

Dear Mr. Henshaw, by Beverly Cleary

Characters:

Leigh Botts, the main character, who writes to author Mr. Henshaw

Mr. Henshaw, a well-known author of kids' books

Bandit, Leigh's dog

Mom (Bonnie Botts), works for Katy's Catering

Dad (Bill Botts), drives a truck

Katy, a caterer, whom Mom works for. She sends great snacks for Leigh's lunch

Mr. Fridley, the school custodian

Miss Neely, the school librarian

Miss Martinez, a teacher

Barry, Leigh's friend

Angela Badger, a famous author

Who does Leigh live with? (His Mom. She and Leigh's Dad are divorced)

What do Leigh and his Mom live next-door to? (A gas station)

What does Leigh hear every time a car pulls into the gas station next door?  
(Ping-ping)

What is Leigh's dog's name? (Bandit)

Why doesn't Leigh's dog live with him? (He keeps dad company while out on long trips in his truck, and mom works all day & can't care for him)

How did the family get Bandit? (He jumped into Dad's rig at a truck stop).

What was the name of the author Leigh wrote to for a school assignment?  
(Mr. Henshaw)

When did Leigh begin writing to Mr. Henshaw? (In second grade, after hearing Ways to Amuse a Dog)

After reading Ways to Amuse a Dog over and over from 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grades, doing a diorama, and giving a book report on the same book, Mr. Henshaw

suggests Leigh try another book. Which book does Leigh read? (Moose on Toast, by Mr. Henshaw)

In Moose on Toast, how many pounds of moose meat did the family have? (1000 pounds)

Leigh goes to a new school in which grade? (6<sup>th</sup>)

How many siblings does Leigh have?

- A) 2
- B) 0\*
- C) 1

What does Leigh's father do for a living?

- A) Works in a cafeteria
- B) He is a writer
- C) He drives a big truck\*

After Leigh sent Mr. Henshaw a letter with a list of questions to answer for a class assignment, Mr. Henshaw sent him:

- A) a thank-you card
- B) silly answers to the questions, and a list of questions for Leigh\*
- C) a new book to read

Why does Leigh have such interesting food in his lunch?

- A) He loves to cook
- B) Leigh's mom shops at the bakery
- C) Leigh's mom works for a caterer\*

What state does Leigh live in?

- A) California\*
- B) Texas
- C) Florida

Before his parents divorced, Leigh lived with them in:

- A) a trailer
- B) a nice apartment
- C) a mobile home\*

Leigh's dad now lives in:

- A) a motel
- B) a trailer\*
- C) his truck

What does Leigh's father always say to him before ending a phone call?

- A) "Keep your nose clean, kid"\*
- B) "Stay out of trouble, kid"
- C) "Don't forget your old man"

Does Leigh like it when his father says this? (No, he wishes he would call him Leigh and tell him he misses him)

Why does Leigh leave for school so early?

- A) He wants to be the first one in his class to get there
- B) He can't sleep, so he gets up very early
- C) His mom has an early class and he doesn't like to be home alone\*

What did Mom decide not to have fixed at home, and why? (The TV, because she said it was rotting Leigh's brain)

Sometimes Leigh's dad hauls a "Reefer". What is this? (a refrigerated truck)

One morning before school, Leigh notices something wrong with how Mr. Fridley is hanging the flag—what? (It is upside down—Leigh notices because the bear on the state flag is upside down. Then Mr. Fridley suggests Leigh come a little early every day to help hang the flag)

What does Mr. Henshaw suggest Leigh do to help him with his writing?

- A) Keep a diary\*
- B) Write to some more authors
- C) Watch TV for ideas

When Leigh begins to write in his diary, he is not sure how to begin. What does he decide to do?

- A) Begin "Dear Composition Book,"
- B) Begin "Dear Leigh," like he is writing to himself
- C) Begin "Dear Mr. Henshaw," as if he is writing another letter\*

What problem does Leigh have with his lunch at school?

- A) He can't eat so much food in such a short time
- B) Someone steals the good stuff from it\*
- C) He doesn't like what his mom gives him for lunch

What does Leigh decide to do in order to find out who is stealing from his lunch?

- A) put a video camera in the coat room
- B) Put a burglar alarm on his lunchbox\*\*
- C) Make a sticky trap for the thief

Where did Leigh get the supplies needed for the lunchbox alarm?

- A) the hardware store\*
- B) Barry's garage
- C) His basement

The first day Leigh used his rigged lunchbox, did he catch the thief? (No, no one stole from it and he had to set the alarm off himself in order to eat)

After the class learned Leigh had an alarm on his lunchbox, did he have food missing again? (No)

Did Leigh ever learn who had been stealing from his lunch? (No, and he was glad later, as it was someone he would be in school with all the time)

What did Barry want Leigh to help him make at his house?

- A) An alarm for his room\*
- B) An alarm for the refrigerator
- C) An alarm for his bike

What did Leigh's dad send him for Christmas?

- A) A new scooter
- B) A set of books
- C) A down jacket\*

When the school librarian asked Leigh to see her in the library, what did she have for him?

- A) A new book by Mr. Henshaw\*\*
- B) A letter from Mr. Henshaw
- C) A book by Angela Badger

What was the name of Mr. Henshaw's new book? (Beggar Bears)

When dad stopped in the mountains to put chains on his truck, what happened? (Bandit got lost)

Why did Leigh hang up on his dad during a phone conversation?

- A) He was angry that his dad lost Bandit
- B) He was upset his dad didn't call earlier, as promised
- C) He heard another boy's voice in the background\*

What did Leigh and his mom buy to eat in the car by the ocean in the rain?

- A) A bucket of fried chicken\*
- B) Burgers and shakes
- C) Ice cream

Leigh's dad sent a note written on a napkin with what wrapped in it?

- A) A valuable coin
- B) A \$20 bill\*
- C) A picture of Bandit

Leigh was working on a story for Young Writers Yearbook that just didn't work—what was it about?

- A) A story about a wax man driving a truck through the desert\*
- B) A story about magical dogs
- C) A story about his family

What did Leigh finally decide to write about for Young Writers Yearbook?

- A) About him and his dog, Bandit
- B) About riding with his dad in his truck\*
- C) About burglar alarms

What was the prize for the top 3 winning writers in the Young Writers Yearbook contest?

- A) Lunch with a famous author\*
- B) An awards dinner with Miss Neely, the librarian
- C) A \$100 prize

What place did Leigh come in for the writer's contest?

- A) First place
- B) Honorable Mention\*
- C) Third place

Who was the famous author the winners were having lunch with? (Angela Badger)

Why did Leigh get to have lunch with the author after all? (A winning poem had been copied, so the girl who submitted it was not allowed to go)

Where did the winners of the writing contest have lunch?

- A) At Miss Badger's home
- B) At the steak house downtown
- C) At the Holiday Inn\*

What did they have for lunch?

- A) Salad Bar\*
- B) Meatloaf
- C) Steak

When Dad came to visit in his truck, who was with him? (Bandit)

Did Leigh keep Bandit? (No, he thought Dad should have him for company on the road)

Why did Leigh feel better about at the end of the story? (that his dad missed him and his mom, and his dad called him Leigh)

In what book...

...does a boy invent a lunchbox alarm to find out who is stealing from his lunch?

...does a boy sign a letter "de liver de letter de sooner de better de later de letter de madder I getter"?

...does a boy get to ride in a big rig (truck)?

...does a boy get special things in his lunch like chicken livers wrapped in bacon and mini cheesecakes?

...does a boy win an "Honorable Mention" for a story he wrote?