

Name \_\_\_\_\_



## Whiskers of Wisdom

**Directions:** Read the passage carefully from start to finish. As you read, **highlight or underline** moments where characters' **actions, dialogue, or story outcomes** reveal an important lesson or idea. Then, use your evidence to write a one-sentence **Theme Statement** that expresses the story's overall message.

### Homeward Whiskers

The rain had stopped just as Emma set another bowl of food by the porch steps. For three days now, she'd been leaving tuna out, hoping her cat, Whiskers, would return. The night he ran off during the thunderstorm, she'd searched the neighborhood until her flashlight went dim.

On the fourth evening, she heard a soft cry from the bushes. When she turned, a muddy, trembling Whiskers crept forward, his tail low but his eyes bright with recognition. Emma knelt down, whispering, "You found your way home." She wrapped him in a towel, ignoring the dirt on her shirt. As he purred against her chest, she smiled through tears.

That night, as Whiskers slept by the window, Emma realized something: **love doesn't fade with distance or fear. It waits, patient and strong, until it's found again.**

Write one sentence that expresses the story's central message:

### Reflection Questions:

1. Which specific actions or lines helped you understand the story's theme most clearly?
2. How did Emma's emotions change throughout the story, and what does that show about love or perseverance?
3. What might readers learn from this story about caring for others—even animals?