

## Unit 9: Animals: Our Research Partners?

### A Mouse Named Hope

#### Keywords

claim	contract	employee	examine	experiment
issue	parent	patient	refuse	training

Hope, a small mouse, opened her eyes to a strong, clean smell. She was not in her home. The ground was hard and cold. Everything was too bright when she opened her eyes. She tried to remember how she got here. She felt fear when big hands picked her and her brothers and sisters up and put them into dark bags. Thinking about this made her want to cry. Now, she was in a cold place with bright lights. It wasn't like her home in the fields. She saw two people dressed in white talking in low voices far away. Hope sat in a corner of a little glass box, missing her **parents** and feeling very alone. She felt fear and did not know what would happen next. Alone and away from her family, Hope stayed in the corner and closed her eyes when people came near. She watched them look around and write notes. The other animals near her closed their eyes in fear, too. They made crying sounds when people came close. Hope felt sad for them.

One morning, Hope woke up and saw food and water next to her. She was very hungry, so she ate a little. The food was plain but made her feel better. While eating, Hope thought about why she was in this place. She watched the **employees** go to each little glass box. They didn't show any feelings. Hope felt like they didn't see her as a real, living animal. To them, she was just part of their **experiments**. Hope was scared of what they might do to her. Without her family, she felt very small. The people gave her food, water, and a place to stay, but they didn't care about how she felt. They were just **employees** doing experiments under a **contract** with a big company that wanted to see if medicine was safe for **patients**. To them, she was just an animal for their lab, and they didn't notice her feelings. The pain and feeling of the animals was not an **issue** for them. Hope lay on the floor of her box, quietly wishing she could leave this lonely place.

In the next few weeks, the people began taking Hope out of her box. She felt fear when they picked her up. She tried to get away, but they always caught her and placed her on a cold table. The people there looked very scary with masks on. Hope felt very small under the bright lights. Her heart raced, and she felt fear a lot. The people did various tests on Hope and **examined** her every day. They put things on a spot on her back, causing pain. They gave her food that made her feel unwell. They placed new things in her cage to see how she would respond. With each test, Hope felt more and more fear. She stopped cleaning herself when she was back in her box. She hardly noticed when she ate. She felt as if she was fading away, turning into just a small research animal like the people saw her.

Then one day, the people put a new thing on Hope's back. The pain was more than anything before. As Hope cried, she heard the people say it was working to remove her fur. Hope felt a strong feeling in her body. She **refused** to be just a test animal. She wanted to run away. That night, Hope couldn't sleep. Her back was in pain a lot from the tests. She looked through the bars of her box, thinking she needed to escape. She was scared of what the people might do next. Hope waited until the last person turned off the lights and closed the lab door. It made a big sound. When everything was quiet, she pushed against the door of her little box. It opened easily—a new **employee in training** had forgotten to lock it! Hope's heart beat fast. She looked around carefully. When nothing happened, she quickly ran out, her feet cold on the floor. Then she heard a sound from another box. She saw another mouse looking at her, wanting to be free too. Hope quickly opened the other mouse's box. Then she helped the other mice get out. Soon, many mice were with Hope, all looking at her to know what to do. She felt strong and told them to follow her. "We have to **claim** our freedom," Hope said.

They all ran to a small opening in the wall. It was their way out. Hope was in pain, but she kept going, thinking of the outside. She went through the opening and felt the fresh night air. She was outside! Now she helped the other mice to get to a better place, away from the lab. Hope's eyes blinked quickly as she came out of the dark building into the outside. The bright moon was almost too much for her eyes after being under electric lights for so long. She stopped for a bit to decide which way to go. Her heart was beating fast because she was so excited and yet full of fear.

She looked back to make sure the other mice came out safely. They were close together, taking in the night air and looking around. This new place was different, but it was much better than the boxes they were in before. Hope led the mice along the wall of the building. They stayed close to the wall so they could hide if they needed to. Their feet touched soft, ground, which was much nicer than the hard, cold floors in the lab. Hope saw the other mice start to feel better as they got farther from the place which made them sad.

In front of them, Hope saw trees moving in the wind. She thought about her old home and her family. She wondered if she would ever go back to her warm, safe home. But first, she had to make sure the other mice were safe. Hope followed the edge of the trees until she found a place to go into the forest. She looked with care to make sure it was safe. Then she told the other mice to follow her into the dark, welcoming forest. They all went into the trees together, leaving the cold building behind.

Hope and the other mice walked for a long time in the dark forest. When it started to get light with the morning, Hope saw that the forest was coming alive, too. There were sounds and animals moving. Some of these animals would love to eat a small mouse. This place wasn't safe. Hope discovered a covered spot in some thick plants. She needed to think of a new plan.

Suddenly, Hope's thoughts were broken, her nose moved from side to side as she caught the scent of a fox. The sound of rustling leaves and breaking twigs grew louder, indicating the fox's approach. Fear, fear again! She knew they had to move, and fast. Hope made a quick decision. She shouted to the other mice, "Quick!" They ran through the trees, then suddenly there was the sound of engines close by. They were out of the forest at the edge of a road.

A car drove by really fast, making a lot of wind—another car, then another. But the fox must be getting close. The mice were scared, but Hope was strong. Run now! she shouted as she ran into the road. But she was not fast enough. All the days in the box had made Hope weak and slow. A car was driving toward them very fast. She wouldn't make it to the other side. But with a big sound, the car stopped fast just before it could hit Hope. She was very tired and saw a woman looking at her before she fell asleep.

When Hope woke up again, she was in a soft bed. She saw the kind woman who was happy Hope was okay. "It's okay, little one," the woman said. "You've had a hard time, haven't you?" Hope saw she was in a warm room. There were many animals there—cats, dogs, birds, and even other mice. The mice from the lab were there, too, resting. Hope was at an animal shelter. This was a safe place with lots of friends. As she got warm in the bed, Hope remembered her mother's story about an animal shelter, a place where animals could feel safe and protected. By wonderful good chance, the woman driving the car was the director of this animal shelter. Hope and her friends were safe at last.

## Questions

1. Where did Hope first find herself at the beginning of the story?  
A) In her home in the fields

- B) At an animal shelter
  - C) In the open night air
  - D) In a little glass box
2. What did Hope miss the most in her new environment?
    - A) Her parents
    - B) Her freedom
    - C) Food and water
    - D) Other animals
  3. What feeling did Hope have when she was under the bright lights for the experiments?
    - A) Excitement
    - B) Comfort
    - C) Fear
    - D) Curiosity
  4. What was the purpose of the experiments conducted on Hope and other animals?
    - A) To train them
    - B) To play with them
    - C) To test medicine safety for patients
    - D) To entertain the employees
  5. How did Hope react to the tests performed on her?
    - A) She became aggressive.
    - B) She enjoyed them.
    - C) She ignored them.
    - D) She felt fear and pain.
  6. What triggered Hope's decision to escape?
    - A) A new food source
    - B) An open door
    - C) A forgotten lock by a new employee in training
    - D) The arrival of new animals
  7. How did Hope help other mice in the lab?
    - A) By feeding them
    - B) By opening their boxes
    - C) By comforting them
    - D) By following them
  8. What danger did Hope and the other mice face in the forest?
    - A) Getting lost
    - B) Dangerous animals
    - C) The lab employees finding them
    - D) Experiments
  9. How did Hope end up at the animal shelter?
    - A) She was found by a kind woman after a car almost hit her.
    - B) She was captured by the lab employees.
    - C) She walked there herself.
    - D) The other mice led her there.
  10. Who was the director of the animal shelter where Hope ended up?
    - A) A former lab employee
    - B) Hope's previous owner

- C) A veterinarian
- D The kind woman who found her

## Vocabulary Review

**claim:** to state something as true or to demand ownership of something

Example: *“We have to **claim** our freedom,” Hope said.* (Paragraph 4)

**contract:** a legal agreement between two or more parties

Example: *They were just employees doing experiments under a **contract** with a big company that wanted to see if medicine was safe for patients.* (Paragraph 2)

**employee:** a person hired to work for another in return for payment

Example: *She watched the **employees** go to each little glass box.* (Paragraph 2)

**examine:** to inspect or look at closely

Example: *The people did various tests on Hope and **examined** her every day.* (Paragraph 3)

**experiment:** a test conducted to prove or discover something

Example: *To them, she was just part of their **experiments**.* (Paragraph 2)

**issue:** a topic or problem that is under discussion or over which there are opposing views.

Example: *The pain and feeling of the animals was not an **issue** for them.* (Paragraph 2)

**parent:** a person who has a child or children

Example: *Hope sat in a corner of a little glass box, missing her **parents** and feeling very alone.* (Paragraph 1)

**patient:** someone receiving medical treatment

Example: *They were just employees doing experiments under a contract with a big company that wanted to see if medicine was safe for **patients**.* (Paragraph 2)

**refuse:** to indicate unwillingness to do or accept something

Example: *She **refused** to be just a test animal.* (Paragraph 4)

**training:** the action of teaching a person or animal a particular skill or type of behavior

Example: *It opened easily—a new employee in **training** had forgotten to lock it!* (Paragraph 4)