

## Flushing Frank

My little sister Grace has a fish. His name is Frank. She loves Frank. She feeds him every morning and reads to him every night. Yes, she actually reads to him. It's ridiculous, but kind of cute too.

The problem is that Frank is floating. I saw him there, on top of the water, when I got home from school. I know what this means. Frank is dead. I'd better tell Mom and Dad so they can break it to her when she gets home. Before she sees, or worse, doesn't understand and tries to read to him or something. That would be awful.

Grace is really upset about Frank. Of course she is. I mean, he was only a fish, but he was her buddy. I think she talked to him more than she talks to me or Mom or Dad. Poor kid. I feel for her.

Seriously, I do feel for her. But now we all have to crowd into the bathroom to have a ceremony. A funeral for flushing Frank. It's a little much. But I try to stay serious. I try not to laugh, out of respect.

Dad can see me trying to hold in my laughter. I mean, Frank is going to be flushed. He's just a fish. It's hard not to laugh at how solemn everyone is. I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings.

"Remember, Frank was her friend," Dad whispers to me.

“I know,” I say back. And I do. That’s rough. So I volunteer to give a eulogy. That’s when people talk at a funeral and say nice stuff about the person who died.

“Frank was a good fish,” I say. “He was loyal. He was a good listener.”

I start out just doing this for Grace, but part way through I actually do feel something. Frank was a living being. He was pretty cool for a fish.

After the flush, my eyes are a little wet. I’m sad. For Frank and for Grace. It’s hard to lose a pet. I remember when our dog died and I cried for days.

Dad mouths, “thanks.” But he doesn’t need to. Grace’s giant hug is thanks enough.



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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Who did Grace talk to the most?
  - a. The narrator
  - b. Frank
  - c. Mom
  - d. Dad
2. Why does the narrator try not to laugh?
  - a. Because laughing hurts their face
  - b. Because Dad told them not to
  - c. Because they don't want to hurt Grace's feelings
  - d. Because they are really sad about Frank
3. What's another word for solemn?
  - a. Serious
  - b. Sad
  - c. Sleepy
  - d. Smart
4. When they consider Grace's feelings, the narrator is showing \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Jealousy
  - b. Happiness
  - c. Grief
  - d. Empathy

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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