

The Joke Plant

When Uncle Benny came to visit, Melody never knew what to expect. Sometimes he brought cake. Sometimes he brought coins from his travels to far away places. Sometimes he brought . . . a dead plant?

“Um, thanks?” said Melody.

“I know it looks strange,” said Uncle Benny. “But trust me, it’s awesome.”

Melody stared at the shriveled brown vine in the pot. “Maybe it needs some water?” she asked.

“No,” said Uncle Benny. “This plant doesn’t need water. Or sunshine. This plant needs jokes.”

“Jokes?” said Melody. “Like, knock-knock-who’s-there jokes?”

“Give it a try,” said Uncle Benny.

“Knock, knock,” said Melody.

“Who’s there?” Uncle Benny replied.

“Banana.”

“Banana who?”

“Banana.”

“Banana who?”

“Orange.”

“Orange who?”

“Orange you glad I didn’t say banana again?”

“Ha!” said Uncle Benny. “That’s a pretty good one.”

The plant was still brown. But maybe it looked slightly less shriveled.

“How about this one,” said Uncle Benny. “What did the evil chicken lay?” Melody waited for the punch line. “Deviled eggs!” The plant started to perk up.

“More!” said Melody.

“What is a vampire’s favorite ship? A blood vessel!” yelled Uncle Benny.

“I’ve got one!” cried Melody. “Did you hear about the racing snail who got rid of his shell? He thought it would make him faster, but it just made him sluggish! That’s from Reader’s Digest.”

Uncle Benny laughed. They looked over at the plant. It was green now and it stood up in the pot. “Why don’t pirates take a bath before they walk the plank?” he asked. “Because they just wash up on shore.”

“I know a bunch of good jokes about umbrellas,” said Melody. “But they usually go over people’s heads.”

The plant was getting greener and greener. It was sprouting leaves all over the place.

“What’s the most popular fish in the ocean?” asked Uncle Benny.



“A starfish!” answered Melody. A flower exploded from the vine.
“You were right. This *is* awesome!” A joke plant is better than cake any day.



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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. What was the topic of the knock, knock joke?
 - a. Flowers
 - b. Fruit
 - c. Fish
 - d. Eggs

2. What are the two meanings of “vessel” in Uncle Benny’s joke?
 - a. A boat and a vein
 - b. A boat and a vase
 - c. A vein and a vase
 - d. A vase and a servant

3. How did Melody feel about the plant when she first saw it?
 - a. Excited
 - b. Angry
 - c. Sad
 - d. Unsure

4. Which word best describes Uncle Benny?
 - a. Serious
 - b. Mean
 - c. Fun
 - d. Nice

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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