

Grandma's House

Rachel Howard



The sun was just peeking through the curtains in Emily and Hannah's room when their mom called upstairs to wake them. "It's time to go to Grandma's!" she said.

Emily groaned and looked over at her twin sister, who was rubbing her eyes. "I don't want to go to Grandma's house," Emily said grumpily.

"Me neither," Hannah said. She sat up and stretched. "But maybe Uncle Joe will be there."

Uncle Joe was their favorite. He always brought them chocolate chip cookies from the bakery he owned.

"Yeah, maybe," Emily said. She hated going to their Grandma's house. It smelled like an old person, and there was plastic on all the couches, which stuck to their legs whenever they wore shorts and tried to get up. Their Grandma was also very deaf, so they had to talk right in her ear whenever they needed to tell her something. Mostly when Emily and Hannah went over to their Grandma's house, they whispered to each other and let their mom talk to Grandma.

Hannah went to the bathroom to brush her teeth, and Emily reluctantly got out of bed. She got dressed quickly and went downstairs for breakfast. Their mom was sitting at the table with a steaming cup of coffee and the newspaper in front of her.

"Morning, Em," she said.

"Hi, Mom." Emily pulled out the cereal she and Hannah liked and poured two bowls before sitting at the table next to their mom.

"Excited to see Grandma?"

"Yeah, kind of," Emily said, in between bites. She knew it would hurt her mom's feelings if her mom knew how uncomfortable she was at their grandmother's house. It was better not to tell her.

Hannah came running down the stairs and started eating quickly, shoveling the cereal into her mouth. "Sorry I'm late, Mom!" she said.

Emily rolled her eyes. Hannah was always the good one. She was even wearing a nice dress to go to Grandma's house. Emily looked down at her old jeans with holes at the knees and the lumpy sweater she had pulled out of her closet.

"You're not late," their mom said. She closed the newspaper and took a long drink of coffee. "I really appreciate you guys going over to Grandma's today. I have a ton of Christmas presents to buy, and I know Grandma will appreciate the company."

Hannah smiled, but Emily felt her stomach drop. They would be at Grandma's house *alone*? Emily finished her breakfast slowly and took her empty bowl to the sink.

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"Bye!" their mom called, waving from the car before she drove away. Emily and Hannah walked up the long driveway to their grandma's house.

"This is going to be so weird," Emily said.

"It'll be fine, Emily. Maybe Grandma will let us watch TV," Hannah said, swinging her arms. Emily didn't understand why Hannah was so optimistic: Grandma, like their mom, "didn't believe in television."

When they got to the front door, Hannah rang the bell. They could hear the loud ring reverberate through Grandma's house and had to wait a long time until they heard Grandma's shuffling steps walking to the front door.

"Hi, girls," Grandma said. She opened the door and Hannah and Emily walked in, dutifully kissing her on the cheek as they passed into the dark house. They waited in the foyer, not quite knowing where to go or what to do. After their grandma had locked the door carefully, they followed her into the kitchen, where they all sat at the table.

"Are you girls hungry?" Grandma said, looking from one to the other.

Emily wasn't sure if she could tell them apart. Both she and Hannah shook their heads.

"Okay, well there's something I want to show you," Grandma said. "Will one of you go get that album over there?" She pointed to a thick, brown photo album that was on the kitchen counter. Hannah got up and brought it to the table, placing it right in front of Grandma.

Their grandma opened the album and the spine cracked. "These are pictures of your mom when she was a little girl," Grandma said. Hannah moved closer to Grandma, and even Emily was curious. She pushed her chair closer to Grandma's and looked over her shoulder as she showed them pictures of their mom's childhood.

A few hours later, they heard a loud honk, which meant that their mom was back to pick them up. Emily and Hannah hugged their grandma, and for the first time they felt really close to her.

As they walked down the long driveway, Hannah grabbed Emily's hand. "That wasn't so bad, was it?" she said.

"No," Emily said. She smiled at her sister.

When they got in the car, Emily thought about how she, Hannah and their mom had the same way of raising one eyebrow when they were happy. Today she had noticed that Grandma had that same habit, too.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Where do Emily and Hannah go in the story?

- A shopping with Mom
- B Uncle Joe's house
- C Grandma's house
- D to a restaurant

2. What main problem do Emily and Hannah face?

- A They don't want to go to Grandma's house.
- B They don't want to look at old photographs.
- C They don't want to go shopping with their mom.
- D They do not get along well with each other.

3. Emily is uncomfortable going to Grandma's house without her mom. What evidence from the story supports this conclusion?

- A Emily does not want to hurt her mom's feelings, so she pretends to like Grandma's house.
- B Emily does not understand why Hannah is so optimistic about visiting Grandma.
- C Usually Emily and Hannah whisper to each other while Mom talks to Grandma.
- D Emily's stomach drops when she learns she and Hannah will be alone.

4. How do Emily and Hannah feel about seeing old pictures of her mother?

- A bored
- B interested
- C unhappy
- D excited

5. What is this story mostly about?

- A two sisters who end up enjoying a visit at their grandma's house
- B why two sisters feel uncomfortable visiting their grandma alone
- C why visiting relatives is a good thing to do
- D two sisters who visit their grandma and Uncle Joe

6. Read the following sentences:

"Bye!" their mom called, waving from the car before she drove away. Emily and Hannah walked up the long driveway to their grandma's house.

"This is going to be so weird," Emily said.

"It'll be fine, Emily. Maybe Grandma will let us watch TV," Hannah said, swinging her arms. Emily didn't understand why Hannah was so **optimistic**: Grandma, like their mom, "didn't believe in television."

What does "**optimistic**" most nearly mean?

- A uninterested
- B disappointed
- C hopeful
- D excited

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Emily is very unhappy about visiting Grandma's house. _____, Hannah is much more optimistic about the visit.

- A Finally
- B Especially
- C Such as
- D In contrast

8. What does Grandma show Emily and Hannah?

9. Why does Emily hate going to Grandma's house?

10. Explain how and why Emily's attitude toward visiting Grandma changes during the story.

Teacher Guide & Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 700

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8. What does Grandma show Emily and Hannah?

Suggested answer: Grandma shows Emily and Hannah pictures of their mom when she was a little girl.

9. Why does Emily hate going to Grandma's house?

Suggested answer: Emily hates going to Grandma's house because it smells like an old person, there is plastic on the couches, and their Grandma is very deaf.

10. Explain how and why Emily's attitude toward visiting Grandma changes during the story.

Suggested answer: At the beginning of the story, Emily does not want to visit Grandma and is uncomfortable at her house. At the end of the story, Emily feels close to Grandma for the first time and says that visiting Grandma wasn't so bad. Her attitude changes because Grandma showed her old pictures of her mom, and she learned more about Grandma.