

## So Tired

Story By: Andrew Frinkle

Susie wanted to play, but her Dad didn't want to. In his defense, he *did* look very tired. "Why won't you play with me?"

"Honey, I want to, but I just don't have the energy." Dad lamented. He really did want to play, but he'd been so busy all day that he just wanted to sit down and relax. Tomorrow was the weekend, which meant catching up on things around the house.

"What does energy have to do with anything?" Susie asked, confused.

Dad grinned, because he remembered the boundless energy of childhood, and his eight year old daughter had plenty. "Maybe we can play tomorrow afternoon, but right now I just want to sit."

"Talk to me, then." Susie insisted, taking the armchair next to her father.

Dad sighed. "I don't have the mental capacity to do much more than drink my tea and watch TV for a little bit before I fall asleep."

"Why are you so tired, Daddy?"

Dad sighed and looked at his daughter. It hadn't always been like this. When she had been little, they'd been best friends. They'd spent hours playing together after he got home from work. "Life as an adult is hard. You know the house, the cars, the food, the gas for the car, and all that stuff?"

"Yeah?" She answered, wondering where this was going.

"Well, all those things are getting more expensive, but Daddy isn't getting paid more, so Daddy has to work more hours to pay for those things. Then there are the toys, money for vacations, and all that stuff."

Susie tried to understand. Her parents had always given her money as an allowance for doing chores around the house. Each year, she got another dollar per week, as she got older and was able to do more. That didn't happen for her father? "Why don't they just pay you more?"

"I'm doing the same job as always, so why would they pay me more?"

"Because things cost more now, so you need more money." Hadn't he heard his own argument?



Father grinned and ruffled her hair. "Now you're starting to sound like me. You'll make someone a good wife someday."

"Gross." She shivered. "I can't even think about stuff like that."

"Good. Keep it that way. You need to study hard in school, get a good job, and become successful. Then you'll have more time, money, and energy to play with your daughters or sons when you have them."

"Daughters." Susie declared. "Thanks for talking to me, Daddy." She gave him her winning smile. "See? We spent time together, and tomorrow I'll help you on your chores."

Father got a far-off look for a moment, as he was remembering something. "You know, that reminds me of something your grandfather said: 'Son, everything you do together with your kids in quality time. It doesn't always have to be expensive or fun.'"

"I think grandpa is a smart man." He certainly had that look about him. Grandpa's glasses made him look like the smartest man she knew.

"Yes, he is, and I hope you know how to work a hose. We have to wash the windows and spray off the sidewalks tomorrow." Father yawned.

"That sounds like quality time." Susie said with a grin. It might be work, but it was fun when she worked with her father. "Good night." She whispered as her father sank into sleep in his chair.

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Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. What does Susie want from her father?
  - A. She wants to play.
  - B. She wants money.
  - C. She wants help on her homework.
  - D. She wants him to fix her bike.
  
2. Why can't Dad play with Susie?
  - A. He's too busy.
  - B. He's too hungry.
  - C. He's too tired.
  - D. He's too sick.
  
3. What is the best summary for Dad's explanation for why he can't play with Susie?
  - A. He is too poor, so he has to work, and doesn't have time.
  - B. He is too busy, because his work is very important.
  - C. He is too important to waste time playing.
  - D. He has to work overtime to pay for things his family needs, so he has no energy.
  
4. What does Susie ask for if Dad can't play with her?
  - A. Just talk to her.
  - B. Just give her money.
  - C. Just take a nap.
  - D. Just take her to a movie later.
  
5. What lesson does Susie learn from this situation?
  - A. Never grow up, because it's hard.
  - B. Spend time with your family however you can.
  - C. Don't bother Dad, because he's always tired.
  - D. Do whatever you want, because Dad isn't home to yell at you.

## So Tired – Answer Key

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