

Black Coffee

Story By: Andrew Frinkle

Denise liked to sample her mom's drinks from time to time. Whenever she wasn't looking, Denise would take a sip and see what her mom was drinking. This time, she spluttered after she sipped from her mom's mug. "Gross! What is this stuff?"

Mom smiled. "It's coffee with no cream, no sugar."

"Why does it taste so bad?" Denise made a sour face.

"Honey, please don't tell someone who is enjoying their drink that it's gross."

"Why?" Denise frowned. If she didn't like something, why not tell someone about it?

Mom thought for a moment before explaining. "Alright, let's say that you are enjoying a cupcake. Your favorite kind is white cake with yellow butter cream frosting. You like sprinkles on top."

"Yeah, I do!" Denise grinned, thinking about a cupcake.

"Okay, now let's say someone walks in and says, 'Ewww. What are you eating? That's nasty.'"

Denise slapped her fist into her palm. "I'd punch them in the mouth and enjoy my cupcake."

Mom laughed. Her daughter was anything but tough. "You would not, silly. You'd feel a little bad. What you were enjoying you suddenly wouldn't enjoy quite as much."

"I'd still enjoy it."

"Yes, but maybe 90% instead of 100% enjoyment. That's not nice. So, when we have nothing good to say, especially about something someone else is enjoying, then we keep it to ourselves."

"You mean like when I'm reading a girl's book and my friend on the bus says it's sissy stuff?"

"Exactly! I bet you feel kind of sad afterward, because you just want to like what you like, right?"

Denise nodded. "You're right. I'll be more careful in the future, but couldn't you at least put cream and sugar in that?"

"I like cream and sugar in my coffee, but this is flavored coffee, and I want to savor the flavors without hiding them in cream and sugar."

"I guess I'll just let you enjoy your coffee as is then." Denise still wasn't convinced. Old habits die hard. It was hard not to try to make suggestions.

Mom patted her head cheerfully. "Thank you, dear. Now would you please go get me a cookie to eat while I sip my coffee and read the newspaper?"

Denise grunted. "Is that punishment for opening my mouth, eh?"

"Nope. It's just a favor for your understanding, loving mother."



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

1. What does Denise do at the beginning of the story?
 - A. She eats some of her mom's donut.
 - B. She drinks some of her mom's soda.
 - C. She drinks some of her mom's water.
 - D. She drinks some of her mom's coffee.

2. What does Denise think of her mom's coffee?
 - A. It's great!
 - B. It's gross!
 - C. It's tasty!
 - D. It's yummy!

3. What example does mom give to explain why Denise shouldn't always share her opinions?
 - A. eating cupcakes
 - B. drinking coffee
 - C. reading books
 - D. choosing pizza toppings

4. What example of her own does Denise give about unwanted opinions?
 - A. eating cupcakes
 - B. drinking coffee
 - C. reading books
 - D. choosing pizza toppings

5. What is the BEST way to put the lesson Denise learns from mom?
 - A. Don't say anything that is nice.
 - B. Don't say anything where mom can hear you.
 - C. Don't say dumb stuff.
 - D. Don't give opinions if they might hurt feelings.

Black Coffee – Answer Key

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