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# LIFE

Why a spider eats a fly?

family • love • here and now  
friends • memories

Albatros



## Why a spider eats a fly?

AMELIA AND GRANNY 1-2

NEW LIFE 3-4

GIRL OR BOY? 5-6

FAMILY IS THE BEST! 7-8

FRIENDS ARE IMPORTANT! 9-10

HOPE IS ILL 11-12

NEW FRIEND 13-14

HERE AND NOW 15-16

WHY DOES A SPIDER HAVE TO EAT A FLY? 17-18

HOPE IN THE HOSPITAL 19-20

TOM 21-22

CHRISTMAS TIME 23-24

NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATION 25-26

LOST IN THE STORM 27-28

BALANCE 29-30

PANTA RHEI 31-32

LUCY 33-34

ANDREA 35-36

MOURNING IS ALLOWED 37-38

LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL 39-40

LIFE IS TO BE LIVED AND ENJOYED 41-42

Amelia was 12 years old. One of the unique things about her was that she liked to be friends with both boys and girls. Sometimes the boys would make fun of her for hanging out with the girls, and sometimes the girls would make fun of her for hanging out with the boys. Amelia didn't care. Before her Grandma Maya died, she told Amelia that she should be sure to live well so that she could have a good life.

If she was only friends with girls, she'd miss out on all the boys' tricks. If she were only friends with boys, she'd miss out on the girl's giggling. When she needed to feel good, Amelia always thought of her grandmother. But then her grandma died of a heart attack. Nobody told Amelia her grandma had died, and nobody took her to the funeral because they didn't want her to get upset. But Amelia had wanted to go so that she could at least say goodbye.

## AMELIA AND GRANNY

Grandma could talk about anything in such a beautiful way. Amelia loved small children and asked her grandmother if she would have a big family of her own one day. Grandma Maya didn't tell Amelia to take a pill or a story about a butterfly and flower. She told Amelia that a child can be born when a father cuddles a mother. Amelia asked why she was an only child because she had seen her mother and father cuddle before. Grandma Maya told her that not every cuddle makes a baby.

## NEW LIFE

One morning while Amelia was eating cinnamon and sugar pancakes for breakfast, she noticed her parents looking mysterious. Amelia put another pancake on her plate and said, "Okay – what's going on?" It can be surprising to moms and dads when they realize their children notice something feels different.

Mom smiled and told Amelia that she was going to have a baby. Amelia had wished for a sister or brother for so long, she couldn't believe it was finally going to happen.



Since then, things have been a little different at home. Her mom usually laughed at the movies they watched, but now she cried, even when Nemo's father found him. Sometimes her mom would take a jar of mustard out and put lots of it on sliced bread and eat it while they watched. Her mother always wanted garlic toast every night for dinner. Yuck! Sometimes during the morning, her mother would vomit. Amelia shook her head and thought the gross meals must have caused it.

Amelia didn't understand why people told her mom she looked beautiful even though she was the size of a whale. Her legs were very swollen, and her cheeks looked like a hamster's. Amelia barely recognized her. Her parents got an ultrasound of the baby so that she could see what it looked like. She thought it looked more like an alien than a baby. It'll be weird looking when it is born.



But when the doctor let Amelia listen to the baby's heartbeat, she realized what a miracle a new baby is.

Amelia asked the doctor if the baby was going to be a girl or a boy, but her parents wanted it to be a surprise. She didn't understand why her parents didn't want to know. Wouldn't it be good to know whether to buy pink or blue clothes? Her mother explained that it didn't matter because not all girls like pink, and not all boys like blue. The most important thing was that the baby was healthy. They all agreed to wait until the baby was born to find out what it was.

For several days, her mom looked so big that Amelia thought she'd burst. She looked like an inflatable balloon and couldn't move as easily as she had before. Her mother also wasn't as fun anymore. One day, Amelia's mother laid down next to her and said she was very sorry for not being like she was before. But she also explained that what was happening was a beautiful thing that would change all their lives. It was good to look forward to the baby's arrival because it gave them something exciting to look plan for.

Amelia began to look forward to the due date. She wondered if the baby would be anything like her. 3 days later, it looked like her mom had urinated on the kitchen floor. But it wasn't actually urine. It was amniotic fluid. The baby was ready to be born!



## FAMILY IS THE BEST

She thought about when Grandma was a baby and how she was delivered right at home. Although people still did that, Amelia's parents wanted the baby to be born at the same hospital that Amelia was. She nervously paced back and forth in her house waiting to hear news from her parents. Suddenly, the phone rang. Her father was on the other end and sounded very emotional. "Amelia! You have a brother! His name is Samuel, and he is big and healthy." She didn't know why, but tears started streaming down her face.

The next day, Amelia went to visit her mom and new brother in the hospital. She saw her little brother sleeping peacefully and noticed that her mother didn't look like her stomach was a watermelon anymore. Her mom was tired, but also very happy. "You looked like that when you were a baby," she said. Amelia wasn't so sure. Her mom put Sam in Amelia's arms and he nestled right in.

But then Sam woke up and began to cry and cry. Amelia was shocked. "He's not going to do that at home, is he?" she asked. Her mother explained that he was just hungry, so she took out her breast and began to feed him her milk. "Mom! That's disgusting!" Amelia said.

Sam was very happy. Her mother told her that she used to feed Amelia the exact same way when she was a baby.



## FRIENDS ARE IMPORTANT!

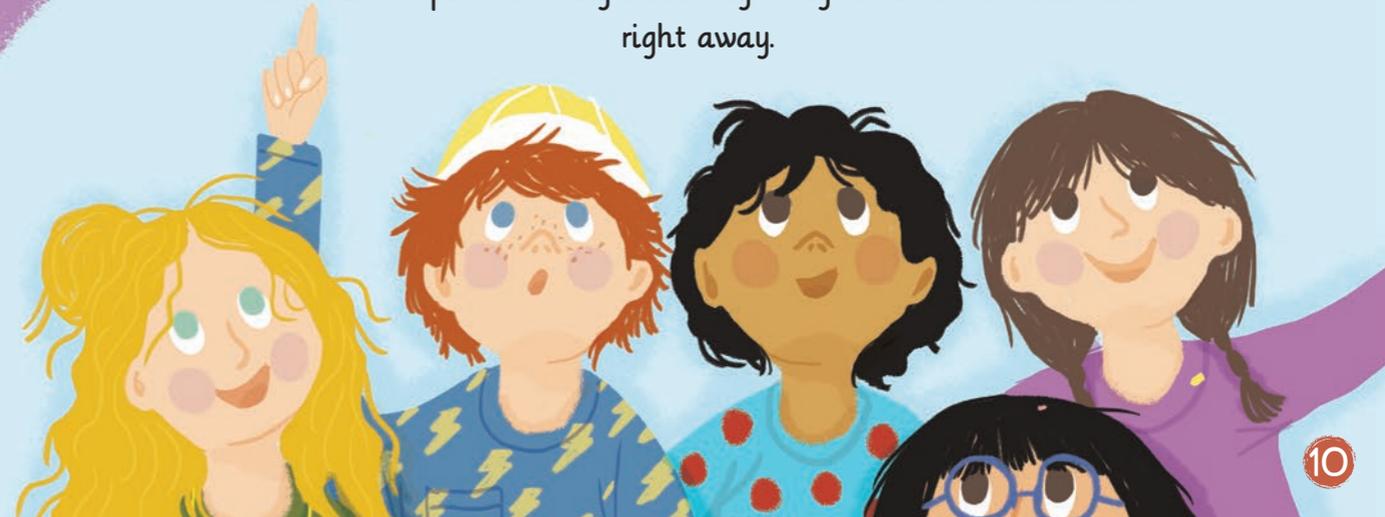
Amelia was grateful for her new brother, but she was also grateful for her friends. Every Wednesday they walked from school to the green park near the playground. They would drop their backpacks and start to run and play. Klara and Kate had a fight while Mate, Dan, Peter, and Jan kicked Charles out of their group because of a disagreement.

Amelia sat on the grass and watched everyone fighting with each other. She didn't understand why some of them were arguing on purpose. They would eventually stop arguing until someone in the group started doing it again. It was almost as if everyone had a chance to feel what it was like to be unpopular. Nobody liked it. Amelia wondered why they behaved this way.

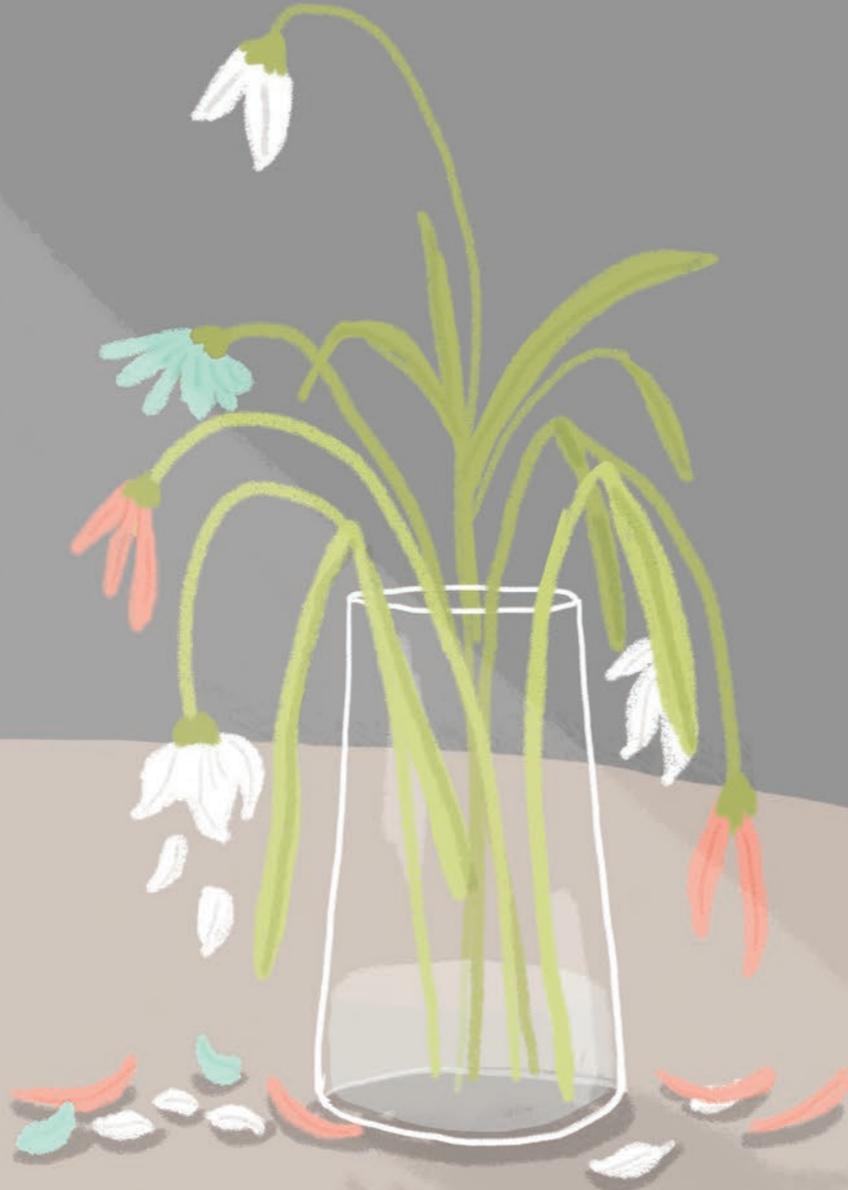
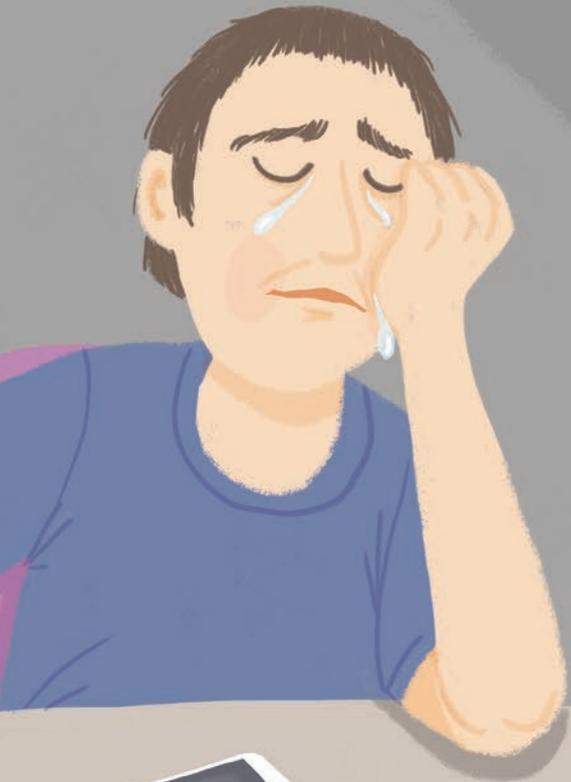


She lay down in the grass and looked up at the sky and stared at the clouds. Life was strange, she thought. She wished her grandmother was still alive because she knew she would have been able to talk to her about all that had been happening. Whether it was nobody telling her about her grandma's death, her mother being moody while she was pregnant, or not being able to play the piano because Sam was sleeping, Amelia's grandma would have known what to say. Amelia also had a best friend. Her name was Hope. She wasn't like grandma, but Amelia could tell her anything. Hope would never tell anyone. Amelia thought about how important it was to have good friends.

Suddenly, she heard her friends calling for help! Amelia sat up and looked around to see what happened. She saw Hope laying still on the ground. She had fainted! Amelia's heart started racing. She ran over to her and saw that Hope was barely breathing. They called an ambulance right away.



## HOPE IS ILL



She tried calling Hope, but her cell phone was off. Amelia's dad called Hope's dad and got some very sad news. He hung up the phone and began to cry.

Amelia was shocked. She had never seen her dad cry before. What should children do when their parents cry? At first, she was angry with him. She wanted to scream, "Why are you crying? I'm the kid here. I can cry, but you have to be strong."

But then Amelia realized that even moms and dads can cry sometimes. She went over to her dad and gave him a hug and sat on his lap. He held her tight, and they sat there quietly for a few minutes. Her dad wiped away his tears and began to talk.

"Hope is sick. It's serious. She has cancer and might die. She'll need to have surgery and then get radiation and chemotherapy treatment. But today's doctors and medicine are wonderful, and the chances for her recovery are very good. Amelia couldn't believe what she was hearing. Cancer? Hope might die just like her grandma did. That can't be true, she thought. Just last weekend they were laughing together while working on a school project about helping save the environment. Hope had seemed perfectly healthy then. Amelia couldn't believe it.



## HERE AND NOW

Before Hope went to the hospital for treatment, her and Amelia's dad took them both out into nature. They visited a beautiful valley where a small river flowed. They were surrounded by wildflowers and large rocks. They made sure to take the short routes so the hike would be easier on Hope.

Although her eyes weren't bright, Hope was very excited. Every day they would walk a short distance along the river. They would splash their feet in the river water, catch fish, and laugh. Hope told Amelia about her brain surgery, how the doctors will have to shave her head and her treatment plan. Amelia lay on the grass and didn't know what to say. Hope talked about everything very calmly.

Tears streamed down Amelia's face. Hope had beautiful, long blonde hair. It made Amelia said to think of the doctor's having to shave it off. Hope noticed how sad Amelia was. "You know Ami, it's terrible when bad things happen. But we can also think about nice things, too. Maybe my hair will grow back even thicker and wavier! The doctor said my tumor is as big as a hazelnut, but they will remove it and I'll recover. I'll be thankful every day."

Amelia lay in the grass holding Hope's hand. She was unable to say a word. Hope told her, "You don't have to say anything. All you need to do is keep holding my hand like this. You'll always be my best friend."

Amelia liked that plan. From that moment on, she decided to only have good thoughts in her head.



## NEW FRIEND

Amelia thought about how Hope told her to only focus on the here and now. We can't change the past, so we should enjoy every moment of the present and future. We just have to think about how wonderful things can be and look forward to those times.

Amelia went to school and stared at Hope's empty seat. She missed her so much. The days continued to pass and nothing special happened. But one day, Amelia's neighbor asked her to walk her dog. It was a Golden Retriever named Lucy. She was 12 years and didn't walk very fast. Amelia's parents wouldn't let her get a dog, so she was very happy to be able to spend time with Lucy.

Lucy would get very excited for her walks with Amelia. They would spend time by the river. Lucy would chase sticks. All of a sudden, a Black Labrador wanted to join in on the stick chase. Amelia noticed a boy running after the dog. "Ron! Ron! Wait!"

The two dogs began to play, so the boy introduced himself. His name was Tom. They began to chat, and Amelia told him that Lucy wasn't her dog, that she had a new little brother, that she wasn't sure how to help her classmates be kinder, and that her best friend was very sick. When they said goodbye, she realized that Tom hadn't said much about himself. He promised to meet them by the river tomorrow.

Amelia went back to Lucy and they had a wonderful rest of the afternoon together. Amelia was looking forward to tomorrow.



## WHY DOES A SPIDER HAVE TO EAT A FLY?



The next morning, Amelia's dad told her that they could go visit Hope at the hospital. He let her know that when they got there, Hope might look a bit different than Amelia was expecting. Then they sat down and began to talk about Grandma Maya's death.

He said it had made him very sad and that he didn't feel like he could talk to anyone about it. Amelia told her dad that she thought about her grandma a lot and that it was ok to talk about it. Her dad realized how sad and lonely it must have made Amelia feel.

Just then, Amelia noticed something in the corner. "Dad! Look at the cobweb! Is that spider about to eat the fly!?" She watched the fly buzz as the spider got closer to it.

Before she knew it, the spider ate the fly and enjoyed its delicious meal. Amelia got angry. "It's so cruel! That spider is disgusting."



Her father thought for a moment. "Amelia, if that spider didn't eat the fly, it would have starved to death. That's the cycle of life. A lion has to catch a zebra, a cat has to catch a mouse. Some are born and some die. Death can be a good thing when an old, sick person dies. But it's never a good thing when a child dies. But these things have to happen. We should celebrate when a baby is born, and we should also celebrate when we tell someone goodbye. It's very important to remember all the good times we had with those that aren't here with us anymore.

From birth until death, the cycle of life is natural. Maybe one day people won't have to die in hospitals but will be able to pass away at home surrounded by their loved ones"

Amelia looked at her father. "Dad, do you think Hope will die?"



## HOPE IN THE HOSPITAL

That afternoon, Amelia and her dad went to the hospital. They met Hope's dad and he showed them to her room. It felt odd to see her through a glass window. Hope's head was bandaged, she looked pale, and she was receiving an IV. Amelia needed to sit down. Her dad told her that it was ok if she wanted to leave, but she didn't want to. It was difficult to see Hope like this, but Amelia knew that she needed to be brave and cheer her friend up. She thought for a second and remembered what Hope had told her when they were laying in the grass. HERE AND NOW. Hope was alive, and she and Amelia were together.

She entered the room with a smile. Hope opened her eyes and they started to shine when she saw Amelia. "You look awful," Amelia said affectionately. "Why are you still in the hospital? The hazelnut is out of your brain, so you should get out of your bed." Amelia sat next to Hope and gave her a big hug. Hope was weak, but being with her best friend cheered her up. "You know what, I'm actually really good. I'm just a little tired. I've made friends with some of the other patients and we say silly things about the doctors and nurses. There was a medical student here who fainted while taking someone's blood!" The girls giggled.

Amelia realized that Hope was not as bad as she looked, and that made her very happy. Hope suggested that they order hot chocolate. Amelia wondered where they could find that in a hospital. But 15 minutes later, Hope's dad had brought them 2 hot chocolates with lots of whipped cream. Amelia told Hope all about Tom. Hope smirked.

Amelia had a great afternoon and realized it was important to be in the **HERE AND NOW**.



# Why a spider eats a fly?

Everyday events like birth, illness and death are a part of the fabric of life – even for children. In *Life*, thanks to the story of Amelia and her encounter with those experiences, young readers will learn about the importance of listening to emotions like sadness, anger and happiness. By engaging and awakening their understanding of those feelings, kids will discover how to navigate them in a positive way, which will highlight the joy and beauty that life offers each of us.

\*During this title's development, we realized that expert opinions are not uniform. This work is not a scientific publication, but a book that asks its readers to think critically about the information presented within its pages. The stories and characters are fictional



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7-11  
years  
old

TARGET GROUP



SOCIAL  
EDUCATION



FUN TO  
READ



VOCABULARY



MENTAL HEALTH  
EDUCATION

*\*Why Does a Spider Eat a Fly totally blew me away. The complex topic is handled with age-appropriate sensitivity. It's connection with the birth of a baby, the illness of a friend, the importance of peer relationships, and the cyclical nature of life had me thinking about it long after I'd finished reading it. This is, truly, a very good book.*

*Andrea Slaba, child psychologist*

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