

What Goes Around, Comes Around:

Comprehension Questions for Chapters 9-12

1. In chapter 9, what does Finny think of his decision to run away and how does he feel?

Finny thinks it was a selfish thing to do and he feels guilty. He believes he is a coward for running away.

2. In chapter 9, Finny wonders if Aunt Fraidy ran away from something, which could have contributed to her death. What does he think she ran away from and how does he think it contributed to her death?

Finny wonders if his aunt ran away from her feelings. As a result, he questions whether or not the aneurysm was caused from her keeping emotions bottled up inside. He imagines a balloon inside of her, bursting. He is afraid that if he doesn't confess his sadness to someone else, he might die, too. Of course, this is NOT the cause of Aunt Fraidy's death, but Finny is not yet mature enough to comprehend what actually causes aneurysms. His father tells him all about aneurysms in chapter one, but he is already thinking otherwise in chapter 9.

3. In chapter 9, what is Finny most afraid of?

Finny is most afraid of expressing his emotions to those he loves. Mainly, he is afraid of expressing how sad he feels pertaining to Aunt Fraidy's sudden death.

4. In chapter 9, what "reputation" is Finny trying to protect?

Finny is trying to protect his reputation for always being happy and never feeling sad.

5. In chapter 9, how does Finny feel when he strolls past the family having a picnic lunch?

When Finny strolls past the family having a picnic lunch, it makes him miss his own family, especially his dog Frances the Foodle, a toy fox terrier mixed with a poodle.

6. In chapter 10, who does Finny think Marlin Finklewitz is/could become?

Finny believes Marlin Finklewitz is his friend, someone who he could eventually confide in. He believes that once he confesses his sadness to Marlin Finklewitz, he will never feel sad ever again and he can return home safely to his family and friends where they will never know he was sad in the first place. It is a way for him to protect his reputation as the "always happy 11-year-old."

7. In chapter 10, how does Marlin Finklewitz befriend Finny?

Marlin Finklewitz discovers that Finny is alone and appears depressed. He starts off by saying, "You look like someone who could use a friend." Because Finny is feeling bad about his decision to run away, he perks up when Finklewitz offers to be his friend. Finklewitz makes Finny feel better about himself and his family's financial situation (Finny says his parents were stressed about paying for Aunt Fraidy's memorial service).

Finklewitz, who wants an advertising manager, offers to pay Finny 30 percent of all fish roe profits, hinting that the money could help pay for Aunt Fraidy's memorial service, which is appealing to Finny. None of this is true, however, Finny is at such a low point in his life that he is willing to listen to Finklewitz whose charming personality lifts him up and out of his deep depression, even if only temporary.

8. In chapter 10, what secret is Finny keeping?

Finny is keeping the secret of vulnerability.

9. In chapter 10, what is Marlin Finklewitz' ultimate plan?

Finklewitz wants an advertising manager. He hopes that if he and Finny become business partners, they can sell the sturgeon to each one of over one hundred different caviar distributors throughout the country. Finklewitz does not plan to pay Finny any money, however Finny's own naivety causes him to believe otherwise.

10. In chapter 11, where do Finny's friends find him?

Finny's friends find him at a shave ice shop on First Street in downtown Lahaina.

11. In chapter 11, describe Marlin Finklewitz.

Finklewitz is a shyster, a conman, and overall, a shady person. He is good at selling himself to others and convincing them to believe whatever he says regardless of whether it is true or not. He has a bubbly personality and smiles often while talking. He has dark hair, tan skin, and wears a black belt, bootcut acid wash jeans, and a white Alfie Torrance collared shirt.

12. In chapter 11, who is "the woman?"

The woman is a random tourist inside the shave ice shop who overhears a conversation about Marlin Finklewitz. She interrupts the conversation to say that her son was the same age as Finny when he was befriended by Finklewitz. Her son was tricked into believing that the two could become business partners and he could earn 30 percent of all fish roe profits.

13. In chapter 11, how is Frankie so easily able to recognize Marlin Finklewitz?

Frankie used to be a criminal himself. He and his best pal Fawny were formerly known as the "Black Rock Bandits." In his own words, Frankie says, "It takes one to know one," meaning it takes a criminal to recognize a criminal.

14. In chapter 12, what does Finny learn about grief, loss, and expressing his emotions?

Finny learns that sadness is a part of life and no one feels happy ALL the time. He also learns that sadness comes in waves and that Aunt Fraidy would want him to move on and experience joy in life, just like Frankie says his dog Ol' Flyer would want for him.

15. In chapter 12, what is "the gift?" (hint: there are two gifts)

The gift is both a) the mother-of-pearl necklace that Fritz Pickin makes for Finny using Aunt Fraidy's mother-of-pearl spoon and b) vulnerability, or Finny's ability to express his true feelings, recognizing that it is actually a sign of strength, NOT weakness like he previously thought.