

The Trolls

Recommended for Grades 3-6

Book Summary: The Trolls

When their parents leave for Paris for a week, Melissa, Amanda and Pee Wee are left with their mysterious Aunt Sally. She tells them unusual stories about their family that the children question are really true. Tying all the stories together is a story about trolls that the girls beg for their aunt to tell them until she finally reveals the story.

[SPOILERS]

On her final night, Aunt Sally tells the girls a story about leaving her brother Robbie, their father, alone on a beach with trolls. She and her brothers go back a few seconds later to get him, but find him disappeared and it isn't until two hours later that a search party finds Robbie in the woods. The girls had expected the story to be scary and are disappointed when it isn't, but they notice their father acts strangely around Aunt Sally when she leaves. This leads them to wondering whether the trolls are real.

Author Biography: Polly Horvath

Polly Horvath was born January 30, 1957 in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Her mother wrote children's books, which encouraged Polly to begin writing when she was eight. In her last years of high school, she was given her own little room in the library which became her office where she wrote in earnest. In 1989, she published her first book *An Occasional Cow*. She has won a number of honors and awards for her books including a Newbery Honor for *Everything on a Waffle*. Polly is married to Arnie Keller and they have two daughters: Emily and Rebecca. She currently lives in Metchosin, British Columbia with both American and Canadian citizenship.



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Discussion Questions: The Trolls

1. When Pee Wee says he doesn't like beans, Aunt Sally puts them on her own plate and eats them. Amanda and Melissa take advantage of their aunt's kindness and don't eat beans either. Why do you think Aunt Sally let them not eat their vegetables? How did she encourage them to want beans? Has this ever happened to you?
2. Aunt Sally seems to let the children do whatever they want, but still sticks to the schedule their mother gave her. Do you think it's good or bad for the children to have such a permissive baby sitter? Why? Have you ever had a baby sitter that let you do whatever you wanted?
3. Pee Wee seems to be constantly reprimanded by his sisters, but Aunt Sally makes sure to always listen to him. Does Pee Wee give his sisters any reason to dismiss him? How do you think Aunt Sally's attention makes a difference to him? How do you think he got the nickname Pee Wee?
4. According to Great Uncle Louis in Aunt Sally's story, people began bringing things to the trolls because their minds were corrupted from a lack of greens. Why would Great Uncle Louis claim this? Is there any truth to it?
5. Aunt Sally tells a story about Uncle John who put off practicing the b-flat melodic minor until he stopped practicing his scales altogether and had his finger bitten by a clam. Later, he got over his fear and began practicing again. What was the lesson of Aunt Sally's story? Have you ever become afraid of a chore that you put off like Uncle John did? What happened?
6. Fat Little Mean Girl uses toys and candy to buy the attention of her classmates and to alienate poor Lyla. Edward, John and Sally buy "kindness" powder which they sprinkle on Mean Girl's food and make her get sick and eventually move to a new school. Is there another way they could've helped Lyla? Was overfeeding Mean Girl an unkind thing to do? What would you do to save a friend from a bully?
7. Aunt Sally finally tells Amanda and Melissa the story of tricking her brother Robbie and how he was taken away by trolls, but not everyone believed trolls had taken him. What do you think happened to Robbie when he disappeared from the beach? What do you think the trolls took from Sally and her family?
8. The children notice that their father (Aunt Sally's brother Robbie) never seems to look directly at Aunt Sally and he throws out the picture she made of their family. Why do you think he acts like this?
9. After Aunt Sally leaves, the children question which of the stories she told them were real. Which stories do you think were real? Why?



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