



Matylda, Bright & Tender

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Discussion Questions

1. Guy and Sussy make up an origin story for Matylda in which she's a great warrior lizard. Can you think of your own origin story for Matylda?
2. Have you ever learned anything about the world or about yourself from a pet or an animal? What did you learn?
3. Why is it so easy for Sussy to listen to that voice inside her telling her to steal presents from the pet store for Matylda?
4. In addition to her stealing and feelings of sadness, what behaviors or changes in personality did you notice in Sussy after Guy died? In what ways did the accident affect her family?
5. Do you think Matylda really is communicating with Sussy?
6. Did this book make you feel at all differently about your loved ones and how you treat them?
7. Why did Sussy wear the same clothes that she was wearing on the day of the accident for so long?
8. Do you think having Matylda made it harder or easier for Sussy to face a world without her best friend?
9. Even when they can't relate to what she's going through, the people around Sussy are kind and understanding: her parents, Mrs. Hose, Wayne Hoffman, and Mike from Total Pets. Did any of them surprise you?
10. When Sussy thinks, "I was always gonna be on Witchett somehow, was always gonna hear that crash—loud or quiet I'd hear it. I was supposed to hear it; it was part of me," what does she realize about that day and her future (page 195)?
11. Do you think it's right that Sussy isn't punished for stealing from the pet store? What is the difference between regular bad behavior and bad behavior after a tragedy? Should they be treated differently? Why or why not?
12. What does Matylda's tail mean to Sussy? What does it mean to you?

