



Spinky Sulks

By William Steig

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According to Spinky, his family doesn't love or understand him and nothing he can say or do will cure his blinding case of the sulks.

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Spinky Sulks By William Steig Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

What happens when you feel angry and hurt by your family's stinging words that you tear right out the front door? In many classic children's stories, the protagonist just keeps on running--setting off on a thrilling, dangerous adventure that turns out to be a cautionary tale about the risks of the great big world and a reinforcement that the only safe place to be is back home with family.

In William Steig's terrific *Spinky Sulks*, the young fireplug-shaped, spiky-haired hero does not run away and learn his lesson. Instead, he hits the grass outside his home and collapses into the world's longest, most impermeable funk. Completely mute and physically unresponsive--his arm hangs "like a noodle" when his mother reaches for it--Spinky practically turns into an inanimate object. As the days go by, his older siblings "kept finding him in weird places" where they'd "try to pry a word out of him, or they'd just pass him by." In time, Spinky becomes so adept at his catatonia as to be able to completely ignore a parade marching by in the street.

Spinky Sulks is a highly resonant, realistic picture of childhood feelings. And yes, Spinky does come inside and talk to everyone in the end--in his own time and in his own way, because he's ready. --Jean Lenihan

From Publishers Weekly

Spinky joins a distinguished list of Steig heroes: plucky Pearl, stalwart Abel, brave Irene, playful Solomon. But Spinky doesn't behave very heroically; in fact, he's a colossal brat. He's sullen and unforgiving, testing the patience of his very loving family at every turn. Storming out of his house, feeling angry and unappreciated, Spinky heads into the yard for a good sulk, and nothing can entice him out of itnot apologies from brother Hitch (with his "slimy voice"), daisies from sister Willamina, visits from buddies Smudge and Iggie, a box of candy, a delicious tray of lunch, a circus parade, a prancing clown bearing ice cream. Finally, Spinky figures out how to stop sulking in a way that allows him to save face. "After that, Spinky's family was much more careful about his feelings. Too bad they couldn't keep it up forever." Spinky is a strongly drawn character, endearing despite his obstinacy. And the message of the book will be clear to young readers, as capsulized by Spinky's father: "Even though Spinky was wrong to sulk like a baby, every one still loved him anyway." It's a story with terrific child appeal, and Steig's characteristic dry humor makes it a pleasure for adults as well. Michael di Capua Books. Ages 3-up.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 1-3 Spinky comes stomping out of the house in a major-league huff, mad at his family, mad at the whole human race. As he sulks about the yard, his sister and his brother come out to apologize repeatedly, his mother and father make nice, his friends try to lighten him upall to no avail. A circus parade goes by, but so what? His father hires a clown to coax him out of his scowl, but that doesn't work either. By this time, days have passed, and at last Spinky's mood passes too; now he's faced with the problem of rejoining his family in a way that saves his self-respect. He secretly concocts a huge feast for them, dresses as a clown, and everyone laughs for a long time, crisis over. That a child would sulk is certainly a real issue, but children aren't likely to gain much perspective on their own snits from the *reductio ad absurdum* because everyone in Spinky's world behaves so unrealistically, and the ending is just not feasible. Steig never talks down to his readers, but he generally delivers his point more imaginatively and less facilely. John Peters, New York Public Library

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

John Solorio:

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