

Name: _____

Nothing to Fear

By Kelly Hashway

"What are you afraid of?" Mr. Miller asked the class.

Clayton tried not to laugh. Fear was for babies, not a tough kid like him.

"Snakes," Rebecca said.

"Spiders," Michelle added.

"Okay," Mr. Miller said, "but I was actually talking about bigger things."

"Like sharks?" Joe asked. "They're really scary with their razor sharp teeth and—"

Mr. Miller held up his hand. "I'm talking about the things that scare you in life. Things like failing math or not making the basketball team."

Hands flew up all around Clayton. His classmates named everything from not being popular to losing a loved one. Clayton was barely listening. He didn't want to because every fear his classmates mentioned was something he worried about, too. He'd always thought he was fearless, but here he was afraid of every single thing mentioned in class.

"What about you, Clayton?" Mr. Miller asked.

Clayton crossed his arms and looked out the window. "I'm not afraid of anything."

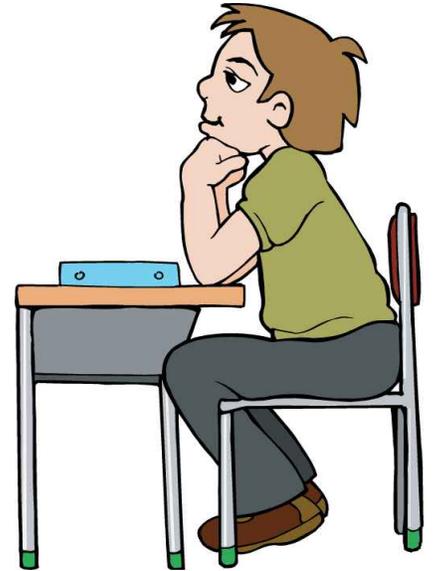
"Nothing?" Mr. Miller asked.

"You have to be afraid of something," Joe said.

"What about the science test we have coming up?"

Clayton had been studying every night, and he still had trouble remembering everything.

"Nope."



"Isn't your grandfather in the hospital?" Rebecca asked. "You must be worried about him."

Grandpa Mike had to have open heart surgery. The doctors said he'd fully recover, but Clayton couldn't stop thinking about how much older Grandpa Mike had looked in the hospital. "He'll be fine."

"You know," Mr. Miller said, "there's another fear that many people have." He sat down on the edge of the desk and stared at Clayton. "Some people are afraid of fear. They're afraid to admit when something scares them because being afraid makes that thing seem so much more real."

Clayton looked at Mr. Miller. "Are you like that?"

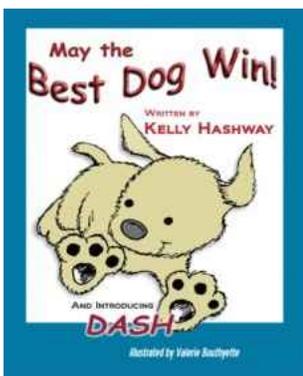
"I was." Mr. Miller walked over to Clayton's desk. "But then I learned that facing my fears allowed me to do something about them. I could take control, even if only in a small way." He leaned down and looked Clayton in the eyes. "When my grandfather was in the hospital, I visited him every day and read the newspaper to him just because it made him smile. His smile made me feel better, less afraid."

Grandpa Mike liked to read the newspaper, too. "I should do that for my grandpa," Clayton said.

"Facing your fear is much braver than pretending you aren't afraid," Mr. Miller said.

Clayton nodded, determined to face his fears.

About the Author



Kelly Hashway's picture book, *May the Best Dog Win*, is now available!

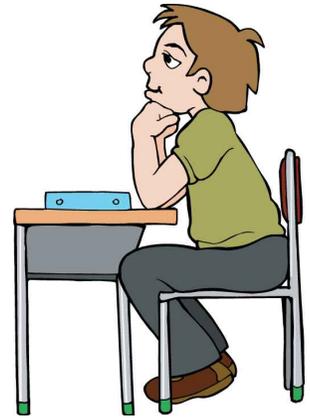
Dash has the perfect life until the Super Sweeper 5000 shows up. Sweeper runs all over the house sucking up the leftover food scraps, and he even gets his own room! But Dash won't give up his place as the favorite dog without a fight.

Hashway, Kelly. *May the Best Dog Win*. ISBN: 9780984589081

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1. In the beginning of the story, Clayton...
- a. proves that he's not afraid of anything.
 - b. talks about many things he's afraid of.
 - c. pretends that he's not afraid of anything.
 - d. writes a list of his many fears.

2. When Mr. Miller's grandfather was in the hospital, what did he do every day?

3. According to Mr. Miller, if you face your fears...

- a. you become more afraid.
- b. you have more control over them.
- c. people will think you are weak.
- d. you forget all about them.

4. When Mr. Miller first asked the class what they were afraid of, what type of answers did they give?

- a. people they feared
- b. places that scared them
- c. books and movies with scary plots
- d. animals they feared

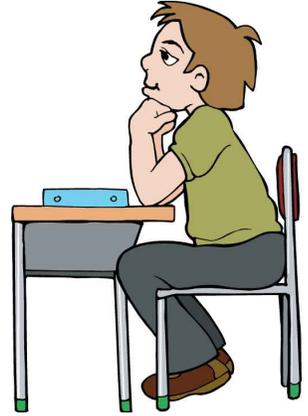
5. Why was Clayton's grandfather in the hospital?

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Match each vocabulary word on the left with the definition on the right.



- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| 1. _____ babies | a. not afraid of anything |
| 2. _____ razor | b. imagining |
| 3. _____ popular | c. infants |
| 4. _____ hospital | d. mother or father's father |
| 5. _____ pretending | e. person or thing that is liked by many people |
| 6. _____ grandfather | f. place where medical treatment is given |
| 7. _____ mentioned | g. sharp metal blade |
| 8. _____ fearless | h. said or referred to something |

❖ **Now try this:** Write a sentence using each of the vocabulary words above.

ANSWER KEY

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- In the beginning of the story, Clayton... **c**
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 - pretends that he's not afraid of anything.**
 - writes a list of his many fears.

- When Mr. Miller's grandfather was in the hospital, what did he do every day?
He read the newspaper to him.

- According to Mr. Miller, if you face your fears... **b**
 - you become more afraid.
 - you have more control over them.**
 - people will think you are weak.
 - you forget all about them.

- When Mr. Miller first asked the class what they were afraid of, what type of answers did they give? **d**
 - people they feared
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