

THE mess

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The stars in the night sky shone brightly down on the town as a four people strolled merrily across the street. Two of the people were adults, obviously parents, and two of them were young girls, around eight years old. The girl with longer hair and darker eyes looked like the parents but the other girl, with pale, light brown eyes and hair that barely brushed her shoulders, didn't look like the parents at all. The girl with the longer hair was the daughter of the adults and the other girl was her friend. The friend's name was Emily, and the family had taken her out for dinner. The daughter's name was Jennifer, and her mother's name was Grace. The father's name was Jeff. They walked past buildings, shops, and stands, chatting to each other, until they came to a large shop with "Yo-yo Sushi" in flashing letters on the top of the building. A happy buzz of people talking came from inside the shop.

"Here we are," said Grace, opening the door. A bell tinkled. She motioned the talking children to come inside. Jeff stepped inside the shop, too. A strong smell of sushi was wafting through the air. Customers clinked their glasses with each other, and cooks quickly made sushi in a kitchen. Emily and Jennifer sniffed the air. It smelled delicious, so delicious that she could almost taste the food. Emily's mouth began to water.

A waitress looked up and smiled. "Hello," she greeted them briskly. "How many people?" Jeff held up four fingers. "Right," nodded the waitress. "Follow me." She led them through the shop until she came to a table with four chairs. "Please sit," she said, pointing at the chairs. Emily and Jennifer sat down together, holding their stuffed pandas to their chests.

"I'm hungry," Jennifer said to Emily, a string of drool dangling from the corner of her mouth. Emily made a face, and they laughed.

"What do you want to drink?" asked the waitress, taking out a pen and a clipboard. "We have green tea, water—"

"Water," interrupted Emily and Jennifer.

Grace was very strict about being polite. She didn't like interruptions and it made her embarrassed when her daughter or anyone else she was looking after interrupted. Her face turned red and she shot Emily and Jennifer a warning look before saying, "Yes, I'll have water too, and so will Jeff."

"Right-o," grinned the waitress. She left.

Jennifer took her chopsticks and pointed it threateningly at Emily, pretending it was a sword. She slashed it around in front of Emily's face. Emily took one of her chopsticks and waved it around, jabbing Jennifer on the chest. Jennifer stabbed her chopstick at Emily's arm and giggled. Grace frowned. "Girls!" she said, stopped the battle between Emily and Jennifer. "No funny business. That's twice." Jennifer smiled at Emily.

"Sure," they promised.

The waitress came back with a glass of water and asked, "Are you done choosing your food yet?"

"Yes," said Emily. "I want sushi, that one with the crab meat and avocado in it." She smacked her lips.

Jennifer and her parents ordered their food and the waitress went away. "I love sushi," said Emily dreamily. "It's really yummy."

After a while, the waitress came back and gave them their food. Emily picked up the sushi with her hands and gobbled it up. The rice on the sushi was sticky. It stuck to her fingers. Jennifer said she needed to go to the bathroom, and Emily followed to wash her hands.

Jennifer finished going to the bathroom and let Emily in. They put a big glob of soap on each of their hands rubbed their hands together. Just as Emily was about to wash her hands, she noticed a smudge on the mirror. She wiped away the smudge with her hands. The soap made a handprint on the mirror. Jennifer saw a fly on the mirror and banged her palm on the glass, trying to get it.

It flew to another part of the mirror and Jennifer tried to hit it again. Emily helped her. They slapped their soapy hands onto the mirror. In the end, the fly buzzed away. Emily almost screamed when she saw the mirror. Every single inch of the mirror was covered in handprints. “We have to get it off!” she cried.

She grabbed a paper towel and rubbed it on the mirror. It only made it worse. Now the mirror was completely covered in a soapy blur of handprints. “Let’s run,” said Jennifer, and they dashed out of the bathroom.

They had forgotten to wash the soap off their hands. Grace took them back to the bathroom and saw the mess. She turned around and glared at the terrified girls. “Explain!” she roared.

They told her the whole story—about the smudge, the fly, the handprints, everything. Grace frowned at them. “Well,” she said. “Clean it up.” Emily and Jennifer scrubbed and scrubbed at the mirror until all the handprints were gone. “We’re really sorry,” apologized Emily. “We didn’t mean—”

“It’s okay,” said Grace. “Don’t do it again. That was quite a mess you made!”

“Sorry,” said Jennifer.

“Boy, was it a mess!” laughed Emily.

They went back to their table, finished their dinners and went home.