

Carly and the Candy Shoppe

by RV Staff Writer J.C.

“Bye, Mom; bye, Dad; don’t worry. We’ll take care of everything!” Carly waved from the front door of the shop as her parents drove off. They were headed for a well-deserved vacation from their candy store, and Carly had promised them she’d be able to run it by herself.

Her parents didn’t quite agree, however, so they compromised by having Carly’s Aunt Maggie come over and help. Aunt Maggie didn’t have any experience running a store, but Carly did, and at least her aunt would be good company. Her parents graciously called her aunt “eccentric” or “uniquely creative,” but it didn’t matter; Carly always had fun when her aunt was around.

Maggie blew into the store like a swirling whirlwind. She looked as if she’d been stitched together by a child; she was a dazzling display of patchwork patterns and colors.

“All right, Carly my love, let’s get this party started,” she smiled at her niece. “What do we do first?”

Carly put on her pink shop apron and removed a white one from a hook, handing it to her aunt.

“Please put this on. The main job is to serve customers, but we also make some of the candy ourselves. Dad and Mom did most of the work already, but we have to finish up a few things. I’ll show you.”

Carly took her aunt behind the counter and over to where the family made some of their own candy, such as fresh fudge, cotton candy, and ice cream. They had lots of delicious flavors to choose from. Aunt Maggie looked them over and nibbled a bite of the chocolate mint-flavored fudge.

“Hmm,” she said.

“What?” asked Carly. “It’s delicious, right?” Carly knew the fudge was perfect.

“It’s good, but ... unoriginal,” replied her aunt. “We can do better.”

Before Carly could question what Maggie meant, the woman had gone to investigate the kitchen in the back. Carly heard her rustling around, opening drawers and the refrigerator.

“Bingo!” called Aunt Maggie, coming back to Carly with her hands full of items. She spread them on the work surface with a flourish.

“We need to add some of these to jazz up that basic fudge taste.”

“Brussels sprouts?” Carly gave her aunt a quizzical look. She couldn’t be serious!

But she was. The woman's hands were busy chopping and then adding small pieces of the green vegetable into the vanilla fudge batter. Carly's eyes grew wide as she watched her aunt mix it together.

"And some Flaming Hot Chili Sauce," suggested Maggie, picking up the red bottle.

"Aunt Maggie, I really don't think that's a good idea," said Carly.

"No, you're quite right," agreed Maggie. "That's definitely an ice cream flavor. The cold will perfectly balance out the spicy sauce!"

Carly shook her head in dismay. She couldn't imagine what her parents were going to think upon their return. Her aunt whistled a happy tune as she continued to concoct strange candy combinations: lemonade with pickle juice, barbeque-flavored candy floss, and lima bean ice cream.

Carly looked up as the bell over the front door jangled, announcing some customers. Three boys came in and approached the counter.

"I'll have a strawberry ice cream cone, please," said the first boy.

"Oh, how dull," laughed Maggie. "I must insist you try something new, something innovative! Try this!"

She offered the first boy a piece of the Brussels sprout fudge she had made. She gave the second boy a sugar spun cloud of the barbeque-flavored candy floss. The third boy received a scoop of hot sauce ice cream.

"It's on the house! Enjoy!" Maggie waved them off, her many bracelets clattering loudly.

Baffled, but too polite to argue, the boys left the store.

"There go our customers. They will tell everyone how weird our candy is, and nobody will want to shop here!" Carly mumbled to herself. She didn't know what to do. Her parents were going to be mad!

The store was quiet except for the soft sound of Maggie writing the new specials on the chalk board sign. Carly sat up on a stool behind the counter, propping her chin up in her hand, although waiting for what, she didn't know. Her parents to come back? They would probably ground her for two weeks for letting her aunt mess around with the classic candy recipes.

The sound of the bell roused her from her thoughts. The trio of boys were back, but this time there was a crowd of kids swarming the store with them. A line was forming out the door! The silence was replaced with excited chatter. The kids were laughing, pointing at the new candy flavors, and pulling handful of coins from their pockets.

"I'll have a pickle juice lemonade, please!"

“Can I have a lima bean ice cream?”

“Give me two pieces of Brussels spouts fudge, please!”

“I want to try the hot sauce ice cream!”

Carly and her aunt worked fast to serve all the customers, and more lined up at the door every minute. Carly had never seen the shop so busy! It seemed the customers could not get enough of Maggie’s crazy candy concoctions.

When they finally sent the last customer out the door and turned on the “Closed” sign that flashed in the window, they were exhausted.

“That might have been the craziest day, ever.” Carly smiled. “Aunt Maggie, you’re a genius.”

“I know,” grinned her aunt.

Questions

1. How would you describe Aunt Maggie? Use quotations from the text to support your description.

2. What does *eccentric* mean here: "Her parents graciously called her aunt 'eccentric' or 'uniquely creative'"?

3. How does Carly feel when her aunt changes the candy?

4. Would you try any of Aunt Maggie's new recipes? Why or why not?

Vocabulary List

Each of the vocabulary words below are used in the reading passage. As you read the passage, pay attention to context clues that suggest the word's meaning.

1. concoctions
2. compromised
3. eccentric
4. investigate
5. quizzical
6. dismay
7. exhausted

Context Clues

Using context clues from the sentences in the passage, underline the correct meaning of the word in boldface.

1) "It seemed the customers could not get enough of Maggie's crazy candy **concoctions**."

a. combinations b. bargains c. collections d. value packs

2) "Her parents didn't quite agree, however, so they **compromised** by having Carly's Aunt Maggie come over and help."

a. decided b. agreed c. fought d. took turns

3) "Her parents graciously called her aunt "**eccentric**" or "uniquely creative..."

a. boring b. loveable c. kind d. unusual

4) "Before Carly could question what Maggie meant, the woman had gone to **investigate** the kitchen in the back."

a. cook b. decorate c. explore d. rearrange

5) "Brussels sprouts?" Carly gave her aunt a **quizzical** look."

a. silly b. confused c. worried d. scared

6) "Carly shook her head in **dismay**."

a. happiness b. concern c. disgust d. despair

7) “When they finally sent the last customer out the door and turned on the “Closed” sign that flashed in the window, they were **exhausted**.”

a. lonely b. tired c. closed d. empty