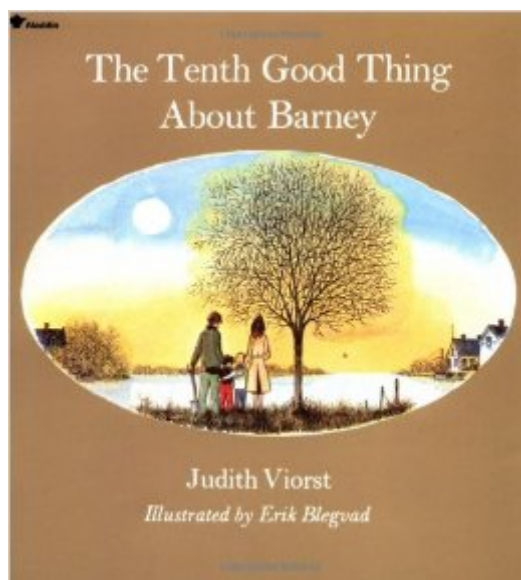


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# The Tenth Good Thing About Barney



## Synopsis

My cat Barney died this Friday. I was very sad. My mother said we could have a funeral for him, and I should think of ten good things about Barney so I could tell them... But the small boy who loved Barney can only think of nine. Later, while talking with his father, he discovers the tenth -- and begins to understand.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 490L (What's this?)

Paperback: 32 pages

Publisher: Atheneum Books for Young Readers; 1 edition (September 30, 1987)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0689712030

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Product Dimensions: 6.2 x 0.2 x 7 inches

Shipping Weight: 0.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (104 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #15,125 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #34 in [Books > Children's Books >](#)

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Age Range: 6 - 9 years

Grade Level: 4 - 6

## Customer Reviews

The little boy who is the narrator of this book has just had his pet cat Barney die. He can only think of nine good things about Barney, until the day after the funeral, when he spends the day in the garden with his father. The plot is extremely simple and spare, but the book depicts grief very well, and so we understand just how broken-hearted the little boy is, and how much he loved his cat. *The Tenth Good Thing About Barney* is an excellent springboard for families of every religious persuasion (including agnostics and atheists) to discuss what they feel happens after we die. The book helps children put into words many questions that they might be too young to articulate, and helps parents answer them for him as best you can. The writing is excellent, and perfectly captures the voice of a young boy, and the illustrations are elegant. It's a classic book, and belongs in every library.

Judith Viorst has written a lovely and touching look at death from the perspective of a child. Though dealing with the death of a pet, it helps children deal with the reality of any death. I can't read it out loud without crying myself; but then, children need to know we feel sad sometimes, too, and it's okay. This book does not have religious overtones, so it can be used by families with all different sets of beliefs. It addresses the feelings children have when faced by loss, and how we all deal with those feelings, learn from them, and grow.

When our third child died, my husband and I looked for books to help us talk with our older children, then 5 and 4, about death, and this book was recommended to us. It's a really nice book if a pet has died, but since the tenth good thing is that as Barney rots he helps the flowers grow, it's not the best for dealing with the death of a person--the thought of a loved one rotting can be really disturbing for a child.

As a veterinary technician who regularly assisted in euthanasia procedures, I kept kept copies of this book on hand to distribute to families with children. Years later I'm working as a teacher and still love it. In contrast to other reviewer comments that the book is morbid, I find the underlying message hopeful - that our bodies are part of a natural cycle and that death gives rise to new life. The language is simple, elegant and understandable even for young children. If you have family pets and have not yet experienced a loss, buy this book ahead of time. You'll appreciate having it on that day when inevitable death comes calling.

This book is absolutely, without a doubt, a great book for younger children to cope with the loss of a pet. This book, however, would not be appropriate for the loss of a human life. The author lets the reader know that it is OK to feel sad, to not want to watch TV, or to eat or to go outside and play. But most important of all, that it is OK to cry and feel sad. The mother and father hold a backyard funeral for Barney, the beloved deceased cat, and the little boy comes up with nine good things to say about Barney. Afterwards, when they plant flowers, he can come up with the tenth good thing about Barney. Older children will find this too "babyish", I believe, but this book was perfect for my younger children when our beloved dog, Snowball died. Our vet gave us this book, along with the Rainbow Bridge poem. It was very comforting. The book conveys that we have to honor the grieving and the questions of children as they mourn their beloved pet, whether it is a fish, a dog, a cow, a horse, or whatever pet is important to them. The value of a

Ã Â¿Ã ceremonyÃ Â¿Ã is just as important for closure.I highly recommend this tender book.

The Tenth Good thing about Barney was such a wonderful book, when I was Little. I used to have the tape of it. Barney was a cat and he died last friday. Mother consoled the small boy who loved Barney, by encouraging him to think of ten good things about him. But the boy that loved Barney could only think of nine. So after the funeral, he thought of the tenth good thing, which was that Barney was helping to grow a flower. Mom bought me a copy of this book after my pet fish Frank died. And then we later bought an identical copy after my cousin's pet dog Cindy died. I hope they continue to make it.

I love Juith Viorst's funny books, about the frustrations of being a kid. But I treasure this one, about death.A beloved cat dies, and it's sad. The viewpoint character is a little kid, and it is tough for the kid to understand how to handle grief (I am honestly not sure about the gender of the child, nor does it matter). Mom suggests that the kid make a list of all the things that made Barney the cat special. Both parents are clear that it's ok to be sad, that the loss is real and that they are grieving, too.The kid and a friend bandy around ideas about what happens when a cat dies, and Dad rejects the idea that anyone knows what happens to the soul, but we do know what happens to the body.A lot of reviews I've seen are very negative about the "areligious" aspect of talking about decomposition, and not Heaven, but I think it is a comfort, at least it was for the very tangible minds of my young children.We don't know what happens to the soul, if any, after death, but we are pretty clear on what happens to bodies. This is a book about the acceptability of grief, and the consolation of good coming from hard things.

I purchased this book last week when I found out that our dog of 14 years was to ill to save and would need to be put to sleep. Not only was I dealing with the loss of a beloved pet, but how to discuss this with my 7 year old son who had never experienced any sort of loss. We sat and read this book before we discussed what was about to occur and I truly believe that it helped him cope with the heartache. We began thinking of 10 good things about Molly. I would recommend this book to anyone who is the parent of an animal lover!

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