



# The Prolonging Frustration And Fear in Jennette McCurdy's *I'm Glad My Mom Died*

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## Abstract

This article examines how the memoir *I'm Glad My Mom Died* by Jennette McCurdy portrays the characteristics of frustration and fear in the main character of this memoir. The study aims to understanding the concept of frustration and fear that have the mostly negative impact to the everyday life. The researchers use qualitative approach, focusing on the context and some subjective interpretations in detail. The analysis uncovers that Jennette, as the main character of this memoir felt the frustration and fear in her everyday life. The conclusion states that fear and frustration may come to someone that is being expected to do more perfect deeds in general.

**Keywords:** Fear, Frustration, *I'm Glad My Mom Died*, Jennette McCurdy

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## INTRODUCTION

Emotion is a reaction that is known to be very complex and requires a lot of understanding in interpreting it. Emotions are also known as something that can have multiple meanings; either negative or positive (Rosch, 2002; Saputro, et al., 2024). In a negative situation that a person feels, the form of response that will be shown is stress, and becomes fear of facing the situation. Then the most fatal, a person will experience prolonged frustration due to the accumulation of fear and stress that is feels, almost every day. Fear is usually associated with despair and one's inability to deal with the negative emotions that often caused from the inability to regulate negative emotions. Numerous studies have explored the relationship between stress that caused fear and frustration that said often the things that produce negative emotions, often stem from the accumulation of unmanageable stress (Pasopati, et al., 2024; Saputro, et al., 2024).

People who are prone to stress attacks are likely to experience them. In the practice of behavioral medicine or health psychology, numerous people acquire stress-related ailments without realizing it is due to their emotional condition. To adequately understand what happens to the body when stressed, it is important to understand the conditions that indicate the physiology of stress and relaxation. Often, the body, which strives to achieve perfect internal balance at all times, exhibits physical signs and symptoms of disorders caused by stress. This can worsen the condition of the body and mental state if stress is not properly managed (Rosch, 2002; Sarmi, et al., 2023).

The fear and frustration brought on by stress always come with the high level of pressure one feels. This is because the trigger of negative emotions in humans always begins with the pressure they feel. In certain situations, this can directly lead to prolonged fear as the negative pressure that caused the stress continues to build up. This, in turn, can lead to frustration because, fear has no limits and the pain of this fear makes someone experience a high level of frustration (Wang & Wei, 2020; Saputro, et al., 2024). A poor mental condition can affect every activity that a person undertakes. A mismanagement of stress can lead to emotional instability that can lead to other negative emotions such as frustration and great fear.

In this study, the researchers choose the memoir entitled *I'm Glad My Mom Died* by Jennette McCurdy, which was released in August 9, 2022. In this book, the main character, Jennette, experiences severe emotional instability in her life due to her mental problems. For example, when Jennette suddenly experiences anxiety during an audition, she is afraid that she will perform badly and disappoint her mother who has high hopes for her (McCurdy, 2022). She always went through the ritual of self-soothing, and it was never enough. The perfection she wanted to achieve made her fearful of failure itself. The researchers choose this memoir to analyze through the mental condition suffered by the main character in the novel. In this study, the researchers discuss fear and frustration from a psychological point of view. The researchers focus on Jennette's mental state which is getting worse and worse without her realizing that it is caused by many possibilities (McCurdy, 2022).

As someone who lives with the pressure of being perfect because of her profession, Jennette often experiences mental collapse caused by stress in the form of frustration and fear. So, what are the forms of frustration and fear experienced by Jennette? This study shows the form of mental instability that Jennette had during her life, and how much pressure was put on her. This research highlights the intense frustration and fear experienced by Jennette (McCurdy, 2022). The researchers also anticipate some possible causes of frustration and fear occurring on other psychological fronts such as depression and anxiety that may cause frustration and fear.

## METHOD

This study uses qualitative approach to examine certain concepts and written data address the research question. It explains how the memoir *I'm Glad My Mom Died* relates to the concept of frustration and fear, using literary study perspective. The data for analysis is obtained by closely reading the whole content of memoir and reading the narrative of Jennette, connecting it with the concept of frustration and fear in her life by studying the main character's narrative. It provides quotations from the memoir and the sources that support the analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The focus of the findings and discussion here is to analyze the memoir *I'm Glad My Mom Died* by Jennette McCurdy. The researchers aim to explain the topic consists in the main character, Jennette McCurdy by showing evidence of fear and frustration that happens in Jennette's life and the complexity of the concept of fear and frustration in Jennette's mental state in the following texts below:

### Jennette's Emotional Struggle in *I'm Glad My Mom Died*

Jennette McCurdy's memoir is mainly about the relationship between Jennette and her mother. Jennette is struggling every day to satisfy her mother for being a perfect child actress that her mother wants (McCurdy, 2022). It always makes Jennette always have indecision about herself because the pressure she feels because of her mother. The main idea about Jennette's struggle within her life is the expectation that her mother gives to her. It indeed leads her to feel fear and frustration if she cannot meet the expectation her mother wants (McCurdy, 2022; Syed, 2023). The proof of Jennette's feelings that dominate of fear and frustration is stated in the quotations as follows;

#### Data 1

*I'm sure will get her to wake up is the fact that in the days since mom's been hospitalized, my fear and sadness has morphed. (Prologue, Page 2)*

Since her mother is in hospital, Jennette feels so mixed about her feelings. Jennette feels her bad emotions, especially fear, dominating her. She is worrying about her mother, wanting her to wake up soon so that Jennette could be a little more relieved (McCurdy, 2020). It makes Jennette both faithful and nervous at the same time whenever she visits the hospital. She is so sad and keeps hoping that her mother will wake up. Jennette feels her sadness and her fear growing, when she knows that her mother's condition does not improve.

#### Data 2

*Moreover, if she's really going to die, what am I supposed to do with myself? (Prologue, Page 2)*

Jennette feels so anxious about what she will be if her mother dies because she always thinks that her life is just for her mother. Jennette thinks she would lose her way in life if her mother leaves her. She could not do anything without her mother. Jennette does not even know if she could still be who she is without her mother (McCurdy, 2020). Jennette feels fear and negative thoughts about her life if her mother leaves her. Jennette would constantly question the purpose of her life if her mother is not around. She is never doing anything based on her own self, since all is based on her mother. Jennette's frustration at the prospect of being abandoned by her mother soars and scares her to death.

#### Data 3

*So, without Mom, who am I supposed to be now? (Prologue, Page 2)*

Jennette is anxious about what she will be if her mother dies because she always thinks, without her mother, she will never feel alive again (McCurdy, 2020). Jennette is so scared that her mother would leave her because of her actions. She does not understand herself all this time because her mother is constantly telling her what to do. That is why Jennette never takes a step without her mother by her side. She does not make any decision for herself. Everything is based on what her mother tells her to do (McCurdy, 2020). Jennette seems to have lost her identity without her mother. She does not understand her identity as Jennette when her mother leaves her. She has been strongly dependent on her mother. She follows her mother's wishes, and does everything for her mother.

#### Data 4

*She'll be disappointed. (Chapter 3, Page 14)*

Jennette is scared that she will disappoint her mother because she is not good enough to act. Jennette does not want to disappoint her mother. She is afraid of her mother's disappointment because it would make Jennette feel so guilty. Jennette often feels like if she disappoints her mother, she is not doing anything right at all. Moreover, of the mistakes that makes her mother sad, Jennette often blames herself for not doing the right thing according to her mother's will (McCurdy, 2020). Jennette always wants to make her mother proud of her. Jennette will always blame herself if she makes her mother sad or upset.

#### Data 5

*It's frustrating. It makes me feel like I'm missing something. (Chapter 3, Page 15)*

Jennette is frustrated about the way grown-ups act to her. She feels that no one explains to her how she is doing, and only speaks to her mother. Since Jennette is the one acting, she has the right to know what her shortcomings are and what she needs to do in the future. However, all the adults around her never speak to her (McCurdy, 2020). Jennette is frustrated because of that, she never knows how they view her performance and it scares her. Jennette wants people to tell her about their opinion of her; about whether she belongs in acting or not, but no one ever tells her that.

#### Data 6

*I hate this house. I hate how being inside it makes me feel tense and anxious, and all week long I look forward to my three-hour escape into the land of testimonies and pine-scented tile cleaner. (Chapter 5, Page 22)*

Jennette feels stressed about her house that makes her anxious every time. Jennette never feels comfortable at home and she is always depressed. Things are demanded by her mother and the rest of her family never pays any attention to Jennette at all. Her hatred of the house frustrates her and often makes her want to leave. Hence, she could not even though it suffocates her. She loves her mother too deeply, and she is afraid that her mother would be sad if Jennette leaves the house (McCurdy, 2020).

#### Data 7

*Would she be okay if I wasn't perfect? (Chapter 17, Page 61)*

Jennette feels so mixed as she thinks about voices that speak in her mind. Somehow, her grandpa says that it is okay if Jennette is not perfect like what her mother expects. Jennette's mother always wants Jennette to grow up flawless. Jennette knows that from the beginning her mother never wants Jennette to grow up to be an ordinary child. Jennette has to get into acting and Jennette has to do her best to make her mother proud (McCurdy, 2020). If Jennette's mother knows that Jennette has a disorder where she could hear voices guiding her to do things, Jennette fears that her mother will be disappointed. Jennette is afraid that her mother will not be okay with the fact that Jennette is not perfect.

#### Data 8

*I'm scared our friendship may be over. (Chapter 30, Page 101)*

Jennette's mother tells Jennette not to be friend with Miranda, because Miranda is a girl of her age, and both are into acting. Jennette tries to mask her desire to be friend with Miranda, even though she really wants to get to know Miranda a little more. Jennette is afraid of disappointing her mother if she is stubborn and still wants to be friend with Miranda (McCurdy, 2020). She sometimes feels so frustrated because of her mother's restrictions that do not allow Jennette to be friend with everyone, like Miranda. Jennette feels like she is at an age where she can make decisions about friends, but she does not. Her mother tells Jennette not to have friend with anyone and Jennette complies with that.

#### Data 9

*And I fear that I resent my mother. The person I have lived for. (Chapter 34, Page 113)*

Jennette is afraid that she will resent her mother for forcing Jennette to become famous. Jennette is afraid that she will blame her mother. Her mother is the reason why Jennette is still alive and the reason why Jennette is still doing acting. Jennette will do anything for her mother and she feels the truth of what she is doing for her mother includes acting. Jennette lives for her mother even though her frustration gets a little too much many times (McCurdy, 2020).

#### Data 10

*This complicated feeling crops up when I take a picture with a strangers and I see Mom standing off the side, mirroring the smile she wants me to have (Chapter 34, Page 113)*

Jennette's always driven by her mother and even about a smile. Jennette has to watch her smile so as not to disappoint her mother. Her mother is always there every step of the way when Jennette decides something. Jennette realizes that her mother sometimes makes her feel suffocated. It also makes Jennette almost hate her mother (McCurdy, 2020). Jennette never wants to be in a position where her every action is closely watched by her mother. Jennette feels suffocated and she is uncomfortable with it. Sometimes she feels frustrated at everything her mother does to keep her under surveillance, but Jennette does not have enough courage to hate her mother (McCurdy, 2020). She is afraid not to love her mother just because of her mother's excessive behavior towards her.

### Fear and Frustration as Psychological Impact in People's Emotional State

In the concept of frustration and fear entrenched in complicated emotions, it always begins with a lack of ability to manage negative energy in the form of stress. This becomes the downside of further matters being involved. The worst stress-related problems that may arise in a period of acute stress are the effects it has on the health of the body and the worst is the mental breakdown to a serious level due to not being able to manage stress (Jeronimus & Laceulle, 2017; Rosch, 2002). It is stated when fear is experiencing by people is getting out of control; humans perform a rejection of fear in the form of hope that is adjusted to a sense of inability to do something (Jeronimus & Laceulle, 2017; Sarmi, et al., 2023).

The fear of something when people could change their situation, and feeling that change itself is frightening, leads to frustration as they are unable to accept the pain of loss and the fear of loss, making their minds less rational and

filled with these fears (Meulders, 2020; Saputro, et al., 2024). In some cases, this is referred to as the major effect of emotional instability on the stress reception system experienced by humans. The character of a feeling of frustration can trigger other negative emotions such as depression, which is a prolonged effect of the frustration that is not properly dealt with (Jeronimus & Laceulle, 2017; Sarmi, et al., 2023).

Fear always leads to deep frustration. In such a situation, fear can be produced by a variety of factors, such as the dread of losing a loved one or the fear of failure, which causes the person to remain in a negative emotional state. The fear of losing a loved one, which influences all negative emotions, can lead to everlasting discontent and dissatisfaction. This fear, which is still in the form of hope, is punctuated by real frustration and despair as the result of former conditions (Sarmi, et al., 2023; Zajenkowska, et al., 2019).

If it is about fear of failure, especially from the high expectation given by others, the situation could cause so much frustration. The life labeled by society always takes the form of frustration and fear that occurs in each individual to meet those expectations. This also does not deny that pressure also occurs in the family environment, such as the expectations set by parents (Dzhaneryan & Gvozdeva, 2015; Saputro, et al., 2024).

Frustration stems from an unsolved impediment, such as a psychological disorder, that stops people from accomplishing their goals, passions, or personal desires. In an intricate pattern of dissatisfaction, one will continue to feel dissatisfied and admonished for their incapacity to complete something (Saputro, et al., 2024; Sarmi, et al., 2023). This problem may be considered legitimate, but it might nonetheless have a detrimental consequence. It all relies on how the individual responds to the problem.

All people experience frustration because our needs are not always effectively met in all situations, and dissatisfaction can help people identify these requirements (Jeronimus & Laceulle, 2017; Pasopati, et al., 2024). Though, regarding fears, it resulted in self-blame that usually caused by something that so pressurizes individuals. People that interpreting their fears as threatening, and turn that fears into weapons of self-harm with the effect that frustration cannot be prevented (Meulders, 2020; Pasopati, et al., 2024).

In addition, at the time a person feels something is out of their control, they will feel more fear and frustration surrounding them because they cannot control the situation they cannot handle. This becomes a trigger that makes the individual feel a sense of inadequacy about them and anger that also surrounds their emotions. It is stated that, if a person is in a situation that often pressures her without being able to control it; it will cause endless frustration (Breuer & Elson, 2017; Pasopati, et al., 2024).

The relationship between fear and frustration can be said to be the normal dynamics of a negative emotion that exists within a human being. When a person experiences a fear that is quite difficult to eliminate, they will experience frustration also as a result of the fear that does not find a way out. Then, the effects of both these negative emotions can be characterized by several cases, such as self-harm, low self-confidence, and serious anxiety. Unfortunately, it can lead to serious depression if the individual who is experiencing such a bad emotional situation does not deal with it immediately (Jeronimus & Laceulle, 2017; Meulders, 2020)

### **Fear and Frustration in Jennette's Character**

This section examines how the narration that stated in *I'm Glad My Mom Died* reveals the factor that leads to fear and frustration in Jennette's everyday life. The factor is based on how she feels the struggle of that emotional state like fear and frustration. The aspect is explained further below.

In data 1, the quotation explains that Jennette tries to believe even though fear and sadness surround her all the time. Although she tries to believe in the positive possibilities she creates, Jennette still feels the fear of what would happen to her mother. The fear has no limits and the pain of this fear makes someone experience a high level of frustration (Jeronimus & Laceulle, 2017; Saputro, et al., 2024). The fear that Jennette feels is something that she cannot avoid, because the stress of a situation that frightens her, is a destiny that Jennette herself needs to understand. It states that fear that someone feels is the response for the situation that makes anyone helpless, it makes anyone feel not good enough for resolving the problem being faced and it fuels a fear (Saputro, et al., 2024; Syed, 2023). This makes it clear that Jennette feels fear and frustration towards a situation that she cannot change, making her feel helpless towards solving the problems in the situation.

In data 2, the quotation explains Jennette's fear of losing her mother is unbelievably high. Jennette will lose her own sanity because it is a form of fear rooted in real frustration. The fear of something when people could change their situation, and feeling that change itself is frightening, leads to frustration as they are unable to accept the pain of loss and the fear of loss, making their minds less rational and filled with these fears (Meulders, 2020; Saputro, et al., 2024).

In Jennette's case, she experiences a fear of losing her mother that frustrated her every time she thinks about her mother. Fear and frustration, that make people question their own ability to change a situation, are signs that they feel not good enough to solve a problem that makes them desperate to solve (Gupta, 2023). Jennette shows how her fear and frustration, over the fact that she will lose her mother, makes Jennette someone who often feels that she is not good enough to change her mother's condition. She blames herself because she knows that she could not change anything and it frustrates her even more.

In data 3, the quotation explains Jennette seems to have lost her identity without her mother. She does not understand her identity as Jennette when her mother leaves her. She has been strongly dependent on her mother. She follows her mother's wishes, and does everything for her mother. When people feel the fear and frustration of losing 'something' in their life, it can cause a drastic difference in their outlook on the world. This is due to the feeling of

frustration that makes the person think the worst thing in life. It is when fears become real (Jeronimus & Laceulle, 2017). Jennette feels the fear of losing her mother, and the frustration of her fear being too overwhelming. Jennette thinks a world without her mother around and she is terrified that it would happen. Jennette feels this fear of losing her mother, gnawing at her mind and frustrating her.

In data 4, the quotation explains Jennette always feels very frustrated with herself if she disappoints her mother. That is why she is often afraid that she would make a mistake and end up making her mother unhappy with her. Jennette feels the fear of an expectation that her mother has placed on her for the rest of her life. This causes frustration because an expectation placed by others may shape fear if an individual cannot fulfill that expectation. The frustration is also piled up to individual fear of feeling depressed (Gupta, 2023; Sarmi, et al., 2023).

Jennette feels this clearly, as she is forced to fulfill her mother's wish, becoming afraid of the disappointment her mother would feel towards her. In addition, sometimes it seems to devour her slowly, making Jennette keep thinking that she will disappoint her mother every time she makes a small mistake. The emotions that Jennette feels show a deep frustration because of fear that her feels all the time. It makes her even scared to act since she is afraid that her action will turn into failure and disappointment to her mother.

In data 5, the quotation above explains that Jennette is frustrated about the way grown-ups act to her. She feels that no one explains to her how she is doing, and only speaks to her mother. Since Jennette is the one acting, she has the right to know what her shortcomings are and what she needs to do in the future. However, all the adults around her never speak to her (McCurdy, 2020).

Frustration and fear of people's expectations and opinions of her acting dominate Jennette's feelings about this. The causes of frustration are usually facilitated by a tendency towards an approach when the problem is considered uncontrollable. This usually creates a fear of not achieving something and results in anger and frustration towards the person (Jeronimus & Laceulle, 2017; Saputro, et al., 2024).

Therefore, an expectation that a person places on themselves, and demands something of others, will inevitably lead to a strong pressurized sense of frustration with his or her own expectations of others. Jennette thinks she deserves to hear everything the adults have to say about her, but no one give her a chance to know anything about her acting, instead telling it all to Jennette's mother. This creates negative emotions of fear and frustration in Jennette about what other people think of her.

In data 6, the quotation explains Jennette realizes her frustration about her house, and it never goes away. These feelings are the frustration and hopelessness that Jennette experiences of having to remain in that suffocating house. The atmosphere, she has to experience every day in the house, many times stresses Jennette. The concept of stressful and uncontrollable frustration makes an individual feel discomfort and pain that cause his or her to think about leaving the situation (Zajenkowska, et al., 2019). Jennette feels this in her home, where she is suffocated and unable to breathe because every room pressurizes her into becoming someone she is not. Her mother's presence in the house makes Jennette feel the most nauseating feelings and the fear and frustration lingered in her emotions. Jennette experiences the frustration about her house and it strangles her almost every day.

In data 7, the quotation explains Jennette is afraid that her mother will not be okay with the fact that Jennette is not perfect. Frustration can somehow be caused by dissimilarities between expectations and realities of such people. Frustration is a result of other people's responses to an individual, given by the people around them that stem from expectations and fears of not being what the other person thinks they are (Jeronimus & Laceulle, 2017). Jennette notices her frustration subconsciously because she questions herself whether her mother will be disappointed if Jennette is not as perfect as her mother thinks. In addition, this causes fear, which leads to frustration in Jennette's mind.

In data 8, the quotation shows that Jennette sometimes feels so frustrated because of her mother's restrictions that do not allow Jennette to be friend with everyone, like Miranda. Jennette feels like she is at an age where she can make decisions about friends, but she does not. Her mother tells Jennette not to have friend with anyone and Jennette complies with that. Frustration usually occurs because a person is too weak to what is around him or her. It is usually punctuated by hurt feelings, unhappiness with a situation, and discomfort that one feels quite often (Sarmi, et al., 2023; Wang & Wei, 2020). Jennette felt how frustrated she is because of the fear she feels about the rules her mother makes and that she has to, or is forced, to obey whatever her mother tells her to do. This makes Jennette an introverted person and afraid to make friends because of her mother's restrictions.

In data 9, the quote above shows Jennette is afraid that she will blame her mother, which she will blame the person she lives for. Frustration usually occurs to someone who often cannot accept herself because of the pressure others put on her. This is due to the person's lack of control over the boundaries that others set for her. It causes frustration because she is questioning whether she is at fault (McCurdy, 2022; Zajenkowska, et al., 2019). Jennette's situation is not being able to blame anyone but herself it makes Jennette feel a heightening sense of frustration. It is because her emotions are stuck to fulfill her mother's wishes, and Jennette does not want to blame her mother. She really wants her mother to be happy even though she is not.

In data 10, the quotation explains about Jennette's feelings dominated by the frustration of herself being monitored. Somehow, she is being dominated makes Jennette devalue her own desire because she is not free to do anything. Her habit is forced and it shapes such despair rather than freedom (Bierzynska, et al., 2016; Saputro, et al., 2024). Jennette feels frustrated because her mother is constantly monitoring her with the pressure that Jennette must not make mistakes. This cause Jennette always think twice about her actions, afraid of making a mistake and disappointing her mother.

Frustration felt by an individual due to pressure from others will usually be easily imprinted, and will become a trigger if the person makes a mistake (Meulders, 2020; Saputro, et al., 2024). Moreover, this fear of making mistakes, it makes Jennette suffering from Atelophobia because of the pressure of expectations given by her mother. As an Atelophobia sufferer, it makes Jennette force herself not to make mistakes and be afraid if she makes mistakes.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis in memoir *I'm Glad My Mom Died* by Jennette McCurdy indicates the form of frustration and fear that Jennette's feels when she is struggling for being a perfect actress. The main character, Jennette, is the child actresses that have always having emotional struggling and how frustrated and scared she was in facing it all throughout her life. Her fears about her mother's condition and her complex frustration about her life, combines to create a mess. This causes Jennette's life to always be based on those two negative emotions. Therefore, Jennette choose to faces every event that happens in her life, even though she always surrounded by these fears. Jennette always tries to obey whatever her mother wants.

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