

Molly the Very Best and the Dream Room
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pp. 9–43

Welcome to the Very Best Molly

Molly. That's my name. I live with my mum, dad and little brother Mingus. I've many friends. Lily and Ellen are my two best friends.

Lily is my new friend. She looks like an angel with super white hair. Like if angels can be crazy, I mean, because Lily is. She's good at climbing, playing catch and all that stuff. Her favourite subject is PE.

Ellen is my best friend. We've been in the same class until now. She's good at dancing, probably even better than me. Luckily we still have dance class together.

Dad. Works at a hospital. I've been to work with him a couple of times. It's cool when he wears his white coat. Maybe I'd like to be a doctor too. I might be a vet. Dad often says Mingus is right when we fight. It's annoying, but it's always like that with little kids.

Mum is the best ever when she's not stressed. She says loads of stuff in the mornings but doesn't listen much. The best thing is just to smile.

My mum works in an office. I don't really get what she does, but it's something to do with making sure other people at work are happy too. When she has time off, she paints pictures.

Grandma lives alone. I can't really remember Grandpa. I was very little when he died. When Grandma looks after me, we bake cakes or watch films. Grandma likes romances – she cries. She thinks I can't see, but her eyes are all red.

Mingus is my little brother. He's the world's best brother and also super, super annoying. You don't get much alone time when you have a little brother. He always wants to join in. But when he's being looked after at Gran's, and I haven't seen him for a few days, I always miss him a lot

Clutter and Bricks

“Can you sleep alright now?” Dad strokes Molly’s cheek.

“Yeah,” she replies, pulling the duvet up over her nose.

Dad goes over to Mingus.

Mingus’s eyes are closed.

“I think he’s already asleep,” whispers Dad, winking at Molly.

Mingus starts to laugh.

“I tricked you,” he shouts.

“You did,” says Dad, “but we need quiet now.”

Molly turns towards the wall. It’s warm under the duvet. Almost too warm, but also cosy.

“Molly.”

Molly can hear him just fine, but acts like she can’t.

“Molly,” whispers Mingus again. “I can’t sleep.”

Why does he always talk?

Molly doesn’t answer, but Mingus keeps going.

“Molly, Molly, wake up!”

Dad opens the door.

“I told you two to be quiet.”

“It’s not me,” says Molly, sitting up in bed. “Mingus is the one making a noise.”

“I’d say you’re both pretty good at it,” says Dad, shutting the door.

Mingus gives her a stupid little-brother smile.

It’s so easy being the youngest.

You can make loads of trouble and get away with it.

“When I get my own room,” says Molly, “I won’t have to deal with all your noise.”

She throws a pillow at Mingus, but he manages to duck.

It smells like toast.

It always does on Saturday mornings.

Molly can hear Mum and Dad talking in the kitchen.

“I think I’d like to paint today,” says Mum.

She has some big canvases standing in the living room.

Beside the pictures is a little table with brushes and tubes of paint.

Mum uses loads of different colours.

You can’t tell what the pictures are of.

Mingus thinks they look a mess. But Dad says that’s the way it is with art sometimes.

Molly gets out of bed.

She steps straight onto a lego brick, which jabs into her foot.

It hurts.

The room is an awful shambles. Mingus had Anton round yesterday. They never tidy up after themselves.

Molly hobbles into the kitchen.

“What happened?” asks Mum.

“I stepped on one of Mingus’s stupid bricks,” answers Molly.

“Ouch, that must have really hurt,” says Dad.

“We need to tidy up today,” says Mum. “This place is a tip!”

“Mingus needs to,” replies Molly. “He’s the one making a mess.”

“You were involved yesterday too,” says Dad.

Molly wasn't.

She spent the whole day at her desk, making things out of beads.

“Please can I have my own room soon?” she asks. “You promised I could when I was older.”

“We'll have to see,” says Mum.

“What do we have to see?” asks Molly.

“Stop nagging,” says Dad. “We don't have much space.”

“Why do we live somewhere this tiny anyway?” says Molly. “Silly flat.”

Mingus is playing with a car on the floor.

“I want to share with Molly,” he says.

Annoying little brother.

“What time do you need to be at Lily's?” asks Mum.

“Five,” answers Molly. “Can't I sleep over at hers?”

“You know we're visiting Grandma tomorrow, so you need to sleep here,” says

Mum.

There's a sleepover at Lily's.

All the others are spending the night.

It's only going to be really fun once they're messing around in their sleeping bags.

Zombies and Sleeping Bags

They're laying out sleeping bags and duvets onto mattresses and ground mats.

Molly feels a bit left out, sitting there on the sofa, not wearing pyjamas.

But it doesn't make sense to put pyjamas on when Dad will be coming to pick her up at nine.

Lily picks a film for them to watch.

She usually chooses something creepy.

Molly both likes and doesn't like creepy films.

She can't help watching them, but she hides her face when it gets too dangerous.

This one is about zombies, which eat a whole crowd of people on a train.

Molly has to take a break and go to the toilet.

Lily's bag is on the chest of drawers beside the toilet door.

Molly's been wanting one like that for ages.

Selma, Barbara and Rebecca have it too.

Almost everybody has one.

Molly's mum thinks it's too expensive.

She's sewn one for Molly that's almost identical.

Molly puts Lily's bag over her shoulder and looks at it in the mirror.

It's stripy, and really cute.

She turns to get a better look.

Lily calls to her from the living room: "Come on, Molly, you're missing all the exciting stuff."

Dad sends a text when the film is nearly over.

There are only two people left on the train.

A father and his daughter.

It's okay to miss the ending.

The others are completely engrossed in the film.

Nobody says goodbye properly as she puts on her coat.

Lily waves.

Selma says bye without looking away from the TV, where the zombie is now eating the dad.

"I really want my own room," says Molly, sitting next to her dad in the car.

"You'll have to be a bit patient, sweetheart," he says.

"Everyone else has their own room. I want a room like Lily's with yellow walls and a shelf above the bed. I hate looking at all Mingus's stupid toys."

"I do understand, but there needs to be space for us all," says Dad.

"I can move into the study," says Molly.

"Your mum and I have been thinking about that too," he says.

"Have you?" asks Molly.

"Yes," says Dad, "but Mum wants to use the room for her paintings."

"TYPICAL!" shouts Molly. "You only think about yourselves. I always come last."

"No you don't," says Dad. "Now we're moving Mum's pictures into the study, there will be more space in the living room. Mingus is bound to play in there more often, you'll see."

Molly doesn't say anything.

She looks out of the window.

It's dark. There are lights on in most of the flats.

If Molly had her own room, she'd hang up fairy lights in loads of colours.

A Visit to Grandma's

Grandma lives a few streets away from Molly's building.

You can walk there in five minutes.

Mum's a bit late.

Molly, Dad and Mingus are in the hall. They're ready, standing there with their coats on.

"You coming?" says Dad, knocking on the toilet door.

Mum mumbles something about just fixing her lipstick.

"She's being so slow – I could easily have stayed over at Lily's."

"Hang on a minute," says Dad. "You'd be exhausted if you'd been nattering with your friends all night long."

Mum comes thundering down the hall.

"We can have a sleepover at our place," says Mum.

"Good idea," says Dad. "You can ask Lily and Ellen if they'd like to come."

"It's embarrassing to have a sleepover when you don't have your own room," answers Molly.

"There's nothing embarrassing about sharing a room," says Dad.

"And it's been ages since we've seen Ellen," says Mum.

Molly misses Ellen.

Since Molly started at her new school, they only see each other at dance class on Wednesdays.

"But it's not fun when Mingus is there the whole time," says Molly.

"I'll be super quiet," says Mingus. "I won't say anything."

"No, but you're listening," answers Molly.

"To your secrets," says Mingus, with a grin.

"Mingus can sleep in our room," says Dad.

"Aww, that's so mean," says Mingus.

"Oh, but you love sleeping in our room," says Mum.

"We'll be late if we don't go now," says Dad.

Molly runs down the stairs.

Grandma hugs Molly so hard that she vanishes into her soft woolly jumper.

"Why don't you come and help me in the kitchen?" she asks.

Molly likes helping Grandma.

Grandma has baked cakes and made coffee.

Molly pours a jug of juice.

"Did you have your own room when you were little?" asks Molly.

"No, I certainly did not. There were four of us children all sharing a room."

"Didn't that get annoying?" asks Molly.

"I didn't think about it very much. It's just the way it was, when you had lots of brothers and sisters," answers Grandma. "Would you like your own room, then?"

Mum interrupts them.

"Would you like a hand?" She's standing in the doorway.

"You're sure I'm not getting another little brother or sister, right?" asks Molly.

"What makes you ask that?" Mum looks down at her belly.

"I just think two children is enough," answers Molly.

Grandma laughs.

Mum looks cross. "I guess I'd better start running again," she says.

Red Yarn

The room is still a mess.

There are toys all over the place.

There's childish stuff all over the place.

Childish cars.

Childish balls.

A childish dinosaur that can roar.

And Molly's big dollhouse.

Molly doesn't know if the dollhouse is for little girls.

She plays with it sometimes.

Will her friends think it's childish?

Ellen wouldn't. Nor Lily, probably.

It's more the stuffed animals.

They're definitely childish.

There are stuffed animals everywhere: in Molly's bed, in Mingus's bed, and in a big basket on the floor.

Lily's room is completely different.

She doesn't share with anyone.

There aren't stuffed animals all over the place, either.

Just one, which matches the pillows on the bed.

Lily has a stripy bedspread. Above the bed is a shelf with all Lily's favourite things.

A box of jewellery.

A clay bowl she made at school.

Hair accessories in a glass jar and a figurine brought back from holiday.

Molly can't remember everything, but she'd love a shelf like that.

Ellen has her own room too.

She has a double bed with a lovely bedspread.

Molly has slept over at Ellen's at least a hundred times.

She knows exactly what Ellen's house smells like.

It's smells kind of Ellen-ish.

A bit sweet.

Maybe like strawberries, although that might just be because Molly loves strawberries.

Mingus is sitting in the middle of all the mess in their room.

He's building something very tall.

"You need to clean up before Lily and Ellen come," says Molly.

Mingus doesn't answer. He keeps building.

"Okay," says Molly, "then we'll have to divide up the room."

Mingus looks at her.

"What do you mean?" he asks.

"You'll have the side of the room with your bed," says Molly.

She gets up and pushes all the toys on the floor towards Mingus.

"Watch out," he yells, clinging onto his tower.

"I don't want all your mess," she says.

Tidying up all his stuff will take too long.

She picks up the rug so that all the toys tumble towards him.

Luckily, Mum has some yarn they can use.

Molly takes a red ball of yarn.

Mum doesn't see her.

She's painting.

Molly takes one end of the yarn and ties it firmly to the radiator pipe.

She pulls the yarn across the carpet and over to the bed.

She winds it three times around the leg of the bed.

Now the room is divided by the red line.

Mingus looks at the yarn.

"Your room is there," says Molly, pointing at the floor beside him. "And this is mine. You're not allowed to come into my room without asking first."

She arranges the duvet neatly on the bed.

The pillow she rests up against the wall.

She saw that on a TV show about nice houses.

She doesn't have a bedspread.

Maybe she can take the blanket from the sofa.

She creeps past her mother and grabs the blanket.

Mum still doesn't see a thing.

Molly hurries into her room with the blanket.

She leaves a couple of stuffed animals on the bed.

The rest go into the basket.

That can go on Mingus's side.

"Why are you putting your stuffed animals on my side?"

"I'm too old for them," answers Molly.

"So can I have this one, then?" Mingus picks up Molly's big brown bear.

"You can borrow it, sure."

"How do I get out?" asks Mingus, looking at the door.

"If you need to get out, you can quickly run along the wall," says Molly.

"Okay," says Mingus.

"Just don't disturb me," says Molly.

"No, no," he replies crossly, taking very slow steps towards the door.

"Lily and Ellen will be over in a minute," says Mum, and she looks at the yarn. "What's going on here?"

"We've made two rooms," says Molly.

"Okay! We can bring a mattress in so you can all sleep here together," says Mum.

"But Mingus is sleeping in your room," says Molly.

"Yes, I know, we already agreed," says Mum.

"Aww, man," says Mingus, flinging himself onto his bed.

"Can't you go outside while I tidy up?" asks Molly.

But Mingus doesn't want to.

He stays where he is, looking at Molly.