

What Do Parents Do? When You're Not Home

Jeanie Franz Ransom

Cyd Moore, Illustrator

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Spending the night at Grandma's is always a special treat—children know they'll be spoiled and pampered. But what happens at their own house while they're gone?

As a brother and his sister leave with their grandparents for an overnight visit, the little boy wonders exactly that. He believes his parents now have the run of the house—and are doing everything they tell their children not to do!

This is Ransom's fourth picture book. Previous titles include *I Don't Want to Talk About It*, a story about divorce, and *Don't Squeal Unless It's a Big Deal: A Tale of Tattletales*. Ransom also works as a school counselor.

Illustrator Moore's work has appeared in more than thirty children's books. Her best-known artwork is probably in the *Stinky Face* series by author Lisa McCourt.

The little boy imagines in a parallel timeline what his Mom and Dad are doing at home alone. As his grandparents' car travels down a country road, he envisions his parents bouncing on the beds. In his head, he admonishes them, as if he's the parent: "Somebody always gets hurt when you play rough."

In subsequent scenes as the grandchildren arrive at their grandparents' country home, the boy pictures his parents using pillows to sled down the stairs (with feathers flying!), eating junk food, and playing with the children's toys, including his very own Beasty Bugs action figures.

The boy's running dialogue is accompanied by Moore's exuberant, colorful, and humorous illustrations. The parents' bad behavior and activities are set apart in large balloon-type boxes, while the children's visit is represented in smaller pictures beneath.

Little (and big) readers will enjoy the detail, such as the small goldfish crackers lined up on the kitchen table and noticing how the father and son sleep in similar positions.

When they're back home the next day, the boy gets to finally ask his parents what they did. "Oh, nothing much," answers Mom.

Observant readers will note the stitched and repaired pillow cushion, a couple of free-fallen feathers under the chair, and a Beasty Bug by the remote control.

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