

The Attic
By
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An ALARM CLOCK RINGS loudly next to a bed. BILLY, a slightly chubby and pale 9-year old, turns underneath his covers. Next to his auburn hair is HENRY, his STUFFED TURTLE. The alarm clock continues to ring, and Billy blinks his eyes. Downstairs, his MOTHER calls out to him.

MOTHER(OFFSCREEN)

Billy! Can you come down here please?

Billy groans and slowly sits up in his bed. He reaches over and turns off the ringing alarm clock. He's dressed in light PAJAMAS with stars on them. He rubs his eyes and yawns as the door to his room opens. Billy stares at the door as JEREMY, a boy his age and wearing similar pajamas but with inverted colors, enters the room. Jeremy is slightly translucent, as if he doesn't fully exist in reality. Smears on his face is PEANUT BUTTER, and in his hand is a PEANUT BUTTER SANDWICH.

JEREMY

'Morning Billy. How'd you sleep?

Jeremy takes another bite of his sandwich as Billy frowns.

BILLY

Why do you have a sandwich?

JEREMY

I'm hungry.

BILLY

Imaginary people don't need to eat.

Jeremy smirks at the statement. Billy's mother calls out again.

MOTHER(OFFSCREEN)

Billy! I'm not going to ask you again!

Jeremy takes another bite of his sandwich.

JEREMY

Better go see what she wants.

Billy crawls out of bed and walks past Jeremy, who somehow dissipates into thin air. Billy walks down the stairs of the house and into the kitchen, where his fiery-haired mother frowns at him. She points to the table with a manicured finger, where a jar of peanut butter and a bag of bread lay messily on top of it.

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MOTHER

What have I told you about cleaning up after yourself?

Billy shakes his head in denial at his mother's outrageous claim.

BILLY

That wasn't me! I don't like sandwiches. It was Jere-

MOTHER

Ah ah! I don't want to hear it. I don't care who did it, but you can't leave a mess on the table.

The Mother kneels down and looks Billy in the eye.

MOTHER

Besides, Billy, you're 9. You're too old to be believing in imaginary friends anymore.

The Mother stands and lifts her gym bag and yoga mat.

MOTHER

I have to go to yoga now, so I expect this to be cleaned up by the time I come back, okay? And please don't make too much noise today. You're father is still sleeping.

The mother exits the room and leaves the house. The door closes with a quiet thud. Instead of cleaning the mess, Billy goes back upstairs to his room to get Henry. When he enters his room he notices Jeremy sitting on his bed, playing with Henry. Billy clenches his fist at seeing Jeremy play with his toy.

BILLY

Did you leave the mess on the table so you could play with Henry?

JEREMY

I told you, I was hungry and I made a sandwich.

BILLY

But you can't make a sandwich. You're imaginary! That's impossible.

Jeremy doesn't respond and crawls off the bed, bringing Henry with him. He smiles at Billy.

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JEREMY

I'll tell you how I did it, but first you have to play a game with me.

BILLY

What kind of game?

JEREMY

Hide and seek.

BILLY

I don't like that game. Everyone at school hides too well and makes fun of me when I can't find them. You can just disappear too and then I'll never find you!

JEREMY

I won't be the one you have to find. You'll be hunting for Henry.

Jeremy holds up Henry. He giggles and vanishes, taking Henry with him. He reappears behind Billy, and runs out of the room.

BILLY

Hey! Bring him back!

Billy chases Jeremy out of the room, and sees the other boy at the bottom of the stairs without Henry.

BILLY

Where did you put him?

Jeremy giggles.

JEREMY

He's in the attic. If you want him back you'll have to go up there.

BILLY

No way, it's impossible to get up there! Only my parents can reach it. Please, can you bring Billy back? I don't care how you made the stupid sandwich anymore.

JEREMY

If you want him you'll have to go into the attic! Don't you want to know why your parents don't want you in there anyway?

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Billy sighs and walks to the storage room. There are plastic tubs and boxes strewn about everywhere He looks up at the ceiling where the pull-down entrance to the attic is located.

BILLY

How am I even supposed to get up there?

JEREMY

Well there's a bunch of boxes here you could probably stack.

BILLY

You aren't going to help?

Jeremy giggles and vanishes again. Billy sighs and begins to stack boxes strewn about in the room. After a couple minutes, Billy has stacked as many objects as he could into a makeshift ladder. He climbs up and tries to reach the PULL-DOWN CORD, but he still can't reach it. Billy frowns and sits down on the box, looking like he's about to cry. Jeremy appears on the ground.

JEREMY

Almost there Billy!

BILLY

I don't like this game anymore, Jeremy. Just give Henry back and leave me alone!

Jeremy frowns.

JEREMY

I just want you to know what's in the attic, Billy. That's what friends do, right? Help each other learn new things?

Billy is silent for a moment, then stands up again.

BILLY

Fine. But after you show me and I get Henry, I don't want to talk to you anymore.

Jeremy frowns but nods anyway.

JEREMY

If you say so. If you're looking for another chair, there's the one in your dad's room.

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BILLY

I can't go in there! I'll wake him up!

JEREMY

Not if you're quiet about it.

Billy climbs down the makeshift ladder and walks to his father's room. He slowly opens the creaky door, and sees his FATHER snoring inside. Billy sees the CHAIR next to the bed, and tip-toes inside to get it. As he begins to drag it out, a BOWL resting on the chair wobbles and falls. Billy catches it before it hits the ground, but it causes the chair to tip over. Billy's father continues snoring.

Billy drags the chair out of the bedroom and to the storage room, where he haphazardly places it on the stacked boxes.

Billy stands on top of the chair and pulls down the attic entrance. It creaks open. Billy stares at the dark interior for a few seconds before climbing inside.

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INT. ATTIC - DAY

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At the top of the stairs is a hanging LIGHT BULB and a string. Billy pulls the string, and the light bulb reveals the claustrophobic interior of the attic. There are BOXES randomly placed on the floor and SHELVES lining one wall. Billy looks around the dark attic until he spots a shelf with several STUFFED ANIMALS. One of them is Henry.

BILLY

Henry!

Billy picks Henry off the shelf and hugs him tight. Jeremy appears behind him. He's less translucent, and appears to be real.

JEREMY

Well you found Henry. Want to meet the others?

Billy is startled by Jeremy's appearance, but turns around to face the other boy. He narrows his brow in confusion.

BILLY

What others? What do you mean?

JEREMY

The ones upstairs.

Billy frowns.

(CONTINUED)

BILLY

But we're already upstairs.

JEREMY

Not yet. Look up.

Billy looks up. Amongst the cobwebs is another TRAP DOOR.

BILLY

What is that? Where does it go?

Jeremy reaches up and pulls the rope. The trap door creaks open.

JEREMY

Why don't you take a look?

Billy hesitantly looks up the new set of stairs, then slowly walks up them. He clutches Henry tight in his arms as he enters a KITCHEN similar to his. He looks around in wonder as Jeremy emerges behind him. Jeremy is fully opaque, and when Billy looks at his own arm he notices he can see through it. JEREMY'S MOTHER enters the kitchen, and Jeremy smiles when he sees her.

JEREMY

Hi mom! I'm back for lunch. I brought a friend with me.

JEREMY'S MOTHER

Oh no, is it another one of those imaginary friends of yours? The last time you had one over, they ate all the peanut butter.

END