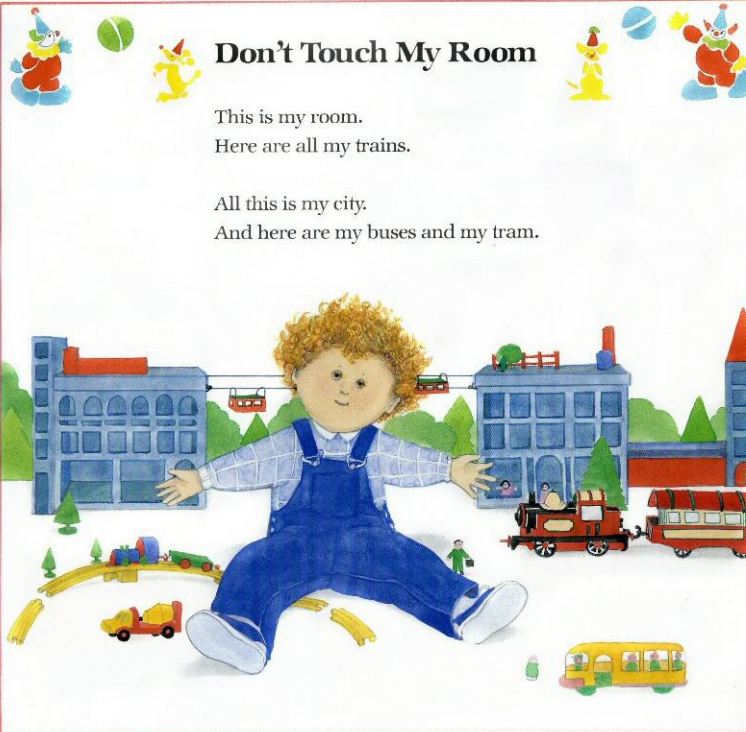
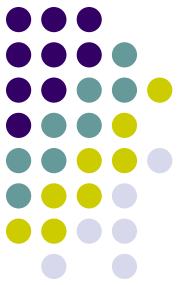
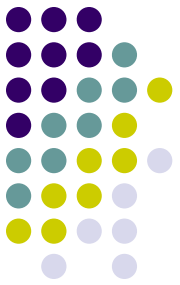
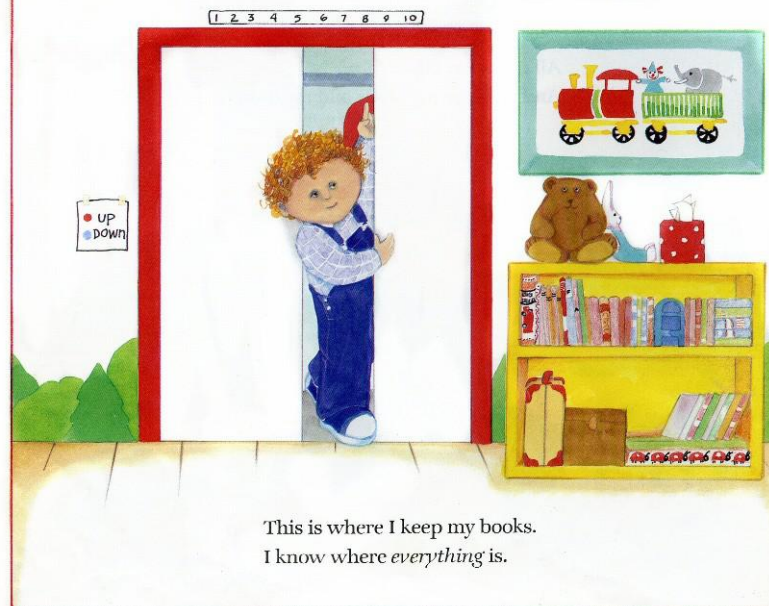


**Don't Touch My Room**

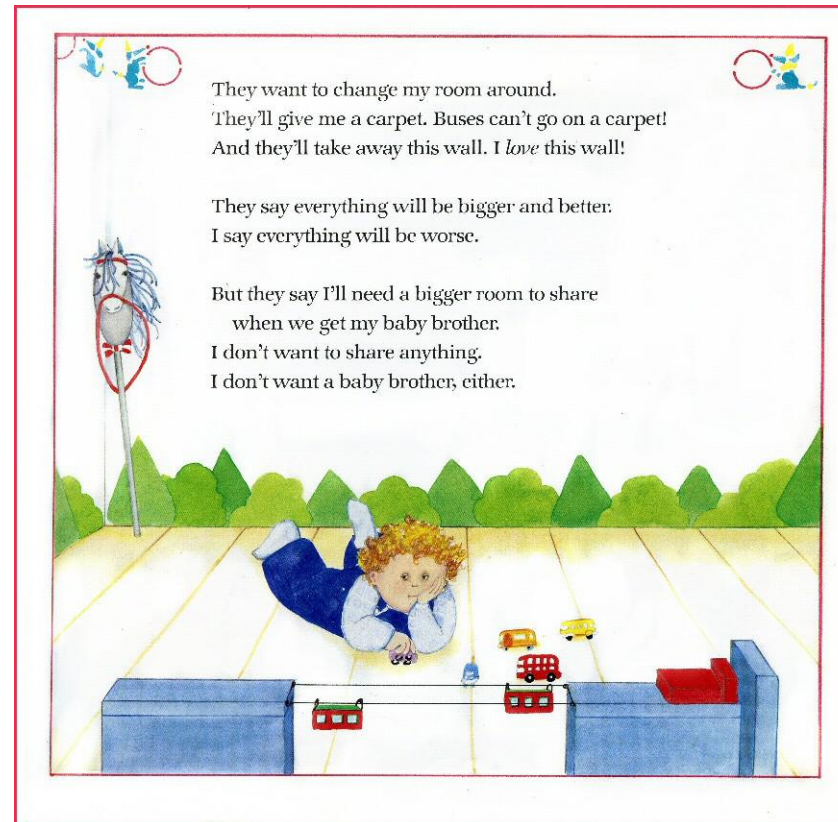
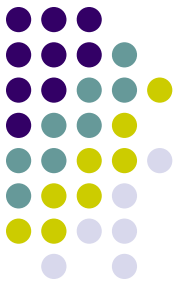


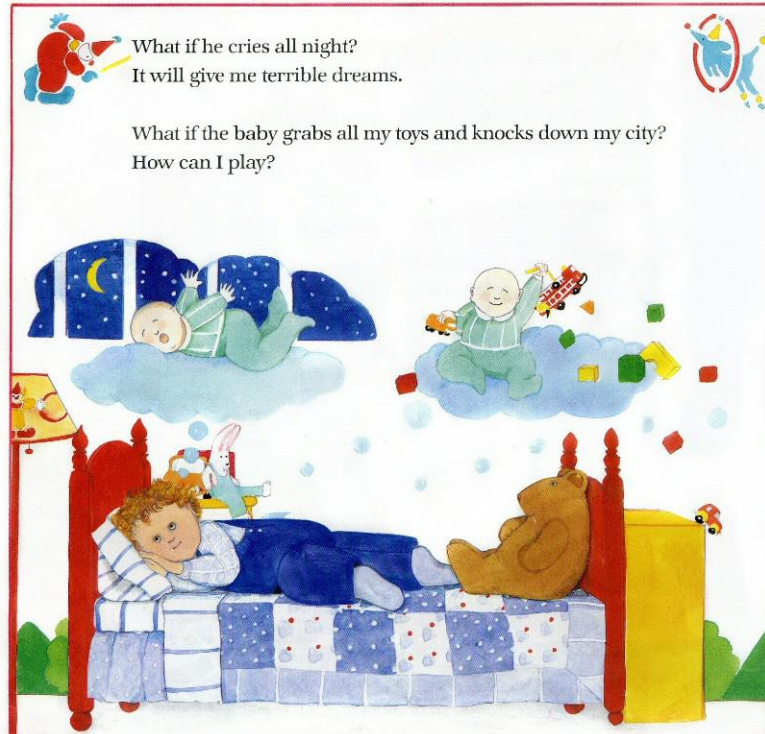
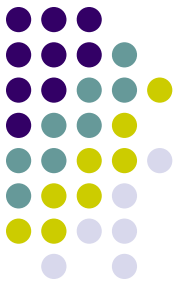


Here's my closet. I go inside. Then I close the doors  
and pretend it's an elevator:



This is where I keep my books.  
I know where *everything* is.



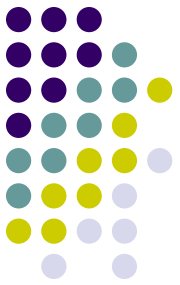


What if he cries all night?  
It will give me terrible dreams.



What if the baby grabs all my toys and knocks down my city?  
How can I play?



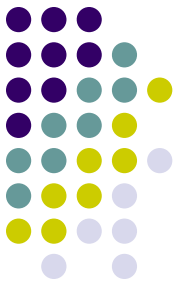


Why don't we just forget about it.  
We don't need a baby at all.  
Then we won't have to change anything.  
But they say we're getting him anyway.

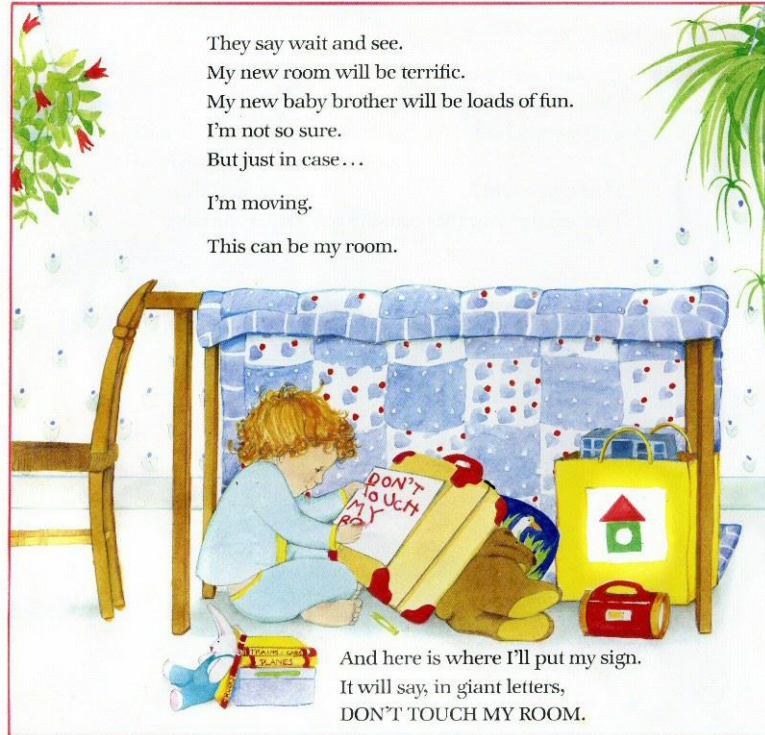


Maybe he could live somewhere else. We could visit.  
They say that way they couldn't get to know the baby.



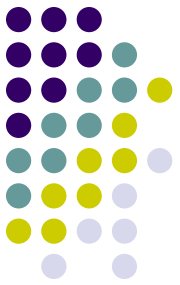


They say wait and see.  
My new room will be terrific.  
My new baby brother will be loads of fun.  
I'm not so sure.  
But just in case . . .  
  
I'm moving.  
  
This can be my room.



And here is where I'll put my sign.  
It will say, in giant letters,  
DON'T TOUCH MY ROOM.

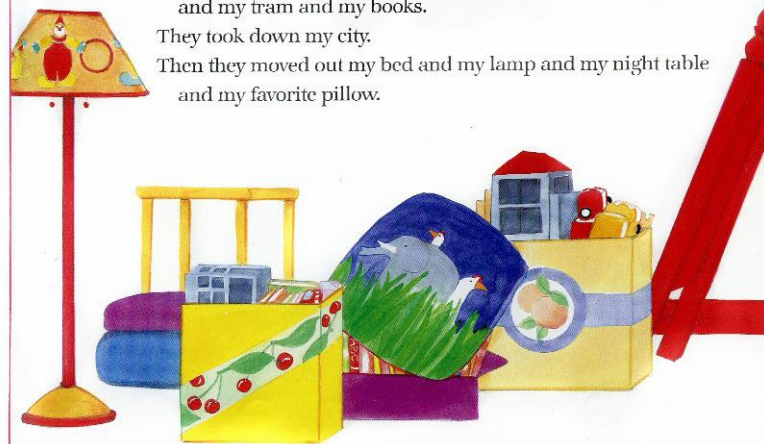


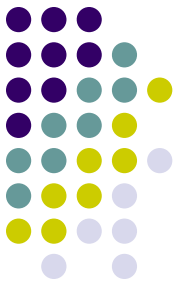


## Don't Touch My Things

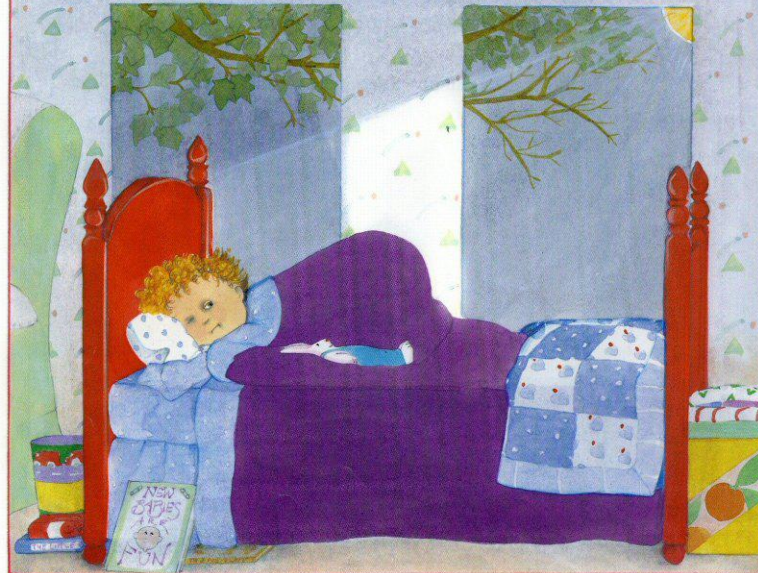
They touched everything.  
"It's for your new room," they said.  
"It's for the new baby," I said.

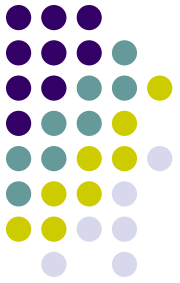
First they packed all my buses and cars and trains  
and my tram and my books.  
They took down my city.  
Then they moved out my bed and my lamp and my night table  
and my favorite pillow.



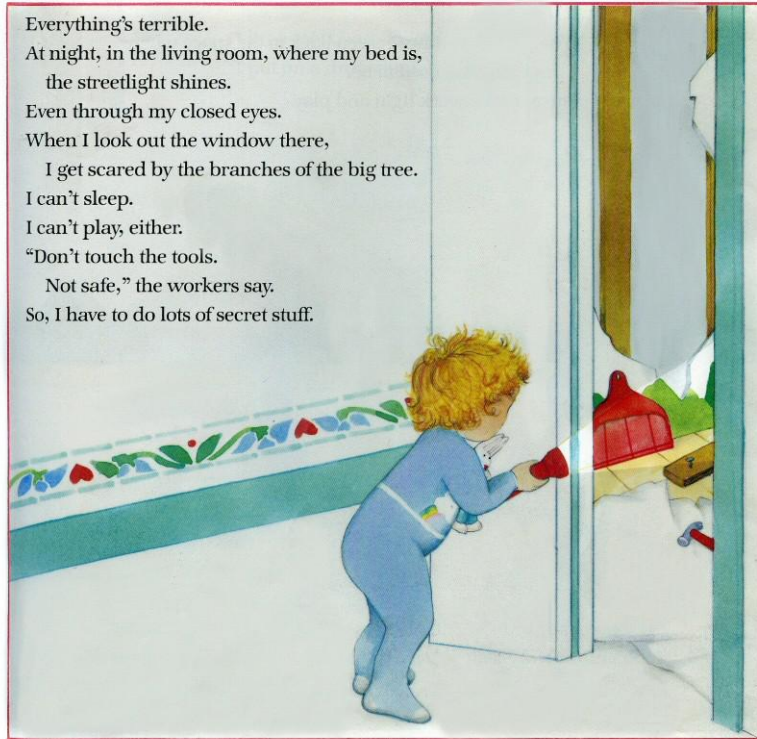


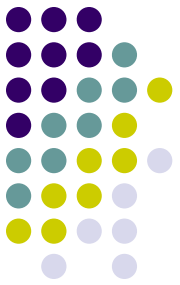
All the toys got put into boxes and put away in the cellar.  
All my clothes and bed stuff went into the living room, where I'll sleep.  
The wall... broken to bits and carried away.  
And now my room... gone. Everything's gone.  
My closet doors that I used for a pretend elevator are off and gone, too.



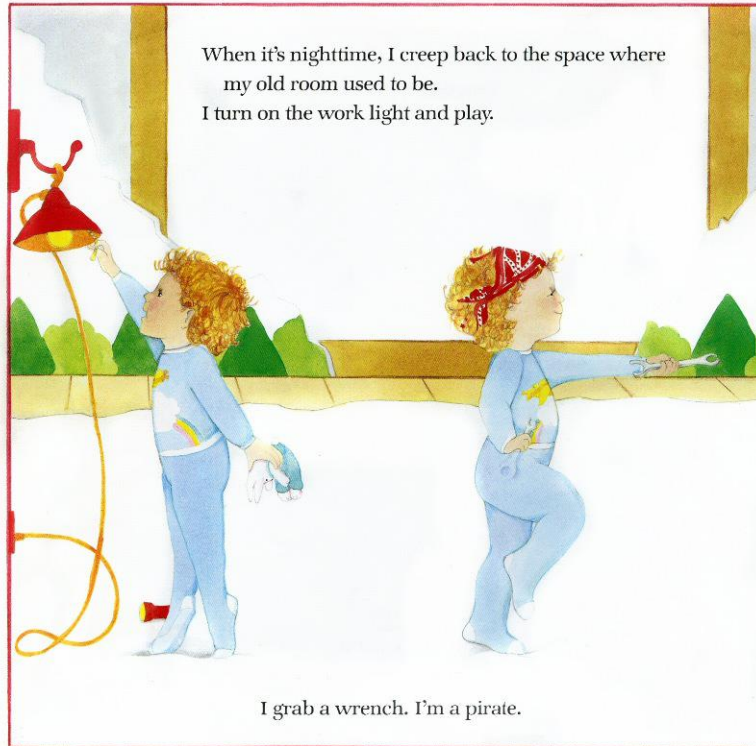


Everything's terrible.  
At night, in the living room, where my bed is,  
the streetlight shines.  
Even through my closed eyes.  
When I look out the window there,  
I get scared by the branches of the big tree.  
I can't sleep.  
I can't play, either.  
"Don't touch the tools."  
Not safe," the workers say.  
So, I have to do lots of secret stuff.

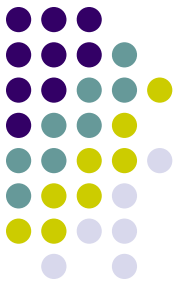




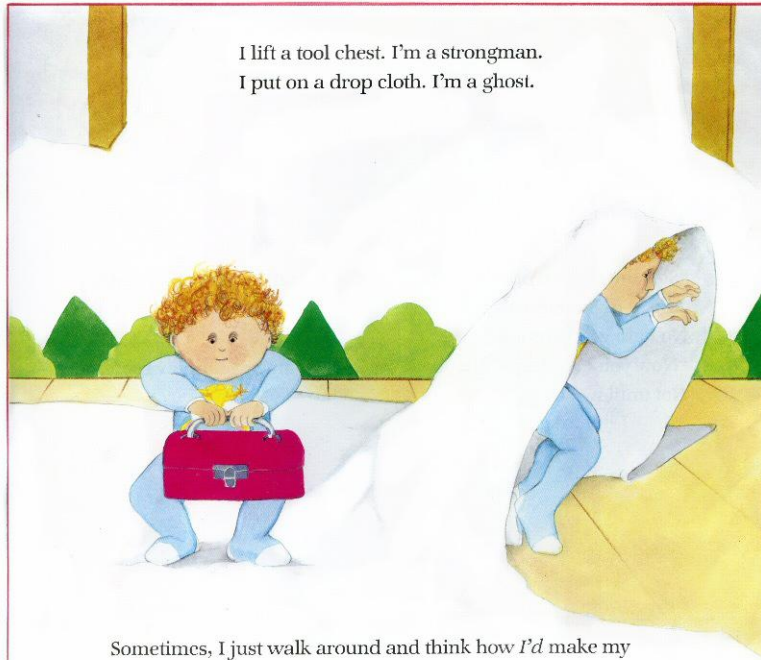
When it's nighttime, I creep back to the space where  
my old room used to be.  
I turn on the work light and play.



I grab a wrench. I'm a pirate.

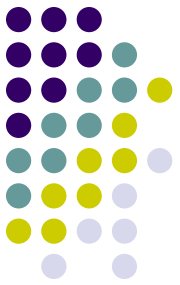


I lift a tool chest. I'm a strongman.  
I put on a drop cloth. I'm a ghost.



Sometimes, I just walk around and think how *I'd* make my  
new room. Trapdoor here. Tree house there. Swimming pool  
over there.





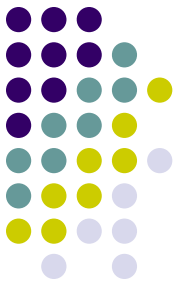
But they find out about almost everything.

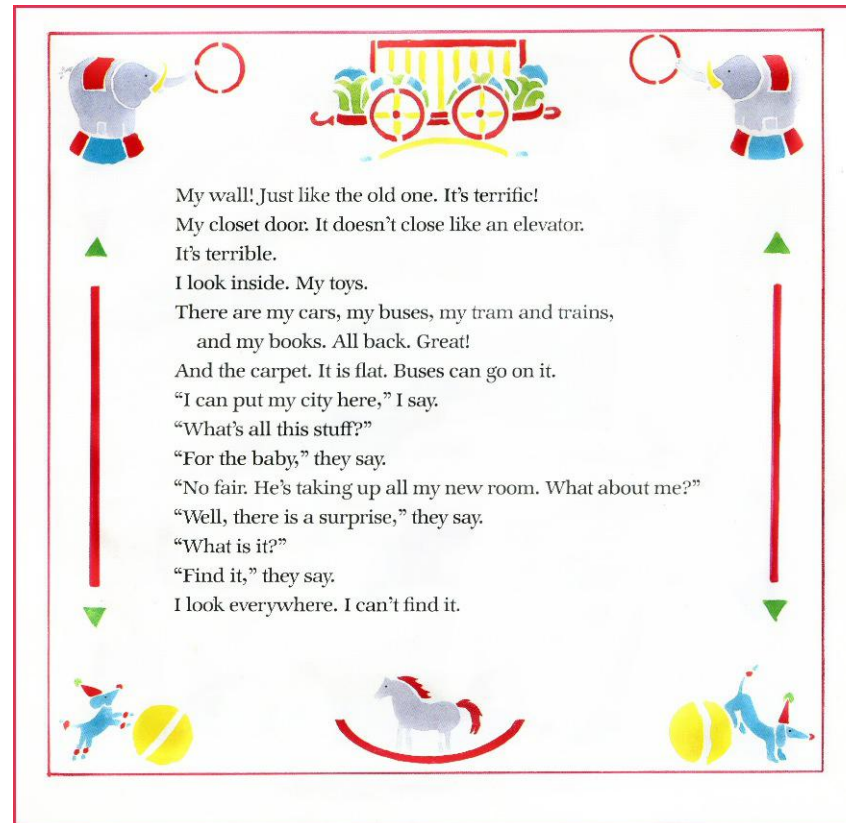
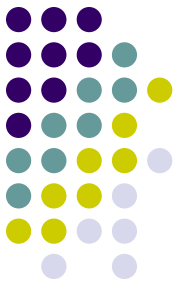


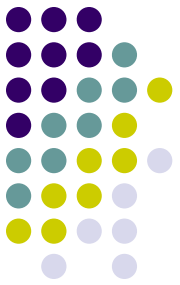
"Stay out of the work area. Too dangerous, night or day," they say.  
And at night they cover the living room window with a cloth.  
No light gets through.  
"Now you can sleep," they say. "And no peeking in your new room.  
Not until it's ready."

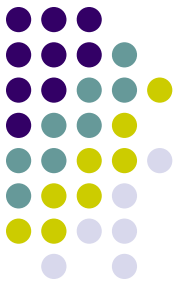


"Come and see," they finally say.  
I'm scared to look.







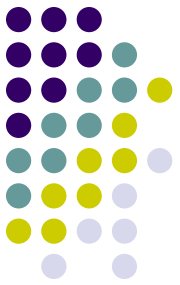


So they take me over to the new wall.  
“Push,” they say.  
I push. Whaam! A secret door opens.  
It’s big enough only for me.

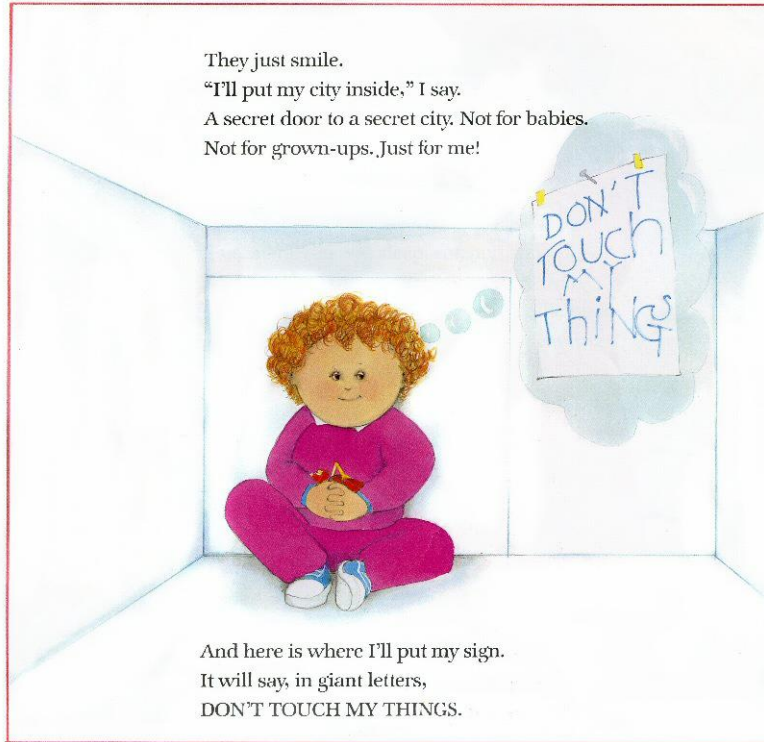


I crawl inside.  
“Where did you get this little room?” I say.

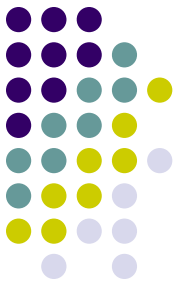


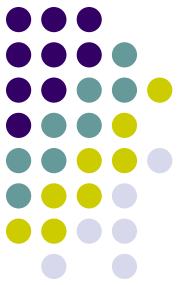


They just smile.  
"I'll put my city inside," I say.  
A secret door to a secret city. Not for babies.  
Not for grown-ups. Just for me!



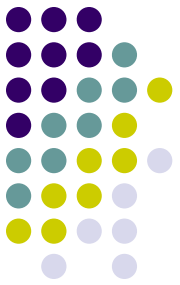
And here is where I'll put my sign.  
It will say, in giant letters,  
DON'T TOUCH MY THINGS.



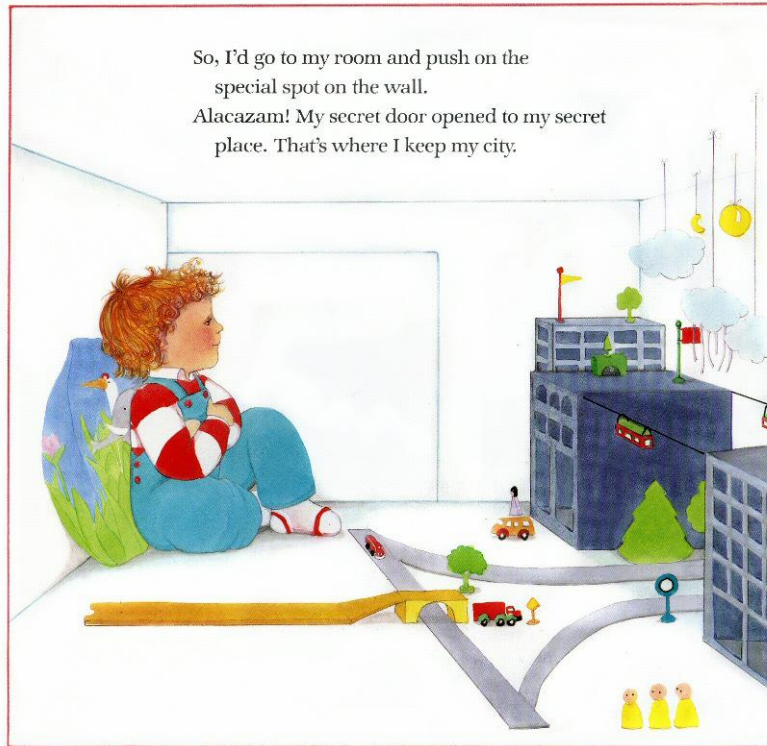


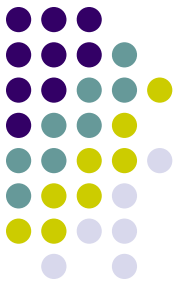
"Now, what would *you* like to play?" they said.  
"Nothing," I said.





So, I'd go to my room and push on the  
special spot on the wall.  
Alacazam! My secret door opened to my secret  
place. That's where I keep my city.



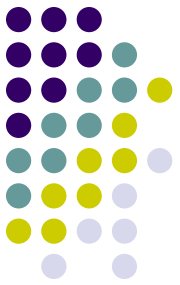


Then he got older.  
They started calling him Benji.  
I started calling him *Worse*.



He tried to pull my hair,  
or scratch my face,  
or pinch my nose.  
“Don’t!” I yelled.  
He just laughed.

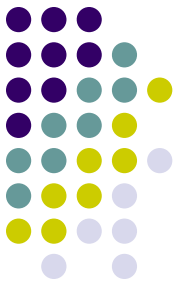




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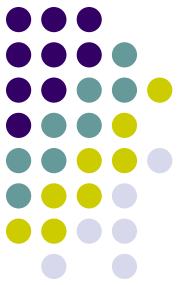


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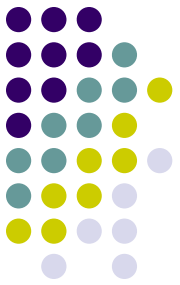


Benji got bigger.  
They started calling him Benji — *Watch Out!*  
I started calling him Benji *the Pest*.  
That's because he always crawled around after me.  
So we'd have to play dog.  
And he'd always laugh when I tossed him the red ball.  
So I'd have to do it about a million times.





The table was set.  
Milk, lamb chops, mashed potatoes, carrots, peas,  
plates, knives, forks, spoons, one vase with flowers,  
and the candles all fell to the floor.  
They screamed at him.  
I had no choice.  
“C’mon, Benji,” I said.



We crawled to my secret door, opened it,  
and went inside to play with my secret  
city. Before I closed the door  
I told them, "DON'T TOUCH MY BABY!"



