

JAKE

Hey! My name is Jake. I am 9 years old and kind of tall for my age. I have curly brown hair and brown eyes. My friends like to call me J or Curly J. I just finished the 3rd grade and summer is finally here! I have a younger brother who is 4. He has the same curly hair and brown eyes as me, but he's a lot shorter. His name is Gabe, but I call him baby G. He will start kindergarten this fall. His room is next to mine on the second floor of our mom and dad's house.

We live in Alabama, in a little town called Summerdale. It's almost at the very bottom of Alabama. It's really nice because it doesn't get too cold in the winter and we are also close to the Gulf of Mexico, so we go there some weekends and play in the water. The beach is really nice and sometimes while we are playing on the beach, we see dolphins. Sometimes I wish we lived right on the beach so we could watch dolphins every day. At least it's a not a very long drive to get there! My mom works as a nurse at a hospital that is a couple of towns over. My dad works at a factory. He gets up really early and then gets home in the afternoon. He usually falls asleep in the chair in the living room while watching TV. I don't understand adults. Come home from work, turn the TV on, and then fall asleep. When my dad falls asleep, he snores. And when he snores, it is really loud! I can usually hear him snoring throughout the whole house. It really doesn't matter what room I'm in, I can hear him everywhere. Adults are very loud when they are sleeping! I don't know how they can sleep when they are so loud.

Mom and dad have been really busy lately. They said that we will be doing a lot of cleaning since I am out of school for the summer. They want me to go through stuff and get rid of things, even my toys! I hate getting rid of things. They're mine. I have had them for so long, I don't want to get rid of them. So I have to go through my stuff and they are going through baby G's stuff. I guess it could be worse. At least I get to pick what I don't want to keep. Poor baby G doesn't get to pick. They are just going to get rid of whatever THEY think he doesn't need.

I remember them doing that to me when I was younger. I came home from school one day and some of my favorite toys were gone. Just gone. They just boxed them up and donated them somewhere. I mean, I'm a kid. I'm supposed to have toys and lots of them.

That way if I get bored with some, I have others to play with. I don't even have as many toys as some of my friends do. It's just not fair.

So I go to my room and start to look around. Nope, I don't have anything to get rid of. I play with all of it and it really doesn't take up much room. Maybe I will just hide stuff under my bed and in the closet? They wouldn't look there. Yeah, yeah they really would. So then I decide maybe I will try to tell them how much I need my stuff.

I heard a lot of noise in baby G's room. So I go over there to see what he's doing. It wasn't baby G. I looked in and saw Mom and dad were in there. They were going through clothes and toys, and rearranging his whole room, and boxing up the toys THEY thought he didn't need. I decided I was going to tell them that we don't need to throw any toys out, that we play with them all and NEED them all, and that's when I saw it. There it was.....in the corner....by the window. Looking at me like it did a few years ago. The toy box.....

It wasn't just any toy box. It had big white and black eye-like stickers on the lid and this silly, big mouth smile sticker on the front like it was smiling at me nonstop. I thought mom and dad got rid of it. It must have been in storage. Well let me tell you, it is not as cute as it appears to be. I had nightmares for months because of that thing. I will tell you a little bit about that story. I'm going to call it the story of the hangry toy box. It all happened when I was just a little kid.