

A Place for Everything

“Jackson, I love you. But you may be the messiest boy in the world,” Jackson’s mother said as she placed a stack of clean clothes on his already crowded dresser.

“No way, Mom.”

“No? Why not?”

“Because you haven’t met every boy in the world, so there is no way you could know that!”

Mom smiled. “Maybe. But I bet you are in the top ten! Put all of these clothes away before you go to bed.”

“Okay. I will. Thanks for washing them.”

“Thanks for putting them away. Remember, before you go to bed! A place for everything, and everything in its place.”

“I know. I know. I’ll put them away. I promise!”

After his mom left the room, Jackson looked around. He didn’t understand his mom sometimes. His room wasn’t that messy! Sure, there was some stuff on the floor, on top of the dresser, and under his bed, but he could still walk around without stepping on stuff. Mostly.

He pulled on a baseball cap and left the room. It was a beautiful summer day. School ended a few days ago and Jackson couldn’t wait to get outside and ride his bike. He walked past his little sister Sophie who was playing with some dolls on the living room floor. Jackson hoped she didn’t follow him. Sometimes a guy just wanted to be alone. “Hey Sophie,” he said as he passed.

“Hi Jackson,” Sophie said as she pulled a dress on one of her dolls.

Jackson stepped through the back door and onto the porch. A gentle breeze was blowing, and he could smell the pink flowers in baskets hanging along the front of the porch. He wondered what they were called. Maybe he’d ask his mom later, he thought. She’d like that. Mom loved her flowers.

He rode his bike through the yard and toward the road. They lived in the country and didn’t get much traffic. Still, he always looked both ways to be sure no car was coming. Far down the road, he could see someone riding a bike. Who was that? Then he saw the bright blonde hair and he knew. Kaylee Monroe! Only the prettiest girl in first grade! They rode the same bus, sat in the same class, lived only a few houses apart, but still Jackson had never talked to her. Ever! Today would be the day!

He looked down at his jeans. They were dirty and the knees were green from playing in the grass. He smelled under his arms. His shirt was even worse! Jackson turned his bike and rode as fast as he could back to the house. He ran through the door, past Sophie who yelled out “Hey!” as he stepped on one of her dolls, and up the stairs to his room. He pulled on clean clothes from the stack his mom left and then looked into the dresser mirror. His hair poked out from under the baseball cap. He pulled the cap off and ran his

fingers through his hair. It looked even worse now.

“My comb!” Jackson searched the top of his dresser, under the clothes and toys. “Where’s my comb!” It should be on top of his dresser, but it wasn’t there! He ran out of his room and across the hall into his brother Carter’s room. He looked out the front window and tried to see down the road. He couldn’t see Kaylee yet. But she’d be here soon!

He ran back toward his room, slipped, and fell on the floor in the hall, banging his knee. “Ouch!” he yelled. Jackson got to his feet, limping a little, and hurried back to his room. Dropping to his knees, he looked under his bed for the comb. Nothing but parts of his racetrack, some dirty socks, and his old football. He pulled the football out so he could play with it later.

Jackson rubbed his sore knee as he got up and then ran back to his dresser. He pushed his hair down again and put the cap on. “Oh well,” he said as he looked at his hair. He turned and ran toward the door. Just before he reached it, he stepped on something and fell hard. His face hit the floor and he felt pain in his lip. He reached up and touched his mouth. A small drop of blood was on his finger. “Great!” he said. “That’s all I need!” He looked over at the football he just tripped over. He was done. He could not go out there and talk to Kaylee for the first time ever with a bloody lip.

He stayed on the floor. This was the worst day ever.

After a few minutes, he rolled to his side. As he did, he could see his comb. Under the dresser. He remembered his mom saying, “A place for everything, and everything in its place.” He stood slowly. Maybe he would go for a bike ride later. Right now, he was going to clean his room.

Questions

1. What kind of hat does Jackson wear?
2. What color are Mom's flowers on the porch?
3. What color is Kaylee's hair?

4. Where was Jackson's comb?