

Let's Play Outside

by Elizabeth Trach

On Saturday morning, John ate cereal while watching cartoons on TV. His little sister Frankie was still in her high chair. Mom was wiping the kitchen table after breakfast.

"Today I need to clean the house," said Mom.

"Can I help?" asked John. He liked to draw pictures in the dust with his fingers before wiping it away. John was good at dusting.

"The best way to help is to take your sister outside to play. She's too little to help," Mom said.

John would rather stay inside, but he wanted to be helpful. "Sure," he said.

John held Frankie's hand and led her out of the apartment to the elevator. Frankie could walk by herself, but it was better to hold hands. That way John could keep her next to him.

Inside the elevator, Frankie pushed all the buttons. That made the elevator stop at every floor. It took a long time to get to the lobby. Frankie laughed every time the door opened. It was like a game to her.

After they got out of the elevator, John said hello to the doorman.

"Where are you going today, John?" asked the doorman. He was very friendly. He knew everyone who lived in the building.

"I'm taking Frankie outside to play. Mom is cleaning," said John.

"Good idea. It's a lovely day," the doorman said. He held open the front door and the two children went outside. John and Frankie walked around the corner of the tall apartment building. There was a gate there that only people who lived in the apartment knew about. John opened it and walked through a long, cool tunnel. He still held Frankie's hand.

At the other end of the tunnel was a green garden. The garden was surrounded by apartments on all sides. Everyone who lived in the building could look out onto the green space and see the lawn. There were also pretty flowers.

John let go of Frankie's hand. She ran around a rose bush. Frankie ran in circles and laughed. She smelled the flowers.

John smiled. The garden was a fun, safe place to play. He could let Frankie run anywhere she liked. He and Frankie would have fun here until Mom came down to get them. It was going to be a wonderful day!

