

# *A Cool Kid -Like Me!*

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This story is about a kid everyone  
thought was so terrific and so cool.  
That kid was me.



I knew how to draw  
great pictures.



I even brushed my teeth—  
most of the time.



And I had a few friends to play with.



My parents left me alone a lot.  
They thought I was a cool kid.  
But that was only on the outside.  
They didn't really know me.

Nobody knew what I was really like on the inside—except my grandma.

She wanted to know how I felt. “What’s the matter?” she asked.

And I told her everything, like how scared I was without a night-light or how awful I felt when I dropped the ball.



I liked talking to Grandma. She was a good listener. And I could ask her all kinds of questions. Grandma was the only one I would let hug me.

One day she left for a long vacation.  
But before she went, she gave me  
a special present.





It was a teddy bear!



"Oh, no," said my father. "He's too old for that! He's a big boy now!"

"I agree," said my mother, shaking her head. "He won't play with it. He's already into computers."

What a weird present for a cool kid, I thought.

"Nonsense!" replied Grandma. "Nobody is too old for a teddy! It will keep him company while I am away."

Then I took another look at Teddy and decided that I liked him—except for the stupid ribbon, of course.



He was soft and cuddly  
and kind of fun to hold.

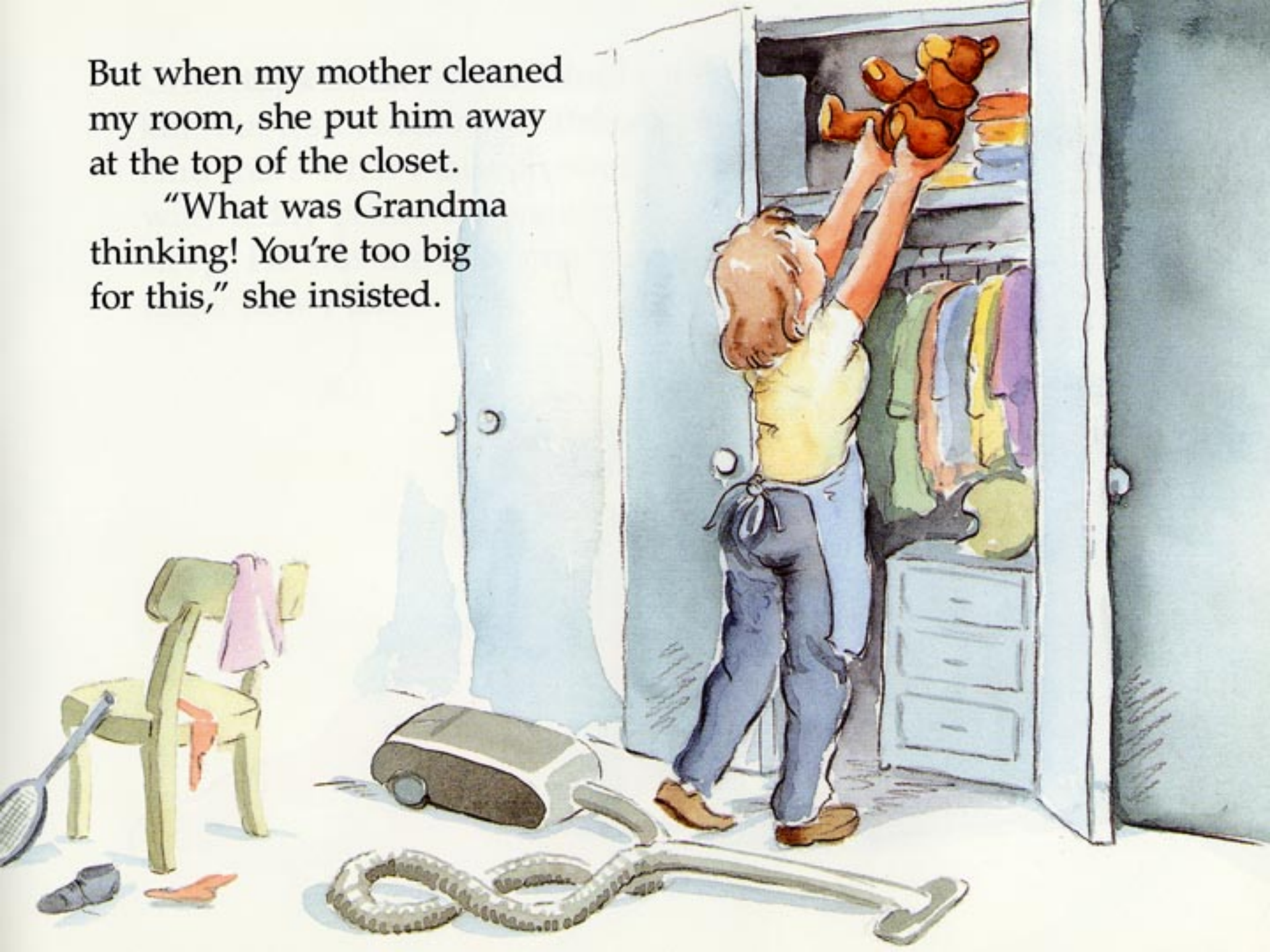


I took him with me when I was  
sure nobody could see him.



But when my mother cleaned my room, she put him away at the top of the closet.

“What was Grandma thinking! You’re too big for this,” she insisted.



But I took him down as soon  
as she left the room.



Grownups think it's fun to be a kid. But it's not fun all the time. And that's what I talked about with Teddy before we went to sleep. He was the only one who knew how I felt.

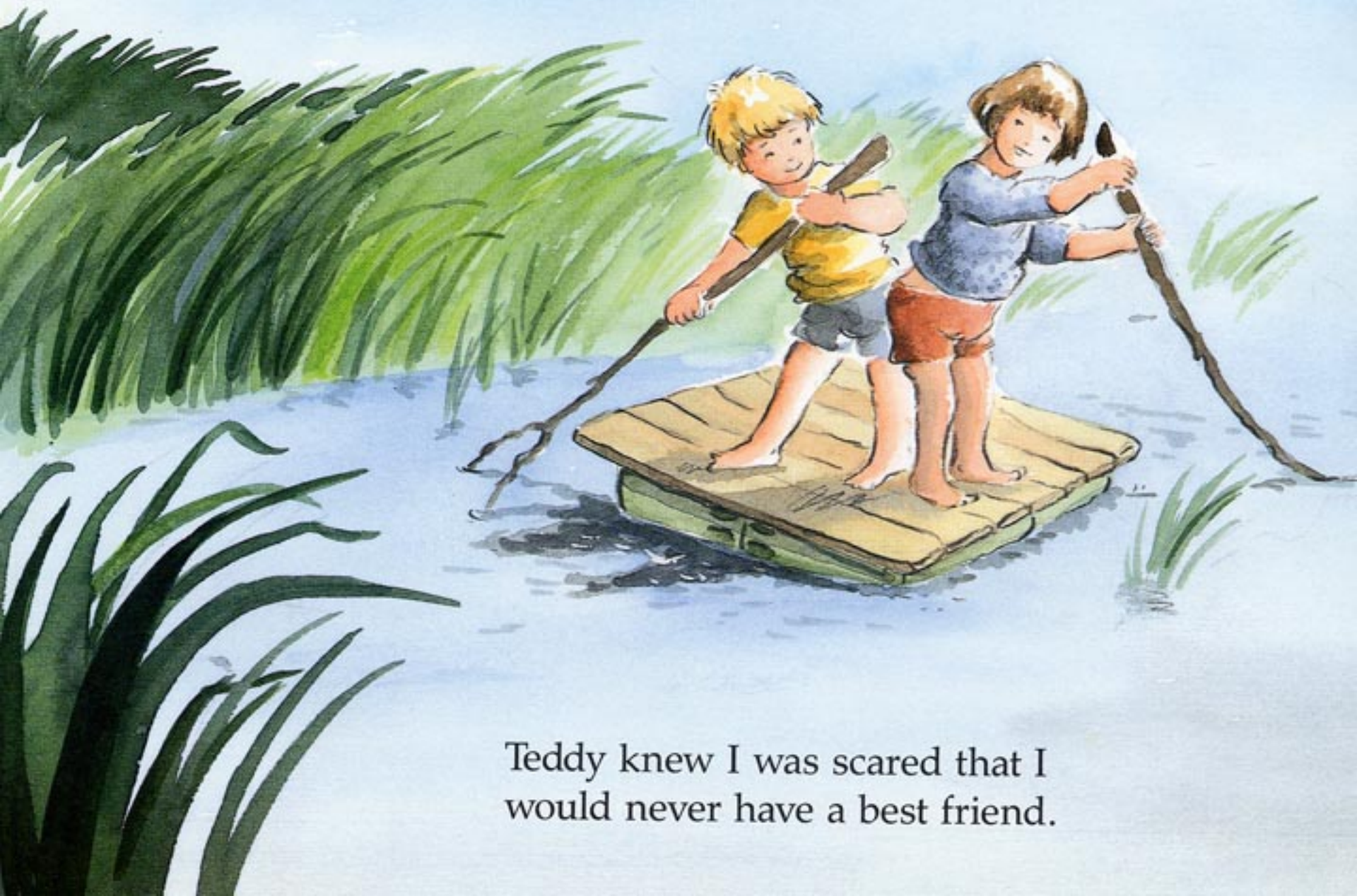




Teddy understood when I told him...



that I didn't like to be alone in the dark.



Teddy knew I was scared that I  
would never have a best friend.





I could tell him I was afraid the other kids wouldn't like me and would laugh behind my back.

I was scared that I'd be picked last at games...



or that my parents would chew  
me out in front of my friends.



Teddy knew how  
I felt when my  
parents were  
fighting...



or not talking to  
each other at all.



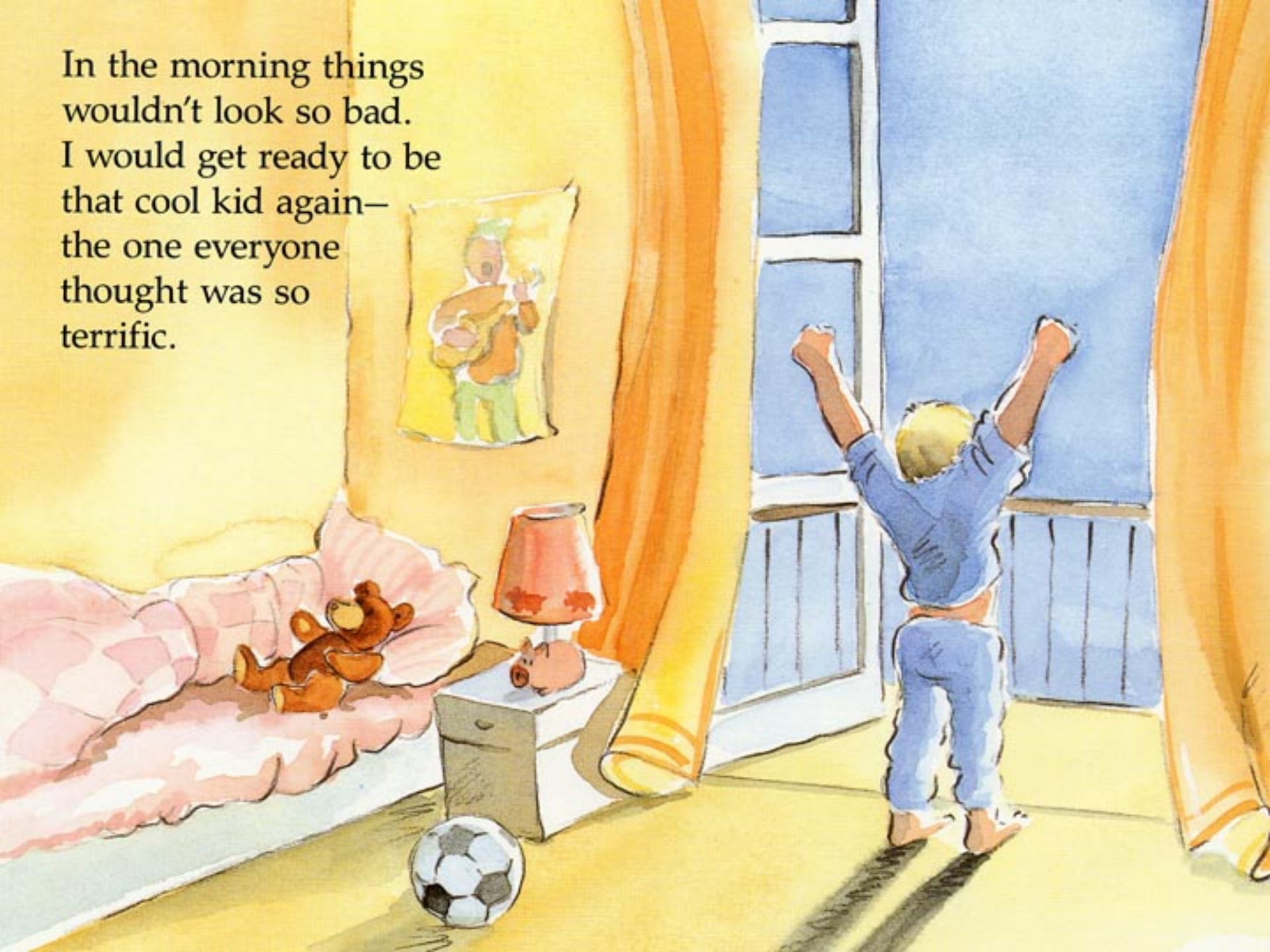


And Teddy knew I was scared that my mother would leave and never come back! I know it was stupid, but sometimes I just could not help being scared.

There were other secrets, too,  
that I could share with Teddy.  
It made us feel much better.  
Finally we would fall asleep.



In the morning things  
wouldn't look so bad.  
I would get ready to be  
that cool kid again—  
the one everyone  
thought was so  
terrific.





I would be as cool as I could be.  
Except, of course...





when Grandma came home again.  
Boy, was I happy!  
On the outside *and* on the inside, too!