

Why are children left alone? In many instances, a young child is loved and cared for but may still be left alone at home.

Mink gives a brief peek into the day of a 5 year old as she struggles to deal with her joys, her fears and her emotions.

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Mink

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Mink

By Christine Pat

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Mink climbed up on the chair that she had placed by the window. She peered down. There were lots of people bustling about. They looked like ants. They were each following their own path and somehow despite the overall confusion there were no collisions. Mink loved watching them, it was the one new thing she had discovered to do. She sniffed, about to start crying again, then smiled, a pleased smile, as she watched a dog skillfully negotiate his way across the street. She leaned over the window a bit more, her eyes following the dog. An anxious expression appeared as a horn bleared. But no. The car screeched to a halt; the dog scampered away. He had made it across, safe for now.

Mink wished that she had a dog. No. She didn't want a dog, not now. She wanted her Mommy. She was even prepared to like R-Gee if he came back. She dashed

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a grubby hand across an equally grubby face, wiping away the new streaks of tears from her face. Maybe, she thought, her Mommy had left her because she didn't like R-Gee. But he cried so much, and he couldn't do anything. Besides, ever since he came along her mother no longer took her anywhere.

She missed her trips to the park and shopping; especially shopping. Every time her mommy took her shopping, she would buy her something. She still had the coloring book that her mommy had bought on their last shopping trip. Where was it?

Mink climbed down. She went across the living room but the coloring book was not on the side table where she kept her books. Then she remembered that she had been coloring before. Was it the day before...or perhaps two days ago? She had been in the bedroom then.

There was only one bedroom in the apartment. She used to share the big bed with her mother but now R-Gee did. Her mother had gotten a folding bed for her. Mink didn't like the folding bed. She had been sleeping on her mother's bed since being left alone. She made sure to make the bed every morning. That way it was always neat and her mother wouldn't know that it had been slept on. She didn't like how her mother had rearranged the bedroom either. She wouldn't have

minded the folding bed so much if she had been able to sleep next to the window. But her mother said no. Now the big bed was next to the window. Her mother had explained that she had to place the bed against the wall so that R-Gee wouldn't roll off. Mink however, thought that was a silly reason. R-Gee couldn't roll. He was always twisting up himself and squirming around as if he were trying to roll, but it never got him anywhere. Mink was convinced that her mother loved R-Gee and no longer loved her. Why else would her mother let R-Gee take her place on the big bed, and then refuse to let her sleep by the window? And why else would her mother have left her alone—for so long?

Mink began digging through her box of toys, looking for the coloring book. She found it, and after a bit more searching, she also found three crayons. Lying flat on the floor, she began to color.

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