

# Mummy is poorly

by Zoe Robinson

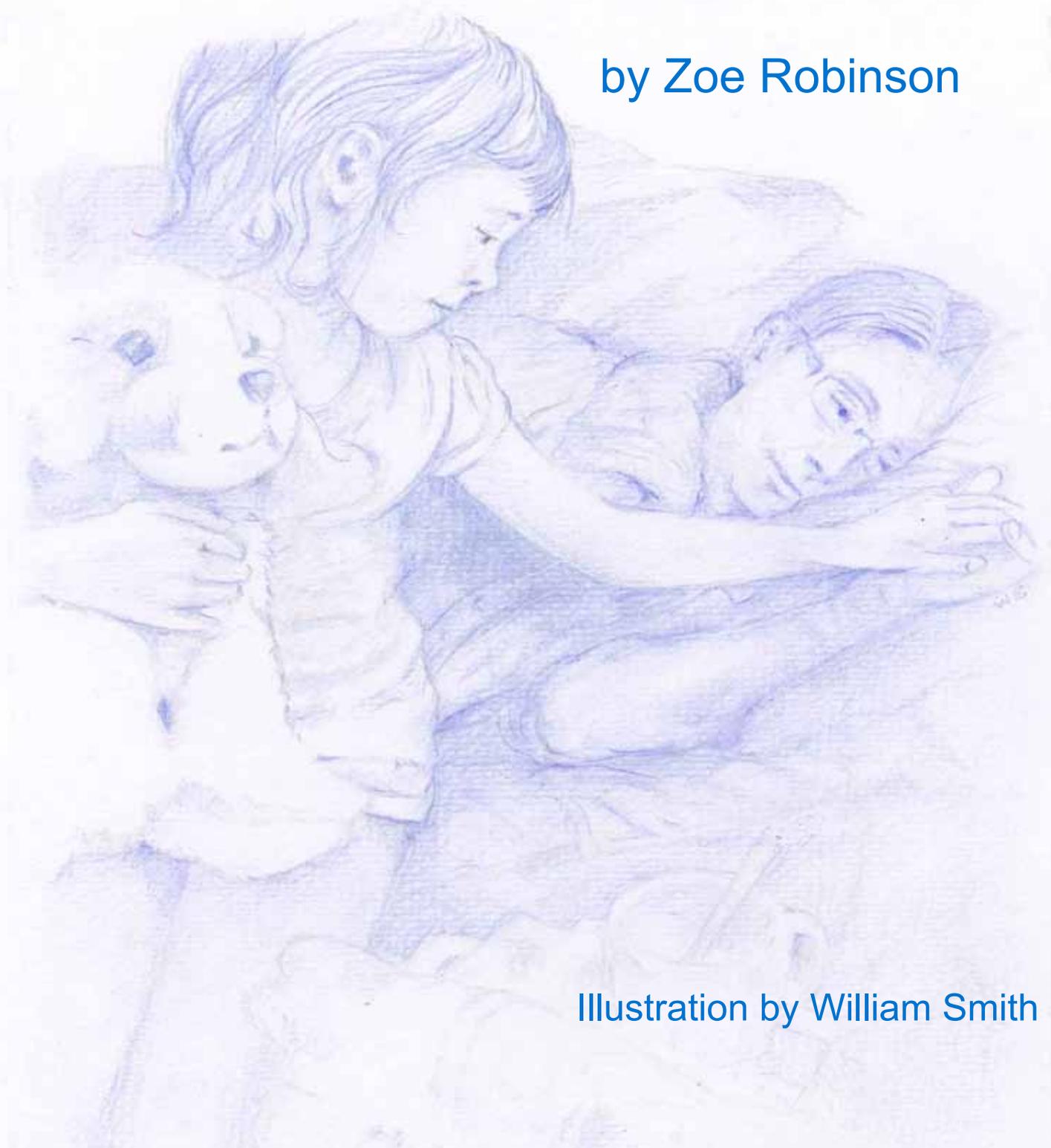


Illustration by William Smith



**Mummy is Poorly is a children's story about a little girl whose mother has mental health difficulties.**

**It was written with the aim of reassuring very young carers by providing them with a basic understanding of what would happen to them if their parents developed severe 'poorly thinking'.**

**The author, a single mother, wrote it from personal experience, having been a Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust service user.**

**It is hoped that the book will benefit families affected by mental illness or substance misuse, by helping to open up a dialogue with children. It should also remind mental health professionals of the need to engage with patients' children, who may have useful clinical information but no voice.**

*To L.J.R., my favourite girl in the whole universe.*

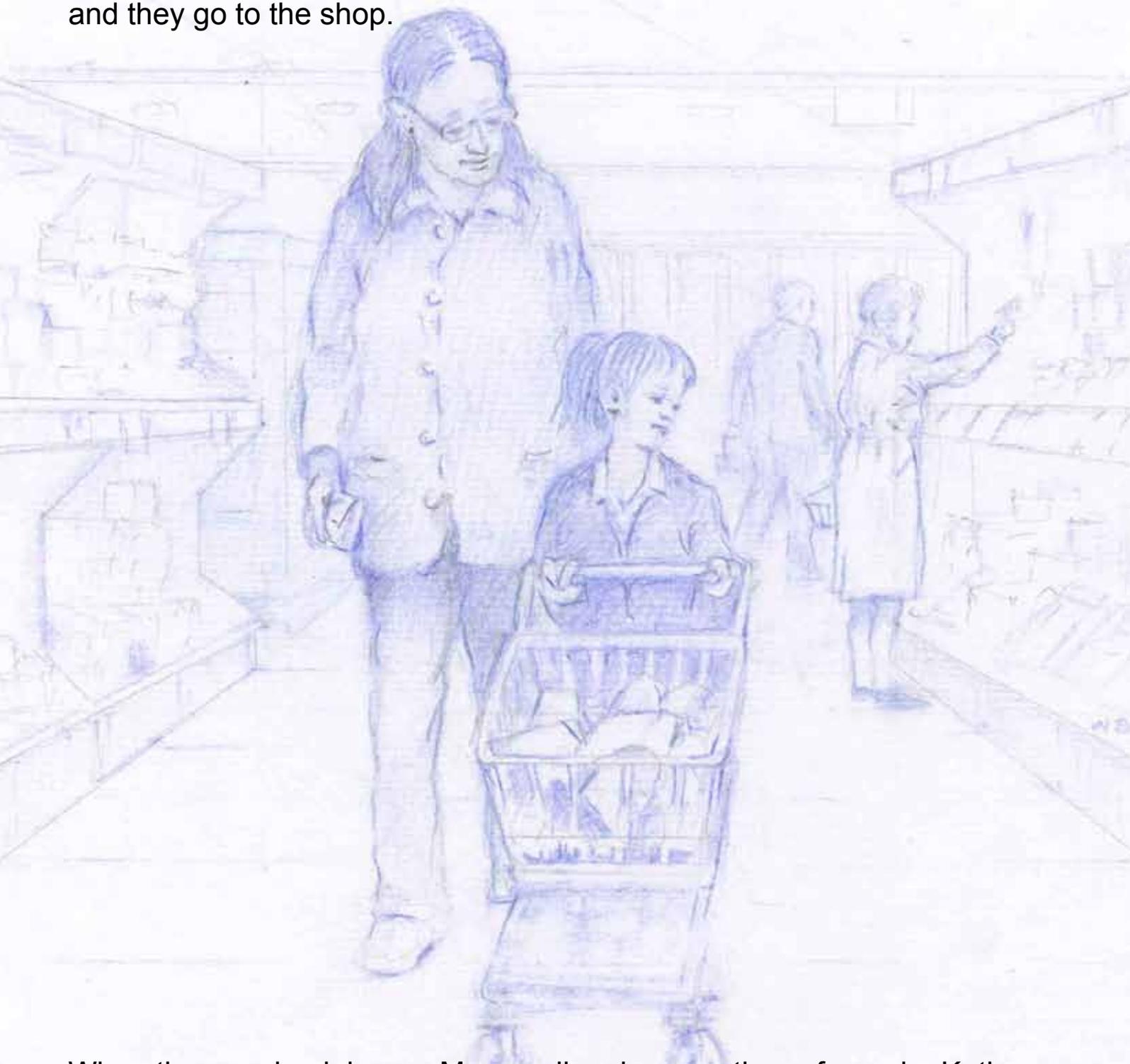
*I love you all the way round the world, to Australia and back, times by infinity. ZR*



Mummy is poorly. Mummy lies on the sofa. Katie plays with her train. Katie says, 'I'm hungry.' Mummy doesn't move. Katie goes into the kitchen. She looks in the fridge. There are two yoghurts – one for Katie and one for Mummy. Katie brings the yoghurts and two spoons to Mummy. They eat together then Mummy goes back to sleep.

'I'm still hungry,' says Katie. She goes back into the kitchen. She looks in the fridge but it is empty. She looks in the fruit bowl but it is empty. She looks in the cupboard but it is empty.

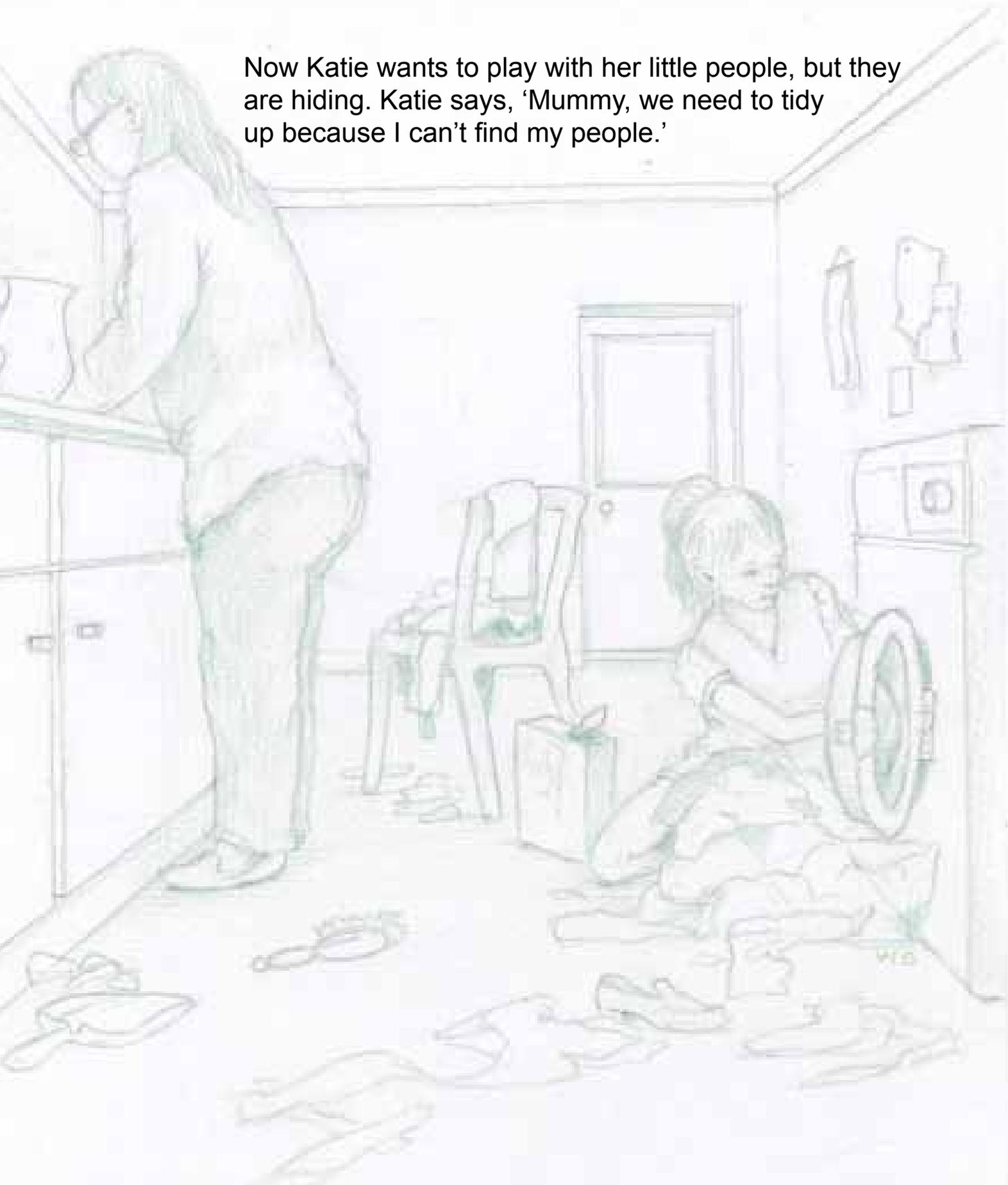
'We need to buy some food,' says Katie. Katie fetches the coats and shoes and Mummy's purse and the keys. 'Come on Mummy,' says Katie. 'We need to go to the shop.' Slowly Mummy puts on her coat and shoes and they go to the shop.



When they are back home, Mummy lies down on the sofa again. Katie takes the sandwiches out of the shopping bag. Mummy and Katie eat cheese sandwiches on the sofa. Mummy goes back to sleep. Katie draws pictures.

Then Katie says, 'You smell bad, Mummy. You need to get washed.' Katie fetches a towel and takes Mummy to the bathroom to have a bath. Afterwards, Mummy lies on the sofa again.

Now Katie wants to play with her little people, but they are hiding. Katie says, 'Mummy, we need to tidy up because I can't find my people.'



Katie puts the dirty clothes in the washing machine and Mummy puts the dirty dishes in the sink. Then Katie puts her toys in the toy box and Mummy puts rubbish in the bin. Then Mummy and Katie vacuum the carpet.

Then the phone rings. Katie answers it. It is their friend, Mandy. Mummy takes the phone and smiles. 'I'm fine,' says Mummy to Mandy. 'Katie is being such a good girl. Everything's ok.' Mummy puts the phone down and then she cries. Then she shouts at Katie. Then she lies on the sofa again. Katie reads books.



Then Mummy sits up. She says, 'Listen carefully, Katie. Mummy is very poorly. Mummy is going to phone the doctor now and get help. You're going to stay at Mandy's house until Mummy gets better. Won't that be exciting?'

Mummy phones Mandy. Then Mummy and Katie pack a bag. They put in some clothes, pyjamas, Katie's night time bear, her toothbrush and a picture of Mummy and Katie together.

Knock knock knock. It's Mandy at the door. Katie is excited. She is going on an adventure at Mandy's house.

Katie kisses Mummy goodbye and she holds on tight to Mandy's hand as they walk to Mandy's house.



Mandy's house is very noisy. Katie says Hello to Andy, who is the daddy. The three children are chasing the dog. It is a big family and Mandy likes to cook big meals. At dinner time, everyone sits round a table and tells jokes and stories. Mandy serves proper meat and vegetables and hot puddings.

Mandy likes to keep her family and her house clean. Katie shares a bath with the girl called Jenny. They splash and sing and play with Jenny's bath ponies. Andy washes the dishes and Mandy mops the floors.



At bedtime, Katie and Jenny have hot chocolate like in a café. The little boy and the baby have milk. Katie sleeps in Jenny's bunk bed. She is excited because she has never slept in a bunk bed before.

Mandy sticks the picture of Katie and Mummy together on the wall by the bed.

In the morning, Mandy makes porridge. Then she takes Katie and Jenny to school. The teacher is very nice to Katie and helps her make a Get Well Soon card for Mummy.

At home time, Mandy comes to fetch Katie from school. Katie has forgotten that she is living with Mandy. She starts crying because she wants to see her Mummy. Mandy hugs Katie and says, 'Listen carefully, Katie. Your Mummy phoned me today. She is still poorly, so the doctor says she has to have a little holiday. You will stay with me for one week – that's seven days.' Mandy draws seven boxes on some paper. Every morning, Katie can colour in one box. When all the boxes are coloured in, that will be the day that she will see Mummy again.

Katie smiles. Mandy sticks the paper on the wall next to the picture of Mummy and Katie together.





In the day time, Katie and Jenny go to school together. In the evenings and weekends, they have adventures. Sometimes they bake biscuits with Mandy. Sometimes they play football with Andy. Katie has learnt to skip. She is proud of herself and can't wait to tell Mummy.

Katie is having fun at Mandy's house. She misses Mummy but she is glad that she doesn't have to look after her. Mummy is being looked after by the doctors and Katie is colouring in a box every day.

It is Sunday. Today Mummy will come to fetch Katie. Katie is excited and is looking forward to seeing her again. Mandy packs Katie's bag. She puts in the clothes, pyjamas, Katie's night time bear, her toothbrush and the picture of Mummy and Katie together.

Then, knock knock knock. It's Mummy at the door! Hooray! Mummy comes in. She gives a big bunch of flowers to Mandy and a big hug to Katie. She is smiling and wearing clean clothes. Katie holds on tight to Mummy's hand as they walk back to their house.

It feels strange to be back home. Mummy makes a proper dinner and then she washes the dishes. But Katie doesn't know what to say to Mummy. Mummy plays a card game with Katie and then she reads her a story. But still Katie feels strange. Mummy says, 'Listen carefully, Katie.

Mummy was very poorly but now she is getting better.'

Then Mummy closes her eyes. 'Don't fall asleep, Mummy.' shouts Katie.

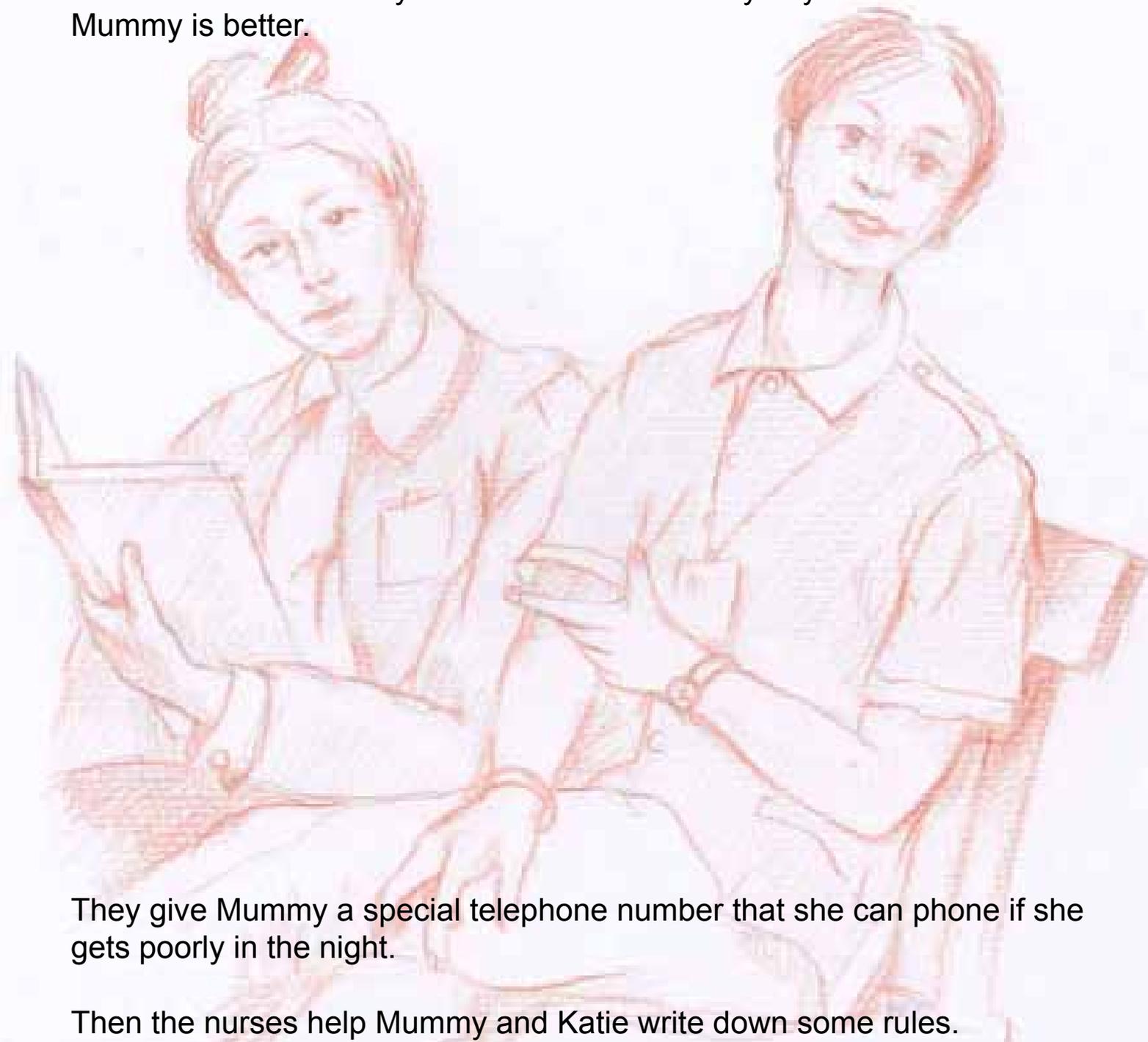




‘Sorry,’ says Mummy. ‘Let’s go to the park!’ Mummy gets their shoes and coats and her keys. She helps Katie to put on her gloves. In the park, Mummy chases Katie round the duck pond. Then Katie chases Mummy all the way to the swings. When Mummy pushes Katie on the swing, Katie asks, ‘How much better are you?’ Mummy explains that she is still a bit poorly but that she will get better. Mummy has to take some medicine every day. And Katie can go to Mandy’s house every weekend.

When they are home, they hear a knock knock knock. There are some ladies at the door.

They sit down and talk to Mummy. They are smiley and friendly. Katie shows them her little people. The ladies tell Katie that they are nurses and that they will come and visit every day until Mummy is better.



They give Mummy a special telephone number that she can phone if she gets poorly in the night.

Then the nurses help Mummy and Katie write down some rules. On Katie's poster they write, 'You must go to bed at seven o'clock. You must finish your dinner before you have pudding.' Then Katie helps the nurses write some rules for Mummy. On Mummy's poster they write, 'You must stay awake all day. You must not shout. You must cook proper meals for you and Katie.' Katie decorates the posters with her crayons and then Mummy sticks them on the wall.



At bed time, Mummy gives Katie a bath and reads her a story. Katie is happy because Mummy is a proper mummy again. The nurses will come and visit again tomorrow. And Katie will go to Mandy's house again at the weekend.

Katie falls asleep with a big smile on her face. Good night Katie. Sleep tight. Everything will be all right.

# Useful contacts for young carers

## Newcastle

Montague Community Centre  
Houghton Avenue  
Cowgate  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE5 3UT

**Tel:** 0191 271 4615

**Website:** [www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk)

**Email:** [nyc@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:nyc@barnardos.org.uk)

## North Tyneside

North Tyneside Carers' Centre  
3rd Floor YMCA Building

Church Way

North Shields

NE29 0AB

**Tel:** 0191 643 2298

**Website:** [www.northtynesidecarers.org.uk](http://www.northtynesidecarers.org.uk)

**Email:** [enquiries@ntcarers.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@ntcarers.co.uk)

## Northumberland

Northumberland Young Carers website contains lots of useful information and contacts for young carers.

**Website:** [www.northumberlandyoungcarers.org](http://www.northumberlandyoungcarers.org)

## Carers Trust

Help, support and advice for carers. Also has Young Carers site and postcode search to find local services.

**Website:** [www.carers.org](http://www.carers.org)

**Email:** [info@carers.org](mailto:info@carers.org)

## Sunderland

Sunderland Carers Centre

Thompson Park

Thompson Road

Southwick

Sunderland

SR5 1SF

**Tel:** 0191 549 3768

**Website:** [www.sunderlandcarers.co.uk](http://www.sunderlandcarers.co.uk)

**Email:** [youngcarers@sunderlandcarers.co.uk](mailto:youngcarers@sunderlandcarers.co.uk)

## South Tyneside

South Tyneside TEN

9/10 Waverley

Market Dock

South Shields

NE33 1LE

**Tel:** 0191 427 2790

**Website:** [www.southtynesideten.com](http://www.southtynesideten.com)

**Email:** [stten@southtynesideten.com](mailto:stten@southtynesideten.com)

## Gateshead

Carers Trust, Tyne and Wear Crossroads

Carers Service

The Old School

Smailes Lane, Highfield

Rowlands Gill, NE39 2DB

**Tel:** 01207 549 780

**Website:** [www.carerstrusttw.org.uk](http://www.carerstrusttw.org.uk)

**Email:** [youngcarers@carerstrusttw.org.uk](mailto:youngcarers@carerstrusttw.org.uk)

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