

STORY

My BIG Little Sister

By Tina Williams, illustrated by Rose Forshall

It was a cold and snowy weekday morning. Ruby wanted to play 'dressing up'. Tom wanted to ride on his scooter. Mum wanted Tom and Ruby to get ready for school. The goldfish wanted to be fed and Nan wanted her breakfast. Nan lived next door; she'd broken her leg so Mum was cooking her meals.

While Mum got ready for work and Tom got ready for school, Ruby tried on Mum's lipstick. Standing on her dressing up box and looking down at Tom, she said,

"I'm bigger than you!"



"No you're not", said Tom, "I'm bigger than you and older than you 'cause you're my little sister!"

"I'm your BIG little sister", said Ruby.

"If you say so", said her brother, "But wearing Mum's lipstick won't make you bigger or older; it will just get you into trouble!"

And it did! Mum was cross. She wiped the lipstick off Ruby's mouth.

"Tidy up the dressing up clothes, they're all over the floor", said Mum. "Then get in the car or we'll be late for school".

On the way to school Ruby noticed other cars, bigger than their car.

"When I grow up" she said, "I'm going to have a big, long car with black windows". She also thought she'd like a big house with ten bedrooms and a swimming pool.

"How will you pay for it?" asked Tom.

"I'm going to be a famous pop star", said Ruby.

When Mum had dropped Tom and Ruby at school, she drove to work.

Mum worked as a dentist.



Ruby didn't think that looking at peoples' teeth all day was much fun. She thought she'd like a more glamorous job. By the end of the school day, she'd decided that she'd like to be a model when she grew up. By the time they'd arrived home, she wanted to be a famous hairdresser.

Ruby looked around for the biggest pair of scissors she could find.

"Come here Tom", said Ruby. "I want to cut your hair!"

"No!" said Tom.

"Then we'll play something else", said Ruby. But Tom didn't want to play any of Ruby's games.

Ruby was bored and then she was naughty. She took Mum's new dress and her best high-heeled shoes out of the wardrobe and put them on. She then took Mum's red lipstick and covered her mouth and face with it. She looked in the mirror.

"I look like a grown-up", she said.



"Ruby! What are you doing in my new dress and shoes?" shouted Mum. "Take them off!"

"But I want to be a grown-up", said Ruby.

By bedtime Ruby had decided to be a princess, then a ballerina and finally a pop star again. Tom was allowed to stay up later because he was older.

"It's not fair", said Ruby. "When I'm a grown-up, I'll go to bed whatever time I like! I wish I was a grown-up now!"

"You should be careful what you wish for Ruby," said Mum. "Good night". And she turned off the light and shut the door.

That night Ruby tossed and turned in bed. When she woke up the next day she felt very strange; changes seemed to have happened in the night. She looked in the mirror; she seemed taller and older. Hanging up was Mum's new dress. She tried it on; it fitted perfectly; so did Mum's high heeled shoes.

"I'm a grown-up", Ruby called out, "I've grown up over night!"

Tom was not impressed. "You can't get to school like that!" he said.

"Grown-ups don't go to school!" replied Ruby.

"But what will you do?" asked Tom.

Ruby knew exactly what she'd do. "First I'll go to the hairdressers and get my hair done, then I'll buy some new clothes, lots of them; in pink! Then I'll go on 'X Factor' and when I win, I'll buy a big house and marry a prince and....."

"Morning Ruby", said Mum.

"Look Mum", said Ruby, "I've grown up. I'm a big girl now!"

"That's right", said Mum, "A big grown-up girl old enough to be left on her own".

It was then that Tom and Ruby noticed that Mum was carrying a suitcase. "I'm going on holiday", she said.

"But who's going to look after us?" asked Tom.

"Ruby", said Mum. "She's a grown-up now and she can look after you and Nan".

"But what about your job?" asked Tom.

"Oh, Ruby will be doing that", said Mum. "That's what grown-ups do! They go to work to earn money to buy food and to pay bills."

Ruby didn't want to work but Mum had gone to catch her plane and Tom needed taking to school.

Ruby had a horrible day. Driving the car was difficult and dangerous; being a dentist was even harder and the high-heeled shoes that Ruby liked so much were useless for work; they hurt her toes. To make matters worse a lady had got very cross when she took out the wrong tooth!

Tom had had a great day at school. He'd had sausages for lunch, Ruby's favourite, then a rehearsal for the end of term play, and an extra long play time in the snow making giant sized snow balls.

Ruby was tired, but they still had to go to the supermarket to get food for tea. They found everything they wanted, a pizza and ice cream for Tom and new clothes and make up for Ruby. They were at the till with all their things but Ruby couldn't find her purse.

"Where is it?" demanded Tom.

"I don't know," cried Ruby, "I must have lost it! Now we haven't got any money! We'll have to leave everything here!"

Ruby drove Tom home from the supermarket. They didn't speak.

They hoped there would be some food in the fridge at home but they only found some frozen peas and some mouldy cheese. Ruby was so tired she didn't know what to do.

To make matters worse there was a knock at the door and Nan arrived.

"Nan!" said Ruby, 'You shouldn't be walking with your broken leg. Sit down."

"Well, I got tired of waiting for my tea", grumbled Nan.

"I'm really hungry", said Tom.

"Come on", said Nan. I've got a tin of biscuits next door.

Tom and Nan went to find the biscuits but the door slammed on their way back and they got locked out. Then it started to snow again! They called out to Ruby but she was too tired and too cross to open the door for them; she was busy making a list of all the things she had to do the next day. She heard Tom and Nan calling out to her.

"Help! Help!" shouted Tom.

"Let us in", shouted Nan. "It's snowing!"

Ruby didn't open the door. She lay down and went to sleep. All night it snowed.

Ruby woke up screaming. "Noooooooooooo!" Mum rushed into the bedroom.

"Ruby! What's the matter?" said Mum giving Ruby a hug.



"Mum!" cried Ruby. "Why are you here? I thought you were on holiday."

"Chance would be a fine thing!" said Mum, "It's a long time till holidays. We've got to get through the winter first."

"But you went away" said Ruby, "You went on holiday without us!"

"How could I do that when I have to go to work?" said Mum.

"Because I did your job for you", said Ruby. "Because now I'm grown-up". She looked in the mirror. "Was grown-up," she said, noticing that she was a little girl again. She then remembered Tom and Nan.

"Mum, I've done something terrible, I left Tom and Nan out in the snow all night. They'll have died of cold. Oh no! No! I'm so sorry. Poor Tom. Poor Nan." Ruby burst into tears.

"Ruby, hush now, it's all right", said Mum. "I think you must have had a bad dream. Nan's fine. I've just been round to see her and I certainly wouldn't go on holiday without you and Tom".

On hearing them talking about holidays, Tom appeared and Mum explained that Ruby had had a bad dream

"I dreamed that I was a grown-up", said Ruby.

"What were you?" said Tom, "A hairdresser?"

"No", said Ruby.

"A pop star?" asked Tom.

"No", said Ruby.

"A princess?" asked Tom.

"No", said Ruby. "I was a dentist. I might be a dentist when I grow-up if I learn to take teeth out properly." Mum looked very pleased.

"Or I might be an astronaut", said Ruby.

"Right", said Mum "Who's going to take Nan her breakfast while I scrape the snow off the car?"

"I will", said Tom.

"And who's going to feed the goldfish?"

"I will", said Ruby. "I'm so glad it was only a dream and I'm not really grown-up yet."

"Too right!" said Tom. "You can't be grown up before me, you're my little sister".

Ruby jumped onto the dressing up box so that she could look down on him. "I'm your BIG Little sister", she said.

The End.



The End.