

YOUR *Collected* ROOM

AN ORIGINAL SHORT STORY



The Dollhouse That Added a Room

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A story for the cozy little girl bedroom

Clara's dollhouse had six rooms.

It had always had six rooms. Two downstairs, three upstairs, and one tiny attic tucked beneath the sloping roof. Clara knew, because she had rearranged them roughly four hundred times. The kitchen had been a bakery, a veterinary clinic, and once, briefly, a detective office. The upstairs bedroom currently belonged to a wooden rabbit named Captain Buttons. The attic was full of furniture Clara couldn't decide what to do with.

So when she walked past the dollhouse one Saturday morning and noticed seven windows, she stopped.

Backed up.

Counted again.

“One, two, three, four, five, six... seven.”

There was a narrow window beneath the roof that had definitely not been there yesterday. It glowed faintly yellow — not bright like a lamp, more like someone had left a night-light on.

Clara opened the dollhouse. Six rooms. She shut it. Seven windows. Opened it again. Six rooms.

“That's not possible,” she muttered.

She pulled out every tiny chair, bed, table, rabbit, teacup, and rug, certain she'd find the seventh room hiding somewhere. Still six. Then she noticed something behind the attic wardrobe: a door, painted pale blue, so small she'd almost missed it, with a brass knob no bigger than a lentil.

She touched it. The knob turned. The door opened.

And Clara fell through.

Not forward exactly. Not down, either. One moment she was kneeling on her bedroom rug. The next she landed with a soft whump on a pile of enormous cushions.

The room around her was full-sized. Or maybe she was doll-sized. She wasn't sure which was stranger.

A window glowed with golden morning light. Shelves lined one wall, packed with books. A soft chair sat beneath a blanket, and a little table held a mug of something warm that smelled like cinnamon.

Clara had spent that whole morning being told to clear half her dresser and “be flexible” because her cousin was coming to stay. Flexible usually meant somebody else got what they wanted.

Now, somehow, the dollhouse had made her a room where no one could bother her.

“This,” she said, “is excellent.”

She read three chapters of a book she'd never seen before, drank the cinnamon drink, and wrapped herself in the softest blanket in the world. When she finally climbed back through the blue door, she tumbled onto her bedroom rug — and the dollhouse looked completely ordinary again. Six rooms. Six windows.

The next morning, there were seven.

This room was bright and messy — jars of paintbrushes on the windowsill, rolls of paper against the wall, beads and clay and yarn and glue across three enormous tables. Yesterday Clara had wanted quiet. Today she was bored out of her mind. She painted a fox wearing boots, built a cardboard castle, and made something out of clay that was supposed to be a bird and looked more like a potato.

By Monday, Clara had started testing it on purpose.

“If I want a swimming pool,” she announced to the dollhouse, “will there be one?”

There wasn't. Instead: a desk, index cards, a giant chalkboard, and a little wooden model of the solar system — because she had a science presentation the next day and hadn't started it. She practiced four times. By the last run-through she barely glanced at her notes. She got an A.

That afternoon, Clara sat cross-legged in front of the dollhouse. “So you don't give me what I want.”

The blue door appeared anyway.

This time the room was almost empty — a single lamp beside a bed, rain tapping the window. No books. No crafts. No snacks. Just quiet.

Clara sat on the bed, and her stomach went tight, because she suddenly knew exactly why the room was empty. Her best friend Mia had barely spoken to her all day. At lunch, Mia had sat with someone else, and Clara had spent the rest of the day pretending she didn't care.

She thought about Friday — how she'd promised Mia they'd work together on their history project, then joined another group instead because they were doing it as a game show, and never told her.

“Oh,” Clara said, and covered her face. “Oh, no.”

The room didn't answer. It didn't need to.

She climbed back through the door, found her tablet, and typed before she could talk herself out of it: I think I hurt your feelings. I'm sorry I didn't tell you before I changed groups. Can we talk tomorrow?

She stared at the screen until it buzzed.

Yes. I was really mad. But yes.

For nearly three weeks after that, no extra room appeared. Clara checked every morning and started to worry she'd broken something. Then, on a Friday night after her cousin had finally gone home, the seventh window glowed again.

She hurried to the attic and opened the little blue door.

The room on the other side looked almost like her own bedroom. A bed. A shelf of books. A basket overflowing with craft supplies. A crooked clay bird that was unmistakably a potato.

And by the window, two chairs.

Not one.

Clara sat down in hers, and after a moment, so did Mia — because of course it was Mia, curled up in the second chair like she'd always been there.

Neither of them said anything about how strange that was. There didn't seem to be a need to.

The next morning, the dollhouse had six rooms again, and stayed that way for a long while. Then one rainy Tuesday, Clara came home, dropped her backpack by the door, and caught a faint golden light beneath the attic roof.

She smiled and went to find out what it was this time.

The End

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