

Molly The Ragdoll

# Into The Big Unknown



Written & Illustrated By  
Jeff DeMarco

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*“Dedicated to my family, friends, and those who encouraged me to keep going in the face of the unknown.”*



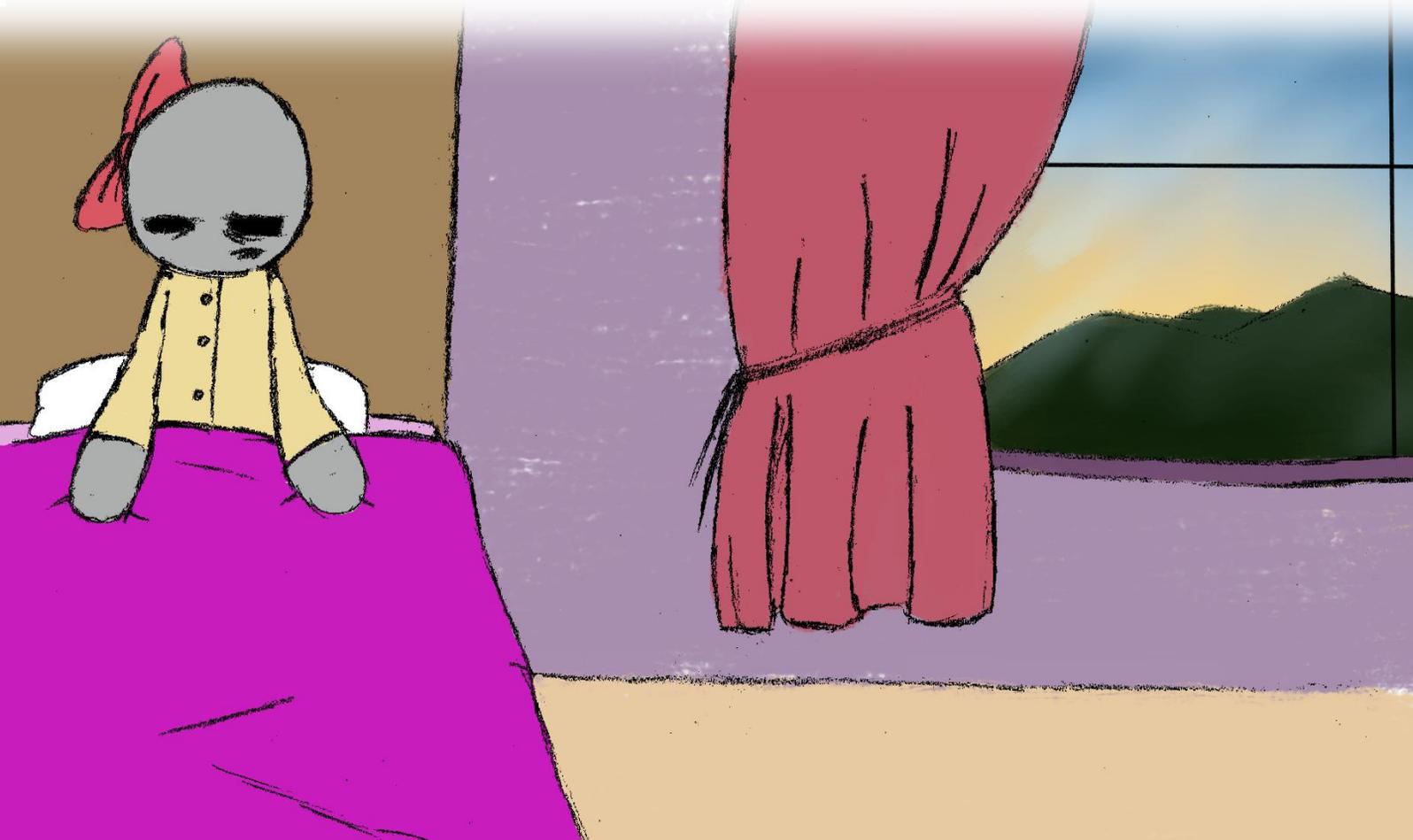


COCK  
-A-  
DOODLE

DOOOOOOOOO!!

"Molly!!! Rise and shine!!!!"

Molly slowly rose from her bed. She looked out her window to see the sun was barely even up!



"Mom," she said, still half-asleep. "The sun isn't out yet! Why are you waking me up?"

"Don't you remember? We're going camping today!"



Molly jolted awake. She had forgotten all about her camping trip!  
"Mom! I forgot about it! I don't have anything packed for it!"



Molly's mom grinned.

“Don't worry, I took care of all of that for you! Now, come on and let's eat breakfast! We need to get going!”



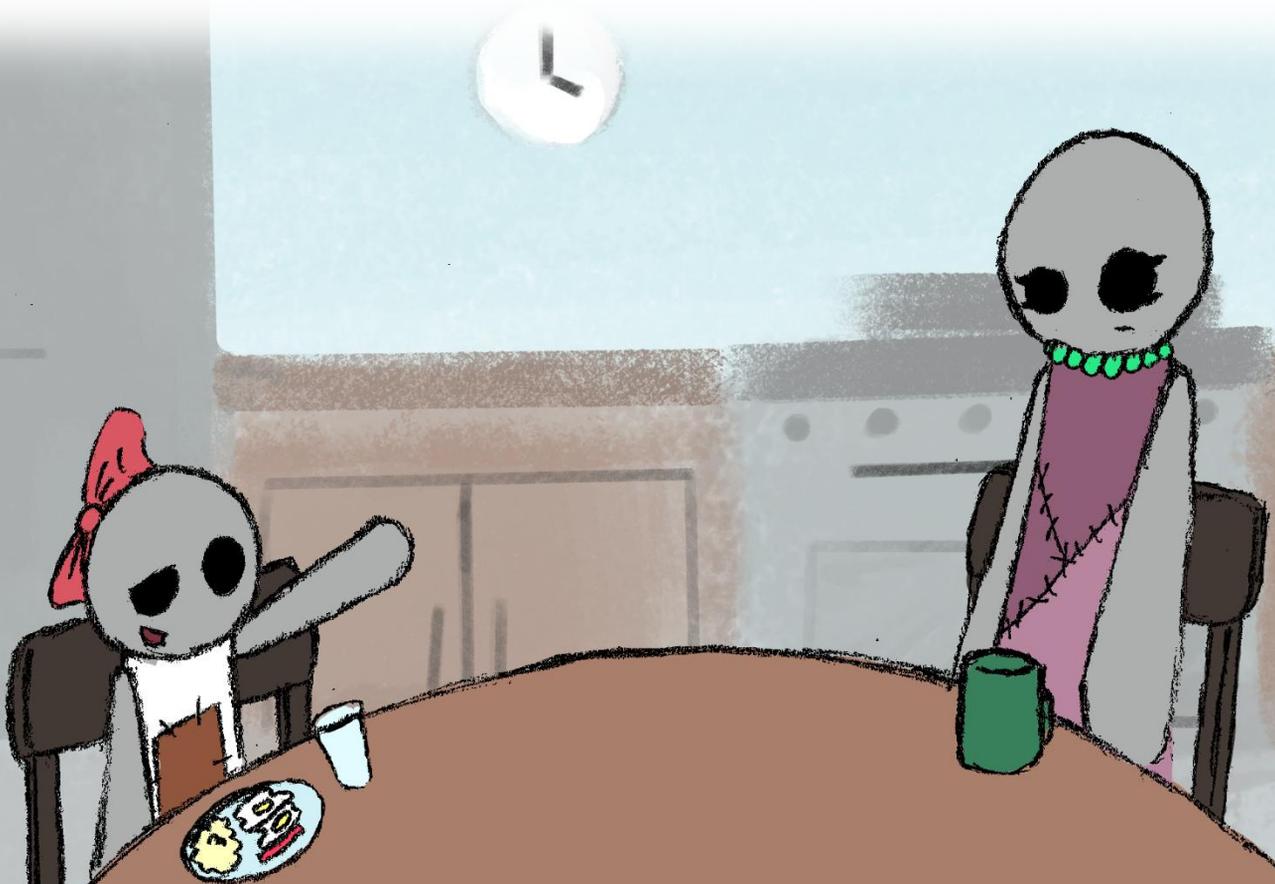
The two sat at the table. Molly wanted to be excited, and she thought that she would love the idea of camping in the great outdoors... but honestly? Now that the day had arrived...? She just wanted to stay home, in her comfy room, where she knew exactly where her things were...



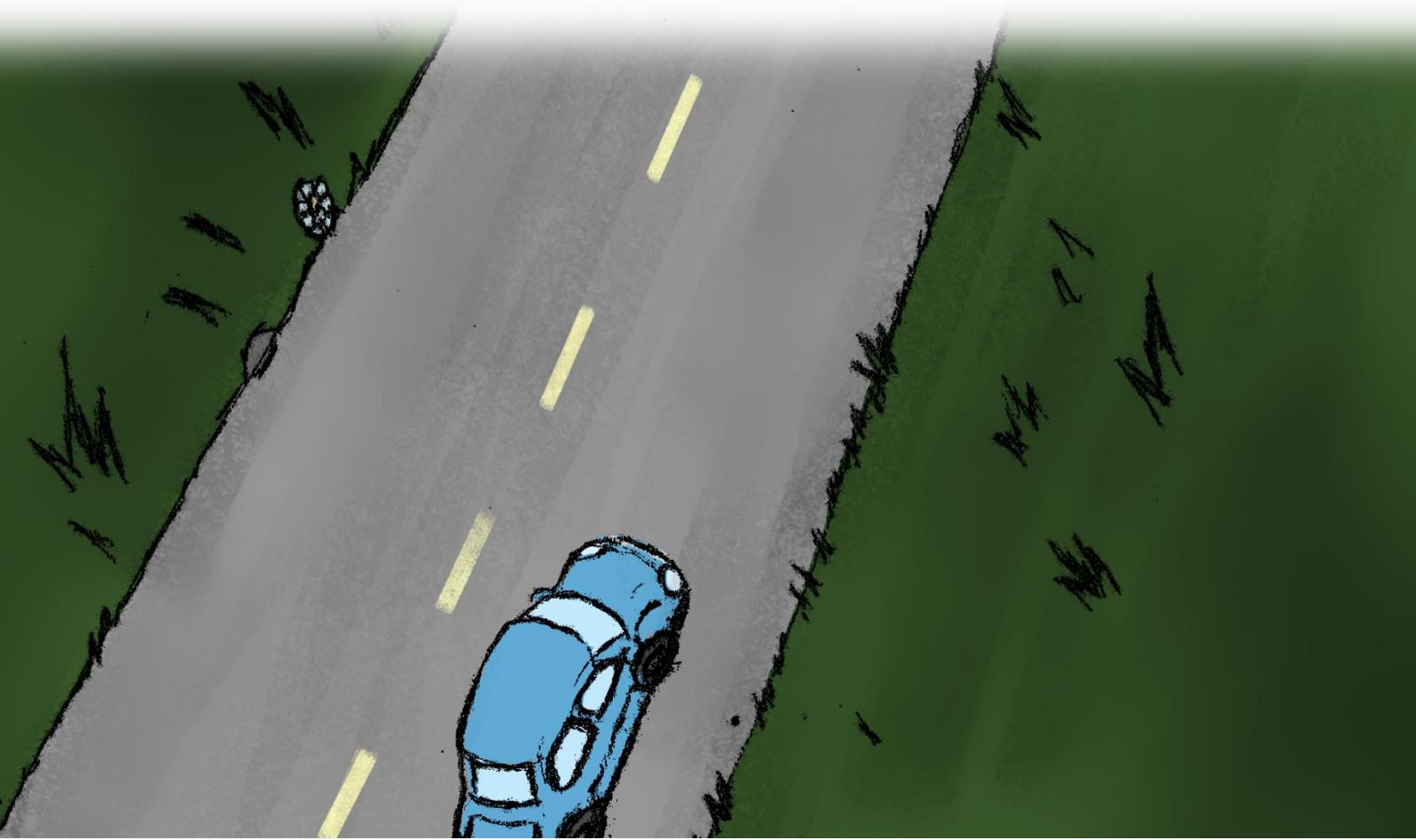
"Molly honey are you okay? You've barely touched your breakfast this morning!"



"Mom..." Molly began to express her nervousness about the upcoming trip. But when she thought of how happy and excited her mom was, she knew she couldn't let her know. She shrugged. "...I'm fine! Just too stoked to eat!"



The two drove through the morning fog to the campgrounds. Her mom sang loudly to tunes coming from the radio- Molly wanted to join in but couldn't muster up the excitement. Her mind was elsewhere...

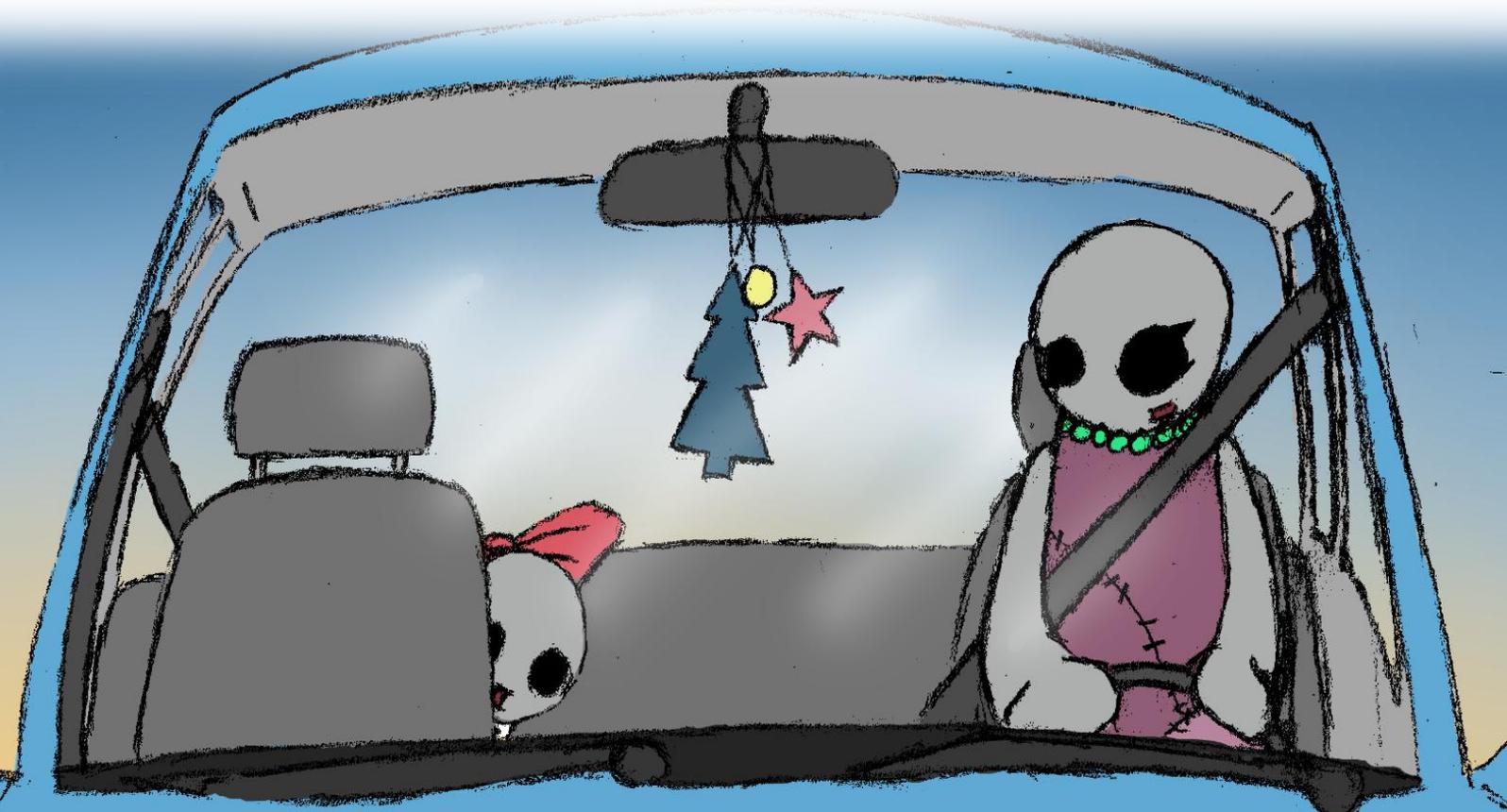


"Mom?"

"Yes dear?" She turned down the radio and looked at her daughter.

"What if we get there and I can't sleep?"

"Then I'll hold you and sing to you, just like I used to when you were little and couldn't sleep."



"...what if the animals don't like us trying to get cozy in their homes?"

"We won't disrupt anything I promise!"

"What if we get lost and can't find our way back?!"

"Molly," her mom said reassuringly, "I promise I'll keep us safe and not let us get lost."



She smiled at her mom, wanting to find comfort in her words.  
"Molly?" Her mom asked. "Are you scared of this trip and being away from home?"



"...maybe a little."

"I understand. If it gets to be too much you tell me, and I'll take you right home. But let's try it- you might have fun!"

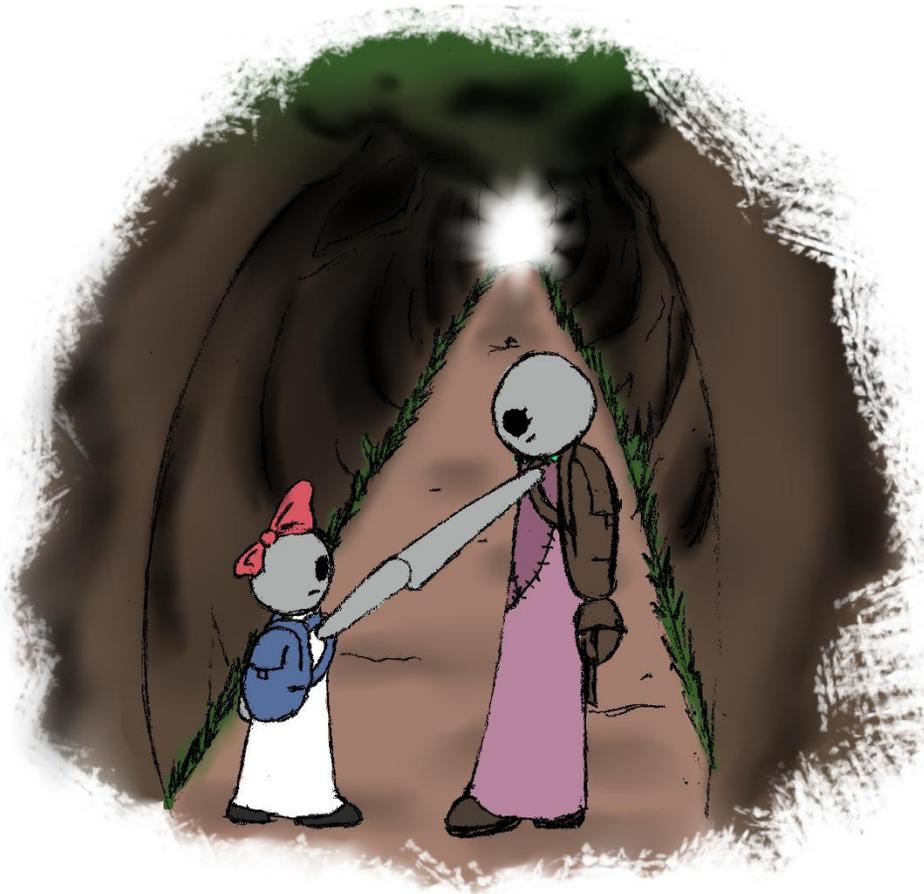
Molly nodded with a smile. She hoped her mom was right.

They arrived and began to unload their supplies. Molly readied her bag and joined her mom on the trail, a mixture of excitement and dread washing over her.

"Don't you just love the great outdoors, Molly?" Her mom began, "I love being out here with nature! I'm so excited for all the fun we're going to have!"



She looked up at her mom. "Yeah... the woods look kind of scary though..."  
The two stood before the mouth of the forest.  
"Just hold my hand and stay close and we'll get through this, okay? We won't get lost."



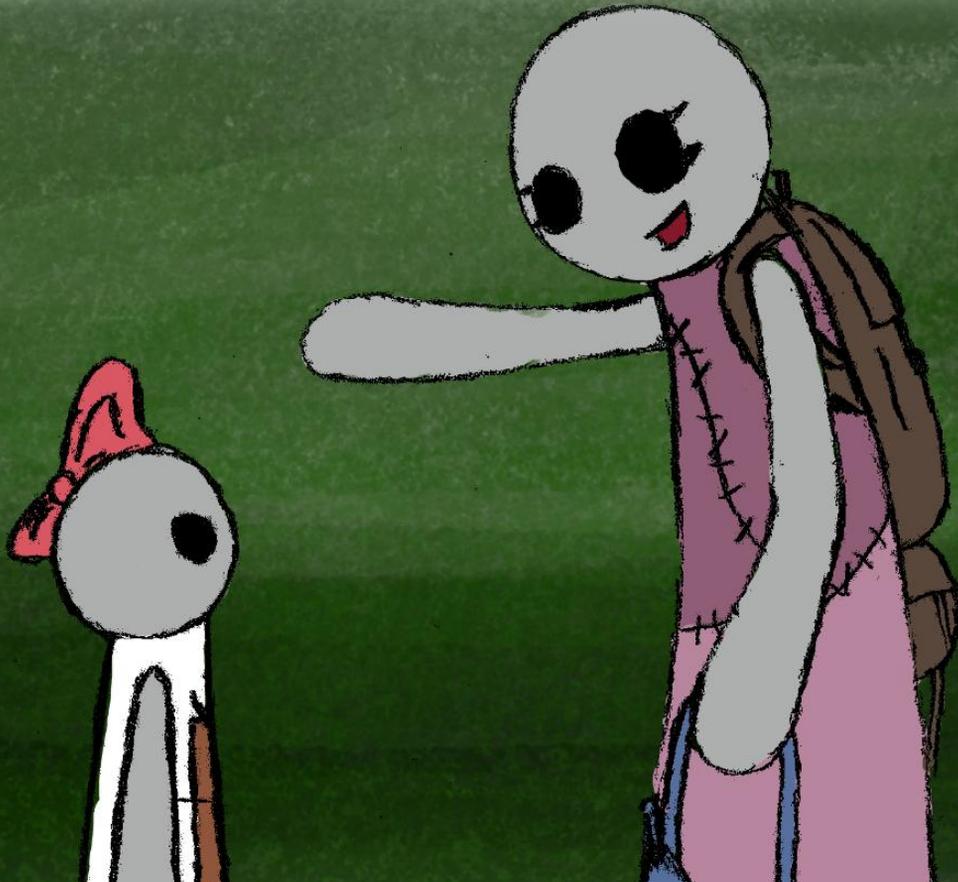
Molly closed her eyes, gulped, and took her mother's hand. The two of them made their way into the forest. She **WANTED** to enjoy this and just embrace the adventure...  
...but it was all so strange and unfamiliar...



"Here we are!!!" Molly's mom exclaimed as they reached their destination. Molly looked around the campsite, curious but unsure what to make of it.



"Molly, why don't you poke around a bit and look for some sticks for a fire?  
I'm going to get this tent set up for us!"  
Molly nodded and began to explore the area around them.







HOO!  
HOO!



Startled, she dropped the sticks to the ground.  
"EEEEEP!" She let out a small yelp. Two, massive glowing eyes stared at her from the darkness in the woods. Then, MANY pairs opened around her.

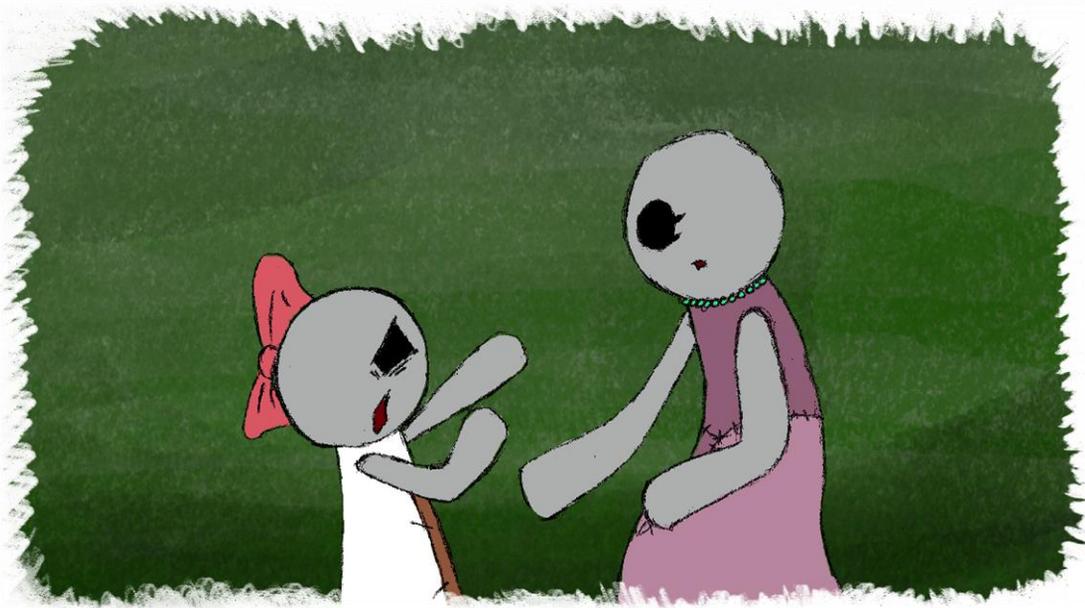


Mooooo!!!



Molly ran screaming from the clearing, startled beyond words. Her mom caught her with open arms.

“MOLLY! What is it?!”



“Mom I can’t do this!” She said panting, tears forming in her eyes. “I’ve seen so many scary things already and I’m just not comfortable here! Mom, can we go home? Please?”

Her mom wiped the tears from her eyes and held her close. “Molly, let’s go get those sticks and let me show you something.” Molly nodded, scared. She held tight to her mother’s arm as they walked back to the sticks.





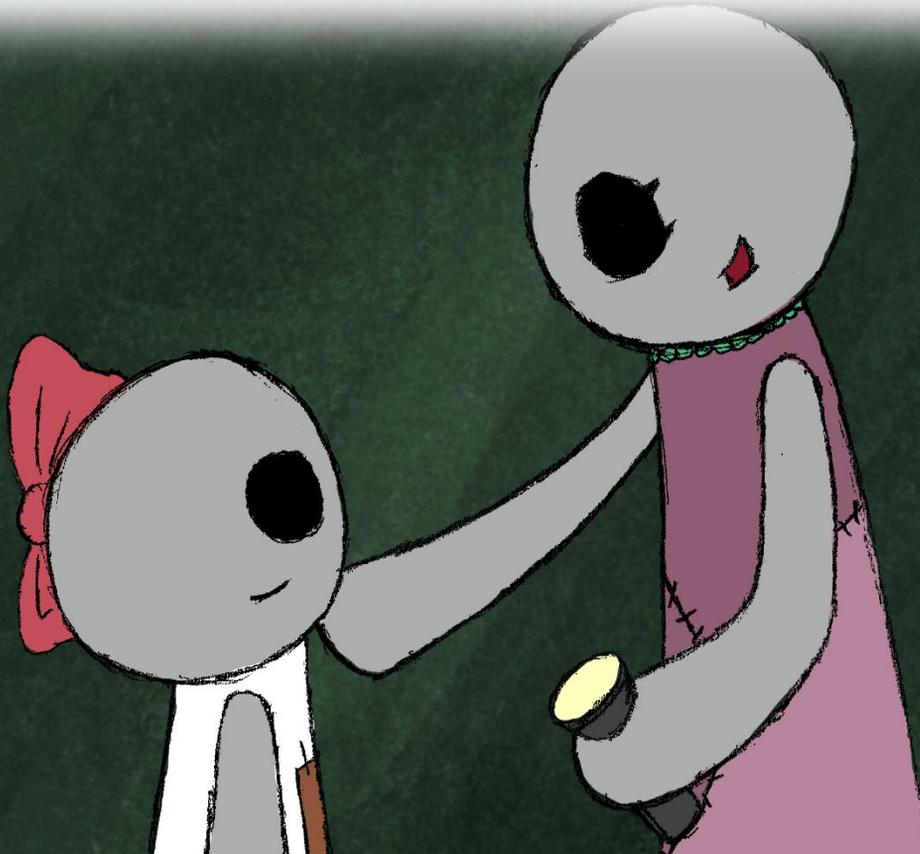
Her mother aimed the beam of the flashlight into the trees.  
“See- look!” Molly opened one eye slowly.



These weren't scary.  
They were cute owls, squirrels, and other tree critters.  
Innocent creatures that were just living their lives.  
She sniffled before wiping away the rest of her tears.



“See? It’s okay dear- come on, let’s go take these to the fire. I’ve finished setting everything up and I’d love for you to have smores with me. After that, if you still want to go home, I promise, we will leave.” She straightened up Molly’s bow before hugging her reassuringly. Molly nodded and the two made their way to the fire.



They roasted up smores, laughing and giggling and enjoying the peaceful dusk air.  
It wasn't as scary now- if anything, she was even finding herself having fun with it all!





As the sun finally began to fade behind the rolling hills, the two cuddled together by the fire under the stars:

Molly felt the world around her ease into a calm as she began to relax, listening peacefully to the sounds of the big unknown that surrounded them.

# The End



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