

3. Benny's Room

Benny appears in bed. He's finished a drawing.

Mom...Mom!

BENNY

flicker orange

It's finished.

Mia walks to him.

Look.

MIA

Wow, it's beautiful.

BENNY

Do you see what it is?

MIA

It's a landscape.

BENNY

It's a planet.

MIA

Oh, is it Mars?

BENNY

No, it's not from our solar system. It's a planet from the 11th dimension.

MIA

There are eleven dimensions?

BENNY

Of course. Everyone knows that.

MIA

They do?

BENNY

Mom. There are a multiverse of universes which adds up to eleven dimensions. Like eleven bubbles that float around. And our universe is like the skin on one of the bubbles and we're like flies trapped on the skin of the bubble like fly paper.

MIA

Fly paper.

Yeah. BENNY

That doesn't sound pleasant. MIA

Mom, it's the way it is. BENNY

Sounds like a sticky situation. MIA

Oh God. BENNY

Okay, what's the name of the planet? MIA

Eleven. BENNY

Planet Eleven? MIA

Yup. BENNY

I love the colors. Complimentary. MIA

What do you mean? BENNY

MIA
You know all about eleven dimensions and you don't know about complimentary colors. Green compliments red, purple-yellow, and--

BENNY
Orange and blue. That's what I used. Do you see anything different? Look Mom.

MIA
I'm looking.

I've moved on.

BENNY

She looks at him blankly

No more stick figures.

You're right. I don't see any stick figures.

MIA

Nope..

BENNY

That's a big change.

MIA

Yeah, I've moved on.

BENNY

May I have it?

MIA

I drew it for you and Dad. Don't hang it on the fridge.

BENNY

I'll find a good place for it. Maybe in the living room. I'll get it framed.

MIA

You don't have to do that.

BENNY

I want to.

MIA

Do you think Dad will like it?

BENNY

I'll be suprised if he doesn't.

MIA

It feels alive to me. Like it vibrates...I can almost hear it. Weird.

BENNY

MIA

It would be a fun place to visit.

BENNY

Okay Mom, don't get carried away. Besides, you couldn't survive in the eleventh dimension. You're entire body would be stretched out into a piece of string that would go on for infinity. That's pretty much forever.

MIA

Like Mozzarella.

BENNY

What?

MIA

String cheese.

BENNY

Ha ha. No.

MIA

Ha ha, Yes.

BENNY

Mom.

MIA

Benny.

BENNY

Okay. But I don't think mozzarella belongs in the eleventh dimension.

MIA

I would stretch like mozzarella, right?

BENNY

I guess so.

MIA

Still sounds unpleasant...What do you think about hitting the hay?

BENNY

I'll stay up and draw for a while.

MIA

I don't want you to exhaust yourself.

BENNY

Maybe it'll be worth a lot of money some day. You know, when an artist dies their art gets more money. You and Dad can sell my art and become millionaires.

MIA

Benny, what about tomorrow? I don't want you to wear yourself out.

BENNY

Tomorrow wears me out.

MIA

I know, Honey. We'll get through this. You're the most courageous person I know.

BENNY

I'm gonna stay up and draw. It doesn't matter whether I'm tired...after...the treatment wipes me out. But I can draw now.

MIA

Please, Honey.

BENNY

It's my life.

MIA

Yes it is.

BENNY

I won't stay up too late. Promise.

MIA

Thank you.

BENNY

Is Dad coming to the hospital with us?

MIA

I'm not sure.

BENNY

I don't want him to come.

Why not?
MIA

He's not very nice to the doctor.
BENNY

He's got a lot on his mind.
MIA

Will you talk to him? Tell him not to yell at everyone.
BENNY

I will... You know he's only worried about you.
MIA

I know.
BENNY

Oh my god!
MIA

What?
BENNY

Oh my god!
MIA

Mom, what?
BENNY

You have a birthday coming up, don't you?
MIA

Oh yeah, I forgot.
BENNY

Twelve years old. How did that happen? I feel so old.
MIA

You're not old.
BENNY

MIA
What do you want for your birthday?

BENNY
Nothing.

MIA
What? Nothing is not a birthday present.

BENNY
I don't need anything.

MIA
I want you to have something special.

BENNY
I'm only turning twelve.

MIA
You only turn twelve once.

BENNY
Mom, you only turn any age once.

MIA
Twelve is special. You're becoming a teenager.

BENNY
Is it special because it's probably my last birthday?

MIA
Don't say that. It's not your last...you'll start your treatment tomorrow. It'll be hard but you'll be okay. It's just a little setback.

BENNY
Okay...but don't make such a big deal about my birthday. Twelve-year-old boys don't want their mothers to make a big deal about it.

MIA
Think about what you want.

BENNY

I don't know...I guess I'd love some more markers. I'm running out of the good colors. And maybe another sketchbook.

MIA

Markers and sketchbooks are easy. Think about something else. For me. Okay?

BENNY

Okay.

MIA

Thank you.

She hugs him and leaves.

BENNY

Mom...

He holds up the drawing.

You forgot the drawing.

MIA

Oh.

She takes it and looks at it.

flicker blue

Benny's bed recedes.

flicker orange