

Justin Cleans His Room

When Justin returned with the broom, all the clothes from the closet were piled on his bed. Shoes, socks, balls, even games he had stored in back of his closet were strewn about the room.

Anthony doesn't know any more than I do about getting closets neat, Justin thought.

He got busy sweeping the closet floor, wondering how he would ever get all that stuff put away before Grandpa came.

It was well past lunchtime and they had only half of the things back in place. Exhausted and starving, Justin finally decided that his room looked no better than at first. And with the balls, socks, and extra clothes hangers strewn about outside the closet, maybe it looked even worse.

He jabbed his hands into his pockets and sighed. Why couldn't he get his room straight?

His mind flashed to Hadiya's room. Neat as a pin. Evelyn was not as fussy as Hadiya, but her room was far neater than Justin now thought his would ever be.

He looked at Anthony sitting on the lumpy bed, with his elbows on his knees, his hands cupping his face.

"Let's stop now and get some lunch."

Anthony quickly said, "I gotta go home now."

Justin suddenly knew that Anthony had to be feeling as exhausted, frustrated, and disappointed as he was. He remembered Anthony's words about women's work. Maybe this is work that only women and girls can do, he thought, and went to see Anthony out. "We'll play tomorrow, OK?" he said.

"I can't. We're going away for the weekend. My family."

Justin said goodbye and went to the kitchen to find something to eat. He found Hadiya in the kitchen. Whatever she was cooking smelled delicious.