

Two Messy Friends

By Barbara Bottner

Grace Marshall is quiet. I am loud. Grace Marshall likes to listen to stories. I like to tell them. Grace Marshall is neat. I am messy. We're best friends because we're so different. Friday night, we're having a sleepover. Mom tells me, "Harriet, you can have a messy messy afternoon and messy evening. But you can't end up messy." "No problem, Mom," I say. Wednesday, I call Grace. "I can't wait until you get here." "Me, too," she says. "I want to play Superheroes and paper chains." "We can do anything we want," I tell Grace.

On Friday, Grace arrives. "Let's go!" she says and runs into my room.

Grace want us to be green superheroes, so we put green glitter on our cheeks.

We get it on our clothes, too.

But mostly grace drops it.

At last she says, "I'm tired of this."

She gets the glue to make paper chains.

We make a chain long enough to go around my bedroom. The glue get all over our fingers our clothes, and on my bedspread.

"I love coming to your house!" says grace.

At dinner, Mom tells me to watch how nicely Grace eats. When mom's not looking. Grace draws faces in the spaghetti sauce with her fingers. After dinner, Grace says, "Let's take

a bath." And she brings my dolls and animals into the tub. "What are you doing?" I ask her. "Giving everyone a bath," she says.

Grace picks up many dolls that they roll down the stairs. Now the stairs are wet and everything is messy. In the morning, Grace and I clean up. I like cleaning with Grace. We talk to all my toys and we sing, too. I don't really mind putting away my dolls and animals. But we have trouble getting the glitter and glue off the floor. After Grace leaves, I'm so tired. I fall asleep. Grace calls me the next day.

"When can I sleep over again?"

"But it's my turn to say at your house," I tell her. "How about next Friday?" When I ask my mother, she says, "Fine. Please remember to be as neat as Grace." At Grace's house, we

sing along to the radio. I make sure we sing quietly and in tune.

We have a proper English tea party with real dishes. Grace's mother shows us how.

"I am the lady princess," I say. "And, Grace, you can be the lady-in- waiting." We don't spill a drop of anything. Our baths last only six minutes.

"One person at a time," I tell Grace. I am very strict. I brush my teeth----- all of them. We don't have one single pillow fight. Well, maybe just a little one.

And I count seventeen clean white sheep before I sleep. "I don't recognize you," says my mother when she comes to pick me up in the morning. "I even slept neat," I tell her.

What's your secret?" she asks. Grace and I look at each other.

When you sleep at your best friend's house, you become just like her." My mother smiles.

Grace's mother sweeps some crumbs off the table. Then, I go home. Poor Grace! She has to stay neat.