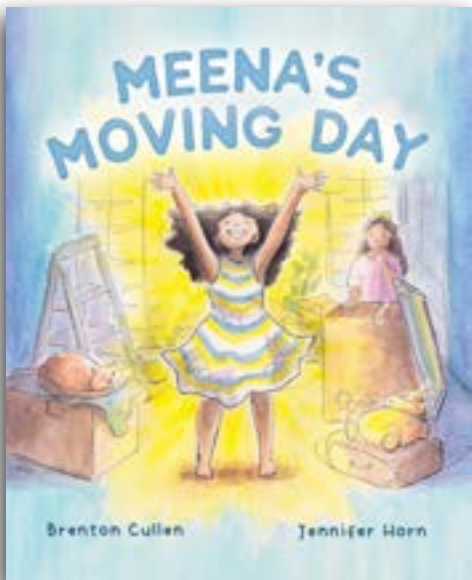

Teachers' Notes



MEENA'S MOVING DAY

Brenton Cullen / Jennifer Horn

ISBN: 9781761113574

Recommended retail: \$24.99

Reading level: 4 to 7 years

BOOK SUMMARY

Meena's excited for her own room! But does being separated mean the sisters won't see each other?

Meena and Lina share a room. They whisper at night and swap secrets and laughs. But sometimes ... they argue. When Dad cleans out the sunroom, Meena asks, 'Can it be mine?' As they prepare the room for her, Lina asks, 'But what about me?'

Will Meena be happy in her big room, away from her little sister?

THEMES

Sibling & Family Relationships • Independence • Creativity • Building Resilience

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**Brenton Cullen is available for author talks and workshops.
Contact Wombat Books for more information.**

Meena's Moving Day Teachers' Notes can be used in schools (independent learning, small groups, and whole classes); at home with caregivers; and as part of mental health support programs facilitated by counsellors, psychologists, children's charities, etc.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Brenton Cullen is passionate about writing stories from the heart for all ages, from picture books to adult fiction. When not writing, he works as a bookseller, reviewer and interviewer. His works have been published in *Magpies*, *Books + Publishing*, *Good Reading*, *Writing QLD* and *Reading Time*. Brenton is the 2023 recipient of the Ian Wilson Memorial Fellowship, bestowed by the May Gibbs Children's Literature Trust. He won the 2024 Just Write for Kids Pitch It! Competition (Middle-Grade Category). He lives in Queensland, between the bush and the beach, with his partner, eight house plants, and an overflowing picture book collection. *Meena's Moving Day* is Brenton's debut picture book. Earlier in 2026 his debut middle grade novel *The Prime Minister Problem* was published with Riveted Press and was shortlisted for the Speech Pathology Australia Book of the Year award. Visit his website at www.brentoncullenwriter.weebly.com

AUTHOR NOTE

When I was growing up, I shared a room with my sisters. A couple years later, when my brother was born, I shared a room with him. I loved spending time with my siblings but I wished I could have my own room to have my friends over or to have space to spread out my things or to just sit and read without someone else intruding on my quiet time. I used to dream about how I would decorate my very own bedroom: mostly, I dreamed about all the bookshelves I would have in my room! Finally, when I was thirteen, we moved to a new house and I got my very own bedroom. I liked having my own space. It was important to have a space where I could read books and write stories and draw pictures and hang out with my friends. I think it helped bring me closer to my siblings; by this time, we all had our own bedrooms. It's nice to share with siblings but just because we grow up and want independence and desire to have some things of our own, it doesn't mean we don't love our brothers or sisters any less. When I was thinking of an idea for a new story to write, I thought about the important feelings and emotions from my childhood. I tried to think of a universal theme that kids of any culture, in any country, might respond to: and I think having your own space, whether it be a physical space or a mental space, to make your own is something that all kids can relate to. And *Meena's Moving Day* was born.



ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Jennifer Horn is a children's illustrator and writer who used to ask her Grandma to pause the VHS so she could copy the animations on the screen. She has illustrated three books with Wombat Books, as well as many that are independently published. Her fairytale debut picture book *The Precious Plum* was shortlisted for the 2022 Little Pink Dog's Authorstrator Prize. She lives in Brisbane with her husband, two little children and a skittish black cat.

Explore Jen's work at www.jenniferhorn.com.au or @eskyjen on Instagram.

ILLUSTRATOR NOTE

My process is a hand-drawn one, which I then colour in watercolour or digitally, depending on the book. I started sketching up the sisters - who I always felt could be twins - and found that their hairstyles wanted to be a big personality difference, with exuberant Meena having quite an untamed voluminous mane, and the more demure Lina having hers tied back just enough, like her energy.

With the plentiful step-by-step movement in this story, I wanted the audience to feel like they are moving along with Meena and the family throughout the relocation, hence my abundant use of progressive spot vignettes. There is a trio of pages where, because of Lina's interruptions, Meena goes from earnest to downright desperate over having her own space, and I enjoyed reflecting this in Meena's darkening little corner illustrations. There's also one page where Meena is so overjoyed at finally moving into her own room alone, followed by one where she is immediately conflicted. I wanted to show this contrast with joyful colour and detail in the first, then pull the tone right down to monochrome and isolated in the second.

Growing up, my sister and I shared a bedroom when we stayed at our Dad's house. Being the eldest, you'd think it would be me who would push to have my own room once a bit older, but it was actually my younger sister. And I don't think she looked back!

This story captures that love-hate relationship that siblings, perhaps especially sisters, often have. I wanted to show that difference in attention needs that can sometimes happen, with Meena being very much the in-charge and proactive one, the centre of the happenings, while Lina is off to the side, feeling a little left out and left behind, but not causing drama about it, just quietly reaching out. And they are exactly the balance that each other needs.

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

This sweet story portrays a common childhood milestone of moving into one's own room and having space to create. Students will relate to common emotions including ambivalence, loneliness and jealousy as well as interdependence. Recognising how Meena navigates her own emotions helps to develop student's emotional literacy and empathy.

Meena and her relationship with her little sister, explores how students can be emotionally close with their siblings while still wanting their own space. Students can explore with Meena how sibling relationships shift and change over time. This story supports students' deeper thinking about how others might feel in shared situations.

Students will build comprehension through the everyday interactions and dialogue between Meena and her family. The illustrations add visual meaning to the text and students can analyse how images extend emotions in the story.

Meena's story will promote conversations about family relationships and change as well as students' own emotional understanding. Meena's Moving Day will help students see that confusing and big feelings are normal and it will help them to build resilience in change.

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS & LEARNING OUTCOMES

FOUNDATION

English, Humanities and Social Science, Music, Visual Arts

AC9EFLE01 - share ideas about stories, poems and images in literature, reflecting on experiences that are similar or different to their own by engaging with texts by First Nations Australian, and wide-ranging Australian and world authors and illustrators

AC9EFLE02 - respond to stories and share feelings and thoughts about their events and characters

AC9EFLE03 - recognise different types of literary texts and identify features including events, characters, and beginnings and endings

AC9EFLA06 - recognise that sentences are made up of groups of words that work together in particular ways to make meaning

AC9EFLA02 - explore different ways of using language to express preferences, likes and dislikes

AC9EFLA07 - explore the contribution of images and words to meaning in stories and informative texts

AC9HSFS03 - share a perspective on information, such as stories about significant events and special places

AC9AMUFD01 - use play, imagination, arts knowledge, processes and/or skills to discover possibilities and develop ideas

AC9ADAF01 - create arts works that communicate ideas

AC9ADAFP01 - share their arts works with audiences

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AC9ADAFE01 - explore how and why the arts are important for people and communities

AC9ADFD01 - use play, imagination, arts knowledge, processes and/or skills to discover possibilities and develop ideas

YEAR ONE

English, Health, Drama

AC9E1LA01 - understand how language, facial expressions and gestures are used to interact with others when asking for and providing information, making offers, exclaiming, requesting and giving commands

AC9E1LA06 - understand that a simple sentence consists of a single independent clause representing a single event or idea

AC9E1LE02 - discuss literary texts and share responses by making connections with students' own experiences

AC9E1LE03 - discuss plot, character and setting, which are features of stories

AC9E1LA03 - explore how texts are organised according to their purpose, such as to recount, narrate, express opinion, inform, report and explain

AC9E1LY11 - use short vowels, common long vowels, consonant blends and digraphs to write words, and blend these to read one- and two-syllable words

AC9E1LY05 - use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising and questioning when listening, viewing and reading to build literal and inferred meaning by drawing on vocabulary and growing knowledge of context and text structures

AC9E1LE05 - orally retell or adapt a familiar story using plot and characters, language features including vocabulary, and structure of a familiar text, through role-play, writing, drawing or digital tools

AC9HP2P03 - identify how different situations influence emotional responses

AC9ADR2D01 - use the elements of drama and imagination in dramatic play and/or process drama

AC9ADR2C01 - create and co-create fictional situations based on imagination and/or experience

AC9ADR2P01 - share their drama in informal settings

YEAR TWO

English, Humanities and Social Science, Visual Arts

AC9E2LA01 - investigate how interpersonal language choices vary depending on the context, including the different roles taken on in interactions

AC9E2LA03 - identify how texts across the curriculum are organised differently and use language features depending on purposes

AC9E2LE05 - create and edit literary texts by adapting structures and language features of familiar literary texts through drawing, writing, performance and digital tools

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AC9E2LA02 - discuss the characters and settings of a range of texts and identify how language is used to present these features in different ways

AC9E2LE03 - discuss the characters and settings of a range of texts and identify how language is used to present these features in different ways

AC9AVA2C01 - use visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials to create artworks

AC9AVA2P01 - share artworks and/or visual arts practice in informal settings

AC9AVA2E01 - explore where, why and how people across cultures, communities and/or other contexts experience visual arts

AC9AVA2D01 - experiment and play with visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials

AC9HS2S04 - discuss perspectives related to objects, people, places and events

TEACHING POINTS AND ACTIVITIES

This book may be used in whole class, small group or independent learning activities in schools.

Please note, the following suggestions and activities are suited to a variety of year levels spanning Foundation to Year 6 primary aged children. Some activities may be applicable to early secondary school students.

KNOWLEDGE AND LITERAL UNDERSTANDING

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Give the students a moment to analyse the cover and ask them if there are any interesting details they can see. What makes these details interesting and what do they think it will mean within the book?
2. Read the back cover blurb and discuss. Ask what themes they think might be prevalent in the book. Ask if they know of any similar books.
3. Ask the students if they have ever shared a room with someone and talk about all the things they liked about it. Also talk about the tricky times and how they responded.
4. Without looking inside, can the students predict how the story will unfold?

AFTER-READING QUESTIONS

1. Why does Lina cause trouble when Meena is packing her things?
2. What would you do in Lina's position?
3. What would you do in Meena's position?
4. Which character did you relate to the most? Why?

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

SIBLING & FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

- Are Meena and Lina good friends? Do they always get along?
- How do you think Lina feels when Meena says she wants her own bedroom?
- Why does Lina cause trouble when Meena is packing her things?
- What things does Lina do to show she is unhappy with the move?
- Name the ways that Meena and Lina's sisterly relationship changes throughout the story, from the first page to the final page.
- How could Mum and Dad help Meena and Lina solve the problem?

INDEPENDENCE

- List three things Meena and Lina have in common and three ways they are different.
- Why does Meena want to move rooms?
- Why is having separate rooms good for the two girls?
- Why was it good for them to share a room when they were younger?
- Find an example in the text where Meena might be second-guessing her choice to have her own bedroom.

CREATIVITY

- Is it understandable that Meena should want her own space?
- What difference does it make to have a dedicated space to create instead of a shared space?
- How would Meena's new room help her to be more creative?
- What are the basic things needed to create?

BUILDING RESILIENCE

- If Meena wanted her own room, why does she miss Lina? Why is her stomach in knots?
- What strategies can she use to help her untie the knots in her stomach?
- Why is change sometimes a good thing?
- What are some strategies that are helpful during a time of change?
- Have you ever felt happy and sad at the same time? How did you handle these confused feelings?

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

DESIGN YOUR DREAM ROOM

If you were to have your own space, what would you put in it? Design a room, a studio or bedroom, and include a space to create - write, paint, sculpt, dance or sing - whatever your heart desires! Make sure you label each part of your room; eg. desk, bookshelf, hammock bed, easel.

ROLEPLAY MEENA'S MOVE

In teams of two, perform a short roleplay scene dramatising the book. One of you plays Meena while the other plays Lina. Then, swap roles and discuss how it felt to be in the other character's shoes.

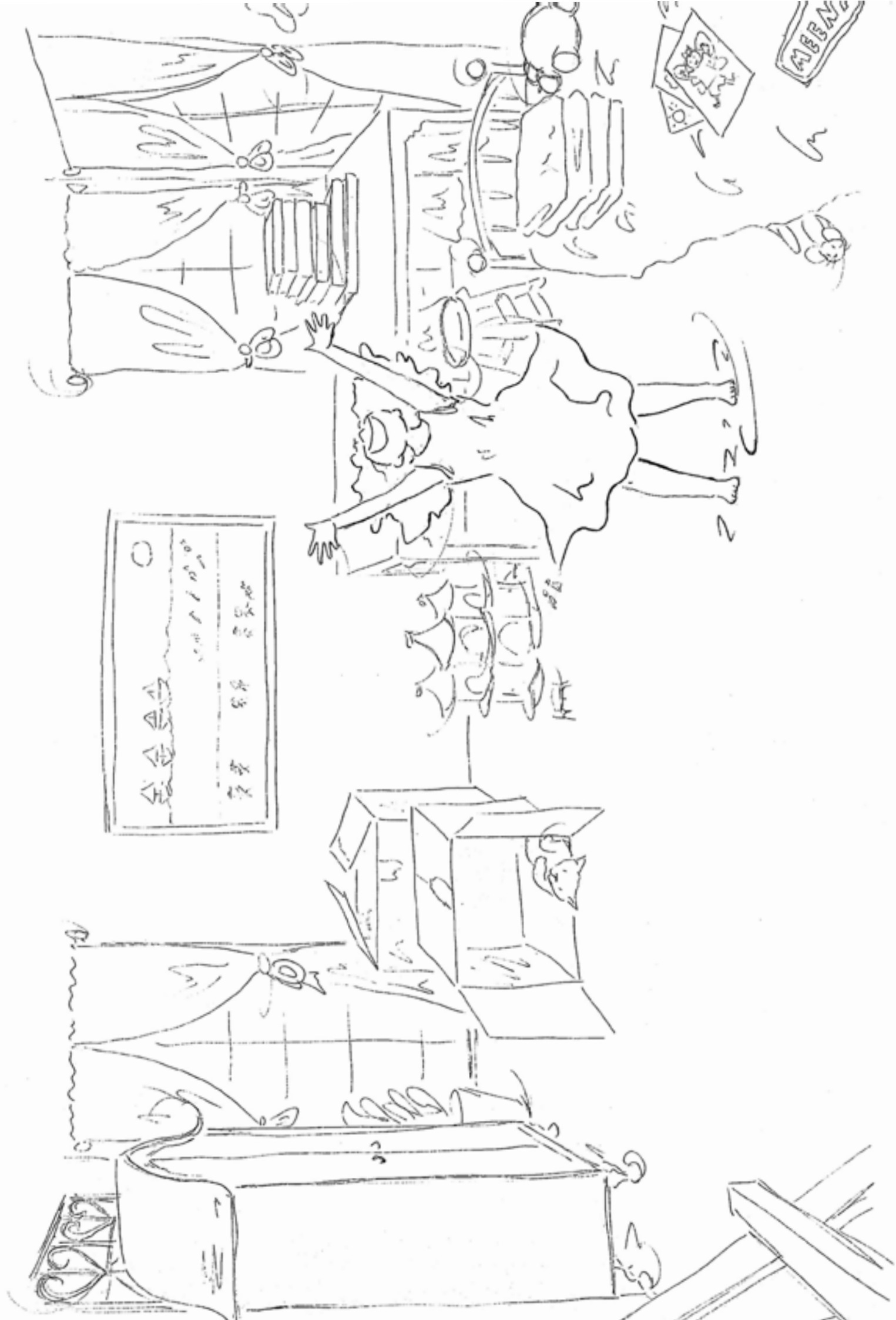
WRITE A LETTER

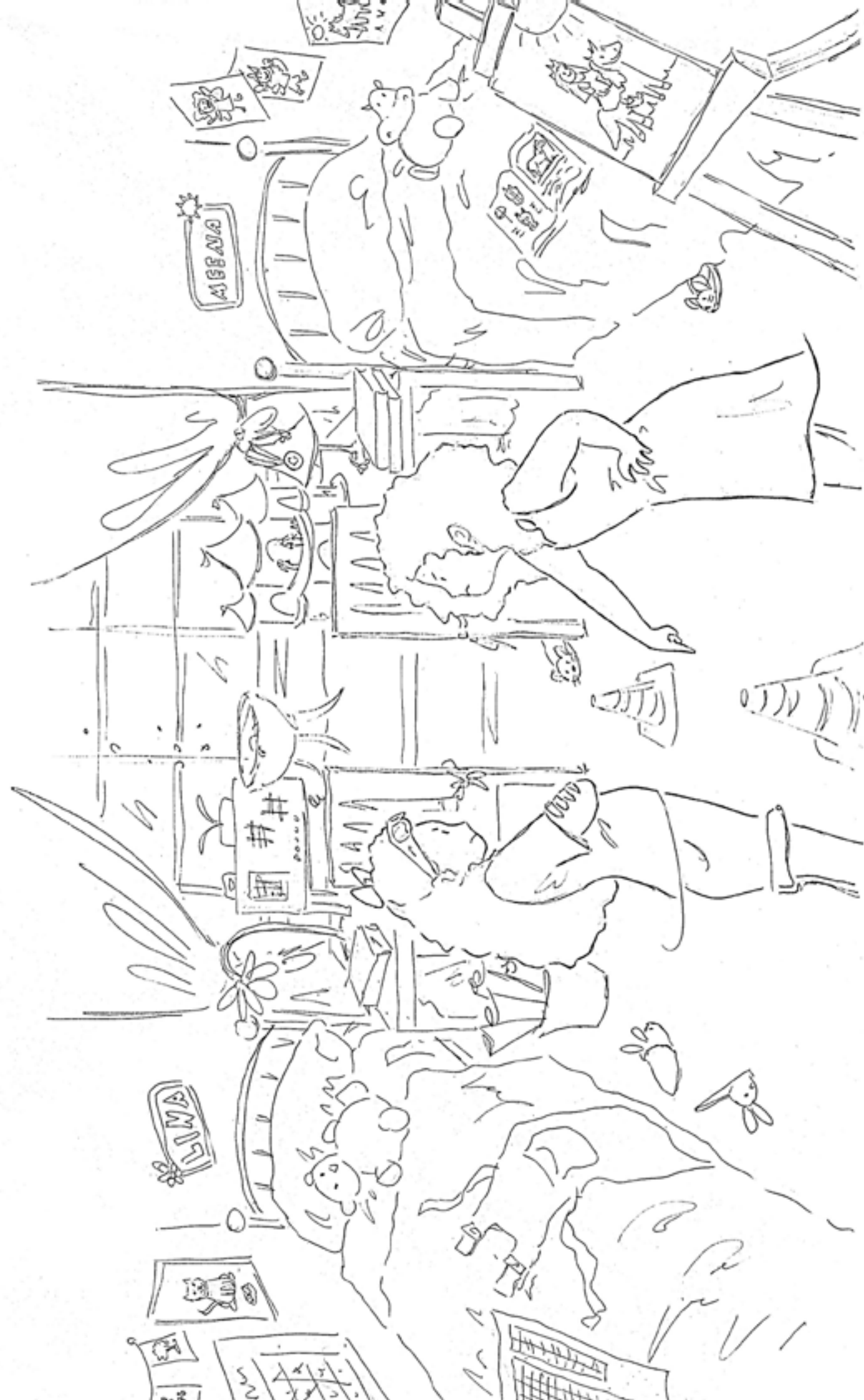
Pretend you are Meena and write a letter to your sister Lina. Tell her all about your new room.

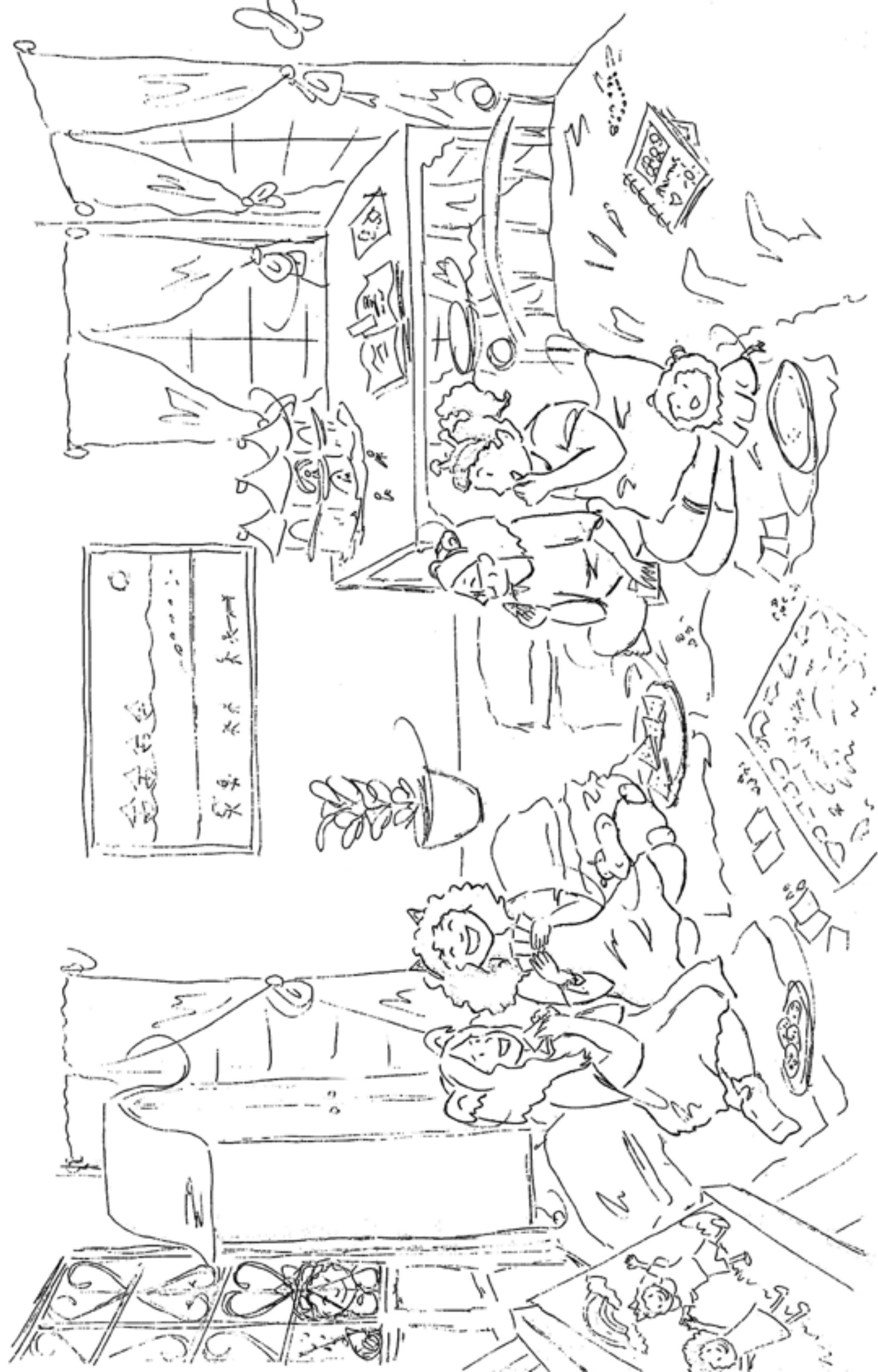
MY FAMILY'S SPACE

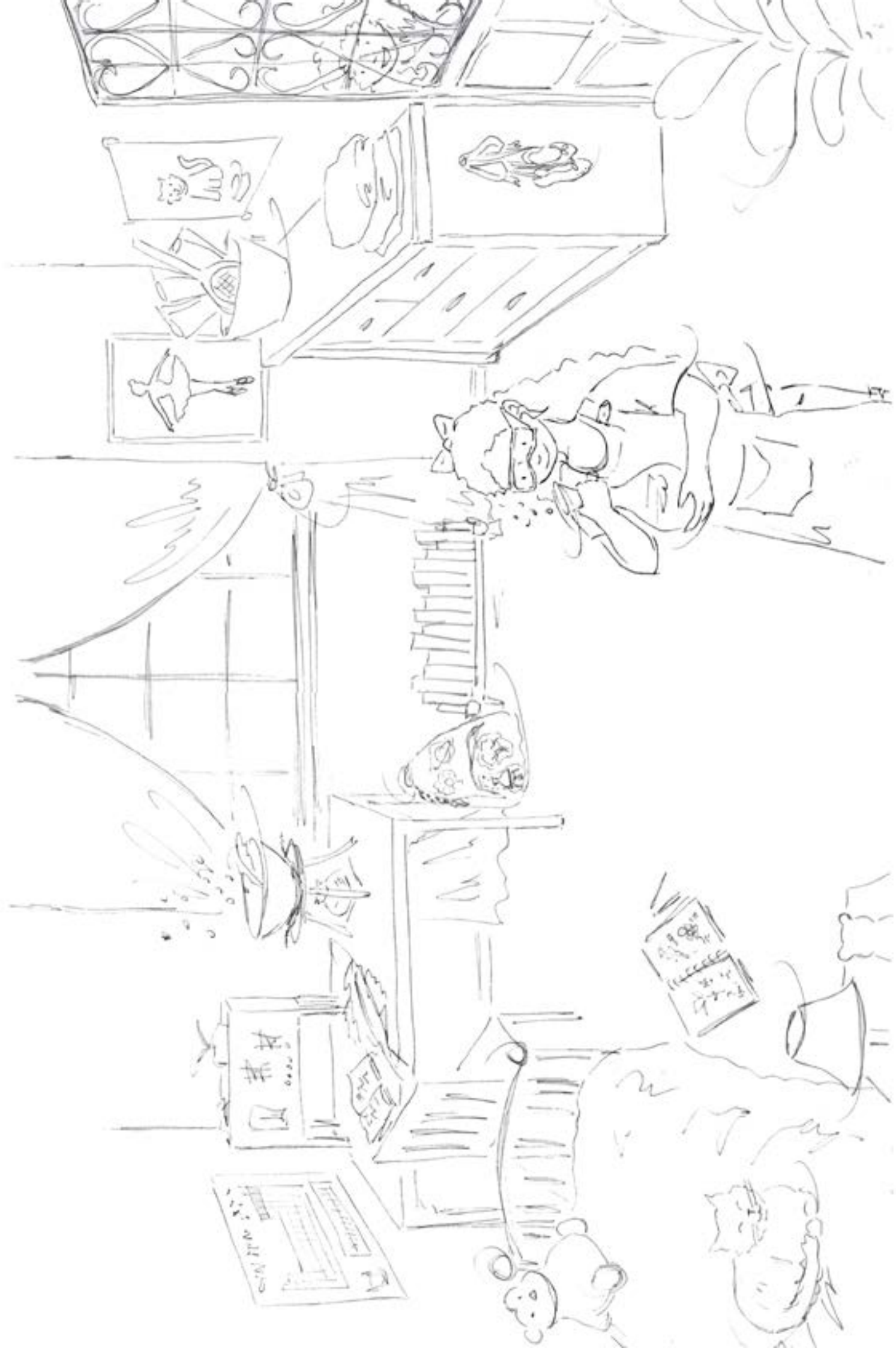
Draw your family home. Talk about each space and who uses them.

Further resources can always be found on our website.













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