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Unit 2 Text A A child's clutter awaits an adult's return 翻译,原文和录音

字号 [大] [中] [小]

A child's clutter awaits an adult's return

▶ 0:00 / 6:20



1 I watch her back her new truck out of the driveway. The vehicle is too large too expensive. She'd refused to consider a practical car with good gas efficiency and easy to park. It's because of me I think. She bought it to show me that she could.

2 "I'm 18" she'd told me so often that my teeth ached. "I am an adult!"

3 I thought is that true? Just yesterday you watched some cartoons. What changed between yesterday and today?

4 Today she's gone off to be an adult far away from me. I'm glad she's gone. It means she made it and that I'm finally free of 18 years of responsibilities. And yet I wonder if she could take good care of herself.

5 She left a mess. Her bathroom is an embarrassment of damp towels rusted shaving blades hair in the sink and nearly empty tubes of toothpaste. I bring a box of big black garbage bags upstairs. Eye shadow face cream nail polish all go into the trash. I dump drawers sweep shelves clear and clean the sink. When I am finished it is as neat and impersonal as a hotel bathroom.

6 In her bedroom I find mismatched socks under her bed and purple pants on the closet floor. Desk drawers are filled with school papers filed by year and subject. I catch myself reading through poems and essays admiring high scores on tests and reading her name printed or typed neatly in the upper right-hand corner of each paper. I pack the desk contents into a box. Six months I think. I will give her six months to collect her belongings and then I will throw them all away. That is fair. Grown-ups pay for storage.

7 I have to pause at the books. Comic books teen fiction romantic novels historical novels and textbooks. A lifetime of reading; each book beloved. I want to be practical to stuff them in paper sacks for the used bookstore. But I love books as much as she does so I stack them onto a single bookshelf to deal with later.

8 I go for her clothes. Dresses sweaters and shoes she hasn't worn since seventh grade are placed into garbage bags. I am a plague of locusts emptying the closet. Two piles grow to clumsy heights: one for charity the other trash.

9 There are more shoes stuffed animals large and small posters hair bands and pink hair curlers. The job grows larger the longer I am at it. How can one girl collect so much in only 18 years?

10 I stuff the garbage bags until the plastic strains. I haul them down the stairs two bags at a time. Donations to charity go into the trunk of my car; trash goes to the curb. I'm earning myself sweat and sore shoulders.

11 She left the bedroom a ridiculous mess the comforter on the floor the sheets tossed aside. I strip off the comforter blanket sheets and pillows. Once she starts feeding coins into laundry machines she'll appreciate the years of clean clothes I've provided for free.

12 I will turn her room into a crafts room. Or create the fancy guest room I've always wanted.

13 I turn the bed over. A large brown envelope is marked "DO NOT THROW AWAY." I open it. More papers. I dump the contents onto the floor. There are old family photographs letters greeting cards and love notes from us to her. There are comics clipped from newspapers and magazines. Every single item in this envelope has passed from our hands to hers. These are all things that we gave her. Suddenly I feel very emotional.

14 "DO NOT THROW AWAY".

15 My kid my clutter bug knows me too well. As I read through the cards and notes I think maybe the truck wasn't such a bad idea after all. Maybe it helps her to feel less small in a big world.

16 I reverse myself and bring back the garbage bags from the car and the curb. Clothes and shoes go back into the closet. I remake the bed and pile it with stuffed animals. My husband comes home and calls up the stairs.

17 "Just straightening up" I tell him. "Can you find some boxes for her stuff?"

18 He brings up boxes from the basement.

19 "She left a mess" he says.

20 "I don't mind" I reply. Silence.

21 Then he says softly "She's not coming back." I feel my throat tighten at the sadness in his voice. I try hard to keep back my tears.

22 My little baby my dependent child isn't coming back. But someday my daughter the independent woman will return home. Tokens of her childhood will await her. So will we with open arms.

