

---

Post No. 14

### MY LITTLE COUSIN HARLEY

'How can I be kind about this?' That was the question I faced when my little cousin Harley visited me. I guess I will just tell you the story of what happened; then you can be the judge of what I did.

Let me start by saying that my little cousin Harley is one of those hamsters that some people would describe as being 'cute as a button'. Here is a picture of her.



I know that you can see what I mean: she is totally adorable-looking. I had not met Harley before she came to visit me, but I had seen a picture of her. That's why I didn't think her visit would be anything other than completely and utterly delightful. As it turned out, her visit was completely and utterly delightful... once we sorted out a very big problem. Well, to be more exact about things, it was not so much a big problem as a loud problem.

Although Harley had flown hamster and had brought her own home from New York to London with her, I thought it would be nice if she stayed in my home. I thought that we would be able to spend more time together if we were both living in the same box.

---

Harley is only a little hamster (smaller than me), so I thought there would be more than enough space in my box for both of us.

We were enjoying a lovely first day together when Harley, who was rather tired after her long flight, asked if she could take a nap. Of course, I said that she could use my sleeping bag, but Harley said that she would prefer to just curl up on the soft cushions on my sofa. I turned off the lights in the sitting room so that Harley could sleep. Then I headed off to my bedroom to type up a blog post on my computer.



Well, just as I turned on my computer, I heard a very loud sound. The sound sounded like the revving of a motorcycle engine. I looked out of the window, but there was no sign of a motorcycle outside. In fact, there was no sign of any traffic at all. I wondered if my computer was making that very loud sound, but the loud sound did not seem to be coming from my computer. I wondered where the loud sound could be coming from.

I looked in the bathroom, but there was no sound coming from there. I looked in the kitchen, but there was no sound coming from there. I thought that I had better peek into the sitting room to make sure that Harley was still sleeping. I was worried that the loud sound might have woken her up.

As I opened the door to the sitting room, the sound seemed to get louder. As I walked towards the sofa, the sound seemed to get even louder.



It was then that I realised where the sound was coming from. It was coming from Harley! Harley was fast asleep on the sofa, snoring. She was snoring very loudly... very, very loudly. In fact, her snoring sounded just like the revving of a motorcycle engine.



---

I did not want to wake Harley, but I hoped that she would wake up soon and stop making that very loud sound. If she slept through the whole night snoring like that, I would not get a wink of sleep... and neither would anyone else in my neighbourhood.

The next morning, Harley came running into my bedroom. She looked bright and refreshed and cute as a button. I, on the other hand, looked terrible. I had bags under my eyes, and I could not stop yawning.



You see, Harley had slept through the whole night. I was completely and utterly sure about that. Every time I had been on the point of falling asleep that night, she had snored again and startled me awake.

Harley said to me, "Good morning, Harrison. Thank you for letting me sleep on your sofa. It was very comfortable, and I slept very well. Are you feeling okay today? You don't look very well."

"Harley, has anyone ever told you that you snore rather loudly?" I asked.



at [Stories for My Little Sister](http://www.storiesformylittlesister.com)  
[www.storiesformylittlesister.com](http://www.storiesformylittlesister.com)  
Free Online Books for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Kids

---

Harley laughed and said, "Of course! When I was a baby hamster, my parents said that my snoring reminded them of the revving of the engine of a Harley-Davidson motorcycle. That's why they decided to name me Harley."

It was hard to believe that no one in the family had warned me about Harley's snoring. It was also hard to believe that someone as cute and little as Harley could snore so loudly.

I decided that Harley simply had to stop snoring if we were to be able to enjoy the rest of her visit to London. If she slept at night and snored all night, I would have no choice but to sleep during the day. That would not give us any time together when we would both be awake. I thought about sleeping peacefully. That led me to think about snuggling down into my sleeping bag. Then I knew what I needed to do.

As I admitted when I told you about my home, my sleeping bag is actually one of Diana's thermal socks. Since the weather has been getting colder, I have been worrying that Diana will look in her sock drawer and find that one of her thermal socks is missing. She might get very upset. The remaining sock would be a painful reminder of the sock that was missing. Since she has two feet, Diana would have no use for one sock on its own. I, on the other hand, had thought of a very good use for that sock. I decided that it would be best for everyone if I put the sock to good use.

Just before bedtime, I suggested to Harley that she might like to try sleeping in a super-warm sleeping bag. In fact, I insisted upon it. I insisted very insistently, and Harley agreed to try the sleeping bag.



Then I tucked her into a certain thermal sock that I had decided to put to good use. Then I turned off the light, went to my bedroom and wiggled into my own sleeping bag.

I waited for a little while. I did not want to fall asleep and then get woken up by Harley's snoring. I waited and waited and waited. I expected to hear a very loud sound, but I could not hear any sounds at all. I wanted to go over to the sitting room and switch on the light to see if Harley was still awake, but I didn't want to disturb her. Eventually I gave up waiting and fell asleep.

The next morning, Harley came running into my bedroom. She looked bright and refreshed and cute as a button. She said, "Good morning, Harrison. You are looking better today. Did you sleep well?"

I said, "Yes thank you, I slept very well. You did not snore at all last night. Did you sleep well?"

"Yes," said Harley, "I slept better than I have ever slept before. I felt so cosy in that super-warm sleeping bag. Maybe the sleeping bag somehow helped me to stop snoring."

"It looks that way, Harley. Why don't you take that sleeping bag back to New York with you? No one has any use for it here any more."



at **Stories for My Little Sister**  
[www.storiesformylittlesister.com](http://www.storiesformylittlesister.com)  
Free Online Books for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Kids

---

"Thank you, Harrison! I will definitely take that sleeping bag home with me."

After Harley returned to New York, I got a letter from a New York family of gerbils. Apparently, they lived in the box next door to Harley's box and had not slept at night since Harley had moved to the neighbourhood. That was quite some time ago: three years, six months, two weeks and four days ago, to be exact. They wanted to thank me for helping Harley to stop snoring and for helping them to get back into the habit of sleeping at night.

I think that the moral of this blog post is that sometimes, if you wish that someone who snores very loudly would just be quiet but don't want to hurt their feelings by telling them so, it is a good idea to find a way to help them to stop snoring. You might say that it is kinder to put them into a sock than it is to tell them to 'put a sock in it'. You can be the judge.

Bye for now!

Harrison Hamster I  
18th November 2011