

Martin & Sylvia

All Story Descriptions by Season

Martin and Sylvia live in a tall house with lots of windows. In their backyard is all a five-year-old and a seven-year-old could ever want: a brook, a tree swing, a playhouse, and a garden full of magical friends. Join this enterprising brother and sister for a year of delight and wonder. Whether it's the heat of summer, or the deep snows of winter, every day is an adventure!

Autumn Season:



This is a collection of 13 autumn stories, for the 13 weeks of autumn.

The Cabin

Martin and Sylvia's friends have a mountain cabin in the woods. The whole family is invited to join them for a weekend of blackberry picking! Everyone is excited to hike the many trails to the lake and waterfall, except Sylvia. Sylvia is tired. Sylvia's feet hurt. Sylvia would rather stay at the cabin and play games. When Momma teaches her how to have "fox feet" and "deer ears," Sylvia suddenly finds the woods full of possibilities and, indeed, animals.

Goose-Eye Wilderness School

Martin is looking for more adventure in his days: he wants to live in the woods, hunt for his own food, and fashion a sword with his own hands. When Momma and Daddy enroll him in a local wilderness school, Martin has the opportunity to experience adventures in the wild — both unexpected and satisfying.

Gargoyles

During a trip into town, Martin sees a crew of workers installing some big goblin-looking stone sculptures on the front of the Town Hall. He learns that long ago the stone goblins, which are called gargoyles, were often placed on buildings to ward off anything scary. Martin thinks that a gargoyle might be just the thing to help protect him from his new fear of noises in the night.

PARENT NOTE: *This is a story about facing night-time fears, but using something that is traditionally perceived as being "scary" to find courage. So the topics of night-time fear and "scary things" run throughout.*

Apple Pies

Mr. and Mrs. Brown, the farmers who live next door, are hosting an apple pie contest, complete with games, stories, and a lot of apple pie eating. All families must bring a pie to be judged. This year Martin wants to make his own pie in addition to the pie Daddy and Sylvia are making. In a flash of inspiration, Martin knows exactly what his secret ingredient will be. Will his unique concoction win the competition?

The Sit Spot

After a day at Wilderness School, Martin tells his sister and Daddy about finding a "sit spot" or personal spot in the woods. Sylvia is inspired to find one herself, as is Daddy — but Momma is feeling she needs to focus on getting the house ready for guests. But in the final moments before the guests arrive, she decides to find a "sit spot" and has the most magical moment of all.

Super Raker

Why is it that Daddy never seems to tire when he's raking? This is what Martin wonders out loud. Does he have superpowers? When Daddy answers the questions with more questions, Martin decides for himself that he really does have super strength, Sylvia really can fly, and Momma really can become invisible. Or can she?

A Trip to the Doctor

Sylvia falls from the rope swing and lands funny. And Momma notices that, though Sylvia isn't complaining about her arm, she isn't using it. Momma decides to take Sylvia to the doctor to take x-ray "pictures" of her arm. This is the first time Sylvia has ever had x-ray pictures and is feeling nervous. Both she and Momma use a special imagination game to help them feel brave and relaxed, and, in the process, even delight the hospital doctor.

Tracking

Martin and Sylvia wake to see a dusting of snow outside, with more falling all around. They speedily dress and eat breakfast so they can go outside and play in the snow, perhaps to sled or make a snowman! But this is autumn snow — which Daddy says doesn't last. When it stops snowing and they haven't so much as a snowball to play with, their friends Jonathan and Sasha come up with an idea that melts all disappointment.

Helping Hands

Downtown is a fun place for Martin and Sylvia. There is the library, the bakery, Momma's office, and the Town Community Center, where they will occasionally serve soup and bread to those who need a little help. On this visit to town, however, it is little Sylvia that unexpectedly needs a helping hand.

Parent Note: *In this story, Sylvia gets momentarily separated from her family. There is a moment of nervousness when Sylvia realizes she can't see her parents. But Momma and Daddy have taught her what to do in this situation, and she does it beautifully. She is very quickly reunited with Momma, Daddy,*

and Martin. The story teaches smart choices for “lost” children, and gives a picture of a loving and helpful community.

Comfort Food

Martin and Sylvia's family have special friends named the Webers. They camp together, take trips together, and play games together. When Mr. Weber has surgery on his knee, they decide to cook for the Weber family. Momma suggests they cook "comfort food," and the family delights in learning how to cook carefully, slowly, and how to fill the food with love.

Family Farms

It is almost winter and their neighbors, the Browns, are not able to supply Martin and Sylvia's family with milk. They decide to try a new farm that is run by three families and is much bigger than the Brown's farm. Martin and Sylvia are resistant at first — they like the little farm and the animals next door! But then they visit the new farm and find not only milk, but cheese, bread, and so many wonderful people — not to mention, lovely cows. The farm offers much more than they thought!

Winters Little and Big

The first snow is falling! Brother and sister announce that it is time to get the winter books from the back attic. It's the family tradition! They dive into the box and discover not only books that they dearly love, but also treasures that inspire sweet memories of years past. They were once so little! Both Momma and Daddy marvel at how big their "littles" have become.

The Dark

It's autumn: the days are getting shorter, and the dark comes earlier. Martin is feeling nervous. He can't see as well at night, and he worries about shadows and things he can't see. All of it makes it difficult for him to go to sleep at bedtime.

Momma encourages him to use his other senses, and guides him through a hearing, smelling, and feeling exercise that not only reassures him, but relaxes him enough to fall deeply asleep



Winter Season:

This is a collection of 13 winter stories, for the 13 weeks of winter.

First Day

The First Day celebration is happening downtown! Everyone is excited. Martin and Sylvia love the snow and ice sculptures, the music, and the booths of hot chocolate and muffins. But this year, they can't agree about what sort of snow sculpture they want to make. Their team of family and friends is counting on their help! The group finally decides on Martin's idea, leaving Sylvia feeling on the outs. Who can help Sylvia create the snow sculpture of her imagination?

Helping Out

Martin and Sylvia wake to a snowstorm and the promise of sledding on the neighbor's horse pasture hill. When the hill turns out to be occupied and they return to see that Momma has taken a sick day from her work, the children recognize the value and delight of letting go of plans and helping out at home.

Fairy Snow Fort

This week Sylvia wakes with a plan to build a "Fairy Snow Fort," a structure that looks a lot like an igloo with one very important distinction. The whole family helps build the fort together, working steadily all day, and culminates with a star-lit dinner within. This is a story of collaboration and the joys of a full-family project.

Moving

Martin finds out one morning that his good friend, Peter, is going to move away to a new house in a new town far away. The night before Peter leaves, the whole family has a sleepover at Martin and Sylvia's house — and though they have lots of fun sledding and playing games, Martin finds it difficult to say goodbye.

Telling the Truth

Sylvia accidentally breaks one of Martin's inventions and blames the damage on their cat, Pickles. "Pickles did it!" But oh, how Sylvia feels miserable all day! Momma knows just what to do: she whispers a little something in Sylvia's ear, and Sylvia knows what's needed next.

Putting on a Play

Martin and Sylvia wake to a very cold morning — ten below! Momma's car won't start, and she is unable to get to the office. What will she do? It just so happens there is to be a play in the living room. It's a play about the conquest of the south pole — starring Martin and Sylvia, and featuring Daddy as the sled dog!

A Trip to Grandma's

Martin and Sylvia are going on a road trip to Grandma's! But they've never been in the car together for that long before. What will they do, stuck in the car for all that time? Martin and Sylvia are nervous, but Daddy has delightful ideas around every turn.

Going on a Date

One morning Martin has an idea: he can be Daddy's assistant for the day, and Sylvia will be Momma's assistant. But it's not all work for Martin and Sylvia! The parent-child pairs go on "dates" to their favorite places in town, ending the day in a fun surprise.

Fairy Detectives

Martin finds a mysterious piece of fabric on the couch. What could it be? A fairy hat? Could there be fairy magic afoot in the house? Martin and Sylvia form a "fairy detective agency" to find out.

St. Patrick's Day

Martin and Sylvia are ready for spring, but when they look out their window, all they see is snow. That afternoon, Momma comes home early with a St. Patrick's day surprise!

Festival of Lights

Martin and Sylvia's town center holds many festive events throughout the year. During December, there are several town traditions, including a "Festival of Lights," where the shopkeepers decorate their storefronts in lights. When Martin learns that Hanukkah is also called the Festival of Lights, he begins to discover the similarities between all the festivals and holidays that take place during this time of year. And he and Sylvia are inspired to create a festival of their very own.

Throwing a Party

Martin and Sylvia want to throw a party for their parents and their friends, the Webers. They work it out with Daddy that they can earn the money to pay for decorations and food by doing extra cleaning around the house. They work all day and then shop for what they need. On the day of the party, they feel a little nervous — what will it be like? Will everyone enjoy themselves? And then the doorbell rings...

A Plane Trip

Christmas is over, there's snow on the ground, and it's COLD. What's a family to do? Daddy suggests they all go ... to the beach? "Daddy, are you being silly?" asks Sylvia. It turns out that Daddy isn't being silly at all: he has made plans for them all to travel to Florida to visit Granny! And this year, Daddy tells them excitedly, they are taking an airplane. Martin can't wait, but Sylvia hesitates. Long hours of sitting still don't sound like fun for her. But when it is time, she is surprised at what sort of magic is possible in a ticket line, an airport terminal, and, indeed, on a plane ride.

Spring Season:



This is a collection of 13 spring stories, for the 13 weeks of spring.

Big Brother

Martin is having a bad day. First he feels left out of a snuggly moment between Momma and Sylvia, and then he has to go to a Spanish class while Sylvia gets Momma and Daddy to herself. Martin doesn't know it, but Momma and Daddy have a plan...

Stuck in the Mud

One morning the children wake to rain and melting snow — and mud! For the rest of the day the whole family — Martin, Sylvia, Momma, and Daddy, plus some of their friends — get regularly stuck in the mud.

Springtime Fun and Foolery

It's the first week of spring and the house is abuzz with fun and foolery. Martin makes a treasure hunt for his sister that has a suspicious treat at the end. Sylvia and Daddy dress up like each other and fool Martin. But at the end of the day, Momma surprises everyone at dinnertime!

Signs of Spring

Sylvia loves to color eggs — she loves to make the dyes, draw designs, and soak white eggs in the color. However, she doesn't like to wait. So, while the eggs are turning magnificent colors, Momma creates a springtime game that transforms impatient waiting into springtime magic.

Spring Cleaning

It's Spring Cleaning Day in Martin and Sylvia's house! But Martin and Sylvia would much rather get in the way than help. A little springtime fun with Sasha and Jonathan turns the tide and provides a little inspiration to join the effort.

The Cruds

Daddy's birthday is coming up, and he's preparing for his annual birthday canoe ride through downtown. This year Martin gets to come along! On the day before the trip, Martin has everything planned, but one thing might keep him from going — a case of the “cruds.”

Good Old Dog

Billbill is Martin and Sylvia's good old dog. He spends most of his time snoozing on his thick checkered mat in the living room, but they don't mind. When Momma gets a phone call from Poppi and Nana with some sad news about their old cat, Martin and Sylvia celebrate how lucky they are to have Billbill in their life.

Mother's Day

Momma doesn't know what she wants to do for Mother's Day. So Daddy, Martin, and Sylvia come up with all sorts of ideas. Together they create a small book of options. When Momma pages through, she is delighted and amazed to discover what her perfect mother's day could include!

A Fine Town

Martin and Sylvia return from a vacation to their grandparents house with the regret that their vacation was too short. Momma proposes that they have one more day of vacation — only spending it in their own town. Daddy suggests they start by swimming in the downtown hotel pool — and this is just the beginning of seeing their fine town through new eyes.

The Woodpecker Tree

The woodpecker tree needs to be cut down. It is big and old and filled with woodpecker holes. From Karl the playful woodsman, Martin and Sylvia learn a lot about trees, cutting firewood, and a secret way to stay safe from black flies!

Pick-Up League

Martin wants to join little league baseball like his friend Peter, but Momma and Daddy say he isn't old enough for organized sports. He has to be nine. Nine! Martin is amazed! But that doesn't mean there's no baseball for Martin. Daddy pulls together a pick-up game with friends; flexible rules, bat and ball options, and many creative calls from the sidelines make the game fun for everyone in the family!

The Playhouse

Daddy has noticed something new about Martin and Sylvia's play time: the children tend to do only what Martin wants to do. And Daddy knows that Sylvia has wonderfully imaginative ideas. So he decides to build a little possibility onto their playhouse and surprise them all.

Thank You's

Mr. Brown teaches Martin the secret to being a good farmer — to be thankful. Martin is excited to be more thankful at home, but he returns to see that his cat Pickles has ripped his favorite toy. How can he be thankful when he is feeling so mad?

Summer Season:



This is a collection of 13 summer stories, for the 13 weeks of summer

A Trip to the City

Martin wakes one morning to see Momma and Daddy packed and ready for an adventure: they're all going to the city! The Big City! Hotel rooms, huge buildings, scores of people, different languages! It's a first for Martin and Sylvia. And a trip to a very special restaurant tops it all off.

Spy Team

Martin's friend, Julian, is coming over and Sylvia knows that he loves to play spies. Sylvia likes spies too but she really wants to be on Martin and Julian's team — not by herself. When Julian suggests they all be together, Martin wonders who they will spy on. Their solution makes for an exciting afternoon.

The Cook Out

Visitors are returning to Martin and Sylvia's house — friends they haven't seen in a year! The brother and sister can't wait to do all the fun things they did last summer: cook-outs, tag, ball games, and "explorers." But once the friends arrive, Martin finds that Jacob doesn't want to join in the fun they

planned. Not only that, but Jacob speaks rudely and teases Martin! Daddy gives Martin some useful advice on how to treat those who tease, and Martin is surprised to see that it changes everything.

Animal Daycamp

Sylvia has been waiting a whole year to go to Animal Camp! She has heard all about it from her brother Martin. But when the time finally arrives, she is no longer quite sure. With Daddy's encouragement, she decides that she will try camp "for a little while." How amazed she is to meet "the bravest of forest animals" and find that the very same bravery lives in her as well!

Pirates

"Yo ho ho" and "Shiver me timbers!" are not what is usually heard on Town Lake during Lake Days, but this year pirates have invaded the event, complete with head scarves, gnarly beards, and thick pirate accents. Could that be Martin in the black pirate's hat? Could that be Sylvia at the helm of the pirate canoe? Could that be Daddy leading them to invade a friend's sailboat and attempt to steal some "booty"? Listen and find out.

The Drawing Contest

It's "Animal Week" at the library. In celebration, there is a childrens' drawing contest, to be judged by a real artist. Of course Martin wants to enter. But what animal could Martin draw? There are no bobcats or foxes in his yard for him to study! And Pickles the cat simply won't sit still! Who could he possibly draw?

Cousins

The cousins are coming! They live on the other side of the country, so Martin and Sylvia only get to see them every few years. When they arrive at their house, brother and sister initially marvel at how different they look from the last time they were together. It isn't long, however, until all four are playing "Astronauts and Aliens" together like they have never been apart. Martin and Sylvia agree that cousins are special.

This is Camping

It's time for their annual camping and canoeing trip on Deer Lake, and Martin and Sylvia are excited to enjoy all of their camping traditions: setting up the tents, exploring the creek next to site #42, and canoeing to all their favorite spots. All goes according to plan until it becomes clear that the neighboring campers have an entirely different picture of what is fun in the woods. The whole family learns that camping means different things to different people.

Loose Tooth

Martin and Sylvia don't go to the town school; instead they are schooled at home. And Momma and Daddy have a special way of telling when they are ready for certain lessons. Usually Momma and Daddy notice when they show an interest in a particular subject — but sometimes something unexpected happens, which can turn the day's lesson on end.

The Enchanted Frog

Momma is canning tomatoes and Daddy is cleaning the basement. Martin and Sylvia don't want any part of it. But when they try to find something to do on their own, they can't agree on a good idea. What could they possibly do? The thought of Mrs. Brown's delicious peach pies draws them to the neighboring farm, where they find Mrs. Brown having her quiet "idea time" by the frog pond. When the children join her in her watchful place, they find the best magic flows from the quietest spot!

The In-Between

Fairies love the space where two different things meet: like forest and field, or garden and house. When the family takes a day-trip to the ocean, Martin and Sylvia are particularly excited to experience the fairy treasures that can be found between the sea and the land. And they discover that fairy magic can appear in the most unlikely places.

Babbit the Rabbit

Babbit is Sylvia's very special stuffed rabbit. She talks to Babbit, she eats with Babbit, and she sleeps with Babbit. When she plays hide and seek with Babbit, Martin objects: stuffed animals can't play games! But Momma and Daddy know better. With a little whispering in Martin's ear, Momma helps him see a whole new world of magic in his very own familiar back yard.

The Sick and Tired Day

It is the third day of rain in a row, and brother and sister are sick and tired of it. Nothing sounds like fun, until Momma suggests they have a Sick and Tired Day. "What's a Sick and Tired Day?" A day to do things they would only do when they are "sick and tired" of everything else. Suddenly morning play, snack time, lessons, lunch and even clean-up time become a game of finding things they have never done before.



Sample Pack:

May Day

It's May Day! In Martin & Sylvia's town, the community celebrates with a May Day Fair, complete with music and a Maypole. The family can't wait to don their woven flower crowns and visit all the booths at the fair. But Martin can think of nothing but the Maypole — and how he wants to join the "fast dance" this year. It takes courage and a little story magic for Martin to take a ribbon and join the big kids in the twisting, turning dance.

Mr. Brown's Bees

Mr. Brown's orchard is a bloom and ready for the busy work of his bees. He invites Martin and Sylvia to help prepare the hives, and Sylvia enthusiastically joins in. Martin, however, is apprehensive. He's been stung before. But when Daddy gives a lesson on bees, Martin learns how much he has in common with the helpful workers.

The Goose Pond

Martin and Sylvia wake one morning to hear a clear sign that autumn has arrived: the honking of geese! Sylvia wonders if any geese have visited the little pond she created in their backyard brook, but Martin is sure the geese have passed by. When they check, they find that the swollen brook has washed away the little pond as well as a series of precious fairy houses. They both set to work but cannot agree on how to proceed. Only a true collaboration solves the question of how to make a proper goose pond!