

# ***Good Neighbors***

# Good Neighbors

*The Mustard Seeds Series #1*



**MABEL ELIZABETH SINGLETARY**



**MightyWayBooks**

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MABEL ELIZABETH SINGLETARY

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Summary: Tired of feeling too young to spend time with their teen sisters, ten year old Kayla and friends decide to form The Mustard Seeds Club and do good deeds to help others.

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*For Kayla and all children  
who believe faith gives them strength  
to move mountains.*



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## Chapter One

### **“We’re ALL IN!”**

**KayLa** quietly watched her big sister, but Mandy was so busy working on her school project she didn’t hear Kayla come into her room. Kayla was proud of Mandy and thought she was the smartest big sister in the world.

Mandy had carefully planned every step of her project and took her time adding the finishing touches. She wanted her science project to be perfect. “Yes,” she said sounding pleased. “It looks as good as I thought it would.”



Kayla could always tell when Mandy finished a project. Her big sister would have a gigantic smile and anyone looking at her face could tell she was super pleased. That's when Kayla knew Mandy was fully satisfied with the job she had done. This time Mandy had created a beautiful display of pictures and information that told the origin of gray wolves found in North America. Mandy loved animals and hoped to become a veterinarian someday.

Kayla thought Mandy's projects always looked great when they were done. She decided she had been patient enough while waiting for Mandy to notice her. She reached to touch the display board. "It's so nice."

"Hands off!" Mandy shouted, getting between Kayla and her project.

Kayla stood still. "Why can't I help?"

Mandy looked annoyed. "Because you can't and I don't have time to talk about it."

Kayla paid no attention to her sister and moved even closer to the project. "That's not even a reason. Mom and Dad said if someone says no, they should at least give you a reason why."

But Mandy had other things to do and didn't

want to talk about it. She had said no and felt that should have been enough. After all, she was a high school freshman and Kayla was only ten-years old. Their interests were different and they spent very little time together. Nothing was the same. As far as Mandy was concerned, they were worlds apart. And she didn't think she needed to explain her actions to a ten-year old.

Kayla thought differently about the whole older sister, younger sister thing and wondered who this new Mandy was. More and more, she realized they didn't seem to know one another anymore. This new Mandy had high school friends who talked about school, boys, college dreams, and shopping. Kayla's friends were ten like her. They mostly talked about scary movies, where they could find the best ice-cream flavors, and the juiciest hamburgers.

“Please let me help?” Kayla pleaded.

It looked like Kayla was again going to try and touch the not yet dried poster board, and Mandy became nervous.

“Out of my room, Seedling!” She demanded.

Kayla didn't understand this new change. Mandy always use to have time for her, now was too busy

for her younger sister. And just like every day since the start of the school year, Mandy ordered Kayla to leave her room. “I mean it—out now!”

Kayla folded her arms across her chest and didn’t move. *Besides*, she told herself, *I hate it when Mandy calls me Seedling. No one even sees a seedling. It is so small. They’re just little nothings waiting to grow into something. Maybe Mandy is right... No one notices me either. I guess I am a seedling.*

As fast as Kayla had that thought, she immediately pushed it out of her mind. Kayla didn’t consider herself small even if everyone else did. Besides, she had grown at least a half an inch over the summer. If given the chance, she could help Mandy make her project even better. All Kayla wanted was to show her sister what she could do. “You won’t let me help because you think I’m too small. No one thinks you can do anything when you’re small,” Kayla grumbled. “I can do things too—good things.”

“Sure you can, but not now and not here.” Mandy got up and walked her little sister to the door. “I’m busy Kayla. Maybe we can do something fun later.”

“I don’t believe you. That’s what you said the last time you told me to get out of your room.”

Mandy's patience had run out. "Mom! Dad! Please tell Kayla to leave my room!"

Kayla knew it was time to go, but she would get even with Mandy for the way she had treated her. "Just wait and see. I'm going to do something too. And I won't let you help me either!"

Mandy smiled. "Okay, Seedling. I guess I'll just have to miss out." Then she closed her door.

Kayla stood outside her sister's room. "I'm not a seedling! Seedlings are small, and I'm bigger than you think."

Kayla sat down on the floor, looking up at the high ceiling outside her sister's bedroom. At that moment, she did feel very small—and powerless. *I might be a seedling, but I know I can do things too. I just need to figure out what those things are.*

The next day, Kayla was sitting at lunch with her three best friends Tara, Morgan, and Sam. Kayla always liked to talk and spend time with the friends she had made at Clover Elementary School. But today, she wasn't talking at all and the girls could tell something was wrong. "Are you okay Kayla?" Tara asked. "Don't you like your lunch?"

They were having spaghetti for lunch, and all the girls knew how much Kayla liked spaghetti. It was her favorite, but she hadn't touched it.

Do you feel sick?" asked Sam.

Kayla shook her head no.

"I'll bet it's got something to do with Mandy again," said Morgan.

Sam put her hand on Kayla's shoulder. "Is Morgan right? Is Mandy treating you like a little kid again?"

The girls knew exactly what Kayla was going through because they each had an older sister too. And just like Kayla, their sisters were also in high school.

Kayla imitated her sister's voice. "And then she said, 'Leave my room now!'"

Sam took a bite of her bologna sandwich. "That happens to me all the time."

Morgan chimed in. "What's so important about being in high school anyway?"

"I don't know," said Tara. "But I'm wondering what happened to my sister too? It's like someone took her to some far away teenage world and I can't find her. She's busy all the time, and we hardly ever talk like we use to."

“Does she say you two can talk later?” Sam asked.

Tara looked surprised. “How did you know that?”

Sam laughed. “That’s what my big sister tells me. But I know she tells me that so I’ll leave her alone.”

Morgan was very interested. “So what do you do?”

Sam chuckled. “I make sure I knock on her door at least once a day—sometimes twice. It drives her crazy!”

The girls laughed, and Kayla felt better knowing she had friends who understood what it was like being a little sister—or as Mandy called her—a *seedling*. Suddenly, Kayla had an idea. “Maybe we should be too busy for them.”

“It wouldn’t matter,” said Sam. “They wouldn’t anyway. They don’t want us around.”

“Kayla is right.” Morgan said. “If we can find something special to do, it would show our sisters we are bigger than they think we are.”

Tara looked confused. “But what can we do? We are only ten you know?”

Sam agreed. “Yes, we *are* only ten.”

Morgan grinned as though a great light had flashed in front of her eyes. “Kayla, you know how

Mandy is always calling you a seedling and how much you hate it when she does?”

“I don’t like it at all when she calls me that.”

“Well,” said Morgan, “my mom once told me about these tiny little seeds called mustard seeds.”

“Seed are seeds,” said Kayla. “What’s the big deal? No one notices seeds until they grow into something.”

“That’s right,” Tara cheered. “But they do grow into something!” She pointed to the window. “Look outside at all those beautiful trees, and what about all the pretty flowers we see in spring? They all started out as seeds.”

Morgan got up from her seat and waved her arms in a large circle. “And those tiny mustard seeds grow and become huge trees.”

Sam asked, “But what does that have to do with us?”

Morgan was excited. “We may be small now, but one day we will grow too.”

Sam shook her head. “I don’t get it.”

Kayla got up and stood next to Morgan.

“I do! We can start a secret club. We can be like those mustard seeds! And while we are growing, we can do good deeds. And we can do them together.”

“Good deeds?” Sam asked. “What kind of good deeds?”

Morgan and Kayla looked at one another hoping the other had an answer to Sam’s question. “I’m not sure,” said Morgan. “But I do know that good deeds are about doing things to help people.”

“So what do you all think about the idea?” Kayla asked.

“I don’t know if I want to be a mustard seed,” said Sam.

“Well, I do!” Tara giggled. “I think it’s a great idea. We’re small now, but we won’t always be little. And it doesn’t matter. If we work together, we can do big things.”

The girls knew Kayla did not like being called a seedling, but she liked the idea of being part of a club. Morgan couldn’t wait any longer for an answer. “Well—are we in? Are we going to be mustard seeds and do good deeds?”

“Yes,” they squealed. And Kayla’s voice could be heard above the others. “WE’RE ALL IN!”



## Chapter One

# **"We're ALL IN!"**

### *\*Questions for Discussion:*

1. Why was Kayla in Mandy's room?
2. What name did Mandy call her younger sister?
3. How did Kayla feel about the name Mandy called her?
4. Should Mandy have let Kayla help her? Explain.
5. How did Kayla feel when Mandy told her to leave her room? How would you have felt in Kayla's place?

**\*Writing:** Pretend to be Kayla. Write a letter to Mandy telling her how you feel about her calling you a seedling. Explain why you feel this way.

**Dear Mandy,**

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**Yours truly,**

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