

Hello There
January 2nd

Hi! My name is Joan, but my friends and family call me Joanie. You can call me that too if you want!

I'm twelve years old and live in Washington, D.C., the capital of the United States. It is a pretty big city filled with buildings, parks, monuments, bikes, buses, and many visitors and people from different countries!

My favorite thing about living in D.C. is experiencing all four seasons. In Winter, the snow can pile up to my knees, and we all go sledding at Montrose Park.

In Spring, our neighbor's garden is filled with little green sprouts, followed by delicious-looking little strawberries--which we are not allowed to pick.

There is no school during Summer; it's my favorite.

And in the Fall, the leaves on the trees that line the streets turn red, yellow, and orange. And after changing colors, they fall from their high branches, float downwards, and pile on the sidewalks. And then you know it's time for Halloween.

My family lives in a very skinny yellow brick townhouse on one of these tree-lined streets. A friendly neighbor with a pet turtle lives on our left, and a not-so-friendly one is on our right. My best friend Clare lives down the street. Our house has three floors, and a pear tree grows in the backyard.

The best part about my home is the people I share it with: my family.

My parents' names are Doug and Maria, though, to me, they're "Mom" and "Dad".

My dad is an engineer with a great big beard and bright blue eyes. He's significantly taller than my mom, great at math, and laughs very loudly. All in all, he's a good guy.

My mom helps people write books, and she looks after us. She also always wears reading glasses, keeps her hair in a nice messy bun, and smells like lemon perfume.

They met a very, very long time ago when they were in college. He thought she was brilliant, and I don't think that's changed over time. She liked his loud goofy laugh.

But it's not just me, Mom, and Dad.

There's Grant, my responsible, very clever, fifteen-year-old brother who is generally "not to be bothered."

Then there's me, two years younger. Unlike Grant, I'm not typically described as "very clever," but I've got my strengths. And, of course, there are the twins.

Ty and Ruby have spent the last eight years (their entire lives) learning how to cause trouble—and they've gotten pretty good at it! Though they're both small for their age, when they pair up, there is absolutely no stopping them.

Finally, we've got a dog named Fudge, and Ty has a stinky little guinea pig named ZoomZoom. There's also my Grammy, who lives in Rhode Island, and Gramps in Texas, who both like to visit.

It's a full house, but we generally all get along. As you'll read and learn, we sometimes have our hiccups, but we love each other so much.

I'm excited to tell you about my life, family, and friends, and I look forward to hearing about yours!

Your Friend,
Joanie