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When I was a child my family moved to a big old two-floor house,

with big empty rooms and creaking floorboards.

Both my parents worked so I was often alone when I came home from school.

One early evening when I came home the house was still dark.

I called out, “Mum?” and heard her sing song voice say “Yeeeeees?” from upstairs.

I called her again as I climbed the stairs to see which room she was in,

and again got the same “Yeeeeees?” reply.

We were decorating at the time,

and I didn’t know my way around the maze of rooms but she was in one of the far ones,

right down the hall.

I felt uneasy,

but I figured that was only natural so I rushed forward to see my mum,

knowing that her presence would calm my fears,

as a mother’s presence always does.

Just as I reached for the handle of the door to let myself in to the room

I heard the front door downstairs open and my mother call

“Sweetie, are you home?” in a cheery voice.

I jumped back, startled and ran down the stairs to her,

but as I glanced back from the top of the stairs,

the door to the room slowly opened a crack.

For a brief moment, I saw something strange in there,

and I don’t know what it was, but it was staring at me.

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