**Antique Doll**

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On the morning of her birthday, Lucy’s mother woke her up and told her a package had arrived in the mail and it was addressed to her.

The girl hurriedly unwrapped the gift and was horrified at what she found inside. It was the most disgusting old doll she had ever seen. It was completely bald and it’s skin was cracked and caked in dirt. The worst thing of all was it’s teeth. They were long, pointy, sharp and beastly. They looked like an animal’s fangs.

With a shiver, she took the doll and threw it in a corner. Her mother scolded her, telling her that someone had gone to a lot of trouble to send her this antique doll. Her mother told her she had better appreciate it.

Lucy tried to protest but her mother would not listen. She forced the young girl to keep the doll. So, to put her mind at rest Lucy stuffed the antique doll into the little cupboard under the stairs, behind a pile of shoes where she wouldn’t have to look at the ugly, evil little thing.

It was not until a few nights later, when Lucy was lying in bed that she heard a noise…a shuffling sound, which went on for about five minutes. Then, a brief dragging noise and finally, a scuttling like light footsteps walking very fast.

By now Lucy was shaking in her bed with fear, unable to move. Then, she thought she heard a faint raspy voice whispering quietly from downstairs. Lucy always slept with the door open and the landing light on, as she was a little scared of the dark.

She heard the voice say “Lucy, I’m on the first step”…And then loud scrabbling again as whatever was speaking apparently turned tail and returned to it’s place of hiding.

Lucy was so scared that she didn’t sleep a wink that night but laid in fear until the break of dawn, when her mother got her up for school Lucy tried to explain to her mother what had happened the night before, but was so tired that, when her mother passed it off as “just a dream” she began to believe it might be the case.

Of course it wasn’t. Lucy begged her parents to let her throw the antique doll in the garbage, but they insisted that it was a present and she had to keep it. So Lucy reluctantly went back to bed, telling herself that it had only been a dream. She checked the cupboard under the stairs, but the doll was exactly where Lucy had left her.

That night, Lucy fought sleep but she eventually drifted off even though she had fought sleep. Presently, the deep disembodied voice woke Lucy again. She wondered if she could only hear it in her head.

“Luuuuccccyyyy! I’m on the fourth step…”, it said. Then came to scuffling noise and the voice didn’t reoccur that night. Lucy was crying by now, and again she didn’t sleep that night. At school, Lucy told her friends about the doll, and of course they laughed at her. Lucy could only think that if the doll was climbing four steps at a time then there was only one more night to go.

That night Lucy decided to shut her bedroom door. When her mother turned her light out she asked why Lucy was no longer scared of the dark. Lucy replied that she was and could she leave her light on instead of the hall light? But her mother pointed out that her bedroom light was so bright it would keep her awake, and said no.

Therefore Lucy agreed to just sleep without a light. She opened the bedroom curtains instead to light the room a little anyway. Just as she began to doze, she heard the noise.

And then the voice came, very clear this time. “Luuuuccccyyyy! I’m on the top step…”

In the darkness of her bedroom, Lucy heard a click and trembled with fear. She wasn’t sure, but she thought she could see her bedroom door opening very, very slowly.

The next morning, Lucy’s parents found her body at the bottom of the stairs. They guessed that she had been on her way to the toilet during the night and in the darkness, had slipped and fallen down the stairs, breaking her neck.

The antique doll was found beside her body, and was buried with Lucy. Everyone said what a tragedy it was.

“She loved that doll”, said her mother. “Now they can be together forever”.