

Sugar Fairy

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A story I wrote for my English class ^^;

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1 - The Grace family get acquainted with their new home

"We're nearly there now kids, I'm sure you'll love your new home once you see it" Mrs. Grace said taking her eyes off the road to lean back and smile at her two children sitting in the back seats. Leon and Lorraine both looked up sulkily and shrugged grudgingly at their mother, who at this time had already turned back around to take a sharp left turn. Leon was 11 years old and Lorraine was 14. Although their age gap isn't that big, their personalities and looks are completely different. Leon is small and skinny with short spikey black hair, which never seems to go how he wants it. While Lorraine is tall, plump and has perfect long straight brown hair that she only has to brush once and it looks great. Leon has a soft spot for all kinds of animals and insects and would love to be a vet when he's older. But unfortunately Lorraine doesn't share this same spot and thinks all creepy crawlies are disgusting and gross, and has a habit of sneaking into Leon's bedroom in the middle of the night and killing all of his bug collections and denying it or saying it was an accident. In the morning once Leon had noticed, of course Leon had never been able to prove that she had done it on purpose, but he knew. "Oh Look! I can see our new house from here!" Mrs. Grace exclaimed excitedly and pointed out the window at huge far away trees to the left.

"What! Where? All I see are trees!" Lorraine shouted at her mother in a puzzled voice while leaning across Leon to see out the window, her face pressed against the glass.

"I do wish you wouldn't shout" Leon groaned covering his ear closest to his sister.

"Look over there, Lori" Mrs. Grace said pointing again but higher this time "through the gap" Lorraine and Leon both gaze up at the huge majestic trees and then they saw it, through a tiny a gap in the middle was the clear sight of what looked like a tiny house, they could only see it for a second and so could not really make it out but it looked sort of like one of those old haunted mansions from horror movies.

"Awwwwwwwwwwwwww but mum" Lorraine protested "it's out in the middle of nowhere! You know I've never wanted to live in the countryside!"

"Now come on Lori, how do you know you won't like it? You've never been in the countryside in your whole life" Mrs. Grace said in one of her reassuring voices.

"But mmmmm!" Lorraine moaned, leaning forward to hold onto the back of her mother's seat.

"No buts Lori! We'll live a happy life here and that's final!" Mrs. Grace snapped back angrily. "Mum nearly never gets angry" Leon thought "but when she does it's best not to argue with her" Leon looked over to Lorraine and realised she must be thinking the same thing, because she leaned back into her seat without saying a word, her eyes filled with tears. Leon knew these were fake tears though, because it was a well known fact to Leon and Lorraine that their mum hated to make them cry and if she ever saw she had, she'd be overcome with guilt and apologise, even if she wasn't in the wrong. Instantly, as if Mrs. Grace had some sort of ESP for sensing tears, she looked into her rear-view mirror at Lorraine, turned her head around and said "ohhh I'm sorry Lori, please don't be upset I didn't mean to shout at you like that, sorry!" Lorraine looked up at her mother with her big sad puppy dog eyes and said in a low voice "that's alright mommy" Mrs. Grace turned back around to concentrate on the road, happy that her daughter was no longer upset. Lorraine glanced at Leon with a smug smile across her face as if to say 'Did you see that? I never lose' Leon just looked away, he was used to Lorraine's acting.

"You should star in movies" Leon mumbled to himself under his breath.

"What? Did you say something?" Lorraine said giving Leon a suspicious look.

“No nothing” Leon replied with a fake smile, showing his straight pearly white teeth.

Mrs. Grace suddenly pulled up the car, causing both Leon and Lorraine to fly forward into the seat in front “WE’RE HERE!!” Mrs. Grace shouted merrily, sounding like a little kid with a new toy. Leon and Lorraine both gazed out the window at the house they were parked out side and the house seemed to stare back at them. It was old and rusty looking with most the painted peeled off and windows broken, and had two large chimneys on top of the pointed roof. It sort of looked like the building was being held up by all the cobwebs on it. But that wasn’t the worst of it, it was dark and gloomy with a huge black cloud behind it that never seemed to move. And it was where they’d be sleeping tonight and probably for the rest of their lives, Leon and Lorraine both realised to their horror.

2 - C2- Dream? Vision? Flashback

"It's a bruck down shack" Lorraine said, getting out of the jeep, which was a red, 7-year old (P reg.), 4x4, Vauxhall Frontera

"It's just you can't see it properly now that its getting dark, you'll see it's lovely in the morning" their mother said, with what looked like a forced smile. "And the word's broken, honey" she added, wagging her finger in the air, she had a habit of always correcting Lorraine's slang.

"Whatever" Lorraine said with a long sigh.

"What do you think Leon?" Mrs. Grace said, turning a 180° turn around too see Leon, who was still sitting in the back seat of their jeep gazing up at house though the window.

But Leon just sulkily looked away from his mother to look down at his feet and said nothing.

"Oh Leon! Your not still upset at me for making you leave all your bugs and animals behind, are you!?" his mother said with an annoyed voice. "I told you you'll find many new one's here! I know you will"

Leon just gave a slight groan as his answer, still staring down at his feet. Once his mother turned back around to face the house, Leon returned his gaze up to the big old house, than down to Lorraine who was trying the door, she was unsuccessful and so went to the side and peered into one of the large windows. Their mother then made her way to the front door, fumbled around in her pocket for a bit, than pulled out a long rusty looking key, stuck it into the keyhole and struggled a bit to turn it, but then eventually flung the door open.

"Well what are you waiting for! Bring in your stuff from the boot!" Mrs. Grace yelled to both her children, without even bothering to turn around, and then disappeared into the house.

"Coming" Lorraine yelled back from somewhere around the back of the house. Lorraine came running to the jeep with her long hair blowing all around her face. "You still sitting here?" she said, once she reached the back door of the jeep.

"No" Leon answered sarcastically.

"Wish you weren't, I wish we'd left you behind in the old house"

Lorraine snapped back, Lorraine could always think of a clever comeback.

"ohhh I'd better go and see if I can find any new bugs before it gets dark" Leon said, changing the subject.

"Well there's plenty of butterflies around the back, ugly things they are, all colourful and hairy, I can't stand 'em" Lorraine said while wrinkling up her nose.

"Ohhhh really? I've never had a butterfly before" Leon said excitedly, and immediately swung the car door open, nearly knocking his sister over and jumped out, as if he'd suddenly gotten a burst of energy. Than started to run towards the back of the house, but before he could reach there, he heard his mum yell, stopping him in his tracks. She was calling him. "What is it!?" he yelled back.

"hurry up and bring in your stuff!!" he heard his mother reply "and then you can pick which bedroom you want!"

Leon sighed "okay mum! I'm coming!" he shouted and started walking back towards the car. By this time his sister was already entering the house with her arms full of bags of her junk. She collected the weirdest things, like different types of stones and shells and even some old cereal packets but the weird thing was everything she collected was Japanese or had something to do with Japan, why? Leon never could figure it out. He just put it down to his sister being weird.

Once Leon reached the boot of their jeep, he picked up two large bags, they were both his, one was full of clothes and the other had about 10 different sized glass jars, all with little tiny holes in their lids. There

was also different sized books in the bag, all of them about animals or insects in great detail. Leon wobbled over to the front door with the huge bags in each hand trying to balance the weight out, he looked like the weighing scales his mother owned for flour. He entered the door by squeezing both bags sideways together, once he was in, he suddenly realised how dark it was, the dark brown wooden walls didn't let any sun light enter and no lights were switched on. He walked further into the hall, still holding the two heavy bags. All was silent, the only noise he could hear was the creaking of wooden floorboards under his feet. All he could see was the long empty hall, no doors in sight, Leon gulped, he realised the only place to go was straight into the darkness ahead. He took slow steps forward, hoping his eyes would adjust before he walked too far in. Still all was quite, creak creak creak, his feet made as he walked. CRACK! Leon stopped frozen in fear "what was that? I never made that sound! But somebody or something did! And it was close!" Leon's mind was racing, all kinds of thoughts flew by, like, a murderer was in the house or a giant rat or killer bees or a bear or wolf. Leon tried to calm himself down and think rationally. He turned his head to the right a bit, as that had been the direction it had come from and he listen, but it wasn't working, all he could hear now was his heart beating, louder and louder it got, he felt like it was going to pop right out, like they do in cartoons. Leon stood there for another few minutes without making a sound, still standing in the same spot he had stopped on. He was dying to shout out 'Mummy mummy I'm scared!!' and start crying. But he knew if he did, Lorraine would never let him live it down. "okay, its okay, its just one of the noises old houses make, yeah that's right, everything's okay" Leon was repeating over and over in his mind. He didn't dare say it out loud. Leon slowly raised his foot and stepped forward, creak, the floorboard groaned under the weight of his body. Creak, Leon took another step and then another and another. He was slow at first but got faster. His hands were numb from holding the heavy bags for so long but he didn't care, he just wanted to reach the end of this spooky hall and never look back. CRACK! Leon froze again, he could feel sweat dripping down his cheek from his forehead. Badum badum badum his heart now felt like it was going to explode and he was sure that people miles away could hear it. However Leon decided this time he wasn't just going to just listen "ummm.... Is anyone there?" Leon asked in almost a whisper. He listened, nothing, no sound, no answer. "Anyone?" he said a little louder. He listened again, but again nothing. So he took another step creak. Just as he did, like he'd stepped onto a trap switch or something, a little door to a built in cupboard to the right of him, flung open and something, no, somebody, jumped out and pulled Leon to the ground "ARRRRRGGGGGHHHHHHHHH!!!!!" Leon shouted at the top of his lungs. The person landed on top of him and pinned him down, his two bags he was holding crashed down to the floor with a thud. All Leon could make out was the silhouette of the person, he could tell it was wearing a cap and he couldn't see any hair. He struggled with the figure for a minute on the floor until it overpowered him and he could see it raising its fist into the air, right above his face and he could picture it coming smashing down into his face. When all of a sudden the light came on in the hall and Leon could see his mother standing above him looking down with a puzzled expression. Leon quickly took his focus off his mother to see who had attacked him, and to his shock leaning on top of him was his sister!! By now she was laughing her head off!! "Lori! It was YOU!" Leon shouted with tears in his eyes and his face flushed. "well ofcourse it was me, stupid" Lorraine sniggered "who did you think it was? A murderer?" Lorraine burst into her hysteric laughter again and pulled off the cap she was wearing to let her hair flow down. "well what's going on here?" their mother asked still looking puzzled "Leon are you all right? Lori get off him now!" Lorraine stood up and patted the dust off her jeans. "Everything's alright mum, we were just playing, that's all" Lorraine said in an innocent voice, this was

ofcourse just more of her acting.

"I was really scared!" Leon blurted out. Mrs. Grace and Lorraine both stared down at Leon who was still sitting on the floor with tears now rolling down his cheeks. Lorraine gave Leon a devilish grin and he instantly knew he shouldn't have had said that.

"awwwww the poor little baby was scared" Lorraine said in the kind of voice you'd talk to a baby in "awww does the baby want his mommy" Lorraine said, just to rub it in a bit more and then laughed wildly.

"Lori!" Mrs. Grace snapped. Lorraine stopped laughing and gave Leon an angry look.

"Now Leon tell me what happened" Mrs. Grace said in a kind, soft voice.

"I was bringing in my stuff and as I got to here Lori jumped out on me and since it was dark I couldn't see who it was and... well I got... scared" Leon replied.

"What!?! don't lie!" Lorraine yelled angrily "I was the one who was scared! Do you know he made me wait like ten minutes before he got up to here! I almost fell asleep! And then I hear what sounded like running, so I thought Leon might be getting chased so I jumped out to save him! And he started attacking me!

"That's not true! And you know it!" Leon yelled angrily at his sister while climbing to his feet

"Okay okay, that's enough you two, look, I don't know who was telling the truth but I do know that there's a big mess on the floor from your two bags Leon, and I know you both made it, so you can both pick it up" and with that Mrs. Grace turned and walked off down the long hall.

"But mmmmm!! They're HIS bags and HE dropped 'em!" Lorraine argued. But Mrs. Grace ignored her protests and continued down the hall.

"grrrrrrrrrrrr! This is all YOUR fault!" Lorraine said, with an angry voice and an even angrier expression across her face. Leon noticed she waited till their mother was gone far away enough that she wouldn't hear.

"Oh shut it, Lolly, this is all because of you, and you know it" Leon said as he leaned down to examine the damage done to his jars.

"My name is Lori! L-O-R-I, LORI! Not Lolly! Get it right, you little twerp" Lorraine said, leaning closer to say it into Leon's face.

"Okay, Lolly, whatever you want" Leon replied, turning his face away from his sisters.

"arghh! I wish you'd never been born! Lorraine snapped back so quickly that it almost all sounded like one word. "And then mum and dad would still be together and we wouldn't have had to move house" Lorraine added dryly.

"huh!? What! It wasn't my fault they broke up! You always blame me!" Leon shouted out instantly, his eyes filling with tears again.

"Oh come on! You know it all started with you and your stupid kitten! It you hadn't found it and wanted to keep it, we'd still be living in our big bungalow in London! Not out here in this old rundown shack!" Leon began to shake, not from the cold breeze coming from the open door behind him or the shock of seeing most of his glass jars broken, but from the combination of anger he felt towards his sisters thoughtlessness and the pain he felt in his heart for even being accused, however there was more to it than that, and he knew it, there was also the feeling of fear and guilt, because he couldn't completely convince himself she was wrong.

But Leon said nothing, he just continued picking up his broken glass jars, his head down low.

"You can ignore me, but you can't ignore that fact that we'll probably never see dad again, and it's all your fault" Lorraine said coldly, not even bothering to look at Leon, who was still kneeling on the floor, his head

down, fiddling with his broken jars. He may not have answered, but he

really felt what she was saying, he took it all in, and although he didn't show it, what she said really hurt

him.

Leon finished packing all his jars back into the bag and quickly stuffed the clothes back in as well. He stood up silently, still looking down, with a bag in each hand and walked past his sister without looking or saying anything. Then walked slowly down the hall. He felt like bursting into tears but held it all in, he stopped and took a deep breath, "I won't let her make me cry! Not again! I won't!" Leon shouted in his thoughts, and with that he looked up. With all his sadness he'd forgotten how scared he'd been and then suddenly realised, he didn't know where he was going, he looked back but Lorraine was gone, "she must have had gone back outside for something from the car" Leon mumbled to himself, and turned back around. He looked at his choices, the nearest door to him was on the right, than further up from that was another, across from that was a flight of stairs, which turned to the right so he couldn't see the end. And then last, the furthest away was a door, straight ahead, at the very end of the hall. He began to wish he'd paid attention to where his mum had gone, but then that was always his problem, his teachers at his old school called it, having a large imagination, but he knew that they just meant he never paid any attention, and they were right! After about a minute, Leon's mind would wonder of to some fantasyland, with faeries and goblins and would never come back to reality, until a teacher yelled his name. "okay, well I might as well try the nearness one, I don't think I can hold these bags any longer" Leon whispered. He looked back across the long thin hall but his sister still had not returned. "okay here I go" He said in a determined voice. He walked over to the first door and pushed it open, it made a squeaky noise as it swung fully open. It was dark and he fumbled around a bit for the light switch but eventually found it, it clicked on, and the whole room lit up. "It's a kitchen!" Leon exclaimed in a half surprised, half relived voice. He walked over to the window, which looked out to the side of the house, examining the furnishing as he went. There was a big rectangle shaped table in the middle with a ripped up and dirty table cloth over it. There was no carpet or rug, just plain brown floorboards. There was a sink under the window and a few cupboards on the walls. Leon looked down at the sink and tried the cold tap, at first water gushed out but then settled down and ran smoothly. Leon guessed the house must have it's own water supply, like from a well or something. He turned it off and looked out the window again, all he could see were fields, fields and more fields, and some mountains really really far away in the distance, the top of them looked white with fog. Leon sighed, he was still gazing out the window but without his eyes really seeing anything. Then all of a sudden a little tiny red and black butterfly flew past, snapping him out of his daze "A butterfly!" he shouted excitedly. He leaned across the sink and stuck his face against the glass of the window in the direction it had flown, but it was too late, it had already disappeared around the back of the house.

"awww it's gone!, sigh, oh well I better go find mum, and then I can choose a bedroom" with that said, Leon walked out of the old rusty looking kitchen, back into the hall. He noticed Lorraine to his right, walking into the room ahead, her arms full of her clothes and some cushions.

Leon walked quickly to catch her, but the door had already closed behind her before he reached it.

"Ummm... hello" He said pushing the door open. Inside his mother was wiping away cobwebs from the ceiling with a feather duster. And his sister placing the cushions onto an old faded yellowish sofa.

"Hi Honey" Mrs. Grace said with a warm smile. "You can just leave those two bags here for now, if you like"

"okay mum" Leon replied, dropping the two heavy bags to the floor.

"Hey mum, what's this room?" Leon asked shyly.

"It's a sitting room, stupid" Lorraine answered for her.

"oh" Leon said, feeling really dumb for asking, his face crimson.

Leon surveyed his surroundings. There was a big window, looking out to the side of the house, it had a

large crack through it. At one end of the room was the big yellowish sofa, where Lorraine was standing, fluffing cushions. Opposite it was a small, dark brown, coffee table, with a small blue, tattered looking, rectangular rug, with white tassels coming out of each side. Next to it was a large, old fireplace, it had a nice flowery design carved into its wood and a lovely colourful peacock design down each side of it, made with tiles. Mrs. Grace was standing to the right of it, reaching up on tiptoe, with her right hand reaching high into the air, with a feather duster in it.

"What a nice pattern on the fireplace" Leon said, walking over to it, he rubbed his finger across it.

"Yeah I know! Isn't it pretty!" Mrs. Grace said, happily. "It'll look lovely once I've cleaned it, doesn't the flower design look lovely?"

"Beautiful" Leon said, in a soft voice.

"oh you think so!?" Mrs. Grace said, looking surprised and happy at the same time, she stood back onto her feet normally and let her right arm drop back down to her side, the feather duster still tightly in her grip. "I didn't realise you liked flowers so much"

"Huh? Oh no, not the flowers, I meant the peacock" Leon answered.

"Oh you think all animals are beautiful" Mrs. Grace said sighing.

"And insects" Lorraine added.

"I don't THINK they are, I KNOW they are" Leon corrected.

"Hey mum, when we gonna buy a T.V.?" Lorraine asked, changing the subject.

"Soon dear, and it's when ARE we GOING TO buy a T.V." Mrs. Grace said, waving her finger in the air like a teacher, the same as she always did. Lorraine just frowned and said nothing.

"T.V. is all you think about, Lolly, you're such a couch potato" Leon said sniggering.

"Oh shut up, shrimp!" Lorraine shouted back.

"Okay you two, if you want to put some of your energy to good use, then you can help me clean these spider webs away, okay?" Mrs. Grace said, and handed Lorraine her feather duster.

"Okay" Leon agreed without a fuss.

"awww but mum!" Lorraine protested "I still haven't picked my bedroom yet!"

"Oh come on Lori, Leon still hasn't picked his room yet either and he's not moaning, you need to be more mature, like your brother" Mrs. Grace said, in a slightly annoyed voice.

"arghh FINE!" Lorraine shouted, in a pissed off sounded voice, and walked over to the other end of the room with the feather duster, she hated being compared to Leon and he knew it.

"oh kids these days" Mrs. Grace muttered to herself with a sigh.

"Where should I start?" Leon asked his mother politely.

"Here would be nice" Mrs. Grace answered, with equal politeness and a warm smile. She pointed up above the large fireplace. "There's another duster by the door.

"Kay" Leon walked to the door, picked up the short feather duster and then back to the fireplace.

"I'm going to see what I can do in the kitchen" Mrs. Grace said, walking out the door"

"Alright!" Leon yelled, after her. "Oh and I tried the water and it works!" He added

"I know!" Mrs. Grace yelled back from somewhere in the hall. Lorraine didn't look or say anything.

Leon and Lorraine got to work with the dusting, they were at it for a few minutes when something caught Lorraine's eye "Hey! A butterfly!" she exclaimed excitedly. Leon rushed over to see, but when he got there a felling of disappointment fell over him like a ton of weight. "It's dead" he said in a low voice.

"Well it serves it right, it shouldn't be in my house" Lorraine said flatly, turning her nose up at it.

Hearing this, Leon felt like punching her right in the mouth, but decided against it, he knew if he did, she'd beat him to a pulp. Their age gap wasn't that big, but their height gap was, she was taller and stronger than he was. "For now anyway" Leon thought. "But someday, I'll be older and stronger than

her” He reassured himself.

Leon gazed up, it was stuck in a large spider web, only it’s wings remained, the rest had been devoured. It’s wings were a pretty crimson, with black around the edges and a few black spots in the middle.

“Poor thing, and it was so beautiful too” Leon muttered, a frown forming on his face.

“Ha! Well it isn’t very beautiful now, is it?” A smug smile crept across her face, spreading from ear to ear.

“You... you... heartless witch!” Leon yelled, his body shaking from anger.

“ohhh aren’t you bold, calling me heartless ha ha ha ha ha! I feel so ashamed” Lorraine laughed in Leon’s face. Lorraine lifted the feather duster into the air and destroyed the web with one easy swing. Leon watched her doing it and found it hard to believe that it had once been a prison of torture and death for the poor butterfly.

“I’m going to pick my room” Leon said sharply and stomped out of the room.

“awwwww is the poor wittle baby sulking, ha ha ha ha ,does he want his nappy changed?” Lorraine’s mocking voice reached him in the hall.

“I’ll show you” Leon murmured angrily. Leon stuck his head into the kitchen door where his mum was busy cleaning. “Mum, I’m going up stairs to pick my room, is that okay?”

“Sure, honey” Mrs. Grace answered, looking up at him from her work, a smudge of dirt on her cheek. “oh but I’m I haven’t checked to see if all the lights work, dear, so you might have to pick it in the dark. The word dark sent chills down Leon’s spine “no! I’m not a baby! Who cares if it’s dark” “That’s alright mum”

And with that said Leon pulled his head out of the door and turned to face the long dark stairway. Leon walked slowly over to the bottom step, taking it a step at a time. He flipped the switch, nothing happened. “Nothing happened! I guess I’ll have to go up in the dark” Leon stepped onto the second step and gazed up into the darkness above. Gulp. Leon didn’t move for a second “no! I’ll show Lolly I’m not a baby!” He closed his eyes tightly shut and he took another step, then another and another. The floorboard creaked on the impact of his foot and his eyes snapped open. He looked around, it was dark, too dark to really see much. He took another few steps and noticed the creaking of the floorboards got louder. When suddenly as his full weight hit the step, it collapsed, sending Leon’s right leg straight through “ARRRRRRGGGGHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!” Leon’s ear-piercing scream echoed around the house, like an angry banshee.

“Leon! What happened?” Mrs. Grace yelled, running to the bottom of the stairs. “Are you alright!?” She yelled with genuine concern.

“The stairs broke...” Leon answered, teary eyed. And pulled his leg out of the newly made hole. His jeans were a little torn and his leg a little cut and bruised, but nothing major.

“Are you hurt? Anything broken?” Mrs. Grace asked again, climbing a few steps up to get a better look. By this time Lorraine was standing at the bottom, staring up, that usual devilish grin, spreading across her face.

“I’ll live” Leon replied, putting on a brave face. “There’s no need for you to come up, mum” He forced a smile.

“You sure? Honey” Mrs. Grace looked a bit worried. “I can find you some plasters or bandages, if you like”

“No thanks”

“You sure, honey?”

“Yep”

“Well okay, but be careful, the steps are very rotted and warped” With that said, Mrs. Grace made her way down to the bottom again, she looked back up at Leon and smiled, than made her way to the

kitchen again to continue her work. Lorraine had already left.

With everyone gone, Leon once again noticed how dark it was and the terror he felt as his leg fell through was still stuck deep in his throat.

Leon stood on the step above the one that had collapsed. He felt like the darkness was surging around him, thick and suffocating, like there was nothing but blackness. Leon tried to breathe regularly but couldn't, the dust that had risen up after the step broke was overwhelming, it was hard to see your hand in front of your face, let alone breathe normally. Leon knew he had no choice, he had to keep going up.

Leon slowly, cautiously, took another step. He hoped that it would remove the gut wrenching feeling of being devoured by the darkness. But it didn't. Leon tried to pull away, pull away his mind, from this never-ending nightmare. Pull away from the darkness, away from the deep shadows, the close walls, and the overwhelming old musty smells. "No! I won't run away! I won't run from reality! I'm NOT a baby!!"

Suddenly without warning Leon flew through the air, jumping about 3 steps, than started sprinting up the warped, creaky stairs, at about 90 miles per hour. The floorboards creaked and groaned and bent under his feet where he landed, he reached the sharp right turn and continued running up the last few steps. Once he reached the second floor, he came to an abrupt stop, almost toppling over. Phew. Leon let out a sigh of relief. And fumbled around in the dark, trying to feel for a light switch on the dust covered wall. He finally found it and switched it on. Bursts of light came on all over the hall. The hallway stretched ahead of him like a dim tunnel. Leon looked around, half surprised anything happened, the hall was covered with little lamps on each side, but only a few came on, casting strange shadows across the floor and wall, shadows the lights couldn't touch. "Oh great... half these lights don't work" Leon mumbled nervously.

Leon plucked up his courage and walked down the musty smelling hall, the dust rose with every step he took. He stopped at the first door, to his left, pushed it open, its hinges squeaked violently, and Leon feared the door would fall over at any moment. But he kept pushing it anyway, once it was fully open, he walked in, surveying the interior, there was a large window, half covered by a tatty flowered curtain. The floor had a torn and dirty green carpet. There was a huge king-size bed in the middle and a small bedside table to the left of it. "I guess mum'll want this room" Leon realised and walked back into the hall. When he reached the next door, he only had to give it a slight push and the door swung open effortlessly. He wondered in, gazing at the multicoloured flower wallpaper, which covered the room, although it was peeling down in some places. His eyes left the wallpaper and focused on the single bed, sitting alone in the middle of the room, then he turned to his right, only to see someone looking right back at him! He jumped in fright and landed on his butt on the floor. It took a second for it to sink in what had happened. And then he laughed, he laughed and laughed at his own stupidity. "It wasn't someone staring at me" he laughed again "it was only a stupid mirror" Leon straightened up and wiped the tear from his eye. "I'll have this room" He said with pride. "Hmmmmm... I'd better go get my stuff" Leon ran down at of the room, across the shadowy hall and down the steps, jumping right over the step he'd fallen through earlier, to the second to bottom step, he landed with a loud BANG! That shook the step violently. He stepped down and walked into the sitting room to look for his stuff.

"Oh here it is!" He said, in excitement. He walked over to the faded yellow sofa, where someone had put his bags. He picked them up quickly, however the sudden extra weight made his cut leg ache, and he had to drop them again.

"Ouch" he mumbled, rubbing the cut on his leg. "Guess I'll have to take 'em one at a time" so he lifted up his bag of jars and books and held it using both hands.

The pain in his leg came back but not as much, so he struggled out the door and to the bottom of the stairway. "hmmmmmmm.... Now how am I going to bring this up" Leon pondered. He lifted the bag

onto the second step and stood on the first, he repeated this for the next step and the next and the next, he prayed the old rotten steps could take it.

Once Leon had struggled all the way up, he dragged the bag to the second doorway and stopped. He let go of his bag and looked at the door, a proud smile spread across his face, almost from ear to ear. He put his hands on his hips and said, "you know, I think I'm going to like sleeping in this room" He gazed at the door, still smiling, for another minute or so, before his smile quickly faded, he heard footsteps, they were coming up the stairway.

He stared at the top of the stairs, wondering who was going to emerge, his face tensed. Then to his relief, his sister appeared, her arms full of her clothes.

"Phew, I thought I was hearing things" Leon murmured and his features lightened.

"What are you mumbling about!" Lorraine said sharply, in a distrusting voice.

"Nothing"

Lorraine walked over, and as she walked past, abruptly turned, knocking Leon to the floor with a loud thud. "Oops" Lorraine said, sniggering. And to Leon's dismay, Lorraine pushed open the door that Leon had so proudly been gazing at, walked in, dropped her clothes on the bed and sighed a huge sigh of relief, as if she'd been holding a ton of bricks.

"W-what a-are you doing!?" Leon stammered, climbing to his feet.

"I'm putting MY stuff, in MY room, stupid, what does it look like?" Lorraine said, that oh so familiar smug smile crept across her face.

"B-but! This –" Leon tried to protest, but Lorraine butted in quickly.

"Go away! You're not allowed in my room" Lorraine said, coldly, giving Leon an icy stare, if looks could kill, Leon would be dead.

And with that she paced towards the door and slammed it shut, right in Leon's face. Leon stared in disbelief, at the door, only centimetres away from his face. Leon's legs suddenly felt like jelly and he could hardly stand, he leaned his back against the door but his legs felt completely drained, he slid down the door and landed on his bum with a pathetic thud, as if he was made of paper. Too bad he didn't feel like paper, his whole body felt so heavy, like the weight of the world had suddenly fallen over him. "I'm soooooo tired, my knee hurts like hell, my bums sore 'coz I keep landing on it and I hate this stupid house! I want my old house back! My old family! My old life!" Leon began to shake, he was almost in tears. "When did this all happen? When did my life start crashing down around me! I HATE this place! I HATE myself!" tears rolled down Leon's cheeks, like waterfalls, it was as if all the pain and sorrow he was holding inside suddenly burst out. He buried his face into the palms of his hands and cried and cried. Suddenly Lorraine's voice echoed through his mind:

Awwwww the poor little baby was scared
does the baby want his mommy?

Leon could see Lorraine's smug smile spreading across her face, in his mind's eye.

"NO! I'm NOT a baby! I'll show her! She thinks she can make me upset and cry for mum by taking my room! But that's what she thinks! I'm not even going to care!" Leon wiped the tears from his eyes clumsily and climbed to his feet. He was shaking at first but fought and finally stood up straight and steady.

"I'm going to my room" Leon said, in a low but confident and determined voice, and his face turned serious, dead serious.

Leon started to walk to the end of the hallway, where the last door stood, he was dragging his bag, along the floorboards.

Creak creak! One of the wall lamps flashed violently in front of Leon, and then went out. Leon gulped

nervously and stopped to look around.

Suddenly Leon noticed how dark it was, and all the deep shadows that were surrounding him, almost devouring him. Leon swallowed a sick taste of fear.

Leon began slowly making his way to the last doorway, again. The silence echoed around him. The gloomy hall ahead was swathed in shadows. He took a deep, shaky breath and pushed himself forward into the darkness. Coming closer to his destination, he could feel his uneasiness growing around him. Once he finally reached the door, he slowly lifted his hands, they were shaking a little, he grabbed the door handle with one hand and placed the other firmly on the wooden door. He twisted the handle and pushed the door open, the hinges creaked, sounding like they were in pain. Leon stepped inside, it was dark, very dark. No light could penetrate the thick wooden shutters that clamped the window closed. Leon plucked up his courage and walked quickly over to the sealed off window, not taking his eyes away from it. He wiped away some thick cobwebs and dust from the shutters, and surveyed the lock, he was relieved to see that it was only a simple bolt, holding the two shutters together tightly. Leon spat on his hands and rolled up imaginary sleeves. He grabbed the bolt angrily and pulled with all this might, pulled and pulled, his face turned more and more red. Till finally he lost his grip and was sent hurtling backwards, by his own force.

“Ouch” Leon mumbled miserably, standing back up and rubbing his bum. “Why do I always land on my butt?” Leon groaned, then sighed.

“Okay! One more try!” Leon stood as close to the window as he could and established firm footings, rubbed his hands together and grabbed the bolt once again. He held it so tightly his palms went white, and pulled as hard as he could, he arched his back to help his pull, but the bolt didn’t budge. Leon stopped, his hands still firmly holding the bolt but now they were sore and sweaty, and took a deep breath. He channelled all his strength and pulled with everything he had, suddenly the bolt jerked out halfway, surprising Leon and making him lose his grip, his hand slid across the bolt and then smashed into the right shutter, as he fell. “Ouch... not again” Leon moaned, sitting on his bum once again. Suddenly a surge of pain swept through his hand. He wanted to scream but held in it, he slowly, painfully lifted his right hand, it was bleeding. Leon froze for an instant then as if he’d seen a ghost went extremely pale, his unblinking eyes never left his hand. He tried to hold it in but it was futile, Leon burst out an ear-piercing scream, it filled the whole house.

Leon heard loud footsteps smashing up the stairs towards him, then his mother burst into the room, followed by a surprised looking Lorraine.

“What’s wrong!?” Mrs. Grace yelled, with a flushed and worried face.

Tears started gushing down Leon’s face and just wouldn’t stop.

“You’re bleeding!” Mrs. Grace shouted anxiously, a look of horror crossed her face. She lifted up his hand and examined it frantically, looking for the cause of blood. Finding it, she sighed a sigh of relief. “Don’t worry, honey, it’s not bad, just a large scratch, that’s all” Mrs. Grace said, reassuringly. “Just close your eyes and relax, everything’s alright”

Leon nodded his head, sniffing violently as if he couldn’t catch his breath and closed his eyes tightly together.

“Ohhh come on! I can’t believe Leon’s still scared of blood! I mean wants the big deal!?” Lorraine snapped angrily, then turned abruptly towards the door and walked out, kissing her teeth as she went.

“Oh that girl! How rude!” Mrs. Grace almost shouted “ignore her Leon, she doesn’t know what she’s talking about”

Leon just sniffed miserably, his eyes still clamped tightly closed.

“hmmmm... sigh I’m worried about that girl” Mrs. Grace mumbled with a sigh.

“huh!?” Something inside Leon snapped “What do you mean your worried about her!? What about

me!!” Leon yelled, almost jumping to his feet, despite the pain in his leg. Tears still running down his now anger face.

“Oh.. well I... just – “

“You always care about her and never me!” Leon butted in angrily, not letting her finish.

Mrs Grace stood up abruptly, her face looking down to the floor, she raised her right hand and slapped Leon right across his face. They stood there in silence for about a minute, before she looked up from the floor and gazed straight into Leon tear filled eyes. She had a single tear rolling down her cheek. “Look Leon, I know this is hard for you” Mrs. Grace said, in a soft, slightly trembling voice. “But you’ve got to understand it’s hard for all of us, not just you, we all miss how we used to live, but that’s gone now and you just have to face it. You the man of this house now Leon, you need to be strong and protect your sister, although she might not admit it she really does love you. And she’s also suffering, she’s just showing in a different way, instead of crying like you do, she holds it all inside and tries to act tough. You know one night not so long ago, Lorri cried herself to sleep. I bet you didn’t know that, did you?”

“No...” Leon just managed to mumble through his tears. His eyes left her and settled on the floor, a few tears plopped on the floor boards near his feet.

Seeing this, Mrs. Grace placed her hand gently onto Leon’s chin and lifted his face back up, so there eyes once again meted. She leaned her face close to his and in almost a whisper said “I know this is hard for you now, but it’ll get better, I promise”

Once she had finished this sentence, the silence seemed to swallow them, devour them completely. Until Leon finally broke it and said “I’m sorry” and sniffed loudly.

Without saying a word, Mrs. Grace lifted both arms and squeezed Leon tightly in a motherly hug. She then gently let go and turned towards the door. But stopped as she reached it, and said kindly “I know honey, I

know” With that said she left the room, a proud smile spread across her face.

Leon, with tears still coming down his face, sighed. He was once again alone. He slowly lifted his hand to examine it, he was shaking, he didn’t want to know how bad it was, but knew he had to, he just hoped it’d stopped bleeding. He raised it slowly towards his face. Once he finally built up the courage to look, he sighed again, except this time it was a sigh of relief. It’d stopped bleeding, and his mum had been right, it wasn’t that bad, just a large, although kind of deep, scratch.

Leon shook both hands clumsily but harshly. And twitched his fingers. Just to get them back into the groove. He then sniffed loudly and rubbed away the excess tears left on his face. He took a deep breath and sat down on the bed behind him heavily, causing a cloud of dust to rise from it, almost choking him. Leon sat there for a minute in silence, just thinking, thinking about what his mum had said, that Lorraine and herself were both also suffering, but showing it in different ways. Leon was about to sigh once more but before he could his mother appeared at the door once more, startling him.

“I found my medicine box” She said smiling, and lifted a small white box with a red cross on the middle of it.

“Oh it’s okay, don’t bother, I – “

“No, no, no, no! I’m going to clean that little scratch up, or you could get an infection” Mrs. Grace butted in, waving her finger in the air, as she always did.

“Fine” Leon gave in quietly and raised his right hand towards her. She took it in her own and gently examined it, she then opened her box and took out a small bottle, shook it, then took off the lid.

“What’s that?” Leon asked worriedly

“Don’t panic, it’s just water” She replied, with a giggle

She poured the liquid, which was supposedly water, although Leon wasn’t sure, all over his hand, which then just dripped onto the bare floorboards. She then proceeded to take out another smaller bottle and

some cotton wool. She poured a little of the liquid from the bottle onto the cotton wool. Leon could smell that this wasn't water.

"Ummm... what's that?"

"Just something that will make you better, honey"

"Oh" The worried look crept back onto Leon's face "Will it hurt?"

"Why don't you tell me" With that said, she dabbed the soaked cotton wool all over his hand and held it tight.

"OUCH!" Leon screamed suddenly, and tried to pull his hand back, but his mother held too tight and he couldn't break her grip.

"Hold still, honey, this'll kill any harmful germs that might have gotten into your hand" Mrs. Grace said in a soft reassuring voice.

Leon bit into his lower lip and groaned, but said nothing. Mrs. Grace let go of his hand and opened her box again, she pulled out a long roll of bandage and started wrapping it around his hand.

"soooooooo... does it hurt?" Mrs. Grace asked, innocently.

"Er... n – no" Leon stammered embarrassingly, he could feel his face turning red.

"Good" Mrs. Grace smiled lovingly "I'm all done"

Leon opened and closed his hand, testing the bandage "Thanks, its fine now" Leon smiled, a weak looking smile.

"Well I've a lot of work to get on with, will you be alright alone?" Mrs. Grace asked, a concerned look on her face.

"Ofcourse, I'm not a baby, you know" Leon replied with a half disgruntled voice.

"I know" Mrs. Grace said, a hint of amusement "Nobody said you were"

"Lori did!" Leon yelled hurtfully in his thoughts. He wanted to say it out loud as well, but just couldn't bring himself to do it. He knew if he did then she'd just say to ignore her and he'd end up feeling stupid for even remembering it. So instead he answered lamely "Yeah I know" and dropped his head, to stare down at his trainers.

"Well I'll be going then" Mrs. Grace walked towards and out the door. She popped her head back in and added "Call me if you need anything"

"Okay"

Once the sound of his mothers footsteps had vanished down the stairs, the silence fell over him once more, almost suffocating him.

Leon lifted his head slowly, painfully slowly, from his trainers.

He was suddenly aware of all the deep shadows all around him, he looked around the old dust covered room and his gaze once again fell upon the clamped window. The bolt only half way through. Leon took a deep breath and walked towards the window. He faced it bravely and clenched his fists tightly "I'm gonna do this!" He lifted both hands and gripped the end of the bolt that was already half out. "Okay this is it" He bend his elbows and arched his back. "3 2 1 and GO!" Leon pulled with all his might and to his surprise it pulled out quite easily. Leon held the bolt in both hands "pewh that was easier then I thought" Leon smiled at his own work proudly. "Okay lets get some light in here" He put a hand firmly on each shutter and tried to pull them a part. They were shaking but not opening. He could feel the scratch on his hand reopening, it felt like someone was ripping his hand in two. The bandage started to drip a little blood through it. Leon wanted to cry again, the pain was overwhelming, but he knew he had to be strong and keep his focus. He took another deep breath and pulled with all his strength. BANG the two shutters flung open and crashed back into place at each side. The sudden bright light flowing into the room dazzled Leon, in his blind daze he could just make out lots of little lights flying around outside the window "Butterflies?" Leon rubbed his eyes clumsily and looked again, his eyes had almost completely adjusted by this point, however there was nothing out there. "Did I really see them?" Leon sighed.

“Maybe I didn’t”

Now that there was light Leon almost didn’t recognise the room. He hadn’t taken any notice of his surroundings before. “That’s right I had more important things to worry about” He looked down at his hand, the bandage had a large stain of blood on it. The sight of it sickened Leon.

He looked away quickly and clamped his eyes closed. “I mustn’t let it bother me, I’m not a baby, so I’m NOT afraid of blood! I’ve got to focus on something else” Leon opened his eyes and looked around the room, his room. He hadn’t noticed what was inside it before. There was a small bed on the right hand side, it had dusty covers and a little torn pillow. A tiny bedside table next to it with a half burnt out candle on it, and a small cupboard on the left wall. The flowery wallpaper above it was peeling off a bit. “Wow, the flowers look so real” He walked over to the wall and stroked the colourful petals. “Lovely” Taking a step back, Leon looked down at the small cupboard. “Hmmm... I wonder what’s inside” He knelt down and flipped the latch on the side of it, gripped the handle and pulled it open, it creaked loudly. “Empty?” Leon’s wondering face turned to disappointment. “Darn” The cupboard was bare. “Huh?” He noticed something, the cupboard stuck out a lot from the wall, however looking at the inside, it seemed small. “Something just doesn’t add up”

Leon placed his arm across the top of the cupboard and took a mental note that the cupboard was from the tip of his elbow to his knuckles. He knelt down once more and put his hand inside the cupboard, placed his fist at the back panel of the cupboard and looked closely. “I knew it!” The front of the cupboard only reached three-quarter way up his arm, the hinges of the door were nowhere near the tip of his elbow “ha! Am I smart or what!” Leon laughed proudly at his discovery. “Huh? But wait, why is it smaller” He looked at the inside of it, wonderingly. “Hmmmmmm... I wonder if...” He lifted his right hand to put it inside, a surge of pain swept through it “Arrghh” He snapped his hand back down with great speed. “Ouch” He rubbed it soothingly with his fingers. “I’ve gotta stop forgetting about it” Leon mumbled. Lifting his left hand, he put it inside once again. Place his palm firmly on the back of it, he felt around for anything suspicious. His fingers felt along the edges of it, until suddenly his index finger went right through it. “Oops I think I broke it” He said guiltily. “Hey wait” He looked around the back of the cupboard, but he couldn’t see his finger. “Hmmmmmm...” He stood up and gripped the top of the cupboard, pulled, trying to move the back of it away from the wall. Unfortunately it wouldn’t budge, it seemed to be secured to the wall somehow. “Curse it” He knelt back down in front of it. “Lets see” He put his finger back in the little hole he’d made, making sure not to put the wrong hand in. He curled his finger, to make it into a hook shape and tugged his hand back forcefully. Unexpectedly the back of it came out effortlessly, but only on the right hand-side where his finger was. The other side stayed put. “Hey, its on hinges” His voice was surprised. The reason the other end hadn’t moved was because it was nailed down. “It’s like another door inside it, strange, wonder what it was for?” He mumbled curiously. It was too dark to see if anything was inside. He raised his left hand and cautiously positioned inside. Feeling around blindly, he didn’t find anything “Empty? No way!” He sighed and let his hand flop down. “Ouch” his hand shot back up. “What was that?”

Examining his finger he noticed the source of pain. “A scratch, curse it” He put his finger in his mouth. “Wait, what scratched me? Its too small to be by a nail, its more like a paper scratch –“

A look of shock covered his face. “Ofcourse!” He shot his hand back in and put it palm down on the bottom, then clenched his fist “I knew it!” The bottom of the cupboard had crunched up into his hand, it was paper, it layered the bottom of the cupboard perfectly so you wouldn’t notice.

Pulling it out caused a huge cloud of dust to rise, it was suffocatingly thick. Leon proudly lifted his discovery high above his head, as if to proclaim it his, and hopped over to the window for some light, to see what was on this mysterious paper.

Disappointingly the window shed no light, it was now 8:30 o’clock and become dark out.

“Curse it, it was bright a minute ago”

