

The Broken Lamp

Story By: Andrew Frinkle

Scarlett and Ryan were chasing each other through the house, playing tag. They loved to chase each other, because grandma's house was so big! There were practically hundreds of hiding places in the different rooms.

There were weird little crawlspaces behind the hallway walls. There was an attic with strange old furniture and chests to hide in and behind. There were countless closets and even some air ducts or laundry chutes they could clamber into.

The best part though was the balcony on the second floor. They could race along that long corridor and hit the wooden floors at a full skid, sliding at least ten feet if they were running full tilt. They liked to race down the hall, slide, and then pound down the stairs or ride the banister down to the ground floor.

This time, Ryan was in the lead with Scarlett hot on his heels. He didn't want to slow down, or she'd tag him "it." He tried to keep running past the skid zone and grab the stair rail as he ran past, so he could use it to slingshot himself down the stairs. Instead, he stumbled and fell into a roll.

Ryan tumbled down the first few steps, hitting the console table at the first landing. An antique lamp rocked precariously above him, and he was too dazed by his fall to reach out and steady it. CRASH! It fell right beside him, and a shout went out from the living room.

"What have you kids broken now?" Grandmother hollered anxiously.

"Uhhh... nothing?" Ryan lied.

Scarlett's eyes were wide with horror as she looked down at her brother, sprawled out with chips of fine antique lamp dusted all over him. "A lamp?"

"Not my collector's edition lamp!" Grandmother gasped. They could almost hear her old bones creak as she levered herself out of her recliner and made a run for the stairway. "No!" She howled, seeing the destruction.

"Grandma, I'm sorry." Ryan offered weakly.

Grandmother's face twisted in anger. "You'd better be, because I'm going to take that out of your hide!" She waved her cane threateningly.

"Maybe we can make it up to you? We could clean and do yard work?" Scarlett offered.

Grandma's gaze softened, and she nodded after some thought. "Start with cutting the lawn, and then dust everything in the house. We'll see what's left after that."

Scarlett and Ryan both thought they were getting off easy, but they didn't know Grandma had only paid \$20 for that lamp a few years ago. It was hardly an antique. She chuckled to herself as the kids cleaned her house. That would teach them to behave!



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