

CREAKY OLD HOUSE

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[[logo]]

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Our house is kind of old and creaky.
Porch is sloping; roof is leaky.
Window's drafty; shutter's peeling.
There's a crack across the ceiling.
Paint's a little chipped and faded.
Might say it's dilapidated.
Still, each one of us—all nine—
thinks the house is fine, just fine.

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We love the yard, the old oak trees,
the favorite spots and memories:
Lou first toddled down this hall.
John drew pictures on that wall.
In the parlor by the phone
Dad records how much we've grown.

(old wall telephone)

(kids' names & height marks on wall)

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Here's the quiet corner nook
where Mama goes to read a book.
And the ancient, fraying rug
where Gran and Grandpa jitterbug.

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This is where we carved our names,
where Uncle Bob plays poker games,
and the giant claw-foot tub
where Dudley gets his monthly scrub.

(the dog)

Here's the trapdoor Lizzie found,
The banister we all slide down,
The hallway where we like to race . . .
And my secret hiding place. (Sssshhhhh!)

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A great old house in every way—
Or was, that is, till yesterday.

Dad was headed out the door
when—CLANG!—the doorknob hit the floor.
“Looks like it needs a screw,” he said.
“Bet we’ve got one in the shed.”

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We swiped the cobwebs, blew the dust,
tossed a moldy sandwich crust.
Dug through hammers, wrenches, tacks,
cardboard boxes, stacks and stacks.

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Searched through buckets, bins and pails,
sorted washers, nuts and nails,

and then—at last—we found a screw.

“Aha!” said Mom. “This one should do!”

We ran inside and down the hall.

“We’ll fix it in no time at all!”

But we were wrong—

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it was too small.

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“Uh, oh!” little Lizzie sang.

John said, “Drat!” Lou said, “Dang!”

“Seems to me,” drawled Uncle Bob,

“we’d better get another knob.”

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And so we eyed the knob and door,
then marched to Wally’s Hardware Store.

(That’s Wally’s—built in 1910—
and never cleaned—not once—since then).

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We searched through hinges, levers, latches,
doorstops, doorbells, bolts and sashes,
brackets, knockers, address plates,
pulls and handles, crates and crates!

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We picked through doorknobs: brass and steel,
amber, violet, emerald, teal,
porcelain, crystal, egg-shaped, round—
a knob for every door in town!

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Grandpa hollered, “This is it!
We’ll fix that doorknob, lickety-split.”
The trouble was—

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it didn’t fit.

(back at home)

Grandma frowned and shook her head.
“Guess we need a door,” she said.

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And so our eighteen tired feet
trudged outside and down the street
to Dorothy’s Door Emporium,
weighing choices, one by one.

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We studied every door design,
considered alder, maple, pine,
mirrored, louvered, painted, leaded,
fancy doors with jewels embedded,
craftsman, cottage, stable, Dutch,

*(could show extreme variety, eg,
huge door for elephant, tiny door
for mouse, stable door with horse,
elaborate castle door, etc.)*

bi-fold, paneled—way too much!

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“This should do the trick!” Dad cried.

“Our finest,” Dorothy said with pride.

What a shame—

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it was too wide.

(back home)

Nine faces stared in disbelief.

Grandma muttered, “Oh, good grief!”

“Now, now,” said Mom. “It’s not so bad.

We’ll move the door frame just a tad.”

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“But then,” said John, “The couch won’t fit.

We’ll have to shift that wall a bit.”

“Fine,” said Lou, “But if we do,

We’ll have to move the stairway, too.”

p22

And so it went all afternoon—

we huddled in the living room,

squabbling over building plans,

sketching maps and diagrams,

building models out of blocks,

toothpicks, and a cardboard box.

*(could show very elaborate sketches
and models, like the Taj Mahal,
Buckingham Palace, etc.)*

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“Move that bookshelf.”

“Bump this wall.”

“Shift the den.”

“Extend the hall.”

“Push the kitchen back a smidge.”

“Better oven!”

“Bigger fridge!”

“Knock that closet.”

“Add three feet.”

“How about a window seat?”

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At last we had a grand design
that everybody loved—all nine.

We voted to approve . . . but wait!

When hands went up, we counted eight!

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Grandma bellowed, “Lizzie’s gone!”

“Search the attic!” hollered John.

“And the basement,” Lou decreed.

“Everywhere!” we all agreed.

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Sixteen legs ran all around—
inside, outside, up and down—
then to the front . . . where Lizzie sat,
grinning like the Cheshire Cat.

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“Well, I’ll be,” said Uncle Bob.

“Lizzie’s gone and fixed that knob!”

“Now it’s like it was before.”

“Maybe we don’t need that door.”

“Don’t need a wider door frame then.”

“Or the bookshelves.”

“Or the den.”

“Wouldn’t need to move that wall.”

“Wouldn’t need to build at all.”

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Eight faces stared in disbelief.

Sighed Grandma, “What a huge relief!

I never liked that new design.”

Said Mom, “Our place is fine, just fine.”

“I love it as it is,” said Lou.

Grandpa smiled and said, “Me, too.”

pp30-31

And so we tore the plans we’d made,

mixed a batch of lemonade,

marched across the creaky floor,

out the slightly crooked door,

settled on the old porch swing—

(a little bent and wobbling)

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and didn't change a single thing.

[Cozy vignette here, showing the house from a bit of a distance, with everyone happily settled on the porch with their lemonade.]