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## The Egg Raid

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David Wilson 12/1/08 9:18 AM

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There was a boy who forgot how to fall asleep. “I can’t do it anymore,” he told his mother. She told him to go to bed or his father was going to hear about it. The boy said, “I remember how to go to bed.”

He went to bed.

He lay there ...

He stared at the ceiling and tried to remember how to fall asleep. Close your eyes—he knew that one. But then what?

In the hallway, somebody whispered in harsh tones. Then the door creaked open and a butler appeared. He turned on the light. “I’m sleeping with your mother,” he said. “We’re running away together. She wanted me to say goodbye for her.”

“My parents can’t afford hired help,” said the boy. “Who are you?”

Rearranging his bowtie, the butler nodded apologetically, turned off the light, and slipped out the door.

In the hallway, a curt shriek ... scuffling and grunting ... squishing noises ... The boy pulled the covers up to his nose.

The door opened and his father walked in. The boy pretended to be asleep.

The father turned on the light and said, "I know you're pretending to be asleep. Your mother told me you couldn't remember how. By the way, your mother's gone. Everything's going to be all right, though. I ordered a blow-up mother to replace her. Well, that's it. Good luck with the whole sleep thing." He turned off the light and slammed the door behind him.

The boy flipped over and sobbed into his pillow.

In the hallway, a machine roared to life and labored in quick, methodic spurts ...

The door opened and the father walked back in and turned on the light. He leaned a blow-up doll against the wall. The doll had a Mary Tyler Moore hairdo and wore a blue airline stewardess dress. "Mom?" said the boy, springing to his knees.

The father arranged himself next to the doll. He removed a banjo from a long wicker case, got into position, and strummed a fast, friendly tune ... Ten minutes later he abruptly smashed the banjo to pieces against the floor like an angry rockstar, then attacked the doll with a large kitchen knife, stabbing it over and over in the chest and screaming "Die! Die! Die!" until the doll was reduced a clump of mauled, deflated plastic.

"Excuse me, son," said the father, turning off the light. This time he shut the door carefully, quietly.

The boy lay flat and pulled the covers over his head. The extreme darkness beneath the covers scared him. He poked his head out into the open and peered at the ceiling.

In the hallway ...

The door opened. Nobody came in. The door closed.

The boy remembered something about sleeping. The next step. The step that comes after closing your eyes ...

In the middle of the night, the boy awoke. Moonlight shone through a half open window. His father sat on the edge of the bed. "I can't keep doing this," he said softly. "Being your father, I mean. It's too hard. There's too much explaining to do." Groaning, he stood and walked into the boy's closet. "I'll be in here if you need me." He closed the closet door.

The boy closed his eyes to go back to sleep, but he had forgotten how to do it again. He got out of bed and went to the closet to ask his father for advice, but the closet door was locked. He went downstairs to the kitchen to get a snack, but the refrigerator was locked. He went back upstairs to lie in bed and think about things, but his bedroom door was locked.

He heard something inside ... The boy thought it might be the sound a crow makes as it tears flesh from roadkill ... He kneeled and peered through the keyhole.

He saw a man dressed in his father's clothes. In place of his head was a giant white egg tilted to one side. "I am an egg man," he said. "I am an egg man and I commit egg raids." He sprinted toward one wall and crashed into it. He sprinted toward another wall and crashed into it. Finally he sprinted toward the bedroom door and crashed into it. The boy leapt backwards on impact ... He got up. Tentatively he put his ear to the door and listened ... no movement, no sound. Nothing ...

He opened the door and stepped into the bedroom. The door stayed open.

He turned on the light, tiptoed across the bedroom, and shut the window. He tiptoed to the closet and looked inside. No sign of his father. He shut the closet door.

He tiptoed to his bed where the butler slept, soundly, using the mangled carcass of  
the blow-up doll for a sheet ...

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