

It's Alive!

True Story by S. Noel Kemp 2023

I tumbled out of bed and toddled down the hallway toward my parents' master bathroom. It was early in the morning, still dark, and my parents hadn't yet appeared from their bedroom. They were hustling behind the door, and I yearned for my mama. As I put my ear up to the door, I could hear a sensational sound like a roaring rocket. I wonder what that is, I mused to myself. As I carefully pried open the door, my eyes fixated on my dad as he removed a "rope" from the wall, disabling some curious appliance. In one impressionable instant, I determined that whatever "machine" my dad held in his hands took on a "life" of its own, as long as it was attached to the wall. However, once the "rope" was removed, there was no "life." From that moment on, my curious senses took over like a magnet being forcefully drawn to its polar opposite.

I must find a magic rope to insert into the wall, I obsessed, and the drive to animate an object like my dad's curious apparatus insatiably infused my underdeveloped senses. I stealthily searched and rummaged until I discovered the perfect object: it wasn't a magic rope, but it was long, lean, shiny, and just the ideal size for poking into the little holes in the bedroom wall. Instinctually, I knew that my mother would never approve, even though I had no awareness of the impending danger such a stunt would cause. I clutched my perfect prop all morning until I was sure that my mother wouldn't notice my shenanigans. At last, the perfect moment arrived, thanks to my little sister who needed a clean diaper. So, as my mother busily hunched over the crib to take care of the dirty deed, I tightly squeezed my precious little prize, aiming it towards the tiny holes in the wall, and determinedly darted forward.

POP!

Then

ZZZZZZZZAAAAAAAPPPPPPPP!

And,

Complete blackness

I don't know how long I was asleep, but I remember feeling very confused as I tried to open my heavy eyelids. My mom was rocking in grandma's old, orange upholstered rocking chair. I liked that chair- the antique springs moaned a very pleasant, soothing sound as it glided forward then back, forward then back. Next, I noticed that my hand rested on a bag of ice, and my mom was sniffling. *Was she crying?* I was too tired to form even the slightest of complaints. After a while, my dad entered through the front door, wearing his Sunday suit. Startled, he locked eyes with my mother and cautiously queried, "What happened?" My mother quietly sobbed as she spoke, revealing what had already been erased from my wearied mind: "Suzanne poked one of Nana's hairpins into the wall, blew a fuse which knocked her out, and the shock sent her soaring across the room and into the hall!" My parents embraced, and the tears freely flowed. Exhaustion enveloped my listless body, and I savored the snuggle.

Going forward, the doctor warned my mother to cover the outlet plates. With great authority, he stated, "Children who experience the effects of electricity have difficulty leaving it alone. Chances are, your daughter will be driven to do it again." Well, I proved that doctor wrong. After all, I was an obedient child and *always* did as my mother said. Usually. Yet, my parents wisely invested in those little plastic plugs anyway. Even though I don't remember being zapped across the room, it must be true-because moms never lie.

