

Bobby's Closet



Bobby opened his eyes with a start. Something had awakened him.

He held his breath and listened.

There were noises coming from inside his closet. Grunts, thumps and creaks. Bobby was sure that someone-- or something-- was hiding there.

Lately, he had been hearing a lot of noises coming from his closet at night. But when he told his mother, she just said that he was imagining things.

Bobby was always too afraid to leave his room when he heard the noises. So he stayed awake until it would get light outside and then leave his room as quickly and as quietly as possible. He never went back to his room until his mother had looked inside his closet. But when she looked, she never found anything, so after a while Bobby quit telling her about the noises, because he knew she didn't believe him anyway.

Instead, he came up with an even better way to get his mother to look inside his closet. It always worked, too.

Bobby headed toward the kitchen.

His mother was sitting at the table, drinking a cup of coffee and watching a morning news program on television.

"Mom! Mom! I can't find that sweatshirt Aunt Jean brought me from France!" Bobby really did like the sweatshirt. It was bright red and had a picture of the Eiffel Tower on it.

"Just a minute," his mother said. "I want to hear this." Bobby looked at the television screen.

He saw a photo of the mean-looking man who had escaped last week from the local jail. The woman talking said that the police had at first thought the dangerous criminal was hiding somewhere in the city. Now they had decided he had left town. They were no longer looking for him here.

Then the woman started talking about something else. Bobby's mother turned to him. "What did you say?"

"I said I can't find the sweatshirt that Aunt Jean brought me from France." "It's hanging in your closet."

"I didn't see it."

Bobby didn't think of this as a lie. He really hadn't seen the sweatshirt, because he hadn't looked for it.

"Well, I don't have time to look for it now, Bobby. I have to leave for work. You have some clean clothes in the laundry room. Just wear those."



This wasn't exactly what Bobby had expected to happen, but at least he wouldn't have to go back to his room before he went to school. He'd just make sure his mother looked inside his closet before he went to bed that night.

When he got home from school that afternoon, his mother was sitting at the kitchen table, drinking coffee and watching television.

"They captured that man this afternoon," she said. She went over to the refrigerator and started taking out things for dinner. "He hadn't left town after all."

Bobby looked at the screen. Now, instead of the man's photo, there was a live picture of the man being taken back to jail.

The man kept coming closer and closer to the television camera.

Bobby couldn't believe how short and skinny he was. He looked almost like a kid. He was wearing a sweatshirt with a picture of the Eiffel Tower on it!

Bobby stared at the man. He could feel his heart pounding. He suddenly didn't care how afraid he was of his closet. He had to know!

He ran out of the kitchen and upstairs to his room. He opened his closet door and pulled the string to turn on the light.

No one jumped out at him.

He saw an empty hanger.

The sweatshirt his Aunt Jean had brought him from France wasn't there.

And Bobby knew who was wearing it.

