

The Creaking Stairs
a Sister Rose Mary story

Just outside of town
On a deserted dirt road
An old house stood empty
But for a green toad.

Then a car drove in front
And parked in the drive
It was mom and dad Custard
And their children—all five.

They began to move in
To the house that spring day
“Let’s explore the whole place!”
I heard one child say.

While they ran through the house
From bottom to top
Some movers were helping
The mom and the pop.

By the time day was done
They moved all their things in
Their boxes and beds
And their clothes in a bin.

When suppertime came
They ate pizza with cheese
When they finished mom said,
“Kids, go to bed please.”

Mom and dad had one room
The two girls had another
The third bedroom was shared
By three younger brothers.

It had been a long day
So they soon fell asleep
‘Till the only sound left
Was a stair that said “Creak.”

It was soon answered
By a noisier stair
Whose creak, in stair language,
Asked, “Who’s sleeping up there?”

A third stair creaked the answer
“The Custard family is here
We had not seen a human
Since June of last year!”

The stairs had decided
Long ago, that this house
Should have no one in it
Not a person, not a mouse

Every time a new family
Had tried to move in
And cleaned up the house
As neat as a pin.

The stairs would cause trouble
And drive them all out
They were happier creaking
With no people about.

A few years ago
A stair named Pete Peg
Had tripped a small girl
And broke her left leg.

A stair named Stan Staple
Pushed a boy to the bottom
When the boy broke his arm
Stan creaked out, “I got ‘em!”

The stairs liked, best of all,
To talk late at night
In their creaking stair language
That gave people a fright.

So when the Custards arrived
A stair named Bob Blick
Creaked out to the others
“Let’s get rid of them quick!”

“We’ll talk all the night
With our loud creaking speech
We’ll scare them to death
They’ll howl and they’ll screech.”

So they started their plan
They creaked all night long
‘Till the morning sun rose
And the birds sang their song.

“What was all that creaking?”
Asked the girls and the boys
When they got up that morning
Still scared from the noise.

A stair named Ralph Rude
Then caused dad to trip
He fell all the way down
And bloodied his lip.

“It’s these stairs,” he told mom
“They do not like us
But we have no other home
So live here we must.”

“If these stairs knock us down,”
Said mom, with a tear
“Then we’ll have to move out
We can’t just stay here.”

“I know who to call,”
Said dad to his wife
“She’s a good and wise person
Who’s lived a long life.

“She’s a hundred and five
And she walks with a cane
In a habit all black
And a veil of the same.”

“Sister Rose Mary!” the kids cried
They knew her quite well
She helped people in trouble
As the stories all tell.

Dad called her that minute
Then hung up the phone
“In three hours,” he said
She’ll come to our home.”

Back in her small chapel
Sister finished her prayers
And went to investigate
The strange creaking stairs.

A few hours later
The little nun appeared
She greeted the Custards
Saying, “Good afternoon, dears.”

Dad said, “See these stairs
I described on the phone?
They creak all night long
And they break people’s bones.”

The old creaking stairs
That caused so much pain
Knew Sister Rose Mary
And they knew her cane.

She said, “Let’s all talk
You kids, mom, and dad,
And these creaking stairs
About the problems you’ve had.

“People want peace and quiet
And a safe place to walk
The stairs knock people down
And creak when they talk.

“The answer to this
Is to share the whole place
Between people and stairs
There’s plenty of space.

She tapped the stairs with her cane
And to them she said
“You get to keep creaking
While the family’s in bed

“But no tripping the Custards
As long as they live here
Do you understand?”
Her look was severe.

The stairs did not argue
With Sister Rose Mary
The little nun with the cane
Whom they thought was so scary

They creaked in stair language
Which she understood
“They agree,” she translated
“From now on they’ll be good.”

Then she said to the Custards
“Your part of this deal
To avoid broken bones
That would take time to heal

“You must not be afraid
Of the stairs when they creak
They don’t have voices
So how else can they speak?”

The Custards knew better
Then to put up a fight
With Sister Rose Mary
For they knew she was right.

They said, "Thank you Sister!"
To the little old nun
Then the stairs creaked their thanks
So her work was done.

As she hobbled on out
With her cane, to the road
She waved one last goodbye
To the little green toad.