

Foundation

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Foundation

by [Sixteenthdays](#)

Summary

It's a noisy house, in the way that old things are always noisy. The floorboards creak, and wind shakes the windows, and little sighs and shudders run through the walls. Maybe it's haunted.

(A history.)

Notes

the statements in the main series that accompany this little study are freezing point and that old house <3

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

The house is old. The foundation is stone, quarried nearby, and the walls are wood, topped off and embellished with turrets in the Victorian era, refitted with electricity throughout the twentieth century. Several times, because the wiring for the lights never seemed to work right. The roof is slate, and it darkens to black in the rain.

The house is older than the family that lives in it, that bought the rights to it when the old owners became destitute or disappeared. The foundation is older than the house itself, fire-brushed, and the pit that became the basement is older than the foundation.

It's a noisy house, in the way that old things are always noisy. The floorboards creak, and wind shakes the windows, and little sighs and shudders run through the walls. Maybe it's haunted.

Maybe, like a dead tree, it's rotted out invisibly from the inside, and someday it'll fall, and everything clinging to life within will die, and all the neighbors will shake their heads and say, *How didn't we realize?*

Shadows pool in the basement.

A boy, eleven maybe, comes home to his family's house. He has a father and a mother and a brother, but he's the first inside, and the shadows cling to the soles of his shoes and the folds of his jacket in welcome.

I've been waiting for you, the house tells him in creaks and gusts. Put away your shoes. Forget your grandfather. Come explore. I've opened every door for you.

The house is older than the shadows is older than the family is younger than the foundation is younger than the pit, but it hosts them all within its walls, over its heart, dripping darknesses and biting snowless winds and mother and father and brother and brother.

The boy puts away his shoes, and forgets his ailing grandfather, and opens every door in the house, and looks down the stairs to the basement, and looks, and doesn't descend. This time.

He will.

Before there is a house that burns and is rebuilt, there is a castle. It's a cold, compact thing built of the same stone as the foundation, huddled against the hillside. The tapestries on the walls are thin, threadbare, and the fires never do anything except fill the air with thick, greasy smoke.

The family that lives there with all their household and animals lose their sons to hypothermia, basement floods, sudden violent brawls. *Cursed by God*, say the neighbors. *Sinners*, they say. *Murderers*. The family tries to send a son to a monastery. He's found dead the morning he is to leave. They bury him in the basement, because the churchyard won't take him.

The castle stands, curled tight around its inhabitants, holding them as they die and secreting their bones in its walls, letting in the winter chill, pooling water in its basement until it's flattened by cannonfire, collapsing the roof into the floor into the basement and killing everyone inside.

The boy, fourteen or so years old now, finally steps into the basement alone.

The house leaves the light off for him. The steps creak on the way down, and the shadows swallow him, and when he looks up behind himself the door down is closed. He can't remember closing it.

The shadows swallow him, the firstborn son of the family above.

They enter through his wide unseeing eyes, staining his mucus and arteries, and as he steps onto the basement floor they filter through his blood and out his capillaries, hollowing him out, throwing organs into two dimensions, making him something paper-thin and wavering, something shaded into being by the foundation and the electric wiring in the walls.

He doesn't scream, even though he must be afraid. The house takes his name, for that, and buries it in the floorboards to keep him.

A long time ago, before there was a family or a shadow or a house or a castle or a foundation, a different family hollows out a pit in the earth, and their favorite son breaks his neck falling in.

The shadows swallow him. And then they swallow his parents, and then they swallow everything, and the house creaks on its foundation and doesn't quite fall.

Yet.

End Notes

dearly beloved cowriter zeph was VERY excited for that old house to be posted so they could finally write this.

there's a bit of this plot still left to unfurl in the main series, but in the meantime you can consider this a bit of elaboration with some information nobody in the story really knows or is in a place to explain. as a treat

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