

My House

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Clara Mae and me got married two weeks ago last Sunday, and we haven't left this house since the first night. This old house was one of the reasons I married her for in the first place. Her daddy willed it to her, and it became my property on the day I joined the family. I thought I might have some trouble getting it in my name, legal and all, but Clara Mae up and gave it to me for a wedding present. That was nice of her. She's an awful nice woman, except she's kind of old. She turned twenty last month, and this was her first time for getting married. I'm twenty-six, and I've already been married before to three different girls. Her being never married and all was another reason, besides the house, for me deciding to get married to her.

Anyway, before the first time Clara Mae even brought me to this house, I knew I would marry her, just so I could live here. It's a big, red brick house with a white porch and fancy white columns that go clear up to the roof of the house. There's a white gravel road that goes right up to the front door, then circles around back where the out-buildings are, and then goes clear back to the main road. I've got me a brand new 1929 Packard that I keep out in one of the garages. All the buildings are made out of brick, too, just like the big house. Clara Mae's daddy was probably the richest man in the state when he passed on about five years ago.

There are twenty-eight rooms, and I've been in every one of them. I've even got a floor plan made up for each of the three stories, and I'm getting to know pretty well what's in every room. I heard this rumor once, that Clara

Mae's mama was a little funny in the head and hid all the money she inherited from her family somewhere in the house here, but that's just talked about by the servants, so naturally I don't take much stock in it. I could use a little extra money, now, though. Clara Mae told me the other night that we might be having some hard times this year. The money isn't coming in so good as it did when her daddy was still here. It seems like everybody's having troubles this year. So every now and then, during the daytime when I don't have anything to do, I've been sort of looking around to see if maybe that old rumor is really true.

Yesterday, I was in Clara Mae's dressing room, just looking around, and she came in and asked me what I was doing. I told her I was just looking at all her pretty clothes, but she didn't like that answer very much and asked why I was looking on top of the shelves and behind the bureau, because she didn't have any dresses in those places. I told her since I'm her husband, I could do anything I want and didn't need to hear any complaining from her. Just to show her that I meant business, I kept right on with what I was doing and turned over one of the chairs to look at the bottom of it and see if anything was under there.

That made Clara Mae awful mad, and she started yelling and carrying on and bawling, all at the same time. She said she didn't know why she married me, because I wasn't acting much like a husband should act. I told her that I knew a lot more about how a husband should act than she did, since she was the fourth woman I was a husband to. Then she wanted to know what happened to all my other wives, so I told her about how they'd all passed on before I'd been married to any of them for more than a year. I said that the last one was a lot nicer than her, because when she passed on, she'd left me enough money to buy my new car. Clara Mae started acting funny then and asked me how come they'd all passed on so young. But I said that it didn't matter and she didn't need to know

about it. Then she said that I'd only married her for her money, but I said that wasn't right, because it was turning out that she didn't have very much money anyway. I told her that if she'd help me look, we might find the money that her crazy old mama had stashed away, then we wouldn't have to worry about money any more. That really got her sore at me, because she picked up a vase and threw it at me, but being a woman, she missed and hit the wall. I didn't like it, anyway, even though she missed me, so I had to go over and give her a good slap on the face. It was a pretty good one, too, because she fell on the floor and hit her head on the chair I'd turned over before. She didn't move after that, so I picked her up and carried her into her bedroom and put her on the bed.

She's been laying there ever since, and I haven't heard a sound out of her. I've been too busy looking for that money, though, to worry about her. I kind of hope she gets up pretty soon, since we've only been married two weeks. I wanted her to last longer than the others. I thought her being older would make her stronger, so maybe she'd last longer. I should've asked her how much this house was worth before we had that fight yesterday.