Looking for Amelia

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Chapter One

Moving House



Emily stood in the overgrown front garden of her family's new home and shivered as the winter wind blew a scattering of dead leaves around her feet. She looked up at the front of the house and it seemed to glare angrily back at her, the afternoon sunlight reflecting off its small windows.

"Emily!" called her mum from the front porch. "Mrs Fraser has a present for you."

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Emily sighed and walked slowly towards her mum. Mrs Fraser was the elderly lady who had sold the house to Emily's family. She was moving to the country to live with her son and his wife. Today Emily, her big brother Rick and their parents were moving in.

"My daughter's a little sad to be moving house," Emily heard her mum whisper to Mrs Fraser. "She'll get over it when she starts school here and makes some new friends."

No I won't! Emily thought to herself.

It wasn't that she minded changing schools very much – it was the house they were moving to that bothered her. It was old and dark, and the boards creaked when she went upstairs to her bedroom. Rick, who was studying to be an investigative journalist, thought it was great. He already had crazy plans to make a study for himself in the damp, dark cellar.

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"This is a beautiful old house with lots of potential," Emily's dad had said to her after they bought the place. "We'll redecorate your room first, Em. Imagine what it will look like with new wallpaper and a colourful rug on the floor!"

But Emily didn't care what her room would look like. She thought the house was spooky and longed for the modern city apartment they used to live in.

Mrs Fraser pushed an old wicker dolls' pram out of the front door as Emily approached the porch steps.

"Here you are," she said, with a smile. "I found this doll and pram hidden away in a corner of the cellar many years ago when my husband and I first moved in. They must have belonged to someone who lived here before us and I think they should stay with the house."

Emily didn't really like dolls but she smiled politely and looked into the pram.

"Oh!" she gasped. "She's so pretty!"

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