

TOAST

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Most days Grace did not mind that her dad didn't exist. She didn't even seem to mind how her mom was pretending to be one from two states away. But today the heater broke. The house was as irritable as usual, clothed in wallpaper from the '70s, rooms swollen with knick-knacks from her grandmother's uneventful life. When her grandmother passed seven months ago, she left a void, a void that was quickly stuffed with unpaid electricity bills from a log mansion deep in a Missourian forest.

When morning awoke, Grace could see her breath. Frost licked the floorboards and her eyebrows and it was then that she wondered if her mom had told her what number to call when things broke. Grace buried herself in layers of clothing and went about her morning, assuring she wouldn't miss the bus. She flicked on the bathroom light by habit. Nothing happened. She showered in the familiar but worse cold water, shivered