

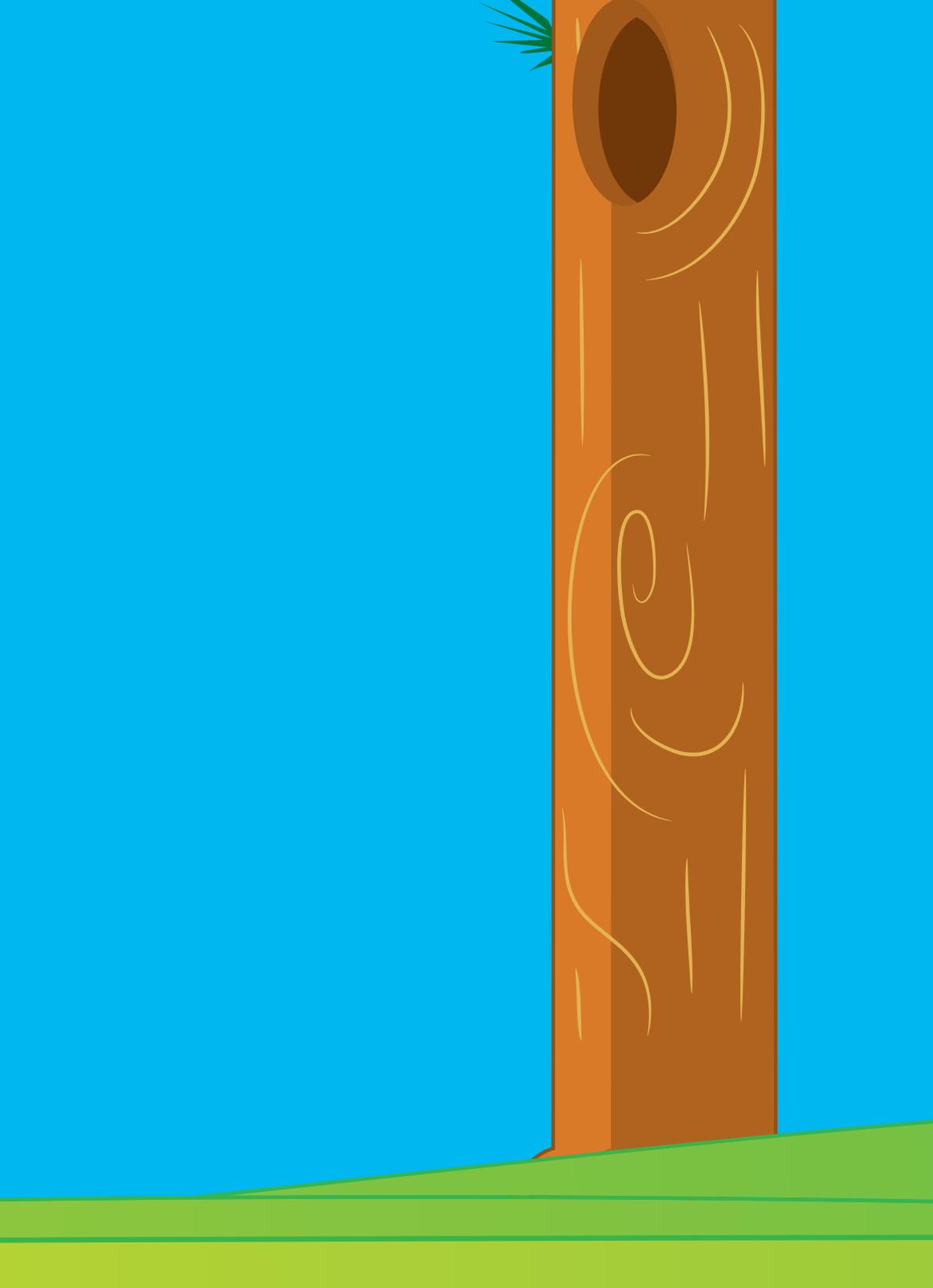
# Golbo the Spider's Amazing Vacuum Cleaner Adventure

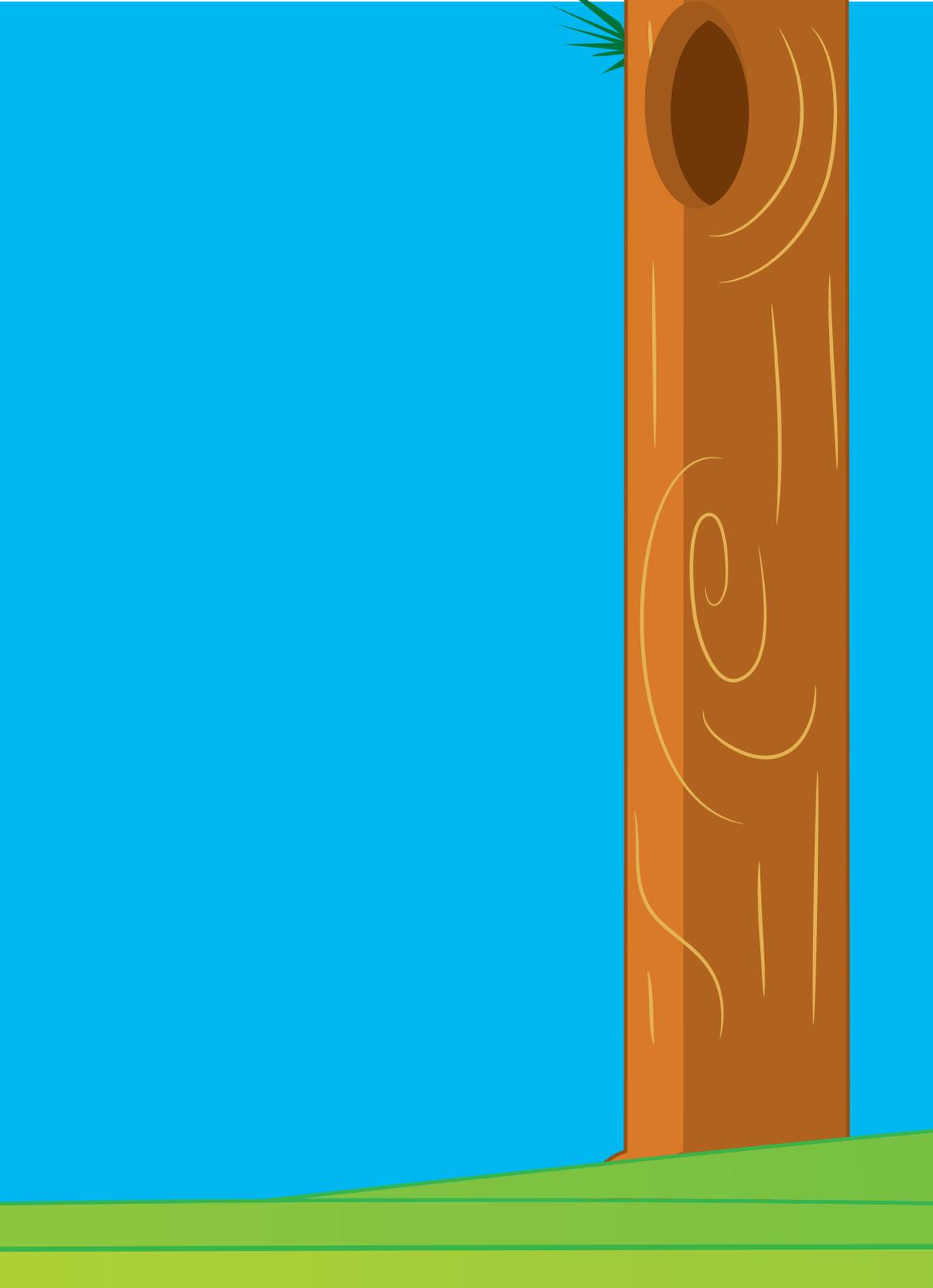


by  
**Faiz Kermani**



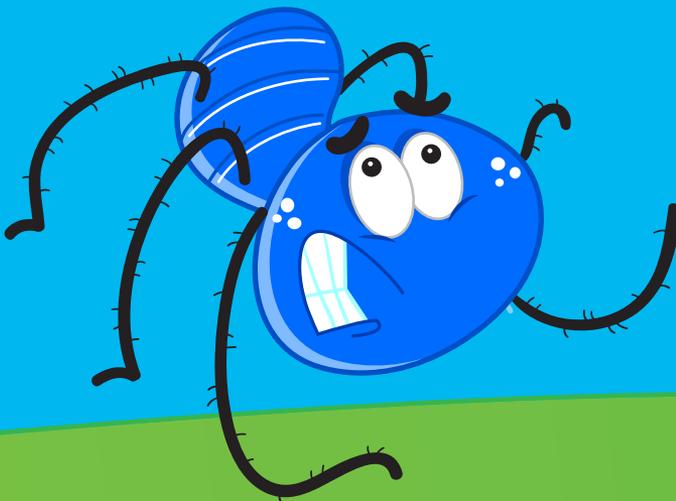
*Illustrated by Korey Scott*

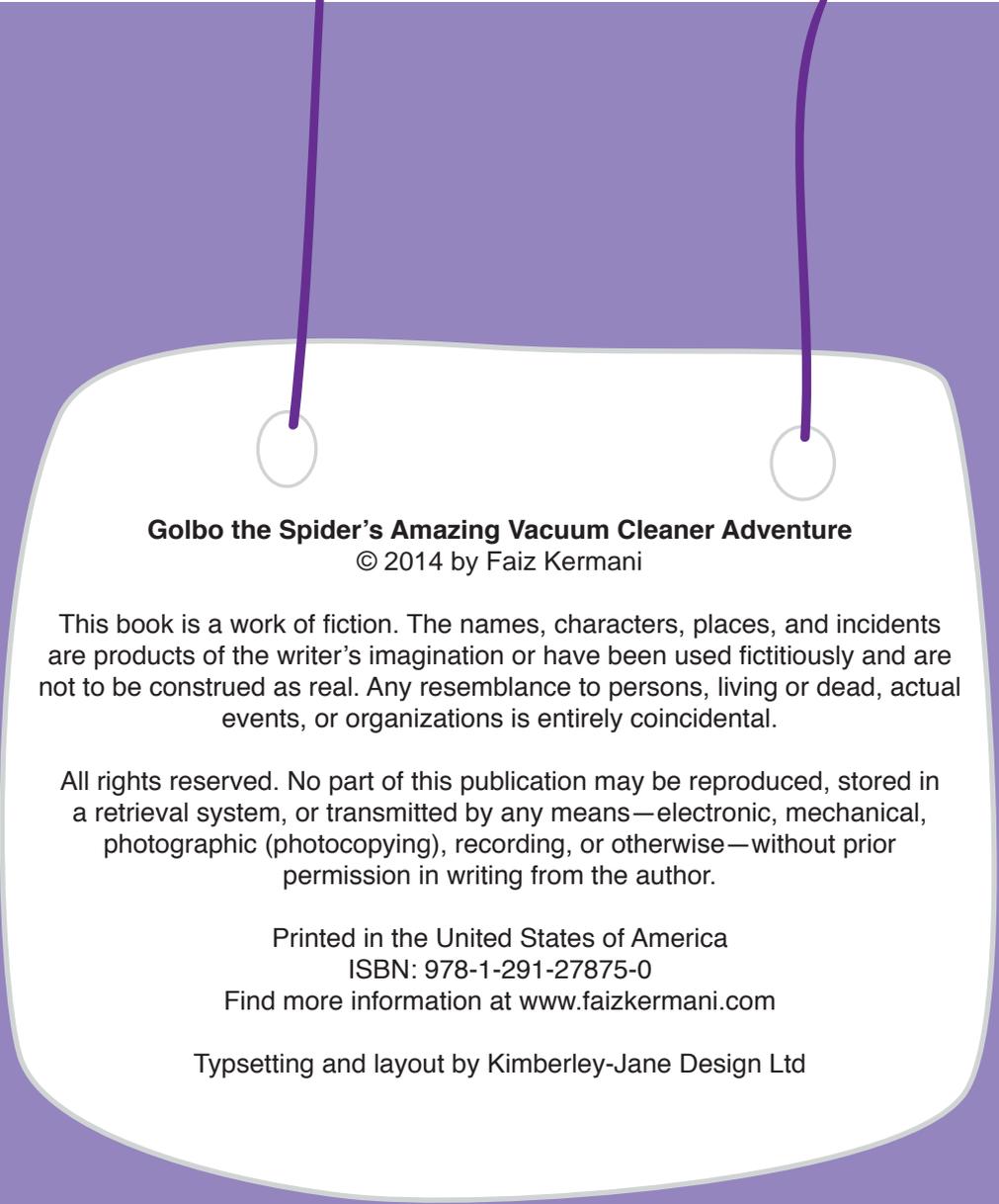




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*Illustrated by Korey Scott*





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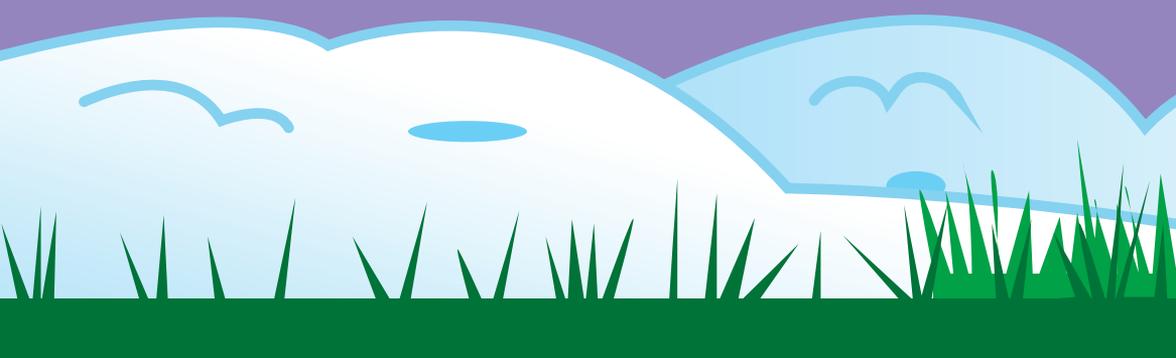
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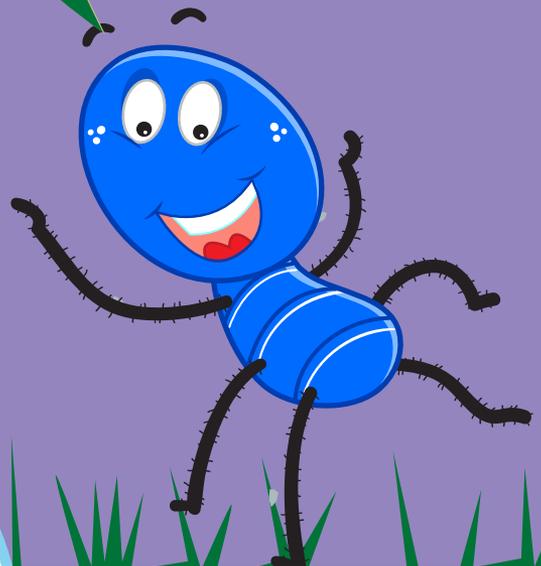
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*For  
Nathalie, Isis, and Yvain.*



# CHAPTER 1

Golbo the spider trudged unhappily across the snow. He had been scurrying around for hours in the hope of finding a cozy, warm place to hide, but he was not having any luck. Every winter it was always a worry. Where could he find a place to take cover until the weather warmed up?

Every time he thought that he had found the ideal spot, he would be faced with the disappointment of another spider having grabbed it first—and then telling him in no uncertain terms to get lost. There never seemed to be an opportunity to ask whether the spider would be willing to share the space. Spiders could be so rude and selfish! He had lost count of the number of times he had been physically booted out of promising locations.

Ah, location, location, he thought. For a spider, location was everything.

He shivered as another icy blast of wind swept across the ground and caused him to topple over. Down he went, and he began to roll down a slope. There was nothing he could do but to let the momentum carry him away. With some luck he would hit something solid and be able to grab onto it.

Unfortunately for him, this time the wind was particularly fierce and persistent. Just as his descent was slowing, he found himself being carried off into the air. His legs flailed around in all directions as he rose higher and higher into the sky.

“Ouch,” he exclaimed as he hit a tree branch.

“How I hate the winter!”



He shook himself dry, scraped himself clean, and scanned the horizon for a new hiding place. He needed to be on the move immediately, as it was not safe to be out in the open like this. There were always hungry birds on the lookout for food, and he had no intention of becoming their next snack. It was only a few months since his best friend, Spognot, had been snatched away by a blackbird while they had been enjoying a drink of water from a leaky pipe at the back of the Italian restaurant. It had been a favorite haunt of theirs because when the owners ran the dishwasher, the water droplets came out all nice and warm.

Golbo felt a lump in his throat. Poor old Spognot. Life just was not the same without her around. She was always such fun!

The life of a spider is not an easy one, pondered Golbo. You had to be constantly on the move, and you never knew how long you would be able to stay in one place. Just when everything seemed sorted out, you would get a nasty shock. For example, after Spognot's unfortunate demise, Golbo had been happily installed in an old barn ready to pass away the winter in relative comfort. Yet that very morning, when he was still half-asleep, the farmer's wife had found him and had chased him out with a broom.

"Get out of my barn, you fat, ugly monster!" she had screamed.

Golbo sniffed as he remembered the harsh words. He had always been a bit self-conscious about his size. He was much bigger than his 254 brothers and sisters, and all the other spiders had continually teased him about being on the large side. Yet he did not consider himself fat—how dare she call him that! As for calling him ugly, well, that was just plain insulting. He wanted to tell her that he took great pride in his personal

appearance, but when you are being whacked with a broom every few seconds, it is inadvisable to stick around for a lengthy discussion.

Golbo considered himself to be an optimist, but he had to admit that at that moment he was feeling particularly miserable. And then just to make things worse, it started to rain. Heavy raindrops began to fall around him, and every now and then one would hit him directly, knocking him over and causing him to cry out in pain. He gritted his teeth. Things were looking desperate, but he was determined to find a hiding place.

Perhaps a song would cheer him up! He began to hum the winter song that he and Spognot used to sing:

*Pack up your troubles in your old silk web,*

*And smile, smile, smile.*

*What's the use of worrying?*

*Why do you bother hurrying?*

*Pack up your troubles in your old silk web,*

*And smile, smile, smile.*

After Golbo took shelter under a pinecone for a few minutes when the rainfall became rather heavy, his luck took a turn for the better. The wind blew the pinecone under a large gate, and when Golbo finally managed to extricate himself, he found himself in front of a large sign, with the words "Paradise Valley Mansions." Golbo had never been to this side of the town before, and he began to feel confident that his search for a hiding place would soon be over.

In front of him stretched a long driveway, and at the end of that

was a large block of modern apartments. Even in the miserable weather it was clear that these were luxury accommodations, and Golbo could not wait to get inside the building. He thought about the dirty barn that he had been kicked out of earlier in the day and decided that perhaps fate had been kind to him after all.

He slipped through the gap under the main door and ran past the “All Visitors Must Report to Reception upon Arrival” sign. A smartly dressed man towered above him, scouring the entrance for uninvited guests. Golbo felt no guilt as he slipped between the big man’s shoes. He was no visitor—he was intending to stay for a while! Oh, how he enjoyed the warmth of the building’s central heating. The thought of spending all winter in such comfort was most appealing. How envious all those other spiders who had refused to share their hiding places would be!

A panel on the wall showed the general layout of the building. It looked as if there were multiple floors in the building, but for now, the ground floor would do for him, and he scurried into the first apartment he came across.

The hallway was dimly lit. From the silence of the apartment, it appeared that no one was at home. Golbo was delighted. He would have plenty of time to explore and find a cozy spot. He bounded across the padded carpet with joy. How soft and nice it felt under his feet—so much more pleasant than those nasty, hard muddy paths he had been forced to cross to get to this side of town.

There were three bedrooms in the apartment, a giant bathroom, an open-plan kitchen, and a spacious living room. Every spider had a preference when it came to lodgings. Spognot had always favored hiding out in kitchens, as she liked to rummage through the food, but Golbo was more of a living

room connoisseur himself. People tended to relax in their living rooms and become distracted by whatever entertainment was being offered, and that gave him more of a chance to be left undiscovered.

He suddenly stopped in his tracks as he found himself enveloped by a large shadow. He was about to panic when he realized that a giant plasma screen on the wall was casting its silhouette around him. Perhaps this would be a good area to stop. He crawled up the wall and perched himself at the top of the curtain rod. What a fantastic vantage point to watch some television when the owners got home.

