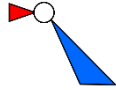


1919 GC

bncdoc.id	ACW
bncdoc.author	Highsmith, Domini
bncdoc.year	1990
bncdoc.title	Frankie.
bncdoc.info	Frankie. Sample containing about 32090 words from a book (domain: imaginative)
Text availability	Worldwide rights cleared
Publication date	1985-1993
Text type	Written books and periodicals
David Lee's classification	W_fict_prose

<1919/c>	a cardboard box in his direction, and he began piling the leaves and petals inside.
 <p>Key:</p> <p><u>Footprint</u> <u>ConEn1</u> <u>Footprint</u> <u>ConEn2</u> <u>Footprint</u> <u>ConEn3</u></p>	<p>Then he stood awkwardly beside the box, feeling utterly miserable, not knowing what to do next and so deeply humiliated that his face began to twitch. When Sweetheart spoke again, her voice had lost its caustic edge. 'Shall we go out to see a film tonight, Frankie? Just you and me? We could see Jane Russell again at the Empire, or walk up to the Arcadian to see Sanders of the River. I think it would be nice to see the Jane Russell film again, don't you, dear?' Frankie nodded vigorously. He sneaked a glance at her from beneath his brows, his head still lowered. He allowed several moments to pass before daring to return her smile. Then his smile became a sheepish grin and his shoulders hunched in a giggle. Everything was all right. She was no longer angry, and he was not to be thrashed for spying on her and Tom Fish. He had succeeded in pleasing her in spite of everything that had happened. His gift of stolen peonies was discarded in a cardboard box, and she did not seem to mind at all. He had made her laugh. She was pleased with him. He was to be allowed to go to the cinema with her. For the moment at least, she had forgotten that he was a dwarf and the biggest disappointment of her life. She was still shaking her head from side to side and laughing softly when she shoed him from the kitchen and returned her attention to her magazine. THE MAN IN THE ATTIC began to move about again around mid-morning. He aimed a noisy jet of urine into the metal bucket in the corner, then emptied phlegm from his throat in a series of growls. He began to cough in rasping barks that became horribly convulsive before eventually subsiding. Presently his feet took up the restless pacing that had become the rhythm of his curious existence behind the locked attic door. By now the sounds of his waking hours were familiar to the boy curled up in an army greatcoat in the room below. Although Frankie had been dozing, he was too hungry to sleep for more than a few minutes at a time. He left his cocoon of warmth, closing the folds behind him so that the damp chill of the room would not invade his secret place during his absence. He crept from the room to the shadowed corridor, tip-toed past the attic door to the little corner where the banister curved into the wall. He knew he had not been dozing very long because</p>
	<p><u>the smells</u> of <u>fried bacon and toasted bread</u></p> <p>still drifted through the house. He guessed that she had not yet taken the man <u>his breakfast</u>. There was still time for Frankie, if he was very quiet and very careful, to eat <u>his fill</u>. From that angle he could see the lower corridor running from the great square of the hall to the heavily curtained kitchen door. That area was dark and gloomy even in the daytime, with doors leading to permanently locked rooms, padlocked cupboards and deep curtained alcoves. Here, too, was the door to the cellar, that awful place dropping beneath the main staircase into the very bowels of the house. Glancing to his left, he wondered why the Bogeyman chose to live in a room on the first-floor landing instead of making his lair in the cellar, where he would surely feel more at home. Crouched in the shadows at the curve of the banister, Frankie stared down at the dark jungle of coats and jackets hanging from a</p>

	<p>row of wall-hooks in the lower corridor. Below them was a collection of boots and shoes, gardening tools, cardboard boxes, books, cooking utensils, spare vehicle parts and horse leathers. A pair of wellington boots stood below a big black overcoat in such a way as to give the impression that a very tall man was standing against the wall, watchful and silent. Frankie had learned to be wary of that place. He knew how easy it was for someone to conceal himself amongst the clutter of hanging garments, unseen and unsuspected, while even grown-ups went about their business in ignorance of his presence. He could never pass along that section of the corridor in comfort. Whenever he stood at the turn of the great stairs, with the entrance-hall and main door at his back, he knew he was facing the very worst the house could offer. To his left the row of coats like so many black and patient predators; to his right the secret horrors trapped beyond the cellar door; and between them, at the very end of the unlit corridor, Sweetheart's daytime room, the kitchen. Frankie shifted his position so that his knees would not become cramped. A smile tugged at his lips when he remembered the dead peonies falling at his feet and Sweetheart's totally unexpected laughter. He could not recall when last she had laughed at him without ridicule. The times were few and far between when she could look at him and not be reminded of his many faults and shortcomings. However hard he tried, he somehow always failed to be the son she wanted; the son she truly deserved. Without doing anything at all he could make things happen for which he</p>
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