

following the rectangular lines of a creaking bolt, of her thumb pressing the bottom of the can to release those yellow drops which should heal and calm that harsh scream of metal, brought healing and calm to Emma Davis herself.

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Mrs. Sigr d Christianson swung wide her door, released her hold upon its knob, folded her large arms with their still powerful hands gripping her broad shoulders, and stared at Emma Davis out of large, pale blue eyes, which unmistakably held suspicion, resentment, and hostility.

"Always listening at folks' doors," she said in a high, hoarse whisper. "Always creeping about to find out folks' secrets. Don't I know? Can't I tell when someone's outside my door? I don't need to hear footsteps. I *know*!"

How big she is! Emma thought. What great, round eyes she has! The long forgotten, yet familiar words seemed to come from somewhere far back in her childhood, and although at the moment she couldn't trace their source, the understanding that they had been sitting comfortably inside her for many years somehow lent her a singular confidence and security. She laughed at Mrs. Christianson.

"If you couldn't hear *my* footsteps," she said