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## The Puddle

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## The Puddle

Winter crept into my town, accompanied by a blanket of snow. Snow upon the yard was perfect for my four-year old daughter, Sofie, to play. The lesser company that this otherwise whimsical weather brings is the tendency for my troublesome air conditioning to freeze up. Every year, at least one leak invades the house. Last year, the kitchen floor was the victim. Thankfully, our neighbor not only always has a smile on his face, but is an impeccable handyman. "Snowman" was his nickname, as everyone called on him this time of year. I embroidered the nickname onto a nametag for him last year for his help, which he always wears as winter approaches. This year, the leak inhabited my bedroom. My bedroom was my sanctuary. Was.

The leak was adjacent to my bed, my grogginess compelling me to forget to step over this puddle, every morning. The puddle spilled almost six feet, passing my night stand and almost reaching the window. It must be fixed. Snowman came to examine the air conditioning and plumbing. There was no flaw. In fact, they ran better than most, considering the sudden change in weather.

The leak stopped for one week. I thought the problem dissipated, until Sofie complained, "Mommy, there's water in my room". The same puddle, again spilling over. Needing answers, I placed a camera upon her window. Being kept up all night by the thought of that damn puddle, I used the next morning to sleep in. I woke up, my drowsiness escaping me to make room for the eagerness to review the footage.

I entered Sofie's room to find her bed perfectly made, unusual for Sofie. I shrugged it off, and continued my charge for the camera. I picked it up, a slight shake in my hand from anticipation, flipped the screen, and hit play. Skipping through two hours, there was nothing. Then, I was startled. The camera shook. I rewound the film, and I heard the slightest sound of shifting crawl from the speakers. The camera shot rose, starting from Sofie's bed, and ending with her just beneath frame. And then, horror. A man came into view. He approached Sofie and extended his arm. All I saw was it moving back and forth, as if he was petting Sofie. I let out a helpless whimper as he picked Sofie up, holding her against his chest. He placed her down gently on her bean bag, as if to not wake her. After making her bed, he picked Sofie up, and turned around. I lost all traces of breath from my chest as I read on the man's shirt in blue stitching, "Snowman". His smile stretched across his face, he exited the window, and shut it. My body trembled. The camera brought the floor back into frame, revealing a pile of snow left from his boots. I looked in terror at my Sofie's empty bed. I see, exactly where there was a snow pile in the video, a puddle.