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Opening extract from

The Dark

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Published by

Little, Brown and Company

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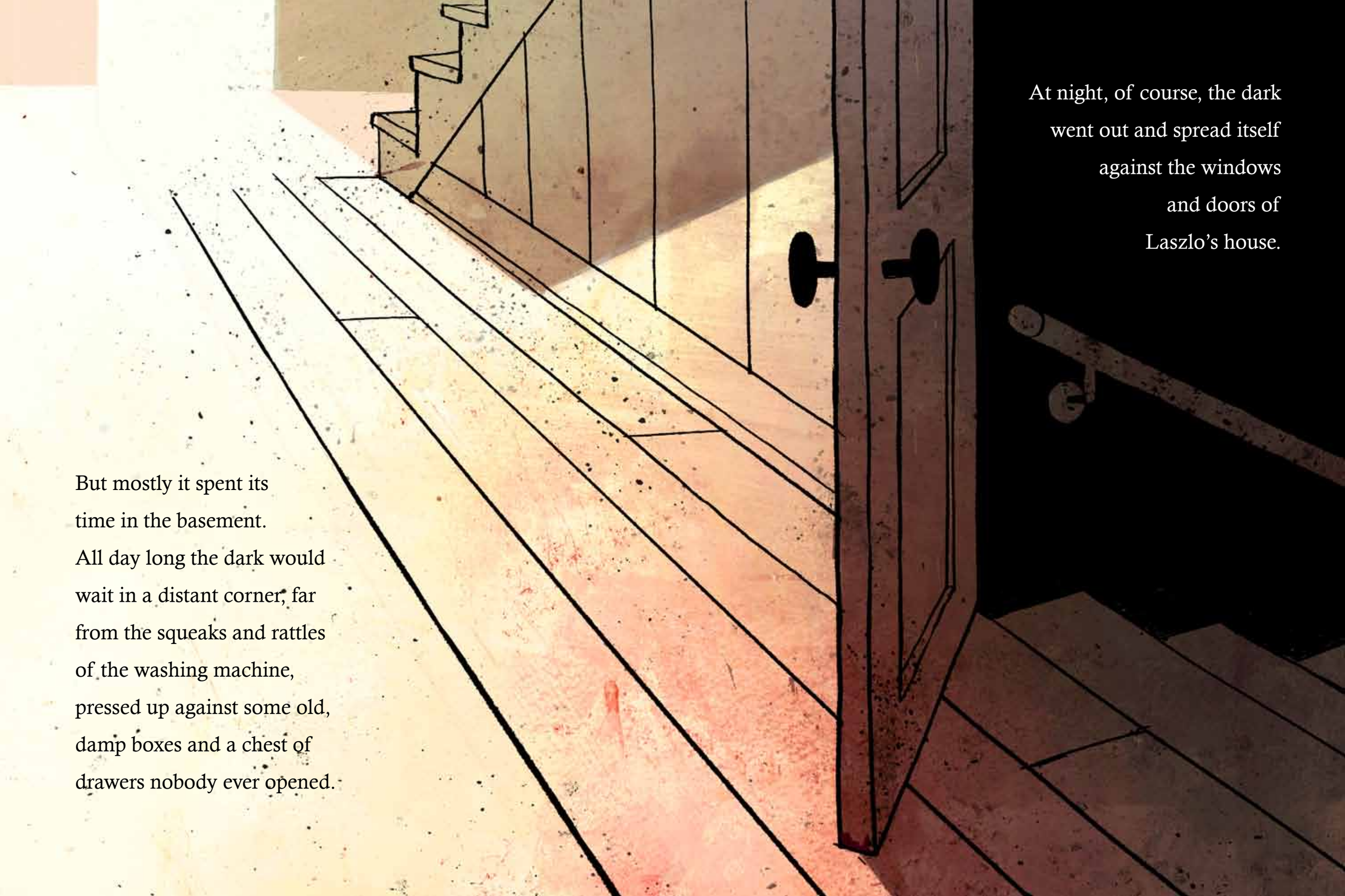
Laszlo was
afraid of
the dark.



The dark lived in the same
house as Laszlo,
a big place with a creaky roof,
smooth, cold windows,
and several sets of stairs.

Sometimes
the dark hid
in the closet.

Sometimes
it sat behind
the shower curtain.



At night, of course, the dark
went out and spread itself
against the windows
and doors of
Laszlo's house.

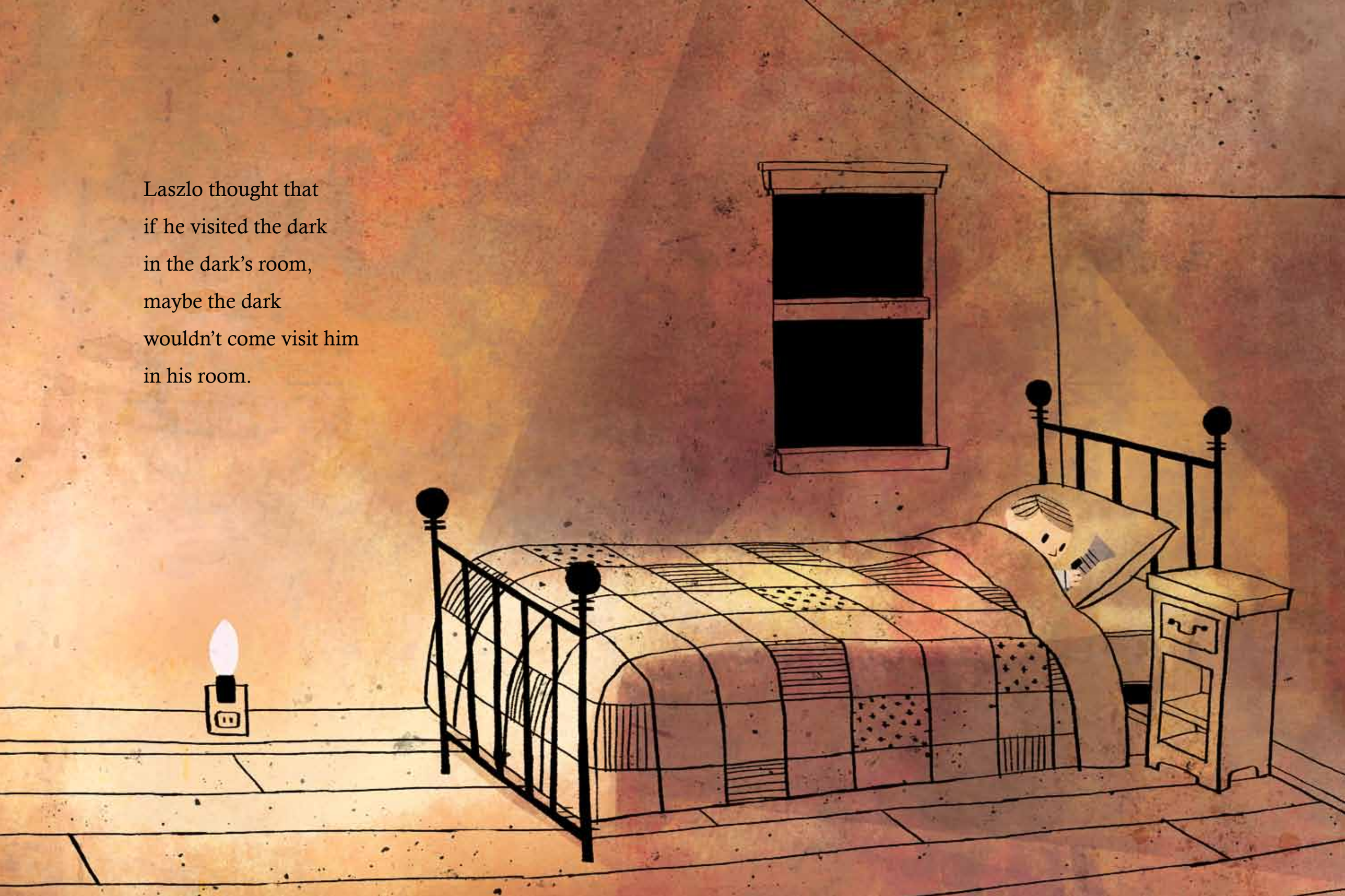
But mostly it spent its
time in the basement.
All day long the dark would
wait in a distant corner, far
from the squeaks and rattles
of the washing machine,
pressed up against some old,
damp boxes and a chest of
drawers nobody ever opened.

But in the morning
the dark would be
back in the basement,
where it belonged.
Laszlo would peek at the
dark every morning.



“Hi,”
he would say.
“Hi, dark.”

Laszlo thought that
if he visited the dark
in the dark's room,
maybe the dark
wouldn't come visit him
in his room.



“Laszlo,” the dark said,
in the dark.



But one night—
it did.

The voice of the dark was as creaky
as the roof of the house, and as smooth and
cold as the windows, and even though the dark
was right next to Laszlo, the
voice seemed very far away.

"What do
you want?"
asked Laszlo.

"I want to
show you
something,"
said the dark.