

This story appeared in *Wee Ones Magazine*, June 2002:

Mom's an Octopus

by Susie Yakowicz

Ryan's my big brother. He fibs sometimes. But the other day, he sat me down in a chair and looked me right in the eye. "Polly," he said, "did you know Mom's an octopus?"

"No way," I told him. "Mom doesn't have eight arms."

"Yes, she does," Ryan insisted. "You have to look close. *Real close*. It's easier to see her arms at night, when Mom's alone."

"Hey, Josh!" I said, giggling. "Did you know Mom's an octopus?" Josh is my bigger brother. He doesn't fib.

Josh didn't look up from his book. "Yeah, she's an octopus all right."

"See?" Ryan said.

That night, I couldn't sleep. What if Mom really was an octopus? Wouldn't Dad know, too? Since he worked the night shift, maybe he hadn't seen her arms either!

Cautiously, I slipped down the stairs and stood in the empty hallway. I listened to the sounds in the kitchen. *Ting! Clank! Splat!* Ever so slowly, I poked my nose around the corner.

And then I saw them! Those long, stretchy arms, all going at once!

One arm was emptying the dishwasher, pulling open cupboards, and stuffing plates and cups inside. Another arm slapped peanut butter between some bread. Ryan's sandwich for tomorrow!

Mom's grocery list had fallen on the floor. A third arm swept up the list and started writing.

Now I could hear Darby yelping at the back door. Darby's our poodle. Mom jetted to the door to let the dog out with her fourth arm.

Quick as a fish, I dove for cover under the kitchen table. Looking up, I noticed Josh's torn football jersey hanging over a chair. Suddenly, a fifth arm yanked the jersey from the chair and began stitching.

Seconds later, the TV burst on in the family room. I turned to see Mom's sixth arm push the volume button on the remote. The weather man was saying that tomorrow would be chilly. A seventh arm whipped open the closet, grabbed my pink fleece jacket, and tossed it over the coat hook.

Bzzz! In the laundry room, the dryer signaled before shutting off. I counted to ten, then peeked out from under the table. The coast was clear.

I sprang from my hiding place, bumping my head on the table and knocking over the centerpiece. *Crash!* Water from the vase splattered across the kitchen floor.

Mom reappeared just then, her eighth arm wrapped around clean, folded clothes. Seeing me, she turned purple-red with fury!

"I'm s-sorry," I squeaked, rubbing my head. "But it's all Ryan's fault." I told her the whole story.

Mom's color returned to normal. "I have an idea," she said.

The next morning, Ryan shuffled into the kitchen still half-asleep. Imagine his surprise when Mom opened her arms to hug him . . . first two arms, then four, then six, then eight!

"Huh?" Ryan gasped, suddenly wide awake. His face was as white as a shark's belly.

Josh, Dad, and I popped out from behind Mom's back, wriggling our arms and squealing with delight!