



Source: Ed O'Loughlin with Reuters, 'Hamas cuts back Abbas' powers', *The Age online*, 08/03/06.

Tags: [child/parent](#), [home](#)

Writer/s: [Sophie Townsend](#)

© 2008 Barbara Campbell and the writer/s

Celia is five years old. She wears glasses in the daytime but she likes when she goes to bed, when she takes them off and the world gets a little foggy. She likes to look at things as they move out of focus, even though it makes her head hurt.

Today at school she opened her lunch-box and found that mama had not tightened the drink bottle up right. The orange juice had run all over her jam sandwich and it was soggy and she couldn't eat it. It was the fourth time mama had done that. Celia had to ask the teacher for a sandwich from the tuckshop and the teacher sighed.

Celia lies in bed, awake. It is past her bed-time, and she knows her eyes should be shut, but she looks up at the ceiling, feeling restless even in the warm pink glow of her nightlight.

She lies in bed, alone, without teddy bears or dolls. But she holds on tight to a blanket, an old, soft blanket she has held onto all her life, as long as she can remember. It has holes, and is ratty, and smells funny, and Celia's mama says that it's time to give her blanket up. But she is not ready to give it up. Celia's mama says that she is a big girl now, but Celia does not always believe it. Celia does not always feel ready to assume this title.

Celia is five, and because she is five, she does not believe in monsters. She made a decision about monsters on her birthday. She and her mama made it together. They had sat down and 'calmly and rationally' decided that monsters are not real, and that Celia's mama, who 'did not have the time or, frankly, the energy', to help Celia find the monsters and get rid of the monsters, would not be 'indulging' her anymore. Celia wants to be a good girl, so and decided then that she would not be scared by monsters anymore.

But Celia does not sleep. A gnawing feeling keeps her awake. She wants to cry out 'Mama, mama' and have her mama climb into bed with her and stroke her hair the way Celia likes it. Mama does not know what keeps Celia awake, and Mama would 'not be pleased.'

Celia is up tonight thinking about the Creature.

The Creature sleeps in the room next door. The Creature screams and wails in the night and 'it is important that Celia stay quiet.'

The Creature came a while ago, when Celia was little, and when it came everyone told Celia she was big. But Celia still felt little and she blamed the Creature for confusing everyone. The Creature in the room next to her own tricks people, that they did not have to change and be big and stop being scared of monsters.

Celia does not know what to do about the Creature. She does not like it. It makes her mama tired, sometimes makes her mama cry. She hears her mama say 'I'd just like

to get away', and Celia knows that mama would leave her behind too.

The Creature has woken and cries out and screams and it makes Celia's head hurt. But Celia does not say a word. Celia has been told to 'just ignore it.' So Celia does. But it goes on and on and Celia hears her mama come up the stairs.

The Creature takes up room and time and makes Celia feel very mixed up. The Creature cannot be stopped. It's like the Creature sucks up the air with its wails, and makes everything harder. Celia wants to magic the Creature away, wants to wave her wand and remove the Creature from her life. Celia thinks about this, and this is why she can't sleep.

Sometimes she thinks if she put a blanket, her special blanket, over the Creature's head, it may just disappear. If she put it right over its head, and made it not see and not breathe, it would leave everyone in peace. Celia would have to be very brave to do this, and she thinks that maybe mama would be angry.

Celia thinks it's strange that mama is so tired by the Creature and finds the Creature so hard, but that she loves the Creature anyway. Celia does not yet know the word 'seduction' but she knows what it looks like and she knows that the Creature has tricked her mama and so mama would not like her to cover the Creature with a blanket.

The Creature gurgles and blows bubbles and is fat and tiny. Celia does not do these things and Celia is skinny. Celia does not know the word 'nostalgic' but she knows her mama looks sad that she is not fat and tiny anymore.

Celia hears her mama try to quieten the Creature. Shhh. Shhh. Shhh. But the Creature wails and screams.

Celia holds on to her blanket. It hurts she holds so tightly. But it keeps her still, it keeps her quiet.

The Creature is quieter. The Creature whimpers and Celia hears the creaky rocking of the chair that used to be in her room. She listens to it, and thinks that she just wants mama to come in and lie in her bed and stroke her hair.

And she listens to the creaking chair and she starts to unfold her hands from the corner of the blanket. And Celia, thinking about the blanket and the Creature and her mama not coming in and not stroking her hair, falls asleep.

And Celia's mama comes in and looks at her first born and whispers 'I love you my darling one' and strokes her hair. And Celia does not hear the whisper and does not feel the strokes and does not know.

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Sophie Townsend.*