

# These Four Walls

by Cindy Charlton

These four walls whispered a warm welcome as the youngest occupant crawled across the threshold, not yet walking. The sounds of glee and looks of joy on the three inhabitants' faces rivaled nothing less than those of elated game show winners. Living within these four walls had just begun.

The sounds of laughter echoed within these walls, as did the cries from skinned knees and hurt feelings, all part of growing.

These four walls soon heard the wails of a new baby. New life within, a new life to protect and nurture, as these walls held strong.

Then came cries of bewildered children. "Where is mom?" Desperately ill, mom left these four walls not knowing if she would return. These walls held strong for three lives that were uncertain the fourth would survive. They beckoned her, these walls, encouraging, demanding her back. She returned to the safe familiarity of these four walls. Now it was her turn to walk, tentative steps at first, steps taken on legs no longer attached, no longer her own, as these walls held strong. "I'll always be here," they whispered lending support.

The family found a renewed spirit, living within these four walls. "It's a different, but better life," they whispered gently. "You survived!"

Then again came cries of bewildered children. "Why is daddy dying?" These four walls held the anguish, the injustice, the unanswered question. "Why?" These walls listened for voices grieving, ready to offer respite from despair. "I'll always be here," they whispered, never faltering holding strong. "You are survivors."

These four walls heard the last breath of his dying, the cries of sorrow from the living. "Heal within me," they whispered, each heart breaking, as these walls held strong.

The family once four, now three, grows and lives within these four walls. They dare to hope and dream once more. These walls, never wavering, always safe, protective of the strong yet fragile lives held within. "I'll always be here," they whisper. The one constant in the ever-changing lives of the three, within these four walls.

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