

## Water in the Horse Trough, Skunk on the Stairs

The horse trough needed water, so I gave it water... for a very long time. I turned the faucet on and went about chores and then dinner and then some TV. It was when I went to the bathroom that I could hear the water in the pipes in the wall. Oh Jeez, how much worse is this forgetfulness going to get??

I grabbed a flashlight, exited the house, and started running down the stairs in the dark night, the narrow beam of light illuminating my way. I slammed on the brakes so hard that smoke billowed from my overheated brake shoes. Just past the middle of the stairs was a pretty skunk that I nearly ran over. I probably mostly blinded it with the flashlight. It looked up at me with slow curiosity. I told it that it was a very pretty skunk and that I was in a terrible hurry so maybe could it get off the stairs and far enough away that its spray couldn't reach me?

It sniffed at me awhile and then turned and "hid" under the big cactus right next to the steps. I had expected that it would fearfully run away. I debated passing it, but wisdom prevailed.

I ran around the long way and tore through the shop to shut the water off. Shining the light up the steps, I could see the skunk was still there, just kinda hangin' around. So I went back the way I came, the long way. I went back around to the top of the steps and shone the flashlight where the skunk had last been, no skunk. I waved the light in an arc that came to rest about 6 feet from me, where the slow skunk peered at the light, blinking blandly. My body rippled slightly with shock at how close I was to the skunk.

It watched me or the light for awhile and then decided to scoot on down the hill, finally realizing that maybe something as big as me could mean trouble for it.

I didn't look at it that way of course and was glad that the skunk was so placid. I talked to it the whole time I watched it, remarking about what dainty feet it had and what beautiful fur. I looked carefully for signs of any kind of sickness but it was just one of my many healthy skunks, and I recognized the pattern on its back from the many night videos that I have of it.

It is very wise to never go anywhere around my house at night without some kind of light because there can be some rude surprises out there!