



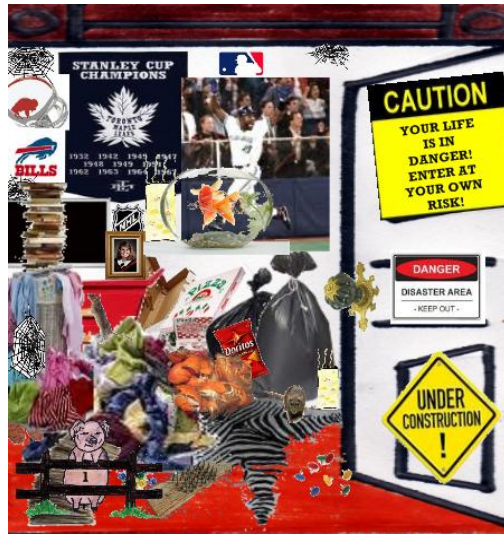
THE CRUDDIES

BY: CHRISTOPHER MACKENZIE GLOVER

The jungle lay ahead of him. He could feel tangled masses all around his feet. The ground was bumpy and littered with junk. It was like the scene out of a bad movie. Inky blackness surrounded him; a thin slit of moonlight led the way. The air smelled musty, dusty and like rotten eggs. Crunch, crack! Something beneath his feet just broke into a million pieces. He was too scared to find out what it was. A cobweb brushed across his face and went in his mouth. Pffffttt, he spit out the web and pulled the thin strings off his face which seemed to take forever. He reached his arm forward and felt for something in the darkness. Click, click! A bright flash of light blinded him. The jungle was for the first time ablaze. It took a few minutes for his eyes to adjust. He stood in the middle of it all, and it didn't bother him for a second. The slob had returned to his nest.

"Chris your room is a pig sty," shouted the unsuspecting voice behind him.

"Jeez, mom you scared the poop right out of me!" said a startled Chris.



"I didn't know Oshawa had experienced any tornadoes recently," she said sarcastically. "You have this room cleaned by tomorrow, or you can't go to the Toronto Maple Leafs hockey game on Saturday night."

"Awww mom, what do you care what my room looks like? You don't have to live in it."

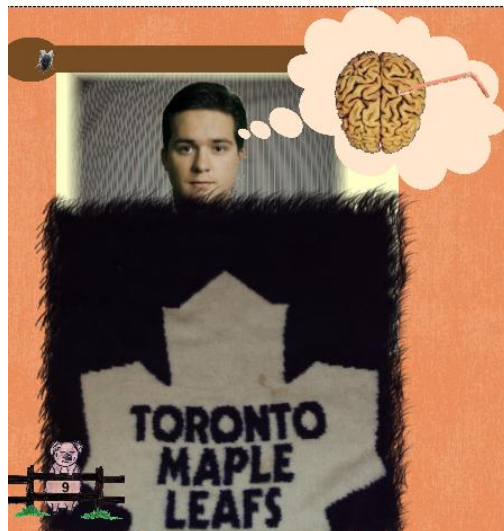
"Yeah, but I have to look at it. There could be something living under all that stuff. Plus the smell is starting to get out into the hall, so clean it up," said his mother as she gulped for some clean air outside the room.

Chris looked at his room and sighed heavily. It was going to take him days to sift through the rubble. He stared at his desk where mounds of paper, dishes and disgusting assorted clumps of food lay rotting. The first thing he picked up was a glass of milk. Several months earlier he had brought this once full glass of milk to his room, and never drank it. Funny, it was only a quarter full now, but what was left was a rotting mass of yellow and greenish puss. Gagging he dumped the sour blob of milk in the toilet. As he continued through the food he found several pieces of moldy pizza. He noticed all the pepperonis were missing, but just figured they had rotted completely away. Scattered about were parts of old steak bones, rotting cheese and even the remains of lobster shells. The last thing he found was amazing. Mold had actually grown into the electric light socket by the garbage pail, but he was too lazy to see where it went. Looking at his clock he noticed it was already 11:00pm and he hadn't even made a dent yet.



He needed some garbage bags, compost bags, cleaners, vacuum, scrapers of some kind, blow torch, bulldozer etc, etc to clean up this mess. He yawned and decided to finish the job in the morning in case some mice or bugs were living in the mess. Besides he was too lazy to go downstairs and get the stuff. He threw his clothes in the ever growing pile in the corner and amazingly found some mostly clean pajamas to sleep in. He got under his crusty sheets and turned his face away from the putrid smell coming from them and drifted off to sleep.

"Tie him up better. Turn up that heating pad to full we want his brain to cook quickly," a raspy little voice said from the dark.



Chris woke suddenly. He tried to roll over and found he couldn't move a muscle. He felt around with his hand and found some kind of ropes held him place. The sweat was running from his brow very quickly. He was scared witless. He figured somebody was

robbing the house and had tied him up so he couldn't phone the police. What he couldn't understand was why somebody was trying to cook his brain?

Suddenly the lights to his room came on, but nobody was there. Then to his sheer horror these things started floating out of the closet. They were some kind of little creatures about four inches tall. Their bodies seemed to be made mostly of dust. On top of what looked like a head was a pulsating red meat substance. Running through most of their bodies were green strands of mold connecting to a yellowish green blob in the centre of their bodies. A faint blue glow was coming from them. Some had arms that were paper clips or doll arms. Others had fish eyes and insect eyes. Most of them looked like they were somehow only half formed. They stopped just above his face. There were at least thirty or forty of them. Just then one of them came from the back. It had a mouth of some sort and one big fish eye. Instantly he remembered the goldfish that had died and he had forgotten to flush down the toilet. It held a blue globe thing on a stick in one hand and the other arm was a lobster claw fused to its' grey body.



The lobster claw thing began to talk in a garbled voice, "We call ourselves the Cruddies. We are creatures that have been formed in the depths of the crap that has built up in your room. Chris was unable to speak as his mouth was fused open in shock and his jaw was locked. "When mold in your room formed from the rotting piles of food it grew up to your electric plug in. The mold and the electricity began to mix. Before long the mold grew and mixed with the pepperoni. Combined with the genetic enhancing materials in meat nowadays complex connections began to form between the pepperoni, mold and electrical currents. In short this was the formation of the Cruddie brain." The leader Cruddie continued, "I was the first to become aware. For a long time I grew in the depths of your filth. The mold and electrical connections tapped into your internet line near the plug in and I began to learn. As I grew stronger I helped more Cruddies to form.



Since you never cleaned your room for a long, long, long time we began to grow stronger. We mixed with rotting animal parts from leftover food and the massive piles of dust and began to grow more complex brains. Since dust is made of human skin we began to form into almost human like creatures. Almost!

Chris thought that these creatures were quite nasty and probably couldn't be reasoned with. The head Cruddie then spoke for the last time, "However, we can't survive forever being made of old rotting meat, dust, milk and fungus. We have discovered that if we eat human flesh and then suck out your brain cells we will undergo a mutation and become a life form of higher physical capabilities. You are to be our source of human flesh."

The sweat poured from his head and Chris began to panic. This was no dream and he was about to be eaten by a bunch of little creatures that existed because he was a total slob. Just then the head Cruddie swooped down and landed on his face. His big lobster claw reached out and scooped some flesh from his cheek and a put it in his mouth. Chris could now see the red mass on the Cruddies' head was a mutated piece of pepperoni. The pepperoni brain began to blister and red mucus began to form over the creature's body. It fell to the floor in a wriggling mass. Chris was now in pain from the bite to his face, but more importantly sheer terror overtook him. With the strength of ten men he broke his ropes which he could now see were made from some of his old clothes. He jumped up from his bed and lunged for the door.

Crash, bang, boom!! He fell to the floor with a thud. He had tripped over a pile of school books and other assorted garbage. The remaining Cruddies swarmed his body and began to bite him all over. Barely able to get up, he pulled off as many of them as he could and tried to open the door. Some towels jammed up the door and he struggled mightily to open it. The last of the Cruddies fell off. Chris closed his bedroom door and wedged a pizza box underneath it.

Chris staggered downstairs and flicked on a light in the bathroom. To his horror he had small bite marks on various parts of his body that looked like angry pimples. The

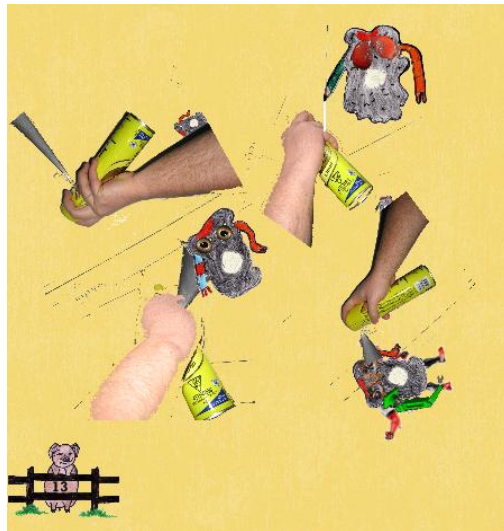
Cruddies were upstairs starting to turn into some half human little creatures, and he had to get rid of them before they got his or somebody else's brain cells. Then an idea came to him. They were mostly made of dust and he knew exactly what might eliminate them. Quickly he searched the cupboard and found the gleaming yellow can. Triumphantly he held the extra large can of Dust Bunnies Be Gone brand furniture polish over his head. "Those little suckers will try to eat my brain, huh! Well, they're history now." Chris said aloud.



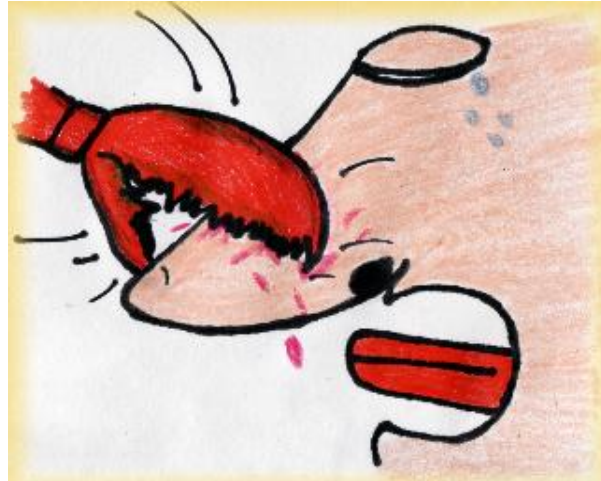
Armed with the can of Dust Bunnies, he found his father's hunting raincoat and mosquito face protector he crept upstairs. He flung the door to his bedroom wide open. It was very quiet. There were no signs of the Cruddies. Just then a gruff little voice bellowed from behind the door, "Get the human and destroy him."

Chris whirled around to see a horde of half crap, half dust freaks of nature jump on his head. He fired his can of Dust Bunnies at them. The first wave began to choke and gasp and fell to the floor dead. Others kept coming. Again after tripping on some more floor debris Chris fell to the floor. Some of the Cruddies threw an old pair of clearly used underwear on his face to distract him.

Determined, Chris continued to fire the furniture polish in all directions. Cruddies were dying everywhere.



Then there was only one left, the leader Mr. Lobster Claw. It now had some skin on it's body and looked a little more like a human. It pointed the blue globe at him. Just then a bolt of electricity flew from it and hit Chris squarely in the forehead. As Chris fell, the head Cruddie moving with startling speed swooped up to Chris' face and cut the netting open on the mosquito hat. It grabbed onto his nose with great force and began to squeeze.



Now in great pain, Chris rolled away on the floor and dropped the can of Dust Bunnies. The pressure on his nose began to make his eyes fill with blinding tears. He felt on the floor for the can, but he just kept getting hands full of dirty socks, and other garbage. Mr. Lobster Claw put the little metal globe close the back of Chris' head. Finally he felt the cold metal canister. He brought the can up to his face and sprayed. The polish burned his eyes, but the grasp on his nose let up. The lead Cruddie fell to the floor.



Chris almost felt pity for the half human looking creature. After all, his extreme lack of hygiene led to these creatures forming. He reached for the Cruddie to try and comfort it, but it had one final burst of energy and latched its' big lobster claw onto his thumb and began to draw blood. Chris grabbed the can of polish and gave one more big blast to the Cruddie. It fell to the floor, no longer moving. It's mostly dust body disintegrated and all that was left was the pepperoni brain, fish eye, lobster claw and other bits of flesh and sour milk. All around were the bodies of the little creatures, a reminder of the battle that had just been fought. Chris put his hands to his face and began to cry softly.

For years after this Chris' room was spotless even when he was an adult. In fact it his was often the cleanest room in the house. His mother could never figure out why, and she never asked. She could also never understand why he always had at least two cans of Dust Bunnies on his dresser.

The End

