Aggie vs. the Gremlin

by Artie Moffa

Part one

I'm in my messy room right now.
I have to make it clean.
I have to pick up all my socks
And all my blocks
Before the clock
Tells Mom it's five-fifteen.

My mom sent me into my room
At quarter after four.
I have to clean my bedroom sheets,
My soccer cleats,
And make things neat
So she can see my floor.

But it's hard.

It's hard to clean when something green and very mean yet seldom seen resides between my carpet and my bed.
A gremlin is there!

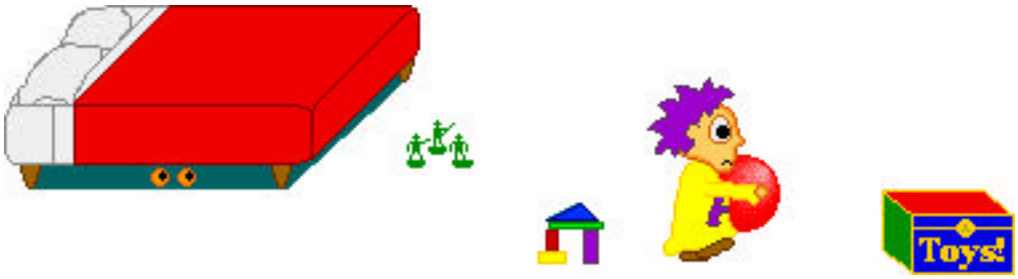
A gremlin lives beneath my bed.
He comes out now and then.
When I have put away my slacks,
My ball and jacks,
And turned my back,
He makes a mess again!

I hate the gremlin in my room.
He makes room cleaning tough.
He gets out all my art supplies,
My action guys.
I don't know why
He jumbles up my stuff.

He only comes out when I'm gone.

My mom thinks I made the gremlin up.

My mom's naive and can't believe that when I leave the gremlin heaves my stuff and weaves a messy web instead.



Part two
(The Gremlin's Account)

I'm underneath the bed right now,
And under very great distress.
That nasty boy is in my room
And he is cleaning up my mess!

He doesn't understand at all!
He does it just because he's mean.
My Dad is always telling me:
"Good gremlins don't have rooms this clean!"

I try to be a good gremlin, but the boy makes it hard.

Each day I walk through sticky tar pits, tracking dirt on all the carpets, hoping that my dad will like the stain.

But long before my dad has seen it, that kid gets some soap to clean it, so that only perfect rugs remain.

I told my dad about the boy, but he told me I shouldn't make up stories like that.

Nobody believes me.

I'm hoping that he'll go away.
I'm hopping mad at that mean kid.
I worked all day to mess my room,
And he undoes the work I did!

I watch and strengthen my resolve.
I watch him straighten up my shelves.
Because my dad won't get involved,
We'll have to work this out ourselves.

But I'm scared.

I'm scared that he'll get mad and holler, break my nose because I'm smaller, or that he and I will not agree.

I'm worried that he will not listen, that he'll clean without permission, and that he'll continue bugging me.

This might just be the bravest thing I've ever done in my whole life...

Part 3

The gremlin wants dirty, but Aggie wants clean.
They're both in a mess, if you see what I mean.
This mess can be really confusing, I bet:
When Aggie is happy, the gremlin's upset.

So what did they do?
Did they fight?
They did not!
They worked out a compromise there on the spot!
The gremlin and Aggie were worried, at first.
They glared at each other, expecting the worst,
But as they were staring, and as they were glaring,
And as they were each of them quickly preparing
To start in with anger and screaming and yelling
(And what might have happened, there's no way of telling),
They stopped.

Each one took a deep breath.

Each one sighed.

The gremlin spoke first: "We have problems, you know.
We're sharing this room, and it's sad that that's so.
But since it's unlikely that either will move,
We'll have to work out how our lives can improve.
"We undo the work that the other has done.
Our parents aren't happy. Our lives are not fun.
And I don't know how we can settle this mess.
Do you know the answer?"
And Aggie said "Yes!"

Then Aggie continued, "The problem, you see,
Is cleaning this room is not easy for me.
But messing this room is not easy for you.
So here's my idea. Here's what we should do.

"Whenever your Dad says your room is too clean,
I'll make a mess bigger than any he's seen.
I'll make LOTS of messes! Some big and some small.
It won't be a problem, no trouble at all."

"I see," said the gremlin, "and when you are done,
My dad will be very impressed with his son!
And after Dad leaves, very proud of this scene,
I'll undo your mess and I'll make the room clean!

I'll fold all your clothes and I'll make up your bed!
I'll clean all the dirt from your soccer-cleats' tread!
I'll clean all the crayon-marks off of your wall!
It won't be a problem, no trouble at all!"

And so, now you see how their problem was solved.
Without any yelling or screaming involved.
It's hard to believe it, but maybe it's true.

I wish that my room had a gremlin, don't you?

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