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THIS IS NOT DISNEYLAND, MINI MOUSE DOES NOT LIVE HERE!

DEAR DIARY, I've got mice. Not pets; these are unwanted visitors. The ground has been disturbed in the house next door. Our rich next door neighbours are making major refurbishments so the house has been practically gutted while the Fernleigh's move to their country house whilst the mice roam homeless into other people's back gardens and subsequently into any little crevice they can find into our back-to-back homes.

Why doesn't Jesus understand that I don't do rodents, reptiles and insects! Reptiles are bad and not too bad because the only time I see something from the reptile family is abroad. The insect thing is a major hazard because whenever I open my windows during the warmer months they're there, crawling or buzzing around like they own the place. As I write these words, I've just taken my slipper to a spider who thought that my bedroom was somewhere for it to walk up and down in! But this rodent thing is making me break out in hives. Honestly, in the past, I've had medicated cream and tablets because of the stress of mice and prior to that, many years ago, I broke out in hives because of a cockroach infestation.

Next thing you know, I'll walk into the bedroom to see a fox sitting on my bed watching TV, clutching the remote control in its paws because that's all I hear in the garden at night, foxes rendezvousing, having get togethers, crying, procreating and making a whole lot of noise having more fun than I do in my everyday life while I'm trying to sleep. During the day time, they act like they own the place because when I make attempts to frighten them, they look at me like what in the hell can you do? I'll have to move out soon as they'll be no room for me and my children. It will just be foxes, rodents, reptiles and insects running the place.

The last time a stag beetle flew in for a crawl around the kitchen floor, I had to call a neighbour to get rid of it. This is after I'd run upstairs and locked myself in my bedroom for hours terrified. It took ages for me to pull myself together. You would have thought someone came in with guns and knives trying to hold me hostage.

Now I have mice! I woke up to scratching last night. I just knew what it was because a few days ago, my son said he saw a mouse run across the front garden. So when I heard the scratching coming from the cupboard, I knew it wasn't a long finger-nailed ghost with fangs for teeth and blood dripping from its lips with a bleeding eye socket, empty of eye and

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matted grey hair, wearing a white bed sheet as a coat. I knew it was a mouse or even rat. I guess rats are a bit more boastful though, a rat would have burst open the cupboard door and marched through the bedroom saying wake up! Everybody get up! We're hungry! Come on, quick, sharp, where da food at? Anyway, last night, I heard the familiar scratching and I immediately jumped out of my bed, dragging my duvet and everything that I keep on the bed fell off onto the floor; three remote controls, my lap top, dictionary, pen, portable phone, mobile phone, sheets of paper and Essence magazine. This all happened at five in the morning.

As soon as the clock struck nine, I shot out the house wearing my eldest son's coat over my nightie, a pair of trainers which belong to I don't know which one of my children and a baseball cap more suited to a boy of 15. My coats, hats, jackets, shoes and boots all live in the cupboard where the mice now live. I didn't brush my hair, brush my teeth nor wash my skin. I really didn't care for all that. My mission was to go to the hardware store to get expanding foam sealant to block up all holes. I also needed mouse traps; *they can run in, but they can't run out*; that sounds good to me. Mouse & rat poison; *the picture on the bottle doesn't help!* Sticky traps; *they're good for spiders too.* I've heard that sometimes, mice get stuck on the sticky traps and in their effort to get off them, they sometimes end up tearing off a limb. The thought of a three legged, bleeding, p*ssed off mouse lurking around the dark corners of my house makes me want to vomit and faint. Last but not least, ultrasonic mouse repeller, all in an effort to commit mice murder. Unfortunately, the man in the shop was friendly. Friendly to the point of him saying smile, it can't be that bad. I couldn't smile. It was that bad. On top of everything else, I hadn't brushed my teeth and had morning breath and crusty eyes. The last thing I wanted to do was smile. He should be smiling with all my money in his cash register.

I wouldn't mind if mice were clean and bright little Disney characters wearing little red vests with cute voices but they're ugly, dirty, grey vermin and I'm about to treat them in a way that vermin's supposed to be treated. Rough and unforgiving.

August Mayfield