

## Chapter II

### Chiseling Your Way to Glory Or Cleaning The Freezer

OK! Give yourself a very gentle pat on your sore back for cleaning out those cabinets you meant to get to for the past couple of years. Big check mark and one hearty “Atta Girl!”

Now, with your chin up and a gleam in your eye, you’re set to take on the next in this series of therapeutic domesticities! Your new mantra: *“I am invincible! I am invincible!! I am invincible!!! Gimme the damn Ben-Gay!”* Repeat.

So today, you’re going to chisel your way to glory and take on a crud-infested freezers; be they an upright standing model, a chest in the basement that you bought to store your mother-in-law in during one of her little Holiday visits, or the Old Clanking Horror in the basement that you inherited when you bought the house.

[NB - No one will blame you if you forget the day the ~~dump~~-Recycling Center is closed. After all, you’re the one who has endure the sights and smells that will emanate from said freezer for at least a day – possibly more.]

Step 1 – Determine if it’s Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday or Sunday. This may not be as easy as it sounds, because you’ve been away from humanity for so long all the days seem to blur together. So check the calendar already!

Step 2 –Drag out every single cleaning product under your sink. This ~~may~~ *will definitely* include schlepping out to the shed to find a box of thick rubber gloves, your work boots, gardening trowel and large chisel or splitting wedge for when you approach the Old Clanking Horror.

[NB – we will discuss finding anything in the shed in another chapter, called Finding Anything In the Shed]

[NB – You’ll notice that once they see the growing tools, the little nippers will vanish completely. You need to find something “fun” for them to do. Playing in traffic is frowned on socially, and probably illegal as well – especially these days when all the other neighborhood parents have scooted their kids out to “play”. ]

Step 3 - Next, fill the kitchen sink with really hot water and a couplea good shots of Clorox. Keep the cat off the sink. Now’s not the time for little sippies.

Step 4 – After cutting out Jessie’s articles, spread what’s left of The Cabinet on the floor to soak up the dribbling, fulminating, sticky and oozing objects that have not already exploded in the back of the freezer. Rev the ole hair dryer up to High and

swish left to right melting as much as you can before you have to use the chisel. Grab the sponge and try to mop up everything that comes spewing out - kinda like cleaning up after Mittens ate the mouse. You're wearing those gloves, right?

Step 5 – Once you've scraped out, disinfected and replaced the contents of the upstairs freezer – a mere 6.5 hours with no lunch break, (who wants to eat anything that came out of that thing anyway?) find a WHOP Take Out menu in one of those spankin' clean drawers discussed in Chapter I, and phone in an order. You know you're not going to be in any shape to fix dinner, but your husband hops to the job of going down to get it.

Step 6 – While waiting for the pizza, begin the descent into the black void of your basement to take on the Old Clanking Horror. At the bottom step turn on every single light, and the volume of the basement radio so it blasts like a speaker from a Who Concert in the 60s. Now you don't feel alone but approach cautiously. (“*I am invincible! I am invincible!! I am invincible!!!*”) It's been so long since anyone paid any attention to the thing, the gaskets are cracked and the rubber smells a bit whiffy. There's a soft hissing somewhere.

Step 7 – Deep breath! Carefully pry open the creaking door. Steady yourself. Now, rake, chisel and haul out the rusty contents into a sturdy bag. I'd advise a metal spatula or garden shovel for the scraping but whatever you do, *don't* ding its old threadbare insulated wiring, probably hand-wrapped by old man Westinghouse himself. It's just barely hanging together.

Wait! Look! At the back of the Old Clanking Horror you'll notice what at first glance resembles the Harry Potter Book of Monsters– complete with fur, teeth and eyes. Whereas it has languished in the freezer for so long, it's probably dead by now and most probably is safe to remove.

*[NB -- This is not too far from the truth, as my husband was a biology teacher at a rather prestigious boarding school (in Groton), and dead snakes, spiders and remnants of various science project straight out of the “Island of Dr. Moreau” were not beyond waiting in my freezer for burial come the spring thaw. SBM.]*

*[NB – However, the part about putting my mother-in-law in a freezer chest during one of her “quickie” Holiday visits tends to be somewhat close to the bone ---- at least in my imagination. SBM]*

Step 8 – Once the freezers have been scoured out and their contents dumped, it's time to turn off the radio, shed the boots, peel off the rubber gloves and toss the raggy-baggies. Yes! it's time to climb the stairs and put on your jammies. But just when the pizza arrives and you think it's Miller Time, your house-bound adventure takes yet another exciting turn: the circuit breaker decides to pop since the old wiring finally gave up the ghost leaving you and your loving Ozzie & Harriet family in dire straits. This means – wait a sec! – this means no internet, no lights, no washer or dryer, no TV.

Maybe just curl up with a cold pizza, a warm beer, a flashlight and a book.....  
What a glorious day!

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