

The Mess Monster and the Clean-Up Fairy

Written By

Alastair Murdoch

(c) Copyright 2013
This screenplay may
not be produced or
reproduced without the
express permission of
the author.

alastair.j.murdoch@gmail.com

FADE IN:

EXT. SMALL HOUSE. MORNING

A small house with a "For Sale" board in the front yard.

MOM (OS)

Francesca! Julian! Greta! Come down
for breakfast. We're in a hurry. We
have to get out!

INT. KITCHEN. MORNING

GRETA (5), JULIAN (10) and FRANCESCA (12) sit at the kitchen table, in pajamas, eating cornflakes. Julian holds an electronics magazine; Francesca holds a teen fashion magazine; Greta holds a fairy wand. Greta also wears a tutu and fairy-wings over her PJ's, and a tiara over uncombed hair. MOM (40) bustles around in the background.

MOM

Hurry up! The broker wants to show
the house in half an hour, and
we're not supposed to be here!

CHILDREN

(Without even looking up)
OK, Mom!

MOM

And what about your bedroom?

FRANCESCA

It's tidy!

JULIAN

We did it already.

MOM

Really?

GRETA

Really!

Mom walks past with a basket of folded laundry.

MOM (OS)

Well, we'll find out soon enough.

The children look at each other, shrug, and return to their magazines, fairy game and cornflakes.

MOM (CONT'D - OS)
You three! Come up here now!

INT. BEDROOM. DAY

Mom stands in the middle of a large, and very messy room with three beds. The children peer through the door.

MOM
You told me you'd tidied this up!

JULIAN
But we did, Mom. Honest.

FRANCESCA
Really, we did.

GRETA
Promise!

MOM
Do you want to have to share a room forever? Don't you want your own rooms?

FRANCESCA
You're seriously asking if I enjoy sharing a room with children?

MOM
Not now, Francesca!

FRANCESCA
You realize I'm almost a teenager?

MOM
Almost, but not yet - so lose the attitude, Miss.

JULIAN
Or maybe Mom's asking me and Greta if we like being locked out of our own room for hours and hours, while you're in there with your almost-teenage friends?

MOM
Julian! Don't start another fight!

JULIAN
But she started it! She called us children. Like she's not a child!

GRETA

I like sharing a room! It's nice to have someone to play fairies with!

MOM

Look, we can't move - and you can't have your own rooms - if we can't sell this... this... this place.

FRANCESCA

But we didn't make this mess.

JULIAN

It's the truth - we didn't.

MOM

Oh no? Then how do you explain it?

GRETA

The Mess Monster! The Mess Monster!

MOM

(Sighs)

OK, just get dressed, brush your teeth and go downstairs while the Clean-Up Fairy deals with this.

Mom starts tidying up. Julian and Francesca turn to Greta.

JULIAN

Greta - this Mess Monster "friend" of yours.

FRANCESCA

Yeah, he's gotta knock it off.

EXT. SMALL HOUSE. DAY

Mom hustles the children out of the house. Greta now wears her wings and tutu over day-clothes, and still wears her tiara and carries her wand. Francesca and Julian read their magazines as they walk. The family piles into a car, which screeches out of the drive - nearly hitting two cars that are about to turn in - and speeds off. The other two cars pull into the drive. A REAL ESTATE BROKER (50) climbs out of one car and greets a MARRIED COUPLE (both 30 - the wife is heavily pregnant), climbing out of the other car, to whom she hands sales details.

REAL ESTATE BROKER

It does have an, umm, lived-in feel - but it's a family-feel. It's a lovely home to start a family.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY

Mom and the children eat lunch at the table. Francesca and Julian have their magazines and Greta has her wand.

MOM

Oh, come on - put those down. Let's have a conversation at mealtime. Like a normal family.

JULIAN

(mouth full)

But Mom - you told us not to talk with our mouths full!

The family continues to eat in silence. The meal comes to an end. Greta is covered in pasta sauce.

MOM

Oh, Greta! Look at you! Come with me, and let's get you cleaned up.

Mom leads Greta away. Francesca and Julian drop their magazines and lean in, conspiratorially.

FRANCESCA

This "Mess Monster"... I have an idea.

EXT. SMALL HOUSE. DAY

Mom is working in the garden, and Greta is playing fairies. Francesca and Julian mount their bikes.

FRANCESCA

Back in half an hour!

MOM

Be careful!

JULIAN

Love you, Mom!

EXT. HARDWARE STORE. DAY

Julian and Francesca cycle up to a hardware store, leave their bikes outside and enter.

INT. HARDWARE STORE. DAY

Julian and Francesca work through the store with a handwritten list - picking up masking-tape, duct-tape, batteries, a flashlight, netting and string. The children pay and leave the store.

EXT. SMALL HOUSE. DAY

Julian and Francesca cycle into the driveway. Mom is still gardening, and Greta is still playing fairies. Julian and Francesca rush into the house with their shopping bag.

MOM

Oh, hey!

Mom returns to her gardening. Francesca reappears at the front door, waits for Mom to turn her back and sprints for the garage. Francesca disappears for a moment, then sneaks back to the house, carrying a small step-ladder. Greta sees, but says nothing.

INT. BEDROOM. DAY

Francesca is up the step-ladder, attaching netting to the ceiling with masking-tape, and running a string down to her bedside. Julian sits surrounded by his electronics kit and various toys, including a Nerf Gun, as well as the duct-tape, flashlight and batteries. Greta enters.

GRETA

What are you doing? Can I help?

JULIAN

(screwdriver between teeth)

Yeah, come in Greta - we're working on a project. Can you pass me the Photo-Resistor? It's marked "RP".

Greta reaches into the electronics kit box and pulls out the piece Julian needs, which she hands to him.

JULIAN

Thanks Greta! Great job!

GRETA

Duh! I know my ABC's. I'm five!

The children resume their activity.

INT. KITCHEN. EVENING

The children are finishing dinner - as ever, with magazines and toys in hand.

MOM

OK, guys - now off up to bed.

CHILDREN

OK, Mom!

The children immediately put down their magazines and toy, pick up their plates and put them in the kitchen sink before trooping out. Mom cannot believe what she sees.

INT. BEDROOM. EVENING

The bedroom is barely lit. The children lie in their beds, waiting nervously. The bedroom door opens a crack, revealing Mom. She surveys the children, still puzzled. She is about to switch on the main light.

GRETA

Noooo! No big light! It hurts my eyes. I want to sleep.

MOM

Really?

Mom goes from bed to bed kissing each child Good Night. Mom leaves. Julian reaches underneath his bed and flicks a switch on his electronics board. A laser beam shoots from under his bed to the base-board under the toy-shelf. Francesca feels for the string by her bed.

GRETA

This is gonna be grrrrreat!

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

The children fight sleep, but lose. The closet-door opens and a furry MONSTER emerges. He checks the children are sleeping, rubs his hands and approaches the toy-shelf. As he does so, he trips the laser beam, setting off Julian's Rube Goldberg machine - activating a smartphone camera flash, and turning on the flashlight, which is duct-taped to the muzzle of the Nerf Gun. The Monster is caught in the glare as the Nerf Gun nails him between the eyes. Francesca tugs on her string and the net falls onto the Monster. The children leap out of bed and onto the Monster.

MONSTER
Sunnuva...

JULIAN
Gotcha!

MONSTER
Geddofffaaammeeee!

GRETA
Yay! I told you he was real!

FRANCESCA
OK, Buster - let's talk...

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT (LATER)

The children (triumphant) sit around the Monster (sulking).
Julian waves the smartphone in the Monster's face.

JULIAN
Photos! All the evidence we need.
One touch, and these babies are
uploaded to Mom's Facebook page.
And then every parent in town will
know the Mess Monster's for real.

MONSTER
You guys hacked your Mom's
Facebook account?

FRANCESCA
Zip it - you're the one that's
busted!

MONSTER
Come on guys! Gimme a break! I'm a
Mess Monster. I make mess. I get
kids in trouble. It's what I do.

GRETA
Told you so! Told you so!

MONSTER
You wouldn't deprive me of a
living, would you?

FRANCESCA
Maybe not. Maybe we can cut a deal.

JULIAN

You see, the real problem is the Clean-Up Fairy. She's just a figment of Mom's imagination.

GRETA

(Shaking her head)
She's not really real.

FRANCESCA

So here's the deal... Greta...?

Greta steps forward with her fairy wings, tutu, tiara and wand, which she holds out to the Monster.

MONSTER

Yous kidding me, right?

The children shake their heads.

SUPER: SIX MONTHS LATER

EXT. LARGER HOUSE. EVENING

A larger house. A "For Sale" board in the front yard has a "Sold" sticker over it.

MOM (OS)

OK, kids. Bed!

CHILDREN (OS)

Yes, Mom!

INT. FRANCESCA'S BEDROOM. EVENING

Francesca lies on her bed, reading. The walls of her room are plastered with teen posters. Mom pops her head in.

MOM

Another half hour, and then lights out. OK, Honey? You have school tomorrow.

FRANCESCA

OK! Oh, and Mom...?

MOM

Yes, Francesca?

FRANCESCA

I love my room. You rock, Mom!

Mom smiles as she closes the door.

INT. JULIAN'S BEDROOM. EVENING

Julian lies in bed. His bedroom walls are covered with posters of rockets, planes and cars. Mom enters, kisses him good night and turns off his bedside lamp.

MOM

Good night.

JULIAN

(drowsily)

Love you Mom.

Mom smiles and kisses him again.

INT. GRETA'S ROOM. EVENING

Greta is asleep in bed. Her bedroom is entirely pink, with fairy decorations. Mom walks in and kisses her. Greta doesn't stir. Mom leaves. Greta's hand reaches out to switch on her night-light. The Monster emerges from the closet, wearing the tiara, tutu and wings. Greta sits up.

GRETA

OK - clear away the coloring books.
We're having a tea-party now!

MONSTER

(Surly)

Really?

GRETA

Facebook?

MONSTER

I guess I'll get the cupcakes then.

Greta is blissed out.

END.