

## Big Brother: Melissa Hickey

The television flicked from colourful picture to blank screen. A loud snap rang out and a putrid puff of smoke wafted from the speakers. "Oh no," I shouted, "not again." I flung the remote aside and bounded to my feet. A person, a tiny man with bushy eyebrows, red hair, and a blubbery belly appeared on the screen. He shook his finger. "TOO MUCH TELEVISION WILL KILL YOU," he preached.

"Like hell." I knelt in front of the telly and slapped my palm on the man. He shrieked, blinked his eyes, then inch by inch faded into nothingness. In his place, a black haze appeared. It started in the middle and grew until it covered the whole screen. Yuck, the haze solidified, forming a crumbly, muddy, black layer. I wiped my index finger across it and big chunks sprayed into the air before dropping onto my clean white carpet.

I pinched my lips together. Bloody Big Brother. Four years ago, health officials announced the dangers of too much television, laziness, obesity and lower cognitive function. They recommended no more than three hours per day. Should someone continue watching, a little programmed man appeared delivering a message of doom. TOO MUCH TELEVISION WILL KILL YOU. As punishment, you were then hit with a spray of black dirt. So far, I'd only been stung by Big Brother once. Several weeks ago, after a busy day at work, I'd fallen asleep in front of the TV. I woke three hours later to the sound of plopping mud. Oh, the mess. By the time I finished washing off the dirt, the bristles on two scrubbing brushes were limp and grey.

Now I'd had to do it again. I sneezed, and a blob of thick green snot oozed from my nose. Without wiping, I rolled onto my back and stared up at the ceiling. Black mud continued to shower me, my carpet, my furniture, fricking everywhere.

Why? Why me? In the clutches of a filthy cold, the only option was to lounge on the couch and watch TV. Who cared how many hours? I wiped my sweaty brow and coughed. Bloody Big Brother, and their let's save the world crap. A clump of dirt fell in my mouth and I sat up and screamed.

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