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Post No. 29

THE GREAT INTERIOR DECORATION CRISIS - PART II

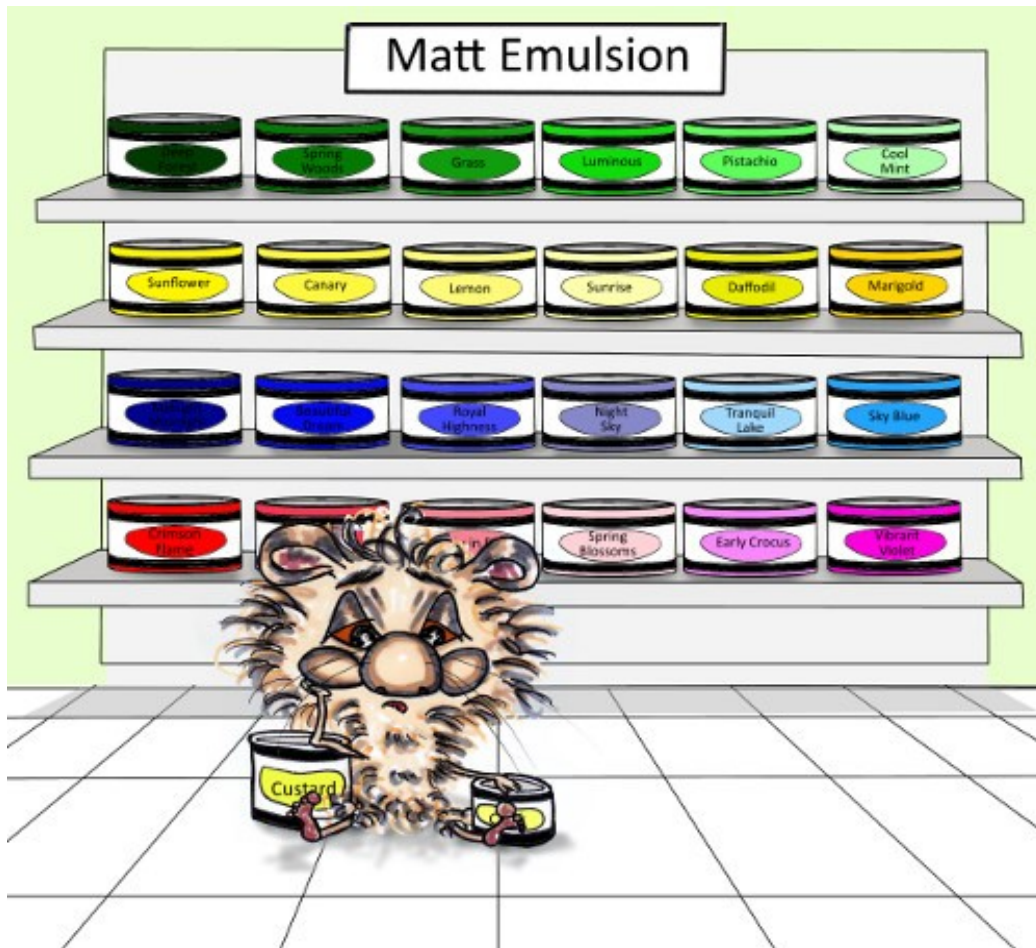
Where was I, readers? Oh, yes, I had just told you how I had decided to surprise Kimster by repainting her sitting room whilst she was away. Well, I did not want to waste any time, so that very day, as soon as I left Kimster's box, I headed over to the DIY store.

I had thought it would be easy: just go to the store, have a look at the paints, choose a colour (not pink, of course), and that would be that. The problem I found was that choosing paint is not easy. It is not easy at all.

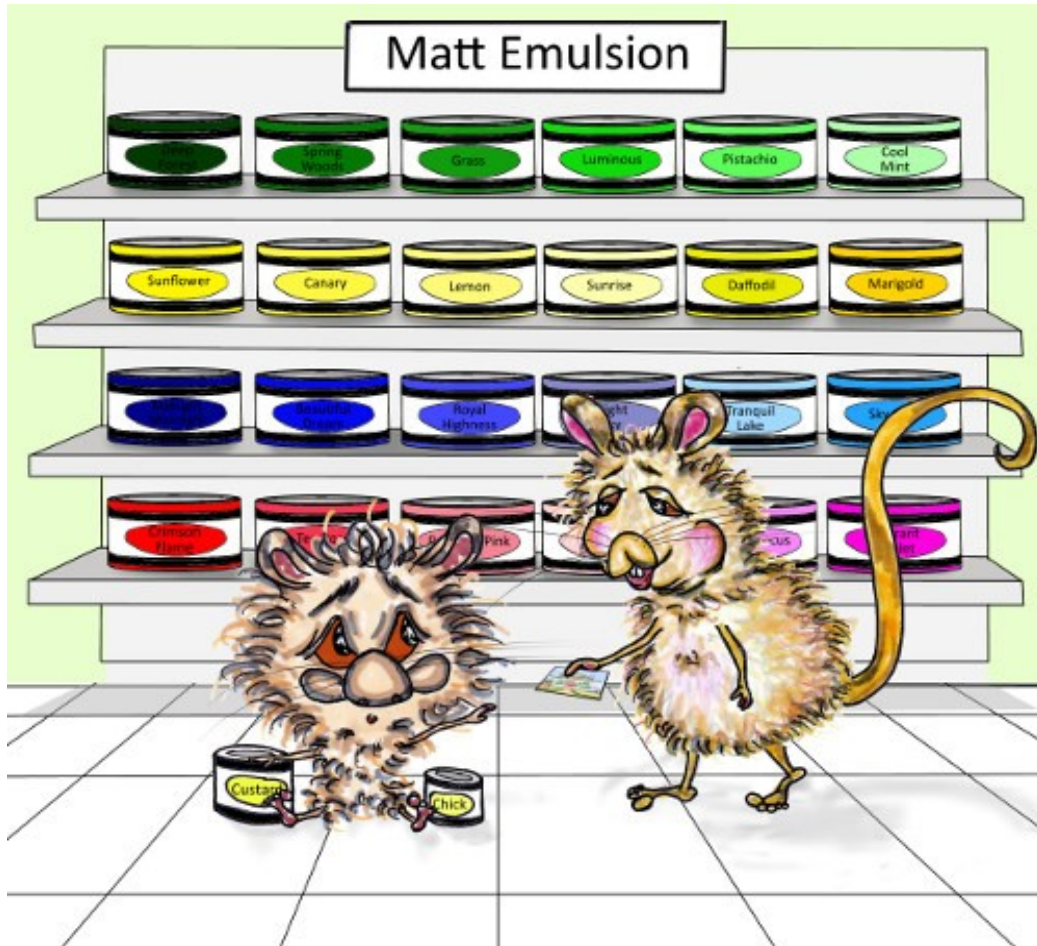
First of all, I had never expected there to be that much of it. Paint, I mean. I had never seen so much paint in my life. There was paint for ceilings, paint for walls, paint for wood and even paint for floors; there was paint for inside and paint for outside; there was gloss paint and matt paint and satin paint; there was quick-dry paint and non-drip paint. There were simply too many kinds of paint. And that was before I even began to think about choosing a colour. There were so many colours, and most of them were colours I had never heard of before. I mean, I had been thinking about yellow, but I had not thought about sunflower or canary or lemon or sunrise or daffodil or marigold, or indeed any of the other colours with silly names that were supposed to be yellow.



There is simply not enough space in one blog post to list all their silly names, but I am sure you, dear readers, get the idea. I was completely and utterly overwhelmed. I slumped down in the paint aisle, dejected.



I thought that I might have taken on a task that was just too big for one little hamster. That was when I met Grabbiner Gerbil III.



"May I be of assistance?" he asked, holding out his arm to pull me up from the floor of the paint aisle. "Allow me to introduce myself," he continued, once I was up on my feet. "I am Grabbiner Gerbil III." He held out a business card to me. It was a very impressive-looking business card.



"Any job at all," I murmured, reading aloud. "Grabbiner Gerbil III, I am so glad to have met you. I think you can indeed be of assistance to me. Allow me to introduce myself. I am Harrison Hamster I, and I think I might have a job for you."

"We gerbils may be small, but we can do any job at all!" Grabbiner said, enthusiastically repeating what I had just read on his business card.

"Well, I want to surprise my dear friend Kimster by redecorating her sitting room whilst she is away for a week. Would you be able to assist me with choosing the right sort of paint for that job? There are so many kinds of paint, I just don't know how to begin to choose."

Grabbiner Gerbil III scratched his chin and squinted his eyes in an intense way. He looked as if he was thinking very hard.



"I would be delighted to help you select some paint. What sort of look did you have in mind for the room?"

"Well, Kimster wants something fresh and different, but I think she is a little afraid of moving away from her old pink colour scheme. I was thinking that yellow might be a good idea, myself, but, what with sunflower and canary and lemon and sunrise and daffodil and marigold, I got completely and utterly overwhelmed," I explained.



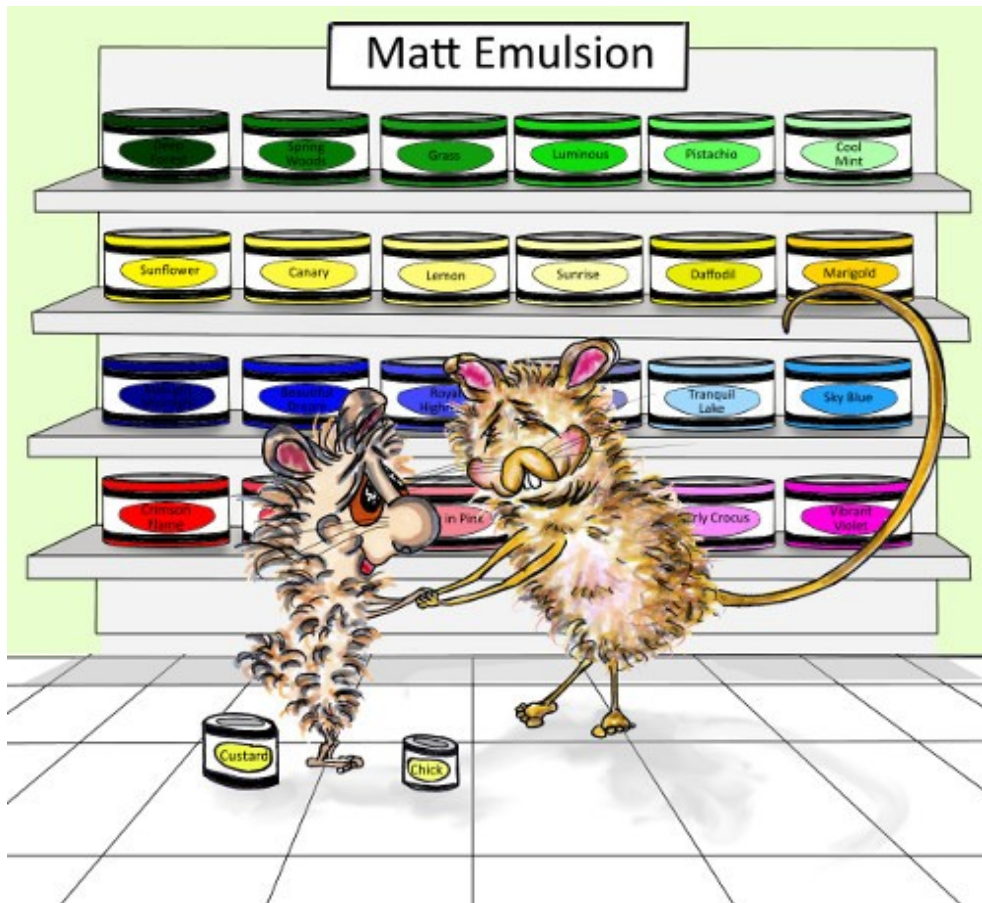
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"I understand your predicament, Harrison. People who are not in the interior design business often find that selecting paint is actually a lot more difficult than they expect. Stores such as this one only make the matter more difficult for those who, through no fault of their own, know nothing about paint. And if you think choosing paint is difficult, imagine how hard it will be to get that room painted and looking great all on your own in just one week. You are lucky to have met me. In fact, meeting me might just be one of the best things that has ever happened to you. With my help, you could give your friend a surprise much bigger and better than you ever thought possible. Imagine if you could redecorate not just her sitting room, but her entire home before she gets back. If you hire me, I'll not only redecorate the whole of the inside of your friend's little box, I'll redecorate the outside to match. Imagine how surprised she will be. She will never forget it. She will remember it for the rest of her life."

Grabbiner's words echoed in my head.

She will never forget it. She will remember it for the rest of her life.

Well, I was already absolutely determined to do something nice for Kimster, but here was an opportunity to do something she would remember forever. I simply could not let that opportunity pass me by. That was why, there and then, I hired Grabbiner Gerbil III to redecorate Kimster's entire box.



One thing I can say about Grabbiner Gerbil III is that he does not waste any time. He did not even bother to let go of my hand after we had shaken on our deal. He just pulled me towards the rear of the store.

"But what about the paint?" I asked, perplexed that we were leaving all the cans of yellow paint behind.

"I am taking you to the best part of the store," said Grabbiner, smiling broadly. "This is where you go to buy paint when you are in the know." He gave me a conspiratorial wink.



I looked around. There were all sorts of bits and pieces in this aisle at the back of the store: a ladder with three rungs missing, an ugly plastic plant, two ceramic cats (one with a broken ear), and a leaking can of wood varnish were just some of the things I had noticed when Grabbiner started pointing and jumping up and down. "Ooh, Harrison," he squealed, "this really is your lucky day!"



Grabbiner started loading paint cans on to a shopping cart. He said, "Harrison, help me. These are for your job."

"But Grabbiner," I said, "these paint cans are dented. They don't have labels on them. Do you even know what kind of paint is in them?"



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"Oh, Harrison, you have so much to learn. This is the clearance aisle. Most people do not even come to this aisle when they visit the DIY store. However, we interior designers know that when a client wants something fresh and different, this is *the* place to come. You see, the only reason stuff ends up here in the clearance aisle is because no one has bought it. So, you can be sure that whatever look you create using stuff from the clearance aisle is going to be fresh and different. Not only that, but the stuff in this aisle is cheaper than anything else in the store. It's so cheap, in fact, that for the amount someone like you might spend on decorating one room, a smart interior designer like me can decorate an entire home."

"But Grabbiner, do you know what colour that paint is?"

"Harrison, you really know nothing at all about interior design, do you? You cannot hope to achieve a totally fresh and different look if you focus on minor details such as the paint colour. Trust me on that. Now, do you have any old socks?"

"Old socks?" Why was Grabbiner asking about old socks?

"Do you have any? Ideally, we will need some old socks with holes in them. We could cut holes into some new socks, but I would not like to waste a perfectly good pair of new socks unless there was absolutely no alternative."

"I don't understand, Grabbiner."



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"I don't like to waste stuff."

"No, I don't mean that I don't understand your feelings about cutting holes into new socks. I completely and utterly agree with you about that. I mean that I don't understand why we will need socks at all. I thought we would need paintbrushes, rollers and paint pads, a ladder and some protective sheeting, but it really did not occur to me that we would need socks with holes in them."

"Harrison, you have so much to learn. You really are so very lucky to have met me. I have saved you a fortune already. Paintbrushes, rollers, paint pads, ladders and protective sheeting indeed! All you need are some holey old socks, my man. Now, do you have any?"

"I think I can get some, yes."

"Then we're all set."

I must admit that when Grabbiner asked about the socks, I did think that I might have been a bit hasty in hiring him.



Then I reminded myself how little I really knew about interior design. I reminded myself of Grabbiner's impressive-looking business card. I reminded myself of what Grabbiner had said about doing something that Kimster would remember for the rest of her life. That was what did it. That was what made me go ahead with it. I have said it before, but it bears repeating: sometimes the worst type of crisis situation can arise when you try to do something nice for someone else.



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I'll sign off for now, dear readers, but please stay tuned. I'll be back soon with another blog post, the end of this story and, of course, a moral for you to take away and apply in your own lives.

Bye for now!

Harrison Hamster I
19th January 2013