

A BEDTIME STORY

By Joan Black

You want Grandma to tell you a story? Then get those teeth brushed, hands and faces washed, pajamas on. Snug in your beds? Then we are ready to start.

This is NOT a 'Once Upon A Time' story. Oh no. This is a story of the here and now. Right this very minute in fact. No fidgeting. Be very quiet. Listen! Do you hear anything? Of course not! It is night time and the house is still and silent.....WHATWASTHAT?! A stair step creaked. But we are up here and there is no-one downstairs, so how come a stair step creaked? Tap, tap, tap on the window. Is the wind starting to howl or is that the tapping of 'Little Things' wanting to join us in here where it is warm and cozy? Oh- oh. Do you hear rustling, slithering, scratching sounds coming from the closet in the corner? You nod your heads "yes". You know why? I'll tell you why. It is the sound of the SQUIGGLIES waking up. There are hundreds, maybe even thousands of SQUIGGLIES that spend their days crouched on the top shelf, but as the moon comes up...the SQUIGGLIES slide down and they creep out - under the door.

The SQUIGGLIES are UGLEE - they have Spider bodies and Tadpole heads and each one has nine and a half legs and they scuttle along sideways. They scridgy out and skitter across the carpet to the beds where they scramble up and squirm among the sheets and blankets looking for their favorite food....tiny pink ears! Especially Little Girl ears.

But boys are not safe. Oh no. Out from beneath the bed where they dwell among the smelly sneakers and stinky socks slide hordes of SQUISHIES. Did I say the SQUIGGLIES were ugly? Well the SQUISHIES are the ugliest critters in the whole wide world. They are soft and squirty yellow-brown blobs and they burp all the time. Burp. They slip and slide in and out between toes, nibbling, nibbling, chomp, chomp, chomp.

When the SQUIGGLIES and the SQUISHES have chewed on enough ears and toes, they hunt for a place to rest. Places like underarms and that soft spot behind the knee or their most favorite place of all - a nice, plump BELLY BUTTON! If you try to dislodge them by squirming they will bite and prickle and tickle and your body will twist and turn and itch until all the bed clothes fall on the floor and you are cold and scared and screaming and.....

Well, lookee here. Two adorable kids fast asleep and smiling and not a SQUIGGLIE or a SQUISHIE to be seen. Goodnight my little monsters - sleep tight.

I'll switch off the light and creep downstairs. Oh Yuk! I think I just stepped on a SQUISHIE. Well, I HOPE it was a SQUISHIE and not something the kids dropped on the floor!