

Space
by Kaz Getts

Space. The final frontier. Oh I don't mean out there where impolite aliens rip through your stomach and you're doomed if you wear a yellow uniform. I mean right here, where walls laden with ... things ... threaten to take over your very soul.

Once I thought the solution was simple. Being a bit New Age, I invoked the Norse deity of simplicity and order – the Goddess Ikea – but that brought its own problems. I should have known that these divinities are a capricious lot. There is always a price to pay.

It started innocently enough. “Oh mighty and omniscient goddess, please help me overcome my filing woes,” I cried.

As if bewitched, my feet followed the yellow line to Home Storage. Then I looked up and I saw them there in all their glory: pristine white storage folders that simply blossomed outwards and clicked together. Perfect. Away went my magazines in a flash. Huh. Too easy. Bring it on!

I cast a contemptuous glance at the piles and piles of illicit milk crates overflowing with paper-backs and sundry mystery objects that other people would have discarded years ago. In my mind's ear I could hear Mum's voice – “you know that's stealing, don't you! They'll come and arrest you one day. Don't say I didn't warn you!”

This time Goddess Ikea led me straight to my saviour – Billy!

And for a while it was like a miracle. A crate full of Dr Seuss books and fairy tales from my childhood was transformed, my treasures now proudly displayed – in alphabetical order – in a Billy bookcase. With adjustable shelf heights. Stunning.

I might have been okay if I could have stopped there. But no. Billy was like a drug and I had no answer to my craving for ... order.

Billy bookcases, Billy CD racks, Billy shelves, Billy wardrobes, Billy filing cabinets, Billy desk organizers, Billy drawer inserts. And accessories. Billy, Billy, Billy! I just couldn't get enough of Billy!

Slowly my crowded floor of mess and mayhem became a vertical tower of tidiness. Floor to ceiling systematization. A thing a beauty; worthy of worship.

If only I hadn't gone back.

They asked me to join the Ikea Family. I couldn't resist. There were so many reasons to be part of it. It made so much sense when they explained it all. To be with other like-minded people who felt the same way about – things – as I did. We could change the world!

And so it went on. My flat became home to more and more storage solutions – ah Billy! - but paradoxically there was less and less room. In my deluded state I told

myself that those rows of vacant shelves meant I was planning for the future, but that was a typical addict's lie. I was hooked.

Then came the intervention. My mother, once ecstatic about the new structure and purpose in my life saw my gradual decline into ... neatness. She knew at once there was something very, very wrong.

She packed up everything, loaded Dad's ute and took it back. She took on the Family. For me! She was expecting trouble at the returns counter but nothing stops my Mum. I think she's immune to temptation. She left me one Billy as a keepsake – my first bookcase with my old stories presented in their perfect height shelving.

And now? I try hard to forget how I felt about Billy. If I'm driving past, the urge to stop in and grab a big yellow bag is almost too powerful to overcome. It's safer just to keep on driving ...