

This Is Why We Can't Have Nice Things

Erica Plouffe Lazure

Dad's records are off limits. They always have been. He has every last Pink Floyd on vinyl. Every Cream album and all of Led Zeppelin and the 'rarest of rare,' he says, Jimi Hendrix forty-five from a 'little-known single-press recording studio outside of Memphis.' All of these, he has never heard, never opened. Original sleeves, pristine innards, sitting in special boxes on a shelf above the stereo. Mint, he calls them. I think of toothpaste whenever I think of his records, or mom's stinky tea, which she sometimes gives me when I can't sleep at night. But now it is Saturday morning and the house is silent, as it always is on a Saturday morning, with mom at yoga and dad sleeping late and so I dive into *Ripley's Believe it Or Not!* or the *Guinness Book of World Records* to read about everyone who I am not. The woman with the world's longest toenails! The man who made the largest flapjack! The world's oldest cat! I, too, want to find my name in these pages, to break a record, win the race, grow the longest toenails so I don't have to wear shoes. But I am picked last every time for dodgeball and I bite my nails to stumps and I have probably eaten enough pancakes to beat the record, but I can't prove it. So when I look up the record to see who broke the record for broken records, and find nothing there, I realize now how I can finally win.

The image features three black silhouettes of lobsters against a white background. One large lobster is centered, facing forward with its claws raised. Two other lobsters are partially visible on the left and right sides, also facing forward. The text 'the lobsters run free' is printed in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font in the lower-left quadrant of the image.

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lobsters
run
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