

attention!!

Incompatible Roommate Syndrome

Whenever I used to hear people talking about how they just can't get along with their roommates, I didn't listen. I thought they had to be exaggerating. Getting along with someone just takes a little cooperation, right? Wrong.

I didn't use to believe in the Incompatible Roommate syndrome. Until last year, when it happened to me.

Oh, there were the little things, like the fact that she never filled ice cube trays and put bowls and glasses back into the refrigerator empty. But the final straw was the watermelon she left in the bottom of a grocery bag for a week in the pantry.

It was the smell that caught my attention. Of course, she had left town. Although that wouldn't make too much of a difference because it seemed like she only stayed in the apartment a few times the whole semester. So, I gave in and decided the trash couldn't wait for her return any longer.

The brown blob that fell from the soggy hole in the bag to the floor made my stomach retch. Most of us know that feeling. Your stomach hits your throat, every abdominal muscle tenses, and you head for the door.

But wait — as if all this wasn't enough, little animals had made my pantry their stomping ground. Worms and little creatures of the night infested the decay. Dash to the door. If you happened to see the gnats that took flight in the living room and bedrooms, they also used to dine in the watermelon mush.

I gave up on the Raid. I think they're using it as a food supplement.

Okay, anybody can make a mistake and not realize that a watermelon shouldn't be left to grow unnurtured in its little brown bag in the pantry, but what about the food that's been in the refrigerator for three weeks, the bacteria cultures in the glasses in the bathroom and the empty containers that remain in the refrigerator because somebody doesn't want to wash them?

The funniest thing about this situation is that my roommate wasn't the bacteria culture type

at all. She is an absolute doll. She has the perfect height, the perfect bottled hair, the perfect figure, she's what most Texans recognize as the typical California girl. She's sweet as can be, something of a people-pleaser. We've never exchanged harsh words. In fact most people are surprised to hear that we never got along. We're more than civil to each other; you'd think we'd been long-time friends. So what was the problem? Communication.

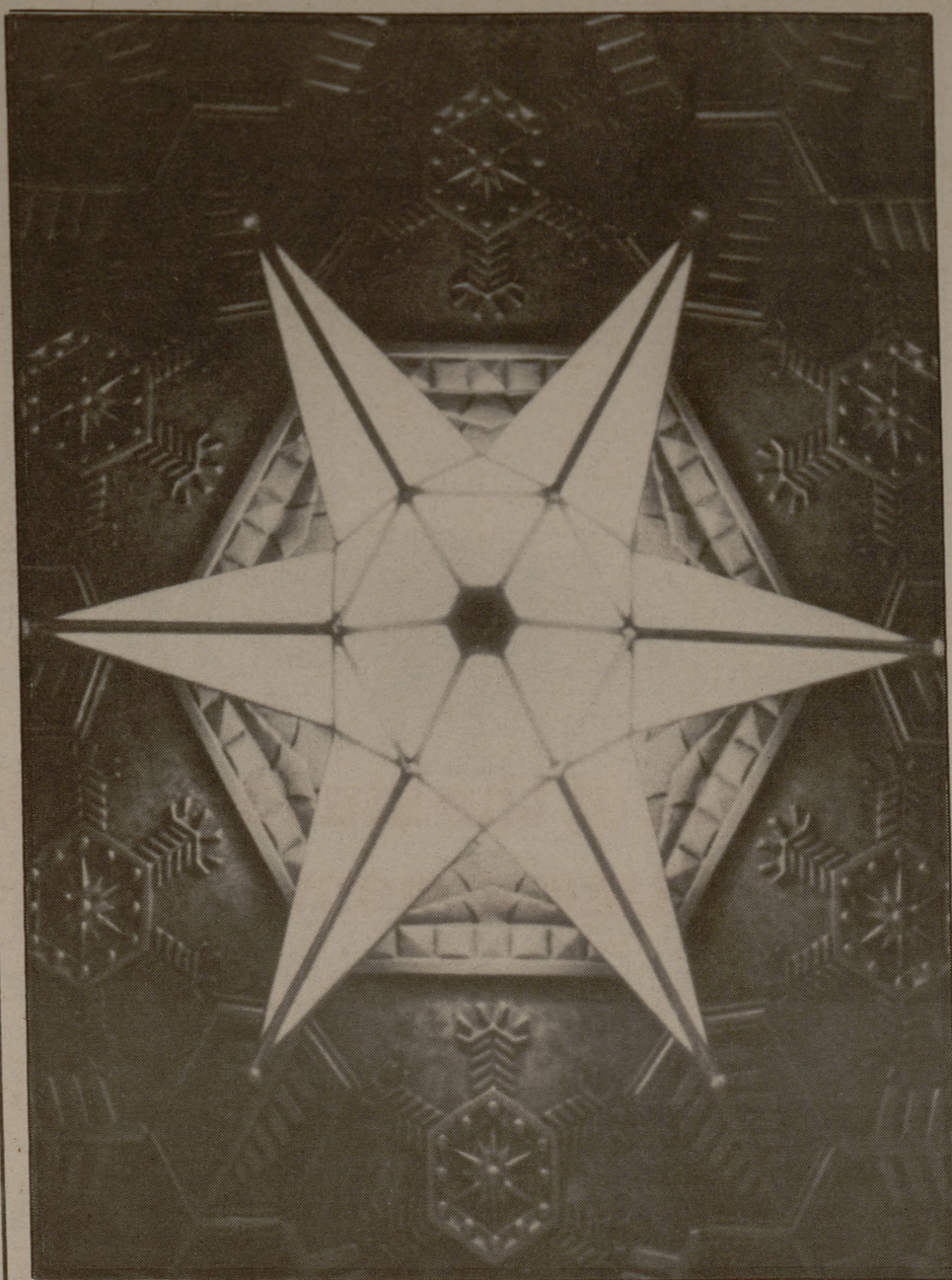
We've all heard it before. Communication is the answer to the problem. But a lot of good that does. The more we tried to communicate, the more we muddled things up. We were just so different we talked on different wavelengths.

I think our differences can be summed up like this: On the outside, she's picture perfect. She never walks out of the apartment without a perfectly painted face. The art of putting on make-up has been perfected to a mere two-hour process. That does include hair styling, too. Every article of clothing matches, from the bow on her head to the stripe on her socks. Like I said —perfect, not a flaw to be seen.

Me, I can't understand that. It's just not my style. My philosophy is faded jeans, T-shirts, and light make-up. Just right for the couch, the Chicken, the mall or campus. Don't get me wrong. I dress the part when the need arises. Formals, dinner dates or a night on the town will find me in a dress, slacks or whatever the situation calls for. But *every day?* Guess I have better things to do with my time. That's not true. I just don't give a damn.

But the worst of it is that she tells everyone that I'm the slob and she is the one that keeps the apartment clean. Okay, she's right, I am a slob. My books are on the table along with tennis shoes, scraps of paper, a tape, an empty coke can and a plate or two — but they're not growing mold! I'm not dirty.

I guess it's the way we present ourselves, our philosophies on life. I'm the same inside as out. Surface and material things just don't mean that much to me. I don't put up



This weeks attention!! photo of the light in the Chemistry Building hall was taken by Sarah Granberry, a senior journalism major.

a front. I may not have my place in tip-top shape but I don't put empty containers in the refrigerator, shove everything in a drawer or vacuum the rug so the surface looks great. I give you the truth a little disorganized, a little messy but solid rather than superficially perfect.

As for her philosophy on life, I don't know. But I know what image she puts forth. Maybe communication was the answer. I know there wasn't a right and a wrong, just a difference. The Incompatible Roommate syndrome strikes again.

Katie Matzinger is a senior journalism major.

Editor's Note: This attention!! page will be used each week as a forum for you, our readers. We encourage you to submit any original work that would be suitable for publication in At Ease.

Pictures should be black-and-white shots that are unique either in content, angle or technique. Columns, essays or poems should be no longer than 500 words. Please don't send us your gripes, complaints, or sermons on heavy-duty issues —send those to the Battalion's Opinion Page.

Don't forget to put your name and phone number on anything you send us. Then just drop it off at the Battalion, Room 216 of the Reed McDonald Building. Be sure to specify that it is for At Ease.