



Hal, the Roach

By Curtis Jerry Smothers

I first met Hal the Roach one day as I was watching TV in the dark and eating pizza. I remember that it was one of those American Idol programs and one of the overweight singers was killing an old Karen Carpenter song.

Hal skulked towards the open pizza carton. As he headed for the pepperoni sliver, his jiggling antennae caught my eye. Now, roaches disgust me; so I ran to the kitchen to get the Raid, knowing full well it would contaminate the remainder of my pizza.

As I pointed the nozzle towards Hal, he reared on his back legs and in a surprisingly strong voice (for a roach) yelled, "Wait! Don't do it! I'm your uncle Hal."

Yikes, I thought, a talking roach who claims to be my mother's dead brother Hal!

So I asked Hal some questions only the real Hal would know, and he passed. Happy to be reunited with one of my favorite uncles, I prepared a comfortable matchbox home for Hal; and we were getting along well, except for periodic disagreements over American Idol.

Everything was going well, until my mother came over one day while I was at work. As I returned from work and walked in the door, I knew something was amiss. I detected the faint odor of insecticide as I walked in.

"Did you know you had roaches?" asked my mother, holding the can of Raid in her hand and poor old dead Hal dangling between her thumb and forefinger.