

# STEPHEN LEACOCK ASSOCIATES

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## McMission Impossible

by

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Second Place Winner in the 2018 Student Competition

When hungover, the best feeling in the world is not setting an alarm for the morning, snuggling into the mountains of feathered pillows behind your head and nesting your body in blankets like a human burrito. But instead of vegetating in my burrito with a side of Advil and some hydration sauce, I got to stand in the kitchen of a fast food restaurant, letting my skin soak in the extreme amount of grease in the air and my brain soak in the *old lady mumbling* of my boss.

I felt two quick taps against my shoulder. I turned around to face my Supervisor with her wrinkled face and permanent frown. She scanned me like an underpaid Bouncer at a University bar.

“I would fire every teenager in here if I could, especially you Chelsea. All you do is ramble about your miserable life and wanting to upgrade to the iPhone who-the-hell-knows-what. You millennials would sell your own mothers for the next generations of those touchy texty devices”.

“Yes?” I questioned her, completely ignoring the fact she had just become my Grandma at the annual Christmas dinner. When my Supervisor gave me her best *you didn't eat your vegetables* look, I was ready to break down more than our ice cream machines.

“Since you seem to be oh so busy here...” she started, taking a brief break to scan me again as her plump and veiny arms remained crossed, “I need you to do some cleaning for me. You know, so you don't just get paid to stand around.”

I smiled like she just gave me the present I never wanted and reached for the cloth, without breaking eye contact. Her arms crossed tighter.

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“Actually, I have the perfect mission for you to do before going on break. It's a little bit more than wiping the same spots over again. There was an accident in the play place this morning, and I need you to clean it.” She returned the fake smile back to me, and proceeded to give me yet

another unwanted present. The droopy mop fell into my hands, and I couldn't tell if it was the fries sizzling in the oil or if my blood was boiling.

I already wanted to throw up. The last time somebody was sentenced to clean up an accident, they couldn't look at another chicken nugget for a week.

"You may as well lock the doors behind me then because this is going to take some serious mental preparation on my behalf," I jokingly mumbled to her as a shudder ran down my spine. *May as well at least try and make this old General laugh.* I felt her staring deep into my soul as I turned away, her eyes radiating heat through me like I was a burger and she was the heat lamp.

I approached what would become my battlefield with deep regret, not ready for the casualties this war may inflict. I unsealed the door and the enemy launched its first strike: chemical warfare. The stench of old hamburger and the breath of a 4 year old who refused to brush his teeth punched me in the face. In an olfactory defensive move, I blocked my nose and feigned short breaths through my mouth to avoid the poisonous cloud at all costs.

The playplace's fluorescent lights rocked my already dehydrated brain like explosions. I read in a book somewhere that the best way to approach the enemy was in the the dark. I pushed my mop against the light switch, and it became as dark as the fryer grease at closing time. I continued to slump the mop over my shoulder; it would be my primary weapon in this heinous war.

As I entered the red tubed tunnels, I realized I had made my first step across enemy lines. I pushed my mop ahead of me and tested for unseen traps or landmines. I felt the scratched plastic underneath my fingers and my hair began to stick on end, thinking about how many children had scraped, bit, drooled, and even peed in this plastic tube. Though the enemies may be small in stature, never underestimate the power of their bodily fluids.

*Crawling up these tubes really is hard work,* I thought to myself, beginning to pant. I felt the battle bruises beginning to form on my knees. I needed to find cover. Ahead of me, I saw a break in the tubes as it dropped into a net, and there was enough headspace that I would be able to crouch and scope the area. I threw my mop as hard as I could to land on the netted platform, sick of dragging it and thumping it against the walls. Reaching out my hand, ready to launch myself after the mop, I froze in my tracks. They got me.

My palm became engulfed in a warm, wet substance, and as quick as a fat man finishes his super-sized fries, I remembered why I was sent here in the first place. The liquid seeped between my fingers, even getting under my long, perfectly trimmed nails.

I let out a battle cry, launching myself forward, dragging my fingers along and creating a path of greasy wetness behind me. Feeling the nets under my infected body, I reached for the mop, but a wave of remorse swept over me as I couldn't see a damn thing.

Crouching up to search for my much needed weapon, I spotted a signal left from the enemies. A hole in the net had been created by a troubled foe with a plastic knife and an imagination that told him to escape this war front. Looking out the hole and to the tubes that lay below the net, I spotted the outline of my beloved sword that had fallen to the ground.

Groaning out the ultimate sigh of teen angst, I realized it was time to retreat. I needed to take the alternative route to escape the battlefield. Crawling through the tubes, I let the scratched plastic guide me to the most worn out path. Many of my comrades had previously died on this hill. I knew it would be dangerous, but it was my only option to get out. I needed to take the slide.

Reaching forward after my long journey, I felt the slope beneath me begin to descend. I made it. This was my path to freedom. After this, I could run out, wash my hands, quit my job, and go to therapy. Throwing myself in head first, I went full speed.

*Too fast, I thought. This is a trap.*

I tried to to push my elbows against the slide to slow down, but only got burns and battle scars from the peeling plastic. I felt my body moving faster, and suddenly landed face first into the ground. All the oxygen evacuated my body and I laid on the floor like a deflated, pre-cooked muffin. A vile smell crept up my nose and down my throat.

*Oh no. It wasn't over.*

Gasping for air, I squirmed and splashed in the yellow liquid attempting to suffocate me. In a final effort, I used the force of my arms to push upwards but slipped back into the pool as if it were my own blood.

Laying like a limp and lifeless fry on the kitchen floor, I heard footsteps approach from the other side of the play area. I hoped another McSoldier had been sent to save me. But it was the moment I heard the *-click-* of the door being locked at the other end of the room that I realized my biggest mistake was to trust the old General: treachery from within!

I rolled over in defeat and my hand fell upon a plump and bloated diaper likely left by the enemy. Instinctively, I squeezed it like a sponge and more of the enemy's acid rain leeches onto my fingers. The final dagger.

I reached for the mop handle, placed the white diaper on top and with my last bit of energy, raised the white flag in McDefeat.