

THIRD-GRADE CLOSET BLUNDER

The moral of this story- Never cram all your messy items into your closet when your grandmother is coming over. When I was eight years old and in the third grade, I learned my lesson the *hard* way.

You see, my parents were heading to this million-dollar country club in Tarpon Springs to see this actress named Jacqueline Bissett. My dad had heard at work that she was coming to the country club to have a fancy dinner with a select number of guests. Dad's friend Pat decided he was going to foot the bill for him and his wife as well as my parents. Caught up in a whirlwind of activity before they left, my parents seemed to be more into their evening wear than me. My mom, in a flurry, called out, "Clean your room. Make sure it's neat for your grandmother."

Well, well, well. Honestly, I was not in the mood for cleaning. Rather than wanting to organize, I was in the mood for video games. Mario and Luigi were practically calling my name from the Super Nintendo system with the incredible color television I had received just a few months before. Smirking, I decided I was going to be devious. The plan was that I was going to cram all the messy items into my closet, please my parents, and continue the game until grandma arrived.

All kinds of toys were scattered all over the floor. Even worse, lots of books and art supplies were strewn across the room. It looked like a disaster zone in there, yet with my genius plan, the room was spick and span in ten minutes.

I stepped out, grinning broadly. "I already got the room cleaned," I proclaimed. My mother, still worried about this fancy dinner party, didn't notice not too much time had passed, and she told me how proud she was of me. *Yes! I fooled her!* I thought to myself.

Perhaps twenty minutes later, my grandmother arrived. Instantly, she told my parents how she would watch over me for the evening. She then walked to my room, nodding her head in approval. It only took me moments to realize she was INSPECTING my room. Pale and petrified, I attempted to guard the closet like a precious fort. "No, no, no," I crooned sweetly, "I have a few piles in there. It's not too bad, but I don't necessarily want anyone going in there."

You may imagine what happened next. She opened the closet and shrieked in horror. That's when all of a sudden I wished there was a secret passageway hidden within the realm of the closet. She then tapped one of the piles I had stacked ever-so-perfectly, letting it crash to the floor. In a stern voice, she demanded, "You will spend your time cleaning this tonight." I lost all remaining color in my face.

What lesson did I learn? Well, I didn't, honestly. To this day, I am still a slob sometimes. Ehh... wait, that's not encouraging for you as the reader. I *guess* I learned that you don't always take the easy way out, or else you have to do twice the work. That's exactly what I had to do.

SCREAMING IN K-MART

"To finish out the day, we are going to head to the photography studio and then K-Mart," my mom told me when I was five years old. It was during kindergarten and the Daisy Girl Scout troop had some sort of field day event where we got our faces painted. With my two bouncy brown pigtails, multicolored heart necklace, pastel striped dress, and my adorably painted face, I appeared to be a perfect angel.

To the left and right of my eyes were these cerulean blue tufts of paint, and under my eyes, there were white and cerulean half-moons. My nose was painted a light shade of pink while the entire area around my mouth was the same white paint that went under my eyes. I was on my very best behavior when my mom brought me to the leader's friend's professional photography studio. The photographer got a picture of me smiling broadly, yet then my mom announced what would doom my day- we would be heading to K-Mart.

All these people were telling my mom how darling her daughter was, and I was taking all the compliments in. My mom was leading me through the aisles. When we arrived in the toy aisle, the evil side of me came out. "Mom, I wanna toy," I whimpered, sticking out my lower lip and trying to appear even cuter.

"All right, you get to choose one today," she responded. "Find which toy you want to have."

My mind was racing. The aisle was loaded with all kinds of amazing toys. My mind was focused on Barbie outfits and her ridiculous plastic shoes, yet I wanted the entire shelf, not just one outfit. Mind you, there were already some items in the cart, so I placed a few in there while she had her back turned. It was deviousness at its best. By the time I had three other toys in the cart, I held up my "choice" and told her that was what I wanted.

"All right," she responded again, and told me we had to hurry home. I started getting cranky and wanted to draw some attention to myself, so I stomped my foot. This was only the beginning.

"Now, you need to be on your best behavior," she stated, frowning just a bit. "Let's head to the register."

I saw something else along the way and tried to con my mother into getting a "second" toy for me. "Can I have another toy?" I suggested, smiling just a bit.

"No," she stated, just a little agitated. "Put it back, please, or we will leave the cart here."

All of a sudden, it was as if everything had broken loose inside of me. "AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!" I hollered at the top of my lungs. Tears began streaming down my face. The clown makeup was beginning to stream down my face, making a horrid mess. Everyone in the store was staring at me. THIS was exactly what I wanted. Everyone was staring at my mother like she was an ogre.

Suddenly, the cart came to a halt, and she took me swiftly by the hand. Being the kind person she is, she apologized to the cashiers that she had to leave the cart behind. However, she was certainly not apologizing to me- I was on the fritz, and I knew it. I knew from that day I would never cause a scene in the middle of the store again.

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