

Operation S.T.M.

Thud!

"Ow!" said Leechie as something hit her on the head.

"Oooo!" she exclaimed as she rubbed the part that hurt. She looked down onto the ground and found a rock.

"That Tubblie!" she said, looking around for that practical joker! Tubblie was the practical joker of Acersville, always trying to get a good laugh out of someone else's misfortune! But he was nowhere to be found!

"Mmmmm," Leechie inspected the rock, it looked like a piece of cheese.

"That's odd," she said to herself.

"I guess the Professor would love to take a look at this." And with that she headed for the University.

"Professor!" she called as she reached the University.

"Come in dear!" came the muffled sounds of the Professor's voice, he seemed to be busy with some new experiment or invention, as he always was.

"Professor, look what I found!" exclaimed Leechie.

"A piece of cheese, now how is that interesting dear?" asked the Professor in surprise.

"No Professor! It's not cheese, it's a rock that looks like cheese and it fell from the sky and hit me on the head!"

At that the Professor pulled a huge magnifying glass from one of his nearby drawers and began inspecting the rock from all angles.

"Interesting, very interesting and very consistent with...." his voice trailed off as he started to remember something.

"Ah-ha!" he said with gusto.

Leechie jumped at his sudden ah-ha.

"It seems to match the rocks that I collected from the moon on Mango & Sherbet's Space Picnic!" he exclaimed, shaking with excitement.

"Now where on earth did I put those?" he asked as he buzzed around his office in a mad search.

"Here we are!" he smiled.

Leechie watched in awe as the Professor became more and more excited over her discovery.

"So it really is a rock from the moon then?" she asked gingerly.

"Mmmm," replied the Professor as he examined each specimen closely, then made a mad dash to his telescope. Leechie followed close behind determined not to get left out of the excitement, it was her discovery after all!

The Professor peered through the telescope.

"What are we looking for?" asked Leechie, still amazed at the Professor's reaction thus far.

"The moon of course." Chuckled the Professor, not realising that he had failed to explain any of his actions.

"Egad!" exclaimed the Professor as he took a closer look at the moon.

"What is it?" Leechie was very interested in what he had seen.

The Professor gulped and stumbled away from his telescope, he was very pale.

"Professor, what's wrong? Can I get you some tea? Leechie started to worry, she'd never seen the Professor like this before.

"No! No tea! We need pies! Yes, that's it pies! For Operation S.T.M!" the Professor declared.

"Huh?" Leechie was very confused.

"You need to get lots and lots of Cherry pies from Crumpet immediately! I have a lot of work to do! I'll explain everything when you get back!" and with that, he charged away to the back of his lab, leaving Leechie with a very puzzled look on her face.

So Leechie has no other option but to head to Crumpet's Bakery, she was far too inquisitive now! She had to find out what Professor Astro was up to!

She made her way to Crumpet's Bakery and then began to tell Crumpet the strange happenings of the morning.

"And then he said I need to get pies." Leechie finished.

"Whatever for?" asked Crumpet as she packed the last pie into a rather large basket she had taken from the shelf.

Leechie shrugged.

"We'll soon see!" Leechie smiled, as she lugged the heavy basket of pies, back up the hill to the University and the waiting Professor.

"Tally- ho!" grinned the Professor as he spotted Leechie in the doorway to his laboratory.

Leechie marvelled at what the Professor had done while she was away. He had built a giant catapult!

"And this?" she asked in surprise.

"It's to launch the pies, my dear!" he smiled.

"Why are we launching pies and where are we launching them too?" asked Leechie even more puzzled.

"Why, to the moon of course!" he chuckled.

"But why?" she gasped.

"We need to check our launch angle before we get started on our mission!" the Professor explained.

"Oh, you mean Operation S.T.M.?" she asked.

"Bravo! Jolly Good! You're a genius too then aren't you?" The Professor smiled as he waved wildly with his arms, cheering her efforts at understanding his plan.

Leechie was exhausted by all this silliness, she still wanted to know what on earth was going on. But with the Professor as her guide through the process she could see that wasn't going to happen in a hurry!

The Professor hurriedly set out in getting the catapult outside and positioning it to face the moon.

"We haven't got much time!" he said.

Then he set his telescope nearby and asked Leechie to watch that the pies indeed did land on the moon, as he shot them into the sky! Leechie excitedly peered through the telescope to see what had made the Professor come up with this silly plan in the first place.

"Oh dear!" she breathed as she took a closer look.

It seemed as though mice were eating the moon!

"Is that what S.T.M. stands for Professor? Save The Moon?" asked Leechie.

"Yes dear!" the Professor smiled.

"The moon is made entirely of cheese, everyone knows that and with these mice on the loose, we may not have a moon left if we don't act quickly!"

Leechie broke into a brilliant smile, as she thought she had understood the Professor's plan.

"So of we shoot pies at them they'll stop eating the Moon and begin to eat the pies instead?" she offered.

The Professor's face fell.

"Mice don't eat pies dear, they eat cheese." He looked stunned.

"So why are we shooting pies at them?" Leechie was confused all over again.

"I already told you, to see that our launch angle is right!" replied the Professor.

"Well then, what are we launching at them once our launch angel is right?" the Professor grinned, he hadn't thought that far yet.

It was then that Professor Astro noticed Granny.

"Hallo, hallo!" he said peering over a freshly positioned pie.

"Astro!" said Granny.

"What are you doing with those pies?"

"Checking the launch angle of our catapult." He said grinning and pointing to Leechie looking through the telescope.

"Care to have a look?" he gestured Granny toward the telescope.

Granny peered through and noticed tiny red dots all over the moon.

"Are those pie footprints?" asked Granny chuckling.

"Why yes! By the red prints left by the pies we can see where 'what' we catapult will land."

"But what are you going to catapult to the Moon?" asked a puzzled Granny.

The Professor grinned his embarrassed grin, he still hadn't thought that far.

"We're busy with Operation S.T.M. Granny, that stands for Save The Moon! And we don't have much time!" interrupted Leechie.

"Why do we need to save the Moon?" she asked with surprise.

"Because the Moon is being eaten by mice!" answered the Professor.

"Mice? On the Moon?" asked Granny.

"Yes! They love cheese!" replied Leechie.

The Professor motioned Granny to have a look through the telescope again and sure enough there were mice tucking into the Moon and it was crumbling fast!"

"Well what are we waiting for?" asked Granny.

"Let's save the Moon!"

She hurried home.

"Where are you going Granny!" called Leechie after her.

"To get the cats of course! Something must be done about them and we need to save the Moon!"

The Professor and Leechie had been so busy with their launching, they hadn't given anything else a second thought! Before long Granny returned, cats in hand, basket and well just about everywhere else really.

"Will they survive up there?" Granny looked worried.

Astro laughed.

"There's plenty of mil in the Milky Way to keep them going for Eons!" And with all the mice they have to catch, they will have plenty of fun too!"

Granny smiled, sending Linky's kittens to the Moon seemed like the best thing to do!

Soon the whole of Acersville were involved in Operation Save The Moon! The Loopies tried not to sneeze too much as they safely packaged the cats in foamy sponge suits and catapulted them to the Moon. It was quite a site! Once the last kitten had been sent, they rushed over to the telescope to have a look at how their plan would work. And it was working! The cats quickly went to work catching the mice and the Moon was saved! The Kittens had a wonderful time being the heroes of Acersville and Linky was so proud! Granny smiled and stroked her cat.

Astro's eyes gleamed as he starred at the sky that night. He looked at what was left of the Moon and smiled. And then tucked himself into his bed and fell fast asleep. The Moon peered down at the sleeping Astro and smiled thankfully. Operation S.T.M. had been a success!



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