

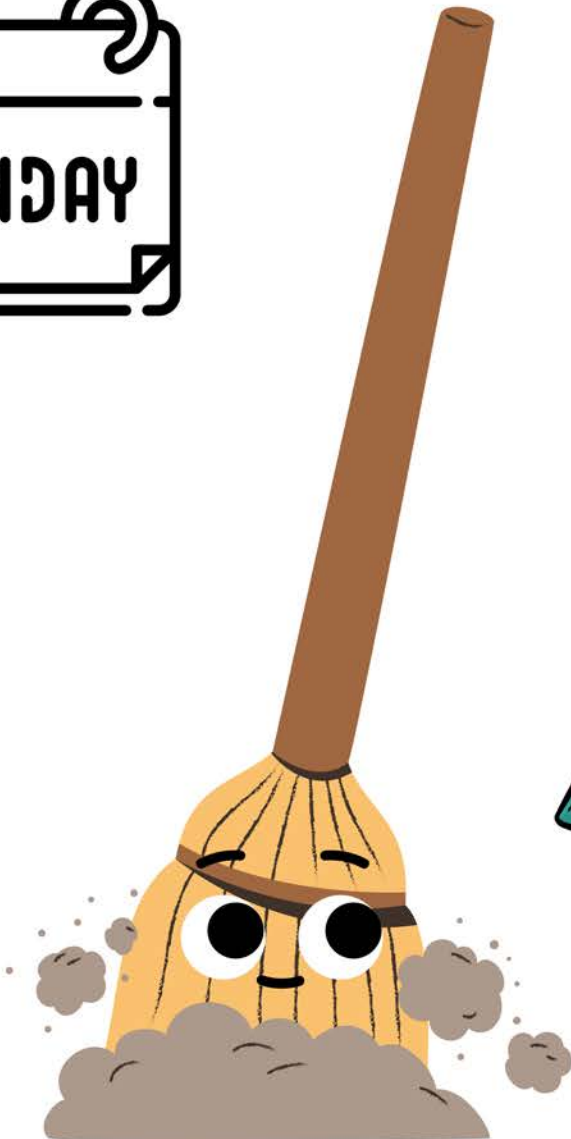
A SWEEPING ENGAGEMENT

BY ANDREA RYCROFT



Harry B. Broom reported for duty on his favorite day of the week. To be fair, Harry B. Broom was always prepared to report for duty. He never knew when he might be needed. Mondays, however, were predictable. For that reason, he liked them best.

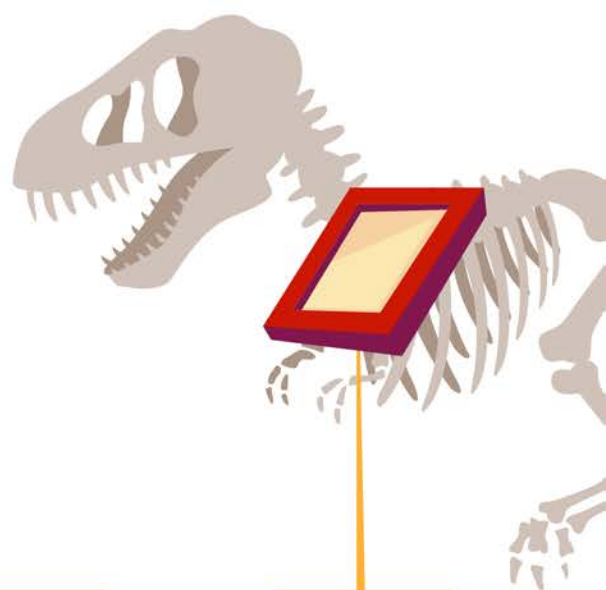
Each Monday at 8am, without fail, Harry, and his friend Pat dePan, received a visit from their colleague and closest friend: Gladys.



Gladys was a longtime staple of the Museum of Wonder. As the head housekeeper, Gladys had been keeping the halls tidy and the exhibits dust-free for over 30 years. Harry joined the Museum of Wonder only two years ago, but, in his short tenure, he had come to know that Gladys was as much a part of the institution as its bricks and mortar.



Pat and Harry had been attached since conception, finding meaning in their collaborative workstyles and utilizing each of their strengths. Together, they formed an ironclad triad with Gladys, and the three friends found contentment in being good at their jobs. Harry, held firmly in the soft hand of Gladys, would glide across the smooth, linoleum floors while Pat waited anxiously, clasped in the grip of her other palm, ready to capture the debris. The trio worked together to accomplish a task that could not otherwise be conquered without each one of them.



Every Monday was a day of exploration. Each week, as they swept through the halls of the Museum of Wonder, Pat and Harry listened to the soft hums of Gladys's hymnals. They observed her kind pleasantries with Steve from Security and Alyssa from Accounting, and they reveled in the oddities and culture of each separate wing of the Museum. Gladys had taken her expectation to keep the Museum clean and weaved in a deeper meaning by knowing every character, every corner, and every exhibit.



When Gladys was finished with sweeping for the day, Harry and Pat would return to their home in the cozy closet. Pat always found solace in returning to their quiet space. Harry, however, often found himself impatiently waiting for the week to pass, yearning for the next Monday to arrive. He often daydreamed about what it would be like to leave the closet more often, and he desired enhanced experiences in the Museum of Wonder. While he was proud of his skills as a trusted sweeper, Harry knew he was capable of more. He wanted fulfillment on other days, too.



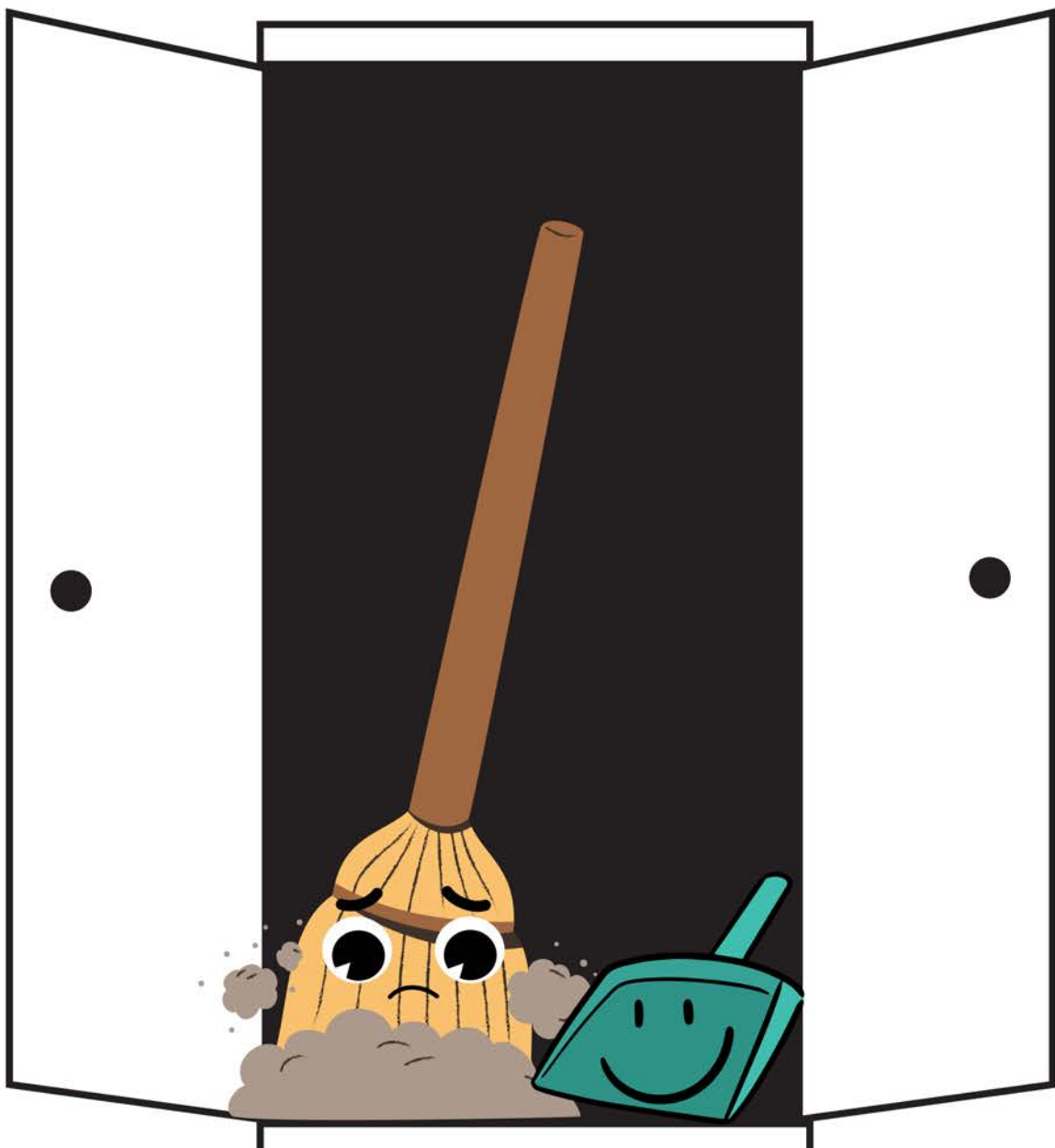
Harry's favorite spot in the Museum of Wonder was the Room of Many Colors. Each Monday, the walls were different. The interactive space offered visitors the freedom to create using a palette of paints displayed on the community craft table, enticing hands to craft funky splatters and smooth strokes.



After returning to the closet one Monday afternoon, Harry said to Pat, “Enough is enough. I’m making Tuesdays exciting, too!”

Pat, wide-eyed, said, “But that’s not part of our job! I’m here to scoop, and you’re here to sweep.”

Harry piped back, “Who says our skills should be limited by what’s expected? We are good at what we do, this much is true, but I know I can do more.”



The next day, Harry snuck out of the closet to visit the Room of Colors. While he rested, inconspicuously in the archway, Harry noticed Bob, the museum painter, climbing a tall, unsteady ladder with an equally wobbly bucket of paint. When Bob reached the apex of the ladder, he steadied his feet, whipped out a paint roller, and began cautiously applying a coat of white paint to the ceiling. Harry watched as paint dripped onto the floor below. He observed Bob's uneasy balance and the creak of the metal each time he adjusted his posture.



“Ah ha!”, Harry shouted. “I have an idea!”

Bob, alarmed by the bodiless voice, turned around, lost his balance, and came tumbling to the floor.

The clamor caused Gladys to emerge, “What’s going on?”

“I have an idea,” repeated Harry. “You can use my broomstick to elongate your paint roller. You can coat the ceiling without the wobbly paint can or unsteady ladder. “

Gladys and Bob exchanged glances, a series of double takes between each other and Harry.

“That...is a great idea,” said Bob, wiping the paint from his face.

From the closet down the hall, the faint, familiar voice of Pat dePan could be heard cheering.



Harry B. Broom reported for duty on his favorite days of the week. To be fair, Harry B. Broom was always prepared to report for duty. He never knew when he might be needed. Mondays and Tuesdays, however, were predictable. For that reason, he liked them best. Each Monday at 8am, without fail, Harry received a visit from his colleague and closest friend: Gladys. And each Tuesday, Harry aided Bob in refreshing the Room of Colors, creating a fresh canvas for a new week of visitor creations.

After all, Harry B. Broom was a tool of many talents.

