

Adventures on Inking Island: Lexy's story (the polluted trees)

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Lexy and Cally went to the forest, looking for work. They had heard that people were needed to clean the trees. They found the manager and introduced themselves.

“So you want a job here? You can help us wash the trees every week – some of them are getting grimy from an unknown pollution, you see,” explained the manager. He showed them a complicated machine. “You can use this for the job – the Tree Washer 3000!”

Cally and Lexy went off into the forest with the machine, ready to start work. “I’ll take care of the machinery,” Cally said, handing Lexy the instructions. “You can help me by reading the instruction manual, Lexy.”

“Um – that’s a lot of words...” said Lexy, doubtfully, as he looked at the booklet.

Cally was busy setting up the machine. “Power’s on; easy enough. What do the instructions say, Lexy?” There was no answer.

“Lexy?” she called to her friend. “Lexy, why are you taking so long?”

“Er... oo – sorry. I think you’re to press the green, red and big blue buttons,” Lexy stammered, hesitantly.

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Cally did as Lexy suggested, but the machine started making some strange noises.

“But not in that order, it seems,” Lexy added. “I’ll find the emergency stop function.” He flicked through the pages of the booklet, desperately looking for how to stop the machine. “OK – I think I’ve found the page for ‘Power’. It says here: turn the handle the full way round to little the power.”

Cally looked at him to check she had heard right. “That sounds like a strange instruction, but okay then...” BOOOOMM. The machine exploded, leaving Cally holding just the handle, and covered in bits of plastic. “Oh,” said Lexy. “I now see it says: turn the handle a little way round for full power.” Lexy looked so embarrassed and sad that Cally went to comfort him.

“It’s okay, Lexy,” she said kindly. “You struggle with processing words and information. I’m like that too, but with numbers. I suggest we go back and report to the boss.”

Just then, Lexy’s eyes lit up. “WAIT! I have an idea!” he said excitedly. “I’ve noticed that all the polluted trees have a slimy mushroom growing out of them. The pollution must be in the soil, caused by that fungus. That’s what causing them to be slimy.” He pointed at the trees around them. “I’ve seen the forest through the trees!”

Cally was not convinced. “That’s great, Lexy, but we have nothing to get rid of the mushrooms with, let alone wash the trees.”

Again, Lexy’s eyes lit up. “WAIT! I have an idea!” he said again, even more excitedly.

Lexy explained his idea to Cally and she reluctantly went along with it. “You’ll thank me, Cally,” he said, as he pushed her around the forest. “Your beak is a perfect mushroom-scooper, and the remains of the machine make a great carrier for them!”

When they had finished, they went back to the manager’s office and Lexy explained what had happened, while Cally hid. But the boss was not angry at all, and even offered them a bonus. “You’ve put the machine to better use: extra pay for solving the crisis,” he said as he handed over their wages. “I’ve a mind to buy that great mushroom-scooper of yours, too. How much?”

Lexy was just about to name his price, when Cally shook off the last of the mushrooms and spoke up. “Stop!” she shouted. “That’s enough of your bright ideas for one day!”

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