

On Doing The Dishes

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At the end of every working day, the unavoidable, feared task of doing the dishes awaits in every household, in every kitchen, in every sink. A towering pile of dirty plates, glasses and cutlery rests in the trenches of the battlefield right before their enemy comes along to face it. As soon as the soldiers, owners of the utensils, commence this classic clash, a number of scenarios present themselves in an attempt to unmotivate and defeat them, but the brave combatants stand their ground and never put their guard down. These are the trials and tribulations of cleaning your kitchenware.

The battle starts as soon as water begins running through the dishes in an alliance with the soldier, tackling the remnants of a substantial dinner eaten a few moments prior. The trooper clutches his sponge while distributing enough soap on it to clean everyone's silverware in a two-kilometre radius, and then chooses his first victim. The warrior lathers up a plate, rinses it with determination and sets it aside to rest after coming out a winner. He repeats this tactic with every utensil, until he is unlucky enough to choose the spoon. Because of its concave shape, the spoon is a much-feared enemy in this sort of confrontation. If the faucet happens to shoot out the water with one more ounce of strength than necessary, it might compromise the whole operation. Concentrated in soaping up and rinsing, our soldier usually forgets to adjust said faucet, and is quickly reminded of this omission by the warm splash of liquid on his arms, uniform, and even face. But this counter strike is not enough to bring him down. With his eyes half closed and enduring the offence, the combatant reaches the handle and manages to regulate it to rinse his attacker and set it down to dry beside his defeated comrades.

With his opponent neutralised, the trooper continues his task. With each minute that goes by, the arm and wrist movements become smoother, more experienced. The calloused hand makes the sponge sail through the sink's troubled waters in search for lone floating enemies to take down. Fewer and fewer cups remain. Just when the fighting man believes he is about to finish the mission, he turns his head to the side. His tired eyes capture a glimpse of what seems to be the biggest, dirtiest cooking pot he has ever seen. This artefact is utilised to prepare various dishes in great amounts such as pasta, stew, and soup, so it comes as no surprise that the pot in question should be completely plastered with leftovers. Just when he thought he was done... Shaking off the thought, the resilient soldier reaches for the container to set it in front of him and start scrubbing. Turning and shifting, the antagonist resists; it will not let go of its armour. With a strong grip, the warrior manages to keep it still and disarm it, little by little, until it finds itself at a loss for a reason to keep fighting; it is set aside with his now defeated army. The trooper smiles hopefully: he knows the war is almost over.

The last utensil is placed aside, next to the rest of its kind. The vanquished plates stand still in a perfect line, the defeated pot and glasses are flipped on their heads to avoid staying wet, and the unsuccessful forks, knives and spoons remain cramped up in one corner as if they feared a new attack. The battlefield has been swept, and is empty, with the last man standing in front of it as if contemplating the sacrifice he has made. But he is not done yet. He grabs the sponge once more and finishes off the sink which, after getting soaped and rinsed, finally gives the impression of having been untouched. After squeezing his loyal weapon dry and placing it back, the victorious hero grabs the nearest rags and begins wiping the countertop. He does so with little force, as in a sign that peace is here at

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last. He repeats the action with the stove and a couple more spots near the abandoned battlefield. He then wipes the table and sweeps the floor. When he reaches for the rag again, he unfolds it, and places it on the edge of the counter to signal his victory over the kitchen territory. It has been freed. The war is over.

There is a promising horizon at the end of every battle fought and the top of every mountain top climbed. A light at the end of the tunnel which justifies what has been unleashed in such a Herculean event. The scenarios we must endure are worth living through when we encounter the beauty of a clean kitchen in the end. Mark my words; next time you find yourself before an enemy of this calibre, do not hesitate to gear up and prepare for battle, because what comes after the storm is totally worth your while.