Not a creature is stirring— any more

Coming off of Thanksgiving, I know I'm not the only one who ate way too much. For the last week, I was sharing my house with a seemingly insatiable mouse.

Actually, the critter may have been scurrying about for much longer, but a week ago I was sitting on the floor in the kitchen, eating some scrambled eggs, when the mouse ran from the living room into the laundry room, its trajectory mere inches from me.

Although every bit of my being wanted to scream and run away, I mustered a modicum of foresight before acting. It occurred to me that the seven elementary school girls in the house probably wouldn't respond so well to having a mouse in the house. I can only imagine the chaos of bedtime if they thought a mouse might find them in the night.

As I'm often called to do in my line of work, I decided to stay strong for the children. I kept my mouth shut, and I snuck away to make a call to maintenance. I was assured they would bring a couple traps over and we'd see if we could catch the pest.

The next order of business was to go put some shoes on, and I fully intended to leave them on until that mouse was gone. Somehow I managed to go about the morning routine as usual, and I got the kids ready to go without incident.

When I walked back into the house, I realized maintenance had come while we were walking to school. I was impressed by their haste, but I was less than thrilled that they had simply dropped off the traps for me to set on my own.

I told myself it was just part of growing up, and this was a problem I simply had to solve. Notice my use of the present continuous tense in "growing up." I don't exactly feel like a grown-up yet,

so I did what any kid would do before preceding: I called my dad.

I'm not sure what I expected from the phone call. He certainly couldn't do the job for me. But I figure at least he knew the imminent peril I was facing, and I had a chance to tell my parents I love them in case something tragic were to happen while I was setting the trap.

Eventually I did get the traps baited with peanut butter and set out to trick the little rodent. I suppose I figured the hungry mouse would instantly fall prey to my evil scheme, and I was more than a little upset that he was still on the loose by the time school was out that afternoon.

Granted, I was even more upset when I checked the traps before bed and saw that he had eaten the peanut butter without getting snapped. That made it personal. With renewed courage, I reset the traps and said a little prayer that the little bugger would be caught by morning.

I'm thinking God must have a good sense of humor, because I did not catch the mouse. No, instead I caught a crumpled piece of homework one of the kids threw. The next day I caught a big piece of lint that, for a moment, had me convinced that I had been victorious over my opponent.

One morning I heard a high-pitched squeal that I was sure must be the sound of a dying mouse. Nope, it was just one of the kids being weird. I set and reset the traps, certain that the mouse must be roughly the size of a cat after eating so much peanut butter.

Packing my bags to visit Holyoke for a few days, I internally debated whether I should leave the traps set while I was gone. I decided that I would rather come back to a stinky house than risk finding a living mouse in my bed, shower or laundry basket.

Upon returning from my Thanksgiving vacation, I found that I had finally defeated my foe. My celebration was short-lived because I soon realized I had to dispose of the body, but I took comfort in the fact that he hadn't actually grown to the size of a cat.

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