



# The Bumbling Painter

By frogprince

Published on Stories Space on 07 Dec 2013

**Copyright 2012, 2013 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 by Cal Erickson, aka frogprince<br/><br/>Posted with permission at [storiesspace.com](http://storiesspace.com)<br/><br/>All other rights reserved.**

The handyman strikes again.

<https://www.storiesspace.com/stories/memoirs/the-bumbling-painter.aspx>

I performed many different odd jobs when I was a teen and into my early twenties. I mowed lawns at five different homes including my own. Several people also asked me to paint and redo their kitchens and bathrooms. The result of all this painting helped me become a home handyman when I got married. The first apartment we moved into needed a lot of refurbishing. Rooms needed stripping of wallpaper. Windows needed re-glazing and painting. I performed all this work for lower rental payments. It worked out well for everyone. Our second apartment was in far better shape and did not need fixing up. We had our first child before we left our first apartment. In the second, we set up one room as the nursery. It was a light and airy room to start with and remained that way. As the baby

grew and learned to walk, our bathroom became the target of many baths and the walls needed painting. It was an old house with a very interesting bathroom. Small mosaic tile covered the entire floor. The walls were ceramic tile for four feet up, the rest painted plaster. I got permission from the owner to paint the plaster to make the room brighter and better. The room had a shower in one corner big enough for two adults. Across from that was a giant tub. On the same wall as the tub were a pedestal sink and a small medicine cabinet. The toilet was next to that. The wide long room was very open and easy to paint. One day, my wife took our daughter to visit her grandparents for the afternoon and evening. I stayed home waiting for a call from my work. After the call, I decided to paint the bathroom. Having painted a lot, I moved things to the center of the room. I did not need to remove them or use drop cloths. I got my ladder, my brushes, the paint and a bucket. I chose to paint the room bright yellow. It was good color and easily coated the existing color in one coat. The painting proceeded quickly and worked out well. I was about six feet from finishing. The remaining area was a simple with no borders or moldings. It was a something I could paint with one hand. As I moved the ladder down the floor, it caught on some dirty clothes waiting for washing the next day. As luck would have it, the ladder tipped and the paint bucket fell, spilling bright yellow paint on the floor and a pair of bright red Oshkosh B' Gosh coveralls, which were my daughter's favorite. I stood there looking at the mess and felt my heart sink to my feet. What was I to do? I grabbed some paper towels and a couple of paint rags and cleaned the floor. That was easy, I thought. Now I panicked. What would I do with the coveralls? The paint was water based and cleaned up easily, but I never had to get it out of clothes much less children's clothes. I thought I might just throw them in the washer and dryer. That would not work because the paint would linger in the machine and stain other clothes later. I looked around, saw the tub and thought I could wash them there. I was getting ready to fill the tub and saw that it would stain the tub. What was I to do? I finished painting the wall. I moved everything back where it belonged. As I cleaned up, I got an idea. I could wash the coveralls in the shower. The running water would carry the paint down the drain and leave no stains behind. I got a towel, stripped out of my clothes, turned the shower on and stepped into the stream of water. I picked up the coveralls, wet them thoroughly and rubbed my shower soap on them. The yellow paint slowly came off them and washed down my legs into the drain. It took about fifteen minutes to wash them clean and I came clean too. I turned off the water, wrung out the coveralls as best as I could and dried myself. I put on clean clothes, took the coveralls, examined them and wrung them out some more. They were not dry, but that was all right. I took the coveralls out to the laundry room and put them in the drier. In thirty minutes, they dried with no sign of yellow paint. I put them in our daughter's room. To this day, no one knew what happened that afternoon with the bumbling painter.