

## Operation: Ball Retrieval

by

Chase March

Kevin was the best goalie ever. No shot could get by him. He was quick and agile. He could fly through the air to catch or knock down the high shots. He could dive like an eagle, swooping to catch his prey for the shots that went for the lower corners of the net. He was a wall. Nothing could get by him.

Suddenly the ball went flying over his head. Kevin leaped into the air and stretched out his hands as far as he could.

“Too high!” he argued, “That doesn’t count.”

He then saw the look on his brother’s face. It was a look of horror.

Kevin turned around and saw their only soccer ball lying in the middle of their neighbour’s yard. The ball was only about four meters away but for the two brothers that distance seemed insurmountable.

“Why didn’t you aim lower?” screamed Kevin.

“I didn’t mean to get it over the fence,” argued Danny.

“Well we gotta get it back,” said Kevin. He then ran to go get his hockey stick. He reached it over the chain link fence.

“Don’t let him see you,” said Danny. “He’ll yell at us again.”

“I know, I know,” he said.

Kevin stretched his arm as far as he could, fishing for his soccer ball with a hockey stick. The stick just wasn’t long enough.

“I know,” said Danny “tie my stick to yours. That should reach.”

Danny quickly got his hockey stick and some yarn that was lying around. They worked together to tie the two sticks together. Danny then took a turn at fishing for their ball. He slowly extended the sticks and was able to actually hit the ball so that it rolled a little closer to the fence.

“Good job,” yelled Kevin. “Do it again.”

As Danny tried his best to retrieve the ball, neither boy noticed the yarn. They were too focused on the ball. The yarn had been in the backyard for some time. It was old and had been rained on more than once. It probably wasn't the best thing for the kids to use to attach the sticks together.

The old and almost worn-out yarn was no match for the metal fence or the rose bush on the other side. A little bit of friction was all it took to wear it through.

Danny was helpless. All he could do was watch his hockey stick fall into enemy territory.

“At least it wasn't my stick,” teased Kevin.

“Hey,” yelled Danny. “I need it back.”

“Let me think,” said Kevin.

“Come on, no more plans,” said Danny. “Let's just go around on knock on his door and ask for our stuff back.”

“We can't,” said Kevin. “Mom says we have to stay in the backyard. We can't walk around to the next street by ourselves. He always yells at us anyway. This time, he's gonna think we were just throwing stuff in his yard. How do we explain that?”

Danny didn't have an answer. He also knew that they were supposed to give their mom some “me time,” that's what she'd called it anyway.

Kevin took a big deep breath. “Cover me,” he said.

“What?” said Danny. “How?”

Kevin quickly ran and jumped the fence. He didn't want to be in enemy territory any longer than he needed to. It made sense to go after the ball first since it was furthest away. As he ran towards the angry man's house, he was a bit afraid that the man would come out right that very second. Kevin reached the ball turned around and threw it back over the fence.

So far so good, thought Kevin. He could see his yard now and hoped that he'd make it back all right. He picked up Danny's hockey stick and threw it over the fence as well.

He then noticed the rose bushes. It had been easy to jump over them by climbing up the fence. He tried to see if there was any way to squeeze by them without getting stuck by the thorns.

"Come on," said Danny.

"These bushes are thick over here," said Kevin. He remembered the time last year when he accidentally fallen into a rose bush. He'd gotten a few thorns stuck in his side and it had hurt. He didn't want to repeat that experience but he also didn't want to get caught by his mean neighbour.

Kevin then had the bright idea to jump over the fence into the next backyard. They didn't have rose bushes there so he could jump back to his side with ease.

"Where ya going?" yelled Danny.

Just then, the mean neighbour slid open his patio door and looked towards Danny. He didn't seem to notice Kevin in the yard right beside him.

Danny kicked the soccer ball into the fence a few times. "Open net! Open net! I'm winning." He tried to take a third shot but by that time, Kevin had reemerged safely.

Kevin dove in front of the fence that the boys always used as a soccer net and swatted the ball away. "Good distraction," said Kevin.

"What distraction?" said Danny. "I'm winning now."

“Not for long,” said Kevin. Danny might be able to score on an open net but he wouldn’t be able to get passed the wall of Kevin. Kevin was the best goalie ever. He could stop everything and if by some weird chance that a shot did get by him, he also happened to be the best ball retrieval expert as well.

THE END