

Pipe Cleaners



Leslie taught arts and crafts at Dinklaker Middle School in Beanoboro. She had a talent for being able to make something out of the proverbial nothing. She had turned discarded shrimp shells into potpourri, built tree houses out of newspaper adverts and Mason jar lids, created scintillating sculptures out of hypodermic needles she found in the girls' locker room, and constructed water bottle cozies out of a mixture of lint and matted dog hair (which regrettably were unexpectedly flammable). Once she told her class they were going to create a small army of reanimated human beings and she needed a hundred sturdy pipe cleaners. The kids dutifully brought in an assortment of colorful pipe cleaners made out of wire and nylon pile. And that was the first time they'd ever seen her mad. "No no, I wanted *real* pipe cleaners!" she shrieked as she reached under her desk and pulled out a short, swarthy, and obviously terrified man, "like Nguyen here!" The poor man had good reason to be frightened, based on what Leslie did next!