

## Bonnie

"I can't find them anywhere. I had them just ten minutes ago!"

Bonnie had lost her keys again. Bonnie was always losing her keys.

At the moment she was on her knees with her head stuck into the cabinets under the sink in the staffroom.

"Uh, Bonnie ... I don't think ..."

"This makes me so mad! No, they're not in here. Wait a minute ... maybe they're in the drawer in my desk. Let's go look there!"

If in fact Bonnie's keys were in her desk drawer, there was no hope of finding them. I'd seen the inside of that drawer once. I still had nightmares.

She stood up and wiped her hands on her pants. "What do you think?"

"Um, Bonnie ..." I pointed to her neck.

She looked down and saw her keys hanging there. "Well, isn't that silly. I'm really getting absent-minded these days!"

I'd noticed that. I pointed it out to her.

"Bonnie, you're really getting absent-minded these days!"

I wasn't going to beat around the bush.

"Yes, well ... I think it's because I'm missing Brooke!"

"What do you mean, missing Brooke? She hasn't even left yet. In fact, she's in your office down the hall helping you clean!"

"I know." She looked sad. "I just meant that I know I'm going to be missing Brooke. When she leaves."

"Does she know you're planning on turning her bedroom into a workout room?"

"No. And don't you tell her either. It's going to be a surprise!"

That left me mystified. And I don't mystify easily. I teach Junior High.

"A surprise? For who?? And where's she going to sleep when she comes home on weekends ... on the treadmill?"

“Well, I suppose I could put a cot in there ...”

Clearly Bonnie hadn't thought this through. But I'd leave her to sort that out. I wanted to ask her something.

“Bonnie, I just want to make sure that you're OK with being the Grad supervisor this year. I was a little surprised when you volunteered.”

She looked at me strangely. “Of course I'm OK with it. How hard can it be? You did it last year, didn't you?”

I wasn't sure how to take that. So I ignored it.

“It's just that, well, you know ... there can be a lot of arguments ...”

“Arguments?”

“Yeah. Not fistfights or anything ... although I remember last year Carson and Michelle nearly ...”

“What??”

“I'm just kidding, Bonnie. It will be fine.” She didn't have much of a sense of humour these days, what with Brooke leaving and all.

“How are your other girls feeling about Brooke moving out?”

“Oh, they're quite relieved about it, actually.”

“Relieved??”

“Yeah. Now they won't be forced to watch all those Justin Bieber specials on TV all the time ...”

Okayyy ...

“Oh, say, Bill, did I tell you about the new Skills grant I got us?”

Bonnie had been instrumental in bringing a welding program to our school, as well as various other skills-related courses.

“No, you didn't. What is it this time?”

“Aircraft mechanics. I got a grant for a cement pad out behind the school, and I found a complete set of aircraft maintenance tools on sale that we can afford. Isn’t that wonderful?”

I pictured people bringing in their ultra-light aircraft for servicing. It could work.

“That’s great, Bonnie. Ultra-lights probably won’t need specialized tools, I would think.”

“Ultra-lights? Who said anything about ultra-lights? I’m talking a complete 747 toolkit here!”

“Uh ... 747 as in ... jumbo jet??”

“Sure. We have to think big! Besides, I’m pretty sure they just have to drop off the engines, not the whole plane. Would a 747 engine fit in the back of my pickup, do you think?”

I was trying to picture that when Bonnie changed topics. She does that a lot too.

“I’ve been thinking ... I’m going to have a lot of free time when Brooke is gone. She was sort of a ‘high maintenance’ daughter, if you know what I mean.”

I did know what she meant. I had one of those.

I jumped in. “Bonnie, you need a hobby!”

“Well, fixing the school computers is sort of a hobby. I love doing that! I even stay after school a lot to do it.”

“That can’t be your hobby! That’s your job!”

“Well, can’t my job also be my hobby?” She thought for a moment, and then wrinkled her nose in confusion. “But what I’m wondering is, if I do a lot of computer fixing as my hobby, so that the amount of fixing I do on the job is actually less than the amount I do as my hobby, does that make my job my hobby, or is my hobby still my job?”

I couldn’t unscramble that one. She’d have to ask Val. Val was good at unscrambling twisted logic. She’s worked for five different principals.

“I’m not really sure, Bonnie. But that’s not what I meant by a hobby. I meant something totally relaxing, that will take your mind completely off school. Do you do anything like that now?”

“Well ...” She had to think for a moment. “I really like to relax in the bathtub for several hours in the evening, just all spread out, with bubbles up to my ...”

I suddenly remembered some photocopying I had to do, so I left her to her musings.