

Bonnie Saves the Day

We were sitting around in the office one Monday afternoon after all the kids had left. We had a box of donuts which we'd carefully guarded all day ... although our student teacher wasn't around, so that probably hadn't been necessary.

Darren said to Bonnie "Bonnie, you've been looking pretty pleased with yourself all day. How come? Did you get that grant for the portable sawmill that you applied for?"

"No, not yet. But I'm hopeful. I've already arranged for several logging trucks to donate their loads to the school. They'll be dropping the trees off any day now ..."

Darren knew better than to get mixed up in anything like that. "So, what ...?"

"I did something this weekend that I'm really proud of." Bonnie was indeed looking pleased. She hadn't looked this happy since she'd learned that Paige had decided not to get the barbed wire tattoo on her upper lip.

"OK, so why?" Darren wasn't going to let it go.

"Well, you know that rabbit that we got for Jessie a few weeks ago, right?"

"You mean the one that she named 'Pythagorus'? The one that's always chewing people's socks?"

"Yeah, that's the one. And I can never pronounce his name. I just call him 'Pyth'"

I had a sudden image of Bonnie yelling at her daughter. 'Jessie, don't let Pyth get on the carpet ...' But I let it go.

"Jessie really loves that rabbit. She keeps him in a cage in her room. She even made a Facebook page for him!"

"You're kidding!"

"Nope. And Pythagorus already has four hundred and sixty five friends!"

I was thinking about the fifty seven that I had.

"But I think that's a little inaccurate. Apparently most of them are Math teachers who signed up by mistake ..."

Bonnie continued. "Pyth likes to eat just about anything. Yesterday he was eating a part of my peanut butter sandwich ..."

"You feed your rabbit peanut butter sandwiches?" That was Mindy.

“Well, just that once. And, as it turns out, never again.”

“Why? What happened?”

“Well, I think the peanut butter got stuck in his little throat. He gagged a lot, and then his nose started to turn blue ...”

“That can’t be good!”

“Yeah. Pyth wasn’t breathing. Nobody knew what to do ...”

“Did he ... die?” No, that couldn’t have happened. Bonnie was looking too happy.

“No, he didn’t. I used my first aid training. I tried to give him CPR, but ... that didn’t work.”

“Why not?”

“Are you kidding? I wasn’t going to put my mouth on a rabbit’s mouth! Ewww!”

Darren couldn’t help himself. He was busting. Finally he let it out. “So ... in other words ... you didn’t want Pyth in your mouth ...”

Bonnie just glared at him. But she kept going.

“So I tried the Heimlich maneuver.”

“You did the Heimlich maneuver on a rabbit?” I couldn’t picture that. “Did it work?”

“Oh yeah! That old piece of bread and peanut butter just popped right out! And Pyth started breathing again right away!”

“Bonnie ... that’s amazing!”

“Yeah, I thought so. But he was a little frightened. Afterward Pyth ... uh... peed on my arm. But he does that a lot. I think he has a weak bladder.”

“Well, you should be proud of yourself.” That was Darren. We noticed that he was eating a donut. He took a big bite while Bonnie continued.

“So now we’re pretty careful what we feed him. He does really like tuna salad, though, and we mix a little broccoli in with his ice cream ...”

Darren snorted. We think he was going to laugh. But the piece of donut he had been chewing on must have gotten lodged somewhere.

We only noticed when he started to wave his arms around. That wouldn't have meant much ... he does that a lot ... but we also noticed that his nose ... no, wait a minute, his lips ... were starting to turn blue.

It was Bonnie who responded first. "Darren, are you choking?" She wasn't flustered at all. She was very calm and businesslike. "Raise one finger if you're choking. Raise two fingers if you're OK and just need to take a breath. Raise three fingers if you're ..."

"Bonnie, I think it's number one ..."

"What? You mean he has to go to the bathroom? Why doesn't he ..."

But Darren's hands went to his throat, and we immediately knew that he was indeed choking. Maybe he just needed a drink.

But Bonnie went to work. She grabbed Darren under the arms and hauled him to his feet. She grasped him around his midsection and pulled up sharply. Darren grunted.

I don't know if you've ever seen the Heimlich maneuver done on anyone, but it's very effective, and very dramatic. If it's done correctly, the foreign object lodged in the throat will be expelled forcefully.

Bonnie did it correctly. The large piece of donut popped out of his mouth and across the room, where it stuck to the wall. Mindy ducked just in time. She still has fast reflexes, considering how old she is.

Darren took a deep breath. "Bonnie ..." He coughed. "Bonnie, thanks. I was having trouble breathing there for a minute ..."

"I'll say! I haven't seen you that panicked since Kate threatened to tell everyone what your nickname was in high school ..."

Darren grimaced. But he continued. "I don't think I would have choked. I just needed a drink of water and couldn't find one. But you did good, Bonnie. Thanks."

Bonnie was smiling. "Does that mean I can order ..."

"No."