

Just One More Bonnie Story

“You want me to teach *what??*”

“Now, Bonnie ... calm down! It’s a CTS course, right? How hard can it be?”

I was talking to Bonnie about some of the courses we’d be offering this year. She had one of the new ones. And she wasn’t thrilled about it.

“But *fashion design??* That means I’ll have to learn to sew, right?”

“Well, probably ...”

“I’ve never sewn much at all. I’m no good at it. Besides, every time I learn something new, it pushes some old stuff out of my brain. Remember when I took that home winemaking course, and I forgot how to drive?”

“Bonnie, you’re exaggerating.” I hoped she was.

“Besides, the students who will be taking the course already know how to sew. All you’ll have to do is help them with their designs.”

“I don’t know, Bill. That’s asking a lot. I’m not even a teacher.” I saw a sly smile appear on her face. “What do I get out of it?”

“Well ...”

“I want my office redone. I get to pick the colours and the furniture!”

“Furniture? Uh, I don’t know ...”

“How badly do you want this new course?”

I didn’t have much choice. “All right. But Darren will have to approve ...”

“Don’t worry about the money. I’ll find a grant that will cover it!”

I didn’t doubt that.

A week later, after school was over on a Friday afternoon, I noticed that Bonnie, Paige and Jessie were busy removing all the shelves and supplies from Bonnie’s office. The equipment shelves were already pushed against the wall.

“So you were serious ...”

“Of course I was.” Bonnie stopped to mop the sweat off her forehead. “Once we get all this stuff out of here, we’re going to paint. The wall-to-wall carpeting arrives on Monday. Then the couch, and the loungers ...”

“What??”

“You *did* say I could redecorate ...”

“Yes, but ...”

“By the way, my Fashion Design class is going really well. You should see the cute little black dress that Rylan is making ...”

“Rylan is making a dress?”

“Well, I assume it’s not for him. At least, I hope not. And I’ve been designing some clothes too. I’m making a whole new wardrobe for Paige.”

“How does Paige feel about that?”

“She’s OK with it. She likes leather.”

I didn’t pursue that. Leather? “OK, have fun redecorating.”

Late the next week I found a few spare moments and looked in on Bonnie in her office. At first I couldn’t find her. It was dark in there.

The recessed lighting cast a faint blue glow over everything. Red, white and green indicator lights on the network servers blinked behind smoked glass windows that fronted on large wooden cabinets.

The grey plush carpeting reduced ambient noise to a whisper. It complemented the peach coloured walls very nicely. Several paintings hung in prominent spots around the room. And there was a chandelier.

The furniture was stunning. A black leather love seat was nestled in a corner, flanked by two black leather reclining chairs. The other corner held a small refrigerator.

Val was fast asleep on one of the recliners.

“Bonnie ...”

“You’re at a loss for words, aren’t you! Isn’t it great? Jessie did all the painting, and Paige and I set up everything else.”

“Why is Val ...”

“Don’t wake her up. She’s had a hard week. All those new teachers have been driving her bananas.”

“Uh ... OK ...”

“And just so you know, she wants her office redone too.”

“That’s ...” I went to sit down on the love seat.

“Wait. Don’t sit down. Are your pants clean?” She handed me a lint roller. “Here ... make sure there’s no dirt. And take off your shoes, OK?”

I did as she asked, grudgingly. It was her office. “What’s in the fridge?”

“Are you asking as a friend, or as an administrator?”

“Uh ... as an administrator?”

“OK, in that case, there’s just a case of Pepsi. And my lunch.”

“... and if I’d asked ... as a friend??”

“A six pack of Bud Light and a bottle of Tequila.”

“What???”

“Relax. I’m just storing it in there until I can take it home tonight. No-one will see it!”

I took several deep breaths. “Bonnie ...”

“Besides, it’s a birthday present for my great uncle. He’s ninety-five and likes a little drink once in a while.”

I must have looked a little doubtful.

“You didn’t buy that, did you?”

“Not really.”

“OK, the truth is, those stories you’ve been writing about me have made me so nervous, I’ve taken up drinking!”

I didn’t buy that either. But I assured her that this would be the last one.

“OK, you can sit down now. I want to talk to you about my fashion design course anyway.”

“Uh ... OK.”

“The kids will be wearing their creations to school tomorrow. Is that all right?”

“Of course, Bonnie. We’ve been looking forward to it. Listen, about your office ... can I come in here sometime when I’m tired and ...”

“Have a nap? Sure you can! Darren’s been doing that all week.” She gave me a serious look. “But, Bill ...”

“Yes, Bonnie?”

“Take your shoes off first, OK?”

The next morning we were all waiting anxiously to see what Bonnie and her class had created. We weren’t disappointed.

Most of the girls had made dresses, and some of the designs were really well done. I was impressed.

Rylan’s little black dress looked pretty good too. So did Danny’s silver jumpsuit with red flashes on the arms.

But it was Bonnie’s creation that wowed everyone. Paige was dressed all in black leather, including knee-high high-heeled leather boots and a very short leather dress. The top was several pieces of leather held together by black leather laces. Everything seemed tight ... very tight. It really did look good.

Jessie was standing behind her, helping to keep her upright on her high heels.

“Bonnie, did you make that? You did a really good job! And the purple lipstick was a nice touch.”

“Paige isn’t wearing lipstick.” We all looked at Paige again. A crowd was starting to form in the hallway.

Paige’s face was faintly purple. She looked like she was holding her breath.

“Uh ...Bonnie ...”

“Oh oh!. It rained this morning, and everything got wet. I think the leather is starting to shrink a little.”

We all heard the snap as several of the laces broke. Paige was definitely turning purple. It looked like she was being squeezed out both ends.

“You’d better ...”

Paige fell over. She landed on Jessie. Leather laces were snapping everywhere. Paige was gasping for breath. Jessie was gasping for breath because Paige was sitting on her.

Bonnie rushed Paige off to help her change. She came back holding the outfit in one hand.

“She wasn’t really going to wear that again, was she?” I asked.

“Of course not. It was going to be a Hallowe’en costume.”

“It was pretty impressive, Bonnie. Really. Maybe you’d like to make something for me!”

“In leather?”

I told her I’d have to think about that.