

More Adventures with Bonnie

Bonnie found me hiding in the woodworking room.

“Bill! There you are! Were you hiding from me?”

“Of course not, Bonnie. I was just ... er ... checking the length of these screwdrivers ...”

“You were hiding, weren’t you! Who from?”

There was no putting anything over on Bonnie. Well, not usually.

“Yeah, I was. From Darren.”

“What? He’s the Principal! You can’t hide from the Principal!”

I didn’t say that I’d managed to do a pretty good job of it the previous year.

“Well, it’s because he’s always coming up with new ideas that he wants me to implement ...”

“Isn’t that a good thing?” Bonnie was always optimistic.

“Maybe. But his latest idea is that we should implant chips in the arms of all of our Jr. High students so we can track them electronically. You know, like, ‘Aha! There’s so-and-so, out smoking behind the school again!’”

“Sounds like a good idea to me! I wish we’d had that when Brooke ...”

“There’s a problem.”

“Oh?”

“The parent permission forms are one hundred and seventeen pages long ...”

“Oh.”

“So what is it you wanted to ask me, now that you’ve found me?” I didn’t mention that Darren wanted to put one in my arm too.

“Well, I had this great idea ...”

“Oh oh!”

“Now don’t start! You know it wasn’t my fault that the CTS Farm Management course I got going in September flopped!”

“The chickens all died!”

“How was I to know they couldn’t survive a week of thirty below!”

I didn’t want to pursue that. “So what’s your great idea?”

“Well, you know how you and Val are sort of sharing an office?”

We weren’t. It was her office. The Principal last year had made me put a sign on the door that read ‘Assistant Principal’. Apparently we were the only school in the Division that had an Office Manager with an actual office.

I thought it was only fair. We were the only school who had Val.

Anyway, the sign had mysteriously disappeared at the start of the year.

“Yeah? So what’s the problem?” I only used the office to talk on the phone.

“Well, I was thinking about that wasted space above the A/V room on the stage. There’s space for a couple of offices up there. All we’d need is a divider and some lights ...”

I was trying to picture how we’d drag a couple of desks up that ladder.

“Think how much fun it would be for you to climb a ladder to get to your office. And look at all the weight you’d lose!”

I didn’t want to look. “So, what would we use the other office up there for?”

“I thought it would be handy to have a spare office. You know, for people who need to use one occasionally. Like Dallas.”

Dallas had never forgiven me for demolishing his office space last year to make a woodworking room. He was currently camped out in the back room of the library. Nobody could ever find him.

“That might work.” I was actually considering it.

“And when Melanie comes back, she’d have a place to work, instead of having to use those tiny little chairs in the Resource Room.”

“Uh, Bonnie ... I don’t think Melanie will be back ...”

“What? Why not?”

“After last year, I think she’ll probably prefer to do her practice teaching somewhere where there’s a little more ... sanity. Besides, after that lesson I planned for her with the jelly beans ...” I’d learned that under no circumstances should you ever teach a lesson to grade one students that involved jelly beans.

“Oh, she’ll get over it. Besides, she owes you for that nice evaluation you gave her.”

“But it wasn’t official. And I didn’t ‘give’ it to her ... she earned it. But never mind that. What’s the *real* reason you want to put some work spaces up there?”

“Well, I figured it would be a good place for Paige to work ... fewer distractions, fewer interruptions ...”

“Fewer boys”

“There is that, yes.”

“OK, Bonnie, I’ll think about it. By the way, I like your hair today.”

It looked sort of like ... braided dreads ... with bangs. Bonnie’s hair was never the same on any given day of the week.

“Thanks. I’d say the same about yours, only ...”

“I know. I don’t have any. Was there anything else?”

“Yeah. I have this new grant ...”

Bonnie was always finding grants so we could buy things. It wasn’t always for things we *needed*, necessarily, but the extra money was nice.

We were still trying to spend the ten thousand dollar grant she’d found us last year for installing pay toilets in all the washrooms. Those suckers were expensive. And we’d discovered that students didn’t want to pay when they had to pee. And the teachers weren’t too pleased either ... they were always running out of coins at inopportune moments.

“What’s the grant for this time?”

“Well, see, that’s the thing. It’s for five thousand dollars. And we can use it for anything we want.”

“What? That’s incredible! Bonnie, you’re a genius!”

“Well ...”

“There’s a problem, isn’t there.”

“Yeah. We have to spend it all by the deadline.”

“Which is ...”

“Yesterday.”

“What??” I say that a lot when I’m talking to Bonnie.

“It’s not my fault. I only applied last week. I thought it went through pretty fast, considering.”

“So we’re approved for a five thousand dollar grant that we have until yesterday to spend.”

“That’s about it, yeah.”

“This wouldn’t happen to be a PRSD grant, would it?”

“How did you know?”

I went to look for a better place to hide.