

The Chorus Line

... yet another Bonnie and Darren short story. You'd think I'd know better.

It had been a slow month. May is like that. We'd all decided that we needed to do something fun, as a whole school. Jackie suggested a talent show.

We all thought that was a pretty cool idea. We have a lot of talented kids in our school. It would be fun to let them perform in front of an audience.

Our enthusiasm was dampened somewhat when several teachers decided that it would be only fitting and proper if the staff also performed. On stage.

"I know we can do it! We have talent. Let's show it!" Not all of us were as keen as Jackie was, but she was relentless. I should mention that she was a drama major in college. We all should be so lucky.

Grudgingly, we agreed to perform. We'd do a song and dance number. The kids would love it.

I use the word 'we' very loosely here. There was no way I was going anywhere near the stage. I can't sing a note, and as for dancing, well ... forget about it.

Kathleen agreed to look after the singing rehearsals. In order to keep myself safe from actually having to perform, I volunteered to help with the choreography. Somebody had to do it.

The staff who would be performing practiced the song several times before we eventually met on the stage after school to decide on the dancing. I had a plan.

"Look, let's keep it simple, OK? You'll form a line, wave your arms around a little, and do a few kicks. Simple, right?" It sounded simple to me.

On stage were Darren, Mindy, Kate, Bonnie and Adrien. None of them looked too happy to be there. In fact, Darren looked downright miserable. And Jackie was nowhere to be seen.

"What will we be wearing? Nobody told us that." Bonnie looked concerned.

"Uhh ... I don't know. Ask Jackie. Where is she, anyway?"

Nobody knew where Jackie was. So we deferred the issue of what people would be wearing until next time.

"I'm not wearing a dress. Just so you know that!" Bonnie again.

"I'm not either!" Darren was still embarrassed about the wedding dress he'd worn on Hallowe'en. Especially after the picture had somehow shown up in the school newsletter.

"OK, let's line up and practice your moves. Adrien, stop slouching!"

I walked up onto the stage and looked over the group. I wanted them in a line, and I figured that if they could synchronize their movements ... but, no ... that was probably asking too much.

I was in front of Mindy. She seemed pretty enthusiastic. *"OK, stand up straight. Stick your chest out. Look confident ..."*

"What's wrong with my chest??"

"Uhh ... nothing, Mindy. Your chest is ... just fine ..."

I realized I was looking at her chest. I quickly moved on to Darren.

"All right, watch the person next to you. Start with your arms at your sides. Let's hear the song."

Dawn was back in the sound room, and she cued the music. Nothing happened.

"I don't know what to do here ..." It wasn't Dawn's fault. Bonnie was the only person who seemed to be able to get the sound equipment to work properly. She rushed back in to help.

"I'm not sure I'm ready for this. Maybe if I just watched ..." Back on stage, Adrien was apparently having second thoughts.

Kate turned to him. *"Listen, turkey, if I have to do this, there's no way you're getting out of it! Lose the attitude!"*

Kate doesn't mince words. And apparently she'd picked up a thing or two from Melanie.

I suspected we could have probably used Melanie about now ... at least she could sing. She could probably wave her arms around pretty well too. I couldn't remember if I'd ever told her to stand up straight, look confident, and stick her chest out. I fervently hoped not.

Darren, in fact, was waving his arms around right now.

"Darren, what is it? We haven't started yet."

"I need to use the washroom. Can I ..."

"Oh, all right, But be fast!"

In fact, Darren never returned. He claimed later that he'd had a phone call from a parent. We think he was hiding in the staff room.

"I can't get this to work" Dawn yelled from the sound room. *"Bonnie will have to do it."*

"Well, OK. Dawn, can you ..."

"Me, sing and dance?? Don't even think about it!" She disappeared too.

That left Adrien, Kate and Mindy to do the singing and dancing. But like rats deserting a sinking ship, Adrien was the next to leave. *"I just remembered that I have to let my cat out. If he doesn't get out, he might have an accident on the rug."* He left in a hurry.

"Wait a minute ... does Adrien even have a cat?" I was suspicious.

"Yes, he does. And Adrien will probably need some help getting her back inside ... I'd better go give him a hand." I suspected that Kate was making that up, but I wasn't brave enough to say anything to her as she hustled down the stairs.

That left Mindy. She was still looking pretty enthusiastic.

"I hope you're not going to make any more jokes about my chest!"

"I didn't ..."

"Anyway, I can't sing and dance up here all by myself, can I?" To give her credit, I think she really was disappointed. *"I guess I'll leave too."* She danced off the stage.

So that left just me. Bonnie stuck her head out of the sound room. *"OK, the music's all ready. Tell me when to ... oh!"*

She'd noticed that our chorus line had vanished.

"Bill, are you going to ..."

"Me?" I laughed. *"No, I'm not. And apparently nobody else is either."* She started down the stairs. *"Unless you'd like to do a dance number with me ..."*

I could hear her laughter echoing all the way down the hallway.