
Lijjett/English 1001

KEY CLUB PRESIDENT

"We'll take nominations for president now."
"Brent Kelly!"
"Ellis Moore!"
"David Carter!"
"Okay, there's the candidates, now only vote for one."

I can't believe I might be president. Only two years ago I came to Sandusky High, as scared as could be. I really wanted to be involved in a club, so I went to a Key Club meeting. All the members were popular and they made real good grades. I made pretty good grades but for some reason I felt inferior to them. Before the meeting even started I got up and left without being seen. I realized later that I was stupid for not staying. Well, the next year rolled around and people were joining clubs. I thought I might try again having somewhat overcome my lack of self-confidence.

Such to my surprise in no time I was in the club and becoming very active. I was elected secretary that year. Now a year later here I am again awaiting the results of the voting.

"The votes are totaled. Our new president is Ellis Moore."

Well, I really couldn't believe it. I made it! I was really lucky to be president that year because we had a real good membership. The seniors were especially active and willing to work. Our club was a very active one, with each member taking part in all our projects. We gained the respect of the school and community. The club was asked to take part in almost all school events such as Homecoming and dances. We were invited to local Kiwanis and Rotary Club meetings. Some of our officers were guest at a banquet for former governor Edwin Edwards.

One of our major service projects was that we took two boys from Boy's Village shopping at Christmas. An area clothing store stayed open after hours to allow them to search for all they needed throughout the store. Our second major project was a blood drive. The local office of the Louisiana Blood Center spent eight hours accepting donations of a pint of blood from students, teachers, and some area citizens who wished to take part.

I am very proud to have been associated with such a fine club. I left Sandusky High with more responsibility and self-confidence than I came to it with. I guess you can get out of something what you put in it if not more.

My Ten-Year High School Reunion
by Kathy Sutton

As the mailman made his rounds through the Arkansas bedroom community, I heard his brakes squeak at each house down the street. Little did I know that today's mail would eventually change my self-image. When I recognized the clip of my mailbox door, I told my two-year-old to watch her baby sister, then I went out to get the mail. Among the bills was a letter from Bonneville High School in Ogden, Utah. I would have usually hurried to read a message from home but instead, I hesitated. An impersonal invitation requested my presence at the ten-year class reunion.

Amazed that it had indeed been that long, I thought back to when I was a junior in high school and desperately wanted to be a member of the drill team, the Lakettes. Not being one of the popular girls who were usually chosen for this glamorous status, I had to practice faithfully the routines for try-outs. One night while exercising in the living room, I suddenly became aware of cackles and hoots coming from the front yard. Sheer draperies over the picture window had not hidden my erratic performance from the neighborhood athletic heroes and the student body president, Scott Neilson. Immediately, I crashed to the carpet, wishing it would swallow me up, and slowly crawled out of the room.

"Honey, Honey!" wailed my impatient toddlers, bringing me back to reality. I hugged them both and hoped they would never become objects of rejection in their high school years.

My daughters reminded me of my best friend in high school, Roma Lee. Together we survived those turbulent years of pimples, blunders, and unpopularity. Now I missed her deeply and knew we'd have a great time at the reunion together. I wondered if my classmates had changed and felt anxious to see them again.

Ironically, my husband Leroy and I had already made plans for a vacation to Utah that summer.

My excitement turned to a feeling of desertion when I returned to Utah and learned that Roma was out of town for the summer. Regardless, my mother and husband considered this a chance for me to show my classmates that I was a successful late bloomer.

All too soon, the day of the reunion arrived. My husband and I drove to the Elks Lodge. The sultry afternoon wilted my spirits along with my hair and makeup. Pulling down the visor mirror, I saw a stern, heat-flushed face. Leroy didn't perceive the disapproval evident in my eyes. I hoped that no one would know that my dress wasn't new or that my hair was too short. As people scurried toward the door, I searched eagerly for Vicki, Patty, or Donna.

The car became an oven, forcing us into the crowd. My stomach wrenched tightly, and I wanted to run away. The timid high school girl had re-emerged inside of me. I held Leroy's hand tightly as we walked to the door.

Inside the Elks Lodge, the pungent smell of stale beer and thick cigarette smoke hung together like smog. Chattering around us were unchanged voices that brought back memories of each face. Their Utah

drawl clung to each word.

The ncisy procession of people bottlenecked on the tall lit staricase leading to the ballroom. A boisterous voice, from a few steps ahead, belonged to an old crush, Dirk Davis. He was now surprisingly quite bald. Dirk's tone quickly turned to ridicule when he noticed Louis Lucero in the ballroom proudly wearing an Air Force uniform. I knew that uniform well. Leroy wore his to work, back in Arkansas, just as proudly.

Believed that Leroy hadn't heard Dirk's remarks, I continued to search the dusty ballroom for friends. Faces seemed to fade into the dusty sunbeams sneaking through the dark curtains. No one ventured away from their high school cliques. "Where were my good friends?" I sadly thought.

Leroy left to buy drinks. He had been a well known track star who would have been the life of the party at his high school reunion in Louisiana. I had played the clarinet in the band while wanting to march with the Lakettes. Again I stood alone among the same people who I once wanted to accept me.

The program announcement boomed over the loud speaker, and I found Leroy just in time to get seats. Former homecoming queens, cheerleaders, Lakettes, and sports heroes were the ones again being honored. Nothing had changed. When the local band drowned out the chance for further conversation, Leroy and I agreed to leave.

At the door stood Scott Neilsen looking unexpectedly average. Ten years ago I had pictured him as governor by now. Despite the dim lights, I could see him clearly and firmly shock his outstretched hand.

As Leroy and I walked to the car, the mounting weight of bitterness began to lift. Once inside, I took a long look into the visor mirror. A relaxed face had replaced the stern one of before. The shy high school girl had vanished. This time I saw a woman who'd left Utah to live in five different states and raise two beautiful children, often on her own. I saw a woman able to make new friends at each new place. Finally, I could see those high school heroes for just what they were, ordinary people. It didn't matter now that they had rejected me. For the first time, I was intensely satisfied to simply be me.

"Blue Moon"

During my eighth grade year at Creekwood Middle School, just north of Houston, Texas, I enrolled in a Drama II class simply because I enjoyed the teacher and had a chance to express my talent of acting a fool without having to face the consequences of being a "disruptive student." Having moved to the Houston area only one year earlier, I was constantly on the lookout for opportunities to increase my popularity. In doing so, I had developed quite a reputation as a class clown, which sometimes proved to be quite embarrassing.

Mrs. Dumas, my drama teacher, enjoyed my enthusiasm and sense of humor. I found this to be quite refreshing since most of my other teachers seemed to despise it. I guess you could say we had some sort of understanding.

The big project for the year was a three act play called *Up The Down Staircase*. I won't go into the plot, because I really don't remember much of it. I do, however, remember the setting because that is where, shall I say, I got caught with my pants down.

The setting was an inner city, high school classroom. Along the back of the stage was a wall filled with graffiti, a fake blackboard, and several holes cut in at different levels. At various times in the play, the principal, whom I played, would stick his face through one of the holes and give the morning announcements.

One infamous afternoon, Mrs. Dumas had gone to the principal's office for one reason or another and had left us to rehearse our lines, which of course, we had no intentions of doing. Having heard the song earlier in the day, one of my classmates was singing "Blue Moon." Mark, who was a good friend and the spotlight operator, came up with the brilliant idea that I should go behind the wall on the stage and stick my bare bottom through one of the holes intended for my face. Showing someone your bare bottom was termed a "moon"--needless to say. While my backside was displayed to the rest of the class, Mark was to turn on the blue spotlight and shine it where the sun usually didn't shine--on my butt. While all this was going on, Mark would also sing a song that seemed to suit the occasion, which as you probably guessed was "Blue Moon."

The class definitely got a good laugh, and I was very proud to have caused it. Then the singing came to an abrupt halt. Wondering why my butt was no longer funny, I turned around to see what was wrong. After peeking through the hole, I wished I had not. There on stage, only twenty feet away, was good old Mrs. Dumas. She was looking directly at me with a very unhappy facial expression which gave every indication of what she thought of our interpretation of the hit song.

I sank down behind the wall and hoisted up my pants as my heart raced and visions of disciplinary measures flashed through my head. I figured I should go straight to the principal's office and bypass the embarrassment of a public tongue thrashing. On second thought, I entered stage right to accept the full consequences of my actions. Upon doing so, I saw Mrs. Dumas giggling and shaking her head in a disgusted but amused manner.

Mrs. Dumas never said much about it, though now I wish I knew what she was thinking at the time. I'm sure she knew what I was thinking, which probably added to her amusement.

That incident was probably the most embarrassing moment of my life; however, my performance got great reviews from the student body and raised my social standing considerably. Later in the year, the yearbook staff asked all the teachers their most memorable experience of the year. Mrs. Dumas's response was simply, "I have a new appreciation for the song 'Blue Moon'."

REVISION

The Friendly Con-Man

The summer of my ninth grade year, my mother's voice throbbed in my ears like an earache, "Get a job this summer. Get a job this summer." To stop her nagging, I took my first step into the cold, cruel business world. This image of the business world was a jcke to me; after all, how many backstabbers and hustlers could I meet in a summer job? As it turned out, hustlers were easy to find. No one can help being fascinated by a good hustler because he always manages to get what he wants.

I went job hunting, keeping in mind stories about how hard it is to get a job. Acting on a hint from my grandmother, I got a job at a sawmill right away, or so I thought.

The first day on the job, while waiting to speak with the owner, I noticed a black man sitting near a pile of sawdust. He looked old yet strong, like a burnt tree that refuses to die. He spoke and moved slowly. And when he did, I expected his cracked leather skin to make crunching sounds like aluminum foil. He was quiet and sullen; I had the feeling he knew something I didn't.

When the boss came toward us, the old black man gave me a sad blank look. Something was bothering him, and he wanted me to know it. Sympathizing with the old man, I even felt sorrier for him after the boss's announcement: "My small lumber business is suffering because of the depressed housing industry. Therefore, I can hire one of you full time and the other part time when large orders come in. Although both of you can work this week, Friday I will decide who works full time. The pay is five seventy-five an hour."

I couldn't believe it. Five seventy-five. I was going to be rich. I smiled, glancing at the black man, who was looking at the ground with that same sad stare. "The job is mine," I thought. Five seventy-five. Visions of dollar signs danced in my head.

The visions vanished, however, when the black man turned out to be a great worker. Although he moved more slowly than I, he was consistent, almost mechanically precise. I worked faster but would tire halfway through. Our actions reminded me of the rabbit and the turtle. I began to hate the black man for threatening my job and had all but given up hope. Although the job was obviously his, the black man continued to look sad. Despite his attempts to start conversations during breaks, I refused to respond.

When my grandmother picked me up, I was furious. I told her an old black man was going to get the job. She reassured me, "Your boss, Mr. Walsh, is good friend of mine. The job is yours."

Since I felt more relaxed, I worked much harder the next day. I didn't hate the black man any more, and I stopped trying to avoid him. During breaks I would sit by the weather-beaten old man, listening to his stories. He talked about youth, his search for work during the Depression, and people my grandmother knew who had long since died. He was a fascinating story teller.

Everyday he would talk about another ten or fifteen years of his

life. The more he talked the more I like him. His stories mesmerized me. As he spoke about his recent life he became sadder, telling how hard it was for an old man to get a job. He said how much he hated welfare checks but how he had to get them to help his grandson through school. By Thursday I really liked the old man. Where would he find another job since a part time job wasn't enough? I realized how unfair it was to have this job set up for me. Although the old man was a better worker than I, he didn't have a chance to get the job. I held all the cards.

During the first break Friday morning, the old man began to talk about my grandfather who had died when I was two. The black man told me that Mr. Walsh and my grandfather were good friends. It was then I realized that the old black man knew that my grandmother had set me up with the job. I held all the cards but one, a wild card; the old black was a playing that wild card like a champion poker player. That wild card was me. Angry at first, I realized how smart this old guy was and how much I liked him. After work, when the boss was about to make his announcement, I stepped in. "I got another job."

"What do you mean?" my boss asked.

"I have another job closer to home. I'm going to work there," I replied.

My boss turned to the black man who now didn't look so old and said, "Alright, you're in." The old black man smiled from ear to ear, the wrinkles disappearing from his face. "What a sucker play," I thought. I had been hustled by the best.