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The Mouth

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THE MOUTH

"Look, Trista, here comes Mrs. Bertoni in her Porsche," I whispered, rolling my eyes. Trista, frightened we would get caught by The Mouth again, looked at me sideways with a distressed smile. Mrs. Bertoni, our sixth-grade homeroom teacher and unappointed instructor on "how to act rich, great, and make a fool of yourself," stuck her head out the window of her red, 911 Porsche, waved, and honked her horn. "Red," I yelled, "I thought it was blue?"

Trista murmured, "It was. She got it redone, I guess. Please don't ask her about--," but Mrs. Bertoni rushed to where we stood, waiting to invade Boneventure Roller Skating rink for our safety-squad party.

Out of breath, she snorted, "Are you girls excited about this? I've been looking forward to it all week!" I thought you jogged, Superwoman? Out of hot air already? She had balanced her four-foot, eleven-inch body on ten-inch pumps and deliberately stuffed it into designer jeans and a trendy shirt.

"Like the car, girls?" she asked nonchalantly. "I just had that new cinnamon coat put on. I got tired of the blue."

Trista and I stared at her Porsche, double-parked to avoid anyone putting a dent in her "magnetic, male-mobile."

"Yeah, it looks great," we chimed like overzealous saleswomen. I leaned over to Trista and mouthed, "I'll bet someone hits her car anyway."

Mrs. Bertoni blinked her tearing eye rapidly. "Are you okay? Is your eye turning red?" I asked her.

"No, I'm fine. I think it's because these contacts are new. They're the sixth pair I've gone through in the past two months."

"Probably all that eye make-up you have on," I mumbled under my breath.

"Did you say something, sweetie?"

"Me? No, nothing," I assured her innocently, wondering how many tubes of mascara she went through every week on each eye.

She ran her daggers through her bleached, grey-blond hair, pointed them at Trista and me, and showed us the new solid gold Porsche symbol screwed into her long pinky claw.

"I thought this thing was just so cute. I had to have it. I mean a Porsche symbol for a fingernail," she explained, pronouncing the "e" in Porsche, for effect. Oh, you Italian baby, you.

When the doors finally opened, we hurried into the rink, but Mrs. Rondello continued, "Do you like my Guess jeans?"

"Your WHAT jeans?" Trista spat.

"My GUESS jeans, hon. Haven't you ever heard of them?"

"I guess we haven't," I answered, accentuating each word. Who cares what jeans a forty-seven-year-old teacher wears?

"Well, I thought you'd be terribly impressed with them," she added, disappointed. "They're the newest fad with the teenagers. I just bought my daughter, Angelina, three pairs this weekend. They're rather expensive, but you know how it is, her being in high school and all." You're not a teenager, Mrs. Bertoni. The way you look in those jeans proves it.

"I guess I DON'T know how it is," Trista muttered, walking ahead of us. I'm going to kill her for abandoning me with Mega Mouth.

"Is something wrong with Trista? She seems kind of irritated. Is she having her period?" Mrs. Bertoni intimated. God, I'll become a nun if You get me out of this, I promised. Weren't teachers supposed to get kids to stop talking?

I abandoned her at the skate rental counter. Trista and I laced up our skates as everyone passed us, joking, "Get caught by The Mouth again?" We skated around the rink a couple of times and decided to request a song. On our way off the wood floor, we caught Mrs. Bertoni flirting with two teenage guys, giggling and batting her spiked eyelashes.

"That has got to be the sickest thing I've ever seen in my life," Trista groaned.

"No way, that's the most hilarious thing I've ever seen," I laughed, running into a bench and falling on my butt.

After we requested Michael Jackson's "Pretty Young Thing," the DJ asked everyone to leave the rink for a skate race. To our horror, when he called the "thirteen and older" group, Mrs. Bertoni skated out to the floor with the teenage girls. All the sixth-graders clumped together, snickering. Do you really think you're sixteen, Mrs. Bertoni?

When the whistle blew for the two-lap race, the girls took off, vibrating the floor with each push of their wheels. Until she hit the first bend, Mrs. Bertoni surprisingly stayed with the girls. Suddenly, her legs flew out from under her, and she hit the floor with a thud. The girls trailed her and laughed as they breezed by.

When they finished the race, she slowly skated off the floor, a look of pain and embarrassment showing through her fake tan. "Well, I gave it a try," she managed.

Trista whispered, "I don't think I've ever seen her blush before. Have you?"

Knowingly, I answered, "No...but, mark my words, nothing phases The Mouth. She'll be back."

Manpreet K. Bagga