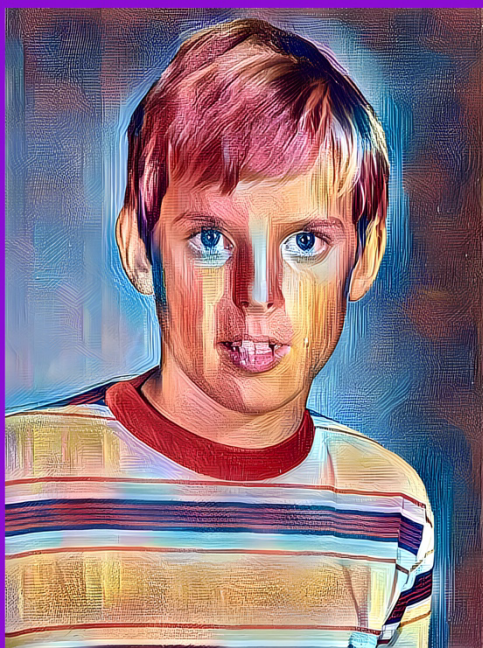


A Boy's Adventure in Junior High School



Richard Carlson

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Jennifer is beautiful—an absolute babe, fourteen-year-old Rich thought as he admired the pretty and petite girl. She probably even has pretty feet, he thought happily.

They were all on the field at Cross Junior High, waiting for the physical education teacher to arrive and teach the class archery. Archery targets were set up in the distance downhill.

Jennifer was talking to her friend, standing a short distance in front of Rich. He imagined rubbing her soft toes and soles. He wished he could see her bare feet.

For that matter, he just wished he had a girlfriend to care about. He was sensitive and very shy.

His friend Troy walked up to Rich and held his hand up to the side of his mouth so no one else would hear. He whispered, “Your penis is creeping out.”

Rich glanced at him in horror. What should he do? He plopped down

on the grass, which thankfully hid his erection. He was so embarrassed, but grateful that only Troy had noticed—not any girls.

Troy walked away to hang out with another friend.

Rich tried to calm down.

Don't think about Jennifer! Don't think about Jennifer!

He was so glad that no one else had noticed—at least, he hoped no one had noticed!

Rich shifted his thoughts to the intricacies of archery. Before long, the teacher arrived and began class. Rich

pulled his P.E. shirt out and over his skimpy P.E. shorts, to hide his erection, which, unfortunately, was still there! He couldn't help it!

Rich finally calmed down and learned archery. He grouped up with Troy and Troy's friend. He was too shy and too worried about another erection to ask Jennifer to be in his group. In the end, everything worked out, and Rich didn't have to be worried about being embarrassed. He wished he wasn't so shy and had the courage to get a girlfriend.

Think about archery steps, Rich decided to do if he got an erection again. Next time, he'll be prepared.

What Happened in Woodshop?

Richard carried his project, a wooden footstool, to a workbench in woodshop class.

He retrieved a tube of wood putty from a nearby cabinet and used a wood chisel to apply the putty on the small gaps in the wood's surface.

He should have gotten a putty knife, not a wood chisel, which is used for trimming the wood's surface. But Richard had chosen a chisel because his father had given him one to use. It was dull and not really used as a

chisel; it was great for spreading plaster in a hole in his bedroom wall, though.

Richard's vibe didn't feel right. Richard suddenly knew that something was wrong.

While he was applying putty to his footstool, the teacher, Mr. Bromley, grabbed the chisel from Richard and smeared putty on Richard's hands.

“No. No. No. No. No.”

Richard's stomach sank to the floor.

The teacher stormed away, still holding the chisel.

Richard finally realized why the teacher had made his hands such a mess. He shouldn't have used a wood chisel as a putty knife. He wiped his hands clean, got a putty knife, and finished the assignment.

Afterward, he shook his head, thinking about what had happened. I should have used a putty knife, he realized.

Richard earned a B-plus on his footstool.

Not bad, he thought to himself.
Especially since he hadn't been using
the right tool for much of it!

Griffonage

It has been over six years since I was in Mr. Johnson's class. I still recall the first day of school; I was heading toward my first class of the day, geography. I entered the classroom and sat in the back, near the door. The teacher was seated at his desk, reading. I had heard things about Mr. Johnson—things that made me nervous.

My friends had told me that he had a bad temper. Many said that he criticized everything, and nothing was

ever quite right. I'd heard that he often screamed and threw books clear across the classroom.

I soon found out that these rumors were true.

During the first half of the class, Mr. Johnson explained his expectations and rules. When he finished, he gave us a short writing assignment, due on his desk ten minutes before the end of class. He quietly read as we did our assignment. When I finished, I placed my paper in the basket on his desk.

Ten minutes before class ended, he stood up and examined the papers in the basket. As he looked through our work, he placed some papers back into the basket; others, he held tightly in his hand. Without warning, he violently crumpled the papers in his hand and threw them in the trashcan adjacent to his desk. Mr. Johnson stomped toward the front of the class and shouted, “I feel insulted to have to grade such atrociously illegible work.” He was furious. He added in a harsh voice, “This is unacceptable, and you should all be ashamed!”

Then he pointed at the trashcan. I could see his eyes bulge as he demanded, “Whoever did not write neatly, dig your paper out of the trash and rewrite it.” Walking toward the trash can, Mr. Johnson ordered us, “Retrieve your paper—even though it belongs in the trash.”

About half of the class, including myself, reluctantly walked up to the trashcan. The crowd searched as he watched. I found my paper, returned to my desk, rewrote it neatly, and handed it to him.

When he had retrieved all of the papers, he sat at his desk without saying a word. Suddenly, in a loud voice, he barked, “You can leave when the bell rings.”

After what seemed like an eternity, the bell chimed, and the entire class stampeded out of the room to freedom. As I left his class that day, I decided that I would always write legibly, fearing what measures he might take.

I remember Mr. Johnson well. Recently, as I was doing my homework, I made sure to write

legibly, even though the instructor said that the work would not be turned in.

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About the story: Rich, a sensitive and shy young teenage boy, experiences an embarrassing incident during physical education class. Today, it is humorous to remember. Based on a true story that happened in Tucson, Arizona, USA, circa 1984. Also included are two other short stories:

What Happened in Woodshop?

About the story: Richard, a shy and sensitive middle school student, experienced an unusual incident during woodshop class. Based on a true story that happened in Tucson, Arizona, circa 1985.

Griffonage

About the story: The rumors about seventh-grade geography teacher, Mr. Johnson, turn out to be true. Idea was taken from a true story that happened in the mid-1980s.

About the author: Richard Carlson is an author of children's and coming-of-age books. He is a highly sensitive person, or HSP. You can learn more about him at www.richardcarlson.com.

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