

The "Mashed" Potato

special spoof spread



Security blanket

"Who was that, Ted", asked Ziff as his co-worker lowered the phone receiver. The two men were just beginning to enjoy their day when that darned phone had rung again.

"Oh, just the people at the kindergarten. They say the kids won't play outside cause their feet get cold and there's some sort of white mist covering the ground."

Ziff frowned, "Those kids, always complaining. Guess I'd better get Mark to look into it." He picked up the mike of a two-way radio and tried to reach security officer Mark.

In the Girl's residence lobby, Mark was, as usual, resting his eyes with his feet up on the counter. This usual comatose state had earned him the affectionate moniker 'Killer' amongst the university students. After several squawks from the walkie-talkie attached to his belt, he snorted to consciousness and answered the call.

"Wadda ya wan", he yawned.

The CB crackled, and Ziff asked Mark to check out the kindergarten. Grudgingly, he lifted himself from his chair and lurched across the parking lot to the scene of the disturbance.

Minutes later, Mark called the security office back, "Ziff, there's this propane truck leakin' white gas all over the kindergarten playground. I think the kids won't go out 'cause they're afraid it'll ruin their shoes."

In the office, Ted and Ziff shook their heads. What a bunch of spoiled kids.

Ziff asked, "Do you think it's propane that's leaking, Mark?"

Mark said he wasn't sure but he'd ask the driver as soon as he could locate him. Satisfied, Ziff

signed off.

"Now where were we, Ted", said Ziff, feeling comfortable again.

Ted picked up his coffee cup. "We were talking about the Blue Jays".

"Oh yeah, those Blue Jays ..."

It seemed fate would just not allow the afternoon to pass smoothly. Ted and Ziff had delved no more than half an hour into their conversation when again that bothersome phone rang.

"Take it off the hook after this call", suggested Ted.

Ziff nodded and answered. This time it was more serious. When he started putting on his coat, Ted asked, "What now?"

"Oh, come on. Some nut pulled the fire alarms in the residences. The fire trucks have just arrived." Ted hunted up his boots and they left for the commotion.

Ziff and Ted strolled down the centre of the university campus, enjoying the sight of the autumn leaves and victorian buildings around them. As they passed one building, Ted tugged Ziff's arm. He said, "C'mon, while we're out here, let's see if our rat traps have been working. Ziff agreed, and they entered a pair of small doors into the base of the stately building.

No sooner had they reached the bottom stair when a boisterous bunch of students, bumped into them. Every one was clad in cold clothing, caked with mud, and carried shovels and flashlights. Upon seeing the officers, most pushed past the officers and fled up the stair. However, Ted and Ziff managed to hold on to a couple to remain and face the officer's wrath.

"Just what are you kids doing

down here?", bellowed Ziff.

The students trembled. "Uh, we were spelunking, sir."

"Spelunking? What's that mean?"

One student volunteered, "You know, exploring caves and all that." He was immediately elbowed into silence by the others.

"Caves", said Ted, "There aren't any caves down here are there, Ziff?"

Ziff said, "I don't think so, Ted. Maybe he means the tunnels". Ziff was referring to the catacomb of dirt-floored service tunnels that linked every building on campus. "Do you mean the tunnels, lad", he asked.

The students resigned themselves to their fates. "Yeah", they said.

"Are you with the power company or the plumbers", inquired Ziff, thinking of the pipelines and conduits that ran through the tunnels.

The students looked at each other, confused.

"Well", said Ziff, folding his arms across his chest, "which is it?"

Again, one youth ventured, "Um, the plumbers?"

Ziff nodded. "I thought so. Is the problem very bad?"

The other student caught on and answered, "N-no. No, not bad. The others all, uh, just went out to the truck to get some parts. Should have it fixed in no time."

Ziff said, "Great. If you guys have any problems, just give us a call. We're glad to help anytime." The officers then checked the empty rat traps on the floor and left.

"You know", said Ziff, closing the door behind him, "I wonder if students ever go into those tunnels."

Ted thought a moment. "Per-

haps we should hang a sign on the door. Here ..." He took out his notepad and scribbled a message on it; 'Do Not Use This Door'. This he tacked on the small entrance and, happy, the pair walked on.

Passing another building, Ziff and Ted noticed a pickup truck backed up to an open window to one of the campus buildings. In back was a pile of table lamps, furniture and automatic coffee makers.

"What do you make of that," Ziff asked his companion.

"Dunno, Ziff." They walked on.

When they were out of sight, the three men who owned the pickup reappeared and continued to stock it with furnishings.

Soon, the two security officers reached the centre of campus where they came across a student bent over a decorative flower garden. One hand held a pair of scissors and in the other was a fistful of carnations and roses. Ziff and Ted came up behind the young man.

"What's your name, son?" inquired Ziff in a pleasant tone.

The student bolted to attention, dropping his scissors and nearly spraying them all with flora. He turned to face the officers and said, "Uh, N-n-name? I-It's Robert, uh, Sir."

Ziff smiled at Ted. He said to the youth, "And what are you doing, son?"

The young man looked miserably at the flowers he'd collected. He knew he was trapped, but decided to lie anyway. He said, "Uh, see officers, I was just weeding out all these dying flowers here. You know, it gets to be such an eyesore passing here every day and seeing the beauty of this patch marred by a few imperfect

flowers." He shook the perfect clump of carnations in his hand menacingly, as though they had leprosy.

"Now son", began Ted, "you know you shouldn't be doing that. The university pays a lot for those flowers, and it pays even more for a gardener to take care of them. You just finish up what you're doing and next time you see a problem, tell us. We'll make sure the gardener fixes it up right away."

The student's jaw dropped open. He could only stare blankly at the officers.

Ziff picked up the scissors from the flower bed and handed them to him. He said, "Well, go on. We'd like to stay and help but I'm afraid we're kind of rushed. Security's job is never done."

With a nod and click of their heels, the two strolled away.

In the flower garden, the student, realizing they were serious, waved and called out, "Uh. Thanks Officers. Maybe we can have lunch sometime", then promptly continued to denude the patch for his girlfriend.

It was a lovely afternoon. The clouds were high up and fluffy, the sun was beaming, and it wasn't too hot for the time of year. In the distance, behind a residence, Ziff and Ted could see flashing lights, people running around, and water being sprayed high into the air. Cars driven by angry mothers were speeding away with their children.

"Well, I wonder why anyone would pull those fire alarms", said Ziff.

"I dunno", replied Ted, "sometimes people get excited at the smallest things."

"Yeah", said Ziff, "I guess they will. Wonder what happened with that propane truck ..."