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Daddy Tames the Ferocious Junior Boys

By Janette Blackwell

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Throughout World War II my Daddy had 4F draft status -- meaning he couldn't be drafted -- as there would have been no one to farm his Montana land if he were gone.

His draft status bothered Daddy. He was young and vigorous, and he longed to fight the enemies of his country. He knew he was working hard for his country out there in the fields, but his life lacked drama. And perhaps he longed for military action more fervently on days when things weren't going well on the farm.

Daddy and other 4F Bitterroot Valley farmers liked to talk about the war. They talked about it in the barbershop, of course, and after church on Sunday. What MacArthur and Patton ought to do to the enemy. What the army, and the navy, and the marines ought to do to the enemy. Their male hormones buzzed around rapidly, doing what male hormones do.

The men's ferocity was only exceeded by that of the little boys, who thought nothing of wiping out an enemy air squadron on their way to Sunday school.

The junior boys of our Sunday school were especially ferocious. In fact these nine to twelve year olds were incorrigible, by the standards of the time and place. They whispered and giggled, nudged and pushed each other. They never studied their Sunday school lessons. And they openly chewed gum in church.

Several stalwart men of the Corvallis Community Church had tried and failed to whip these incorrigibles into shape. The junior boys were taught in the church auditorium, only a few feet from the adult men's and women's classes. And whenever the teacher of the junior boys lost control of those boys, the whole auditorium heard it.

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Then even worse things began to happen. At the end of our class sessions, when we good little primary children filed out of our classroom and into the auditorium for closing exercises, we were faced with a terrible sight: the junior boys had completely run amok. They were making V-shaped paper airplanes from their Sunday school handouts. Large white missiles flew everywhere in the auditorium, above the heads of the men's and women's Bible classes.

Occasionally a boy scored a direct hit on the pulpit and even, once or twice, on the Sunday school superintendent as he stood behind the pulpit. And it appeared, from the expressions on faces in the men's Bible class, that they were focusing more on memories of their own boyhood than on the good Christian example of the Sunday school superintendent, who pretended nothing had hit him.

The worst of it was, of course, the example it set us little ones: pure minded children who had not known, up to that moment, that one could do anything with a Sunday school handout besides read it. Formerly innocent primary boys were seen examining paper airplanes to see how they were made. It was easy to imagine the effect these illegal missiles were having on their sensitive childish minds, the

subtle seeds of corruption thus being sown.

Strong measures were needed, and the church leadership turned to Daddy to whip the junior boys into shape.

They probably felt that in Daddy they had found a disciplinary tiger. But unfortunately Daddy was not a person who enjoyed whipping other people into shape, not even little people. Of course he couldn't say so. He was a church board member, after all, and the kind of young man the junior boys should look up to.

The European trenches may have looked especially inviting that week.

Daddy had rough going for awhile, and then, behold, he didn't.

I remember coming into the auditorium after my own Sunday school class, to find Daddy's junior boys following his every word. They didn't want the class session to end. Daddy's hand appeared to be a U.S. airplane moving steadily on its just mission. His other hand, he said, was "See, this Zero comes up and tries to shoot down the B-29, and the P-38, see, it comes in there with its guns blazing. . . ."

He and the junior boys had arrived at an understanding. If they paid attention to the Sunday school lesson and behaved themselves, there'd be time to discuss airplanes -- real airplanes -- at the end of the session. If the boys cut up and he had to spend time making them behave, the whole class period would be spent struggling with Jonah and the whale.

Their choice.

Find Janette Blackwell's Christian mystery and hilarious cookbook, "Steamin' Down the Tracks with Viola Hockenberry," at

The Rep

By Keith D Commiskey

As a young girl, while growing up in Junior High, if you show that you are too eager to be with boys, or even a certain boy, you will, sooner or later, be seen as "desperate". Come High School, reputation becomes more important (to girls) than looks. Imagine if you have a bad hair day, your next day you can still shine. But if you get a bad rep one day, your entire year can suffer. At least that's the case in High School (in Junior High your bad rep is forgotten the moment someone else becomes news).

Boys, by their very nature, are, and will always be, desperate creatures. This is a given. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the girl to make sure that this evolutionary process is maintained. That is, they cannot let show that they are "eager" to be with this boy, then that boy. And if a boy is able to come between to girl friends, they've turned the tables. This is not good for either girl. Only the most charming boys can pull this off, but it can be done. And these are the guys that you'll want to be with the most! Be very careful girls, because this can be the "life or death" of your reputation in High School (and yes, it begins in Junior High).

So, girls, in keeping with the tradition, and for the future of all girls, never let a guy see your eagerness to be with him. "Hard To Get" works like a charm, and is the single biggest advantage of girls over boys (and even women over men). Never let a guy come between you and your friends. Never, ever, let a guy feel as though they have the control over you; or, as sure as the sun came up this morning, they will take that control, and never give it back. Keep them guessing. Keep them eager to want you. Keep "them" desperate!

The way to accomplish this is by never letting a guy get the "Hard To Get" advantage over you. You must make him feel like you're self-sufficient and that you can live without him, while at the same time showing little signs here and there that you are interested. A boyfriend/girlfriend relationship will last much longer if you don't blurt out, "YES!" when he asks you to the next dance (and yes, he must ask "you") or asks if he can sit with you during lunch. Think about it for a second, and then calmly reply, "Sure. That sounds good." There are thousands of proven ways to make them want to be with you even more.

Remember, if you'd like to guarantee yourself a great reputation in High School, you have to show restraint in Junior High. Never let them see you sweat :) And never, ever let them see your desperation, no matter how desperate you really are! The girls that the (important) boys want most in High School are the girls that have restraint and dignity. Boys do not. These are the girls the geeks stay away from because they think, "She'd never like me." They're the girls the jocks say, I'll take her, and her, and her ... They're the girls that the intelligent, good looking boy knows, to get with her, he must also spend time with, and like to be with, her one or two not-so-good-looking friends.

The most important thing to remember, above all, is that a great looking guy won't necessarily take out the trash, show respect for you by opening the door for you, or get up in the middle of the night to feed

the baby. So while you're gawking at that "Ashton Kutcher" look-alike, take a step back and see if he's also got some "Mekhi Phifer" in him. Great looks are second to reputation in High School. And while

immaturity will show your age, it'll end up leaving you with only the geeks to choose from. Being mature makes for an awesome and long-lasting reputation with the guy who will take the time to make it past the "Hard To Get" routine. It'll get you that guy of your dreams!

Keith D Commiskey is the husband to a great wife, and step-dad to one great daughter turning teen. Keith does graphics and web design by day; and is a father, husband and entrepreneur by night. He established himself as a web and database developer beginning in 1995, and has layered those talents on top of his graphics and computer animation experience which he began 1991. Hi is the sole creator and owner of two sites with creative thoughts that just won't stop:

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