

COULD THIS REALLY BE HAPPENING TO...ME!

So now I had another new routine for my day. My new home was only ten minutes drive away, so I had a fairly leisurely start to my days. I did not enjoy being in the car much, so this journey seemed just about right. Alas, as soon as I got to school the “leisurely start” quickly evaporated. It took me awhile to realise what was going on...

As soon as I arrived at school, and at every available moment after, the same group of half a dozen parents would go out of their way to corner me and bombard me with questions about the school and, generally, keep me talking. It seemed that I could not walk along the corridor without at least one or two of them coming up to me and commanding my attention. I think their idea was to badger me in this way in order to make life as difficult as possible for me so that, perhaps, I might voluntarily leave! I later heard that this caused some resentment from people outside this group of parents because they could not seem to get any opportunity to talk to me about their concerns and their children. For a long time I just did not realise what was going on. You see, in spite of what was happening in my personal life, everybody was being as friendly as ever to my face, so I did not really have a clue about anything untoward going on. Then, one morning I had a phone call which changed everything...

“Mr.-----,” said a voice I had not heard for about two years, “I want you to know that I am not having anything to do with what those people are up to. I AM NOT HAVING ANYTHING TO DO WITH IT!” And after that she simply said who she was, repeated her message again and then hung up! I had no idea what she was talking about but it did not take much working out that there was something going on in the village that was anti-me! This parent who phoned me had complained a couple of years ago about the way I had handled a problem with her daughter. All had been resolved amicably I thought and I did not expect to hear any more about it. But here it was suddenly in front of me again. It turned out that this group of parents who were “talking” to me so “interestedly” every day were also contacting anybody they knew who had ever had a grievance or cause of complaint against me and asking them to write it down so that they could use it against me, presumably to get me removed from my job. They were also phoning my “wife” every few days

and trying to involve her in their plotting! I discovered, too, that they had, also, been in touch with some un-named “people in the profession” to find out how they could go about removing a Head! All this I learnt from other concerned and sympathetic parents and, later, some of this was confirmed by one of the parent group involved in it all. Phew!

I did expect some problems, quite serious problems, about my “conduct”. After all, here I was a Head in a small, very conservative area, where such behaviour from a pillar of the society such as myself, must, I thought, be seen as nothing short of scandalous. I even found myself looking at newspaper billboards, half expecting to read something along the lines of “Local Head Accused of Immoral Behaviour”! Not all that long ago, I knew I would have been dismissed and “shamed” for it. I did three-quarters expect this to happen to me anyway and I **could** understand why. After all, was I, because of my position in society, not expected to be a good example to all of that society’s highest values? And how could someone who got married and then immediately flouted the marriage vows - and committed adultery no less! - be a “good example”? I knew, too, that it would be naïve to the point of stupidity to expect anyone else to consider any “inner views” of the situation such as I had. Why, I was having enough trouble with that myself! But then as the weeks went by and all *seemed* to be normal I stopped thinking about it---until that phone call! Now I realised that there was *something* going on and I prepared myself for the worst.

I went in every day ready to face what some disinterested parents called, my “fan club” and awaited a summons from the Governors and/or the Area Office. That, I was sure, would lead to my dismissal. I would not have protested about this because I had flouted conventional morality in a way that I knew could so easily be offensive and intolerable to, what I imagined, would be many people. I knew, too, that had this not happened to me but to someone else, then, I most likely would, myself, have reacted, quite strongly, against it all. It was also quite clear to me that if it came to a choice between my job and my new relationship, then there would be no question which I would choose- and I would need no time to think about it! Yes, my life had become so lonely, unchallenging and unfulfilling that I was ready to sacrifice it all for this relationship which was giving me more happiness than anyone else had ever done in my entire life. I had been so low for so long that this

seemed to offer me a completely new start and, if that meant, a new job, a new everything, then so be it!

Now I knew more about what was going on I began, in a sort of perverse way, to enjoy these daily encounters with this little group of parents. I realised that they were playing a sort of game, albeit a rather nasty one, and I began to take some of my ideas and plans to them and to try to get them to do more and more for the school! And to their credit they did this with admirable enthusiasm. They proved me wrong when I said that we would never raise enough money for some scheme or other because we had never managed to raise that amount in the past. In fact, by fund-raising so successfully they raised more money in one year than the school had managed in the five years previously! And we had to work quite closely together to achieve this, so to all outward appearances it must have looked as if we had the best of relationships! I guess all the time they, like me, must have been congratulating themselves on how well they were “acting the part” and how well they were keeping their real feelings from me! So, financially, at least, the school gained a lot from their efforts and, as a result, we were able to improve the resources the school had quite significantly. We even installed some playground play equipment and created a sheltered play area for the children together.

Help From A Medium- Not For The First Time!

It was at this time that my partner was given a message by a local medium that was to give us some encouragement and support. She said that although there was a lot of trouble and difficulty around our relationship at the time this was not “between the two of us” but was rather coming from “other people around us”. She said, it was as if we were “inside a bubble that was protecting us”! We discovered that this seemed exactly how it was: I never knew that my parent-group had taken their complaints to the Area Office until much later, for example, by which time the trouble had passed. There were several other examples of things going on that would have been extremely worrying had I known about them at the time but by the time I knew anything about them need for worry had gone. I was told later by some of these parents themselves that the reason nothing came of their efforts to remove me was that they could not get enough support from the parents as a whole. “Everyone we asked said that you were too good a

teacher to lose!” one of them said to me, and that, of course, was a real boost for me.