

New Balls Please?

We should have known better. He had been expelled from three schools and banned from his friend's houses. Somehow though, we gave him the benefit of the doubt. I'm not sure if it was our generous forgiving nature, or our desperate need for a break. Either way, we made the questionable decision to leave our home and cherished pets in his care for a long weekend.

We wrote our list; Pack clothes, tidy house. The second list was for Michael:

- Feed cats twice daily
- Let Sally and Ben into run every morning
- Put them back in hutch *before* it gets dark
- No smoking
- No alcohol
- Only one friend allowed in
- Keep house tidy

Granted, it was a long list, but each instruction definitely belonged there!

Our main concern was the rabbits. Ben had only moved in two weeks ago. We had bought him to keep Sally company and give her some babies. Ben took his role so seriously, that at times Sally had to fight him off for a well-deserved rest!

Day one of our break we remembered ET's advice and phoned home. Michael assured us that all was well. Lured (we felt lured rather than lulled) into a false sense of security, we relaxed a little and looked forward to visiting the beach the following day.

We awoke early the next morning to the telephone ringing. It was our next-door neighbour, Ernie from back home. "Turn the music down a bit!"

"Whaaaat?.. it's 7am"

"Yes, it's been going on since ten o'clock last night. We need some sleep"

We immediately rang the prodigal son. Eventually a girl's voice answered. "Hello, who is this?" "I am Michael's father, who are you?" "Errrr, hold on." We held on to some frantic whispering before the phone banged down.

We called Ernie back. He confirmed that not only had the music gone off, but a dozen or so people were scurrying from the house, accompanied by the noise of glass bottles and empty cans hitting the bottom of the recycling bin. We apologised profusely. Ernie agreed to keep an eye on the situation, and we hoped that Michael would soon be in bed fast asleep, keeping out of trouble.

At 6pm the phone rang again "Hi Dad, how are you?"

“Worried, do you have something to tell us?”

“Actually, yes I do, it’s Sally”

“**What?** Is she dead? Did the fox get her?”

“No...She is alive, but she will never have babies”

“WHAT HAPPENED? I *knew* we shouldn’t have gone away”.

“Nothing’s happened, but she can’t have babies.

“What are you talking about?”

“Charley came over, she’s a veterinary nurse. She said rabbits with testicles that size can’t get pregnant. How on earth did you not notice them Father?”

We arrived home the following afternoon to a house that stunk of cigarettes, a carpet decorated with beer stains, and my £300 bottle of Glenmorangie missing, yet the hardest thing to accept was that Sally had had a sex change in our absence.