



How Come There Are More Women Teachers? by Douglas Evans

In the age of noble kings, valiant knights, and gallant teachers, the village of Bonus Pointz built a school as grand as any castle. The white stone building stood proudly at the town's center. Ivy-covered walls with a tall spired tower at each corner enclosed the vast green school grounds. Every morning, a wooden drawbridge lowered across a crocodile-filled moat to let the students enter.

Two weeks before Bonus Pointz School opened its heavy wooden gate, the headmaster held a staff meeting in the Great Hall.

“Now that we have a grand school, we must find the grandest teachers to teach here,” he said. “Only the noblest teachers--those with the finest skills, sharpest minds, and truest hearts--shall earn the right to teach at Bonus Pointz.”

The deputy head stood. "Why not hold a teacher tournament?" she suggested. "We will invite the top teachers in the land to compete for our six classroom posts."

"We can hold contests in assignment writing, paper passing, whistle blowing, and homework correcting," said the vice deputy head.

"The teachers can compete in playground games--hopscotch, Double Dutch, and four-square," said the assistant vice deputy head. "We'll have a championship spelling bee, history quizzes, and flash card speed races."

"A splendid idea," said the headmaster. "And the highest-scoring teachers will earn a place at our grand school."

"Let the best teachers win!" the head, the deputy head, the vice deputy head, and the assistant vice deputy head said together.

The next day, Herald, the school secretary, rode his horse through every village in the kingdom.

"Hear ye! Hear ye! Bonus Pointz Teacher Tournament!" he cried. "Friday on the school grounds. Win the honor of teaching at the finest school in the land! Hear ye! Hear ye!"

Many bold and caring teachers heard the call and began training for the competition. They practiced their tetherball serves and perfected their attendance-taking skills. They reviewed times tables and memorized spelling lists. They sharpened their pencils and polished their pointers.

Meanwhile, the Bonus Pointz Parents Club sprang into action. They decorated the school grounds with bunting, banners, and long, fluttering flags.

They set up brightly colored tents to sell cupcakes and lemonade. Finally, on the eve of the big day, they erected a giant wooden sign across the road at the edge of town. It read:

**BONUS POINTZ
TEACHER TOURNAMENT!
ALL MEN AND WOMEN TEACHERS WELCOME!**

“This is the grandest event ever held in Bonus Pointz,” declared the headmaster.

“What pomp!” said the deputy head.

“What pageantry!” said the vice deputy head.

“What thrills, spills, and drills!” cried the assistant vice deputy head.

“Bring on the teachers!” the head, the deputy head, the vice deputy head, and the assistant vice deputy head shouted together.

That night, a fierce storm ripped through Bonus Pointz village. Blasts of wind tore the banners and shredded the fluttering flags. Thunder boomed, and zigzags of lightning split the sky. But by morning, the clouds had parted. The sun rose bright and warm. It was a perfect day for a teacher tournament.

Soon after breakfast, every citizen of Bonus Pointz lined the road leading to the school grounds. They cheered and waved handkerchiefs, eager for the arrival of the first teacher.

Before long, a tall boy standing on a barrel shouted, “I see one! A teacher is coming!”

Bells rang and whistles blew as the first competitor trotted down Main Street. Lady T. Collywobbles, famed across the land for her unmatched dodgeball

skills, rode a tall dappled stallion. Her coat of arms, three red rubber balls, was stitched on the back of her leather jacket. Behind her, a squire followed on a donkey, its saddlebags bulging with rubber balls.

Children surged forward, begging for autographs. But Lady Collywobbles waved them away with a gloved hand.

“Isn’t she wonderful, Mother?” said a girl in the crowd. “I do hope she’s one of the chosen teachers.”

“It takes more than playing dodgeball to be a good teacher, dear,” her mother replied.

Next came Lady Curlicue Quills pedaling down Main Street on a high-wheeled bicycle with a giant front wheel and a small rear one. Lady Quills was famous far and wide for her beautiful penmanship. A tall goose feather bobbed from her purple tri-corner hat.

“I adore your cursive M’s, ma’am,” shouted a father in the crowd.

“Your capital D’s are divine,” called a mother.

“Thank you, kind citizens!” Lady Quills replied with a graceful nod. “I hope soon to be instructing every Bonus Pointz pupil in the noble art of handwriting.”

The next teacher to pass through town was Lady Wilhelmina Whatnot, seated upright and rigid in a black buggy pulled by six long-horned oxen. She wore a tall conical hat with a veil trailing from the tip. Her icy stare could freeze even the squirmiest child. Parents along the road nodded with approval, for Lady Whatnot was well known for her firm hand and her strict classroom discipline.

The teacher snapped her riding whip above the oxen’s heads. At once, the

beasts straightened their lines and trotted in perfect step.

“I do hope she’s one of the top six at the tournament,” said a mother in the crowd.

“It takes more than being strict to be a good teacher,” her daughter replied.

One teacher after another paraded through the village, some on horseback, some on foot, a few on roller skates, two on camels, one bouncing on a pogo stick, and one riding a unicycle while juggling flaming batons.

But it wasn’t until the fiftieth teacher had passed that a young boy, perched on his father’s shoulders, cried out, “Where are the men teachers? All these teachers are women!”

Perhaps the parents would have wondered, too, if trumpets hadn’t blared at that very moment from a schoolyard tower. With a great rattling of chains, the drawbridge lowered, and the headmaster’s voice boomed through a giant megaphone, “Let the Grand Teacher Games begin!”

The procession of teachers marched through the wooden gates. The crowd surged in after them. As the teachers began their warm-up drills, the spectators filled the wooden grandstands ringing the vast tournament field.

“Ladies and gentlemen, our first events are about to begin,” the headmaster announced. “At the north end of the field...a freeze tag match. At the south end... round one of the storytelling contest.”

The crowd roared as the first teachers stepped onto the grass. The cheering was so loud that no one heard a girl in the stands ask again, “But where are all the men teachers? What happened to the men?”

Before anyone could answer, a bell clanged from the ramparts, and the games began.

Never before had the citizens of Bonus Pointz seen such a thrilling spectacle. The contests in long division problem-solving, Chinese jump rope, report card writing, clay pot making, coloring, and recorder playing were as fierce as they were exciting.

"Hurrah, Mrs. Periwinkle!" cheered a group of men after she won the finger-painting competition.

"Miss Take! Miss Take! She's number one!" chanted some women during the heated Hangman contest.

A giant scoreboard tallied the points each teacher earned. The headmaster, deputy head, vice deputy head, and assistant vice deputy head, seated in a long wooden box, served as judges. After the grand finale, a grueling game of capture the flag, the six highest-scoring teachers were declared the winners.

Afterward came the award ceremony. One by one, the headmaster tapped each of the six winning teachers on the shoulder with a golden yardstick.

"I dub thee an official Bonus Pointz teacher," he declared.

He was about to proclaim the games officially closed when a boy at the top of the bleachers cried, "How come no men teachers came to the tournament?"

"Yeah, how come there are only women?" added a girl nearby.

A low murmur rippled through the crowd.

"The kids have a point," a father shouted. "Wouldn't hurt to have a few fellows teaching at our school."

“Where *are* the men teachers?” shouted a mother.

As the protests grew, Herald, the school secretary, came charging across the drawbridge on his horse. He stopped in front of the judge's box.

“Headmaster!” he cried out. “I’ve just come from the road outside of town. I’ve discovered why no men teachers showed up today.”

“Speak, Herald,” the headmaster said. “What’s the answer to this mystery?”

Harold turned to face the grandstands. “It was the storm last night. A bolt of lightning struck the welcome sign hanging over the road. It split the billboard clean in two. My pages are bringing what remains.”

Two teenagers marched through the school gates. They carried a cracked plank of painted wood between them. The moment the crowd saw the sign, the storm damage became clear. A lightning bolt had struck the letter *W* in the word WOMEN, splintering the board straight down the middle. The left half had likely blown away in the wind. Only the right side remained. Here's how it now read:

**BONUS POINTZ
TEACHER TOURNAMENT!
NOMEN TEACHERS WANTED!**

The deputy head rose in the judges’ box. “That’s what the traveling teachers, men and women alike, saw when they reached the outskirts of town this morning.”

“What a shame,” said the vice deputy head. “The men teachers must have thought they weren’t welcome at our tournament.”

“No men, how embarrassing,” the assistant vice deputy head added.

“And I’ve already dubbed the six winning teachers,” said the headmaster.

“It would be unfair to redo the entire tournament.”

The crowd fell silent, eyes fixed on the cracked sign. Fair or not, the headmaster's decision held.

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In the years that followed, new schools were built, and more teacher tournaments were held to staff the growing number of classrooms. But the men, still stung by what happened at Bonus Pointz, rarely took part.

Today, more men teach in grades K through 5. But women still far outnumbered them.

Now you know why.