



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 wide stone school stood in the center of the town. A high stone wall with four lookout towers at each corner surrounded the school grounds. For the students to enter each morning, a wooden drawbridge was lowered across a moat filled with starving crocodiles.

One week after Bonus Pointz School opened its fine doors, the headmaster held a staff meeting in the Great Hall.

“Now that we have a grand school we need the

grandest teachers to teach here,” he said. “We must select noble teachers of the highest order. Only educators of the highest valor and rarest skill shall earn the right to teach at Bonus Pointz.”

“We should hold a teacher tournament,” suggested the deputy head. “We will invite the top teachers in the land to compete for our six classrooms.”

“We’ll hold contests in assignment writing, paper passing, bulletin board decorating, and homework correcting,” said the vice deputy head. “And, of course, maintaining discipline.”

“The teachers will compete in playground games like four-square and kick ball,” said the assistant vice deputy head. “We’ll have a championship spelling bee and flash card speed races.”

“A grand idea,” said the headmaster. “And the grandest teachers will teacher 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 as one.

The next day, Herald, the school secretary, rode his horse through every village in the kingdom. “Hear ye! Hear ye! Bonus Point Teacher Tournament!” he cried. “Friday at the Bonus Pointz school grounds. Win the honor of teaching at the top school in the land! Hear ye!

Hear ye!”

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

Meanwhile, the Bonus Pointz Parents Club also prepared for the big day. They decorated the school grounds with bunting, banners, and fluttering flags. They set up brightly colored tents for selling cupcakes and lemonade. Finally, on the day before the tournament, 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! What spills! What chills!” 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 as one.

That night a fierce storm ripped through Bonus Pointz village. Blasts of wind whipped the banners and fluttered the flags. Thunder boomed and zigzags of lightning split the sky. But in the morning, the sun shone brightly. It was a perfect day for a teacher tournament.

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

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

Bells rang and whistles blew as the first competitor trotted onto Main Street. Mounted on a tall dappled stallion rode Lady T. Collywobbles, famed across the land for her skill dodgeball. Her coat of arms, three red rubber balls, was stitched on the back of her leather jacket. Her squire followed on a donkey, its saddlebags bulging with rubber balls.

Children surged forward, begging for autographs, but Lady Collywobbles waved them off 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 penny-farthing 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 the purple tri-cornered hat she wore at a stylish slant.

“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. “I hope to soon be instructing every Bonus Pointz pupil in the noble art of handwriting.”

The next teacher to roll into town was Lady Wilhelmina Whatnot, seated upright in a black buggy pulled by six long-horned oxen. She wore a stiff collar, a pointed bonnet, and a gaze that could freeze the most fidgety child. Parents lining the street nodded with approval for Lady Whatnot was renowned for firm hand and her strict classroom discipline.

The teacher snapped her riding whip above the oxen’s heads, and the beasts straightened their line.

“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,” said her daughter.

Teacher after teacher entered the town, some on horseback, some on foot, a few on roller skates, and one on a unicycle while juggling.

But it wasn't until the fiftieth teacher had passed that a young kindergartener cried out, “There aren't any men teachers! They're all women! Where are the men?”

Perhaps the parents would have wondered, too, if trumpets hadn't blared at that very moment from atop the schoolyard wall. The drawbridge lowered, and the headmaster's voice boomed through a giant megaphone, “Let the Grand Teacher Games begin!”

The parade of teachers swept through the gates. The crowd surged in after them. As the teachers began their warm up drills, the spectators packed the wooden grandstands that ringed 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 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 hopscotch, Chinese jump rope, report card writing, relay races, clay pot making, coloring, and recorder playing—were as fierce as they were exciting.

"Way to go, Mrs. Periwinkle!" shouted some men, after she won the finger-painting competition.

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

A giant scoreboard tallied the points each teacher earned. The headmaster, deputy head, vice deputy head, and assistant vice deputy head, sitting in a long box, served as judges. After the grand finale, a brutal game of capture the flag, the six teachers with the most points were declared the winners.

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

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

He was about to proclaim the games over, 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?" asked a

girl.

A low murmur spread through the crowd.

“The kids have a point,” a father called out. “It would be nice to have some guys teaching at our school.”

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

As the protests grew, Herald, the school secretary, rode his horse onto the school grounds.

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

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

Harold faced the grandstand. “It was the storm last night. A bolt of lightning struck the welcome billboard hung across the road. It split the sign in two. My pages have brought what’s left of it.”

Right on cue, two teenagers marched through the school gates, carrying a plank of painted wood between them. The moment the crowd saw the sign, the damage from the lightning became clear. The bolt had struck the letter W in the word WOMEN, splitting the board in two. The left part must have blown away in the wind. All that remained was the right side.

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

The deputy head rose in the judges' box. "And that's what the traveling teachers—men and women alike—saw when they arrived this morning on the outskirts of town."

"What a shame," said the vice deputy head. "The men teachers thought they weren't wanted."

"This is downright 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 tournament."

The crowd fell silent, eyes fixed on the cracked sign. Fair or unfair, the headmaster's decision stood.

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

Today, more men do teach in grades K through 5. But they're still far outnumbered by women.

Now you know why.