

THE STINKERS

FOR THE LOVE OF CHOCOLATE

Chapter One

FRIDAY NIGHT

Click goes the phone! Stomp goes a foot! Cindy bites her trembling lip!
“How can I have a radio station if Brenda’s not coming? I may as well of gotten grounded too ‘cause I’ve got nothin’ to do.”

“You better think of something,” says Mom. “Remember what happened the last time you were bored? You almost burnt the house down.”

“It was only a little fire,” says Cindy.

“NEVER-THE-LESS... The kitchen is closed,” says Mom. “Dad and I are watching the news in the family room if you want to join us.”

“That’s worse than playin’ with my goofy little brothers and baby sister.”

Cindy marches to her room and plops onto the bed. She looks around at the mess. Cleaning is not on the list of fun things to do. Tick, tick, tock, goes the clock on the nightstand next to her bed. What to do? What to do?

Cindy's choices spin around in her head. *I've already gotten into trouble for shaving the dog's ears. Cutting off Jenny's ponytail landed me into bigger trouble. And the "mostest" trouble was Mom's fault because she never told me that magic markers make a permanent tattoo. And Dave got really mad when he was sent to the principal's office for having a "not so nice" word written on his forehead.* Tick, tick, tock... two minutes have passed. What to do? What to do?

Falling backwards onto the bed, Cindy covers her face with a pink flowered pillow. She yells at the top of her lungs, "My life is O-O-o-o-ver-r-r-r-r-r." She draws in another breath and squeals, "E-e-e-e-e-e-e-eeh."

Cindy pulls herself to a sitting position and grabs her pinkish purplish brush from her nightstand. She puts it to her mouth and says, "Live from K-B-O-S-S, its Cindy Campbell, your favorite DJ, Big Boss."

Her little sister, Jenny, rushes into the room pushing short blond curls from her face. She drags her rag doll, Becca, behind her. "Emergency, emergency. The animal hospital is out of bandages."

"This is Cindy Campbell, live from K-Boss Radio. There seems to be a situation building here in the town of Folly's Korner. There are no band-aides anywhere."

Cindy taps her finger on her jaw. "I know my radio station donated a full box two days ago." Cindy extends her hairbrush toward Jenny's mouth.

“My animals need a lot of attention. Becca and I had to doctor Jimmy’s arm. I think he got an ow-e-e-e playing with Janna.”

“Are those your monkeys?” asks Cindy.

“You know they are Sissy.” Jenny stamps her feet. “You were with me when Mommy got them for me at Stuffed Zoo.”

“Ohh, that’s right. Tell the good citizens of Folly’s Korner more about these wild animals.”

She pushes the pretend microphone back toward Jenny’s face.

“Well, my monkeys are always getting hurt ‘cause they do lots of things they shouldn’t do.” They jump on the bed, bounce off of the desk, and swing on the ceiling fan.”

“Sounds like your jungle friends are out of control.”

“They are,” says Jenny. “I have told them over and over that I’m the boss and they have to follow my rules.”

“We all have to follow the rules.”

Cindy hands Jenny a tiny box of breath mints saying, “Here at K-Boss Radio, we like to do our part to help animals. Why don’t you give your monkeys some medicine? This will calm them down.”

“That sounds like a good idea. One of my other animals might need a pill too. She has a cold. Sissy, have you ever seen an elephant sneeze?”

“Can’t say that I have Jenny girl. I bet our great town would like to see that.”

“It’s kind of yucky. I had to put my elephant to bed and wrap her trunk. It’s all swollen.”

“Here at K-Boss, we would like you to know... that’s disgusting.”

“Like Mommy says, ‘You have to take the good with the bad.’ H-u-u-m-ph.”

Jenny sticks her chin in the air. Her eyes widen. “You better be careful. I think giraffe measles are going around. I need to get back to my hospital and give some shots. Ohhh... and remember Sissy... tell your radio people to send more bandages.”

Cindy puts the hairbrush back to her face. “This is K-Boss Radio asking for your help around the globe and here at home. Please save Jenny’s animals. This has been a live report from Cindy Campbell. Signing out.”

Mom has walked into the bedroom during Cindy’s speech and begins clapping. “You are a good disk jockey, Cindy.”

“A lot of good it does me. I don’t have anyone to play with.” Cindy crosses her arms and looks to the ceiling.

“You can play with Becca and me,” Jenny blurts out. “I will even let you be the doctor. Becca and I will be your nurses.”

“That sounds like a great idea. You know where Dad and I will be if you need us.” Mom kisses Jenny and leaves.

Cindy scrunches up her nose and pushes her long blonde tresses off of her shoulder. “Ten year olds don’t play with five-year-olds.”

“Is that a rule?” asks Jenny.

Cindy puts her nose right up into Jenny’s face.

“Come on Becca,” says Jenny. “Let’s go back to the animal hospital.”

She turns to leave the room.

“Wait,” says Cindy. The frown on her face turns slightly upward. “Maybe I will let you play with me.” Cindy shoves her hot pink backpack off of her plush pink bed.

“Becca we need to listen,” Jenny whispers to her rag doll.

“I’m starting a new radio station. Would you like to be one of my DJ’s and work with me?”

Jenny jumps up and claps her hands. “You betcha. Can Becca have a job too?”

“Maybe,” says Cindy. “I’ll let Becca have a job if you can get our brothers to join us.”

“Is that all?” asks Jenny. “That’s easy. Watch the big girl go to work.”