

Trash Troop #1

Mr. Sussex was sitting at the head of the table. “Dinner was delicious, Sweetie. Don’t you kids agree?”

Susan smiled. “Yes, Mommy, delicious, especially the fresh beans.”

Mrs. Sussex beamed. “Why, thank you, Honey. They’re French haricots. They’re skinnier and I think they taste better than the usual string beans. I’m glad you noticed.”

Harold was having none of it. He pushed his beans around on the plate and then piled them on top of his meatloaf which was now cold. “I’m not hungry; I’m going up to my room.”

Mrs. Sussex reminded Harold that he hadn’t been excused and then addressed her husband, “Harold’s sulking; I told him he can’t go out after supper.”

“Susie, why don’t you help Mother clear. Harold, you’re now excused.” He indicated that he would be up later to talk about his behavior.

~~~

Mr. Sussex knocked on the door to Harold’s bedroom and entered. He sat on the corner of his bed and watched as Harold, sitting back against the headboard, pretended to read.

“Care to tell me what’s going on, Son?”

“Mom won’t let me go out after supper.”

“So?”

“Well I got this project.”

“Hmm.”

Mr. Sussex was a tax lawyer but had seen enough Perry Mason episodes to conclude that “Hmm” was often enough to solicit an answer from even the most hardened criminals. After 30 seconds it worked with Harold.

“Well, Dad, I’m in this sort of troop, it’s informal, we’re all trying to become super-heroes. Then we get a special t-shirt.”

“And how does this work?”

“Oh, it’s easy. Did you notice how the neighborhood seems cleaner when we take our walks on Sunday? You know, less papers blowing around and I bet you can’t find a plastic bottle or aluminum can anywhere, right?”

“I guess so. I hadn’t been paying much attention. We *do* live in an upper-class community and you wouldn’t expect people here to litter.”

“That’s just it, Dad. Too many people think that there’s always some hired help picking up after them. And there’s always stuff blowing out of cars or dumpsters. No one bothers. You’d be surprised.”

“I guess I would. So...”

“So, Aaron’s father, he’s a professor over at the university, had this idea about getting the kids to form “Trash Troops.” We’d go around picking up litter. It wouldn’t mean anything extra, just once a week on patrol, the other time is on an *ad hoc* basis. He said that meant as the opportunity presented itself. Like if we were at a mall and saw a candy wrapper dumped on the stairs, we could pick it up. We wouldn’t have to get every piece of crap – oops, sorry, that’s what he said. ‘Remember,’ he said, ‘every litter bit hurts.’”

“And tonight?”

“Well, he thought it would be a good idea if we patrolled our own neighborhood once a week. Just walked around the block with a shopping bag. You know, pick up what we find. I was supposed to go on patrol tonight”

“Then what?”

“We’d save up our stuff, and tabulate, I think Aaron’s dad likes to use big words, what we find the first Sunday of every month. We’d be able to keep records and then his dad said he could write up the results for that Northshore magazine we get once a month.”

“Hmm.”

“Well, it does make you think different about litter.”

“And?”

“And his dad said he’d get everyone who stuck it out for six months a super hero t-shirt. It’ll be black with a 50-gallon steel trashcan on the front and *Trash Busters* slashed across the back. It’ll be ever so cool, don’t you think?”

“Hmm. You know, I think the professor may have a good idea going there. It’s getting late now; do you think you could go on patrol tomorrow night?”

“Yeah, I guess so.”

“Good. And I’m guessing you’re hungry so why don’t I go down and ask Mother to warm up your supper.”

“Gee, Dad, that’d be super. Thanks, I love you.”

~~~

If you enjoyed this broadside please give charity and commit random acts of kindness.

Smiles work wonders.

Please share this Broadside with others and visit www.kmkbooks.com for more stories.