

Subernoj. 31 December 2021

'What are you doing Grandpa?'

A fair question considering I was up a ladder with the top half of my body disappearing through the ceiling manhole accessing the roof space above the garage, a torch in my hand.

'I'm looking for something.'

'Why?'

'Because I want to find it'

'Why?'

'Because the box I want to find has some things in it that I want.'

'Why?'

Why does nearly every sentence from a four-year-old start with *Why*?

'Because I need the things in the box – and don't ask me why. I'm looking for a box of firewor ... *Eureka* - found it!'

'Oh' from below.

I carefully positioned the torch on a rafter and started man-handling the smallish cardboard box towards me when I sensed my grandson and I were not alone – and I don't mean the possum living in the roof space. The dreaded words floated up from below.

'What on earth are you doing **Subbie**?'

I was tempted to suggest she ask our grandson, given that he was now the fountain of all knowledge in the matter with his hundred and one questions. But I resisted. I pushed the box back away from the manhole and switched off the torch, descending a rung or three to find *Mrs S* looming in the garage doorway. I carefully shuffled around on the half-way-up-the-ladder rung to face her (old men and ladders are a big no-no apparently), wiping my dusty hands on my t-shirt. Hoping to share responsibility for my actions, I replied 'We're looking for something.'

'Oh, we are, are we? And what *exactly* is it that you're looking for?' deftly taking grandson out of the equation.

'Just a box of some stuff' I replied less than convincingly.

'And, pray tell, just what stuff happens to be in this box?' The rising inflection in her voice at the end was an ominous sign if I'm honest.

'Er ... just some fireworks.' I was desperately trying to remain casual about the whole escapade.

'*Fireworks!*' she exploded (unlike the contents of the box – yet). 'Since when have we had a box of fireworks in the roof?'

Our grandson seemed fascinated by the events and was looking back and forth from his grandma to his grandpa, like a spectator at the tennis.

'Not long'

'Define *not long*.'

'Oh, I dunno. Roughly fifteen years I s'pose. I bought them ages ago from

Derrick down the pub and put 'em up here. Forgot all about them until now.'

I replied sheepishly.

'You mean to tell me you've had a box of dangerous explosives up in our roof for fifteen years through all those blistering summers?' By now she was incandescent (unlike the contents of the box – yet).

'I wouldn't exactly call them dangerous explosives – they're perfectly safe' I replied defensively. 'I was hoping to let them off this New Year's Eve.'

'Saints preserve us **Subbie**. I can't believe you'd be so utterly stupid. Get them out of the roof and get rid of them. It's illegal to let off fireworks without a permit and you'd probably end up blowing yourself to bits anyway, they're so old and deteriorated.' She turned away from the door, shaking her head and mumbling things that were probably best left unheard.

I headed back up the ladder to retrieve the box and torch and climbed back down from my once lofty position. I sat on one of the lower ladder rungs as my grandson shuffled over to look at our unopened Pandora's box of fun (or disaster).

'Well buddy, I might be utterly stupid but it doesn't look like I'm going to be crackers' I joked. He looked at me blankly, the attempted humour clearly lost on a four-year-old.

'Guess we won't be letting off these fireworks then' I sighed.

'Why?'

Have a Happy New Year and thanks to the setters for an interesting ride in 2021.