

Oh that sub!

Akiko and Onola walked down the worn yellow steps that belonged to their bus stop. Akiko had a bottle of blue raspberry flavored vitamin water.

“This guy named Mr. Bálenfinkelur is my new English teacher. ‘Ya know him?’” Onola asked. Suddenly, a spray of indigo vitamin water erupted from Akiko’s mouth as she choked.

“He was only the worst substitute Nola Middle has ever seen! Now he’s permanent teacher?”

“No, Ms. Lenyé quit, so he’s a temporary place holder until we get a permanent English teacher. Is he really that bad?”

School bus #43 pulled up and honked Yankee Doodle. “That’s ours,” Akiko said, “I’ll tell you all about Mr. Bálen-fink. You know the sub” The two sat down next to each other on the small bus as they prepared for the long one-hour journey to Yella Z Nola Middle School.

“It all started on a chilly November day, 3rd Block. It was a fright full Tuesday” Akiko began to tell her tale.

“Hello, students, I’m your substitute, Mr. Bálenfinkelur. Ms. Richardson is at a teacher planning session for science. Now I’m sure you know what to do.”

Lousia raised her hand to speak, “Excuse uh, Sir. Where is the paper on which we should diagram the atom?”

“Good question. Let’s find the sub plans.” The substitute replied, looking around the pig sty of a teacher desk, “I seem to have lost it. But this doesn’t seem like a problem The Great Substitute can’t solve!” He walked around the classroom.

“Excuse me sir,” said Timothy, “Who is The Great Substitute?”

Mr. Bálenfinkelur walked around the room, looking through cupboards, under chairs and desks, and in filing cabinets. “Why, me of course.”

“Sir, do you think that maybe these papers are in the file cabinet labeled “Sub Plans: Paper for Atom Diagraming”?” Akiko offered her suggestion.

“No, don’t you think that sounds a bit too obvious?” said the sub as he ransacked nearly the whole classroom, “What if it’s in the file cabinet labeled “Sub Plans: Paper for Atom Diagraming”?” He opened the cabinet to reveal a stack of small poster paper; all titled “Cell Diagram.” “I hit the nail on the head, don’t you think?” the sub complimented himself, “NOW GET TO WORK!”

“Shouldn’t we pass out the paper before starting to work?” A student asked.

“Right, right.” The substitute passed out the papers and everyone got to work.

“I almost forgot attendance. Does anyone know the roster? I seem to have misplaced it,” Mr. Bálenfinkelur said.

“You can print one out,” Jiminy said.

“No, I don’t think...” the sub continued with his tearing up of the classroom, “I’ve got it! What if I print one out?” The sub opened the computer as he got ready to print a roster out, “two for two. This is one of my best subbing days. Students, stay right here and I’ll go to the library and pick this up.” The sub swam through the pile of miscellaneous items that now swamped the floor, a collective mass of junk, and out of the door to the library.

The students looked around. It seemed as if a tornado had come through room 107. Ms. Richardson, a devoted neat freak, would – well – freak!

High heels click-clacked and a sing-song voice filled the air from outside of the door that was cracked open. “Hey kids, I need to borrow one of your previous projects to show the other teachers.” Ms. Richardson! The doorknob

turned slowly and Ms. Richardson's face went pale. "Oh, the mess!" Students who were working looked to the direction of the door when they heard the thump. Ms. Richardson had fainted!

"I'll get the nurse," Betsy yelled, "Which teacher should sign my hall pass?"

"Betsy?" Akiko asked

"Uh-huh?"

"THERE IS NO TEACHER!"

"I need a signature!"

"I'll sign it!" Akiko said, signing the paper

"Okay" Betsy said as she ran out into the hallway

A few minutes later, the nurse, followed by the sub entered the classroom. Soon, Ms. Richardson woke up and was dragged out of the classroom before she was conscious enough to faint again.

"I found the roster, but its lunch time! I'll have to eat with you and take attendance. Single file line, people. Let's go, let's go!"

"Something smells fishy," the sub said as they walked to the cafeteria.

"How about the fish sticks?" Elzi offered.

"No..." the sub said, for once not having anything to ransack, "Wait! It's the fish sticks! Three in a row. A row! I'm on a roll!"

"I could go on, but I'd rather not," Akiko said.

"He can't be *that* bad," Onola said hopefully.

"You'd be surprised!" Akiko replied.

"Come on," Onola said, "You're exaggerating."

"No"

The bus stopped as Betsy came on.

“Hey guys, what’s up?” she said.

“We’re just talking about a substitute” Onola replied

“I’m going to need a little more” Betsy said

“Mr. Bálénfinkelur, the one we had for science.” Akiko chimed in.

“Oh *that* sub”