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Caught on Camera

Annette Goggin

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Thursday February 29, 2024

Caught on Camera

By Annette Goggin

“Something’s eating the cat food in the barn,” my husband mused. Unwilling to feed a freeloader, he borrowed a trail camera and set it up. Eventually, he put the trail cam on his desk in our house, planning to look at the pictures another day.

Months later, I asked, “What’s that camouflage thing on your desk?”

“It’s the camera I borrowed.”

“Why don’t you give it back?”

"I don't know how to see the pictures."

"That thing can't stay on your desk forever; it's cluttered," I said in my teacher voice. "I could have my friend Luther at school figure it out."

"Whatever," Mark mumbled, heading for the barn, his man cave on steroids. Carrying the trail camera to my school bag, I paused. How hard could it be to get the pictures onto my computer? It wasn't hard. Soon I was perusing pictures of a gluttonous thief. Satisfied, I was ready to tell Mark to return the camera to its owner. Pushing enter for one more picture of the bandit, I gasped at what filled the screen: my husband in his birthday suit! Horrified, I went to the next picture, only to find him in the same outfit. Five pictures and gasps later, I came close to a panic attack. The only thing worse than finding pictures of my husband in the buff was finding pictures of my sixty-something self that way! For the record, "in the buff" is the only way the word *buff* will ever make it into a sentence with our bodies. That motion-detecting "camouflage thing" on the desk had been doing its job every night for many moons as Mark and I trekked from our bedroom through the office to the bathroom.

As I was pressing enter and cringing, Mark came in and looked over my shoulder. "What are you looking at?" he demanded. I broke the news about the millions of pictures I had discovered. He leaned in for a few more images and said, "Throw that thing away!"

"You borrowed the camera, and we'd have to buy another one. I'll figure out how to erase it," I snipped. Within minutes, the "Bodies-Over-Sixty" photo exhibit was gone. I must have checked over sixty times to make sure. As the shock wore off, I went from being horrified at the pictures to being giddy with relief that I had not taken the trail cam to school so that Luther could check out the wildlife. Embarrassment would have forced me into unemployment. As Mark carried that cursed camouflage thing out of the house, I remembered something. "Hey, Mark," I yelled as he walked toward the barn, "it was a raccoon."

—Annette Goggin

As a preacher's kid, Annette Goggin was raised on revival services and pitch-in dinners. After earning a bachelor's degree at MidAmerica Nazarene University and a master's degree from Ball State University, she has spent a lifetime in a room with sixteen-year-olds as their English teacher. When school lets out, she's a farmer's wife, a mom, and a granny. Annette writes when she's not grading essays. She became a finalist in the 2024 Erma Bombeck Writing Competition in the global humor category with her essay "Caught on Camera," and her book, *Home: Three Houses*, is a collection of some of her best stories.