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# THE FLIMFLAM MAN

by Darleen Bailey Beard

Cast:

**Bobbie Jo**

**Clara Jean**

**The FlimFlam Man**

**Narrator**

**Narrator:** It all started one scorching July day in 1950. Bobbie Jo had been sitting in front of the Wide-A-Wake cafe' since before the morning rush. The sun was burning the back of her neck and sweat dripped down her jumper, when along came mean Clara Jean, mimicking the way Bobbie Jo talked.

**Clara Jean:** Wh-whatcha' got in the b-box, B-Bobbie Jo?

**Bobbie Jo:** N-None of your beeswax.

**Clara Jean:** You've got something in that box. Now what is it?

**Narrator:** Clara Jean stood there, hands on hips, wearing a long-sleeved blouse in the middle of July. She had on clear plastic rain boots, the kind that fit over shoes, only there were no shoes inside, just her dirty feet. Bobbie Jo wanted to laugh, but didn't dare.

**Clara Jean:** You better show me!

**Narrator:** Bobbie Jo thought it over. If she didn't show Clara Jean what was inside, she'd probably get kicked. Or worse yet, Clara Jean might kick the box. But if she did show Clara Jean what was inside, she might move along and let Bobbie Jo get on with her business. Slowly, Bobbie Jo opened the flaps and there inside was a brown and white puppy.

**Clara Jean:** OHhhh! She's so cute. I'm taking her home with me right now.

**Narrator:** Now Bobbie Jo didn't hanker to sitting in front of the Wide-A-Wake all morning long, with sweat dripping down her back asking folks if they wanted a free puppy, but she would have sat there the rest of July before handing Daisy's last puppy over to Clara Jean. Why, she wouldn't give Clara Jean a wooden nickel.

**Bobbie Jo:** L-Let go!

**Clara Jean:** Your box says "Free puppies" and that means I can have one.

**Bobbie Jo:** N-No you can't. Now give her back!

**Clara Jean: Give me one good reason why.**

**Narrator: Bobbie Jo could think of a thousand good reasons. Like the time Clara Jean put sand in her sandwich. The time Clara Jean yanked the poodle off her poodle skirt and slid it under the boy's bathroom door. And the time she laughed out loud when Mrs. Hampton asked Bobbie Jo to stand and spell "opportunity". But the only reason that came out of Bobbie Jo's mouth was a lie. A downright lie. And it slipped out quick as a wink.**

**Bobbie Jo: Because she's already taken.**

**Clara Jean: If she's already taken, then why are you still sitting here? Do you like my new hair band?**

**Narrator: Clara Jean held the puppy on her head and Bobbie Jo wanted to punch her right in the face. But she couldn't. Clara Jean was lots bigger than her. Eighteen months older. And mean as all get-out.**

**Bobbie Jo: I'm w-waiting for her new owner to come b-back and get her.**

**Clara Jean: What new owner?**

**Narrator: Bobbie Jo peered inside the Wide-A-Wake, but the breakfast crowd had already scattered. She looked up and down Main Street. No one was in sight. Then she saw him--a fabulous fat man with a checkered vest, a gold pocket watch, and black rimmed glasses, getting out of a turquoise Chevy. He wasn't anybody she'd ever seen before, which was pretty unusual in a town the size of Wetumka.**

**Bobbie Jo: Him!**

**Narrator: Clara Jean turned to see and Bobbie Jo stole the puppy right off her head before she could grab it back.**

**Bobbie Jo: Here's your fr-free puppy, mister.**

**Narrator: The man looked at Bobbie Jo kind of strange like, then at her box and at Clara Jean. Then he smiled a snaggle-toothed smile.**

**Flimflam Man: This is just the pup I've been waiting for, little lady.**

**Bobbie Jo: It is?**

**Narrator: Bobbie Jo glanced at Clara Jean, not sure which of them was more surprised.**

**Flimflam Man: Allow me to introduce myself. My name is F. Bam Morrison, advance man for Bohn's United Circus Shows. You've seen our circus, haven't you?**

**Bobbie Jo: No.**

**Flimflam Man: Why, that's impossible! Everyone knows about Bohn's United Circus Shows. What's your name, little lady?**

**Clara Jean: Clara Jean Knox.**

**Bobbie Jo: Bobbie J-Jo Hailey.**

**Flimflam Man: Girls, you're in for a treat. Bohn's United Circus Shows are the most exciting, most thrilling, most daring shows you'll ever see. And in a few short days we're coming to .... what's the name of this town?**

**Clara Jean: Wetumka!**

**Flimflam Man: Ah, yes. Wetumka, Oklahoma. And this lucky pup will be our new circus dog.**

**Narrator: Bobbie Jo was so surprised, Clara Jean could have knocked her over with a feather.**

**Bobbie Jo: D-Daddy always said that someone in our family was b-bound to be famous. Bet he never dreamed it'd be Daisy's puppy.**

**Flimflam Man: It's the opportunity of a lifetime!**

**Narrator: That gave Bobbie Jo a mean idea. She spelled the word out loud to Clara Jean, saying each letter nice and clear.**

**Bobbie Jo: O-p-p-o-r-t-u-n-i-t-y!**

**Narrator: Clara Jean didn't even snicker.**

**To find out what happens to mean Clara Jean, Bobbie Jo and F. Bam Morrison, run don't walk to the library nearest you and read "The Flimflam Man" by Oklahoma author, Darleen Bailey Beard.**

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