

with humour. One of the boys hasn't been going to school, hasn't been going to Youth Link at TAFE, and hasn't handed in his work experience form. He asks Bernie if he can do work experience with him.

'I was hoping you'd ask me that,' says Bernie. 'How about —'

He's interrupted as a figure in a white pantsuit and high heels sashays through the door. I watch in amusement as Geraldine puts her hands on her hips and tosses her hair back from her face.

'Alright,' she says, looking around at the group of boys, some of whom are already cowering in mock-fear. 'Who's been eating sugar this morning?'

The boys start dobbing on each other – pointing their fingers and calling out names. One boy has the misfortune to be caught with a can of Coke, and before he can run out the door, Geraldine grabs him and wrestles him to the floor. He calls out to the others for help, but they just stand back and laugh.

'You know the rules,' Geraldine tells him sternly, holding him down and putting her knee in the small of his back. 'No lollies, no soft drink and no junk food before twelve!' When she pulls his ear – *hard* – the boy cries out in pain. He's half-laughing, but obviously feeling the pressure. 'What's good enough for my daughter is good enough for you!' she pants, still holding his ear. 'If I catch you drinking Coke again next week, I'll beat you!'

The others whoop and holler, while Bernie sits back and lets it all happen in front of him. Before Geraldine can deal with any more rule-breakers, two drug and alcohol lecturers from Tamworth arrive. They've come along to see the boys work with the dogs.

Geraldine releases her grip and the boy goes back to his seat, grinning madly, even though he's followed by calls of 'Shame!' Soon after, Bernie and the boys take the visitors down to the