

Beep-beep-beep!

By Marilyn Reeves

Awhile back my son and his wife gave me an old cellphone which they said could still be used for 911 emergency calls but nothing else. The following is an e-mail message I sent to them which contains my story.

Dear Tom & Mary,

I just wanted to let you know that your plot to drive me out of my mind in order to inherit my vast fortune has failed – first because I'm already there, and second, there is no fortune, sad to say.

I did come a bit closer to totally losing it this morning, however. I was sitting in the living room reading my library book when I heard a subtle but demanding little *beep-beep-beep!* Uh oh. Supposing it was my computer, I came into the office and checked it all over. I didn't really see a problem, so I went back in to the living room and sat down again. But a couple of minutes later, there it was again: *beep-beep-beep!* Okay, what could it be? Must be something to do with the power bar. So I shut down my computer and turned off the power bar, then turned it back on again. *Beep-beep-beep!* No, the sound was definitely coming from somewhere else, but where?

Could it be the smoke detector out in the main hall? I went out in the hall and stood there until I heard the *beep-beep-beep!* again. No, it was definitely coming from inside my apartment. Could it be my *own* smoke detector? That must be it. Maybe I needed to replace the battery. So I stood on a kitchen chair and jimmied off the cover, only to hear once again the *beep-beep-beep!* coming from the other room. Okay, so it wasn't my smoke detector, either. Then I tried to put it back together, but I couldn't get the cover back on. No biggie – it could just dangle there until the guy comes to check it a few months from now.

The next time I heard the blanket-blank *beep-beep-beep!* I realized it was coming from my storage room! That's where the electric box is, mounted on the back wall. I'd never heard it beep before but there's a first time for everything. So while I was standing there studying it trying to figure out what to do ... *beep-beep-beep!* The sound was coming from the shelf on my right. Where I keep my electric cords. Where I put the cell phone you gave me.

Sorry, I forgot to thank you for the cell phone. (It's the thought that counts.)

Love,

Mom

Epilogue: I decided that the dangling smoke detector cover was an eyesore, so I placed a Work Order Request with Windsor Maintenance and a nice fellow named Steve came by and properly remounted it. He informed me that the unit doesn't even contain a battery – it runs on house

current. Glad I didn't do any more probing around with my screw driver or I might not be here today to tell you the tale of the *beep-beep-beep!*