

FROM WHERE I SIT

JOHN COONEY

Once Upon a Keyboard

I'm a forgiving sort of chap. Not one to record a wrong or nurse a grudge. But it's my wife's fault we bought the stupid thing. It would never have happened if she hadn't called me over and said, "John, come and look at this!"

Now that might sound innocent enough to you. But when you've lived with a woman for as long as I've lived with mine, there are tones of voice and innuendos and subtle unspoken messages that you understand all too clearly. And what my wife was really saying to me was, "If you don't buy this bargain for the kids, I probably won't speak to you for a week!"

We were window-shopping in Singapore, you see. And the 'this' she wanted me to look at was a keyboard. A dinky little electronic piano-style keyboard that stood in the window on its little metal legs, just like a real one. And the price (no kidding) was only \$39.

"That's ridiculously cheap," she said. And I grunted in agreement.

"And the kids would have so much fun," she added. And I grunted again.

"Well, stop grunting and buy it!" she said, grinning her victory-grin.

Well, I knew in my bones it was the wrong thing to do. I knew I would live



to regret it. But what else can a man do? I stopped grunting, paid the shop-lady the \$39, and flew home from Singapore with a keyboard under my arm.

We set it up in our lounge, and my wife was so excited. "Play something, John ..." she encouraged. So I stood at the keyboard like Stevie Wonder and began to play. But, despite what my wife may tell you, the noises that came out of that thing were not nice. The sound was cheap and tinny, the chords didn't come out right, and it kept wanting to override my tunes with prerecorded Chinese music that caused our dog to become very agitated.

Depressed after that first failed effort, I didn't bother trying again. And our \$39

keyboard sat there for several days until the grandkids arrived. They not only wanted to play it – they also wanted to use the plug-in microphone and try some karaoke.

I grunted reluctantly and turned the thing on. And what followed for the next two hours was so truly awful that I'm surprised the neighbours never called the police.

The kids banged on that stupid keyboard and yelled into that stupid microphone like they were rockstars. And we couldn't turn the volume down!

As I said to my wife (who, by now was also grunting), "What else did you EXPECT for \$39?"

Finally, urged on by all the adults (and the dog), I pulled the plug and told the kids to go and wreck some quieter toys.

Later, over some coffee laced with Panadol we tried to find a solution. I tried to give the stupid keyboard to my son: "Take it home with you – it's yours!" But he and his wife didn't hesitate for even a nanosecond: "No way! No thanks! We don't want it!"

So when I went to bed that night,

I informed my wife that her precious keyboard was going out in the next inorganic collection.

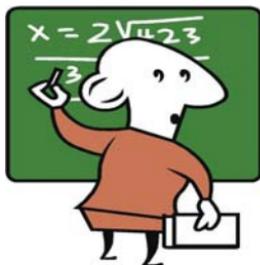
We were woken later, around 2:00am, by a frightening, howling, siren-type noise. Propelled from our mattress in a state of panic, we rushed around the house, checking our radio clock, our security alarm, our TV and video, and every other likely source. It sounded like it was coming from under the floor, and I was about to go outside and check when my wife called me from the lounge.

The problem, we quickly discovered, was the microphone. One of the kids had turned the thing back on – and, don't ask me how, but it was picking up feedback.

That stupid keyboard was having the last say. It had waited until 2:00am to take its revenge. It had won! 🍷

THE COONEYS ARE WILLING TO DONATE THE KEYBOARD – FREE TO A GOOD HOME. THEY'LL EVEN DELIVER IT. ANYWHERE. REALLY – ANYWHERE! THEY MEAN IT. JUST SAY THE WORD ...

THORT



"Instead of having 'answers' on a maths test, they should just call them 'impressions' – and if you got a different 'impression' so what? Can't we all just get along?"