

Never-U-Fail



The Acme Never-U-Fail Cloning Apparatus was on the fritz again and Dr. Beezer was peeved. He'd run Bob, the test subject, through the process – he checked his figures – a hundred and thirteen times now, and *still* he couldn't get a perfect duplication. It didn't make sense! The three-step process was simplicity itself. First you transferred a DNA fragment of interest from one organism – Bob – to a self-replicating genetic engine – the Never-U-Fail Cloning Apparatus. Then you added to the mix a soupcon of cloning vector – yeast artificial chromosomes – and set it aside in a covered bowl overnight. In the morning, you briefly kneaded the recombinant DNA “dough” before re-inserting it into the Never-U-Fail. An hour, hour and a half later, *voilà*, a brand new Bob II! And while Beezer's clones bore a striking resemblance to the original, they weren't exact doppelgängers. Each copy had a hat, sure, but only three-quarters of them sported Bob's trademark mustache. Even fewer (fifty-one percent) began life with his tie! No, the machine was definitely out of whack. And *whack* is what the disgusted doc did to the Acme with the somatic cell nuclear transfer unit. It wasn't the wisest use of that rather delicate propagation appliance, but at least Beezer felt better afterwards. His next four clones, on the other hand, all complained of chronic aches in their latissimi dorsi ... which would be right about where he'd walloped the Never-U-Fail. Well, if he couldn't get the device to work properly, it was back to the old binary fission sequencers – the replicantometer and mitochondriatron – and *that* was almost all the way back to the drawing board. Surely there was another way! And just like that, the solution to the misbehaving DNA popped into his head: **Shirley!** (*to be continued*)