

Cool Tools Show Podcast Episode 301: Bonnie Burton
October 2021
Visit Cool-tools.org for shownotes

Mark: Welcome to the Cool Tools show. I'm Mark Frauenfelder, editor-in-chief of Cool Tools, a website of tool recommendations written by our readers. You can find us at cool-tools.org. I'm joined by my co-host, Kevin Kelly, founder of Cool Tools. Hey, Kevin.

Kevin: Hey, it's great to be here.

Mark: In each episode of the Cool Tools show, Kevin and I talk to a guest about some of his or her favorite uncommon and uncommonly good tools they think others should know about. Our guest this week is Bonnie Burton. Bonnie is a Los Angeles-based author, games writer, podcaster, YouTuber and journalist. Bonnie writes books about entertainment, pop culture, crafting, drawing, self-help and humor. She writes both fiction and non-fiction for childrens, teens and adults. Her books range from making of movies, crafts, drawing and sci-fi books for kids and young adults. She also writes non-fiction books for licensed property such as Star Wars, Harry Potter and DreamWorks, and she writes murder mystery games for Hunt A Killer. You keep very busy, Bonnie. How are you?

Bonnie: I'm good. How are you?

Mark: I'm doing great, thank you.

Kevin: Yeah, I'm so glad that you can take time to join us. Thank you for your wonderful suggestions.

Bonnie: Oh yeah, definitely. They're a little bit different than the last time I was on.

Kevin: Good.

Bonnie: Last time, that was my first time out and now I had a bit more fun with it this time.

Mark: Cool.

Kevin: That's what we're looking for, fun.

Mark: That sounds great. Yes, it's all about fun. Tell us your first one. It sounds pretty cool. I'll let you share.

Bonnie: It's a Nordic Ware Haunted Skull Cakelet Pan. I don't know why they call it cakelet. For the rest of us oldies, it's a muffin pan. I don't know if-

Kevin: Cakelet.

Mark: Cakelet.

Bonnie: I guess-

Kevin: You can charge more for a cakelet than you can for a muffin.

Bonnie: Yeah. It also-

Mark: Yeah, exactly.

Bonnie: It's slightly bigger than a muffin. It's a skull-shaped mold that you can make ice, because it's... I think what they're trying to do is so it's not just muffins, that's why they don't want to call it a muffin pan.

Mark: Oh, I see.

Bonnie: You can make popsicles from it. you can make... They say crispy treats. I think they mean Rice Krispies Treats. You can make pizza rolls, Mexican ginger skulls for Day of the Dead and obviously little cakes, but you can also make meatloaf.

Bonnie: I have not done the meatloaf yet, but I watched this great... There's a great goth YouTuber out of Kansas called Jade the Libra. She shows step by step how to make a meatloaf skull from this cake pan. That's one of the reasons I got it, because I was like, "Okay, I need to..."

Bonnie: Since the pandemic, everybody's been cooking more at home. I've been trying to wean myself off of Postmates because I'm very lazy. And because I don't have any roommates, it's just me, I tend to not eat the healthiest because I don't have anyone raising an eyebrow at me when I order food. So I was like, "Okay, maybe if I get one of these things, I'll make a vegan meatloaf or something."

Bonnie: I mean, truth be known, I'm probably just going to make red velvet cupcakes. They're not going to be any healthier than before. I like the idea of skull as a mold for things.

Mark: Yeah, definitely.

Bonnie: It's pretty cheap. It's 30 dollars on Amazon. I got mine at Target. If you can get to Target, now is the time to get all the Halloween stuff if it hasn't been picked over yet. If they have it for sale there, it might be a tad cheaper at Target.

Kevin: It's a little tray with six skull molds.

Bonnie: Yep.

Kevin: Is it half of it, or is it a full mold with the back as well as the front?

Bonnie: I think it's got a flat back to it. I'm not sure. It's not like those silicone trays where you get two of them and you just fill it up and then do back to back. I think it's flat on one side, which makes sense because you don't want your food rolling off the plate. I think it's just flat on one side.

Mark: Is it metal or silicone, this one?

Bonnie: Let me double-check. I believe-

Kevin: Well, is it stiff or does it flexible?

Bonnie: I have mine underneath a bunch of pots and pans or else I'd get it, and then you'd have this cornucopia of things hitting each other.

Kevin: It's ambient sound. [inaudible 00:04:42].

Bonnie: It's aluminum, or aluminum.

Kevin: Aluminum.

Mark: As they say-

Bonnie: In the UK.

Mark: ... over the pond, yeah. Okay.

Bonnie: But if you go to the Amazon page, it's funny. They have all these stylized links and of course, one of them is red velvet cake. It looks like Red Skull from Marvel.

Mark: Cool.

Bonnie: It looks like Hydra.

Mark: I love it.

Bonnie: Yeah, it's pretty intense. If you do sugar skulls for Day of the Dead, you can decorate it with different-colored frosting and stuff. That's a little bit more playful.

Bonnie: I collect a lot of Day of the Dead stuff just because I like how death is celebrated. It's not macabre. You're celebrating your loved ones that have passed. I'm more on that spectrum of death, but I do love horror films. So I think I'm also being slightly hypocritical-

Mark: Yeah, on both of them, yeah.

Bonnie: ...because I also like... Yeah.

Mark: Did you like the Disney movie about Day of the Dead? I can't remember the name.

Bonnie: I did. I thought that was so sweet.

Mark: It was really good.

Bonnie: It was really good. The music was great. I think it really showed the culture well. A lot of Mexican Americans worked on that movie, so it wasn't appropriating anything.

Mark: Right.

Bonnie: It was definitely more of a informational if you don't know anything about that culture. I grew up around that culture in the Midwest. We have a lot of Latinx people and Mexican Americans, and so I grew up with that, knowing about it, but not everyone does.

Mark: Did you see that movie, Kevin?

Kevin: I saw a Coco.

Mark: Yeah, that's it, right?

Bonnie: Yeah, that's it.

Mark: Coco.

Kevin: The Pixar movie, Coco.

Mark: Yeah.

Bonnie: Yeah, yeah.

Kevin: Oh, yeah. It was fabulous. Fabulous.

Mark: Yeah, it was so good.

Bonnie: It's really good. I feel like we'll start seeing more of that, hopefully as more things get greenlit that are diversity-based and not just white dude stories.

Mark: Right.

Bonnie: Hopefully, we'll see more of that culture and stuff, not just in kid stuff, but adult stuff as well. I'm all for it, for sure. But yeah, so that's my first tool.

Mark: Good. Okay. Well, let's move on down the list.

Bonnie: Okay, second tool. They're called silicone trivets. They look like a large rubber coasters for hot... It's basically you put hot pans on it. If you need to move something hot from the stove to the kitchen table, dining room table, you put that on there and it keeps kitchen surfaces and table surfaces from burning if you have something super hot like a casserole or something. But these are such a cool design. They almost look like Spirograph designs.

Kevin: Yeah, they do.

Bonnie: That I got it for decoration. I was going to buy a bunch and put them on my bathroom wall because I like different designs for that, and I don't want to do wallpaper. And they're pretty cheap. You get three for 12 bucks. I got mine off of Amazon.

Bonnie: But they're also perfect for opening really tough-to-budge jar lids, which I have the upper body strength of a Keebler elf. I have no... Not a Lord of the Rings elf, but a Keebler elf. I have-

Kevin: Right, it's completely different.

Bonnie: ... enough muscle power to shove cookies into my mouth, but I can't open anything. I have zero weightlifting skills. And because I live alone, I can't open anything. I don't want to go to my neighbors because that just seems sad.

Kevin: Can you open this jar of peanut butter for me, please?

Bonnie: Yeah, and I have a lot of jars to open. You could do that trick. There is a trick. There's a science-ey trick where you can put the whole jar and the jar lid under some hot water and then you hit the edge of it with a butter knife or something. You hit the edges of it all the way around and then you can open it. There's something to do with physics, science, I don't know. But if you don't want to do that, you get one of these trivets, these silicone rubber coasters, and you just put it on top of the lid and just-

Kevin: You create grip.

Bonnie: You cover the lid and then it opens. You just turn it with that, because you have extra grippage. That's why I got it. But they're very cool designs because they are like Spirograph design.

Bonnie: For those of you listening who don't know what Spirograph is, I feel sad, first of all, because that's a childhood thing from the '60s, '70s and '80s that they were these disks that you basically put... They were different shapes and they had holes in them. I don't know if I can describe this properly.

Kevin: They were like gears and so-

Bonnie: Yeah, they look like little steampunk gears. You put them inside a hoop, like a circle that was a hoop. Yeah, I guess that's a good way to put it. Everything's on white paper, and the you use a pen into one of the holes in the gear. And then you work the gear all the way around inside the hoop or around the hoop, you could do around it as well, and you get these really cool almost atomic designs. I don't know how to describe them. They're very-

Kevin: They're all radial. They're all radial and circular.

Bonnie: Yeah. They're really pretty, too. When animated gifs were first a thing in... I'm going to age myself. Remember GIFBuilder? [inaudible 00:10:13] that come out in 1997? It's called GIFBuilder. You could put a series of images and make an animated gif. You could make your own animated gif, not like how you can do it now super easy, but you had to have a bunch of different images and then you put it together, kind of like stop motion. I would make these stop motion Spirograph animated gifs. I'll send you some if you want to check them on.

Mark: Cool.

Bonnie: They're on my website, grrl.com, which is G-R-R-L.com, grrl.com, that I've had since-

Mark: Forever.

Bonnie: ... '96, '95. Yeah, I still have the same email address. It's so funny when people are like, "Oh, I forgot your email address." I'm like, "I've had bonnie@grrl.com since 1996. If you can't remember that, that's sad."

Bonnie: But yeah, so I had those... Because I have a eBay collector's section on grrl.com of things I would collect when eBay first started. I collect big-eyed dolls from the '60s and really creepy haunted puppets and a lot of... Like Pee-wee Herman dolls and Spirograph, and then I collected a lot of... Remember Cooties?

Mark: Yeah.

Bonnie: The plastic bug game?

Mark: The grasshopper toy.

Bonnie: Yeah. So I collected a bunch of those and then would decorate my apartment with them on the wall. It looked like I had a Cooties infestation in my apartment.

Bonnie: I always treat my apartment like an art installation. It's always for my own benefit. No one else cares.

Mark: [inaudible 00:11:42].

Kevin: What happened to those decorations from that time?

Bonnie: Well, that was my first apartment in San Francisco in the '90s. I mean, I've been through so many apartments.

Kevin: I know, but did you leave all that with the apartment when you left? Or did you-

Bonnie: Oh, no. I want the security department back. The security deposit, it's like when you're that young, it's life or death for you to get that back.

Mark: Yeah, exactly.

Kevin: Right.

Bonnie: It's funny because Amy Sedaris and Todd Oldham called it personality tax, where if you want to do strange things to your apartment... I mean, she's lived in the same apartment in Chelsea for years. But if you want to do fun things with your apartment, you just have to assume you're never going to get that back.

Mark: Right.

Kevin: Right. So you still have the Cooties stuff?

Bonnie: I don't. I think I gave them to a friend that had kids. I regift a lot. I mean, I have a pretty small apartment in North Hollywood right now. I think it's less than a thousand square feet. It's a loft. But if you look at my Instagram, it looks like I live inside of a bookstore because I have like 23 bookcases.

Mark: Oh my God.

Bonnie: Because I color code everything, it looks nice.

Kevin: You say color code meaning everything is arranged by color, or that you have-

Bonnie: Yeah.

Kevin: Okay.

Bonnie: Yeah. All my books, all of them are... Except for my comics because I would never be able to find the comics. It's a lot easier to find books than comics if you color code.

Mark: Yeah.

Kevin: Yeah, that's really tough. I did go to a bookstore that was color coded and man, it's beautiful but I could not find anything.

Bonnie: Adobe Books in San Francisco.

Kevin: Yeah, that's where it was. I went to it.

Bonnie: In the Mission District.

Kevin: Yeah.

Bonnie: I think they're long gone. I don't know if they still exist.

Kevin: While they were doing that, it was like this is wonderful. This is horrible.

Bonnie: Well, they were also a bookstore if you'd ever been in there before they color coded, they were the kind of bookstore it was like good luck finding anything because it was just books on the floor. I think it was kind of organized like a regular bookstore. I don't think they did Dewey Decimal System, which I have done my organization of my books and records like that before. That's because I'm a third generation library kid. Both my mom and my grandmother were librarians, so we learned Dewey Decimal very quickly and very sternly, so I knew it.

Bonnie: But yeah, Adobe Books was all over the place with their books. It was kind of fun if you're a book collector and a book lover, because I love bookstores like that because you feel like you're treasure hunting. You feel like you find some really cool stuff.

Bonnie: Iliad Books in North Hollywood is like that. That's a really famous used bookstore, rare bookstore. Everyone that's ever in LA should visit Iliad Books.

Kevin: Absolutely.

Bonnie: I know everyone says go to Last Bookstore, which is also very pretty, but Iliad is a rare and used bookstore run by book lovers. They just went through a redesign, but if you watch I think it's the latest season of American Horror Story called Red Tide, there is a scene where one of the characters, before she finds success as a romance writer, is having a very limited attended book reading. I was like, "I can relate to that."

Mark: Oh, me too.

Bonnie: And it's in Iliad. Oh my God, I've had book signings as an author where just two people showed up, and one of them showed up on the wrong day. They thought I was somebody else.

Mark: That's good.

Kevin: I've had ones where zero showed up.

Bonnie: Yeah, that's fun. That's real fun, especially when you're at a convention and you're sitting next to really popular authors who have a line-

Kevin: Oh, yeah.

Mark: That's classic.

Bonnie: ... all the way down the hallway. And then you see the pity in the eyes of the people waiting in line as they look at you-

Mark: Oh my God, yeah.

Bonnie: ... trying to figure out who you are and why you're siting there.

Kevin: Totally.

Bonnie: I don't miss that because of COVID. I have books come out every year, and I had a book come out last year and a book come... Two books last year and one book this year. I was like, "I'm so glad I don't have to do that."

Kevin: Yeah, I know.

Bonnie: Everyone thinks it's a really cool and ego-boosting thing to do because we're all used to seeing our favorite authors and how big of lines they have. I know that Murder, She Wrote ruined my ideal of what book... It basically gave me unrealistic ideals as an author, thinking I, like Jessica Fletcher, would be put up in the presidential suite, that I would be invited to very posh and expensive hotels and that I would have... That NYU would offer me a professorship. No. None of that's...

Mark: It doesn't happen.

Kevin: I had a couple of those experiences where one or two people show up. That was why in my last big book I decided to do podcast. I had a rule. It was very simple. It was like if you've done more than three episodes of your podcast, I will show up on your podcast.

Bonnie: Wow.

Kevin: It was superior than having two people show up at a bookstore. It was far more effective just to appear on anybody's podcast if they had more than three episodes because the audience was always going to be larger than the two people who would show up at the bookstore.

Bonnie: Yeah, I will say the new series with Dean Martin and... Not Dean Martin. As if. As if.

Mark: [inaudible 00:17:39].

Bonnie: Steve Martin. Steve Martin and who's the other guy?

Mark: Martin Short?

Bonnie: Martin Short. Martin Short and Selma Gomez, the Only Murders in the Building where they are amateur detectives and they are true crime podcast junkies. They decided to start their own podcast, which was great because you have the boomer level with the two old guys and then the millennial with Selena Gomez.

Bonnie: They start a podcast called that, Only Murders in Our Building, because there's a murder that happens in their building and they want to solve it. So they start a podcast like the ones they love to compete with the big guys. I think they get 17 followers and they think they're a huge success. I was just like, "I can relate to that. I can relate to that."

Mark: Totally.

Bonnie: Anyway.

Mark: Is that a recommended show?

Bonnie: Oh, yeah. It's on Hulu if you have Hulu.

Mark: Okay, we do.

Bonnie: I highly recommend it. I don't want to spoil it too much, but there's some great cameos from other people from theater. Martin Short's character plays a retired... Or I guess I shouldn't say retired. He's trying to make it big again on Broadway, but he's that guy that came up through Broadway and he has too many Broadway stories that no one wants to hear. You know what I mean?

Mark: Uh-huh.

Bonnie: Like the Stephen Sondheim stories or whatever. He just has too many. And then Steve Martin plays a actor who was on a famous detective cop show called Brazos. Certain people know him from that, but he hasn't done a TV show in ages. Selena Gomez is just random millennial, but she's got secrets, but she's also very sarcastic. She also accepts their friendship, which is sweet to see a millennial-boomer friendships happen.

Bonnie: And if you love true crime, there's so many shout-outs to true crime. I will say there's a surprise cameo of someone who's a very successful true crime podcaster who... It's kind of based off the My Favorite Murder podcast, which is my favorite true crime podcast. It's very funny, the cameos they have, actor cameos they have in the show. I highly recommend it.

Kevin: I want to confess some ignorance here. What are true crime podcasts? That sounds like a genre.

Bonnie: It is, it is.

Kevin: And the genre is true crime meaning that each podcast will be about a history of crime?

Bonnie: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kevin: Okay.

Mark: Like Serial, Kevin. Do you remember that one?

Kevin: Yeah, I remember Serial.

Mark: [inaudible 00:20:30].

Bonnie: You know how 20/20 and 48 Hours-

Kevin: Nope.

Bonnie: ... and those type of news shows?

Kevin: No, I've never seen those.

Bonnie: Are you serious? 20/20?

Kevin: No, I never-

Bonnie: The TV show.

Kevin: I don't have TV.

Bonnie: It's been on since like the '80s.

Mark: Kevin doesn't watch broadcast TV. Never had.

Kevin: I haven't had TV. I never had TV. We haven't had TV in our house.

Bonnie: Oh, you're one of those.

Kevin: Yes.

Bonnie: You're one of those people.

Kevin: I'm one of those people who had internet from the very, very beginning, but no TV.

Bonnie: Okay.

Kevin: And the first Netflix subscriber, but no TV. Yeah, I'm one of those.

Bonnie: Okay. Well, Netflix counts because Netflix has a lot of documentaries that about-

Kevin: Sure.

Bonnie: ... crimes that have happened. You know the Ted Bundy Tapes, that's true crime.

Kevin: But the podcast is like every week, they would dissect-

Bonnie: A new case. A new case and dissect it, yeah.

Kevin: Okay.

Bonnie: A lot of them are cases that are cold cases that have yet to be solved. That's the attraction as a true crime fan, is that you think if you just look at this case long enough and dissect it and hear all the different sides, that maybe you could be the one that solves it.

Mark: [crosstalk 00:21:37].

Bonnie: You could crack the case. It's funny because that is something that comes up in Only Murders in This Building because there is a detective who's just sick of true crime people trying to butt their way into her cases because they think they know everything because they listen to true crime podcasts.

Mark: Oh yeah, that happens.

Bonnie: Well, it's like Jessica Fletcher, right? She's not a real detective. She just writes about murder. Or Castle with Nathan Fillion, which is very much like Murder, She Wrote. It's all about people who think they can solve things because the cops must've missed something, by I can figure it out. That's what true crime is.

Bonnie: Some true crime is about that. Sometimes true crime podcasts will dissect a historical murder mystery. Bailey Sarian, who's one of my favorite YouTubers, she started out as a beauty tutorial person... And she's gorgeous. I mean, she's one of those people that does makeup professionally as a makeup artist. She decided, because she loved true

crime, that every Monday she would turn her usual beauty tutorial YouTube, which was very popular, into Makeup Murder Mondays.

Kevin: Oh my gosh. That transition, that is bold.

Bonnie: It's bold, but it's made her very famous and very lucrative. She gets millions and millions of views on these things. It's literally her with no makeup on at the start putting on makeup. And if you're interested in what she's putting on, she lists the makeup in her description in the video. But she'll go step by step, very in depth, talking about one true crime case. Sometimes-

Kevin: As she's putting on makeup.

Bonnie: Yeah, yeah.

Kevin: Oh my gosh, that is brilliant.

Mark: It's so niche.

Bonnie: Yeah, and she's very funny.

Kevin: Is she whispering? Does she do ASMR?

Bonnie: No.

Kevin: She should.

Bonnie: She's very funny and very personable. She could be a little sarcastic.

Bonnie: But one of the things she does, which I really commend her for, and I think My Favorite Murder podcast which is done by two female comedians as well, I think that's... What they do is they don't celebrate the serial killer. They don't glamify it. They don't glamorize serial killers. They are about the victims.

Bonnie: But with Bailey, sometimes she picks true murder cases that are just so off the wall. One of them was, I think, about Aquafina, which was about a perfume that was made by this perfumist in France, I believe, in the 1700s, 1800s. That perfume was actually a poison in a perfume bottle that she would sell to women who were beaten by their husbands, because you couldn't get divorces back then.

Mark: Oh my God.

Bonnie: They would poison their husbands with this poison that was made but sold as a perfume. I was like, "That's genius. Why don't I know about this?" She delves into a lot of weird 1920s, 1930s murder mysteries that you might not know about. It's not just recent ones. It's not like just the girl gone stuff. It's new stuff. I mean, old stuff. I've learned a lot. And so does My Favorite Murder. They'll go into that stuff, too.

Bonnie: True crime's weird. I think if you love murder mysteries, fictional murder mysteries, that it's not too big of a step to then go into true crime because you want to know about why there's so many unsolved cases, why there's so many cold cases.

Bonnie: I write for Hunt a Killer, which is fictional murders. It's a dream job because I plan elaborate murders for these games. They're marketed as escape rooms in a box. It's a RPG game.

Bonnie: It's a team who writes it. It's almost like a TV writers room. We use real world poisons and stuff. Not in real life. We don't test death on each other. It's not a how-to. These games are not how to kill people. We do murder mysteries.

Mark: That are realistic.

Bonnie: Well, the cool thing about these games is it's like you're a detective that gets suspended, but you take all the information with you and make a murder wall on your wall and try to figure out the murder mystery using autopsy reports and witness statements and clues.

Mark: How fun.

Bonnie: Yeah. And it's all different things. We have physical clues and we have a lot of different ciphers and puzzles to figure out.

Kevin: And what's it is? This is called-

Bonnie: Hunt a Killer.

Kevin: Hunt a Killer. And this is-

Mark: And you get a package in the mail like...

Bonnie: Yeah. You can get it like Loot Crate, where you get a box... If it's a game that's many seasons, kind of like a TV show has many episodes, then each episode is a box and it leads up to the end of the story. Or you can get an all-in-one story in one box. Those are for sale on Amazon and Barnes & Noble, things like that. If you go to huntakiller.com, you can see all of them.

Bonnie: But the true crime stuff has suddenly now become important to my job. That's why I'm more obsessed with it than I should be. But here's a good segue. Here's a good segue.

Kevin: Yeah, dusting gloves.

Bonnie: If you decide to kill someone, don't forget to do it using dusting gloves. If you're going to murder someone, gloves are good to wear. But dusting gloves? Even better, because then you wipe away all the evidence.

Mark: As you do the job.

Bonnie: Yeah.

Mark: What are they?

Kevin: Yeah, what's a dusting glove?

Bonnie: Oh, they're super soft. They're made out of microfiber, which is ideal type of fiber for dusting. You don't want to use... You know how a lot of us have used old socks and rags for dusting? Microfiber actually picks up the dust and holds onto it, so it's not like you're just wiping dust all over the place. These are actual gloves you wear. They're almost like mittens. They're super soft and you wear them. I'm all about the dusting, so I wear these gloves, but then I also have dusting slippers.

Mark: Oh, interesting.

Bonnie: I wear them on my feet.

Kevin: Should you have those dust things that that they use for silicon wafers, the whole bunny suit?

Bonnie: I was thinking about that. I was like, "Why don't I just get a whole hazmat suit> Then I could just roll around on the floor."

Kevin: Great. Yeah, microfiber the whole thing, then you could-

Bonnie: Yeah.

Kevin: If you have the gloves, that means you could just go through your bookshelves and just pick up a book.

Bonnie: Oh, yeah.

Kevin: And then you don't have to dust it. You just have to hold it.

Bonnie: Yeah, that's why I like them, is because you can wear them and then you can get into corners that maybe your other dusting apparatuses can't get into. But they're also perfect for dusting houseplants. If you have a lot of houseplants that have fragile leaves but you need to get the dust off of them-

Kevin: Massage them.

Bonnie: Yeah. A Monstera can rip easily, so you have to be careful of those leaves. Not so much snake plant or pothos, but you still have to dust all those off.

Bonnie: I live in Southern California where it's dusty all the... It might as well be 1930s Kansas because it's like Dust Bowl central, or Dubai dust storm. It's always dusty in my apartment. I'm always using these things.

Mark: LA is dusty.

Bonnie: It's just dusty. It's not like San Francisco where I lived predominantly most of my adult life just because it's great, but it got too expensive so I moved down here. But honestly, San Francisco you have to worry about mold and mildew. And then in LA, you just have to worry about-

Kevin: Dust.

Bonnie: ... dust and fire.

Mark: Yeah, exactly.

Kevin: We have earthquakes and mold. You have dust and fire. Okay.

Bonnie: Yeah, yeah. But I will say these gloves are very comfortable. They're machine washable, so as soon as you're done dusting-

Kevin: Oh, I see. Oh, that's brilliant. So you just put them in the wash.

Bonnie: All microfiber is. If you have microfiber frags or sock booties, I use that for just... I use those just to wear around the house every day because then it picks up dust on my floor.

Mark: I love it. What a cool idea.

Bonnie: And they're cheap. They're cheap. They're like 10 for... I'm sorry, three for 10 bucks. I think the footies are even cheaper. But yeah, if you can get these gloves, you'll never go back to regular dusting again.

Kevin: Okay, so we have just a few minutes. You should tell us about your fourth-

Bonnie: Okay, the fourth one's the best one.

Kevin: Yes, I think so.

Bonnie: It's a five-foot tall posable life-sized skeleton. You can get these anywhere, but Target right now has it for the cheapest, for 40 bucks. It's about 60 inches in height, 15.5 inches width, 6.5 inches, I think, diameter. I mean, though, it's five foot tall. Just imagine any of your friends or family that are five foot tall. That's how tall the skeleton is. It's really fun because it's posable.

Mark: Cool.

Bonnie: The ankle joints, knee joints, I'm staring at my skeleton as I'm saying this, the elbow and the shoulder joints are moveable. Hand joints are moveable, too. The skull itself, you can turn around. The jaw is also moveable, so you can have the mouth shut or the mouth open so it's like, "Hey."

Bonnie: It comes looking like a regular skeleton. You can hang it. That comes with a little hoop on the skull. I cut that off. I just have him sitting in my living room, staring at me. I put googly eyes in the eye sockets so it's extra, extra awake.

Mark: You got to send us a picture of that.

Bonnie: Oh yeah. In the document I filled out for you, I have my Instagram.

Kevin: Yeah, the Instagram.

Mark: Oh, okay.

Kevin: Right, right, right.

Bonnie: If you go to my Instagram, it's @bonniegrrl. It's just my name, Bonnie, and then G-R-R-L. You could see many, many, many, many pictures of this skeleton just hanging out.

Kevin: In the old days, these life-sized skeletons used to be incredibly expensive.

Bonnie: Oh, yeah.

Kevin: Because they were anatomical models and whatnot.

Bonnie: Oh, I have one of those, too. I have a medical-grade one.

Kevin: Right, but these are-

Bonnie: On a stand.

Kevin: ... almost as good, right?

Bonnie: I mean, they're not as detailed. The medical one that I have is on a stand. It's like the kind you would see if you had a science class in high school or college or pre-med, so it's accurate. It also comes with stickers so you can label everything because those skeletons are really for teaching models.

Kevin: Sure.

Bonnie: I got my first one on Amazon. It was on sale for I think a hundred bucks or something, because they're usually a lot more expensive. It's just so funny because when I moved

from San Francisco to LA... Let me just tell you I have a lot of taxidermy, too, so the movers really were nervous.

Mark: Oh, man.

Bonnie: They thought I was a bookstore at first because of all the books and the bookcases. And I had no bed. I had a futon that I was leaving behind so I had no bed, just books, dead animals and skeletons and scary puppets and dolls and things.

Bonnie: I remember when one of the boxes broke open and the skeleton fell out, there was this long pause. The movers looked at me and then looked at the skeleton, looked at me. I'm remember saying this so cheerfully: "Oh, it's not real."

Bonnie: I said it a little too quickly and they're like, "Uh-huh, uh-huh." I'm like, "No, it's not real, see?" I'm trying to prove to them. I'm like, "See? If you lick it, your tongue won't stick to it. If it's a real bone, your tongue will stick to it because human bones are porous." The more I tried to explain why it wasn't real, the creepier I sounded. So I will say if you move with skeletons, just make sure they are wrapped in bubble wrap. Don't just put a skeleton in a box. They don't... Yeah.

Bonnie: Yeah, so originally I did have the medical one. I still do. I bought it because of the British comedy series The Young Ones.

Mark: Oh, yeah.

Bonnie: I don't know if you ever watched it.

Mark: Yeah, absolutely.

Bonnie: It's a comedy series but Vyvyan, who's a punk rocker, is a med student. He has the skeleton, the exact same medical skeleton, right next to their refrigerator. And different episodes, you'll see him decorate it with different things. I'm like, "That's genius." That's why I bought it.

Mark: So cool.

Bonnie: Yeah. But I do highly recommend a posable skeleton. It's a lot cheaper. They're usually 40 bucks. You can find them pretty now everywhere because of Halloween, but you can find them at any store. Online, you could probably find them cheap. Party City has them, too. Everybody has them.

Kevin: I saw our friend Matt Haughey, Instagram, and a neighbor of his who had nine-foot skeleton. That's what I want.

Bonnie: Here's the one you really want.

Mark: Wow.

Bonnie: It's not the nine-foot one. It's the 12-foot one.

Kevin: Okay.

Bonnie: It's a 12-foot skeleton. I almost bought it. My apartment is too small. I almost bought it. But I realized because I lived in a loft, I'd either be staring at its crotch the whole time or if I was in bed, it goes all the way up so you see this skull staring in at me while I sleep. I thought, This would be funny until I forget I have this. And then it's not going to be funny. But it's only 300 dollars at Home Depot. It's actually very [crosstalk 00:35:33].

Kevin: Oh, Home Depot sells it? Oh my gosh.

Bonnie: Oh, yeah. You have to get a U-Haul though, because the box is so big.

Mark: Because it's so big?

Bonnie: And you have to still put it together. Even though you have to assemble it, the box is still very, very, very big.

Mark: Oh, man.

Kevin: Oh my gosh.

Bonnie: If you're going to get it at Home Depot, I think Home Depot delivers, but it might be cheaper to do a U-Haul. But they're going like hotcakes. If you're on Facebook, I highly recommend joining, I think it's called, The Giant Skeleton Club-

Kevin: Oh my gosh.

Bonnie: ... or the 12 Foot Skeleton Club. I'll send you the URL. It's so much fun to see what people are doing with them. It's just hilarious.

Bonnie: They have one where a bunch of little skeletons are holding up the big skeleton. And then there's one where the giant 12-foot skeleton is walking a ton of dog skeletons like he's a dog walker. Someone also dressed him up as Mario from Mario Bros. There's one that's dressed up like the Grim Reaper.

Bonnie: And these things are tall. When I say 12 feet, you don't think it's tall. It's tall.

Kevin: It's tall. No, it's tall.

Bonnie: It's tall.

Kevin: I think this is a good place to end.

Bonnie: Good idea, good idea.

Kevin: Oh my gosh, this has been-

Bonnie: Now that I've officially ruined Cool Tools talking about dead things.

Kevin: No, no. No, you've upped our level [crosstalk 00:37:00].

Bonnie: I've turned it into Cool Murder Tools.

Mark: Yeah, murders, poison, skeletons. We're on topic here.

Bonnie: Okay, good.

Kevin: When we get to 12-foot skeletons that you get at Home Depot [inaudible 00:37:13], that's like, "Okay, I was not expecting that one."

Bonnie: That's a new level.

Kevin: Yeah.

Bonnie: That's dedication to Halloween right there.

Kevin: Yeah, well.

Bonnie: I think because we were all sequestered for so long because of COVID quarantine, it's made people a little loopy. I'm one of those people. I got very Shining-like. I bought all this furniture, thinking all of friends are going to come visit when I first moved to LA, and then COVID quarantine happened and I have all this empty chairs. I just filled it with creepy ventriloquist puppets and now a skeleton. I've completely gone Norman Bates. I need to reclaim my spot in society so I don't go completely insane.

Bonnie: But I think because of quarantine and COVID, people are... They want to celebrate Halloween to its fullest because we didn't really get to do that last year.

Kevin: That's true, that's true. So our contribution to this was this week, my wife and I watched in five nights Squid Game, the first season.

Bonnie: Oh, it's so good. It's so good.

Kevin: It's like oh my gosh, that's my contribution to the Halloween spirit.

Mark: Don't ruin it for us. We're on our fourth episode.

Bonnie: I won't, I won't. It's on Netflix. If you haven't seen it yet, start watching it. It's more bizarre than you think it's going to be.

Kevin: Yeah, exactly. It's really great.

Mark: Oh my God, we're loving it. And very well made. Good acting, great sets and good story.

Kevin: Did you do the dub or the subtitle?

Mark: We're doing the subtitles. We're purists.

Kevin: We did the dub, and the dub was pretty good.

Mark: Good.

Bonnie: Here's the thing. I do both the dub and subtitles, but I'm-

Kevin: At the same time?

Bonnie: Yeah. I'm of the age where I put subtitles on English things.

Mark: Oh, yeah. We do that, too. We have to.

Bonnie: I have to because people whisper, or I don't quite understand what people are saying. I don't want to be that old person that goes and says, "What did he say? What's he talking about?" So I watch it with subtitles.

Bonnie: But here's the fun thing. If you do watch something that's in another language and you know the language, it's fun to watch the subtitles because they don't always match up.

Kevin: Yeah.

Mark: Yeah, they never do.

Bonnie: They never do, especially Russian stuff never does. But if you watch... What was the one with Natasha Lyonne that was like Groundhog Day? Russian Doll?

Mark: Russian Doll.

Bonnie: The cool thing with that, their music and their end credits, it's just so well curated, but one of them is a Pussy Riot song that's in Russian, but the subtitles are in English. You actually finally know what they're saying because-

Mark: Oh, cool.

Bonnie: ... they never sing in English.

Mark: Yeah, that's great.

Bonnie: But it's also good because I watch a lot of things in different languages with subtitles on just so I can learn bad words, like swear words, because there's just certain swear words that are best said in Russian or Spanish or Italian. It's good.

Kevin: But in Squid Game, you watched it with subtitles and dubbed.

Bonnie: I did. And then I'll probably watch it again in its original language with subtitles. I just finished Chestnut Man. I highly recommend that as well on Netflix. That's a Danish murder mystery show. That's very creepy. I watched it both in Dutch and also English.

Bonnie: I watch things twice just because I always think I'm going to miss something. I'm that person.

Kevin: Okay. Well, this has been fantastic. Thank you for the whole tour and for your picks and for all all of a sudden this stuff we talked about, which is just as interesting as any of the tools that we're talking about.

Bonnie: Oh, good. I mean, sometime if-

Mark: [crosstalk 00:40:54]. It was really fun.

Bonnie: I will say if you dare to have me back on, if you want me back on, if I haven't ruined our friendship-

Mark: Of course not.

Bonnie: If you ever want to do a Cool Tools based on murder, I can-

Kevin: You're the girl. You're the girl.

Mark: You're the go-to.

Bonnie: I can tell you which tools you are best used for killing, but also hiding a body because that's the one thing killers always forget.

Mark: That's the tough thing.

Bonnie: Killing is easy. It's getting away with it that's hard.

Kevin: Exactly.

Bonnie: You have to figure out where you're going to bury or dismantle or hide the body for years. That's not easy. I'm your girl if you want to do a special tools episode.

Kevin: All right.

Mark: That sounds so great.

Bonnie: But I should say for entertainment purposes only.

Kevin: Educational purposes only. Yes, absolutely.

Bonnie: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kevin: Yeah, yeah.

Bonnie: I'm not suggesting anyone murder anything. There's always a nonviolent solution for pretty much everything.

Mark: Absolutely.

Kevin: That's true.

Mark: Yes. It's all in good fun.

Kevin: Okay, well you certainly killed it today. Thank you.

Bonnie: Yay. Thank you.

Mark: Wah-wah.

Bonnie: Wah-wah. Thank you for having me on.

Mark: All right.

Kevin: All right.

Bonnie: I had a lot of fun, so thank you.

Kevin: All right.

Mark: That was so much fun.

Kevin: Thank you.

Mark: Hey, everybody. It's your host, Mark. I wanted to thank you for listening to the Cool Tools show. I also wanted to let you know that we've got a lot more going on at Cool Tools than just this podcast. We also have the Cool Tools website, which has a new tool review every day. You can get there by going to cool-tools.org. We also have four different newsletters that you can subscribe to. You can subscribe to those from the Cool Tools page. We have this podcast that you're listening to right now. We also have a YouTube

channel where we review tools. Check that YouTube channel out by going to youtube.com/cooltools.

Mark: One of the things I'd like to ask you is if you're really enjoying everything that we are producing, go to our Patreon page and support us there. You can sign up and give us as little as one dollar a month. That would mean a lot to us.

Mark: The money that we get from Patreon goes towards a lot of things: we transcribe our podcast interviews so that you can read them online. We pay for our editing of our podcast and for our videos. We pay our contributors. We have video production costs. We have equipment costs. We have posting costs. The money you give us on Patreon also goes to support Cool Tools Lab. Anything you give is a huge help.

Mark: One of the things we do is if you are a contributor at Patreon, we'll give you a shout-out on air, and so I have a few people here to thank this week: [Mark Liomage 00:43:39], [Mike Agate 00:43:41], [Monty Zukowski 00:43:42], [Patrick James McNelly 00:43:43], [Robert Cohen 00:43:45], Scott, [Spence Lloyd 00:43:48], [Steve Avery 00:43:48], [Steve Golden 00:43:48], [Steve Lavine 00:43:48], [Tom Hess 00:43:48], [William Phillips 00:43:48], [Aaron Nipper 00:43:48], [Dorab Patel 00:43:48], [Gwen Mercer 00:43:48], Jay Walker, [Jeff Bonair 00:43:48], [Ryan Jarrell 00:43:48], [Pat Daly 00:43:48], Patrick Kennedy, [Troy Wallit 00:43:48], [Mike Camaree 00:43:48], [Nicole Harkin 00:43:48], [Kim Yusef 00:43:48], [Scott Reed 00:43:48]. Thanks all of you for supporting Cool Tools. If you would like to have a shout-out, go over to the Patreon page and sign up.

Mark: Thanks for listening to the Cool Tools podcast. We'll see you next week.