

Favorite Student

A+, I mean, it's a literary masterpiece, he's got a serious knack for mystery. I'm almost tempted to send some of his papers to a publishing firm, he could really have a serious career. My top student. Easily.

His writing talent excuses any of his misdemeanors in my mind, maybe I shouldn't pick favorites but I'd be shitting you all if I tried to say I didn't.

I always save his papers for last, just to tie the grading together. I want to end my writing on a positive note, especially today. My neighbor went missing last night, I feel like it's almost my fault. I remember watching her leave her house in that stupid pink blouse that nobody ever had the guts to tell her looked terrible, her hair curled in such a damaging way that I almost had to laugh. *She's getting too old for this.*

I walked out with my dog as she went by, waving a little "hello" to her. I could tell, even in darkness, there was lipstick on her teeth. Truly, I hated the woman, her house wasn't nearly big enough and her walls weren't nearly thick enough to shield her neighbors from all of her sexual doings. I suppose I should thank her for my love of music, something I only truly discovered after purchasing headphones to drown the cooze out.

I should've asked where she was going, or maybe called the police when I never saw her come home with the nightly man. I brushed it off as her going to the man's house, but now she's an official missing person and for once I'm actually excited to grade the creative writing pieces to avoid the guilt.

Probably around half past one Saturday morning when I finally made it to his paper. I took an excited sip of coffee and began the read, trying to keep my mentality as that of a teacher and not just a reader. That didn't last long. My earbuds went on the floor, every light in the small house is on, I can't stop pacing. What. The. Fuck.

Concerned is an understatement. Maybe I should watch the news more. It's really not every day that you read a perfect description of your nextdoor neighbor in one of your students' murder mysteries. He got it down to the lipstick on her teeth. I can hardly call that coincidence.

A+.

What do you do in that situation? Call the authorities? Call his parents? Call the school? Call my mother? For God's sake, I feel like a fucking alibi. If I could just keep myself calm for long enough to come up with a reasonable solution, the problem would be solved. *But what is the reasonable solution in question?*

I decided to sit on it until Monday, when I handed back the assignments, maybe I should have done something more, but I'm just a college professor, admittedly, I don't quite have it in me.

It almost feels like my sanity is deteriorating, I could very well be teaching a murderer. But, at the end of the day, how is that my problem? Okay. It's definitely my problem. *But what am I supposed to do?!*

He's a gifted writer, truly, reading his pieces is a true pleasure. Maybe I should just hold out until parent teacher conferences. Which isn't a thing I do.

As far as I'm aware, he lives off campus, so as long as no students get hurt, it's fine, right. *Right?*

I normally drive to the grocery store, but I really just needed to do something to clear my head, so walking seemed like the best option. I don't live in a bad neighborhood, it'll be fine. Until you hear a strangled cry in one of the only back alleys in town. Great. Lovely. Gorgeous.

I definitely should not have gone to investigate, Lord, I don't know why I did, but I did. I wish I was surprised, really, I do. But as I stood in front of my grade A student and the bloody remains of some stranger, I almost felt like laughing.

He looked at me in terror, like a student caught cheating on a test. Maybe I was just numb, or maybe I had run the scene over mentally so many times prior that it almost felt right. I still don't know.

"I expect your paper in by Friday." Was all I ended up saying, looking down at the body once more. I still think of that body on late nights.

"Yes sir."