

Back

BACK

**a novella by
Steve Hussy**

1

I turn the pages of a book, feel the blank walls around me and enjoy it. This can last for a good hour because the staff/disabled toilet is largely unused. On the rare occasion another teacher has dropped their load, that smell is preferable to hearing the same waste spout from their mouths.

I had to go back. I had been screwed out of thousands by Thomas Salter through buying CDs and records for the Murder Slim shop. Salter delayed opening the shop, month after month, and it transpired he'd been selling stock to friends and spending the money on himself. Salter wanted pear wine to drink and an oily rag to sniff. And, above all, he wanted to look like a hero to his cronies. The guy had always loved to rant about his own magnificence and now he could do so while doling out good, cut-price music.

So I was forced back to work, but this time I had it figured out. Two years of thought had gone in to how to avoid as much *risk* as possible. After my previous teaching stint had driven me to near-insanity, this time I'd carefully figured out my rules for institutional survival...

1. Always looks busy and walk quickly. If you see a teacher sidling towards you, wave cheerily and take a different route.

Back

2. If cornered and asked about your life and views, reverse the question and then leave as soon as they've finished yapping.

3. Sit in a toilet during busy staffroom periods. Always check your pigeonhole during the middle of lessons.

4. Never talk during staff meetings unless prompted. If prompted, seem confused yet affable. Never talk too much.

5. Never compromise your teaching style. Students aren't your enemy. If they like you, they're forgiving and accommodating.

That all sounds benign, but I didn't want to raise hell again. As a guy in my twenties, I had exploded during a couple of meetings and been caught drinking booze. I had even called some students a cunt. Rarely – mind you – and they truly deserved it.

But this time I thought I could survive it and remain unscathed. I had no thought of promotion or a career, much as I didn't want a wife or a family. All I wanted was to teach lessons to the best of my ability, to have a decent amount of quiet each day, and the opportunity to read or watch or write stuff.

Teaching meant I could work the least hours for the most money. And hell, I was older and wiser. Wasn't I?

2

I've been a teacher since I was twenty-one.

I had no job in mind during my schooling, but after filling out a computer survey I'd been given a list of suitable jobs.

The first of those jobs was “secretary.”

Well, fuck me.

Back

It reminded me of my terrible social skills. I was lousy at small talk and was often inadvertently offensive. This wasn't a problem when I worked bar for three years. Drunks love a sleazy line. But in a *normal* job?

I considered various jobs which were self-reliant. Writer? I wasn't good enough at that. Journalist? I would have to write about crap. Male prostitute? Too nervous. In its own weird way, teaching was the best fit.

Straight after my English and Film degree ended, I went back to the college I'd attended three years before. In the UK, colleges are for 16-19 year olds, and it'd been the most fun I'd had in education.

I had hated school. Aside from being forced to study Maths and other subjects I had no interest in, the atmosphere is one of impending violence. There were borderline insane teachers... I had a German teacher who would sob loudly in his cupboard after we did badly in a vocabulary quiz. And there were a lot of psychotic students... I had one of those fuckwits knee me in my left eye during a cross country run.

That knee permanently fucked up the vision in the eye but also clonked a little thought into my head. It forced out a little of the sarcastic indifference I'd built up around myself.

College gives you an opportunity to weed out the biggest assholes. It's non-compulsory and you also get to pick the subjects you want to do. You even get a good dose of free time. It's a more relaxed atmosphere and a definite improvement from the dictatorial schools.

The college was much smaller back then... just a few hundred students. Many of the teachers were eccentrics. They were

Back

from the days before the National Curriculum, which enforced a fixation on the grades needed to attend university.

My favourite was Mr. Greene, my History teacher. He was an unassuming bearded guy touching sixty who looked after his recently disabled wife. He'd tell us largely untold – yet true – tales. Like how the 1905 Russian Revolution failed because Lenin's train into Moscow was late. Or how Napoleon lost at Waterloo because he had piles and couldn't ride into battle.

Although it seemed at odds with my personality, I gradually learned to love teaching lessons. The same thing had no doubt happened to Mr. Greene too. He was a quiet man with a simple love of history who found his inner storyteller.

My own love remains. I get to rant about a lot of great movies, try out various real-life stories, and help students understand – and hopefully enjoy – worthwhile films.

But I do wonder why I'm here. I fluked into teaching – through various illnesses and the main Media tutor quitting to write Roman mystery novels – and then suddenly *I* was a teacher. Huh? I was comfortably the youngest teacher and was voluntarily thrown into a confusing world that took me years to figure out.

Look, the only real problem with teaching is *teachers*. I've been around them for so many years, it's embarrassing to call myself one of them. I teach but please don't call me a teacher.

3

I come from a working-middle class background. I grew up on a housing estate, but it was a plush one where people mostly

Back

owned their own houses. My father was the accountant for a company that supplied arcade games and fruit machines. Before she got sick, my mother was a hairdresser and then a housewife.

I don't talk in a similar way to other teachers. I still have a local accent and I swear more than is acceptable. I also have a base sense of humour. But say what you like about fart and sex jokes, they don't truly demean like sarcasm does. That's why I banned it in my lessons.

Teachers' main strategy to control a class is to be a bigger asshole than the students. They respond to problems through snide insults... always wordplay and sarcasm rather than direct comments:

“Why don't you come up here and teach the lesson? I'm *sure* you could do a better job than me.”

“Well, I suppose if you didn't understand *anything* you'd think that might be correct.”

A fart joke has no victim. It's a universal problem. And tales of sexual dysfunction put yourself as the butt of the joke. It also shows you can't be shocked or offended, which is the main way students will try to get at you.

My first role was teaching a GCSE Media course to students who'd failed at school. One kid, Jonjo, was now touching 19 (just two years younger than me) and was a hulking 6'4" presence. He happily told me that he was an “internet pioneer.” He would video himself and his girlfriend fucking on a webcam, and sell passwords to look at the footage. For a guy who'd failed a lot of courses, the guy certainly knew his way around a computer.

This was in the days before DVDs, and I'd have to laboriously set up video clips the night before. Fast-forwarding and rewinding could take a couple of hours.

Back

Halfway through my twentieth lesson or so – on film noir – I felt a familiar gurgle in my stomach that meant I quickly needed to shit. Irritable bowel syndrome. I was nervous early on, getting over that in-built fear of public speaking.

I made my apologies, squirted in the toilet, then returned. I popped in the next videotape and... oh... A porno of a cock entering an asshole in extreme close-up, a little gob of spit dribbling into the black cave before ol' dick probed in. I had – and still have – an aversion to anal sex, and the whole thing set me back on my heels.

The class erupted into laughter.

“You get yer tapes mixed up?” Jonjo said, and laughed wildly.

It's times like when you live or die. Asshole teachers flip out. Exert power. And by doing so, they signal their prissiness. Respectable folks blush and set themselves up for more pranks.

The trick is to *go further*. You can't do that in school, but you can at college. You can't get fired for cursing. For all their tendency to push boundaries, students have limits too. They can be shocked.

“That's not me,” I said. “My cock is way bigger than that in my videos.”

I then went on to say how the woman looked bored. I described how to tell if a woman has had an orgasm. The six previously disaffected students were damn interested in that. About the nipples hardening, and the boobs puffing out before sagging at the moment of orgasm.

Hopefully the guys treated their gals a little better after that. Hey, I'm a *public servant*.

“WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT!? WHAT IS THIS DISGUSTING TALK!?”

Back

I looked over to my left and there – steaming in the doorway – was Mrs. McKay. She was an English Literature teacher from the classroom next-door. A 50-year-old Lutheran married to the Computing teacher.

“WHERE IS YOUR TEACHER!?”

The group laughed again.

“Hello,” I smiled at her, “I’m the new teacher.”

She looked at me for a good ten seconds.

“I’M REPORTING THIS!” And, with that, she stormed off.

I never copped any flak for it... but I did start to talk more quietly.

I had learnt that teachers are almost exclusively smug, phony left-wing, backstabbing, pseudo-intellectual, frequently stupid, hypocritical cunts.

But I better explain all that.

And why you need to run, fucking run, from them.

--- END OF SAMPLE ---

Full Version Available on Amazon and MurderSlim.com