

Josephine Lombro

A teacher's lounge. GYM is pouring a cup of coffee. He/she then sits down, picks up a magazine and starts to read. MATH comes running in and slams the door.

MATH TEACHER:

Please hide me! Don't let them get me!
(Dives behind the couch)

GYM TEACHER:

(Continues reading without looking up)
That was a heck of an entrance. (Pause) I
can't wait to see how you exit.

MATH TEACHER:

I'm happy you find this amusing. You
wouldn't be so glib if it were you they
were after.

GYM TEACHER:

Who is they?

MATH TEACHER:

Who do you think! Those...horrors.
Those...creatures, those...vermin, those...

GYM TEACHER:

(slowly) Children?

MATH TEACHER:

You have the audacity to call them that?

GYM TEACHER:

That's what they are. They're high school
students. Nothing more.

MATH TEACHER:

That's like saying a great white shark is
a fish and nothing more.

GYM TEACHER:

Well, from some people's point of view,
that's correct.

MATH TEACHER:

Then you must have gotten the only
"students" in the school. The rest of us
seem to have gotten what was left over.

GYM TEACHER:

You wanna tell me what brought all this
on...sometime today?

MATH TEACHER:

The usual. Why do you think anything
would be different?

GYM TEACHER:

Because...you usually don't run shrieking from your classroom.

MATH TEACHER:

Not usually, but I think about it a lot. (Pause) Okay, aside from the usual noise, back talk, loud music, smoking in the bathroom, et cetera, at one point today I found a sign taped to my back.

GYM TEACHER:

So? They've been doing that since Socrates was teaching. What did it say? Kick me? (MATH takes a crumbled piece of paper out of he/she's pocket and hand's it to GYM. GYM unfolds and reads) "Kill me, suck the marrow from my bones and incinerate the rest. (Long pause) Well, it's descriptive...

MATH TEACHER:

Enough said?

GYM TEACHER:

Okay, but you've completely overlooked the bright side.

MATH TEACHER:

There's a bright side to this?

GYM TEACHER:

Yes. Whoever wrote this actually knows what bone marrow is and... (pause, thinking) Oh look! They've even spelled incinerate right...see!

MATH TEACHER:

My, but you're just a regular glass is half full kind of guy/gal aren't ya?

GYM TEACHER:

I'm just realistic. You're mistaking that for optimism.

MATH TEACHER:

Look all I know is that when I was in college, studying to be a teacher, I was told that when I came into the classroom, the students would sit, listen, and learn.

GYM TEACHER:

Where did you go to college? Laura Ingalls University? This is what I'm talking about! That's not a realistic expectation.

MATH TEACHER:

Then what is?

GYM TEACHER:

You go in, impart whatever knowledge you have and let whoever wants to suck it up, do so.

MATH TEACHER:

(Stares at GYM. Pause) That's the most asinine thing I've ever heard. Don't you find that a slightly cavalier approach to teaching?

GYM TEACHER:

Maybe, but most of my students seem to enjoy my class.

MATH TEACHER:

(Stares, at GYM) You teach gym! Only the spastics don't like gym. You have no knowledge to impart, so you're home free. I'm a math teacher.

GYM TEACHER:

Yeah, well, that does kind of start you off in the debit column...

MATH TEACHER:

And you know what? That's not even the bad part. I know most kids hate math, but there re some who don't and it's great when they learn. My real problem seems to be that I've lost control of my classes. My kids are pretty unruly.

GYM TEACHER:

Oh, that? That's a whole different story. That's a matter of attitude.

MATH TEACHER:

I know. Their attitudes could use a lot of work.

GYM TEACHER:

No, not their attitudes, yours. Let's try a test. Stand over there and pretend you're teaching. I'll be one of your students who's talking in the back of the room.

MATH TEACHER:

(Walks a few feet away) So if you bisect the triangle at the base of a 90 degree angle, you get...

GYM TEACHER:

(Pretends to talk to a table partner)
Anyway, Suzy and I are going to the mall
tonight and...

MATH TEACHER:

(Walks over and tries to act tough)
Excuse me, I'm trying to teach a class.

GYM TEACHER:

So?

MATH TEACHER:

So, I'd appreciate it if you would just
sit quietly and...

GYM TEACHER:

(Cut's off) Yeah? Well I'd appreciate it
if you'd shut up!

MATH TEACHER:

I...I...you...

GYM TEACHER:

See, I've got you stuttering already.
Let's switch places and I'll show you how
to do it! (The two switch places and
start the experiment over.) So, the sit
up. It first began in...Ancient Greece
with Sitius Upus...

MATH TEACHER:

Bob and I are going to the movies tonight
and... (Stops with a glare from GYM, who
strides over)

GYM TEACHER:

Excuse me, I'm teaching a class here.

MATH TEACHER:

(Uneasily) So?

GYM TEACHER:

(Shouts in MATH's face) So, if you don't
shut up and sit down in that chair, I'm
going to make you sorry your mother and
father ever met each other. (MATH, mouth
agape, falls into his/her chair) See? Now
you're in your chair and quiet.

MATH TEACHER:

Oh, please tell me that you don't really
say that to your students.

GYM TEACHER:

Why shouldn't I'M

MATH TEACHER:

Aside from the fact it's just a touch on the rude side?

GYM TEACHER:

Well relax, I don't but with my attitude, I may as well. See, it's in the eyes, the voice, the tone. Get It's Authority is all up here. (Points to his/her head.)

MATH TEACHER:

So I have to make them think I'm tough.

GYM TEACHER:

Exactly. These kids are terrified of me. (Looks out into the audience and smiles) They think I'm a real psycho!

MATH TEACHER:

And you think that's a good way for them to feel?

GYM TEACHER:

I think it's the only way they should feel.

MATH TEACHER:

Well, how do they feel about me.

GYM TEACHER:

They call you "welcome" behind your back.

MATH TEACHER:

What's that mean?

GYM TEACHER:

You know- Welcome...as in door mat.

MATH TEACHER:

Oh, that's not good. What should I do?

GYM TEACHER:

Toughen up mentally. Make them think you'll rip out their spleens if they don't listen. Say it with your eyes, your voice.

MATH TEACHER:

Okay, how's this? (Screws up face, trying to look tough and barks at GYM)
Ok...you...you sit your buttocks in that chair or...or...you'll regret it! Deeply!
And...I'm not kidding!

GYM TEACHER:

(Pause) Yeah...Okay well, it's a start. Are you free this period?

MATH TEACHER:

Yes.

GYM TEACHER:

Then you should go back to your room and practice. It makes perfect you know.

MATH TEACHER:

I think I will. Thanks for all your help.

GYM TEACHER:

No problem, that's what I'm here for.

MATH TEACHER:

(Starts to exit, practicing) You sit down...sit down now. I'll...make you sorry if you don't...(Turns to one and tries to be mean) I'm tough so don't fudge with me!

GYM TEACHER:

Great! Just great! Keep practicing!

MATH exits while continu=ing to practice. GYM watches until he/she is gone.

GYM TEACHER:

He'll/She'll be dead in two minutes...(Picks up magazine and continues to read.) Oh well, c'est la vie!