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# Mr. Woody

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Mr. Woody

by Jeffrey Shuster

Professor Laft gripped the teacher's assessments in her hand. She stared with glassy eyes at all thirty-eight of us. Those eyes did their best to hold back her tears. I felt embarrassed for her.

"I know I haven't been there for you as much as I should have been this semester," she said.

It was evaluation time, the only time college students feel they can strike back. I'm not that vindictive, but many are. The girl with bags under her eyes started passing out forms. Professor Laft cracked a fake smile before stepping outside. As soon as she was out the door, the comments started.

"Notice how she acts all sorry right before evaluations."

"I think we all know what to put for number six."

It continued on like this. There were some catty remarks which I won't mention. I didn't think Professor Laft was all that bad. The class was mostly girls. Typically, I prefer it that way. However, these girls were mean. I hadn't been around girls this mean since my days at St. Mary's High School.

Whenever I think of St. Mary's, disturbing memories come flooding back to me. I remember Mark Greenly, who got caught playing with himself in the back of Mr. Parson's Sociology class. The less said about that, the better. I remember that Freshman girl who looked like Cindy Crawford. I can't remember her name. She got high at a

party and slept with five guys. Someone took pictures, and they were spread around the school. She was expelled.

But, Mr. Wood stands out more than the others. Mr. Wood was a tall, withered looking man. Thin framed glasses slipped over his pointy nose. I could never tell how old he was. His hair was unnaturally gray, almost like a wig. He spoke with a lisp.

“Anyone got any idears?” he’d often say when teaching a lesson. He taught Biology. I can honestly say I didn’t learn a thing during his three weeks of teaching. One of the higher ups had the bright idea of mixing Freshman and Sophomores in the same class. I was a Sophomore at the time. I hated school but, then again, who didn’t. Keeping to myself was the order of the day. I never liked to make any waves, you see. I was a good kid. Especially when compared to my peers.

Every time Mr. Wood had his back turned, something would happen. Papers flew in all directions. They were rolled up into balls, like little cannon balls. Freshmen targeted Sophomores and Sophomores targeted Freshmen. All sorts of fake animal calls were made. The most common of these were sheep. Mr. Wood could never tell who made the “bah” sound. Not that he would ever take action. He was too easy going.

One day Mr. Wood asked the class to select a cell to diagram on the board.

“Sperm!” one girl shouted.

The class chuckled as Mr. Wood drew the sperm cell nervously on the blackboard. From then on, he was known as Mr. Woody.

“Mr. Woody, I have to pee.”

“Mr. Woody, that’s a fly tie.”

“When do we get the sex lesson Mr. Woody?”

As the days went by, I started to notice a change in Mr. Wood. You could feel the tension coming off him. The color had drained from his face, and his skin seemed like rubber. His eyes had deadened like that of a corpse. When he spoke, his voice was hollow. I don't think he believed in what he was doing anymore.

We were a bad class, but we weren't as bad as the class he had after us. Will Diggs was in that class, and he was a real piece of work. He'd gotten kicked out of public school for beating up his gym teacher. The English class I was in was right underneath the Biology lab. We could always hear them making a ruckus. Ms. Reynolds often lost her train of thought, the noise was so distracting. One time a desk came crashing down outside Ms. Reynolds' window. Will Diggs did it.

Then it finally happened. I was in Ms. Reynolds' class and there was quite a party happening on the second floor. They were louder than they'd ever been. Then glass shattered. Laughter turned to screams. The thunder of forty pairs of feet rushed down the stairs. A Freshman girl popped into Ms. Reynolds' class.

"Ms. Reynold's! Help! It's...Mr. Wood...He's attacking Will!"

Ms. Reynolds told us to stay put and left. The details of what happened after that are a bit sketchy. I know the police came and took Mr. Wood away. Many students said Mr. Wood just snapped. He shoved Will through a window, shattering the glass. Will would have fallen out had the vice principal not shown.

Will never spoke about it. He became very quiet. Never talked to anybody. One of his eyes was damaged, and he had to wear a patch over it. They called him One Eyed Willie from then on.

None of the teachers ever mentioned Mr. Wood except Sister Cecile. It was like he was a bad dream, like he had never worked at St. Mary's. Sister Cecile had taken over the Biology class. She knew how to keep the class in line. Before she started, she told us something that has stuck with me to this day.

"You know, that man had a family. Now that family is without a husband and without a father."

I remembered those words as I filled out Professor Laft's evaluation.

"I hope she gets fired," snickered one of the girls behind me. I gave her a dirty look. People don't know what they do.