

A Naked Education

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Chapter 1: Nemesis

David Jones stared with open frustration at the twenty senior teens sitting in the classroom facing him. They stared back with ill-disguised hostility. For the moment it wasn't too noisy, though there was that constant background mummer. He never seemed to achieve the complete silence that other, more experienced teachers managed. What exactly was wrong with him?

Glancing at his watch and seeing that the end-of-day bell was due any second, David made up his mind about something. "McDonald, stay behind after class, I want a word with you." Spencer McDonald's head bobbed up from where it had been laying almost flat on his desk facing his friend Delroy Carter. They had been chatting most of the lesson.

"Me? I ain't done nuttin," he complained loudly, arrogantly.

"You're not in trouble, I just want to discuss an idea I have with you."

"He want's to suck my dick!" McDonald smirked none-too-quietly to Carter. Carter snorted, the rest of the class chorused, "Oooooooo!"

David closed his eyes momentarily. This could not go on. Fortunately the bell sounded before he had a chance to respond, and the class en masse made a bolt for the door, chairs crashing all over the place.

"Quietly! Slowly, take your time," David yelled into the din. His words were utterly futile.

He turned from where he'd been perched on the front of his desk and closed the classroom door. He looked at Spencer McDonald still sitting sullenly at his place, and crossed the floor to sit in the chair beside him. McDonald regarded him silently. He was a wiry, tough black kid from the inner city. In his senior year and in line to be king-of-the-hill at this residential sixth-form school for difficult older boys set in the middle of the English countryside.

David wondered quite where to begin. Only twenty-one himself, and a recent graduate from a three-year teacher-training college program, David was slim, about 5'8" white skin with fair hair and blue eyes. A greater contrast between two people could hardly be imagined.

David had done well at college, with the notable exception of classroom discipline. He was not able to keep order with unruly, rambunctious kids in his various teaching practicums. In some schools he did well -- in those that had the old-fashioned English discipline imposed by the Headmaster with a rod of iron. But here, where individual teachers had to live by their own ability to keep good order, David was completely incompetent, and hence his problems with this class. This class was the worst. Younger kids and David got along like a house on fire. Somehow as they reached the late-teens and began to challenge authority, David felt more threatened and he responded by getting uptight, losing his great sense of humour, and generally becoming a complete asshole. He recognized it, but didn't know how to correct it. He'd thought of counselling, but was reluctant to admit he couldn't deal with it. So here he was about to embark on the plan he had decided to try.

"Um, Macd...., er, Spencer," David began.

McDonald grimaced, "That's McDonald to you," he sneered, glaring at David.

David swallowed and started again. "Okay, sorry. McDonald. I know you don't like me."

"No shit!"

"Just let me say this. As I say, I know you don't like me. I admit that I can be an idiot sometimes."

"Try most o' the time!"

"Okay, okay. You're not making this easy." McDonald just sat slumped in his seat with that look on his face that communicated utter disdain. 'Oh boy,' thought David.

"Okay, look, what I want to say is that I would like us to get to know each other ... outside the classroom. I need to be able to relax and talk to you as a person, not as a teacher. I think if we get to know each other a bit, maybe

we'll be able to get on better in class." David ran out of breath, having delivered this speech all in a rush.

"So?"

"So, I'm thinking maybe I could get permission to take you out with a couple of your friends on Saturday."

"Where?"

"Oh, anywhere you like. Your choice, you name it." David felt a little encouraged. At least he hadn't turned down the idea out of hand.

"So who's going with us?"

'He's agreeing!' thought David in delight. He permitted himself a slight smile to encourage McDonald. "Who do you want to take with us – any two people you choose." David had a pretty good idea who he'd choose.

"Carter and Smith." Stated McDonald emphatically; exactly whom David expected. Delroy Carter was also black, originally from Uganda, and Tom Smith was an East End Londoner, as white, skinny and cockney as they come.

"So where do you want to go?"

"We'll go to the beach."

"Okay, you're on! I'll make the arrangements with the Headmaster, and clear it with your house-parents. We'll leave right after breakfast on Saturday, I'll pick you up at the main entrance."

Spencer McDonald stayed slumped where he was, and regarded David with the same contempt as before. "This ain't gonna make any difference ya' know."

"Well, let's give it a try," said David with all the sincerity in his voice that he could muster.

"Your money," said McDonald, getting up and leaving, knocking over his chair as he did so.

As David picked up the chair and began straightening the classroom, he reflected whether he was doing the right thing. Time would tell, though

things surely couldn't get much worse. It was only David's third month at this school located in a huge rambling Victorian mansion in the idyllic countryside, yet already things were going badly wrong with this particular class. If it was just inside this classroom, that would have been one thing, but the kids from this class continued their disrespectful manner all around the school whenever they saw him. They'd mutter insults just loud enough to provoke laughter that followed him down the halls. They would openly defy him if no other teacher with more authority were around. When they provoked David to near livid, incoherent rage, they'd just laugh and walk away – or if he got mad enough, suddenly cave and do what he wanted, seeming to exactly judge the point at which David was provoked enough to call in the Headmaster, or take the matter further.

David brushed back his mid-length blonde hair, locked up his classroom and headed through the School grounds to the little cottage he occupied with his wife and small son.