

GOOD MORNING TEACHER

A play written by Dean Lundquist (2007)

CHARACTERS:

Mr BROWN - a veteran English teacher

JUDY - a little frumpy with glasses

FRED - a bit bookish

LAURA - beautiful but aging

SCOTT - athletic type

SYNOPSIS:

Former students reminisce about their school days after their favourite teacher who has passed away.

SETTING:

The teacher's lounge.

(A school bell rings. We hear the sound of children in the hallways. FRED, JUDY, SCOTT and LAURA enter the teacher's lounge and busy themselves, marking papers, making coffee, etc. They are a bit glum.)

ALL
Good morning, teacher!

FRED
That's how we started every class.

JUDY
We all remember him...

SCOTT
And with good reason.

LAURA
He was our favorite.

SCOTT
Mr. Brown

FRED
A quiet,

JUDY
Unassuming man

LAURA
With short, dark, cropped hair

FRED
And a moustache.

SCOTT
He always wore

LAURA
A navy blue sweatshirt

JUDY
With a hood.

LAURA
He didn't care much about fashion

FRED
Definitely a function over form type of guy.

SCOTT

I don't think he had a lot of money.

JUDY

Of course he didn't!

LAURA

Duh! He was a teacher. We all know how underpaid they are.

ALL

(Moans of agreement.)

JUDY

He said I'd be a great musician someday.

FRED

Philosopher.

SCOTT

Athlete.

LAURA

Doctor...*(beat—they all realize that they are none of these things)*.

Well, I guess he didn't have the gift of prophecy.

FRED

I guess he just had high hopes for us all.

JUDY

It wasn't until I met him that I started thinking of my teachers as real people. I mean I used to wonder if he had a family — a wife, children.

LAURA

I never noticed a wedding band.

FRED

I think maybe he thought of us as

LAURA

His children.

SCOTT

I liked when he would read the classics to us.

JUDY

Like a parent

LAURA

Reading a bedtime story

FRED

My favorite was The Odyssey.

(Lights fade as a spot comes up on a silhouetted Mr. Brown seated on a stool with a book in hand.)

MR. BROWN

And Odysseus revealed his plan, "I shall introduce myself to the Cyclops and tell him that my name is "NO MAN". Then I shall take this spear and thrust it into the Cyclops's eye." "But will not the Cyclops then call out for aid from his friends?" asked one of his crewmen. "Indeed," replied Odysseus, "and they shall ask who it is that assails him. The Cyclops will exclaim, "NO MAN is torturing me! NO MAN has thrust a spear into my eye! NO MAN has blinded me!" and then we shall escape." (Spotlight fades on MR BROWN and returns as before.)

FRED

He made me want to read.

SCOTT

He made me think about things

JUDY

In a way I'd never

LAURA

thought of them before?

SCOTT

He made me want to come to school.

JUDY

I miss him now.

ALL

We all do.

FRED

He had such high hopes for us all.

SCOTT

Even if we didn't have them for ourselves.

FRED

I hope we aren't a disappointment.

JUDY

Did you ever wonder?

LAURA

What?

JUDY

What his hopes were?

FRED

I heard a rumor that Mr. Brown wanted to be a novelist.

SCOTT

Makes you wonder though...

JUDY

Why he started teaching?

LAURA

He was a born teacher.

FRED

I don't think so.

SCOTT

I think good teachers are the products of having good teachers. You know, I saw him catch someone cheating once.

FRED

Really?

SCOTT

Why would I lie?

MR BROWN

(Silhouetted as before)

Mr. Smith! Don't look at Susan's paper! Do you know why? You probably think I'm going to say that "You're only cheating yourself." Or "You're depriving yourself of your own knowledge!" Or "Passing someone else's work off as your own is plagiarism!" Wrong! I don't want you to copy her answer because — Susan's answer is wrong!

LAURA

He always had...

JUDY

A good sense of humor.

FRED

I think it's a prerequisite.

SCOTT

If it's not, it should be. Why would anyone choose to be a teacher in the first place?

JUDY

Low pay.

LAURA

Long hours

SCOTT

And crappy conditions.

JUDY

There used to be a lot of fun things in school though, back then.

LAURA

Such as?

JUDY

Music class

SCOTT

Wood shop

FRED

Electric shop

SCOTT

Auto shop

LAURA

The school play.

FRED

Do you remember family history night?

JUDY

Who could forget?

FRED

I did my family tree on a computer and made drawings, then linked them together in a slide show. This was years before power point, mind you. I wrote a little program in BASIC. My dad was so proud. Mr. Brown asked him if he had helped me with it, and he beamingly said that I had done it all myself. He gave me 100 points out of 100. And the next day, he gave me an

extra 10 points! Ha! Ha! Those were the good old day... (he chuckles to himself, lost in his reverie...silence)

JUDY, LAURA, SCOTT
GEEK!

FRED
That's the kind of thing Mr. Brown would do, though.

JUDY
He appreciated it.

LAURA
When you made the extra effort.

SCOTT
Not many kids do that anymore. I don't think most of them care. Apathy is easier. Makes me wonder what's the use anyway?

FRED
Don't you remember what he said at graduation?

MR BROWN
(as before, perhaps with a mortar board hat)
Every year I meet new people – I call them people, not students – that are just beginning this odyssey we call life. Just discovering who they are. I see them grow. I see them begin to emerge as independent, free thinkers. Individuals. And sometimes they ask me what's the use of it all? I tell them to live well and do something memorable – for we are all food for worms. Love, joy, satisfaction in accomplishment – these are the fruits of life we all must savor. For tomorrow, we will all be gone. Wishing that someone remembered us. That you are here – that life exists, that the powerful play goes on and you may contribute a verse."

SCOTT
And now he's gone...

LAURA
He was everyone's favorite teacher.

FRED
Who lived through his students.

JUDY
He inspired.

SCOTT
He gave hope

FRED
He praised us

LAURA
And lived by example

JUDY
He is the reason.

ALL
We all became teachers.

MR BROWN
(As before)
Good morning, teacher.

ALL
(They turn to look at him)
Good night, Mr. Brown.

(Lights fade. As the teachers console each other. A school
bell rings.)

END OF PLAY.