

My Teacher Is An Alien

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To my sixth grade teacher,

Florence Crandall,

who told me to write a story

What would *you* do if you found out your teacher was an *alien*?

As I watched, Mr. Smith pressed his fingers against the bottom of his eyes. Suddenly he ran his fingertips to the sides of his head, grabbed his ears, and started peeling off his face!

I gasped. Fortunately, the horrible noises coming from the room drowned it out. I wanted to get up and run, but I was too terrified to move.

I started to shake instead. Whatever Mr. Smith was, I was pretty sure the face he was slowly uncovering wasn't anything that had been born on Earth!

CHAPTER ONE

Missing— One Sixth-Grade Teacher

"Hey, Geekoid!" yelled Duncan Dougal as he snatched Peter Thompson's book out of his hand. "Why do you read so much? Don't you know how to watch TV?"

Poor Peter. I could see that he wanted to grab the book back from Duncan. But I also knew that if he tried, Duncan would cream him.

Sometimes I wonder if Duncan's mother dropped him on his head when he was a baby. I mean, *something* must have made him decide to spend his life making other people miserable. Otherwise why would he spend so much of his time picking on a kid like Peter Thompson? Peter never bothers anyone. Heck, the only thing he really wants is to be left alone so he can read whatever book he has his nose stuck in at the moment.

That doesn't seem like too much to ask to me. But Duncan takes Peter's reading as a personal insult.

So here it was, the first day back from spring vacation—we hadn't even gone into the school yet—and I could tell by the look on Duncan Dougal's face that the spring fight season was about to begin.

I clutched my piccolo case to my chest and watched as Peter's pale face began to turn red. Peter blushed at almost anything. He was tall and thin and wore thick glasses. And he was the smartest person I had ever met—grown-ups included.

The problem was, it was all book smarts. Peter had absolutely no idea how to deal with a creep like Duncan. Actually, neither did I. If I did, I would have stopped him. But the one time I had tried to come between Duncan and Peter, I ended up with a black eye myself.

Duncan claimed it was an accident, of course. "Susan just jumped right in front of my fist," he said as if I was the one who had done something wrong. To tell you the truth, I think Duncan punched me on purpose. Most guys wouldn't hit a girl. But Duncan doesn't mind. It was his way of warning me to keep my nose out of his business.

As I watched Duncan squinting down at Peter, it occurred to me that sixth grade can be a dangerous place if you don't watch out.

Stacy Benoit was standing a few feet away from Peter, pressed against the school wall and looking nervous. Stacy is this incredibly good kid, who never gets in trouble ever. She hates fights even more than I do.

She had just started edging her way toward me when Duncan ran his foot through a puddle and splashed dirty water all over Peter's jeans.

"Cut it out, Duncan," said Peter.

"Cut it out, Duncan," mimicked Duncan in a whiny, singsong voice.

Anyone who knew Duncan could see he was gearing up for a fight. But it wasn't necessarily going to be with Peter, since Peter usually just took whatever Duncan dished out. I figured Duncan was using him as a warm-up. So I was a little surprised when he tossed Peter's book into the puddle.

Even Duncan should have known that was something you just don't do to Peter.

"Oops!" he said maliciously. "I *dropped* it."

I heard Stacy gasp as Peter launched himself off the wall and bashed his head into Duncan's stomach. Within seconds the two of them were rolling around on the ground.

"I hate it when this happens," said Stacy as the boys surrounded Peter and Duncan in a shouting, cheering circle.