

The Parent's Evening Sketch
By Mark Allen

INT – A SCHOOL HALL – NIGHT

MR AND MRS RILEY APPROACH A DESK, BEHIND WHICH, MR WARD IS SITTING. THEY SHAKE MR WARD'S HAND AND SIT ON TWO SMALL CHAIRS.

MR WARD: Hello, pleased to meet you both. Thanks for coming to parents evening – you must be very brave.

MR WARD LOOKS AT HIS NOTES IN FRONT OF HIM.

MR RILEY: (PAUSE) I'm sorry? Brave?

MR WARD: Well, it must be very disheartening to keep hearing that your daughter's a dunce.

MRS RILEY: But no-one's said anything of the sort.

MR WARD: Have they not? (BEAT) I bet they're all thinking it.

MR RILEY: We've had glowing reports from all of Angela's other teachers.

MR WARD LOOKS SURPRISED.

MR WARD: Well that does surprise me - normally they can't stop going on about how stupid she is. We pin her homework on the staff room notice board for a good laugh.

MRS RILEY: Well there's been no mention of substandard homework in any of her other subjects.

MR WARD: Maybe they're trying to protect your feelings. (BEAT) I mean there's no doubt that your daughter really is very stupid.

MR AND MRS RILEY LOOK SHOCKED.

MRS RILEY: But she's taking her final exams in the summer. Is there no hope of her passing any of them?

MR WARD: Mrs Riley, your daughter will exceed expectations if she manages to find her seat in the exam hall.

MRS RILEY: (BEAT) Well, what hope has she got when she leaves school?

MR WARD: I'm afraid I'd be lying if I told you that your daughter would be useful for anything other than a particularly animated door-stop.

THERE IS A PAUSE. MR AND MRS RILEY LOOK HORRIFIED.

MR WARD (CONT'D): Now, is there anything else you wanted to ask me? I do have other parents waiting.

MR RILEY: No. (BEAT) Thank you for your honesty.

MR AND MRS RILEY LEAVE, AS TWO MORE PARENTS SIT DOWN TO TALK TO MR WARD.

MR WARD: Mr and Mrs Crudge, let me begin by telling you that your son is without a doubt the most idiotic piece of child I've ever taught.

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