

Taking a deep breath, Principal Grimm circled his office and once again approached her with a fake smile. Displaying Jekyll and Hyde-like behavior, a switch seemingly flipped transforming him from an: out of control, raving, madman, to the valedictorian of charm school. “Ms. Jones, I apologize if I came across a bit harsh. But you just have to understand that, in these parts, all the cripple kids go to Pine Tree Elementary. They have an excellent program over there.”

“You mean disabled—not crippled!” She firmly admonished. “Oh, whatever, I guess I stand corrected,” he laughed.

He strolled over and draped an arm around her back then clasped her shoulder. Then, using a slightly condescending tone, he spoke gently in her ear, “Besides, I know you want what’s best for your child,” he sighed, “you want him to go to a place where he’ll fit in and be with his own kind. I’m afraid if Alan goes here, Ms. Jones, the normal kids will tear him apart, tease and torment him, and in general, treat him like an outcast.” Then, he released her shoulder so that he could face her, “Which will, in turn, crush his spirit. And I know, as Alan’s mother, that’s the absolute last thing you want to have happen.”

Unfortunately for Mr. Grimm, his incompetence as a principal took second place to an awful poker face. Even a kind hearted, trusting soul—such as Ms. Jones—could recognize an overtly deceitful foray, “You must think that I just fell off the turnip truck, Mr. Grimm.” She rebuked. “What kind of lame brain, half-witted, numbskull, do you take me for?” She heatedly inquired. “You just want to do what’s convenient for you. I’ve met your type before, and you’re all alike. You, Mr. Grimm, are an old, bigoted dinosaur who needs to be dragged—kicking and screaming—into the 20<sup>th</sup> century!” She gave him a cold stare; a look that a mother usually reserves for an unruly child whom she’s about to discipline. “Alan had absolutely no problem mainstreaming into his previous school. Why don’t you want my boy here?” She slammed her purse on his desk in frustration.

Mr. Grimm folded his arms while taking a deep sigh of utter exasperation. His eyes shifted rapidly – like a bad poker player down to his last few chips. “Aren’t you one of those parents, who are trying to force their retards down my throat?” He then stood up and shook his right index finger at her, “Let me tell you something lady,” his face scrunching up defiantly, “This is my school. And I’ll run it how I see fit. Nobody and I mean nobody is going to tell me what to do in this regard! And if you and your bitch friends don’t like it, you can all kiss my ass!” He punched the desk.

He turned away from her; hand combed his hair, opened his top desk drawer and—in one motion—withdraw a pinch of chewing tobacco and put it in his mouth.

Ms. Jones snatched her purse and stormed for the door. As her hand turned the knob, she looked back and warned Mr. Grimm. “I’ll be in contact with the superintendent of schools, Mr. Grimm; you can be assured of that.”