Saturday, March 6, 2010

8 a.m. Class (of the Dead)

They shuffle into the room, many of them dragging one heavy, club-like foot (clad in a cozy Ugg boot) behind them. Some wear pink sweats that define their asses as "Juicy" or "Spoiled." Others wear baseball caps turned backwards, barely covering mashed-in skulls oozing the rotting gray meat of their brains. One or two have just enough strength to hold cell phones up to their mangled ears.

With dangling limbs and lolling heads, they stumble-walk into desks and collapse into their seats.

"Good morning!" I say. "Looks like we're getting off to a bit of a late start, so let's jump right in with the essay you read for today. Anybody want to talk about their first impressions of the piece?"

Silence. A sea of slumped bodies. An apocalyptic landscape. Every once in a while one of them twitches. A raspy groan rises from one corner, from the kid slumped over his desk, his arm hanging over the edge, swinging slowly like a sinewy pendulum. Of doom.

"So what do we think of the author's central claim in this essay? Let's start with that."

A thud-crunch from the back, as one student's skull falls forward and hits the formica desktop. From the other side of the room: a vaguely disturbing slurping sound, as another student slowly drags his blackened, dried lips over the top of his venti non-fat Brain Latte, trying to slurp out something tasty. Then, just silence again.

Their condition is sad. But it's so great that the Cal State system provides zombies with the opportunity to go to college and get an education.
“Ok. Tell you what -- Let's just read the first sentence of the piece again. Ok? First sentence? What does the first sentence say?”

A ripple effect seems to move across the room, a faint shuffling. Feet slowly drag back and forth across the linoleum floor. A guy in the far left row seems to gnawing gently on his own hand, occasionally issuing a low, throaty grunt of satisfaction. But beyond that, there is nothing.

"Listen, you guys. I know it's early, but we're all here, so let's try and wake up a little bit. Can anybody just summarize what this essay is about? Just define the general topic. For extra credit."

Shuffle shuffle. Grunt. In the back, someone's jaw bone falls from his face and hits the floor with a thud.

“Did anybody even read the assignment?”


“Fine. Everybody get out a piece of paper. Pop quiz on the reading. Time to engage your brains.”

One head jerks up abruptly. Then another. It's disconcerting.

(Brains? Did he say brains?)

“...braaannnsssss........"

“Well, you guys,” I say, trying not to show fear, "you leave me no choice. If you won't discuss the reading, you can write about it."

One rises, lifting a skeletal arm, dripping shreds of muscle meat, pointing straight at me. His slackened mouth starts chewing on itself as drool oozes over his scarred chin. "....braainnnssssss....."

More rise and join him, staring at me with their lidless eyes. "... quizzzz.... baddddd........ BRAINNNNNSSSSS.......gooooooood....."

I'm cornered. Thank God they move slowly. In the time it takes them to shamble forward and get close enough to yank my limbs off and start eating, I'll probably be able to write their homework assignment on the board and leap for the door.

You might also like:

Septembers From a Student, to the Rest of the Students Have a Paper Due? Kiss Nana Goodbye.
Meg March 8, 2010 at 9:41 AM
This is brilliant. And I'm not just saying that because I still pride myself on having never once taken an 8am class. Although, that too. (One must take pride where one can when one is as lame as I.)

Reply

Jeni Rickard April 20, 2010 at 5:48 PM
You're so cool, Seth! I love the zombie literature and I think you could go for a whole range of short stories!!

Reply