

TAUGHT A LESSON

The action takes place in a classroom of a modern secondary school. The bells rings and the teacher, Miss Green, is already in the classroom waiting for her Year 11 class to arrive.

Stephanie, a swot enters first.

TEACHER Hello Stephanie

STEPHANIE Hello miss. (After a pause). Miss, I've almost finished those posters on the intermolecular forces of simple covalent compounds, but I'm not sure if it conducts electricity. Do I need to ask Mr Peterson about it?

TEACHER Yes, I think you should. He should be coming round soon.

Damien, the school bully, enters just in time to hear the teacher's last line.

DAMIEN (sniggering) Why, is he unconscious?

TEACHER Don't be silly. I mean he's coming to check the classrooms this afternoon. He should be here soon.

DAMIEN (sarcastically) I know

TEACHER What was that, Damien?

DAMIEN Nothing miss...

The other children from the class enter. Ashley, who is very fashionable and wears lots of make up, and Sam, who thinks of nothing but sport.

TEACHER Come on, hurry up, sit down, books out. Ok, this lesson, P.C Foot is going to come and talk to you about drugs...

The class looks rather relieved, no work this lesson.

DAMIEN Great, sit off lesson!

TEACHER It is not a 'sit off' lesson. First I'm going to give you back your homework.

The class groan. Disappointed.

TEACHER Now, if you remember. I asked each of you to prepare a poster, of 'the most influential person of the 20th century'.



Stephanie, you made a beautiful portrait of Sir Winston Churchill...

The teacher hands back the poster whilst Stephanie looks smug.

TEACHER Sam I thought it was a very good facial likeness of Bobby Moore but I don't think he ever captained during an important event.

SAM Actually he was captain of England's football team when they won the world cup in 1966. Everyone knows that!

TEACHER Oh, I...um...

She hands Sam his picture.

TEACHER ...Ashley, why is it whoever you draw, they always look like Posh Spice?

She gives Ashley her poster.

TEACHER And finally... Damien.

DAMIEN I hate that name...

TEACHER You haven't been bullying Sam to do your homework *again* have you?

DAMIEN Why do you say that?

TEACHER He's drawn David Beckham.

He glares at Sam.

TEACHER I'll put him with posh spice. They should get on well together.

The caretaker enters. His face like thunder and he eyes the class suspiciously.

TEACHER (seeing the caretaker) Ah, Mr Darling. Can I help you?

CARETAKER (gruffly) Sorry for interrupting Miss Green, I just need a word with the class...(raising his voice) I would like to know who broke the English classroom's window?

Stephanie looks shocked, Damien looks slightly amused, Ashley isn't paying any attention and Sam looks guilty.

CARETAKER (looking at Sam) I've a good idea who it is mind! I just wonder if they would be brave enough to own up? So....

Timidly, Sam raises his hand.

CARETAKER Ha... I thought so. How many times Sam, do I have to tell you not to play football round there! (Softening) I know you are practicing in every spare moment that you've got but you're supposed to be good enough to miss windows!

Unseen the Headmaster enters behind the caretaker.

CARETAKER If you want that scholarship you're going to have to prove yourself in front of Mr Peterson, you know he doesn't want you to go...

Headmaster coughs loudly making the Caretaker jump in surprise.

HEADMASTER That will do, Darling. Don't want to be giving the boy false hope now do we.

The children giggle at the Caretakers name being mentioned.

DAMIEN Uhhh.... Darling. Are you getting married?

CARETAKER Shut up you lot, there's nothing wrong with the name Darling.

Children giggle again.

DAMIEN Sounded like he called you his *darling*. Ahh.

CARETAKER Which reminds me, I want a word with you later. My office at break.

HEADMASTER That boy is trouble. Wait till I get my hands on him I'll...

STEPHANIE Miss? Can I go the toilet?

TEACHER Can you not wait until break Stephanie?

STEPHANIE I really need to go!

TEACHER But...

STEPHANIE Please...?

TEACHER Ok, be quick.

Stephanie exits.

CARETAKER (To Sam) Well what have *you* got to say for yourself?

HEADMASTER I don't think you should be so hard on him Mr Darling.

CARETAKER Hard on him? Do you know how many times I've had to mend...

HEADMASTER Yes, but even so. I won't have you treating any of my fam... my pupils like this. And you know what will happen if you don't do as I say (looking meaningfully at Caretaker)

CARETAKER Yes, I um...

HEADMASTER Haven't you got *work* to be doing?

CARETAKER (mumbling) I'll go and clean the science room...

Caretaker exits, feeling rather small.

ASHLEY (shrieking) Oh no!

TEACHER What is it Ashley?

ASHLEY I've broken a nail!

TEACHER Honestly.

ASHLEY Can I go and sort it out miss, I won't be a minute.

TEACHER Quickly.

Ashley exits cradling the hand with the broken nail.

TEACHER Can I do something for you Mr Peterson?

HEADMASTER I...er...well...yes. I came to tell you that the school inspection, has...has had to be brought forward.

TEACHER Brought forward?

HEADMASTER Yes, to tomorrow.

TEACHER (Panicking) *Tomorrow?* But they can't. I'm not ready. I...I...

HEADMASTER Shhhh...It's ok. We'll be fine. (Lovingly) We can talk about it later in my office if you want?

TEACHER (Uneasily) No, no, you're right, I'm sure I'll be fine.

Headmaster looks disappointed. Stephanie re-enters and Caretaker pokes his head into the classroom.

CARETAKER Sorry, miss. Erm, Sam, will you come and get your ball, It's rolling round my cupboard floor.

TEACHER Yes, yes, be quick.

Sam exits hurriedly.

HEADMASTER Well, I need a quick word about the Christmas Party. As the inspection is tomorrow, we can't possibly have the party. We'll have to have it tonight, there's no other way around it.

The class start muttering excitedly. The party, tonight!

HEADMASTER (indicating the door) Could you spare a moment?

TEACHER Yes, of course. But constable Foot should be here any moment.

HEADMASTER Ah yes, I'd forgotten, the drugs talk (meaningful look at Damien). I shouldn't be too long.

TEACHER Ok, everyone start reading pages 83-87 on drugs. And keep the noise down.

Teacher and Headmaster exit passing Ashley in the doorway. The class immediately start chattering excitedly.

ASHLEY What's happening?

DAMIEN The Christmas party's tonight.

ASHLEY What! But they can't! What will mummy and daddy say!

STEPHANIE Will they let you come?

DAMIEN Mummy...Daddy...

ASHLEY (to Stephanie) I don't know Steph? They've got a really posh dinner tonight. It's costing them loads.

DAMIEN They're not exactly poor though are they?

ASHLEY They're still angry with me for being sent home last week.

STEPHANIE Just for you not taking off a necklace.

ASHLEY Mr Peterson told them I was really rude. So they grounded me for a week. Now that it's tonight they might say I'm still grounded! Oh no!

Ashley starts sobbing. Sam re-enters and immediately tries to comfort Ashley.

DAMIEN Dunno why you two always hang round with each other. Anyone would think you fancied each other or something.

ASHLEY Actually, Sam asked me out on Thursday.

DAMIEN What? Sam asked you out?

ASHLEY You're just jealous you don't have such a good-looking girlfriend as me.

DAMIEN I am not!

ASHLEY You are.

SAM Hey, Damien, drop it, OK?

DAMIEN Oooo... You big softy.

SAM I'm not soft, I've liked her for ages. You know it.

DAMIEN Do I?

ASHLEY You're just jealous

DAMIEN Am not

SAM Just leave it ok

DAMIEN Or what

P.C Foot enters. Unseen by Damien, but everyone else see's him.

SAM I get the police on you...

DAMIEN Yer...right.

FOOT 'ello, 'ello, 'ello what's going on here then?

DAMIEN Blimey!

ASHLEY You were saying.

DAMIEN Hmmmph

FOOT I'm looking for Miss Green. Is she about?

STEPHANIE Yes. Why... What has she done?

FOOT Oh nothing. I've come to talk with her about drugs.

DAMIEN (disbelieving) She's not a druggie is she?

Teacher re-enters.

TEACHER That's quite enough Damien. And I to be mistaken or have you been graffiti-ing in toilets again.

DAMIEN I don't know what you mean.

TEACHER Of course you don't. There's no one else who would even dare to graffiti the school.

DAMIEN But miss...

TEACHER It's your handwriting...

DAMIEN But...

TEACHER And as if that wasn't bad enough, you've signed it. Go and find Mr Jones at once and tell him what you've done.

DAMIEN But miss....

TEACHER *Now* Damien.

Damien exits, just as the Caretaker sticks his head around the door.

CARETAKER Sorry Miss Green, do you know where my keys went after I gave them to you?

TEACHER No, I gave them to Stephanie, she went to get some paper from the store cupboard for me.

CARETAKER Ah, where are they now?

STEPHANIE Oh, I gave them to Ashley. Needed to get into the toilets to fix a nail or something. She said she'd put them back once she'd finished.

Ashley isn't listening to conversation and doesn't realise her name is mentioned.

CARETAKER Oh, right. Thanks, I'll

FOOT Excuse me, I hope you don't mind me asking sir, but how's your leg?

CARETAKER The leg?

FOOT You've had a broken leg, if I'm not mistaken sir.

CARETAKER Why yes, but that was over the summer. How did you...?

FOOT Ah. Well sir. I couldn't help but notice that the sole of your left shoe was worn down a little more than your right. A little thing I grant you, but in my profession one gets to notice these little things, if you get my meaning.

CARETAKER Goodness constable, are you a detective?

FOOT Who me sir? Oh no sir. You must be thinking of my cousin, Inspector Foot of the Yard. Oh, I'd give anything to be like him sir. He's my hero. No, I'm just a humble police officer, here to look after the community.

TEACHER (shakes hand) Well, we're so glad you could come.

FOOT Thank you.

CARETAKER I'll be off. Lots of things to prepare for the party you know.

TEACHER Ok everybody, this is P.C Foot. He's going to give you a quick talk through drugs in the community I believe.

FOOT Yes.

TEACHER Ok, over to you

FOOT Ok, hello everyone. I've got some leaflets for you all. Now can someone tell me any names of drugs?

STEPHANIE (counts on her fingers) Heroin, Cocaine, Ecstasy....

FOOT Yes, good. Anyone else.

Stephanie looks smug. Class look blankly back at Foot. Damien re-enters.

FOOT Ok, does anyone know which drugs are the most dangerous and potentially fatal?

Stephanie's hand is up in the air. Ashley waves her hand in the air absent-mindedly.

FOOT (to Ashley) Yes?

There is no answer. Ashley is looking the other way, still waving her hand.

TEACHER Ashley, P.C Foot is talking to you.

ASHLEY Sorry miss. I was just drying my nails.

Sam raises his hand.

SAM Please miss. What about paracetamol?

FOOT Quite right yes, paracetamol can kill if you take too many.
Why do you think people take drugs?

DAMIEN To kill themselves.

FOOT Yes, but why else?

ASHLEY Don't they make you feel good?

SAM Yes, I heard that too, is it true?

FOOT Oh yes quite true. Now who can tell me...

Suddenly hurried footsteps can be heard in the corridor outside and P.C Foot stops to listen. Suddenly the caretaker bursts through the door.

CARETAKER (panicked) Come... quick... there's been a terrible...

SAM What? Smell.

CARETAKER No, a...a...

DAMIEN Fire?

Caretaker shakes his head

TEACHER Robbery?

CARETAKER It's...it's...

ASHLEY Oh no. It's not the toilets is it? My designer make-ups in there!

Again Caretaker shakes his head

ASHLEY Phew! That's a relief

CARETAKER He's...He's....

DAMIEN Maybe there's a power cut?

STEPHANIE The lights would have gone out.

DAMIEN Oh, yes.

CARETAKER It's the... headmaster, he's...he's...

FOOT Come on man, spit it out.

CARETAKER Dead.

FOOT Dead?

STEPHANIE Dead?

TEACHER He can't be!

Caretaker nods, still very shaken.

SAM But how?

FOOT Now, now. Everybody calm down. There could be a perfectly reasonable explanation for this. But we cannot rule out the possibility that he was... murdered.

STEPHANIE Murdered?

FOOT I didn't say that he *had* been...

ASHLEY He's been murdered?

CARETAKER Yes...

FOOT I didn't say...

DAMIEN *Cool!*

SAM What's happened?

DAMIEN He's been murdered.

SAM No

ASHLEY Yes.

FOOT Look, I just said that he *might*...

STEPHANIE How did it happen?

FOOT We don't know that anything *did*...

SAM Maybe he was strangled?

ASHLEY Or suffocated

FOOT Quiet, everyone, please...

STEPHANIE He could have been shot.

ASHLEY Too noisy.

FOOT Please, quiet...

DAMIEN Maybe he was poisoned...

TEACHER Or stabbed.

DAMIEN I bet he was slit open with a knife.

ASHLEY Yuuch. Gross.

Teacher faints.

Suddenly everyone starts talking at once, and loudly. 'Maybe it was this...I bet it was this...' As they do so P.C Foot tries to get control of the situation.

FOOT QUIET!
Ladies and Gentlemen, boys and girls.. it appears we have a little mystery here. Maybe with your help, I could solve it and become a real detective... just like my famous uncle, inspector foot of the yard. After I've done a little questioning of my own I will ask you to help me interrogate the suspects here, but first we shall throw a bucket of water over Miss Green here...

TEACHER I'm awake!

FOOT Excellent! Just in time for some questioning. If you'll all kindly walk this way...

P.C Foot leads the cast of stage.