

Mr. Brandon Lukney
by Adam Casalino

Brandon Lukney hated the sound of his own voice. It didn't help that he was a teacher. He would climb the steps of the wooden podium, calmly clear his throat, and proceed to block out the next hour and a half of his life as he lectured on European history. Once the clock struck twelve he would wave his hands, dismissing the anxious-to-leave class, and slink down from the podium—exhausted and defeated.

He tried for years to make his lectures interesting. He bought colored chinks, printed out large cardboard displays. Once he even tried wrangling with a laptop in an effort to use "Powerpoint." In the end he found no way to make the Magna Carta any more interesting than it already was, which wasn't much. After years of droning on about the same, dry subject, all life in his voice drained away. It was now a dull, creaking sound. He cringed whenever he heard it.

To make matters worse, there were the students. Each new crop was dumber than the last. In the past many selected his class out of genuine, good old fashion hunger for knowledge. Now it was merely a requirement and the dull-eyed pod people that filled the room barely glanced up from their notebooks. Some of them even slept during class. Brandon hated them the most.

It was Monday, April the 21st when Brandon Lukney decided enough was enough. He packed a few special items into his bag before heading to the university. That morning he climbed the steps quickly, dropping the bundle onto the desk beside the podium. He rifled through it momentarily as the apathetic students murmured to themselves. A loud piercing voice arrested their attention.

"Who can tell me the year Henry VIII was crowned king?"

Professor Lukney's lips slightly curled into a smile behind the megaphone. The students were stunned—for a moment. A few chuckled at the surprise, some of the more alert sat up straighter. Soon, however, most of them slumped back into their usual daze.

"If you don't answer, I'll continue to use this."

More laughs. Nobody believed him.

"Mr. Oreson, do you have an answer?" Everyone turned and looked in the direction of Michael Oreson. A baseball cap was pulled low over his face. His feet were propped up on the chair in front of him. He was asleep. Normally one would expect to find a sleeping student at the back of the classroom, but such was the boldness of Mr. Oreson, he sat in the second row from the front.

At the sound of his name, Michael stirred, but remained asleep.

“I see Mr. Oreson prefers a more meditative form of instruction,” said Mr. Lukney through the megaphone. The few students who got the joke laughed. “Let’s see if we can better acquire his attention.” Lukney reached into his bag and grabbed another item. He pulled the rather long pointer from the blackboard and used it as a makeshift cane as he strode towards the row of seats. The students tensed and glanced nervously at Michael. Had anyone who sat near him possessed common sense, they would have elbowed him awake, or at least thrown a wad of paper his way.

Mr. Lukney stood over Michael, arms crossed. He waited one last moment for the student to awake on his own volition. He didn’t stir. Mr. Lukney lifted an air horn and pointed it squarely at Michael’s face. The other students grimaced and covered their ears as the berating noise flooded the lecture hall.

Mr. Oreson woke up. The ball cap fell off his head as he clutched his ears. White faced he looked up at the smiling professor.

“Good morning, Mr. Oreson,” Lukney said. Michael Oreson nodded. He didn’t hear a word. “Now that you’re awake, we can resume. I trust everyone else is awake as well?”

He looked up to see forty-five heads straighten and look at the chalkboard. Books were pulled out from underneath chairs as pens began scratching across notebooks.

“Good. Oh and keep your feet off the chairs, Michael.” He swept the pointer under Michael’s legs, lifting them off the chair and bringing his feet crashing to the ground. Brandon Lukney strode confidently back to the podium where—in an entirely new voice—he began his lecture on Medieval England.