

"Parent Teacher Conference"
By Chase Smith
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CAST:

Mr. Smith - 30s, 3rd grade teacher, overly optimistic, sees the
bright side in everything
Principal Jones - 40s, female, supportive of Mr. Smith
Hank - 30s, father of 3rd grader
Melissa - 30s, mother of 3rd grader
Shirley - 40s, mother of 3rd grader
Mary - 40s, mother of 3rd grader

(a classroom)

MR. SMITH

Thank you all so much for joining me this evening. I think
Parent/Teacher Conferences are so important to a child's
development.

PRINCIPAL JONES

Yes, Mr. Smith is right. Third grade is an important time for
children and we're glad you all care about your child's
education.

MELISSA

We've heard nothing but good things concerning Mr. Smith - we're
glad to be here!

HANK

Will this last longer than an hour? The game starts at eight?

MR. SMITH

Hank we should be outta' here in no time! I can see where Tommy
gets his impatience from. But Hank brings up a good point.
Parent/Teacher Conferences can be boring, so to help liven it up
a bit, I have prepared an activity for us all to do while we
talk.

SHIRLEY

All of us?

PRINCIPAL JONES

Yes Ms. Wilson, all of us. Everyone please, just listen to Mr.
Smith.

(cont.)

MR. SMITH

Thank you Principal Jones. If I could have everyone stand up, as we talk, I want us all to do the chicken dance.

HANK

(cue The Chicken Dance song)

What?

MR. SMITH

The chicken dance! You know. The birdie song! The 1950s accordion-led Switzerland smash hit! The one you hear at birthday parties, roller skating rinks, and wedding receptions.

MELISSA

This seems a little unprofessional.

PRINCIPAL JONES

Listen, Mr. Smith has his master's degree in elementary education coupled with an excellent track record. His methods may be a little...

SHIRLEY

Unorthodox

MELISSA

Stupid

HANK

Annoying

PRINCIPAL JONES

...elementary...but they're effective none-the-less. Parents, please follow my lead.

MR. SMITH

(cue The Chicken Dance)

Thank you Principal Jones! Now, there are a couple matters I wanted to bring up with you all tonight. Melissa?

MELISSA

Yes?

MR. SMITH

I wanted to touch base with you regarding your son, Steven. He seems to be struggling in math, are you working with him at home?

(cont.)

MELISSA

We are but he's just not good with numbers. He's more of an English guy. (chuckles) He takes after his mother.

MR. SMITH

That's totally fine! Numbers are hard sometimes. You know D's and F's aren't that bad! It's really not that big of a deal if he excels in other areas. At least you're working with him at home and you're getting quality parent-kid bonding time!

MELISSA

So what do you suggest we do?

MR. SMITH

Oh he'll come around! Keep giving him attention at home and working with him. I believe in Steven! Everyone does! There's only one place to go from D's and F's, that's up!

MELISSA

So you're telling us he's getting bad grades but not change anything?

MR. SMITH

Our second order of business is final third grade class assessments. Principal Jones would you care to elaborate?

PRINCIPAL JONES

Yes. The state recently...Mr. Smith can we turn it down?

MR. SMITH

No! LOUD MUSIC CLEARS THE CONSCIENCE!

PRINCIPAL JONES

(sighs)

The state recently passed a new law that requires all third grade students to pass a year end assessment before progressing into fourth grade.

SHIRLEY

Are you serious? Belinda is terrible at tests!

HANK

This is terrible news! Tommy is going to be ticked! He wants to go to fourth grade now!

(cont.)

MR. SMITH

Now look, it's not that bad! Tests are a part of our entire educational life. We'll go over every section months before the exam and we'll have countless practice tests. I promise you everything will be fine. Actually, it'll be exciting! Think how great your children will feel after they ace the test!

MELISSA

How important is the math section?

PRINCIPAL JONES

Math is the largest part of the test.

MR. SMITH

I promise you Melissa, Steven will do great! (beat) Hey come on everyone, keep dancing! There's one more piece of exciting information I wanted to share with you all. And really, Principal Jones, is the reason I wanted you to join us this evening.

PRINCIPAL JONES

Yes?

MR. SMITH

Last week I was diagnosed with Sarcoma! Woooo!

HANK

What's that?

SHIRLEY

Sarcoma! Mr. Smith, that's leg cancer!

MR. SMITH

Leg cancer found in soft tissue to be exact!

PRINCIPAL JONES

Oh my gosh! Mr. Smith. That is terrible.

MR. SMITH

Ah it's not so bad! It's not like they're going to chop my leg off or anything. Well, probably not.

SHIRLEY

Mr. Smith, this is terrible news. I'm not sure why you're so optimistic...

(cont.)

PRINCIPAL JONES

How long will you be able to teach?

MR. SMITH

Well that's the good news. Since it's leg cancer, I can still use my hands! And with the amazing advances in technology I may even be able to teach at home! I can prepare my lesson plans, give lectures, and even show students how to work out problems!

HANK

Mr. Smith, this seems to be a serious problem.

MR. SMITH

What? No, not at all! Why did you all stop dancing! Come on, dance!

PRINCIPAL JONES

Mr. Smith, we will work with you on this.

SHIRLEY

I mean you're looking at surgery, recovery, maybe even chemotherapy if the cancer spreads.

MR. SMITH

It'll be fine! I'm feeling fine! The doctors seem sure it's contained but we won't know for sure until the results are back. Actually, the results should be back tonight. I'm going to head there tomorrow after work to find out.

MELISSA

What! You mean you could find out how severe your cancer is, but you decided to have a Parent/Teacher Conference instead?

MR. SMITH

Yup! You got it! I love these things! I'm sure it'll all work out.

PRINCIPAL JONES

Mr. Smith. We appreciate your enthusiasm and optimism but this is a serious issue! Your life hangs in the balance!

MR. SMITH

You know Principal Jones, whatever happens, happens. If I live, I live. If I die, I die, but I won't. It's out of my control. The only thing in my control are these sweet dance moves. So dance with me will you!

(Blackout.)

(cont.)