

FOR WHO THE BELL, LIKE, TOLLS

By Martha King De Silva

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Cast: One Female

CINDY

Professor Nelson? Do you have a minute? I'm sorry to, like, bother you, but I just got my English paper back and I'm really upset. Hmm? Cindy Devereaux. English 101. Your 8:30 class?**(blinks)** All semester. Yeah, I'm sure. You know I missed a couple of classes at the beginning, 'cause I had, like this really bad sinus infection, so...**(listens)** Back of the class usually, 'cause sometimes I'm running a little late...**(HE suddenly remembers.)** Right, the pierced navel. That's me! **(smiles)**

Anywaaay...can I come in? Thanks. **(sits down)** So, I got my paper back **(begins sifting through her backpack and pulls out in succession a walkman, a brush, a pack of gum, etc)**, Gosh I just had it here **(continues sifting)** and I was, like, really surprised and upset about the grade. I know it's here...**(pulls out a pack of cigarettes)** and I thought maybe I missed something and...**(sifts)** you know, like, I really was excited about my paper topic and I thought I did a pretty good job with it and all...oh, here it is...**(pulls out a wrinkled set of papers and sets it down on the desk)** Sorry, it's kind of a mess. I went out for coffee, afterward and...my latte was filled a little high and well...but here it is..."Christian Myth in the Old Man and the Sea." D+. That was what really kind of got to me, Professor Nelson. You know? I mean, it just seemed really low. You know?

The thing is, I really like this class. That's what was so upsetting. It's really, really good, you know? And interesting. Not like I know some other classes are. I mean I'm taking World Cultural Geography, Pre-Calculus, which is a huge drag, I don't even know what's going on in there and what else...oh, Dance, which is cool. I was kind of thinking partway through the class that maybe I would major in English. I mean you would have no way of knowing this, Professor Nelson, but I like to read. And I write poetry that's pretty good. And sometimes songs. In fact, I was even asked to read some of my poetry for this coffeehouse thing. I was going to invite you to it. It could be like a field trip for the class. So, anyway, English would be, like, perfect. And then this D+ kind of dashed my hopes, if you know what I mean.

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I'm not saying that this is a perfect paper. No, I'm not saying that at all. I don't think it's an A. I know that. But, you know, I gave it to my roommate, Sylvia, before handing it in. Her father is a professor at Brandeis, you know? And she said that she thought it was good and that she felt pretty sure that her father wouldn't give it anything less than like a B+. She thought it was that good. **(HE answers.)** Well, I know...but, I, well that's what I was working from...I was going on that kind of thought that it was a B+...and I was pretty psyched when she said that 'cause she's pretty smart and all and...well I know that you probably have different values about papers and that's why I came to you.

What? Yeah. I really liked it. It was a really good book. **(considers)** I mean, honestly, honestly? I didn't get to finish it the whole way. I wanted to, I really did. And I plan to finish it up over break. I just got kind of jammed with other things. **(HE asks her "how far" she read.)** Page 52. **(explaining)** But I liked what I read and I talked to this guy on my hall who had read it in high school. He went to this really good prep school and he told me what happened at the end. So I, like, totally, totally, knew this book. You know what I mean? Well, I know it's not a substitute for reading it myself. Believe me. And that's why I wouldn't give this paper an A. Not even an A- even.

What? H-E-M-I-N-G-W-A-Y. Didn't I spell it that way? **(is proud)** I thought I had. Oh. Um. E-A-R-N-E-S-T. That's not right? **(considers)** Well, I don't think that's my fault, Professor Nelson, I really don't. 'Cause I had it that way in the paper and then ran it through spell check and...it was wrong. And Hemingway wasn't even in the spell checker, if you want to know. I just had to guess on that one. Okay, alright. But I didn't have it at that point 'cause I had to give it back to the person I borrowed it from. What was I supposed to do? **(gets impatient)** Well I would have, but the library isn't open at 5:00 a.m. You know?

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