

# *An Ingenious Felony*

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Age 14  
Language Arts Short Story

## *An Ingenious Felony*

‘It’s Jack, I’m here to fix the heater,’ he said lifting his toolbox.

‘Oh, alright then,’ Mrs. Summers, the teacher-on-call, replied to the man, who showed up unannounced in her grade seven classroom. She then continued instructing her students.

Throughout the day, Mrs. Summers occasionally shifted focus to watch as Jack gradually installed wires around the entire room. There was a time or two when they would share an artificial smile, but it seemed that the teacher’s overall impression of this man wasn’t favourable.

At the end of the day, when the time came for the students to return home and Little Tommy, the youngest student, opened the classroom door, a series of quiet beeps sounded and the suspicious technician hurried to slam the door shut.

‘Nobody leaves!’ he yelled, swallowing to stay calm, and then rushed over to the far corner. Within a

few seconds the beeps ceased. “Nobody leaves,” he repeated, in a calmer tone.

‘What happened?’ Bobby asked his teacher, who redirected the question. Jack looked every child in the eye, then motioned the teacher over toward him and began to explain.

‘Surrounding us, in this room, is a series of minute explosives powerful enough to ignite the entire school.’ The teacher clutched her hand to her mouth in horror. The man hushed her, and continued to talk as he motioned her toward the door watching the security camera, that he knew had a microphone installed. ‘In a few minutes, you are going to send a student to the office with *this* letter requesting \$25,000.’ He opened the door and the beeps sounded again. Mrs. Summers looked around in fear as the man gently closed the door and walked her back to the far corner of the classroom. She watched as he carried a small wireless remote control with a red button in the center. Beside it, a meter had begun to count down from ten in bright red. ‘If the door or *any* window is opened, and this, here, button isn’t

pressed in time... you can expect a big *bonanza*, if you know what I mean...’

The teacher hurriedly grabbed the remote from out of his reach and pressed the red button, mortified. The sirens discontinued and the man smiled handing her an envelope. ‘You know what to do.’

The teacher slowly tip-toed back to her students, with a forced smile on her face, and gestured for Bobby, her ace student, to come closer toward her. He did as he was told and she handed him the envelope in return. ‘Be sure to let the principal know to read this *immediately*, do you understand? *Immediately*.’ Bobby slowly nodded his head and left the classroom.

‘Make sure they don’t call them cops, either!’ Jack yelled after him.

‘Why does *he* get to go?’ Little Tommy asked Mrs. Summers. She watched all her pupils stare back at her with deep worry, and returned back to the extortionist. ‘Can you at least let the students—?’

‘*Nobody leaves*,’ the man repeated.

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A night had passed, and the office had informed them that families were pitching in to pay the desired price. Mrs. Summers turned around to look back at her students, and then asked Jack in a whisper, ‘*Why? Why are you doing this?*’ The man merely shook his head, and then looked her in the eye.

‘Three,’ he said. The teacher shook her head to show that she hadn’t understood. He reiterated, ‘Three children may leave, the rest must stay.’

‘*Three?* How am I supposed to cho—?’

‘**THREE CHILDREN MUST GO**, the rest must stay! That way the office will know that if they cooperate, I’ll keep my side of the promise.’ Mrs. Summers, shocked at his reply, slowly nodded and returned to the youngsters.

‘When can we go?’ Little Tommy asked and tears filled the teacher’s eyes.

‘Not everybody can go, my dear.’ Then the entire class broke out into loud cries as Jack yelled, ‘*Shut up—SHUT UP!*’

He then grabbed the classroom hamster, and began to shake it fiercely. ‘You see this?’ he bellowed as he continued to shake it. ‘You children speak another word, and you will follow in the footsteps of your little furry friend!’ and he slammed the body of the animal onto the ground and returned to his corner at the back of the classroom.

All the children turned around to face the teacher and silently pleaded, with tears in their eyes, for her to choose them as the lucky ones to leave and return home safely. The teacher closed her eyes and whispered, ‘You have to know that this is a very difficult decision. One I wish I didn’t have to make.’ *How to choose*, she thought... *Little Timmy’s father is rich*. She figured that if his son had been released, he wouldn’t contribute money like all other parents were doing and it would only take longer for them to get out. ‘Leila, George and Matt,’ she called. These were the names of students that she knew weren’t of the richest. The three students left the room and the beeping sounds arose, as the teacher looked up at the security camera that had been installed in the classroom. The next instant, a handgun was fired

from behind her destroying its lens. Jack, then put the gun back in his toolbox and pressed the remote control, once again to stop the beeps.

Unexpectedly, an envelope appeared from under the classroom door. The man slowly picked it up, opened it, and then counted the money that had been stored inside.

‘Ask your students to face the back wall,’ he demanded, and they did.

‘Agreed?’ the principal’s voice came from the other side of the door. Jack looked at Mrs. Summers.

‘Is it all there?’ she asked, and the technician slowly nodded.

‘It’s all here,’ he replied. Mrs. Summers quietly jumped and ran to give her accomplice a hug of joy. ‘We did it,’ she whispered.

‘You were great, sweetheart,’ Jack replied.

‘I had to make it seem real,’ she smiled, ‘they’ve been watching us all along.’ She jerked her head in the direction of the security cameras. ‘Why did you make me release three students? That wasn’t part of the plan!’

‘I told you—to make them parents cooperate!’

‘*Agreed?*’ the principal repeated from behind the door, after clearing his throat.

‘Count to ten,’ Jack conditioned, ‘then you may enter and take the children.’ The duo, then, hopped out of the window, beeps resounding, into a car and sped off mirthfully as the school exploded in the horizon behind them.