

## Excerpt from *Posted* by John David Anderson

"Let's have it."

"Have what?"

"The phone, Ruby."

"I don't have a phone," Ruby said, sounding suddenly Dorothy-like, all innocent as she attempted to slide the phone she didn't have into her glitzy bag. It caught the edge of the pocket and clattered, much too loudly, to the ground.

Naturally, this was hilarious. At least to everyone but Ms. Sheers, who shot down the aisle and reached for it, hawklike, snatching it out from underneath Ruby's fingertips.

"Give me my phone back," Ruby said, her face suddenly flushed, lunging upward as Ms. Sheer held it out of her reach.

"You don't have a phone," Ms. Sheers reminded her. She looked at Ruby's screen and her expression changed, Jekyll to Hyde. If it was possible for a teacher to be pretty, Ms. Sheers might qualify, but when she looked at that screen her face transformed into something pinched and contorted, like she had just taken a swallow of rancid milk. She looked from the phone to Ruby, then back to the phone. Ruby's eyes fell to her desk, head dropping so fast you would have thought someone had tied an anchor to her chin.

"Is this...?" Ms. Sheers stammered. "Did you...?"

Judging by the lack of response, the rest of us could only assume it was and she did. About a half dozen students, me included, telescoped our necks to get a look at the screen, but Ms. Sheers pressed the phone close to her chest.

We all turned and looked expectantly at Ruby, waiting for her comeback. Sarcastic or apologetic, it could go either way. I've found that kids will apologize instantly if they think that it will keep them out of trouble. I know I will. But there are some times you just know an apology – even one you actually mean – won't be enough. Then it's best to just keep your mouth shut.

I'm guessing that's what Ruby Sandels was thinking, because she didn't say a word at first. Just blushed and refused to look up.

Ms. Sheers took a deep breath. "You understand we need to go see Mr. Wittingham."

Source:

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