

Excerpts from *Posted* by John David Anderson

Ruby's message was passed around, jumping from phone to phone like a skipping stone, each of us gawking at it in turn.

The kids all knew before the parents. We probably even knew before Ruby's mom did. There was no way to take it back. You can't erase what everyone else has seen, and you certainly can't stop the gossip train once it has gathered steam and rocketed out of Branton Middle School Station. The whispering was like static in the halls.

'She actually *said* that?' Bench said with a whistle.

...

'Technically she typed it,' I said. 'I don't think you'd ever hear her say those words *out loud*.' I tried to imagine Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz* dropping the kind of bombs that Ruby did in that text message. Some of the things she wrote would have made the Wicked Witch turn white.

'She's going to get suspended,' Wolf said.

'Or worse,' Deedee added.

'I still can't believe she said that about *him*.'

Bench shook his head. The *him* was a big part of the problem and one of the reasons Ruby was sure to get sent home this time. It wasn't some guy she'd had a crush on or some other kid who bad-mouthed Ruby behind her back. The *him* was Mr. Jackson. An adult. A *teacher*. He apparently gave Ruby an F on her last science test because he suspected her of cheating. In response she thumbed a long rant to her friends, calling him several choice words...

With three exclamation points. She only sent the text to two people, but it didn't matter. Friends have friends. The message made the rounds.

Source:

Anderson, J. D. (2018). *Posted*. Walden Pond Press, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers.