

"The end", he said softly as he gathered his notes to return from the podium back to his seat.

"Thank you Ronald," and after a glance at his watch, "it looks like we have time for one more today." The professor marked a "C+" into his book and called out the next name on the list, "Mark Finlam". A resounding silence ensued.

After a moment, he repeated, "Mark Finlam", and this time an almost mumbled response from the audience.

"He's sick today Professor," muttered an anonymous female voice from somewhere in the middle of the room.

Smoothly accepting the information, the professor marked an "F" into his book with a sigh of disappointment and moved down to the next name calling out, "Bethany Fomer"

Startled and with an audible groan that echoed through the still classroom, Bethany shifted in her seat before slowly standing to begin making her way to the stool at the front of the room, as if the slower she moved, the less likely it would be for her to have to complete her assignment and tell a story to the class, a story that she didn't have ready to tell. Bethany had calculated she wouldn't be called on this class, but next, giving her a whole extra weekend to prepare. Two absences and then Kirk and Rachel speed-talking through their stories, and now she was facing utter failure as she hadn't even thought about the assignment. It wasn't even as though she had done anything great with the time she gained in her life from her wagered procrastination, spending the 4 hours she estimated she would have spent crafting a story, she'd only spent her time watching youtube videos on makeup application, so at least her look was on point as all eyes in the class were on her. She was going to look great as she failed the assignment.

However, on the way, thinking to herself and reminding herself about what a story is, a story is always an overcoming... a triumph over some enemy or difficulty, so perhaps her being unprepared was a perfect thing to overcome in a story. Could she perhaps tell the story of telling a story, unprepared, unrehearsed, to a critical audience? It was very meta, but maybe, just maybe she could pull it off. Bethany loathed the idea of going down without at least making an attempt.

A few more steps and her confidence began to build as the outline came together in her mind, after all, she was drawing completely from her immediate reality here. As her confidence built, she stood taller and took longer strides, now having a story to tell.

Unlike all the other students that day, and even the class before, she strode with purpose right to the center of the front of the room, choosing not to hide behind the podium lectern. Not only was she brimming with confidence by this point, but putting herself out there would help keep the full attention of everyone on her and show off the outfit she was also quite pleased with, besides, unlike all the others today, she wouldn't need to be referring to notes through her storytelling.

With an a playful smirk, and an amused light tone to her voice, she began her story, in quite the unusual fashion. "The end," she spoke, and paused for the unavoidable chuckles before resuming her tale.