

MY FORENSICS COACH IS NOT A JELLYBEAN.

A TEN MINUTE MONOLOGUE

By Bradley Walton

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MY FORENSICS COACH IS NOT A JELLYBEAN

A Ten Minute Comedy Monologue

By Bradley Walton

SYNOPSIS: The forensics coach used to dress in black. But one day, that changed. One day, the forensics coach began to wear...color. Bright colors. Assorted colors. Like jellybeans. And one of his students can't get the thought out of her head. In fact, the thought is so overwhelming that today, she can't even practice her original oratory speech because all she can think about is sinking her teeth into her coach's bright red shirt. She suspects that things are going to end badly. She is probably right.

Cast: 1 Male or 1 Female

Set: Bare Stage

AUTHOR NOTES

Two of my forensics students said that my shirts made them think of jellybeans, and that I should write a script about a forensics student mesmerized by the jellybean-ness of her coach's shirt. I wasn't sure at first where I could go with the concept, but the more I thought about it, the more I liked it. This script is what I came up with.

Thanks to Daelynn McCleve and Merrill Harmison.

AT RISE: *The NARRATOR, a teenager dressed for school, on a bare stage. HE or SHE seems anxious.*

My forensics coach is not a jellybean. I mean, I know deep down that he's not. But I keep having to tell myself over and over again. He's staring at me very intently right now and he is not a jellybean. He's wondering why there's this long awkward pause in the middle of my original oratory speech and he is still not a jellybean. He is tapping his pen impatiently on the table and he will never, ever be a jellybean. I wish I could convince myself. And I am very, very concerned that things are going to end badly.

This never used to be a problem. He used to wear black turtlenecks to school all the time. They matched his black pants and his black shoes and he looked like he was part of a stage crew. I never once thought of jellybeans. But then the principal retired and her replacement made collared dress shirts mandatory for all male faculty members.

So my forensics coach went out and bought a bunch of dress shirts. All of them in very bright, single colors.

Completely unlike what he used to wear.

Completely like a jellybean.

Okay, not really. It's not as if he's fat or short or round. He isn't. He's tall and skinny. If anything, he looks more like a crayon than a jellybean. But I don't want to flip him upside down and rub his face in a coloring book. I want to bite into him.

This would get me kicked off the team. A smear on my college applications. My future would be ruined. I'd wind up selling pencils to tourists on street corners or something.

The weird thing is, I'm not a connoisseur of jellybeans. I don't eat them very often, so I have no idea why I'm stuck on this.

I wonder how long I've been standing here saying nothing. My forensics coach is looking at me with a weird mixture of irritation and boredom. There is a zit forming on his forehead. I take a deep breath, and with more effort than I'd like to admit, I shift my attention away from his shirt and onto the zit. Which is slightly disgusting, but frees my brain up enough to force words out of my mouth.

"Sorry. I zoned out."

"Obviously," my coach says as if he was addressing a microscopic parasite.

"Would you like for me to start my speech over?" I ask with as much butt-kissing helpfulness as my pathetic voice can muster.

"You never started in the first place," says my coach.

Oops. I think my brain was even further off track than I realized.

"Oh. Right. Sorry," I say. "I'll get going with that, then."

My speech is a persuasive essay about how most science fiction is actually science fantasy, and the failure to distinguish between the two will lead to the decline of the civilized world. It has nothing to do with jellybeans. If I can just focus on my speech, I should be fine.

"Not too long ago, in our very own galaxy..." I say the words confidently, fixing my eyes on my coach's forehead zit, and I can feel my composure returning. Nine words down. So far, so good. I can do this. But as I complete the sentence, my coach shifts in his seat and my eyes flick down to his shirt and the next words come out wrong.

"A new jellybean was born."

No! I can't say that! There are no jellybeans in space!

“What?” My coach looks down at his hard copy of my speech. “Isn’t it supposed to be ‘genre’?”

“Right! It is. Thank you.” I nod my head a little too appreciatively.

My coach looks at me questioningly. “Jellybean?”

“Rhymes with genre. Threw me off.”

“No, it doesn’t.”

“True. But they’re similar. Kind of. Got the words mixed up.”

“Start over.”

I begin to sweat. I can feel the beads forming on my face like little clear jellybeans. No! Don’t think like that! Focus!

“Not too long ago, in our very own galaxy, a new genre was born.” There. I did it!

“Do you think you can say it without contorting your face like you’re in pain?” asks my coach.

“My face was contorting?”

“Like you were trying to pull out your wisdom teeth with a spatula. It was impressive, yet disturbing.”

“You’ve seen someone pull out their own wisdom teeth with a spatula?”

“No. It’s impossible.”

“Then why—“

“Because it’s exactly the expression you were making. Now start over.”

I close my eyes and take a deep breath. I think about my speech. About the absurdity of what passes for science fiction. The ridiculousness of something like lightsabers—with beams of light that somehow either stop or double back on themselves at a fixed range, and come in an assortment of bright fruity colors like jellybeans.

I hear someone scream and open my eyes to see who it is...then I realize it was probably me.

“Did I just scream?” I ask my forensics coach. Judging from his expression of disbelief and the fact that he’s got his fingers stuck in his ears, I can only assume the answer is yes.

“Are you finished doing that?” he asks, his fingers still in his ears.

I nod.

He pulls his fingers out of his ears, stands, and walks over to me. His shirt is very bright. I don’t think I can fight this anymore.

“Are you feeling okay?” he asks.

“I’m fine,” I say, nodding my head again. Probably a little too vigorously. His shirt is red. I bet it tastes like strawberry jellybeans. And just like that, I know I have lost the fight. Whatever happens, happens. It’s out of my hands.

“You’re fine?” my coach asks, obviously cluing in to the fact that I am anything but fine.

“Totally fine.”

“I don’t believe you.”

“Why not?”

“For one thing, you’re not making eye contact with me right now. Unless I’ve suddenly sprouted eyes on my shirt.”

“Your shirt is very red.”

“I think we can call it quits for practice today. How about we try again tomorrow?”

“Red like a jellybean.”

“I guess. So how about tomorrow?”

“No. I don’t want to go yet.”

“I feel like we’ve done all we can today.”

“A giant strawberry jellybean.”

“Okay, listen...you’re starting to freak me out a little bit. Whatever this thing is with jellybeans, you need to go home, deal with it, and leave it there. Don’t bring it with you to forensics practice tomorrow, okay? Actually, you know what? Let’s reschedule your practice for next week. How does that sound? Please stop looking at me like that. How about after winter break, okay? We’ll do it after winter break. That’ll give you all of November and December to sort through whatever it is of yours that needs sorting. So there’s the door. Go through it. Have a nice Halloween. See you in January.”

I think it's the mention of Halloween that does it. Trick-or-treating...candy...jellybeans. My coach is standing very close to me. So I bite into his shoulder. There is screaming. The screaming is not coming from me. I know this because the noise is right in my ear and it is very loud. I wish it would stop. If I were to let go with my teeth, that would probably make it stop. But it would make me sad to release the giant, thrashing jellybean from my jaws. Admittedly, it doesn't taste like a strawberry jellybean at all. It tastes like shirt. But I can pretend. I wish I could pretend my forensics coach wasn't screaming in my ear, but my imagination isn't that strong. He's also trying to push me away, which is irritating. There's a heavy-looking English textbook on a shelf a few feet away...if I could reach it, maybe I could hit my forensics coach over the head and make him be quiet and enjoy my snack in peace. I think he sees it too, though, because when I try to pick it up, he grabs my wrist.

This is incredibly annoying.

My forensics coach's screams start to cohere into language. I can almost make out sounds resembling the words "not" and "a" and "jellybean." My forensics coach seems to be trying to tell me that he is not a jellybean.

My forensics coach is not a jellybean.

My forensics coach is not a jellybean? That sounds...familiar...somehow. Like a long-forgotten mantra embedded by sheer repetition in my subconscious memory. My forensics coach is not a jellybean. My forensics coach is NOT a jellybean. MY FORENSICS COACH IS NOT A JELLYBEAN!

And just like that, I come to my senses.

Oh, crap. (Or "shoot.") I knew this was going to end badly.

I let go with my teeth and my forensics coach shoves me away.

“What are you doing? What’s the matter with you?!?” he yells.

“I’m sorry. I thought you were a jellybean.”

“Obviously...but...why?”

“Your shirt.”

“I got that part. But it still doesn’t make sense.”

“I know it doesn’t. But the thought got in my head and wouldn’t let go.”

My coach rubs his shoulder. “It’s not the only thing that wouldn’t let go.”

“Does this mean I’m off the team?”

“Yes!”

“What if I buy a steel practice cage?”

“No!”

He walks me down the hall to my guidance counselor’s office, ushers me in, and explains what happened. I stare at the floor the whole time. I can’t look at my coach or my guidance counselor. It’s too embarrassing. Finally, my counselor tells my coach he can leave. When the door shuts and I know my coach is gone, I finally look up at my guidance counselor. He’s wearing a bright green shirt that makes me think of a lime jellybean.

Oh, crap. (Or “Oh, no.”)

My guidance counselor is not a jellybean.

My guidance counselor is NOT a jellybean...

BLACKOUT.

THE END

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NOTES

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