

Windows

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Fiction

It could not be denied there was something wholly wrong with the scene.

The classroom itself did naught to inspire. The children, though beautiful in their own ways—of course—were nothing special. The stapler, the worn surfaces of the desks, the motivational posters peeling off the walls, they all sang of repetition, of classroom constancy.

But there was something about the sky that day. Something about the windows, thrown open to catch the first breath of spring air that made the children itch beneath their skin.

If Miss Freely noticed the faint buzz of apprehension among her third graders, she didn't acknowledge it. Maybe she was distracted by it herself, looking up as she leaned over a child's desk to find herself caught in an imagined summer haze. Her students were unusually restless beasts, but such troubles couldn't penetrate the awareness of a woman, pining. Shortly after the children were given class time to work on their homework; she turned her attention to the phone, and dialed up Nurse Jackson for the latest gossip.

It was then that the students started to really fixate on those windows.

Their room faced the main parking lot, and, separating the outer wall of the school from the pavement, there were a few yards of grass. This went unseen and unrealized by the children, however, as the windows were on the top half of the wall, leaving only the sky and the tops of a few lonely street lights visible.

It seemed like such a strange thing, to have a window open in school. One less barrier against the outside world—though the strongest still remained. An invisible force heard but not seen, rested in the frame of the window, where the glass would normally be. There was the outside, and then there was the children's world, and the unspoken rule was that nothing could possibly travel through this barrier, as there was really nothing but nothingness past it.

On this day, however, as the gentle, spring-smelling breeze floated in, rattling the pinned-up artwork like the breath of a giant, the children's faith in that barrier began to be tested.

Nearest the window sat Andrew Lictan, who had a cool brother in fifth grade, and Charlie Burris, who had two dads. Andrew, who had been watching the window for quite some time, had been struck by an impulsive, yet genius sort of idea. As Miss Freely kept on her conversation with the nurse, he nudged Charlie and flicked his eyes up to the window.

Charlie, confused, narrowed his eyes and half-shrugged.

Andrew grabbed his calculator, and held it, cool and solid in his palm. He held it up at eye level, looking at Charlie, then moved his gaze to the window.

Charlie grinned, mouthing, throw it.

Andrew nodded, making a face like, yeah. He turned back to the window, keeping an eye on Miss Freely, and, as stealthily as he could, began to pull back.

It was at this point that the nervous energy which had been plaguing the class all day directed the students' attention to the scene about to play out.

Andrew felt it, their eyes on him. That he was at the epicenter of whatever revelation was to come from his actions.

He sent the calculator soaring through the air, watched it, mouth agape, as it arched perfectly through the window and landed with a soft, muffled thump on the grass outside.

An image came to him, the outside of the school, that patch of grass, clear and green, freshly cut, with his calculator fallen right in the middle.

The children all held a similar slack-jawed countenance. What was inside now found itself out, and it didn't have a note from its parents or guardians, and it wasn't three fifteen PM, and it wasn't on a field trip—it was just out.

Miss Freely, perhaps noticing the change in class temperature, or maybe just tired of listening to Nurse Jackson, dismissed herself, and turned back to the children.

"Now." She said, brushing her hair back. "Why don't we move onto spelling?"