

James in School and the Origin of the Pown

by

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INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

JAMES (15) with long brown hair and dressed in a scruffy school uniform twiddles his thumbs as he sits by a table, all alone. All around him are similar tables. In front of him is a door and a white board. A clock on the front wall says 3:20. A TEACHER (50) enters the room. She is dressed with flower patterns. She folds her arms as she stands right in front of the PUPIL.

TEACHER

Hello, James. Do you know why I'm here?

JAMES sighs.

JAMES

I haven't been working hard enough?

TEACHER

Not exactly. You have been working hard in a WAY, just not on the subjects you're supposed to.

JAMES

What do you mean?

The TEACHER removes an item from her pocket and focuses on it, hard.

TEACHER

This is what I found in your bag  
'Proposal for business: I offer 75% of my business in return of getting just an apple. :O (So I stick in the minds of my potential employers and make them confused so they don't know how to react. Then out of nowhere, I demand a million pounds! They accept). My business is that I slap other people on request. However, not hard enough so it's assault. Be legal.

JAMES nods.

JAMES

Yes.

TEACHER

I can't for the life of me work out what you're going on about.

JAMES

It was for business studies.

TEACHER

Then why does its title say 'Music Homework'?

JAMES

Er. It's for both subjects? No, that doesn't sound right... No, no, my thinking was music is a business, too.

TEACHER

You're not sure?

JAMES

No. Ha ha. I rushed it. I have more well thought out ideas, if you're interested?

JAMES reaches into his pockets.

JAMES

Oh, my pockets are empty right now. But...

The TEACHER shakes her head in disbelief.

TEACHER

(interrupting)

Whatever the case, why would anyone pay you to slap people?

JAMES

I was thinking hit men take things way too far, so I filled a gap in the market. That's what you teachers told me to do. I learnt from the best.

TEACHER

Would you like to explain what I also found in your bag?

JAMES

Nope.

TEACHER

I found a plastic cup and a ball of string.

JAMES

So?

TEACHER

So? What in God's name is it for?

JAMES  
It's for my D.T. project.

TEACHER  
And what are you planning to make?

JAMES  
A plastic cup attached to some string.

TEACHER  
And what are you supposed to make?

JAMES  
A remote controlled car...

TEACHER  
So why don't you?

JAMES  
Too difficult. Sorry.

The TEACHER tries to look sympathetic but fails.

TEACHER  
Is there any subject you're doing well at in school? All you do in class is doodle in your books. At very least we'd expect you to be good at art, instead you keep practicing karate moves, there.

JAMES steeples his hands together with confidence.

JAMES  
Actually it's a slap.

The TEACHER frowns.

TEACHER  
For your English project your story goes as follows 'Man saw ball. He chased the ball. He fell over. Powned. The end.

JAMES gives a thumbs up.

JAMES  
I want to be a children's author.

TEACHER  
What's 'powned' mean?

JAMES

You know... It's when you pown someone... It's like... when someone tries to annoy you, but you annoy them first. You... y'know. You just pown them.

TEACHER

This is what you wrote for your cover letter for when you leave school. It's a haiku that goes 'Please hire me mister. Or it could well be misses. Ha ha ha ha ha!!!'

JAMES

Right...

The TEACHER sits beside JAMES.

TEACHER

Do you know what's going to happen to you when you leave school?

JAMES

I'll host a super successful podcast?

TEACHER

No.

JAMES

Yes I will.

TEACHER

No.

JAMES

Oh.

TEACHER

Instead, you'll end up on the streets, where you'll be slapping people to protect your sleeping bag, or tent if you're very lucky. It's bad enough when a student doesn't progress in his or her studies...

JAMES widens his eyes.

JAMES

'His'...

TEACHER

But you're getting progressively dumber.

(MORE)

TEACHER (cont'd)  
I bet you don't even have any plans  
on what your podcast would be about.

JAMES  
As I said, I'm really good at powning  
people.

TEACHER  
Ok.

A note falls out of James's pocket. The TEACHER picks it up,  
unravels it, and reads it.

JAMES  
Oh I did have something there...

TEACHER  
'Pown'.

JAMES  
Ha.

TEACHER  
Who's the note for?

JAMES  
Anyone who found it...

TEACHER  
So me, then?

JAMES  
I'm so sorry. I never realised I'd  
end up powning you...

The TEACHER wipes her eye.

TEACHER  
How's that supposed to make me feel?

JAMES  
I'm sorry, but the whole point of the  
pown is to make the other person feel  
small.

TEACHER  
I should report this to the  
headmaster.

JAMES  
Please don't.

TEACHER  
Or what? You'll pown him too?

JAMES

I can teach you. I can teach you to pown him. I bet you'd love that. You can pown anyone. I'll teach you right now. What you have to do is take him by surprise. You'd be like 'how are you today?' than out of nowhere, bam! Pown!

TEACHER

Can you stop saying 'pown'?

JAMES

I do try!!

JAMES starts to cry.

TEACHER

You need to speak to somebody.

JAMES

A business mentor?

TEACHER

No, that's not going to happen. And I mean ever.

JAMES

Who then?

TEACHER

Anyone apart from me sounds fine.

JAMES pushes his seat back with his legs.

JAMES

So I can go now?

TEACHER

What are you going to do when you leave?

JAMES

Pester people online.

TEACHER

What do you mean?

JAMES

Spam them!

TEACHER

With what?

JAMES

I once copied and pasted a section of  
a random novel...

TEACHER

If it makes you happy, I suppose...

JAMES

Yes, very much so.

TEACHER

Ok. Please leave.

JAMES does so.

20 YEARS LATER...

INT. HALL - DAY

JAMES (35) with long brown hair and dressed in a suit stands  
on a stage with a microphone in front of him. A spotlight is  
on him. Everything else is in total darkness.

JAMES

... So, as you can see, I'm a  
reformed character now, and I have  
completely turned my life around. Any  
questions?

AUDIENCE MEMBER

Is this guy for real?