

## February Writing Prompt Winner

Mr. Buckman

By Kalina Cleavinger



On an especially boring Tuesday morning, I walked into my animal science class. A quick glance around the room told me I wasn't the only one feeling less than happy to be here. Something about not even being halfway done with the school week just put everybody down in the dumps. I took my usual seat at a table towards the middle of the room. "Where's Mrs. Shrum at?", my friend Kara said. "She had a family emergency, remember?", I tiredly replied. Yeah, maybe the 3 AM movie marathon was a bad idea. Not 5 seconds after Kara's question, a man who looked straight out of a Harry Potter movie confidently walked in. He wrote his name on the whiteboard like it was 1990 again. It read "Mr. Buckman". "Good morning today students. I'm sure you've heard Mrs. Shrum is unable to be here this week. No worries, I'm perfectly capable of taking over until then. You will call me Mr. Buckman and I don't accept any nicknames.....", the sub rambled on for a while. He didn't seem bothered when a few bunnies scurried into the room and some squirrels ran out of his pocket. The class stood in shocked silence for way too long. "Ah, I see you've met my friends. I applied for this job because I thought it would be a good opportunity to teach you kids about the makeup of animals. How they think, work, and especially how they talk." I took out my phone to call the police as this whole deal seemed freaky. Sigh. It's too early in the morning for this. Just as I was about to dial 911, a squirrel rammed it out of my hand,



scaring the daylights out of me. "I appreciate it, Bob. Will you go close the door as well for me?" Like magic, the squirrel, whose name was apparently Bob, climbed up the desks to flick the light switch.

"Start talking or I run out of here screaming murder" Kara hastily said. He had that coming, I thought.

Mr. Buckman smiled what appeared to be a genuine and happy smile. "Like I said, teaching you how to communicate with animals is part of why I am here. I have been gifted with the ability to talk to any animal. I thought this would be a good class to teach this.", he said and for some reason I had a burst of excitement. "Come on guys. If you feel anything like me I know you're a bunch of burnt out highschoolers who could use a little fun. Let's give him a chance before we go nuts.", I pleaded. Mr. Buckman started out his lesson teaching about the way bunnies migrate and move together. He asked them to demonstrate for us. It was probably the best class I've ever had. Mr. Buckman with his long red beard, green eyes, black robe, and toothy smile became the favorite teacher of everyone in that class. We all swore to keep this our little secret and occasionally saw him the next few years at our school. To this day, that remains the most magical week of my life.