

MAX PARADOX

# THE ABSURDITIES OF BEING A TEACHER



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# INTRO

Teaching is often described as a calling.

This is usually said by people who left the classroom years ago

or by people who have never been inside one for longer than a polite visit.

From the outside, teaching looks clean.

Organized.

Structured.

A profession built on knowledge, respect, and the quiet authority of someone who knows more than the room.

From the inside, it looks like a very specific kind of endurance sport.

One where you are expected to be calm while being interrupted every twelve seconds.

One where you are expected to care deeply while pretending not to notice how little control you actually have.

One where you prepare for hours so that nothing goes according to plan within the first three minutes.

Teaching is not about standing in front of a class and explaining things.

It is about managing expectations that were never realistic to begin with.

- The expectation that students will listen because learning is important.
- The expectation that parents will be reasonable because they love their children.
- The expectation that the system knows what it's doing because it is a system.

None of these expectations survive long.

Teachers live in a strange parallel reality.

A place where you are simultaneously responsible for everything  
and officially responsible for nothing.

You are blamed when students fail.

You are questioned when students succeed too confidently.

You are evaluated by people who do not teach  
using criteria designed by people who never did.

Somewhere between lesson plans, grading, meetings,  
emails, and last-minute schedule changes,  
you are supposed to remember why you started.

You usually do.

Briefly.

At inconvenient moments.

Teaching also comes with a unique emotional contradiction.

You are expected to be endlessly patient,  
yet deliver results on a fixed timeline.

You are told to individualize education,  
while handling groups that are anything but individual.

You are encouraged to be creative,  
as long as that creativity fits neatly into predefined boxes.

- Be inspiring, but follow the curriculum exactly.
- Be empathetic, but maintain authority at all times.
- Be flexible, but never deviate from the plan.

It is a job built almost entirely on contradictions,  
held together by coffee, habit, and the quiet hope that  
tomorrow might be slightly easier.

It rarely is.

There is also the audience.

Students who are tired before they arrive.

Students who are bored before you speak.

Students who can sense uncertainty the way animals sense weather.

And then there are the adults.

Parents who believe their child is both misunderstood and exceptional.

Administrators who speak fluent policy and basic reality.

Colleagues who cope in wildly different ways, all of them valid, none of them sustainable.

- Some become overly enthusiastic.
- Some become deeply sarcastic.
- Some disappear emotionally while remaining physically present.

All of them are still called "teachers."

This book is not a guide.

It will not tell you how to teach better, faster, or with more passion.

It will not suggest techniques, strategies, or revolutionary methods.

There are enough of those already.

This is simply an observation.

A long, tired, affectionate look at the absurd machinery of  
modern teaching  
and the people inside it who keep showing up anyway.

Not because it makes sense.

Not because it is efficient.

But because leaving feels harder than staying.

If you are a teacher,  
you will recognize yourself immediately.

If you are not,  
you will finally understand why teachers laugh at things that  
aren't jokes.

And why, despite everything,  
they walk back into the classroom the next day  
and do it all again.

# Chapter 1 - The Bell Rings, Reality Enters

The bell is not a sound.

It is a declaration.

A clear, metallic announcement that whatever version of the day you imagined has just been cancelled.

Before the bell, there is hope.

You stand in the classroom.

You arrange your notes.

You believe, briefly, that today might be the day everything flows.

Then the bell rings.

And reality walks in, carrying backpacks, opinions, unfinished conversations, and a complete lack of interest in your plan.

The first few seconds after the bell are crucial.

They tell you everything you need to know about how the lesson will go.

- The volume of the room does not drop.
- Several students are still emotionally in the hallway.

- Someone is already asking a question that has nothing to do with anything.

This is when you remember that teaching is not about starting lessons.

It is about interrupting chaos just long enough to pretend learning might occur.

You say "Good morning."

It is not returned evenly.

Some students mumble.

Some nod.

Some stare as if you have personally inconvenienced them by existing.

A few are still finishing conversations that began yesterday and apparently cannot be paused.

You wait.

This is a tactical wait.

A silence designed to assert authority without openly begging for attention.

It works sometimes.

Today is not one of those times.