6:54 Am. Six more minutes of peaceful solitude. The teacher leans back in his chair, eyes wide open, painfully anticipating the start of the day. His body stretches out as if trying to desperately gain a few more minutes of relaxation before the looming tension kicks off its eight hour marathon run towards strained veins and tense muscles. A red paisley necktie sits slightly off center of the white dress shirt that is already half un-tucked from his gray slacks. He runs his fingers nervously through his salt and pepper colored hair, or at least what he has left of it, encircling the sides and back of his head. The lines in his 56 year old face could tell the story of years of stress and anxiety like the rings of a freshly cut maple tree. Leaning forward, he grasps his coffee cup and raises it to his lips. The lukewarm liquid moistens his top lip as he savors the taste of the rich Columbian brew. **RRRIIIIIINNNNNNGGGGG.** The school bell causes Mr. Lupinetti to jump. “Oh, great!” he grumbles, “The zoo has officially opened.” He roughly wipes at the newly acquired coffee stain on his shirt. The stain was going to be the least of his problems today.

* **M. Kiley**