



The Students Sold Us

SECRETS



Lee J. Mavin

The Students Sold Us Secrets

A collection of short stories

By Lee J. Mavin

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Smashwords Edition

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Warning

Be advised that the stories collected in this book may be disturbing and dangerous.

It is our intent to place before you these cautionary tales so as to inform you — parents, children, teachers, and communities at large — of things that, because of their horror, are often kept from the news. A teacher takes a sudden leave of absence, a missing student is said to have transferred. Has this happened in your school? What was the official reason?

May we suggest that if left unchecked, these things may spread to one's place of work, dark theaters, or public gatherings in general.

We have been advised by counsel to forgo publication of *The Students Sold Us Secrets*. The possibility of contagion between story and reader is high. The risks are great — suggestibility, mirrored behavior, individual and group psychosis, what experts call folie à deux. But further analysis of the situation leads us to believe that we do a far greater good by making this collection available to you, a reading member of society: Too often we appear not to see the truth, not because it is dim and distant, but because we are more comfortable in our ignorance.

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and events that appear within are either products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any

resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

Dedicated to

The scared and underpaid teacher

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Forward

The first edition is finally here, and it wouldn't be possible without traffic jams on the bus to work or extended time spent at work, supposedly lesson planning, unexpected days off and cancelled lessons. I've been a fan of the short story collection since I could read and my favorite kind of short story was always the horror story.

I loved hearing ghost stories from friends at sleepovers and spent many weekends reading horror short story collections. The stories that scared me the most were the ones that could actually happen in real life. Don't get me wrong, I loved the occasional vampire or werewolf adventure, but the really freaky ones were always about stuff that was close to home. I loved the concept of the psychological thriller, getting into the mind of a madman and understanding the passions and emotions of a killer. These were the kinds of stories that I read over and over again.

I was a big fan of Stephen King too and clearly remember buying each volume of the *Green Mile* series. But there was something missing in the characters that I wanted and later I realized, none of them were my age. I found it hard to relate to a forty-year-old man on death row so I turned to young adult fiction. I wasn't really a fan of R.L. Stines' immensely popular series: *Goosebumps*, because I was just a little too old for it and basically just wanted something with more bloodshed. I got that in Japanese Manga but the

themes were way too fantasy related and often involved robots and aliens.

So I turned to the television and got addicted to teen dramas like the *X-files* and *American Gothic*, but I quickly realized that they hardly had any real action in them at all. I went on searching for the right combination. I never found it.

That is one of the reasons why I am writing this series. I want to bring the psychological thriller aspect to a high-school setting because I always wanted to read something like that as a teenager. Sure, they were probably out there, but I couldn't find them in my tiny little town of Coffs Harbour, New South Wales. I've always loved writing short stories and especially enjoyed the horror anthologies. The short story format was quick enough to read at lunch time and between classes and I could always put them down after reading one story and read some other novel or comic in between without losing track of the plot.

So here they are, enjoy my readers! I'm fulfilling a lifelong dream in publishing them so just having them in print is awesome for me.

Secret report from an anonymous, terrified teacher

Report #1 Introduction

My name must remain unknown to you, but my presence will definitely be felt. I'm constantly keeping an eye on the current school system and its students. I'm watching around the corner and from outside the classroom windows. I'm listening to the shouts and insults from the hallways, and I'm witnessing a change for the worse. I have become a double agent, working for the teachers and spying on the students as an undercover teacher. Students: be careful what you say around me, because I am constantly recording dialogue from students when they least expect it. Teachers: I have no advice for you, but to either quit or take necessary precautions to protect your very life.

If you are considering a career in teaching, I would advise you against it completely. It has become a profession far more dangerous than being a police officer or even an army soldier in open warfare. Teachers risk not only physical damage, but mental damage too, as so-called innocent children tend to attack with their most lethal weapon, their voice. Even the strongest and most emotionally sturdy of people have been brought down to their knees by a child's *poison tongue*. I have survived long enough to learn that the children are slowly, but surely getting worse. They are

becoming more and more immoral every year and there isn't a week I don't hear about some awful deed or gruesome punishment at the hands of another student.

I have recently quit my full-time teaching position and now cautiously go from school to school as a casual employee. I sneak to school every day with a different identity, and I have changed my name several times in the hope to remain anonymous. I also often wear fake beards and dye my hair different colors on a weekly basis trying to remain unidentified. I do this because I know what these kids are capable of. I have read some foul and disturbing information regarding the intentions of several current students. So far, I have collected twelve diaries to expose the truth. These diary entries have been handed to me secretly at a hefty price. Let's just say some sacrifices were made to obtain them. Some of the diaries were stained with blood; others had unreadable parts that have been omitted. I have only edited these entries slightly, and the events described within them are unchanged. I only changed the names as I was instructed to via several middle-men in order to protect both their lives and mine. One may notice very common surnames for all the main culprits in these stories. These were chosen only to prevent reactionary violence and also to put off my inevitable untimely death.

I have also conducted some very dangerous research on the individuals involved in the proceeding events. The more I study these students, their friends and their daily life, the more I remain clueless as to why they continue to commit

such evil crimes. Based on the following diary entries, I have found that these children appear normal on the outside, but on the inside they are plotting something ghastly and hurtful. As you will find out, these children often fulfill their desires at the expense of others. There is no excuse for the violent and psychologically disturbing things they think and do as none of the students come from poor families, and, in fact, they are all reasonably wealthy. All of their families appear functional and all of these students have been raised by a set of married, full-time working parents.

I'm risking my life giving you this information, but I feel you need to know the truth. On the surface these children appear innocent and well-mannered but it is inside where their darkness dwells. Today's teachers have much to worry about when entering a school. We have become targets and vents for students' ever-growing anger and increasingly violent tendencies. Teachers have entered into a dark era of educational instruction indeed. The school is no longer a place of learning, but a place of fear. We teachers fear the worst is still to come, and we grow weaker every term. We have become the enemy in the students' eyes and risk attacks from every direction during every school hour. I have heard some news of an uprising of extreme student terrorism against teachers, but have found no evidence of it surfacing as of yet. I am therefore grateful to report that the culprits in these entries do remain random and unrelated to each other. My worst fear is that the students

band together in a mass rebellion of carnage against their instructors.

This is all I can report at this moment in time as I have reason to believe that I have been under investigation from several unknown students. If you are reading this information then at least I have succeeded in getting some of the truth out there before leaving this school, possibly in a body bag. Eventually they will find me and discover my whole operation, but until then I hope to uncover more of their horrible deeds. I will do my best to shake these spies from my trail and if I succeed in this I will report back with more information at an unspecified date.

Note: This information is not to be returned to the enemy. If it winds up in any school bag, I am surely doomed.

—E. P.

I'll never eat apples again

No one is innocent in the current system. The pressure to be the best has driven some individuals to despicable acts of violence. Friendship has become a disposable commodity in the race for a better position in the class.

—E. P.

I'll never eat apples again! Why apples you ask? They are a perfectly healthy fruit that most people enjoy, right? Not for me, and for good reason. They are normally in most students' lunch boxes, right next to the sandwiches and the packet of chips, and I used to eat them all the time. I used to be an apple eater just like anyone else until things got crazy at school. It started with my fake friendship with Andy Zhou. Andy Zhou was never my *real* best friend, I mean everyone thought we were inseparable best buddies, but they didn't really know what was going on — and neither did Andy for that matter. I definitely acted like a best friend, and he had no reason to doubt anything I said, but he didn't have a clue what was going on in my head. We sat next to each other every day at school right at the front of the class because we were the best two students in grade 6. He was forever sitting in the number one seat; I was stuck at number two, in the era of seating by academic rank.

Andy Zhou was basically Mr. Perfect. He was consistently at the top of the Math, English and Science classes, and

this frustrated me all the time. I was always second best in every assignment, project, and exam. He was fractionally beating me in every subject, even in Physical Education where we both struggled. There he was fifth last, and I was fourth last. It was killing me, but he didn't know I was jealous at all. His perfection didn't stop in the classroom. He was better than me at everything else too. I constantly lost to him at every PlayStation and Nintendo game we played. I was always finishing books weeks after him. The thing that really got to me was his skills in Yu-Gi-Oh. We collected Yu-Gi-Oh cards religiously and even held huge tournaments in the Math room at lunchtime. I spent all the money I had on these cards, but it didn't matter — Andy always had at least double that of mine. We hung out all the time after school trading these Yu-Gi-Oh cards. I desperately wanted all of his, which he kept in a shiny collector's box — yes, it, too was a little more expensive, a little fancier, than mine.

Andy Zhou was also effortless in his perfection. He seemed to breeze through learning something without even showing any signs of misunderstanding. One time we had a history exam where we had to remember a ridiculous amount of times and dates. I spent the whole week trying to memorize every time, date, and place for hours every night. I even stayed up all night studying before the test. During this time Andy seemed to be preoccupied with his Yu Gi Oh cards, and only glanced at his book at times in history class. He didn't seem worried at all before the test,