

The Tyrannical Teacher

Or, The Soliloquy of Master Dennis Chan

(Inspired by Mark Twain's *The Soliloquy of King Leopold*)

Music teacher Dennis Chan is the absolute king and master of all the young slaves to whom he assiduously and regularly assigns enormous heaps of homework. He says, and with greater accuracy than a common teacher like Peter Dudink, "Let us manage the exact ways of the homework. The source of my success as a music teacher is in the musical notes being drawn in the exact size I demand, and if one size is bigger or smaller, the students must redo the entire work. It matters not that the homework is 10 pages long, and they must write hundreds of notes. The size must be exactly as I want. The name of the document emailed to me must be written exactly as

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sioadnosiadnsoainfoi_email_Oinoinasdoinsato_the-music-theory-hw_fsaidosaidnoasind, or else I will lecture them, embedding my perfect thoughts in their empty minds. The success of the tortuous work is the work of this sole directing will, without being hampered by kind family and friends or other, worse teachers, carried out under my exclusive supervision.

"If I had them by the throat! [*hastily kisses the textbook and mumbles*]. I have done plenty of hard work to keep the children quiet, and still their talk of my incompetence continues. I have spent millions on these huge textbooks stuffed full of interesting concepts for the children to slave away at, and what do I get in return for my magnanimity? Nothing. Not a compliment. My generousities are read without passion, in print. In print I get nothing but slanders and slanders and slanders! Grant them true, what of it? They are slanders all the same when uttered against a great teacher.

"With my powers in their tears, with my mouth full of Music Concepts, and my heart ringing with Music, I implored the parents to place the vast array of Free Children in trust in my hands as their teacher, so that I may root out happiness and stop the words of non-music, and lift up those once happy children into light, the light of our blessed Music Theory That You Don't Need To Know To Play Music, the light that streams into our holy Nonsense, the light that makes glorious our noble youth -- lifting them up and drying their tears and filling their bruised hearts with joy and gratitude-- lifting them up to make them comprehend they are no longer Rotten Nothings that know nothing of music, but our very brothers of Unnecessary Nonsense. Kevin's parents and others wept in sympathy with me, and were persuaded after their children met on two different platforms and made me their teacher of Useless Information as I drafted out my power and limitations, carefully guarding their mental health against hurt or harm, forbidding the use of free time for non-music-religious things and providing courts of public humiliation for their mistakes.

"These meddlesome children! Those tiresome brains are always talking, always telling. They have told how, for many years, I have taught them not as a great teacher of knowledge, but as an idiot, irresponsible and unclear; being above my own rules and restrictions; barring out any questions I cannot answer with "check the textbook"; restricting free time to myself; seizing those under me as my personal property--mine, solely mine--claiming and holding my many little students as my slaves; their labor mine, without wage or praise; the knowledge they get from Google is not theirs but mine.

"These pests! -- it is as I say, they have kept back nothing! They have revealed these and yet other details which shame should have kept them silent about, since they were exposures of a

teacher, a sacred personage and immune from reproach, by right of his selection and appointment to his great office by their parents themselves; a king whose acts cannot be criticized. Their incompetent suggestions deserve oblivion as I am master of this universe.

“Yes, they go on telling everything, these chatterers! They tell how I levy incredibly burdensome homework upon the students -- pages which are a pure theft of their life; pages which they must satisfy by working under harder and constantly harder conditions, and by raising weary hands to draw notes--and it all comes out that, when they fall short of their tasks due to hunger, sickness, despair, and ceaseless and exhausting labor without rest, and forsake their homes and flee from classes to escape punishment and my manipulations of parents, who, as my henchmen, hunt my children down and yell at them and burn away the happiness in their souls. They tell it all: how I am wiping a nation of once friendly creatures out of happy existence by every form of homework, for my private pocket's sake.

“The parents support the fact that quarantine required me to create a new means for online learning, and so, I selected two different platforms that require separate app downloads and are used to give access to two different elements of my wonderful classes: one for the superb audio and one for the incomparable visual experience. Did this stop their mouths? No, they merely pointed out that my plan involved wholly unnecessary work!”