

Grading Papers

(Story words: chocolate, poetry, books)

Jane walked into Fluff's and said a bright and cheerful "Hello" to Len who ran the shop.

Len smiled and said, "Two chocolate and one twist?"

Jane said, "You know it!"

Jane was an English teacher at the local high school. She loved being a teacher, and she loved books. When she got her students interested in writing and reading, she was thrilled. Every April she had a poetry unit ending with a poetry slam. It was her favorite time of year.

But there was one thing she wished that she did not have to do so often: grade papers. To prepare for a long night of grading, she often stopped at Fluff's.

Jane knew that her students became better writers because she had them write lots of papers. But commenting on those papers took so much effort. She told her friend Len: “Sometimes I would rather eat a stack of papers than grade them!” She pulled her stacks out of her bag and waved them in the air for emphasis.

After dinner, Jane would make a big pot of coffee. With donuts by her side, she would grade paper after paper late into the night. Her cat Rufus would curl up under the lamp on her desk or sit at her feet. It was as if Rufus could tell that Jane needed his moral support.

When returning papers to her students, Jane felt as free as a bird. Once, after staying up all night grading, she came into class with a big smile and put her stack of papers on her desk.

One of her students, Sasha, gazed at Jane’s shoes and said, “Ms. Reed? Do you realize that one of your loafers is blue and the other is black?”

Jane laughed and said, "That may be, but at least I have no more papers to grade!"