

SISTER ALOYSIUS:

You are a very innocent person, Sister James. William London is a fidgety boy and if you do not keep right on him, he will do anything to escape his chair. He would set his foot on fire for half a day out of school. . . He has a restless mind. His father's a policeman and the last thing he wants is a rowdy boy. William London is headed for trouble. Puberty has got hold of him. He will be imagining all the wrong things and I strongly suspect he will not graduate high school. But that's beyond our jurisdiction. We simply have to get him through, out the door, and then he's somebody else's project. Ordinarily, I assign my most experienced sisters to eighth grade but I'm working within constraints.

Are you in control of your class? I mean, usually more children are sent down to me. If you are trying to take care of things yourself, that could be an error. You are answerable to me, I to the monsignor, he to the bishop, and so on up to the Holy Father. There's a chain of discipline. Make use of it.

[Pause]

He had a ballpoint pen.

William London had a ballpoint pen. He was fiddling with it while he waited for his mother. He's not using for assignments, I hope. I'm sorry I allowed even cartridge pens into the school. The students really should be learning script with true fountain pens. Always the easy way out these days. What does that teach? Every easy choice today will have its consequence tomorrow. Mark my words.