

## Teacher tangled in literary witch hunt



**BRITTANY NORMAN**  
MANAGING EDITOR

Censorship strikes again. A ninth grade teacher in Tuscola, Texas has been placed

on leave and is being investigated for providing harmful material to a minor after a parent complained to the police about a novel on the pre-Advanced Placement English class reading list.

The most recent victim to overreacting parents on a witch hunt is Kaleb Tierce, an English teacher at Jim Ned High School in Tuscola.

Parents went to the local police after their daughter read the book for a book report. Tierce now faces criminal charges for providing harmful material to a minor.

Yes, the book in question deals with notably mature subjects. The main character is a murderer and necrophiliac, and certain scenes depict these disturbing parts of his nature in detail.

The book wasn't written with

the intention of causing a stir over the content.

The book in question is a 1974 novel by last year's Pulitzer Prize winning author Cormac McCarthy.

The fact that a teacher can get in legal trouble over fictional necrophilia is a testament to many things, among them close-minded small-town Texas, the tendency of parents to freak out over the written word while letting mature TV and movie content run wild, and a disturbing reminder of just how often books are banned despite literary merit.

A 14-year-old girl chose the novel from a list of titles approved by the school district. When her parents checked out the book, they were disturbed by certain passages that depicted rape, violence and necrophilia.

The parents complained to school officials who stood behind Tierce. Unsatisfied, the parents then went to the local sheriff's department and filed charges against the educator. A detective has been assigned to the case and there is a state law about providing harmful material to minors, but the teacher hasn't been charged or arrested.

The town of 700 was divided. Some supported the teacher,

including many students who wore black armbands under their clothes in demonstration. Others backed the parents or blamed the district.

In a larger city would the same thing have happened? Maybe. But in a world where young children are shooting people in violent video games without anyone batting an eye, it seems very hypocritical that literature should be the focus of parents' outrageous concern.

The fact of the matter is that a good kid can read about murder and necrophilia, watch violent movies and play violent video games and still turn out all right. The bad kids are going to be bad regardless of the books they read.

Most accounts of Tierce from students and parents focus on his ability to inspire his students. The fact that those in his classes are willing to protest the forced leave of absence speaks volumes.

Parents need to stop overreacting when literature oversteps their own narrow moral road and rejoice, instead, that their children are actually reading.

And if they want teachers to continue teaching well, it's time to lay off the lawsuits.

## Unthankful sacrifice of a holiday



**REBECCA FERGUSON**  
AD MANAGER

It has definitely come down to crunch time.

I was at ballet rehearsal last night when my artistic director

told me not to make any plans during the third week of November, but more specifically the Wednesday and Thursday of that week.

Anyone want to take a guess what days those are?

Hmm. Yeah.

That would definitely be Thanksgiving.

Of course I smiled, nodded, and said "yes ma'am." I knew there was no point in arguing. I knew I couldn't win, so I didn't even try.

Don't get me wrong, though. I love ballet, and I love performing. I've given up so much time and turned down so many other things to get to the level I'm at right now.

But seriously now, Thanksgiving?

I guess it could be worse, right? It's not like I have rehearsal on Christmas.

Thanksgiving isn't one of my favorite holidays anyways.

Sure, I'll be missing out on my

family, most of which I haven't seen in about a year, but I could do without the food. I don't eat half of the things that are considered typical Thanksgiving dishes.

And on the bright side, I'll be avoiding a long car ride trapped with my parents. (I tend to get a little grouchy on car trips!)

I really have no room to complain though. For as long as I can remember, being Clara in *The Nutcracker* has been my dream, and if this is what I have to do, then it's what I have to do.

I want to look good on stage, and I will look good on stage. I will know what I'm doing. There's no other option.

I'm afraid it won't come together in time, and that is a big deal.

It's not like I haven't already been working my ass off for this role and this performance.

Those extra days are very much needed, I just wish they weren't on those two specific days.

My partner doesn't come in to town until that Wednesday before Thanksgiving and we're performing the following Friday and Saturday. That's why this has become such a mess.

To make it a little bit more understandable to people outside the dance world, it would probably be like the equivalent of throwing in a whole slew of unpracticed defensive plays hours before a football game.

I panicked when my artistic

director told me my partner was coming in so late.

If we had more time, this wouldn't be necessary, nor would it be that big a deal.

I performed this part last year, so I do actually know what I'm doing. It's just rough trying to do partner-work without your partner, obviously.

It's a scary thought knowing you'll have to make something performance ready after practicing three or four times and then it to the stage.

Thank God I have an awesome partner who knows his part and is super easy to work with. If not, I would be majorly stressed.

I kind of knew this was going to happen, but it's still kind of upsetting. I honestly don't mind.

It just had to happen the year I was supposed to go out of town and have a huge Ferguson family reunion.

Surprisingly enough, my mom wasn't too upset when I told her. She knows it's not my fault, and I think that's why.

She's only going slightly out of her way to change her plans to accommodate my schedule and the rest of the family's schedule.

I am, however, going to leave up to her to tell the rest of the family!

So, while the rest of my family is enjoying each other's company that Thursday, I'll be in the studio, tying my pointe shoes and getting ready for a long day of rehearsal.

## Horoscopes

**Today's birthday (11-07-07):** You'll find a hidden source of income, possibly in a dream. Follow a hunch, your intuition or the voice inside your head to a source of great abundance.

To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging..

**Aries (March 21-April 19):** \_ Today is a 7 \_ Let somebody else provide an item you can't quite reach. What's easy for this other person is rather a hassle for you. Minimize your stress.

**Taurus (April 20-May 20):** \_ Today is a 7 \_ You'll notice an older person having trouble making a decision. Don't wait, figure out what needs to be done and offer it as a suggestion. Your input is appreciated.

**Gemini (May 21-June 21):** \_ Today is an 8 \_ Draw word pictures with your partner as vividly as you can. Once you can see in your mind what you're after, getting there will be easy.

**Cancer (June 22-July 22):** \_ Today is a 7 \_ Conditions are good for compromise. Give a little and the other person will give a little, too. That will be enough.

**Leo (July 23-Aug. 22):** \_ Today is a 7 \_ How can you get the whole story? Keep asking the tough questions. One person in particular will sing like a canary.

**Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** \_ Today is a 7 \_ You know what you want but you're not sure you can afford it. If it's for your home, it's probably a good investment. This includes culinary delights.

**Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):** \_ Today is a 7 \_ Being smart is just the beginning. Having the aptitude's nice, but you also have to develop the skills. That's your next assignment.

**Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):** \_ Today is a 7 \_ Something you've been holding onto has increased in value. Do the research and ask your informants. Find out who wants what, and what you can provide.


**Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** \_ Today is a 7 \_ Sometimes others believe in you more than you believe in yourself. This is perfectly natural. You can trust them on this. Proceed boldly.

**Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** \_ Today is a 7 \_ Somebody's putting the pressure on. You don't like this feeling much, but it sure is activating. Finish a task you've been resisting and earn a tidy bonus.

**Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** \_ Today is a 7 \_ Gather more information on your own before you go into discussions with people who know what they're talking about. You'll want to keep up.

**Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20):** \_ Today is a 7 \_ Through an amazing twist of fate, the impossible is accomplished. Nobody has to convince you to believe in miracles!

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