

BUCK. Um. Feared?

ELIZABETH. Care to elaborate?

BUCK. No.

ELIZABETH. *Buck* you're my TA!

BUCK. I'm a shy TA.

RICHARD. Given a choice, it is best to be feared. For man is ungrateful, fickle, and greedy, and thusly being loved is a bond they may break. Whereas being feared is sustained by a dread of punishment that won't ever fail you.

ELIZABETH. Well I'm glad at least *one* of you is soaking up Machiavellian tactics for consolidating ABSOLUTE POWER (*Echoing.*) power power power!

No response.

Okay did *anyone* else do the reading?

CLARISSA. I did the reading Ms. York.

ELIZABETH. Clarissa, great!

CLARISSA. And I totally disagree with this assignment, from a religious and moral standpoint.

ELIZABETH. (*General groans.*) Oh boy here we go...

CLARISSA. This book is telling me it's okay to lie and murder and steal, and all of that is really really cruel and totally goes against all of my Christian values.

ELIZABETH. Machiavelli was Christian. Machiavelli was Catholic.

CLARISSA. Whose work was banned by the Catholic Church.

ELIZABETH. Fine but *The Prince* isn't cruel, it's pragmatic. Machiavelli even speaks out against idle cruelty, because idle cruelty stirs people's hate.

RICHARD. I actually had a question about that.

ELIZABETH. Sure hon go ahead.

RICHARD. It's about that passage, on how not to be hated.

EDDIE. It's easy Dick. Talk Jess, shower more.

ELIZABETH. *Eddie*.

EDDIE. What? That's good advice! Matter of fact, I'm tweeting that.

He tweets it.

ELIZABETH. No phones in here. Richard, go on.

EDDIE. (*Still tweeting.*) His name isn't Richard, it's Dick

RICHARD. That's not my name.

EDDIE. What's that *Twisty Dick*?

RICHARD. I said that's not my name.

EDDIE. Richard is a nickname for Dick.

ELIZABETH. Gentlemen.

Richard turns around, hissing to Eddie, all menace.

RICHARD. I want you to know that this is the very best time of your life. It will *NEVER* get any better than this. The rest of your life will be spent searching in vain for this moment of former glory as your downward trajectory plunges you ever further from here.

EDDIE. I think I just peed a little.

ELIZABETH. Let's get back to the text. Richard, what was your **question**?

RICHARD. (*Shaken.*) Right... Machiavelli says cruelty is at times warranted but that over-cruelty generates hate. But what if you're hated to begin with? If cruelty is a viable tool then why *stop* being cruel if you've always been hated since birth?

ELIZABETH. Jeez, I uh - Richard where is this coming from?

The bell rings. Everyone starts packing up.

Uh-oh, looks like that's an answer that'll have to wait. Okay but everybody if we could just listen up for one second. Please stop packing your bags. I just wanted to mention that as some of you know I'm the faculty advisor for Class Council and that speaking of civil election, *senior elections* are coming up. You all should think about running. Or re-running! Two years in a row with Ms. York! Whaaaat?! Woo-hooo party time. Untz-Untz-Untz-Untz!

Clarissa and Eddie stare incredulously, then exit.

BUCK. Hey buddyboy you coming to lunch?

RICHARD. **In** a minute.

(*Direct address as Buck exits.*) Pop quiz, friends. What's the first step of staging a populist uprising? <_onvincing the populace that they