

## Walter Lacklustre

Walter Lacklustre had not been the best student who has ever appeared on a college quadrangle. He had continued, with less and less success, to use old high school formulas—wide margins, blank pages at the front and back of every paper beyond two pages, and the clear plastic I-Love-You-Teach-and-Find-This-Assignment-One-Of-The-Best-I-Have-Ever-Had covers on all projects. His writing usually began, “There are many possible interpretations that can be made . . . ,” but despite the surfeit, he usually came up with none, claiming a lack of space.

Suddenly his papers had depth. Not only did myriad explanations follow his assurances that there were many ways to look at a question, but also he added almost lyrical imagery to enliven the usual soldierly slogging through evidence. His teacher was heartened by the change while suspecting a ghost writer.

An explanation surfaced when a dog that had been trained to sniff out marijuana became highly agitated in Walter’s presence. Looking closely at the pupils of Walter’s eyes the teacher asked, “Have you been using parables?”

Later, when the police searched Walter’s room, they found parabolic paraphernalia—a lamp, a desk board, a pad and a pen. On the pad was a short story that ended mid-sentence; Walter did not have time to flush it down the toilet when the police came. Under Walter’s bed they found thirty copies of Kafka’s *Parables and Paradoxes* and twenty copies of *Parables of Kierkegaard*.

In the week following the raid, the bookstore reported a run on clear plastic folders and yellow felt highlighters. The president congratulated the police on the full restoration of order to the campus.

“Walter Lacklustre,” in John Bonsignore, *In Parables: Teaching Through Parables*, 12 Legal Stud. F. 191, 191-192 (1988) (The title of the parable has been added without consultation with the author, now deceased.)