

## TEACHABLE MOMENT

By

Shariba Rivers

- Name of the character: DENISE
- Age: Old enough to be OVER IT with her students' parents and can speak her mind
- Race: African American
- Gender: Femme
- Setting: Home office at the computer holding yet another Zoom meeting

Quarantine, Day 5, Chicago, 2020. If there's one thing this "thing" has taught us, it is to wash our hands. And, maybe, to wipe our ass? I mean, why else would all the toilet tissue be gone? The other thing it's taught us? And by us, I mean me. Hi. Denise. Your child's teacher, trapped in this mothafuckin' home office with y'all's kids on this gatdamn computer. The OTHER thing it's taught us? Is that we NEED **real** classrooms because your children need to GET AWAY FROM YOU! YOU are the GATDAMN problem! Yes. I *do* have a teacher voice. This ain't it. Your kids are working in virtual groups while I talk to y'all, so real quick, before I have to go back: Y'all are NOT HELPINNNNNNG. Like, at all. (*Beat, sucks teeth*) Hold on. (*Talks while she types, using her teacher voice*): I'm checking back in with you in two minutes. The expectation is an *extended metaphor* using this week's vocabulary words. (*Beat, switch back to the parents*): Sorry. One of your children had a question. Nope. Don't go and "help" because your answers are **wrong**. And if they're not wrong, they're so RIGHT that I know good and hell well your child didn't do her own work. Do you really think I'm *that* stupid that I don't know who your child is??? I've sat with that mumbling mothafucka for an entire six months in my class. You expect me to believe that Mumbles all of a sudden is speaking in complete sentences with correct punctuation and using phrases like "pregnant with anticipation" in her writing? Whothefuck you think you dealing with? (*Beat, sucks teeth*) Sorry. One sec. (*Talks while she types, teacher voice is back*) Yes, we did talk about extended metaphors. Someone in your group has been assigned the researcher role. Have them look it up. I see that group three has moved on to the discussion questions. Nice analogy, Rayquan! (*Beat*) I'm back. Where was I? Oh, yeah, "pregnant with anticipation." Listen, all we need from you is your SUPPORT. Get your kids to class on time. Make them do their assignments. We don't care if they're wrong. That's where the learning comes in. We don't need to know how smart YOU are. You shoulda proved that when YOU were in school; don't come writing your essays NOW! Get Monique on the damn computer and let us take it from there. Got it? Good. Shit. My timer just went off. Gotta get back to your kids. **I** gotta get back to your kids. YOU go put some mothafuckin CLOTHES on! Shit. I wouldn't have to see all that if we were at **school** school. Geezus.