

Silence

By Suzy Hopkins

He came over to me with an 'I'm up to somethin' look on his frightful tattooed face. All inmates want something when they approach you.

He cheerfully said, "Miss Hopkins, I want a pass to the law library to work on my appeal."

I said, "You know you lost all your privileges because you are always picking a fight on the main exercise yard."

He angrily said, "It's not my fault. They start it."

I said, "Every single time?"

He ardently said, "Yeah. All the time. They disrespect me."

I said, "Get back to me in 30 days and if you have not broken any rules I'll consider your request."

He impatiently said, "But Miss Hopkins, I need to work on my appeal now."

I said, "I can't help you."

He furiously said, "You don't want to help me."

I said, ".....(silence)"

He optimistically said, "You could make an exception. I've seen lots of other inmates in the Law Library."

I said, ".....(silence)"

He somberly said, "Aw, Miss Hopkins, you are so mean."

I said, ".....(silence)"

Discouraged by my silence the inmate wandered off. Silence can be more powerful than any spoken words.