

One of the things a teacher quickly learns to recognize is the smell of smoke. This is particularly true when you are teaching teenagers how to interfere with the fundamental forces of nature, and some decide that the best approach is to beat them until they start working how they want.

“Something is on fire,” Professor Ramses declared to himself before opening the door to his classroom. He paused to survey the chaos that currently reigned. “Several somethings are on fire,” he amended, partially in order to stave off the thought of what the dean would have to say when he asked for replacement worktables *again*. ... He really needed to double check the fireproofing them before he used them. Whoever the school’s supplier was, they obviously were not as thorough as they ought to be.

Regardless of that - explanations first? No, they could wait. He rapped the end of the crook he carried on the stone floor of his classroom. Every single student immediately froze and turned to look at him. So did the flames, if they could be said to do such a thing. He paced across the classroom to the window that overlooked the school grounds, crook tapping on the ground as he walked. Each time it did, the students jumped. When he reached the window, he pushed it open, then turned to glare at the fires. They recoiled. “Out,” he snapped. The flames flickered, and he lifted his staff into the air. They collected into one large ball, then whisked out into the open. After watching to make sure they hadn’t landed on a bush or anything, he turned to his class.

“Would someone care to explain this?” he asked.

One of the few students who seemed entirely unshaken by the fact that a device that someone - probably her, given her... enthusiasm - spoke up. “Tassen bet me his next allowance I couldn’t use cryzium to make a flamethrower!” Roxana Fairchild said, without a hint of shame. Well, that sounded about right.

“I believe he’ll have to forego his next expedition to the student’s supplier, then,” the professor said wryly, casting a glance at the Hestrin heir, who seemed more annoyed that she’d actually managed it than anything else. “However, while I certainly understand your desire to meet his challenge, could you not have tested it elsewhere? Preferably somewhere supervised, where nobody would have their assignments set on fire?”

She shrugged. “Well, yeah, but I figured the enchantments on the tables would hold, and you know how it is when you finish a project. ‘Sides, it’s your classroom. If anyone here knows how to handle things bursting into flame, it’s you!” ... Well. Were it anyone else, he would have suspected flattery.