

Dedicated to Rich, Sabrina, Jake, and Carleen, who believe,
as I do, that it's the breaking of silence that is golden—SR

Dedicated to all the teachers who make
a difference every day—JZ

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Note to Adults

Childhood sexual abuse happens alarmingly often, yet the subject remains taboo. In order to overcome the problem of childhood sexual abuse, we must start talking about it in meaningful ways. An important fact that's often ignored is that the vast majority of childhood sexual abuse is perpetrated not by strangers but by family members and other trusted adults.

All adults must learn to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. Learning about such an incident can be overwhelming, but support is available. For help, contact the Childhelp USA National Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-422-4453, your region's child protective services agency, or the local police. Local schools and hospitals can also provide assistance.

Preventing child sexual abuse is an adult's job. It's your job. The nonprofit organization Darkness to Light offers prevention training. Go to www.D2L.org and download the introductory guide "The 5 Steps to Protecting Our Children." Your willingness to help, as Mrs. Salvador does in this story, can make a powerful difference in a child's life.



On the first day of school, Mrs. Salvador said, “At home, when your parents tell you to clean your rooms, you might shove dirty socks under the bed and heap toys in the closet, and you might get away with it.”



The children in Room 204 smiled secret smiles.
“But not in Room 204. Here, we keep our desks neat.”
Some of the children fidgeted, but Regina Lillian
Hadwig sat up straight.

“In other places, you might get away with less than your best work,” Mrs. Salvador said. “But *not* in Room 204.”

Jack Galvin and Trevor Jensen smirked.

“In Room 204, if you turn in work that isn’t your best, I’ll give it right back to you, and you’ll have to do it over.”

Jack whispered, “I think I’ll move my desk into the hall.”

Mrs. Salvador heard. “Mr. Galvin, you might get away with whispering wisecracks to your neighbor in other classrooms but *not* in Room 204.”





“In other places,” she continued, “you might get away with name-calling. You might even call someone ‘stupid’ or ‘dumb.’ Not in Room 204. In Room 204, *no one* is stupid. I’ve seen your report cards from last year. I know.”

Mrs. Salvador folded her hands neatly behind her back.

In October, in Room 204, Amanda Zadatowski ate Brenda Levitt's Halloween candy without asking.

Mrs. Salvador sent a note home to Amanda's mother.



Dear Mrs. Zadatoski,

Today Amanda ate Halloween
candy that did not belong to her.
I have asked her to replace it
tomorrow, please.

In Room 204, we do not take
what does not belong to us.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Salvador





In November, the class went on a field trip to the aquarium. Just loud enough for everyone to hear, Melanie Dickson said that the tour guide looked like a whale. Regina Lillian Hadwig shook her head with disapproval.