

## Scenario 3 - The Case of the Cursèd Coauthor

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You're in your office, brainstorming ideas for a "brown bag" style professional development talk on scholarly communication you want to offer, when there's a knock at the door, tentative and barely audible. The person at the door is in their teens, with pale skin and eyes that keep darting away from your own, as though they're somewhere they're not supposed to be.

As though they're *intruding*.

They don't have a public feed turned on, so you save the document you were working in and give them a smile your hope is reassuring, switching your local overlay to "visitor preference" so they can pick what they want your office to look like.

"What can I help you with?" you ask, only jumping a little when your surroundings suddenly snap from your standard "view of a big city at night" to an undersea grotto, complete with a feeling of pressure and shadowy forms that swim past in the corner of your eye.

Although it might be unnerving for you, it seems to put your visitor at ease.

They slide into the chair across from you with a little wave. "I don't know if you can," they admit, "or if I just need to accept what's happening and deal with it."

"It's okay," you reassure them. "It's always good to ask for help if you're not sure. So, what's going on?"

They swallow and fidget with the tie on their hoodie for a bit, then blow out a puff of air. "I've been working with Professor Jones in the chemistry department," they say. "Doing a lot of lab work. Writing up experiments. Stuff like that. I even wrote most of an article draft that we were supposed to submit to a peer reviewed journal together. He said it would look good if I want to do grad school."

They go quiet for a bit again, so you nudge them with a gentle, "I see. But...?"

"But," they say with a grimace, "now he's saying that because I'm only a student, he should be the only person listed as the author. That all I really did was preparation and some basic writing, so he'll just thank me in a footnote for my contributions."

"Wow," you reply, before you can stop yourself. "That's messed up."

They look up, a grim satisfaction in their eyes. "Right? But what can I do about it? Like he said, I'm only a student, and he's a professor. I didn't think anyone would believe that the work I'd done was worth anything without his help. What do you think I should do?"

### Scenario 3 Resources

Arthur, N., Anchan, J. P., Este, D., Khanlou, N., Kwok, S.-M., & Mawani, F. (2004). Managing faculty-student collaborations in research and authorship. *Canadian Journal of Counselling*, 38(3), 177-192. <https://cjc-ucc.ualgary.ca/article/view/58738/44227>

Discusses ethical aspects of collaborations between faculty and student authors. Especially useful are the three scenarios it includes, which show how the abstract ethical principles can be applied in hypothetical real-world situations.

Burks, R. L., & Chumchal, M. M. (2009). To co-author or not to co-author: How to write, publish, and negotiate issues of authorship with undergraduate research students. *Science Signaling*, 2(94). <https://doi.org/10.1126/scisignal.294tr3>

Briefly summarizes the benefits and potential drawbacks of collaborating with students on research with a goal of publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Particularly useful in this article are several decision trees which can be used to both determine when co-authoring with a student might be a good idea and when students should be included as authors of the final paper.

Foster, R. D., & Ray, D. C. (2012). An ethical decision-making model to determine authorship credit in published faculty-student collaborations. *Counselling and Values*, 57, 214-228. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-007X.2012.00018.x>

This brief article, which also focuses on the ethics rather than legality of determining authorship, offers a decision-making model guided by a number of explicit considerations intended both for faculty co-authors and student coauthors. The model is essentially a flowchart of how the co-writing process should work, and is included by an example case showing how it might be used in practice.

Oberlander, S. E., & Spencer, R. J. (2006). Graduate students and the culture of authorship. *Ethics & Behavior*, 16(3), 217-232. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327019eb1603\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327019eb1603_3)

Oberlander and Spencer approach collaborative authorship between faculty and graduate students in a practical way, pointing out the inherently "disadvantaged power position" of graduate students compared to their faculty mentors and suggesting strategies for determining authorship credit in an ethical manner.