



case 1-429-045
April 23, 2010

Augusta Richards: Responding to Plagiarism (B)

Dusty thought about her decision for several weeks. On the advice of a trusted colleague, she decided to begin the process by calling Professor Beta first and discussing the situation. Chris Beta was horrified and embarrassed that such a thing should happen within academia, much less on a paper that bore his name. He was appalled that this could happen after more than thirty years in the field. He surmised that Terry Alpha's research assistant, Pat Gamma, must have copied Dusty's work during the literature review and that Terry Alpha must have mistakenly used the notes as new writing and not as verbatim copying. Regardless of how it happened, however, Professor Beta announced, "I assume full blame for the error. Although I was not the lead author, I should have been more diligent in watching for this. Dusty, do as you see fit and I will abide by your decision."

This was not the outcome Dusty had hoped for. She thought that Professor Beta might assist in her dilemma and offer to mediate with Alpha. But she was impressed by Beta's honorable response. It was a manner that was befitting the status of someone held in such high esteem within the field. But Beta's answer only seemed to elevate her dilemma. How should she proceed now with the future of Beta's career also in her hands? Is the situation different now? Is her ethical dilemma altered? Should Dusty take Beta's response into account in her decision?



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