

Detention

A Ten Minute Play by Logan Pratt

CHARACTERS:

PAUL - 11, C+ average, claims one time he totally dunked a basketball from the free throw line. Mikey was there, Mikey saw, ask Mikey! Smart but hates school. Loves video games but hates girls. But Rachel Williams is sort of pretty.

ANDREW - 11, already has worry lines and chronic neck pain, A+ average, reads books about space for fun, not sure if he wants to go to law school or get his masters in engineering, but he's still got time.

MRS. PARMSCHNICKEL – 55, a grumpy old English teacher, runs a tight ship and loves putting kids in their place. She has her eye on Coach Lewis... Of course she's happily married. But still...

SETTING:

A school classroom on a Saturday afternoon. A time before touch screens but after the Berlin Wall. Stage right there are two school desks facing the audience, papers on one, nothing on the other. Stage left there is a teacher's desk with notes, rulers, an apple, etc. Behind the desk there is a whiteboard with dry-erase markers. Offstage right there is a window and off stage left, there is a door that leads to the hallway.

NOTES:

The symbol - indicates an abrupt interruption in the dialogue, this can be one character interrupting another, or a character stuttering or at a loss for words.

Italicized words are meant to be given emphasis or stressed. At least in the playwright's opinion. The actors and/or director can change or adjust these as needed.

(Lights up on a classroom. Two boys sit at school desks. PAUL stares out the window while ANDREW starts doing his math homework. MRS. PARMSCHNICKEL stands at the whiteboard and writes “no talking in big red letters.”)

MRS. PARMSCHNICKEL

Good afternoon, boys, welcome to Saturday detention. My name is Mrs. Parnschnickel and I will be your supervising teacher today. My expectations are for both of you to be on your best behavior and to follow the rules of detention outlined on the whiteboard. That means no talking, no eating, no gum, no cellular telephones, or gaming doo-dads. You will sit at your desks quietly and work on any assignments you may have missed whilst you were misbehaving. Do I make myself clear?

PAUL/ANDREW

Yes Mrs. Parnschnickel.

MRS. PARMSCHNICKEL

Very good. Let us begin.

(Lights down and back up, a few hours into detention, all three look bored as hell. Mrs. Parnschnickel clears her throat.)

MRS. PARMSCHNICKEL

I’m going to the teacher’s lounge to get a cup of coffee. But so help me if I hear one peep out of this room you both will spend next Saturday right back here in detention. Clear?

PAUL/ANDREW

Clear.

MRS. PARMSCHNICKEL

What did I say about no talking!?! Are we clear?

(Paul and Andrew look at each other then look back at Mrs. Parnschnickel and nod their heads.)

MRS. PARMSCHNICKEL

Excellent.

(Mrs. Parmchnickel exits stage left, leaving the two boys together. After a brief pause Paul begins imitating her.)

PAUL

“Meh meh meh, what did I say about no talking? My name is Mrs. P and I’m a gassy old hag.”
(Andrew giggles but catches himself and goes back to work)

So what are you in for?

(Andrew says nothing)

Helloooooo? Anyone home?

ANDREW

Shhhhh!

PAUL

Oh fuck off she can’t hear us.

(Andrew gasps)

What?

ANDREW

(whispering)

You said the f-word!

PAUL

So what?

ANDREW

Well you shouldn’t even be talking right now. But what if she walked in and heard you swearing?
(leans in close and whispers)

PAUL

Please, she won’t be back for at least another 20 minutes.

ANDREW

How do you know?

PAUL

Listen, the teacher's lounge is at least a good minute walk away from here, she always goes to the bathroom whenever she leaves which'll take at least two minutes, depending on how much bran she had this morning. The coffee will take about two, maybe three minutes to make depending on if she has to wash her favorite cup, y'know the one with the forest painted on it that she got in Minnesota. She'll most likely drink the coffee in the lounge just to "get away from us kids", and then if Coach Lewis stops in she'll probably spend at least 10 minutes flirting with him. It's gonna be a while before we see Mrs. P.

(beat)

You never told me what you're in for.

ANDREW

Nothing, I didn't do anything.

PAUL

So they just put you in detention because you were sitting at your desk doing nothing? C'mon, man, why are you here?

ANDREW

(mumbling)

I just... skipped class a little.

PAUL

No way! A little teacher's pet like you? What'd you skip class for?

ANDREW

None of your business that's what.

PAUL

Ok, ok, whatever.

(beat)

You wanna know what I did?

ANDREW

Not really.

PAUL

Why not?

ANDREW

Because I don't have to wonder. You probably put a frog in the teacher's desk or cut off Rachel Williams' ponytail again. You and your little gang are always up to no good.

PAUL

I'm not a bully.

ANDREW

What about that time you dunked my head in the toilet bowl?

PAUL

That was just a prank! You need to take a joke, man.

ANDREW

Yeah, well, you need to not be such an asshole!

(Andrew immediately realizes the word that came out and clamps his hands over his mouth.)

PAUL

Woah, Andrew. I didn't know you could swear.

ANDREW

I didn't swear!

PAUL

Yes you did! You called me-

ANDREW

Ok fine. Whatever. Just drop it, ok?

(long silence as Andrew goes back to his work and Paul stares out the window)

PAUL

I'm not here for some prank, you know. I'm here for trying to fight Mitchell Daniels.

ANDREW

You stood up to Mitchell Daniels? No way! He's the biggest bully in the school.

PAUL

Yes, way. He was trying to shove my boy Mikey into a locker. I told him to knock it off. Next thing you know we're duking it out on the floor and Mrs. P is dragging us by our ears to the Principal's Office.

ANDREW

Don't call her that.

PAUL

What?

ANDREW

Her name is not "Mrs. P", it's Mrs. Parmaschnickel.

PAUL

Yeah I'm not calling her that.

ANDREW

(under his breath)

No wonder you're here every week.

PAUL

What?

ANDREW

Nothing.

PAUL

You said something about me being here every week. Well, what about you Mr. I-didn't-do-anything? You don't get to act all high and mighty anymore. You're one of the bad kids now.

ANDREW

Am not.

PAUL

Are too.

ANDREW

Am not.

PAUL

Are too.

ANDREW

Am not.

PAUL

Are too.

ANDREW

AM NOT! I am not like you! I just skipped class *one* time!

PAUL

Probably to go smoke some stolen cigarettes or something.

ANDREW

No I didn't!

PAUL

Then where'd you go? Huh? Where? Where!? WHERE!?

ANDREW

I went to the park ok!? I just... went to the park down by the bus stop. Happy?

(beat. Andrew puts his head in his hands and sighs a deep, grown-up sigh)

PAUL

Why?

ANDREW

I don't know... I just woke up and I... I couldn't do it. I just needed a break.

PAUL

A break from what?

ANDREW

All of it. Tests, piano lessons, clubs, my parents, grades, that weird wart Mrs. Parmaschnickel has on her earlobe. When my mom dropped me off at school that morning, I don't know why but I really, really didn't want to go in. So I started walking. I walked a long way, like a whole mile. And then I saw this park. And I just kinda sat there on the swing set all day. I felt guilty but also

happy. And when it was 3 o'clock I just got up and walked back to school and my mom picked me up. She wouldn't have even found out if the stupid school hadn't called. She was so upset. She kept saying "Oh Andrew, you're such a good boy, why would you go and do a thing like that?" For once I tried to have fun, and look where it got me.

PAUL

Look where it got *us*.

ANDREW

No. Not us. I'm here on accident. You're here every week. I am not like you. So stop trying to say we're alike. Because we're not.

PAUL

Whatever man. All I know is that none of *my* friends have ever skipped just to sit alone at a park all day. If you were gonna skip, you should've done something cool.

ANDREW

Like what?

PAUL

I don't know. Something fun like go to the arcade, or sneak into an R rated movie, or throw water balloons filled with glue at Mrs. P's house.

ANDREW

Those are all things you like. Not everyone thinks they're fun.

PAUL

No man. Those things *are* fun, you're just too wound tight to see it. Here, let me show you.

(Paul goes to the door, checking to make sure the coast is clear. Paul gets up, walks to Mrs. Parmaschnickel's chair, loosens some screws, and goes back to his seat.)

ANDREW

What did you do?

PAUL

You'll see. Alright shhh here she comes, here give me some homework so I can look busy.

(Mrs. Parmaschnickel laughs offstage, as she says goodbye to Coach Lewis)

MRS. PARMSCHNICKEL (O.S)

Barney Lewis you are a hoot and a half. You should do standup comedy! Yeah we could go together. Well of course, I'm happily married but we could still... Oh yes yes I understand. Yes she can come too I suppose. Ok. Bye now, Barney!

(Mrs. Parmschnickel comes into the classroom with a half-drunk cup of coffee, looking slightly downhearted.)

MRS, PARMSCHNICKEL

Alright children, I have returned. I trust there has been no *funny business* during my absence?

(Paul and Andrew shake their heads no)

Excellent. Now, let us finish detention.

(Mrs. Parmschnickel goes to sit down in her chair but it suddenly buckles beneath her. Paul bursts out laughing and Andrew starts to giggle. Mrs. Parmschnickel struggles to get up, but when she does, she is furious.)

Who did this!? Which one of you little twerps messed with my chair!?

(the boys look at each other and say nothing)

Answer me!

(Andrew and Paul look at each other, and back at Mrs. Parmschnickel. Paul points to the whiteboard where the words "No Talking!" are written. Mrs. Parmschnickel looks back and lets out an exasperated sigh.)

I will give you permission to talk, only to confess.

(She leans in to Paul)

What did you do, you little snot nosed Rugrat!?

PAUL

Nothing, ma'am. I didn't do anything.

(Mrs. Parmschnickel growls and leans into Andrew, but with a completely different demeanor.)

MRS. PARMSCHNICKEL

Andrew, dear, you've always been such a good boy. So polite, so *honest*. Now, tell me, did you see anyone in this room do something to my chair?

(she glances at Paul with an evil smile.
Andrew looks at Paul then back at Mrs.
Parmaschnickel. He sighs.)

ANDREW

Yes ma'am. I know who it was.

MRS. PARMSCHNICKEL
(whispering)

Who dear? Who was it?

ANDREW

It was me. I did it.

(Mrs. Parmaschnickel gasps. Paul smiles.)

MRS. PARMSCHNICKEL

Wha- I- Andrew! I am... Well I don't know what to say. I just... Oh Andrew, you were such a good boy, why would you go and do a thing like that?

ANDREW
(smiling)

Because it was funny. And you deserved it.

MRS. PARMSCHNICKEL

Well I think you both *deserve* another weekend detention. How's that sound?

ANDREW

But Paul didn't do anything!

MRS. PARMSCHNICKEL

Oh baloney. I know he had something to do with this. I will see you both right back here next Saturday.

ANDREW

But that's not fair!

MRS. PARMSCHNICKEL

I don't want to hear it! Now go home, the both of you. And I don't want to hear about any more funny business before next Saturday or I will make it a whole month of detentions. Dismissed!

(Andrew and Paul start packing up their things as Mrs. Parmaschnickel exits.)

ANDREW

Paul, I'm sorry I just-

PAUL

How 'bout next week we put laxatives in her coffee? That way she'll be pooping all day and we can do whatever we want.

ANDREW

(smiles)

I'm in.

(Blackout)