

**Narrator:** The hallway was silent. The wooden walls were gnarled and the roof was made out of a strange material that dyed the permeating sunlight orange. It was a warm day; one of those days where you could just lie next to a lake or a river and time was dictated by the clouds passing by.

Laughter broke the silence. The doors that appeared to be formed of intertwined branches creaked and unraveled opening the hall to classrooms and the outside world. The membrane that covered the hallway unfurled into petal shaped discs. The room was exposed to the warm rays of the sun as well as a welcoming breeze that carried over from the nearby hills.

Nick welcomed the breeze every morning. It was one of the only things that stopped him from falling asleep during this heat wave. He continued his dazed stride across the hallway. The smell of jasmines signaled the start of class. Soon streams of students poured in and made their way to their respective classrooms.

**Jake:** "Morning sunshine."

**Nick:** "You know Jake, I'd like to see you wake up bright and perky after a night out."

**Jake:** "Night out? I was there too, mate."

**Nick:** "I'm not a morning person."

**Jake:** "Not a day person either. You're like a vampire, except more pale and less sexy."

BELL RINGS.

**Nick:** "Dammit Jake. Now you made us late. What's our first lesson, anyway?"

**Jake:** "Mate, you don't even know where we're going and you're blaming me for making you late."

**Nick:** "I blame you for more than making me late."

**Jake:** "Geez you're grumpy this morning. It's history with Mrs. Parkin."

**Nick:** "I hate Tuesday mornings."

**Jake:** "I hate every morning."

**Nick:** "Shit, we had homework didn't we?"

**Jake:** "Uhh, yeah."

**Nick:** "Mrs. Parkin's going to kill me."

**Jake:** "Well, you and me both, brother."

**Nick:** "Thanks."

**Narrator:** The class was already sat down and listening to Mrs. Parkin or at least too tired to do anything else other than to stare into space in silence. The knobby desks matched the rest of the room. Mrs. Parkin stared at the two boys through her thick glasses. They were balanced on top of her nose on a frame so thin that it looked like they would snap off at any moment.

**Mrs. Parkin:** "Well. I hope you two had a leisurely walk?"

**Nick:** "Sorry we're late."

**Jake:** "Yeah, Nick forgot about history."

**Mrs. Parkin:** "You're both late. Nick, consider this your first and last warning. As for you Jake, your time keeping is improving. We'll celebrate during detention."

**Jake:** "Nobody throws a party like Mrs. Parkin"

**Mrs. Parkin:** "Flattery will get you everywhere young man. Double detention."

LAUGHTER

**Mrs. Parkin:** "So glad you find that amusing, Susanne. You can carry on laughing in detention. Anybody else?"

SILENCE

**Mrs. Parkin:** "Now sit down you two and I don't want to hear another peep."

**Nick:** "Yes, Mrs. Parkin,"

**Narrator:** As Nick took his seat next to Susanne he couldn't help but notice that she seemed upset.

**Jake:** "I like my women feisty."

**Nick:** "Shut it Jake. "

**Jake:** "She'll walk over here with her lush grey hair rolling down her wrinkled bosoms."

**Nick:** "Shut up."

**Jake:** "You know you want it too."

**Susanne:** "Jake, be quiet."

**Narrator:** Mrs. Parkin swiped her hand across the large board and it lit up. The desks in front of the students came to life in a similar fashion. A map of the world faced them with "The Great Petroleum War 2067-2075" written as the title.

**Mrs. Parkin:** "As you all know, history is written by the victor."

**Narrator:** Animations started to play out across the map as different coloured arrows swept across borders. The title now counted the months and the years of the war showing the expansion of several territories.

**Mrs. Parkin:** "However, if you want a good grade for your essay you will need to use the triangulation we have talked about before. The thesis must be followed by the anti-thesis in order to reach a conclusion. Both the thesis and anti-thesis must be supported with primary and secondary evidence-"

**Nick:** " I swear she repeats this every lesson."

**Jake:** "Now look who's talking in the middle of the class."

**Susanne:** "Just shut up. I'm already in trouble because of the two of you. Some of us are trying to learn."

**Narrator:** The screen flickered. A picture of a barren landscape.

**Mrs. Parkin:** "In this photo we can see a field of wheat that had been laid to waste. This was caused by a new biological weapon developed by the US government. This weapon caused large famines during the winter of 2072 in which thirty million civilians lost their lives-"

**Jake:** " Susanne's probably just sore at you about what happened yesterday."

**Nick:** "What do you mean?"

**Jake:** "Well I guess it depends. It could be the part where you tried to make out with her or the part where you puked on her shoes right afterwards."

**Nick:** "What?"

**Narrator:** The desolate landscapes were suddenly covered with vast fields of golden wheat.

**Mrs. Parkin:** "-the new tactic known as "Green siege" was used in order to starve the population until they surrendered. Once the territory was occupied by the American forces they would remove the biological weapon from the soil. It would take twenty years for the technology to be developed to counter the biological agent-"

**Jake:** "Green siege, huh. So were you trying to use that to occupy her territory? Don't think vomit was the biological weapon used."

**Nick:** "Just shut up already. I probably just leant forwards because I lost my balance. I was drunk you know."

**Jake:** "So you pucker your lips every time you lose your balance. Must be a very unfortunate condition."

**Nick:** "Dick."

**Mrs. Parkin:** "-that leads us to the economic factor of the Petroleum war. With the collapse of the economic model developed in the early 2000's, the USA's role as a superpower was waning."

**Narrator:** The screen now displayed a sketch in which a character that was carrying bags with dollar signs on them was trying to cross a very thin wooden pole.

**Mrs. Parkin:** "This is a cartoon published in a Chinese newspaper in 2046. It was published in a Government newspaper. Can anybody describe what they see in this picture?"

**Jerry:** "Ooh, I know Miss."

**Mrs. Parkin:** " *Mrs.* Parkin. And please do not speak before raising your hand."

**Jerry:** "Right, sorry Miss- I mean Mrs."

**Mrs. Parkin:** "Fine Jerry. Please describe the picture."

**Jerry:** "It's a fat guy in a suit with a bunch of money walking over a pole that is about to snap. Following which he'll probably fall into the pool of sharks that says 'Wall Street' on it."

**Mrs. Parkin:** "Right Jerry, can you tell me more about the picture in the context of the time period it originates from."

**Jerry:** "Yeah, it means that obesity was a problem at the time."

LAUGHTER

**Mrs. Parkin:** "Right, can anybody else describe the picture."

**Narrator:** No one raised their hand.

**Mrs. Parkin:** "Come on, it's pretty obvious."

SILENCE

**Mrs. Parkin:** "How about telling me about the author and their intended goal and audience?"

**Nick:** "Jake, just put her out of her misery and say the answer? Jake?"

**Jake:** "Huh, what?"

**Nick:** "Were you sleeping again?"

**Jake:** "Nah, just resting my eyes."

**Susanne:** "Please shut up. I'm trying to listen."

**Mrs. Parkin:** "Susanne, do you have something that you want to tell the class?"

**Susanne:** "Ermmm... no Mrs. Parkin. But-"

**Mrs. Parkin:** "No buts. How incredibly rude. I will have you write out "I will not talk back to my teacher" one hundred times during your detention."

**Susanne:** "But Miss."

**Mrs. Parkin:** "Two hundred times."

**Narrator:** Susanne bit her lower lip. The smell of freshly cut roses indicated the impending end of the class.

**Mrs. Parkin:** "Right, could everybody please hand in their homework as they leave?"

THE SOUND OF CLASS LEAVING.

**Mrs. Parkin:** "Why Nick, your homework is curiously absent from this pile."

**Nick:** "I think I might have left it at home, miss."

**Mrs. Parkin:** "Detention."

**Nick:** "But Miss."

**Mrs. Parkin:** "No buts."

**Narrator:** Nick stormed out of the classroom.

**Jake:** "Hey bud. Wait for me."

**Nick:** "Can you believe that woman?"

**Jake:** "Hey, it ain't so bad. I hooked us up with some "get out of jail free cards."

**Narrator:** Jake extracted a couple of vials from his back pocket.

**Jake:** "We'll be out of detention in no time."

**Narrator:** Jake tossed the vial towards Nick who caught it and quickly stashed it into his back pocket.

**Jake:** "You should probably save some of that for Susanne."

**Nick:** "Huh, what do you mean?"

**Jake:** "She'll be brimming with gratitude. If you know what I mean."

**Narrator:** The rest of the day was rather uneventful. History was followed by a dull lesson in Physics. During PE they got to play football out on the old pitch and during Biology they were taught about the ethical debate on whether new species of mammals should be bred for commercial purposes. This was followed by some simple molecular biology experiments where they inserted pigment producing genes into microbes. Then, the hour of detention had arrived. Nick and Jake walked into the history room

where Mrs. Parkin was already waiting and Susanne was already sat at her desk scribbling her punishment on the table. The front of the desk lit up indicating the number of sentences she had completed. So far she had only completed six.

**Mrs. Parkin:** "Good of you two to join us."

**Narrator:** The two wooden tables that were at either side of Susanne lit up to beckon them. Susanne looked up and saw Jake wink at her. She furrowed her eyebrows and re-directed her eyes back to the task at hand. Nick and Jake sat down at their respective seats.

Mrs. Parkin observed them while they began to write on the surface of the table. The etchings on the table were immediately mended once the sentence was completed. Mrs. Parkins smiled and walked out of the room with a confident stride.

Almost immediately after Mrs. Parkin disappeared Jake flourished the vial out of his back pocket and proceeded to pour its contents onto the table. Soon after, the sentences began to etch themselves onto the table.

**Jake:** "You gotta love those geeks. These little microbes saved me an hour. Well, I'll meet you guys on the other side."

**Nick:** "Susanne."

**Narrator:** Nick retrieved the vial of bacteria from his pocket. He proceeded to pour half the contents on her desk and the remainder on his own. Soon the tables were operating on their own. She stared at him with her eyebrows raised.

**Susanne:** "Thanks."

**Nick:** "No problem. Listen, about last night. I'm sorry I umm- you know."

**Susanne:** "You're sorry you... what?"

**Nick:** "You know, at the party last night. I was kinda drunk."

**Susanne:** "Nick, I wasn't at the party last night."

**Narrator:** Nick stared at his desk. The etchings continue to curl and contort across the surface of the table. The word "lie" flashed before his eyes. His heart sank and his tense shoulders relaxed. He could not believe that he had fell for it. He would get Jake back for this. It would only be a matter of time.

**Susanne:** "Sounds like fun though. Anyway, thanks for the get out of jail. That was sweet of you."

**Narrator:** She smiled and walked out of the room.