

# Annie's Worst Day

**BY EMILY CAMERON**

Momma, Momma!” Annie Parker shrieked happily, throwing her arms around her mother after the long day at school. “It’s great to be home! I got a detention today and—it was really bad!” she shouted as if what had happened had been brilliant, but it hadn’t been. Detention was what the third-graders loathed most. You had to stay inside the classroom for recess and do boring old schoolwork, while your teacher watched you like a hawk. And you weren’t even allowed to go to the lavatory, because teachers thought students would just go there to throw wet toilet paper at other people for the rest of the recess, a problem at Walnut Elementary School. Annie had tried many times to explain that it wasn’t fair that *all* students weren’t allowed to go to the bathroom, because girls didn’t do that sort of thing, but her teacher, Mrs. Taylor, wouldn’t budge.

What Annie had done today to get in trouble was passing notes around. Annie had told Mrs. Taylor again and again that it was all Stephanie’s fault, because Stephanie had asked Annie to write how to spell “important” on a piece of paper and hand it to her. Annie had done exactly that, for she was trying to be helpful, but she had passed the note at the wrong time—when Mrs. Taylor was walking by her. For that Annie had gotten into big trouble. Mrs. Taylor had read the note, swore under her breath, and bellowed, “DETENTION!” at poor Annie. The class had become tense. Annie had been shaking from head to toe, sweat pouring down her face. Then she tried to explain what had happened, but Mrs. Taylor interrupted her before she could say the third word. School today hadn’t exactly been fun. A bit of it had been just *terrible*.

The rest of the day, though, had been sort of good—some of it, at least. Maria, one of Annie’s friends, had given her half of her sugar cookie, Annie’s favorite kind, and it was even topped with delicious mouth-watering M&Ms. The PE teacher had announced with a smile on his face, eyes gleaming at Annie, that she had won the race because everyone else had taken off before he blew the whistle and she had started when the whistle had been blown. Actually, that had happened by sheer luck—Annie had tripped on her untied shoelace as everyone else ran off. Then she had tied it quickly into a bow just as the whistle blew and she sprinted off.

Everyone, after that, was sulky and gloomy, which turned her good afternoon into a bad afternoon, and in class they slipped her notes that read things like, “You’re the dumb P.E. teacher’s pet!” Mrs. Taylor, unfortunately, hadn’t seen the students silently passing them on to Annie. Nobody had tattled to the teacher about the note-passing, because everyone agreed with what each note said about Annie being the Phys Ed teacher’s pet. Annie, for the first time in her life, wished someone in the class would raise his or her hand to tell the teacher the instant he or she saw the note, even if they agreed with what the notes said. Natalie Peterson, a thin, horse-faced girl with dark, fiery eyes, snickered every time she saw the notes, which irritated Annie. It was also a sign that another annoying note was coming.

Not only those two things had gone wrong in school—detention and teasing. There was also something else that had made the day bad - rain. Annie hated it the most out of all the bad things that had happened at school today. Rain splattered the windows and drenched the playground with water. Somehow, the kids had managed to convince the principal that they should be allowed to go on the playground. Everyone had come back inside with soaking wet hair, sopping sneakers, and wet bottoms from sliding on the rain-splattered slides. Everyone had smelled like grass—wet and dewy and gross. Annie had been kept dry for recess, but she still enjoyed playing outside, especially when she could splash in puddles. But then again, no one would have played with her because of the Phys Ed incident. Kids never forgot those sorts of thing.

Annie thought that perhaps she should have known this bad day was coming when she had detention for recess. Lunch and the grinning Phys Ed teacher had been the only good things today. Not the whole PE, of course. Phys Ed had sort of made her day bad. If the teacher hadn't grinned at her or congratulated her, maybe there wouldn't have been any note-passing or teasing.

Then Annie thought about her teacher, Mrs. Taylor. She couldn't stop thinking about the only happy thought that Annie kept reminding herself of. If Mrs. Taylor continued all that bellowing and roaring every day, her

voice would be worn out from yelling so much. Then she wouldn't be able to shout at Annie, which meant no more scolding. Sure, the teacher could still jab her fat finger at Annie's chest, but that was way better than being *yelled* at. Annie smiled grimly to herself.

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“Detention?” stammered Mrs. Parker, clapping a hand to her mouth. “What do you mean? You got into detention—again? Well, what’s the story here?”

Annie smiled meekly. Then, talking as fast as she could, she explained why she had gotten into detention and all the other problems. She really didn’t like talking about troubles at school. She just liked to keep them to herself, but she knew that she would have to tell her mother this time. Her voice was stern and angry, and Annie knew her mother was going to yell if she didn’t reply to her questions.

Mrs. Parker’s thick eyebrows turned down—she was frowning. Annie cowered and sank into the shadows, waiting for the yelling to begin. To her great surprise, her mother suddenly smiled. The crimson color drained from her face. She was—could it be—happy?

“You were trying to help Stephanie? That’s nice. I don’t believe Mrs. Taylor would give you detention for helping a friend. And you won the race in P.E! Brilliant! I don’t understand why they were gloomy—they should have been congratulating you like the teacher did!” squealed Mrs. Parker, patting her daughter on the back.

Annie felt much better and realized it was not such a bad day after all.