

A for Effort
By Audrey Knox

INT. A 3RD GRADE CLASSROOM - MIDMORNING

A group of students, looking eager to learn are seated in desks in front of their teacher, MRS. HENIKA, who is writing on the chalkboard using her peripheral vision. Her other beady eye stares out at the room. Her vision sweeps across the innocent gazes of the students, daring any of them to make a movement that could possibly disrupt what she's saying as she writes. Teachers are excellent multitaskers.

MRS. HENIKA

Therefore, the proper punctuation of this sentence will look something like this-

A hand in the back of the class shoots up into the air. It belongs to ALEX. Mrs. Henika's eyes bulge slightly, but she maintains her composure.

MRS. HENIKA (cont'd)

Yes, Alex?

ALEX

Mrs. Henika?

(His face is the picture of innocence)

Can I go to the bathroom?

MRS. HENIKA

I'm afraid you said "Can I" instead of "may I", young man, so I'm sorry the answer is no. You cannot.

Alex

May not!

Mrs. Henika twitches her head slightly, but lets the slight pass.

MRS. HENIKA

That's correct, Mr. Now, The punctuation of the sentence will look something along the lines of Capital T in "the"...

She's interrupted by some stifled laughter by the rest of the students. ALEX'S hand is raised, but he doesn't wait to be called on.

ALEX

Mrs. Henika, it's an emergency.

His face is a little contorted, as if he's trying to hold it in. Mrs. Henika just glares at him.

MRS. HENIKA

Well then, maybe you'll have to think of that next time you decide to use a bathroom pass on a trip to Mr. Koley's class next door.

The rest of the class snickers.

ALEX

(his eyes wide)

But Janey is so hot!

Mrs. Henika breathes in a sharp intake of breath.

MRS. HENIKA

Mr. Clark, you may NOT use that kind of language in my class! Go stand outside-

Alex is already running to the door by the time she realizes the implication of her words.

MRS. HENIKA

STOP! Young man!

She starts to chase him, and then hesitates, looking back at the class watching her with interest. She turns and marches back into the classroom. At her desk, she picks up the phone.

MRS. HENIKA (cont'd)

(trying to keep her voice low)

Hello, yes, I'd like to speak to one of the office faculty. Mhm yes, one of our students has... um... escaped. He says he needed to go to the bathroom, but is probably right now in the classroom next door, harassing a Miss Janine Clein. Yes, I would say this is a code A-14. Stat. Yes, thank you.

She sits down at her desk and looks expectantly at the class.

MRS. HENIKA

I hope you all know this kind of behavior is completely unacceptable. Alex will be severely punished.

A younger looking OFFICE WORKER appears at the door.

OFFICE WORKER

For going to the bathroom?

Mrs. Henika gives her a polite but poisonous smile.

MRS. HENIKA

Excuse me?

OFFICE WORKER

That's right, ma'am. We found this boy walking back from the nearest bathroom. That..

(she gestures at a bit of toilet paper on his foot)

...was stuck to his shoe.

MRS. HENIKA

I see.

OFFICE WORKER

Mrs. Henika, are you preventing students from using the restroom when they need to?

MRS. HENIKA

(softly)
He already used up his bathroom pass.

OFFICE WORKER
You're going to have to come with me.

MRS. HENIKA
What?

OFFICE WORKER
I'm sorry.

Mrs. Henika leaves the room with the Office Worker, glaring at Alex, who is looking blankly back at her. The second she is out of sight, he turns and gives a huge wink to the class, whipping out of his pocket a note that says "To: Alex Love: Janey." Everyone cheers. He looks out the door, to make sure their former teacher isn't watching, shakes the toilet paper off his foot, and takes a deep bow.