

THE BORING-EST POEM IN THE WORLD

by
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THE BORING-EST POEM IN THE WORLD takes place over two nights and two days, somewhere in America. The locations include:

The Odwalla family dining room
A high school hallway
A high school classroom

The cast of characters, in order of appearance, are:

ANNIE.....	15/16, a feisty teenager, knows her own mind
ABBIE.....	15/16, Annie's best friend, a calm presence
MRS. ODWALLA.....	40s/50s, Annie's mom, knows what's best for her daughter
MR. ODWALLA.....	40s/50s, Annie's dad, tries to mind his own business
NOELLE.....	10, Annie's little sister, likes causing trouble
COLT.....	16/17, handsome, athletic, a popular boy
DREW.....	16/17, Colt's friend
PEYTON.....	16/17, Colt's other friend
BILLY.....	15/16, the new kid
MS. DZUGASHVILI.....	30s/40s, a teacher of poetry
SHEILA.....	15/16, a mean, popular girl
SHAWNA.....	15/16, Sheila's friend
SHANNON.....	15/16, Sheila's other friend

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SCENE 1

(The Odwalla dining room. Annie, a fierce, opinionated high school student, eats dinner with her parents, her little sister Noelle, and Abbie, her mellow best friend.)

MRS. ODWALLA

You love poetry.

ANNIE

No I don't.

MRS. ODWALLA

Auden. Longfellow.

ANNIE

Blah.

MRS. ODWALLA

Frost. Dickinson. All of the greats.

ANNIE

That's you, Mom, not me.

MRS. ODWALLA

All girls love poetry.

ANNIE

Poetry is like a conspiracy to make people feel bored.

MR. ODWALLA

What'd you do your report on, Abbie?

ABBIE

Poe.

MR. ODWALLA

Good. Good for you.

ABBIE

Good writer.

MR. ODWALLA

You see? Poetry doesn't have to be boring.

MRS. ODWALLA

Poetry is never boring.

ANNIE

To you.

ABBIE

I thought he just made up scary stories, you know? But I guess he did other stuff, too.

MR. ODWALLA

The Raven.

ABBIE

Annabel Lee.

NOELLE

Annie fell asleep doing her homework.

ANNIE

Noelle!

NOELLE

It's true, I saw her. She drooled all over her papers and stuff. She left a stain.

MRS. ODWALLA

Annie!

MR. ODWALLA

Abbie, is that true?

ABBIE

I don't know.

NOELLE

You see?

ANNIE

IT WAS BORING!

MR. ODWALLA

Annie.

ANNIE

POETRY IS BORING!

MRS. ODWALLA

Annie!

ANNIE

Why do you have to use fancy words and "thee" and "thou" and blah blah blah when you can just say something - STRAIGHT OUT! "I'm really bummed today! I wish people would treat me better." See?! What's so hard about that?!

MR. ODWALLA

That could be a poem.

ANNIE

Why write line after line of verbal puzzles and rhythm stuff and confuse the reader ON PURPOSE unless you don't have anything to say - REALLY - and the only thing you care about is showing everyone how beautiful your *mind* is!

MRS. ODWALLA

Go to your room.

MR. ODWALLA

Some poems say things straight out.

ANNIE

Not what I'm reading!

MR. ODWALLA

Carl Sandburg.

ABBIE

Gertrude Stein is sort of like that.

MR. ODWALLA

Like Carl Sandburg?

ABBIE

Like - - what Annie's talking about.

ANNIE

What I'm reading is WORSE than Gertrude Stein! What Ms. Dzhugashvili is *making* me read has got to be just about the boring-est poem that has ever been written! EVER!

MRS. ODWALLA

Annie Odwalla, you will go to your room right now!

ABBIE

Maybe it is a conspiracy.

NOELLE

A what?

ABBIE

You know, like a plot by adults to make kids feel sleepy.

MRS. ODWALLA

Why is no one listening to me?

ABBIE

Not that poetry makes me feel sleepy. Calculus, that's what makes me feel sleepy.

MR. ODWALLA

"Dzugashvili." That's the new English teacher, right?

ANNIE

I blacked out the moment my eyes fell on the first word of the thing!

MR. ODWALLA

Strange name.

ANNIE

I don't even remember what the first word IS, that's how fast I fall asleep!

MRS. ODWALLA

ANNIE ODWALLA, YOU WILL GO TO YOUR ROOM AND READ YOUR POEM AND FINISH YOUR HOMEWORK OR SO HELP ME I WILL GROUND YOU AND TAKE AWAY YOUR COMPUTER AND OTHER ASSORTED ELECTRONIC DEVICE PRIVILEGES - FOR THE REST OF YOUR NATURAL LIFE!

ANNIE

FINE!

(To Abbie)

Sorry, Abbie. I'll see you tomorrow.

ABBIE

Okay.

(Annie stands and exits. After a moment)

MRS. ODWALLA

Abbie.

ABBIE

Yes, Mrs. Odwalla?

MRS. ODWALLA

You're free to stay as long as you like, but we'll understand if you choose to go home at this time.

ABBIE

Yes, Mrs. Odwalla.

MRS. ODWALLA

I'm just sorry you had to witness what you just witnessed. You won't tell your mother what you witnessed, will you?

ABBIE

No, Mrs. Odwalla.

(Abbie collects her things and hurries off.)

MR. ODWALLA

That could be a poem.

MRS. ODWALLA

What could be a poem?

MR. ODWALLA

I'm just sorry you had to witness
What you just witnessed.
You won't tell your mother
What you witnessed,
Will you?

MRS. ODWALLA

Free verse.

MR. ODWALLA

Free verse, blank verse. I always get them mixed up.

NOELLE

What if it is a conspiracy?

MR. ODWALLA

What if what's a conspiracy?

NOELLE

Like what Abbie said. What if poetry's some kind of twisted conspiracy by adults to make kids feel sleepy.

MRS. ODWALLA

Poetry is a craft, an art, a way of sharing something of the human soul. And if a poem is deceptive, it's the deception of injecting a tiny notion into the soul that lies there, dormant, until one day, without warning, it bursts forth as a full-blown revelation.

NOELLE

Revolution?

MRS. ODWALLA

Revelation, Sweetie. Emily Dickinson does that for me.

MR. ODWALLA

Frost for me.

NOELLE

I bet Annie's sleeping right now.

MRS. ODWALLA

Heaven help her if she is.

(We hear the sound of a school bell calling kids to class, and find ourselves...)