

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian

by Sherman Alexie

(Arranged for Readers' Theater by CYRM Committee Members, for classroom use only.)

Characters:	Mr. P.	Narrator 1	Narrator 2	Narrator 3
	Narrator 4	Narrator 5	Narrator 6	

Narrator 1: I was fourteen and it was my first day of high school. I was happy about that. And I was most especially excited about my first geometry class. Yep, I have to admit that the isosceles triangle makes me feel hormonal.

Narrator 2: Most guys, no matter what age, get excited about curves and circles, but not me. Don't get me wrong. I like girls and their curves. And I really like women and their curvier curves. But the thing is, I am much more in love with the right angles of buildings.

Narrator 3: When I was a baby, I'd crawl under my bed and snuggle into a corner to sleep. I just felt warm and safe leaning into two walls at the same time. When I was eight, nine, and ten, I slept in my bedroom closet with the door closed. I stopped doing that only because my big sister, Mary, told me that I was just trying to find my way back into my mother's womb.

Narrator 4: That ruined the whole closet thing. My sister is good at ruining things.

Narrator 5: After high school, my sister just froze. Didn't go to college, didn't get a job. Didn't do anything. Kind of sad I guess. But she is also beautiful and strong and funny. She is the prettiest and strongest and funniest person who ever spent twenty-three hours a day alone in a basement. She is so crazy and random that we called her Mary Runs Away.

Narrator 6: I am not like her. I am steady. I am excited about life. I'm excited about school.

Narrator 1: Rowdy and I are planning on playing high school basketball. Last year, Rowdy and I were the best players on the eighth-grade team. But I don't think I'll be a very good high school player.

Narrator 2: Rowdy is probably going to start varsity as a freshman, but I figure the bigger and better kids will crush me. It's one thing to hit jumpers over other eighth graders; it's a whole other thing to score on high school monsters.

Narrator 3: I'll probably be a benchwarmer on the C squad while Rowdy goes on to all-state glory and fame. I am a little worried that Rowdy will start to hang around with the older guys and leave me behind. I'm also worried that he'll start to pick on me, too. I'm scared he might start hating me as much as all of the others do. But I'm more happy than scared.

Narrator 4: I was sitting in a freshman classroom at Wellpinit High School when Mr. P. strolled in with a box full of geometry textbooks. And let me tell you, Mr. P. is a weird looking dude.

Narrator 5: He is a weird old coot, but most of the kids dig him because he doesn't ask too much of us. I mean, how can you expect your students to work hard if you show up in your pajamas and slippers. And yeah, I know it's weird, but the tribe actually houses all of the teachers in one-bedroom cottages and musty, old trailer houses behind the school. It is like some kind of prison-work farm for our liberal, white, vegetarian do-gooders and conservative, white missionary saviors.

Mr. P.: All right kids, let's get cracking. How about we do something strange and start on page one?

Narrator 6: Mr. P. starts passing out geometry books I grabbed my book and opened it up. I wanted to smell it. Heck, I wanted to kiss it. Yes, kiss it. That's right, I'm a book-kisser. But my lips stopped short when I saw this written on the inside front cover: This book belongs to Agnes Adams.

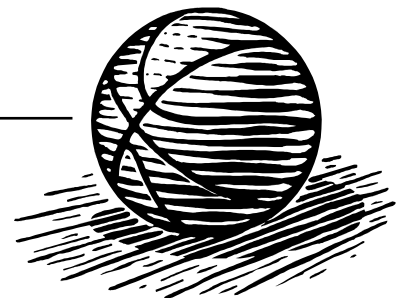
Narrator 1: Okay, now you're probably asking yourself, "Who is Agnes Adams?" Well, let me tell you. Agnes Adams is my mother. MY MOTHER! And Adams is her maiden name.

Narrator 2: So that means my mother was born an Adams and she was still an Adams when she wrote her name in that book. And she was thirty when she gave birth to me. Yep, so that means I was staring at a geometry book that was at least thirty years older than I was. I couldn't believe it.

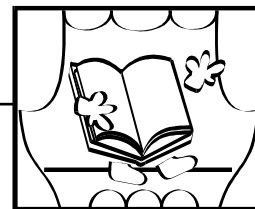
Narrator 3: How horrible is that?

Narrator 4: My school and my tribe are so poor and sad that we have to study from the same dang books our parents studied from. That is absolutely the saddest thing in the world. And let me tell you, that old, old, old, decrepit geometry book hit my heart with the force of a nuclear bomb. My hopes and dreams floated up in a mushroom cloud. What do you do when the world has declared nuclear war on you?

Narrator 5: Well, I stood up from my desk, grabbed the dusty old textbook, hurled it across the room, and smashed Mr. P. in the face.



Readers' Theater



Saint Iggy

by K.L. Going

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Characters: Iggy Mrs. Brando Principal Olmos Narrator 1 Narrator 2

Narrator 1: So I got kicked out of school today, which is not so great but also not entirely unexpected, and I went back to Public Housing where I live to tell my parents all about it but my mom went visiting someone or other and probably isn't coming back and my dad is stoned on the couch like he always is, so somehow I'm not getting the vibe that he'd really, you know care, so I think,

Narrator 2: Here's what I'm going to do: First I've got to make a plan. And this is part of the plan — making a plan — so really I'm doing good already. If my dad was awake part of the plan would be telling him about the trouble at school so he would know it was not entirely my fault. This is how it happened: I came in late to Spanish class because I followed a hot new girl.

Iggy: Can I sit here?

Mrs. Brando: (*confused*) I think you have the wrong classroom.

Iggy: No, I'm in this class.

Mrs. Brando: (*really patronizing*) Son, it is December and I have not seen you in this class even once before, so I don't know what classroom you are looking for. Are you new here, too?

Iggy: (*being real patient*) Nooo, I am in this class and if you'd just check your list from the beginning of the year you'd see that.

Mrs. Brando: (*flipping out*) Are you threatening me? Do you have a weapon? Are you on drugs? Someone get the principal. Call security. Help! Help! Help!

Narrator 1: Then all the other teachers come in because they think I'm going to pull a Columbine, and everyone's asking what happened only no one's asking me, and in Mrs. Brando's version of it, I moved like I was going to hit her or maybe pull something out of my jacket, and even though hitting someone and pulling something out of your jacket require two totally different hand motions, the one being an up and out motion and the other being a down and in motion, no one comes to my defense and instead everyone in the classroom nods in agreement with Mrs. Brando's story and you would think they didn't know me all these years, the traitors.

Narrator 2: Then the security guy pushes my face into the concrete wall, and after that he drags me to the principal's office.

Principal Olmos: (*tapping his desk*) Remember how you wanted to drop Spanish for metal shop?

Iggy: I don't remember.

Narrator 1: I started thinking about the hot new girl and I looked at the ceiling and the floor and the walls.

Principal Olmos: Did you think about your actions before you went into that classroom?
(*silence*)

Principal Olmos: Don't be silent now. The only time you cease talking is when you should be making an attempt to better yourself—participating in class, for example, or explaining your actions, which frankly, are largely incomprehensible.

Narrator 2: I wonder why I am incomprehensible because everything I do makes perfect sense to me.

Iggy: Umm, 'cause, see, I was just going in there to learn some Spanish because I changed my mind about things and I wasn't going to hit anyone — Mrs. Brando is just an old . . . uhh, teacher and . . .

Narrator 1: Mr. Olmos puts up his hand.

Principal Olmos: Actually, it's too late. It's time to start thinking about your future outside of this high school. Mrs. Brando wants to file serious charges, but we're not going to go that route. I'll speak to Mrs. Brando about not involving the police, but that's the best I can do. I'm afraid I'll be recommending to the school superintendent that your time at Carver High be terminated.

Narrator 2: My eyes get big, because I don't understand being terminated.

Principal Olmos: There will be a hearing within the next five days to officially determine your status. If your parents wish to hire an attorney, of course they are welcome to do so, but given your past suspensions, your disciplinary history, the number of times you've had detention this year alone, and of course the incident with the spray painting, I think the outcome is virtually certain.

Iggy: Oh, so terminated means over.

Narrator 1: And it is not like I didn't see this coming, but this time I can tell it is real so I start thinking how the girl wasn't even that hot and my parents will never show up to a hearing ...

Principal Olmos: . . . tried to contact your parents but as usual we can't reach them . . . can't tolerate the threat of violence in schools these days . . . clearly not suited for this environment.

Narrator 2: I could beg. I could offer him money, only I don't have any. Maybe I will say I was on drugs so they will decide to help me, only this may not work because I already have a social worker and everyone thinks I am on drugs even though I'm not, and it has not helped me once yet.

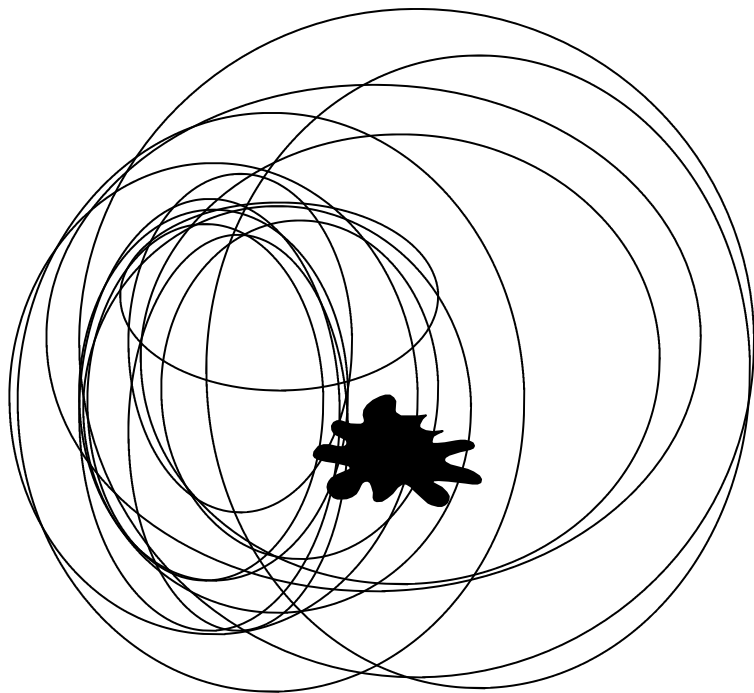
Principal Olmos: Are you listening? Honestly, I believe you are a good kid. Lots of people around here don't think that, but I do. You've had a lot to overcome in your life, but that's no excuse for poor discipline. We can all make something of ourselves, no matter what our situation. We can do something that contributes to the world, live a life that has meaning. Do you believe that?

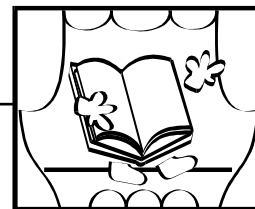
Iggy: *(nods)*

Narrator 1: Principal Olmos stands up and closes the folder. He reaches out to shake my hand like we are both adults and I am not a kid or a student anymore, and that's when it hits me that I am on my own, which is scary because even though I'm sixteen I am only a freshman and that is too soon to be kicked out. Plus, I have no skills, and if you do not graduate high school and you have no skills then you are out of luck.

Principal Olmos: You'll have to stay here until the end of the school day while we continue trying to contact your parents. If we can't reach them I'll have the social worker come by your house to deliver an official letter stating you have out-of-school suspension pending a hearing. I'm sorry.

Narrator 2: Principal Olmos is wrong, about the hearing and even though he thinks it's a done deal I will make a plan. And the kind of plan I will make is a How-to-Change-Everyone's-Mind-About-Me plan. I am really not so bad a person once you get to know me.





Story of a Girl by Sara Zarr

(Arranged for Readers' Theater by CYRM Committee Members, for classroom use only.)

Characters:	Deanna	Lee	Jeremy	Jason	Mr. North
	Stacy	Narrator 1	Narrator 2	Narrator 3	

Narrator 1: The stories in my head about the girl on the waves, the story I started that night with Tommy, didn't get onto paper until I had Mr. North for English. One time in class he said we should keep a journal, and I thought, no thanks, that whole dear diary thing is so fourth grade.

Mr. North: A journal could be anything, like drawings or poetry or lists or whatever, anything you wanted to say about anything and no one else would see it.

Jeremy: Then, what's the point? Are you saying we don't get credit?

Mr. North: The point is to have a place to express your personal feelings. You do have personal feelings, don't you, Jeremy?

Narrator 2: Everyone laughed, ha ha ha, and Mr. North hardly ever mentioned journals again, but I bought a two dollar comp book at Walgreens and started writing down these little things about the girl, just random stuff. The girl on her surfboard, the girl with her family, the girl on the beach, whatever.

Narrator 3: One day I read what I had and thought, God but that sucks, ripped out the pages and threw them away. The weird thing is, after I tore those pages up, I missed her. I missed the girl in my head. So I started again, this time trying to stick to "personal feelings."

Narrator 1: I was working on some of that stuff the next morning when Lee called to let me know she'd gotten back from Santa Barbara.

Lee: It's nice, but I wouldn't want to live there. Lots of tall, blond people with really white teeth. I feel like a troll whenever I visit. Ooooh, look at that short person with brown hair! How did she get in?

Deanna: That's one good thing about Pacifica. You can be totally average and still look better than half the population.

Lee: Save me from my family, Deanna. My mom is having a 'sing-along to Simon & Garfunkel while we clean the house' kind of morning.

Deanna: *(smiling)* I'm going down to Beach Front later to drop off job applications. Wanna come with?

Lee: Let's meet at the donut shop. I've been donut deprived. I don't think people in Santa Barbara are allowed to eat donuts.

Narrator 2: I went down to the basement to see what Stacy and April were up to. Stacy, the Teenage Mother, handed April to me and got up.

Deanna: I'm meeting Lee down at Beach Front to drop off some job applications.

Narrator 3: April grabbed a fistful of my hair and started pulling.

Stacy: Don't let her do that. I'm trying to teach her to stop.

Deanna: I can watch her when I get back if you want.

Stacy: She has a checkup this afternoon.

Deanna: Oh. Sorry.

Stacy: No big deal. I just wanted to go to some thrift stores in the city to look for clothes. My old stuff still doesn't fit. I feel like such a cow.

Deanna: I'll be around later if you need any help.

Narrator 1: Later in the day Jason and Lee invited me to go out with them that night. Which was nice, you know, because Lee's parents only allow her to go out two nights a week. Lee's mom drove us into the city at a mall near San Francisco State where you can wander around and usually not get jacked by wannabe gangster kids.

Lee: Okay, who has money?

Deanna: Not me.

Jason: I got five bucks.

Lee: I have four. That's nine, so ... three for each of us. Woo-hoo! Stand back, we have some shopping to do!

Jason: (*whispering*) Note how the salespeople are not flocking to us.

Deanna: (*snorting*) More like calling security.

Lee: Come on, you guys, don't lag. We only have two hours to spend our fortune. I might be able to buy half an earring someday. If it was on sale that is.

Jason: Dude, can we sit down already?

Lee: Aww. I love it when you call me "dude." He's such a romantic, huh Deanna?

Deanna: Yeah, it's real sweet.

Jason: I've got to go to the bathroom. Meet you guys at McDonald's?

Lee: (*sighing*) All roads lead to McDonald's for you, Jay. See you there.

Narrator 2: I looked at the kids behind the counter.

Deanna: That's gonna be me in twenty-four hours.

Lee: Only without the customers. No one actually eats at Picasso's.

Deanna: It's a job. I just want money.

Lee: We need to have, like, a giant shopping spree at the end of the summer. New clothes, new everything.

Deanna: I'm not wasting my money on that crap.

Lee: What crap are you going to waste it on? What are your plans for your colossal summer earnings?

Jason: You gonna buy a car? Don't do it without talking to me first.

Deanna: I'm moving out.

