
THE WALL

Clever Tommy Sayero manages to get his friends—and even his enemies—to do his work for him, and pay for the privilege.

CAST

[In order of appearance]

THE BOMBERS: JOKER, ZORRO, and T-BONE

MRS. PALEY, principal of George Washington High School

MR. LEE, a science teacher

TOMMY SAYERO

CHUCK, BENNY, and J. J., his friends

NORBERT, a new boy

ANA, a student

TWO GIRLS

TWO BOYS

Extras if needed to help paint the wall

SCENE 1

Early in the morning, outside a high school in a small town in California. Separating the schoolyard from the street is a large white wall with “George Washington High School” printed on it.

[Three teenagers enter, looking over their shoulders to make sure nobody sees them. They are “THE BOMBERS”: JOKER, ZORRO, and T-BONE. They are wearing their gang colors and carrying spray cans.]

JOKER: Come on! Over here!

ZORRO: Wow! This is terrific!

T-BONE: Hey! Keep it down!

ZORRO: No one's ever put a mark on it. [*He strokes the wall.*] Oh, baby! Zorro's going to make you look good!

T-BONE My name goes here—right in the middle. [*He starts spraying.*]

ZORRO: This end's mine. [*He sprays.*]

JOKER: Hey, you guys! Leave me some room! [*He sprays.*]

ZORRO: [*Listens for a moment*] You hear something?

JOKER: Someone's coming!

T-BONE: Come on! Let's get out of here!

[*They all run offstage as MRS. PALEY and MR. LEE enter, talking.*]

MR. LEE: Gangsters! That's all these kids are! This is the third time they've stolen a microscope from my science lab!

MRS. PALEY: I know how upset you are, Mr. Lee.

MR. LEE: No respect for school property! No respect for anything!

MRS. PALEY: The worst thing is, I don't know when we'll be able to replace it. There's no money left in our budget.

MR. LEE: How am I supposed to teach without enough microscopes? I should have gone into business with my father.

MRS. PALEY: You're a wonderful teacher, Mr. Lee. You know it, I know it, and... [*She stops, seeing the spray-painted wall, completely covered with graffiti.*] Oh, no!

MR. LEE: Those rotten kids! Somebody ought to teach them a lesson!

MRS. PALEY: We just had it painted last month. [*She sighs.*] Well, I'd better get back to the office. I'll have to report this to the police. [*They start walking off.*]

MR. LEE: If there's no money for my microscope, there's no money for painting. What are you going to do?

MRS. PALEY: [*Sighing again*] I have no idea. Maybe I should have gone into business with your father too.

[*MRS. PALEY and MR. LEE exit, as TOMMY and his friends enter from the opposite side of the stage. They are wearing T-shirts and baseball caps.*]

CHUCK: Come on, Tommy. You said you would ditch class and go to the mall with us. They got some new games at the video store. [*He pantomimes playing a video game.*]

TOMMY: Give me a break. You know if I get caught for one more thing, Mrs. Paley said I'd be kicked out of school for good.

[*Just then NORBERT appears. He is wearing a bow tie and glasses. His hair is parted in the middle and slicked down. He is carrying a book.*]

BENNY: Whoa! Look at that!

J. J.: He's not from the neighborhood.

BENNY: You said it! I think he's from another planet!

J. J.: What planet do you think he's from?

BENNY: The planet Pluto! Where all the dogs come from! [*They laugh.*]

CHUCK: Hey, Tommy. Why don't you show him some of your karate moves? [*He pushes TOMMY toward the new boy. TOMMY gets into a karate pose, then thinks again, shoves his hands in his pockets, and turns away.*]

NORBERT: Chicken.

TOMMY: [*He turns around.*] What did you say?

NORBERT: Nothing. [*He makes a clucking sound like a chicken.*]

TOMMY: Are you looking for trouble?

NORBERT: Who, me?

TOMMY: Yeah, you. What's your name?

NORBERT: None of your business.

TOMMY: I'll make it my business.

NORBERT: Go ahead. Try it.

TOMMY: You say one more word, and I will.

NORBERT: [*Slowly*] One. More. Word.

TOMMY: You think you're smart, don't you? [NORBERT *shrugs.*] I could flatten you in a minute.

CHUCK: Go on, Tommy! Flatten him!

TOMMY: [*To NORBERT*] You'd better get out of here before you get hurt.

NORBERT: Get out of here yourself.

TOMMY: [*He draws a line on the floor with his foot.*] Step over that line, and you're dead meat. I'll knock every tooth out of your head.

NORBERT: [*Stepping over the line*] Go ahead. Do it.

TOMMY: For two cents, I will.

[NORBERT *takes out a dollar and throws it on the ground.*
TOMMY *knocks the book out of his hand. In the next instant, both boys are rolling on the ground and fighting.*
TOMMY's friends *cheer him on. Finally TOMMY ends up on top of NORBERT, pinning him to the ground.*]

TOMMY: Give up?

NORBERT: [*Struggling to get free*] No way!

TOMMY: Give up!

NORBERT: No! [TOMMY *twists his arm.*] Ow!

TOMMY: [*Twisting harder*] Give up!!!

NORBERT: Okay, you win! Get off me!

TOMMY: [*He gets up as his friends congratulate him and slap him on the back.*] That'll teach you to fool around with Tommy Sayero. [*As TOMMY picks up the dollar, brushes off his clothes and starts to go off with his friends, NORBERT gets up, picks up his book, and throws it at TOMMY, hitting him in the back.*]

NORBERT: [*Yelling, as he runs off*] My name is Norbert, chicken! And I lied about giving up!

[*TOMMY picks up the book and goes after NORBERT. Instead, he runs right into MRS. PALEY, who is coming back to take another look at the wall. Immediately, TOMMY's friends disappear, leaving him alone with the principal.*]

TOMMY: Hey, I'm sorry, Mrs. Paley, sir. I mean . . .

MRS. PALEY: Fighting again, Tommy?

TOMMY: It wasn't my fault!

MRS. PALEY: I told you if you got into trouble one more time, you'd be thrown out of school. I'll have to call your parents.

TOMMY: Not my parents. Please, Mrs. Paley. It'll kill my mom.

MRS. PALEY: You know the rules.

TOMMY: Come on, Mrs. Paley. Give me a break. Please?

MRS. PALEY: I'm afraid you can't talk your way out of this, Tommy . . . [*She suddenly glances at the wall and gets an idea.*]

Wait a minute. Do you know how to paint?

TOMMY: Paint?

MRS. PALEY: You know. A brush. A roller. Paint. [*She demonstrates with her hand.*]

TOMMY: I guess so.

MRS. PALEY: Good. See this wall? I need someone to paint it for me tomorrow.

TOMMY: But tomorrow's Saturday!

MRS. PALEY: Of course, if you're busy, I'll just go ahead and call your parents . . . [*She turns to go.*]

TOMMY: No, wait! . . . I'll be here. Tomorrow is fine. There's nothing I'd rather do on a Saturday than paint that wall.

MRS. PALEY: The whole wall.

TOMMY: [*Sighing*] The whole wall.

MRS. PALEY: Fine. I'll meet you here tomorrow at 9 o'clock sharp. You know, Tommy, I actually think you're going to enjoy working for a change.

TOMMY: [*Resigned to his fate*] Sure, Mrs. Paley. [*They walk off together.*]

SCENE 2

Same place. The next morning.

[*TOMMY enters with a bucket of paint, a brush, and a roller and sadly looks at the graffiti-covered wall. He puts down the bucket and sits down on top of it.*]

TOMMY: Saturday morning, and where am I? Hanging out with the guys? Making out with the girls? Noooo, I'm painting the school wall! [*He shakes his head.*] I don't believe it. I'm out of here. [*He gets up to go and runs into MRS. PALEY.*] Oh, hello, Mrs. Paley. I was just getting started.

MRS. PALEY: Really? You weren't getting ready to quit?