

A Novel by Todd Strasser

# the wave

**THE  
CLASSROOM  
EXPERIMENT  
THAT WENT  
TOO FAR**



## CHAPTER 1

Laurie Saunders sat in the publications office at Gordon High School chewing on the end of a Bic pen. She was a pretty girl with short light-brown hair and an almost perpetual smile that only disappeared when she was upset or chewing on Bic pens. Lately she'd been chewing on a lot of pens. In fact, there wasn't a single pen or pencil in her pocketbook that wasn't worn down on the butt end from nervous gnawing. Still, it beat smoking.

Laurie looked around the small office, a room filled with desks, typewriters, and light tables. At that moment there should have been kids at each one of those typewriters, punching out stories for *The Gordon Grapevine*, the school paper. The art and layout staff should have been working at the light tables, laying out the next issue. But instead the room was empty except for Laurie. The problem was that it was a beautiful day outside.

Laurie felt the plastic tube of the pen crack. Her mother had warned her once that someday she

would chew on a pen until it splintered and a long plastic shard would lodge in her throat and she would choke to death on it. Only her mother could have come up with that, Laurie thought with a sigh.

She looked up at the clock on the wall. Only a few minutes were left in the period anyway. There was no rule that said anyone had to work in the publications office during their free periods, but they all knew that the next edition of *The Grapevine* was due out next week. Couldn't they give up their Frisbees and cigarettes and suntans for just a few days in order to get an issue of the paper out on time?

Laurie put her pen back in her pocketbook and started to gather up her notebooks for the next period. It was hopeless. For the three years she'd been on staff, *The Grapevine* had always been late. And now that she was the editor-in-chief it made no difference. The paper would be done when everyone got around to doing it.

Pulling the door of the publications office closed behind her, Laurie stepped out into the hall. It was practically empty now; the bell to change classes had not yet rung, and there were only a few students around. Laurie walked down a few doors, stopped outside a classroom, and peered through the window.

Inside, her best friend, Amy Smith, a petite girl with thick, curly, Goldilocks hair, was trying to endure the final moments of Mr. Gabondi's French class. Laurie had taken French with Mr. Gabondi the year before and it had been one of the most ex-

cruciatingly boring experiences of her life. Mr. Gabondi was a short, dark, heavysset man who always seemed to be sweating, even on the coldest winter days. When he taught, he spoke in a dull monotone that could easily put the brightest student to sleep, and even though the course he taught was not difficult, Laurie recalled how hard it had been to pay enough attention to get an A.

Now watching her friend struggle to stay interested, Laurie decided she needed some cheering up. So, positioning herself outside the door where Amy could see her but Gabondi could not, Laurie crossed her eyes and made an idiotic face. Amy reacted by putting her hand over her mouth to keep from laughing. Laurie made another face and Amy tried not to look, but she couldn't help turning back to see what her friend was doing next. Then Laurie did her famous fish face: she pushed her ears out, crossed her eyes, and puckered her lips. Amy was trying so hard not to laugh that tears started to roll down her cheeks.

Laurie knew she shouldn't make any more faces. Watching Amy was too funny—anything could make her laugh. If Laurie did any more, Amy would probably fall out of her seat and roll into the aisle between the desks. But Laurie couldn't resist. Turning her back to the door to create some suspense, she screwed up her mouth and eyes, and then spun around.

Standing at the door was a very angry Mr. Gabondi. Behind him Amy and the rest of her class were in hysterics. Laurie's jaw dropped. But before Gabondi could reprimand her, the bell rang and



**the wave** is based on an incident that took place in a high school history class in Palo Alto, California, in 1969.

*Ben Ross and his history class are about to learn a lesson they will never forget.*

As they study World War II, Ben Ross's students can't seem to understand how the German people could have followed Hitler and the Nazis. So Mr. Ross creates an experimental movement called The Wave. What begins in a single classroom quickly gathers momentum. Before the end of the week, The Wave's motto, "Strength Through Discipline, Strength Through Community, Strength Through Action," governs the entire school. Only two students, Laurie Saunders and David Collins, recognize The Wave for what it is and set out to stop it before it's too late. But is history destined to repeat itself?

COVER ILLUSTRATION BY JON C. LUND  
[WWW.RANDOMHOUSE.COM/TEENS](http://WWW.RANDOMHOUSE.COM/TEENS)

**US \$6.50 /\$7.99 CAN**

ISBN 978-0-440-99371-1



9 780440 993711

COVER PRINTED IN THE USA