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The Man Without a Face

By Malcolm MacRury

'It was a good dream - my best one.'

'Everything was perfect.'

'My mother was proud of her son's wings.'

'My half-sister, Meg, lost her braces.'

'My other half-sister, Gloria, had realised my intellectual superiority'
..And was quietly respectful to me.'

'My step-fathers were slaves, captured in battle.'

'And, there was a Wac by my side.'

'Not too bright, not too loud. Hugely attractive.'

'It's a good dream.'

'A John Wayne meets Hugh Hefner philosophy...
..if you consider Hef a philosopher, or John Wayne.'

'But whatever the dream, there's always a face that I can't see...
..that I keep missing, out there beyond the edge of the crowd.'

"This is WJB Boston."

"It's 70 degrees on the first day of summer, 1968...
..a good day to be born a woman..."

"# If you are born a woman..."

Turn it up, I love this song!
It's too loud already.
Turn it up!
Turn it down, Meg.
I like this song, Gloria.
White-trash music.
It's good!
Mother, will you reason with her?
Mother, I was listening to that!
Don't whine. It's so unattractive.
It was wearing down the battery.
No, it wasn't. Batteries can run for hours like that.
Thank you, Charles.
What an engineer(!) I thought airplanes were your forte.
Was I talking to you?
This is our pilot, Charles Norstadt.
Yeah, was he talking to you? Come on, Gloria, spare us.
'It was a good dream.'
Did you see that? They ate right out of my hand!
Chuck? Wake up!
What?
You're doing that thing again.
What thing?
You get that look on your face.
Where do you go when you do that? He came this close to my eyes.
Hi.

It's a beautiful day, isn't it?
Are you married?
He's really shy.
You're nuts.
I'm just trying to help Mother.
She doesn't need help.
Marriage is her hobby, like bridge or dog-breeding.
I wanna be sure the next guy's nice. More like my dad than Gloria's.
Or mine.
I didn't say that.
Doesn't matter. I won't be here much longer.
How? You flunked.
I can take the exam again.
What's so funny?
I didn't say anything. Anyway, she'll never let you go.
Look.
Mother, I'm trying to read.
Oh, come on!
Oh!
Isn't it clever?
What is this?
Mom?
Mother?
What is it, Charles?
I wanna retake the exam.
You've had your chance, Charles.
I can retake it at the end of August.
I don't want you at boarding school.
It's my dad's school.
That'll convince her(!)
Shut up!
I don't want you at a military academy.
They're fascist and unnatural.
Well, there's no risk letting him take the exam.
Can you see him cramming Latin and geometry at the cottage?
Look, I'm already studying! Mother?
All right, Charles.
If you wanna give up your whole vacation, you can try again.
No, not the whole summer.
You know it takes you longer than other children.
It's nothing to be ashamed of.
You're stupid, you're stupid, you're stupid!
Now you're slow!
You know you're Goober Pyle!

Down, boy! Lie down!

I'm, er...

I'm so...sorry.

This tyre's been vandalised.

What?

Yeah. Look.

Half a dozen deliberate punctures.

Oh, my God! Who would do something like that? That's crazy!

Oh! My God! Come here!

What?

Isn't that Hamburger-Head? You know, McLeod?

I thought he never left his dungeon.

Don't stare. We're not at a circus.

'"Will I actually commit the crime? That is for the coin to decide."'

"Which face will it show? The whole, or the ruined?"

"The coin has decided. And so, Two-Face must strike..."

"as the bells of Gotham City ring out into the murky night."

Charles! Lunch!

Oh, no! Here she comes. Better get you out of here, Mac.

Shut up.

Charles, what are you doing?

I'm studying.

You're not gonna get lunch in bed. Come on!

Charles!

What?

I told you I don't want that rabid beast in the house.

I keep Mac outside.

I am in earnest, young man.

That cat is so disgusting.

That's enough, Gloria.

- Where are you going?

- I'm going to study.

If you need any help...

Hey, Chad! What's that kid's...? Chuck! Have you seen Gloria?

Er, yeah. She went off with some guy in a Mustang.

What guy?

I don't know.

Who's the guy?

I dunno. Just...some guy.

When?

Just now.

Chuck! Wait up!

Jeez!

Chuck, I said wait up!

What are you, my shadow?

Don't compensate by using me as an emotional punching bag.

You're too young to talk like that.

Gloria's right. You'll never pass it on your own.

- Shut up!

- Why don't you let me tutor you?

- You're ten years old!

- So? You know I'm smart enough.

You're a genius. A fender-face genius!

And you're a jerk! I hope you fail and have to live with us forever!

What are you gonna do, ask Gloria for help?

Don't be such a boy!

Hey, Norstadt!

You're still a virgin!

Catching up on a little reading?

School's over, you know, wing-nut.

Thanks for the newsflash, brillo-head.

Shut up!

What's goin' on, guys?

Pearson's got his old man's boat.

- Where are you gonna swim?

- Freak beach. You want in?

- You up to it?

- Let's go.

- Sure.

- What are you waitin' for?

- Come on.

Can I come?

No flat chicks allowed!

Shut up, you sexist pig!

- Whoa, bra-burner!

- Trainer bra-burner!

The only bra you'll ever see is your momma's!

What a stupid world.

We could divide all chickdom into Ginger and Mary-Anne...

but why not let visitors onto this island paradise?

Guest stars. Top of the list, Agent 99.

- Agent 99 sucks.

- Bewitched would be good.

- Bewitched is married.

- So?

- He'd probably do it with Mrs Howell.

- You guys ever seen the Freak?

- McLeod? He won't let you see him.

- I saw him.
- Oh, screw you!
I saw him on the ferry!
Why would Hamburger-Head go on the boat?
He travelled below. The Hound from Hell was with him.
His wolf?
The Freak was this close to me.
Why would the Freak go to Boston?
Mafia meeting, probably.
Porno. He writes porno books.
Get outta here!
He gets parcels from porn publishers.
How's a freak gonna write porno?
What would he write about?
I don't know. Maybe his dog!
Wait. Did you hear that?
What?
Listen... What was that?
I'm scared.
Shut up, don't let him see you.
Ow, my finger!
Shut up, man!
- Wait up, guys!
- Come on!
Start the motor! Come on!
Boy, was that close! Jeez! Was that a wolf?
Did you see the Freak up there, man?
He was scared of the wolf. He was pissin' in his pants!
We gotta go back!
I left my books there! Come on! I left my books!
We gotta go back!
Tell the school the dog ate 'em.
What subject was it, Latin? Screw-us you-us!
See ya later, pizza-head!
If he's a cannibal, I'll just tell him I have bone cancer.
'I don't know what to do when he gets that stupid look on his face.'
'What do you see in the ink blot, Charles?'
'What do you think I mean by "passive aggressive"?'
'He's his father's son all right.'
'Eric was my third husband and my one real mistake.'
'That's very funny, Charles. What do you really see?'
'You don't care about anybody but yourself.'
'What do you see in the ink blot, Charles?'
John Wayne.

What are you doing here?

What's wrong with you? You got any idea how long you been here?

S...sorry.

It just went off. It's a funny clock.

Funny "ha-ha", funny strange?

Not sure.

Says you taught at, erm, Barrett Academy.

Is that a good school?

What do you teach?

- What's your name?

- Erm, Chuck. Chuck Norstadt.

Well, Chuck Chuck Norstadt, where do you live?

Just the other side of the harbour.

Then you'd better drink this and go.

Oh, great. Thanks.

Come on, Mickey. Heel.

Mickey really doesn't seem the right name for your dog.

It's like naming Godzilla "Bambi".

You name him after Mickey Metal or Mickey Mouse?

How's your mother's front tyre?

Fine.

It's a bright night. You should be able to find your way home.

Yeah.

You found your way here, didn't you?

Mm-hm.

It's my bike.

Hey, you still do any teaching?

Reason I ask is...

This may sound crazy, but I could really use some help on an exam.

- Why does that sound crazy?

- I don't know,

I just never thought of you as a teacher.

Nobody does. Not that I know anything about you or anything.

It won't take long. It's just to get into this second-rate boarding school

Misunderstood, are we?

I'm just sick of living with three females, all brilliant, and being the family retard.

I see. Nothing at all to do with pre-pubescent angst, then?

It was the school my father went to.

He was in Korea, then he died in a jet crash.

Some kind of experimental spy plane.

- If it's a matter of money, I can pay you.

- No, I don't think you can.

Nice to have met you, Mr McLeod.

Bucket-head.

There's Great Grandfather MacNeil. He built the cottage.

Far out.

Oh, look at those Presbyterian eyes.

Ooh, terrifying!

I can't believe you're interested in all this ancient history.

I am, it's all research.

All for my book on the Robber Baringer mine shaft.

That is such an important topic.

It looks like Mark Hughes is writing the foreword.

Mark Hughes?

Charles? Come here, dear.

Hi, man.

I want you to meet Professor Hartley of Yale. This is my son, Charles.

Just call me Carl.

I don't need any of that imperialistic authoritarian crap.

Hi... Carl.

She hasn't caught a fish, she's vacuumed up a hairball!

Hi, Chuck.

Go put some dry clothes on.

Good night.

"Arms, I sing. I am the man...

"who first from the shores of Troy came."

"Fate exiled to Italy and her Lovinian strand..."

"..much buffeted he, on flood and field, by constraint of heaven..."

"and Juno's unslumbering wrath."

Hi, Mickey. Aren't you the ugliest son of a bitch?

If I had a dog like you, I'd put a bag over its head.

Yes, I would, you flea-infested sack of worms...

How you doin'?

Beautiful day, isn't it?

Um...

I'm here.

I know you're pressed for time and everything...

but I was wondering,

maybe you'd be interested in some Latin exercises...

just to look over 'em.

I realise you're busy, Mr McLeod...

but how much work is a couple of Latin passages?

Maybe a little geometry?

I'd like a hole.

I don't understand.

Three feet, cubed. Right here.

Stay.

Listen, I said I could pay you, didn't I?

Three feet cubed.

Hello!

Mr McLeod?

You can sit here.

Now, I'd like you to write an essay.

Any topic you'd like.

Why? It's not on the exam.

Why did you come here?

Quickly! Don't think, just answer.

For some help. You know.

No. Do you want help or not?

I guess so, if you're a teacher.

I guess so...sir.

I guess so, sir.

Good.

This is the way it works - adisca alt disceda. Learn or leave.

It's of no consequence to me one way or the other. Understood?

Yeah.

Except the bit about digging shithouse holes and writing bullshit.

I haven't got a lot of pity.

You can go now.

Pity yourself, freak! Stupid freak!

Moon river...

Want one?

No, thanks.

According to my sources, he was a mad professor like Carl. "Dr McLeod"

Must be a Harvard man.

No doubt.

Martini?

Thank you.

It was a classic murder-suicide.

Butchered his wife, but botched the job on himself.

Ask Gus the barber.

That's not what Gus told me.

When you were getting your hair cut?

He said he didn't kill his wife, but his boyfriend.

Carl!

I wanna know what he thinks plastic surgery is for.

Unless he doesn't have the money.

Someone told me, and I do not believe this, that he was one of the Kennedys

The Kennedys? Well, he certainly resembles one.

No, I didn't mean that.

I can't believe you said that.

Becky, how many years has McLeod been here?

Six - no, seven.

Every summer we talk about him.

So?

One day I'll knock on his door and end all this.

Oh, Todd, where's the fun in that?

Hey, how's the scholar doin'?

Gonna make it to West Point yet, are we?

Don't remind me.

You know how I hate the idea

of him becoming one of those brush-cut fly boys.

Come on, Catherine, you like to fly.

I like to have the garbage picked up but I don't want him doing that!

This air force bit is something Chuck's just into for the moment.

Once he understands what the Pentagon is doing in Vietnam...

Are we having this argument again?

No, because I'm talking to Kitty. Besides, I'm too drunk.

I'm just glad he's way too young for the draft.

Y'know, there's nothing I'd rather do than drop napalm for a living.

I... Are you gonna let that...?

Television.

Mine's vodka. What's your excuse?

You gonna marry the hair... Er...

Carl? I don't know, Charles. Do you think I should?

Your mother's not much use to you these days, is she?

I'm sorry. I'm just not cut out for this mothering racket.

I never expected to have three children, let alone by three husbands.

Can I ask you something?

Sure.

You promise not to get mad?

Charles.

Why does Gloria hate me?

Oh, Charles, she doesn't...

Because you were born, baby.

But that wasn't my fault.

No, but she didn't know that. She was four years old.

All she knew was she had a rival for your father's affection.

She hated my father. She's always telling me what a jerk he was.

The way you do.

Oh, Charles, I never meant that.

I just didn't know how to...

Morning, all.

Hey, we didn't always feel that way about him.

About who? Who are we talking about?

Charles' father.

Oh, yes?

Whoa.

Is this what you wanted?

"Why the system must be changed now!"

Exclamation point. "By Charles E Norstadt."

I had no idea you pondered such weighty issues, Charles E.

I did what you asked. Are you gonna keep up your end?

All right.

I'd like a hole. Three feet across, three feet deep.

And how about a triangle? Two by two by three. Three feet deep.

Just near the paddock, left of the entrance.

If you need a hole, hire a contractor.

I don't need a hole.

I'm interested in your title.

I was wondering how you came to choose it.

Erm, it's about how... how people have to change things.

What kind of things? Sit down.

What kind of things?

The Government, you know.

What would you change about the Government?

Me? Erm, lots of things.

Such as?

Such as...

Such as how the word is spelt, for example.

What?

Judging by your essay, it seems you hope to change the spelling of "government", "democracy"...

and "Richard Miltown Nixon".

So, I'm not too good at spellings.

I see that, but if you're going to plagiarise, you might at least show the courtesy of...

- What are you talking about?

- Don't! Who wrote this? Who?

Bill Garfield.

Never heard of him.

He's at Colombia.

Oh, so you're a high-class cheat.

I'm not a cheat...

You are!

I hate writing. It sucks!

Adisca alt disceda.

It's a waste of time! It's like digging those shitty holes!

I'll write you a stinkin' essay!

"Why Spiderman sucks worse than the Silver Surfer!" Very good.
Are you happy now? Can I go?
You invited yourself.
Tonight, I want you to look up ten alternatives for the slang "to suck"
Shit!
And find me the Latin equivalent of your other favourite descriptive.
Mickey!
I gotta go.
If you're born a woman
You're born to be hurt
You're born to be stepped on
Lied to, cheated on and treated like dirt. #
I followed you this morning.
You tell, and you're dead.
I'm not gonna tell anybody.
I'm not gonna tell anybody IF...
What? If what?
You tell me all about him. What were you doing there?
You swear. Swear by Thor.
- I did what you said. I got a tutor.
- The Freak's a teacher? Come on!
- I think he is.
- What does he teach?
He makes me dig holes.
You liar! I'm gonna tell Mom, and she'll never let you near him again!
Keep your mouth shut!
OK! Get off, you maniac!
What's he like? Do you like him? Does he like you?
He hates everybody. I mean, look at him.
Sometimes I think I'm gonna be sick, just watching him.
Let me come with you. Please!
Come on, Chuck.
Lunatic!
Hello?
Mr McLeod?
Sir?
Hey, Pukehead! You home?!
Guess not.
Porno.
Take it easy. OK.
Lie down.
I'll be right back, fella. OK?
Hey, when did you get back?
I went for a walk when I finished my homework.

Jeez, what happened to him?

He encountered a porcupine.

Excrementum!

Stiltus puer.

What? What does that mean?

"The foolish boy"... digs a three-foot hole.

If we assume that he has dug his cube properly...

what will be the volume if he fills up half of it?

Now, stiltus puer wants to erect a pole at the centre of his circle.

But how does he find that centre?

Think, Norstadt, reason.

No? Write this down.

Draw a circle. A,B,C.

Draw within it any straight line, AB.

Bisect AB at D and draw a straight line, DC, at right angles to AB.

With me, Norstadt?

Yes, sir.

OK. Any other straight line - AC.

Bisect AC, and you get the centre of your circle.

Good.

Euclid's Proposition 47. This is the famous one.

In any right-angled triangle...

Have a good look. Get it over with. Then we'll continue. Enough?

Good.

In any right-angled triangle,

the square on the side subtending the right angle, is equal to... what?

Equal to the sum of the squares on each of the two sides, sir.

Thank you.

Take away the moustache, lighten the hair...

McLeod?

Shouldn't it mention that the man has no face?

You don't know what they keep back.

Give it a rest. Last week you thought it was Fidel Castro.

I said take away the beard.

How's that, Wayne?

Oh! Very nice, Gus.

All right, Wayne, but nobody lives like that unless they've got history.

Who's business is that?

This man has not bothered a soul since he's been here.

Any reason why you think he would?

Some other haircut.

"Strange fits of passion have I known

"and I will dare to tell but in the lover's ear alone"

"What once to me befell,

"when she I loved looked every day fresh as a rose in June..."

Don't bludgeon it completely.

I hate poetry!

It's all love this, love that.

It's boring, snoring, smothering.

You don't like poetry or you don't like the word "love"?

Not every poem's a love sonnet. There's the "Ode to my Goldfish".

"Oh, wet pet".

That's it?

That's it.

What kind of a plane did you say your father flew?

U2.

157. Take it home and read it.

Take it. It's all of 20 lines. I'm sure you can manage that.

Hey!

Oh, Chuck. You know my kid brother, don't you?

I guessed, yes.

Were you on "The Flintstones"?

What?

You know - Fred, Dino. You know - yabadabadoo?

That's funny. Good. Funny kid.

Let's eat.

You sit down. I'll find something.

What have we got here?

What have you got in your sandwich?

You wanna give him my sandwich?

Calm down.

What's this, poetry?

You stupid brat! You did that on purpose!

Take it easy!

Shut up, Douglas! Come down, Slime!

What are you hiding? Idiot Charles doesn't read poetry!

It's just a little spilled milk.

'Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth

'And danced the skies on laughter's silvered wings.

'Sunward I've climbed, joined the tumbling mirth of sun-split clouds

'And done a hundred things you have not dreamed of.

'Wheeled and soared and swung,

'and while with silent lifting mind I have trod

'the high, untrespassed sanctity of space,

'put out my hand, and touched the face of God.'

That's promptness.

I didn't need that back today.

No, it was good. I just thought I should return it.

Why?

Remember I told you about Gloria?

- Your sister?

- My half-sister.

What's evil half-sister done now?

Speak up. I've got an egg boiling.

She saw the book. She'll snoop around till she finds out what I'm doing.

I don't follow.

You haven't told your mother that you're coming here, have you?

That's it, isn't it?

Why the blazes not?

If I did, she wouldn't let me come.

Then you can't come.

No! I've got to, just for a little longer!

If she's letting you take the exam,

she's not totally opposed to the idea of a boarding school, is she?

She won't let me come because it's you.

That's why. They don't know you. People are afraid of what they don't know.

Thank you, Herr Doctor, I must be sure to write that down.

I just meant...

What are you playing at?

Nothing. Nobody has to know!

Do you want this exam?

Good.

Then take some responsibility for what you want.

Talk to her, Norstadt, convince her.

Convince me.

'Mother, I could not believe it.'

Attacked in my own home.

Oh, Gloria.

I'm not exaggerating.

Why do you baby him? That's what the psychiatrist said.

You know what his father...

Mother, I was there.

Then you should be more patient.

He's not the only one with bad dreams.

It's not the same.

Charles, what are you doing?

I've just got home.

Is there something you wanted?

No.

Did he hear us?

I dunno.

Hey, Mickey. Good morning.

What's all this?

My mother said I had to pay my way if I was going to keep coming here.
It's no trouble. I can do it every morning if you like.

Oh, erm...

What's this?

It's her phone number. She said to call if I was any trouble.

I don't have a telephone.

I'm no trouble. You could write her.

Scratch my back, I'll scratch the horse's.

Here, you're going the wrong way.

Go downward, long strokes.

Like this?

"Believe me, you are marvellously changed."

"I hold the world but as the world, Grat...iano, a stage."

It's not a cereal box you're reading

Why can't I read it silently?

Because it's a play, Norstadt.

You perform it. "I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano.

"A stage, where every man must play a part,

"and mine a sad one."

And what's his reason?

"I am a Jew."

"Hath not a Jew eyes?"

"Hath not a Jew hands,

"organs, dimensions,

"senses, affections, passions?"

"Fed with the same food? Hurt with the same weapons?

"Subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means?

"Warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is?"

"If you prick us, do we not bleed?

"If you tickle us, do we not laugh?

"If you poison us, do we not die?

"And if you wrong us...

"..shall we not revenge?"

"By my soul, I swear there is no power in the tongue of man to alter me. I
stay upon my bond."

"Most heartily I do beseech the court to give their judgement."

"Why, then, thus it is. You must prepare your bosom for his knife."

"No!"

"Yes!"

"Aye, his breast. So says the bond, doth it not, noble judge?"

"'Nearest his heart' - those are the very words."

Is it my line?

No, it's mine, but it's late.

We'll finish this tomorrow.
No, we started. Let's finish.
Tomorrow...
..and tomorrow...and tomorrow, creeps Charles E.
Hello?
Supper's in the oven.
I'm not hungry.
Do you know Shakespeare?
Know him?! I was his Ophelia at Radcliffe.
How does The Merchant of Venice end?
I don't know. Why?
Does the guy get his heart cut out?
Well, probably. Somebody dies.
Somebody always dies at the end of Shakespeare.
I thought you said you knew it.
I studied those plays years ago. Why's it so important?
It's not!
Is he doing drugs?
Hey, Norstadt! Forget the horse!
Let's see if the guy gets his heart cut out!
"Do you confess the bond?"
"I do."
"Then must the Jew be merciful."
"On what compulsion must I? Tell me that."
"The quality of mercy is not strained.
"It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath.
"It is twice blessed. It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.
"It is enthron-ed in the hearts of kings.
"It is an attribute to God himself,
"and earthly power doth then show likest God's
"when mercy seasons justice."
What did she say she wanted?
Um, cookies and rice.
They're over there.
Which one... Which type?
How many types are there?
I need suntan lotion. Hi, Chuck.
I'm sorry.
Sorry? For what?
Oh, nothing.
Sir?
Yeah?
Did you ever wonder...why men and women are attracted to each other?
It's called sex, Norstadt, and it's not on your exam.

I don't mean like that.

I mean, why is it so difficult?

Why can't they stay together, stay attracted?

You know I never did consider myself a source of advice for the lovelorn.

Why, weren't you married?

Yes, I was.

A long time ago.

Still, that hardly qualifies me for any reasonable answer to that question.

All right. Do you want the short answer or the long one?

Short, I guess.

Good.

The problem is one of water.

Water?

Water.

Women have about 5% more of it than men,

making them subject to different forces of gravity.

Don't take my word for it, you can look it up in Newton.

It's there.

Can they be drained?

I'm serious!

Well, I believe they're waiting for us to drink more fluids.

What now?

I was wondering if...

..you really...write pornography?

Is that the latest rumour?

Come here. I'll show you what I do for a living.

Here.

Tutoring doesn't pay what it used to.

Here's a few you might have seen.

- You did these?

- Yeah.

Wow. Yeah, I've seen this one.

Well, what do you know?

Well, we don't get a lot of live specimens at the castle, do we?

Come on, back to Caesar's Gaul.

How did it happen?

Was it in the war?

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have asked.

That's all right. Everyone does, sooner or later.

It was in a car crash.

- I'm sorry.

- So am I.

Not just for this, but...

There was a boy killed in that car crash and he burned to death.

Let's pick up the slack tomorrow, huh?
8.30, sharp.
Double sixes! Big Julie is dead!
He gets the hook, new King of the Mountain.
I won! I won!
Just don't forget, Norstadt, that on the exam Caesar wins, OK?
Wiseacre.
Do you want to be Romans or Gauls this time?
Sir?
It was a lousy thing to happen.
- What?
- Lots of people die in accidents.
It wasn't your fault.
Norstadt...
No, look.
Even if it was, it doesn't matter.
It doesn't matter to me.
Norstadt!
Hey, look who it is!
Who is it, bat boy?
Hey, Norstadt!
Hi, Chuck.
Come on, you're hoggin' it. Over here.
How's the scholar doin'?
How's your freaky friend?
He's all right... for a Hamburger-Head.
How d'you know?
I gave your sister a pink belly till she squealed like a pig!
Jerks.
Just don't tell anyone, all right?
Why not?
Just don't. Not till I take the exam.
You're gonna hate that army school.
I don't care. I just want out.
Do you know how he hurt his face?
Yeah, how'd the Hamburger get burnt?
Car crash.
He got burnt and a kid got killed.
The Freak killed a kid? No shit!
Listen, guys, don't say anything about McLeod. All right?
Who would we tell? My friends hate me and I don't know anybody else.
What? It's true.
Hello, Charles.
Would you come down here, please?

What's the matter, can't you hear me? I said come down here!
Who you been talkin' to, you little bastard?
Huh?
Who did you tell?
Come down here, I said! Or are you deaf as well as stupid?
Who's there? Who's that?!
Get down here! Or do I have to come up and get you?
It's three in the morning!
Who you been talkin' to, you little bastard?
Do you realise what you've done to me?!
Help yourself!
Morning, Chuck. What's happening, man?
- Charles...
- We have some big news.
Go ahead, tell him.
Your mom and I are going to be married.
Charles... Is there something you want to say?
You may be tall but you're stupid.
Gloria! You're practically naked!
So what? It's my house!
Heard the news?
I heard it yesterday.
Don't freak with delight(!) It might go to my head.
- Congratulations, Carl.
- Watch out, she bites.
- You bite!
- Butt out!
- Shut up, Gloria!
- Be quiet, and...
..Think happy thoughts.
Are we going to live with you in Connecticut?
Sure. Your mom and I are going looking for a new home, and you're coming with us.
You want to come along too, man?
What about me? I don't get a say in where we live?
Of course you do, come along, then.
- I can't, because I'm going to Dad's, remember? I told you, Mother!
- How convenient(!)
I can't go. I've got to study and take care of my cats!
Oh, Charles!
- I don't take milk.
- Oh, you don't take milk...
- Your cat brother has developed a fetish for my underwear!
- No accounting for taste!

I think we should put it to sleep.
I think we should put you to sleep.
You touch Mac and you're dead!
- What are you...
- I'm trying to eat!
Don't hit your sister!
What about his background?
That's enough, Gloria!
He started it!
That's enough!
It's OK, it's OK.
Morning.
Sorry to be late.
That's all right.
I wanted to talk to you, about what happened yesterday.
Seems I'm not so good with people anymore.
I've forgotten how to be with them, I guess. Can you understand that?
Doesn't matter.
Doesn't it?
Why should it?
So, can we start?
All right.
Your turn, Dougie.
B-E-D. Bed.
Six. Very good, Doug. Excellent.
Triple word score, double letter on the F. 48 points.
Have you heard the latest on the F-R-E-A-K?
Gloria, don't call him that.
Sorry. The reclusive deformed warpo.
He killed a kid when he got that face.
So Rob's mother said.
She thinks he's JFK...
Mom, I think you should know that...
Erm, who's winning?
Um...I think I am.
Charles, I can't send you to the Lansings' with a carton of beans.
What about this? You like this.
No, I like beans.
Sorry, Mrs Camlin.
Take your time. We always stay late on Thursdays for Mr McLeod.
Oh, that's nice of you.
Ah!
What?
I... I have to go to the bathroom.

Wait until we get home.
Mom, I have to pee so bad I'm gonna wiz out my ear!
Downstairs to the left.
Good evening.
It's almost ready, Mr McLeod.
Thank you.
Er...
There you are. That does it. Thank you.
Thank you.
Bye, honey.
Bye, Carl.
Call us when you get there!
Bye-bye!
Want a beer?
Yeah. Want a beer?
Yeah.
Quidem magistri discipulos tanta
cumata dulcebant ut ipsi discipulis.
Now...
Right. "Some teachers used to teach their pupils so well..."
With such great art.
Erm... .."that..."
This is Latin, not Swahili.
You had this a week ago. What's the matter with you?
Good afternoon.
Afternoon.
Good hunting?
Can't complain.
All right. Quidem magistri discipulos, tanta cumata...
What are you lookin' at?
I said what are you lookin' at?
Norstadt, come here!
Assholes!
Better bring it up, Norstadt, whatever it is.
I told how you got hurt, and how the kid died.
Now everybody knows.
And why did you do that?
It was... I got...
I... I was really angry.
You're a hard marker, aren't you?
People are either in or they're out. Strictly pass or fail.
I'm sorry. I betrayed you.
I stabbed you in the back, and I don't even know why.
Come on, we're not doin' Julius Caesar now.

What?

Et tu, Chuckus? It's all right, I'll live.

You mean you don't hate my guts?

No, I don't hate your guts. Come on.

Do you think I'm crazy?

One of those kids who offs himself and writes a letter blaming Ed Sullivan.

Why?

The shrinks at school thought I was twisted.

Probably because you're interesting.

Sometimes I blank out, and I feel bad...

I think about the past - my mother, my father. I don't really know how he died.

My parents split up when I was four.

The stuff about spy planes and pilots - I made it all up to impress you.

To make me tutor you.

Yeah.

You needn't worry, Norstadt, you're not crazy. You're shrewd.

People spend too much time thinking about the past.

Whatever else it is, it's gone.

You know, everybody else would be all over me with questions.

"What do you mean you're crazy? Is your brain hot?" You never do that.

- It's just habit. I like privacy.

- What about living alone? Do you like that?

- It likes me.

- What do you mean?

I've become a proper fairy-tale troll here, Norstadt.

Tourist Board ought to pay me.

You're not a troll.

I'm a troll.

That's my job, Norstadt. My part. You want this?

No, you keep it.

By the way, I'm setting you a practice exam tomorrow.

But I haven't studied!

"Then I'll make ya.

"You're soft.

"Won't anything make a man of you?

"For 14 years I've been scared but it's gonna be all right!"

Time's up.

Pens down, time's up. Come on, Norstadt. Come on!

Good.

- Can you mark it now?

- No, tonight. You're too excited.

I didn't get the third one because we didn't do reciprocal proportions.

- Go home, Norstadt.

- No!
Patience.
Thank you.
I'll try some of this tonight.
Good.
Say, Chuck, were you out hiking lately?
Er, no, not me.
Up north, Mr McLeod's place?
No, not me. I'm in a real hurry here.
I don't know.
Well?
Well?
Are you going to tell me?
Get in.
Tell me! Or do I have to kill you?
84 per cent.
84 per cent? No way, that is great! 84 per cent!
I'm a genius! I am a genius now!
I am one of the geniuses!
All right, it's only a practice exam. Get in.
I'm brilliant! I am a regular Einstein!
Norstadt!
OK, how come we're not studying if I'm so stupid?
Because it's carrot day.
Put your belt on.
Wow, look at the seaplane!
It's not a seaplane, it's a carrot.
You're kidding?
What are you waiting for? Take off. Go on.
Now you can tell him you've flown.
Think you can handle this yourself?
Really?
- Did you see us dive up there?
- Yes.
How fast do you think we're going? 100? 125?
'I don't know. About...
No. 165 miles an hour.
John says we get great wind. John says it's not like a passenger plane.
John flew a Starfighter once.
As a matter of fact, I did.
He flew a Starfighter.
Can you imagine the G-force on something like that?
And the instruments... You should have seen the dials on this.
On the jet, it had to be ten times as many, at least.

What, you thought it was Brigitte Bardot driving?

No.

No, I was just thinking, it's weird.

What?

I can't see your scars anymore.

I can hardly even tell they're there.

What about you?

It's different for me.

Yeah.

Did you ever try to have it fixed?

No. I thought about it, but it just never seemed right.

My sister wanted to know if maybe you'd be interested in our mother.

She could keep me in the attic. Can she cook?

Hello, no, but she's gorgeous.

You could save us from the hairball.

- He's number five?

- Yeah.

- He can't be that bad.

- What?!

I can wait for you if you like and then drop you off at the Lansings'.

It's OK. I've got to feed the cat.

All right.

Thanks a lot.

Hey, Mac, you hungry?

Sorry I'm late, buddy.

No, get down. Come on, come on.

I guess you were hungry.

What are you doin'?

Get out!

You heard her. Get out!

What a day!

What a perfect day!

- What a day...

- Doug, do something!

- Come here!

- Uh-uh.

Come here! You going to keep quiet?

Flintstone, you could kill me, and I'd die happy telling Mother.

You keep your mouth shut, you hear?

- You hear me?

- Forget it!

NO! MAC!

Bastard!

Let me go! He's hurt!

Calm down, kid, you're crazy!

His father was a psychotic maniac!

Shut up, you stupid cow!

- Gloria?

- He should know.

Your father was an abusive drunk who killed himself in a mental hospital.
And you will too.

Liar! I'm gonna smash your lyin' face!

You don't believe me? Bottom drawer of Mother's dresser.

Liar! You're dead!

You're going to be good? I'll let you up if you're good.

Don't listen to her, man, she's just tryin' to get you goin'.

BARKING:

MCLEOD!

MR MCLEOD, SIR!

Charles? What's the matter?

Charles? What's wrong?

Charles?

They were in bed... He hurt Mac... She said...

Take it easy. Go slow.

She said...

I don't have a father...cos he walked out on me to be a drunk.

To be a crazy fucking drunk!

He killed himself in a mental institution.

Here, sit down.

Morning, Mr McLeod.

Good morning, Chief...?

- Stark.

- Chief Stark.

- Can I come in?

- Oh, please. Come in.

- I'm looking for the Norstadt boy. Is he here?

- He is, yes.

- He is? Oh, that's a relief.

The Lansings are in quite a state. They had a family melodrama there.

He was very upset when he arrived. I'm sorry I don't have a telephone. I would have called.

- I hear you're tutoring Chuck.

- Yes, that's correct.

- Fine. Can I see him?

- He's asleep. I'll...

- Where would that be?

- Upstairs.

It's all right. I'll just take a peek, see if he's all right...

What's goin' on?

- It's time for you to go home, son.

- It's all right. Nothing to worry about.

- You've given a lot of people a fright.

- I don't wanna go. I'm staying here.

- Charles.

Your mother's worried. She's on her way back.

I don't care. I'm staying here!

- Why don't you get your clothes and let's go.

- No!

Charles... I want you to get dressed and go with Chief Stark.

What?

You have to. It'll be all right.

Why d'you lie to me the other day?

I don't know.

You like your teacher, don't you?

He's my best friend.

Charles...

I'm sorry.

I'm sorry.

Is that why you divorced him?

Cos he was psycho?

That was wicked of Gloria.

Charles, it was just wicked.

Your father wasn't...

Your father was a wonderful man.

But he had problems, and when he drank...

..we just couldn't handle it.

He hurt us, didn't he?

Oh, my poor boy.

My poor Chuck. Oh, what a time you've had.

Y'know, I always blamed you.

I know, baby, I know.

It's all right.

Charles, why didn't you tell me you were going to see Mr McLeod?

I wanted to, but I didn't think you'd let me go.

You're mad, aren't you?

No, Charles.

See, he's my tutor, but he's also my friend.

I can tell him anything.

Last night, did he... or at any other time...

..did he...touch you?

Yeah, sure.

How did he touch you?

Why are you asking me this? I told you he's my friend.

Just tell me.

Chief Stark told me something about your friend.

A boy was killed in a driving accident.

I know, he told me. So what?

He went to prison for three years.

The boy that was killed was a pupil of his.

He was in the car with McLeod and they were having...

He was abusing the boy, Charles. Do you understand what that means?

No.

No. You don't want me to love anyone else, so you hate him. You hate him.

Charles!

- Charles, please! Listen to me! I'm only trying to protect you!

- You're a liar! Leave me alone!

Get out of my sight!

Sorry.

Hello, Mrs Palin. My name is...

I know who you are. What do you want here?

I came to see Charles and I wanted to explain...

What you've been doing to my son?

I haven't done anything to your son.

What? You expect me to believe that?

How do they let people like you walk around?

You're being irrational. Let me...

What?! You want to see irrational? I'll show you irrational! Get out!

Get out!

Ah, Doctor.

Mrs Palin, this is Dr Talbot. He's come all the way from Bangor to see us.

Hello, Charles. Just call me Lionel.

John Wayne.

- And how do you feel about that?

- What do you mean?

Do you feel good about seeing John Wayne, or does it make you uneasy?

I don't know. Why do I have to feel anything?

You don't. But you don't want to keep things hidden that could hurt you.

There's no right or wrong answer here...OK, Chuck?

Let's try another.

- It's a very sensitive issue, Mr McLeod. The mother's concerned.

- Have you talked to Charles or not?

- Yes, we have.

- Then what do you need a meeting for? What did he say?

I can't discuss that. We just want a little meeting.

You mean a trial.

It's just an informal get-together to get the facts straight.

You don't even need a lawyer.

Mr McLeod, I would appreciate it if you didn't try to see the boy now.

Not till after the meeting.

I'd appreciate it.

I came here to get away from your meetings and...

Seven years I've lived here... alone in this house, and in peace.

Maybe it would have been best all around if that's the way things had stayed.

- You promised me!

- How can I possibly let you take that exam after everything that's happened?

Nothing's happened! Nothing! Why won't you believe me?

It's out of my hands. The authorities will decide if there's anything to decide.

Oh, my gosh, I cannot live here! I can't live here!

- There's perfectly good schools in Connecticut.

- I'll run! I will run!

OK, Charles. OK, Charles. Charles, I'll talk to Gloria.

It's not Gloria I can't live with.

I'm sorry.

Do whatever you want, all right?

Mr McLeod, I'm afraid we're getting too old to stay open so late.

You'll just have to come back at our regular hours. Sorry for your trouble.

Charles, would you please take this out to the car and give it to Carl?

Good luck in the exam.

Thanks.

Oh, oh. I got it.

Here. Careful, it's fragile.

I got it.

Put Gloria's in first. Mum's too. Put mine in last for easy access.

Mom!

Asshole!

MR MCLEOD!

MR MCLEOD!

I'm not allowed to talk to you, Norstadt. You have to go.

No! No!

- I want to know!

- You always want to know!

I want to know the truth!

About what? Life? Religion?

Why did you go to prison?

I was convicted of involuntary manslaughter. You can look it up.

Did you? The boy in the car, the boy that died. Did you molest him?

What do you think, Norstadt?

Stop playing the teacher. Tell me!

I think you've already made your mind up, haven't you?

Looks like I've fallen off that pedestal you put people on. Strictly pass or fail, isn't it?

I don't know what to think!

You're just lazy! I couldn't teach you a thing!

- Just tell me!

- Did I ever abuse you?

Did I ever lay a hand of anything but friendship on you? Think, Norstadt, reason.

Did I? Can you imagine me ever doing so?

Then what about the past? What do you see?

- Tell me you didn't. I'll believe you.

- No! No, sir!

I didn't spend all summer so you could cheat on this question.

I'm sorry.

I didn't know what to think. I'm sorry.

It's all right, Charles. It's not your fault.

You're a good student, Charles.

You're a very good student.

You better go.

Goodbye.

Sequari deum.

Gentlemen, we're ready.

Good luck.

You have five minutes left in section A. Five minutes.

Pencils down.

In section B, you will translate the passage from Cicero, on the value and nature of friendship.

Pencils ready.... Begin.

Mr McLeod, I'd like to introduce Miss Fletcher from Children's Aid, Dr Talbot, Judge Sinclair, Mr McDowell from the DA's office.

Is your legal counsel not with you?

- I was told that this was an informal meeting. Isn't that right?

- Oh, no, that's correct.

William, why don't you begin?

Why didn't you go to the mother and make sure that Charles had told her about the tutoring?

Because I...

- You've never taught, have you?

- Taught? No.

- You can't teach a thing without giving away your trust.

- I don't follow.

Let's say I was teaching you, as a lawyer, to be honest.
I couldn't trust you to tell the truth, then run round the courts to see whether you were lying.
Not unless I was absolutely sure that you were lying.
Perhaps you should tell us about Patrick Scott.
What would you like to know?
Whatever you feel is relevant?
Nothing.
Please, humour me.
Patrick was an outstanding student. He could have done anything.
He was also very troubled.
He was from a broken home, full of guilt and violent fantasies.
Not unlike the profile of Charles.
No, not unlike it. He too had a hard time with authority.
I was one of the few, if not the only one, that he connected with.
He developed a fixation with me that I didn't know how to deal with.
I was 26. I didn't know a thing.
When I did confront him with it, on the way back from Boston, I was too frank, too hard.
- He became enraged, tried to step from the vehicle into the highway.
- That's not what the jury found.
- You asked me what I knew of Patrick Scott, not what the jury thought it found.
- But you lost your job?
Yes, I lost my position.
Then why, ten years later, would you pick a strange boy as a pupil?
Second chance.
Charles needed my help. I guess I needed his too.
How would you define "needed"?
I'm a teacher, Dr Talbot. I make my living otherwise, but I'm a teacher.
Afraid I don't follow. You were expelled from the profession.
I'm not talking about a piece of paper.
I'm talking about a moment of grace.
A moment to prove that I could do it well and true.
And did you?
Yes. Charles is a good student.
You're very fond of him.
Yes, I'm very fond of him.
- As fond of you were of Patrick Scott?
- No, much closer. Is that my crime?
- Is that what I'm accused of?
- We're simply interested in finding out the truth.
- I wish you were!
- I beg your pardon?

You're interested in the appearance of the truth.

You haven't the slightest comprehension what bond of friendship I have with Charles.

- Perhaps you could enlighten us?

- I don't think I can.

The tragedy of that is, I don't know why I can't.

Is it this? Is this what you see?

I assure you, it is human.

If that's all you see, then you don't see me. You can't see me.

- Perhaps we all need a short recess.

- When you charge me, what will happen to Charles?

Mr McLeod, no-one has....

Will he have to testify?

This panel....

Will he be examined, probed?

That's enough!

Obviously the boy will be involved. That goes without saying.

Your implication that this is some sort of violation is offensive in the extreme! Do I make myself clear?

I apologise.

And I will cooperate with any course you feel necessary to resolve the problem with fairness, discretion.

Thank you.

Walker...

Yes, sir?

I think it's from your mother.

Mr Smith-Baker.

Sir.

Mr Gablon.

Thank you, sir.

Mr Norstadt.

Check the address on that.

Mr Libby.

Hop in!

'Hello, Norstadt. I'm sorry, but I'm not allowed to see you.

'I'm not allowed to talk to you, I'm not allowed to write this letter.

'These are my concessions and their conditions...

'..or, what I hope any good teacher would call "a lesson in the tender mercies of injustice".

'But, strangely, this is nothing to grieve over...

'..because you know the truth, and I now know that you can outgrow a part, even a sad one.

'You taught me that.

'You gave me what I never expected to find again - a gift of your trust and

love.

'And nothing can take that grace away.

'The best is yet to be, Norstadt, so do it well.

'I remain, as ever, your tutor, Justin McLeod.'

..Those who persevere in faith.

Once again,

congratulations on achieving the goals set out before you four years ago.

Class of 1972...dismiss!

'Everything was perfect.'

Charles!

- Darling, I am so proud of you.

- Thank you, Mother.

Charles, your mother and I are pleased.

Thank you, sir.

We'll see you at dinner, honey!

See you at eight!

I'll see you guys later.

'But there's always a face before me now...

..somewhere beyond the edge of the crowd.'