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Men of Boys Town

By James Kevin McGuinness

All right, fellows.
There'll be no more classes today.
Quiet down! Not so fast.
You've all got to be back here in an hour.
Now I want the band in their uniforms
and everybody cleaned up.
We're going to welcome home
Dave Morris.
Now I don't have to tell you older boys
who Dave Morris is.
But the new citizens ought to know that...
he's the best friend Boys Town has,
next to Father Flanagan.
And I don't have to tell any of you
who Father Flanagan is, I hope.
And I guess there's no doubt
that I'm the mayor around here?
So that's the orders now, fellows.
Everybody back here in an hour.
Give out with everything you've got...
when Dave Morris drives up
with Father Flanagan.
Make it sound like we just beat
Notre Dame at football.
- We'll shout our lungs out.
- All right, buddy.
- You bet your life.
- All right. Dismissed!
- Hello, Father.
- Good morning, Roger.
- Good morning.
- Good morning, Bradford.
I'm sorry, Father.
This letter requires your attention.
From the contractor,
about his last payment.
Well, it looks like today is my day.
Due on the day
the interior plastering is finished, huh?
The amount is \$200,000.
\$200... That much?
The \$300,000 we underwrote originally
would have been enough...
if there hadn't been

those few little improvements.
Well, we need those two new wings,
you know. There are so many boys.
And, of course, that extra dormitory.
Don't overlook that extra dormitory.
We may be cramped even with that.
Well, I'm afraid we've gone
as far as we can.
After all, the bank's money belongs
to the depositors. It's not ours.
Excuse me, gentlemen.
Father, you're gonna be late for the train
if you don't hurry.
I made out a new basketball
schedule for you to look over, too.
There it is. But after you get back.
That can wait. You're late now.
The car's waiting outside.
Whitey, you're the most tyrannical mayor
that Boys Town has ever had.
You see, gentlemen,
I'm absolutely helpless.
Honest, Father. You're gonna miss
Mr. Morris if you don't hurry.
What do you suggest Burton write
to the contractor?
I'll take the finances up with Dave.
After all, that's his department.
Goodbye, gentlemen.
It'll be nice to have Dave home again.
A year is too long to be
without a friend like he is.
Yes, Father, but he needed the rest.
It's been a long time
since you've had a vacation yourself.
Whitey, my whole life is a vacation.
Father, you didn't write Mr. Morris
about the new buildings, did you?
No, I didn't, Whitey, I...
I thought I'd let Dave see
what the new buildings looked like first.
- You know, sort of surprise him.
- He'll be surprised, all right.
Yes.

- Hey, Dave!
- Eddie!
- I'm glad to see you.
- Hello, Mr. Morris.
- Hello, Whitey.
- Well, you're back at last, Dave.
I've missed you. We've all missed you.
If you don't think it took all
my willpower to stay away for a year.
I wanted to start home
after the first week.
And we wanted you to.
Eddie, you didn't write me
about Boys Town.
I've been anxious about the place.
What goes on out there?
Everything's the same.
No great change, Dave.
We're glad to see you back, Mr. Morris.
Every one of us.
That goes double in spades for me.
Well, what about Boys Town?
Well, the boys are waiting.
They want to give you a little reception.
- It's beautiful.
- Thanks, Dave.
Eddie, what about Boys Town?
What's happened there?
It's been a very quiet year, Dave.
No year is quiet where you are.
And I've been away, you know.
How well I know.
But I haven't been away long enough
to forget how you work.
And when you start stalling...
Tell me, Eddie,
what trouble have you got into?
Eddie, I know you've done something.
And when you do something
it always means money.
What have you really been doing?
Anything new about the place?
Well, we've made a few little
improvements here and there.

Those shrubs, for example.
Some new trees and some other items.
You know, a few little improvements
here and there.
Well, shrubs are all right
and trees are all right.
But those other items,
those few little improvements...
could you give me an idea?
- Well, Dave, here we are.
- Yes, here we are.
Thanks, boys.
It's good to be home again.
And it's very good
to get a welcome like this...
which I know comes from your hearts.
Put it up, Pee Wee. Put it up.
Well, I'm glad to see
that during the year I've been away...
Boys Town hasn't stood still.
Seem to have made a few little
improvements here and there.
Yeah, a few little improvements.
How was South America?
Magnificent, I hear.
Some of the most beautiful buildings
in the world, I understand.
Well, I didn't see any buildings down there
to compare with the new ones up here.
Eddie, I've got to take my hat off to you.
I've got some excellent cigars here.
Someone sent them to me, and I've been
saving them especially for you.
They're the finest Havanas.
- Those new buildings are honeys.
- Yes.
When we get them opened up
there'll be room for twice as many boys.
More boys waiting
than we'll have room for even at that.
I never thought you could do it
without me, Eddie.
Those new buildings must cost
half a million, if they cost a cent.

You've got a great eye for figures.
You hit the nail right on the head.
Well, how did you get all the money?
Is it true that there's a difference in the
quality of cigars as you smokers say?
- Or is that...
- You didn't get the money.
Eddie, look me in the eye.
Are those buildings paid for?
Now, Dave, don't make
a mountain out of a molehill.
After all, it's only \$200,000.
We borrowed the other \$300,000.
\$300,000 you borrowed!
Well, with you, when it's borrowed,
it's nothing.
It's no worry. It's paid back already.
So there's \$200,000 you
haven't even got a smell of borrowing.
Eddie, that's no mountain, that's the
whole Rockies and the Alleghenies...
thrown in.
Now, Dave, more boys need this place.
Boys need! Who doesn't need?
If there's any place in this world,
where people don't need...
tell me where it is, and I'll go there.
I can't turn them away, Dave. If you
could see their poor, pinched faces...
and their shivering bodies.
Every day they come, every night.
Well, I'm not in on this.
That's \$200,000 somebody else
can start looking for.
Not me, not Dave Morris. So help me.
It isn't looking for the money
that bothers you.
It's the fact that you can't give it yourself,
that's what makes you angry.
I wouldn't give a penny, not a red cent.
Do you think money grows on trees?
Sometimes the way you manage to get it,
I think it does.
Now listen, Eddie.

Don't try any of your schmooze on me.

Hello? Where?

All right, put him on.

Yes, Judge?

Well, if it's about taking a boy in here,
I couldn't do that, Judge.

Not until the new buildings are opened.

I haven't got room for a canary right now.

Well, if I could be any help.

All right, I'll leave on the night train.

You're welcome. Bye.

That wouldn't be a couple of \$100,000
somebody wants to give you, would it?

A poor boy accused of manslaughter
up in Marysport.

Manslaughter! I'm surprised

I'm not accused of murder.

\$200,000.

Now, Dave, you'll have plenty of time
to think that over while I'm away.

Somebody else should think, Eddie,
not me. Include me out.

There aren't enough troubles
around here...

you've got to go a 1,000 miles
to find more.

The Judge thinks maybe I can help.

Hey, what are you doing? Get out of there.

- I ain't doing nothing.

- I know it. But you can't hang around here.

- I thought this place is for homeless kids.

- It is, but it's jam-pack full.

What about all them buildings?

As soon as they're open, there'll be room.

Look, there's kids come around here
all the time. Dozens every night.

But we just can't take care of them yet.

It's tough luck, that's all.

- What right you got to kick us out?

- I'm the mayor of Boys Town.

Mayor or no mayor,

we want to see Father Flanagan.

- You can't.

- Why not? He's the headman. Ain't he?

I'll get you some grub, that's all I can do.
But if you talk to him,
he's liable to give up his own bed to you.
Wait a minute, boys.
Whitey, that's a good idea of yours.
Have the housekeeper put the boys
in my room till I get back.
And give them my supper, too.
No sense in wasting food.
- Thanks, Father.
- Thanks a lot.
This way, fellows.
Whitey, introduce them
to the washroom, too.
Now I'm sure I'm home.
Never a dull moment.
Got any money for your railroad fare?
- Good thing you reminded me.
- Yeah.
- Here.
- Thanks, Dave.
I'll stop by the bank in the morning
and have a talk with Gorton.
- Maybe we can do something.
- I'm sure you'll do whatever you can.
I go away a year for a rest.
In one hour I'm back with you and already
I've got another nervous breakdown.
Has the jury reached a verdict?
We have.
The jury will rise
and look upon the accused.
The defendant will...
The defendant will face the jury.
In the case of the
People v. Theodore Martley...
how says the jury, guilty or not guilty?
Guilty of murder in the second degree,
Your Honor.
And if it please Your Honor, the jury
earnestly recommends mercy.
The court will take
your recommendation into account.
I realize that the members of the jury

have performed a highly distasteful duty...
as good and earnest citizens.
Because of the onerous nature
of your service...
I will release you from further jury duty.
If there is any reason at this time why
a sentence should not be pronounced...
Ted, there must be something you can say
that will help me.
There must be some reason why
you killed that guard at the reformatory.
Tell me why you did it.
Ted, can't you see that the court
is trying to help you?
I hate to think you committed this crime
without some reason.
Theodore Martley, you've been found
guilty of murder in the second degree.
According to the laws of this state,
I have no alternative...
but to sentence you
to imprisonment in the penitentiary...
for a term of not less than 10 years.
No more than 20 years.
But I will suspend execution of sentence...
pending consultation with
Father Flanagan and Mrs. Maitland...
Chairman of the State Parole Board.
Court will recess.
Ted, I want to be your friend.
I've come here to help you.
I've come over a 1,000 miles
just to see you.
Then go on back there!
I will after you talk to me, not before.
You know, there are other boys who are
waiting for me to come back to them.
I'm neglecting my job to be here with you.
And I'm going right on neglecting it
until you let me help you.
I don't want your help!
I don't want anybody's help!
Well, I can wait just as long as you can.
But you're going to let me help you.

Don't be afraid, boy.
You know, Ted, you've got beautiful eyes.
Why don't you look up
and let the world see how nice they are?
What good is helping me now?
Why didn't somebody help me when that
drunken guard broke my back...
with a two-by-four?
Why didn't somebody help me
when he beat me so I couldn't walk?
Why didn't somebody help me
when that doctor cut me up?
And now, I can't move my legs at all!
Why didn't somebody help me then?
So that's why you shot the guard?
He beat you, broke your back?
Sure. That's why! And I'd kill him again.
Do you hear that? Any time.
- I'd kill him again.
- No, you wouldn't, Ted.
What you've done,
no matter what the provocation...
will rest heavily upon you
for a long time to come.
I'm going to tell the Judge about this.
He should know.
I didn't tell you anything!
I didn't say anything.
What are you afraid of?
I didn't tell you anything, you hear me?
You can't say I did because I didn't!
It'd only get those other kids
at the reform school in trouble...
- with the guards.
- I see.
Ted, how would you like to go to a place
where there are no guards? No walls?
There isn't any such place.
You said you wanted to help me.
Well, if you do, prove it.
Promise me you won't say anything.
I won't say a word to anybody
until you tell me I may.
That's the boy, Ted. Have a good cry.

That's the first step back.
I'm not crying.
I'm just tired, that's all.
Just tired.
Sure. Sure you are.
Take Ted into the anteroom.
I thought he was as hard as granite.
No boy is.
I hate to shift the natural burdens
of society to you, Father.
But you can see what I'm up against.
I can either parole him in your custody,
or send him to state's prison.
Maybe this is a judgment.
The only empty bed in Boys Town
is in the infirmary.
Where are the guards?
I told you, Ted, there were
no guards here and no walls.
Any boy is free to leave here
any time he wants to.
How would I leave? Roller skate?
Well, you might roller skate sometime
if a really fine doctor looked you over.
Doctors! I won't have any part of them.
All they do is cut you up and hurt you.
They never do you any good.
I knew you had some racket
getting me here. Them doctors again.
Well, you can have them, all the doctors!
Don't you worry, Ted. You'll never see
a doctor unless you want to.
You sent for us, Father?
- Yes.
- Hello, Mr. Morris.
Hello, Whitey, Pee Wee.
Hello, Mr. Morris.
Pee Wee, were you a good boy
while I was away?
- Yes, Father.
- Okay, go.
You're cold, Pee Wee.
Whitey, if you had something
to work out, you couldn't quite do it...

but you had a good friend,
what would you do?
Why, I'd ask my friend to help me.
Getting warm now, Pee Wee.
- Well, I know that you're my friend.
- You bet I am.
You're hot now, Pee Wee.
You're getting very hot.
Whitey, I've got a problem.
I want you to help me.
The boy that came here in the ambulance?
Yes.
Oh, you're hot now.
You're hot as a firecracker.
You're burning up.
Well, go on. Take a piece for every day
you were a good boy.
That makes six pieces, doesn't it?
Whitey...
what you do for this boy may determine...
whether he's going to be a cripple
for the rest of his life, or not.
He's had terrible things done to him.
He has no faith in anybody
and I don't blame him.
That's tough.
He won't laugh, he won't smile.
That's where you come in.
Anything you want, Father,
but what do you think I can do?
Help make him believe in people again.
Try to get him to smile.
If you can get him to smile,
maybe I can do him some good.
If that's the job, I'll get the gang together
and we'll make him smile, all right.
It's not gonna be an easy job.
Father, we'll have him laughing
out loud in no time.
- Just a smile will be all right.
- All right. Goodbye, Father.
- Goodbye, Mr. Morris.
- Goodbye, Whitey.
Pee Wee!

How many days was I away?

Pee Wee.

Hold out your hands.

Thank you!

- Eddie, you really think Whitey can help?

- I hope so.

At least he may make Ted feel
that he's part of a community.

That he belongs with other boys.

And it won't hurt Whitey any to realize
he's doing a little job of reclamation.

Doing some good for somebody else
will help build his character.

- Ted's a tough problem.

- I'm not worried.

There's no problem you can't solve,
except financial.

Yeah, I know.

The real problem is the reform school
like the one at Marysport.

That place neither reforms nor schools.

It maims and destroys.

Look at that boy, Ted.

His idea of society is that it's a monster
which lashes boys with a whip.

Beats them into submission.

He's a terrible example
of places like Marysport.

And those places have got to be
cleaned out.

If there were 250 Boys Towns...

I don't mean Catholic Boys Towns,
or Jewish Boys Towns...

or Protestant Boys Towns,
just places run by men of good will.

We could stop that factory-made
output of criminals...

and make good, useful,
self-respecting citizens instead.

Two hundred and fifty Boys Towns
he wants. Listen to him.

Outside are five new buildings,
not even all finished yet.

\$200,000 we need

before we can open them up.
Right here we have enough worries
to take 10 years off your life and mine.
And 250 Boys Towns you want.
Youth is the greatest natural resource
of the country.
Whatever it costs to preserve it,
it's worth it.
Eddie, Boys Town was Boys Town
when it was only a shack.
It isn't buildings makes a place like this.
It's a man.
You show me 250 Father Flanagans
and I'll get you 250 Boys Towns.
Don't forget, the grand prize
for the winner is \$5,000.
Wouldn't you like to have a check
for \$5,000?
Of course you would. Well, it's simple.
All you've got to do is write
the best letter of 50 words telling why...
Gossamer Soapies are kindest
to your dainty undies...
and win \$5,000.
This ought to win the contest, all right.
- Are you going into the contest, too?
- Sure.
This is the best job of typography
of any school paper in the state.
- We're a cinch to win this year's award.
- Oh, that contest!
I'm going to win \$5,000 in a radio contest.
You are? And what are you
going to do with all that coin?
I thought we could give it
to Father Flanagan.
And he could maybe
buy something to help Ted with.
You know... like something.
Yeah, I guess something
would help at that.
Would you set my letter up
on the Linotype? Would you?
- It'll look better that way.

- You let me hear it first, huh?
"Dear Gossamer Soapies,
in reply to yours of even date"...
Wait a minute. Where'd you learn that?
I saw it on a letter
in Father Flanagan's office.
You did? Was the letter addressed to you?
No, to Father Flanagan.
Well, go ahead.
"Would state as follows:
"My dainty undies always itched
and scratched when worn...
"and especially the long woolly ones
in winter.
"Since washing them
in Gossamer Soapies...
"they don't itch me at all. Only
when I run around a lot and get sweaty. "
Do you think maybe I'd better say
"Perspirey"? It's more elegant-like.
I'll make it "perspirey,"
if you can spell it.
Better leave it "sweaty. "
Go put it on the Linotype.
- Hello, Whitey.
- Look, everybody, sit down.
We're going to have
an informal council meeting.
No parliamentary procedures.
And look, Slim, no yelling this time.
I can't. I got a cold.
I've been waiting for you guys
to pop up with a suggestion...
about going to work on Ted Martley,
and not a peep.
Now, I'm giving you one more chance...
before I take the whole situation
into my own hands.
Well, who's got an idea?
- Yes, Pee Wee?
- What about a broadcast?
I fixed him a radio extension, and he
won't even laugh at Charlie McCarthy.
Yes, Pee Wee?

I mean, we can make up a fake broadcast,
you know, and you be the announcement.

- I think Pee Wee's got something there.

- He has at that.

- You bet he has.

- That's it, Pee Wee.

You're a genius!

Mo.

Our last hope is to do the slow motion
rassling match, so, we'll get ready.

- Frank.

- All right.

Ladies and gentlemen,
this is the main event of the evening.
A wrestling match for the
catchweight championship of the ashcan.

In this corner, the Maston Mopper!

Weighing two tons, four ounces!

Introducing at this time, the titleholder:

The Mosquito Menace!

Weighing four ounces, two tons!

All right, boys, right here. Now, look!

I want no fair wrestling in this match.

Biting, butting, gouging, everything goes.

And may the worst man win.

All right, boys, go to your corners
and come out fainting.

Say, who do you think you are, anyway?

Don't you realize we went
to all that trouble for you...

- rehearsing and everything?

- Nobody asked you to.

I know, but you didn't even give us
a tumble, not even a snicker.

And some of the stuff
was pretty good, too.

Now you sent all of them out of here
down at the mouth.

As far as I'm concerned,
you're all washed up with me.

And if you never laugh, it'll be too soon.

- Big car.

- Yeah.

It ain't so hot. I seen better.

Be swell to take Ted out
driving in that bus.
Stay where you are, Brian Boru.
Don't you go looking for any lions
to fight while we're away.
Mr. and Mrs. Maitland
to see Father Flanagan.
All right.
Nice pup. Good dog.
Say, you're a swell guy, doggie.
You've got plenty of what it takes.
You'd make friends with anybody.
That tickles!
Say, it might work at that.
Come on, we'll try it.
Gee, he sure likes you.
- You think he does?
- Sure.
- You like him?
- Yeah. He's friendly.
Like to have him?
- Could I?
- He's yours.
Really mine?
Thanks!
Why, you, you're...
Nice pup.
- He likes you.
- I like him.
- I like you, too.
- Whitey's a good guy.
You got to like him, too.
- He bawled me out the other night.
- He's my pal.
Do you think he'd be my pal, too?
Sure he will. I'll lend him to you.
- He smiled, Father! He smiled.
- Ted.
Sure he smiled, and he talked to me, too.
He said, "Thanks. "
It's Ted Martley.
You'll have to excuse me.
I guess we're on our way at last.
- Pee Wee's a great lad, isn't he?

- Yeah, swell.

How about Whitey?

How do you get along with him?

He gave me this pup.

- Looks like a great pup.

- He is. Ain't you, fella?

Ted, I'd like to make a little deal with you.

You've been manhandled by a lot of people
who didn't know their business.

I'd like to have you looked over
by two of the best doctors in the country.

No. No doctors!

I see you're interested in football.

- Yeah.

- Do you know Trem Fellows?

Yeah, I know him. He was all-American.

Played for Nebraska.

Read all about him in a magazine.

He was great.

Yeah.

Just as great a surgeon
as he was a football player, too.

- Then that makes him tops, huh?

- He's tops, all right, Ted.

Yeah...

but I guess he costs a lot of money
and I haven't any.

I think maybe that could be handled.

Now, Ted, I want you to be
the boss of this thing.

Just let Trem Fellows look you over.

Talk to him.

He'll tell you
whether he can help you or not.

And send for me,
and I'll abide by your decision.

I won't try to force you
one way or the other.

Whatever you say goes.

What do you say, Ted?

Bring on Trem Fellows.

We'd better leave them alone.

I'm beginning to believe in miracles.

Father Ed can pull any kind of a miracle

out of an old boot.

Except if it has to do
with meeting a contractor's bill.

- And that, I suppose, is your department.

- Strictly.

Well, we contributed to this one.

You did, or you will?

We did. At least, it's our dog
the boy's playing with.

I wonder how the pup got up here.

I took him. Excuse me.

I didn't know he was anybody's
and then I thought of Ted and...

so that's how it was. I didn't really mean
to keep him for good or for keeps.

- I see.

- And then Ted asked me for him...
and I told him, yes, he could keep him.

And I...

- Look Mr...

- Maitland.

Mr. Maitland, I can't ask Ted
to give him back now.

It's the only thing
that ever made him smile.

That's an awful funny-looking dog.

I'll pay you for the dog.

I've got about \$4 saved up...

and I make a little

doing extra printing jobs around...

and I'll send it to you, every cent,
if you'll only let me buy him, please.

- What is he worth?

- That pup?

About \$100, I guess.

A hundred dollars?

He's worth a lot more than that
to you though, isn't he, dear?

Not as much as he's worth to Ted.

We'll call the deal then,

just as it stands now, even-steven.

You mean he can keep him for nothing?

I'd like to see somebody

try to take him away.

Thank you, sir. And thank you.
I mean, isn't that swell of them. Yeah.
I gave him a tough moment there
about the \$100.
- But he stood up to it well.
- Very well.
You know, dear...
he's about the same age
our boy would have been.
Yes, about the age.
Whitey's a fine boy.
Of course, Whitey could never take
the place of your own son, no boy could.
He's an individual with his own character,
a very well-defined character.
He's a manly boy,
and if he can learn to love us...
we're both only too ready to love him.
It will make room here for one more boy.
I understand from Mr. Morris
that you need room badly.
If Whitey weren't the mayor
of Boys Town...
People have to get over giving up
lots of things.
He edits the school paper, too, you know.
I'm sure you've taught some other boy
here how to write English, Father.
And he's a great quarterback.
He's the best we've had here in years.
They play football up our way, too.
We've tried to do
what we could for people...
and there's a satisfaction in knowing
that we have accomplished something.
There's so much of a case history
about them.
And I'm selfish enough
to want something warmer...
something closer to me.
Of course, the final decision rests
with the boy himself.
Naturally.
- Yes, Father?

- Send Whitey Marsh in right away.

Yes, Father.

Of course, the boy will have to readjust himself to...

a wholly new environment and...

that's something that he couldn't do in a minute.

Who could?

I think it would be fairer to you and to him...

if we fixed a sort of trial period... of about three months.

That seems very fair to everyone.

There's something else

I think I ought to tell you.

And that's about Whitey's older brother.

He was in trouble all of his life.

As a matter of fact,

he was sent to the electric chair.

You think a lot of that boy, Father.

Yes, I do.

Yes. You're painting so black a picture

I suspect you of wanting to hold onto him.

- Whitey is...

- Anything wrong, Father?

No, Whitey.

How long have you been here now, Whitey?

Three years. You know that, Father.

I suppose sometimes you've thought of the day when you'd leave Boys Town?

After I graduate, sure.

Yes, others have gone before you, others will go after you.

What do you mean, Father?

There comes a...

I guess you'd better tell him.

Whitey, my husband and I had a boy... about your age.

- We lost him two years ago.

- I'm very sorry.

We're very lonesome without him...

and we have many advantages to offer

a boy who could take his place with us.

Yes, ma'am. I see.

You remind us very much of him.

About the same age. And Father Flanagan tells me you're very interested in radio.

Yes. I've had the radio bug for a long time now.

There's a set up over the garage of our home. It can get anything.

If there are any more gadgets you want, we'll get them.

We want you to come home with us, Whitey. Will you?

- And leave Boys Town?

- Yes.

- For good?

- We hope so, Whitey.

- It's up to Father Flanagan, isn't it?

- No.

No, I think that's up to you, Whitey.

You always told me

what to do before, Father.

About important things, I mean.

I think this is too important.

I think this decision rests with you.

What do you feel?

What do you think I should do about it?

Do you want me to leave here?

Whitey, it isn't a question of what I want you to do.

It's what's best for you.

I thought I was doing pretty good here.

You are doing good. Splendidly, Whitey.

You're the best helper I ever had.

About six months I'd graduate.

You can carry on your studies in another school.

Another school?

Different fellas, everything.

You'll never have any trouble

making friends now, Whitey, ever.

If you don't like it with us after a fair trial, you can come back here.

Is that the way you want it, Father?

Yes, Whitey, I do. I think that's best.

I'll be ready tomorrow.

- You found a name for him yet?

- Yeah.

- I call him Bohunk.

- Bohunk. That's pretty good.

Where you going to?

It's a place about a 1,000 miles
away from here.

- Marysport.

- Yeah.

I know. I was there.

Sorry, Ted.

- Say, could you do me a favor?

- You know I would.

I got a pal in the Reform School up there,
Miles Fenely.

- Would you go up and see him?

- Sure I will.

He can have visitors
if he hasn't lost privileges.

- What was the name again?

- Miles Fenely.

- F-A-N?

- F-E-N-E-L-Y.

Gee, I sure wish we could get him up here.

I'll look him over

and then I'll write Father Flanagan.

That's great.

- Now take good care of yourself, Ted.

- Sure.

You too, Whitey.

Bohunk.

Tell the new editor, I guess it'll be Mo,
to put this in the next issue of the paper.

It's my farewell to the gang.

I'll take care of it.

There's no nonsense in it

or any of that softie stuff.

I don't go for none of that crying

or any of that.

Me, neither.

I'll write you when I feel like it, see?

Just when I feel like it.

Me, too.

Writing letters is a pain in the neck.

- Yeah, I got a big set where I'm going.

- Yeah.

Now I know why I worked on you
to get your license...

- so you can keep this heap going.

- Sure.

I'll call you at 6:00

every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday...

- just so you won't get stale.

- Yeah, I know.

- You'll listen for me?

- I'll be on.

It's not like I wasn't going to have
a swell time.

Gee, I wish they wanted me, too.

When you're old enough to get adopted,
I'll be rich enough to adopt you.

You'll remember that?

When I'm old enough

and you're rich enough...

- you'll remember, Whitey?

- I'll remember.

- Honest, I will.

- Whitey.

I'll give some thought to your problem
when I get home, Mr. Morris.

I hope you can see your way clear
to help us.

Good day, Mr. Morris.

A pleasant trip

to you and to Mrs. Maitland.

Thank you.

You won't forget about us, Whitey?

No, I won't, Father.

I'll try to be a credit to you
and Boys Town.

The Maitlands are fine people, Whitey.

Think of them as the mother and father
from whom you've been separated...

and have just found again.

Yes, Father.

Good luck, Whitey.

Bye, Mo.

You better be a good mayor
if they elect you...
or I'll come around and beat your ears off.
I've got to be elected first.
Hop in. My arm's getting cramps.
Okay, tough guy.
You can't hold onto them forever, Eddie.
Say, wouldn't you like to sit this one out
and get a cold drink or something?
I'd adore it.
- Will you finish this one with me, Agnes?
- I'd adore it.
No, that's all right, go right ahead.
- You don't mind? You're sure?
- No. Not at all.
I've been much too busy all my life
to pay much attention to dancing, anyway.
- You know, more important things to do.
- Thanks, bud.
- Who's that homely-looking girl out there?
- That's my sister.
- She's a swell dancer.
- Yeah.
Look.
- Excuse me, dear.
- Of course.
Isn't it about time you danced
your duty dance with me?
- Yes, ma'am.
- "Mother. "
Mother.
- Never hit a golf ball in your life, Whitey?
- No, sir.
At Boys Town, we always kind of thought
this was sort of a sissy game.
- Sissy game?
- That is, you played it when you got older.
As the old Scotsman said, Whitey,
"Golf is a humbling game. "
All right. Go ahead.
You take a sock at one.
You'll find out what a softie game it is.
Yes, sir.
Here it is.

- I missed it.
- Yeah.
- Just put it on my bill.
- Okay, Mr. Maitland.
Sissy game? Try another.
As the old Scotchman said,
"Golf is a humbling game. "
I think I'll just walk around with you.
- Any news yet, Father?
- What did the doctors say, Father?
- Can they do anything for Ted?
- Can they fix him up?
Is he gonna be all right?
Doctors are with Ted now.
We'll know as soon as they finish
their examination.
- How about a little game of handball, Mo?
- Okay.
- How many points will you give me?
- Eleven.
- Twelve and I serve.
- Twelve and you serve.
Here we go.
Ready?
- Ready.
- Okay.
Service.
Your serve.
I got him, Pee Wee.
Service.
I don't know how Father Ed stands it.
Night and day, a few hours for sleep,
that's all the free time he has.
Me, I wouldn't work that hard to make
a million a year, net, clear of taxes.
I've got to get in my two golf games
a week, or no go.
But all work and no play
seems to be Father Flanagan's routine.
Service.
You're right, Dave, I don't see
how he stands up under this drudgery.
Eddie.
I'm sorry, Mo. We'll finish it later.

I'm not sorry,
I wouldn't have made a point.
- Pee Wee, come on. You want to play?
- Sure.
I'll spot you 15 points.
And probably beat you.
I serve.
- Roger, how are you?
- Splendid, thanks.
You're looking well.
Nothing like regular exercise
for keeping a man fit, Father?
- It doesn't hurt the boys, either.
- You must be right.
I haven't seen one of them
without a big smile on his face.
If they weren't smiling,
our work would be a failure.
There's Dr. Fellows. I want to see him.
Father, I believe we can help him.
It will require a very delicate operation.
In fact, two operations in one.
I doubt if any man in America can do it
as well as Trem Fellows.
No advertising, Doctor.
There'll be some tragically painful weeks
for the boy...
but the usefulness of his leg
can be restored.
I'll be on hand for the surgery, Father...
but the boy himself
will have to supply the faith.
You're going to fix up the boy with
the broken back so he can walk again?
I think so, if he'll help us.
Well, I sincerely hope so.
And, Dave, you're still going to raise
the \$200,000...
to meet the contractor's payment?
- Leave that to me.
- Gladly.
Two miracles at the same time?
Well, I'll be very interested
in seeing them done. Very.

Let's hope the day of miracles
hasn't passed. Excuse me, gentlemen.
Sister.

Ted?

- How'd you like Dr. Fellows, Ted?

- He's swell.

Do you know what he told me?

He told me he was always scared
before a football game.

You don't believe that, do you?

I don't think Dr. Fellows would lie to you.

Do you, Ted?

Well, I guess not.

But he looks to me
like he wasn't scared of anything.

Well, it's being afraid of something
and then going right ahead...

and doing what you're supposed to do
even though you are afraid...

that's what makes
a really brave man, Ted.

Yeah. I see.

Like being hurt a lot and still...

What did Dr. Fellows tell you, Ted?

He said it would hurt a long time...

worse than having your arm broken
in a football game.

But he said he could fix me up
so I could walk...

if I wanted him to.

It must be great to be able to do things
like that for people.

Do you think maybe it'd be a good idea
now for Bohunk to go out for a little walk?

Yeah. Pee Wee ought to be coming
along after him pretty soon now.

I think maybe Pee Wee might be a little
late today. Do you mind if I take him out?

No, I'd like you to.

Come on, Bohunk.

Here, Bohunk.

Come on, Bohunk.

He doesn't like to go out with anybody.

Pee Wee has to carry him sometimes.

I guess I'll have to get well...
so I can take him out for a walk.
Shall I tell Dr. Fellows that, Ted?
Tell him I'm scared, too...
but I ain't that scared.
He'll be proud of you.
But you'll be here when they do it,
won't you, Father?
You promise me that, don't you?
You'll be right alongside me, won't you?
I'll be right here, Ted.
Go on, Bohunk.
Go out with Father Flanagan.
W7BDF calling W9YDK.
- Come in.
- I was waiting, Whitey. How are you?
Couldn't be better.
Say, how's Ted coming along?
- They're going to operate soon.
- They are?
Pee Wee, you be sure and call me...
the minute you find out
how everything comes out.
Sure. I will.
Ted told me to ask you if you saw
his pal yet. Miles Fenely, he says.
Tell him I was over there twice,
but they wouldn't let me in.
Tell Ted that I'm going to drive over there
again tomorrow...
and this time I'll get in all right.
Drive over? You mean hitchhike.
No, drive.
I've got my own car now, a roadster.
With a grumble seat?
Yeah, with a grumble seat.
Quit kidding me, Whitey, that ain't right.
Wait just a minute, will you, Pee Wee?
Come in.
Beg pardon, Master Whitey...
but would that be Master Pee Wee
you're communicating with?
Nobody else.
Pee Wee, wait just a minute.

Parsons wants to say a few words to you.

- Go ahead.

- Thank you, sir.

Master Pee Wee, this is Parsons calling.

How did you fare in the radio contest?

I didn't win it. They're a bunch of gyps.

What? You didn't win the \$5,000?

That's very regrettable.

Yes, I'm afraid the Gossamer Soapies are, as you say, a bunch of gyps.

And, Master... Just one moment, please.

The master asked me to tell you, sir, to dress this evening.

The family is going out for dinner.

What? I've got to put on

one of those monkey suits again?

- That's what the master said.

- Twice in one week.

Some night they'll find me strangled to death by one of those stiff collars.

Pee Wee.

Pee Wee, I've got to get myself wrapped up in a straitjacket.

So tell Ted I'm gonna go over to that place again tomorrow...

and I'm going to see his pal for sure.

So long, Pee Wee, and don't let

Father Flanagan work too hard.

All right, go ahead, you can monkey around with it a little more.

Thank you, sir.

- And don't "sir" me, will you, please?

- No, sir, I won't.

Are you still there, Master Pee Wee?

- Well, if it ain't fancy-pants again.

- Yep, again.

You're getting to be part of the scenery, ain't you? And not very pretty, either.

Look, I want to see Miles Fenely.

You ain't his father,

and you ain't his mother...

and you ain't a relative.

This is the third time I've told you that, and three strikes is out in any league.

- I want to talk to the Superintendent.
- Write him a letter.
- I did.
- Did you now?

And you mean to say you got no answer?

You're a great kidder, aren't you?

If a certain friend of mine was here now
I'd get in there all right.

And I'm going to talk to him tonight
and tell him about this.

Unless your pal's
the Governor of the State, don't bother.
Fenely's in solitary section for 30 days.
And nobody can see him.

Solitary section? What's that?

It's something that's just as well for you
that you ain't in.

How I'd like to bend a crowbar
over your thick skull!

- That's enough of those kind of cracks.
- Leave me go, will you?

Here, I don't have to take any guff
from you or any other brat.

You been around here enough pestering
me. If you come back here again...

I'll lay this across your nose so hard
I'll split it into toothpicks.

And after this, stay clear of here.

Come on, step on it, buddy.

What are you stopping for? Get going.

- Where do you think you're going?
 - Anywhere. I just broke out of the can.
- But don't be worried.

They won't miss me till checkup at 6:00.

We got two, three hours.

- What's your name?
- Flip Bryer.
- What were you in the can for?
- I had a gang.
- You had a gang of what?
- Of guys. Good, tough guys.

I was the leader.

- You were the leader?
- Sure, I give the orders.

I had it all set to stick up
a swell pawn shop...
when some rat stooled on me.
Where were your folks
when all this was going on?
All I had was Grandpop.
They didn't give you much of a chance,
I can see.
But stickups at your age aren't so hot.
- They never are.
- So what?
Are you a man or a stool pigeon?
- I'm no stool pigeon.
- All right then, step on it.
Let's get out of here.
Not so fast.
If it was just myself,
I might take the chance.
Who's holding you? Come on, get going.
If they caught you, there'd be a jam.
It'd get in the papers.
What's wrong with that?
Dillinger and Pretty Boy Floyd
got their names in the papers plenty, too.
Plenty.
It wouldn't be right.
They must feed you canary seed,
you're so yellow.
Look, tell you what.
I've got a good friend,
he can help you, see?
You go back to the reformatory
for a week or two...
You or nobody else
is gonna send me back there.
See that? Them marks?
You want me to get 20 lashes again?
Not me, brother.
- Not Flip Bryer.
- They do that to you?
Plenty times. Plenty.
And rub salt in afterwards.
So, if you're scared,
I'll hop out and thumb a ride.

- No.

- But I ain't going back there.

No, you're not.

Is this the dump where you flop?

Hey, Flip...

are you always as tough as this?

Say, with the guys I hang out with,
you're either tough, or you're out of town.

And I don't suppose it hurts any
in the reformatory, either?

You bet it don't. If you turn soft in there,
you're a dead fish.

I see.

You certainly put on a swell act.

If you think it's an act,
put them up and find out.

Okay, so you're tough.

What's that?

Tommy-gun Tomcats. It's great.

It's all about stickups and bank jobs
and shooting it out with the law.

You can learn plenty from a book like this.
Plenty.

Yeah, sure you can.

How to get back to the reformatory,
and then to the penitentiary.

Don't worry about me. I'm bad medicine.

- I started bad and I'm gonna end bad.

- No.

No, you're not.

- There's no such thing as a bad boy.

- Baloney.

Yeah, that's what I said once, too, but...

- somebody taught me different.

- Who?

A great guy. A priest.

- A Holy Joe.

- You can't talk...

Forget it.

You know, I'd like to get you to a school...
where there's no guards or fences
or punishment.

What brand do you smoke, sweetheart?

I'm going over to the house

for a few minutes.
Now, don't poke your nose outside
till I get back.
Go ahead, ankle out.
I gotta catch up on my reading.
I'll be back in a few minutes
with something to eat.
And some milk.
There we are, Flip.
Flip?
Why, you bone-headed numbskull!
Turned copper?
Fine business. I'll square this with you.
- Why you...
- What's going on here?
Nothing, mister.
Okay, Flip. You don't have to do any more.
You're initiated. You're in the club.
I didn't think he'd have nerve enough
to get to the door even.
What do you mean, nerve?
I got in here all it takes for anything.
What do you know?
He's still putting on the act.
- It don't seem like an act to me.
- He was being initiated.
We thought he'd lose his nerve.
He sure surprised me.
- Imagine what he would have done to me?
- Yeah.
I've sure got to hand it to you.
You've got what it takes, Flip.
Hope he didn't scare you too much.
- What right you got, queering my racket?
- I'm only trying to keep you out of jail.
Thanks for nothing.
After this, keep your own nose clean.
- Understand?
- Sure, I understand.
You're going to be up to your neck
in trouble unless I get you out of here.
And I'm going to do
something about that tonight.
No tricks.

Sorry we bothered you. So long, mister.

W9YDK. Come in, Whitey.

W7BDF back to W9YDK.

I thought I'd find you on, Pee Wee.

Listen, can you get Father Flanagan
to talk to me now? It's important.

Not tonight, Whitey.

He went in to Omaha.

He's got to make a speech or something.

I'll ask him to talk tomorrow night though.

Tomorrow morning. The first thing.

It's very important. Now, don't forget.

I'll remember, all right.

Go to bed. You're up awful late.

Good night, Pee Wee.

What are you trying to hide? Money?

If you don't ask questions,
you won't get answers.

And if you don't get answers,
you'll never know anything...

that'll hurt you, see?

- Did you steal it?

- No, I won it in a crap game.

- Crap game.

- So it was a poker game.

- Come on. Give me the money.

- What do I look like, a chump?

Give me the money

or I'll take it away from you!

- Hijacking a pal.

- I'm going to give it back...

- to whoever you took it away from.

- You and what regiment?

Where'd you get it? Tell me!

- A gas station.

- We're gonna take it right back now.

A copper. A double-crossing copper.

Why, I'll copper you.

Pull over to the curb

and turn your lights on.

Come on, get out of that car.

Are these the ones?

- That's them.

- The little one's him, all right.

- Stuck a gun in my ribs, he did.

- How much you missing?

- Eighty-eight dollars.

- Reach.

It ought to be all here.

They haven't had time to spend any yet.

- Here.

- Not yet. Evidence.

He didn't cop that dough.

He ain't got the nerve

to pull a job like that.

Okay, baby face. You can straighten it out
with the judge.

Don't listen to him. He likes to talk tough.

He had nothing to do with it.

Anybody you want to pick up

before we go to the precinct?

No. Nobody.

Get in the car. We're going for a little ride.

Come on, you.

Come on, get in there.

Hey, broadbeam, quit crowding.

Straight ahead.

You knew that he escaped

from the reformatory?

Yes, sir.

- And you had him living in your den?

- I did.

- Good evening, Lieutenant.

- How do you do, Mr. Maitland?

- How are you, Whitey?

- I'm sorry this had to happen, sir.

I have the records

if you'd like to look at them.

Whitey Marsh's brother.

Reformatory, one trick in the penitentiary,
and then the chair.

Yes, I knew about that.

Father Flanagan told me.

And the little boy's record.

- That baby?

- Hey, watch what you're saying.

Associating with young criminals
of 14 and 16.

Amazing.

- Did you know about this?

- When he told me, I wouldn't listen to him.

I just thought

he was shooting his mouth off.

Oh, sure.

All those reform school kids

stick together...

just like their older brothers.

I was never in reform school.

- You were at Boys Town, weren't you?

- Boys Town isn't a reform school.

It's as good as any school in the country.

Better.

When a school's got a lot of kids in it

with criminal records...

- it's reform school to me.

- You're a liar!

Perhaps you'd better let me

talk to him alone.

All right, sir. In there.

- This way, Whitey.

- Yes, sir.

He sure told you off.

How do you like them onions?

Why didn't you tell me about the boy?

Why, I wanted to keep you and Mrs...

Mother, out of it.

It's developed into quite a mess, Whitey.

I tried to get Father Flanagan on the radio,

but he wasn't at Boys Town.

You were going to ask Father Flanagan

for advice?

Yes, sir. He'd know what to do.

There isn't very much he could do,

or anyone else...

for such an incorrigible little thief.

- That young scamp is thoroughly bad.

- Oh, no, sir.

There is no such thing as a bad boy.

That, I suppose, is something you learned

from Father Flanagan.

Yes, sir.

That's why I was trying to help Flip.

You see,
I wanted to keep you out of it altogether.
I was going to handle it.
Just me and Father Flanagan.
That attitude is completely wrong
for any member of my family, Whitey.
You belong with me,
on the side of law and order.
You mean
that I shouldn't try to help people?
No, Whitey, that isn't what I mean.
But you should pick people worthy of help.
Nobody needs it more than Flip.
Why, he'll become a criminal
if they keep him in Marysport.
That's where he learned
about sticking people up.
The boy was born
with criminal tendencies.
- I won't believe that.
- You must.
After all, you should accept my standards.
And forget everything
that Father Flanagan has taught me?
Whitey, you have a strange idea that
yours is a mission to reform humanity.
That's wrong, as many of
Father Flanagan's ideas are equally wrong.
Don't you say anything
about Father Flanagan.
Don't you ever.
You did that all by yourself?
Come on, let's go.
- Where do you think you're going?
- Downstairs to my cell.
But we can only keep one houseguest
and that's the big boss, not you.
You can't do that to me.
I got a right to a cell.
I'm the real boss. I did all the work.
You ain't going to make me no softie
sitting around here with a bunch of bulls.
Sling me into a cell.
I can do time standing on my head.

Now, look,
you're going to do time right here...
until the bus comes to take you back
to the reform school.

- Joe, get the kid a glass of milk.

- Yes, sir.

Hot milk.

- How does it look?

- Dark. Very dark.

- Whitey's story is difficult to believe.

- That's terrible.

Don't you think
that my being on the parole board...
No, dear, he's the one boy
you can't possibly use your influence for.
We've got to do something.
I'm afraid Whitey's in the position
of the general's son...
he'll have to face the music.
All out. Come on, follow me.
Hey, what's that?
Duck waddle. Punishment.

- Yeah? How long do they keep it up?

- Till they drop.

Here, what's all the gab about?
Well, if it ain't fancy-pants.
Helped the kid get away, didn't you?
And got me fined three days' pay.
If you didn't have that club...
This is elegant.
Get up!
Here, fall in there, you.
We'll start cutting you down to size
right now.

- Flip, where's Miles Fenely?

- In solitary.

Watch out for the guard, he's tough.
Sure, he's tough in here with plenty of
other guards and clubs to back him up.
Jiggers.
Halt!

- What were you saying?

- I was talking to myself.
Well, quit talking to yourself.

Quit thinking to yourself, remember that.
Around here we don't tell anybody
anything twice.
All right, get moving!
You know, Whitey ain't so bad
when you get to know him.
Of course,
he's got a little stool pigeon in him...
but after he's done some time
he'll get over that.
Jiggers.
Still the wise guy, ain't you?
No, I'm no wise guy.
Hey, lay off me.
Say, why don't you pick on someone
your own size?
I've been waiting for this.
You can talk all you want to in here.
Shout your head off.
Nobody will ever hear you.
Whitey, I'm scared.
It's Fenely, Miles Fenely!
This kid's hurt. He's dead.
They beat him and beat him.
You kids ain't seen nothing, I tell you.
He's dead. That's what he is, dead.
You killed him.
You're only imagining things.
Kids always think they see something
when they first come in here.
I saw it, I tell you. I can still see it.
We'll go to the Superintendent.
He'll convince you, you're wrong.
You're just seeing shadows.
You killed him.
Yes, that's too bad about Fenely.
But he always did have a weak heart.
You know he didn't. He was beaten up.
The doctor reported heart failure,
didn't he?
That's right. Signed the death certificate.
- You must have been imagining things.
- No, I wasn't.
Or seeing shadows.

Fenely was dead for hours, poor boy.
You know what happened to him.
I saw him beat up, all right! I saw him.
Now, look, Whitey.
You seem to be an intelligent boy.
I could use you doing clerical work
in my office.
No, you don't. That boy was beaten up.
You're smart enough to take
a doctor's report about how he died.
You've got the doctors bulldozed, too.
Things can be easy for an inmate here,
or very tough...
just as he makes them himself.
I saw him keel over, and you can't talk me
out of it, you can't buy me off.
Take him back to solitary.
Think it over, all by yourself.
And when you realize that
you've been seeing things, send me word.
Come on.
Flip. I want to talk to you some more.
You're just covering up,
trying to keep it quiet to save your job.
Trying to scare Flip into lying.
Well, you can't scare me!
- Do you hear that? You can't scare me.
- Take him away.
Now, Flip.
I'd like to see Whitey Marsh.
- Got a pass?
- No, I haven't.
You can't go in then.
The rules call for a pass.
- Well, where can I get a pass?
- The Superintendent, I guess.
Well, then,
I'd like to see the Superintendent.
He ain't seeing anybody just now.
- When does he see people?
- Well, now, that's hard to say.
- You'd better let me see him.
- I can't.
- Why not?

- He's away on vacation.

I want to see Whitey Marsh.

I said I want to see Whitey Marsh.

- Who did you say?

- Whitey Marsh.

I don't care what he's in,

I want to see Whitey Marsh.

I'm telling you, he's in solitary.

Nobody can see him.

And I'm telling you, and I'm telling you
for the last time, I want to see him.

If you was the President... He's in solitary.

Nobody can see him.

And if you had that collar turned around,
I'd convince you pretty quick.

I told you I want to see Whitey Marsh.

Okay.

- I came as soon as I heard, Whitey.

- I knew you would, Father.

How did all this happen?

Well, there was a kid.

He thought he was tough.

His name was Flip Bryer,
and I tried to help him.

There's no crime in that.

Yeah, but I didn't want to drag
Mr. and Mrs. Maitland into it.

- They've been so good to me, in a way.

- Sure. I know.

Well, this kid had my gun,
he got it out of my den.

He had it at the pawn shop,
he'd already held up the gas station...
and I had the money on me.

Well, you certainly fixed yourself up right
while you were about it, didn't you?

Yeah, I didn't do any credit to you
or Boys Town...

getting it in the papers and everything.

I don't blame you if you're sore at me,
Father.

Why should I be sore at you?

On the contrary, I'm proud of you.

If you had turned your back on that boy...

if you had played safe
and ignored the plea for help...
I'd have been ashamed of you,
but you didn't.
You may not have been wise, Whitey...
but you certainly lived up
to the best teachings of Boys Town.
Then you're not ashamed of me?
I'm prouder of you
than any boy I've ever known.
Gee, you're a great guy.
I think this is about enough
of the mutual admiration, don't you?
Yeah.
- Yeah, let's see what we can do for Flip.
- Yeah.
Mrs. Fenely's inside.
She wants to see you.
- How is she?
- Taking it hard.
No wonder.
I thought that maybe...
Well, a man of your cloth...
Perhaps you could talk to her, Father.
Get Whitey and Flip ready.
I'm taking them over to see the Judge.
All right. Come on.
I heard you were here, Father.
I just had to see you.
This horrible place,
it must be wiped out, Father.
You must stay here and help wipe it out.
Then I'll know that my boy went
for some reason.
You'll do it, Father?
You won't leave Marysport
till you've done it, promise?
Well, I'm needed at Boys Town at present.
- A promise I...
- No, no.
If you go, something else,
there'll be something else.
You must help the boys here, Father.
You must.

I have learned that boys
have an inflexible sense of honor.
And that they never betray a trust.
Give them confidence
and they will return you loyalty.
And that is why this system
of punishment for boys is wrong.
It's based upon the wrong principle.
It's based upon suspicion
rather than belief.
There is no redemption for youth
in the lash.
There is no healing of the wounded spirit...
in lonely confinement in a cell
on bread and water.
Such institutions
cannot bring about reform.
They feed their victims on the poison
of revenge, on the red lore of criminality.
They turn out youths who are resolved
to take vengeance on society.
Such misnamed reform schools...
which are really prisons for boys...
should be wiped out of existence!
Father, this now paroles Flip
into your custody.
Thank you, Your Honor.
You can go back to Boys Town
proud of the work you've started here.
- I promise you we'll carry it on.
- Well, I am proud of the work.
It's a crusade that must be stirred
in every section of the country.
- We'll keep it going here, Father.
- I'm sure you will.
Whitey, are you still determined
to go back to Boys Town?
Yes, sir, I am.
But think, Whitey...
do you want to give up golf and tennis
and your car, and everything?
I want to be with Father Flanagan,
Mother... Ma'am.
Well, thanks again. Goodbye. Thank you.

Dave, my boy, there's a great decency inherent in the human race.

Well, I'm glad to hear you think so.

Personally, I've got my doubts.

Dave,

the people of Marysport are aroused.

There'll be a Boys Town there

one of these days...

and that's a start, Dave, a great start.

So that's where you were all this time,

starting another Boys Town.

- Trying to. What about you?

- Me? I've been trying to keep one open.

Now, Dave, no mountains, just molehills.

I'm going to run over

and have a little talk with Ted.

You're not going to find him very talkative,

Eddie.

Why, you wired me

that the operation was successful.

- The surgery was.

- Then what went wrong?

- You, Eddie, you.

- Me?

You promised the boy you'd be here.

Well, I know, but I had to stay

at Marysport, Dave.

It meant so much to so many boys.

It meant a lot to this boy, too.

Come on,

I'll walk down to the infirmary with you.

- Father.

- Sister.

Well, Ted, I'm back.

I had to help another boy, Ted.

As a matter of fact, a lot of boys.

Ted, look at me.

Don't you know that I wanted to be here

with you, Ted?

Please try.

Please have faith, Ted.

I promise you

that everything will be all right.

Please try.

That's the works, Eddie.
The court has shut down.
Yes.
I tried to get the bank
to put me on the cuff...
but my cuff is too frayed, Eddie.
You did your best, Dave.
That's what I expect of you.
That's what I expect of you, too, Eddie,
the best you can do.
But this time I didn't get it.
I see.
I warned you not to go dreaming
about 250 Boys Towns...
when you didn't have one all fixed yet.
I couldn't refuse a cry for help, Dave.
When you're trying to save someone
from drowning...
you've got to concentrate on him.
If you help too many, you lose them all.
Maybe hopping about all over the ocean
proves what a great swimmer you are...
but it isn't helping the poor guy
that's going down for the third time.
You're right, Dave.
What I wouldn't give to be wrong.
Just 10 years off my life, that's all.
- I was thinking, Father...
- Yes, Pee Wee?
- I was wondering...
- Yes, Pee Wee, what is it?
I've been holding out on you.
Oh, well, we'll both overlook it.
I won \$5 in the Soapies Contest.
It was a consternation prize.
- A consolation prize.
- Yeah, a consternation prize.
I was going to buy you and Whitey
something for Christmas.
But Boys Town needs it more. Here.
The wormwood and the gall.
- Wanna play a game?
- I don't play with children.
Drift away, infant.

It's a good game.
I never felt my knuckles itch
like they do right now.
It's candy. You guess what pocket it's in
and you get to keep it.
Oh, I do?
That one.
And that one and that one and that one.
Talk about taking candy from a baby.
Where I come from, Curly Locks,
we play that game for eating tobacco.
- Mr. Morris.
- Yes, Whitey?
What's the matter with Father Flanagan?
He looks awfully worried.
- Well, he's been worried before.
- But not the way he is now.
I guess you and I are two people
he can't fool.
Since he came home,
he looks like he lost his best friend.
Whitey, I guess you're the only one
who's got a right to know.
He's come pretty close
to losing Boys Town.
But he can't lose Boys Town.
They can't do that to him.
He's never done anything wrong in his life.
Sometimes you can be wrong
without doing it.
How?
Like counting too much on other people...
thinking you can do too much by yourself.
- It's the money, isn't it?
- It's a big part of it.
Did my not staying with the Maitlands,
I mean, was he counting on them...
Well, the Maitlands
might have helped Boys Town...
but then again, they might not.
Thanks, Mr. Morris.
Mr. Maitland, Father...
I wanna come back home
and live with you.

This is quite a change in your attitude.
I know, but I've had a chance
to think it over since then.
And what have you thought?
About playing golf with you...
and tennis, and my car.
And your car?
And Mother, and all the kids at school.
If you'll only take me back,
I'll do anything you want me to.
I'll be around every minute. Honest, I will.
What's become of your devotion
to Father Flanagan?
Well, things aren't
quite the same here now.
I didn't realize how great it was with you.
What a fine chance I had.
If you'll only take me back.
You change your mind very rapidly,
Whitey. It's a quality I don't admire.
I won't change it again, honest I won't.
On my word.
No, Whitey, you made your decision.
I think it's best to let matters rest
just as they are.
Good night.
Mr. Maitland, don't go. Wait!
You're taking over Boys Town.
Oh, well, now, you'll stay on in charge,
of course.
In charge of my own failure.
Eddie, in five years, maybe, 10, anyway...
we'll be free and clear of debt.
You'll have Boys Town back like it was.
- Somebody will have to tell the boys.
- I'll do that for you, Eddie.
No, Dave, thank you.
- Yes, Father?
- Have the bugler blow Assembly.
Yes, Father.
If you don't think I've been hoping
for some miracle for you...
Miracles only come
to those who deserve them.

Boys...
this place...
Boys Town...
was my first dream.
It has been a dream come true.
It has made many boys happy.
More than 4,000 boys
have gone through here.
And gone out into the world
to become good citizens.
Not one of them has failed me.
Not one...
of all those thousands.
No one has ever failed Boys Town, ever.
Until now.
And now...
the failure is here.
Someone has failed Boys Town.
Failed badly.
Horribly.
Bohunk!
Bohunk?
That big old skunk.
Why couldn't he look where he was going?
Well, he couldn't see him, Pee Wee,
it's around a curve.
I didn't even see the dog.
He must've run under my rear wheels.
- I'm sorry for it.
- That's all right.
I didn't go up to take him out.
That's why it happened. I forgot.
He got out without his leash.
Pee Wee, a dog has to run free sometimes.
You can't keep anyone on a leash
all the time.
Whitey, you and the boys...
go over and dig a grave for Bohunk,
over there by the statue.
Yes, Father.
And you help Whitey.
Where's Bohunk?
Ted, you've stood so much pain,
do you think you could stand a lot more?

Why doesn't somebody else
have to stand it?
Everybody does have to go through pain,
Ted.
Some seem to have more to endure
than others.
And you're one of them.
And I...
I can't tell you why, either,
unless it's that suffering seems to...
forge such a fine man, that in the end...
you'll be better than the rest of us.
No more doctors?
Ted, I'm going to let you have it
square on the chin.
But I think you can take it.
Bohunk was run over by a truck.
The boys are burying him.
I thought you'd like to go.
Bohunk, dead?
Put me down.
We're all saying goodbye to you, Bohunk.
You're the only one
who could make a fellow smile...
that had been kicked around too much.
You did your job, and you did it well.
We all loved you, and we always will.
That's enough for now, huh, Ted?
Yeah.
Take me back now, Father.
I'll try some more tomorrow.
Sit down, Eddie.
Father, did you know that
Whitey wanted to come back with us?
No, he didn't say anything to me about it.
- I forgot.
- You're not usually forgetful.
Well, he spoke to me over the radio.
He told me the worst, most bare-faced
collection of lies I've ever heard in my life.
Lies?
What's come over you, Whitey?
I guess, I'm just naturally bad, Father.
That's not fair.

Whitey was really offering himself to us
as a hostage for Boys Town.
Yes, when I had a chance to think it over...
I realized that
Whitey was selling himself down the river.
- Whitey.
- Yes, Father?
- Did you want to do this for me?
- No, not particularly. I guess...
He did it because he knew
you were in trouble.
Trouble? That's a mild word for it.
As Dave says, we're out of business.
No, you are not.
Any place that can inspire loyalty
like Whitey's...
faith like Ted's...
a friendship as fine as Dave's,
mustn't go out of business.
I know that Dave has gone
half as deep as Boys Town...
but we'll put our heads together and find
some way to pull both of them out.
Thank you.
Today another class has graduated.
Another group is leaving Boys Town...
and going into manhood.
It is not an easy world
they're going out to.
The coddled, the weak, the doubting
will fall.
But the men will survive.
And great will be the honor they shall win.
You graduates must be such men.
Men of Boys Town.
You must realize
that the inheritance of your generation...
is toil and sweat and sorrow.
But you must also know...
that out of the bitterest battle,
the sweetest victory is won.
I envy you the glory
of solving the problems you will meet...
for the tasks of youth today...

are tasks for giants.
But the time that awaits you...
is the time...
when giants will walk again in the land.
Be staunch...
keep the faith...
and you...
will walk among the giants.
God bless you.