

# 5 If That's the Way You Want It

by D. Compton

## Characters

Joe  
Shirley

**A street. Joe and Shirley are standing side by side, but there is a distance of a couple of feet between them.**

JOE: If that's the way you want it.

SHIRLEY: Put the blame on me.

JOE: I said, if that's the way *you* want it.

SHIRLEY: You're no gentleman. You wouldn't always put the blame on me if you were a gentleman.

JOE: Blame?

SHIRLEY: You said – if that's the way you want it.

JOE: Isn't it the way you want it?

SHIRLEY: You're going on the right way to get your ring back.

JOE: If that's the way you want it.

SHIRLEY: All right then. All ... right. (She pulls at her engagement ring, but cannot get it off).

JOE: I knew tonight was going to end like this. As soon as I asked you to pay for the bus. I knew it by the way you got sour when I borrowed that 50p.

SHIRLEY: A gentleman wouldn't have asked a girl to pay for the bus.

JOE: How many times ...? I hadn't got the change.

SHIRLEY: (still struggling with the ring) No push. That's your trouble.

distance *afstand*

blame *skyld*

en'gagement *forlovelse*

sour *sur*

borrow *låne*

change *småpenge,*  
*byttepenge*

struggle *fight*

push *energy, initiative*

that's your trouble

that's what's the matter  
with you



JOE: You can't give the man a pound note. He doesn't like it.

SHIRLEY: If you were a gentleman you'd have more push.

JOE: I've got push.

SHIRLEY: You didn't have any change.

JOE: Change isn't push.

SHIRLEY: If you'd got push, you'd have change.

JOE: It's like that is it? All right, I'm getting my ring back.

SHIRLEY: You're getting your ring back. (She struggles even harder.) Just as soon as I can get it off.

JOE: All right.

SHIRLEY: A gentleman wouldn't say all right. A gentleman would say no. Even if he meant all right. You're glad to get rid of me.

You're glad to get rid of me so that you can go round with the girls. A gentleman wouldn't want to go round with the girls when he's engaged. Well – if that's the way you want it ...

JOE: Who said that's the way I want it?

SHIRLEY: I can see. I've seen it coming. I've seen it coming a

**I'm getting** (*her:*) now I  
want  
**get rid of** *slippe af med*  
**go round with** *føjte om*  
*med*



long time. (She struggles wildly with the ring.) It won't come.  
 JOE: Won't come?  
 SHIRLEY: It's stuck.  
 JOE: It slipped on easily.  
 SHIRLEY: Well, it won't slip off.  
 JOE: Your finger must've got bigger.  
 SHIRLEY: Tell me I'm fat, now. Go on. Tell me I bulge all over,  
 and my clothes don't fit. Tell me I drink too many milk  
 shakes.  
 JOE: I meant your finger was fatter, that's all.  
 SHIRLEY: My finger wouldn't be fatter if the rest of me wasn't  
 fatter with it. Anyway, the ring was too small to start with. Just  
 like you to get a ring that's too small. Too stingy to get the  
 larger size. The larger size is always cheaper in the long run.  
 My Mum says so.  
 JOE: When I put it on you said it shone like a star.  
 SHIRLEY: Some stars are smaller than others. (She tugs.)  
 JOE: Try screwing.  
 SHIRLEY: I don't take to bits like a bicycle. I should have known  
 better than to go steady with a cycle mechanic. If a boy's  
 satisfied with bicycles he's got no push. My Mum says so.  
 JOE: What does your Mum know about it?  
 SHIRLEY: My Mum ...  
 JOE: Try sucking.  
 SHIRLEY: (sucking her finger) My Mumumumumumumum ...  
 JOE: (at the same time) Yammeryammeryammeryammer ...  
 SHIRLEY: Have you got a bit of soap?  
 JOE: A bit of what?  
 SHIRLEY: Soap. The stuff you use for washing. Remember?  
 JOE: Funny you should mention it. I usually carry a couple of  
 bars around with me. After all, you never know when  
 somebody's going to ask you for a bar of soap, do you?  
 SHIRLEY: You're no gentleman.  
 JOE: Wait. I've got a thing for taking the stones out of horses'  
 hooves.  
 SHIRLEY: Horses' hooves? My hands?  
 JOE: Same idea.  
 SHIRLEY: Let me tell you, I'm very careful about my hands –  
 rubber gloves for washing up, manicures, creams – the lot.  
 My Mum says you can always tell a lady by her hands ... If  
 only we had some hot water.  
 JOE: Come round to the coffee stall. I'll buy you a cup.  
 SHIRLEY: I'm not thirsty, thank you.  
 JOE: Not to drink.

be stuck *sidde fast*  
 slip *glide, smutte*  
 bulge *bule ud*  
 just like you to ... *hvor*  
*det ligner dig at*  
 stingy *nærig*  
 cheap *billig*  
 tug *hive, rykke*  
 screw *skrue, dreje rundt*  
 take to bits *kunne skilles*  
*ad*  
 steady *fast*  
 yammeryammer *blabla*  
 bar of soap *piece of*  
*soap*  
 hoof, pl. hoofs or hooves  
*hov*  
 glove *handske*  
 tell ... by *kende ... på*  
 stall *bod, vogn*



SHIRLEY: What for then?

JOE: Stick your finger in.

SHIRLEY: You want me to stand stirring a cup of coffee with my finger?

JOE: What's wrong with that? You asked for hot water. You needn't put sugar in it.

SHIRLEY: Anybody can tell where you were brought up.

JOE: I'm no gentleman. (Takes her hand.) Give it here.

SHIRLEY: Can't wait to get it back, can you? You can't think much about me if you're in such a hurry.

*stir røre rundt (i)*

*bring up opdrage*

*can't wait to ... 'helt vild  
efter'*



JOE: Don't you want to give it back?  
 SHIRLEY: Of course I do. But a gentleman wouldn't be in such a hurry.  
 JOE: I'll get it off in no time.  
 SHIRLEY: That's what you thi...oooooooooooh! (Her voice rises to a scream as he pulls. She frees her hand and walks about, groaning.)  
 JOE: What's the matter?  
 SHIRLEY: You almost broke my finger, that's all.  
 JOE: Sorry.  
 SHIRLEY: It clicked. I felt it click. All the way up my arm.  
 JOE: I said I'm sorry.  
 SHIRLEY: It was coming off.  
 JOE: The ring?  
 SHIRLEY: My finger.  
 JOE: Let me see.  
 SHIRLEY: No.  
 JOE: I might be able to do something for it.  
 SHIRLEY: You've done enough, thank you. There's only one thing left. It'll have to be cut off.  
 JOE: Oh, no!  
 SHIRLEY: That's the only other way to get a ring off.  
 JOE: You mustn't – not even for me. Who cares about an old ring? It would hurt me more than you.  
 SHIRLEY: I'm not going to have my finger off. Only the ring.  
 JOE: Oh, only the ring. (Suddenly understands.) The ring! You're not going to do that to my ring.  
 SHIRLEY: It won't come off.  
 JOE: That's my ring. It's valuable.  
 SHIRLEY: You gave it to me.  
 JOE: How can I give it to another girl when you've had bits cut out of it?  
 SHIRLEY: Thinking about other girls already, are you?  
 JOE: I saved up for that ring.  
 SHIRLEY: Who is she? I bet it's Elizabeth Skim. I've seen you looking at Elizabeth Skim.  
 JOE: I saved up a year for that ring.  
 SHIRLEY: A gentleman doesn't tell lies. You haven't even known me a year.  
 JOE: I started saving from the time I first saw you. From the very minute I saw you – cheeking that customer in the Co-op – I started saving. I can remember the very words you were saying. Branded in my mind, they are. Branded.  
 SHIRLEY: What was I saying?

free make free  
 groan stønne, klage sig  
 click 'sige knæk'  
 coming off ved at gå af  
 hurt gøre ondt på  
 valuable værdifuld,  
 mange penge værd  
 save up spare sammen  
 lie løgn  
 cheek være fræk over for  
 customer kunde  
 co-op brugs  
 branded brændt fast



JOE: "You're no gentleman," you were saying.

SHIRLEY: That's right.

(Pause.)

JOE: What are you going to do now?

SHIRLEY: Keep it on I suppose.

JOE: I sort of hoped you would.

SHIRLEY: But just because I'm wearing your ring, it doesn't mean we're engaged.

JOE: (turning on her and shaking her) It does. That's just what it means. You're engaged to me, and don't you forget it!

SHIRLEY: Well ... If that's the way you want it ...

1. What had happened on the bus?
2. How had Shirley reacted to this?
3. What is the situation now between Joe and Shirley?
4. Why do they not just leave each other?
5. What would Joe have done if he had been a gentleman – according to Shirley's views?
6. "The larger size is always cheaper." What do you think Shirley's mother was talking about when she said these words?
7. What is Shirley's mother's opinion of Joe?
8. What are Joe's suggestions for getting the ring off? What do you think of them?
9. Why does Joe not want the ring to be cut off?
10. Where had Joe first met Shirley? What was she doing there?
11. What effect does it have on them, talking about their first meeting?
12. Would you call the ending a happy one?
13. Would you call it romantic?
14. Do you think the engagement is going to last? Try to give reasons for your point of view.

sort of *ligesom*

### Quarrelling

Why do you always have to ...

It is just like you to ...

You can't blame me for ...

Don't put the blame on me.

It is not my fault (:skuld), if ...

Why don't you look where you are going?

Why don't you think before you speak?

You are so wrong.

How many times must I tell you ...

Who do you think you are?

You have no right to be so offensive (:fornærmende).

What a rude thing to say!

I demand an apology (:jeg kræver en undskyldning).



# 6 Terry

by J. W. Hanson

**T**erry lived with his parents and younger sister in a quiet village. He enjoyed living in the country, though many of his friends thought the village had no life at all. He had gone to school in a nearby town and left at sixteen to work in a small printing firm.

"A quiet boy who works well" his last school report said. His sister Jill, a year younger and still at school, was the lively one in the family, always surrounded by friends and a popular figure at school. Terry stayed at home many evenings, and often helped his father in their large garden. He even helped his sister with her homework.

His favourite hobby was fishing, which he enjoyed with several of his old school friends.

Every Friday evening he and his friends went to the Youth Club meeting at the village hall. He had seldom missed an evening since leaving school. It was a chance to meet more old friends, and he enjoyed being in the large group, sharing the general talk and laughter, the music and whistling at the girls. Terry did not dance himself and his group agreed that they were not that interested in girls. He had never enjoyed the company of those boys at school who could talk of nothing else and bragged about their adventures to everyone.

One weekend his sister brought a group of her girl friends to tea, as she did quite often. Terry was going to keep out of their way, as he usually did, but he at once noticed a newcomer, a girl whose family had moved into the district a few weeks ago. Her name, he soon heard, was Mollie. He spent most of the afternoon hanging about outside the window, hoping to catch sight of her again. Then, by chance, he almost bumped into her as the girls came out into the garden. He was still searching for something to say when she smiled and said hello. They started to talk and he had just begun to describe the Youth Club evenings when his sister called her. "I may come along then,"

**nearby** *nærliggende*  
**printing firm**  
*bogtrykkerfirma*  
**re'port** *'karakterbog',*  
*vidnesbyrd*  
**lively** *livlig*  
**sur'round** *omgive*  
**large** *big*  
**favourite** *best*  
**village hall**  
*forsamlingshus*  
**seldom** *not often*  
**miss** *gå glip af*  
**share** *take part in*  
**general** *almindelig*  
**whistle** *fløjte, pifte*  
**ag'ree** *være enige om*  
**that** *(here:) so much*  
**brag** *prale*  
**ad'ventures** *eventyr,*  
*'pigehistorier'*  
**usually** *sædvanligvis*  
**notice** *lægge mærke til*  
**newcomer** *nyankommen,*  
*ny*  
**hang about** *drive*  
*omkring*  
**bump** *støde*  
**search** *look for*  
**des'cribe** *beskrive*



said Mollie as she moved away. She was smiling, and Terry thought he had never seen such a warm attractive smile.

The following days Terry could not get the girl out of his mind – he had never felt like this before, even when he had taken out two girls at school. He was not sure whether his sister would be a help to him in this matter or not. He asked only a few questions, enough to learn that Mollie's family had moved from Nottingham, where she had gone to a private school. Her father was a bank manager.

Friday evening came at last. Mollie would not come, he told himself, her parents would not allow it. But before long she entered with another girl. Awkwardly he found a table for the three of them and bought drinks. It was so difficult to start a sensible conversation. Perhaps they would rather just sit and listen to the records for a while.

at'tractive pretty  
whether if  
matter sag  
manager direktør  
al'low tillade  
awkwardly kejtet  
sensible fornuftig  
conver'sation samtale  
while stund, stykke tid



Suddenly Mollie said, "Do you dance?"

Terry's heart sank. "Not really," he said in a low voice. It seemed as if everyone in the hall was staring at him.

At this moment Alf, one of the motorbike gang, came boldly up to the table and faced Mollie. "Have a dance, love?" he grinned.

Mollie smiled. "Thank you," she said, "but I'm Terry's guest this evening."

1. Why did Terry like living in the village?
2. Why did many of his friends not agree with him?
3. "He even helped his sister with her homework." Try to explain the effect of the word 'even' in this sentence.
4. Why did Terry enjoy the Youth Club evenings?
5. Describe Terry's feelings and reactions when he first saw Mollie. Would you call his behaviour normal – for a boy?
6. On what occasion (:lejlighed) do you think Terry had taken out the two girls at school?
7. Terry was uncertain whether Jill would be a help to him or not. Do you think this was because he was afraid she might laugh at him? Or, could you imagine what might happen if she was 'too helpful'?
8. What were Terry's feelings when Mollie came to the Youth Club?
9. Did Mollie say the right thing when Alf asked her to dance?
10. Could Terry have avoided (:undgået) the awkward situation?
11. What do you think Terry should do? And Mollie? Have group discussions about the different things that could happen next and try to decide which is fairest. After this, you might like to dramatise the scene in the Youth Club with your version of the ending.

heart (*her.:*) *mod*

gang *bande*

boldly *dristigt*

### Talking about visits and parties

May I call on you tomorrow afternoon?

Come and see me after school.

Yesterday afternoon we suddenly had a visitor.

How many guests were there at the party?

He paid a visit to an old friend.

We have been looking forward to seeing you.

Your parties are always such a great success.

It has been a long time since we last saw you.

Here is an invitation we must accept.

We simply cannot refuse (:sige nej).

Thank you for a lovely evening.

It has been wonderful having you.



# 10

## When I'm Sixty-Four

by John Lennon/Paul McCartney

1. When I get older,  
losing my hair,  
many years from now,  
will you still be sending me  
a valentine,  
birthday greetings,  
bottle of wine?  
If I'd been out till  
quarter to three,  
would you lock the door?  
Will you still need me,  
will you still feed me,  
when I'm sixty-four?

You'll be older too.  
And if you'd only say  
the word,  
I could stay with you.



**valentine** a traditional  
'sweetheart postcard',  
sent on Valentine's Day  
(February 14th)

**greeting** *hilsen*

**feed** give food



2. I could be handy, mending a fuse,  
 when your lights have gone.  
 You can knit a sweater by the fireside,  
 Sunday mornings, go for a ride.  
 Doing the garden, digging the weeds,  
 who could ask for more?  
 Will you still need me, will you still feed me,  
 when I'm sixty-four?

Every summer we can rent a cottage  
 in the Isle of Wight  
 if it's not too dear.  
 We shall scrimp and save.  
 Grandchildren on your knee:  
 Vera, Chuck and Dave.

3. Send me a postcard, drop me a line,  
 stating point of view.  
 Indicate precisely what you mean to say,  
 yours sincerely, wasting away.  
 Give me your answer, fill in a form,  
 mine for ever more.  
 Will you still need me, will you still feed me,  
 when I'm sixty-four?

1. Who is the singer speaking to?
2. What does he want to know?
3. "Would you lock the door?" Explain the situation.
4. Give your opinion about their life together as described in stanza (:vers) 2.
5. Who is "Yours sincerely", and why is this person wasting away?
6. What sort of form do you think the singer speaks about in stanza 3?
7. How would you picture your own life at the age of sixty-four?



**handy** practical  
**mend** repair; (*her.:*) *skifte*  
**fuse** sikring  
**knit** strikke  
**ride** a ride in the car  
**dig the weeds** luge  
**rent** leje  
**cottage** 'sommerhus'  
**scrimp and save** *spinke og spare*  
**drop a line** send a short letter to  
**state** tell about  
**indicate** show, tell  
**yours sin'cerely** (*brevstil*) *din/Deres hengivne; 'undertegnede'*  
**waste away** *hentæres, sygne hen*  
**form** *skema, formular*  
**ever more** = ever



# 9 Green, Green Grass of Home

**T**he old home town looks the same  
As I step down from the train.  
And there to meet me is my Mama and Papa.  
Down the road I look, and there runs Mary,  
Hair of gold and lips like cherries.  
It's good to touch the green, green grass of home.  
Yes, they'll all come to meet me,  
Arms reaching, smiling sweetly.  
It's good to touch the green, green grass of home.

**T**he old house is still standing  
Though the paint is cracked and dry,  
And there's that old oak tree that I used to play on.  
Down the lane I walk with my sweet Mary,  
Hair of gold and lips like cherries.  
It's good to touch the green, green grass of home.  
Yes, they'll all come to meet me,  
Arms reaching, smiling sweetly.  
It's good to touch the green, green grass of home.

**T**hen I awake and look around me  
At four grey walls that surrounded me,  
And I realise that I was only dreaming.  
For there's a guard and there's a sad old padre  
Arm in arm we'll walk at daybreak:  
Again I'll touch the green, green grass of home.  
Yes they'll all come to meet me  
In the shade of that old oak tree,  
As they lay me beneath the green, green grass of home.

**cherry** *kirsebær*  
**cracked** *revnet*  
**oak** *eg*  
**lane** country road  
**sur'round** that are  
around  
**guard** *vogter*  
**padre** (here) prison  
priest  
**daybreak** as soon as it is  
light

1. How long do you think it is since he was at home?
2. What does he remember about his home?
3. Where is he having this dream? Describe the place and what is happening.
4. Why is the song called 'The Green, Green Grass of Home'?
5. What do you think he has done? Does he seem sorry about it?
6. How do you feel about the narrator (:fortæller)?





## Joby

by Stan Barstow

Because his mother is ill in hospital, eleven-year-old Joby is staying with his aunt. He has just made up his mind to visit Sidney, a friend of his who is also called Snap.

The very small old lady with a shawl round her shoulders came out of the next house and looked at Joby standing on Snap's doorstep.

"It's no use knocking at their door, young man," she said. "There is nobody there. They have gone on their holidays to Bridlington." Her voice was as light and thin as her body.

"Have they gone for the week?" Joby asked.

"As far as I know, they have. Was it young Sidney you wanted?"

make up one's mind

beslutte (sig)

shawl sjal

Bridlington by i det

nordøstlige England



"Yes, it was."

"Well, they have all gone, so you will have to wait until they come back."

"Yes, all right then. I'll be off."

"Just a minute." The old lady moved her head, looking at Joby first over the top of her glasses and then through them.

"Are you in a hurry? Have you got to go somewhere?"

Joby shook his head and moved towards her along the pavement that ran along the houses.

"What's your name?" the old lady asked him.

"Joseph Weston."

"Have I seen you before?"

"I don't know. I've been here a few times."

"Yes, I thought so. Do you go to school with Sidney?"

"I did till the end of last term; but I'm going to a new school next month."

"Oh." The old lady nodded several times. "Oh. Well then, I wonder if you would give me a minute and come inside."

The old lady turned and led the way into the house. The living room, beautifully clean and neat, had the faint smell of old age you sometimes find in old people's homes. The old lady crossed to the table and picked up an envelope.

"This came through the post this morning," she said, turning once more to Joby. "It's from my eldest son; I can tell by the writing, how he makes his letters, you know. I wonder, as you are a school-boy, if you could read it to me."

Joby wondered for a moment if she was giving him some kind of a test and then he realised that the old lady couldn't read.

"We never had much schooling when I was a girl," she said, feeling in the envelope with her old fingers and taking out a sheet of writing-paper. "I don't suppose I had more than a year altogether. It's different now. You young people have all the chances we never had." She held out the letter and Joby took it. "Here, see if you can see what it says."

"It's from Coventry," Joby said, looking at the address.

"Yes," nodded the lady. "That's where he lives. He went down there three years ago and got a job in a motor-car factory. He helps to put all these motor-cars together that you see on the roads."

Joby was quickly reading through the first page of the letter while the old lady was talking. He found that his hand was trembling.

"What has he got to say then?"

**I'll be off** (her) så går jeg

*igen*

**glasses** briller

**pavement** fortov

**term** semester

**nod** nikke

**lead (led/led) the way**

*gå forrest*

**neat** pæn

**faint** svag

**envelope** konvolut

**tell by** (her) se det af

**test** prøve

**realise** forstå, indse

**sheet** ark

**factory** fabrik

**tremble** ryste, skælve





"I... I can't really read what it says," Joby stammered. "He doesn't write very clearly, does he?"

"Oh? I always thought he did. Mrs Prendergast says he's a very clear writer. She usually reads his letters to me and then writes back for me. I don't like to ask the woman who lives on the other side – Mrs Carter. She hasn't lived here long, and I think she is too interested in other people's private lives."

"I'm not very good with handwriting," Joby said.

"Can't you read it at all?"

Joby shook his head. His face was very red, he knew, but he didn't think that the old lady's eyes were sharp enough to notice it.

"Well, I thought you said you were going to a new school. I don't think you will do very well there if you can't read a letter."

"I'm better at some things than others," Joby said. "I'm good at history."

"Ah well, I can't read a word, so I shouldn't say anything."

*notice bemærke*



She took the letter back and put it away. "Maybe I'll get Mrs Carter to look at it for me in the morning."

"That'll be best," Joby said, "I'm sorry."

"Oh, it doesn't matter. It can wait until tomorrow. It'll be just bits of news about the family and that sort of thing. But he knows I like to know what is going on. He doesn't get up here very often, you see, as it is so far to come. He says it would be wonderful if he could borrow a car out of the factory at week-ends. Just his joke, you know. William is a great joker. Always full of fun."

"I'd better be going," Joby said, making for the door.

"Yes, all right then. And thank you for trying."

"I wish I could have read it for you."

"You did your best, I am sure." The old lady went with him to the door. "But I would study at that, if I were you. You'll be handicapped if you can't read handwriting."

"Yes, I know," Joby said. "Good night then."

The old lady gave him a farewell smile and stood watching him walk up the road. He wondered if he had done the right thing and knew that he could not have read out the first sentences of the letter:

borrow låne

joke spøg; joker spøgefugl

make for gå hen imod

sentence sætning

fault skyld

15 Madeira Road  
Coventry  
Friday

Dear Mother,  
I'm afraid this letter brings you  
bad news. You will be shocked to  
know that little Cynthia was knocked  
down by a bus the day before yesterday  
and died in hospital last night.  
It was nobody's fault. She ran  
out of the house like kids do...

1. What is the situation in Joby's family?
2. What happens when he goes to Snap's house?
3. What does the old lady ask Joby about?
4. What is the old lady's house like?
5. What does the letter say?
6. What does the old lady tell Joby about her son?
7. What does the old lady do with her letters when Joby is not there to read them for her?
8. What did William write in the letter to his mother?
9. Why didn't Joby read the letter aloud?
10. What did Joby feel when he first read the letter?
11. What would you have done?



# Joby in the Sweetshop

by Stan Barstow

**J**oby put two pennies into Gus's hand and Gus opened the door, setting a bell ringing. The inside of the shop was quiet and cool. There were jars of jam and marmalade and cans of all kinds of things piled high on the shelves against the walls; boxes of sweets and bars of chocolate on the counter and an open sack of potatoes and another of sugar on the floor. They listened for someone coming but there was no sound from anywhere.

jar *krukke*  
 jam *sylltetoj*  
 marmalade always made of oranges in English!  
 can *dåse*  
 shelf (shelves) *hylde*  
 bar *plade*  
 counter *disk*

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When Gus put his hand into a box of sweets, it was like a signal to Joby. He did the same while Gus, not at all afraid, stretched right over the counter to reach the cigarettes. At the back of Joby's mind as he stuffed handfuls of sweets into his pockets was the thought that the shopkeeper was a very long time coming.

And just then the voice, like a kick to the heart, said, "And what do you think you are doing?"

**T**hey sprang round, their bodies going stiff with fear as they saw that the man was on their side of the counter, between them and the door. Shock robbed them of their voices. They stared at him, saying nothing. The shopkeeper, a thin elderly man, reached out and locked the door, cutting off all hope of escape.

"I asked you what you thought you were doing."

His voice was stiff and cold as iron. Joby, weak with shock and fright, thought he had never heard a voice like it, nor seen a face as hard and fierce as this man's. Oh! but he had feared this from the first. He had known it from the first. He had known it must happen some time. If only they could go back ten minutes and be playing with the ball in the street, and no thought of the shop in their heads!

**G**us managed to speak. "We wanted some chewing-gum, please," he said, as though he didn't understand the man.

"Yes, that's right," Joby heard himself whisper, "just some chewing-gum. He's got the money for it." He gestured towards Gus who opened his hand and showed the two pennies in his palm.

"Chewing-gum, eh? Well, you won't find any in that box of sweets, nor under the counter either."

His eyes looked over the top of his spectacles, grey and hard, as he spoke to them. He waved his hand towards the back of the shop.

"You'd better go through there with me. Go on, now, let's be having you!"

He pushed them before him into his living-room. They stood near the table, not knowing what to do with their hands.

"Are you going to fetch a bobby?" Joby asked.

A sudden view of the trouble to come flashed through his mind. The police at home; the surprise and shock of his parents; everybody knowing; the scene in court; grammar school shut to him because he was a bad character; probably

**stretch over** put his arm over

**reach** get to

**stuff** *stoppe*

**robbed them** took away from them

**e'scapo** running away

**fierce** *barsk*

**managed to speak** only just got the words out

**gesture** move one's hand

**palm** inside of the hand

**spectacles** *briller*

**let's be having you**

come along

**bobby** policeman

**view** picture

**to come** *forestående*

**flashed** went quickly

**court** *retten*

**grammar school** *skolen*

*der giver adgang til*

*universiteterne*



Borstal instead, or somewhere just as bad. He wanted to sit down. The fear was in his legs and they wouldn't hold him up much longer.

The shopkeeper ignored the question. He said, "Now then, empty your pockets."

Quickly, Joby put sweets on the table, searching carefully for any forgotten in the corners of his pockets. Gus produced two packets of cigarettes, as well as the sweets. To these they added all the other pieces of useful rubbish which they had in their pockets.

The shopkeeper looked at it. "Is this all?"

They nodded together. The man pushed his own things to one side and then took off his glasses and rubbed his eyes with his free hand. Joby wanted to look quickly at Gus and receive

**Borstal** school for criminal children  
**search** look  
**pro' duce** take out  
**rubbish** *skrammel*  
**nod** move one's head up and down  
**rub** *gnide*  
**re' ceive** get



some sign of help, but he could only shoot frightened looks at the face of the shopkeeper. He hastily turned his eyes away as the shopkeeper lifted his head up and put back his spectacles.

“**W**hat’s your name?” he asked Gus. “Your real name, of course.”

Gus told him, and he nodded as though he knew all about him. “And who are you?” he said to Joby.

“Joseph Weston,” Joby said. “Everybody calls me Joby.”

“What would you think of everybody calling you ‘thief?’” the man replied quickly.

“I wouldn’t like it,” Joby said quietly.

“No... Well, you’d better tell me what made you come into my shop to steal. How long have you been doing this kind of thing? Do you usually do this in every shop you go into?”

Gus answered him and sounded honest and sincere.

“No, we’re not thieves, Mister, really. We just thought it would be a bit of fun. The others said we wouldn’t dare. And most of our friends have gone on holiday and... We’ll never do it again, will we, Joby? This has taught us a lesson.”

“Fun, eh? You know where that kind of fun will take you? Into the reform-school. And there’s no chocolate there, nor holidays at the sea, either. And when you get out, everybody will know you are thieves and nobody will trust you any more. What sort of a start in life is that? You might think you have all the time in the world, but you will have to think about getting a job before you know it, and you won’t get far when everyone knows you are a thief... What school do you go to?”

“Tinsley Road,” Gus said.

“I’m going to Cressley Grammar School in September,” Joby said.

“Have you passed your exam to get in?” The man looked at Joby as he nodded. “Then why the devil do you want to spoil a chance like that by behaving like this?”

It was the tone of tired anger in which he spoke now that made Joby realize he was not going to report what had happened. He hardly heard the rest of what was said, because he felt so relieved.

“**P**ick your things up and get along home.” The shopkeeper moved away from the fireplace. “And have a good think about what I have told you.”

They gathered together their belongings and put them in their pockets before making for the door.

**shoot looks** look very quickly

**honest** ærlig

**sin’cere** oprigtig

**dare** turde

**re’form-school** school

for young criminals

**trust** stole på

**spoil** ødelægge

**be’have** opføre sig

**realize** understand

**re’port** anmelde

**re’lieved** lettet

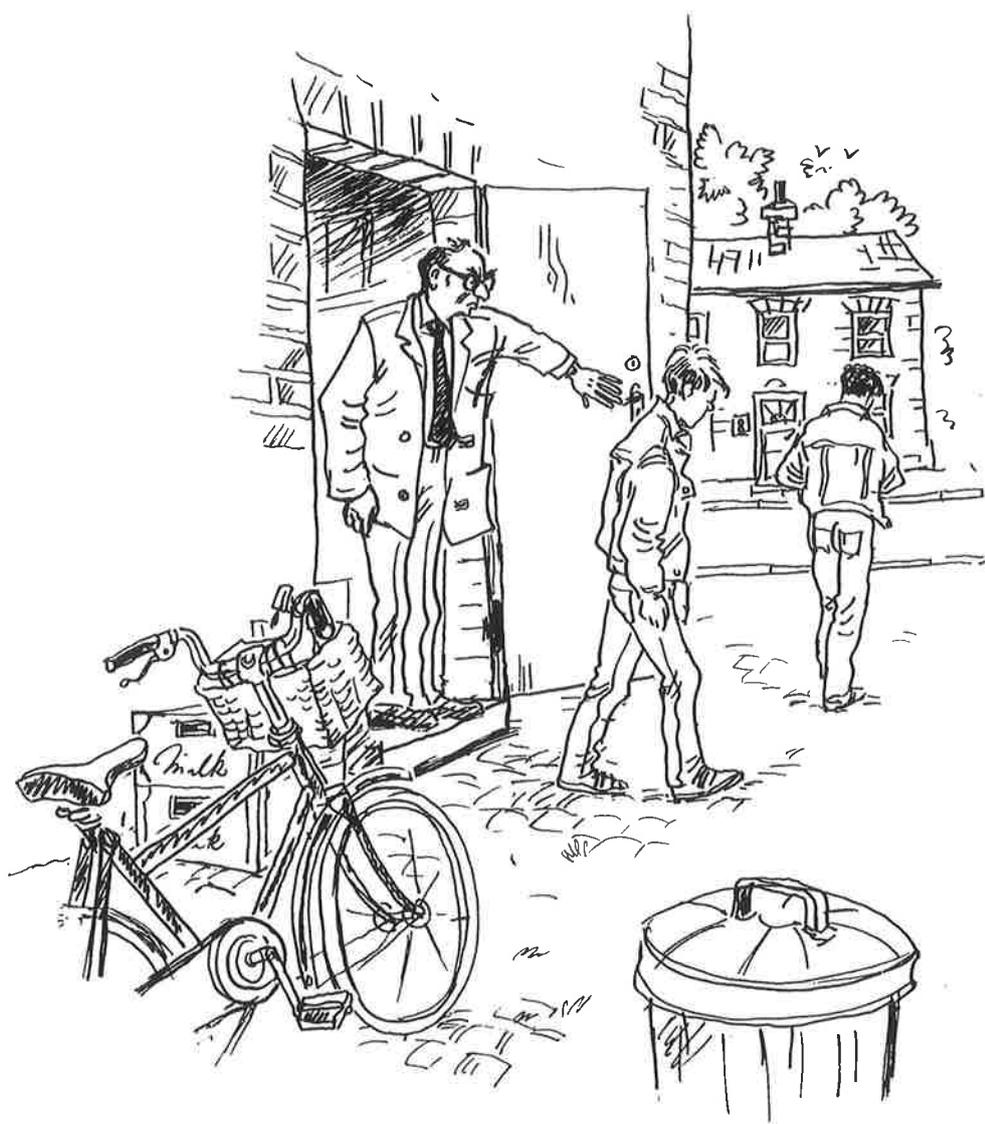
**have a good think** think

carefully

**be’longings** things they

owned





"You can go out the back way," the man said and opened the door to let them pass through.

"Are you going to tell our dads?" Gus asked.

"You'd better wait and see about that. But remember this, I know who you are and if I hear of you getting into any more trouble like this, I shall go straight to the police and tell them about today."

"Don't worry, Mister," Gus said thankfully, "we shan't get into trouble again. We've had enough for today."

He stepped out into the yard. Behind him, Joby stopped. He wanted to say something. He felt he should. He felt as though a great weight had been lifted from him.

He looked up at the man and said, "Thanks, Mister. Thanks very much."



The shopkeeper put his hand on Joby's shoulder and pushed him out after Gus. "Get off home. Just think of what I've told you and you'll be all right."

They didn't speak until they had gone some way from the shop, then Gus said, "I thought we were in for it that time!"

"So did I." Joby looked sideways at Gus's face, trying to read his expression. "I think we had better stop now."

"Yes, we'd better. It's not safe now."

**T**hey went into a field and sat down to talk about what had happened. Small clouds of fear still troubled Joby now that he was away from the shop.

"Do you think he will tell our dads?" he asked.

Gus laughed. "No, he won't tell now. He let us off with a good talking-to, didn't he?"

The church clock struck the half-hour.

"What time's that, then?"

"Half past four."

"I shall have to be off home to tea, then," Joby said.

"Oh, there's plenty of time." Gus sat up and looked all around the empty field. "What about having a quick smoke first?" He

**we were in for it** we were going to get into bad trouble

**ex'pression** the look on his face

**trouble** *bekymre, plage*

**a talking-to** he scolded them



put his hand into his pocket and brought out an unopened packet of cigarettes. Joby stared at it.

"Where did you get them?"

Gus grinned. "Where do you think?"

"But you gave them all back."

"All except these!"

A smile of both admiration and unhappiness forced itself on to Joby's face.

"Honestly, Gus, you are a devil!"

"Well, are we going to have one, then?" Gus said.

"No." Joby got to his feet quickly. "I've got to go. My Mum said I mustn't be late. I'll see you later. So long."

He began to walk away across the rough grass. By the time he reached the edge of the field he was running. He wondered what Gus thought of him, and didn't care. His only interest now was to get as far away from Gus as possible.

*ex'cept undtagen*

*admi'ration beundring*

*honestly ærlig talt*

*rough* that had not been cut

*edge kant*

1. Why does Joby give Gus some money?
2. What do they do when they get into the shop?
3. How do they feel when they hear the shopkeeper?
4. Where is the shopkeeper – and why?
5. What does Joby wish?
6. Why does he not believe that they wanted to buy chewing-gum?
7. What does Joby see in his mind when they go into his living-room?
8. What do they take out of their pockets (and what is the 'rubbish')?
9. "We did it for a bit of fun." Do you think either of the boys has done this sort of thing before?
10. What does the shop-keeper say happens to thieves?
11. How does Joby know that it is going to be all right?
12. Why does Joby stop before leaving the man's house?
13. How does Joby feel when he sees the packet of cigarettes?
14. Why does he want to get far away from Gus at the end of the story?
15. Why does the shopkeeper let them go? Is it the right thing to do?
16. Do you think either of them will do anything like this again?
17. Most people steal something at one time or another. Does it matter?



# 7 The Weapon

by Fredric Brown

The room was quiet in the dimness of early evening. Dr. James Graham, key scientist of a very important project, sat in his favorite chair, thinking. It was so still that he could hear the turning of pages in the next room as his son leafed through a picture book.

Often Graham did his best work, his most creative thinking, under these circumstances, sitting alone in an unlighted room in his own apartment after the day's regular work. But tonight his mind would not work constructively. Mostly he thought about his mentally arrested son – his only son – in the next room. The thoughts were loving thoughts, not the bitter anguish he had felt years ago when he had first learned of the boy's condition. The boy was happy; wasn't that the main thing? And to how many men is given a child who will always be a child, who will not grow up to leave him? Certainly that was rationalization, but what is wrong with rationalization when – The doorbell rang.

Graham rose and turned on lights in the almost-dark room before he went through the hallway to the door. He was not annoyed; tonight, at this moment, almost any interruption to his thoughts was welcome.

He opened the door. A stranger stood there; he said, "Dr. Graham? My name is Niemand; I'd like to talk to you. May I come in a moment?"

Graham looked at him. He was a small man, nondescript, obviously harmless – possibly a reporter or an insurance agent.

But it didn't matter what he was. Graham found himself saying, "Of course. Come in, Mr. Niemand." A few minutes of conversation, he justified himself by thinking, might divert his thoughts and clear his mind.

"Sit down," he said, in the living room. "Care for a drink?"

Niemand said, "No, thank you." He sat in the chair; Graham sat on the sofa.

**dimness** weak light  
**circumstances**  
*omstændigheder*  
**mentally ar'rested**  
*psykisk handicappet*  
**anguish** great pain  
**an'noyed** irritated  
**nondescript** ordinary  
**in'surance** *forsikring*  
**justify** *retfærdiggøre,*  
*forklare*  
**di'vert** *adsprede*



The small man interlocked his fingers; he leaned forward. He said, "Dr. Graham, you are the man whose scientific work is more likely than that of any other man to end the human race's chance for survival."

A crackpot, Graham thought. Too late now he realized that he should have asked the man's business before admitting him. It would be an embarrassing interview – he disliked being rude, yet only rudeness was effective.

"Dr. Graham, the weapon on which you are working –"

The visitor stopped and turned his head as the door that led to a bedroom opened and a boy of fifteen came in. The boy didn't notice Niemand; he ran to Graham.

"Daddy, will you read to me now?" The boy of fifteen laughed the sweet laughter of a child of four.

Graham put an arm around the boy. He looked at his visitor, wondering whether he had known about the boy. From the lack of surprise on Niemand's face, Graham felt sure he had known.

"Harry" – Graham's voice was warm with affection – "Daddy's busy. Just for a little while. Go back to your room; I'll come and read to you soon."

"*Chicken Little?* You'll read me *Chicken Little?*"

"If you wish. Now run along. Wait. Harry, this is Mr. Niemand."

The boy smiled bashfully at the visitor. Niemand said, "Hi, Harry," and smiled back at him, holding out his hand. Graham, watching, was sure now that Niemand had known: the smile and the gesture were for the boy's mental age, not his physical one.

The boy took Niemand's hand. For a moment it seemed that he was going to climb into Niemand's lap, and Graham pulled him back gently. He said, "Go to your room now, Harry."

The boy skipped back into his bedroom, not closing the door.

Niemand's eyes met Graham's and he said, "I like him," with obvious sincerity. He added, "I hope that what you're going to read to him will always be true."

Graham didn't understand. Niemand said, "*Chicken Little*, I mean. It's a fine story – but may *Chicken Little* always be wrong about the sky falling down."

Graham suddenly had liked Niemand when Niemand had shown liking for the boy. Now he remembered that he must close the interview quickly. He rose, in dismissal.

He said, "I fear you're wasting your time and mine, Mr. Niemand. I know all the arguments, everything you can say I've heard a thousand times. Possibly there is truth in what you

sur'vival *overlevelse*  
crackpot madman  
em'barrassing *pinlig*  
lack *mangel*

bashfully *genert*  
lap *skød*

sin'cerity honesty

**Chicken Little** American

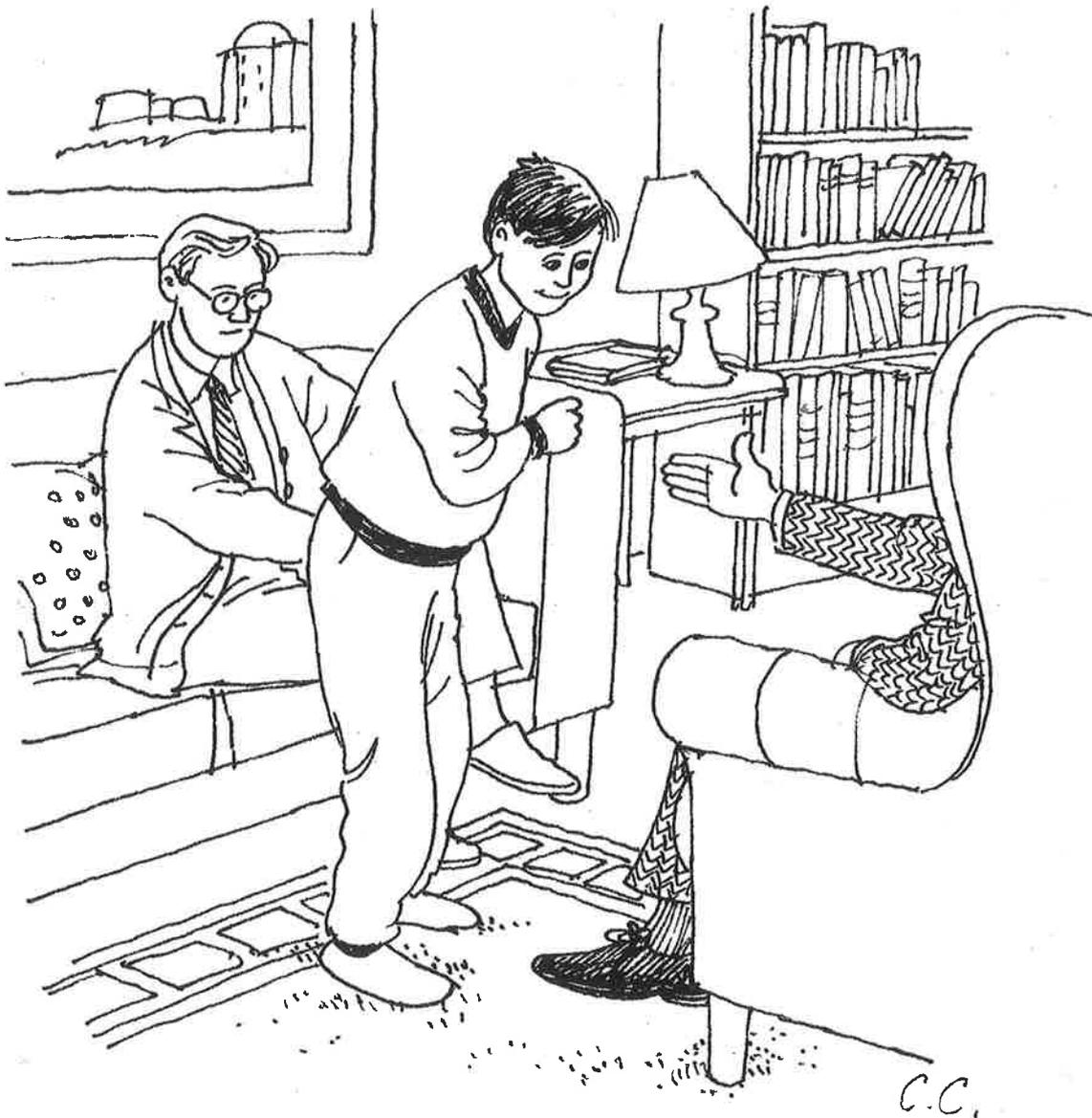
children's story about a  
small chicken that runs  
around crying that "the  
sky is falling": the

catastrophe is coming

in dis'missal to say

goodbye





believe, but it does not concern me. I'm a scientist, and only a scientist. Yes, it is public knowledge that I am working on a weapon, a rather ultimate one. But, for me personally, that is only a by-product of the fact that I am advancing science. I have thought it through, and I have found that that is my only concern."

"But, Dr. Graham, is humanity *ready* for an ultimate weapon?"

Graham frowned. "I have told you my point of view, Mr. Niemand."

Niemand rose slowly from the chair. He said, "Very well, if you do not choose to discuss it, I'll say no more." He passed a

**con'cern** interest, affect

**ultimate** final, all-destroying

**hu'manity**

*menneskeheden*

**frown** *rynke panden*



hand across his forehead. "I'll leave, Dr. Graham. I wonder, though ... may I change my mind about the drink you offered me?"

Graham's irritation faded. He said, "Certainly. Will whisky and water do?"

"Admirably."

Graham excused himself and went into the kitchen. He got the decanter of whisky, another of water, ice cubes, glasses.

When he returned to the living room, Niemand was just leaving the boy's bedroom. He heard Niemand's "Good night, Harry," and Harry's happy "Night, Mr. Niemand."

Graham made drinks. A little later, Niemand declined a second one and started to leave.

Niemand said, "I took the liberty of bringing a small gift to your son, doctor. I gave it to him while you were getting the drinks for us. I hope you'll forgive me."

"Of course. Thank you. Good night."

Graham closed the door; he walked through the living room into Harry's room. He said, "All right, Harry. Now I'll read to —"

There was sudden sweat on his forehead, but he forced his face and his voice to be calm as he stepped to the side of the bed. "May I see that, Harry?" When he had it safely, his hand shook as he examined it.

He thought, *only a madman would give a loaded revolver to an idiot.*

1. Describe Dr. Graham's thoughts before the visitor arrives. Do you think he is happy or not?
2. How does the visitor treat Harry? When you have finished the story, decide if it is important that he likes him.
3. Why does he tell Dr. Graham that he has given Harry a present?
4. What is the point of the last sentence?
5. What is Dr. Graham's reason for producing 'the ultimate weapon'? Discuss whether he is right about what scientists are concerned about.

forehead *pande*  
admirably excellently  
de'canter *karaffel*  
de'cline refuse  
liberty *frihed*



# 2 The Stranger

by Walter Macken

## I

Michael John's shop was the only one in the village, but in it you could find everything you would ever want to buy. Strangers rarely found their way into it, for the village was in the middle of the mountains with a long and very bad road leading into it from the main road. Everyone in it was quite happy, and they did not care if they never saw a stranger. So Michael John was a little surprised one fine spring morning, looking out of his small window, to see a stranger coming over the hill and walking down the road.

He was a tall man dressed in a dark suit. The boots he was wearing and his trousers were covered with dust. He has come far, Michael John thought, and he has walked all the way. His shoulders were very broad, and he had very long arms hanging straight down. They were almost below his knees. His head was bare and his short hair was very grey and there was a sort of yellow look about his face. He paused in the middle of the road. There were only four houses to be seen. The other few were hidden behind the hills. He saw the faded tobacco sign outside Michael John's and headed that way. Michael John pulled away from the window.

The shop was part of his house, just a small counter to one side of the room. The big open fire was blazing, because even though it was a spring day there was snow on the top of the hills and you would get very cold if you were not working.

The man appeared in the door.

"Morning," said Michael John.

The man came in. He had a big face, with big muscles on the jaws and a strong nose. Calm brown eyes without any expression in them. Michael John liked the man from the look of him. That was the way he was. He would like you or he would not. If he liked you and you turned out bad he would always find

**stranger** fremmed  
**rarely** sjældent  
**suit** sæt tøj  
**boot** støvle  
**cover** dække  
**dust** støv  
**faded** falmet  
**sign** (her:) skilt  
**head** (vb) sætte kursen,  
gå  
**pull** trække (sig)  
**counter** disk  
**blaze** burn  
**jaw** kæbe  
**calm** rolig  
**turn out** vise sig at være



excuses for you. If he did not like you and you turned out to be a saint he would not trust you anyhow.

"It's a nice day," said the man. His voice seemed to be rusty.

"It is, thank God," said Michael John.

"I'd like to buy a loaf of bread and a little cheese and a bottle of stout."

"It's a pleasure," said Michael John, reaching for them.

"Would it offend you if I ate them here?" the man asked.

"It would not," said Michael John. He liked the man's good manners.

He watched the man eating. He ate slowly and carefully. He chewed every bit of the bread and cheese slowly and washed it down his throat with the stout. He took a purse out of his pocket, found a few coins and paid, and Michael John thought he was old-fashioned. Very few men carried the little leather purses nowadays. He was not as young as he had looked

ex'cuse *undskyldning*

saint *helgen*

anyhow *alligevel*

rusty *rusten*

stout *mørkt øl, porter*

pleasure *glæde, fornøjelse*

offend *fornærme*

manners *opførsel; good*

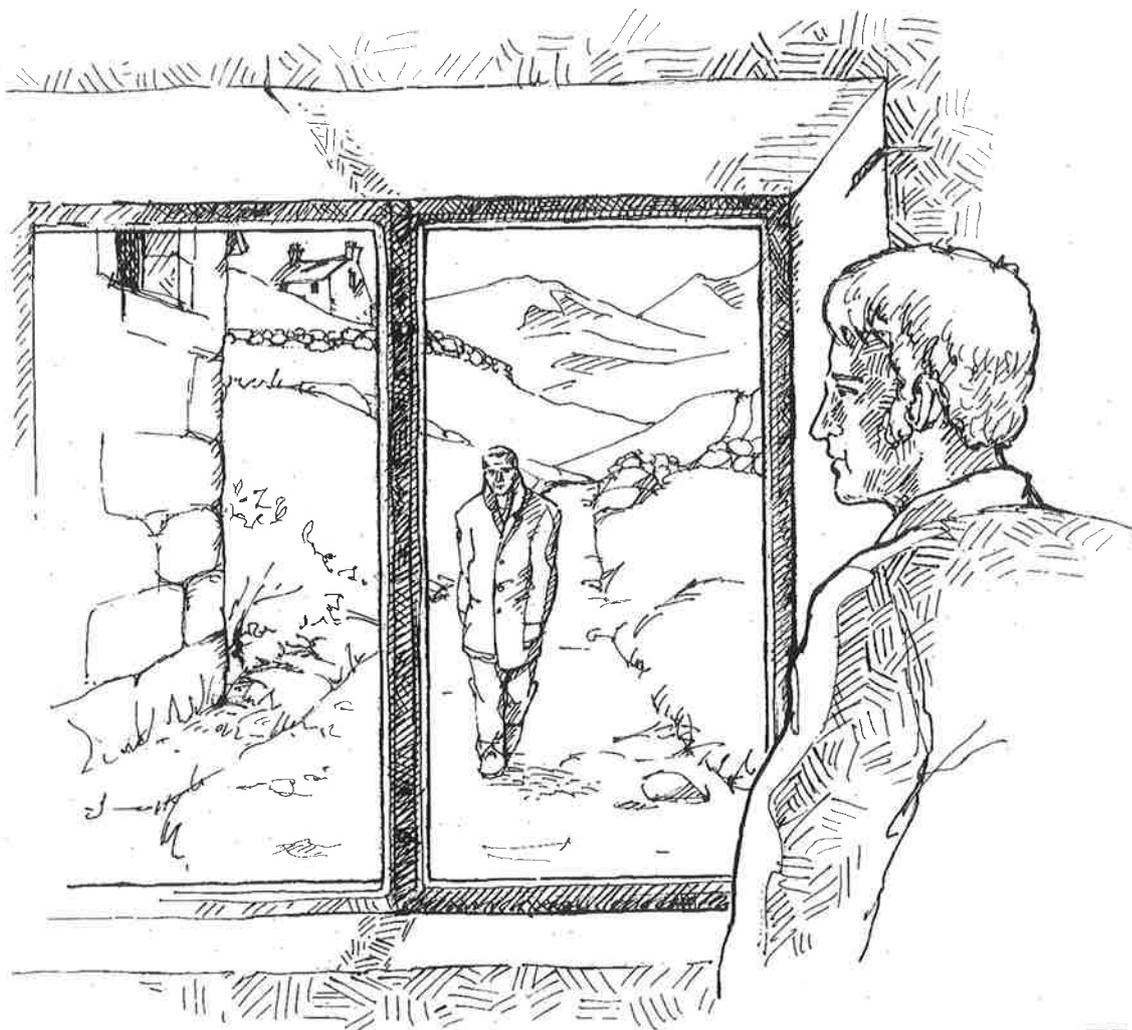
manners *høflighed*

chew *tygge*

wash *skylle*

purse *pung*

coin *mont*



walking to the house. Michael John thought he must be more than fifty. But he was strong and healthy. Muscles were bulging under his coat sleeves. Michael John wondered about him.

He took out tobacco and filled a pipe and lit it. Then he looked at Michael John.

"This is a nice spot," he said. "Is it lonely?"

"I don't know," said Michael John. "We like it. Is it lonely? I don't know. We haven't time to be lonely."

"I don't mean that way," said the man. "I mean do many strangers find their way into it?"

"We're rarely troubled," said Michael John.

"When I came in by the fork on the hills," said the man, "I saw a green space up in the middle of the heather. There is a house there too with a lock on the door. Looking like a small hill farm that had been deserted."

"That's right," said Michael John.

"Does it belong to somebody?"

"It belongs to me," said Michael John. "I was born in that house. My grandfather died in it. We couldn't make him move down here."

The man paused. His big hands rubbed against each other.

"Would you let me live there?" he asked. Direct.

Michael John was a bit uncertain.

"It's not in good shape," he said. "The roof is bad. It must be leaking inside. It wants an awful lot done to it."

"I'll do it," said the man. "I'll do all that wants to be done to it, and I'll clear the fields of the weeds. I'll make it very nice for you and I'll pay you within my means."

"It's a long way from company," said Michael John. "In the bad winters there's no way out of it. A person would be snowed up like the sheep."

"I'd like it that way," said the man.

"Where are you from?" Michael John asked.

"I'd rather not tell you that," the man said earnestly. "I'd just like to fix that little house if you'll let me live there on my own. If you think I'm honest, oblige me, and if you don't think so just let it lie."

Michael John thought. He looked into the brown eyes that were calmly fixed on his own. Michael John had a big, cheerful face that was very readable. The man knew he had succeeded when he saw its expression.

"All right," said Michael John.

The man sighed. Michael John was surprised. A terrible lot depended on that, he thought.

**bulge** *svulme*  
**sleeve** *ærme*  
**trouble** *genere*  
**fork** *'hvor vejen deler sig'*  
**heather** *lyng*  
**rub** *gnide*  
**shape** *(her:) stand*  
**leak** *lække, være utæt*  
**wants ... done** *trænger til, at der bliver gjort ...*  
**clear** *rense, rydde*  
**weeds** *ukrudt*  
**wi'thin my means** *så godt jeg kan; efter evne*  
**company** *selskab; 'andre folk'*  
**earnestly** *alvorligt*  
**ob'lige me** *do as I ask you*  
**cheerful** *happy*  
**readable** *easy to read*  
**suc'ceed** *have heldet med sig, få sin vilje*  
**sigh** *sukke*  
**de'pend on** *afhænge af*



"My name is Paul," said the man.

"Shake on it, then, Paul," said Michael John, holding out his hand.

Paul seemed to hesitate, and then put out his hand. It was as hard as rock, Michael John felt.

"You do it up, and when you have it fixed we can talk about a payment from then," said Michael John. "Up to that it will be like you are working for me."

The man's eyes showed his thanks. For one of the few times in his life Michael John was embarrassed. That look should only be in the eyes of a sick dog, he thought.

If the people wanted something to talk about they had it now. They wanted to know everything. Michael John, knowing very little more than themselves, had to pretend to be very mysterious. That went well. Just a friend of mine, said Michael John, from the other side of the country. Bad health. Building himself up.

1. Describe the village. Why was it rarely visited by strangers?
2. Describe Michael John's shop.
3. What do you specially notice about the stranger's looks?
4. Why do you think Michael John liked him?
5. What did the man buy?
6. What were Michael John's feelings about the village?
7. What was it the stranger would like to do?
8. Why did Michael John hesitate?
9. Why did he agree?
10. What was Paul's reaction?
11. What did Michael John tell the villagers about Paul? Why?

### Polite requests (:anmodninger) and answers

Please ...

I'd like to ...

Would you please give me ...?

Could I trouble you about ...?

Would it offend (:forværme) you if ...?

Would you let me ...?

Could you perhaps/possibly ...?

It's a pleasure ...

I'm pleased to ...

I'm happy to ...

You are welcome to ...

**hesitate** *tøve*

**do up** fix, repair

**em'barrassed** *forlegen*

**build oneself up** *komme*

*til kræfter*



## II

Three months later you would not have known the small place on the side of the hill. The house had changed from sad and grey to yellow and white. The fields were cleared with neat stone walls all around them. It was like a miracle. But nobody could get close to the man. He would answer your greeting and talk about the weather and drink a bottle with you in Michael John's in the calm of the evening. But that was all. He had lost his yellow look. He was brown and strong and one of the hardest-working men they had ever met. And one of the happiest. The villagers became fond of him, and proud of his place, and Michael John had a way of looking at him, as if he had got him from Santa Claus for Christmas.

The inside of his house was nice. The furniture he made himself was good and solid. The children liked him. They seemed to understand his silence. With a knife he could make the funniest figures that you ever saw out of bits of branches and roots. There was not a kid in the place that did not have one of them. In the beginning the parents often questioned the children about him. But before long they gave up asking and just accepted him.

But then, the following spring, the car made its way into the mountains.

The road was bad even for bicycles, and the car had terrible trouble with it, bumping along and swaying. It was not the only car that had come in here. Lorries had come before and often brought supplies in to Michael John. But lorry drivers are very careless people who will drive a lorry in and out of hell as long as they do not own it themselves.

Paul was working at the road he was making into the place. It was a hard job, but now the worst was over and it was a pleasant sight to see it running up the hillside. He saw the car making its way and he leaned on the spade to watch it come. If he had seen it coming a year ago it might have given him uneasiness, but he was a different man now.

The man driving the car was small and fat. He wore glasses and his face was a round blob that was decorated with a small nose and a small mouth and small eyes. He travelled for people. He sold all sorts of things for them. He was very successful because he often did what he was doing now, following the bad side roads that other men would have thought too much trouble.

As the bumping car came closer Paul pretended to be working

neat *pæn*  
greeting *hilsen*  
root *rod*  
sway *svaje, hælde*  
sup'plies *varer,*  
*forsyninger*  
careless *uforsigtig,*  
*ligeglad*  
un'easiness *utilpashed,*  
*uro*  
blob *klat*  
work away *be busy*  
working





away. But he could not help looking back now and again over his shoulder. The car stopped below him. The window rolled down. He heard the small high voice calling him. He turned and went down to stand beside the car. He could feel the heat from it. Then he saw the face of the little man and his life was destroyed. The man tried to hide the recognition in his face, but it was too late. Paul had seen it. Bitterness filled him, and black despair. His hands gripped the spade, hard. Seeing this, the man was suddenly frightened. Then Paul turned away and went slowly up the hill. The little fat fellow called after him, "Hi, mister, is this the way in to Michael John's?"

The man did not turn back to answer him. He kept walking up the hill.

not help *ikke lade være*  
recog'nition *genkendelse*  
de'spair *fortvivelse*



1. "Nobody could get close to the man." What does this sentence mean here?
2. What were Paul's feelings about "the place"?
3. What were Michael John's feelings about Paul?
4. Why had Paul started making a road up to the house?
5. What is the first impression (:indtryk) you get of the man in the car?

### III

The salesman started his car again and went on.

He smiled broadly. Who would ever believe this? He heard himself telling the story in every cheap hotel in the country. Did these people in here know? They would not. But wait till they heard. He went down into the valley at full speed. He did not notice the river, the glittering sea far away, the sun shining brightly on the cottages. He saw nothing because he was really only a blind little man who thought about nothing except commission and dirty stories.

Michael John was in the shop, and two more of the men.

He did not even try to sell anything. He started straight off.

"Hey! How are you, men? I met a fellow up on the side of the hill. Do you know who he was?"

"That's Paul," said Michael John.

"Paul, is that what he calls himself?" said the little fat fellow.

"No, my friend, that's James Brian who killed his wife twenty years ago, down in the town. Came home drunk and didn't know his own strength. Listen, man. Listen now to the best part of it. Do you know who was foreman of the jury that convicted him? Me! Imagine that! Did you ever hear the like of that?"

"Listen," said Michael John tensely. "Did you talk to him?"

"Oh no," said the little fellow. "Not me. Should I talk to a murderer? He took one look at me and then he went up the hill as if the devil was after him."

Michael John left the shop at a run. He was cursing. He was not good at running any more. He was slow in the legs and heavy around the middle but he ran. Up the road and around the hill, holding his hand at his chest to keep his heart from bursting.

And he was too late. That was what he had been afraid of.

He stood there and called to the small figure down in the valley.

salesman *repræsentant*  
 glittering *shining*  
 com'mission *'procenter',*  
*fortjeneste*  
 dirty *sjofel*  
 straight off *at once*  
 jury *nævninge*  
 con'vict *dømme*  
 i'magine *tænk jer*  
 the like of that *noget*  
*lignende*  
 curse *bande*



The small figure of the big man running and jumping down. He was wearing the suit that he came with and nothing at all in his hands or in his pockets or on his back. He was going out the very same way he came in. Michael John stood there and called: "Paul! Paul!" He called and the hills carried his call away and over the man and sent it back to him. He saw the man stand as if he had been hit with a bullet, wait a moment and then run on. Michael John shouted "Paul!" once more, but it was no use, and he knew it. Tears of anger and sadness came into his eyes, and he had to bend in two, coughing from the running. Then he turned and walked back to the group at the door of the shop.

Michael John stopped in front of the little fat one and looked at him with red-rimmed eyes.

"Get out of here, you little bastard," he said, "and if you put a foot in this place again I'll shoot you."

"Now look here," said the little fellow, in the tone he used to sell people things they did not want.

"Get out of here," Michael John roared at him, grabbing his

**bullet** (*gevær*) *kugle*

**cough** *hoste*

**red-rimmed** *rødrandede*



shoulder and pushing him towards his car. "Get out of here before I cripple you."

"But –" said the fellow, and then after a look at Michael John's face he jumped into the car and shot away. Michael John bent and took up a stone from the road and flung it at the car. It made a mark in the black paint.

He walked into the shop and went over towards the fire. Then he sat down on a chair and lowered his face into his hands.

1. Why did the salesman get frightened?
2. Why is he called "blind"?
3. "... didn't know his own strength."  
Try to imagine what may have happened.
4. Why did Paul leave?
5. Why did he not take anything with him?
6. What would you have done in his situation?

**cripple** slå til krøbling  
**fling/flung/flung** kaste,  
kyle  
**lower** sænke, bøje

# 3 *The Fastest Runner on Sixty-First Street*

by James Farrel

**M**orty Aiken liked to run and to skate. He liked running games so much that sometimes he'd go over to Washington Park all by himself and run just for the fun of it. He got a kick out of running, and he had raced every kid he could get to run against him. His love of running and racing had even become a joke among many of the boys he knew. But even when they laughed at him they did it in a good-natured way, because he was a very popular boy. Older fellows liked him, and when they would see him, they'd say, "There's a damn good kid and a damned fast runner."

When he passed his fourteenth birthday, Morty was a little smaller than most boys of his own age. But he was well known, and in a way, almost famous in his own neighborhood.

He won medals in playground tournaments, and, in fact, he was the only boy from his school who had ever won medals in these tournaments. He became the winner of the fifty- and hundred-yard dash, and therefore he was called the best runner, for his age, on the South Side of Chicago.

Morty had his secret dreams. He was impatient to go to high school and get into high-school racing competitions. He'd never been coached, and yet look how good he was! Think of how good he would be when he had some coaching! He'd be a streak of lightning, if ever there was one. He dreamed that he would be called the Human Streak of Lightning. And after high school there would be college championships, and after that he would join an athletic club and win a place on the Olympic team, and somewhere, in Paris or Rome or some European city, he would beat the best runners in the world.

And girls would all like him, and the most beautiful girl in the world would marry him. He liked girls, but girls liked him even more than he liked them. In May, a little while before his

skate løbe på skojer  
got a kick out of blev  
'høj' af  
race løbe om kap med  
good-natured elskværdig  
playground legeplads,  
skolegård  
tournament turnering,  
konkurrence  
dash spurt, løb  
im'patient utålmodig  
high school skoleform for  
unge over 14  
compe'tition  
konkurrence  
coach træne  
streak of lightning lyn  
human menneskelig  
college (svarer omtrent  
til) gymnasiet  
championship  
mesterskab





graduation, the class had a picnic, and they played post office. The post office was behind a clump of bushes in Jackson Park. He was called to the post office more than any other of the boys. There was giggling and teasing, but it hadn't bothered him, especially because he knew that the other fellows liked and kind of envied him. To Morty, this was only natural. He accepted that he was somehow different from other boys and very important. Even Tony Rabuski looked at him in this way, and if any kid would have picked on him, Tony would have punished that kid. Tony was the toughest boy in school, and he was also considered to be the dumbest. He was also the poorest. He would often come to school wearing a black shirt, because a black shirt didn't show the dirt the way that other shirts did, and his parents couldn't afford to buy him many shirts. One day Tony was walking away from school with Morty, and Tony said:

"Kid, you run de fastest, I fight de best in de whole school. We make a crack-up team. We're pals. Shake, kid, we're pals."

Morty shook Tony's hand. For a fourteen-year-old boy, Tony had very big and strong hands. The other kids sometimes called them 'meat hooks'.

**M**orty looked on this handshake as a pledge. He and Tony became friends, and they were often together. Morty had Tony come over to play, and sometimes Tony stayed for a meal. Tony ate like a hungry wolf. When Morty's parents spoke of the way Tony ate and of the quantity of

**gradu'ation**  
*afgangseksamen*  
**picnic** *udflugt*  
**giggle** *fnise, smågrine*  
**tease** *drille*  
**bother** *genere*  
**es'pecially** *især*  
**envy** *misunde*  
**somehow** *in a way*  
**pick on** *plage, drille*  
**punish** *straffe*  
**crack-up** *førsteklasses*  
**pal** *friend*  
**shake** *giv mig hånden på*  
*det*  
**hook** *krog*  
**pledge** *højtideligt løfte*  
**quantity** *mængde*



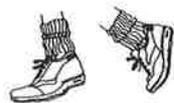
food he ate, Morty would reply by telling them that Tony was his friend.

Because he was poor and rather stupid, Tony was often teased by other boys. He was not able to run very fast, and they usually got away, laughing at him, saying that he had iron and bricks in his big feet. But after he and Morty had shaken hands and become pals, they found a way that would give Tony the chance to get even with the kids who tormented him. Morty would chase them, and had no difficulty in catching one of them. He'd usually be able to hold the boy until Tony would lumber up with punishment and revenge. Sometimes Tony would be cruel, and on a couple of occasions when he, in a dull rage, was sitting on a screaming boy, hitting him, Morty ordered Tony to stop. Tony did so at once. Morty did not want Tony to be too cruel. He had come to like Tony and to look upon him as a big brother. He'd always wanted a big brother, and sometimes he would imagine how wonderful it would be if Tony could even come to live at his house.

Soon their way of working together paid off, and the kids stopped mobbing Tony. Because of their fear, and because they liked and respected Morty and wanted him to play with them, they began to accept Tony. And Tony began to change. Once he was accepted, he looked on all the boys in Morty's gang as his pals. He would protect them as he would protect Morty. Tony then stopped making fierce and funny faces and acting in many odd little ways. After he became accepted, as a result of being Morty's pal, his behaviour changed, and because he was strong and could fight, the boys began to admire him. At times he really hoped for strange boys to come around the neighborhood and act like bullies so he could beat them up. He wanted to fight because he could feel powerful and would be praised and admired.

**E**ver since he had been a little fellow, Tony had often been called a 'Polack' or a 'dirty Polack'. After he became one of the gang or group around Morty, some of the boys would tell him that he was a 'white Polack'. In his slow way, he thought about these words and what they meant. When you were called certain words, you were laughed at, you were looked at as if something were wrong with you. If you were a Polack, many girls didn't want to have anything to do with you. The boys and girls who weren't Polacks had fun together that Polacks couldn't have. Morty Aiken wasn't called names. Tony didn't want to be called names. And if he fought and beat up

**brick** mursten  
**get even with** hævne sig  
på  
**tor'ment** plage  
**chase** run after  
**lumber up** run slowly,  
heavily  
**re'venge** hævn  
**cruel** grusom  
**dull** sløv  
**rage** raseri  
**i'magine** forestille sig  
**pay off** give bonus, være  
til gavn  
**gang** flok, bande, kreds  
**pro'tect** beskytte  
**fierce** vild, rasende  
**odd** strange  
**be'havior** opførsel  
**ad'mire** beundre  
**bully** bølge  
**praise** rose  
**call names** give øgenavn



those who called him names, they would be afraid of him. He wanted that. But he also wanted to have as much fun as the kids who weren't called these names. And he came to understand that these kids felt better when they called other kids names. He could fight and he could call names, and if he called a kid a name, and that kid got tough, he could beat him up. There was a name even worse than Polack - 'nigger'. If Tony didn't like a kid, he called him 'nigger'. He felt as good as he guessed these other kids did when he talked about the 'niggers'. And they could be beaten up. They weren't supposed to go to Washington Park because that was a park for the whites. That was what he had often heard.

He had heard it so much that he believed it. He sometimes got a gang of boys together and they would go to Washington Park, looking for colored boys to beat up. Morty went with them. He didn't particularly want to beat up anyone, but when they saw a colored kid and chased him, Morty would always be at the head, and he would be the one who caught the colored boy. He would grab or tackle him, and the others would catch up. He worked the same plan he and Tony had worked against the other boys. And after they had caught and beaten up a colored boy, they would all talk and shout and brag about what they had done. They felt good and proud of themselves, and they talked about how the Sixty-first Street boys would see to it that Washington Park would stay a white man's park.

And this became more and more important to Tony. If you could be called a 'Polack', you weren't considered white. Well, after the way he beat up these black ones, how could the other kids now say that Tony Rabuski wasn't white? That showed them all. That showed he was a hero. He was a hero as much as Morty Aiken was.

**M**orty was a proud boy on the night he graduated from grammar school in June. When he received his diploma, there was more applause in the auditorium than there was for any other member of the class. He felt good when he heard this clapping, but, then, he expected it. He lived in a world where he was somebody, and he was going into a bigger world where he would still be somebody. And he was in the midst of a happy and friendly crowd: teachers, parents, aunts, uncles and older sisters. A local politician made a speech praising everybody, adding that in this group there was one who not only promised to become a first-class athlete but who had already won gold medals and honors.

guess *gætte, antage*  
 weren't sup'posed to *varer ikke*  
*måtte ikke*  
 par'ticularly *særlig*  
 at the head *at the front*  
 grab *gribe fat i*  
 tackle *spænde ben for*  
 catch up *indhente*  
 brag *prale*  
 proud *stolt*  
 see to it that *sørge for at*  
 con'sidered *anset for*  
 hero *helt*  
 grammar school *grundskolen*  
 dip'loma *eksamensbevis*  
 ap'plause *bifald*  
 add *tilføje*  
 honor *æresbevisning*





And on that night, Morty's father and mother were very happy. Morty was their only son. Mr. Aiken was a carpenter. He had saved up money so that the house he owned was now paid for. He and his wife were quiet-living people who minded their own business. He believed that a boy should have a good time in sports, should fight his own battles, and that boyhood – the best time of one's life – should be filled with happy memories.

After the graduation ceremonies the father and mother took Morty home where they had cake and ice cream. The two parents were deeply moved by the applause given to their son when he had walked forward on the stage to receive his diploma. They were raising a fine boy and they could look people in the neighborhood in the eye and know that they had done their duty as parents. Morty had the whole summer before him. He would play and grow and enjoy himself. He was not a bad boy, he had never gotten into trouble, he wasn't the kind of boy who caused worry. It was fine. In August there would be the father's vacation, and they would all go to Wisconsin, and he would go fishing with the boy.

The days passed. Some days were better than others. Some days there was little to do, and on other days there was a lot. Tony Rabuski was working, delivering flowers for a flower merchant, but he sometimes came around after

**carpenter** *tømrer*  
**mind one's own**  
**business** *passe sig selv*  
**raise** *opfostre*  
**gotten** (Am.) *got*  
**little** *only a little*  
**de'liver** *bringe ud*  
**flower merchant**  
*blomsterhandler*



supper, and the kids sat talking or playing on the steps of Morty's house or of another house in the neighborhood. Morty liked to play running games, feeling the excitement of running like hell and like a streak of lightning, feeling your speed in your legs and muscles and getting to the goal first.

There wasn't anything to worry about, and there were dreams. Edna Purcell, who had been in Morty's class, seemed sweet on him, and she was a wonderful girl. One night she and some other girls came around, and they sat on the steps of Morty's house and played Tin-Tin. Morty had to kiss her. He did, with the kids laughing, and it seemed that something happened to him. He hadn't been shy when he was with girls, but now, when Edna was around, he would be shy. She was wonderful. She was more than wonderful. When he did have the courage to talk to her, he talked about running and ice-skating. She told him she knew what a runner and skater he was. A fast skater, such as he was, wouldn't want to think of skating with someone like her. He said that he would, and that next winter he would teach her to skate better. At once, he found himself wishing it were next winter already, and he would imagine himself skating with her. Coming home again, he would carry her skates, and they would be alone, like in another world, and then, there in the quiet park, with white snow all over it, he would kiss Edna Purcell. He had kissed Edna when they'd played Tin-Tin and Post Office, but he looked forward to the day that he got from her the kiss that would mean that she was his girl, his sweetheart. Everything he dreamed of doing, all the honors he would get, all the medals and cups he dreamed of winning – now all of this would be for Edna. And she was also going to Park High. No matter what Morty thought about, he thought about Edna at the same time. He thought about her every time he dreamed. When he went to Washington Park to swim, he thought of Edna. When he walked on the streets in the neighborhood, he thought of her. Edna. Just to think of her, Edna made everything in the world wonderfully wonderful.

And in this way the summer was passing for Morty. Morty sat on the curb with a group of boys, and they were bored and restless. They couldn't agree about what game to play, where to go, what to do to amuse themselves. Morty suggested a race, but no one would race him. They couldn't agree on playing ball. One boy wanted to go swimming, but no one would go with him. Morty sat by himself and thought about Edna. He guessed he'd rather be with her than with the kids. He didn't know where she was.

goal *mål*  
sweet on in love with  
cup *pokal*  
curb *kantsten*  
be bored *kede sig*  
amuse oneself *more sig*  
sug'gest *foreslå*

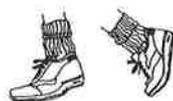


Tony Rabuski came around with four tough-looking kids. Tony had lost his job, and he said that the niggers had jumped him when he was delivering flowers down around Forty-seventh street, and he wanted his pals to stick by him. He told them what had happened, but they didn't get it, because Tony couldn't tell a story straight. Tony asked them didn't they know what was happening? There were race riots, and the beaches and Washington Park and the whole South Side were full of dark clouds, and over on Wentworth Avenue the big guys were fighting, and the dark clouds were out after whites. They didn't believe Tony. But Morty said it was in the newspapers, and that there were race riots. The bored boys became excited. They bragged about what they would do if the jigs came over to their neighborhood. Tony said they had to get some before they got this far. When asked where they were, Tony said all over. Finally, they went over to Washington Park, picking up sticks and clubs and rocks on the way. The park was calm. A few adults were walking or strolling about. A boy of eighteen or nineteen lay under a tree with his head in the lap of a girl who was stroking his hair. Some of the kids smirked and leered as they passed the couple. Morty thought of Edna and wished he could take her to Washington Park and kiss her. There were seven or eight row-boats on the lagoon, but all of the occupants were white. The park sheep were grazing. Tony threw a rock at them, frightening the sheep, and they all ran, but no cop was around to chase them. They passed the boathouse, talking and bragging. They now believed the rumors which they themselves had made up. White girls and women were in danger, and anything might happen. A tall young guy sitting on the grass with a girl called them over and asked them what they were doing with their clubs and rocks. Tony said they were looking for niggers. The young guy said that he'd seen two near the goldfish pond and urged the boys to go and get the sonsofbitches. Screaming and shouting, they ran to the goldfish pond. Suddenly, Tony shouted:

"Dark clouds."

They ran. Two Negro boys, near the pond, heard Tony's cry, and then the others' cry, and they ran. The mob of boys chased them. Morty was in the lead. Running at the head of the screaming, angry crowd of boys, he forgot everything except how well and fast he was running, and images of Edna flashed in and out of his mind. If she could see him running! He was running beautifully. He'd catch them. He was gaining. The colored boys ran in a northwest direction, crossing a road.

**jump** (*her*) *overfalde*  
**stick by** *holde med,*  
*hjælpe*  
**straight** *lige ud,*  
*sammenhængende*  
**riots** *optøjer*  
**dark clouds**  
 (sl) *Negroes*  
**jigs** (sl) *Negroes*  
**this far** *'helt her over'*  
**club** *kølle*  
**rock** *stone*  
**adult** *voksen*  
**lap** *skød*  
**stroke** *kærtagne*  
**smirk** *grine skævt*  
**leer** *glo frækt*  
**la'goon** *lagune, sø*  
**sheep** *får*  
**graze** *græsse*  
**rumor** *rygte*  
**pond** *dam*  
**urge** *opfordre*  
**sonsofbitches**  
*skiderikker*  
**in the lead** *at the front*  
**image** *picture*  
**flash** *fare*  
**gain** *hale ind (på)*



Morty was held up by a funeral procession. The other boys caught up with him. When the funeral procession had passed, it was too late to try and catch the colored boys they had been chasing. Angry, bragging, they crossed over to the ball field and marched across it, shouting and yelling. They picked up about eight boys of their own age and three older ones of seventeen or eighteen. The older ones said they knew where they'd find some shines. Now was the time to teach them their place once and for all. With the older boys in the lead, they left the park and marched down Grand Boulevard, still picking up men and boys as they went along. One of the men who joined them had a gun. They screamed, looked in doorways for Negroes, believed everything anyone said about Negroes, and kept boasting about what they would do when they found some.

"Dark clouds," Tony shouted.

The mob crossed to the other side of the street and ran cursing and shouting after a Negro. Morty was in the lead. He was outrunning the men and the older fellows. He heard them shouting behind him. He was running. He was running like the future Olympic champion. He was running like he'd run for Edna. He was running like a streak of lightning.

The Negro turned east. He had a start of a block. But Morty would catch him. He raced along the center of Forty-eighth Street. He began to breathe heavily. But he couldn't stop running now. He was outrunning his own gang, he was now about half a block ahead of his own gang. They screamed murderously behind him. And he heard shouts of encouragement.

"Catch'em, Morty boy!"

He heard Tony's voice. He ran.

The Negro turned into an alley. Morty entered the alley just in time to see the Negro spurt into a yard in the center of the block. He'd gained more. He was way ahead of the white mob. Somewhere behind him they were coming and yelling. He tore on. He felt the movements of his legs and muscles, felt his arms, felt the sensation of his whole body as he raced down the alley. Never had he run so fast. Suddenly Negroes jumped out of yards. He was caught and held. His only thought was one of surprise. Before he even realised what had happened, his throat was slashed. He fell, bleeding. Weakly, he mumbled, just once:

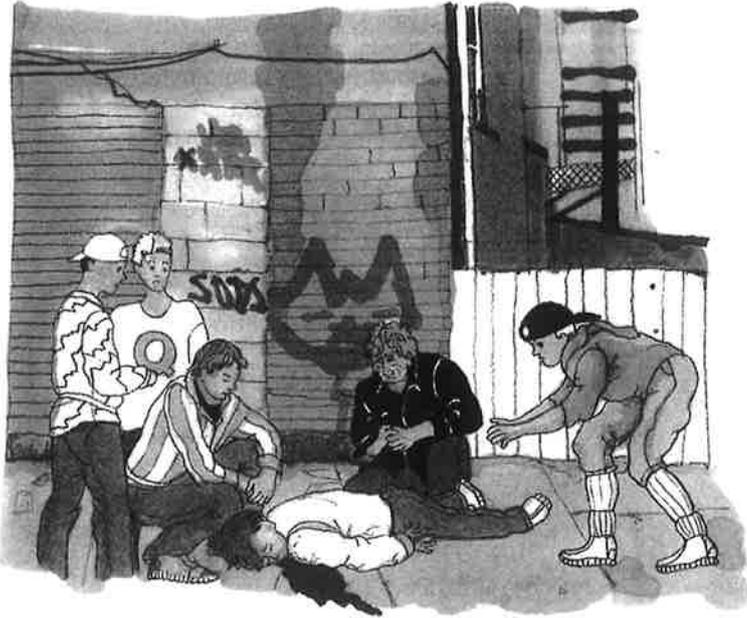
"Mother!"

The Negroes disappeared.

He lay bleeding in the center of the dirty alley, and when the gang of whites caught up with him they found him dead in dirt

funeral *begravelse*  
 catch up with *indhente*  
 ball field *boldbane*  
 yell *scream*  
 shines (sl) *Negroes*  
 boast *prale*  
 mob *flok*  
 outrun *run from*  
 a start of *et forspring på*  
 murderously *blødtørstigt*  
 of en' encouragement  
*opmuntrende*  
 alley *gyde*  
 tear (tore, torn) on fare  
*videre*  
 slash *skære over, flænge*  
 mumble *mumle*





and his own blood in the center of the alley. No Negroes were in sight. The whites surrounded his body. The boys trembled with fear. Some of them cried. One wet his pants. Then they became maddened. And they stood in impotent rage around the bleeding, limp body of Morty Aiken, the fastest runner on Sixty-first street.

**sur'round** *omgive*  
**tremble** *ryste*  
**impotent** *magtesløs*  
**limp** *slap*

1. Is Morty the sort of person you would envy? Give your reasons.
2. Would you like to be his friend? What are the positive and negative sides to it?
3. Why do the other kids tease Tony? (Give at least 3 'standard reasons').
4. What happens to Tony after he makes friends with Morty?
5. '...these kids felt better when they called other kids names.'  
Can you explain this?
6. What were Tony's reasons for chasing black boys in the park?
7. How do you feel about the relationship between Morty and Edna?
8. Try to imagine how Tony lost his summer job.
9. Describe what a race riot is, and what might make it start.
10. Why do other boys and men join Morty's and Tony's gang in the chase?
11. How do you feel about their behaviour? What do you think could be done to stop them?
12. How does Morty, in a way, kill himself?
13. How do you feel about the ending? Has the story got a 'moral'?





# The Last Spin

by *Evan Hunter*

**T**he boy sitting opposite him was his enemy.

The boy sitting opposite him was called Tigo, and he wore a green silk jacket with an orange stripe on each sleeve. The jacket told Dave that Tigo was his enemy. The jacket shrieked 'Enemy, enemy!'

"This is a good piece," Tigo said, indicating the gun on the table. "This runs you close to forty-five bucks, you try to buy it in a store."

The gun on the table was a Smith & Wesson .38 Police

**spin** *snurren, omdrejning*  
**opposite** *overfor*  
**sleeve** *ærme*  
**shriek** *scream*  
**piece** *revolver*  
**indicate** *point at*  
**run** *cost*  
**buck** *dollar*

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Special (...) Alongside the gun were three .38 Special cartridges.

Dave looked at the gun. He was nervous but he kept tight control of his face. He could not show Tigo what he was feeling. Tigo was the enemy, and so he said, "I seen pieces before. There's nothing special about this one."

"Except what we got to do with it," Tigo said. Tigo was studying him with large brown eyes. The eyes were moist-looking. He was not a bad-looking kid, Tigo, with thick black hair and maybe a nose that was too long, but his mouth and chin were good. You could usually tell a cat by his mouth and his chin. Tigo would not turkey out of this. Of that, Dave was sure.

"Why don't we start?" Dave asked. He wet his lips and looked across at Tigo.

"You understand," Tigo said. "I got no bad blood for you."

"I understand."

"This is what the club said. This is how the club said we should settle it. Without a big street diddlebop, you dig?" (...)

"We going to sit and talk all night, or we going to get this thing rolling?" Dave asked.

"What I'm trying to say," Tigo went on, "is that I just happened to be picked for this, you know? Like to settle this thing that's between the two clubs. I mean, you got to admit your boys shouldn't have come in our territory last night."

"I got to admit nothing," Dave said flatly.

"Well, anyway, they shot at the candy store. That wasn't right. There's supposed to be a truce on."

"Okay, okay," Dave said.

"So like - like this is the way we agreed to settle it. I mean one of us and - and one of you. Fair and square. Without any street boppin', and without any Law trouble."

"Let's get on with it," Dave said.

"I'm trying to say, I never even seen you on the street before this. So this ain't nothin' personal with me. Whichever way it turns out, like..."

"I never seen you neither," Dave said.

Tigo stared at him for a long time. "That's 'cause you're new around here. Where you from originally?"

"My people come down from the Bronx."

"You got a big family?"

"A sister and two brothers, that's all."

"Yeah, I only got a sister," Tigo shrugged. "Well." He sighed.

"So." He sighed again. "Let's make it, huh?"

"I'm waitin'," Dave said.

Tigo picked up the gun, and then he took one of the

**tight** *stram*

**moist** *fugtig*

**tell** *bedømme*

**cat** *fyr*

**chin** *hage*

**turkey out** (*slang*) *få*

*kolde fødder, løbe*

**bad blood** *hate*

**settle** *afgøre*

**diddlebop** (*slang*) *fight*

**get...rolling** *starte*

**I happened to be** *det*

*var et tilfælde, at jeg...*

**ad'mit** *indrømme*

**sup'posed to be** *should*

*be*

**truce** *våbenstilstand*

**agree** *blive enig*

**fair and square** *helt*

*retfærdigt*

**bop** (*slang*) *fight*

**turn out** *end*

**o'originally** *to start with*

**Bronx** *se kortet på side*

157

**shrug** *trække på*

*skuldrene*

**sigh** *sukke*



cartridges from the table top. He broke open the gun, slid the cartridge into the cylinder, and then snapped the gun shut and twirled the cylinder. "Round and round she goes," he said, "and where she stops, nobody knows."

"There's six chambers in the cylinder," Tigo said, "and only one cartridge. That makes the odds five-to-one that the cartridge'll be in firing position when the cylinder stops whirling. You dig?"

"I dig."

"I'll go first," Tigo said.

Dave looked at him suspiciously. "Why?"

"You want to go first?"

"I don't know."

"I'm giving you a break." Tigo grinned. "I may blow my head off first time out."

"Why you giving me a break?" Dave asked.

Tigo shrugged. "What the hell's the difference?" He gave the cylinder a fast twirl.

"The Russians invented this, huh?" Dave asked.

"Yeah."

"I always said they was crazy."

"Yeah, I always..." Tigo stopped talking. The cylinder was still now. He took a deep breath, put the barrel of the .38 to his temple, and then squeezed the trigger.

The firing pin clicked on an empty chamber.

"Well, that was easy, wasn't it?" he asked. He shoved the gun across the table. "Your turn, Dave."

Dave reached for the gun. It was cold in the basement room, but he was sweating now. He pulled the gun toward him, then he left it on the table while he dried his palms on his trousers. He picked up the gun and then stared at it.

"It's a nifty piece," Tigo said. "I like a good piece."

"Yeah, I do, too," Dave said. "You can tell a good piece just by the way it feels in your hand."

Tigo looked surprised. "I mentioned that to one of the guys yesterday, and he thought I was nuts."

"Lots of guys don't know about pieces," Dave said, shrugging.

"I was thinking," Tigo said, "when I get old enough, I'll join the Army, you know? I'd like to work around pieces."

"I thought of that, too. I'd join now, only my old lady won't give me permission. She's got to sign if I join now."

"Yeah, they're all the same," Tigo said, smiling. "Your old lady born here or the island?"

**cartridge** *patron*  
**break/broke open** *lukke op*  
**slide** *skubbe*  
**cylinder** *tromle*  
**twirl** *turn*  
**chamber** *kammer*  
**whirl** *turn quickly*  
**dig** (slang) *understand*  
**sus'piciously** *mistænksomt*  
**break** *chance*  
**in'vent** *opfinde*  
**still** *not moving*  
**barrel** *løb*  
**temple** *tinding*  
**squeeze** *trykke*  
**trigger** *aftrækker*  
**firing pin** *slagstift*  
**shove** *push*  
**basement** *cellar*  
**palm** *håndflade*  
**nifty** (slang) *wonderful*  
**mention** *say*  
**nuts** (slang) *mad*  
**old lady** (slang) *mother*  
**per'mission** *tilladelse*  
**the island** *Manhattan*  
(*se kortet s. 157*)





"The island," Dave said.

"Yeah, well, you know they got these old-fashioned ideas."

"I better spin," Dave said.

"Yeah," Tigo agreed.

Dave slapped the cylinder with his left hand. The cylinder whirled, whirled and then stopped. Slowly, Dave put the gun to his head. He wanted to close his eyes, but he didn't dare. Tigo, the enemy, was watching him. He returned Tigo's stare, and then he squeezed the trigger.

His heart skipped a beat, and then over the roar of his blood he heard the empty click. Hastily, he put the gun down on the table.

**I better = I had better**

*jeg må hellere*

**a'gree samtykke**

**slap hit**

**skip a beat hoppe et slag**

*over*

**roar brølen**



"Makes you sweat, don't it?" Tigo said.

Dave nodded, saying nothing. He watched Tigo. Tigo was looking at the gun.

"Me, now, huh?" he said. He took a deep breath, then picked up the .38.

He shrugged. "Well." He twirled the cylinder, waited for it to stop, and then put the gun to his head.

"Bang!" he said, and then he squeezed the trigger. Again, the firing pin clicked on an empty chamber. Tigo let out his breath and put the gun down.

"I thought I was dead that time," he said.

"I could hear the harps," Dave said.

"This is a good way to lose weight, you know that?" He laughed nervously, and then his laugh became honest when he saw that Dave was laughing with him. "Ain't it the truth? You could lose ten pounds this way."

"My old lady's like a house," Dave said, laughing. "She ought to try this kind of diet." He laughed at his own humour, pleased when Tigo joined him.

"That's the trouble," Tigo said. "You see a nice deb in the street, you think it's crazy, you know? Then they get to be our people's age, and they turn to fat." He shook his head.

"You got a chick?" Dave asked.

"Yeah, I got one."

"What's her name?"

"Aw, you don't know her."

"Maybe I do," Dave said.

"Her name is Juana." Tigo watched him. "She's about five-two, got these brown eyes..."

"I think I know her," Dave said. He nodded. "Yeah, I think I know her."

"She's nice, ain't she?" Tigo asked. He leaned forward, as if Dave's answer was of great importance to him.

"Yeah, she's nice," Dave said.

"The guys rib me about her. You know, all they're after – well, you know, they don't understand something like Juana."

"I got a chick, too," Dave said.

"Yeah? Hey, maybe sometime we could..." Tigo cut himself short. He looked down at the gun, and his sudden enthusiasm seemed to ebb completely. "It's your turn," he said.

"Here goes nothing," Dave said. He twirled the cylinder, sucked in his breath, and then fired.

The empty click was loud in the stillness of the room.

"Man!" Dave said.

**nod** *nikke*

**lose weight** *tabe sig*

**diet** *slankekur*

**pleased** *happy*

**deb** *young girl*

**turn to fat** *blive tyk*

**chick** (slang) *girl-friend*

**five-two = five feet, two**

**inches** *ca. 155 cm*

**guy** *fyr, bandemedlem*

**rib** *drille*

**cut short** *afbryde*

**en'thusiasm** *begejstring*

**ebb** *ebbe ud, forsvinde*



"We're pretty lucky, you know?" Tigo said.

"So far."

"We better lower the odds. The boys won't like it if we..." He stopped himself again, and then reached for one of the cartridges on the table. He broke open the gun again, and slipped the second cartridge into the cylinder. "Now we got two cartridges in here," he said. "Two cartridges, six chambers. That's four-to-two. Divide it, and you get two-to-one." He paused. "You game?"

"That's - that's what we're here for, ain't it?"

"Sure."

"Okay then."

"Gone," Tigo said, nodding his head. "You got courage, Dave."  
"You're the one needs the courage," Dave said gently. "It's your spin."

Tigo lifted the gun. Idly, he began spinning the cylinder.

"You live on the next block, don't you?" Dave asked.

"Yeah." Tigo kept slapping the cylinder. It spun with a gently whirring sound.

"That's how come we never crossed paths, I guess. Also I'm new on the scene."

"Yeah, well you know, you get hooked up with one club, that's the way it is."

"You like the guys on your club?" Dave asked, wondering why he was asking such a stupid question, listening to the whirring of the cylinder at the same time.

"They're okay." Tigo shrugged. "None of them really send me, but that's the club on my block, so what're you gonna do, huh?" His hand left the cylinder. It stopped spinning. He put the gun to his head.

"Wait!" Dave said.

Tigo looked puzzled. "What's the matter?"

"Nothing, I just wanted to say - I mean..." Dave frowned. "I don't dig too many of the guys on my club, either."

Tigo nodded. For a moment, their eyes locked. Then Tigo shrugged, and fired.

And then the empty click filled the basement room.

"Phew," Tigo said.

"Man, you can say that again."

Tigo slid the gun across the table.

Dave hesitated an instant. He did not want to pick up the gun. He felt sure that this time the firing pin would strike the percussion cap of one of the cartridges. He was sure that this time he would shoot himself.

**you game?** (slang) er du med, tør du?

**courage** mod

**gently** blidt

**idly** dovent

**block** kvarter mellem to sidegader

**cross paths** meet

**hooked up** involved

**send me** (slang) sig mig noget

**what's the matter** what is wrong

**frown** rynke panden

**dig** like

**lock** mødes, holde fast i hinanden

**hesitate** tøve

**per'cussion cap**

fænghætte



"Sometimes I think I'm turkey," he said to Tigo, surprised that his thoughts had found voice.

"I feel that way sometimes, too," Tigo said.

"I never told that to nobody," Dave said. "The guys on my club would laugh at me, I ever told them that."

"Some things you got to keep to yourself. There ain't nobody you can trust in this world."

"There should be somebody you can trust," Dave said. "Hell, you can't tell nothing to your people. They don't understand."

Tigo laughed. "That's an old story. But that's the way things are. What're you gonna do?"

"Yeah. Still, sometimes I think I'm turkey."

"Sure, sure," Tigo said. "It ain't only that, though. Like sometimes – well, don't you wonder what you're doing stomping some guy in the street? Like – you know what I mean? Like – who's the guy to you? What you got to beat him up for? 'Cause he messed with somebody else's girl?" Tigo shook his head. "It gets complicated sometimes."

"Yeah, but..." Dave frowned again. "You got to stick with the club. Don't you?"

"Sure, sure – no question." Again their eyes locked.

"Well, here goes," Dave said. He lifted the gun. "It's just..." He shook his head, and then twirled the cylinder. The cylinder spun, and then stopped. He studied the gun, wondering if one of the cartridges would roar from the barrel when he squeezed the trigger.

Then he fired.

Click.

"I didn't think you was going through with it," Tigo said.

"I didn't neither."

"You got heart, Dave," Tigo said. He looked at the gun. He picked it up and broke it open.

"What you doing?" Dave asked.

"Another cartridge," Tigo said. "Six chambers, three cartridges. That makes it even money. You game?"

"You?"

"The boys said..." Tigo stopped talking. "Yeah, I'm game," he added, his voice curiously low.

"It's your turn, you know."

"I know."

Dave watched as Tigo picked up the gun.

"You ever been rowboating on the lake?"

Tigo looked across the table at him, his eyes wide. "Once," he said. "I went with Juana."

**turkey** afraid

**trust** stole på

**stomp** sparke, tæske

**mess** blande sig, 'blive  
kæreste'

**shake/shook** ryste

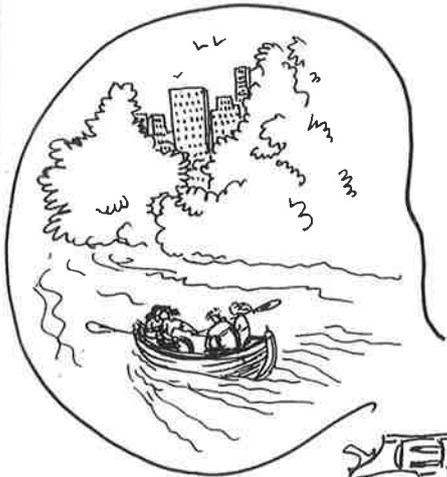
**heart** mod

**even money** lige chancer

**curiously** mærkeligt

**rowboat** sejle, ro





"Is it – is it any kicks?"

"Yeah. Yeah, it's grand kicks. You mean you never went?"

"No," Dave said.

"Well, you got to try it, man," Tigo said excitedly. "You'll like it. Hey, you try it."

"Yeah, I was thinking maybe this Sunday I'd..." He did not complete the sentence.

"My spin," Tigo said wearily. He twirled the cylinder. "Here goes a good man," he said, and he put the revolver to his head and squeezed the trigger.

Click.

Dave smiled nervously. "No rest for the weary," he said. "But Jesus, you got heart. I don't know if I can go through with it."

"Sure, you can," Tigo assured him. "Listen, what's there to be afraid of?" He slid the gun across the table.

**kicks** fun

**ex'citedly** *opstemt*

**com'plete** *fuldføre*

**wearily** tiredly

**as'sure** *forsikre*



"We keep this up all night?" Dave asked.

"They said – you know..."

"Well, it ain't so bad. I mean, hell, we didn't have this operation, we wouldn'ta got a chance to talk, huh?" he grinned feebly.

"Yeah," Tigo said, his face splitting in a wide grin. "It ain't been so bad, huh?"

"No, it's been – well, you know, these guys on the club, who can talk to them?"

He picked up the gun.

"We could..." Tigo started.

"What?"

"We could say – well – like we kept shootin' an' nothing happened, so..." Tigo shrugged. "What the hell! We can't do this all night, can we?"

"I don't know."

"Let's make this the last spin. Listen, they don't like it, they can take a flying leap, you know?"

"I don't think they'll like it. We supposed to settle this for the clubs."

"To hell with the clubs!" Tigo said vehemently. "Can't we pick our own..." The word was hard coming. When it came, he said it softly, and his eyes did not leave Dave's face. "... friends?"

"Sure we can," Dave said fervently. "Sure we can! Why not?"

"The last spin," Tigo said. "Come on, the last spin."

"Gone," Dave said. "Hey, you know, I'm glad that you thought of this idea. You know that? I'm actually glad!" He twirled the cylinder. "Look, you want to go on the lake on Sunday? I mean, with your girl and mine? We could rent two boats. Or even one if you want."

"Yeah, one boat," Tigo said. "Hey, your girl'll like Juana, I mean it. She's a swell chick."

The cylinder stopped. Dave put the gun to his head quickly.

"Here's to Sunday," he said. He grinned at Tigo, and Tigo grinned back, and then Dave fired.

The explosion rocked the small basement room, ripping away half of Dave's head, shattering his face. A small, sharp cry escaped Tigo's throat, and a look of incredulous shock knifed his eyes.

Then he put his head on the table and began weeping.

**feebly** weakly

**take a flying leap** så er det bare synd

**vehemently** heftigt

**fervently** brændende, inderligt

**swell** fine

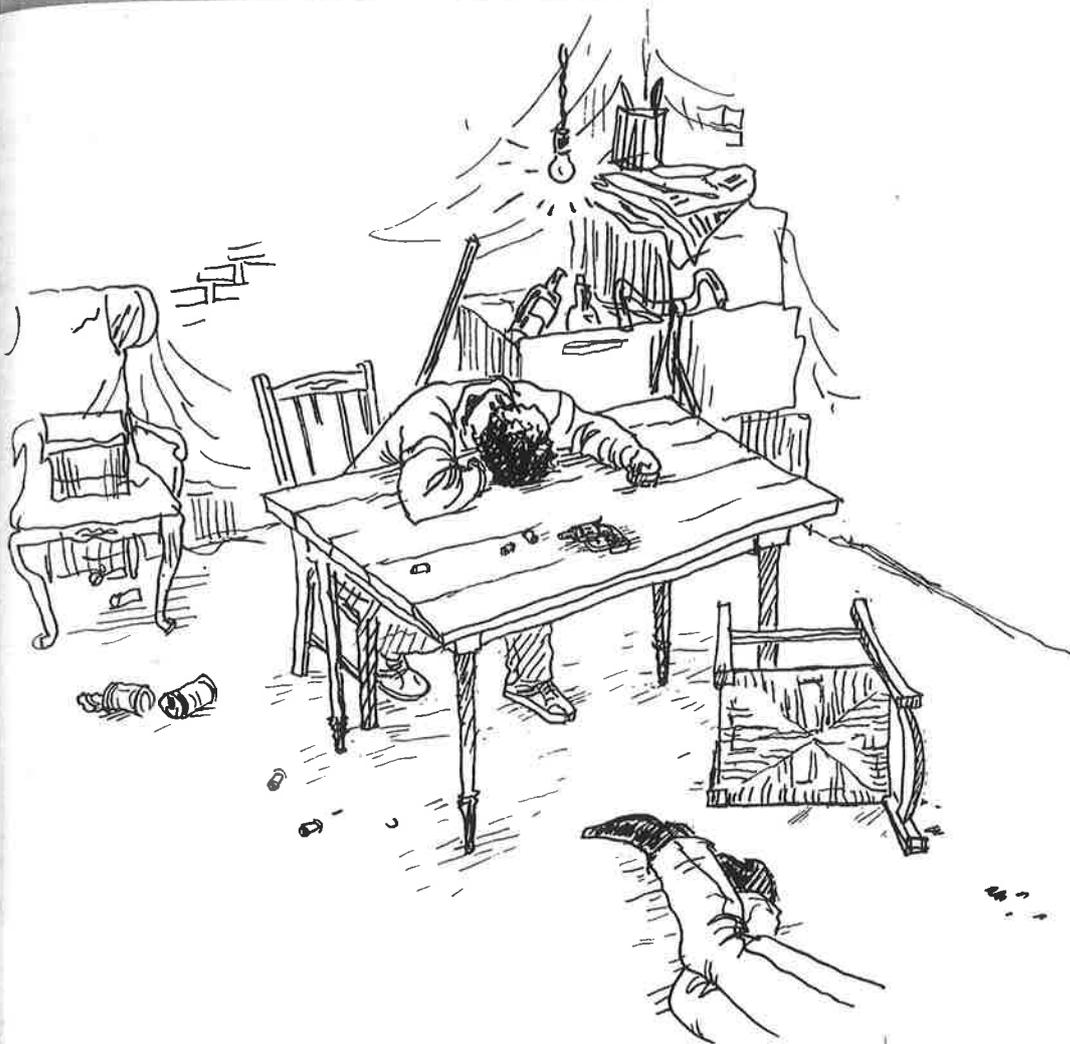
**shatter** smash

**in'credulous** vantro

**knife** stikke, lukke

**weep** cry





1. Where do you think the story takes place?
2. What has been happening, so that the two boys have to 'play Russian roulette'?
3. Describe the two boys – you can add details from films you may have seen or other stories you have read. Why have they been given such different names?
4. Are these two boys typical of their gangs, do you think?
5. How many times do they 'make the spin'? Is there any difference in the way they make these spins?
6. What sort of a relationship (:forhold) develops (:udvikle sig) between the two of them?
7. Imagine you are Tigo. How would you describe what happened that day to your girl-friend Juana?
8. Why were the boys members of their gangs? What does being a gang-member mean for a boy (both the good things and the bad things)?
9. Do you think Evan Hunter wants to tell anything in this story – or is it just exciting?

