MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER

This issue of VooDoo is dedicated to the fine art of humor. In these troubled times, it is sad to think of the countless thousands who don't know the difference between an elephant and a mailbox, or, say, between an intellectual pygmy tribe and a woman's track team. This, then, is dedicated also to those at MIT who don't have the slightest idea what a sense of humor is. We hope to make a small dent in their heads with this issue.

FEAR & LOATHING, COMMONS

Everyone has to eat, of course, but that doesn't mean everyone has to eat the same thing. It is in that spirit that we present some exciting tales of heroics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, including tales of Bexley Hall, romance, and, of course, Commons. Pictured at left, one of the famous Commons "specials," the "human's steak." Available only during the school year.

219.......................$2.49

LEARN TO BE FUNNY QUICK, EASY

Now you can learn, in the comfort of our luxury classroom settings, the secrets of the masters of humor and comedy! These secrets have been closely guarded for aeons.

117...$1.98

Happy Thanksgiving! While you're enjoying your festive dinner, remember that 3% of the people in the world are living under a subsistence level, are starving to death.
VOODOO is published often as not.
Volume 55, Number 1
October 24, 1976


Many thanks are due, as usual, to Thursday, Liberation News Service, and Blood Studios. Subscriptions are available, ask us.
So here it is, the middle of January, and it's a good 70-80 degrees outside. I've seen some pretty freaky weather in Cambridge in my time, but this is something new to me. To the subjective body, such as mine, it is hot and stifling, so its no wonder that around eight or nine o'clock I start to nod out. Of course, the fact that I've been toking up some pretty good feathery Mexican tops since ten in the morning might have something to do with my early fade-out.

Be that as it may, I collapse early in the evening, only to be awakened some three hours later by the sound of a raucous party out in the courtyard. After a few moments of inner debate ("Can I possibly get more wasted? Well, I can sure as hell try!") I stagger out into the night. I shoulda stood in bed.

Get a few feet past the doorway, and am still trying to decide whether or not I am actually awake, when someone shoves a pipe in my hands and says, "Where've you been? You're way behind. Suck on this for a while." Not wishing to enlighten the dear little nimrod on our comparative states of mindlessness, (proceed to monopolize the pipe while browsing through the sundry bottles of beer, rum, tequila and 100 proof whatnot. Suddenly, a voice of doom wails out, "We're out of ice!") and just as quickly two young stalwarts cry out, "Fear not, we shall journey to the Main Building and replenish our supply," and take off across the street. Such noble youth! Such selfless action! Such unmitigated stupidity!! I shoulda stood in bed.

Because our dauntless duo return momentarily with a plastic bag-lined milk case full of exceptionally finely crushed ice, which bears an uncanny resemblance to snow. In fact, the first thing I say when they return with their body—clever me—is "Hey, this ain't ice, it's snow." Almost immediately, the air of the courtyard is filled with flying snow, but the stationary target provided by the Walls of Bexley soon proves too tame, and the snowball throwers move out onto Mass Ave to have at the traffic. I remain in the courtyard, nursing a small rum and a large bowlful of whatever it was we were smoking at the time.

The story at this point begins to grow more confusing, so I'm going to cheat a little and ask all of you to pay close attention to this next. We have one group so intent upon the calendar that they have neglected to consult the thermometer, and so are throwing snowballs at Mass Ave in January, 70 degrees be damned. We have me, staggering about the courtyard, drunk, stoned, half-asleep and more than normally out-of-it. And we have the Cambridge Police. "Cambridge Police?" you demand indignantly, "where did they come from?" Well I told you it was going to get a little tricky. Now as I pieced it together later from several informed sources, the snowball contingent had sent one or two arcing over a Cambridge PD car, which had subsequently pulled over a few hundred feet ahead, and probably called for help. Minutes later, a taxi cab (but a taxi cab with a difference) had rolled s-l-o-w-l-y by, lacking only a blinking neon sign screaming HIT ME! HIT ME! Several people, none of whom very strongly resembled me (aha, subtle foreshadowing) stepped forward and sent fluffy white missiles cascading off the windshield. Within two feet the car stopped, and even before completely still the driver's door flew open, a blue leg leaped from the car, and the Bexley snowballers took off for the nearest entryway.

Unfortunately, I had no way of knowing that these events were transpiring. Even so, the sight of the screaming hordes piling into that one entryway conveyed a message of "Uhh—something's happening." But seeing the crowd at that one entryway, I decide to play it "smart" and head into the other entryway, the one being held open by a doorstop. Chorus: I shoulda stood in bed.

I just make it inside the doorway when this blue blur comes steaming around the corner of the courtyard, takes a flying leap and executes a perfect landing—on the middle of my back. I am thrown to floor, and alld along the hallway, not on any kind of carpet, mind you, but on one of them hard plastic runners used to dig the
ON NOVEMBER 2, THERE’LL BE A MAJOR ECONOMICS TEST.

If the Bottle Bill passes, beer and mixer prices will go up. Way up.
If you don’t believe us, ask somebody who goes to school in Vermont.
They’ll tell you that under their similar law, beer went up $1.80 a case.

Some of that is a deposit they get back – provided no one breaks a bottle, mashes a can, or loses either one.
But a full 60¢ of that $1.80 is a non-returnable handling charge.
Look, if the Bottle Bill were a recycling measure, if it even encouraged recycling, the higher costs might not be hard to take.
But it doesn’t. If you really study the Bottle Bill, you’ll never let it pass.

Question: Would you vote for a Bottle Bill when a similar law in Vermont forced the cost of beer up $1.80 a case?

Yes  No

VOTE NO - QUESTION 6

NOV.2

Committee to Protect Jobs and Use of Convenience Containers in MA, 21 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108.
mud out of your boots. Wearing shorts as I am, it serves equally effectively at digging the flesh out of my knees. I start screaming, as of impact, "Help, somebody, this big dude's beating the shit help out of me! Help, hey somebody— (at this point I squirm around and get my first good look at my assailant—) "Oh my God—it's a cop!"

It's truly amazing how quickly one can become sober, perfectly straight, and wide awake, given the proper incentive. The man now hand-cuffs my hands behind my back and lifting me to my feet by my hair was providing all the incentive I ever could have imagined. Immediately my thoughts processes became crisper and clearer, as I recalled that I had been holding a pipe in my hand when this neanderthal had nailed me. Miracle of Miracles, my new-found friend, who was now teaching me ballet (more on that later) had been so intent on coralling a piece of raw meat that he had failed to notice that slightly incriminating piece of baggage. Thus my heart and spirits rose, as well as the heels of my feet, as he walked me out of there in ballet-form was now good enough to get arrested to that. What that consisted of was his getting a firm, I mean FIRM grip on my hair with one hand, and then proceeding to keep that hand far enough off the ground that I had a chance of premature baldness, or tip-toeing as a form of locomotion. I didn't care if it meant walking on my hands, I was anxious to get the hell out of that entryway and far away from that pipe. So naturally, he executes an about-face and heads back to the scene of the crime—his crime. Imminent heart failure. Not wanting to get too close to where ever the hell the pipe ended up, I try to convince him he wanted to go up the staircase near the beginning of the hallway by proceeding there ahead of him. By the simple means of retaining his firm grip on my roots and not moving, he manages to convince me that, yes, I like the first floor just fine. All of a sudden he starts to knock on this one door. Still as eager as ever to depart the immediate vicinity, I venture, "If you want the houseparents, they're across the courtyard." He ignores the issue, and instead barks at me, "Where are the houseparents?" "Not feeling in any position to practice my snappy one-liners I reply, "They're parents?" Not feeling in any position to practice my snappy one-liners I reply, "They're parents?"

"First of all, this Patrol sergeant comes in and takes off my handcuffs. Great. He then proceeds to tell me that he will have to put them back on again when they take me away from here to the police station. Not so great."

At the time, however, I was too caught up in certain petty concerns to marvel at the incredible eyesight of the man. In short, I feel myself slipping from a standing position to a more comfortable heap on the floor, and commence the process of eliminating my involuntary muscular reflexes and catalepsy, which has been a part of this particular adventure. It happens that there is in the basement of Bexley a room bearing the name of Miracles, my new-found friend, who was now teaching me ballet (more on that later) had been so intent on coralling a piece of raw meat that he had failed to notice that slightly incriminating piece of baggage. Thus my heart and spirits rose, as well as the heels of my feet, as he walked me out of there in ballet-form was now good enough to get arrested to that. What that consisted of was his getting a firm, I mean FIRM grip on my hair with one hand, and then proceeding to keep that hand far enough off the ground that I had a chance of premature baldness, or tip-toeing as a form of locomotion. I didn't care if it meant walking on my hands, I was anxious to get the hell out of that entryway and far away from that pipe. So naturally, he executes an about-face and heads back to the scene of the crime—his crime. Imminent heart failure. Not wanting to get too close to wherever the hell the pipe ended up, I try to convince him he wanted to go up the staircase near the beginning of the hallway by proceeding there ahead of him. By the simple means of retaining his firm grip on my roots and not moving, he manages to convince me that, yes, I like the first floor just fine. All of a sudden he starts to knock on this one door. Still as eager as ever to depart the immediate vicinity, I venture, "If you want the houseparents, they're across the courtyard." He ignores the issue, and instead barks at me, "Where are the houseparents?" "Not feeling in any position to practice my snappy one-liners I reply, "They're parents?" Not feeling in any position to practice my snappy one-liners I reply, "They're parents?"

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to work upon this most difficult of locks. He was an excellent lockpick, and one of good character. He labored long and hard at that lock, still working when all had left for the pursuits of the evening. Late that night, those still awake were startled to see lights and stereo blinks on and off, and stay off for periods of time. With one or more finally deciding to check things out, those who knew of our young lockpick's ambitious project hastened to the scene, and after some effort were able to restore light and sound on a permanent basis. Those still asleep, those with electric alarm clocks, were suitably upset in the morning, and their frowns were of with a sense of revenge—need, to bring together might and main necessary to gain succor. Ah, but how to take fitting revenge?

This is where our other main character enters the picture, namely, The Wrecking Ball, star of stage, screen and construction site. Sengen showed prior to the night of blinking light, one of the more irregular Bexley regulars was driving past a construction site, on Vassar Street as I recall, and saw this lonely wrecking ball sitting in the middle of a semi-vacant lot, looking incredibly forlorn. Being of tender, if larcenous, heart, he drove in, stopped by the ball, jacked it into his car (god only knows how—no chain, no lock), and with the thought that he can figure it out, and the man in question ain’t talking) and drove off. When he got to Bexley, he got a crowd together and rolled it up to the steps. Getting it up the four steps into a first floor apartment is a tale of such heroic courage, selfless effort, and monumental proportions that I am sure it is well worth the telling. It was delivered, and not having anything better to do with it immediately, it was spray-painted day-glo orange and emblazoned with the letters SUNKIST. A three hundred and fifty pound steel Sunkist orange. Aside from making a dandy paperweight, it was real handy for bringing showers of plaster onto the pool players directly beneath in the basement. But that little fellow was destined for much bigger things than being lifted slightly, and dropped, so as to chaste noisy pool players.

It was a joint effort. One man supplied the chain. Another the locks. A third made a metal box (with-wicked on the outside, no less) for the victim’s leg. Somebody brought a saw with them. Some people were making last minute preparations with the locks. In order to prevent Danny from working his will on the locks, the one man was violating the lock with a screw driver, methodically ravaging the pins. The other was being a little bit more basic about it, driving nails into the key hole until there was no place to instal late a lockpick. The camera people were ready, and it was time to go. I and a group of volunteers went over to the basement of the main building and convinced the physical plant men to let us borrow one of their heavy duty type dollies. We rolled it into the courtyard, loaded the ball onto it, and rolled it into the basement of the main buildings. After a few false starts and mistakes, the doors to the elevator opened, and the cart, with wrecking ball concealed under cardboard box, was pushed across Lobby 7 to the little carpeted whitish between the information office and the door. Two things became immediately evident less than halfway to what would become the scene of the crime. First of all, Suzanne Weinberg, of Lobby-of-Building Seven-Committee fame, was organizing some sort of chorale group between our carpeted whatsis and the main corridor. Secondly, we weren’t going to escape her notice very long, because the cart we were using had metal wheels which were literally SCREAMing in protest. Sure enough, just as we roll the ball off onto the carpet, with an incredible THUD, she comes over and says, “Don’t make anymore noise, we’re having a closed group here, and I don’t want that cart making anymore noise.” We promise her, “The cart won’t make anymore noise, we guarantee it,” and roll the cart away. She goes away. We’re almost ready.

We had the ball in the lobby, with the chain locked onto it via a hole that runs through the ball, and the other end of the chain, waiting. Someone called his room, where his roommate, our con-federate, waited for the call. Upon receiving it he jumped up and yelled, “There’s a bunch of maniacs in the Lobby of Building 7, I can’t miss this” and ran out. Danny, of course, was right behind him. As soon as he entered the lobby and took a few steps we jumped. At first five people grabbed him, so he almost got away. Danny may not be big, but he has boundless reserves of manic energy. Fortunately we were prepared for this, and had come in force. With ten or so people on top of him, and one unfortunate person below him holding on for dear life, the shackles was attached and we scattered. The crowd was all hollering and rolling that thing for all he was worth, he was in the middle of the last lane, when the cars got the green light. The crowd was all hollering and screaming, CO, GO, STOP. But it was too late—danger—nobody is going to try rolling their car over a 350 pound wrecking ball. Over Danny, maybe, but that wrecking ball would have been positively brutal.

Over on the Bexley side of the street, the crowd was still with him as he rolled it home, on the brass lock instead of the steel chain, he was off! Pushing and shoving and rolling that thing for all he was worth, he was in the middle of the last lane, when the cars got the green light. The crowd was all hollering and screaming, CO, GO, STOP. But it was too late—danger—nobody is going to try rolling their car over a 350 pound wrecking ball. Over Danny, maybe, but that wrecking ball would have been positively brutal.

“Campus Patrol wasn’t sure what they saw was really happening, and wandered off, slightly amused.”

Even when a member of the crowd volunteered the information, “Danny, God himself couldn’t pick that lock,” he persevered. Even when Campus Patrol elbowed their way through the crowd that had formed around him, and asked him if he wanted help, he waved them off with a cavalier, “Nah, I’ll pick myself out.” Campus Patrol wasn’t sure that what they saw was really happening, and wandered off, slightly amused.

After a while, Danny realized that the locks had been doctoried, and decided he would go home and hacksaw his way out. Some people suggested that he might want to use the elevator, but Danny was more interested in the direct route, the front steps. He grabbed the hacksaw, climbed up on the window sill, and the other end of the steps, and jump the ten feet after it, as everyone was urging him to do. Having sampled our helpfulness once already today, he opted for the steps. Very slowly he let the ball roll down one step, pulling above and behind it on the chain, so that it wouldn’t get away from him. Only five people grabbed him, so he almost got away. Danny was hopping behind it, and managed to keep it from him just a few steps from the bottom. It rolled a little, bounced once, twice, and landed on the edge of the bottom step, tearing out a double-fisted hunk of concrete. Danny was hopping behind it, and managed to keep it from rolling out into Mass Ave. The crowd was ready for the great race. Danny stood behind the wrecking ball waiting for the light to go Walk. The moment it did, he was off! Pushing and shoving and rolling that thing for all he was worth, he was in the middle of the last lane, when the cars got the green light. The crowd was all hollering and screaming, CO, GO, STOP. But it was too late—danger—nobody is going to try rolling their car over a 350 pound wrecking ball. Over Danny, maybe, but that wrecking ball would have been positively brutal.
It was near closing time and each of our trays was piled high with 4 to 7 pieces of Royal Worcester flatware soiled with the remnants of our O'Brien Potatoes, Turkey Tetrazzini, institutional size green beans with mushrooms and onions, Ruben Grill with and Ruben Grill without, all swimming in a buttery pool of chocolate non-dairy drink.

But the only thing that worried me as I moved toward the dish conveyor was the Ruben Grill. Unevenly toasted on the outside, the rye bread and cheese formed a perfect seal which protected the contents inside and presented an apparently harmless, culinarily aesthetic treat when served with the green beans and the creamed potatoes on a scalding commons plate.

When bitten into, though, this dietician's Pandora's box spouts forth a noxious mixture of mild sauerkraut juice, ketchup, mayonnaise, commons special sauce and rehydrated leftovers tolerable to only the heartiest food plan veteran. This potent liquid now cascaded down the plasticized edges of the flatware as I moved forward. Cautiously I balanced the tray in my left hand, my right holding my spanking new copy of the Kemp Notes, Newtonian Mechanics by A. P. French, and, protecting them, copies of the latest Cross Currents.

Annoyed by the gathering odor of the concoction and concerned about the ability of my wrist to withstand the pressure applied by this not insignificant mass, I quickened my pace; suddenly my eyes were met by those of a commons captain. There is nothing more threatening and potentially irresponsible than a 6' 4" beer bellied commons captain who has been impressed into dish duty by the absence of a forgetful freshman coolie and has just handled his 450th half-eaten Ruben Grill.

I considered returning to the table in an effort to regain my courage, but the precariousness of the structure on my tray, my momentum and my gathering fear of dropping this, my most ambitious lunch, on the commons rug, caused me to lunge forward and thereby slam the tray on the metal channel encasing the conveyor, promptly speckling the captain with a monte-carlo method assortment of organic matter which would have delighted Viking researchers had it been found on Mars, but which instead enraged the dishhandler.

Yesterday, I was told that I now have the notoriety of being the first unmarried freshman given an off-campus apartment since Briggs Field, Jr., son of the wealthy patron of our Institute.

I hope the lesson to be learned is clear to all: eat sensibly, make no uncertain moves, and at all costs avoid Ruben Sandwiches—with or without.
Anything CAN DRAW

EXERCISE 1

Don't let anyone tell you it doesn't take talent—and lots of it! —to make it as a cartoonist. But sometimes you can get by for months, or even years, just on a couple of simple tricks that anyone can learn.

For example, in Exercise 1, you can see that even the most complex figure-drawing is nothing more than a couple of easy steps, made up of simple basic curves and ovals.

The most difficult aspect for the beginner is keeping faces recognizable as they turn from side to front to side again. Exercise 2 shows how to use a standard graph to make it easy and straightforward.

EXERCISE 2

Try this one without compass or ruler!

Spare parts.

Note that while the circles are concentric, none of the lines are parallel, or skew!

1. View from the front.

2. View at an angle.

YOUR TOOLS OF THE "TRADE"... THE PENCIL... AND PAPER -- AND INK!

1. Eyes.


3. Hands.

4. Bodies.

5. Noses.

6. Hair.

7. Feet.

8. Spare parts.

REMEMBER--

The human face is a subtle thing. You can change expression as easily as a car can change its tires—and so can the characters you draw! These examples show just some of the incredible range of emotions and expressions you can give to your "comic-strip actors."

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DON'T PUT THE "CART" BEFORE THE "HORSE."

Avoid making this mistake!

ANATOMY

1. Eyes.


3. Hands.

4. Bodies.

5. Noses.

6. Hair.

7. Feet.

8. Spare parts.

Mix "n" match!
These strips depict the growth and maturation that takes place with time and practice. Note the way in which the strips develop as they go from early, primitive style and content (upper left), to the highly professional and polished product of the more recent strips (lower right).
Much as is done in television, the trend in the comics is toward consolidation and continuity of characters. Here is a prime example, as several different strips' characters meet for the first time, above.

Below, the strip begins to reach its stride. Note the standardization of size, as well as the clear-cut characterization. Following the adventure depicted here, the plot develops with several more strips added to the continuity.
These delightful comics are the result of a well-educated writer-artist returning to a primitive style by rejecting and/or ignoring everything that he knew about wit, and forgetting everything he knew about drawing.
In second grade I wet my pants. I remember it quite clearly. I was sitting next to Ernest Guglielmo. We hated each other, so every year our desks were pushed together. It was Music Day, a Wednesday morning. We were in the middle of learning hymns for the May Procession when I knew I had to go to the bathroom.

Sister Marie Michelle was saying the lines to the song. We had to repeat them after her. Lucille Mauricio sat three rows away, but you could always hear her the best. Sister’s voice droned on in that tone which I now realize only a nun’s voice can achieve. It reprimanded us for nothing with every word. I thought it sounded holy.

“Hail Holy Queen, Enthroned Above, O Maria.” Our voices would echo back, imitating her tone in our high childish voices.

“Hail Holy Queen, Enthroned Above, O Maria.” About this time I raised my hand and made the appropriate noise for a second grader at St. Maria Goretti School who wanted to get the teacher’s attention. It was a sort of hissing noise which sounded like an abbreviated form of the word “sister.” It always worked. If you did it long enough, the “S-s-s-t, S-s-s-s-t” would elicit some response. On this particular occasion, I wasn’t having much luck. I tried waving my arm and leaning forward onto my desk. I decided to give the noise another try.

“S-s-s-t, S-s-s-s-t!” The second noise was always longer than the first. It worked this time.

“Miss O’Connell, what is the problem?” Until I reached fourth grade, I thought all Catholic girls were baptized with the name Miss in front of the other names. I guess I got lost in the thrill of the moment, I was so relieved to be acknowledged that I forgot to answer. Sister repeated her question, “Miss O’Connell, what is the problem?” I hadn’t exactly considered my need to urinate a problem up until this point.

“Sister, may I go to the lavatory?”

“Just sit quietly in your seat until we’ve finished learning our Hymns to the Blessed Mother.”

I sat down next to Ernest. He had a mole next to his ear, right where his ear lobe connected to the side of his head. Ernest liked to chew little balls of the yellow, lined paper that we used for Penmanship. After roughly five minutes of watching the mushy ball of paper make its flash appearances between Ernest’s front teeth, my insides were starting to get all tight and nervous.

All I could think about was the lavatory, the blue stalls, and the funny little locks on the doors that Colleen Haggerty had taught me how to use in the first grade, and the smell of the yellow soap in those squirt things, and the crunchy folded squares of school toilet paper. I thought about the wonderful feeling that would come, and wondered if I’d have to wait so long that all the pressure would be gone. It would take a delightfully long time if the pressure was gone. That happened sometimes.

Ernest was a perceptive little bastard. He must have noticed that my mind was miles away from “Bring Flowers of the Rarest.” He began to torment me in his smelly-breathed little whisper.

“You gotta go to the bathroom. You gotta go to the bathroom.” I squirmed uncomfortably in my seat. I tried shifting my weight around and squeezed to hold it in. My eyelids and neck felt sweaty. I could think of nothing but the sound of urine piddling into the toilet water. Again I raised my hand.

“Miss O’Connell, don’t ask me to go to the
bathroom again!” I pulled my hand down quickly and pressed it between my knees. I spent the next few minutes thinking about nun and bathrooms and the bumps they had under those black habits. It was very funny to think about those things.

Sister was standing behind the black podium with the gold cross on the front of it. We were all done with memorizing the lines. She began teaching us the tunes, singing one line at a time in her high nasal singing voice. When she sang she always put her left hand inside the big white cardboard part of her habit which covered and protected her chest. My eldest sister, Jayna, had once said that she played with her breasts under there. At the time, I remember thinking that Jayna’s theory was absurd. My parents had been angry because of this, and in great fear of being refused again by sister, when Ernest firmly stuck one end of his wooden ruler in my stomach. I let out a wild little yelp. I sounded like an animal. Everyone turned to see who had screamed in the middle of “O My We Crown Thee With Blossoms Today,”

“that is going on back there, Mr. Gugli-\ldashu?”

I didn’t wait for Ernest to answer. I jumped up and blurted out something about how I couldn’t wait any longer. When my body stood up, the rest came down. My bladder poured forth its contents. I think I died for a brief moment. All I remember was Ernest lifting his feet onto the waxed blue tiles of the linoleum floor. I don’t think I heard anything.

Sister Marie Michelle grabbed me by the shoulders and shook me until her anger had subsided. I never saw anyone look so ugly. Her skin was a sickly white with pink blotches all over her cheeks. An EXIT light at the end of the corridor cast a red light on her face to add to her ugliness. Little chunks of apple pie crust sat in the corners of her watery, colorless eyes and as her nostrils flared wide I noticed a million black wet hairs that I had never seen before. She had no hair for all I could see; just a black veil on her head and a curved white thing on her forehead. It looked like it had been cut out of the bottom half of a cloxboottle.

Sister Marie Michelle walked toward the fourth grade, leaving me to contemplate my fate and feel the cold flesh on my wet legs. I noticed that Sister Clotild’s real name was Elizabeth Quirk’s picture was only funny when my sister wanted it to be funny. All of these thoughts were swimming through my head while Bobby and I were talking. I’m not sure if they had been talking to me the whole time. My ears zoomed in on Sister Clotild’s voice.

“Why didn’t you ask Sister if you could go to the lavatory? There is no excuse for a seven year old girl who still wets herself for attention. No excuse.”

She made it sound so awful. I knew I didn’t want to be recognized among my peers as a pee-er, but I couldn’t say a word in my defense. Sister Marie Michelle demanded that I answer Sister Clotild. I was in the middle of contemplating how I would explain that I had twice asked permission to go to the lav, and twice been refused, when Sister Marie Michelle’s hand deposited a quick hard slap on my left cheek.

I knew then that I should never have stolen Margaret-Mary Belliveau’s dessert. I thought I was dead. A slap in the face can be shattering to one’s self-esteem, I recently urinated in front of a room full of people.

“Kathleen O’Connell, you never asked to be excused,” Sister told me. For a brief moment, she was most convincing. Bobby was embarrassed. I could tell by the way he chewed on the lip. I wanted desperately to save myself. “I asked to be excused,” I waited for another slap.

“I waited for another slap. It came, only it was pleasantly warm, tingling all the way over to my ear.

“Sister, she isn’t telling the truth,” Sister Michelle said to Sister Clotild. It was decided that a first hand witness should be brought into the case and into the darkness of the corridor. Sister Clotild went into Room 2 and came back with Patty Roderick.

Patty Roderick had been an Angel at last year’s First Holy Communion. Her uniform blouses were as white as my grandmother’s sheets and the sleeves were as crisp as hosts. Her black habits were always on straight and her belt was never unbuttoned. Sister once told the whole class that Patty’s mother had said that Patty was a wonderful help with her baby brother. The clincher, however, was that Patty Roderick’s knee socks never fell down. You had to trust a girl whose knee socks never fell down.

“Patricia, did Kathleen ask Sister Marie Michelle for permission to go to the lavatory?”

“Yes, Sister, she asked three times.”

I knew I had only asked twice, but I wasn’t about to argue. Sister told Bobby to go get his jacket. “Everything is all settled,” she said. Patty was dismissed. Bobby went back into his jacket. Sister Clotild walked toward the tunnel to the Convent. I stayed where I was, my head barely touching the Honor Roll, I didn’t find her face ugly anymore. It was just a face.

“You’re a nun. You’re a nun and you tell lies.” I never knew if she heard me. If she did, she didn’t say anything. My mother let me chop up little pieces of green olive to put in our tunafish sandwiches for lunch. I gave one Yodel to Maureen Hannaway at recess the next day. I guess everyone forgot that I wet my pants.
HUMOR
THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

- Βόρας, φαουρνέλλο!

- Πρόσεχε, πρόσεχε. Στην πίσω τοιαύτη έχει βαρέλοτο!

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