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ABSTRACT

A philosophy reader for seventh and eighth graders, "Lisa" presents a story about daily experiences of a group of schoolchildren. The story is a sequel to ED 103 298. "Lisa" focuses on ethical and social issues such as lying and truth-telling, fairness, naturalness, and what are rules and standards. Other issues such as job and sex discrimination, punishment, the nature of death, and the rights of children are also explored. Constructed as a series of dialogues between children, the story has a child-centered perspective which provides readers with a means for attending to their own thoughts and to ways that their thoughts can function in their lives. This is approached through a discovery of rule-governed thinking and by illustrations of a variety of non-formal types of thought. Search techniques are provided to allow readers to identify rules of their own. In the story and in the classroom, it is the children and the students who discover and test the structural rules of formal logic. "Lisa" is not only about reasoning and morality; it is also concerned with the interrelationship of logic and morality. For example, Lisa ponders inconsistencies in her own behavior of loving animals and yet liking to eat roast beef. The philosophy program helps students establish good reasons in justifying their beliefs and in justifying certain departures from normal patterns of conduct. (Author/AV)

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Readers of *Lisa* should first have read *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery*

CHAPTER ONE

"Take it back!" Lisa wanted to say to her parents. "Take it back wherever you bought it!" She sat in front of her new birthday gift, a dressing table with a row of little lights around the mirror, just like in theatre dressing rooms. "They might as well have said to me, 'Here, make yourself beautiful!'" Lisa thought. She was sure she'd never be beautiful, no way.

But she'd accepted the gift with a murmured "Gee, thanks," and she now found herself searching her face in the glass.

"Every feature's just wrong," she groaned to herself. "The forehead's too high, the eyes are too far apart, the mouth's too wide, and the nose tilts up too much. And look at these teeth—spaced apart like pickets!" She was even annoyed that 1
her ears were just the slightest bit pointed at the tops. Suddenly she grinned, as she remembered her father saying earlier that day, "Y'know, Lisa, with your features, you should have been a faun." She was still amused by the thought when her mother entered the room. And Mrs. Terry smiled too, guessing that Lisa had been using the dressing table. "Dinner's ready," she said softly.

Lisa loved roast chicken, and this chicken was especially well roasted, so that the meat fell away from the bone while Lisa's father was carving. He knew how much she liked drumsticks, so he gave her one. It was wonderfully tender and juicy.

The thought crossed her mind of how Mickey had been trying to tease her the 2
other day in school. "Lisa Terry eats dead chicken," he'd said. But Lisa hadn't gotten angry. She just laughed and replied, "Anybody who doesn't like chicken—at least the way my mother makes it—must be just plain retarded!" She passed her plate for another drumstick.

After dinner, Lisa went outside. She had hardly reached the sidewalk when Mr. Johnson came along with his dog on a leash. Mr. Johnson was new to the neighborhood; Lisa really didn't know him at all. When he and the dog got in front of Lisa's house, the dog spotted a squirrel by a tree and started after it. Mr. Johnson pulled up on the leash and the dog went sprawling. Then it was up again, growling and straining after the squirrel which had disappeared behind 3
the tree. Mr. Johnson started to walk on, but the dog stayed put. The more the leash was pulled and yanked, the more the dog resisted. Mr. Johnson called to

his dog, he shouted at it, but the dog did not move. Finally he picked up a small switch from a nearby bush and began to hit the dog which crouched, motionless, absorbing the blows. Lisa stared at the two of them in horror. She couldn't even cry out. Suddenly she sprang forward and tried to grab the switch. "You stop doing that!" she commanded furiously. Surprised, Mr. Johnson snatched the switch clear and turned, saying: "What's it to you?" Beside herself with rage, she blurted out, "I'm a dog too!" He shrugged his shoulders and began pulling on the leash again. Now the dog ended its resistance and began walking alongside Mr. Johnson; soon they were out of sight.

1 In school next day, Randy Garlock said, "Boy, did I have a great time this weekend! My father took me duck hunting."

"Takes lotsa guts to hunt ducks," said Mark sarcastically. "They're always so heavily armed."

"Very funny," Randy replied.

"You don't even eat those birds, so why do you kill them?" Mark persisted.

"There's too many of them," Randy snapped. "Unless hunters kill off the oversupply, there'll be ducks all over the place."

"Sure, sure. I'll bet it's only the hunters who claim to have counted how many there are, and who've decided there are too many, just so they can keep shooting
2 them. I'll bet the hunters will keep on killing animals until they're all wiped out."

"So what?" put in Mickey. "Good riddance."

"People got a right to hunt," Randy said to Mark. "It's in the Constitution."

"The Constitution doesn't say anything about hunting," Mark retorted. "It just says that men have a right to bear arms for purposes of defense.

"And what do women have a right to bare?" Mickey inquired. He nudged Randy. "B-a-r-e, d'you get it?"

Mark paid no attention to Mickey's wisecrack. "Next you'll be telling me that people can hunt whatever they like, even other people. I once saw a movie like that, and I've never forgotten it."

3 "That's ridiculous!" Randy retorted. "Killing people is altogether different from killing animals."

"But if we can exterminate animals because we say there are too many of them, what's to keep us from exterminating people because we think there's too many of them?"

Lisa had been listening to the conversation without saying anything. But now

she remarked, "Right, because once we get in the habit of killing animals, we may find it hard to stop when it comes to people."

Randy shook his head vigorously. "You just have to remember that people and animals are completely different. It doesn't matter what you do to animals, but you shouldn't do the same things to people."

The conversation drifted off to other topics, but Lisa was troubled. "Why is it," she asked herself, "that everything looks so simple, and then when you start talking about it, it always turns out to be so difficult? Mark's right: it's horrible the way we slaughter animals all the time. But in order to eat them, we have to kill them first. I don't understand—how can I be against killing birds and animals, when I love roast chicken and roast beef so much? Shouldn't I refuse to touch such food? Oh, I'm so confused!" 1

Lisa's father was in his study, listening to his stereo. She sat down on a hassock alongside his lounging chair, waiting for the music to end. (When she would sit like that in class, with her knees drawn up to her chin and her long hair falling down straight behind her, she looked, Harry Stottlemeier once remarked, like the letter M.)

"Beethoven," said Mr. Terry.

Lisa said nothing.

"String quartet," said Mr. Terry. 2

Again Lisa said nothing. But she thought to herself, "He knows I can't tell one piece of music from the next. But I remember everything he tells me; I just wish he'd tell me more."

Then she remembered her problem. "Maybe I should become a vegetarian," she concluded, after telling her father about the conversation with Randy, Mickey and Mark.

"And you've got two reasons, as I understand you. First, you feel sorry for animals. And second, you believe that if you can kill animals, you might think killing human beings is okay."

"That's right. But are my reasons any good? Randy said they weren't." 3

"Oh? Why was that?"

"He said there are too many animals, so they've got to be killed off. And he also said that if we didn't have animals to kill, we'd be even more likely to kill people than we are now."

"Did Randy claim that animals have no feelings?"

"He didn't say one way or the other."

"Do you believe that animals have a right to live?"

"Oh, daddy, how should I know? Animal rights? I never heard of such a thing."

Lisa's father regarded her soberly. "Your mother's calling you," he remarked. Lisa twisted her arms in front of her and interlaced her fingers backwards, then undid them. She stretched and bounded out of the room, her father watching her mildly until she was out of sight, down the long hall into the kitchen.

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1 "Hey, Fran," Lisa called out, "what d'ya think? Do animals have rights?"

"You've got to be kidding," Fran laughed. "No one wants to admit that people have rights, so who's going to admit anything about animals? Besides, I can just see myself some day as a lawyer in court representing a cat whose tail has been stepped on."

"And what about kids?" put in Mark. "Do they have rights?"

"Kids!" Fran laughed again. "They're halfway between people and animals! That's the way some people think."

"Kids get rights when they grow up," commented Bill Beck.

"Naw," said Mark. "You've got rights the moment you're born. You've got a
2 right to be fed and clothed. You've got a right to medicine and a right to an education. You've got a lot of rights if you're a kid."

"But what about animals?" insisted Lisa. "Do they have a right not to be killed and eaten?"

Bill replied, "It's their right to kill us and eat us if they can catch us, and it's our right to kill them and eat them if we can catch them."

"Does the same go for killing people?" Harry asked. "Is it just being able to catch them that gives us the right to kill them?"

"Sure thing," answered Bill. "And when it happens, we call it war, and then it's okay."

3 That evening, Harry cornered his father before Mr. Stottlemeier could unfold his evening newspaper.

"Dad, what d'you think? Should people eat animals?"

"Only when cooked. Raw, they're not too nice."

"Dad, c'mon now. The guys at school today were talking about it. Wouldn't it be better if everyone stopped eating meat?"

"What's the matter? Is there a meat shortage?"

"No, but maybe it's wrong to kill animals just to eat them."

"If you want people to stop eating fish and meat, you'd better be sure you have other kinds of food ready for them."

"That's easy. Grow more grains and vegetables."

"Easier said than done."

"Maybe there are too many people." The moment Harry said it, he was uneasy. He recalled Randy's remark about the need to kill ducks because there were too many of them. Harry shook his head. "I don't understand. There are too many things to be taken into account." 1

"Well," replied his father, "but you want to see the whole picture, don't you? So you have to take everything into account."

"Everything?"

"Sure, either you think it's okay to kill animals and eat them, or you don't. You've got to take all the facts into consideration: what happens if we eat them, and what happens if we don't?"

"So what should we do?"

Mr. Stottlemeier unfolded his newspaper. "Wouldn't you say that what we are to do depends a lot on what sort of world we want to live in?"

"I guess so." 2

"So that's my answer. Something may look wrong to do, but then when you take everything into account, it may look okay. Or just the other way 'round: it may first look okay, but then look wrong all things considered."

Harry looked out the window for a moment. Then he remarked, rather slowly, "Y'know, there are drugs in school. Everybody knows about them. Everybody knows who has them and how to get them. The kids who get hooked are really in bad shape lots of the time. But the ones who provide the drugs don't feel they're doing anything wrong." Mr. Stottlemeier nodded agreement, and Harry continued, "And the ones who supply the sellers, they can't see anything wrong with what *they* do, like carrying the stuff in their cars. And the ones who grow 3 the stuff say why pick on me, I'm not doing nothin ."

"They may not want to look at the whole picture."

"But even if they did," Harry wondered, "would they act any different?"

"That's a good question," replied Mr. Stottlemeier, and settled back to read his paper.

Harry wasn't satisfied. "Dad, just one more question. Look, we're supposed to be generous, aren't we?"

"Okay."

"Well, the other day a kid I know asked me to lend him some money, and I happened to have just the amount he needed. Should I have been generous and lent it to him?"

"What do you think?"

"Well, I happened to know what he wanted it for. It was to buy drugs."

"So would you really have helped him out if you gave him the money?"

1 "I guess not."

"And is giving always right, regardless of the circumstances?"

"I guess you've got to take the circumstances into account."

"All things considered," said Mr. Stottlemeier, settling back once again into his chair, "I'm determined to read my paper." From the way he said it, Harry knew he meant it.

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"Maybe I don't really care about animals after all," said Lisa.

"She's off again," commented Fran.

"No, I mean it," Lisa replied. "If I really cared about them, I couldn't bear to

2 eat them."

"But the second part of your sentence is false: you've told us all how much you like roast chicken and roast beef," said Tony.

"Right," agreed Lisa. "So that means the first part is false too. If I really cared about animals, I wouldn't eat them. But I do eat them. So I don't really care about them."

"I wish the only problem I ever had was whether or not to eat a plateful of roast chicken," laughed Fran.

"No, Lisa's got a point," said Harry. "How can she say one thing and do another? Shouldn't our thoughts agree with what we do? Shouldn't our actions

3 agree with what we believe?"

"That's right!" exclaimed Tony. "Everything should fit together—the way we think and the way we live—it should all connect."

"I don't know," said Harry, shaking his head. "Maybe that's going too far."

No one had anything to add, and in a few moments Fran and Lisa were whispering to each other.

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"Did you see Laura O'Mara try to pass that note to Tony?" giggled Lisa.

Fran nodded. "Yeah, and she's always trying to brush up against him, but he doesn't seem to understand what's happening."

"Maybe he'll notice her when she gets that new bra," said Lisa, and the two girls began laughing.

Then Mickey came over with Bill Beck. Everyone tried to be humorous, but after a while the jokes began turning into a steady patter of friendly insults, mainly directed at one another's families.

Mickey told Lisa that her little cousin, Herbert, had all the intelligence of a "lobotomized cricket." 1

Lisa grinned and replied that Mickey's older brother was "no smarter than a decorticated flea."

"How about Fran's brothers," said Bill. "They're nothing but elongated goofballs."

Fran was laughing so hard she could hardly think of a reply, and it was on the tip of her tongue to say, "Ah, your sister's got the mind of a retarded roach," when she caught herself with the recollection that Bill's sister was actually several grades behind other kids of the same age.

In Fran's behalf, however, Lisa said to Bill, "Ah, go on, your mother takes in washing!" 2

Bill walked away. But Mickey was furious. "Why did you say a thing like that to him?"

Lisa looked at Mickey wonderingly. "Like what?"

"You know very well! About his mother taking in washing."

"Nothing wrong with taking in washing," said Fran. "Lots of people I know do. It's a perfectly honest thing to do. You against people who work hard, maybe?"

But Lisa was aghast. "I didn't know it was true!" she wailed.

"Aw, c'mon, Lisa," Fran said consolingly, "I don't think Bill really minded."

"I'll bet he did!" Mickey insisted. "How would you like it if some snob talked about what your parents do?" 3

Fran shrugged. "I'd say let them. They'd be wasting their breath."

But Mickey wouldn't let the matter drop. "Isn't it bad enough that Bill's father got killed in the war? Sure his mother gets a pension, but it isn't a lot. She works in a hotel cleaning up, and to make ends meet she does laundry for some of the

guests there. Boy, isn't it just like you to make fun of her, Lisa!"

Lisa was speechless. Nothing Fran could say could comfort her. "If only I'd known," she said to herself over and over again, "I'd have taken it into account and I wouldn't have said what I did. It doesn't matter that he may not have felt hurt. I shouldn't have said it." Yet, in the midst of her misery, a half-humorous thought crossed her mind—that next time she'd not speak until she was sure that what she had to say was totally false!

But she couldn't shake off her feeling of having done something shameful, even though she'd intended Bill no harm. Then she began to wonder if she might
1 really have meant to hurt Bill. "But why would I have wanted to do such a thing? He's always been nice to me. And he sure has enough troubles of his own already—he doesn't need me making any more for him." Then it occurred to her that these might have been the very same reasons for her having tried to wound him. The thought made her shudder.

That evening, Lisa wouldn't leave her room to come to dinner. Her parents insisted, but she refused so stubbornly that they finally left her alone. The aroma of roast beef mounted the stairs and managed to reach her where she lay face down on her bed. It smelled so delicious that it both added to her torment and to her satisfaction, for she felt that if she denied herself supper, especially a roast
2 beef supper, she would somehow atone for what she'd done.

But it didn't seem to help very much, even though she writhed on the bed when she thought of the roast carrots and onions, and the gravy making a pool in the mashed potatoes. She felt a bit better only when she resolved to try, in the future, to be more considerate before she did or said anything that might hurt someone else's feelings. "I wish I could also resolve to make what I do agree with what I think. But it would mean giving up roast beef and roast chicken! What's the sense of making a promise to myself that I don't intend to keep?"

She was proud of herself for not having the roast beef dinner. But that night, before she went to sleep, she really cleaned out the refrigerator.

CHAPTER TWO

Tony awoke with the comforting thought that it was Saturday, his parents were away, and he could stay in bed as long as he liked. He turned over and went back to sleep.

When he opened his eyes later, the bright morning sun had begun to find its way through the chinks in the Venetian blind, so that a grid of light was thrown on the ceiling of his room. Though only half awake, Tony studied it with fascination. The sound of Mrs. Borton's high-pitched voice came through the window from the neighboring apartment. She was beginning to yell at her kids; it would go on all day. The thought of a bowl of cereal hovered in Tony's mind.

He thought back to the discoveries which he and Harry and the others had made last year, like the four possibilities. And the four types of sentences, A, E, I and O. 1

"Funny," Tony thought, "we never noticed, last year, that there were four in one case and four in the other. I wonder if they're connected." He tried putting them together in his mind. There were four ways of relating A and E:

A and E
A without E
E without A
Neither A nor E.

But there were also four ways of putting A with I, and A with O, and E with I.... 2
Tony began to get sleepy.

But then he said to himself, "Hey, wait a minute. When we were figuring how some sentences followed from other sentences, and we'd put two sentences together so as to get a third, the sentences we used always began with the word 'All.' We'd say something like

All people who live next door to one another are neighbors.
All neighbors are residents of the same region.

And it would follow that

All people who live next door to one another are residents of the same region. 3

But do the sentences always have to begin with the word 'All'? Couldn't they ever begin with the words 'No' or 'Some'? Like, suppose I said

All neighbors are noisy.

Some neighbors are unfriendly.

So what would follow? Wouldn't it be

Some unfriendly people are noisy?"

Tony felt good about what he'd figured out. He got out of bed and fixed himself some breakfast. Next door, Mrs. Borton continued to scream at her kids.

The following Monday, Tony told Harry, Fran and Lisa about how the different types of sentences could be arranged, and he also pointed out that, so far, they had talked about only those AAA arrangements of sentences that
1 began with "All." "But there are lots of other arrangements possible," he concluded.

"I like AAA," said Fran. "My father's a member of the Automobile Association of America."

Harry looked at her dubiously. "Gee, what a reason! I might as well say I like it too, because my cousin Edgar's a member of Alcoholics Anonymous of America."

Lisa was scribbling something in her notebook. Then she looked up brightly. "You keep trying to find words that begin with 'A.' But anyone can do *that*! Let me give you something harder to figure out. Tell me a word that has just three
2 *vowels*, all of them 'a'."

Tony promptly said "Abacus," but a moment later he added, "No, I'm wrong. It's got two A's and a U in it."

But Fran suggested "caravan," and Harry came up with "cataract." Since that was all they could think of, they turned back to Lisa and asked if she'd thought of one.

"Sure," said Lisa, "but it's a girl's name—Barbara."

"Hey," laughed Harry, "I like that. Let's nickname the AAA arrangement 'Barbara;' then if we come across any other arrangements, we can give them names too."

3 Fran shook her head. "I've nicknamed my cat, and I've even nicknamed the plants in my room. But I never thought I'd live to see the day when I'd be giving nicknames to arrangements of sentences!"

"How about when we give nicknames to arrangements of stars in the sky, like Big Dipper and Little Dipper?" asked Harry.

"That's right!" added Lisa mischievously. "And the next thing you know,

we're going to give a nickname to each brick in the schoolhouse!"

"That'll be the day," groaned Fran. "Pet bricks."

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Millie Warshaw wasn't exactly the favorite baby-sitter in her neighborhood. Mr. Samuels, Timmy's father, had pretty much summed up the parents' impression of Millie when he remarked, "If anything were to happen, I'd sooner expect the baby to look after Millie than the other way 'round." But there were times when no other baby-sitter could be found.

Whatever she earned from these labors, Millie put in a toy safe that she kept under her bed. In time she saved enough to buy a Peruvian guinea pig. It was no 1
ordinary guinea pig. Part of it was tan, part was the whitest white, and a third part was a rich brown, the color of coffee. Most unusual was its delicate, soft hair, which hung straight, right down to its feet, so that it looked for all the world like a miniature yak. Millie named him Pablo, and loved him with a single-minded passion. To Pablo she confided all her secrets, murmuring them to him as she brushed him, and pausing only occasionally so as to be able to gaze wonderingly at his little round eyes, which shone back at her like bits of black porcelain. Then she'd hold his face against her cheek and whisper, "If anything were to happen to you, Pablo, I think I'd die."

But Millie didn't really expect anything to happen, least of all that on this 2
particular day, upon coming home from school, she would find Pablo, his bright eyes wide open, quite stiff and cold and dead. Lisa and Fran had come along just to meet Pablo. They'd expected a pleasant afternoon sharing in Millie's delight; instead they found themselves trying to comfort her, caressing her thin shoulders and back as she sobbed.

"He was so precious," Millie managed to say at last, although still quite choked up. "I'll never find anything so precious again in my whole life."

"Sure you will, sugar," said Fran. "Guinea pigs aren't irreplaceable."

"Pablo wasn't just another guinea pig. He was like nothing else in the world."

"Well," said Lisa, "at least you know that for a time you had something really 3
wonderful. Aren't many of us can say that."

"I know," said Millie. Then she stood up and brushed the hair back from her face. "We've got to bury him."

Lisa could only nod, but Fran thought to herself, "Yes, because if your father comes in and finds you with this dead animal, he's going to want to take it

outside and throw it in the garbage can." But aloud she just said, "Okay, let's."

Millie found a cardboard box just the right size, but she felt she just couldn't put Pablo in it without anything soft for him to lie on. Lisa suggested they put some litter in the box, but Millie shook her head. Fran said she thought some tissue paper would be all right, but again Millie said no. Then Millie went to her dresser and rummaged about until she found her favorite scarf. She folded the scarf in soft folds, and put Pablo gently on top of it; then she laid both it and him into the box.

The girls went out into the back yard, and Millie found a shady spot, under a
1 young silver birch tree, where she and Pablo had often played together. Then she got a shovel from the basement and dug a hole about a foot deep. The other girls wanted to help her, but she wouldn't let them. She put Pablo down onto the cool earth at the bottom of the hole, and whispered to him, "you were a *good* guinea pig." At last, she put the cover over the box, and reached for the shovel to begin covering up the hole. But Lisa said, "Wait!" and she began tearing up handfuls of grass and sprinkling it over the box. And Fran found some dandelions which she also dropped in. Finally Millie said, "That's enough," and she covered over the hole. The girls rounded the mound of dirt with their hands, and placed a rock at one end to serve as a headstone.

2 Soon after, Lisa and Fran left. When they reached the sidewalk in front of Millie's house, Millie ran out after them, still unsmiling, and shook hands silently with each of them, then ran back into the house.

They must have walked several blocks—about half the way to Lisa's house—when they ran into Harry and Tony. Of course they couldn't wait to tell the boys what had just happened, and both Lisa and Fran talked about it at once, something the boys found hysterically funny. Before long, the girls were giggling and laughing too, although they weren't quite sure why, and they were glad that Millie wasn't there to see them at that moment.

Then Lisa became more sober. "Funny how Millie didn't say much, but just
3 went ahead and did what she had to do."

"She did say something to me," Fran responded. "She said, 'When I left him this morning, he was alive, and when I came back, he was dead.'"

"Well," said Tony complacently, "That's how it goes. Either you're alive or you're not alive. Can't have it both ways."

"That's right," echoed Harry. "Can't have it both ways."

The girls plodded on silently towards Lisa's.

Eventually Lisa managed to put a thought into words. "Are they right? Is it true you've gotta be either alive or dead, you can't be anything in between?"

Fran smiled faintly. "I don't know. Lots of times my mother says she feels half-dead, she's so tired." Then she suggested, "I guess what you mean is, you can't be what you're not. But that's not so. I'm not a lawyer, but I can *become* a lawyer."

"Of course," laughed Lisa, "but at any one time you can't be what you aren't—you can only be what you are. Right now, at this moment, I'm the age I am, and not some other age." 1

"And I have the name I have, and not some other name."

"And you're wearing the clothes you're wearing, and not some other clothes."

"And my briefcase is a briefcase, not a—, not a—"

"—not a non-briefcase." The girls found the idea of a non-briefcase very amusing.

Lisa started looking for her key to open her front door. "No key," she laughed, as she rummaged about, "just lots of non-keys. Oh, here it is."

As Lisa opened the door, Fran exclaimed, "Y'know what? It's a rule! It's sort of like Harry's rule, only it isn't turning sentences around, or anything like that. I don't know just how to say it, but it's something like this: at any one time, if 2 something's false, it can't be true. It's got to be one or the other: it can't be both."

"So that's like we were saying a moment ago. A girl can't be a non-girl. A giraffe can't be a non-giraffe. A living person can't be a non-living person."

"That's it! It's a rule that always works! Am I right?"

Lisa hesitated. "I don't know. I'm just not sure. Does it mean, for example, that there can't be something that's halfway between what's living and what's dead, or that there can't be something that's halfway between a human being and an animal?"

Fran stared at Lisa for a moment, then smiled. "Oh, now I get what you're driving at. No, that's not what I mean at all. How should I know whether there's 3 anything halfway between what's living and what's not? All I'm saying is, if something's living, it can't be non-living. If something's human, it can't be non-human. That's all I mean."

"It seems okay," Lisa responded. "In fact, it sounds great. But I want to think about it some more."

The next day they told Harry and Tony about the rule they'd discovered. "Either something is or it isn't," Fran said. "It can't be both."

"Give me an example," Harry demanded.

"Well, take an airplane," Fran replied. "At any one moment, either it's flying or it isn't flying. But it can't do both at the same time."

"Sounds okay to me," said Harry.

"To me too," said Tony.

"Hey, wait a minute," Lisa broke in. "I'm having trouble with it."

"How d'you mean?" Fran asked.

1 "That airplane you just mentioned—where is it?"

"Wherever it is—how should I know?"

"Okay, it's where it is, right, and not where it isn't?"

Fran made a face. "That's right. It's in the space it's in, and not in some other space."

"But that's just my problem," said Lisa. "An airplane occupies just the space it's in. But can it fly in that space?"

"Of course not. It wouldn't have room to move around."

"On the other hand," Lisa continued, "can an airplane fly in some space that it *doesn't* occupy?"

2 "I guess not. It can't be where it isn't. It can only be where it is."

"Well, then," exclaimed Lisa triumphantly, "I've just proved that an airplane can't fly! It can't fly where it is and it can't fly were it isn't!"

"But airplanes *do* fly, and you know it," insisted Harry. "It's a fact."

"Sure," Lisa laughed. "They fly from where they are to where they aren't."

"So are you saying the rule doesn't work?" Fran wanted to know.

"No—but you don't mind my testing it, do you?" And with that remark, Lisa dashed away.

Afterwards Harry said, "The rule's a good rule. I can't take Lisa's example very seriously, because I know that airplanes do fly. But I can't show how she's

3 wrong, either. At least I can't right now."

"I think it's a good rule because it helps me understand how to think," remarked Tony.

"Yeah," Harry answered. "But y'know, understanding's something like flying. You're always going from what you know to what you don't know, or from what you don't know to what you know. But it sure beats me how it happens."

18

•••

Mickey Minkowski poked Tony lightly in the ribs and asked, "What's with you and Laura?"

"What're you talkin' about?" Tony flared up. "Nothin'." He looked uncomfortable. "There's nothing between me and her."

Mickey grinned. "Not even clothes?"

"Aw, lemme alone," said Tony. He wasn't angry. Everyone knew that Mickey liked to tease.

"That's not the way Laura tells it," Mickey persisted. 1

"What'ya mean?" Tony demanded.

"Well, Sandy Mendoza's been after Laura, trying to get her to go with him to one of those rock sessions at the Blue Falcons. But she always tells him she can't go out with him because she's going out with you."

Tony was aghast. "That's a lie! I've never been out with her in my life."

"Well, you haven't heard the worst of it."

"There's more?"

"Yep. Laura told Sandy that *you* said if he keeps bothering her, *you're* gonna beat him up."

"But—but—" Tony stammered, "she knows that's not so! In fact, she told me 2
just the other day—she said she wouldn't go out with me anywhere, even if I asked her."

"Well, obviously she tells you one thing and she tells Sandy just the opposite. It just goes to show you: them girls is fickle."

"I don't know about girls," mused Tony, but it sure can't be true that I take her out and that I don't take her out. Anyhow, I doubt that Sandy takes her seriously."

"That's where you're wrong. He told me to tell you to be out in back of the school tomorrow at four o'clock. He says he's really gonna take you apart."

"Oh, fine," Tony muttered. "Oh, that's just great!" 3

Lisa came over, and Mickey told her about Sandy's challenge to Tony. Then Harry came over, and Mickey told the same story all over again. All the while, Tony listened without saying a word, drawing lines in the sand with the toe of his sneaker.

"You worried, Tony?" Mickey wanted to know.

Tony shrugged. "Why should I be worried?"

"Well, you might get beat up."

"Look," Tony replied impatiently, "either there'll be a fight—or there won't be a fight. Those are the only two ways it can go. If there's no fight, I got nothing to worry about. And if there is one—well, I can take care of myself."

Harry mulled over Tony's comments. "Are you telling us that, like people say, 'What will be will be'?"

"I guess so."

"So—" Harry pursued his line of thought, "then whatever it is that's going to happen tomorrow has already been decided?"

1 Tony frowned. "I didn't say that. What're you getting at?"

"What I mean is," said Harry, after a moment's pause, "even though *we* don't know what'll happen tomorrow, is it possible that it's already decided what *will* happen? All *we* can tell is that either there'll be a fight tomorrow or there won't be. That's what we can figure out from the rule that Fran and Lisa discovered: both things are possible. But actually, only one of them is really going to happen—we just don't know which. So maybe what's going to happen in your fight tomorrow is already decided."

"Naaah," said Tony, "you're all wet. The future isn't decided at all. Sure it's true that either there will be a fight tomorrow or there won't be. But either way,

2 *anything's* still possible."

"I don't agree with you," objected Mickey. "I think what's going to happen is already pretty much spelled out. Look, suppose I'm going to get a cold tomorrow. Well, that means the conditions for my getting a cold tomorrow are already present today, right?"

"Right!" said Harry.

"So if a doctor examined me carefully today, he could tell if I'd get cold tomorrow, just like the weather man can forecast storms. I think the future's already decided, including what happens to you tomorrow, Tony."

"What about you?" Harry asked Lisa.

3 "I'm with Tony," Lisa said simply. "Anything can happen. What about you?"

Harry shook his head. "I just don't know. When I listen to Tony, I'm convinced he's right, and when I listen to Mickey, I'm convinced *he's* right. But if you really forced me to choose, I guess I'd go with Mickey."

"Two against two," said Lisa. "Standoff."

"But will it be a standoff tomorrow?" said Mickey.

As it turned out, the fight did take place. Luther and Mickey were with Tony at the appointed time and place. Tony handed his glasses to Luther. Then Sandy, followed by a number of his friends, came rushing at Tony, who put up his arms to protect himself. Tony got butted in the chest and fell to the ground. The next thing anyone knew, Sandy was walking away with his nose bleeding, and Tony was sitting on the fire escape, trying to catch his breath.

"You won, Tony," said Luther cheerfully.

Tony looked up at Luther. "Yeah, sure."

"Well," said Mickey, "you can be proud—look at all that blood!"

Tony didn't reply. He had an idea that Sandy's friends, while helping him with his nose, were also congratulating *him* on his victory. Finally Tony remarked. "Sandy didn't think he had any choice. He felt he had to do what he did. I can understand it; I'm not sore at him. If Laura'd said something like that to me, maybe I'd have done the same thing Sandy did." He paused, then added, "On the other hand, I did what *I* had to do. Once it all started to happen, I felt like I didn't really have much choice. Right now, I'd just like to forget the whole thing."

After a while, Tony walked away with Luther, leaving Mickey sitting on one of the upper steps of the fire escape.

CHAPTER THREE

"Do I *have* to?" Lisa's voice was edged with irritation.

"You're *not* going to visit Uncle Fred and Aunt Georgina without getting a new dress." Mrs. Terry said firmly. "You know how they love to take you out and entertain you whenever you visit them. The least you can do is get a new dress for the occasion."

"But I've already got some good dresses I could wear."

"Yes, but they're not new. Let's not argue about it. We'll go shopping on Saturday." When Lisa said nothing, her mother added, "You want to look right, don't you?"

1 "What do you mean, 'right?'" Lisa demanded. But even as she asked the question, she wondered to herself, "Why do I always have to challenge her, every time she says something? I don't understand why I do it."

Wishing Lisa wouldn't be so irritable, Mrs. Terry tried to respond calmly. "Well, dear, I suppose a dress is right if it's what any girl would want to wear if she were going to visit her favorite relatives."

"I hate to wear dresses," Lisa said with a scowl. "And besides, I'm not just any girl."

"Oh, I didn't mean to say you were," her mother hastened to remark. "What I mean is that the right thing to get would be what *every* girl would want to get."

2 "That's no better," said Lisa briskly. "In fact, it's worse. Not all girls are the same size. I need something that fits *me*, not something that's okay for everybody. I'm not like everybody else. I'm not like anybody else. I'm me—can't you understand that?"

"People come in certain sizes, and so do dresses," said her mother. "What you need is a girl's 13. You wouldn't look right in anything else."

"Oh, that's not so," Lisa exclaimed. "I should be in teens now, and they're different, and you keep sticking me in those kid's sizes!"

Mrs. Terry looked a bit surprised at Lisa's outburst. "You know, you're a bit small for your age, Lisa. But you are beginning to get a bosom—"

3 Lisa doubled up with laughter. "Bosom!" she howled, "Oh, what a word!" She collapsed into an armchair, then slid onto the floor, still laughing.

Her mother looked at her with a tolerant smile. "So what should I have said—

your bust?"

Lisa curled up with laughter once again. But neither she nor her mother was too anxious to pursue the topic, so it was dropped. Besides, Lisa suspected that her mother was always calling attention to Lisa's figure or her intelligence so as not to call attention to her face. And the more her mother did so, the more often Lisa would turn up in the most shapeless sweatshirts and jeans she could find.

Saturday came, the shopping expedition took place, and the conflict both anticipated soon developed.

"Here's one. Try it on," Mrs. Terry directed. It was a dress the store was featuring. There were about fifteen of them on the rack, in several sizes, all identical in color and style. 1

Obediently Lisa tried it on, but did not commit herself to it. Her mother pressed her, but Lisa insisted on looking around longer. In time she found a dress on a sale rack.

"Hey, this is cool."

"It's been marked down twice."

"So what? I like it."

"We should wait till they mark it down once more; they'd have to pay us to take it off their hands."

"Oh, mom, I've never seen anything like it! It's just perfect for me!" 2

There was an exchange of words, and both said things they immediately regretted. In the end, Mrs. Terry, rather tight-lipped, bought both dresses. When they got home, Lisa hung the expensive one away without looking at it further. But she put on the other one, and turned this way and that in front of the mirror. "It's so right!" she said to herself ecstatically. "It might not be right for everyone, but for me, it couldn't be better." Then she looked admiringly and steadily at herself in the mirror and said "Lisa."

•••

Mickey, Sandy and Bill practiced playing baseball after school every day. Mickey would bring an outfielder's glove, Bill would bring a softball, Sandy would bring his bat, and they would take turns throwing, batting and fielding. Sometimes, when other kids would gather around, a pickup game would develop. 3

Such a game was starting now, with Mickey and Bill on one side, and Sandy and Harry on the other. A number of other boys were in the process of joining one side or the other when Fran and Lisa came up, and the girls promptly announced

that they wanted to play. The girls expected an argument, and were surprised when the boys made no objection to them. But it seemed to be agreed—although again, no one said anything openly—that Sandy was the captain of one team, while Mickey and Bill were co-captains of the other.

It was well known that Fran played baseball as well as most of the boys; she was especially good at hitting. She wondered what place she'd be given in the batting line-up, as did Lisa. Both girls found themselves put last, but neither complained.

The game was well played and exciting. There was no score for two innings,
1 and then in the third inning, Mickey's team had a chance to score. There were runners on first and third; Lisa was due to come up, to be followed by Mickey. But there were two outs. Mickey took the bat from Lisa, who was so surprised she offered no objection. He walked up to the plate, ready to bat.

"Hey, wait!" Fran shouted from right field, "No fair! You've got no right batting for her just 'cause she's a girl. You wouldn't do that if she were a boy!"

Mickey said nothing. He just continued to stand at the plate and swing the bat.

Then Sandy spoke up from the pitcher's mound. "Hey, Mickey, you can't do that! It's against the rules of softball. You can't bat out of order. You're trying to bat twice in the same line-up, while Lisa's not batting at all!"

2 Tony, who was on Sandy's team, also voiced his objection: "That's right, Mickey, rules are rules."

"First of all," said Mickey, grimly, "she can't hit. Second of all, it's my team."

"What do you mean, your team?" Fran demanded.

"'Cause it's my glove, and it's Sandy's bat, and Bill's softball. It's our game, and we're just letting the rest of ya play."

Harry stood out near second base, saying nothing. Finally he walked over to Lisa and said, "Look, why don't you just agree to bat after Mickey? If Fran keeps insisting, the game will never go on."

Fran overheard his suggestion and turned on Harry furiously. "You know
3 better!" she charged. "You know it's not fair to skip her turn at bat. Boys always bat, no matter how bad they hit. Why are you butting in?"

Harry felt very embarrassed. He turned to Mickey and began, "It doesn't seem fair, Mickey ..."

But Mickey had a[l]ready picked up his glove and started off the field, followed by Bill with his softball. After a few moments, Sandy shrugged, picked up the

bat Mickey had dropped near the plate, and walked off. Pretty soon the others drifted away. Fran watched them go contemptuously. "They don't know what it means to be fair," she said finally.

"No sense in playing a game if you're not going to follow the rules," Tony observed.

Harry would have left with the others, but Mark came over, and wanted to know what had happened. Fran told him, still indignant. As she finished, she turned to Harry and said, "Thanks, you were a lot of help!"

Harry flushed. Then Mark supported Fran's criticism of him. "You saw it wasn't fair. Why didn't you do something?" 1

"Because I wasn't sure what was the right thing for me to do," Harry said.

"That's just pathetic," said Fran. "If you admit that what they did wasn't fair, then there's *no* way, there's just no *way*, it could be right for you to do nothing about it."

"That's true," agreed Mark, "What's fair is right, and what's right is fair."

Fran and Mark walked off together, still discussing the incident.

Lisa looked at Harry, who had only just then become aware of the fact that Lisa had said nothing all along. "If they had to get mad," she remarked, "I don't know why they got mad at you instead of at Mickey."

"Yeah," said Harry, "why me?" Then he turned to her. "How come you didn't say anything?" 2

Lisa shrugged. "I don't know why I didn't say anything. I just didn't." Then she added quietly, "If it had been Fran, I'd sure enough have protested. Maybe I couldn't do it because it *was* me."

Harry nodded. "Yeah, I know what you mean. But I could have protested for you—and all I did was stand there with my mouth shut."

Lisa quickly replied that she was not accusing him of letting her down. "That's not it at all. No, it's something else that puzzles me . . ." Lisa told him about the incident in the store with her mother. "My mother thinks that what's right for everybody ought to be right for me, and I think it doesn't make the least bit of difference to everybody else what I choose to wear, but it makes a lot of difference to me. So my point is, regardless of how other people dress, what's right for me is what I think suits me best." 3

"But that's clothes!" Harry protested. "You can't compare the question of whether a dress is right or wrong with whether what I did was right or wrong."

"Why not?" Lisa wanted to know.

"Because," said Harry. Lisa looked at him doubtfully, so he added, "Because, if a dress looks okay on you, sure, you may say it looks right. But *looking* right, that's not the same thing as when you say a person has *done* something right or something wrong."

"Well," said Lisa, "how about what Mark said as he was leaving? That what's fair is right and what's right is fair. Do you agree with him?"

"I don't know. Nothing fits together today."

"Maybe all the pieces aren't ever going to fit together."

1 "What do you mean by that?"

"Well," Lisa struggled to get her thoughts in order, "could it be that what's fair may not be right for someone, and what's right for someone may not be fair?"

"You mean that what's fair and what's right don't *have* to go together? Boy, that's sure hard to believe."

Lisa persisted with her idea. "What I mean is, what's *fair* may be just what would be correct for anyone, no matter who. What's fair is what everyone should do. For example, if we went to a school where everyone wore a certain kind of uniform, like a certain kind of blue dress, then it would be unfair to allow me to dress as I please. But it's not like that. We're supposed to think for ourselves, not

2 choose each other's food and clothing and houses and stuff like that. So it's only fair that I should choose my own clothes. That's how it should be for everyone."

"Okay, that's what's *fair*. But then what's *right*?"

"What's *fair* is what's correct for everyone to do. What's *right* is what's correct just for us, just for each one of us. It's only fair that other people let me choose my own clothes, and that I let them choose theirs. But what I choose to wear is my own business, and I decide what I think is *right* for me."

"I get it. What's fair is what you consider when it affects others. What's right is what you consider when it affects yourself."

Lisa laughed. "Suppose it's half and half, what do you do?"

3 "That was my problem before!" Harry exclaimed. "I didn't think what Mickey did was fair, but I didn't think it would be right for me to butt in. So I didn't know what to do. But I'm sorry now that I didn't say something. So what if he would have walked off the field? He was going to do that anyhow. I think I was wrong not to have spoken up."

"Well," said Lisa, retying the drawstring on her canvas bookbag, "I still think

it's possible that what's fair and what's right aren't the same thing. What's right for me may be wrong for you, even though what's fair is what's fair for everyone."

Harry reflected. "But Lisa, don't you see, the word 'right' can have more than one meaning! It could mean what's right for everyone, where we should act alike, or it could mean what's right for each of us, where each of us is different."

"Sure," Lisa agreed, "I see what you mean. The word 'right' could mean many different things. But when *I* use it, I want it to mean that what's right for me depends on what kind of life *I* want to live and not on how you or anyone else wants to live." 1

Harry shrugged. "If that's what you want it to mean," he replied, "that's your privilege—"

"No," Lisa interrupted, "it's my right."

•••

It was getting late in the afternoon and Harry knew he should be getting home. But as he passed the apartment complex where Luther lived, there was Luther just coming home on his bike, and the two of them decided that a glass of milk might not be a bad idea.

In the Warfield's kitchen, they found Marty, Luther's older brother, opening a 2
beer, so the three of them sat around the kitchen table, with its bright yellow tablecloth, and silently sipped their drinks.

After a while, Harry told them what had happened during the ball game. But he also made a point of telling them about his conversation afterwards with Lisa.

Marty studied his drink. After a while he said, "There's lots of laws and rules to tell us what we're supposed to do. But laws and rules only apply to what's fair. Ain't no laws made can tell us what's right."

Luther looked from Marty to Harry, then back to Marty again, and shook his head. "You guys must be crazy. How's anybody gonna tell what's right to do 3
unless he knows the rules? Take an umpire in a game. Could he be a good ump and still not know the rules? It's the same with a good person—he's a guy who knows the rules and doesn't break them. If I'd been at that softball game, I'd have said the same thing as Tony: you've got to know the rules and stick to them."

"Look, Luther," said Marty gently, "you remember that Harris family down in 8C that got killed in the auto accident last month?" He turned to Harry. "Whole family—father, mother, three little kids—all because some idiot got roaring drunk and came down the wrong side of the highway. Forced the Harris's car into a tree, and this cat got off without a scratch.

"There *are* laws—against driving when drunk, and against driving on the wrong side of the road. They're laws meant to protect innocent people like the Harrises. I'm not saying that all laws are good laws. What I'm saying is, it's just not fair for turkeys like that drunken driver to endanger other people's lives. So
1 that's why we have laws, to try to force people to be fair to one another."

"But does that mean," Harry asked, "that whatever's unfair has a law against it?"

Marty took another sip of beer. "I didn't say that. For example, there are about ten of us, where I work, who have jobs like mine, and I work as well as any of them. But somehow, they always get the promotions. *That's* unfair, and as far as I know, the boss isn't breaking any laws."

"I'll bet he is," said Harry. "I'll bet if you'd get yourself a lawyer, he'd prove that your boss is breaking some kind of law."

Luther had been looking down at his hands, as if he were ashamed for Marty.
2 But now he looked sharply at Harry. "I can answer you on that. Marty knows what his chances are if he tried to play it that way. No sense in biting off more than you can chew, like Mom always says."

Marty finished his beer silently, got out his pick, and started working on his afro. After a while he spoke up: "Let me tell you something. *I* decide what's right for me, and I hope Luther here'll have the good sense to decide what's right for him. Nobody can tell me what girls to go with, or what job to choose, or what motorcycle to buy, or what magazines to read, because these things have nothing to do with fairness. And if me and some chick go out Saturday night, where we go and what we do is our own business."

3 It was Harry's turn to look slightly uncomfortable; he was annoyed at himself, because here was Marty talking to him as if they were the same age, and Harry hardly knew what to say.

"Mom wouldn't like to hear you talking like that," Luther murmured. "She thinks I should listen to her when it comes to how I should live. And she's probably right." Luther poured himself another half glass of milk, then looked at

Harry inquiringly, the milk carton poised in the air, but Harry shook his head.

Then Luther continued, "Funny you should bring all this up. It fits in with something that happened to me last week. Marty, you remember that kid Frankie who works the paper route next to mine?" Marty nodded. "Well, y'know what Frankie told me? He said that the guy who runs the delivery service told him there was this room in the back of a warehouse he owns, with a lot of new TV sets still in their cartons. And he said the boss told him that he was leaving just a little lock on the back door, because he was hoping the TV sets would get ripped off, so that he could collect the insurance. Frankie wanted me to go with him and jimmy open the door and get those TV sets. He claimed it would be doing the boss 1
a favor. I told him I bet the boss would appreciate the favor so much he'd come to visit me personally every day in prison and thank me. Anyhow, Frankie got someone else to help him, and they got caught."

Marty smiled approvingly at Luther but said nothing. Harry, however, wasn't satisfied. "Okay, it would have been unfair to rip the guy off. And besides, of course, there are lots of laws against such things. But—" he turned to Marty, "does that mean that what Luther did was *fair*, but you couldn't call it *right*?"

"Did I say that?" Marty asked mildly. "Couldn't we say that what Luther chose to do was both the fair thing for *anyone* to do in that situation, and the right thing for *him* to do in that situation?" 2

"Fair—because he has to live with the others, and right—because he has to live with himself?" Harry asked.

Marty smiled. "I'd say that's a pretty fair way to put it."

Then Harry looked up at the kitchen clock, slapped his forehead, and scooted home.

CHAPTER FOUR

"Kio," said Suki, "go see who's at the door."

"'Kay," Kio responded good-naturedly, and continued to watch the soft metal spring he was playing with slink down the stairs.

"KIO," Suki repeated more firmly, "my hands are all wet and soapy. Please go to the door!"

Kio made a face at his sister, but got up anyhow and went over to the front door. As usual, he had trouble with the knob. His hands were small, and he couldn't turn it too well. Finally he managed to get the door open.

"Hello, Kio," said Lisa, "Is your sister in?"

1 "Yeth," said Kio, "Who you?"

"You remember me, don't you?"

"I fordet. What your name?"

"Lisa."

"Thuki," Kio shouted. "It's Litha."

But by this time Suki had arrived, having finished washing the dishes, although still holding the towel on which she had dried her hands. The two girls laughed and talked, while Kio stood by doubtfully. After a while he said to Lisa, "You a boy or a dirl?"

"He has trouble with his d's and g's," Suki explained with a smile.

2 "I'm a girl," said Lisa.

"If you're a dirl, why you not—why you don't—why not you—why don't you wear a gress?"

"Oh," said Lisa, "practically all girls wear jeans. I only wear a dress when I feel like it—"

"And you never feel like it," Suki added, and both girls laughed.

Kio still looked at Lisa soberly. He picked up the cat from the sofa where it had been sleeping, and handed the still drowsy animal to Lisa. "Puthy cat!" he announced. "Him altho dot—he altho dot—he hath long hair too, like you dot."

Suki dropped down on her knees in front of her little brother. "I know, Kio, it's

3 hard to put what you want to say into words, and arrange the words just right at the same time."

Lisa would have paid more attention to Suki's remark if she hadn't been so

amused by the notion that what she was holding in her arms was a "puthy cat." But she burst into laughter when, a moment later, Kio pulled at Suki's sleeve and demanded, "What we having for thupper?"

Kio looked terribly hurt. "You laughing at me?" he wanted to know. "Why you laughing at me?" He took the cat out of Lisa's arms, and put it back on the sofa.

"His feelings get hurt easily," said Suki to Lisa, somewhat apologetically.

"Don't talk about me!" exclaimed Kio.

"I'm sorry, Kio, I didn't think," said Suki. She tried to smooth his hair, but he pulled away from her.

"I don't laugh at you," he remarked, so quietly it almost seemed as though he were talking to himself. 1

Kio went over to a cabinet and got out a toy mountain made of brown plastic. When marbles were placed at the peak of the mountain, they would race down slopes and through tunnels, then roll along the floor.

"This spring here used to shoot the marbles back up to the top of the mountain," Suki told Lisa. "But then it broke. I think Kio did it on purpose."

Kio said nothing.

The three played for a while very enjoyably. Then Kio tired and went off to his room, his cat hanging limply under his arm, its feet dragging the floor and bumping against each step on the stairs. 2

The girls sat silently for a while. Then Lisa looked up. "Y'know," she said, "it was funny, it was as if he was changing the subject when he got out his game for us to play."

"Oh no," Suki replied reassuringly, "it probably wasn't like that at all."

"I'm not so sure," replied Lisa, "it was just as if he'd said, 'let's play a game where no one gets hurt.'"

Suki shook her head, but said nothing. Then the girls began talking about their history projects. Each of them had an exciting idea she was working on, and as they talked, their conversation became more and more animated. Kio reappeared at the top of the stairs, but they paid no attention. He just stood there, now with his bear instead of his cat, looking down at them silently. 3

Lisa began to leave—always a slow process when she and Suki were ending a thoughtful discussion. Suki accompanied her out to the sidewalk, where the girls continued their exchange of ideas.

Kio balanced on the top step, holding the bannister with one hand. Now no

hands. He shifted his weight to his right foot, and placed the heel of his left foot on the toe of his right. Now he tried shifting some of his weight back onto his left foot. But it wasn't resting on anything. It was like in a dream, the way he began falling forward, then tumbling headfirst down the steps. Fortunately they were carpet-covered, but he was shaken up and when he had caught his breath he began to squall. Suki and Lisa came running in, picked him up and comforted him and took him up to his bed. He quickly fell asleep, still holding his bear.

"Do you think maybe he broke anything?" Lisa asked.

"That's what I've been wondering," said Suki. "Probably not, but my father'll
1 be home in a few minutes and he'll decide what to do." Suki paused and frowned. "That's not what worries me," she remarked finally. "What worries me is—well—what happened? How come he fell down the stairs, just like that?"

"It was an accident," Lisa ventured.

"If you mean no one pushed him, you're right," Suki returned. "But I don't think he tripped. So how come?"

"But he wouldn't have done it on purpose!" Lisa exclaimed.

Suki shrugged. "Maybe he felt nobody was paying attention to him, I don't know. Oh, Lisa, I can't seem to do my school work *and* take care of the house *and* give him the attention he needs too!"

2 "He knows you care about him," said Lisa.

"That's right!" Suki said vehemently. "And in the next few days, I'm going to give him lots of attention, so he'll have no doubt left in his mind how much I really do care about him."

Lisa said nothing for a time. When she spoke, she chose her words carefully. "Suki, do you think that's a good idea? I mean, if you make a big fuss over him now, after he just had that "accident," won't he begin having more such 'accidents'?"

It was Suki's turn to ponder. Then she said, "You're right. I'll act as if it was nothing. But in the future—not just in the next few days, but in the future—I'll
3 try to pay more attention to him."

"Not too much, now!" grinned Lisa. "But I've really got to run," she gasped, looking at the clock. "See you tomorrow. Take care."

Suki waved at her friend. But she said the words over to herself: "take care." "And do what with it?" she asked herself. "Give it?"

•••

Tony, Mark and Harry were working together on a history project and stayed a while after school. Later, on their way out of the building, they raced each other down the long corridor on the first floor; as they turned a corner, they ran into Mr. Spence. Mark went sprawling on the newly polished floor, while Tony and Harry cracked up laughing. Mr. Spence helped Mark up, and Mark grinned appreciatively.

"Hey," said Mr. Spence, "I was hoping to run into you fellows, but I didn't expect such a collision."

"Did you want to see us about something?" asked Mark.

"Right. Isn't it your class that has a study hour at 2:15 in Room 307?" 1

"Sure," answered Harry, "with Mr. Gallagher. Boy, is he strict!"

"Well," said Mr. Spence, "that's what I wanted to talk to you about. Mr. Gallagher has to take over another class at 2:15, so I've been given the study hour."

"Oh, boy," exclaimed Tony, "now we can pick up where we left off last year."

"It'd be fine with me," replied Mr. Spence, "but only if the rest of the class is agreeable."

"I think they'll all go along with it," said Mark.

"Are there any new kids in the class?"

"No," said Harry, "and Pam Ridgeway moved away." 2

"That's not much change for a year," Mr. Spence commented. "Okay, great! I'll see you tomorrow then."

Outside, the boys met Fran and Lisa, and told them about how they would be able to have discussions with Mr. Spence again.

"Hey, that's keen," exclaimed Fran.

"Yeah," returned Lisa, "far out."

"Tell 'em about Millie," Fran urged.

Lisa laughed. "Hey, yeah, lemme tell you about Millie. I really broke her up—told her about this kid who ran halfway through the woods and climbed a tree with a bear behind." Then she added, "It was the hardest I've seen Millie laugh 3 since she lost Pablo."

Now it was Harry's turn to laugh at Lisa. "What's wrong with you?" she demanded.

Harry couldn't stop laughing long enough to answer, but Fran explained to Lisa, "What you said was just as funny. It sounded like Millie laughed like crazy

when Pablo died."

When Lisa caught on, she agreed that what she said could be taken two ways, and was amused at herself.

"It's like saying, 'Throw gramma from the train a kiss,'" said Mark.

"Yeah," agreed Tony, "It's like saying, 'At the zoo, Johnny liked the hippopotamus better than his sister.'"

Afterwards, Lisa kept thinking about the funny way sentences could have double meanings. In history class next day, instead of paying attention to the lesson, she wrote a little paragraph that she passed around the room:

1 Last night, we had a guest for dinner. My father bought a lot of groceries at the corner store, which had been robbed last week by three armed thugs. But when it came to doing the cooking, my father wouldn't help one bit, and my mother had to cook herself. Boy, she really put her heart in that stew! The table looked beautiful, because it was once part of a set belonging to an aunt of mine with a mahogany chest and brass legs. After dinner, we gave the leftovers to the dog. He eats much more slowly than most dogs; maybe if he'd bolt his food down, he wouldn't throw it up so often.

No one else in the class was as amused by what Lisa wrote as she was. She
2 thought it was hilarious, but Fran just looked straight-faced at her and said, "No, Lisa, no. Why don't you go home and go to bed? Probably with a couple days' rest you'll be good as new."

"You guys don't appreciate real wit," Lisa retorted.

Later, during physical ed, a tortoise-shell cat burst suddenly onto the playground, closely followed by a small dog. The dog was closing in so fast that finally, in the middle of the playground, the cat stopped and faced its pursuer. As the dog circled, the cat kept turning about, always sure to face the dog so as not to be caught off guard. Eventually some of the girls chased the dog away, although several of the boys wanted to see the two animals get into a fight.

3 "Hey," said Mickey, "I got a question. Did the dog go around the cat?"

"Of course it did," Millie retorted. "Didn't you see—it kept circling around, and the cat just stayed in the center. You sure must have bad eyesight!"

"Wait!" Timmy exclaimed, "I think I see what Mickey's asking. The dog and cat were always facing each other! So how could on go around the other? It would be impossible!"

A full-scale argument developed, with half the class taking one side, and the remainder taking the other side.

Lisa listened intently. Then she shouted out, "Shut up, you guys, lemme say something." The arguing partially subsided, although Millie and Timmie continued to debate each other. "Look," Lisa went on, "the problem's with the words 'go around,' don't you see?"

"What's wrong with 'go around'?" demanded Tony. "It means 'go around'."

"Let her talk," said Harry.

"Okay," Lisa continued, trying to make herself heard over Millie's high-pitched protests, "sometimes 'go around' means one thing, and sometimes it means another." 1

"It means," said Tony impatiently, "that if something's standing still, and another thing moves to the west of the first thing, then to the south of it, then to the east of it, and then to the north of it, then the second thing went around the first. It's as simple as that. The dog went around the cat."

"But don't you see," Lisa insisted, "'go around' could also mean, to go to the left of something, then to go behind it, then to go to the right of it, then to come up in front of it, right?"

"Right," Harry agreed. Tony was silent.

"So when we say 'go around,' we can mean two different things by it, don't you see?" Lisa looked about her triumphantly, but only Harry and Mickey agreed. 2

Then Mickey whispered to Lisa, "How 'bout when Laura and Sandy 'go around' behind Tony's back? What happens then?"

"Mickey," said Lisa, "you're something else."

"That's right," he replied, "I may not be better, but at least I'm different."

"You're not different," Lisa shot back. "You're just weird!"

"Very funny."

Lisa smiled. "Funny strange or funny ha-ha?"

•••

Millie's parents thought she would quickly forget about Pablo, but they were mistaken. She often found it difficult to think about what was going on in the classroom; her mind was full of memories of the beautiful little yak-like animal she had loved so much. 3

The nights were most difficult. It wasn't only the bad dreams, although they were bad enough. It was the terror of lying wide awake in the still house, and

feeling absolutely certain that someone was standing motionless in the room. Millie would look at the back of her door, and be convinced that the shape was that of a person—sometimes a man, sometimes a woman. Eventually she might fall asleep, and then in the morning she would see that some of her clothes, hung at the back of the door, might very well have looked like a human shape in the dark. But it would not change her conviction that what she had seen had really been a person. So her life alternated between daytime reveries of Pablo and nights of wild and fearful imaginings.

Then one day her father told her that his father would be moving in with them.
1 There was no guest room, so it would be necessary for Millie to give her room to her grandfather and sleep on the sofa in the living room.

Millie had hardly known her grandparents. They always lived so far away, it had never been possible to visit them, and it had been a long time since they had visited Millie's family. Yet here was her grandfather now, coming in the front door, saying hello and kissing Millie gently on the cheek, and then being shown upstairs to her room where he unpacked his bags and spent a while resting.

Millie wondered what she should call him. "Grand-dad," "gramp," none of these made any sense. She kept meaning to ask her mother what to say, but her mother always looked too busy and too flustered to be bothered. When he did
2 come out of the room that had been hers, Millie blurted out to him, "I don't know what to call you."

He smiled. "Well, I've been called lots of things, so it really doesn't matter very much. What would *you* like to call me?"

Millie just stared at him and said nothing. She knew it wasn't polite, and she felt terribly ashamed of herself, but she felt absolutely tongue-tied.

"How about 'grandfather'?" he suggested.

Somehow Millie hadn't thought of that. She liked it. She thought of the generations and generations of her ancestors. Her father's father was a *grand*father, and his father was a *great* grandfather: on and on the generations
3 stretched, all of them made up of individuals who were grand and great! And here was her own living grandparent, looking mildly at her and motioning to her to come sit and talk with him while dinner was still being prepared.

Naturally she told him about Pablo. He wanted to know all about the ill-fated guinea pig—what color his eyes and hair were, whether he'd snored when he slept (Millie squealed with laughter at the suggestion), and together they

speculated what his life had been like back in Peru.

They talked for a long time about Pablo. Then the conversation changed to school, and to the neighborhood, and to her friends. Her grandfather had so many questions! Millie found herself answering in great detail, while her grandfather would puff away at his unlit pipe, and slap it into the palm of his hand, and clean it, and do everything but smoke it.

It didn't take Millie long to get used to sleeping on the sofa. It might have been more awkward if her parents stayed home in the evenings. But Mr. and Mrs. Warshaw went out just about every night, sometimes together, sometimes separately, and Millie was able to go to bed just about any time she pleased, just as she had before her grandfather had arrived. As for him—he retired early every evening. 1

The longer her grandfather stayed (Millie never asked him how long he was to stay), the more they found to discuss with one another. If it was school they talked about, she found he knew a lot about the subjects she had to study and could even help her with her homework. If they talked about games, she discovered that he knew more games than she had ever dreamed existed. He taught her all sorts of card games; when they would finish playing, he'd show her how to construct towering card houses, or show her wonderful card tricks. And when she'd put on some clothes that she knew he hadn't seen, she felt no hesitation about mentioning the fact to him, and he'd soberly discuss with her how he thought her "threads," as she called them, looked on her. 2

But the topic they shared most enjoyably was animals, and it didn't take long for Millie to find out why her grandfather knew so much about animals: he'd spent most of his life with the Wildlife Service. He'd even spent years in Alaska, and Millie never tired of hearing about his encounters with bears and eagles and countless other wild creatures.

One day he asked Millie if she'd like to visit the zoo. She'd been to the zoo several times before, but she guessed instantly that a trip there with her grandfather would be very different from those other occasions. 3

"Can I bring a friend?" she asked.

"Of course," her grandfather quickly replied.

Millie didn't have that many friends to choose among, and she readily settled on Lisa. Nor was Lisa reluctant to accept, since she liked animals as much as Millie did.

It was a perfect outing. The birds were gorgeous, the dolphins were hilarious, and the big cats were incredibly graceful. True, the monkey house did smell pretty awful. But the monkeys themselves were absolutely wonderful. Lisa and Millie were so fascinated with the gibbons, which were swinging from trapeze to trapeze in a marvellous aerial dance, that they felt no urge to finish their tour. Nor did Millie's grandfather become impatient: he seemed just as ready as they were to stand and watch. Eventually they moved outside to the artificial mountain, with its caves and grottoes and winding moat, and they found what seemed to be an entire society of baboons. Here and there were family groups,
1 while younger baboons raced about, shrieking wildly for no apparent reason, and then suddenly stopping—again for no reason one could detect.

After a time, Lisa nudged Millie and said, "Look at those two out there."

Millie looked, then looked wide-eyed back at Lisa. "Are they making love?" she finally asked.

Lisa laughed. "Love? That I can't say, but they sure seem to be making little baboons!" Eventually the two animals separated.

"Separating is as much a part of things as mating," Millie's grandfather remarked. The two girls weren't sure what he meant, so they said nothing. But the comment stuck somehow in Millie's mind. There had been a question that
2 had been on the tip of her tongue ever since her grandfather arrived, but she'd never been able to bring herself to ask it. Now that they had come back, and were alone together in the living room, Millie faced her grandfather with her question. "Grandfather," she asked, just a trifle more loudly and less casually than she'd intended, "where's—where's grandmother?" As her grandfather didn't answer immediately, Millie couldn't help racing ahead: "Did she die?"

Millie's grandfather looked shocked. "I thought you knew!" he exclaimed. "I thought your parents told you!"

"Told me what?"

"That your grandmother and I had gotten a divorce."

3 A divorce? Such a possibility had never occurred to Millie. But now she felt entitled to some kind of explanation.

"Well," her grandfather began, banging his pipe against his palm more energetically than usual, "We never did spend much time together. I was always off in the woods or the mountains somewhere, so she pretty much had to develop her own life. We were both very agreeable about the divorce; as a matter of fact,

we're still good friends."

"But where is she now? What's she doing?"

Her grandfather chuckled a bit. "Oh, she's doing quite well, I believe. She's remarried."

"Isn't she too old to remarry?"

"Now why do you say that? She's in her middle fifties, just like me!"

"Well," Millie persisted, isn't *that* too old?"

Her grandfather laughed. "I can see you don't remember your grandmother. Her too old? She'll never be too old!" Then he added, with a curious note of pride, "Why, she married a man fifteen years younger than herself." 1

Millie's thoughts whirled about. Further questions came to mind, but she could not bring herself to ask them. That night she dreamt alternately about the baboons and about her grandmother. Her grandmother was at a ball, and insisted on dancing every dance. Then the baboons came in, and they danced too. And soon all of them—baboons and people—all of them were dancing together.

It was not the sort of thing Millie could keep from telling Lisa—this strange business about her grandmother remarrying, and to someone so much younger than herself.

"Hmmmm," said Lisa, "I'd say what your grandfather has to do now is find a nice, 40-year old widow." 2

Millie shook her head. The idea of her grandfather remarrying seemed altogether inappropriate.

"What would you want him to do, spend the rest of his life by himself?" Lisa demanded.

Millie wanted to know what would be wrong about that.

"Well, look at your grandmother. He could be happily married, like her."

Millie shuddered. "How can you talk like that? It's absolutely wrong for a woman to marry a man younger than herself. And it's absolutely, absolutely wrong for her to marry a man all that many years younger than she is." 3

Lisa pursed her lips a bit. "Is it wrong for a man to marry a woman younger than he is?"

"Of course not."

"Then why is it wrong for a woman to marry a younger man?"

"Cause it's just wrong, that's why," said Millie.

Lisa shook her head. "I don't understand. If it works one way it should work the other. I just don't understand."

The girls continued to discuss the problem, with Lisa insisting that what was fair for men had to be fair also for women, and with Millie insisting that "it's not a question of what's fair. It's a question of what's natural. And it's just not *natural* for wives to be older than their husbands!"

"I don't see that the question of what's natural has anything to do with it," Lisa returned. "Look, as I see it, if it's right for a man to be able to marry who he wants to marry, then it should be right for a woman to marry who she wants to
1 marry. Age has nothing to do with it!"

It was Millie's turn to shake her head. But all she could say was, "You're always talking about what's 'fair' and what's 'right,' Lisa."

"Why not?" Lisa retorted, just a bit sharply. "I think about it a lot."

That evening, Millie studied herself at length in the bathroom mirror. "I look different, somehow," she said to herself. "Why do I look different?" She put her pajamas back on, and got back in her bed on the sofa. But it was hours before she slept.

She still felt different the next morning. "It's as if I found a new part of myself," she mused. And the night following, instead of putting on her cotton
2 pajamas as usual, she put on the lovely nightgown her Aunt Margaret had given her for her birthday.

CHAPTER FIVE

Lisa was relieved to see that the cafeteria was serving a noodle casserole for lunch. It made it easier for her. She was somewhat uneasy eating meat or fish.

She stood holding her tray at the end of the serving line, looking for an empty seat. "There's always such a mob in here," she groaned to herself. Then she spotted a vacant place, and hurried over to it.

She found Mark sitting across from her, concentrating on his plate. She and Mark hardly ever had much to say to one another. She knew she didn't dislike him, and she suspected he didn't dislike her. But she always felt somewhat tongue-tied if for any reason she found herself alone with him.

He nodded at her and they proceeded to eat in silence. Lisa desperately racked 1
her brain for something to talk about. Only three topics surfaced in her mind, none of them very promising. She could talk to him, she thought, about food, about his family, or about "figuring things out." But when it came to translating these possible topics into conversation, she found herself floundering again.

"Food," she told herself sternly. "Find something to say about food." Then she brightened. Looking up at him, she said, "Mark, d'you like noodles?"

When Mark answered with a shrug, Lisa realized that she could think of nothing else to say about food, and that they had exhausted the first topic.

"Family." Lisa wasn't about to start talking to Mark about Maria, but she knew nothing of the rest of his family. The moments dragged by in silence. She 2
had to get a conversation started. "Mark," she said desperately, "do you have a brother?"

"No."

The abruptness of Mark's answer unnerved her, and she found herself unable to think of anything else to ask about his family. So she was down now to the final topic, and Mark was hurrying through his lunch.

"Figuring things out. What in the world can I say about that? Funny, I can always talk to Harry about it, so why not to Mark? Don't panic: figuring things out." Then a thought struck her, and she looked at him impishly: "Mark, what d'you think—if you *had* a brother, would *he* like noodles?" 3

Mark looked uncomfortable. "How would I know?" he asked.

"It was just a joke," said Lisa apologetically, and it no longer seemed much of

a way to start a conversation.

Then Mark said slowly, "*If* I had a brother, would *he* like noodles? Hey, Lisa, that's not bad." He laughed. "If you had a pet dinosaur, would it like scallions?"

"Don't tell me—" Lisa thought, "he's going to talk!" And they lingered for a few moments, while Lisa listened to Mark's ideas of what he would do if he were teaching the History course. "I'd make it all a game," he concluded. "If learning could only be a game—"

Lisa laughed. "If learning were a game, we'd all learn to use our noodles."

•••

1 Harry and Tony were Indian wrestling, waiting for Mr. Spence to show up in study hall. Each time Harry would bring Tony's knuckles down close to the desk, Tony was able to bring his arm up straight again. Suddenly Harry tired, and Tony pinned Harry's arm flat on the desk.

They both laughed, and Tony said, "Wanna try again leftie?"

Harry shook his exhausted arm and grinned, "No, thanks!"

Jane Starr said she wanted to try, and she also lost, although she gave Tony more of a fight than he'd expected.

"Anyone else?" Tony asked, pushing his glasses back up on his nose.

"Me," answered Lisa, sitting down across from him, and scowling ferociously.

2 Then everyone laughed as Tony had no trouble at all pushing her arm over.

Laura O'Mara was standing beside Lisa, trying to decide whether to challenge Jane, when suddenly Harry called out, "Hey, Tony, how's Barbara these days?"

It took Laura off guard. She looked searchingly at Tony, but he didn't act the slightest bit embarrassed. He just seemed amused by the question and waved to Harry to come over to the blackboard.

"I want to show you what I've been doing," he announced with obvious satisfaction. "I've got more than Barbara—I've got Margaret and Alice and Carole, and soon I'll have lots of others!"

Laura looked at him as if he'd lost his mind.

3 Harry grinned, and Laura demanded, "What are you two acting so smug about? You collecting a harem, Tony?"

"That's right," Harry teased. "He's got a lot of hot numbers, and he keeps them all in neat little rows."

At that point Mr. Spence came in. "What's happening?" he asked.

"Hey, Mr. Spence!" Tony called out. "You remember last year when we were

figuring things out using sentences beginning with 'all'?"

"Sure. If we took two true sentences like that, we were able to figure out a third true one from them."

"Okay," said Tony, picking up a piece of chalk, "and you remember how we used to call them 'A' sentences when they began with 'all'?"

"So what's all this got to do with Barbara," demanded Mickey, before Mr. Spence could answer.

"C'mon, Mickey," said Tony, "you were in on this last year when we were working it out, weren't you?"

Mickey shrugged. "Don't ask me," he said grandly. "I only sleep here." 1

"Lookit," Tony went on, turning to the blackboard. "Like this."

All apples are tasty.	A
No apples are tasty.	E
Some apples are tasty.	I
Some apples are not tasty.	O

"I bet it wouldn't work if you took a different example," argued Mickey. "I bet it wouldn't work if you took something like roaches or something, and said something like 'All roaches are tasty.'"

Jill Portos shuddered and said, "Oh, Mickey, shut up!"

But Tony remarked, "It doesn't matter, Jill. It's not what the sentence *says* 2 that counts. It's the *form* of the sentence that we're talking about. There are four different forms here, so we're giving them four different nicknames, 'A,' 'E,' 'I,' and 'O.'"

"So where do the girls come in?" Laura wanted to know.

"Okay, I'm getting there," Tony replied. "Now, each of those sentences we were working with last year was an 'A' sentence, right?"

Laura nodded.

"So if we had three sentences like that in a row, we could call it an 'AAA' arrangement, right?"

Laura nodded again. 3

"But we don't have just one letter to work with, we have four—A, E, I and O. And we have three places to put each of them."

"I see what you're saying," said Mr. Spence. "So how many possible arrangements are there?"

"I know," Mickey put in. "3 times 4. Makes 12. Easy as nothing."

"Wrong," said Harry. "It's 3 times 4 times 4. Makes 48."

"You're both wrong," Tony declared. "Look, let's say we start with all the arrangements where the first sentence is an A. Now, we can first take the AA's, then the AE's, then the AI's, and then the AO's. And here's what we get:

AAA	AEA	AIA	AOA
AAE	AEE	AIE	AOE
AAI	AEI	AII	AOI
AAO	AEO	AIO	AOO

"I see now," said Jill, much amused, "you're just taking the three vowels that
1 are in a girl's name, like the first one's AAA, so that could be Barbara!"

Tony and Harry grinned.

"Hey," called out Maria. "How 'bout my name? It's an AIA!"

"Right," Harry agreed.

A moment later, names were being called out from all corners of the room.

"Lillian," said Suki.

"Melissa," contributed Jill.

Then Fran suggested "Diane," and Jane suggested "Joanne."

Three suggestions were now made at the same moment: "Theresa," by Timmy, "Maxine," by Luther, and "Deborah," by Lisa.

2 Laura looked relieved. Then she said "How about Deirdre? It's such a pretty name."

"Pretty or not, it works," said Jill. "But personally, I prefer Pandora."

"Pandora?"

"Sure," Jill returned, "don't you remember in the Greek myth, she was the one who opened the box and let out all those angry things that had been shut up inside."

"Yes," said Fran, "but the things in the box weren't shut up because they were angry; they were angry because they were shut up."

"All those myths were about someone doing something they were warned not
3 to do," ventured Millie.

But now Lisa had a mischievous look on her face, and she whispered something to Fran, who whispered to Jane, and soon the girls were laughing both at what they were telling each other and at the puzzlement the boys were displaying.

Finally Jane told Mickey what they were doing: they were taking the same

sets of letters, A, E, I and O, and seeing if they couldn't find parts of the body that contained any three of the letters. So far, Lisa had suggested "shinbone," Fran had thought of "forearm," and Jane had proposed "abdomen."

"I'd have a good one," said Millie plaintively. "I'd say 'cranium,' if you'd let me exchange an O for a U."

"Sorry," replied Lisa, "but we're not allowed to move our vowels in study hall."

•••

"Hey, Tony, what's this history project you and Harry keep working on?" Fran demanded the next day.

"Wouldn't you like to know," Tony countered. 1

But Harry shook his head. "We might as well admit it, Tony, it's a failure—a complete washout."

"We could make it work if we just put some more time into it," Tony insisted.

"Oh, boy," Lisa commented drily, "you guys really seem to be on the brink of success!"

"Nobody asked you, Lisa," Tony replied curtly.

"C'mon," Harry was more conciliatory. "Let's show them what we've done so far. Maybe they'll have some ideas. *We* sure as heck don't seem to be having any!"

Reluctantly, Tony reached into his desk and got out a package wrapped in 2
newspaper. When he removed the wrapping, it turned out to be a game board with an arrow for a spinner in the center. A number of concentric circles had been drawn on the board. The circles themselves were then divided by a number of lines which radiated out from the center, so that the whole thing looked like a pie cut into a large number of equal slices. Fran and Lisa looked at it dubiously, and Mark and Maria, who had come over, were equally puzzled.

"What're all those things you've written in the spaces?" Fran asked.

"Well, see, the outer circle has names of famous people in history, and the next circle has names of famous places, and the next circle has important historical dates." Harry paused to flick the arrow so that it spun around and came to rest 3
on Attila the Hun. "So we figured we'd give each person in the class three spins of the wheel, and whoever could match up the right name, the right place and the right date in three successive spins would be high scorer."

"But what would be the right name?" Maria wanted to know.

Tony answered impatiently, "*Any* name would be the right one, just so the

next spin you got the place to match the name, and just so on your third spin you got the right date lined up with the other two."

"Whoever's most consistent wins," Lisa murmured.

Tony shot an approving glance at her. "That's right," he asserted. But then his face fell again. "I'm afraid it's not a very good game. As many times as Harry and I have spun that darned arrow, we still haven't been able to get three right in a row. Nobody would want to play a game that nobody could win."

"And nobody for sure would want to play a game where no one could ever score any points," Harry added gloomily.

1 "There's another thing wrong with it," said Mark.

"What's that?" Harry was surprised to find that he was afraid of having his game criticized, even though he suspected it was worthless.

"Well, the main thing that's wrong with it is that you're making even a worse mess of history than everyone else does. First you make it a bunch of names and dates and places, and then you give points to whoever lines them up, which is just stupid. I think you'd be better off trying to figure out how to show how history works using pin-ball machines, or something like that."

Neither Tony nor Harry could answer, and Harry felt particularly crushed because he agreed with Mark's criticism. Lisa idly spun the spinner over and
2 over, not even waiting for it to stop. Then suddenly she said, "Y'know what's wrong? It's deadly—it's got no life to it. Something's gotta happen in a game; it's gotta have excitement."

"A game should be fun," Maria chimed in.

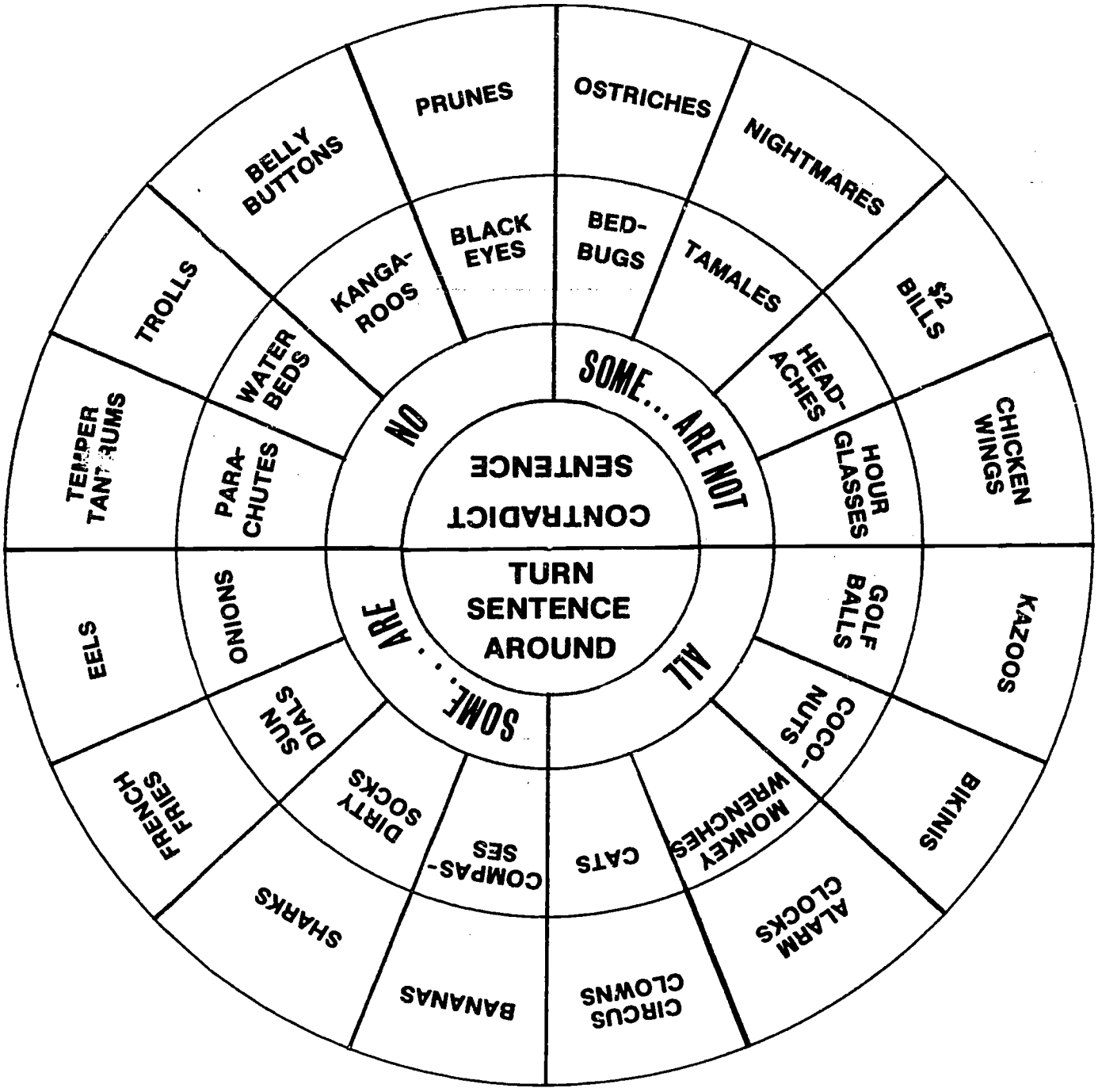
"I wish it could be sort of funny," Lisa agreed, with a smile. "With every spin, some kind of surprise."

"Hey, right," Harry put in. "But you know what? Do you think we could make it work with the way we were figuring things out?"

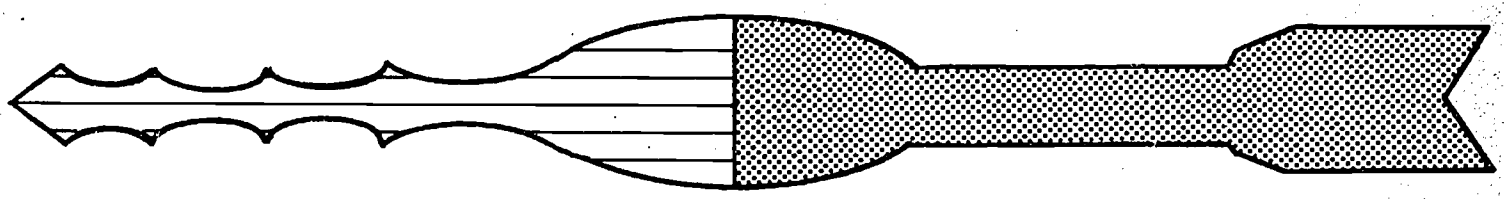
"You mean with Barbara and all those other girls' names?" inquired Mark. "That could be deadly too."

3 "Naaah, that's not what I mean," Harry began. But Lisa had already gotten an eraser out of her briefcase, and was erasing the pencilled names and dates from the gameboard. She let the concentric circles stay, and began writing some words down in the spaces. Then Fran and Mark caught on to what she was doing, and began to help write words into the remaining spaces, as did Harry and Millie shortly afterwards.

Lisa looked proudly at their work. "Quite a job!" she announced. She filled in the last empty space with the word "eels," so that the completed board looked like this:



Meanwhile, Harry cut a spinner out of some hard cardboard, and made points along its sides so that it could point to parts of any of the concentric circles. It looked like this:



Tony made a washer of a piece of plastic, and Lisa found a brass fastener to serve as a pin. In a few minutes they had completed the game board.

"What's next?" Mickey asked. "I'm ready to play."

"Rules," Tony answered. "We can't play without rules."

"But there *are* no rules!" wailed Millie. "How are we going to follow rules if we
2 don't know the rules to follow?"

"Make them up," advised Lisa impatiently.

"But how?" Millie persisted. "Who knows how?"

Harry intervened. "Anyone know how?" he asked calmly.

"I've never made up the rules to a game," Randy said, "but I've got lots of games at home, and I've read lots of rules."

"So have I," replied Harry, "but I can't remember how they go."

"Lemme think." Randy scratched his head. "Usually it's on the inside cover of the box."

"Now there's a big help!" exclaimed Mickey.

3 Randy ignored Mickey's comment and continued. "As I remember, they first tell you the objective of the game. Then they tell you how to begin, and how to play."

"You forgot one thing," added Jane. "They also tell you how to win."

Harry went to the blackboard and wrote across it:

Objective: To Begin: To Play: To Win:

"Okay," he said, "we have four columns here. How about some suggestions for each column? Let's take the first column first. What's the objective of this game?"

"Let me do that," volunteered Lisa. "It's to invent sentences and then figure out what follows from them."

Harry wrote Lisa's description in the first column, then asked for suggested rules for beginning the game. He wrote these down as they were offered:

"Rule 1. Choose up sides. Two sides," suggested Suki.

"Rule 2. Choose an umpire," proposed Mickey. 1

"Rule 3. Flip a coin for which side goes first," offered Timmy.

No one else had suggestions for rules for beginning, so Harry moved over to the third column, and asked for suggestions.

"Rule 4," offered Mark, "should tell how many spins each player is allowed."

"Okay," said Lisa, "so put down that each person who comes up gets four spins. What counts in the first spin is where the pointer lands on the inner circle. Then the next circle, then the next, and finally the outer circle."

Harry grumbled at writing so much, but he put it all on the board.

"I've got Rule 5," said Randy. "It has to be, 'do what the directions in the first circle tell you to do.'" 2

"Yeah," said Fran, "and Rule 6 tells you to form your sentence the way the second circle tells you to."

Now Luther had his hand up. "Rule 7 must be: make this word the *subject* of your sentence." Then he added, "The word in the third circle."

"And Rule 8 must be, 'The fourth circle gives the *predicate* of the sentence,'" said Laura.

"We haven't said anything about scoring," objected Tony. "What counts?"

"How about this?" suggested Harry. "If the player performs the operation correctly on the sentence, his side gets 1 point. If the player performs the operation incorrectly, his side loses 1 point, or is given a -1. He can't continue 3 playing until his side has figured out the right operation." Since there were no objections, Harry wrote these scoring rules on the board in a scrawl that was even tinier and more illegible than usual. He labelled them "Rule 9."

"Okay," said Lisa, "now we've gotten the sentence in the proper form, but we've got to change it again." There were several audible groans, traceable to

Mickey, Sandy and Jane. "C'mon," Lisa encouraged them, "We're almost done."

"You're so right!" said Mickey. "I've just about had it."

Lisa was about to tell Mickey how lazy and gross he was, but instead she promised, "Just one or two more rules. Look, for Rule 10: Take your sentence, put 'if' in front of it and put 'then' after it. Now give three sentences that follow if your first sentence is true. If you can't supply the three sentences that follow, other members of your team can do so."

By this time, Harry's writing hand was numb, so Tony took over.

"We need a rule for the number of points to be given for each of the three
1 sentences that follow," said Harry. "How about letting the umpire assign points—either 0, 1, 2 or 3 points for each sentence?"

"Rule 11" announced Maria.

"The last one," sighed Millie.

"Okay, Rule 1. Let's choose up sides," said Tony. Sides were quickly agreed upon, but it was found that one side had one player more than the other.

"No problem," said Randy. "Rule 2 says we need an umpire. I nominate Harry."

Harry protested vigorously that he wanted to play, not to umpire, but he was overruled. "You guys," Harry grumbled, then added, "we never even voted on
2 the rules."

"Makes no difference," replied Tony. "Nobody's arguing."

Mickey was the first player to come up for his side. In four spins, he drew "Contradict: Some cats are not prunes." "Uh—" he began, "uh—, the contradiction is "No cats aren't prunes."

"Wrong," said Harry. "Minus one. What's the correct answer?"

"All cats are prunes," said Jill. Lisa, who was also on Jill's side, applauded loudly.

"What am I supposed to do now?" Mickey demanded.

"You gotta say what figures," put in Mark.

3 "That's right," added Lisa. "In fact, that would be a good name for this game—let's just call it, 'It Figures.'" Or maybe, "If-Then."

Mickey thought for a while, then said, "Okay. *If* all cats are prunes, *then* whenever I eat prunes, I get cat hairs in my teeth." Mickey looked at Harry. "I get three points for that, right?"

"Sorry," said Harry, "no points. That might happen if all prunes were cats, but

it wouldn't have to happen if all cats were prunes."

Mickey shook his head unbelievingly. "I must be out of my mind to be playing this crazy game."

Mark said that since his side had two more chances, he'd like to offer another sentence: "*If* all cats are prunes, *then* if I eat too many cats, I'll get diarrhea."

"One point," Harry announced. "Can you give me one more sentence?"

"Yep," said Sandy, "If all cats are prunes, then dried kittens are little old wrinkled plums."

"Two points," was Harry's verdict. "That's -1, 0, 1 and 2, so your side gets 2 points. Okay, now you guys. Who's first?" 1

Fran spun four times, and came up with "Contradict: No waterbeds are alarm clocks." "Well," she suggested, "how about this? The contradiction is Some waterbeds are alarm clocks! And *if* some waterbeds are alarm clocks, *then* I'd better set my waterbed tonight if I want to get up on time tomorrow morning."

Harry gave it two points.

Maria contributed "*If* some waterbeds are alarm clocks, *then* Fran's water bed may have a wet ring tomorrow morning."

"Three points," said Harry.

It was Tony's turn. After some deliberation, he said, "*If* some waterbeds are alarm clocks,*then* I'll understand tonight if I find my mattress is ticking." 2

Harry at first gave Tony's statement one point, but Tony protested: "Stottlemeier, as an umpire, you act like you were born yesterday. That was the best sentence so far, and you know it!"

Harry thought about it some more and then awarded Tony three points, whereupon Lisa protested loudly that Harry shouldn't have changed his mind once he'd made a decision. But Harry stuck by his verdict, so that the score was 8 to 2.

Now the game began to move faster. When Lisa came up with the sentence, "All onions are sharks," she said, "Well, *if* all onions are sharks, *then* whenever I bite an onion, it'll bite me back." 3

"*If* all onions are sharks," said Jane, "I'll take a slice of Bermuda shark on my hamburger."

As for Jill, her entry was "*If* all onions are sharks, *then* if you suddenly start to cry while you're bathing, you'd better quick get out of the water."

Then Timmy had to work with "Some kangaroos are belly buttons," but he

couldn't think of anything that might follow.

"C'mon, Timmy," Randy said, "all you gotta do is imagine it in your mind. Look, if Maria were wearing her bikini, and if kangaroos are belly-buttons, then what would happen?"

Timmy looked up brightly. "Oh, I get it now! *If* some kangaroos are belly buttons, *then* when Maria wears her bikini, it'll show her kangaroo."

Millie now tried to match Timmy by saying "*If* some kangaroos are belly buttons, *then* some people might discover that they have pouches in their paunches."

1 The game continued for a time. After everyone had a turn, the score was 12 to 12.

"Hey," exclaimed Tony, "we forgot the fourth column. How do you tell who wins?"

"Why don't we just say 12 wins?" suggested Harry.

Lisa stared at Harry. "It figures," she said.

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"What did you say his name is?"

"Mr. Pennypacker," Maria answered, putting some more salt on her egg, and grimacing at Mark across the breakfast table.

2 "Yeah, but what's his first name?"

"I think it's Henry, or something like that."

"Oh, boy!" Mark grinned, "Henny Penny!"

That's how Mr. Pennypacker came to be known in the school. He had arrived as an assistant principal when classes began in the fall. Some time thereafter, when Mr. Partridge fell ill, Mr. Pennypacker became Acting Principal.

He was a blue-eyed young man with carrot-colored hair. Usually he wore a bright red jacket and plaid pants. Mr. Pennypacker seldom walked: he would race through the halls, his tie loosened and his jacket flapping. Whenever something was amiss somewhere in the school, Mr. Pennypacker would appear

3 almost instantly.

"No problem!" he'd announce, his eyes bright behind his rimless glasses. He'd make a decision on the spot, and the difficulty would be dealt with promptly. "Trouble-shooting's my business," he'd say.

Some of Mr. Pennypacker's solutions worked, and some didn't. When students in the art class complained to him that they wanted to do a large mural but had

nowhere to do it, he arranged with the owner of a warehouse to let them design a mural for one of the warehouse walls. And when some of the girls wanted to organize a drill team, he worked with them after school until they were able to compete in state-wide contests. But when he attempted to improvise some changes in the school schedule the result was complete confusion, with some students scheduled to be in two different places at the same time and others scheduled to be nowhere. Another memorable incident occurred when he sought to organize some students and teachers into a brigade that would put a new coat of tar on the roof of the school building. The volunteers succeeded in getting more tar on themselves than on the roof. "All you and Henny Penny need now," said 1
Maria to Mark, when he came home that evening, "is feathers."

Naturally, as Mr. Pennypacker persisted in introducing changes in the school wherever he could, rumors flew about concerning his alleged successes and failures. After a while, Mr. Pennypacker was as much a legend as he was a fact.

"What's he going to do, change everything around here?" demanded Randy irritably.

"That's right," said Jill, "whatever it is, good or bad, he's got to monkey with it. Can't he leave anything alone?"

"A lot of the things he's trying to do should have been done a long time ago," protested Mark. 2

"Yeah," replied Randy, "but Henny Penny thinks that whatever's been working okay for a long time must have something wrong with it."

"It's like, if you have any habits, you're a failure," agreed Millie.

"Hey," whispered Sandy," did you hear the latest?"

Even Mark leaned over to hear what Sandy had to say, though he knew it would probably be just a bit of gossip.

Sandy was laughing so hard he could hardly tell the story he'd heard. According to Sandy, the school custodians had complained to Mr. Pennypacker that the kids were throwing paper towels into the toilets, causing the toilets to back up and flood the bathrooms. After a moment's deliberation, Mr. Penny- 3
packer suggested that the custodians make baskets of wire screen so that foreign objects could be kept out of the plumbing.

Millie practically got hysterical, but Mark simply grumbled, "Okay you guys, you can laugh at him, but you've gotta admit, he makes everything exciting. All he's got to do is walk in the room, and everyone gets charged up. Suddenly

everything's possible."

A few days later, Mr. Pennypacker showed up unannounced in the study hall.

"I've been hearing about this group, Stan," he said to Mr. Spence. "I hear they're doing some good work in here."

Mr. Pennypacker turned to the class. "Just what is it you're working on? Can you tell me?"

"Oh," said Lisa, rather diffidently, "we're just trying to figure out—I mean, we're trying to understand how to figure things out."

"They even invented a game to help them," Mr. Spence added. "Would you like
1 to see it? I'm sure they'd be glad to show it to you."

"No, that's okay," replied Mr. Pennypacker hastily. "But since you're all doing a lot of thinking in here, I hope you'll think about things you'd like to see corrected in the school."

"That'd be great!" exclaimed Mark.

"No it wouldn't," Randy shot back.

"Mr. Pennypacker," said Harry, "we've been thinking about thinking, but we haven't been thinking about the sort of things you're talking about. Maybe we should be, I don't know. But gee—where would we begin?"

"Begin with me," said Mr. Pennypacker. "I don't mind. If there are criticisms
2 you have about the way I do my job, I'd like to hear them."

No one said anything.

Mr. Pennypacker's eyebrows were raised. "I'm surprised. I was hoping for a lively discussion with this particular group."

Finally Harry remarked, "I'm not against saying something's wrong if I think it wrong, Mr. Pennypacker. But this just doesn't seem to be the way to begin."

"Before you criticize, you've got to know what the problem is," said Lisa.

"Yeah," agreed Tony, "and we're not sure what it is."

"Well, then, find out!" snapped Mr. Pennypacker. "You have this free hour—use it to find out what's wrong, so we can make this a better school."

3 "Do you mean it?" asked Fran.

"Of course I mean it. I never meant anything more." He paused at the door. "Think about what's going on around you. Don't be afraid to get your hands dirty." Then he turned and was gone.

"Does he really mean it?" wondered Fran.

"Sure he does," Mark assured her.

"No, he don't," interjected Luther. "He's just gonna stir up a mess, but he's got no way of solving anything. We were better off before, trying to learn how to think better. All this will get us exactly nowhere."

"Mr. Spence," said Laura, "what do you think?"

Mr. Spence looked surprised at the question. "Well, Laura, if you mean what do I think about what you've been talking about among yourselves since last year, I'm certainly in favor of it. Look, take the other day, when you worked out that "If-Then" game. You knew you had to have rules before you could play it, so you went ahead and figured them out. Well, our beliefs are like rules. They're like rules for what we do, and what we say, and what we think. And we need the best beliefs possible." 1

"That's not what I meant," said Laura. "I meant, what do you think of what Mr. Pennypacker wants us to do?"

Mr. Spence looked rather pained. "I don't know what to say, Laura. I just don't know. I halfway agree and I halfway disagree."

"Sure," said Harry, "there are things that maybe have to get done, but there's still a right way and a wrong way to do them."

"Let's just say some ways are better than others," said Mr. Spence.

But Randy had the last word. "Mr. Pennypacker comes on too strong," he objected. "I wouldn't take his suggestions about nothin'." 2

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Shortly thereafter, Mr. Partridge returned and resumed his duties as principal.

"I guess Henny Penny's going to be put back in his old job," said Mark.

"No," Fran replied, "that's not what I hear. There's a rumor that he's going to be transferred to another school."

But he wasn't reassigned. He was dismissed.

Mark was stunned. The next day, in study hall, he presented a proposal. He wanted a discussion as to why Henny Penny had been fired, and whether anything could be done to bring him back. Mark went on to propose that Henny Penny be called to come to their classroom and explain his side of the matter. 3

"He said we should make this a better school by criticizing things that are wrong," insisted Mark. "Well, here's a chance for us to do something practical. It's our school. Let's investigate what happened."

"Don't be silly, Mark," protested Maria. "It's none of our business."

"That's right," agreed Millie. "There are lots of things we can talk about. We don't have to meddle in what doesn't concern us."

"It's not meddling!" Mark was furious. "Doesn't it matter to any of you that Henny Penny was finally beginning to make this old school shape up, that he got fired for stepping on too many toes while trying to make improvements?"

"Who says they were improvements?" said Randy. "They were changes, and lots of times changes do more harm than good."

"I still say we should have Henny Penny in here to tell us his side. And while we're at it, let's have Mr. Partridge in to tell us his."

1 "Are you crazy?" Mickey demanded. "When a guy's fired, he's fired! All you're going to do is get us all into hot water!"

As the discussion progressed, Mr. Spence looked increasingly uneasy. Finally he rapped his pencil on the desk to get attention, and remarked, "Hey, you people, look here, this is supposed to be a study hall, but I said you could use it to work on figuring things out. Now I've got nothing against your talking about school policies, but I think maybe the best time to do it would be after school. So how 'bout it now, will you hold off until after school, when you can talk about it all you want on your own time?"

Mark stared at Mr. Spence speechlessly, and Fran asked, "Are you kidding?"

2 What we were doing wasn't hurting anyone. We were only talking."

"I know it," Mr. Spence replied firmly, "but I've got to look out for you—for your own good."

Harry shook his head disbelievingly. "Mr. Spence, maybe—maybe it's best we should wait 'til after school to talk about this. You're probably right—I don't know. But I don't know why you say it's for *our* good that we stop talking about a real problem that really bothers us."

"That's right," Lisa chimed in. "If it's the best thing for *everyone* that we hold this discussion after school, then I'm all for holding it after school. But Mr. Spence, don't lay it on *us*!"

3 "Don't you see, Mr. Spence," pleaded Mark, "if we can't talk about the things that bother us, we aren't going to be able to think straight about them? Talking these things out is the only way we can get them straight!"

"Mark," said Mr. Spence quietly, "I didn't say you shouldn't either think *or* talk about these things. I simply suggested that this wasn't the purpose we had in mind when we changed the study hall into a discussion group. And besides,

other people might not understand what you were trying to do if you tried to become some kind of review board for school policies."

Harry still was quite perturbed. "I think Mark's right. First we'll be told not to talk about something 'for our own good,' and next thing you know, we'll be told not to *think* about it 'for our own good.' It scares me."

"I don't know why you're all so uptight all of a sudden," said Randy. "Nobody's shutting us up or stopping us from thinking. but like Mr. Spence says, we've got to be practical." Then he added, "besides, who cares what we say or think? It's what we do that counts."

The hour was now over, but the topic discussed in the study hall soon became known throughout the school. Rumors buzzed everywhere that Mark had demanded that Mr. Partridge be forced to resign, and that Mr. Spence had urged the students to investigate what had happened to Henny Penny.

Then Mr. Spence was summoned to Mr. Partridge's office.

CHAPTER SIX

"Hey, Tony," Harry called out, "what you doing this afternoon? You wanna come over my place?"

Tony shook his head. "Some other time. I gotta help my mom. But she won't get home till 4:30. Why don't you stop over at my house for a while on your way home?"

"Okay, might as well," Harry assented. They walked along, taking turns kicking a large stone in front of them. It finally rolled off the sidewalk and into a drain. Harry wished he had a stick to knock against the trees he passed, but he couldn't find one. "What's with Barbara and the others?" he finally asked. "You
1 get any further along with it?"

"Nope," Tony replied, "but I've been thinking about it."

When they got to Tony's, they promptly raided the refrigerator, then went out on the porch overlooking the street.

"Did you ever figure out all the girls' names?" Harry asked. "We were supposed to have 64, and I don't think we thought up even a quarter that many."

"No," Tony shook his head. "But something else occurred to me, and if I'm right, there may be a lot more arrangements than just 64."

"What d'you mean? I don't understand."

"Well, look," said Tony, taking up a tablet and pencil. "Each arrangement has
2 three terms in it, right?"

"Yeah, right, there's one that's the subject of the conclusion, and one that's the predicate of the conclusion. And the third term is the one that drops out. It's the one that was in each of the first two sentences, but is left out of the conclusion."

"Kee-rect!" Tony agreed. "Suppose we call the one that dropped out the "middle term," okay? So now we see that we have three terms—the subject term, the middle term, and the predicate term. And each term shows up twice, see what I mean?"

Harry nodded. "But what's this got to do with there being lots more types of arrangements?"

3 Tony grinned. "Just keep your pants on. Now lookit. The middle term, what position is it in? I mean, in the first two sentences, where's it found?"

"Where? Well, it's once in each sentence."

"I *know* that!" said Tony, pretending to be more exasperated than he actually was. "But *where* does it appear in each sentence?"

"Oh, oh, oh, oh," said Harry, as the light dawned. "It could be the subject or the predicate of the first sentence. And for that matter, it could be either the subject or the predicate of the second sentence."

"Right! So what we have here are four possibilities again, isn't that so?"

"Shut up," Harry nodded. "I have an idea." He took the pencil and tablet from Tony's hands and began sketching out four possible arrangements of the middle term:

1.	Middle term	Predicate term
	Subject term	Middle term
	Subject	Predicate
2.	Predicate term	Middle term
	Subject term	Middle term
	Subject	Predicate
3.	Middle term	Predicate term
	Middle term	Subject term
	Subject	Predicate
4.	Predicate term	Middle term
	Middle term	Subject term
	Subject	Predicate

Tony watched with great interest. "That's it," he said excitedly, "that's it. This means that there are four different arrangements for Barbara, and four for Pamela, and four for Theresa—in fact, there are four for each of the 64 we worked out the other day."

Harry chewed on the eraser for a while, and then said, "Hey, Tony, why don't we give each of these four types girls' names, only this time they can be middle names, so that we can add them to Barbara, Pamela and the others?"

Tony was delighted with Harry's idea. "Tell you what—let's keep the middle names short, and let's have them begin with A, B, C and D."

Before long, they had chosen "Ann," "Bea," "Cass," and "Dee." Harry wrote it this way on the tablet, abbreviating so that "S" stood for Subject term, "P" stood for Predicate term, and "M" stood for Middle term:

Ann: M P
S M
S P

Bea: P M
S M
S P

Cass: M P
M S
S P

Dee: P M
M S
S P

1

"Hey," Harry exclaimed, "let's try it out. Give me an example of Barbara Dee."

Tony thought for a while, then he wrote down:

All _____ are cows
All cows are _____

"I don't know how to fill in the blanks," he confessed. "What do I do?"

"Well, let's see," Harry answered. "How can we find words that will make these sentences true? I guess the first sentence raises questions like, 'What sorts
2 of cows are there?'"

"Right," said Tony. "And the second sentence makes us ask ourselves, 'What are cows?' — or something like that."

Harry nodded. "What sorts of cows are there? All I know are Holsteins and Guernseys."

"That's great!" Tony was excited now. "And what are cows? Well, we could say 'animals,' and then it would look like this:

All Holsteins are cows
All cows are animals.
All animals are Holsteins.

3 "But that ain't right," said Harry. "What happened?"

The boys were puzzled. They had taken two sentences they knew to be true, combined them in what they thought was the proper fashion, and what they got for a conclusion was obviously false. "It shouldn't be 'all animals are Holsteins,'" said Harry, "it should be 'all Holsteins are animals.'"

"Wait a minute," Tony exclaimed, "look at Ann:

All cows are animals.
All Holsteins are cows.
All Holsteins are animals.

"That's it!" Harry was jubilant. "That's it! Barbara Dee's no good, but Barbara Ann's okay!"

Just then they saw Fran, Lisa, Millie and Maria out on the tree-lined sidewalk, shuffling through the red and golden autumn leaves. They called to the girls through the porch screen, but the girls had already gotten too far down the street so they ran out and after them. When they caught up, Harry and Tony both talked at once, explaining about Ann, Bea, Cass and Dee, and how they 1
discovered that Barbara Dee didn't work, while Barbara Ann did. Millie and Maria didn't conceal their lack of enthusiasm, but Fran was fascinated. Lisa wrinkled her nose a bit. She wasn't at all sure the discovery meant anything. "All you guys can show is that one arrangement works and the other doesn't—but you can't explain why, so what's the point?" she asked.

"We don't *have* to explain why, dummy," growled Tony, at which Lisa flushed, but made no reply.

Then Fran remarked, "Remember, Lisa, that time we were on the bus, and we figured out two arrangements that didn't work? Remember, we said that when the term that drops out appears at the beginning of the two sentences you start 2
with, or at the end, then the arrangement doesn't work? Well, they're what Tony and Harry are calling 'Bea' and 'Cass'."

"That's right," Lisa said proudly. "See, we found out about it ahead of you guys!"

"Well," said Harry, "that means only Ann works with Barbara. Barbara Dee, Barbara Bea, and Barbara Cass are all no good."

"Yeah," said Tony gloomily, "only 252 to go."

"What?" Harry shouted.

"That's what I said. We had 64 different arrangements before, and then we discovered 4 possible types for each arrangements. So 64 times 4 equals 256. On 3
the other hand, maybe we've discovered that 1 out of every 4 is okay; that wouldn't be so bad."

"*Maybe*," said Harry. "But what are we going to have to do, look at each of the other 252?"

"I dunno," Tony replied, "we'll figure something out."

•••

Lisa and her father had raked up a huge pile of leaves. Now they stood before it, leaning on their rakes, tired but proud of their accomplishment.

"I can remember helping my father rake leaves here in this same yard, just as you've been doing," Lisa's father remarked after a while. "Each autumn, when we'd visit my grandfather's in the country, I'd get together with my cousins in the early evening. We'd build bonfires and roast apples and potatoes and marshmallows. I think I loved that burnt potato skin best of all, but oh, those toasted marshmallows were sure good!"

Lisa stared at the pile of leaves, and tried to imagine great flames leaping out
1 of it, then simmering down to a cheery glow in the crisp evening air, the smoke stinging her eyes. She was holding out a marshmallow on a stick, watching as it acquired a delicious brown crust."

"Couldn't we—?"she began hesitantly.

"'Fraid not," her father replied, anticipating her question. "There's a local law against leaf fires. They pollute the air too much."

"Maybe if you and your cousins hadn't roasted all those apples in those bonfires, the air nowadays would be less polluted," Lisa remarked mischievously.

"I wouldn't be surprised," agreed her father amiably.

2 "But I still wish we could have a bonfire," Lisa sighed. "There's something about watching a fire that's like nothing else in the world. I could watch a fire in the fireplace for hours, but we never even light the fireplace any more. I think you must have had things better when you were my age."

"Maybe so," her father nodded. "It's funny, I think much more often these days about how it was when I was your age than I do about things that happened to me just a few years ago." Turning to her, he asked, "Do you think much about what happened to you long ago?"

Lisa laughed. "No, why should I? I wouldn't be able to think of anything. Nothing really worth remembering has ever happened to me."

3 "Well," her father persisted, "do you think much about the future?"

"Of course not!" Lisa laughed again. "That's silly, why should I? What would I think about? I haven't any idea." Then her face grew a bit more serious and she remarked, "I guess that's not quite true. I do think sometimes about things long ago, and about what might happen—but not very often."

"Do you think much about what you'll do when you're older?"

"Mostly I think of what I'd like to do now, not years from now. Like, I want to dance, I want to dance really well, but I hardly know how to dance at all, and I really hate myself for it, I really do. There are kids in the class who're really great at dancing, but I seem to be all feet, and all I do is sort of stumble around." She and her father both laughed at the image.

"But do you remember when you were quite small?"

"Oh, daddy, I suppose I could if I wanted to, but what for? Why do you keep asking me? I don't want to remember all that mess." But a moment later her irritation gave way to amusement. "Like the time Miss Simpson in first grade 1
wouldn't let me go to the bathroom, and Jeremy Baker, who was sitting next to me, he raised his hand, and the teacher, Miss Simpson, said, 'You can't go either!' And he said, 'I don't want to go, I just want *her* to go!' I can laugh about it now, but for years I was so ashamed of that memory!"

"The time will come when you'll remember the better things," said her father, "just as I do."

Lisa shrugged and looked at the pile of leaves in the hope of again seeing it as a great fire, but to her surprise found herself wishing Mark would happen to walk by and stop awhile to chat with them. Later, alone in her room, staring up at the ceiling where she had tacked a huge poster of a pig who now gazed calmly back 2
down at her, she continued to wonder why that thought of Mark had suddenly pushed its way into her mind.

The next day, Lisa and Jill sat on the steps of the fire escape behind the school. Lisa ate her lunch with great zest, down to the last few sandwich crumbs. But Jill said she wasn't hungry—that, in fact, she didn't feel very well.

"Y'ever get cramps?" Jill asked.

Lisa nodded, still pursuing some fugitive crumbs in the wrapping paper.

"Well, that's how I feel now," said Jill, and she slowly doubled over, steadying herself with one hand on the iron railing.

Lisa wadded up her lunch bag, looked silently at her friend for a long moment, 3
then announced, "C'mon, let's go see the nurse."

Jill did not ordinarily allow herself to be led about that easily, but she was too unsure of what was happening to want to argue about Lisa's suddenly taking charge. Uncomfortable and apprehensive, she went through the milk-glass door of the nurse's office, while Lisa sat down in the waiting room. Soon Fran and

Maria came by, and joined Lisa in their little vigil.

It wasn't too long before Jill came out. She still looked a bit pale, but announced immediately that she wasn't going home. "I'm okay," she insisted, "I'll be okay."

"So," said Lisa, not bothering to conceal her curiosity, "what happened?"

Jill looked wide-eyed at Lisa, but could say nothing.

"Started to menstruate, right?" Lisa inquired, while rummaging in her bag for some chewing gum or bubble gum.

Jill nodded.

1 "Ta-da!" Fran exclaimed, and Lisa laughed at Jill's weak effort to smile. "Welcome to the club," Fran added gently.

Jill pointed to the nurse's office, from which the nurse had not emerged. "She said—" she couldn't find words.

"S'okay, we've all heard it from her before," said Lisa nonchalantly.

"*I* haven't!" exclaimed Maria. "I'm still waiting. What'd she say? *Tell* me!"

"Well," Jill began hesitantly, "I thought at first maybe something bad had happened, like an internal injury or something. So she told me it was something that happens to all females when they change from being girls to women. So I guess today I am a woman."

2 "What else did she say?" Maria's eyes were bright. "What else?"

"Oh, well, I felt better when I found out what it is, and how natural and healthy it is. I didn't want to be the only one—know what I mean? But if it's the same with everybody else, it's fine with me."

"That's right," said Fran, "the only time you have to worry from now on is when it *doesn't* happen.

"What's *that* mean?"

"Don't you know *anything*, Maria?" asked Lisa impatiently. "If some month it doesn't happen, it could mean you're going to have a baby."

Maria stared at Lisa in disbelief. The two of them walked off together, Lisa

3 unable to hide her shock that Maria was so ignorant of what Lisa had known for months already.

Fran turned to Jill. "One thing though, y'know—I'm sure it'll be a long time before something like that happens, where it doesn't show up. In the meantime, the way I was told, it means two things: first, that you're not pregnant, and second, that you *could* be."

Jill smiled. "I'm beginning to like the idea."

"That's also natural," Fran replied, and both girls laughed together.

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No one was able to find out what Mr. Partridge and Mr. Spence had talked about. Mr. Spence, of course, didn't offer to discuss it, and no one dared to ask him. So after a few days, everyone just naturally assumed that the matter had been forgotten. Mickey claimed to have heard that Mr. Partridge had been very angry with Mr. Spence for "letting the students talk about the administration of the school during class time, and for encouraging them to ask Henny Penny to come back, after he'd been fired, to explain his side of things." But no one knew whether Mickey was telling the truth or just making things up. 1

Then about a week later the story came out that Mr. Spence had received "an official reprimand."

Fran was shocked. "What did he do that was wrong? He didn't do *anything*! He didn't even *say* anything that day. He was just trying to help us talk things out, because we said we wanted to discuss it, and because he saw it was a real problem for us."

"That's right," said Mark. "And Mr. Partridge himself didn't see anything wrong before with what we were doing. So why did they all of a sudden crack down on Mr. Spence?" 2

"Aw, what's a reprimand, anyway," commented Mickey, as he packed his briefcase to go home. "I get reprimands every day. They don't mean nothing."

Harry looked troubled. "Yeah, but if it's official, a reprimand isn't just nothing. It goes down on his record. It'll hurt him."

"That's right," Fran added. "Every time he comes up for promotion."

"Or whenever he's due for a salary increase."

"And the worst of it all is, what'd he do that was wrong anyhow? He didn't ask Henny Penny to do the things he did. He didn't even want to have that discussion with us that day. He just let us because, for one thing, he's a good guy, and for another, it was the only fair thing to do. But one thing's for sure, Mr. Spence is completely innocent." 3

"Yeah, okay, you're right," said Randy. "It wasn't his fault. But who kept hollering to get Henny Penny back? *You* did! So it's really your fault, what's happened to Mr. Spence."

Mark was very much shaken by Randy's criticism, and wasn't able to think of

anything to say in reply.

Then Millie criticized Mark for the way in which he approved of all the changes Henny Penny had introduced into the school, "no matter how goofy they were."

Finally Mark tried stating his case: "Look, you guys. I never claimed to be right about everything, and I never claimed Henny Penny was right about everything either. But why take it out on Mr. Spence? Okay, so now some of us will go back to meeting with him after school, if he still wants to. Or we can meet without him, whoever feels like it. But why should he get punished when he
1 hasn't done anything wrong?"

"Why don't we look at the brighter side," Laura suggested. "Maybe Mr. Spence wasn't going to get a raise or a promotion anyhow, so he isn't really going to miss anything!"

Fran turned on Laura sharply. "That's a stupid thing to say! I happen to know for a fact that he was supposed to be appointed assistant principal at the end of this year. I'll bet old Mr. Partridge didn't *want* him to be his assistant, so he's using this business with Henny Penny as an excuse!"

"I'll tell you something else," Tony put in. "What Mr. Partridge is doing could be a way of his to scare kids who might want to talk things over among
2 themselves and get to think for themselves."

"Whoa, hold it," Harry exclaimed. "You're all just guessing now. You don't know whether what you're saying is true or not. Fran says she knows something for a fact, but how do we know where she heard it? And Tony's just guessing about Mr. Partridge wanting to scare us."

Fran's eyes flashed, but her voice was very measured. "Mrs. Halsey told me. All the teachers know about it."

"And I haven't forgotten the way Mr. Partridge handled that business with Dale last year," said Mark. "He made believe that he was in favor of open discussion then too, but he really wasn't."

3 Harry said nothing. He felt very uncomfortable.

Then Mickey, who was standing by the window, found something interesting to watch down below, in the front yard of the school. A car had pulled up to the curb, a young woman had gotten out, and she could now be seen running up the walk towards the door. As she got about halfway to her destination, Mr. Spence came dashing out, raced down the steps, and gave her a great hug.

The pupils watched in silence. As Mr. Spence and the girl got into the car, Mickey intoned, "and so, as the sun sinks slowly beneath the purple hills, we leave our hero and our heroine, strolling hand in hand into the sunset."

Mark commented. "Never mind, Mickey, that's not our problem, our problem is, what're we going to do about the situation here in the school?"

Laura answered, "Do? Why should we do anything? It seems to me Mr. Spence isn't worried about Mr. Partridge. Right now he is more interested in her—" she pointed to the sidewalk where the couple had just been. "Besides, anything we do to stir things up will only cause more trouble."

To which Mark replied, "Oh, boy, welcome to the monkey house!" 1

CHAPTER SEVEN

Mr. Portos folded his umbrella and stood it in the corner. "I just made it," he announced to Jill. "In a couple more minutes, it'll be raining cats and dogs."

Jill laughed. "Oh Daddy, the way you talk! No one talks that way—'raining cats and dogs.' Not nowadays they don't."

"Look at it now," said Mr. Portos, glancing out the window. "It's really coming down."

Jill joined her father at the window. "But look out there. It's clear. It'll be over soon." After a while she remarked, "Daddy, what do we mean when we say 'it'? Like, 'it rains' and 'it's clear.' What's 'it'?"

1 "Why," replied Mr. Portos, "we mean the weather."

Jill frowned. "Oh no, that can't be it. The weather doesn't cause the rain. It's the rain that makes it whatever kind of weather it is."

"It's just a word," he said.

"I know that the word 'it' is just a word. But what does it refer to? I mean, look, I don't just say 'running,' I say 'Sandy's running.' Or I say, 'The dog's running.' And I don't just say 'blue.' I say, 'Your necktie's blue.'"

Mr. Portos cleared his throat with a "Harrumpf." Then he said, "The words 'dog' and 'necktie' are subjects."

"I *know* that!" Jill looked at her father impatiently. "But what's the subject

2 when we say 'it's raining'?"

"The word 'it.'"

"And what does 'it' refer to? Daddy, don't you see, it's what I asked you before. What do we mean by 'it'?"

"Well, now, we say 'it's this' or 'it's that' when we mean something's happening. If I say 'it's snowing,' all I mean is that snow is falling. I'm not talking about the *cause* of the snow. Or if I look at the fender of my car, and I say 'it's rusting,' all I'm talking about is what's happening. I'm describing, not explaining—do you see what I mean?"

"Oh, yes, now I'm beginning to see—" Jill exclaimed. "So, like, say, my blood.

3 It just circulates in my body. I don't try to make it circulate—it just circulates, in the same way that the rain just rains."

"Now you've got it."

Jill still looked perplexed. "When my blood runs through my body, we say 'it circulates,' right?"

Mr. Portos nodded.

"But when thoughts run through my mind, what do I say? I don't say 'it thinks,' or 'it thinks in me,' or 'thinking's going on in me,' do I?"

"No, you say, 'I think."

"Does that mean that I'm the cause of my thinking? Is that what explains my thinking—it's the 'I' that does the thinking?"

"When you chase Sandy around the house, there's nothing wrong with your saying 'I chase Sandy,' is there?" 1

"No—chasing him is something I do all the time."

"And when you have something to say, you say '*I* speak,' don't you?"

"Sure."

"So when you have thoughts, why can't you say, '*I* think'?"

"Because most of the time they just pop into my head. I don't have any more control over the way thoughts run through my mind than I have over the way blood runs through my body."

"But don't you sometimes decide to do something? Don't you sometimes choose to wear a different dress, or fix your hair different? When you decide something, don't you make it happen in your mind?" 2

"I-I guess so. So when I make up my mind, I make *it* up, it doesn't make me up?"

Mr. Portos looked out the window. "You were right. It's clearing up." He smiled at her. "I know I haven't answered your question. But it's not because I don't want to. It's because I don't know how."

"Oh, daddy, that's all right. I understand. And I do know a little better now what 'it' means."

"I'm glad. But what does 'I' mean? Take the phrase 'I think'—"

Jill's hand was on the doorknob. "'Scuse me, daddy, but could we talk about this some other time? Now that it's stopped raining, I think I want to take Sandy out." 3

Mr. Portos smiled. "Is that what *you* think—or is it just a thought that popped in your head and is running around in your mind?"

"I don't know. What do *you* think?" And Jill and Sandy slipped out the door, giving her father no chance to reply.

•••

The shower was over, and Mark and Luther balanced on the curb outside of school, observing the flooded street corner.

"The drain's clogged," Luther observed.

"Yeah," Mark replied. "Lemme poke it a little with this branch." But the soaked leaves were so compacted that Mark was unable to move them. Luther found a piece of wood and began to help.

Soon two boys came by. They were a couple of years older than Mark and Luther. Mark recognized them as the boys who'd bothered Maria on her way home from school the week before. One of them asked, "Either of you seen
1 Maria?"

Luther shook his head. Mark, however, said, "Yeah, I saw her. She went home. About ten minutes ago."

The two boys looked at Luther and Mark for a moment, then continued on their way. Mark and Luther continued poking at the clogged leaves.

After a while, Millie came down the steps of the school. "Mark," she said, in her high-pitched voice, "you seen Maria?"

Mark nodded. "Yeah, she's still in school. She's doing some kind of special assignment with Lisa and Fran."

Millie went back into the school.

2 "They both asked you the same question," Luther remarked.

"That's right. And I gave them two different answers, right?"

Luther laughed at Mark's reply, while continuing to work the matted leaves free of the drain. "I'd have said the same thing you did. But still—why's it right to tell the truth sometimes, and not other times?"

"I didn't have any reason to lie to Millie," said Mark. "She didn't mean any harm—asking where Maria was. So lying to her would have been unfair to her."

Just then, Maria, Fran, Millie and Lisa came out of the school building. Mark told Maria what had happened, while the others listened attentively. Then Luther mentioned how odd it was to hear Mark reply two different ways when
3 asked the very same question.

"I'm glad you said what you did to those boys, for Maria's sake," said Millie. "But it was still a lie."

"Also," said Lisa, "I don't think you usually lie, but this time you did. So you weren't being consistent."

"Was I wrong?" demanded Mark.

"No, not at all," conceded Lisa. "You had a good reason for lying to them, and you had a good reason for being inconsistent. I'm with Millie—I'm glad you told them what you did."

"So you're not asking me why I lied?"

"No," said Lisa reflectively, "I've got no problem with that. What I wonder about is why we usually try to tell the truth."

"And what I wonder about," replied Mark, "is how we can tell what's true."

"Those boys—" said Millie, "they were up to some kind of mischief, I'll bet. They didn't have a right to an honest answer! Only an honest question deserves an honest answer!" 1

"Does that mean," said Fran, "that before you answer anybody's questions, you have to know whether they have good intentions or bad intentions?"

Just then, Luther managed to fish a large branch out of the drain, and the muddy water began to pour noisily through the iron grating. "It sounds like my father snoring," laughed Millie.

Later, as they walked off together, Fran suddenly turned to Lisa and asked, "What's this inconsistency stuff?"

"It's something I've been thinking about," Lisa replied, not sure what else to say. 2

"That much I figured," said Fran, "but what's it all about?"

"You know, what goes with what."

Fran looked puzzled. "So what's more important—being consistent or telling the truth?"

Lisa just shook her head. "I'm so confused—that's why I said I wasn't sure why we usually try to tell the truth. Funny, I can't remember my parents ever telling me not to lie. But I *hate* lying, and I do like telling the truth. I really want to—but why?"

"That's the story of your life," Fran laughed.

"I guess I'm just a worry-wart. That's what my father calls me. Or else he tells me I'm an angel even though I look like a satyr. I don't know what he's talking about." 3

Fran recalled that she had a History assignment to hand in the next day. "Hey, Lisa," she said, "will you remind me of something tomorrow?"

"That depends," grinned Lisa, "on what I look like tomorrow."

•••

The study hall buzzed with rumors about Mr. Spence's troubles with the school administration.

"Well," said Mr. Spence, "where are we?"

"It's his classroom and he don't know!" whispered Mickey to Jane.

Tony raised his hand and spoke at the same time. "We were figuring out how to make different arrangements of sentences. What we decided was that, if you took three sentences at a time, you could arrange the letters A, E, I and O in 64 different ways. And then each of these ways has four possible arrangements, so that makes a total of 256 different possibilities."

1 "Two hundred and fifty-six!" exclaimed Millie. "What are we going to do with all that stuff? I still haven't gotten the multiplication table straight yet!"

"Me neither," said Timmie. "You guys are crazy if you think I'm going to get myself into a mess like that! Maybe we should just do our homework this hour."

Lisa suggested that they put off the discussion of the 256 types for some other time, and go back to playing some more "It Figures." But both Harry and Tony disagreed vigorously.

"Look," said Harry, "I know it sounds pretty bad—256. But Tony and I have tried a few out, the way Fran and Lisa did last year, and hardly any of them worked out okay. And we've looked over a bunch of the others, and lots of them

2 look wrong too. So we may not end up with very many."

"Yeah," Tony added, "if only we could figure out how to tell for sure which arrangements are good and which aren't, don't you see what it would mean? It would mean we'd finally figured out ways of thinking correctly! So whenever we'd find somebody using one of the wrong ways, we could show him how it was in one of the wrong patterns. And if we found ourselves thinking in one of the correct arrangements, then we could feel sure about going ahead, because we'd know our thinking was okay."

"So what are we supposed to do?" Jill asked softly, but with just an edge of impatience in her voice.

3 Harry and Tony looked a bit sheepish. "That's the problem," Harry admitted. "We're not sure. We really don't know why some arrangements look okay and some don't."

There was a moment of silence. Then, from the back of the room, came Randy's voice: "You got any ideas, Mr. Spence?"

Mr. Spence looked a bit startled, but he could tell from Randy's expression that the question was not quite intended to be the challenge it sounded like. Randy himself looked surprised at what he'd said.

"No," answered Mr. Spence, "no, I don't have any ideas on what to do next. And to tell the truth, I can't help wondering about what Timmie suggested a little while ago, that maybe we shouldn't be doing all this. But you know, Timmie, as a mathematics teacher, I'd look pretty silly if I were to say it's useless for us to try to figure out what reasoning's all about, because mathematics itself is a way of reasoning. So I'd be inconsistent if I tried to get you to do math, but at the same time if I told you there was no point in trying to understand how we reason." 1

"Mr. Spence," exclaimed Lisa, "you say mathematics is a way of reasoning. But I keep thinking there are lots of ways of reasoning. This stuff we're doing with sentences—it's just one way, but it's not the only way." Tony groaned but Lisa continued. "You've got to reason when you try to figure out what words to put together into a sentence, or what clothes to wear, or what groceries to buy, or what movies to go to, or which homework assignment to do first, or—or—"

"Or how to get out of dusting and vacuuming," laughed Jill.

"What I can't figure out," said Anne, "is how to get more depth into my drawings when I try to do landscapes." 2

"And I can't figure out why an asphalt road looks wet on a hot day," said Randy.

"And I can't figure out what lungfish are," said Luther.

"I know what I want to do—I want to be a doctor," Jane remarked. "But I can't figure out how I'm going to do it."

"That's right," added Lisa. "It's not enough just to figure out how to think. How about figuring out how to live?"

But now Harry was waving his arms. "Hey, wait a minute, you guys. Sure there's a lot of things to figure out, and sure there are a lot of ways of going about it. All I'm trying to say is, one thing at a time! Now, we've been working on this one way, and maybe later we'll work on some of those others. But why can't we finish what we've started before going on to something else?" 3

"Because," said Lisa, and her wide, grey eyes were serious now, "we don't know what to do next, that's why."

Mr. Spence looked sharply at Harry and Tony. "Are you telling me that you've

gone about as far as you can go without help?"

Both Tony and Harry nodded. The others said nothing.

"All right then. As I told you before, I don't have any answers. I don't even know for sure what we'll find out if we keep going in this direction. But it's very important to be able to admit that you don't know something. And it's also very important to ask for help when you think you need it."

"But Mr. Spence," said Mark still looking very worried, "what good is it going to do us to ask you for help if *you* don't have any answers?"

Mr. Spence's face brightened. "Not much, I'm afraid, Mark," he said gently.
1 "But don't you think *I* know enough to ask for help when I think *I* need it?"

Tony's eyes narrowed a bit. "*You'd* get help? From whom?"

"Why—from Heather!"

Half a dozen voices asked the same question, "Who's Heather?" It was like a chorus.

Mr. Spence laughed, but offered no immediate explanation.

"Is she—?" Mickey began. "I'll bet—I'll bet it's that girl we saw you with!"

"Was it, Mr. Spence, was it?" they asked breathlessly.

"Okay, okay, I won't deny it. That was Heather."

"And what's she to you—or aren't we supposed to ask?" said Laura coyly.
2 "Is she your girlfriend?" asked Millie.

"Are you gonna marry her?" asked Luther.

Mr. Spence held up his hands, much amused. "Look, if I make one statement about it, will you promise to let me alone, no more questions, cross your hearts?" They nodded eagerly. "Okay, we've talked about getting married, but nothing's settled. She's a student at the university so she doesn't have a job, and I don't know if I'll have one next year, so we're still discussing what we should do."

"Marry her anyway," Mickey exclaimed. Then he said knowingly to Timmy, "What a dish!"

"Shut up, Mickey," Harry said with annoyance. He turned to Mr. Spence.
3 "Does this mean—I don't understand—does it mean you may not be here next year?"

"Didn't we agree there'd be no more questions?" said Mr. Spence.

"That's a question too," Mickey shot back, and everyone laughed.

"Anyhow," Mr. Spence went on, "the reason I think Heather might be able to help us is that this reasoning things out is just the sort of stuff she's been

studying in school. I've told her about what all of you have done already, and she's very much interested. In fact, she told me that if she could ever be of help, she'd be glad to do what she could."

"Yeah," came a number of voices, "ask her, ask her."

"But ask her what?"

Tony spoke out very loudly and clearly. "Ask her if she'll go over the 256 types of arrangements and tell us which ones are correct and which are incorrect."

"Right," Harry agreed. "And while she's at it, we'd like her to tell us how she can tell the one kind from the other kind."

"Okay," said Mr. Spence, "I'll ask her." 1

Harry scratched his head. "Gee, Mr. Spence, it would be great to get some help on this, but who knows how many correct forms she's going to come up with? There may be a hundred of them, or a hundred and fifty. What would we do with them all? Millie's right: some people in the class are already having trouble with what they're doing in math, or in social studies, or in English, and they sure don't need a lot of additional stuff—it'd be a waste of time."

Lisa laughed. "Hey, Harry, you're beginning to sound like me! Mr. Spence, I think Harry's right—but I've got a suggestion. Since it looks like it's going to be too much to handle, why don't we limit what we're trying to do? Instead of taking up all kinds of sentences, couldn't we just deal with those that begin with 'all' 2 and 'no,' and leave the others that begin with 'some' for another time?"

"Fair enough," said Tony. "Let's just stick to A and E—in the beginning sentences and in the conclusions."

"Just A and E it will be," agreed Mr. Spence.

"Oh boy," said Mickey, "we got a poet."

•••

Sandy had trouble following the conversation. He was tired. His parents had been quarreling with some neighbors the night before, and it had gone on and on. He hadn't been able to sleep for all the noise they made, and had been too upset to sleep well once the neighbors had finally left. So he pored over some 3 ancient comic books that he'd stored away under his bed. But now he wandered about the classroom while the others talked with Mr. Spence about sentences and girls' names and all sorts of other things which, for the moment, made very little sense.

Mr. Spence's room was not the same he'd had the year before, and Sandy

examined it with considerable interest: the new, colorful travel posters, the art displays, even the news items for social studies. Eventually he found himself before a door that was not the coatroom door, and when he opened it, he found himself in a closet so large as to be, more accurately, a small room.

It was, in fact, the supply room for the whole floor, although it had been inconveniently placed in Mr. Spence's room instead of opening out onto the main hall. Sandy closed the door quietly behind him. It had a large panel with slats or louvres which let air and light through them. He could hear the conversation quite well as he wandered about inside the supply room, looking
1 over the reams of wrapped duplicator paper, the stacks of tablets, and the cans of duplicator fluid. There was something very comforting about hearing the familiar voices of his classmates and Mr. Spence come floating in through the door, reaching him in the half-darkness. It was as if, in his solitude, he was still part of the class. He could hear everything, but nothing was expected of him in return. He felt a comfortable sense of security, and a sense of closeness to his companions. A long table on one side of the room caught his eye. Vaulting onto it, he rolled his jacket up for a pillow, and stretched himself out for a brief nap.

Sandy had figured he would get up and leave with the other kids when they finished talking. But he slept through their departure, and they didn't notice his
2 absence. When he eventually woke, he peeked through the door before opening it, although he was sure the classroom would be empty.

To his surprise, Mr. Spence was still there, working at his desk. Before Sandy could quite decide what to do, in came Mr. Partridge. Sandy knew he had better wait at least until Mr. Partridge left.

"Hello, Stan," said Mr. Partridge. "I'd like to talk with you for a moment. I guess you know what it's about."

Sandy couldn't hear Mr. Spence say anything, so he figured Mr. Spence must have just nodded, because Mr. Partridge went on: "I want you to know, Stan, that I've been just as unhappy about this unfortunate matter as you have. I'm
3 sure you didn't intend to have things happen the way they did, and I've tried to explain that to the committee that's considering your tenure situation, and to the other committee that's considering your request for a promotion. They aren't too sympathetic, I'm afraid, but I've been persistent, and I'm here now with some really great news. Stan, they both agree that they may be able to act favorably on you—on one very small condition."

"On one condition—?" Mr. Spence hesitated.

"All you have to do is give them a written apology."

"An apology for what?"

"Oh, come on, Stan, don't play cat and mouse with me," Mr. Partridge exclaimed, quite evidently irritated. "You know quite well." Then his voice softened. "You've simply got to say you're sorry you encouraged those kids to agitate against the school administration."

"Mr. Partridge, I'm afraid you're making several assumptions which I can't agree to. The kids weren't agitating—they were discussing. And I didn't encourage them to talk about administrative problems—they chose to do so on their own." 1

"You could have stopped them."

"Perhaps. But the assumption we operated under in our discussions was that they were free to talk about whatever problems they felt they had, and this was a problem they felt they had. So I figured I wasn't free to stop them."

"Then you won't apologize?"

"There are a lot of things I've done I wish I hadn't, Mr. Partridge, but allowing kids to talk their problems out isn't one of them. Nor is helping them to reason about the things that puzzle them."

"Do you realize that you give me no choice but to report to the committee that you refuse to write an apology? They are bound to interpret that as a very stubborn and unconstructive attitude toward school policies and procedures." Mr. Partridge's voice lowered at this point, and Sandy was unable to hear it. 2

Sandy waited until he was sure both men had left before he emerged from his hiding place. He raced quickly down the hall, down the stairs, through the side door of the building and out into the street. Soon he met Mark, Lisa, Fran, Tony and Harry, and quickly told them what he'd overheard. They were shocked.

"You know what I think we've gotta do?" said Fran. "We've got to go see Mr. Partridge."

"And tell him what?" asked Tony. 3

"Tell him we know what's going to happen to Mr. Spence, and we want to protest, that's what," Fran replied indignantly.

"Yeah, but hold on," said Harry. "What if he asks us how we found out? We can't say Mr. Spence told us. And what would we do, say that Sandy was listening to him and Mr. Spence?"

"Hey, now just a minute—" Sandy protested.

"It's okay, Sandy," Harry remarked. "Nobody's going to tell. But don't you see, Mr. Partridge could accuse us of not being consistent."

"That's right," Lisa agreed, "He could say that we want our own classroom conversations to be respected as private, but we don't respect a private conversation he tries to have with Mr. Spence!"

There was a momentary silence, then Mark spoke up. "Let's go see Mr. Partridge anyhow. We don't have to tell him anything about what Sandy just told us. Let's just say we heard Mr. Spence might be in trouble on account of us,
1 and we'd like to speak up for him."

It was agreed to try to set up an appointment with Mr. Partridge.

Afterwards, Lisa said to Harry, "It's funny, Sandy listened in to that conversation that was none of his business, and afterwards we all listened to him tell about it. But no one was able to say that anything was wrong. It was only when you said that about consistency that I saw what the problem was."

"I don't think I really knew what I meant when I said it," Harry confessed. "You explained it."

Lisa felt grateful for the compliment, but she couldn't bring herself to say so to Harry, so she forced a grin and said, "Stick with me, kid."

78

CHAPTER EIGHT

A small and somewhat uncomfortable delegation approached the secretary and asked to see Mr. Partridge.

"I'm afraid he's tied up all this week," the secretary answered brightly. "Let me see—" she tapped her chin with the eraser end of a pencil, "I could give you an appointment next week. How would that be?"

"That's a week away!" Mark exclaimed. "Can't you make it sooner?"

The secretary smiled and shook her head. "Would Thursday at 3:30 be all right?"

They nodded, a few of them said "Thank you," and they filed out.

"In a week it may be too late," Tony muttered, only half to himself. 1

"Well," said Lisa, "maybe we can use the time to think of what we're going to say to him."

•••

Later that afternoon, as they walked down the hall towards Mr. Spence's room, Harry turned to Mark and asked if he knew whether Mr. Spence had spoken to Heather about the reasoning arrangements.

"How would I know?" Mark replied.

"Well, I see you talking to him quite a bit."

"Yes, but I don't talk to him about that sort of thing."

To their surprise, when they entered Mr. Spence's classroom, they found 2
Heather had come to answer their questions. She perched herself on the desk alongside Mr. Spence, and the students awaited her report expectantly.

"As I understand it," she began, "you really had two questions. The first was about which reasoning arrangements are correct, not counting sentences beginning with "some." The second question was whether there is some method for telling correct arrangements from incorrect arrangements. Am I right?"

"Right!" they chorused.

"Okay. Now, with regard to the first question, I understand you had already figured out that there are 256 different possible arrangements. So now, I'd like you to guess how many correct forms there are, using just "All" and "No" type 3
sentences."

There was an outburst of answers, ranging from 47 to 219.

Heather laughed. "No, I'm afraid you're all wrong. As I checked them out, I could find only four!"

"Four!" the students exclaimed. They were incredulous. "That's all? Just four?"

"That's all I could find," she answered.

Immediately they wanted to know which four.

Heather held up her hands. "Hold on! Hold on! I'll tell you in a moment. But there's something I have to ask you first. When you put down your beginning sentences, do you know which goes first?"

1 The students looked at each other. Finally Harry spoke up. "Which goes first? It doesn't matter which goes first—does it?"

"I'm afraid it does. At least, it's useful to have a rule to follow in deciding which goes first."

"So what's the rule?" Tony demanded.

"Ah," said Heather, "I'm going to have to do some explaining." She went to the blackboard.

"Look," she began, "in each arrangement you have three sentences. And in each sentence you have a subject and a predicate. So that makes three subjects and three predicates, right? Let's work with an example. Who'll give me an

2 example?"

Tony volunteered. He went to the board and wrote:

All spaniels are dogs.
All dogs are mammals.
All spaniels are mammals.

"All right," said Heather. "Or maybe I should say that it's *almost* all right." Tony looked startled, but Heather continued. "Altogether you use three words—or terms, as we call them—isn't that so?"

"Sure," Tony responded, "'spaniels,' 'dogs,' and 'mammals.'"

"And each term appears twice in the entire arrangement of three sentences?"

3 "Yep," Tony answered.

"And one term is the middle term, which appears in each of the beginning sentences, but then drops out, so that it can't appear again in the conclusion?"

Everyone nodded.

Heather paused. "Okay, now pay close attention. In addition to the middle term, there are two other terms. You'll notice that one of them is the subject of the

conclusion, and the other is the predicate of the conclusion."

"That's right," said Harry. "One is 'spaniels' and the other is 'mammals.'"

"Good! Now, I'm going to give those terms names. I'm going to say that the subject of the conclusion is *always* called the 'minor term.' And the predicate of the conclusion is *always* called the 'major term.' And as you already know, the term that drops out is always called the 'middle term.'"

"Aw, that's easy," commented Mickey. "Minor term, major term and middle term."

"We're not quite finished," warned Heather. "Suppose we identify the major term in the conclusion by putting it in a rectangle, and the minor term by putting it in an oval. How would it look?" 1

Tony went to the board and drew an oval and a rectangle on the arrangement he had already written.

All spaniels are dogs.
All dogs are mammals.
All spaniels are mammals.

Heather nodded. "But the terms 'spaniels' and 'mammals' appear once again in the beginning sentences. So the beginning sentence where the minor term appears once again, we call the 'minor premise.' And the beginning sentence where the major term appears once again, we call the 'major premise.' Okay?" 2

"It doesn't change anything," said Harry. "It's just giving names to the different parts."

"Well, but it will change things just a bit, as you'll see," Heather remarked. "Because we're going to make it a rule that the major premise should always be written first."

Tony burst out, "Then the way it's written up there on the board isn't right."

"That's it!" laughed Heather. "How should it be?"

Tony went to the board, erased what he had previously written, and wrote instead:

		3
Major premise.	All dogs are mammals.	
Minor premise.	All spaniels are dogs.	
Conclusion.	All spaniels are mammals.	

"And who'll put in the proper ovals and rectangles?" asked Heather.

"I will," said Fran. "But what about the middle term?"

"Why not put brackets around it?" said Harry.

"Okay, brackets it will be," Heather agreed, and Fran completed the arrangement:

All [dogs] are [mammals.]
All (spaniels) are [dogs.]
All (spaniels) are [mammals.]

"That's great!" said Heather, resuming her place beside Mr. Spence on the desk. Lisa noticed that Heather's fingers were now interlaced with Mr. Spence's.

"Hey," Harry suddenly observed. "That's Barbara Ann!"

1 "Well," Mark demanded, "What about the other three?"

"I'll write examples of them on the board, and you tell me what they are," Heather answered. These were her examples:

No [dogs] are [birds.]	No [birds] are [dogs.]	All [spaniels] are [dogs.]
All (spaniels) are [dogs.]	All (spaniels) are [dogs.]	No (birds) are [dogs.]
No (spaniels) are [birds.]	No (spaniels) are [birds.]	No (birds) are [spaniels.]

"I'll take the first one," Harry volunteered. "The sentences are, let's see, E, A, and E. And the middle terms are in the first arrangement that we call 'Ann.'"

"The second," said Lisa, "is also E, A, E. But it's in the arrangement we call 'Bea.'"

2 "And I can do the third. It's A, E, E, and it's also in the Bea arrangement," said Fran.

"Hey," exclaimed Tony, "but what are the girls' names?"

"We've got two EAE's and one AEE," said Fran.

"EAE," Lisa shouted, "that's Heather!"

Everyone was delighted. They now had Heather Ann and Heather Bea.

"But what about the AEE," pursued Harry.

"How about 'Kathleen'?" suggested Lisa.

So the last of the four was accepted as being named 'Kathleen Bea.'

Harry looked puzzled, however. "This is great," he said hesitantly, "but

3 something bothers me."

"What's the matter?" Heather inquired.

"Well, look. Look at the board, at those last three examples you wrote down. The first two are identical, except that the major premise in the second is the reverse of the major premise in the first. I mean, 'No dogs are birds' is the reverse

of 'No birds are dogs.'"

"Okay, but so what?"

"Well," Harry went on, "in the last example, you've got a minor premise 'No birds are dogs.' So why couldn't you have still another arrangement in which *that* sentence is reversed, just like the first one?"

Heather looked at Mr. Spence, then at Harry, then back at Mr. Spence. "I must have missed that one somehow," she laughed, and wrote it on the board:

All [spaniels] are [dogs.]
No [dogs] are (birds.)
No (birds) are [spaniels.] 1

"Why, it's Kathleen Dee!" exclaimed Fran. And so it was, the rest of the class agreed.

"But what about telling us how you figured them out?" Tony persisted in asking.

"I'm afraid I can't stay any longer today," Heather answered. "It'll have to be another time. And it's not so easy to explain; it may take quite a while. So if it's okay with you, I'd like to hold off on explaining it to you for a bit. But look, there's something else you might want to do in the meantime."

"What's that?" they asked.

"Well, let me give you each an assignment." 2

There were several groans. "We never give each other assignments," said Tony.

"This won't be hard," laughed Heather. "It might even be fun. All I want you to do is think up one sentence that could be used as the conclusion of any of the five arrangements we have here. Each person think up one sentence, okay?"

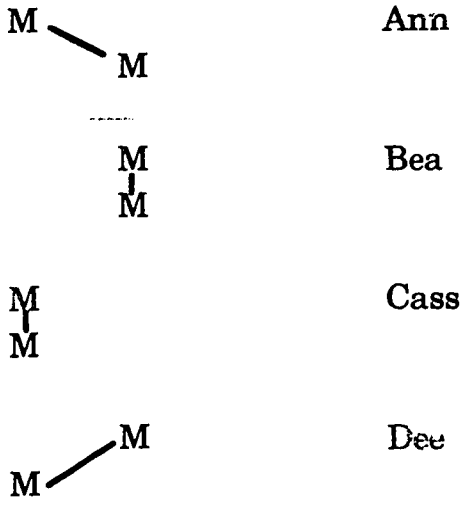
"Okay!" they agreed as they trooped out of the room.

Heather stood looking at the blackboard. "What d'you know, Kathleen Dee!" she remarked softly. "I'd forgotten all about her!"

•••

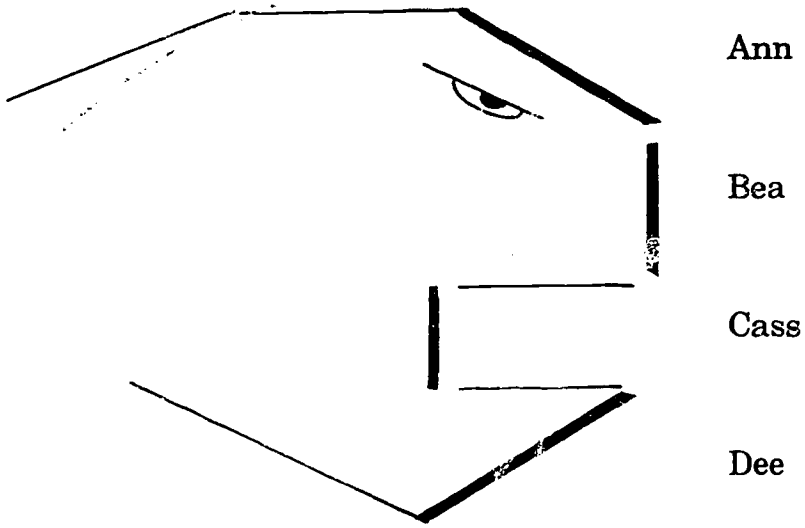
The students started off down the hall in different directions, but then Lisa 3 called out, "Hey, wait a minute, I want to show you something." She dug out her notebook. "I was afraid I wouldn't be able to remember the four different arrangements, Ann, Bea, Cass and Dee," she explained. But then I got to thinking about how the Big Dipper and the Bear and all those other patterns of stars in the sky are made of a few points and lines, and yet everyone remembers

them. So I took the four arrangements of the middle terms, which look like this:



1

And then I drew lines connecting the points, and I came up with a turtle head:



2

"It looks more like the head of a brontosaurus than the head of a turtle," Harry complained.

"Without the eye," said Tony, "it would look like a wrench."

Fran laughed. "No, it's a turtle, all right. But it's the meanest, most square-
3 mouthed, most toothless turtle I've ever seen. Hey Lisa, what's his name?"

"It's not a he, it's a she," Lisa answered.

"Okay, what's *her* name?"

"Why, Ann B. Cassidy, of course!"

•••

Suki and Lisa were very much impressed with Anne's new easel. Lisa, in fact, was impressed with everything about Anne's house, and especially with Anne's room; Suki had been there many times before.

The girls looked through a stack of Anne's pencil sketches and water colors.

"Oh, Anne," Lisa exclaimed, "I just love them!"

Anne grinned happily. "You make my day, telling me that. My art teacher says I have an awfully long way to go."

"To where?" Suki joked.

Anne's face became a shade more serious. "To being an artist, I guess, which is what I'd like. It's such fun. I'm sure you find writing poems fun too, don't you, Suki?" 1

"Fun, my eye," laughed Suki. "It's just plain misery. I go through agonies just to turn out a couple of lines that sound right."

"So why do you do it?" Lisa asked.

"Because it's such delicious agony, that's why," Suki replied, and the girls all laughed together.

Picking up her sketch book and pencil, Anne turned to Lisa. "Hey, Lisa, let me draw you."

"Oh, no, please don't," Lisa responded, genuinely alarmed. Finding the idea of being sketched quite unpleasant, but hardly knowing what else to say, she added, "Why don't you draw Suki? She's so much prettier!" It wasn't something Lisa had really wanted to say; she felt she'd never have blurted it out at all if she hadn't felt so uneasy. 2

"Oh," countered Suki, "Anne's drawn me lots of times. Besides, it's not a question of prettiness. You've got the kind of face artists like."

"That's right," Anne agreed, "C'mon, Lisa, how 'bout it? Just this once?"

The two girls coaxed and coaxed, until Lisa at last gave in and allowed herself to be seated on a high stool before the window, while Anne proceeded to sketch her. As she drew, Anne alternately scowled, frowned, grumbled, groaned, and muttered to herself. Suki stood behind Anne, watching the drawing as it developed, while being highly amused at Anne's intense behavior. "I don't know what you're complaining about so much," Suki remarked mischievously, then adding, in a voice that mimicked Anne's, "It's such fun!" 3

Anne couldn't help laughing, then got angry at herself again for the way she drew the line of Lisa's nose. "That's not right at all, it's wrong, wrong, wrong,"

she growled, all the while scrubbing away at the line with a big, rubbery eraser.

"I know just how you feel," Suki remarked. "Sometimes I'll write a line in a poem, and I know it's bad, and I just hate it—but I can't get rid of it until I can find a better line to replace it with. But you're right—it's got to be right."

By that time Anne had finished the picture. "C'mon, Lisa," Suki said, in her soft, musical voice, "I'll walk you home."

As they walked down the leaf-strewn sidewalks, Lisa turned to Suki. "I didn't want to be sketched. You know what I mean, don't you?"

Suki nodded, and while she said nothing, she took Lisa's hand. The girls
1 walked on that way silently until they came to Lisa's house, at which point Lisa laughed and told Suki to forget the whole thing.

That phrase, "You're right—it's got to be right," echoed in Lisa's mind as she walked up the path to her house. "How do you know when something's right?" she asked herself.

Even though it was quite late in the afternoon, she hadn't expected to find her father had gotten home ahead of her: usually, he didn't get there until supper-time. He was standing at the living room window, watching the leaves swirl down from the trees in the brisk November air. Nor did he hear Lisa tiptoe up behind him. He was surprised and delighted when she pressed her face against
2 his back and hugged him tightly around the waist.

"I can't recall an autumn so beautiful," said her father, as Lisa released him and joined in looking out the window. "It's just perfect!"

"Daddy—" Lisa began, in the hesitant way she had when she was puzzled, "is it that something isn't right until it's perfect?"

Her father smiled. "You'll have to tell me more than that, I'm afraid."

Lisa recounted how Anne and Suki had been talking about getting their pictures right and getting their poems right. "So I guess," she concluded, "that what they were saying was that they couldn't be satisfied until what they were doing was perfect."

3 "Okay, fair enough." Her father could tell Lisa wasn't finished.

"That's just it: you said it—only, it's not what we mean by 'fair' at all. A picture or a poem has to be perfect, but it doesn't make any sense at all to ask it to be fair!"

"Well, what do you mean by 'fair' and what do you mean by 'perfect'?"

"The way I figure it," Lisa tried to choose her words carefully, "if something's

expected of everyone else, then it's only fair that should be expected of you too. Like if everyone's expected to do homework in algebra, it's only fair that I should have to do it too. But just because everyone does something doesn't make it perfect at all—it's just fair. On the other hand, something's perfect when everything in it is right. It's the way everything fits together: if something doesn't fit, we say it's not right. That's the way it is with pictures and poems and things like that."

"And is that the way it is with things you do?" her father asked in his quiet voice. "Are they right when they help to make things fit together perfectly?"

Lisa nodded. 1

Her father pursued his questioning. "So what happens when what seems the right thing to do, as far as you're concerned, is what everyone else thinks is unfair?"

"I don't know," Lisa admitted. "That's one of the things that bothers me. I keep thinking that everything should work out, and it never does."

"Sometimes, when we can't find the right connections, we have to make them," her father mused. He turned from looking searchingly at her face to gazing meditatively out the window again. The last rays of the afternoon sun burnished the golden leaves as they watched, and he added, "How they blaze up at the very end!" 2

Lisa's mother entered the room. Her face looked different. "Did you tell her?" she asked her husband.

Lisa turned to her father. "Tell me what?" she demanded.

Her father smiled faintly. "Oh, nothing—nothing but a folded newspaper."

"What's so bad about a folded newspaper?" Lisa wanted to know.

"Bad enough when it's the newspaper your father worked for," answered her mother.

Lisa shook her head unbelievingly. "But—but—you can get another job! There are other newspapers!"

"There are only a few others, and they're almost as bad off as we were, so they 3
aren't about to hire right now. They're cutting back." Her father put his arm lightly on her shoulder. "Don't worry your head about it, Lisa, it'll be all right. Maybe not perfect, but all right."

When the ambulance arrived in the middle of the night, Lisa was so bewildered she couldn't tell what was going on. She heard her mother, as if from

a long way off, say that her father had had a heart attack. Lisa sank to her knees beside her bed, and buried her face in her blanket. She tried to hold her breath, as if holding it would stop anything more dreadful from happening.

Lisa was still crouched by her bed when her mother returned and stood alongside her. Lisa had only to look at her face to know her father was dead. Pressing herself close, her face buried in her mother's warm robe, she recalled how she and her father had stood at the window that afternoon. She felt her mother touch her hair, and she wept.

CHAPTER NINE

"Dad," said Harry, "did you hear about Lisa's father?"

"Mmmm," Mr. Stottlemeier replied, "Too bad."

"How old was he?"

"Oh, he couldn't have been very old—probably about my age."

"Did you know him?"

"I'd seen him a couple of times, I guess. Nice guy."

"But you never talked to him?"

"No, not really."

Harry busied himself for a few moments with the catch on his briefcase, which wasn't working too well. 1

"Dad."

"Yes."

"Remember last year, we were talking about your smoking?"

"Sure."

"I said I wouldn't pester you about it again, and I won't. But there's something I still don't understand."

"What's that?"

"Well, Lisa said something the other day that started me thinking. It was about how everybody says smoking is bad for a person's health. And yet it seems to me that just about everyone smokes anyhow." 2

"So?"

"So, if you turn it around, are there things which everyone does, things which are perfectly harmless, and yet everyone tells you they're really bad for you?"

"I imagine so."

"So how are we supposed to know what's all right to do and what's not all right?"

"Isn't that what you go to school to find out?"

"That's not the sort of thing we talk about in school, I mean, not in regular classes."

"So you ask me." 3

"Yep."

Mr. Stottlemeier smiled faintly. "People are funny, Harry. I remember when I

was a kid, much smaller than you are now. My mother was going out for a few minutes, and I was in the kitchen, and she said to me, just as a joke, I guess, 'I'll be back in a moment, so you be good, and don't put any beans in your nose.' Well, it wouldn't have occurred to me in a million years, all by myself, to think of putting beans in my nose. But you know what I did as soon as she closed the door?"

"You went to the closet and got out the bean jar."

"Right."

"Did you ever do it again?"

1 "Nope—once was enough, I guess. But I've often thought of it since."

"So it didn't become a habit, like smoking."

"No."

"Can people have harmless habits that they don't admit to because everyone says things like that are wrong to do?"

"Sure."

Harry shook his head.

"Dad."

"Mmmm."

"Is everybody crazy?"

2 Mr. Stottlemeier peered over his glasses at Harry. "Um," he said.

"What's that mean?" Harry persisted.

"It means 'sort of'."

"Mom doesn't smoke."

"Did you ever watch the way she eats?"

It was Harry's turn to be silent. Finally he spoke up. "Dad, are you and Mom worried?"

"Why?"

"'Cause I've heard that worry causes overeating and that worry causes smoking, so I want to know if you're worried."

3 "I don't know if 'worry' is the right word for it."

"Well, then, what *is* the right word for it?"

"I don't know."

"Okay, then, whatever it's called—what makes you feel that way?"

"Oh, nothing in particular."

"So it's things in general?"

"I reckon."

"Dad, they say Lisa's father had a heart attack because the place where he worked closed."

"Could be."

"Is that the sort of thing you worry about happening?"

"No, I don't think it'll happen where I work, and I don't think it'll happen to me."

"Then what are you worried about?"

"It's just that I don't see any ready solutions. I think the world has spent the last 500 years getting itself into a mess that it will take 500 more years to get itself out of. And I think things are going to get a lot worse before they get better." 1

"Dad, you gotta be kidding! Our books in school say just the opposite! They say things have been getting better and better. You've just gotta be wrong."

Mr. Stottlemeier said nothing.

"Dad, how could what you say be right? Everyone knows about progress. It's all over the world. It really bugs me to hear you say things like that, when you know for a fact that everyone else says just the opposite."

"It really bugs you, does it?"

"That's right, it really does." 2

"Funny, how just a little while ago you were asking me if it was possible that some things might not be bad to do, even though everyone else said they were bad. But now I've got to be wrong just because, according to you, everyone else has the opposite opinion."

Mr. Stottlemeier was looking steadily at Harry, and he wasn't smiling. Harry found himself unable to look back at his father, so he began to fool around some more with the lock on his briefcase.

Finally Harry asked, "Dad, why do you think—you know, what you said?"

"Harry, you're a good deal more of a bookworm than I ever was. I can't explain too well why I have some of the opinions I have, so I keep them to myself. I don't know. It seems to me that the big systems that were invented so we could all be better off have gradually gotten bigger and more complicated than anyone can understand, and what's worse, they've now sort of gotten out of control. Well, you asked me, and I told you." 3

"Isn't there something we could do?"

"There isn't much use doing anything until we know what we're doing, and I think it's going to be a long, long time before we get to that point."

"So what should we do in the meantime?"

"What you're doing."

"What's that?"

"Trying to understand."

"And what about you?"

"Oh," said Mr. Stottlemeier, lighting another cigarette, "I'll be okay."

Mrs. Stottlemeier came in from the kitchen, drying her hands on her apron.

1 "Anyone want to have a cup of tea?"

"I'd like to," smiled Mr. Stottlemeier, "but I'm afraid there wouldn't be room in the cup for both of us."

Sandy couldn't get over it; Heather was right on time. Earlier, he had impressed Mickey and Timmy by claiming to know that "girls who look like that are always late." But she was sitting on the desk when they got there.

She got right down to business. "I don't have much time," she announced, "and after today I go back to school. So let's go. Let me see the sentences you prepared."

2 The students looked at each other in embarrassment. Finally Harry spoke up. "It's not that we don't have anything. It's just that, well, we weren't sure what the assignment was—you left so fast we didn't get a chance to ask you about it."

"Well, then, let's see what you have."

Harry still hesitated. "You see, somebody, I think it was Lisa, got the idea that what you wanted was like a one-line proverb or something, so that's what she wrote down, and then she started showing it around, and the first thing you know, that's what everyone did."

"You all wrote down the same sentence?"

"Nope—but we all wrote down sayings we'd heard of."

3 Heather shrugged. "S'okay with me--but it'll be up to you to standardize them." Mickey looked at his sentence and groaned loudly.

Heather snapped her fingers: "Papers please." The papers were slowly handed in. Suddenly she said, "Wait, I've got a better idea. Write all the sentences on the blackboard." There was a lot of confusion with fourteen kids trying to write on the blackboard at once, but it was finally accomplished. These are their

proverbs:
Jill: Every cloud has a silver lining.
Luther: Nothing ventured, nothing gained.
Millie: See a pin, pick it up.
Timmy: A penny saved is a penny earned.
Harry: Slow and steady wins the race.
Tony: Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other.
Mickey: Never trust a guy who can shuffle cards with one hand.
Fran: All looks yellow to the jaundiced eye.
Laura: Where there's life, there's hope. 1
Sandy: Don't take any wooden nickels.
Maria: An apple a day keeps the doctor away.
Mark: What you don't know may hurt you.
Anne: The early bird gets the worm.
Suki: All men are mortal.

"All right, now," said Heather. "Write a standardized version alongside your original sentence. I'll help you." Then, with a twinkle in her eye, she remarked to Mr. Spence, "Sounds like three-fourths of the class have been reading Benjamin Franklin."

This is how the sentences looked when translated into standard form: 2
Jill: All clouds are things that have silver linings.
Luther: No things not ventured are things that are gained.
Millie: All people who see pins are people who should pick them up.
Timmy: All pennies saved are pennies earned.
Harry: All slow and steady people are people who win races.
Tony: All things equal to the same thing are things equal to each other.
Mickey: No guys who can shuffle cards with one hand are people to be trusted.
Fran: All things seen with jaundiced eyes are things that look yellow.
Laura: All places where there's life are places where there's hope.
Sandy: No wooden nickels are things people should take. 3
Maria: All days you eat apples are days you don't need a doctor.
Mark: All things you don't know are things that may hurt you.
Anne: All birds that are early are birds that get worms.
Suki: All human beings are creatures that are mortal.

Getting the sentences standardized was far from easy, and most of the class needed a lot of help from Heather. Mr. Spence also helped out, although many

times he too needed Heather's advice. Luther's sentence was particularly troublesome, while Tony's and Suki's were easy since they were very close to standard form.

Heather clapped her hands. "Okay, let's go. Do you know what we're going to do next?"

There was a loud chorus of "No's."

Heather laughed. "We're going to try to prove the sentences we've just written by arranging them so that they follow correctly from premises we can make up for them. Now, how are we going to do it?"

1 Fran raised her hand. "We can take the sentences that begin with the word 'all," and we can make them the conclusions of the Barbara Ann arrangement."

"Absolutely right," Heather declared. "And do we have any other arrangements we could use for them beside the Barbara Ann arrangement?"

"No, none at all," said Fran.

"Good," said Heather. "Well, now, what about the sentences that begin with the word 'no'?"

Tony spoke up: "We've four choices of arrangements: Heather Ann, Heather Bea, Kathleen Bea and Kathleen Dee."

But now Harry was waving his hand in the air. "Wait, wait, I've got an idea! If
2 there are four different ways of proving the same sentence when it begins with the word 'no,' why do we need them all? We need only one arrangement to prove sentences beginning with 'all.'"

"What are you suggesting we do?" Heather inquired.

"Just pick one of those four arrangements, and not worry about the others."

"It might simplify things, I'll admit," said Heather. "Okay, which arrangement would you pick?"

"That's easy," said Harry, "Heather Ann—because it's practically the same as Barbara Ann, except that the beginning words are 'No-All-No' instead of 'All-All-All.'"

3 "Hey," exclaimed Tony, "that's great! All we need to know now are just two arrangements, one for 'all' sentences and one for 'no' sentences—and even those two are almost alike."

So Heather wrote the two final arrangements on the board. She didn't put in subject, predicate, and middle terms, but said that the students should fill in the blanks themselves. What she put on the blackboard looked like this:

Barbara Ann

All [ ] are [ ].
All ( ) are [ ].
All ( ) are .

Heather Ann

No [ ] are [ ].
All ( ) are [ ].
No ( ) are [ ].

"All right, let's go," Heather called out. "Back to your seats, now. Take a piece of paper, and write your sentence as the conclusion of one or the other of these two arrangements." Everyone did as she said.

"Now," Heather continued, "Fill in the other boxes, w re it says 'major term' and 'minor term.'" Again, everyone followed her direction, although several students needed help. 1

"What about where it says 'middle term'?" demanded Mark. "What am I supposed to put in there?"

"Ah, that's where you'll have to rummage around in your minds until you come up with something that works," Heather answered.

The students began puzzling over their Barbara Ann and Heather Ann arrangements. Harry was the first one finished, so Heather had him write his on the board:

All [persistent people] are [people who win races.] 2
All (slow and steady) people are [persistent people].
All (slow and steady) people are [people who win races.]

Then Mickey came up with an arrangement for his sentence:

No [people who can fool us] are [people to be trusted.]
All (guys who can shuffle cards with one hand) are [people who can fool us.]
No (guys who can shuffle cards with one hand) are [people to be trusted.]

Some of the other members of the class also were able to find middle terms and finish their arrangements, but the rest needed help. Then Heather looked at her watch, clapped her hands and called out, "Sorry, but this is all we'll have time for." 3

Tony was very annoyed; he hadn't finished his arrangement, and there was something else he remembered: "Heather, you said you'd tell us how you figured out the correct arrangements. I wanted to find out what the rules are. Aren't you gonna tell us?"

"Sorry, Tony," Heather said, genuinely apologetic. "But I just don't have time now. Maybe during the vacation recess I can come back and see you all again."

"Who comes to school during the vacation recess?" grumbled Tony, as he picked up his papers. But everyone thanked Heather as they left. Harry and Mark paused for a moment to say a few words to Mr. Spence, then they too began to straggle out. As they reached the door, they could hear Heather saying, "Stan, how is it I know logic, but I can't keep my checkbook balanced—" Then the door closed behind them.

Halfway down the hall, Harry remembered his books. He raced back into the
1 room, caught sight of Mr. Spence and Heather embracing, turned red, picked up his books, and began to race out. He cut a corner too sharply, tripped over a desk leg, and sprawled headlong on the floor with books flying in all directions. He finally managed to pick the books up and get out of the room.

"What happened to *you*?" asked Mark, who had seen none of Harry's difficulties.

"Aw," said Harry, "go jump."

•••

It was Thursday afternoon, time for the delegation to meet with Mr. Partridge. It was also Lisa's first day back in school since the funeral. No one expected that
2 she would want to attend the meeting with Mr. Partridge, but she insisted that she had been one of those delegated, and she felt she ought to go. Fran and Suki looked at her very closely when she came back to school that morning, as if her experience would have left some kind of scar that would be visible on her face. But she looked much the same, except that her face was somewhat puffy, and she was much quieter than usual.

In the hall outside Mr. Partridge's office, Mark said, "Hey, wait a minute, shouldn't we have a strategy conference before we go in?"

"The best thing to do is just to explain to him how it wasn't Mr. Spence's fault," said Millie.

3 "No," Mark replied, "we've got to have a plan."

But no one offered any suggestions, and they could see Mr. Partridge's secretary glancing in their direction. Mark looked nervously at Harry.

"Well—," Harry began, hesitantly, "I guess we should try to show him that what we've been doing is in line with *his own* beliefs."

"That's it!" Fran exclaimed. "And that what he's been doing isn't!"

The secretary showed them in to Mr. Partridge's office, although Mark pointed out that they all knew where it was. Mr. Partridge was on the phone when they came in, so they sat quietly in the great leather-covered armchairs and on the leather-covered sofa until he finished speaking.

At last he put down the receiver and turned to them. He told them how delighted he was to be able to discuss their problems with them, how seldom he had time to do so, how this sort of thing should be done more often in the future, how proud he was of them for having an interest in discussing problems rationally, and how he knew their parents were proud of them too.

At the last remark, Lisa shut her eyes momentarily, but only Suki noticed. 1

"Now," said Mr. Partridge, "how can I help you?"

Mark spoke up first. "Mr. Partridge, we want to talk to you about Mr. Spence."

It seemed to Lisa that Mr. Partridge's expression changed ever so slightly, but he merely asked, "Oh? What is there to discuss about him?" Before anyone could answer, he went on: "Let me say that I have the highest regard for Mr. Spence. Absolutely. A very fine teacher, and a very fine young man. Yes, indeed—a credit to his race."

Fran's eyes flashed. "Mr. Partridge, when you say that, it sounds like he's some kind of exception—you know, like the rest of us really aren't much. Would you say that about any of the other teachers, that they're 'a credit to their race'?" 2

But now Lisa and Suki were whispering to Fran to "cool it," and Fran, although obviously disturbed, said no more.

Mr. Partridge attempted to smooth things over, and again alluded to the high esteem in which he held Mr. Spence. "But I'm sure you didn't come here to hear me tell you how much I think of him. What can I do for you?"

Mark tried again. "There's a rumor going around that Mr. Spence isn't going to be promoted—or maybe not even rehired—because he let us have a discussion during school hours about Mr. Pennypacker's leaving. The rumor is that Mr. Spence is being accused of showing poor judgment by letting us discuss school policies in the classroom. So we figured we'd better come talk to you." 3

"I can assure you—"Mr. Partridge seemed to search for words, "I can assure you that all of us realize that none of you children was at fault in that incident. Absolutely not. You're not being blamed one bit."

"Mr. Partridge," Harry broke in, "we didn't come here because we thought *we* were being blamed for anything. It's never occurred to us there might be

anything wrong with what we've been doing, and even you keep telling us how proud you are of us. We've got to make it clear to you that we're not talking about ourselves; we're talking about Mr. Spence."

Mr. Partridge cleared his throat, and began to describe the many responsibilities of a school teacher and his obligation to follow the rules and regulations of the school. Mr. Partridge went on at great length, and no one was prepared to interrupt him.

Finally there was a pause, and Tony took advantage of it to ask what was going to happen to Mr. Spence.

1 Mr. Partridge put his hands out in front of him, palms up. "Please! please! I'm not a crystal ball reader! I've no idea what will happen in this case because I have no control whatsoever over these matters. It's entirely out of my hands. And even if it weren't, it would be thoroughly improper for me to discuss it with students."

"But Mr. Partridge," said Suki, "all we want to do is tell you how convinced we are that Mr. Spence is innocent."

"That's right," said Mark. "We can't see that he's done anything wrong at all. We'd feel very badly if we thought an innocent person were being punished in our school. And we'd feel extra bad if we thought he was being punished because

2 of us."

"Mr. Partridge," Harry added, "if we're to get a good education in this school, then people shouldn't be blamed for helping us think for ourselves."

"Yes, but Mr. Spence *is* being blamed, even though all he's ever done is help us think for ourselves." Fran's voice shook as she spoke.

Mr. Partridge regarded the delegation soberly. "So it follows that you can't get a good education in this school—is that it?"

Before anyone could reply, the secretary came in. "Mrs. Van Zant is here to see you about Johnny," she announced.

Mr. Partridge got up, whereupon the students also rose. "I'm so glad we had

3 this little chat," he said affably. "It's good to be able to share our feelings and thoughts with one another from time to time." And with that, he gently ushered them from the room.

Mark looked grim. "Yeah, we shared our thoughts with him, but he sure didn't share any of his thoughts with us. Boy, did we accomplish a lot!"

"We never even had a chance to discuss it, because that secretary scheduled us

for only a few minutes," said Tony. "Boy, were we dumb not to have asked for more time."

"It wouldn't have helped," commented Fran. "You know that."

CHAPTER TEN

Tony felt triumphant. After their many months of work, they had managed to reduce the correct ways of proving a sentence to just two, and even those two were almost alike. "We did it, Harry, we did it!" he exclaimed jubilantly.

Harry felt pretty good about it too. But he couldn't help saying to Tony, "Y'know, those proverbs that everyone was using in class—I don't know—somehow, I don't trust them."

"They were okay—" Tony began. He paused, then added, "What did you think was wrong with them?"

"I don't know. But I'd like to see the proofs tried out on something else, not just
1 on those silly old proverbs. We should try them on something we really believe, and see if we can find reasons for what we believe, so we can prove it."

Harry raised his hand, and Mr. Spence said, "Okay, let's begin, but Mickey had his hand up first."

"Mr. Spence," said Mickey, "could we go back to something we were talking about today in the cafeteria? We were trying to remember whether you'd said there were really things like points."

"Ah," replied Mr. Spence. "I remember our talking about it. Yes, I said a point was a position or location in space, but it had no size or shape."

"But Mr. Spence," Mickey said, "I know a point's like a little dot, only real
2 small. But how could it have no size or shape? It wouldn't be a point at all if it didn't have some kind of size."

"It's a mathematical notion," said Mr. Spence. "It's not a thing but a position."

"But which?" Mickey grumbled. "Is it an idea in our minds, or is it a location in space?"

"Or is it just something real, real tiny?" asked Millie.

Mr. Spence held up his hands. "All those are possible," he laughed. "The word 'point' can have many meanings."

By now Harry and Tony were impatient to get back to their proofs. "Let's
3 everyone take something he believes, put it in a sentence, and then try to prove it," Tony proposed.

It was fun seeing what people came up with. Mark, for example, wanted to

prove his belief that "all schools are bad." But for his conclusion he wrote down "no schools are good." "Oh well," he said, "it's the same thing." He proceeded to prove it like this:

No things run by people who don't understand kids are good.
All schools are run by people who don't understand kids.
No schools are good.

Then Jane offered her contribution:

No places where everyone squabbles are nice.
All families are places where everyone squabbles.
No families are nice. 1

"You people are sure negative today," Mr. Spence commented. "Doesn't anyone have anything positive he wants to prove?"

Mickey put up his hand. "I'd like to prove that points are real things." And he wrote on the board:

All things that are small are things that exist.
All points are things that are small.
All points are things that exist.

"Oh, wow," laughed Fran. "You can prove anything that way. Look, I could prove that giants exist that way." She wrote:

All things that are large are things that exist. 2
All giants are things that are large.
All giants are things that exist.

Harry looked at Tony. "How ridiculous can you get?" he asked.

"Pretty ridiculous," put in Randy. "Let me show you. Look, suppose I believed something real silly, like, say, 'All triangles are monsters.' Well, by your method, it'd be easy to prove."

All peppermint sticks are monsters.
All triangles are peppermint sticks.
All triangles are monsters.

Harry flushed. "But that's crazy!" he protested. "Those sentences are all 3 wrong!"

"I just followed your method," Randy replied coolly. "Show me what I did wrong."

"Boy, we must be dumb," Harry said to Tony in dismay. "Using this method, you can prove anything! No matter how stupid! And if you can prove anything

with it, what good is it?"

"Don't give up so fast," Tony answered. "We'll figure something out."

•••

"Lisa," Suki called out, "wait up."

Lisa said nothing, but she stopped and waited.

"Is it okay if I walk back with you?" Suki asked.

1 Lisa nodded. They walked together silently, block after block. Finally they came to Suki's house. "Wouldn't you like to come in for a few minutes?" Suki asked. "Kio's out with Daddy, and they won't be home until five at least."

Lisa said nothing; it was almost as if she hadn't heard Suki at all. Then she gave a barely perceptible nod and followed Suki into the house. They went to Suki's room. "Sit down?" asked Suki, motioning to the several chairs in the room. But Lisa sat on the floor, her legs folded and her elbows resting on her knees. Suki sat down in the same position next to her, facing her.

They sat that way for quite a while, Lisa numb and silent, Suki gentle and patient. Eventually Suki spoke up. "When my mother died, the way I felt must
2 have been like the way you feel now."

It was difficult to tell whether Lisa heard; she simply continued to look towards the floor.

After a time, Suki saw Lisa bend forward. Then back. Then forward again. She was beginning to rock back and forth, and she continued to rock for quite a while. Then suddenly she stopped and stared at Suki. She attempted to speak, but couldn't quite make it.

Suki reached out and touched Lisa's arm gently. Lisa stopped trying to speak, and collapsed against Suki, who cradled her head and began to rock her. Lisa's whole body shook with sobs, and Suki continued rocking her steadily, stroking
3 her head and caressing her until the sobbing subsided.

Eventually Lisa sat up straight. "I'm all right," she announced. Her voice sounded husky and a bit strange.

"Sure you are," Suki responded affectionately.

"It's not fair!" said Lisa. "He didn't deserve to die!"

"Everything living dies sometime or other," said Suki softly. "It's only natural."

"But he didn't have to die just *now*!" Lisa cried. "He had so much life still to live!" Then she added, "Besides, what's natural is to finish what you start. Not just get cut off in the middle. *Even trees* grow old! Why couldn't he?"

"I don't know," Suki murmured. "It's odd, though. When my mother died, I kept thinking about how much *my father* had lost. And here you're saying how much *your father* lost! But the two things are so different!"

"Oh," replied Lisa, her voice flat and toneless, "what does it matter?"

"You're right. It doesn't matter just now. I thought I'd never get over it when it happened to me. It took me a long time to accept what had happened. It was only then that I began to feel better." 1

"I'll never get over it," said Lisa vehemently. "I'll never feel better! I never want to feel anything again—ever!"

Suki changed the subject. "Do you talk to your mother?"

Lisa shook her head. "We're both in the same shape; I can't talk to her and she can't talk to me."

"Why's that?"

"She can't seem to manage without him. She's helpless, can you imagine? She keeps asking me what she should do." 2

Suki tried to reassure her, saying "I'm sure your mother will get herself together after a while."

"She'll never be able to face it, so I'll have to face it for her," Lisa retorted bitterly.

"You'll find your old interests again."

"What interests? I have no interests. And I have no ambitions. I'm not like Jane, who can't wait to become a doctor, or like Fran who can't wait to become a lawyer. They know what they want: good for them! But I'm not anything and I don't ever want to be anything." She hid her face in her knees and began sobbing again. "When he was here, I was never alone. And now, just to be left alone, that's all I want." 3

Suki shook her head compassionately. This time she didn't try to hold Lisa or caress her. She simply said nothing.

Lisa sniffled and Suki found a tissue for her. Lisa said, "I'm a fool. An absolute idiot."

"No, you're not."

"As if all this carrying on could make a difference."

"It may make you feel better, and that makes a difference."

"To me, maybe, but not to anyone else."

"I thought you didn't care about anyone else."

"The kids at school are nice. I've nothing against them."

"They've all been very much concerned. Every day, while you weren't in school, Fran would ask about you, and Harry, and Mark, and lots of others."

Lisa was suddenly aware that she felt better. But she couldn't bring herself to
1 tell Suki how much that last remark had meant to her.

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Mr. and Mrs. Jahorski arrived home from work at the same time, and promptly went into the apartment kitchen to make supper. Mark and Maria came in from their rooms.

"Mark, you want to give me a hand with this salad?" Mr. Jahorski asked.

"Oh, let me," Maria asked. "I love cutting cucumbers. And Mark's got his hands full."

Mark was putting a large cast iron pot on the stove. "It looks like there'll just be enough of this stew for one more time," he announced.

2 By now Mrs. Jahorski had tied the strings to the apron which she'd put on over her dress, and was busy wrapping a loaf of bread in foil.

"Oh, boy!" exclaimed Mark. "Hot bread! I love it!"

Mrs. Jahorski smiled but said nothing. After Mark lighted the oven, she put the bread in and closed the oven door gently.

Maria set the table once her father had gathered the last of the vegetable parings and removed them with the cutting board.

"This garbage needs to be taken out," said Mr. Jahorski.

"I'll get it," said Mark, and disappeared with the bag down the hall.

The aroma of the bread was beginning to circulate through the dining room,
3 and Maria sniffed with gusto. "Oh, I just can't wait. And that stew smells so good, too! Why is it that stew gets better and better each time you serve it?"

Mark came back from the incinerator room, which was down the hall from their apartment.

"Hey, ma—," Mark began. Then seeing his mother and father embracing, he said, "Aw, c'mon, you two, break it up and let's eat."

Mark's parents paid no attention to his request, and took their time about getting back to the supper arrangements. By then Maria had gotten the bread

out of the oven, and put it on a board. "Lemme cut it, pa, please?"

"Sure," he replied, putting the bread knife down. "Just be careful."

As they finished the stew, Mark and Maria cleaned their plates with bits of bread. "This gravy's just great with bread," Mark commented, his mouth full.

"Mmmm-mmmm," Maria agreed.

Mrs. Jahorski surveyed the two of them. "You don't have the best manners in the world, I'm afraid," she commented.

"Ma," Mark protested, "the better you cook, the less we can restrain ourselves."

"That's right, ma," said Maria. "So when you cook perfectly, we've just got no manners at all!" She took another slice of bread and spooned more gravy over it. 1

For dessert, Mr. Jahorski peeled and cut up a couple of apples, and passed the slices around. There was a moment of quiet as he and Mrs. Jahorski sipped their coffee while Maria and Mark straightened up the dishes.

"Your turn to wash," said Maria.

"Okay, I know," replied Mark, "but wait a minute." He sat down at the table again, as did Maria.

"Ma," said Mark, "We said how good the food was, and you said how bad our manners were."

"Ma didn't mean our manners were really, really bad," broke in Maria. "She just meant it isn't polite to soak up your bread with your gravy." 2

Mrs. Jahorski laughed. "It's not very serious, Mark. It's the sort of thing I was told not to do when I was growing up, so I just automatically tell you the same thing. It really doesn't bother me when you do it here, but I've got to admit that I might be a bit embarrassed if you did it in public."

Mark shook his head. "You're both way off base. I wasn't worried about that particularly. What I wanted to know was, how can you tell when something's good and when it's not? I mean, what counts for good and what counts for bad?"

"I don't see how you can say, Ma," said Maria, before her mother could answer. "Good food is one thing, good manners are another. They're altogether different." 3

"That's right, Maria," said her mother. "Manners are social rules for what to do in different situations. If you act according to the rules, people say you have good manners. But good food depends on taste. What counts is how it tastes. So when we call food good, it has nothing to do with rules."

Mr. Jahorski began peeling another apple. "Sure, but Mark wants to know how we set standards—right, Mark?"

Mark nodded. "I guess so. What do we use standards for? And what do we use them on?"

"Well," his father replied, "we use standards when we're dealing with things that matter to us—"

"Like, what we think's important?" Mark interrupted.

"Right—matters of importance. Things of value. And what do we use standards for? To tell what has more value or importance from what has less."

1 "I don't understand," said Maria.

Mrs. Jahorski laughed. "Let me try. Maria, is seeing important to you?"

"Oh, my, if I couldn't see, it'd be terrible!"

"But you have good eyes, right?"

"Yep. The doctor at school said I have 20-20 vision. That means I have good eyes. But Randy's got 20-60. He can see, but without his glasses he can't see well. So I guess he doesn't have such good eyes."

"So your eyes are called good because they see well, and his eyes aren't so good because they don't see so well."

"But don't you see," put in Mr. Jahorski, "the standard of goodness that you're
2 using is the doctor's 20-20. You can't tell whether something is better than something else unless you have a standard. For example, if you ask me whether one brand of gasoline is better than another, I wouldn't know what to say. But if we agreed that the standard is how many miles my car would go on one gallon of each, I could tell which gasoline would be better."

"According to that standard," said Mark.

"Right," agreed Mr. Jahorski. "But maybe not according to some other standard."

"I'm confused," said Maria. "First we had *rules* for telling what's right to do, and now we have standards. What's the difference between rules and
3 standards?"

"That's easy," said Mark. "Rules are like directions in a game. If you play the game, you've got to obey the rules. But standards are—standards are—I guess it's not so easy. Hey, ma, what are standards?"

"A standard's like a yardstick that you use for measuring. An inch is a standard. A yard is a standard. A gallon is a standard."

"So aren't standards rules? In fact, we sometimes even call a yardstick a ruler, don't we?"

"Sure, but we don't mean it's a ruler like a king's a ruler."

Mr. Jahorski held up both hands. "Hold on now."

"But I've got nothing to hold on *to*!" wailed Maria.

Mr. Jahorski regarded her soberly. "I'll explain everything."

Maria's face brightened considerably.

"First of all," said Mr. Jahorski, "Mark was right about rules. Rules tell you how to act. Rules are what you're supposed to obey. A standard's a measure you use when you *judge*. If someone asks me how far it is from the earth to the sun, 1
then I can *estimate* the distance using the standard of the mile."

"Ninety-six million miles," said Mark.

"Okay," agreed his father. "And if you ask me how much gasoline I have in my automobile tank, I use the standard of the gallon to make an estimate of the amount—say, 10 gallons."

"But those are standards of quantity," said Mark. "And goodness is something else."

"That's right," replied Mr. Jahorski. "Goodness is not a matter of quantity but of quality. It's like I told you before, it's a matter of importance. And standards are what we use to judge *how* important, or *how* valuable, something is." 2

Maria and her mother both began to talk at once, but Mrs. Jahorski won. "So if I say Maria's a good ice skater, you have a right to ask me what standard I'm using, isn't that so?"

Mr. Jahorski nodded. "Maria, what standards could be used to decide whether or not a person's a good ice skater?"

"Well, it could be speed—or it could be how well you do figures."

"Gracefulness," said Mr. Jahorski. "Right."

"Oh," said Maria, "I wish someone could put it all together for me. I'm so confused!"

This time both parents tried talking at the same time, but Mark insisted, 3
"Lemme try. Lemme try. Look, Maria, remember we were doing those 'if... then' sentences last year?"

Maria nodded doubtfully.

Mark continued, "Well, we could put it this way: 'If you skate fast, then, using

the standard of speed, you're a good skater.'"

"Right," said his father. "Or, if the meat's delicious, then, using the standard of tastiness, it's good meat."

"And if Maria takes other people into account, then, using the standard of considerateness, she's a good girl," said Mrs. Jahorski.

"Aw, cut it out," growled Maria. Then, suddenly mischievous, she tried to stuff a paper napkin down the back of Mark's shirt. Mark finally escaped by pleading, "Hey, lemme alone, I've got to do the dishes!"

"Okay," said Maria, "I'll be considerate and let you."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

"Lisa, before you go off to school, would you mind running over to the store on the corner and getting a few things for me?"

Lisa turned at the door to face her mother, and replied in an exasperated voice, "Mom, you know I'll be late if I stop to do anything else. I'm practically late already."

"You're leaving a little earlier than usual today, and it'll only take a couple of minutes."

"Oh, all right, give me the list." Lisa snatched the piece of paper which her mother extended to her with a few dollar bills, and raced out of the house. In a few minutes she was back, dumped the groceries so hard on the kitchen table 1
that the bag broke, and raced out once again.

When she was out of sight of her house, she slowed down to an easy walk. Her mind still boiled with resentment, going over and over how her mother had unnecessarily delayed her. Lisa was furious too at her own inability to cope with her mother's helplessness. She felt trapped.

It was a mist-shrouded morning; the mist was especially heavy in the park which skirted Lisa's route to school. Lisa hardly noticed the car which pulled up alongside her, until an amiable voice called out to her, "Hi, like a lift?"

The face, as far as she could make it out, was young and pleasing. And as Lisa made no reply, but kept on walking, the voice came back again, "What d'ya say? 2
Wanna lift?"

It was like a slow-motion movie, there in the mist, as she dawdled along, and the car moved slowly alongside her. But Lisa was also aware of her own turbulent thoughts and feelings. On the one hand, she was very conscious that her parents' warnings and her own good sense told her to do everything possible to avoid a situation which she might not be able to handle. But on the other hand, there were two strong feelings of which she was distinctly conscious. One was the temptation of engaging in a small adventure, a breezy little ride to school she would be able to boast about to her friends. The other, even stronger feeling, was that this was a way of getting away—just away. 3

The car stopped, the door on the driver's side opened, and the boy began to get out—although he now looked less like a boy and more like a man. Lisa hesitated,

then began to run. The man got back in his car and quickly caught up with her.

A traffic light shone red in the mist. The car stopped for the light, and another pulled up behind it. Lisa saw her chance. She raced across the intersection, and began to run the three blocks that still separated her from the school. Looking back and seeing a car moving slowly towards her, she hid behind some trash cans in an alley and watched as it moved on by. She was relieved to note that it was a different car. Soon she was on the school grounds. She was quite early. In a leisurely fashion, almost dawdling, she strolled into the school.

As Lisa told her story to Suki, Lisa reflected on her own response to what had
1 happened. She was particularly troubled by the fact that the danger had attracted her, and that she had to struggle to overcome her own impulses even though she knew at the time how unreasonable they were. She found the fact that she had indeed attempted to save herself encouraging, and she believed she might have succeeded even without the fortunate arrival of the other car.

"I learned a lot about myself," she told Suki.

"That's one way to do it," replied the unsmiling Suki. "The hard way."

"I'm learning about life," Lisa argued.

"Sure—only next time it may not be life you learn about."

Lisa looked at Suki for a moment. Then they began talking about some of the
2 boys in the class.

•••

When the students assembled as usual in Mr. Spence's room, they discovered a note from him on the blackboard, indicating that he wouldn't be able to be there that day.

"Anybody have any ideas about what we should do next?" asked Mark.

No one made a suggestion.

Then Harry blurted out, "As far as what we've been doing for the past couple of months is concerned, Tony and I have been talking about it, and we think maybe we've just been wasting our time."

3 "Yeah," Tony agreed, "Fran and Randy are right. It's just like they showed us. Those arrangements we figured out—they're okay by themselves, but they work with false beliefs as well as with true ones. They even work with sentences that are completely silly."

"I wasn't here yesterday," said Maria. "What happened? Show me."

"All right, look," Tony answered. "Gimme a sentence you know is false—

c'mon, any sentence you know is false."

"Okay," said Maria, "how about 'All friends of Godzilla are friends of Rumpelstiltskin'?" She wrote it on the blackboard.

Tony studied what Maria had written, and then said, "No problem." He added the two premises:

All enemies of Grendel are friends of Rumpelstiltskin.
All friends of Godzilla are enemies of Grendel

All friends of Godzilla are friends of Rumpelstiltskin.

"Hey, wait a minute," said Harry, "we're not sure those are really false sentences. How do we know about the friends or enemies of those story characters?" 1

"Okay," replied Tony, "Then how about this?" And he wrote on the board:

All fire engines are ping-pong balls.
All ducks are fire engines.

All ducks are ping-pong balls.

"All the sentences are false!" exclaimed Maria.

"But the form is okay, right?" responded Tony. "The arrangement is okay." Maria agreed.

Then Harry came back to the point he'd made earlier. "So what good is it for us to have this method of giving reasons for what we believe, if you can prove anything with anything? Don't you see, maybe we should just forget the whole thing!" 2

Mickey turned to Lisa and half-whispered, "The trouble with Harry is, he's been brushing his teeth so long with fluoristan toothpaste, his whole head has turned to bone."

Lisa grinned. "The trouble with you, Mickey, is that you've got a biodegradable mind!"

Mark had been sitting on one of the desks, watching with a troubled expression. Now he protested vigorously. "I don't know what's wrong with Harry and Tony. All we gotta do is stick with true premises." 3

"And what's that going to do?" asked Tony. "So we'll prove our beliefs with true premises, and someone else will prove his beliefs with false premises, and who's going to be able to tell which of us is right and which is wrong?"

A number of the students were now beginning to see the seriousness of the doubts which troubled Harry and Tony, and nodded their agreement.

Suddenly Lisa came to Mark's support. "Mark's right, don't you see? Sure you can prove anything using false premises and correct arrangements—or at least you can *seem* to be able to prove anything. But can you prove *anything* using nothing but true premises and correct arrangements?"

Harry and Tony looked puzzled. "I don't get you," Harry told her.

"What I'm saying is," and here she wrote the rest of what she had to say on the blackboard:

with true premises and correct arrangements, your conclusions are sure to be true.

1 "Okay, now," she went on, "you want to prove I'm wrong? You want to contradict me? Then show me a case, *just one case*, where the premises are true and the arrangement is correct, but where the conclusion is false."

Harry and Tony looked at each other. Then Tony said, "Let me work on it tonight. I can't think about it clearly right now."

"Yeah," Harry agreed. "Let's cool it. I want to think about this for a while."

"That Stottlemeier," commented Mickey, "Always trying to sabotage our intellectual activities."

"He's not like you," Lisa replied mischievously. "You're as straight and honest as you are intelligent." Then, as Mickey made a face, she added, "Sorry

2 'bout that."

•••

"Dad," said Harry.

"Mmmmm," said his father.

"Dad," Harry repeated.

"Hummm?" his father answered.

"Dad, what's a question?"

"What you're asking me."

"Yeah, I know I'm asking you a question, but that's not the question I'm asking you."

3 "What's the question you're asking me? We seem to be going round and round, like Abbott and Costello. Who's on first?"

"Dad!"

"What?"

"I'm serious. What's a question?"

"Why do you want to know?"

"Dad, that's beside the point. What difference does it make why I want to know. I just want to know."

"You're always asking why. Why can't I ask why?"

"Dad, all I asked you was a simple question and you go round and round. All I was trying to find out was, what happens when we ask a question?"

"I thought I answered you."

"How did you answer me? You didn't answer me. You just asked me a bunch of questions."

"I wouldn't have to ask so many questions, if I knew a few answers."

"And maybe if I knew what questions were, I wouldn't ask so many." 1

"Maybe if you knew what they were, you'd ask even more."

"Dad!"

"Hmmm?"

"I'm still trying to find out."

"What a question is, or what happens when we ask a question?"

Harry looked pained. His father shrugged. "Well, first you asked me one thing, and then you asked me the other. I can't help it if you keep switching what you ask me."

"Okay, what happens when we ask a question?"

Mr. Stottlemeier pursed his lips and pondered. "When you ask a question, how do you feel?" 2

"Puzzled."

"And how do you feel when you sit down to the dinner table?"

"Hungry. Oh, I get what you're saying. You mean, when we're hungry, we naturally look for something to eat, and when we're puzzled, we naturally look for answers."

"So looking for answers is just as natural as looking for food?"

Harry stretched out on the floor alongside his father's chair. "Maybe so, but does that mean that asking questions is the same thing as looking for answers?"

Mr. Stottlemeier shook his head. "I didn't say that." 3

"So what's a question?"

"Harry, you're like a sick fly; you buzz around like a sick fly."

Harry laughed. "Maybe the fly's not sick at all. Maybe he's just trying to ask you something. Or maybe he's got a problem." Then he asked, "Is that what you're telling me, that we ask questions because we've got problems?"

"Do we have problems or do the problems have us?"

"Oh, Dad, for gosh sake, will you be serious?"

"I *am* serious."

"Well, what's the connection between a question and a problem?"

"What's the connection between an iceberg and the tip of the iceberg?"

"The tip of the iceberg is all you can see; the rest of it is under water."

"So isn't it possible that your question is just the tip of the problem?"

"The question's mine, but the problem's not mine?"

"No."

1 "So whose is it?"

"It isn't anybody's. Look, if you were finished with school and you weren't sure what you were going to do next, you'd be puzzled and you'd start asking questions. But if there's unemployment, then that's a problem, and it's not just your problem. That's why I said, you wouldn't have it, it would have you."

"So the reason I ask questions is not so much to get answers, as to get to know what the problem is?"

Mr. Stottlemeier touched Harry's head lightly with his hand. "I couldn't have put it better myself," he said.

2 •••

Mr. Partridge came into the History class just after it began, and sat down in the back of the room. The students were puzzled at his presence.

Mickey frowned at Fran, as if to say, "Why's he here?"

Fran hunched her shoulders as if replying, "How should I know?"

Towards the end of the session, Mr. Partridge was called upon by Ms. Quinton to come forward and say something to the class.

"I bet he's gonna tell us that Mr. Spence will be kept on," Maria whispered to Mark.

"Wanna bet?" Mark whispered back.

3 Mr. Partridge spoke with his usual warmth and graciousness. "First of all," he began, "let me say that I'd planned to visit you today in your study hall, rather than interrupt your History lesson. But my schedule wouldn't permit it."

Maria looked at Mark. "I told you it was about Mr. Spence," she whispered again.

Mark said nothing.

"I also want to tell you what a fine lot of young people you are," Mr. Partridge continued. "You've got perseverance and you've got loyalty, and these are qualities I really admire. For a moment, I was about to say that they're qualities a person can't have too much of, but that wouldn't be exactly correct. There are times when we can be more loyal to someone or something than necessary, and then loyalty becomes a fault."

"Are truthfulness and honesty like loyalty?" Lisa asked.

"How's that?" Mr. Partridge inquired.

"I mean, are they all qualities we shouldn't have too much of?" 1

Mr. Partridge laughed. "Well, now, I didn't come here to discuss morality with you, and I'm sure you and I would only bore the rest of the class here if we got into a long discussion of right and wrong. No, I've something to talk to you about that I think you'll find much more interesting. I'm talking to each of the classes in the school, by the way."

The students looked expectantly at Mr. Partridge.

"What I've come to talk to you about," he continued, "is that there's a controversy going on in the school, and it's come to my attention. As you know, the editors of the yearbook send a questionnaire around to all the students every year, asking who they think is the boy most likely to succeed, and the prettiest 2 girl, and all that sort of thing. Well, now, there's been some criticism of the idea of having such a survey, and I thought I'd like to get your opinion on it."

Fran spoke up first. "Mr. Partridge, where did the idea originally come from to have students grade each other?"

Mr. Partridge smiled. "Why, I don't really know, but I've been told that it's something kids just naturally like to do. And the yearbook editors tell me that it's the most popular part of the yearbook."

"Well," Fran responded, "I think if grown-ups weren't always trying to grade us, we wouldn't think of doing it to one another."

Lisa's hand went up, and she was called on next. "Did you say, 'best looking 3 boy, and girl most likely to succeed'?"

"No," Mr. Partridge chuckled, "we run beauty contests for girls, not for boys." Then he added hastily. "That's not my doing, of course. It's just something that's always been done, and it's organized by the students themselves."

"Why's that?" Lisa wanted to know, keeping her voice as steady as she could.

"Well, let me say—since this is a History class—that it's mainly a matter of history. People used to think that, since men have the greatest responsibilities in running the world, that they're the ones who have to be the most intelligent, and they're the ones who have to succeed. On the other hand, beauty in women has been cherished as one of the highest ideals of mankind. Think of how many men died for Helen of Troy!"

"Mr. Partridge, I know if I come out against beauty contests, there'll be kids who'll say, 'That's just sour grapes, because she knows she could never win one.' And there'll be other kids who'll say, 'Next thing you'll want to do is stop all
1 kinds of contests, including sports contests.' But I'm not saying anything of the kind."

"So what *are* you saying, Lisa?" Tony demanded. "Shouldn't we be graded in subjects like Math and English?"

Lisa stared at Tony for a moment without speaking. Then she turned back to Mr. Partridge. "It seems to me that each of us thinks differently. Each mind works in its own way. And each face is beautiful in its own way; it doesn't matter whether it's a boy's or a girl's. But when you put your finger on just one kind of intelligence, and you say, 'This is what it is to be smart,' then you make the rest of us feel like dummies. And when you put your finger on just one kind of beauty,
2 you make the rest of us feel like there's something wrong with us."

"How do the rest of you feel about this?" Mr. Partridge asked, turning to the others in the class.

"Lisa's right," said Harry.

"Yeah," Mark agreed. "She's right."

Then Tony said, "Look, I couldn't care less about those yearbook contests. But just the same, there are lots of places where you've got to have rules and standards."

"That's right!" said Mr. Partridge. "In fact, I agree with just about everything that's been said here. Our main purpose here in the school is to help you get an
3 education. Now, what I want to know is, will this contest that the editors of the yearbook want to run again this year—will it help everyone get an education or not? I'm asking you students because it's your school, and it's your contest."

Luther got to his feet. He'd grown so fast in the past few months that he was now almost a head taller than anyone in the class. "Mr. Partridge," he began, "that contest doesn't mean anything to me. I don't think it means much to

anybody. Sure, you could get rid of it—but then the students will have just a little less say in this school than they had before." Luther wanted to say something more, but he couldn't put it into words. After a moment or two longer on his feet, he slumped slowly back into his seat.

"Hey," exclaimed Mark, "Luther's right! It's not a question of whether to have the contest or not. The question is what we should replace it with!"

"Right," said Fran. "Let's do something in the school that makes a difference. Let's have something where our votes will really count."

There was a silence. Then Mr. Partridge said, "Let me think about these things. I'll be getting back to you, I promise. Maybe we can work something out." 1
With that, he left.

Mickey grinned at Luther. "I nominate Warfield to be Secretary of Defense."

Luther laughed and countered with "I nominate Minkowski to be Secretary of the Treasury."

"I accept." Mickey clasped both hands above his head. "I accept. I accept."

Harry was watching the two of them cutting up, when Tony came over to him. "You know what this means, don't you?" he demanded.

"Why, what's it mean?" Harry asked.

"It means we've just about cooked Mr. Spence's goose, that's what it means," Tony replied grimly. "Before, he was just going to get fired. But now he'll get 2
fired with student assistance."

Harry shook his head unbelievingly. "Either that—" he remarked, "or Mr. Partridge means what he says."

CHAPTER TWELVE

"Mr. Spence," said Harry, the moment the teacher strode into the room, "we've got a problem. We'd like to talk to Heather about it. Will she be coming back soon?"

"Well, if she does," remarked Mr. Spence, "it won't be for another month. But chances are she won't get down here at all, because I've been thinking of doing some work at the University over the holidays."

"Gee," said Tony, "what are we going to do, Mr. Spence? We don't know where to go next." And he proceeded to tell Mr. Spence how they'd come to the conclusion that the arrangements they'd worked out for proving beliefs weren't
1 much good, because you could use them to prove any kind of belief at all, and they'd hoped that the arrangements they'd figured out would only work with *true* beliefs.

"You know what?" said Mr. Spence. "Let me see if I can't help you with this. At least I could try."

"Hey, that'd be keen!" exclaimed Fran. "Where do we start?"

"Well, you remember my telling you that 'you can only get as much out of a thing as you put into it'?"

"Sure," Mickey replied, "and I remember what happened too when we started talking about it."

2 "What happened?" Suki asked. "I must not have been there that day."

"Oh, Mr. Spence, he was trying to get us to spend a little more time on our homework, so he said, 'you only get as much out of a thing as you put into it,'" Mickey related with a grin. "Anyhow, we asked him what that meant, and he told us. Then Lisa said when her mother bakes a cake, she puts together a lot of ingredients that don't taste like cake at all, or look like cake, or smell like cake, and what she takes out of the oven is something altogether different. So Lisa said, 'it's not true that what you get out of something is just what you put into it.' And Anne said that when she paints a picture, she just puts some messy old oils on the canvas and suddenly a picture shows up, so that's getting more out of it
3 than she put into it."

"Well," Randy put in, "couldn't there be times when you put a lot more into something than you got out of it?"

"Like what?" a number of students asked.

"Like in science class the other day. I took a liter of water and a liter of alcohol, and I put them together in a big bottle and shook them up, and y'know what? I didn't get two liters of liquid! I got less than two."

Maria's eyes grew large: "You didn't? How come?"

"Alcohol's what's called a 'miscible' liquid. Its molecules combine with water molecules and they interpenetrate, so you get less volume when you combine them than the two volumes you started with."

"Hey, that's great!" said Tony. "I never knew that!"

"Mr. Spence," said Lisa, "how do you feel when everybody jumps on what you start to say, and everybody just tears it all to pieces like that?" 1

"Why," Mr. Spence responded with a slow smile, "I feel perfectly miscible. But now, as I was saying, before I was so informatively interrupted by you assorted hecklers, kibitzers and low-grade geniuses, you want your reasoning arrangements to work only with true beliefs. But it seems to me that the beliefs you hold are only as strong as the reasons that support them. So if the reasons you use aren't good reasons, then they aren't going to support your beliefs."

"I don't yet see what you're getting at," said Mark.

"I do," declared Lisa. "It's what I was saying the other day. People wouldn't be able to prove false beliefs, if only they started from true premises and if they used only the two arrangements which we worked out, Barbara Ann and Heather Ann. So it all boils down now to seeing to it that the premises *are* true. By the way," Lisa turned to Tony and Harry, "did you ever figure out a case where the premises were true and the conclusion was false?" 2

Harry and Tony looked at her a bit sheepishly. "Nope," said Harry, "we worked on it one whole evening and finally gave up."

Lisa turned to Mr. Spence and said, "See what I mean? What we've got to do now is figure out what makes sentences true, and we've got the whole thing solved."

"Nothing to it," Sandy put in sarcastically. "All we gotta do is figure out what makes sentences true. Oh, boy!" 3

Lisa turned to Mr. Spence. "Am I right, Mr. Spence. Isn't that all we have to do?"

Mr. Spence looked at Lisa, then at Sandy, then at Lisa again. "Sure, you're right," he said softly. "But Sandy's got a point. It's not going to be easy."

Suddenly Lisa remembered something. It was her father once saying to her, "Nothing good comes easily, Lisa. But maybe that's why what's difficult is so often a challenge." She sat with her eyes shut tight, trying to visualize him as he was when he said it. But the image faded away, and she was left only with the memory of her own determination never to shrink from the challenge of the difficult. When she opened her eyes again, her friends were discussing what to do.

"My guess," declared Tony, "is that you should be able to tell when a sentence is true just by looking at it. Of course, you may not be able to see it right away. But
1 once you understand a sentence clearly, you should be able to tell whether or not it's true. For instance, suppose somebody says to me that $64 \times 4 = 256$. For a moment, I won't know whether he's right or wrong. But then I see that the product of the first two numbers is exactly 256, so $256 = 256$. By that time, I can see it clearly, and I know it's true."

"Aw, come on, Tony," said Harry, "that's only in arithmetic. There are lots of other sentences that aren't like arithmetic at all. Am I right, Mr. Spence?"

"Yes, Harry, you're correct. Tony, do you really think that understanding a sentence clearly is enough for you to be able to tell whether it's true or not?"

"Yup," said Tony with the scowl which he frequently wore when he felt he had
2 to stick firmly to his opinions. "Can anybody tell me what other ways there are of telling whether or not a sentence is true?"

"Wait a minute," said Millie. "Maybe we're going about this wrong. Maybe we should just worry about picking out which sentences are false, and afterwards, we can just figure that the ones left over are true."

"So how do we tell when they're false?" asked Tony, somewhat sarcastically.

"I don't know," Millie answered.

"I know," volunteered Bill. "I once heard there's this book that was written by the Devil, and everything in it is false, so that's a way. If we had that book, we could tell what those false sentences are."

3 "I got one question," said Harry. "How do you know the book was written by the Devil?"

"Because it said so right in the book," Bill answered.

"But if everything in the book was false, then wasn't that false too?" Even Bill began to laugh when he saw the point of Harry's question.

Now Luther broke in. "Look," he insisted, I agree with all of you that our

beliefs have to be true. The only point I want to make is that the only people who can say what's true are those who already believe."

"You're crazy," said Fran. "Go soak your head in a bucket."

"You're going round in circles," said Harry.

"Hey, Luther," Mickey called out, "I withdraw my nomination of you to be Secretary of Defense. With a corny idea like that, you ought to be Secretary of Agriculture."

Luther smiled good-naturedly at the furor his suggestion caused. To everyone's surprise, Lisa came to his support. "Look," she explained, "I'm not saying I agree with him. As a matter of fact, I think I disagree. But if we still don't know how to tell true sentences from false ones, how do we know that what Luther says is false?" 1

Tony was quick to answer. "One way to tell a false sentence is to see whether it contradicts itself. Like if I say that 'Fire engines aren't fire engines,' or 'No cats are cats,' I'm contradicting myself, and sentences like that *have* to be false."

Lisa wrinkled her nose as if it itched, then rubbed it vigorously with her hand. "But I don't think what you say applies to what Luther said. I'm not sure. Maybe it does and maybe it doesn't. All I know is, isn't it possible that my believing something might make it possible for me to know something that people who don't believe don't know?" Lisa looked around, and saw that the other students were still puzzled. So she added, "What I mean is, sometimes I have to believe something in order for it to be true. Like when I take a math test. If I believe I'm going to fail, then I *do* fail, but if I believe I'll pass then I pass." 2

Luther laughed. "That's funny. I always seem to do better in classes with teachers who think I can make it than with teachers who think I can't. So it's not what *I* believe that makes it come true, but what *they* believe."

Then Maria suggested, "Maybe the way to tell what's true is to get hold of the right authorities and listen to them. We can then be sure that whatever they say is true. For example, when it came to mathematics, we could consult a mathematician. Or when it came to the stars, we could ask an astronomer. Or if it had to do with law, we could ask the Supreme Court." 3

"That makes sense," said Timmie.

"Sure it does," responded Harry. "But a mathematician may not know anything about the law. So you'd better be sure to consult the judge just about the law, and the mathematician just about mathematics."

"Yeah, and remember," added Tony, "not all authorities are equally good. F'rinstance, some judges are more expert about the law than others."

Then Mark said he had an answer to the question of deciding which sentences were true. "It's simple. Seeing's believing." Then he added quickly, "Of course, I don't mean just seeing. I mean that what's true is what we can see and hear and taste and touch."

"We smell too," volunteered Harry.

"Speak for yourself, Stottlemeier," Mickey remarked drily.

•••

1 "Grandfather," Millie blurted out, without any preliminaries, "am I dumb?"

"Are you what?"

"Dumb. Stupid."

"What makes you ask?"

"This afternoon, after school, out on the playground—a couple of kids called me dumb."

"Was there something you'd been doing to make them say that?"

"All I did was try to walk across the field while they were practicing football. They weren't even playing a game—they were just practicing. I got in their way a little bit, maybe, but that was no reason to call me dumb."

2 "I suppose that was the first word that came to their minds. Instead of them saying to you, 'Hey, Millie, boy are you dumb,' can you imagine them saying 'Hey, Millie, boy are you inconsiderate'? Or perhaps, 'Oh, Millie, that's so thoughtless of you!'"

Millie had to laugh, in spite of herself. "I'm really not mad at them. They're just boys."

"Just boys," echoed her grandfather.

"They tease me all the time."

"If they spend that much time on you, they must find you very interesting."

"I wish I had a real sharp tongue, like Jane. But I can never think of anything

3 to say."

"Sometimes it's best just to say nothing."

"I *know* that, but which times are which? Lots of times I open my mouth when I should have kept it shut, and other times I don't say anything when I should have spoken up."

"You'll learn in time what to do when."

"Sure, and by then I'll be known as 'Stupid With a Capital S.' I'll even have to wear a big letter 'S' on my sweater." Millie thought of the new guinea pig which her grandfather had bought her. "At least Pedro doesn't think I'm stupid," she laughed.

"That's because he knows you better than those boys do," her grandfather answered. Then he added, "He also knows how carefully you look after him, and how much you love him. Animals can often tell, you know—they're like children in that respect."

Millie ran to get Pedro, and came back with him cradled in her arms. Then another thought occurred to her. "Grandfather, am I inferior?" 1

"Absolutely. There are people in the world who can wrestle better than you, and people who can fly airplanes better than you, and there are even people who can swim underwater better than you. So I believe you're definitely inferior."

Millie laughed. "No, stop teasing me. I mean, am I inferior to the other kids in my class? Some of them try to make me think I am. I know my grades aren't too good, but does that make me inferior?"

"Millie," said her grandfather, "suppose one kid's good in arithmetic, and another's good in taking care of animals, and another's good in singing, and another's a good dancer, and another's good in history, and another's a good skater, and so on—would you say that any one of those kids is inferior?" 2

"I see what you mean." Millie pondered her grandfather's remarks. "But what if you weren't any good in a lot of things, and only good in a few? And what if the things you weren't good in were just the things that the school was always testing you on? Wouldn't that make you inferior?"

"Millie, there are ever so many things in which a person might be strong or weak—they're just countless. But of course there's always someone who insists that the real test of what makes people better or worse is just that one thing *he* happens to be good in. When I was in Alaska, I had a reputation in the wildlife service for being the best one around in spotting birds' nests. But I never figured, from that, that everybody else was inferior to me simply as human beings." 3

"But I'm hardly good at *anything*!" Millie wailed.

Her grandfather smiled. "What's that you have around your neck?"

Millie pouted. "Just a cheap piece of costume jewelry."

"But it's a necklace isn't it? A chain necklace?"

"Yes. So what?"

"And each link is a little circle of wire?"

"Yes."

"What would it take to break the chain?"

"Oh, not much. If I were just to pull on it the least little bit, one of the links would open up and the chain would break. Oh, I see what you're getting at—you're going to tell me that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link."

"Yes I was, but you beat me to it. Now—what's the difference between a chain and a cable?"

"Well, they're both made of little lengths of wire. But the wires in the chain are
1 all in separate loops that are linked together, while in a cable they're called 'strands,' and they're woven together."

"And is a cable no stronger than its weakest strand?"

"No. If a link in a chain breaks, the whole chain breaks. But if a strand in a cable breaks, the cable is only just an eentsy bit weaker."

Her grandfather was quite amused. "So isn't it possible that one person, with lots and lots of strengths, could have a very serious weakness, while another person, although rather average in lots of ways, could put these average strengths together, like the strands in a cable, in a way that would make him very, very strong?"

2 Millie sighed. "Grandfather, I wish I could believe you."

"Go ahead. Doesn't cost anything."

"My father and my mother don't say this sort of thing to me. Most of the time they act like I don't exist. I ask them things and they don't answer. Or else they tell me what my question is before I ask it. They never take me seriously. It's like I didn't count, like I'm not really a person. How can I take myself seriously when they don't take me seriously?"

She had her face down now, but he tipped her chin up so that she looked at him. "They're inconsiderate sometimes. Maybe often. It's like you when you walked across the ballfield without thinking. When they talk like that—thought-
3 lessly—it's very unfair to you. But I doubt they mean it, any more than you meant what you did."

"But they're supposed to love me! If they don't love me, why don't they say so? They shouldn't pretend to! Maybe they never even wanted me!" Millie clung to her grandfather and wept, her face dug into the shoulder of his old, worn jacket, while he patted her back consolingly.

"Life is pretty crazy sometimes, I'm afraid," he said softly.

Millie made no response at first, but after a while she stopped sobbing, looked up at him and asked, "What's that mean?"

He shrugged. "Oh, nothing much, I guess. It's funny, though. I can remember when I was about your age. I had a funny idea. A real funny idea."

"What was it?"

"I thought I was crazy. Really. I thought I was absolutely, 100% crazy, while all the people around me were just as sound and right as dollar bills."

"No kidding? You? You once thought you were crazy? What happened?"

"Oh, it took me a long time to get over that feeling. I gradually learned that I really wasn't any crazier than anyone else. Maybe not any more sane, but not more crazy either. I began to see that the world we live in is—well, in some ways, it's a crazy sort of world, but it gives us the impression that *we're* the ones who're out of whack, not it." 1

"That's funny," said Millie. "Just today, in science class, we were studying Copernicus. How he showed that, even though it looks like the sun goes round us, it's really the other way 'round—we go 'round the sun yet people called Copernicus crazy. So it could be that the *world's* really screwy and not us.

"Right," added her grandfather. "And among people who care nothing about human beings, you might come to consider that *you're* the one who's worthless or stupid or inferior." 2

"Hey, Copernicus," said Millie, with her high-pitched little laugh, "wait for me!"

•••

Harry and Mark were throwing a frisbee back and forth in front of Harry's house when Millie and her grandfather walked by. Millie's grandfather liked to walk for exercise, and Millie enjoyed going along with him. Mark kept trying to make the frisbee sail back towards him, like a boomerang, but he wasn't succeeding. "Do you know how to make it do that, Mr. Warshaw?" he asked. 3

"I'm afraid not," Millie's grandfather said with amusement. "When I was your age, we didn't have frisbees, so I never learned to throw them. But I know something about boomerangs." And he told them about how he learned about boomerangs while doing some field work in Australia.

"Boy," exclaimed Harry, "I wish we had one here so you could show us how

they work."

"That's not hard to arrange," Millie's grandfather replied, and he asked Millie to run back and get the boomerang he kept on the mantel of the fireplace. In a few minutes Millie returned, and the boys studied it with fascination.

"I can't throw it as well as I used to," said Millie's grandfather, "but I can give you some idea of how it goes," and he proceeded to give them a demonstration of the different ways of throwing a boomerang.

Afterwards Harry couldn't help saying how much he wished he had a boomerang like that.

1 "Well," came the answer, "I wish I could give you this one, but it's the sort of souvenir I don't like to give up. It was a gift to me from an Australian. But you know, you can make one yourself. It doesn't have to be as elegant as this one. All you have to do is take two light, flat pieces of wood about a foot long and nail them together in the center so that they form a cross. You'll find that, if you throw it hard, it'll sail away, go up, and land right back at your feet."

It sounded like such an interesting idea that, as soon as Millie and her grandfather had walked on, Harry and Mark went into the basement of Harry's house to see if they could find a couple of pieces of wood to nail together. In time they found some rather dirty pieces of lath which the plasterer had thrown away

2 when he had replastered the kitchen. Harry located some lath nails and nailed the boards together in the center. In his haste, he neglected to examine the boards very closely. He failed to notice a rusty lath nail protruding from the end of one of the pieces of wood.

Harry wanted to be the first to try out the boomerang, so he raced out to the street, looked to make sure no cars were coming, and threw the boomerang as hard as he could. It sailed back perfectly to him, but at the same time he threw it, he felt a sharp pain in his finger. He looked down and discovered the rusty nail had gone right through the flesh of his index finger, between the first and second knuckles, and had come out the other side. He was so surprised that he ran into

3 the house, with the pain beginning to mount and (although he didn't understand that this was happening) with shock beginning to set in. Harry wasn't thinking: he just knew he wanted to crawl in somewhere, some protected place where he could be alone with his wound. He went to his room and crawled under his bed, curled himself in a ball, and tried not to think about his throbbing finger.

Finally his mother came and coaxed him out. She told him he had to go to the

doctor immediately. He had blacked out for a while under the bed, but now he could see again, and he was willing to go. But he didn't want Mark to see him with his face red and swollen from crying, so his mother sent Mark away before Harry came downstairs.

The doctor gave Harry a local anaesthetic, pulled the nail out with a pliers (no easy task), and gave him a tetanus shot in the backside.

The next day, Harry came to school sporting a great bandage on his finger. Lisa asked him how it happened, and when he told her, almost boasting, about how it happened, she couldn't keep from saying, "Oh, Harry," and touched his arm momentarily with her hand. Mark, who was with Harry at the moment, 1
corroborating his story, said nothing.

Later that afternoon, in a pickup game of touch football, Mark found himself running down the field, and a long pass was thrown in his direction. He was moving towards the sidelines now, where there was a small crowd of spectators, both boys and girls, all clustered together. The ball was thrown high, and Mark leaped as high as he could, whirling about at the same time. He could see the ball coming towards him, and he could see the faces of the spectators, but something was definitely odd. Although the spectators were evenly spaced, one girl's face seemed to be isolated among all the rest. It was as if all the others formed a ring around her—yet he knew that his imagination must have been playing tricks on 2
him. Then he saw that the girl was Lisa, and at that moment the ball sailed through his outstretched hands, bounced embarrassingly off his chest, and rolled into the crowd. It was an incident which haunted him for days afterwards.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

"Harry," whispered Millie across the library table, "do you have grandparents?"

Harry shook his head.

"But you have a cat, don't you?" Millie asked, ignoring Tony, who was sitting next to Harry, and was now looking up from his book scowling at her.

Harry looked apologetically at Tony, then motioned to Millie to come out in the hall, where he acknowledged that he had a cat named Mario. "Why do you want to know?" he asked.

Millie laughed lightly. "Oh, I just thought I'd ask. I don't know why. I have a
1 new guinea pig. His name's Pedro. And you know my grandfather. I love them both."

"You love them both?"

"Sure, why not?"

"I don't know. It just sounds a little funny to hear you say it like that."

"Oh," said Millie, "but there's a difference. You see, my grandfather and I are also friends."

"But you're not friends with Pedro?"

Millie giggled. "No, that's so silly, Harry. How can anyone be friends with a guinea pig? I just love him, that's all."

2 "We can't be friends with animals?"

"Of course not, silly! Animals aren't our equals, and we can only be friends with our equals. But we can love anything, no matter how great or how small!"

"But I still don't understand how you can be friends with your grandfather, if he's so much older than you."

"Oh, Harry, sometimes you act like you're so dense! Don't you see that, when people are friends, it doesn't matter how different they are in other respects, because as far as they're friends, they're equals? Why, when my grandfather and I talk, or play cards together, it's just like we're the same age."

Harry was silent.

3 "What's the matter?" Millie asked.

"I've got a cat, but I'm not sure I love it. I'm not sure I'm not friends with it."

"That's ridiculous, Harry. How can you say such a thing?"

Harry shrugged. Then he asked, "Is everyone your equal your friend?"

"Of course not. Lots of kids are my equal because they're the same age as me, or the same size as me, but they're not my friends. But once we're friends, we accept each other as equals."

"Ah," said Harry. "So being friends comes first. And once you're friends, it follows that you're equals."

"It's nice having friends."

"Sure, but as you just said, there are lots of people who aren't your friends. There are lots of people you know very little, or don't know at all."

"Well, Harry, it doesn't matter whether you like such people or don't like them. 1
It doesn't matter how you feel about them. Regardless of who they are, they've got to be treated fairly."

"That's right," Harry replied. "All kids should have the same chances, regardless of who they are."

"Oh, I just hate it when some kids in the class are given privileges that other kids don't get!"

"If everybody got them," Harry observed drily, "would they still be privileges?"

Millie didn't laugh. Instead she looked thoughtfully at Harry, and then remarked, "Let me see if I understand. First, there's getting along with people 2
regardless of differences."

Harry nodded. "That's where fairness comes in."

"And second, there's being friends—"

"—which automatically makes you equals. Is there anything that comes third?"

"Oh, Harry, of course! It's what we were talking about, where each person recognizes what's special about each other person. In fact, it's where each person recognizes what's special about everything. That's why I love Pedro—because he's so special. And that's why I love my grandfather—because he's something special too." 3

"I've never thought of things like that," Harry conceded.

"I wouldn't have either if you hadn't asked me like you did."

"See if I've got them straight. First is where we're fair to one another in spite of our differences. Second is where differences don't count. And third is where other people's differences are just what we like about them."

"You changed it some," Millie said, rather doubtfully.

"Sure," Harry agreed, "but as you say, among friends, differences don't count!"

•••

"Lisa!" Millie screamed across the playground. "C'mere." As Lisa walked up, Millie insisted that she "guess what's happened."

Lisa shrugged. "I give up," she said, not having even tried to guess.

Laura, with whom Millie had been talking, wrinkled her nose: "Oh, Millie, you make such a big fuss about every little thing!"

1 "It's not a little thing!" retorted Millie quickly. Then, turning back to Lisa, she announced, "My grandfather's got a job. But wait'll you hear about it. You know the new county zoo? Well, they were looking for a good field representative, whatever that is, and they said that my grandfather was just the person they were looking for, because he's had so much experience with animals all over the world!"

"Is he still going to live in your house?" Laura wanted to know.

"No, he's going to get a place of his own. I'm going to miss him, but I'm so glad for him. He's so excited—sometimes he's just like a big, overgrown kid. He and my father are so different—I always wonder how they could be even the least
2 bit related to one another."

"My sister in high school, she says all men are boys, and all boys are infants," said Laura.

Lisa laughed. "Does that mean all men are infants?"

"No, that's not it at all. She just means that they all act younger than they really are. And she oughta know, 'cause she only goes out with college guys. She says she won't have anything to do with the boys in her class." Laura changed her bracelets from one wrist to the other. "That doesn't mean that *I* wouldn't have anything to do with them."

"Oh," Millie exclaimed, "Laura, you don't mean that!"

3 "Who says I don't?" Laura tossed her head. "D'you think I'd have anything to do with the boys in this class? They're just children!"

"I thought you liked Tony," said Lisa, mildly.

"Tony Melillo?" Laura shrieked, "that creep?"

"'Scuse me, I'm sorry," Lisa laughed. "I guess all those notes you kept handing him under the desk during class last year were just to tell him how awful he was."

"Very funny," Laura replied with a sniff. "When you've been around as much as I have, you can talk. Look, I gotta go—my sister's bringing home her new boyfriend, and I'm dying to meet him."

"Don't steal him from her," Lisa called out as Laura walked quickly away.

A bit later Anne came by. "Hey," said Millie, "what d'*you* think of the boys in our class?"

"The boys in our class?" repeated Anne. "I don't think about them at all. Why should I?"

"But sometimes I see you sketching in class," objected Lisa, "and I notice you sometimes sketch boys, so you must think about them some." 1

Anne shook her head vigorously. "I just draw them. I don't think about them."

"Could I see some of your drawings of them?" Millie asked eagerly.

Anne was about to say no, then relented and said, "All right." She opened her briefcase and took out a small sketchpad, which she handed to Millie and Lisa. It had only a few sketches in it, but the girls recognized the subjects right away.

"You made Tony look too thin," said Lisa. "He's not that thin."

"But this one of Jill is nice," said Millie.

"Yes, isn't she pretty?" replied Anne.

"And this one of Mr. Spence is just great," exclaimed Millie, and Lisa agreed. "Do you have any more we could look at?" 2

"Well, okay," Anne allowed herself to be persuaded. She reached into her briefcase and took out another sketch pad.

"I hope you have one in there of Harry," said Millie.

"Why Harry?" asked Anne. "I don't think he has a particularly interesting face. If he did, I'd have drawn him."

"Oh, you're wrong!" Millie exclaimed. "He's very sweet, really. But he never notices anybody. At least, he never notices me."

"Harry!" said Anne, "Ugh!"

Lisa just laughed. But she looked through the sketchbook eagerly, and the girls noticed that she paused over the sketch of Mark. 3

"You kinda like him, don't you, Lisa," Millie inquired.

"I don't know," Lisa replied.

"He was fun to draw," said Anne. She pointed to various parts of the drawing: "Look at the way his eyebrows curve here. And the way this curl of hair reaches almost all the way down his forehead. And this line of his chin...." Lisa followed

every detail with fascination.

The girls were so absorbed that they didn't notice anyone approaching. The first thing they knew, Harry and Mark were standing there. Anne fumbled with the sketch book, trying to get it into her briefcase as quickly as possible.

To the girls' great relief, Mark and Harry had apparently not noticed what they were doing.

"I've got to run," said Anne. She turned to Millie and Lisa. "You guys want to walk back with me?"

"We're not guys," laughed Millie. "Okay, I'll walk partway back with you."

1 Lisa said nothing, so Anne and Millie started off. Then Millie called out, "Lisa, my grandfather's taking me to the school play next week. Are you going to be there?"

"I think so," Lisa called back.

"Will your mother come with you?"

"I don't know. Maybe."

Millie turned and went off with Anne. "What was *that* all about?" Lisa said, to no one in particular.

"Millie's really something," said Harry. "You wouldn't think it to look at her, but she is."

2 "Well *you* look more innocent than *you* are," Lisa said to Harry.

"Yeah, that's right, you do," Mark said to Harry.

As they continued talking, Harry became aware that Lisa spoke only to him, and Mark spoke only to him. They didn't seem able to talk to one another. Harry figured maybe he'd move along, but the others both protested, and told him to hang around for a while, it was still early. But Harry didn't feel comfortable, talking first to one and then to the other; finally he managed to get away. "Boy!" he said to himself, "what a drag!"

•••

"Dad."

3 "Son."

"Dad, cut it out, will you? I want to ask you something."

"You sure know how to surprise a fellow. Pretty soon you'll be telling me something else that's shocking, like that day follows night."

"Dad, do you have to?"

"What's your question?"

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"Well, we're trying to figure out what's true, and how to tell true sentences from false ones."

"Have you gotten anywhere?"

"No, not very far."

"Let me know if you find out anything."

"Dad, you're not much help."

"You haven't asked me anything yet."

"How do we know what's true?"

"Do you want the truth?"

"Of course."

"I don't know."

"That's just great. I thought I was supposed to ask my parents to explain to me about the difference between right and wrong!"

"You didn't ask me about the difference between right and wrong. You asked me about the difference between true and false."

"Well, they're connected. It's always right to say what's true, and it's always wrong to say what's false."

"See, Harry, you really know all the answers. I don't know why you bother to ask me anything."

"*That's* why I always have to ask questions! Because the moment I try saying anything, you make fun of me."

"I'm not making fun of you. I'm just trying to keep you on your toes."

"Okay, then, if you don't like the way I said it, let me put it in the form of a question. Is it ever right to lie?"

"If there are times when it's wrong to tell the truth, then there are times when it's right to lie."

"Dad! Cut the comics, will you?"

"Harry, you keep asking me these questions that look very simple on the surface, only they're not simple at all. A question from you is about as innocent as a razor blade. I'd have to be out of my head to try to give you a simple answer."

"Why can't you just say yes or no?"

"All right, if that's how you want it. But first, you answer a question for me. Am I intelligent?"

"I—"

"The truth now, Harry."

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"What I mean is—"

"Sure, what you mean is, in some ways you think I am, and in some ways you think I'm not, right?"

"You don't want to wait for my answer."

"I don't need to wait. I've made my point."

"Which is what?"

"Which is that when you ask me a question, you want an immediate, yes-or-no answer, but when I ask you the same kind of question, you want to be able to hem and haw for a while."

1 "Dad."

"I'm right here."

"Okay, now look, what you seem to be saying is that the question about telling the truth is different from the question about what the truth is. You also seem to be saying that each of those questions is more complicated than it looks, right?"

"Right."

"Well, let's take one of them—telling the truth. Can you explain to me why it's so complicated you can't give me a simple answer?"

"Do you remember that Norwegian fairy tale I used to read to you about the giant with two extra heads, one under each arm?"

2 "Sure."

"Well, suppose now that I asked you if he was handsome. What would you say?"

"I couldn't answer you by looking at just one of his heads. I'd have to see all three, and see how they looked together."

"All right; isn't it possible that your question likewise has two hidden heads in addition to the one that's visible?"

"Yes, but I'm not following you."

"Let's say the obvious, visible head is whether the thing you say is true or false. Let's say one concealed head is what you're trying to do by saying it. And

3 let's say the other concealed head is whether what you say is hurtful to anyone. Now, as you put it before, you might want to look at all three heads, and how they're related, before you conclude whether or not it's right to say something."

"So when would it be wrong—always wrong—to lie? How could I be sure it was the wrong thing to do?"

"I don't know about absolutely sure, but I think you could be pretty sure if you

knew that what you said was false, that you meant it to hurt someone, and that saying it actually would do more harm than good."

"Those are the three heads of the giant?"

"Right. Those are the three heads of the giant. But I want to warn you, it's very seldom you find all three heads, and if you can see only one or two of his heads, you just have to guess."

"Dad, can you explain to me better what happens when you just see a couple of the heads, instead of all three?"

"Sure, but you'll have to put up with my telling you a story. Think you can bear it?" 1

"I'll try. Heck, I'll try anything."

"All right. Now, this is a sort of personal recollection ..."

"You mean it's true?"

"What'd I tell you about asking questions like that?"

"Okay, I'll shut up. Tell it to me—just the way you remember it."

"When I was a kid, much younger than you, my mother decided I should have a birthday party, and she decided I should invite all the members of my class. So she told me to write everyone invitations, telling them to come to my party on the night of the 14th.

"Now first I wrote to Kenny. But I didn't like Kenny, and wanted to hurt him. 2 So I deliberately told him to come on the 16th. But somehow he found out the party was really on the 14th, which is when he showed up, and he had a wonderful time."

Harry looked up alertly: "Aha—you lied, and your intention was malicious, but no great harm was done."

"Right. Next I wrote to Sally, whom I couldn't stand. I told her to come on the 14th, and that I thought her loathsome."

"So," interrupted Harry, "what you said was true, but you intended to hurt her."

"And I did. I next invited my friend Sam, who was not a member of our class. I 3 wrote him that my mother wanted him to come, which wasn't true at all. But I didn't mean any harm. And Sam came, and had a great time."

"Were there any more?"

"I'll just mention one—Linda. I was very fond of Linda. But by mistake, I invited her for the 16th. So she missed the party, and was very hurt."

"False, harmful, but not malicious," said Harry.
"I could go on and on."
"Please don't. My head's spinning already."
"Well, you wanted it straight."
"Right," said Harry grimly, "I wouldn't have it any other way."

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

"Hey, Harry," Timmy called out, "how'd you like to come to a stamp club meeting with me?"

Harry was at the point of saying no, but it occurred to him that he had nothing particular to do, and besides, he didn't want to hurt Timmy's feelings, so he agreed to go along.

Not being a collector, Harry didn't find it too exciting. But he enjoyed watching Timmy.

One girl said, "I'll swap you this New Caledonia for that Luxembourg of yours."

"You've got to be kidding," Timmy replied. "The Luxembourg's worth twice what the New Caledonia is worth. How about throwing in the Albanian commemorative that you've got in the packet there?" 1

The girl agreed, and the two-for-one swap was concluded.

"Fair exchange," Timmy commented.

After the meeting, Timmy and Harry drifted down the street, until they came to Corwin's Drug Store. .

"Hey, how about stopping in here? I'd like a cone," Timmy suggested.

"Fine with me," Harry agreed.

"Wait a minute, though," said Timmy, with a worried look, while rummaging through his pockets. "I don't have a cent with me." 2

"S'okay," Harry assured him. "I did some baby-sitting at our neighbor's last night, so I'll pay for it."

"I'll pay you back!"

"S'okay," Harry replied, "next time you can buy me one."

"Fair enough," said Timmy. "Even swap. Like my grandmother says, 'turn about's fair play.'"

As they started out the drugstore, they passed some boys they knew sitting in a booth sipping cokes. One boy put out his foot and Timmy tripped over it, although he didn't fall. He turned quickly and knocked the boy's books off the table, then raced from the store, with Harry not far behind him. 3

"I couldn't let him get away with it," Timmy remarked, when they saw that they were not being pursued, and could slow down to a walk. "He didn't *have* to

stick his foot out." Then he added, "Of course, I didn't have to do what I did either. But like I said before, 'turn about's fair play.'"

Somehow, Harry thought, it isn't quite the same thing. But he couldn't figure out why. "I dunno," he said finally to Timmy. "The purpose of your stamp club is to exchange stamps. So when you give someone stamps, you're supposed to get some back. Just like if someone lends me some money, I'm supposed to give it back. But if someone pulls a dirty trick on you, should you do the same thing to him? I'm not so sure."

"But I *had* to get even," Timmy protested. "I couldn't let them get away with
1 it—tripping me like that for no reason."

A bit later they met Lisa and Laura. Harry told the girls what had happened, and why he was puzzled.

"It reminds me," remarked Lisa, "of last year when we were learning about how some sentences could be turned around and would stay true, while others, when you turned them around, would become false."

"Yeah," Harry agreed, "but there we found a rule. What's the rule here?"

Lisa tossed her long hair so that it hung over her right shoulder. "It looks like there are times when it's right to give back for what we got, and other times when it's wrong. But how do we tell which is which?"

2 After a moment in which no one had anything to say, Laura decided she'd better get on home, and with that the group broke up.

•••

After dinner that evening, Laura returned to the bedroom which she shared with her sister Mary. She found Mary putting on make-up before the mirror.

"Going out tonight, Mary?"

"Yeah, got a date with Gene."

"Where's he taking you?"

"To a movie."

"He's cool."

"He's okay. I just wish he didn't have such a wonderful opinion of himself."

3 The doorbell rang. Mary said, "Tell him I'll be right down, Laura."

"Sure, Mary," said Laura. But she brushed her hair carefully before she went to open the door and let Gene in.

It must have been midnight when Mary returned. Laura was sound asleep, but she awoke when Mary put the light on and slammed her handbag hard against the back of the chair.

"That you?" Laura asked sleepily.

"Who else?" Mary's voice was hard, and Laura could tell she was furious.

"What happened?"

"That Gene."

"But what?" Laura was still bewildered. "What'd he do?"

"It wasn't what he did. It was what he wanted. Just because he took me to a movie, he said he was entitled to something in return."

"But what'd he want?"

Mary's eyes narrowed, and she hesitated before answering Laura. Then she said lightly, "Oh, he just wanted to make out a little." 1

Laura brightened. "Oh," she laughed, "but you don't mind *that*, do you?"

"That's not the point!" Mary returned, her voice shaking. "It's what he thought he was *entitled* to! When you give something, you're not entitled to *anything* in return!"

"But people exchange gifts!"

"That's what they say—but I don't believe it! Just because he took me to a movie, I'm not obliged to give him affection. If I wanted to, that'd be something different—I'd give it to him whether he did anything for me or not. But one thing has nothing to do with the other!"

It was a long while before Laura got to sleep again that night. The next day she 2 related the incident to Lisa and Harry. "It's funny," she observed. "It's just like what we were talking about. Harry was wondering whether it's right to do something bad to someone who does something *bad* to you. And then there was Mary telling me that if someone does something *nice* to you, he has no right to expect you to do something nice for him in return!"

"Harry," said Lisa, "you remember last year, when we were talking about relationships that could be reversed?"

"Sure," Harry replied, "like 'Timmy is the same height as Randy' can be reversed, but 'Luther is taller than Timmy' can't be reversed."

Lisa grinned. "Right, but remember, there was that third type, where it doesn't 3 follow one way or another?"

"Yeah, it had to do with feelings. If Jane likes Anne, it doesn't follow that Anne likes Jane, and it doesn't follow that she doesn't."

"Okay," Lisa responded excitedly, "so wouldn't this be the same thing? Some things we do are exchanges and other things we do aren't?"

Harry and Laura looked at each other. Laura said, "So you should do nice things to people because you want to, and not because you want something from them in return?"

And Harry asked, "And when people do bad things to you, you don't have to do the same things back to them?"

"I guess that's it," Lisa answered, her gray eyes twinkling. "Exchanging is fine if you're stamp collecting or dealing with money. You know, 'I'll scratch your back if you scratch mine.' But I guess there are lots of other times when it doesn't work that way."

1 Laura sighed. "Poor Gene. How was he to know? He probably didn't think of it as trying to buy my sister's affection. He was just trying to play the game."

"Maybe he could ask the theatre for a refund," Lisa suggested.

•••

Suki looked into Kio's room. "What's the matter, Kio, can't you sleep?"

"I'm okay. I'm thinking."

Suki came in and sat down on the side of his bed. "What are you thinking about?"

"My thong."

"What song?"

2 "The one I thing to mythelf."

"You sing a song to yourself? I never hear you."

"I hum it."

"But when?"

"When I'm doing to sleep."

"Ah, when you're going to sleep. So that's why I haven't heard it. You must hum very quietly."

"Yeth," Kio smiled.

"Kio."

'Mmmm."

3 "What's your song? I mean, how does it go? Do you know the words?"

"I don't know the words. All I know is, it was what Mamma thang to me."

"Kio! You remember her singing to you?"

"Yeth."

"How did it go? Can you hum it for me?"

Kio nodded and hummed the song all the way through. When he'd finished,

Suki exclaimed, "Kio, that was the same song she used to sing to me! I never thought—"

Kio interrupted her: "You know it?"

"You mean, do I know the words?" Suki laughed. "Sure. They're kind of nice," and she sang the song to him. Kio followed Suki's singing happily, as every word came back to him afresh. He asked her to go over the song with him until he was sure he had all the words right.

A few minutes later, the door opened a bit more, and Mr. Tong came in. He smiled at Kio. "Suki telling you a bedtime story?" he asked gently.

"No," Kio answered. Then he made a place on the edge of the bed for his father 1
to si* down, and said, "Thuki and me, we want to thing you thomething."

"Go ahead. I'm listening."

They sang the song through without a mistake:

T'is the gift to be simple
T'is the gift to be free
T'is the gift to come down
    where we ought to be
And when we are in the place just right
We'll be in the valley of love and delight. 2

When true simplicity is gained
To bow and to bend we will not be ashamed
To turn, to turn, t'will be our delight
Till by turning, turning, we come 'round right.

Mr. Tong put his arms around them and hugged them tight, and told them how much he liked their song. Looking at his face, Suki saw tears brimming his eyes.

•••

It was the day before the class field trip. Every year the class would go to a 3
place of historical interest, and this year they had chosen to go to the old mansion in which several governors had made their home a century before. It was now part of a state park.

Most exciting was the expectation of travelling up to the mansion by river-boat. To Maria, it promised to be the most thrilling feature of the whole outing.

She and Millie were so immersed in their discussion of what they would wear and what sort of sandwiches they would take along that they couldn't stop talking when Mr. Spence rapped lightly on his desk.

Mr. Spence observed Maria and Millie with amusement, as they struggled to bring themselves to attention. Finally he remarked, "I know you want to talk some more about what makes sentences true. But if you don't mind, there's something I'd like to tell you first. I think you've a right to know."

Mark, like many others in the class, felt a pang of apprehension. "He's going to tell us he's been fired," he thought.

1 "All of you know," Mr. Spence continued, "that there was some discussion about the way school policies were being carried out this year, and I'm aware that some of you were concerned about my own future here as a result. However, I can now tell you that it was pretty much a tempest in a teapot, and everyone involved has agreed to forget it."

"Then you're staying?" Mark asked with relief.

"No, not exactly. I've been offered a position as assistant principal in one of the other schools in town, and I'm taking it. So I won't be here next year."

There was a buzz of excited conversation, which Mr. Spence permitted for a few moments. Then he said, "C'mon, let's get back to the question of what makes

2 sentences true."

"Mr. Spence," Harry complained, "we just keep stumbling around. Ever since Barbara Ann and Heather Ann were discovered, we haven't figured out a darn thing."

"There've been a lot of interesting suggestions," countered Mr. Spence, "like the ones the other day from Tony and Mark and Luther."

"They didn't make any sense to me," Harry grumbled. "Take Tony's idea that there are certain sentences he can just look at and tell they're true. Mr. Spence, that only works with numbers, so what good is it? Sure, I can look at '2 + 2 = 4' and tell it's true, but can anyone look at the sentence 'Columbus discovered America'

3 and say whether or not it's true?"

An argument immediately broke out as to who really did discover America, with the final comments coming from Fran, who said that the Indians were there before the Europeans arrived, and from Tony, who asked who the Indians found in North America when they themselves arrived there from Asia. Mr. Spence finally quieted everyone down, and asked Harry if he'd finished with his

comments.

"No, I haven't," Harry replied. "Because I just want to say that I can't agree with Mark that 'seeing is believing.' Like, we see the sun go across the sky, but that doesn't mean that the sentence 'The sun revolves around the earth' is true. Or, if I were to put a pencil in a glass of water, it would look broken, right? So what should I say, 'This is a broken pencil' just because it looks *broken*? As for what Luther's been saying around here, that if you want to know what's true, you've got to ask the people who already believe, I don't know what in the world he's getting at."

Luther shrugged, but made no comment, and Mark didn't argue with Harry either. 1

"What about the rest of you?" asked Mr. Spence.

There was a buzz of conversation. Some students agreed with Harry, while some claimed that he was "all wet."

Mr. Spence held up both hands for quiet. When everyone had simmered down, and there was silence in the room at last, Mickey yelled out, "Everybody shut up! Don't anyone say another word!"

"Another word," said Sandy. Naturally, this caused another outburst of wisecracks and catcalls.

Eventually order was restored, and Mr. Spence made an effort to bring some order into the discussion as well. "Look, let's put these things in some kind of sequence. Why don't we take up Tony's point first? Tony, can you explain your idea so it can be understood by all of us here? A lot of us are having trouble with it." 2

"Sure," Tony agreed amiably, "I've been thinking about it. Look, I can think of a number of ways in which we could say that a sentence would have to be called 'true.' In fact, I can think of three different ways, offhand."

"One at a time," said Mr. Spence. "What's the first?"

"Okay, the first would be where the subject and the predicate of a sentence are the same. Suppose someone said, 'All chickens are chickens.' A sentence like that just has to be true. It just *has* to be." 3

"Why?" inquired Maria.

"Because, like I said the other day, you can't contradict such a sentence without contradicting yourself, so it has to be true. After all, what's the contradiction of 'All chickens are chickens'? It's 'Some chickens aren't chickens,' right? But that last statement is obviously false. So 'all chickens are

chickens' is obviously true."

"Okay, Tony," said Mr. Spence. "What's next?"

"Well, I don't know if you could really call it true in the same way the first one was true. But when you look up a word in the dictionary, and it says that a 'so-and-so' is a 'such-and-such,' wouldn't that have to be true? I mean, if it says that a 'cat' is a 'small feline,' then isn't that a true definition?"

Mr. Spence scratched his nose, then scratched his ear, then cleared his throat, and finally remarked, "For the time being, why don't we just call sentences like that 'true by definition,' okay?" There was no disagreement, so he called for
1 Tony to continue.

"The third way I can think of to find out if sentences are true, is to see if you can figure them out from other sentences which you already know are true. Like, if I know that '2 + 2 = 4' is true, then I can figure out that '(1 + 1) + (1 + 1) = (4 × 1)' is true. So now, if the definitions we start from are true, then whatever follows from them must be true also. Look, suppose I claim that 'All rats are animals.' How do I prove it? Like this:

All rodents are animals.
All rats are rodents.
All rats are animals.

2 And since my first two sentences are 'true by definition,' the last sentence has to be true also."

"Mmm," said Mark, "but don't you see that not many sentences are true by definition? What're you going to do when you can't find sentences like that? Look, suppose I wanted to prove, say, 'All cats are creatures with tails,' how would I do it? I'd say this:

All felines are creatures with tails.
All cats are felines.
All cats are creatures with tails."

"So what's wrong with it?" demanded Tony.

3 Mark laughed. "Ever hear of Manx cats?"

Tony shook his head. No one else had ever heard of them either. "Well, if you don't believe me, look it up," said Mark. "Cats that come from the Isle of Man are called Manx cats, and Manx cats don't have tails. So the first premise is false, and the conclusion is false."

"Well, what's that prove?" Tony wanted to know.

"It means that, if no one had ever *seen* a Manx cat, he might think that all cats have tails, and that all felines have tails. But once you've *seen* cats born without tails, you know such a sentence has got to be false."

"Don't you see, Tony," demanded Harry, with just a note of exasperation in his voice. "People can make up all sorts of beliefs: everything is this, nothing is that, and so on. But sooner or later they've got to face facts. If you see cats born without tails, that's a fact. Sure, I haven't seen all the cats in the world, so I can't say they're all born with tails. But if I know it's a fact that cats are born without tails, then I can't use 'all cats have tails' as a true premise. It's as simple as that."

"It's not simple at all," grumbled Tony, as everyone got up to go. 1

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The following day, everyone was aboard the riverboat as it chugged slowly up the river. A crowd of youngsters stood leaning over the side, watching the giant paddlewheel churn the brown muddy water green and white.

Mark was able to cup his hand over the rail and catch a few drops of spray. "Hey, Stottlemeier," he called out, "You want me to prove to you that the sentence 'water is wet' is true? Well, how 'bout this for proof?" And before Harry could answer, he had received a splatter of water in his face. Harry laughed good-naturedly and returned the favor a moment later. But Mark was careful to remind Harry just the same—"Y'see, sentences are true when they correspond to 2 facts. What I said was true because water's really wet."

Later they joined Tony on some deck chairs near the bow of the boat. After a while, Tony mentioned having had a dream the night before that he was in China. "Boy, was it ever real!" he exclaimed. "I really believed I was there. I could see the Great Wall, and imperial palaces, the pagodas, and everything!"

"So," Harry replied, "if it seemed that real to you, how come you now think you're awake, and that China was just a dream? Maybe this riverboat's a dream and China was for real!"

Tony knew Harry was teasing him, but he was ready for it. "It's easy," he answered. "What happened during my dream seemed as real as anything else, 3 as it was happening. But when I woke up, I realized I couldn't have spent the night in China, and not remember travelling there, or travelling back, or anything. So what happened in the dream wasn't consistent with everything else in my life. It wasn't consistent, so it wasn't true—it's as simple as that!".

Harry shrugged, and Mark was silent.

After the boat had docked at the landing, everyone rushed to explore the mansion, and still later, they began to explore the grounds. The three boys met Millie, Lisa and Laura as they crossed the great, sloping lawn, and together they began to explore the paths that led into the wooded area. Most had signs, but soon they began to follow one that was unmarked. They pushed further and further on into the woods. The path grew fainter and eventually they lost it. Then they realized that they themselves were lost.

For a time they wandered about, until at last they came to a small stream. Mark and Laura were for crossing the stream and going into the forest on the
1 other side, in the hope that they would soon come to a road. But Harry pointed out that the forest might well stretch before them for a great many miles.

"Well," said Laura, "anyone have any ideas?"

"All we need is a compass," Millie answered. "Anyone got a compass?"

"You've got to be kidding," growled Tony.

Mark said, "I wish we had a map. We could find this stream on it, and then we'd know where we are, and how to get out of here."

"But we don't have a map," Harry replied.

"My grandfather used to live up in this area," said Tony. "He knew it like the back of his hand. He didn't need a map. He had a clear idea of the whole layout. If
2 we knew this forest as clearly as he knew it, we could walk out of here with no sweat."

"That's just great, Tony!" Lisa responded quickly. "If we had a clear idea of the forest, we wouldn't be lost!" Then she added, "But wait a minute. Why don't we take a chance that this stream flows down to the river that we came up here on? Once we get to the river, we'll know where we are."

"Good idea," said Harry, and the others agreed that they had nothing to lose by trying it.

For quite some time the six of them walked along the bank of the stream. Just as they were about to give up on Lisa's plan, the river came into view, and they
3 could see the mansion not far off upstream.

Lisa couldn't help bragging just a bit. "See, when you get right down to it, what's true is what's okay when you act on it. I had a hunch; we acted on it; it turned out to be true. That's all there is to it."

"Hold on," said Harry, "hold on. Look, what was the sentence we were trying to decide was either true or false?"

"It was 'If we follow the stream, we'll come back to the mansion,'" said Tony.

"Okay," said Mark excitedly, "so what made it true was our coming back and seeing the mansion. Like I said, seeing's believing."

"No," Tony replied, "what made it true was that it was consistent with the whole layout around here—with *all* that anyone knows about this place. If it hadn't been, we'd still be out there stumbling around in the forest."

Lisa laughed. "The trouble with you guys is you don't want to admit when you're wrong. Look, given the sentence 'if we follow the stream, we'll come back to the mansion,' there's only one way to tell for sure if that sentence is true or not."

"Follow the stream," said Laura.

"Not quite," Lisa answered. "We had to make a guess where the stream led to. Look, we knew for a fact the mansion was on the river. And we knew for a fact that we were on the stream. Now the best guess we could make was that the stream led to the river. So we just went with our best guess. We tried it out, and sure enough, we found our way back to the mansion. Don't you see, our idea was true because it worked!"

But both Tony and Mark exclaimed together, "No, it worked because it was true!"

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

"Oh, mom, do you know what happened in school today?"

"No, what, Lisa?"

"The kids are all talking about giving Mr. Spence a going-away present."

"That's nice. Don't talk with your mouth full."

"He can't stay till the end of the school year. He's needed in his new job."

"Have some broccoli."

"Mom, you know I hate broccoli."

"Well, have some chicken."

"Um—is there anything else to eat?"

1 "That's about it. Anything wrong?"

"No—maybe I'll try some broccoli."

"That's nice. It's good for you. And have some rice." Lisa's mother watched her for a moment and then asked, "You're not going to have any chicken?"

"No, mom. I decided no more. I should have told you."

"Why not?"

"Well, I figured out that if I really loved animals, I wouldn't eat them. But I've been eating them. So—"

"So you're not going to eat them any more."

"Is it all right with you? I mean, does it bother you?"

2 "No, if that's what you want, that's what you want."

"You can make me lots of salads. And I'll learn to eat vegetables—honest I will."

"It's funny, how your saying that reminded me of something that happened such a long time ago."

"What's that?"

"When I was your age—no, I'm wrong, I was much younger than you. Well, anyhow, my mother always used to hit me. So one day I said to her, 'If you loved me, you wouldn't hit me.' And you know what she did?" Lisa's mother laughed at the memory. "She hit me again for saying that to her."

3 Lisa was somewhat shocked at her mother's amusement. "But you were right!"

"Sure I was. But that didn't matter to her any. She figured she had good

reasons for punishing me when she did."

"But she wasn't consistent! What you do has to be consistent with what you say!"

"Yes, I know. But she didn't think so. She hit me consistently and she loved me consistently. But she never got the two things together. That's the way she was."

"You shouldn't hurt what you love."

"Of course you shouldn't. You shouldn't hurt anyone if you can help it. All I was trying to show you was that I may have been wrong when I said to her, 'If you loved me, you wouldn't hit me.' She loved me—I know she did."

"Are you trying to tell me that I could love animals and still eat them?" 1

"Lisa, I don't think I'm trying to tell you anything. I agree with what you said a moment ago—that what you do ought to be consistent with what you say. You shouldn't even have to think about making them consistent—you should just live so that they are. But if there has to be an exception, there should be a good reason for it."

Lisa studied her plate. "Just the same," she said, "no more meat."

"Fine with me. And by the way, I have a job."

Lisa looked at her mother unbelievingly.

"That's right, Lisa. I called Dr. Martin to make an appointment with him about this tooth of mine. And to make a long story short, he didn't have a 2
receptionist, so I told him I'd been one once. And he hired me for a two-week trial."

Lisa stared at her mother, then leaped from her chair and threw herself into her mother's arms. "Mom, I just can't believe it! You did it just like that! I can't believe it!"

"I figured you'd be proud of me. Here, stop wiping your nose on my dress!"

"I don't have a handkerchief—and I *am* proud of you."

"Here's a tissue—blow your nose."

Lisa blew her nose and wiped her eyes. "We won't have to move?"

"I don't think so—if I can keep the job." 3

"You'll keep it—you'll see, mom, you'll be the best receptionist there ever was!" Lisa looked intently at her mother. "But mom, in your white uniform, you'll look great—if only you'd fix your hair right."

"What's wrong with my hair? That's the way your father liked it!"

"Yeah, but mom, things are different now. You've got to think of how you look

to people *now*. I bet if you cut it short, you'd look ten years younger."

"You don't cut yours short!"

Lisa tossed her head. "You think *I* want to look ten years younger? I'd practically have to be in diapers!" They laughed, holding each other tightly.

Then Lisa's mother said, "Well, I'll think about it. And oh, by the way, didn't you say I was invited to the school play next week?"

Lisa studied her mother's face carefully. "Yes, sure you're invited. Do you want to go with me?"

"I think I'd like to."

1 "I'm not twisting your arm now. It's up to you. Don't say afterwards I made you go."

Her mother laughed again. "I won't."

"Mom—your mother, did she ever really hurt you?"

"Oh, my, no. Why do you ask?"

"I've heard there are kids who really get clobbered."

"Yes, I know."

"Did your mother ever give you reasons for hitting you?"

"Oh, she always had reasons. One time, it would be 'to teach us a lesson.' Another time, it would be 'to serve us right.' Another time it would be 'to keep us
2 honest.' But we always took what she said with a grain of salt."

"Mom, did you ever give her a reason for *not* hitting you?"

"Oh, that would have been a waste of time. What could we have said to her?"

"I don't know. But weren't you and your sisters always fighting?"

"Were we? That's all we did. And then my mother would come in and hit us to make us stop fighting."

"But mom, couldn't that be one of the reasons you and your sisters would hit each other, because you were just imitating your mother?"

"Maybe so."

Lisa was silent for a moment. Then she said reflectively, "Y'know, there's one
3 thing I've got to admit. There are ways of scolding kids that make them feel like dirt—like you want to crawl into a corner and never show your face again. That can be worse than hitting them."

"I think you're right. And something else—I can remember once when you were playing in the street, and I ran out and yanked you out of the way of a car. You got a good spanking for that—but I almost went out of my mind when I saw

you out there about to get hit."

"Yes, well I suppose what you did was excusable."

"Under the circumstances, yes. You've always got to take the circumstances into account, Lisa."

"Sure, mom, I know that. But all I was saying before is you've got to take the results into account too. And if grownups set us the example of hitting us every time they can't cope, what do they think we're going to do?"

With that, Lisa went up to her room.

Seated cross-legged on her bed, Lisa took a packet of letters from off the closet shelf, and spread them out before her. They were letters her father had written her during each summer she'd been at camp—long letters, filled with his own observations and reflections, and written with those clear, fine words he knew how to use so well. Lisa was dry-eyed as she read, but she studied each letter as if trying to drain it of every possible meaning. 1

Then at one point she looked up. "The words," she thought. "They're alive!"

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Mr. Partridge cleared his throat loudly, and Mr. Spence and Heather, who were embracing by the window, looked up and separated, just as the students began filing in for their study hour.

"It's all right, Stan," said Mr. Partridge. "I got your note." 2

"I can get someone to proctor the study hall for me, Mr. Partridge," said Mr. Spence."

"No, that's all right, I'm free this hour, and I'd like to talk to these young people anyhow. You run along."

The pupils looked puzzled.

"What's happening?" Timmie wanted to know.

"Where they going? Where they going?" Millie kept repeating.

The class gathered at the windows to see the couple get in their car.

"I know." Randy announced. "I heard Mr. Spence say they were going to City Hall." 3

"That must be it!" Mark exclaimed. "They're going for a license."

"A license for what?" cried Millie. "They don't have a dog!"

"No, a marriage license," said Mark.

At that there were so many cheers and squeals of delight that the couple standing by the car turned and waved back at the students who were now

leaning out the window and waving at them.

"Way to go, Mr. Spence!" called Mickey.

The car drove off, with Heather and Mr. Spence continuing to wave.

After a while, the class settled down. Mr. Partridge walked over to the window and stood there silently looking out, his hands folded behind him, the way he did whenever he was deep in thought. Then suddenly he turned about.

"Well, now, let's have one of these—what do you call them—'rap sessions?' that you always have with Mr. Spence."

"We don't call them rap sessions, Mr. Partridge. We don't call them anything,"
1 said Mark.

"Well what I want to know is, what are you trying to prove?"

"We're not trying to prove anything," said Fran. "We're just trying to understand what's happening."

Mr. Partridge looked puzzled. "I still don't understand what you're getting at."

"We're trying to figure out how to prove our beliefs," said Maria.

"Which beliefs?" retorted Mr. Partridge. "Which beliefs?"

There was a silence that was finally broken by Harry's saying, "All we want to show is that kids can think for themselves, Mr. Partridge."

Then a peculiar thing happened. Without saying a word, Fran went to the
2 blackboard and wrote on it:

All kids are people that can think for themselves.

Almost immediately, Tony and Lisa got up and went to the board. Tony wrote the two premises, but he left the middle term blank:

All _____ are people who can think for themselves.

All kids are _____.

Then Lisa filled in the two blanks with the phrase "people that can think."

The class turned its eyes to Mr. Partridge, who now stood staring at the
3 sentences written on the board. Finally he remarked, "Do you know what? I think what you've got there is really excellent! You've not only told me what you believe, but you've given me your reasons for believing it, and you've put your reasons together in a very clever way. I must say, I'm impressed!"

"We're glad you like it, Mr. Partridge," said Lisa. "And I'm glad you're satisfied now that we're really trying to figure things out, like what we believe

and why we believe it."

"Not so fast, now," replied Mr. Partridge. "I said I was impressed, but I didn't say you'd convinced me. After all, look at that first sentence, 'All people who can think are people who can think for themselves.' What makes you think that sentence is true?"

The members of the class looked at each other helplessly. At last Tony spoke up: "We *don't* know it's true, Mr. Partridge, but we don't know that it's false either."

Mr. Partridge looked at Tony soberly. "Well, but that won't do. It just won't do. If your reasons aren't true, your conclusions may not be true. So you really haven't proven anything to me at all. Why should I believe you when you tell me that all kids can think for themselves? That's what I want to know." 1

But now Harry was waving his hand wildly. "Mr. Partridge! Don't you see—there's no *way—no* way, we could ever prove to you once and for all that kids can think for themselves, because we can't prove our reasons once for all either. We may not be able to prove *anything* once and for all. But maybe that's not so bad. Maybe now, if you think we're wrong, it's up to *you* to show us why we're wrong!"

"That's right," Lisa agreed. "Mr. Partridge, don't you see, what usually happens is that everyone assumes we can't think for ourselves, and lots of us have a hard time proving we can, because no one really wants to listen to us. But why can't people assume that kids *can* think for themselves until someone can prove they can't?" 2

Mr. Partridge looked out the window again for a moment, then turned back to the class. "Wouldn't it be better just to take our word for what's right? After all, we're your teachers. Why do you have to demand reasons for everything?"

"Not for everything!" broke in Mark. "Not for everything! Just for those things we're worried about."

"That's right," Harry agreed. "No sense trying to prove everything, but wherever we've got questions, we ought to look for good reasons for what we think." 3

"But don't you see," Mr. Partridge shot back, "each reason is another belief, and you're going to have to find reasons for it too, so that you're never going to be through looking for reasons. It's endless."

"We know that, Mr. Partridge," Lisa said quietly. "We know that."

Mr. Partridge folded his arms. "I hear a lot of talk about 'thinking for oneself.'

Who can tell me what it is to 'think for oneself?' And how is it different from just 'thinking'?"

No one ventured a reply. Finally Mark spoke up. "C'mon, you guys. We can figure out what to say. Look, why don't we take turns? One person say what he thinks thinking is, and the next person say what it is to think for oneself."

"I'll start it off," volunteered Tony. "Thinking is figuring things out."

"And thinking for yourself is figuring out something that applies particularly to you," said Fran.

"Thinking," said Maria, "is like, when someone says something, knowing
1 what follows from what he says."

"But when you think for yourself," remarked Luther, "it means you can figure out what follows from your own ideas."

"I know," announced Millie. "When somebody thinks, he's considering what's possible."

"Right," answered Mark. "But if a person thinks for himself, he's considering what's possible for him—how he might use his ideas."

"Thinking," Sandy suggested, "is just having thoughts run through your mind."

"Maybe," agreed Harry, "but when you think for yourself, you put your
2 thoughts together and make something out of them."

Mickey suggested that, "if you can figure out why someone else thinks the way he does, you're thinking. But if you can figure out your own reasons for believing what you believe, you're thinking for yourself."

"Well," replied Mark, "if you think the way everyone thinks, you're thinking, but if you find a way of thinking that's all your own, that's thinking for yourself."

"Let me tell you what I think it is," said Lisa. "I don't believe you need to have reasons in order to think, and I don't believe you even have to have definite ideas. Like if you've got a problem and you're trying to work it out, you're
3 thinking, but you may not have any particular ideas in mind at the time. But if it's *your* problem, and *you* work it out, you're thinking for yourself."

Now a number of hands were up. "Lisa's right!" Anne chimed in. "When I'm trying to do a painting, I'm thinking real hard, and I'm thinking for myself 'cause it's *my* painting, but I'm not thinking in words, I'm thinking in paints."

"Sure," Bill agreed, "and when I'm on the basketball court, I've got to think

which ways I might run, and how I might throw the ball, but I'm not actually thinking in words while I'm playing. It's like I'm thinking with my whole body."

"And when I sing," said Jill, in her warm, rich voice, I'm thinking at every moment how to sing the next note just right, but I'm not thinking in words, I'm thinking in music."

"So see," said Lisa, turning to Mr. Partridge, "there's a big difference between thinking and thinking for oneself. But there are also lots and lots of different ways of thinking, and some of them mean using reasons, but some don't, and some of them mean thinking with words, but some don't, and some of them mean finding out what follows, but some don't." 1

"Also," said Harry, "some of us think slowly, and some of us think real fast, like in a flash. But whether you think slow or fast has nothing to do with whether you think well or badly."

Harry paused as if he were finished, but then he added, "It's getting your thoughts to connect and hang together."

"And that's what I do when I write a poem," said Suki.

Mr. Partridge nodded. "I can see you've all been thinking about thinking," he remarked mildly. "I've got to give you credit for coming through with your answers when I challenged you. But don't forget—*I* was the one who challenged you! I *dared* you to think! I don't agree with a lot of your answers, but at least give us credit here in the school for setting the stage for what you're doing." 2

"Sure thing, Mr. Partridge," Mark said quietly. "You did challenge us. But would you have done so if we hadn't started on our own?"

Mr. Partridge didn't answer. He merely nodded and waved at the students as he left.

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The surprise party for Mr. Spence took place a few days later. As the students began gathering in the room, they couldn't help looking out the windows at the storm that was building up. Some said it was going to rain; some said it was going to snow. No one guessed that it would be sleeting in a few moments. 3

Soon the windows were being battered by pellets of ice which were gradually succeeded by a steady, heavy downfall of snow. The students opened the windows, raking in the ice and snow, and rolling it in their hands. From there, it seemed only logical to several of them to begin throwing snowballs at one another. Soon the floor was slippery and wet, here and there crunchy with ice.

Then some of the boys began putting snow down girls' collars, and the girls were soon trying to do the same to the boys. Finally Sandy found a broom and dustpan, and he and Luther began sweeping the snow and ice from the floor.

They had just about straightened the place out when Mr. Spence came in.

The room rang out with cries of "Surprise! Surprise!"

Mr. Spence was startled. Then he grinned and said, "But I have a surprise for you too." He went back out in the hall, and returned a moment later, leading Heather by the hand into the room.

"And we've got another surprise for you," said Mr. Spence. "Heather and I are
1 getting married tomorrow."

There were more cheers, and congratulations.

"Aw," said Mickey, "we figured that out long ago!"

"And Mr. Spence," said Mark, "we never did get to congratulate you on your promotion. Gee, you had us scared there for a moment."

Then it was realized that they'd planned to have refreshments ready when Mr. Spence came in. But he'd surprised them by arriving earlier than they'd expected. So now there was a rush for the supply closet, and for paper cups, and soda, and for the cake which Millie had baked (with a little help from her grandfather). Meanwhile, Randy got out his portable record player, and in a few
2 moments the classroom was rocking—in fact the whole building seemed to be vibrating a bit. The chairs were pushed back, and a few students were beginning to dance. Everyone was so preoccupied with the refreshments and the music that only Mark noticed Mr. Partridge walk by, peek in, smile faintly and walk on.

"Mr. Spence," said Harry, "it's been great."

"Yeah," said Mark, "really good."

Other students added their appreciation:

"Really real," said Millie.

"Cool," said Randy.

"Nice," said Anne.

3 "Super," said Maria.

Lisa shook hands with Heather and Mr. Spence. "You'll be so happy," she laughed.

Heather smiled. "It's hard to imagine how we could be more happy than we already are."

Mark and Fran were easily the most accomplished dancers in the class, and

everyone admired how easy and effortless dancing seemed to be for them. Millie, in contrast, merely jumped up and down very energetically, but she was determined to get Harry to dance with her, and before long Harry was making some rather clumsy efforts to keep up with her.

At first Lisa couldn't bring herself to join in. She just shook her head when she was asked, while saying to herself, "I can't dance." The phrase drummed in her mind even louder than the music. Suddenly Mark spun around in front of her and reached out, and she allowed herself to be drawn among the dancers. Her clumsiness was forgotten. Everything seemed easy and natural; the beat of the music became the pulse of her movement.

A thought crossed Lisa's mind: "I said believing in something could make it come true. But I didn't believe I could dance. And it came true anyhow!"

Out of the corner of her eye, Lisa could see Heather spinning gracefully around Mr. Spence. Then Lisa turned her attention to Mark.

"It's kind of unreal, isn't it?" he said to her.

"No," she answered, "everything's real. Everything."