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The Crux

March 2001

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I try to tell my dad stories about the high school, and he gives me advice. He says, "if she likes you, she'll give you long, lingering looks." He says, "if want to get to know her, then just ask her to a movie." He says, "why don't you tell Ms. Irritated that you regret missing so much of her class, and that you only now realize the real importance of her class time."

When he gives me advice about girls, I think of movies like *Back to the Future* and *Animal House*, and I want to say, "Dad, it's not the sixties now, girls don't LOOK at you if they like you. In fact, no one looks at each other. Things have changed." It's true that the system of relationships in schools have changed, but it's not a simple change of language like the looks we give each other. It's a much sicklier change.

If people don't look at each other when they feel attracted, it is because they're psychotic. The reason you can't ask a person to a movie just to "get to know them better" is because if you ask someone to a movie, and he or she says yes, you are married. If he or she says no, you immediately end the conversation feeling awkward and appropriately ashamed. These conditions are resultant of the fact that the person you asked is probably psychotic. And you're psychotic, too. Look at you, going around smiling at people, trying to start conversations, trying to date. What business do you have pretending you know how anyone is going to react to anything? You're like a little kid who tears the cellophane off of his new chemistry set, tosses away the instructions, and starts pouring random substances into test tubes. What are you hoping for? An explosion? A funny smell?

Of course you're dissatisfied. I know I was when I was little. I think one time I combined two chemicals and they turned purple, but aside from that, not much happened. It's because I didn't know anything about chemicals. I didn't know anything about the rules, I just dove right in without thinking, like a baby. Just like you did. A little, helpless, drooling baby. Had I taken chemistry at that age, I would've understood the system that I was dealing with. Unfortunately, there is no class that will tell you what the hell is going on around you. This brings attention to one of the major flaws of the system at ARHS: No one really wants you to know what the hell is going on. I'm not just talking about teachers, other students, too. In fact, you probably don't even want to know what the hell's going on. Getting a semi-reasonable grasp on reality can be advantageous though. For example, have you ever had a really boring class? Where the teacher is saying and doing things that if they thought about for one second, they would think, "why am I being

Boring teachers are boring because there's probably a whole long list of things in their life that they should, but don't want to, think about. I'm writing to the students and not the teachers because at fifteen or sixteen or however old you are, your list of unpleasant little weeds that are growing in the back of your mind is going to be a lot easier to deal with than the lists of your teachers.

The advantage to stepping outside of yourself, and forcing yourself to look at how screwed up you really are, is that once you've got a decent idea of who the people you have to deal with are, you'll be able to real world solutions, and apply them to our little ARHS fantasy existence. The most important thing in any of our lives right now is to realize that it is just a little fantasy existence at school, and that if you don't get why people are the way they are, you won't be able to use any advice on school that you get outside of school.

For example, if I had kissed Ms. Irritated's ass the way my dad advised me to, she wouldn't have been charmed or pleased or flattered, she would've gotten more mad at me. And you can just forget about Joe Big-Pants or Jane Puffy-Coat wanting to go to the movies before they know what kind of music you listen to or how old you were when your parents got divorced or what kind of grades you get or whatever. Had I been foolish enough to actually accept advice from the outside world, and apply it in an environment such as the Amherst Regional High School, I would've been laughed at and pointed at and thrown out on the street.

The trick is to listen to any advice you might get, and then to try to think about solving your problem a way that your mindless, gibberish babbling peers and authorities will be able to respond to. Now this won't be such a big step for many of you, since your enrollment at ARHS alone makes you eligible to be admitted to a number of insane asylums.

To work with the others around you, you must be able to speak the language of the environment. When you leave school and tell your friends or family about how mean Mr. So-and-So is, or how manipulative Ms. Hwang-Carlos is, it's nice to hear their sane perspective on things. It feels good to vent, and it makes you think "wow, I can see everything so clearly, I'm really on top of things."

But when you get back to school, Joe Blow and Malia are going to be just as tyrannical.

So you have to translate your out-of-school (democratic/reasonable) solution into a more in-school (dictatorial/nobody-likes-you) solution: Since my father's method of dealing with Ms. Irritated's annoyance with me didn't feel like it would work in Loony Land, I invented my own method of complementing my teacher: I participated more in

so insufferably boring?" If they just stopped and thought, "maybe my class doesn't have to be unpleasant for kids to go to," and related the subject matter to something we cared about (ourselves, for example), the class could suddenly become tolerable.

class, and I stayed the hell out of her way. I feel as though our original friendliness has returned, and we can now continue to let our balanced and communicative teacher/student relationship grow. I'd write a success story about open romantic communication with a member of the opposite sex, but I'd be lying. More on that in the next issue. Shut up.

Three Important Things to Think About

- 1. The way florescent lights slowly make you hate yourself and everyone else in the room.**
- 2. At least we get to leave after four years.**
- 3. Your small but shameful contribution to Mr. Goldman's resignation.**