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thing on her quiet typewriter, which isn't quiet at all. But there aren't many kids in seventh-period study because most of them cut it and the others get excused early because our school is overcrowded. It's only kids like Lorraine and me that get stuck with seventh-period study because we have to stay around for an eighth-period class called Problems in American Democracy. And if you think having Problems in American Democracy is a fun way to end the day, you need a snug-fitting straitjacket.

Anyway, Miss Reillen is a little on the fat side, but that doesn't stop her from wearing these tight skirts which make her nylon stockings rub together when she walks so she makes this scraaaaaaatchy sound. That's why the kids call her the Cricket. If she taught woodshop or gym, nobody'd really know she makes that sound—but she's the librarian, and it's so quiet you can hear every move she makes.

Lorraine is panting to get at the typewriter now, so I'm going to let her before she has a heart attack.

CHAPTER 2

I should never have let John write the first chapter because he always has to twist things subliminally. I am not panting, and I'm not about to have a thrombosis. It's just that some very strange things have happened to us during the last few months, and we feel we should write them down while they're still fresh in our minds. It's got to be written now before John and I mature and repress the whole thing.

John doesn't really curse that much, and I don't think he needs his system. But even when we were in Miss Stewart's typing class, he had to do something unusual all the time—like type a letter in the shape of an hourglass. That's the kind of thing he does. And as you probably suspected, the reason John gets away with all these things is because he's extremely handsome. I hate to admit it, but he is. An ugly boy would have been sent to reform school by now.

He's six feet tall already, with sort of longish brown hair and blue eyes. He has these gigantic eyes that look right through you, especially if he's in the middle of one of his fantastic everyday lies. And he drinks and smokes more than any boy I ever heard of. The analysts would call his family the source problem or say he drinks and smokes to assert his independence. I tried to explain to him how dangerous it was, particularly smoking, and even went to the trouble of finding a case history similar to his in a book by Sigmund Freud. I almost had him convinced that smoking was an infantile, destructive activity when he pointed out a picture of Freud smoking a cigar on the book's cover.

"If Freud smokes, why can't I?"

"Freud doesn't smoke anymore," I told him. "He's dead."

Another time I got my mother to bring home a pamphlet about smoking in which they showed lungs damaged from tobacco poisons. I even got her to borrow a book from a doctor, which had large color plates of lungs that had been eaten away by cancer. She's a nurse and can get all those things. But nothing seems to have any impact on John, which I suppose brings us right back to his source problem. Actually, we both have families you

wouldn't believe, but I don't particularly feel like going into it at the moment because I just ate lunch in the cafeteria. It was Swiss steak. That is, they called it Swiss steak. John called it flet of gorilla's heart.

Also, you'll find out soon enough that John disports—when he isn't out-and-out lying. For example, in Problems in American Democracy the other day, Mr. Weiner asked him what kind of homes early American settlers lived in, and John said tree huts. Now John knows early American settlers didn't live in tree huts, but he'll do just about anything to stir up some excitement. And he really did set off those bombs when he was a freshman, which when you stop to consider sort of shows a pattern—an actual pattern. I think he used to distort things physically, and now he does it verbally more than any other way.

I mean, take the Cricket for instance. I mean Miss Reillen. She's across the library watching me as I'm typing this, and she's smiling. You'd think she knew I was defending her. She's really a very nice woman, though it's true her clothes are too tight, and her nylons do make this scraaaaaatchy sound when she walks. But she isn't trying to be sexy or anything. If you could see her, you'd know that. She just outgrew her clothes.

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Maybe she doesn't have any money to buy new ones or get the old ones let out. Who knows what kind of problems she has? Maybe she's got a sick mother at home like Miss Stewart, the typing teacher. I know Miss Stewart has a sick mother because she had me mark some typing papers illegally and drop them off at her house after school one day. And there was her sick mother—very thin and with this smile frozen on her face—right in the middle of the living room! That was the strange part. Miss Stewart kept her mother in this bed right in the middle of the living room, and it almost made me cry. She made a little joke about it—how she kept her mother in the middle of the living room because she didn't want her to think she was missing anything when people came to visit. Can you imagine keeping your sick mother in a bed right smack in the middle of the living room? When I look at Miss Reillen I feel sorry. When I hear her walking I feel even more sorry for her because maybe she keeps her mother in a bed in the middle of the living room just like Miss Stewart. Who would want to marry a woman that keeps her sick mother in a bed right in the middle of the living room?

The one big difference between John and me, besides the fact that he's a boy and I'm a girl, is I

have compassion. Not that he really doesn't have any compassion, but he'd be the last one on earth to show it. He pretends he doesn't care about anything in the world, and he's always ready with some outrageous remark, but if you ask me, any real hostility he has is directed against himself.

The fact that I'm his best friend shows he isn't as insensitive to *Homo sapiens* as he makes believe he is, because you might as well know I'm not exactly the most beautiful girl in the world. I'm not Venus or Harlow. Just ask my mother.

"You're not a pretty girl, Lorraine," she has been nice enough to inform me on a few occasions (as if I didn't remember the first time she ever said it), "but you don't have to walk about stooped-shouldered and hunched." At least once a day she fills me in on one more aspect of my public image—like "your hair would be better cut short because it's too kinky," and "you're putting on too much weight," and "you wear your clothes funny." If I made a list of every comment she's made about me, you'd think I was a monstrosity. I may not be Miss America, but I am not the abominable snowwoman either.

But as I was saying, it is a fact that John has compassion deep inside of him, which is the real reason we got involved with the Pigman. Maybe at

of a gigantic Egyptian eye that was found in one of the pyramids I read about in a book on black magic. Somehow an archeologist's wife ended up with this huge stone eye in her bedroom, and in the middle of the night it exploded and a big cat started biting the archeologist's wife's neck. When she put the lights on, the cat was gone. Only the pieces of the eye were scattered all over the floor. That's what John's eyes remind me of. I knew even from the first moment I saw him he had to be something special.

Then one day John had to sit next to me on the bus because all the other seats were taken. He wasn't sitting there for more than two minutes before he started laughing. Laughing right out loud, but not *to* anyone. I was so embarrassed I wanted to cry because I thought for sure he was laughing at me, and I turned my head all the way so the only thing I could see out the window of the bus was telephone poles going by. They call that paranoia. I knew that because some magazine did a whole article on mental disturbances, and after I read the symptoms of each of them, I realized I had all of them—but most of all I had paranoia. That's when you think everybody's making fun of you when they're not. Some extremely advanced paranoiacs can't even watch television because they

think the canned laughter is about them. Freud would probably say it started with my mother picking on how I look all the time. But no matter how it started, I've got to admit that when anyone looks at me I'm sure they're noticing how awful my hair is or I'm too fat or my dress is funny. So I did think John was laughing at me, and it made me feel terrible, until finally—and the psychiatrists would say this was healthy—I began to get mad!

"Would you mind not laughing," I said, "because people think I'm sitting with a lunatic." He jumped when I spoke to him, so I realized he wasn't laughing at me. I don't think he even knew I was there.

"I'm sorry," he said. I just turned my head away and watched the telephone poles some more. Then I heard him whisper something under his breath, and it had just the tone of a first-class smart aleck.

"I am a lunatic."
I made believe I didn't hear it, but then he said it again a little louder.

"I *am* a lunatic."
"Well, I wouldn't go around bragging about it," I said, and I was so nervous I dropped one of my books on the floor. I was mortified picking it up because it fell between the seat and the window, and I was sure I'd look like an enormous cow

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bending over to get it. All I could think of at that moment was wishing one of his eyeballs would explode and a nice big cat would get at *his* neck, but I managed to get the book and sit straight up with this real annoyed look on my face.

Then he started that laughing again. Very quietly at first, and boy, did it burn me! And then I decided I was going to let out a little laugh, so I did. Then he laughed a little louder, and I laughed a little louder, and before I knew what was happening I couldn't stand it, so I really started laughing, and he started laughing, and we laughed so much the whole bus thought we were out of our minds.

CHAPTER 3

Like Lorraine told you, I really am very handsome and do have fabulous eyes. But that doesn't get me much, except perhaps with Miss King, this English teacher I'm going to tell you about. I think she really goes for me the way she always laughs a little when she talks to me and says I'm such a card. A card she calls me, which sounds ridiculous coming out of the mouth of an old-maid English teacher who's practically fifty years old. I really hate it when a teacher has to show that she isn't behind the times by using some expression which sounds so up-to-date you know for sure she's behind the times. Besides, card really isn't up-to-date anymore, which makes it even more annoying. In fact, the thing Lorraine and I liked best about the Pigman was that he didn't go around saying we were cards or jazzy or cool or hip. He said we were delightful, and if there's one way to show how much you're not trying to make believe you're not