



In Chemistry lab. Maxine Grove and Dick Mangis.

At NCHS

He sat in sixth period Chemistry class, watching the milky liquid seep slowly through the filter paper. As his eyes followed each drop that eased down the long stem of the funnel and splashed into the beaker below, his mind drifted farther and farther away from the experiment at hand. It's funny, he thought to himself, how a person's opinion of this school can change almost overnight, just because of a girl. Two weeks ago, before I broke up with Debbie, I thought that this place was great—now, I wish I were out!

He completed the experiment and was cleaning the last of his apparatus when the bell sounded. Having locked up his equipment, he walked downstairs to his locker. I've got homework in every doggoned subject tonight. Those teachers! They must think that we don't need any sleep at all! Of course, if I would get down to business and use my study periods for something besides daydreaming, I might have less to do after school! With the last thought, he slammed the locker door shut with a crash that resounded up and down the entire length of the hall.

Joe met him as he wandered wearily toward the band room. They noticed a frightened Freshman being reprimanded in the principal's office as they passed. "Poor Johnny," remarked Joe. "He had better learn right now, that it is best to conform to the school's way of doing things. Of course, Freshmen always have to learn the hard way—at least, I did!"

"Yeah," he muttered in an uninterested tone.

They picked up their instruments in the band room, and then sauntered out to his car. As he pulled away from the curb, the spinning wheels of the car sent gravel flying in an arc of one hundred and eighty degrees.

"What's bugging you, man?" questioned Joe. "Is all this homework getting you down—or maybe you've got the spring fever, huh?"

"That isn't all that I've got," he retorted. "One problem just seems to multiply itself times another one until all I've got is one huge mess."

"Just get a good night's sleep, and you'll be over it in the morning."

"How in the heck is a guy supposed to get any sleep with this mess of work to do?"

"That does present quite a problem, doesn't it?" said Joe laughingly. "By the way, how are you getting along since you quit going steady with Debbie?"

"Let's forget her—she's the basis for all my worries!"

Maybe it would do you good to talk about it and to get the whole business out of your mind for a while," surmised Joe.

"All right—she broke up with me because she thought that we should both try to increase our association with others. I didn't want to, but she insisted. Unfortunately, I'm in such bad humor now, that I couldn't make a new friend if I tried."

"Man, you should follow ol' Joe's theory and leave those troublesome females darned-well alone."

"Look Joe," he said sarcastically, "Maybe you can walk right past a good-looking blond and never turn your head, nor blink an eye—but I can't! I've got a certain amount of human instinct in me which says that I notice the opposite sex!"

"Are you inferring that I am not human?" queried Joe as they pulled to a stop in front of his house.

"No, but I am saying that one of these days some girl is going to knock your feet right out from under you."

"I still think that you should adopt my philosophy and forget them—or her, at least!"

"Go soak your head!" he retaliated as Joe stepped out of the car.

Somewhat angered by Joe's carefree attitude about his problems, he made the tires squeal as he rounded every corner on his way home. If I don't quit driving this way, the cops will get me for sure, he thought.

He jerked the car to a skidding stop in front of his house, gathered up his books and other material of torture, and went inside. Going straight to his room, he dumped everything in a heap in the middle of his bed; and after having devoured a sandwich and a glass of milk in the kitchen, he laboriously opened his Advanced Math book. Finding no obvious solution to a problem, he decided that it must have an extraneous root. That's the simplest method that I know, he thought.

At his desk again after supper, he leaned back thoughtfully in his chair and stretched his arms. Seeing Johnny in the office that afternoon caused him to recall the time when he was a Freshman.