

Chapter 2

Only Fifty G's?

“Time to get up,” announced Boots.

A lump under the blue blanket stirred slightly. “It’s the middle of the night,” it mumbled plaintively.

“It’s twenty to nine. You know how Mr. Stratton freaks out when someone is late for math class.”

Bruno Walton’s dark, tousled head appeared from under the covers. “You know I never get up before quarter to, so don’t disturb me. I’m going back to sleep.” The head disappeared again.

Five minutes and forty winks later, Bruno bounded out of bed and tore through the room like a whirlwind. Within five minutes, the two boys were headed towards their first class, Bruno hopping on one foot as he tied the other shoe.

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At a secluded table in the lunchroom sat six boys. Along with Bruno and Boots from Dormitory 3 were Mark Davies, editor of the school newspaper, and the eccentrically brilliant Elmer Drimsdale, both from Dormitory 2. Dormitory 1 was represented by Chris Talbot, a talented art student, and Wilbur

Hackenschleimer, an amateur weightlifter and a whiz at wood-working and metal shop. Bruno, seated at the head of the table, had obviously appointed himself chairman of the committee.

He cleared his throat. "I suppose you're wondering why I've called you all here today," he began impressively.

Nobody answered.

"All right, I'll tell you," he said. "And frankly, I don't see how any of you can even swallow your lunch!"

"I'm hungry!" protested Wilbur Hackenschleimer, his mouth full of meatloaf.

Bruno pounded the table so hard that one of Wilbur's baked potatoes rolled off his tray and onto the floor. The big boy scrambled to retrieve it.

"How can you think of food at a time like this?" Bruno hollered. "This is the darkest hour in the history of Macdonald Hall! Our world is crumbling around us!"

"You'll have to excuse my friend," interrupted Boots, before Bruno could go into detail about the tragedy that had overtaken them. "He gets very emotional sometimes. What he's trying to say is that York Academy has a pool and we don't."

"Right," said Bruno. "But there's more to it than that. We stand to lose valuable students — *him* for one" — he pointed at Boots — "if the Athletic Department here doesn't start to move."

Mark Davies nodded. "Pete Anderson's dad has been talking about taking him out of the Hall."

"You see?" exclaimed Bruno triumphantly. "We need that pool, and to get it we need fifty thousand dollars. And here's how we're going to raise it."