

BLOT IT OUT



ekt vog prikbrow vil elgeq, vog naelb
ouwt jent. bebaal pilleer ero, strodbott
ouwt tinner woy efas fo bniid ekt
bniidb nebbib. stiw edward skum
txer zl. was emad fo erutrig w
ekt metw, moanretfo yuabsenbll
s'jubodar, tnebas w at op strodbott
orient fo bid tarkt tgeerne emad
-mid fo ero edat moe ew tcd
fo eltdof w pralo prikf tayf
wont retted moe w - moafarab
w ouwt mit edam moe l, stort
-pel metard w jad, tnebicas eltil
-mit ekt ilo zitto ekt at gr. wop eff
-negqat ti edam il. beretw stort moe
wary, oval fur illo
lireb) tnebicas wop

Whiz McGonnigle knew he shouldn't have done it, but he did it anyway.

He was spending Wednesday afternoon with his friend, Skinny Hobart, when Skinny suggested going up to the attic to see what they could find. That was all right, but when they passed the cook's room on the third floor and the door was open, Whiz said, "Let's go in."

The cook's name was Cheri, which the two boys thought was funny. Whiz, who was always looking into things, looked into Cheri's open desk and saw an inkwell and an old-fashioned pen, which he took out to examine. He remembered his grandmother saying what a nuisance those pens had been, before ball-point pens were invented. She said the ink was always wet on the paper after you'd written, and that you dried it by pressing the paper down on a sheet of blotting paper, which left an impression of the letter, only *backwards*, on the blotting paper.

That's what Cheri had done, and she'd been using a brand-new sheet of blotting paper so you could almost read what she'd written, except that it was backwards.

Whiz picked up the blotting paper to study, but just then there was a noise, so the two boys ran out of the room and up into the attic, with Whiz still holding the blotter. A couple of minutes later they heard Cheri's voice say, "My blotter's gone. I bet it's that kid." Then a man's voice said, "I'll teach him to go snooping around. Wait till I get hold of him."

Cheri said, "I bet he's in the attic. And that blotter—if he has it—"

The man's voice said, "Don't worry. Maybe he went in, but he's not going to come out."

Whiz knew that somehow he had to read that blotter, and fast. Can you? What do you think he and Skinny Hobart should do?

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