

RALPH (*moving toward the group*). At recess a select group always gathered around a lamppost in the corner of the playground to discuss the deep philosophers and share information based on the latest research.

SCHWARTZ. All right then, if you don't believe me, I double dare ya!

RALPH. The exact exchange and nuance of wording in this phase of the "dare" ritual is very important.

FLICK. So you're sayin' if I put my tongue on this post it'll stick.

SCHWARTZ. Yeah!

FLICK. That's dumb! It wouldn't happen!

SCHWARTZ. Then go ahead! Prove I'm wrong!

RALPHIE. Go ahead, Flick.

FLICK. Heck no!

SCHWARTZ. That's 'cause you know it'd stick!

FLICK. Would not!

SCHWARTZ. Would too!

FLICK. Would not!

SCHWARTZ. All right then, I double dog dare ya!

*(The other children react with surprise and concern. FLICK is thrown a bit off balance.)*

RALPH. This was getting serious. A double dog dare. There was nothing left but a "triple dare you" and, finally, the coup de grâce of all dares, the sinister "triple dog dare."

SCHWARTZ. I triple dog dare ya!

*(Unconcealed shock and sharp intakes of breath all around. Significant looks exchanged.)*

RALPH. Hm. Schwartz created a slight breach of etiquette by skipping the triple dare and going right for the throat.

FLICK (*nervous*). All right, all right.

RALPHIE. Do it, Flick.

SCHWARTZ. Go on, smarty pants, do it. (*He gives FLICK a poke in the arm.*)

FLICK (*wincing*). Hey! That's my sore arm, OK?

RALPHIE. Do it.

FLICK. Don't rush me. (*He cracks his knuckles, shakes out his hands, steps up to the lamppost and sticks out his tongue as RALPH speaks.*)

RALPH. There was no going back now. Flick's spine stiffened. His lips curled in a defiant sneer. His tongue went into docking mode and he moved toward consummation.

FLICK (*leans into the lamppost and his tongue makes contact*). Thith ith noth ... (*And then he realizes.*) Thtuck! I'm thtuck! (*He begins to wail.*)

SCHWARTZ (*his theory is proven out, but it still surprises him*). Jeepers! It really works!

*(The bell rings to end recess. The children exit, save for RALPHIE, SCHWARTZ and, of course, FLICK. SCHWARTZ moves to leave.)*

RALPHIE. Wait! Whadda we gonna do?

SCHWARTZ. I dunno. (*He points offstage in the direction of the school building. It is out of his hands.*) The bell rang. (*He exits. The fence and shed roll out R, the classroom wagon rolls into place from upstage.*)

RALPH (*moving to R proscenium*). We lived by the bell. It told us when to come in, when to go to recess, when to go home. It was the voice of God, and could not be denied.

*(RALPHIE turns to leave.)*

FLICK. Auth! Oaait! Cuh back! Doe lee nee! Cuh back!

RALPH (*with an apologetic shrug to the audience*). The bell rang.