

Tony “Scooter” Turrelli

“The secret source of Humor itself is not joy but sorrow. There is no humor in heaven.”
-Mark Twain

You’ve always had strange luck; either really, really good or really, really bad. Take J.D. and his gang. Take them as far from here as you possibly can... but seriously folks, look at the way things have worked out. When you were young, J.D. was the class scapegoat, always easy to pick on whether it was because he wore hand-me-downs that looked like they had been handed down from the local garbage dump, or whether it was because he was always a little behind in class, which is like saying San Inguon is a little south of Canada.

So the social rule of the school (hey, that rhymed, in two beat time, you’re a poet and didn’t know it) was to pick on him, and the more deftly you picked on him, the less you got picked on by everybody else. You found you had a natural talent for jokes and barbs, and you were pretty well respected. Until J.D. got together with Nick Kerensky, who, due to his size and the fact that he was behind a grade, also was a prime target for the “in” crowd. J.D. and Nick might not have been good with insults, but they were darn good with their fists, and cross-country running became the sport of choice for those who had previously taunted him. Of course, your sublime and cutting wit made you number one with a bullet, and thank God J.D. didn’t have a gun to put that bullet in, or your father wouldn’t have anyone to lift all the heavy objects in his shop.

So that was your bad luck shining through. You hadn’t been the main “hey, let’s get J.D. and pour salt in his wounds” guy, but you were good enough at it that J.D. always had a special place in his heart for you. And a special place in his knuckles, which several times he revealed to you in warm intimate moments just before you lost consciousness.

Then James Daniels moved into town. James is as big as Nick is, and James knows how to fight, being a military brat and all. He saw how Nick was terrorizing the kids, and decided to form his own gang, protecting the students, righting J.D.’s wrongs, and generally upholding truth, justice, and the American Way. Oh, say, can you see...

Well, anyways, James was a God-send, and you joined his gang as quick as you could, because as long as James is standing next to you, J.D. and Nick avoid you like the plague. Besides, with Timmy Carroll as part of the group, there’s always someone who falls like a ton of lead to your jokes. With James as Captain Goodness, you as The Comedian, and a special appearance by Timmy Carroll as The Gullible Geek, hanging out with “The Good Guys” (the gang’s name, and you really wish you could convince James to change it to something not nearly so stupid) is a lot of fun.

Still, every silver lining has its dark cloud. J.D. and Nick and Robert Sherman have their own gang called “The Killers,” and they still do whatever they can to corner you or Timmy alone or do what they can to make you look foolish. This afternoon, for example, J.D. and James are going to drag down I-42 in some sort of macho ritual that’s likely to get them both killed. You and Timmy are supposed to be working on James’ car, souping it up for this little escapade. As if you knew anything about cars other than which pedal means gas and which pedal means brakes. Still, James is the guy that protects you, so you should help him out, right?

You’re really starting to wonder about that. Oh, sure, James is the wonder guy, big, strong, handsome and honorable, class president, valedictorian, captain of the football team and starting quarterback. And that really gets to you. You have to settle with being class vice-president, which is a job nobody cares about, vice-captain of the football team, and place kicker. You’re sure that someday, all the students of Edwood High will rush onto the field after a game to carry you off on their shoulders because of that great punt. Sure. Let’s face it, whatever you try to do, James does so much better with half the effort. And to make matters worse, he never really lords it over you. I mean, if he rubbed your face in it, you’d know he was just a hyper-achieving asshole, which you could deal with. But he’s so damned humble about all of his achievements, it makes you want to puke. You put all your effort into doing something, and James walks by, gives a half-hearted try and succeeds so obviously that it puts you to shame. Then he tries to cheer you up. Sometimes you just really want to strangle him.

Now here’s where the strange luck comes in. You were sitting in Pop’s Malt Shop, which is a very appropriate name because your father owns and runs the place, brooding over James recent show at the last football game of the season, where he led the team to a 14-0 victory. Catherine Thomas walked in, saw you sulking, came over to your booth, and asked you what was wrong. Now, normally you don’t think too much about Catherine; she’s a quiet girl who keeps to herself, and nobody knows much about her. But for some reason, you opened your heart to her, spewing out all of the bile and ichor you’ve kept hidden and making no effort to hide your envy of James.

Catherine sat down and told you that she had a perfect way to help you get even with James. She told you about a spellbook her Grandmother had left her that had all sorts of spells that could help make James look like a fool in front of everyone. In retrospect (all new, coming to you in retrospectrlevision!), you should have smiled nicely, ran like hell, and laughed about it with everyone at school the next day. But you were still seething from James being the hero at the football game while you were in your perennial role as the sidekick, and you said it was worth a try.

You and she went up to the mesas outside of town. All the while you were starting to sort of regret going up with her because Wendy, your girlfriend, might find out and suspect something was going on between you and Catherine, and that’s a fight you really don’t want to get into, because you never win a fight with Wendy. She’s always full of facts and evidence and you just give her a flippant comment, and she seethes until you

apologize, and it's never much fun. But there wasn't much you could do with Catherine holding your arm tight and pulling you up to one of the little caves.

Inside, there was a little star drawn on the ground with a *huge* book inside of it. That thing made dictionaries look like pamphlets. Catherine sat down, told you where to sit, and began leafing through it for the right "incantation." Well, she found it before the general spookiness of it all made you bolt, and she showed you the part you were supposed to read. It was in Latin, but you had taken three years of it, so you were able to fumble your way through it while she began reading her side of the page.

And as you were reading, you began to feel this *power* within you, this strange and awful force rising out of your stomach sort of like that beer you tried back in junior high school, but this tasted even fouler, if you can imagine that. And you looked at Catherine, but she was completely taken by what she was doing and swaying to the rhythm of the words and there was nothing you wanted more than to run, run like the wind down the hill and get as far away from this as you possibly could, but that force was still in your chest, pushing its way out, and you had no idea what it might do to you if you tried to push it back in so you just kept reading until like a forty-thousand watt blast of Little Richard it blew itself out of you, and you knew that something really, really bad was about to happen, and so you ran, down the hill and back to town, legs going faster than J.D. had ever gotten them to go, running until you got home and could dive under the bed and hide until the something you had unleashed had gone away.

After the adrenaline wore off, you realized that if something that powerful was going to kill you, it would certainly look under the bed. So you got up and undressed and collapsed into bed, the pure exhaustion of it all overwhelming your fears.

The next morning, you woke up alive and in a single piece. But things were different. Not different in a way you could put your finger on. But different. And you're not sure whether you caused it, it caused itself, or it's all just happenstance. But you've been jumpy over the last few weeks, worrying about what you might have done. J.D.'s been acting more violent lately. Darla Hotchkins, the school nurse, had a very weird look in her eyes when she gave you your annual vaccination. Teresa Kerensky, Nick's younger sister, asked you if you'd like to go up to Lover's Lane sometime, and you didn't even know Teresa knew what Lover's Lane was, let alone want to go there. C.J. Nickels, who runs the Five And Dime in town has been grouchier than ever. Someone stole the Cermonial Throw Pillow from Edwood High. Timmy was in a car accident. Is any of this your fault? Some of it? Or are you just imagining it all?

Lord knows you don't want to deal with Catherine again. She spooks you now, spooks you in a big way. And if she told everybody what you and she did, well, you'd get into some serious trouble. And guess who would come riding in on his white horse to save the day? James. He seems to be the only person unaffected by what you did. Of course. Just your luck.

Stock quote: “Hey, did you hear the one about...”

Mannerisms: Tony is the class clown, the guy always ready with a joke or an insult. Letting your big mouth get you into trouble is highly suggested. Tony has the problem of always being the sidekick to James’ heroics, and would like to be the hero himself once in a while.

People You Know:

J.D. Koln: Leader of The Killers and all-around local rebel. He’s been acting more violent than ever recently, which scares the dickens out of you, whom he’s always been sort of violent to. Make sure you don’t meet him alone in a dark alley.

Nick Kerensky: One of The Killers. Big, brawny, and ready to pound anyone who gets in his way. He’s especially over-protective of his sister; anyone going with Teresa is likely to end up hamburger.

Robert Sherman: One of The Killers. A pretty decent guy, if a little on the daredevil side. You have no idea why he hangs out with J.D. and Nick.

James Daniels: Leader of The Good Guys and all-around all-American boy. He drives you crazy sometimes, but he also keeps you from getting torn to pieces by The Killers.

Timmy Carroll: Class Science Whiz. The standard “head so full of theories it knows nothing about how the world really works” kind of kid. You once told him that Thursdays were Inside Out days, and everyone was required to wear their underwear outside of their pants. Boy, did he fall for that one. You can still get him to turn red by asking him if he still wears boxers with little rocketships on them. He’s one of The Good Guys.

Mark Sturvin: Son of the richest guy in San Inguon, if not Arizona. You once broke into his locker and filled it with “Richie Rich” comic books poised to fall on him when he opened it. That was hysterical.

Mary Jenkins: J.D.’s current squeeze. You have no idea what they see in each other.

Teresa Kerensky: Nick’s younger sister, although they’re both in the same grade. She’s pretty cute, although a bit of a tomboy. Still, no one in his right mind would date her with Nick watching. You’d have better luck dancing on railroad tracks and tangoing with the Phoenix Express.

Catherine Thomas: You used to think she was just a regular girl. You’re really not so sure about her now. Not at all.

Margaret Smith: Class airhead. Wonderful for stumping with regular questions. Only person you know who has to think for a while before she remembers what color her shirt is.

Laura Fetner: Class cheerleader, sexiest girl in the 11th grade, and all-around dreamgirl. Guess who she’s dating? James, of course. You end up with girls like Wendy.

Wendy Mitchell: Class reporter for the school newspaper. Really straightlaced and serious, which is occasionally a serious source of tension. Still, she’s pretty cute and full of all the gossip in class, which gives you plenty of ammo when taking someone down a couple of notches.

Giovanni “Pops” Turrelli: Your father. You and he came to America from Italy after your mother died in the war. You don’t remember her or Italy very much. Pops has done the best job he can to raise you, and you have to admit he’s done a good job.

Adele Siegelski: Ah, good old Principal Siegheilski. Runs the finest jail... er, high school in all of Arizona. One day she’ll take that broomstick out from up her butt and give you a serious thrashing.

Goals:

1. Keep J.D. from stringing you up. Hang around James, torture the Killers with insults until they can’t stand being around you anymore, and keep from being caught alone with no protection.

2. Live it up. Make all the jokes you can, clown, mug, and generally show everyone you really don’t take anything too seriously at all.

3. Show up James. Admittedly, you don’t want to do anything so obvious that he’ll stay out of the way when J.D. and Nick come after you. But still, try to prove to the town that James isn’t as great as everyone thinks, and that you’re better than him in some way. If you’re successful enough, you might even get Laura to go out with you.

4. Keep what you and Catherine did a secret. If you actually did unleash something, you’ll end up in serious trouble, which is the last thing you need. If you didn’t do anything substantial (which you doubt), you’ll just look like a chowderhead. And if Wendy finds out you went to a dark and secluded place with Catherine, you can kiss your ass good-bye.