

Timothy Carroll

“That is the essence of science: ask an impertinent question, and you are well on the way to a pertinent answer.” -Jacob Brownoski

Geez, you hate having to come into the Research Labs real early in the morning. But there's a big presentation tonight, and everybody's got work left to do, so you have to come in at the crack of dawn to help out. Getting up early isn't your strong point, but the extra money you make goes a long way towards buying a burger at Pop's Malt Shop or gas for your car.

Assuming you *had* a car. Well, you did have one. Unfortunately, on the way home from hanging out with James Daniels and Tony Turelli, who are your two best friends in all of Edwood High School, and together you guys have formed a gang, calling yourselves “The Good Guys” and you do all sorts of helpful stuff around town and do your best to stop whatever trouble J.D. and his gang is starting up, and... where were you?

Oh, yeah, on the way home. Anyway, you were driving home when you started thinking about one of the things Dr. Forbes had been talking about. He's been working on some sort of project and he hit a stumbling block, namely that he needed to find some sort of mononuclear hydro-oxy dehydrated chain or such in order to get his project to work. And the thing is about a mononuclear hydro-oxy dehydrated chain (or a MHODC, as you like to call it because calling it a mononuclear hydro-oxy dehydrated chain for very long tends to make it easy for your brain to wander off onto another subject while your mouth is trying to push out these huge names of chemical compounds, and pretty soon you've lost track of exactly where it was you were trying to go, which is why James is really cool to hang around because he sort of understands most of what you're talking about (he is the class valedictorian, after all, which you would have been if they didn't grade gym classes, but you're not really angry about that, because James is a really cool guy, after all. Now what were you talking about?

Oh, yeah. You were driving home and not really paying attention to where you were going because you were trying to figure out some of the properties of a MHODC, when suddenly some idiot driving an Edsel pulled out in front of you, and you turned the wheel so hard to avoid him that you accidentally drove off the road and hit a telephone pole. The car your mother had put aside most of her savings for, that you had saved up from all of your summer jobs for, was a wreck.

Mom was hysterical. She kept jumping back and forth from being really angry at you for having wrecked a car that the two of you had saved up so long for to being really happy that you were all right, especially after Dr. Forbes' wife had died a few days before in a car accident. Finally she calmed down and the two of you worked out a way for either her or James to drive you to work, and she is keeping your license (and your wallet,

because the license is sort of stuck in one of the pockets because when you were younger and kept losing your library card, which was really a major inconvenience because you were at the library so often, and so you took a needle and thread and sewed the pocket just a little bit smaller so that the library card would stay in, which it did, but unfortunately, you stuck your driver's license in that pocket too, and so now it's stuck there and won't come out, so Mom had to take the entire wallet.)

Okay, back to work. Let's see... first project, deliver those missile reports to Dr. Bates. You like working here at the Labs a lot. Dr. Bates, the Lead Scientist, which means he pretty much oversees all of the departments in addition to supervising the Physics Department of the Labs, is a really cool guy to work with. Sure, he's a little absent-minded, but he's one of the most brilliant men you've ever met. And he lets you work at all of the departments, so you're getting to learn more about physics, biology, chemistry and astronomy than you ever would just reading a textbook in class. Sometimes he'll even bounce a problem off of you, to see if you can figure it out! Usually, you can't, but it's still a lot of fun to work with him and try to puzzle it out.

Okay, here are those reports. Now we'll just... oops. Okay, the pages are numbered, so you should be able to put them back in the right order after you pick them up. Oh, dear. The charts aren't numbered. Well, we'll just put them all on the bottom. Dr. Bates is smart enough to put it all together, right? Sure. Now let's just go put them on Dr. Bates' desk. When you first started working here, you had absolutely no idea how he could find anything in his office. Papers were everywhere, little widgets and gadgets that had a part missing were strewn across the desk and the floor, writing on the blackboard occasionally continued onto the wall, stuff like that. But he had a system, and he showed you how it worked. You think you understand it, although you doubt you'd be able to explain it to anyone else. It's pretty complex. Let's see, important information for a current project should go under the third stack of papers from the left underneath the blackboard. Cool. That's one job down.

Okay, next is copying the late-night astronomer's reports into the main log. That's in Dr. Carroll's (known to you as Mom) office. It's really neat sometimes having your mother working for a major research lab. I mean, knowing your mother is doing important stuff and trying to answer the mysteries of the cosmos. On the other hand, working at the same place your mother does can be a bit of a drag, because she's always asking you what sort of work you've been doing, and if you do something wrong in her office, you'll hear about it over and over again for the next two weeks. And this last week, she's been all over you, constantly asking you what sort of things you've been doing for the other departments, seeing how the projects have been going, that sort of thing. I mean, she's only been in charge of the Astronomy department for a week and a half, and it seems like she's already working on becoming Lead Scientist. Still, you know she has it rough. When Dad left ten years ago she had to work constantly just to keep you housed and fed. And the two of you have been moving around a lot, as she tried to find a good, steady job that would support the two of you and let you go off to a good college. Things are pretty calm now, and now that Mom's in charge of a department you two shouldn't have to worry

about money for a while. Of course, you did wreck your car, and you'll be going off to college in a couple of years, so maybe things will still be sort of... whoops.

Okay, didn't break it. Just set it back up on the tripod, and it was watching... check the log... third quadrant. No problem. Just adjust the dial a little... good as new. You really need to watch where you're going more often. Okay, copy over the logs, and you're good to go. Just two jobs left to do. So let's go over to the Biology Department and see what Dr. Forbes wants you to do.

You've only lived in San Inguon for a couple of years. Before that, you lived in various place in New Mexico and California. You were pretty scared when you first came here that you really wouldn't fit in. You had changed schools before, and knew how hard it was for a new kid, especially a shy, brainy new kid to get along. Your fears were confirmed when you met "The Killers."

"The Killers" is J.D. Koln's little gang. J.D. scares the dickens out of you. He's not real tough or real strong, not like Nick Kerensky, another of the Killers who *really* scares you, but J.D. has this attitude, a sort of "I don't care if I live past today, so get out of my way" attitude that makes you get out of his way, because you *definitely* want to live past today. The third member of the Killers is Robert Sherman. He seems like a nice guy, and everybody tells you he's not that bad a person by himself, but he's always hanging around J.D. or Nick, so you've never really met Robert. Anyway, those three saw you at school like you had a sign over you saying "Beat Me Up!" J.D. started harassing you while Robert snickered and Nick cracked his knuckles. You were doing your best to hide in your locker, when James Daniels walked by. As soon as they saw James, Nick pointed him out to J.D. and the three of them walked away as quick as they could. Needless to say, you introduced yourself to him, thanked him for saving you, and hung around him as much as possible.

It turned out that James was kind of new to school as well; his father was just reassigned to Ft. Lucas Rita (which the Research Labs are attached to) a few months before. He's pretty big and athletic (he's nickelback for the football team or something like that) and seems to scare J.D., so you did your best to become friends with him and keep him around you. It wasn't that hard. James is really a nice guy, and he likes listening to you talk about science and explain the mysteries of life in neat little chemical formulas. You two also hang around with Tony "Scooter" Turelli, who is one of the biggest clowns you've ever met. He's always making a joke or a wisecrack, which gets him into trouble. Especially when J.D. is the butt of his joke. That probably explains why he likes to hang around James, too. In any case, you three decided that you should work together to stop J.D. from really doing any damage to anybody, and it's worked. Sort of. Well, actually, it really hasn't. You see, some one stole the Ceremonial Throw Pillow from Edwood High. It's this throw pillow that has embroidered in it the names of all the Edwood High graduates who died in World War I. It was kept in a glass case in the middle of Edwood High, and someone pried the case open and stole the pillow two weeks ago Sunday. You're positive that the Killers are behind it, but nobody has any evidence. If you're going

to prove to J.D. that the Good Guys will stop his mischief, then you'd better find the pillow and prove he stole it.

The other problem is... really a big problem. You see, J.D. has a car. James has a car. You don't, but we've already talked about that. J.D. and Nick like to work on their car. James likes to work on his car. J.D. challenged James to a drag race. Today at two p.m. James agreed. And asked you to help him "soup up" his car. Unfortunately, cars are things you know nothing about. You tried to change your own oil once, and you were sitting in the place where you were supposed to put the pan, because you couldn't really see under the car to the place you were supposed to pull the plug out, and you slid under the car to find the plug, and you found it, oh boy did you find it, and you must have turned it while searching around for it, because when you pull your hand out, the plug came right off the bottom of the oil pan, and you were washing oil out of your hair and brushing it out of your teeth for the next week. Yuck. Where were you? Oh, yeah. So you're supposed to help James "soup up" his car. Great. Well, you'll see what he wants to do, and see if you can do it. I mean, it never hurts to try, right? Well, I mean with most things. Actually, with cars, it might hurt to try. You don't really want to do something that'll ruin the engine, because you *know* how much cars cost, and you really don't want to do something that will completely destroy James' car. And there are other things that it hurts to try. Asking girls out, for example. I mean, you're not a great looking guy, sort of average in a bland kind of way, and you're sure that you can't dance without causing some sort of injury- if not to you, then to whoever you're dancing with. So you're not what the girls in town would really call "a catch." Besides, most of the girls are already going out with someone else. Mary is going out with J.D., Theresa is Nick's younger sister, so no one asks her out unless they want to end up with a few less teeth and a black eye, word about school is that Margaret's going to go to the dance with Mark Sturvin, who's a nice guy if a little quiet, Laura, class cheerleader, is going out with James (of course he gets the most attractive girl in all of Edwood High, just goes to figure), and Wendy is going out with Tony. The only girl left, really, is Catherine Thomas. And you know she hates science, so she'd never go out with you.

Okay, Dr. Forbes' office. Hmm. He's not in. Not real surprising. Ever since his wife, Rachael, died in that car accident, he's been acting kind of weird. I mean, you expect someone who's going through that much grief to act kind of weird, but he's gone beyond that. I mean, when Sparky, your gerbil, passed away you felt like it was the end of the world. You were crying, pleading to God to bring him back, wishing that he were with you, holding your breath until he came back to life, that sort of thing. Of course, you were only seven, so it's sort of the thing that you'd expect. Dr. Forbes is... well, he's just not all there any more. Still, if there were any way you could help him, you would. Before the accident he was a really cool guy. He'd show you life forms growing in test tubes, talk to you about his project, all sorts of things.

Okay, nothing to do in Biology. Now off to... <shudder>... Chemistry.

You really don't like the Chemistry labs. I mean, Dr. Fields (Head of the Chemistry Labs) is imposing enough. He looks at you as if his eyes were lasers and he was trying to burn a hole in your skull, he talks in a bombastic, booming voice, and he treats everyone around him (especially you) as if they were little insects running around and dirtying his house. He's just plain creepy. And the way he blasts that classical music whenever he's working on an experiment- well, it's just plain eerie. Okay, he doesn't seem to be here. Interesting... most of his equipment is gone too. Oh, well. Nothing to do, here eit... <crash>

Whoops. Okay, find a rag... should be a rag here somewhere... clean that up. Luckily the test tube didn't break, it just spilled. So we'll just... Oh dear. Spilled onto the petri dish. Well, we'll just hope that wasn't a real important experiment. Wipe up everything you can, wash out the rag, and pretend that this never happened. Very good.

All in a day's work.

Stock Quote: "Yes, but if you take the hypotenuse of the radical and apply that to Newton's Eighth Law, you get a... <crash> whoops."

Mannerisms: You are the geeky science kid. Ham it up. Talk about things that make no sense. Create Laws of science. Occasionally run off into a tangent so far that no one remembers where you started from. Have fun.

People You Know:

J.D. Koln: Leader of the Killers. A really scary guy. Really dangerous, too. Try to keep him from doing too much mischief, but don't get directly in his way. Not without James by your side.

Robert Sherman: One of the Killers. You don't know him too well.

Nick Kerensky: Biggest guy in all of Edwood high. Not real bright, but he could probably pound you into the dust. Stay out of his way, too.

James Daniels: Leader of the Good Guys. One of your best friends. All-around American kid, smart, brave, and athletic. He protects you from J.D. and Nick.

Tony Turelli: The third Good Guy. Always there with a joke or a wisecrack. A lot of fun to hang around with.

Mark Sturvin: Richest kid in town. Kind of quiet, stays to himself.

Mary Jenkins: J.D.'s girlfriend.

Theresa Kerensky: She's really attractive. You'd love to go out with her. Unfortunately, she's Nick's sister, so going out with her means you might have Nick looking to kill you. He doesn't like people dating his sister. He's a bit overprotective. He's also twice your size.

Catherine Thomas: One of the girls at Edwood High.

Margaret Smith: Another of the girls at Edwood High. She comes off as a bit of an airhead.

Laura Fetner: Head of the Cheerleading squad. She's going out with James.

Wendy Mitchell: Another of the girls at Edwood High. She's going out with Tony.

Dr. Marshall Fields: The tyrant who runs the Chemistry Department. Avoid him.

Dr. Lawrence Bates: He runs the Physics Department. He's a really cool guy.

Dr. Gerald Forbes: He runs the Biology Department. He used to be a really cool guy. Now he's kind of scary.

Dr. Sarah Carroll: Mom. She runs the Astronomy Department.

Adele Sigelski: Principal of Edwood High. She runs the place like it were a concentration camp or something. Well, she's strict and has a German accent. That's about as close to a concentration camp as it really is.

Goals:

1. Help out all of the scientists. Do their odd jobs, get stuff for them, occasionally let them bounce ideas off of you. Remember, you're getting paid for that sort of thing.

2. Help out The Good Guys. Try to keep J.D. from causing too much trouble, find out who stole the Ceremonial Throw Pillow, try and win the drag race, that sort of thing.