

# **Catalyst**

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## ***Contents***

|                         |    |
|-------------------------|----|
| 01 - RISING .....       | 5  |
| 02 - PACKING .....      | 6  |
| 03 - DAWDLING .....     | 7  |
| 04 - WAITING .....      | 8  |
| 05 - BUSSING .....      | 9  |
| 06 - DISEMBARKING ..... | 10 |
| 07 - LISTENING .....    | 11 |
| 08 - CATCHING .....     | 12 |
| 09 - TEXTING.....       | 13 |
| 10 - ANTICIPATING.....  | 14 |
| 11 - COMPUTING.....     | 15 |
| 12 - HELPING .....      | 16 |
| 13 - WONDERING .....    | 17 |
| 14 - FUMBLING.....      | 18 |
| 15 - REGROUPING.....    | 19 |
| 16 - DERIVING .....     | 20 |
| 17 - UNDERSTANDING..... | 21 |
| 18 - CLARIFYING.....    | 22 |
| 19 - DEMYSTIFYING ..... | 23 |
| 20 - QUESTIONING .....  | 24 |
| 21 - BREAKING .....     | 25 |
| 22 - FACEBOOKING .....  | 26 |
| 23 - DEBATING .....     | 27 |
| 24 - GOOGLING.....      | 28 |

|                         |    |
|-------------------------|----|
| 25 - EMBARRASSING ..... | 29 |
| 26 - SPORTING .....     | 30 |
| 27 - INTERRUPTING ..... | 31 |
| 28 - RUNNING .....      | 32 |
| 29 - BOLSTERING .....   | 33 |
| 30 - TALKING .....      | 34 |
| 31 - EATING .....       | 35 |
| 32 - REPLYING .....     | 36 |
| 33 - CONFISCATING ..... | 37 |
| 34 - VENTING .....      | 38 |
| 35 - CALMING .....      | 39 |
| 36 - CLASHING .....     | 40 |
| 37 - JUDGING .....      | 41 |
| 38 - BULLYING .....     | 42 |
| 39 - CONFRONTING .....  | 43 |
| 40 - CONSIDERING .....  | 44 |
| 41 - DISCUSSING .....   | 45 |
| 42 - SETTING .....      | 46 |
| 43 - REACTING .....     | 47 |
| 44 - REELING .....      | 48 |
| 45 - ESCORTING .....    | 49 |
| 46 - REFLECTING .....   | 50 |
| 47 - ANALYSING .....    | 51 |
| 48 - REPORTING .....    | 52 |
| 49 - DECLARING .....    | 53 |
| 50 - REVIEWING .....    | 54 |
| 51 - APOLOGISING .....  | 55 |
| 52 - CONNECTING .....   | 56 |
| 53 - FEELING .....      | 57 |

|                       |    |
|-----------------------|----|
| 54 - RELIVING.....    | 58 |
| 55 - QUIETENING.....  | 59 |
| 56 - EASING .....     | 60 |
| 57 - LEAVING .....    | 61 |
| 58 - REFOCUSING ..... | 62 |
| 59 - CONCLUDING ..... | 63 |

# 01 - *RISING*

The alarm's just sung its song  
i shriek into the day,  
stumble to the lavatory  
busting to have a say.

There's clothes in here somewhere  
so scattered on the floor,  
the smell is not so pungent  
once you've lived in here before.

Searching out the Marmite™  
a muffin there or two,  
skipping past the wheat bran  
which only clogs my poo.

I'd like a cappuccino  
but the maid is on the blink,  
and my cup is surely hiding  
amongst the residents in the sink.

## *02 - PACKING*

Seems they like it when i bring my  
    books and pens and memory USBs,  
teachers are kinda odd that way  
    i guess i'll bring them just to please.

For it's really not much hassle  
    they line up instantly,  
the only challenge is my back pack  
    where in blazes could it be?

Now there was that English homework  
    Miss Smith asked us to do,  
an analysis of modern poetry  
    only our dog came down with flu.

But i'm reminded where i left it  
    my school bag with my shoes,  
downstairs in the laundry  
    where mum last blew a fuse.

## 03 - *DAWDLING*

Time is of the essence  
my mum wants me out the door,  
but there's Facebook and there's Google  
and more YouTube to explore.

But alas my begs and pleading  
come to no avail  
i'm choofed off and worded sternly  
her dance is but a little stale.

The path is long and trudging  
past 50 homes of boring stone,  
grey, dark grey and dusty grey  
some fenced, some with gardens grown.

And again that dog decides it's me  
it needs to fulfil its day,  
chasing me that final block  
friends in stitches, morning matinee.

# 04 - WAITING

Yo bro, gudday and how are ya  
 reverbs around the stop,  
 there's Jim and James and Jack  
 with weekend adventures there to swap.

Stories exchanged of viewing, gaming,  
comedy and raunchy music clips,  
skateboard parking, winning and losing it  
and dreams of legendary skating rips.

So we act on a little Frisbee®  
to show off, or just for the appeal,  
we skill up on a little technique  
inside-out, outside-in, scoober and the  
wheel.

James spins it a little high  
     with a car now swerving off the road,  
 ducking behind the bags and bushes  
     brake lights red, someone ready to implode.

## 05 - *BUSSING*

Saved by the bus arriving  
i'm now scrounging for a little change,  
then sitting down the back seats  
so the driver's out of range.

James starts spinning bull dust  
thinks he's better than he is,  
his athletics are not much more than dodgy  
and he cost us another Fris'.

Meanwhile Jim has started freaking  
with a maths test on today,  
he's bouncing off the window, and  
his coherence has gone astray.

So i offer him my service  
maths has always been my thing,  
we work a couple of problems  
till he starts to get the swing.

## 06 - *DISSEMBARKING*

Pulling up in the car park  
the school yard's a sea of hair,  
long and short, red and green  
even a skin-head out to scare.

Slowly we collect our stuff  
and meander off the bus,  
the driver's looking frazzled  
we can't understand his fuss.

But indifference turns to troubled  
on seeing Craig waiting there for me,  
what's his call this morning  
what drama could there be?

He seems a little agitated  
like he hasn't slept a wink  
or maybe he's copped an ear-full  
or maybe his luck's just in the sink.

## 07 - *LISTENING*

See Craig has been a bully  
for as long as we have known,  
maybe it's in his genes, his disposition  
or the way his dad has him sown.

But i seemed to get a break with him  
found a way to make it through,  
Craig still spins on me occasionally  
but i know just what to do.

We have this kinda arrangement  
when he's somewhat in a bind,  
he comes to me and lets it out  
lets it spill, lets it all unwind.

And i don't let it eat me  
i don't take it personal,  
mostly i just listen and be there  
accept his irrational unconditional.

## 08 - *CATCHING*

Today we chat around the thing  
but the thing is not quite clear,  
sort of about school, a girl, class,  
a test, or something we should all fear.

But then Craig finds a moment  
of calm, finds a spot of clarity,  
so i suggest we could join the others  
play some footy, burn some energy.

All good, we butt in on their touch  
though there is some general hesitancy,  
the guys are often a little grey  
with Craig – sometimes it's catastrophe.

But things go fine this morning  
right through to the bell,  
then we make our separate ways  
off to class and pending hell.

## 09 - *TEXTING*

My phone takes a moment buzzing  
i dutifully survey the grounds,  
check no teacher's peering  
as phones are not allowed in bounds.

The text incoming is from Simon  
a mate at a neighbour school,  
a new season TV is due out any day  
so far it's all been pretty cool.

I text back my uncertainty  
and my hope that release is soon,  
moments pass and another buzz  
'no prob, catch ya later this afternoon'.

I can't survive without SMS  
and i can't believe in school it's banned,  
they hassle us to communicate  
yet confiscate the means we have at hand.

## *10 - ANTICIPATING*

The time is nigh, we're all  
gathered dishevelled outside the room,  
locked out for security  
with a general sense of gloom.

But we're here and we're present  
and that's all that really counts,  
phones on silent, all dutiful  
brains on the ready – so tantamount.

There's all that stuff to tell us  
and things that we should do,  
as life is but a classroom  
and what they tell us must accrue.

Some teachers seem to have it  
and they seem to come in real,  
others kinda miss it  
and our time is what they steal.

# *11 - COMPUTING*

On time the teacher cruises in  
with purpose in her stride,  
it's computing first up this morning  
we saunter our way inside.

Julie's in this class with me  
and that immediately lifts my day,  
she has that sense of special  
so much so i just can't bring myself to say.

I've liked her since the first day  
just can't place what i adore,  
seems everything she says and does  
just speaks to me, connects me more and  
more.

Though this all seems to cripple me  
i've barely stammered out one word,  
almost like i get possessed  
helplessly speechless – it's so absurd.

## 12 - HELPING

So i sit not so far away  
     maybe we'll manage a word or two,  
 though what would at least make my day  
     is a glance, a smile, or something that was  
                                 true.

I don't think you like computers much  
they seem to elude you every week,  
you seem more into people  
you captivate, every time you speak.

There's been the odd occasion  
when you've floundered with what to do,  
i've waited till you've stepped away  
then snuck in and corrected things for you.

If i could carry a conversation  
i'd offer you my time,  
help clarify what's been missing  
clear the path, remove the climb.

## 13 - *WONDERING*

But it makes me really wonder  
if i even have a chance,  
you have such a sense of grace  
a presence, and an air of elegance.

I've not so much to offer  
though i'd be just true to you,  
listen to your thoughts and feelings  
and help out with what i knew.

You seem to be pretty smart  
your friends often seek advice,  
you always seem so giving  
your time you'll often sacrifice.

But i know there's no great point  
sitting dreaming of what could be,  
i need at least to speak to you  
finding courage would be the key.

## *14 - FUMBLING*

The teacher's now talking word processing  
some of the methods and functionality,  
there's actually a thing or two in this  
like changing case with Shift-F3.

She asks us about document sections  
asks what they could possibly gain,  
i offer up my service  
but my hand is raised in vain.

The answer given is not so clear  
i realise we could be here all day,  
though she now takes up my offer, i open with:  
“Headers and footers might be managed in  
this way.”

But as i go to elaborate  
i'm caught by Julie's stare,  
i stammer just a moment  
that's gotta be unfair.

# *15 - REGROUPING*

But then i manage to find my focus  
and i block out her impede,  
“Orientation, headers and footers  
can be sectioned where they need”.

I mention as you add each section  
you can alter these types of things,  
and that none of this is possible  
without the features that it brings.

You see YouTube’s quite the teacher  
when you need to find your way,  
a wealth of skill and information  
when something’s a little grey.

The teacher accepts my answer  
and elaborates all the way,  
i check back now with Julie  
but she’s fully looked away.

# 16 - DERIVING

Closing out the lesson

we get to practise what's been taught,  
we are surely now empowered  
to embody living colour in our report.

The bell chimes in, singing us its song

we're quickly up and heading out the door,  
keying up for proof and computation  
maths theory , derivation and yet another  
law.

I don't find it quite so awful

though there are many who don't agree,  
it's odd when something comes so natural  
to see what others don't seem to see.

They say it has to do with brains

and the side you favour most,  
i guess it's why i can't draw at all  
or hammer a cross beam to a post.

17 -

## *UNDERSTANDING*

Building on and hoping we took on  
his underpinning  $d/dx$  instruction,  
the teacher's now bringing us the joy  
the relevance of the derivation of a  
function.

I find it pretty neat how this  
all ties in with chemistry and physics,  
though my mates just spin out  
and start checking out helpful clinics.

It's now that i think i finally see  
why we did so many years,  
of algebra and geometry  
and all that stuff of engineers.

So while i'm soaking up this stuff  
and finding light bulbs switching on,  
i watch others just glazing over  
and wishing they were gone.

## *18 - CLARIFYING*

So we've got bricks enough for 60 metres  
for walls, for a house, in which to reside,  
what shape would be the best  
for us to enjoy the space inside?

The teacher draws a diagram  
and heads off down the creek,  
he's made a blue somewhere  
and Craig is busy giving cheek.

I throw in my 2 cents worth  
hoping to alleviate his plight,  
the teacher pauses and considers  
then acknowledges that i'm right.

I get the usual backlash,  
how i'm basically a square,  
but sadly i can't help myself  
it's a burden i must bear.

## *19 - DEMYSTIFYING*

Now with the example fully drawn  
and the explanation fully given,  
we're set the usual 4000 problems similar  
no care, no love, just slave driven.

With cheek aside and now unstitched  
Craig cruises over and grabs a chair,  
asks to start with question one  
i take a breath – i guess it's time to share.

So i start out from the top  
break it down and work it through,  
jot down each step as we go  
hoping he'll catch on with what to do.

With the next, i look to Craig  
to prompt me with what to do,  
he has a fair run at it  
and i realise i need to give him his due.

## 20 - QUESTIONING

There's something that's been bothering  
when the house turns out a square,  
i call the teacher over  
and i say it's not quite clear.

I get that a square beats a rectangle  
but the shape we really need,  
is a circle and here i've got the numbers  
to qualify my feed.

I add that the derivative  
doesn't really make things clear,  
limited by our assumptions  
and the methods we revere.

The teacher seems dumbfounded  
just looks at me rather blankly,  
he finally nods, agrees, then walks away  
i start to fear, am i now looking at a B?

## 21 - *BREAKING*

Working through the problems, the teacher  
even demonstrates one or two,  
i'm sure we did around 32 hundred  
before the bell gave us our cue.

It's recess time and there's now  
things that must be done,  
like spending time with friends  
and having a bit of fun.

The crowds are escaping classrooms  
and congregating now en-mass,  
yawning and distempered faces,  
some being a little crass.

Yet in the crowded exodus  
i notice Julie's dropped her book,  
i sneak by and return it  
before she gets a chance to look.

## 22 - *FACEBOOKING*

And then off to my secret 'office'  
away from prying teacher eyes,  
to log in to my Facebook  
to respond to and revise.

Catching up on newsfeeds  
and messages i've been sent,  
message back where i need to  
and maybe even have a vent.

It seems my mate's had issue  
with some guys just down the road,  
something about a wager  
and some money that he's owed.

There are a few other feeds  
though it's just another day,  
nothing much to comment on  
so there's not much call to stay.

## 23 - *DEBATING*

Outside i catch up with my mates  
seems they're stuck in deep debate,  
all over zombie facts  
what they declare and what they fabricate.

Jim is driving home the fact  
that zombies must eventually die,  
they must run out of juice  
fall down and petrify.

Science no doubt would agree  
would support this on principle,  
thermodynamics would weigh in here  
even though zombie animation is purely  
fanciful.

So not to cause upset  
i note that Jim may have a point,  
while i've not ever seen it mentioned  
it's a novel counterpoint.

## 24 - *GOOGLING*

But all i manage to achieve  
    is heat and collars steaming,  
they're coming out of their corners  
    asserting i must be dreaming.

So after a quick surveillance  
    we all rip out mobile phones,  
it's Google to the rescue  
    and validation of zombie knowns.

We find several definitive sources  
    and we start to check the facts,  
but just as we seem to be zoning  
    a teacher comes cruising and distracts.

She sees us looking a little suss  
    but we don't think that she's seen,  
so we accept that resolution is pending  
    until we get a chance to reconvene.

## 25 - EMBARRASSING

I sit down with the group  
and take time to scan the scene,  
only then do i realise that you're within earshot  
(*Julie*)  
and have witnessed our whole routine.

You're sitting with Alison and Sarah, and  
you're all  
looking and whispering in quiet tones,  
i feel my face go the flavour of watermelon  
drawing heat while icing all my bones.

I sneak another look  
and you're checking up on me,  
i don't know what to think  
so i look away sheepishly.

This world has no justice  
when it comes to impressing you,  
i'm lacking in sophistication  
to be fair, i haven't got a clue.

## 26 - *SPORTING*

But alas recess has ended  
and we're off to take the field,  
phys ed is next for a double (lesson)  
and my blood has just congealed.

Thoughts of Julie and my shame  
will have to wait an hour or two,  
maybe deliberate better strategies  
while i slog this session through.

I'm not the fastest runner  
but i seem to hold my own,  
not always the most co-ordinated  
with some classics now well known.

Though i seem to have those days  
where maybe breakfast hits the spot,  
i'm all over every move and sprint  
brain connects body and my skill's running  
hot.

## *27 - INTERRUPTING*

Now changed and stretched and ready  
we make our way out onto the field,  
with a couple of laps to warm  
before today's torture is to be revealed.

I'm keeping pace with Jimmy  
we're usually an even match,  
we've long since reached acceptance  
of runners we'll never catch.

Meantime Craig is victim-searching  
and he's found a guy to taunt,  
he's fully winding up the verbal  
and the kid's looking a little gaunt.

I speed up to join them  
and i challenge Craig to pace,  
he's a sucker for competition  
leaves his mark and starts to race.

## 28 - *RUNNING*

It's knocking out the wind in me  
my keeping pace with Craig,  
he's physically my better, my motives  
are now a little vague.

I'm finding i'm now drawing  
on reserves to beat the drain,  
soaking up what air i can, and  
distracting myself from pain.

I see the end is coming near  
my legs are molten fire,  
i'm not so sure i'll make it  
things are looking pretty dire.

It's not so much a gift for me  
to let Craig take out the win,  
he'll just slander me a little / a lot  
and then lend me a violin.

## 29 - *BOLSTERING*

It takes a good few minutes  
    collapsed there on the ground,  
to catch my breath and slow the heart  
    and let my muscles all rebound.

Craig is still giving heaps  
    though he's puffing much like me,  
i look up at him and smile  
    and i rejoice in his jubilee.

“Man, you were always pretty fast...”  
    i stammer between puff and pant,  
he smiles with pride and victory  
    and bathes in being dominant.

The others follow us in  
    and we wait to hear what's next,  
the teacher announces cricket, sadly  
    Craig's now looking a little vexed.

## 30 - *TALKING*

Craig and i draw the same team, now  
on the bench waiting our turn to bat,  
we can play almost any sport  
but cricket!? – Craig's just not into that.

He's again a little toey  
and i ask him "What's the go?"  
he looks at me uncertain  
not sure whether i really want to know.

"Something at home?" i add  
and he kinda looks away,  
"Dad's been dumping," he says  
"he thinks i deliberately disobey."

"Anything i can do?" i ask  
knowing i'm doing all i really can,  
he shakes his head and frowns  
"really like to stick it to that orangutan!"

## 31 - *EATING*

So cricket was a bore  
and we lost to the other team,  
now finished, packed and changed  
heading out, i'm searching for ice-cream.

The tuck shop sells me an ice-block  
and i head out to find a pew,  
then drag out my home-made lunch  
and eat it with the crew.

They're talking about the weekend  
and the party out at Steve's,  
who's going, who's not, who's taking who  
it's a roll-call no one believes.

I guess i'm probably going,  
love to go with you know who,  
but i've got to convince my mum  
that my friends are not taboo.

## 32 - *REPLYING*

I soon make a beeline for my 'office'  
to catch up with things on-line,  
i Facebook-in, message out  
and check that all is fine.

Again no real surprises  
just a few things i need to close,  
comment here, comment there  
couple of newsfeeds to diagnose.

And then Craig seems to call me  
and i wonder 'what the hell?',  
it's only been 20 minutes  
since we parted at the bell.

He's wondering where i've got to  
he wants to catch and talk,  
i tell him i'll meet him  
i log off but find i start to baulk.

## 33 - *CONFISCATING*

Without a doubt he's clingy, today  
more so than i'm used,  
things must have been all drama, overnight  
his father must have really got him juiced.

But before our call is ended  
i lose Craig there off the line,  
i hear a teacher spitting spanners  
and doing the porcupine.

The line goes dead, i wander out  
knowing his cover's been blown,  
the teacher's left him standing  
and made off with his mobile phone.

No surprise that he's spewing  
and he's gone that shade of red,  
if things weren't bad before  
i now can only start to dread.

## 34 - *VENTING*

“Man, i’m really sorry.”  
is all i can think to say,  
but i don’t think that he’s hearing  
he’s looking for unsuspecting prey.

Two younger students pass us by  
and Craig quickly picks one out,  
puts out his leg, trips him up  
and proceeds to yell and shout.

I step out in front of Craig,  
“Hey man, that’s not so cool,  
if you need to pick on someone,  
then maybe i can be your fool.”

The flame inside dims a little  
though it’s not gone fully out,  
Craig follows with some ugly phrases  
We both know what it’s about.

## 35 - *CALMING*

I realise that there's little point  
in telling Craig to calm,  
the colours got to ease away  
and he's got to just disarm.

So i make a point to stop  
and listen to his rant,  
watching as it washes off  
trying just to be tolerant.

He eventually stops and sighs  
then looks me in the eye,  
"I'm sorry man." i say again  
and he almost starts to cry.

We sit down in silence  
it's the best thing we can do,  
i wish that i could save him, i wonder  
maybe he wishes that i could too.

## 36 - *CLASHING*

We sit for 5 or 10  
as Craig begins to find his calm,  
then as before i suggest some footy  
it couldn't do us any harm.

So we catch up with a game  
and again i plead his case,  
Craig's to be on his best behaviour  
in finding us both a place.

All goes well for several tackles  
before James strikes a little hard,  
some words, then some profanity  
Craig has now fully dropped his guard.

Craig stops abruptly  
and throws the ball at James,  
then turns and walks away, swearing  
and calling everybody names.

## 37 - *JUDGING*

Judgement pours out of everyone  
there's a barrage of spite and hate,  
i can reasonably understand the dominant view  
it's more than most should tolerate.

James is spitting chips and fuming  
dropping the odd choice word,  
he demands Craig not be welcomed back  
even thinking he'd changed is absurd.

Jim calls for a recommence  
and someone plays the ball,  
the agro is quickly over-ridden / replaced  
by another blue, another friendly brawl.

I look to see where Craig  
has gone to find his peace,  
maybe another unsuspecting victim  
is yet to suffer his emotional release.

## 38 - *BULLYING*

And with no real surprise  
that's exactly what i see,  
Craig has started now at Alison  
fool am i, i decide i need to referee.

Excusing myself from the game  
i cross to where Craig's in full slam,  
"Craig, there's somewhere we need to be..."  
i say, not caring whether he gives a damn.

I grab him by the arm  
to lead him away,  
he turns and has a swing  
i duck out of the way.

"Craig it's me..." i add  
as i let his arm go free,  
"I think there's a teacher coming,  
let's find somewhere else to be."

## 39 - *CONFRONTING*

The distraction is a winner  
Craig walks away with me,  
looking out for the teacher  
neither one of us can see.

“Craig, we can’t do this all day,” i say  
“the drama’s got to settle down,  
you need to let stuff go  
before we both completely drown.”

He thrashes out at me  
there’s frustration still to ease,  
i stand and take it, knowing  
it’s what’s needed to appease.

He finally breaks the onslaught  
stops, and then lets out a scoff,  
“Sorry man, I’m just so flaming angry,  
I just don’t know how to turn it off.”

## 40 - *CONSIDERING*

And then i find myself more settled  
and clarity finds a little light,  
“What’s the go with you and Alison?” i ask.  
“You like her, am i not right?”

Craig shies away  
and he goes a shade of pink,  
“Uh-huh.” he admits,  
“But I’m sure she just thinks I stink.”

“Maybe there’s a better way to go...” i start,  
trying to think how he might repair,  
“Firstly, don’t go near her when you’re angry...  
but maybe show her how much you care.”

“When your dad’s not got you on the ropes  
you can be a pretty decent guy,”  
i ask: “What can we do to stop him?  
There must be something we can try.”

## 41 - *DISCUSSING*

But before we get a chance to get into it  
the bell interrupts our flow,  
“Chemistry’s next i think.” i say,  
we seek out our bags and start to go.

“Maybe the counsellor can help you.” i say,  
knowing there’ll be some doubt,  
“I don’t know.” Craig shrugs.  
“What happens if my dad finds out?”

“I think they have to keep things confidential.”  
i say feeling fairly sure,  
“I guess I could give it a go.  
Anything stupid he says, I could just  
ignore.”

We make our way out to the lab,  
joining Jim, Julie and Alison,  
there’s uncomfortable silence, no surprise  
no doubt they’re feeling, Craig ought be  
gone.

## 42 - *SETTING*

The door then opens and we shuffle in  
equipment on ready, there's things to do,  
The teacher presents an intro spiel  
Then sets instructions we must read  
through.

Jack and Jim are a little cautious  
with Craig directing, setting things out,  
everything would be more settled, i believe  
if everyone knew what it was all about.

Craig asks me quietly  
so the others cannot hear,  
“What do you think I should say to her?  
What would sound sincere?”

“Maybe an apology would be the thing,”  
i add: “it'd have to go some way.  
But then i'd let things settle,  
Maybe follow up again on another day.”

## 43 - *REACTING*

So just minutes later

Craig seizes his opportunity,  
crosses over to Alison's bench  
and readies a heart-felt apology.

However he catches Alison unawares  
there's shock, surprise, and then she  
freaks,

“What the hell do you want?  
Just leave me alone!” she shrieks.

And before another word is said  
Alison grabs a filled beaker by its base,  
pitching it at Craig, who ducks  
instead hitting Jim fair in the face.

Jim screams as the beaker breaks  
cuts and slices, it's just insane,  
he clasps his hands across his face  
then collapses to the floor in shock and  
pain.

## 44 - *REELING*

And then all is silent  
    bar Jim - so much in grief,  
the teacher rushes over  
    she's beyond disbelief.

She screams out to the lab assist  
    who rushes in to address her need,  
rushes back and grabs the phone  
    plus a first aid kit to stem the bleed.

I now feel completely sick  
    as i watch in horror, stare down at Jim,  
What the hell? How can this be?  
    He didn't do anything! Not fair, not him!

“How can i help?” i ask.  
    It's Jim! I've got to know!  
The teacher looks and sees my need,  
    “The dustpan – that glass has gotta go.”

## 45 - *ESCORTING*

It seems like forever  
before the medical team attend,  
they lift Jim onto a stretcher, and tend  
to wounds they too can't comprehend.

Alison and Craig are sent to the office, there's  
gonna be hell to pay,  
i ask if i can go with -  
i feel i had a part to play.

Julie offers to support Alison  
fearing her being left alone,  
Craig no doubt draws no trust  
his aggression now well known.

We walk and arrive in silence  
the shock's still so real,  
reality fully begins to settle in  
Alison breaks down, reflecting how we feel.

## 46 - *REFLECTING*

Craig has not said a word  
his head is bowed in shame,  
so many events today have brought us here  
we now must fully accept the blame.

I feel i've been sitting by him  
for most of the day,  
not really achieving anything  
just running from fray to fray.

I wonder how else  
it might have been,  
had i not stepped in repeatedly  
could outcomes not have been foreseen.

But answers are not forthcoming  
i guess i feel i did my best,  
the odds were stacked against us  
independent of my invest.

## 47 - *ANALYSING*

The principal calls the girls in  
to listen to their account,  
i realise that it's now  
that the truth is paramount.

“So what are you going to say?”  
i whisper now to Craig,  
“Not sure,” he mutters back  
looking and sounding rather vague.

“All I see is Jim in all that pain.” Craig adds.  
“And he'll never look the same.  
It's all my fault and I have to live with that.  
Nothing fixes this... I'm completely to  
blame.”

“Man, you were trying to fix things  
with Alison – it's been a tough day,  
maybe tell the principal everything  
and see what she has to say.”

## 48 - *REPORTING*

Moments later the girls are out  
Alison now fully lost to tears,  
Julie is there to comfort, can only  
share her regrets, her fears.

Craig and i go in  
the principal looks worrisome,  
“I assume I don’t need to tell you,” she starts,  
“just how serious this has become.”

“No.” we say,  
for we know full well,  
Craig starts with the night before  
it’s quite a complex drama to tell.

As he closes out his admission  
i nod and agree with what’s been said,  
“It’s all my fault,” he adds,  
“I wish I’d been hurt instead.”

## 49 - *DECLARING*

The principal follows us out  
as we sit down on our chairs,  
she pauses and looks at each of us  
“A very serious series of events!”  
she finally declares.

“I’ll be calling in your parents,”  
she says to Craig and Alison,  
“We’ll discuss your respective actions,  
and see what must be done.”

“I believe we’ll need the counsellor  
to meet and chat with you separately,  
There’ll be further action beyond that...  
plus Jim and his parents  
will need your sincere apology.”

“You two now should go,” she directs  
and points to Julie and to me,  
i look at Craig and touch his arm  
in the hope of relieving some misery.

## 50 - *REVIEWING*

I'm not sure his misery could be saved  
i feel very much that i failed,  
was crisis somehow destined?  
had salvation already sailed?

And then there was Alison  
who it seems was already too far wound,  
for Craig to ever reach  
any effort was destined to compound.

She reasonably assumed further insult  
as Craig made his approach,  
and she acted in accordance with  
Craig making unreasonable encroach.

And then from out of left of field  
a square house strangely comes to mind,  
any processing or action may be ill-considered  
if our assumptions are fairly blind.

## *51 - APOLOGISING*

Julie checks with Alison,  
    “Will you be alright?”  
Alison nods then looks up at Craig,  
    “I think we’re done with this fight.”

Craig looks up  
    and catches Alison’s eye,  
“I’m really, really sorry,” he offers.  
    “I didn’t mean to terrify.”

Craig drops his head again –  
    there's no other recourse,  
all that anger has now  
    been replaced by true remorse.

Julie and Alison look at each other  
    and then look across at me,  
i just nod in agreement  
    they read my sincerity.

## *52 - CONNECTING*

Julie and i rise and leave  
and slowly make our way to class,  
it's now last lesson and  
any further learning will be a farce.

“You’ve been a pretty good friend.”  
you offer, looking across at me,  
“I’m not sure he deserves it,” you add.  
“But it’s good he offered an apology.”

“Yes – that’s actually what he was trying to do  
when he caught Alison by surprise.  
He’s been a wreck all day, though  
i'm not sure anything justifies.”

I then realise that i've  
managed a full sentence, maybe two,  
pretty sad that it's taken this  
to finally connect with you.

## 53 - *FEELING*

“Do you want to sit and talk?” i ask  
as we make our way through the quad,  
“Okay,” you agree – to my surprise  
you accept and give me a nod.

“You’re a good friend too.” i say.  
as we find ourselves a table,  
“You’re always helping your friends –  
doing what you can, whenever you are  
able.”

I pause to check on your response  
not so sure just how you’ll feel,  
you sort-of smile and look across at me  
your look is true – it’s real – somewhat  
surreal.

I sort-of smile back to acknowledge, despite  
feeling this day’s just been too real,  
the day has left me with a barrage of thoughts,  
somewhat overwhelmed with what i feel.

## 54 - *RELIVING*

You say: "I feel quite sick and very sad  
with what has happened to Jim."  
And then you add: "This should never  
ever have happened to him!"

"I agree." i reply. "It's completely not fair!  
"None of this was Jim's fault."  
We sit in silence for a moment  
reliving the whole assault.

"I wonder if he will now have scars!?"  
you say, your voice so full of fear;  
i'm not sure what i should say  
as you begin to shed a tear.

I reach out my hand, place it on yours  
and look you in the eye,  
and then before i realise  
i find i'm almost about to cry.

## 55 - QUIETENING

I now feel a little uncertain -  
quite unsure of what to do,  
though i realise we both need this moment  
to see this feeling though.

Then i slowly move my hand away  
and you kind-of shrug off all the hurt,  
you start to wipe your eyes  
with a sleeve of your shirt.

“I wonder when we’ll be able to visit!?”  
i ask: “To see just how Jim feels.”  
“Maybe in a week or so,” you offer,  
“Hopefully his face then fully heals.”

We take another moment  
to just reflect on things in silence,  
my mind wanders the events, the actions,  
and their gut-wrenching consequence.

## *56 - EASING*

Slowly our concerns and feelings -  
our sadness and our fear,  
start to ease, start to  
feel a little less severe.

We start to chat about the other events  
that brought things to where they came,  
i admit to feeling a little guilty,  
that i likely was part to blame.

That had i not interfered  
things may not have gotten out of hand.  
You are not convinced, and say:  
“You had no way of knowing how things  
today would stand.”

You add: “We can’t know everything,  
everything that’s going to be,  
We just do the best we can,  
in dealing with what we see.”

## *57 - LEAVING*

As we sit and chat to the final bell,  
i'm in awe of the things you say,  
you're caring and you're clever  
and i only wish that we could stay.

But with the bell, you pause a moment  
and tell me you have to leave;  
and then before i can collect my thoughts  
you're asking me if i'll be at Steve's.

"I hadn't yet decided," i admit,  
not sure just what to say;  
"It'd be good to see you there." you add,  
"I think it's on Saturday..."

And with a quick kiss on my cheek  
you turn and walk away,  
i find again i'm completely lost for words  
and my emotions have gone astray.

## 58 - *REFOCUSING*

So i make my way out to the bus  
i'm feeling pretty tired,  
many events have worn me down  
and my emotions have me wired.

Sadly there was the friend i couldn't help  
and another i couldn't save,  
and with these in mind, now some guilt  
for a connection that i crave.

But i find my thoughts refocus  
on those most affected by events,  
for Jim, i have to wonder  
what'll be the long term consequence?

And i really hope that Craig and Alison  
will now get the help they should,  
and that their underpinning issues  
are identified and truly understood.

## *59 - CONCLUDING*

It seems sometimes that our choices  
    have factors hidden deep,  
it would be nice if we could filter out  
    those factors we do not wish to keep.

To strengthen who we are  
    and who we wish to be,  
help us make the best of judgements  
    with events we can't foresee.

It seems our lives are bound by friendships  
    and the connections that we make,  
by the things we say and do  
    and the risks we often take.

Sometimes we can't predict  
    all the outcomes of what we plan,  
i guess all we can really hope to do  
    is to just do the best we can.