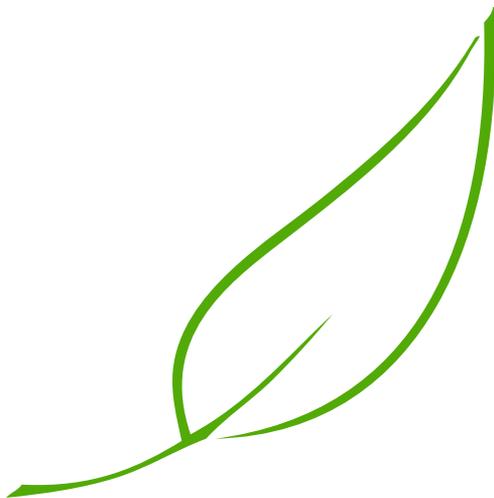


FRANKEN-BRO

by Ken Bradbury



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A scene for three boys: James, Pete, and Frank

Frank is asleep, lying on two chairs or a table. Pete and James enter, whispering.

PETE: James, this is crazy.

JAMES: I know.

PETE: It'll never work.

JAMES: Maybe not.

PETE: Then why are you doing it?

JAMES: Because I need the grade! If I don't come up with a science project, Mr. Anderson's gonna flunk me.

PETE: It'd help if you'd do your homework.

JAMES: Yeah, I know that now. Look, you gotta help me, Pete.

PETE: But what if something goes wrong?

JAMES: Big deal.

PETE: But it's your own brother!

JAMES: I know. That's why I'm going to try it on him.

PETE: But it could be dangerous!

JAMES: Who cares? He's just my brother. I've got another one downstairs.

PETE: James!

JAMES: Kidding. Look, just help me get this thing hooked up. *(They move to above the sleeping Frank.)* Mr. Anderson's gonna just love this if it works.

PETE: If it works.

JAMES: Okay, we've got to hook these battery terminals up to Frank's head.

PETE: You're kidding.

JAMES: Look Pete, I think I've got this worked out. I've been studying up on it.

PETE: You? Studying?

- JAMES:** Yeah, I got the idea from a video game. You hook these electrodes to a person's head, you run a cable down to your dad's car battery, then you flip the switch.
- PETE:** You'll fry his brains!
- JAMES:** He's my brother. Brothers don't have brains. Here. Hold this cord.
- PETE:** This could turn out really bad.
- JAMES:** The worst he'll get is a little shock.
- PETE:** You could blow his head off!
- JAMES:** So I'll get him a new one at Wal-Mart.
- PETE:** James!
- JAMES:** Kidding! Come on. According to my figures, this will turn my brother Frank into a monster.
- PETE:** Monster?
- JAMES:** I mean a monster who will do what I tell him. Look, Frank's always picking on me.
- PETE:** Frank's a nice guy.
- JAMES:** Yeah, but he's always making me pick up my room and do my homework and chores. He's a pain.
- PETE:** Sounds like he's trying to make you better.
- JAMES:** Just wait 'til you see what I make of him. Okay. Everything's attached. Now I'll pull the switch.
- PETE:** I don't like this, James. Frank's a really nice guy. I mean, he's class president, and he works at the homeless shelter. He's perfect! I don't think you ought to be messing with him.
- JAMES:** Hey, when the science project's over, I'll just turn off the switch. Okay ... you ready?
- PETE:** No!
- JAMES:** Good! Here goes! (*He throws an imaginary switch and Frank's body begins to shake ... then shakes violently.*)
- PETE:** Oh, no! Stop it, James! Turn it off!
- JAMES:** I think I broke the switch. Oh boy ... Mom's gonna be mad.

(Frank's body, still jerking, begins to slowly rise from the "bed." He comes to a sitting position, his eyes open wide. He jerkily comes to a standing position.)

PETE: Stop it, James!

JAMES: Man, I'm gonna get a great grade! *(to Frank ... shouting)* Can you hear me?

FRANK: *(in a very artificially horrible voice)* Yes ... Master.

JAMES: Master! Did you hear that! It works! It really works!

PETE: I'm leaving.

JAMES: *(grabbing Pete)* No! You can't go. What if he goes crazy? I need help.

PETE: You need therapy.

JAMES: *(to Frank)* Raise your right arm! *(Frank jerkily does so.)* Raise your left arm! *(Frank does so.)*

PETE: Wow!

JAMES: What—is—your—name—Frank?

FRANK: *(a quizzical look at James, then)* Frank.

JAMES: Amazing!

PETE: But you just told him that ...

JAMES: What's an algebraic equation?

FRANK: An algebraic equation is two valid mathematical expressions that are joined with the equal sign.

PETE: Is that right?

JAMES: Don't know. Sounds smart. The capital of Norway!

FRANK: Oslo.

JAMES: When was George Washington born?

FRANK: On his birthday.

PETE: Wow!

JAMES: This is so cool! Clean my room! *(Frank looks at him.)* Go ahead! This place is a mess and you ... I mean my brother ... always says I'm a slob. Clean it up!

FRANK: *(mechanically going around the room and picking up various items)* Dirty socks ... dirty shoes ... pop cans ... someone else's homework ...

JAMES: Hey! Give me that! *(He takes it.)*

FRANK: Spiderman underwear ...



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