

Atticus Spit

By

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This is based in a prompt a creative writing student  
assigned me . . .

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INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A full high school class sits watching the movie version of To Kill a Mockingbird. The teacher sits at his desk watching the class watch the movie. A boy sits in the front row, and, as the movie scene intensifies, he leans in, watching closely. His classmates either text, chat, or watch with disinterest.

The movie scene climaxes when Bob Ewell walks out of the courthouse and spits in Atticus's face. Atticus wipes the spit and Ewell walks away.

BOY  
(sitting up straight)  
Stop it!

TEACHER  
What?

The class stops their passivity. They want to see how this real-life scene will unfold.

BOY  
Turn it off!

He jumps up from his seat. The class gets excited.

TEACHER  
What's wrong?

BOY  
This movie is trash, man.

TEACHER  
You knew what would happen, right?  
Didn't we read the book?

BOY  
No, man. It's not the same. I  
would NEVER let someone do that to  
me. Never!

The boy gets up and grabs his backpack. He heads for the closed door.

TEACHER  
Wait a second!

The boy opens the door and slams it shut, walking out into the hallway.

TEACHER  
(to class)  
Somebody got up on the wrong side  
of the bed!

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

A small crowd of students notices boy from down the hall.

BOY  
(loudly, but to himself)  
That was trash.

The kids down the hall are silent as they watch his outburst  
but begin snickering amongst themselves.

BOY  
(walking toward the small  
group of student)  
You got a problem?

BOY 2  
(to his friends)  
What a psycho.

GIRL  
Just ignore him. He's just  
spazzing out again.

BOY  
What did you say?

BOY 2  
She said you're a psycho. Who else  
storms out of class like a baby all  
the time.

BOY  
(throwing his backpack aside,  
walking toward them)  
What did you say?

BOY 2  
You heard me!

GIRL  
(to BOY 2)  
What are you doing?

BOY 2  
Getting him to shut up.

BOY  
(getting in his face)  
C'mon!

BOY 2  
Let's go!

The boys begin fighting. TEACHER and others open classroom doors at the disturbance. Kids run out into the hallway as the fight ensues. TEACHER calls security and another teacher tries to break them up. BOY is losing pretty badly. Students gather until security arrives to break up the fight. They drag BOY to the office kicking and screaming. BOY 2 is left to sort things out with the other security guards as everyone crowds around.

BOY 2  
What a nut job. He just came at me  
. . .

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

BOY sits silently pinching a nosebleed while PRINCIPAL stares at him. BOY meets his gaze for a moment and then looks down at the floor.

PRINCIPAL  
This is your third incident this  
quarter.

BOY refuses to answer.

PRINCIPAL  
Do you have something to say for  
yourself? Some sort of  
explanation?

The BOY remains silent. He stuffs the bloody tissues in his pocket.

PRINCIPAL  
Nothing?

BOY picks at his fingernails.

PRINCIPAL  
Well, you've got to go home while  
we sort this out. Do you have a  
ride?

BOY looks out the window.

PRINCIPAL  
(picking up the phone)  
Then I'll just call your uncle  
again . . .

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

BOY is escorted from the school by security. A beat-up car pulls up and BOY gets in.

INT. UNCLE'S CAR - DAY

BOY sits in his uncle's car and slams the door shut. It's a mess. He pulls out of the parking lot and a long silence follows. UNCLE's cellphone rings. He picks it up.

UNCLE  
Yeah? . . . No . . . Later . . .  
I'll call you back.

Uncle looks over to BOY. He hangs up the phone.

UNCLE  
(to boy, driving)  
What happened this time?

BOY  
Nothing.

UNCLE  
There's blood on your shirt.

BOY  
So?

UNCLE takes a few turns and drives through the city streets. He slows down to check out some girls walking by.

UNCLE  
Do you know those?

BOY  
No.

UNCLE  
Just wondering if they were  
skipping school.

The keep driving, taking a few more turns. UNCLE gets a text message. He checks his phone. It reads "WHERE R U?"

UNCLE  
Jeez. I said I'd be there in a  
second!

They keep driving for a few more turns and then through a bad neighborhood. In a few moments, UNCLE pulls up to a run-down tenement. He stops the car and gets out, pocketing his phone.

UNCLE  
(to BOY)  
Wait here.

BOY is silent while he sits and waits. A sketchy guy opens the front door, looks around, and lets UNCLE into the house.

BOY waits in the car for a while. He inspects the CDs scattered on the floor. They're a mix of gangster rap and gospel. A yellowed baseball bobble head is on the dashboard next to a Post-it note with phone numbers written on it. He tests the door, but it won't open. He bangs his head back on the headrest and waits.

UNCLE exits the house alone and with a crumpled brown paper bag. He walks down the steps and gets into the car.

UNCLE  
(sitting down and closing the  
door)  
Your ready to go?

BOY  
What do you think?

UNCLE  
Let's go then.

UNCLE starts the car and drives off slowly. His phone starts ringing, he looks at it, but he ignores the call.

UNCLE  
I need you to help me out again  
tonight.

BOY doesn't answer.

UNCLE  
(a little upset)  
I just asked you a question.

BOY  
No you didn't.

UNCLE  
(pausing, breathing, then  
softening  
Can you take this bag for me  
tonight or not? Usual place.

BOY  
No. I got things to do.

UNCLE  
(snapping at him)  
Like what?

BOY looks out the passenger window. He doesn't immediately respond.

BOY  
I don't know. Things.

UNCLE  
(voice rising in anger)  
If you don't do it, I'm not going  
to ask you again. No more help  
from me.

BOY  
(angry now, too)  
Fine!

UNCLE jerks the car violently to the curb. The phone starts ringing again. UNCLE checks it.

UNCLE  
It's your mother.

He answers the call.

UNCLE  
(to MOTHER)  
No. It's no big deal. He told me  
he's walking home . . . yeah, what  
a pain in the ass. Bye.

UNCLE hangs up the phone and turns to BOY.

UNCLE  
Get out.

BOY tries to open the door, but it's stuck. He hammers on it with his fist and then slams it with his shoulder.

UNCLE  
Knock it off!

UNCLE reaches forward to grab BOY, who stops struggling and stares at him defiantly. UNCLE stares back until his phone starts ringing again, then backs off. He picks up the phone.

UNCLE  
What? No . . . I got to do it  
myself . . . I'll be a little late  
. . . Whatever. Bye.

UNCLE looks back at BOY, still angry, but his glare softens. BOY forces the door once more and it pops open. He gets out of the car.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

BOY exits the car and slams the door. UNCLE shouts something as he speeds off. BOY watches him go. He shoulders his backpack, spits where the car once stood, and walks off in the opposite direction.