

Thurber Essay Assignment

English 1001, LSUE

For this assignment, you are to write a Thurber-style story. Like Thurber, your story must be **mostly true**, though it can use slight exaggeration, and it must be written in the classic Thurber style. Thurber wrote mostly about that which he knew, so I expect you to do the same. This is not fiction, completely, so you may not make up something.

Remember, classic Thurber style means that you will have dialogue, you have an interesting story at the heart of your essay, you will veer off course occasionally into a vignette of sorts, and you will have a Thurber style title. Mimic Thurber as much as possible, including his dry, sardonic humor. You may include a Thurber style cartoon that reflects your story, and that might get you some extra credit.

Your essay should be generally three to four pages, but you may decide the length. Just be sure the essay is developed fully. Follow regular MLA conventions.

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English I Honors

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The Day of Accidental Revenge

It was the ending to a long day, and I was ready to finally go to sleep. After walking into my mother's room, giving her a hug and telling her goodnight, I headed toward the kitchen quietly. My dad was desperately searching for something on the bottom shelf of the cabinet.

My father was one of those dads always trying to pull a perfect prank on one of his kids. Late one night, I was getting dressed for bed in my room, and little did I know that he had hidden a walkie-talkie under my bed. I heard this strange noise coming from my left. Now, I am the kind of person that will wait to hear if the noise sounds again just to be sure I have a good, strong, logical reason for screaming my head off. I could see my cotton t-shirt jolting to every pulse that my heart pounded. The noise struck again – it sounded like static – but with a strange twist to it. At the second hearing of the mysterious noise, I fled the room and went straight to my parents' bedroom. In there I could tell by the way dad had shown no concern for the incident that he had something to do with my misfortune. I saw his side of the blanket move, and I pulled it back, only to discover a walkie-talkie in his hand.

“Dad!” I screamed. “How... why... what is this?”

The response that I expected did not even come from him; he was too busy laughing. Mom said, between stunned outbursts of laughter, “I told him not to do it. I told him it was too mean.” I laughed it off, but naturally, it was only normal for me to want to get back at him for the injustice that he had been done to me.

Creeping around to the dining room, I could see the kitchen light on. “Hmmmmm,” I thought. “I’m gonna scare him. I’m gonna jump around the corner and yell, ‘Boo!’”

I continued to sneak around the wall separating the kitchen from the dining room, anticipation building inside my throat like a lion ready to catch its prey. The doorway was drawing closer, and closer, until I stood in it. I was hiding behind the open door of the cabinet my father was kneeling by. I peeked over, but only to see what he was doing.

This only brought back memories of the time he told me we were aliens. Of course I didn’t really believe him, although he was extremely convincing. I remember it exactly: he was on the Internet and I walked in only in time to see him sign off.

“Mandy,” he said, “I just did a search of our ancestors. We have none. There is no genealogy associated with our name, Bostic.”

At this I gave him a questioning look. “Well, I’m sure we didn’t just fall out the sky.”

He glanced back only in time to catch the look I had sent him. “We are aliens, Mandy.”

After a long debate, it was finally decided that we were originally from planet Earth and we did have human ancestors, whether the computer agreed with us or not. I went to bed that night knowing I had won, yet another, of our play fights.

I continued peeking over the door of the cabinet. I was just tall enough to see over it. Only my eyes were high enough for him to see. He rose slowly, not knowing I was in his presence, and he glanced in my direction before I could jump out to scare him. With the night’s darkness casting a shadow around my head, and my eyes seeming to glow in their sockets, it can only be assumed that he thought a stranger was watching him.

The young man that I proudly called my dad jumped at least a foot and a half in the air and two feet backward. He landed in the strangest position: sprawled out on the floor, rocking

back and forth from the gust of shock he had just received, his arms behind him trying to pull his confused body off the ground and his trembling legs frozen in their position, straight up in the air.

When I stepped out from my hiding place, his pale face had even more blood drain from it. I was laughing uncontrollably, trying to figure out why the strange expression (that wasn't really a word at all) had escaped from his mouth.

I helped him to his feet and asked him what in the world had just gone through his head. His response was, "I thought you had broken into the house, and I was completely unprepared and unarmed. I didn't recognize you at all!"

To this I laughed even harder. I looked at him, glad he had such a good sense of humor and knowing how blessed I was to have him for a father.

After we made our way to the other side of the house, I went into my room, and through the walls, with my door closed, I could hear my mother laughing at his tale of what had just occurred. All I could hear as I fell asleep that night were his teasing words echoing through my head, "You just wait. I'll get you back, my girl, you just wait."