

EARTH'S DUMBEST BOY

Written by

Brian Morrow

Email: [BrianGMorrow1@gmail.com](mailto:BrianGMorrow1@gmail.com)  
Phone: (817) 504-3858

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

A grim, cement-slab of a school.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (V.O.)  
When I was a boy, around the age  
you are now, my teacher asked the  
class a question that would change  
my life forever...

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A smush-faced SCHOOLMARM towers over the class.

SCHOOLMARM  
Which organ of the human body  
controls decision making? *Arnold?*

Her enormous face cranes down on ARNOLD PETTIGREW, (8), his  
pale, freckled face turns as red as his bowl-cut hair.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (V.O.)  
And... I panicked.

ARNOLD  
Uhhhhh...

GRANDPA ARNOLD (V.O.)  
Because, you see, for the last  
several minutes, I had, in fact,  
been constructing the world's  
finest paper football, and had,  
well, not been listening in the  
slightest.

SCHOOLMARM  
*Well, Mr. Pettigrew?*

His SCHOOLMATES leaned in, looming over him.

Sweat drips from his chin.

The armpits of his prep-school jacket soak through.

He cringes.

ARNOLD  
The heart?

GRANDPA ARNOLD (V.O.)  
--I replied... And was *promptly*  
laughed out of the third grade.

The Schoolmarm grabs Arnold by the ear and drags him from the classroom as his schoolmates howl with laughter.

INT. ARNOLD'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Arnold slinks in.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (V.O.)  
When I got home, my mother had  
already heard about my 'heart'  
answer...

ARNOLD'S MOTHER, (30's), scowls, her hands on the hips of her bubblegum business suit.

GRANDPA ARNOLD  
She was so worried she sent away  
for an IQ test to determine, once  
and for all, if I was smart or not.

INT. ARNOLD'S HOUSE - THREE WEEKS LATER

Arnold's Mother sits Arnold down.

ARNOLD'S MOTHER  
It says here that 'people with  
average intelligence score around a  
hundred, below average around  
ninety, and genius level is above  
one-thirty.'

She opens an envelope.

ARNOLD'S MOTHER (CONT'D)  
Your test came back... a D minus.

Mother sours.

Arnold's already pale face goes ghostly white.

MONTAGE - DOCTOR'S OFFICES - DAY

Arnold stares at his toes.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (V.O.)  
The first doctor told my mother,  
one letter at a time, that I was,  
in fact...

FIRST DOCTOR  
D. U. M. B.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (V.O.)  
The second doctor compared my  
intelligence to being...

SECOND DOCTOR  
Less than that of a *doorknob*.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (V.O.)  
While the last described my brain  
by using the visual aide of a  
circus peanut...

The THIRD DOCTOR chomps down on the peanut shell.

INT./EXT. ARNOLD'S MOTHER'S CAR - RAINY DAY

Arnold's Mother lays on her car horn in bumper to bumper  
traffic.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (V.O.)  
Mother was not pleased to say the  
least.

She swerves up onto the sidewalk and drives across people's  
front lawns, leaving thick, muddy tire tracks.

INT. SCHOOL RECEPTION DESK - DAY

Arnold stands outside the principal's office, a boy before  
the firing squad.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (V.O.)  
The next day I was removed from my  
regular classes and put into  
remedial math, where we learned...

MONTAGE - CLASSROOMS - DAY

MATH TEACHER  
Two plus two equals a ballerina's  
skirt.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (V.O.)  
And in remedial History where we  
studied...

HISTORY TEACHER  
The Greek philosopher Play-dough.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (V.O.)  
 And in remedial geography, where we  
 learned that Iceland is green,  
 Greenland is made of ice, and  
 Finland only has *some* shark-people,  
 but not all as we'd been previously  
 led to believe.

GEORGRAPHY TEACHER  
 That would be *ludicrous!*

GRANDPA ARNOLD (V.O.)  
 --my teacher would say.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - DAY

ELLA, (9), peeks out from under her comforter, her eyes red  
 with tears.

GRANDPA ARNOLD, (70), sits across from her on an identical  
 twin bed.

GRANDPA ARNOLD  
 You see, Ella, my dear, grownups  
 love words like *Ludicrous!*, and  
*Preposterous!*, and *Incongruous!*,  
 and use them for anything they  
 don't agree with.

Ella rubs her eyes, puzzled.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
 And when they *do* agree with  
 something they use the word  
*Indubitably!*, and stick their noses  
 in the air like this...  
 (clearing throat)  
 Ahe-he-he-hemm... *Indubitably!*

Grandpa turns his nose up and waggles it snootily.

Ella cracks a smile.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
 Ah-ha! There's my granddaughter.  
 Very good. Now it's you turn, give  
 it a try.

Ella dives back into her blanket and hides.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
Ah yes, you are 'too sick' to go to school so we certainly can't have you exerting yourself with impressions of grownups, now can we? No, no. Quite prudent of you. Pretending to be a grownup can be rather exhausting. I would know, I've been doing it for fifty years!

He waggles his eyebrows at her and chuckles at his own joke.

Ella peeks out, her mouth covered with blanket, but smiles with her eyes.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
Now... That word 'Indubitably!' just means 'true,' you know. But grownups just absolutely love to use long words, the more letters the better, and feel all the smarter because of it.

Grandpa leans closer so no one will hear.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
My favorite grownup word is "Sesquipedalian." It means, "a person who uses big words so other people will think they're smart, when, in fact, they are not."

Ella emerges from her turtle shell of blankets, brushes away a mess of strawberry-blonde hair, and giggles.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
Don't feel bad if you didn't know these words though. I didn't know them until I'd grown up, because as the doctors put it, I was, in fact, a first-class, grade-A, *nincompoop*.

Ella outright laughs.

EXT. ARNOLD'S DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Arnold stares up as a shooting star soars overhead.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (V.O.)

Which is why the grownups found it  
incredibly amusing when an alien--  
or *extraterrestrial*--came to our  
planet requesting a tour from  
Earth's smartest being, and  
instead, they gave them me...  
Arnold Pettigrew, Earth's *dumbest*  
boy.

The shooting star stops suddenly overhead, backs up a little,  
then plummets to Earth, straight for him.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (V.O.)

Even after all these years, I  
remember my alien abduction like it  
was yesterday. It was a balmy  
spring evening in May when a ball  
of light the size and shape of a  
beanbag chair floated down from  
space and parked in the driveway  
behind my father's Ford.

Snooty-looking GROWNUPS look on, skeptically.

GRANDPA ARNOLD

Seeing as the glowing ball of light  
was not large, or smart-looking, or  
expensive, the grownups were left  
utterly unimpressed by the whole  
ordeal.

SCIENTIST

A spaceship made of light is  
impractical, implausible, and down  
right impossible!

ENGINEER

It is imperceivable, imperceptible,  
and utterly imperfectible!

POLITICIAN

It's impeachable, implacable, and  
wholly impermissible!

A cylinder of light shines down on Arnold.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (V.O.)  
 I, for one, found the alien ship to be absolutely impeccable, but as its tractor beam lifted me off my feet, I overheard an army general-- the meanest of all the grownups-- declare that he believes the aliens to be...

ARMY GENERAL  
*Imprisonable!*

Arnold stares down at the General, bathed in light.

The general stares back. They scowl at one another.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (V.O.)  
 But I wasn't going to let that happen. I couldn't let it happen! This was my mission. My chance to be taken seriously...

Arnold looks up as the ball of light opens like the loosening of strings on a coin pouch and draws him in.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
 This was my chance to show the doctors, and my parents, and *the whole world* that Arnold Pettigrew is not a dummy after all!

ARNOLD  
 And I'm not going to screw it up!

Arnold stares up into a bright white light, ready.

INT. ALIEN SPACESHIP - NIGHT

The drawstrings of light pull closed behind Arnold as he turns and shields his eyes.

He watches through his fingers as a small, thin silhouette move into the light.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (V.O.)  
 And so, that's how I came to know the little green man.

A little green ALIEN steps into the light. He blinks big, black, football-shaped eyes that bulge out of a bald, misshapen head.



GRANDPA ARNOLD (V.O.)  
 The alien was four-foot, eight and three-quarters inches tall, just like me. He had green-blue eyes, just like me. And he had no one in the whole galaxy he could talk to, just like me. I told him...

ARNOLD  
 My name is Arnold.

GRANDPA ARNOLD  
 And to both our surprise, he replied...

ALIEN  
 Your name is Arnold? My name is Arnold!

GRANDPA ARNOLD  
 And Alien Arnold and I were best friends from then on out.

ALIEN ARNOLD  
 Wanna see the cockpit?

ARNOLD  
 Yes! Yes! Definitely yes!

Both Arnolds race off through the cavernous, glowing halls-- the ship's interior far exceeding its outward appearance.

ALIEN ARNOLD  
 Tag! You're it!

ARNOLD  
 What! No fair! I didn't know you had tag on your planet.

Arnold laughs and chases after his new found friend.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - DAY

Grandpa Arnold pauses. Ella is on the edge of her seat.

GRANDPA ARNOLD  
 Do you have a best friend, Ella?

Ella's eyes drop.

ELLA  
 I use to... But...

She retreats back into the blankets, tears welling up in her eyes.

GRANDPA ARNOLD

Ah. Then you understand. When I was your age, I never had many friends. In fact, Alien Arnold was the first real friend I ever had.

Grandpa Arnold stares, sorrowfully.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (CONT'D)

Although a few years before I had grown very fond of an old elm tree in my back yard...

EXT. ARNOLD'S BACKYARD - DAY

LITTLE ARNOLD plays.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (V.O.)

I would wait for the wind to pick up, then call out...

LITTLE ARNOLD

Good morning!

GRANDPA ARNOLD (V.O.)

--and wave, and when the branches would sway I'd pretend that "Carl" was waving back...

Little Arnold high-fives a tree branch; it breaks off and lands at his feet.

LITTLE ARNOLD

AHHHH!

He turns and runs--*WHACK!*--right into the tree then falls flat onto his back, out cold.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (V.O.)

We had some good times, he and I... That is, until my father had him chopped down on account of him 'not being a *smart* use of the space.'

The tree is chain-sawed before Arnold's wide eyes.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (CONT'D)

Carl was replaced by an enormous chess board with life-size pieces.

EXT. ARNOLD'S BACKYARD - LATER

A towering bishop scowls down at Little Arnold.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
Never mind the fact that neither  
mother nor father actually knew how  
the game was played. The neighbors  
were impressed by the sheer size of  
its smartness nonetheless.

NEIGHBORS peer over the fence, green with envy.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
And as father would say...

ARNOLD'S FATHER  
What they don't know won't hurt  
them.

Arnold's Father sneers.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ella rubs tears from the corners of her eyes.

GRANDPA ARNOLD  
And, to make matters worse, neither  
bishop nor king or queen or pawn--  
black or white--wanted to be my  
friend.

She frowns.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
But then I met Alien Arnold, and  
to my great relief it seemed he had  
not heard about my 'heart' answer.  
Nor did he seem to notice how dumb  
I was at all. In fact, compared to  
him, I seemed to be a genius--or  
*Einsteinian*--if you will.

He waggles his nose, snootily, and Ella giggles.

EXT. ALIEN SPACESHIP - DAY

The ball of light soars over hills and oceans.

GRANDPA ARNOLD (V.O.)  
I taught Alien Arnold about all  
sorts of cool Earth stuff...