

Other Books By *This* Idiot

Barry Trotter and the Shameless Parody

How to Survive Being Shat Out Of a Bloody Great Dragon
(with *Ruddy Hafwid*)

Barry Trotter
and the Unnecessary Sequel

Michael Gerber
(yes him again)

GOLLANCZ
LONDON

HEY YOU!

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Seduced by some misguided vision of petty immortality, the moral right of Michael Gerber to be identified as the author of this shabby rot has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyrights, Designs and Patents Act of 1988. It would be funny, if it weren't so needy and sad.

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To Kate, who knows something funny when she reads it,
all the Trotteristas who demanded another one

...and, of course, to YOU!*

* (but only if you paid for it)

A Note To Sensitive Readers

This book contains extremely graphic descriptions of sex, often without cuddling. Its needlessly frank, obsessively detailed sexual language—and diagrams—render this book COMPLETELY UNSUITABLE for sensitive readers.

In fact, only that small clutch of sweaty-palmed perverts bent on imagining beloved icons of their childhood ‘getting it on’ in every conceivable fashion, for the flimsiest of reasons, should purchase this book. You know who you are.

—*The Publisher*

[TYPESETTER: please set tiny text below at bottom of page.]

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Chapter 1 — A Birthday, and a Book

Barry Trotter had always had awful birthdays. By 38, it had become a perverse point of pride with him, like the grottness of his attire had been during his teens, or merciless sarcasm in his twenties. “You want a *present*, boy?” his Uncle Vermon used to drawl malevolently. “How about not killing you? How’s *that* for a present?” Sure, Barry had the last laugh—but you can’t humiliate, drive insane, and ultimately crucify memories.

These days things were only slightly better. He could count on getting another squeaky fire hydrant from Lonald Measly, his dog-brained pal. A biohazard-suited postman would bring a few exuberantly lethal candies from Ferd, and a bloody-minded trick something-or-other from Jorge. His godfather Serious Blech would send him a birthday card, not containing money, but asking for some. And he’d get something incredibly useful and completely boring from his wife Ermine Cringer. What would it be this year? Recent hints suggested a self-scrubbing wok. Even a Strip-O-Gram was too much to hope for, now that they had kids.

“Thirty-eight down, hundreds more of these miserable buggers to go,” Barry said, shutting off his computer at the Ministry of Magicity, where he was assistant deputy under-vice-secretary for Muddle relations. **Earlier in the day — wasting time as usual —** he typed “38” into the wizard search engine, prest.org: “According to Nostradamus, this number symbolizes the little-known Fifth Horse of the Apocalypse, Boredom.”

As far as Barry could tell, his family had totally forgotten. Ermine was (to use her phrase) “busy living her *life*.” At the moment, that meant writing a syndicated advice column, “Ermine’s ‘Elps,” for the *Daily Soothsayer*. In it, she perkily suggested witchy uses for Muddle stuff. “If a potion calls for horse’s hoof, use store-bought gelatin instead!” On Tuesdays and Thursdays, Ermine wafted the five minutes into Oxford to teach a gorilla named Audrey how to cast spells; this was part of a Ph. D. in Crypto-zoology.¹ And in spare moments—most weekends, the evenings, in the tub—she was

¹ In the wizarding world, teaching a gorilla magic was about as illegal as you could get without splitting Time into 17 different dimensions and committing crimes in all of them simultaneously. Barry took some credit for turning the former Miss Perfect Cringer into such a rebel; but of course her curiosity had always been her strongest attribute. Barry had to admit that the gorilla was learning staggeringly fast. After just six months, Audrey had several of the deadliest spells known to wizardry down cold. As a result, nobody messed with her cat, “All-Ball.” (They did, however, say what a stupid name that was—behind her back.)

translating *The Book of Common Spells* into 133+-speak. Add to this the constant supervision and improvement of their children, Nigel (11) and Fiona (3), and any normal person would give Ermine a pass.

But Barry wasn't normal, and Ermine knew it. Each of his birthdays was a minefield of unspoken expectations—and Barry wasn't above withholding sex if he wasn't well pleased. Every July 31st, she spiked Barry's morning cuppa with Maturi-tea, just to take the edge off; Ermine shuddered to think what Barry would've been like "straight." Magicking your spouse was frowned on—some little niggles involving free will—but being married to Barry Trotter called for desperate measures. Besides, the tantrum of a powerful wizard could ding up an ecosystem. Every **married** couple plays by their own set of rules, and Ermine's included the occasional misdemeanor in the name of sanity and the greater good.

Ermine remembered that it was her husband's birthday a little after four, only an hour and a half before he arrived home. The kids were immediately set to making cards (she'd cast a quick Clumsy Sweetness spell on them if necessary), while Ermine sent owls to all their pals.

While she waited for responses, Ermine polished off today's column. She needed ten more words. "Old, unenchanted pantyhose can be really, really, really, really, really useful," she typed, and tapped the screen with her wand—the column was sent to her editor, a crusty old warlock named Clagton who smelled like newsprint and bats' blood pomade.

Ermine spent the next hour conjuring like mad—a few presents, a cake, some hats and decorations. Since everything has to come from somewhere, these things disappeared from various Muddle stores, the Sharper Mage, a Muddle bakery,² and the party of an unlucky seven-year-old in China.

The responses trickled in, with the mean old Measly owl Ahole grudgingly delivering a birthday card as well. He'd straggled in, probably drunk, daring Ermine not to give him a treat, and lunging for her jugular when she did. She and Ahole were old

² Which was about to be closed for health-code violations. The spell didn't care—it got what you asked for, regardless of quality. Therefore, it was important to be specific. "A *nice* coat." "A birthday cake *without* rat droppings."

adversaries, and she'd had a tennis racket on hand. "Tell Ferd to send Herpes next time," Ermine said, knocking Ahole outside with an overhead smash.³

Promptly at five, several hastily assembled guests had collected at the Trotter's small home. Lon was there, minded as usual by his sister Genny. Ahole had conveyed Ferd and Jorge's regrets—the twins were in the middle of blowing up a small, petulant country on behalf of NATO. But Lord Valumart made it.

"Thanks, Terry," Ermine said when she greeted the Dork Lord at the door. "Barry will appreciate it. We know how rarely you travel."

"I was in the neighborhood, shutting down some unprofitable orphanages," Valumart said. "It's important to stop and smell the roses once in a while, you know?"

Ermine smiled weakly. Valumart had grown ever richer, and weirder, with every pound, dollar, drachma or zloty that poured in. He lived in the penthouse suite of Nero's Gardens, a posh hotel/casino in Hogsbleede, Sin City of the wizarding world. Valumart was Hogsbleede's unofficial mayor and de facto monarch.⁴

At one time always spiffily dressed in a black tunic jammed with phony metals, Valumart now shuffled around with tissueboxes on his feet. If he wanted to grow his fingernails two feet long and wear a surgical mask, who was going to stop him? Valumart owned most of the town, and before being dismissed as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he was able to have Hogsbleede declared autonomous, so that he couldn't be extradited. But all that Muddle money was buying him a curse, the curse of never hearing "no." He didn't even care enough to put on a fruity fake German accent anymore.

This might surprise you, He-Who-Smells showing up at a birthday party for Barry Trotter. But you'd be amazed at how much constantly trying to kill someone can feel like—yes, I'll say it!—a love affair. Barry considered him a charming rogue, a snake-oil

³ The Measlys didn't have very good luck with owls. Lon had once owned a tiny anal-retentive one named Prig (short for Prigrigid), which he ate soon after his dog-brain transplant.

⁴ Hogsbleede was a gilded bog, a nasty bit of nowhere puffed up by the power of vice. Wizards loved to gamble, and so the casinos made a killing—as long as they kept an eye out for seers. (For example, Mrs. Tralala, Hogwash's Divination Teacher, was *Medea non grata* at the gaming tables.) As for the pleasures of the flesh, the tricks a magical prostitute knew were enough to make the average client swallow his or her tongue. Magical prostitutes, all incubi and succubi, were strictly regulated by a Ministry department (headed by Tarty Crotch). They had a tremendously powerful union, being willing to exercise the Lysistrata option when necessary. In fact, in 1612, a strike by all the Goblin blackjack dealers almost strangled Hogsbleede in its dirty little cradle, after the sex workers went out in sympathy. That hit the wizards where it hurt, and they had to settle.

salesman who happened to sell phony phoenix tears instead. (The stick-in-your-brain jingles oozed powerful Dork magic: “You hurt yourself/Whatta shame/Try Cryin’ Flame/Ask for it...by name!”)

Valumart always brought a little something for the kids; this time it was a slot machine magically connected to the United States Mint. “Get them young, and you have a customer for life,” he always said.

They all waited in the front room, listening for Barry’s footfall outside the door. He wore seven-league wingtips, so they wouldn’t get much warning.

Ermine turned to Valumart to make small talk, trying to put his odd personal smell out of her mind. “How was the trip down?”

“Fine, fine.” Valumart was taking a risk by leaving Hogsbleede—in addition to the inevitable back taxes and Ponzi spells, the Muddles wanted to throw him in the clink for an internet scam involving some mythical funds trapped in Nigeria. Mind you, if the frankincense ever really hit the fan, he could always evaporate and literally slip through their fingers.

Valumart laughed and pointed. Red-haired Fiona, very magical for her age, was levitating her rune blocks and flinging them at her older brother, Nigel, who had been trying to rig the slot machine.

“Ow!” Nigel hollered, getting one in the eye. Then another just above the ear. “Fi, stop it!”

Picking up on the conflict, Lon’s frenzied barks came from the bathroom. He was celebrating the cocktail hour by drinking from the toilet.

“Shh, Lon! Quiet down!” Genny⁵ Measly told her big brother. Still unmarried (Barry always suspected her brush with the basilisp had something to do with it), she took care of Lon, feeding him, making sure he got his walkies.

Laughing, Fiona sent over more blocks, and faster. Nigel took his appeal directly to the Supreme Court. “Mum! Tell her to stop!”

“Stop fighting, you two.” With a finger, Ermine brought a levitating tray of potions in for a landing on the coffeetable. In a corner, several presents that had gotten into the liquor cabinet were unwrapping each other and giggling.

⁵ Short for “Genital,” her mother’s rather unfortunate maiden name.

“We *aren’t* fighting, she’s hitting me with blocks. The difference is subtle but, I believe, meaningful,” Nigel complained. As verbal as his sister was magical, Nigel would start at Hogwash School of Wizardry and Witchcrap in a month. He was the spitting image of his father, except for that famous interrobang. Nigel had no early warning system, so Life constantly sucker-punched him.

Valumart was determined to fix Nigel up. “Nigel, come here,” he said, reaching into his pocket and rummaging around. “I want to give you a”—Valumart looked in his palm to see what he had to offer—“a piece of lint. It is...” Valumart paused, searching for a selling point. “...very magical and charming.”

“No, thanks, ‘Uncle’ Terry,” Nigel said, **keeping his distance**. “I’ve got enough magical stuff already.” He saw Valumart’s decidedly old-school pocketknife, a holdover from his Teutonic dress-up days—it looked wickedly sharp, and had a small skull on the end of it. Sometimes you didn’t need an interrobang to know which way the wind was blowing.

But the Dork Lord was undeterred, and kept rummaging. “No, really, I’ve got something very enjoyable for you. An old movie ticket? A scrap of paper that says”—Valumart unfolded it— “‘Dominate world’ on it?”

Too polite to tell an adult to piss off, Nigel tried to change the subject. “Hey Mum, can I get red contact lenses?”

Suddenly, Lon ran in from the bathroom and howled. “Lonald, shhh!” Genny said. Lon ran to the door. He had a little hand-lettered “Happy Birthday Barry” pennant stuck in his head-hole. There were steps on the stair, then a wand tap on the lock, and Barry walked in.

“Surprise!” everybody yelled, and Barry was. He smiled.

As befitting an adult, Barry’s haul was modest, but heartfelt. From Lon and Genny, he got a subscription to “Lay Off!,” England’s leading professional Quiddit weekly. Valumart got him a magical hair-thickening comb.

“See, it works!” Valumart said, shaking his long, unwashed locks. Barry’s hair was just as untidy as ever, but now there was less of it—or his head was growing, which didn’t make sense. (**For one thing, his homemade** beer helmet still fit perfectly.)

Fiona got him—via Ermine, of course—a pair of yellow flannel pajamas covered with purple moons and stars. (“Gay with a side of retarded,”⁶ Barry thought, but smiled just the same.) From Nigel, Barry got a Sneaky Prickoscope, a device for telling whether people were jerks. “Useful,” he said, and his son beamed (he had picked it out himself—or, more accurately, told his mum what to conjure from the Sharper Mage catalogue).

“You’d better not take that to work,” Ermine said. “It’ll go off all day long. Do you like the babble-band?”

Barry knew enough to say the right thing. “It’s great...What is it?”

“I thought it might be useful on the phone,” his wife said. “It’s a little ribbon worn around the tongue like dith—” she spread it across her fingers and stuck them in her mouth.

“Gross, Erm,” Genny said.

“I wasn’t going to *do* it,” she said (but she was—Ermine was the kind of person who ate from other people’s plates). “It allows you to speak whatever language somebody is speaking to you. Anyway, your real present is tonight,” she whispered, and kissed his cheek.

Nigel heard. “Gross!” he said, disgusted to his core.

“Goss!” his sister mimicked.

“But how can you understand them?” Genny said.

“I never thought of that,” Ermine said, slightly annoyed. “Maybe they make earmuffs?” She suspected that Genny resented her having stolen Barry. Yes, Barry had once been a prize, though you wouldn’t have known it to look at him now. **He was scratching himself.**

“Barry, not in front of the guests,” Ermine pleaded.

“It’s my birthday, I can do what I please,” he said. Barry held up a birthday hat. “Why do the party hats have pictures of Mao on them?”

After the cake (which read “Congratulations on Your Retirement”) Ermine said, “It’s **such a nice evening. Why don’t we move** the party into the garden?” They’d been

⁶ Or, to be more politically correct, ‘These clothes practice an alternative lifestyle, and have special needs!’

lucky so far, but it was only a matter of time before Lon got overexcited and widdled on the rug.

Barry excused himself for a moment and went to the kitchen—being around Valumart always gave him a scar-ache. The only thing that worked was Ermine’s menstrual aspirin, which also kept him from bloating.

He was just washing down a few tablets at the kitchen sink, when something caught his eye through the window.

“Ermine, that bloody urchin is back again!”

“Oh, leave her alone, Barry,” Ermine said. “I’ve seen her around the College. Everybody calls her Liar.” You had to have a thick skin to work at the school, which was crawling with vomiting undergrads, dippy American tourists, and plucky preteens having inscrutable adventures in multidimensional Miltonian cosmologies.

Barry was implacable. “Hey, you! Dirtbag! Get outta here!” She was a little blonde girl, dressed well enough, but **strangely undomesticated**. “And take your ferret—”

“It’s not a ferret, ya tosser!” she shouted. “It’s an expression of my inner self in animal form!”

“Well, your inner self poops in our garden!” Barry retorted. The girl stuck her tongue out at him, then clambered over the back wall.

“This neighborhood!” Barry said. “First the witch two streets down...” (The witch in question had been cooked and eaten by children; luckily, her life insurance covered “Malicious Consumption by Minors.”)

“They found the kids who did it. Germans,” Ermine said meaningfully, as if that explained everything.

The group all brought chairs out into the grass. Barry passed the Measly’s ancient Ford Ganglia, now passed down to Genny.⁷ Reaching in through an open window—an enticement to thieves that had so far proved unsuccessful—Barry jabbed the Implausibility Booster. It was still broken.

⁷ After the boys had crashed it, the enchanted vehicle spent 10 years tooling around ferally in the Forsaken Forest. At some point, it had met an abandoned Mini and, with her, sired a bunch of mopeds. The Ganglia needed to pay child-support, so it went back to the Measlys.

“Lon, do you remember when we flew this hunk of junk into the Bugging Birch?” Barry said, suddenly misty. He was a nostalgia addict. “I couldn’t sit down for a week.”

“Yeah,” said Lon absently. He was on his hands and knees, sniffing a tree trunk.

“I’ve heard good things about those Dragonette Decimators,” Ermine said, out of the blue. Barry didn’t respond. She was constantly on about this latest fad in wizard autos. “I need one for safety,” she always said, but Barry suspected it was because Penelope Saggs had one. She made a lot of money selling real estate in other dimensions.

“Lon, don’t wee on the lawn,” Genny told her brother. “It’ll kill the grass.”

“It’ll make the Muddles next door call the cops,” Barry said. Once secretive, magical folk lived openly among Muddles now, mostly harmoniously. But there were limits, and Lon whipping it out definitely crossed one.

They all arranged their chairs. “Go sit next to Uncle Terry,” Ermine told Nigel.

“He’s going to carve my head,” Nigel whispered.

“Oh, shush,” Ermine said. “Uncle Terry likes you.”

“Undoubtedly! Look—he’s brought a portable woodburning kit!” It was true—a wisp of smoke curled skyward as he carved “H-W-S #1” in the arm of the lawn chair.

Ermine waved her hand dismissively. “Oh, he’s probably just trying to be funny. You know what a weird sense of humor he has.”

“But Mum—”

“No buts. His feelings will be hurt,” Ermine said.

Nigel plopped down, and took a glum drink from his disgusting tannis-root squash (it was supposed to make him more magical). Lon circled three times and laid down next to the boy. Fiona was investigating an old lollipop **left in the grass**, prior to eating it.

“Icky!” Ermine said. “Put that down.”

“I wa icky!” Fiona said, outraged. She made the hem of her mother’s skirt smolder.

“Who **wants** an early bed time?” Ermine threatened. The smoldering stopped.

Barry had gone back into the house and brought out a little dry-erase board. He wrote something on it, then put it next to him, and tilted the board towards the sky.

Valumart read the message: “Will Be Probed For Food.”

“Dad wants to get abducted by aliens,” Nigel said to Valumart.

“Pardon me,” the Dork Lord said, “since the sign is between us—just so there is no confusion—” He drew an arrow pointing in the proper direction. “I hate those little bastards,” Valumart said. “I can’t *sell* them anything.”

“When did you decide *to get abducted*, Barry?” Genny asked.

“Oh, after they fired me at Hogwash.” His book, *Barry Trotter and the Shameless Parody*, written while he was Public Relations Officer for Hogwash, had indeed gotten the school lots of publicity. Unfortunately, all of it was bad.

“Do you remember what Nigel asked when you told us about your plan for being abducted?” Ermine said. ““Is there any money in that?””

Everybody laughed at the boy’s precocity except Nigel himself. He had honestly wondered.

Ermine continued. “I was just overjoyed at the possibility of getting him out of the house,” she said. “Two weeks and it looked like the whole place had suffered an epileptic fit.”

“Yeah, she offered to pack me a lunch. Too bad I didn’t need it,” Barry said glumly. “They wouldn’t take me.” *The hopeful space traveller* had sat out on the front lawn for a week, an overnight bag next to him, with a supply of chocolates and beer for sustenance.

“They won’t take magical folk,” Ermine said. “Not good enough for them, I suppose.”

“They’re bloody prejudiced!” Barry said, taking an angry swig of his Boarsbollocks’ Brew, and pumping a fist into the air. “We Shall Overcome!”

“Have you tried reverse psychology?” Genny asked, trying to be helpful.

This made sense, so Barry wiped the board and wrote “Please DON’T Abduct Me.”

“Cunning,” Valumart said. You often couldn’t tell whether he was making fun of you or not, Barry thought. Maybe that’s why he didn’t have many friends. “If they don’t take me this time, I’m going get really drunk, go find a flying saucer and puke on it.”

“Understandable,” Valumart said.

“Anyway, I’m glad Barry has a job now,” Ermine said, “Getting abducted’s a hobby, not a career.”

“Thank goodness for the Ministry,” Genny said. “No offense,” she said to Lord Valumart.

“None taken,” Valumart said. “The Ministry of Magicity is a necessary good.”

“Well, you didn’t have to be at work with me today,” Barry said.

“Why? What did you have to do?” Valumart asked. Dusk was falling.

“Bloody boring public service announcement,” he said. When Barry Trotter spoke, Muddles listened. Today, what he was saying was, “Don’t cast bootleg spells.” For the past several years, Dork wizards had been providing blackmarket spells, or “charmz,” catering to Muddles’ every desire, from finding a mate to automotive repair. The problem was that these spells had been copied so many times, from smudgy parchments full of archaic words, they were full of errors. So a love charm aimed at the girl next door might light on your older brother instead. Or an incantation to increase your height would actually make the entire outside world slightly *smaller*.

“What were you saying today?” Genny said, with a touch of hero-worship. “Can you still remember it?”

“God, I’ll never forget it,” Barry said. “Three hundred takes. ‘Read ‘em, trade ‘em, collect ‘em—just don’t say ‘em. Magic isn’t a toy and *charmz* can be deadly,’” Barry parroted with a glazed look in his eye. “Behind me, there was this wall of televisions playing an endless loop of some poor kid getting his eyeballs pulled out by an imp.”

“Ooh, how awful.” Genny *stood up and stretched*. “Well, people, we’d best be going. Lon gets me up at the crack of dawn.”

“Thanks for coming, Genny,” Barry said. “And thanks for letting us take Lon up to school for the Reunion next month.”

“Quite all right,” Genny said. “I think he’ll enjoy it, and frankly, I could use the time off. Taking care of a half-canine manchild can be wearing.”

“I understand more than you realize,” Ermine said. Barry elbowed her.

After Genny *and Lon* had left, Barry asked Valumart, “Are you coming to the Reunion?”

The Dork Lord laughed. “Of course not! I wasn’t a member of your class.”

“Yes, but you spent so much time trying to kill us...if anybody deserves to be an honorary member, it’s you,” Ermine said.

“I graduated four years later, and they’re letting me come,” said Barry.

“But I’m not the great Barry Trotter,” Valumart said.

“Nor am I,” Barry said, smirking. “Those books were mostly nonsense. You know that.”

“You always stayed one step ahead of *me*,” he replied. For an evil mastermind, Lord Valumart was certainly a good sport. “Speaking of books,” Valumart said, “I have a proposition for you. I’d like you to do another one.”

“Why?” Barry asked. “My latest royalty statement **said** we hadn’t broken twenty copies yet.” (**It had actually spoken—magical world, all that.**)

“And we never will,” Valumart said. “That’s precisely why I’m asking. ValuBooks needs to lose some serious money before year’s end or the taxman will have my arse. That damn ‘Wizard Called It’ book is flying out of the stores.”

“It’s true,” Ermine chimed in. “The last time I was at Boorish and Clots, one hit me.” She showed a bruise.

“A kid in my class was browsing in Wartytoad’s and got a broken nose,” Nigel **said**.

Valumart chuckled. Other people’s **injuries** amused him. “Anyway, I need to lose some money, so naturally I thought of you.”

“Thanks, I think,” Barry said. “What did you have in mind, another parody?”

“God no,” Valumart said. “I don’t need to lose that much. A small outrage will do—maybe a memoir or something?”

Valumart tapped a pack of cigarettes on the arm of the chair, and took one out. He offered it to Nigel, who declined.

“Why do you **smoke**?” Ermine said. “It’s so bad for you.”

“The alternative is living with Muddles for 400 years, and I need to cling to something,” the Dork Lord said. He pulled down his oxygen mask and lit up. “What about some sort of tell-all, were you set the record straight, in your own words?”

“How straight?” Ermine asked, worry creeping in.

“Don’t worry, Ermine, not that straight,” Valumart said, smiling. His spies had once given him a single-spaced list of Ermine’s schoolgirl crushes, flirts, dalliances and affairs. It weighed twelve pounds.

“Oh, I don’t think anybody’d be interested—” Barry began.

“Precisely,” Valumart said, shaking his match out and throwing it into the grass. It was magical, so it kept burning. Only Nigel saw it, and for the rest of the evening, he battled the flame, alone.

“Okay,” Barry said. “I’ll try to come up with something.”

“Great,” Valumart said. “You do that. I’m sure it will be a worst-seller.”

Something caught Ermine’s eye. “Hey! Look out!”

A lump of metal fell from the sky and hit Barry squarely on the head.

“Ow!” Barry said, clutching his noggin. Nigel had grabbed Fiona and scrambled under his chair.

“Barry, are you okay?” Ermine asked. “Don’t worry, it’s his least vulnerable part.”

“It’s those damn aliens,” Valumart said. “They’ve really got it in for you.”

Rubbing his injury—which was already beginning to swell—he turned the piece of metal over. “Gimme that match, Nigel,” he asked. Looking at it in the flickering light, Barry read what had been incised—in perfect cursive—on the piece of slag: “Wishing you were here...”

With a swoosh, another lump of metal hit him, this time on the backside. “Ow! *Alpo!*” Barry swore. (For the sake of the children, he and Ermine had agreed to replace all instances of ‘the f word’ with their ex-Headmister’s name.) Immediately Barry whipped his wand out, pointed **upwards** in the direction of the **attack**, and yelled.

“*Aveda Neutrogena!*” The infamous death-by-moisturizing spell spurted out into the inky black. They were well out of range; it would fall in viscous green clumps all over the yard for the rest of the night.

Somewhat avenged, he looked at the new missile, which bore a single word.

“*Psyche!*”