# Brrons 1100

## W1

### READING WISELY

The youngster who reads **voraciously**, though **indiscriminately**, does not necessarily gain in wisdom over the teenager who is more selective in his reading choices. A student who has read the life story of every **eminent** athlete of the twentieth century, or one who has **steeped** herself in every socialprotest novel she can get her hands on, may very well be learning all there is to know in a narrow area. But books are **replete** with so many wonders that it is often discouraging to see bright young people limit their own experiences.

### SOLVING THE SERVANT PROBLEM

The worlds of science fiction **abound** with wonders. Yet modern technology progresses so rapidly that what is today’s wild dream may be next year’s kitchen appliance. A British scientist has **prognosticated** that within ten years every suburban **abode** will have its own robot servant. One task this domesticated **automaton** will not have to contend with will be scouring the oven because even today the newest ranges can be programmed to reduce their own baked-on grime to easily disposed of ash.

### IT’S A MAN’S WORLD

How paradoxical that the world’s greatest chefs have all been men! Cooking would clearly seem to be a field that lies exclusively within women’s realm, yet the annals of cookery are replete\* with masculine names: Brillat Savarin, Ritz, Diat, Larousse. To compound the puzzle, there has rarely been a tinge of rumor or scandal casting doubts on the masculinity of these heroes of cuisine.

### A LUCKY FIND ON THE SUBWAY?

Sylvia regularly took a crowded subway train to work during rush hour, so she found it to be a **paradox** one hot, steamy Tuesday to easily find a seat in a car that was nearly empty. She wondered how, in the **realm** of possibilities, this could be; how often in the **annals** of subway history had there been such a fortunate occurrence? To **compound** the puzzle, looking out the window she could see many commuters busily racing on the platform to fill other cars. It was not until she saw the sign on the door that she realized, with a **tinge** of resignation, why she had been so “lucky” this morning: “We apologize, but the air conditioning is not working in this car.”

### HOW NOT TO GET YOUR WAY

It is difficult to change someone’s opinion by **badgering** him. The child who begs his mother to “get off his back” when she **implores** him for some assistance with the household **drudgery**, may very well plead **interminably** for some special privilege when he wants something for himself. How paradoxical\* that neither is able to **perceive** that no one likes being nagged.

## W2

### TO THE POINT

Calvin Coolidge, our thirtieth president, was named “Silent Cal” by reporters because of his **laconic** speech. One Sunday, after Mr. Coolidge had listened to an interminable\* sermon, a **throng** of newsmen gathered around him. An **intrepid** reporter **accosted** the Chief Executive: “Mr. President, we know that the sermon was on the topic of sin. What did the minister say?” “He was against it,” the **reticent** Coolidge replied.

### IF I HAD THE WINGS OF AN ANGEL

Casting a furtive glance over his shoulder, the felon slipped out the main prison gate to be swallowed up in the British fog. A plethora of escapes from supposedly secure prisons embarrassed the hapless wardens. To compound\* their problems, the officials were badgered\* by irate citizens who accused the guards of accepting bribes from convicts whose motto was: “Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage.”

### DR. JEKYLL OR MR. HYDE?

Under the pretext of being a surgeon he gained entry to the hospital. When interviewed by the director, he had to fabricate a tale of his medical experience, but he was so adroit at lying that he got away with it. It was not until the phony “doctor” began to gesticulate wildly with his scalpel that a vigilant nurse was able to detect the fraud. In the annals\* of medical history there have been a number of such cases.

### YOU’VE GOT TO BE A FOOTBALL EXPERT

As an avid football fan, I try to see every game the Jets play. Whenever I can cajole my father into accompanying me, I try to do so. He has only a rudimentary knowledge of the game, and since I am steeped\* in it, I enjoy explaining its intricate details to him. It certainly does enhance your appreciation of football when you are aware of every nuance of the sport.

## W3

### THE PEP TALK

“If there’s one thing I loathe,” the coach said, “it’s a quitter.” He had good reason to reprimand us at half-time, because the scoreboard revealed that we were losing, 45–20. Our lackluster performance indicated to him that we had forgotten the rudimentary\* aspects of basketball. His caustic remarks fired us up, however, and we dashed out, determined to wrest control of the game from our rivals.

### THE HANDCUFF IS QUICKER THAN THE EYE

Slippery Eddie, the infamous pickpocket, was back at work, and every detective had to be especially vigilant.\* Eddie’s technique was to jostle a victim toward a partner in crime who would then slip the man’s wallet out of his back pocket while Eddie was stammering an apology to the confused dupe. Within a week the incipient crimewave came to an end when Slippery Eddie inadvertently chose the chief of police for his victim. Although Eddie loathes\* the county jail, it’s his permanent address for now.

### COURTROOM DRAMA

There was an ominous silence when the jittery defendant rose in court. He explained in a tremulous voice what had led him to repudiate his confession made at the police station on the night of the crime. The audience began to buzz excitedly until the judge demanded a cessation of the noise. Although the district attorney bristled with anger, the defendant kept insisting that his rights had been violated because he had not been told that he could see a lawyer before confessing.

### CALL ME BY MY RIGHT NAME

My cousin refers to himself as a “sanitary engineer”—a euphemism for garbage collector. There are any number of people who try to find more respectable or glamorous titles for the mundane jobs they hold. It may seem incongruous to call an undertaker a “condolence counselor,” or to refer to a taxi driver as a “transportation expediter,” but some prefer those titles. As a matter of fact, our butcher has stipulated that from now on he wants to be known as the chief “meat coordinator.” He became irate\* when I inadvertently\* called him “Meathead.”

## W4

### MULLINS A K.O. VICTIM

When the bell sounded, K.O. Mullins responded with alacrity. He sprang from his stool and charged across the ring, showing disdain for the champion’s strength. Although this belligerent attitude impressed the referee, it failed to intimidate the champ. That intrepid\* battler laid the hapless\* Mullins low with an adroit\* feint and an uppercut.

### MULLINS THROWS DOWN THE GAUNTLET\*

The pugnacious K.O. Mullins demanded a rematch. He took a full-page newspaper advertisement to promulgate his challenge. When the champ’s manager saw the brash announcement, he accosted\* Mullins, who was surrounded by a throng\* of newsmen. The manager openly scoffed at Mullins and belittled his fighting ability. Mullins then lost his temper and fearlessly punched the manager, knocking them both off their feet.

### MULLINS FORCED TO EAT HUMBLE PIE\*

The irate\* 80-year-old manager pressed charges against K.O. Mullins, suing him for assault. As tangible evidence of the attack, he pointed to a deep laceration over his eyebrow that had required ten stitches. When the case was brought before the court, the judge castigated Mullins for the sordid incident. In addition to a costly financial settlement, Mullins was required to make a public apology to the octogenarian.

### THE DECLINE OF MULLINS

Mullins sought solace in whiskey. Once a highly respected aspirant for the lightweight crown, he now found himself associating with the dregs of society. He would work himself into an alcoholic frenzy in which he would trumpet scurrilous attacks on the champ, the old manager, and the judge. One avid\* fight fan attributed Mullins’ absence from the ring to sickness, saying that he was “recovering from a bad case of SCOTCH.”

## W5

### CHEATING

During my first weeks at the new school I observed that cheating was rampant. I had always considered it rather inane to cheat on a test because of my code of ethics, and because so much was at stake. Apparently the other students didn’t concur. In fact, even the presence of a proctor did not intimidate\* them. Far from being a clandestine activity, the cheating was open and obvious.

### CRACKING DOWN

Mr. Dorsey, our new principal, determined to do something about the flagrant cheating at our high school. He issued bulletins and began to admonish those teachers who did not proctor alertly. Under duress, the faculty reported the names of the culprits. Several cheat sheets were turned in as tangible\* evidence of the offense. Mr. Dorsey’s inexorable campaign against the wrong-doers seemed to be paying off.

### STAR PLAYER IS CAUGHT

The cheating scandal came to a head when Art Krause, our football captain, made the egregious mistake of getting caught cheating on a midterm exam. If Art were suspended for his part in that sordid\* affair, our chances for winning the city championship would go up in smoke.\* The distraught coach asked the principal to overlook Art’s duplicity, but Mr. Dorsey replied in an acrimonious fashion that the players had been given “a plethora”\* of athletic instruction, but a paucity of moral guidance.”

### OUR PYRRHIC VICTORY\*

Mr. Dorsey summoned a representative group of teachers and student leaders to his office in order to elicit their reactions to the suspension of the football captain. He told them that cheating was a pernicious disease that could not be tolerated at our school. He loathed\* having to discipline Art Krause so severely, but unless strict measures were taken, the student body would construe the incident as an open invitation to cheat with impunity. “We may lose a football game,” the principal said, “but we can salvage our self-respect.”

## W6

### THE NEWSPAPER UMBRELLA

Our neighbor is an affluent inventor whose latest brainstorm, a feasible umbrella substitute, has been featured in many magazines. As simply as the eye can discern, it is a hard plastic strip, about the size of a ruler, which fits comfortably into a woman’s handbag or a man’s suit jacket. If a person is caught in a sudden rainstorm, he swings the plastic open in the shape of a cross. Attached to each arm is a clip-like device. Next, he takes the newspaper he is carrying and slides it under each of the four clips. Now, equipped with a rigid head covering he can sally forth to face the elements. To the consternation of the umbrella manufacturers, it has been enjoying a brisk sale, especially among commuters. If it continues to do well, it could have a pernicious\* effect upon the umbrella industry.

### PATENT PENDING

My kid brother, Verne, a precocious teenage automotive wizard, and I were inspired to do some inventing on our own. We thought it might be feasible\* to park a car parallel to a space on the street. Then, by pressing a button, we could raise the four tires off the ground slightly, while dropping two special wheels perpendicular to the curb. It would then be child’s play to roll into the narrowest of parking spaces. We took the idea to Ed Greene who runs the Ford agency in order to elicit\* his reaction. After a perfunctory glance at our plans, to our chagrin Ed snorted that our idea was inane,\* but we decided that he was just jealous of our brilliance. Tomorrow we are going to start on a computer that will enable us to measure the intelligence of perverse car dealers who like to deride the efforts of junior geniuses.

### HOLD THAT NOBEL PRIZE!

Speaking of inventions and discoveries, I just learned that an eminent\* scientist in Ohio has developed a pill that contains all the nutritive value of three complete meals. In addition to providing us with the vitamins and minerals we need daily, this pill also gives a feeling of fullness. According to its sponsors, the pill will nourish and satisfy. I hate to disparage such a laudable achievement, but to me it seems like a most objectionable discovery. Rather than a scientific triumph, I’d be inclined to label it as an egregious\* blunder, a scientific disaster, a laboratory fiasco. Is there anyone in his right mind who thinks that a pill can replace the pleasures of devouring hot corn bread, masticating on a thick steak, biting into crisp french fries, or attacking a chocolate sundae? I’m afraid that this is one pill I’ll have to eschew chewing.

### PERFECT PRODUCTS

I guess we’ll never be able to quell those persistent rumors about the invention of auto tires that will never go flat, stockings that cannot run, and pens that won’t dry out. A verbose economist informed me that such products will never be marketed. “Can you imagine,” he asked, “a manufacturer cutting his own throat? Why would he sell you an item that you will never have to replace?” “No,” my confidant whispered, “it’s part of their scheme of planned obsolescence to sell you merchandise with a limited life span in order to keep you coming back for more.” I am dubious about the existence of those perfect products, but then I’m a skeptic.

## W7

### MUCH ADO ABOUT DYED HAIR

Long after most schools had adopted more lenient policies regarding students’ hairstyles, ours had a widely reputed showdown on their practice of prohibiting brightly-dyed hair. Two honor students, Ron Harris and Jen Chester, were sent to the principal by their French teacher, an implacable rule enforcer, who went into a paroxysm of anger when she spied the students in the hall. At first it seemed like a simple case. The school would reprimand\* the two for their untoward behavior and order them to return their hair to their natural colors, or be suspended. But the students’ parents decided that the school had overstepped its jurisdiction, and they took their case to the newspapers. What had started as a local skirmish now began to take on the appearance of a full-scale war.

### THE TEMPEST SPILLS OUT OF THE TEAPOT

Once the newspapers got the story, the case of the two students became a cause célèbre.\* Ron and Jen were interviewed, seen on TV, and regarded by their fellow students as superstars. “These are not delinquents or hoods,” one reporter wrote, “but clean-cut American teens who are being harassed by a monolithic school system.” A caustic\* editorial referred to the school’s decision as arbitrary and inane.\* A false story even circulated about Ron and Jen being rock ’n’ roll performers whose indigent families needed their salaries. Finally, the Civil Liberties Union jumped into the fray with a court order stipulating\* that the principal be required to show cause why the students should not be allowed to return to class.

### HAIRCUT DILEMMA

The school authorities were stymied. Public opinion had been marshaled against them. No longer was it a simple case of disciplining two wayward students. Suddenly it had taken on the appearance of a nightmare in which the principal was pictured in cartoons as either hanged in effigy or making a villainous swipe at the two young heroes. But the officials could not allow Ron and Jen to flout their authority with impunity.\* Members of the school board concurred\* with the principal’s action, but they were cognizant of the popular support for the students. Clearly, action was called for to resolve the turbulent situation.

### HAPPY ENDING?

Following an executive session, the school board ordered the principal to terminate the suspension and to send Ron and Jen back to class forthwith. Unless it could be shown that their presence disrupted the learning process, there was no reason to bar the two. It was a bitter pill to swallow\* for the principal whose irritation was exacerbated by the ruling. But some of the sting was taken out of the victory when the students appeared in school the next day with their hair returned to their natural colors. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief. Just as things were about to revert to normalcy, however, the same French teacher then demanded that a girl be ousted from class for wearing a miniskirt.

## W8

### ENTER DR. THOMAS A. DOOLEY

In 1956, Look Magazine named Thomas Dooley as one of the year’s ten most outstanding men. Just under thirty years of age at the time, Dr. Dooley had already distinguished himself by caring for a half-million sick and emaciated Vietnamese refugees. When fighting broke out in the divided country of Vietnam, the northern communist Viet Minh forces surged southward, scattering thousands of refugees before them. At the time, Dr. Dooley was a lieutenant, assigned to a tranquil naval hospital in Yokosuka, Japan. Forthwith\* he volunteered for duty on a navy ship that had been chosen to transport the refugees to sanctuary in Saigon. The curtain was beginning to ascend on Dooley’s real career.

### DOOLEY’S MISSION

Aboard the refugee ship, Dooley’s destiny took shape. He became painfully cognizant\* of the malnutrition, disease, ignorance, and fear that afflicted the passengers. In addition, he discerned\* how active the communists had been in spreading their anti-American propaganda. Tom Dooley pitched in to build shelters in Haiphong, and to comfort the residents there before that besieged city fell to the powerful Viet Minh forces. He was seemingly unconcerned by the many privations he had to endure. For his services, Dooley received the U.S. Navy’s Legion of Merit. He told the story of this exciting experience in Deliver Us from Evil, a bestseller that alerted America to the plight of the Vietnamese and what Dooley saw as the sinister intentions of Communism.

### STYMIED\* BY PERSONAL SICKNESS

After an extensive lecture tour in 1956, Dr. Dooley returned to Laos to set up a mobile medical unit. Because the Geneva Agreement barred the entrance of military personnel to the country, he resigned from the Navy and went to work as a civilian. That story is told in The Edge of Tomorrow. The next year, despite a growing illness, the ubiquitous Dooley turned up in the remote village of Muong Sing, attempting to thwart his traditional enemies—disease, dirt, ignorance, starvation—and hoping to quell\* the spread of Communism. But his trained medical eye soon told him that the pain in his chest and back was a harbinger of a malignant cancer.

### “PROMISES TO KEEP”

From August 1959 until his death in January 1961, Dooley suffered almost continuous, excruciating pain. His normal weight of 180 was cut in half, and even the pain-killing drugs could no longer bring relief. Knowing that he did not have long to live, Dr. Dooley worked without respite on behalf of MEDICO, the organization he had founded to bring medical aid and hope to the world’s sick and needy. The lines of Robert Frost kept reverberating in his mind during those fretful days: “The woods are lovely, dark and deep/ But I have promises to keep/ And miles to go before I sleep.” When he finally succumbed, millions throughout the world were stunned and grief-stricken by his death.

## W9

### JUST SPELL THE NAME CORRECTLY

P. T. Barnum, the great circus impresario, was once accosted\* by a woman who showed him a scurrilous\* manuscript about himself, and said that unless he paid her, she would have the book printed. Barnum rejected the extortion attempt. “Say what you please,” he replied, “but make sure that you mention me in some way. Then come to me and I will estimate the value of your services as a publicity agent.” Barnum obviously felt that adverse criticism was an asset for a public figure. He believed a man who seeks the limelight should not care what is written about him, but should be concerned only when they stop writing about him. Barnum’s philosophy suggests that we might do well to review the plethora\* of publicity given to rabble-rousers and bigots.

### BIGOTS\* GET PUBLICITY

Today, the blatant bigot, the leader of a lunatic fringe, and the hate-monger, each with his tiny entourage, find it relatively easy to attract publicity. Newspapers give space to the virulent activities of those agitators on the grounds that they are newsworthy. TV producers and radio executives, seeking sensationalism, often extend a welcome to such controversial characters. “Yes,” said the host of one such program, “we invite bigots, but it is only for the purpose of making them look ridiculous by displaying their inane\* policies to the public.” Some civic-minded organizations have answered, however, that the hosts are not always equipped to demolish those guests, and even if they were, the audience would still be exposed to the venom they spew forth.

### COPING WITH BIGOTS\*

Suppose a bigot\* wished to organize a meeting in your neighborhood. Since we cherish freedom of speech, we are loath to deny the request, even if he preaches hatred. As a result, hate-mongers are given the opportunity to rent halls, conduct meetings, publish abusive literature, and solicit contributions. What can be done about them? One astute observer, Prof. S. Andhil Fineberg, advocates the “quarantine method.” His plan is to give such groups no publicity and to ignore them completely. Without the warmth of the spotlight, he feels that the bigot will freeze and become ineffectual. Debating with such warped minds is not feasible\* and only tends to exacerbate\* the situation.

### MORE THAN SILENCE

The quarantine method for handling bigots implies more than giving them the silent treatment. Prof. Fineberg urges community-relations organizations to scrutinize the nefarious activities of hatemongers and to be prepared to furnish information about them to amicable inquirers. When a rabblerouser is coming, those organizations should privately expose him to opinion-molders. In addition, constructive efforts should be taken to induce people to involve themselves in projects for improving intergroup relations. Bigger than the vexatious immediate problem is the need to find out the cause for such bigotry and to counteract this sinister\* malady that afflicts\* a segment of our society.

## W10

### JERRY HART’S SIXTH SENSE

An uneasy feeling had made Jerry Hart miserable all day long. It was difficult to explain, but the similar sensations in the past had been accurate—trouble was on the way. Just as some people can predict the onset of inclement weather because of an aching in their bones, so could Jerry detect incipient\* disaster. He sat at his desk, trying to peruse a company report but his efforts were ineffectual.\* The gnawing at his insides, the tinge\* of uneasiness, the premonition of calamity that besieged\* him would not desist. When the phone rang, he recoiled with fear—it was his wife and she was hysterical. Their son had been bitten by a mad dog!

### CRISIS!

As soon as Jerry Hart could get the pertinent facts from his wife, he dashed out of the office on his way home. He jostled\* people in the hallway, implored\* the elevator operator to hurry, and with flagrant\* disregard for an elderly gentleman jumped into the cab he had hailed. The twenty-minute taxi ride seemed interminable,\* and all the while horrible thoughts occurred to Jerry. Visions of an ugly mastiff with foaming jaws obsessed him. A crowd of people had gathered in front of his house so that Jerry had to force his way through them. Little Bobby was on his bed, surrounded by a doctor, a police officer, Jerry’s doleful wife, his two daughters, and a half-dozen wan neighbors.

### A TIME FOR DECISION

The doctor explained the situation calmly, avoiding histrionics. First of all, they didn’t know whether the dog had rabies. Secondly, the elusive dog had frustrated all attempts to find him so far. Finally, the decision would have to be made whether Bobby was to undergo the painful vaccination administered daily for two weeks. Mrs. Hart said that a neighbor who had seen the dog claimed that it had been foaming at the mouth, barking, and growling constantly—all symptomatic of rabies. But the policeman interjected that there hadn’t been a case of a mad dog in the county in over twenty years; he repudiated\* the neighbor’s report, advocating\* that they do nothing for at least another day. Mr. and Mrs. Hart sat down to think about their next step.

### THE PERTINENT\* FACTS ABOUT RABIES

“Give me some of the rudimentary\* information about the disease, Doc,” said Jerry, glancing toward the inert figure of his son. “Well, as you know, the malady\* used to be called ‘hydrophobia’ (fear of water) because one of the symptoms is an inability to swallow liquids. Actually, it is caused by a live virus from the saliva of an infected animal. If saliva gets into a bite wound, the victim may get rabies. The virus travels along the nerves to the spine and brain. Once the salient characteristics appear (ten days to six months) then death is imminent.” “What are the symptoms?” asked Mrs. Hart. “Pain and numbness, difficulty in swallowing, headaches and nervousness. Also, muscle spasms and convulsions.” The squeamish neighbors who were engrossed in the doctor’s remarks gasped. “I think we should go ahead with the injections,” the distraught\* Mrs. Hart said. “I’ve heard enough.”