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## The Picture

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# The Picture

## **Abstract**

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"The tiny black eyes of knowledge. That smug smile he had on his face. Everything about that picture pissed me off. Every time I walked to class that moron stared at me from his little picture frame. It really creeped me out every time I saw it. I could never concentrate in class with him staring at me like that. I always had to study harder and get notes from other people because all I could do was think about that picture."

## **Cover Page Footnote**

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### THE PICTURE

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On Wednesday we had to take a midterm that was 25% of our grade. I had been studying nonstop for this and by Wednesday I was ready. I didn't want any problems so I walked down the other hall on the other side of the building, away from the sinister smile of the picture. I sat down and was feeling pretty confident. I looked up and could see it through the window in the door, but I told myself to just ignore it. The teacher passed out the tests and I got started. I flew through the first ten questions with no problem. Then I got to number eleven. I remembered reading something about this somewhere, but I just couldn't place it. That's when I saw it. That picture was staring at me again; staring a hole right through me. What the hell was it staring at? Did it know I couldn't figure out the answer? How could it possibly know? I tried to get back to the test but it kept staring at me. I couldn't take it, it was too much. I felt like I was about to snap right there in the middle of class. All of a sudden I heard, "Ok everyone, hand in your tests." Class was over and I had only answered ten questions! I tried to scribble in a few answers before the teacher took my test, but it was no use. That picture has screwed me. It screwed me out of a good grade on my midterm. But I vowed right then and there that was the last time it would get in my way.

It was late Thursday night and I knew no one would be around. I packed a few supplies and left my house. I parked my car across the street, snuck through an open window and made my way down the halls of the school. I turned the corner and saw it. The same beady little eyes, same goofy smile. I took my paintbrush and dipped it in my bucket of paint. It was time for revenge. I drew a nice big moustache on him and a big cigar in his mouth. There, I thought, that'll teach you. So I stepped back to look at my work, but something still didn't seem quite right. Maybe it was the angle of the picture in the moonlight, maybe it was the fact that I was in a poorly ventilated building with an open bucket of paint, but I could have sworn that he was laughing at me! Oh you wanna play hardball, eh? So to further insult this punk, I wrote my name in huge letters across the picture = Hugo was here. That shut him up. I left the school and headed home, feeling very self-satisfied.

The next day I got into school and ran to the hallway to see the picture. They had taken it down! I won! Ah, it looked so much nicer with him gone. I walked into class for the first time with a big smile on my face. But as soon as I sat down, I heard the principal over the intercom, "Hugo Quinn, please report to the principal's office." I felt a little nervous, but figured it was probably nothing and went down. When I got to the office, I sat down and he asked me if I knew anything about an act of vandalism that occurred last night. I told him I didn't. "Oh come on," he said "I know it was you." I didn't leave any evidence, did I? "How could you possibly know it was me?" I asked. "You wrote your name on it!" he said. "So, maybe it was one of the other Hugo's." I told him. "There aren't any other Hugo's!" he shouted. I couldn't believe it. That picture screwed me again! That's why it laughed at me, so I would get mad and write my

name on it. But how did it know I would get mad? "You don't understand," I said "It keeps staring at me, it won't leave me alone!" The principal looked confused, almost like he didn't believe me. He looked down and sighed. "You don't have to make excuses and lie to me. All I was going to have you do was clean it off." "You mean it's still here?" I asked. "Of course, why wouldn't it be? The janitor just hung it back up in the hall - Go get a wet rag and wash it off. Then you can go back to class."

I walked back down the hallway only to see that menacing face hanging right back where it was before. I took the wet rag and began to wipe off my artwork. It wasn't coming off very easily, but I kept scrubbing, trying not to look it in the eyes. It was no use. Its piercing gaze caught mine as we stared at each other. But this time was different. This time it was actually waving at me! I was tired of this. I only had one more option. I lifted the picture off the wall and stared at it. It stared back at me as it always did. "I've had enough," I told it. "This is the end of the line." I lifted the god-forsaken picture over my head and threw it to the floor. It smashed into a million pieces all over everything. There, it's over, I thought. It'll never bother me again. "What the hell was that noise?" a voice screamed from the other end of the hall. The principal came running from his office to see what was going on. "It was looking at me again!" I shouted. "It was mocking me, it knew it outsmarted me and it was trying to rub it in!" But as I pointed at the shards on the floor, I saw it. It was still there. The face was still there, in one of the pieces, yelling at me. I picked up the piece and looked closely at it. It was still there, the whole face in just one piece of the picture. But how? I picked up another piece and again I saw it. I picked up another and another and another, but it was there, in every single one of them. "What are you doing?" the principal yelled? "Do you know how much that mirror cost?" I stopped moving and turned around. "What did you say?" I asked. It couldn't be. There was no way. No, I know the difference between a mirror and a picture. He was lying. Yes, he was lying! He was friends with the picture and was trying to protect it. No, you can't be friends with a picture. Can you? It was all too much to take in.

I woke up in a dark room. It was a quiet place, different from the places I was used to. Not quite as friendly. There weren't any pictures here, just soft walls and a nice bed. The other people that lived here were strange too. For some reason they always gave me paper plates and plastic forks for my meals. And they never let me drink water either. I never saw the face again.