

## Lancelot College - A Trilogy of Short Stories

### Part One: Jaffa Cakes.

'Which one of you boys stole my Jaffa Cakes?' screamed the history teacher at the top of his voice. The alcohol-induced network of red capillaries in his face looked as if they were about to explode through his waxy skin. In front of him were two rows of six twelve-year-old boys, still in their pyjamas. A couple of them were trembling with fear.

'If I do not find out who did it within ten seconds, I will cane the lot of you!' he screamed again. He was perspiring now: there were drops of sweat on his forehead and wet patches butterflyed over his light-blue shirt.

'Ten, nine, eight, seven, six ....'

The smallest boy in the group with a spotty face and round, nickel spectacles, stepped forward.

'I did it, sir,' he announced in a hesitant, not-yet-broken voice.

'Where *are* they?'

'I've eaten them, sir.'

'Eaten them? Well, I will show you what happens to little boys who eat their master's Jaffa Cakes,' said the teacher spitefully, grabbing the boy just above the elbow and dragging him away to his office.

The other boys looked at one another in a mixture of amazement and relief and tiptoed along the polished linoleum to listen at the history teacher's door.

'Pull your pants down!'

The boys then heard six harsh whips of the cane lashing against naked flesh. They winced each time.

As they tiptoed back to the dormitory, Richard Crouch said, 'I don't get it. It was *me* who stole the Jaffa Cakes.'

By the way, the year is 1974 - when corporal punishment was still legal in British schools.

Later that morning at breakfast the spotty boy with the round nickel spectacles, who was named 'Jaffa Cake' for the rest of his school career, sat alone at the end of a long, wooden dining table.

'Why did you say it was you?' asked Richard.

'I read about it in a book last week. It's called *substitution*,' replied Jaffa Cake.

Incidents like this were not uncommon in Lancelot College, Church of England School. They were designed to make boys into real men. The kind of men who could be senior doctors and lawyers, lead the government, run the civil service and win wars. Over 20% of the pupils were awarded places at Oxbridge, which made the school very popular with well-to-do parents from North Surrey to the South Coast.

Richard had been at the school for three months now and he liked it very much, except for being a border. His parents were not rich, but he had won a scholarship to the school from a fund set up in 1792 to support the bright sons of Anglican clergymen. He was convinced, in retrospect, that he had only got into the school because he was able to quote the whole of Psalm 121 in the entrance examination. Richard's faith in God had less to do with his parents and more to do with a little, old, single Christian lady who used to babysit him regularly and had taught him the psalm.

Richard liked nearly all of his teachers, except for Mr. Prickard, the alcoholic history teacher. There was only one woman teacher in the Upper School, a French mistress called Madame Troussaud. She was extremely thin and always wore trousers. You could smell her perfume from anywhere in the school building for anything up to half an hour after she

had been there. Her nickname was 'The Bitch' because she was very strict and two-faced, even with the boys who were her obvious favourites. You would have thought she was a lesbian if it had not been for the fact that she regularly slept with some of the sixth-formers.

There was also Mr Poland, a Welch sports teacher who, instead of following a sports curriculum, taught rugby union all year round. He used to shower naked with the boys, and once he had even shown them his erection. He was like a horse. Some of the boys had a complex for the rest of their lives.

Then there was Mr. Bishop, a tall, skinny English teacher with a bald head and thin, wire glasses that he kept pushing to the top of his nose with his spiny, outstretched middle finger. He never once stood up from his desk during the lesson, yet he managed somehow to make Shakespeare rivetingly exciting. All the boys in his Sixth Form class got 'A' grades for English in the public examinations.

Also a brilliant teacher, but very scary, was Herr Schneider. He had had both arms blown off by a hand grenade during the Second World War. Thanks to two artificial arms he could still write on the blackboard and mark vocabulary tests. He gave every boy a nickname, and, if a boy was rude or disobedient, Herr Schneider would drill a piece of chalk hard into the nape of his neck. 'Das werden eure Eltern nie beweisen können,'<sup>1</sup> he said with a click of his false arms. No one ever messed around in his lessons.

But the best teacher of all was Mr Lightbody, who taught chemistry. He was the perfect teacher who set the standard for all teachers. He made chemistry really come alive employing crazy experiments with naked flames, smoke and explosions. He was great fun and used to get the boys standing on the desks to learn the periodic table and he taught them complex chemical formulae in the form of amusing songs. He never seemed strict, yet the boys always behaved in his lessons.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Your parents will never be able to prove that.'

When they entered his classroom, it was as if they were drawn into a parallel universe where education became essential and exciting through the sheer whirlwind force of his character and charisma. He was always patient, always had time or an encouraging word even for an eccentric loner, and he never put anyone down. Teaching for him was clearly a calling and not a job, since you could tell that he actually liked young people and could relate to them.

Some of the older pupils said that he was in the wrong school. If he did have any weakness, it was that he was sometimes in a more subdued mood during the weeks when he had to stay overnight in the school as the Housemaster of Ridley House. He missed not being with his girlfriend, so rumour had it.

Richard was fascinated by this curious gallery of individuals who shaped his school environment. Or, was it that the school environment shaped them?

After breakfast the new week began with an assembly for the whole school. The head teacher was 'gravely concerned' that some older boys had been seen by the neighbours smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol outside the school gates at the weekend. This dreadful behaviour would stop immediately, the boys in question would be caught and punished and their parents would be informed. Such crimes damaged the reputation of the College and were displeasing to God.

God got Richard into quite a lot of trouble over the following few weeks. In Biology with Dr. Greenhalf, Richard had challenged his teaching evolution as an established truth.

'Surely you admit that it is only a *theory*, sir? There is not one single piece of fossil evidence showing one species evolving into another. Believing in evolution is just as much a step of faith as believing in creation. Even Einstein believed in God.'

A heated discussion ensued in which some of the boys began to side with Richard. Dr. Greenhalf resorted to calling all the boys 'stupid morons' since every one knew that

evolution had been proven true beyond any scientific doubt. They were not at school to question the truth, they were there to learn it.

At this point, however, Jaffa Cake dared to comment, quoting his mother, who was a novelist: 'Exactly. Claiming that evolution is fact is like describing an entire elephant when you remain seated behind its bottom. Your determination to see everything from your limited perspective stifles your ability to see it from others.'

The whole class was immediately given, as a punishment, a two-sided essay on how creation had been disproved by modern science.

'Well done, Jaffa Cake!' whispered Peter, who was sitting next to him. 'Whatever happened to substitution, then?'

In Religious Knowledge Richard also got into trouble with the teacher, Reverend Black, the College Chaplain. He was an ordained Anglican minister who did not believe in God. He always wore a dog collar and an academic gown. When he walked between the single desks you could smell stale tobacco mixed with dried excrement. The theory was that the heavy smoker was too fat to wipe his bottom properly.

'We have a school inspection after Christmas, so I want you all to do a nice, coloured poster of a church that I can put on the walls as an interesting display,' instructed the chubby chaplain in his croaking, smoker's voice.

The boys set to work, all drawing buildings, from gothic to glass and concrete, of various shapes and sizes - with the exception of Richard, who drew a large crowd of people.

At the end of twenty minutes Reverend Black got up from his chair and wandered up and down between the desks, leaving the familiar odour in his trail. One of his nicotine-stained fingers suddenly landed on Richard's drawing.

'What is that, boy?' he growled.

'It's a church, sir.'

'No it's not. It's a group of people.'

'Yes, sir. Exactly. The Bible teaches that a church is a group of people, *not* a building. The Greek word for "church" in the New Testament, *ekklesia*, means "crowd".'

The reverend Black held up the drawing, sneered sarcastically and dramatically ripped it into thin shreds in front of the whole class. He screwed the shreds into a ball and aimed for the bin. He missed.

'Start again, boy, and do it properly this time. And you can finish it in detention tonight.'

But the biggest God-disaster was to be, of course, in history. Mr Prickard was teaching about the Second World War and the Holocaust. He showed the boys a black and white BBC documentary film of hundreds of Jews being gassed in concentration camps, interspersed with clips of Hitler ranting and raving in front of large, enthusiastic crowds of Germans and scenes of thousands of Nazi soldiers marching through Berlin.

'Can anyone in the class tell me how a whole nation can become so depraved that it inflicts this despicable suffering on innocent men, women and children?' he asked, his eyes exploding with hatred and cheeks burning with fire. No one knew. A few of the boys thought briefly of Herr Schneider, but he didn't seem *that* bad. He had, after all, risked his life to save his friends by catching the British hand grenade that was hurtling towards them.

Then, Richard made the terrible mistake of filling the pregnant pause.

'Maybe the Nazis had no choice, Sir. In Deuteronomy Chapter 28, God warns the Jews that if they don't obey Him and put Him first in their lives, He will punish them by sending a great and violent people from the North whose symbol will be the eagle.'

Mr Prickard stared at Richard with a look of furious hatred that surpassed anything in the documentary they had just seen. He raised his hand and some boys really did believe that he was about to kill Richard. Fortunately, after a loud shriek of anger, Mr Prickard left

the classroom, slamming the door behind him. He did not come back for the rest of the lesson.

'Well done, Dickhead,' said Harry. 'Mr Prickard is a *Jew*.'

Things changed for the better, though, towards the end of the term as Mr Lightbody organised a so-called *Winter Weekend Away* (all of his extra-curricular activities included alliteration). This short event was to be for the boys of Ridley House on a converted farm in West Sussex. There was abseiling, bike-riding, team-building exercises, a treasure hunt, a camp fire, a horror story competition and a little unofficial alcohol and smoking allowed for the older boys.

Mr Poland was going on the trip too.

For Richard, this was the best school trip during his seven years at Lancelot College. The weekend finished with an inter-age soccer competition in which Richard, although he was only a First Year, set up two stunning goals and then scored the winner. From then on the older boys nicknamed him 'Tricky-Dicky' and always greeted him in the playground.

One boy, Stephen, a Sixth Former who was a prefect in Ridley House, started treating Richard like his younger brother and used to buy him his favourite chocolate bar, *Turkish Delight*, at the tuck shop once a week.

The Michaelmas Term ended, as usual, with an assembly about the true meaning of Christmas. The head teacher explained how Christmas was about God's love.

In His Son, Jesus, God had given mankind His greatest gift. In Greek, there were three words for love. *Philo*, which was the love between a father and a son or two friends on the battlefield. *Eros*, which was sexual love. When some boys giggled at the word 'sexual', the head teacher added, 'Sex was created by God as a *good* thing. It is only made dirty if you have a dirty mind, *boys*.'

Richard looked briefly at the Bitch who was sitting inert next to the head teacher on the stage.

Finally, there was *Agape* which was the kind of selfless love like that of Mother Theresa or of Jesus Christ himself. The head teacher wished the boys a Happy Christmas and an educationally successful New Year.

As Richard packed his suitcase to go home, he had no idea that, in the next six months, he was going to experience, at twelve years of age, all three of these types of love.

When he arrived home at the vicarage, his mother had prepared his favourite lunch, steak and kidney pudding and chips. His parents read his report and were rather disappointed with the 'F' grades in Biology, History and Religious Knowledge.

'You always used to get "A"s in these subjects at your old school,' lamented his mother. 'Well, let's hope you can do better in the New Year.'

His father rushed down his food and dashed out to his next appointment. He was trying to start a new, more creative and up-to-date service on Saturdays so that more families might come to church, but the parish council wouldn't let him. Instead, he had to keep getting up at 7 am on Sunday to conduct a Holy Communion service for two old ladies and their dog, Butch.

Christmas was no busier for Richard's father than any other time of the year. Church life was always somehow busy, so that the father rarely had time for his growing son.

'Children spell "love" T - I - M - E,' his father used to preach, but he was never able to put this teaching into practice in his own family. Richard's father didn't even know which football team his only son supported or which songs he liked in the charts.

On night during the Christmas holidays, Richard got up in the early hours of the morning because he was feeling sick from eating too much chocolate. He found his father still awake, working in the study at 1 am.



'Dad,' he said sadly. 'Do you know something?'

'What's that, Rich?' attempting to hide his guilt behind joviality.

'You spell "relax" W-O-R-K-S,' said the boy.

His father lowered his head. He did not know how to reply.

Richard went instead and cuddled his mum who was fast asleep in bed. His mum simply suffered in silence under her workaholic husband, keeping the house impeccably clean and tidy and running all the boring women's meetings.

She had fallen out of love with the vicar at some point after the birth of Richard. There was maybe a little *Agape* and some *Philo* left in their home, but *Eros* had got dressed, packed his bags and left a long time ago. She had grown cold and weary and immersed herself in books. It was only her love for her son and the fear of shame in the local community that kept her imprisoned in this uneventful and predictable life. She sometimes fantasised about running away to another country with Richard and starting again with another man. Yet she was also a woman who knew dutifully how to keep a promise: *For richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part.*

Christmas came and went. Richard returned to school. Two weeks into the new term he was called out of German to go to the head teacher's secretary's office. It must have been something serious, since the boys were hardly ever called out of lessons.

'You have a phone call,' said the school secretary with a very concerned look on her face. Richard took the phone in his hand and heard his uncle Phil hesitantly utter the words, 'Richard, I have some very bad news.'

'Is it the dog?' he asked.

'No.'

'Has my grandmother died, or something?'

'No,' came the solemn reply again.

'It's your father. He's had a heart attack. Your mum is on her way to collect you.'

Richard wasn't able to cry. For the first time in his life, he was profoundly angry with God. On the night of the funeral, he took the dog for a walk in the park on his own. As he looked up at the cratered moon and distant stars in the cloudless sky, he proclaimed out loud: 'There is NO GOD!'

Richard had been given up to two weeks off school for bereavement. He helped his mother to tidy away his dad's things.

In the bedside drawer there some white cotton handkerchieves that smelled of his father's after shave. He put them in his pocket.

At the bottom of his father's lowest desk drawer, underneath a large pile of loose papers, Richard found a magazine with photographs of naked young men. He stared at the photos that were so much more informative than the strange, monochrome illustrations in his biology text book at school. He mentally compared their bodies to his. For the last few months, he knew that his body was changing and he was on his way to looking more like the young men in these photographs. He then threw the magazine in the dustbin, along with the rest of the pile of papers.

When he went to bed that night, he took his father's handkerchief out of his pocket, smelt it and lay it under his head on top of his pillow.

After six days Richard asked his mum whether he could go back to school already. He actually missed school and was worried about getting behind, plus his mum had become very withdrawn and was not good company.

Back at Lancelot College his friends were very sad for him and tried unsuccessfully to find the right words to say. The head teacher led an assembly on the theme of death.

‘We need not fear death as Christians,’ he said, since Jesus had overcome death on the cross and when we died we would go to heaven for all eternity. ‘The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Let us pray.’

Instead of praying, Richard thought about the new soccer league that Mr Lightbody had arranged for Thursdays after lessons.

It was now time for the school inspection. All the staff were on edge and punishments increased drastically during the days leading up to the arrival of Her Majesty’s inspectors.

In biology a very severe-looking old man with a long white beard sat at the back of the laboratory and made copious notes. He looked as if he was chewing on lemons.

The new topic was the human body. Dr Greenhalf showed the boys skeletons and posters of the internal organs. To the boys’ great disappointment, he did not even mention the subject of sexual reproduction. As in most British public schools in the 1970s, the boys would have to work that one out for themselves.

Instead, Dr Greenhalf took a large frog from an aquarium at the side of the biology lab and placed it inside a tall, glass jar. He soaked a cotton wool swab in some liquid, dropped it in the jar with the frog and closed the etched lid with an eerie squeak.

‘The frog will now die from the chloroform,’ explained the biology teacher.

All the boys were amazed. Biology was interesting after all.

The teacher then lifted the dead frog onto a wooden dissection board and pinned down its splayed-out legs. He took a scalpel and cut it open down the middle. A strange smell - like bananas and custard - emanated from the lifeless animal. Dr Greenhalf pointed with the tip of the scalpel at the lungs, the liver, the intestines, making a brief comment about the function of each organ.

As he began to remove the heart, to everyone's horror, the frog suddenly woke up. The pins popped out of the wooden board. The frog turned itself over and tried to hop across the teacher's desk with its intestines flailing out of its open belly. As they dragged along the varnished wood, they made a smeary mess, like multiple snail-tracks. There were gasps of disgust and two boys even ran out of the room feeling sick. After three attempted hops, the frog came to a sudden halt. Dr Greenhalf quickly picked up the resurrected creature and whisked it away into the prep room next door. The inspector got up and left the room.

That night there was quite a commotion around Colin's bed. Stephen and another prefect from Ridley House had brought two porno magazines into the First Year dormitory. It was the very first time the young boys had seen one. They looked eagerly at each page and made ingenuous comments about the size of the woman's breasts, the hardness of their nipples and the fascinating shape and colour of their mesmerising, moist vaginas. Richard had never experienced anything quite like this before. It felt so very good yet also so very wrong. Like lying successfully to his parents.

Harry had a bulge protruding from his pyjama trousers. To stave off the potential embarrassment, he pointed to his erection and asked the other boys if they could get one of those too. Three or four of them said yes and pointed to their groins with a mixture of embarrassment and pride.

Soon it was lights out and the boys all got into bed. Richard felt he had to get rid of the enormous tension in his body. He secretly rubbed himself under the bedcovers until he reached a conclusion that was almost more pain than pleasure.

At breakfast it was obvious that Richard was not the only one to have relieved himself the previous night.

'You mustn't do it too often, though,' warned Colin, 'or it can give you spots and make you go blind.'

'My mother says that that's not true,' announced Jaffa Cake, to the double bewilderment of the other boys.

At last it was Thursday. Richard worked hard in all his lessons and looked forward to the soccer at the end of school.

He played really well, scoring one goal with a stunning bicycle kick. He was nominated man of the match. On the way back to the changing room, Mr Lightbody put his arm on Richard's shoulder and said, 'Well done. You played really well, Richard.'

'Thank you, Sir.'

'Are things okay, by the way? You know, with your dad and everything?'

Richard turned and looked at his kind face. In the late afternoon sun, more clearly than ever before, he could see the teacher's birthmark that covered almost the entire right hand side of his face. It was slightly pitted like the surface of an orange.

'I'm fine, thank you, Sir.'

As Richard got undressed for a shower, he felt invincible. To be affirmed like that by Mr Lightbody was the greatest compliment in the world. He joined the other naked boys under the lukewarm water. Winterbotham had diarrhoea. It was running down his leg.

Rugby training had evidently also just finished. Mr Poland came in and stood boldly under the shower directly next to Richard's.

'I hear you played well, Crouch,' bellowed the teacher, his Welsh accent drowning out the hiss of the water and filling the whole changing area.

Richard was too embarrassed to reply. Instead, he looked down and saw the foamy water spiral into the plug hole, streaked with Winterbotham's turmeric-coloured discharge.

The following week Richard had to move into a one-man dormitory that used to be reserved for the prefects. Two new boys - the twin sons of a diplomat's family - had arrived and had been allocated Richard's dormitory. Since his dormitory was

already full, lots were drawn and Richard and Harry were selected to move out into one-man dorms in order to make space for the two new boys.

With this unsolicited move Richard's life began a new chapter, one which he spent the rest of his life wishing he could erase.

One night, when he was asleep, someone got into his bed alongside him. Some one older. The first time it happened, the visitor put his arm gently across Richard's chest. After a while, the arm moved down to his waist. Richard was very scared. He wanted to shout for help and to push the arm away, but instead he just pretended to be asleep. Frozen. Hardly breathing. For the first time since the death of his father, Richard began to pray.

'Dear God, if you are there, make this stop and make him go away.'

The arm remained still but Richard felt some slow movement in the body next to his. The breathing became faster and heavier. Then everything stopped and the visitor slipped back out of the bed and silently left the room.

The next morning Richard felt sick. He was unable to concentrate in his lessons. Most of the time he just stared out of the classroom window and the same thoughts went racing round in his bewildered brain like Formula 1 cars on a Scalextric track: *Who was this? Why were they doing it? Who could he tell about it?*

He wondered about telling his mother, or Harry or Colin, or uncle Phil, or the head teacher or his form teacher. Or, of course, yes, Mr Lightbody. *He* would listen, understand and not to tell anyone.

He plucked up the courage to tell him after soccer the following Thursday. He had rehearsed what to say word for word. When Thursday came, however, it was just impossible. It would have been hard enough to tell him about the porno mags, but in bed with another male was just too dark for words. It was off the scale. All as he could do was to write it all down in his diary as a way of trying to process it.

Over the following weeks things got worse. The unwanted visitor came into Richard's room again and again, got into his bed and became more and more bold. Richard, still scared and praying to God for help, pretended to be asleep.

Richard wanted so desperately to see who it was but he did not dare open his eyes. In any case it was pitch black in his tiny dormitory. The only thing Richard knew was that the person smelt of a kind of strong deodorant that the older boys used in their dorms or after sport.

Shortly before the Easter vacation, the teachers had been tipped off that some cannabis had been smuggled into the school. A special staff meeting was held. It was decided that the heads of house would search all the boys' dormitories during lesson time. Substitution would be provided for those heads of house who needed it.

It was Mr Lightbody's job to search Ridley house. Logically, he started with the Sixth Form dormitories and worked his way down to the First Year. By the time he had reached Richard's dorm, he had found no evidence of cannabis. In Richard's room, however, he found some things that deeply concerned him.

First, when he peeled back Richard's bedcovers to search the bed, he noticed several small, cream-coloured stains on the sheet. He knew of course what these were. Then, under the top of his mattress, wrapped in a white handkerchief smelling strongly of aftershave, he found the boy's diary.

The chemistry master opened the red book and began reading Richard's deepest personal thoughts. They started with comments about the teachers and pupils in his new school. Then there were Bible quotations and comments about God. After that came dark reflections about his father's sudden death and his disappointing relationship with his dad. Then, finally, came the entries that made Mr Lightbody's hands tremble as he turned over each page.

'Scared...pretended...touched...stroked...faster...slower ...guilty...God...moved.'

The chemistry master began sweating. *What was he going to do? The poor kid! This had to stop!*

He needed time to think.

*Should he talk to Richard? Should he keep the diary as evidence or put it back under the mattress?*

Back in the staffroom the cannabis had been found in the Sixth Form dormitory in Lionel House. The culprits had already been escorted from lessons to the head teacher's office. The sense of triumph in the staffroom was tangibly felt by all, except for Mr Lightbody, whose shaking hands revealed the shock and anxiety in his turbulent thoughts.

For the next few days, at least, Mr Lightbody decided not to say anything to anyone. The whole matter was too dark, too explosive.

If handled badly, the reputation of the College would be ruined, heads would roll, and, worse still, Richard's face would be all over the press and television. He would be branded as a queer, or worse, for the rest of his life.

Instead, the chemistry teacher decided to observe Richard closely yet unobtrusively for evidence of any worrying changes in his behaviour, and, on the last Thursday of term, he asked the twelve-year-old once again whether he wanted to talk.

'No thank you, Sir. Enjoy your holiday.'

'You too,' replied Mr Lightbody, in the most unartificial tone he could muster.

'Oh, that reminds me, I've got something for you, Sir. I'll give it to you tomorrow after the final assembly.'

The Lent term ended, as usual, with an assembly about the true meaning of Easter. The head teacher explained how Easter was about a new life in Jesus Christ who had triumphed over sin, death and the devil at the cross.



'The cross is as relevant today as it has always been. Even good boys do naughty things, sometimes *very* naughty things,' he said, staring at the older boys on the front row who had brought the cannabis into school. But in Jesus you could be forgiven for every sin, no matter what it was, and each day could be a clean slate, a brand new life. That was, too, the significance of the Easter egg: new life. He wished the boys are very Happy Easter and an educationally successful Trinity Term.

On his way out of the assembly, hoping that the other boys wouldn't see, Richard gave Mr Lightbody a large Cadbury's milk chocolate Easter Egg, filled with several smaller Cadbury's cream eggs.

'Happy Easter,' said Richard quickly as he vanished into the mass of departing pupils.

During the Easter vacation Richard almost told his mother about what was happening in the dormitory. He had seen a late night film, his first ever adult-rated movie, in which a young woman had been attacked by a drug addict. That night he learnt the meaning of the expressions 'rape' and 'to be robbed of your virginity.' Richard applied both expressions to himself. Then he decided that he had better not tell his mother after all. He couldn't. Meanwhile, he had also thought up a plan for when he went back to school.

On the first day of the Trinity term he asked Jaffa Cake if he would mind swapping dorms.

'I'd really rather not, Richard,' replied Jaffa Cake, sporting a new pair of trendy glasses. Richard couldn't help noticing that the lenses were thicker and that Jaffa Cake had become more spotty too.

'I am very happy where I am. Lots of friends. Bed near the radiheater (sic). Plus, I don't get on with Harry. He's a Toff.'

'And what about your brave example of substitution? Don't you do that any more?'

'No, I'm too selfish, sorry.'

Richard was really disappointed. He would now have to think of something else.

But later that afternoon Jaffa Cake came bouncing up to Richard after school and said, 'I've been thinking about your proposition. I'll swap. Tonight, if you want.'

Richard was so grateful and relieved. He offered him chocolate, money and help with German. Jaffa cake didn't want anything in return. Richard pressed him as to his motive for such an amazing favour. There *had* to be a reason.

'Let's just call it *Agape*,' smiled Jaffa Cake.

For the whole of Trinity Term Richard received no further late-night visits to his bed. He was so relieved and thanked God in his revived faith.

Every day, though, Richard tussled with the whole issue of sex. At times he would be raging with anger against his abuser and want to seek him out and mutilate him. At others he would be filled with guilt and confusion.

He was certain he wasn't gay yet he could no longer get excited about the magazines that aroused the other boys.

Above all he could not understand why a God of love could allow such a thing to happen to him, especially straight after the death of his father.

He had neither been led into temptation, nor had he been delivered from evil.