

# LOUIS SACHAR

WINNER OF THE NEWBERY MEDAL FOR *HOLES*



YEARLING



## The Boy Who Lost His Face



# 1

"SHE'S SO ugly!" whispered Roger.

Scott and Randy laughed.

David laughed too, even though he didn't think it was funny. Mrs. Bayfield wasn't ugly. She was just a lonely old lady who dressed kind of weird.

"Is someone there?" Mrs. Bayfield called out.

The smile left David's face. The boys crouched down behind the bushes next to the rusted iron gate leading to her yard. They became very quiet.

Mrs. Bayfield was sitting in a rocking chair in front of her large though quite dilapidated three-story house. She wore a yellow and white flowered dress and a red cardigan sweater. A floppy red hat covered her long gray hair. On her feet were red high-top sneakers and purple knee socks. Her snake-head cane lay across her lap.

They had come to steal her cane.

The cane was carved to look like a snake wrapped around a stick. The snake had two heads facing back to back. They formed the handle. Embedded in each snake head were two sparkling green eyes. One of the heads had its mouth open, with a tiny gold tongue sticking out.



"Look at her hair," said Scott. "I don't think she ever washes it."

The boys laughed, including David.

"I don't think she's ever taken a bath!" said Roger. "Have you ever smelled her?"

"I can smell her from here," said Scott, holding his nose. "She smells like a pig!"

Roger and Randy laughed, and again David laughed along with them, but not because he thought anything was funny. In fact, he liked the way Mrs. Bayfield smelled. He thought she smelled like Chinese tea.

He once stood behind her in line at the post office. The whole time he kept trying to figure out what that smell was, and finally decided it was like very sweet Chinese tea. That was also when he had gotten a good look at the cane.

He knew better than to tell Roger and Randy that he thought Mrs. Bayfield smelled like tea. It was one of those things that Scott would say was uncool.

"Okay, Scott," said Roger. "When I give the signal, you grab the cane. Randy and I will take care of Old Lady Buttfield."

"What do you want me to do?" asked David.

Roger didn't answer him. He just looked at David like he didn't know what David was doing there.

David didn't know what he was doing there either. He certainly didn't want to help steal a poor old woman's cane. Still, he felt disappointed not to be included in Roger's plans.

"You just be ready, David," said Randy. "Do whatever needs to be done."



David nodded. He was glad that at least Randy was willing to include him.

"But be careful," warned Randy. "She's a witch." He smiled at David.

David smiled back, although he had no idea what he was smiling at.

"She stole her husband's face," said Randy.

David snickered, but stopped abruptly when nobody else laughed. Scott gave him a dirty look.

"She waited until he was asleep," said Randy, "and then she peeled it off his head. It's hanging on the wall of her living room. She talks to it."

"Weird!" said Scott.

"What happened to her husband?" asked David.

"He's dead now," said Randy. "But for a long time he just walked around without a face. He lived up there, in the attic, so nobody could see him."

David looked up at the window just below the roof. "Wow," he said. He wondered if Randy or anybody else really believed any of that nonsense. He knew Scott didn't. Scott couldn't.

Scott and David had been best friends since the second grade. Then, this year, Scott managed to get in with Roger and Randy.

"You're holding me back," Scott had told David. "If you want to hang around with Roger and Randy, you got to be cool."

"I'm cool," David told him.

"Well, just try to be cooler, okay?"

"I'm ice."

"What?"

"Never mind."

# Cursed!

**D**avid is only trying to be cool when he helps some of the popular kids steal Old Lady Bayfield's cane. But when the plan backfires, he's the one the "old witch" curses. Now David can't seem to do *anything* right. The cool kids taunt him, and his only friends are freaks. He even walks into Spanish class with his fly unzipped! And when he finally gets up the nerve to ask out a cute girl, his pants fall down in midsentence. Is it the Bayfield curse at work? Or is David simply turning into a total loser?

*"Wildly funny."—Kirkus Reviews*

[www.randomhouse.com/kids](http://www.randomhouse.com/kids)

**US \$6.50 / \$9.99 CAN**

ISBN 0-679-88622-2



9 780679 886228

50650



S



**YEARLING**

A Yearling Book

New York

RL: 4.5

009-012

Cover art © 2004 by C. F. Payne

COVER PRINTED IN THE USA