

This Boy's Life - Quote Sheet

Fortune

'We were going to change our luck' p3

'I was caught up in my mother's freedom, her delight in her freedom, her dream of transformation' p4

'I was subject to fits of feeling myself unworthy...that everybody but my mother saw through me' p9

'I thought Roy was what a man should be' p12

'A weapon was the first condition of self-sufficiency' p19

'All my images of myself as I wished to be were images of myself armed' p22

'The giddiness of flight' p25

Uncool

'our passion for this pistol was profound and about the only passion we admitted to' p34

'One look was enough to see that he was everything we were not' p38

'I was practiced at this and happy doing it, not because she was unhappy but because she needed me, and to be needed made me feel capable' p46

'my self-mastery seemed like an act' p46

Dwight 'tried to hard' p52

'It wasn't really a house, but half of a barracks where German prisoners of war had been quartered' p55

'He thinks he's some kind of big hunter' p61

'I couldn't bear for her to think that I was the kind of person who took advantage of other people's kindness, or wrote filth on bathroom walls. And at that moment I wasn't' p64

'she saw in this plan a duty which she would be selfish not to acknowledge' p69

A Whole New Deal

'He tried to make this appear effortless but I could see he was surprised and strained by the beaver's weight' p73

'I was fiercely conventional' p74 (A key passage)

'You're in for a whole nother ball game' p76

Citizenship in the Home

'Dwight made a study of me' p79

'I slipped into daydreams' p80

'The sun didn't make it up over the peaks before classes started in the morning, and it was gone behind the western rim by the time school let out. I lived in perpetual dusk' p82

'I was always so mired in pretense that I could see no way out' pp82-83

'I was stirred by the elevated diction in which we swore our fealty' p84

'I had come to feel that all of this was fated, that I was bound to accept as my home a place I did not feel at home in, and to take as my father a man who was offended by my existence' p87

Arthur: 'I liked his acid wit and the wild stories he told and his apparent indifference to what other people thought of him. But I withheld my friendship, because I was afraid of what it would cost me' p89

'He had me tell the story again and again' p94

'He caught my fist or foot almost gently' p95

'those thoughts made me feel cheated and confined' p101

'I began to see myself from the stands and became sentimentally aroused by the consciousness of my own nobility and grit in seeing this game through' p107

'My mother did well at matches. She loved to win. Winning made her jaunty and bright' p109

'I was a liar...I couldn't help but try to introduce new versions of myself as my interests changed, and as other versions failed to persuade' p110

'these accusations did not hurt me, because I did not see myself that way' p111

'I was my mother's son. I could not be anyone else's' p118

'But she may also have dreamed of flight and freedom - unencumbered, solitary freedom, freedom even from me. Like anyone else, she must have wanted different things at the same time. The human heart is a dark forest' p119

'I planned to travel alone under an assumed name' p129

'Mrs Gale was a snob...Mrs Gale carried herself as one betrayed into an inferior version of life' p130

'Arthur was a great storyteller. He talked himself into reveries where every word rang with truth' p131

'We both believed that the real lie was told by our present unworthy circumstances' p132

'I had learned a rough kind of competence and ease in the woods' p133

'Dwight would shoot at anything. He was a poor hunter, restless and unobservant and loud' p142

'Someday, I thought, I would just keep going' p145

'my legs began to feel foreign to me, and then the rest of my body, foreign and unconvincing, as if I were only pretending to be someone' p145

Citizenship in the School

'I wanted distinction, and the respectable forms of it seemed to be eluding me' p155

Chuck: 'his manner was gentle; even, at least with me, brotherly'. p156

'I didn't want to be like that, squalid and public, with a stranger' p157

'I thought we were meeting rightly, true self to true self, free of the accidents of age' p158

'I only ever wanted what I couldn't have' p159

'I listened with godly condescension' p161

'my mother, who was stirred by Kennedy's hopefulness' p162

'I felt she knew all of me, all my foolishness and trouble' p166

'it was hearing my brother's voice and, for the first time in all these years, the sound of my own name' p171

'Alone, she might have bolted anyway. With me to take care of she thought she couldn't' p174

'To seek status seemed the most natural thing in the world to me' p175

'Being realistic made me feel bitter. It was a new feeling, and one I didn't like, But I saw no way out' p177

'The tricks had a smugness about them that provoked me. I wanted to confound these sharpies, show them I wasn't as dumb as they thought I was' p178

'His anger made no sense to me. I did not understand that he wanted out, too.' p179

'That was what I thought I was writing - the truth. It was the truth known only to me, but I believed in it more than I believed in the facts arrayed against it.' p180

'Arthur was trying to be a citizen. He stayed out of trouble and earned high grades.' 184

'But I knew he was no citizen and he knew I was no outlaw' p 184

'Using the peculiar patience, almost tenderness, that he reserved for instruction in combat, Dwight rehearsed this move with me several times before the smoker' p185

'I felt a surge of pride and connection; connection not to him but to Dwight' p187

Mr Howard: 'looked around with a certain expectancy, as if he were ready to be interested in what he saw' p189

'He spoke to me as if I were not a kid myself but someone who could understand him, someone of his world, family even.' p190

'Now I wanted above all, as the only redemption left to me, to be a good sport' p193

'Knowing that everything comes to an end is a gift of experience' p194

'We hated each other so much that other feelings didn't get enough light. It disfigured me' p196

The Amen Corner

Chuck: 'What came out instead was his own fear of being condemned' p200

'Everyone liked Chuck. Sober, he was friendly and calm and openhanded' p201

'I didn't need to see the tears in Mr Welch's eyes to know that I had brought shame on myself' p206

'I had no way of explaining my feelings to him, or even to myself. I believed that there was no difference between explanations and excuses, and that excuses were unmanly. So were feelings, especially complicated feelings. I didn't admit to them. I hardly knew I had them' p207

'She had never been so far away' p209

'I was not available to be reached. I was in hiding. I had left a dummy in my place to look sorry and make promises' p211

'in my heart I was glad he was in trouble' p214

'the good life he had in mind for himself was just as conventional as the one I had in mind for myself, though without its epic pretensions' p215

'When it asked for my name as I wished it to appear in the school catalogue, I wrote, "Tobias Jonathan von Ansell-Wolff III"' p218

'She was happy for me, after all, and willing not to question fortune too closely' p219

'Her tolerance was good for most things, but she had no time for crybabies' p221

'We were ourselves again - restless, scheming, poised for flight' p221

'I could see that any other answer would have broken his heart' p229

'I was being outfitted not for pleasure but for survival' p230

'The elegant stranger in the glass regarded me with a doubtful, almost haunted expression.' p231

Amen

'my father had indeed suffered some kind of breakdown' p239

'conscious of the falseness of my position. I had known someone was in trouble and had done nothing' p240

'It seemed to me when I got there that this was where I had been going all along, and where I might redeem myself' p241

'The night was hazy. There was no moon. Farmhouse windows burned with a soft buttery light' p242