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To Harry de Forest Smith - March 1, 1892

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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TO HARRY DE FOREST SMITH

1691 Cambridge St.
Camb., March 1 - '92

My dear Smith,

I find I am at my old tricks again and as usual owe you a letter. But this time there is an excuse.

You know when I wrote last I mentioned casually a small gathering held in Saben's room which passed off quite successfully, assisted by two of the Cambridge police. Well, it has been further assisted by the Faculty and the skies are a little cloudy. I have been awaiting developments, so that I could give you full particulars. But I cannot, and will write what I know. It is rather a bad mess, I am afraid, and Saben is practically expelled from Harvard. This is quite interesting, you see, and consequently your friend is feeling

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a little anxious. The worst part of the whole matter is that we did nothing to warrant such action. The madam of the house complained to the police and they went to the Faculty. (I use a big "F" for the reverence I entertain for that austere body.) I have no doubt, in fact Prof. de Sumichrast practically told him as much, that Sabens^a trouble lies chiefly in his damnably low marks. Fortunately I do not carry such an unpleasant burden, and as far as I know, they ~~do~~ are not aware of the fact that I was present at the festivities. As things are now it could not possibly help Saben if he gave us away, so he gave us strict orders to keep our mouths shut for our own good. He would not peach if they put him on the rack, but of course we would not let him suffer if confession would do any good. I do not have any fear of

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expulsion, but a reprimand might be sent home

^a WA has "Saben's".

and that would be nasty. The gullible public have some queer ideas concerning Harvard methods. The fact is that it does not take but a very little to get a man into trouble, and one is not obliged to murder ~~more~~ more than three professors to get his walking ticket. This will doubtless surprise you somewhat but it is a fact. Here is a case which happened during mid-years.--One ingenious Freshman decided that the exam in English A would be a little too much for him. So he invited a friend to ~~to~~ take his place, thinking that in a class of 500 he would be safe. But they discovered the trick, and out they both went—for good too. They are not only expelled from Harvard, but from any other college that amounts to anything. About a fortnight ago two fellows were "fired" for playing poker in a dormitory room. This is the

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way they do things in Cambridge, and woe be unto the man who gets caught.

But I will change the subject and say a few words about mid-years. I have heard from three of them, and here is the result:

| | | |
|--------|----------------|----|
| Eng. A | - ^b | B+ |
| " | 9 | B- |
| French | | C. |

I was a little disappointed in French but a {as?}^c a rule^d the marks are more than good. If things should come to a crisis they stand me in good stead. But I hope I have [heard?] the last of the matter.

By you {=your}^e last letter I infer that you will be in Gardiner soon and I will ask you not to mention this affair to anyone. Of course this is not necessary, but it might slip out before you thought. You know how rumor travels and it might make an elegant stink at home. You understand. Next week I hope my mind will be easy.

Yours truly

Robinson

^b WA omits this mark, the nature and function of which is uncertain.

^c WA has "as".

^d WA suggests "whole"—the holograph is far from clear, though I think "rule" is more likely.

^e WA has "your".

Have you read "David Grieve" ^{1f}? It is immense.

HCL US, 55-57.

NOTES

1. *The History of David Grieve*, a novel by Mary Augusta Ward. Published in 1892. (SL)

^f EAR crosses this out.