

# The Muckraker

## Anonymous Teachers

An educator's response to  
"How to get the grade you want"

and a controversial interview  
with an unidentified source

### Elite School?

How JFKS  
compares to  
other schools

### European Youth Par- liament

EYP: The new  
MUN?

### AIDS Chari- ty Event

Have fun and  
save lives!

### Evil Sug- ary Foods

An open letter  
to concerned  
parents

# The Muckraker

## Speaks

For those of you who are already sick and tired of all the tests, quizzes, and school in general, just keep in mind: only one more month to go until summer vacation! We'd like to wholeheartedly congratulate all students who have survived the past dreadful month of May.

Though the weather may have been enjoyable, students hardly had the time to appreciate it due to agonizing tests and quizzes. The seniors and juniors can finally breathe a sigh of relief now that the APs and Klausuren are over!

Another exciting news is that the FIFA World Cup 2014 will begin on the 12th of June. So it's time for us to get those flags out and cheer for Germany (or whichever country you come from)!

With that being said, we genuinely wish you a happy month of June. Enjoy the sunshine!

Cheers,  
*The Muckraker Editors*

Note: Check out our new website!  
<https://sites.google.com/site/themuckraker/home>



## Index

<i>JFKS: School for the Elite?</i>	2
<i>AIDS Charity Event</i>	3
<i>European Youth Parliament: Youth Shapes Europe!</i>	3
<i>Community Service Activity</i>	4
<i>Evil Sugary Foods</i>	4
<i>Caricature of a Character: Teacher Interview</i>	5
<i>Ask Mister E</i>	7
<i>Spiderman Soundtrack</i>	7
<i>Literature &amp; Arts Column</i>	8

## Staff

**Founding Fathers:** Mikolaj Bekasiak, Seth Hepner, Adam Nagorski

**Editors:** Kilian Justus, Leo von Kleist, Chaeky Song

**Layout Editor:** Julia Keller

**Journalists:** Alina Albrecht, Alexandra von Anhalt, Matilde Borio, Aqueena Crisp, Richard Diehl, Clara Frick, Jule Garaycochea, Kilian Justus, Eleanor Kelly, Elsa Kienberger, Leo von Kleist, Simona Koch, Christina Lennartz, Avelina de Ment, Antonia Nihsen, Annabelle Proepstl, Matilde Rose, Max Sherwood, Chaeky Song, Lisa Thiergart, Lukas Tophoven, Lafayette Vanderkin-Jus

**Join Us!** Tuesday, 20 minute break, B122

**Contact:** [themuckraker@gmail.com](mailto:themuckraker@gmail.com) / Facebook

*The opinions expressed here in no way reflect those of the John F. Kennedy School.*

## JFKS: School for the Elite?

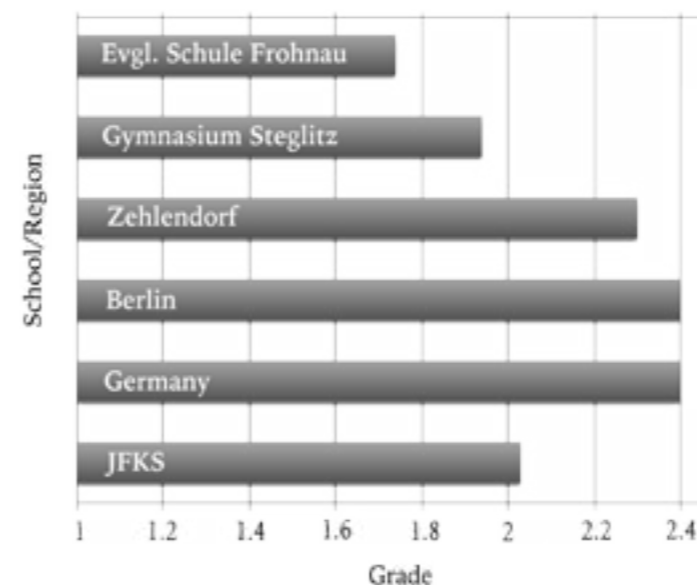
RECENTLY, SITTING IN the barber chair, I was asked where I go to school. When I answered, the hair-dresser inquired, half-rhetorically, whether JFKS isn't "that elite school." It appears that aside from the typical impression numerous Berliners have of JFKS – a big school with a weighty drug problem – many find our school to be exclusive and elite. How substantial is this claim?

**Admission:** According to the High School Profile 2013-14, "admission is competitive and selective." The JFKS website lists no statistics of the number of applications and admissions; yet it is commonly known that generally, the chances for admission into JFKS are minimal. That's 1-0 for the coiffeur's argument.

**Cost:** Aside from the occasional fees for books and field trips, tuition at JFKS is free, since it is a public school. This fact opposes the standpoint that JFKS is for the elite. If you compare JFKS to the Berlin Brandenburg International School (BBIS), where the tuition of an 11th grader costs 17,000 € annually, the former appears quite humble.

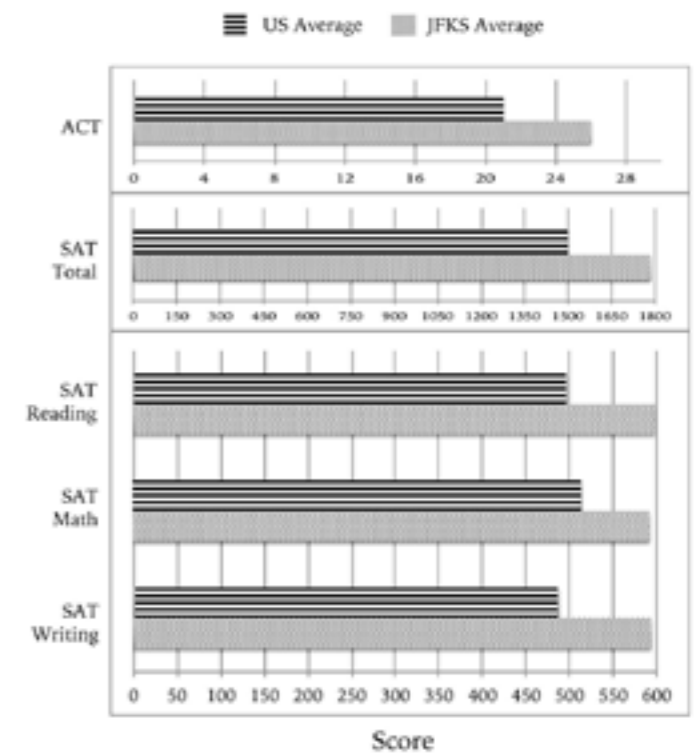
**Abitur Grades:** In 2012, the 149 Abitur students who completed 12th grade at JFKS had an average Abitur grade of 2.03. The German national average and that of Berlin that year were 2.4 while Zehlendorf's was 2.3. That put JFKS at the top of all *Gesamtschulen* in Zehlendorf in terms of the average Abitur grade; nonetheless, schools such as the Gynasium Steglitz, which had an average of 1.94, scored even higher. Therefore, while JFKS is definitely above average, it is not quite at the top. Does that make it elite?

Abitur Grades 2012



**Diploma Grades:** In 2012, the median grade point average of the JFKS graduating class was 3.20. One must remember the GPAs of Abitur students may have been included in this number, meaning it might not truly represent the merit of our school. Nonetheless, by comparison, in 2009 the average GPA of all US schools was 3.0. However, one must keep in mind the difficulty of reaching certain grades varies between schools.

Standardized Test Scores 2012



**Standardized Test Scores:** Because the previously mentioned scores depend on schools' unique expectations, colleges require students to complete tests such as the ACT and SAT. These can be considered more valid representations of the merit of JFKS students, although not all take the tests. Still, JFKS students clearly lie above the average standardized test taker.

It is difficult to describe JFKS as an elite school, as the question depends on the definition of such an institution. It is safe to say, however, that JFKS students are privileged in their education. Aside from scores which are higher than regional, national and global averages, students at JFKS are offered the opportunity to pursue success in a diverse range of activities, whether it's traveling to New York with Model United Nations, winning the Berlin Championships in badminton, visiting Shanghai with Honors Orchestra, or writing for *The Muckraker*.

■ Kilian Justus

## AIDS Charity Event

THE FOURTH ANNUAL AIDS Charity Event at JFKS will take place on June 20 from 9:00 to 13:30 on the sport field. Each year the 10th graders, Mr. Baildon and Mr. Robertson raise money for AIDS organizations and hand out information about this deadly disease. Half the money is donated to a local AIDS organization and the other half to one in Africa.

The goal for this year's 10th grade is to raise more than 1,800 €, currently the greatest amount raised at one event. A flag football tournament is the highlight of the event each year. Students and teachers participate in the tournament. Everyone is welcome to sign up as a flag football team for 5 € and the winning teams (first through third place) will receive prizes.

In addition, the 10th graders will sell raffle tickets prior to and during the event to all students and teachers. The raffle includes prizes such as tropical island tickets and sport jerseys. Besides the flag football tournament the 10th graders will sell burgers, cakes, and other delicious foods with all proceeds going to charity.

Any student or teacher interested in participating in this year's flag football tournament should listen to Mr. Anderson's announcements beginning in June or keep an eye out for AIDS Charity Event posters around school which will inform you about the signup dates.



## EYP: Youth Shapes Europe!

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE of the European Youth Parliament (EYP) target current European political and socioeconomic issues. Founded in 1988, the EYP is organized and directed solely by graduates, and encourages political participation by modeling the legislative process in the European Parliament. Presently, around 40,000 students from 35 European countries participate every year.

In the beginning, delegations were asked to submit resolutions which addressed the growing problem of youth unemployment in Europe. Our delegation, consisting of seven 11th grade students, was accepted. The highly competitive selection process was then divided into three German regional conferences. The Northern regional conference took place in the little city of Ahaus, close to the Dutch border, and our school can be proud to announce that we were one of the three delegations chosen to move on to the national round.

Committees targeted issues such as Euroscepticism, the lack of farmers in Europe, tax evasion, and genetically modified food. Similar to MUN, delegations prepared a resolution, presented it to the General Assembly, defended it, attacked others, and engaged in lively debate. However, unlike the strict nature of BerMUN conferences, the EYP is known to create a familiar and relaxed atmosphere through team-building and an emphasis on teamwork. Examples include creative trust games, parties, and a Euro-Quiz. With an average of 3 hours of sleep in regional school classrooms, the students gathered in a Baroque Hunting Lodge for the General Assembly debates.

The conference concluded with a closing ceremony accompanied by the European anthem, along with speeches from the Session President, members of the press team, key organizers, and the final announcement of winning delegations.

In essence, one fact remains evident: the EYP "breeds a special kind of young, politically engaged Europeans." We wish our team, Sarah Dölger, Ryan Dunkel, Lukas Fietz, Florentine Friedrich, Florian Klawun, Robert Opitz, and Anna Reiffenstuehl much luck for the upcoming national, and hopefully international, conference.

■ Simona Koch & Anna Reiffenstuehl

## Community Service Activity

IN RESPONSE TO the observation that volunteers are too often seen as amateurs, just remember Susan Ellis's timeless observation: "Noah's Ark was built by amateurs. The Titanic was built by professionals."

In a world in which we constantly demand and expect more and more, try to think back to the last time you returned something to your community. Community service is an opportunity for people to voluntarily serve their community. Both high schools and colleges, especially in the United States, are widely known for valuing and rewarding service hours, subsequently making voluntary activities a weekly habit for many students. While in Germany, community service is often associated with the news title "*Jugendlicher Sprayer mit 200 Sozialstunden verurteilt*," German schools are getting caught up in the spirit as well.

JFKS's Community Service Activity (CSA) represents a fun and unique experience for all interested and motivated students, offering a variety of opportunities around Berlin. Some include: Laib & Seele, Berliner Tafel, Ronald McDonald Haus, Library Service, and making music with seniors and young kids. While volunteering, you meet new people, have a good time together, and afterwards can enjoy the feeling of having given something back to your community.

P.S.: A good amount of community service hours makes your application profile for universities and internships rock! CSA meets Wednesdays during 20 minute break in W303. See you there, and remember: "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give" (Winston Churchill).

■ E. S. M.



Jakob Eckhardt

## Evil Sugary Foods

RECENTLY, PARENT COUNCIL members have been asking why packs of gummy worms, bars of chocolate, and bags of chips are being sold in the high school snack machines. According to the most vocal Parent Council members, snack machine foods are not healthy, have no place in the school, and might as well be removed altogether.

Every JFKS high school student knows not to go to the vending machines for real food. When we're actually hungry, the Green's snack bar or the bio vending machines offer plenty of serious sustenance. However, some of us munch on unhealthy vending machine snacks more often than we eat Green's sandwiches. Most of our parents probably are unaware of our school-day snacking habits, but the high school's Parent Council has decided to pick up the slack.

I have no problem with the idea that snack machine foods are unhealthy and a waste of money. However, I don't think eliminating the snack machines is a reasonable solution to the common problem of kids eating junk.

First, hasn't it always been parents' individual responsibility to make sure that their kids aren't spending their lunch money on chocolate and coke? Why are parents in the parent council suddenly trying to make the school responsible for our diets by taking away "sugary" foods? If you really don't trust your kid to eat healthy at school, stop giving them money and make them a packed lunch!

Second, in what way does taking away the vending machines improve students' health? Deny me a bag of chips, and I'm not going to eat a salad. Take a 1€ Coca-Cola out of my hand and I will buy Lidl's 40¢ Freeway Cola. Limiting the availability of "sugary" foods on campus does not in any way encourage us to eat healthier; it is the "easy" solution to the real problem, which is a lack of students' concern for their own health. I am healthy not because I do not have access to unhealthy foods, but because I care about my own health (and money) enough to eat what healthy food is available to me.

Parents: if you actually care about our health, don't take the easy route. Make healthy food cheaply available and talk to your kid about what they are buying and eating. After all, health starts in the mind. Just think: would you want your kid saying "I don't do drugs because I can't get any," or "I don't do drugs because I choose not to?"

■ Max Sherwood

## Caricature of a Character

**N**O TEACHER AT JFKS is like any other. Last Wednesday, I took the time to interview one of these unique characters. While his feet left a footprint on the cover of this edition, he asked for his name to remain unknown.

*How long have you been at this school?*

Seven years.

*Where were you before?*

Prison... If I answer, people will know who the article is about. How long before? I mean, you know, way, way before, I was inside my mom and then I was born.

*Where did you go to college?*

Prison... For undergrad? Somewhere in the Midwest.

*Our readers might be wondering why you asked for this interview to be anonymous. What's your answer to that?*

Well, I'd like the freedom to, you know, insult your readers easily without having any repercussions. It's so much easier to say inappropriate things when nobody can attach a name to it.

*So why did you become a teacher?*

Because astronaut was out of the question? Because I wasn't very good as a hit man? And I'm not tall enough to dunk.

*What's your favorite part about teaching?*

Summer vacation... Without a doubt, I mean getting to rip on the students – what else would be fun? It's one of the humble perks of teaching. Getting to laugh, every day. That's the best part.

*And what's the worst part?*

The worst part? You guys stink. I mean you smell bad. You're an insult on my olfactory organs, whether it's the food you eat, or the lack of deoderant. I don't know whether it comes from sports or living in a hole for thirty days. And the younger you are, the more you smell. Go into any classroom, and you can tell which grade has been in there after sport class. It's the worst part. My nose is sensitive, and you guys be stinking.

*What are the three things a good teacher has to be able to do?*

Steal a car in 60 seconds or less, skin a squirrel, and – oh, be able to make meth without anybody knowing about it.

*Before teaching, did you aspire to become a standup comedian?*

No. I never thought about the idea of being a comedian.

You guys are under the impression that all my jokes are like ... I mean, while I may use them over and over again, most of my best material comes off the cuff. And so it's not really planned. When you teach as much dark literature as I do, it makes it a little bit easier to handle the depressing stuff if we can laugh about our own lives. If we were serious all the time, it would be even more depressing.

*Students say they either love or hate you.*

{laughs} You know what, if they say that, they should listen to a Lady Sovereign song and they'll find out how I feel about that. I don't give a frog's fat ass how you feel. I'm not here to be your friend. I'm not interested in whether people love or hate me. The best I can hope for is that I'm tolerated for 45 minutes or an hour and 37 minutes every day. But as far as love – if I wanted love, I'd get a cat.

*Students also say you like to throw things.*

Yeah, like my feces. I'm a chimp! {laughs} What do you mean, "throw things?"

*Last year, I saw you throwing books, this year it was chairs...*

I have a physical form of Tourette's. I randomly throw things, based on spasms of my body.

*What's next, after throwing chairs?*

Oh, I don't know. Sometimes, things are theatrical. Sometimes, the moment calls for an extreme example. And sometimes, I mean, to be quite honest with you, it's really all about entertaining me, by looking at your reactions. I don't make enough money not to get entertained.

*You're one of the very few people who can claim to work next to a life-sized representation of themselves. How come?*

You'd have to ask the students who made it. It's always amazing when someone comes in my classroom and thinks I constructed a freak of myself to hang out by the windows. No, it's one of the best practical jokes every played on me. It was a 13th or 12th grade art project. Can you believe they got a grade for that? And the reason it is up there is that it was sitting on the ground and it was freaking me out. And I'm keeping it, until it disintegrates, out of respect for the artists.

*Not many teachers have a puppet of themselves...*

A puppet! Do you see my hand up my own butt, making it talk? It ain't no puppet! Let's get this straight! I mean, I don't know what you would call it, but it's certainly not a puppet. It's really just ... yeah ... you'd have to ask the people who made it.

## Caricature of a Character

*How long have you been playing Jai Alai?*  
Over 40 years.

*Why do you prefer Jai Alai over other sports?*

I don't know. I always felt – given the fact that I am butt ugly – that at least it was an excuse to be butt ugly. Fugly, if you will. Then I could say, "All this damage is Jai Alai." It's the one place I can say: *I'm not a teacher, I'm not a parent, I'm not a husband, I'm nothing else but a Jai Alai player.* And there's something about the speed. It's a Zen experience, or a religious experience for me, I swear. I know you find it amusing, but it is. I mean I have moments where I'm completely lost and I don't even know what's happening while I'm in the court. I love that. It's a break from everything else. And I get injured over and over again, and people say, "Why do you keep playing?" Because I have the rest of my life to watch.

*Let's do some word association.*

Oh God.

*Student.*

Periwinkle.

*Teacher.*

Zucchini.

JFKS.

Warthog.

BBIS.

{laughs} I don't know BBIS! I don't even know what it stands for! Hold on ... say it again ... all right, er, Juno.

*Teacher's pet.*

Poisonous dart frog.

*Weed.*

Are you under the impression that that shisha is mine? {points to a hookah standing on top of a cupboard} 'Cause it ain't. Weed ... sole. I mean, like, the sole of a shoe.

*Shakespeare.*

Pepper.

*Facebook.*

Duck-billed platypus.



*If you think his feet are ugly, wait until you see his face...*



*Wilbur.*

Not a porn name. It's not a romantic name. No stripper or porn star will ever be named Wilbur.

At this point, we ended the interview. The anonymous teacher reassured himself of the protection of his name, and after making arrangements for a photo shoot of his feet, I departed, leaving him behind me with a hookah and a life-sized replica of himself.

■ *Kilian Justus*

## Ask Mister E: Response to *How to Get the Grade You Want*

1. *FORGET ABOUT STUDYING.* Rote memorization is still a method of learning – figure out the difference between what you can “critically decipher” and what needs to be memorized and study the latter. Practice is a form of studying ... practice well.

2.) *No matter how corny, laugh at teachers' jokes.* Everybody likes to feel like they are funny ... disingenuousness is easy to detect.

3.) *Eye contact.* Eye contact is merely a bonus; vapid, glazed-over eyes that nod mechanically is a trait reserved for robots and aliens. Don't be a robot or an alien.

4.) *Sit next to dumb people.* Any time you evaluate yourself based on comparisons to anything other than your own standard is belittling to everyone involved.

5.) *Don't participate in class.* “Participate” is an active verb. Being active engages the mind, and engaging the mind releases the soul from the constraints of time; hence, participation relieves you of the burden of “clock watching.” Nothing is more frustrating than working with people who are watching the clock.

6.) *After class, talk to your teachers.* You will not befriend a teacher. You will inspire them to be better. Your needs will help drive what they teach. Your ideas will open new doors. Your misunderstandings will provide a new point of view. Your questions will help them understand how they approach lessons. But befriending them disintegrates the relationship of teacher/student. Could you imagine Socrates or Marx becoming friends with one of their students?

7.) *When you don't know an answer, bluff.* See #3.

8.) *Go to Wikipedia and look up the topic you are doing in class. Then find a long word that seems sophisticated and mention it in class.* Any time a student engages in pursuit of an internal question provides an opportunity for learning. So, if you wiki a topic, even for such transparent reasons, it's a “win-win” in my book.

9.) *Make them overhear you complimenting them.* Any time you propagate deceit deteriorates your soul and sows seeds that will cultivate within you a falseness that will become part of your character as you mature. Don't water these kernels ... water truth. Be like Hemingway and create a text that can't help but spawn meaningful symbols.

10.) *Money.* Make it a significant amount.

One last note – want to get a good grade and please yourself. Want a good grade in every class, even if its dynamic disagrees with your sensibilities. Your generation

should recognize the value of the random and arbitrary. Try to look at “random” and “arbitrary” as nouns that carry code that will later in life turn up again, under a new guise and for a new reason. Don't end sentences with prepositions, kids.

A cheerful demeanor is appreciated, but not required, nor is it detrimental. Teachers don't hate students or go after students; it's a cause-and-effect relationship. Think of the times when you've had good experiences in these classes and try to keep that vision in your minds. The world is diverse and populated, opportunities are branching off into other fields and these fields birth branches of their own; where before there were maybe a handful of branches, now there are too many to navigate.

No matter what your art – let your actions be the medium with which you express it (idea derived from Nietzsche).

*For all those questions you never thought you'd get an honest answer to, ask Mister E! Send in your questions to themuckraker@gmail.com or post them on our official Facebook page “The Muckraker!”*

## Spiderman Soundtrack

FOR ANYONE WHO has not yet seen the newest *Spiderman* installment, shame on you, go watch it now! The new movie seems pretty great. It's funny, romantic, action-packed, a little melodramatic, or whatever else you like in a movie, just fill in the blank.

Aside from a “super group” cast (do movies have super groups?), including Andrew Garfield, Emma Stone, Jamie Foxx, and Paul Giamatti, what seems to grab my attention the most whenever I watch the film – and I've seen it on several occasions – may very well be the music.

Now why would the music be a focal point of the film? After all, all movies have music and sound, right? Well, yes, but without having seen the movie you cannot tell how the music compliments it. The soundtrack provides an obvious backdrop to the characters' thoughts. However, it is not so overwhelming as to

*continued on page 8*

## Spiderman Soundtrack

*continued from page 7*

seem like a musical, in case anyone gets the wrong idea. Hans Zimmer (who wrote much of the music for movies like *The Dark Knight* and *Inception*), Pharrell Williams, and several others make up the super group “The Magnificent Six” composers who created the score for the film.

They take an interesting approach as they seemingly narrate the thoughts and actions of the characters in each scene. This is easy to notice when you watch the movie, especially when Electro first enters. The soundtrack also includes songs which help progress the film, like “Gone, Gone, Gone” by Phillip Phillips, and “It's On Again” with Kendrick Lamar and Alicia Keys.

With good music and good actors, you can't go wrong. Check out *The Amazing Spiderman 2: Rise of the Electro*: it's in theaters now.

■ Lafayette Vanderkin-Jus



## Hogwarts & Divergent

LET US TAKE you on an imaginary journey. Close your eyes. Imagine entering Hogwarts's Great Dining Hall, a butter beer in your hand. You see the professors and the tables already set for the banquet.

Now you believe this dream could never become reality. Wrong! Still waiting for your Hogwarts letter? Get it yourself! Visit the Warner Bros Harry Potter Studio Tour in London and you will be in heaven. Ride a broom, pet an owl, admire props (from the set!) and chill in the Gryffindor common room. All these things you can do there AND you will find out all backstage secrets. The trip really is inspiring and worth the money.

A shout-out to all *Divergent* fans: the movie based on the bestselling novel has finally reached our cinemas! Now, for all of you that haven't discovered this masterpiece of literature, you ought to read it now! The story revolves around a 16-year-old girl, confronted with the decision to select one of five factions as her new home. Dauntless, Amity, Erudite, Candor and Abnegation are her choices, of which only Abnegation will allow her to stay with her family.

One day in advance of the selection, each 16-year-old is requested to take a test to evaluate the individuals' character. Yet when the protagonist, Beatrice (played by Shailene Woodley), takes the test, she does not simply have one designated faction, but three. This is known as “divergent.”

*Divergent* is indeed a romance; nevertheless, action and fighting do not fall under its shadow. The actors are reasonably well-suited and true to the book. There might even be those of you who believe the movie is better than the book. You doubt that? Well, go find out! Maybe you will even detect a certain resemblance between Beatrice's brother and the amazing Augustus Waters of *The Fault in Our Stars*!

Best wishes,  
Mary Poppins & The Wizard of Oz

