

In 1956 Michael Gleeson was both the youngest and the smallest kid in his class at Rupertswood, a boys boarding-school in rural Victoria run by the Salesians of Don Bosco, a Catholic teaching order of priests and brothers.

He was 9 years old and in 5th grade. It was true that he had pneumonia several times a few years earlier and if that had scarred his lungs and stunted his growth, it had done nothing to slow him down. He could run like the wind and could keep away from trouble.

With the rush of kids on his tail he was now in full flight down the stairs under the dormitory, through the narrow corridor between the theatre and the toilets, out through the back of the building, and over the cemetery lawn. Time to think quick - Left to Jackson's Creek or right to the dairy? The creek was out of bounds and that would only compound whatever trouble he was already in, so he swerved off sharply to the right and raced down towards the dairy. You could, of course, smell that it was a dairy well before you got there, and soon the lowing sounds of calves and their mother-cows were also filling his burning ears.

GLEESON! GLEESON! The kids were hot on his heels although by now he was pulling away. The dairy was a possible haven. He could climb a piece of machinery or find a hiding place among the hay bales stored in the shed. His escape was tantalisingly close but as he crested the final hill it all came to a sudden stop.

"Whoa! What's going on? Slow down, Michael, slow down." Said Brother Reg Hamilton as Michael rounded a corner and nearly knocked him off his feet... He was a kindly man. Quietly spoken, uncomplicated and devout. The dairy was his domain and students were not allowed to be there unless they were working.

Michael stopped as he was told and now, one by one, the kids had reached him and gathered around pulling at his shirt and all yelling at once. He wasn't at all scared but he was by now on the defence and his instincts knew that he must have done something wrong. Otherwise why all the fuss, what could it be? How could he minimise the inevitable punishment that would follow?

"Gleeson. Gleeson Guess what? You've got the highest IQ in the school. You've got the highest IQ in the school." The boys called in unison.

"No I haven't!" Denial was always the first line of defence. Every kid knew that. It also gave you time to think up something more plausible as you gained more information about the predicament you were in.

"Yes you have. Yes you have. You've got the highest IQ in the school." The kids began a chant.

"NO I HAVE NOT." Add volume to denial. That sometimes works, at least temporarily. Survival is all about buying time. By this time, his mate Johnny and some other curious kids had joined the fray and it was time for Brother Reg to take charge.

"OK. OK. Quieten down. All of you. Now what's this all about?" Brother Reg asked the impatient young throng of eager schoolboys.

In the aftermath it was explained by the breathless kids that some recent tests that all the boys in the school had been given by Fr Fedrigotti, the Provincial, were something called "IQ tests". And although none of them had any idea what IQ was, the results had just been posted on the noticeboard and Gleeson had more of it than any of the other kids. He was on top of the IQ list. "It's true. You can check it on the noticeboard." One of the boys said in an attempt to add merit to the claim.

"I see, said Bro Reg, turning to marvel at the young boy now staring down his accusers. The boy stood his ground. Time to switch from defence to offence."

"Don't say that! It's not true!" Young Gleeson was emphatic on the subject and could not be moved.

**"I HAVE NOT GOT AN IQ!!"**

