This Boy’s Life Character List

Written by David Gravolet

1. **Toby (Jack) Wolff (3)** – main character and narrator; kleptomaniac; takes baptismal name to Jonathan, shortened to Jack; joins Archery Club—messes around, almost shoots Sister James; has a “case of nerves” before first confession—speaks with SJ about it, “borrows” her sins; pretends to be shooting people with his Winchester, actually shoots squirrel; weed fiends report him for beautiful “poetry” on the mirror—must see vice-principal; enjoys being a boy scout—collects plethora of badges; plays basketball in dress shoes because of Dwight’s penny-pinching (only in some regards); goes into attic with Dwight on Christmas and finds moldy chestnuts and consumed beaver; intends to run away at Boy Scout Jamboree but loses all of his money playing Blackout; becomes drunk and falls off a cliff; tries to forge check—kind clerk chases after him and later sees him at a Boy Scouts event; cuts last joint of finger off in shop class—becomes addicted to morphine in hospital; fails out of Hill, then goes into army to fight in Vietnam War

2. **Rosemary Wolff (3)** – mother of Toby; rides on float “End of the Rainbow”; leaves work to go shopping, causing Roy to panic; supposedly attractive—harassed by cab driver; wins a turkey shoot; once spent Thanksgiving in Connecticut with novice turkey farmers—turkeys in their bathtub; depressed after honeymoon with Dwight but determined to make a life in Chinook; takes job campaigning for JFK; cries when she hears that TW spoke with GW; becomes girlish when TW’s actual father calls; eventually finds job as secretary in Seattle; takes a job in D.C. after TW goes to Hill—Dwight follows her there and ties to strangle her—arrested and sent back to Seattle

3. **Daddy (5)** – Rosemary’s father; rich navy officer but loses money; abusive—beat Rosemary, shot at suitors; liked cars

4. **Toby (8)** – girl with same name as Toby (Jack); makes him want to change his name to Jack

5. **Father (9)** – opposed Toby’s changing his name; rich; obsessed with the appearance of status; lives in Connecticut; Jewish; TW visits him on way to Vietnam—become friends; moves to California to work with Convair Astronautics; insane—tells Toby to shoot one of his acquaintances for embracing him; arrested for “going crazy” with his girlfriend and committed to Buena Vista Sanitarium

6. **Geoffrey (9)** – Toby’s older brother who lives with Father; goes to Princeton; in TW’s second year at Concrete, sends him Princeton sweatshirt and letter; plans to get TW into a boarding school; went to Choate himself

7. **Sister James (6)** – teaches Toby his religion classes; forms clubs to prevent kids from becoming Mormons (Note: Salt Lake City is basically Mormon Mecca.); neither timid nor coy (sex-ed); leaves letter for Rosemary, Jack burns it

8. **Roy (12)** – Rosemary leaves Florida to get away from him; they become involved again in Utah; takes Toby hunting—gives him his Winchester

9. **Alice (13)** – TW’s pen pal in Phoenix, AZ; he invents stories of his great exploits for her; she doesn’t respond

10. **Boone (26)** – boy whose sole purpose in the story is to introduce Crockett
11. **Crockett (26)** – Mormon friend of TW; loudly exclaims, “Any relation to Daniel?” when Boone’s name is announced; father kind to children, becomes justice of state supreme court

12. **Kathy (38)** – shy secretary who lives in Seattle boarding house with Wolffs

13. **Marian (38)** – housekeeper in Seattle boarding house; “big and loud” (foil to Kathy); boyfriend shows Toby pictures of his fellow war veterans—Doc, a man with glasses; Curly, a man devoid of hair; Jesus, a man with a beard; hates Toby—tries to convince Rosemary of his malfeasance

14. **Terry Taylor (39)** – friend of TW; father in Korea—mother fills house with pictures of him

15. **Terry Silver (39)** – friend of TW; only child; father lived in Tacoma with new wife; mother worked at Boeing—he and friends had apartment to themselves for hours at a time; “genuine” Nazi armband, made it himself; prank calls; has “six inches of piping hot flesh just for you [Annette]”; shouts “Yid!” at Thunderbird driver; Toby writes “FUCK YOU SILVER” on the mirror

16. **Mrs. Taylor (39)** – tall, sad woman; chain-smoker; sometimes cried out “Terrence! Terrence!” and wrapped arms around son (friends taunt him because of it); also had two daughters—both older than son; Tw and friends only visit her apartment to steal cigarettes

17. **Annette (43)** – character in *Mickey Mouse Clubhouse* (not the animated remake); TW writes letters to her, eventually rejected

18. **Phil (40)** – owns boardinghouse; detests kids; addicted to chewing tobacco; badly burned in warehouse fire—fingers of one hand welded together; touches TW constantly

19. **Judd (50)** – “wingman” for Gil; helps him to kidnap Toby and rape Rosemary (implied heavily)

20. **Gil (52)** – Judd’s partner; takes Rosemary into his apartment and later out on a date; presumably rapes or sexually abuses her

21. **Willy (58)** – Kathy’s son; clown -- acts like a parrot

22. **Grandmother (59)** – gentle woman; tried to defend Rosemary from her abusive father

23. **Dwight (63)** – short; mechanic; poor shot; lives in Chinook with three children (Pearl, Skipper, and Norma); Toby mocks his mannerisms—lighter, etc.; liar (70/ shooting competition); picks up a dead beaver with Toby “to sell”—eventually found in the attic several years later; alcoholic—leaves Toby in the car while he goes into a bar; told by Marian of ho TW mocks him; forces Toby to pick up a paper route, join the Boy Scouts, and to husk chestnuts; paints whole house white; bonds with TW over his fight with Arthur—teaches him new strategies; abuses Rosemary and TW; when Norma comes home, paints Christmas tree white; tries to stop Norma from marrying Kenneth; slaps TW over throwing away residual mustard—prompts GW to seriously consider sending TW to boarding school; atheist of the *Popular Science* variety

24. **Pearl (65)** – Dwight’s youngest; bald spot; grabs Mother’s attention; “cares so much” about games—always wins; pities TW and chestnuts; sings with TW while waiting for Dwight to finish drinking

25. **Skipper (66)** – Dwight’s oldest; shares a room with Toby; rejuvenates 1949 Ford for trip to Mexico with friend **Ray (120)**; TW thought he would be going on trip to Mexico; encounters sandstorm in Mexico—car destroyed

26. **Norma (66)** – Dwight’s middle child; 17; “ripe and lovely”; Toby is attracted to her; moves to Seattle after she graduates Concrete and marries Kenneth
27. The Millers (66) – family that lived on the other side of the duplex where Dwight lived
28. Vice-principal (78) – sees through Toby; drags him by his ear to the office; allegedly quit cigarettes after college epiphany and bought Nash ambler with savings; wants to suspend Toby for two weeks—eventually worked down to no time at all by principal and Rosemary
29. Bobby Crow (97) – Indian boy from Marblemount; Norma’s boyfriend; drives TW to his basketball games—but only to have car sex with Norma (130); soft voice; football star; presumably fights with Norma when she returns to Chinook
30. Arthur Gayle (107) – “uncoolest boy in sixth grade”; dog named Pepper; “sissy”; fights TW, but eventually they become friends; kisses TW once, causing the beginning of the fall of their friendship (Sex with friends isn’t always the best idea); hated shop class, so he works in school office during that period; gives TW official school stationery to forge letters of recommendation; argues with TW which leads to fight in Mr. Mitchell’s smoker—Dwight coaches TW, but Arthur still wins
31. Stephen (137) – RW’s affluent brother who lives in Paris; TW writes him letter begging to go to Paris and live with him; offers to take TW in—at first for just one year but eventually for five; TW eventually decides not to go because he doesn’t want his name to change again
32. Kathy (138) – Stephen’s daughter; TW’s age
33. Lawrence Welk (145) – TV personality; Champagne Orchestra; Dwight collects his records
34. Kenneth (146) – works with Norma in Seattle; 7th-day Adventist; abrasive personality; wants to be hated; alcoholic; “Argument was the only kind of sound he knew how to make.”
35. Cal (156) – Arthur’s father; simple, kind man
36. Mrs. Gayle (157) – Arthur’s favorite parent; snob; believed she deserved a better life; shopping
37. Liz Dempsey (157) – Mrs. Gayle’s friend whom she takes on shopping escapades
38. Smoke (164) – “fat smiling guy”; works at Blackout booth; said that he was once a scout himself; gives scouts free games
39. Rusty (164) – thin and nervous; works at Blackout booth; Smoke’s partner in ripping off children—takes the appearance of a concerned co-worker who believes Smoke is being too generous; gives TW the “consolation” prize of a stuffed pig
40. Champion (169) – Dwight’s “hunting” dog; purchased by Dwight with proceeds from selling TW’s Winchester; “a little gun-shy”; Dwight forced to shoot him after he kills neighborhood cats
41. Mr. Mitchell (182) – teaches civics at Concrete High; military fanatic; bragged about his murders in WWII; also teaches PE; organizes “smoker”—wrestling competition for boys
42. Miss Houlihan (183) – teaches speech; method of “reaching down” for words; makes students memorize “Hiawatha”
43. Horseface Greeley (183) – teaches shop class; dropped fifty-pound block on foot to show off his Tuff-Top shoes
44. Chuck Bolger (184) – driver for TW and friends; gentle and brotherly, but crazed when drunk; TW eventually goes to live with him after fight with Dwight; accused of raping Tina Flood and nearly forced into marrying her; helps TW to steal Dwight’s guns and later pawn them; goes with TW to Seattle but spends day at double feature
45. **Mr. Bolger** – Chuck’s father; minister; owns auto parts store; makes boys apologize to Mr. Welch for theft; when TW doesn’t, arranges for him to go home; Rosemary convinces him that TW should instead work for the Welches—never actually happens

46. **Psycho** (185) – spent time in jail for stealing chainsaw and cat; tried to ransom cat—instead arrested

47. **Gerald Lucius “Jerry” Huff** (185) – handsome; vain; bully; “made fun of other boys’ dicks”; high, nasal voice; sits in booth behind TW and Howard at Concrete Drugstore

48. **Arch Cook** (185) – long, thin head—Chuck said he was run over as a baby; cousin of Jerry Huff

49. **Veronica Cook** (186) – Arch’s sister; Norma’s age; married with two “fat little girls who wandered the wreckage of the house in their underpants, whining for their mother’s attention and eating potato chips from economy packs almost as big as they were” (Tobias clearly wished to be in a family like this one); flirts with Chuck; had “inside crack on Hollywood”—thought she knew which actors were gay along with other juicy tidbits

50. **Rhea Clark** (187) – junior who moved to Concrete High; TW attracted to her; dances with her once; eventually become Lloyd Sly’s girlfriend

51. **Lloyd Sly** (188) – basketball player with “a hot car” loved by Rhea

52. **Thomas Findon** (193) – Eagle Scout from Portland with the body of a man and an easy way with the girls; TW assumes his name when he goes to forge a check to pay his way to New Jersey to see Geoffery

53. **Albert** (196) – manager of store at which TW tries to forge a check

54. **John Boyden** (208) – headmaster of Deerfield who tells TW to consider applying elsewhere; son of previous headmaster who had thrown TW’s father out

55. **Mr. Howard** (223) – Hill school alumnus from Seattle; calls Concrete to ask for a chat with TW; drives a blue Thunderbird; meets TW a Drugstore; leave after Huff comes in; calls TW to tell him that he had been accepted to Hill; meets TW in Seattle for lunch followed by a sartorial trip

56. **Father Karl** (239) – entirely serious Episcopalian minister who traveled to Chinook every few weeks; speaks to TW after theft, but realizes that the conversation doesn’t change anything

57. **Mr. Welch** (241) – owns a farm; Chuck, Huff, Psycho, and TW steal gas from him; destitute; TW unable to apologize to him

58. **Jack Welch** (241) – Mr. Mitchell would match him with Toby (Jack) in sparring matches because they went by the same name

59. **Mrs. Bolger** (242) – angry with the boys for stealing from the Welches

60. **Mrs. Welch** (244) – greets the boys when they come to return the stolen gas; surprised that they would do such a deed

61. **Ripples** (250) – nickname for Boy Scout chaplain who gave sermon that actions had great consequences by throwing a rock into a pond

62. **Sherriff** (253) – comes to tell Mr. Bolger that Chuck is to be arrested for rape

63. **Tina Flood** (253) – girl Chuck is accused of raping; father doesn’t want Chuck to go to jail for rape—he instead wants him to marry her because she’s the best husband she could possibly have; marries Huff instead of Chuck

64. **Mrs. Howard** (270) – does fund-raising for Seattle Repertory Theater; meets husband and TW at Ivar’s Acres of Clams; chooses cashmere coat for TW

65. **Franz** (273) – Mr. Howard’s tailor; helps TW choose wardrobe for Hill