

## Fred

by Edward L. Williams, III

Fred is a real great guy. He has everything going for him. Just yesterday as I was walking down to the pool room, I passed two elderly ladies and overheard them talking, or gossiping, whichever way you look at it. They were remarking, "Did you know Fred is going to State next fall?" That's what they were talking about. You see, Fred is a straight "A" student at Central. He's sort of what you'd dream about if you were a teacher or a professor. I actually think some of the old lady teachers really dream of him sometimes. It wouldn't surprise me, the way they are always talking about him. Around Central High, he's just about everything. I mean, if you were going to build a statue and put it in the lobby for freshman to come and say, looking up, "If I could be anyone here, I'd want to be like Fred Andrews." Then you would make that statue, like I said, of Fred. It sounds a little ridiculous, but a lot of things in high school do. Take for instance, National Honor Society. It's a good organization, for the members. It's good for the members if they need it. It doesn't do anyone any good, though, but set the scholar apart from the crowd so when you see one, you can say like two old ladies, "Fred sure is making something out of his life." Fred's in the Society, President. He's in all the school clubs. To put it short, he's received so many accolades that he's almost a legend. And do you know why? Like I said, the reason it was all made possible is because some professor gave him an "A". You see, if you get below a "C" average, you're out of school activities. That means no athletics, no clubs or no food halls, because in short . . . you're a trouble maker.

Now, meeting Fred has sure been a factor in this life I'm living, but we don't get along. He seems to think, you know, why bother? Who am I? Well, it wouldn't be so bad, but the thing that's too much to take is that because his I.Q. is about 140, he believes he's really got it made. Like, what else is there in life? Yesterday, when I was waiting my turn at pool, I was thinking. Everyone is measured, dressed, and labeled according to how fast and often he finds the square root of two complex numbers. Then I started thinking how Hitler had a way of categorizing people too. Super soldiers got to carry guns and murder their inferiors. Remember the "Super Race"? And the more I thought, this whole affair of labeling people started unfolding like a map before me. Even in Russia, what grade you make

as an adolescent actually lines you up for your life work. You could be a doctor or a peasant, all at the time you're still in your teens. Now, I imagine, to make things more orderly, everything in life could have a test and a label to it. Say with God, you had to pass a test to see what part of heaven you got to sit in. Gabriel, just like professor Watkins, would watch to make sure no one cheated.

It sure is funny what a grade will do for you. Look at Fred. He's a real great guy. But who says so, really? This is what really is odd—only the people like Fred. Right. Now, it's not too difficult to see once you get the idea. The righteous are judging the righteous, so to speak. The intellect says it's good to be smart, but only the intellect. He's got his own set of standards, like Hitler. He says the average guy is a stumbling block, but his opinion comes only from him. He doesn't look through anyone else's eyes but his own. It seems to me that you'd have to be pretty careful not to have a biased opinion, like that. And then, isn't everyone going around looking through his own eyes? What's in a grade? Just what has Fred got? He's gone and solved life's riddle.

I lined up the eight ball and thought about my teacher. She had asked once, "Why don't you use your potential and succeed?" She wanted me to be like Fred. Then with a crash, I sent the ball screaming into the pocket, taking a full ten dollars from Harry. Damn! he groaned, how do you do it? You look through your own eyes and line it up, I thought.