



# The Gift

by Jean-Pierre Lacrampe

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Dearest Son,

I'm sorry I won't be with you when you read this letter. Happy eighteenth birthday, though. I love you. I know you might find that fact a little hard to believe, seeing as how you've never ever even seen me, but I assure you it happens to be true. I do love you—very much.

I wasn't sure what type of boy you'd turn out to be, so I didn't buy you a present on this, your eighteenth birthday. And I didn't get you money because I think that's a little impersonal. Besides, I'm really broke these days. By the way, if you've become a famous singer or sports star, please let me know. No, I'm just kidding. Unless of course you have.

I'm going to give you some advice. That's my gift to you on this day of your becoming a man. Advice is a pretty cheap gift, I'm aware of that. Like I said, I'm pretty broke, so it's really the best that I can do. Go ahead and bear with me. Or tear this letter up. I suppose I wouldn't blame you if you did. I'm just glad we got to the singer/sports star stuff first. Again, just kidding if you are.

Life is a pretty tricky thing, my son. Sometimes it will seem like everyone is out to get you. My advice is: Trust your instincts; sometimes people *are* out to get you and don't brush that feeling off just because of some hippy philosophy you read in civics class. Strike first. Kill shots only.

In life, it's very hard to spot the smart people, but very easy to spot the stupid ones: they are the ones who keep insisting they're smart. Anybody who is stupid enough to believe they know whether or not they're smart, well, you know what to call that: Boobery.

Never trust anyone who says they're trustworthy—trust me, they're lying.

When the trade winds blow you off course, women will, of course, flatly refuse.

Money is not such an evil thing. In fact, money can be great. Earn as much of it as you can and always remember that I was the one who encouraged you.

Read one newspaper every day and find some way to disagree with everything it says. Remember: Newspapers are run by the same idiots and liars I was just telling you about.

Drink as much as you can.

Sleep with as many women as you can.

Don't drink so much that you cannot physically sleep with women. (That can happen you know).

Wink at old ladies and smile at young ones, never the other way round.

When in trouble with the law: Deny, lie, and cry.

When in trouble with women: Deny, lie, and cry.

If a woman ever accuses you of having a "terrible view of women," ask her if she wants to send another one in and you'll take a look at her (Do not ever really do that).

There is nothing cowardly about a man realizing he's not brave and following that inclination.

Truth is a tardy wink.

The worst part about life is that we are left to make the best of it.

Don't try sounding poetic in letters; it just comes off sounding stupid.

If someone sticks a gun in your face and demands all your money, probably the worst thing to say is: "Over my dead body."

When arguing, never admit that you're wrong unless you're positive that you're right. Then, later on, when he finds out he's wrong, the other guy will feel like an idiot.

If you're going to be terrible at something, make it losing.

Always introduce yourself as a doctor. It will impress the hell out of girls, and if someone calls you on it, you can tell them you're not a real doctor—you're a doctorer. You doctored your diploma.

If someone asks you, "Just what in the hell did you mean by that?" don't answer. It's a trick question

If you ever find yourself in a tight spot, loudly announce that you are an idiot. You'd be surprised how much trouble it saves, and most of the time you're right anyway.

Always kiss a woman with your eyes open; otherwise she'll be rifling through your pockets for valuables. And the not the ones you had in mind.

Remember: The wallet is the heart of your pants.

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And this above all else: Never heed anybody's advice—especially mine.

Good luck, my boy.

Love,

Esmeralda Vincente, your mother (biological)

P.S. There really is no money in this envelope. You can quit looking.