

## THE TRUTH BEYOND THE PREFIX.

Mr Snook was a Latin master at the local boys' grammar school, believing strongly that the boys in his care should be taught to love the subject.

'It's good for building character. Where would the British Empire have been without Latin?'

David and his classmates at Roburton Boys Grammar School did not reply. They had been brought up to believe that Mr Snook's words were words of wisdom.

'Give me the boy. I shall teach him Latin. Then you will have the man,' was another of Mr Snook's favourite sayings.

But David's heroes were all footballers. He reflected on how many of them could speak Latin. If so, he wondered whether this helped them in their confrontations on the field of play. David had learnt that 'Erras' is the Latin for 'You are wrong', but any referee not understanding this in the heat of battle, particularly if the offending footballer had a southern accent, might involve the player being shown a yellow card.

That morning Mr Snook was speaking about prefixes and suffixes and how many of them had Latinate roots. 'Dis' meaning 'not', was referred to. David had only heard the term 'diss' amongst his friends to mean demonstrating a lack of respect, but he understood Mr Snook's point that 'dislike' was the opposite of 'like' and 'distrust' was the opposite of trust. On many occasions Mr Snook had been openly critical of David and he had, ironically, wanted to 'disappear'.

Mr Snook completed the lesson by telling the boys that it was important that people got along and avoided any unnecessary *disputes*. He then smiled at his own witticism.

David went home that afternoon and switched on the television. Most of the local news passed him by, the main story being about a lost parrot, who had disappeared, last seen in Grimsby docks, before making a bolt for Belgium.

This was followed by the main news. David's frivolous reflections ceased as he suddenly became aware of something of momentously serious proportions. Russia had invaded the Ukraine on the basis that it was to free the citizens from a Nazi regime.

The pictures were horrific and David could barely bring himself to watch. How could anyone with a conscience order such an invasion? It was at that moment that David received a call from one of his classmates, someone David regarded as being super-cool.

'Have you seen the news?' Leo asked. 'You know Snook was telling us not to, like, get involved in disputes, like?'

'Yeah?'

'Well, there's dis guy on the TV, dis Putin, saying he can do stuff, real disputin'.'

It was at that point that David, for the first time, had understood the wisdom of Mr Snook's words. Behind David's initially humorous take on Mr Snook's assertions about prefixes and suffixes was a realisation that we live in a world where evil has a presence.

'Once there was Rasputin,

Now there is dis...'

*Please, can he just disappear.*