My first shaving kit
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1. **child·hood-**
   the state of being a child

I grew up in house without shaving cream. Just an old razor without any blades. And a half empty bottle of Brut aftershave. Before I had any chance of noticeable facial hair coming in I'd put water on my face to act as shaving cream and I'd glide the plastic razor from below my puffy eyes down to my throat. Once I thought my smooth face looked even smoother, I'd splash a few drops of the aftershave on. At my grandfather's house they had the whole works. Razors with blades and cans full of cream. My older cousin lathered my face up and showed me what a shave really felt like. The blade came swiftly down my chin and he must have been pushing too hard. The blood started to flow. A gash on the right side of my chin. We cleaned the rest of the cream from my face and washed off the blood. Next comes the aftershave. I remember the burn. The awful smell of Brut. Like Macaulay Culkin in the first Home Alone when he shaved his face for the first time and followed up with the aftershave. He slapped both of his hands to the sides of his face and shrieked into the mirror. Macaulay Culkin taught my cousin and I how to shave.

2. **pu·bes·cence**
   the time when puberty begins

Macaulay Culkin retired from acting at the age of 14. When I was 14, I still lived in a house without shaving cream. Around that time tiny black hairs began to pop up all over my body. Most visibly on my face. I'm glad there was no shaving cream at my house. No razors with blades to take away my newfound stubble. We bragged to each other in school. My dark hair was on my side this time. My hairs more exposed than those with blonde hair. It was the beginning of the 21st century. Blonde was still cool. We were products of the 90s. We grew up watching endless reruns of Saved by the Bell. We all secretly wanted to be Zach Morris; leading the gang with our moussed blonde hair. By 2004, Mark-Paul Gosselaar no longer had blonde hair and neither did I. I stood proud with the black stubble feeling like a man, yet hiding the fact that there wasn't much of anything happening beneath my armpits. I asked my mother to get me a razor and shaving cream and cross referenced the smoothness of Zach Morris' face with Macaulay Culkin's shaving scene from Home Alone, but I still decided against putting a real razor to my face.

3. **ad·o·les·cence**
   the period following the onset of puberty during which a young person develops from a child into an adult

For my eighteenth birthday I received a razor from Gillette in the mail. Despite that gift and the razors and cream from my mother I could count on one hand the amount of times I've shaved my face clean in my life. By the time that I graduated high school, I had a beard that

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made me look like I was in my early twenties. I was drinking in bars by 19. A face full of hair gave me confidence. A face full of hair gave me power. A masculine statement on the vessel of a genuinely soft man with a slow-burning short-fuse. At 24–ten years after the first bit of black hairs appeared on my chin–my charcoal colored eyes speak a kind of anger. The long stringy beard backs those two spheres up. It hides the scar on my chin that came from the blade of a razor when my cousin pushed too hard. It hides the scars from the times that others have pushed too hard. The hair on my face is unkempt. I'm too lazy to deal with the upkeep. To everyone who knows me it says who I am. Without it there is no way that they'd recognize me. I wouldn't recognize me. I keep it there to hide the things I'm afraid of becoming. With a clean shaven face I look like the man who never taught me to shave. I look like the man who left the teaching of manhood up to Macaulay Culkin and Mark-Paul Glosselaar and my mother. As long as I never shave, I'll remember who I never want to be.

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