

Plot

- ▶ An unnamed narrator recounts his experiences as a nine-year-old member of the Comanche Club in New York City in 1928. The leader of the club, “The Chief”, is a young law student at New York University who is described as lacking in physical attractiveness but appears beautiful to the narrator.
- ▶ Every day, after the troop has completed its activities, The Chief gathers the boys for the next episode in an ongoing story about the eponymous Laughing Man. In the format of a serial adventure novel, The Chief’s story describes the Laughing Man as the child of missionaries who was kidnapped by bandits in China, who deformed his face by compressing it in a vise; he was obliged to wear a mask, but compensated by being profoundly athletic and possessed of a great Robin Hood-like charm and the ability to speak with animals.