

Eddie, The Senior Year

Braden's Turn

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Chuckie is not too happy with Lynn Berson. Lynn got a few good photographs of Chuckie being carried over Bobby B's. shoulder to the principal's office when Chuckie and Goldstein caused an uprising in physics class. One photograph appeared on the front page of the school newspaper, making Chuckie the laughingstock of the school. Mark, however, would argue that Chuckie has always been the laughingstock of the school. What Chuckie does not know is that a few other photographs of him being carried to Mr. Crum's office will appear in the yearbook.

Between first and second period, Chuckie walks down the hallway behind Lynn during class change. Lynn has her books in one hand and, as expected, her camera hanging from her camera strap in her other hand. Seeing an opportunity to get back at Lynn for the humiliation she caused, Chuckie strategically places his foot through Lynn's camera strap and briskly thrusts Lynn's camera to the floor. Lynn abruptly stops and picks up her camera, immediately seeing that the lens has been broken. Chuckie laughs, and tells Lynn, "I'm sorry. You should have been walking faster."

Lynn lashes out at Chuckie, "you idiot!" Chuckie replies, "you're the idiot, bitch! It was an accident." Lynn carefully examines her camera, seeing that Chuckie has not only broken the lens, but has also damaged the camera body. Now extremely upset, Lynn exclaims, "you broke my lens and my camera!" Chuckie tries to grab Lynn's camera,

but Lynn pushes him away. Making a second attempt, and grabbing Lynn's camera, Chuckie tells Lynn, "I didn't break it! Let me see it." Lynn pulls her camera away from Chuckie, who now grabs Lynn and slams her up against the wall. Lynn screams, catching the attention of everyone in the hallway, including the attention of Axel Braden.

Walking up to Chuckie, Braden announces, "you shouldn't have done that." Braden forcefully grabs Chuckie and, bracing his foot against the wall, Braden shoves Chuckie across the hallway with as much force as he can deliver. Chuckie is abruptly greeted by a concrete block wall, and suddenly falls to the ground. Chuckie, now motionless, has been knocked out cold. On their way to class, the students just walk around Chuckie.

Meanwhile, Eddie asks Lynn, "are you okay?" Crying her heart out, Lynn replies, "I'll be okay. But, he broke my lens. And, my camera isn't looking too good either!" Lynn's camera, a Nikon F with a 50-millimeter Nikkor lens, is quite expensive. Lynn is just happy that her high-end zoom lens, which she uses for sporting events, wasn't attached to the camera. Eddie tells Lynn, "we'll take up a collection, and get you a new camera and lens." Mark comments, "or, make the Chuckie pay for it." Eddie makes a note of Lynn's camera and lens model.

Seeing that no good can come from standing in the hallway, Braden announces, "we'd better get to class, or we're gonna be late." Everyone agrees, and heads off to class, leaving Chuckie lying in the hallway. Braden fully understands that hanging around in the hallway is of no value. And, besides, someone will report to the administration that Chuckie, lying in the hallway, has a slight problem.

By the third period, the announcement is made over the loudspeaker, "will Axel Braden, Edward Bogenskaya, Mark Svoboda, and Lynn Berson please report to the principal's office immediately." Over in the gym, Mr. Zunde tells Mr. Frazier, "I wonder what this is all about." Mr. Frazier replies, "I have no idea. Things have been relatively quiet all week." Mr. Zunde tells Mr. Frazier, "I'm going to go and

see what's going on." Mr. Frazier replies, "let me know if you find anything out." Mr. Zunde walks over to Mr. Crum's office, wondering what kind of trouble the guys are in today. Braden, however, knows exactly what the meeting with the principal is about.

Mr. Zunde arrives at the administrative offices, seeing Eddie, Mark, Braden, and Lynn seated, waiting to see Mr. Crum. Mr. Zunde asks Mrs. Marlowe, the secretary, "do you know what the issue is today with these guys and Lynn?" Mrs. Marlowe replies, "it's about the fight in the hallway earlier today." Mr. Zunde replies, "oh, really? What exactly happened?" Mrs. Marlowe replies, "I'm not sure. But, it involves Charles Black, who has been sent home for the day." Mr. Zunde, hearing that Chuckie is involved, now knows he is in for some interesting entertainment.

Mr. Zunde turns to Eddie, and asks "what exactly happened this morning?" Eddie replies, "the Chuckie broke Lynn's camera, and then started a fight with her. Braden broke up the fight." Mr. Zunde asks Eddie, "how were you involved?" Eddie replies, "I wasn't. I don't even know why I'm here." Mr. Zunde asks Mark, "and, how were you involved?" Mark replies, "I wasn't involved either. But, I saw the whole thing." Mr. Zunde asks Lynn, "what happened to your camera?" Lynn explains, "Chuckie broke my lens, and the camera body is all dented."

Expecting to hear the worst, Mr. Zunde asks Braden, "and, you broke up the fight?" Braden replies, "yeah. Chuckie shoved Lynn against the wall. So, I pulled Chuckie off of her, and pushed him away. His flimsy ass got knocked out somehow when he hit the wall. But, that wasn't my fault. He should have watched where he was going." Mark comments, "the Chuckie ran right into that wall. We all saw it." Mr. Zunde, without a doubt, knows this will be an interesting meeting with Mr. Crum.

Mr. Crum opens his door, telling the group of students, "get in here, all of you." Eddie walks in first, walking very slowly only to annoy Mr. Crum. Seeing only three guest chairs, Eddie decides to stand, taking a place next to Mr. Zunde, who stands next to Mr. Crum's bookcase.

Mr. Crum asks Mr. Zunde, "this has nothing to do with athletics. So, just why are you here?" Mr. Zunde replies, "for the same reason I'm always here. There are three athletes seated in your office, so I've come to observe and watch the entertainment." Mr. Crum informs Mr. Zunde, "fine. Just keep out of the discussion. I'm running this meeting." Always having the last word with Mr. Crum, Mr. Zunde replies, "go ahead. Don't let me stop you."

Braden tells Mr. Crum, "your desk still ain't looking too good. You ought to look into getting a new one." Eddie and Mark laugh, knowing that it has been two years and Mr. Crum's desk has not yet been replaced. Mr. Crum tries to ignore Braden's comment, but Braden's remark set the overall tone for today's meeting.

Mr. Crum opens the meeting, informing everyone, "a very serious incident occurred in this school this morning. Charles Black is reported to have been beaten up by Axel Braden and, perhaps, a few others. Charles was knocked unconscious, and eventually made his way to the nurse's office." Mark interrupts, and asks, "if he was unconscious, how did he make his way to the nurses office?" Mr. Crum exclaims, "he eventually woke up! Then, he walked to the nurse's office! And, please don't interrupt me again!" Eddie laughs, clearly noticed by Mr. Crum.

Mr. Crum continues, "I'm going to get to the bottom of this. Now, who wants to tell me what happened?" With no hesitation, Lynn replies, "I will." Mr. Crum coldly tells Lynn, "go ahead. I'm waiting." Lynn explains, "Chuckie slammed my camera to the ground with his foot, and broke my lens and my camera. Then, he tried to take my camera from me. And, when I wouldn't let him see it, he slammed me up against the wall. Then, Axel pulled Chuckie off of me, and pushed him away." Mr. Crum asks Lynn, "so, you started a fight?" Lynn exclaims, "no! Chuckie started the fight!" Mr. Crum informs Lynn, "nevertheless, you were involved in a fight. Fighting is not allowed in school." Mr. Zunde can't wait to see where this is going.

Mr. Crum addresses Braden, telling him, "explain to me why you decided to get involved in the fight." Braden

explains, "Chuckie's fat ass is three times the size of Lynn. When Chuckie slammed Lynn against the wall, I pulled him off of her, and pushed him away. All I did is break up the fight. She don't stand a chance against his fat ass." Mr. Crum asks Braden, "would you care to explain to me how Charles got knocked out?" Braden replies, "sure. When I pushed him away, he ran away. But, the wall got in the way. It looked like to me that he should have watched where he was going." Mr. Crum, suspecting that Braden had more of an involvement in the altercation, informs Braden, "as you know, Axel, fighting is not allowed in school." Braden informs Mr. Crum, "running in the hallway isn't allowed in school either. Chuckie shouldn't have run into that wall. You ought to suspend his ass." Mr. Crum sternly informs Braden, "I'm running this meeting, not you!" Knowing that Mr. Zunde has his back, Braden replies, "just don't run your ass into a concrete wall, like Chuckie did. Your ass might get knocked out too."

Mr. Crum, trying not to show his anger, asks Braden, "do you really expect me to believe that Charles ran into the wall and got knocked out?" Eddie interjects, "we all saw it. The Chuckie looked scared when he saw Braden. It looks like he made a run for it." Mr. Crum takes this opportunity to ask Eddie, "and, just how were you involved?" Eddie replies, "I wasn't." Mr. Crum asks Eddie again, "you weren't involved?" Taking Mr. Crum's question to be a statement, Eddie replies, "I'm glad you agree." Mr. Crum, now getting irate, tells Eddie, "that was a question, not a statement! Now, please answer me!" Eddie smiles, and replies, "I wasn't involved. So, there. Go suspend someone else."

Not wanting an argument with Eddie at the moment, Mr. Crum turns to Mark, and asks, "and, how were you involved?" Mark replies, "I wasn't involved either." Mr. Crum stupidly asks, "then, why are you sitting in my office?" Mark replies, "what are you, stupid or something? You called me to your office. That's why I'm sitting here! Geesh." With his blood beginning to boil, Mr. Crum boldly informs Mark, "any further remarks like that out of you, and I'll suspend you immediately!"

Interrupting the meeting, Mr. Zunde informs Mr. Crum, “no, you won’t. You will not be suspending Mark. If you recall, you asked Mark why he is sitting in your office. I’m sure Mark did not show up on his own accord to watch this circus. And, as Mark stated, you called him to your office.” Eddie laughs, adding a little fuel to the fire. Mr. Crum, quickly realizing that he will not win the argument with Mr. Zunde, replies, “I’ll get back to that issue.” Mr. Zunde wittingly replies, “no, you won’t. Now, move on.”

Focusing again on Braden, Mr. Crum asks, “so, you claim that you just pulled Charles off of Lynn?” Braden replies, “that’s right. And, his flimsy ass ran right into that wall.” Lynn interjects, “everyone saw it.” Ignoring Lynn, Mr. Crum asks Braden, “did you look for a teacher?” Braden replies, “no! By the time anyone got there, Chuckie’s fat ass would have kicked Lynn’s ass. And, everybody knows there ain’t no teachers in the hallway during class change!”

Mr. Crum mulls over the situation, and announces, “I’m sure all of you know that fighting is not allowed in school. Lynn and Axel, it is clear that both of you have been involved in a physical altercation, so I’m going to have to suspend both of you.” Lynn exclaims, “how about my camera? Chuckie broke it!” Mr. Crum informs Lynn, “there’s nothing that I can do about that. Your parents will have to take that up with Charles’ parents.” Lynn, trying to hide her tears, tells Mr. Crum, “this isn’t fair.”

Braden tells Lynn, “don’t worry about nothing. If Mr. Crum’s ass is gonna suspend us for fighting, I’m gonna drag Chuckie’s ass across the street after school someday, and kick the shit out of him off school grounds. And, there won’t be any witnesses. Then, I’ll just keep kicking his fat ass until he buys you a new camera. And, there ain’t nothing Mr. Crum can do about it.” Mr. Crum turns an eerie shade of white, and tells Braden, “no, you won’t!” Braden asks Mr. Crum, “oh, yeah? And, who’s gonna stop me? I can tell you it ain’t gonna be you.”

Mr. Zunde interrupts, and informs Mr. Crum, “you really have a sticky situation here. First, it’s clear that Charles Black destroyed Lynn’s camera. Second, all Braden did was

to pull Charles off of Lynn and push him aside. Breaking up a fight cannot be construed as fighting in school. You should already know that since we've been over that many times before. And, I might add, there are no witnesses contrary to what you've heard here today. If anyone is to be suspended, it should be Charles Black." Mr. Crum replies, "it's clear, Mr. Zunde, that Charles, Axel, and Lynn were fighting in school." Mr. Zunde replies, "so what? Go ahead and suspend them then. But, I can assure you of this. When Braden kicks the shit out of Charles Black off school grounds, I can guarantee you, you will not be suspending him." Mr. Zunde just gave Braden the green light to kick the shit out of Chuckie, but to do it off of school grounds.

Mr. Crum sits back in his chair, analyzing the situation. Mr. Crum realizes that Braden could easily make good on his threat to kick the shit out of Chuckie off of school grounds, and there is nothing that Mr. Crum can do about it. And, Mr. Zunde, pointing out that there are no witnesses to the contrary, has again checkmated Mr. Crum. Realizing that he is in a no win situation, Mr. Crum announces, "okay. For right now, I'm not suspending anyone. But, I have my eyes on every single one of you." Hearing that phrase many times before, Eddie laughs. Mark asks Mr. Crum, "can we go now? We're missing class." Mr. Crum brashly replies, "yeah. Get to class. I'll deal with this later." Which, he won't. Mr. Zunde will make sure of it.

Out in the hallway, Mr. Zunde asks Braden, "what really happened in the hallway this morning?" Braden explains, "it went down just like I said. I pulled Chuckie off of Lynn, and pushed him away. But, I braced my foot against the wall, and pushed his ass real hard. I'm surprised his ass didn't go right through that wall." Mark adds, "the Chuckie did take a step or two. So it looked like he was running to me." Mr. Zunde laughs, and tells Braden, "I think you scared Mr. Crum a bit when you told him you were going to kick Chuckie's ass off school grounds until he pays for Lynn's camera." After a short conversation, the students head back to class. Mr. Zunde heads back to the gym, and will inform Mr. Frazier of what happened.

The next day, Eddie arrives at school, and walks into the first period classroom. Eddie places a bag on Lynn's desk and walks toward the window, taking a seat with the tribe. Looking across the room, Eddie sees tears of happiness coming from Lynn's eyes. Inside the bag is a brand new Nikon F2, which is one model newer than her Nikon F, and a 50-millimeter lens just like the one Chuckie broke. In the bag is also an auto winder, an expensive option that Lynn did not have on her camera that Chuckie destroyed.