

Eddie, The Junior Year

Mr. Crum's Fucidulator

Copyright © 2018 by Dr. Robert E. Zee

During auto shop class, one of Eddie's classmates, John Schmidt, asks Eddie, "has Mr. Crum been after the track team this year?" Eddie replies, "more than ever. He's especially after me, Mark, and Braden. And, he's really been after Kathy and Paula this year. But, Kathy and Paula are also after him, and they're winning." Schmidt reveals, "Mr. Crum tried to suspend me and Ambrosini for fighting. We were just boxing. Boxing is a sport. We weren't really fighting, as Mr. Crum claims." Eddie asks, "what happened?" Schmidt replies, "we were called to his office. Mr. Zunde came to our rescue. We didn't get suspended, but Mr. Crum said he'll be watching us." Eddie tells Schmidt, "I bet he said, 'I'll have my eyes on both of you.'" Schmidt laughs, and replies, "those were his exact words." Eddie informs Schmidt, "he says that a lot."

Eddie advises Schmidt, "why don't you rewire his piece of shit Volkswagen Beetle?" Schmidt asks, "what do you talking about?" Eddie explains, "why don't you wire his brake lights to his starter solenoid? That will cause his starter to engage whenever he hits his brakes. Or, you can wire his brake lights to his horn. Another thing you can do is wire his reverse lights to his starter solenoid. When he shifts into reverse, his starter will engage." Schmidt smiles, and whispers to Eddie, "thanks for the idea. I know what I'll be doing at lunchtime today." Eddie tells Schmidt, "all you'll need is a wire, and possibly a pocket knife." Schmidt, who already knew that, replies,

“yeah. Wire and a knife. I got the knife. I’ll find a piece of wire somewhere around here before the end of class.”

Class comes to an end. Schmidt, knowing exactly how to rewire Mr. Crum’s Volkswagen Beetle, leaves with a four-foot piece of wire in his pocket. Eddie heads to his next class, wondering whether he will be blamed for tinkering with Mr. Crum’s car.

After lunch, Eddie passes by Schmidt in the hall during class change. Schmidt holds up his hand, giving Eddie a high-five. Eddie knows exactly what Schmidt was celebrating. Braden, however, does not. Braden asks Eddie, “what was all that about?” As they enter the classroom, Eddie explains to Braden about Schmidt’s rewiring job.

After school, the track team is out on the track, practicing relay handoffs for the upcoming meet. As Kathy hands the baton off to Paula, Kathy announces, “trouble at twelve o’clock. Mr. Crum is headed out to the track.” Paula grabs the baton and, looking to her right, sees Mr. Crum waddling out to the track at a record pace. Also looking over towards Mr. Crum, Mark smiles, knowing an amusing confrontation is just ahead. Eddie, however, knows exactly why Mr. Crum is headed out to the track today.

Hearing Mr. Crum yell out, “Edward Bogenskaya, I want to see you in my office right now,” Eddie jumps ahead of the next person in line, grabs the baton, and takes a half lap around the track. Hearing Mr. Crum’s tirade, Mr. Zunde walks over, hoping to quickly dispose of Mr. Crum. At the other side of the track, not quite as calm, Mr. Frazier quietly exclaims to himself, “not this shit again! We have work to do!”

Mr. Crum again yells out, “Edward Bogenskaya, I want to see you in my office right now!” Making Mr. Crum take the long way to get to him, Eddie, handing off the baton on the other side of the track, pretends to ignore Mr. Crum. On the far side of the track, Braden jumps the line,

wanting to be close by to hear the details of the confrontation between Mr. Crum and Mr. Zunde.

Mr. Zunde walks over to Mr. Crum, asking, "what seems to be your problem today?" Mr. Crum exclaims, "Eddie did something to my car! Every time I step on the brakes, there is a grinding sound!" Mr. Zunde calmly asks Mr. Crum, "what makes you think Eddie is responsible?" Mr. Crum exclaims, "it was him! I know it was!" Mr. Zunde tells Mr. Crum, "I see. Eddie is responsible because you think he's responsible. Crum, get out of here. We have a meet coming up, and the team has a lot of work to do."

Mr. Crum, however, does not leave, but rather exclaims, "Mr. Zunde, I want to see Eddie right now!" Mr. Zunde tells Mr. Crum, "fine. Have it your way. He's on the other side of the track. Why don't you walk over there and talk to him? And, please do not walk through the red zone on your way." Mr. Crum informs Mr. Zunde, "I'm the principal! You can't tell me where to walk! I'll walk wherever I want to!" Mr. Zunde replies, "be my guest. I am not going to stop you. And, I'm not going to stop the discus or javelin should it come your way." Mr. Crum walks across the red zone, yelling out to Mr. Frazier that he wants to see Eddie.

Using the two-way radio, Mr. Zunde radios Mr. Frazier, telling him, "Mr. Crum is headed your way. He wants to see Eddie. When he gets close, send Eddie back around." Mr. Frazier replies, asking, "what's Mr. Crum's problem this time?" Mr. Zunde replies, "he claims Eddie did something to his car." Mr. Frazier replies, "oh, wonderful," then asks, "couldn't you get rid of him?" Mr. Zunde replies, "no. When he gets close, send Eddie this way, and tell Mr. Crum to come back to this side of the track if he wants to talk to him. When Mr. Crum heads back this way, I'll send Eddie back around to your side." Mr. Frazier replies, "understood. Perfect."

As expected, Mr. Crum approaches, yelling out, "Edward Bogenskaya, I want to see you in my office immediately!" Mr. Frazier tells Eddie, "get on the track

and take the next handoff.” Eddie gets on the track, takes the baton from Johnson, and heads back to the other side.

Mr. Crum yells at Mr. Frazier, “didn’t you hear me? I wanted to see Eddie!” Mr. Frazier tells Mr. Crum, “it was Eddie’s turn to receive the baton. I can’t interrupt the workout flow.” Mr. Crum tells Mr. Frazier, “get him back here right now!” Mr. Frazier informs Mr. Crum, “I can’t. And, I don’t know when he’ll be back. You can always walk over to the other side of the track, and talk to him there.” Mr. Crum exclaims, “I’m going to do that!” Mr. Crum heads across the red zone to the other transition zone. And, while Mr. Crum is in the red zone, Springer releases a discus, which lands very close to Mr. Crum.

Mr. Zunde and Mr. Frazier, by perfectly timing which side of the track Eddie is on, make it impossible for Mr. Crum to talk to Eddie. Mr. Crum, fatigued by his workout traversing the red zone several times, eventually gives up and walks back to the school. Mr. Zunde, however, is confident that Mr. Crum will intercept Eddie after practice.

Track practice comes to an end, and the team heads back to the locker room. Strategically waiting near the door, as Eddie approaches, Mr. Crum announces, “Edward Bogenskaya. What did you do to my car?” Mr. Zunde asks Mr. Crum, “what seems to be the problem with your car?” With a vague answer, Mr. Crum exclaims, “Eddie did something to my car! I know it was him!” Mr. Zunde tells Mr. Crum, “Mr. Crum, why don’t you stop ranting, and show me what the problem is?” Finally getting the attention he thinks he deserves, Mr. Crum commands Mr. Zunde and Eddie, “follow me!” Mr. Zunde and Eddie walk toward Mr. Crum’s car, followed by a few members of the track team.

Mr. Zunde again asks Mr. Crum, “so, what seems to be the problem?” Mr. Crum gets into his car, and tells Mr. Zunde, “listen to this.” Mr. Crum starts his car and presses on the brake pedal, causing an awful grinding sound to

come from his engine. Purely to irritate Mr. Crum, Mr. Zunde informs Mr. Crum, "it sounds like your car might have a mechanical problem. Perhaps you should bring it to a mechanic." Mr. Crum exclaims, "of course it has a problem! Eddie did something to it!" Eddie bluntly replies, "no, I didn't. It wasn't me."

Mr. Crum exclaims, "I have to be home in a half hour! I don't have time for this!" Now irritated, Mr. Zunde tells Mr. Crum, "that would be your problem, not mine, Crum. If you want me to look at your car, you'll have to push it over to the auto shop." Mr. Crum exclaims, "I can't push it all the way over there!" Mr. Zunde tells Mr. Crum, "if you have a better attitude, perhaps some of the guys might push it over there for you." Braden exclaims, "yeah! We can do that! Let's see how fast we can get it to go!" Mr. Crum tells Braden, "this is not a game!" Braden replies, "fine. Push it over to the auto shop by yourself, then." Settling the discussion, Mr. Zunde announces, "Mr. Crum, it doesn't appear that you have much choice in the matter. Either let the guys help you out, or solve your problem yourself." Mr. Crum relents, "okay. Okay. But, be careful! It's my only car."

Eddie gets in the driver's seat, as Braden, Mark, Johnson, Bobby B, and Mitchell push Mr. Crum's vehicle to the auto shop. Mr. Zunde heads inside, and will open the garage door to the auto shop. And, as the guys get Mr. Crum's car up to ten miles per hour, Mr. Crum is unable to keep up. Neither could Chuckie were he around. Ten miles per hour would be roughly equivalent to a 20-second 100-yard dash, far faster than Chuckie could run.

In the auto shop, Eddie puts Mr. Crum's car on the lift. Mr. Crum randomly and bluntly puts out the question, "does anyone here know what they're doing?" Mr. Zunde responds, "if you'd prefer, we can go home and you can fix your car yourself. Please show a little appreciation, Crum. The guys are trying to help you out."

Eddie and Mr. Zunde examine the underside of Mr. Crum's car. Already aware of the modifications Schmidt

made earlier today, Eddie points out the problem to Mr. Zunde. Eddie whispers to Mr. Zunde, "someone wired his brake lights to the starter solenoid." Mr. Zunde asks, "that wouldn't have been you, would it?" Eddie replies, "no. It wasn't me. But, I'd give the student an A for this one."

Informing Mr. Crum of the issue at hand, Mr. Zunde tells Mr. Crum, "Crum, your ficidulator is shorted out. You should have done the scheduled maintenance when it was due. Then, this problem would not have occurred. This is your own fault, Crum." Mr. Crum then starts yelling at Mr. Zunde, 'what? Can it be fixed? I have to get home!' Mr. Zunde instructs Mr. Crum, "go back to your office, and I'll call you when it's fixed. This shouldn't take too long." Mr. Crum heads to his office, hoping that he does not have to walk home today.

While Mr. Crum is away, Mr. Zunde asks Eddie, "do you know anything about who did this?" Eddie replies, explaining, "in auto shop today, a few of us were talking about interesting ways to mess with cars. Wiring the brake lights to the starter solenoid was on the list. So was wiring the reverse lights to the starter solenoid. We must have put the idea in someone's head." As Eddie removes the wire, Mr. Zunde tells Eddie, "I'd have to agree with what you said earlier. Whoever did this should get an A."

Meanwhile, off to the side, Bobby B. asks anyone who may know, "what's a ficidulator?" Mark replies, "a ficidulator ficidulates." Suspecting that Mark is messing with him, Bobby B. asks, "really? How does the ficidulator know when to ficidulate?" Mark explains, "the ficidulator ficidulates when ficidulation is necessary." Bobby B. then asks, "how do you know when ficidulation is necessary?" Mark confidently replies, "you know ficidulation is necessary whenever you see the ficidulator ficidulating." Hearing a bunch of nonsense going back and forth, Braden comments, "that makes sense to me." Now knowing for sure that Mark is messing with him, Bobby B. yells out to Eddie, "hey, Eddie! What's a ficidulator?"

Eddie replies, “there’s no such thing. But, don’t tell Mr. Crum. We’ll all get in trouble.”

As Eddie lowers the lift, Mr. Zunde comments, “from my perspective, it couldn’t have been anyone in the auto shop class. It’s obvious that the ficidulator was shorted out. And, there’s at least three oil leaks coming from his engine. On top of all that, his oil filter is rusted. That should tell you something.” Eddie tells Mr. Zunde, “it looks like he needs a new Johnson Rod, too.” Knowing Eddie is referring to a fictitious auto part, Mr. Zunde replies, “I can see that.” Mr. Zunde then calls Mr. Crum, informing him that his automobile has been repaired.

Returning to the auto shop, Mr. Crum yells out, “did you get it fixed? Is my car running now? Is it fixed?” Mr. Zunde informs Mr. Crum, “Crum, you could at least show a little appreciation. Eddie repaired your car for you.” Mr. Crum asks in a demanding tone, “what? What was wrong with it?” Mr. Zunde replies, “I told you. Your ficidulator was shorted out. Eddie repaired it for you. If you had done the preventative maintenance when it was scheduled, you would not have had this problem.”

The unappreciative Mr. Crum gets in his car and drives away. Mr. Zunde closes the garage door, telling Eddie, “don’t be surprised if he calls you to his office tomorrow morning.” Eddie replies, “if he does, I’ll tell him to call my father.” Mr. Zunde laughs, telling Eddie, “if your father joins this conversation, please inform me. I’d like to be present for the entertainment.” Eddie replies, “you got it.”

The guys head to the locker room. Mr. Zunde heads home, suspecting that it was John Schmidt who made the modifications to Mr. Crum’s automobile, for it was just last week that Mr. Zunde had to explain to Mr. Crum that boxing is not to be confused with fighting in school. And, Schmidt’s skill in repairing autos is far better than average, for his father is a diesel engine mechanic.