

Eddie, Eighth Grade

Erika vs. Terry Haynes

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One day, while Eddie and the tribe are playing a game of Kill the Man with the Ball, over on the baseball field, a girl's gym class is in the middle of a softball game. Eddie nor Mark pay much attention to the softball game, for they are way too consumed with keeping the peewee sized football away from the others.

Deviating from their normal playing style, Eddie, Mark, Braden, and Gump monopolize the ball among themselves. In a vague game of follow the leader, the four athletes run in unison on the grass around the inside periphery of the track. Tossing the ball to one another in a rapid fashion, Eddie and his three buddies leave others to guess who will get the ball next. Whenever anyone gets too close, the four athletes simply speed up, quickly evading those who are after them.

Halfway through lunch period, Eddie yells out, "break time," and tosses the ball high into the air. Brave enough to catch the ball is some seventh grader named Jay, who makes a run for it. Within no time, seemingly coming out of nowhere, an eighth grader named Tim blind sides Jay, taking him down hard. Eddie mentions to the three guys, "ouch! That must have hurt." Mark replies, "yeah. That didn't exactly go as planned." Tim wrestles the ball away from Jay, and sprints to the other side of the field. Tim has a good run, but is eventually taken down by Bobby B, the doctor of the shot-put, who just happened to be in the right place at the right time to deliver the punishment. Bobby B. procures the ball, and makes a run for it.

Gump asks, "is our five minutes up yet?" Braden laughs, and replies, "it don't matter none. It's time for us to get that ball from Bobby B." Mark laughs, commenting, "yeah. Who does he think he is?" The four superstars of Kill the Man with the Ball sprint toward Bobby B., who quickly realizes what is about to happen. Seeing Eddie and the group rapidly approaching, Bobby B. tosses the ball into the air. Grabbing the ball out of mid air is Braden, and the four athletes again run in unison on the grass around the inside periphery of the track, keeping the ball from the others.

The bell rings, and today's game of Kill the Man with the Ball is over. As the guys head inside, Mark asks Eddie, "what's today? Wednesday?" Eddie replies, "yeah, bro. It's Wednesday. We have gym class next." If it were Tuesday or Thursday, the guys would be sitting in health class, bored to tears, wishing they were in gym class. Braden comments, "he never knows what day it is." Mark replies, "Monday through Friday are all the same to me. Saturday and Sunday are not." Gump replies, "Mark does have a good point."

Mark suddenly announces, "wow! Did you see that?" Eddie replies, "yeah. That girl just threw the softball at that other girl's back!" Gump asks, "who are those two?" Mark replies, "I don't know. I'm guessing they're sixth or seventh graders." Forcefully throwing the ball at Erika Gabriel's back is a chronic troublemaker named Terry Haynes.

Eddie exclaims, "oh, shit. Here it comes!" As Erika takes down Haynes, Gump, who is on the wrestling team, exclaims, "that was a good two point takedown." Erika repeatedly pulverizes Haynes at will in her mid section. Crying out in pain, Haynes repeatedly screams out, "stop! Stop!" Others in the gym class step back, giving Erika and Haynes ample room to fight. Truth is that everyone wants Erika to kick the crap out of Haynes. Eddie and his buddies stop and watch the fight, wondering who the two girls are. Pounding Haynes' face, Erika relentlessly beats Haynes to a bloody pulp.

Finally catching wind of what has happened, Mrs. Crystal, the gym teacher, turns around, and yells out, "hey! You two! Break it up!" Braden comments, "ain't no one breaking that up! That's a pretty good ass kicking if I've ever saw one!" Erika ignores Mrs. Crystal, and continues to kick the crap out of Haynes. Yelling louder, Mrs. Crystal exclaims, "I said, break it up!" Erika stands up, kicks her foot into Haynes' ass several times with as much force as she can deliver. Haynes goes from crying to letting out a loud scream, but Erika is not finished. Erika forcefully kicks Haynes in her rib cage, yelling out, "you piece of shit!" Finishing off Haynes, Erika stomps Haynes' right arm several times, making sure Haynes will not throw a softball for the remainder of this school year. Erika walks away, back to the locker room, leaving Haynes lying on the ground.

Eddie comments, "whoever that girl is, she really took care of that other girl." Mark replies, "yeah. I'd say." Braden exclaims, "I was thinking about breaking that fight up! I wasn't gonna get in the middle of that one! I might have got my ass kicked!" Braden, of course, is not too serious. He would not have gotten his ass kicked by any stretch of the imagination. If the right person is winning the fight, it's not likely anyone is going to step in and break it up. Referring to Erika, Gump suggests, "that girl ought to try out for the wrestling team." Mark replies, "yeah, really!"

Mrs. Crystal, already having found out who instigated the fight, yells at Haynes, "you! Get up, and get to my office immediately!" Barely able to move, Haynes attempts to sit up, but is not too successful. Seeing Haynes in dire straits, Mrs. Crystal tells one of the students, "you! Go get the school nurse." The student, who is among those who are glad that Haynes lost the fight, walks inside to get the school nurse. Not surprisingly, the student charged with notifying the school nurse takes her time accomplishing the task assigned to her. She is well aware that she'll be awarded a late pass for her efforts in helping out. But, that's the way students think in middle school. Getting out of class is of utmost priority.

Eddie tells the guys, "well, it looks like the party's over. We'd better get to gym class." Mark replies, "yeah. I bet she'll still be laying on the ground when we come out." The guys, already dressed for gym class, head inside so they are present when attendance is taken. They'll be back outside in a few minutes, when Mr. Harris will either have them play a game of softball or time them in a few track events.

Ten minutes later, the guys walk out to the field with their gym class. From a distance, Braden observes, "it looks like that girl got her ass kicked big time! Her ass is still laying on the ground!" Mark suggests, "after that shit the Chuckie pulled in the lunchroom today, maybe we can take him out again today. We can make it a two for one special." Braden brilliantly replies, "that sounds good to me! Whoever gets him on their team, put his ass at second base, and put someone good at shortstop. Then, someone can take Chuckie's fat ass out." Mark smiles, telling the group, "yeah. Let's do that. We haven't taken the Chuckie out in three weeks."

Earlier today, in the lunchroom, Chuckie intentionally spilled water all over Eddie, Mark, and Braden. Chuckie claimed he tripped, and that it was an accident. No one believes Chuckie, who has had three such accidents this year. And, as if that was not enough, when Chuckie tripped, his elbow slammed into the side of Braden's head. It's no wonder that the guys want to take Chuckie out.

Seeing the school nurse, Mrs. Crystal, the assistant principal, and a few other students congregated around a student laying on the ground, Mr. Harris comments, "I wonder what the big commotion is out there." Braden answers, "that girl laying on the ground got her ass kicked by some other girl! That was the best girl fight I've seen in a long time!" Mr. Harris asks, "who was the other girl?" Eddie replies, "some girl who was really well built." Mr. Harris asks, "it wasn't Erika Gabriel, was it?" Eddie replies, "I don't know. I've never seen her before."

Mr. Harris tells the group, "Eddie and Braden are the team captains. Let's get moving!" Using rock - paper -

scissors to see who chooses first, Eddie puts out a rock, and Braden puts out paper. Without hesitation, Braden, who immediately knows Chuckie will be on Eddie's team, announces, "I pick Mark." Eddie announces, "I'll take Gaspari." Selections continue for a minute or two, until Charles Black, otherwise known as Chuckie, remains, who will be on Eddie's team. Eddie whispers to Mark and Braden, "I'll make him play second base, and I'll play shortstop. You guys take him out." Braden suggests to Eddie, "if you're gonna be at shortstop, you can take his ass out too!" Eddie nods his head, and replies, "that's a good point. Thanks, bro."

At the bottom of the second inning, Mark is first up at bat. Hitting a line drive between first and second base, Mark should have been thrown out, but Chuckie failed to procure the ball and throws it to the first baseman. The ball rolls into right field, and Mark gets a single. Up second is Braden, who motions something to Mark. The pitcher pitches the ball, and Mark sprints toward second base where Chuckie is standing. The catcher quickly throws the ball to Chuckie, who is at a complete loss to figure out what he should be doing. Seeing Chuckie blocking second base, Mark plows into Chuckie like a runaway train. Chuckie goes down, sliding a few feet before coming to a rest near Eddie.

Eddie looks down at Chuckie, and yells out, "that play sucked, junior! You were supposed to catch the ball!" Chuckie, however, doesn't hear a word Eddie said. For the second time this year, Chuckie has been knocked out cold. Seeing Chuckie motionless, Eddie yells out to Mr. Harris, "hey! The Chuckie got knocked out again!" Mark yells out, "delay of game! Five-yard penalty!" Eddie informs Mark, "that's football, bro." Mark replies, "yeah, I know. But, he flew five yards when I hit him."

Mr. Harris runs over, seeing that Chuckie is not responsive. Mr. Harris then goes over to the school nurse, who is waiting for the ambulance to arrive to take Haynes to the hospital. The school nurse walks over and attends to Chuckie as Mrs. Crystal attends to Haynes.

While Chuckie lies on the infield, Mr. Harris walks over to Eddie and asks, "why did you put Charles on second base instead of right field?" Eddie explains, "last gym class, I hit the ball to the Chuckie in right field. He took so long to get to the ball, that I managed to get a home run out of something that should have been a single. So, I put him on second base, figuring I could take up the slack at shortstop." Eddie then informs Mr. Harris, "that guy is seriously dangerous." Mr. Harris shakes his head, and replies, "I know. But, there's not much I can do about it. Maybe he learned something out here today." Mr. Harris, the track coach, is no idiot. He knows how difficult it is for students to play a sport when the spread of abilities range from the most athletic to the least athletic in the school. Mr. Harris also knows that Chuckie is the school bully, and will be glad to get rid of him next year.

Chuckie finally comes to, and sits up, asking, "where am I? What happened?" Mark informs Chuckie, "you died and came back to life, junior." Chuckie asks, "I did?" Mark replies, "no, you idiot. You were blocking the base, and got knocked out." Chuckie asks, "I was?" Mrs. Crystal and Mr. Harris help Chuckie off the baseball field so the game can go on.

The ambulance arrives, and the paramedics attend to Haynes. The paramedics also do a cursory check of Chuckie, finding out that his vital signs are fine. Not so fortunate is Haynes. Suspected of having a broken wrist and a broken rib or two, Haynes is transported to the hospital. As the paramedics drive away, Mrs. Crystal walks over to speak with Mr. Harris, informing him of what happened earlier.

Following an abbreviated three-inning game, Mark boasts, "we won!" Eddie rebuts, "yeah. But, we were down one player. You took out our second baseman!" Mark laughs, and replies, "I was just helping you guys out." Pretending to act serious, Eddie tells Mark, "today could have been the Chuckie's day. He could have hit a home run." Braden interjects, "that don't make no difference. His fat ass couldn't run around the bases." The guys head inside, only to be back outside later for track practice.

