

Eddie, The Mechanic

Kathy's Porsche 914 (A Story Within a Story)

Copyright © 2018 by Dr. Robert E. Zee

Author's Note: This excerpt has been slightly modified from its original content so that the story makes a bit more sense outside of the book series. This story is extracted from *Eddie, The Spohomore Year* through *Eddie, The Mechanic*.

The Dream

The final bell of the school year rings, and Summer begins. Eddie and Kathy meet at the front of the school. Eddie tells Kathy, "I got an A!" Kathy asks, "how do you know?" Eddie tells her, "Mr. Malik told me." Kathy replies, "oh, auto shop. Of course you got an A!" Eddie mentions, "next year, I get to take advanced auto shop, and also woodworking and metal shop." Kathy replies, "well, when I get to buy a car, you can keep it running for me." Eddie asks, "you're not trading in your bicycle, are you?" Kathy replies, "no way! That ain't happening!" Eddie tells Kathy, "you don't even have a driver's license yet." Kathy informs Eddie, "yeah, well, I have my learners permit, and I'm going to pass Driver's Ed. And, I think I take my road test in like two weeks." Eddie replies, "great! You can drive me to the beach!" Kathy tells him, "that's in the plan, hon."

After a while, the whole tribe is together. It is no big secret what today's agenda is. The only question is what will be on the pizza. They all head to the pizzeria, and are all as happy as they can be now that Summer vacation

has begun. Everyone talks about their plans for the Summer, which includes working out and getting faster and stronger for next year. The sad part is that Barbara will be in college next year. But, the good news is that the University is only a few miles away, and she will be back to work with the team.

The group overheard earlier that Kathy said that she wants to buy a car. While they are waiting for their pizza, Paula suggests, "make sure you get something that will seat four of us." There is no big secret there. Paula and Mark want to ride to the beach with Kathy and Eddie. Braden tells Kathy, "forget that. Get something that is going to kick ass!" Braden's comment comes as a surprise to no one.

Eddie has his own suggestion, telling Kathy, "get something that I won't be spending my weekends fixing." Kathy tells him, "darn! I was going to buy three junk cars that didn't run, and tell you to make one good car out of them." Eddie replies, "I'd rather carry you around town." Kathy tells everyone, "hey! Everyone heard that, right? Eddie's going to carry me around town!" Mark replies, "yeah, the Eddiemobile. Top speed of five miles per hour when fully loaded. He gets eight miles to the pizza." The conversation quiets down when Joe brings them their pizzas. They all dig in, and the conversation again shifts to what everyone will be doing this Summer.

After lunch, everyone tells each other to have a great Summer. They all plan to meet at the pool a few times, and maybe go to the Fourth of July fireworks at the park together. For certain, they will meet to work out a few times. Eddie, Kathy, Mark, and Paula will probably spend a lot of time together at the beach. The girls give each other hugs, and the guys give each other fist bumps, as they all go their way.

On the walk home, Kathy tells Eddie, "okay, so now I feel really bad." Eddie asks, "why?" Kathy replies, "Paula wanted me to get a car that seats four, but the one I really want only seats two." Eddie tells her, "I wouldn't feel bad

about that. She's going to buy her own car someday soon, so that will only be an issue for a few months. We can all still ride our bicycles to the beach together." Kathy replies, "yeah, you're right! It's only for this Summer that it will matter."

Eddie asks Kathy, "so, what did you have picked out?" Kathy tells him, "a German sports car." Eddie asks, "really? Which one?" Kathy tells him, "I'll tell you, but you have to promise not to laugh." Eddie tells her, "okay, I promise." Kathy tells him, "I want a Porsche 914." Eddie informs Kathy, "that's nothing to laugh about. It's a really good car. It's the best British roadster ever made." Kathy informs Eddie, "it's made in Germany." Eddie replies, "I know. That was a joke." Kathy tells him, "I like it because it's cute." The Porsche 914 is anything but cute, but it is to Kathy, and that's all that matters.

Eddie tells her, "as long as we make a few repairs, it should be good." Kathy asks, "repairs? I haven't even gotten it yet!" Eddie tells her, "the fuel line near the battery needs to be moved, and the water drainage in the engine compartment needs to be modified, and the sills need to be rust proofed. Other than that, it's a really good car." Kathy asks him, "how do you know all that?" Eddie replies, "because I'm Eddie, the mechanic."

Now curious, Kathy asks, "why does the fuel line need to be moved?" Eddie explains, "because it's too close to the battery, and battery corrosion could get on the fuel line, and it could lead to an engine fire." Kathy tells him, "yeah. That definitely sounds like it needs to be fixed." Eddie assures her, "it will only take an hour, and we'll replace the fuel line with a metal braided one."

Kathy asks Eddie, "so, are you going to help me pick it out?" Eddie replies, "sure. I'll pick the color. Get green, but don't get the yellow. And, if you get a white one, you'll be washing it forever." Kathy exclaims, "I like the green! That's my favorite!" Kathy then asks, "but, why not the yellow?" Eddie tells her, "because it comes with black trim, and it looks like a school bus." Kathy replies,

“that’s a good point. I don’t want to drive around in something that looks like a school bus.”

Eddie asks Kathy, “so, are you going to buy a new one or a used one?” Kathy replies, “I don’t know. I don’t have a lot of money. But, I have my job again this Summer, so I can save up some money.” Eddie suggests, “well, we can stop by Angelo’s sometime and see what he has to say.” Kathy replies, “yeah, Angelo! He’s the mechanic on the corner. You guys built your squat rack.” Kathy, who is kind of impulsive at times, tells Eddie, “hey, let’s go see Angelo now.” Kathy drops her stuff off at her house, and she walks her bicycle to Eddie’s house. Eddie gets his bicycle, and they head to Angelo’s Service Station.

When they arrive, Angelo is eating dinner at his desk. He is done early for the day because it is Friday. Eddie and Kathy walk in, and Angelo asks, “hey, Eddie, how have you been?” Eddie replies, “good! Track is over, school is out, and Summer begins today!” Angelo tells Eddie, “I bet you’re happy about that!”

Eddie tells Angelo, “this is my girlfriend, Kathy.” Angelo tells Kathy, “it’s really nice to meet you.” Angelo then asks, “so, what brings you guys to a garage on a Friday evening?” Eddie replies, “Kathy had some questions.” Angelo tells Kathy, “Eddie’s a great guy. Keep him. That should answer all your questions.” Kathy replies, “aw, that is so sweet.”

Getting down to business, Angelo then asks, “okay, so what’s up?” Kathy tells him, “I want to buy a car, so Eddie said I should ask you about it, since you’re the expert.” Eddie mentions, “Kathy wants a Porsche 914.” Angelo tells Kathy, “that’s a nice choice, but be sure to reroute the fuel line.” Kathy looks at Eddie, realizing that Eddie actually knew what he was talking about. Kathy asks Angelo, “so, are they good?” Angelo replies, “they’re a lot of fun to drive, and they’re easy to keep running.”

Kathy asks, “how much do they cost?” Angelo replies, “a lot. Somewhere around six thousand for a new one. If

you build one, you can drive away for less than two thousand.” Kathy mentions, “wow! The new ones are really expensive.” Kathy is a little disappointed at the cost of a new Porsche 914. She thought the price would be a lot less than that, especially since the Porsche 914 is a lot smaller than an average sized car. And, she really had her heart set on that car.

Kathy asks, “how do you mean, like by ‘build one?’” Angelo explains, “well, for example, Malea has a 914 sitting around, and the engine is blown. The body, and everything else, is in perfect condition. If you find an engine in a junkyard, just drop it in. You’ll be driving around for less than fifteen hundred bucks. That’s assuming your mechanic, Eddie, gives you a break on the labor.”

Eddie asks, “who’s Malea?” Angelo replies, “John Malea. He builds autos just like I explained. But, he hates working on foreign cars. He only works on the domestic stuff.” Kathy mentions, “wow! I thought I’d have to work all Summer and wait until next year to buy one.” Angelo explains to Kathy, “just stay out of the retail market. You’ll pay top dollar there.” Angelo tells Kathy, “if you build one, you can probably have it up and running in less than a week.” Eddie tells Angelo, “well, maybe you can. You’re a mechanic.” Angelo confidently tells Eddie, “trust me. You can do it.”

Angelo asks Kathy, “do you want me to call Malea?” Kathy asks, “like right now?” Angelo replies, “yeah, right now.” Eddie tells Kathy, “it doesn’t hurt to ask.” Kathy tells Angelo, “sure. Go ahead and call him.”

Angelo looks through his book, and calls Mr. Malea. Mr. Malea answers, and Angelo says, “hey John, what are you doing working on Friday night?” Eddie and Kathy can only hear one side of the conversation, so they have to fill in the blanks in their minds. Angelo gets around to asking, “hey. Do you still have that 914 with the blown engine sitting around?” Mr. Malea talks for a while, and Angelo replies, “really?” Kathy looks at Eddie, wondering

what Angelo and Mr. Malea are talking about. Angelo then says to Mr. Malea, “a girl in high school wants one built. Her name is Kathy, and she’s looking for parts.” Kathy looks at Eddie, and whispers to him, “I’m looking for parts.” Angelo asks Mr. Malea, “are you sure?” After a long pause, Angelo tells Mr. Malea, “okay, I’ll let her know. And, take the weekend off, John. You work too much.”

Angelo hangs up the phone, and tells Kathy, “you’re in luck. He said you can have it.” Kathy asks, “how much is he selling it for?” Angelo tells Kathy, “you don’t understand. He said you can have it.” Kathy asks, “how do you mean? Like for free?” Angelo replies, “yeah. He said he is sick of looking at it, and it’s taking up space. He said, ‘tell her to come and get it.’” Eddie tells Kathy, “wow! Now all we have to do is find a motor for you.” Angelo warns Kathy, “I’m sorry to have to tell you this, but a running motor is probably not going to be free.” Kathy replies, “somehow, I didn’t think so.”

Kathy is so happy that she starts crying. Kathy asks Eddie and Angelo, “so, I might have a car this Summer?” Angelo tells Kathy, “yes. But you have a little work to do. Have the car towed here first. Then, you’ll have to find a motor. Unless, of course, you’re really lucky, and the motor can be rebuilt. You can’t just sit around and wait for it to happen. You have to make it happen.” Kathy, on a mission, tells Angelo, “I’m going to find a motor for it.” Angelo tells him, “you got Eddie to help you. It shouldn’t be too hard.”

Angelo then tells Eddie, “and, the green ‘69 MGB over there,” pointing to the lot in the front, “is yours, if you want it.” Eddie asks, “really? Are you serious?” Angelo replies, “yes. It’s yours. It’s been sitting there for a few years, and it’s taking up valuable space. And, I don’t have the time to fix it and sell it. I’m way too busy with other stuff.” Eddie exclaims, “thanks! Thank you so much!” But, Eddie knew that Angelo would give him the 1969 MGB someday, for he found out from the mechanic.

Angelo informs Eddie, "it does have a few problems." Eddie asks, "what's wrong with it?" Angelo explains, "it's a perfect illustration of the first law of auto mechanics." Eddie asks, "'the first law of auto mechanics', what's that?" Angelo replies, "the first law of auto mechanics is the defective component will eventually identify itself by complete failure." Angelo continues, telling Eddie, "it needs an overdrive box, a valve job, a few bushings in the suspension, and some other minor work." Eddie asks Angelo, "so I can have it?" Angelo tells him, "yeah, it's yours." Eddie cordially replies, "wow! Thank you so much!"

Eddie asks, "where did it come from?" Angelo replies, "a customer had it towed in one day. Actually, he had it towed in a few times. I took a look at it, and he never wanted it back after hearing how much it would cost to fix." Eddie tells Angelo, "wow, thanks!" Angelo tells Eddie, "if you want, you can leave it here for a while, or you can take it to your house and work on it there. It would be better if you take it home sometime, so you can work on it whenever you want."

Eddie begins to think about when he went through the portal a long time ago. The mechanic told him that Angelo would give him the MGB someday. Someday is apparently today. Eddie and Kathy thank Angelo immensely for his help, and then ride back to Kathy's house.

Kathy is surprised something that is so difficult can be made so easy when the right person is involved. Kathy tells Eddie, "wow! Angelo made that sound so easy! Almost too easy!" Eddie tells Kathy, "well, Mr. Zunde does the same thing." Kathy asks, "how do you mean?" Eddie explains, "well, just look at all the trouble Mr. Crum caused with the track team in the last year. You tried to get on the team. Mr. Crum tried to stop it, and Mr. Zunde fixed it. He tried to suspend me, and Mr. Zunde fixed it. He tried to give Braden detention, and Mr. Zunde fixed it. And Mr. Zunde probably had something to do with replacing Mr. O'Brien with Mr. Cruz. And who knows what

else Mr. Zunde has done for us that we don't know about." Kathy exclaims, "yeah, you're right!" Eddie tells Kathy, "well then, Angelo is the Mr. Zunde of automobiles." Kathy, now a bit more confident, tells Eddie, "this is going to work out! I know it!"

The Reality

On the first day of Summer break, Kathy wakes up very early, and rides her bicycle to Eddie's house. When she arrives, she finds Eddie expanding the garden in the back yard. Eddie's parents plan on expanding the garden next year, so starting the project this year makes sense.

Kathy walks up to Eddie and asks, "hey, do you want any help? I'll work cheap. I need money to buy an engine for a car." Eddie asks, "how cheap?" Kathy replies, "fifty dollars an hour. Seventy-five if I have to get all sweaty." Eddie tells her, "you're hired. By the way, mechanics get a hundred dollars an hour, and we work really, really slow when we're working on a Porsche. They're precision machines, you know." Kathy replies, "well, then you'll be carrying me around a lot more than you think." Eddie asks Kathy, "what happened to all that money you made running at the State meet?" Kathy replies, "I spent it already." Eddie asks, "on what? Pizza?" Kathy exclaims, "yeah! That's it! I spent it all on pizza!" Eddie tells Kathy, "well, I'm done here for today."

Kathy, unable to contain her excitement, tells Eddie, "I found out where John Malea's place is! I called this morning, and told him who I was and that Angelo talked with him last night. He told me that he'll be there all day and I can come look at the car if I want. And it's not that far away. It's on Sunrise Highway. And I know exactly how to get there! And, I forgot to ask him what color it is. So, do you want to come with me?" Eddie tells Kathy, "wow! It sounds like you're excited." Kathy asks, "how can you tell?" Eddie tells her, "because that sounded like one big long run-on sentence." Kathy tells him, "at least, I wasn't being verbose or giving you superfluous

information.” Eddie puts his tools away. He gets his bicycle and tells Kathy, “okay, let’s go.”

Eddie and Kathy ride to John Malea’s place. Kathy was right. It is not too far away. She even found a short cut, taking the path along the parkway that they usually take to the beach. They find the shop, which has many cars for sale on the lot, and a building in the back where cars are repaired. All of the cars for sale appear to be American-made muscle cars. They look around the lot, and do not find the Porsche.

Mr. Malea comes out to meet them, and says, “you must be Kathy.” Kathy replies, “yeah, that’s me. And, this is Eddie.” Mr. Malea tells them, “it’s nice to meet you both. Lets go to the back, and I’ll show you the 914. Let me get the key.”

Behind the repair facility is another lot, which is full of cars waiting for Mr. Malea to work on. Most of the cars are Mustangs, Corvettes, Camaros, Firebirds, and other muscle cars. All need some work, which is what Mr. Malea does. Mr. Malea turns these muscle cars into super muscle cars, which perform far better than the day they left the factory. Mr. Malea tells Eddie and Kathy, “as you can see, I work on American made sports cars. I don’t mess with the foreign stuff. I don’t even have a metric wrench anywhere in my shop.”

They come up to the Porsche. Kathy jumps up and down, exclaiming, “it’s green! Eddie, it’s green!” Eddie tells Mr. Malea, “wow! It looks really nice.” Mr. Malea opens the doors, and opens both trunks. Kathy looks at every detail. Mr. Malea pops the engine cover, and tells Eddie, “honestly, I don’t know what’s wrong with it. A guy bought two Corvettes from me a year ago, and he just dumped his 914 here. He gave me the title. I don’t know what the deal was, but he was very upset about something. It’s been sitting here ever since.” Kathy looks over the car, and is hard pressed to even find a scratch on it. Kathy sits inside, and the inside is in perfect condition

too. She giggles, and says to herself, “okay, this can be mine. Wow! This is really happening!”

Kathy gets out of the car and asks Mr. Malea, “so, you said I can like just have this?” Mr. Malea tells her, “yeah, it’s yours. If you want, I can have it towed to wherever you want, but you have to pay for the tow.” Kathy tells him, “thank you, thank you! Oh, thank you so, so, so much!” Eddie tells Mr. Malea, “I think she likes it.” Eddie asks, “can we tow it to Angelo’s?” Mr. Malea tells him, “sure. I can probably have it there later this morning if the driver is not too busy.”

Eddie, Kathy, and Mr. Malea go inside. Mr. Malea gets the title out of the safe, signs it and gives it to Kathy. Kathy asks, “how much is it to tow it?” Mr. Malea tells her, and Eddie gives him the cash to tow it, along with a nice tip. Kathy asks Mr. Malea, “can I go back and look at it again?” Mr. Malea tells her, “sure. Go ahead. I’ll be working in the shop.” Mr. Malea calls the towing company, and tells them to come and get the 914 and tow it to Angelo’s Service Station.

Kathy and Eddie look over the car together. Eddie tells Kathy, “this is really in perfect condition as far as I can see.” Eddie, looking at the back of the car, tells Kathy, “oh look! It’s even got the two-liter engine.” Kathy asks, “is that good?” Eddie replies, “yeah. It comes with a 1.7, 1.8, or 2.0-liter engine. This has the better engine.” Kathy replies, “yeah, but the motor doesn’t run.” Eddie explains, “well, maybe it can be rebuilt, and you won’t have to buy a new engine. We’ll see what’s wrong with it first.” Eddie peeks inside the passenger compartment, and mentions, “wow! It looks like someone added a lot of instrumentation.” Kathy asks, “is that good?” Eddie replies, “yeah. It sounds like something I would do.”

Kathy and Eddie spend about thirty minutes looking the car over, and surprisingly the tow truck arrives. Eddie, seeing the tow truck, tells Kathy, “oh good. It’s a flatbed.” Kathy tells Eddie, “I’m glad you know all about this.” They watch as the car is put onto the tow truck.

Kathy tells Eddie, “hey, let’s see if we can beat him to Angelo’s!” They thank Mr. Malea again, and the two State medalists ride their bicycles as fast as they can to Angelo’s Service Station.

Eddie and Kathy arrive at Angelo’s, beating the tow truck. But, after all, they did take a short cut. They tell Angelo that the car is on its way. Kathy waits like a child at Christmas for her car to arrive. The tow truck arrives about fifteen minutes later, which seemed more like an hour to Kathy. The driver unloads the car onto Angelo’s parking lot. Angelo tells Kathy to get in and steer, as Eddie and the tow truck driver push the car into an open bay. Angelo briefly looks the car over, telling Eddie and Kathy that it looks like it is in good condition. Angelo lifts the car, and tells Eddie to inspect it underneath. Angelo then goes back to work.

Examining the underside of the car, Eddie finds nothing wrong. Eddie tells Kathy, “the brakes look good, and there’s no leaks anywhere.” Eddie points out, “the exhaust has been changed out.” Kathy asks, “is that good?” Eddie replies, “yeah. It’s a stainless steel ANSA exhaust. It will last forever.” Eddie also tells Kathy, “and the wheels have been changed out as well. These are aluminum, not the stock steel ones. Oh, and look! You have a seriously upgraded suspension.” Kathy says, “okay, so far it’s all good news, I think.” Eddie tells her, “yeah, it’s all good news.” Eddie then tells her, “wow! This is not a 914 engine. It’s a six-cylinder, and it’s fuel injected. It’s got to be a 911 engine.” Kathy asks, “is that good?” Eddie replies, “yeah.” Kathy asks, “okay, Eddie the mechanic, why did they replace the engine?” Eddie tells her, “so it will go faster.”

After Eddie and Kathy are finished looking the car over, Angelo tells Eddie, “go across the street and get a battery.” Eddie lowers the car, and looks in the engine compartment, and does not find the battery. In fact,

Eddie finds that the 914 “hell hole¹” in the engine compartment has been re-engineered. They open the front trunk, and do not find the battery there. When they open the rear trunk, they find the battery. Eddie tells Kathy, “it looks like they moved the battery to the rear trunk. I can’t believe I didn’t see that before. That was a good place to put it.” Kathy tells him, “well, we weren’t exactly looking for a battery in the trunk before.” Eddie replies, “yeah, you do have a point.” Eddie removes the battery so they can get a small credit for the trade-in. They go across the street to the auto parts store and buy a new battery.

When they return, they install the new battery. They check the radio, lights, the accessories, and everything seems to work well. Not knowing exactly what is wrong with the engine, Eddie does not try to start the car right now. But, all of this is good news for Kathy. There could have been a long list of things wrong that could have cost more to repair than the car is worth. Eddie tells Angelo what they found, and Angelo gives them the thumbs up. Since it is now late morning, Kathy and Eddie go and get lunch. Angelo takes a break for lunch too, but he can’t leave the station.

At lunch, Eddie tells Kathy, “it looks as if your car has been heavily modified for some reason. A lot of that stuff didn’t come from the factory.” Kathy mentions, “I wonder why the owner just gave it away to Mr. Malea.” Eddie suggests, “maybe it’s not the first time it broke. Maybe the owner just got sick of fixing it.”

Kathy tells Eddie, “I have a problem.” Eddie asks, “what’s that?” Kathy explains, “this morning, when I left my house, I didn’t have a car. Now I have a Porsche 914 sitting at Angelo’s. So now, I have to explain this to my parents.” Eddie tells her, “they should be happy!” Kathy

¹ Hell Hole: An appropriately named area near the original battery location of the Porsche 914 that causes nothing but trouble.

tells Eddie, “that’s not the point. The point is that my father really likes the 914. He’s always looking at them, and he wants one.” Eddie tells her, “he can get one too. But, either way, it will work out.”

They head back to Angelo’s, where they find Angelo looking at the underside of the Porsche 914 when they return. Eddie and Kathy watch, as Angelo looks at every little detail. Five long minutes go by as Angelo investigates every last detail of the underside of the 914. Angelo pays particular attention to the drive train, which is not a factory 914 drive train. Kathy whispers to Eddie, “is something wrong? He’s so quiet.” Eddie whispers back, “I’ve never heard Angelo be this quiet before.” Kathy whispers back, “how can you hear someone being quiet?” Eddie replies, “good point.”

Angelo, looking at Eddie and Kathy, says, “so this is it. This is the 914.” Eddie asks, “what do you mean?” Angelo explains, “this is Richie Dennison’s car. This is no 914.” Angelo tells Eddie and Kathy, “this as a gymkhana car.” Angelo got Eddie on that one. Eddie has no idea what Angelo is talking about. Eddie asks, “a what?” Angelo explains, “this car has been heavily modified for agility racing.” Eddie says, “that makes sense. The six-cylinder engine, the wheels, the sway bar, the active suspension, the exhaust, all of it.” Eddie tells Kathy, “wow! You really lucked out.”

Eddie mentions to Angelo, “I noticed they left the 2.0 emblem on the back of the car, but it has a fuel-injected six-cylinder.” Angelo explains, “leave it there for the insurance company. It makes it look like it has a 2.0 liter engine. If they knew what this car really was, they’d raise your insurance rates. Or, perhaps they wouldn’t insure it at all.”

Angelo tells Kathy and Eddie, “let me tell you the history behind this car. This car was completely re-engineered by a Georgia Tech Mechanical Engineer when it was new. For the money Richie put into this car, he could have bought a Ferrari. Richie Dennison, and his two

sons, Donald and David, got into racing a few years ago. They live over in Northport. They planned to put this car on the course, but it never made it there.” Eddie asks, “why?” Angelo explains, “David took Richie’s 911 out for a drive one day, without asking. He went around a curve way too fast, and hit the brakes. The 911 went into a spin, and he went off the road, and was greeted by a tree. The 911 got totaled, and so did David. He didn’t make it. If he understood understeer, he might still be alive.”

Angelo continues the story, “his wife laid down the ultimatum. She told him to get rid of the other Porsche, the 914, immediately. That was the end of racing for that family. After that, Richie was finished with foreign cars, especially Porsches.” Kathy exclaims, “that’s why he just gave the car to Mr. Malea!” Angelo replies, “probably. He must have been so distraught over what happened, and just gave it away. His wife had a lot to do with him getting rid of it. The rumor was that she was beyond furious, and told Richie, ‘either that car is out of here, or I’m out of here.’ And, she supposedly gave Richie to the end of the day to decide.”

Kathy asks, “what’s understeer?” Angelo explains, “understeer is built into the 911 suspension. The car turns a little less than expected, which is a good thing for that car. In the 911, if you are going too fast into a curve, and hit the brakes too hard, the car can go into a spin. With the weight of the engine in the back, you can lose control easily.” Kathy asks, “how is that good?” Angelo explains, “David didn’t know what he was doing. Instead of hitting the brakes, he should have pressed on the accelerator and turned more sharply. If David understood understeer, he would have made it around the curve and still be alive today.” Angelo adds, “when a 911 is totaled, going around a curve too fast and slamming on the brakes is usually the scenario. It’s not the car that’s the problem. It’s the driver.” Kathy tells Angelo, “they never went over that in Driver’s Ed.” Angelo tells Kathy, “don’t worry. You won’t have that problem with this car.”

Angelo tells them, "I've heard a lot about this car, but I've never actually seen it." Angelo tells Eddie and Kathy, "the suspension in this car is designed to prevent understeer and oversteer regardless of its speed or acceleration. This is pretty much a street-legal racing car." Angelo tells Kathy, "you'll understand when you drive it. It's not going to drive anything like your parent's car. You'll see."

Angelo tells Eddie, "I tried to crank it when you were away. You're in luck." Eddie asks, "what did you find?" Angelo replies, "there's no compression in cylinder number three. It dropped an exhaust valve or something. That's probably about it. I heard it when I cranked it. And, I smelled gas in the exhaust." Kathy asks Eddie, "what does that mean?" Eddie explains, "one of the valves isn't working. It should be obvious when we open it up."

Angelo explains to Eddie, "the engine actually runs. I pulled the wire to each cylinder, and number three is gone. If it was anything more than a valve, it probably wouldn't run. We'll open it up to see what else might be wrong." Angelo tells Eddie, "let's pull the engine and we'll bench it." Kathy asks, "what happened to it? Why did the valve break?" Angelo tells Kathy, "they probably ran it past the redline. The redline of an engine is usually based on how fast the valves can respond. Some people see the redline as merely a suggestion."

Angelo and Eddie remove the engine, and set it on the block stand. Kathy is amazed at how quickly they removed the engine. Angelo tells Eddie, "start breaking it down. If you run into a problem, let me know." Angelo goes over to work on his own job. Eddie and Kathy start disassembling Kathy's engine.

Eddie exposes the valve assembly, and finds the number three exhaust valve has been crushed by the piston. "Crushed" is a mechanic's term. The valve's edge is slightly bent, and no longer seats properly. Eddie tells Kathy, "here's your problem. The valve got crushed." Eddie yells out to Angelo, "I think we found it!" Angelo

comes over to take a look. Angelo tells Eddie, “well, the good news is that the piston looks okay. Pull the valve, and check the lifter.” As Eddie continues working, Kathy tells him, “wow! Now I see why you want to be a mechanic, and pretty much flipped a bird to all those college scouts.”

Eddie checks the engine over and shows Angelo a list of parts he thinks he will need. Angelo looks over the engine, and tells Eddie, “don’t forget the gaskets for everything you’ve opened up, and get an oil filter too.” Eddie replies, “oh, yeah.” Angelo tells Eddie, “go across the street and get the parts. And bring the valve. Tell them it’s from a 911. See if they can match it up. And, then get to work.”

Eddie and Kathy go to the auto parts store, and pick up the parts. While they are walking across the street, Eddie asks Kathy, “do you want to do this today, or wait?” Kathy replies to Eddie, “if you want to, we can do it today. I think it’s kind of interesting.”

When they return, Eddie replaces the valve, which takes him about a half hour. Angelo checks his work, and goes over the whole engine before Eddie closes it up. Everything looks good, so Eddie reassembles the engine with Kathy’s help. Eddie tells Kathy, “hey, you make a good assistant.” Kathy replies, “thank you.” Eddie tells her, “okay, now go ahead and put your engine back in the car.” Kathy tells him, “I can’t do that all by myself!” Eddie tells her, “that’s the easy part. Reconnecting everything else is the hard part. Well, it’s not that it’s hard. It’s just time consuming.”

Angelo and Eddie reinstall the engine, which doesn’t take too long. Kathy remarks, “dang. You guys make this look so easy.” Angelo tells Eddie, “hook it back up, and we’ll see if it runs.” Angelo goes back to work, and Eddie and Kathy finish the reinstallation.

After Eddie and Kathy are done, Angelo comes over to inspect Eddie’s work. Angelo asks Kathy, “were there any

extra parts?” Kathy, who is not about to fall for that one, replies, “only the broken ones.” Angelo smiles, and replies, “good answer.” Eddie mentions, “the only thing odd that I found is that those are the tightest valve springs I’ve ever seen.”

Angelo tells Eddie, “well, it’s looking good.” Angelo asks, “did you put the oil in and check the transaxle oil?” Eddie replies, “we did. The transaxle was fine and so was the brake fluid.” Angelo asks Kathy, “did you check the coolant?” Kathy replies, “yeah. The air flow is fine.” Angelo tells Eddie, “good. You found a smart one!” Kathy already knows the engine is air cooled, and has no coolant. Angelo was trying to tease her, but Kathy is apparently smarter than he thought.

Angelo tells Eddie, “we’re ready. Crank it up and see what happens.” Eddie sits in the car and turns the key. After a few seconds, the engine starts. Angelo listens to the engine, and tells Kathy, “it sounds strong.” Filled with joy, Kathy jumps up and down, and yells out, “it started!”

Angelo tells Kathy, “well, now let’s see if it runs.” Angelo gets in, and backs the car out of the service bay. He tells Kathy, “get in. Let’s see how it drives.” Kathy gets in the passenger side, and Angelo tells Eddie, “man the station. We’ll be back in a few minutes.” Angelo rides off with Kathy, test driving her new car. Eddie, who was relieved to watch the car start, is more relieved to see the car drive off.

In a few minutes, Angelo returns, and the car is running well. Kathy is exceedingly happy, but the day has worn her out. Angelo tells Eddie, “this car handles like a dream, better than a 911. And, it has a lot more power. You did a good job. Let me know when you graduate. You can come work here.” Kathy tells Eddie, “it runs really, really good!”

Angelo mentions to Eddie, “Kathy tells me she doesn’t have her license yet.” Angelo then asks Kathy, “how far away do you live?” Kathy answers, “a few miles. It’s not

too far.” Angelo tells her, “we have to get it to your house somehow.” Angelo calls Vinnie, who owns the body shop across the street. Explaining the situation, Angelo asks Vinnie to follow him to Kathy’s house. Angelo closes his shop for the day, and Kathy and Angelo drive the 914 to Kathy’s house, as Vinnie follows. Eddie waits at Angelo’s with their bicycles. Angelo leaves the 914 parked in front of Kathy’s house, and he and Kathy drive back to the station with Vinnie.

Angelo, Vinnie, and Kathy return, and everyone calls it a day. Kathy asks Angelo, “okay, so how much do I owe you?” Angelo figures out the bill for miscellaneous shop supplies, and the oil for the oil change. Angelo’s bill amounts to \$65.00. Kathy asks him, “are you sure?” Angelo tells her, “that’s my bill. You haven’t gotten Eddie’s bill yet. He did all the work. And besides, it was fun having you guys around here today.” Kathy pays Angelo, and tells him, “thank you so much for helping me.” Angelo tells her, “I was glad to.” Kathy asks Angelo, “so, if you fixed it, how much would you charge?” Angelo tells her, “probably somewhere around six hundred. More if it was a cranky customer. But, I’d give you a good deal.” Eddie and Kathy tell Angelo good night, and they ride their bicycles back to Kathy’s house.

When they arrive at Kathy’s house, Eddie tells her, “I suppose I should go home, but I really want to hear this.” Kathy, already knowing what Eddie means, asks, “hear what?” Eddie replies, “I want to hear you explain to your father that the Porsche 914 in front of your house is yours.” Kathy tells him, “if you’re waiting around, then you’re helping me explain it!” Kathy puts her bicycle away, and goes out to the road to look at her car.

It was hard for Kathy’s father not to notice the Porsche 914 parked in front of his house after Angelo and Kathy dropped it off. He heard Kathy come home, and steps outside, seeing her and Eddie looking at the Porsche. He walks up, and Kathy asks him, “so, how do you like it?” Kathy’s father replies, “it’s beautiful. Whose is it?” Kathy replies, “um, well, it’s kind of like mine.” Kathy’s father

tells her, “kind of like yours? Okay, I got to hear this one.” Eddie mentions, “me too. That’s why I’m still here.” Kathy’s father whispers to Eddie, “here comes a long-winded explanation. Just watch.”

Kathy explains, “well, I told you we went to Angelo’s last night. And, Angelo said Mr. Malea had a 914 that he wanted to get rid of. So, I called him this morning and he said I can come look at it. And it was green, just like I wanted. So, he like just gave it to me.” Kathy’s father interrupts, and asks, “he gave it to you?” Kathy replies, “yeah, free. He just wanted to get rid of it. Like just to get it off his lot. He said he didn’t even have the wrenches to fix it.” Kathy’s father says, “okay. Well, you can’t beat the price.”

Kathy continues, “but, the motor didn’t run, so we had it towed to Angelo’s. And we beat the tow truck to Angelo’s by fifteen minutes! Then, Eddie and Angelo took the motor out, and Eddie took it apart.” Kathy asks Eddie, “and what was wrong with it again?” Eddie replies, “a valve was crushed. The engine was probably revved past its redline.” Kathy continues, “yeah, that was it. That little valve thingie was bent a little. So Eddie took the motor apart, and put in a new valve. Then, Eddie and Angelo put the motor back in. Then, it started. And so, Angelo drove it here for me because it runs now.”

Kathy’s father gets around to the usual parental question, “so, how much did this cost you?” Kathy, adding the battery, Angelo’s bill, the parts, and the towing charge in her head, tells him, “about two hundred and fifty dollars.” Kathy’s father exclaims, “what? Are you serious?” Hugging Eddie, Kathy replies, “yeah. But, Eddie didn’t give me a bill because he is so sweet.” Kathy’s father tells her, “well, we raised you to be independent and think for yourself. You did well!” He then asks Kathy, “how many miles are on it?” Kathy tells him, “about six thousand.” Eddie’s father asks, “six thousand, not sixty thousand?” Eddie tells him, “a little less than six thousand.”

Kathy's father then takes a closer look at the car. Kathy asks her mother, who just walked outside, "so, what do you think?" Kathy's mother replies, "it's nice. Whose is it?" Kathy tells her, "it's mine." Kathy's mother asks, "how is it yours?" Kathy goes through her long-winded explanation a second time, while Eddie and Kathy's father examine the vehicle. Kathy's mother tells her, "wow! You left this morning to go to Eddie's and you come back with a car for two hundred and fifty dollars." Kathy tells her, "yeah! And, when I get my license, I won't have to ride my bicycle to work in the rain this Summer."

Kathy's father asks Kathy, "can we take it for a ride?" Kathy replies, "I was hoping you'd ask that." Kathy just bought a car and hasn't driven it yet. She runs inside and gets her learner's permit, and is ready to go. Kathy's father gets behind the wheel first. He shows her a few things that she may not know about the car. Kathy and her father drive off, as Eddie and Kathy's mom watch.

Kathy's father tells her, "this car handles really nice. Someone did some work on it." Kathy tells him, "yeah. Angelo said something about the car being modified for agility racing or something." Kathy's father replies, "I can see that." Kathy's father, while acting quite reserved, is very impressed by how well the 914 handles.

Kathy's father pulls over in the high school parking lot, telling Kathy, "okay, it's your turn." They swap seats, and Kathy gets behind the wheel. He tells her, "one thing that's different about this car and mine is that, on this car, first gear is to the left and down, not up like mine. And this is a five speed. Mine is a four." Kathy looks at the shift knob, and replies, "yeah, I see that."

Kathy drives off cautiously, but gets the hang of it very quickly. She drives her car on the curvy road where the cross country team practices. She tells her father, "wow! This car just glides around the curves, and it steers so good!" When she comes to the stop sign, Kathy notices the car stops really well too. Taking off on the deserted road, she tells her father, "and, wow! It's got some pick

up too!" Kathy's father tells her, "this car is definitely not stock." Kathy tells him, "yeah, Eddie said they changed a lot of things, and we found out that the battery was moved to the rear trunk." He mentions, "I wonder why they did that." Kathy explains, "because the fuel line is too close to the battery and, if the battery gets corrosion and it gets on the fuel line, you can get an engine fire." Kathy's father asks, "how did you know that?" Kathy replies, "Eddie told me. And then, later Angelo said the same thing." Kathy pulls up at her house, and her father tells her to park in the driveway.

When Kathy gets out of the car, Eddie asks, "so, how does it run?" Kathy exclaims, "really awesome!" Kathy's father mentions, "it handles better than a 911!" Eddie tells him, "Angelo said the same thing." Kathy's father mentions to Eddie, "Kathy said the car was modified." He asks Eddie, "what was done to it?" Eddie tells him, "the suspension isn't stock. It has an active suspension. The steel wheels were replaced with aluminum ones and the tires are a little wider. It has an ANSA exhaust, and the brakes have been upgraded. It has a six-cylinder 911 engine that's fuel injected. Angelo said the car was modified by a Georgia Tech engineer for agility racing." Eddie's father comments, "well, they did a really, really good job." Kathy, for some reason, declined to tell her father that the car is a street-legal racing car.

Since Eddie is a bit dirty from working on the car, he decides to ride home and clean up. Kathy gives Eddie a hug and a big kiss, thanking him for helping her today. He tells Kathy good night, and rides home.

Kathy and her parents look at the car a while longer, and finally go inside where Kathy gets some dinner. They are accustomed to Kathy occasionally missing dinner. But, she is seventeen now. Kathy has joined the track team and has a job, so she now has her own schedule. And, when she is with Eddie, they know that she is safe. Today has been a long day for both of them, and they will sleep well tonight.

The Next School Year / Rumors Begin

The first day of school arrives, and it is anything but business as usual for the seniors. Kathy, who now owns a Porsche 914, will occasionally drive to school. Kathy's and Paula's new wardrobes will certainly turn a few heads. While the seniors are concerned about applying to colleges and universities, the freshmen will be trying to figure out where their classrooms are. Then, there are the sports teams. The returning students will move up the ladder, while the freshmen will be vying for a place on a team. The teachers and coaches see it as the same old situation, but with a new group this year.

Like last year, Eddie walks to Kathy's house before school. He arrives earlier than usual today, only because his mother wanted to make sure he got to school on time. Last year, Eddie and Kathy walked to school. This year, even though the school is a mere half mile away, Kathy is driving, only because she can. She and Eddie could just as easily walk to school, but not today.

Kathy and Eddie get into the Porsche 914, and Kathy starts the engine. Eddie mentions to her, "the engine sounds really good." Kathy replies, "yeah, I know. I have a very special mechanic who keeps it running perfectly for me." Eddie suggests, "you should have him change the oil sometime. There's been almost a thousand miles put on the engine since it was worked on." Kathy remarks, "yeah. We should do that sometime." Kathy backs out of the driveway, and drives down the street.

It does not take Kathy very long to get to the high school. Eddie and Kathy could have run to the school faster than she took to drive there. Kathy finds a parking place right up in front, in the end space, minimizing the risk that anyone will ding her doors. They get out of her car, and walk to the lawn in front of the school. Since they are early, there is no need to go inside. They'll just wait outside until the rest of the tribe arrives, and then they'll all go in together. From where they are sitting,

they see a few of the students walking to school checking out Kathy's new Porsche.

At the end of the day, the final bell rings and everyone heads home. Kathy heads to her car to wait for Eddie. While she is waiting for him, quite a few of her friends check out her Porsche 914, and ask her all about it. Kathy must have told the story about a dozen times today. She is glad when Eddie walks up. Now they can leave, and she can get some peace.

But, it's not that simple. Eddie is now fielded with questions about the car. Eddie, knowing Kathy wants to leave, tells the three people standing around, "it's a gymkhana car. It's been heavily modified for agility racing. It will kick the crap out of anything in this parking lot, and out maneuver any police car in this State." No one dares to ask any further questions, so Kathy and Eddie get to drive away. Eddie, however, by using the word 'racing,' just accidentally seeded a rumor about Kathy's 914.

A Few Weeks Later

The long awaited day arrives, and Kathy cannot wait to get to school. She and Eddie drive to school, and get there very early. Kathy drives past the garage door to the auto shop, which happens to be open. Mr. Malik, the auto shop teacher, hears the 911 engine of the Porsche 914, and walks outside to see what exactly drove by. Mr. Malik sees Eddie and Kathy get out of the Porsche 914. Being a little curious, he walks over and wants to take a look at the car.

Mr. Malik opens by mentioning, "that doesn't sound like a normal 914 to me." Kathy, who is now well versed regarding the modifications that were made to her car, tells Mr. Malik, "it was modified for agility racing. It has a six-cylinder engine, not a four. And, it has better suspension so it goes around curves really well. And, the battery is now in the rear trunk." Mr. Malik asks Kathy, "how come you didn't sign up for auto shop?" Kathy

smiles, and replies, “because I have Eddie.” Mr. Malik asks Kathy, “if you don’t mind, I’d like to put it up on the rack sometime and take a look.” Kathy replies, “we’re way early for school. How about now?” Mr. Malik replies, “sure. We’ve got 20 or 30 minutes before the bell rings.”

Kathy drives the 914 to the garage door, and Mr. Malik guides her in, getting her centered over the lift. Kathy gets out, and Mr. Malik lifts the car. Eddie, Kathy, and Mr. Malik take a look underneath. Mr. Malik is amazed, to say the least, of the engineering masterpiece that he sees underneath the vehicle. Mr. Malik tells Eddie and Kathy, “I cannot even begin to explain the genius that it took to make these modifications.” But, Kathy and Eddie already know that, already hearing it from Angelo.

Looking around underneath the 914, Mr. Malik points out, “and, take a look at this. There’s an active front and rear suspension. Here are the hydraulic links. The active front suspension, in combination with the small front anti-sway bar, must respond really fast.” Looking around a little closer, Mr. Malik comments, “and, take a look at this. Girling brakes. This model is often found on racing cars.” Mr. Malik examines every little detail underneath the 914. Mr. Malik mentions, “they’ve even stiffened the body. These structural components are not original equipment. They’ve been welded in. And, apparently, after the work was done, they’ve powder coated the entire underside. This took a lot of time, effort, and money.”

Mr. Malik lowers the 914, and tells Kathy, “Mr. Zunde will definitely be interested in seeing this sometime. He’s a Porsche fanatic.” Kathy informs Mr. Malik, “Angelo, at the service station, said he heard all about this car, but he’s never seen it until I got it. He said that an engineer from Georgia Tech made all the modifications.” Mr. Malik tells Kathy, “that would certainly explain everything we see here. No one does this type of work without some kind of extensive engineering background. To be honest, what was done to this car is far beyond me. I’d like to meet the guy who modified this car someday.”

Kathy drives the car out of the garage, and parks it in her favorite space on the end.

The Confrontation

The rumor around school is that Kathy's car is not street legal, and that the Porsche 914 she drives is a racing car. This is all Mr. Crum, the school principal, needs to hear to begin an investigation. He gathers as much information as he can during the week, puts it together and, as usual, comes to the wrong conclusion.

On Monday, after the announcements, the school secretary announces over the loudspeaker, "will Edward Bogenskaya and Kathy Karakova please report to the administration office immediately." Miss Starr tells Eddie, "you two must have got caught holding hands in the hallway." Eddie replies, telling Miss Starr, "or, maybe my socks are too short." The class cracks up, as Eddie stands up to leave. Miss Starr tells Eddie, "good luck." On his way out, Eddie points to Chuckie, telling him, "shut up, junior," before Chuckie even has the chance to say anything.

Eddie and Kathy meet in the administration office. Kathy asks Eddie, "what did we do?" Eddie replies, telling her, "I don't know. Miss Starr thinks we got caught holding hands." Kathy asks Mrs. Marlowe, the secretary, "how is it that we're here this time?" Mrs. Marlowe replies, "Mr. Crum wants to see both of you." Eddie asks, "about what?" Mrs. Marlowe replies, "I'm really not allowed to say." Kathy tells Eddie, "wow! It must be really, really bad." Eddie comments, "it can't be an overdue library book. I've never checked one out."

Mr. Crum opens the door to his office, and says, "both of you. Get in here right now!" The first thing Eddie and Kathy notice is that Mr. Shapiro, the assistant principal, is sitting in Mr. Crum's office. Kathy looks at Eddie, and says, "wow! Isn't he grumpy today. Somebody must have

pissed in his cornflakes.” Mr. Crum exclaims, “don’t think I didn’t hear that, Miss Karakova!”

Mr. Crum tells Kathy and Eddie, “have a seat.” As he sits down, Eddie mentions, “wow! You haven’t gotten a new desk yet. It’s been what, almost a year now?” Mr. Crum tells Eddie, “I’ve had enough out of you already, and I haven’t even started.” Eddie asks Mr. Crum, “does that mean we can go back to class now?” Mr. Crum tells Eddie and Kathy, “you two just keep quiet, and listen.” Kathy comments, “here we go again with your poor command of the English language.”

Mr. Shapiro, the assistant principal sits back and listens to the heated introductory conversation between Mr. Crum and the two students. Mr. Shapiro appears to be taking a few notes, and is pretending to support Mr. Crum. What is written on Mr. Shapiro’s pad, however, is his grocery shopping list, having absolutely nothing to do with Mr. Crum’s meeting. Mr. Shapiro is perfectly happy to let Mr. Crum dig his own hole or sink his own ship. If Mr. Crum gets fired or demoted, Mr. Shapiro is next in line to take his position.

Mr. Crum announces, “let me get right to the point.” Kathy replies to Mr. Crum with the highly sarcastic tribe trademark, “waiting.” Mr. Crum begins his dissertation, telling Eddie and Kathy, “it has come to my attention that Kathy’s car is not a street-legal vehicle. It has also come to my attention that you, Edward Bogenskaya, used the school’s auto shop to make modifications to her car. The vehicle is also reported to me to be a racing car, which I simply cannot allow on school property. And, using the school facilities in the way that you did is a clear violation of school policy.”

Eddie and Kathy, beyond a shadow of a doubt, know that Mr. Crum is full of shit. Kathy whispers to Eddie, “let’s have some fun with this.” Mr. Crum exclaims, asking, “what did you just say to him?” Eddie tells Mr. Crum, “she told me ‘we just got busted.’” Mr. Crum, who’s confidence in his accusation has just risen to new heights,

tells them, “now, I’m going to get to the bottom of this.” Kathy laughs, and replies, “waiting.”

Mr. Crum asks Eddie, “how did you modify Kathy’s car?” Eddie replies, “with a socket wrench set, a screwdriver, and a small hammer. I think I may have also used pliers at one point. Oh, and I used a valve spring compressor.” Mr. Crum tells Eddie, “don’t get smart with me, young man.” Eddie replies, “well, what exactly do you want to know?” Mr. Crum instructs Eddie, “tell me exactly what you did to Kathy’s car.” Eddie replies, “I replaced a valve, which I did at Angelo’s Service Station. And, while I was at it, I changed the oil, which I had to do since we opened up the engine. I also replaced the battery. Ask Angelo. He’ll tell you.”

Mr. Crum tells Eddie, “I can see that I’m not getting anywhere with you. I was expecting your full cooperation, and I can see that I’m not getting any.” Kathy asks, “so, you’re not getting any?” Mr. Crum replies, “no, I’m not!” Kathy replies, “that’s sad. I’m so sorry. I can clearly see that.” Mr. Shapiro has difficulty containing his laughter at Kathy’s double entendre that flew right over Mr. Crum’s head. Kathy’s comment will certainly make its way around the teachers lounge later today. Mr. Shapiro is sure to tell someone by the end of the morning.

Eddie tells Mr. Crum, “hey, why don’t you just talk to Mr. Malik. He’ll explain it all to you.” Mr. Crum tells them, “I might just do that.” Kathy adds, “and, Mr. Zunde too. Bring him back with you. He seems to always enjoy these meetings.”

Mr. Crum whispers something to Mr. Shapiro, and Kathy exclaims, asking, “what did you just say to him?” Mr. Crum shakes his head and tells Eddie and Kathy, “don’t go anywhere. Just sit right there.” Eddie asks, “what if there’s a fire drill?” Mr. Crum dares not to respond to Eddie’s sarcasm. Mr. Crum leaves his office for a moment, taking Mr. Shapiro with him.

While Mr. Crum and Mr. Shapiro are away, Kathy tells Eddie, “wow! His full of shit gauge is totally pegged.” Eddie laughs, and replies, “yeah. I’d say so.” Eddie and Kathy hear the announcement, “Mr. Malik, please report to the administration office. Mr. Harrison, please report to the auto shop.” Kathy tells Eddie, “wow! They sent the permanent sub to the shop.” Eddie replies, “I guess we’ll be here for a while.” Kathy asks, “so, what do we do now?” Eddie suggests, “well, we can just let Mr. Crum make a fool out of himself, like he usually does. He’s really good at that.” Kathy replies, “yeah. We’ll let him self destruct. You’re right. He’s really good at it.”

Mr. Crum and Mr. Shapiro enter Mr. Crum’s office again, this time bringing Mr. Malik with them. Mr. Malik is at a loss to understand why he was called to Mr. Crum’s office. Mr. Zunde also walks in since two athletes are sitting in the principal’s office. Mr. Zunde stands by the bookcase, waiting to see what flavor of free entertainment is in store for him today.

Mr. Crum asks Mr. Malik, “can you please tell us what modifications were done to Kathy’s car?” Mr. Malik replies, “I can try, but Eddie can probably explain it better than I can. The modifications made to Kathy’s Porsche 914 were quite extensive.” Thinking that he has Eddie pinned down, Mr. Crum sits back in his chair, and replies, “I can’t wait to hear this.”

Mr. Crum tells Eddie, “okay, explain it to me, and cut the funny stuff.” Eddie begins his dissertation, telling Mr. Crum, “first of all, the engine is a six-cylinder fuel-injected 911 engine, and not a four-cylinder 914 engine. Second, the battery has been moved to the rear trunk of the vehicle.” Kathy interjects, “that’s so it won’t have an engine fire.” Eddie continues, “the suspension has been completely re-engineered. An active suspension was added to the front and rear. The stock wheels were replaced with alloy wheels.” Eddie thinks for a moment. Kathy tells Eddie, “oh, don’t forget the brakes.” Eddie continues, “oh yeah. The brakes are upgraded. The

brakes are Girling brakes, which are designed for racing cars.”

Mr. Crum asks, “anything else?” Kathy replies, “yeah, I added a compass to the dashboard, and sometimes I’ll hang one of my track medals from the rear view mirror.” Eddie adds, “yeah, that’s right. And, there are a few more things. If we put it up on the rack, I can show you.” Mr. Crum replies, “that won’t be necessary.” Kathy sarcastically mentions, “that’s because you wouldn’t know what you’re looking at anyway.” Mr. Crum warns Kathy, “I don’t need your sarcasm right now.” Kathy replies, “well, let’s put my car up on the rack then. Let’s see if you can show everyone where the hydraulic links are for the active suspension. Or, maybe we’ll start off with something easy, and see if you can find the battery.” Mr. Crum tells Kathy, “that’s enough out of you.” Kathy replies, “hey! I’m not the one that’s having a shit fit here.” Kathy has really had enough of Mr. Crum. She knows she can get away with whatever she says, so she’s going for it.

Mr. Malik interrupts, and asks Mr. Crum, “may I ask what is the point of this exercise?” Mr. Zunde comments, “I’d like to hear the answer to that too.” Mr. Crum tells Mr. Zunde, “Mr. Zunde, I suppose that you are here because there are two athletes sitting in my office. But, none of this concerns you.” Mr. Zunde informs Mr. Crum, “I’m quite sure that, when the dust clears, none of what is being discussed here concerns you either.” Mr. Crum exclaims, “Mr. Zunde, please let me get on with my meeting!” Trying out the tribe’s highly sarcastic innuendo, Mr. Zunde replies, “waiting.” Eddie and Kathy laugh, adding more fuel to the fire.

Mr. Crum tells Mr. Malik, “it is against school policy for a student to use the shop in the manner Eddie has.” Mr. Malik, who is quite puzzled, asks Mr. Crum, “what are you talking about?” Mr. Crum informs Mr. Malik, “Eddie is not allowed to use the auto shop to make modifications to Kathy’s car.” Mr. Malik informs Mr. Crum, “he didn’t. I fail to see what the big deal is here.” Mr. Crum asks, “what do

you mean by, 'he didn't?'" Mr. Malik tells Mr. Crum, "exactly that. He didn't. Eddie didn't make those modifications to her car in the shop. In fact, Eddie didn't make those modifications at all."

Mr. Crum tells Mr. Malik, "Eddie must have done something to that car!" But, how would Mr. Crum even know? He would not even take Kathy's challenge to find the battery. Eddie replies to Mr. Crum's accusation, announcing to everyone, "you're right, Mr. Crum! I did make modifications to Kathy's car in the auto shop. I removed the Holley carburetors, and I installed high performance azalea carburetors. I also put in stainless steel muffler bearings. The headlights were replaced with arc welder bulbs. And, I Freon cooled the ball joints and steering rack. You wouldn't want the ball joints and the rack and pinion steering to overheat, now would you? Oh, and I almost forgot. I put high performance air in the tires, which is a mixture of oxygen, carbon dioxide and nitrogen. And, that's just to start." Mr. Crum exclaims, "see! I finally got it out of him! Eddie did modify that car!"

Eddie does not stop there. He goes on, making an offer to his principal, "Mr. Crum, if you'd like, I might be able to move the dipstick in your car from your passenger compartment to the engine compartment." Mr. Crum replies, "no. The dipstick will remain in my passenger compartment!" Kathy, not missing a beat, remarks, "I guess that dipstick is going to be in the passenger compartment for a long, long time." Mr. Malik, who is trying not to laugh, tells Mr. Crum, "do you understand what Eddie just said?" Mr. Crum replies, "yes, I do. He admitted that he modified the car." Mr. Malik whispers to Mr. Crum, "he just laid out so much bullshit in front of you that you'll need a fire hose to wash it away."

Mr. Crum, not knowing what to do next, asks Mr. Malik, "then, explain to me what the issue is with Kathy's car?" Mr. Malik tells Mr. Crum, "I was curious and put it on the rack one day. The car is perfectly street legal. I understand that it was extensively modified by an

engineer from Georgia Tech. The guy must have been a genius. Quite frankly, the modifications that were made to the 914 are far beyond anything I can understand. You really should put it up on the rack and take a look at it. It is an engineering masterpiece.” Eddie adds, “Angelo was even amazed by the car.”

Mr. Crum tells Mr. Malik, “I just cannot have students driving racing cars to school.” Mr. Malik tells Mr. Crum, “it’s not a racing car. The Department of Motor Vehicles determines whether a car can be driven on the road or not. Private individuals, such as you or me, do not have the right to make that determination. Doing so may get you in legal trouble.” The term “legal trouble” is all Mr. Crum needed to hear to end today’s witch hunt. Mr. Crum tells Mr. Malik, “okay, you can return to your class. Thank you.” Mr. Crum just got his head handed to him again, this time by Mr. Malik.

Mr. Crum, not having any solid ground to stand on, tells Kathy and Eddie, “okay, you can go back to class now.” Kathy, who is really ticked off, sarcastically tells Mr. Crum, “really? It’s that simple? We can go back to our class. Oh, how nice of you. You call us out of class every week for this sort of bullshit! Your argument today was full of holes so big that a tractor-trailer could drive through them. Anyone can see that. You’re after me, Eddie, Paula, Braden, and anyone else you can find any little itty bitty problem with! Make no mistake about it! This time, I’m after you! Don’t you even think for a second that this is the end of this. The next time you even look at me, I’m going to have my father and his attorney shove barbed wire up your constipated ass! I’m just sick of your bullshit and your weekly shit shows already!”

As Kathy stands up getting ready to leave, Mr. Zunde laughs, and tells Kathy, “please advise me as to when that will happen. I would like to be there to see that myself.” Abruptly changing her tune and attitude, Kathy smiles, and tells Mr. Zunde, “gladly. I wouldn’t let you miss it for the world. And, we’ll make sure Mr. Frazier is there to see

it too. We can throw a party and get pizza afterwards.” Eddie also mentions, “we should invite Braden. Whenever an ass kicking comes down, he’s usually close by.” Kathy replies, “yeah! We can’t leave Braden out!”

Kathy takes Eddie’s hand, and storms out of Mr. Crum’s office. As they pass by, Mrs. Marlowe smiles and whispers to them, “Kathy two, Mr. Crum zero. Here are your passes for class.” They take their passes, and overhear Mr. Shapiro tell Mr. Crum, “I think she might be a little pissed off at you.” That was certainly the understatement of the day.

Kathy and Eddie leave the administration area, and take the long way back to class. Eddie mentions to Kathy, “shove barbed wire up his constipated ass? That was really funny.” Kathy tells Eddie, “well, he’s full of shit. It might do him some good.” Eddie tells her, “hopefully, we won’t hear from him for a while.” Kathy replies, “I’d better not hear from him. Actually, on second thought, I hope he suspends me. It’s still warm outside, and I have a pool to swim in.” Eddie mentions, “if he suspends you, he’ll suspend me too.” Kathy rethinks this and tells Eddie, “well, after the clothing thing, I don’t think he’s going to try to suspend us. That’s just too bad.” Eddie mentions, “never underestimate that idiot. He simply can’t be trusted.” Kathy replies, “hmm, your superpower.” They then head to their classes.

Years Later ... Meet Kurt Richter

Not everything that goes on at Angelo’s Service Station is bad news. One day, out of the blue, an unexpected guest decides to pull in and fill up his tank simply because he happened to be in the area. The patron yells out to Eddie, “hey, you work here now!” Eddie replies, “Kurt! How have you been?” Eddie yells over to Angelo, “hey, Angelo! This is Kurt Richter, the engineer who modified Kathy’s Porsche!”

When Eddie met Kurt last Spring, he told him about Angelo's Service Station. Kurt was in the area, saw the sign, and decided to stop by. Angelo stops what he is doing, and walks over to meet the Georgia Tech engineer that he's heard so much about over the years. Kurt, likewise, has heard a lot about Angelo, but they have never met.

Angelo tells Kurt, "wow! I've heard so much about you. It's nice to finally meet you! That was an impressive job you did on Kathy's Porsche." Kurt replies, "it's nice to meet you too. And yeah, that particular 914 was an interesting project. I was wondering what ever happened with that car." Angelo tells Kurt the story about Richie Dennison, and that the car never made it to the track. Kurt is surprised to hear that the Porsche 914 was never put into service to do what it was built to excel at.

Kurt mentions, "well, I was certainly glad to hear from Eddie that the 914 is back on the road again." Angelo then explains, "Eddie broke down the engine, and we found a valve got crushed. Eddie and Kathy fixed it. Kathy's now driving it every day." Kurt replies, "wow! A valve got crushed. They must have downshifted and overran the valve train." Angelo replies, "we thought that someone revved it past the redline²." Kurt replies, "that's not possible. That particular engine doesn't really have a redline." An engine that doesn't have a redline doesn't make much sense to Angelo and Eddie. Neither Angelo nor Eddie can just let Kurt's comment fly by without investigating the reason why.

Wanting to know what Kurt did to modify the engine, Angelo asks, "no redline? How did you manage to do that?" Kurt explains, "all the mechanicals are perfectly balanced. The weight difference of each piston is less than a half gram. The same thing with the valves. And, the valve springs and camshaft aren't stock. The cam is

² For the installed engine, the factory redline was originally 7,200 rpm.

balanced and has a much steeper profile than the original stock version. The crankshaft is balanced and has oversized bearings. And, the valve springs are a whole lot stronger and stiffer than the stock ones.”

Kurt, explaining when the engine reaches its limit, continues, “the engine gets to a point where it just won’t rev any faster. I suppose it might have a redline when the motor is not loaded but, on the road, you can safely take it to 10,000 rpm. I’ve taken it to 11,000 rpm once. But, on the road, you’ll find that, at the higher speeds, wind resistance becomes the issue.” Eddie replies, “wow,” and is at a loss for any more words. Eddie, however, does think back to when he was in Miss Amherst’s physics class and learned about wind resistance and drag.

Kurt continues, “since the valve train was no longer the limiting factor, I replaced the fuel injectors with a model that can deliver a little more fuel. That resulted in more torque, but no additional rpms. As a result, the acceleration improved. When I finished the engine, the distributor advance was seemingly the limiting factor of why the engine won’t rev higher. I could have solved that problem, but anything mechanical has its limits. So, it would have just led to another problem that would have to be solved. So, I just left it as is.”

Kurt further explains, “cooling the engine, though, was a real issue. If you look underneath, you’ll see two curved steel plate assemblies that direct air up into the engine compartment. The plates are both structural and functional. While you can run the engine at 10,000 rpm, you just can’t do it forever.” Eddie remarks, “that would explain all the gauges.” Kurt replies, “exactly. And, normally cylinders two and five will be running just a little hotter than the others. Those are the ones to watch.” Eddie, Angelo and Kurt talk a while longer about the modifications that were made to Kathy’s 914. Needless to say, Angelo and Eddie have a lot of interesting questions for Kurt.

Eddie inquires of Kurt, “when I tuned up the engine, I noticed it ran a little rougher than I expected. I had to adjust the timing slightly. Is there any reason for that?” Kurt smiles, and replies, “oh, yeah! Advance the timing three to four degrees beyond the factory specs, and set the idle to at least 1,200 rpm. You can then rev the engine to 10,000 rpm. When you hit about 6,000 rpm, the engine will really come alive. Below 6,000 rpm, there’s really not too much difference compared with a regular 911 engine, other than it’s a little noisier. That’s because of the steeper camshaft profile.”

As he is taking a few notes, Eddie comments, “we clocked it from zero to sixty right at 6.5 seconds. But, that was shifting at the redline on the tach. So, it will actually perform a lot better?” Eddie already knows the answer, but he wants to hear Kurt’s take. Kurt replies, “of course. If you tune it like I mentioned, it easily does zero to sixty in better than four and a half seconds. On the track, it was once clocked at 4.3 seconds from zero to sixty.” Eddie replies, “wow! Kathy will be glad to hear that.”

Eddie, Angelo, and Kurt talk a bit more about the Porsche 914 as Angelo shows Kurt around the shop. Kurt is impressed that, in addition to being a well equipped three-bay auto repair facility, Angelo also has an impressive in-house machine shop and welding facility. Most of all, Kurt is impressed that he has finally found two mechanics that understand and appreciate the engineering he does.

Before Kurt leaves, Eddie asks, “I remember you were working on a Dune Buggy. How is that project coming?” Kurt replies, “it’s finished. It handles like a charm. I must admit though, with the Porsche 911 engine, it’s a bit overpowered. But, that’s better than being underpowered.” Angelo asks, “you built a Dune Buggy with a 911 engine?” Kurt explains, “yes. The 911 drive train drops right into my frame design, and the 911 front suspension drops right in too. And, I designed it so the

Meyers Manx³ body fits perfectly.” And, it’s sort of street legal. Angelo asks, “how is it ‘sort of street legal?’” Kurt explains, “I found a wrecked Volkswagen Beetle. I took the VIN plate off of it, and replaced the entire car, piece by piece.” Angelo and Eddie laugh, understanding perfectly how Kurt managed to get the vehicle registered.

Eddie asks, “Kathy really wants a Dune Buggy. What’s the chance that I can get you to build a frame for me?” Kurt replies, “I can do that. But, you’ll need a 911 drive train, and it will also require a 911 front suspension. Is that what you were looking for?” Preferring a 911 engine over the comparatively anemic Volkswagen Beetle engine, Eddie replies, “sure. The drive train should be easy enough to find.” Kurt advises Eddie, “if you want to build it on my frame design, start looking for a wrecked 911.” Angelo informs Eddie, “there are two sitting over at Vinnie’s right now.”

Kurt then mentions, “you also might want to find a wrecked Volkswagen and get the VIN plate off of it.” Surprisingly, Angelo tells Eddie and Kurt, “I have a few VIN plates, along with the titles, from various vehicles that have disappeared over the years in the back. A few of them are Beetles.” Kurt tells Eddie the price for the frame, and Eddie agrees to having Kurt build not one, but three of them. Angelo, Eddie, and Kurt then exchange contact information, and have vowed to keep in touch.

Later that afternoon, when Kathy comes home, Eddie tells her, “hey! I have some good news about your Porsche.” Kathy replies, “oh really? What’s that?” Eddie explains, “Kurt Richter, the guy who modified your car, came by the shop today. He explained how the engine was extensively modified. If it’s tuned to his specs, the engine doesn’t have a redline.” Kathy asks, “okay, so what does this mean, Mr. Mechanic?” Eddie continues, “the engine will rev to over 10,000 rpm, and it will do zero

³ Meyers Manx: The most popular fiberglass Dune Buggy body of all time.

to sixty in less than four and a half seconds.” Eddie then asks, “well? Do you want to go and try it?” Suddenly getting excited, Kathy replies, “sure! Let’s go! We can make dinner later.”

Eddie also tells Kathy, “I have some other good news.” Kathy tells Eddie, “wow! You’re just a bundle of good news today.” Eddie explains, “I got Kurt to build us a Dune Buggy frame. But, it won’t have a Volkswagen engine. It will have a Porsche 911 engine, like your car has.” Kathy exclaims, “woo-hoo! My Dune Buggy is on its way!” Eddie tells Kathy, “Angelo tells me Vinnie has two wrecked 911s at his shop. I’m going to take a look at them tomorrow. And, I’ll have to order the body.” Eddie then asks Kathy, “do you still want yellow?” All excited that her Dune Buggy project is rolling, Kathy replies, “yeah! Yellow! That’s the ticket!” Kathy is very happy that her Dune Buggy is now on its way.

As he sets the timing and idle speed to what Kurt suggested, Eddie explains more about the engine modifications to Kathy. After a few minutes of making adjustments, Eddie tells Kathy, “okay, we’re ready. Let’s go!” Kathy replies, “wow! That was like really quick!”

Since it is her car, Kathy gets behind the wheel, and Eddie gets in the passenger’s seat. They get on the road and drive toward the high school. While in first gear, Kathy takes the engine past the redline, which is something she’s never done before. As Kathy is driving, Eddie listens to the engine carefully for any signs of imminent mechanical failure. Fortunately, he hears no such sounds. In fact, at 8,000 rpm, the engine sounds very smooth. At 10,000 rpm, the engine sounds like a plane that is ready to take off.

Now that the engine is warmed up, Eddie tells Kathy, “when we get to the stop sign, accelerate as fast as you can, but don’t shift at the redline. Let it keep going.” From a standstill, Kathy pops the clutch, and floors the accelerator. Just like Kurt said, when the engine hits 6,000 rpm, the acceleration suddenly improves. At 6,500

rpm, Eddie and Kathy get the impression that they got rear ended by a freight train. Kathy takes the engine close to 10,000 rpm and, when it sounds like it's not revving any faster, Eddie tells her, "okay, shift." Kathy shifts into second gear, and screams, "oh yeah! Awesome!"

They come to a red light at the school, where Kathy has to slow down. Kathy turns left onto the main four-lane road, again taking the car to 10,000 rpm. Kathy drives down the main road, taking the car to its limit in third gear. Quite impressed by the car's performance, Eddie is not quite believing what he just experienced. Eddie and Kathy now understand why Angelo called her Porsche a street-legal racing car.

Kathy pulls off the main road, and Eddie gets behind the wheel. Eddie drives away, with the pedal to the metal ignoring the redline on the tachometer. Sensing that the torque peak has expired just above 9,500 rpm, Eddie shifts into second gear. Second gear provides more excitement than first gear, taking the car to 60 miles per hour long before the engine is at its rev limit. Taking the car around the three-mile loop behind the high school, Eddie comments, "wow! This is exactly like what Kurt described." Kathy replies, "pretty cool, isn't it?" Eddie comments, "yeah. But, I get a really weird feeling just ignoring the redline."

After discovering the newly found features of her Porsche 914, Kathy asks Eddie, "hey, do you mind if I let my dad try it out?" Eddie replies, "no. Let's go and see if he's home." Eddie heads to Kathy's parent's house. Kathy is hoping that her dad is home from work. As they drive up, Kathy gets excited, seeing her dad's car in the driveway. Eddie parks Kathy's Porsche on the road, in the same place it was parked by Angelo when Kathy first got it.

Since she doesn't have her key, Kathy knocks on her parent's door. Her dad opens the door and, before he can say anything, Kathy tells him, "hey! This is really cool!"

You have to come and see my car! Follow me!” Kathy runs toward her car, as Eddie and Kathy’s dad try to keep up. Kathy’s dad asks Eddie, “what’s this all about?” Eddie replies, “we found out something new about the Porsche, and she couldn’t wait to show you.”

Kathy tells her dad, “okay. Get in! I got to show you this!” Knowing that Kathy will be gone for a few minutes, Eddie tells her, “I’ll go in the back yard and check the pool water.” Kathy drives to the four-lane road, which is less than a half mile away. Kathy’s father can clearly tell that Kathy is very excited about something.

Turning onto the main road, Kathy tells her dad, “okay. Watch this.” With an empty road in front of her, Kathy pops the clutch, and takes the car well past the redline. Shifting into second gear, it doesn’t take long for the car to reach 60 miles per hour, which is 4.4 seconds to be exact. Coming to an intersection, Kathy slows down, and turns onto a side street.

Kathy asks her dad, “so, what do you think?” Kathy’s father exclaims, “wow! I don’t even know where to begin!” Kathy asks her father, “do you want to give it a try?” Kathy’s father, who always wanted a Porsche 914, can’t resist the temptation. Kathy’s father gets behind the wheel, remembering when he and Kathy took their first drive in the car when she first got it.

Kathy energetically explains, “okay, so Eddie talked to Kurt, the guy who modified my car. And, so Kurt said the car really doesn’t have a redline, and it will do zero to sixty in like four and a half seconds. And, then Eddie tuned up the car the way Kurt said to. So, now when it gets to like 6,000 rpm, it’s like Braden kicked it in the rear end.” Kathy’s father comments, “yeah, I noticed that.”

Kathy’s father, being a bit apprehensive, takes the car onto the four-lane road. Like Kathy, Kathy’s father takes the 914 to sixty miles per hour in about four and a half seconds. Every bit as impressed as Kathy is with the car’s performance, he asks, “can we take it around the loop

behind the school?” Kathy replies, “yeah. That’s the road I drove on when I first got it.”

Taking the Porsche 914 on the curvy back roads, it quickly becomes evident to Kathy and her father what a gymkhana⁴ car really is. Not only does the car handle like a racing car, but accelerates like one too. Kathy’s father asks, “so, this car could perform like this all along?” Kathy replies, “yeah. But, we just didn’t know it until Eddie talked with Kurt.” Kathy’s father comments, “wow. This is definitely impressive.”

Eddie hears Kathy’s Porsche driving toward the house, so he walks with Kathy’s mom from the pool area to the front. Eddie greets Kathy, telling her, “there are no dead frogs!” Kathy replies, “one dead frog in a pool per lifetime is enough.”

Eddie asks Kathy’s father, “so, what did you think?” Kathy’s father replies, “I had no idea my daughter was driving around in a racing car when she was in high school. This car is seriously impressive.” Kathy’s father then asks her, “how much did you pay for your car again?” Kathy replies, “the final bill came to two hundred sixty seven dollars, and seventy-five cents. Oh, and plus whatever it cost to register it.”

Wanting to know the newly discovered details, Kathy’s father asks Eddie what they learned from Kurt. After Eddie’s explanation, Kathy’s father, needless to say, is more impressed with Kathy’s Porsche now than when she first got it.

While the men are talking, Kathy’s mother asks Kathy, “would you and Eddie like to stay for dinner?” Kathy replies, “I was hoping you’d ask that. I didn’t really feel like cooking anything tonight anyway.” If Kathy’s mother didn’t offer, Kathy and Eddie probably would have

⁴ Gymkhana Car: A car, usually heavily modified, intended for agility racing.

headed straight to the pizzeria. But tonight, the dinnertime conversation will revolve around Kathy's Porsche 914.