

Eddie, The Collegiate Freshman

A Plane Crash

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While they are waiting, Mark sees that McCutchen is eavesdropping on his conversation with Eddie. Mark whispers to Eddie, “hey, pretend to get into an argument with me. Say, ‘it’s in Italy.’” Following Mark’s instruction, Eddie exclaims, “it’s in Italy!” Mark replies, “it’s not in Italy!” Eddie replies, “yeah, it is! It’s in Italy!” Mark and Eddie exchange a few words for a minute or so, as McCutchen seems to be paying even more attention to the makeshift argument.

Mark announces, “maybe McCutchen will know.” Catching his attention, Mark asks McCutchen, “hey, are you smart?” McCutchen replies, “yeah!” Mark asks him, “if a plane crashes on the border of Italy and Switzerland, where do they bury the survivors?” Thinking about it, McCutchen replies, “they bury them in whatever country they were from.” Mark nods his head, and replies, “really?” McCutchen replies, “yeah.”

Overhearing the conversation, Kathy starts laughing, and blurts out, “they don’t bury survivors! I haven’t heard that one since like the third grade!” Mark has often compared McCutchen’s performance on the track to that of a middle school student. Today, Mark has reduced McCutchen’s cognitive abilities down to that of a third grader.