

Eddie, The Freshman Year

Chapter Six Spring Tryouts

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When Monday arrives, so do tryouts for the Spring sports teams. Mr. Frazier has assured the medalists from the indoor track team that they already have a place on the Spring team. That, however, will not afford them the luxury to be lazy. The Spring track season usually brings out many more students vying for a place on the team. Mr. Frazier has to weed through the pack quickly in order to trim the field down to the most competitive athletes.

At the end of the day, the locker room again becomes the most popular place on campus. Students are trying out for baseball, lacrosse, swimming, golf, and, of course, track and field. There is some unfounded belief that track and field is some sort of unskilled sport that just about anyone can do. Some of the students think that anybody can run, so many of them try out for the team. They will be in for quite a shock once they hit the track and find out what it really takes.

Mr. Zunde enters the locker room, and makes the announcement for those students who have missed the sign on the door telling the athletes where to report for each sport. Mr. Zunde announces, "if you are trying out for lacrosse, you will meet out on the lacrosse field. If you are trying out for baseball, you will meet in the main gym for a short meeting. If you are a swimmer, meet at the pool. If you are trying out for track and field, you will meet in the auxiliary gym for a short meeting. And finally, if you are trying out for golf, you are in the wrong place. You should have taken the bus that would have brought you to the golf course. Better luck next time." Mr. Zunde does not bother with students who cannot get to the proper location for their tryouts. He does not put up with bullshit from students using lines such as, "I didn't know," or, "no one told me." He just tells them, "welcome to the real world."

While the athletes are getting dressed, Kathy, Paula, and Barbara load up the Cushman¹ and bring the equipment out to the track. They set up the starting blocks and set up the high jump and pole vault equipment. Finally, they place both the sixteen and twelve pound shot-puts near the shot-put pad and the discus near the discus pad. They drive the Cushman back to the school making the second trip, bringing out the hammer, the javelins, the poles for the pole vault, and a few other items. They then head back to the school to join the meeting. After practice, they'll load the Cushman again, and return the equipment to the storage room.

As the track and field team hopefuls gather in the auxiliary gym, it appears that certain cliques begin to form. Eddie and his tribe are no different. They hang out together, joined by a few of the freshmen from last year's team. This time, however, it does appear that you can judge a person's speed from the appearance of their stationary body. Many of the students appear out of shape, and obviously will not make the team. Well, it is obvious to the well-conditioned athletes anyway. Braden, looking over the field of athletes, says to the tribe, "it looks like we got a lot of fat ass to kick today!" Eddie starts laughing, recalling what he and Kathy said last week about Braden using proper English.

Mr. Frazier walks into the gym, and tells everyone to get seated on the bleachers. As he is waiting for everyone to take a seat, he looks over the sign-up sheet. Kathy, Barbara, and Paula walk through the door, ready to go to work. With more than a hundred students trying out for track and field, you can bet there will be a lot of work to do. The large turnout this Spring is due to many students hearing of the success of the indoor track team at the State invitational meet. Those who have never run in a competitive environment before think that winning a medal is easy. They will be in for a big surprise.

Mr. Frazier opens by telling the students, "welcome to Spring track tryouts. We do not have a lot of time to get the team ready for the first meet." He then informs the students, "tryouts are today, and for the next two days." Mr. Frazier then gives the not so good news, announcing, "when you come to school tomorrow, check the roster posted on the window to the administration office. If your name is not on the list, you have been cut. Do not bother showing up tomorrow." As Mr. Zunde walks into the gym, Mr. Frazier, getting right down to business, tells the students, "if you are trying out for a field event, Mr. Zunde will take you out to the track right now. Please follow him."

¹ Cushman: (a corporation) A utility vehicle, larger than a golf cart, used to transport small items.

Mr. Frazier then tells the runners, “there are only two races that are run in Spring track. The two races are the 100-yard dash and the 440-yard dash.” Some of the athletes can be heard making comments, such as, “he’s crazy,” or, “what is he talking about?” Mr. Frazier continues, “the 220-yard dash is nothing more than a very long 100-yard dash. If you can run one, you can run the other. The 880-yard run, the mile, and any distance race is nothing more than a 440-yard dash. The last 440 yards is where the race is won or lost. There is only one difference between any of the distance races. That difference is how much of a warm-up you must perform before running the last 440 yards.” Mr. Frazier tells them, “the next time you see a track meet on TV, you will see exactly what I’m talking about.” Eddie looks at Mark, and mentions, “you know, that really makes a lot of sense.”

Mr. Frazier introduces his three team assistants to the team, saying, “these three women are my assistants. They will be working with you today.” He then issues a warning, “I want you to treat them with the same respect as you would treat me. If you don’t, you will be cut from the team.” Wasting no time, Mr. Frazier tells the students, “if you are a distance runner, including middle distance, you will be working with Barbara today. Please follow her out to the track right now.” Before Barbara leaves with the group, Mr. Frazier whispers to Barbara, “six minutes and fifteen seconds, and run a steady pace.”

As part of the gym empties out and follows Barbara, Mark says to Eddie, “wow! He’s getting right down to business today.” Eddie replies, “yeah. I guess he’s got to get rid of some of these guys.” Braden adds, “and, the faster the better.” Braden is now very confident in his abilities, and freely displays it. Mr. Frazier continues, “if you are a sprinter, please follow Kathy and Paula out to the track right now.” Mr. Frazier then leaves the gym with the sprinters, leaving a few people sitting on the bleachers who apparently have no idea for which event they showed up. They eventually get a clue, and follow the rest of the students out to the track.

Once the distance group is warmed up, Barbara, who has a distinct British accent, tells the group, “we are now going to run a mile for time.” She informs the candidates, “just for fun, today I will be running with you.” She then instructs the runners, “if you finish the mile before me, I want you to please move to the inside of the track and wait. If you finish after me, I want you to please move to the outside of the track.” Then she gives them some words of advice, telling them, “you must run the best race you can right now, today.”

She gets the runners positioned at the starting line, and tells them, “when I blow my whistle, we will start.” Barbara then announces, “get ready,” and two seconds later she blows her whistle. The field of runners leaves the starting line along with Barbara. The seasoned runners know

what they are doing, and pace themselves appropriately. Some of the novice runners begin sprinting as if they are running a 100-yard dash, and think they can keep up that pace for the entire mile.

Halfway through the mile, some of the runners are beginning to fall significantly behind. Mitchell and Davis are leading the pack at the halfway mark, with Davis slightly ahead. It's no secret that Mitchell will pass Davis during the last lap. Barbara, running with a stopwatch, plans to run exactly a 6:15 mile, running each 440-yard lap in about 94 seconds. Barbara, who is a junior, can run this time easily.

With one lap to go, Mitchell makes his move and passes Davis. Mitchell crosses the finish line first, with Davis right behind him. A few other runners cross the finish line after Davis. Barbara then crosses the finish line, exactly 6:15 after the race began. About twelve runners, who finished before Barbara, are waiting inside the track. Barbara then waves the other runners off the track to stand on the outside as they cross the finish line. When the last runner crosses, about thirty runners have accumulated on the outside of the track.

Mr. Frazier walks up to the thirty runners finishing after Barbara, and informs them, "Barbara ran a 6:15 mile, and you could not beat her?" Mr. Frazier informs this group, "if you can't run a sub-six minute mile, unfortunately you are not competitive enough for the team." Delivering the bad news, Mr. Frazier tells them, "unfortunately, I have to cut everyone in this group, so please head on back to the locker room. But, keep practicing and train hard, and try out again next year." This is Mr. Frazier's quick and easy way to eliminate noncompetitive runners who will not make the team. Barbara then records the names of the runners who ran the mile in less than 6:15, most of whom were on the track team over the Winter.

Kathy and Paula, working with the sprinters, arrange their own competition. Kathy calls out, "Eddie, Mark, Braden, and Johnson, please come up here and meet with Paula." While Kathy is addressing the other runners, Paula tells the group of four runners, "warm up. You have to show these guys how to run. We're going to have some fun today." The four medalists from the indoor season get ready for their debut performance in the 100-yard dash.

Announcing to the field of 40 or so runners, Kathy announces, "these four guys are going to run the 100-yard dash. This year, they will set the standard that you will be compared to. After they run, the rest of you will get your chance to show us what you can do!" One upperclassman is heard saying, "they're freshmen. They'll be easy to beat." Another upperclassman comments, "I guess they're starting the bar out pretty low this year." They will be in for a surprise.

Kathy, who is very observant, notices Eddie, Mark, Johnson, and Braden all carefully setting their blocks. Paula will be the Starter. Kathy and Mr. Frazier will be the Timekeepers. Kathy, moving to the finish line, tells the rest of the field, "follow me to the finish line." Kathy and Mr. Frazier want all of the runners to see the finish of the upcoming race. Kathy arrives at the finish line where Mr. Frazier is waiting for her. They both have two stopwatches, and will record the time of each runner. Mr. Frazier instructs Kathy, "I'll take first and third place, you take second and fourth place." Kathy replies, "second and fourth. Got it."

As the group of sprinters is moving to the starting line, Paula bumps her hip to Mark's and whispers to him, "hey. Do you want to go out with Eddie and Kathy and get pizza after practice?" Mark quickly replies, "yeah. That would be awesome." Paula's casual comment to Mark gets his energy level up, as the two have not been out together before. Eddie hears the comment, and sees Mark getting all fired up. Eddie, however, is not about to let Mark beat him, and gets fired up himself.

Paula, announcing to the runners, says, "on your marks." The runners get ready in their blocks, which appears easy to those watching from a distance. Paula announces, "set." When the runners are set, Paula fires the gun and the runners are out of the blocks. Eddie and Mark take a quick lead, with Braden and Johnson not far behind. The field of 50 or so onlookers watch the runners intently, many not believing what they are seeing. Halfway through the race, Eddie is ahead, with Mark slightly behind. Johnson and Braden are tied at the halfway mark. As the runners approach the finish line, Eddie crosses the finish line first, Mark second, Johnson third and Braden fourth.

Mr. Frazier and Kathy look at their stopwatches, and compare the times. Kathy says to Mr. Frazier, "wow! Is this for real or what?" Mr. Frazier tells her, "yeah, these are right. They fit the finishing distances between the runners, and they seem to correlate." Knowing Kathy's passion of wanting to be a gym teacher, Mr. Frazier tells her, "I'll let you tell them their times." Kathy replies, "really?" Mr. Frazier responds, "yeah! Go ahead, and have some fun."

Kathy then makes the announcement to the field, "Eddie, who came in first place, ran a 9.7. Mark, who came in second place, ran a 9.8. Johnson, in third place, ran a 10.1. And Braden, in fourth place, ran a 10.2." Eddie, Mark, Johnson, and Braden give each other high-fives. While Kathy breaks the news to the runners, Mr. Frazier reflects upon the times that were just delivered. He looks again at his stopwatch, in total amazement at what he just saw. Normally, he would be exclaiming the time to the runners. Today, however, he is at a loss for words, for it was freshmen that ran those times.

Mark leaves the group quickly, to share his time with Paula. Kathy, meanwhile, looks over at Eddie, with the biggest smile on her face that one could imagine. Eddie walks over to Kathy, who gives him a high-five, and exclaims, “awesome, winner!” Eddie asks her, “do you think I’ll make the team?” Kathy, with her quick sense of humor, replies, “I don’t know. These other guys haven’t run yet.” Eddie, with his unusual sense of humor, asks Kathy, “how about those slow guys that were behind me? Do they stand a chance?” Kathy jokingly replies, “it looks like they could use a little work.” Kathy and Eddie often surprise each other with their sense of humor, and they never miss a beat.

Mr. Frazier instructs the remaining runners, “form groups of four, and you will all be running the 100-yard dash for time.” Some students can be heard commenting about the times of the first group. Mahoney, who will be running shortly, is having difficulty believing the times delivered by Eddie and his tribe. Last year, Mahoney’s best time was a 10.4, which he could run fairly consistently, but never able to beat.

As the runners are forming their groups, Mahoney mentions to Bell, “I wonder if those times were real.” Bell, responding authoritatively, tells Mahoney, “you know that Mr. Frazier doesn’t make up times.” Mahoney agrees, replying, “yeah, you’re right. He doesn’t.” Mahoney, now thinking to himself, whispers under his breath, “not this shit all over again.”

The students run in groups of four, as Mr. Frazier and Kathy record their times. As Mahoney’s heat comes up, one upperclassman is heard saying, “here it comes. He’s going to beat those four guys.” Another upperclassman responds to him, “yeah. No one beat Mahoney last year.” As Paula instructs the runners to get ready, all eyes are on this race. Running in this heat is Mahoney, Darryl Bell, Louis Zaino, and a wrestler, Mack Clark. Clark was not on the indoor track team because it conflicts with the wrestling season.

Once the runners are ready, Paula tells them, “on your marks.” She then announces, “set.” The gun goes off, and the runners are out of the blocks. After ten yards, all the runners are at their top speed. Mahoney is clearly the leader, with Bell slightly behind. Halfway through the race, Bell has not lost any ground to Mahoney, which is surprising. Zaino and Clark are somewhat falling behind, but the 100-yard dash is not their primary race. At the finish, it is Mahoney taking first place, with Bell right behind, taking second place. They are followed by Zaino, and then Clark, who were not too far behind.

Mr. Frazier did not appear too happy after this heat. He and Kathy record the runner’s times, which were not as good as expected. Mr. Frazier makes the announcement, “Mahoney, 10.7 seconds. Bell, 10.8 seconds. Zaino, 11.0 seconds. And Clark, 11.1 seconds.” Mr. Frazier

then exclaims, “all four of you ran better times last year!” Making another comment that pierces the heart of the runners in that heat, Mr. Frazier informs them, “and there’s a guy in middle school named Jimmy Hoffer that can beat three of those times!” Hoffer, who will join the team next year, ran a 100-yard dash in less than 11.0 seconds when he was in the seventh grade.

After Mr. Frazier examines the times, he tells the field of sprinters to prepare to run a 440-yard dash. Braden, who lost his heat in the 100-yard dash, is exclaiming, “now, it’s my turn to kick ass! This is my race, and ain’t no one gonna beat me!” He then questions the crowd, “who want’s their ass kicked first? Come on! Step up! Who’s first?” Braden, even though he came in fourth place in his 100-yard dash heat, still had the fourth best time of the day, which was not a bad time at all.

Quite impressed with Braden’s energy, Mr. Frazier smiles, and tells Braden, “you will be kicking the ass of your 4 by 440 relay team, and I’m throwing in O’Brien.” Jimmy O’Brien, who did not make the indoor track team, decided to try out for Spring track. Thinking about it a little further, Mr. Frazier adds, “and, Mahoney! You’re running in this heat too!” Mr. Frazier tells Braden and the rest to get ready to run. Mr. Frazier knows that Eddie, Mark, Braden, and Johnson always run better when they run together. Throwing in O’Brien is just adding more fuel to Braden’s fire. Throwing in Mahoney adds even more fuel to Mark’s and Eddie’s fire. Mr. Frazier is not stupid, and he knows this.

Jimmy O’Brien’s father, who is a social studies teacher, is present today at the tryouts. Mr. O’Brien wanted to make sure Jimmy didn’t get a raw deal, so he decided to come and watch the tryouts. Jimmy O’Brien will get his fair chance today. But, oddly, Mr. O’Brien has a tendency to be harder in the classroom on the athletes than the other students. Mr. Frazier completely ignores Mr. O’Brien, primarily because any conversation with him will go nowhere.

As the runners prepare to run, Mr. Frazier tells the field, “on your marks.” He waits about fifteen seconds for Jimmy to get himself ready. Making sure that Kathy and Paula have not fallen asleep as they are waiting for O’Brien, Mr. Frazier makes sure they are ready to start their stopwatches. The girls signal to Mr. Frazier that they are ready. Mr. Frazier finally announces, “set.” The gun sounds, and the runners are off. The first 100 yards are run by the tribe as if that was the total distance in the race. Mark, Braden, and Eddie are in the lead, in that order. Johnson, in fifth place, is on the heels of Mahoney, but will not be there for long. As for Jimmy O’Brien, well, at least he got out of the starting blocks.

At the halfway mark, Braden takes the lead, with Mark right behind him. Mark remembers what Eddie told him about drafting during their

ride to the beach earlier this year. Also, at the halfway mark, Johnson makes a move and passes Mahoney. Johnson, whose strength is at the end of the race, is catching up to the leaders.

Three quarters the way around the track, Braden is ahead, with Eddie and Mark tied for second place following Braden very closely. Johnson is now right behind them, narrowing the gap. Braden glances to his left, and sees O'Brien has barely made it past the 110-yard point. Eddie takes a slight lead over Mark as they approach the finish line. This is Braden's race, and he is not about to let anyone else beat him. Braden sprints to the finish, with Eddie right on his heels.

Braden crosses the finish line first, followed by Eddie. Mark finishes in third place, right behind Eddie. Johnson finishes two or three steps behind Mark. Mahoney, disappointed with his own performance, finally crosses the finish line eight seconds later.

While everyone is paying close attention to the finish, Mark points out Braden to Eddie, and exclaims, "look! What's he doing?" Braden never stopped running at the end of the race. Braden is taking a second lap around the 440-yard track and has not slowed his pace. Eddie, still recovering from his run, exclaims to Mark, "he's trying to catch O'Brien again!" Mr. Frazier finally sees what is happening, and starts laughing uncontrollably out loud. Mr. Frazier exclaims, "there goes Braden! He's going to kick ass twice in one race!"

Mr. Frazier looks across the track at Paula and Barbara and yells out to them, "does anybody got him on the clock?" Barbara, who is timing O'Brien, screams back, "I got it!" Mr. Frazier yells back to Barbara, "forget O'Brien! Catch Braden's time!"

Everyone turns to watch Braden as he is gaining on O'Brien. Braden is halfway around the track when O'Brien is three-quarters the way to the finish line. The last half of the race is usually O'Brien's weakest. He tends to flail and jog, which he is doing as expected. In the last 100 yards, Braden is gaining on O'Brien at an enormous rate. With 50 yards left to go, O'Brien is slowing down to a fast jog, and Braden is speeding up, passing O'Brien. Braden slows his pace just a bit, since his mission has been accomplished. Braden crosses the finish line a second time. Crossing the finish line a few seconds later is O'Brien, naively thinking he almost beat Braden.

While Braden is walking down the track to recover, Mr. Frazier, Kathy, and Barbara record the quarter mile times. Mr. Frazier, who clocked Braden's quarter mile, asks Barbara, "what did you clock his half mile at?" Barbara replies, "two sixteen." Mr. Frazier exclaims, "a 2:16 half mile, that

was a 2:16 half mile! That's the new standard! Can anyone believe it?" Braden, finally cooled down, returns to the finish line.

After Braden's run, many of the students standing around have lost any sense of confidence they have in their own abilities. Mahoney is amongst them. Braden not only beat Mahoney in the 440-yard dash, but just shattered Mahoney's best half-mile time as well. When Braden is told his times, he exclaims, "I said I was gonna kick ass, and I did!" Braden, all fired up, points to O'Brien, and exclaims, "twice! I kicked your ass twice in one race! Put some ice on your ass, junior." Eddie, Mark, and Johnson all have a good laugh listening to Braden. To them, watching Braden rant and rave is free entertainment.

Mr. Frazier then tells the remaining sprinters to form groups of six. As they get ready to run, Eddie and his tribe walk off to the side of the track, and sit on the bench. Their work is done for today. Wendy, who was watching with a few others from the bleachers, comes down to meet Braden.

Joining the group, Wendy tells Braden, "you looked pretty good out there today." Braden tells Wendy, "yeah! I won the 440 and the half mile, all in one race!" Mark, humorously says, "we let him win every once in a while." Eddie, joining in the humor, adds, "today was Braden's day to win anyway." Even Johnson, who is a little on the quiet side, says, "we didn't want to make him look too bad today." Braden, taking all this in, laughs along with them, has the final words, "yeah, right! I'm just getting warmed up!"

Bobby B. and Mitchell come over to join the group and the conversation. Bobby B., the shot doc, has some good news, telling the group, "I'm in. I made it!" Johnson asks Bobby B., "in what? The shot-put or the high jump?" Bobby B. replies, "neither. I made the 100-yard dash. I'm taking over!" Johnson replies, "yeah! I heard you run the 100-yard dash in the ten range. Ten minutes, that is." Bobby B., returning the humor, tells Johnson, "yeah, well the rumor is that you can throw the shot-put around 60 or 70. That would be 60 or 70 inches, with the wind behind you." After a hard day's work, they all have a good laugh together.

Mitchell tells Braden, "I saw your 440 and half mile. That looked really awesome!" Braden says, "yeah, I know! I even kicked Mahoney's ass too!" Mitchell, the honor roll student, points out, "you do realize you just signed up for the half mile, don't you?" Braden responds, "dang! Dang! I hate that race! Dang! What's the matter with me? What did I have to go and do that for?" After Mitchell's statement, it became obvious to everyone that Braden, in fact, may now be running the half mile. The group hangs out until tryouts are over, then everyone heads to the locker room.

Eddie, Kathy, Mark, and Paula meet after practice and walk to the pizzeria. Kathy takes Eddie's hand, which quickly prompts Paula to take Mark's hand. On the way, they talk about today's tryout session. Kathy tells everyone, "Mr. Frazier cut half the students today." Paula adds, "yeah. And, that was interesting how he cut the distance guys." Paula was not a team assistant last year, so everything is new to her. Mark mentions, "what was cool is that Barbara ran the mile in exactly the time Mr. Frazier told her to." Kathy informs Mark, "Mr. Frazier tells her how fast to run the mile, and she does, right down to the second. Last year he told her how fast to run each lap, and she hit it spot on."

As they sit for a moment and decide what they want to eat, Kathy tells everyone, "only me and Paula get to eat. You guys are in training. You don't get to order pizza." Eddie starts laughing, and responds, "okay, you order it then, and I'll just eat it." Mark and Paula join in laughing. Joe, seeing the laughter from behind the counter, yells out to them, "I tell you! If I charged by the smile, I could retire when you guys come in."

Eddie and Mark go up to the counter and place their group's order, and return to the table with the drinks. Eddie tells Kathy and Paula, "we ordered two pizzas, one for each of you." Paula, not quite familiar with the guy's sense of humor yet, replies, "we can't eat a whole pizza!" Mark chimes in and says, "well, I guess we'll have to help then." Eddie tells Mark, "but, we're in training. They said we can't have pizza." It's quite amazing how the four friends can have such a good time joking about something so simple.

After dinner, the group heads in the direction of the school. Halfway back to the school, Kathy tells the group, "well, here's my exit." Mark, who lives back in the other direction, thinks to himself that he doesn't even know where Paula lives. Kathy tells Paula and Mark, "we've really enjoyed going out with you guys." Paula replies, "me too! It's really been fun. We have to do this more often." Paula is clearly hinting to Mark that she wants to go out with him more.

The girls give each other a hug, as the guys give each other a fist bump. Eddie and Kathy head to Kathy's house, as Mark and Paula turn around and walk in the direction of Paula's house. Kathy looks back at Paula and Mark, and says to Eddie, "hey, look! I think they really like each other!" Eddie, looking back at Mark and Paula, replies, "maybe we can all ride to the beach together someday." Kathy tells him, "yeah! That would be nice. Summer is right around the corner."

As they are almost to Kathy's house, they pass the side entrance to the elementary school, and Kathy takes a detour. Kathy starts running into the schoolyard and tells Eddie, "catch me!" Eddie starts chasing Kathy, as she starts running in circles. It takes the track star a little

longer to catch Kathy than he thought. Eddie can run in a straight line faster than anyone at school but, Kathy, running in circles, is really giving him a good run for his money.

After a minute or so, he finally catches up to her. Kathy turns to Eddie, and jumps up onto him, locking her legs around his hips and arms around his neck. Looking Eddie in his eyes, Kathy says to him, "Edward Bogenskaya, I love you!" Eddie, holding Kathy and seeing the joy in her eyes, tells her, "Katarina Karakova, I love you." They kiss each other passionately, both knowing, at that moment, something again has changed. Eddie slowly squats to the ground, with Kathy still on his lap. They kiss passionately, wanting their time together to go on forever.

Since tomorrow is a school day, the night comes to an early end. As they walk back to Kathy's house, she reassures Eddie, "don't worry. No emotional breakdown today." Eddie tells Kathy, "you seem extra happy today." Kathy replies, "well, Edward Bogenskaya, that's because I am!" Kathy then asks Eddie, "hey, after tryouts tomorrow, do you want to see my gym?" Eddie asks, "you have a gym?" Kathy answers, "I sure do!" She then prepares Eddie, telling him, "it's nothing like yours. It's totally different." Kathy then whispers to him, "you have to promise me one thing though." Eddie whispers back, "what's that?" She tells him, "you can't laugh. You got to promise me that you won't laugh." Eddie says to Kathy, "okay. I promise. But, now you really got me wondering." Kathy replies, "good! I hope you wonder all night, dream about it, and wonder all day tomorrow!" Eddie tells Kathy, "okay. Now you're torturing me."

The time comes when they have to say good night to each other again. They give each other a goodnight embrace, and Kathy goes inside. Eddie walks home, wondering on the way what kind of gym Kathy could possibly have. His mind, however, quickly wanders back to Kathy's words, "Edward Bogenskaya, I love you!"

The next day, Eddie is again sitting against the street lamp post waiting for Kathy. She is unusually late today, and Eddie begins to wonder where she is. Thinking that maybe he missed her, he stands up and walks up to the door. On his way up the walk, Kathy walks out of her house, and is all ready for school. They run to each other, and give each other a morning hug and kiss.

Eddie tells Kathy, "I thought I missed you." Kathy, still half asleep, replies to him, "I couldn't sleep, and I woke up late." Kathy tells Eddie, "I kept hearing you say, 'Katarina Karakova, I love you,' and I think I was up half the night." Eddie looks at Kathy again, and says to her again, "Katarina Karakova, I love you." Kathy melts into his arms, telling him, "oh, Eddie, I love you." The good morning hug turns into a very affectionate good morning kiss.

At school, Kathy and Eddie walk in late. They stop by the office to get a late pass, following school protocol. On the sign-in sheet for late students, there is a column heading "Reason for Tardiness". Eddie writes in, "tired from track practice". Kathy, seeing what Eddie wrote, uses a different excuse, writing, "took the long way home". The school secretary, Mrs. Marlowe, looks at the sign-in sheet, and looks at Kathy and Eddie. Mrs. Marlowe says to Kathy, "the long way home? Really?" Kathy explains to Mrs. Marlowe, "yeah. I got sidetracked and got home real late." Mrs. Marlowe just sighs, and hands them their late passes.

When they get into the school lobby, Eddie tells Kathy, "the long way home. That was a good one." Kathy smiles, and replies, "well, it looks like it worked." As they walk in front of the glass window to the administrative office, Eddie asks Kathy, "should I check to see if I got cut from the team?" Kathy, affectionately bumping her hip to Eddie's, tells him, "nah. You made it." Kathy then goes to her class, and Eddie to his.

Eddie walks into English class late. As he is walking to his seat, Miss Starr tells him, "Eddie, I'm glad you could join us today." Handing Miss Starr his late pass, Eddie responds, "track tryouts were yesterday," letting her fill in the blanks.

About twenty minutes later, Mark walks into the classroom, also quite late. Miss Starr says to Mark, "let me guess. Track tryouts?" Mark, looking over at his friends, responds, "yeah! That's it! Track tryouts." Miss Starr tells the class, "these guys can run 100 yards in 9.7 seconds, but do you think they can get to class on time?"

As the whole class starts laughing, Eddie asks Mark, "how did she know that?" Hearing everything that goes on in her classroom, Miss Starr catches Eddie's question to Mark. Miss Starr answers Eddie before Mark could, telling him, "I know because Axel told the whole class." She then adds, "at least three times!" Miss Starr also informs Mark and Eddie, "I also overheard Axel describe in vivid detail how he placed his foot in certain posterior anatomical locations of his opponents yesterday. Don't worry. I got the play by play." The students are now hysterical, which just about does it for class today. After a few minutes, the bell rings, and it's off to the next class.

Class change, however, is interrupted by the fire alarm going off. Walking down the hall, Eddie comments to the group, "I didn't know they have fire drills during class change." A bit on the observant side today, Braden replies, "that's because this ain't no fire drill. There's smoke down the hall where the science classrooms are. Maybe somebody blew something up in the chemistry lab." Seeing the smoke filling the hallway, Mark replies, "well, I guess today didn't go exactly as planned." Passing

by a door to the field, Eddie and the group are directed outside by one of the teachers along with the rest of the students.

With chaos out on the field, seeing Mr. Frazier standing with Johnson, Mitchell, and a few others, Eddie suggests, “let’s go over and see Mr. Frazier. Maybe he’ll know what’s going on.” Braden replies, “that’s a good idea. It sure beats standing around here.”

Walking up to Mr. Frazier, Eddie asks, “what’s going on?” Mr. Frazier replies, “I heard through the grapevine that someone’s locker got set on fire.” Braden replies, “that makes sense. There was a whole lot of smoke in the hall down by the science classrooms.” Mr. Frazier mentions, “some things never change. The same thing happened when I was a freshman in high school.”

Johnson comments, “well, this really sucks. It’s cutting into our gym class. Why couldn’t this happen before math class?” Braden laughs, and boasts to Johnson, “we’re getting out of science class. I was hoping somebody blew up our classroom!” Mr. Frazier tells Braden, “from the looks of things, you won’t be having science class today.” Bobby B., not quite the fan of Earth Science class, smiles.

Not too much later, Mr. Zunde walks up, announcing, “the fire is out. But, we’ll all be out here for a while until the smoke clears from the hallways.” Just then, a fire truck drives up followed by a news reporter from the local newspaper. Mark asks, “then, what’s the fire department doing here?” Mr. Zunde replies, “they’re here just to make sure the fire has been properly put out and to let us know when it’s safe to reenter the school.”

Mr. Zunde tells Mr. Frazier, “you’ll never guess who’s responsible for this.” Mr. Frazier replies, “I’m pretty sure it’s one of those clowns on the tobacco team.” Not keeping any secrets from the students, Mr. Zunde laughs, and replies, “that was a very good guess. It was Ronald Rex. Mr. Harrison caught him setting the fire, and then caught him bolting out of the school right after he pulled the fire alarm.”

Johnson asks, “who’s Ronald Rex?” Mr. Frazier replies, “Ronald Rex is the captain of the tobacco team. Today must have been one of his training exercises.” Mark interjects, “oh. One of those.” Mr. Zunde tells the group, “let’s just say that Ronald Rex and the rest of those nutcases will be lucky to graduate. That is, if they even make it out of high school alive.”

Confirming Mr. Zunde’s assessment, Mr. Frazier tells Mr. Zunde, “well, you got to give Rex some credit. He actually made it to school today.” Mr. Zunde instructs Mr. Frazier, “make sure that guy fails gym class.” Mr.

Frazier replies, “that shouldn’t be too hard to do. He hasn’t shown up to class all year.” Overhearing the conversation between Mr. Frazier and Mr. Zunde, Eddie and his buddies are beginning to understand the dynamics of their track coaches.

While they are standing outside, Johnson comments, “I can’t believe it’s still this cold out.” Mr. Frazier reassures Johnson, “it will warm up by this afternoon by tryouts. But, when the sun goes down, the temperature will drop pretty quickly.” Mr. Zunde then comments, “two years ago, we held Spring track tryouts in the arena because there was snow on the track.” Mr. Frazier replies, “I remember that. We almost had to have the first Spring meet on the indoor track.”

While they are waiting around, Braden asks Mr. Frazier, “what are we gonna do at tryouts today?” Mr. Frazier replies, “we’ll be running a few more sprints. And, I would see if you could run a mile in the time it takes Jimmy O’Brien to run 880 yards. But, I cut O’Brien. So, you’re off the hook for today.” Braden laughs, and exclaims, “I still can’t believe I did that! I kicked his flimsy little ass twice!”

An hour later, the signal is given that it is safe to reenter the school. Mr. Frazier tells Johnson, “I’m sorry you missed gym class. But, you’ll be better rested for track tryouts later.” Mr. Frazier then tells his star track athletes, “I’ll see you guys this afternoon.” Eddie replies, “I can’t wait.”

Once Mr. Frazier and Mr. Zunde are far enough away, Mark tells Eddie, “what you mean is you can’t wait to see Kathy again.” Eddie replies, “yeah. That’s part of it. But, look who barely made it to school today.” As they walk back into the school, Mark smiles, kind of liking being busted by Eddie.

The end of the day brings the second session of track tryouts. The students meet on the track, continuing where they left off yesterday. Instructing the remaining field of athletes who survived the first cut, Mr. Frazier announces, “there are two more days of tryouts, including today. If you are a field athlete, please follow Mr. Zunde over to the field events area now. Everyone else will meet with me.”

Surveying the field of the remaining track athletes as he is talking, Mr. Frazier yells out, “O’Brien, you were cut! Head to the locker room now!” Mr. Frazier then instructs the distance athletes, “if you are running distance, you will be working with Barbara again today.” He then instructs the sprinters, “and, the sprinters will be working with me, Kathy, and Paula.” Mr. Frazier already has a good idea who will make the team, and who will run each event. After today, the team members will be carved in stone. Tomorrow’s practice will be for fine tuning the events.

Mr. Frazier instructs the sprinters to take a seat on the bench. Today, Mr. Frazier will attempt to further identify the better sprinters, and begin to assign events. Several of the sprinters will be running the 100-yard dash again for time, Mahoney included. Calling the sprinters by name, Mr. Frazier places four in each group. He tells them to be ready to run when their group is called. He then calls the first group. The first group steps up to the blocks, and gets ready to run. Mahoney is in the first group, wanting to be the one to set today's standard. Following the 100-yard dash time trials, Mr. Frazier will move to the 220-yard dash.

Eddie, Mark, Braden, and Johnson, however, were not assigned to any group. Their times were already good enough to make the 100-yard dash. They all sit back for a while on the bleachers and watch the action. Eddie tells Mark, "from what I can see, Paula really likes you." Mark replies, "wow! Yeah! I'd say so." Eddie jokes with Mark, "so, she kept you up past your bedtime, didn't she?" Mark admits, "yeah, a little bit. Well, two hours." Eddie laughs, and gives Mark some advice, "just make it up in science class, and take a nap."

Braden chimes in, giving his own advice, "just take your nap after lunch." Eddie questions Braden, "so, that's where you've been at lunch?" Braden replies, "yeah. Now that the weather's nice, me and Wendy go to the back of the school, and sit and relax." Mark answers Braden, "yeah, right. I can see that. You sitting and relaxing. Especially when Wendy is around."

Wendy walks up to the bleachers where the guys are sitting and relaxing. Wendy, as she takes a seat next to Braden, asks, "why aren't you guys running?" Braden replies to Wendy, "Mr. Frazier is trying to make us fall asleep, just to make the next race fair." Wendy pokes Braden in his side, and asks, "no, why? Really!" Johnson, answering Wendy, tells her, "we're already in for this event. We'll be running in a few minutes." Mark, correcting Johnson, tells Wendy, "don't believe him. We all got cut from the team." Wendy says to the group, "geesh! Since you turned my question into a multiple choice question, I think I'll go with Johnson's answer." Wendy is easy to tease, easily falling for the guys joking around.

Mr. Frazier blows his whistle, announcing the beginning of the 220-yard dash time trials. Braden tells Wendy, "it looks like we have to go and check in." Wendy replies, "I'll be sitting here watching, and doing your homework for you." Eddie replies to Wendy and the guys, "well, that certainly explains a lot." Mark, also commenting, adds, "now we know where Braden gets all the time to sit and relax and do all those other things he won't tell us about." All Wendy could say is, "you guys!" The guys head to the track, and Wendy starts working on her and Braden's homework, which Mark will undoubtedly be copying tomorrow morning.

When they get down to the track, Mr. Frazier makes the announcement, "next up is the 220-yard dash." Mr. Frazier instructs the groups, "you will be running with the same group that you ran the 100-yard dash with." Eddie, Mark, Braden, and Johnson take a little time to warm up, since they have been sitting for a while. The group stretches, and runs a few short ten-yard sprints.

While they are warming up, Mr. Frazier calls for the first group that ran today to get ready. Mahoney, getting ready to run, starts babbling, imitating Braden, "I'm hot. Ain't no one kicking my ass today." Eddie quickly points Mahoney's feeble ranting out to Braden, telling him, "look, bro! You have some competition!" Mark says to Braden, "hey! He thinks he's you!" Mahoney continues his non energetic rant, telling everyone, "I'm doing the ass kicking today."

Braden has had enough. Braden jogs up to the starting line where Mahoney is getting ready. Repeatedly pointing to his chest, Braden yells out to Mahoney, "I'm the chief ass kicker here! You ain't kicking nobody's ass but your own!" Mahoney, again trying to imitate Braden, yells back, "no, I'm kicking." Mahoney is sharply interrupted by Braden, who shouts back, "oh no, you ain't! Not with that Mahoney baloney jive you ain't! You ain't kicking no one's ass! Your fat, flimsy little ass is gonna have my footprint on it for a month!" Mahoney, in a fit of rage, screams back to Braden, "who the hell do you think you are?" Braden, standing tall, responds, "I'm the one and only ass kicker around here! You got that, junior? Your job is to get your ass kicked, and my job is to kick it!"

While Mahoney and Braden are having their exchange, Mr. Frazier jogs over to the starting line to find out what is going on. During part of Braden's rant, Mr. Frazier had to turn around for a moment to conceal his laughter. When he arrives, Mr. Frazier instructs Braden and Mahoney, "okay, now. Everybody calm down." Pointing to Ambrosini, who is all ready to run, Mr. Frazier tells him, "sit out this heat. You'll run in the next one." Pointing to Braden, Mr. Frazier instructs him, "take his place." Mr. Frazier instructs the runners, "I want your best performance in this heat. Don't let me down." Mr. Frazier then jogs back to the finish line.

While Mr. Frazier is returning to the finish line, the ranting continues, albeit in a much subdued tone. Braden is energetic as is possible. Mahoney, on the other hand, has a look of fear on his face. Braden, ignoring Mahoney, says, "gonna kick his puny little ass to the moon." Mr. Frazier gives the signal to Paula, who announces, "on your marks." Braden makes his own announcement to Mahoney, saying, "here we go! My foot is gonna kick your puny little ass!" Paula announces, "set." The gun goes off, and the ass kicking of the day is underway.

Not surprisingly, Braden is out of the blocks first. Braden already has a two-step lead before Mahoney is even out of the blocks. Braden is running down the track like a jet engine. By 50 yards, it is a one-man race. Mahoney, giving it all he has, can't catch Braden. The gap between Braden and Mahoney, not surprisingly, is getting wider. At the halfway mark, there is absolutely no hope of Mahoney catching Braden. At the finish line, Mr. Frazier clicks his stopwatch as Braden crosses the line. Kathy catches the time of Mahoney on her stopwatch, and the runner in fourth place. After catching Braden's time, Mr. Frazier was looking so intently at his stopwatch, that he failed to catch the time of the third place runner.

Mr. Frazier examines his stopwatch, and is very impressed by Braden's performance. He checks with Kathy, who is recording the times. Mr. Frazier waits for Braden and Mahoney to recover before he announces the results of the race. Braden returns to the finish line, staring at Mahoney. Neither of them says anything. Nothing had to be said. The times Mr. Frazier has recorded on the stopwatches says it all.

Mr. Frazier then announces the times, "Braden, 24.7, and Mahoney, 30.7." Those times settle the dispute. Braden is the chief ass kicker, and Mahoney got his ass kicked. Mr. Frazier calls Barbara over, and tells her to work the 220-yard dash with Kathy. Mr. Frazier then goes on a short walk by himself, telling Barbara, "I'll be back in a few minutes."

As Mr. Frazier walks away, he thinks to himself, "how did I get so lucky to get all this talent in one year." He felt like he had to take a short break from the tryouts. Runners like Eddie, Mark, Braden, Johnson, and Mitchell come along once every five years. This year, he has five runners, and one shot-put star who will hopefully be with him for four years. Mr. Frazier also has been blessed with three team assistants, any of whom could easily coach the team in his absence. Mr. Frazier, feeling blessed, drops to his knees, looks to the sky, and exclaims, "thank you, Jesus!" He looks back at the track, watching the action from a distance.

Kathy, Paula, and Barbara continue managing the heats where Mr. Frazier left off. As Mr. Frazier walks back to the school, no one knows why. Someone is heard saying, "he's probably going back to get another stopwatch. He's been staring at his like it's broken or something."

Kathy blows her whistle, telling the second group to get ready, which is Eddie, Mark, and Johnson. She tells Ambrosini, who Mr. Frazier removed from the previous heat, to run in this one. He will take Braden's place, running against the tribe. Ambrosini is not happy with this decision, but that's the way the dice roll.

The tribe gets fired up, ready to crush Ambrosini's ego once again. While they are getting ready, Paula mentions to Mark, "that was like a free comedy show watching Braden and Mahoney get at each other." Mark replies to her, "yeah. I wonder who Mahoney's going to try to act like next." Paula comically suggests, "maybe Jimmy O'Brien." Mark starts laughing, delaying the heat for a minute or so. Paula starts laughing too, causing another slight delay.

Finally, the runners are ready to run, and Paula tells them, "on your marks," followed by, "set." She fires the gun, and the four runners are out of the blocks. Halfway through the race, Eddie is clearly leading. Mark is usually right up there with him, but not today. The comical exchange at the starting line threw Mark off a bit. Mark and Johnson are tied at the halfway point, with Ambrosini far behind. At the finish line, Eddie is the clear winner. Johnson and Mark finish in second and third place, respectively. Ambrosini finishes in last place, but delivers a better time than usual because of whom he was up against.

Mr. Frazier returns from his walk, just in time to hear the results of the race. After Kathy and Barbara record and announce the times, Kathy tells Eddie, "you ran a 24.9! That was great!" Eddie asks Kathy, "what did Braden run?" Kathy replies, "a 24.7, but he was more fired up than ever." Eddie tells Kathy, "wow! I wish I was in that race. I would have done better." Kathy reassures Eddie, "it doesn't matter. You're in." Eddie replies, "yeah. Well, I guess I wanted to kick Mahoney's ass too." Kathy laughs, and tells Eddie, "now you're sounding just like Braden!"

Kathy then whispers to Eddie, "do you want to know a secret?" Eddie says, "you love me?" Blushing at Eddie's unexpected comment, Kathy replies, "that ain't a secret anymore!" Eddie tells Kathy, "okay. Tell me." Telling Eddie the secret, Kathy whispers to him, "Mr. Frazier is going to let you, Mark, Braden, and Johnson choose your events, but he has you all down for the 4 by 440 relay. He mentioned that to me while you guys were sitting on the bench earlier." Eddie replies, "cool! I'll take the 100, and whatever else he has me in will be fine." Eddie, thinking for a moment, adds, "that would be good news to Braden. After yesterday's 440 that he turned into an 880, he thought he'd get stuck with running the half mile." Interrupting Kathy and Eddie's conversation, Barbara tells Kathy, "Paula's ready." Kathy then tells Eddie, "okay, it's back to work for me."

When tryouts are over, Mr. Frazier reminds everyone to check the final roster, which will be posted tomorrow. Mr. Frazier then calls a few hand-selected runners aside, also asking his team assistants to stay for a minute. Eddie, Mark, Braden, Johnson, and Mitchell were among the group asked to stay.

Mr. Frazier asks them, "is there any particular race you guys want to run?" Eddie, without hesitation, says, "the 100-yard dash." Mr. Frazier instructs Barbara, "write these down for me, please." Mark asks, "can I have the 220 or the 440?" Mr. Frazier replies, "you got it." Mitchell says, "I'll take the half mile and mile, if that's okay." Mr. Frazier tells Mitchell, "no problem. They're yours." As Mr. Frazier questions the group, Braden claims the 440-yard dash and the 220-yard dash, and Johnson claims the 220-yard dash and 100-yard dash. Mr. Frazier also asks a few other runners what events they would like to run.

Once the list has been compiled, Mr. Frazier tells them, "thank you for delivering a good performance. You guys are my core team this year." Mr. Frazier, almost forgetting, says, "oh, and the 4 by 440 relay, unless someone strongly objects, will be the same team as we had in indoor track." No one objects, and everyone heads to the locker room.

On the trip to the locker room, Eddie asks Kathy, "so, do I get to see your gym today?" Kathy replies, "oh, yeah! That's right!" All excited, she tells Eddie, "we're going to have fun!" Kathy's comment attracted a lot of attention from Mr. Frazier and the group of guys walking with them. Eddie does not know what to expect, but is looking forward to the workout. When they get back to the locker room, Kathy tells Eddie, "meet me by the front door."

Eddie comes out of the locker room, and walks to the school lobby. Exiting the school, he finds Kathy waiting for him. Kathy asks, "are you ready?" Eddie replies, "as ready as ever. I can't wait!" Kathy tells him, "you know, you're not going to be able to keep up with me." Eddie, showing a bit of confidence, replies, "yeah, I will." Kathy reassures him, "oh no, you won't. Ain't no way." Eddie then asks, "okay, then. What is this gym?" Kathy replies, "oh, you'll see." Eddie tells his sweetheart, "you're already making this workout fun."

When they arrive at Kathy's house, they go inside. Kathy tells Eddie, "okay, wait here. I'll be right back." Kathy runs downstairs to the den, and opens the door to the back yard. After Kathy moves her equipment into the back yard, she runs back upstairs to get Eddie. She takes Eddie downstairs, telling him, "close your eyes and don't peek." Kathy takes his hand, bringing him out into the back yard. Kathy tells Eddie, "stand here, and remember, no peeking." Eddie is now wondering what this gym could possibly be. He's been waiting all day to see Kathy's gym, and the time has finally come.

Taking her special workout hoop, which is heavy and silent, Kathy begins hooping. She tells him, "okay. Open your eyes, and remember, don't laugh!" When he opens his eyes, he sees Kathy hooping, in a way he's never seen before. As the hoop is spinning around her body, she

raises it up to her chest, then up to her neck, and back down again to her waist. Then, with the hoop rotating around her waist, she places one arm behind her back. As she makes a half turn on her feet, the hoop is now overhead, rotating around her wrist. She lowers her hand to her waist, and the hoop seems to have magically moved back to her waist again. She then does the same move with the other hand.

Eddie had no idea that what Kathy is doing with the hoop was even possible. Kathy says to Eddie, "this is my gym! There's one laying against the bush for you, over there." Eddie says to her, "wow! You are awesome at that!" Eddie gets the hoop, but right now he is more interested in watching Kathy as she is hooping. Kathy tells him, "go ahead, and give it a try!"

Eddie takes the hoop, and places it around his waist. He is able to get the hoop going around his waist, but right now his mind is stuck on watching Kathy. Kathy then does the ultimate, raising the hoop over her head, getting the hoop airborne. She moves quickly back under the hoop, catching it with her body. The hoop seems to have magically appeared rotating around her waist once again. In the blink of an eye, Kathy reverses the direction the hoop is spinning, and does the move again. While concentrating on watching Kathy, the hoop around Eddie's waist drops to the ground.

Kathy tells Eddie, "okay, throw me that hoop." Eddie asks, "how?" Kathy explains, "throw it over my head so I can catch it and make it spin." Eddie takes the hoop, and tosses it just over Kathy's head. Kathy takes a step back, and catches the hoop with her body, while she still has the other hoop going. Within a few seconds, both hoops are rotating around her waist. With one arm placed behind her back, she raises one hoop over her head, while the other hoop is rotating around her waist. She tells Eddie, "okay. Now, here's the hard part." She then reaches behind her back with the other arm, and raises the other hoop over her head. Eddie is totally amazed at what he is seeing. Kathy tells Eddie, "now, this is the really hard part." Kathy lowers one of her arms, with both hoops rotating overhead around her other arm. She lowers her other arm, and both hoops magically appear around her waist again.

Kathy stops hooping, and asks Eddie, "so, what do you think?" Eddie, at a loss for words, tells her, "that was awesome! It was so beautiful!" Eddie continues, "that is really artistic, like dance." Kathy tells him, "well, it kinda is like dance." Tossing Eddie a hoop, Kathy tells him, "lets hoop together." They start hooping, but this time Kathy keeps the hoop around her waist, not doing anything fancy. Eddie's hoop falls off a few times, but he quickly gets the hang of it.

Kathy tells Eddie, "I'm training for the Olympics in Hula Hoop." Somewhat puzzled and surprised, Eddie asks her, "they have Hula Hoop in the Olympics?" Kathy replies, "ha, ha! I got you! But no, unfortunately they don't!" Eddie laughs, as his hoop falls to the ground. Eddie picks up his hoop and starts hooping again. While he is hooping, he is moving backwards slowly. Kathy tells him, "you better not back up any more. You might fall into the pool." Eddie says, "yeah, I saw that. I thought the pool was your gym, not the hoop." Kathy tells him, "in the Summer it is. Sometimes I swim laps."

After a while, Kathy asks, "so, how do you like my gym?" Eddie replies, "I like it! And you're really good at this!" Kathy tells him, "I try." Eddie says to her, "no, that's not just try. That's first place, gold medal, Hula Hooping!" Letting her hoop drop to the ground, Kathy walks over to Eddie and puts her arms around his neck. She tells him, "I just wanted to show you what I'm good at." Eddie reassures Kathy, "you're good at a lot of things." Kathy replies, "yeah. But, you're really good at what you do. I just wanted you to see that I'm good at something too." Eddie hugs Kathy, telling her, "I'm really happy you showed me. You're not just good at it. You're awesome!"

After they are finished hooping, they sit on the grass and relax for a moment. Kathy then asks Eddie, "you're staying for dinner, right?" Eddie asks, "hmm. Do I have a choice?" Kathy replies, "nope. I'll call your mom and tell her I have taken you captive, and you won't be home until later." Kathy jumps up and runs inside to call Eddie's mom. Eddie follows her, wanting to hear this conversation.

Kathy goes upstairs to the kitchen and calls Eddie's mom. When she answers, Kathy says to her, "hi, this is Kathy." Eddie's mom asks Kathy how she is. Kathy replies to her, "I'm good, but I've taken Eddie captive. Can he please stay at my house for dinner or maybe go out for pizza?" Eddie, listening to this conversation, is laughing in the background. Eddie's mom agrees, so Eddie can stay for dinner. Kathy tells her, "he's kind of hungry. I made him Hula Hoop, and it wore him out." Eddie can hear his mother laughing on the other end of the phone. After another minute of conversation, Kathy then whispers, "okay, bye," and she hears Eddie's mother hang up the phone.

Eddie, unaware that his mother is no longer on the phone, hears Kathy say, "and, after dinner, we're going skinny dipping." This quickly gets Eddie's attention, prompting him to whisper to Kathy, "no, don't tell her that!" Kathy hands Eddie the phone, whispering to him, "she said it's still too cold outside to go skinny dipping. Here, you convince her that it's not." Eddie says, "hi," into the phone, quickly realizing that there is no one on the other end. Kathy exclaims, "ha, ha! I got you again! That's twice in one day!"

Eddie starts tickling Kathy, both quickly ending up on the floor. Rolling around on the floor, Kathy is clearly ahead in the tickling contest, probably because Eddie is allowing her to win. The contest abruptly comes to an end when Kathy embraces Eddie. Letting Eddie come up for air, Kathy tells him, "I won!" Eddie tells her, "I want a rematch!" Kathy whispers to Eddie, "that's what I like about you. You're light and airy." Eddie asks, "I am?" Kathy tells him, "yeah. Your energy is light and free. Nothing heavy can fly." Kathy whispers in his ear, "that's one of the reasons I love you." Eddie tells Kathy, "you're really like that too." Kathy replies, "yeah, and I'm going to stay that way." Dancing around the room, Kathy tells Eddie, "and I feel even lighter when I'm with you. Everything is like waves and stars." Eddie, seeing a side of Kathy he's not seen before, expresses to her what he said to her a while ago, "Katarina Karakova, I love you!" They embrace again, with Kathy listening for any hint of anyone coming home.

After Kathy and Eddie come back to this universe, Kathy asks, "so, do you want to eat here, or go out?" Eddie replies, "it doesn't matter. I'm starving. That Hula Hoop workout really wore me out." Kathy, making the executive decision, tells him, "okay, then. We're going out because dinner is not for another hour or two, and my mom's not even home yet." Eddie asks her, "okay, then. Where are you taking me?" Kathy tells him, "it's a surprise, and it's not pizza." They head out the door, and head in the direction of the pizzeria. The main street in the town has a lot of small restaurants, coffee shops, and delicatessens. Eddie will have to wait to see what Kathy has in mind.

On the way, Kathy asks Eddie, "so, what's your secret?" Eddie replies, "what do you mean?" Kathy tells him, "well, you know two of mine. I break down, and I Hula Hoop." Eddie tells Kathy, "you wouldn't believe me even if I told you." Kathy tells Eddie, "try me." Eddie tells her, "you'll think I'm crazy." Kathy tells Eddie, "I promise. I won't think you're crazy." Eddie, telling Kathy his secret, says to her, "I can go into the future." Kathy responds, "no! Really? Are you serious?" Eddie tells her, "I know it sounds crazy, but it's possible." Kathy tells Eddie, "okay. Show me." Eddie tells Kathy all about the portal, and where it is. Actually believing Eddie, Kathy wants to see it right after dinner. Kathy is not willing to let this wait until the weekend or next week.

Kathy takes Eddie to a Greek sandwich shop that is on the way to the pizzeria. They both order a Gyro and a side salad. Over dinner, Eddie tells Kathy all about the portal, and how he found it. He explains that the portal is the way that he gets his vitamins and brings them back. Kathy, surprisingly to Eddie, does not think he is crazy.

Also during dinner, Eddie asks Kathy, "what did you mean when you said, 'nothing heavy can fly'?" Kathy explains herself, "heavy energy, like

Mahoney. He's always mad and angry." Eddie says, "yeah, I've noticed that. Everyone stays away from him." Kathy further explains, "he's not a free spirit like you. That's why his times on the track are getting slower, and yours are getting faster." Eddie asks Kathy, "was he faster last year?" Kathy replies, "oh, yeah! No one knows what happened to him, but I do." Kathy continues, explaining, "look at Braden this afternoon. He's just being himself, and whooped Mahoney." Eddie quickly responds to that, saying, "yeah. I still wish I was in that race."

Kathy asks Eddie, "do you want to know another secret?" Eddie responds, "sure. Good things come in threes." Kathy thinks carefully how to word her answer, and tells Eddie, "this may not make too much sense, but I see things other people don't. I think it had something to do with a blue stone that I once had." She then gives Eddie an example, revealing, "like when I first saw you, I somehow knew you were different."

The check arrives, and Kathy leaves the money on the table. Kathy abruptly tells Eddie, "okay, more about my superpower later. And, don't let me forget. Take me to the future!" Eddie and Kathy get up and walk out of the restaurant so fast that the person sitting next to them thought they had an emergency. After dinner, they walk back to Kathy's house as fast as they can to get Kathy's bicycle. From there, Kathy rides to Eddie's house as Eddie runs beside her. When they get to Eddie's house, he gets his bicycle, and they ride off to the portal.

Eddie and Kathy ride down the road, and make a left at Angelo's Service Station. Eddie glances over at his future MGB, making sure it is safe, which it is. They ride past Mark's house, and take the paved path along the parkway. Eddie is quite surprised at how well Kathy can keep up with him. Eddie yells out to Kathy, "we're almost there." Eddie slows his pace and, right before the portal, he gets off his bicycle. Pointing to the three boulders, he tells Kathy, "there it is, right up there."

Eddie and Kathy walk up to the portal, and Eddie tells her, "here it is, right here, between the rocks." Kathy asks, "how does it work?" Eddie explains to her, "you raise your right hand, and say when you want it to be, and you immediately get there." Eddie then asks, "when do you want to go to? Ten, twenty, thirty years from now?" Kathy replies, "lets try twenty-five years." Eddie asks, "how about in the Summer?" Kathy tells him, "well, maybe late Spring. I'm not dressed for Summer."

Eddie tells Kathy, "okay, hold my hand," as he holds Kathy's hand with his left hand. Eddie raises his right hand, saying, "May, twenty-five years from now, in the afternoon." In a moment, Kathy asks, "are we there?" Looking around Eddie responds, "yeah. It got a little cooler, and the clouds are all gone." Kathy looks around and, seeing the difference, asks,

“okay! Where are we going to go?” Eddie replies, “the beach, the school, or maybe the park. Wherever you want.” Kathy exclaims, “beach!”

Eddie explains to Kathy, “if we stay here for four hours, when we get back, it will be the same time as when we left.” Kathy asks, “how do we get back?” Eddie tells her, “we just walk back into the portal again, and we’re back to the time we came from.” Kathy, who is not the least bit stressed or apprehensive, asks, “how far is the beach?” Eddie replies, “eleven miles. Well, eleven miles from my house. It’s about seven or eight miles from here.” Kathy tells him, “cake! Let’s go.” All excited, Kathy and Eddie head in the direction of the beach, making good time.

When they arrive, the beach is definitely open for business. Eddie and Kathy ride to the parking lot that has the concession stand and the pool. Arriving at the bicycle rack, they lock their bicycles. Finally, they have time alone together. Kathy jumps up onto Eddie’s hips and gives him a hug. Kathy tells him, “we made it!” While they are walking toward the water, Kathy then asks, “okay, now what?” Eddie suggests, “let’s take a walk along the shore.”

On the way to the water, Kathy stops abruptly, and sits on the sand. Eddie sits with her, waits a bit, then asks, “are you okay?” Kathy replies, “no! Listen to that song.” A couple sitting right near where Kathy sat is playing the song *The Power of Love*, by Céline Dion. Kathy, with a tear rolling down her cheek, tells Eddie, “that song! It’s so beautiful.” They listen to the song together, holding each other as they watch the waves crash onto the beach.

When the song is over, Kathy tells Eddie, “I’ve got to have that song. It’s so beautiful!” Eddie tells her, “we’ll find a way to get it for you.” Before they continue walking to the water, Kathy asks the couple playing the song, “do you know what that song was that just played?” The girl responds, “that was by Céline Dion. The name of the song is *The Power of Love*.” Kathy responds, graciously telling her, “thank you. Thank you so much.” She then asks Eddie, “help me remember that, ‘Céline Dion, *The Power of Love*,’ okay?”

Overhearing Kathy and Eddie’s conversation, the girl asks Kathy, “do you want me to play it again for you?” Kathy asks, “can you?” The girl answers, “sure. No problem.” The girl pushes a few buttons on her iPhone, and the song plays again through her wireless speakers. The girl’s technology is totally foreign to Kathy and Eddie. This time they slow dance to the song, as the girl who played the song tells her boyfriend, “they are so sweet. Look at them.” After the song is over, Kathy thanks the girl one more time for playing the song again. They walk to the water, and keep repeating to each other, “Céline Dion, *The Power of Love*.”

When they get to the water, Eddie asks Kathy, “so tell me about this superpower you have.” Kathy replies, “oh, yeah. That’s another one of my secrets.” Eddie responds, “the more I find out about you, the more I love you, Katarina Karakova.” Stopping on the beach, Kathy gives Eddie a hug and a kiss, telling him, “wow! Our first kiss on the beach!” Getting back to Eddie’s question, Kathy tells him, “somehow, and I don’t know how, when someone doesn’t tell me the truth, I know.” Kathy turns to Eddie, and continues, telling him, “that, my dear, is how I know you are truly someone special.”

Bringing up the flip side of her superpower, Kathy tells Eddie, “and that is how I know Mahoney is full of shit, excuse my French.” Eddie, curious about what Kathy is telling him, replies, “tell me more. Keep going.” Kathy goes on, explaining, “if someone is truthful, their energy is light and airy. If they are living a lie, their energy is heavy. That’s what I meant when I said ‘nothing heavy can fly’ while we were eating tonight.” Whispering to Eddie, Kathy tells him, “when you said you can go into the future, I believed you.” Planting both feet into the sand, and placing her hands on her waist, Kathy tells Eddie, “so then, detecting bullshit! That’s my superpower!” A moment later, Kathy gives Eddie a hug, and whispers to him, “but really, my superpower is I can read people really well.”

Kathy and Eddie take a walk farther down the beach, with Kathy secretly hoping she hears that song again. Kathy asks him, “do you remember the name of the song?” Eddie replies, “Céline Dion, *The Power of Love*.” Kathy tells him again, “I really got to have that song!” Eddie reassures Kathy, “we’ll get it somehow.”

On their walk, Eddie mentions, “this place still really looks about the same.” Kathy replies, “yeah. Ocean and sand. Beaches haven’t changed much over the last few thousand years.” After hearing Kathy’s answer, Eddie tells her, “okay. I’m going to tickle you again.” Kathy then runs in circles in the sand, with Eddie chasing her. Abruptly turning around, she runs to Eddie and jumps onto his hips, holding him around his neck. Kathy kisses Eddie, distracting him from any tickling he had planned. Kathy then whispers to him, “the power of love.”

The afternoon on the beach comes to an end as the sun begins to set. Kathy asks Eddie, “can we please, please, please stay for the sunset?” Eddie replies, “sure. I’d like that.” They find a place on the beach with a good view. Kathy asks, “so, when we get back, it will be the same time we left?” Eddie replies, “yeah. It’s weird. I don’t understand it. But, that’s what happens.” Looking at her arms, Kathy asks, “does my suntan come back with me too?” Eddie, somewhat puzzled, answers, “you know, I don’t know.” While Kathy sits on Eddie’s lap, they have a wonderful conversation as they wait for the sun to set.

With the beach nearly deserted, the sun begins to set. Kathy whispers to Eddie, "I haven't seen a sunset like this for years." Eddie confesses, "me either." Kathy whispers in his ear, "this is the best sunset ever, because I'm here with you." While the sun is setting, Eddie and Kathy hold each other, never expecting a day of track tryouts to end like this.

Once the sun has set, they both know they have to make the trip back. They get up and walk back to the bicycle rack where they locked their bicycles earlier. Eddie asks Kathy, "so are you up to riding eleven miles?" Kathy thinks for a moment, and replies, "no. Carry me." Eddie picks up Kathy, and carries her back to their bicycles.

On the way, Eddie, with a sense of humor much like Kathy's, asks her, "I ran all day, and now I have to carry you?" Thinking for a moment, Kathy tells Eddie, "if I remember correctly, you ran, let's think about this, a grand total of what, 220 yards?" Laughing so hard, Eddie has to put Kathy back on her feet. Eddie replies, "yeah, I guess so, 220 yards." Returning to the bicycle rack, they unlock their bicycles, and make the eleven-mile trip home.

Because it is dark out, Eddie has a little trouble finding the exact location of the portal. Kathy tells him, "oh good! We're stuck here forever together!" Eventually, when they find the portal, Kathy asks, "okay. So, now how do we get back again?" Eddie tells her, "we just walk back through it." They walk through the portal again, holding hands. While they are walking through, it immediately becomes daytime again.

Kathy gives Eddie a high-five, screaming out, "awesome! We had a vacation together!" Kathy, looking at her watch, tells Eddie, "and, take a look at that. It's the same time when we left!" Eddie thinks for a moment, and says to Kathy, "wow! That means we can leave for days and come back, and no one will ever notice." Kathy and Eddie then begin the short trip back to Kathy's house.

When they arrive at Kathy's house, Kathy sighs, telling Eddie, "well, I guess it's back to reality, homework, and that sort of thing." Eddie replies, "yeah, and tomorrow we have another day of tryouts." Kathy reminds him, "tomorrow it's just going to be relay drills and, by now, Mr. Frazier has the team picked." Eddie replies, "that should be easy, if it's anything like Winter track." Kathy reassures him, "yeah, it'll be cake." Kathy and Eddie sit on the lawn and talk for a while longer.

When it comes time for Eddie to head home, Kathy puts her head on Eddie's shoulder, and tells him, "I don't want you to go." Eddie holds Kathy tightly, and whispers to her, "we can go to the beach again on Saturday." Thinking for a moment, Kathy replies, "yeah, or the pool. But, next time, I'm bringing my swimsuit." Kathy then remembers, "oh, yeah.

And we got to get that song.” Eddie replies, “yeah. Céline Dion, *The Power of Love*.” Eddie and Kathy kiss goodnight, knowing that, after today, nothing will ever be the same again.

The next morning, Eddie is waiting for Kathy so they can walk to school together. Walking out of her house, Kathy sees Eddie waiting by the sidewalk. Kathy tells Eddie, “I’m really tired this morning. Carry me.” Eddie replies, telling Kathy, “well, we did have a 30-hour day yesterday.” In an ah ha moment, Kathy tells Eddie, “yeah! You’re right!” Kathy concludes, “well, we should have just slept on the beach and came back in the morning.” When they arrive at school, Kathy tells Eddie, “see you at practice, maybe before.” They kiss each other in the school lobby, and head to their classes. Anyone not knowing that Kathy and Eddie are together no longer has any doubt.

At the end of the day, the last session of tryouts begins. The team members have already been determined, and today the relay teams will be decided. With the team meeting at the track, Mr. Frazier discusses today’s agenda. He begins by telling the group, “today, we are going to be running relay drills. While you will not be on the clock, your handoff will be done at full speed. Kathy and I will be right here in the middle, at the transition zone. We will be watching your handoff, and recording how well you do. For this drill, we will be running three batons today.” Pointing to one end of the 220-yard straight track used for sprinting, Mr. Frazier tells the group, “Barbara will be at that end.” Pointing to the other end of the straight track, Mr. Frazier tells them, “and Paula will be at that end. Barbara and Paula will tell you what to do.” Mr. Frazier then makes an announcement to the team as to which runners will be at each end, and which three runners will initially remain at the transition zone.

Today, Mr. Frazier brings several hand-held two-way radios to the practice session. Since the venue is larger than the indoor arena, he often uses the radios during the Spring track season to communicate with his assistants. Giving one to Paula and another to Barbara, he will use the radios to coordinate matching up certain runners on the handoff. Mr. Frazier and Kathy will be seated close to the transition zone, where they can watch the handoff. Kathy is happy that she gets to sit today because she is a little tired from yesterday’s beach expedition.

The drill begins, and continues for a while. Mr. Frazier watches the actual handoff of the baton, and Kathy has been watching for any break in cadence involving either runner. Eddie, Mark, Braden, and Johnson have been working together for years, and they have their handoffs down to a science. Some of the other runners have also been working with each other for years, and their handoff is also great.

Mr. Frazier decides to see how well some of the faster runners handoff to the 4 by 440 relay medalists. As Bell delivers the baton to another runner, using the radio, Mr. Frazier tells Paula to put Eddie in lane three. Bell is instructed to get in lane three to receive the baton from Eddie. As Eddie enters the transition zone, he is running much faster than Bell expected. Bell quickly realizes this, and leaves slightly early. This allows for a smooth transition.

Just arriving in the transition zone, and handing off, is Mahoney. Mr. Frazier, on the radio, asks, "where's Braden?" Using the radio, Paula replies, "he's here with me." Mr. Frazier takes a quick survey of the field, and tells Paula, "put him in lane six next." Mr. Frazier tells Mahoney to get in lane six. Braden, receives the baton, and is at full speed long before the transition zone. Mahoney sees Braden coming, and takes off. Not nearly close to full speed, Mahoney is unable to take hold of the baton from Braden. Braden passes Mahoney, still holding the baton. Now outside of the transition zone, Braden leaves the track, and walks back to where Mr. Frazier is seated.

Mahoney advises Braden, yelling, "you really messed that up!" Mahoney's comment is not well received by Braden, who exclaims, "me? What do you mean, me?" Braden points his finger at Mahoney, telling him, "you're ass is slower than an ice cube melting at the North pole!" Mahoney screams back, "you're just going to." Before Mahoney could finish his sentence, Braden interrupts and finishes for him, "yeah! I'm just gonna shove the baton up your flimsy ass next time if you don't take it." Braden, all fired up, continues with his rant, "and, if your ass ain't moving fast enough, I'm gonna kick you in your fat ass to get you moving if I have to! Now, get your flimsy ass back on that track and get it right this time! I don't like losing!"

Meanwhile, Mr. Frazier, listening to the exchange between Braden and Mahoney, cannot contain his laughter. Kathy is also laughing uncontrollably, remembering what she told Eddie about Mahoney's anger yesterday. Mr. Frazier instructs Mahoney to get back in lane six. He instructs Braden to go to the end of the track and tells them both, "we'll keep doing it until we get it right." Mahoney, by intentionally attempting to make Braden appear incompetent in front of Mr. Frazier, made himself look bad instead.

The next transition between Braden and Mahoney goes a little better, but not the seamless transition that is needed for competition. Mr. Frazier mentions to Kathy, "I'm beginning to think that Mahoney and Braden are incompatible on the track." Kathy is thinking to herself that Mahoney is not compatible with anyone. Kathy, holding her tongue, replies, "yeah. I can see that. Last year, Mahoney was a lot faster. And, you know, Braden is kind of funny when he gets all fired up like that." Mr.

Frazier replies, "yeah. I know. And, after Braden rants like he just did, he runs better, so I'm not stopping it." Kathy points out to Mr. Frazier, "everyone else seems to run faster too." Mr. Frazier replies, "I think you're right about that."

A few minutes later, Kathy tells Mr. Frazier, "that stuff Mark and Eddie pull at the starting line is really funny too." Mr. Frazier asks, "oh, really? What do they do?" Kathy tells him, "well, for one, during the State meet, when the Starter said 'on your marks', Eddie told Brady, the number one seed, 'you again', which distracted him and caused him to lose the race."

Kathy tells Mr. Frazier, "Mark pulls that kind of stuff all the time." Mr. Frazier asks, "what does Mark do?" Kathy explains to Mr. Frazier, "well, to start with, Eddie and Mark scope out the highest seed in the race. When the Starter says, 'on your marks, Mark says to the highest seed next to him, 'I thought you said you were ready', and then points to where his feet are in the blocks. The runner then questions everything, like the block settings, his position, and even if his shoelaces are tied. That throws the runner off." Mr. Frazier laughs, telling Kathy, "I didn't know that about them." Kathy informs Mr. Frazier, "yeah. Those guys are really funny at the starting blocks. Even the Starters are entertained."

Tryouts finally come to an end, and everyone heads to the locker room. On the way back, Kathy asks Eddie, "did you hear Braden?" Eddie replies, "yeah. That was kind of funny. Especially that comment that Mahoney is slower than an ice cube melting at the North pole." Kathy tells Eddie, "even Mr. Frazier found it amusing." Eddie tells Kathy, "yeah. I see what you meant about Mahoney. He can't even run anymore." Kathy mentions, "something is sucking the life out of him big time." Eddie proposes that, "maybe it's Braden." Thinking about that for a moment, Kathy replies, "Braden couldn't suck the life out of Mahoney unless he lets Braden do it. It's Mahoney. It's got to be. He's his own problem." Eddie replies, "and he can have it." Kathy, with words of wisdom, says, "yeah. You don't want any part of that energy. All it can do is drag you down." When they come up to the school, Kathy tells Eddie, "catch you in a few."

Kathy and Eddie meet at the school entrance and walk home together. On the way, Eddie tells Kathy, "I ran more than 220 yards today. Carry me." Kathy stops, and tells Eddie, "I love you so much! You are so much fun!" As they start walking again, Kathy tells Eddie, "you're the one in training. You should be carrying me." Eddie stops, and tells Kathy, "hold my book." Eddie gets behind Kathy, putting his head between her legs. He grabs her hips, and raises her onto his shoulders. All bubbly, Kathy tells Eddie, "I didn't really mean that you actually had to carry me!" Eddie replies, "yeah. But, it sounds like to me that you're liking it." Kathy exclaims, "yeah! I really am!" As Eddie walks down the street with Kathy on his shoulders, he tells her, "watch out for tree branches."

When they get to Kathy's house, Eddie lets her down, telling her, "now I can skip my workout tonight." Kathy jokingly asks him, "are you telling me I'm heavy?" Eddie replies, "no. I'm just weak. Remember? I get worn out after running 220 yards." They both have a good laugh, and sit on the grass and talk for a while. Since no school work has gotten done in the last few days, Eddie and Kathy have a bit of catching up to do. They give each other a goodnight kiss, and Eddie starts the long walk home.

The next day, the final roster is posted on the window of the administration area. As Eddie and Kathy walk in, they see Johnson, Braden, and Bobby B. looking over the list. Braden tells Eddie, "it looks like we got our 4 by 440 relay team again. That's gonna tick Mahoney off." Eddie, seeing that he is in the 100-yard dash, asks, "who else got the 100?" Kathy replies, "you, Mark, and Johnson." Kathy also adds, "Mr. Frazier hasn't made all the decisions yet." As they are talking, Mark walks up, and asks, "any news?" Braden answers, telling Mark, "no. It looks like Mr. Frazier gave us all exactly what we wanted, just like he said he was gonna."

Looking at the roster, Braden casually mentions, "Mahoney got the half mile again." Mark, Eddie, Braden, and Johnson start laughing hysterically. Left in the dark, Bobby B. asks, "what's so funny?" Kathy says, "yeah! Fill us in." Mark replies to both of them, "we'd better do this outside." Eddie, agreeing with Mark, says, "yeah. Outside would be a lot better." On the way across the school lobby, Kathy tells Bobby B., "this is going to be good. I can feel it." They all walk outside to the front of the school, and sit on the grass.

Kathy asks, "so, exactly what is it that you guys did?" Eddie starts the story by telling Bobby B. and Kathy, "during indoor track tryouts, I overheard Mahoney talking to Matt Wood. Mahoney was telling Matt that he hates running the half mile." Mark adds, "Eddie told us what he overheard, and none of us like running the half mile either." Eddie then tells Bobby B. and Kathy, "we figured that, if we let Mahoney win the half mile, he'll get stuck with it. After Johnson finished his race, we told Johnson about it, and he was in on it too." Mark, explaining what Braden did, says, "and, right before the race, Braden started one of his usual 'nobody's gonna beat me, I'm hot' rants, just to fire up Mahoney. And so, we all let Mahoney win the race."

Bobby B. starts laughing, with Kathy joining in. Kathy, now laughing uncontrollably, exclaims, "tell me you guys didn't!" Braden replies, exclaiming, "oh, yeah! We did! And, Mahoney was so proud of winning that race and beating us. He was giving everyone high-fives!" Braden is quick to point out, "I ain't running no half mile. I'll let that Mahoney baloney run it." Mark adds, "and it worked! Mahoney won, and got stuck with the half mile." Kathy says to the group, "you guys just made my day!"

After a good laugh, they all go to class, starting the day in an awesome mood. On the way to class, Kathy tells Eddie, “at practice yesterday, I was telling Mr. Frazier what you guys do at the starting blocks, like how you distract the opponents.” Kathy then adds, “he thought that was too funny.” Eddie says, “I hope Mr. Frazier doesn’t find out about the one we pulled on Mahoney.” Kathy replies, “my lips are sealed. That is seriously funny! I can’t believe you guys actually did that! I’m going to be laughing about that all day.” As they walk through the hall and get to Kathy’s classroom, Kathy says, “here’s my stop. I guess I’ll see you at practice.” Eddie and Kathy kiss, having an awesome start to the school day.