

# Eddie, The Freshman Year

## Chapter Eight Summer Break

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The first week of Summer break, Mr. Frazier sits outside Dr. Brooks' office, hoping to make his case against his unfair review. Knowing he will likely have limited time to speak with the superintendent, Mr. Frazier has gone over again and again in his head what he would like to convey to Dr. Brooks in his defense of what he considers a very unjust review. Quite nervous about the meeting, Mr. Frazier tries to remain calm by rehearsing his case in his mind.

The secretary walks out into the waiting area, telling Mr. Frazier, "Dr. Brooks will see you now, sir." Mr. Frazier stands up, and is escorted to the superintendent's private office. Dr. Brooks greets Mr. Frazier, and tells him, "please have a seat, sir, and please help yourself to a glass of water if you would like." Mr. Frazier passes on the water for now, and replies, "thank you."

Dr. Brooks opens the meeting, telling Mr. Frazier, "good morning. Thank you for taking the time out of your schedule to meet with me this morning. On behalf of the entire school district, I would like to thank you again for your contribution to the State's physical education curriculum. Your efforts in representing the district in a positive light have not gone unnoticed." Mr. Frazier is quite shocked at the difference between Mr. Crum's demeanor and that of Dr. Brooks. Mr. Frazier is particularly impressed that Dr. Brooks does not seem to be in a rush and speaks very pleasantly. But, Mr. Frazier is still in the dark regarding what today's meeting is about.

Dr. Brooks continues, "I, personally, was quite impressed with the performance of the Northside High School track team this past year. Congratulations on having another undefeated season. And, I understand from Gerhard that, next year, the team's performance is expected to be even better." Attempting to use proper English, Mr. Frazier nervously

replies, “I believe the team will be much stronger next year. We had a good number of freshmen go to State this year. Next year, it’s looking even better for us.”

Dr. Brooks mentions, “I’ve taken notice of a few of the athletes. In particular, Edward Bogenskaya and Mark Svoboda seem to be excellent sprinters. And, Axel Braden is phenomenal at the 440-yard dash.” Quite surprised that Dr. Brooks even knows the names of the student athletes, Mr. Frazier replies, “these guys are among the best I’ve ever coached. And, they’re only freshmen.” Still very nervous, Mr. Frazier is still in the dark regarding what this meeting is about. The school superintendent does not typically call a track coach into their office to inform them the track team is doing well. The coach can usually figure that out on their own.

Getting down to business, Dr. Brooks asks Mr. Frazier, “I understand you had some concerns regarding your performance review this year. Am I correct?” Mr. Frazier’s heart rate increases a bit, and replies, “yes. For the record, I believe my review was very unfair.” Dr. Brooks bluntly informs Mr. Frazier, “so do I. So, I’ve thrown it in the trash can.” Mr. Frazier, just as shocked as if Jimmy O’Brien were to beat Eddie in a sprint, replies, “you’ve thrown it in the trash can?” Dr. Brooks replies, “yes, I have. I, personally, have reviewed your performance over this past year.” Dr. Brooks then hands Mr. Frazier his revised performance assessment in which the overall rating is “greatly exceeds expectations”. Hearing the news, Mr. Frazier immediately feels as if a great weight has been lifted from his shoulders.

Dr. Brooks elaborates, “in lieu of the disgraceful performance review you’ve received from Maurice Crum, I’ve decided to give you an 8 percent cost of living adjustment, which represents the level of ‘far exceeds expectations’. In addition, you will receive a promotion to the next level, which carries along with it a 15 percent salary increase on top of the cost of living adjustment. I do hope that the revised arrangement better meets your expectations.” Quite flustered and not exactly knowing how to respond, Mr. Frazier replies, “thank you. Thank you very much.” Dr. Brooks also informs Mr. Frazier, “the administration has taken note of the increased attendance at our home track meets. I, for one, have attended several of the meets during this past year.”

Dr. Brooks then orates, “it has come to my attention that several of our administrators, for one reason or another, do not perceive the value in our school’s athletic programs. Many students excel at academics, and will have many excellent opportunities to further their education when they graduate from high school. Athletics, as you probably are aware, is the only avenue by which some of our students will ever get into college. That reason, among a few others, is why we must keep our athletic

program strong. And, I might add, college athletics often paves the way to professional sports.” Mr. Frazier agrees, telling Dr. Brooks, “I understand completely. An athletic scholarship is how I was able to attend college.”

Dr. Brooks continues, “Gary Mitchell, the distance runner who had an impressive first season with the high school, is quite the exception. He’s a straight A student, yet performs very well on the track, and is one of our better cross country runners. Not every athlete can be like Gary, excelling at both sports and academics. The rest of the student athletes are counting on coaches like you to develop their abilities to the highest level, thereby paving the way to a better future. I just want to reinforce that your expertise is needed by these athletes, and highly valued by our district.” Quite surprised at Dr. Brooks’ commendation, Mr. Frazier replies, “thank you. Thank you very much.” Dr. Brooks then tells Mr. Frazier, “and, please do not let Maurice bother you. Gerhard will keep him under control.” That was, by far, the best news that Mr. Frazier has heard all year.

Dr. Brooks and Mr. Frazier have an informal talk about the outlook of next year’s sports teams. Mr. Frazier is grateful that his disgraceful review got overturned. Receiving a promotion and a raise, Mr. Frazier is glad to hear that his efforts are noticed and appreciated. Now even more motivated to win, Mr. Frazier looks forward to next year’s winning track season.

As Mr. Frazier is getting ready to leave, he notices that Mr. Crum is seated outside the superintendent’s office. Just like Mr. Frazier was, Mr. Crum is at a loss to understand why Dr. Brooks wants to meet with him. Mr. Crum is fairly certain that good news is coming his way. Unfortunately, the news waiting for Mr. Crum is not so good. For the next half hour or so, Mr. Crum will be explaining to Dr. Brooks why the three winning-most coaches at the high school received unfavorable reviews this past year. As Mr. Frazier walks by, Mr. Frazier and Mr. Crum exchange no words.

Now that Summer is finally here, Eddie can get back to serious training. Kathy is now training with Eddie. They often ride to the beach together. Once there, they go for a run in the sand. After all, who needs a sand track if you have a whole beach. Mark and Paula often join them. Paula, who is training with Mark, has discovered the beach is her home away from home. Occasionally, they will all go to the beach of the future, just to check it out.

Eddie still takes regular trips to the future to sell the gold that he buys. He is amassing a great fortune, and has money to spend in the present time. Eddie buys the gold while he is out riding his bicycle,

stopping in wherever he can to pick some up. Eddie has known for a while that he can go into the portal, and sell the gold in the future. He realized that he can then return to the present time, and immediately go back into the portal, choosing a different date to sell even more. This gives him a good workout. Eddie has also accumulated a lot of gold, which he can sell whenever he wants. While taking trips to the future, Eddie also picks up the vitamins and supplements that he needs.

This Summer, Eddie is cutting lawns and maintaining a few pools. He has enough work to keep him busy three days a week, leaving the other four days for himself and time with Kathy. Mark is helping his father a lot more this Summer, working a few days a week. More money means Mark can go out on more dates with Paula. Kathy, who is now sixteen, has a job teaching a morning class at a Summer day camp for kids three days a week. Not to anyone's surprise, one of the things Kathy is doing this Summer is teaching the kids to Hula Hoop. Paula also landed a job teaching at the same day camp, also three days a week. Paula, however, is assisting on field trips, where she takes kids on nature walks.

During the first weekend after school is out, Eddie and Kathy decide to check out the beach. They decide to invite Mark and Paula to join them. It does not take much to convince Mark and Paula to go to the beach, or to get pizza. They all decide to leave early, and agree to meet at 8:00 a.m. At 8:00 a.m. on a Saturday, most of the other teens are still in bed. The foursome, however, is up and ready to go. By the time the other kids their age wake up, the group will have already put in a full day's workout. They all agree to meet at Mark's house, since he lives the closest to the path.

Eddie rides to Kathy's house so that she does not have to ride alone. Once they get to Mark's house, Kathy asks, "so, what beach do you guys want to go to?" Eddie asks, "do you mean like today's beach or tomorrow's beach?" Mark suggests, "how about tomorrow's beach. The water will be warmer if we pick a day later in the Summer." If they pick a date in mid Summer, it will also be farther from the Summer Solstice. So, they'll be able to spend more time in the sun since the sun won't be as high in the sky. They ride to the portal, with the girls leading the way.

Once they arrive at the portal, Mark says, "okay. Somebody take us there." Kathy tells Mark, "hey! You can make it work too! You take us there." Mark mentions, "I thought it was Eddie's portal." Eddie tells Mark, "it's not mine, bro. I just found it. It's for all of us." Mark, deciding to give it a try, raises his right hand and says, "take us to about two months from now on a sunny day." The group is immediately transported to a warmer sunny Summer day.

While they are walking their bicycles to the path, Paula asks, "I wonder what would happen if you said, 'beam me up Scotty?'" Kathy then suggests, "hey! We can put Mahoney in the portal, tell him to raise his right hand and say, 'beam me up Scotty!'" Kathy and Paula laugh hysterically, but Eddie and Mark do not. Eddie's and Mark's families never had a television, so they never saw the television series *Star Trek*. But, Mahoney will not be beamed up anytime soon. Mahoney is still in the loony bin, and will not be released for a while. Kathy and Paula will have to explain the joke to Eddie and Mark later. Once Kathy and Paula stop laughing, they get on their bicycles and start riding to the beach.

Once they get to the beach, they notice it is not very crowded. Because it is low tide, the beach looks even more sparsely populated. Once the tide comes in and more people arrive, the beach will be more crowded. For some people, their nice place they have staked out in the sand twenty feet from the water will be under water in two or three hours.

After locking their bicycles, they all go to Eddie's favorite spot. This is just beyond the concession area, between the sand dunes and the water. They lay out in the sun for a while, and then go into the ocean to ride some waves. After everyone comes out of the water and dries off, Kathy and Eddie decide to explore the sand dunes again, in search of a spot where they cannot be seen. Mark and Paula head out in the other direction for a while, searching for their own private getaway location before the afternoon crowd begins to show up.

An hour later, when Eddie and Kathy return to their spot, many people have arrived. Small kids are playing in the sand near the water, while the adults lay out in the sun. There are a few people in the water riding waves or just getting wet. Near the concession stand, which is far back from the water, there is a volleyball game going on.

Eddie and Kathy lay out in the sun again for a while. Mark and Paula return a few minutes later and join Eddie and Kathy as they all relax in the sun. They all lay there, dozing off, listening to the waves crash and the sounds of people talking and radios playing in the background.

All of a sudden, Paula springs up and screams, "oh no!" She jumps off her towel and heads to where the ocean meets the sand. Mark, Eddie, and Kathy also jump up, wondering what is wrong. Mark chases Paula, who is long gone, and already at the ocean. Paula goes into the water, and, as the waves are going out, pulls a two-year-old girl out of the water. The girl starts crying, which is a dead giveaway she is still alive. Paula holds the child, reassuring her, "its going to be okay." Mark asks Paula, "wow! How did you know about that?" Paula replies, "I don't know. Somehow I just did." Mark asks, "what?" Kathy tells Mark, "just believe her. I'll explain later."

The girl's mother has been searching for her daughter for quite some time. Watching from a distance as Paula pulled the girl out of the ocean, the mother begins running toward Paula, skirting around people laying on the beach. Paula's scream did not go unnoticed, and attracted a lot of attention. It only took a minute or two for a crowd to develop.

The child's mother, breaking through the crowd, exclaims, "my baby! My baby! Thank God that she's okay!" She tells Paula, "thank you so much! Thank you. Thank you!" Paula hands the baby back to her mother, telling her, "here's your little pumpkin."

Mark whispers to Eddie, "I want to tell the mother to be more careful next time. That's what all the adults usually tell us." Eddie whispers back, "yeah. I know what you mean." The crowd disperses and Eddie, Kathy, Mark, and Paula go back to their towels, and relax on the beach.

Mark asks Kathy, "okay. So, what were you talking about before?" Kathy asks, "when?" Mark replies, "when you said 'just believe her.' You said you'll explain later." Kathy replies, "oh, yeah! I forgot about that. It's Paula's superpower." Paula's eyes light up, and she asks, "what superpower? What are you talking about?"

Kathy tells Paula, "there's been a lot of times in the past when you knew something was going to happen, and it did." Paula asks Kathy, "like when?" Giving one example, Kathy tells Paula, "right before Mahoney knocked me down, you said something like, 'there's trouble right around the corner.'" Kathy explains, "that was a minute or so before he even arrived." Mark then points out, "hey! Right before I ran the 100-yard dash final at State, you told me, 'this is going to work a lot better than you think.'" Paula confesses, "yeah! I did say that! I remember that!" Kathy tells Paula, "see there? That's your superpower."

After thinking about what Kathy explained for a minute, Paula asks Kathy, "so, what's your superpower?" Not even a bit hesitant, Kathy replies, "I'm the world's greatest bullshit detector! That's my superpower." Kind of puzzled, Paula asks, "what?" Kathy tells Paula, "somehow I know, and I don't know how I know, when someone lies to me or feeds me bullshit." Kathy also mentions, "I've always been this way for as long as I can remember. I think it might have something to do with my blue stone that I lost a while ago. But, since we've been going through the portal, it's been a lot more apparent." Eddie asks, "really?" Kathy replies, "yeah. I thought I was imagining it but, after what just happened, now I'm sure."

Mark, flexing his biceps, mentions, "I wonder if I have a superpower too." Kathy tells Mark, "sure you do. Your casual comments to your opponents before a race write the future." Mark asks, "how's that?" Paula,

catching on quickly, tells Mark, “all that psychological warfare you do before a race. When has that not worked?” After thinking for a while, Mark laughs and replies, “never.”

Kathy reminds everyone of what happened during the State invitational meet a few weeks ago, exclaiming, “Mark! When you pulled that limping stunt at State, you left a train wreck behind you after Eddie passed you the baton!” Paula exclaims, “you’re right! And, that was so awesomely funny!” Mark mentions, “I wish I could have seen that.” Kathy tells Mark, “see? There’s your superpower.” Wondering deeply, Kathy asks, “Mark, has that worked better for you since you’ve been coming through the portal?” Mark and Paula both answer, “yeah!” Kathy mentions, “we might be on to something here.”

Mark asks, “then, what’s Eddie’s superpower, other than running faster than anyone else?” Eddie, as he gives Kathy a kiss, replies, “my superpower is finding someone so special.” Kathy smiles, as Paula says, “aw. That’s so sweet.” After listening to everyone else, Eddie, who thinks that he doesn’t have a superpower, says, “I don’t have one.” Kathy tells Eddie, “oh, yeah! You do!” Eddie asks, “okay, then. What is it? What’s my superpower?” Kathy tells Eddie, “your superpower is knowing who to trust and who not to trust.” Eddie asks, “really?” Kathy replies, “yeah. When have you ever been wrong about that?” Thinking for a moment, Eddie replies, “okay. You might be right about that one.”

Paula then mentions, “okay, then. So, my superpower is knowing something right before it happens. Mark’s is subtly changing the future. Kathy’s is detecting bullshit, and Eddie’s is knowing who to trust. That sounds like a really good set of skills.” Eddie remarks, “in the comics, superpowers are like flying and that sort of thing.” Kathy tells everyone, “those are make-believe. Our superpowers are real!” Paula, after pulling the baby out of the water a little while ago, says, “I don’t need any convincing that mine is real. I just wish I knew about it before Mahoney showed up that day. I could have stopped that from happening.” Kathy comments, “well, Mahoney is right where he needs to be, in the loony bin.”

Eddie, out of the blue, mentions, “Braden’s superpower must be kicking ass.” Mark laughs, as Kathy replies, “yeah, in a way. But, before a race, Braden sucks the energy out of the opponent with his rants, and that’s how he does it.” Paula mentions, “and, can you believe what he had inscribed on his medal?” Eddie replies, “that is seriously funny! He says he’s going to kick ass, and he does it. Then, he engraves on his medal that he did it.” Mark replies, “Braden ends up winning before the race even starts.” Kathy replies, “exactly.”

Eddie asks, “how about Johnson?” Silence comes over the group. After thinking about it for a moment, Kathy mentions, “you got me on that

one. But, we'll figure it out." Everyone then lays back and relaxes for a while before lunch.

After lunch, the group takes a long walk down the beach together. Kathy mentions, "walking in the sand is hard. Now I can see why they put that experimental sand track in at the University." Paula replies, "I know what you mean. I wonder if it's really hard to carry someone in the sand." It's no secret where this is going. Mark casually mentions, "it sounds like someone wants to be carried." Eddie replies, "either that, or they're telling us we haven't worked out enough." While the girls are smiling, Eddie motions to Mark that they should carry them. Kathy ends up on Eddie's shoulders, and Paula on Mark's.

They walk up the beach for a while, and Mark motions to go toward the water. Kathy exclaims, "hey! Where are you guys going?" Mark replies, "for a swim." The guys keep walking to the ocean. Kathy and Paula start to giggle like little kids. Once they get to the water, Eddie and Mark keep walking. When the water is almost up to their heads, Mark and Eddie fall over, landing their girls in the water. Kathy yells out, "hey! That was fun! Let's do it again!"

Eddie tells Kathy, "okay, stand on my shoulders." He drops down and Kathy stands on his shoulders while she is holding on to his hands. Once she is balanced, Eddie yells out, "does anybody got a Hula Hoop?" Holding Kathy's legs, Eddie carries her into the water, and once the water is up to his waist, he tells her, "okay, dive in." Kathy dives into the ocean. When she comes up, she exclaims, "that was fun! You make a great diving board!"

Eddie looks at Paula, telling her, "okay, it's your turn." Turning to Mark, Eddie tells him, "we'll each clasp our hands, she'll put one foot in your hands and one in mine. Then, we'll make her fly." They go into the water, just about up to their waist. They tell Paula to hold on to them, and put one foot in Eddie's hands, and the other in Mark's. Watching out toward the ocean, Eddie tells Mark, "here comes a big wave. Talk about perfect timing!" Eddie announces, "on three. One, two, three." They both hurl Paula high into the air, making her airborne, flying high before she lands into the water. When she comes up, Paula exclaims, "wow! Was that ever fun!"

Hearing Paula's excitement, Kathy exclaims, "I want a turn, please, please, please!" Mark looks at Eddie, and mentions to him, "this is a good upper body workout." Getting Kathy ready to fly, the guys wait for a good wave to approach. Mark sees a good one coming, and counts, "one, two, three." They then send Kathy airborne. While she is in the air, Kathy spreads her arms like a bird, and dives into the ocean. Coming up, Kathy

exclaims, “wow! That was really fun!” Kathy and Paula fly a few more times, and then they all head back to their towels.

After a while, it comes time to go home. Today was a fun day at the beach for everyone. After they dry off and pack up, the group heads to their bicycles. They then begin the long ride up the path, which seems to get easier with each trip. Kathy and Paula are getting in awesome shape just riding to the beach with Eddie and Mark. When they arrive at the portal, they enter through, and return to their time. They left early in the morning, spent the day at the beach, and returned to their time at the same time they left. They quickly realize they have the whole day ahead of them.

Paula mentions, “okay, guys. Now what do we do?” Kathy replies, “wow! We still have the whole day ahead of us!” Eddie jokingly suggests, “we had our workout. You girls should work out now.” Kathy replies, “hey! Wait a second! You’re on to something!” Mark asks, “really? Like what?” Kathy explains, “you guys can work out while we’re in the portal, and come back to our time and work out even more. That means that you guys can get even faster, since you can get more time during the day to work out!” Mark replies, “us? How about you guys?” Paula exclaims, “yeah! We can too!” Eddie comments, “I’m going to need to take some more vitamins.” They all ride back to Eddie’s house, and decide they are going to work out for a while.

Once they get to Eddie’s house, they go downstairs to Eddie’s home gym to work out. When they are together, they have a tendency to push each other harder. They also know each other’s limits. Since they had a good ride to the beach, today they are working on their upper bodies. Next time, they’ll decide to work out their lower bodies, and then go to the pool and swim. In changing up their routine, they can make better gains.

Kathy and Paula rotate through the bench press, raising the weight each set. Paula gets on the bench, attempting to lift a weight that is seemingly heavy for her. She lowers the bar, and does not seem to have the energy to complete the lift. Kathy, standing behind the bench spotting her, tells her, “you can lift it! Do it!” Mark looks, telling her, “just lift it! You know you can.” Eddie is watching, somehow knowing she can lift the weight. Paula, already fatigued from her first attempt, tries again and manages to lift the weight.

While Paula is getting off the bench, Kathy says the word, “superpowers.” Paula replies, “superpowers? How’s that?” Kathy replies, “Mark told you that you can lift it, and you did.” Mark then tells Kathy, “yeah, and you knew it was bullshit that she couldn’t lift it.” They all have a good laugh. Kathy, in amazement, suddenly realizes everyone is spot

on, and exclaims, “yeah! And, Eddie knew we were right. He totally trusted our instincts.” Paula flexes her biceps, and replies, “yeah, superpowers.”

As the Summer gets into full swing, a schedule seems to have appeared. Kathy and Paula are working three days a week at the day camp. Their working hours are from 8:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Eddie changes his schedule to cut lawns in the morning so he can have more time with Kathy. Mark also tries to schedule most of his work in the mornings, so he can spend more time with Paula. Eddie buys and sells his gold early in the morning. He then waits until late at night time to hide any gold and the money he obtained by going through the portal.

Eddie, Kathy, Paula, and Mark often work out together. Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday seems to be the days they frequently get together to work out. Eddie and Kathy go to the beach several times during the week. On the days they don’t make it to the beach, they go to the county pool. Mark and Paula also go to the beach frequently. Once or twice a week, the couples join each other, either at the beach or at the local pool.

One day, while Eddie and Mark are off working, Eddie’s mother, Nina, runs into Mark’s mother, Mariana, at the local farmers market. Having the same shopping schedule, they see each other at the market at least once during the week. They know when the new shipments arrive, so they get there before the food has been picked over.

Nina mentions to Mariana, “Eddie is eating me out of house and home.” Mariana replies, “I know what you mean. Mark is doing the same.” Nina tells Mariana, “we’ve even planted a bigger garden this year.” Mariana adds, “we planted a larger garden this year too. It’s looking pretty good right now.” Mariana asks Nina, “is Eddie home anymore?” Nina replies, “no. He’s either working, exercising, or he’s with Katarina.” Preferring the name “Katarina” to “Kathy”, Nina is one of the few who calls Kathy by her real name, Katarina. Mariana tells Nina, “Mark is the same way. He’s always out with Paula now.”

Mariana mentions to Nina, “here comes trouble.” Mariana spied Kathryn Black, the mother of Chuckie. Once a month or so, Kathryn feels the need to make her presence known. Kathryn, with her usual sarcastic introduction, announces, “well, well, well, if it isn’t Mariana and Nina.” Nina returns the serve, replying, “well, and if it isn’t the Kathryn Black.” Kathryn asks Nina and Mariana, “how are your little boys doing?” Answering Kathryn’s sarcasm with a hand grenade, Nina replies, “Eddie is very big and strong now. You should see him! He won a lot of medals in track this year, and he’s doing really good!”

Having absolutely no tolerance for Kathryn, Mariana tells her, "I hear your little Chuckie is taking the dope now." This comes as a shock to Kathryn, who replies, "oh, no! Not Charles! He would never do anything like that." Mariana hits back hard, telling Kathryn, "no? That's right! He's a dope and he's a taking the dope! You might want to check under his bed. That's where all little kids hide things, you know." Kathryn makes herself scarce, feeling once again like she's been beaten to a pulp by Nina and Mariana. Nina mentions to Mariana, "you got rid of her real fast this time." Nina and Mariana continue shopping, hoping not to run into Kathryn anytime soon.

One Saturday morning, Eddie, Kathy, Mark, and Paula get together to work out at Eddie's house. Kathy asks Eddie and the group, "can you guys time me? I want to see how fast I can run." Eddie, thinking this is right up his alley, replies, "sure. We can do that." Eddie asks, "what do you want to run?" Kathy replies, "maybe 100 yards. Or, maybe 440 yards. I don't know." Mark mentions, "well, let's head out to the track and decide when we get there."

Paula asks Eddie and Mark, "can you guys time me too?" Eddie asks Mark, "do you have a stopwatch?" Mark replies, "yeah. But, I only have one." Eddie tells Mark, "go home and get it. We'll need two of them." Mark asks Eddie, "I thought you had two stopwatches." Eddie replies, "I do. But, one of them only measures to one fifth of a second." Mark, who lives only a half mile from Eddie, rides his bicycle home to get his stopwatch.

When Mark returns, they head to the high school track. When they arrive, they find the football team practicing for the upcoming season. Kathy decides she wants to run Eddie's race, the 100-yard dash. They find the markings on the track for the start and finish for the 100-yard dash, which are engraved on the concrete curb. Kathy asks Paula if she wants to run the 100-yard dash with her, or run a different race. Paula decides she wants to run the 100-yard dash too, and is happy to join Kathy. Competition breeds better performance, so Kathy is happy to have Paula run with her.

Kathy and Paula get ready to run. They decide that Mark will be the Starter, and Eddie will be the Timekeeper for both runners. Eddie walks to the finish line, as Kathy and Paula stretch and warm up, preparing to run. Mark, making light of some of the interesting stuff Starters sometimes say, jokingly tells them, "I want you to run a fair race. I don't want any girl fights to break out during the race. And, I want no hair pulling. And, please keep your fingernails to yourself." Kathy laughs, and remarks, "don't worry! That ain't happening." Once Eddie arrives at the finish line, Mark tells Kathy and Paula to get ready.

Mark tells Kathy and Paula, “take your marks.” Correcting Mark, Kathy tells him, “it’s ‘on your marks’.” Mark, correcting himself, tells them again, “okay. On your marks.” He waits two seconds, and says, “set.” Kathy and Paula taught the proper “set” position to Eddie and Mark, so they know this position quite well. Mark yells out, “go.”

At the other end of the track, Eddie starts both watches. Kathy and Paula are off, doing exactly what they’ve watched hundreds of times before. Kathy takes an early lead, but Paula’s competitive spirit leads her to run faster. Hearing Paula right behind her, Kathy runs as fast as she can. The girls can hear Eddie and Mark yelling, “faster, faster,” as they run. While Kathy and Paula are running, the football team momentarily stops practicing, and they all turn to watch. Just before the finish line, Kathy is in the lead, but Paula is giving her a good run for her money. Eddie, at the finish line, clicks one stopwatch when Kathy crosses, and the other when Paula crosses.

While the girls were running, Mark has been jogging down the track, following them. He didn’t want to be the last to find out Kathy’s and Paula’s times. Eddie, looking at the stopwatches, shows them to Mark. Mark, almost in disbelief, exclaims, “wow!” Eddie replies, “yeah. I know.” Mark and Eddie are thinking the same thing. The girls both ran a very good race.

The girls return from overrunning the finish line, and Eddie hands them the stopwatch with their respective times. They both look, and jump up and down with excitement. Kathy ran a 10.7 and Paula ran a 10.9. Eddie exclaims to Kathy, “do you know how good that is?” Kathy replies, “yeah! Now I wish I had starting blocks and spikes!” They all celebrate the girl’s awesome run. This time it is Eddie who gives Kathy a victory hug and kiss, and Mark giving the same to Paula.

Mark tells Paula, “that was really awesome!” Mark then asks, “so, what race will you be running next?” Kathy looks at Paula, and asks, “how about the 440?” Paula replies, “sure. Why not? But, let me rest for a while.”

While they are standing around the track, a stray football from a lousy kickoff attempt comes in the direction of Mark and Eddie. Mark picks up the football, and throws it 40 yards back to the football team. Mark targeted one of the players accurately, but Mark thought nothing of it. Mark’s pass did, however, get the full attention of Mr. Moreno, the football coach. Meanwhile, the girls drink a little water, and decide they are ready for the next race. Eddie and Mark will each work one stopwatch for this event. Mark decided he likes being the Starter, so he will start the race.

They find the starting point for the 440-yard run, or 440-yard dash, depending on how you see it. Mark instructs the girls again, telling them, "I want a fair race. No hair pulling, no girl fights halfway around the track, and definitely no tripping." Mark then tells Kathy and Paula, "on your marks." The girls get down, in position to run. Mark announces, "set." The girls look like this is going to be a fierce competition. Mark announces, "go," and the girls are off. For once, Eddie and Mark get to stand around and observe, as their stopwatches are ticking away the seconds. Kathy and Paula start off quickly, knowing well the strategy in the 440-yard dash.

While Eddie and Mark are watching Kathy and Paula intently, Mr. Moreno, the football coach, walks up to Mark. The coach interrupts Mark, and asks, "are you Mark Svoboda?" Mark replies, "yeah. But, I'm really busy right now." The coach sees the stopwatch in Mark's hand, and backs off. Mark walks away, with his eyes fixed on Paula, who has a little less than 220 yards left to go. Eddie is looking at Kathy, then at his stopwatch, and back to Kathy again. Eddie, who is all excited, tells Mark, "Kathy might break 60 seconds!" Kathy and Paula show no signs of fatigue during the last half of the race. As Kathy and Paula approach the finish line, they sprint as hard as they can. Kathy, who is slightly ahead of Paula, crosses the finish line first, with Paula right behind her.

Kathy, temporarily exhausted, utters, "so, that's the kind of crap you guys go through!" Kathy lies face up on the ground, trying to catch her breath. Paula sees Kathy, and thinks laying on the ground is a wonderful idea. In a minute or so, Kathy yells out, "okay! I'm still alive! That's a good sign!" The girls lie there for a while, recovering from the race that, to use Braden's terms, "kicked their ass." Eddie and Mark look at the stopwatches together. Mark whispers, "look. They both broke 60." Eddie whispers back, "wow! They're faster than Mahoney on average."

After the girls somewhat recover, Eddie asks, "do you want to know your time?" Kathy, still trying to catch her breath, asks, "I don't know. Do I?" Eddie holds the stopwatch up, and Kathy stands up abruptly. She grabs the stopwatch out of Eddie's hand, and looks at it as if she is in shock. Kathy yells out, "57!" She somehow finds the energy to jump up and down, still yelling, "57, 57, 57! Awesome!"

After hearing Kathy's time, Paula jumps up and takes her stopwatch from Mark. Paula knows that if Kathy ran a 57, her time is very close to that. Paula looks at the stopwatch and yells out, "60 seconds!" Mark, who looked at the stopwatch closely, tells Paula, "actually, it's a 59.8." Paula, all excited, yells out, "I broke 60! I broke 60!" Eddie tells Mark, "it looks like we're finally going to have some competition." Kathy says, "yeah! You see that? We're catching up! You guys are going to have to carry us

more!” Paula whispers to Kathy, “shh. They’re going to make us carry them.”

Eddie asks, “well, what event is next?” Kathy, who is very happy with her performance today, replies, “the discus. Yeah, the discus. But, since we don’t have a discus, we’ll have to get a pizza. Yeah, that’s it! A pizza. A pizza kind of looks like a discus, so that’s close enough. Once I eat the pizza, I can throw the pan like a discus.” Paula replies, “yeah. Pizza. Discus. What’s the difference?” Eddie replies, “for one, you can’t eat a discus.” Paula asks, “then, what good is a discus?” Kathy tells everyone, “I’m going to order a discus with shot-puts on it.” Mark mentions to Eddie, “it sounds like we’re getting a pizza with meatballs for lunch.” Kathy tells Mark, “yeah, buddy! You got it! Meatballs, shot-put, they’re both round!” Everyone breaks out laughing at Kathy’s silliness. They all then head out to the pizzeria.

Over lunch, Eddie asks the group, “so, when are we going to work out?” Kathy replies, “work out? Are you crazy? I’m worn out.” Paula agrees that working out is no longer on their list of activities for today. Eddie asks Kathy, “how could you be worn out? You only ran 540 yards today.” Kathy replies, “somehow, I knew that was on the horizon.” Paula laughs and replies, “well, you did set yourself up really good for that one.” Eddie then suggests, “why don’t we just go to the pool and hang out.” Everyone agrees to an afternoon at the pool. Eddie and Mark can swim laps, while Kathy and Paula lie in the sun, celebrating their awesome runs.

At the pool, Kathy and Paula talk about their 100-yard dash and 440-yard dash times while Eddie and Mark both swim laps. Paula mentions, “we should be on the track team. We’re faster than some of the guys.” Kathy replies, “Barbara tried out two years ago when she was a freshman, and they told her she couldn’t join the boys’ team.” Paula comments, “she seems like she’s a really good distance runner.” Kathy replies, “I think she’s faster in the mile than everyone on the team, except for Mitchell.” Paula then concedes, “I guess we’re destined to play badminton.” Kathy replies, “well, there’s also a girls’ volleyball team.” Paula ends the discussion by saying, “I’d rather watch Mark run.” Kathy replies, “yeah, being with Eddie. That’s where I’d rather be.” Kathy and Paula turn over to sun their other side, and doze off.

After Eddie and Mark finish swimming their laps, they find the girls asleep. Not wanting them to get too much sun, Eddie and Mark wake them up with gentle kisses on their necks. Eddie then gives Kathy, who is still half asleep, a kiss on her lips. Paula, waking up a lot faster, lands quickly onto Mark’s lap. Kathy, who wakes up very slowly, does not even remember where she is. Eddie whispers to Kathy, “good morning, sleepy head.” Before she even opens her eyes, she puts her arms around Eddie, and gives him a good morning embrace. Kathy sits up and stretches, and

lands on Eddie's lap with her arms around him, whispering to him, "that's the first time you ever woke me up." They embrace each other again, as Kathy finally wakes up.

They hang around the pool for a while until the sun sets. Kathy mentions to everyone, "hey! Please don't tell anyone about my times." Paula asks, "why not?" Kathy tells everyone, "I want to keep it as a surprise." Eddie asks, "how's that?" Kathy explains, "I don't know. But, somewhere, someday, I want someone to watch me run those times, not just hear about it." Paula agrees, saying, "yeah. That would definitely be better." Eddie and Mark agree to keep Kathy's and Paula's times a secret. Mark and Paula head out together, and Eddie and Kathy head out together.

Later in the Summer, Eddie decides to go through the portal in order to find another place to hide the money and gold he is accumulating. Eddie decides to go into the future, specifically sometime in the Summer after he graduates high school. His plan is to make sure his parents are still living in the same house, and to find an undisturbed area of the yard where he can hide his money and gold. Putting the money in the bank, or storing the gold and money in his bedroom, might attract the wrong kind of attention.

Eddie wakes up early on a Wednesday, and prepares to make the trip. Before he goes into the portal, Eddie looks all around the yard. He knows the yard very well, for he cuts the lawn and does all the yard maintenance himself. There are two or three locations in the back yard that look promising, but none in the front yard. One good location is behind a bird bath in the corner of the yard that has been there since Eddie can remember. The bird bath is surrounded by large pieces of slate, which haven't been moved in years. Another good place is anywhere between the garden and the back fence. This area serves more as a walking path, and not suitable for planting. Eddie identifies a few other areas, and will check them out when he arrives in the future.

Eddie gets a flashlight, and heads to the portal. He is planning to look at the yard at night, lest anyone sees Eddie and his counterpart together. At the portal, Eddie raises his right arm, and declares a time in mid-Summer after he graduates, adding a specific time, which is 3:00 a.m. No one is usually around this time of night. It suddenly becomes dark, and Eddie is off to his house.

Once he is at his house, Eddie hides his bicycle behind a bush. The first thing he notices is his father's truck is parked on the cement pad next to the driveway. This is good news. Eddie still lives here. He enters the back yard, and sees that a lot has changed. Since it is a full moon, there is not much need for the flashlight. The garden has been expanded

to occupy nearly the entire back yard. Eddie, seeing the larger garden, thinks to himself, “well, it looks like I’ll be expanding the garden sometime in the next few years.” The bird bath is still in the same place, and appears undisturbed. The area between the fence and the garden is the same. Eddie returns to the portal, and now has a plan.

Arriving back at the present, Eddie takes another look at the back yard. The place around the birdbath looks like the most promising hiding spot. No one ever goes there, and it will be undisturbed in the future. Eddie then gets ready to go to work. Today, Eddie has three lawns to cut, and a pool to clean. This will be enough to keep Eddie busy until Kathy gets off work. After work, it’s anybody’s guess where the day will lead.

Later that day, Eddie meets up with Kathy. It doesn’t take Eddie a minute to notice that Kathy is not her usual self today. Eddie asks Kathy, “what’s wrong?” Kathy tells Eddie, “bad news. Mahoney is out.” Eddie asks, “how do you know?” Kathy explains, “his prick of a father called my father and begged him not to press charges against that asshole.” Eddie comments, “I thought your dad dropped the charges.” Kathy replies, “he did. I guess Mahoney’s father never got the memo. It just shows how suckky of an attorney he is anyway. My father told him that if Paul comes anywhere close to me, he will press charges again.” Eddie replies, “well, that sounds okay. He won’t bother you.” Kathy tells Eddie, “it’s just knowing that he’s out there. It sucks.”

Eddie explains to Kathy, “well, to start with, he’s been sitting on his ass for a few months in a loony bin, so he’s way out of shape, not that he was ever in shape to begin with.” Kathy replies, “yeah, but.” Before Kathy could finish, Eddie points out, “you can outrun him now! He couldn’t catch you to save his life!” A smile comes across Kathy’s face, and she exclaims, “yeah! You’re right!” Eddie reminds Kathy, “your times now are better than his were at the end of the season!” Eddie also explains, “and besides, all you have to do is look at him and say, ‘we are Katarina Karakova,’ and he’ll land himself right back in the hospital in no time.” Kathy, who is suddenly in a better mood, replies, “yeah! I could do that!” Kathy gives Eddie a big hug, telling him, “you just made my day!”

Eddie tells Kathy, “hey. I have a plan.” Kathy asks, “what’s that?” Eddie, explaining his plan, tells Kathy, “we’ll just call everyone, Braden, Johnson, Mark, and everybody else, and tell them that if they see Mahoney, they are to tell him there are now four of you.” Kathy laughs, and says, “yeah. He’ll be back in that place so fast.” Kathy asks, “what did they used to call those places, a sanitarium or something?” Eddie replies, “yeah. I think so.” Kathy replies, “yeah. A sanitarium. That’s what they were called. From now on, we’re calling it a sanitarium, no more hospital or looney bin.” Trying out the new word, Kathy says, “Mahoney is out of the sanitarium. Mahoney is back in the sanitarium.

Mahoney has moved back into the sanitarium.” Eddie admits, “yeah. That definitely makes him sound a lot more crazy.”

Now that Kathy is in a better mood, they go and work out at Eddie’s house. Working out will help Kathy get rid of a lot of adrenaline that built up after finding out that Mahoney is out of the sanitarium. Kathy has an awesome workout, which puts her in even a better mood. While they are working out, Kathy suggests, “hey! Let’s see if Paula and Mark want to go to the beach or the pool.” Eddie agrees, replying, “yeah! That would be a good afternoon.” They call Mark first, who is with Paula working out at his house. Mark and Paula agree to meet Eddie and Kathy at the pool afterwards, since it is late and the pool is a lot closer.

When Eddie and Kathy arrive at the pool, they find Mark and Paula are already there. Since it is a little later in the day, the pool is sparsely populated. They join Mark and Paula, who are just standing around in the water cooling off. Mark asks everyone, “so, does anyone want to swim some laps?” Kathy replies, “yeah! I’m swimming laps today.” Everyone begins swimming laps, each having their own lane, which is unusual on a sunny day.

Kathy, watching Eddie do flip turns, realizes how artistic they are. Kathy waits for Eddie to get to the end of his lane. When he gets there, she asks him, “will you show me how to do a flip turn?” Eddie replies, “sure. I’ll do one in slow motion, so you can watch first.” Backing up a bit, Eddie swims toward the wall and approaches the wall in slow motion. Right before the wall, Eddie does a somersault in the water, and kicks off the wall. Eddie asks Kathy, “could you see how it’s done?” Kathy replies, “yeah. I got it. Give me the strategy.” When it comes to athletic stuff, Kathy learns very quickly.

Paula and Mark are now standing around, also wanting to learn how to do a flip turn. Eddie tells Kathy, “when you are about an arms length from the wall, that is when you want to begin your flip turn. A flip turn is nothing more than a half somersault in the water. You’ll still have some forward motion but, once you’re flipped, just kick and you’re off. Then, once you’ve kicked off the wall, you will be upside down. Just turn in the water to get face down again.” Eddie also tells Kathy, “that black lane marker, the ‘T’ at the end of the lane, is a guide to tell you when to flip.” Mark replies, “oh! So that’s what it’s for. I never knew that.” Mark is not alone. Not a lot of people know why there is a “T” at the end of the lane in a pool.

Kathy backs up and gives it a try. She approaches the wall, and when she thinks she is in position, she does her somersault. Kathy kicks, but there is no wall to push off of. Eddie tells her, “try again, but go a little farther this time.” Kathy backs up and tries it again. Getting a little

closer to the wall this time, she does the somersault, kicks, and is off. Kathy does a flip turn at the other end of the pool, and comes back to Eddie. Kathy exclaims, "this is fun!" Being very athletic, Kathy learns the technique very quickly.

Mark and Paula then give it a try. Eddie mentions, "the faster you are swimming, the sooner you want to start the somersault, because you have more forward motion." After a few attempts, it seems like everyone is now an expert at flip turns. Eddie gets out of the pool and watches a few of their turns. Everyone appears to have the technique mastered in no time, so Eddie gets back into the pool and continues with his laps.

The mother of a young girl watched as Eddie explained the flip turn to Kathy, Mark, and Paula. The mother approaches Eddie, asking him, "I'm sorry to bother you. Will you please show my daughter how to turn like that? She's always wanted to be able to do that, but she can't figure it out on her own." Eddie replies, "sure. No problem. Go and get her."

At the end of her lap, Kathy sees Eddie standing at the end of the lane, and asks, "what's up?" Eddie replies, "I'm teaching swimming lessons now." Puzzled, Kathy asks, "what?" Eddie explains, "the lady wanted me to show her daughter how to do a flip turn." Kathy replies, "how can you say no to that?"

The woman's daughter, in the lane next to Eddie, stops at the wall where Eddie is waiting. The mother returns, introducing her daughter, "this is my daughter, Tessa Klement." Eddie replies, "hi. I'm Eddie, and this is Kathy." Tessa is a very athletic looking girl. This is obviously not her first time in the water.

Kathy, the future gym teacher, asks Tessa, "so, your mom says you want to learn how to do a flip turn." Tessa replies, "yeah. But, I keep messing it up." Kathy tells Tessa, "okay. Eddie's going to do one in slow motion. You just watch him first." Eddie backs up about ten yards and swims toward the wall. Approaching the wall, Eddie does the somersault, kicks off the wall, and turns 180 degrees in the water, continuing with his stroke. Eddie returns, explaining to Tessa in detail how he did the flip turn.

Kathy tells Tessa, "okay. It's now your turn." Tessa backs up, swims, and approaches the wall. After doing the somersault, she kicks, but the wall is too far away. This is a common problem when learning to do a flip turn. But, it's better than the other problem, which is hitting the wall with your head. Kathy tells Tessa, "try again and, this time, I'll tap you on your back when you should flip." Kathy then tells Tessa, "okay, let's try again."

As Tessa approaches the wall, Kathy taps her on her back when she is close enough. Tessa then does the somersault, kicks, and is now off in the other direction. She goes off on a bit of an angle, but quickly straightens up. She takes a few strokes, and stops. Eddie tells her, "okay, try it again. But, this time Kathy is not going to tap you." Tessa swims toward the wall, but this time she swims a little faster. When she gets within an arms length, she flips, kicks off the wall, and swims straight in the lane this time. Tessa tries a few more times, getting better with her timing during each attempt.

While Tessa is practicing, Kathy asks Mrs. Klement, "how old is Tessa?" Mrs. Klement tells Kathy, "she's fourteen. She's always been very athletic, but this flip turn thing has really got her." Kathy replies, "it looks like she's got it down now," as she watches Tessa do another turn. Watching as Tessa does another flip turn, Mrs. Klement exclaims, "wow! That one looked really good!"

Kathy asks, "so, Tessa will be in high school next year?" Mrs. Klement replies, "yeah. And, she's really nervous." Kathy asks, "Northside High?" Mrs. Klement replies, "yes. We just moved here in the beginning of the Summer, and she doesn't really know too many people." Kathy tells her, "well, I guess we'll see Tessa in high school next year."

When Tessa returns to the end of the pool, she tells Eddie and Kathy, "hey! Thanks so much for showing me how to do that!" Eddie tells her, "no problem." Eddie tells Tessa, "if you want to just practice your flip turns, swim the short dimension of the pool." Kathy gives Tessa a high-five, and Eddie, Kathy, and Tessa go back to swimming laps.

After a while Tessa gets out of the pool, and dries off. Tessa tells her mother, "I'm so excited! I can finally do a flip turn!" Tessa's mother tells her, "some of your turns looked really great! Oh, and Eddie and Kathy go to Northside High School. I guess you'll see them there when school starts." Tessa tells her mother, "they seem really nice." Tessa's mother replies, "see? There's nothing to be worried about."

Mark and Paula get out of the pool, followed by Eddie and Kathy. They have had enough for today, and dry off. Mark asks everyone, "okay. Are we taking on the swimming team next year?" Eddie replies, "you can't be serious." Mark replies, "no. But it's a thought." Kathy asks, "is there a pizza team? We can take them on. That won't be a problem." Paula replies, "they won't stand a chance against us." Mark mentions, "yeah. I can see it now. A discuss with shot-put topings."

Kathy asks, "how about the javelin? Where does that fit in?" Paula reveals the mystery, telling Kathy, "the javelin is just cut up into little pieces, and they call them bread sticks." Kathy then comes to the

conclusion, “yeah. I guess no one can eat a whole javelin on their own.” Eddie mentions, “don’t forget about those drill bits on the salad.” Kathy thinks for a while, and yells out, “yeah! That spiral shaped pasta! Drill bits! I knew it! I knew it!” Paula exclaims, “and, the ziti are really water pipes, and spaghetti is electrical wires!” Kathy adds, “spaghetti is electrical wires only after it’s cooked!” Mark tells everyone, “well, it looks like Joe is in for a surprise next time we go for pizza.” Kathy says to the group, “well, let’s go and surprise him now.” They get on their bicycles and head to the pizzeria.

While Eddie, Kathy, Mark, and Paula were drying off, Tessa looked over and noticed not only how big and strong the high school guys look, but the girls too. She also noticed that they were all having fun together. Something happened to Tessa today at that moment. Today, Tessa learned how to do a flip turn. What is more important is, today, Tessa was filled with the motivation and drive to be a great athlete. Tessa decided that she is going to be athletic like Kathy and Paula. Tessa knows what she wants and has set her goals. Nothing can stop Tessa now.

When they get to the pizzeria, Joe yells out, “hey, look at who’s here!” Joe is always happy to see happy people. The whole group walks up to the counter, and place their order. With a straight face, Kathy tells Joe, “I would like a discus with shot-put toppings. Oh, and we want a javelin, all cut up, please.” Paula, also acting very serious, tells Joe, “we’d also like a large salad, but please don’t put any drill bits on it.” Not quite understanding the girls, Joe starts laughing.

Looking at Eddie, Joe tells him, “it’s no wonder why you guys always come up and place the order!” Kathy and Paula laugh at what they just said. Kathy exclaims, “I can’t even believe I said that!” Mark explains to Joe, “a pizza looks like a discus, and the meatballs are the shot-puts.” Joe begins to catch on. Joe asks, “what’s this about drill bits?” Mark explains, “that’s the spiral shaped pasta on the salads.” Joe laughs, telling them, “you guys are so much fun!” They place their real order, and find a seat.

After dinner, they head out. Mark asks, “how about the beach this weekend?” Everyone agrees the beach is a great idea. Eddie suggests, “maybe, we can get the whole tribe together for pizza sometime.” Paula is quick to respond, telling everyone, “I’m in.” Kathy suggests, “yeah! And we’ll see who’s brave enough to eat drill bits.” Paula has a suggestion too, mentioning, “I want to see Bobby B. eat a shot-put.” Kathy laughs, and says, “yeah, we’re crazy all right!” Paula remarks, “when we all get together, it’s really going to be something.” Mark and Paula then head out together. Kathy suggests to Eddie, “lets go to my house and just hang out in the pool.” Eddie replies, “that sounds great.” Eddie and Kathy then head out to Kathy’s house.

For the next few weeks, the workouts continue. Eddie and Kathy are both getting stronger and faster. Mark and Paula are also working out together. They are keeping pace with Eddie and Kathy. Eddie improves his nutrition, taking more amino acids to build muscle. Eddie also notices that, because he is taking the methylfolate, the heat does not bother him as much as it has in previous years.

Eddie's bicycle is holding up well. He does notice, however, that Kathy's bicycle can use a little work. Kathy's bicycle is a quality bicycle. It is a top of the line Motobecane touring bicycle with high end Campagnolo components. A squeak somewhere, however, suggests it's time for service. One day, Eddie asks Kathy, "hey. Do you want to tune up your bicycle?" Kathy replies, "sure. If you think it needs it." Eddie tells Kathy, "it needs it. Trust me. Let's ride over to Vito's and get some parts."

At Vito's Bicycle Shop, Eddie and Kathy pick up some brake shoes, new cables, handlebar tape, and a few other items. Kathy also buys a small handlebar bag, so she can carry more stuff to the beach. They then ride back to Eddie's house to tune up Kathy's bicycle. Eddie brings Kathy's bicycle into his father's shop in the basement, where they begin to work on it.

In no time, Eddie has Kathy's entire bicycle disassembled. Kathy is amazed, seeing the parts from her bicycle spread out all around. Eddie tells Kathy, "if you want to, you can clean the frame." Kathy cleans up the frame, and anything else that looks dirty. The first thing Eddie does is to disassemble the front hub, clean and repack the bearings, and reassemble the hub. He then removes the freewheel from the rear wheel, rebuilds the rear hub in the same way he did the front hub. After replacing the freewheel, he lubricates it, and moves on to the cranks. Removing the cranks, he cleans and repacks the bearings, and reinstalls the crank set. He tells Kathy to remove the old brake shoes. After showing her how to remove one, Kathy quickly catches on and removes the others.

Kathy mentions, "wow! I didn't know there are so many parts." Eddie replies, "yeah. There are lots of little ones, but I know where they all go." Eddie removes the derailleurs, cleans and lubricates them, and reinstalls them. They then install the new brake shoes. At this point, Eddie tells Kathy, "we're almost done." Removing the old cables, Eddie replaces them with better cables that have Teflon sleeves. Flipping the bicycle upside down, Eddie adjusts the gears and the brakes. They then check all the bolts, making sure they are tight. The last thing is to replace the worn out handlebar tape with new leather tape. This will afford a better and more comfortable grip.

The bicycle is now done. The effort to rebuild the bicycle took a little more than two hours, including the trip to Vito's. Eddie takes Kathy's

bicycle outside, and gives it a short test ride. It seems to ride perfectly, so he lets Kathy give it a try. Kathy gets on her bicycle, and takes it for a test ride. As Kathy rides past Eddie, she exclaims, "wow! Is this really my bicycle?" Kathy rides up the street, and back to Eddie's house. She stops, and tells Eddie, "I can't believe how good it rides now!" Eddie replies, telling her, "it's back to factory specs again." Kathy exclaims, "it never rode this good before! You're not going to be able to keep up with me anymore!" Eddie replies, "then I guess I'll have to carry you more." Eddie and Kathy go for a short ride together to give Kathy's bicycle a good test.

During the next few rides, Kathy is able to keep up a better pace. On the way to the beach one day, Paula tries Kathy's bicycle. After seeing how well it rides, she asks Eddie if he can tune hers up someday too. Paula's bicycle, like Kathy's, is a quality machine. Machines do require periodic maintenance. Eddie gives Paula's bicycle a test ride, and agrees that it definitely needs some work.

When they are all together later that week, Eddie tunes up Paula's bicycle. As Eddie disassembles each bearing set, Paula cleans the parts. Eddie, with Mark's help, lubricates and reassembles the bearings. Mark and Kathy, in the mean time, clean the frame and wheels. The difference after the tune-up is remarkable. They can all now enjoy an easier ride to the beach.

With Summer vacation coming to an end, Kathy and Paula plan for the tribe to get together at the pool, and get pizza afterwards. They choose the last Friday afternoon of the Summer before school starts. This will give everyone a chance to meet up before the school year begins in a more relaxed atmosphere. Kathy and Paula did not set any specific time to show up at the pool. Kathy and Paula rule their life like a bird in flight, so plans are not set in stone. They decide to tell everyone to show up at the pool in the afternoon. Afterwards, when they are hungry, they will all go out and get pizza.

The week of the pool party, the class schedules arrive in the mail. Eddie immediately calls Kathy, and finds out that they have the same lunch period together. Eddie talks with Mark, and they discover they are again in the same section, so most of their classes overlap. Eddie, now a sophomore, is eligible to take auto shop. Mark, however, signed up for woodworking and metal shop, which will be an easy A for him. Eddie tells everyone to spread the word to bring their schedules to the pool party, so they all can compare. With any luck, they will be in some of the same classes together.

The day of the party arrives, and Eddie and Kathy ride to the pool together. When they arrive, they find Braden and Wendy sitting at a table under an umbrella. Kathy and Eddie put their stuff on a nearby table, and

join Braden and Wendy. Eddie compares schedules with Braden, and notice they are in the same section as well. Eddie informs Braden that Mark is also in the same section, which is good news. Braden mentions, "the best part is that gym class is right before lunch." Eddie replies, "yeah. And, not right after." Gym class right after lunch is never too much fun. While Eddie and Braden are comparing schedules, Kathy announces, "I'll be right back."

Kathy walks over to the pool, where she sees Tessa swimming laps. What caught Kathy's eye was the flip turn Tessa did. Kathy sits at the edge of the lane waiting for Tessa. Seeing Kathy, Tessa stops and exclaims, "Kathy! Hey there!" Kathy tells Tessa, "you've gotten really good! Your flip turn looks great!" Tessa replies, "I've been practicing almost every day since you guys showed be how to do a flip turn." Giving Tessa some encouragement, Kathy tells her, "well, your turns look really awesome!" Tessa tells Kathy, "it's my favorite part of swimming laps now."

Kathy asks, "is your mom here today?" Tessa replies, "no. She got tired of taking me to the pool every day, so she lets me ride my bicycle here now. She just makes me call her when I get here and when I leave. But, sometimes I come here with a friend, so she knows that I'm safe." Kathy tells Tessa, "hey. When you're done, come and join us. We're over there," pointing to the tables where they dropped their stuff.

Kathy returns to the group, noticing that Mark and Paula have arrived. Eddie asks Kathy, "isn't that Tessa?" Kathy replies, "yeah. And her flip turns have gotten really good." Eddie asks, "so, she's been practicing?" Kathy tells Eddie, "she said almost every day." Seeing Tessa do a flip turn, Paula remarks, "yeah. She definitely has what it takes." Kathy tells the group, "I told her she can come and join us when she's done."

Bobby B. arrives next, two inches taller and with twenty more pounds of muscle. The shot-doc, who was highly motivated after the last regular meet of the Spring season, has been working out all Summer. The shot-doc drops his stuff on the table. Mark jokingly says to him, "hey! Did you take the Summer off, bro?" Bobby B. replies, "yeah. I only worked out five or six days a week over the Summer." Bobby B. exchanges a fist bump with his friends, and takes a seat. Eddie announces, "I'm going to swim a few laps before it gets crowded," and heads to the pool. Everyone else sits back and relaxes for a while.

Eddie gets into the water, and notices Tessa is swimming like a machine. She apparently now has her flip turn down to a science. Eddie starts swimming, and is in the lane next to Tessa. While Eddie is doing his laps, he notices Tessa is still keeping her same pace, and is not slowing a bit. Eddie and Tessa, otherwise, do not pay much attention to

each other. They are too focused on their workouts. After a while, Mark gets in the pool, and also starts swimming laps.

Johnson and Barbara are the next to arrive. They put their stuff down, say a quick hello, and head right for the water. Kathy mentions to Paula, “Barbara looks like she’s been working out a lot too.” Kathy remarks, “I wonder what everyone else does over the Summer.” Bobby B. answers, telling everyone, “they sit in their houses, getting a head start on next year’s school work.” Bobby B., who lives near Kathy, is in a neighborhood where there are a lot of kids, but they are rarely seen outside. It’s not hard to see why Bobby B. came to that conclusion. Paula mentions, “well, there were a lot of kids in the camp this year. Maybe everyone goes to Summer camps.” Kathy points out, “Tessa has been swimming all Summer. And, it definitely shows.”

Eddie and Mark get out of the pool, and take a seat. Mitchell walks up, telling everyone, “hey! It’s great to see everyone again!” They all talk for a while and catch up on what they did this Summer. As they are talking, Jimmy Hoffer, the sprinter who will be a freshman this year, notices Mark and Eddie sitting with a group of people. Looking a little closer, Hoffer also recognizes Johnson, Bobby B., and Mitchell. Hoffer, who hasn’t seen many of them in a year, comes over to say hello. Mark introduces Hoffer to Kathy, Paula, and Barbara. They all talk about track for a while, filling Hoffer in on last year’s indoor and Spring track seasons.

Tessa finishes her laps, and gets out of the pool. Tessa gets her towel, and dries off. Looking around, she walks over to the table where Eddie and his tribe are sitting. As Tessa is walking up, Kathy mentions to her, “it looks like you had a great workout!” Tessa replies, “yeah. And, I’m exhausted.” This is the first time any of them have seen Tessa out of the water. Paula whispers to Mark, “that girl has lats the size of angel wings!”

Tessa sees Hoffer sitting with the group. All excited, Tessa asks Hoffer, “hey! Do you know these guys?” Hoffer replies, “yeah. I ran with them in middle school a while ago.” It is obvious to everyone that Hoffer and Tessa have met before.

Kathy tells Tessa, “hey! Come and sit with us.” Kathy introduces Tessa to everyone. Tessa tells everyone, “my family just moved here in the beginning of the Summer. I met Jimmy at the pool during our first week here. We’ve been hanging out together.” Tessa is as happy as she can be right now. She’ll be in high school next week, and has already been accepted by the upperclassmen.

Mitchell asks, “did anybody bring their schedules?” In no time, everyone takes out their class schedules. Everyone compares their

schedules and, to everyone's amazement, all the sophomores are in the same section. This means everyone in the group is all in the same core classes.

Braden exclaims, "hey look! We're all in the same gym class!" Mark replies, "I wonder how we all got the same classes together." Barbara smiles, and tells everyone, "I know how." Eddie asks Barbara, "tell us." Barbara explains, "Mr. Frazier or Mr. Zunde probably pulled some strings to get you guys in the same section. It was probably Mr. Zunde. They've done that before for other teams. It really boosts team morale."

Braden then exclaims, "since we're in the same gym class, we're kicking ass during that football game! We're gonna be kicking ass all year long! Ain't no one gonna stop us!" While Braden is on his rant, Kathy whispers to Tessa, "Braden is the team's chief ass kicker. He gets like this, especially during track meets." Tessa replies, "he sounds really confident." Kathy replies, "oh, yeah! He is, and then some!"

Tessa asks, "what's all this about a football game?" Barbara explains to Tessa and Hoffer, "in gym class, Mr. Frazier arranges the first football game of the year to be the freshmen versus the sophomores." Eddie adds, "it's like some sort of initiation rite." Braden is quick to point out, "we kicked a lot of sophomore ass last year. And, we're gonna be kicking ass again this year!"

For the next hour or so, Hoffer and Tessa talk with the group. Many in the group go in and out of the pool to cool off. As the afternoon comes to an end, the decision is made to get pizza. Kathy asks Tessa and Hoffer, "we're getting pizza. Do you guys want to join us?" Tessa tells Kathy, "let me call my mom and make sure it's okay first." Hoffer and Tessa go off to make the phone call as everyone else packs up their stuff.

As they are packing up their stuff, Eddie asks Paula and Barbara, "when's your lunch period?" Paula replies, "fifth period." Barbara replies, "so is mine! It looks like we'll be together for that part of the day. Kathy screams, "awesome! Yes!" Mark walks over, and asks, "what was that all about?" Eddie replies, "we all have lunch together." Mark smiles, having something to look forward to mid day.

Barbara mentions to Paula, "someone had to have pulled a lot of strings to get all this to happen." Paula curiously asks, "who do you think it was?" Barbara tells her, "Mr. Frazier probably suggested it. But, one thing is for sure. If Mr. Zunde wants something, he gets it." Paula replies, asking, "really?" Barbara informs Paula, "Mr. Zunde doesn't even need his job. The rumor is that no one messes with him, not even the principal." Paula, having a revelation, mentions, "yeah. I've noticed that. He seems to do whatever he wants."

Barbara whispers to Paula, "I know a secret about Mr. Zunde." Paula, whispering back, asks, "what's that?" Barbara tells Paula, "well, it's not really a secret. A few people know. Mr. Zunde is actually Dr. Zunde, but he doesn't want to be called Dr. Zunde around the school. He has a Ph.D. in Exercise Science and a Ph.D. in Nutrition." Barbara also tells Paula, "Kathy knows about it, only because Mr. Zunde knows her father." Barbara explains, "Mr. Zunde can walk into any university or high school and get a job that he doesn't even need." Paula remarks, "this is beginning to make a lot of sense."

Many years ago, the high school principal, Mr. Crum, suspended John Davies, the school's star football quarterback. Davies was on target to get a scholarship to a major university. Many college scouts were present at the regional semifinals, with the team being a strong contender for a State championship. Davies was so good, the high school retired his number, number 7. No other student before or has since had that honor.

A few days before the game, Davies was caught drinking a beer on school grounds. Even though he was of legal age<sup>1</sup>, and school was not in session, Mr. Crum suspended him anyway. Davies was therefore not allowed to play in the divisional semifinals. The team got beat, 63-6, clearly proving that Davies was a key player. His father, Mr. Davies, took the issue to the school board, which led to the hiring of Dr. Zunde. Davies, a walk-on in college, eventually got the scholarship he was due.

Mr. Maurice Crum, the principal, is quite afraid of Dr. Gerhard Zunde. Dr. Zunde was appointed by the school board years ago to beef up the failing athletic program. Before Dr. Zunde arrived, many of the Northside teams occupied the basement, courtesy of Mr. Crum. After Mr. Zunde began working with the teams, championships, State invitational meets, and subsequently scholarships for the students have been a commonplace.

Dr. Zunde is also the highest paid teacher in the school district, earning more than three times what Mr. Crum makes. Of special interest is Dr. Zunde does not report to the principal. He was appointed by, and reports directly to, the school board, which annoys Mr. Crum. Dr. Zunde drives to school in his Porsche 911, and parks it next to Mr. Crum's dilapidated Volkswagen Beetle. Mr. Zunde also often mispronounces Mr. Crum's name, calling him Mr. Crumb.

Hoffer and Tessa return with good news. Tessa announces, "I can go! Well, as long as Jimmy goes with me." Kathy tells her, "awesome!" Once

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of Davies suspension, the legal drinking age was eighteen years of age.

they are all packed up, they all head out to the pizzeria. On the way, Kathy yells out, “wow! My bicycle rides really good!” Eddie yells back, “yeah! I see that! I’m having trouble keeping up with you!”

On the way, they pass through Bobby B. and Kathy’s neighborhood. As they drive down the street, Tessa points to her house and yells out, “hey, Kathy! There’s my house!” Kathy yells back, “wow! We live in the same neighborhood!” Kathy takes the lead, and makes a turn so they can ride by her house. When they pass by Kathy’s house, Kathy yells out to Tessa, “there’s my house!”

When they arrive at the pizzeria, Joe yells out from behind the counter, “hey, look who’s here!” Mark yells back, “hey, Joe! We’re really hungry today!” Joe yells back, “hey, Kathy! What will it be? A discus or a shot-put today? Oh, and we’re having a special on drill bits!” Tessa is now really beginning to feel special. Tessa has found her tribe.

They all take a seat near the window, spreading out over a few tables. Since it is a large group, Joe comes over to take their order. Kathy, pointing at Bobby B. tells Joe, “he’s having a shot-put. Yeah, make sure he gets a shot-put.” Quite puzzled, Bobby B. asks, “what?” Joe turns to Bobby B., asking him, “do you want a javelin to go with your shot-put?” Kathy starts laughing, and explains to Bobby B., “a meatball is a shot-put. A pizza is a discus. And, bread sticks are a javelin that is cut up into small pieces.” Everyone laughs, as Paula remarks, “this is never going to end. I can see it.”

Once they have all placed their order, Tessa asks, “what’s this about drill bits?” Kathy explains, “drill bits are those little spiral pasta things they put in salads.” Tessa starts laughing, and says, “you guys are so funny!” Eddie says to the group, “just wait until we get back to school. Kathy’s going to have a special name for everything they serve in the school cafeteria.” Paula remarks, “I can’t wait to hear what she comes up with.”

Hearing Paula’s comment regarding the food served in school, Kathy tells Paula, “how about fried rat brains with cesspool sauce? Or, a Chinese dish, Bird Dropping Soup.” Paula exclaims, “stop it, girl! We’re about to eat!” Kathy laughs, telling Paula, “you know, at school, they serve sandwiches on boogie man bread.” Paula pretends to ignore Kathy, but Kathy knows that Paula was very afraid of the boogie man when she was younger.

During dinner, Paula whispers to Kathy, “uh oh! Trouble is coming.” Kathy whispers to Paula, “like in your superpowers?” Paula replies, “yeah. Exactly.” Paula looks out the window, and sees Mahoney drive into the parking lot in his Corvette. Paula announces to everyone, “hey! Mahoney

just drove up.” Kathy, who is not afraid in the least bit, tells everyone, “if he comes anywhere near here, I’ll take care of him.” Eddie reassures Kathy, “don’t worry about him at all.” Braden adds, “yeah. He’s about due for another ass kicking anyway. He’s got to get through us to get to you. And, he ain’t gonna be doing that.” Tessa asks, “what’s this all about?” Kathy explains, “Paul Mahoney. He’s an escaped crack pot from the sanitarium.” As they continue to eat, Mahoney walks through the door.

Mahoney, seeing the group together, spies Kathy and freezes for a moment. Mahoney walks to the counter to place an order, and looks again at Kathy. Eddie turns around to look at Mahoney, and turns back around. Paula whispers to Kathy, “this is not good.” Kathy tells everyone, “don’t ask questions now but, if he comes over here, whatever I say, say exactly the same thing.” Everyone agrees to Kathy’s request. Mahoney looks again in the direction of Kathy’s table. Kathy is ready. She no longer has any fear in confronting Mahoney.

Mahoney places his order, and walks in the direction of Kathy’s table. Eddie turns around, but Mahoney stares right through him looking at Kathy. Mahoney points directly at Kathy, shaking his finger, and tries to say something, but has difficulty speaking. Mahoney finally utters to Kathy, “you! You!” Making no sense at all, Mahoney gets too close for comfort.

Kathy stands up, looks at Mahoney, and says in a monotone voice, “we are Katarina Karakova.” Everyone repeats in unison what Kathy said, “we are Katarina Karakova.” Mahoney panics, puts his hands over his ears, and screams out, “nooooo!” All the patrons turn to look to see what happened. Mahoney runs to the door, and is barely able to get it open. When he finally opens the door, he runs down the street in the opposite direction of his car, screaming out words that make no sense at all.

Hoffer asks, “wow! Is that guy crazy, or what?” Kathy replies, “yeah. He is. I guess it’s back to the good old sanitarium for him.” Tessa asks, “what’s up with that guy, anyway?” Paula interjects, “he’s a real mental case. His elevator is stuck between floors. Apparently, they let him out of the sanitarium way too early.” Kathy reassures Tessa, “don’t worry about him. He’s pretty much harmless now.” Mitchell mentions, “Mahoney is what you would call an entitled brat. His parents kept telling him that he’s so special when he was younger. And, this is what happened to him.” They resume their dinner, not giving Mahoney any further attention.

With dinner now over, they all get up and head out. While they are unlocking their bicycles, a police car with flashing lights drives up the road slowly. The officer, whose name is Richard Hayes, asks the group, “did any of you see a guy screaming and running around here?” Kathy, taking control of the situation, tells Officer Hayes, “yeah. His name is Paul

Mahoney. He must have escaped from the sanitarium.” Understanding that Kathy has some valuable information, the police officer pulls over, parks his car, and gets out.

The officer tells Kathy, “Paul Mahoney. We know all about that character.” The officer then asks Kathy, “how do you know him?” Kathy replies, “he was supposed to graduate high school last year, but they had to put him in a sanitarium.” Pointing to the parking lot, Kathy tells the officer, “his car is over there. It’s the blue Corvette.” Kathy and the officer go over to take a look. The officer writes down Mahoney’s license plate number. Kathy tells the officer, “Mahoney is seriously crazy. You need to get him off the streets.” The officer replies, “I agree. This Mahoney character allegedly almost caused an accident up the street. The complainant states that he was screaming as he was running down the middle of the street.”

Getting back into his car, the officer radios the precinct to relay the information regarding Mahoney that he obtained from Kathy. The officer asks Kathy for her name and phone number, which she is quick to give him. The officer thanks Kathy for her help, and tells her she can go.

When Kathy returns to the group, Eddie tells her, “you handled that really well.” Kathy replies, “I’m not afraid of that jerk anymore.” Hoffer mentions to Eddie, “I have to hear about this one sometime.” Eddie tells Hoffer, “well, if you’re riding home with Tessa, we’ll explain when we get to Kathy’s.”

They all say goodbye, and will meet again in a few days at school. Mark and Paula then head out together. Johnson and Barbara head in another direction with Braden and Wendy. Eddie, Kathy, Bobby B., Mitchell, Hoffer, and Tessa all head in the direction of Kathy’s house.

When they arrive at Kathy’s house, they all sit on the front lawn. Kathy and Eddie explain to Hoffer and Tessa what happened at the end of the last school year regarding Mahoney. Eddie specifically tells Hoffer, “Mahoney was supposed to be the star of the track team last year but, as the year went on, he kept getting slower and slower. No one knows why.” Hoffer mentions to Eddie, “he looked kind of weak for a senior.” Kathy points out, “that’s what a few months in a sanitarium will do to you. His muscles wasted away, and now he’s Mahoney baloney.”

Tessa asks, “what was that name that you said to get rid of him?” Kathy tells Tessa, “oh. That’s my real name, ‘Katarina Karakova.’” Tessa tells Kathy, “that’s a really beautiful name.” Kathy replies, “thank you.” Tessa mentions, “my real name is Tessa. But, everyone thinks it’s short for something, like Contessa, Theresa, or Quintessa.”

After a while, Hoffer and Tessa ride their bicycles to Tessa's house. Bobby B. and Mitchell head home. Eddie and Kathy have what's left of the evening to spend with each other.

Eddie tells Kathy, "today was really fun." Kathy replies, "yeah, and I'm doing really good." Kathy whispers to Eddie, "thank you for a wonderful Summer." Eddie whispers back, "this was my best Summer ever. I really loved our time together." Kathy sighs, and says, "yeah. And, next week it's back to school." Eddie tells Kathy, "we'll just make it the best school year together."

Kathy tells Eddie, "take me home." Eddie reminds Kathy, "you are home." Kathy says to him, "no, silly. Take me home the long way." Kathy and Eddie walk to the schoolyard behind Kathy's house, and take the long way home.