

Eddie, The Sophomore Year

Chapter Five Spring Track Tryouts

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Eddie, Kathy, Mark, and Paula decide to go to the beach the weekend before Spring tryouts. The weather is still a bit on the cooler side, so they decide to go to the beach of the future. They meet at Mark's house, and ride to the portal together. They all decided on late Summer, 25 years from now. This time, Paula takes them to their destination. Raising her right hand, Paula declares, "late Summer, 25 years from now, in the morning." They instantly arrive, and it is a beautiful day. Eddie remarks, "it looks good," and they all head down the path to the beach. Kathy and Paula lead the way, with the pace being a lot faster now than it was last Spring when Eddie and Kathy took their first trip to the beach together.

When they arrive, they find that the beach is not too crowded. Heading to the concession area, they lock their bicycles, and find their favorite spot a little way farther down on the beach. Taking a walk along the beach together, they hunt for shells and other interesting stuff that may have washed ashore. On the way, Kathy stops abruptly, telling Eddie, Mark, and Paula, "wait, guys! Listen to that song!" A couple lying on the beach is listening to the song *When You Say Nothing at All*, by Allison Krauss. Kathy walks closer, falling in love with yet another song from the future.

She tells Eddie, "okay, I know you're going to think I'm crazy, but I've got to have that song too." Paula mentions, "yeah, that is a really awesome song." Kathy approaches the couple, and asks, "hey. Can you tell me what song that is?" The woman replies, "it's *When You Say Nothing at All*. It's by Allison Krauss." Kathy asks Eddie, "can you help me remember that?" Eddie replies, "sure," as he repeats the name of the song and the artist. Paula replies, "I might want to get that song too. I'll help you remember it." Mark comments, "between the four of us, we should be able to remember that." Eddie mentions, "we can pick it up on the way

back at the record store.” It looks like there is another song of the future about to be added to Kathy’s record collection.

On the way back from their walk, Kathy mentions, “we should just come to the future someday and just listen to the music.” Eddie replies, “yeah, a lot of this is different. Look at all we’re missing.” Kathy asks, “missing?” She then points out, “none of this has happened yet in our world.” Eddie remarks, “oh yeah. You got a point.” When they arrive back at their towels, Eddie and Kathy tell Mark and Paula that they are going to go for a walk in the sand dunes. Mark and Paula decide to go on their own walk, to their favorite place.

The sand dunes are, as usual, deserted. Being quite secluded, there is no view of the water, or anything for that matter. Kathy asks Eddie, “hey, do you remember the name of the song?” Eddie replies, “*When You Say Nothing at All*, by Allison Krauss.” Kathy tells Eddie, “hold me, and kiss me, and say nothing at all until we head back.” Eddie kisses Kathy, as they find themselves sitting among the sand dunes. Laying in the sand, they caress and embrace each other, saying a lot, but saying nothing at all.

Before they go back to their towels, Kathy searches for the highest sand dune. Weaving in and out of the dunes, she thinks she’s found it. While they are on top of the dune, she asks Eddie, “can you put me on your shoulders, please?” Eddie raises Kathy onto his shoulders, as Kathy looks around. Eddie asks, “what’s the view like up there?” Kathy replies, “hey! It looks like there is another beach farther down. I think I can see a parking lot.” Eddie tells her, “yeah, there is. That beach is about two miles away.” On the way back, Kathy asks, “have you ever been to that beach?” Eddie replies, “yeah. It’s a small parking lot and beach. There’s no concession area or pool. It’s kind of small. But, you can drive onto the beach over there.” Kathy tells Eddie, “someday, we’re going to that beach.”

When they arrive back at their towels, they grab some lunch and lay in the sun for a while. After a while, they see Mark and Paula in the water and decide to join them. While they are riding the waves, they see a man in his forties, who is grossly out of shape, getting into the water. Eddie remarks, “you know, that could be Jimmy O’Brien. Or, maybe it’s the little Chuckie. After all, we’re 25 years into the future.” Kathy replies, “wow! We could walk down the beach, and see people we know from school, and they could have kids running around.” Paula adds, “or teenagers.” Mark then mentions, “so, there’s probably somebody somewhere on this beach that we know.” Eddie drops a bomb, and replies to Mark, “who knows? Maybe you’re here somewhere.” That certainly gives them a different perspective of what they are seeing and experiencing.

After a relaxing day at the beach, they head home. Tryouts begin on Monday and, even though they will all make the team, they must be at their best. The Spring track season always brings a much larger field of athletes trying out for the team. When they arrive at the portal, Kathy asks, “hey, how about my song?” Eddie replies, “oh yeah. We can go and get it now, before we head back.” They ride to the record shop, which is only a short distance away.

When they arrive at the record shop, the clerk who helped Kathy and Eddie once before exclaims, “hey! It’s the blonde beach girl again!” The girl remembered Kathy from her last visit to the store. After all, it’s not every day someone comes in wanting a vinyl copy of a song. Everyone else buys CDs, which Kathy could not play unless she had a CD player. Returning to her time with a CD player and a few CDs would certainly provoke a visit from the alphabet soup agencies¹ in Washington, D.C. if the wrong person saw it.

The clerk asks Kathy, “what are you looking for today?” Kathy replies, “I’m looking for *When You Say Nothing at All*, by Allison Krauss.” The clerk asks, “the vinyl 45?” Kathy replies, “yeah! You remembered!” The clerk replies, “yeah! You’re *The Power of Love* girl!” Kathy replies, “wow, you remembered that too!” The clerk tells Kathy, “sweetie, you’re unforgettable. Let me go and get it for you.”

The clerk returns with the record, a 45-vinyl single, which is very familiar to Kathy. While the clerk was away, Paula decided she wanted one as well. While the clerk goes and gets Paula’s copy, Kathy reminds Paula, “remember, you can’t let anyone hear it. It doesn’t exist in our time. And who knows? Allison Krauss may not have even been born yet.” Kathy was close. Allison Krauss was just learning to walk in Kathy and Paula’s time. The clerk returns, and hands the 45 to Paula, telling her, “one for blonde beach girl and one for brunette beach girl.” They check out at the counter, and head back to their time, taking a piece of the future back with them.

When Monday arrives, tryouts for the Spring teams also begin. By now, Eddie and the tribe are used to the drill. After school, the locker room is packed. Students are trying out for baseball, lacrosse, swimming, golf, and track and field. Tessa will be trying out for the swimming team, so she won’t be at track tryouts today. Hoffer tried to convince her to try out for track, but swimming is where her heart is. If Tessa doesn’t make the swimming team, Mr. Frazier assured her that she has a place on the track team.

¹ Alphabet Soup Agencies : CIA, FBI, NSA, etc.

Mr. Zunde gives the announcement to direct the students to the proper location for whatever sport they are trying out for. Track and field will meet in the auxiliary gym before they head out to the track. Mr. Zunde always finishes with his comical announcement, "and, if you are trying out for golf, that's too bad. You should have taken the bus going to the golf course. Better luck next time."

Eddie and the tribe are among the last to walk into the gym. Kathy, Paula, and Barbara are all dressed in uniform. Seeing the girls gives the freshmen confidence that they will make the team, thinking to themselves, "if girls can make the team, so can we." The tribe sits on the end, not paying too much attention to whom else might be there.

Mr. Frazier walks in, and introduces himself, Mr. Zunde, Wendy, and Erika. He quickly goes through today's agenda. Mr. Frazier, looking at the very large turnout of athletes, announces, "after today, about half of you will unfortunately be cut. The other half, who were not cut, will return tomorrow for another session of tryouts. After tomorrow, I will begin to assign events."

This year there is a huge turnout, including about ten women. The huge turnout is partially because Eddie and his tribe brought home so many medals during the indoor track season. Many students get the false impression that track and field is easy, and anyone can run. Some of them are about to learn differently.

Mr. Frazier tells the athletes, "if you are a field athlete, please follow Mr. Zunde out to the field now." Mr. Zunde leaves, with the field athletes following him. Included in the field athlete group this year is Jimmy O'Brien. O'Brien will be trying out for any event he can just to get on the team.

Mr. Frazier then announces, "Barbara, please come up here." Barbara walks up to the front. Mr. Frazier tells the remaining athletes, "if you are a distance runner, please follow Wendy and Barbara out to the track now." Before the distance team heads out, Mr. Frazier whispers to Barbara, "run a 6:15 mile today." Quickly changing his mind, Mr. Frazier tells Barbara, "no, wait. Give it the best you got. Tell Mitchell to run a 6:15 mile, and let's see how that goes. And, tell him he's on the team." Mr. Frazier obviously wants to see what Barbara can do on the outside track.

Mr. Frazier tells the rest of the group, "if you are still here, I presume you are a sprinter. If you are a sprinter, please follow Erika and myself out to the track now." Eddie and his tribe walk out to the track, and lead the crowd. This is their track now. If anyone steps onto their track, Eddie and the tribe will kick their ass in each and every event. On the way, Eddie, seeing the crowd of distance runners, asks Kathy, "how is he going to get

rid of half of them?” Kathy explains to Eddie, “last year, he had Barbara run a 6:15 mile. If you couldn’t beat her, you got cut immediately.” Eddie replies, “wow! That makes it really easy.”

Out on the track, the sprinters gather around Mr. Frazier, waiting for instruction. Looking around, Kathy suddenly exclaims to Eddie, “shit! How is he here?” Eddie, alarmed at Kathy’s reaction, asks, “who?” Kathy, who is clearly pissed off, points to a guy on the far side of the group, and quietly exclaims, “that’s Mahoney! How is he here?” Mahoney is the last person Kathy expected to see at tryouts today.

Mr. Frazier starts addressing the crowd, but Kathy and Eddie are not listening, but talking between themselves. Eddie tells Kathy, “don’t worry about him. He can’t do anything to you.” Kathy calms down a bit, but her adrenaline level is definitely up. Eddie tells Kathy, “just kick his ass on the track, and put him in his place.” Kathy replies, “his place is in the sanatorium.” Eddie tells Kathy, “and, if he gives you a problem, you know exactly how to put him there.”

When Mr. Frazier is finished addressing the candidates, he whispers to Braden, “start a big rant at the blocks.” Braden asks, “really?” Mr. Frazier replies, “yeah. And, you know who the target is, if you catch my drift.” In a military tone, Braden replies, “yes, sir!” Mr. Frazier whispers to Braden, “give it your best. I want to hear it all the way over here at the finish line.” Braden grins ear to ear, ready to go to work.

Mr. Frazier, who has just finished addressing the crowd, tells Eddie and Kathy, “come on, what are you waiting for?” Mark fills them in, telling them, “we’re running a 100-yard dash.” Kathy, who was too busy talking with Eddie about Mahoney, asks Mark, “who?” Mark informs her, “you, me, Eddie, Paula, Braden, and Mahoney. We’re in the first heat.” Kathy lets her tribe know, “I’m kicking Mahoney’s ass.” As they are walking to the blocks, Mark asks, “what is Mahoney doing here anyway?” Paula answers, telling everyone, “he never graduated, so maybe he’s going to try Spring semester for the second time.”

When they get to the blocks, Mahoney, who looks like he has lost 20 or 30 pounds, takes the outside lane. He had no choice, for the tribe got there first and all picked the better lanes. Braden looks over at Mahoney, and exclaims, “didn’t I kick your ass enough last year? What? Are you back for more? I’m kicking your ass and, this time, you’re gonna feel it all the way through to the other side!” Mahoney is silent, knowing that any response will only result in more ranting by Braden.

Braden asks, “who’s in the lane next to Mahoney?” Paula, who happens to be in that lane, replies, “me.” Braden tells Paula, “move over. I want that lane! If I’m going to kick his ass, I want to be right next to him!

I want him to know how badly he got his ass kicked!" Paula and Braden exchange lanes, and Mahoney begins to get a little nervous. Paula is glad not to have to run next to Mahoney.

Mahoney begs Braden, "just calm down a little. Please, just calm down." Braden exclaims, "this is calm! When my foot gets rammed up your ass, then I'm fired up! And this year, if you don't grab that baton, I'm gonna shove it up your ass and make it a permanent part of your anatomy!" Mr. Frazier, 100 yards away, hears the rant and enjoys the entertainment. Braden tells Erika, "okay! Let's get this ass kicking started!"

Erika announces, "on your marks." Once the runners are in the blocks, Erika announces, "set." Braden, turning toward Mahoney, immediately yells, "go," causing Mahoney to incur a false start. Braden exclaims, "see that? I just kicked your ass once! Now, you're in for your real ass kicking, junior! Now, get your scrawny ass back in the blocks, and stop holding up the race!"

Eddie and Mark are laughing at Mahoney. Kathy is no longer worried about Mahoney, who is now acting like a little pussy cat. Erika announces, "okay, everyone, let's try this again. On your marks." The runners get ready. Erika announces, "set." She fires the gun, and the runners are out of the blocks.

Eddie is quickly in the lead, with Mark, Braden, Kathy, and Paula slightly behind at 25 yards into the race. Mahoney is clearly in last place. At 50 yards, Mark and Braden take a slight lead over Kathy and Paula. Mahoney falls even farther behind. At 75 yards, Eddie is still in first place, Mark is in second place, with Braden following closely behind. Kathy and Paula are right behind Braden. At the finish, Eddie crosses first, with Mark taking a very close second place. Braden finishes in third place. Kathy and Paula tie for fourth place, only one yard behind Braden, surprising everyone including Mr. Frazier. Thirty yards behind the winner is Mahoney, running a poor time even for middle school. Mahoney finishes the race, quite perplexed about how Kathy and Paula just pummeled his ass.

Braden starts ranting again, exclaiming, "five people just kicked your ass, and two of them are girls! You ought to get your little pussy ass back to the locker room while you still have an ass, because everyone's kicking it now! Even Jimmy O'Brien can kick your ass!"

After Braden finally calms down, Mr. Frazier announces, "Eddie, you ran a 9.5." Mr. Frazier only has two hands, so he only timed the winner and Mahoney. Since it was a tight field, Mr. Frazier can easily gauge everyone else's times, estimating about a tenth of a second per yard. But,

their times do not matter too much. Eddie, Mark, Braden, Kathy, and Paula will all be on the team. Mr. Frazier only arranged this exercise to eliminate Mahoney.

Mahoney asks Mr. Frazier, "what was my time?" Mr. Frazier tells Mahoney, loud enough for everyone to hear, "Mahoney! You ran a 13.8!" Kathy comments, "that's what a year in a sanitarium will do to you." Braden starts ranting again, "Mahoney! You've been cut! Get your sorry ass back to the locker room while you still have an ass! You ain't worth shit to this team! All you do is drag everyone down!" Mahoney, knowing he is all washed up, heads to the locker room. He is well aware that he no longer has what it takes to compete. A 13.8 is a good time for a fifth or sixth grader. Mahoney knows that, so he decides to throw in the towel, sparing himself from further embarrassment.

Mr. Frazier calls Kathy aside, telling her, "Mahoney didn't graduate last year and he's back in school part time. He never ran track during his freshman year, so technically he is eligible to run this year. I was going to cut him anyway. Last year, as we all know, he was very disruptive to the team. I can't have that. I'm just glad he decided to leave on his own." Kathy tells Mr. Frazier, "yeah, Braden cut him. That was funny." Mr. Frazier replies, "I couldn't have done it better myself." Mr. Frazier knew exactly what would happen during that race. And, Braden saved Mr. Frazier the trouble of cutting Mahoney.

Mr. Frazier arranges several more heats of sprints. He reminds everyone, "Eddie ran a 9.5. He's a little slow today because he's been eating too much pizza." Mark, Kathy, and Paula laugh. Mr. Frazier tells the group, "that's the kind of performance I expect! The guy that just left ran a 13.8. That will guarantee you last place in any race." Mr. Frazier tells the group, "after the mile is completed, we will be running a 440-yard dash for time. You will be running in groups of ten. But, before we start, we are going to watch the rest of the mile, which is underway. Pay particular attention to Barbara, the girl in the front."

In the mile, Barbara is clearly the front runner. Mitchell, who is pacing himself to run a 6:15 mile, has about fifteen runners in front of him, and about thirty behind him. Mr. Frazier tells the team, "from the spread of the runners on the track, they have a half mile to go." One of the freshmen comments to another, "I wonder how he knows that."

Mr. Frazier, who is always timing something, is timing Barbara's third quarter mile. Mr. Frazier announces, "from her pace, Barbara is on track to deliver a 4:35 or 4:40 mile." On her fourth lap, Barbara passes a few runners who are still on their third lap. Barbara crosses the finish line, and Wendy records her time.

Wendy waves the first group of runners to the inside of the track after they cross the finish line. Mitchell then crosses the finish line with a time of 6:15. Wendy waves anyone who crosses after Mitchell to the outside of the track. Anyone who was around last year knows exactly what it means when you are waved to the outside of the track. Mr. Frazier asks Wendy, "what was Barbara's time?" Wendy informs him, "a 4:37." Mr. Frazier smiles, but waits to show his excitement.

Once the race is done, Mr. Frazier addresses the runners who finished after Mitchell, "Barbara ran a 4:37! Did everyone hear that? A 4:37! Anyone who crossed the finish line after Mitchell, who ran a 6:15 today, is unfortunately cut. A competitive time for this team is in the lower five-minute range or better. If you expect to consistently win, you will have to break five minutes. I want you to train hard and practice a lot more over the next year, and try out again next Spring." Many of the athletes are disappointed but, unless they can deliver a reasonably competitive time during tryouts, they will not deliver a competitive time during a meet. Mr. Frazier will further refine the field of distance runners tomorrow.

Mr. Frazier now has the job of cutting down the massive field of athletes who want to be sprinters. That will be just as easy as trimming the field of aspiring distance athletes. He'll just have them all run a 440-yard dash, like he did last year. As with the mile, he'll set a certain time. Anyone who performs better than that time will be back tomorrow. Above that time, and they'll be cut, unless, of course, they are an awesome sprinter. Mr. Frazier announces, "I want the first group of ten to line up at the starting line." Eddie, and the rest of the tribe, is in the first group. They will demonstrate how the race is supposed to be run.

Eddie, Mark, Braden, Johnson, Hoffer, Kathy, Paula, Zaino, Bell, and Mack Clark are the first group of ten. Ambrosini is still trying to settle the score with the tribe, but will not get a chance to do it in this heat. So far, in the last year, Ambrosini has been unsuccessful in gym class, on the football field, and on the track. But, that will not stop him from trying. Mr. Frazier instructs everyone else to watch, as the core team runs the first heat.

Mr. Frazier instructs the runners, "get set." Since there are ten runners, and this is a time trial, he is not using blocks. Mr. Frazier fires the gun, and the runners are off. Eddie, Mark, Braden, and Johnson take an early lead. Kathy and Paula are not too far behind the closely packed group. Clark, a wrestler who only runs track in the Spring, lags slightly behind. He is still delivering a time that will be sufficient to make the team.

At the halfway mark, Braden takes a slight lead over everyone. After all, this is his race, and he is not about to let anyone beat him. As they

approach the finish, Eddie and Mark give Braden a run for his money. Kathy and Paula are holding their own, surprising many of the freshmen.

At the finish line, Eddie edges out Braden by a very slim margin. Mark and Braden appear to tie, and finish second. Johnson, Kathy, and Paula all finish nearly together, followed by Hoffer, Bell, and Zaino. Clark finishes in last place, with a respectable time in the lower 60-second range. This was a good competitive run.

The heats that follow do not demonstrate the times or competitiveness the first heat did. But, in all fairness, many of the runners in the first heat possess numerous medals from State level competitions. A few good times were delivered during the day, which is good news for Mr. Frazier and the team. After all the heats are run, and the numbers are in, Mr. Frazier cuts the lower 50 percent. The times delivered by the lower 50 percent were in the upper 60-second range, and above. Mr. Frazier will wait until tomorrow to further refine the field.

When the guys return to the locker room, they find that Mahoney has not yet left. Mahoney is sitting on a bench, still in his running clothes, just staring out into space. No one pays him any attention, and everyone walks right by him. Mahoney turns his head toward the tribe, and watches as they celebrate and talk about today's tryouts.

Eddie and the tribe are very enthusiastic about this year's season, and it shows. Mark tells Hoffer that he wishes Tessa had tried out for the team. Braden can be heard encouraging a few of the freshmen. Braden is very encouraging to his fellow teammates, displaying as much energy as his pre-race rants on the track. Mahoney is deeply troubled by Braden's positive attitude toward everyone else today. Mahoney does not quite understand why Braden is so positive toward the rest of the team, and yet so negative toward him.

Mahoney, who has finally had enough, yells out to Braden, "what is your problem, asshole?" Braden stands up and, pointing his finger in the direction of Mahoney, rants, "I'll tell you what my problem is, junior! You pummel Kathy into the ground, and you run away like a coward! Why don't you get your ass over here and pummel Eddie like you did to Kathy? Go ahead! Go for it! I wanna see that! Go ahead and try to kick Eddie's ass! I wanna see what happens!"

The whole locker room goes silent, as they watch Braden scold Mahoney. Breaking the silence, Mark comments to Mahoney, "waiting!" Hearing Mark, Braden gets fired up, and continues, "bring it on! Here he is, right here! Go ahead and kick Eddie's ass! Eddie's the one you got a problem with. But, you can't kick his ass, so you knock his girl over! If you even tried to kick Eddie's ass, he would kick your ass so bad it will

take you a month to move your sorry ass 100 yards! That is, if you could ever walk again.”

About to have another breakdown, Mahoney haphazardly throws his stuff into his duffel bag, and runs out of the locker room. As he leaves, Mahoney exclaims, “I’ve had it with you guys! It just never ends!” Braden tells Eddie, “we better follow his ass. The last thing Kathy needs is to see him like this again.” Eddie, Mark, and Braden quickly stand up and follow Mahoney out of the locker room. They stay far enough behind, making sure he leaves the school and doesn’t cause any trouble.

Erika and Wendy have unloaded the Cushman², and have wheeled the equipment back into the school. Kathy, Paula, and Barbara are still in the hallway, and are just finishing up helping Wendy and Erika put the equipment away in the storage room. Since this is Wendy and Erika’s first Spring season with the team, they could use the help.

Before Mahoney comes around the corner, Paula exclaims, “oh shit! Here comes trouble again!” Kathy knows exactly what that means. And sure enough, here comes Mahoney, in a rush down the hall.

Mahoney, seeing the five girls, yells, “nooooo! This can’t be happening again! Get them out of here!” Mahoney has a flashback to the last Spring season, and then he freezes. Kathy, remembering what happened last time Mahoney was in a tizzy, stares right through him. Kathy says to Mahoney, “we are Katarina Karakova.” Paula and Barbara, remembering the incident from the pizzeria last Summer, join in, saying, “we are Katarina Karakova.” Paula whispers to Kathy, “well, at least you’ve found the magic words to turn that asshole into a pussy cat.” Kathy whispers back, “it’s like we hit the ‘off’ switch.”

Eddie, Mark, and Braden, turning the corner, see Kathy and the rest of the girls in the hallway. Eddie walks right by Mahoney, who is still frozen and motionless, and comes up to Kathy. Eddie asks, “what happened?” Kathy tells Eddie, “d’jà vu.” Erika asks, “what’s up with that guy? He’s really scary.” Kathy replies, “that’s Paul Mahoney. He belongs back in the sanitarium.” Erika replies, “oh! That guy! Bobby B. told me about him.” Mahoney is still motionless, staring at the wall.

Kathy tells Eddie and everyone else, “cover me.” Kathy walks up to the frozen Mahoney, staring him right in the face, telling him, “I am Katarina Karakova. If you ever come near me again, I will kick your ass in a way

² Cushman: (a corporation) A utility vehicle, larger than a golf cart, used to transport small items.

Braden can only imagine!” Kathy walks away from Mahoney, who is still motionless and staring at the wall.

Mark comments, “that was kind of funny.” Braden remarks, “yeah, I wanna be around when that ass kicking comes down.” Eddie tells Braden, “it just did.” Eddie and the guys help the girls put the rest of the equipment away, and the girls enter their locker room to get changed. Eddie, Mark, and Braden walk by Mahoney, and back to their locker room. Mahoney remains motionless in the hallway, kind of acting like a zombie.

When everyone leaves, Mahoney is still in the hallway. The team just walks by him. As they are leaving the school, Braden sees Mr. Zunde, and tells him, “Mahoney is in the hall, and he ain’t moving.” Mr. Zunde asks, “what do you mean, ‘he ain’t moving?’” Braden replies, “he’s just standing there, staring at the wall. There’s something wrong with him.” Mr. Zunde comments, “this should be quite interesting. Show me.” Braden and Mr. Zunde go and take a look, as the rest of the tribe waits in the lobby.

Seeing Mahoney, Mr. Zunde tells Braden, “oh, how wonderful. You know, I’m going to make this Mr. Crum’s problem.” Mr. Zunde walks back to the lobby, and into Mr. Crum’s office, explaining to him the problem. Mr. Crum follows Mr. Zunde to see for himself. Mr. Zunde tells Mr. Crum, “Mr. Frazier cut him from the team. I guess he couldn’t handle it.”

Mr. Crum, in a demanding tone, asks, “why did he cut him?” Mr. Zunde replies, “he ran the 100-yard dash in something like fourteen seconds.” Mr. Crum crassly remarks, “so, what’s wrong with that?” Mr. Zunde replies, “nothing at all, if you’re ten years old.” With few good options, Mr. Crum returns to his office, and calls the police, making Mahoney law enforcement’s problem.

Mr. Zunde tells Eddie and the rest of the tribe, who are all still hanging around in the school lobby, “Mr. Crum admitted Mahoney back into school for the Spring semester so he can graduate. Mr. Crum told Mahoney that he wants him to try out for track. I told Mr. Crum that Mahoney is ineligible. I was mistaken. Mahoney never ran during his freshman year, so he still has one year of eligibility.” Barbara surmises, “so, Mr. Crum wanted Mahoney back on the team just to cause problems.” Mr. Zunde replies, “exactly.” Mark replies, “it looks like that backfired. Mr. Crum derailed his own train.”

As the team begins to head out the door, the police arrive. Kathy tells the officers in a matter of fact tone, “he’s down the hall to the gym. His name is Paul Mahoney, and he belongs in the sanitarium.” The rookie officer asks Kathy, “what’s the problem?” Kathy tells him, “he lost it again. This time he’s frozen like a statue in the hallway.” The senior officer, Officer Richard Hayes, recognizes Kathy from last Summer. Officer Hayes

remarks, “yeah, the pizzeria, last Summer. I remember that incident with this Mahoney character. He almost caused an accident when he ran down the street.” Kathy replies, “you got it! That’s the guy.”

Braden tells the officers, “he tried to start an argument in the locker room, then he just left. He was screaming about something, and then he ran right out. He was pretty worked up.” The senior officer, Officer Hayes, tells the rookie officer, “go and check it out.” Officer Hayes then gets some more information from Kathy and Braden, which he will need for his report.

The rookie officer returns, and tells Officer Hayes, “he’s unresponsive, and down for the count. She’s right. It’s off to the booby hatch³ for him.” Officer Hayes replies, “I’ll radio for a bus⁴.” Kathy tells Officer Hayes, “you’d better make it the short bus.” Kathy then mentions to herself, “Mahoney’s taking the short bus to the booby hatch,” laughing at how that sounds. The officer also laughs at Kathy’s remark, and gets on the radio. Since no crime has been committed, there is not much the officers can do anyway. The officers have decided to make Mahoney the paramedic’s problem.

Mr. Crum, a day late and a dollar short, walks up and sees the officers in the lobby. Mr. Crum insists that one of the officers follow him to the hallway where Mahoney is standing. When Mr. Crum and the rookie officer get to the hallway, they find Mahoney now sitting on the floor, staring at the wall. Trying again to get Mahoney’s attention, the officer tells Mahoney, “son, get up. It’s time to go home.” Mahoney still does not respond.

The officer asks Mr. Crum, “do you know what happened?” Mr. Crum replies, “the athletic director said he got cut from the track team, but I think someone may have roughed him up.” The officer asks Mr. Crum, “how do you know? Do you have any witnesses?” Mr. Crum replies, “well, no. But I’m sure someone did.” The officer explains to Mr. Crum, “that’s called conjecture. Unless you have any concrete evidence, there’s nothing I can do.” Mr. Crum is just trying to get the track team in some kind of trouble again. This time, he gets nowhere. But, that won’t stop him from trying again in the future.

The ambulance arrives, and the paramedics come to take Mahoney away. The tribe, along with Mr. Zunde and a few others, stands around to watch. Mr. Crum appears to be very stressed over the situation, frantically

³ Booby hatch: Slang term for a mental institution.

⁴ Bus: Slang term for an ambulance.

moving back and forth, not knowing what to do next. Mr. Zunde, however, is as calm as can be, watching as Mr. Crum, himself, is about to have his own mental breakdown.

Mr. Crum approaches the tribe and asks, “which one of you guys roughed him up?” Mr. Zunde, standing off to the side, is about to get more free entertainment. He will step in if necessary, but he prefers to see the students handle the situation themselves. Braden exclaims, “ain’t no one kicked his ass! If any of us roughed him up, he’d look like your office did after Eddie’s father got done with you!” Not appreciative of being reminded of that incident, Mr. Crum brashly exclaims, “one of you must have done something!” Braden, who is now ticked off, tells Mr. Crum, “yeah, right! It looks like to me that you’ve never seen a real ass kicking in your life.” Hearing Braden, the senior officer interrupts the conversation, calling Mr. Crum aside.

Officer Hayes explains to Mr. Crum, “look. There are no signs of any physical altercation. If I were you, I wouldn’t be looking for trouble. This Mahoney character has had a drug problem since middle school, and is a known chronic LSD user. His father is an attorney, and has attempted to keep the situation quiet for years.” Mr. Crum exclaims, “what? I demand to know why the school wasn’t informed of this!” The officer, ticked off by Mr. Crum’s curt attitude, tells him, “sir, you have no idea what goes on in your school. If you were doing your job, you would have known. We know more of what goes on here than you do. Let us take care of the real problems. You just keep sending late students to detention and looking for overdue library books. Let us do the real work.”

Mr. Zunde, eavesdropping on the officer’s conversation with Mr. Crum, whispers to Eddie, “‘late students and overdue library books.’ That is kind of funny. Your father was right. Crum really is running a pussy factory.” Eddie, as witty as his father, whispers back, “I guess Mahoney’s drug problem gives a new meaning to higher education.” Mr. Zunde chuckles, and tells Eddie, “I got to tell that one to Mr. Frazier. He’ll get a kick out of it.”

Kathy, and the rest of the tribe, is also listening to the conversation between the officer and Mr. Crum. Paula whispers to Kathy, “yeah, drugs. That would explain everything.” Kathy whispers back, “now, it’s all beginning to make sense.” Paula suggests to Kathy, “he was probably high when he knocked you over that day last year.” Kathy comments, “and, that would also explain why he always acts so weird.”

One of the paramedics hands Mahoney’s duffel bag to Officer Hayes, the senior officer. The paramedic tells the officer, “it looks like he’s yours after we get done with him.” Looking through the duffel bag, the officer

comments, “a bag of sugar cubes, probably laden with acid⁵, an unlabeled pill bottle filled with who knows what, and good, a notebook with names in it.” The rookie officer comments, “and this guy wanted to be a track athlete?” The senior officer replies, “the only thing he’s good at is running from the law. He’s eighteen now, and daddy ain’t getting him out of this one.” The senior officer then tells Mr. Crum, “we’ll be back tomorrow with a warrant to search his locker. In the mean time, I suggest you do not tamper with any evidence.”

The paramedics wheel Mahoney out, belted down to a stretcher. Eddie cannot resist commenting, quite loudly in fact, “look at that! They belted his ass to the stretcher!” Mr. Crum hears Eddie’s comment, and gives him a dirty look. Mark replies, “well, I guess we won’t be seeing him for a while.” Braden remarks, “I guess he should have paid more attention in health class.” Mark, remembering health class last year, mentions, “yeah! He’s been taking too much of that psycho Chubin.” Eddie reminds Mark, “that’s psilocybin.” Mark laughs, and replies, “oh, yeah. That’s right!”

The ambulance leaves, taking Mahoney to the looney bin. The officers head back to the station to deliver the evidence, and will be back tomorrow to search Mahoney’s locker. Finally getting some answers, the tribe walks home, now knowing what Mahoney’s real problem is. And, Mr. Crum is left with the carnage of another failed plan to damage the athletic program.

The next day at tryouts, Mr. Frazier has the remaining athletes assemble in the auxiliary gym. Mr. Frazier addresses the contenders, telling them, “today, we are getting down to business. We are having real competition, and I expect you to give it better than your best. Making this team is dependent on your performance today.” Mr. Frazier then goes over the agenda for today. Neither Mr. Frazier nor Mr. Zunde, make any mention of yesterday’s incident involving Mahoney.

Before they head out to the track, Mr. Frazier announces, “O’Brien, Mr. Zunde cut you from the team! Please head to the locker room!” O’Brien asks, “can I try out for a running event?” Mr. Frazier replies, “no! Head to the locker room! Now!” O’Brien just doesn’t get it. A two-foot high jump, a five-foot long jump, and tossing the shot-put six feet just doesn’t cut it. Mr. Zunde allowed O’Brien to try out for a field event simply for the entertainment value of it. Mr. Zunde was wise enough to not let O’Brien touch the javelin, discus, or hammer. One can only imagine what would happen if O’Brien picked up one of those field implements.

⁵ i.e., LSD, a hallucinogenic drug

Mr. Frazier arranges a few sprints of the 100-yard and 220-yard dash. He tells the runners to form groups of six. This is good news to the sprinters. The 440-yard dash they ran yesterday is, by far, the most difficult race for this age group. Only the best sprinters are found competing in the 440-yard dash. With Eddie, Mark, Kathy, and Paula all very strong in this event, they were able to win gold at the State invitational meet during the Winter. Braden, Johnson, Mitchell, and Hoffer, and a few others are also able to deliver amazing times in the 440-yard dash. If a runner is strong in the 440-yard dash, the 220-yard dash and half mile should not pose too much of a problem. So, today Mr. Frazier will be deciding who is best for which event.

While they are waiting, Kathy tells Eddie, "I'm so glad they took Mahoney back to the sanitarium. I'd hate to think what being on the same team with him would be like. But, I have to admit, it was really nice beating him in the 100-yard dash." Eddie tells Kathy, "he just walked off yesterday. He knows he doesn't have it anymore. Not that he had much to begin with." Kathy mentions, "and, wow! His drugs! That would definitely explain why he is so unstable."

Eddie, extending his arms to his side, making like an airplane, replies, "yeah, he's unstable. Just like the little Chuckie. The pilot in training who's learning how to fly." Kathy laughs and responds, "the Chuckie is going to crash land right into the sanitarium along with Mahoney." Mr. Frazier tells the first group to get ready for the 220-yard dash. Kathy tells Eddie, "I guess you'll have to come in for a landing. We have to run now. And, stop making fun of the poor little Chuckie when he's not here. You could at least wait until he's around to see it." Eddie concedes, telling Kathy, "yeah, you're right."

The 220-yard dash goes well for the tribe. Any one of them can run the race competitively. Mark, however, delivers the best time of the day. Eddie might have been able to beat him, but this is Mark's race. Paula actually beat Johnson this time around. Johnson, although he is an excellent sprinter, has been more focused on distance races since meeting Barbara.

The 100-yard dash goes equally as well. Mr. Frazier has Eddie run in every heat of the 100-yard dash, just so the rest of the field knows what they will be up against during competition. What is quite impressive is that all of Eddie's times are all sub-ten seconds, even after running a few heats.

The day finishes up with the half mile. Mr. Frazier excuses some of the runners from this race. Eddie, after running quite a few sprints, is among them. Kathy, Mark, and Paula are also excused, primarily because Mr. Frazier already knows what events they will be running in. They could

hang around and practice more, but they decide to take the rest of the day off.

On the way to the locker room, Eddie remarks, "I had to run a lot of sprints today." Kathy tells him, "yeah, you did really good." Eddie, who set Kathy up really good, replies, "you only ran 320 yards today. That can hardly be called a workout." Kathy, knowing exactly what Eddie was insinuating, starts to chase Eddie as he avoids the slap in the butt Kathy tried to give him. Eddie runs in circles and all around, reminiscent of the game of Kill the Man with the Ball that he played when he was in middle school.

Mark, who is also reminded of the Kill the Man with the Ball games, mentions to Paula, "they need a ball." Paula replies, "he's got two of them. And, she's chasing after them." Mark and Paula both laugh, as Kathy continues to chase Eddie. She is destined to catch him, one way or another. Mark explains to Paula about how they used to play Kill the Man with the Ball in middle school. Meanwhile, Mr. Frazier, who is quite amused, watches as Kathy relentlessly chases down Eddie. Anyone on the team who is standing idle also watches the entertainment.

After about five minutes, Eddie starts running in slow motion, allowing Kathy to finally catch him. When she does catch Eddie, she just about tickles the life out of him. They roll around on the ground for a while, and finally call a truce. Kathy stands up, with Eddie still laying on the ground, and says, "how's that, Edward Bogenskaya? I just ran a mile! Now, I don't have to carry you! And, now we're going out for pizza!" Paula is glad to hear that. So, for the four of them, it's off to get pizza.

The next day, the final roster is posted on the window of the athletic office, along with another copy at the administration area. Mr. Frazier posted a copy on the administration window just to annoy Mr. Crum. Mr. Crum can cross the girl's names off the list again, but they already know that they are on the team.

As the tribe walks in, they check the list to see which events will be theirs. There are no surprises. It's Eddie, Kathy, and Hoffer in the 100-yard dash. Mark and Paula will run the 220-yard dash. Braden will run the 440-yard dash, and Johnson will run the half mile. Barbara and Mitchell will both run the mile. The relay teams are the same as they were during the indoor track season, with a few minor changes. And, Tessa will be swimming the butterfly in the pool.

Later that day in gym class, Mr. Frazier mentions to Eddie, "it looked to me that you and Kathy had quite a good workout yesterday after tryouts." Eddie tells him, "yeah. It kind of reminded me of Kill the Man with the Ball, except it was only two of us." Mr. Frazier asks, "when did

you guys play that?" Eddie replies, "in middle school. We played after lunch every day out on the field." Mr. Frazier speculates, "that must have been a good workout." Eddie explains to Mr. Frazier, "well, a lot of the time it was just me and Mark playing keep away from everyone else. On some days, we managed to keep the ball the entire time." Mr. Frazier reasons to himself that 30 to 40 minutes of non stop running everyday makes for an awesome workout. Not only that, but it's a combination of a moderate pace and sprinting, which would be good for any of the runners.

Later that day, at practice, Mr. Frazier tells Wendy and Erika not to bring the equipment out to the track. Wendy asks, "can I drive the Cushman anyway?" Mr. Frazier tells her, "certainly. I do have something that you'll need to carry out there." Wendy seems to like driving the equipment cart around, sometimes just for fun. Mr. Frazier tells Wendy, "I'll load up the Cushman. Have the team assemble in the auxiliary gym." Mr. Frazier goes to load the Cushman as the team assembles in the gym.

Once the team is assembled, Mr. Frazier announces, "congratulations to all of you. This is our team this Spring." He makes a few more announcements regarding the events and the upcoming meet. He then makes a surprise announcement, telling the team, "normally, today we would run relay drills. But, today we are going to do something a little different. So, we're going to head right out to the track." Wendy and Erika drive the Cushman to the track, loaded with the equipment needed for today's workout. The team heads out to the track, discussing among themselves what Mr. Frazier might have planned.

When they get to the track, Mr. Frazier has the track and most of the field athletes gather together. Bobby B. and the rest of the shot-put team are in the weight room today with Mr. Zunde. Mr. Frazier announces, "today, instead of relay drills, we are playing a game of Kill the Man with the Ball." Eddie, Mark, and a few others who remember playing the game years ago, all cheer. Mr. Frazier continues, telling them, "however, we're not playing tackle. I don't want anyone getting injured. You have the entire schoolyard, but stay away from the baseball field." Mr. Frazier walks over to the Cushman, and takes out a half-sized pee wee football. Mr. Frazier tosses the football to Eddie. Mr. Frazier exclaims to Eddie "what are you waiting for? Run!"

Eddie takes off with the ball. Mark is not too quick to chase him down. Just like in middle school, when Eddie gets in trouble, he will pass the ball to Mark. Eddie quickly realizes that this is no middle school game of Kill the Man with the Ball, and that the competition is real. He tosses the ball to Mark after Johnson gets close, but Johnson intercepts it. Now, the game is getting serious. Mark is now after Johnson. When Mark closes in on Johnson, he tosses the ball to Kathy, who was the closest one to him. Eddie could probably catch her, but he lets her run since she

looks like she is having fun. She keeps the ball for quite a long time. Her agility is well above average, perhaps partially due to all the hooping she does.

Meanwhile, Mr. Frazier goes over to say hello to Mr. Ryan, the baseball coach. Mr. Ryan asks Mr. Frazier, “what do you have going on there?” Mr. Frazier explains, “I’m letting them play Kill the Man with the Ball. Look at them. They’re fierce. That’s what I call a workout!” Mr. Ryan looks at his baseball team, as they are doing light calisthenics on the baseball field to get in shape. The baseball team’s workout appears very pale in comparison to what the track athletes are doing.

Mr. Ryan asks Mr. Frazier, “do you mind if we join you?” Mr. Frazier, knowing that the baseball team is no match for the track team, replies, “go right ahead! I’m sure they won’t mind. We’re not playing tackle. It’s touch, so let them know. Let me go tell my team that you’ll be joining them.”

Mr. Frazier jogs over to where the action is, telling the team, “hold up for a minute! Hold up!” He waves for the team to gather around him. Mr. Frazier tells the team, “Mr. Ryan wants the baseball team to join you guys. Are you up for it?” Braden replies, “bring it on! We’ll kick their ass! We’ll show them what running really is.” Everyone is up for the competition. Mr. Frazier mentions, “I’d better not see any of you getting tagged by a baseball player.”

When the baseball team arrives, Mr. Frazier says, “give me the ball.” Mr. Frazier, tossing the ball to Paula, tells her, “show them how to run.” Paula takes off with the ball, as Mr. Ryan comes over and talks further with Mr. Frazier.

Paula keeps the ball for a while, but she is chased down by Mark, Eddie, and Braden. Before she gets tagged, she tosses the ball in the air. A baseball player grabs the ball out of the air, and runs for a couple yards before he is tagged by Braden. Braden grabs the ball from the baseball player, telling him, “give me that ball!” Braden sprints straight across the field as if he is running a 440-yard dash. Two groups clearly develop during Braden’s run. The first group is the track team chasing down Braden. The second group is the baseball team, left in the dust.

Mr. Ryan asks Mr. Frazier, “how did you come up with this?” Mr. Frazier replies, “Kathy, one of my better runners, was chasing Eddie for about five minutes yesterday. It looked like a good workout, so I decided to try it out on the team.” Mr. Ryan mentions, “they’re definitely getting a good workout.” Mr. Frazier and Mr. Ryan watch, both amazed at the energy level.

In about ten minutes, the energy level of the baseball players is completely gone. A few manage to keep up, but many of them are now walking rather than running. Some have given up all together. Mr. Ryan, seeing that his team is getting exhausted, yells out, "okay, that's enough! Let's play a little baseball!" The baseball team was certainly glad to hear that, and head back toward the baseball field.

The track team continues playing Kill the Man with the Ball for another hour. While the team was working out, Wendy and Erika have been driving the Cushman around. That will probably end in the next year or two when Wendy gets her driver's license.

When he thinks the team has had enough, Mr. Frazier blows his whistle, and tells Wendy, "go pick up the equipment," referring to the football. You would think one of the guys could carry the football back to the school, but that's not happening if Wendy can carry it in the back of the Cushman. When they get back to the school, Wendy and Erika will share the grueling task of putting the football back into the storage room.

Mr. Frazier asks a few of the runners whether they had a good workout today. Everyone agrees that the game was intense. Today was not your typical day at track practice, but the workout was perhaps more intense than the traditional workouts. The sprinters got to sprint and run distance. The distance men and women got to run distance and a few sprints. Mr. Frazier informs the team that, tomorrow, they will run relay drills and begin to prepare for the first meet of the year, which is coming up on Monday.

Practice for the rest of the week goes well. The team is well prepared to meet Riverdale on Monday. But, the weekend is here, and Kathy tells Eddie, "hey, let's go to the beach today." Eddie tells her, "sure, I'm game." He asks her, "today's beach or tomorrow's beach?" Kathy replies, "tomorrow's beach. I have homework to do. If we go to tomorrow's beach, then I'll have the rest of the day to do it." Eddie suggests, "let's get our stuff together and go."

Kathy mentions to Eddie, "hey, I wonder if there are other portals too." Eddie asks, "like what do you mean?" Kathy replies, "like a portal in another state or another country." Eddie remarks, "oh, so like if we're in the portal, we can land in another portal somewhere else and get back to our portal." Kathy replies, "yeah! Exactly like that." Eddie mentions, "I wonder how we would find out."

Kathy, remembering that the portal understands both exact times and vague requests, comes up with an idea. Kathy suggests, "maybe we can tell the portal to take us to a portal in Hawaii." Eddie replies, "we can try it, and see what happens. The worst that could probably happen is

nothing will happen.” Kathy remarks, “or a big giant laughing sound could come out of the portal.” They each gather their stuff, and ride together to the portal to see if they can get to a portal elsewhere.

When they arrive at the portal, Eddie asks Kathy, “so, where are we going?” Kathy suggests, “how about Hawaii?” They walk into the portal with their bicycles. Kathy does the honors, raising her right hand in the air, saying, “Hawaii, today, in the morning.” Much to their surprise, they find themselves among three boulders in a similar configuration to the portal back home. This portal is adjacent to a mountain road in Hawaii. There is a great view of the beach, which appears to be only a mile or two away.

Kathy jumps up and down, and exclaims, “Eddie, Eddie, Eddie! It worked! We’re in Hawaii!” Eddie looks around, and says, “wow! This is really awesome!” Kathy exclaims, “do you know what this means?” Eddie replies, “yeah. A better workout. There’s lots of hills.” Eddie then adds, “I’m only teasing.” Kathy tells him, “we can go on vacation to Hawaii, and who knows where else!” They ride down the road in the direction of the beach, not exactly sure where they are going.

The steep mountain road eventually intersects with a road that parallels the beach. They stop at the intersection, which lacks the names of the roads, so they look for a landmark to find their way back. Looking around, Kathy remarks, “it’s the intersection with all the palm trees.” Eddie replies, “the whole island probably has palm trees like that.” Kathy exclaims, “ha! I got you good with that one!” They think they’ll be able to recognize the intersection, and take a right turn. A few miles down the road, they find a sandy path that leads to the beach. Across the street from the beach are a few restaurants and shops. They take the path to the beach, which is not too far down.

When they get to the beach, Kathy remarks, “wow! Look! The sand is so different!” They lock their bicycles together, and lay out their towels. Eddie mentions, “wow! Check out the waves!” Kathy replies, “yeah, we ain’t going out and riding those today.” Swimming through the pipe to get to the waves is not on Kathy’s to do list.

As they sit on the sparsely populated beach, Eddie remarks, “wait until Mark and Paula see this!” Kathy replies, “yeah. We’re going to surprise them sometime. We’re going to tell them that we’re going to the beach. Then, we’ll bring them here, and act as if nothing is unusual.” Eddie laughs, telling Kathy, “now, that would be fun.”

Kathy tells Eddie, “you know, I’ve never kissed you in Hawaii before.” Before Eddie can even respond, Kathy rolls over and kisses him. What started out with a kiss turned into a passionate embrace. They caress

and embrace each other passionately, without a care in the world. All they hear is the sound of each other breathing and the sound of waves crashing in the background. After a long while in their own world, they lay and watch the waves as they crash onto the beach.

Kathy whispers to Eddie, "I really like this beach, but something is really different about it." After a long pause, Kathy asks, "well, aren't you going to ask me what it is?" Eddie replies, "okay, what's different?" Kathy tells him, "I don't know yet. But, if I find out, I'll definitely let you know." That wasn't the answer Eddie was expecting. It's also not the answer that Kathy wanted to give him. They lay on the beach a while longer, and Eddie suggests, "maybe it's because we're totally some place else." Kathy thinks about that, and tells Eddie, "yeah. But, there's something else too." Eddie tells her, "well, you'll figure it out."

At noon, they head back up to the road to find some lunch. They pick a hole in the wall place, which has a few cars parked in front. They walk in, and are seated at a table with a view to the beach. As they look over the menu, Kathy is quick to find her selection. Kathy tells Eddie, "I found what I want!" Eddie asks, "what's that?" Kathy says "fried chicken! I'm going to get fat, but I want fried chicken." Eddie tells Kathy, "yeah, I've noticed that extra ounce you gained in the last year." Kathy tells Eddie, "you're so sweet." Eddie tells her, "one or two pieces of fried chicken isn't going to make you fat." Kathy tells him, "I haven't had fried chicken in years." Kathy, after looking at the menu further, tells Eddie, "hey, look! The fried chicken comes with pineapple slices." Eddie replies, "well, this is Hawaii. Everything probably comes with pineapple." They both decide to get fried chicken, deviating from their otherwise healthy diet with the exception of pizza every now and then.

Over lunch, Eddie tells Kathy, "I know what's different about this place." Kathy, who is enjoying every bite of her fried chicken, asks, "what's that?" Eddie replies, "it's not that there's something more here, but there's something less." Kathy exclaims, "that's it! It's not what is here that's different. It's what's not here!" Eddie replies, "yeah, it's like that energy thing you said about Mahoney last year. When Mahoney was around, there was more. More of his shitty energy. Take away Mahoney, and there's less people, but better energy."

Kathy, now understanding what is different, tells Eddie, "yeah! You figured it out! The energy here is light, not heavy. It's like when Mahoney walks into a room, it drains everyone. But, this place energizes me. The energy is so light and free. Does that make sense?" Eddie replies, "yeah. Actually it makes lots of sense. It's also like when Braden walks out onto the track. Our team gets energized." Kathy and Eddie have figured out what is different. The next question is why it is different. They'll explore that question on another day.

After lunch, they head back to the beach. On the way, Kathy asks Eddie, “hey. Do you want to go in the water?” Eddie tells her, “yeah, I’ll get my feet wet.” Kathy asks, “only your feet?” When they get to the shoreline, Kathy walks into the ocean, noticing the water is a lot warmer than she expected. Kathy tells Eddie, “hey! It’s not too cold.” Eddie mentions, “I thought it would be really cold, being out here in the middle of the ocean.” They go in the water for a while, and then decide to walk down the beach to see what else is around.

After returning from their walk, Eddie and Kathy both go for another swim. This time they stay in the water for a while. The sea has calmed down a bit, so they go out a little farther in the water. Kathy tells Eddie, “the waves are a lot bigger here!” Eddie replies, “yeah. It makes you want to get a surf board!” They ride the waves for a while, and then call it a day. Letting a wave wash them ashore, they walk back to their towels.

Packing up their stuff, they head up the sandy pathway to the road. Kathy tells Eddie, “we definitely have to come back to this place!” Eddie replies, “yeah. And, there’s the whole rest of the island.” Before they ride away, Kathy remarks, “when we get home, I’m going to find a map of this place and see what else is around here.” Riding down the road, they easily find the intersection of the mountain road leading to the portal, and the palm trees on the corner.

Eddie and Kathy enter the portal, not really knowing what to expect. When they enter, they suddenly find themselves back home, at their own portal. Eddie, looking at Kathy, says, “wow! Did that really happen?” Kathy replies, “yeah! That was really something!” Eddie mentions, “I wonder how many more portals there are.” Kathy tells Eddie, “we can go to the library later and look it up.” Eddie laughs, and replies, “I’m not falling for that one, Katarina Karakova. You’re going to have to try a lot harder than that.” Kathy smiles, and admits, “well, it was worth a try.” They head to Kathy’s house, where Kathy is going to start a new project.

On the way to Kathy’s house, she makes a detour and stops at the library. Eddie asks, “you’re not really thinking you’re going to find information about the portal here, do you?” Kathy replies, “nope. But, I’m going to write it. I’m going to find a world map, make a copy of it, and mark the locations. And, then I’m going to buy an empty book and put it all in there.” Eddie replies, “yeah, that would be a good idea. That way we can keep track of the portals.” Kathy looks through the maps, finding just the right ones. Finding a few suitable maps, she goes over to the copier to make copies.

When they are done, Kathy tells Eddie, “okay, now I need a book, like a diary or something.” Eddie suggests, “we can try the bookstore near the mall.” Kathy replies, “that’s clear across town, and then some!” Eddie

reminds Kathy, "it's not even 10:00 a.m. yet." Kathy contemplates what Eddie said, and replies, "well, we spent the whole day in Hawaii. We should have taken a nap while we were there."

They make the ride to the bookstore anyway. When they arrive, Kathy finds exactly what she is looking for. She tells Eddie, "this is it, a diary. A small book with a lock on it. Perfect." Kathy buys the diary, and is all ready to start on her project.

When they get to Kathy's house, Kathy opens the diary she bought. Containing nothing but blank pages, she decides to give her book more of a personal touch. Kathy decides to trace the maps onto the pages rather than taping them in. She traces the map of Hawaii onto page two, using a black pencil. She is saving page one for her own local portal, which she will add in later. Using a red pencil, she marks the location of the Hawaiian portal. And, with a green pencil, she marks the place where they were today. And finally, on the back of the page, she writes in "fried chicken and pineapple," so she remembers what food they found to eat there.

The book came with two keys. Kathy keeps one key for herself, and gives the other to Eddie. Kathy, showing Eddie her work of art, asks, "okay, so what do you think?" Eddie looks over the map, telling her, "hey! This is good. I like your map a whole lot better than the library maps." Kathy replies, "I'll keep them and trace them when I need to." Eddie remarks, "if somebody finds this, they'd have absolutely no idea what they are looking at." Kathy tells him, "yeah. That's the way I want it. You'll have to know what you're looking at in order to understand it." Eddie replies, "so, Mark and Paula would understand it." Kathy tells him, "eventually, but right now they have no idea what we just discovered." Kathy mentions, "I'd love to take them to Hawaii right now, but I need a nap."

Eddie and Kathy eat lunch, which is really a mid afternoon snack, which makes her even sleepier. They then go outside to Kathy's back yard, where they take a nap on the chaise lounges. The sound of the water circulating in the pool causes both of them to fall asleep real fast.

Kathy and Eddie sleep for about two hours. Kathy wakes up first, wondering where they are and how they got here. This is quite understandable, considering she was in Hawaii for eight hours today. Kathy finds Eddie fast asleep in the early afternoon sun. She leans over him to wake him up, kissing him passionately on his lips. Eddie, still half asleep, kisses Kathy back as he begins to wake up. After a few minutes, they both begin to fully wake up. Kathy tells Eddie, "I woke up and had no idea where I was!" They stand up and give each other a hug. Eddie tells

her, "I see what you meant a while ago. We should have taken a nap in Hawaii." Kathy whispers, "my wild side is kicking in. Let's go for a walk."

They walk to the schoolyard behind Kathy's house. Kathy heads to the bleachers, and Eddie sits next to her. Kathy wastes no time landing herself on Eddie's lap. Putting her arms around his neck, Kathy looks Eddie in the eye, telling him, "remember when I showed you the long way home?" Eddie cannot even reply before Kathy's lips touch his. Kathy and Eddie make out on the bleachers for a while, trying to break the world's record in passion, if there is such a thing. After a while, Kathy lays her head on Eddie's chest, and says, "totally perfect day, Edward Bogenskaya. I love you." As Eddie holds his sweetie, neither of them have any more words. Words simply can't express what they feel right now.

Heading back to Kathy's house, Kathy asks Eddie, "am I dreaming, or what?" Eddie replies, "you're not dreaming. It's all real." All Kathy can reply is, "wow!"