

# Eddie, The Sophomore Year

## Chapter Seven Summer Break

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Eddie, Kathy, and Mr. Malea go inside. Mr. Malea gets the title out of the safe, signs it and gives it to Kathy. Kathy asks, "how much is it to tow it?" Mr. Malea tells her, and Eddie gives him the cash to tow it, along with a nice tip. Kathy asks Mr. Malea, "can I go back and look at it again?" Mr. Malea tells her, "sure. Go ahead. I'll be working in the shop." Mr. Malea

calls the towing company, and tells them to come and get the 914 and tow it to Angelo's Service Station.

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

Kathy and Eddie spend about thirty minutes looking the car over, and surprisingly the tow truck arrives. Eddie, seeing the tow truck, tells Kathy, "oh good. It's a flatbed." Kathy tells Eddie, "I'm glad you know all about this." They watch as the car is put onto the tow truck. Kathy tells Eddie, "hey, let's see if we can beat him to Angelo's!" They thank Mr. Malea again, and the two State medalists ride their bicycles as fast as they can to Angelo's Service Station.

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

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

After Eddie and Kathy are finished looking the car over, Angelo tells Eddie, "go across the street and get a battery." Eddie lowers the car, and

looks in the engine compartment, and does not find the battery. In fact, Eddie finds that the 914 “hell hole<sup>1</sup>” in the engine compartment has been re-engineered. They open the front trunk, and do not find the battery there. When they open the rear trunk, they find the battery. Eddie tells Kathy, “it looks like they moved the battery to the rear trunk. I can’t believe I didn’t see that before. That was a good place to put it.” Kathy tells him, “well, we weren’t exactly looking for a battery in the trunk before.” Eddie replies, “yeah, you do have a point.” Eddie removes the battery so they can get a small credit for the trade-in. They go across the street to the auto parts store and buy a new battery.

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

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

Kathy tells Eddie, “I have a problem.” Eddie asks, “what’s that?” Kathy explains, “this morning, when I left my house, I didn’t have a car. Now I have a Porsche 914 sitting at Angelo’s. So now, I have to explain this to my parents.” Eddie tells her, “they should be happy!” Kathy tells Eddie, “that’s not the point. The point is that my father really likes the 914. He’s always looking at them, and he wants one.” Eddie tells her, “he can get one too. But, either way, it will work out.”

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

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

whispers back, “how can you hear someone being quiet?” Eddie replies, “good point.”

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

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

Angelo tells Kathy and Eddie, “let me tell you the history behind this car. This car was completely re-engineered by a Georgia Tech Mechanical Engineer when it was new. For the money Richie put into this car, he could have bought a Ferrari. Richie Dennison, and his two sons, Donald and David, got into racing a few years ago. They live over in Northport. They planned to put this car on the course, but it never made it there.” Eddie asks, “why?” Angelo explains, “David took Richie’s 911 out for a drive one day, without asking. He went around a curve way too fast, and hit the brakes. The 911 went into a spin, and he went off the road, and was greeted by a tree. The 911 got totaled, and so did David. He didn’t make it. If he understood understeer, he might still be alive.”

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

Kathy asks, “what’s understeer?” Angelo explains, “understeer is built into the 911 suspension. The car turns a little less than expected, which is a good thing for that car. In the 911, if you are going too fast into a curve, and hit the brakes too hard, the car can go into a spin. With the weight of the engine in the back, you can lose control easily.” Kathy asks, “how is that good?” Angelo explains, “David didn’t know what he was

doing. Instead of hitting the brakes, he should have pressed on the accelerator and turned more sharply. If David understood understeer, he would have made it around the curve and still be alive today.” Angelo adds, “when a 911 is totaled, going around a curve too fast and slamming on the brakes is usually the scenario. It’s not the car that’s the problem. It’s the driver.” Kathy tells Angelo, “they never went over that in Driver’s Ed.” Angelo tells Kathy, “don’t worry. You won’t have that problem with this car.”

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

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

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

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

Eddie exposes the valve assembly, and finds the number three exhaust valve has been crushed by the piston. “Crushed” is a mechanic’s term. The valve’s edge is slightly bent, and no longer seats properly. Eddie tells Kathy, “here’s your problem. The valve got crushed.” Eddie yells out to Angelo, “I think we found it!” Angelo comes over to take a look. Angelo tells Eddie, “well, the good news is that the piston looks okay. Pull the valve, and check the lifter.” As Eddie continues working,

Kathy tells him, “wow! Now I see why you want to be a mechanic, and pretty much flipped a bird to all those college scouts.”

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

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

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

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

After Eddie and Kathy are done, Angelo comes over to inspect Eddie’s work. Angelo asks Kathy, “were there any extra parts?” Kathy, who is not about to fall for that one, replies, “only the broken ones.” Angelo smiles, and replies, “good answer.” Eddie mentions, “the only thing odd that I found is that those are the tightest valve springs I’ve ever seen.”

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

Angelo tells Eddie, “we’re ready. Crank it up and see what happens.” Eddie sits in the car and turns the key. After a few seconds, the engine

starts. Angelo listens to the engine, and tells Kathy, "it sounds strong." Filled with joy, Kathy jumps up and down, and yells out, "it started!"

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

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

Angelo mentions to Eddie, "Kathy tells me she doesn't have her license yet." Angelo then asks Kathy, "how far away do you live?" Kathy answers, "a few miles. It's not too far." Angelo tells her, "we have to get it to your house somehow." Angelo calls Vinnie, who owns the body shop across the street. Explaining the situation, Angelo asks Vinnie to follow him to Kathy's house. Angelo closes his shop for the day, and Kathy and Angelo drive the 914 to Kathy's house, as Vinnie follows. Eddie waits at Angelo's with their bicycles. Angelo leaves the 914 parked in front of Kathy's house, and he and Kathy drive back to the station with Vinnie.

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

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

It was hard for Kathy's father not to notice the Porsche 914 parked in front of his house after Angelo and Kathy dropped it off. He heard Kathy come home, and steps outside, seeing her and Eddie looking at the Porsche. He walks up, and Kathy asks him, "so, how do you like it?" Kathy's father replies, "it's beautiful. Whose is it?" Kathy replies, "um, well, it's kind of like mine." Kathy's father tells her, "kind of like yours? Okay, I got to hear this one." Eddie mentions, "me too. That's why I'm still here." Kathy's father whispers to Eddie, "here comes a long-winded explanation. Just watch."

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

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

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

Kathy's father then takes a closer look at the car. Kathy asks her mother, who just walked outside, "so, what do you think?" Kathy's mother replies, "it's nice. Whose is it?" Kathy tells her, "it's mine." Kathy's mother asks, "how is it yours?" Kathy goes through her long-winded explanation a second time, while Eddie and Kathy's father examine the vehicle. Kathy's mother tells her, "wow! You left this morning to go to Eddie's and you come back with a car for two hundred and fifty dollars."

Kathy tells her, “yeah! And, when I get my license, I won’t have to ride my bicycle to work in the rain this Summer.”

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

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

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

Kathy drives off cautiously, but gets the hang of it very quickly. She drives her car on the curvy road where the cross country team practices. She tells her father, “wow! This car just glides around the curves, and it steers so good!” When she comes to the stop sign, Kathy notices the car stops really well too. Taking off on the deserted road, she tells her father, “and, wow! It’s got some pick up too!” Kathy’s father tells her, “this car is definitely not stock.” Kathy tells him, “yeah, Eddie said they changed a lot of things, and we found out that the battery was moved to the rear trunk.” He mentions, “I wonder why they did that.” Kathy explains, “because the fuel line is too close to the battery and, if the battery gets corrosion and it gets on the fuel line, you can get an engine fire.” Kathy’s father asks, “how did you know that?” Kathy replies, “Eddie told me. And then, later Angelo said the same thing.” Kathy pulls up at her house, and her father tells her to park in the driveway.

When Kathy gets out of the car, Eddie asks, “so, how does it run?” Kathy exclaims, “really awesome!” Kathy’s father mentions, “it handles better than a 911!” Eddie tells him, “Angelo said the same thing.” Kathy’s father mentions to Eddie, “Kathy said the car was modified.” He asks Eddie, “what was done to it?” Eddie tells him, “the suspension isn’t stock. It has an active suspension. The steel wheels were replaced with aluminum ones and the tires are a little wider. It has an ANSA exhaust, and the brakes have been upgraded. It has a six-cylinder 911 engine that’s fuel injected. Angelo said the car was modified by a Georgia Tech

engineer for agility racing.” Eddie’s father comments, “well, they did a really, really good job.” Kathy, for some reason, declined to tell her father that the car is a street-legal racing car.

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

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

This Summer, Eddie is cutting lawns and cleaning pools again. With his many jobs, he earns more money so that he can buy gold. Then, he can bring the gold into the future and sell it. Eddie now has another project on his list. The MGB given to him by Angelo needs to be brought home and needs work. The good news is that Eddie has a long time to finish the work. He won’t get to drive the car until he is seventeen. Eddie can disassemble and rebuild an engine, fix anything on a car, but he’s not allowed to drive one. And, before he gets his driver’s license, he’ll have to pass Driver’s Ed. like everyone else.

Now that Eddie is sixteen, he has opened a brokerage account at the bank. Since he is only sixteen, he needed his parent’s permission to open the account, which they were glad to give him. Buying stocks is simple for Eddie. He simply goes into the future, and finds out what the price will be on whatever date he chooses. And, when that date comes, his profit will be sitting there waiting for him. Eddie’s method of picking stocks makes the professional traders on Wall Street seem like they trade as if they were in kindergarten.

Kathy is also working again this Summer. She now works five days a week, in the morning, teaching at the Summer day camp for kids. This year, she will again be teaching the kids to Hula Hoop. In addition, she will be their Summer physical education instructor. Working five days a week is welcomed because she will have to pay for the insurance for her car, and buy gas. Paula is again teaching at the same camp this year. She will be assisting on field trips again, which she really likes. Mark will be helping his father again on various jobs.

Eddie makes a trip to Angelo’s Service Station to arrange to tow the MGB to his house. He thanks Angelo again for the MGB, and letting him use his garage and tools, and helping him repair Kathy’s engine. Eddie tells Angelo that he told Kathy and her parents to make sure they buy gas

here. Angelo finds the title to the MGB, and signs it over to Eddie. They call the tow truck company, which is the same one they used for Kathy's tow. The towing company tells them they can have it delivered later today, in the afternoon.

Eddie heads home, and locates a place for the MGB. He picks a place to the side of the garage, near where his father parks his work truck. Eddie's mother tells him the spot he chose will be okay, which is a concrete pad that is rarely used. While he is waiting, Eddie does a little more work on the garden that he is expanding.

Later that afternoon, the tow truck arrives with Eddie's MGB. Eddie tells the driver where he wants it, and they unload the car. Eddie pays the driver, and spends the rest of the afternoon looking over his newly acquired MGB, making a list of things that need to be done. He notices that the car is in reasonably good shape. It just does not run. But, Eddie has a year to get it running and, after seeing the extensive modifications made to Kathy's car, decides to do similar improvements to the MGB.

Early one morning, Eddie is again in the back yard, working on expanding the garden. He likes to get this kind of work done in the early morning before it gets too hot. When it gets hot, he'd rather be at the pool or at the beach with Kathy. Eddie gets a lot of work done today. One of the things he did was to un-bury one of his ammunition boxes near the bird bath where he stores his gold and money. He adds a little bit to it, and buries it back in the ground, replacing the slate over the area where it is buried.

Eddie is about to finish up, and Kathy, who just got out of work a little earlier, walks into his back yard. Kathy yells out to him, "hey! Your day labor is here!" Eddie yells back, "good. The second shift is here. I'm done for the day. I'm headed to the pool!" Well, Eddie wasn't really headed to the pool, and he wasn't expecting Kathy to work either.

Kathy tells Eddie, "hey! I have some good news!" Eddie asks, "did they give you the afternoon off?" Kathy tells Eddie, "I have every afternoon off!" But, Eddie already knew that. She tells him, "guess again." Eddie tells her, "okay, tell me." Kathy exclaims, "I got my driver's license! I drove here!" Eddie tells her, "awesome!"

Eddie then asks, "so, are you going to drive me to the pool?" Kathy tells him, "yeah. I sure am. I have my swimsuit and a towel in the trunk, and my gym bag. I have my whole car organized with my beach and pool stuff." Eddie tells her, "wow! You've been busy." Kathy explains, "well, if you have to wait a few weeks to drive your first car, you clean it, polish it, and organize the inside. That's all you can do." Eddie goes inside and

gets a quick shower. While Eddie is in the shower, Kathy talks to Eddie's mom, and shows her the new car.

Eddie and Kathy head to the pool, but this time they are driving instead of taking their bicycles. Kathy still takes it a little slow since she is new to driving around without her parents in the car. Today was her first solo trip.

Kathy asks Eddie, "so, what do you think?" Eddie replies, "you drive really well." Kathy tells him, "no. My car. What do you think about it?" Eddie replies, "it feels like it's driving really good." Kathy tells Eddie, "watch this," as she goes around a curve a little faster than she would in her parent's car. Eddie comments, "wow! This car handles really well." Kathy tells him, "yeah. I like it! And it's little. It's not big, like everything else on the road." They arrive at the pool, and Kathy finds a parking space in the shade.

At the pool, they find Tessa swimming laps. Tessa is totally oblivious to anything going on around her. Kathy sits at the end of Tessa's lane and, when Tessa approaches the wall, Kathy announces in an official sounding voice, "may I have your attention please. All high school swim team members must leave the area immediately." Tessa looks up, wondering why she has to leave. She sees Kathy, and they both laugh. Tessa gets out of the pool and gives Kathy a hug. Kathy tells her, "I don't mean to interrupt your workout." Tessa tells her, "that's okay. I'll take a break." Eddie, Kathy, and Tessa talk for a while, then swim laps together.

When it comes time to leave, Kathy tells Eddie, "I have a surprise for you." Eddie asks, "what is it?" Kathy tells him, "if I tell you, it won't be a surprise anymore, now will it?" When they dry off, they head back to Kathy's car. Kathy asks Eddie, "are you ready for your surprise?" Eddie replies, "I'm all ready." Kathy tells him, "I'm sorry. That's just too bad. I'm not ready yet." Kathy asks Eddie, "hey. Can we make a detour by the school on our way home?" Eddie replies, "sure. What's up?" Kathy tells him, "your surprise." Kathy then drives to the high school.

When they arrive, Kathy tells Eddie to turn around and close his eyes as she opens the front trunk of her car. Kathy takes Eddie's surprise out of the trunk. She stands in front of Eddie, holding her surprise in front of him. She tells him, "okay, you can open your eyes now."

Eddie sees Kathy holding a brand-new discus. She hands the discus to him, as she exclaims, "surprise!" Eddie tells her, "wow! Thank you! Awesome! You are so sweet!" Kathy tells him, "come on! Let's go try it out." Eddie asks, "where's Mr. Crum?" Kathy giggles, and tells him, "you'll have to wait until school starts for that."

They get to the discus pad, and Eddie gives the discus a throw. Kathy tells him, “wow! That was pretty far.” They go together and retrieve the discus. Kathy comments, “hey! They rolled the field<sup>2</sup>.” Eddie replies, “good! We can mess it up again.”

They get back to the pad, and Eddie tells Kathy, “okay, it’s your turn.” Kathy gives it a try, letting out her primal scream as she releases the discus. Kathy exclaims, “hey! This is fun!” Eddie asks, “but, where are Wendy and Erika?” Kathy replies, “seriously! How should we have to retrieve our own discus? What’s up with that?”

Eddie and Kathy take a few more throws. They both get a little better with each try. Eddie tells Kathy, “I’m trying out for the discus next Spring.” Kathy tells him, as she is getting ready to make a throw, “how do you mean, ‘try out’? You’ll make that event with no problem.” After a while, they call it a day, head back to Kathy’s car, and drive off.

Kathy tells Eddie, “hey! I can take you for pizza now!” Eddie tells her “that sounds good! I guess you’ll be driving everywhere now.” Kathy replies, “no, not really. Actually, I like it better when we walk to get pizza.” Eddie responds, “yeah, you like it when I walk and you’re carried.” Kathy replies, “darn, I’m busted again. I can’t get away with anything.” Kathy suggests, “hey, we can show Joe the discus.” Eddie replies, “no, we can’t. It’s dirty. It’s more special than Bobby B’s. shot-put, so I have to keep it really clean.”

Kathy makes an unexpected turn, well, unexpected to Eddie anyway. Eddie exclaims, “wow! This car really does handle well!” Kathy replies, “yeah, I’ve noticed that. And, it stops really well too.” He asks, “where are we going?” Kathy tells him, “back to my house to wash the discus. You wouldn’t want for anyone to see you with a dirty discus, especially Bobby B. Then we can get pizza. Now, I’m wondering if Mark and Paula want to come with us.” Eddie suggests, “we can call them and ask when we get to your house.”

When they arrive at Kathy’s house, Eddie takes the hose and washes off his new discus. He tells Kathy, “it was really sweet of you to get this for me.” Kathy tells him, “I got my dad to order it for me after the State meet. I’ve had it for a few days, and I kept it under my pillow when I slept.” Eddie whispers, “wow! That makes it even more special. I probably have the only discus in the world that has been kept under a pillow.” Kathy and Eddie embrace each other, and the discus falls to the ground, getting dirty again. After a long stretch of hugging and kissing,

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<sup>2</sup> The field is periodically rolled with a roller to remove divots caused by the thrown field implements.

they decide to call Mark and Paula. They clean the discus off again together, and go inside to make the call.

Mark and Paula are excited to join them, and they all decide to meet at the pizzeria in a half hour. Mark and Paula have to walk or ride their bicycles to the pizzeria. Kathy, however, gets to drive, only because she can. While they are waiting, Kathy tells Eddie, "hey, let's drive to the school behind my house. I want to see something." Eddie asks, "why can't we walk?" Kathy explains, "because we won't have enough time." They put the discus in the trunk, get in the car, and Kathy drives to the school behind her house. She parks at the back of the parking lot, and they get out.

As Kathy is looking at the parking lot, Eddie asks, "what's up?" Kathy explains, "if we painted a circle right here on the concrete, we can throw the discus out that way," pointing to the field behind the school. Eddie agrees, telling Kathy, "that's a really good idea." Kathy adds, "then, we could practice right here." Eddie mentions, "wait! You said 'we'. Does this mean you're trying out for the discus too?" Kathy smiles and replies, "I might. I'm thinking about it. Mr. Zunde told me my throws were pretty good." They get back in the car, and head to the pizzeria to meet Mark and Paula.

When they arrive at the pizzeria, Mark and Paula are not yet there. They sit in the car and listen to the radio until Mark and Paula arrive. After a while Kathy tells Eddie, "I wish I could hear my songs on the radio right now." Eddie asks, "*The Power of Love* or *When You Say Nothing at All*?" Kathy replies, "either one is better than what's on right now." But, it doesn't matter at the moment, because Mark and Paula just walked up.

Kathy and Eddie get out of the car, and walk to the entrance. Paula, seeing Kathy and Eddie come from the parking lot, asks, "did one of your parents drop you off here?" Kathy replies, "no. I drove here." Paula exclaims, "awesome! You got your license!" Kathy tells her, "and now I can drive to work!" Paula, screams, "awesome," as they walk to the parking lot to show the Porsche to Mark. Mark has heard about the car, but has not yet seen it. Kathy offers to drive Paula to work now that she has her license, since they both work at the same day camp. Paula graciously accepts Kathy's offer.

They go into the parking lot and look at the car, and the first thing Paula asks is, "which end is the front?" Kathy replies, "the end with the hidden headlights." Kathy and Paula sit in the car, as Paula checks it out. Meanwhile, Eddie and Mark look at the outside. Mark comments, "wow! This is really nice." Eddie explains, "she got it about three weeks ago, but she just got her license today." Mark then mentions, "Braden's really

going to like this because it looks like it can kick ass.” Eddie responds, “it not only looks like it. It actually does.”

After a few minutes, Kathy and Paula get out of the car and Eddie asks, “hey! Can you open the trunk, sweetie?” Eddie shows Mark the discus, telling him, “Kathy got this for me.” Mark exclaims, “wow! Cool! Are you going to throw the discus next year?” Eddie replies, “yeah. I’m thinking about it. I can throw farther than Sheffield, and he took the gold at State.” Mark mentions, “Springer’s just going to love that.” Eddie replies, “Kathy can throw farther than Springer. And, so can you and Paula.”

Kathy insists they bring the discus with them as they all go in to eat. On the way in, Paula tells Kathy, “you’re going to have to tell me all about how you got such a nice car.” Paula has heard about the 914, but did not expect to see what she just saw.

They all go up to the counter and place the order. Kathy tells Joe, “hey! We brought a discus.” Kathy shows the discus to Joe, who says, “that’s not a discus! It’s a pizza! The discus is in the oven.” Kathy replies, “Joe, you’re too funny.” Joe takes a look at the discus, and tells them, “so, that’s a discus. I’ve never seen one up close before.” They place their order, and find a seat and talk for a while.

Eddie asks Mark, “so, what have you been up to?” Mark replies, “I’ve been working on a house with my dad, fixing a lot of water damage.” Eddie mentions, “yeah, they say water is the most damaging force to the house.” Mark replies, “no, it’s not. My dad says the homeowner is the most damaging force to the house.” Eddie and Mark both have a good laugh about that.

Eddie then mentions, “and, they say that salt on the roads is the most damaging thing to a car, but it’s not. It’s the driver.” Kathy tells Eddie and Mark, “you guys are so funny.” Mark tells her, “well, it’s true. It’s not funny.” Kathy relents, and tells them, “yeah. I suppose you guys have a point.” They all talk about their Summer thus far, and Kathy and Paula decide to get the tribe together at the pool soon.

After lunch, Kathy gives Paula a ride in her car as Eddie and Mark hang around and talk. During their ride, Kathy tells Paula, “so far, I spent a total of about two hundred and fifty dollars on it.” Paula exclaims, “what! How did you manage that, girl?” Kathy goes through the story of how she got the car. She then goes on to explain to Paula how Eddie spent half the day replacing the valve. Paula remarks, “maybe I should go and see that Angelo guy.” Kathy explains to Paula, “Angelo says to stay out of the retail market because you’ll pay top dollar there.” Paula replies, “yeah, I can see that.”

When they return, Mark asks Paula, “well, what do you think?” Paula replies, “I want one. Buy one for me, sweetie.” Mark tells her, “you don’t have your license yet.” Paula reminds Mark, “yeah, but my test is coming up. Kathy’s a little older, so that makes me next.”

Mark asks Kathy, “when is your birthday?” Kathy tells him, “March fourth.” Mark exclaims, “wow! You were born on the military holiday!” Kathy asks, “what holiday is that?” Mark tells her, “march forth.” Kathy asks again, “so, how is that like a military holiday?” Eddie, who got Mark’s joke, explains to Kathy, “march forth, as in marching, like service men do. March forth.” Kathy and the rest start laughing. Kathy tells everyone, “you definitely got me on that one! I’ve never heard that one before!”

Eddie asks Paula, “so, when’s your birthday?” Paula replies, “March 22.” Kathy tells Paula, “that’s a special day too.” Paula asks, “it is?” Kathy tells her, “yeah. It only comes once a year.” Kathy then mentions, “we’re getting really silly. We’d better get out of the heat.”

Mark and Paula walk home, and Kathy drives Eddie back to her house. They hang out for a while out back by the pool, but it then starts to rain. When it comes time for Eddie to go home, they kiss good night, and Eddie starts to walk out to the road. Kathy asks, “where’s your bicycle?” Eddie reminds her, “you came to my house after work today. So, it’s at home.” Kathy tells Eddie, “it’s raining. I’m driving you home.” Eddie replies, “you’re so sweet.” They get in Kathy’s car, and she drives Eddie the half mile to his house.

On the way, Kathy tells Eddie, “hey! The sign says ‘Slippery When Wet.’ I’ve never noticed that before.” Eddie remarks, “yeah, I suppose you notice these things when you first start driving.” Kathy asks Eddie, “do you know what ‘Slippery When Wet’ means?” Eddie replies, “yeah. I do. But, I know you, Katarina Karakova. So, tell me. This has got to be a good one.” Kathy tells him, “it means that the area is dangerous and slippery when it’s wet, so you should speed up and get out of the area as fast as possible.” Eddie laughs, telling Kathy, “that’s a good one. I’ll remember that one for Drivers Ed.”

They get to Eddie’s house, and they kiss good night again. Both have to work tomorrow so they have to call it an evening, albeit a little earlier than they’d like.

Kathy and Paula were able to plan a date where everyone can meet at the pool, like they did last year. They picked a Saturday, since no one has to work. Eddie and Kathy arrive at the pool right after lunch, and find Tessa already swimming laps. Tessa figures she’ll get her workout in early, and have time to relax with the rest of the group in the afternoon. Swimming next to Tessa is Hoffer, who can’t even remotely keep up with

Tessa. Seeing this, Eddie remarks, “well, we won’t have to worry about Hoffer defecting to the swim team.” Mark mentions, “not after he got a medal this Spring.”

Eddie and Kathy find a seat, and sit for a while. Braden shows up with Wendy, and they both also have a seat. Eddie gets in the water and swims a few laps, as Kathy, Braden, and Wendy talk about their Summer. Mark and Paula arrive and, soon after, Bobby B. makes an entrance with Erika. Barbara drives up shortly after, along with Johnson, and joins the group.

Noticing that Tessa is still in her own little world, Mark decides to let her know that the party has started. Standing at the edge of the pool at the deep end, Mark waits for Tessa to approach the side. When she is about fifteen feet away, Mark does a cannonball into Tessa’s lane. Tessa stops swimming, and Mark tells her, “we had to get your attention somehow.” Tessa asks, “wow! How long have you guys been here?” Mark replies, “about three hours. Only kidding, we’ve been here for about fifteen minutes.” Tessa and Hoffer get out of the pool, and say hello to everyone.

Once most of the group is together, the guys start talking about which teams they should try out for next year. Mark suggests, “we could all go out for basketball, and turn it into a contact sport.” Eddie adds, “yeah, we’d be so fast, no one can catch us.” Mark adds, “we can turn basketball into a game of Kill the Man with the Ball.” Kathy points out, “but wait! If you make it a contact sport, then we can’t play!” Eddie remarks, “that’s right. So, I guess basketball is out.”

Hoffer mentions, “how about football?” Braden tells Hoffer, “we already tried that last year. We nearly killed the whole team. Franz and Beck looked like they just got out of the ring with a prize fighter, and Ambrosini had to be carried away to the hospital. And the rest of the team didn’t give a shit that he’s laying there on the ground.” Paula comments, “and, it’s a contact sport. So, that means we can’t play.”

Eddie suggests, “how about wrestling?” Braden remarks, “yeah! I’d love to see how that works out!” Bobby B. asks, “who’s in the heavyweight class?” Mark replies, “I think it’s that guy who’s on the football team. He plays on the line. What’s his name, Jeff Pratt, or something like that?” Braden starts laughing, telling everyone, “I want to see that one go down. Pratt might be a heavyweight, but you can’t flex fat!” Bobby B., with absolutely no wrestling experience at all, would likely pin Pratt in under a minute.

Mark suggests, “hey! We could all try out for baseball. Those guys are totally out of shape.” Braden, remembering this past Spring, says, “yeah! We really kicked their ass in Kill the Man with the Ball.” Eddie

comments, "I wonder if baseball is a contact sport." Kathy asks, "how do you mean?" Eddie points out, "there's always a collision at the bases when the play is close." Not a fan of Mr. Crum, Barbara points out, "then, to Mr. Crum, it's a contact sport. And, that's only so he can keep the girls off the team." Paula comments, "you might be right about that one."

After a long and humorous conversation, they all decide to stick with track and field. It's not that they were really going to try out for those teams, but the thought of it was at least interesting.

The last to arrive is Mitchell, and his girlfriend, Amber Amy, also known as the "two first name girl", but she is trying to shed that nickname. Mitchell's last name could also just as easily be someone's first name, but he never suffered the same fate as Amber. Mitchell and Amber walk up, and Mitchell introduces his long time girlfriend to everyone. Mitchell tells everyone, "Amber is trying out for track next year."

Barbara asks Amber, "did you run in middle school?" Amber replies, "no. But, I run with Gary a lot, and he says I'll make the team." Barbara asks Amber, "so what are your times?" Amber replies, "I can run a mile in a little over five minutes." Barbara tells Amber, "wow! If you can do that, you're in. Mr. Frazier will find a place for you." Amber was certainly very happy to hear that.

Kathy mentions, "hey! Our Amazon tribe is really expanding." Amber asks, "what Amazon tribe?" Kathy and Paula tell Amber the whole story behind the Amazon women controversy last season. Paula then tells Amber, "Mr. Frazier, our coach, had Mr. Ruff, the Centerville coach, convinced that he is going to the Amazon to pick up my sister over the Summer. Mr. Ruff is a real sucker." Mark cannot resist mentioning, "so is McCrutchen." Kathy interjects, "I know exactly where Paula's going with this." Paula tells Kathy, "yeah, exactly. You're reading my mind, girl." Paula tells Amber, "if we can convince them that you're my sister from the Amazon, that would be hilarious." Amber says, "hey! That sounds like it would be a lot of fun. Count me in!" It looks like Paula's sister has safely arrived from the Amazon, just as Mr. Frazier promised. Mr. Frazier, and the tribe, will certainly get a lot of mileage out of this one.

A few in the group get in the pool to cool off, and a few others swim laps. Kathy couldn't resist telling Braden, "hey, I did what you said!" Braden replies, "uh oh. What did I say?" Kathy reminds him, "when school let out and we all went to get pizza, you told me to get a car 'that is going to kick ass.' Well, I did." Braden asks, "is it here?" Kathy replies, "yeah. It's out in the parking lot." Braden stands up and exclaims, "I've definitely got to see this! Show me."

Kathy and Braden walk out into the parking lot, and Kathy shows Braden the car she bought. Braden looks at the Porsche 914, and exclaims, “now, that’s a mighty fine looking kick ass car! I bet there’s a lot of ass kicking power under that hood!” Kathy tells him, “it’s a mid-engine, so the engine’s in the middle.”

Braden looks over the automobile, telling Kathy, “you ought to park that next to Mr. Crum’s piece of shit.” Kathy replies, “yeah! Mine on one side, and Mr. Zunde’s 911 on the other side.” They both laugh about that suggestion, and walk back to the pool and join the others.

When Kathy and Braden return to the pool, they find a heated competition brewing up between Eddie and Tessa. Eddie and the guys think that Eddie can beat Tessa in a race in the pool, and the gals think Tessa will beat Eddie. After all, Tessa is on the swimming team, and did rather well this year.

Tessa tells Eddie, “choose your race, buddy.” Since Eddie is a sprinter, he chooses his favorite distance, telling Tessa, “100 yards.” Tessa then asks Eddie, “well, which stroke?” Eddie replies, “it doesn’t matter. I’m going to win.” Tessa tells Eddie, “okay, then. We’re doing the freestyle. I can beat you the fastest with that stroke!” Since the pool is 25 yards long, Tessa explains to Eddie, “100 yards is there and back twice.” Eddie, however, already knew that.

Eddie and Tessa walk over to the deep end, as Kathy convinces everyone in the pool to clear two lanes. They use the two middle lanes, just so the race is fair. If the competition involved a lane against the pool wall, which would be lane one or six, the person in that lane would have a slight disadvantage.

Kathy will be the Starter. Kathy tells Eddie and Tessa, “on your marks.” A crowd begins to develop once everyone figures out what is going on. Kathy announces, “set.” She then says, “go,” as Eddie and Tessa dive in and race to the other side of the pool.

The guys are cheering for Eddie, and the gals for Tessa. As they approach the wall, Eddie does the flip turn first, and swims back to the other side. Tessa, however, is not far behind. Knowing that Eddie is ahead, Tessa swims faster, giving it all she has. Since Eddie is ahead, he thinks he has the race wrapped up. But, this is not a 100-yard dash. There is still a lot of time left in this race, and it will not be over in the usual ten seconds. At 50 yards, although Eddie touches the wall first, Tessa has made up significant ground. The gals cheer louder, and spectators begin to line both sides of the pool.

Since Tessa is gaining on him, Eddie steps up his pace and swims faster. Eddie grossly underestimated Tessa, who has been swimming for one or two hours a day for the last few years. During the third lap of the four-lap race, Eddie and Tessa are head to head. At the wall, they both turn at the same time. The last 25 yards will determine the winner. Eddie muscles his way through the last lap, while Tessa relies primarily on her superior swimming skills. Halfway through the last lap, Eddie takes the lead, and Tessa is well aware of it. They approach the wall, and Eddie touches first, with Tessa a few strokes behind.

Eddie and Tessa get out of the pool, and give each other a high-five. The crowd claps and cheers, happy to see the lively competition between Eddie and Tessa. Tessa immediately tells Eddie, "I want a rematch! I swam a lot earlier today!" Eddie replies, "I also swam a lot. But, sure, we'll race again before the Summer's out."

Kathy tells Eddie, "that was a really good race." Eddie replies, "she's faster than I thought." Tessa returns the compliment, telling Eddie, "and, you're faster than I thought." Eddie tells Kathy, "I need to work out more." Tessa replies, "yeah, me too. I should have beaten you."

They all sit at the tables and relax again. Eddie suggests to Tessa, "hey. How about a discus throw? I'll even spot you ten feet." She gladly accepts, telling Eddie, "I might even let you win if you're nice." Everyone knows a discus competition between Eddie and Tessa will never fly. Eddie will win the discus throw with ease. But, after the race between Eddie and Tessa, everyone is secretly deciding to step up their game. Mark even whispers to Paula, "Tessa is fast. She would have beaten me." Paula whispers back, "that's why she's on the swimming team and you're on the track team."

Wendy tells Eddie, "your time was 56 seconds." Eddie replies, "that really sucks." Eddie can run a quarter mile faster than 56 seconds, so, to him, 56 seconds does not sound too good for swimming a mere 100 yards. Tessa, who was a few seconds behind, tells Eddie, "no, 56 is awesome! That might even qualify you for State!" Wendy tells Tessa, "you were only one or two seconds behind Eddie." Tessa exclaims, "wow! That would be a 58, which would have qualified me for State last year!"

Hearing Tessa's excitement, Kathy exclaims, "aw, crap!" Tessa asks Kathy, "what do you mean?" Kathy tells her, "I guess we'll never get you to go out for Spring track then!" Tessa tells her, "well, you still have me for indoor track!" Tessa reveals to Kathy, "I never swam the 100-yard freestyle that fast before. I broke 60!" Kathy replies, "there was a lot more at stake today." Apparently, there is more at stake from Tessa's viewpoint in racing Eddie than in a swimming meet.

After a few hours at the pool, it's no big secret where everyone will go for dinner. They all dry off, and gather up their stuff so that they can head to the pizzeria. In the parking lot, Eddie tells Kathy, "carry me." Kathy replies, "gladly."

Not everyone has seen Kathy's car yet and, finding out that she has bought one, the group comes to check it out. Everyone is impressed, and Tessa falls in love with it. Tessa, like Kathy, thinks the Porsche 914 is cute. While everyone is looking at the car, Kathy and Eddie remove the top and stow it in the rear trunk. Johnson mentions, "everyone's going to see you guys driving around, and they're going to start calling you Barbie and Ken." Mark comments, "yeah, it just happened."

When they arrive at the pizzeria, Joe is glad to see them all. Joe exclaims, "hey! Your group is getting bigger!" Since the group is so large, Joe comes to take their order. Everyone gets pizza today, including Bobby B., who usually makes a high protein meal from side dishes. Mitchell reintroduces Amber to everyone, not remembering whether everyone has met her.

Amber, who will be in high school next year, fits in well with the group. Although Amber is two years behind Mitchell in school, they are about the same age. Mitchell skipped a grade in primary school, and Amber just missed the age cutoff for entering school. They live down the street from each other, and have known each other for as long as they can remember.

While they are waiting, Mark asks, "does anyone have any idea who's going to fill in for Bell, Zaino, and Clark next year?" Braden suggests, "Jimmy O'Brien will probably try out again." Braden's comment quickly brings the table to laughter. Johnson predicts, "maybe Chuckie will try out for the 440-yard dash." Braden laughs, and exclaims, "I'm gonna run a mile in the time it takes his fat ass to run a 440!"

Eddie mentions, "well, I heard McCrutchen is moving to our school district. He could fill in for someone." Mark replies, "no! Don't tell me this! He can't be moving here." Kathy tells Mark, "really, he is." Getting a bit worried, Mark replies, "no, he can't be. You guys are feeding me bull." Paula starts laughing and, by doing so, gives it away that they're pulling Mark's leg. Mark says to the group, "that's all I need, having to hand off to that sucker." Braden tells Mark, "he wouldn't make our team anyway and, even if he did, he'd never place." Mark mentions, "but, you know, I can use that! I'm going to tell McCrutchen that I'm moving to his district next year." Paula adds, "yeah! Tell him right before a big race. That should get him good."

The pizzas arrive, and it looks as if there is more than enough for everyone. Over dinner, they all agree that they have to do this a few more times before the Summer is over. Tessa mentions that everyone has to get together at least one more time for the 100-yard freestyle rematch. Tessa is convinced that she is going to beat Eddie next time. Eddie, however, is not concerned. They all decide to meet again at the pool in two weeks, when there will be a rematch between Eddie and Tessa. After dinner, everyone goes their separate ways for the rest of the evening.

Eddie and Kathy go back to Kathy's house, where they sit by the pool for a while. The sun sets a little earlier now, so they wait for Kathy's star to arrive in the sky. Kathy asks Eddie, "so, do you think you're going to beat Tessa next time?" Eddie replies, "yeah. I didn't swim too fast on the first lap. She was behind, so I thought I'd take it easy. Next time, I'm not going to take it so easy." Kathy tells Eddie, "you guys were pretty fast. She said that was her fastest time."

Eddie then mentions to Kathy, "we should get Erika to swim too." Kathy asks, "how's that?" Eddie replies, "that girl is definitely hiding something. What did she run at the end of the season last Spring? Wasn't it in the high ten-second region?" Kathy agrees, telling Eddie, "yeah, you're right! She ran a 10.7!" Eddie tells Kathy, "nobody runs 100 yards in 10.7 seconds without some training. I mean, look at her. She's a freshman! And she's a she!" Kathy asks, "hey now! Just what is that supposed to mean?" Eddie replies, "she is a she, she's a freshman, she's faster than Mahoney's average, and she's faster than most of the team. Think about it. She is hiding something." Kathy replies, "yeah, I can see that now. And, she's built like a brick house. And, you know what else?" Eddie replies, "no. Tell me." Kathy tells him, "that's your superpower at work. You know she's hiding something." Eddie tells Kathy, "we really need to get Erika in the water." Kathy tells Eddie, "she'll sink." Eddie asks, "how do you know?" Kathy explains to Eddie, "she has no boobs. She's all muscle. She'll sink like a rock."

Eddie and Kathy chill out for a while, and wait for Kathy's star. When her star appears in the sky, Kathy sees it first. She knows exactly where it will appear in the sky. She tells Eddie, "there it is! My star!" Eddie kisses Kathy, telling her, "it's so beautiful. You have your own star. And, it's always going to be there." Kathy tells Eddie, "you are so sweet," and kisses him. Kathy whispers to Eddie, "I'm going to kiss you once for every star in the sky. I promise." Eddie whispers back, "they say there are billions of stars in the sky." Kathy whispers, "then, I'd better get busy." Not many more words were exchanged that evening, but a lot of kisses were. Kathy's star is joined by all the other stars, and the moon appears in the horizon that evening to join them.

Early the next morning, Kathy looks in the basement for a can of paint. She finds something better than what she is looking for, which is a can of white spray paint. Kathy, however, is not at all interested in painting her house. Kathy is planning to paint a 2.5 meter diameter circle at the edge of the school parking lot behind her house. Thinking about how to make a perfect circle, she tapes several dozen pieces of 8 ½ x 11 paper together. Using a string and pencil, she makes two perfect circles, and cuts out the template. By mid morning, she is ready to paint her and Eddie's discus pad behind the school.

Kathy loads up her Porsche 914 with the supplies. She then drives to the back of the school. Looking around, she sees no one in the schoolyard and no cars in the parking lot. Placing the template at the edge of the parking lot, Kathy uses a few pre-cut pieces of duct tape she made earlier to hold the template in place. She takes another look, making sure the coast is clear. It takes her almost no time to spray paint the circle that she's been planning for a while now.

She puts the paint back in the trunk, and then removes the template. Kathy now has a regulation discus pad in the schoolyard behind her house. The last thing she does before she leaves is to fold up the template, and throw it into the dumpster behind the school. She then makes herself scarce, and heads back home.

A few days later, while Kathy is at work, Eddie continues working to expand the garden. He finishes a little early, and starts working on his MGB. Eddie was wise enough to buy a shop manual for the MGB to get some advice on how to best accomplish certain repairs. There is no sense spending time trying to figure something out that has already been figured out by someone else. Since the engine does not run, the first thing Eddie does is to pull the engine. This is all Eddie will do today, as he has quite a lot of time to finish the task. Next go around Eddie will disassemble the entire engine, and figure out what parts he needs. When Eddie is finished removing the engine, he heads for the shower.

When Eddie gets out of the shower, he finds Kathy talking with his mom, as she is putting away groceries. Eddie's mother tells Eddie, "I saw the little Chuckie's mother in the farmers market this morning. She said the little Chuckie is in jail, and it's all your fault." Eddie asks, "really? How is it my fault?" Eddie's mother, trying to conceal laughing, tells Eddie, "she said you make fun of him, so he has to take the dope. And, now the police caught him selling the dope." Eddie laughs, and replies, "he's made fun of me for years. How come I don't take the dope and I don't sell the dope? And, by the way, Braden makes fun of the Chuckie too. How come it's not Braden's fault that the Chuckie is in jail?" Eddie's mother tells Eddie, "sometimes I think the Kathryn Black must be taking the dope herself."

Kathy asks Eddie and his mother, “why do you guys call him ‘the little Chuckie,’ and call her ‘the Kathryn Black?’” Eddie’s mother explains to Kathy, “I refer to them as ‘the’ because they are more like a thing than a person. They don’t even act like people. They’re mean. Eddie’s father once said a 2 by 4 has more sense than the little Chuckie. None of them have any sense in their heads.” Kathy replies, “well, you can’t argue with that. At least 2 by 4s don’t throw bricks at people.” Eddie tells Kathy, “Mark’s mother refers to her in the same way.” Kathy tells Eddie, “you do too. And now, so do I!” Eddie replies, “oh yeah! I guess we all do.” Kathy mentions, “yeah. The little Chuckie definitely has a few screws loose.”

Today, Eddie and Kathy are working out in Eddie’s home gym. Eddie cannot let Tessa beat him in the rematch, so he is working out a little more than usual. Kathy is working out more than usual as well. Eddie tells Kathy, “you’re getting really strong. Are you still thinking about the discus?” Kathy replies, “yeah, I am! If I can throw farther than Springer, then I’ll get a spot on the team.” Eddie mentions, “I asked Wendy when we were at the pool, and she said Springer won over half the regular season meets.” Kathy explains, “Mr. Zunde can have you, me, and the rest of the guys in his discus pool. He can put up whoever he needs to win the meet. And besides, we can participate in up to three events.” Eddie tells Kathy, “when Spring comes, I might want to give the javelin a try too.”

After their workout, they head to the pool to swim a few laps. Kathy tells Eddie, “hey, before we go to the pool, I want to show you something.” Eddie asks, “what is it?” Kathy tells him, “it’s a surprise.” Eddie replies, “okay, Katarina Karakova. I know all about you and your surprises.” Kathy smiles, and replies, “but, not this one. You have no idea this time.” They get in Kathy’s car, and drive to the school behind her house.

Kathy parks the car in a parking space near the side of the school. She tells Eddie, “okay, let’s go and see our surprise.” Eddie and Kathy walk toward the back of the school. Kathy tells Eddie, “okay, now you have to close your eyes.” Eddie tells Kathy, “this is going to be good.” With Kathy holding Eddie’s hand, they walk to the edge of the parking lot, which is not too far away from where Kathy parked.

Kathy tells Eddie, “okay, you can open your eyes now.” Looking at the edge of the parking lot, Eddie sees a regulation discus pad painted on the concrete, near the grass. Eddie exclaims, “wow! When did you do this? This is awesome!” Kathy tells him, “it just happened to show up one day. Well, sort of. With a little help from me!”

Eddie tells Kathy, “now we can practice together!” Kathy tells Eddie, “and it’s two-and-a-half meters across, just like it should be.” Eddie whispers, “you are always full of surprises.” Kathy tells Eddie, “it’s our very own discus pad.”

Eddie stands in the middle of the circle, and tells Kathy, “come here.” Kathy walks into the circle where Eddie is standing. Eddie embraces Kathy, as he holds her tightly. Eddie then tells her, “now, it’s all ready for use!” Eddie and Kathy will try the discus pad out soon. But for now, the pool is waiting. They get back in the car and head to the pool.

When they arrive at the pool, sure enough, Tessa is there swimming her laps. Since the pool is crowded, Eddie and Kathy both share a lane. Tessa is totally unaware that Eddie and Kathy are in the pool. Eddie and Tessa both swim their laps in order to gain an advantage in the upcoming rematch.

When Eddie and Kathy have had enough, they get out of the pool. Tessa, however, is still swimming laps. Kathy tells Eddie, “wow! She’s really working out a lot.” Eddie reminds Kathy, “we’ve worked out all day. You teach gym in the morning, and I worked in the yard. Then, we worked out with weights. And we just finished swimming.” Kathy replies, “the way you say that, it sounds like we need a day off.” Eddie casually remarks, “I have to cut lawns tomorrow morning, and then I have the rest of the day off. Maybe we can go to the beach, and you can drive us there.” Kathy replies, “it’s a date!” Kathy and Eddie head home, as Tessa still swims her laps.

The day of the big rematch arrives, and everyone heads to the pool in the afternoon. Eddie and Kathy are hanging out in the water, waiting for the others to arrive. Eddie knows that he performs better in cooler weather, so he does not want to get overheated by staying in the sun too long. Tessa is already there, and just hanging out at a table with a few others.

Eddie reminds Kathy, “we have to get Erika in the pool somehow today.” Kathy mentions, “well, the pool is not too crowded right now. So, maybe we can get the lifeguard to shut the pool down for us for a few minutes.” Kathy looks over at the lifeguard, and tells Eddie, “hey! The lifeguard today is Lena Borg! She’s in my class, and she’s on the swimming team!” Eddie asks, “how well do you know her?” Kathy replies, “we’ve known each other since grade school. I’ve seen her here at the pool a few times before.”

Kathy goes over to talk with Lena, explaining, “Eddie and Tessa want to swim a 100-yard race. They’re doing the freestyle.” Kathy asks Lena, “would it be possible to close the pool down for a few minutes so that they can race?” Lena explains to Kathy, “well, I’m supposed to get a five minute break every hour, and I can close the pool. Andrea can be the Starter if she’s not busy doing something else.” Kathy replies, “awesome!”

Lena asks, “how many people are swimming in the race?” Kathy replies, “two, but we have plans for a third.” Lena, knowing Tessa from the swimming team, asks, “hey! Do you care if I swim in the race too?” Truth be told, Lena sees Tessa swimming every day, and wants to know where she stands compared with Tessa. Kathy replies, “sure! No problem. I’m sure they’ll be glad to have you swim with them.” Lena replies, “awesome! Just give me about a ten-minute warning before the race.”

Kathy dives back into the pool and swims over to Eddie. Kathy tells Eddie, “we’re on. She’s going to close the pool for us, and she wants to swim in the race too.” Eddie replies, “now we have to figure out how to get Erika in the water.” Kathy suggests, “let’s go work on that now.” Eddie informs Kathy, “I have a plan. We’ll tell Erika she has to compete because it’s some tribe rule or something.” Kathy replies, “yeah! We’ll tell her it’s part two of her initiation.” Eddie and Kathy formulate a plan, and get their script down. They swim over to the side, get out of the pool, and head to the tables where everyone is hanging out.

Kathy exclaims to the group, “hey, everyone! Lena is going to close the pool down for us for the race!” Kathy also mentions, “Lena wants to swim in the race too. Since there are six lanes, we can have three more swimmers.” Eddie mentions, “two more swimmers.” Pretending to be puzzled, Kathy asks, “two more? Why only two more? How do you mean?” Eddie replies, “Erika’s initiation is incomplete. She’s never competed against anyone in the tribe.” Kathy exclaims, “that’s right!”

No one dares to question Eddie and Kathy. They know they are up to something. This group knows each other very well. Not even Bobby B. says anything. Surprisingly, Erika agrees to swim in the race. Kathy tells everyone, “okay, we need two more swimmers.” Wendy, who is also part of the group, mentions, “well, I know I’ll be found out sooner or later. I’ve never competed either.” Kathy whispers to Eddie, “wow! That worked better than expected.” With five lanes accounted for, one more person can swim, but no one volunteers.

Kathy asks everyone, “so, is everyone ready?” Eddie replies, “let’s go for it.” Kathy goes over to Lena, telling her, “everyone is ready, so we can start whenever you want.” Lena tells Kathy, “okay. I’ll let Andrea know. Get everyone warmed up and ready.”

Kathy goes back over to the group, and finds out that Mark is also going to swim in the race. There are now six swimmers in the competition. Kathy tells those who will be competing, “everyone warm up. Lena is getting ready herself.” Kathy, Paula, and Barbara decide that they will be the officials, like in the old days when they were Mr. Frazier’s team

assistants. Andrea agrees to be the Starter, since she has a nice loud whistle.

Lena blows her whistle, and tells everyone in the pool that the pool will be closed for five minutes for a race. Everyone leaves the pool, as the swimmers pick a lane. Eddie is in lane three, and Tessa in lane four, since this is their race. The swimmers line up at the deep end, and Lena joins them, all ready to race.

Andrea announces, "Lena tells me you are track athletes. In swimming, we announce, 'take your mark,' and then the signal is given to start the race. There is no 'set' command as there is in track. After I say, 'take your mark,' I will wait until everyone is in position, and then I will blow my whistle to start the race. If someone is not ready, I will announce, 'stand.'"

Wasting no time, Andrea announces, "take your mark." Wendy is not in position, so Andrea tells everyone, "stand. Hold on a second." Andrea explains to Wendy, who is unfamiliar with swimming, the starting position. Andrea again announces, "take your mark." Once everyone is ready, Andrea blows her whistle, starting the race.

The six swimmers dive into the water. Eddie and Tessa are fighting it out, both swimming at a slightly faster pace than they did two weeks ago. Lena, in lane one, much to Kathy's and Paula's surprise, is leading the field. Eddie, in second place, has a slight lead over Tessa. Eddie, aware of how Tessa caught up at the end of the last race, seemingly puts enough force into his flip turn to crack the concrete pool wall. After the first turn, Eddie has gained a better advantage over Tessa. During the second lap, Tessa closes in on Eddie's lead, but is not quite able to catch him. Lena is still in first place, and slightly widens her lead. A crowd develops, and lines the edges of the pool to watch the race.

Eddie again kicks off as if he is trying to move the pool wall. Barbara asks Kathy and Paula, "did you guys see that?" Paula asks, "see what?" Barbara explains, "Tessa is a faster swimmer than Eddie. She's catching up." Paula remarks, "yeah, I can see that." Barbara tells Kathy and Paula, "but, watch after the turn. Eddie will be way ahead. He must be really hammering that wall with his legs. That's how he is staying ahead. Watch, here he goes." Right before the wall, Eddie and Tessa are nearly tied, with Eddie having a slight advantage. Eddie does his final flip turn of the race and, after the turn, has again gained a few yards over Tessa. Kathy exclaims, "wow! I can see that!"

As the last lap is underway, Tessa is eroding away at Eddie's lead. In the last few yards, Tessa nearly catches Eddie, but Eddie touches the wall right before Tessa. Erika finishes in fourth place, several yards behind

Tessa, slightly ahead of Mark, who finishes in fifth place. Wendy completes her initiation rite, and finishes in a distant last place. And, taking first place is Lena. It is comforting to the spectators knowing that the lifeguard won the race.

They all get out of the pool, and Andrea, blowing her whistle, announces that the pool is open again. Barbara tells Eddie and the rest, "Lena won the race. But, between Eddie and Tessa, Eddie won, but barely. Eddie won by only a yard or two." Lena was the only one on the woman's swimming team to go to State this year, so the field was rigged, per se. It does appear, however, that Tessa will be going to State next year. They all go back to the table and recover from the race.

Barbara has some good news for Tessa. Barbara tells everyone, "that was a really interesting race. Tessa actually swims faster than Eddie. But, after each flip turn, Eddie gained a few yards over Tessa." Paula interjects, "yeah. I saw that when Barbara pointed it out." Kathy mentions, "if the pool was 100 yards long, Tessa would have probably won. If the pool was ten yards long, Eddie would have won by a long shot."

Barbara tells Tessa, "I'm no swimming expert but, if your kick off of the wall was a lot stronger, you'd have a far better advantage." Tessa asks, "so, after each turn, Eddie gained a lot over me?" Barbara replies, "yeah. It was really noticeable. But, during each lap, you were doing a really good job catching him." Tessa, who is really happy, says, "well, I know what I need to work on! Thank you!" Tessa looks at Eddie, telling him, "next year, buddy!" Eddie replies, "you're on!"

Back at the tables, Kathy, noticing that Erika actually beat Mark, and came in a close fourth place, asks Erika, "so, what's your story?" Erika asks, "what do you mean?" Kathy explains, "well dear, you just finished right behind two girls on the swimming team, one of which who went to State, and Eddie, the fastest runner in the State. And you ran the 100-yard dash in what, 10.7 seconds, last Spring? You're going to be a sophomore, and you're not on any teams." Everyone is waiting to hear Erika's explanation of how she is clearly athletically superior, but has absolutely no ambition to join any team.

Erika casually replies, "I don't really have a story." Paula replies, "yeah you do, girl. You must work out or do something." Erika replies, "oh, that. I'm into bodybuilding. That's really all that I do. That, stretching, and some running." Kathy, finally getting her explanation, exclaims, "I knew it! You had to be working out or something! No one just gets onto a track and runs a 10.7 in the 100-yard dash!" Kathy knows there is more to Erika's story, and also knows she is not getting it out of Erika right now. Erika tells everyone, "honestly guys, I had no idea how fast I can run or swim."

Kathy whispers to Paula, “that explains why she has no boobs, and no body fat. She’s all muscle and bones, mostly muscle.” Paula whispers back, “yeah. It all makes sense now.”

As Kathy and Paula are talking, Barbara is trying to convince Erika to try out for track, and Tessa is trying to convince her to try out for swimming. Erika, at the moment, is not too interested in either. Truth be told, Erika wants to know exactly where she stands before she tries out for anything. Erika, however, now wants to know how fast she can run. She admits to the group that, last Spring, she may not have given it her absolute best on the track. Erika agrees to go to the track later this week and run a sprint with Kathy and Paula.

Kathy is now satisfied knowing that Erika actually does something that explains her athletic performance. Erika clearly does not sit in front of a television set all day long eating potato chips. And, now that the race is over, everyone sits back to relax. They make plans to meet at the track later this week. Eddie mentions that it would be a good time to throw the discus. Erika mentions that she would like to try that as well. Erika is getting interested in sports because, after working with the track team, she sees how much fun competition can be, especially if you win all the time.

While they are lying around in the sun, Tessa asks Eddie, “so, do you have any advice on how to improve my flip turn?” Eddie replies, “if you want more power in your flip turn, do squats and leg presses.” Barbara mentions, “that’s important. That’s how Eddie beat you. If Eddie gained three yards on you at each turn, that’s nine yards during the whole race. Eddie only won by two yards.” Tessa replies, “wow! I totally get it now. I definitely get it!” Tessa then tells Barbara, “now, I know why you’re going to school for Exercise Science. The swimming coach never saw things like that.”

Tessa is now actually happy that Eddie beat her and that Barbara noticed why Eddie won. If Tessa had won the race, no one would have noticed that her turns could benefit by more power. Tessa now knows how to improve her times, and it’s not necessarily by swimming more laps. And, Barbara’s biggest secret is that, when it comes to athletics, she knows a whole lot more than she leads anyone to believe.

They all hang around the pool until it closes. Bobby B. decides that he would like to join Eddie, Kathy, Mark, and Paula when they time Erika later this week at the track. Bobby B. wants to try his hand at the discus. He has been primarily focused on the shot-put, but is ready to try something new. All of this sudden interest in the discus came from Mr. Zunde throwing the discus over Mr. Crum’s head after the last meet of the Spring

season. Should Mr. Zunde have known this would happen, he might have also thrown the javelin over Mr. Crum's head too.

Later that week, they all meet at the school to time Erika in the 100-yard dash and to throw the discus. Kathy drives her Porsche, and arrives at the school with Eddie first. They see Bobby B. and Erika walking through the parking lot. Kathy tells Eddie, "hey. Play along with me when they walk up." Eddie replies, "sure," not knowing what Kathy has planned. Kathy quickly gets her beach towel, and carefully wraps the discus, and places it neatly in the front trunk. She closes the trunk, waiting for Bobby B. and Erika to walk up. Kathy tells Eddie, "I'm going to show them that the discus is a whole lot more special than the shot-put." Eddie, Kathy, Bobby B., and Erika hang around and talk, as they are waiting for Mark and Paula.

Mark and Paula arrive shortly after, riding their bicycles. Mark tells Kathy, "you guys are going to get all out of shape driving around." Kathy smiles, and tells Mark, "we had to transport the discus. You don't expect us to just carry it around like a Frisbee, do you?" Paula, immediately knowing that Eddie and Kathy are up to something, replies, "oh yeah. That's right. I forgot about that." Paula can't wait to see what Kathy has up her sleeve.

Kathy opens her front trunk, and slowly unwraps the discus she wrapped earlier. Using two hands, she carefully removes the discus, and holds it with two hands far in front of her body. She turns around, and hands the discus to Eddie, who takes it with both arms extended. Eddie then brings the discus closer to his body, as Kathy says, "okay, the discus has been properly removed from the transportation vehicle." Paula mentions, "yeah. That was silly of me. I forgot you guys were bringing the discus." Kathy gets Eddie's father's surveying tape out of the trunk, treating it with just as much care. Bobby B. knows exactly what they are up to, and says nothing. They then head to the track to time Erika.

Kathy and Paula will be running with Erika. They decide that Bobby B. will be the Starter, and Eddie and Mark will be the Timekeepers. Eddie and Mark head to the finish line, and the women get ready to run. Kathy tells Bobby B., "the command is 'on your marks', 'set,' and then 'go.' But, give us at least two or three seconds before you say 'go.'" Bobby B. replies, "got it."

At the finish line, they hear Eddie yell out, "we're ready!" Bobby B. tells the three contestants, "on your marks." He waits, and the three runners appear ready. He announces, "set." Bobby B., who rarely gets to see a race start from this close up, is impressed by the women's form. He says, "go," and instantaneously, the three women are gone. After they leave the starting line, he says to himself, "wow! Now, that's really something."

Kathy has an early lead, but this was her race this past season. Paula is right behind her, followed by Erika. Erika now has real competition, and is running a bit faster than she did last Spring. Running against two State medalists who are two years older than she is, Erika is not the least bit intimidated.

Halfway, at 50 yards, Kathy is still in the lead, and is certainly not willing to give up her position. Erika is chasing Paula as if her life depended on it. As the runners approach the finish line, Eddie and Mark have their stopwatches ready. Kathy crosses first, followed by Paula, and finally Erika. Never expecting to actually win, Erika does not care that she came in third place. She is more interested in her time.

Mark and Eddie compare the times. When the women return to the finish line, Eddie, working two stopwatches, announces "Kathy won. I clocked her at 10.3." Mark tells Paula, "you ran a 10.4." Eddie looks at Erika, telling her, "you ran a 10.6." While the women are catching their breath, Kathy asks Eddie, "what did she run again?" Eddie tells her, "a 10.6." Kathy exclaims, "wow! That's good!" Erika, who is seemingly clueless, asks, "so, a 10.6 is good?" Eddie replies, "yeah. It's really good. You'll definitely make the team if you try out." Paula mentions, "and, that's with no starting blocks, and no one watching." Kathy adds, "yeah, and those weren't our best times."

Erika, who will be a sophomore next year, has never tried out for a team. She has been living in her own world of bodybuilding. She lifts weights, stretches, and runs a little, which is pretty much all she does as far as working out. But, she does a lot of it. Erika has never applied her physical abilities to the sports field before. It's anyone's guess what else she might be good at. Perhaps next year everyone will find out.

The group heads over to the field area, where everyone wants to give the discus a try. Eddie is going to go first and, although he is not an expert, will show everyone what he knows of the technique. Eddie and Mark lay their stopwatches on the grass, a few feet behind the discus pad. Bobby B. clears his throat, and tells Erika, "did you see that?" Erika asks, "see what?" Bobby B. points out, "they just laid their stopwatches on the ground, in the dirt." Eddie whispers to Mark, "we're busted. There's no way out of this one." Bobby B. tells Eddie and Mark, "you guys are going to have to clean and sterilize those stopwatches later today." Paula whispers to Kathy, "pay backs are hell." Eddie, not missing a beat, tells Bobby B., "yeah, they were due for a good cleaning anyway."

After demonstrating what he knows regarding how to throw the discus, Eddie throws the discus. Eddie goes out in the field to retrieve the discus and, using the tape, measures 189 feet, 3 inches. Eddie is happy with that throw, which is a little farther than his last throw a while ago.

Mark goes second, and throws 184 feet, 7 inches. Either Eddie's or Mark's throw could have earned a medal in this past Spring's State invitational meet.

When it becomes Erika's turn, she practices a few times with everyone's help. She thinks she has the technique down well enough to make a throw. Everyone stands behind Erika as she makes her first attempt. Erika throws the discus, which flies off center, but a lot farther than anyone expected. Kathy and Erika retrieve the discus and take the measurement. They measure 115 feet, 4 inches, which is awesome for a first throw.

Bobby B., who has thrown the discus for fun a few times in the past, steps up to the discus pad and takes a turn. Mark tells Bobby B., "don't throw it too far. You'll have to run out there to pick it up yourself." Bobby B. tosses the discus about five feet, and asks, "how's that?" Mark replies, "a little better than Chuckie and a lot better than Jimmy O'Brien." Bobby B. gets on the discus pad again, and makes a real attempt this time. Bobby B. throws the discus, which does not fly too far. Bobby B. goes out to retrieve the discus, but doesn't bother taking a measurement. He's decided to stick to the shot-put.

They all throw a few more times, and get a good workout retrieving the discus. Erika's best throw of the afternoon is 130 feet, 9 inches, which is far better than anyone ever expected. Kathy mentions to Erika, "your throws are on par with Springer." Erika asks, "who's Springer?" Kathy tells her, "he's the guy that's been throwing the discus for the team all last year." Erika replies, "oh, that guy. He wins most of the time." Kathy points out, "then, so can you!" Kathy wonders how Erika can be so naive. She's worked with the team for the entire year, and does not know the name of the team's discus thrower. But, in Erika's defense, she was paying a whole lot more attention to Bobby B. than anything else going on during the track meets.

Kathy points out to everyone, "Eddie's discus is a 2-kilogram regulation Olympic discus. During a regular season high school meet, the discus used is usually a 1.6-kilogram discus, but the coaches can use the 2-kilogram if they agree." Paula exclaims, "so, we've been throwing the mother lode?" Kathy replies, "yeah. But actually, if we had a girl's team, we'd be throwing a 1 kilogram discus." Eddie asks, "what did they throw at State?" Kathy replies, "the 2-kilogram." Eddie asks, "what did Mr. Zunde throw at Mr. Crum?" Kathy replies, "probably the 2-kilogram. I don't think he'd even touch the 1.6." Kathy has done a lot of homework regarding the discus. Actually, she asked her father, who helps write the State track and field rules. Paula mentions, "so, we are all better than we think we are." Kathy replies, "it would look that way."

That afternoon, everyone walks away with the understanding that they are better athletes than they originally thought. To them, they think their level of performance is normal. But, persons of high athletic ability tend to underestimate their relative competence, and erroneously come to the conclusion that their level of performance is closer to average than it actually is. Likewise, people of lower athletic ability have a tendency to overestimate their abilities, and erroneously come to the conclusion that their level of performance is far beyond what it actually is.

As they are leaving the field, Bobby B. reminds Eddie and Mark, “hey! Don’t forget to clean and sterilize your stopwatches. I want to see them sparkly bright the next time I see them!” Mark replies, “you got it, bro.” Eddie mentions, “yeah, I’ll be cleaning my discus when I get home.” Mark and Paula ride away on their bicycles, as Bobby B. and Erika walk to Bobby B’s house. Kathy and Eddie put the discus and tape into the trunk, and they get in the car. Kathy mentions, “a sparkly bright stopwatch. That’s kind of funny.” Eddie replies, “he’s catching on. We’d better be careful.”

While they are sitting in the car, Kathy tells Eddie, “there’s definitely something up with Erika.” Eddie asks, “like what?” Kathy replies, “well, for one, she didn’t even know Springer was the discus thrower.” Eddie tells her, “yeah, but she knows Bobby B. really well to make up for it.” Kathy tells Eddie, “I don’t know. I just can’t put my finger on it.” Eddie responds, telling Kathy, “she just seems a little naive. She’s only a freshman.” Kathy mentions, “yeah, I would think that too if it wasn’t for the comment she made at the pizzeria when Bobby B. wanted three breasts, and she said, ‘I only have two.’ That is not naive.”

Eddie goes on to explain, “she said she does bodybuilding. Bodybuilders generally live in their own world.” Kathy also comes to the conclusion that Erika lives in her own world, quite unaware of much that goes on around her. Kathy tells Eddie, “I’ll go with that for now, but I really think there’s something else to her story.” Eddie mentions, “well, if there is, maybe someday you’ll find out. It’s probably your superpower that is getting you.” Kathy exclaims, “you’re right! That’s why I can’t just let this go!” Kathy asks Eddie, “how about your superpower?” Eddie tells Kathy, “in time, she’ll let you know. If you press her on it, you’ll just push her away.” Kathy replies, “dang, you’re right.” Kathy drives off, taking Eddie back to her house.

When they arrive at Kathy’s house, they go in the pool for a while. Since it is a hot day, and they ran around the field chasing the discus, any relief from the heat is welcome. As Eddie is holding Kathy face up in the water as she is floating, she tells him, “you know, we really shouldn’t be in the pool right now.” Eddie replies, “this is going to be a good one, Katarina Karakova. I can tell. But, tell me why.” Kathy explains, “well, you have two dirty stopwatches that need to be cleaned and sterilized, and a

discus that has been thrown into the dirt a few dozen times today.” Eddie exclaims, “yeah! That’s right! I knew I should have been doing something else! I may not be able to sleep tonight with all that hanging over my head.” Kathy tells him, “you’re such a slacker.” Eddie replies, “yeah, I know. I’m sure Mark is home cleaning his stopwatch right now with Paula. His stopwatch is going to be sparkly bright.”

After a while, Kathy tells Eddie, “hey, let’s go back to Hawaii!” Eddie replies, “yeah. Let’s do that. We were going to take Mark and Paula.” Kathy exclaims, “yeah! That’s right! Now, I really want fried chicken again.” They float around the pool a while longer, relaxing in the late afternoon sun. Every so often they say something to each other but, after a while, they kiss more than they talk. Time gets away from them, but they have a lot of it because it is now Summer. After they get out of the pool, they make plans with Mark and Paula to go to the beach.

A few days later, Eddie and Kathy meet Mark and Paula at the portal, and everyone is ready for the beach. Mark tells Kathy, “hey, you’re back on two wheels.” Kathy replies, “yeah. My car wouldn’t fit in the portal.” Paula asks, “so, where are we going today?” Kathy tells her, “we have a surprise for you.” When Kathy says she has a surprise, it’s usually something big. Mark replies, “I don’t know if I’m prepared for this.” Eddie reassures him, “you’re not.” Kathy tells everyone, “okay, let’s go.” They all walk into the portal with their bicycles, and Kathy raises her right arm, and says, “Hawaii, 10:00 a.m. today.”

Like last time, they arrive at the Hawaiian portal. Mark exclaims, “wow! This is really weird! How did you figure this out?” Kathy replies, “it just popped into my head one day. We tried it, and it worked. We figure there’s a bunch of these around the world.” Mark asks, “how do we get back home?” Eddie replies, “the same way. When we walk back into the portal, we’re back home.” Kathy tells Mark and Paula, “the beach is down that road. It’s not too far. And, there’s a restaurant that has really good fried chicken.” They head down the road together to begin their day at the beach.

At the end of the road, they stop for a minute. Paula exclaims, “wow! Look at this place! It’s beautiful!” Mark mentions, “yeah! This place is really cool.” Looking around at the plants, terrain, and the sky, they don’t see much that resembles home. Making a right turn, they go down the road a few miles. They go to the same beach as they did last time, probably because Kathy wants fried chicken again for lunch.

They find a place on the beach to lie out in the sun for a few minutes, deciding what they want to do. Kathy walks to the ocean, and tests the water. Kathy yells back to everyone, “it’s warm!” They all decide to go for a swim or, more particularly, wrestle with the waves.

Paula exclaims, “wow! We’re really in Hawaii! Am I dreaming, or what?” Mark exclaims, “we don’t have these kind of waves at home!” They ride the waves for a while, which is a bit more challenging than the beach back home. When they have had enough of the losing battle with the waves, they head back to their towels for a while.

Mark and Paula decide to hunt for their own special spot on the Hawaiian beach. Eddie and Kathy do the same. The couples walk in opposite directions, and will meet back in about an hour for lunch. Kathy cannot find any sand dunes, but there certainly are a lot of rocks. The beach is mostly deserted today. They’ve only seen one other person on the beach since they’ve arrived, so it’s easy to find a secluded area.

A hundred yards down on the beach, Kathy finds the perfect spot. They sit in a sandy area nestled among a few rocks, where Kathy notices rock formations that have a strange resemblance to the portal. Kathy sits on Eddie’s lap, telling him, “I’m falling way behind. I have to catch up.” Eddie asks, “catch up? With what?” Kathy reminds him, “yeah. There’s billions of stars in the sky. I have to catch up.” Kathy embraces Eddie, giving him a very long kiss. She whispers to him, “one,” and embraces him a second time. After an hour or so, Kathy is a little closer to the billions of kisses she laid out for their future.

On their way back to their towels, Kathy stops and puts her head on Eddie’s shoulder. She asks him, “how did I end up with such a good life?” They hug each other, with Kathy not really expecting Eddie to answer her question. They are just glad that they have the life that they do have. As they continue walking, Eddie ponders Kathy’s question, and replies, “the power of love.” Kathy stops again, and exclaims, “that’s it! The power of love! That’s the difference between a wonderful life and a suckky one!” Eddie replies, “it’s too bad that people don’t find that out earlier.” Kathy is now all bubbly and ecstatic. She has just found out the secret to life. Kathy tells Eddie, “right now, I want to hear my song.” But that will have to wait until she gets home.

When they arrive at their towels, they find Mark and Paula lying in the sun. Eddie asks, “hey, where’s our lunch?” Mark, quick on his feet, replies, “back up on the road.” Eddie replies “on the road? That would make it road kill.” Mark and Paula stand up, and are more than ready for lunch. They walk up the sandy path to the road, and eat at the same restaurant Eddie and Kathy ate at earlier this Summer.

Mark and Paula look over the menu, but Kathy has already decided what she is having. Paula asks, “so, how many other landing spots have you found with a portal?” Kathy tells her, “this is the only other one we found. But, there’s got to be more.” Paula suggests, “maybe we should try the Bahamas.” Mark replies, “or the Amazon.” Paula adds, “yeah. So

we can find my poor little helpless sister, who is sitting all by herself somewhere in the middle of the Amazon jungle just waiting for Mr. Frazier to come and rescue her.” Kathy tells Paula, “he’s already found her. He gave her the name Amber Amy. Remember?” Paula replies, “oh, that’s right! I totally forgot that my sister is safe now. I’ll sleep better at night knowing that she’s not going to get eaten by lions, tigers, and bears.” Kathy mentions, “you’re so compassionate. Remember? You were there once too.” Paula replies, “that’s right! Thank you for reminding me.”

The waitress takes their order, and everyone decides to get fried chicken with, of course, pineapple. The conversation shifts back to the Amazon. Mark mentions, “how did all this Amazon stuff get started anyway?” Kathy answers, reminding Mark, “do you remember when Mr. Frazier said that the Centerville coach, Mr. Ruff, wanted to go to the Amazon with him next time to get some women? Mr. Frazier told him that only two of us are from the Amazon, and the other two are from Paradise Island.” Mark replies, “yeah! That’s right! You mean we didn’t start that rumor?” Eddie replies, “no, bro. We just took it and ran with it.” Kathy adds, “yeah, literally. We ran with it. Ha ha.” Mark mentions, “talk about derailing your own train. Mr. Ruff did it to himself!” Kathy tells everyone, “my father said that rumor is all around the State now, and it’s found its way to other states as well.”

Paula mentions, “well, we’re just high school kids. We just better do what we’re told, and run, and collect our three thousand dollar checks after we win a race.” Kathy warns Paula, “or worse. If we don’t win, Mr. Frazier might just dump us off in the middle of the Amazon jungle, and we’ll have to hunt for our own food again.” Paula exclaims, “that ain’t happening! I’m done hunting for my own food.” Mark adds, “I heard once that someone slacked off, and he stopped winning. So, Mr. Frazier took him up in a plane, flew over the jungle, strapped a parachute to him, and pushed him out.” Kathy replies, in a serious tone, “we’d better train really hard. We definitely don’t want that to happen.”

The meal arrives, and they all try the fried chicken first. Eddie whispers to the group, “hey. The couple in the booth next to us are eavesdropping on our conversation.” Kathy and Eddie can see the couple, but Mark’s and Paula’s backs are to them.

Hearing what Eddie said, Mark asks, “now, who is it that Mr. Frazier told us to pick up from here and bring back?” Kathy replies, “some girl named Kali. She’s a distance runner. We have the address and her picture.” Eddie asks, “how much did Mr. Frazier pay for her?” Kathy nearly chokes on her chicken listening to this conversation. Mark replies, “I think about ten grand, plus travel expenses.”

Paula mentions, “wow! I feel special. Mr. Frazier paid twenty grand to get me.” Mark tells Paula, “yeah, but you came from the Amazon. That’s treacherous territory. You know. Snakes, piranha, and that sort of thing.” Eddie adds, “yeah, and dodging all those spears thrown from all different directions.”

Kathy exclaims, “that’s right! That’s where Mr. Frazier got the javelin guy! The guy was throwing spears, and Mr. Frazier just threw the guy over his shoulders, and brought him back. The rumor is that the guy put up a big fight, but Mr. Frazier won.” Eddie asks, “the javelin thrower, what was his name?” Mark replies, “his real name was Uga Buga Bunga, but Mr. Frazier named him Johnny Spears.”

Kathy is laughing so hard that she is finding it difficult to eat. Kathy, trying to remain sane, blurts out, “okay, we got to stop this now.” Paula tells Kathy, “but, we have more business to talk about. We have at least three more stops to make this Summer.” Eddie whispers, “okay, now that couple is giving us weird looks.” They calm down a bit, and do a little more eating than talking.

It doesn’t take Mark long to continue the conversation, asking, “so what are we doing with Kali when we pick her up?” Eddie replies, “she’s going to Paradise Island for training for about a year.” Paula adds, “then we’re supposed to pick up the ones on Paradise Island who have completed their training, and bring them back to Mr. Frazier.”

Mark mentions, “yeah, one of the women we’re picking up is a discus thrower.” Paula asks, “really? And, what is her name?” Mark replies, “Libby Doe.” Eddie laughs, and mentions, “the guys are going to really like her.” Kathy has to think about that one for a minute before she gets the pun. Kathy laughing has turned into giggles. She tells them, “if you guys don’t stop, I’m going to have to take my chicken back to the beach and eat it there.” Eddie tells Kathy, “well, they’re leaving anyway.” Kathy replies, “I’m sure they got an earful.” Kathy sighs, and says, “okay, now I can eat.” For some reason, the conversation got Kathy right in her funny bone.

Finally finishing lunch, they are probably lucky that they haven’t been taken away by the police. They head back to the beach and collect their stuff, and decide to ride farther down the road and see what else may be going on. Stopping at another beach, which is a bit more crowded, they hang out there for a while. They notice this beach is a lot more active, with a concession area, people having picnics, and a few sporting activities.

While they are laying in the sun, a few other high school kids ask if they want to play a game of volleyball. Their group has four players, and

figure playing with a few others might be fun. They all introduce themselves to Eddie and the rest. On the Hawaiian team are John, Kaleo, Andy, and Pika, who goes by Peter. Eddie and the group agree to play, but they tell the Hawaiian team that volleyball is not really their game. Everyone agrees to play to eleven points, and see how that goes. The local guys let the visiting team serve. Eddie and Kathy play on the front line, and Mark and Paula play in the back.

Mark serves first, delivering an ace. The second serve is returned, and Eddie and Kathy, on the front line, get the hang of it real fast. They volley a few times, and Kathy spikes the ball. The local guys quickly realize that they are up against four players that must play some sort of sport, and play it well. The third serve is returned, and Kathy sets up the ball for Eddie. Eddie fakes a spike, passing back to Kathy, who gently places the ball in a vacant area in the sand. With the score three to nothing, the local guys realize they have to step up their game. But, stepping up their game doesn't get them too far. Eddie, Kathy, Mark, and Paula, who always play to win, are too much for them to handle.

They play for a while, but the game is a bit lopsided. Eddie and the tribe are making Hawaiian Punch out of the local team. Once the score is ten to two, Peter asks, "okay, are we supposed to know you guys or something? Are you guys famous?" Eddie replies, "no. We're just visiting." Peter replies, "we hadn't seen you around before." Paula serves, and the serve is returned. Eddie sets up the ball for Mark, who spikes the ball, ending the game.

After the game, John mentions, "you guys are good. You play like the Olympic beach volleyball teams." Kaleo asks, "so, what sports do you guys play?" Kathy, answering for the group, says, "we all run track. That's it." Peter mentions, "hey! That's my sport!" Peter then asks, "does anyone want to race?" Eddie replies, "sure. As long as it's a sprint." Peter, who is apparently the local track star, is looking for a chance to redeem himself after the embarrassing volleyball loss. Peter asks, "so, who am I going to race against?" Eddie asks, "who do you want to race against?" Peter asks, "who's the fastest?" Kathy, Mark, and Paula all reply, "Eddie." Peter says, "well, then Eddie it is."

While they are walking to the end of the parking lot, Mark asks Peter, "are you sure you don't want to race the girls?" Peter replies, "no. I'll beat the girls. They're too easy." Kathy, with noticeable energy behind her, replies, "oh no, you won't!" Kathy is not about to let Peter's casual comment just fly by. Kaleo tells Peter, "hey, man! It looks like the girl is throwing you a challenge." Taking the offer, Peter tells everyone, "okay. I'll race both of them." Kathy, who smiles, is up for the challenge. After all, she won the silver medal at the State invitational meet, and Eddie won the gold. It's not likely anyone can beat either of them.

When they get to the end of the parking lot, Peter asks, “how about we race to the other end of the parking lot?” Eddie looks at the parking lot, and asks Mark, “what is that? About 200 feet?” Mark replies, “yeah, it’s longer than 40 yards, but less than 100 yards.”

Kaleo volunteers to start the race, and everyone not running in the race heads to the finish line, wherever that may be. Once everyone else gets to the finish line, Kaleo asks, “are you guys all ready?” Everyone says they are ready to run. Kaleo tells them, “okay. I’ll say, ‘ready, set, go,’ and then you go.” Mark, from the other side of the parking lot, yells out, “we’re ready whenever you are.”

Kaleo tells them, “ready.” After a pause, he says, “set.” Paying no attention to whether anyone is either ready or set, he says, “go.” Fortunately, everyone was ready when Kaleo gave the command. Eddie, Kathy, and Peter take off, with Kathy and Eddie clearly leading the race. Kaleo runs and follows the group, so he can get a better view of the finish. Halfway through the race, Eddie and Kathy are very close. Peter, who is very far behind them, is probably wondering what planet his competition is from. It’s now a race between Eddie and Kathy. They approach the finish, and Eddie beats Kathy by a slight margin. Peter, unfortunately, finishes far behind Eddie and Kathy.

Andy and John waste absolutely no time pointing out to Peter that the girl beat him. Peter asks, “where are you guys from anyway?” Mark replies, “the mainland. We head back later today.” Andy asks, “so, is this your first trip here?” Kathy replies, “me and Eddie have been here before, but it’s Mark and Paula’s first trip.” The Hawaiian guys and Eddie’s tribe walk down the beach, back to the volleyball courts. They talk for a while, and everyone is glad to have the chance to meet each other.

When it comes time to go, they unlock their bicycles, and get ready to leave. Andy takes a look at Eddie’s and Mark’s bicycles, exclaiming, “wow, man! Nice bikes!” Andy asks, “are they yours?” Mark mentions, “yeah. We brought them with us. That’s how we get around.” Andy looks over the bicycles and, although he is somewhat familiar with bicycle racing, has never seen a track bicycle up close before. A track bicycle, meant for flat ground, is not exactly what you’d expect to see on the steep roads of Hawaii. The two groups say goodbye to each other, and Eddie and the group head out to the Hawaiian portal.

After Eddie and the group leave, Peter tells his buddies, “there’s definitely something up with those guys.” John mentions, “what’s up is that they are all really good athletes. They’re good at everything.” Peter replies, “yeah, I’d say. I’ve never seen anyone as fast as they are.” Andy mentions, “and those bicycles. That’s what the bicycle racers ride.” Kaleo

mentions, “maybe they’ll be back. They’re really nice, even though they kicked our butt.”

When they ride up the road to the portal, Mark mentions, “if we come back here, I need to do something with the gearing on my bicycle.” Eddie tells Mark, “you can probably put a nineteen or a twenty-tooth sprocket back there without having to mess with the chain.” Mark, pedaling as hard as he can, tells Eddie, “you’re hired.” It sounds like Mark will be making a trip to Vito’s sometime in the near future.

When they arrive at the portal, they take one last look around. Paula exclaims, “this place is really beautiful!” Mark replies, “we’ll definitely be back here again.” Kathy tells everyone, “wait a second. I’ll be right back,” as she walks off the path. Eddie asks, “where are you going?” Kathy replies, “to get a souvenir.” Picking a pineapple off of a pineapple plant, Kathy takes it back to her bicycle and puts it in her handlebar bag. Kathy tells everyone, “okay, now we can go back.” They enter the portal, and find themselves back home, on Saturday morning, when they left.

Paula asks, “okay, now what? After that trip, what do you do for an encore?” Mark replies, “we can make the trip to Paradise Island and pick up Mr. Frazier’s athletes who have finished their training.” Kathy exclaims, “oh no! Don’t do this to me again! I thought this was over!” Eddie mentions, “yeah, Paradise Island. I wonder if the portal can bring us there.” Kathy asks, “what if it’s a one way ticket, and we can’t get back?” Paula replies, “then, we’ll just fly back in Wonder Woman’s invisible airplane.”

They all decide to get lunch, but then remember that they already had lunch back in Hawaii. But, that was hours ago, so a slice of pizza will help them make it to dinner. They all head to the pizzeria, and get a mid afternoon snack. On the way, they drop off Kathy’s pineapple at her house. After lunch, Mark and Paula go to the pool, and Eddie and Kathy head to Kathy’s house.

Over the next few weeks, Eddie makes a few more trips into the future to find out which stocks will perform well. He finds a few good prospects and invests his money, knowing ahead of time what the return on his investment will be. Eddie finds some very lucrative stocks, but some of the companies do not yet exist during his time. He’ll have to wait to make those investments, but he’ll be getting in on the ground floor. He also continues to buy gold in the present and sell it in the future.

With all the money Eddie can potentially make, he could purchase a brand-new car when he gets his driver’s license. But instead, he would rather completely rebuild his MGB given to him by Angelo. In the next few weeks, Eddie has the engine of his MGB completely disassembled. He

figures that, if he is going to rebuild the engine, he might as well do it properly. At Angelo's recommendation, he has the cylinders bored out, and rebuilds the engine using oversized pistons. He also has the cylinder head re-machined to accommodate oversized valves. Eddie also purchases a balanced crankshaft and camshaft. This will give a modest increase over the 91 horsepower factory specification, but he'll have to wait to see how well it performs. Although it takes him a while, when Eddie is finally finished with the engine, it will be in perfect condition. Instead of rebuilding the overdrive box, he purchases a new one.

Eddie and Kathy spend the remainder of the Summer working out and at the pool. With the beginning of the school year right around the corner, Kathy gets the idea that she wants to go school shopping. But, this year, Kathy's idea of school shopping is a little different from anyone else's. Kathy tells Eddie, "I want to go school shopping, but I want to get something from the future and bring it back. You know, something that no one else can have." Eddie asks, "like what?" Kathy replies, "I really don't know yet. Maybe a blouse or pair of blue jeans. I want something that's unique." Eddie mentions, "well, that should be easy enough." Kathy, who is a bit on the impulsive side today, tells Eddie, "okay, so let's go now." They get on their bicycles and head to the portal.

When they arrive at the portal, Kathy picks a date 25 years into the future, since she has been there before and likes the fashion of the time. They head to the mall, which appears nearly the same on the outside as they know it. On the inside, however, it is a different story. Many of the stores that they are familiar with are now gone, and replaced by stores they've never heard of. They shop around for a while, as Kathy and Eddie take notice of the drastic changes in fashion.

Kathy is drawn to a pair of blue jeans with no waistband, but rather a drawstring in place of a belt. She tries them on, and Eddie tells her, "they really look good on you. You should get them." Kathy really wants to buy them, but she is concerned that they may attract a lot of attention. She asks Eddie, "what if someone knows that they are, well, you know, like can't be bought or something?" Eddie tells her, "get them anyway. You can always tell them that someone made them for you. It's really not a lie. Someone in a factory somewhere did make them for you." Kathy replies, "okay, you convinced me. I'm getting them." It didn't take too much to convince Kathy to buy them.

Kathy looks around at a few more items, and finds a shirt that she really likes. The shirt is very short, which sports her belly button and shows a hint of her six-pack abs. But, this shirt was manufactured this way and is quite nice, as opposed to the scissored cutoffs seen during her time. She chooses four shirts of that style, and goes back to get a second pair of the draw string blue jeans. Kathy also picks out two pairs of

drawstring shorts, similar in style to her blue jeans. Kathy is now set, and they head to the check out counter.

While they are waiting in line, Eddie tells Kathy, “you know, you might just set a fashion trend, especially with those shirts.” Kathy tells Eddie, “maybe. But, I can tell you one thing. Paula is going to want a shirt like these.” After checking out, Kathy and Eddie leave the mall and head back to the portal.

On the way back to Kathy’s house, Eddie tells Kathy, “you’re going to be a real hit when you get back to school.” Kathy asks, “how do you mean?” Eddie explains, “the Porsche, the blue jeans, the sexy shirt.” Kathy replies, “yeah, well, we’ll see who copies me.” Eddie also tells Kathy, “you know, Mr. Crum is probably going to suspend you for wearing that shirt.” Kathy replies, “he can’t. The school doesn’t have a dress code.” Eddie remarks, “well, knowing Mr. Crum, he’ll write a dress code just for you.” Kathy replies, “yeah, I want to see that. But, as funny as that is, I wouldn’t put it past him.” Eddie, yanking on Kathy’s chain, tells her, “and, then he’ll make a rule that students can’t drive a Porsche 914.” Kathy tells Eddie, “well, if he ever did that, I’ll get him back really good. I’ll tell you more about that later.”

They ride into Kathy’s driveway, and Kathy tells Eddie, “come inside with me. I’m doing laundry.” Kathy can’t wait to wear her new clothes. While Kathy is getting her laundry together, Eddie asks, “so, what was that about getting Mr. Crum back?” Kathy replies, “oh, that. Do you know those two big trees where his special little reserved parking place for his piece of shit Volkswagen Beetle is?” Eddie replies, “yeah. Across from the tennis courts.” Kathy replies, “yeah, those. Well, when I was a freshman, some of the seniors picked up his Volkswagen Beetle and stuck it long ways between the trees. And, he couldn’t get it out. They never did figure out who did it. But, the rumor was that some of the football players put his car there.” Eddie laughs, and replies, “your ace in the hole.” Kathy informs Eddie, “well, I’m a senior this year, and seniors pull pranks. And besides, they’ll never suspect the girls.” Eddie replies, “yeah. Girls are delicate and fragile, like little flowers. Boys are rough and tough, like tree trunks.” Kathy exclaims, “yeah! See that! If they ever suspect me, I’ll use that line!”

While Kathy is waiting for the laundry to finish, they sit by the pool and relax. Kathy tells Eddie, “okay, so you convinced me.” Not quite understanding, Eddie asks, “convinced you of what?” Kathy replies, “I’m sticking Mr. Crum’s car between the two trees, just for fun.” Eddie asks, “how did I convince you to do that?” Kathy tells him, “because I’m a delicate and fragile little flower!” Eddie replies, “yeah, right. Your State medals and that primal scream really give that away.” Kathy explains to

Eddie, "I'm going to get Paula, Tessa, and Erika, to help. No one would ever suspect us delicate and fragile little flowers."

Kathy goes inside, and moves her laundry to the dryer. She calls Paula, and explains her plan to move Mr. Crum's car. While they are talking, Eddie whispers to her, "I guess us rough and tough guys will be the lookouts." Paula is 100 percent in on the plan. Kathy calls Tessa and Erika, and they also agree to help. They set the date, which is during the week before school starts. Since the teachers have to be in school a week before the students, this would be the perfect time. Part of the plan is to go to the track afterward, and wait to see what happens.

After the laundry is done, Kathy puts her clothes away. She tells Eddie that she plans to wear the shorts and shirt to work tomorrow to see if anyone notices. Kathy and Eddie go back outside, and hang out by the pool. Eddie asks, "so, what's the plan?" Kathy explains, "well, we go to the school in the afternoon. All the teachers will be in their meetings, and that's when we move Mr. Crum's car. They all leave by three o'clock. So, then we go to the track and run for a while, throw the discus, and watch what happens." Eddie replies, asking, "so, we all sit back, and watch the fun?" Kathy replies, "exactly! If we did this when we were in school, we might miss the fun when Mr. Crum sees it!"

The next day, Kathy gets dressed for work, wearing her new outfit. Since it is still Summer, she wears her drawstring shorts, and a shirt that comes to right above her belly button. Kathy's mother tells her, "that really looks nice on you." Kathy replies, "thanks! I got it at the mall yesterday." Kathy got her first compliment, which she is very happy about. Kathy certainly did not want to hear her mother tell her to return the outfit. Kathy then drives to Paula's house.

When she arrives, Paula quickly notices Kathy's new outfit. Paula exclaims, "look at you, girl!" Kathy tells Paula, "yeah, I really like it. I picked it out myself." Paula asks, "where did you get it?" Kathy replies, "at the mall, sort of." Paula asks, "sort of?" Kathy explains, "yeah, at the mall, but 25 years from now." Paula exclaims, "you didn't!" Paula then tells Kathy, "okay, I want something like that, especially the shirt." Kathy tells her, "okay, but you can't get anything exactly like mine." Paula tells her, "never! But, I definitely want something like it." On the way to work, Kathy tells Paula where she got it. Paula decides to make a trip through the portal and pick up something similar.

When they arrive at work, everyone notices Kathy's new outfit, fortunately in a positive way. After seeing the reaction to Kathy's new style, Paula is now convinced more than ever that she wants something similar. They make plans to head to the portal together after work, so

Paula can pick something out. With the reaction Kathy got today, she considers buying a few more items to complement her new wardrobe.

After work, Eddie and Mark are informed of the day's plans. Mark suggests that they all get a bite to eat before they go shopping, adding that girls have a tendency to spend hours at the mall. After they eat, they all head to the portal together. Kathy takes them to 25 years in the future, to the time she bought her new wardrobe. They return to the mall, where Kathy will continue her school shopping and Paula will start hers.

Kathy shows Paula where she got the jeans and shorts. It doesn't take Paula very long to pick something out. Kathy finds a top that drapes around only one shoulder, leaving the other exposed, has only one sleeve, and is cut above the belly button. She finds a similar top that is sleeveless. This is a style that none of them have seen before. Kathy tries them on, and decides to get both. Paula finds a few shirts similar to Kathy's but a slightly different style. Paula also finds a few fashionable halter tops, and decides to get them. Since there are so many styles of drawstring blue jeans, Paula picks up a few of her own.

Mark was right. The girls spent two hours shopping. But, they came away with a wardrobe that will certainly turn heads. They return to their time, with some laundry to do before school starts. On the way home, Paula asks, "how will we explain where we got our clothes from if someone asks?" Mark replies, "you didn't think of that one." Kathy explains, "Eddie said to tell anyone who asks that someone made them for me. After all, someone did make them, but like in a factory somewhere." Paula replies, "yeah, that will definitely work."

Paula and Mark head to Paula's house. Kathy and Eddie ride to Kathy's house. Not surprisingly, Kathy and Paula will both spend the afternoon doing laundry. Kathy and Paula are really excited, and can't wait to wear their new outfits to school.

The week before school starts, Kathy and her cohorts meet at the high school in the afternoon to move Mr. Crum's car. Kathy assures everyone that the girls can move the car by themselves. Eddie, Mark, and Bobby B. head to the track, entering the schoolyard through the South gate. This is the gate near where Eddie belted Chuckie to the fence. The girls head to the front of the school, and into the back parking lot where the teachers park. Hoffer will be the lookout, and stations himself at the front door. They hang around for a while, making sure there is no unusual activity around the school.

Kathy, Paula, Tessa, and Erika casually walk through the parking lot. They stop at Mr. Crum's car. Kathy tells them, "let's make sure we can lift it first." They lift the car by the rear fenders and bumper, and let it down

again. They are surprised at how easily they can lift Mr. Crum's Volkswagen Beetle. They look over at Hoffer, who gives them the thumbs up. Eddie and the guys watch from the track, as Kathy and her team plan to move Mr. Crum's car.

Mark sees Mr. Zunde walking out to the track. Mark tells Eddie and Bobby B., "uh oh. We're busted. Here comes trouble." Eddie and Bobby B. turn around, also seeing Mr. Zunde walking toward the track. Eddie replies, "no, bro. Here comes our alibi." Eddie makes a throw, and goes out into the red zone to retrieve his discus. When Eddie returns to the discus pad, Mr. Zunde is just walking up.

Mr. Zunde says to them, "school doesn't start until next week. What are you guys doing here?" Eddie replies, "we just came to practice the discus and run a little." Mr. Zunde tells them, "I was walking out to make sure the fields were in good shape. You never know what could have happened to them over the Summer." Eddie shows Mr. Zunde his discus, telling him, "Kathy bought this for me. They're on their way. They should be here any time now with Hoffer." Mr. Zunde offers, "if you'd like, I can show you a few things about the throw." Mark replies, "sure, we'd love that."

While Mr. Zunde is helping Eddie, Mark, and Bobby B. with their discus technique, Kathy and the girls have successfully pushed Mr. Crum's car off the parking lot and onto the grass. They are now turning the vehicle, and wedging it between the two trees. They periodically look over at Hoffer, who gives them the thumbs up. Little by little, they wedge the Volkswagen Beetle between the two trees. Once they are done, they walk past the front of the school, with Hoffer joining them. Then walking around the school to the South entrance of the field, they make their way to the track where they will join up with the rest of the group.

As they approach, they see Mr. Zunde instructing the guys on how to throw the discus. Mr. Zunde, seeing the women, asks them, "are you here to throw too?" Kathy replies, "yeah. I'm trying out for the discus next Spring!" Mr. Zunde spends considerable time working with them regarding proper discus technique. Mr. Zunde is impressed by how good they all are.

After throwing the discus for a while, they all hear a commotion off in a distance, in the direction of the teacher's parking lot. Everyone wisely ignores the disturbance, knowing exactly what is going on. Mr. Zunde also hears the commotion, paying it not one bit of attention.

Mr. Crum, looking around the schoolyard, tries to find who may have wedged his car between the two trees. He sees no one in the front of the school. There are a few people playing tennis on the far court, but they

are engrossed in their game. Mr. Crum, seeing a crowd out on the track, thinks he may have found the perpetrators. He heads out to the field, waddling faster than he has in years. Mr. Crum is on track to do the 300-yard walk in four minutes. As he gets closer, he recognizes a few of the people on the track.

Back at the discus pad, Kathy runs out into the field to retrieve the discus after her throw. Mr. Crum approaches the group and, seeing Mr. Zunde, exclaims, "these guys moved my car!" Mr. Zunde calmly asks, "Mr. Crum, what are you talking about?" Mr. Crum replies, "these guys, they stuck my car between two trees!" Eddie replies, "no, we didn't." Mr. Zunde tells Mr. Crum, "see? They said they didn't do it. It must have been someone else."

Kathy returns with the discus, and asks, "who's next?" Mark tells Kathy, "I think it's my turn." Kathy hands the discus to Mark, who gets on the discus pad. Mr. Crum yells at Mark, telling him, "put that thing down!" Pointing to the field where he is about to throw it, Mark replies, "I will. About 200 feet in that direction." Mark throws the discus, and Mr. Zunde tells him, "that was a nice throw, but try to get the angle a little higher next time." Mark then heads out to the field to retrieve the discus.

Mr. Crum yells at Mr. Zunde, "are you just going to ignore me?" Mr. Zunde replies, "yes." Mr. Crum exclaims, "these guys moved my car! They're not going to get away with it!" Mr. Zunde tells Mr. Crum, "I came out here to examine the fields, to check their condition. I saw the guys walk through the student parking lot, and toward the track an hour ago. The women came in right behind them. They were nowhere near your car. We've been right here, all along, working on their discus technique."

Eddie tells Mr. Crum, "we didn't move your car." Mr. Crum, yelling at Eddie, exclaims, "yes, you did! And, I'm going to prove it!" Eddie tells Mr. Crum, in a matter of fact tone, "if I moved your car, I would move it to a junkyard." Everyone, including Mr. Zunde, laughs hysterically at Eddie's comment.

Mr. Crum then exclaims, "how about the girls? They could have moved it!" Kathy, with a crafty smile, tells Mr. Crum, "girls are fragile and delicate, like little flowers. And besides, cars are big and very, very heavy." Everyone again laughs, especially Mr. Zunde, who knows Kathy is anything but delicate and fragile.

Mr. Crum exclaims, "you're not getting away with this!" Since Mr. Crum used a vague singular, and not a plural expression, Kathy asks, "which one of us isn't getting away with what? Please be clear. You're English is very confusing." Mr. Crum brashly replies, "all of you! None of you are getting away with this!" Mr. Crum briskly walks away, hitting a

brick wall with Mr. Zunde and the students. After a few minutes, Mr. Zunde tells the group, "I'm going to go see what he's talking about. This should be interesting. I'll see you all next week."

Once Mr. Zunde is gone, Eddie suggests, "maybe we should go help the poor little pathetic weasel out." Kathy replies, "I have a better idea." Eddie asks, "what's that?" Kathy replies, "I'll move his car out from between the trees myself." Eddie asks, "do you think you can do that?" Kathy replies, "I think so."

They catch up to Mr. Zunde. Eddie tells Mr. Zunde, "we want to see what we supposedly did." They arrive at Mr. Crum's car, and see Mr. Crum standing there, scratching his head, puzzled about what to do next.

Purely to irritate and inflame Mr. Crum, Mr. Zunde asks him, "why don't you just move it yourself?" Mr. Crum exclaims, "it's a car! You can't just pick it up and move it." That's all Kathy needed to hear to get her adrenaline going. Kathy tells Mr. Crum, "get out of the way, junior." Kathy puts her back to the front fender, and lifts the wheel just enough to be able to slide the car over a little. She does the same with the rear fender. Little by little, she gets the car to move.

Mr. Zunde is amazed at Kathy's strength. Mr. Zunde tells Mr. Crum, "look at that! Kathy can move your car all by herself, and you can't?" Mr. Zunde tells Mr. Crum, "just don't stand there, Crum. Get your ass over there and help her!" Kathy stands aside, and tells Mr. Crum, "go for it!" Mr. Crum gives it a try, and cannot budge the car an inch. Mr. Zunde whispers to Eddie, "your dad couldn't have been more right about Mr. Crum running a pussy factory. He's the head pussy."

Erika tells Mr. Crum, "get out of the way." Everyone's eyes are now wide open, and Erika takes her turn. Erika, who has far more strength than anyone realizes, lifts the front of the car by the fender and slides it a bit more. She then moves the rear of the car. Inch by inch, she is able to move Mr. Crum's car. Mr. Zunde tells Mr. Crum, "Crum, you should be totally embarrassed today. These girls are stronger than you are." Mr. Zunde never passes up the opportunity to mess with Mr. Crum.

Eddie suggests that they all pick the car up and carry it the rest of the way. They all get in position, with Eddie, Mark, Kathy, and Paula in the rear, and Bobby B., Hoffer, Tessa, and Erika in the front. Eddie says, "on three. One, two, three." They all lift the car with ease, and carry it back to the parking lot. Eddie says, "okay, on three, we drop it. One, two, three." They drop Mr. Crum's car, which takes a little bounce. Mr. Crum yells at Eddie, saying, "don't drop my car!" Eddie, a bit ticked off by Mr. Crum's attitude, says, "fine, then. We'll put it right back where we found it."

Mr. Zunde tells Mr. Crum, "Mr. Crum, these guys just helped you out. You should be a little more grateful and show your appreciation. And, let me point out something to you. Erika, who will be a sophomore next year, can easily move your car and you couldn't budge it an inch. That should concern you. May I suggest that you visit the weight room this next year?" Mr. Crum brashly replies, "I don't have time for that!" Mark comments, "yeah, he's got to push his pencil around." Since school is not in session, Mr. Crum really cannot do anything to the students. Mr. Crum hastily walks back inside, and is quite unappreciative of the help he received.

Mr. Zunde, who is not naive at all, asks, "okay, which one of you moved his car?" Knowing they just got busted, Kathy replies, "well, we kind of did." All the girls confess, and Mr. Zunde tells them, "great job! That was quite entertaining. I am quite impressed by your strength." Kathy tells Mr. Zunde, "please don't tell Mr. Crum." Mr. Zunde replies, "tell him what? I didn't see anything or hear anything out here." Mr. Zunde tells them, "we'll see you next week," and heads back to the gym. Everyone heads to the pizzeria, reassured that they really didn't get busted.

After they get a bite to eat, Eddie and Kathy go to Kathy's house. They sit by the pool for a while and relax. Kathy tells Eddie, "that was really nice of Mr. Zunde not to bust us." Eddie tells Kathy, "it's obvious whose side he's on." Kathy tells Eddie, "yeah. Whatever side Mr. Crum is on, Mr. Zunde is on the opposite side." Eddie tells Kathy, "yeah, I've noticed that. It's the same thing with Mr. Frazier. Mr. Zunde and Mr. Frazier are always on the same page." Kathy mentions, "Mr. Crum must have really done something to seriously tick them off a long time ago. I wonder what it was." Eddie tells her, "since Mr. Crum hates sports, that would be a good enough reason."

Eddie tells Kathy, "the Summer before I entered high school, Me, Mark, and the guys were at the county pool. We ran into a guy who was in college when Jimmy O'Brien cracked his head open. I think the guy's name was Bill Deutsche or something. He told us that he graduated two years ago. He told us that Northside had a good track team, wrestling team, and football team. I remember him saying to watch out for that principal, Mr. Crum." Kathy replies, "Bill Deutsche. I can't say I've ever heard that name before."

Kathy then asks, "what's this about Jimmy O'Brien cracking his head open?" Eddie explains, "he tried to do a somersault off the diving board, and hit his head. The lifeguards had to dive in and rescue him." Kathy sighs, telling Eddie, "well, that explains a lot." Eddie asks, "how so?" Kathy replies, "how he's so inept." Eddie reassures Kathy, "O'Brien was

inept long before he cracked his head open on the diving board.” Kathy replies, “you’re probably right about that.”

Kathy and Eddie get in the water, which is warmer than the air. Kathy tells Eddie, “it’s warm in the pool, and it’s getting cooler out. We’ll just have to spend the whole night in the pool.” Kathy puts her legs around Eddie’s waist and her arms around his neck. Kathy whispers to Eddie, “I love you.” Eddie whispers back, “I love you.” Kathy reminds Eddie, “I’m falling behind again. All those stars up there in the sky. I need to catch up.” Kathy embraces Eddie, and more stars come out as the night sky hides them from the world. Kathy has a lot of catching up to do.