

# Eddie, The Senior Year

## Chapter Five The Spring Season

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After school, the track team heads to the locker room to get ready for the grand opening of the Spring season. No one on the team has seen Eddie since he walked out of the school a few days ago. And today, no one finds Eddie in the locker room either. Today's meet is against Centerville High School, Northside's arch rival. Last year, Northside took first, second, and third place in every event. Whether they can do that again this year is yet to be seen.

The team heads out to the track and, not surprisingly, the discussion is centered around Eddie's whereabouts. The discussion is whether Eddie is absent from the meet because his hip is still giving him a problem, or if the problem has something to do with Mr. Crum.

Once they get to the track, Braden spies Mr. Crum in the bleachers. Braden informs everyone that Mr. Crum is in the bleachers, sitting in his usual place, with a pair of binoculars. Also in the bleachers, sitting far from Mr. Crum, is Dr. Noreen Brooks, the school superintendent. She is well aware that Eddie is not on the track today. Kathy knows that Eddie will be watching the meet, but not anyone else. Mr. Frazier, optimistic that Eddie would show up for the meet, has lost all hope of that happening once Kathy informed him that Eddie has dropped out of school.

The call for the first event, the 100-yard hurdles, is made. As the hurdlers get ready to run, Mark spots McCutchen running a few warm-ups. It appears McCutchen is still on the Centerville team. This is surprising to Mark, since McCutchen was disqualified at the State invitational meet during the indoor season after testing positive for steroids. As the gun goes off, the sound of the hurdler's spikes grinding into the gravel announce the beginning of this year's Spring track season. Now that the

hurdlers are gone, Eddie's event, the 100-yard dash is next. But today, Eddie is not running. His brother, John, will be running in his place.

Mark, Hoffer, and John head to the starting blocks. Mark tells Hoffer and John that he is going to tell McCutchen that there are ticks on the track, and to keep inspecting their calves. McCutchen, and two other Centerville sprinters, arrives at the blocks. Ignoring McCutchen for the moment, Mark sees Hoffer and John inspecting their calves, and asks, "do you see any?" Hoffer replies, "no. But, I heard one of the hurdlers had one." McCutchen looks at Mark while he is inspecting his legs. Mark tells McCutchen, "you'd better check your legs. There's a lot of ticks on the track. This place is infested with them." McCutchen and his teammates check their legs, with one more thing to worry about for the rest of the afternoon.

Mr. Crum, in the bleachers using his binoculars, sees no sign of Eddie at the starting line. Coming down from the bleachers, Mr. Crum approaches Mr. Zunde, and asks, "where's Eddie?" With a calm demeanor, Mr. Zunde replies, "I don't know. In case you've forgotten, you're the principal of this school. You've announced that fact several times this year. It's your job to keep track of attendance, not mine. Perhaps you suspended Eddie, and you forgot." Clearly perceiving that he will get absolutely nowhere with Mr. Zunde, Mr. Crum hobbles toward Mr. Frazier, who is at the finish line, watching as the 100-yard dash is underway.

Kathy and Paula, standing alongside Mr. Frazier, record the times. Mark takes first place, John takes second place, and Hoffer takes third place today. McCutchen takes fourth place, as he and his teammates check their calves for ticks on their way back to their team bench. Within a few minutes, the whole Centerville team will be informed that there are ticks on the track. A few choice words from Mark are all it takes to cause mass hysteria at the Centerville bench.

Desperate for information, Mr. Crum hastily walks up to Mr. Frazier, exclaiming, "where's Eddie?" Taking control of the unwanted intrusion, Kathy brashly replies, "he dropped out of school. And, it's your fault, you piece of shit. Now, get your scrawny little ass off my track! Now!" Mr. Frazier asks Mr. Crum, "what are you waiting for? Didn't you hear her?" Now quite angry, Mr. Crum exclaims, "I want to know where Eddie is!" Looking at Mr. Crum right in the eyes, Kathy sternly tells him, "I told you. Eddie dropped out of school. He does not attend this school any longer. So, he is not eligible to be on the track team. Now, get your sorry ass off my track, you piece of shit! And, please do us all a favor and walk through the red zone on your way out." Mr. Crum is apparently not getting any cooperation from anyone today.

Mr. Crum walks back toward the bleachers, not appreciative of how Kathy treated him. But, Kathy's remarks are the least of his concern. As he passes by the field area, Mr. Crum raises his voice, as if he is distressed, telling Mr. Zunde, "why didn't you tell me that Eddie dropped out of school?" Mr. Zunde informs Mr. Crum, "the superintendent will let you know soon enough. She is taking care of this situation. I'm sure you'll be hearing from her soon." Mr. Crum, who is now in a panic, heads back to the bleachers to calm down, which isn't likely to happen.

Meanwhile, Eddie has been standing next to the equipment building, watching the meet. Eddie's vantage point near the equipment building gives a great view of the finish line for the sprinting events, and a good view of the field athletes releasing their implements. No one really notices Eddie, except Kathy, who knows exactly where he is standing. Eddie finds it kind of humorous that Mr. Crum waddled around the venue like a cartoon character, acting like a jerk. It's no secret to Eddie why Mr. Crum interjected himself into the meet.

With the focus shifting to the distance and relay events, Eddie moves to the bleachers. Kathy catches Eddie's eye as he walks toward the bleachers to find a good seat. Also noticing Eddie, as he walks by, is Mr. Crum. Taking a seat in the middle of the top row, Eddie now has a great view of the track as the other events get underway. Eddie finds it quite amusing how loud he can hear Braden, as he exclaims, "I'm kicking ass! Ain't nobody in this State that can kick my ass! Let's get this ass kicking underway!" Braden's rant just announced that the 440-yard dash is about to begin.

The gun goes off, and Eddie sits back, relaxing as Braden kicks ass in the 440-yard dash. Eddie thinks back to his freshman year, when Mr. Frazier told him, Mark, and Braden to run a 440-yard dash during gym class. Recalling that they all ran a 54-second quarter mile back then, Eddie sees how Braden, who now owns the State record in the 440-yard dash, has come a long way. Knowing that it's all over now, Eddie thinks to himself that those were the good old days. But, on the positive side, Eddie thinks to himself that he and Kathy are getting married, he has a house to work on, and he needs to talk with Angelo sometime in the near future. As expected, Braden wins the 440-yard dash, letting everyone know how badly they've been beaten.

After the 440-yard dash, walking up the bleachers toward Eddie is Mr. Crum. Eddie just sits back and relaxes, knowing that the school's principal no longer has any authority over him. Approaching Eddie, Mr. Crum brazenly asks, "Edward, why haven't you been in school?" Eddie calmly replies, "because I dropped out. I don't go to your pussy factory anymore, so get your fat piece of shit ass out of my way so I can watch the meet." Mr. Crum tells Eddie, "I want to see you in my office in the

morning!” Eddie, mimicking Mr. Crum, repeats, “I want to see you in my office in the morning.” Standing up and walking away, Eddie takes a seat elsewhere in the bleachers so he can watch the rest of the meet in peace. Mr. Crum dares not follow him.

In the final event of the day, the 4 by 440 relay, Erika will be taking Eddie’s place. At the starting line, Mark, Braden, Johnson, and Erika all pretend to check their legs for ticks. McCutchen, and his 4 by 440 relay team are constantly checking their legs as well. McCutchen asks, “so, where’s Eddie?” Mark whispers to McCutchen, “steroids,” resurrecting the rumor that led to McCutchen’s takedown over the indoor track season. It will be interesting to see how far Mark’s one word comment will go this Spring. As the race gets underway, Eddie is surprised how strong the 4 by 440 relay team is.

Mark, the anchorman today, crosses the finish line about 45 seconds before McCutchen. With Erika taking Eddie’s place on the 4 by 440 relay team, the composite time is only ten seconds slower, so Eddie figures the relay team can win every race this season. With his former team taking first, second, and third place in the 100-yard dash, and destroying the competition in the 4 by 440 relay, Eddie is fully convinced that he is no longer needed on the team. Coming down out of the bleachers to join his former teammates, Eddie heads straight for Kathy.

Eddie tells Kathy, “congratulations! You guys won!” Kathy replies, “yeah. But, it wasn’t the same without you here.” With some wisdom, Eddie explains, “I’ll be gone next year anyway, and you’ll have three more years at this job.” Seeing Eddie’s point, Kathy sighs, and replies, “yeah. I guess you’re right.” Kathy gives Eddie a hug, and tells him, “well, it’s time to go home. Come with me.” Eddie asks Kathy, “what? No pizza?” Kathy replies, “the team is probably going out for pizza, but I’d rather be with you.” Eddie tells Kathy, “it’s a date.”

Remembering that she is not quite ready to leave, Kathy tells Eddie, “oh crap. I forgot. I’m an assistant coach again. I’ve got to help put all this shit away. Then, we can go.” Kathy helps Wendy put away the equipment, as the team and the coaches head to the locker room. As Kathy and Eddie were talking, not even Mr. Frazier has noticed that Eddie walked down from the bleachers onto the track. But, neither Mr. Frazier nor Mr. Zunde knew Eddie was at the meet.

While Wendy, Kathy, Paula, and Barbara put away the equipment, Dr. Brooks walks down from the bleachers over to Eddie. Introducing herself, Dr. Noreen Brooks says, “Eddie, perhaps you don’t remember me. I’m Dr. Brooks, the school superintendent. Do you have a moment?” Eddie asks, “sure. What’s up?” Dr. Brooks asks, “Eddie, tell me what happened. I heard you dropped out of school. Is that true?” Eddie explains the whole

situation in detail to Dr. Brooks, including Mr. Crum vowing that Eddie will never graduate. Dr. Brooks, hearing Mr. Zunde's and Mr. Frazier's account earlier in the week, and now Eddie's side of the story, is very concerned. Dr. Brooks tells Eddie, "I'm definitely going to do something about this." Eddie cordially replies, "thanks, but don't waste your time. I'm not coming back here." Eddie thanks Dr. Brooks for being concerned, and walks away. Dr. Brooks, who was very bothered by hearing what happened, is very much more disturbed now than before.

Eddie meets up with Kathy, and they head out in separate cars. Meeting at Kathy's house, they drive together to the Greek restaurant, where they have a quiet meal together. The rest of the team is getting pizza and celebrating their victory, but Eddie and Kathy are not in the mood for celebration today. After dinner, Kathy and Eddie take the long way home, driving to the house they bought together. Sitting by their pool, they manage to leave the world's cares behind them, at least for a while.

For the next week, Eddie is still absent from school. By now, it's clear to Mr. Frazier and Mr. Zunde that Eddie is not coming back. Neither of them is happy, to say the least. Mr. Crum, expecting to hear some news, gets none from anyone. Mr. Crum is very worried. He caught a glimpse of Eddie talking with the school superintendent after the track meet last week. Mr. Crum can only imagine what that conversation was all about.

Instead of being in school, Eddie is making a small garden in his and Kathy's new house. Buying a park bench, Eddie makes a small area between the woods and the pool where he and Kathy can sit. Eddie also spends time getting the pool up and running. Heating the pool to a nice warm 92 degrees, Eddie has a nice surprise waiting for Kathy. Since the house is on well water, Eddie replaces the water filters, making sure everything is working correctly. Going on a shopping spree, Eddie buys some pool towels, and a few items for the pool side. Remembering that Kathy wanted a patio table where she can do homework, Eddie picked up a patio set too. And, since it's the Spring, Eddie cut the lawn, what little of it there is to cut.

The weekend comes along, and Eddie drives to Kathy's house in the morning. Before they go out to get pizza, Eddie tells Kathy, "hey! Get your swimsuit." Kathy replies, "why? The pool isn't open yet." Eddie tells her, "just bring it. I'll explain later." Kathy figures that Eddie might want to go through the portal to a Summer's beach somewhere. They go out for their usual Saturday pizza, running into Mark and Paula, who have the same Saturday lunch plans. They have a seat together, and are all glad to be one happy group again.

Since Eddie is curious about what is going on at school, he asks Mark, "so, what's up at Mr. Crum's pussy factory?" Mark tells Eddie, "well, Mr. Frazier is really ticked off. Mr. Crum is trying to talk to him, but Mr. Frazier keeps ignoring him." Eddie laughs, telling Mark, "good. Mr. Frazier wins on the track and off." Eddie asks, "is the little Chuckie back in school yet?" Mark informs him, "no. But, O'Brien is back. He looks really sick. He's lost ten pounds." Eddie remarks, "he doesn't have ten pounds to lose. He's a walking skeleton." Mark elaborates, telling Eddie, "O'Brien got dehydrated and had to go to the hospital. They say he almost died because all his muscles broke down." Sick of a few of the characters at school, Eddie laughs, and comments, "Jimmy O'Cryin' doesn't have any muscles."

When the pizza arrives, Eddie asks Mark and Paula, "hey, do you guys want to take a look at what I did to the house?" Paula, who seems to get excited about these sort of things, answers, "sure, we'd love to." Eddie tells everyone a few of the things he's done around the house, but leaves out the surprise that the pool water is nice and warm. Eddie does, however, tell Mark and Paula, "before you come over, get your swimsuits." Paula exclaims, "the water is way too cold to go swimming!" Brushing off the comment, Eddie tells her, "you can get your toes wet, like you did that day on the beach last year when you guys were acting like you're getting old." That was enough to convince Paula to get her swimsuit. Paula certainly doesn't want to be accused of getting old again.

After lunch, Mark and Paula pick up their swimsuits and follow Eddie and Kathy to the house. Driving up the driveway, Kathy sees the patio tables, and exclaims, "Eddie! You got us a patio table!" Eddie replies, "yeah. Now you and Paula can sit out here and study when it's nice out."

Getting out of the car, they walk out to the pool area as Mark and Paula drive up right behind them. Before Mark and Paula get out of the Jeep, Eddie points to the park bench between the woods and the pool, and tells Kathy, "the long way home." Seeing the park bench with some nice landscaping around it, Kathy exclaims, "oh, Eddie! It's so beautiful! Our very own park! I love it!"

Kathy notices that Eddie bought a whole lot more than just a table and chairs. Eddie bought a whole patio set, with a few lounge chairs. Walking up to the pool area, Paula comments, "nice!" Eddie tells everyone, "I was thinking we could put our swimsuits on and lay out and relax for a while." Now onboard with the plan, everyone goes inside to get into their swimsuits.

While they are inside waiting for Mark and Paula, Eddie mentions to Kathy, "taste the water." Not expecting anything too special, Kathy gets a plastic cup, and tastes the water from the tap. Kathy tells Eddie, "wow!

This is like water! It's way better than the water at home." Eddie tells Kathy, "it's well water."

Mark and Paula are ready, and they head out to the pool. Putting his toes in the water, Eddie makes sure the water is still warm. Kathy looks at the pool bottom, secretly looking for frogs. Standing next to the water, Kathy mentions, "I really wish we could go swimming. The water looks so nice." Eddie pushes Kathy into the pool, and Kathy screams, expecting the worst as she lands in the water. Eddie jumps in right after hearing Kathy exclaim, "wow! I can't believe this is our pool! It's so warm!" Mark and Paula, wasting no time, also jump in. Kathy tells Eddie, "this is really beautiful!" Eddie hands Kathy the floating pool thermometer, which reads 92 degrees. When Eddie threw Kathy into the water, she was expecting 62 degrees, which is a bit cold to swim in.

With the water being warmer than the air, they all float around and hang out in the pool for a few hours. At 92 degrees, however, the pool is a bit too warm for swimming laps. Mark asks Eddie, "so, this is what you've been up to in the last week?" Eddie replies, "mostly. And, I've got the perfect place for a home gym in the basement." Kathy asks, "where?" Eddie explains, "in front of the wall with the door and the windows. There's a nice view. The other three walls are concrete." Kathy agrees, telling Eddie, "yeah! That would be really nice, looking outside instead of concrete walls when we work out."

Paula asks, "and, all the money for this came from buying and selling gold through the portal?" Eddie replies, "yeah. The same place the money for Mark's truck came from. I've made a few trips over the last week. Actually, I've made a lot of trips over the last week. I probably made more money in one week than Mr. Crum makes in an entire year." Paula exclaims, "wow! We're not calling that the portal anymore! From now on, we're calling it the bank!" Mark, taking a good look at where Kathy and Eddie will be living, mentions, "I'm going to the bank later." Paula agrees, telling Mark, "I'm coming with you!"

Kathy then mentions, "maybe you guys," and catching herself, continues, "can come and use the pool even when we're not here." Kathy was going to tell Paula, "maybe you guys can buy a house around here too, so we can all be together." Kathy, learning that Mark and Paula will be getting married from a trip to the future, caught herself before she spilled the beans. Paula replies, "that is really nice of you! Thank you!" Kathy got herself out of that one nicely.

After a nice afternoon in the pool, Mark and Paula get ready to head out. Mark, liking the way the phrase sounds, tells Eddie, "I'm going to the bank!" Mark then tells Paula, "you'll have to show me how this bank thing

works.” Eddie comments, “Kathy wanted to live on Second Street, but we got stuck here instead, courtesy of the bank.” Kathy exclaims, “not!”

Paula asks, “what’s on Second Street?” Kathy exclaims, “haunted houses! That’s what!” Paula tells Kathy, “wow! Now, I want to go see! Where is it?” Kathy explains, “Second Street is near the railroad tracks. There are four houses there and they’re all haunted. And, two of the houses are backwards. The back of the house faces the street.” Paula asks, “and, people live there?” Kathy replies, “yeah. Probably Mr. Crum and Mr. O’Brien.” Everyone laughs, but who knows. Maybe Mr. Crum and Mr. O’Brien really do live on Second Street.

After Mark and Paula leave, Eddie and Kathy float around their pool a while longer. Kathy puts her legs around Eddie’s waist and her arms around his neck, telling him, “I love you so much!” Kathy kisses Eddie, and tells her, “our first kiss in our pool!” As they float around the pool, Eddie asks, “I wonder where your star will be in the sky.” Kathy, with her head on Eddie’s shoulder, tells him, “someday we’re going to find my star. But, for right now, I’ve got a lot of catching up to do.” Kathy, holding her heart shape pendant with the inscription that reads, “One Kiss for Every Star in the Sky”, gives Eddie a kiss, followed by many more. With only a few billion more to go, they’ll be in the pool for a while.

Another week goes by and Eddie gets a lot done on his and Kathy’s house. On Monday morning, Eddie heads out to see Angelo about getting a job. Eddie’s mother, however, informs him, “the school wants to see you tomorrow morning. They asked that you be there at 9:00 a.m.” Eddie asks, “why?” Eddie’s mother tells him, “oh, Eddie, you know why. They want your father there too.” Eddie tells her, “okay, I’ll be there.” Eddie knows this is going to be good. Perhaps he’ll get to watch his father break another desk, or he’ll hear his father ask Mr. Crum for an update on how well the pussy factory is operating. So, Eddie figures why miss out on the entertainment.

Eddie heads out to see Angelo. Eddie drives up during the mid morning, and Angelo is surprised to see him. Angelo asks, “hey, Eddie! What’s up?” Eddie asks, “are you hiring?” Angelo answers, “yeah. I can always use some help around here.” Angelo works ten to twelve hours a day, six days a week, and he could be busier if he wanted to be.

Eddie explains the situation at school to Angelo, explaining how Mr. Crum set him up. Angelo, understanding completely, tells Eddie, “you can start whenever you want.” That certainly was the best news Eddie received in the last three weeks. But, Eddie does inform Angelo that he might have to go back to school. Angelo, who has known Eddie quite well since Eddie has been in the seventh grade, knows Eddie’s abilities, and

that he is a good worker. Angelo assures Eddie that a job is waiting for him when he wants it.

Tuesday morning comes along, and brings with it the mystery meeting at the high school. Eddie and his father drive separately, since Eddie's father has to return to the job site after the meeting. Eddie walks into the administration area, and asks Mrs. Marlowe, "what's this meeting all about?" Mrs. Marlowe tells Eddie, "it's about getting you back into school." Eddie tells Mrs. Marlowe, "I was hoping you were going to tell me to clean out my locker. I wasn't expecting to waste my time with that asshole, Mr. Crum." Eddie knows he has the upper hand, so he crosses the line every chance he gets. Eddie then asks Mrs. Marlowe, "does Mr. Crum have my gold medal for kicking the shit out of the Chuckie?" Mrs. Marlowe, who overheard the discussion about the medal a few weeks ago, smiles, and tells Eddie, "I don't think you'll be getting that medal today."

Eddie's father walks into the administration area at 8:58 a.m. While they are waiting, Eddie's father and Eddie talk about the house Eddie and Kathy bought. Eddie's father explains to Eddie that he should pipe the downspouts for the rain gutters far away from the house to keep the water away from the foundation. As they talk about that project, Mr. Bogenskaya, looks at his watch, and tells Mrs. Marlowe, "this meeting was supposed to start at 9:00 a.m. It's now ten after." Mrs. Marlowe informs Mr. Bogenskaya, "everyone's not here yet." Eddie's father replies, "and, the count just went down by one. I have work to do." Mr. Bogenskaya stands up and leaves. Following his father, Eddie tells Mrs. Marlowe, "make that down by two."

Eddie and his father walk through the lobby, and unexpectedly run into Mr. Frazier and Mr. Zunde. Eddie has little choice but to talk with Mr. Frazier. Not knowing what to say, Mr. Frazier tells Eddie, "I heard what happened. For what it's worth, no one believes Mr. Crum." Changing the subject, Eddie tells his former coach, "I saw your meet against Centerville. You guys did really good." Mr. Frazier tells Eddie, "the whole team missed you." Eddie tells Mr. Frazier, "the team is strong. They did fine without me. You'll have an awesome season."

Not wanting to prolong the misery, Mr. Bogenskaya tells Mr. Frazier and Mr. Zunde, "it's nice to see you guys again. But, unfortunately, I need to get back to work. You guys can talk with Eddie if you want." Mr. Zunde asks Mr. Bogenskaya, "aren't you coming to the meeting?" Mr. Bogenskaya replies, "the meeting was at 9:00 a.m. I don't have time to waste on whatever that Mr. Crum has to say today." Mr. Bogenskaya has customers who need to have projects completed at a certain time. He does not have time to sit around and wait all morning for Mr. Crum.

Mr. Zunde tells Mr. Bogenskaya, “the school superintendent called this meeting. She really wants Eddie to graduate.” Eddie informs his father, “she talked to me at the track meet about two weeks ago. I told her not to bother.” Mr. Zunde persuades Mr. Bogenskaya, “why don’t you come and hear what she has to say. The meeting is in the library. If you don’t like what you hear, you can walk out whenever you want.” Eddie tells his father, “I might as well go, since I’m already here.” Mr. Bogenskaya, Eddie, Mr. Frazier, and Mr. Zunde head to the library together, all hoping that their time is not wasted.

On the door to the library, Eddie sees a sign stating that the library is closed. Upon walking in, Eddie sees Dr. Brooks, the school superintendent, Mr. Crum, Braden, and a few administrators he’s never seen before. Eddie, wondering why Braden is present, gives him a fist bump, telling him, “yo bro. What are you doing here?” Braden, who appears very concerned, replies, “I don’t know. I think I’m in big trouble, but I didn’t do anything.” Eddie tells Braden, “you’re good. It’s me that they want to talk to today.” Eddie, his father, and his former coaches take a seat, wondering why so many people are present. No one, except for Dr. Brooks, knows the full agenda of today’s meeting.

Once everyone is present, Dr. Brooks opens the meeting, stating, “good morning. Thank you all for coming. I have called this meeting today to investigate the reason behind why Edward Bogenskaya has allegedly dropped out of school. While I have heard conflicting reports, the tone behind Edward dropping out of school simply does not resonate well with me. Today, hopefully, I can get some answers to a few questions that I have. Before I begin, I want to get something straight. Please understand that this is a public, not a private meeting. The events leading to this meeting transpired in a public setting, and they will be resolved in a like manner.” Eddie’s father whispers to Eddie, “at least she’s a lot more cordial than that so-called principal around here.”

Dr. Brooks continues, “when a student with reasonably good academic performance drops out of school three months before graduation, it certainly raises a red flag and attracts a lot of attention. It is especially noteworthy when the grades of that student suggest that they would have graduated anyway, even by putting forth minimal academic effort. I’m sure all of us sitting here in this room today can clearly see the conundrum.” Mr. Zunde whispers to Mr. Frazier, “I’ve not heard her speak in this way before. This is going to get interesting.”

Dr. Brooks continues, asking Eddie, “Edward, would you be so kind as to explain to all of us why you dropped out of school?” Eddie replies, “it’s simple. Mr. Crum wanted me to help the Chuckie out by getting the district attorney to drop the charges against the little Chuckie. When I told him that I wouldn’t do that, Mr. Crum told me that I won’t graduate

from this school, and that he'll make sure of it. There's no point coming back here anymore if I'm not going to graduate. So, I dropped out. I think you people call that 'logic'." Dr. Brooks, who is no idiot and already knows the truth surrounding this whole situation, replies, "wow! That's really surprising to me."

Focusing her attention to Mr. Crum, Dr. Brooks asks Mr. Crum, "Maurice, do you recall telling Edward that, if he does not help Charles Black, that he would not graduate from high school?" Mr. Crum, replying brashly to Dr. Brooks, exclaims, "I said no such thing! He's making the whole thing up. I said nothing of the sort." Present with a few others when Mr. Crum told Eddie that he would not graduate, Braden whispers under his breath, "that's a bunch of bullshit." Dr. Brooks, and everyone else in the room, hears Braden's comment. Dr. Brooks bluntly asks Mr. Crum, "does Charles Black have a police record?" Mr. Crum replies, "not that I know of." Dr. Brooks replies, "oh, I see."

Turning her attention to everyone in the room, Dr. Brooks asks, "is anyone in this room aware whether Charles Black has a police record?" Mr. Zunde replies, "the school is well aware that Charles Black has a record." Dr. Brooks asks Mr. Zunde, "would you please tell us how you became aware that Charles Black has a police record?" Mr. Zunde replies, "Mr. Gabriel, the local police captain, informed us that Charles has a police record about a year ago when Charles assaulted Erika, one of the members of the track team. Captain Gabriel mentioned, at the time, that Charles has had three drug busts and four assault charges." Dr. Brooks asks, "was anyone else made aware of this?" Mr. Zunde replies, "if I recall correctly, Mr. Frazier, Erika, Mr. Crum, and myself were in a meeting in Mr. Crum's office when that information was revealed." Dr. Brooks glances over at Mr. Crum, with a look giving the unmistakable impression that he has been busted.

Dr. Brooks, taking full advantage of Braden's personality, asks, "Axel, I perceive by your comment a moment ago that you might have a differing opinion as to what happened. Am I correct?" Braden boldly replies, "yes, I do." Mr. Crum is quite surprised that Braden answered Dr. Brooks using proper English.

Dr. Brooks asks Braden, "Axel, would you be kind enough to share your opinion of what happened, from your perspective, with all of us?" Braden, who is ticked off at Mr. Crum, replies, "we all heard Mr. Crum ram that shit down Eddie's throat. Mr. Crum told Eddie he won't graduate if he won't help out Chuckie." Dr. Brooks asks, "who else heard it?" Braden replies, "Mark, Johnson, Mitchell, and Bobby B. We were hiding near the bathroom listening when all this went down. We knew something was up when Mr. Crum asked Eddie how his hip was doing and when he can practice again. Mr. Crum doesn't give a shit about Eddie's hip or the track

team. So, we hid near the bathrooms to hear what was going on.” Braden certainly tells it like it is.

Mr. Crum interrupts the meeting, stating, “they’re all making it up! They’ve all clearly colluded together to make up this story!” Eddie, who has nothing to lose, stands up, and exclaims, “Crum, you’re full of more shit than will fill the Grand Canyon! I haven’t spoken to Braden, Johnson, Mitchell, or Bobby B. since I walked out of your pussy factory. And, I’ve had it with your crap, which is why I dropped out.” Mr. Crum tells Eddie, “Edward, please calm down. I’m sure everyone here does not want to hear your temper tantrum.”

Eddie, who has had enough of Mr. Crum, continues, albeit a slight bit calmer, “I have a job. Kathy and I just bought a house in the town behind the school. I don’t need your school or your diploma. And, even if I did graduate from this school, if your name is on my diploma, the first thing I’m doing when I get home is tearing it up and throwing it out.”

Silence falls over the room as Eddie walks over to the table where Mr. Crum is seated. Mr. Crum, seeing a six-foot, five-inch, 245 pound disgruntled student walking toward him, raises his voice, telling Eddie, “now, Edward, please calm down! I’m sure these people don’t want to hear your ranting!” Eddie sternly tells Mr. Crum, “I didn’t ask for your opinion! So, shut up.”

Eddie picks up the four-foot table where Mr. Crum is seated, forcefully throwing it across the room, breaking two of the legs off as it collides with a bookshelf. Now that Eddie has everyone’s attention, standing in front of Mr. Crum, Eddie tells him, “for once in your life, Crum, why don’t you tell the truth? You’ve been after the track team ever since I got here! You were after Kathy and Paula last year! And, you’re constantly after Braden, who breaks up at least a dozen fights every year because you, and your pussy factory, can’t! And, then what do you do? You threaten to suspend Braden for being involved in a fight! And then, Mr. Zunde and Mr. Frazier have to step in to keep your sorry ass in line.” Eddie turns around, and heads back to his seat, as Mr. Crum starts shaking and turns an eerie shade of white.

Reconsidering, Eddie realizes that he is not finished with his diatribe. Turning around, and approaching Mr. Crum a second time, Eddie exclaims, “and, why are you protecting the Chuckie? You’re always protecting him! And, then when the Chuckie kicked the shit out of you, all you did was to send him to detention! Now that I’m thinking about it, if that’s the price to pay for kicking your ass, I should tell everyone in the school!” Acting as if he is making a public announcement, Eddie exclaims, “that’s right, everyone! If you kick the shit out of Mr. Crum, all you’ll get is three days of detention.” Eddie continues, and tells Mr. Crum,

"I bet you'll have a lot of takers! And, it's the same thing with that moron, Jimmy O'Brien! He could burn the school down, and you'd let him off!" Eddie again returns to his seat, as Dr. Brooks comments, "okay, good. We all now have a clear understanding what Eddie's side of the story is."

Mr. Frazier whispers to Mr. Zunde, "I wish I could put him in the starting blocks right now with all this energy. He'll break some sort of record." Catching a glimpse of Dr. Brooks, Mr. Zunde whispers back to Mr. Frazier, "here it comes. She's going to bury Crum." Dr. Brooks just allows the meeting to move on naturally, and is not the least bit concerned with Eddie breaking a table or with Braden's language. Mr. Zunde and Mr. Frazier will preserve the peace, if necessary.

Focusing her attention back to Mr. Crum, Dr. Brooks asks, "Maurice, can you think of any reason why Eddie would spontaneously drop out of school? After all, he is very well positioned to break the National record in the 100-yard dash this year. That honor could get him a scholarship to just about any college or university that he wants. Not to mention that it would certainly bring a lot of positive attention to this school. It will also give excellent exposure to our other athletic programs as well. And, it's not like Eddie is failing anything. He's got a mid to high-B average."

Mr. Crum replies, "you saw how he reacted. He'll never get into college with that attitude." Eddie replies to Mr. Crum's accusation, stating, "and, we'll never forget how you reacted when you ran into the discus last year. At least I act my age. You acted like an eight-year-old pansy. No, wait. I'm wrong. You acted more like a three-year-old." Eddie starts imitating Mr. Crum from a year ago, babbling like a baby, "who threw the discus at me? I demand to know! I'm going to suspend them! Who was it?" Eddie's comment silences Mr. Crum and everyone else attending the meeting today. Everyone present is aware of the incident with the discus last year.

Mr. Bogenskaya whispers to Eddie, "this guy is so full of shit. He's not even qualified to be the janitor." Hearing Mr. Bogenskaya's comment, Mr. Crum announces, "I heard that." Mr. Bogenskaya tells Mr. Crum, "good. They may call you the principal around here but, to me, you're nothing but a pussy. I may only have an eighth-grade education, but I'm a whole lot wiser than you are. You'd have to be a very special kind of idiot to believe anything you say. And, by the way, how's your desk doing? I hear that it's still broken. You know, you could just take it down to the shop. They could fix it for you there. Or, maybe you could even fix it yourself. If you do, please call me. I'd like to watch." Everyone present laughs at Mr. Bogenskaya's comment, except for Mr. Crum. Mr. Crum dares not to respond to Mr. Bogenskaya.

Getting back to the original question, Dr. Brooks asks Mr. Crum, “Maurice, please let me know if there is any reason at all that you can think of why Eddie would drop out of school. And, please do not evade my question this time, or answer my question with any further irrelevant observations.” Mr. Crum replies, “I can’t think of any reason, but there must be one.” Dr. Brooks responds, “there must be a reason. I see. But, you do not know the reason?” Mr. Crum brashly replies, “kids drop out of school all the time for no reason.” Dr. Brooks replies with a sarcastic, “really? I was not aware of that.”

Dr. Brooks heard exactly what she suspected she would hear. The only reason she arranged this meeting is to confirm what she knew all along, and to get everything out in the open. Dr. Brooks could allow the meeting to go on, but it will be more of the same. She has already made her decision on what action she was going to take several days earlier. Hearing nothing new today that would change her mind, Dr. Brooks takes out a paper summarizing her decision.

Wrapping up the meeting, Dr. Brooks announces, “I think I’ve heard enough today. To me, it’s very clear what is going on here, and there are certain things that clearly must be addressed.”

Mr. Crum sits in his chair, no longer behind a desk, with his arms crossed. Mr. Crum, holding his head up high, is waiting patiently to hear the superintendent’s decision to expel Eddie from the school once and for all. After all, the broken desk across the room is evidence of Eddie’s demeanor, highly suggestive of the need for strict disciplinary action. And, a trail of destruction in the principal’s office adds to the evidence collection.

On the other side of the room, Mr. Zunde whispers to Mr. Frazier, “she’s going to kick Crum’s ass, and kick it hard. I can see it coming.” Mr. Frazier smiles, and whispers back, “I’m just glad that I was invited, and get to watch.”

Dr. Brooks continues, “it is the official position of the administration that we sincerely hope that Edward will elect to return to school. If he chooses to return to school, Edward will graduate with his class. I will make certain of that myself. There is nothing in Edward’s record that is even remotely suggestive that he would not have graduated anyway and, I might add, with reasonably good grades. Also, if Edward chooses to return to school, he will not be responsible for any work that he’s missed, or any work dependent on the course material he’s missed.” Eddie is relieved to hear what Dr. Brooks announced. But, that is nothing compared to what is coming.

As Mr. Crum turns beat red, Dr. Brooks announces, “I have also decided to make an administrative change in the high school. This change is to further harden the administrative change made several years ago when John Davies lost his football scholarship due to certain events that transpired on campus at that time. Effective immediately, Mr. Frazier, Mr. Chubin, Miss Paterno, and Miss Hamilton will no longer report to the principal, Mr. Crum. Instead, the entire physical education staff will now report directly to Dr. Zunde who, as most of you know, reports directly to the school board. And, I’m going to add this. If Edward does not return and graduate, I will give serious consideration regarding further restructuring the administration of this school. And, Mr. Crum. I sincerely hope you will be at each and every track meet to cheer for your school’s team. I will be at each and every meet myself, and expect to see you there.”

Silence falls over the room as Dr. Brooks finishes her summary. Even Braden figures out that Dr. Brooks just told Mr. Crum that he will be fired or demoted if Eddie doesn’t graduate. It also sounds like to Braden that Mr. Crum, instructed to attend all the track meets, has been given detention by the superintendent. Mr. Crum, who was proudly sitting in his chair with his arms crossed, is now staring at the floor, not believing what he just heard.

Mr. Frazier is greatly relieved that he no longer reports to Mr. Crum. With the expression on Mr. Frazier’s face, you’d think his team won the gold, silver, and bronze medal in every event at the State invitational meet. Mr. Zunde is quite surprised to hear the announcement, completely removing the school’s athletic department from under Mr. Crum’s authority. Mr. Zunde is also happy that he will not have to address any further confrontations between the physical education staff and Mr. Crum, which were quite a frequent occurrence. And, Mr. Bogenskaya is glad to finally hear a voice of reason in the room.

Dr. Brooks concludes, “Edward, I hope that you will give serious consideration to the school’s offer. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. My door is always open to you. I hope to hear from you by the end of the week. And, unless anyone has any questions or comments, I believe we are done here for today.”

No one has any questions, so the meeting is adjourned. Mr. Crum leaves the room first, heading back to his office to sit behind his broken desk. Braden heads back to class, without a late pass.

Mr. Zunde, who is very curious, asks Dr. Brooks, “by the way, why did you pick Braden? Why not Mitchell, or perhaps Johnson?” After all, Mitchell is an honors student, and may come across as a little more credible than Braden. Dr. Brooks replies, “oh, that’s very simple, Gerhard.

The whole school will know what happened during this meeting because Axel Braden was here.” Caught a bit off guard, Mr. Zunde smiles, and says, “I should have guessed.”

Eddie’s father heads off to work, and Eddie heads off to who knows where. With the offer put on the table by Dr. Brooks, Eddie really has no choice but to return to school. And, Eddie has nothing to lose by returning. It’s not likely that Mr. Crum will give Eddie, the track team, or Mr. Frazier any more problems. Not knowing where to go, Eddie heads to the University to tell Kathy the news.

Out of school by 11:00 a.m., Tuesday is Kathy’s short day at school. Eddie arrives at the college with plenty of time to catch her. Waiting in the parking lot, Eddie feels a bit more relaxed than he has in the last few weeks. Class change occurs, and students walk in all directions, heading to their next destination. Kathy and Paula walk into the parking lot, and head in different directions. Seeing that Eddie is waiting for her, Kathy hopes for the best.

Kathy can tell by the look on Eddie’s face that he has good news. Kathy gives Eddie a hug and a kiss, and asks him, “how did it go this morning?” Eddie tells Kathy, “you should have been there! Dr. Brooks buried Mr. Crum.” All excited, Kathy asks, “so, are you going to go back to school?” Eddie replies, “yeah. Dr. Brooks told me that I’m going to graduate, and that I’m not responsible for the work I missed.” Kathy exclaims, “Eddie, that’s awesome! You can run for the team again!” Telling Kathy what he really feels, Eddie whispers to her, “the track team is the only reason I’m going back. But, don’t tell anyone.” Kathy replies, “my lips are sealed.” Eddie tells Kathy, “here, let me open them,” as he gives his sweetheart a kiss.

Kathy asks Eddie, “now what?” Eddie tells her, “I think I’m going to go over to the house and do some work. I won’t have as much time when I’m back in school.” Kathy tells Eddie, “I’m coming with you. I’m sitting by the pool and working on my project.” As they head out, Eddie tells Kathy, “see you at home.” As Kathy drives to their house, the words, “see you at home,” resonate in Kathy’s head.

After a three-week absence, Eddie returns to school on Monday. Getting to school early, Eddie takes his usual seat near the window, waiting for the tribe to arrive. Braden walks in, and exclaims, “yo, bro! Are you running?” Eddie replies, “I hope so.” Mark arrives next, who already knew Eddie was going to show up today. One by one, the tribe arrives and is back together again. Best of all, they all can’t wait for track practice later today. Bobby B. tells Eddie, “it’s good to see you back!” Eddie replies, “I had to come back. I got word that the shot-put hasn’t

been cleaned in a few weeks. Someone has to keep you in line.” Hearing that comment, everyone knows Eddie is back.

As the tribe is catching up, another surprise walks through the door. Today is Chuckie’s first day back to school as well. After being patched back together during his two week stay at the hospital, Chuckie spent a few days in jail, and was bailed out. The whole school has heard that Eddie kicked the shit out of Chuckie. Everyone now sees Chuckie, with one arm in a sling, the other in a cast, a crooked nose, and six broken teeth. It is now clear what happens when you intentionally throw a javelin at someone who is a lot bigger and stronger than you are.

Miss Amherst walks into the classroom, announcing, “Eddie, it’s so good to see you back again.” The class cheers, making Eddie feel welcome. No mention is made about Chuckie returning. If there were, the class would likely boo.

After taking attendance, Miss Amherst moves on to her lesson for today. Looking through her material, Miss Amherst tells the class, “today, we are going to do something a little special before I move on to today’s lesson.” Miss Amherst occasionally gives a real world application of the class material, so the students have a better understanding of what they learn.

Miss Amherst begins today’s lesson by telling the class, “since the track season is fully underway, today we are going to go over how to throw an airborne instrument, such as the discus, shot-put, javelin, or hammer, the farthest possible distance. Everyone should know, by now, the angle that a projectile should theoretically be released in a vacuum in order to allow it to travel as far as possible. Can anyone tell me that angle?” Nearly every student answers, “45 degrees.” Miss Amherst replies, “and, you all are correct. Now, if I was, for example, to throw the discus, what would be the optimal angle for its release?” The class again answers, “45 degrees.” Surprisingly, Miss Amherst tells the class, “well, not quite. And, today we will learn why.”

Miss Amherst explains to the class, “the optimal release angle would be 45 degrees in a vacuum but, since we don’t throw a discus in a vacuum, 45 degrees might not actually be the optimal angle. A factor called wind resistance, or air resistance, comes into play. Air resistance introduces something called drag. The resistance of an airborne object moving through the air is dependent on three things. The first is the surface area of the object in the direction it is moving. The second is the aerodynamic properties of the object. And, the third is the velocity of the object in motion. Is everyone following me so far?” No one says anything, so Miss Amherst continues.

Miss Amherst addresses the class, “so, we have four airborne implements in track and field<sup>1</sup>. They are the discus, hammer, shot-put, and javelin. Which one do you think has the least resistance while it’s moving through the air?” Mitchell replies, “the javelin.” Miss Amherst tells Mitchell, “theoretically, that is correct. So, we will go with that. Now, which of the implements would have the greatest resistance while it’s moving through the air?” Mitchell again answers, “the hammer.” Miss Amherst tells the class, “that is also correct. Not only does the hammer have the greatest surface area in the direction in which it is moving, but the wire and handle introduce an interesting problem, as the wire and handle rotate as the implement sails through the air.”

Getting to the shot-put and discus, Miss Amherst asks, “between the discus and the shot-put, which implement would have the greatest surface area in the usual orientation that it is thrown?” Half the class answers the shot-put, and the other half answers the discus. Giving the class the answer, Miss Amherst tells them, “the answer is the shot-put, but not by much.” Summarizing, Miss Amherst explains, “so, in the order of least to most air resistance, are the javelin, discus, shot-put, and the hammer.”

Miss Amherst then gets to the core of her discussion, telling the class, “assuming zero air resistance, the optimal angle for the release of any of the field implements is 45 degrees. Once air resistance is introduced, the optimal angle will actually decrease with respect to the horizontal. The decrease in the optimal angle is proportional to the frontal surface area of the implement exposed to the air in the direction in which it is moving.” Miss Amherst then asks the class, “using this information, which implement would be thrown at an angle closest to 45 degrees to obtain the farthest distance?” Eddie answers, “the javelin.” Miss Amherst tells the class, “and, that would be correct, since it has the smallest surface area exposed to the air in its direction of movement.”

Miss Amherst then tells the class, “a competitive throw of the javelin would best be done at an angle slightly less than 45 degrees, say, perhaps 40 to 43 degrees.” Trying to get the students to understand the physics behind her point, Miss Amherst poses the question, “what would happen if the javelin were to be released at an angle of 80 degrees with respect to the horizontal?” Mitchell replies, “it would come back to Earth, and land a few feet in front of you. And, you’d definitely not win.” The class laughs, as Miss Amherst announces, “that is correct on both fronts.”

Miss Amherst then asks, “what would happen if the javelin was released at an angle of, say, five degrees?” Braden replies, “you’d get your

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix II.

ass kicked, like Chuckie did.” The entire class starts laughing hysterically, including Miss Amherst. After composing herself, Miss Amherst replies to Braden, telling him, “well, I can’t say that I disagree with you. If the javelin was released at a five-degree angle, it cannot be construed as an attempt at a competitive throw.” Eddie, and the tribe, continue to laugh, as Chuckie sits, not being able to cross his arms, pouting.

Miss Amherst then goes on to explain, “so, in competition, when releasing the javelin, discus, shot-put, or hammer, the optimal angle is actually going to be somewhere between 35 and 44 degrees. The implements with the greater surface area in the direction of travel will best be released at a lower angle within that range. Eddie, for the discus, slightly over or near 40 degrees will be optimal. And, Bobby B., for the shot-put, slightly less than 40 degrees will be your optimal angle.” Eddie and Bobby B. take a few notes, as this information will help their performance.

Focusing her attention on Chuckie, Miss Amherst comments, “and, Charles, releasing the javelin at a five-degree angle into a field of runners is clearly not intended to be a competitive throw.” The class again laughs hysterically at Chuckie, who may have learned something today. But, if Chuckie didn’t learn his lesson three and a half weeks ago when Eddie took him apart, he likely never will.

Later that day, before track practice, Eddie heads to the physical education office, and asks Mr. Frazier, “am I still on the team?” Mr. Frazier tells Eddie, “yes, of course! I recorded your absence as an injury, which is what it was.” Mr. Frazier asks, “how is your hip doing?” Eddie replies, “it’s good. I’ve been working out, swimming, and doing a few sprints.” Mr. Frazier tells Eddie, “great! I’ll see you out on the track.” Eddie gets dressed, and heads out to the track with the rest of the tribe, who are all glad to see him back in action again. Mr. Frazier, unknown to Eddie, is exceedingly happy because he no longer has to report to Mr. Crum, and he has Eddie to thank for that.

On the way out to the track, Eddie asks Kathy, “so, what are my events?” Kathy replies, “Mr. Frazier wants you to run the 100-yard dash, and he wants you to throw the discus. I think he wants to keep John in the 4 by 440 relay for Wednesday’s meet, but he might need you in the 220-yard dash with Mark.” Eddie tells Kathy, “wow! A meet on Wednesday! I guess I’ve really been out of it.” Kathy informs Eddie, “we’re up against Riverdale. They have two good sprinters this year, so Mr. Frazier might have to move things around depending on where they put their people. The rumor is they can beat Hoffer and John, but not you or Mark. The competition is a lot stronger this year.” Eddie tells Kathy, “well, I hope I’m ready.”

Mr. Frazier has everyone sit on the bleachers and announces that the team will be running his favorite drill for the sprinters and distance group. The drill, a variation of Fartlek training, intermixes distance running with sprinting. To the athletes, this means that they will have a hard workout today. But, with a few more meets to go, and the State invitational meet right around the corner, everyone must be at their best.

During this drill, the distance runners will be running on the outside of the track. After every mile, they will drop to the inside of the track, and run 440 yards as fast as they can as if it was the final lap of the race. They will then drop to the outside of the track, and run another mile. When they are fatigued, the distances are changed to a half mile of distance running coupled with a 220-yard sprint.

The sprinters will be sprinting on the inside of the track for one lap, or 440 yards, then drop to the outside, taking one recovery lap with the distance group. After the recovery lap, they will sprint for another 440 yards. Once they cannot sprint for 440 yards effectively, the sprinting distance is dropped to 220 yards with a 440-yard recovery lap. All the runners will get a five minute break after fifteen minutes so that they can rehydrate.

This is a difficult workout for everyone. But, since there is a meet on Wednesday, the team will only run for 30 minutes as opposed to the usual one hour today, and then practice a few relay hand offs. No one likes the drill, but it does help to improve performance.

Today, Mr. Frazier adds an interesting twist to the drill to make it more challenging and more interesting. Mr. Frazier calls Eddie, Mark, Braden, Johnson, Mitchell, and Akinmola in front of the group. Mr. Zunde joins them. What the team is about to hear was Mr. Zunde's idea. Holding a roll of duct tape, Mr. Zunde starts cutting off one-inch lengths. Of course, everyone is wondering why Mr. Zunde is doing this.

Mr. Frazier announces, "Mr. Zunde will be taping a twenty-dollar bill to the backs of each of these six runners. Your job is to catch them. And, if you can grab the twenty-dollar bill, it's yours! If you are a distance runner, you are after the twenty-dollar bill on Mitchell's, Akinmola's, or Johnson's back. If you are a sprinter, you are after the twenty-dollar bill on Eddie's, Mark's, or Braden's back. Now, listen up. If no one gets the twenty-dollar bill on any of the runner's back, that runner gets to keep it. And, if you have a twenty-dollar bill taped to your back, you are not eligible to swipe one from someone else's back. And, you are only allowed to grab the bill during the sprinting part of the drill, not during the recovery laps. Does everybody understand?" Everyone seems to understand, so the drill is ready to begin.

Mark mentions to Eddie, “this is going to be better than Kill the Man with the Ball.” Braden exclaims, “ain’t no one getting my Andrew Jackson! I’m going to be twenty dollars richer by the end of the day!”

The drill starts, and everyone is after twenty dollars or more. The distance group, following Mitchell, Akinmola, and Johnson, quickly fall behind. Mitchell, Akinmola, and Johnson look strong, but are careful not to lap the slower runners. They quickly realize that there will be quite the spread of runners on the track after a while, so strategy will become very important. But, fortunately, a lot of runners will tire faster than Mitchell or Akinmola, giving them a distinct advantage. And Johnson, who is a far capable sprinter than anyone on the distance team, will be the most difficult in the distance group to catch.

On the sprinting side of things, Eddie, Mark, and Braden are not caught in the first 440 yards. Only a few sprinters even stand a chance to get any of the twenty-dollar bills. John, Erika, and Hoffer are at the top of the list of contenders. But, if you ask Braden, he’s already made twenty dollars during this workout. In the sprinting group, a lot of energy is expended in the first mile, with the runners not wanting to fall too far behind Eddie, Mark, and Braden. What the slower runners haven’t figured out is that, if they do fall behind, the group wearing the twenty-dollar bills will eventually lap them, bringing the prize again within reach.

As the drill proceeds, Mr. Frazier tells Mr. Zunde, “I don’t think I’ve ever seen them practice so hard!” Mr. Zunde mentions, “maybe I’ll up it to fifty dollars sometime and see what happens.” Mr. Frazier comments, “take a look at that. Erika is really after Mark! And, Mark’s messing with her.” Mr. Zunde replies, “Erika should probably go after someone else. Being the master of psychological warfare, Mark definitely has the advantage out there.” It is clear that Erika really wants twenty dollars, or more.

Kathy, Paula, and Barbara walk up and join the discussion. Barbara mentions, “it’s too bad Brad Evans isn’t sitting in the bleachers today.” Mr. Frazier laughs, and replies, “the workouts over at Centerville will get very expensive if they think we do this every day!” Barbara comments, “you know, I really wish Evans was here. That would be hilarious.” Mr. Zunde makes mention, “well, if the spies ever show up again, we’ll put on a show for them.”

Fifteen minutes later, not a single one of the twenty-dollar bills was grabbed from any of the runner’s backs. Toward the end of the drill, Erika, who has been putting in a monumental effort to grab one of the bills, chases down Eddie. Eddie, who doesn’t need the money, allows Erika to get a little close. With all she has left, Erika sprints toward Eddie. Eddie speeds up a bit, but Erika quickly grabs the bill taped to his back.

Seeing what just happened brings a smile to Mr. Zunde's face. To everyone, it looks like Eddie was caught off guard. But, Eddie's secret, seeing how hard Erika tried to get a twenty-dollar bill, is that he allowed Erika to catch him.

On the track, Eddie's performance is better than ever. Kathy is very glad to see Eddie back on the track again. After Mr. Crum pulled his shit a few weeks ago, Kathy found it very difficult to do her job as a team assistant. Eddie pointed out to Kathy that he'll be gone next year anyway, but the issue was not that Eddie left, it's how and why he left.

After the drill, Eddie spends the rest of the time practicing the discus. Using what he learned in physics class, Eddie can now throw the discus farther than before. Mr. Zunde is surprised that Eddie can now consistently throw the discus over 200 feet. His best throw today was 218 feet, 2 inches. A throw like that will not only wrap up first place in the discus tomorrow, but will likely take the gold medal at the State invitational meet this year.

After throwing the discus for a while, Eddie gives the shot-put a try, just for fun. Bobby B. asks Eddie, "so, are you throwing the shot-put now?" Eddie replies, "yeah. There's been a change in plans. You're running the 100-yard dash tomorrow." Everyone is glad to see Eddie is back to himself again. But, between Bobby B. and Gump, the team will take first and second place in the shot-put tomorrow. And, if necessary, Mr. Zunde will put Mark or Johnson up in the shot-put to secure sweeping the event.

After practice, Eddie and Kathy head to their house to jump in the pool for a while before they go home. Before Kathy gets in the pool, she empties the skimmers, being sure to check for dead frogs, while Eddie checks the pool chemistry. Even though they don't live there yet, the pool still has to be attended to. Kathy takes quick notice that Eddie has done a lot around the house. With three weeks off of school, he certainly has made a lot of progress.

As they are floating in the pool, Eddie tells Kathy, "when I was working on the house one day, I went out on a run, since I didn't have my bicycle. It's really peaceful out here!" Kathy tells Eddie, "yeah! I like it." Kathy then asks Eddie, "shh. Do you hear that?" Listening for something, Eddie tells her, "I don't hear anything." Kathy tells him, "exactly! No car noise. No trucks. Nothing but wind blowing through the trees and the birds singing. That's why I like it so much here."

A while later, still floating around in the pool, Kathy asks Eddie, "do you know how mad Mr. Frazier was at Mr. Crum for the last few weeks?" Eddie asks, "he was mad?" Kathy replies, "oh yeah! After Dr. Brooks

talked to you after the Centerville meet, she came to practice a few days later, looking for Mr. Frazier. Mr. Frazier had a long discussion with Dr. Brooks that day. He was so busy talking with Dr. Brooks, that he didn't even work with the team. She even spoke to Braden, Bobby B., Johnson, Mark, and Mitchell during practice that day." Kathy adds, "Mr. Frazier's blood has been boiling since the Centerville meet. Then, after finding out that he now reports to Mr. Zunde, he's been in a whole lot better mood." Eddie tells Kathy, "wow! I guess I missed a lot in the last three weeks."

After an hour in their pool, Eddie and Kathy head home. Eddie has already missed five track meets, and Wednesday is the big meet against Riverdale. And besides, Eddie now has to do homework. His three-week vacation is over. But, one thing Eddie learned is that he actually enjoys working on his and Kathy's house, slowly turning the house into their home.

Wednesday, Eddie is ready to run in his first meet of the Spring season. All the students in the school are aware of what happened with Eddie, and his argument with Mr. Crum. The word has gotten around that Mr. Crum lost, Eddie won, and he is back in school. Everyone also is well aware that Mr. Frazier, and the rest of the gym teachers, now report directly to Mr. Zunde. And, everyone is also aware that Chuckie is not quite the bully he purports to be but, instead, he's nothing but a big baby. Finding this out, some of the girls are now taunting Chuckie, and justifiably so. The girls seen taunting him were bullied by Chuckie many times in the past. As it turns out, Erika was not Chuckie's only female target over the years.

The end of the school day arrives, and the team heads to the locker room. Bobby B. is no longer supervising the shot-put being moved from the school out to the track. With the new equipment building, the shot-put is stored with all the other equipment. Wendy now performs the ceremonial task of moving the shot-put from the storage building to the field. Truth be told, the shot-put is placed in the back of the Cushman along with all the other field implements, receiving no special treatment at all. Bobby B. would be appalled at the treatment the shot-put is receiving this year. But he'll never know. Erika and Bobby B. now walk out to the field together, along with the rest of the team.

Today, the stands are full, with standing room only. While this is quite unusual for a track meet, it's no secret that nearly half of the school is attending the track meet to watch Eddie run, voicing their opposition to Mr. Crum's tyrannical attitude. Mr. Crum, reluctantly sitting in the stands, is only watching because Dr. Brooks, the superintendent of schools, strongly suggested that he attend the meets. Dr. Brooks is present herself today, sitting next to the high school physics teacher, Miss

Amherst. With so many spectators in the stands, the team will undoubtedly deliver their best performance of the year.

The Riverdale team arrives, along with their coach, Mr. Lyons. Mr. Lyons always seems to have a problem with Mr. Frazier taking first place in every event. As the Riverdale team exits their bus, they immediately notice the large number of fans in the stands. Getting situated at their bench, the coach, Mr. Lyons, gives his team a pep talk. Mr. Lyons specifically tells his team that Northside is very good at psychological warfare, and not to fall for any of their underhanded tricks.

The meet begins, and after the hurdles event will be the 100-yard dash. Eddie, Hoffer, and John, who are running the 100-yard dash today, are hanging around at the bench, waiting for the hurdles event to finish. Mr. Frazier tells his sprinters, “from what we know, they have two good sprinters, Brad Turner and James Gregory. They can run the 100 in the ten-second range.” Implying that those times are not too impressive, Eddie asks, “so, then who are their good sprinters?” Mr. Frazier exclaims, “that’s the kind of attitude that wins meets!”

The call is made for the 100-yard dash. Eddie, Hoffer, and John head to the starting line. Mr. Frazier and Kathy walk with them, with Mr. Frazier wondering where Eddie’s performance stands. The Riverdale sprinters, already at the blocks, include Turner and Gregory. Eddie sets his blocks, as Kathy reminds him of his block settings since it’s been a few weeks since he’s been on the track.

Eddie tells the Riverdale runners, “hey. Good luck. You’ll need it.” The Riverdale sprinters are surprised by Eddie’s confidence. One of them replies, “yeah? We haven’t lost this event all year.” More confident than ever, Eddie tells them, “I am going to tie the National record in this race. As I said, good luck to all of you. You’re really going to need it.”

Even Mr. Frazier is surprised at what Eddie just said. Mr. Frazier and Kathy head to the finish line. On the way to the finish line, Mr. Frazier asks Kathy, “has Eddie ever ran a 9.3? That’s the National record.” Kathy replies, “yeah. At the University, about a half year ago.” Mr. Frazier, surprised to learn this, comments, “I thought he was just messing with their heads.” Kathy confidently replies, with a long pause between each word, “I don’t think so. Not today.”

At the finish line, Mr. Frazier asks the Head Timekeeper, “do we have any extra Timekeepers?” The Head Timekeeper replies, “no. But, we all have two watches.” Mr. Frazier, asking for a favor, mentions to the Head Timekeeper, “if it’s not too much trouble, get an extra watch on the guy in lane three.” The Head Timekeeper instructs the two officials assigned to lane one and six, “clock the guy in lane three as well.” Lanes one and six

usually have the slower runners, so the Timekeepers assigned to those lanes can simultaneously time a faster runner.

The Starter, who is impressed with Eddie's confidence, announces, "on your marks." The Starter announces, "set." The gun goes off, and the runners are out of the blocks. After twenty yards, Eddie clearly has no competition in this race, gaining ground with every step he takes. John and Hoffer battle it out with Turner and Gregory for second and third place. At 50 yards, it is clear to the Timekeepers why Mr. Frazier wanted an extra watch on Eddie. Now having the Timekeepers full attention, Eddie is having the best run of his life.

At the finish line, three Timekeepers and Mr. Frazier have their full attention on Eddie, ready to click their stopwatches as he crosses. As Eddie approaches the finish line, he does not relent. No surprise to anyone, Eddie finishes in first place, with four stopwatches documenting his time.

Second place is still a battle between John and Hoffer. It appears Turner and Gregory were a bit overrated, but nevertheless good competition. Today, Hoffer beats out John by a few steps. But, it doesn't matter. Northside takes first, second, and third place, sweeping the event.

Mr. Frazier is heard exclaiming, "he broke the record! I clocked him at 9.2! Eddie broke the record! Can you believe it?" The Timekeepers, however, are not so quick to make an announcement. Having their own meeting, the Timekeepers compare their stopwatches, all knowing that they have just witnessed the biggest event of this year's track season. They lay the four stopwatches that document Eddie's time on the track, which includes Mr. Frazier's, and a photograph is taken. Wanting to hear the news, Mr. Frazier is exclaiming over and over, "what did you guys clock him at?" As everyone is anxiously awaiting the announcement, the Timekeepers discuss the results among themselves.

The long awaited announcement comes. The Head Timekeeper finds the bullhorn, and announces, "may I have your attention please. We have all just witnessed history in this State today. One watch records 9.3 seconds, and three watches record 9.2 seconds. I am officially recording Edward Bogenskaya's time as 9.25 seconds, breaking the National record in the 100-yard dash for high school competition, which was previously 9.3 seconds. Congratulations, Edward! It is only once in a decade that an event like this occurs in any high school track and field event!" Jumping up and down, Mr. Frazier exclaims, "he did it! He did it! Eddie broke the record!"

Kathy and Eddie have their own celebration. Kathy jumps up onto Eddie's hips giving him the biggest congratulatory hug imaginable. The team cheers wildly, and the crowd goes wild. Eddie gets a high-five and a fist bump from everyone around, even from the runners on the Riverdale team. Even Mr. Lyons, the Riverdale coach, comes over to congratulate Eddie. But, after a while, the meet must go on, and runners in the next event prepare to run.

But, before the meet continues, the Head Timekeeper calls the Head Field Judge over to measure the distance before the track is disturbed by any other events. With the surveying tape used to measure the distance that the field implements are thrown, the Head Field Judge and another Field Judge measure the distance, making sure it is exactly 100 yards. The measurement comes in at 100 yards, and three-quarters of an inch.

Validating the distance is just as important as validating the time when a National record is broken. If the distance was less than 100 yards, Eddie's time would be disqualified as a potential record. The small three-quarter inch excess was due to a slight variation in the lime line used to mark the starting line and finish line.

During the brief intermission, Dr. Brooks mentions to Miss Amherst, "wow! I knew Eddie was good, but, breaking the National record! I certainly wasn't expecting that today!" Miss Amherst informs Dr. Brooks, "at the State meet, there's a good chance that Eddie will break the State record in the discus, and Robert Bradshaw will break the State record in the shot-put." Dr. Brooks replies, "I will definitely be attending that meet." Miss Amherst adds, "so will I. Oh! And, here's something that you may not know! Eddie unofficially broke the State record in the 50-yard and in the 100-yard freestyle during swim team tryouts this year. Barbara Hamilton could not believe what she saw." Dr. Brooks, stating the obvious, replies, "and, he's had to plow through Maurice's roadblocks the whole way."

Once the Field Judges confirm the track length, Eddie is all fired up. Eddie walks over to the field area to make his first discus throw. The field athletes, often unaware of what goes on in the running events, did not miss hearing about Eddie's accomplishment. Mr. Zunde, Bobby B., Gump, and the other field athletes give Eddie a high-five. As Eddie sits on the bench waiting to make his throw, Mr. Zunde tells Eddie, "congratulations! No one expected that to occur today. That's the kind of performance that you usually only see during the State or National meets!" Eddie, who is in an elated mood, replies, "thank you! Thank you!"

Eddie's turn comes up for the discus. Taking hold of the discus, Eddie walks toward the discus pad. Making a suggestion to the Head Field Judge, Mr. Zunde tells him, "you might want to have the judges move out

past the 200-foot line.” The judges were naively standing at about the 140-foot line. The Head Field Judge waves to the Field Judges, suggesting that they should move back.

Eddie then steps onto the discus pad. After winding up, Eddie goes into the spin, letting out a primal scream as he releases the discus. Soaring through the air, the discus finds its resting place just past the 215-foot mark. Mr. Zunde tells Eddie, “that was a very good throw. You’re in first place.” The measurement comes in at 215 feet, 3 inches, setting a new school record.

Watching from the bleachers is Miss Amherst, Eddie’s physics teacher, who is very pleased to see Eddie’s throw. Miss Amherst is positioned in the bleachers to get a good view of the field events. Apparently, the field events are her favorites. Earlier in the meet, Miss Amherst got Mr. Zunde’s attention after Bobby B’s. first attempt of the day. She told Mr. Zunde that she had noticed that Bobby B’s. release angle might be a bit high. Mr. Zunde relayed this information to Bobby B., whose second attempt was much better than his first.

Back on the track, Riverdale’s two good sprinters aren’t as good as they were reported to be. Well, compared with Northside’s sprinters anyway. So, Mr. Frazier makes a mid course change and has John run the 220-yard dash along with Mark and Elliot. Eddie will be running in the 4 by 440 relay, back on the team that took the gold medal during the indoor season State invitational meet.

The call is made for the 220-yard dash. On the way to the starting line, Mark tells Paula, “hey, watch this. I’m going to tell John and Elliot to check their legs for ticks. That worked really good for the Centerville meet. Play along with me.” John and Elliot already know this one, so they’ll be ready to support Mark’s story. With any luck, the news about the hazard on the track will make its way back to the Riverdale bench.

At the starting line, Mark checks the back of his legs, asking Paula, “do you see any?” Paula replies, “no.” Telling John and Elliot to turn around, Paula announces, “you guys are good. No ticks.” Catching Paula’s comment, one of the Riverdale runners asks, “how come you’re checking for ticks?” With a very serious expression, Paula replies, “the track was infested with ticks during last week’s meet. A guy from Henderson even had a few ticks on his balls. Who knows, they could have crawled up his butt.” Mark has to turn around, pretending to check his shoelaces, to conceal his laughter. How Paula even said that with a straight face is a miracle. That kind of news is certainly not what a runner wants to hear a minute before a race. The Starter, who often works meets at Northside, is amused by Paula’s distraction of the opponent.

With a silly grin on his face, the Starter announces, “on your marks.” The word, “set,” is heard, as several of the Riverdale runners are looking back at their legs, checking for ticks. The gun is fired, and everyone is off.

At 50 yards, Mark is in the lead, with John in second place. Elliot is right behind John. For the remainder of the race, Mark’s lead over the rest of the runners widens. At the finish line, Mark takes first place, with John taking second place and Elliot taking third place. It’s hard to say whether the Riverdale runners were distracted by Paula’s comments, but they all continue to check their legs after the race.

Mark, John, Elliot, and Paula return to the bench. Paula casually mentions to Kathy, “there’s ticks on the track again.” Kathy starts laughing, exclaiming, “no! Tell me you didn’t!” Paula replies, “yeah. We did. Eddie asks, “what’s all this about ticks?” Kathy informs Eddie, “you weren’t there. During the Centerville meet, Mark told McCrutchen that there is an infestation of ticks on the track.” Eddie starts laughing, as Paula tells Kathy, “I told the Riverdale 220 guys that a guy from Henderson even had ticks on his balls and that they could have crawled up his butt.” Kathy exclaims, “no! You didn’t! Tell me you didn’t!” Mark tells Kathy, “oh yeah, she did.” Kathy laughs hysterically, never knowing that track and field could be this funny.

After all the other events are run, the call for the last event, the 4 by 440 relay, is made. Braden, who won the 440-yard dash earlier, is all fired up. Braden exclaims, “here we go! The final ass kicking of the afternoon! Let’s get this ass kicking over with!” Riverdale, not taking first place in an event all afternoon, is already feeling defeated. Riverdale knows that they probably won’t win this race either, since they are up against the State’s best team in this event. Both teams head to the starting line, knowing that the outcome of this race will change nothing.

At the starting line, Turner, Gregory, the guy Braden beat in the 440-yard dash, and their best 220 guy are all waiting. Mark catches a few of the Riverdale runners checking their legs for ticks. Braden, seeing the guy he beat in the 440-yard dash, exclaims, “yo, mouth! What leg are you running? I want to kick your ass again!” Braden gave this guy the nickname “the mouth” because he was telling everyone how he was going to beat Braden. The mouth ignores Braden, but it’s a sure bet that their 440-yard dash guy is the anchor leg.

Seeing Gregory holding the baton, Eddie will lead off, and Braden will be the anchor. Mr. Frazier allows any changes to the order the team wants. During this race, they are not running against Riverdale as much as they are running for a ticket to the State invitational meet, since Eddie was not present earlier in the season.

The Starter tells the runners to get ready. Paula tosses the baton to Eddie, and Eddie gets behind the blocks. The Starter announces, "on your marks." Once both runners are ready, the Starter announces, "set," followed by the gun. Eddie takes the lead, leaving Gregory behind once again. Eddie, however, doesn't let his guard down. Gregory might be better in a 440-yard sprint than he was in the 100-yard dash. At the midway point, Mr. Frazier exclaims, "he's clocking a sub-50!" Everyone standing around knows what that means. Eddie approaches the transition zone, handing off to Johnson.

Johnson takes off, and the guy who lost to Mark in the 220-yard dash earlier receives his baton about ten seconds later. Ten seconds, while it does not sound like a lot, translates to about 100 yards at this pace. This is not good news to the Riverdale team. With 100 yards to make up, they will have a tough time ahead of them, especially since Johnson increases the lead by another 50 yards, or more than five seconds, as he hands off to Mark. Johnson gets the news from Mr. Frazier that he also ran a sub-50 second quarter mile.

Mark is up against Turner in his leg. Turner watches, as Mark is long gone before he receives his baton. As Mark is on the back straightaway, he sees Turner across the track. Braden is exclaiming, "I wanted to kick the mouth's ass, but the race is gonna be over before he runs!" Mark, coming around the curve, sees Braden, who can't keep still, right ahead of him. Mark hands off to Braden, leaving the mouth 250 yards to make up.

Braden, out to deliver yet another sub-50 second quarter mile, is looking for another ticket into the State invitational meet this year. The rest of the relay team watches, as Braden widens the lead. Braden crosses the finish line, with Mr. Frazier carefully inspecting his stopwatch. Beating the opposition by more than 45 seconds, the relay team celebrates, exchanging high-fives. In a repeat performance of last Winter, the 4 by 440 relay team is now going to the State invitational meet for the second time this year.

Having the best afternoon of the Spring track season, the team walks away with a victory in every event. Mr. Lyons congratulates both Eddie and Mr. Frazier, not only for today's victory, but for Eddie breaking the National record in the 100-yard dash. The meet officials also congratulate Eddie, expressing that they were glad to be present for the event. Coming down from the bleachers, Dr. Brooks and Miss Amherst find Eddie, and personally congratulate him for breaking the National record in the 100-yard dash, and his awesome discus throw this afternoon. The team heads to the lockers, planning to have a big celebration by getting pizza after the meet.

After getting dressed, they all head to the pizzeria. When they arrive, they take their usual seat. Mr. Frazier walks in, taking a seat with the tribe. Mr. Zunde walks in a few minutes later, along with Miss Amherst. Since they are a large group, Joe comes over and takes their order. Joe learns that Eddie broke the National high school record in the 100-yard dash, and congratulates him. Everyone orders pizza, and are convinced that eating pizza is the reason they keep winning meets. And, while the pizzas are in the oven, Joe gets a few photographs of the group with their coaches, which will be displayed on the wall with Joe's collection of his favorite customers.

After dinner, everyone steps outside and talks for a few minutes before they head home. Mr. Zunde and Miss Amherst congratulate the team again, then walk over to Mr. Zunde's Porsche 911. Kathy mentions to Paula, "well, just take a look at that!" Paula asks, "at what?" Kathy tells Paula, "Mr. Zunde and Miss Amherst. They are walking way too close together. They have overlapping body parts." Taking a second look, Paula comments, "yeah, I can see that."

Kathy then tells Paula, "well, that really explains a lot." Paula asks, "what do you mean?" Kathy explains, "do you remember back in physics class last year? Miss Amherst was always talking about physics and then applied everything to running around a track. And then, at the end of the year, she started applying everything to throwing a discus, shot-put, or something." Paula exclaims, "that's right! And, when you started throwing the discus, every week she had something in her lesson about a discus."

Bringing Eddie and Mark into the conversation, Kathy asks them, "does Miss Amherst talk a lot about track and field in her lessons?" Eddie replies, "yeah. Quite a lot." Mark adds, "she even told us all the proper angles to throw the implements. The greater the air resistance, the lower the angle should be." Kathy exclaims, "see that? I knew it!" Eddie asks, "knew what? Can someone tell me what we're talking about?" Eddie feels like he's not only missed three weeks of school, but thinks he's missed something else as well. Kathy explains, "Mr. Zunde and Miss Amherst just walked to Mr. Zunde's car, and they had overlapping body parts."

Eddie asks, "what are 'overlapping body parts'?" Kathy explains, "that was a school rule a long, long time ago. It's supposed to stop students from making out in the hallways. But, it also means that you can get detention or be suspended for nearly everything in gym class, like wrestling or basketball." Eddie laughs, telling Kathy, "that is seriously funny. You can't have overlapping body parts in school."

Getting back to the subject, Kathy tells Eddie, "you guys should keep an eye on those two. There's definitely something going on between

them.” After thinking about it, Paula mentions, “I can’t believe we haven’t seen this before.” Mark comments, “Miss Amherst is at all the meets. She always sits over near the field area where Mr. Zunde is. And, she always sits with Dr. Brooks. And, Dr. Brooks is Mr. Zunde’s cousin.” It looks like their secret may be out. If there is anything going on between Mr. Zunde and Miss Amherst, Kathy will certainly find out.

The following day in school, the word gets around that the track team had shut out Riverdale. The word also gets around very quickly that Eddie is not only the fastest high school guy in the State, but also in the country. But, today the fastest high school guy in the country has to sit in physics class, along with everyone else. Today, however, physics class will be anything but routine.

For reasons unknown to the class, Mr. Zunde accompanies Miss Amherst to class today. After taking attendance, Miss Amherst tells the class, “today, we are having a lab class. We will be observing and recording what we learned earlier this week regarding projectiles in motion. If you observe the world around you, you’ll be amazed at what you see. So, please pay close attention to what we are doing today. Please gather your stuff, and follow me out to the track.” The class is glad to hear that they will not be sitting in the classroom today. They all head out to the track, not knowing what to expect.

On the way to the track, Mr. Zunde pulls Eddie and Bobby B. aside, and walks with them. Mr. Zunde explains to Eddie and Bobby B., “you guys have a shot at breaking the State record in the discus and shot-put. We want to get a few photographs of your release, at various angles, to maximize the distance.” Mr. Zunde asks Eddie and Bobby B., “are you guys up for it?” Eddie replies, “sure!” Bobby B., who is rarely the center of attention in class, replies, “yeah! Awesome!”

The class arrives at the track, and Miss Amherst explains what they will be doing today. Mr. Zunde, Eddie, Bobby B, and Wendy go into the equipment building, and get the discus, shot-put, and the 300-foot surveying tape. Eddie whispers to Bobby B., “that’s a shot-put. It’s very special. Be careful how you handle it.” Bobby B. replies, “yeah, I know. And, the discus hasn’t been cleaned all year. Are you really going to touch that?” When they get back to the group, the shot-put and discus are passed around for the class to see and feel. The class gets a first hand look at the implements that Eddie and Bobby B. throw during a meet.

After Eddie is warmed up, Mr. Zunde tells him to make a discus throw, with an angle that he thinks is at 40 degrees from horizontal. This is the angle that it was suggested that Eddie use in the last meet. Eddie winds up, goes into the spin, and releases the discus. Using a Polaroid camera,

Miss Amherst gets a photograph of the release, and will measure the actual angle later. Needless to say, many in the class are impressed with what they just witnessed.

Wendy drives the Cushman out to the field to get the measurement, as Mr. Zunde holds the tape. The measurement comes back at 210 feet, 5 inches, which Miss Amherst writes on the back of the photo. Not surprisingly, many members of the class wonder why Wendy is so special that she gets to drive the Cushman.

Now, it's Bobby B's. turn. Using the 16-pound shot-put, Bobby B. gets onto the shot-put pad. Instructed to make his throw using an angle of slightly less than 40 degrees, Bobby B. throws the shot-put. Miss Amherst again gets a photograph and will accurately measure the actual angle later. Wendy takes the measurement, which comes back at 61 feet, 9 inches, which is written on the back of the photo.

One of the students, a guy named Michael Nelson, comments, "that wasn't very far." Compared to the discus throw, maybe. But that was a reasonably good shot-put attempt, and would have won any regular season meet this year.

Mr. Zunde asks Nelson, "would you like to give it a try?" Nelson steps up, perhaps thinking he can beat the State gold medalist in the shot-put. Mr. Zunde gives Nelson brief instructions on how to throw the shot-put. Nelson stands confidently on the shot-put pad, and makes his attempt, giving it all he has. Wendy takes the measurement, announcing, "he got 8 feet, 9 inches." It's now clear to everyone why Bobby B. is known as the shot doc. It's not likely anyone else will make any more derogatory comments today.

Miss Amherst tells Eddie, "this time, throw the discus at a slightly higher angle and let's see how that goes." Eddie winds up, goes into the spin, and releases the discus. Miss Amherst also gets a photograph of this release. Wendy drives out to the field to get the measurement, as Mr. Zunde holds the tape. The measurement comes back at 193 feet, 10 inches, which is recorded on the photo.

Sure enough, as if he hasn't learned yet, Mr. Crum waddles out to the track to find out what is going on. In his limited view of the world, the physics class should not be out on the track for any reason. Interrupting Miss Amherst's class, Mr. Crum asks, "what's this all about? Why are you out here on the track?" Miss Amherst explains, "we are doing an experiment measuring the effect of air resistance on projectiles in motion. It's in the syllabus." Without even thinking, pointing to the field implements, Mr. Crum exclaims, "those aren't projectiles! That's a discus

and that's a shot-put! Even I know that. You shouldn't be having track practice during school!"

Mr. Zunde interrupts, telling the principal, "Mr. Crum, anything is a projectile once it is freely moving through space. I'm sure you've taken physics before, and you understand that." Not wanting to be embarrassed, Mr. Crum replies, "yes, of course I know that! I was just checking."

Miss Amherst tells Mr. Crum, "Mr. Crum, you're invited to my class tomorrow morning when I will give a presentation of the results. If you attend the class, you will clearly understand why we are out here today." Mr. Crum brashly replies, "I might just do that." Mr. Crum heads back inside, leaving everyone wondering why it was so important for him to come out and investigate.

Alternating throws, Eddie and Bobby B. each make six attempts at their event, using various angles. Miss Amherst records all of the data, and Eddie and Bobby B. got an extra practice session in today.

Before he puts the equipment away, Mr. Zunde asks everyone, "would anyone like to try their hand at the javelin? Charles, how about you?" The whole class, who heard about what happened the last time Chuckie threw a javelin, laughs hysterically. Chuckie cannot respond because his jaw is still wired shut. The class heads back inside, and will head to their next class, which will not be quite as exciting as their trip out to the track today.

The following day, Mr. Zunde is again present in physics class. Taking a seat in a chair alongside the tribe, Mr. Zunde talks to the tribe about what the class will learn today. Miss Amherst walks in, and takes attendance. She jokingly tells Mr. Zunde, "Mr. Zunde, please refrain from talking in class, or I'll have to send you down to Mr. Crum's office." The tribe, having been in a few meetings when Mr. Zunde and Mr. Crum are head to head, laughs. Mr. Zunde replies, "maybe I'll get lucky and he'll suspend me. The weather is quite nice out there today."

Mr. Zunde did not get so lucky. Walking into the room, Mr. Crum apparently took Miss Amherst up on her invitation to join the class to hear her presentation of the results.

After taking attendance, Miss Amherst gets down to business. Miss Amherst begins her lesson, "yesterday, Eddie and Bobby B. threw their field implements in an experiment demonstrating the effect of air resistance on the trajectory of each implement. The relationship that represents the motion of the implements can be represented by Newton's

Second Law.” After Miss Amherst writes the equation for Newton’s Second Law on the board, the class is already lost.

Miss Amherst goes on, “using the drag equation, and applying the frontal area of each implement, we can easily calculate the drag force on each implement.” It’s easy for Miss Amherst, who writes numerous equations on the board, explaining the mathematics behind her analysis, but not easy for anyone else.

The class is totally lost, but Miss Amherst is not expecting anyone to understand the graduate-level college mathematics she is using. Miss Amherst continues, “using this information, we can set up the following first-order linear differential equations. You may discuss this among yourselves as I solve the equations. And, Mr. Crum, please feel free to check my work for mistakes.”

The class watches, as Miss Amherst writes Greek letters and symbols from calculus on the board, forming and solving equations that look like they are intended to launch a rocket into space. Miss Amherst then says, “now, to simplify, we perform the integration of these equations, and we are ready to solve using our initial parameters,” which is anything but simple.

After fifteen minutes of mathematical analysis, Miss Amherst finally announces to the class, “based upon the analytical data we compiled yesterday, it would appear Eddie’s optimal angle of release is 41.3 degrees for the discus. Bobby B’s. optimal angle of release for the shot-put is 38.5 degrees. And, let me mention that these angles will change to some degree based upon the distance the implement is thrown.” She then asks her class, “does everyone understand how we arrived at those angles?” A few students reply, “no,” but, if someone replied, “yes,” Miss Amherst would know they are not quite telling the truth.

Miss Amherst, addressing another subject, mentions, “and, for those of you who may be interested, this is the level of mathematics that would be used to modify the suspension angles of an automobile to improve cornering performance. For example, if someone wanted to modify a Porsche 914 to make it handle and perform like a racing car and corner better, advanced math like this is required to formulate the design parameters.” Miss Amherst was clearly referring to Kathy’s Porsche 914, of which only a few students in the class, especially Eddie, understood the reference. Miss Amherst made the reference to the Porsche 914 purely for the benefit of Mr. Crum, who still thinks Eddie somehow modified Kathy’s car in the school’s auto shop.

Giving the good news, Miss Amherst announces, “and, by the way, none of this will be on the test.” That is a relief to everyone, especially to

the students who were frantically taking notes. Unknown to the class, Miss Amherst has a Ph.D. in mathematics. Solving the equations she wrote on the board is as easy to her as her students reciting the alphabet. Mr. Crum couldn't even pretend to understand the physics problems that Miss Amherst just solved. Miss Amherst then continues, moving on to today's lesson. Mr. Crum leaves, going back to his office to push his pencil around, since Miss Amherst's physics lessons are way over his head.

Bobby B's shot-put throws and Eddie's discus throws have gotten a lot better now that they have their optimal release angles down. Eddie and Bobby B. are expected to win their field events at the State meet, but that is not enough. They both want to set the State record in their respective events. This was the real reason for the exercise in physics class. Miss Amherst could have very well been given the title of Field Event Engineering Analyst for the team, but she is glad to help out in any way she can.

Shortly before the State invitational meet, Mr. Frazier calls a team meeting after school. Everyone knows exactly what this meeting is about. A team photograph will be taken for the school newspaper and yearbook, and the athletes attending the State invitational meet will be officially announced.

Wasting no time, Mr. Frazier gets down to business, and announces, "I have the invitee list for this year's State competition. Listen up. Eddie and Mark will be running in the 100-yard dash. Mark will also be running in the 220-yard dash. Braden will be running in the 440-yard dash, which is no surprise. And, in the 880-yard run, it will be Mitchell, Johnson, and Akinmola. In the mile, we have Mitchell and Akinmola. The 4 by 440 relay team, Braden, Johnson, Mark, and Eddie, will be going for a repeat performance of last year. In the mile medley relay, it will be Hoffer, John, Erika, and Mitchell. And, in the field events, Bobby B. will be throwing the shot-put and Eddie will be throwing the discus. Both of them, by the way, have a shot at the State record." The team cheers as the yearbook and newspaper photographer, Penny Hart, walks in. Penny thinks the team was cheering for her.

After the team photograph, Mr. Frazier then goes over the practice schedule for those going to the State invitational meet. The beginning of the week will bring the normal workout schedule but, on Thursday and Friday, Mr. Frazier wants the team to rest. Two days of rest will allow everyone to be at their best for the competition. Mr. Frazier invites the rest of the team to attend the meet, which will be held at the University as it was last year. He then turns the floor over to Barbara, who will give the team some advice.

Barbara walks up and tells the team, “for the fourth year in a row, this team has excelled at every event in track and field. Look around you. Everyone going to the State invitational meet this year works out just as much, or more, during the off season. And, over at the University, we have no off season. We practice year round. Next year, if you want to be equally as successful, you can’t sit on your ass all Summer. Some of the competition has been better this year than in previous years. You can be sure that, next year, they will be even stronger. This team has clearly made a great impact in the sport around the region. But, with Eddie, Mark, Braden, Johnson, Mitchell, and Bobby B. all leaving, there will be a lot of work to do before next season.”

After Barbara is finished, those athletes going to the State invitational meet head out to the track to practice, and are joined by a few who are not going to the State meet. Apparently, Barbara’s suggestion had gotten through to some of the athletes.

After practice, Eddie and Kathy head over to Angelo’s Service Station. With graduation right around the corner, Eddie has to check in with Angelo to make sure that he still has a job waiting for him. They drop off Kathy’s car at her house, and take Eddie’s MGB to Angelo’s so they can be together.

On the way, Kathy tells Eddie, “only three more weeks. You’ve almost made it. Then, you’re out of there.” Eddie replies, “I’m coming back.” Kathy asks, “how do you mean you’re coming back?” Eddie explains, “maybe I’ll help out with the team. It seems like it would be fun.” Kathy tells Eddie, “you could help out with the University team. They really need some help.” Eddie tells Kathy, “they’re college guys. They don’t need me.” Kathy explains to Eddie, “do you realize that, running a 9.25, you could have won every 100-yard dash at the University this year?” Eddie thinks about that for a moment, as he drives into Angelo’s Service Station.

They always seem to catch Angelo eating dinner at his desk, which they again do today. Seeing Eddie, Angelo yells out, “how many more weeks?” Eddie replies, “two and a half.” Eddie and Kathy walk in, and Angelo tells them, “once you get out of school, that’s when you’ll really learn something. I’ll teach you what you need to know.” Eddie replies, “I can’t wait.” Angelo asks, “how’s the MGB running?” Eddie tells Angelo, “it runs great. By the way, I found the guy who modified Kathy’s 914. His name is Kurt Richter, and he lives down near the beach.” Angelo replies, “wow! I’d like to meet him someday.”

They talk for a while longer, and Angelo tells Eddie he can start whenever he wants. Angelo also tells Eddie that he can work as many hours as he wants. Even if Eddie only works twenty hours a week, it would help Angelo out a lot. With Eddie around, and both of them

working, Angelo may not have to work ten to twelve hours a day anymore. Eddie tells Angelo he'll keep in touch, and Eddie and Kathy head out. Since they haven't had dinner yet, it's off to the pizzeria.

A week later, the day of the State invitational meet arrives. The State invitational meet will bring better competition this year, so says the rumor mill. The team will find out shortly, as they get on the bus taking them to the meet. This is Eddie's last track meet, and is the meet he will likely be remembered by. The bus trip today is no different from any other. On the way, Mark, letting the cat out of the bag, mentions to Eddie, "hey! Your house is up that road!" Mark's comment attracts a lot of attention, prompting chatter like, "Eddie bought a house?"

Kathy finally tells everyone, "yeah. Me and Eddie bought a house in the woods. Everyone will get to see it during the graduation party!" Everyone on the bus cheers, many wondering how Kathy and Eddie were able to buy a house. Eddie whispers to Kathy, "thanks for throwing me a graduation party. Since we're all together, we might as well plan it now."

Kathy stands up and announces, "the party is going to be right after graduation. Everyone's invited. And, we have a pool. So, bring your swimsuit! And, we're having pizza delivered, lots of it!" Everyone on the bus cheers and, if the energy behind the cheering is any indication, the party will be a good one. Kathy sits back down, and tells Eddie, "see, that was easy! We'll just get Joe to cater it."

With only a short drive, the bus arrives early at the State University where Kathy, Paula, and Barbara attend. The team unloads their equipment with the help of some of the team members who came along to support the team. The equipment includes a few boxes of towels, Gatorade, chests of ice, a few cases of water, and a long extension cord to power the large electric fan. Most teams, with one or two entrants in the meet, carry nothing with them. But, when Northside arrives, it is clear to those around that it is a big production. With nine athletes participating in eight events, the State invitational meet is not too much different from a regular season meet.

Since they have a half hour before the meet begins, Mr. Frazier instructs his team to all have a seat on the bench. Addressing his team, Mr. Frazier explains, "in our last meet, as a team, we did not perform quite as well as we could have. Some of you, as always, delivered a world-class performance. A few others, according to our statistics, could have done much better than you did. Before we get out on the track today, some of you need to hear what I am going to say. Much of what you are about to hear I have said before. You may have heard what I am going to say several times, but, this time, I want you to listen and take it to heart."

Mr. Frazier reminds his team, “this is the State Invitational meet. Is there any reason why this team can’t walk away with the gold medal in every event we are scheduled to participate in? No! There’s not! There is absolutely no reason why all of you can’t walk away with a gold medal! If you’re up against someone who has given you a problem in the past, do something! Mess with their head! A little psychological warfare might just be the difference between winning and losing! We, as a team, are going to have to do everything we can if we are going to emerge as the clear and undisputable winner of this year’s State meet!”

Rehashing one of his favorite stories, Mr. Frazier tells his team, “many of you have heard this before, but some of you need to hear it again. When I was in my early teens, it was very stormy outside, and my father was watching a track meet on television. As you all know, track was my sport, so I watched along with him. I remember that day quite well, as if it were yesterday. My race, the 100-yard dash, came up. I carefully watched what the runners did before they got into the blocks. I watched them as they were waiting for the gun. I watched very carefully when the gun went off and they left the blocks. And, I watched every step as they raced toward the finish line.”

Explaining when he first heard that there is only one winner in any race, Mr. Frazier continues, “once the race was over, it was clear to my father and I which runner took first place, but second and third place seemed to be a tie. While we were waiting to find out who came in second and third place, I asked my father, ‘who do you think came in second?’ My father turned to me and said, ‘George. It doesn’t matter. They both lost. Only one person wins the race. Everyone else is a loser.’ I told my father, ‘but, they give medals for second and third place.’ He replied to me, ‘so what. They still lost.’

My father wanted to teach me a lesson, so he told me, ‘George, go and get your Bible.’ I returned with my Bible, and my father told me, ‘open your Bible to First Corinthians, chapter 9, verse 24, and read it to me.’ I read, ‘Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you win.’ My father looked me straight in the eye, and said to me, ‘George, there is only one winner. Everyone else is a loser. It’s that simple.’ I saw the deep conviction in his eyes when he told me that. His conviction was unmistakable! There is only one winner!

My father didn’t stop there. He asked me, ‘George, when you play football in school, and your team loses, do you go around boasting to everyone that your team came in second place?’ Before I could answer him, he told me, ‘of course you don’t! Second place is nothing to be proud of, especially if there are only two teams playing!’ If there are two runners in the race, or eight, there is still only one winner! There are

many professional football teams. Only one team wins the Super Bowl! There are many professional baseball teams. Only one team wins the World Series! No one ever boasts about coming in second place!”

Barbara walks over to Mr. Frazier, and whispers to him, “you have an audience. A few of the other coaches, and their team assistants, are listening to your talk.” Mr. Frazier smiles, and whispers back to Barbara, “that’s okay. Let them listen.”

Citing a few examples, Mr. Frazier orates, “they said no one can run a mile faster than four minutes. Roger Bannister did not believe that for a second! They said a man is physically incapable of running 100 meters in less than ten seconds. Jim Hines did not believe that for a second! They said no one can run 400 meters in less than 45 seconds. Otis Davis did not believe that for a second! They said no relay team is capable of breaking three minutes in the 4 by 400-meter relay. Robert Frey, Lee Evans, Tommie Smith, and Theron Lewis did not believe that for an instant! What’s stopping you? What’s in your way? Whatever is in your way, if you want to win today, you must get rid of it!

What do all these athletes I just mentioned have in common? These athletes have in common the one, and only one, attribute that will determine your success at anything you do! They attacked the challenge they faced ahead of them with no fear! Roger Bannister. No fear! Jim Hines. No fear! Otis Davis. No fear! Robert Frey, Lee Evans, Tommie Smith, and Theron Lewis. No fear! If you are to win, you must do the same! You must attack the challenges you face today with no fear!”

Mr. Frazier then asks the athletes, “I have a question for all of you. Who is the fastest sprinter in the State?” Eddie raises his hand, as a few athletes answer, “Eddie.” Mr. Frazier chuckles, and informs the group, “well, maybe he is, and maybe he isn’t. It depends on what race he’s running.” Getting very serious, Mr. Frazier continues, “but, I can tell you this. All of you seem to agree that Eddie is the fastest sprinter in the State. Anyone who steps onto the track and is up against Eddie has already been preprogrammed to believe that they will be up against the fastest sprinter in the State! If anyone believes Eddie is the fastest sprinter in the State, when they step onto the track next to him, at best, that makes them second best! They’ve already lost! When you believe that you are better, faster, and stronger than your opponent, then you will win!”

Reminding the team of Eddie’s high school career, Mr. Frazier explains, “speaking of Eddie, when Eddie was a freshman, Eddie won the silver medal in the 40-yard dash at the State invitational meet. During the following three years at the invitational meet, Eddie won the gold medal in the 40-yard dash. Eddie won the gold medal in the 100-yard dash at the

Spring State invitational meet for the last three years! And, Eddie expects to win the gold medal again today! But, here's what you may not know. Eddie put all his gold medals in a box, where he couldn't see them. Left out on his dresser was Eddie's silver medal, where it served as a constant reminder to train harder. Second place was not acceptable to Eddie! Second place should not be acceptable to any of you either!"

Wrapping up his presentation, Mr. Frazier finishes, "when you get out there and participate in your event today, I want you to perform as if first place is the only thing that matters. And, remember, there is absolutely no reason why every one of you can't walk away with the gold medal in your event! So, let's get out there and win today!" The team, with a renewed sense of purpose, was highly motivated by Mr. Frazier's speech.

The stands slowly fill with spectators, parents, and college scouts, as the teams arrive one by one. Carefully keeping his distance, the team assistant from Centerville, Brad Evans, takes a walk by the Northside bench to check out the competition. Mark yells out to Evans, "hey! Did McCrutchen pass his steroid test?" Evans doesn't answer, but rather inconspicuously flips Mark a bird. This year seems to be a little different. There are no known controversies facing Northside. Usually there is some controversy already in high gear before the first gun goes off.

The meet gets underway, and the hurdlers get on the track. This means the 100-yard dash preliminaries are next, so Eddie and Mark warm up. Mark qualified for this event during Eddie's three week vacation from school earlier in the Spring. Eddie tells Mark, "well, this is it. Our last meet." Mark replies, "yeah. And, I'm going to miss messing with McCrutchen." Eddie tells Mark, "you'll find someone else to mess with. You can practice messing with Mr. Crum. There's nothing he can do anymore." Mark exclaims, "that's it! My dad got the contract to build the storage building for the baseball team, just like the one he built for the track team. I'm doing that. I'm messing with Mr. Crum!" Mark might have just found a little more energy for his race that is coming up.

Kathy and Paula walk up with Mr. Frazier, who tells them, "okay, guys. You're up!" They take a walk to the starting line together and Mark unexpectedly sees McCutchen among the contestants. Seeing McCutchen, Mark mentions, "McCrutchen must have qualified sometime during the year." They arrive at the starting area, and are grouped according to their heat. Eddie is in the first heat, along with Mark and McCutchen. Mark, seeing McCutchen, comments to Eddie, "how wonderful. This should go over well. Let's mess with him."

Mark tells McCutchen, "well, look at this. A reunion from eighth grade. If I remember correctly, I won that race." Eddie tells Mark, "nope, I won." McCutchen tells Mark and Eddie, "I thought you guys tied." Mark

tells McCutchen, “how would you know? You were too far away to see anything. We crossed the finish line when you were just getting out of the blocks.” McCutchen, who is now irritated, tells Mark, “that was four years ago!” Mark exclaims, “wow! Look at this! Do I detect a little ‘roid rage? Did you pass your steroid test?” McCutchen is now angered, and not focused on the race. Mr. Frazier, Kathy, and Paula head to the finish line, wanting to get the best view of the finish.

The Starter tells the first heat to get on the track. Eddie is in lane three, Mark in lane four. Duane Harris, from Central, in lane five, is tired of getting beaten by Eddie. Another familiar face, Mikhail Sokolov from Liberty High School, is in lane two. And, McCutchen is in lane one. Now it’s down to business. Seeing McCutchen taking his position in lane one, Mark laughs, and tells him, “lane one? That’s kind of like being at the business end of a sewer pipe.”

The Starter announces, “on your marks.” As McCutchen looks over at Mark in anger, the Starter announces, “set.” The gun is fired, and Eddie and Mark are once again competing against each other. Halfway through the race, Eddie is in first place and Mark is in second place. Eddie crosses the finish line first, and Mark second, delivering times that will set today’s standard. Sokolov finishes in third place, a few yards behind Mark. Harris finishes in fourth place, and will likely be in the final. McCutchen finishes in fifth place but, with a few more heats to go, it’s hard to say if he’ll be in the final.

Mr. Frazier tells Eddie and Mark, “I clocked you guys at a 9.4 and 9.5,” and gives them both a high-five. Kathy gives Eddie a kiss, and Paula gives Mark a kiss. Eddie comments, “forget the medals. I run for kisses.” Mr. Frazier also comments, replying, “we all know that!” Eddie, Mark, Kathy, Paula, and Mr. Frazier all walk back to the bench together. Mr. Frazier tells them, “both of you did really good! You’re in the final.”

The 440-yard dash is next. Braden, the top seed, is expected to win. Just ask Braden, and he’ll let you know who won before the race even starts. Today is no different. Braden’s only real competition in this race is Mikhail Sokolov, who finished three seconds behind Braden at the indoor track State invitational meet this past Winter, taking second place. Three seconds, which does not sound like a lot, is something to be concerned about.

Braden, Mr. Frazier, and Kathy head to the starting line for the 440-yard dash. Braden, who holds the State record, is telling everyone, “I own the record, and I’m going to break it. I’m breaking my own record today! I’m going to run so fast, I’m even going to kick my own ass!” When Braden gets fired up, not everything he says makes sense. But, Braden is a master of eroding the competition’s confidence, which he has just done.

The Starter tells the first heat to get on the track. Braden is in lane one, and Sokolov is in lane two. Sokolov comes over to shake Braden's hand, telling him, "it's good to see you again." Braden replies, "you too. Good luck!"

The Starter announces, "on your marks." After Braden is finally motionless, the Starter announces, "set." The gun is fired, and the only heat that matters in the 440-yard dash today is underway. In Braden's final 440-yard dash, he takes the lead, a place he's quite familiar with when running this event.

Because of the staggered start, Braden, in the inside lane, starts slightly behind the other runners. Halfway through the race, Braden is clearly in the lead, passing some runners in the outer lanes, including Sokolov. Near the finish line, Mr. Frazier is jumping up and down and waving his arms, as if he's trying to help Braden run. Coming out of the final curve, Braden is clearly the leader. Crossing the finish line, Braden takes first place, and Sokolov takes second place.

Mr. Frazier exclaims, "I clocked him at 46.6! He broke his own record! Can anyone believe it?" Braden, however, is walking off his run, and is too far away to hear his time. When Braden returns to the finish line, he gets the news that he broke his own record. Braden exclaims, "my final ass kicking in this race! And, it was a mighty good one!" But, Braden will have to wait for his official time. Mr. Frazier gives Braden a high-five, telling him, "that was your best run ever!"

While Braden is celebrating his victory, Eddie is over in the field area, waiting to make his first attempt at the discus. Sitting on a bench with Mr. Zunde and Bobby B., Eddie learns Bobby B. has already taken the gold medal in the shot-put. There are more throws to be made, but it appears that Bobby B. is untouchable.

Eddie is called for his turn. Eddie takes a look around, noticing that there are a few college scouts watching. Eddie thinks to himself that he might as well give them a good show for their money.

Stepping up to the discus pad, Eddie takes his time. Going into the wind up, and into the spin, Eddie releases the discus and lets out a primal scream heard throughout the stadium. The discus soars through the air, catching the attention of the college scouts. The discus lands at around the 220-foot mark. The Field Judges take the measurement, and the competition is stopped. The Head Field Judge is called out to the field to verify the distance.

Eddie, waiting on the bench to hear his distance, sits with Mr. Zunde and Bobby B. Mr. Zunde tells Eddie, "congratulations, you just broke the

State record and won the gold medal.” Eddie asks, “how do you know?” Mr. Zunde replies, “they just shut the field down, and are taking another measurement. They don’t do that unless they think you’ve broken the record.” All Eddie can say is, “wow!”

The Head Field Judge announces, “Edward Bogenskaya’s throw was 220 feet, 4 inches, setting a new State record.” Many of the college scouts are trying to find out more about who made that throw. But, they are not allowed in the team area during the competition. Mr. Zunde tells Eddie, “congratulations, you just won. The rest of them can fight it out for the silver medal.” Eddie asks Mr. Zunde, “do I have to throw it again?” Mr. Zunde tells him, “technically, you don’t. But the people in the stands might want to see you throw it again.”

Eddie sits around talking to Bobby B. and Mr. Zunde, waiting for his next throw. While he is waiting, Mark Miller, who took the silver medal in this event last year, steps up to make his second attempt. Miller is painfully aware of Eddie breaking the State record. Miller makes his second attempt, and the discus lands just over the 180-foot line. Unable to deliver the distance needed to win the gold medal, it looks like Miller will have to settle for the silver medal again this year.

Eddie is called to make his second attempt. Stepping up to the discus pad, Eddie thinks to himself that, if he already broke the State record, maybe he can do it for a second time today. This time, there are a lot more eyes on Eddie than during his first throw.

Going into the wind up, and into the spin, Eddie releases the discus, knowing he had more energy behind this throw than his first. The discus soars through the air, again landing just past the 220-foot mark. The Field Judges take the measurement, and the competition is again stopped. The Head Field Judge is called out for the second time today to verify the measurement.

The Head Field Judge announces, “Edward Bogenskaya’s throw was 222 feet, four-and-one-half inches, breaking the old State record which stood for about twenty minutes.” Eddie and Mr. Zunde laugh at how the Head Field Judge worded his announcement. Mr. Zunde congratulates Eddie again, telling him, “Miss Amherst is in the stands watching. I’m sure she was quite impressed.” Eddie replies, “she really knows a lot about track. It’s helped a lot.”

The call is made for the 100-yard dash final, so Eddie has to go. Mr. Zunde tells Eddie, “I’ll tell the judges that you have other events to compete in. I’ll let you know if they will require you to make your third throw.” Eddie gives Mr. Zunde and Bobby B. a high-five, and heads off to compete in the 100-yard dash final.

At the starting line for the 100-yard dash final stand Eddie, Mark, Sokolov, Harris, McCutchen, and Davida. Paul Davida, a sophomore running for Parkview High School, edging his way into the final, is this year's biggest surprise in this event. Mr. Frazier, Kathy, and Paula are waiting, as Eddie walks over from the field area. Mr. Frazier jokingly tells Eddie, "I'm glad you could show up for the final." Eddie replies, "I'm sorry. I was too busy breaking the State discus record." Mr. Frazier exclaims, "you broke the record?" Eddie replies, "yeah, twice. I broke the record with my first throw, and my second throw was better than my first." Mr. Frazier, Kathy, Paula, and Mark give Eddie a high-five, which is enough to unnerve the competition.

The Starter announces, "this is the final for the 100-yard dash. Runners, please take your lanes." The finalists get in their lanes, and set their blocks. Eddie, in lane three, and Mark, in lane four, had the best qualifying times. Mark does not bother messing with McCutchen in this event. It surprises McCutchen that Mark has nothing to say, which, in a sense, worries McCutchen more than if Mark had said something.

The Starter commands the finalists, "on your marks." Eddie and Mark, well prepared for this race, are racing each other and care not about the other runners. The Starter announces, "set." At the other end of the track, Kathy nervously has her finger on her stopwatch. Kathy and Paula will be timing Davida and Sokolov, who will return next year. Everyone else in the race is a senior, and will not return next year. Mr. Frazier will be timing Eddie and Mark, not having the patience to wait for the official times. The gun is fired, and the 100-yard dash final is underway.

Eddie and Mark are off to their strongest start ever. At 25 yards, a quarter way through the race, Eddie leads Mark by a slight margin. McCutchen trails in last place. At 50 yards, it is a two-man race. Eddie, about a yard in front of Mark, is out to set the record again. As they approach the finish line, Eddie is ahead of Mark by a little more than two yards. Eddie crosses first, taking the gold medal, with Mark taking the silver medal. Sokolov edges out Harris for third place. Harris, taking fourth place, gets the biggest participation trophy of the day. Davida takes fifth place, which is not bad for the sophomore. McCutchen, as Eddie and Mark expected, finishes in last place.

Not waiting for the official announcement, Mr. Frazier exclaims, "I clocked him at a 9.2! Does anyone have his time? What do we got on the clock?" Looking over at the Timekeepers, Mr. Frazier knows something is up because three Timekeepers are all looking at one stopwatch.

Kathy catches up to Eddie, telling him, "you did it again! Mr. Frazier thinks you broke the National record!" Eddie replies, "I feel like I broke the record and my ass doing it." If Eddie feels like he broke the record, he

would be correct. The Head Timekeeper announces that Eddie's time was 9.2 seconds, and Mark's was 9.3 seconds. Sokolov, taking third place, ran a time of 9.5 seconds. Hearing the good news, Kathy and Paula cheer wildly.

Mr. Frazier congratulates Eddie and Mark for an awesome performance. Mr. Frazier is ecstatic at the performance his team is delivering today. The Timekeepers, and other officials in the area, come over to congratulate Eddie. Sokolov's coach, Mr. Pushkin, comes to shake Eddie's hand. And, at the other end of the spectrum, Mr. Ruff, the Centerville coach, walks away in disgust.

As the meet moves on, Mark heads over to the team bench to rest a while since the 220-yard dash is next on his agenda. Eddie and Kathy, however, are ready for lunch, and head to the cafeteria. Mr. Frazier asks them to bring something back for him and, believe it or not, requests a pizza.

On the way to the cafeteria, Kathy tells Eddie, "that's two records in one day!" Amidst all the excitement, Eddie's accomplishments still haven't sunk into his mind. On the way to the cafeteria, Eddie and Kathy decide to pass by the field area, to see how the field events are going. Bobby B., sitting on the bench relaxing, watches as the field events continue.

Eddie asks Bobby B., "yo, bro! Did you win the gold medal in the high jump?" Bobby B. jokingly replies, "no. But, I beat your discus throw! You missed it!" Kathy asks, "hey, where's Mr. Zunde?" Bobby B. informs them, "he left to get lunch, I think." Eddie remarks, "maybe we'll see him at the cafeteria." Bobby B. asks, "do you mind if I come?" Eddie replies, "no. Come with us." They all head to the cafeteria together to get lunch and Mr. Frazier the pizza he requested.

When they arrive at the cafeteria, the group orders a pizza and a large salad, which they bring out to a table. As they discuss the meet over lunch, Kathy, nearly choking on her salad, coughs for a second. Eddie asks, "are you okay?" Kathy replies, "yeah. Don't turn around now, but Mr. Zunde and Miss Amherst are eating lunch together on the other side of the cafeteria." Eddie replies, "so." Kathy replies, "they just kissed."

Eddie discreetly turns around to peek and, seeing the two teachers together, replies, "well, that explains a lot." Kathy replies, "yeah, I'd say." Bobby B. adds, "well, they're about the same age, and they're both single."

They finish lunch, and walk back up to the counter to get a pizza for Mr. Frazier. Kathy and Eddie head back to the team bench with Mr. Frazier's lunch, and Bobby B. returns to the field area.

On the way back to the bench, Eddie tells Kathy, “so, that’s why Miss Amherst knows all about track and field.” Kathy replies, “when I had physics, Miss Amherst talked a lot about the discus and how to throw it farther. It seemed like that’s all she talked about.” Eddie explains, “she had our class go out to the track with Mr. Zunde, and me and Bobby B. made a bunch of throws. And, after a whole bunch of heavy math, she told us what our optimal release angles are. Mine was 41.3 degrees.” Kathy comments, “and, now we know why.” Arriving at the bench, Kathy gives Mr. Frazier a box of pizza, who smiles when he sees it.

After all the other events are completed, the call is made for the 4 by 440 relay, the final event of the day. Mr. Frazier, Eddie, Mark, Braden, Johnson, Kathy, and Paula all head over to the starting line. On the way, Kathy mentions, “this has been a very quiet meet.” Mr. Frazier replies, “what do you mean?” Kathy replies, “there’s been no controversies, and Mr. Ruff has been quiet.” Mr. Frazier tells Kathy, “don’t get your hopes too high. There he is, with his relay team.” Mr. Ruff, the Centerville coach, is acting as if he’s going to win this year, trying to fire up his team before the race.

At the starting line, Mr. Frazier tells the relay team, which has been together since middle school, “well, this is it, your last race together. Make it your best!” Mark, wanting to run against his arch rival, McCutchen, will be the anchor. Braden gets on the track, informing everyone of the outcome of the event before it starts.

Hearing Mr. Ruff give the Centerville team a pep talk, Braden exclaims, “that’s right! Pump your team up with all that hot air. The silver medal might be waiting for you, but not the gold! That’s ours!” Mr. Ruff gets annoyed at Braden, and tells his team, “that’s the guy I want you to beat!” In response, Braden exclaims, “bring it on! Put your fastest girly-looking boy on the track first so I can kick his ass!”

Mr. Ruff complains about Braden to the Starter, telling him, “just listen to that guy! Can’t you stop him?” The Starter tells Mr. Ruff, “I’m not going to stop him any more than I stopped you from giving your pep talk. You are just as loud, if not louder, than he is.”

Making a very big mistake, Mr. Ruff yells out to his team, “okay, let’s get this ass kicking underway!” Hearing that, Braden starts banging on his chest, exclaiming, “I’m the one and only ass kicker here! My job is to kick your ass! Your job is to get your ass kicked! Bring it on, junior! Let’s see what you got!” The Starter delays the race by a minute or two, listening to the sideline commentary.

The Starter finally announces, “on your marks.” After Braden is finally motionless, which is a miracle, the Starter announces, “set.” The gun is

fired, and the final event of the afternoon is underway. Braden exclaims, “kick ass,” as he leaves the blocks. Braden, in the inside lane, is well aware that Sokolov, in lane three, is his only competition.

Sokolov, who is usually Liberty’s anchor in this event, is Braden’s only real competition in his leg. It appears that the Liberty coach, Viktor Pushkin, has made a last minute change in the running order. It could be because he does not want his team to fall too far behind at the beginning of the race. Approaching the transition zone, Braden hands off to Johnson, four seconds before Sokolov delivers his baton.

With a tight race, Johnson has a lot of work to do to maintain the lead. During the first 100 yards of his leg, Johnson widens the lead. This is good news for Mark and Eddie, as they will not have to work as hard. With Johnson on the back straightaway, Sokolov walks over to Braden, telling him, “good run, my good man. Good run!” Braden gives Sokolov a fist bump, and replies, “you gave me a run for my money.” Sokolov knows who his competition is, and so does Braden. The good news to Sokolov, a junior, is that Braden will graduate this year. Johnson approaches the transition zone, delivering the baton to Eddie along with a 15-second lead over the closest opponent.

Eddie, running his last race of his high school career, wants to go out with a bang. Halfway through his leg, Mr. Frazier exclaims, “he clocked a 22 split,” meaning Eddie just ran the first 220 yards in 22 seconds. A 22-second 220-yard time is on track to break the National 440-yard dash record. All eyes are on Eddie, who widens the lead by a significant margin. Eddie approaches the transition zone, and hands off to Mark.

Mark leaves the blocks, aiming to kick McCutchen’s ass. Referring to Eddie, Mr. Frazier exclaims, “I clocked him at 47 seconds! They’re all clocking!” Mr. Frazier has his own vocabulary. If someone is “clocking,” they are running faster than anyone could imagine. When Mark is on the back straightaway, the second place team, Liberty, transfers their baton. Centerville’s McCutchen watches Mark coming out of the back straightaway, completely missing his teammate approaching the transition zone. McCutchen bungles the handoff, losing several precious seconds.

Mark crosses the finish line, taking the gold medal, and ending this era in the tribe’s walk through life. The 4 by 440 relay team gives each other, and their coach, high-fives. Giving Eddie a hug, Kathy tells him, “you guys did it again!” As soon as Mark returns to the finish line, Paula bumps her hip to Mark’s, reminiscent of her asking him out on their first date, and tells him, “you did it! Four years in a row!” The team heads back to the bench, as the rest of the teams cross the finish line.

The team heads to the cafeteria to get something to eat before the awards ceremony. Miss Amherst also joins them, which is no surprise to Eddie, Kathy, and Bobby B., who now know something that no one else does. They all order pizza, which is also no surprise. Eddie tells Mr. Frazier he had pizza for lunch, also reminding him that he ran a 47-second quarter mile after having pizza. Mr. Frazier suggests that, if someone can run a 47-second quarter mile, he doesn't care what they eat.

While they are eating, the father of Paul Davida, one of this year's 100-yard dash contestants, comes up to Mr. Frazier and asks, "are you the Northside coach?" Mr. Frazier replies, "I'm one of them." Pointing to each individual, Mr. Frazier adds, "we also have Mr. Zunde, our athletic director and field events coach. Barbara, Kathy, and Paula are our assistant coaches. And, Dr. Lynn Amherst is our field events technical analyst and physicist." Mr. Frazier's latter comment was added just for its entertainment value, but is not far from the truth. Mr. Frazier, at times, is beginning to sound a bit like Mark. Mr. Davida, who was completely unaware of the extensive coaching behind the Northside team, is very impressed.

Mr. Davida tells Mr. Frazier, "I hate to interrupt your dinner. I'm looking to move to your area of the State next year. My son is really good at track. I've been watching the meet, and I was wondering if you'd consider him for your team." Mr. Frazier asks, "who's your son?" Mr. Davida replies, "Paul Davida. He's a sophomore." Kathy, in between bites of pizza, interjects, "he took fifth place in the 100-yard dash. That would make him officially the second seed next year. But, John and Hoffer can beat him, so Davida is really the fourth seed."

Mr. Davida, quite impressed that the Northside coaches already know about his son, asks, "how do you know all this?" Mr. Frazier confidently replies, "we know everything about every contestant at this meet. We know the outcome of every race in this meet before it starts." Which is true. Mr. Frazier has a file on anyone who has ever ran on his track, and at the State invitational meets. And, Mr. Frazier has a few buddies throughout the State that he keeps in touch with, all sharing information throughout the year. And, this year, Coach Viktor Pushkin will likely be invited to join the group of track and field insiders.

Mr. Frazier asks Kathy, "what was his 100-yard dash time?" Gobbling down some pizza, Kathy replies, "I think it was a 9.6, which would be a 9.7 on a gravel track, which is why I think John and Hoffer can beat him. And, his quarter mile time is on par with Erika's." Mr. Frazier, understanding completely what Kathy just told him, tells Mr. Davida, "if your son made it this far, and he's a sophomore, we'll definitely find a place for him."

That is exactly what Mr. Davida, who is looking for a track scholarship for his son, was hoping to hear. Mr. Davida thanks Mr. Frazier for his time, hoping that something will come through for his son, Paul. Northside is apparently gaining a great reputation in track and field.

After getting a bite to eat, they all rush back to the track, which has been set up for the awards ceremony. The left over pizza is boxed up, and will be finished off later. Barely making it back in time, they see the hurdlers on the stage receiving their awards. Mr. Frazier, Mr. Zunde, Miss Amherst, Kathy, Paula, Barbara, and Wendy return to the bench, and will finish off the few slices of leftover pizza. The team looks carefully at the bench, discussing whether Miss Amherst will now be officially part of the coaching staff.

The program moves on to the 100-yard dash. The Meet Announcer announces, "in first place, setting a new State record and National record in the 100-yard dash, running for Northside High School, Edward Bogenskaya." As Eddie walks up and stands on the first place tier, the crowd cheers wildly. The Meet Announcer then announces, "in second place, also running for Northside, tying the National record held until this year, Mark Svoboda." Mark walks up, and the crowd cheers, except for, perhaps, McCutchen. The Meet Announcer then announces, "in third place, running for Liberty High School, Mikhail Sokolov." The crowd cheers, and the winners are draped with their medals.

In other events, Mark takes the gold medal in the 220-yard dash. Braden, setting a new State record, takes the gold medal in the 440-yard dash. In the 880-yard run, Mitchell takes the gold medal, Johnson takes the silver medal, and Akinmola the bronze medal. This is the first time in State history that one team has taken an entire event during the Spring season. And, in the mile, Mitchell takes the gold medal, and Akinmola the silver medal. This is good news to Akinmola. He will be the number one seed in the 880-yard run and the mile next year.

In the relay events, Hoffer, John, Erika, and Mitchell take the gold medal in the mile medley relay. In the 4 by 440 relay, Braden, Johnson, Mark, and Eddie again take the gold medal. Liberty takes the silver medal, which is good news to Sokolov. And third place went to Parkview, Davida's team. Davida hopes to be part of the Northside team next year.

In the field events, Bobby B. takes the gold medal in the shot-put, setting a new State record. Eddie asks Bobby B., "bro! Why didn't you say anything?" Bobby B., who is a bit on the reserved side today, replies, "I was keeping it as a surprise." Eddie mentions, "I should have guessed when you mentioned you already won when the field events were just getting started." Eddie takes the gold medal in the discus, setting a new State record in that event.

After the ceremony, the parents come down from the bleachers, and join the medalists in their celebration. It seems like the same group meets twice a year during the brief victory celebration that follows the meet. Eddie's parents congratulate him, and the other team members.

College scouts, reporters, and photographers make their way to the Northside bench, and attempt to talk with anyone they can. Again, the scouts try to get Eddie interested in going to college. This year, Eddie messes with them a bit, asking if they have any programs in automobile repair. The scouts try to convince Eddie that being a mechanic is a dead end street. Eddie cordially thanks them for the insult. Eddie simply doesn't want to push a pencil around for the rest of his life, like Mr. Crum.

After the meet, Dr. Karakova delivers the news to Mr. Frazier that Eddie, Mark, Johnson, Braden, and Bobby B. that they have been invited to the National invitational track meet. The National meet, which will be held in two weeks, is considered to be the highest honor that a high school track and field athlete can receive.

Dr. Karakova and Mr. Frazier call the four athletes aside, along with Kathy, Paula, Barbara, and Wendy, to tell them the good news. With his senior year being a rough ride, it does not take Eddie much time to decline the invitation. Already knowing that he is the fastest high school athlete in the country, Eddie has nothing more to prove. Not surprisingly, Mark, Johnson, Braden, and Bobby B. follow suit. To them, track and field is fun and games. They've had their fun, and now it's time to move on to the next chapter in their life.

The team, all wearing their medals, poses for a team photograph with Mr. Frazier, Mr. Zunde, Kathy, Paula, Barbara, and Wendy. Miss Amherst is even invited to be part of the team photograph this year, and stands very close to Mr. Zunde when the photograph is taken. After all, she did have a significant contribution in Eddie and Bobby B. breaking the record in their field events. Mr. Frazier answers a few of the reporter's questions, but directs the reporters to speak with the medalists. This is their day, and Mr. Frazier does not want to be the center of attention.

One college scout is very persistent in trying to convince Eddie and Mark to come to his school. Eddie and Mark are offered full scholarships right on the spot. The recruiter tells Eddie and Mark, "you're not going to get a better deal anywhere else." Eddie asks, "how is this a good deal?" The recruiter explains, "we'll give you a free college education, and you get to run track!" Eddie asks, "do I have to go to class?" The recruiter replies, "well, yes. Of course. That's what college is all about." Eddie asks, "do I have to go to track practice?" The recruiter replies, "yes, of course. That's part of the deal too."

Eddie and Mark look at each other, as if the recruiter is from a different planet. Mark informs the recruiter, “that’s the fastest way for my times to go down the toilet.” The recruiter asks Mark, “what do you mean?” Mark explains, “we’re fast because we have our way of working out and training.” The recruiter informs Mark, “well, in college, things have to be done our way.” Eddie and Mark again look at each other, and Mark informs the recruiter, “well, if your training is so great, then you don’t really need us. You can find anyone and put them through your special training, and they’ll be fast, right?” The recruiter is at a loss for words.

Eddie tells Mark, “I think I’ll just stick to automotive repair. I don’t want to sit in a classroom for four more years anyway.” The recruiter cannot understand why Eddie and Mark do not want to go to college. The recruiter walks away, off to talk with Mr. Frazier, thinking that Eddie and Mark’s coach can talk some sense into two of the team’s star runners. It appears that Eddie’s and Mark’s logic was way too much for the recruiter to handle.

After a half hour of celebration and talking with scouts, everyone heads out. Eddie and Kathy walk to the bus together, talking about the meet. A tear comes from Eddie’s eye, as he tells Kathy, “well, I guess this is the end of the road for me. There’s no more track and field after today.” Kathy, giving Eddie a hug, replies, “the way you say that, it sounds so sad.” Eddie explains, “if I want to run and compete anymore, it seems like I have to go to college. And, I really don’t want to.” Kathy tells Eddie, “I’ll ask my coaches at the University. Maybe there’s another way to keep competing if you want to. We’ll figure it out, hon.”

Rationalizing his future, Eddie tells Kathy, “well, I have a lot of work to do on our house, and I have a job.” Kathy points out, “wow! It sounds like you’re officially an adult now!” Eddie replies, “yeah! Now I can say, ‘Crum, you are full of more shit than an overfed elephant. Get out of my arena,’ and get away with it!” Kathy laughs hysterically, and says, “that was so funny when Mr. Zunde said that to Mr. Crum!” Kathy and Eddie get on the bus with the rest of the team, and head back to the school.

During final exam week, the seniors get a bit of a break. All of their tests are during the first four days, giving them Friday off. This is done so their grades can be compiled before graduation. With only one more week to go, it’s the end of this road and the beginning of another. Eddie has a job lined up after graduation. Mark is also ready to go to work. Eddie and Kathy have been planning their wedding, which they’ll be able to spend more time doing once school is out.

Monday morning starts with the physics final, which is two hours long. Eddie, Braden, Johnson, Mark, Bobby B., and Mitchell sit in their usual

place near the window, along with Wendy. Miss Amherst walks in, taking time to announce how well the track team did in the State invitational meet over the weekend. With the class nervously awaiting the final exam, Miss Amherst announces to the class, "Eddie, Mark, Axel, Eric, Gary, and Bobby B. have all taken first place in the State invitational track meet this weekend in several events. Several weeks ago we demonstrated the flight mechanics and characteristics of the airborne field implements. Using our data, we then calculated the optimal release angles. Eddie and Bobby B. have taken that information, along with their skill, and have both broken the State record in their event." She then instructs the class, "everyone, please give them a round of applause!" The class applauds, with some of the students understanding that there might be a use for physics after all.

Miss Amherst hands out the final exams, telling the students, "not all the tests are the same, so don't even think about looking at your neighbor's paper. This test should take one hour, but you have two hours to complete it." The announcement bothered Chuckie, who intended to cheat on the test. And, by now, Miss Amherst knows that Chuckie, Goldstein, and Haynes all cheat, so she put an end to it before any cheating could begin.

As the tests are being handed out, Mark whispers to Eddie, "hey, Chuckie's not wearing a belt." Eddie looks over at Chuckie, seeing Chuckie without a belt. Eddie laughs, and whispers back, "I guess he got tired of getting belted to the fence." Mark laughs, and replies, "I guess that's one way to get out of it."

Miss Amherst asks Eddie and Mark, "okay, what's so funny over there?" Mark answers, "Chuckie's not wearing a belt. Now, Eddie can't belt him to the fence." The whole class cracks up, including Miss Amherst. Miss Amherst comments, "well, at least Charles has learned one thing this year." Chuckie won't be wearing a belt for a while. His arms were so severely dislocated during his fight with Eddie, and can no longer put a belt on.

After the test, Eddie and the tribe head to their next final exam. In the hallway, they are followed by Chuckie, Goldstein, and Haynes. Eddie comments to Mark, "that test was really easy. It was all multiple choice and all the answers were obvious." Mark replies, "yeah! I know. I can't see how anyone could get less than 100." Braden adds, "yeah. I did really good!"

Overhearing Eddie and the tribe, Chuckie, whose mouth is no longer wired shut, asks Goldstein, "was your test multiple choice?" Goldstein replies, "no, no, mine was all hard problems. Yeah, yeah, and they all said 'show your work.'" Chuckie replies, "yeah, mine too. We really got screwed." Hearing Chuckie's comment, Eddie gives Mark a high-five,

seeing that Miss Amherst took the opportunity to throw Chuckie, Goldstein, and Haynes under the bus.