

Eddie, The Collegiate Senior

Chapter Five Spring Break

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Now parked in the service station parking lot is another Volkswagen Bus. The Bus, recently procured by Bobby B., is soon to receive a Porsche engine. While doing a brake job, Eddie asks Bobby B., “did you find an engine yet?” Bobby B. replies, “no. Vinnie said something will come along soon.” Eddie suggests, “a 911 engine should work just as well. You don’t have to wait for a turbo.”

Quickly changing the subject, Eddie yells out to Bobby B., “here comes a Slinky!” Bobby B. asks, “what are you talking about?” Eddie replies, “Chuckie. He’s like a Slinky. It’s really not good for anything, but it brings a smile to your face when you push it down a flight of stairs.” Bobby B. laughs, and replies, “they must have let him out of rehab for Spring break.”

Eddie tells Bobby B., “go see what he wants. And, be careful.” Eddie walks over to the shop telephone, calling the police department, wondering whether Chuckie has been released from the mental health facility. Eddie informs the police that Chuckie is at his service station, and to send an officer by as soon as possible. Eddie then walks outside, wondering what brings Chuckie into his station.

Seeing Chuckie, Eddie exclaims, “hey, Chuckie! What are you doing here? Did they let you out of the sanitarium for Spring break?” Chuckie replies, “shut up! I just want a tank of gas.” Eddie whispers to Bobby B. as he is checking Chuckie’s oil, “pull the ignition wire and disable his engine.” Eddie tells Chuckie, “hey, Chuckie! It’s good to see you again! Stay out of jail.” Eddie heads inside, as Bobby B. gives Chuckie the good news that his oil looks good. Chuckie pays Bobby B., then attempts to drive off. The only problem is that Chuckie’s car won’t start.

Officer Richard Hayes rolls into the station with flashing lights, pulling up right next to Chuckie's car. Eddie walks out of the station, telling Officer Hayes, "the Chuckie, here, is violating his restraining order. Can you get rid of him?" Seeing Officer Hayes, Chuckie starts running, if it can even be called that, knowing that he is in big trouble. While the officer is chasing Chuckie, Bobby B. reattaches the ignition wire that he disconnected earlier. Officer Hayes easily catches Chuckie, places him in handcuffs, and escorts him back to the service station.

Chuckie screams out, "I didn't do anything!" Officer Hayes then asks, "then, why did you run?" Chuckie replies, "I don't know! Arrest them! They broke my car!" Eddie tells Chuckie, "shut up, junior! No one broke your car."

Officer Hayes informs Chuckie, "Charles Black, are you aware that there is a restraining order against you and that you are to keep 100 yards away from this establishment?" Chuckie replies, "well, yeah. But, I needed to get gas." Officer Hayes informs Chuckie, "Charles Black, you are under arrest for violation of your restraining order." Chuckie is read his rights, and placed into the cage¹ of Officer Hayes' patrol car.

Eddie tells Officer Hayes, "I just remember the last time the little Chuckie was here. The Chuckie and Goldshit tried to attack me." Officer Hayes explains, "they let this Charles Black character out of the hospital about a week ago. That other character, Andrew Goldstein, is out on bail, and skipped out of town. He failed to show up at his hearing. We think he's left the area. If you see him, call us." Eddie replies, "will do."

Eddie turns to Bobby B., telling him, "see? Slinkys." Officer Hayes asks, "what's this about Slinkys?" Eddie replies, "I told Bobby B. earlier that the Chuckie is like a Slinky. It's really not good for anything, but it brings a smile to your face when you push it down a flight of stairs." Officer Hayes laughs, and replies, "keep pushing. Every time one of these characters get back on the street, there's nothing but trouble on the way." Officer Hayes takes Chuckie off to jail. Eddie has Chuckie's car impounded, since it is parked and unattended in front of the gas pumps.

Trying to make inroads into the track team, Mayor Jamieson calls Mark, explaining that he wants some work done at his home. Mark drives to the mayor's house, wondering what kind of work the mayor needs done. Driving up the driveway and seeing the mayor's house, Mark concludes the mayor must have a lot of money.

¹ Cage: The highly secure rear seat of a police car.

Mayor Jamieson comes out to greet Mark, saying, "Mark! It's good to see you again!" Mark, who clearly perceives that the mayor is up to something suspicious, replies, "it's good to see you, too. What can I do for you today?" The mayor replies, "I'd like you to build a wall around my house, similar to the one you're working on for Gerhard Zunde." Wondering how the mayor knows that he is working on a wall for Dr. Zunde, Mark replies, "yeah, I can do that. Let's walk around your property so I can get an idea what we're looking at."

Mark and Mayor Jamieson walk the mayor's property. Mark asks the mayor, "what do you got here, about two acres?" The mayor replies, "a little over." Mark explains, "if you want to do this, I'll need to get the surveyor out here, and mark your property lines. Once that's done, we can get the job completed fairly quickly." Mayor Jamieson asks, "how can you get it done quickly? I thought it would take months." Mark replies, "there are a dozen guys on the crew. They work like machines." Mark gives the mayor the cost per foot of the wall and, without any hesitation at all, the mayor agrees.

Mark returns to his truck, placing his surveyor's wheel in the back. Changing the subject, Mayor Jamieson asks Mark, "so, how long have you been working with Jackson Finley?" Not wanting to mess up Officer Hayes' investigation, Mark replies, "we're really not allowed to discuss that." The mayor replies, "I understand."

Mayor Jamieson then asks Mark, "what's the chance that Axel Braden is interested in working on the inside?" Realizing exactly where this conversation is going, Mark replies, "I know for sure he'll be interested. He's having a really tough time making it right now. You know, bills. But, I can't say anything to him. I'll get in big trouble." Mayor Jamieson tells Mark, "I can see that." Mark is not stupid. He clearly sees the mayor's intent.

Abruptly changing the subject again, Mayor Jamieson asks, "getting back to my wall, when do you think you can get the surveyor out here?" Mark replies, "probably in the next day or two." The mayor then asks, "and, you'll be able to start work after that?" Mark replies, "yeah. I can get the crew out here to start laying the footing as soon as the surveyor is finished. By then, they'll be finished with Dr. Zunde's wall, and they can start on yours." Mayor Jamieson shakes Mark's hand, and writes him a check for the deposit. Wondering why the mayor needs a wall so quickly, Mark heads home to make a few telephone calls.

The next day, Mark meets with Officer Hayes, Braden, and Eddie at the arena, where Mr. Frazier is also present. Since it is Spring break, the campus is nearly deserted. Before the meeting begins, Eddie spreads the

word that Kathy is pregnant. Mr. Frazier, for one, is happy to hear the news, hoping that another track star is on the way.

The meeting begins, and Mark brings everyone up to date regarding the details of his meeting with Mayor Jamieson, announcing, “yesterday, I met with Mayor Jamieson. He wants me to build a wall around his house, kind of like the one I built for myself, Eddie, and Mr. Zunde. Here’s the problem. Mayor Jamieson was very interested in whether Braden was on the inside of the gambling ring. I told him that Braden wasn’t, and that I’m not allowed to discuss it.” Officer Hayes asks, “what exactly did you tell him?” Mark replies, “I told him, ‘I know for sure he’ll be interested,’ and that, ‘he’s having a really tough time making it.’ And, I told him, ‘I can’t say anything to him. I’ll get in big trouble.’”

Officer Hayes smiles, and tells Mark, “that’s perfect. I tell you. This Jamieson character is about as dumb as they come. He’s setting himself up, and he’s not leaving me much work to do. The next thing he’s going to do is cuff himself, and walk into the police station.” Everyone in the meeting laughs, especially Mr. Frazier, who wants more than anyone to see the gambling ring out of business.

Quickly arriving at a plan, Officer Hayes announces, “here’s what we’re going to do. If this Mayor Jamieson character wants Braden on the inside, then I suggest we give him the opportunity to do so. Once money changes hands, I can add bribery to the charges.” Addressing Officer Braden, Officer Hayes tells him, “and, if I remember correctly, Officer Braden, you said that you wanted to be on the car trip when we take Mayor Jamieson on a ride and make him talk. You might just get your chance.” Braden replies, “I’d be honored to help!” Officer Hayes suggests to Mark, “when Mayor Jamieson brings it up again, lead him down the path to speaking with Officer Braden. The next move is the mayor’s. Let’s hope he makes his move soon.”

Mr. Frazier asks, “is this gambling ring involving Mayor Jamieson the end of it, or are there other rings out there?” Officer Hayes explains, “this Mayor Jamieson character, who seems to head this ring, is just getting started. My job is to stop it now, before it gets bigger. But, to answer your question, they’ll always be gambling operations out there. Once we get rid of one gambling ring, another pops up and takes its place.” Mr. Frazier asks, “is there anyone else here at the University involved?” Officer Hayes replies, “no. But, we have a list of characters who were involved with Alistair Crum’s operation. They have been under surveillance since we busted that ring. Some of them have signed up with the mayor.” Mr. Frazier is relieved to find out that no one in the University is known to be involved in gambling.

Officer Hayes reminds everyone that, even though Mayor Jamieson appears to be a bit on the stupid side, to be careful. One careless comment can ruin the entire operation. As the meeting adjourns, it is now up to Mark to convince Mayor Jamieson to make the next move and contact Braden. Once that is accomplished, Officer Hayes and the undercover officers will make their next move.

With all that is going on in Kathy and Paula's yellow universe, they decide to pay a visit to a parallel universe. They meet one afternoon at Kathy's house while Eddie and Mark are at work. Not knowing which universe to visit, Kathy asks Paula, "are we going to the red universe or the blue one?" Paula suggests, "how about the blue universe? I'm kind of wondering if me and Mark, in the blue universe, ever bought the property over on Orchard Lane." As they walk into the portal with their bicycles, Kathy replies, "okay. Take us to the blue universe." Walking out of the portal, Kathy tells Paula, "I hope I'm home, wherever that is."

Paula walks up to the side door, and knocks gently. Kathy's counterpart from the blue universe opens the door, telling Paula, "hey there! I thought you were working with Mark today." Paula replies, "we came from the yellow universe. Kathy is here too. Are you alone?" Kathy's counterpart replies, "yeah. It's safe." Paula waves to Kathy, telling her, "it's safe." Kathy's counterpart invites Kathy and Paula inside, telling them, "me and Eddie just moved in last month! Come inside and take a look!"

Kathy's counterpart tells Kathy and Paula, "I know there's not much furniture in here right now, but I really love our view. And, it's so quiet and peaceful out here in the woods!" While Kathy's counterpart shows Kathy and Paula around the house, Paula asks, "in your universe, did me and Mark buy the lot on Orchard lane?" Kathy's counterpart replies, "you guys did! And, you're starting to build your house. That's what you guys are doing now, at least in my universe. Bobby B. and Erika are probably over there helping you guys right now."

With some interesting news, Kathy's counterpart exclaims, "oh, and guess who's now house sitting at Lena's parent's house!" Paula replies, "tell us." Kathy's counterpart exclaims, "Mitchell! He came back! He's looking for a job now. Actually, he's spending more time looking for Amber than he is trying to find a job." Kathy comments, "wow! Mitchell's back! It sounds like, in your universe, the whole group is getting back together again." Kathy's counterpart sighs, and replies, "that would be so nice. I miss everyone."

In the blue universe, everyone in the tribe went their own way after high school. Johnson and Barbara have been around. Bobby B. has returned, and is back together with Erika. And now, Mitchell has

returned. Kathy's counterpart in the blue universe was hoping that the group would get back together someday. It seems that her dream is slowly coming true.

Kathy asks her counterpart, "are you working somewhere?" Kathy's counterpart replies, "yeah! I got a job as a gym teacher at the elementary school." Kathy replies, "wow! The universes are coming into alignment." Paula asks, "how about me? Do I have a job in this universe?" Kathy's counterpart replies, "yeah. You got a job at the middle school teaching gym." Paula exclaims, "wow! Just like in my universe!" Kathy curiously asks, "is Dr. Akinmola's church finished yet?" Kathy's counterpart replies, "yeah! It's all finished. And, the first service is going to be held on Easter Sunday!"

Paula asks Kathy, "well? Are you going to tell her the big news?" Not thinking of anything that can be bigger news, Kathy's counterpart asks Kathy, "are you pregnant?" Kathy exclaims, "how did you know?" Kathy's counterpart replies, "because I am too!" Paula laughs and comments, "at least one thing is the same between the blue and yellow universe!"

Kathy's counterpart mentions, "now, I'm wondering if I'm pregnant in the red universe." Kathy guesses, "probably so. The one thing that seems to be consistent among the three universes is people." Paula comments, "that seems logical. If there was no counterpart in a parallel universe, it wouldn't really be a parallel universe, now would it?" Kathy replies, "you're beginning to sound like the me in the red universe." Paula tells Kathy, "thank you. She was really smart." Kathy asks Paula, "are you saying I'm not smart?" Paula laughs, and replies, "no. I'm saying that I got you really good, girl!"

Kathy and Paula explain to Kathy's counterpart all about Giuseppe Vio Otto, Frank Glooma, and the situation with Mayor Jamieson. In the blue universe, Vio Otto and Glooma are still on the streets. After hearing the news of the break ins, Kathy's counterpart decides she will put a sign in the window to her side door that reads, "Giuseppe Vio Otto and Frank Glooma, you are being watched!" That should definitely keep them away.

Kathy, Paula, and Kathy's counterpart share all about what is going on in each of their universes. Now curious whether Kathy is also pregnant in the red universe, both Kathy and her counterpart plan to make a trip there to find out. Kathy and Paula head back to their universe, happy to hear that, in the blue universe, life is very peaceful.

On the last Sunday of Spring break, the tribe gets together to attend church together. Eddie and Kathy arrive, walking into a conversation between Mitchell and Akinmola as they are discussing who is going to win the 1,500-meter run during the first meet of the season. Akinmola is

energetically informing Mitchell that he has a new strategy, and has found a way to shave a few seconds off his time. Mitchell doesn't want to believe Akinmola, but Akinmola appears very confident. Worse yet is that every time Mitchell asks Akinmola a question, Akinmola answers with another question for Mitchell.

Interrupting Mitchell and Akinmola's conversation, Eddie boasts, "I'm running distance now. I'm going to beat both of you guys." Braden and Wendy walk up, prompting Eddie to also mention, "Braden's going to run the 1,500-meter too. Isn't that right, bro?" Suspecting that something is up, Braden replies, "that's right! I already broke all the records in my races! Now I'm gonna break the records in your races too! Somebody's gotta do it!" With a serious demeanor, Eddie tells Mitchell and Akinmola, "see that? If you guys are going to win this Spring, you're going to have to really step up your training."

Once the tribe is together, they all walk in together as a group and take a seat, except for Akinmola, who is working today. Kathy whispers to Eddie, "the mayor is here again. What's up with him?" Eddie replies, "I suppose that he's taking attendance." Kathy thinks for a few seconds, then exclaims with a whisper, "I got it!" Eddie asks, "what did you get, Katarina?" Kathy replies, "I can't believe I didn't see this before!" Eddie asks, "see what?" Kathy sighs, and replies, "I can't believe I've been so dumb." Eddie laughs and replies, "okay. Out with it, Katarina."

Kathy whispers to Eddie, "he's taking attendance so that he knows what houses are empty on Sunday morning. I bet Giuseppe Vio Otto and the other guy who broke into Mr. Zunde's house were working for the mayor." Eddie points out, "but, Mr. Zunde doesn't attend this church." Kathy explains, "yeah. But, his house got broken into when they thought he was at work. And, Officer Wilson told us that a lot of break ins were happening on Sunday morning." Eddie whispers back, "you might be on to something, Katarina."

The service begins and, sure enough, the mayor is taking notes. Kathy whispers to Eddie, "I really want to see what he is writing down in his notebook." Eddie suggests, "we could rough him up in the parking lot, and take his notebook from him." Kathy bumps Eddie's hip, telling him, "you can, but you know you can't." Eddie replies, "I bet Richard would like to see what's in that notebook." Kathy confidently replies, "the names of everyone here, and whether they're regular attenders." Eddie whispers to Kathy, "I wonder if he follows people home to see where they live." Kathy whispers back, "that's kind of creepy."

After the service, Mayor Jamieson walks up to Mark, asking him, "does it look like they'll be able to start my wall tomorrow?" Mark wants to reply, "good morning to you, too," but instead replies, "yeah. The survey

is all done, so they'll start pouring the footing tomorrow morning." Knowing that Braden is waiting for the mayor to contact him, Mark suggests, "hey. There's Braden. Why don't you go talk to him now?" The mayor replies, "would it be too much trouble for you to introduce me?" Mark replies, "no problem." Mayor Jamieson and Braden have never been formally introduced, and Mark really does not want to talk to the mayor today. So, Mark will pass the mayor off to Braden, and let them conduct business together.

Walking over to Braden, Mark introduces Mayor Jamieson to Braden. Following the formal introductions, Mark tells Braden, "Mayor Jamieson wanted to meet you. But, I have to run." Braden, who is not stupid, suspects that the mayor wants to make some sort of deal. Mark walks back over to Paula, who is talking with Eddie and Kathy. Knowing exactly why Mayor Jamieson wants to talk with Braden, Kathy mentions, "Richard was right. That guy walks right into every trap. What an idiot." The group watches, as Braden and Mayor Jamieson walk outside where they can be alone.

Wendy walks over to the group, announcing, "that jerk is so rude!" Kathy laughs, and asks, "what did he say?" Wendy explains, "he told me and Axel, 'I would like to speak to Mr. Braden alone for a moment. Do you mind?' It's not what he said. It's how he said it." Eddie comments, "well, look at it this way. It's one more step on the path to getting rid of the mayor forever." Mark tells Eddie, "just make sure it's after I get my money for his wall." Paula replies, "yeah, seriously." While they are waiting for Braden, everyone checks out Kathy's new Volkswagen Bus.

Meanwhile, as the tribe discusses where to get lunch and make plans to head to the beach afterwards, Braden is having a business meeting with Mayor Jamieson. Opening the meeting, Mayor Jamieson slyly comments, "Mark is doing some work for me. He mentioned that you might be interested in making some money on the side." Braden replies, "I got a few side jobs, like directing traffic and working during football games. But, yeah. I'm always looking for a way to make some more money. I got a wedding coming up, and I got to do something. The bills are piling up." Mayor Jamieson replies, "I understand completely." Braden, however, knows exactly where the mayor's conversation is going.

Knowing that he is treading on thin ice, Mayor Jamieson tells Braden, "I may be able to help you with your wedding, if you'd like." Braden asks, "how can you do that?" Walking a fine line, the mayor explains, "in sports, sometimes athletes get paid a considerable sum of money to not perform at their best in a particular game or meet. Do you understand what I am getting to?" Braden cautiously replies, "I think so. I've heard about that happening." Mayor Jamieson explains, "let me give you an example. If you come in second place in a race that you're expected to win, you can

probably pay for all your wedding expenses.” Opening the door, Braden energetically replies, “now, your talking!” Mayor Jamieson asks, “am I to take it that you’re interested?” Braden replies, “yes, sir!”

Mayor Jamieson is surprised that recruiting Braden was so easy. But, Braden indicated he has many upcoming expenses, and needs money. From the mayor’s perspective, coming in second place in a race should be a small price to pay for Braden to get his wedding and honeymoon paid for. And, not to mention, Braden’s enthusiasm gives Mayor Jamieson great confidence.

After a short discussion, Mayor Jamieson hands Braden his card, telling him, “give me a call soon. I’m sure we can work something out and get your wedding and honeymoon paid for.” Pouring it on, Braden replies, “I’d really like that! I was hoping to take Wendy somewhere nice for our honeymoon. Wow! And, Wendy don’t even got a car right now.” Perceiving that Braden is just a dumb athlete, Mayor Jamieson assures Braden, “I can help you with all that too. Give me a call sometime soon.” Braden replies, “I will.” Mayor Jamieson heads to his car. Braden then heads back to the group, where everyone is waiting for him.

Walking up to the group, Braden yells out, “it’s about time you guys showed up!” Mark yells back, “we’ve been waiting for you for an hour, bro! We need to beat the Baptists to the pizzeria!” Braden laughs, and replies, “they’ve already eaten and gone home!” Everyone then heads to their vehicles, and will meet at the pizzeria.