

Bully My Troubles Away



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When any acts of bullying takes place a positive reaction must follow and a good lesson in how to treat others must be learned. But bullying is not acceptable and should never be the first thought that comes to mind.

The Backpack Pals
Featuring Stuffi Complex
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Hey, kid, I heard they were talking about expelling you from school. That's a pretty serious charge," said Stuffi Complex, sitting on a swing next to Teal Teagley, a self-proclaimed bully, who was on the very verge of being dropped from school all together, behind his actions of bullying another kid in school. He'd gotten caught practicing his craft and the schools administration just does not condone bullying on any level.

The sun was shining bright and stretched across the grass and sand like a blanket of warmth. The park was settled with little activity and practically no sound, other then the one sound Teal Teagley was making with the chains of his swing, shaking them in an attempt to annoy Stuffi away but she had come on a mission. She thought kids in her neighborhood should work together and help one another when they needed it and that is what she came to the park for this morning.

Yesterday, on Friday, at lunch time, one of the teachers caught Teal Teagley slapping the books out of the arms of another kid, Alexander Rothem, and when Alexander bent over to retrieve his books and papers, Teal kicked him square in the pants, sending him head first into the hall lockers.

The children in the hall, which was nearly full, burst with eager laughter. Some leaned on the lockers, banging and howling, others laughed for various reasons but none of the children cared enough to stop and see how the victim, Alexander, felt or the embarrassment he'd gone through.

For a sixth grader, Teal Teagley was a tall lanky one and quite naturally, the boy, Alexander, was much smaller and an easy target for Teal, who was not the most fashion conscious kid in the school. His multicolored layered clothes were an insult to all the colors of the Christmas season.

The entire group of kids Teal Teagley hung out with suffered some form of fashion tragedy or another and all were in denial for their own reasons.

Crystal Crumbpaker wore thick glasses and could still barely see her own feet and her clothes were a mixture of faded colors. Booterbug has buckteeth, tightly rolled close-cropped hair and wholly clothes. Shuttlesworth was a negative sourpuss of a kid and his clothes were always ragged. Youngme Hogshead seemed like the only sensible one in their group, at times, but he has a bad attitude and never wears socks.

Crystal had pulled Alexander up by the back of his shirt, while the three other boys, Youngme, Shuttlesworth and Booterbug shoved the kid back to the floor, for no other reason than to bully others and felt they could get away with it, like they always had and were about to kick Alexander but they were all immediately caught and brought to the Principals office, led by Teal Teagley, who was being dragged by his ear.

Every kid who was involved in the incident had a phone call to their parents made and the parents, some of which was not happy about leaving work, had to come up to the school and sit in on a meeting and explain why their child was involved in the bullying of another student.

When the kids filed into the office, one at a time, the desk clerk gave them all an evil eye because she'd heard of these kids being knotty and it is about time they were caught and brought to the office. If it were up to her, they'd all have to go through some form of counseling. The Clerk was a chubby older girl, not too much older than the kids in the office. She glared at them over the top rim of her glasses, as she chomped rhythmically on her gum, popping it some times, something that irritated her coworkers but Ginger was a recovering bad girl herself who had to go through counseling.

As soon as Alexander was brought into the Principals office, not only was he immediately embarrassed to have to walk passed teal Teagley and his friends but he was faced with a dilemma. He was brought in, not for being the victim of bullying but for being a participant in the disturbance. He was forced to make a decision to tell on the others for bullying him or accepting responsibility for partly being the cause of the disturbance, which caused the classes in the area to be halted until things were figured out.

Fortunately, for the children involved, the Principal and Vice-Principal were called off to an emergency meeting at the school board and all of the school counselors were busy so, the next available person who would be in charge, if such an occasion arrives, is Ginger, the office clerk.

"Well, I swear, you little kids are about the baddest and weirdest kids in the entire school. If it were really up to me, I'd take you all out to a horse farm and make you plough the fields like you were a horse, let the horses sit down and eat your lunch while they watch you plough," said Ginger. She was a plumb girl wearing a plaid shirt and sweater with a white shirt underneath.

None of the parents crowded in the small office made so much as a disagreeing remark to Ginger's statement but Mrs. Crumbpaker drew in a small tick of air. The parents knew their child deserved to be punished but all felt an all out expulsion was entirely too harsh.

Ginger kept popping her gum as she stared at the kids with her hands on her hips. Only Emira "Emmie" Anayati, who was dragged in the office as part of Teal Teagley's group but not an actual part of the disturbance, on account of her being late going to lunch because she had to use the restroom, and Youngme Hogshead stared back at Ginger, the rest lowered their head.

"What?" snapped Ginger after Emmie raised her hand.

"Well, um, I, why am I here? I didn't have anything to do with what happened," said Emmie. She wore her blue skirt and white top.

"Yeah and you didn't do anything to stop it either missy so you just sit your little tail right there and wait until I figure out what to do with the lot of you little monsters. You start doing small stuff like this now and you'll just tare the town up when you get older. Just sit there," responded Ginger then went around and sat behind the Principals desk.

The parents looked at one another. Even the other kids raised their head. They thought Ginger was a bit too abnormal to have been left in charge. At one point, Ginger snatched up the phone on the Principals desk, nearly cursed then slammed it back down, left the office and told everybody to get out because she was ready to eat her lunch and don't need an audience.

Emmie's mom suggested the kids meet with Stuffi Complete. "Good. Fine. Yeah. Do that," said Ginger, hustling everyone out of the office. "I'll let them know what I came up

with and all of you report back here on Monday." Ginger slammed the office door then snatched it back open. "Wait, who the heck is a Stuffy Complex? Is that a horse?"

"No. Stuffy is a kid in my neighborhood. Everybody knows her," said Emmie.

"Good. Go. Meet with that Stuffy and remember, get back here on Monday because I'll be watching all of you." Ginger slammed the door again, reached in her purse, pulled out a can of air freshener, sprayed the air then snatched up her lunch bag and went back in the Principal's office and propped her feet on the desk. "I always wanted to eat my lunch in this office."

"Mom, are you kidding me? Stuffy is a third grader. She's just a kid," said Teal.

"Yet, she's smarter than you are because she's not running around bullying other kids and she knows how to stay out of trouble. Now, you will meet with her young man, you shall listen to what she has to say and you will learn what to do come Monday morning when we all have to be back here," said Mrs. Teagley.

"Ok mom, but..."

"No buts, just go," said Mrs. Hogshead when Youngme tried to protest. All of the other parents agreed and made it clear the children were to do as they were told.

Teal Teagley was sitting on the swing early Saturday morning. He arrived early, intending to stay for just a few minutes, in hopes that Stuffy would not show up, then he would go back home and tell his mom he told her it was a bad idea to get Stuffy Complex involved in a sixth graders business.

One thing about Teal Teagley is that, he did not see everything that life had to offer. Stuffy was standing by a tree at the far edge of the playground watching him. She could almost sense what Teal was thinking. Just when he was about to get off the swing and leave, Stuffy appeared and plopped down on the empty swing next to him, giving him a good scare. He nearly fell over the swing backwards and had to tighten his grip around the support chains on both sides.

"That wasn't funny you little runt," said Teal, balancing himself upright on the swing again.

"It was a little but I wasn't trying to scare you. I just said hey," said Stuffy leaping from the swing and assessing Teal. His hair was disheveled in a frumpy way but at least he followed Stuffy's directions and wore shorts and a T-shirt.

Stuffy had worked overnight to layout her betterment exercises she plans on using for Teal and the others. When her mom first told her she had a phone call from one of the older kids parents, Stuffy wasn't surprised. She was called upon to resolve a lot of issues between the kids in the neighborhood many times before but this would be her biggest challenge ever. It was a spur of the moment plan and she hopes it works, if not, she'll just learn from it and improve it for the next time, which she is sure is not far away.

"Well, you almost made me poop my pants."

"Sorry Teal. Hey, where are all the others?"

"I don't care. They're probably right where I should be...home in bed. They're the smart ones. I was fool enough to come here and for what, so you can talk to me? This is silly and I'm leaving."

When Teal got off the swing and began to walk away, Stuffy jumped right in front of him. "Where do you think you're going?"