

Writing: 5-8th Grade. 3rd Place.

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"Upstander"

The night was dark and rainy when Billy, a teenage boy with short brown hair was in his car with his mom and dad driving around a neighborhood. "One of these is our new house," said the mom. "Are you excited Billy," she asked.

"Yes, mom," he responded without interest.

After driving through the neighborhood for five minutes they finally pulled into a driveway. "This is our new house," said the mom breathlessly. They all got out of the car and walked to the front door. Opening the door, to his own surprise, Billy's eyes lit up. "Wow, it's way bigger than the apartment in Chicago!"

"Yup, and you start school tomorrow," his mom said, somewhat piercing his bubble. So, the family set out to unpack everything from their bags into their rooms. After a seemingly endless night of unpacking, the family went to bed happy and excited. Even Billy, because he was in the 5th grade and had a chance for a fresh start in his first day at his new school in the morning.

As Billy's alarm went off, his mom came in his room. "Billy wake up and get ready for school. You don't want to make a bad impression on your first day," said the mom smiling. Billy got out of his bed and went to his closet and got a shirt and pants. Then he got in the shower, brushed his teeth, and got all his clothes on. "I'm ready mom!" he yelled. Billy and his mom went downstairs to the front door to leave the house. "Bye, dad," Billy said. "Bye, honey," the mom said, giving the dad a kiss.

Billy and his mom got in their car and drove to school. When they got to the school Billy's mom pulled into a parking spot. When Billy got out of the car he read, "Long Branch Elementary." Billy's mom walked him to the front door and said, "be good" and gave him a kiss. Billy walked inside, and he saw people looking at him and whispering to other kids. Billy just ignored them and walked to the office. He had to ask someone where the office was, so he asked a kid that was bigger than him and the kid got mad and said, "I don't know, idiot! Don't be such a noob!"

"I'm not an idiot," Billy almost begged. He couldn't believe this, he had just arrived and this was already happening.

"Do you want a problem, Pinocchio?"

So, Billy just walked away, and everyone was looking at him laughing. He was so humiliated, turning redder than a turnip. "Pinocchio, ha, ha! Good one!"

After what seemed an eternity of continued insults and catcalls, a girl cut through the crowd of bullies and onlookers. She came over to him and said to the others, "Back off, clowns! Don't you have something better to do, like go to your classes?" Then, turning to Billy, "It's okay, that's James. He can be a punk sometimes."

"I can see," said Billy. The girl told Billy where the office was, so she walked him toward it. When he got there a lady said, "Oh, you must be the new kid. Your classroom is room 12, just down the hall."

"Thanks." He then made his way to his class room and, hour after another, he finished his day of school.

Billy walked outside to find his mom. When he found his mom, he got into the car. "Did you have a good day of school?"

"I guess," he responded.

"What's wrong, Billy?"

"A kid just was being a jerk." He bit his lip to stop from talking more. Talking more would make him either more sad or angry.

"Oh, well, tell me if it gets out of hand," the mom said, worried.

They started driving home. When they got home, Billy's mom talked to his dad. "I think something is wrong with Billy," she said, very worried.

"Bullies? If so, they probably just gave him a hard time because he's new," he responded, unsure.

"Yeah, but we moved here from Chicago because he got bullied there and there was too much violence. Please tell me we didn't step from the frying pan into the fire!"

"He's fine," he said with a sigh.

"COME ON BILLY," his mom yelled as she was waiting in the car for him. Billy ran outside and entered the car, praying to himself for a better second day of school. "Have fun, Billy, you know I love you and am here for you."

As Billy entered the school, it was like a broken record. The same kid that called him an idiot and Pinocchio for his long nose came up to him and pushed him down. "Stupid," he smirked. Everyone around was watching and didn't tell any teacher. The only one that did anything was the girl from yesterday. He just realized that he hadn't even gotten her name yesterday. "AYE, STOP!" she yelled.

"What are you going to do, teacher's pet," the kid responded, as everyone started to laugh again. A teacher heard everyone, and ran out of his class room and saw the boy and pulled him away to the office. He told another teacher that Billy needed to go to the office also. She took Billy to the office and called his mom to pick him up.

"So, what happened," said Billy's mom to the principal.

"Well, from what I hear it seems your child got pushed down this morning. We don't know why this student did it for certain, but from other students we assume it has something to do with his features... And, he's the new kid, so it adds to it," responded the principal with a worried face and tone.

"I guess, but will there be consequences of any sort," the mom asked.

"Yes, the student will be suspended and your son will be able to stay at home a couple days if you'd like. I'm happy to let you know, however, that there was a girl that stood up for Billy when no one else would. If she did not do so, things could have been a whole lot worse," the principal stated. "It seems a rather large group of students, I'm very disappointed to report, just stood by and did nothing."

"Well thank god for her," she said, adjusting herself in the seat. Billy's mom decided

it would be best for him to stay home a couple of days and she would not further press the issue.

Billy and his mom left the school and went home. When they got home, Billy went upstairs to his room and his mom confronted his dad to talk about what happened at school. "Something happened to Billy," she said.

"I figured when you left in a panic. So, what happened?"

"Well, I guess a kid pushed him and it was the same kid from the other day that called him an idiot and, ready for this, Pinocchio," said the mom with a sigh.

"Were there consequences," asked the dad.

"Yes, the kid got suspended and Billy can stay home a couple of days," the mom answered.

"Oh, ok, so everything is fine now, he's not hurt," the dad asked.

"Yes, everything is fine now he is not hurt thanks to a girl that stood up for him though she didn't know him," the mom responded.

"Wow, wish that would happen more often" the dad said with a sigh. Billy's dad went upstairs to talk to him. They had a similar conversation to the one his dad and mom had. Billy did stay home a couple of days and thought about what he can do to prevent this in the future and why the kid bullied him. He also thought about the girl that helped him and wished that people everywhere would stand up to "bullies" around the world so such instances of hate would never grow into anything more.