

Crowd Pleaser

Little kid wins big.

Two kids, one 10, the other 8. The big kid, they called him Moons (he had a big round face like a moon) was top heavy, his body like an upside down pear. Being big, you would think he would be a bully. But it wasn't that simple. Kids smaller than him, or even about the same size, kept away from him, because he did look large, and he acted like he wasn't scared of anything. Always boasting how good a fighter he was, and telling stories of the last kid he had beaten up. No matter that nobody had ever seen him beat up anyone.

One day, down in the school yard, behind the shelter shed, a friend of mine (no longer a friend) dared me to go up to Moons and call him names, tease him and get him mad and see what he would do.

"Go on, betcha can't. Too scared," taunted my friend.

"If you're so smart, why don't you do it?" I say, feeling smart.

Other kids gathered around. "Scaredy-cat! Scaredy-cat," they chanted.

I looked over at Moons who was hacking away at the shelter shed trying to carve his name in the wood frame. "Hey Moons, you'll get into trouble doing that!" I cry.

"So you gunna stop me?" He mutters with a big grin, his face more like a moon than you could imagine.

My friend nudged me, and the other kids pushed him into me. "Go on, I bet you can't," chided my friend. "Anyway, if he goes for you, we'll all join hands and keep him off you."

I took one step towards Moons. "You better stop doing that, or I'll report you, Pieface."

Moons stopped his carving. "Whatdja call me?"

"You heard. Pieface," I said cheekily.

"You wanna get bashed up?" Moons now took a couple of steps towards me, his pocket knife clenched in his hand. This scared the shit out of me. But it was too late to step back, the bunch of kids behind me pushed me forward and I almost fell against Moons who now stood like a rock, his big tummy poking me in the chest.

I'm not quite sure what happened next. The bunch of kids

behind me, and my friend, so called, pushed me a little off balance and I fell forward, my right leg stretched out, one big step behind Moons's thin legs, and my right arm thrust forward, thinking that I would save myself from falling down. Instead, it had the effect of banging Moons on the chest just as my leg hit against the back of his legs. You guessed it! It was the classic trip they teach you in self-defense school. Anyway, his top heavy body simply fell backwards over my leg and down he went with a plop!

All the other kids gasped as one. Here I was, the littlest kid in the grade, just dropped the biggest. Now they all gathered around in a circle and chanted, "go on! Do it Again! Doo - it! Doo - it!"

Moons got up, with some difficulty, because his body was so heavy and his legs long and thin. Yet, to my amazement, he showed no signs of anger, just grinned and patted himself down, brushing away the red dust of the playground. And I then understood that he wasn't a bully at all, not like we all reckoned just because he was so big. He just looked at me silly-like. And I stepped up and this time I put my leg out behind his, and with my left arm this time gave him a sharp push backwards over my leg, and tripped him again. Down he went, amidst the cheers of the other kids. I looked around at them and they were all looking at Moons, not me.

Then they taunted Moons. "Get up ya fat shit!" And everyone laughed, calling yet again for him to subject himself to humiliation.

And he did. And now we became an act. He stood up, and I tripped him, and we did it over and over until the bell rang and we all ran into class.

The next day, during morning recess, all the kids ran down behind the shelter shed and egged us on, and Moons just stood there, a big grin on his face. The circle of kids formed around us and I walked up to Moons, enjoying the chanting of the kids, "trip him! Trip him!"

But it didn't feel right. And besides he was much bigger than me, so why didn't he just push me away or even fall on top of me? If he did that it would squash me to death! So I looked up at him and he looked down at me, already preparing himself for the fall. I wanted to walk away, but the kids around us were jeering

and swearing. How long could this go on until Moons flattened me? And if I walked away, what then? Would the kids start calling me names? Like Coward! Yella-belly!

I looked up into Moons's eyes, they were each about as big as my face, I reckoned. He did seem to be enjoying all this attention, even though the crowd's fun was at his expense. What if I pushed him down really hard and he hurt himself? Would they change things? Maybe he would get mad and flatten me? And what would the other kids say? "Do it again?" Surely they wouldn't want to see him get hurt?

We got ready, my leg behind his, my arm forward of his chest. I tried to whisper to him from where my face was level with his tuberous chest. "This is the last one. I'm not doing this anymore. Sorry!" I whispered.

Down he went, and as he went down, I just walked away, pushing gently past my friend. I did not wait for them to call me back. I just kept walking fast towards the classroom, and was fortunately saved by the bell for classes to begin.

I ran home from school that day, avoiding any of the other kids. And I did not sleep that night, imagining how I would be made fun of the next day for walking away and not standing up to fat Moons.

But I had lost sleep over nothing. The next day it was as though the whole thing had not happened, and my friend did not even mention any of it. Moons did come up to me and ask if I wanted to play, and I said, no thanks, though I then wondered whether he wasn't really meaning that I should knock him over again to the crowd's enjoyment, but simply to play with him and be his friend.

Moral: *The pleasure of a crowd is always at the expense of others*

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