

Jon Faustman

The Enemy's Life

Josh's perspective:

When Matt walks into the room his confidence is overwhelming. It's more than confidence – it's pure cockiness. His smile is almost devious because he knows everyone is looking at him, or at least he thinks everyone is looking at him. Cocky guys always seem to have an imaginary audience complex; I'm sure psychologists could write an entire book on Matt's. When I see Matt open his mouth to start talking, I have to mentally prepare for the verbal diarrhea that he is about to start spewing. It's funny, the only things that come out of Matt's mouth make me think about crap: utter bullshit and verbal diarrhea.

Maybe some of the things he says are smart; maybe he is a nice guy; maybe he is good looking; maybe I'm just jealous? But, I don't fucking think so. If I recall correctly, the last thing Matt said to me was, "Get the fuck out of my way, you fucking little loser." That doesn't sound like the words of a nice, smart guy. I wonder if he could even spell all of those words. I don't know, fuck is pretty difficult to spell.

Don't ask me how it happened, but we actually have several mutual friends. I've always wondered how people could like him *and* me; we're just so different. I guess people enjoy both night *and* day.

Mental preparation be damned, Matt actually strings enough syllables together to be talking. Oh, and what a surprise he is whining about the homework we had due for today. Not only was the homework easy, but Mr. Talbott gave us half the answers in class yesterday. As Matt explains his "problems", I let out a very loud sigh - a sigh that gets me a glare from Matt. If Matt were really explaining his problems they would sound more like "Everyone loves me, I'm the hottest guy in the school, my parents make too much money, my life is too perfect, and I'm

an asshole.” Those problems would be easy to solve – a swift kick to his nuts.

Mr. Talbott is actually trying to explain the homework to him. I guess doing half the problems wasn't enough explanation for Matt. While I am thinking about Matt's incompetence, I barely hear Mr. Talbott say, “Josh, will you help Matt with these Algebra problems?” Fuck, it's not that hard $(2+3x)(3+2x)=6+13x+6x^2$. I don't give Mr. Talbott an answer so he asks me again, but my only response is to stare at him. It's not like I have a choice; I'm the automatic tutor for this class, but I don't mind it. Well, at least I wouldn't mind it if it were anybody but Matt.

I grab my books and slowly walk over to Matt; if I have to tutor him, then at least I will do it right. “Look, get this straight,” Matt says to me. I can actually smell the diarrhea coming out of his mouth, that or he didn't brush his teeth after his morning Cheerios. “I don't like you, I don't want you tutoring me, but I need to pass this class. If I had any choice in the matter I would never talk to you. Just help me get through this and we can be out of each other's lives.” That sounds all right by me.

Matt's perspective:

I found out I just got my first A in English, so I'm smiling as I walk into Algebra. Like usual, the girls all seem to be looking at me. How you doin' ladies? I can see Josh staring at me through the corner of his eye. I don't know what that kid's problem is, but I can't stand him; him and his almighty, I'm smarter than thou attitude. Whenever I did poorly on an assignment, my mother would tell me that some people are blessed with looks and some people are blessed with brains. I guess I know what categories we both fit into.

Yesterday in the hallway I could overhear Josh talking shit about me. It's like he has nothing better to do than turn my friends against me. Not only was he talking about me, but he was walking slower than anyone should have the right to in a crowded hallway. His short legs must keep him from moving very fast. I was fed up with his constant bullshit and slow walk, so I told him, “Please get the fuck out of my way, you fucking little loser.” I know that might not have

been the nicest thing in the world to say, but at least I remembered to say please.

I take my Algebra assignment out of my notebook, but I try to cover it with my hands. I'm embarrassed because I don't have many answers filled out. I didn't understand any of it, so the only answers I did fill out were the ones Mr. Talbott gave us. I have to pass this class or my parents will be furious. They said the next time I fail, 're going to ship me off to military school. It's not like I'm a troublemaker, I just don't understand a lot of things.

Embarrassment be damned, I ask Mr. Talbott about some of homework problems. But Josh being the asshole that he is, let's out a huge sigh, as if *I* were inconveniencing *him*. I don't even know why he is in this class, he already knows the material. Actually I do know, he likes to feel superior to everyone.

Mr. Talbott tries to explain some of the problems to me, but I just don't understand. He says he wishes he could help more, but there isn't enough time in the class period. I'm tired of teachers telling me that. What else is class time for?

Still trying to figure out the homework, I hear Mr. Talbott say, "Josh, will you help Matt with these Algebra problems?" Fuck, not only did he make me look like an idiot in front of the entire class, but now I have to work with Josh. I would almost rather fail, but I guess I will take Josh's bullshit over military school.

Walking over to me, Josh looks almost happy. I'm sure he is happy; it must make him feel like a big man to tutor me. Before he can even open his smug mouth I say, "Look, get this straight. I don't like you, I don't want you tutoring me, but I need to pass this class. If I had any choice in the matter I would never talk to you. Just help me get through this and we can be out of each other's lives." I think that's a fair enough deal.