

I AM NOT A BULLY

by Ken Bradbury

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SYNOPSIS: She thinks she's not...and then something happens...and she finds out otherwise.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 female)

NARRATOR (f)

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NARRATOR: I saw her, but I didn't say anything. Yeah, Mom was mad, but I couldn't say anything.

Mom turned to me in the car and said, "Terri, you've got to write things down. And pay attention when people tell you things."

I replied, "Mom, I thought it was today ... honest. Maybe they changed the date and didn't tell me."

She shot me a quick look and said, "We could have gone up to the house and asked."

"That would have been really embarrassing."

I hadn't forgotten. This was the day of Mallory's birthday party. She'd invited the whole class. You see ... Mallory's not too popular. I mean, she brings it on herself the way she acts and talks. It wasn't my fault. She made these invitations and she invited our whole class to her birthday party ... I mean everybody. Lots of other kids said they weren't going to go but I slipped and told Mom about the date so when we pulled up to Mallory's house, nobody was there. I didn't tell Mom but I could see into the back yard ... balloons and food and a big Happy Birthday banner ... and I saw more than that. I saw Mallory's face peeking through the curtains in her front window. She was waiting for somebody ... anybody to come to her party. (*A pause, then.*) I didn't want to be the only one there. I told Mom it was the wrong date and we drove on.

Look, I am not a bully because I didn't do anything.

Like this kid ... Jeremy. He was sort of ... well ... you know ... heavy. He knew he had a weight problem and he was real quiet and nice to everybody. One day in English class we had to write about our dream job ... what we would be if we could be anything we wanted. I said I wanted to be a chef and own my own restaurant in New York and be on one of those cooking shows. We had lots of cool answers 'cause we took it seriously. The teacher asked us to read them in front of the class so we took turns and when Jeremy

got up there he said he wanted to play football. Not be a pro or anything, just be able to play football well. The kids thought he was joking I guess because they laughed. I mean, Jeremy was always saying funny things and we just thought he was kidding again.

He stood up in front of the class and said, "More than anything in the whole world, I want to play football. I don't care if I'm any good at it. I just want a chance to play."

You gotta admit, it was kind of ridiculous. Jeremy even has trouble getting in some of the seats at school because of his size and to think about him running down the football field, well ... we all laughed.

He didn't finish reading. He asked if he could leave the room. He called his Mom and went home sick.

But look, I didn't do anything. You can't call me a bully if I don't do anything. I saw him standing in the hallway waiting for his mom when class was over and I didn't even say a word, so you can't accuse me of being a bully.

I think everybody's getting worked up over nothing sometimes. Like when the girls in our class started texting each other about those new kids. They had this funny accent and we just sort of texted each other about how they talked. We weren't trying to bully anybody, we were just kidding. Then some of the girls started sending messages to the new kid who was in our class and she got all upset and said we were all against her. That's ridiculous, because I didn't do anything.

And Facebook? Lots of kids say things on Facebook when they're just teasing. Besides, you can always take it off later. I mean, it's out there somewhere, but that doesn't count does it?

It's just not fair to blame all of us when only a few of us do something. This girl would always come to school wearing these old clothes ... like old-fashioned or something and this one kid ... not me ... this one kid came up to her at lunch hour and said, "No freaks allowed at this table." I wasn't there. I didn't hear it. And I wouldn't have said something so mean. But she started eating out in the hallway. She sat on the floor in the hallway and when the teacher caught her she said she couldn't eat in the cafeteria so the teacher said that she had to eat in the cafeteria but the girl said she wouldn't ... so she quit eating lunch. She'd go to the library during lunch period and ... I don't know ... read I guess.

I saw her go out in the hall but I didn't know what was going on. When she came over to our table it was already full and she just stood looking for a place to sit but the only place was beside the boys so she tried to sit real quiet at the end of their table. That's when he came up and told her "No freaks allowed." ... and that's when she stopped eating.

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