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Kopetsky the Great.

“Yo, Matt!”

“Whazzup Carlos?”

From his position, leaning against the glass at the north end of the bus shelter on Springfield and Hillside Avenues, Matt reaches out and grasps his boy’s extended palm in a dap grip. The two briefly bump their right shoulders together.

“I didn’t see you last night, man. You blew us off. Last night was the battle in the Student Union to welcome all the “freshettes”. Did you forget?” Carlos winks at Matt and continues. “Raythoven and Double-O-Seven rocked the *House!* It was a hard call to say who won the spin-off. Lots of shortys on display too, B, you missed it! That girl, Monica, was asking about you, she looked a little disappointed that you didn’t show up.”

“Monica?” Matt looks quizzically at his college mate, but only for a second, then his face registers recognition of the name (and the body springs instantly into focus). “Ahhh, Monica,” he grins. “Nah, couldn’t make it last night, Dog, my pops brought the hammer down over the summer. According to the Ayatollah Melendez, I can’t work or partay again until I bring my grades up. He’s threatened to yank my car too. Without some paper I’m like a kid again in his house, man, can’t allow him to get at my whip too!”

“I feel you!” The other young man’s face is a study of pity. “Gotta have stacks. No money, no females, you know.” He commiserates, thumping Matt on the bicep.

The bus pulls up next to the stop, like, 5 feet away from the curb, in the street, as usual. The driver is her own franchise. She rules, not the MTA, and her passengers better hustle. That new supervisor has her on the clock for the 9:12 a.m. route progress check-off at Horace Harding and 188th.

Matt and Carlos board and find seats in back, directly over the rear wheels. Matt starts talking as Lady MTA yanks the steering wheel hard left and taps the brakes, causing the woman dipping her metro card to fall almost into her lap.

“Yo, lemme tell you what happened to me yesterday,” Matt says. “First day of classes too, man. My luck is in the toilet. Guess who I have this semester?” Without waiting for, “Who?” Matt rushes on. “Kopetsky!” Carlos groans: “Aww, man. For real?” “Kopetsky the Great.” Matt affirms, nodding. “You know that chem. is my best subject, right? Well now that I’m catching all this flack at home, I *need* chem. to keep my GPA up! So, like, I got my game on for first class, or so I’m thinking, but when I get on campus I realized I’d left my class schedule on the kitchen counter. No problem though. I dash to Technology, 327A to get at a computer to print it out only to find out that the door is still locked. It’s 9:05! What’s up with that? By the time Sherry gets to work, there’s 4 of us waiting outside. It’s 9:12 now. But, I’m cool, I’m ah-ite. I can make it to Humanities by 9:20, that way, I’ll be in Kopetsky’s room with minutes to spare, still no problem. Well, anyway, that’s what I’m thinking. You know Sherry, right?”

Carlos butts in: “The one with the double D’s and the . . .?” Yeah, yeah, her.” Matt shoots back. “I swear, blonde must also be her middle name. Could she find the keys to the cabinet to get out the paper for the printer? Nah, of course not. Not on a day when I don’t need to catch lightening from the K, The Great. Anyway . . . we’re here, lemme make it quick.” Carlos punches the sensor on the back doors of the bus with the heel of his palm and the guys step onto the sidewalk in tandem. Matt continues. “Yes, as I was saying. Finally, I get my printout and I’m charging the stairs to the fourth floor like Bolt. As I make it into the hallway offa Stairwell No. 1, I crash hard into this dude. Tall, guy, but skinny and looked new, a little lost like freshmen always do on first day. I’m pissed now, right, my book bag skated, like 3 feet, pencils and my newly minted class schedule gone the other way, plus I’m late by a full 7 minutes now! I pick up my shit and myself at the same time as this dude and I look him right in the eye and say: @!!&~+**%! Why don’t you look the hell where you’re going? Then I take off round the corner at the women’s washroom by 416, rush the classroom door and hustle to the only

empty seat.” Carlos is laughing, he starts to say something, and Matt confirms: “You know it! Climbing over everybody in the room, all the way to the back, over by the windows. But, wait, wait, that’s not the kicker. After about 3 minutes it dawns on me that I’m in the wrong room! If I was dog doo I couldn’t have gotten more dirty looks as I scrambled out again, too embarrassed to even mutter, “I’m sorry.” Who cares anyway, right? So to cap it off, at 9: 41, I eventually slink into Kopetsky’s room, keeping my head down, getting my stuff out as fast and as quietly as I can. When I figure I’m no longer attracting attention, I look around slowly to scan for the new chicks and then back toward the blackboard. Guess who’s standing there? The dude I mowed down in the hallway!” Carlos loses it. Matt is laughing too. When they stop he asks his friend: “Did you hear that Kopetsky had an accident last week? I hear his car was creamed. He’ll be out for most of the semester and this guy is his replacement! Go figure!”

“Dude, last night, when I should’ve been hollerin’ at the cuties, I was working my first chem. assignment to death. I hope I can make a better second impression with this new guy. If I don’t, my Dad will rip me a new one.”

Carlos is laughing so hard, he barely notices, his ex sashaying past, swinging her hips and hair and talking a mile-a-minute to her friend as if she doesn’t see him either. Matt pushes him. “How’d you let that get away, yo?” Carlos, replies, “Well if you don’t get your GPA back on point, I’ll be taking *all* your girls this year, Son.”