Tough World

Word Count 903

Spud has it tough. He is only fifteen in a town full of old, retired folks. He was adopted from his real family at the young age of eight years old. His parents couldn’t support themselves, their pets, and their child. Spud regretted it all his life. He felt it was his fault his parents sent him away. He had felt that way for seven years now.

Spud had to take two buses to school since he lived in a rural town. He had a nice friendship with one of his classmates. Rowan, that was his name. *Rowan,* Spud always thought that was an odd name. He is older than Spud, being sixteen. Rowan had it easier growing up. He came from a loving home in a lovely city. However, his father did die while Rowan was fourteen. That’s when he moved from the big city into the smaller town where he lives now.

Spud always had a passion that someday he would be in the NBA. Since his ninth birthday, when his adoptive parents got him a basketball hoop, he has been working daily. “February ninth, 1999, basketball tryouts,” Spud read. “You think you're gonna make it?” Then, a voice behind Spud spoke up. Oliver Jones. Oliver has always thought he was the best. Mainly because he was. However, he was only the best on his team. Whenever it came to other teams, he simply could not keep up.

“You’re only good ‘cause we live in this run-down town,” Spud said confidently. “Oh, Mr. Freshman wants to speak up, huh?” Oliver said with a grin. “If you ever speak up to me again, I will pummel your face into this uncleaned floor,” Oliver got closer to Spud. “Got it?” “Whatever, Oliver, you know you can’t do anything to me,” Spud replied. “Of yeah? Why’s that?” Oliver said, smiling, knowing he would easily beat up Spud. “Right here,” Spud said, pointing at the basketball tryouts flier. “It says right here that if you get in trouble with the school, you will be ineligible for the team.”

“Huh, that sure is funny, see now something you’ll learn in high school is coach needs me. Without me on the team, we would be nowhere every season.” “Oliver, sorry to tell you, but we do end up nowhere every season.” Everybody laughed, which embarrassed Oliver. “Alright, kid, you run, I wait for a few, then I try to catch you, just to have fun, Dig?” Oliver said, knowing Spud couldn’t outrun him.

Spud was standing there, unfazed. “Well, you gonna run?” Oliver asked. “Why should I? You’re going to catch me anyhow,” Spud replied. “Fine, it makes my life much easier,” Oliver said. Oliver was a strong, tall man, standing at 6’10”. On the other hand, Spud was a weak, semi-tall guy, standing at 6 '2".

Oliver hoisted Spud over his shoulder, slammed him to the floor, and proceeded to show why you don’t talk back to Oliver. “Oh man, sick, and not in a good way, dude.” Spud heard a faint voice after waking up after being knocked out by Oliver. “Oh man, we gotta get you some help.” Rowan, Spud knew that voice. “R-Rowan? Rowan, I need help,” Spud said in a soft, hurt voice. “Yeah, yeah, I kinda figured, man,” Rowan replied, lifting Spud up.

“So, who did it?” “It was Oliver,” Spud said, rubbing his cut and bruised forehead. “Oliver Jones? What made him do that?” “I talked back to him,” Spud said, almost confused about why anyone would be that mad over someone talking back.  “Anyhow, where are you taking me?  I need to get there quickly.” “To the nurse, see what she says. Are you feeling alright?” “No, no, I’m not. I feel like I’m about to faint.” Then, it all went dark for Spud.

“Vitals are in check.” “Oh, finally, man,” Spud heard Rowan’s voice again. An unfamiliar voice started talking to Spud, “you’re awake, good. You're feeling alright, kid?” “Who–who are you?” Spud stuttered. “I’m doctor Clyde Myers.” “Doctor? Where am I?” Spud darted up. “You’re in the emergency room soon.” Dr. Myers said, “now lay back down.” “Am I going to be alright?” Spud asked. “Well, you have five broken ribs, a broken index finger, and some nerve damage on your head. However, the good news is that we have it all under control, and yes, you will be fine.”

After two days, Spud finally got out of the hospital. “Alright, man, I’m going back home,” Spud said, walking with Rowan. “Alright, see you, little man.”

Spud chose not to take the bus. However, he felt he needed a walk. “Huh, I sure miss this city,” Spud said, walking through the city he grew up in with his real parents. “Help! Please, somebody help!” Spud heard a voice in the distance, followed by four gunshots. Spud ran towards the alleyway the noises were coming from.

After walking down the dark-filled alleyway, he saw a puddle. “That’s weird. It doesn't rain much here,” Spud talked to himself. After walking not much further, there they were. Spud saw his two parents lying there, lifeless. “Mom? Dad? No, no, it’s not you,” Spud felt a tear run down his red cheeks.

It was hard enough being left by his parents. Now they’re gone.