Facing the Unknown Variable

By

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Characters:

DAVID: High School senior who’s in the closet. He’s slim, but fit. A bit quiet but not afraid to speak out.

EDDIE: DAVID’s best friend. High School senior who’s an athletic goof-ball and more out-going than DAVID. He’s tall and muscular.

Setting:

Present-day. Chicago suburb high school in the morning before school.
SCENE ONE

EDDIE and DAVID are sitting at desks, working on homework together before the start of school.

DAVID
What are you doing?

EDDIE
I’m doing the trig homework

DAVID takes a look at EDDIE’s homework.

DAVID
But all you’re doing is circling the x’s.

EDDIE
Yeah. All it says is to find x.

EDDIE laughs at his own joke while DAVID gives him a disappointed look.

DAVID
Very funny. Now finish this worksheet. Your trig grade sucks.

EDDIE

Let’s take a break. We’ve been at this for half-an-hour.

EDDIE gets up, stretches, and yawns while David remains seated

...So, have you found a date, yet, to prom?

DAVID sits straighter and stiffer in his seat.

DAVID

No, I’ve been busy lately. You know, with homework, and basketball, and stuff.

EDDIE

Yeah. OK. Sure, but you don’t have the time to ask a girl one question? I mean, every girl you know loves you. Can’t be that hard to find a date.

DAVID

Well, how about you? Have you found a date?

EDDIE

Uh, yeah I did. It’s Heather.
DAVID
Ah, the one with all boobs and no brains.

EDDIE
(Slowly)
Oh Yeah...

DAVID rolls his eyes and they both continue to work. A few moments pass, and as they’re working DAVID gives EDDIE a few meaningful looks

DAVID
Hey, Eddie? There’s, uh, something I do want to talk to you about.

EDDIE
I knew it!!

DAVID
Wait? What!?

EDDIE
You can’t get a date!

DAVID
Huh? No, that’s not it.
EDDIE
Haha, yeah, just messing with ya. Okay, what is it?

DAVID
Um... Have you ever felt different?

EDDIE
Hmm...? What do you mean by different?

DAVID
Well, have you ever felt like you weren’t part of the social norm?

EDDIE
Well, your fancy words like “social norm” are making me feel pretty different.

DAVID
You know what I mean. Have you ever felt separate from most people?

EDDIE
Nope.

DAVID rolls his eyes in frustration
DAVID

(sigh) Look, I just want to tell you that I’m... a little different.

EDDIE

I know you are. You use words like “norm”. Hey, can you help me with number 9. It’s asking me to find Y now.

DAVID

I’m trying to tell you a secret!

EDDIE’s smiling face slowly drops

EDDIE

You’re keeping a secret from me?

DAVID

Yes. And I’d first like to apologize for that. I know you don’t like secrets, but please don’t take it personally. This hasn’t exactly been easy for me to come and tell you.

EDDIE

Alright, I’m sorry. I’m listening.

DAVID takes a few moments to collect himself
DAVID

I’m gay.

EDDIE just stares at him. He opens his mouth to try and say something, but nothing comes out. He just stares.

DAVID

Please say something.

EDDIE

I... I don’t know what to say. I almost don’t believe you. I’ve known you for so long and I never thought... How long?

DAVID

Well, you know what they say, “it was always there.” I didn’t really know myself until sometime in 7th grade.

EDDIE

Wow, this whole time through high school and I never guessed. I’ve known you for almost four years and suddenly this just makes me think...

EDDIE stares away from David and appears to be thinking, but doesn’t speak.
DAVID

I never tried to be someone else!

EDDIE looks back at David

I’ve always been myself, and you know what type of person I am. You know I hate horror movies; you know jalapenos make me queasy; and you know I think chemistry is witchcraft. I get cranky when I’m hot and tired when I’m cold. You know other things that I’ve never told anyone else. I’ve never pretended. You know who I am. You just didn’t know I liked guys instead of girls.

EDDIE stares deeply at David

looking into his fearful eyes

EDDIE

You think I’m just gonna storm out of here and never speak to you again, don’t ya?

DAVID

No, I hope not.

EDDIE

Why didn’t you tell me before?

DAVID

I didn’t know what you were going to do. That’s the scariest thing: not knowing. I was afraid of the worst possible thing, and that I’d never be able to undo it.
EDDIE

What’s the worst possible thing?

DAVID

Losing my best friend. I was afraid of the possible change. Kind of like you.

EDDIE’s face becomes stunned and upset

EDDIE

What are you talking about?

DAVID

(Softly)

Your mom told me two summers ago what happened when you were in 5th grade. You lost your temper with another kid and you broke his arm. It’s why you’re afraid of change with no control. You never wanted to go wild like that again and so you’ve always demanded control from yourself and others.

EDDIE

My mom has got the biggest mouth in the world.

They both laugh quickly, but then EDDIE looks away again.
DAVID

That’s why I didn’t want to tell you before. I figured the news might be too much of a shock and you’d go ballistic.

EDDIE

Hmph. What changed?

DAVID

I got to know you better. I found the nice and caring guy inside the thick-skinned dictator. You look out for others and always stand up for those who don’t speak for themselves. You’ve got a big heart; and you always know how to make me laugh.

EDDIE

Is this also a love confession?

DAVID

That’s not funny, but no you’re not my type.

EDDIE

I’m sorry. You know I start cracking jokes when I’m under weird situations. Look, I don’t hate you and I’m not going to go ballistic. I just don’t know what to do.

They both sit there in the awkward silence.
DAVID

You know I’m here for you. I don’t want to lose my best friend.

EDDIE

I don’t either. I just feel like I’ll have to change somehow, now.

DAVID

I’m not asking you to change; but if you find that you do, I’m sure it will be for the better.

EDDIE

I still have more questions.

DAVID

And I’ll answer them the best I can.

EDDIE

So how--

The school bell rings for the start of class.

DAVID

(quickly) You promise we’ll still be friends and that you’ll talk to me later?
EDDIE

We’ll always be friends; I just need more time to--

Other students start to walk into class.

DAVID points to EDDIE’s trig sheet as if he were just explaining a problem.

DAVID

So what’s the answer? What is X?

EDDIE

I’m not really sure yet. You know I’m no good at math.

EDDIE picks up his stuff and then turns for the door.

You were always the genius. So, maybe you can help me later. I want to learn, but it’s hard finding... those unknown variables.

DAVID

See that. You’re already learning. But don’t worry. I can help; I’ll be your tutor.