

Don't Feed the Bully Summary

Characters

Hannibal Greatneck III: known as "Handy": main character, moves into a new school

Kurt Pesterman: president of the anti bully club, mean to others, small in size

Zack Brewer: bully working for Kurt Pesterman

Jack: bully working for Kurt Pesterman

Mrs. Austin: 6th grade teacher of Handy's class

Ralphie: accused of bullying others, sits in a cage, becomes Handy's friend

Kayla: a girl in Handy's class that he becomes friends with

Chapter 1 – Hannibal Greatneck III (Handy) moves to a new elementary school called William B. Travis Elementary School. He is in Mrs. Austin's sixth grade class. His dad had recently changed jobs and their family had to move. William Travis Elementary seemed to have a very strange way of dealing with bullies and Handy was determined to do some detective work and figure out what was going on in the school. Handy first met Kurt, president of the Agitator Awareness Society, which was the anti-bullying club of the school. Handy learns that there is a desk and chair inside a cage sitting in the middle of the classroom. A student named Ralphie sits inside the cage during class. Ralphie has been labeled by some of the students as a student who has strong bullying tendencies. Above the cage is a sign reading "Don't Feed the Bully." Ralphie was a very large kid and the students were all very scared of him. Handy told Kurt that he didn't think Ralphie looked or acted that mean. This made Kurt furious! Kurt describes all of the problems with Ralphie and mentions how Ralphie destroyed Mr Crumblebean. Handy loves to figure things out, and was quite the detective. Questions kept going through his head: "Why was everybody so scared of Ralphie? How did someone get a huge cage into a classroom? Why did the teacher have no problem with this?" Handy wanted to figure out the truth. Kids were scared, but not only of Ralphie, they were scared of Kurt!

Chapter 2 – Handy begins to learn that Kurt is in control of the school and class. He starts to learn that Kurt has assistants that help him keep control of the school. Handy decides to talk to his teacher about what is going on in the classroom regarding the bullying problems. Mrs. Austin explains that they had a terrible bullying problem at William Travis Elementary (WBT) in the past, but now that they have a cage for Ralphie, they don't get complaints from students, teachers, or parents anymore about bullying problems. She discusses how the WBT Agitators Awareness Society was formed with Kurt as the president to handle bullying problems in the school. Mrs. Austin mentions how no one ever saw Ralphie bully anyone, but there were so many complaints that they had to do something. Mrs. Austin describes how Kurt came to the adults with the ideas of what to do about the bullying problems in the school. His club came up with all of the rules and punishments for dealing with bullies. Ralphie had requested to be allowed to go into the cage. Since he has, all bullying complaints against him have stopped. All bullying complaints go through the anti bullying club and go to the adults after the club talks about them. So far this year, there have been no bullying complaints given to teachers.

Handy begins to figure out that the teachers and administrators were being fooled. They thought the bullying in their school was under control, but Handy begins to learn there is a big problem here. He is beginning to think that Kurt and his group are controlling others to get them to do what they want. Handy wants to try to get Ralphie to

talk to him about what is going on. He is wondering why everyone is scared of Kurt. He still wonders who Mr. Crumblebean was, and learns that Mr. Crumblebean was destroyed.

Chapter 3 – Handy describes the playground scene in this chapter and compares it to the scene with all of the different animals in the Lion King movie. Many of the students were hanging out with Kurt, while Ralphie sat alone during recess. Kurt had a few followers, but basically ruled alone. He had a lot of power over the other students. In this chapter, Handy meets Kayla, a girl in his sixth grade class. He tries to talk to her about why everyone is so afraid of Kurt. Kayla told him that he should just focus on his homework and being the new kid. Handy offered to help Kayla because he could tell she was afraid of Kurt. She told him she didn't need any help, and welcomed him to school. Handy is starting to think that Kurt is very smart, and also very dangerous.

Chapter 4 – Handy learns that no one wants to tell him what is really going on in this school. Whenever he asked any of his classmates about the anti bullying club (Agitator's Awareness Society), the cage, Kurt, or Ralphie, no one would talk to him about it. Handy decides that he needs to gain Ralphie's trust and talk to him about what is going on in the school. Handy plays catcher in the kickball game at recess in hopes of getting Ralphie involved in the game. Ralphie usually just sits and watches what is going on around him. Today, however, Handy is hoping to somehow be able to talk to Ralphie.

Chapter 5 – Handy talks to Ralphie about the strange things going on at the school, including why Ralphie sits in a cage. Ralphie says for the first time in his life he isn't in trouble, and that there are worse positions to be in than being labeled a bully and having to sit in a cage. Handy tells Ralphie that he thinks he is scared and is giving up his freedom for peace. Ralphie warns Handy to watch himself very carefully. Handy is still wondering who in the world Mr. Crumblebean is.

Chapter 6 – Handy realizes that someone has taken his notebook out of his book bag and figures out it must have happened in the locker room. He had completed his math homework in the notebook and someone had taken it so he would get in trouble for having missing work. Handy asks his teacher, Mrs. Austin, if he can go to the locker room to look for his notebook. She gives him a hall pass. He found his notebook on the bench in the locker room, but as he is leaving, two bullies from the other 6th grade classroom jump out of the shower area. Handy thought about what to do:

1. Stay calm.
2. Assess the likelihood of violence.
3. Have a thick skin and a sense of humor.
4. Collect evidence.

Handy learns that the two bullies want him to stop trying to figure out what is going on at the school. He discovers they are not afraid of being reported as bullying others. The boys had no fear of the Agitators Awareness Society (the anti-bully club). One boy punched Handy, but Handy was able to grab the hall pass out of one boy's pocket. The janitor suddenly walked in and Handy and the other two boys all head back to class. Handy learns one of the bullie's names is Zach Brewer, and the hall pass giving him permission to leave class was signed by Kurt Pesterman, the president of the Agitators Awareness Society. Handy is trying to figure out why Kurt would be able to sign hall passes when teachers were the ones supposed to be signing them.

Chapter 7 – Once Handy returns to class, he finds a note on his desk that says, “After school, Mr. Fresh. Don’t be late! Slurpees on you!” Handy thinks it was written by a girl. He goes to Mr. Fresh, the 7/11 convenience store, after school to meet up with the person who wrote the note. As Handy is waiting in front of the store, Ralphie and Kayla show up. They are the ones who wrote the note. Ralphie went into the store to get the slurpees that Handy is paying for. Kayla told Handy that Ralphie and she “think it might be time to do something.” Handy told them what had happened in the locker room, and then asked them who Mr. Crumblebean was. Handy learns that Mr. Crumblebean was Kurt Pesterman’s toy “dummy.” Handy, with the help of Kayla and Ralphie, discovers what is really going on in this school. Pages 56-63 are very important to read and discuss very clearly what is happening in the school. In this chapter, Handy becomes very good friends with Ralphie and Kayla.

Chapter 8 – Handy decides to file a complaint with the Agitators Awareness Society (the anti bullying club). Handy tells his parents about the bullying problems and what he believes is happening at the school. His parents are supportive of him. He warns his parents that he may be in trouble soon at school.

Kurt Pesterman fakes being pushed over a desk and says Handy did it. He desperately wants to get Handy in trouble and times this event right when Mrs. Austin walks in the classroom. Handy comes up with a story that he pushed Kurt because he was trying to save Kurt from being stung by a wasp, since Kurt is allergic to bees. Mrs. Austin thinks Handy is a hero. Kurt’s plan to get Handy in trouble failed. Kurt is beginning to learn that Handy is pretty intelligent and that quite possibly he has met his match.

Chapter 9 – Handy continues to put complaints in the issue bin about Kurt and his two bullying assistants (Zack and Jack), but does not hear from Kurt who is in charge of checking the issue bin for complaints. Handy doesn’t want to hang out with Kalya and Ralphie at this point because he doesn’t want the Agitators Awareness Society to start picking on them too. After gym class, one of Handy’s classmates, Anson Summerhead, goes back into the locker room to change from his sports glasses to his regular glasses. He puts them on and begins to scream. Handy runs over to help Anson and discovers someone sprayed pepper spray on Anson’s glasses and his eyes are burning. Handy helps Anson over to the showers to rinse out his eyes. While Handy was busy helping Anson, Zach Brewer, Kurt Pesterman’s bullying buddy, planted a plastic knife in Handy’s backpack to get Handy in trouble. However, with the help of the janitor, Handy finds a clever way to not get in trouble.

Chapter 10 - Anson is in the nurse’s clinic due to the pepper spray incident. The school staff is trying to figure out who did this mean, criminal trick. The nurse tells Handy what a great job he did in helping Anson by rinsing the pepper spray out of his eyes as quickly as possible. Kayla drops a note on Handy’s desk telling him to meet her at Mr. Fresh, the 7/11 store, and she said she is buying the slurpees this time.

Chapter 11 – Kayla and Ralphie met Handy at the Mr. Fresh 7/11 store. They tell Handy they want to just coast along and ride out the year and not go up against Kurt Pesterman. Ralphie and Kayla are afraid of Kurt and worried that Handy will get hurt. Handy makes them a deal that if the problems with Kurt aren’t over in two days, he will go to the principal with his side of the story. Handy tells Ralphie and Kayla to stay out of

it and let him try to handle things so they won't get hurt. Handy feels good about the fact that Ralphie and Kayla care about him so much and have become such great friends.

Chapter 12 – Handy receives a typed note that says, “Meet me in the speech room. At the start of recess. So I can tell you the truth. (signed) Handy,” but Handy didn't write the note. He is very curious and shows up for the meeting in the speech room to find the bullies, Kurt Pesterman, Zack Brewer, and Jack, waiting for him.

Zack tries to grab Handy's backpack. Handy fought him just enough to make him fall over backwards. Kurt and Jack start laughing. **Handy points out that it is really interesting in every story that bullies like to see their buddies fail and get hurt. He says that evil has no compassion even for friends.** While talking with the bullies, Handy learns that Kurt's mother gave him the pepper spray to use and knew what he was going to do with it.

Handy learns that Kurt told Zack to destroy Mr. Crumblebean (Kurt's dummy), and make it look like Ralphie had done it. Kurt tells Handy that his mom told him that he needed to destroy Handy, but Kurt said he would rather Handy join them and become part of the Agitators Awareness Society. Handy also learns that Kurt's mom always called Kurt's dad “spineless,” and one day his dad left the family and didn't come back. When Kurt learns that Handy doesn't want to join them, he gives Jack instructions to begin the beating. Jack isn't instructed by Kurt to beat up Handy, he is instructed by Kurt to beat up Kurt. Jack then begins punching Kurt. Kurt instructs Jack to do this while Zack holds Handy to watch the beating. In other words, Kurt actually instructs his bully friends to beat him (Kurt) up. Handy starts screaming for someone to come help Kurt, but no one hears because they are at recess. Jack punches Kurt many times and Kurt keeps mumbling, “It's for the greater good. I am not spineless.” Handy realizes Kurt has many issues about the situation with his family and feels sorry for him.

Chapter 13 – Handy is screaming for help, Kurt is screaming in pain, and Zack and Jack take off out of the speech room. The nurse rushes in the room followed by Jack. She thinks Handy is the bully and has beaten up Kurt. She yells at Handy to go to the office. Kurt kept saying the word “bag,” the nurse looks in Handy's backpack and finds a can of pepper spray, which was planted in there by the bullies.

Chapter 14 – Handy is in the principal's office. His mom and dad have been called, and Kurt's mom is on her way down to the school. All parents arrive and Kurt's mom storms in demanding the principal to call the police. Handy learns what an evil, bullying mother Kurt has. Handy feels sorry for Kurt, and realizes he is a bully because of his mother and family situation. Handy understands now that Kurt does this because he doesn't want his mother to think he is a wimp. Kurt's mother would always belittle his father and call him a wimp. Kurt didn't want her to think that of him. Handy starts to wonder if he would behave like Kurt if he had lived the same kind of life.

Kurt tells the story of Handy beating him up, but Handy pulls out a tape recorder and has the entire event of what really happened on tape. Handy plays the tape of everything that was said in the speech room. The police arrive and take Kurt's mom to jail for planning the beating of her son, giving him the pepper spray to use, and helping him bully others. Kurt's father was also called and he Kurt will be living with him. As Kurt left the office, he looks at Handy and apologizes. The principal wants Handy to stay and tell all he knows about what is going on in the school. Handy asks Ralphie and Kayla to

help in telling the principal the real story of what is happening at William Travis Elementary.

Chapter 15 - Handy, Kayla and Ralphie tell the principal all that has happened.

Chapter 16 – The truth about William B. Travis School finally being told and heard made Handy, Ralphie, and Kayla very happy. The three talked about how they felt sorry for Kurt having to live the life that he had lived. They were glad that he was going to be living with his dad now. They understood why he had reacted the way he had. Handy talked about if you are bullied, do the following:

1. Stay calm.
2. Assess the likelihood of violence. If violent, get help immediately.
3. Have a thick skin and a sense of humor.
4. Collect evidence.

The appendix section is very good – please read.