

From First Person Shooter by Don Zolidis

From First-Person Shooter

CHARLIE, 17

TAD, 17,

CHARLIE and TAD have been friends since middle school. Before middle school, however Charlie used to bully Tad. In this scene, Charlie has snapped and is trying to enlist his friend in a school shooting.

CHARLIE

You hear about Garrett?

TAD

No.

CHARLIE

The Orioles drafted him.

TAD

Really?

CHARLIE

Offered him something like eight hundred thousand dollars as a signing bonus. Just goes to show: act like a jerk, take steroids, abuse girls... life works out great for you.

TAD

Terrible.

CHARLIE

It's a shame, you know? All the crap he's pulled? It's like he has impunity. His actions have no consequences.

TAD

I know.

CHARLIE

It's not even that, his actions are endorsed.

TAD

Right.

CHARLIE

This is supposed to be our education, you know? This is what they're teaching us. That there are certain people who are glorified, ignorant people who are glorified, and the rest of us, who are forced to slave and live by a different set of rules.

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TAD

Ridiculous.

CHARLIE

In the meantime you can't even afford to go to college.

TAD

And you didn't even get into college.

CHARLIE

I mean what kind of travesty is it that your family can't even afford to send you to the school of your choice, but had you been able to shoot a basketball or some nonsense you'd be fine. Is that the point? Is that what we're doing here?

TAD

You can't think about that Charlie -

CHARLIE

What are we even capable of doing about it?

TAD

I don't know.

CHARLIE

I guess we just roll over, right? This is how it works. You'll take it and you'll like it.

TAD

It sucks.

CHARLIE

You're not going to do anything about it, right?

TAD

What do you mean?

CHARLIE

Like if there was some way to get back at them – you wouldn't even be capable of doing that.

TAD

What are you talking about?

CHARLIE

You ever think about it?

TAD

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Think about what?

CHARLIE

You know what I'm talking about.

TAD

No I don't.

CHARLIE

Yes you do. We were just talking about it.

TAD

What were we talking about?

CHARLIE

That stuff about the electricity.

TAD

I was just kidding around.

CHARLIE

I mean you talk about that –

TAD

What are you talking about?

CHARLIE

I'm just saying that if you had the opportunity for action, would you be the kind of person to take the action?

TAD

What action are we talking about?

CHARLIE

What action do you think we're talking about?

(Pause.)

TAD

Are you talking about doing something crazy?

CHARLIE

You know what's crazy? Getting beaten on again and again, and doing nothing. That's crazy. That's like being a slave, you know? Like... let's say if every day at recess someone was bashing your head in, and every day at recess you kept going outside... that's crazy. That's the act of an insane person, right?

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TAD

Charlie I don't like talking about this.

CHARLIE

Or is it crazy to be the person bashing someone in the head?

(TAD can't say anything.)

You think I don't know what you did? You think I didn't remember you?

TAD

That was a long time ago.

CHARLIE

Just hoping I'd forget? Forget that you hit me in the head every day at recess for a month? Forget that you were going along with the rest of them -

TAD

I was a stupid kid. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

CHARLIE

I thought you were one of the smart ones.

TAD

I was just going along.

CHARLIE

I'm just saying – that when I come up with an idea to stand up for ourselves, you're saying that's crazy, but when it comes to inflicting damage on some geeky awkward fifth grader, you were fine with that.

TAD

What do you want?

CHARLIE

I want you to tell me who you are.

TAD

I'm sorry I did that to you. Okay? I don't know – I don't know why I went along with them.

CHARLIE

Yeah you do.

TAD

I mean yeah I know why I went along – I didn't want to be the one getting hit. I was glad that at least I wasn't at the complete bottom... there was at least one person beneath me – so yeah...

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You enjoyed it. CHARLIE

No. TAD

You did. Just admit it. CHARLIE

I didn't want to do it. TAD

Man, I was there. I remember this. CHARLIE

I didn't want to. TAD

You were usually the first one. CHARLIE

That's not true, Charlie. TAD

Just admit that – I don't understand how you can sit there and try to reframe the past like you weren't a complete jerk and a bully and a tormentor – how you can sit there and think your conscience is clear of this stuff – CHARLIE

Fine. TAD

Fine what? CHARLIE

Fine I tormented you. And I enjoyed tormenting you. But I was eleven years old. Kids are evil. TAD

Right. And now you're civilized. CHARLIE

What are you even talking about? TAD

CHARLIE

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I want to show you something.

(CHARLIE goes to a closet door.)

TAD

You think I don't think about this stuff? You think I don't regret that I was a jerk when I was in fifth grade? Of course I do. But it's survival. You know that. It's become one of them, or be destroyed by them, that's the only equation. And yeah, I made a terrible choice – but if you had the opportunity you would've done the same thing.

CHARLIE

No no no.

TAD

You would've. If it was me getting hit every day, you would've breathed a sigh of relief and joined in.

(CHARLIE returns with a case. He sets it down on the table.)

What is that?

(CHARLIE opens it. The assault rifle is not visible.)

Jesus.

CHARLIE

This was my Dad's. He was a big hunter.

TAD

Why are you even showing this to me?

(Pause.)

Charlie. Why are you showing this to me?

CHARLIE

You want to get back at them?

TAD

Get back at who?

CHARLIE

Everybody.

TAD

No, man. This is sick.

CHARLIE

You keep saying things like that.

TAD

I mean this is sick.

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CHARLIE

It's just a weapon. I mean that's the point of a gun, right? Before guns, it was brute physical strength. The guy who fought best ruled the day.

TAD

I don't even know what you're talking about –

CHARLIE

And so if you were pathetic or skinny or weak or all those things they hated about you – you had no choice. Right? Eleven-year old you had no choice. There was no option. They were bigger, they were stronger, and as a result, they were in charge. But with something like this...

TAD

I'm not even talking about this, Charlie.

CHARLIE

Yes you are. You're still here.

TAD

You need to get help.

CHARLIE

That's why I'm talking to you.

TAD

What?

CHARLIE

I want you to help me.

TAD

Like talk?

(Pause)

I'm not –

CHARLIE

I want you to help me. I want you to come along.

TAD

This is messed up, man. This is your whole life you're talking about – you're gonna go crazy and –

CHARLIE

You're the only friend I've got. That's why I'm asking you.

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TAD

No.

CHARLIE

You think they're gonna love you some day? You think magically the world is going to change and someone like you is going to be accepted and loved? You think there's a girl out there that's going to talk to you like a human being? It's Always Going to Be Like This. That's what's messed up. Not me.

TAD

I'm not doing it.

CHARLIE

They're gonna keep after you – every day they're gonna tear off a little chunk of you... and you're gonna go along... and you're gonna smile, and you're gonna cower in the corner and hope they don't pay too much attention to the freak –

TAD

I gotta go, Charlie.

CHARLIE

You're going to help me.

TAD

No I'm not and you need to get help.

CHARLIE

You've talked about this for years. This was your idea.

TAD

This was not my idea!

CHARLIE

I have notes from you. About revenge. That's what we talked about.

TAD

So? So what?

CHARLIE

So if the police come I know what to tell them.

TAD

Wait a minute? What?

CHARLIE

If the police talk to me, I know what I'm going to say. I'll tell them who started it.

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TAD

I didn't start anything. I gotta go, man.
(*TAD starts to leave.*)

CHARLIE

Are you sure? Are you sure you didn't start this?

To read the rest of the play, visit

http://www.dramaticpublishing.com/p3697/First-Person-Shooter/product_info.html