

The Power of the Dodge

written by

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FADE IN:

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

The frame is filled with a picture of a student's beaming face on a newspaper's front page. The student is dressed in a football uniform and triumphantly holds a trophy. The newspaper's headline reads, "STAR WALPOLE HIGH QUARTERBACK, MACK MACPHEE, SAVES THE DAY AGAIN"

MACK and COLIN walk coolly through the hallway. They have a large mass of adoring students following them, but it's Mack they all want the attention of. Mack's "fans" call out his name as if he were a celebrity.

TEACHER

Hey great job in the Foxboro game, Mack!

ANOTHER TEACHER

Crush 'em on Friday, Mack!

IMBUSCH

What's good, big guy?

IMBUSCH daps Mack up

GYM TEACHER

Hey Mack, dodgeball today, you ready?

GYM TEACHER goes to dap him up, but Mack doesn't even acknowledge him and keeps walking.

INT. GYMNASIUM - DAY

Dodgeball has started and it's nothing short of terrifying. Stumbling through the war zone that is PE class, Mack shields his face with a ball. The strewn about, unmoving bodies of other students lie in Mack's way- survivors run for cover. Dodgeballs fly.

The number of people on Mack's team begins to dwindle. Suddenly, the other team's onslaught of dodgeballs ends. Mack looks around. He's alone- the last person on his team. He's opposed by 10 or so students on the other side of the floor, all of them empty handed. Mack realizes he's the only person left holding a dodgeball.

The other team freezes with fear, they're in for it now. Mack starts to wind up, running towards the center line. Students watching gasp. Mack cocks his arm, and-

Nothing. Mack's throw is embarrassingly weak and skips harmlessly to the other team. He emits a wimpy moan while throwing.

Mack's ball is picked up by a short, nerdy kid with glasses. He takes the ball, looks at Mack, and fires it at him without missing a beat. The ball crashes into Mack, sending him spiraling to the ground.

The class is silent- no one moves. Mack opens his eyes and slowly gets up, aware that everyone is staring at him. His mind races for an excuse to leave.

Mack shakily raises his hand.

GYM TEACHER

Yeah?

MACK

May I get a, a sip of water please?

GYM TEACHER

Uh, sure

Mack awkwardly waddles out- everyone in the gym still watching him.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The bell rings.

Mack and Colin leave the gymnasium and start down the hallway, Mack's eyes glued to the ground. Other students chuckle at Mack as they walk by. The mob he once had following him around has dispersed entirely.

COLIN

A sip of water? You asked for a sip of water? Mack when has anyone asked for a sip of water before? In gym too! No offense but-

MACK

Alright alright I get it

COLIN

Sorry, just saying... Hey, you'll
be fine man no one will remember.

They come upon a bulletin board where someone is pinning the newest edition of The Searchlight to it. The headline catches Mack's attention and he stops to read.

COLIN (CONT'D)

What're you-

The headline reads, "WALPOLE HIGH QUARTERBACK, MACK MACPHEE,
GETS EMBARRASSED BY TOTAL NERD IN DODGEBALL."

MACK

How do they know, that just
happened-

A group of dramatically small freshmen bump into Mack.

FRESHMAN

LOSER!

COLIN

Are those- Are those freshman?
Did we just get bumped into by
freshman? If I get my hands on
them- or those kids at the
Searchlight I'm gonna...

Colin continues to talk in an animated manner, but Mack isn't listening and tunes him out. Mack's deep in thought about how his life has been flipped upside down... by *dodgeball*.

INT. MACK'S BEDROOM - DAY

A phone rings.

Mack is laying on his bed, throwing a football to himself.
His phone buzzes, but he feels no urgency to answer it.

Eventually Mack answers the phone.

MACK

Hello?

INT. ENGLISH CLASS

COLIN

Mack! How we doing kid? Hey, are you gonna be out the whole day, man?

Colin is talking on the phone during class, his teacher is asleep. The rest of the class is working silently.

INTERCUT - ENGLISH CLASS/ MACK'S BEDROOM

MACK

Planning on it.

COLIN

Bummer yo... it's funny, the newspaper said you'd probably be out today.

MACK

What? What newspaper? The Searchlight?

COLIN

Yeah man their newest one. They said that you'd probably be out because you got embarrassed in dodgeball yesterday-

MACK

I didn't get embarrassed. Those journalism kids I swear- wait, you read the school paper? Do you read for fun, Colin?

COLIN

I've actually been into Colleen Hoover recently.

Colin is shushed by a student near him.

COLIN (CONT'D)

Look, could you come in for next period at least? Ms. Allison is starting a group project and I don't want to be with a rando.

MACK

I-

COLIN

Thanks man, appreciate it. Meet
you in the parking lot.

Colin hangs up and grabs his bag, heading for the door.
Still, no one in his class looks up from their work.

COLIN (CONT'D)

Nerds.

Mack sighs, sitting pensively on his bed. He thinks of the
dodgeball battlefield from gym class yesterday.

Mack gets up to leave, but stops at the door. The horrifying
thoughts of dodgeball spark in his head once more, dread
washing over him. But suddenly, he remembers something.

INSERT - GYM CLASS

A student on crutches approaches the gym teachers and points
to the door. The gym teachers nod and the student exits.

BACK TO SCENE

Injured students can't participate in gym! Mack runs to his
closet, rummages around, and takes out an old pair of
crutches. With hope, he runs out the door.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Mack gets out of his car, sporting a pair of crutches.

Colin is just leaving the building.

COLIN

Mack! Whoa, what happened. You
hurt?

MACK

No, I'm... I'm faking.

COLIN

Faking? Why?

Mack doesn't say anything. The two start towards school.

COLIN (CONT'D)

Come on, why? Is it dodgeball?

MACK
(whispering)
Yeah.

COLIN
I knew it! Sorry, but, you know.
It's because you got embarrassed
by the total loser-

MACK
Stop saying that. It wasn't that
bad anyway.

COLIN
Uh, sure man.

INT. GYMNASIUM - MOMENTS LATER

Colin and Mack stand at the doorway.

COLIN
What're you gonna tell them?

MACK
I'm hurt and can't participate in
class. Simple.

Mack approaches the gym teachers.

MACK (CONT'D)
I'm hurt and can't participate in
class.

GYM TEACHER
Okay.

Mack is taken aback by the ease but turns to exit regardless.

GYM TEACHER (CONT'D)
MACK MACPHEE!

Mack freezes, turning slowly around.

GYM TEACHER (CONT'D)
Where's your limp?

MACK
Excuse me?

GYM TEACHER

Your limp, sir. You're on crutches yet you limp on neither of your legs.

Mack swallows.

GYM TEACHER (CONT'D)

Come back over here. You will be participating in dodgeball today.

The word "dodgeball" once again makes Mack think of the dodgeball battlefield. He wobbles.

MACK

(croaking)

I don't feel good.

Mack drops the crutches and runs off to the nurse's office.

INT. NURSE'S OFFICE - DAY

Mack lays in the nurse's office.

The NURSE enters.

NURSE

Well, nothing's wrong with you but I can give you this ice pack. You can head back to class.

MACK

Could I stay here?

The nurse ponders.

NURSE

Just this once.

She exits.

Mack looks to his side. A Searchlight article is pinned on the nurses bulletin board. He gets up and walks over to it, taking it off the wall. The headline reads, "WALPOLE HIGH QUARTERBACK FOOLISHLY TRIES TO SKIP GYM CLASS."

MACK

Stupid Searchlight.

Mack places the paper on a nearby table, where something else catches his attention- a pad of papers reading, "INJURY NOTE". Another idea sparks in Mack's head. He takes the top slip.

The bell rings. Mack runs out.

INT. GYMNASIUM - DAY

Mack walks over to the gym teachers, handing one the slip. The teacher laughs.

GYM TEACHER

Mack. One question. Does this look like the nurse's handwriting to you?

The teacher flips the slip around.

INSERT - THE NURSE'S SLIP

"Hi this is the nurse Mack is too sick and can't play dodgeball ever again. -The Nurse"

BACK TO SCENE

GYM TEACHER (CONT'D)

I know you wrote this. No getting out of dodgeball this time, my friend. Join your classmates-

MACK

Well, can I go to the bathroom?

GYM TEACHER

Oh yeah, sure.

Mack runs off.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Colin enters, and immediately runs into Mack, standing right at the door with a metal bat in hand.

COLIN

What're you doing?

MACK

I, uh, need a favor. Would you break my legs?

Mack holds the bat out.

BAKALE walks in.

BAKALE

Oh, hey boys. What do you have there?

Bakale doesn't care for an answer, and starts to fix his mustache in the mirror.

MACK

Like I was saying, there's no way I can play dodgeball if both my legs are broken, so just take this bat and I'll-

COLIN

WHAT? You can't be serious.

BAKALE

You do sound crazy, Mack.

COLIN

Yo, gym class just isn't this deep.

MACK

I can't go out there.

COLIN

You have to, it's-

Bakale steps forward, holding a hand up to Colin.

BAKALE

Let me ask you something, Mack. In the Trojan War, did Odysseus ever give up? Did he let the Trojans win?

MACK

No, Mr. Bakale. He- he built the Trojan Horse.

BAKALE

That's right! And after the war, did Odysseus give up then. Did he give up the hope of making it home?

Colin, inspired, steps forward.

COLIN

NO! He sailed home to Ithaca, Mr.
Bakale.

BAKALE

What about those 300 spartans in
the Battle of Thermopylae? They
must've given up?

MACK

They didn't give up.

BAKALE

What?

MACK

They didn't give up!

BAKALE

Neither are you! Get back out
there, and crush those kids!

Mack grins, running out with Colin.

Bakale is out of breath. He takes out a handkerchief and
wipes his forehead.

BAKALE (CONT'D)

How exhilarating.

INT. GYMNASIUM - MOMENTS LATER

Mack, with Colin behind him, throws open the gym doors. The
dodgeball game had already started, but everyone stops and
stares at Mack.

GYM TEACHER

No stopping!

A whistle blows, the game starts again. Mack picks up a
dodgeball. He holds it for a second, then looks over to
Colin. Colin nods his head. Mack grins, turning to see the
other team. He winds up, and throws a rocket of a dodgeball
right at a girl on the other team. The ball hits her square
in the nose, making an awful cracking sound. The girl flies
back, people gasp and run to her side.

STUDENT

You monster! Look what you did!

The girl turns to Mack. Everyone gasps. One of her eyes is purple and closed shut, and her jaw hangs loosely open.

GIRL
(wailing)
It's as bad as it looks!

ANOTHER STUDENT
Why would you do that! You're
awful, Mack Macphee!

Mack turns away, horrified. The frame freezes.

INSERT - NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

"LUNATIC QUARTERBACK SENDS POOR GIRL TO HOSPITAL."

MACK (V.O.)
You can dodge it as much as you
want. But in the end? The game
always finds its way back to you.

FADE OUT.