

Two boys stand in the playground.

One's tall with dark hair; he's good-looking. The other one's got a ginger fuzz and looks like Little Orphan Annie. They used to be friends, a couple of years back, but then their faces and bodies changed and they couldn't be friends any more.

The tall one calls the other one a fag and the other one asks why, if he's a fag, did he screw the tall one's mom the night before, over and over, until she couldn't take it no more. There's a crowd gathered round, some of them are friends with the tall one, who used to be friends with the other one. Some hang out with the other one and wish they had better options. All of them, doesn't matter which side, draw their breath in and let out a low murmur of approval when he says this. It's brave and fantastically dirty and they like that.

The tall one says that the other one better be careful, that if he says something like that again then he's gonna drag his face along the gravel from now till the end of lunchtime. The other one says yeah right, you and whose army, which is lame but he can get away with it for now on account of what he said before. He has a little credit in the bank. Still, he loses some support from the crowd just when he was so close to winning them over and one of the voices asks the tall one whether he's going to let a challenge like that go unanswered.

He shakes his head and says that the last guy who spoke to him like that is in hospital now and takes a step forward, trembling slightly, because he knows what he has to do, he has to start the fight, start it or lose it already, but he's hoping the other one will run away first.

You're a moron, says the other one, holding his position. You think you scare me?

The tall one tells him that he's giving him one last chance, he can get the hell out of here now or else.

The other one says he's not going anywhere, that's he not afraid of some lanky prick wearing his brother's hand-me-down jacket and the crowd turns again.

The tall one takes another baby-step. You better run, he tells the other one.

I'm not going anywhere, he replies.

The tall one bites his lip. He doesn't know what to do next. People usually run away. You better run, he says again.

Go fuck yourself, says the other one real quick.

The tall one looks around. He knows every face there and they made him who he is. He's with them. He's in the crowd, watching, waiting, wondering how all of this will end.