

Elliot Strikes Luck

By Talon H.

"I'd like to sign up for the race please." I tell the nice lady standing behind the table. The sign in front states; "Winner takes home Trophy & \$500 prize".

"Okay, I'll need your name. You'll have to fill out this paper and get a parents signature. There's also \$50 sign-up fee." She hands me a sheet of paper. It's a chilly day in Chicago. Luckily for us, the sun is still out.

"My name is Elliot Callaway. I just turned 12." I stand up a little straighter, proud of my pre-teen age.

"Sup, Smelliot. You joining the race? You're going down, stinky." I hear my school bully; Max Willington come up from behind me. I immediately turn in the other direction, ignoring his meaningless jabs.

I make it to my dad, who's leaning against his truck on the phone. I assume he's talking with his boss. I wait patiently until he finishes the call. After a few minutes, he finally gives me his attention.

"What's up, bud?" He places his hand on my shoulder, ready to listen.

"I want to sign up for the go-kart derby race on November 22nd. It costs \$50 to sign up and I need your signature... Please." I stick out my bottom lip, pleading before he can turn me down.

"Sure thing, my man. Take me to who I need to talk to." Taking his hand, I lead the way.

November 17th

Five days until the race

My dad and I spend the weekend building my car. We spent three hours building the body. We opt to paint it red with black stripes. Lucky #20 written on both sides. Finishing it off with tires and the steering wheel. I feel confident I'm going to win because my dad knows his stuff when it comes to cars. He's built most his own vehicles since he was a teenager. It's nice to be able to bond with him, since most of his time is spent working lately.

"Thanks for all your help, dad. I don't know what I would do without you." I wrap my arms around his waist. He still towers over me even though I'm tall for my age.

"It's been fun helping you, bud. A nice change of scenery from my office." He returns the hug, squeezing me tightly.

November 18th

Four days until the race

On my way walking home from school, I notice a black cat. I hesitate to approach but get low to the ground, trying to make friends with the cute little guy.

“Hey, cutie. You lost?” I say, knowing it doesn’t understand a word I say.

It stares me down, like he’s looking right through me. He keeps his distance, so I stand and begin to walk away. He follows me all the way home. Creeped out, I leave him staring at me on the sidewalk, not inviting him inside.

I hope I didn’t just invite bad luck into my life...

November 19th

Three days until the race

I wake up with an eerie feeling in my stomach. I get dressed and run down to the garage and find that my tires are missing!

“Dad!” I yell, stumbling into his office. “My tires are gone!”

“What? No, that’s not possible.” He replies, walking into the garage to see the truth for himself.

My dad calls the tire shop to see if they have the wheels we need in stock. I sit on the sofa, waiting for the answer. I stand up when he walks into the living room.

“I’m sorry, Elliot. They won’t get any more wheels in until December 1st.”

I hold back tears, negativity sweeping me off my feet, landing me on the sofa once again.

I can’t help but think that black cat has something to do with it.

November 20th

Two days until the race

I woke up this morning with a plan. I need a potion to rid me of my bad luck. Thanks to that black cat that seems to be lingering around my yard. Maybe if I call animal control, they'll come take him away. I make a mental to do that when I get home.

During my walk back from the local witchery shop, none other than Max Willington rolls up next to me on his bike. I quickly slid the potion bottle into my pant pocket.

"Hey, Smelliot. You ready lose the race this Saturday?" His nose scrunches up, looking me up and down.

I continue walking, not giving him the time of day.

"Finish your car yet? Hope you have wheels cause the shop is sold out." He gets my attention with the last words out of his mouth. I turn to look at him, giving him the attention he so desperately craves.

Right as I open my mouth, my dad pulls over. Perfect timing to interrupt our little spat.

"Elliot! The shop just called; They found a set of wheels. They're holding them for us, let's go! Come on, hop in." He opens the passenger door, patting the seat. I give Max my best death stare and buckle up.

November 22nd

Day of the race

"Number 20 in the lead. A mister Elliot Callaway." They announce over the speakers. My heart is pumping out of my chest. Max is right on my tail.

I'm 12 feet away from checkered line when my engine stalls out. I try restarting it, shoving my foot through the floor. No luck. I look towards the finish line and I see that black cat staring back at me. I feel movement behind me. Turning around, my eyes meet Max who's pushing me closer to the line.

"What are you doing?" My voice breaking.

"I stole your wheels. Let me make it up to you." He pushes me across while everyone cheers. I stare at my bully since second grade in disbelief. My dad runs towards us with his hands waving in the air. Celebrating my win.

"Thank you." I state simply, looking Max in the eyes. He nods, walking back to his go-kart.

It's then I feel something brush against my ankle. Or someone I should say. Looking down, the black cat purrs at my feet.

"I'm so proud of you, bud." My dad's arm hangs around my shoulders.

I guess I had a little bit of luck after all...