

2/25/16

English 102

Grayson

My Friend  
Standing on  
Ground

### My Friend Brendan

When I started middle school I was eager to make new friends and try new things. I was always trying to meet new people and discover concepts that I didn't know of before. I spent those two years doing exactly that, meeting new people and making discoveries. Some of these discoveries were enjoyable, such as discovering my musical preferences and things of that nature. There were also discoveries that weren't enjoyable to experience. One of these involved a great friend of mine named Brendan.

When I was new to middle school in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade I did what a lot of other kids my age were doing, played Xbox 360. I played xbox like religion, I was so hooked on games like Call of Duty and Grand Theft Auto. I used to play with my friends and talk to them in chats via our headsets. It was generally the same group of kids every day. One day a kid that I had known my whole life but never really talked to was online and we were both playing a new game. Since nobody else had the game I decided to invite him to my game and play with him; his name was Brendan. He joined my game and we had an awkward first few minutes of small talk but it didn't take long for me to discover that he was one of the funniest people I'd ever met. We pulled an all-nighter playing xbox together and talking. I was laughing almost the whole time.

Brendan and I quickly began hanging out together, we slept over each other's houses all the time. Our friendship stayed strong throughout 7<sup>th</sup> grade and into 8<sup>th</sup> grade. However, it did hit some turbulence late in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. I had introduced Brendan to two of my friends, Garrett and Tim, and we were all spending a lot of time together. Brendan had always been more of a loner type; he was often perceived as weird or socially awkward. Tim was another friend that I had known my whole life. He was an interesting friend of mine because I was always being told to stay away from him due to his family life, which must've been a pretty rough one. However, I was in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade and I thought that he was funny so I remained his friend. Lastly, there's Garrett. Garrett has always been one of my best friends. He was and still is a genuine, good-hearted, funny kid. The four of us were having a great time with our middle school antics.

Tim was one of those people that I knew would eventually cause problems for me, but I was a loyal person so I disregarded the warnings I had received from other people in my grade and my parents and remained his friend. It was all going well until he started changing his mind about Brendan. Now, to be clear, none of us were ever completely sure about Brendan. By this I mean none of us were completely committed to being his friend. He had shortcomings such as his socially awkwardness, his tendency to nag at you for not being able to hang out with him, etc.

My friend?

as opposed to what?

show up at school

None of this mattered to Garrett and I. We were aware of his shortcomings and we were sure as hell bothered by them, but we understood that everyone has shortcomings and we weren't planning on turning against him because of it. Tim had other plans.

The four of us were playing Xbox on a weekend, as usual. The only difference this time was Tim. He started to scheme of ways to shut out Brendan. He would do little "pranks" such as mute him in the chat and try to convince us to mute him as well. He would kill Brendan's player in the game over and over again after being asked not to. Garrett and I didn't know better than to just laugh because we thought it was all in good fun. Our perception of the situation began to change when we realized that Tim wasn't just messing with Brendan, he really didn't like him anymore and was trying to give him a hard time. When Brendan wasn't around Tim would constantly bring up his shortcomings, saying things like "Brendan is so awkward", and "Don't you think Brendan follows us everywhere? He has no other friends." Garrett and I would agree with what he was saying because, well, it was pretty true. We all knew what we didn't like about Brendan, but nobody decided to act upon it until Tim did.

Bullying...  
MAKE US  
more  
present  
in the  
scene.

Brendan might have had his problems but he was still a good person. I liked him a lot even if he did drive me crazy sometimes, and Garrett felt the same way. I'm not sure what exactly made Tim change his mind but once it was changed there was no going back. He started openly trying to turn Garrett and me against him. He would tell us to watch him walk around at recess, in which we observed Brendan wonder around the groups of people constantly searching for us. This was when Garrett and I started to let Tim change our minds. We were beginning to grow our own dislikes for Brendan, primarily fueled by Tim's words and actions but also influenced by real issues with Brendan. We started excluding him from everything we did. We would kick him from our Xbox chats, ditch him at recess, and not invite him to hang out with us anymore; all of this was done with no explanation. Tim completely convinced us to move forward without Brendan. He would bash him to us and to other people we knew. One thing Tim liked to do was bring up the fact that Brendan is Jewish. He made many racist remarks to us about him, which we tried to ignore.

Anti  
Protest

↳ show us the racist remarks. Tim can be powerful.

what did  
you think  
when you  
heard  
these  
comments?

Brendan caught on to what was going on in the group and began pleading to us for an explanation. He understood Tim position so he tried reaching out to Garrett and I. We were so brainwashed by Tim that we saw Brendan's efforts to fix our friendships as him being obsessed with us. This only made the situation worse. He would join our Xbox chats and try to get a word in but wouldn't be able to without Tim saying something like "Leave you Jew" and kicking him. Garrett and I would speak privately and agree that Tim wasn't right in making his racist remarks but we didn't know what to do about it. We were both scared of becoming targets of Tim's because he was such an irrational person to deal with when he didn't like you. This is why we continued to be on his side.

↳ show more examples