

C H O I C E S

no exceptions

E. Robins

chapter

1

It was Monday morning. Malik was on his way to school. He was in his car.

Malik was on his way to pick up his friend Tyler. Then Malik would drive them both to school.

Malik got to Tyler's house. And he honked the horn.

The front door of the house opened. And Tyler came out of the house. He hurried to the car. And he got in the car. Then he looked over at Malik.

Tyler said, "Don't get me in trouble."

“What are you talking about?” Malik asked.

“You honked the horn. And that makes my dad and mom mad,” Tyler said.

“Sorry. But you weren’t outside. And I don’t want to be late to school,” Malik said.

“Just please don’t do it again. You know I’ll be right out. You don’t have to honk the horn, dude,” Tyler said.

“Okay, I won’t honk the horn next time. But be sure you come right out. So I won’t need to do it,” Malik said.

“I will,” Tyler said.

The boys rode for a few minutes. And they didn’t talk.

Then Tyler said, “Did you finish your term paper last night?”

“No, did you?” Malik asked.

“No,” Tyler said.

The boys were in the same English

class. And they had term papers due the next day. They both had said they'd finish their papers over the weekend. They didn't want to work on them Monday night.

"On Friday, you said you were going to finish your paper this weekend. So you wouldn't have to do it tonight," Malik said.

"I know I said that. But you said the same thing. And you didn't finish your paper," Tyler said.

The boys rode for a few more minutes. And they didn't talk.

Then Malik said, "Why didn't you finish your paper?"

Tyler said, "No good reason. I guess because I didn't want to work on it last night."

"The same with me," Malik said.

"We didn't finish our papers. So you

know what that means,” Tyler said.

“We have to stay up tonight until we finish them. And that means very late for me,” Malik said.

“The same for me. And now I wish I’d done it over the weekend,” Tyler said.

“But it’s too late for us to think about that,” Malik said.

The two boys rode for a few more minutes. And they didn’t talk.

Then Tyler said, “I might ask Mr. Li if we can wait until Friday. And turn our papers in then.”

Mr. Li was their English teacher.

“You know what Mr. Li will say,” Malik said.

Tyler said, “I know. You’ll get a zero if you don’t turn your paper in tomorrow.”

“You’ve got that right. That’s what he’ll say,” Malik said.

“But I still think I’ll ask Mr. Li. He

won't give me a zero for asking," Tyler said.

Malik said, "I wouldn't do it. But ask him if you want to. But we know what he'll say."

"I still think I'll ask him. We don't know for sure what he'll say," Tyler said.

"This time I think we do," Malik said.

"But I don't want to stay up late tonight. So I still think I'll ask him," Tyler said again.

"Maybe by class time you'll change your mind about that," Malik said.

"Maybe," Tyler said.

Malik didn't think Mr. Li would let them wait until Friday. And he didn't think Tyler should ask Mr. Li to let them do that.

But Malik didn't want to stay up late and write his paper either. So in a way he wished Tyler would ask Mr. Li.

chapter

2

It was the same morning. Malik was in his English class. Tyler was there too. It was almost time for class to start.

Malik looked over at Tyler. Tyler sat next to him.

Malik said, “What are you going to do? Are you going to ask if we can turn our papers in Friday? And not tomorrow?”

“Yes,” Tyler said.

Malik didn’t think Tyler should ask that. But he was glad that Tyler was going to ask it. There was always a

chance Mr. Li would let them wait until Friday. But Malik was sure Mr. Li wouldn't do that.

The bell rang to start class.

Mr. Li called the roll. Then he said, "Are there any questions before we start the lesson?"

Tyler quickly raised his hand.

Mr. Li looked at Tyler.

"Yes, Tyler," said Mr. Li. "What is your question?"

"Can we wait until Friday to turn in our papers?" Tyler asked.

Mr. Li just looked at Tyler. He didn't look pleased. And he didn't say anything.

Malik could tell that he didn't like it that Tyler asked that.

A girl quickly raised her hand. And she began to wave it around. Mr. Li would be sure to see she had her hand up.

She sat in the desk in front of Malik.

And her name was Darcie.

Mr. Li looked at Darcie.

“Yes, Darcie,” Mr. Li said. “Can your question wait until after I answer Tyler’s question?”

“I don’t have a question. I just want to say something about what Tyler said,” Darcie said.

“What would you like to say about it, Darcie?” Mr. Li asked.

“You told the class that we had to turn our papers in tomorrow. And we all know that. And we all had plenty of time to write our papers,” Darcie said.

Malik hoped Darcie wouldn’t say anything else. But she did.

“The rest of us aren’t like some people in the class,” Darcie said.

And Malik knew the whole class knew she was talking about Tyler. And Mr. Li knew she was too.