

# **AFM3 Part 7 Ricky Balboa**

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Ricky suddenly pushed Levi aside and started running, weaving his way in and out of the pedestrians like an artful-dodger fleeing after picking a pocket or two and got quite a lead from Levi, who quickly sprang into action but struggled to keep up.

Levi gasped as Ricky veered off the footpath and ran onto the road without bothering to check for traffic. His heart chilled at the sight of the oncoming Holden Station wagon.

“Look out!” warned Levi, then covered his eyes and cringed. Seconds later a gut wrenching screech sounded followed by a loud horn blast and a shrill scream.

“Watch it you crazy kid!” hollered the driver, who had only missed the child by mere millimetres.

Levi opened his eyes and breathed a sigh of relief that Ricky had not been run over. He then noticed that that the Station Wagon was the same one he had seen the other day whilst trying to visit Wanda. Straining his eyes he could just make out the chocolate labrador, sitting in the back.

“Don’t worry Ricky’s safe,” assured Levi, turning to the woman on his left who had screamed.

“You give that little scamp a swift kick in the bum from me,” she grumbled then patted the top of Levi’s head  
“He almost gave me a heart attack,”

“I’ll kick him good and proper.”

“And tell him to stop, look, and listen before crossing the road.”

“Will do,”

Levi waited until the familiar station wagon and a couple of other cars had move on before hastening across the road to where Ricky was grinning impishly.

“You could have gotten yourself killed you crazy dingbat!” he scolded, kicking the seat of his cousin’s track-pants as promised. “You’re meant to stop, look, and listen before crossing the road!”

“Didn’t hurt,” taunted Ricky brazenly, then arched forward and yelped as he received a second, much harder kick. Tears swelled and his attitude waned. “I hate you, you ugly poo faced dipstick!”

Levi motioned to kick him a third time but just could not bring himself to do it. The sight of his crying cousin defused his stalwart wrath, and filled him with an overwhelming shame. It seemed inconceivable that he could have treated his staunchest ally so cruelly. He quickly turned his head and saw woman across the street clapping her hands in appreciation.

*“Save your sympathy for later.”* advised VOP (the voice of Pessimism) *“By apologising you allow him to believe you acted irrationally and his actions were acceptable. Knowing this will only encourage to keep running across the road without fear of reprisal and before you know it he’ll be in a hospital or morgue, and it will be your fault; for caving in.”*

“I’m really sorry Ricky,” he offered quietly, defying VOP. “I just don’t want you to end up getting run over. I could not bear to live in a world without you.”

“Screw your apology. You think you can push me around because you’re older, but you can’t.”

“Settle down Ricketts.”

“Don’t call me Ricketts, No-bum!”

No-bum was Levi’s most hated of all nick-names and until now had only ever been used by Travis, the school bully, in times of malicious teasing. The word derived from Le-vi-fo-fum, shortened to fo-fum and cruelly changed to No-Bum.

Taking exception he threw a punch but Ricky quickly blocked it and retaliated with a couple of sharp blows of his own. Levi staggered backwards with a sore jaw and a stinging left cheek, and was just about to throw a right cross when he was suddenly grabbed from behind. Seconds later someone else snatched hold of Ricky and dragged him back from striking distance.

“Alright that’s enough out of you two!” scolded a tall lanky woman with thick rimmed glasses, struggling to keep a grip on Levi. “Cease this fighting this instant or I’ll ring the police!”

“Stop it!” growled a shorter plump woman, trying just as hard to control Ricky.

“He started it!” cried Ricky pointing his index finger towards Levi “He kicked me!”

“He deserved it,” retorted Levi pointing back at Ricky “He ran across the road without looking. And a woman cross the street told me to kick his ass!”

“She did not!” argued Ricky

“Did too!” countered Levi, glancing to the other side of the road but the aforementioned woman had already moved on.

“I don’t care who did what to whom for whatever reason, it all stops now,” affirmed the shorter woman. “I want you two scallywags to shake hands and make up or you’ll both get something to cry about!”

Levi and Ricky both stared daggers at one another as they were tentatively released; neither wanted to make the first move, both felt unjustly treated by the other. Such tension had never reared its ugly head during their four year friendship and as far as Levi was concerned he would quite happily never experience such hostility towards Ricky again...

*The heavy downpour had ceased and sunshine now peeped through the last of the parting clouds but a cold southerly chill lingered as Levi wheeled his bike into the shed and started along the pathway that led to the front door of his house....*

No stop!- Interrupted Levi suddenly realising his mind was replaying the wrong flashback, a memory he had been trying desperately to forget.

*The afternoon sun shone from a cloudless azure sky as Levi sat miserably in the backyard upon an overturned wooden beer crate, trying to make sense of what had happened...*

Yeah, that’s the one – he affirmed feeling less stressed.

*A window was open and he could hear the sound of people and mingling inside the house, three dozen or maybe more conversations merging into one unintelligible noise, like a gabble of geese. Geese, like the colonial goose Katrina had promised to cook in honour of his very first report card result that had more A’s and B’s than C’s*

*and D's. It was his favourite dish and he'd been looking forward to it all day...*

No, wait we're back to the wrong one again- he protested but the memory ignored him and continued running its course.

*The house seemed strangely quiet. Usually there was activity of some sort at this hour of the day, be it the television, kitchen noises, a radio or even Delilah having one of her hissy fits with Katrina; but there was none of the above. He felt uneasy and sensed something had gone horribly wrong, something with the potential to scar his impressionable mind for life.*

*"I'm home," he heard himself announce as he searched from one unoccupied room to another and was just about to declare himself home alone when he heard a loud bang from above.*

*Goosebumps chilled his spine as he hastened up the staircase and by the time he reached the top rung he was trembling fretfully. Staring down the narrow passage way to the left of the Rumpus Room (a converted up stairs guest room) he noticed all the bedroom lights were off except for the one his parents slept in when...."*

"Well are you just going to stand there or are you going to apologise?" grumbled the short woman, snapping him out of the painful memory, just in time before he relived the part he so desperately wished would vacate his troubled mind, an instance three councillors had failed to rid him of.

"I'm sorry Rickets...I really am," offered Levi. "I should never have treated you like that."

"I'm sorry too Levi...I should have been more careful in crossing the road."

As Levi extended his left hand and began walking towards Ricky a high pitched whirring noise rang in his ears, a sound Katrina often referred to as newsbells. He suddenly felt nauseous and dizzy. Seconds later he collapsed to the footpath and passed out of consciousness. Continues

Part 8 Summoning the Boogeyman.

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