



# Video Story Transcript

## THE BOY WHO FELL BETWEEN THE CRACKS: BULLYING IN THE JUNIOR HIGH

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**Link to YouTube Video:**  
<https://youtu.be/WU6EwjR5xjg>

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Note : The following is a transcription of a spoken story performance and may not reflect textbook perfect English. It will guide you as you listen (or read) along.

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Hi, my name is Dan Keding. I'm going to tell you the story of The Boy Who Fell Between the Cracks. A story about bullying in junior high.

In eighth grade at our school, it was always a challenge. We were rambunctious. And all the boys in my class were sports minded and all the boys in the other class were girl minded. Strange combination because all the girls who were boy minded were in my class. Very strange.

But there was one kid who stood out and his name was William. William had suffered from the F-word; he had flunked, failed - two, three, four times. By the time he hit eighth grade, he was 16 or 17. Very tall, very slender with shoulders that he would hunch up like that. Not because he was scared or cold but because he couldn't fit into his clothes. They were so small. So, he'd hunched his shoulders so his jacket didn't look so small and the sleeves wouldn't come up so far on his arms. And his pants were always too short.

His parents had come from Eastern Europe and they spoke very little English and they very seldom came to the school. Nowadays, we would know that William was challenged - mentally challenged or, at least, had severe learning disabilities. But back then, we didn't know that. We were kids and he was different with his slicked-down hair and his ill-fitting clothes and a sweet, high voice. And we teased him... all the time. This poor boy, who had fallen between the cracks, was teased by everybody in the classroom. I wish I could say that I was one of the ones who stood up for him but I wasn't. Nobody was.

We chased him after school, but with his long legs, he always outdistanced us. And during class, we would tease him. And every day he started class by sitting at his desk, taking out a piece of paper and a pencil and writing his name, printing it out. William. He couldn't write cursive but he would print it out. William. And he'd say, "Good morning, Mr. Pencil! Good morning, Mr. Paper!" And everybody would laugh.

And our teacher, hm, she would just say, "William, stop talking to your paper and pencil." And he'd just smiled sweetly.

But one day, she had a parent-teacher conference and she came in and she was crabby and she was out of sorts. And she walked in just as William said, "Good morning, Mr. Pencil! Good morning, Mr. Paper!"

And she lost it. She said, "That's it. I have told you enough times." And she turned to Frank and I, and she said, "Daniel, Francis, take his desk and put it on the front lawn."

Now that was one of the ultimate punishments because the front lawn faced a group of houses. And the old women who lived there would get on the phone and they'd call somebody, who called somebody, who called your house. And your mom or your grandmother was there. I know because my grandmother had been there many times because I'd been on the lawn many times.

And I looked at her and I said, "Sister, this is William."

And she looked at me and she said, "Would you like to join him?"

I said, "No, no."

So, we put his chair on top of the desk and Frank and I lifted it up and we walked out the door. And William was putting on his coat. He looked frightened. For the first time, I didn't see him as an object of ridicule. And I looked, I said, "It's okay, William. She's just in a bad mood."

And Frank said, "Yeah, you'll be back in class in no time."

But he didn't look reassured. We walked out the door to the front lawn, set up his desk and his chair and he sat there. And I said, "Don't worry about it, man. It's nice out here." And we went inside.

But even though Frank and I had desks by the window, we couldn't look out the window because we were ashamed that we were even part of this. And then one kid in the back said, "Look!" and everybody looked out the window.

And there was William sitting at his desk. He had reached in and taken out his lunch. He'd broken all the bread apart and broken the meat apart. Broken the cookie apart, and around him were squirrels and birds, some sitting on his desk. And a stray dog with his head in his lap. And you could hear him through the window. "Here's a piece of bread for you, Mr. Bird, and some cookie for you, Mr. Squirrel. And here's a piece of meat for you, Mr. Dog."

And Sister Marie came over and she stared out the window. And the whole class just watched 'til finally, she turned to Frank and I and said, "Daniel, you and Francis, go get him." And there were tears rolling down her cheeks.

And Frank and I ran to the door, but we waited respectfully 'til his lunch was gone and the animals had disappeared. And we brought him back into the classroom. But he didn't go hungry that day because every kid in the room gave him part of their lunch. And after that, he was never teased again. If the kids in the other eighth grade tried, well, he had 35 brothers and sisters who would stand up for him.

And we taught the seventh graders in the lower grades to respect him... this boy who had fallen between the cracks. It taught us a lesson. I think he taught me a lesson that was greater than anyone I've learned from any teacher I've ever had.