

## GETTING WHAT I DESERVE BRIEFING PAPER

### Main Themes:

- **Bullying and Abuse:** The story centers around Charlie, a teenager who endures persistent bullying and manipulation from Mark, a classmate.
- **Power Dynamics:** Mark establishes dominance over Charlie, controlling his actions and emotions through intimidation, threats, and gaslighting. He uses Charlie's desire for friendship to exploit and abuse him.
- **Trauma and Resilience:** Charlie suffers both physical and emotional trauma as a result of Mark's abuse. He struggles with anxiety and fear, yet ultimately displays a degree of resilience.
- **Forgiveness and Redemption:** The possibility of forgiveness and redemption hangs in the balance as Mark attempts to make amends. However, Charlie remains understandably cautious and uncertain about trusting him again.

### Important Ideas/Facts:

- **Charlie Day:** Mark and his friends orchestrate a day of targeted harassment against Charlie, subjecting him to various forms of physical and emotional abuse.
- **Mark's Manipulation:** Mark uses tactics like gaslighting ("Unless you act like one," "My dad tells me if I'm doing wrong"), feigning friendship, and isolating Charlie from others to maintain control.
- **Impact of Abuse:** Charlie exhibits signs of trauma, including sleeplessness, anxiety, fear of social situations, and an obsessive need to appease Mark.
- **Turning Point:** Mark's attack on Charlie with a tree branch marks a turning point in their relationship. It forces both characters, and their families, to confront the severity of the situation.
- **Uncertain Resolution:** The story concludes with Charlie's refusal to immediately forgive Mark. He acknowledges the possibility of forgiveness but remains wary, leaving the question of redemption open.

### Key Quotes:

- **Mark's control over Charlie:** "I mean, if you act like a baby, I'll tell you, like a dad would. I'll tell you if you're acting wrong."
- **Charlie's fear and anxiety:** "I worked out a plan to wake up 'sick' in the morning so mom wouldn't let me go. I was good at pretending to be sick."
- **Mark's disregard for boundaries:** "He even walked into the bathroom when I was pooping once to tease me because he knew I wouldn't like it."
- **Mark's attempt at justification:** "This is what you did to your friend," he said, his voice cracking. "Look at what you did."
- **Charlie's enduring trauma:** "I counted thirty Charlie Day things that one day."

- Charlie's refusal to immediately forgive: "Are we good?" He put my backpack in front of the door and smiled cautiously. "That wasn't a no." "It wasn't a yes," I warned him.

**Observations:**

- The narrative style effectively conveys Charlie's perspective, immersing the reader in his experience of fear, confusion, and emotional turmoil.
- The story avoids simplistic resolutions, leaving the audience to ponder the complex dynamics of abuse, trauma, and the potential for forgiveness.
- The portrayal of Mark's manipulative behavior is disturbingly realistic, highlighting the insidious nature of bullying and emotional abuse.

**Further Discussion:**

- The story raises questions about the role of bystanders and adults in recognizing and intervening in abusive situations.
- The text invites discussion about the long-term consequences of bullying and the process of healing from trauma.
- The story's conclusion prompts reflection on the meaning of forgiveness and the possibility of redemption for both victim and abuser.