

My First Punch (by Billy LaRocque, age 9)

I live in Needham Massachusetts at 134 Grant Street near the railroad station and Steven Palmer Elementary School. I am in the third grade with Miss Cassidy and multiplication tables. 11 times 11 is... We only have to know 9 times 9, that's 81.

My neighborhood has old shady trees and simple two-story colonial style homes. Most houses have kids but across the street are the two Mary sisters - two old ladies that always gave me a handkerchief for Christmas. I have to write them thank you notes. I hate to go visit there. I always get coco and one fig newton.

Down the street is a single-story modern stucco house where the Valdinos live. People say they are different from the other families. When I go to play there Mrs Valdino has treats with funny names that taste different but are pretty good. They have two dogs. Their son David is a year older and likes to tease me. He has two friends at school and they call me "squirt" and shove me. In the hallway one day after school, David pushed me so hard I landed on the ground.

When I told my mother she must have mentioned it to my dad because after supper he told me about problems that he had in the Army and how he learned to box. Next day he showed me some basics and told me about some of his boxing experiences. He showed me how to stand almost sideways and to block and throw a punch.

Guess what? The next day I tried it on David Valdino and it worked. I popped him right in the nose and he cried and ran home. That night my father told me he had a call from Mr Valdino and my dad told me I should never hit someone unless they hit me first. So, I had to walk down to the Valdino's and apologize to David with his whole family listening. My father said that he was proud.



Back in Miss Cassidy's class I still got teased a lot about everything - especially my middle name. Eventually I learned to be a wise guy and use jokes to avoid fights. It works.

Later I had to apologize for a few of my good punchlines.

The End.