Friday is ranking day

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Friday is ranking day

by Alphome

Summary

After yet another embarrassing defeat to Near, Mello makes a bet with Matt to try take Near's top spot on the Wammy's house rankings once and for all.

Notes

Hello, uh I did not plan to post this since it was just a little procrastination device, but decided I may as well, why not! If you enjoy it please comment, even if it's just a little heart (<3) it takes almost none of your time and really encourages me to keep writing! Anyway, on with the show...

See the end of the work for more notes

It is a Friday at Wammy's house, meaning the dinner hall is buzzing with anticipation.

This is not, as one would expect, because this means it is the end of the week, or out of any particular appreciation for the sub-par, slightly burnt mac and cheese on offer. No, Friday is the most important day of the week for one reason and one reason only - the ranking posting.

Every Friday, after the thirty-or-so orphans at Wammy's house have finished their dinner (or at least, persuaded the dinner lady to let them leave), they would run from the dining hall to scan the large wooden display plaque that took up half the wall in the corridor leading to the classrooms, desperately hoping to find their names near the top. The plaque detailed the current rankings for students for most likely to take over the mantle of 'L', placements based on a number of factors, from in-class test scores to behaviour analysis, and to get into the top three was an honour that very few could boast of having ever achieved.

Of course, that is because the top two were always taken by Mello and Near, leaving only the third place open to change. But still, it was difficult to even get third place at the most competitive orphanage in England and impressive in on of itself.

As always, Mello was the first to finish, managing to sneakily discard his mac and cheese in record time and being waved out of the room by a weary lunch lady, far too done with his schemes to protest the scraps left on his plate. Technically, it was obvious what place he would be in - same as always, but Mello refused to ever accept it, and not a Friday went by when he wasn't the first craning his neck, squinting to try read the names at the top:

'third: Haven - 87, second: Mello - 95, first: Near - 96'

And as with most Fridays, suppressing the urge to break something, he stomped in the directions of the dormitories, fists clenched in frustration. Always the same, at least his eagerness gave him a head start to get away before anyone else saw.

Matt found him in their dorm room, ripping up pieces of paper absentmindedly, sitting on his bed while watching some maths video on his laptop.

'Hey,' he said, by means of introduction, 'Catch.'

Mello spun around for a chocolate bar to land in his lap - same brand as usual, Favargar dark chocolate, judging from the small red dot, taken from his own stores anyway.

Wordlessly, he balled up the ripped up paper, threw it into the bin, slowly unwrapped the chocolate and began to snap it into small pieces.

Eyes fixed back on the equations being drawn on the screen, he began to eat it, piece by piece, completely ignoring Matt's presence.

'Y'know, you should probably eat something other than that chocolate'

Matt threw himself down on the bed beside Mello, causing the blonde to shoot him a glare. Mello took one of his earbuds out when Matt continued to stare at him, expectantly.

'What.'

'I was saying,' Matt repeated, 'You should probably eat something other than chocolate sometime. There's no way you can live off -'

He reached over Mello's body to snatch the wrapper out of his other hand, turning it over to read the ingredients.

'-cocoa mass, sugar, cocoa powder, cocoa bu-'

The murderous look in Mello's eyes when he snatched the wrapper back would've brought anyone who hadn't dealt with him for the last five years to begging for their life. Unfortunately, Matt did not fall into that category and instead remained largely unfazed.

'I'm just saying, you've gotta have some kind of real food. And no, I'm not at all fooled by your 'shoving your mac and cheese into a sandwich bag in your pocket' thing, how long's it been since you had a vegetable? I heard vegetables make you smarter, getting the right nutrients might help you actually beat Near for once.'

Mello appeared to react to Near's name by furrowing his brows and looking as if he were actually considering Matt's words for once.

'That's bullshit…' He said, but more like a question than definitive statement.

'Actually, yeah, it's clearly bullshit, you eat your vegetables all the time and you've only gotten third like, once.'

'I could get third if I wanted to, Y'know?' Matt reached across Mello again to grab his DS from his nightstand, flipping it open to play while talking. 'It's just way too much work, I can't be bothered. I could probably even get higher if I tried. '

'Now that's bullshit.' Mello seemed less miserable now at least, back into their familiar friendly banter. 'If you could beat me then who wouldn't you want to? You're just making excuses.'

'Why would I want to? It's way too much pressure, if you do well once you're expected to do well more… and like, I don't want to be actually doing the work or anything.'

'Yeah sure, You know what? If you manage to beat me in the rankings I'll eat all my vegetables at lunch and dinner for a whole week. That's how little I believe you.'

Matt scoffed and clicked his DS closed.

'Well. Obviously the bet is on, and you're going to have to get used to peas and beans for the next week, but…' Matt gave Mello a somewhat aggravating, overconfident grin, 'What

happens when I also beat Near?'

All of a sudden, Mello knew he was going to regret this.

This was ludicrous. Absolutely ludicrous. Mello wasn't expected to believe Matt would take this seriously, was he? And yet all weekend Matt had been studying for this week's quizzes, acting as perceptively and cautiously as possible when staff were around to notice and had seemingly cut his gaming time down from four hours between dinner and bed to one hour, with more time for looking over the class reading.

Had he just not been doing this before? Mello tried to think back to when he had ever seen Matt study or even read the pre reading before. He always seemed to just turn up to classes and achieve pretty much average, never bothering to put in any effort. Is number 15 on the rankings him without studying?

He would never admit it, of course, but he did work harder upon realising this.

'Lastly, did anyone get the answer to 12b in the homework?' The maths teacher, a middle-aged woman with a permanent tired look in her eyes, glanced around the class, looking for a volunteer, 'I didn't expect many people to get this one, but I know at least one person must have an answer to give me.'

Her gaze lingered on Mello and he tried his best to look as if he wasn't giving an answer out of boredom rather than actually having not been able to solve it.

She sighed.

'Right, Near, what'd-'

She started slightly, when she noticed Matt's hand up, easily missed in his seat in the corner.

'Oh, um, Matt? Did you have an answer?'

'Uh, yeah, maybe?' Matt looked uncomfortable as several of his classmates swung around in their chairs to stare at him. 'Is 'x' four over one thousand, six hundred and forty-nine?'

'Yes, actually… well done…'

While Mello did appreciate the brief look of surprise on Near's face, his glee at his rival's concern was somewhat overpowered by the thought that Matt would literally never stop bragging if he was right.

By the time Friday had come, Mello was determined to savour this last day of not knowing for sure how clever Matt actually was. He knew for certain Matt would be insufferable if he

got into the top two and today was sacred as a final day of peace. However, dinner came far too quickly.

Mello took longer than usual to finish eating, trying to put off seeing the rankings for as long as possible. However, when he left the hall to see the gaggle of children gathered around talking far more animatedly than usual, he already know he had lost.

No use delaying now, he shoved his way past a group of girls who were chatting loudly in front of the display to squint up at the top names.

oh fuck this.

'Third: Mello - 94, Second: Near - 96, First: Matt - 97'

This isn't possible. There's no way.

Back in their room, Mello, as per usual, stomped in, to find Matt sitting on the floor playing some shooter game on his laptop. Kicking off his shoes by the door, Mello threw himself onto his bed face-first and lay there.

'You doing okay?' Matt asked after a while.

Mello launched straight into a rant as if waiting for this, 'No! Of course not! First that Near weirdo shows up and I'm not top of the class anymore which is bullshit and then it turns out that I'm not even second? Third, to a guy that does nothing but build card towers all day and a guy who doesn't even have to study to do better than half the people here? what am I even going to do? I can't be L now, this is-'

'Dude calm down, it's not like I'm staying at first?'

Mello rolled over and sat up to face him.

'What?'

'I'm not ever doing that again, it was way too much work, I had barely any time to do actually fun stuff, I don't know how you do it.'

'But - surely it's worth it?'

'I mean, yeah it was definitely worth it to get you to eat some vegetables for the next week. You're gonna have to eat so healthy!'

Matt only narrowly dodged the pillow that came flying at his head.

'You know what I mean! Don't you want to be top of the class?'

'ha! Why? to get given more work? no thanks.'

'I'd do you good to care more,' Mello reprimanded.

Matt picked the pillow up off the floor and chucked it back at full force, laughing when it hit Mello in the stomach, knocking him backwards.

'Well it'd do you some good to care less.'

Mello never did learn to listen to Matt's advice.

End Notes

I've gotta be honest I have no fun facts about writing this :/
Oh well, I hope you liked it!

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!