

# **Fresh Off the Boat: Book Report**

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COLD OPEN:Fade In:

Jessica sits legs crossed at table with Ashley, Honey, and Samantha sipping coffee and reading magazines.

Ashley appears frustrated and drops her magazine.

Ashley

“I’m not making dinner tonight. I’m just too tired”

Ashley picks up house phone and calls husband’s work number

Ashley

“Hey Sweetie, I’m exhausted...how about dinner?”

Pause...

“Great! Lets go to my favorite place, you know the one!”

Jessica looks puzzled at Ashley while other women remain sipping coffee.

Jessica

“Wait...Ashley, you never named the restaurant. Does your husband just know all of your favorite things?”

Ashley

“Yes of course! He forgot I hated salt on my popcorn when we saw Clueless a few weeks ago and I made sure he paid for it”

Jessica

“Interesting...hand me the phone”

Ashley hands Jessica the phone and Jessica dials the number of Cattleman’s Ranch, asking for Louis

Jessica

“Hey Louis, lets go to that restaurant I love...see you there at 7?”

Fade In:

Louis hangs up phone with distressed look on face:

Louis

“O dear God”

Fade in:

Split Screen showing Jessica sitting by herself at booth of restaurant while Louis, Eddie, Emery, and Evan sit at the table of another restaurant.

Emery

“I don’t think this is mom’s favorite place dad”

Eddie

“Yeah dad you’re screwed”

Louis

“This is going to be a very, very bad time for your father boys”

Louis covers face with hands and groans

Fade Out:

End of COLD OPEN:

ACT ONE:

Fade In: Eddie sits in classroom with writing on the board saying “BOOK REPORT DAY.” The students have been selecting names out of a hat that correspond to a list of remaining names on the board to write their book reports about. The two remaining names are: Shaquille O’Neal and Jackie Chan. Eddie and a quiet, smiling girl named Marcy have left to pick.

Narrator:

“Ok Baby...here we go. Me and Shaq. Going to be the best book report this school has ever seen.”

Teacher:

Marcy Feldman and Eddie Huang come on up and pick a name!

Eddie begins to saunter up to the front of the room. Things begin moving in slow motion as he fantasizes about hanging out with his favorite basketball player Shaquille O’Neal (Shaq).

Fade Into Daydream: Daydream begins with Eddie reading his book report to the class. Upon finishing, he shuts the book and points to Shaq, who is sitting hilariously in the back row desk. Shaq points back and nods in appreciation.

Fade Into Next Segment of Daydream: Shaq and Eddie are swinging on swing sets together laughing wildly as rap music plays and the class stares in jealousy.

Fade Into Next Segment of Daydream: Eddie and Shaq are hanging out in the Orlando Magic basketball arena. Shaq throws a pass to Eddie, which he miraculously jumps to catch and dunk emphatically into the hoop.

Fade Into Next Segment of Daydream: Shaq is eating dinner (again sitting hilariously) at the Huang family table.

Shaq:

“Mr. and Mrs. Huang this is a beautiful meal. Eddie is such a great kid. He’s my best friend....frien...frie...”

Teacher’s screeching, shrill voice interrupts daydream

Teacher:

“Congrats Marcy you get Shaquille O’Neal!”

Marcy:

“Whose Shaquille O’Neal?”

Eddie’s face suddenly drops with horrified shock

Eddie:

“Noooo! This is a mistake! Please! Shaq was going to be my best friend!  
Nooooo!”

Classroom of students laugh as Eddie falls onto hands and knees begging teacher for reassignment.

Teacher looks down begrudgingly at Eddie, who is wearing an Orlando Magic O’Neal jersey.

Teacher:

“Now Eddie...This is the way the assignment has been going for everyone. No one else has complained about their assignment”

Eddie:

“Duh! Billy got Michael Jordan. At least give me Biggie Smalls! This is torture! Marcy doesn’t even know who Shaq is!”

Teacher:

“Yes Eddie and she will get to know him through the report. All the better to learn something new that’s what this is for. Now you’ve been assigned Jackie Chan. You should be proud. He’s achieved a lot and is a great ambassador for your culture.

Eddie sighs and slumps back down in his chair.

Narrator:

“Culture? What is she talking about? Shaq is my culture. Blocking shots and Dunking on fools. That’s what I’m about. Not some nerd doing fake karate kicks in bad movies....This report is going to be the worst.”

Fade Out:

End of ACT ONE:

ACT TWO:

Fade In: Eddie sits at family dinner table playing with his fork and food; staring at an empty chair assumedly wishing Shaq was there. Jessica stares at him for a few seconds before putting down her fork and folding her hands on the table.

Jessica:

“Eddie Huang what is wrong with you! You haven’t touched your food. I’m not buying you anymore lunchables. They are taking your appetite away!”

Eddie:

“It’s not that mom...I totally got robbed on the book report. Marcy Feldman got Shaq.”

Jessica:

“Well who did you get? I’m sure there are plenty of other great subjects. I would much rather you get a poet or a lawyer or doctor instead of all these hip hop artists and millionaire athletes you adore.”

Eddie:

“Jackie Chan...”

Emery and Evan together:

“Yay Jackie Chan!”

Louis:

“I tell you what I could have used Jackie Chan’s help the other night when we left your mother at the wrong restaurant.”

Louis smiles idiotically while Jessica whips her head towards him and glares angrily. Eddie shakes his head with a look of disgust and Emery buries his face in his hands.

Louis:

“Ok I see the Huang family can’t joke about that just yet! Maybe we should just eat at Cattleman’s every night. That’s everyone favorite restaurant!”

Louis still smiles idiotically while Jessica shakes her head and Emery looks at Louis with a humorously puzzled look.

Emery:

“Dad you need to learn when is enough”

Louis:

“Anyways...Eddie why are you so disappointed. Jackie Chan is a great role model. Its important for you to see how successful an Asian man can be. He’s achieved the same American Dream we moved to Orlando for.”

Evan:

“Jackie Chan owned a steakhouse?”

Jessica drops her fork in her food and buries her face in her hands while Emery laughs.

Louis:

“No he did not. But that doesn’t mean he never failed. The important thing is that he kept trying.”

Jessica:

And he stayed true to himself. Eddie you need to learn from him. Quit forcing yourself to impress all the kids in your class with the dirty rap lyrics and baggy pants. Be yourself.”

Eddie:

“But I am myself! We are from D.C. I don’t know Karate. After I got assigned Jackie Chan everyone at school pretended like I was going to beat them up and kept bowing to me. I blame stupid Jackie Chan. None of this would have happened if stupid Marcy Feldman didn’t get Shaq. Then the class would have respected me for the baller that I am.

Louis:

“When I was your age I did my report on my father. He was very tough on me. But I was proud of him. Eddie, I would be honored if you did your project about me. I think the class would find me to be a pretty cool guy!”

Eddie:

“Yeah dad that’s a great idea. I’m sure the class would love to hear about you right after Michael Jordan and Biggie Smalls!”

Louis:

“All I’m saying is take pride in who has come before you son. The Asian American community here has a lot to be thankful for.”

Pan to Emery who has tied a rope around his forehead impersonating Jackie Chan: Jumps, swings a leg out to kick, misses, and knocks his plate of food on the ground.

Louis:  
“Yeah I can take the blame for that one.”

End of ACT TWO:

ACT THREE:

Fade In: One week has passed and students are now presenting their book reports. The scene opens with Marcy Feldman speaking in a monotone, unenthusiastic voice about Shaquille O’Neal while the class watches, appearing extremely bored.

Marcy:

“And then, Mr. O’Neal spent three years at the University of Louisiana. During his time there he was a very good player, averaging 21.6 points per game as well as 13.5 rebounds. Wow. Isn’t that great.”

The boy in the first row rolls his eyes and turns around to Eddie.

Boy:

“Yo Huang, if your report is this boring I’m gonna pull the fire alarm”

Eddie squints his eyes and glares back at the boy.

Eddie:

“Shutup! It’ll be better than your stupid report!”

Pan back to Marcy as she concludes her presentation:

Marcy:

“But that’s not all. He was also a very interesting student, studying business and general studies at school. And that is my book report on Shaquille O’Neal”

Eddie rolls his eyes and slumps in his chair.

The teacher rises from her desk and walks to the middle of the room.

Teacher:

“Thanks very much Marcy for your insightful information on Shaquille O’Neal. Next up Eddie Huang presenting on Jackie Chan”

Eddie looks at the rude boy in the front row, smirks, and walks confidently up to the front of the room.

Eddie:

“Thanks Marcy, I can promise the class I won’t give a report on what Jackie Chan studied.”

Class giggles and teacher rolls her eyes.

Eddie:

“You know...I was originally pretty disappointed to present on Jackie Chan. I thought he was a loser. And that Karate is lame. But as I read I learned a few things. In fact, he’s a pretty badass dude!”

Teacher sits up and gasps while classroom of students perk up and cheer.

Teacher:

“Eddie Huang!”

Eddie:

“Yea yea yeah I got it I’m in trouble. But let me finish first.”

Eddie winks at rude boy in front row and then looks down at his paper to begin the report.

Eddie:

“First off, Jackie Chan’s dad was a spy. That’s a lot cooler than any basketball player. As a child, Jackie went to school from 5 AM to midnight and learned acrobatics, drama, martial arts, and classical music. By age eight, Jackie had appeared in his first movie. Shaq couldn’t even dribble by that age. In a 1986 movie, Jackie almost died doing his own stunt and falling forty feet to rocks below a tree. I don’t know many pro athletes who almost died in a silly little sporting event. He’s also broken his nose three times and injured all ten of his fingers. He’s dislocated his pelvis, sternum, and shoulders. And seeing Jackie do all these awesome stunts has inspired me to take a risk myself. Marcy can you hold this?”

With that remark Eddie puts a bandana on and hands Marcy a moderately sized plank of wood.

Eddie:

“Marcy, I would like for you to hold this piece of wood out in front of you. Class, watch me break through this seemingly indestructible piece of wood using only one swift punch.”

Eddie takes a step back and prepares to punch the plank of wood as the teacher stands up from her desk.

Teacher:

“Eddie Huang what do you think you’re doing! This is inappropriate!”

As the teacher begins to walk towards Eddie presumably to stop this fiasco, Eddie rushes into a poorly executed punch. He steps forward, throws his

wrist into the piece of wood, recoils as it doesn't break or budge at all, and then lets out a loud shriek of terror and pain.

Eddie:

“AHHHHHHHHHHHHH MY WRIST!”

The class stares silently as Eddie drops to the ground. Moaning and groaning in hilariously exaggerated fashion:

Narrator:

“Well...let's just say I learned a little about the dangers of Karate”

Fade Out:

End of ACT THREE:

ENDING SEGMENT:

Fade in: The Huang family sits at the dinner table of the restaurant Jessica attended by herself at the beginning of the episode (her favorite restaurant). Eddie has his right wrist in a cast.

Louis:

“Well Eddie...You broke your wrist and got a C- on the book report. But I must say, I’m extremely proud of you son!”

Emery and Evan:

“What?!”

Jessica:

“Excuse me!”

Eddie:

“Huh?”

Louis:

“Yeah. You took something that you didn’t care about at all and became passionate about it. You learned how important Jackie Chan’s story is and did your best to show your classmates. You even broke your wrist trying to honor him.”

Jessica:

“Yes but you didn’t have to say badass”

Louis:

“Yeah that was a little excessive”

Louis:

“But regardless I am proud of you and your attitude. That’s why we came to such a nice restaurant tonight!”

Jessica:

“Excuse me?”

Camera fades out with narration:

Narrator:

“I learned something that day. I learned it doesn’t really matter whose name you get assigned. You can’t control that. Life is about taking pride in those who came before you. Just like my dad did with his dad. Jackie Chan is a

pretty cool dude. And I'm thankful for what he is doing with his life. Just because it isn't my American Dream doesn't mean it isn't important. I just wish my wrist didn't hurt so bad..."

END