

BEING OTHERS

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FADE IN:

EXT. MORNING.

A minivan zips along the suburban residential streets. It takes a corner. Just misses a curb. The bustling city still retains charms of an old fashioned town.

INT. MINIVAN - CONTINUOUS

TOM HOTCHKISS, 40ish wearing a business suit sits next to his oldest son **HARRIS HOTCHKISS**, 16 with shoulder length hair. He is geeky. Not smart. Just a teenager looking for an identity. Slender but not anorexic. Both wear seatbelts and sour expressions. Harris gazes out the passenger window lost in thoughts of how to gracefully exit the minivan without being detected by any of his friends. Tom's hands are in the 10 / 2 position. A steaming cup of coffee is in the cup holder closest to him.

All is quiet save for the engine's rumble.

HARRIS

Dad, how fast are you going?

TOM

I'm doing the speed limit.

HARRIS

It's not fast enough. I'm going to be late.

TOM

And whose fault is that?

Harris looks out the passenger window. The suburban sprawl passes him by.

Tom turns on the radio to one of his presets.

VOICE ON RADIO

I hope that you've enjoyed the last few days of these unseasonably warm temperatures because that's all about to end. We have a massive cold front coming in from the north that is going to play havoc with the afternoon and

evening drive. It looks like October and it is about to start to feel like October.

TOM

Marvelous.

VOICE ON RADIO

...Expect rain and lots of it! We could see some high winds and thunderstorms in some areas. Wherever you are going and whatever it is you're gonna do today don't forget to show it a little R-E-S-P-E-C-T.

Aretha Franklin's "Respect" starts playing in the background as the voice on the radio trails off. The song fills the minivan.

Tom smiles at the song and the memories that it evokes. He taps along with the tempo on the steering wheel.

Harris rolls his eyes. His attention is focused squarely on the radio. Harris reaches out and presses another preset button. A heavy power chord rattles the cabin of the minivan. Harris smiles.

Tom's mood drops. He looks over towards his son. He clicks the preset back to Aretha Franklin.

HARRIS

Hey! That is so not cool!

TOM

It's a classic.

Aretha's voice is cut short by Harris's finger on the preset button once again.

HARRIS

Yea, so is this!

The guitar charges back through the van's speakers.

TOM

No. That's a public health hazard.

Click. Tom presses the preset for Aretha once again.

HARRIS

Dad, you're killing me here.

TOM

No, I'm considering it, but I'm not willing to have to fill out all that paperwork.

Click. Harris pushes the preset for the guitar again.

TOM

HARRIS! What's the matter with you?

HARRIS

I don't know, Dad. I was just trying to get a little peace and harmony out of this morning before school.

TOM

THIS is peace and harmony?

A dozen electric guitars are vying for dominance. The rock gods are stirring.

Click. Tom pushes the preset. Aretha's voice fills the minivan once more. It is to the point in the song where Aretha sings...

ARETHA (SINGING ON RADIO)

..All I'm askin' for is a little respect...

EXT. SCHOOL. CONTINUOUS.

The minivan pulls into the driveway of the school. Tom steers it towards the curb. There is the general confusion of a new morning. High school kids mill about and find their way to their appointed areas. The buses drop off their payloads. Cliques assemble and walk together in a hive heading towards their various destinations.

Harris climbs out of the minivan and carefully watches for anyone who may see him being dropped off by his father. Harris is just about to close the passenger door when his father slides towards the open door.

TOM

Harris...

HARRIS

Yeah, Dad?

TOM

Have a good day, son.

Harris smiles quickly towards his father.

HARRIS

You too, Dad.

Harris closes the door and watches the minivan pull out away from the curb and drive out of sight. Harris then looks up and down the sidewalk and satisfied that his reputation would be intact if he just joined the crowd on their march towards the entrance of the school, Harris takes a step.

VOICE FROM THE CROWD

HARRIS!

Harris looks in the direction of the voice and sees **TERRY MICHAELS** a tall, lanky, acne laden, blond, young man. He is also a member of the geek club. He is Harris's best friend.

TERRY

Dude, where have you been?

Harris looks around. Before he can answer the crowd of students part. The cheerleading squad, each wearing their squad jackets, walks by like a gaggle of geese. It is a group of seven girls each giving off the glow of a classic Greek goddess. Leading the pack is **LISA MINETTI** a 17 year-old blond girl with cruel blue eyes and an air of indifference for most things that she sees. She is pretty and she knows it. Number seven, in the clique of the beautiful girls is **TAYLOR MAJORS** 16 with dark, flowing, dirty blonde hair, blue eyes and a playful smile. She effortlessly draws attention and energy from wherever she goes.

HARRIS

Terry... *There she is!*

Terry looks to the group of cheerleaders who are passing them by.

TERRY

Whoa.

Taylor looks towards Harris and smiles.

Harris immediately looks away as if by the very act of looking at her he would burst into flames.

The group of cheerleaders slow. They stop. Like satellites drawn around a heavenly body crowds seem to follow these girls. Lisa turns her head towards Harris and Terry. She cocks an eyebrow.

LISA

Let's keep moving along, girls. There's nothing to see here.

Some of the other cheerleaders begin to giggle at this. Taylor is not one of them. In a moment Lisa turns and marches towards the entrance of the school. Her squad and onlookers go with her.

Taylor looks over her shoulder towards Harris once again. Their eyes meet. Taylor looks away. She quickens her pace to keep up with the other cheerleaders.

HARRIS

I'm such a shmoe! Instead of saying something... ANYTHING, I freeze up every time I see her.

TERRY

It's true, you know.

HARRIS

What's that?

TERRY

You are a shmoe.

INT. HOMEROOM, DAY

The homeroom is a unique place in the universe. There are smatterings of cliques that range from the jocks, to the Goths, to the headbangers, to the geeks, to the cheerleaders, to the popular, to the unpopular, and to those who are sleeping or at least trying to. There is a large orange, yellow and red board in the class that festively lists all of the activities that are upcoming in the month of October. There are lists for football and basketball tryouts, as well as, chess and glee club.

Amid all the conversations, the handheld videogame battles, and the bobbing heads of the kids with MP3 earbuds, we find Harris and Terry.

MELISSA "MISSY" HOTCHKISS, 17, she has shoulder length auburn hair. Very pretty. What the guys would a hottie. A cheerleader and Harris's older sister.

On her way to the cheerleader's corner of the room she stops

to say hello.

MISSY

Hey nub. How ya doing, Terry?

TERRY

...Um... ..Good.

HARRIS

The ride in this morning wasn't the same without you. How did things go at the dentist?

MISSY

Great, no cavities.

HARRIS

Of course.

MISSY

Of course? What's that supposed to mean?

HARRIS

It means that your winning streak remains untarnished. Even your teeth are perfect.

MISSY

Hey, wouldn't that make a great compare and contrast essay - "The Success of Missy Hotchkiss Compared to the trails of Her geeky brother Harris"?

HARRIS

Oh yeah. That's great.

MISSY

I don't know, it's got a good ring to it. What do you think Terry?

TERRY

Uh...

MISSY

See, he loves it! Listen guys, I've got to go. I'll talk to you later.

Missy exits and migrates towards the other cheerleaders.

HARRIS

Aren't big sisters great?

TERRY

Yeah...but she is soooo incredibly hot!

HARRIS

Huh? Yeah whatever!

TERRY

Never mind. So let me get this straight... Your father designed the *Magnetic Brian Drain* and you don't think that's cool.

HARRIS

Oh, it's cool enough but don't forget Terry you're dealing with gravity and the laws of physics. A roller coaster like the *Magnetic Brain Drain* is just a hanging cart on a track.

TERRY

But what about the G's that it pulls and all of the loops?

HARRIS

What about 'em? Look Terry, it can't fly off because of the opposing wheels and the loops are there to slow it's decent.

TERRY

Really?

HARRIS

What?

TERRY

That does nothing for you?

HARRIS

It's just the laws of physics...

Three young women walk past Terry. They are each beautiful in their own right but one of them shines as constant as the North Star. Taylor Majors effortlessly draws on the energy from the room and magnifies it with each and every step she takes.

HARRIS

It's the simple law of attraction.

Harris and Terry watch as the three girls join with the larger pool of cheerleaders in what has turned into, quite possibly, the most beautiful corner of the room that the old rustic high school has ever seen.

VOICE OFFSCREEN

And what are you two nerds looking at?

Harris and Terry whip around at the gruff question. Standing there is **JOSH BOSON**, 6'1, 220 pounds of solid quarterback. His blonde hair is buzz cut to a quarter inch. He wears a jacket with the team's name in bold red letters "The Burro's". There is a caricature of a donkey kicking a football wearing a football helmet.

TERRY

What? NOTHING! We weren't looking at Nothing!

Harris looks at Terry and then to Josh.

JOSH

Yeah, that's what I thought. Keep it that way or I'll play connect the dots with your pimples.

This interaction begins to draw the attention of the room. There is a smattering of sounds from the homeroom at these words. Taylor's attention is peaked. She moves towards the action. The rest of the cheerleaders follow Lisa Minetti.

HARRIS

Come on Josh you're not fooling anyone.

JOSH

What's that, worm?

HARRIS

You have to know how to count to play
connect the dots.

Josh steps towards Harris as if he is going to rip off his head and yell "Go Long!" to one of his teammates.

TAYLOR

JOSH! That's enough.

Josh stops where he stands. His chest heaving and his eyes never wavering from Harris's.

JOSH

This does not concern you.

TAYLOR

Josh, what about your probation? You do this and you're off the team.

Josh breaks eye contact with Harris and glances over his shoulder.

JOSH

You know what?

The room is silent.

JOSH (CONT.)

Baby, you're right. This worm's not worth my time.

TAYLOR

Don't call me "baby". You lost that privilege a long time ago.

Josh bristles at this. Lisa slides in beside him and wraps herself around him. She shoots a sneer towards Taylor.

LISA

She's right, baby the worm's not worth it.

Josh looks into Lisa's eyes.

JOSH

What would I do with out you?

RING! The morning bell rings in the homeroom. The students gather their books and belongings and move towards the exit.

Josh looks towards Harris and Terry once more.

JOSH (CONT.)

You two... you got off easy this morning.

Lisa disengages herself from Josh and retrieves her things for first period.

Josh leans down in between Harris and Terry.

JOSH (CONT.)

Watch your back.

In a moment Lisa is there next to Josh.

LISA

Come on Josh walk me to class.

JOSH

Yeah... let's go.

Josh and Lisa exit arm in arm.

TAYLOR

Exit stage left.

HARRIS

Charming young man that Josh is.

Taylor looks harshly towards Harris.

TAYLOR

Look, just keep out of his way. There's more to him than meets the eye.

TERRY

What, like a Transformer?

TAYLOR

I'm serious. Leave him alone. He's bad news.

HARRIS

And how do you know that?

TAYLOR

That is none of your business. Just...
stay out of his way.

Taylor gathers her things and exits leaving Harris and Terry alone.

TERRY

You don't have to tell me twice.

HARRIS

Did you hear that?

TERRY

What?

HARRIS

She cares enough to stop Josh from
throttling us.

TERRY

Heh, yeah... real touching.

Harris smiles as he and Terry grab their things to move onto first period.

INT. BOARDROOM OF CAPITOL AMUSEMENTS, MORNING

Tom Hotchkiss is in the middle of a PowerPoint presentation concerning one of his newest creations for Capitol Amusements, the *Magnetic Brain Drain*. Men and women in business attire are gathered around an oblong table in a darkened room. An overhead projector that is connected to Tom's laptop is displaying statistical and design information about the roller coaster.

TOM

So you see, the *Magnetic Brain Drain* is a first in the nation. The electro-magnetic couplings increase the 0 to 70 miles per hour speed to 4.5 seconds - one of the fastest speeds for a roller

coaster worldwide. Coaster fans the world over will be looking for a ride on the *Magnetic Brain Drain*. ...Lights please.

The lights in the room come up.

TOM (CONT.)

Any questions?

A man with gray hair and sharp eyes who is sitting at the head of the table, AVERY WESKER, 60's stirs in his seat.

AVERY

And it will be ready to next Saturday?

TOM

All safety checks and last minute tweakings are finished Mr. Wesker. You are about to become the proud owner of the fastest roller coaster in North America.

Wesker smiles at this announcement.

Another man stirs. He is sitting two seats down from Avery. This is a large man who appears to be a one-time weight lifter who has gone to seed. **ANDREW BOSON**, mid 50's, wears a frown.

BOSON

Mr. Hotchkiss. Is this safe?

TOM

It's safer than riding the bus, driving your car or crossing the street. Yes, the *Magnetic Brain Drain* is safe.

BOSON

What about the insurance risks?

AVERY

I'm not following you, Mr. Boson, what do you mean?

BOSON

I mean what happens if something goes wrong? What happens when "the fastest

coaster in North America" flies off of the tracks and takes out a whole family reunion at our park - I'm talking three or four generations in one fell swoop?

AVERY

We are not new at this game, Andrew. This is not our first rodeo.

TOM

Mr. Boson...

Andrew's attention refocuses on Tom.

TOM (CONT.)

This coaster, in particular due to the groundbreaking intensity of the ride, has gone through rigorous safety trials. However we welcome any and all outside inspections - even now at this late date.

BOSON

What would you say to one more independent study?

TOM

Absolutely. If the board feels that another is warranted. We are professionals here and safety is our number one concern.

BOSON

You know, Mr. Hotchkiss, professionals built the Titanic and amateurs built the ark.

There is a small murmur around the room at this remark.

BOSON (CONT.)

Look, I mean no disrespect but I used to play football and I needed to know that I could rely on my team. It is a tradition in the Boson family. My son is an offensive lineman for "The Burro's" and I have always ingrained in him the value of teamwork...

AVERY (INT.)

Andrew your point is taken. Tom, you don't mind another battery of tests do you?

TOM

No sir, not at all.

AVERY

Well, it's settled then. The independent testing will continue. In the meantime I would like to review what sort of publicity we are going to be generating next week.

Another man at the table clears his throat. He talks.

PUBLIC RELATIONS MAN

The publicity for the premiere of the *Magnetic Brain Drain* is unprecedented..

As the man continues Tom's and Boson's eyes meet. There is the shadow in the smile that he flashes towards Tom that is disconcerting.

INT. GYMNASIUM, AFTERNOON

Students are dressed in wrestling getup, singlets and headgear and are awaiting instruction from their COACH, 40's and wearing white shorts, a dark blue jumper and a whistle around his neck. He has a clipboard tucked under one of his arms. Harris and Terry are a part of the crowd, so are Josh and several other bulky football players.

TWEET! The Coach blows his whistle.

COACH

All right ladies, here is what is in store for today. I will announce two names and those two men will meet in the middle of the Greco Roman circle that you see before you.

The Coach gestures towards the large circle marked on the mats in front of the class.

COACH (CONT.)

You know what you need to do so...

He glances at his clipboard.

COACH (CONT.)

MICHAELS, MOORECOCK - FRONT AND CENTER!

A look of horror crosses over Terry's features as he gets up and moves to the center of the circle.

MOORECOCK, 17, chiseled and muscular is about 5'10 and about 210 pounds steps into the ring and faces Terry. A wicked grin spreads across his face.

The two assume the starting positions. Moorecock on his hands and knees and Terry on one knee with his arm draped around his opponent's torso.

The rest of the class looks on. Josh is standing with his arms folded in front of a handful of muscle bound football jocks. He glares at Harris.

JOSH

This shouldn't take long. Moorecock's is on the All State wrestling team.

The corner of Josh's mouth curls into a mockery of a smile as the jocks around him grunt their approval. Their attention is refocused on the center of the circle.

COACH

READY?

Moorecock nods his acknowledgment while Terry, resembling an indecisive squirrel crossing the road, quickly shakes his head.

TWEET! The coach blows a blast on his whistle. The battle begins. The "battle" is over quickly when Moorecock twists out of Terry's grip, grabs him around the waist and with a suplex that arcs Terry's body through the air he pins his shoulders to the mat. Two eternal seconds pass.

TWEET! The coach's whistle blasts once again.

COACH

Win by fall! Good job, Moorecock. Did you see how both shoulders smacked against the mat?

Terry's chest is heaving. He now resembles a squirrel that has been hit by a truck on while trying to cross the road.

COACH (CONT.)

MICHAELS! You still with us?

Terry sits up and stands.

TERRY

...Yes coach.

Terry makes his way over towards Harris. The two share a shell-shocked, *trapped in a foxhole with you*, expression.

COACH

Good work out there. Way to show hustle.

Terry's eyebrows raise. He nods his head incredulously.

The coach glances at his clipboard again.

COACH (CONT.)

BOSON and...

He looks up from the clipboard and over to Harris.

COACH (CONT.)

HOTCHKISS - Front and center!

HARRIS (TO TERRY)

Tell my family that I loved them.

TERRY

You got it.

Harris makes his way into the circle. Josh is already there staring at his victim. The jocks grunt out their approval of the coming slaughter. Harris who is 5'6 looks up into the eyes of Josh who is 6'1.

HARRIS

Coach... *Really?*

Harris looks at the coach while Josh's wolf like eyes never waiver from his opponent.

COACH

Oh, I'm sorry Hotchkiss, how foolish of me, this doesn't seem all that fair.

Josh looks towards the coach. A spark of hope is kindled in Harris's heart.

COACH (CONT.)

LIFE'S NOT FAIR, son! Get used to it!

Josh exhales a grunt that could in some circles be considered a laugh.

JOSH

Worm, I'm going to crush you.

COACH
WRESTLERS READY!

Harris gets down on all fours. Josh gets down on one knee with his arm around Harris's torso.

JOSH
Say your prayers...

HARRIS (INT.)
Varmint.

JOSH
Huh?

TWEET! The coach's whistle blasts and the battle is joined. Harris twists away from Josh's grasp and rolls to his feet.

HARRIS
Yosemite Sam.

JOSH
What did you call me?

HARRIS
No - "Say your prayers, varmint" is something that Yosemite Sam would..

WOOF! Before he can finish the sentence Josh hurtles his body towards Harris knocking the wind out of him. Harris lands on his side gasping.

TWEET! The coach's whistle blast stops the match.

COACH
Boson, this is not a football field. No tackling. That's one caution to you. Two more and you lose due to disqualification.

The jocks are loving what they are seeing much like sharks sensing blood in the water from wounded prey.

JOSH
Yes Coach!

Harris gets to his feet again taking several deep breaths.

COACH

RESUME!

Harris and Josh resume their starting positions.

JOSH

Congratulations, Worm. You are about to win your first wrestling match.

TWEET! The coach's whistle splits the air. The battle is joined again. Harris struggles to get out of Josh's grasp but he can't find an opening. Josh is all over him and just as he is about to pin Harris he lets go.

JOCK

What?! Dude you had him!

Harris rolls to his feet once more and faces Josh anew. Josh has not broken a sweat. Harris pounces towards Josh's direction and just before he makes contact Josh falls to the mat and trips Harris's legs. Harris lands face first into the mat.

TWEET!

COACH

BOSON! This is Greco-Roman Wrestling and therefore no tripping, hooking or grabbing your opponent's legs.

Josh gets to his feet.

JOSH

Sorry Coach.

COACH

That's two, one more caution and you're disqualified.

JOSH

Yes Coach!

COACH

HOTCHKISS How you holding up?

Harris gets to his knees, chest heaving.

HARRIS

I'm...

COACH (INT.)

GOOD! RESUME!

Harris crawls to the center of the circle. Josh assumes the starting position again.

JOSH (TO HARRIS)

Your victory is in sight.

HARRIS

Oh just get on with it.

TWEET! Harris throws his weight into Josh's ribs. This move was unanticipated. Josh is taken aback. Harris twirls wrapping one of his arms around Josh's waist. Before he can join his hands together Josh recovers and twists out of Harris's grasp. The two are standing with only a few feet between them.

JOSH

You have no idea what you are getting into. Your move worm.

Harris jumps towards Josh for another grapple. Harris slams into him. It is like running into a brick wall. Harris throws his arms around Josh's waist, clasps his hands together, and tries to throw him to the mat. Josh just stands there with his arms out to his sides and his palms up. Harris might as well be wrestling the bronze statue of George Washington in the County Park.

Chuckles from ringside can be heard.

Josh looks at Harris struggling to throw him. In one fluid motion Josh head butts Harris who goes down to the mat like a ton of bricks. A thud resonates from the rubber mat.

TWEET!

COACH

That's THREE Boson! You are now disqualified! Hotchkiss wins!

Josh leans down towards Harris who is blinking the stars out of his field of vision.

JOSH

Congratulations on your win, worm.

Josh moves towards his group of friends who greet him with cheers and high fives.

Terry moves towards Harris who is beginning to move to a

seated position on the mat.

TERRY

Harris, are you all right?

HARRIS

...Sure, I'd like extra cheese on the pizza. And ummm.. what year is this?

TERRY

Look man, you just took a nasty blow to the head, I think you should get checked out by the nurse.

TWEET! The coach's whistle pierces through their conversation.

COACH

I think he should take a lap and walk it off.

TERRY

But Coach...

COACH

MICHAELS - YOU GO WITH HIM!

TERRY

..Yes coach.

The two boys get to their feet. They begin their lap around the gym.

INT: LUNCHROOM, LATER

Crowds of highschoolers are mingling over their lunches. It is a busy area with people standing in line for today's special, a box of milk or a can of soda. Sitting at a table are Harris and Terry.

TERRY

You know what, Harris?

HARRIS

What?

TERRY

We need to face facts. Nerds like us will NEVER be Olympic athletes. We should have our noses in books like all the clichés say we should. Speaking of which, have you studied for tomorrow's test?

HARRIS

TEST! There's a test tomorrow!

TERRY

Yes. Please tell me you've studied.

HARRIS

Uh... What's it on?

TERRY

Unbelievable.

VOICE FROM BEHIND

Harris, I heard you got your clock cleaned in gym class.

Harris turns and sees **CHARLIE WATTS**, a lanky 16 year-old with freckles, standing over him.

HARRIS

..You could say that.

CHARLIE

So what happened?

HARRIS

I don't know...

Josh enters the lunchroom with his entourage of jocks and football players. He sees Harris and makes a beeline for him.

Charlie quickly moves out of the way.

JOSH

Worm. I can't seem to get away from you today.

HARRIS

The feeling's mutual.

JOSH

You're a funny guy but you know what your problem is?

Harris looks at Josh forlorn.

HARRIS

No Josh, what is my problem?

JOSH

You need to stay away from my girl.

Harris's mouth drops open.

HARRIS

WHAT! Are you kidding me? I have had NOTHING to do with Lisa!

JOSH

I'm not talking about Lisa. Stay away from Taylor. She's off limits.

Taylor walks into the room with another girl. Upon hearing her name and seeing the commotion she moves towards the action.

JOSH (CONT.)

Do you hear me? Stay away from Taylor!

TAYLOR

Or what?

Josh whips around at the sound of the question and is surprised to find Taylor standing there.

JOSH

...Taylor.

TAYLOR

You and I are over Josh. There is not

enough room for your ego and us. And what about Lisa? You're free to date her and I am free to date whomever I want.

JOSH

You deserve better than this worm.

TAYLOR

You're missing the point, none of that matters. WE are over. You shouldn't care who I'm with.

JOSH

But Taylor...

TAYLOR (INT.)

No Josh. We are done here.

The bell rings. Lunch is over. There is movement throughout the room to gather trash and trays together and to move on to the next class. Harris and Terry are among the last to leave followed by Taylor. The lunchroom empties. Josh is left standing alone.

INT: BOSON'S OFFICE, AFTERNOON

Andrew Boson is looking out the glass window at the gathering storm clouds and the streets several floors below his feet. He is used to standing above it all. His contemplations are interrupted by the bleep of an intercom.

BLEEP!

VOICE ON INTERCOM

Mr. Boson, your 2:00 PM appointment is here.

A shadow crosses Boson's face.

BOSON

Yes, send him in.

BARTHOLOMEW MEADE A well dressed man in his early 50's enters the office. He is wearing a fine tailored Italian suit. His appearance is well coifed.

BOSON

Ah, Mr. Meade, it is good to see you.
Can I offer you anything?

MEADE

Mr. Boson have you made progress on our
project?

BOSON

I am close to having the plans for the
magnetic coupling.

MEADE

Close. Close as in 'you don't have them
yet?'

BOSON

I have another team who is going to
acquire what we need.

MEADE

Another team, Mr. Boson?

BOSON

Yes and this time they will be posing as
safety inspectors.

MEADE

My employers are growing tired of your
excuses Mr. Boson.

BOSON

They will have their precious industrial
secrets soon.

MEADE

That would be a most beneficial
situation Mr. Boson. I wish you the

best with your efforts. When should I tell my employers that their package will be ready?

BOSON

Thursday of next week.

MEADE

Very good, Mr. Boson. I shall pass along the good news. They will be most pleased.

Andrew Boson smiles broadly.

MEADE (CONT.)

Of course it would be most unwise to disappoint them any further.

Boson's smile fades.

EXT: BUNGALOW HOME, LATE AFTERNOON

The Hotchkiss home is located deep in the heart of suburbia. It is raining cats and dogs. The forecasted storms are moving through the area. Thunder is in the distance.

INT: KITCHEN, CONT.

Tom Hotchkiss enters the kitchen to find his wife, **BEVERLY HOTCHKISS**, she is a fit woman in her early 40's in jeans and a light sweater holding a cup of coffee.

TOM

Hey Lady. How was your day?

BEVERLY

Oh, it was all right. How about yours?

Before Tom can answer an 11 year-old blur runs into the kitchen and right past Tom. Beverly looks onward expecting exactly what is about to come next. The blur is their son, **STEWART HOTCHKISS**. There is a book in his hand with the name, "MISSY" on the cover in bold pink letters. His wide smile shows a mouth full of braces.

TOM
Stewart!

STEWART
Yes, Dad?

TOM
Slow down, son, somebody's going to get hurt.

Another figure appears at the entrance to the kitchen. Her usual bubbly 17 year-old persona has dropped and Missy appears as though she has plans for the pound of flesh that she is going to extract from her little brother. Her manicured blonde eyebrows furrow at the sight of her little brother.

MISSY
YOU!

Stewart's smile disappears and for a brief moment he resembles a squirrel not knowing which direction to turn to escape the oncoming car tires.

MISSY (CONT.)
Give me back my diary.

Stewart looks briefly to the book in his hands and then back to his sister.

STEWART
Missy, I can explain!

MISSY
I don't need explanations, Stewie, I need my diary!

STEWART
Mom, Missy called me Stewie!

Beverly swallows a mouthful of coffee and looks towards her youngest child.

BEVERLY
Stewart, give her back her diary.

MISSY

Yeah, *Stewie*, give me back my diary.

BEVERLY

Knock it off, Missy.

STEWART

Yeah, Missy, you're not being very nice, what would *Brad* say?

MISSY

...Brad? You little tugnugget, you READ MY DIARY!

Missy takes a step toward her little brother with visions of homicide dancing through her head. Stewart takes a step backwards. Tom interjects his body between them.

TOM

Missy... Stewart.

MISSY

Yes.

Stewart looks at his father.

TOM

You two are driving me loopy. Listen, whose turn is it to take out the garbage? I came home and it's not outside on the curb.

The two siblings exchange glances.

MISSY

Harris's.

STEWART

Yeah, Harris.

TOM

Harris.

Tom looks around the room.

TOM (CONT.)

Where is Harris?

MISSY

I don't know Dad; sorry.

STEWART

He might be outside in the tree house.

TOM

The tree house! In this weather!

STEWART

Well, the roof is holding up since we fixed the leak and it is pretty cool out there with the wind blowing the branches against the walls. It's kind of like being a Storm Chaser.

BEVERLY

A Storm Chaser, huh?

MISSY

You are such a geek.

TOM

All right, thanks.

Tom steps out of Missy's way leaving her a clear path open towards her youngest brother. Stewart's eyes shoot wide open as his sister takes another step towards him.

Stewart begins to run down a hallway in hopes of outrunning his sister to some sort of oasis where he could happily read his sibling's most dark and hidden secrets.

MISSY

I'm gonna kill you!

Missy chases him down the hall leaving Beverly and Tom alone.

BEVERLY

That's what I love about our home...

She takes a sip of coffee.

BEVERLY (CONT.)

The peace and quiet.

EXT. TREEHOUSE, CONTINUOUS

The rain pelts the house. A tree house sits in the crotch of an old buttonwood tree in the back yard of the Hotchkiss bungalow. A thick rope with knots every foot and a half is beginning to whip around being pushed by the wind. There is a light coming from the inside with power supplied by an extension cord that runs from the small garage next to the buttonwood in the back yard.

INT. TREEHOUSE, CONTINUOUS

Harris is trying to study his physics book for the test tomorrow but he's failing in his attempt. Although he has tried to isolate himself from his family to have some peace and quiet, the storm is asserting itself and drawing his attention away from his studies.

BOOM! The thunder is rolling ever so closer to the tree house.

Harris looks out at the menacing skies, looks back towards his open book and begins to mumble.

HARRIS

"Worm..."

Harris sits and pushes his schoolbook away.

HARRIS (CONT.)

Just who does Mr. Popular think he is?

Harris reaches past his physics book to a pile of comic books, pulls one off the top and looks at the cover. There is a group of muscle bound costumed superheroes on the front. The title of the book is "JUSTICE SQUAD".

HARRIS (CONT.)

That's what I need... to extract justice from my tormentors.

TOM (OFFSCREEN - DISTANT)

Harris!

Harris pulls himself up and to the window. He sees his father below. He sees how much darker the skies have

become.

HARRIS

..Holy cow.

TOM

Harris, come down! It's getting bad out here!

As if on cue streaks of lightning discharge illuminating Tom and the whole back yard. Tom is drenched.

HARRIS

Right!

Harris exits the treehouse and begins to descend the knotted rope.

TOM

Come on Harris!

HARRIS

I'm coming!

The storm is on top of them now. The lightning seems to have a mind of its own as it dances around their location.

KRACK! There is a deafening clap of thunder and a blinding light that illuminates Harris's body as he hangs in mid air. As soon as it had happened the light and the sound disappear as Harris's smoldering body falls to the muddy ground below.

TOM

HARRIS!

INT. HOSPITAL, LATER

The Hotchkiss family, Tom, Beverly, Missy and Stewart are gathered around Harris as he lies still on a hospital bed. There are intravenous drips & lines. There are heart and blood pressure monitors that are hooked up to the boy on the bed. The effect is chilling. The silence is deafening.

A tear makes a trail down Missy's cheek. She grabs her father's hand.

The door swings open and DOCTOR HORTON, 30ish with dark hair enters. He is wearing a lab coat and holding a clipboard.

DR. HORTON

Hello everyone, I'm Dr. Horton.

BEVERLY

What can you tell us about our son?

Dr. Horton looks at Beverly and Tom.

DR. HORTON

I can tell you that your son is a very lucky young man.

Beverly's lower lip begins to quiver.

DR. HORTON (CONT.)

But he is not out of the woods yet.

TOM

What do you mean? Will he be ok?

DR. HORTON

Your son was just hit by lightning - and survived. That carries with it reason to hope. We have run a MRI and everything appears to be functioning within normal limits.

STEWART

Harris, "normal"?

BEVERLY

Shhhhhh!

Dr. Horton waves his hand towards Harris.

DR. HORTON (CONT.)

In the plus column he does not need a ventilator since he is breathing on his own. That too is a good sign and after the adventure that he has had tonight, I'd say that is another sure sign that he is making progress. Still, he is going to be here a few days so that we can observe him and run a few more tests. His vital signs are good and now... Now it is a waiting game.

INT: HOSPITAL ROOM, DAY

Sunshine bathes through the vertical blinds in Harris's room. There is a bunch of balloons on the nightstand next to him, each one says "GET WELL". He is lying on crisp fresh bedclothes. His closed eyes appear to be moving back and forth as if he is in a REM state.

The door opens. **NURSE WALKER** a young woman in her early twenties comes in to check on Harris's vital signs. She is wearing scrubs with a Mickey Mouse themed top. A stethoscope is around her neck.

Harris's eyes fly open. He sits straight up in bed.

NURSE

Whoa!

HARRIS

What's happening? Where am I?

NURSE

Harris...

Harris's eyes dart around the room.

HARRIS

Where's my Mom and Dad?

Harris looks at the IV in his arm and makes a motion toward it.

NURSE

Harris. Don't touch that. You are fine. You are safe.

Harris looks at her with comprehension returning to his face.

NURSE (CONT.)

You are in the hospital, I'm Nurse Walker and, if you will hold on for a moment, I will see about getting the doctor in here to answer all your questions. Before I do that I have a question for you. How do you feel?

Harris pauses as if he is mentally inspecting his body.

HARRIS

I feel... I feel pretty good Nurse Walker.
I feel great.

NURSE

That's good to hear! Now don't touch those leads and I will be right back.

Nurse Walker exits.

Harris begins to investigate his state of being by wiggling his toes, which are covered by the hospital blanket.

HARRIS

Good I still have my feet and they're working.

He looks at the palms of his hands and wiggles his fingers.

HARRIS (CONT.)

Check.

The door opens. **DOCTOR KRAMER** enters. He appears to be a man in his mid-fifties. He is balding. He wears scrubs underneath a lab coat. There is a thermometer in his chest pocket where a pen should have been. He looks tired.

DR. KRAMER

Good morning Harris. It's good to see you wide-awake. How do you feel?

HARRIS

I feel great but I have a lot of questions.

DR. KRAMER

I bet you do. Fortunately for both of us I have answers.

HARRIS

Where are my parents?

DR. KRAMER

They are down in the waiting area. I have sent Nurse Walker to retrieve them. They will be very pleased to see you.

HARRIS

What happened?

DR. KRAMER

Harris, my friend, you were struck by lightning and here you are to tell the tale!

HARRIS

Lightning?

DR. KRAMER

Yes. Do you remember anything from your experience?

HARRIS

Well... not really. I remember being in the treehouse and my dad called for me.

DR. KRAMER

Yes.

HARRIS

I remember climbing down the rope and then... well, I remember waking up right here.

DR. KRAMER

Fascinating. Harris have you ever heard of Keraunomedicine?

Harris shakes his head.

DR. KRAMER (CONT.)

I'm not surprised not many people have. It is the medical study of victims of lightning strikes - those who live and those who do not. It just so happens that I have more than a passing interest in Keraunomedicine and I am always pleased to meet and talk to a survivor.

HARRIS

Lightning! I can't believe it. Have you met many lightning strike survivors?

DR. HARRIS

Why yes. I'd say I've met about twenty people - including you, who have been struck by lightning and lived. You, however, are unusual.

HARRIS

How's that?

DR. KRAMER

I usually meet these people years after their incident you, Harris, are fresh off the experience. You are a very fortunate young man.

Dr. Kramer extends his hand. Harris shakes it.

The door bursts open. Tom and Beverly Hotchkiss enter. They are overjoyed to see their son awake and on the road to recovery.

TOM

Harris... my son...

BEVERLY

My beautiful boy.

Beverly begins kissing her son.

The doctor smiles and makes room for Harris's parents to get a clear look at their child.

DR. KRAMER

I will be at the nurse's station if you need me. I'll be back soon but for now I think the best medicine is to enjoy each other's company.

Dr. Kramer exits.

TOM

How do you feel, Harris?

HARRIS

Well I don't have any of the immediate injuries associated with a lightning strike such as to the circulatory system, the lungs or the central nervous system. I did not enter fibrillation

and there was no myocardial infarction or cardiac arrhythmias - either of which can be fatal as well. I did experience a loss of consciousness but I am not suffering from Amnesia or confusion. Experiments have shown that during such a lightning strike the brainstem, which controls breathing, can get "overloaded" and thus any unconscious victims die of suffocation. Since I am here I suppose I have you to thank Dad. I assume you started artificial resuscitation until my brainstem recovered?

Beverly and Tom are shocked and awed at what Harris is saying.

HARRIS (CONT.)

Isn't that right Dad?

TOM

...Yes Harris, that's what happened...

HARRIS

As for long-term effects ruptured eardrums and ocular cataracts may develop but most long-term injuries are usually neurological in nature and may include memory deficit, sleep disturbances, chronic pain and dizziness; although, I gotta tell ya, right now I feel like a million bucks.

BEVERLY

Harris. Are you all right?

HARRIS

I'm great. Never felt better.

TOM

Son... listen to yourself... You sound like you are in residency.

HARRIS

Residency? I haven't been in residency

for over thirty years!

Harris's jaw drops open.

HARRIS (CONT.)

What's wrong with me? What's going on?

Beverly's hand goes towards her mouth in shock.

TOM

Harris, what was just going through your mind?

HARRIS

I don't know, Dad. All of the sudden my mind filled with all of this medical stuff...

BEVERLY

...How do you feel now?

HARRIS

I feel fine. Why does everyone keep asking me that?

Dr. Kramer enters again.

DR. KRAMER

Well, the last of the tests have come back and Harris, I'm glad to inform you that you have a clean bill of health. Son, you are what's know as in these parts as a miracle.

Beverly clears her throat and smiles. Harris smiles too.

TOM

That's my son... the Miracle!

DR. KRAMER

Well Harris, I can't think of a reason to keep you hear so I believe it's time for your family to spring you.

HARRIS

"Spring" me?

DR. KRAMER

Why yes, 'spring' you - let you go home. You know 30 plus years ago when I was in my residency, being 'sprung' out of a hospital was a good thing. And don't you know, it still is.

Harris smiles at this.

DR. KRAMER

Take care of yourself Harris and stay away from anything that remotely looks like a rain cloud.

HARRIS

Doctor Kramer...

DR. KRAMER

Yes?

HARRIS

...If I have any problems can I come and see you?

DR. KRAMER

Of course. Now I want you out of here and back home. That is my prescription.

The doctor smiles at the family. He exits.

BEVERLY

Do you think we should tell the doctor?

TOM

Tell him what - that our boy's a genius? What do you think of that Harris - your mom thinks your crazy.

BEVERLY

That is NOT what I said, Tom.

HARRIS

I'm just glad to be on this side of the Pearly Gates.

INT: HOTCHISS HOME, LIVING ROOM, DAY

There is a wide screen TV and other trappings that show upper class status. There is a bird cage with a cockatoo named Marvin.

Harris enters. Looks to see that he is alone. Reaches into the cage.

HARRIS

Hey Marvin...

The bird chirps as if acknowledging Harris's presence.

HARRIS

Wouldn't it be cool to fly?

Harris touches the bird. He closes the cage door. He runs down a hallway past Missy. Harris runs through the back door and into a spacious yard. Harris begins to flap his arms.

Missy looks through the window watching her brother.

MISSY

MOM!

Harris backs up and starts to run flapping his arms with all his might. He takes a leap into the air.

SMACK! Harris hits the ground. He is winded but is able to roll onto his back.

MISSY (CONT.)

I think Harris has lost it!

ANGLE ON HARRIS

HARRIS

Note to self... it does NOT work on animals.

INT: BIOLOGY CLASSROOM 305, MORNING

Jars, vials, terrariums and petri dishes of living and once living things line the room. Examples of life forms of several dozen varieties can be found here in the classroom.

MR. PANECKI, 50's balding with horn rimmed glasses hanging off the bridge of his nose holds court here. He is wearing a white lab coat with a green stain where his pocket protector is. He looks like he has taught for too long.

The name "Mr. Panecki" is highlighted in a corner of the chalkboard. It is underlined three times.

Students are rushing in and finding their seats before class begins. **TODD GROVER**, 16, wearing a school football jacket, looks as if he could arm-wrestle a grizzly. He is tapping the side of a terrarium.

Harris and Terry enter.

TERRY

And you say it happens when you touch someone?

HARRIS

Yeah. It's like I know what they know.

TERRY

Like empathy?

HARRIS

Maybe - but it's more than that... Their skills... their knowledge... I *absorb* it.

TERRY

For how long?

HARRIS

I don't know for sure but it's been clocking in at about 20 minutes.

The pair walks past Panecki's lab table.

HARRIS

Good morning Mr. Panecki.

PANECKI

Hmm? Oh yes. Good morning.

He turns as he addresses Harris and sees Todd.

PANECKI (CONT.)

Mr. Grover! Stay away from the tarantula.

The young man is startled and stops. He begins to make his way to his seat. He passes Taylor on his way to the back of

the class.

Taylor sees Harris, stands and approaches him. She lays a hand on his arm.

TAYLOR

HARRIS! Are you all right? I heard that you were struck by lightning.

Harris is beaming but trying hard not to show it.

HARRIS

Yes! ...Lightning. I got hit with it.

Taylor looks at him strangely.

TAYLOR

There were no permanent damages?

HARRIS

Permanent? NO! I'm fine. I was climbing out of the treehouse.

TODD

Treehouse! Dude, you're what - 16? And you're still playing in treehouses!

Harris looks in Todd's direction but he cannot shake the feeling of joy at having Taylor touch him.

PANECKI

All right students please find your seats. We will be checking on the progress of our fruit flies today.

TAYLOR (HUSHED)

I'll talk with you at lunch.

Harris and Terry find their seats. Harris is reeling at the true concern that Taylor has for his well being.

SPLAT! Something hits Harris squarely on back of his head. Harris hears the giggles from the other kids. He turns around just in time to see the next spitball's trajectory and feel it hit the center of his forehead. Todd is the assassin.

TODD

You got a problem, Treehouse?

TAP, TAP, TAP! Panecki raps his pointer on the side of his lab table.

PANECKI

Eyes forward, please. Let's begin. Open your texts to page 184 as we begin to see the wonder of the fruit fly.

INT: SCHOOL HALLWAY, LATER

Harris and Terry make their way through the crowded hallway heading towards their next class.

TERRY

There has got to be a better way.

HARRIS

To what?

TERRY

To go to school. I'm sick of it all. It's distracting. By the way...

HARRIS

Yeah?

TERRY

This is crazy.

HARRIS

What's crazy?

TERRY

This whole 'tactile-morph', psychic thing.

HARRIS

All right, let's get two things straight. I love it when you talk comic book and I'm not a psychic.

TERRY

What else would you call it?

HARRIS

...I don't know but I DO know I can't see the future.

TERRY

Maybe you just haven't touched the right person yet?

HARRIS

So you're saying there are real, honest to goodness psychics out there?

TERRY

You're here, Harris. And if you're here and you can do the things that you claim you can do who's to say?

The pair's pace slows as Harris considers the question.

TERRY

What about your parents?

HARRIS

What about 'em?

TERRY

Don't they know?

HARRIS

Well they were surprised when I started talking about medical prognosis when I touched the doctor but I think they were just happy that I was alive.

JOSH (OFF SCREEN)

Hey Static Cling...

Harris and Terry look over their shoulders to the sound of the voice. It's Josh. On either side of him are his

girlfriend, Lisa Minetti and Todd Grover. Lisa is wearing a sneer. Todd is grinning from ear to ear.

JOSH

I heard that you were hit by lightning...
in your TREEHOUSE.

Todd and Lisa giggle.

Harris and Terry turn and continue their march towards their next class.

JOSH (CONT.)

The electric worm rides again.

INT: ALGEBRA CLASS, LATER

Harris and Terry are sitting next to each other as the other kids come filing in to the classroom.

TERRY

Are you sure this is going to work?

HARRIS

As sure as the tides, Terry. Besides,
what have we got to lose?

TERRY

Well, I'll give you that...

Todd Grover comes walking down the aisle and stops in front of Harris's desk. He looks him over disapprovingly.

TODD

Hmph. Just how does a geek like you
have a smokin' hot sister like Melissa?

VOICE OFFSCREEN

Mr. Grover, please be seated.

Todd glances over his shoulder at the Algebra Teacher, MR. LANG, 50ish wearing a tweed jacket with suede pads on the elbows.

MR. LANG

Now.

Todd snickers in Harris's direction and finds his seat.

Mr. Lang opens his brief case and produces a stack of papers, collated and stapled.

MR. LANG (CONT.)

Good. As you know...

Mr. Lang takes his pile of stapled papers and begins to move between the aisles passing a package to each of the students.

MR. LANG (CONT.)

Today's test counts for 25% of your grade for this class.

Another package is passed to a kid with a look horror on her face.

MR. LANG (CONT.)

If you don't know - 25% is a full QUARTER of your grade for my class.

Another package is passed to another kid.

MR. LANG (CONT.)

Four quarters make a whole or... 100%.

Another kid gets a package. Lang turns and moves down Harris's aisle.

MR. LANG (CONT.)

Two quarters makes 50% or if I had two quarters in my pocket I would have 50 cents.

Mr. Lang slaps down Todd's test onto the student's desk.

MR. LANG (CONT.)

Do you understand the importance of this test CHILDREN?

Mr. Lang stops in front of Harris's desk.

HARRIS

Sir...

Harris reaches out his arm to shake Mr. Lang's hand.

HARRIS (CONT.)

I just want you to know that you are doing a fine job.

Mr. Lang smiles and shakes Harris's hand.

Terry watches with wide eyes at the physical connection.

MR. LANG

Oh, flattery - from the man who has failed the *last two tests*?

Mr. Lang's smile drops. He releases Harris's hand.

TODD (LEANING FORWARD)

Treehouse, you are such a suck-up.

Todd sits back in his desk once more.

MR. LANG (CONT.)

I believe the children are the future..

Mr. Lang continues down the line passing out tests.

MR. LANG (CONT.)

I just didn't believe that the mole
people would have their shot at running
the world so soon.

Mr. Lang slaps down another stapled package of papers onto
another kid's desk and moves along.

Mr. Lang finishes passing out the test, moves to the front
of the class and glances at his watch as he sits down in his
chair.

MR. LANG

Begin.

The students pick up their pencils and start their tests.
Looks of concern are on the kid's faces except for Harris.
His is a look of deep concentration. His pencil moves
furiously across the page.

He glances towards Terry's direction to make sure that he
can see his answers.

Terry does. The two begin completing their tests at a rapid
pace. Harris is sure to pass along each answer to Terry.

Harris slams his pencil down. He is finished. It has taken
him 10 minutes. He is ahead of every other student. Knowing
that he has time to kill he goes over the test a second time
and then a third.

RING! The bell finally goes off. The period has ended.

MR. LANG

Ok, pencils down! Put 'em in a pile
here on my desk. NEATLY!

One by one the students file out of the Algebra class,
leaving their tests on Mr. Lang's desk. Most of them wear
looks of despair as they exit.

Harris and Terry exit the room and enter the busy hallway.

HARRIS

Terry... This is amazing - it's like I
WROTE the test!

TERRY

So it worked?

HARRIS

Oh yeah, bud, it worked.

TERRY

So that lightning strike made you smarter?

HARRIS

No... I wouldn't go that far. Let's just say it made me see things... *differently*.

The two head down the hall to their next class.

INT. CAFETERIA AT LUNCHTIME: LATER

Harris and Terry are eating lunch. Taylor sits next to Harris.

HARRIS

Taylor!

TAYLOR

Yep, the one and only.

TERRY

How'd you do on the test?

TAYLOR

Oh that? I feel pretty good about it. How about you two?

HARRIS

Great.

TERRY

Yeah.

TAYLOR

Listen Harris, I just wanted to say that I'm glad that you are still in one piece and vertical.

She smiles. Harris's knees get weak.

TAYLOR (CONT.)

So what's it like getting hit by lightning?

HARRIS

Well... uh... I hate to admit it but I really don't have too much memory of getting zapped.

TAYLOR

Maybe that's a blessing in disguise. You know some things you just don't want to remember.

Harris nods his head in agreement.

HARRIS

...Um Hmm.

TAYLOR

Well, I'll see you around.

She smiles, gets up and moves towards the food line. Terry and Harris watch as she goes.

TERRY

"Um Hmm", Really? Harris is that the best you've got?

Harris smiles sheepishly.

TERRY (CONT.)

Sheesh!

EXT. DAY, GYM CLASS

It is unseasonably warm for late October. The sun hangs brightly in the sky. Some students are still wearing shorts and tees with the school colors emblazoned on them as they run around the track. In one corner of the field there is a group of kids working on the long jump and in another part of the field there is a group of young women running laps.

Harris and Terry are walking with a group of kids dressed in gym clothes who are being led by the Coach to a bend in the track. Harris is unkempt and one of his shoelaces is untied.

A tall, muscular figure is running around the track. His pace slows as he reaches the class.

COACH

You see that young man there?

The coach points as the group comes to a halt and **RYAN SPAULDING**, 18 and wearing track togs comes to a stop, his chest is heaving.

COACH (CONT.)

RYAN SPAULDING! Could you come here a moment?

The young man jogs over to the coach and class.

COACH (CONT.)

Ryan, I won't interrupt your training for long, I just wanted to show the class what a National Champion looks like.

Ryan, who has now caught his breath, smiles.

COACH (CONT.)

Ryan here has won State three years in a row and just this past spring he won the Nationals. Do you know what that means class?

The class is silent.

COACH (CONT.)

Of course you don't. It means he is a winner! It means SCHOLARSHIPS and GLORY! If you can do half as well as Ryan here then you'll go far. Ryan will be going to college on a full scholarship because of the fact that he is an amazing athlete! Isn't that right Ryan?

RYAN

Uh...

Harris moves forward to see past the heads of those in front of him, steps on his shoelace and falls face first onto the track.

VOICE IN CROWD (OFF SCREEN)

Class act.

VOICE IN CROWD (OFF SCREEN)

Nerd.

Ryan runs to Harris's side and helps him to his feet. Their arms lock as Ryan lifts him up.

Harris has a scrape on his chin but is none the worse for wear.

RYAN

Dude, you all right?

HARRIS

..Yes. Yes. I'm fine. Thank you.

RYAN

You may want to tie your shoes.

HARRIS

Uh... right.

The coach wanders over.

COACH

Ryan we won't keep you any longer.
Thanks for stopping.

Ryan nods at the coach.

COACH (CONT.)

Follow me! I want to see what you're
made of.

The coach begins to briskly walk towards the 100-meter line and the students follow.

Ryan watches the class walk away and begins to jog down the track. In a moment he breaks into a run.

POW! He smacks into a hurdle and flips completely over landing on his back. The wind exits his lungs with the fall.

BACK TO SCENE:

The coach glances at his clipboard.

COACH

All right - first up is... Hotchkiss!

Harris looks up from his position of tying his shoe. His face falls.

COACH (CONT.)

Come on Hotchkiss. I don't have all day.

TODD

This ought to be good.

JOSH

Yeah, break a leg.

TODD

I thought that was for good luck.

JOSH

Not this time.

Harris walks past them to the starting block. He stretches his legs and twists at his waist. He gets into position.

COACH

On your mark.

The balls of Harris's feet sink into the starting block.

COACH (CONT.)

Get set.

Harris crouches and looks towards his destination 100-meters away.

COACH (CONT.)

GO!

Harris explodes from the start position. His feet are a blur of motion. He rockets down the track.

CHEERLEADERS AT PRACTICE, CONTINUOUS:

Lisa, Missy, Taylor and the rest of the cheerleading squad are stretching and readying for practice. A blur catches their eye.

Harris flies down the track.

Lisa, Missy & Taylor's heads follow Harris's progress down the track

Missy's jaw drops.

MISSY

...Harris?

Lisa looks over her shoulder at Missy and then back towards Harris.

LISA

Interesting. Missy I never knew that your brother was into track and field.

MISSY

Yeah... me neither.

TAYLOR

Wow.

BACK TO SCENE.

The coach's jaw drops as Harris crosses the finish line.

POV COACH'S STOPWATCH.

9.83

BACK TO SCENE.

COACH (CONT.)

Impossible.

There is a smattering of applause from the class. Terry is amazed.

TERRY

YES HARRIS!

Josh and his friends are silent.

TODD

Unbelievable.

JOSH

How did that happen?

TODD

Yeah Josh, you better look out -
Hotchkiss may be the new quarterback!

JOSH

Shut up, Todd.

Harris jogs back towards the class.

COACH

That was an amazing run, Hotchkiss. You
don't see numbers like that unless you
follow the Olympics. Keep it up, boy.
You just may make the history books.

Harris smiles and relishes the looks from Josh and his
friends.

Harris rejoins the group and moves towards Terry.

TERRY

Harris - That was unbelievable!

HARRIS

I can't explain it. It's like I've been
running all my life. It's as natural as
breathing.

TERRY

And all of THIS is because you touched
that kid Ryan?

HARRIS

Not exactly... Well... Maybe? ...Yes. Yes.
I suppose it is. I feel like I could
run a marathon!

TERRY

Spelling "Marathon" usually winds you.

HARRIS

Tell me about it.

TERRY

So how long will you have these skills?

HARRIS

If it's anything like it was in Mr. Lang's Algebra class about 20 to 30 minutes.

TERRY

20 to 30 minutes. That's not long.

HARRIS

Oh I don't know. There are times when that could be an eternity.

TERRY

Yeah, when?

HARRIS

Like being bullied by Josh and having the gym door locked.

TERRY

...Yeah, I see what you mean.

HARRIS

Whatever the case, I can't believe that it's working!

TERRY

What if it's temporary?

HARRIS

Then it is what it is. Whatever happens- happens. I can tell you this, Terry- being others is a lot more fun than just being yourself!

MONTAGE OF SHOTS:

- Harris touches another teacher and aces a test.
- Harris shakes hands with another teacher and he and Terry are begin working on a robot for their class project. It is a work of art and the other projects pale in comparison.
- Harris nails the dismount of the long jump. It is a new school record.
- Terry watches as Harris shakes hands with the captain of the chess club. The two sit down for their match moving piece after piece until...

HARRIS

Checkmate!

Terry looks downward as Josh and Lisa, who have been watching the match, shake their heads. Josh's eyebrows furrow as Harris gives the "V" for victory sign.

- Harris is in a wrestling ring once more this time with Moorecock. In a moment he takes control of the match and, lifting his opponent, pins his shoulders to the mat. Josh looks at Harris's victory and turns his head in disgust. Harris's mouth curls in a nasty smile at Josh's reaction.

INT: MR. BELTRAN'S CLASSROOM

A variety of electronics and machinery or all kinds are lined along the counter space of the classroom.

There are robotic projects that are in various states of assembly. Two person teams have been working on the projects for the better part of the semester.

There are diagrams of circuit boards on the walls right next to periodic tables and maps of the solar system.

Harris, Terry, Josh and Lisa are all seated in the room.

MR. BELTRAN a balding man in his fifties wearing a lab coat addresses the class.

BELTRAN

Attention. Attention. May I have your attention? Good. Let's get started. Today we are going to be assessing your progress with the class projects... your robots.

JOSH (QUIETLY)

Great. Another chance for the Electric

Treehouse to showboat.

BELTRAN

I'm sorry Mr. Boson, I didn't quite hear you?

JOSH

I said it will be good to have another chance to work with the electric robots.

BELTRAN

Oh yes. Indeed.

INT: MR. BELTRAN'S CLASSROOM: LATER

The students are working on their projects. There are successes and more than a few failures as work progresses. One couple of students is making an actuated arm bend at an elbow.

Another pair of students is designing a small machination that bounced off of walls in a maze until it learns its environment. It smacks into a corner of the maze and flies over the edge like a scratched cue ball in a game of pool.

Josh and Lisa are working on their project, a robot that combines a photo eye and a paper shredder. The idea is that the robot will recognize different colored paper and shred accordingly. They have been unsuccessful. There are colorful strips of paper in piles up to their knees.

And then there is Terry and Harris. The HAR-TER 3000 is about the size of a small refrigerator. It sits on six wheels, three on each side. Above the wheel deck there is a rotating torso. From the right and the left side of the torso jut out fully articulated mechanical arms. On the back of the torso is the battery housing. On top of the torso is an actuated head module with a red eye and a green laser mount.

Mr. Beltran comes to a stop in front of Harris and Terry.

BELTRAN

Gentlemen how is the HAR-TER 3000 doing today?

HARRIS

Show the man, Terry.

TERRY

HT-3K. Scan and recognize.

HT-3K's torso juts forward. Its arms fold back at the ready its head raises on its neck. Its dim red eye is now bright red. HT-3K rotates in place. Its eye scans the area.

The rest of the class is in rapt attention.

NOTE: the HT-3K's voice is reminiscent of the HAL-9000 and not mechanical in nature.

HT-3K

Good morning Terry. How are you Harris?
It is good to see you again.

HARRIS

I'm good HT. Do you remember Mr.
Beltran?

HT-3K

Of course; how are you today, Sir?

HT-3K stretches out its right armature.

BELTRAN

I'm fine, HT-3K. I was just checking on
your status.

HT-3K

Why thank you, Mr. Beltran. I am fine.

TERRY

Thank you HT-3K. You can power down
now.

HT-3K

Goodbye.

HT-3K's head descends and rests on the top of the torso which settles onto the wheel deck once more.

BELTRAN

Good work, Gentlemen! I have not seen
work like this since my days at Bell
Labs!

HARRIS

Thank you sir.

TERRY

Yes, thank you.

BELTRAN

I have to be honest when you two started this project I never suspected that you could pull it off. Seriously - this is graduate level stuff. You two should consider the field of robotics. You could make history.

Mr. Beltran moves on to the next team.

Josh shakes his head in disgust.

JOSH

I am so sick of this.

HARRIS

What's that Josh?

JOSH

You and this project of yours. You and your boyfriend have got to be cheating.

HARRIS

CHEATING! Terry and I built this robot...

JOSH

Whatever. I don't care.

RING!

The school bell rings. The class is over.

BELTRAN

Don't forget all students will be heading to the gymnasium for a special assembly instead of heading to your regular class.

The students quickly put their projects away, gather their things and exit the classroom.

Harris and Terry are the last to leave. Josh and Lisa are right in front of them.

JOSH

It is insane. There is NO WAY those two are geniuses! Nerds yes, geniuses no.

LISA

Don't worry about it baby, let's get good seats I hear that there is some NBA player going to be here today.

JOSH

Yeah, let's get out of here.

Lisa looks at what she is carrying.

LISA

Oh, I left my purse in class, I'll be right there.

She walks past Harris and Terry and into the room once more.

JOSH

In case you don't know, NBA stands for National Basketball Association.

Terry and Harris say nothing.

Lisa emerges from the classroom with her purse in hand. She makes a face at Harris and Terry and smiles at Josh.

JOSH (CONT.)

Never mind.

Josh and Lisa disappear in the throng of students heading towards the gym.

TERRY

He's right, you know.

HARRIS

Excuse me?

TERRY

We are cheating.

HARRIS

...What? Seriously? ...How?

TERRY

You know how. All of our classes, you with your new-found athletic abilities and with this project...

HARRIS

HT-3K?

TERRY

Yes HT-3K. Harris it's not right. Beltran loves the design because it comes right out of HIS HEAD!

HARRIS

What do you want me to do, Terry? Hmm? Come on WE built the darn thing. Not him!

TERRY

Harris, it took him years of training and studying to get that knowledge. For you it took a handshake. It's wrong.

RING!

The bell sounds once more.

HARRIS

Great, now we're late for the assembly. We'll talk about this later.

INT: GYMNASIUM, DAY

Harris and Terry are sitting on the bleachers which are filled with students. There is a podium set up on center court. A few foldable chairs are gathered to either side.

Applause and cheers echo off of the walls of the gymnasium as **KOBE BRYANT** a professional basketball player, walks out to center court. He is wearing a Lakers tee shirt and sweat pants. The coach and a few members of the administration follow him. The coach takes the podium and addresses the microphone.

COACH

Students of John Hughes High here is a

man who really needs no introduction, a man who one time scored 81 points in a single game! The shooting guard for the Los Angeles Lakers - Mr. Kobe Bryant!

The bleachers go wild at the introduction. Kobe and the coach shake hands. Kobe addresses the microphone.

KOBE

Good morning John Hughes High! How are you this morning?

Cheers once more erupt from the crowd.

KOBE

I take that to mean that all is well. I'm here today to talk to you about the importance of staying in school, staying off drugs and staying in the game!

More cheers.

KOBE (CONT.)

Once you hear what I have to say we will take a couple of volunteers from the audience and shoot some hoops.

More cheers.

KOBE (CONT.)

When I was a kid I went to a Lower Marion High School in Ardmore, Pennsylvania...

Kobe's speech continues.

In the bleachers Terry and Harris's eyes meet. Harris smiles.

TERRY

No.

HARRIS

What do you mean, 'no'?

TERRY

Harris, it isn't right.

HARRIS

Of course it's right - right is what we make it.

TERRY

You've changed, Harris.

HARRIS

What?

TERRY

Yeah, you heard me, you've changed.

HARRIS

Yeah, and we've both benefited from it.

TERRY

I'm not convinced that this is right anymore.

HARRIS

When did you grow a conscience?

TERRY

The same time that you lost yours.

Kobe addresses from center court.

KOBE

...And in conclusion stay in school, stay off drugs and stay in the game!

Applause rings around the gym as the coach and the administrators shake hands with the NBA star. Once more, the Coach takes the podium.

COACH

Kobe will be staying for autographs but first we are going to have a demonstration of what a real team player can accomplish! Now let's try to organize some of the chaos that this next statement is going to bring.. If anyone is interested in shooting some hoops with Kobe Bryant form a line right here!

The coach punctuates the word "here" with a chopping motion

from his hand in front of the podium.

Harris stands and steps over Terry.

HARRIS

Get this on video, will ya? It's gonna
look great on Youtube.

With that Harris get up and joins the line of students to
meet Kobe Bryant.

TERRY (TO HIMSELF)

You can take your own video.

Josh and Lisa are sitting in the bleachers watching the
proceedings.

LISA

You're gonna go for it aren't you, Baby?

JOSH

Oh yeah. Give me a kiss for luck?

Lisa touches his arm, leans in and presses her lips to his
cheek.

LISA

Now go show 'em how it's done.

Josh leaps to his feet and gets in line.

Kobe is dribbling a basketball watching the line assemble.

The coach sees Josh and his newest star athlete, Harris in
line and calls them both forward.

COACH

JOSH, HARRIS! Front and center!

Josh looks over his shoulder and sees Harris standing a few
steps behind him and sneers. Harris sneers back as the two
make their way to the front of the line.

COACH (TO KOBE)

These two are some of the finest
athletes that we have here at John
Hughes High.

Kobe reaches out his hand Josh shakes first followed by
Harris.

HARRIS

It's an honor, Sir.

KOBE

The pleasure's all mine. What do you say we shoot some hoops.

JOSH

Yeah, let's do this!

Kobe passes the ball to Josh as the three of them make their way to one of the nets. Josh takes a shot and it bounces off the rim. Harris gets possession and dribbles his way through Kobe and Josh to the net where he jumps into the air and slam-dunks the ball into the net. The audience cheers. Kobe gets possession of the ball and begins to dribble. The ball hits his sneaker and rolls into the stands.

Josh and Harris make a break for the ball. Harris is faster and grabs it. Josh is hot on his trail but is too late.

SWOOSH! Harris makes another basket. The audience cheers again - this time it is a little lighter in intensity.

Kobe has the ball. He feigns toward Harris but moves towards Josh. Josh steals the ball from him but Harris is on him like he has always played in the NBA and takes the ball and makes a three pointer. The crowd cheers.

Kobe has the ball. Once more he dribbles sloppily along as he awkwardly rushes towards Harris and Josh. Kobe collides with Josh and the pair hit the boards together. The ball hangs in mid-air but not for long. Harris makes a gravity defying 360 and SLAMS the ball into the hoop. He hangs from the edge of the rim for a moment suspended and falls onto the balls of his feet.

HARRIS

YEAH BABY, THAT'S HOW IT'S DONE!

His voice echoes across the gymnasium. There is a smattering of applause.

VOICE FROM THE STANDS

...Jerk.

Kobe gets to his feet and helps Josh up from the floor.

Kobe begins to clap his hands and a smile breaks across his face.

KOBE

Kid, in all my years of playing ball I have never seen someone with your skills outside of a professional arena. I think I should introduce you to my agent.

JOSH

No way! Harris is a punk! He's no athlete! He's a worm!

KOBE

Josh, you've got to give credit where credit is due. He didn't cheat here. He won fair and square.

HARRIS

Uh... thanks.

KOBE

No kid, thank you. I love this game and I love to encourage others with a love for it too. Think about it.

The coach comes over to join the players.

KOBE (CONT.)

Coach...

COACH

Yes Sir?

KOBE

Keep teaching what you're teaching. Harris here has mad skills.

COACH

I taught him everything he knows.

Harris rolls his eyes and breaks into a smile.

COACH (TO THE CROWD)

KOBE BRYANT, Everyone!

The crowd cheers once again.

Lisa looks on with concern as Josh boos.

Taylor has to run to catch up with Terry who is leaving the gym.

TAYLOR

What's going on with Harris?

TERRY

I wish I knew.

Terry looks over his shoulder and exits the crowded gym.

INT: MR. BELTRAN'S CLASSROOM

The students are working on their robotic projects once more.

Harris and Terry are unsettled and tense.

TERRY

Good morning, Harris.

HARRIS

Good morning, Terry.

Hearing the pair Josh cannot resist to comment as he moves toward his and Lisa's project.

JOSH

Lover's quarrel?

Mr. Beltran is looking at the progress that his students are making.

Harris is standing in front of HT-3K. Terry is behind.

BELTRAN

Remember, this project will count 50% of your final grade.

HARRIS (QUIETLY)

Yeah, yeah. Terry?

TERRY

What?

HARRIS

Fire him up.

Terry rolls his eyes.

TERRY

HT-3K scan and rec...

BOOM! The 12-volt battery explodes within the housing of HT-3K wheel deck.

There are screams and confusion in the class

Harris twists but does not lose his footing.

The smoke clears and Terry is lying still behind the ruined robot.

HARRIS

TERRY!

Harris is on him immediately.

HARRIS

TERRY! SPEAK TO ME!

Mr. Beltran kneels next to Terry's prone body.

BELTRAN

Someone call 911.

Half a dozen students whip out their cell phones to place the call.

There are what appear to be scorch marks on Terry's face. His shirt is torn in a few areas and each of these tears is marked by a dab of blood.

HARRIS

TERRY!

Terry's eyes open and gain focus.

HARRIS

TERRY!

TERRY

...how's that workin' for you, Harris?
...What... What did you do, Harris? ...What
did you...

Terry slips into unconsciousness as the doors burst open and Emergency Medical Personnel and firefighters pour into the room.

HARRIS

...Terry...

INT: HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM: LATER

Terry's parents, MR. & MRS. MICHAELS, along with Tom, Beverly and Harris Hotchkiss are waiting. Concern and quiet mark the mood of the room.

A **SURGEON** dressed in scrubs comes into the waiting area. Everyone stands.

SURGEON

Mr. & Mrs. Michaels?

MR. MICHAELS

Yes.

SURGEON

Your son is out of the O.R. and is in recovery. He is one lucky kid. We pulled three pieces of shrapnel out of his arm and two out of his chest. He has some superficial burns as well. We are monitoring his blood pressure. Due to the location of his wounds I would like to have him in ICU for the next day or two for observation but, again, he is one lucky young man.

MRS. MICHAEL

Oh, thank God!

The somber mood immediately changes.

SURGEON

There is some paperwork that you both need to sign at the nurse's station.

MR. MICHAELS

Of course. And, Tom?

TOM

Yes?

MR. MICHAELS

Thank you for being here with us. It means a lot.

Tom smiles as Terry's parents and the surgeon exit the waiting area.

The Hotchkiss's sit down once more.

TOM

Son, what happened?

HARRIS

I don't know, Dad. Terry and I had been arguing...

BEVERLY

Arguing - you two?

HARRIS

Yeah... anyway, I ask him to fire up the robot and it explodes. Dad, I feel horrible... I hope that I didn't do anything that hurt Terry.

TOM

Son, friends are there for each other even when they don't see eye to eye. That's why you're here now.

HARRIS

I hope Terry feels the same.

Dual doors in the hallway open. Terry is wheeled out on a gurney. He is sedated and connected to a variety of IV's, and monitors. Two attendants are pushing him and checking his status on their way to the elevator.

Harris's eyes glisten as his friend disappears from view.

INT: HOMEROOM MORNING: DAY

Harris is sitting by himself as the crowds of students press onward.

Taylor eases herself into a seat next to him.

TAYLOR

Hey there.

HARRIS

Hey.

TAYLOR

I heard about what happened and I wanted to see how you were holding up.

HARRIS

I'm... I'm... not doing very well at all. I think that I caused the accident.

TAYLOR

You don't know that. You don't know that you caused it and even if you did that's why they're called, *accidents*, Harris. I hear that Terry is doing pretty well.

HARRIS

Yeah, ...in ICU.

TAYLOR

You know there is only so much you can do. Terry is recovering and is exactly where he needs to be. You shouldn't blame yourself.

Josh sneaks up and inserts himself into the conversation.

JOSH

Who else are you gonna blame?

HARRIS

SHUT IT, JOSH!

JOSH

Or what, are you gonna blow me up too?

Taylor stands and stands toe to toe with Josh.

TAYLOR

Show some class and move along.

Lisa comes to Josh's side.

LISA

Come on, baby. There's nothing to see

here.

Taylor sits down as Josh and Lisa move on.

TAYLOR

Unbelievable.

Missy joins Taylor and Harris.

MISSY

You know what we need? We need a change of pace. What are you doing tomorrow morning, Taylor?

Harris's eyes fly wide open.

TAYLOR

Nothing much, why?

MISSY

Do you like roller coasters?

TAYLOR

Sure.

MISSY

Great. It just so happens that our Dad designs and builds them for a living. Tomorrow is the BIG unveiling of the *Magnetic Brain Drain* over at Capitol Adventure. How would you like to be on the first official trip around the tracks?

TAYLOR

No way!

MISSY

Cross my heart and hope to die. Harris would love you to come. Wouldn't you, Harris?

HARRIS

...Uh...

MISSY

That settles it! We're gonna have a blast. We'll pick you up on the way. You have each other's numbers, right?

HARRIS

...Uh...

MISSY

No worries ours is 555-867-5309. Hold on a sec...
Missy retrieves a pen and paper from her purse, jots down the number and hands it over to Taylor.

MISSY (CONT.)

There. Harris...

HARRIS

Huh?

MISSY

Get a pen.

Harris reaches into a pocket and pulls out a pen.

MISSY (CONT.)

Good. Harris, take this down... Taylor, what's your phone number?

TAYLOR

555-622-1701.

MISSY

Great! It's a date. Just wait 'till you see this thing. It will be legendary.

TAYLOR

I can't wait!

HARRIS

...Me neither?

Missy exits leaving Taylor and Harris alone. Taylor is smiling and Harris, after a moment of uncertainty, does the same.

EXT: THE MAGNETIC BRAIN DRAIN:

It is a beautiful Saturday morning. The sun hangs full and bright in the bright blue sky. There gleaming in the new day sun is the Magnetic Brain Drain in all its twisted glory. There are loops, drops, twists and breathtaking turns. It is a modern work of art and technology.

Tom, Beverly, Stewart, Missy, Taylor and Harris are staring up at its magnificence. Tom is in a suit and tie while everyone else is dressed casually.

TAYLOR

And this is your baby, Mr. Hotchkiss?

TOM

Well... one of them.

He smiles at his family.

STEWART

I can't wait to get on this bad boy!

MISSY

...Did anyone tell him yet?

Tom and Beverly look at each other and then back to the kids.

TOM

Uh...

MISSY

Stewart, you're too short to ride the *Magnetic Brain Drain*.

STEWART

WHAT - THAT STINKS! This is so *EPICLY* unfair!

MISSY

If you only knew you could have worn those lifts in your sneakers.

STEWART

Hey, that's not funny!

HARRIS

Well, it is a little funny.

BEVERLY

Stop kidding your little brother.

TOM

Don't worry Stewart, I think we can sneak you on after the inaugural ride.

The group moves towards the crowded entrance. There are newsvans, reporters and lines of people waiting to ride.

The group enters a door marked, "EMPLOYEES ONLY". The door closes behind them.

STEWART (OFF SCREEN)

That's still not funny.

EXT: ROLLER COASTER PASSENGER CUE PLATFORM: DAY

The platform of the passenger cue is full of company executives, spectators and press as Tom, Beverly, Stewart, Missy, Taylor and Harris arrive.

Personal assistants and 'yes' men surround Avery Wesker as he works the crowd. His eye catches Tom. He beckons him over.

AVERY

Hello Tom! Is this your family?

TOM

This is them. Everyone this is Avery Wesker, owner and operator of Capitol Amusments. Mr. Wesker, this is

everyone.

There is some polite laughter.

TOM (CONT.)

Sorry, this is Beverly, Missy, Harris,
Taylor and Stewart.

AVERY

Well, I'm so glad to meet you all. You
know, without your father none of this
would have been possible. He's the best
there is at what he does.

STEWART

Like Wolverine?

AVERY

Yes. Just like Wolverine. Say Tom...

TOM

Yes?

AVERY

The boys from public relations in their
grand wisdom forgot to add the pictures
from the early design meetings. Do you
have them on your Blackberry? I wanted
something to show the press.

TOM

Sure...

Tom instinctively touches his belt holster. It is empty.

TOM (CONT.)

I don't believe it. My Blackberry is in
the van.

AVERY

Well, never mind.

TOM

No, hold on a minute. Harris?

HARRIS

Yes Dad?

TOM

Would you mind getting my cell phone from the van? It should be in the cup holder.

HARRIS

I'm not going to have to wait in the line to get up here again, will I?

TOM

No. Just come in the same way we did before.

AVERY

Thank you, Harris. I appreciate it.

HARRIS

No problem at all.

Tom hands Harris the keys. Harris makes his way through the crowded platform to the stairs.

EXT: PARKING LOT: MINUTES LATER

Harris shuts the van door and slips his father's Blackberry into his pocket. He walks back to the entrance gate.

As he turns the corner of a parked vehicle he runs into Josh and Andrew Boson. Andrew's back is to Harris. He is lecturing his son.

BOSON

So you see, Josh, it is better to be feared than it is to be loved.

Josh sees Harris over his father's shoulder.

JOSH

...Harris!

HARRIS

Hey Josh.

Andrew Boson turns to the interloper. Harris can tell that the senior Boson does not trust him and that the apple had not fallen far from the tree.

BOSON

You two know each other?

HARRIS

We go to school together.

BOSON

Josh, aren't you going to introduce me to your friend?

JOSH

Sure. Harris, this is my father, Andrew Boson.

Boson reaches out his hand and Harris takes it.

HARRIS

It's good to...

Harris's face goes blank for a moment as a series of images flood into his conscience.

MONTAGE OF SHOTS

Boson shakes hands with a well-dressed man who gives him a package.

A dark hallway ends at a doorway marked "Control Room".

The door opens onto a room bathed in the electric light of LCD and LED monitors. There is a central computer performing hundreds of calculations near the center of the room.

There is a vault door, which opens, and a device that looks very much like a bomb with a timer is counting down towards zero.

HARRIS (CONT.)

MEET YOU!

Harris breaks the handshake and the connection.

BOSON

You all right, kid?

Harris nods his head.

JOSH

Freak.

BOSON

It's always nice to meet a friend of
Josh's.

Harris backs away.

HARRIS

You too. See you later.

Harris turns and breaks into a run towards the entrance.

BOSON

See what I mean? It's better to be
feared than loved.

They watch Harris run.

BOSON (CONT.)

You know where you need to be.

Josh nods his head and walks to the entrance.

BOSON (TO HIMSELF)

And now I have to put in an appearance.

EXT: ROLLER COASTER PASSENGER CUE PLATFORM:

The crowd closes in towards the front of the roller coaster.
Avery is speaking as the press and visitors lean in.

AVERY

Missy, so what do you think of your
father's creation?

Avery stretches out one of his arms toward a series of
several linked hanging cars. There are three-bucket seats
each with their own descending harness.

MISSY

It's AMAZING! I can't wait to ride it!

AVERY

Yes. Yes indeed. Well you and your
family are going to be right up in the

front!

Missy, Stewart and Taylor are practically jumping out of their skins.

TAYLOR (TO THE FAMILY)

Maybe I should wait for Harris?

AVERY

Nonsense my dear girl. When he gets here you and he will have your choice of whatever seats you want.

MISSY

Yeah, come on Taylor!

STEWART

Yeah!

AVERY

We've come a long way since John Miller designed the Thunderbolt for Coney Island.

STEWART

John Miller - who's that?

TOM

John Miller was the man who invented the *Miller Under Friction Wheel*. It's a series of three sets of wheels that clamp onto the track.

AVERY

It was revolutionary for its time. Until today! The *Hotchkiss Electro-Magnetic Clamp* is going to become the gold standard for roller coaster technology for the next hundred years!

Tom smiles.

AVERY (CONT.)

Don't be modest, son. This inverted

roller coaster is THE fastest, longest, most twisted *electro-magnetically* operated amusement ride in the world!

TAYLOR

So there are no wheels under those housings?

TOM

Yes and no. The car itself runs on a cushion of electro-magnetic energy. Gravity and magnetism propel this beauty around the corkscrew turns and loops. There are wheels but they are only used to break the vehicle and slow it down.

Taylor, Stewart, and Missy climb into the seats of the first car. Attendants assist in putting the harness over their shoulders and locking them into place.

The other cars fill. The riders are locked into place as well.

STEWART

Aren't you coming?

AVERY

Oh we'll be along shortly. We have some more press to talk to, more photos to take and more interviews to give.

TOM

You guys have a great time!

BEVERLY

See you soon!

Avery turns to the cameras and gathered press and stretches out his hands above his head.

AVERY

Welcome to the Electro-Magnetic revolution!

On cue an audible low hum is vibrates through the air. As

it rises in frequency the cars lift so that they are suspended by electro-magnetic force that is at once attracting and repulsing the cars to the track of the roller coaster.

AVERY (CONT.)

And just like that... the world changed.

As soon as these words are spoken he drops his hands and the roller coaster propels itself out of the station at a startling rate of speed leaving only its blustery wake of air behind.

EXT: THE MAGNETIC BRAIN DRAIN, FRONT CAR

Taylor, Stewart and Missy's heads are pressed against their headrests. Shocked expressions that mix horror and pure joy are on their faces.

STEWART

YES!

In less than 4.3 seconds the car climbs 315 feet. As they reach the apex the three passengers look around at the stunning panoramic view and then in a split second they drop.

Taylor, Stewart and Missy are screaming at the top of their lungs.

STEWART

NOOOOOOOOOO!

EXT: SERVICE ENTRANCE LEADING TO THE CONTROL ROOM, CONT.

Josh approaches an "EMPLOYEES ONLY" labeled door, looks around and quickly enters. The door closes quickly behind him.

EXT: ROLLER COASTER PASSENGER CUE PLATFORM:

Harris makes his way to the top of the steps and begins to push his way towards the front of the mob desperately searching for his father.

Tom is next to Avery and Harris sees that the Magnetic Brain Drain is nowhere to be seen.

HARRIS

IT'S GONE!

TOM

Yeah, but don't worry, it'll be back.

HARRIS

NO. That's not what I mean!

TOM

Do you have my Blackberry?

HARRIS

DAD, THEY ARE IN DANGER!

TOM

What?

HARRIS

I'm sorry. I don't have time to explain!

Harris slaps his hands to his father's temples and...

A MONTAGE OF SHOTS:

Directions are displayed to the dark hallway.

The control room door opens.

The access codes for the vault are displayed from the conciseness of the father to the son: "BEV-MIS-HAR-STW 589".

In spite of the dire situation Harris smiles at the password.

BACK TO SCENE:

Harris breaks the connection with his father.

HARRIS

Dad - I've got to go!

With this Harris turns and runs through the crowd towards the stairs.

AVERY

Say, did your boy ever find that cell phone of yours?

TOM
I don't know.

INT: CONTROL ROOM: HALLWAY

Harris makes his way down a dimly lit hallway armed with the knowledge of how to stop the explosive charge. There are tools hanging on a nearby workman's bench.

He trips over a form that he did not see in the shadows. Josh Boson lies unconscious at his feet.

HARRIS
JOSH?

A lithe figure steps out of the shadows. It is Lisa Minetti, an almost imperceptible smile creases her lips.

HARRIS
LISA! What's happening?

LISA
You never really got it did you Harris?

HARRIS
Got what?

LISA
UGH! You are so clueless. Did you really think that you were the only one?

Lisa walks closer to Harris. He takes a step back, towards the control room door.

HARRIS
What are you talking about?

LISA
Oh Harris, do you know how much fun it has been to watch you discover and misuse your abilities?

HARRIS

...Abilities?

LISA

Yes - don't play stupid this late in the game.

HARRIS

How long have you known?

LISA

Ever since you became an A student and star athlete. You know, this has been very hard on me.

HARRIS

Hard on you?

LISA

I never had competition before.

HARRIS

It was YOU all along!

Lisa nods her head.

HARRIS (CONT.)

You're working for Boson!

LISA

Boson? Please, you are thinking small again. Boson and Josh are only a means to an end.

HARRIS

But why? Josh is your boyfriend.

A light goes off in Harris's mind as he begins to put the story together.

HARRIS (CONT.)

Or is he? You sabotaged him in front of Kobe Bryant and the school, didn't you?

INSERT FLASHBACK

Lisa touches Josh's arm before she kisses his cheek.

BACK TO SCENE:

LISA

Please people are our playthings,
Harris. Being others is one thing but
controlling them - bending them to your
will is quite another.

HARRIS

Who gave you the right to interfere with
people's lives like that?

LISA

Excuse me? Listen to who is talking.
I've watched you use your abilities for
nothing but self-service ever since you
got them. Don't presume to lecture me
on what's right and what's wrong.

HARRIS

I'm changing things. Ever since the
accident...

Harris pauses and Lisa fixes him with a purposeful stare.

HARRIS

...It was you.

INSERT FLASHBACK

Lisa goes into the classroom to retrieve her purse then goes
right to the battery housing on HT-3K where she reverses the
positive and the negative poles on the twelve-volt battery
that runs the robot. She closes the housing, picks up her
purse and exits the room.

BACK TO SCENE:

HARRIS (CONT.)

...You're the one that switched the
positive and the negative poles on HT-
3K.

LISA

I must say, Harris, you are getting much better at piecing things together.

HARRIS

Terry is still in the hospital. You could have *killed him*.

LISA

But I didn't.

HARRIS

Why, Lisa?

LISA

I needed to see how far you were willing to go.

HARRIS

ME?

LISA

Yes you. By placing you in a position where you thought you were responsible for the near death experience of your best friend I was testing your resolve.

HARRIS

Testing my resolve?

LISA

I needed to know how you would perform under pressure. Let me just say, Harris, you do not disappoint.

HARRIS

What happened to Josh?

LISA

He's napping. What I'm more concerned is what is going to happen with you.

HARRIS

Me?

LISA

Are you going to try to go through that door and save the day or are you going to join me and let things play out the way they have been planned?

HARRIS

Planned by whom, Lisa? Planned by whom?

LISA

Why my... excuse me, *our* employers, Harris. It was just fate that your father designs these attractions. Industrial spies get paid an awful lot of money. I am about to receive an *awful lot of money*. I was told to offer you a similar contract.

HARRIS

This isn't funny, Lisa. Taylor, Stewart and Missy are on that ride.

LISA

It looks like we may have a couple of spots on the cheerleading squad opening up.

HARRIS

Listen to yourself! You're not making sense. Why would you offer *me a job* and think that I would stand by as my girlfriend, my family and a ride full of innocent people die in some horrible roller coaster accident?

LISA

I didn't really. I was only under contract to make you the offer. Since you have declined said offer you have now become the competition and I am a very competitive girl.

HARRIS

I don't have time for this. I have an access code to imprint and a circuit that needs to be cut.

Josh stirs and makes a groans from the floor. Lisa reaches down and touches him once more. Josh becomes silent and still.

LISA

You asked why Josh was here. I brought him here because of his hatred for you - well that and his black belt in Taekwondo.

Harris reaches for the door and Lisa pounces. She begins her attack with a flurry of blows. Harris protects himself the best he can but he is woefully outmatched. One punch lands squarely on Harris's chest and he wheezes deeply trying to catch his breath. Lisa then delivers a roundhouse kick that sends Harris sprawling through the door and into the control room.

EXT: ROLLER COASTER: CONT.

Missy and Taylor are rocketing down the rail of the *Magnetic Brain Drain* roller coaster. The coaster is not slowing.

MISSY (SCREAMING TO TAYLOR)

Why isn't it stopping?

TAYLOR

I don't know! Something must be wrong!

The other riders of the coaster sensing that something is awry are beginning to get scared.

ROLLER COASTER PLATFORM: CONT.

On the platform Andrew Boson has made his way to the front of the action making certain that he is seen by as many witnesses as possible.

Avery Wesker and his public relations staff wear grave expressions. Tom and Beverly Hotchkiss and the crowd look on in horror as the roller coaster tears through the waiting cue area at speeds of access of 70 miles per hour.

BOSON

What's going on?

BEVERLY

MY BABIES!

In an instant it is gone and spinning into a bowel shaking drop and then up the hill once again.

AVERY

We've got to save those people!

TOM

I've got to get to the control room!

BOSON

Don't worry, Tom. I'll send my best people down there to see what's wrong.

TOM

I AM the best person for that job!

Tom rushes towards the stairs and disappears down the steps.

Avery tries to comfort Beverly.

Boson glances at his watch.

BOSON (TO HIMSELF)

Where's Meade?

INT: CONTROL ROOM: CONT.

There are displays of each angle of the *Magnetic Brain Drain* roller coaster for each section of track that it rides upon. A central computer, Harris's destination, is in the middle of the room. Power cords and wires run from components to sockets throughout the room. A vaulted door is visible on the wall next to a computer readout station.

Harris is on all fours and coughing. He has a bruise on his left cheek and a small trickle of blood from the corner of his mouth.

LISA

Harris, you really suck at the whole 'fighting thing' don't you? I mean it's a shame that the last person you touched was only an engineer - a designer of amusements to distract thrill seekers and children. That's just too bad.

WHACK! Lisa kicks out at Harris rolls completely over onto his belly.

LISA

Man, all those aerobic classes have really paid off! Cheerleader's rule!

Harris looks up from his position and sees something that only an engineer would see - an unexpected weapon. Right in front of him are a series of power cables. He traces the tangle and sees a positive and a negative feed.

HARRIS

Oh, I don't know... engineers have their perks too!

Harris rips the cords from the terminal in front of him and lunges at Lisa touching one wire to her left thigh and the other to her right knee.

CRACK! There is a flash of a blinding spark and Lisa is glued to the spot - she spasms with the electric current coursing through her body. Harris gets to his feet. The hum of electricity and the smell of ozone are in the air of the control room.

HARRIS

Don't go away!

Harris runs to the central processing terminal for the roller coaster. A screen comes up and he enters the proper code.

HISS! The hermetically sealed vault door opens exposing the inner circuitry of the *Magnetic Brain Drain*. There is a device with a timer and a blinking red LED light it is sitting on what appears to be a brick of C-4.

HARRIS (CONT.)

Ok. Let's do this.

Harris reaches into his right pants pocket and retrieves a pair of nail clippers.

HARRIS (CONT.)

Lisa, all I have to do now is cut the red wire - just like in the movies and everyone is safe.

Lisa is still grounded in place but her eyes are glaring at him with hate and venom.

Harris moves towards the vault just as Bartholomew Meade enters the room. He reaches into his coat and pulls out a nasty looking automatic pistol.

MEADE

Tut. Tut. Tut... boy. Not so fast.

Harris turns to see the barrel of a gun trained on his chest.

Meade looks at his electrified minion.

MEADE (TO LISA)

Oh my dear... look at you. I don't believe that this imbecile got the better of you. Don't worry I'll have you out of there in a moment.

HARRIS

I assume you are the employer that I have heard so much about?

MEADE

So much about - really? Lisa, I am surprised at you. Since she is indisposed at the moment I can only guess that you have refused our generous offer of employment?

HARRIS

Listen mister, all I want to do is stop that coaster. There are people who are going to be hurt.

MEADE

Oh yes - don't forget the deaths.

HARRIS

Why! How can this possibly benefit you?

MEADE

Son for someone who is about to die you ask a great many questions.

HARRIS

Please - let me stop this.

MEADE

Lisa was right, you are annoying. Still you have asked a question, perhaps it is only fitting that you know the reasons why. You see I already have the secrets concerning your father's design of the magnetic coupling.

HARRIS

Then why?

Tom silently moves towards the entrance of the control room. He is able to hear the voices. He sees a crescent wrench hanging from a peg on the workman's bench and takes it, feeling its heft and girth in his palm.

MEADE

What the owners of this park do not know is that I have a controlling interest in a company that is in direct competition with *Capitol Amusements*. They hired an industrial spy but they really let the fox into the hen house.

HARRIS

You can't be acting alone.

MEADE

Oh no, Mr. Boson has ultimately proven to be an asset. Stupid, but an asset nonetheless. It was his urging for another safety check that procured the plans for the magnetic coupling, which is I must say, a breathtaking achievement in engineering.

Tom enters the room wielding the crescent wrench.

TOM

Why thank you!

He takes a swing at Meade's shoulder and connects. The force of the blow brushes Meade to the side.

BANG! The gun goes off. Harris closes his eyes.

Meade staggers trying to catch himself but he cannot avoid running into Lisa. In a moment there are two figures electrically glued to the spot.

TOM

Harris! Are you all right?

Harris opens his eyes.

HARRIS

Yeah. I think so.

TOM

GREAT! Now disarm that bomb!

Harris runs to the device. His father joins him there.

HARRIS

Would you look at that?

The bullet that just missed Harris has severed the red wire effectively disarming it.

Father and son look at each other and smile.

TOM

Unbelievable.

Harris turns to look at Meade and Lisa both spasming away.

HARRIS

That was a great shot!

TOM

I'll say. You took the red wire clean out of there. I bet you couldn't do that again if you tried.

Police with guns drawn and Josh in tow enter the control room and survey the scene.

OFFICER 1

Mr. Hotchkiss?

TOM (AT THE SAME TIME)

Yes?

HARRIS

Yes?

OFFICER 1

What's going on?

HARRIS

Sir... that is a long story.

TOM

This young man's father...

He gestures to Josh who is looking very weak.

TOM (CONT.)

...is Andrew Boson and you need to arrest him as soon as possible.

HARRIS

Yes. He was last seen on the passenger cue platform of the *Magnetic Brain Drain*. The most advanced roller coaster in the world and even cooler than that... it was invented by my Dad - Tom Hotchkiss.

Tom smiles at his son.

TOM

This man is Mr. Bartholomew Meade industrial spy and major shareholder of the *Pangalactic Amusement Co.* He wanted to murder a whole roller coaster full of people to discredit the *Magnetic Brain Drain* while stealing her secrets.

HARRIS

The girl is Lisa Minetti. She's a cheerleader and a psychopath. Handle with care.

EXT: PASSENGER CUE PLATFORM: MINUTES LATER

Police and concerned family members are everywhere. Andrew Boson is being led away in handcuffs. He is surrounded by three police officers. Lisa follows, cuffed as well.

Tom and Harris arrive on the platform in time to see Boson being led down the staircase.

BOSON

You will be hearing from my lawyer!

OFFICER

Of course we will. You have the right to remain silent...

Tom and Harris rejoin Avery and Beverly at the cue just as the roller coaster glides to a halt.

Missy, Stewart and Taylor are the first two off.

MISSY

MOM - DAD!

STEWART

MOM - DAD!

The family embraces each happy to be alive and well.

TAYLOR

HARRIS!

Taylor rushes into his arms.

MISSY

Stewie, I bet you wish you were too short to ride that coaster now.

There is a rush of people moving to find their loved ones.

TAYLOR

What happened?

AVERY

Yes - do tell!

The press and people move in closer to hear what is about to be said concerning the incident.

TOM

Quite simply Harris uncovered a plot of industrial espionage and murder and saved all your lives in the process. I don't know how he knew the codes and the electronics but he did. Oh yes... he was also shot at and defused a bomb. I am just thankful that we are all safe and sound.

Missy leans in and kisses Harris on the cheek.

MISSY

What do you know, you're not such a geek after all.

TAYLOR

So you did all that? You know Harris, I always liked you for who you are. So don't try to be anybody but yourself. Oh, and by the way, thank you for saving my life.

HARRIS

...Well...

TAYLOR

...You know Harris you talk too much.

With this she kisses Harris full on the lips.

The crowd begins to cheer.

DISOLVE TO:

INT: HOSPITAL ROOM: DAY

Terry is sitting up in bed smiling. All the leads are now off of him and he looks healthy as a horse.

TERRY

So she crossed the positive and the negative wires on the circuit in Mr. Beltran's class?

HARRIS

Yup.

TERRY

She is one twisted cheerleader.

HARRIS

And how.

TERRY

And you and Taylor?

HARRIS

Great! she'll be meeting me later today.
We're gonna catch a movie.

TERRY

Cool! So how's Missy doing?

HARRIS

Great! She is the new head cheerleader
for the squad, why do you ask?

TERRY

Oh - no reason...just that she is sooo
hot!

HARRIS

Listen Terry, I've been selfish and
stupid and...

TERRY (INT.)

Pigheaded?

HARRIS

Yes - pigheaded!

The two friends begin to giggle.

HARRIS (CONT.)

I'm sorry Terry. Things got out of
control and I should have listened to
you. When that project blew up I was
scared to death that you had been

injured and that I may have had something to do with why it happened.

TERRY

Harris...

HARRIS

No listen. I need you. I can't have this power and let it go to my head. I need you to help me focus it so that we can do some good.

TERRY

Do some good - what, like superheroes?

HARRIS

...Yeah, Terry, for lack of a better description, like superheroes. We've got to do some good with the tools that we've been given.

TERRY

I'm in.

HARRIS

(excited)

What - just like that, you don't want to think it over?

TERRY

What's to think over?

The door opens and a young DOCTOR FINE comes into the room. She is in her late 20s, with red hair that is pulled back in a tight ponytail.

DOCTOR

Oh hello. I don't mean to disturb you, I'm Doctor Fine.

She reaches out her hand and Harris takes it. An odd expression crosses his face.

HARRIS

I am Harris Hotchkiss and Terry is my brother. Now if you'll excuse me, I'm needed in the O.R.

DOCTOR

The O.R.? That's where I am heading after my rounds. Are you a doctor?

Harris winks at Terry.

HARRIS

I am right now.

Harris exits Terry's room.

Harris briskly walks out of Terry's room and down the hospital corridor. He turns a corner and pushes the double doors that clearly read "OPERATION ROOM" open.

The doors close behind him.

HARRIS (OFF SCREEN)

Now, what seems to be the problem?

FADE OUT:

THE END