

MICKEY AND THE PLOW HORSE

Story by

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FADE IN:

INT. FAMILY ROOM - MICKEY'S HOUSE - HIGHLAND PARK, IL - DAY

MICKEY BRANFIELD, 12, is curled up on the couch and reading a book. He is frail, skinny and pale. An asthmatic inhaler is sitting on the couch next to him.

DONNA BRANFIELD, 38, enters the room. She peers closely at Mickey and sighs.

DONNA
(softly)
Mickey?

No response. Mickey is engrossed in his reading. Donna sits down next to him. Mickey looks up at her. Donna smiles and ruffles his hair.

DONNA
You don't just read a book, you
become part of it, don't you?

Mickey smiles.

MICKEY
Yeah... and I was just about to
slay a dragon before I was so
rudely interrupted.

Donna laughs.

DONNA
Your dad and I have been talking
--

MICKEY
-- that always spells trouble for
me!

DONNA
Don't be silly. We... uh...
thought... we thought it would be
a good idea for you to go to
summer camp.

Mickey sticks his nose back in the book.

MICKEY
Not interested.

DONNA

We already enrolled you, honey.

Mickey's face colors.

MICKEY

(angrily)

You had no right to do that
without checking with me first!
You don't know my plans for the
summer.

JOHN BRANFIELD, 39, walks into the room.

JOHN

What are your plans for summer,
son?

MICKEY

Well, uh...

Mickey looks back and forth at this parents.

MICKEY

... I've got a ton of books on
hold at the library and...

Mickey's eyes brighten.

MICKEY

And -- oh yeah -- I'm already
registered for summer camp --

JOHN

-- The summer camp for on-line
dragon slayers doesn't count,
Mickey.

Mickey's shoulders slump. Donna grasps Mickey's arm.

DONNA

We want you to have fun outdoors
with other --

MICKEY

-- With other kids, Mom?! No
thanks! I'll stick to my dragons.

DONNA

Darling, we love you and want the
best for you.

Mickey holds up his book.

MICKEY

This is the best for me, Mom!

Mickey grabs his inhaler and intakes a few breaths.

Donna sighs and looks up at John.

JOHN

You need to have friends, Mickey.

MICKEY

I have Clancey. He's my best friend.

JOHN

You and Clancey sit in the same room and play video games for hours without exchanging a word.

MICKEY

Dad, we have the kind of friendship that allows for lulls in conversation.

John shakes his head.

JOHN

Clancey kind of creeps me out with that cape he wears. Does he wear white powder or something on his face?

MICKEY

Dad, I don't really want to go to camp. Please don't make me go.

John sits down by him.

JOHN

What about this... you go for two weeks. Give it a good try and --

DONNA

-- John, he's signed up for the summer.

JOHN

I know but... Mickey, if you really hate it after two weeks, we'll come and get you.

Mickey slams his book down on the floor.

MICKEY

Two weeks is an eternity!

JOHN

You decide, Mickey, three months
with no out or a two-week trial.

Tears of anger form in Mickey's eyes.

MICKEY

How about one week?

JOHN

Two weeks or no deal.

Mickey stands, angry.

MICKEY

Fine! Two weeks!

Mickey turns to leave then stops and grabs his inhaler.

MICKEY

Make sure to pack a big supply of
these! The kids will be fighting
over me -- they'll all want to be
best friends after they see me in
action with this!

Mickey runs out of the room. Donna and John look at each
other, worry on their faces.

EXT. BUS DEPOT - CHICAGO - DAY

The depot is crowded and chaotic. Parents are escorting
children to their buses. Children's joyful and excited voices
filter over the early morning air.

Mickey, wearing a backpack, Donna and John make their way
through the din and horde.

DONNA

(loudly, over the crowd)
Look how excited everyone is!

Mickey is holding his hands over his ears.

LATER

Mickey is standing in a line of KIDS at his bus. Donna and
John are standing next to him. John leans down by him.

JOHN
Remember, give it a fair shot.

MICKEY
How 'bout one week? Judging from
the noise level, I'll be deaf by
then.

DONNA
Two weeks, honey.

MICKEY
Can I call you before that?

JOHN
They'll let you write us a letter
after the first week.

DONNA
(tentatively)
They have their rules.

MICKEY
Rules to have fun by, huh?!

Kids start to board the bus.

JOHN
They're starting to board, Mickey.

Mickey doesn't move. One of the BOYS in line behind Mickey
speaks up.

BOY (V.O.)
(loudly)
Get going, nerd!

Mickey looks up at Donna.

MICKEY
One of my new friends, Mom?

Donna hugs Mickey and kisses him on the cheek. John
affectionately ruffles his hair. Donna is fighting tears.

JOHN
It's time to go, son.

Mickey, with tears brimming in his eyes, walks ahead to the
opened bus door and climbs aboard.

John grabs Donna's arm and leads her away.

DONNA

I want to wave to him.

JOHN

Let's just go.

DONNA

(plaintively)

I feel like we're turning our backs on him, forcing him out of the nest before he's... before he can fly.

JOHN

No, Donna, we're letting him go so he can fly.

(confidently)

He'll be fine!

John puts his arm around Donna's shoulders. Out of her line of vision, he crosses his fingers as they walk away.

INT. BUS - DAY

There is pandemonium on the bus as the children search for their seats and stow backpacks away. Kids are talking loudly to one another, throwing things at each, and generally being kids.

Mickey nestles into seat in the rear of the bus. He puts in his ear buds, opens his iPad and begins to read.

DANNY AND DONNY, 12, are twins. Danny grabs another KID's lunch and rifles through it. Donny sticks his foot out and trips a kid walking down the aisle. Danny spots Mickey and pokes Donny.

DANNY

Look at that loser!

Danny tugs on Mickey's earbuds and pulls them out. Mickey looks at Danny and Donny apprehensively.

DONNY

You anti-social?

DANNY

Too good for the rest of us?

Mickey puts his earbuds back in and continues reading.

Danny tries to grab Mickey's iPad. Mickey holds it tight to his chest.

MICKEY

Leave me alone!

DANNY

What you got here?!

Danny holds up Mickey's backpack.

MICKEY

Leave that alone!

Danny and Donny toss Mickey's backpack back and forth between each other playing keep-away from Mickey who struggles to grab it back.

Suddenly, the BUS DRIVER, 45, tall and stocky, steps up behind Danny and Donny and grabs them by the scruffs of their necks. The backpack falls on the floor.

BUS DRIVER

(to Mickey)

Is that your backpack, son?

Mickey nods his head "yes."

DONNY

Get your hands off of me, or...

BUS DRIVER

Or what?

DANNY

We'll report you to our parents!

BUS DRIVER

I guess you could call that a coincidence 'cause I'll be reporting you to your parents, too.

(beat)

In the meantime both of you are sitting up front right by me!

The bus driver half drags both boys behind her back up the aisle. Mickey resumes his reading.

SAMANTHA (SAM) HUNTER, 12, is sitting in the row in front of Mickey. Sam is very pretty with blonde hair and bright blue eyes. She watches as Danny and Donny are being taken away and then focuses on Mickey for a few moments.

EXT. ROADSIDE PARK - DAY

The children all file out of the bus. Mickey, holding his lunch box gets off last. Danny and Donny are standing nearby, glaring at him.

RESTROOMS - DAY

Mickey emerges from the Boy's Restroom and bumps right into Danny and Donny.

DANNY

Well, if it isn't the little wuss.

DONNY

What'd your mommy make you for lunch?!

Donny tries to grab Mickey's lunchbox. Mickey tries to get away but the twins shove him up against the wall. Sam walks up to them.

SAM

Why don't you two jerks leave him alone?!

Donny looks around, dumbfounded.

DONNY

What the...! Who the heck are you?

DANNY

Butt out! Don't make us forget that you're a girl!

SAM

Ooh, I'm really scared.

Sam karate kicks Danny in the groin. As he doubles over in pain the bus driver walks over.

BUS DRIVER

What's going on here?!

The bus driver looks at the double-overed Danny.

SAM

Must be something he ate.

(to Mickey)

Come on. Let's go eat lunch.

(whispers to Mickey)

That kid'll never admit that a girl beat him up.

Mickey and Sam walk off toward the picnic area.

SAM
My name is Samantha, but everyone
calls me Sam.

Mickey remains quiet as they walk. Mickey keeps his head down
and his eyes averted.

SAM
I have to know what to call you.

MICKEY
Huh?

SAM
What's your name?

MICKEY
Uh... Mickey.

They walk a bit more.

SAM
I can't stand bullies.

Mickey remains silent as they reach the picnic area.

SAM
I'm lucky I had three brothers.

Sam takes a seat across from Mickey at a picnic bench.

SAM
I had to learn to defend myself.

Mickey finally looks shyly at Sam.

MICKEY
Looks like it came in hBrian.

Sam smiles widely. Mickey looks in his lunch box.

MICKEY
I have an extra cookie I'm not
going to eat. Want it?

SAM
Sure!

Sam takes the cookie from Mickey.

SAM
My brothers also taught me to
never turn down a cookie!

Sam giggles as she takes a bite of the cookie. Mickey looks at Sam, a look of admiration on his face.

INT. BUS - DAY

Mickey and Sam board the bus together. They pass by the scowling Danny and Donny who are sitting right behind the bus driver.

SAM
I bet you get the best view up
here in front, don't you, Mickey?

Mickey just smiles as he passes by the irate red-faced twins.

EXT. CAMP WHEATON - DAY

A line of a dozen plus buses enter a private road with an overhead sign that reads, "CAMP WHEATON."

INT. BUS - DAY

The bus driver picks up her mic and clicks it on.

BUS DRIVER
(over the loudspeaker)
Get ready for a summer of sun and
fun. We're here, kids!

There is laughing and cheering. Mickey and Sam are seated next to each other.

Sam looks out the window.

SAM
(excitedly)
It looks cool, doesn't it Mickey?!

Mickey sighs, his face stoic. He looks out the window as the buses slow and stop and kids begin to rush off of them.

MICKEY
(monotone)
A summer of sun and fun... yeah,
very cool...

EXT. MAIN BUILDING - DAY

KAREN, 31, the camp director, and COUNSELORS wearing red T-shirts with "Camp Wheaton" on the front and back stand and face the large group of summer camp kids. It is a diverse group of kids who range in age from eight to sixteen.

Mickey and Sam are standing next to each other. Sam is smiling and taking it all in. Mickey isn't paying much attention; his eyes mainly focused on the ground.

Karen steps forward to a podium that is equipped with a mic.

KAREN
(loudly, enthusiastically)
Welcome to Camp Wheaton!

Cheers from the kids.

KAREN
I'm the camp director. But you can call me Karen.

A few giggles and laughs are heard over the crowd.

KAREN
My staff and I will do whatever it takes to make this the best summer ever!
(beat)
But for right now, let me introduce you to the two people who make everything possible.

Karen turns and looks at CHARLOTTE (CHARLIE) WHEATON, 58, and MURPHY WHEATON, 60, who are standing nearby. Big smiles on their faces.

KAREN
Kids, this is Charlie and Murphy Wheaton. They own Camp Wheaton but more important than that they love kids -- all kids!
(beat)
Murph?

Murphy steps forward to address the group.

MURPHY
Each year I always think that the first day of camp is gonna be the best.
(MORE)

MURPHY (CONT'D)

But each year I'm wrong 'cause
every day here is always better
than the day before.

Sam, along with the other kids, laughs and giggles. Mickey rolls his eyes.

MURPHY

We have over 200 campers this
year. Mark my words, you'll make
new friends and want to come back
every summer.

Charlie steps forward to the mic.

CHARLIE

We're *so *happy to have you.
Karen and her staff will be your
leaders but Murph and I will be
here to support and love you.

(beat)

We have four children but they're
grown and all off on their own
now.

(beat)

Thank you for coming and allowing
us to share your summer and for
helping us feel young again.

Karen begins applauding and the counselors and kids all follow suit.

Karen steps forward. She looks behind her where GEORGE, 45, and JAMES, 38, are standing. George is tall and stocky. James is small in stature.

KAREN

George and James here, they live
and work here. They're the
caretakers of the property.

(beat)

They'll be taking the newcomers on
a tour of the grounds -- you'll
see everything -- livestock and
all.

A buzz goes off through the crowd.

SAM

(quietly to Mickey)

I bet they have horses. I love
horses!

Mickey shrugs.

SAM
Maybe we'll get to ride one.

MICKEY
I hope not.

SAM
Why?!

MICKEY
I only ride the horses in my books.

Sam peers closely at Mickey for a few moments.

SAM
You mean in your imagination?

Mickey nods "yes."

SAM
I like books, too, Mickey. But trust me real life is much more exciting.

Sam returns her attention to Karen and the others. Mickey sighs, his shoulders slump.

KAREN
We have a big staff and we're prepared for anything. When you talk to one of our red-shirted counselors, you could be talking to a high school senior or to a nurse or doctor.

(beat)
I want you to meet a few key members who you'll be able to relate to.

SAM
(to Mickey)
I wonder what she means?

Mickey remains silent.

Karen glances at ETHAN, JOEL, LYNNE and BONNIE, all in their early 20s, standing just to the side of Karen.

KAREN
Meet Counselors Ethan, Joel, Lynne and Bonnie. They were all like you -- summer campers -- and not all that long ago.

(MORE)

KAREN (CONT'D)

(beat)

These young people went through the same things you'll all be going through.

(beat)

So ask them questions and let them know of any problems you're having because they probably went through the same things.

SAM

(to Mickey)

Maybe we'll be counselors some day.

MICKEY

I doubt it. I probably won't be here more than two weeks.

SAM

Two weeks?!

MICKEY

My parents are going to come and get me then.

SAM

Why?!

MICKEY

Because... I didn't want to come. I agreed to try it out for two weeks but --

SAM

-- I don't think they'll be coming for you.

Mickey frowns.

MICKEY

Why do you say that?! Of course they'll come for me.

SAM

I predict that you'll want to stay. You and I are going to be best friends. And I think you'll have fun and it won't have anything to do with a book.

Sam turns her attention back to the podium. Mickey stares at Sam, puzzled.

Karen looks at Ethan, Joel, Lynne and Bonnie.

KAREN

Tell the kids what your favorite things about Camp Wheaton were when you guys were campers.

Ethan

I liked the coed all-star baseball game!

KAREN

Always the ladies man!

SAM

(to Mickey)

Baseball!

Sam gives Mickey the thumbs up.

Joel

I liked the tennis lessons so much that I'll be the one giving the tennis lessons this year!

Giggles.

LYNNE

I was always into arts, crafts and my favorite, music.

(beat)

Anybody like music?!

Cheers, laughter and "yeeses" emanate from the crowd.

LYNNE

I'll be organizing a talent show.

More cheers.

SAM

(to Mickey)

I'll be in the audience. I can't sing a note!

Mickey shrugs.

BONNIE

I liked the talent shows so I'll help Lynne and I'll organize a soccer team.

SAM

(to Mickey)

I'll be on that team for sure. I'm the number one striker on my school's soccer team.

Mickey coughs and starts to struggle for air.

SAM
Are you okay?

Mickey shakes his head "no."

Mickey continues to gasp for air. Sam takes Mickey by the shoulders.

SAM
What's wrong?!

Mickey pulls free from Samantha's grasp.

MICKEY
Just leave me alone!

Mickey grabs his backpack and rushes away.

SAM
(to herself)
What got into him?!

KAREN
Hopefully, we've sparked something
in all of you and that you'll find
something here that you'll love as
much as my counselors did when
they were kids.
(beat)
Now it's time for you to find your
cabin assignments. They're posted
in the main lobby.
(beat)
Not to burst any bubbles, you guys
will have chores to do during your
stay.

There are a few moans.

KAREN
Hard work will make you appreciate
the fun more.
(loudly)
Now go on and find your cabins!

Sam looks around for Mickey. After a few moments she runs toward the main cabin with the other kids.

INT. BOY'S ROOM - DAY

Mickey is in a stall with the door closed. He takes his inhaler out and breathes in some of its vapors. As he puts the inhaler away, tears brim in his eyes. He opens the stall door and heads outside.

INT. MICKEY'S CABIN - DAY

The BOYS who are Mickey's cabin mates are fighting over bunks and generally being loud and rowdy. Mickey enters his cabin.

Mickey spots the only empty bunk, a top bunk. BRIAN ROMERO, 12, is sitting on the lower bunk as Mickey climbs the ladder to the top bunk.

Brian stands on the first rung of the ladder and looks directly at Mickey.

Brian
You just come in?

Mickey nods "yes."

Brian
You missed the big fight over the bunks.
(beat)
I just let them fight it out and sneaked over and grabbed this one in the corner.
(beat)
You don't mind being on top?

MICKEY
I guess not.

Brian
I was afraid I'd fall off.
(beat)
Uh... my name is Brian.

MICKEY
Mickey.

Brian
I was here last year. Is this your --

MICKEY
-- This is my first time at this
or any camp.

Lynne steps into the noisy cabin and blows a whistle.

LYNNE

(loudly)

Okay, boys... quiet it down! You need to be at the Rec Center in five minutes or you'll miss the tour.

Lynne leaves.

Brian

Come on. I'll walk over with you.

Mickey climbs down.

Brian

You know anybody here?

MICKEY

Just this girl I met on the bus.

Brian

She cute?

Mickey frowns and shrugs.

MICKEY

I don't know. I didn't notice.

INT. REC CENTER - DAY

Mickey and Brian enter the crowded center together. George and James are at the front of the room talking MOS with some of the kids. Sam smiles and waves at Mickey and walks toward him.

Brian

(to Mickey)

Is *that* the girl?

Mickey nods "yes."

Brian

She's hot!

SAM

Are you okay, Mickey?

MICKEY

I'm fine.

SAM

I was worried about you --

MICKEY

-- I'm fine!

Sam looks warily at Mickey.

GEORGE

(loudly, over the crowd)

Okay, kids. We'll be splitting up
in groups and getting these tours
going!

COUNTRYSIDE - LATER

Mickey, Sam and Brian are in George's tour group. Also in the group are Danny and Donny. Mickey notices an angry glare from them.

MICKEY

(quietly to Sam)

Sam, the evil twins look like
they'd like round 2.

SAM

Ignore them! They aren't about to
humiliate themselves again. That's
how bullies are.

SERIES OF SHOTS - THE FARM

A. Main cabin area: The group passes a large swimming pool and archery range.

Brian
Cool!

SAM

Very!

Mickey remains silent.

B. The barnyard: George leads the kids through the barnyard. Danny shoves a large gander waddling by. The goose turns, honks loudly, chases him and bites him on the butt. Danny runs for his life. Mickey and Sam have a good laugh.

C. The chicken coop: The kids are walking through the crowded chicken coop. The cackling is almost deafening. Feathers fly and Mickey starts to gasp.

D. Ext. Chicken coop: Mickey runs out of the coop and secretes himself behind a shed. Sam follows.

Mickey is using his inhaler when Sam shows up. Mickey is angry and embarrassed. He shoves the inhaler away in his pocket.

MICKEY

You shouldn't have followed me!

SAM

My best friend at school uses one of those.

MICKEY

So!

SAM

So... now my best friend at camp uses one, too.

(beat)

Let's catch up with the others.

Sam turns and runs. Mickey watches her for a moment, a slight smile on his face. He runs after her.

E. Pasture: George stops the group before the fenced-off pasture.

GEORGE

Anybody ever ride a horse?

A few kids raise their hands including Sam.

GEORGE

Everybody will be raising their hands by the end of summer!

MICKEY

(to Sam)

Fat chance!

SAM

I think you'd make a good horseman.

MICKEY

Why... 'cause I'm small like a jockey?

SAM

No... 'cause you're smart like a jockey.

GEORGE

(loudly)

We're in for a real treat. Look at what's comin' our way!

The kids all look down the pasture to see six large powerful quarter horses galloping their way.

Mickey gasps.

SAM

You okay?

MICKEY

I'm fine... it's just that they're
so beautiful.

Mickey stares at the horses mesmerized.

A horse whinnies from the field next to the horse pasture.
Mickey cranes his neck as he looks at the field.

MICKEY'S POV: a horse, wearing blinders, is pulling a plow
along the crop rows.

BACK TO SCENE:

MICKEY

Why is that horse by himself and
pulling a plow?

SAM

Seems like discrimination to me!

George notices Mickey and Sam looking at the plow horse.

GEORGE

This is the field where we plant
potatoes. That there horse is
named Jackson. He's just a plow
horse, not meant for riding.

Danny glares at Mickey.

DANNY

A loser horse?! I think we got the
perfect rider for him!

Sam takes a few steps toward Donny who backs up.

SAM

Keep it up and the other side of
your butt's gonna be sore, too!

Danny instinctively grabs his butt where the goose bit him and
takes another step back.

Jackson nears the fence and stops in his tracks. He seems to
stare directly at Mickey. Mickey is startled, shaken,
immobilized.

George leads the group on. Mickey lags behind. He continues to
stare at Jackson whose eyes are locked on him.

SAM (O.S.)
 (loudly, from a distance)
 Come on, Mickey.

Mickey continues to look at Jackson for another moment then runs off. Jackson whinnies loudly.

INT. REC CENTER - NIGHT

Mickey, Sam, Brian and all the kids and counselors are having dinner. Brian stands with his tray.

Brian
 I'm getting another serving.

SAM
 Of what?

Brian
 Of everything!

Sam giggles as Brian takes off. Mickey puts his fork down and looks at Sam.

MICKEY
 Sam, I'm sorry... you know about earlier --

SAM
 At the chicken coop? Don't worry about it.

MICKEY
 I need to tell you something... I have asthma.

SAM
 That's what my friend has. When I found out, I didn't like her any less either.
 (beat)
 Will anything here... will anything be too much for you?

MICKEY
 As long as I take it easy and stay away from a downpour of chicken feathers... I just have to watch myself.

SAM
 I'll help you watch yourself.
 (MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

(beat)

I'm gonna get more.

Mickey watches Sam as she takes off with her tray. A wide smile covers Mickey's face.

LATER

Mickey and Brian are carrying their trays when they pass by the table where Danny and Donny are sitting. Donny sticks his foot out and trips Mickey. Mickey falls flat. His food, dishes and tray go flying.

DONNY

Hey, watch it clumsy! You spilled salad all over my new Nikes!

Brian

You stuck your foot out and tripped him!

Danny and Donny glare at Brian as Mickey picks up his tray and dishes. Sam rushes over.

DONNY

(to Brian)

You keep outta this or...

SAM

-- Or what, jerk?! I saw you trip him, too.

Murphy walks up.

MURPHY

(to Mickey)

Seems you took a little tumble, son. You okay?

MICKEY

(embarrassed)

I'm fine, just clumsy. I dropped my tray.

SAM

Mr. Murphy, Mickey's not clumsy...

Mickey stares at Sam and shakes his head "no."

SAM

... He's not clumsy, Mickey just tripped on something.

Sam glares at Donny. Murphy pats Mickey gently on the back.

MURPHY

Hurry and get yourself a new
plateful, son. The campfire's due
to start real soon.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

The glow of the campfire lights up the dark night. The kids
and counselors are huddled around it, some are roasting
marshmallows.

Mickey, Sam and Brian are sitting together.

SAM

The fire is cool!

Brian

Cool and hot!

Sam giggles.

SAM

Let's do marshmallows!

(beat)

Come on, Mickey.

MICKEY

I think I'll pass.

Sam shrugs. She and Brian run off to get their marshmallows.

There's the whinnying of a horse a short distance away. Mickey
cranes his neck. In the light of the full moon, Mickey spots
Jackson being led into a stable. Mickey stands and runs off.

EXT. STABLE - NIGHT

Mickey stands in the shadows at the side the stable. A red
apple is bulging out of his back pocket. He watches as George
leaves the stable and closes the large stable doors. George
walks away.

Mickey looks all around to make sure the coast is clear.
Mickey quickly runs to the stable doors.

MICKEY

(to himself)

Don't be locked!

Mickey tries the door; it doesn't budge. He jiggles the latch
a few times and the door swings open.

INT. STABLE - NIGHT

Mickey walks slowly into the large stable. He spots the beautiful quarter horses that were galloping in the field. Each horse has its own stall. Mickey hears a soft neighing. He walks a bit further and spots Jackson who is watching him. Mickey rushes over to him.

MICKEY

Hi, Jackson. Remember me?

Jackson whinnies and sticks his muzzle over the stall door.

MICKEY

You do remember me!

Mickey pulls the apple from his back pocket.

MICKEY

My name is Mickey, Jackson. Look what I brought you.

Mickey offers the apple to Jackson who takes it and chomps it down in one bite. Mickey leans closer. Jackson nuzzles Mickey's face. Mickey's eyes widen, he trembles and jumps back. He shakes his head to recover.

MICKEY

Wow! What was that?! I felt a jolt, like I was zapped by electricity - like a bolt of lightning.

(beat)

I guess that's what I felt today when I saw you in the field.

Mickey walks closer to Jackson.

MICKEY

Do you feel it too, boy?

Mickey reaches out and rubs Jackson's muzzle. Again, he stumbles back a few steps.

MICKEY

There it is again! Only this time... I saw a picture, too.

FANTASY SEQUENCE

Jackson with his mane tied with bright ribbons and a jockey wearing bright silks mounted atop him, is charging down the track racing against other racehorses.

MICKEY (V.O.)

It was you Jackson... you were...
you were running in a race against
other horses -- race horses!

BACK TO SCENE

Mickey whinnies and shakes his head up and down.

MICKEY

That was it, wasn't it?! That's
what you wanted me to see.

Mickey approaches Jackson again and tentatively reaches out to him. As soon as he touches him, Mickey's eyes grow wide in astonishment. He keeps his hand on Jackson's muzzle.

DREAM SEQUENCE

Jackson is standing in the winner's circle, a flower wreath around his neck. His jockey, holding a trophy, is standing beside him.

MICKEY (V.O.)

Now I see you with flowers around
your neck. You're in the winner's
circle, Jackson!

(beat)

You won the race!

BACK TO SCENE

Jackson whinnies loudly.

MICKEY

Shh, boy. We don't want George to
come back.

(excitedly)

You're not a plow horse, are you?
You're really a racehorse, aren't
you, Jackson?!

Jackson rests his head on the top of the stall door. He cocks his head to one side and bats his big brown eyes at Mickey.

Just then the camp bell sounds.

MICKEY

I think that means I have to go
back.

(beat)

But I'll come back tomorrow.

Mickey pats Jackson on his mane, turns and runs off. Jackson snorts a few times. Mickey stops in his tracks.

MICKEY
(to himself)
Did he just tell me to bring
another apple?!

Mickey races off.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Mickey comes running up to Sam and Brian who are finishing off
their marshmallows.

SAM
Where'd you go?

MICKEY
Just looking around.

SAM
You're out of breath.

Mickey smiles.

MICKEY
Not really. In fact, I just got a
breath of fresh air, a *real* breath
of fresh air.

Sam looks puzzled.

Brian
Here comes Karen and Lynne with a guitar.

MICKEY
It must be sing-along time!

Mickey giggles. Sam looks at him warily.

SAM
Wherever you found that breath of
fresh air, you need to go back and
fill up!

MICKEY
I intend to.

Mickey laughs again. Sam smiles and shakes her head,
perplexed.

KAREN
Kids, the activities, times and
places, are all posted in the main
lobby. Be sure to sign up for the
things you want to do.
(MORE)

KAREN (CONT'D)

(beat)

Lynne's going to lead us in a
sing-along.

MICKEY

(to Sam)

Told you!

Sam playfully shoves Mickey.

KAREN

Sing your best. Lynne's got good
ears. You could be recruited for
the talent show!

Lynne strikes a chord on her guitar and begins a song.

INT. MAIN LOBBY - REC CENTER - NIGHT

Mickey, Sam and Brian are looking over the activities list.

SAM

There's horseback riding right
after breakfast. I'm signing up.

Brian

I've never ridden before. The worse that could happen is I'll
fall off. Sure, count me in.

MICKEY

I won't be able to ride.

Brian

Why not?

MICKEY

I didn't mention it but... I have
asthma and --

Brian

-- My little cousin has that. There's some things they don't
let him do. Whatever.

MICKEY

But I like the horses and I'll
probably hang around the stable
while you guys are riding.

SAM

Will the smell of manure get to
you?

MICKEY
I'll hold my nose!

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Mickey is sitting on his bed and is plugged into his iPad as chaos reigns around him -- loud talking and laughing along with hijinks and more than a few pillows being tossed about.

Suddenly, Joel appears at the doorway and knocks loudly on the door.

Joel
Lights out in ten minutes, boys.
(beat)
I'll be your cabin RA. I'm right next door in the counselors' cabin if you need me.

BOY
Can't we stay up longer?

Joel
With breakfast at 7:30 you'll be glad to turn in now. I'll be back in ten to turn the lights out.

Brian pops his head up and gets Mickey's attention. Mickey pulls his ear buds out.

Brian
Joel just said that breakfast is at 7:30. Can you believe that!

MICKEY
7:30 will be just fine. I'm actually looking forward to tomorrow.

INT. DINING HALL - DAY

Mickey and Brian are standing in the food line with their trays. Mickey cranes his neck looking about the crowded dining hall.

MICKEY
I wonder where Sam is?

Brian
You like her, huh?

MICKEY
She's all right.

Just then, Sam enters the hall. She's wearing shorts and her long blonde hair is flowing behind her.

Brian
I'll say she's all right.

Danny and Donny butt in line behind Mickey and Brian.

Brian
Line forms to the rear.

DONNY
You guys sign up for knitting or
the quilting bee?

DANNY
(to Mickey)
Maybe you could play Barbie with
some of the little girls.
(beat)
Where's your Amazon bodyguard,
wuss?

Sam unnoticed, stealthily sneaks up behind them.

SAM
Right behind you, morons!

Danny and Donny turn around ready to attack her. But Sam goes into a martial arts fighting stance and they think better of it.

DONNY
We'll take care of you later,
Missy!

DANNY
Yeah, Karate Chic, you'll get
yours!

Danny and Donny, scowling and angry, walk away.

SAM
(to Mickey and Brian)
Let's go eat!

Brian
And then on to the stables!

EXT. STABLE - DAY

Mickey, Brian and Sam are the first to arrive. They are greeted by George and James. Mickey is carrying his inhaler in plain view.

JAMES
(to the kids)
Ready to ride?

GEORGE
(to Mickey)
You use an inhaler, son?

MICKEY
I have asthma.

GEORGE
Have you ridden before?

Mickey shakes his head "no."

GEORGE
Think it might be a bit too much
for you?

MICKEY
(awkwardly)
Well, I was kinda hoping that
instead of riding I could learn
how to take care of the horses...
you know, like grooming and stuff.

JAMES
(enthusiastically)
That'd be fine with us. We can use
all the help we can get.

GEORGE
Riding is the easy part, the fun
part. Learning to groom and care
for a horse is the most important
part of having a horse.
(beat)
If you're up for it, we'll show
you a few things you can do while
we're on the ride.

Other campers who are riding are gathering around George and James.

JAMES
Looks like everyone's here,
George.

GEORGE
James and I are going to go over a
few things about horses and riding
them.

(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)
 (trailing off)
 First, you treat your horse good
 and he'll return the favor and...

As George speaks MOS, Mickey walks to the back of the stable that overlooks the field.

MICKEY'S POV: Jackson is plowing his furrows, up and down the field.

BACK TO SCENE

Mickey is focused on Jackson when George approached him.

GEORGE
 Ready for horse grooming 101?

Mickey smiles.

MICKEY
 Sure thing. I was curious. That horse out in the field --

GEORGE
 -- the plow horse.

MICKEY
 He seems bigger than the other horses.

GEORGE
 He's much bigger.

MICKEY
 And stronger?

GEORGE
 You could say that.

MICKEY
 Just curious... why isn't he a riding horse.

George leans closer to Mickey.

GEORGE
 'Cause he's a plow horse. That's all he'll ever be.

SERIES OF SHOTS - STABLE DUTY

A. Wall tack center: George shows Mickey, MOS, the bridle, saddles, reins and other tack used on riding horses.

GEORGE

If you keep at it, Mickey, by the end of summer you could be a darned good groomer.

B. George demonstrates MOS how to properly groom a horse -- body and mane.

MICKEY

What kind of horses are used in horse racing?

GEORGE

Thoroughbreds, mainly -- in the big races like the Derby and Preakness. Quarter horses, like we have here, are used in some racing.

MICKEY

Never plow horses I bet.

GEORGE

The other horses would leave a plow horse in the dust.

MICKEY

Is it possible for some horses to have some thoroughbred blood in them.

GEORGE

Sure... they're mutts just like mixed-breed dogs.

C. George shows Mickey MOS how to unlatch a stall and the proper way to lead a horse out of his stall and then back into it.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

George secures the latch on a stall and turns to Mickey.

GEORGE

So you still think you want to learn to be a horse groomer?

MICKEY

Definitely.

(beat)

Even though Jackson is a... a plow horse, he gets groomed, too, right?

GEORGE

Absolutely. We take good care of him. Wouldn't have any potatoes without Jackson.

(beat)

You seem very interested in our plow horse.

MICKEY

I think he's cool. Maybe I feel for him because he's different... separated from the other horses.

Just then Mickey gasps a bit and takes a few breaths from his inhaler. George smiles knowingly, a twinkle in his eye.

GEORGE

Yeah... Jackson is different but he deserves our love and attention just as much as the other horses.

(beat)

You know, when we first got Jackson he was skinny and mopey and had no spirit. The owner was ready to put him down.

MICKEY

Put him down?

GEORGE

Send him off to the great corral in the sky.

Mickey blanches.

MICKEY

Oh.

GEORGE

We had a hard time getting him to eat or even letting us near him. He shied away from everybody. Still shy around strangers.

(beat)

I think he was abused by his previous owner. We didn't give up on him and he finally came to trust us.

MICKEY

That's because you liked him.

GEORGE

That's right... plus we wanted our potatoes.

George has a good laugh. Mickey giggles.

EXT. STABLE - DAY

Mickey watches as Sam and Brian dismount from their horses. Brian has a little trouble walking.

MICKEY

How was it?

SAM

I loved it. Going back tomorrow.

MICKEY

I don't remember you being so bowl-legged, Brian.

Brian

My legs think they're still on the horse.

(beat)

Think I'll try tennis tomorrow.

SAM

How 'bout you, Mickey.

MICKEY

I didn't ride today but I bet I learned more about horses than you guys did -- and I'm about to learn a whole lot more.

(beat)

I'll be at the computer lab for a few hours doing just that.

EXT. STABLE - NIGHT

Dusk is turning to night. Mickey is at the stable door. He looks all around and enters. An apple is bulging from his back pocket.

INT. STABLE - NIGHT

Mickey is surprised when he finds George grooming Jackson.

GEORGE

Mickey! Back for more? I'll let you groom Jackson. That is, if he lets you. Remember what I told you yesterday about Jackson being shy around new people.

Jackson snorts a few times and nuzzles up against Mickey.

GEORGE

Well, look at that. Jackson isn't a bit spooked around you!

MICKEY

I read about grooming tools like the hoof pick, sweat scraper, mane comb...

GEORGE

You've sure done your homework.

George grabs some objects off a nearby shelf.

GEORGE

This here is the hoof pick. We use it to clean the dirt and rocks from the hoof around the shoe. And this is the mane comb... (trails off)

Mickey is beaming as he listens intently.

LATER

George pats Mickey on the head.

GEORGE

You're a quick learner, Mickey. I gotta go tend to the other horses. See you at dinner.

Mickey and Jackson both watch George leave.

MICKEY

Been waiting all day to see you, Jackson.

Mickey pulls an apple from his back pocket and feeds it to Jackson. Jackson nods, whinnies, and paws his hoof in acknowledgment.

Mickey strokes Jackson's muzzle. Mickey trembles but keeps his hand on Jackson.

FANTASY SEQUENCE

Jackson is in the winners circle. A big banner behind him reads, "Kentucky Derby." Jackson has a wreath of bright red roses around his neck.

MICKEY (V.O.)

You're in the winner's circle again, Jackson. I can see it!

(MORE)

MICKEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 The winner's circle at the
 Kentucky Derby!

BACK TO SCENE

Jackson replies by rearing up on his hind legs showing off his full size. Mickey's hand becomes dislodged from Jackson. Mickey looks disappointed.

MICKEY
 I don't see it now.
 (beat)
 I only see these images when I'm
 touching you, when we're
 connected!
 (beat)
 Let me try something.

Mickey slowly and deliberately places his hand on Jackson's muzzle.

MICKEY
 Wow! I see a mare out in a green
 field with her little foal.
 (cooly)
 Baby pictures, Jackson?!

Jackson snorts and nods his head.

MICKEY
 If you can send your images to me,
 maybe I can send mine to you.

Mickey closes his eyes and "thinks" really hard. Mickey opens his eyes.

MICKEY
 You get anything?
 (beat)
 Wish you could talk.

Mickey takes a brush off the shelf and walks closer to Jackson.

MICKEY
 I was just thinking, since only
 one of us can talk --

Jackson whinnies loudly.

MICKEY
 -- I didn't mean to insult you.
 You're better than I am at sending
 pictures.
 (MORE)

MICKEY (CONT'D)

Why don't you send me the picture
of what I sent you just now?

Mickey starts brushing Jackson. His eyes grow wide.

FANTASY SEQUENCE

Mickey is riding a race horse and is charging down the course.

MICKEY (V.O.)

Now I'm riding a horse in a race!

END FANTASY SEQUENCE

Mickey takes his hand away from Jackson. His face is stoic.

MICKEY

Jackson, those images are all
wrong. That's not what I was
thinking! I'll never ride a horse
and never ride in a horse race.

(beat)

You're seeing me as you want to
see me not as I am.

Mickey puts the brush back on the shelf and starts to leave.
He turns back toward Jackson.

MICKEY

Sorry to disappoint you, Jackson.
But all I can be is me. I'm small
and not very strong. I have asthma
and I can never be far away from
my inhaler.

(beat)

I'd never be able to ride a
racehorse. Just a fact of life.

(beat)

Looks like you connected with the
wrong kid.

Mickey walks away. Jackson snorts and shakes his head his head
from side to side.

INT. DINING HALL - NIGHT

Mickey carries his tray full of food and sits down at the
table with Sam and Brian.

SAM

Where'd you disappear to all
afternoon?

MICKEY

After the computer lab I helped
George... in the stable.

SAM

You like grooming?

MICKEY

It's all right. But I think I
might find something else to do.

SAM

I think you'd like riding better.

MICKEY

(annoyed)

Look, you and... you and whoever
else thinks I can ride a horse are
just wrong!

SAM

Personally, I think you can't ride
because you're telling yourself
you can't.

MICKEY

Tell that to my inhaler.

Mickey sulks.

SAM

What'd you learn about horses at
the computer lab?

MICKEY

Just about the different breeds,
their temperaments, how to care
for them...

SAM

Did you always like horses?

MICKEY

Only the ones I rode on when
slaying dragons.

Brian

There must be a whole side of you that I don't know about!

MICKEY (CONT'D)

The only time I was ever on a horse was on a merry-go-round and my mom had to coax me to ride on it.

Everybody laughs.

MICKEY

I noticed something kind of odd when I was working with George. We were grooming... uh... one of the horses and George seemed to communicate with him.

Brian
(incredulously)
George talked to the horse?

MICKEY

In a way. It was almost as if George and the horse knew what the other one was thinking.

Brian
Maybe George has spent too much time in the sun.

SAM

I know what you mean. I talk to my dog all the time. He knows exactly what I'm thinking.

Brian
How do you know?

SAM

I can just tell by the look in his eyes.

MICKEY

Do you ever wonder what *he's *thinking?

SAM

In a way, I guess I do know. It seems like I know when he wants to go outside, when he needs a pat on the head and when he's hungry.

(laughingly)

Maybe he's sending me telepathic messages!

Sam and Brian laugh. Mickey forces an anemic smile.

MICKEY

That is pretty funny.

SAM

I love that big roan horse I got to ride. He was so sleek and as fast as a rocket.

Brian

I wasn't as thrilled with horseback riding as you, Sam. But I did think the shiny black horse I was on was the coolest.

Mickey slams his fork down, picks up his tray and stands.

MICKEY

Black horse! Roan horse! Ever think that the best horse could just be... could just be a plain old plow horse?!

Mickey starts to take off.

SAM

Wait, Mickey! Where are you going?!

MICKEY

Back to the stables!

Mickey leaves in a huff.

SAM

(calling after him)
I thought you were giving that up.

MICKEY

(loudly)
Maybe I changed my mind!

Sam sighs and looks at Brian.

Brian

How can he compare that old run down horse to the black horse or the roan?

Sam looks perplexed.

SAM

Yeah... what's with Mickey and the plow horse?

EXT. STABLE - NIGHT

Mickey runs and opens the stable door.

INT. STABLE - NIGHT

Mickey rushes to Jackson's stall. Jackson is resting his muzzle on the top of the stall door. His eyes lock on to Mickey's who hesitates for a moment then runs up to him.

MICKEY

I'm sorry... that I got mad.

Mickey whinnies lightly.

MICKEY

You're like my friend Sam. She thinks I can ride horses and do everything a normal boy can do.

(beat)

You both see me as more than I am. I'm a half-empty glass type of guy and you're a half-full... oat bag type of horse.

Mickey and Jackson stare at each other. Mickey grabs a brush from the shelf.

MICKEY

Show me you understand, boy. Show me.

Mickey slowly takes Jackson's muzzle in one hand and begins brushing his mane. Even though Mickey's hands are trembling, he keeps them fixed on Jackson.

FANTASY SEQUENCE

Mickey is riding at full gallop on Jackson.

MICKEY (V.O.)

(excitedly)

Now I'm riding you, Jackson!

END OF FANTASY SEQUENCE

Mickey quickly takes his hands away from Jackson.

MICKEY

(gently)

That's what you're telling me.

That's what you want!

(MORE)

MICKEY (CONT'D)

You want me to ride you, don't
you, boy?

(beat)

I would give anything to do
that... but it's not possible.

Mickey hangs his head, lost in his thoughts.

MEMORY SEQUENCE

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Mickey is lying in a hospital bed. His mother is sitting by
his side. Mickey is wearing an oxygen mask.

MICKEY (V.O.)

My health... it's kept me from
living my dreams. Now it's keeping
me from living yours. But I know
that you can't understand that.

END MEMORY SEQUENCE

Mickey shakes his head to clear it. He replaces the brush on
the shelf.

MICKEY

I'll never be a horseman, Jackson.
But... I'll always be your friend.

Jackson flips the brush off the shelf with his muzzle.

MICKEY

Why'd you do that?!

Mickey picks up the brush.

MICKEY

You want me to brush you again?!

Jackson shakes his head up and down.

MICKEY

I'm really spoiling you!

Mickey starts brushing Jackson's mane again. Mickey's eyes
widen and his hands begin to tremble.

FANTASY SEQUENCE

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Mickey is lying in a hospital bed. His mother is sitting by his side. Mickey is wearing an oxygen mask.

MICKEY (V.O.)

It's me -- lying in a hospital bed. I was just remembering this a few minutes ago... Wait! You can read my thoughts!

(beat)

You do understand!

END FANTASY SEQUENCE

Mickey hugs Jackson and then begins to tremble again.

FANTASY SEQUENCE

Mickey is riding Jackson in a race.

MICKEY (V.O.)

Now I see me riding you in a race again. But Jackson...

END FANTASY SEQUENCE

Mickey, his face stoic, takes a few steps back from Jackson.

MICKEY

I get it. You're telling me you know I've been sick but you think I can ride you any way.

Mickey whinnies.

MICKEY

I'm... I'm confused!

(beat)

I... I've got to go now.

Mickey turns and runs off. Jackson whinnies loudly stirring up the other horses who respond in kind.

EXT. STABLE - NIGHT

George is walking up to the stables when he hears the commotion from all the horses whinnying.

GEORGE

Holy bedlam! What in the world worked them up?!

EXT. STABLE - DAY

The sun is just rising when Mickey rushes up to the stable and throws the door open. There are two carrots with huge leafy greens stuck in his back pocket. Mickey is rushing to Jackson's stall when he runs into George whose feeding the horses.

GEORGE

I'm surprised to see you here so early! The sun is just comin' up!

MICKEY

I just wanted to get an early start.

George frowns a bit as he spots the huge leafy greens of the carrots sticking out of Mickey's back pocket.

GEORGE

What you got there, boy?

Mickey's face colors. He looks at the ground.

MICKEY

I was just going to give one of the horses a little extra treat... if it's okay.

George smiles.

GEORGE

Let's see could that lucky horse be Jackson?

Mickey shrugs.

GEORGE

That horse has special meaning for you, doesn't it, Mickey?

MICKEY

Maybe.

GEORGE

Tell you what, we'll do somethin' a little different today. I showed you the tack for riding horses. Why don't I show you the gear and equipment that's used for a plow horse?

Mickey is all smiles.

MICKEY

That'd be great, George!

GEORGE

Okay, now go on and give Jackson those carrots. He'll be your friend forever.

MICKEY

(almost to himself)

I hope so.

Mickey dashes off. George, smiling, shakes his head.

LATER

George is holding a harness.

GEORGE

This is the harness that we put on Jackson everyday. It hitches to his plow.

MICKEY

Are you going to put the harness on Jackson now?

GEORGE

Sure thing. I'll show you how to put it on. First we'll halter him and lead him out to the corral where we'll harness him.

(beat)

Go ahead and open up his stall.

As soon as Mickey opens Jackson's stall, Jackson nuzzles Mickey. When Mickey touches him, Jackson neighs.

FANTASY SEQUENCE

Mickey is feeding Jackson carrots. Jackson is eating the carrots voraciously. Mickey is holding a huge bunch of carrots in each hand.

MICKEY (V.O.)

I think Jackson is thinking about the carrots I fed him. I get the feeling he wants more.

BACK TO SCENE

Mickey steps away from Jackson.

GEORGE

Jackson likes you, Mickey. I've never seen him warm up to anyone other than me, the guy who feeds him everyday. He sure must think you're special.

Mickey's face reddens. A big smile covers his face.

MICKEY

I think *he's* special.

George takes Jackson's halter from a hook on the wall.

GEORGE

Okay, let's get this thing on the old boy.

EXT. CORRAL - DAY

Mickey, holding Jackson's lead, walks Jackson into the corral. George is right behind them, carrying Jackson's harness.

Mickey brings Jackson to a halt. George places the harness on Jackson.

MICKEY

The harness looks heavy.

GEORGE

It's heavy all right but it protects Jackson while he works in the field.

George tightens the harness on Jackson.

GEORGE

Now it's time for Jackson to go to work.

(beat)

You want to lead him to the field?

MICKEY

Sure!

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Walking with George, Mickey leads Jackson to the field. He hands the lead over to the farm HAND who hitches Jackson up to the plow.

Mickey and George stand at the fence as Jackson is led away by the farm hand. Jackson suddenly stops. The farm hand tugs on his lead but he doesn't budge.

Jackson turns and stares at Mickey.

George laughs.

GEORGE

I'll be darned if he doesn't want
you to tell him goodbye!

Mickey grins and waves at Jackson.

MICKEY

(loudly)

See you later, Jackson! Don't work
too hard!

Jackson whinnies and turns back around and continues walking
with the farm hand.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Brian is sitting up on his bed, stretching, when Brian walks
in.

Brian

Hey, Mickey. Where you been? I woke up and you were gone.

MICKEY

I went down to the stables. George
showed me how to harness the plow
horse.

Brian

You're really into this horse business, eh?

MICKEY

I guess I am.

Brian

Why are you so interested in the plow horse?

MICKEY

Why not, Brian. He's just as good
as the other horses.

Brian

He's kind of slow and plodding.

MICKEY

You should see him in his dreams.

Brian

Huh...?

Mickey smiles, grabs his towel hanging on a hook on the wall
and takes off leaving Brian puzzled.

SERIES OF SHOTS - DAY OF ACTIVITIES

A. Archery range: Mickey is standing next to Sam who shoots an arrow at a target. The arrow lands on one of the inner rings of the bulls eye.

Sam watches as Mickey shoots an arrow at the target. The arrow flies in an arc and sticks in the ground ten feet from the target. Mickey and Sam both hold their stomachs laughing.

Later, Mickey is shooting another arrow. It lands on the bottom ring of the target. Mickey and Sam high five.

B. Swimming pool: Mickey with eyes closed is lying on a big float. Brian surfaces near him and dumps the float over. Mickey surfaces and swims after Brian who is faster and gets away.

Later, Brian is dressed and talking to a girl pool side when Mickey, from the pool, soaks him with a huge water cannon.

Brian runs and jumps in the pool and dunks Mickey. Brian looks all around for Mickey to resurface but can't find him. Mickey, who had sneaked out of the pool, blasts Brian with the water cannon again. Brian just shrugs and takes the deluge, laughing.

C. Rec Center: Mickey is engrossed in a chess game against a sixteen-year-old BOY. Mickey stares at the board for a few moments then finally makes his move.

MICKEY

Checkmate!

The boy glares at Mickey.

LATER

Mickey is in the middle of another game. The opponent is not visible on screen. Mickey makes a move, smiles and looks up at his opponent.

MICKEY

Check!

The camera pans to his opponent EMMA, 8. Emma girl makes her move.

EMMA

Checkmate!

Mickey stands abruptly.

EMMA

Rematch?

MICKEY

Are you kidding?!

(beat)

Besides I have to go to work.

EMMA

Work?! Where do you work?

MICKEY

I'm the stable boy.

Mickey rushes off.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

EXT. CORRAL - DAY

Dusk is falling. Mickey arrives at the corral just as Jackson is being brought in by the farm hand.

GEORGE

(to Mickey)

Let's get his harness off then you can walk him around the corral a few times to cool him down before we bring him inside.

Mickey helps George remove the harness. He leans on the railing and watches as Mickey leads Jackson into the corral.

Jackson trots up and nuzzles Mickey, shoving him forward a few steps.

MICKEY

Come on boy. Settle down. We have to cool you down. Look...

Mickey grabs an apple from his pocket and holds it up for Jackson to see.

MICKEY

... I brought you an apple.

Jackson whinnies. Mickey puts the apple back in his pocket. Mickey continues to lead Jackson around the corral.

EXT. STABLE

George opens the stable door as Mickey starts to lead Jackson into the stable. Jackson trots up closer to Mickey, clamps down on the apple in Mickey's pocket and it's gone in a few swallows. Mickey looks at George stunned.

GEORGE

He may be a plow horse but I never
said he was dumb!

Mickey and George have a good laugh.

INT. STABLE - DAY

Mickey and George work together grooming Jackson -- brushing him and cleaning his hooves.

LATER

Mickey and George fill Jackson's trough with food and water. They stand back as Jackson digs into his food.

GEORGE

You been a big help, son.

MICKEY

I really like working with the
horses.

GEORGE

You know they can sense that. I
think Jackson senses he's got a
great new friend.

MICKEY

I hope so.

GEORGE

I have to tend to the other
horses. See you tomorrow night?

MICKEY

You bet!

George leaves. Mickey begins stroking Jackson's mane.

MICKEY

(softly)
How'd you wind up here, boy? How'd
you wind up a plow horse?!

Mickey is shaken. His hands tremble and he shuts his eyes.

FANTASY SEQUENCE

Jackson is galloping through a hilly pasture, free with no harness. He is young and spirited. He gallops up to a fence where Mickey waits for him.

MICKEY (V.O.)

You're young and sleek and fast --
racing through the pasture.

(beat)

Now I'm there... you want me to
ride!

END FANTASY SEQUENCE

Mickey stops stroking Jackson's mane and takes a few steps back.

MICKEY

I told you, Jackson. I can't be
your rider. You saw how sick I
was.

(beat)

You sure you're not part mule?

Jackson whinnies loudly and snorts, shaking his head from side to side.

MICKEY

Didn't mean to hurt your feelings,
boy. But you got a stubborn streak
that would rival any mule.

The dinner bell sounds in the distance.

MICKEY

Gotta go, Jackson. See you
tomorrow.

Mickey runs off but then stops and turns back toward Jackson.

MICKEY

Please leave me out of your
dreams.

Mickey runs off. Jackson, his large brown eyes gleaming, watches him.

INT. DINING HALL - NIGHT

Mickey is eating with Sam and Brian. Mickey is quiet, picking at his food.

SAM
I smell horse.

Brian
Me, too.

Mickey avoids eye contact.

SAM
I think you like the horses better than you do us.

MICKEY
No contest.

Sam playfully elbows Mickey.

MICKEY
I need to... I have something I need to talk to you guys about.

SAM
You're not leaving after two weeks are you?

MICKEY
You were right, Sam. I do like it here and I made two great friends... maybe three.
(beat)
Can we talk?

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - NIGHT

Mickey, Sam and Brian are strolling around the field.

SAM
So, what's up, Mickey?

MICKEY
I've been wanting to talk to you guys but I figured you might think I was loony.

Brian
We already think that so, no harm --

SAM

-- No foul. Let her rip.

MICKEY

By the way, this is just between
the three of us.

(beat)

Remember when we were on the tour
and we were watching Jackson, the
plow horse?

Brian

(to Sam)

I swear he's obsessed with that horse.

MICKEY

Funny thing, it seems to be
mutual.

SAM

Huh?!

MICKEY

I felt the horse was looking right
at me. I had this strange
sensation -- like I had a
connection to this animal, an
animal that I never laid eyes on
before.

SAM

I think that people and animals
can have a kind of emotional
connection.

Brian

Sam, don't encourage him.

SAM

I told you about me and my dog.

MICKEY

I felt sorry for the plow horse
because he had to work all day
while the other horses got to run
free.

Sam has a sympathetic look on her face.

MICKEY

So after dinner that night I went
to the stable to give him an
apple. When I touched him
something almost magical happened.

(MORE)

MICKEY (CONT'D)

I saw flashes, images, almost like
I could read his thoughts.

Brian
Is this a joke?!

SAM

Shut up and let him finish.

MICKEY

I know it's hard to believe. I
don't completely believe it
myself.

SAM

What did Jackson... tell you?

MICKEY

I got images of Jackson only he
wasn't a plow horse. He was a race
horse... fancy ribbons in his mane
and all. And he was racing against
other horses on a big track.

The three friends are quiet for a few moments, each lost in
his own thoughts.

MICKEY

George told me that Mickey was
abused by his former owner.

SAM

I hate to hear that. Poor horse!

MICKEY

The strangest thing... in some of
the images I was the one riding
Jackson -- in a race!

Brian
I think it's your imagination, Mickey.

MICKEY

What do you think, Sam?

SAM

I don't know. Anything's possible.

(beat)

But you know what... it doesn't
really matter where the images are
coming from -- from you or from
Jackson.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

(beat)

The message is loud and clear. You need to ride. You need to take the risk and ride a horse!

Mickey looks wistfully off in the distance.

MICKEY

Maybe you're right, Sam. Maybe you're right.

LATER

Mickey, Sam and Brian are passing by the stables.

MICKEY

You guys want to go see Jackson?

SAM

I'd love to.

Brian
I'm in.

MICKEY

He's on the shy side. George says he usually doesn't take to strangers.

SAM

Let's bring him a snack. You know like a peace offering.

MICKEY

He loves apples.

SAM

I'll run and get some.

INT. STABLE - NIGHT

Mickey, Sam and Brian walk up to Jackson's stall. They each are carrying an apple. Jackson immediately trots over to the stall door and whinnies loudly.

MICKEY

Hey, boy. These are my friends, Sam and Brian.

Jackson backs up from the gate and rises up on his hind legs causing Sam and Brian to take a few steps back.

MICKEY

Jackson, be nice. They won't hurt you. And they brought you something.

Sam slowly walks up to Jackson and offers him an apple. He snorts and flips it away with his muzzle. Sam giggles.

SAM

Seems he doesn't want my apple. See if he'll take yours, Brian.

Brian offers his apple to Jackson. He takes it but spits it out. It goes flying and lands on the floor outside his stall.

Brian

Maybe he had oat bag seconds and isn't hungry.

SAM

See if he'll take yours, Mickey.

Mickey sticks his hand in the stall and offers Jackson the apple. Jackson takes it and gulps it down. The three friends laugh.

Brian

I don't know if you really get images from Jackson or if it's all in your head but --

SAMANTHA

Something special is going on!

Brian

Something weird is going on!

SAM

You need to listen to the message wherever it's coming from --

Brian

-- Ride a horse, Mickey!

SAM

Ride Jackson!

INT. DINING HALL - DAY

Mickey, Sam, and Brian are having breakfast.

MICKEY

I was at the stable this morning. Jackson said to tell you that it was nice meeting you.

SAM
 Now he's talking!
 (beat)
 That was amazing last night.

Brian
 I think you should learn how to ride.

MICKEY
 I don't know. With my asthma --

Brian
 -- I know but I think you could work out a little and maybe build up some strength.

SAM
 We could help you, Mickey.

MICKEY
 The most exercise I've ever done is moving a chess piece or clicking a mouse.

Laughter.

SAM
 But maybe if I start slow...

SERIES OF SHOTS - THE WORKOUT REGIMEN

A. Soccer field: Mickey, Sam and Brian are walking around the soccer field. Mickey is holding his inhaler. Sam gently takes it and sticks it in his pocket.

Later, the three friends are doing some push ups. Mickey rolls over and moans in mock pain. Sam and Brian push him back over.

Brian
 You can do at least five more.

SAM
 I think he's good for ten.

B. Tennis court: Sam and Brian are watching as Mickey fields some shots from Joel. He swings and misses every shot.

MICKEY
 You better be 'cause if I ever connect...

Joel laughs as do Sam and Brian.

C. Swimming pool: Mickey and Brian are in the pool when Sam walks in looking gorgeous in her two-piece swimming suit. As she passes, Mickey and Brian are both fixated on her.

Brian
As I said, Sam is hot.

D. Archery range: Mickey, Sam and Brian are standing in a row next to each other, all aiming arrows at three different targets. Mickey's arrow doesn't make the target, Brian's barely hits the bottom of his target and Sam hits the bulls eye with hers.

Brian
(to Sam)
Didn't anyone ever tell you that you're supposed to let the boys win?!

SAM
Is that right? Maybe you can beat me at ping-pong.

E. Rec center: Sam is at the ping pong table. Her opponent is not on screen. She smashes a winner and grins.

SAM
Eleven to four. I win!

The camera pans to Mickey and Brian across the table from her holding their paddles. They both were playing against her.

SAM
We'll have to find a game that I can let you guys beat me at!

Sam turns her nose in the air and walks off. Mickey and Brian are deflated.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - NIGHT

Mickey, Sam and Brian are walking around the soccer field.

SAM
We need to workout every morning.

MICKEY
Every morning?!

SAM
You have to build up stamina --

Brian
-- And strength.

SAM

And we need to keep at the tennis
and the swimming --

Brian

-- And the archery. It'll all help you get in shape.

SAM

We'll get you ready to ride that
old nag.

MICKEY

If he runs anything like he does
in his dreams, there's nothing
"old nag" about him.

EXT. CORRAL MORNING - DAY

Mickey runs up to the corral just as George is saddling up the
horses for their morning rides.

MICKEY

Hey, George! Need some help.

GEORGE

Actually, this is my last horse.
But I wanted to ask you something.
Come on inside.

Just then Danny and Donny walk up, the usual smirk on both
their faces.

DANNY

(calling out to Mickey)
Hey, loser! Still too scared to
ride a horse?!

George scowls, his face colors in anger.

GEORGE

(angrily)
This kid knows more about horses
than any other kid here.

DONNY

(laughing)
He knows everything about them
except riding them!

Danny and Donny have a good laugh.

George continues on to the stable with Mickey right behind
him.

INT. STABLE - DAY

George turns to Mickey as soon as they step inside the stable.

GEORGE

If I wouldn't get fired, I'd really tell those brats what I think of 'em.

MICKEY

Don't worry, George. I don't let them bother me.

(cooly)

And who knows, one day I might just prove them wrong.

George looks puzzled as Mickey walks on toward the stalls. He follows him to Jackson's stall. Mickey gives Jackson an apple he brought for him.

GEORGE

I ran into Sam and Brian out on the soccer field.

(beat)

They tell me that they're setting up an exercise program for you.

MICKEY

They're going to help me get fit!

GEORGE

Get fit for what? What are you kids cookin' up?

MICKEY

Oh, I just need to get stronger so I won't need any help standing up to the bullies.

GEORGE

I just wanted to make sure that it wouldn't be too much for you.

MICKEY

I told them that I would take it easy. Sam and Brian are going to make sure I take it easy.

GEORGE

And if they don't, I will.

Mickey's eyes shine as he smiles at George.

EXT. CORRAL - DAY

Campers are just arriving back after their rides. Mickey helps George and the farm hands as they assist the riders in dismounting.

DONNY
(yelling to Mickey)
Hey, nerd-face. Me and my brother
need some help. Pronto!

George rushes over to Donny, a grimace on his face.

GEORGE
(tersely)
I'll be glad to help.

With that, George yanks Donny up off the saddle and swings him down to the ground. Donny screams; fear is in his eyes. He lands on his feet but is reeling. George strides over toward Danny. Danny holds his hands up defensively.

DANNY
That's okay! That's okay. I don't
need no help.

Danny hurries and dismounts. George turns and winks at Mickey who does his best to hide his smile.

INT. STABLE - DAY

George leads a horse into a stall and closes the stall door.

GEORGE
I'll go collect any tack we left
laying around outside. If you
want, you can start grooming.

MICKEY
Sure thing.

George leaves.

Mickey takes a brush off the shelf and then stops in his tracks, feeling a presence. He turns to look directly into the smirking face of Danny.

DANNY
Well, well, if it isn't the camp
stable boy.
(MORE)

DANNY (CONT'D)

(beat)

Where's your bodyguards? No karate chick? No old farm hand?

MICKEY

Get lost, Danny. I'm working.

DANNY

(angrily, in Mickey's face)

Working! The only reason you groom the horses is 'cause you're too chicken to ride 'em!

Mickey trembles in anger.

MICKEY

I'm not afraid to ride. And... one day I will ride --

DANNY

-- You're gonna ride?! What that old broken down plow horse?!

Step by step, Danny is coming closer and closer to Mickey who slowly is backing up.

MICKEY

There's nothing wrong with Jackson. He... he might even be part thoroughbred.

Danny laughs.

DANNY

Thoroughbred! Ha! There's more chance that I'm a thoroughbred!

Unknown to Mickey, Donny is on his hands and knees crawling up behind Mickey. Danny shoves Mickey who falls backward over Donny and flips over.

Danny and Donny laugh at Mickey who is sprawled out on the floor. Mickey begins gasping for air and pulls his inhaler out of his pocket.

DONNY

I knew he was weird but I didn't think he was this weird!

DANNY

Nurse! Nurse! More oxygen for the patient!

Danny and Donny have another good laugh.

Just then George, leading Jackson, appears on the scene.

GEORGE

What in the world...?

Suddenly, Jackson pulls away from George and rushes Danny and Donny. He rears up on his hind legs, whinnying and snorting. Danny and Donny scream in terror and back up as Jackson continues to pursue them.

George takes out after Jackson and is able to grab his lead and pull him back. Danny and Donny are backed up against the wall.

GEORGE

(to Danny and Donny)

Jackson's not gonna hurt you... now.

(beat)

He was probably just wonderin' like I am how Mickey wound up on the ground.

DANNY

(tentatively)

He tripped?

Mickey puts his inhaler away.

MICKEY

I did trip... over Donny.

GEORGE

I think you boys ought to think twice about riling Jackson up.

George pats Jackson's muzzle.

GEORGE

This here fella has some wild mustang in him. Never know what he might do.

DANNY

I think he's a mean old bag of bones. The camp ought to make cat food outta him!

GEORGE

Jackson isn't mean unless he's pushed.

(beat)

Horses are loyal beasts. Mickey takes care of this horse.

(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I don't think Jackson will take kindly to anyone messin' with his groomer.

DONNY

(to Danny)

Let's get outta here!

DANNY

(angrily, to Mickey)

Hope you and your plow horse live happily ever after!

With that, Danny and Donny run out. They nearly jump out of their skin when Jackson quickly trots toward them again and whinnies and snorts loudly at their backs.

George rushes over to Mickey and helps him up.

GEORGE

(to Mickey)

You okay, son?

MICKEY

I'm fine... now that those jerks are gone.

Mickey rushes over to Jackson and rubs his muzzle. Mickey's hand starts to tremble.

FANTASY SEQUENCE

Jackson is in a field galloping after Danny and Donny who he runs up a tree. Danny and Donny are crying.

DANNY

Help! HELP!

DONNY

I want my Mommy!

END OF FANTASY SEQUENCE

Mickey smiles slyly at Jackson.

MICKEY

(to Jackson)

You are so bad!

GEORGE

Huh?

MICKEY

Nothing. I think Jackson just passed a little gas.

(beat)

But gas or not, I think Jackson was defending me against the terrible two.

GEORGE

He sure was.

(beat)

Say, I overheard you say you might be ridin' a horse. Is that what all the workouts are all about?

Mickey shrugs.

MICKEY

I don't know. Some of my friends...

Mickey glances sideways at Jackson.

MICKEY

... some of my friends think that I can ride, should ride a horse.

GEORGE

I think you'd be fine and I'm your friend, too. Maybe you should listen to your friends, Mickey.

(beat)

I'll let you visit with Jackson. I gotta finish up outside.

George heads out.

MICKEY

(to Jackson)

You'd do anything for me, wouldn't you boy.

(wistfully)

Now I need to do the one thing you want me to do for you, don't I?

INT. DINING HALL - DAY

Mickey sits down at the table where Sam and Brian are sitting.

MICKEY

Danny and Donny just attacked me at the stable.

SAM
Attacked you?!

MICKEY
Well, not exactly attacked. They
tripped me on purpose.

Brian
(angrily)
Let's get 'em, Sam. We can take them!

MICKEY
Jackson already took care of them.

SAM
Jackson?

MICKEY
He charged at them and reared
back. They were scared to death.
They thought for sure he was gonna
trample them!

They all laugh.

SAM
Way to go, Jackson!

Mickey high-fives with Sam and Brian.

Brian
Now you even got Jackson defending you.

SAM
But you'll be able to defend
yourself after we beef you up!

Brian
Starting tomorrow morning?

Mickey nods "yes."

SAM
Let's meet before breakfast when
no one else is around. Say 6:30?

Brian
That sounds horrible but I'll be there.

Brian stands to leave.

Brian
I'm gonna to have a nice afternoon basket weaving. The sun and
fun at the pool is doing me in.

Mickey and Sam stand.

SAM

I'm off to soccer practice.

MICKEY

And I'm going to be really boring
and take a nap!

As they leave the dining hall a BOY is acting like a charging horse, ala Jackson, and another BOY is cowering against the wall. The kids around them all break out in giggles with the exception of Danny and Donny who are scowling and turning red.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Mickey is alone in the cabin. He throws his cover back and jumps back at the sight of a dead snake in his bed.

LATER

Mickey has a stick that he uses to pick up the dead snake from his bed. He walks toward the door.

MICKEY

(to himself)

Wonder who dropped this Valentine
off.

INT. REC CENTER - NIGHT

Mickey is playing chess and is about to make a move when he is distracted by a commotion across the large room.

MICKEY'S POV: Sam is playing ping-pong against Danny

BACK TO SCENE

Mickey makes his move and stands.

MICKEY

(to his chess opponent)

Checkmate!

Mickey rushes over to the ping-pong table, joining Brian who is standing there.

Brian

(to Mickey)

She's kicking butt!

Donny is standing across from them.

DONNY

Ram that ball down her throat,
Dan!

MICKEY

(loudly)
Who's winning, Brian.

DONNY

Shut up, slouch.

MICKEY

The truth hurts!

DONNY

So does a ping-pong racket over
the head.

Brian

We'll sic Jackson on you!

Sam smashes a ball that Danny can't return.

SAM

That's game.

MICKEY

(shouting)
Sam wins!

Donny scowls at Sam as Mickey, Brian and other kids cheer for Sam. Danny and Donny slink away.

EXT. REC CENTER - NIGHT

Mickey, Sam and Brian exit the rec center.

SAM

That was fun beating that creepy
Danny.

Brian

Well... all in all it was a pretty good day.

Mickey walks away from Sam and Brian.

MICKEY

I need to go to the stable.
(calling over his shoulder)
Other than the snake, it was a
very good day.

Sam and Brian stop in their tracks.

SAM
What snake?!

MICKEY
Later guys!

Mickey runs off. Sam and Brian look at each other and shrug.

INT. STABLE - NIGHT

Mickey is brushing Jackson. He stops, closes his eyes and leans against Jackson's muzzle.

FANTASY SEQUENCE

EXT. RACETRACK - DAY

A series of blurred images of Jackson donning different racing tack and brilliant colors and being ridden by different jockeys with matching colors rushes by, all blending and crystallizing into one final slo-mo image of Jackson and his jockey in brilliant colors galloping down the track. The final jockey is Mickey.

END FANTASY SEQUENCE

Mickey gently strokes Jackson's muzzle.

MICKEY
You've got big plans for me, don't
you boy.
(somberly)
I just hope I can live up to your
dreams.

Mickey whinnies softly and nuzzles Mickey's face.

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - DAY

Mickey is lying on the grass, drifting off when Sam and Brian walk up.

SAM
I see you're ready for your work
out, Mickey!

Mickey wakes up and shakes his head.

MICKEY
Huh?!

SAM
Welcome to boot camp for one!

MICKEY
(pleading)
Can we start tomorrow?!

Brian
I didn't get up at six o'clock to hear your excuses.
(beat)
Get up and give me twenty!

MICKEY
Twenty...?

Brian
Push-ups, man! Twenty push-ups!

SAM
He needs to stretch first and then
he can give us twenty!

SERIES OF SHOTS - TRAINING DAY

A. Soccer field: Mickey follows Sam in a series of stretching exercises -- stretching arms, legs and back.

Later, the three friends walk briskly around the field. Mickey stops and pulls out his inhaler and takes a few breaths.

SAM
You okay, Mickey?

MICKEY
I'm fine. I just get my oxygen a
little different than you guys do.

B. Mickey, Sam and Brian are doing pushups. Mickey is struggling to keep up. Brian glances over at Sam.

Brian
(to Sam)
You're not doing girl pushups?

MICKEY
(panting)
Can I do the girl pushups?

Sam and Brian laugh as Mickey drops to his stomach, exhausted.

C. Brian demonstrates arm strengthening using bands. Sam and Mickey pick up their bands and start working out with them. Mickey groans as he pulls up on the bands for the first time.

MICKEY

Okay. I'm done.

Brian

You have to do more than one.

MICKEY

Two?

Brian

Get going!

Mickey begins pulling up on the taut bands again.

D. Sam is leading Mickey and Brian in deep knee bends. Mickey does a few bends and then seems to get stuck down in a bend. Sam and Brian pull him back up.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

Mickey, Sam and Brian are walking slowing around the field.

MICKEY

I'm already sore.

Brian

Everyday it'll get better.

MICKEY

You mean I'll get sorer.

SAM

Probably. But keep at it and some day you'll be leading us in a workout.

INT. STABLE - NIGHT

Mickey opens Jackson's stall door and leads him out.

MICKEY

How 'bout a moonlight walk,
Jackson?

Jackson neighs and shakes his head in approval.

EXT. PASTURE - NIGHT

Mickey leads Jackson up on a hill crest. The bright full moon is the backdrop for Mickey's and Jackson's silhouette.

LATER

Mickey leads Jackson back toward the stable. Mickey looks closely at Jackson.

MICKEY
Jackson! You seem... I don't
know... taller?!
(beat)
And you're so shiny!

Mickey smiles.

MICKEY
Just like a thoroughbred.

Jackson whinnies his approval.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

George is riding a horse past the field where Jackson is working. He stops the horse and peers at Jackson.

GEORGE'S POV: Jackson is donned with his normal tack but he is strutting and holding his head high.

BACK TO SCENE

George shakes his head.

GEORGE
What's got into him? He's
struttin' like a dang show horse.

EXT. CORRAL - DAY

George rides up to the corral and dismounts his horse. Mickey is carrying a saddle and heading for the stable.

GEORGE
(calling out)
Hey, Mickey!

Mickey stops and turns toward George then darts over to him.

GEORGE
I just saw Jackson out in the
field.
(beat)
What in the world is going on with
him?

Mickey smiles knowingly.

GEORGE

He's prancing like a dancing horse and his coat is so shiny I almost had to put my sunglasses on to look at him.

MICKEY

I've noticed a change. He even looks taller.

GEORGE

Come to think of it... he did look taller and sleeker.

(beat)

Think it's all those extra apples and carrots?

MICKEY

Maybe... but maybe there's something in him that makes him think he was meant for something more than plowing.

GEORGE

I'm pretty sure that horses don't think.

MICKEY

(smiling)

Oh... I'm pretty sure they do.

(beat)

I need to put this saddle up.

Mickey rushes off leaving George sputtering.

INT. STABLE - NIGHT

George, sleepy-eyed and yawning, is closing up the stalls and turning out lights when he hears footsteps. George secretes himself behind a storage shed and watches.

Mickey enters the stable, looking all around, making sure he's alone. He rushes on. George looks at his watch.

GEORGE'S POV: The watch indicates that it's two in the morning.

BACK TO SCENE

George frowns and quietly follows Mickey.

JACKSON'S STALL

Mickey slips into Jackson's stall and gives him an apple. Jackson snorts his approval as he gobbles it up.

George stays in the shadows a short distance away.

Mickey starts stroking Jackson's mane. Mickey squeezes his eyes shut.

MICKEY

Jackson, you don't have to keep telling me. I know you were a racehorse.

(beat)

I just don't know why you picked me to be your jockey.

George is listening closely.

MICKEY

I just don't want to disappoint you, boy.

George slowly walks up to Mickey.

GEORGE

(gently)

What are you doin' here so late son?!

Mickey is startled and jumps.

MICKEY

I... I couldn't sleep.

GEORGE

Yeah... I couldn't either.

(beat)

Seems you were havin' a conversation with Jackson.

MICKEY

(tentatively)

Just pretend.

GEORGE

Is that so?

George looks intensely at Mickey who is turning red and trying to avoid eye contact with George.

GEORGE

I just heard you say somethin' about Jackson -- that he used to be a racehorse.

MICKEY

Just silly talk, George. I know he's just a plow horse.

With that, Jackson neighs and nudges Mickey with his muzzle causing him to stumble forward.

GEORGE

Seems Jackson didn't agree with you. I wonder why that is?

Mickey just shrugs.

GEORGE

You have any contact with Murphy lately?

MICKEY

I've never talked to him.

GEORGE

Well, I need to tell you something that you already seem to know.

(beat)

Mickey, Jackson was a racehorse. The only people who know that are me and Murph.

(beat)

Who told you?

Jackson rears back on his hind legs and lets out a loud whinny. George stares at Mickey, a smile spreading across his face.

GEORGE

I think I just got my answer.

Mickey grins at George.

GEORGE

We'll talk more later. Right now you get back in your bunk and get some shuteye.

MICKEY

Yes sir!

Mickey races off. Jackson shorts and whinnies. George walks over to Jackson.

GEORGE

You been tellin' secrets, boy?

(beat)

You've never talked to me.

George pats Jackson on his muzzle, exits the stall and heads for the door.

GEORGE
 (loudly to Jackson, over his
 shoulder)
 Guess you thought I was too big
 and fat to be your jockey, eh,
 boy?!

Jackson neighs loudly several times as George walks off.

GEORGE
 Don't have rub it in!

EXT. CORRAL - DAY

George exits the corral just as Mickey walks up.

GEORGE
 Short night, wasn't it?

Mickey nods "yes."

MICKEY
 I owe you an explanation.

GEORGE
 You mean explain what's happening
 between you and Jackson?
 (beat)
 Think that's explainable?

Mickey thinks for a minute.

MICKEY
 Not really, I guess.

GEORGE
 I don't know what it is but
 something's going on.

MICKEY
 George, I'd like to learn how to
 ride.

GEORGE
 Let me guess, you want to ride
 Jackson.

MICKEY
 It's like he's my horse.

GEORGE
 I think you're his human. Seems he
 picked you out.
 (MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

(beat)

Well... what say we get started?

MICKEY

Feeding the horses?

GEORGE

Teaching you to ride.

Mickey's grin stretches across his face. George starts to walk off then hesitates.

GEORGE

(whispers)

Anybody else know about you and Jackson?

MICKEY

Sam and Brian.

GEORGE

Let's keep it between the four of us. We don't want anyone -- like my bosses for example -- to think we're nuts.

LATER

Mickey is mounted on Jackson. George slowly leads him around the corral.

Sam and Brian walk up and lean against the fence to watch.

SAM

(loudly)

You look real good up there, Mickey!

Brian

Can't you go faster?

Sam pokes Brian.

SAM

Shh! Just be glad he got up on a horse. I don't think he's ready for a full gallop.

Brian

Think he'll ever be?

Sam shrugs.

SERIES OF SHOTS - HORSEBACK RIDING LESSONS

A. Corral: Mickey is mounted on Jackson. George is holding his lead then lets go of it.

Mickey's eyes grow wide as Jackson picks up speed to a trot. Mickey holds on to the saddle horn for dear life.

B. Riding path: Mickey is mounted on Jackson. George is by his side on another horse. They break into a healthy trot down the path. Mickey looks terrified.

MICKEY

(to George)

I don't know if I can do this,
George.

GEORGE

But it looks like you ARE doing
it.

George gigs his horse which picks up some speed. Jackson follows suit. Mickey swallows hard.

C. Pasture: Mickey and George are riding in the hilly pasture. Mickey is bouncing up and down in his saddle as Jackson trots through the rough terrain.

MICKEY

My backside is feeling this,
George.

GEORGE

Your backside will get a break
when we break-out in a gallop.

MICKEY

(panicked)

Gallop?! You said we were going to
just trot through the pasture.

GEORGE

I said we were going to start with
a trot.

(beat)

Hold on, boy!

George gigs his horse which breaks out in full gallop. Jackson picks up speed. Mickey bends down close to Mickey's ear.

MICKEY

Slow it down, boy. Slow it down!

Jackson whinnies loudly and accelerates. Soon Mickey and Jackson catch up with George and his horse, pass him and leave him in the dust.

Mickey is crouched low on the horse like a jockey.

D. Corral: Mickey and George dismount from their horses. Mickey rubs his backside. He looks frazzled.

GEORGE

You and that old plow horse sure put me and my mount to shame.

MICKEY

Jackson didn't listen to me.

(beat)

I told him to slow down but he picked up speed. That's when he passed you up.

GEORGE

Once a race horse, always a race horse.

(beat)

By the way, all that was missing were the silks and you would've looked just like a jockey.

Mickey smiles, proud and confident.

GEORGE

That kinda reminds me... if you want some real pro instruction on horseback riding, you couldn't do better than James.

MICKEY

James?

GEORGE

James used to be a jockey. But if you approach him about it, be gentle. It's kind of a sore subject for him. You know... like your sore back side.

Out of Mickey's sight, Donny is crouching behind a shed eavesdropping.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. REC CENTER - DAY

Mickey is on the telephone.

MICKEY

Mom, I meant to call sooner --

INT. FAMILY ROOM - MICKEY'S HOUSE - DAY

Donna and John are sitting on the couch. Donna is on the phone.

DONNA
I've been worried --

John grabs the phone.

JOHN
-- I practically had to tie your
mom up to keep her from calling
you!

INTERCUT: PHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN MICKEY AND DONNA & JOHN

MICKEY
I'm fine... really fine. No
breathing problems.

JOHN
Having a good time?

MICKEY
I like it here, Dad.

JOHN
We were going to come and pick you
up this week end --

MICKEY
-- Forget that, Dad. I'm staying!

John laughs and hands the phone to Donna.

DONNA
Are you making friends, Mickey?

MICKEY
Yes, Mom. I am making friends...
the best friends I ever had.

INT. STABLES - DAY

Mickey is grooming Jackson.

EXT. STABLES - DAY

Danny and Donny are outside peeking through a window and watching Mickey.

INT. STABLES - DAY
(MORE)

MICKEY (CONT'D)

MICKEY

I can't believe how fast you ran today, boy.

(beat)

It was kinda scary... but it was fun. George said we'll ride again tomorrow morning.

EXT. STABLES - DAY

Danny and Donny look at each other in surprise.

DANNY

(whispers)

He's talking to the dumb horse like it understands him.

(beat)

The little nerd actually rode a horse?!

DONNY

(whispers)

Correction. He rode a *plow

Danny looks intensely at Donny.

DANNY

We need to make that creep pay!

(beat)

Let's plan on riding in the morning.

EXT. CORRAL - DAY

Mickey is helping George get the horses ready for the morning ride. George throws a saddle on one of the horses.

GEORGE

You hear about tomorrow night?

Mickey shrugs, clueless.

GEORGE

There's an overnight camp out. Some of the kids are taking horses, others are going by truck.

(beat)

Any interest in going?

MICKEY

I'm not sure if my friends are going...

(beat)

But you know, I'd rather stay back and practice riding Jackson.

GEORGE

Not sure if they'll need me on the camp out. I'll check with Karen and let you know.

The campers are arriving for their morning ride. Mickey and the other hands have saddled up the horses. Donny and Danny are in the group. Danny is already in the saddle.

DANNY

(leaning down to Mickey)

I see you're working out these days.

MICKEY

Yeah, so?

DANNY

If you buff up maybe you won't have to hide behind a girl, an old man and an old nag.

Mickey glares at Danny as he rides off. Mickey's frown turns into a smile when he sees James leading Jackson in from the field. Mickey runs over to them.

MICKEY

Hey, James. I'll take care of Jackson if you want me to.

JAMES

Sure thing. It'll save me some time.

(beat)

What's this I hear about you riding this old boy?

MICKEY

Actually, George is teaching me to ride him.

JAMES

He's a lotta horse, Mickey.

MICKEY

I think he's great.

Jackson cocks his head, looks at Mickey and snorts.

James hands Mickey the lead, pats him on the head and walks off. James turns back toward Mickey.

JAMES

You stay right there, Mickey. I got something for you.

James rushes off toward the stable as Mickey watches, curious.

LATER

James is carrying a saddle and a pair of boots. He hands the saddle to Mickey.

JAMES

Check this out.

Mickey looks the saddle over.

MICKEY

Cool! What kind of saddle is this?

JAMES

It's an English saddle.

(beat)

The boots are mine. I think they'll fit you.

MICKEY

Gee! Thanks, James. I'll take good care of them.

JAMES

I need to get to my chores.

James turns to leave.

MICKEY

James?!

James turns back to Mickey who just stares at him.

JAMES

What is it, kid?

MICKEY

Uh... I was just wondering... George said you'd make a great trainer.

JAMES

Really?

James leans on the fence and watches the horses in the corral. Mickey stands next to him, remaining silent. Jackson rests his head on the fence nearby.

JAMES

That horse sure is acting strange lately.

MICKEY

Yeah... I noticed.

JAMES

I used to ride... a hundred years ago.

(beat)

I was a jockey, Mickey. And I was a good one but my career was cut short.

MICKEY

Why?

JAMES

My ticker.

MICKEY

Nothing to do with a clock, right?

JAMES

(smiling)

My heart, Mickey. Our sports doctor said I had a bad heart. I couldn't ride any more.

MICKEY

But you're fine now, right?

JAMES

Never had a problem with my heart. I think it was political.

Mickey looks puzzled.

JAMES

They wanted to get rid of me... give my spot to somebody else.

Mickey's wheels are turning.

MICKEY

But you can't be a jockey if you have a... a disease?

JAMES

It's probably not an issue if a rider's condition is under control.

MICKEY

You like working here, right?

JAMES

Sure... I'm surviving -- maybe
with a little bitterness -- but
I'm surviving.

(beat)

Right now I need to do my job.

James starts to walk off. Mickey hangs his head.

JAMES

(calling back to Mickey)

I can give you a few tips after I
do a few chores... if you want.

MICKEY

(loudly)

I want, James! I want!

Mickey smiles as he looks at the saddle again. Jackson rears
back on his hind legs and whinnies loudly. James turns around
and looks at Jackson.

JAMES

What in the world has got into
that plow horse?!

LATER

Mickey is sitting on the corral fence when James walks up.
Mickey hops down.

MICKEY

I'll go get Jackson.

JAMES

You can train on one of the
quarter horses. They're better
rides.

MICKEY

I'll stick with Jackson.

JAMES

Why kid?

MICKEY

I don't know. Jackson and I just
make a good team.

Mickey runs off leaving James shaking his head.

LATER

Mickey is mounted on Jackson. The English saddle is strapped on Jackson and Mickey is wearing James' boots. James is on another horse.

JAMES

We'll head out to the riding path
and then over through the pasture.

MICKEY

That sounds great!

James gigs his horse and Mickey gigs Jackson. They ride out of the corral area side by side.

Danny and Donny emerge from the side of a shed watching as Mickey and James ride off. Danny finds a shady spot under a tree.

DANNY

Have a seat.

DONNY

Huh?

DANNY

We'll just hang around here until
little jockey boy comes back.

DONNY

Good idea.

DANNY

He needs to pay for making us
laughing stocks.

Danny glares at the disappearing images of Mickey and James.

EXT. CORRAL - DAY

The sun is going down as Mickey and James return.

JAMES

I'm going to ride out to the south
pasture and check a few fence
posts.

(beat)

You did good today, kid.

MICKEY

Thanks, James. Thanks for
everything!

James tips his hat to Mickey and takes off. Mickey guides Jackson into the corral and dismounts.

Danny sits up abruptly and shakes Donny who had drifted off.

DANNY

Wake up! He's back and he's all alone.

DONNY

Yeah... just the way we like it!

Danny and Donny run over to the corral.

DANNY

Well if it isn't the plow horse and his sidekick plow boy!

Mickey glares at Danny and Donny.

MICKEY

Jackson is not a plow horse! He's a thoroughbred.

DANNY

Maybe you could explain why he pulls a big plow everyday and plows the field.

DONNY

Yeah, he doesn't *thoroughbred* the field.

Danny and Donny laugh.

Mickey is angry. He charges at Danny and Donny.

DANNY

Watch out! Plow boy's been working out!

(beat)

See that big muscle on his upper arm?

DONNY

Muscle?! I thought it was a wart?!

Mickey shoves Danny who stumbles back a few steps.

DANNY

(angrily, to Donny)

Let's get this loser!

Danny knocks Mickey to the ground. Donny holds a struggling Mickey down while Danny runs into the corral and mounts Jackson sitting in the saddle backwards.

DANNY

Ooh, look at me! I'm riding the big bad race horse!

MICKEY

You're gonna be sorry. Jackson hates you.

DONNY

Shut up! That horse is too dumb to know who's on his back.

Jackson takes off in a trot that soon turns into a gallop. Danny is screaming and holding on for dear life.

Jackson stops short in front of a haystack lofting a screaming Danny arcing into the air, landing on the haystack, careening and rolling off of it and finally landing in the pigpen, making quite a splash.

Pigs surround Danny who's crying and covered in mud and slop.

Jackson rears up and whinnies loudly. Donny rushes over to Danny. Donny wrinkles his nose up at the smell.

DANNY

Get me outta here!

Donny has the dry heaves and starts to gag.

DONNY

I'm gonna puke.

Donny runs off holding his hand over his mouth.

DANNY

(crying)
Somebody help me!

LATER

The very muddy Danny is standing by the corral. George is hosing him off.

GEORGE

Told you not to mess with Jackson.
(beat)
Now turn yourself around!

George increases the water pressure on the hose. The powerful stream knocks Danny to the ground.

This time hiding behind the shed is Mickey, Sam and Brian who are laughing heartily.

INT. REC CENTER - DAY

Mickey is reading a posting on the board. Sam runs up to him.

SAM

What's up?

MICKEY

Nothing... uh... I was just looking at this flyer about the County Fair.

SAM

Let me see. Sam pushes in front of Mickey and looks on the board.

Sam smiles coyly and looks at Mickey.

SAM

I'm sure you weren't reading the part about the Local Kentucky Derby.

Mickey shrugs.

MICKEY

I couldn't... I could never be part of that.

SAM

I agree.

Mickey looks disappointed.

MICKEY

If you say you can't do something then you can't.

(intensely)

I believe you and Jackson could enter that race and really be in the running. But if you don't believe it yourself, it'll never happen.

Sam walks off leaving Mickey lost in his thoughts.

EXT. CORRAL - DAY

Mickey walks up to George who is prepping the riding horses.

GEORGE

Hey, Mick. You mind getting an extra bridle from inside --

MICKEY

-- I need to talk to you.

LATER

Mickey, George and James are huddled together.

GEORGE

Think he can do it, James?

JAMES

If he thinks he can.

GEORGE

Well, Mickey, do you... do you think you can race in the derby.

Mickey's eyes are intense. He swallows hard.

MICKEY

I not only think I can do it, I know I can.

GEORGE

I'll have to get the nod from Murphy.

JAMES

It's only six weeks to the race. Racing is a lot different than riding through the pasture. You'll have competition from all around the region.

MICKEY

I'm ready to work hard, harder than I've every worked for anything.

JAMES

Jackson'll have to be retrained --

GEORGE

James, Jackson was a racehorse --

MICKEY

No, George, Jackson is a racehorse.

George smiles warmly at Mickey.

GEORGE

The asthma gonna be a problem?

MICKEY

I haven't used my inhaler in weeks. I almost forgot I have it.

JAMES

But you can't forget about it.

MICKEY

I know. But I feel 100 percent better than when I came here.

GEORGE

Looks like Jackson is a cure for what ails you -- maybe even asthma!

Mickey giggles in delight. George and James both laugh. George ruffles Mickey's hair. James pats him on the back.

EXT. CORRAL - DAY

Sam and Brian are leaning against the corral fence. George, Murphy and Charlie walk over and join them.

MURPHY

Well... where's the kid who wants to ride in the Derby? Mickey, right?

GEORGE

He'll be out directly. He's saddling up.

MURPHY

This is exciting. One of our horses in the State Fair Derby!
(beat)
And good timing! The race takes place during Parents Week.

CHARLIE

I hope he picked the big black stallion to ride in the race. We'd be so proud of that beautiful animal riding for Camp Wheaton.

George, Sam and Brian exchange knowing looks. George looks toward the stable where James is opening the double doors.

GEORGE

Here comes Mickey now.

Everyone looks at the stable as Mickey mounted on Jackson emerges from the stable.

MURPHY

Jackson?! The plow horse?!

WIFE

What about the black stallion!

Mickey looks confident in the saddle and Jackson is in an easy trot.

GEORGE

Mickey doesn't want any other horse and besides... Jackson pretty well picked Mickey out.

(beat)

Murph, these two are nothing short of magic together. Watch 'em ride.

Mickey gigs Jackson who takes off in a burst of speed. Mickey has control of Jackson who performs perfectly as he takes a few laps around the field.

CHARLIE

(to Murphy)

What do you think, Murph?

MURPHY

I would have never guessed that that old plow horse would ever be in a race again but looks like he darned well will be!

George and James smile. Sam and Brian jump up and down, happy and excited. Mickey and Jackson trot back up to the corral.

GEORGE

Looks like we'll be ordering your silks, Mickey!

CHARLIE

We'll have Lynne fix you and Jackson up proud!

Mickey grins widely. Jackson whinnies and snorts. He nuzzles Murphy's face as he passes by.

CHARLIE

If I didn't know better I'd swear that horse understands what we were talking about.

Mickey winks at George as he heads back to the stable.

EXT. CORRAL - DAY

James is leading Jackson into the horse trailer attached to his pick-up truck. Mickey helps James close the trailer doors.

INT. JAMES' PICK-UP TRUCK

James climbs in behind the wheel. Mickey is sitting in the passenger seat.

MICKEY

The neighbor's track is like the Derby race track?

JAMES

A little smaller but it will give you a feel for the real thing.

MICKEY

(almost to himself)
The real thing...

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S TRACK - DAY

Mickey and James lead Jackson through an entry to the track. Mickey scans the track.

MICKEY

This is small?!

JAMES

You'll see the Derby track this afternoon.

MICKEY

This afternoon?!

JAMES

You and Jackson have to practice coming out of the gate.

Mickey's eyes grow wide and he takes a deep breath.

SERIES OF SHOTS - TRAINING FOR THE RACE

A. Neighbor's track: Mickey is riding Jackson around the track in a trot. James waves him over.

JAMES

You ready to pick up the speed?

MICKEY

As ready as I'll ever be.

B. Neighbor's Track: Mickey is riding Jackson at full gallop. He is clutching the reins, panic on his face. James is standing on the sidelines, with a timer. Mickey trots over to him.

MICKEY

That was fast!

James looks at the time.

JAMES

Not fast enough. Try it again.

Mickey's face is somber as he turns Jackson back on the track. Jackson takes off at high speed.

JAMES

(to himself)

Jeez, Jackson is flying. He must've heard me.

C. Grassy area by track: As Jackson munches on grass, James gives Mickey a riding crop and explains how to use it MOS. Mickey takes the crop and looks at it closely.

MICKEY

Will it hurt him?

JAMES

Jackson's got the legs of a racehorse but the rear end of a plow horse so whip away.

D. James is mounted on Jackson demonstrating MOS the posture that Mickey needs to assume when racing and how he needs to use his legs and feet during a race.

E. Derby track: Mickey is mounted on Jackson at one of the stalls of the starting gate. James is standing with a GATE OPERATOR who manually depresses a lever. A bell rings and the gate flies open. Jackson takes off like a rocket. Mickey is holding on for dear life and is moaning and groaning.

GATE OPERATOR

I'd say the horse is ready... not sure about the rider.

JAMES

He'll get there... he will get there.

F. Mickey, mounted on Jackson, is on the oval. James is standing to the side with his timer.

JAMES

Let's see what you two can do on
this track.

Mickey gigs the horse, leans down close to Jackson, jockey-style, gigs him with his feet and strikes his shank with his crop. Jackson is in full gallop within seconds. James watches in awe.

JAMES

Unbelievable!

G. Montage of multiple images of Mickey racing around the oval and coming out of the starting gate.

H. Mickey dismounts and is a little wobbly when he walks.

MICKEY

My legs are like jelly.

JAMES

Get a good night's sleep, kid.
We'll do it again tomorrow.

Mickey's shoulders slump as James leads Jackson into the trailer.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. DINING HALL - NIGHT

Mickey is dragging as he walks and sits down with his tray joining Sam and Brian.

Brian

You look half-dead!

MICKEY

That's twice as good as I feel.

SAM

You gonna get time off for the
competitions?

MICKEY

I'll try.

SAM

You better!

MICKEY

I'm supposed to be in the chess
competition.

Brian
You need to take a break from your training.

MICKEY
No kidding.

Mickey lays his head down on the table and closes his eyes.

SAM
Is he asleep?

EXT. ARCHERY RANGE - DAY

Mickey, Sam and Brian are on the sidelines.

Brian
Kill it, Sam.

SAM
I'm doing this for my brothers.

MICKEY
So they'll be proud of you?!

SAM
No... so they'll eat their heart
out with envy.

Sam with her bow and arrows is standing in line with the other competitors. Images of Sam taking shot after shot at the target blend into a final image of Sam against one competitor.

A bead of perspiration runs down Sam's forehead as she takes her final shot. It lands just below the center of the bullseye. Her competitor, a BOY, betters her and gets a bulls eye.

Sam is all smiles as she is presented with the silver medal. Mickey and Brian are on the sidelines and clap and cheer loudly for her.

Later Sam meets up with Mickey and Brian. She is wearing her medal.

SAM
Wish I would have gotten the gold.

MICKEY
But you beat out a dozen other
kids, mainly boys.

SAM
You're right.
(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

The silver medal will be enough to
make my brothers miserable!

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

Brian is lined up at the end of the pool with the other competitors. He turns and waves at Mickey and Sam who are in the stands. Brian pulls his goggles down over his eyes and gets in position to start. The gun sounds and Brian and the other swimmers dive in.

The race is two laps. The crowd is shouting and cheering the swimmers on. During the final leg of the last lap, Brian and another boy are neck and neck in the lead. Brian takes a big breath and gives the last few yards his all. Brian is declared the winner over the loud-speaker system. Mickey and Sam stand and cheer.

The exhausted Brian rests his head on the pool edge. The COACH rushes up and bends down by him.

COACH

Brian! Brian!

The coach shakes Brian who finally looks up at him.

Brian

The other kid won.

COACH

No! You won!

Brian

Huh?

COACH

YOU WON!

Brian pulls his earplugs out.

SAM

(to Mickey)

The doofus doesn't even know he
won.

Brian

Huh?

COACH

Brian, you won the race!

Brian leaps out of the pool high fives the coach and does a victory dance. Everyone in the stands enjoys the scene especially Mickey and Sam.

INT. MEETING ROOM - REC CENTER - NIGHT

A large banner that reads, "Camp Wheat Chess Championship" is hung across the back wall. Multiple tables with chess sets are set up in the middle of the room. Temporary stands have been brought in for guests.

Mickey, Sam and Brian enter the room together. Mickey looks fatigued. He's trying to stifle a yawn.

SAM

Do your best, Mickey.

Brian

Yeah, don't embarrass us. Try to stay awake.

Mickey yawns and gives them the thumbs up as he walks off toward the competition area.

SAM

(to Brian)

I hope he *can* stay awake.

Brian

He's been training with James from sunup to sundown.

SERIES OF SHOTS - THE COMPETITION

A. Mickey is absorbed in a match with a BOY, 12. Mickey makes a move.

MICKEY

Checkmate!

The JUDGE comes over to the table and confirms the match results.

JUDGE

You're on to the semis, Mickey.

B. Mickey is shown to a table where Emma is already seated.

MICKEY

(to himself)

Oh, no!

C. Mickey is yawning and stretching as he stares at the board.

EMMA

You give up?

MICKEY

Of course not!

D. Mickey still hasn't made his move. He's resting his head on his fist, fighting sleep. Emma is glaring at him.

EMMA

You don't have a move.

MICKEY

Just hold on. I'm strategizing.

Emma rolls her eyes.

E. Mickey finally makes his move. His head drops almost to the table. Emma quickly makes her move and stands in victory.

EMMA

Checkmate!

Mickey who's almost drifted off is startled and sits up straight. He looks at Sam and Brian in the stands, grimaces and shrugs.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

Mickey, Sam and Brian are walking toward the exit.

MICKEY

It was a little humiliating.

SAM

I'd say you did your best but I don't think you did.

Brian

At least you stayed awake -- most of the time.

A big smile breaks out across Mickey's face.

MICKEY

But you know what... I don't even care. There's only one competition on my mind. And Sam, I guarantee you I'll do my best in that one!

Sam giggles and playfully punches Mickey.

Brian

(loudly)

Up next -- Mickey and Jackson versus the world!

They all laugh and run off together.

INT. STABLE - NIGHT

Mickey walks up to Jackson's stall in the dark stable. He gives him an apple.

MICKEY

Tomorrow's the big day, boy.

Jackson nods his head up and down. Mickey gently strokes Jackson's muzzle. He immediately squeezes his eyes shut. His hand trembles.

FANTASY SEQUENCE

Mickey and Jackson are in the winner's circle. A large wreath is around Jackson's neck and Mickey is holding a trophy.

END FANTASY SEQUENCE

Mickey takes his hand away from Mickey.

MICKEY

I know you want to win. So do I.
But we might not.

Jackson snorts and shakes his head.

MICKEY

Win or lose I've never had a
better time in my whole life.
(beat)
You helped me, Jackson. You helped
me find myself.
(gently)
See you tomorrow, boy.

Mickey leaves. Jackson looks after him, his big brown eyes shining in the dark.

EXT. - AT THE TRACK DAY

Donna and John didn't expect Mickey to sit with them, but they did expect to see him. They strain to see where he might be, half expecting him to be under the stands or in some corner reading one of his books.

The horses begin to move onto the track. It is all so very exciting. Beautiful horses, colorful jockeys, and lots of banners waving.

EXT. AT THE GATE - DAY

The horses line up at the starting gate. Some balk and needed to be prodded, others neigh, and some rear. Eventually they all settle into their respective places.

The starting bell goes off.

The horses leave the gate and crowd toward the rail.

The crowd goes wild.

One horse seems to hang back. His jockey seems a bit nervous and his horse a bit skittish. The jockey is dressed in purple and yellow. Within seconds the horse came under the skillful control of the jockey and begin move faster, passing one horse and then another, and then another.

The crowd is on its feet as the horses reach the far side of the track.

They are all wondering who is that horse coming up from the rear. And who is that small jockey riding high on that magnificent animal's back?

Charlie and Murphy Wheaton sit near Donna and John and hand them a pair of binoculars. John adjusts the lens and follows the horses. When he comes upon the purple and yellow clad jockey he pauses and almost drops the binoculars; he must sit down. He hands the binoculars to Donna.

JOHN

Take a look.

She looks at him with a very puzzled expression and holds the binoculars to her eyes searching for what could have made her husband speechless and almost fall into his seat.

DONNA'S POV: She sees him. It is her son, her asthmatic, skinny son Mickey astride that big, beautiful thoroughbred.

BACK TO SCENE

Donna and John jump up from their seat cheering wildly.

DONNA AND JOHN

Go, Mickey! Go!

All of campers join.

CAMPERS

Go, Mickey, Go. Go, go, go.

Tears stream down Donna's and John's faces.

Mickey is mounted on Jackson and is on the track. The starting gate is being positioned into place.

JAMES

This is it, kid.

MICKEY
Yeah... no kidding.

GEORGE
It's normal to be nervous.

MICKEY
In that case, I'm feeling very
normal right now.

JAMES
You've trained hard and you're
ready. The nerves are good.
They'll keep you from getting the
big head.

GEORGE
Wait and get the big head after
the race.

MICKEY
I may not win.

GEORGE
You've already won, son.

LATER

Danny and Donny are sitting a few rows back from Donna and John.

DANNY
(to Donny)
He's still a loser.

DONNY
Even if he wins the race?

DANNY
(scowling)
Shut up, Donny!

A bugle sounds as horses and riders take their places behind the starting gate.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Welcome to the County Fair
Racehorse Derby. Get ready for one
exciting race!

Cheers from the stands. The starting gun is fired, the gates fly open and Mickey and Jackson fly out of the gate. Mickey leans down close to Mickey.

MICKEY
 (whispers to Jackson)
 Let's do it, boy!

With a burst of speed Jackson is suddenly out in front. The crowd goes wild. Donna, John, Sam and Mickey are on their feet. Murphy and Charlie are hugging each other.

George and James are on the sideline cheering Mickey and Jackson on.

The horse next to Mickey is a bit skittish. ALEX, his jockey in purple and yellow, seems a bit nervous. But he recovers and gets his horse under control. The horse moves faster, passing one horse after another including Mickey and Jackson and takes the lead.

There is a hush over the crowd as Mickey and Jackson accelerate and are soon running neck and neck with Alex.

Mickey's family and friends are ecstatic, cheering and screaming for Mickey and Jackson. George and James are literally jumping up and down on the sidelines.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 (screaming)
 And they're coming down the home stretch. Jackson is in the lead by one length... two lengths... it's Jackson by three lengths.

It's chaos in the stands. Donna and John hug and kiss as do Murphy and Charlie. Sam and Brian are hugging and jumping up and down as one entity.

All of Camp Wheaton is yelling, screaming, high-fiving. Mickey's parents are hugging one another, hugging Murphy and Charlie.

JOHN
 That's my boy!!

Mickey stands in his stirrups as he and Jackson trot around the track relishing in all the applause. As the other jockeys go past Mickey they all salute him. Several of them say "Nice ride, kid!"

Mickey is beaming. He strokes Jackson as they make their way to the winner's circle. James, George, the Wheatons and Donna and John go to the Winner's Circle to greet Jackson and Mickey. Mickey spots Sam and Brian in the crowd and beckons them over.

EXT. WINNER'S CIRCLE - DAY

The reporters and others are snapping pictures.

A large wreath of flowers is hung around Jackson's neck, a blue ribbon is affixed to Mickey shirt, and a big, gold trophy is placed in his arms declaring him first place winner at the County Fair, just like the picture that Mickey saw in Jackson's head the day they first met.

Donna, John, James, George, Murphy, Charlie, Sam, and Brian all gather around. Mickey introduces his parents to Jackson and then to George, James, Sam, and Brian.

MICKEY

Mom and Dad, I want you to meet James. He was my coach. He taught me to ride right from the beginning. And this is George. Without George nothing would have happened. And these are Sam and Brian. They are my best friends. They trained me every morning before breakfast. They are simply the best.

DONNA

It is so nice to meet you all. I can't believe what I have seen today. You are all miracle workers.

SAM

And Mickey doesn't use his inhaler any more!

Everyone laughs.

JOHN

Mickey, you have made me so very, very proud, Son. While in the stands Murphy and Charlie told us the story about Jackson being a plow horse and you being able to communicate with him and loving him.

Jackson whinnies and nuzzles Mickey's face.

MURPHY

(to Mickey)

I just want to know one thing.

(MORE)

MURPHY (CONT'D)

Was I right when I said that
everyone will want to come back
next year?

Mickey looks at Jackson and then at Sam and Brian and finally
at George and James.

MICKEY

Mr. Murphy, you won't be able to
keep me away.

FADE TO BLACK