BEING OTHERS

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FADE IN:

EXT. MORNING.

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

INT. MINIVAN – CONTINUOUS

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

All is quiet save for the engine's rumble.

HARRIS
Dad, how fast are you going?

TOM
I’m doing the speed limit.

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

TOM
And whose fault is that?

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

Tom turns on the radio to one of his presets.

VOICE ON RADIO
I hope that you’ve enjoyed the last few days of these unseasonably warm temperatures because that’s all about to end. We have a massive cold front coming in from the north that is going to play havoc with the afternoon and
evening drive. It looks like October and it is about to start to feel like October.

TOM
Marvelous.

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

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

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

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

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

HARRIS
Hey! That is so not cool!

TOM
It’s a classic.

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

HARRIS
Yea, so is this!

The guitar charges back through the van’s speakers.

TOM
No. That’s a public health hazard.

Click. Tom presses the preset for Aretha once again.
HARRIS
Dad, you’re killing me here.

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

Click. Harris pushes the preset for the guitar again.

TOM
HARRIS! What’s the matter with you?

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

TOM
THIS is peace and harmony?

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

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

ARETHA (SINGING ON RADIO)
...All I’m askin’ for is a little respect...

EXT. SCHOOL. CONTINUOUS.

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

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

TOM
Harris...

HARRIS
Yeah, Dad?
TOM
Have a good day, son.

Harris smiles quickly towards his father.

HARRIS
You too, Dad.

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

VOICE FROM THE CROWD
HARRIS!

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

TERRY
Dude, where have you been?

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

HARRIS
Terry... There she is!

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

TERRY
Whoa.

Taylor looks towards Harris and smiles.

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

The group of cheerleaders slow. They stop. Like satellites drawn around a heavenly body crowds seem to follow these girls. Lisa turns her head towards Harris and Terry. She cocks an eyebrow.
LISA
Let’s keep moving along, girls. There’s nothing to see here.

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

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

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

TERRY
It’s true, you know.

HARRIS
What’s that?

TERRY
You are a shmoe.

INT. HOMEROOM, DAY

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

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

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

On her way to the cheerleader’s corner of the room she stops
to say hello.

MISSY
Hey nub. How ya doing, Terry?

TERRY
...Um... ...Good.

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

MISSY
Great, no cavities.

HARRIS
Of course.

MISSY
Of course? What’s that supposed to mean?

HARRIS
It means that your winning streak remains un tarnished. Even your teeth are perfect.

MISSY
Hey, wouldn’t that make a great compare and contrast essay – “The Success of Missy Hotchkiss Compared to the trails of Her geeky brother Harris”?

HARRIS
Oh yeah. That’s great.

MISSY
I don’t know, it’s got a good ring to it. What do you think Terry?
TERRY
Uh...

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

Missy exits and migrates towards the other cheerleaders.

HARRIS
Aren’t big sisters great?

TERRY
Yeah...but she is soooo incredibly hot!

HARRIS
Huh? Yeah whatever!

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

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

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

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

HARRIS
What?

TERRY
That does nothing for you?

HARRIS
It’s just the laws of physics...

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

HARRIS
It’s the simple law of attraction.

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

VOICE OFFSCREEN
And what are you two nerds looking at?

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

TERRY
What? NOTHING! We weren’t looking at Nothing!

Harris looks at Terry and then to Josh.

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

This interaction begins to draw the attention of the room. There is a smattering of sounds from the homeroom at these words. Taylor’s attention is peaked. She moves towards the action. The rest of the cheerleaders follow Lisa Minetti.
HARRIS
Come on Josh you’re not fooling anyone.

JOSH
What’s that, worm?

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

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

TAYLOR
JOSH! That’s enough.

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

JOSH
This does not concern you.

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

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

JOSH
You know what?

The room is silent.

JOSH (CONT.)
Baby, you’re right. This worm’s not
worth my time.

TAYLOR
Don’t call me “baby”. You lost that
privilege a long time ago.

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

LISA
She’s right, baby the worm’s not worth
it.

Josh looks into Lisa’s eyes.
JOSH
What would I do with out you?

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

Josh looks towards Harris and Terry once more.

JOSH (CONT.)
You two... you got off easy this morning.

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

Josh leans down in between Harris and Terry.

JOSH (CONT.)
Watch your back.

In a moment Lisa is there next to Josh.

LISA
Come on Josh walk me to class.

JOSH
Yeah... let’s go.

Josh and Lisa exit arm in arm.

TAYLOR
Exit stage left.

HARRIS
Charming young man that Josh is.

Taylor looks harshly towards Harris.

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

TERRY
What, like a Transformer?

TAYLOR
I’m serious. Leave him alone. He’s bad news.
HARRIS
And how do you know that?

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

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

TERRY
You don’t have to tell me twice.

HARRIS
Did you hear that?

TERRY
What?

HARRIS
She cares enough to stop Josh from throttling us.

TERRY
Heh, yeah... real touching.

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

INT. BOARDROOM OF CAPITOL AMUSEMENTS, MORNING

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

TOM
So you see, the Magnetic Brain Drain is a first in the nation. The electro-magnetic couplings increase the 0 to 70 miles per hour speed to 4.5 seconds – one of the fastest speeds for a roller
coaster worldwide. Coaster fans the world over will be looking for a ride on the Magnetic Brain Drain. ...Lights please.

The lights in the room come up.

TOM (CONT.)

Any questions?

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

AVERY

And it will be ready to next Saturday?

TOM

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

Wesker smiles at this announcement.

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

BOSON

Mr. Hotchkiss. Is this safe?

TOM

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

BOSON

What about the insurance risks?

AVERY

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

BOSON

I mean what happens if something goes wrong? What happens when “the fastest
coaster in North America" flies off of the tracks and takes out a whole family reunion at our park – I’m talking three or four generations in one fell swoop?

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

**TOM**
Mr. Boson...

Andrew’s attention refocuses on Tom.

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

**BOSON**
What would you say to one more independent study?

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

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

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

**BOSON (CONT.)**
Look, I mean no disrespect but I used to play football and I needed to know that I could rely on my team. It is a tradition in the Boson family. My son is an offensive lineman for “The Burro’s” and I have always ingrained in him the value of teamwork...
AVERY (INT.)
Andrew your point is taken. Tom, you don’t mind another battery of tests do you?

TOM
No sir, not at all.

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

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

PUBLIC RELATIONS MAN
The publicity for the premiere of the Magnetic Brain Drain is unprecedented...

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

INT. GYMNASIUM, AFTERNOON

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

TWEET! The Coach blows his whistle.

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

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

COACH (CONT.)
You know what you need to do so...

He glances at his clipboard.
A look of horror crosses over Terry’s features as he gets up and moves to the center of the circle.

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

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

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

**JOSH**
This shouldn’t take long. Moorecock’s is on the All State wrestling team.

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

**COACH**
READY?

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

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

TWEET! The coach’s whistle blasts once again.

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

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

**COACH (CONT.)**
MICHAELS! You still with us?

Terry sits up and stands.
TERRY
...Yes coach.

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

COACH
Good work out there. Way to show hustle.

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

The coach glances at his clipboard again.

COACH (CONT.)
BOSON and...

He looks up from the clipboard and over to Harris.

COACH (CONT.)
HOTCHKISS - Front and center!

HARRIS (TO TERRY)
Tell my family that I loved them.

TERRY
You got it.

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

HARRIS
Coach... Really?

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

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

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

COACH (CONT.)
*LIFE’S NOT FAIR*, son! Get used to it!

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

JOSH
Worm, I’m going to crush you.
COACH
WRESTLERS READY!

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

JOSH
Say your prayers...

HARRIS (INT.)

Varmint.

JOSH

Huh?

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

HARRIS

Yosemite Sam.

JOSH

What did you call me?

HARRIS

No – “Say your prayers, varmint” is something that Yosemite Sam would...

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

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

COACH

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

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

JOSH

Yes Coach!

Harris gets to his feet again taking several deep breaths.
COACH
RESUME!
Harris and Josh resume their starting positions.

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

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

JOCK
What?! Dude you had him!

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

TWEET!

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

Josh gets to his feet.

JOSH
Sorry Coach.

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

JOSH
Yes Coach!

COACH
HOTCHKISS How you holding up?
Harris gets to his knees, chest heaving.

HARRIS
I’m...
COACH (INT.)
GOOD! RESUME!

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

JOSH (TO HARRIS)
Your victory is in sight.

HARRIS
Oh just get on with it.

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

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

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

Chuckles from ringside can be heard.

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

TWEET!

COACH
That’s THREE Boson! You are now disqualified! Hotchkiss wins!

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

JOSH
Congratulations on your win, worm.

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

Terry moves towards Harris who is beginning to move to a
seated position on the mat.

TERRY
Harris, are you all right?

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

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

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

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

TERRY
But Coach...

COACH
MICHAELS – YOU GO WITH HIM!

TERRY
...Yes coach.

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

INT: LUNCHROOM, LATER

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

TERRY
You know what, Harris?
HARRIS
What?

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

HARRIS
TEST! There’s a test tomorrow!

TERRY
Yes. Please tell me you’ve studied.

HARRIS
Uh… What’s it on?

TERRY
Unbelievable.

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

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

HARRIS
...You could say that.

CHARLIE
So what happened?

HARRIS
I don’t know...

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

Charlie quickly moves out of the way.
JOSH
Worm. I can’t seem to get away from you today.

HARRIS
The feeling’s mutual.

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

Harris looks at Josh forlorn.

HARRIS
No Josh, what is my problem?

JOSH
You need to stay away from my girl.

Harris’s mouth drops open.

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

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

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

JOSH (CONT.)
Do you hear me? Stay away from Taylor!

TAYLOR
Or what?

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

JOSH
...Taylor.

TAYLOR
You and I are over Josh. There is not
enough room for your ego and us. And what about Lisa? You’re free to date her and I am free to date whomever I want.

JOSH
You deserve better than this worm.

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

JOSH
But Taylor...

TAYLOR (INT.)
No Josh. We are done here.

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

INT: BOSON’S OFFICE, AFTERNOON

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

BLEEP!

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

A shadow crosses Boson’s face.

BOSON
Yes, send him in.

BARTHOLOMEW MEADE A well dressed man in his early 50’s enters the office. He is wearing a fine tailored Italian suit. His appearance is well coifed.
BOSON
Ah, Mr. Meade, it is good to see you. Can I offer you anything?

MEADE
Mr. Boson have you made progress on our project?

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

MEADE
Close. Close as in ‘you don’t have them yet?’

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

MEADE
Another team, Mr. Boson?

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

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

BOSON
They will have their precious industrial secrets soon.

MEADE
That would be a most beneficial situation Mr. Boson. I wish you the
best with your efforts. When should I tell my employers that their package will be ready?

BOSON
Thursday of next week.

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

Andrew Boson smiles broadly.

MEADE (CONT.)
Of course it would be most unwise to disappoint them any further.

Boson’s smile fades.

EXT: BUNGALOW HOME, LATE AFTERNOON

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

INT: KITCHEN, CONT.

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

TOM
Hey Lady. How was your day?

BEVERLY
Oh, it was all right. How about yours?

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

STEWART
Yes, Dad?

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

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

MISSY
YOU!

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

MISSY (CONT.)
Give me back my diary.

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

STEWART
Missy, I can explain!

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

STEWART
Mom, Missy called me Stewie!

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

BEVERLY
Stewart, give her back her diary.
MISSY
Yeah, Stewie, give me back my diary.

BEVERLY
Knock it off, Missy.

STEWART
Yeah, Missy, you’re not being very nice, what would Brad say?

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

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

TOM
Missy... Stewart.

MISSY
Yes.

Stewart looks at his father.

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

The two siblings exchange glances.

MISSY
Harris’s.

STEWART
Yeah, Harris.

TOM
Harris.
Tom looks around the room.

**TOM (CONT.)**
Where is Harris?

**MISSY**
I don’t know Dad; sorry.

**STEWART**
He might be outside in the tree house.

**TOM**
The tree house! In this weather!

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

**BEVERLY**
A Storm Chaser, huh?

**MISSY**
You are such a geek.

**TOM**
All right, thanks.

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

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

**MISSY**
I’m gonna kill you!

Missy chases him down the hall leaving Beverly and Tom alone.
BEVERLY
That’s what I love about our home...

She takes a sip of coffee.

BEVERLY (CONT.)
The peace and quiet.

EXT. TREEHOUSE, CONTINUOUS

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

INT. TREEHOUSE, CONTINUOUS

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

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

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

HARRIS
“Worm…”

Harris sits and pushes his schoolbook away.

HARRIS (CONT.)
Just who does Mr. Popular think he is?

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

HARRIS (CONT.)
That’s what I need... to extract justice from my tormentors.

TOM (OFFSCREEN – DISTANT)
Harris!

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

HARRIS

...Holy cow.

TOM

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

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

HARRIS

Right!

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

TOM

Come on Harris!

HARRIS

I’m coming!

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

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

TOM

HARRIS!

INT. HOSPITAL, LATER

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

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

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

DR. HORTON

Hello everyone, I’m Dr. Horton.
BEVERLY
What can you tell us about our son?

Dr. Horton looks at Beverly and Tom.

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

Beverly’s lower lip begins to quiver.

DR. HORTON (CONT.)
But he is not out of the woods yet.

TOM
What do you mean? Will he be ok?

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

STEWART
Harris, “normal”?

BEVERLY
Shhhhhhh!

Dr. Horton waves his hand towards Harris.

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

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

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

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

**NURSE**

Whoa!

**HARRIS**

What’s happening? Where am I?

**NURSE**

Harris...

Harris’s eyes dart around the room.

**HARRIS**

Where’s my Mom and Dad?

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

**NURSE**

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

Harris looks at her with comprehension returning to his face.

**NURSE (CONT.)**

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

Harris pauses as if he is mentally inspecting his body.

**HARRIS**

I feel... I fee pretty good Nurse Walker. I feel great.
NURSE
That’s good to hear! Now don’t touch those leads and I will be right back.

Nurse Walker exits.

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

HARRIS
Good I still have my feet and they’re working.

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

HARRIS (CONT.)
Check.

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

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

HARRIS
I feel great but I have a lot of questions.

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

HARRIS
Where are my parents?

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

HARRIS
What happened?
DR. KRAMER
Harris, my friend, you were struck by lightning and here you are to tell the tale!

HARRIS
Lightning?

DR. KRAMER
Yes. Do you remember anything from your experience?

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

DR. KRAMER
Yes.

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

DR. KRAMER
Fascinating. Harris have you ever heard of Keraunomedicine?

Harris shakes his head.

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

HARRIS
Lightning! I can’t believe it. Have you met many lightning strike survivors?
DR. HARRIS
Why yes. I’d say I’ve met about twenty people – including you, who have been struck by lighting and lived. You, however, are unusual.

HARRIS
How’s that?

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

Dr. Kramer extends his hand. Harris shakes it.

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

TOM
Harris… my son…

BEVERLY
My beautiful boy.

Beverly begins kissing her son.

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

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

Dr. Kramer exits.

TOM
How do you feel, Harris?

HARRIS
Well I don’t have any of the immediate injuries associated with a lightning strike such as to the circulatory system, the lungs or the central nervous system. I did not enter fibrillation
and there was no myocardial infarction or cardiac arrhythmias – either of which can be fatal as well. I did experience a loss of consciousness but I am not suffering from Amnesia or confusion. Experiments have shown that during such a lightning strike the brainstem, which controls breathing, can get “overloaded” and thus any unconscious victims die of suffocation. Since I am here I suppose I have you to thank Dad. I assume you started artificial resuscitation until my brainstem recovered?

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

    HARRIS (CONT.)
   Isn’t that right Dad?

    TOM
   …Yes Harris, that’s what happened…

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

    BEVERLY
   Harris. Are you all right?

    HARRIS
   I’m great. Never felt better.

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

    HARRIS
   Residency? I haven’t been in residency
for over thirty years!

Harris’s jaw drops open.

HARRIS (CONT.)
What’s wrong with me? What’s going on?

Beverly’s hand goes towards her mouth in shock.

TOM
Harris, what was just going through your mind?

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

BEVERLY
...How do you feel now?

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

Dr. Kramer enters again.

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

Beverly clears her throat and smiles. Harris smiles too.

TOM
That’s my son... the Miracle!

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

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

Harris smiles at this.

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

HARRIS
Doctor Kramer...

DR. KRAMER
Yes?

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

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

The doctor smiles at the family. He exits.

BEVERLY
Do you think we should tell the doctor?

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

BEVERLY
That is NOT what I said, Tom.

HARRIS
I’m just glad to be on this side of the Pearly Gates.
INT: HOTCHISS HOME, LIVING ROOM, DAY

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

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

HARRIS
Hey Marvin...

The bird chirps as if acknowledging Harris's presence.

HARRIS
Wouldn't it be cool to fly?

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

Missy looks through the window watching her brother.

MISSY
MOM!

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

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

MISSY (CONT.)
I think Harris has lost it!

ANGLE ON HARRIS

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

INT: BIOLOGY CLASSROOM 305, MORNING

Jars, vials, terrariums and petri dishes of living and once living things line the room. Examples of life forms of several dozen varieties can be found here in the classroom. MR. PANECKI, 50’s balding with horn rimmed glasses hanging off the bridge of his nose holds court here. He is wearing a white lab coat with a green stain where his pocket protector is. He looks like he has taught for too long.

The name “Mr. Panecki” is highlighted in a corner of the chalkboard. It is underlined three times.
Students are rushing in and finding their seats before class begins. **TODD GROVER**, 16, wearing a school football jacket, looks as if he could arm-wrestle a grizzly. He is tapping the side of a terrarium.

Harris and Terry enter.

**TERRY**

And you say it happens when you touch someone?

**HARRIS**

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

**TERRY**

Like empathy?

**HARRIS**

Maybe – but it’s more than that... Their skills... their knowledge... I absorb it.

**TERRY**

For how long?

**HARRIS**

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

The pair walks past Panecki’s lab table.

**HARRIS**

Good morning Mr. Panecki.

**PANECKI**

Hmm? Oh yes. Good morning.

He turns as he addresses Harris and sees Todd.

**PANECKI (CONT.)**

Mr. Grover! Stay away from the tarantula.

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

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

**TAYLOR**

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

Harris is beaming but trying hard not to show it.

**HARRIS**

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

Taylor looks at him strangely.

**TAYLOR**

There were no permanent damages?

**HARRIS**

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

**TODD**

Treehouse! Dude, you’re what – 16? And you’re still playing in treehouses!

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

**PANECKI**

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

**TAYLOR (HUSHED)**

I’ll talk with you at lunch.

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

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

**TODD**

You got a problem, Treehouse?
TAP, TAP, TAP! Panecki raps his pointer on the side of his lab table.

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

**INT: SCHOOL HALLWAY, LATER**

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

**TERRY**
There has got to be a better way.

**HARRIS**
To what?

**TERRY**
To go to school. I’m sick of it all. It’s distracting. By the way…

**HARRIS**
Yeah?

**TERRY**
This is crazy.

**HARRIS**
What’s crazy?

**TERRY**
This whole ‘tactile-morph’, psychic thing.

**HARRIS**
All right, let’s get two things straight. I love it when you talk comic book and I’m not a psychic.
TERRY
What else would you call it?

HARRIS
...I don’t know but I DO know I can’t see the future.

TERRY
Maybe you just haven’t touched the right person yet?

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

TERRY
You’re here, Harris. And if you’re here and you can do the things that you claim you can do who’s to say?
The pair’s pace slows as Harris considers the question.

TERRY
What about your parents?

HARRIS
What about ‘em?

TERRY
Don’t they know?

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

JOSH (OFF SCREEN)
Hey Static Cling...

Harris and Terry look over their shoulders to the sound of the voice. It's Josh. On either side of him are his
girlfriend, Lisa Minetti and Todd Grover. Lisa is wearing a sneer. Todd is grinning from ear to ear.

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

Todd and Lisa giggle.

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

JOSH (CONT.)
The electric worm rides again.

INT: ALGEBRA CLASS, LATER

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

TERRY
Are you sure this is going to work?

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

TERRY
Well, I’ll give you that...

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

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

VOICE OFFSCREEN
Mr. Grover, please be seated.

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

MR. LANG
Now.

Todd snickers in Harris’s direction and finds his seat. Mr. Lang opens his brief case and produces a stack of papers, collated and stapled.
Mr. Lang takes his pile of stapled papers and begins to move between the aisles passing a package to each of the students.

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

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

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

Another package is passed to another kid.

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

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

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

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

Do you understand the importance of this test CHILDREN?

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

Sir...

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

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

Mr. Lang smiles and shakes Harris’s hand.

Terry watches with wide eyes at the physical connection.

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

Mr. Lang’s smile drops. He releases Harris’s hand.
TODD (LEANING FORWARD)
Treehouse, you are such a suck-up.

Todd sits back in his desk once more.

MR. LANG (CONT.)
I believe the children are the future...

Mr. Lang continues down the line passing out tests.

MR. LANG (CONT.)
I just didn’t believe that the mole people would have their shot at running the world so soon.

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

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

MR. LANG
Begin.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HARRIS
Terry... This is amazing – it’s like I WROTE the test!
TERRY
So it worked?

HARRIS
Oh yeah, bud, it worked.

TERRY
So that lightning strike made you smarter?

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

The two head down the hall to their next class.

INT. CAFETERIA AT LUNCHTIME: LATER

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

HARRIS
Taylor!

TAYLOR
Yep, the one and only.

TERRY
How’d you do on the test?

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

HARRIS
Great.

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

She smiles. Harris’s knees get weak.

TAYLOR (CONT.)
So what’s it like getting hit by lightning?

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

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

Harris nods his head in agreement.

TAYLOR
...Um Hmm.

HARRIS
...Um Hmm.

TAYLOR
Well, I’ll see you around.

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

TERRY
“Well Hmm”, Really? Harris is that the best you’ve got?

Harris smiles sheepishly.

TERRY (CONT.)
Sheesh!

EXT. DAY, GYM CLASS

It is unseasonably warm for late October. The sun hangs brightly in the sky. Some students are still wearing shorts and tees with the school colors emblazed on them as they run around the track. In one corner of the field there is a group of kids working on the long jump and in another part of the field there is a group of young women running laps.
Harris and Terry are walking with a group of kids dressed in gym clothes who are being led by the Coach to a bend in the track. Harris is unkempt and one of his shoelaces is untied.

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

**COACH**

You see that young man there?

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

**COACH (CONT.)**

RYAN SPAULDING! Could you come here a moment?

The young man jogs over to the coach and class.

**COACH (CONT.)**

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

Ryan, who has now caught his breath, smiles.

**COACH (CONT.)**

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

The class is silent.

**COACH (CONT.)**

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

**RYAN**

Uh...

Harris moves forward to see past the heads of those in front of him, steps on his shoelace and falls face first onto the track.
VOICE IN CROWD (OFF SCREEN)
Class act.

VOICE IN CROWD (OFF SCREEN)
Nerd.

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

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

RYAN
Dude, you all right?

HARRIS
...Yes. Yes. I’m fine. Thank you.

RYAN
You may want to tie your shoes.

HARRIS
Uh... right.

The coach wanders over.

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

Ryan nods at the coach.

COACH (CONT.)
Follow me! I want to see what you’re made of.

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

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

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

BACK TO SCENE:
The coach glances at his clipboard.
COACH
All right – first up is... Hotchkiss!
Harris looks up from his position of tying his shoe. His face falls.

COACH (CONT.)
Come on Hotchkiss. I don’t have all day.

TODD
This ought to be good.

JOSH
Yeah, break a leg.

TODD
I thought that was for good luck.

JOSH
Not this time.
Harris walks past them to the starting block. He stretches his legs and twists at his waist. He gets into position.

COACH
On your mark.
The balls of Harris’s feet sink into the starting block.

COACH (CONT.)
Get set.
Harris crouches and looks towards his destination 100-meters away.

COACH (CONT.)
GO!
Harris explodes from the start position. His feet are a blur of motion. He rockets down the track.

CHEERLEADERS AT PRACTICE, CONTINUOUS:
Lisa, Missy, Taylor and the rest of the cheerleading squad are stretching and readying for practice. A blur catches their eye.
Harris flies down the track.
Lisa, Missy & Taylor’s heads follow Harris’s progress down the track.

Missy’s jaw drops.

MISSY

...Harris?

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

LISA

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

MISSY

Yeah... me neither.

TAYLOR

Wow.

BACK TO SCENE.

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

POV COACH’S STOPWATCH.

9.83

BACK TO SCENE.

COACH (CONT.)

Impossible.

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

TERRY

YES HARRIS!

Josh and his friends are silent.

TODD

Unbelievable.

JOSH

How did that happen?
TODD
Yeah Josh, you better look out –
Hotchkiss may be the new quarterback!

JOSH
Shut up, Todd.

Harris jogs back towards the class.

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

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

Harris rejoins the group and moves towards Terry.

TERRY
Harris – That was unbelievable!

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

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

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

TERRY
Spelling “Marathon” usually winds you.

HARRIS
Tell me about it.
Terry
So how long will you have these skills?

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

Terry
20 to 30 minutes. That’s not long.

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

Terry
Yeah, when?

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

Terry
...Yeah, I see what you mean.

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

Terry
What if it’s temporary?

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

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

HARRIS
Checkmate!

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

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

INT: MR. BELTRAN’S CLASSROOM

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

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

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

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

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

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

JOSH (QUIETLY)
Great. Another chance for the Electric
Treehouse to showboat.

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

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

BELTRAN
Oh yes. Indeed.

INT: MR. BELTRAN’S CLASSROOM: LATER

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

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

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

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

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

BELTRAN
Gentlemen how is the HAR-TER 3000 doing today?

HARRIS
Show the man, Terry.
TERRY
HT-3K. Scan and recognize.

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

The rest of the class is in rapt attention.

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

HT-3K
Good morning Terry. How are you Harris? It is good to see you again.

HARRIS
I’m good HT. Do you remember Mr. Beltran?

HT-3K
Of course; how are you today, Sir?

HT-3K stretches out its right armature.

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

HT-3K
Why thank you, Mr. Beltran. I am fine.

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

HT-3K
Goodbye.

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

BELTRAN
Good work, Gentlemen! I have not seen work like this since my days at Bell Labs!
HARRIS
Thank you sir.

TERRY
Yes, thank you.

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

Mr. Beltran moves on to the next team.

Josh shakes his head in disgust.

JOSH
I am so sick of this.

HARRIS
What’s that Josh?

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

HARRIS
CHEATING! Terry and I built this robot...

JOSH
Whatever. I don’t care.

RING!
The school bell rings. The class is over.

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

The students quickly put their projects away, gather their things and exit the classroom.
Harris and Terry are the last to leave. Josh and Lisa are right in front of them.

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

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

**JOSH**
Yeah, let’s get out of here.

Lisa looks at what she is carrying.

**LISA**
Oh, I left my purse in class, I’ll be right there.

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

**JOSH**
In case you don’t know, NBA stands for National Basketball Association.

Terry and Harris say nothing.

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

**JOSH (CONT.)**
Never mind.

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

**TERRY**
He’s right, you know.

**HARRIS**
Excuse me?

**TERRY**
We are cheating.

**HARRIS**
...What? Seriously? ...How?
TERRY
You know how. All of our classes, you with your new-found athletic abilities and with this project...

HARRIS
HT-3K?

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

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

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

RING!
The bell sounds once more.

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

INT: GYMNASIUM, DAY

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

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

COACH
Students of John Hughes High here is a
man who really needs no introduction, a man who one time scored 81 points in a single game! The shooting guard for the Los Angeles Lakers – Mr. Kobe Bryant!

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

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

Cheers once more erupt from the crowd.

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

More cheers.

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

More cheers.

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

Kobe’s speech continues.

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

TERRY
No.

HARRIS
What do you mean, ‘no’?

TERRY
Harris, it isn’t right.

HARRIS
Of course it’s right – right is what we make it.
TERRY
You’ve changed, Harris.

HARRIS
What?

TERRY
Yeah, you heard me, you’ve changed.

HARRIS
Yeah, and we’ve both benefited from it.

TERRY
I’m not convinced that this is right anymore.

HARRIS
When did you grow a conscience?

TERRY
The same time that you lost yours.

Kobe addresses from center court.

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

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

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

The coach punctuates the word “here” with a chopping motion
from his hand in front of the podium.
Harris stands and steps over Terry.

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

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

TERRY (TO HIMSELF)
You can take your own video.

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

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

JOSH
Oh yeah. Give me a kiss for luck?

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

LISA
Now go show 'em how it’s done.

Josh leaps to his feet and gets in line.

Kobe is dribbling a basketball watching the line assemble.

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

COACH
JOSH, HARRIS! Front and center!

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

COACH (TO KOBE)
These two are some of the finest athletes that we have here at John Hughes High.

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

HARRIS
It’s an honor, Sir.
KOBE
The pleasure’s all mine. What do you say we shoot some hoops.

JOSH
Yeah, let’s do this!

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

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

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

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

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

HARRIS
YEAH BABY, THAT’S HOW IT’S DONE!

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

VOICE FROM THE STANDS
...Jerk.

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

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

KOBE
Kid, in all my years of playing ball I have never seen someone with your skills outside of a professional arena. I think I should introduce you to my agent.
JOSH
No way! Harris is a punk! He’s no athlete! He’s a worm!

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

HARRIS
Uh... thanks.

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

The coach comes over to join the players.

KOBE (CONT.)
Coach...

COACH
Yes Sir?

KOBE
Keep teaching what you’re teaching. Harris here has mad skills.

COACH
I taught him everything he knows.

Harris rolls his eyes and breaks into a smile.

COACH (TO THE CROWD)
KOBE BRYANT, Everyone!

The crowd cheers once again.

Lisa looks on with concern as Josh boos.

Taylor has to run to catch up with Terry who is leaving the gym.
TAYLOR
What’s going on with Harris?

TERRY
I wish I knew.

Terry looks over his shoulder and exits the crowded gym.

INT: MR. BELTRAN’S CLASSROOM
The students are working on their robotic projects once more.

Harris and Terry are unsettled and tense.

TERRY
Good morning, Harris.

HARRIS
Good morning, Terry.

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

JOSH
Lover’s quarrel?

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

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

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

HARRIS (QUIETLY)
Yeah, yeah. Terry?

TERRY
What?

HARRIS
Fire him up.

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

There are screams and confusion in the class.
Harris twists but does not lose his footing.
The smoke clears and Terry is lying still behind the ruined robot.

HARRIS
TERRY!
Harris is on him immediately.

HARRIS
TERRY! SPEAK TO ME!
Mr. Beltran kneels next to Terry’s prone body.

BELTRAN
Someone call 911.
Half a dozen students whip out their cell phones to place the call.

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

HARRIS
TERRY!
Terry’s eyes open and gain focus.

HARRIS
TERRY!

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

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

HARRIS
...Terry...

INT: HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM: LATER
Terry’s parents, MR. & MRS. MICHAELS, along with Tom, Beverly and Harris Hotchkiss are waiting. Concern and quiet mark the mood of the room.

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

SURGEON
Mr. & Mrs. Michaels?

MR. MICHAELS
Yes.

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

MRS. MICHAEL
Oh, thank God!

The somber mood immediately changes.

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

MR. MICHAELS
Of course. And, Tom?

TOM
Yes?

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

Tom smiles as Terry’s parents and the surgeon exit the waiting area.
The Hotchkiss’s sit down once more.

**TOM**
Son, what happened?

**HARRIS**
I don’t know, Dad. Terry and I had been arguing...

**BEVERLY**
Arguing - you two?

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

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

**HARRIS**
I hope Terry feels the same.

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

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

**INT: HOMEROOM MORNING: DAY**
Harris is sitting by himself as the crowds of students press onward.

Taylor eases herself into a seat next to him.

**TAYLOR**
Hey there.

**HARRIS**
Hey.
TAYLOR
I heard about what happened and I wanted to see how you were holding up.

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

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

HARRIS
Yeah, ...in ICU.

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

Josh sneaks up and inserts himself into the conversation.

JOSH
Who else are you gonna blame?

HARRIS
SHUT IT, JOSH!

JOSH
Or what, are you gonna blow me up too?

Taylor stands and stands toe to toe with Josh.

TAYLOR
Show some class and move along.

Lisa comes to Josh’s side.

LISA
Come on, baby. There’s nothing to see
here.
Taylor sits down as Josh and Lisa move on.

    TAYLOR
    Unbelievable.

Missy joins Taylor and Harris.

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

Harris’s eyes fly wide open.

    TAYLOR
    Nothing much, why?

    MISSY
    Do you like roller coasters?

    TAYLOR
    Sure.

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

    TAYLOR
    No way!

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

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

HARRIS
...Uh...

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

MISSY (CONT.)
There. Harris...

HARRIS
Huh?

MISSY
Get a pen.
Harris reaches into a pocket and pulls out a pen.

MISSY (CONT.)
Good. Harris, take this down... Taylor, what’s your phone number?

TAYLOR
555-622-1701.

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

TAYLOR
I can’t wait!
HARRIS
...Me neither?

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

EXT: THE MAGNETIC BRAIN DRAIN:

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

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

TAYLOR
And this is your baby, Mr. Hotchkiss?

TOM
Well... one of them.

He smiles at his family.

STEWART
I can’t wait to get on this bad boy!

MISSY
...Did anyone tell him yet?

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

TOM
Uh...

MISSY
Stewart, you’re too short to ride the Magnetic Brain Drain.

STEWART
WHAT – THAT STINKS! This is so EPICLY unfair!
MISSY
If you only knew you could have worn those lifts in your sneakers.

STEWART
Hey, that’s not funny!

HARRIS
Well, it is a little funny.

BEVERLY
Stop kidding your little brother.

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

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

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

STEWART (OFF SCREEN)
That’s still not funny.

EXT: ROLLER COASTER PASSENGER CUE PLATFORM: DAY

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

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

AVERY
Hello Tom! Is this your family?

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

There is some polite laughter.

TOM (CONT.)
Sorry, this is Beverly, Missy, Harris, Taylor and Stewart.

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

STEWART
Like Wolverine?

AVERY
Yes. Just like Wolverine. Say Tom...

TOM
Yes?

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

TOM
Sure...

Tom instinctively touches his belt holster. It is empty.

TOM (CONT.)
I don’t believe it. My Blackberry is in the van.

AVERY
Well, never mind.
TOM
No, hold on a minute. Harris?

HARRIS
Yes Dad?

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

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

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

AVERY
Thank you, Harris. I appreciate it.

HARRIS
No problem at all.

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

EXT: PARKING LOT: MINUTES LATER
Harris shuts the van door and slips his father’s Blackberry into his pocket. He walks back to the entrance gate.

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

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

Josh sees Harris over his father’s shoulder.

JOSH
...Harris!
HARRIS
Hey Josh.

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

BOSON
You two know each other?

HARRIS
We go to school together.

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

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

Boson reaches out his hand and Harris takes it.

HARRIS
It’s good to...

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

MONTAGE OF SHOTS

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

A dark hallway ends at a doorway marked “Control Room”. The door opens onto a room bathed in the electric light of LCD and LED monitors. There is a central computer performing hundreds of calculations near the center of the room.

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

HARRIS (CONT.)
MEET YOU!

Harris breaks the handshake and the connection.
BOSON
You all right, kid?
Harris nods his head.

JOSH
Freak.

BOSON
It’s always nice to meet a friend of Josh’s.
Harris backs away.

HARRIS
You too. See you later.
Harris turns and breaks into a run towards the entrance.

BOSON
See what I mean? It’s better to be feared than loved.
They watch Harris run.

BOSON (CONT.)
You know where you need to be.
Josh nods his head and walks to the entrance.

BOSON (TO HIMSELF)
And now I have to put in an appearance.

EXT: ROLLER COASTER PASSENGER CUE PLATFORM:
The crowd closes in towards the front of the roller coaster. Avery is speaking as the press and visitors lean in.

avery
Missy, so what do you think of your father’s creation?
Avery stretches out one of his arms toward a series of several linked hanging cars. There are three-bucket seats each with their own descending harness.

missy
It’s AMAZING! I can’t wait to ride it!

avery
Yes. Yes indeed. Well you and your family are going to be right up in the
Missy, Stewart and Taylor are practically jumping out of their skins.

TAYLOR (TO THE FAMILY)
Maybe I should wait for Harris?

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

MISSY
Yeah, come on Taylor!

STEWART
Yeah!

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

STEWART
John Miller - who’s that?

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

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

Tom smiles.

AVERY (CONT.)
Don’t be modest, son. This inverted
roller coaster is THE fastest, longest, most twisted electro-magnetically operated amusement ride in the world!

TAYLOR
So there are no wheels under those housings?

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

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

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

STEWART
Aren’t you coming?

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

TOM
You guys have a great time!

BEVERLY
See you soon!

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

AVERY
Welcome to the Electro-Magnetic revolution!

On cue an audible low hum is vibrates through the air. As
it rises in frequency the cars lift so that they are suspended by electro-magnetic force that is at once attracting and repulsing the cars to the track of the roller coaster.

AVERY (CONT.)
And just like that... the world changed.

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

EXT: THE MAGNETIC BRAIN DRAIN, FRONT CAR

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

STEWART
YES!

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

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

STEWART
NOOOOOOOO000!

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

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

EXT: ROLLER COASTER PASSENGER CUE PLATFORM:

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

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

HARRIS
IT’S GONE!
TOM
Yeah, but don’t worry, it’ll be back.

HARRIS
NO. That’s not what I mean!

TOM
Do you have my Blackberry?

HARRIS
DAD, THEY ARE IN DANGER!

TOM
What?

HARRIS
I’m sorry. I don’t have time to explain!

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

A MONTAGE OF SHOTS:
Directions are displayed to the dark hallway.
The control room door opens.
The access codes for the vault are displayed from the conciseness of the father to the son: “BEV-MIS-HAR-STW 589”.
In spite of the dire situation Harris smiles at the password.
BACK TO SCENE:
Harris breaks the connection with his father.

HARRIS
Dad – I’ve got to go!

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

AVERY
Say, did your boy ever find that cell phone of yours?
TOM
I don’t know.

INT: CONTROL ROOM: HALLWAY

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

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

HARRIS
JOSH?

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

HARRIS
LISA! What’s happening?

LISA
You never really got it did you Harris?

HARRIS
Got what?

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

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

HARRIS
What are you talking about?

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

LISA
Yes – don’t play stupid this late in the game.

HARRIS
How long have you known?

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

HARRIS
Hard on you?

LISA
I never had competition before.

HARRIS
It was YOU all along!
Lisa nods her head.

HARRIS (CONT.)
You’re working for Boson!

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

HARRIS
But why? Josh is your boyfriend.
A light goes off in Harris’s mind as he begins to put the story together.

HARRIS (CONT.)
Or is he? You sabotaged him in front of Kobe Bryant and the school, didn’t you?
INSERT FLASHBACK
Lisa touches Josh’s arm before she kisses his cheek.

BACK TO SCENE:

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

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

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

HARRIS
I’m changing things. Ever since the accident...

Harris pauses and Lisa fixes him with a purposeful stare.

HARRIS
...It was you.

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

BACK TO SCENE:

HARRIS (CONT.)
...You’re the one that switched the positive and the negative poles on HT-3K.
LISA
I must say, Harris, you are getting much better at piecing things together.

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

LISA
But I didn’t.

HARRIS
Why, Lisa?

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

HARRIS
Me?

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

HARRIS
Testing my resolve?

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

HARRIS
What happened to Josh?
LISA
He’s napping. What I’m more concerned is what is going to happen with you.

HARRIS
Me?

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

HARRIS
Planned by whom, Lisa? Planned by whom?

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

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

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

HARRIS
Listen to yourself! You’re not making sense. Why would you offer me a job and think that I would stand by as my girlfriend, my family and a ride full of innocent people die in some horrible roller coaster accident?
LISA
I didn’t really. I was only under contract to make you the offer. Since you have declined said offer you have now become the competition and I am a very competitive girl.

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

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

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

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

EXT: ROLLER COASTER: CONT.
Missy and Taylor are rocketing down the rail of the Magnetic Brain Drain roller coaster. The coaster is not slowing.

MISSY (SCREAMING TO TAYLOR)
Why isn’t it stopping?

TAYLOR
I don’t know! Something must be wrong!

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

ROLLER COASTER PLATFORM: CONT.
On the platform Andrew Boson has made his way to the front of the action making certain that he is seen by as many witnesses as possible.
Avery Wesker and his public relations staff wear grave expressions. Tom and Beverly Hotchkiss and the crowd look on in horror as the roller coaster tears through the waiting cue area at speeds of access of 70 miles per hour.

BOSON
What’s going on?

BEVERLY
MY BABIES!

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

AVERY
We’ve got to save those people!

TOM
I’ve got to get to the control room!

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

TOM
I AM the best person for that job!

Tom rushes towards the stairs and disappears down the steps. Avery tries to comfort Beverly. Boson glances at his watch.

BOSON (TO HIMSELF)
Where’s Meade?

INT: CONTROL ROOM: CONT.

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

Harris is on all fours and coughing. He has a bruise on his left cheek and a small trickle of blood from the corner of his mouth.
LISA
Harris, you really suck at the whole ‘fighting thing’ don’t you? I mean it’s a shame that the last person you touched was only an engineer – a designer of amusements to distract thrill seekers and children. That’s just too bad.

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

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

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

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

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

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

HARRIS
Don’t go away!

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

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

HARRIS (CONT.)
Ok. Let’s do this.

Harris reaches into his right pants pocket and retrieves a pair of nail clippers.
HARRIS (CONT.)
Lisa, all I have to do now is cut the red wire - just like in the movies and everyone is safe.

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

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

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

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

Meade looks at his electrified minion.

MEADE (TO LISA)
Oh my dear... look at you. I don’t believe that this imbecile got the better of you. Don’t worry I’ll have you out of there in a moment.

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

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

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

MEADE
Oh yes - don’t forget the deaths.
HARRIS
Why! How can this possibly benefit you?

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

HARRIS
Please – let me stop this.

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

HARRIS
Then why?

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

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

HARRIS
You can’t be acting alone.

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

    TOM
    Why thank you!

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

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

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

    TOM
    Harris! Are you all right?

Harris opens his eyes.

    HARRIS
    Yeah. I think so.

    TOM
    GREAT! Now disarm that bomb!

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

    HARRIS
    Would you look at that?

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

Father and son look at each other and smile.

    TOM
    Unbelievable.

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

    HARRIS
    That was a great shot!

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

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

    OFFICER 1
    Mr. Hotchkiss?
TOM (AT THE SAME TIME)

Yes?

HARRIS

Yes?

OFFICER 1

What’s going on?

HARRIS

Sir… that is a long story.

TOM

This young man’s father…

He gestures to Josh who is looking very weak.

TOM (CONT.)

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

HARRIS

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

Tom smiles at his son.

TOM

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

HARRIS

The girl is Lisa Minetti. She’s a cheerleader and a psychopath. Handle with care.
EXT: PASSENGER CUE PLATFORM: MINUTES LATER

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

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

BOSON
You will be hearing from my lawyer!

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

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

Missy, Stewart and Taylor are the first two off.

MISSY
MOM – DAD!

STEWART
MOM – DAD!

The family embraces each happy to be alive and well.

TAYLOR
HARRIS!

Taylor rushes into his arms.

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

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

TAYLOR
What happened?

AVERY
Yes – do tell!

The press and people move in closer to hear what is about to be said concerning the incident.
TOM
Quite simply Harris uncovered a plot of industrial espionage and murder and saved all your lives in the process. I don’t know how he knew the codes and the electronics but he did. Oh yes... he was also shot at and defused a bomb. I am just thankful that we are all safe and sound.

Missy leans in and kisses Harris on the cheek.

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

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

HARRIS
...Well...

TAYLOR
...You know Harris you talk too much.

With this she kisses Harris full on the lips.
The crowd begins to cheer.

DISOLVE TO:

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

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

HARRIS
Yup.
TERRY
She is one twisted cheerleader.

HARRIS
And how.

TERRY
And you and Taylor?

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

TERRY
Cool! So how’s Missy doing?

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

TERRY
Oh – no reason...just that she is sooo hot!

HARRIS
Listen Terry, I’ve been selfish and stupid and...

TERRY (INT.)
Pigheaded?

HARRIS
Yes – pigheaded!
The two friends begin to giggle.

HARRIS (CONT.)
I’m sorry Terry. Things got out of control and I should have listened to you. When that project blew up I was scared to death that you had been
injured and that I may have had something to do with why it happened.

TERRY
Harris...

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

TERRY
Do some good – what, like superheroes?

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

TERRY
I’m in.

HARRIS
(excited)
What – just like that, you don’t want to think it over?

TERRY
What’s to think over?

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

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

She reaches out her hand and Harris takes it. An odd expression crosses his face.
HARRIS
I am Harris Hotchkiss and Terry is my brother. Now if you’ll excuse me, I’m needed in the O.R.

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

Harris winks at Terry.

HARRIS
I am right now.

Harris exits Terry’s room.

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

The doors close behind him.

HARRIS (OFF SCREEN)
Now, what seems to be the problem?

FADE OUT:

THE END