

"CITY BIRD"

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. FLIGHT FROM BOAT TO CONDO

Intro Title Song:

A jazzy ride-cymbal keeps the beat.

(Whispers)

You've got to get down, you got to get down

You've got to get down, to get down, to get down

You've got to get down, to get down, to get to get down.

You've got to get down, you got to get down

You've got to get down, to get down, to get down

You've got to get down, to get down, to get to get down.

(Crescendo)

You've got to get down, to get down, to get down

You've got to get down to get to get down  
You've got to get down. You got to get down.

GET DOWN to get to Bird City!

Pan in from bustling downtown Manhattan 30-stories high  
onto a freightliner approaching Hudson Bay.

A group of varied breeds of birds gather around Frank  
Blackbird, a dapper, troubadour blackbird who has made his  
way to the states on tour. He is serenading the bird  
"cruise-line". His performance is about to end as the ship  
has reached its destination.

FRANK BLACKBIRD (TIPPING HIS  
FEDORA TO THE CROWD)

(Jazzy music continues in the  
background)

Thank you! Thank you! You have been the  
nicest bird cruise ship audience I've  
played for this week. You're also the only  
cruise ship I've performed for this week!

Crowd roars with laughter.

FRANK BLACKBIRD (CONT'D)

This is my departure. It's been great.  
Remember folks, there's nothing better  
than being yourself. I hope the wind blows  
you into golden fields full of worms  
(looks at blackbirds), tourists with seed-  
filled pockets (looks at pigeons), and  
Johnny...

(Looks at Johnny, a confused,  
cross-eyed penguin)

FRANK BLACKBIRD (CONT'D)

I, uhhhh... I hope you get whatever it is  
you're looking for...

JOHNNY

(beats his chest with his

hand and points at the sky)

Squawk!!!!

FRANK BLACKBIRD

I hope you all get to Bird City. Once you're there, stay there my feathered friends!

FRANK BLACKBIRD dramatically flies off the boat and out over the ocean.

RANDOM ANNOUNCER

(From the boat)

Ladies and Gentlemen, Frank Blackbird has left the building..

The birds look up and onward as he flies away. The camera follows as he continues by the Statue of Liberty, over another steamship, above trains, in-between high rises, through the subway tunnel, atop a subway train, over Central Park, and hitches a ride atop a taxi.

During the flight, the Bird City song continues in the background as Frank Blackbird begins to narrate:

FRANK BLACKBIRD

(Singing)

To. Get. Down. To-get-down.

No matter what I hear or what I found.

There ain't a greater view or better sound.

To. Get. Down. To-get-down.

(Spoken Word to the camera;  
narration)

FRANK BLACKBIRD CONT'D

I don't care if you are the most successful person in the world, if you

can't get down, then you can't relate.  
If you can't relate, you'll never be in  
touch with the date.  
Take for example this boy I once knew. He  
had a heart, but could not unlock the  
gate.  
His brains had taken control. They ruled  
the roost.  
But without friends, his ego needed a  
boost.  
The world was his. He couldn't realize his  
fate.

The answer was in front of him, it was his  
to take.

But he fought and resisted looking like an  
ape.  
He was running out of time. It was almost  
too late.  
All because he couldn't relate.

The title song lyrics change from "You gotta get down, you  
gotta get down" to "He couldn't relate, couldn't relate."

#### FRANK BLACKBIRD CONT'D

Let me tell you about this boy for  
goodness sake.  
He's the boy right here and his name is  
Jake.

EXT. Patio of Jake's Condo

Fade Out Title song

FRANK BLACKBIRD turns and completes his flight by climbing  
up, up, up to the patio of the high-rise of our main  
character, Jake, a 12 year-old, awkwardly adorable,  
slightly pudgy, dark-headed genius.

Before he lands, FRANK BLACKBIRD circles 3 times around the  
patio of the condo, 35 floors high. The camera shows his  
viewpoint. He observes a place to land but is distracted  
by what is inside the large glass windows. He peers into  
the main character, JAKE's, condo. JAKE's parents sit

behind him at the kitchen counter as Jake blows over a hot cup of coffee on the couch and watches his IPAD.

JAKE, although a genius, neither his body nor his mind has caught up to the expectations of a normal 12-year old. He's slightly pudgy, short, and full of young selfish pride. He appears to be stuck in the awkward stage before his body will start to develop.

The blackbird focuses in on what is on his IPAD.

INT. INSIDE JAKE'S HIGH RISE LOOKING OUT

JAKE is watching a kung fu tutorial. You can see FRANK BLACKBIRD hovering, looking into the window behind JAKE. JAKE lowers his "coffee" to a table and mimics a karate move. The display on the IPAD quickly changes as Jake changes the video to a video game.

Animal Collective's *Brother Sport* replaces the Kung Fu music. The music represents the audio from the video game he is playing (foreshadow of final scene.)

Frank Blackbird focuses in on the screen.

IPAD VIEW

The video scrolls from left to right as his Avatar runs on a hillside. He controls the character's actions as it jumps and ducks up and under objects, side-scroll, through a maze-like cave. FRANK BLACKBIRD is enamored. He loses his focus of flying and almost runs into the side of the building.

He regains himself and focuses back to the IPAD and JAKE.

JAKE's POV

JAKE's character jumps is almost eaten by a snake, run into a wall, and dies.

FRANK BLACKBIRD almost runs into the building and is swallowed up by the rain spout just like the video game avatar. He quickly adjusts and misses as he promptly lands atop JAKE's condo's balcony.

Another large awaiting crowd of seagulls, pigeons, pelicans, etc. (looking like tourists ala cameras, maps,

funny hats, sunscreen on a bird's bill, and guides) are waiting for his appearance. They all clap and snap feathers upon his appearance.

Sitting among the birds, upon a big plush outdoor chair, is JAKE's GRANDMA. GRANDMA is a benevolent, soft-bodied, stoic, Zen-like, all-knowing, 80-some year-old lady with white-gray, tightly wound curls. Steeping tea, she appears to neither notice nor not notice the birds sitting along around her.

Although she doesn't appear to be paying attention to the company around her, her benign smile tends to widen when the birds say something funny. She is observing the sunrise and drinking her tea from the high-rise.

FRANK BLACKBIRD (BOWING)

Thank you thank you!!!! Thank you! I just flew in from Germany... and boy, are my arms tired (in an awful German accent)!

Crowd erupts in laughter. Some birds fall over in joy. The laughter is composed of mixed accents from all over the states and world.

FRANK BLACKBIRD

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlebirds! It's nice to be back in town... It's so nice. It's so nice. New York City! When I flew in, I thought it may have been taken over by chickens it smelled so *fowl*! Sheesh!

(Crowd Laughs)

FRANK BLACKBIRD (CONT'D)

Seriously, though. This place is ripe! C'mon now birds! It's like the whole place is covered in white!

He leans up against a wall with his wing and contemplates what he just said. He immediately pulls his wing back from the wall as if it were dirty. He inspects his wing, wipes it clean, and continues.

FRANK BLACKBIRD (CONT'D)

(Pacing back and forth on stage)

Have a little respect! It's like they should rename the park, Central Poop!!! If you gotta go, find yourself a statue already. It's not that hard! I oughta get Steven *Seagull* in here to kick all your butts!!! He'd be doing the *crane*!

(Poses into karate kid stance)

The CROWD has been laughing throughout and repeating what he was saying mid-laugh. He pauses to let them catch up.

Suddenly, JAKE bursts through the door onto the patio continuing his kung-fu lesson (with IPAD and headphones). The bird's laughter stops suddenly as everyone except GRANDMA quickly turn their heads to see JAKE approaching with kicks and karate chops. GRANDMA never turns her focus from the sunset.

BIRDS' POV

JAKE looks like Godzilla about ready to tear a city apart.

The birds are frozen in utter shock, excrete droppings in unison, and fly away in utter disarray leaving feathers and debris in their wake. Some of them scream:

"It's really happening!"

"It's Steven SEAGULL!"

"Beware the Crane!"

The focus shifts to JAKE. He is still doing the karate routine.

Intro Bob Marley- 3 little birds

GRANDMA:

JAKE, did you treat the birds nicely?



JAKE looks adoringly at his grandma and replies,

JAKE

Of course, Memes. They flew away because they were scared.

GRANDMA:

Did you scare them?

JAKE:

Yes, but not intentionally. I can't help it if they're dumb... I guess we all know a bird's fight or flight instinct, right? HAHAHA!

Jacob thinks he's much funnier than he actually is.

Jake joins his grandma on the seat. Together they snuggle in.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)

That is neither nice nor true. Birds can be very intelligent, brave, and overall great to have around... You may be the smartest in your school, but you have lot to learn outside of your tablet.

JAKE:

Eh-hmmm... I'm the smartest in the city, Mema.

GRANDMA:

Prove it.

JAKE hops up from the chair. He stands in front of her in a karate bow.

JAKE

As you wish, Master Grandma.

GRANDMA:

What is the capitol of Kenya?

JAKE:

Nairobi

He steps forward and karate chops

GRANDMA

Who wrote to, "Some rise by sin, and some  
by virtue fall."?

JAKE:

Shakespeare.

Karate chop

GRANDMA:

(Quickly)

How do you say hello in Japanese?

JAKE

Konechewa!

Chop

GRANDMA

Where is URSA MAJORIS right now?

JAKE:

(Does a combo trick move with  
a karate kick at the end.  
His leg is pointing in the  
air. He rotates his body  
until his foot points where  
he believes Ursa Major is in  
the sky)

Right here, Hiya!

GRANDMA grabs his IPAD and opens star-gazer. All of a sudden, the sky is full of constellations and URSA MAJORIS

is right where his leg is pointing.

GRANDMA

Good Job.

GRANDMA:

(Quickly)

Who said "My scientific studies have afforded me great gratification; and I am convinced that it will not be long before the whole world acknowledges the results of my work."?

JAKE:

Trickyyyy... You want me to say Darwin, but I'm too smart for that. Gregor Mendel!

Karate chop

GRANDMA:

HMMMM... Mr. Smarty Pants, What do you do if your friend hands...

JAKE

(Interrupts)

Grandma, you know I don't have friends!

GRANDMA

Hmmmm, Ok what do you do when a potential friend gives you two cookies and leaves nothing for themselves?

JAKE

Easy! I eat the 2 cookies as fast as I can and then laugh at their terrible life-choice! AHAHAHA!

Huge karate kick-jump combo and chop.

GRANDMA

Ok, you may be the smartest in the city in some sense, but that won't matter a lick

if you don't know anything about the natural way of things.

JAKE thinks long and hard for an answer, but is stumped. They look out over the water and the bay. Boats roll in and out. Birds fly in lazy circles. There are airplanes rolling through the clouds. The city is abuzz with morning the morning commute. It appears peaceful this far removed from it.

JAKE

What is nature-way going to teach me that I can't read or learn from a book?

GRANDMA is stumped and hesitates.

GRANDMA

That's a good question.

JAKE

I've finally stumped GRANDMA!

GRANDMA

HAHAHA! Momentarily that may be true. But, just you wait. I only said, "That was a good question." And it deserves a good answer. A good answer deserves time. A good answer is never rushed.

She pauses.

GRANDMA CONT'D

There is more to be learned in nature than all of your books combined. The natural way is everything we know, and books only attempt to cover everything we know. They'll never explain the full range of emotion, the complete depth of character, the grand amount of knowledge that embodies the human experience and the relationships we create. Books won't ever fully describe all that is in nature because we discover more inside and outside of ourselves on a daily basis.. So... the answer is up to you, my dear. What are you going to discover that hasn't

already been written about in a book?

JAKE

Whooooa.

He's impressed for two seconds, contemplates her philosophy, and quickly turns back to his IPAD.

GRANDMA looks onward slightly disappointed that he didn't fully appreciate her deep insight.

GRANDMA

You know, you may be able to answer every question a teacher ask, but there are questions that life throw your way, too.. Will you be ready to answer? Maybe you've been missing a question for all too long now. Maybe, the lesson you've been missing is staring you right in your face.

Frank Blackbird is staring right at Jake. For a moment, they lock eyes and share a moment, blinking awkwardly at each other.

Suddenly, Jake scares the bird away.

JAKE

Get outta here you weirdo!

GRANDMA grabs his IPAD. She shakes her head at him and smiles.

GRANDMA

(Cheerfully)

That's why we are going to Aunt Roberta's for a summer in Kansas. Just you and me, compadre; Rock-chalked full of (as she says the following the scenery in front of her changes to what she is describing. Jake is mildly interested) birds, rolling wheat fields, tractors, sunflowers, sunsets, four-wheelers, fireworks, bees, insects large and small, farm animals, dirt, mud, and more. Just like when I was

growing up. I can practically smell the farm.

JAKE

Yeah, it smells like manure.

POV- LOOKING OUT OVER THE CITY AND HARBOR FROM BEHIND JAKE AND GRANDMA

A big pile of manure replaces the beautiful imagery that GRANDMA had created.

GRANDMA

Noooo... It smells like wheat grass, fresh air, and rain.

Imagery from Grandma starts to re-enter.

GRANDMA

I can see it now. I bet Annie and Noah are up, just finished their chores, and are playing around the farm as we speak.

Cut to EXT. Annie and Noah's Farm

Annie and Noah are waiting on their bus. 2 dogs sit alongside Annie

ANNIE

Hey doggies, are you going to be good while I'm gone?

Both dogs look at her adoringly as if to say "yes"

NOAH

Are you that crazy? Do you really think they know what you are saying? Do you really think you can talk to animals?!

ANNIE

... I think they are smarter than you think they are. I think they understand me better than I understand them.

NOAH

You're nuts!!!

ANNIE

Oh yeah? You'll be proven wrong one of these days. I can't wait... You'll be exposed as dumber than a dog!

Annie paces by the bus stop. She is poked by a sticker in the grass.

ANNIE

Ow! Ow! Ow!

DOGS

(howling to the moon)

Owww Owww Owwwwww!

JAKE

Ahahaha!!!! There's your exposure. They are geniuses!!!!

Cut back to the patio

GRANDMA again looks slightly defeated. The scenery before her melts back to the city. She perks back up.

GRANDMA

You'll love it.

JAKE

Not likely. I've seen and read the first half of the Wizard of Oz and Kansas does not sound like a fun place to go.

GRANDMA

I have a feeling you don't want to go because you don't want to bare a summer without your #1 crush, JENNIFER.

An image of JENNIFER's Face hovers above in a though cloud that quickly bursts when JAKE blurts.

JAKE

Grandma!

GRANDMA:

I guarantee you will learn more this summer than you have from the whole school year.

JAKE:

Good, cause I didn't learn anything this year.

JAKE pretentiously sips his coffee.

GRANDMA

And what's with this coffee? You're only 10!

JAKE

It's a non-fat decaf mocha frappuccino, Grandma.

GRANDMA

I don't like it. Why don't you put the coffee and your tablet down? We'll go to Central Poop, ha-ha, I mean Central Park... It's your last week of school. We need to make the most of it before it's you and me on a train to Oz.

Ribs Jake

GRANDMA CONT'D

Let's go point out the mysteries of birds... If there's time, we can get some ice cream, too.

JAKE

Oh Yeah!!!!

(Runs inside)

GRANDMA stays on the porch and breaths deep. She appears



wore-out from their conversation. Something is weighing heavy on her mind.

FADE OUT

EXT. PARK SCENE

FRANK BLACKBIRD has been observing JAKE and GRANDMA from a perch above their patio as they descend from the high-rise to the street. He flies off the edge as GRANDMA and JAKE exit the building. He follows them through the city and onward to Central Park. Music enters, Empire of the Sun- "High and Low."

FRANK BLACKBIRD perches onto a tree in Central Park where GRANDMA and JAKE are smiling at each other eating ice cream. JAKE has a huge ice cream moustache. They are playing in a large opening of bright green grass. A montage ensues.

1. PLAYING FRISBEE: With ice cream in one hand, JAKE attempts to throw the Frisbee with the other. An army of ants are below him watching every move the ice cream makes in anticipation of a free dessert. The group sways back and forth in anticipation of where the ice cream will fall. Eventually a drop splashes down with a loud "Woohoo!" from the crown of ants. He displays how uncoordinated he is as he struggles with the Frisbee and eventually hits himself squarely in the face. Initially, his reaction is pure rage and frustration. His face grows bright red until he looks at GRANDMA who is doubling over in laughter. Her laugh is infectious. He eventually joins her laughing hysterically, too.
2. CLIMBING A TREE: JAKE is starting to climb a tree. GRANDMA notices and is extremely excited that he is trying something in nature on his own. Her smile quickly diminishes to disappointment as she notices he is on the first limb of the tree watching his IPAD watching a video on "how to climb a tree." She shakes her head in disapproval at him. He notices and turns red with embarrassment and puts the IPAD back in its carrier.
3. FLYING A KITE: GRANDMA puts the kite into flight by running with it behind her. JAKE is amazed looking into the sky at the kite. He decides he wants in on the action. He runs to her side and grabs the kite. He immediately starts aiming the kite in the direction of FRANK BLACKBIRD, a drone, other birds, and other park-goers. GRANDMA looks terrified that he is going

to hurt someone, but there is little she can do as he runs out of site over a knoll in the park. Almost as soon as he is out of site, JAKE returns into view running for his life. The kite has done a 180 and is now chasing him. Instant Karma. He drops the kite string as it takes on its own personality. It is right behind him nudging him in the rear as he continues to be chased. He jumps into a pond in the park for relief. He peeks out of the water to see his grandma at the edge of the water with string in hand, kite in complete control. The park-goers, birds, and drone operator are all in the background cheering the string of events that just occurred to JAKE. He smiles sheepishly at GRANDMA.

4. FEEDING BIRDS: GRANDMA and JAKE each have a handful of bird food. They are feeding the ducks, swans, and geese in the pond. The birds are majestic and beautiful as they graciously accept food from GRANDMA. They appear to thank her with nods of their heads. Meanwhile, JAKE has visibly formulated a sinister plan. He grabs a big piece of lint from his pocket and adds it to the food in his hand. He tosses the pile of food into the water. A big goose swims up to him and nods as they did for GRANDMA.

JAKE

You're welcome... You big dumb bird.

(Under his breath)

The GOOSE eats all of food and moves on to the big piece of lint. JAKES eyes grow dinner-plate sized as he anticipates what happens next. The GOOSE takes a second to realize what he just put in his mouth and gives JAKE a death stare. The GOOSE spits the lint right into JAKE's face, rears back and start flapping its wings so that water from the pond is splashed onto JAKE. He is soaked and wiping away the water from his face. When he opens his eyes, he is face to face with the angry GOOSE who is pressing his beak against JAKE's nose, matching eye-to-eye. He runs for his life again away from the angry bird. The GOOSE waddles back in to the water.

Music begins to quiet down.

5. WALKING BACK:

GRANDMA

I bet you don't think birds are so dumb now, eh? And what was that you said earlier about their fight or flight reaction? My child, you have so much to learn...

Jake normally would argue, but he just looks up at her defeated. FRANK BLACKBIRD has been observing from the tree. He thoroughly enjoyed what he just saw. He is taking a fascination in JAKE. The two humans return back to JAKE's condo.

GRANDMA

Now I must go. Have fun at your last day of school. We'll be travelling to your cousins before you know it!

GRANDMA slowly turns around. She is worn out from the long day. The door closes to the condo and she stumbles in the hallway. She braces herself against the hallway wall. She catches her breath and continues onward.

MONTAGE ENDS

FADE OUT

SCENE: Before SCHOOL

INT Jake's Condo Bedroom

JAKE is sleeping in his bed. It's morning, and drool is crusted all over his face. His MOM, a high-fashion, socialite, business lady is at his door. She looks as if she has been awake for hours putting herself together. She is perfectly organized in business attire from head to toe. Not a single hair lies out of place. Her attire matches her lifestyle. Everything is in order. She opens JAKE's door violently.

MOM

JAKE! I'm not going to tell you again!  
Wake up! You're late for your last day of school!

JAKE

(With eyes closed)

I'm late?

JAKE (CONT'D)

(Eyes open)

I'm late!

He throws the blankets off the bed, his two feet jump to the floor, throws clothes on in a quick second, and runs out of his bedroom. There's a mirror by his door that he checks himself on the run out. His hair is a mess. He brushes it gently into place and it looks great. After he loses sight of himself in the mirror, his hair poofs back up into a big mess. He is oblivious.

INT. The kitchen

MOM

JAKE!

(Not knowing if he is up yet)

JAKE

(Walking into the kitchen)

MOM! I'm already in a bad mood... Where's my

coffee?

MOM

It's about fifteen years away.

JAKE looks confused at her answer. He grabs a muffin as they rush out the door together.

EXT. ON THE STREET OUTSIDE THE CONDO

It's a dreary, drizzily day.

Immediately after taking a step onto the street, a bird (from before) drops excrement onto his muffin from up above. He looks at it disgustedly and looks up at its source with disdain. There are two birds sitting on an apartment deck 3 stories high looking down at them.

BIRD CULPRIT

(Looking at his friend)

Poopoo platter?

The birds crack up together.

Jake gets mad and slams the muffin onto the sidewalk.

From up above, the bird is looking down.

HIS COMPANION

Yes! Double score! Free lunch! Give me some wing

They slap high fives.

MOM

Jake, pick that up right now.

He starts picking it up and throwing it in a garbage can on the street.

BIRDS

(From above)

Aw, c'mon MOM! That muffin ain't hurtin' nobody!

They chuckle together.

MOM hails a taxi. A car passes by and splashes dirty rain water all over JAKE. His mom looks at him trying not to laugh and take it seriously. JAKE is beyond words and stews in silence. A taxi pulls up to them. Before they enter, JAKE notices himself in the car window. His hair looks crazy. He tries to brush his hair down again, but it won't be tamed. He begrudgingly boards the cab.

The taxi pulls up to school as the bell rings and the yard clears. JAKE runs up to the door. Before entering, he gives himself a pep-talk:

JAKE

OK Jake, you got this. You're only late, tired, cranky, hungry, wet, and without coffee. Not to mention, no one likes you here..

(Sighs)

JAKE CONT'D

You can do this.

He enters the building.

JAKE walks into a busy class, very late and disheveled. The crowd is abuzz because it is the last day. His teacher is sitting at her desk unfazed by the craziness. She is reading a gossip magazine at her desk.

The class quiets down and notices JAKE.

POPULAR KID/ BULLY is a tall, dark-headed, bossy over-aged kid who appears to have started his growth spurt 3 years before everyone else. After noticing JAKE, he hones in on his prey.

POPULAR KID

Look what the cat dragged in! Or should I say, look at what the garbage man dragged in?!

JAKE

(Mockingly)

Look at what the garbage man dr... Your mama's a garbage man!

POPULAR KID

I know...

No one's says anything. Awkward tension covers the class.

JAKE doesn't know what to say.

JAKE

Oh, really?

POPULAR KID

NO!!!!!! HAHAHAHAHAHAH!

CLASS erupts in laughter with him.

POPULAR KID

My dad is, you dork!

JAKE is stumped again. He looks onward, perplexed and embarrassed. He decides to stay quiet. He looks at JENNIFER, a freckled, sweet and innocent crush of Jake, who is sitting unfazed at her desk talking with her friend. She feels his eyes on him and looks back at him. He shyly looks away, red-hot with nerves.

The popular kid/bully starts ribbing Jake with his hand. Jake tries to push his hands away, but looks awkward in doing so.

The Bully continues to rib him.

JAKE

Stop it. Stop...

Jake tries a karate move with his hands and fails miserably.

The class laughs at him.

The TEACHER notices JAKE, puts away her book and begins tapping her pen on the desk as a judge would with gavel. The kids quiet down again.

TEACHER

Alright class, we have a very special speech scheduled for you today. Although



it's the very last day of school and we would normally do nothing intellectual at all, JAKE has expressed a deep desire to give you his end-of-the-year speech.

POPULAR KID

You mean he expressed a deep desire to give a speech to Jennifer, right?!?!?!?

CLASS

Oohhhhhhh.

Ensuing laughter.

TEACHER

(So uninterested in the drama)

He missed his opportunity last week to give his speech because he was testing to jump to a higher grade level... And passed... Three levels higher... As Jake mentioned to me, he won't be jumping grades, yet. He just wanted to prove he could.

RANDOM VOICE

NERD!

Laughter from the class. JAKE looks annoyed at the CLASS and lack of support from TEACHER.

TEACHER

Going on, given that he has a grade of 102% without even giving his end of year speech, I'm sure we will all find this very riveting. JAKE?

CLASS

(Collective sigh)

JAKE walks to the front of the class and faces forward at all the peering eyes. The majority of faces are mocking him. His crush, Jennifer, is looking at him patiently.

For a minute, he imagines the classroom is a royal court and he is king. The room fills with queens, princesses, dukes, jesters, etc. The camera pans person to person

JENNIFER=QUEEN of HEARTS

POPULAR KID: EVIL duke.

CLASSROOM Jokesters: Jesters

TEACHER: OLD QUEEN, bitter and unamused.

Classroom returns to normal as someone breaks the silence.

RANDOM VOICE

Hello?!

Jake begins his speech.

JAKE

"My Summer Plans" by Jacob. Since all of you will be playing, enjoying summer break together, I wanted to let you know I will be unavailable. When you try to reach me I will be indisposed. Again, when you try to make plans with me, I won't answer.

He looks at Jennifer who smiles at him.

JAKE

I will be roughing it in Kansas with my dear sweet GRANDMA SYLVIA. We will be visiting my Aunt Roberta's family. I know what many of you are thinking: Kansas is hostile, savage, and untamed. It's filled with beast large and small, coyotes, snakes, life-ending dust bowls, and droughts. Not to mention tornadoes (shutters at the thought). Now all of this is fine as I am equipped with the knowledge to survive almost anything, so please don't want you to spend your WHOLE summer worrying about me. If each of you could just think of me for approximately 5-25 minutes each day this summer I surely think I will return safely. I have handouts for each of you (starts handing them out). Each handout has a

questionnaire that will determine how well you know me. I will evaluate these questionnaires to figure out who I should write to.

POPULAR KID

No one!

Class laughter.

POPULAR KID

Do we have to do this?

(Looks at his teacher)

The teacher looks up from her magazine to Jake questioning if they must go on.

POPULAR KID CONT'D

This is our last day and we want to something fun!

TEACHER

I figured as much, too... JAKE, do you feel that you've adequately given your speech?

JAKE looks torn. He wants to continue, but he realizes no one wants him to. He looks at JENNIFER who is already filling hers out.

The CLASS is back buzzing with the loud voices of excited kids. The TEACHER is back reading her book

JAKE tries to reel their attention in again. JENNIFER looks sadly at him.

JAKE

But, but, but, Kansas... my summer, but, but..

The class is insanely loud and from JAKE's perspective it is a roar. He is overtaken with the loudness. The volume of the room continues to increase into a roar. Jake's mind is flooded with noise and distraction. It is about to make him go MAD. From the crowd, he can decipher someone making fun of him.

RANDOM VOICE

Butts... butts... butts...

JAKE POV

The crowd's volume increases more and the screen goes white with a loud ringing noise.

The screen resumes to the classroom:

JAKE

(Erupts beyond control)

SHUUUUUUT UUUUUP!

Just like the birds pooping and flying away, the class drops all of their notebooks, pencils, paper airplanes, hair-ties (one girl's hair poofs as her friend stops braiding). They all sit open-mouthed staring at JAKE like deer in the headlights.

The camera pans across the whole classroom as everyone looks at Jake as if he lit off a bomb.

TEACHER

Jake, Principal's office, NOW! Looks like your summer is starting early.

They walk out together. Everyone in the classroom begins gossiping as soon as they leave the room.

FADE OUT

INT. CUT BACK INSIDE THE CONDO

Jake has been sent home. He walks in the condo and his mom is crying on the phone. He thinks it's his principal on the phone. Jake looks worried. She hangs up. He sits at the kitchen counter and looks at his mom as she puts her face in her hands.

JAKE:

Gosh mom, I wasn't THAT bad!

She looks at him, red-eyed, very sad.

JAKE

(With as much cuteness and  
humor that he can muster)

MOM, before you say anything, I need to  
explain how bad the kids in my class are.

MOM

(A small laugh breaks up her  
tears)

JAKE, grab your bags for the trip. We  
need to get in DAD's car and pick him up  
from work.

JAKE

(Looking nervous)

But MOM...

It's obviously something else than his bad behavior at  
school.

MOM

Please, JAKE.

JAKE looks even more nervous and realizes how serious she  
is. He goes to his room and grabs his bags.

DAD, a soft-shouldered, eye-glass wearing, suited  
businessman, surprises his MOM and walks in the front door.  
JAKE peeks out his bedroom door. DAD walks directly to MOM  
and hugs her.

DAD

I came as soon as I heard the news.

JAKE walks out, still confused, he joins them in a three  
person hug.

DAD

She was an amazing person

JAKE

Who was?

MOM squats down eye-level with JAKE.

MOM

Grandma

MUSIC PLAYS: WEEN- "I'll MISS YOU" or MUPPETS- "SAYING GOODBYE"

JAKE

She still is. She was hilarious at the park yesterday.

MOM

She's been hiding an illness from us for the past two years. She moved here last year to spend the last year with you. She refused treatment to live in peace with us. She mentioned nothing because she didn't want us to worry.

JAKE

Is she going to be ok?

MOM

She passed away last night.

JAKE

What?!....

(Looks very confused)

JAKE (CONT'D)

Noooo! This can't be happening. I never said goodbye. SHE never said goodbye!

DAD

She said goodbye this whole last year.

JAKE

We were supposed to go to Aunt Roberta's together!

MOM

GRANDMA was full of surprises. This whole time, she only bought one ticket. That ticket is for you. She never planned on going with you.

She hands the ticket to JAKE. Written on the ticket is, "Take me everywhere you go- Love Grandma."

MOM

I know it's a big shock, but GRANDMA knew what she was doing. She loved you very much and wouldn't want you to be hurt.

JAKE

Well, I am!

MOM

I know... I am, too...

The three continue to hug as the camera pans outward through the windows and beyond the condo. The view zooms out just beyond the FRANK BLACKBIRD who is looking from the perch above the patio. He is viewing the scene and wiping away a tear with his wing.

#### SCENE IV: Driving

SAD MUSIC plays from the last scene and continues throughout the scene

Fade from the last scene to JAKE, MOM, and DAD huddled together around family or a coffin-burial ceremony. The Frank Blackbird is watching them from a tree in the cemetery. It looks very similar to the previous scene's ending scenery. They disassemble and slowly walk through a cemetery to their car. They are dressed up with two umbrellas covering them as it is drizzling. They meekly wave at a passing family member driving away and get in their car. JAKE is in a suit and gets in the rear seat. There is a suitcase and a duffel bag next to him. They are driving to the train station.

JAKE is distraught in the back. The view changes to a vantage from his perspective from the middle of the back seat. He looks between his parents shoulders at the windshield as rain droplets create beautiful new arrangements with every passing of the windshield wipers. Slowly the water begins to arrange itself in a way that JAKE is recognizing. It flashes through images of JAKE's entire life and relationship with GRANDMA. Lightning illuminates the water-images every-so-often. His parents do not notice anything. Jake watches in awe.

The rain intensifies and so does the frequency of the wipers. Soon, the intermittent wipers and the images that are displayed across the windshield become a flipbook/video of still images. It is of GRANDMA and him at the park. At last she smiles, waves, and blows a kiss goodbye. The last image that stays on the windshield is a bird. It pops up after every smear of the windshield. It remains there for an extended amount of time. JAKE looks bewildered at it. He has no idea what it means. He looks right into its eyes and it stares right back as if he is looking into a mirror. He blinks, it blinks, etc.

The car stops. The bird slowly fades, flies away, and JAKE's focus goes beyond the windshield to a train that is behind it. It is leaving with a loud horn.

They sit in the parked car and talk before getting out. They are waiting on JAKE's train. The rain has stopped. Jake's train starts pulling in.



His parents are looking back at him from the front seats.

JAKE looks at his parents sadly.

JAKE

Do I have to go?

(Almost brought to tears)

JAKE CONT'D

I didn't want to go even when I thought Grandma was going, too. Now, it sounds much worse. Do I have to?

MOM looks at DAD with concern on her face. It looks as if she is asking him if he should go. DAD minimally nods his head in approval.

MOM

(To JAKE)

I'm sorry you don't want to go now, but trust me, trust GRANDMA. You will be very happy you went.

DAD

Yeah, bud, this is going to be great. I had a trip like this when I was your age that changed my life!

JAKE

You did? Your life became better because of a trip?

DAD

Well... No, not really. I lost the tip of my thumb in a fishing accident, but it definitely changed my life.

He holds his thumb out as evidence. His mangled thumb disgusts JAKE.

MOM

ROGER! (DAD)

The three get out of the car and start walking on the train platform together.

MOM

(Looks at JAKE)

JAKE, you'll have a great time. Now do you trust GRANDMA?

JAKE

Yes.

MOM

Do you think she wanted you to be happy?

JAKE

Yes.

MOM

Would she do anything to harm you?

JAKE

No.

MOM

Then you must trust her. She thought long and hard about this trip. It was her dying wish for you to go. You will have a great time.... Now, hurry up and hop on that train before they leave without you.

Hugs.

MOM

AUNT BERT and UNCLE TERRY will be waiting at the train station to pick you up.

TRAIN WHISTLE

JAKE stops hugging his mom.

JAKE

OK.

Jake pauses, and runs toward the train door. He pauses at the door and looks back before boarding the train.

MOM AND DAD:

(Together, on accident)

We love you!

(They look at each other in amusement/amazement)

MOM

Have a great time! Hug Roberta for me!

DAD

(Voice trailing as JAKE boards)

Don't become a country boy on us!

Above JAKE and the train door, the FRANK BLACKBIRD is perched observing the parents and JAKE. He appears to be going west also.

JAKE punches his ticket and finds a window seat on a half capacity train. He is in a row by himself. The music merges to slower, sadder version of CITY BIRD music. He looks ahead. There is an in-train move: *The Birds*... Jake isn't interested and picks up his IPAD.

Frank Blackbird is sitting on a pole on the side of the train watching *The Birds* movie. He is eating popcorn watching it with fascination. A little girl who was watching the film looks outside and notices him and screams.

A time-lapse occurs showing JAKE from up above. He is wrestling around in his seat trying to find a comfortable position as different shadows and shades of light portray the difference in time. Finally, he assumes a position with his head resting on overlapped arms on the window sill. The camera pans behind him, showing the outside landscape changing through the time-lapse. The view from afar slowly transitions from Appalachians to rivers, Pittsburgh, lakes, steel mines, to Midwest cities, airplanes spraying fields, diggers working the dirt, corn fields, scarecrows (Frank Blackbird perched atop), prairies, and back to mountains. He appears unimpressed by

all of it. Day turns to night (JAKE is scene looking at his stargazer app on his IPAD) and back to morning where Jake is in the same position, forehead pressed against the glass, out like a light.

He is slowly waking up. He hears his grandma whisper.

GRANDMA

(Whisper)

I'll always be with you.

He quickly looks out the window as his grandma is slowly being passed by the train. She is in a field waving joyfully at him.

Sidenote: Frank Blackbird is now riding atop the train. There is a Seagull sitting next to him.

Jake freaks out and looks all around the train panicked for someone to notice her. He is so overwhelmed he can't find words to ask for someone. He is waving his arms around like a mad man. Jake looks back through the window to see where his grandma was. He becomes bummed-out as he realizes she was actually a scarecrow with its arm propped up.

Disappointed, Jake looks back to see if anybody noticed his recent conniption. He is shocked to see that a girl has seated herself right next to him. She is leaning toward him out the window very close to him. She looks a year or two older than JAKE, but she is high-energy, kind of Dory-ish.

RANDO

Are you alright?

(As if he might be crazy)

JAKE

Yeah. Why?

RANDO

(Speaking fast)

'Cause you were just over here flailing your arms like one of those super funny flailly-armed guys you see outside of the

used-car lot.

(She flails her arms  
imitating one. For a moment  
she really looks like one.)

RANDO (CONT'D)

Oh, well. That'd be cool if you were one.  
Anyways, what ARE you doing?

JAKE

Nothing.

RANDO

Nothing on a train? Not even going  
anywhere hmm... Where are you from?

JAKE

Manhattan

RANDO

Manhattan, KS?!?! Beautiful! I'm from  
around there th-...

JAKE

(Annoyed, cuts her off)

Noooo. Manhattan, New York.

RANDO

Woooow. The BIG Apple, not the little  
one. My mistake. Are you going to  
Manhattan, KS?

JAKE

I don't know. I'm going to my Aunt and  
Uncle's Farm. They live in Western  
Kansas.

RANDO

Awesome. We'll I'm from Kansas, too!  
You're going to love it!

JAKE

No, I won't.

RANDO

Oh yes you will. Trust me. There's a lot to see out there. I was just like you. My parents drug me along to the East Coast this Spring. I'm just getting back. I dreaded the thought of it for the first 2 weeks. But now, I'm seeing things in a new light... Speaking of... Do you see that outside?

(She looks past JAKE through the window pointing at something.)

Music starts. *It's a Family Affair* by Sly Stone plays, but the lyrics are "It's a Family of Bears".

You can see two adult bears with a baby cub on the hill. The parents are moving in rhythm with the music as they prepare a nice breakfast. The mom sings the lyrics.

JAKE

What? What is it? What do you see?

RANDO

Don't you see or hear it? It's a family of bears.

JAKE

Whoopie

Music fades as the bears fade into the distance, too.

RANDO

It's OK. I didn't see or hear it for a long time either."

JAKE

What are you talking about?

RANDO

Anyways, Kansas, you are going to love it.

(She starts backing out of  
the aisle to return to her  
family.)

RANDO (CONT'D)

Just remember, "Be open to everything."

(His grandma's voice is  
synced with it)

JAKE looks down at his lap, baffled by what he just heard.

He looks back for the RANDO. He hollers after her.

JAKE

Hey I never got your name...

But she has vanished down the aisle already.

You can hear her say, "Mom?", but JAKE can't see her  
anymore.

He slumps back into his seat and sleeps the rest of the  
morning.

The train whistle blows again. JAKE is at his destination.  
The train conductor is grabbing at JAKE's shirt sleeve.

TRAIN ATTENDANT

I think this is your stop, young fella.

JAKE grabs his bags and jacket, runs past the attendant and  
exits the train. He mutters to himself:

JAKE

Be Open to Everything...

(Under his breath)

SCENE: ARRIVAL

INT. INSIDE A BUSY, LARGE, COVERED TRAIN STATION

JAKE hops off the train and looks up to see his hosts awaiting him: AUNT ROBERTA (the country version of his mother), UNCLE TERRY (dressed in overalls and a straw hat, straw in mouth), and his two cousins.

AUNT ROBERTA is the antithesis of Jake's MOM. They may be sisters but from completely different cuts of cloth. Whereas MOM was drawn to the fancy, socialite lifestyle, AUNT ROBERTA is a home-cooking, home-bodied, "I-love-life-right-here-at-home," control-the-ship type of mother.

Each cousin is holding a sign to greet him. His uncle only needed a fiddle and spittoon to complete his ensemble. Although they're in the Midwest, no one else is dressed like his uncle.

Jake, mouth agape, is embarrassed to join them in a public setting. He looks around for anyone watching him. The cousins are holding the following signs:

Girl Cousin

Boy Cousin

**Welcome  
Jake!!!**

**Back from  
Juvenile  
Hall!!!**



JAKE smiles sympathetically at the first sign and grimaces in disappointment at the Boy Cousin's sign. He looks around again to see if anyone has noticed him with this family. No one could care less. He walks over to them.

AUNT ROBERTA

(To UNCLE)

I told you he wouldn't think your outfit was funny!

She snatches the straw hat and straw dangling from his mouth, grabs the juvee sign and folds it up.

UNCLE

He thinks were hicks so I thought I'd play the part. Loosen him up a little...

(Smiling at his own humor)

NOAH steps in between them. He is a year older than Jake and two years older than ANNIE, the girl cousin. He is blunt, type-A, and unsympathetic. If he's your friend, he's hysterical. If he's not, he is brutal. He is a dark-haired, handsome country boy.

NOAH

Yeah, and I'ma gonna tawk lyk dis, shucks...

(Stuffs hand in pockets and rocks side to side)

AUNT ROBERTA

Cut it out! Let's make him feel welcome...

She looks back at JAKE who doesn't look comfortable at all.

AUNT ROBERTA CONT'D

Hi JAKE! How was your train ride?

JAKE

(Shyly)

It was okay, I guess.

UNCLE

(Grabs and shakes him by the  
shoulder)

Hey Buddy! You sure have grown!

JAKE

(Dully)

It's been six years... I guess people grow.

ANNIE is the sweet doll of the family. She doesn't have a mean bone in her body. She loves all. She's deeply sympathetic to anyone in the slightest pain. Her appearance is a protrusion of the sweetness she possesses underneath. She's a petite, strawberry blond, fireball of energy.

She rushes in and hugs JAKE. He doesn't reciprocate.

ANNIE

(Grabbing his shoulders and  
looking earnestly into his  
eyes)

We are going to have the best summer ever! I have so many plans for us and plenty more in the works. We'll swim, hike, bike, play, and our Fourth of July is the best in the world! Are you excited?!?!?!?

NOAH butts-in again.

NOAH

(Looking at JAKE)

Don't worry about her. *I'll* show you the ropes. Stick with me, and you won't have a problem..

NOAH ribs Jake like the classroom bully. He even resembles the classroom bully. He continues to push his elbow into JAKE's ribs awaiting a reaction.

JAKE

(To Noah)

What are you doing?

NOAH

What? Don't you and your friends wrestle with each other?

Jake looks away un-amused.

Noah stops horsing around with him. He reacts as if JAKE is a wet rag.

ANNIE is still admiring him with doll eyes from afar.

JAKE

OKAY???

(To ANNIE)

AUNT and UNCLE look concernedly at each other. ANNIE grabs JAKE's items and they start toward the van.

MUSIC: BIRD CITY enters.

From above you see the family enter the van and zip down the road. The sky is full of differing flocks of birds: geese flying back north in a V, swarms of swallows, clusters of tiny birds, birds sitting on the power-line, sitting on scarecrows, nesting in fields, filling up large trees, chasing swarms of insects, hawks with snakes, owls resting, bald eagles at lakes, etc.

INT. Minivan

Music- Lynyrd Skynyrd Freebird solo is playing

Everyone in the car is moving along with the music except Jake.

UNCLE TERRY

Sweet Home Alabama, right Annie?

ANNIE

No, Dad! Freebird!

UNCLE TERRY

That was the Byrds?!

ANNIE

No, Dad. Freebird by Skynyrd.

UNCLE TERRY

Ohhh. ok.

Music fades and changes to Prince- When Doves Cry

UNCLE TERRY

Ok. I got this one.

UNCLE TERRY

(Singing)

Purple rain, purple rain.

ANNIE

Sheesh... When Doves Cry, Dad.

UNCLE TERRY

Oh.

JAKE

(impressed)

Wow, Shazam.

ANNIE

Don't you call me that. You know my name is Annie.

JAKE

I meant you are smart like the app, Shazam. It tells you the details of almost any song you are listening to.

ANNIE

Ohhh... Sorry. Mom doesn't let us use IPADS and apps very often. Says they make things too easy.

Jake clutches his IPAD to his chest as the van skirts down the road.

Hours later, the van is approaching a small town called Bird City. It's the first town they've seen in hours.

INT- THE VAN- DUSK

JAKE

Finally a town! Actually proof that life exists out here.

He looks at the water tower. It says Bird City with bright vibrant colors and a silhouette of a couple in the sunset. He looks around and sees no one. It's windy and a single tumbleweed rolls through. You can literally hear crickets.

JAKE

Bird City? What a dumb name! More like Cuckoo Bird City. This place is deader than a doornail. You'd have to be NUTS to live here!

GIRL COUSIN

(Agitated)

You better check yourself! Bird City is one of my favorite places in the whole

wide world! You just need to open your eyes to its wonderment.

JAKE looks around again, this time prying his eyes wide open. The place looks completely desolate. He slouches his shoulders in confusion to himself.

In the front, AUNT ROBERTA gives UNCLE a worried look that says *if he doesn't like it here, he won't like it at our place. This will be a long summer.*

MUSIC BIRD CITY gets louder and the lyrics enter:

You got to get down....

EXT. ATOP THE WATERTOWER OF BIRD CITY- DUSK

Camera pans to show FRANK BLACKBIRD has finished a performance before a huge crowd of birds on top of the BIRD CITY water tower. The crowd is singing BIRD CITY. The van continues to zip down the road in the distance. FRANK BLACKBIRD notices the van.

FRANK BLACKBIRD

All right folks, on to the next gig.  
You've been great. Good night BIRD CITY!!!

ANNOUNCER IN THE BACKGROUND

Ladies and Gentlebird, Blackbird... Has left the building!

He flies in the direction of the van. The camera follows him as he catches up and continues to fly above the van.

The van is following the sun as it sets in the West. On the horizon is a cute farmstead on a hill. It is surrounded by numerous fun areas: Pond, stacks of hay bales, tractors, animals, ducks, geese, cows, horses. There is a large red barn and accompanying sheds.

INT. INSIDE THE VAN- DUSK

COUSIN GIRL

Home Sweet Home!

JAKE

That's your place? Where's the city? Or at

least a town? Where do you eat?

COUSIN GIRL

We live there by ourselves. There is no town. We eat at our kitchen table.

JAKE

That's all yours? How many houses do you have!?

COUSIN GIRL

Those are barns and sheds silly.

Everyone smiles at JAKE's ignorance. The car pulls into the drive.

SCENE.

EXT - GETTING ACQUAINTED- DUSK

The van door opens and everyone piles out. Dogs immediately run up to greet them.

POV of GIRL COUSIN

The farm looks magical with animals with beaming personalities, beautiful sunsets and starry nights, treed forests, and excitement awaiting around each corner. She greets the dogs back.

ANNIE

Hey Fozzie, Hi Skeeter, Hello Ralph. Meet Jake! He'll be with us all summer.

The dogs sniff him one by one as if in a line.

JAKE looks a little overwhelmed and looks like the excited dogs might knock him over.

GIRL COUSIN CONT'D

There's Jack and Allen, too. They're cool beat cats.

She points to the fence where two beat-nick poetic cats lay unimpressed. One notices he is being talked about, stretches, and licks himself un-amused.

JAKE starts walking inside with his luggage, but GIRL COUSIN cuts him off. Excitedly pointing toward the barn, she wants to give him the full introduction and tour.

ANNIE

There's John, Paul, George, and Ringo, our dairy cows.

Four ordinary cows have their heads down eating hay from a pile. They are stunned to hear ANNIE say their names and look around for her. They humorously resemble 4 mop-tops.

*TWIST and SHOUT* plays for a quick two seconds.

With their heads held up, they chew the grass in their mouths, locate ANNIE, flash a lazy smile, and quickly resume eating grass from a hay pile.



ANNIE

There's Abbott and Costello, our ducks,  
Jerry and Elaine, the pigs, George and  
Steven, the Goats, Amy and Tina are the  
resident geese..

One goose sticks its tongue out at Jake and makes a noise;  
Jake shudders from his recent encounter with a goose.

ANNIE

Chickens Jan, Marsha, and Cindy, Lucy..

(Trails off describing  
everyone)

MOM

Hey Lady, don't you think Jake's had  
enough today? It's past supper-time. Why  
don't you warsh up, we'll get some grub,  
and you can show him everything tomorrow?

JAKE

(To himself)

"Warsh? Supper?" Where am I?  
Have I gone back in time?...

ANNIE

(Still rambling from before,  
audio cuts back in)

Oh, and there is your room! You have a  
great view of the tree house from there..

(Trails off again)

NOAH

(Whispers in ear)

Stick with me. I'll show you the way  
around here.

JAKE

Huh?

NOAH

(In his best terminator  
voice)

Come with me if you want live.

CLOSE UP of JAKE's petrified face.

FADE OUT

SCENE: FIRST NIGHT AT THE FARM

INT. IN THE ATTIC- NIGHT

Jake is sitting on his bed. He is residing in the third floor attic. His room is the entire up stairs. It's half-way finished with a bed and couch, storage boxes, random decorations, and whatnot. He looks at his IPAD. He closes down a kung fu video. He closes down a picture of Jennifer. He closes down his star-gazer. He opens up a journal app on the IPAD.

Jake snuggles into the bed under some blankets.

He starts talking into the IPAD. It starts transcribing what he is saying. The words float across the screen as he says:

JAKE

I am in a strange land.. with strange people. I arrived today, May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019. I close my first journal entry with the intention to conquer this rugged land like the settlers did before me. I will domesticate and provide culture to the local town folk. I will tame wild animals into my pets wi...

From outside...

COYOTES

Ow ow owwww!!!

Jake tenses up.

"Ow Ow owwww" is written across the IPAD Journal.

JAKE

(Whimpering)

"Pathetic whimpering" scrolls across the IPAD journal.

Jake pulls the blanket up to his eyes.

FADE OUT

FIRST DAY ON THE FARM

INT. THE ATTIC- MORNING

JAKE wakes up to a deserted house. He sits up in bed questioning where everyone is. He walks throughout the house calling names. He hears a loud grumble from outside (familiar to a chain saw.) Shrill shrieks of terror and excitement accompany the louse noise.

JAKE

(To himself)

Oh great. I'm stuck in Kansas with family I don't even know, and now they've all been taken and eaten by monsters with chainsaws who have now returned to eat me.

The grumbling revs up and the children and Aunt's voice become audible outside.

JAKE peaks through the window.

The two cousins pull on two small 4-wheelers with custom paint. They pull up to their mom who is putting clothes on a clothesline. Jake walks out the side door squinting his eyes. The three others are in front of him.

AUNT

Well Sleepyhead, look who decided to join the world.

ANNIE

Yeah, gosh. Were you going to sleep all day?

JAKE

I don't know... How much have I missed? What time is it? Is it dinner-time, er, I mean supper or lunch or whatever you may call it around here?

AUNT

Why, it's nearly 7 O' clock.

JAKE

What!?!?! I slept until 7PM!?!?

ANNIE

No silly! It's 7AM.

NOAH

(Keeping up with the hick  
accent from yesterday)

And I's chores are all done. We've just  
been waiting on you to have some fun.  
It's about time you joined us. Now let's  
ride!

JAKE

(Nervously)

Hahahaha, hold up. You didn't expect me to  
get on one of those did you?

NOAH

Sure, why not? She rides 'em and she's a  
girl.

ANNIE

Ride better than you!

NOAH

Can't argue because it's true.

(He looks back at JAKE)

So you game?

JAKE

Where I'm from, parents do all the  
driving.

NOAH

Well, good thing we're not there and  
they're not here! Come down and ride!

EXT. OUTSIDE THE HOUSE- MORNING

NOAH

Hop on! You can take mine. I'll ride my dirt-bike!

(Hops onto his dirt-bike and showboats with wheelies, jumps, doughnuts, and other tricks)

JAKE

Alright!

(Acting confident) (Under his breath)

Maybe this place won't be so bad after all.

Hops on.

JAKE (CONT'D)

How do you drive these things?

NOAH

You see that button?

Points to ignition.

NOAH (CONT'D)

Press that to...

JAKE presses the gas and immediately takes off full speed toward the animals.

All of the animals drop pooh in terror.

Jake's body flails like a kite behind him as he holds onto the handle bars for dear life.

COUSINS and AUNT scream for him. JAKE runs full-speed into the animal's pen fencing and goes air-born over into a steamy pile of mud in the pig's sty.

Deafening silence ensues as Jake's head is buried in the mud for 3 seconds. Everyone is paralyzed with fear. A pig

hesitantly walks up to JAKE and sniffs him to see if he's alright. In dramatic fashion, Jake's head snaps up gasping for air. The pig squeals and backs away! As the pig realizes he is alright, the squeal turns into laughter. Covered in mud, JAKE looks lovely to the pig and hearts develop in her love-struck gaze. All of the animals laugh. The cousins laugh. AUNT is trying to contain her laughter behind a painted concerned face as she runs to gather him.

JAKE remains dumbfounded. He looks as if his life just flashed before his eyes.

AUNT, turning concerned, runs closer to him.

AUNT

JAKE, are you okay?

Pause

JAKE

No!!! I'm not okay. I'm anything but okay. I just saw my life-flash before my eyes. I'm covered in mud. And this is not spa mud. This is the opposite of spa mud. This smells like, like, like, ugghhhhh!

NOAH

That's not mud...

Snickering from all the animals.

AUNT

Well, how about next time we start you with something smaller? Annie, why don't you gather the two horses? You can take Jake on a nice horse ride?

ANNIE

(Runs off quickly)

Yessss.

EXT. FRONT YARD BY THE HOSE SPIGOT- MORNING

AUNT hoses off JAKE in the front yard.

JAKE

This is so demoralizing. I feel like a zoo animal. Kansas is for animals and Neanderthals.

AUNT

You may be right... Well, Neanderthals needed to eat, too. Put this in your belly before you go. Maybe that'll change your perspective

NOAH has brought out JAKE's breakfast: eggs benedict, bacon, avocado, hash browns.

NOAH

Breakfast Bravo!

JAKE Looks amazed by the food set forth in front of him.

JAKE

WOW! I didn't think there were any nice five-star restaurants around here.

NOAH:

Mom made that, dummy.

AUNT

(To NOAH)

Hey, how was he supposed to know we eat home-made breakfast every day???

(To Jake)

Jake, thanks for the compliment.

JAKE

(To himself)

Compliment???

Pause



JAKE (CONT'D)

I just called everyone Neanderthals...

Out of nowhere, two majestic horses appear from the barn in glorious, slow-motion fashion, and lead by Annie with two reigns. JAKE is in awe. He envisions all of the videos he's seen online of horses (domestication, wars, racing, chariots, cowboys, Indians, etc.)

AUNT

(To herself)

Neanderthals... hmm?

AUNT

(To everyone)

Now be careful, these guys can be more powerful than those 4-wheelers, but you'll be with the best rider in the land.

NOAH AND ANNIE are mounted on the horses. ANNIE's dog is alongside them.

ANNIE

Thanks, MA!

NOAH

Ha! She was talking about me.

AUNT

I was talking about both of you.

(To JAKE)

It is known around town that Annie is a bit of a horse-whisperer. She hears things that others can't from these beasts.

ANNIE

(To JAKE)

You know why they whisper?

JAKE

(Intrigued)

No. Why?!

ANNIE

(In a raspy voice)

Because they're a bit Hoarse.

EVERYONE BUT JAKE

HAHAHA!

The two horses appear to laugh/whinie at the joke, too. They start whispering to each other once the hysteria dies down.

ANNIE

(To the horses)

Now, c'mon guys! I was just joking about you whispering. Whatever you are saying, you can say to the whole group.

JAKE

(To NOAH)

What's she talking about?

NOAH:

She thinks she's Dr. Doolittle of the Midwest. She "fake" talks to animals and whatnot. One day I saw her even talk to the clouds. She'd try to talk with a deadly shark if she could.

JAKE

*She belongs in Coo Coo Bird City.*

ANNIE

That's not true. Well, maybe it is. But, I can talk with them, Jake. It's true.

(To the horses)

C'mon guys, prove me right and them wrong.  
Tell them what you told me last week.

A horse perks up, looks at Jake, and opens up his mouth;  
the mouth is constantly agape as he says:

HORSE

(MR. Ed Style)

Hello JAKE, I'm glad you're here.

The second horse whinnies in amazement and gives his  
companion horse a shocked look. Jakes is startled and in  
awe, too.

NOAH comes from behind the horse doubling over in laughter.  
It was his voice the whole time.

NOAH

(Pointing at JAKE)

He thought the horse was talking!!!!

He can barely breathe he's laughing so hard.

The horses look mad. One whispers to the other.

HORSE #2

Wow, I thought you had totally blown our  
cover.

FADE OUT

SCENE

EXPLORING THE FARM

EXT. AROUND THE FARM- MID-MORNING

The three go out on horseback. ANNIE and JAKE on one horse. NOAH on another. It's an unbelievably gorgeous setting. The farm is nestled inside a valley with one long hill stretching around the house into a "U" surrounding everything.

JAKE

So, what are we doing? Where are we going? What DO you do for fun around here?

NOAH

Whoa, whoa, whoa... (Both horses react with strange looks at NOAH) buddy. You're looking at it. Plus, only one question at a time going forward. You've got to realize you're in the country. Life's slower out here. We answer things one question at a time...

JAKE

O-Kay...

(Asks the next question very slowly)

Wheeeere arrrrreee weeee goiiiiinnng?

NOAH

Ha... ha. Now you're getting it... We're going to a bunch of places. None of them are as top-secret as our first stop. You must NEVER mention it to anyone outside of this farm. It holds highly sensitive information and could be used by others outside of this establishment to harm us... At this point, we must blindfold you so you won't be able to share our super-secret hide-out location.

JAKE

Okay???

Blindfolds him.

Tests to make sure he isn't seeing anything. Acts like he is about to punch him and stops inches from his face. JAKE doesn't respond. They start moving.

Horses take another five steps and stop. They remove his blindfold.

Before him stands a two-story, decked-out tree-house with retractable rope-ladder, bridge entry, and two side tree-houses with connecting rope-bridges.

He sits in awe.

JAKE

(Below his breath)

My family is a real-life Swiss Family Robinson....

(To the others)

Does this place have the internet and plumbing?! Geez Louise! This is amazing. I've heard of these... tree-... houses...

ANNIE

Yep, welcome to our tree house.

NOAH

Eh-hmmmmmm.. Tree-FORT. And we protect our whole property from this here place. If anyone wanted to come here that shouldn't, ANNIE and I'd know about it first..

For dramatization, NOAH scopes the horizon as if he is looking for trespassers.

JAKE

Did we really need the blindfold? I can see the house from here?

NOAH

THIS place is so well-camouflaged you could have walked by here a million times without knowing until we pointed it out.

ANNIE

(Overriding NOAH's opinion)

It's mainly just for show.

JAKE

Well, it worked! This place is awesome!  
Let's go in!

He jumps off his horse clumsily and starts running toward the fort.

NOAH jumps up from his horse and grabs a tree limb. The tree limb lowers to the ground under his weight and blocks JAKE's route to the tree-fort.

NOAH

Whooooaaa again. Not so fast city bird.  
We've got a lot of things to show you first. And besides, who said you could go inside? You have to prove yourself worthy before you can enter such an elite establishment. We've only been with you one day. Who knows! You could be a spy!

Slides down the limb and presses eyeball to eyeball with JAKE.

NOAH

Are you a spy? Are you!?!?!?

ANNIE

He's our cousin, I can tell!

JAKE

What makes you so sure!?

ANNIE

I. Can. Just. Tell...

(Shrugs)

ANNIE pulls JAKE back onto the horse behind her. The two horses ride off slowly with ANNIE holding NOAH's horse's reins. NOAH runs up and pulls himself onto the horse. They

ride off to the next destination.

They approach the pond. It is also decked-out with a long dock, diving board, rope-swing, zip-line, beach, etc. It is naturally beautiful with cat-tails, lily pads, reeds, and a little island in the middle.

They tie the horses up and walk out onto to the dock.

Jake is looking down at the water. To most people, it would look serene. To him, it appears to be a cesspool.

NOAH

Alright, alright, alright. To be able to gain access to the super-secret Tree Fort, you must prove your worth. Here's your first test. Jump fro..

ANNIE races past the two boys.

ANNIE

Cannonball!!!!

She plunges into the water with a gigantic cannonball that splashes everywhere. Jake is instantly, obviously worried.

JAKE

ANNIE!!!! Noah, I can't see her! Where is she? Is she ok?!!

Seconds go by and Annie is nowhere to be seen. She hasn't resurfaced. NOAH stands behind JAKE un-phased by his sister's disappearance. JAKE is on knees staring into the water below the deck.

ANNIE bursts from below JAKE spewing water directly into his face.

NOAH AND ANNIE

HAHAHAHAHAHA!

JAKE

AWWWWWWHYTHE, HOWDISGUSTING?!?! ANNIE NEVER do that again! You could have killed yourself or... me. You can't see the bottom. You could have hit your head! What about a mean snapping turtle? He could

have munched off a toe! And don't get me started on how many different types of deadly algae you just spit into my face! It's now in my eyeballs! You put that water in your mouth?! That's unthinkable!

ANNIE and JAKE look at each other in disbelief.

JAKE zapped all the life out of the air with his anxieties.

The group stands awkwardly in silence for a while.

NOAH

So, I take it you won't be interested in accepting the challenge then?

JAKE

What challenge?

NOAH

Swim to the other side...

JAKE looks across the pond and back. He gets a version of vertigo trying to judge the distance to the other side.

JAKE

Why would I do that?

NOAH

Because you have to if you want to join our tree fort squad. And the only way to get access to our tree fort is to be in the tree fort squad.

JAKE looks at the water, the other side, his 2 cousins, and back to the other side.

JAKE

You'll have to think of a different challenge. I can't think for another second about what lurks beneath the surface of that water.

THE 2 COUSINS

Boooooooooooooo!!



NOAH starts mimicking a chicken strutting around pecking for food.

JAKE

What are you doing?

(To NOAH)

NOAH

Haven't you ever seen a chicken before?

JAKE

In real life? Never before yesterday...

NOAH and ANNIE look confusedly and almost sadly at each other.

TWO COUSINS

We'll think of something else.

THE TWO HORSES look at each other as if they are concerned for JAKE.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. THE CAVE- LATE MORNING

Cuts to the trio riding again. They are riding alongside a long hillside. They mosey upon a tall portion of the hill with two caves carved into the side. Vines cover both entries.

JAKE notices the cavernous area. It is dark, mysterious, and everything a boy of his age dreams of exploring.

JAKE

Whoa, whoa, whoa!...

(Not realizing horses stop  
when you say whoa)

ANNIE and JAKE's horse stop.

JAKE CONT'D

What's that?

(Points to the cave)

JAKE CONT'D

And why did our horse stop?

ANNIE

You told it to.

JAKE looks perplexed.

NOAH

That's the caaaaaave.

JAKE

Appropriately titled... Why are we here?

ANNIE

That a pretty deep question that everyone  
has to figure out on their own.

JAKE's perplexed again.

NOAH

He means, why are we at the cave?

ANNIE

Oh.

NOAH

Let me explain. I'll start from the beginning. This cave is where everything we know about this farm and the land it's on begins. Millions of years ago, giant dinosaur fish swam right where you stand.

JAKE

Yeah, and this is probably a sacred Indian location I suppose, too!

(Sarcastically)

NOAH

Wow! Good job, JAKE. Right when I thought you couldn't be any denser, none the less.

JAKE checks to see if they realized he was, in fact, being sarcastic, and rolls with it.

NOAH CONT'D

As you may know, Kansas was once an ocean during the age of the dinosaurs.

Imagery fills in everywhere with swimming giants and turtles:

NOAH CONT'D

Sharks, turtles, fish, mussels, trilobites (points to the ground where there's a fossil of a trilobite), clams, and giant beasts roamed for millions of years...

Imagery wipes clean and starts new:

NOAH CONT'D

Millions of years later, Native Americans held this as sacred ground because of the natural limestone formations. They built parts of these surrounding hills by hand as means of protection and vantage points that see for miles. To this day, we can find shark teeth and arrowheads inches away from each other.

ANNIE AND JAKE

Wooooow...

NOAH

Now

(Gets serious)

JAKE, your challenge is to run into the left entry, touch the back wall of the cave, and run out through the small hole on the right. If you are successful in your challenge, you will be in the tree fort squad gaining access into the actual tree fort itself.

JAKE

Why does every challenge involve me going somewhere I don't want to?

Noah shrugs with his hands in the air providing no answer.

Jake jumps off his horse. He peers into the cave, but it is fairly dark. He kicks the dirt, trying to gain time to think this through before committing.

JAKE CONT'D

How about this? What if I ran OUTside the whole cave? That's even *FURTHER*. Could I be in the group then?

NOAH

Nope. I need to see you touch that wall

(Matter-of-factly)

ANNIE

C'mon JAKE! You got this!

JAKE

OK, ok.

(Under his breath)

Well a man has got to do what a man has got to do.

JAKE

When do I do it?

NOAH

Now.

JAKE

Alright, Tree fort, here I come...

JAKE gets down into a sprinter's stance ready to run in and out.

JAKE

(To himself)

You've got this, you've got this. It's just one dumb cave with nothing inside. Nothing to be worried about. Nothing to be worried...

NOAH

Ready?

JAKE

(to himself)

Nothing to be worried about. No snakes, no rats."

SCARY ECHO IN HIS HEAD

No Snakes. No rats.

Nods to NOAH.

Imagery of snakes and rats inside the cave

NOAH:

1!

JAKE

(To himself)

No spiders, No bats.

SCARY ECHO IN HIS HEAD

No spiders, No bats.

Imagery compounds

NOAH

2!

JAKE

(Aloud)

2 and a half!

(To himself)

Definitely no weird cave-dwelling  
monstrous freaks!

SCARY ECHO IN HIS HEAD

(Crescendo)

Cave-dwelling monstrous freaks!

Imagery grows with eyes, saliva, and teeth.

NOAH

3!

JAKE takes off like a lightning bolt in reverse away from  
the cave.

JAKE

AHHHHHHH!!!! I don't want to be in your  
stupid group anyway!!! AHHH!!

Horses look at each other and shake their head in  
disapproval.

ANNIE

(To NOAH)

Don't worry; he'll do it at the barn

(Referring to JAKE getting  
into the squad)

ANNIE CONT'D

Look, he's halfway there already!

The horses travel with NOAH and ANNIE along the beautiful  
creek bed to the barn.

They eventually find Jake outside the barn, sitting along  
the creek, under a tree, reading his IPAD.

The tree is magnificent. Its sheer size is something to  
marvel, but it is as beautiful in shape and color as it is  
grand in nature. From top to bottom, left to right, near  
and far, every branch is full of birds.

From the inside of the tree, all of the branches look like  
bleachers in a coliseum. FRANK BLACKBIRD stands front and  
center performing. They all pause to observe ANNIE and NOAH  
approach.

NOAH

(Jokingly)

You didn't need to run. We could have  
given you a ride.

JAKE

It's useless. I'm never going to be in  
your group. Why would you want me to ride  
with you anyway?

ANNIE

Jake, you better put that IPAD inside.  
You know my ma doesn't allow those outside  
the house and you ain't supposed to be on  
it during the day anyways.

JAKE

Well, I figured I've got nothing to lose.  
I might as well stay inside grounded for  
the rest of the summer.

ANNIE:

That's not true. Summer's barely begun! We  
have lots of time to play together  
outside. Why don't you come with us to the  
barn? NOAH's got another challenge that  
I'm sure you'll finish!!

JAKE

Really?

ANNIE

Yes! But first, go sneak that IPAD into  
the house before you're caught and ruin  
the summer.

JAKE

Consider it done.

The birds in the tree begin making bets/odds of he'll make  
it or not.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

BARN

EXT. THE BIG RED BARN DOORS- LATE MORNING

NOAH:

Here is your final moment of truth.  
Welcome... to the barn...

Opens the double doors, pigeons fly out, and light



spews out as if it is heaven.

It's a traditional big red barn filled inside and out with stacks of hay, both baled and loose. The hay bales and piles line the walls of the lower level making big piles that lead up to a balcony/loft.

ANNIE

(Out of nowhere)

THIS is where the animals sleep at night.

JAKE

It's huge! Everything is so soft. What could the challenge be? Want me to run to the other side of the barn and back?!

Laughs.

NOAH

I thought you'd never ask.

NOAH runs past both ANNIE and JAKE leaping up hay bale after hay bale like a spider monkey until finally reaching the second story and further on up to the highest summit in the far corner. A rope is dangling in front of him. He looks back at both of them.

NOAH

Hey JAKE, I know you're used to heights, living 40 stories high, and flying in airplanes; you're just a high-society dude, but are you ready for this?"

ANNIE nudges JAKE.

ANNIE

Watch this.

JAKE pulls his feet off the precipice and takes flight with the rope. He flies recklessly downward with wind blowing ripples into his cheeks. His flight dips down and goes back up on opposite side of the pendulum. At the crest, JAKE lets go and finishes with a double back-flip into a huge pile of hay. A plume of dust explodes upward.

ANNIE AND JAKE

Wooooow

JAKE

GULP

ANNIE

(Happily)

Your turn!

JAKE

You have got to be kidding me! He just pulled off a performance that would cripple most Cirque Du Soleil performers.

(NOAH AND ANNIE exchange glances)

NOAH

Gesundheit.

JAKE CONT'D

And you expect me to do that?

NOAH

Why not? ANNIE does it.

JAKE looks at ANNIE questioning the legitimacy of the last claim.

JAKE

Really?

ANNIE

Really.

Begrudgingly, Jake slowly starts his way upward. He keeps stopping and looking down to gauge how far he's gone.

JAKE

(Under his breath)

Well, I'm not going to let a girl cousin

show me up. I'm going to join this stupid group...

Looks back. Continues climbing.

JAKE CONT'D

I'm living with a stinking family circus. I'm not a circus animal, but I'll show them whose ring-leader...

He replays what he just said in his head and wonders if he is going crazy.

He's at the top. He looks down, and climbs down one hay bale for good measure.

JAKE CONT'D

(Weakly)

All right... Here. Goes. Nothing.

Climbs down one more hay bale.

NOAH

Eh, eh, hmmm... All the way to the top. Otherwise, it doesn't count.

JAKE

(Under breath)

Ridiculous... "*All the way to the top.*"

(mockingly)

JAKE climbs to the top.

JAKE

(To Everyone)

OK! I'm going to do it! Be prepared to have a new member in your group cause I'm about to join!

(Sounds like he doesn't even believe the words coming out of his mouth)

JAKE grabs the rope, leans over, looks down, and gets

vertigo. The descent looks like the Grand Canyon. The rope slips from his hands as he tries to lean back. He loses his balance and starts to fall. His body teeters back and forth. Eventually, he loses the fight, and his body falls into a human-slinky down the stacks of hay bales.

JAKE

Ahhhhhhhhh!

ANNIE

Jake!

NOAH

Awesome!

By the time ANNIE has ran to check on him, JAKE is already walking out of the barn furious with the two cousins who are following. Hay is protruding from everywhere possible. There's a trailer of dust and hay blowing in the wake behind him. He has scratches all over his body. He's itching furiously.

Annie trails after him.

ANNIE

Jake, are you ok?

JAKE

No. I'm not ok. I just plummeted 30 feet into the scratchiest material on earth. And I'm pretty sure I just discovered the barn animal's makeshift port-a-potty at the bottom of that pile, too.

(Smells himself) (Stops and turns to Annie)

Just let me invite me into your squad and it'll all be better.

NOAH

No-can-do, partner. The deal was you had to rope-swing to get in. You chickened out and fell down on accident. What kind of reward would that be if it let you in

on account of you chickening out and falling? You want an award for breathing air, too?

JAKE just looks at him, blood-boiling, and yells.

JAKE

WORST DAY EVER!!!!

Stomps off.

As JAKE marches from the barn to the house he is halted in front of the bird tree. Hundreds of birds have gathered there in the midst of another show. They stop everything and focus on JAKE's tantrum. Two neighbor boys pull up on their dirt-bikes in front of JAKE. Their engines are high-pitched and annoying. The boys rev the engine over and over. They don't understand that the noise is very irritating to everyone besides themselves. Or, they totally know and don't care.

The birds immediately become agitated by the neighbors and their noisy entrance. They start squawking.

The 2 neighbors are the Beverley brothers. Ty, tall and skinny. John, short and round. They are the slightly brighter, country-versions of Beavis and Butthead.

NOAH

(Yells over the engines to ANNIE and JAKE)

Oh, look! It's the Beverleys! I can't wait to tell them everything that's happened today!

He runs to tell them everything horrible that happened to JAKE.

The wind picks up and a gust is swirling around JAKE. A dirt-devil has surrounded him. His hair is messy, dirt flies in his eyes and face, his clothes are tossed, and the noise adds to the motorcycle engines. The birds seem to get loud, the crickets, the kids, the wind. It's all too much for JAKE and he starts to break down.

Through the madness, Annie tries to calm him down.

ANNIE

It's OK. Don't lose your cool. We have plenty of time left in the summer. Even if you never make it into the tree-fort club, we'll have a great time together. Trust me, you have nothing to prove to my brother. You have even less to prove to the Beverley brothers.

She reaches out to hug/console him. He shuns her and turns away.

In the background, NOAH is describing every embarrassing event that happened to Jake to the Beverley brothers.

ANNIE

Come on, Jake. You know Grandma wouldn't want to see you like this.

JAKE

I'm stuck in Kansas, my cousin's a jerk, I have nothing to do, no IPAD, stupid neighbors, nothing's fun, nothing at all, I can't even hear myself think...

The wind and the birds overmatch JAKE's volume. He is still ranting, but you can't hear it. Only Annie can hear him and her mouth is to the ground in disbelief by what he is saying. Then it dies back down and you can hear the last bit of his rant.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Grandma had me come here to learn something, or grow, or something I don't understand. - Nothing has changed. I'm the same person I was and will always be: the person everyone loves to hate. Even the animals don't like me. What do I do?

(Turns to ANNIE)

Why do I attract such negativity?

The noise begins to crescendo again.

The engines rev louder. NOAH has now joined him with his dirt-bike and the three are revving louder than ever.

JAKE's P.O.V.

JAKE starts to hear everyone's comments from the past few days compile louder and louder in his head. The birds in the huge tree are chirping louder than ever. The wind is blowing in his ears and face. The engines rev louder. Somehow, JAKE can hear the two neighbors laughing at his trials and tribulations over the loud dirt-bikes.

He can't take it anymore and explodes.

JAKE

SHUT UUUUUUPPPP!

(Directed at the cousins, neighbors/Beverleys, and the birds in the tree behind him that were all chattering. Everything immediately goes silent. The birds drop their pooh all at once. The boys cut the dirt-bike engines. The wind mysteriously stops. Everything is awkwardly, utterly silent. All eyes are on JAKE with eerie stillness. A tumble weed blows through without a noise. After a moment, JAKE dejectedly walks away to the side of the house away from everyone.)

A minute later, ANNIE rides up to him on her horse.

JAKE

You might as well give up. I don't want to try anymore. Please leave me alone.

ANNIE

(Demandingly)

Get on. I've got something to say to you.

Confused by her sudden pushiness, he obliges. The horse starts walking.

ANNIE

I noticed something about you from the minute we picked you up from the train station. You...

Suddenly, the horse whinies and does a 180. Jake is flung/ejected backward off the horse's rear. Annie jumps off as the horse rushes back to the barn. Jake is sitting on his rear in the grass confused.

ANNIE

JAKE, hold very still.

JAKE

Why, wha?..

He sees the reason the horse ran away. A snake is perched next to him hissing (sounding like a rattle). His imagination runs away as he envisions the snake taking form 10x larger and more ominous.

JAKE:

Uh.. I.I.It's a rattler!

(Whimpers...)

Help, please..

Tension builds until a hand sharply comes into screen and snatches the snake.

ANNIE

No, it's not. It's just a bullsnake. I don't think he could really hurt you even if he wanted to.

The snake looks at JAKE, bites onto Annie's wrist like an old man gumming bread (to show he's harmless) and shakes his head "no" in agreeance.

The Beverleys and NOAH have driven up on the dirt-bikes to see what happened.

As they drive up and stop:



JOHN BEVERLEY:

It's a rattler!!!

GROUP BESIDES ANNIE AND JAKE:

HAHAHAHAHA

JAKE gets up and marches inside. He is embarrassed. Once his back is turned to the other kids, a tear rolls from his eye.

Annie sits down in the grass looking sad watching him go inside.

Even the birds in the trees which are usually chatty have become melancholy witnessing the scene that unfolded in front of them.

THE BIG TREE/COLISEUM

FRANK BLACKBIRD AT THE STAGE TO A MELANCHOLY CROWD

FRANK BLACKBIRD

And so, he goes alone in his thoughts

Anxiously he waits, defiantly he plots

Sadly, he realized he hasn't changed the weather

With the wind he struggles, ruffles his feathers

SCENE JAKE MOPING

INT. THE ATTIC-

TimeLapse shows days and weeks go by as JAKE mopes in the attic.

Intro music to Hello Mother, Hello Father. No lyrics. Just music.

Outside NOAH and ANNIE are having fun chasing each other. Noah can clearly here them through the windows in the attic. He sighs very depressed. Weeks go by and he is up in his bedroom. The music continues. You can see Aunt Roberta and Annie calling him to come outside, but he denies their requests.

They persist. It looks quite appealing. All of them are equipped with metal-detectors. They load the metal detectors and shovels into a wagon behind the ATV.

ANNIE

C'mon JAKE! There's literally no way you could get hurt!

Jake looks like he really wants to go.

JAKE's P.O.V.

He imagines being out in a field with ANNIE and AUNT ROBERTA. They are hunting for buried treasure with their metal detectors. Suddenly, Annie's machine "hits", and JAKE starts shoveling rapidly. ANNIE and AUNT ROBERTA are loaded in the ATV as JAKE loads up the license plate he just uncovered into the treasure pile in the wagon. The metal detectors and shovels lay beside JAKE in the wagon. He sits looking backward as the ATV starts to move. He is finally happy with the success of the treasure hunt and bonding with the family.

Little did JAKE realize, but he had been shoveling all of the loose dirt into a badger hole. By the time they were loaded and moving, the badger had dug himself out and had started chasing toward the menace, JAKE, that ruined his home. By now, the badger is right behind the ATV and approaching quickly. The girls sit up front, looking forward, oblivious to what is behind them. JAKE sits paralyzed in fear watching the badger approach him. He taps Annie on the shoulder and motions to go quickly. He still can't talk. He's so scared.

Annie looks at her mom with a slightly confused look.

ANNIE

(To her mom)

I think JAKE wants to go faster.

AUNT ROBERTA

Well alright then! About time!

She accelerates and distance grows between JAKE and the badger. JAKE looks back at the badger. He is as pale as a ghost.

INT. ATTIC

NOAH IS LOOKING OUT THE WINDOW AT AUNT ROBERT AND ANNIE

He is still white as a ghost. He looks paralyzed with fear.

ANNIE

Jake!!!

Jake snaps back to reality. He is visibly shaken by his daydream.

JAKE

(Still barely able to talk)

No... I. Think. I'm... Staying. In to-day.

AUNT ROBERTA and ANNIE share a confused look.

*HELLO MOTHER HELLO FATHER* resumes.

He watches kung fu videos, he looks at his star map, all while sitting alone upstairs. He looks at a bruise on his thigh. He Googles, "what do bed sores look like?"

He looks outside again. A row of cows are walking in a pasture shoulder-to-shoulder. They are slowly walking

grazing on the grass as they move. Their mouths never leave the ground. As the cows move forward grazing, a cloud of bugs take flight into the air from the grass. A group of finches and other small birds flies safely in front of the cattle harvesting the unsuspecting insects. It's a beautiful scene.

In another part of the farm, Aunt Roberta is putting clothes on a clothesline. Annie is close-by riding a horse in circles around a pin on one side of the barn.

Noah and the neighbors are on the opposite side of the barn decked out in football helmets and pads. They are in the furthest side of the cow pen making up football plays. They are in a football huddle. All 3 of them keep peaking up sporadically from the huddle at the cows as if they were the opposing team. They break huddle and get into formation aimed directly towards the group of cattle. The cows are on the other side of the pen eying them cautiously. One cow doesn't like the boys getting so close and playfully charges. At first sight of the cow charging, the three boys scramble away to the nearest fence screaming hilariously falling all over themselves like stooges.

TY BEVERLEY drops the ball while climbing over the fence, yells, "Fumble!" and they pile in a heap on the other side of the fence. The look idiotic, but they are having the best time of their lives.

Jake looks unamused and gazes back toward Annie. She is looking majestic on her horse. He looks back at Noah and the neighbors. They have noticed him looking out the window. Noah points up at Jake and yells, "It's a rattler!" The three boys crack up. Jake stops looking out the window and resumes being miserable upstairs. More weeks go by. It's raining outside. JAKE opens the IPAD. He looks at his star-gazer app. Star and constellations fill up the room around him. Normally, he'd love this app, but he can't even get excited about it anymore. He closes it and opens a picture of the girl he likes. He opens her contact information. He contemplates calling her. His finger quivers as it hovers above the green button to call her. He backs off and instead pulls up the contact information for his parents. Imagery follows his lyrics as he walks around the room face-timing while singing to them:

Hello Mother, Hello Father

Here I am at Aunt Roberta's  
Yeah, the farm life is so mundane  
They say I'll have some fun if I stop complaining

All the neighbors think they're funny  
Each day for them, it's so sunny  
They cannot fathom that it's raining  
Just put on slicker boots and keep on playing

Cousin Noah is so mean  
He won't let me join his team  
Hasn't said a word in 20 days  
When he does, this is what he says:

Cuts to a scene of the kids and Aunt Roberta at the pool. It is break time. Everyone is out of the pool. The kids join JAKE, who apparently hasn't gotten into the pool yet, and Aunt Roberta at their sunbathing chairs. Aunt Roberta walks away to the concession stand.

NOAH

(Sits next to Jake and  
randomly says)

You know you stole grandma from us, right?  
She got sick, packed up, and left town to  
save you!!! I figured you must be pretty  
great if she devoted her last years to  
you. Then I met you. Boy, I was wrong.

NOAH then jumps out of the pool chair, ribs Jake (Jake reacts awkwardly) and starts running to his mom yelling:

Don't forget my hot fries!

JAKE sits stunned mouth agape. He eventually snaps back and says to himself,

Good talk, good talk... Thanks for that.

(Puts two thumbs up)

The music cuts back in.

Take me home, oh mother father  
Take me home, I hate the farm life  
Don't leave me out in the Wild West  
It's much worse than I've expressed

All the food is so delicious  
Can you believe I do the dishes?!  
And the internet is so slow  
Takes 6 minutes for a 5 minute show

Everything here is so scary  
Situations are so hairy  
Every day is such a fight  
20 times I nearly died

Cousin ANNIE is so nice  
Always giving good advice  
Really great at helping out  
Feeling helpless, wanna scream and shout

Take me home, oh mother father  
Take me home, I hate the farm life  
Don't leave me out in the mid west

You've always wanted me to have the best...

Music fades slightly. The camera pans to look directly at the parents on the IPAD. They both look sternly back at JAKE. Mother says very bluntly:

PARENTS

You'll be fine.

Music ends abruptly. The parents fade from the screen as they hang up the phone.

EXT. Roof outside the window.

Frank Blackbird has been listening all along outside the attic window on the roof. He starts to sing.

Song- Beatles - Hey Jude/Hey Jake

FRANK BLACKBIRD

Hey Jake, don't make it bad.  
Take a sad song and make it better..

UNCLE TERRY

(Interrupts)

Is that blackbird singing in the dead of  
night?!?!

ANNIE

It's Hey Jude Dad, Sheesh!

Singing resumes.

Fade Out.

SCENE- ON THE UP AND UP

INT. The Attic

It's morning in JAKE's bedroom. He hasn't woken up yet. ANNIE bursts into the room and starts to wrangle him up. He is lying in bed, under the covers, incapacitated. She props him up and throws a shirt, shorts, and socks in his face in succession for him to wear, toothbrush with toothpaste, and

combs his hair. He appears un-phased. He lies back down and turns his back to her. When he doesn't respond, she starts tugging at his leg as if she is going to pull him all the way downstairs.

ANNIE

Good Morning!!!!

JAKE

Hey, what's the big idea?!?! I'm not in the mood.

ANNIE

That's the problem. You haven't been in the mood since the moment you got here. Odds are, you weren't in the mood before you got here, too!

JAKE

That's not fair or true! I lead a very satisfying, cultured lifestyle back-East. People LOVE me there.

(Throws Clothes back at her  
and pulls cover back over  
himself)

ANNIE

(Doubting him)

Is that so?

Jake pauses and ponders.

JAKE

(Defeated)

No.

Annie sits down next to him.

ANNIE

I'm sorry. That has to hurt... I like you, Jake. I really do. And if we could start over again and spend time together, I



think we'd be great friends.

JAKE

You're just being nice. You don't mean that.

ANNIE

Yes I do!

JAKE

Why?

ANNIE

WHY?!?!?! Cause you're...

(Having trouble thinking of something)

Well, you're... And.. You... Well, Jake you're a whole lot of fun.

Jake looks at her as if she is crazy.

JAKE

No, I'm not.

ANNIE

Listen... I loved grandma soooo much. We were like soulmates. She raved about how smart, genuine, and open you could be. Anyone she loved that much is someone I love that much. We just haven't had the right opportunity to prove that. We need that opportunity! That's NOT going to happen if you sit in here cooped up like a hen all summer. You better lit a fire under your rear or you may go back to New York with only awful memories of your summer. It's July 1<sup>st</sup> today. Summer's half-gone already.

JAKE

Thank goodness...

Annie shoots him a scowl.

ANNIE

If you're not careful, you might ruin the best day of the year, 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

Jake appears to be opening up.

ANNIE

Give me 3 days to prove we can be best friends. If you don't feel any different by the time the last firework booms on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, I won't bother you for the rest of the summer.

Deal?

Annie holds out her hand to offer a handshake.

Jake thinks it over.

JAKE

Deal

They shake hands.

JAKE

So how do we begin?

ANNIE

You first must get dressed and go on a walk with me.

JAKE

A walk?! How EVERY friendship begins!!

(Sarcastically)

ANNIE

(Un-amused)

Get dressed...

Jake pulls the blankets down to reveal that he has been completely dressed the whole time. He's just been waiting for someone to beg him.

ANNIE

What the?

JAKE

I've been waiting for this conversation  
for 4 weeks.

ANNIE

Well then, there's hope for you now, isn't  
there?

Annie nods in approval. They walk out together.

CUT TO:

OUTSIDE THE HOUSE

Annie is pacing back and forth in front of Jake who is  
standing at attention as if they are at bootcamp. ANNIE'S  
dog is also sitting at attention alongside JAKE.

ANNIE

Now, to proceed further, you must undo  
everything you know about people and  
friendships. You must undo your  
preconceived notions about people AND  
animals. You must undo your gut reactions.  
You must undo what you've done. You must  
undo YOU... Got it?

Jake shakes his head "yes."

There will be two equal parts to your  
undoing. We will do equal parts of doing  
nothing with equal parts of doing  
everything. You must realize this is a two  
part undoing. You must do everything I say  
and not do everything I say not to do  
during the undoing. Is there anything you  
don't understand about doing the undoing?

Jake shakes his head "no."

CUT TO:

BIRD TREE/ WALKING AROUND

The next scene goes back and forth between "the doing" and

"the not-doing/undoing."

The Doing: Walking Around the Farm learning. No Audio.  
Just Music.

The Not-Doing: Sitting in front of the Bird Tree discussing  
life/philosophy. Audio/conversation from ANNIE and JAKE  
overlaps both scenes as the camera pans back and forth.

Arcade Fire- "Wake UP" intro verse builds in the  
background.

NOT-DOING

Annie has brought two lawn chairs for them to sit upon.  
Behind them, in the distance, sits the tree fort. She has  
aimed the chairs directly at Bird Tree which is full of  
trees squawking amongst each other.

CUT TO:

WALKING AROUND/ THE DOING

Annie and JAKE are walking along the creek bed looking at  
things. Jake looks bored and yet paranoid waiting for the  
next disaster. The dog is walking alongside.

CUT TO

BIRD TREE/ THE NOT DOING

She opens a chair for Jake and motions for him to sit in  
it. He does.

CUT TO:

WALKING AROUND/ THE DOING

Jake is walking around pointing at things along with Annie.  
She points out salamanders, crawdads, and tadpoles all  
within a small pool by the creek.

CUT TO:

BIRD TREE

She takes the seat next to him and she looks at the tree.  
Jake fidgets uncomfortably. He doesn't know what to do.  
ANNIE's dog sits patiently beside the chairs.

CUT TO:

WALKING AROUND/ THE DOING

They are walking across the dam at the pond. There is a part that looks narrow. Annie walks across like a balance beam successfully. Jake hesitates.

CUT TO:

BIRD TREE

They are sitting on their lawn chairs looking at the birds who are squawking louder and louder.

JAKE

(Annoyed by the birds)

So how does the undoing begin?

Annie ignores his question. The birds get louder.

CUT TO:

WALKING AROUND/ THE DOING

Jake is about to give up. He doesn't want to fall in the pond. He starts to walk back.

CUT TO:

BIRD TREE

Jake is getting furious with Annie for not acknowledging his question and even more mad with the birds for squawking so loud. Annie continues to stare blankly forward, entranced by the birds. She smiles amused by something in the tree.

Jake has grown red-hot and is about to yell, "Shut up" to the birds like he has before but Annie cuts him off. She lightly puts her hand on his. He is alarmed by this and stops right as his mouth is forming the words "Shut up." The birds continue to squawk.

CUT TO:

WALKING AROUND/ THE DOING

Jake is walking back home. Annie races back and grabs his hand. She brings him back to the dam and shows him a tutorial. She goes forward again like it's a balance beam. He observes.

CUT TO:

BIRD TREE:

Annie changes the subject.

ANNIE

Have you ever watched someone or something so intently you felt you knew what they were thinking?

JAKE

Impossible! Psychic telepathy is not real. Science debunks it every time... That and any other supernatural phenomena.

ANNIE

That's not what I mean... Ok, Speaking your language here... Do you want me to scientifically prove it?

JAKE

Be my guest...

WALKING AROUND/ THE DOING

JAKE examines the walking beam/dam.

CLOSE UP on his face.

Jake examines his option. He blindly commits, goes forward and crosses the beam successfully.

BIRD TREE

Annie looks around.

ANNIE'S POV

She searches and lands on the horses. They have been eating hay. One of them is licking his lips.

CUT TO:

ANNIE

OK. You see our two horses over there? I

can tell she is going to go get a drink of water.

JAKE

Hahahahahahaha! Good luck!

CUT TO:

WALKING AROUND/ THE DOING

Shows Jake and Annie climbing a tree. Jake is slow at first. Annie is showing him how.

CUT TO:

BIRD TREE

The horse doesn't move for 10 seconds.

JAKE

Horse whisperer?!?! My behind!! That horse isn't thirsty! HAHAHA!"

CUT TO:

WALKING AROUND/ THE DOING

Shows Jake and Annie riding bikes around the farm. Annie is standing on her seat like a boss. Jake is having fun riding normally in a path through the trees.

CUT TO:

BIRD TREE

JAKE

HAHAHA!

The horse starts walking to the trough and you can hear it gulp down lots of water exaggeratedly. It looks up from the

trough and mean-mugs JAKE.

CUT TO:

WALKING AROUND/ THE DOING

Jake and Annie are still riding bikes. Jake tries to stand on his bike seat and the bike swerves and begins to roll down a hill. Annie jumps down on her seat and chases after him. He is standing on the seat going extremely too fast. He approaches the creek bed and grabs ahold of the first tree limb he can. He swings around top of the tree limb like an Olympic gymnast. Annie times it perfectly and catches him on her bike as he falls down. He looks at her with relief and the beginning of some trust.

CUT TO:

BIRD TREE

Jake is stunned.

JAKE

How'd you??? Wait, that was just coincidence. You can't read minds.

ANNIE

No, I can't. But, I can read body language. And, when a horse licks its lips like this...

(Mimics the horse)

...it's time for a drink.

CUT TO:

WALKING AROUND/ THE DOING

Shows Annie driving a motorcycle. Jake is in a sidecar equipped with full football pads, a mattress wrapped around him, giant helmet. He looks pale as a ghost. His knuckles are white as he grips the sides in fear. ANNIE's dog is sitting in his lap with a doggie football helmet on.

CUT TO:

BIRD TREE



JAKE

Who cares!? What's the point?

ANNIE

Everything is the point. Why are you putting up such a fight to realize I'm right?!?! I know you're brilliant, but you don't know it all. You'd appear much smarter if you didn't need to combat everything that my brother, my mother, or I say. These animals know a lot more than you out here on this farm, but you're ego hasn't let you see that yet.

You learn so easily from a book, but you are oblivious to the lessons right in front of you. You put up such a fight all the time. It puts out an invitation to everyone around you to fight right back. Everyone's main goal becomes to prove you wrong.

For once, JAKE is just listening. He is slowly nodding as her words register as the truth.

CUT TO:

WALKING AROUND/ THE DOING

Jake is leading one of the horses around as Annie rides another. He is gaining courage through her encouragement.

CUT TO:

BIRD TREE

ANNIE

You are a city bird lost in the country wind. You're fighting the breeze trying to cut your own path through the sky.

Annie points up high in the sky at a small bird that is

frantically trying to fight the wind.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

If you only relaxed and work with the gusts, you'd realize something you've been missing- the breeze will take you where you want to go.

Annie points back in the sky at a hawk that is soaring high in the sky effortlessly. It is not flapping its wings. It is just soaring gracefully. She then puts her arms out mimicking the hawk soaring.

CUT TO:

WALKING AROUND/ THE DOING

Jake is hanging upside down from a tree alongside Annie like a pair of opossums. The dog is sitting below watching curiously.

CUT TO:

BIRD TREE

ANNIE (CONT'D)

You just need to trust it. Work with it not against the natural flow. Let it guide you to your destination.

CUT TO:

WALKING AROUND/ THE DOING

Jake pushes his limits. He tries to hang from the tree with just one foot and falls. From the ground, he looks up at Annie who is still hanging upside down. He smiles and puts his hands at his sides with a sly smile. He is at least failing gracefully. Annie smiles slightly.

BIRD TREE

ANNIE (CONT'D)

When you figure out where you want to go, you must realize every path eventually take you there. Cough, cough George Harrison.

Things sometimes become a lot easier when

*you stop trying so hard.*

(When Annie says, "stop trying so hard, Jake visuals a time at Central Park from the start of the movie. His grandma is mouthing the same words as Annie says them.)

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Momma always said she found Dad, your Uncle, right after she gave up looking. Some things will only come to you when you stop trying.

CUT TO:

WALKING AROUND/ THE DOING

He is driving the motorcycle. Annie is in the sidecar smiling ear to ear with the oversized helmet. Dog is in the car with her.

CUT TO:

BIRD TREE

Jake is listening, soaking up everything Annie is saying.

ANNIE

And stop focusing so much inward and start paying attention to the wonderful world around you. You could learn so much!

CUT TO:

WALKING AROUND/ THE DOING

Jake is riding a horse by himself. Annie is doing handstands on the horse next to him.

CUT TO:

BIRD TREE

Intro Arcade Fire- Wake up increases in volume.

ANNIE

In fact, this is how we are going to start

your friendship. We are going to sit on these chairs watching that tree that's full of birds. We are going to watch that tree until you see what I see.

JAKE

What? No way! This is impossible. You're on another level! You speak like a guru and you have some mystic animal voodoo.

ANNIE

Yes way.

JAKE

For how long?

ANNIE

As long as it takes. Grandma planned this trip for a moment like this. If anything, do it for her.

Jake mulls it over. He feels he has no other option.

JAKE

(reluctantly)

O-K.

CUT TO:

WALKING AROUND/ THE DOING

Jake and Annie are fishing inside a row boat. She is showing him to tie a line and bait a hook. He is squeamish.

CUT TO:

BIRD TREE

Frank Blackbird joins the stage in the middle of the BIRD TREE. He is welcomed by a raucous crowd.

Annie is seeing this. Jake is not.

FRANK BLACKBIRD

Thank you! Thank you LadyBirds and Gents!

I just flew in from New York and boy are my arms tired!

The crowd is silent for a second as they digest the joke and finally erupt in laughter.

FRANK BLACKBIRD (CONT'D)

Wow. I thought for a second the cat literally had your tongue.

Crowd Erupts again. Annie sits amused. Jake looks onward oblivious.

FRANK BLACKBIRD (CONT'D)

They sit for hours. Jake is shown in various poses and shadows throughout the day looking at the tree.

CUT TO:

WALKING AROUND/ THE DOING

Jake is very impatient with fishing.

CUT TO:

BIRD TREE

Jake is shown in more poses staring at the tree like it's a Magic Eye.

FRANK BLACKBIRD (CONT'D)

You know, I'm always asked "How do you stay so young travelling like this?" Easy. You see it's an hour ahead of time further west of here in Colorado. And I make sure every show I book is further west than the previous one. And if you notice on the stage and everywhere I go, I only go west, north, or south, never east.

He takes one baby step west, looks at his watch.

Crowd laughter.

FRANK BLACKBIRD

I'm cheating the system baby!

Frank Blackbird drops his mic while walking west. He stops and looks at it nervously because he doesn't want to take a step east. He reaches his foot out and pulls the microphone back to himself.

The birds are eating it up. Annie is too.

ANNIE

(To Jake)

You're not getting any of this?

She motions to the birds in the tree.

Jake looks at her like a cocoo bird.

FRANK BLACKBIRD:

Plus, it doesn't hurt that I'll be in Hawaii next weekend.

(Drum fill)

He does a mock hula dance.

More bird laughter.

CUT TO:

WALKING AROUND/ THE DOING

Jake is bored to tears. He can't stand the boredom of waiting for a fish to bite.

CUT TO:

BIRD TREE

FRANK BLACKBIRD

Anyways, speaking of Hawaii, my girlfriend can't stand it when I'm there. My girlfriend... My girlfriend. She never wants to hear about an ex girlfriend. To be honest she doesn't want to hear about another bird... Ever. Never. Can't stand

it... I was talking with her the other day.  
I said, "You know, one of my ex-  
girlfriends sounds like an owl." She said,  
"Who?!?!?!"

Frank Blackbird looks smugly onward.

Crowd is crying.

Annie is smiling happily watching the birds.

Jake still can't see any of it. He is losing all attention.  
He's about to fall asleep.

CUT TO:

WALKING AROUND/ THE DOING

He is falling asleep with the fishing pole in his hand.

CUT TO:

BIRD TREE

Jake is shown in more poses staring at the  
tree. He nods off to sleep. He starts to  
dream about a bird comedian.

Jake's Dreams POV

FRANK BLACKBIRD

So, it's the fourth of July this week. My  
suggestion? Don't hang with the ducks...  
bunch of fire-quackers.

(Drum-fill)

Laughter from birds.

CUT TO:

WALKING AROUND/ THE DOING

Jake has a bite. He starts to reel in a fish.

CUT TO:

BIRD TREE

FRANK BLACKBIRD (CONT'D)

Get too close to them and you'll be a big  
*BALD* eagle.

Laughter from birds.

Jake doesn't move from his fixed position. He is finally starting to see what Annie was talking about. He doesn't want to mess it up. He stays there paralyzed.

CUT TO:

WALKING AROUND/ THE DOING

Jake holds up a tiny blue gill and he looks so proud. You can see a camera flash on his face as he beams with pride.

CUT TO:

BIRD TREE

FRANK BLACKBIRD (CONT'D)

You'll get sick of being called a bald eagle real quick. And if you're a sick eagle, you may end up in jail. Lord knows, our commander-in-chief can't have any ***ILL-Eagles*** out on our streets.

Frank Blackbird turns and stares blankly into Jake's eyes with a crooked smile.

GRANDMA VO

Sometimes the answer you've been looking for is staring you right in the face.

Arcade Fire- Wake Up Chorus

Laughter. Jake laughs at the joke. Annie laughed at the same time. He wakes from his stupor and they give each other a stare. She's excited, he's bewildered.

CUT TO:

WALKING AROUND/ THE DOING

Jake releases the fish back to the water and waves good bye. It waves back. He does a double-check.



CUT TO:

BIRD TREE

JAKE

Hey, wait, you didn't just see what I just saw, did you?

ANNIE

I'm pretty sure I diiiid.  
You're getting it!!!

Jakes smiles hugely at her but his eyes look amusedly worried. She gives him a hug and returns to watching the birds.

JAKE

(happy, To himself)

I'm losing it.

Jake looks around and the whole farm is illuminated in Annie's beautiful world with animals talking, the wind playing a symphony through the wheat, frogs croaking a song, accompanied by a wind chime.

WALKING AROUND/ THE DOING

JAKE is now driving the motorcycle with only a helmet. He has lost all of the extra safety wear. Annie is in the side car. A bald eagle swoops down and flies closely above them. It is majestic.

Arcade Fire- Wake-Up chorus is loud as ever.

ANNIE points up at the eagle so JAKE can notice it. He can't believe his eyes. He is elated. He takes one hand off the steering wheel and holds it proudly in the air. His mouth is open as if he is singing the music, too. Annie quickly grabs the steering wheel were his hand was.

BIRD TREE

Jake is taking it all in. He continues to look around and see the farm in a different light

JAKE

(Dazed)

I think we're going to be great friends.  
Annie is so content with herself and happy for him.  
The whole farm and sky is abuzz with animals, etc.

FRANK BLACKBIRD

You've been great. One last one before I go. You know they say, "Birds of a feather flock together?" Take me leaving as a sign of not liking you.

Laughter.

CROWD MEMBER

You're an arctic loon!

FRANK BLACKBIRD (CONT'D)

Ohh, a pun, eh? Well, Tou-can play that game. Bye folks!

He throws a big kiss to the crowd and takes flight straight upward from the stage. Applause erupts. You see him fly westward.

The whole tree coalesces into a beautiful swarm of images, morphing and changing: bird, JAKE's crush, skyscraper, train, grandma.) They eventually disperse.

JAKE

How have I never seen this before?! I want to see more! I want to see it all! Let's explore!

ANNIE

Hold on, Jake. One step at a time. You still have a lot to learn.

JAKE

First thing's first. Teach me how to be  
friend with Noah.

ANNIE

That's easy! Come with me!

They run off together.

Music fades

THE CAVE II

Beck- Blackbird Chain

They're at the cave giving it a second try.

Jake picks up an arrowhead and holds it tight.

ANNIE

You can do it Jake!

Jake hesitates, walks into the cave calmly, coolly. He sees light entering the cave in the far corner. He seeks it out. There is a small hole in the cave that has been unexplored. He reaches into it. A pile of rocks crash down from it exposing an even bigger hole.

Outside of the cave, Annie hears the crash and gets very nervous.

JAKE walks back out without any sign of panic.

JAKE

That was easy! There's nothing in there.  
I mean it, too. Absolutely nothing. I was  
afraid of nothing! I am afraid of nothing.  
(saying it differently with enthusiasm  
each time). I am afraid of NOTHING.  
I AM AFRAID OF NOTHING!

ANNIE

Told you you've been fighting NOTHING for  
NO reason.  
Now that you've realized that, let's do  
some more!

CUT TO POND

JAKE IS WADING IN THE POND

The water is up to his chest. His arms are flanked out as to not touch the water but they eventually submerge.

JAKE

This is disgusting! I have moss stuck  
between my toes!

ANNIE

You better hope that is moss!

JAKE

Huh? What!?

Jake emerges from the pond with a small snake in his hands

JAKE

Look who I found! Little feller wanted to swim with me.

He nuzzles up to the tiny snake in his hand.

ANNIE

Ummm.. Jake, that's a water moccasin. They're one of the deadliest around.

(Is scared)

JAKE

What?!?!?

Jake drops the snake and runs off screaming.

Annie catches up Jake and says

ANNIE

I was just kidding.

JAKE

Why you little!

(grabs her and gives playful noogies)

She escapes and runs into the barn. JAKE chases after.

CUT TO BARN

JAKE IS TRYING TO TOPPLE HIS FEAR IN THE BARN

Jake walks up to the top bale and is visibly shaking.

JAKE

Have I ever told you I'm afraid of heights?

The horses are nervously watching Jake atop the bales.

ANNIE

Only like a million times. Besides, you were afraid of everything when you got here. We're removing one fear at a time.

With rope in hand, Jake looks out and back a million times. He licks his finger to test the wind. He thinks again.

JAKE

Well, this is one fear that needs more time.

ANNIE

Shucks. Oh well. It's not like we're in a hurry. 4<sup>th</sup> of July is only A DAY away.. We'll take it at your pace. Whenever you're ready.

HORSES

Phewww

Jake and Annie wrestle each other again as they leave the barn. Noah is shown viewing their new found relationship from the kitchen window. He doesn't know how to feel about them having fun together.

CUT TO JAKE'S BEDROOM/THE ATTIC

JAKE'S BEDROOM/THE ATTIC

Jake sits alone on his bed. His Aunt is outside his bedroom door. She has no idea that he has started to enjoy himself and his time there. She is working up a speech and the energy to change his summer around. Walks in passionately.

AUNT

Hey Jake

JAKE

Hi

AUNT

The fourth of July party is tonight and we'd really love it if you'd join us by the pond for some food, music, fireworks, and smore's. It'd be really fun. I know you...

JAKE

Sounds great!

(un-phased)

AUNT

(Didn't even hear his response)

C'mon Jake, You can't sit inside all summer.

JAKE

I said yes.

AUNT

Oh. Yes. You did in fact. Ok, then. See you there.

She walks out very pleased with herself as if that 20 second conversation changed his summer.

CUT TO 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY FIRE RING

4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY

Everyone (Aunt, Uncle, Annie, Noah, the two neighbor Beverley boys and their parents) are sitting around a large bon fire by the pond. Stacks of supplies surround them (fireworks, three tents, smore's, hot dogs, sleeping bags, etc.) Uncle and Mr. Beverley are playing guitar and banjo together. The boys are roasting hot dogs.

They are playing a slower version of a Split Lip Rayfield song.

Annie peaks up from her seat by the fire and notices Jake walking to them from the house. She bolts from her seat to go greet him. Noah notices and again doesn't know if he is jealous, happy, or somewhere in between. He grabs fireworks, the two cousins, and they go by the water.

Annie greets Jake and starts walking back to everyone with him.

ANNIE

Are you ready for this?

JAKE

I'm pretty sure I'm ready to accidentally blow myself up with a firework, if that's what you mean.

ANNIE

You'll be fine. Just remember, go with the flow, and don't fight the wind, City Bird. This will be a monumental night!

She smiles at him endearingly.

JAKE

I equally love and despise your optimism.

As they walk up, the boys greet them.



NOAH

Well, look who it is, the daredevil  
himself, Evil Knieval.

Neighbors snicker at the joke

AUNT

Jake!

Jake and Annie sit down together.

The BEVERLEY BROTHERS and NOAH return to the bon fire.

NEIGHBOR MOM

(To Aunt)

What's that all about?

NOAH

I'll tell ya. Jake's afraid of everything,  
including his own shadow.

JAKE

I'll tell ya what I'm afraid of! Country  
bumpkins that..

(Getting visibly agitated)

Annie puts her hand on his arm like in the previous scene.  
This cuts him off.

ANNIE

Wow guys! Look at those birds flying in  
the breeze. They aren't even flapping a  
wing, just gliding wherever the wind takes  
them.

(Nudges Jake)

Jake takes the hint.

TY BEVERLEY

(To John)

It's dark out. How is she seeing any birds?

(Not the most intelligible question.)

JAKE (CONT'D)

I mean the only thing I'm afraid of is leaving here without making friends with all of you.

AUNT AND NEIGHBOR MOM

Ahhhh, how sweet!

Neighbor boys look confused. They don't know how to react. They almost look nervous. But they are looking at Jake differently as if they are giving him a second chance.

Annie smiles ear to ear.

NOAH

(Doesn't know how to react to Jake's sudden change)

Jake, ummm..

(Looks around, finds a charred hot dog, looks at it sinisterly, and picks it up)

Here, take a hot dog.

(Shoves a dog into Jake's hand before Jake can see how burnt it is.)

JAKE

Yeah, that'd be great. Thanks.

Looks at the hot dog that is charred black. He would have

usually returned it, but this time he chokes it down in two big gulps. He looks as if he really enjoyed it, surprisingly.

Annie looks at him admirably.

JAKE

May I have another?

(To Aunt)

AUNT

Have as many as you'd like!

Jake slams down two more hot dogs.

AUNT (CONT'D)

You've had an amazing appetite Jake. I think you've grown three inches in the time you've been here!

JAKE

Your cooking is so great. I'm lucky to be in a growth spurt. Anyone who spends time here would surely gain weight with how delicious your food is!

AUNT AND MRS. BEVERLEY

(In Unison)

Awww!

Noah is confused and aggravated. He starts ribbing JAKE.

NOAH

I bet this little chicken gets sqiiimish with some high-intensity fireworks, eh?

JAKE does a quick kung fu move with his hands and ends up giving Noah the freshest handshake ever.

Noah stumbles back to his chair befuddled. The neighbors notice and give each other a surprised look. They look like two puppies who have found a new alpha.

Mrs. Beverley starts handing out flashlights with colored plastic-wrap rubber-banded around the light to filter the colors. Each flashlight has a different color that emits far into the sky.

NEIGHBOR MOM

Here you go kiddos. Each of you has your own special colored flashlight. Go nuts!

The kids all start acting like they are sword fighting with lights sabers.

AUNT

Who wants smore's?

EVERYONE BUT JAKE

Me!!!!

JAKE

I wish! Those first three hot dogs filled me up. I couldn't think of even trying to wolf down another.

ANNIE

No silly. Do want SMORES?

JAKE

And I said, "No more, thanks." Is everything alright? You usually talk pretty funny, but you sound even weirder right now.

ANNIE

No! Smore's!

(Shoves one in his mouth)

A look of pure joy spreads across his face.

JAKE

Wooooow...

(With mouth full)

UNCLE

Who wants fireworks?

EVERYONE

Meeee!!!

UNCLE

Alright, but first we must light our Chinese lanterns. I've positioned 30 of them around the pond. We're splitting into 3 groups of 2. Each group must light 10 lanterns and return to the bonfire. Whichever team returns first wins. Beverley Brothers VS. ANNIE and JAKE VS. Noah and myself... And Go!

The 3 groups sprint off. The Chinese lanterns are beautiful in flight. It takes great teamwork to light the lanterns successfully. Noah is confident he and his dad have won. He is running back boastfully. Once he gets back to the bonfire, he sees Annie and Jake resting comfortably enjoying the beauty in the sky. Again, he's confused.

Jake's uncle is running up behind them.

UNCLE

Wow! Well looky here! Little Miss Annie and Jake the Ringer. Congratulations you two!

In the distance, the two Beverley brothers are struggling. Their Chinese lantern takes flight and immediately turns into a huge fireball that fizzles back into the pond. They are fighting amongst each other blaming one another for the mishap.

Next, the kids and the Uncle all go onto the dock together and start lighting off fireworks. The moms and the Mr. Beverley watch from lawn chairs at the edge of the pond by the fire. A large group of birds are watching from the tree. Each kid gets a turn to light off a firework. The launch pad is at the end of the dock. The kids take turns lighting off mortars on the dock. Each kid sprints down the dock individually after igniting a firework. They ignite it

and run as if their life depended on it. You can see the pride in their eyes as they re-join the group and look back at the outcome of the firework exploding in the sky.

After Jake lights of a huge firework, Noah whispers to Annie.

NOAH

(Whispers)

I guess he's alright. Don't tell him I said that. He still has to prove himself!

UNCLE

(to the entire group)

Alright. We are officially out of dock fireworks. All we have left is the finale. Fun is over.

EVERYONE ELSE

Boooooo!!!!

AUNT

Not quite! You still have these colored flashlights to play with.

Everyone has rejoined them at the fire pit. The Aunt passes them back out to the group. Fireworks are still going off in the distance.

NEIGHBOR BOY

What are we supposed to do with these?!?!?!?

Jake looks up at the sky. It looks like his IPAD star app.

JAKE

I've got an idea.

ANNIE

Yes!!!

Everyone sits down. The fireworks fade. Annie puts a

handful of sand on the fire to make the flame very small. The sand gives it a beautiful blue hue. It surrounding grow very dark. The stars become even more illuminated.

Jake grabs ANNIE's blue flashlight to coincide with his red flashlight. Jake points at two constellations. The red/blue lights reach far into the night sky illuminating a constellation.

JAKE

You see that constellation? That's Cassiopeia. We see her a lot this time of year. She's the queen of the nighttime sky. She's a mythical Greek queen who boasted about her beauty.

All of a sudden, a queen is visible out of the ordinary "W" constellation. Everyone "ooohs" and "ahhhs".

JAKE

(points to another constellation)

And here. This is Orion, the great hunter. He's another Greek fella. He was the absolute best hunter and man's man. And he knew it, too.

The constellation comes to life, winks, and shoots an arrow.

Everyone "ooohs" and "ahhhs" again.

NEIGHBOR BOYS

More! More!

Noah shoots a look at them. He's surprised by their sudden interest in Jake.

JAKE

(He points all along the Milky Way)

And along here... This is the Milky Way. Believe it or not this is the galaxy we belong to. The Earth, the Sun, the moon, Mars, Jupiter, our whole solar system is a

part of this and a lot more.

EVERYONE

Wooooow..

JAKE

That's Sirius. It's the center of it all. Everything we know of in the sky revolves around this one point. Sailor's used it to navigate the nighttime seas... That's Leo the lion, and that's...

The camera pans into space and starts to pivot to different viewpoints to see the universe a different way with marvelous constellation formations: bird, firework, farm, etc.

JAKE

From different perspectives in the universe, the nighttime sky can look completely different. Our entire Milky Way Galaxy could look like a tiny bleep from another galaxy Far, Far Away.

(Smiles)

JAKE CONT'D

We could be part of someone else's constellation Far, Far Away. Who knows, maybe aliens are looking at a constellation involving the Milky Way.

ANNIE

I hope they call it the City Bird!

(Smiles)

JAKE CONT'D

A lot of people don't realize it but the sky is constantly changing.. Slowly these stars, constellations, galaxies... they're all caught in this vast expansion. Some of them are moving towards us, some away. Typically, the stars with a red hue are moving away from us. The bluer ones are



moving toward us. But, that's not always true. Some colors are explained by how hot the star is.

(His voice slowly fades)

The camera continues to pan showing another bird constellation, zooming into the eye of the bird which so happens to be the Milky Way, our solar system, and eventually Earth. It keeps zooming until it goes back to the bird tree. It is nighttime and they are doing an improv night. Poets are taking the stage. Birds are snapping their feathers in approval of the act that is exiting the stage.

The next group of performers has taken the stage. They are doing a parody of West Side Story's Cool. A bird takes center stage in a circle of people and sings:

Bird, Bird, crazy bird,  
Get cool, bird!  
Got a flock of mixed breed sea-doves,  
Keep coolly cool, bird!  
Don't get hot,  
'Cause man, you got  
Some high times ahead.  
Take it slow and Daddy-O,  
You can fly it up and die in nest!

Bird, Bird, crazy bird!  
Stay loose, bird!  
Breeze it, buzzard, easy love bird.  
Turn off the juice, bird!  
Go man, go,  
But not like a yo-yo schoolbird.  
Just play it cool, bird,  
Real cool

Random Shouts: "Fly!" "Squawk!" "Chirp" "Kaw!" "Migrate!"

An extended version would show the full dance with the birds in the tree.

The camera pans back to the campfire group. Jake's voice fade back in.

JAKE

And those were the first two cub-years of  
Leo the Lion....

Silence is deafening for two second. Everyone is sitting  
listening to him mouth agape.

JAKE

Sorry, Did I say something wrong?

NEIGHBOR 1

Noooooo!

NEIGHBOR 2

That. Was.

NOAH

Awesome.

(Dejectedly)

All three shake their head like a dog. The rattle their  
heads back to reality.

NOAH

(Motions to Annie to come  
over)

Hey Jake, come over here.

The neighbors stand up, too.

NOAH

Stay here guys. We'll all meet up at the  
barn in 5. I want to show Jake something.

Jake, Annie, Noah, and their dog grab all the flashlights  
and go toward the hill.

CUT TO HILLSIDE

## HILLSIDE SCENE

The three kids and the dog are hillside. Each of them are staggered on the hill vertically. The dog is on the lowest part of the hill. Annie is above the dog, Noah, and then Jake. The dog has a flashlight tied into his collar. The kids are about to embark on a race going left to right that will resemble sheet music which coincides with the music that is being played. The dog resembles the drum beat. Each color flashlight represents a different instrument or melody. The flashlights provide the only illumination on the hill.

NOAH

OUR ANNUAL RACE! Jake, we've done this 4 years straight now. This will be the 5<sup>th</sup>. I won 2 years. Annie won 2 years. We plan on doing it every year of our lives. You can be a part of it this one year if you're not too chicken. The farmstead provides a perfect bowl formation. You must run along the entire bowl until the barn. The first person to grab the wick and light the firework, finale at the top of the barn wins. Choose your path wisely!! See you on the other side... if you think you can make it... On your marks,

JAKE

Hold up.

NOAH

Get set.

JAKE

Where do I go? It goes straight down from here.

ANNIE

(Yelling, overwhelmed with joy)

Go where the path takes you! Wherever you want to go, any path will take you there.

NOAH

Go!!!!

Animal Collective's Brother Sport///Radiohead Idiotech plays. The flashlights coincide with the music. Each flashlight represents an instrument or melody in the song. The dog is the drum beat. Fireworks illuminate the screen at climaxes/crescendos. The 3 kids endure a close race with highs lows, interchanging positions on the hillside, lead-changes, etc. NOAH and ANNIE lead the race until JAKE uses his short cut through the cave and out the new opening he discovered (both NOAH and ANNIE are amazed). In Jake's flashlight (POV), you can see him jump over a snake, a badger, and overcome other scary objects. He is using tree limbs to swing across obstacles, jump across creeks and overcoming every fear during his race. The kids hurriedly climb the hay bales on the outside of the barn and enter the upper part. Jake maintains first place as the neighbors join at the barn just in time to see the finale. Jake reaches the top of the hay bales inside the barn, and without thinking, lights the firework (finale), jumps onto the rope swing, does a double-ganer, and lands in the hay to win the race. Fireworks boom out from the side of the barn as Jake lands and sprays dust into the air like a firework. It corresponds perfectly with the music. The neighbors and cousins race to him congratulating Jake.

NEIGHBOR 1

WOW. You are truly a daredevil!

NEIGHBOR 2

That was awesome! You're awesome!

NOAH

Hey, Hey, Hey. Out of my way.

(Pushing the neighbors aside)

NOAH (CONT'D)

Lady and gentlemen, please join me in

welcoming our newest and possibly last member of the greatest tree-house/fort group known to this planet. Jake, please join our crew.

NOAH holds out his hand.

JAKE reaches out and shakes it.

They all cheer. Jake looks at Annie and smiles.

FADE OUT TO FIREWORKS IN THE SKY.

#### BLENDING IN

The next scene shows a montage of the kids enjoying their new born friendship. They are playing in the tree house, riding 4 wheelers, exploring, fishing, riding animals, etc. It concludes with the family saying goodbye at the train station.

The music fades

NOAH

Seriously, I am going to miss you. You are one cool dude.

Noah acts like he is going to rib Jake.

Jake flexes.

NOAH

Ahhhh! Got you!

He holds out a hand to shake.

Jake grabs the hands and pulls Noah in for a hug.

ANNIE

I wish you lived with us! I miss you already...

(Hugs Jake)

AUNT ROBERTA

Maybe he doesn't live here, but perhaps he could visit sooner than last time.

(Hugs Jake)

AUNT ROBERTA

I'm going to miss someone watching me from the attic.

(Gives him a noogie)

UNCLE

Yeah! Like next year! I could use some extra hands on the farm. You're getting to that age. I'd pay you mighty handsomely.

(Hugs Jake)

ANNIE

Serious?!

(Looks at her dad)

UNCLE

We'll have to check with Jake's parents, but I think it's a great idea.

(Aunt is staring at him unbelievably because they haven't discussed it yet)

ANNIE

Did you hear that?! We'll see you in 9 months!!!

Jake, Annie, and Noah dance around.

Roberta continues to stare at Uncle in disbelief.

ROBERTA

You get to explain this to my sister.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

TRAIN RIDE

Jake is on the train ride home feeling great. He's happy, grinning, and confident. He sees a girl across from him, alone, looking sad and angry. She had been looking outside. Suddenly, she has a change in behavior. She is looking around as if to see if anyone noticed the same thing she did outside her window. He walks over and sits with her.

JAKE

Are you alright?

(As if she might be crazy)

RANDO

Yeah, why?

JAKE: (Speaking fast) "Cause you were just over here flailing your arms like one of those super funny flaily-armed guys you see outside of the car salesman office." He flails his arms imitating one. "Oh, well. That'd be cool if you were one. Anyways, what ARE you doing?"

RANDO

Nothing.

JAKE

Nothing on a train? Not even going anywhere hmm.. Where are you from?

RANDO

Manhattan

JAKE: "Manhattan, NY?!?! Beautiful!"

RANDO

(Annoyed)

Noooo. Manhattan, Kansas

JAKE

Woooow. The Little Apple, not the Big one. My mistake. Are you going to Manhattan, NY?

JAKE

I don't know. I'm going to my Aunt and Uncle's high rise. They live in New York City.

JAKE

Awesome. We'll I'm from New York, too! You're going to love it!

JAKE

No, I won't.

JAKE

Oh yes you will. Trust me. There's a lot to see out there. I was just like you. My parents drug me along to Kansas this Spring. I'm just going back home, now. I dreaded the thought of it for the first 2 months. But now, I'm seeing things in a new light.... Speaking of... Do you see that outside?" Jake looks past Rando through the window pointing at something.

Music starts. *It's a Family Affair* by Sly Stone plays, but the lyrics are "It's a Family of Bears".

You can see two adult bears with a baby cub on the hill. The parents are moving in rhythm with the music. The mom sings the lyrics.

RANDO

What? What is it? What do you see?

JAKE

Don't you see or hear it? It's a family of bears.

RANDO:

Whoopie...



Music fades as the bears fade into the distance, too.

JAKE

It's OK. I didn't see or hear it for a long time either.

RANDO

What are you talking about?

RANDO: Anyways, New York, you are going to love it." He starts backing out of the aisle to return to his spot on the train. "Just remember, "Be open to everything." His grandma's voice is synced with it along with another (maybe the rando's grandma.)

Rando looks down baffled by what she just heard.

She looks back for Jake. She hollers, "Hey I never got your name..." but Jake is gone down the aisle already.

He slumps back into his seat. He watches kung fu videos before he starts to sleep for the rest of the morning. He's humming "It's a Family Affair."

FADE OUT

GREETING PARENTS

Jake is greeted warmly by his parents at the train stop.

They embrace.

DAD

It looks like you grew 5 inches!!!

MOM

You look like a completely different person!

(Grabs him by the shoulders and shakes him.)

MOM CONT'D

(Jokingly)

Who are you? Who has my son and what have you done to him?

JAKE

Mooooom. I love you two. I missed you  
dearly.

He hugs his parents again. While they are hugging them they  
look at each other strangely because of his recent act of  
kindness.

They start walking toward the car.

MOM

Well, maybe we need to send you to  
mysterious, foreign lands more often!

FADE OUT

FADE IN

BACK AT SCHOOL

Jake is early to school. He is sitting in his chair as the  
rest of the class filters in. The bell rings. The  
bully/popular kid and his sidekick walk in.

BULLY #1

Well, well, well. Look what the cat  
dragged in. Or maybe it was a mountain  
lion! Roar!

The class erupts.

BULLY #1 (CONT'D)

Oh, I guess were all lucky that he wasn't  
kidnapped by some yokels down in Kans-as.  
What? Did they not like you either?  
Wouldn't kidnap you?

(Mocking JAKE's voice)

You know that's not the proper protocol  
for kidnapping.

Class erupts again.

The classroom is getting loud and crazy. Jake's anxiety  
builds.

BULLY #2 SIDEKICK

Wait everyone! Prepare yourself for a 2-hour lecture on Jake's summer trip.

Class erupts even more. Jennifer is sitting quietly in the corner feeling sorry for Jake. Jake makes eye contact and it makes him feel sorry for himself. His rage starts to boil over. Then, Annie comes to mind.

ANNIE

(In Jake's head)

Don't fight it. Go with the breeze, City Bird.

Jake stands up next to his bully. All of a sudden, the bully is shorter than Jake looking up at him. His growth spurt evened things out a little.

JAKE

You know what? I actually would like to give a 2 hour speech about some of the greatest people in the world that I met this summer. I have friends for life. They taught me a lot. They taught me that although people like you two may be rough around the edges, but on the inside, you want what everyone else does: friendship. They taught me to not fight guys like you. They taught me to go with the flow. And I figured out something else, too. I figured out that your brash nature isn't anything but a façade to protect your sweet interior. Even though I left my best friends in Kansas, there's probably someone inside you that is my best friend, too. In the meantime, when you are trying to tease me, I will feel sad for you and the sheltered being you hide. I will not resist. I will go with the flow. I will be your friend until you realize that I am your friend.

Jake holds out his hand to shake.

The two bullies are stunned.

BULLY #1

Wow. You've really changed. I can see that we sent out some batter and they baked it up into something real nice... But you're still a cupcake!!!

Bully #1 tries to rib Jake.

Jake does another Karate move and bats the bullies hand around a million times until he has his hand in his, shaking up and down. Jake is squeezing tight. The bully is fidgeting in pain.

The teacher walks in to see the interaction. She doesn't stop anything.

JAKE

Should we try this again??? I want to be your friend.

BULLY #1

Yes, I want to be your friend, too!

Jake lets go of his hand. It is throbbing.

Bully #2 saw what just happened and puts his hand out quickly for a handshake with Jake.

BULLY #2

Friends, friends, yes, that's just what I wanted all the time..

BULLY #1

(Defeated and muttering in the background)

I am a shell of who I want to be...

The class is cheering. Jennifer looks at Jake and blushes.

Jake looks down at his notebook and he has drawn a city bird.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

SAYING GOODBYE

Jake sits atop his condo patio where his grandma had sat. It is dusk. He looks like her, stoic, scanning the horizon for groups of birds. A smile crosses his face.

JAKE

Grandma, you always said I was smart, but you were the smartest person I will ever know....  
I am sorry for all the trouble I gave you along the way. I didn't know any better. I do now.

It grows darker.

JAKE (CONT'D)

I miss you with every second of every day....  
But, Annie taught me that you are still with me everywhere I go.

The sky grows darker. Birds flutter by. He struggles to think of what he wants to say.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Thank you for my trip to Aunt Roberta's. I couldn't have been more wrong about it. It showed me something I would have never discovered here in my little bubble.

Grows even darker.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Although I miss you more than anything, I appreciate our time together even more now that you are gone. I love you and will always keep you in my heart-  
Your City Bird

Clouds part to a dark patch of sky. Grandma's face appears in the form of stars. A shooting star burst as she winks at him.

BIRD CITY

FADE OUT:

THE END