

QIANLIMA

By:

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INT. MAPLE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

The office of JASON HAVERSTADT (40) (Asian-Caucasian mix), calm and unflappable even if a fly went swimming in his cup of coffee, Principal of Maple Ridge Middle School.

NAME PLATE on the large wooden desk:

*JASON HAVERSTADT  
PRINCIPAL*

While the CAMERA PANS the room, a conversation takes place between Jason and a REPORTER.

We see numerous CYCLING TROPHIES and FOUR OLYMPIC MEDALS in frames on bookshelves.

We also see two other medallions in labeled frames: one is a gold medallion on a bright red fabric lanyard that says "BIKERS AGAINST CANCER" on the medal and on the frame; and the other one, a gold medallion with a red-white-and-blue fabric lanyard that says "MAPLE RIDGE MEDAL OF HONOR" on the medal and frame.

REPORTER (V.O.)

So, Jason, we're coming up on the tenth anniversary of your retirement from competitive cycling... and with you being one of the winningest cyclists in American history... Tell us, do you miss it?

JASON HAVERSTADT (V.O.)

Well, to be completely honest, not really.

REPORTER (V.O.)

How's that?

JASON HAVERSTADT (V.O.)

Well, you see... I'd accomplished just about everything that a cyclist can do... and I really love my job here, working with students.

REPORTER (V.O.)

So, Jason, you were on the USA National Team, representing the United States, and cycled in the Tour de France...

JASON HAVERSTADT (V.O.)  
(interrupting and  
chuckling)

Wait... yes, and no... I did ride  
for a while with the USA National  
Team; but no, the USA National Team  
doesn't and didn't compete in the  
Tour de France.

REPORTER (V.O.)  
Oh, I see. So, what type of cycling  
did you do?

JASON HAVERSTADT (V.O.)  
I did a lot of road racing and  
placed both individually and as a  
team.

REPORTER (V.O.)  
What about the Olympics? I see your  
medals.

JASON HAVERSTADT (V.O.)  
Yes, I was a member of the USA  
cycling team and won medals in the  
sprints on the velodrome tracks.

REPORTER (V.O.)  
So, why did you leave cycling?

JASON HAVERSTADT (V.O.)  
I never really left cycling... I  
just don't cycle competitively  
anymore.

REPORTER (V.O.)  
Oh, I see. What got you interested  
in cycling?

JASON HAVERSTADT (V.O.)  
That's a long story.

REPORTER (V.O.)  
I've got time, and I'm sure our  
readers would like to know your  
story.

JASON HAVERSTADT (V.O.)  
Okay... well... it all began when I  
was a young kid, enjoying spending  
time with my dad....

FADE TO:

EXT. OFF-ROAD BIKE TRAIL - DAY

Young JASON (12) (average height and thin), and his DAD (40) (well sculpted Caucasian) straddle their mountain bikes on a lightly forested bike trail at the base of a long hill. Both have helmets off and drink from their water bottles. DAD sweats profusely and breathes deeply. Jason isn't sweating much at all.

JASON

So, when's that ball game? Next Saturday, right?

DAD

No. Next weekend is the father-son fishing trip.

JASON

Oh, that's right.

DAD

The ball game is the following Saturday.

JASON

Right. It's just that we've got stuff going on just about every weekend and I sometimes get confused.

DAD

And that's a problem?

JASON

No, not at all.

DAD

Good, 'cause I like spending time with you.

JASON

Yeah, me too.

Dad pours some more water onto his head.

DAD

Wow! You hot? I'm sweating like a pig.

JASON

Nah, I don't think it's too bad out.

Jason and Dad both return their water bottles to their bottle racks on their bikes and re-affix their helmets.

DAD  
Well, about ready?

JASON  
Race you to the top!

Jason speeds out and begins climbing the hill. He looks over his shoulder and Dad is right behind him.

A few moments later, a grinning Jason looks over his shoulder and sees Dad falling farther behind, but Jason keeps on peddling hard - he's winning!

JASON (CONT'D)  
(yells over his shoulder)  
Come on! Don't poop out on me.  
We're almost half-way there.

Jason again looks over his shoulder but doesn't see Dad. Jason stops his bike and waits for Dad to catch up. But Dad doesn't appear. Jason's grin disappears.

He turns around and begins coasting down the sloped path.

Rounding a turn, Jason sees Dad and his bike both laying on the bike trail - Dad, face down and not moving.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Dad!

Jason drops his bike and runs to Dad. He struggles to roll Dad over onto his back.

JASON (CONT'D)  
(panic on his face)  
Dad! Dad! Are you OK?

Dad struggles to speak.

DAD  
I don't think so.

JASON  
What's wrong? What should I do?

DAD  
Ride down the hill and go get some help.

JASON  
(begins to cry)  
I can't leave you like this.

DAD  
Yes, you can.

JASON  
But I'm scared.

DAD  
Jason, listen to me. Everyone gets scared sometimes. When you get scared, be brave... imagine yourself as the hero, riding a winged horse to save the day. Let your imagination override your fear. Do you understand?

Jason nods.

DAD (CONT'D)  
Okay. Now ride that winged horse down the hill and find someone to help. Be the hero. I'll wait right here.

Jason wipes away a tear and tries to smile bravely. He hops on his bike and begins racing down the bike trail.

JASON HAVERSTADT (V.O.)  
That was the last time I saw my dad alive. By the time help got to him, he was gone. The doctor said that he had suffered a heart attack and probably died right after I left. He likely sent me away so that I wouldn't have to see him die.

REPORTER (V.O.)  
I'm sorry.

EXT. HAVERSTADT HOUSE - DAY

Jason is in the two-car attached garage of a two-story colonial house. With tears streaming down his face, he uses a sledge hammer to beat on his bike, pounding it into a tangled web of metal and rubber.

JASON HAVERSTADT (V.O.)  
I was so upset and angry. I thought it was all my fault...

that I had killed my Dad because I was racing him unnecessarily. I didn't want anything to do with cycling and bicycles after that.

REPORTER (V.O.)

Obviously, something changed. What was it?

Jason arrives home from school, walking and carrying his backpack. As he walks up the driveway, he glances at the Ford Taurus with New York license plates parked in the driveway. A Jeep Grand Cherokee (also with New York license plates) sits inside the open garage.

He quietly enters the house.

JASON HAVERSTADT (V.O.)

Yes, some terrible news from my dad's brother changed everything.

INT. HAVERSTADT HOUSE - DAY

As Jason enters the house, he hears conversation in the kitchen. He silently closes the front door, not wanting to disrupt what was going on.

He peeks around a corner and sees his UNCLE BILL (44) (overweight, compassionate father figure) and his mom, MEI (36) (short, frail, and insecure Asian woman) talking while sitting at the kitchen table. Documents are spread out across the table.

UNCLE BILL

I'm sorry, Mei, but there just isn't anything left.

MEI

I don't understand. He always said we had lots of money.

UNCLE BILL

He may have said that, but it wasn't true. He'd taken out at least two home equity loans for house projects...

MEI

But we had no house projects.

UNCLE BILL

True... Looks like he was using that money along with his salary to maintain your current lifestyle... and to pay off gambling debts.

MEI

Gambling debts?

UNCLE BILL

Yeah. Turns out that he'd been betting online for quite some time... and losing... a lot. He'd been bouncing the debt from one credit card to another, and even opening up new credit cards.

MEI

I just don't get it.

UNCLE BILL

I'm sorry, Mei, but your bank accounts don't have enough in them to cover all that he owes.

MEI

What about his life insurance?

UNCLE BILL

It turns out that he cashed in his life insurance some time ago... There is no life insurance.

MEI

But he was an insurance agent... he sold life insurance.

UNCLE BILL

Yeah, and evidently he knew the loopholes... took shortcuts to stay afloat.

MEI

And then he went and died.

UNCLE BILL

I know, Mei. I am as stunned by this as you are.

MEI

(tearfully)

What are we supposed to do?



UNCLE BILL  
I don't have all the answers, but  
we'll help as much as we can.

Jason turns and softly climbs the stairs to his room, quietly closing the door behind him.

EXT. HAVERSTADT HOUSE - DAY

The Grand Cherokee is parked on the driveway with a U-Haul trailer behind it - both loaded with boxes and items. Uncle Bill's Taurus is parked at the curb in front of the house.

The caring uncle deposits one final item inside, then SLAMS the trailer door shut. Jason and Mei look on... dazed, ripped from their world, still processing the change.

UNCLE BILL  
You sure you got everything you need?

MEI  
Yeah, I think so.

UNCLE BILL  
Call me when you get to Maple Ridge.

Mei nods her head. Uncle Bill reaches out and gives Mei a hug.

UNCLE BILL (CONT'D)  
Everything will be okay.. and  
you'll have your sister nearby.

MEI  
Yeah, I hope so.

Uncle Bill reaches over and tussles Jason's hair, then gives him a sideways hug.

UNCLE BILL  
I'm going to miss you, Sport. But  
I'm sure you'll quickly make new  
friends in Arkansas and forget  
about us back here.

Jason merely shrugs then enters the vehicle.

UNCLE BILL (CONT'D)  
(to Mei as she enters the car)  
Drive careful and be safe.

MEI  
We will.

Mei starts the car and they slowly pull out of the driveway, leaving Uncle Bill standing there, waving.

EXT. NEW HAVERSTADT HOME (A.K.A. JASON'S HOUSE) - AFTERNOON

Mei stops the car in front of an old run-down one-story white house with a detached one-car garage.

The house is a true fixer-upper and the eyesore property in the midst of a neighborhood of newer homes. The front yard has many tall weeds mixed in with the un-mowed grass.

Both Mei and Jason just sit there for a long moment taking in this new home and environment. Jason breaks the silence.

JASON

Are you sure this is the right place?

Mei examines a piece of paper.

MEI

According to the address your Aunt Li gave me, it appears so.

JASON

This place is a dump!

MEI

But it'll have to do for now. Let's not pass judgment until we look inside.

Mei pulls the vehicle and trailer into the driveway, turns off the car, and they both exit the vehicle.

INT. JASON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The door opens. Mei and Jason stand in the doorway for a moment, scanning the new, yet tired environment, then cautiously enter.

The partially furnished interior looks and feels as if someone's grandmother lived, breathed, and died in it.

Mei and Jason slowly tour the house. Every room and the single bathroom are all small and claustrophobic compared to their previous house.

MEI

Things are going to be quite different than what we're used to.

Jason looks at Mei with sad bewilderment in his eyes.

Mei attempts to be cheerful and optimistic.

MEI (CONT'D)  
Well, I guess we'd better get that  
trailer unloaded.

They begin to walk towards the front door; Mei puts her arm around Jason's shoulders and gives him a loving sideways hug.

MEI (CONT'D)  
It'll be OK, Jason.

BEGIN MONTAGE.

- Jason and Mei carry boxes from the trailer, taking them inside the house.
- Jason and Mei sit at a vintage chrome kitchen table set which looks like it had just come out of some Route 66 diner, and use plastic forks to eat out of Chinese takeout boxes.
- Jason hangs some clothes in his bedroom closet while Mei makes up Jason's bed - a twin mattress on the floor.
- Jason, wearing lightweight shorts and a t-shirt, brushes his teeth and turns the faucet to find rust-colored water spurting out.

END MONTAGE.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Jason lifts open the garage door and explores the small dark and dingy garage. Against the back wall, there is an old wooden workbench, once the trophy for a home mechanic, but now just a catch-all space for clutter.

An old gasoline push mower sits in front of the workbench.

Jason pulls on the starter rope, but the mower doesn't start. Sticking his finger into the fuel tank, he withdraws it dry.

In the back corner beside the workbench, he sees the wheel of a bicycle covered by a tarp. He removes the dust-coated cover and discovers an old orange 5-speed Schwinn Stingray fastback bike with a banana seat and tall gear shifter.

Jason hesitantly moves the bike near the front of the garage where there is better light. The bike is filthy, but otherwise in good condition.

He grabs a rag from the workbench, shakes the dust out of it, and wipes away some of the grime caked on the bike. As he wipes off the down tube of the frame, he discovers the word ***Qianlima*** stenciled boldly in black on it.

JASON  
Kwe-an-li-ma?

CLIP OF JASON SMASHING UP HIS OTHER BIKE.

Suddenly Jason shakes his head, as if awakened from a sleep.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Uh-uh. No way!

He tosses the rag onto the work bench and returns the bike to the back corner of the garage and tosses the tarp over it.

INT. JASON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jason enters the kitchen where his mom is preparing a meal.

MEI  
What've you been doing?

JASON  
Oh, nothing much. I was just checking out the garage.

MEI  
Anything interesting there?

JASON  
No, not really. There is an old lawnmower.

MEI  
Does it work?

JASON  
Don't know... it's outta gas.

MEI  
Oh.

JASON  
And I found a bike in there.

MEI  
A bike?

JASON

Yeah, an old ugly bike and it had the word "kwe-an-li-ma" painted on it.

Mei turns towards Jason.

MEI

Kwe-an-li-ma? How's that spelled?

JASON

Q-I-A-N-L-I-M-A.

MEI

Q-I-A-N-L-I-M-A?

Jason nods his head.

MEI (CONT'D)

That's pronounced "she-on-lee-ma"... "she-on-lee-ma". Qianlima was a mythological horse I heard about from my family. It had wings and could run a thousand miles in a day. It was so fast that it could never be caught and no one could ever ride it.

JASON

Well, it's a weird name for a bike.

MEI

Well, maybe yes... and maybe no. But if you don't like it, you can paint over it.

EXT. JASON'S HOUSE - MORNING

Jason and Mei exit the house through the front door. While walking towards their car, parked in the driveway, Jason suddenly stops and turns around, looking at the open garage.

MEI

Come on, Jason, we're going to be late.

Jason stares at the open garage with a puzzled look on his face.

MEI (CONT'D)

Jason!

The bike is on its kickstand in the middle of the garage. The tarp is crumpled on the ground beside the bike.

JASON  
Mom, did you move that bike?

MEI  
What bike?

JASON  
(pointing)  
That bike... the one I told you  
about yesterday.

Mei turns around and also sees the bike standing in the middle of the garage.

MEI  
No, why?

JASON  
Cause I didn't.

MEI  
But maybe you did and you just  
don't remember.

JASON  
No, I remember very well... and I  
didn't leave it in that spot.

MEI  
Well, maybe someone else moved it.

JASON  
Who?

MEI  
Oh, I don't know... come on... you  
can sort that out later. We've got to  
get going. You'll be late for school  
and I'll be late for my new job.

JASON  
Okay... just a moment.

Jason runs into the garage, pushes the bike back into the back corner of the garage, then tosses the tarp onto it.

He then turns and runs out of the garage, SLAMMING closed the garage door enroute, and joins Mei getting the vehicle.

EXT. MAPLE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL - LATER

Jason and Mei walk towards the front door of the school.

INT. MAPLE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Mei and Jason walk down the hallway, weaving between STUDENTS in the hallway between classes. A couple students are listening to Walkmans. All students are White.

Mei and Jason enter the school office and hesitently approach the counter, where a SECRETARY, a White woman (early 60s) with gray-streaked hair and a permanently etched scowl, offers her assistance.

SECRETARY

May I help you?

MEI

Yes, I'd like to register my son  
for school... um, sixth grade.

The secretary looks toward Jason, scrunching her forehead, and gives Jason a quick head-to-toe visual examination.

SECRETARY

I see... and his name?

MEI

Jason... Jason Haverstadt.

The secretary opens a file cabinet drawer and pulls out a folder. She hands some documents to Mei.

The secretary nods her head in the direction of three chairs along the wall.

SECRETARY

(nonchalantly)

He can sit over there while you  
fill out these forms.

Mei motions Jason to take a seat in one of the chairs. Mei begins writing on the forms at the counter while Jason waits, seated in the middle chair of three located there.

Later, the secretary escorts Jason down an empty hallway, the CLUNK-CLUNK of her classic oxford shoes echoing as they walk.

She stops, opens a classroom door and leads Jason into a room of about twenty STUDENTS and the teacher, MRS. OVERLAND (large White woman in her mid-50s with her graying hair pulled back tightly into a bun), standing at the front of the classroom. Mrs. Overland is all business, and has the looks and demeanor of a drill sergeant.

A cart-mounted carousel slide projector shines a picture of the great pyramids of Egypt onto the pull-down screen in front of the slate-colored chalkboards.

The secretary hands Mrs. Overland a note and departs.

Jason stands there with the entire class (all White) gawking at him. The only sound is the humming fan of the projector.

Mrs. Overland glances at the note then breaks the silence.

MRS. OVERLAND

Class, this is Jason Haverstadt. He just moved into Maple Ridge a couple days ago. Let's all ensure we make Jason feel welcome.

Mrs. Overland directs Jason to an empty desk about half-way back in the row closest to the outer wall and window.

Immediately after Jason sits down, HOLLIE (11), a cute small blonde girl sitting in the desk next to his leans towards Jason and whispers to him.

HOLLIE

(smiling)

Hi, Jason. I'm Hollie.

Jason gives a slight head nod.

MRS. OVERLAND

OK, back to our lesson.

Jason looks around and sees everyone's eyes are still on him.

MRS. OVERLAND (CONT'D)

AHEM! Eyes up here!

The students' attention shifts back to the teacher.

Later, in the school cafeteria, Jason stands at the end of the serving line, holding a tray of school lunch food. He's looking for a place to sit.

He cautiously approaches an open chair at a table of BOYS from his classroom. The boy closest to the open chair puts his hand on the chair seat and looks directly at Jason.

BOY I

(heavy Southern drawl)

This seat's saved.



Jason moves on towards another table of BOYS, including CHARLIE (12), one of the bigger boys in his class. Charlie looks Jason in the eyes and shakes his head.

CHARLIE

No Japs allowed here.

Jason calmly looks around and sees an empty table in the corner by the trash cans. He goes there, sits down, and begins eating his lunch.

Hollie, sitting at a table with a bunch of other GIRLS, sees Jason sitting by himself. She excuses herself, picks up her tray, and walks over to Jason's table and sets it down.

HOLLIE

Anyone sitting here?

Jason shakes his head. Hollie sits down.

HOLLIE (CONT'D)

You don't talk much. As a matter of fact, I haven't heard you say anything yet. Do you speak English?

JASON

Of course.

HOLLIE

Then, why don't you talk?

JASON

No need to.

Charlie, and his two friends, JIMMY (11) and BILLY (11) walk towards the trashcans and drop their napkins, milk cartons, and other trash onto Jason's tray rather than into the trashcan.

HOLLIE

(firmly)

Charlie Peterson, grow up!

Charlie makes a face and sticks out his tongue at Hollie. The boys walk away laughing.

HOLLIE (CONT'D)

Don't mind them. They don't know how to act because there aren't any other Japanese kids around these parts.

JASON  
(in a low voice)  
Chinese.

HOLLIE  
Huh?

JASON  
Chinese, not Japanese. I'm half  
Chinese and half American.

HOLLIE  
Oh?

JASON  
My dad's American... at least he  
was... and my mom's family came to  
America from China. She was born in  
America... and so was I.

HOLLIE  
Wait, your dad is an American?

JASON  
Yeah... but he's dead now.

HOLLIE  
Oh... so you're an American?

JASON  
One hundred percent!

HOLLIE  
OK, I see.  
(beat)  
Well, don't worry about those other  
boys. They're OK once you get to  
know them.

Jason picks the paper trash off his plate and takes a drink  
from his milk carton.

INT. JASON'S HOUSE - EVENING

Jason and Mei sit at the kitchen table, eating their dinner.

MEI  
So, how was your first day of  
school here?

Jason shrugs his shoulders.

JASON  
(mumbling)  
Meh.

MEI  
Did you meet any other kids.

Jason shrugs his shoulders again.

MEI (CONT'D)  
Well, I'm sure you'll make many friends.

JASON  
(mumbling)  
Meh.

INT. JASON'S HOUSE - DAY

Mei is cleaning up in the kitchen after breakfast. She shouts to Jason, who is in his bedroom.

MEI  
Jason... can you mow the yard  
today? I got some gas for the mower  
yesterday.

JASON (O.C.)  
Yeah. Okay.

EXT. JASON'S HOUSE - LATER

Jason exits the house and opens the garage door. He freezes when he once again sees QIANLIMA standing in the middle of the garage with the tarp crumpled up on the ground nearby.

He pushes the bike to the back corner of the garage, covers it with the tarp, and pulls out the lawnmower.

Later, Jason is returning the lawnmower to the garage after mowing. The bicycle is once again in the middle of the garage with the tarp on the ground.

JASON  
What the...?!

He parks the lawnmower then turns around and goes back to the house.

INT. JASON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Mei is in the kitchen baking as Jason enters.

JASON  
Mom, did you move that bike?

MEI  
No, Jason, I've never even touched that bike. Why?

JASON  
Because its been moved to the middle of the garage again... and that's not where I put it.

Mei turns and looks at Jason.

MEI  
Well, I don't know, honey. I don't have an answer for you.

Jason plops down onto a kitchen chair.

JASON  
Something really fishy's going on.

MEI  
What do you mean?

JASON  
With that bike. That's three times I found it not where I put it.

Mei stops working and sits in another chair.

MEI  
Well, Jason, maybe this is a magical bike and it's calling out to you. I mean, you don't have any other bike, and you know we can't afford to get you a new bike right now. Maybe this bike wants to be your bike.

JASON  
Mom... You and I both know that's a bunch of crap.

Mei gives Jason one of those "mom looks", then softens.

MEI  
But is it? Maybe it's time for you to start riding again... and maybe this bike wants to help you.

JASON  
But I don't know if I'll ever ride it.

MEI

Why? What's the matter with that bike?

JASON

Well, it's ugly for one thing, and it's orange, and its got that word, "kwe-an-li-ma" on it.

MEI

You mean, "she-on-lee-ma"?

JASON

Yeah, whatever.

MEI

Well, you can always paint it.

JASON

Even so, I still probably won't ride it.

MEI

Why not?

Jason shrugs his shoulders.

MEI (CONT'D)

Because of what happened to your father?

Jason just looks at the floor.

MEI (CONT'D)

You can't let that stop you.

Mei moves over and surrounds Jason with her arms.

MEI (CONT'D)

Look, Jason, what happened to your father wasn't your fault.

Jason begins to weep.

JASON

But I...

MEI

(interrupting)

That bike ride didn't kill him, Jason. The doctors said that his heart was bad and that's what killed him. They actually said that it was a miracle that he had lasted as long as he did...

(pause - then looking into  
Jason's eyes)  
Jason, it wasn't your fault... and  
you cannot beat yourself up about  
his dying.

Jason cries as Mei hugs him tightly and caresses his hair.

MEI (CONT'D)  
(whispering to Jason)  
It will be all right. I think this  
bike will be good for you.

INT. GARAGE - EVENING

Jason paints his bike blue, using a can of spray paint. Parts of the bike (e.g., the wheels, seat, handle bars, kick stand, pedals, reflectors, gear shifter, etc.) are covered with newspaper and tape to prevent the paint from getting on them. He carefully paints over **Qianlima** stenciled on the frame.

Mei enters the garage.

MEI  
How's it going?

JASON  
Just about done.

MEI  
Good, 'cause it's time for dinner.  
Looks nice, Jason.

INT. JASON'S HOUSE - MORNING

Jason rushes into the kitchen from outside while Mei is cleaning up from breakfast.

JASON  
Mom, can you take me to school this  
morning?

MEI  
I thought you were going to ride  
your bike.

JASON  
I can't. That word, QIANLIMA, bled  
through the paint.

MEI

Let's see.

They both exit the house, heading towards the garage.

INT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

The bike stands on its kickstand, looking like a new bike, with the word **Qianlima** looking like it was freshly stenciled onto the frame - however, now in bright white letters.

MEI

Maybe we can use some tape to temporarily cover over it.

Jason runs into the house and returns with a roll of blue painter's tape. He quickly places several wraps around the frame, completely covering the letters. The tape matches the color of the blue frame.

MEI (CONT'D)

I think that will work. You can try repainting it tonight.

Jason nods his head. He dons his back pack and pulls the bike around, swings his leg over to mount it, but just stands there - frozen - straddling the bike as it rests on its kick stand.

MEI (CONT'D)

It's OK, Jason. You can do this. Go on.

Jason takes a deep breath and exhales, grabs the handle bar grips, slowly and almost painfully kicks up the kick stand, and pedals away.

EXT. STREET OF MAPLE RIDGE, ARKANSAS - LATER

Jason, wearing his backpack, rides his bike on the street to school.

FADE TO:

EXT. OFF-ROAD BIKE TRAIL - DAY

Jason on a beautiful WHITE HORSE on the same trail that he and his dad were riding. He sees his dad lying on the trail.

As Jason stops the horse near his dad, he sees and hears his dad speaking to him - the same words spoken the last time Jason saw him alive.

DAD

Jason, listen to me. Everyone gets scared sometimes. When you get scared, be brave... imagine yourself as the hero, riding a winged horse to save the day. Let your imagination override your fear. Do you understand?

(beat)

Okay. Now ride that winged horse down the hill and find someone to help. Be the hero. I'll wait right here.

Jason spurs the horse and finds himself galloping down the hill on that horse. He rides so fast that the wind blows his hair back and presses his shirt against his body. Tears stream down his cheeks.

We see the hooves of the great white horse galloping down the path.

FADE TO:

EXT. STREET OF MAPLE RIDGE, ARKANSAS - DAY

We see the wheels of the bicycle racing along on the street pavement. Jason's hair is blown back and his shirt presses against his body and tears run down his cheeks.

He suddenly brakes hard, skidding the bike to a halt on the pavement.

JASON

No, this isn't happening.

He looks around and sees no one else in the area... he wipes his eyes with his shirt sleeve, then continues on his way.

EXT. MAPLE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL - LATER

Jason parks his bike in one of the open slots in the school's bike rack. All of the rest of the bikes are late model 10-speed road bikes and mountain bikes.

Jason drapes his backpack over one shoulder and walks into school with the other students.



Later, the STUDENTS play kick-ball during P.E. Jason stands in short right field. Hollie is on his team and stands right behind second base.

Charlie kicks the ball in the air in Jason's direction. Jason moves under the ball and prepares to catch it. However, the ball bounces off his chest and through his arms, off his leg, and rolls out into center field.

As Charlie runs between first and second base, he hollers towards Jason.

CHARLIE

Jap nerd!

Most of the other boys on Charlie's team laugh.

As Charlie rounds second base, he bumps into Hollie and knocks her to the ground. Jason sees this and tenses up, but Hollie gets up, unhurt, and merely dusts herself off. Just then the BELL RINGS and everyone begins heading back into the school.

As Jason and Hollie walk towards the school, behind all the other students, Hollie sees the anger in Jason's eyes.

HOLLIE

Don't do anything, Jason. It's okay.

JASON

Why? He knocked you down.

HOLLIE

Maybe... But I was probably standing too close to the base.

JASON

I don't think so.

HOLLIE

I didn't get hurt. It's okay.

JASON

We'll see.

EXT. MAPLE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Immediately after school, Jason, wearing his backpack, approaches the bike rack and notices that the blue tape on the bike has slipped loosely down on the frame, clearly exposing the word ***Qianlima***.

Sitting on his bike, he begins to back the bike out of the bike rack when he is stopped by Charlie and Jimmy and Billy, blocking his way.

CHARLIE  
(snickering)  
Nice bike - NOT! Where'd you get  
it? Walmart?

Charlie points to the word "Qianlima".

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
What's that? Some type of Jap word?

JASON  
(angrily)  
It's not Japanese - it's Chinese!  
And I'm not Japanese - I'm half  
Chinese! You Moron!

CHARLIE  
Moron? Who are you calling a moron?

JASON  
You, you big moron!

With that, Jason gives Charlie a surprise shove, which dislodges him from Quinlima momentarily, and tears off on his bike. Charlie and his gang quickly grab their bikes and begin to chase Jason.

CHARLIE  
(shouting)  
You little jerk! You think you can  
call me a moron and get away with  
that? When we catch you, you're  
dead meat!

EXT. STREET OF MAPLE RIDGE, ARKANSAS - LATER

Jason rounds a corner.

Moments later, when Charlie and his gang round that corner, Jason and his bike are nowhere to be seen. Charlie and the gang stop and just stare perplexed.

CHARLIE  
Where'd he go?

The other boys shrug their shoulders.

Jason glances back over his shoulder and sees no one behind him. And a grin comes to his face. He suddenly gets a pleasant look on his face as he's riding.

FADE TO:

EXT. WESTERN PRAIRIE - DAY

Jason, dressed in Western attire, rides on that beautiful galloping white horse with wings folded back along its sides.

He is behind a group of wild INDIANS galloping on their HORSES. The Indians, led by Charlie and his gang, WHOOP and HOLLER as if on a warpath.

Jason and his horse gallop through the group as if their horses are merely trotting. As he passes through the group, they gawk in amazement.

Soon, Jason is nearly out of sight of the Indians, but their war cries can still be heard in the distance.

Jason stops his horse beside a wooden porch in the middle of nowhere. Hollie is tied to a upright wooden post on that porch. She cries out, "Help me".

Jason jumps off his horse quickly unties her and they both run to the horse. We see the word **Qianlima** branded boldly onto the side of the saddle.

Jason gets on, then helps Hollie get on behind him, wrapping her arms around his waist and holding onto Jason for dear life. Jason spurs the horse and they gallop away.

We see the Qianlima's hooves pounding the ground as it gallops.

FADE TO:

EXT. JASON'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

We see the tires of the bicycle racing along the street.

Jason rides his bike up the driveway and into the garage.

INT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Jason dismounts his bike; his face beaming. He looks down at his bike and focuses in on the word **Qianlima**.

JASON  
That was weird!

Jason tosses his backpack onto the garage floor and grabs the can of blue spray paint on the workbench. He carefully sprays another coat of paint over the word **Qianlima**. The word is completely covered.

JASON (CONT'D)  
That ought to do it.

He sets down the can of paint, grabs his backpack, closes the garage door, and heads into the house.

INT. GARAGE - MORNING

Jason, backpack in hand, opens the garage door and enters the garage. His eyes widen and his mouth opens in amazement as he discovers the word **Qianlima** has once again prominently returned to his bike frame, looking like it was freshly stenciled.

JASON  
What the...!

He shakes his head in frustration and gets the roll of blue painter's tape and once again tapes over the word.

He throws on his backback, hops on his bike, and heads down the driveway.

INT. MAPLE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL - LATER

Jason sits at his desk. Hollie sits at her desk next to Jason's. The school bell hasn't yet sounded and students mill around in the classroom. Mrs. Overland stands at the door just outside the classroom, talking with ANOTHER TEACHER.

Charlie walks down the window aisle, by Jason's row of desks, and towards Jason from the back of the classroom. As he comes alongside Jason, Charlie slaps Jason hard on the back of his head.

Jason quickly grabs the back of his head and turns towards Charlie.

JASON  
Hey!

CHARLIE

If you think that was bad, just  
wait till after school.

Charlie walks away with a smirk just as the bell rings.

Mrs. Overland enters the classroom and closes the door.

MRS. OVERLAND

Alright everyone, you heard the  
bell. Find your way to your seats.

Hollie looks at Jason with a worried expression on her face.  
Jason shrugs his shoulders with a "no big deal" expression.

During lunch, Jason and Hollie sit alone at that same table  
near the trash cans.

HOLLIE

After school... what are you going  
to do about Charlie?

JASON

I don't know, but I'll think of  
something.

Jason sees a broken wooden mop handle propped against the  
wall behind the trash cans.

JASON (CONT'D)

I've got to go. I'll see you back  
in the classroom.

HOLLIE

Where are you going?

JASON

Don't worry about it. I'll see you  
in the classroom.

Jason empties his tray into the trash can and sneakily grabs  
the mop handle and leaves the cafeteria.

EXT. MAPLE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER

Jason, holding the broken mop handle, runs up to the bike  
rack and lays it down beside his bike. He notices that once  
again the blue tape has come off of his bike frame and is  
just loosely wrapped at the base of that frame down tube.  
Again, the word **Qianlima** is prominently visible.

Jason shakes his head and runs back towards the school entrance.

INT. MAPLE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER

Jason and Hollie are at their desks and the other students are taking their seats. Mrs. Overland closes the classroom door. Students are talking and laughing.

HOLLIE  
Where'd you go?

JASON  
No place special.

HOLLIE  
What'd you do?

JASON  
Nothing special.

Hollie gives Jason a disapproving look just as Mrs. Overland picks up a book from her desk.

MRS. OVERLAND  
Alright, let's quiet down. Pull out your math books and let's look at a couple more problems.

Jason glances at Charlie who scowls at Jason and holds up a threatening fist. Hollie turns and sees this menacing gesture, then turns back to Jason.

HOLLIE  
(whispering)  
What're you going to do?

JASON  
Nothing right now. It'll be okay.

Jason opens his math book and grabs his pencil.

EXT. MAPLE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

The school bell rings and within a few seconds, Jason sprints through the doors and toward the bike rack.

Jason bends down and picks up the mop handle, then attempts to back his bike from the bike rack. However, Charlie and his friends arrive just in time to block Jason's effort.

CHARLIE

Where do you think you're going?

Jason turns around, holding the mop handle threateningly.

JASON

Home. You got a problem with that?

Seeing the mop handle, Charlie backs off slightly.

Hollie, wearing her backpack, walks up and stops nearby and observes the conversation. Jason glances at Hollie. Noting this, Charlie turns and also sees Hollie.

CHARLIE

Okay. Okay. No big deal. Anyway, your girlfriend is here and we wouldn't want to do anything to you while she's watching.

JIMMY

Why don't you challenge the Jap to Knob's Hill?

BILLY

Yeah, Knob's Hill tomorrow... You can destroy him there.

CHARLIE

(to Jason)

Yeah, sure. Knob's Hill.

JASON

What's Knob's Hill?

JIMMY

Just the biggest hill in the area.

BILLY

Yeah, it's about a mile to the top along a path.

JIMMY

It's a race to the top.

BILLY

And Charlie's never been beat.

CHARLIE

Yeah, so Saturday... tomorrow... Noon. Be there with that old ugly bike and I'll teach you a lesson.

(beat)

Oh, and bring your girlfriend, too.

(nodding towards Hollie)  
I'll take her as a prize after I  
stomp you.

Charlie and his friends turn and walk away, chuckling, as  
Jason, still holding the mop handle, retrieves his bike and  
begins walking beside his bike and Hollie.

HOLLIE  
Were you really going to hit him  
with that stick?

JASON  
If I had to.

HOLLIE  
Aren't you afraid of him?

JASON  
Not really.

HOLLIE  
But he's bigger than you, and  
there's three of them.

JASON  
So. I had my trusty friend with me.

HOLLIE  
Who... Me?

Jason holds out the mop handle.

JASON  
No, this.

HOLLIE  
Oh.  
(beat)  
Can you come over to my house?

JASON  
When? Right now?

Hollie nods.

HOLLIE  
Uh huh.

JASON  
Yeah, I guess. Why?

HOLLIE  
I want to show you something.



JASON  
Will your parents care?

HOLLIE  
My parents are dead.

Jason stops and looks at Hollie with a "Did she just blurt that out?" type of look.

HOLLIE (CONT'D)  
No-no-no-no. It's okay. I live with my aunt and my uncle, and they're both at work. They don't care what I do.

JASON  
Oh. Okay.

INT. HOLLIE'S HOUSE - LATER

Jason and Hollie sit on the floor of a small storage closet in the basement. The lights are off in the closet, but the tiny room is illuminated by a flashlight standing upright between the two youths.

HOLLIE  
This is my secret safe place.

Jason remains quiet and merely looks at Hollie.

HOLLIE (CONT'D)  
No one knows about this place... except me... and you now... not even my aunt and uncle.  
(beat)  
I come here when I get scared or when things get too wild between my aunt and uncle... They fight almost all the time... screaming and hollering at each other.  
(beat)  
Lots of times they're fighting about money and lots of times they're fighting about me.

Hollie wipes a tear from each eye.

HOLLIE (CONT'D)  
I don't think they like me.

JASON  
Why would you think that?

HOLLIE  
I've heard them in their fights.

JASON  
What'd you hear?

HOLLIE  
If it weren't for me, they would  
have more money to buy things and  
go on vacations... and they could  
have more fun parties... and things  
like that.

JASON  
How long have you lived here?

HOLLIE  
Since my parents were killed in a  
car crash about a year ago.

JASON  
Oh... Why did you want to show me  
this place?

HOLLIE  
Having this place has been good for  
me. It's helped me when I get  
scared or am having troubles. I  
just thought that if you had a  
place like this...

JASON  
(interrupting)  
I don't need a place like this...  
I need to get going now.

Hollie grabs Jason's arm.

HOLLIE  
Can't you stay just a little longer.

JASON  
No... I need to be getting on home.

HOLLIE  
(dejected)  
Okay.

Jason starts to stand up.

HOLLIE (CONT'D)  
What about Knob's Hill on Saturday?

JASON  
What about it?

HOLLIE  
Are you going to do it?

JASON  
Yeah. I don't see a way around it.

HOLLIE  
Well, I'll be there to cheer you on.

JASON  
You don't have to...

HOLLIE  
(interrupting)  
I want to.

Jason shrugs his shoulders.

HOLLIE (CONT'D)  
I'll see you tomorrow?

JASON  
Okay. Tomorrow.

Jason gets up and opens the door, allowing lights from the basement to flood the small darkened room. Hollie remains seated, but looking at Jason.

HOLLIE  
Bye, Jason.

JASON  
Bye.

Jason leaves.

EXT. STREET OF MAPLE RIDGE, ARKANSAS - MOMENTS LATER

Jason coasts down Hollie's driveway and onto the street, holding the broken broom stick like a knight's lance.

FADE TO:

EXT. MEDIEVAL JOUSTING ARENA - DAY

Jason, clad in basic medieval armor sits on his white horse.  
***Qianlima*** is branded onto the side of the saddle.

He scans the crowd and sees Hollie, standing on a raised platform with Jimmy and Billy imprisoning her between them.

Jason's opponent, Charlie, is clad in first class glistening medieval armor and sits astride a black horse. With a sinister grin, Charlie leers at Jason and mouths the words, "You're dead meat!"

Jason and Charlie both lower their helmet visors and secure their lances, holding them upright. They both spur their steeds to a gallop and lower their lances.

We see Qianlima's feet galloping (rider's POV).

We momentarily see the bicycle wheels racing on the street (rider's POV)...

Then back to Qianlima's feet, then PAN UP to see Charlie and his horse rapidly approaching.

CRASH! Jason's lance shatters as Charlie is thrown from his horse.

Jason stops at the end of the jousting run, tosses his broken lance to the ground, turns, and raises his helmet visor. A large grin comes to his face as he sees Charlie's two friends leave Hollie, jump off of the platform, and run to check on Charlie.

Jason rides over to Hollie, offers her his arm. She smiles, grasps it, steps off of the platform and takes a seat on the horse behind Jason. She wraps her arms around his waist and holds on as Jason guides the horse out of the arena.

FADE TO:

EXT. JASON'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Jason rides his bike up the driveway and into the garage. He parks his bike on it's kickstand, props the mop handle next to it, and heads towards the house.

INT. JASON'S HOUSE - EVENING

Jason and Mei sit at the kitchen table, eating dinner.

MEI

So, how was school today.

JASON

Same as usual - boring.

MEI

Anything exciting happen today?

JASON

You know... that word on my bike  
reappeared again today, even after  
I painted over it again.

MEI

Really? Qianlima?

JASON

Yeah.

MEI

Are you going to try to repaint it  
again.

JASON

Nah, I don't think so. I think it  
wants to be seen. So I think I'll  
just leave it there and see what  
happens.

MEI

Well, it sounds to me like you have  
that all sorted out.

(beat)

So, what have you got going on this  
weekend?

JASON

Not much.

MEI

Good... I thought maybe we could go  
to visit my sister tomorrow.

JASON

(a little nervous)

I can't.

MEI

Why not?

JASON

Because I can't.

MEI

But you just said that you didn't  
have anything going on this  
weekend. What's going on?

Jason remains silent and uses his fork to pick at the food on his plate.

MEI (CONT'D)  
(more sternly)  
Jason?!

JASON  
(reluctantly)  
Okay... This kid challenged me to a  
bike race on Saturday.

MEI  
Where?

JASON  
Knob's Hill.

MEI  
Knob's Hill?

JASON  
Yeah.

MEI  
On your bikes?

Jason nods.

JASON  
Uh huh.

MEI  
And who's this other kid?

JASON  
A guy named Charlie... just another  
kid in my class.

MEI  
And when?

JASON  
(frustrated)  
Aw mom. What's with all these  
questions?

Mei merely looks at Jason with piercing "Mom's eyes".

JASON (CONT'D)  
Tomorrow at noon.

MEI  
And who will be there?

JASON  
Just a bunch of kids and  
classmates.

MEI  
Do you want me to be there?

JASON  
(forcefully)  
No way!

MEI  
Well, okay. But you will be  
careful, right?

Jason shakes his head in frustration.

JASON  
Aw, Mom!

Mei reaches out and grabs Jason's hand.

MEI  
Alright. I trust you, Jason. You  
know I'm just concerned for you.

JASON  
(now somewhat contrite)  
Yeah, I know. Thanks, mom.

EXT. KNOB'S HILL - DAY

A group of about thirty KIDS ranging in age between 10-15 have gathered in the small parking lot at the base of Knob's Hill. Among them is Hollie and SUZIE (a girlfriend of hers), and Charlie and his pack. Charlie stands astride his 10-speed mountain bicycle when he sees Jason ride up on his bike.

CHARLIE  
Look who decided to show up. I  
thought you'd chicken out.

JASON  
Well, I made it. What's the rules?

CHARLIE  
Rules? Very simple. We line up at  
that line over there.

Charlie points to one end of the parking lot.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
Then when the signal is given, we go.

JASON

Go where?

Charlie points to the other end of the parking lot.

CHARLIE

Up that path over there. There's a white flag stuck on a stake at the top of the hill. The winner is the one who grabs the flag and brings it back down using the road over there...

(points)

and crosses that finish line there...

(points)

the same one as the start line.

JASON

That's it?

CHARLIE

Yeah.

JASON

What is the start signal?

Charlie nods towards Jimmy standing nearby.

CHARLIE

Jimmy will light a bottle rocket and when it explodes in the air, that's our signal to go. Any other questions?

JASON

Just one... What happens when I win?

This questions catches Charlie by surprise.

BILLY

You win? Fat chance. Charlie never loses.

JASON

(to himself)

Until today.

CHARLIE

Let's get this show on the road.



As Charlie and Jason move to the start line, Jimmy runs down to the other end of the parking lot, near the beginning of the path.

Jason looks over at Hollie. She holds up her hands showing four sets of crossed fingers.

Jason adjusts his helmet strap and both cyclists get ready for the start.

All attention is focused on Jimmy as he bends over to light a bottle rocket standing in a Coke bottle. Smoke appears as the fuse begins burning. Then SWOOSH! The bottle rocket blasts off, racing into the air.

Charlie bursts forward, well before the bang. Then the BANG is heard and Jason sprints down the parking lot, chasing after Charlie.

They hit the path's entrance with Charlie just a few feet in front of Jason.

The two cyclists pedal hard along the narrow footpath, ascending the hill along this winding serpentine trail. Jason is right on Charlie's tail.

Each time Jason attempts to pass, Charlie LAUGHING, moves his bike over to block Jason's move.

Jason attempts another pass, and once again, Charlie blocks his progress, this time nearly forcing Jason off the path and into the bushes.

Jason settles in just a couple of feet behind Charlie and waits for an opportune time to pass. He sees the trail widen more than usual as it makes yet another turn.

As Charlie takes a wider path in this bend, Jason takes an inside path and slips into the lead.

Now, unimpeded, Jason quickly puts some space between himself and Charlie.

Charlie, BREATHING HARD, tries to keep up, but fails in his effort.

Moments later, Jason reaches the top and turns to check on Charlie and doesn't see him at all. He spies the white flag and flies by without stopping, grabbing the flag.

As he races to the gravel road leading from the hilltop, he looks one more time and doesn't see Charlie.

Jason begins coasting down the downhill road, and begins to relax some, knowing that Charlie isn't close behind him.

FADE TO:

EXT. PRAIRIE NEAR THE EDGE OF A CLIFF - DAY

Jason rides casually on that beautiful white horse with **Qianlima** branded onto the side of the saddle. He hears a voice - Hollie's voice - crying for help.

He scours the countryside and sees Hollie standing on a large rock near the edge of a cliff overlooking the ocean.

Three persons - Charlie, Billy, and Jimmy - slowly approach her. Hollie waves a large stick at them.

HOLLIE

Get away from me. Don't come any closer.

Jason spurs his steed and it gallops towards the cliff, but in another location. Without even slowing, Qianlima leaps off the edge of the cliff. The horse spreads its long white wings and they soar along over the crashing waves below.

Jason and Qianlima suddenly appear from below the cliff's edge, landing and stopping between Hollie and the three oppressors. The horse looks at the three, neighs and shakes its head, freezing the three in their tracks.

Jason turns to Hollie and offers his hand.

JASON

Here, get on.

Hollie grabs Jason's hand and he helps her onto the horse. Once situated, with her arms wrapped tightly around Jason's waist, the horse turns and runs off the cliff's edge, once again taking flight over the ocean.

Hollie, smiles warmly as she snuggles in behind Jason.

CUT TO:

EXT. KNOB'S HILL - DAY

Without warning, Charlie and his bike burst onto the road from the bushes, right in front of Jason. Jason slams on his brakes and swerves to miss Charlie, crashing into a nearby bush, and meanwhile dropping the flag.

CHARLIE  
(laughing)  
Oops!

Charlie picks up the flag and quickly begins pedaling down the road.

Jason retracts his bike from the bush and hurriedly chases after Charlie. It doesn't take him too long to catch up to Charlie.

They are side-by-side as they hit the pavement of the parking lot. The spectators cheer wildly. Hollie jumps with nervous anxiety, holding her still-crossed fingers to her face.

Jason pours on the steam and surges ahead of Charlie by more than a bike length as they cross the start/finish line.

As the cyclists circle around and stop their bikes, throngs of kids surround Jason, pounding him on the back, and CHEERING his victory.

Charlie, with Jimmy and Billy on their bikes beside him, stares angrily at Jason.

Hollie hops up and down, screaming joyfully.

HOLLIE  
You won! You won! Jason, you won!

Charlie hollers above the celebratory voices.

CHARLIE  
Not so fast!

Things quiet down as all eyes turn toward Charlie. Charlie holds out the flag for all to see.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)  
The rule was that the one who came down with the flag is the winner... and who has the flag?

JASON  
Yeah, but you stole it from me. I got to the top first, and had the flag, and was coming down with it when you stole it.

CHARLIE  
Oh yeah!? Prove it! Loser!

Jason merely stares back at Charlie.

Charlie and his gang turn and depart the area. The rest of the kids also begin to leave the area - some walking, some on bikes, some on skateboards.

Soon, only Jason and Hollie remain.

HOLLIE  
I'm sorry you didn't win.

JASON  
(angrily)  
But I did win. I was the one who captured that flag... He cheated!

HOLLIE  
I believe you. It's just that the other kids need proof that Charlie cheated. Can you prove that he cheated?

JASON  
(after a pause, dejected)  
No. I can't.

HOLLIE  
But that's okay. You did beat him across the finish line and no one else has ever even done that.

JASON  
Yeah, maybe.

HOLLIE  
And next time, you'll know what to expect and won't let Charlie get away with cheating.

JASON  
If there ever is a next time.

They depart the area - Jason walking beside his bike and Hollie.

EXT. HOLLIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Jason and Hollie stop on the sidewalk in front of her home.

HOLLIE  
I'm sorry you won... but didn't win.

JASON  
(shrugs his shoulders)  
That's okay. Thanks for coming and cheering for me.

HOLLIE  
Sure. You did great.

JASON  
Thanks.

Hollie glances down and sees the word ***Qianlima*** on Jason's bike.

HOLLIE  
(pointing)  
What's that word?

JASON  
It's pronounced "she-on-lee-ma". It was a horse in old Chinese stories - a beautiful fast horse... with wings... so it could also fly. It was so fast that nobody could ever catch it.

HOLLIE  
What a perfect name for your bike. You ride so fast... just like that horse... no one can catch you. Not even Charlie who is supposed to be the fastest in town.

Hollie pauses and ponders.

HOLLIE (CONT'D)  
"She-on-lee-ma". I like that name.

Jason shrugs.

HOLLIE (CONT'D)  
You want to come in for a while?

JASON  
No, I can't. I need to be getting on home.

HOLLIE  
(disappointed)  
Oh, okay.

JASON  
Hey, what's with Charlie? Is he  
always so mean?

HOLLIE  
To me, no... but to some of the  
others, yes.

JASON  
Why?

HOLLIE  
I don't know, but I've heard  
stories that his dad beats him.

JASON  
Really?

Hollie nods her head.

JASON (CONT'D)  
That's a shame... Anyway, I'll see  
you in school on Monday.

A smile comes to Hollie's face.

HOLLIE  
Monday... Okay. Bye.

JASON  
Bye.

Jason hops on his bike and rides off down the street.

INT. JASON'S HOUSE - LATER

Mei is vacuuming the living room when Jason enters the house.  
She sees Jason and turns off the vacuum.

MEI  
So, how was the race?

Jason shrugs his shoulders.

MEI (CONT'D)  
You win?

JASON  
(frustrated)  
Yes, I won... but the other kid,  
Charlie, cheated.

MEI

Let me get this straight... you won  
but the other kid cheated.

JASON

Yeah. But I don't want to talk  
about it.

MEI

Jason....

Jason turns and trudges to his bedroom, SLAMS his door.

Mei stands there for a moment with a concerned expression on her face. She then just lets go of the vacuum and walks into the kitchen, where she grabs the phone off the wall cradle, and presses the buttons, dialing a number.

She paces the kitchen as she waits for the person to answer on the other end.

MEI (CONT'D)

Yeah, Sis, it's Mei...

Mei slumps onto one of the kitchen chairs.

...not so good... I think there's  
something going on with Jason at  
school - maybe being bullied? - and I  
don't know how I can help him...

Tears stream down Mei's face.

MEI (CONT'D)

...No, I've tried, but he's angry  
and won't talk to me. I've already  
lost Tom and I can't afford to lose  
Jason, too. I'm so afraid...

Mei wipes some tears away with her free hand as she listens.

MEI (CONT'D)

... yeah, I'll try. But it's hard  
when I've got these two jobs...  
yeah, I know... yeah, okay... yeah,  
love you too... bye.

Mei buries her head in her hands and weeps.

INT. MAPLE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

Jason sits at his desk, sketching a likeness of Qianlima, the horse.

Other students mill around before the class is to begin. Mrs. Overland talks with another teacher just outside the classroom door.

Hollie leans over and observes Jason's work.

HOLLIE

What's that? Is it Qianlima?

JASON

Yeah, sort of. But I'm not a good artist.

Charlie, again, walks down the aisle by the windows, from the rear of the classroom. When he gets to Jason, he quickly grabs the paper sketch Jason was working on and holds it up to examine it.

JASON (CONT'D)

Hey!

Jason sees nasty bruises on Charlie's arm above the wrist.

CHARLIE

(to Billy and Jimmy  
nearby)

What have we here? A horse lover?

Charlie holds the sketch out in front of him.

JASON

What of it?

Charlie crumples the paper into a ball and holds it in front of Jason's face.

CHARLIE

(threatening)

Well, horse lover... you called me a cheater. You ever call me a cheater again, you'll live to regret it.

Charlie tosses the paper into Jason's face. Hollie just stares wide-eyed at what is transpiring.

Just then, Mrs. Overland closes the classroom door and walks towards her desk.

MRS. OVERLAND

OK, let's find our seats. It's time to get to work.



She searches through the items on top of her desk, looking for something. She pulls open each drawer and performs a quick check. Closing the last drawer, she gives a sigh of frustration.

MRS. OVERLAND (CONT'D)  
Has anyone seen my grade book?

Some murmuring is heard throughout the classroom as the students look at each other. Then, Charlie slowly raises his hand.

MRS. OVERLAND (CONT'D)  
Yes, Charlie. Do you know anything about the whereabouts of my grade book?

CHARLIE  
(shyly)  
I think I saw Jason take something off of your desk and stash it in his desk.

Jason and Hollie look at each other in dismay.

MRS. OVERLAND  
(sternly)  
Well, Jason?

Jason looks bewildered.

JASON  
No, ma'am. I never took anything from your desk.

MRS. OVERLAND  
Maybe we'd best have a look see.

Mrs. Overland marches over to Jason's desk.

MRS. OVERLAND (CONT'D)  
Jason, please open your desk.

Jason opens his desk. Mrs. Overland leans over and peers into Jason's desk and discovers her grade book partially concealed under some other items.

She gives Jason an angry look then reaches down and extracts her grade book from the desk. She then turns and marches back towards her desk.

MRS. OVERLAND (CONT'D)  
Jason, I think you need to go to  
the principal's office and see Mr.  
McKenzie.

Jason sits there... shocked.

Mrs. Overland turns and sees Jason not moving.

MRS. OVERLAND (CONT'D)  
(forcefully)  
Now! Please!

Jason slowly rises and walks towards the door. As he reaches the door, he looks back at Charlie, who is making a face at him. Jason exits and closes the door behind him.

Later, Jason sits in the same middle seat that he sat in on his first day at this school. His eyes widen when he sees Mei entering the school office.

Mei approaches the secretary at the counter.

MEI  
Mrs. Haverstadt to see Mr. McKenzie.

The secretary goes to the Principal's office door, knocks two times, opens it, and enters his office.

Mei looks at Jason, holds her arms out to her sides while shrugging her shoulders in a "What's going on?" posture.

The secretary returns from the Principal's office.

SECRETARY  
(to Mei)  
You can go in now.

Mei enters the office while the secretary closes the door behind her and then returns to her desk.

Moments later, the principal's door opens and Mrs. Overland exits, glancing sternly at Jason as she passes through that portion of the school office.

MR. MCKENZIE (65) (a tall slender grandfatherly type man) stands beside his door.

MR. MCKENZIE  
Come on in, Jason and take a seat.

Jason slowly rises and enters the office.

Once inside, Jason sees Mei sitting in one of the two chairs positioned in front of the principal's cluttered desk. Jason slowly slinks down in the other chair.

Mr. McKenzie walks around the desk and takes a seat in his high-backed chair.

MR. MCKENZIE (CONT'D)  
So, Jason, Mrs. Overland and I have been discussing this stolen grade book situation with your mother.

JASON  
But I...

Mr. McKenzie waves a finger and silences him.

MR. MCKENZIE  
This is a serious offense... one which we cannot take lightly.

JASON  
But I...

Again, Mr. McKenzie waves that finger to silence Jason.

MR. MCKENZIE  
Mrs. Overland also expressed concern about your deportment in class. You don't participate much and you appear to be daydreaming and not paying attention during the lessons.

Mr. McKenzie writes something on a piece of paper then hands it to Mei.

MR. MCKENZIE (CONT'D)  
Mrs. Haverstadt, I'm giving you the name and phone number of a doctor to have Jason examined for Attention Deficit Disorder - A.D.D.

MEI  
Attention Deficit Disorder?

MR. MCKENZIE  
Yes. This is a relatively new condition that we're starting to see more frequently in children today. We have a couple of other students in this school who have been diagnosed with A.D.D.

Mei, with a puzzled expression, looks at the note, then at Mr. McKenzie, then back to the note, then back to Mr. McKenzie.

MR. MCKENZIE (CONT'D)

Yes. Well, I've already spoken with the doctor over the phone and he has agreed to see Jason sometime tomorrow. Now, Jason's going to be suspended from school until he begins taking medication for this. We can't afford to have him get involved in other similar situations here at this school.

MEI

(frustrated)

It sounds to me like you've already confirmed a diagnosis for Jason.

MR. MCKENZIE

(defensively)

What I'm saying is that if Jason is diagnosed with A.D.D., and prescribed medication for that condition, then he will be allowed to return to school only after he begins taking his medication.

MEI

And what if Jason is not diagnosed with A.D.D.?

MR. MCKENZIE

Then, I will speak with the doctor and we will determine a proper course of action at that time.

MEI

It appears that the jury in this case is rigged and Jason is being unfairly judged.

MR. MCKENZIE

It may appear that way to you, Mrs. Haverstadt. But I assure you, that's not the case.

MEI

We'll just have to see about that. Is there anything else?

MR. MCKENZIE

No, not at this time.

MEI  
(firmly)  
Come on, Jason, let's go home.

Mr. McKenzie stands as Mei and Jason rise and exit the room.

EXT. MAPLE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER

Mei and Jason walk down the sidewalk, just out of the school building.

MEI  
(sternly)  
Get your bike and meet me at home.

Jason, eyes fixed on the ground, walks towards the bike rack as Mei continues toward the parking lot.

INT. JASON'S HOUSE - LATER

Mei and Jason sit at the kitchen table. Mei stares at that piece of paper with the doctor's name and phone number. After a moment, she looks at Jason, who is staring at the floor.

MEI  
Would you mind telling me what happened?

JASON  
I tried when we were in Mr. McKenzie's office, but was told to remain silent.

MEI  
Yes, I recognize that. But you're home now and I want to know what happened.

JASON  
Well, somehow Mrs. Overland's gradebook was taken from her desk and ended up in my desk.

MEI  
And you took it?

JASON  
Me... No way!

MEI  
Then how did it end up in your desk?

JASON

I don't know. But I think Charlie might have had something to do with it.

MEI

Why would you think that?

JASON

Well, because it was Charlie that ratted me out... lying to Mrs. Overland... telling her that he saw me take it and put it in my desk.

MEI

But you didn't do that?

JASON

No!

MEI

Is this Charlie the same boy you raced up Knob's Hill on Saturday?

JASON

Yeah. Why?

MEI

And you said that you actually won, but he cheated and took the victory from you?

JASON

Yeah. Why?

MEI

Well, maybe he's upset that you showed him up in front of all those other kids. And maybe this was his way of getting revenge.

Both Mei and Jason sit there silently for a few seconds, Mei contemplating what to say.

MEI (CONT'D)

Jason, I believe you... This Charlie kid... I'm hearing his name come up quite often. Is he a friend?

Jason's eyes drop to look at the floor.

JASON

Not really.

MEI  
Is he bullying you?

Jason just sits there.

MEI (CONT'D)  
Jason?!

Jason shrugs his shoulders while still looking down at the floor.

MEI (CONT'D)  
You know, Jason, we're going to face a lot of discrimination here... not because of who we are, but because we look different than everyone else. But we can't let that get to us. I face it at my work, and you'll probably continue to experience it at school... probably in the form of bullying. I'm sorry that that's the way it is, but we're both strong and we can overcome it. Okay?

Jason nods his head meekly.

MEI (CONT'D)  
Jason, have you made any friends yet?

Jason, still looking at the floor, again shrugs his shoulders.

JASON  
There's this one girl... Hollie... she's been friendly to me.

MEI  
Well, that's a good start. I'm confident that you'll make more friends in due time.

Jason again meekly nods.

MEI (CONT'D)  
But we still have this problem with your suspension and seeing this doctor. What do you think we should do?

Jason thinks momentarily, then looks up.

JASON  
Maybe just blow it off.

MEI

Honey, you know we can't do that.  
You can't return to school until  
after you see him.

JASON

So, big deal. I won't go back to  
school.

Mei gives Jason a somewhat exasperated look.

MEI

You know you can't do that. The law  
says you have to go to school.

JASON

(surrendering)

Then I guess we need to see him.

MEI

I think you're right. I'll call to  
see if we can see him tomorrow.

(beat)

Are you really not participating in  
class?

Jason once again shrugs his shoulders.

MEI (CONT'D)

Why not?

JASON

Because I already learned this  
stuff from my other school.

MEI

Okay. Then what about them saying  
that you're daydreaming and not  
paying attention?

JASON

Aw mom... I already know this  
stuff, I don't need to learn it  
again. So my mind focuses on other  
things. Is that so bad?

MEI

Well, maybe not... We'll just have  
to see what the doctor says.

Jason sits there, numbly looking at the floor.



INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Mei and Jason sit in chairs in front of the doctor's desk.  
The NAME PLATE on the desk: *ANDREW RONCOLI, M.D.*

DOCTOR RONCOLI (70-ish) (a heavy-set and old-looking man), clad in a white lab coat, sits behind his desk examining a number of papers. He slowly sets the papers down and looks at Mei.

DOCTOR RONCOLI

Mrs. Haverstadt, according to these test results, it appears that your son has some mild attention deficit. Not so bad that it cannot be treated with medication.

He picks up a smaller piece of paper and holds it out in front of him.

DOCTOR RONCOLI (CONT'D)

I've prepared a prescription for you to take to the pharmacy for some Ritalin, which should help solve Johnny's problems.

MEI

His name is Jason.

DOCTOR RONCOLI

Oh, yeah... Jason.

MEI

Are there any other alternatives?

DOCTOR RONCOLI

Nah. Ritalin has been around for about ten years and has a proven track record. My recommendation is to begin Ritalin right away. That should help with Johnny's problems.

MEI

His name is JASON!

DOCTOR RONCOLI

Oh yeah....

Mei frowns.

DOCTOR RONCOLI (CONT'D)

Look, I don't really like it either, but you came to me seeking my examination and my opinion...

and my medical opinion is that  
Johnny begin a course of Ritalin  
right away.

MEI  
No other options?

DOCTOR RONCOLI  
No, not really.

MEI  
Okay. Thank you Dr. Broccoli for  
your time.

Dr. Roncoli looks somewhat perplexed as Mei leans forward and  
grabs the prescription out of his hand, then she and Jason  
stand up and depart.

EXT. WALGREENS - DAY

Mei and Jason sit in the car, parked outside the pharmacy.

JASON  
Mom, I really don't want to take  
that medicine.

MEI  
I know, honey. But we've got to at  
least go through the motions in  
order for you to get back into  
school.  
(beat)  
You know I had to take off work  
from both of my jobs yesterday and  
today because of this situation. I  
can't afford to take any more time  
off or I could lose my jobs... And  
I don't know if I'd be able to find  
any other work here in Maple  
Ridge... And if you're not in  
school, then I'd have to be home.  
Can you understand?

Jason stares at the floor of the car.

JASON  
Yes, mom.

MEI  
Jason, you know I love you...  
right?

Jason nods his head.

MEI (CONT'D)

And you know that I would never do anything to you that would be bad for you... right?

Jason again nods his head.

MEI (CONT'D)

Well, all we'll have to prove is that we saw the doctor and got the medicine. But we don't really have to prove that you're taking it properly. Actually, you can take one and throw it in the trash. At least you're "taking" it.

A slight smile comes to Jason's face as he looks over at Mei.

JASON

You think that will work?

Mei reaches over and playfully tousles Jason's hair.

MEI

I can't say for sure, but we can sure give it a try.

They exit the car and walk towards the Walgreens door.

INT. WALGREENS - LATER

Jason and Mei sit in chairs near the pharmacy window when MRS. MASON (mid-30s), the pharmacist, calls Jason's name.

MRS. MASON

Jason Haverstadt.

Jason and Mei stand up and approach the pharmacy window. The pharmacist looks at Jason and a puzzled look comes to her face.

MRS. MASON (CONT'D)

By chance, are you the Jason that's in Hollie's class at school.

Jason nervously, yet politely, nods his head.

MRS. MASON (CONT'D)

(smiling)

Hollie has told us so much about you.

MEI

I hope it's all good things.

MRS. MASON  
Oh, yes. All good.

JASON  
How do you know Hollie?

MRS. MASON  
Oh, I'm sorry. Hollie is my  
niece...  
(looks at Mei)  
My late sister's daughter.  
(looks back to Jason)  
After my sister and her husband  
were killed in an auto accident  
last year, my husband and I agreed  
to take Hollie in and care for her.  
So, Hollie's been living with us  
for about a year now. Anyway, from  
everything that Hollie says, it's  
nice to know that you're her  
friend. Thank you.

Jason again merely nods his head.

MRS. MASON (CONT'D)  
OK, so here's your prescription.

Mrs. Mason hands the bag to Mei.

MRS. MASON (CONT'D)  
That will be thirteen dollars and  
fifty-four cents.

Mei hands her a credit card. Mrs. Mason runs the credit card  
then returns it to Mei.

MRS. MASON (CONT'D)  
And here's your receipt.

She hands the receipt to Mei and, as Jason and Mei turn to  
leave, she calls out in a muted whisper.

MRS. MASON (CONT'D)  
(smiling at Jason)  
And Jason, don't be a stranger.

INT. JASON'S HOUSE - DAY

Jason and Mei are in the kitchen. Jason watches as Mei reads  
the label on the bottle of pills she just purchased. She  
looks at Jason.

MEI

Well, let's do this... I'm going to give you a pill and you're going to take it and do whatever you want with it. That way, we're not lying if asked if I gave you a pill or whether you took your pill.

Jason nods his agreement.

Mei opens the bottle and hands Jason one tablet. Jason walks over to the trash can and drops the pill into it.

MEI (CONT'D)

Okay. Let's call the school.

Mei picks up the phone from its cradle on the wall and dials the school's phone number.

MEI (CONT'D)

Hello, this is Mrs. Haverstadt. May I please speak with Mr. McKenzie?...  
Yes, I'll hold.

Jason looks on nervously as Mei waits for Mr. McKenzie to come to the phone.

MEI (CONT'D)

Hello, Mr. McKenzie. Yes, this is Mrs. Haverstadt... Fine, thank you. I'm calling to report that we have done everything requested. We saw Dr. Roncoli, got a prescription, and picked it up... Yes, that's correct. I gave Jason his first tablet... Yes, he took it... from me, here at home...

Mei gives Jason a wink.

MEI (CONT'D)

Now, will Jason be allowed to return to school tomorrow?... Yes, I understand... Thank you, Mr. McKenzie.

Mei ends the phone call and returns the phone down to its cradle. She looks at Jason and smiles.

MEI (CONT'D)

He said that you can return to school tomorrow.

However, he also said that if you  
do anything stupid again like  
taking the teacher's gradebook...

JASON  
(interrupting)  
But mom, I didn't...

Mei holds out her hand in front of her to stop Jason.

MEI  
I know... I know you didn't take it.

Mei moves over to Jason and gives him a hug.

MEI (CONT'D)  
But just try to stay out of any  
trouble. OK?

INT. MAPLE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

Mrs. Overland once again stands just outside the classroom,  
by the classroom door, chatting to another teacher in the  
hallway. The students mill around and chat - some standing,  
some sitting.

As Jason takes his seat at his desk, Hollie leans over  
towards him with a concerned look on her face.

HOLLIE  
Where were you yesterday?

JASON  
I got suspended.

HOLLIE  
Because of that grade book thing?

JASON  
Yeah, but I didn't take it.

HOLLIE  
I believe you.

JASON  
Anyways, I'm back today.

Hollie hands Jason a piece of paper.

HOLLIE  
Have you seen this.

JASON  
No, what is it?

HOLLIE  
It's a flier announcing the Maple  
Ridge bike race against cancer.  
It's a relay race next Saturday at  
the high school track.

Jason briefly examines the flier.

JASON  
What of it?

HOLLIE  
I think you should enter it.

JASON  
Why would I do that?

HOLLIE  
Because you're really fast and it  
would be a way for you to beat  
Charlie fair and square.

JASON  
(looking at the flier)  
But it's a four person relay team and  
I don't have anyone to race with.

HOLLIE  
Leave that to me. I'll get you  
three other boys to be on your  
team. It won't be hard. Word's  
gotten out how fast you are and  
that you beat Charlie at Knob's  
Hill.

JASON  
I don't know...

Once again, Charlie comes walking up from behind Jason. He  
sees the flier and grabs it off of Jason's desk.

Jason sees the remnant of a busted lip and a bruise on  
Charlie's neck.

CHARLIE  
Hey, hey, hey. You gonna enter a  
team in this race?

The classroom goes quiet as all students witness this  
confrontation between Charlie and Jason.

JASON  
What if I do?

CHARLIE  
Well, you won't win.

JASON  
Why not.

CHARLIE  
Because you can't find four kids  
who can beat us.

JASON  
I won't need to find four kids who  
can beat you. All I need is three  
others kids with bikes and I'll  
beat you myself.

Charlie is flustered, recognizing his verbal mistake. Then he  
leans forward towards Jason.

CHARLIE  
(threatening)  
You think?!

JASON  
Yeah! And after we do beat you, you  
have to promise to leave me... and  
and all the other kids you bully...  
alone.

CHARLIE  
And what if you don't beat me?

JASON  
Then you can continue to bully me  
all you want, but leave the other  
kids alone.

Charlie turns and chuckles to Jimmy and Billy.

CHARLIE  
That sounds fun enough.

JASON  
And one more thing.

CHARLIE  
What.

JASON  
You've got to leave us all alone  
all this next week...



until after the race. Once the race  
is over and if you beat us, then  
you can bully me all you want.

Charlie then notices all of the other students silently  
eyeing him.

CHARLIE  
(hesitantly)  
Deal!

Jason offers his hand.

JASON  
Shake on it.

Charlie reluctantly shakes Jason's hand. Then begins  
chuckling again as he walks down the aisle to his desk at the  
back of the classroom.

Jason turns to Hollie.

JASON (CONT'D)  
You think you can get three others  
to ride on my team?

KEVIN, a smaller boy sitting in front of Hollie speaks softly  
to Jason and Hollie.

KEVIN  
I'll ride on Jason's team.

MIKE, another boy nearby hears this and joins in.

MIKE  
Me too!

Hollie turns back to Jason with a big grin on her face.

HOLLIE  
I know I can.

JASON  
OK, I'll do it.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL TRACK - DAY

Charlie, Billy, and Jimmy sit astride their mountain bikes  
near the start line when JOEY, a larger boy (who looks 17)  
rides up on his late model multi-gear bike and gives them  
all a high-five.

Jason rides up on ***Qianlima*** to join Kevin, Mike, and STEVEN (another classmate), who all stand beside their newer mountain bikes. Jason greets them with a "Hey" and they all return the greeting. Jason glances at Charlie and his team.

JASON  
What's with that one kid?

MIKE  
He's an 8th grader named Joey.

JASON  
He looks pretty old.

KEVIN  
Yeah, I think he flunked a couple times and I hear he already shaves.

Mike and Steven chuckle.

JASON  
He's allowed to ride on their team?

STEVEN  
Sure. Charlie can pick from anyone from the whole middle school.

JASON  
Oh...

Hollie and Suzie walk up and join the group.

HOLLIE  
Hi, guys.

All four boys respond, almost in unison.

ALL BOYS  
Hey, Hollie... Hi Suzie.

HOLLIE  
Are you guys ready?

The boys look at each other and nod their heads.

JASON  
I guess so.

Just then, an announcement is made over the PA system.

PA SYSTEM  
All middle school racers report to the start line.

Jason looks at each boy on his team.

JASON

OK, Mike, you're first... Kevin,  
you're second... Steve, you're  
third... and I'll be riding last.  
Any questions?

Mike, Kevin, and Steven all shake their heads.

JASON (CONT'D)

Don't worry if you should fall  
behind in your part of the race.  
Just do your best and I'll try to  
catch us back up before the finish  
line.

The team walks their bikes to the start line on the track.  
Jason, is the only biker that isn't riding a late-model multi-  
speed mountain bike or road bike.

An adult RACE OFFICIAL wearing a "Bikers Against Cancer" t-  
shirt greets all the BIKERS and gives the instructions,  
trying to be enthusiastic.

RACE OFFICIAL

Okay. It's great to see this many  
teams... eight teams... including  
teams from as far away as Pine  
Bluff and Little Rock... Welcome.  
OK, so this is how this goes...  
Y'all know how relay races work.  
This one's not any different. Each  
rider must possess the team's  
baton, and pass it to the next  
rider. If the baton is dropped, the  
rider must stop and pick it up  
before continuing with his leg of  
the race. Are you with me so far?

Some bikers nod their heads. Others respond with yes, uh-huh,  
sure, etc.

RACE OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

Okay. As you saw, the elementary  
school races were one lap per leg,  
and the high schoolers will be four  
laps per leg. But you middle  
schoolers will have two laps per  
leg... got that?... two laps per  
rider.

After the rider on your team completes his first lap, the next rider will move onto the track and wait for your teammate to ride up and hand you your team's baton. Once you have your team's baton, then you may proceed with your leg of the race. Any questions thus far?

The bikers shake their heads and respond "no".

RACE OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

Okay. The winner is the team that crosses the finish line first... with their baton. Oh, the finish line is also the start line. Let's see, there's eight teams and there's eight lanes. So, each team will start in one of the lanes. Now you don't have to stay in that lane throughout the race... only at the start. Got that?

Again, some bikers nod their heads and some respond with yes, uh-huh, etc.

RACE OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

Okay. Last thing... this is a race to raise money for cancer research. Although it's a race, it's really just for fun. So, let's be safe out there... and have fun racing! OK, let's get the first riders out in a lane and the rest of you move to the side of the track. The race will start when I drop the white flag.

The TEAMS comply, with the first rider of each team positioning himself/herself in one of the eight lanes. Mike sits on his bike in lane 8 while Billy is sitting on his bike in lane 3. All the other bikers are off the track, but still in their respective small groups of three.

The race official moves to a position a few feet in front of the start line and just off the track. ANOTHER RACE OFFICIAL clad in a "Bikers Against Cancer" t-shirt distributes a plastic baton to each of the first leg riders.

The race official, holding a bullhorn in one hand, raises his other hand holding a white flag on a stick.

RACE OFFICIAL (CONT'D)  
 (speaking into the bullhorn)  
 Are you ready?... Get set... GO!

The race official drops his arm holding the flag. The first leg racers tear out from the start line and immediately begin jockeying for position as they near, then round the first turn. Billy is in the lead, and Mike is bringing up the rear.

The other racers, along with friends and family SPECTATORS, CHEER for their respective teams and riders.

Jason, Kevin, and Steven shout to Mike. "Come on, Mike."  
 "Pedal hard." "Faster." "You can do it." etc.

As the first leg passes by the start line, Billy still leads, with each team trailing in single file. Mike is still in last place.

As they enter the final turn of the second lap, the leaders are still tightly grouped together, however, Mike has fallen slightly further behind.

The second leg racers are quickly placed in one of the lanes, lane 1 for Charlie's team currently in first place; lane 2 for the team right behind Billy; and on down the line. Kevin takes his position in lane 8 and awaits the baton hand off from Mike.

Oddly, all eight teams struggle with their baton hand off. However, when it all gets sorted out, Charlie's team is still in first place with Jimmy leading the way. Unfortunately, Kevin is still in last place.

As Mike, BREATHING HARD, walks his bike over to Jason and Steven, Jason gives him a pat on the back.

JASON  
 Good job, Mike. You hung in there  
 really well.

MIKE  
 (huffing and puffing)  
 Thanks.

As the second leg riders enter the last turn, Jimmy is neck and neck with another rider for the lead. The rest of the pack has spread out somewhat with Kevin now still in last place and trailing about 30 yards behind the leaders.

All teams, including Jason's, have a much better baton hand-off this time. However, Joey has retaken the lead and Steven is still in last place.

As Kevin coasts his bike to Jason and Mike, Jason gives him a pat on the back, too.

JASON  
Good job, Kevin. We're still okay.

KEVIN  
(huffing and puffing)  
Thanks.

As the third leg bikers enter the final turn in their leg, Joey has opened up a two-bike lead and Steven has fallen back another 20 yards.

Jason quickly moves to his start position in lane 8 and glances at Hollie standing along the sideline. She holds up her hands showing four sets of crossed fingers.

Joey and Charlie execute a near perfect baton exchange and Charlie opens up a wider lead. By the time Jason gets the baton from Steven, he is more than 60 yards behind Charlie. However, Jason isn't discouraged. Instead, he grimaces and pumps his legs even harder.

After a few moments, the grimace disappears and a pleasant smile comes across his face.

FADE TO:

EXT. CHURCHILL DOWNS - DAY

Jason rides that beautiful white horse in the Kentucky Derby. Instead of a number on the saddle blanket, we see the word **Qianlima**. Although in last place after leaving the gate, Qianlima slowly makes its way along the outside until it is neck and neck with the lead horse. Jason glances over at the other rider on the lead horse - Charlie - who gives an evil look back.

JASON  
(to Qianlima)  
OK, Qianlima, do your thing.

Qianlima suddenly bursts forward, leaving Charlie and the rest of the field behind.

The POV SHIFTS back and forth a couple times between Qianlima's powerful hoofs striking the soft track surface and the bike's tires racing along the cinder track.

Qianlima wins the race by twenty lengths.

In the winner's circle, Qianlima has a large wreath of roses draped over it, while Jason is greeted by Hollie, who hands him the trophy and gives him a quick kiss on his cheek.

FADE TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL TRACK - DAY

Racing down the back stretch of the second lap, Jason catches up to Charlie at the front of the pack. Jason glances over to Charlie, who returns the glance with an evil sneer.

JASON  
(to Qianlima)  
OK, Qianlima, do your thing.

With that, Jason puts out a burst of speed just as they begin to round the final turn. Although Charlie tries hard, he can't keep up with Jason. Jason crosses the finish line about 20 feet in front of Charlie.

Mike, Kevin, Steven, Hollie, Suzie, and many of the spectators go wild CHEERING for the victorious Jason. They rush in and gather around him, slapping him on the back with wild enthusiasm.

Moments later, the race official makes his way to Jason. He shakes his hand and hands him a champion medal - a gold medallion on a red fabric lanyard.

RACE OFFICIAL  
Wow! Never in my life have I  
witnessed such a comeback. What's  
your name, young man?

JASON  
Jason.

RACE OFFICIAL  
Well, Jason, you and your team are  
the middle school champions.  
Congratulations!

The race official proceeds to hand the champion medals to Mike, Kevin, and Steven, who all beam with joy.

Hollie, filled with uncontrollable joy, leans in to Jason and gives him a quick kiss on his cheek. Jason, at first is shocked by this gesture, but then gives her a big grin.

Jason glances over to Charlie, who sits on his bike, still BREATHING HARD and numb from the defeat. But Charlie doesn't respond angrily, but rather, he gives Jason a respectful nod.

Jason, still smiling, gives Charlie a return head nod.

INT. MAPLE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

STUDENTS mill about in the hallway before school begins. Jason is at his locker. Hollie is at her locker just a few down from Jason's.

Charlie and his posse come up behind Jason and Charlie gives Jason a light playful smack on the back of the head. Jimmy and Billy snicker. Jason turns and glares at Charlie, then notices Charlie's slight black eye.

CHARLIE

(friendly)

Hey, good race on Saturday. Where'd you learn to ride like that?

Jason's glare turns to a puzzled look.

JASON

I don't know. I just do it.

CHARLIE

Well, I know that it can't be that old ratty bike you've got.

JASON

I don't know about that.

Just then, the bell RINGS and Charlie and his gang turn and head off to their classroom.

Jason looks at Hollie and whispers.

JASON (CONT'D)

What was that all about?

Hollie smiles and shrugs her shoulders.

HOLLIE

(whispering)

I don't know, but I think it was good.

Jason also shrugs his shoulders.

EXT. MAPLE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Jason is at the bike rack after school, pulling Qianlima out when he is suddenly startled by Charlie's voice behind him.



CHARLIE

Hey, Jason, can I give your bike a  
test ride?

Jason turns and finds Charlie and his gang blocking his path like before. Jason hesitates a moment and tenses up slightly, trying to assess whether or not this is another bullying attempt or trick by Charlie. Charlie doesn't look threatening.

JASON

(hesitantly)

Sure, I guess.

CHARLIE

Great! Thanks!

Jason hands over Qianlima to Charlie who immediately hops on. As he attempts to ride away, the bike suddenly turns into the grass area near the bike rack and Charlie is tossed off and onto the lawn.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

What the...?

He gets up and again gets onto the bike. This time, the bike's brakes lock up and Charlie can't get it rolling. So he sort of drags the bike back to Jason and hands it over to him.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

(frustrated)

Hey man, you've got one screwed up  
bike. I don't know how you can even  
ride this piece of junk.

JASON

I don't know. It works for me.

BILLY

Here, let me give it a try.

He takes the bike from Jason, hops on and begins pedaling away. Suddenly, the front wheel begins to rapidly wobble, causing Billy to lose control and fall off the bike and onto the grassy lawn. He gets up and returns the bike to Jason.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Dude, this bike is trash!

Jason takes the bike and looks down at it as perplexed as the other boys.

JASON  
I'm sorry. I don't know what's  
wrong. It works for me.

Charlie and his gang merely turn, retrieve their bikes and ride away.

Jason hesitantly gets on Qianlima. But as he rides away on it, it works absolutely perfectly.

INT. MAPLE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

The students mill about and chat with each other before class begins. Jason, however, sits at his desk. He glances over and sees Hollie's empty desk.

Charlie once again comes up from behind Jason and gives him a friendly slap on top of his head.

JASON  
Hey!?

CHARLIE  
So... where's your girlfriend?

JASON  
Who, Hollie?

CHARLIE  
You're kidding me, right? No other  
girl gives you the time of day.

JASON  
She's not my girlfriend.

CHARLIE  
Whatever.

JASON  
Anyways, I don't know where she is.  
Maybe she's home sick or something.

CHARLIE  
Yeah, maybe home... love sick.

Charlie turns to Billy and Jimmy who are both snickering.

JASON  
Come on. Knock it off. We're just  
friends. That's all.

CHARLIE  
Whatever.

Just then, Mrs. Overland enters the classroom and closes the door.

MRS. OVERLAND  
 Alright class, let's find our seats  
 and get started. We've got a lot to  
 do today.

As the students move to their seats, Jason again looks over at Hollie's empty desk.

EXT. MAPLE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

The bell RINGS and students exit the school. Jason walks towards the bike rack. A fire truck SIREN WAILS as it speeds down the street past the school.

STUDENT #1  
 (to Student #2)  
 I wonder what's going on.

STUDENT #2  
 Yeah, that's the second truck to go  
 by.

STUDENT #1  
 Must be something big.

STUDENT #2  
 Yeah.

Jason gets **Qianlima** and follows the sound of the fire truck.

EXT. HOLLIE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

After he rounds a corner, Jason sees Hollie's house engulfed in flames and a bunch of fire fighters attempting to control the fire with their water hoses.

Jason sees Mr. and Mrs. Mason standing nearby - Mrs. Mason still wearing her white lab coat. MR. MASON has his arm around his wife's shoulders and is drawing her close to him. Both appear to be in a state of shock.

Mrs. Mason sees Jason.

MRS. MASON  
 Hi, Jason. Is Hollie with you?

Jason gets a puzzled look on his face.

JASON

No ma'am. She wasn't in school today.

MRS. MASON

(surprised and shocked)

What?

JASON

Hollie wasn't in school today. She's not with you?

MRS. MASON

No.

(beginning to panic)

Oh no... Oh my gosh... it was one year ago today that Hollie's parents were killed in that crash.

Mrs. Mason turns to her husband and look at each other with expressions of terror.

MRS. MASON (CONT'D)

Where could she be?

Mr. Mason just remains silent and pulls his wife closer.

Jason sees the basement window slightly open. He tosses down Qianlima and runs towards the house. Mrs. Mason shouts after him.

MRS. MASON (CONT'D)

Jason!

TWO FIRE FIGHTERS see Jason running towards the house and chase after him, but Jason is much quicker than them. One FIRE FIGHTER calls out to Jason.

FIRE FIGHTER

(shouting)

Hey, kid! Stop! You can't go there!

Jason just ignores the commands and races to the basement window. He quickly opens the window and scurries through it and into the basement.

The fire fighters are too large to fit through the window with all their gear on. They lay down by the window and attempt to look into the basement, through the smoke, to see what Jason is doing.

FIRE FIGHTER (CONT'D)

(shouting)

Hey, kid! Come on out of there!

This place is on fire and you can't  
be in there!

INT. HOLLIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jason hears the fire fighter, but ignores him. He attempts to feel his way through the smoke-filled room as he works his way to the small closet door. Reaching the door, he opens it to find Hollie slumped on the floor. He lifts her by her shoulders and struggles to drag her unresponsive body towards the light coming in through the window.

Jason gets to the window and the fire fighters see him struggling to get Hollie to the window. Jason COUGHS as he attempts to lift Hollie towards the fire fighters.

EXT. HOLLIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Laying on their stomachs, they reach out and grab hold of Hollie and bring her up and through the window.

As one fire fighter gets up and hastily carries Hollie towards a nearby ambulance, the other fire fighter reaches down and assists Jason as he climbs out of the basement through the window.

Jason, COUGHING, is quickly escorted to the ambulance.

As Hollie is being strapped onto a stretcher and fitted with an oxygen mask by an EMT, Mr. and Mrs. Mason run towards the ambulance.

MRS. MASON  
(in tears)  
Hollie! Hollie!

EMT  
(to Mrs. Mason)  
She's alive, but unresponsive.  
We're taking her to Saint Mary's.

Mrs. Mason, with tears in her eyes, nods her understanding.

MRS. MASON  
Can I accompany her?

EMT  
Are you her parent?

MRS. MASON  
De facto parent, yes.

EMT

Okay. Yes.

As the EMTs load the stretcher into the ambulance, she glances over and sees Jason seated on the ground by the nearby firetruck being tended to by the fire fighter. Jason is also being fitted with an oxygen mask as he continues to COUGH. Mrs. Mason's and Jason's eyes meet momentarily.

MRS. MASON

(whispering)

Thank you.

Jason BLINKS his eyes between COUGHS in acknowledgement.

With the assistance of the EMT, Mrs. Mason climbs into the back of the ambulance, the door is closed, and the vehicle departs the area with its SIREN BLARING.

INT. JASON'S HOUSE - LATER

Jason, in clean clothes and freshly showered (hair still damp), sits at the kitchen table, occasionally COUGHING, as he stares mindlessly out the kitchen window.

Mei enters the kitchen carrying a bag of groceries. She sets the bag down on the counter, with her back to Jason, and begins to put the groceries away.

MEI

Hey, did you hear about the big fire today? I guess a house burned down.

Mei hears Jason COUGH, then turns towards him.

MEI (CONT'D)

What's up with that cough?

Jason shrugs his shoulders as he again coughs.

MEI (CONT'D)

Your hair... it's all wet and those aren't the same clothes you were wearing when you left for school. You take a shower?

Jason just continues to stare forward.

MEI (CONT'D)

Jason, what's going on?

After a brief pause and between coughs Jason responds.

JASON  
The fire was Hollie's house.

MEI  
(shocked)  
Oh no!  
(beat)  
Is everyone OK?

JASON  
Not Hollie... she was taken to the hospital.

A TEAR rolls down Jason's cheek.

JASON (CONT'D)  
I don't know if she's all right or not.

Mei sits in the chair next to Jason, takes his hand, and looks deeply into his eyes.

MEI  
Oh, Jason... I know she's your friend... I'll tell you what... why don't we go to Saint Mary's and see what we can find out? OK?

Jason nods his head and wipes his eyes.

INT. SAINT MARY'S HOSPITAL - LATER

Hollie lies in a bed and is hooked up to IVs and a monitor in a private room. She is being provided oxygen via small tubes running from her nose across her face and around behind her ears. She is asleep.

Mrs. Mason sits in a chair near the bed, reading a magazine.

Jason and Mei walk up and stand at the door to Hollie's room.

After a moment, Mei timidly knocks on the door.

Mrs. Mason looks up, sees Jason and Mei, sets down her magazine, stands up, walks over to Jason, and gives him a big hug.

As she releases the hug and pulls back arm's length from Jason, we see tears in her eyes.

MRS. MASON  
Jason, how can I ever thank you for what you've done?

Jason shrugs his shoulders.

JASON  
It's no big deal.

MRS. MASON  
Yes it is! You saved Hollie's life.

Jason just stands there quiet, trying not to cough, not knowing how to respond.

Mei, on the other hand, gets a puzzled look on her face.

Mrs. Mason sees Mei's reaction.

MRS. MASON (CONT'D)  
You don't know?

MEI  
Know what?

MRS. MASON  
Oh my God... Jason ran into our  
burning house and rescued Hollie.

Mei places her hand over her mouth in shock.

MEI  
He what?

MRS. MASON  
He saved Hollie's life.

MEI  
Oh my....

Mei places a hand on Jason's shoulder.

MEI (CONT'D)  
(to Jason)  
Is that true?

While looking at the floor, Jason shrugs his shoulders.

Mei turns Jason around and lifts his head to look him in the eyes. Mei begins to tear up.

MEI (CONT'D)  
Jason, are you OK?

Jason nods his head.



MRS. MASON

Mrs. Haverstadt, Jason is a true hero.

Mei, now barely able to contain her tears, points to some chairs in the hallway.

MEI

Jason, I'll be waiting in those chairs over there. Take your time.

Mei exits, sits in one of the chairs, places her face in her hands and begins sobbing.

Jason turns around and glances over towards Hollie.

JASON

How is she?

MRS. MASON

(wiping her eyes)

The doctor said that she'll be fine, but she breathed in a lot of smoke, so she'll have to stay in the hospital a few days.

JASON

Is it OK if I stay for a little while?

MRS. MASON

Why, sure, Jason.

Mrs. Mason grabs another chair in the room, and moves it near hers.

MRS. MASON (CONT'D)

Why don't you have a seat right here.

Mrs. Mason returns to her chair.

After a few seconds of awkward silence, Mrs. Mason speaks.

MRS. MASON (CONT'D)

Jason, tell me... How did you know Hollie was there in the basement?

JASON

(thinking for a brief moment)

Well, she wasn't in school and wasn't with you...

I just sorta figured she would be in her safe place.

MRS. MASON  
Safe place?

JASON  
Yeah... There is a small closet in the basement that she would use... She called it her safe place.

MRS. MASON  
How did you know about this place?

JASON  
She showed it to me one day.

MRS. MASON  
Did she tell you why she needed a safe place?

JASON  
(silent for a couple seconds)  
Yeah... She said that she would get scared when you and Mr. Mason would argue and fight.

There is a moment of awkward silence.

MRS. MASON  
Did Hollie tell you what we were arguing about?

JASON  
(nods his head slightly)  
Yeah... She said it was mostly about money, but sometimes about her... that she was in the way and wasn't wanted.

Mrs. Mason puts a hand over her mouth as tears begin to form again and run down her cheeks. She looks over toward Hollie.

MRS. MASON  
I'm sorry... I'm so sorry. I didn't know... I didn't think she could hear our arguments.  
(brief pause then looking back to Jason)  
Yes, we did argue about money, but it's not that we don't want Hollie. We love her and do want her... very much.

Mrs. Mason weeps while Jason sits there awkwardly in silence.

JASON  
Have you told Hollie?

MRS. MASON  
Told Hollie what?

JASON  
That you love her and want her?

MRS. MASON  
Of course... I'm sure we have... I think... Oh, I don't know.

JASON  
Maybe you could tell her a bit more often... just to let her know for sure.

MRS. MASON  
(gathering her composure)  
Yes, you're absolutely right.  
Jason, you're such a brave and wise young man.

Jason blushes a little.

Just then, Hollie begins to COUGH and STIR in her bed. Mrs. Mason quickly gets up, takes Hollie's hand in hers, and brushes her forehead and face with her other hand.

MRS. MASON (CONT'D)  
Hollie... Hollie....

Hollie opens her eyes and looks at Mrs. Mason through squinting eyes.

HOLLIE  
(weakly and with a hoarse voice)  
Aunt Peg?

MRS. MASON  
Yes, dear. I'm here... right by your side... always.

Jason stands up and moves to the doorway of the room, then he just stands there watching Hollie and Mrs. Mason.

Hollie looks at the IV bag hanging overhead and the machinery she is connected to.

HOLLIE

What happened?... How did I get here?

MRS. MASON

Hollie, you were in the basement of the house and the house caught fire. No one knew you were there... But Jason...

(begins to choke up and weep)  
Jason saved you... Honey, Jason saved your life.

HOLLIE

Jason?

MRS. MASON

(nods her head slightly)  
Yes, dear... Jason.

HOLLIE

How?

MRS. MASON

He knew that you were in the basement when you weren't at school today. He ran past the firemen and crawled into the basement through the window... and pulled you out to safety. Hollie, Jason saved your life. He's a real hero.

HOLLIE

Jason did that?

MRS. MASON

(nodding)  
Uh-huh... and he came here to check on you. He's right over....

Mrs. Mason looks around the room, but doesn't see Jason. He had silently departed.

MRS. MASON (CONT'D)

He was right here a just moment ago.

There is a moment of silence, then Mrs. Mason breaks it.

MRS. MASON (CONT'D)

Hollie, Jason told me that you said you felt we didn't want you.

(beat and crying)  
Nothing could be farther from the truth.

We love you very much and want you  
very much. I'm so sorry we gave  
that impression.

Hollie just looks at Mrs. Mason as she kisses Hollie's hand.

Suddenly, a NURSE enters the room and quickly begins checking  
Hollie and all her vital signs.

NURSE  
(to Hollie)  
That young boy told us that you had  
just awakened. Young lady, we're  
glad to have you back with us. You  
know, you're one lucky girl.

Hollie looks at the doorway and catches a glimpse of Jason  
and Mei as they depart.

INT. MAPLE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

Mrs. Overland sits at her desk and the students are all  
sitting at their desks writing something on paper. The room  
is almost deathly quiet.

A couple of students behind Jason begin to whisper to each  
other and look out the classroom window.

Within moments, all the students are straining to look out  
the window and whispering to each other. Some, including  
Charlie, move to the window to get a better look and the  
activity outside.

Through the window we see a police car, an ambulance, and a  
fire truck pull up in front of the school.

Mrs. Overland notices this disruption then glances at the  
clock above the classroom doorway.

MRS. OVERLAND  
AHM! What exactly is going on here?

CHARLIE  
There's a police car, an ambulance,  
and a fire truck that just pulled  
up to our school.

MRS. OVERLAND  
I see. But do you hear any fire  
alarm ringing?

CHARLIE  
No.

MRS. OVERLAND

Then, there obviously isn't anything that you need to be worried about. Everyone return to your seats and finish your essays.

The children, grumbling quietly, return to their seats.

Suddenly, Mr. McKenzie's voice is heard over the PA system.

MR. MCKENZIE (V.O. PA SYSTEM)

Students and teachers at Maple Ridge Middle School. At this time, I would like everyone to quietly and calmly move to the gymnasium. This is not a fire drill... nor is this an emergency. Teachers, take charge of your classes.

Mrs. Overland stands up from her desk.

MRS. OVERLAND

Okay. You heard the principal. Let's line up by the door. Leave all your belongings at your desks. I'm sure we'll be returning back here in just a few moments.

The students stand and begin moving towards the door where they politely line up. Once everyone is in a reasonable form of a line, Mrs. Overland opens the door and leads the class down the hallway towards the gymnasium.

The hallway is full of lines of STUDENTS being led by their TEACHERS. Mrs. Overland's class, being in the room farthest from the entrance to the gymnasium, brings up the rear of the procession.

In the gymnasium, all of the bleachers are pushed back into their stored positions. A portable podium with microphone stands near one wall of stored bleachers.

STUDENTS are seated on the floor, watching the final lines of their peers pour through the entrance doors. Standing next to the doorway are two POLICEMEN, two EMTs, two firemen, Mr. McKenzie, and another man in a suit (MAYOR JOHNSON).

As the students pass by these visitors, they all turn to gaze at them - some even offer a shy wave of their hand.

As the classes enter, Mr. McKenzie barks out some instructions to the teachers.

MR. MCKENZIE (O.C.)  
Have your students sit on the floor  
facing the podium.

There is a dull roar of young voices as the STUDENTS whisper and converse with each other.

Once all of the students are seated, Mr. McKenzie steps up to the podium. He holds up his hands to silence his audience. The TEACHERS are heard "Shhhh-ing" their students.

After a few seconds, Mr. McKenzie speaks.

MR. MCKENZIE (CONT'D)  
You're all probably wondering what is going on here. Well, that's good. We like inquisitive minds. Not to worry... There's nothing bad going on here today... But rather, something good. We have a real life hero with us today and we're going to take this time to recognize and honor him.

As the principal pauses, some of the students whisper among themselves - attempting to guess who it might be. A couple of students whisper to each other and point towards the police and firemen.

MR. MCKENZIE (CONT'D)  
We also have some guests with us, standing here beside me.

He points to the police officers, fire fighters, and EMTs.

MR. MCKENZIE (CONT'D)  
And although they are heroes everyday, they're not the one we're honoring today. Now, Mayor Johnson requested this assembly and after discussing it with him, I thought it was a good idea. Therefore, I'm going to turn the podium over to the mayor to run this show... Mayor.

The man in the suit, MAYOR JOHNSON, steps up to the podium.

MAYOR JOHNSON  
Hello, students. I've got a question for you. What is a hero?

The mayor pauses while some murmuring is heard among the students.

MAYOR JOHNSON (CONT'D)  
Is it someone who wears a cape or a mask?

Some students shake their heads. Some say, "No". Some chuckle.

MAYOR JOHNSON (CONT'D)  
No... not necessarily. Is it someone with the strength of Hercules?

Again, some students are shake their heads while some giggle.

MAYOR JOHNSON (CONT'D)  
No... not necessarily... A hero is someone who is willing to risk their own safety to do what is right or to help someone else. That's what a true hero is. And today, you've got one sitting among you right here on this gym floor... a real hero.

The students look around at each other, trying to figure out who the mayor is talking about.

MAYOR JOHNSON (CONT'D)  
Where is Jason Haverstadt?

All heads and eyes turn to look at Jason as an audible gasp is heard from the student body.

Mayor Johnson, seeing Jason as the focal point of all the students' eyes, looks at Jason.

MAYOR JOHNSON (CONT'D)  
Jason, come on up here.

Jason hesitantly stands and walks over to the Mayor. The Mayor gently takes Jason by the shoulders and turns him around so that he faces all of the students.

MAYOR JOHNSON (CONT'D)  
A few days ago, Jason risked his own life and safety when he ran into the burning house of one of his classmates and pulled her to safety. Had he not done this, Hollie would no longer be with us. Heroes like this are very rare and that's why we desire to honor Jason today.



The mayor reaches under the podium and pulls out a gold medallion on a red-white-and-blue fabric lanyard.

MAYOR JOHNSON (CONT'D)

Jason, it is my honor to present you with this Maple Ridge Medal of Honor for your selfless act of courage in rescuing your classmate.

The mayor places the medallion around Jason's neck, then shakes Jason's hand. He then steps back and begins clapping. The clapping spreads throughout the entire gymnasium along with some cheers.

CHARLIE

(shouting)

Way to go, Jason!

Jason looks down, grasps the medallion, and examines it closely.

After a moment, the mayor holds up his hand to silence the students.

MAYOR JOHNSON

Jason, there's also someone else who wishes to thank you today.

The mayor takes Jason by the shoulders and turns him to face the gymnasium doors just in time to see Hollie, grinning from ear to ear, in a wheelchair being pushed through the doorway by Mrs. Mason.

Mr. Mason follows right behind them, pushing a new S-Works Epic mountain bicycle. Jason's mom is right behind Mr. Mason.

Mr. McKenzie removes the microphone from the podium and hands it to Mrs. Mason.

MRS. MASON

Jason, we can never repay you for what you did in saving Hollie. Now Hollie...

(looks at Mei)

and others... have informed us that you are an avid cyclist and are currently riding an old battered bicycle. We want you to have this new bike. We've been told it's the best we can get. Thank you, Jason.

Mr. Mason rolls the bicycle over to Jason and hands it to him.

MR. MASON  
 (softly to Jason)  
 Thank you, Jason.

Jason just stands there, stunned.

Mrs. Mason hands the microphone back to Mr. McKenzie.

MR. MCKENZIE  
 Let's give a round of applause for  
 Jason.

As everybody claps and cheers, the policemen and firemen move to Jason and shake his hand. The two firemen are the ones who were chasing after him and ultimately helped him extract Hollie.

One fire fighter, when shaking Jason's hand, stoops low and with a friendly smile speaks softly to Jason.

FIRE FIGHTER  
 Although it turns out that you did  
 the right thing this time, next  
 time, tell us and let us be the  
 ones to enter a burning building...  
 (grinning broadly)  
 Give us a chance to be the hero...  
 OK?

Jason nods his head and the fire fighter pats Jason on the back.

Mr. McKenzie holds up his hand to silence the crowd. The teachers again assist by "Shhhh-ing" the students.

MR. MCKENZIE  
 All right. It's time to get back to  
 your classes. Teachers, take charge  
 of your classes.

The teachers herd their respective students out of the gymnasium and back to their respective classrooms. Jason stands beside his new bike.

As the students are leaving and pass by him, many say to him, "Way to go." "Good job." etc. Others merely ogle him and his bike with admiration.

After all the students have left the gymnasium, Hollie, still with a hoarse voice, calls out.

HOLLIE  
 Jason!

Jason turns to see Hollie beaming with pride. He walks to her.

JASON  
Hey, Hollie.

They just look at each other for a moment.

JASON (CONT'D)  
How are you doing?

HOLLIE  
I'm okay.

JASON  
That's good.

HOLLIE  
I just wanted to thank you.

JASON  
That's okay.

HOLLIE  
No, really. You're my real-life  
hero. Thank you.

Jason, not really knowing what to say, shrugs his shoulders.

JASON  
You're welcome?

HOLLIE  
You know... I won't be at this  
school any more.

JASON  
(perplexed)  
Huh?

HOLLIE  
After the fire burned down the  
house... because we don't have a  
place to live... my aunt and uncle  
decided that we should move to Pine  
Bluff. Aunt Peg got a new job there  
and will be making more money.

JASON  
(dejected)  
Yeah... okay.

HOLLIE  
But Pine Bluff isn't all that far  
away. You can come visit me  
sometime, if you'd like. We can  
still be friends.

JASON

Yeah, I guess... But who will cross their fingers when I race my bike?

HOLLIE

(snickering)

Well, me, of course. Just let me know when you're racing and I'll be there.

JASON

Okay.

Mrs. Mason, standing behind Jason and listening to this conversation, taps him on the shoulder to get his attention. He turns toward her.

MRS. MASON

Jason, you will always be welcome at our house. I do hope that you will come visit us in Pine Bluff.

Jason nods his head.

MRS. MASON (CONT'D)

And please let us know when you're racing, we all want to come watch you and cheer for you...

(grinning)

although I can't cross all of my fingers like Hollie can.

Mrs. Mason gives Jason a big hug.

MRS. MASON (CONT'D)

Thank you, Jason, for everything... and especially for being Hollie's friend.

JASON

You're welcome.

The Masons turn and push Hollie's wheelchair out of the gymnasium.

Mei, standing off to the side observing everything, steps forward and also gives Jason a big hug.

MEI

I'm so proud of you, Jason. And your father would be ever so proud, too.

JASON

He would?

MEI

(smiling)

Yes, he would. You're growing up so fast. I just don't know what I'm going to do.

(beat)

Weren't you scared?

JASON

Scared? When?

MEI

When you ran into that burning house?

Jason shrugs his shoulders.

JASON

Yeah, but dad told me that everyone gets scared sometimes, and when I get scared, I need to be brave.

MEI

Well, you certainly were brave... braver than anyone else I know.

Mei squeezes Jason again - tighter.

FADE TO:

INT. MAPLE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

JASON HAVERSTADT

So, that's how I really got started... with that old Schwinn 5-speed Stingray bike.

REPORTER

But you moved on to faster, more efficient bikes.

JASON HAVERSTADT

Yeah, sure. And that new S-Works Epic mountain bicycle really sealed the start of my racing career.

REPORTER

Do you still have it?

JASON HAVERSTADT

Yep. It's in my garage. I get out on it a couple times each month.

REPORTER

So, what happened to your old Schwinn - Qianlima, wasn't it?

JASON HAVERSTADT

Yes. Qianlima. I think it's stored away in our attic now. I know I put it in our garage after I got my new bike but I don't remember ever riding it again after that. That's a shame, though. It definitely helped me get through one of the toughest times in my life.

REPORTER

Do you still ever ride competitively?

JASON HAVERSTADT

Not really. The only times I compete are when there is a race for a worthwhile charity - like that Bikers Against Cancer event years ago.

(chuckles)

I'll often let some of the younger kids even come close to beating me... Anything to get more kids out riding.

The reporter examines a PHOTO on Jason's desk - a photo of four - Jason, a lovely blonde haired woman, and high school aged boy and high school aged girl, both with dark hair.

REPORTER

What about your family? Do they ride?

JASON HAVERSTADT

Well, Hollie loves to ride and so do both of our kids. But none of them have a competitive spirit when it comes to biking. They all ride just for leisure... for the fun of it.

Just then, a MRS. OWENS (45) (well-rounded white female), the school Secretary, knocks and opens the office door.

MRS. OWENS

Mr. Haverstadt, I think you're needed outside... by the bike rack.

Jason nods his head in acknowledgement.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
(to the reporter)  
Please excuse me for a moment.

REPORTER  
Sure.

Jason stands up and leaves his office.

EXT. MAPLE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

As Jason exits the front doors of the school, he sees a group of STUDENTS gathered around the bike rack. All of the students are White. He also hears an ANGRY VOICE - that of STEWART PETERSON.

STEWART  
(shouting)  
You dumb Chicano. You trying to  
steal my bike?

Jason carefully pushes aside some of the students to work his way into the midst of the fray. Just as he breaks through, he sees Stewart give a much smaller dark complexioned Hispanic boy (MIGUEL) a SHOVE.

Jason steps in between and separates the two boys.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
(forcefully)  
Stewart Peterson! That's enough!  
What's going on here?

STEWART  
(angry and pointing at Miguel)  
This new kid was trying to steal my bike.

Jason looks at Miguel.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
Is that true?

Miguel nervously shakes his head.

STEWART  
That's a lie. He...

Jason interrupts Stewart and waves a finger to silence him (just as Mr. McKenzie did to him years ago).

JASON HAVERSTADT

Uh uh uh uh!

(beat)

All of you students... move on to your classes. You (looks at Stewart)... and you (looks at Miguel)... come with me to my office.

The group of students break up as they all head into the school building.

Jason walks between the two boys as they follow the group and enter the building last.

Inside the school office, Jason motions the boys to take a seat.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)

You boys have a seat there and I'll be right with you in a moment.

Jason turns to enter his office.

As Jason enters, the reporter turns to look at him.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry, but I'm going to have to end this interview.

REPORTER

Everything OK?

JASON HAVERSTADT

Yeah, but something has just come up that I need to handle.

The reporter stands and gathers his items.

REPORTER

That's okay. I think I have enough to get started on the article. But, if I have any other questions, can I call you?

JASON HAVERSTADT

Most definitely. Hey, I'm really sorry about this.

REPORTER

Don't worry. It's no problem at all. Thank you for your time.



JASON HAVERSTADT  
Yes, and thank you so much for  
stopping by.

Jason follows the reporter as he leaves his office.

Standing by his door, he looks at Stewart and Miguel.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)  
OK, guys, why don't you come on in here.

The boys enter Jason's office, and Jason motions for them to sit in the two chairs in front of his desk.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)  
Take a seat.

The SCHOOL BELL rings as Jason walks around his desk and sits down in his big executive chair.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)  
OK, Stewart, why don't you tell me  
what happened.

STEWART  
I was looking out of my classroom  
window and I saw this kid by the  
bike rack, looking at my bike. Then  
I saw him messin' around with the  
shifter and brake handles. So I ran  
out of the building and caught him  
messin' with my bike. He was trying  
to steal it.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
(looks at Miguel)  
Okay... and what's your side of the  
story?

MIGUEL  
(nervously)  
I... I... I wasn't trying to steal  
it. I was just looking at it.

STEWART  
(interrupting)  
That's a lie. He was gonna steal it.

Once again Jason waves a finger at Stewart to silence him.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
Did he get on your bike?

STEWART

No.

JASON HAVERSTADT

Did he even move it from the bike rack?

STEWART

No. But he was...

Jason again waves a finger to silence Stewart.

JASON HAVERSTADT

So, during the time it took you to get from your classroom to the bike rack, your bike was never moved... right?

STEWART

Yeah, I guess.

JASON HAVERSTADT

Then, I don't think he was going to steal it.

STEWART

Then, why was he messin' with it?

JASON HAVERSTADT

I don't have an answer to that question, but that's something I'll investigate. Stewart, you can go to your class now.

Stewart rises and glares at Miguel as he exits the office.

After a few moments, Jason speaks to Miguel.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)

What's your name, son? I don't think I've ever seen you here at this school.

Miguel doesn't respond - he sits there looking terrified.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)

Don't be afraid. I'm just trying to help you. What's your name?

MIGUEL

(meekly)

Miguel Jose Hernandez-Garcia.

JASON HAVERSTADT

Okay... Miguel, you understand English... Right?

Miguel nods his head.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)  
Miguel, are you new at this school?

Miguel again nods his head.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)  
How long have you be coming to this school?

MIGUEL  
Today's the first day.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
Oh, I see. So, Miguel, what were you doing at the bike rack?

Miguel shrugs his shoulders.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)  
Look, Miguel, you're not in any trouble or anything, I just need to know what happened.  
(beat)  
Why were you at the bike rack?

MIGUEL  
(hesitantly)  
Just lookin'.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
What do you mean "just looking"?

MIGUEL  
Just lookin' at the bikes.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
Miguel, why were you looking at the bikes?

Miguel again just shrugs his shoulders.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)  
You've seen bicycles before... right?

MIGUEL  
Yeah. Sort of.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
What do you mean, "Sort of"?

MIGUEL  
(softly)  
Not like those.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
Miguel, what do you mean, "Not like those"?

MIGUEL  
Not like those shiny fancy bikes.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
What kind of bicycles are you familiar with?

Miguel shrugs his shoulders while looking at the floor.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)  
Miguel?

MIGUEL  
Plain ones.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
Miguel, do you have a bicycle?

Miguel shakes his head.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)  
I see.

Jason taps his fingers on his desk as he thinks.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)  
OK, Miguel. Can you come and meet with me tomorrow before school... here in my office?

Miguel's eyes widen and he gets a panicked look on his face.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)  
No, you're not in any trouble. I just would like to chat with you some more. OK?

Miguel nervously nods his head.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)  
Okay. We've got to get you to class now.

Jason stands up and goes to the door of his office.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)  
Mrs. Owens, can you come here a moment?

Mrs. Owens, the school secretary, responds.

MRS. OWENS (O.C.)  
Yes, Mr. Haverstadt.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
(to Miguel)  
Miguel, what grade are you in?

MIGUEL  
Sixth grade.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
Mrs. Owens, whose classroom would get a new sixth grade student?

MRS. OWENS  
That would be Mrs. Bradley.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
Mrs. Bradley... Okay. Miguel here is a new student - it's his first day here. I'm going to take him to his classroom so we can get him started and we'll work out the details and paperwork later. Will that be OK?

MRS. OWENS  
Yes, sir.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
Thank you, Mrs. Owens. OK, Miguel, why don't you come with me.

Jason and Miguel walk down the empty hallway, Jason's shoes echoing throughout the hallway with each step. They stop outside a classroom door.

Jason knocks lightly on the door then opens it. He and Miguel enter the classroom. Jason has a friendly hand on Miguel's shoulder.

A large flat-screen monitor stands on a cart and is situated at the front of the room immediately in front of the classroom white-boards, lit up with a picture of the great pyramids of Egypt.

MRS. BRADLEY, a diminutive White lady in her 50s, stands up from her chair behind her desk.

MRS. BRADLEY  
Oh, Mr. Haverstadt.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
Hello, Mrs. Bradley.

Jason nods in the direction of the STUDENTS - all of them White.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)  
May I?

MRS. BRADLEY  
Sure. Go ahead.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
Class, this here is Miguel Jose Hernandez-Garcia. Miguel is my new friend. Miguel is new to Maple Ridge and today is his first day at this school. Now, being new, he's just learning the ropes here and how we do things at our school. So, I want you all to make him feel welcome and also become his friend. Can you do that for me?

Most of the students provide a silent shaking of the head.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)  
(to Mrs. Bradley)  
Thank you, Mrs. Bradley.

Mrs. Bradley walks over to Miguel.

MRS. BRADLEY  
Hello, Miguel. Welcome to our classroom.

She guides Miguel to a vacant desk - the same spot (but newer desk) by the window that Jason had when he was a student in this classroom.

Jason watches as Miguel takes his seat, then turns glances at the picture on the large monitor, shakes his head in amazement, and exits the classroom with a grin on his face.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
(to himself)  
Whoa! Deja vu?

INT. MAPLE FOREST MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

Jason sits behind his desk looking over some papers when Mrs. Owens knocks on his open door.

SECRETARY

Sir, there's someone outside here  
who said he is supposed to see you  
this morning?

Jason removes his reading glasses, gets up, and walks to the doorway.

Jason sees Miguel sitting in the middle chair of the three lined up against the wall.

That vision fades into one of Jason on his first day at the school, sitting in that same spot, then fades back to the present time.

JASON HAVERSTADT

(cheerfully)

Good morning, Miguel. How are you  
doing today?

MIGUEL

OK, I guess.

JASON HAVERSTADT

Well, I hope so. Today is a  
beautiful day outside. Come on,  
let's go for a walk.

Jason and Miguel exit the office and walk down the hallway towards the front exit doors, against the flow of STUDENTS (all White) as they are entering the school building.

EXT. MAPLE FOREST MIDDLE SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Jason and Miguel stroll down the sidewalk towards the bike rack.

As they approach, Stewart and TWO BUDDIES are at the bike rack. Stewart is angry and CUSSING while attempting to move a blue Stingray bike with a banana seat and tall shifter, but the bike's wheels won't turn, as if the brakes are locked, making it difficult for Stewart to move it.

JASON HAVERSTADT

Stewart, is there a problem here?

STEWART

Yeah. A big problem.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
And what exactly is the problem?

Stewart points to the old bike.

STEWART  
Some idiot parked this piece of  
junk in my spot.

Jason quickly glances at the bike rack and sees that only  
about half of the slots have bikes in them.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
And which one is your spot?

STEWART  
(points)  
This one right here.

Jason bends down and examines that specific slot in the bike  
rack.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
Let's see... Stewart Peterson...  
Stewart Peterson... That's odd...  
I'm looking but I don't see your  
name or anyone else's name on this  
slot... or any other slot for that  
matter.

STEWART  
Yeah, but it's my slot. I've been  
using that spot all three years  
here at this school.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
All three years, eh? Well, if you  
continue bullying like you are  
right now... and have been these  
past few months... Yes, I know what  
you've been up to... Well, if you  
keep at it, you'll be spending a  
fourth year here in middle school.  
Do you understand?... And I don't  
want to have to call your dad.

STEWART  
(under his breath)  
Yeah. Yeah. Whatever.

Stewart turns around and parks his bike in another nearby  
empty slot, then turns and walks away - towards the school  
doorway - with his two buddies - mumbling incomprehensibly.



Only Jason and Miguel remain at the bike rack.

JASON HAVERSTADT

Miguel, why don't you take and move your bike to another slot so that Stewart won't get on you for taking his spot.

Miguel looks puzzled.

MIGUEL

But I don't have a bike.

Jason smiles.

JASON HAVERSTADT

You do now.

Jason easily rolls the bike out of the bike rack and stands it up on its kickstand. He points to the bike.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)

Miguel, this is yours... your new bike and your new friend. It's the bike I had when I was your age.

Miguel just stares at the bicycle.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)

This is a very unique bike... and it is now yours.

Miguel looks at Jason, then back at the bike.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)

I would suggest that you park this bike in a different spot. You don't want to provoke Stewart to any more anger.

MIGUEL

Yes, sir, Mr. Haverstadt.

Miguel quickly rolls Qianlima to another empty slot.

JASON HAVERSTADT

Now, Miguel, this bike is yours. You can paint it another color, if you'd like... But remember, be good to it... it's a special friend.

MIGUEL

Yes, sir, Mr. Haverstadt. Thank you.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
You're welcome, Miguel.

As they walk together into the school building, Jason puts a friendly hand on Miguel's shoulder.

EXT. MAPLE FOREST MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

Autumn leaves fall as Jason walks from the parking lot towards the school building.

As he passes by the bike rack, he sees Qianlima parked there, but now the bike is bright yellow with QIANLIMA in bold black letters. A loose coil of black electrical tape rests at the bottom of the down-tube of the bicycle frame, just the same as the blue painters' tape became detached when Jason was young.

Jason smiles and shakes his head as he enters the building.

INT. MAPLE FOREST MIDDLE SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

The BELL RINGS and the hallway is soon flooded with STUDENTS, many of them racing towards the front doors.

Jason stands outside the office door, monitoring the hallway traffic.

He sees Miguel walking by himself, wearing his backpack.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
Hey, Miguel.

MIGUEL  
Hi, Mr. Haverstadt.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
You got a couple minutes?

Miguel nods his head.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)  
Come on in to my office.

Jason leads the way into his office and motions Miguel to one of the chairs.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)  
Have a seat, Miguel. This should only take a couple minutes.

Jason moves around his desk and sits in his executive chair.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)  
So, how's it been going for you?  
It's been a couple weeks since we  
last spoke.

MIGUEL  
It's been okay.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
Good. I saw your bike today at the  
bike rack... And you didn't park  
your bike in Stewart's spot today,  
right?

MIGUEL  
(very serious)  
No, Mr. Haverstadt. Not today or  
never again.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
(chuckling)  
That's good. It will keep you out  
of trouble with him.  
(beat)  
I also see that you painted it.

Miguel looks a little anxious with that statement.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)  
Yellow... right?

Miguel nervously nods his head.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)  
Oh no. It's OK, Miguel. It's your  
bike and I said that you could  
paint it if you wanted to. You did  
a mighty fine job. When you painted  
it, did you also paint over that  
word on the frame?

Miguel looks puzzled but nods.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)  
And did that word come back, even  
though you painted over it?

Miguel again nods.

MIGUEL  
Yeah, but I covered it with some tape.

JASON HAVERSTADT

(to himself)

Wow!

(beat)

You know, when I painted that bike blue... when I was your age... the word also reappeared... and a different color, too, as if by magic. I painted over it a couple times, and each time it came back. So I finally just left it.

MIGUEL

Yes, Mr. Haverstadt. Me too.

JASON HAVERSTADT

I even tried covering it with some tape, but the tape came off all by itself.

Miguel stares intently at Jason.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)

Yup, and so did yours.

MIGUEL

It did?

Jason grins and shakes his head in amazement.

JASON HAVERSTADT

Yes, indeed it did.

(beat)

So, tell me, Miguel, have you experienced anything strange when you're riding Quinlima?

Miguel again gets a puzzled look on his face.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)

You do know... that's the bike's name... Qianlima... just like your name is Miguel.

MIGUEL

Its name?

JASON HAVERSTADT

Yes. She-on-lee-ma.

MIGUEL

She-on-lee-ma?

JASON HAVERSTADT

It's spelled Q-I-A-N-L-I-M-A...  
 Yep, and it's on the bike frame...  
 That's the bike's name... but it's  
 pronounced "She-on-lee-ma".

(beat)

So, Miguel, have you experienced  
 anything strange when you're riding  
 Quinlima?

MIGUEL

Sometimes.

JASON HAVERSTADT

Like what? Tell me about it.

MIGUEL

(shyly)

Um... so... I was riding my bike  
 when the next thing I knew, I was  
 on a big white horse with wings.  
 And the horse was going so fast....

JASON HAVERSTADT

Faster than anyone else.

MIGUEL

Si... I mean yes, sir.

JASON HAVERSTADT

Then what happened?

MIGUEL

So, the next thing I knew... I was home.

JASON HAVERSTADT

Sort of like a real-life dream?

Miguel nods his head.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)

Miguel, I had the same experiences  
 when I rode Qianlima. It was so  
 strange... but yet, so wonderful.

Miguel continues to stare at Jason, not really knowing where  
 this conversation is headed.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)

Miguel, when you ride Qianlima, do  
 you go fast?

MIGUEL

On the bike... or on the horse?

JASON HAVERSTADT

Both.

MIGUEL

Um... so the horse is really fast... and I think the bike is really fast, too.

JASON HAVERSTADT

Yes, I believe it is... both the horse and the bike.

(beat)

Miguel, I think that bike has some magical powers. If it likes its rider... you... or even me... I think it likes to turn into a horse... a very fast horse... and take us where our minds want to go.

(beat)

But if Qianlima doesn't like its rider, I think it just refuses to cooperate. Remember when Stewart was trying to move Qianlima at the bike rack and it wouldn't move? Something like that. But I think Qianlima likes you.

Miguel smiles.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)

When I rode Qianlima, I won a lot of bike races. I don't think it was me... or my bike riding abilities. I think it was because Qianlima was magical and it liked me.

(beat)

I think Qianlima taught me to be a fast bike rider, so fast that I won a lot of bike races even after I stopped riding Qianlima. That bike helped me through a tough time when I was young like you. I think Qianlima wants to help you now.

Miguel continues to just stare at Jason.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)

Here's what I want you to do. When you get a chance, get on a computer and look up Qianlima on the internet. I think then you'll have a better understanding of your special bike. And don't cover up its name. I don't think Qianlima likes that.

It's a proud bicycle and you should  
feel proud to have it.

Miguel nods his head.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)  
And if you're ever feeling scared  
or angry, just hop on Qianlima and  
let that bike take you to special  
places. And I imagine it won't be  
long before you're winning all your  
bike races, too.

Jason glances at the clock on the wall.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)  
Well, I believe I've kept you long  
enough. Miguel, have yourself a  
great day... what's left of it.

Miguel smiles, stands, and begins to head towards the door.

JASON HAVERSTADT (CONT'D)  
(chuckling)  
Oh, and Miguel... not too fast in  
the hallway. I wouldn't want you to  
get in any trouble from any of the  
teachers for running. Save all that  
speed for when you're on Qianlima.

Realizing this as humor, Miguel grins.

MIGUEL  
Yes sir, Mr. Haverstadt.

He turns and leaves the office.

Jason sits there for a moment with a pleasant look on his  
face. Then he turns to his laptop computer, puts on his  
reading glasses, and types in the letters Q-I-A-N-L-I-M-A  
into his Google search box.

The viewpoint shifts and we see the back of the laptop and  
Jason's face above it, with the light of the screen  
reflecting off his face and glasses. In a moment we see his  
eyes sparkle and a huge grin spread across his face as Jason  
is reading his screen and he nods his head slightly.

JASON HAVERSTADT  
Thank you, Qianlima.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END