

RIDE & SHOW

Written by

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OPENING TEASER

INT. RICHARD'S HOME [CITY APT.] - NIGHT

RICHARD, 38 – casually dressed, sits alone at his computer. Dim light from the screen washes over his face, carving deep shadows as he clicks open a newly arrived email.

INTERCUT – COMPUTER SCREEN

An email fills the screen. A carefully worded termination notice – polite, corporate, impersonal. It cites restructuring, downsizing... a necessary reduction in workforce. Professional. Positive in tone.

RICHARD (V.O.)
[[Narrates the letter]]

INTERCUT: BACK TO RICHARD

Richard leans back in his black leather chair – stunned. He grips his head and stares at the ceiling... hollow.

He lifts his phone, and the screen glows across his face. A message waits. He hesitates. Then presses play.

MOMMA PARKER (PHONE V.O.)
Hey Richard... It's Mom. Sorry to bother you, honey, but I thought you should know... Dad passed away last night.

Richard leans toward his phone with a steady gaze.

MOMMA PARKER (PHONE V.O.) (CONT'D)
The funeral's this Saturday. I know it's sudden, but I hope you can come. He was very proud of you. He loved you so much. I really hope you're able to make it, okay? I love you, sweetheart. Bye.

Richard clicks off his phone and steps onto the balcony, the cold night air hitting his teary-eyed face. Eyes closed, he breathes deep as city lights blur on his face.

FLASH TITLE: Text – *"RIDE & SHOW"*

ROLL OPENING CREDITS: THEME SONG: <https://suno.com/s/VdvYuNzG9NccaYMD>

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE**INT. FUNERAL HOME [LOBBY] - DAY**

A polished lobby. Soft daylight settles over the quiet lobby of the memorial room. Framed photos of the deceased, MR. JACOB PARKER (DAD), through the years, rest beside elegant floral arrangements.

The company: WONDERLAND Amusement Park, displays plaques, uniforms, and memorabilia to honor decades of service. Gift baskets and tribute cards fill surrounding tables.

The front door opens, and Richard enters the funeral home lobby, dressed in a formal suit and tie. He pauses for a moment, his eyes scan the room, filled with mourners gathered in heavy silence around the lobby.

MOMMA PARKER (O.S.)

There he is--

MS. MARIE PARKER (MOM) - Dressed in widow's black, approaches Richard.

MOMMA PARKER (CONT'D)

Oh my goodness, you made it. I was so worried you wouldn't.

RICHARD

Wouldn't miss it for the world.
Are you holding up okay?

Masking her grief, forcing warmth, Mom offers a gentle, reassuring smile.

MOMMA PARKER

I'm just doing the best I can.
Thanks for coming. It really means
a lot your here.

Richard gently grins, masking his nerves as together they stride across the lobby toward family members standing by the coffee table.

GERRY PARKER, 45, stands stiff in a tailored suit, his arm brushing against his wife BONNIE PARKER, 43, poised in a sleek black dress. Their teens, JOEY (17) and JACKIE (15), hover nearby, shifting their weight and glancing at each other.

RICHARD

Gerry, Bonnie, Good to see you.

They shake hands, and then Richard acknowledges the kids.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Wow! Joey, you got big.

Joey stands tall and proud as Richard turns his attention to Jackie.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Rumor has it... Someone is about to
get their driver's permit.
(Playfully)
Now who could that be? Let's see.

Jackie smiles, being acknowledged. She can't hold it in anymore. She lunges forward to give Richard a big hug.

JACKIE
Three weeks, Uncle Richard, and
then I finally get behind the
wheel. Vroom!

The group erupts in warm, easy laughter. Then, muffled HIP-HOP MUSIC thumps from outside. They all turn toward the sound.

EXT. FUNERAL HOME [PARKING LOT/ENTRANCE AREA] - DAY

[SOUND] LOUD HIP-HOP MUSIC BLARES

INTERCUT - PARKING LOT

A sleek, all-black sports truck rolls into the parking lot.

INTERCUT - ENTRANCE AREA

Guests drift out of the funeral home, gathering along the entrance sidewalk - Richard, Gerry, Mom, family, and guests among them - watching.

INTERCUT - PARKING LOT

The truck cruises past, windows down. Inside: MIKE PARKER, 40, drives, nodding to the beat. His wife, KELLY PARKER, also 40, rides shotgun, with two young boys, JUNIOR (short for Mike Jr), 9, and STEPHEN, 6, in the back.

Mike swings the wheel, pulls in, and parks - cool, composed, owning the moment.

[SOUND] MUSIC STOPS

INTERCUT - ENTRANCE AREA

Richard stands beside Gerry. Gerry leans in close.

GERRY
(softly)
Big bro sure knows how to make a
big entrance.

They watch Mike step out of the truck.

GERRY (CONT'D)
How long has it been?

Richard stands motionless, watching Mom rush out to greet Mike and his family, his gaze keen.

RICHARD
Not long enough.

Gerry chuckles.

Richard subtly gathers himself, masking his emotions. He turns, composed, and quietly slips away – walks back inside the funeral home.

CUT TO: CUTSCENE

EXT. WONDERLAND RIDE [SCRAMBLER] - DAY

FLASH CUTSCENE | MONTAGE | SCRAMBLER

The Scrambler ride is in motion with guests riding, hands in the air, and smiling faces.

[FREEZE FRAME] Black & White: Happy guests on the ride swing around for a close-up snapshot with big smiles and hands in the air.

RIDES SYMBOLIC MESSAGE: SCRAMBLER MEANS PLOT IS SCRAMBLED

**CUT TO: BACK TO
SHOW**

INT. FUNERAL HOME [BATHROOM] - DAY

The restroom is spotless – gleaming, almost sterile.

SFX: TOILET FLUSH - WHOOSH, WHOOSH.

Richard steps out of a stall and moves to the sink. He turns on the water, washes his hands, and steadies himself.

The door opens. Mike enters, takes the sink beside him, and washes up.

MIKE

So... How's city life treating you these days?

Richard pulls his hands from beneath the faucet, and the water shuts off automatically.

RICHARD

Let me be the first to officially inform you that my services are no longer required at this moment.

Mike looks to Richard, a hardened face, almost sarcastic, but sincere.

MIKE

Aw! Canned you... Did they?

Mike turns, looks into the mirror, and catches Richard's reflection behind him. Their eyes meet in the glass.

MIKE (CONT'D)

That sucks!

Richard dries his hands with a paper towel.

RICHARD

Like you said.

Richard tosses the paper towel into the trash after drying his hands. looks at Mike's face in the mirror. Their eyes meet in the glass.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Enjoy it while it lasts.

Mike reacts instantly, without hesitation, pridefully.

MIKE

That's good advice.

Richard snaps back with a careless tone as he exits.

RICHARD

If you say so, Mike.

Mike looks back in the mirror at his own reflection.

MIKE

(to himself, confused)
What the hell's his problem?

INT. MR. JAMESON'S LAW OFFICE - DAY

MR. JAMESON, 65, a seasoned lawyer, sits behind his desk, reviewing Marie Parker's financial records [Displayed on computer screen]. On the desk is Mr. Parker's Will (signed), and his Wonderland Spousal Benefits paper.

[**DISPLAYED ON SCREEN**] Numbers scroll across the screen – a steady decline.

He leans back in his chair, absorbing it. His composure cracks – shaken, deeply troubled.

MR. JAMESON
(utters aloud)
Not Good!

INT. FUNERAL HOME [LOBBY] - DAY

Daylight spills across glossy floors – almost angelic. The lobby is full of guests mingling.

BACKGROUND: Richard talks with Gerry and others by the reception desk, which seems pleasantly interactive.

Mom mourns, teary-eyed, by pictures on a tabletop as Mike approaches her eagerly.

MIKE
Richard seems a little on edge.

MOMMA PARKER
We all deal with loss differently.

MIKE
I didn't know he lost his job.

Mom looks to Mike, surprised and unexpectedly.

MOMMA PARKER
When did this happen? He didn't say anything to me.

MIKE
Sorry! I thought you knew.

Mom looks at Richard mingling in the background. It's hard to tell, as Richard seems to be doing well. His troubles do not show. Mom turns back to Mike.

MOMMA PARKER
Give it time. Your brother's
tougher than he looks.

CUT TO: RICHARD
& GERRY [LOBBY]

RECEPTION DESK AREA - CONTINUED

Richard, Gerry, and a handful of others cluster near the reception desk, voices low. Richard glances around the room and notices all the corporate assembly gifts (roses, images, banners, logo displays).

RICHARD
(sarcasm)
Is it just me, or does my father's
funeral feel like it's sponsored by
Wonderland?

Gerry doesn't get the sarcasm and responds as if Richard were serious, admiring the hospitality.

GERRY
Yeah! That was pretty nice of them.

A couple CO-WORKERS lean into the conversation.

CO-WORKER GUEST 1
Everybody loved your father. Good
man.

CO-WORKER GUEST 2
Damn good worker.

Gerry gazes the assembly with enthusiasm.

GERRY
Uncle Jacob loved working at
Wonderland.

CO-WORKER GUEST 1
Who doesn't?

They all chuckle. Gerry wraps his arm around Richard.

GERRY
You do know that you're part of
this family too. I'm just saying...
you're always welcome here.

Richard nods along.

RICHARD
(sarcasm)
Is that a fact?

GERRY
That's a fact, bub.

Gerry turns Richard toward the lobby door where MR. HENSON, 55, Senior Executive of the Wonderland newspaper called, *RIDE & SHOW*, - Steps eagerly outside, yapping away on his phone.

EXT. FUNERAL HOME [ENTRANCE SIDEWALK AREA] - DAY

Henson stands on the sidewalk, paces back and forth, yelling on his phone, but trying to keep his voice low as Richard steps quietly outside and stands patiently unseen.

HENSON
(On phone - Unpleased)
How could that little, you know
what, do this? What am I supposed
to do now?

Richard pretends like he's not listening, but he is. Henson sees Richard and notices his presence.

HENSON (CONT'D)
(On phone)
Hold on! Let me call you back. I
might have a solution.

Henson ends his call and strides toward Richard, urgency in his step. Richard stands upright.

RICHARD
Everything alright, Mr. Henson?

Henson takes a breath and gathers himself appropriately.

HENSON
Sorry to bring business to your
father's funeral.

RICHARD
That's quite all right. It happens.

HENSON
Can I ask you a favor?

Richard casually leans against a column pole and crosses his arms comfortably.

RICHARD

Shoot?

HENSON

One of my writers just quit. I need someone to fill the gap.

Henson puts his phone into his pocket and paces around.

HENSON (CONT'D)

You're a writer. I hear you're pretty good. I hate to intrude, but could you help out? At least until I find a replacement.

RICHARD

A good writer is easy to find. Finding one that's reliable... Well... that's not so easy.

HENSON

You're telling me.

Henson stands paused, awaits a reply.

RICHARD

Can I be straight with you, Mr. Henson?

HENSON

Please?

RICHARD

I just got laid off.

HENSON

You don't say. You know you're always welcome here, kid.

Richard gives Henson a sincere but sharp look.

RICHARD

Am I?

Henson pulls out his phone and dials without hesitation. The phone RINGS. Someone (ALIAS V.O. "Hello") picks up.

HENSON

(ecstatic)

Problem solved. I just found us a rockstar writer. Consider the position filled.

Henson pauses, looks at Richard.

Richard nods with a 'yes' gesture.

HENSON (CONT'D)
The new guy arrives next Monday.
Just run this week's print. Trust
me, you're going to like this new
young man.

Henson hangs up the phone and looks at Richard.

HENSON (CONT'D)
Is next Monday enough time?

RICHARD
More than enough, Sir.

HENSON
You're a lifesaver, kid.

Henson embraces Richard with a hearty handshake.

HENSON (CONT'D)
For the record... I owe your daddy a
big one, but that stays between you
and me.

Richard nods along as Henson releases his embrace.

HENSON (CONT'D)
If you work out like I think you
will... Looks like I owe him two.

They both chuckle.

CUT TO: CUTSCENE

EXT. WONDERLAND RIDE [TWISTER] - DAY

FLASH CUTSCENE | MONTAGE | TWISTER

The Twister is in full motion – a blur of speed and steel.
Guests scream as the arm swings the platform between spinning
poles. Riders flip fully upside down in relentless 360°
rotations. Terrifying, chaotic... and wildly exhilarating.

[FREEZE FRAME] Black & White: At the top, happy guests on the
ride rotate vertically upside down for a snapshot with mouths
open, a happy scream frozen in action.

RIDES SYMBOLIC MESSAGE: TWISTER MEANS A PLOT TWIST

**CUT TO: BACK TO
SHOW**

EXT. MOMMAS HOUSE - DAY

A well-kept two-story home stands proudly at the center of the frame – warm beige siding, crisp white trim, and stone accents wrapping the lower facade. Large shuttered windows reflect the bright sunlight, giving the house a clean, welcoming symmetry.

A double garage faces the driveway, pristine and orderly. A small covered front porch rests just beyond it, framed by white railings and sturdy columns.

Freshly trimmed shrubs line the front walkway, and a neat patch of green lawn stretches toward the curb – everything tidy, calm, and quietly picturesque. The kind of house that looks like nothing ever goes wrong inside.

Richard's car sits in the driveway beside Mom's. At the curb, a U-Haul truck is parked with its rear door rolled open – the cargo area half-filled with boxes and furniture.

Richard steps out of the front door and heads to the moving truck as Mike drives up in his shiny black sports truck. Mike parks across the street. Richard sees him pull up.

RICHARD
(utters aloud)
Here we go.

Mike walks up, eager to lend a helping hand.

MIKE
Need a hand?

Richard pauses and looks around the truck.

RICHARD
Let's get these boxes out of the way first.

Mike steps up inside the U-Haul truck.

MIKE
Sounds like a plan to me.

Mike yanks a box up – too rough, careless. Items shift inside, and Richard tenses.

RICHARD
Easy, Mike. That's my stuff.

MIKE
My bad, bro.

RICHARD
I appreciate the help. Just... be
careful. That's all I ask.

Mike nods along, respectful. They both lift boxes, with love, and carry them inside.

INT. MOMMAS HOUSE [KITCHEN] - DAY

Warm daylight pours through the kitchen window, draped in soft, patterned curtains, illuminating a bright, inviting kitchen space that feels polished.

Kitchen hums. Mom stirs a pot, steam rises. TV news audio PLAYS muffled in the background. Richard enters, pours two glasses of iced tea, slips out without a word.

INT. MOMMAS HOUSE [LIVING ROOM] - DAY

A stone fireplace sits gently at the heart of the room, framed by built-in white shelves filled with books, framed photos, and small decorative pieces collected over time.

Neutral-toned sofas and cushioned armchairs form an intimate seating circle around a white wooden coffee table, where a simple vase of fresh flowers adds a quiet pop of color. A plush area rug softens the honey-colored hardwood floors beneath.

To one side, an open staircase with clean white railings rises gracefully to the second floor, blending seamlessly into the airy layout. Every surface is tidy, curated, and comfortable.

Mike sits on the sofa, watching TV, and Richard enters with two glasses of iced tea in hand. He places both glasses on the coffee table and sits comfortably next to Mike.

RICHARD
Thanks for the help.

MIKE
No problem.

Mike reaches for his glass.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Welcome home, little brother.

Mike Sips.

INTERCUT: TV SCREEN

A breaking news segment airs, honoring Mr. Jacob Parker, Dad. The coverage highlights his years of service, celebrating his life, career, and the people whose lives he touched.

INTERCUT: BACK TO LIVING ROOM

Richard and Mike sit watching the story end. Mom stands behind them and returns to the kitchen after the segment ends. Mike raises his glass.

MIKE (CONT'D)

To Pops!

Richard lifts his glass.

RICHARD

I'll drink to that.

They both tap glasses and sip their drinks at the same time.

MIKE

I'm gonna miss him.

RICHARD

Me too.

MIKE

Well, at least Mom's got some company with you around.

Richard nods along.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I worry, she's been quiet lately.

RICHARD

Don't worry, your secret's safe with me.

Mike chuckles.

MOMMA PARKER (O.S.)

(shouts)

Supper's ready!

Mike and Richard stand up and ready themselves for the kitchen.

RICHARD

Are Kelly and the kids joining?

MIKE

Kelly's good. So are the kids.

Mike wraps his arm around Richard and leans in, speaking in a low tone.

MIKE (CONT'D)
This is for Mom. Dinner with her two boys should make her happier than I've seen her in a while.

RICHARD
Oh! So, in other words, you're here for mom's sake... Not to help a little brother.

MIKE
You're a big boy, why the hell would I do that?

Mike releases his arm and starts walking to the kitchen, pridefully, after taking a nice shot at Richard.

MIKE (CONT'D)
I do what I can.

Mike exits.

Richard stands paused, but confident.

RICHARD
(utters to himself)
I wouldn't expect anything less.

CUT TO: CUTSCENE

EXT. WONDERLAND RIDE [FLUME] - DAY

FLASH CUTSCENE | MONTAGE | FLUME

The Flume ride boat edges over the big hill, splashdown drop. Guests raise their hands as the flume plunges all the way down for a big splash finale.

[FREEZE FRAME] Black & White: Boat hits bottom, water splashes, and guests playfully smile and laugh - wet.

RIDES SYMBOLIC MESSAGE: FLUME MEANS BAWOOSH, BIG DROP

**CUT TO: BACK TO
SHOW**

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO**INT. WONDERLAND [ORIENTATION ROOM] – DAY**

A spacious classroom-style orientation room stretches wide, lined with neat rows of desk seats. At the front, a large chalkboard stands beside a lowered projection screen, both perfectly centered.

Bright "Wonderland" posters and park displays cover the walls, bursting with color and images of guests, workers, friendly-faced executives, and smiling mascots.

Fluorescent lights hum softly overhead, illuminating clean carpet flooring and carefully arranged materials. Everything feels orderly, cheerful... and unmistakably corporate.

A diverse group of people enter into the room. Among them is Richard, dressed in corporate attire – a crisp light-blue collared shirt and tie. They walk in and find their seats. Richard sits somewhere in the middle and blends in casually.

JANE, 23, sharp and professionally dressed, sits beside Richard. Composed, attentive – a quiet confidence in her posture. She glances his way, offering a subtle, reassuring smile.

JANE

Hi – nice to meet you. I'm Jane.

She reaches her hand out professionally for a handshake. Richard accepts.

RICHARD

Nice to meet you, I'm Richard Parker.

DOUGLAS (O.S.)

Parker!

Richard turns his head (to his right side).

DOUGLAS, 35, sharp and business-ready, sits to Richard's right. He drifts into thought – looks up, a realization hitting him.

DOUGLAS (CONT'D)

Any relation to the late Jacob Parker?

RICHARD
He was my father.

DOUGLAS
My condolences.

Richard nods along, accepting the kindness.

RICHARD
Much appreciated.

Excited, Jane rocks eagerly in her seat toward Richard.

JANE
What brings you to Wonderland?

RICHARD
Actually, I was offered a decent
position at "Ride and Show".

JANE
You don't say?

DOUGLAS
What position?

Richard leans back.

Writer! RICHARD

Jane and Douglass nod along.

Nice! DOUGLAS Nice! JANE

Richard leans forward, upright.

RICHARD
How bout you guys?

Jane eagerly leans in, excited.

JANE
Admissions Gate Operator.

Richard and Douglas nod along. Richard turns to Douglas.

And you? RICHARD

DOUGLAS
(Carelessly Proud without
shame)
Sanitation!

Richard and Jane nod along.

RICHARD
They say... Here at "Wonderland", no
one job is above any other... Plus, I
hear Sanitation has Great hours.

DOUGLAS
Oh! The pre-approved overtime
shifts are infinite.

Douglas rocks back with a big, prideful grin.

INSTRUCTOR MARY (O.S.)
(Shouts happily over-
enthusiastically)
Good morning... Future Wonderlanders.

INSTRUCTOR MARY, mid-30s, walks in (big super smile) wearing
a fancy Executive suit and name tag. She is followed by a few
other executives who enter and take a seat against the
sidewall.

INSTRUCTOR MARY (CONT'D)
Who's excited? I know I am. What do
you say we get started?

The room settles down and focuses on Mary (at the front of
the class).

INSTRUCTOR MARY (CONT'D)
First, let me introduce myself. My
name is Mary, and I'm from Kansas.
Here at Wonderland, guess what?

[BEAT] Short pause, no reaction.

INSTRUCTOR MARY (CONT'D)
(Huge happy face smile)
I'm not in Kansas anymore.

The room chuckles (as if at the stupidity).

INSTRUCTOR MARY (CONT'D)
To make a long story short. I was
not happy living in Kansas, so I
ventured out and found myself right
here, at Wonderland.

Mary shoots a big, over-exaggerated, happy-face smile. The room chuckles again (as if at the stupidity), and the lights dim.

INSTRUCTOR MARY (CONT'D)

Now that we're all better
acquainted, let's jump in.

Mary holds a small remote control in her hand. She points the remote toward the screen and presses the play button.

INTERCUT: PROJECTION SCREEN

A welcome-to-Wonderland, orientation presentation video begins to play. The video shows the park, its attractions, and the company's history. Also, in the video are clips of workers.

The video is inviting and welcomes new trainees to the company, covering company expectations and the workplace environment.

NOTE: THIS SCENE ENDS WITH THE END OF THE VIDEO

INT. MOMMAS HOUSE [LIVING ROOM] - DAY

Mom sits on the sofa, accompanied by Mr. Jameson - Family Lawyer, and his guest, MS. OLIVIA, 40s - Accountant.

There's tension in the still silence, as Mom sits with worry on her facial expression. She waits nervously for Mr. Jameson to speak.

MR. JAMESON

I take no pleasure in this. I hate
to see good people affected by such
circumstances.

MOMMA PARKER

Just shoot it to me straight, Mr.
Jameson.

MR. JAMESON

After reviewing Jacob's will, your
benefits, and your finances from
past to present, I don't think you
can hold this up much longer.

MOMMA PARKER

How long?

OLIVIA

Less than six months.

A breeze of relief crosses Mom's face.

MOMMA PARKER
So, there is a little time left.

OLIVIA
Not much.

MOMMA PARKER
I'll take what I can get.

MR. Jameson opens a folder on the coffee table.

MR. JAMESON
I stand by Olivia's evaluation. If we put this house up now, and do some adjustable financial downsizing... we just might break the fall. And that's putting it lightly.

MOMMA PARKER
Yes, but you forgot, my son has returned home. Let me talk to him first before I make any decisions. Maybe he can help.

Both Olivia and Mr. Jameson nod along.

MR. JAMESON
If that's the case... I have no objection. As a matter of fact, Ms. Parker... That could work. And know that you have my full support.

OLIVIA
And mine as well.

MOMMA PARKER
I'll try. Just let me break it to him softly. Give me until the end of the week. I'll have your answer by then.

Both Olivia and Mr. Jameson nod along in agreement.

INT. RIDE & SHOW HEADQUARTERS [MAIN LOBBY] - DAY

The upper-level lobby is vast and neatly polished, an open area flooded with natural light from towering windows overlooking the theme park.

A large, sleek reception desk with multiple RECEPTIONISTS anchors toward the back wall, opening to front administrative offices and hallways leading to the department work area.

The entrance is a stainless steel Elevator, which opens and closes with soft chimes. As the door opens, a small group of future Wonderlanders, including Richard, Jane, and Douglas, is led off the elevator by Instructor Mary.

INSTRUCTOR MARY
(to group)
Right this way.

The group walks to the center of the lobby and circles around Mary.

INSTRUCTOR MARY (CONT'D)
Welcome to "Ride and Show". Here at Wonderland, we have our own company newsletter... Our weekly newspaper.

The group gazes around in awe.

INSTRUCTOR MARY (CONT'D)
This lobby is open to all inquiries: public, private, and all employees as well. Or, as we say, Wonderlanders.

Mary gestures to the group with her hand.

INSTRUCTOR MARY (CONT'D)
So, if by any chance, any of you have any questions or inquiries, don't hesitate to stop by.

The group nods along as Mary shoots another Happy face smile.

INTERCUT: RECEPTION DESK HALLWAY AREA

Mr. Henson steps out and enters the lobby from the hallway behind the reception desk. He recognizes Richard in the group.

HENSON
(utters joyfully)
Aw! There he is.

INTERCUT: BACK TO GROUP IN LOBBY

Mary turns to the group - overly excited, as Henson approaches.

INSTRUCTOR MARY

Wow! Everybody, this is Mr. Henson himself. The Senior Executive of this whole department.

Henson makes a grand entrance toward the guest in the lobby, his focus centered on Richard. The group looks at Richard. Mary steps up and leans, whispers into Richard's ear.

INSTRUCTOR MARY (CONT'D)

(whispers softly)

I think you're going make it here.

RICHARD

(Whispers back softly)

I surely hope so.

Mary pats Richard on the back as Henson approaches.

INSTRUCTOR MARY

Well, this is where we leave you, Richard. Welcome home. We wish you the best of luck.

Mary signals and leads the group back to the elevator. Richard waves goodbye to Jane and Douglas. As the elevator's doors close, Douglas shoots a big thumbs-up. The doors close.

Henson notices and wraps his arm around Richard.

HENSON

I see you made some new friends.

RICHARD

No one job is bigger than any other here at Wonderland.

Hanson chuckles, pleased as he leads Richard, eagerly, to the hallway behind the reception desk.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Come on! Alias can't wait to meet you.

Richard nods, grins, and follows along.

EXT. WONDERLAND [ACTIVITIES AREA] - DAY

NOTE: Wonderland consists of a few areas: a Theme park, a water park, an industrial area, and a resort.

Between the theme park and the resort is an admission gate for resort guests, and an open field is available to both resort and park guests. This area is the activities area, where Mike works.

Mike lines the field with orange cones on the white chalk lines, setting up a dodgeball game for the kids. He is at peace and enjoying his work.

Kelly, his wife, in a work uniform, comes running toward him.

KELLY
(Shouts)
Mike!

She holds a white mail letter in her hand, raising it up - excited as she reaches Mike. She catches her breath.

KELLY (CONT'D)
It came.

Mike stops.

MIKE
What came?

Kelly hands Mike the letter.

KELLY
It's from the school, Mike.

Mike rips open the letter. The paper has the local High School logo in the top left corner. Mike reads the letter out loud.

MIKE
(Reads Letter)
Dear Mr. Parker,
It is with great honor and pride
that we inform you that, following
our review, we have accepted your
application for the position of
Junior Varsity Football Head Coach.

Kelly cheers, claps, hugs, and praises Mike for his accomplishment. In the excitement, MIKE'S BOSS approaches Gracefully.

MIKE'S BOSS
Congratulations, Mike. I'll clear
your schedule so you have the
evenings off for practice.

Mike nods his thanks and gratitude.

INT. RIDE & SHOW HEADQUARTERS [HALLWAY] - DAY

Richard and Henson walk down the Hallway.

ALIAS, 45, CHIEF EDITOR, steps out from around the corner.

HENSON

Aw! Here comes Alias now.

Richard looks at Alias as if he knows him.

RICHARD

That's Alias. I know this guy.

Alias approaches, steps up, confused.

ALIAS

Have we met?

Richard smirks.

RICHARD

Company picnic, ninety-two. Tug of war champs.

Alias looks up, trying to recall.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

You're a good anchor man, if my memory serves me correctly.

Alias suddenly recalls, and a spark of excitement appears on his face.

ALIAS

Richard Parker. Now I remember.

Alias and Richard smile and greet each other happily.

HENSON

Always good to see family and friends come together. I'll leave you two to get situated.

Henson Pats Richard on the back

HENSON (CONT'D)

Glad to have you on board. Alias will guide you from here.

RICHARD

Glad to be here... and thank you, Mr. Henson, I won't let you down.

HENSON
Good to know!

Henson smiles and walks away.

CUT TO: CUTSCENE

EXT. WONDERLAND RIDE [COASTER] - DAY

FLASH CUTSCENE | MONTAGE | COASTER

A wooden roller coaster is in motion with guests riding, hands in the air, and smiling faces as it soars through ups and downs - twists and turns.

[FREEZE FRAME] Black & White: Happy guests on the ride slant diagonally downhill for a close-up snapshot with big smiles and hands in the air.

RIDES SYMBOLIC MESSAGE: COASTER MEANS "HOLD ON, HERE WE GO"

**CUT TO: BACK TO
SHOW**

INT. RIDE & SHOW HEADQUARTERS [POW-WOW ROOM] - DAY

Richard, led by Alias, together enter the Pow-Wow Room. A wide, windowless break room humming with fluorescent light. The coffee machine gurgles beside a cluttered snack station.

This is where Writers drift, hover, linger - scanning like hunters - focused on the massive bulletin board that dominates the far wall. Company spreadsheets blanket it - color-coded, annotated, obsessively pinned. Often, hands reach up, circle items, tear pages down - fishing for stories and input.

ALIAS
Welcome to the Pow-Wow room. Be
sure to make yourself at home here.

Richard looks around. The room is empty, for the moment.

RICHARD
Nice break room.

ALIAS
Not just a break room. Think of it
more like a social hub. Oh! And for
the record, this is also where we
hold, pretty much, all of our
meetings.

RICHARD
Aw! Hence... Pow Wow!

ALIAS
Quick learner. Here.

Alias guides Richard toward the bulletin board, with company posts pinned.

ALIAS (CONT'D)
Tah-Dah! Welcome to the main
Attraction.

Richard smirks, but so does Alias, playfully.

ALIAS (CONT'D)
Bulletin board, this is Richard.

Alias turns to Richard.

ALIAS (CONT'D)
Richard, meet the bulletin board.

Richard chuckles, but nods professionally toward the board, jokingly.

RICHARD
Nice to meet you, Mr. Bulletin
Board.

ALIAS
This is where you will find... how do
you say--

RICHARD
--The infamous to-dos.

Alias nods, pleased and impressed.

ALIAS
Very good! Sounds like you know
your way around an editorial.

[BEAT] Short pause as Richard looks around the room.

ALIAS (CONT'D)
Well then! Are you ready?

RICHARD
For?

ALIAS
Are you ready to see your office?

RICHARD
Lead the way... After you.

They exit the Pow-Wow room area.

INT. CAFETERIA [BONNIE'S OFFICE] - DAY

Bonnie sits at her desk, eyes on the computer, in her kitchen office. She scrambles through the schedule, uttering hopelessness as she sees the staffing shortage.

A KITCHEN STAFF MEMBER walks in.

KITCHEN STAFF MEMBER #1
Bonnie, got a second?

Bonnie looks up.

BONNIE
What is it?

KITCHEN STAFF MEMBER #1
We need all hands on the lunch
line.

Bonnie stands up and pushes her chair in.

BONNIE
Always happy to lend a hand.

Bonnie turns off her computer and exits her office.

INT. RIDE & SHOW HEADQUARTERS [OFFICE HUB] - DAY

The OFFICE HUB – more writer's bunker than bullpen – A sprawling maze of waist-high cubicles stretches beneath tall ceilings and towering windows, pouring in natural light.

Rows of desks form neat grids, softened by potted plants and the occasional family photo. Employees sit tucked into their stations, half-visible over partition walls.

The low hum of keyboards and distant phone calls fills the bright, orderly expanse.

Alias and Richard weave through the maze toward a back-corner square: four desks, three claimed, one waiting.

SARAH, 38, sharp-eyed, types with focus at her station. The other two chairs sit empty. Alias and Richard reach Richard's desk – next to Sarah.

ALIAS
Welcome to your new home.

Sarah turns around in her chair.

SARAH
This the new guy?

Alias nods.

ALIAS
Looks like you'll be sitting next
to Sarah here.

SARAH
Nice to meet you, I'm Sarah.

Sarah extends her hand, still sitting. Richard accepts, and they shake hands.

RICHARD
Richard Parker.

SARAH
Formal! I like that. We work in
teams of four.

ALIAS
Where's Eli and Marquise?

SARAH
Oh! They're out in the field right
now, following a lead.

Sarah gestures to Richard to take his seat.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Have a seat. I'll fill you in.

Alias pats Richard on the back.

ALIAS
Looks like your good hands.
Remember, if you need anything, my
office is open. Like a good anchor
man, consider my support.

Richard chuckles.

RICHARD
Will do. Thanks!

Alias walks away, and Richard takes his seat next to Sarah.
Sarah leans in toward Richard.

SARAH
(softly)
I sure hope you're better than the
last guy.

RICHARD
You guys didn't run him off, did
you?

SARAH
Didn't have to. That guy had his
head so far up his... You know what-

Richard chuckles softly.

RICHARD
Yeah, but how was his work?

SARAH
What work? He quit on his first
assignment.

Richard scoots his chair forward and gets comfortable.

RICHARD
Well, I'll do my best to stick
around.

SARAH
I hope so. Your resume looked good.
I'll be honest with you.

Richard turns with keen focus.

SARAH (CONT'D)
This job is easy, a cake walk, if
you have... at least a working
knowledge of writing.

RICHARD
Good to know. I just try to do the
best I can do.

Sarah swings her chair back toward her desk.

SARAH
If only we had a couple more like
you.

She looks at her computer screen.

SARAH (CONT'D)
We might actually get some work
done around here.

Richard chuckles softly.

Sarah looks at him, turns back to her work.

SARAH (CONT'D)
(utters aloud softly)
Yup! He'll work.

A BELL CHIME MELODY PLAYS over the speakers.

Richard looks confused, and Sarah stands up and gathers her things. She looks at Richard, still sitting. She points her finger up,

SARAH (CONT'D)
That's the lunch bell.

Richard nods.

RICHARD
Oh!

SARAH
Well, come on! I'm starving.

Richards rises out of his chair, and they exit.

CUT TO: CUTSCENE

EXT. WONDERLAND ATTRACTIONS [VARIOUS FOOD STANDS] - DAY

FLASH CUTSCENE | MONTAGE | FOOD STANDS

Show various food stands, serving various park food. Guests eat and express happy, pleased, and satisfied faces.

[FREEZE FRAME] Black & White: A guest takes a big bite of a delicious gourmet venue snack for a close-up snapshot as he bites in.

RIDES SYMBOLIC MESSAGE: FOOD MEANS BREAK TIME

**CUT TO: BACK TO
SHOW**

INT. CAFETERIA [LUNCH LINE] - DAY

A bustling cafeteria lunch line snakes past steaming trays and clattering utensils, employees inching forward with plastic trays in hand. Overhead menus flicker while kitchen staff calls out orders above the steady hum of conversation.

Richard steps in, lunch tray on the rail, and Bonnie works the line as she looks up and sees Richard.

BONNIE
How's your first day going?
Settling in ok?

Richard pushes his tray toward her, and she begins placing food onto a plate to put on the tray.

RICHARD
So far, so good.

BONNIE
Good!

Bonnie slides the tray back, loaded with food.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
Everybody's at table three. Join
us! I'll be there in a minute.

Richard nods and smirks a grin as he steps to the left, sliding his tray along the railing.

INT. CAFETERIA [LUNCH TABLE] - CONTINUED

The cafeteria hums with Wonderland employees on break, trays clattering and voices overlapping. At TABLE 3 - GERRY, big and easy; JOEY, wired on soda; and KELLY, observant and amused.

RICHARD weaves through the chaos with his tray, spots everybody, and makes his way toward the table.

Gerry gestures to an open seat, available at the table.

GERRY
There he is... Plump her down right
here, new Wonderlander.

Richard slides into the open seat. Mid-sit, he spots JANE and DOUGLAS from orientation. He shouts to them.

RICHARD
Hey! Over here... C'mon!

Jane and Douglas look relieved and quickly accept the offer. They make their way toward the table and sit in the end seats.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
(To Gerry, Joey, Kelly)
You guys don't mind if some new
friends join us?

KELLY
Not at all. The more... the merrier.

GERRY
Glad to see you're making friends.

Douglas and Jane join, and Joey extends an open seat.

JOEY
Welcome to the circus. Established
since ninety-eight.

Richard leans toward Douglass and Jane.

RICHARD
That's Joey, my nephew. Let me
introduce you to the family,
starting with my cousin Gerry.

Gerry nods gracefully and introduces himself.

GERRY
Maintenance department. Dock House
Nine.

RICHARD
And this is his son, Joey.

Richard pauses, confused about where Joey works.

JOEY
I work in Attractions, Uncle
Richard.

Richard nods along and quickly gestures to Kelly.

RICHARD
And this is Kelly, my sister-in-
law.

Kelly nods gracefully.

KELLY
Nice to meet ya'll. I work at the
Call center. Oh!

Kelly leans into the table.

KELLY (CONT'D)
Bonnie will join us in a moment.

Gerry leans forward.

GERRY
That's my wife. She works here in
the kitchen.

Richard looks over toward the lunch line and spots Bonnie working.

RICHARD
I thought she was promoted to
kitchen management.

GERRY
She was... The line staff was short
today.

RICHARD
Aw! That makes sense.

Douglas and Jane, a little overwhelmed as newbies themselves, but polite and gracious about the hospitality. Enjoy themselves as the conversation continues.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Well, now that you met my family.
Let me introduce my new friends.

Douglas and Jane sit up.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
This lovely lady is Jane--

Jane raises her hand with an open-handed wave gesture.

JANE
Admissions, Gate Attendant.

KELLY
That's a fun job! Is Hannah still
in charge over there?

JANE
Oh! She's awesome.

Kelly nods along.

KELLY
Yes! She most certainly is. You're
in good hands, Jane.

Jane smiles, and Richard turns to Douglass. But Douglas stands up and introduces himself proudly.

DOUGLAS
Names Douglas, from Missouri...
Sanitation! At your discretion.

They chuckle, except for Gerry, who addresses Douglas.

GERRY
Great hours!

Douglas takes his seat proudly.

GERRY (CONT'D)
Hey, Douglas! I started out in
sanitation, too. Great department.

RICHARD
I didn't know that.

GERRY
You weren't even born yet. That's
how I got into mechanics.

RICHARD
You don't say.

Gerry focuses on Douglas.

GERRY
If you ever get bored, just swing
by Dock House Nine. Ask for Gerry,
and I'll show you around.

DOUGLAS
I might just take you up on that
offer.

GERRY
Anytime!

Jane leans in.

JANE
So, you guys all work here. Wow!
It's like a Wonderland family... for
real.

Bonnie steps in from behind, her lunch tray in hand.

BONNIE
Why, thank you.

Bonnie sits next to Gerry. Gerry leans in.

GERRY
How's the line?

BONNIE
Don't you even get me started.

Kelly sees Mike coming in the distance. The attention of the room shifts to greet Mike (Everybody loves Big Mike). He enters graciously like a star.

KELLY
Oh! Here comes Mike.

Everyone at the table looks, and Richard, next to Douglas, turns around and sees Mike make his grand entrance as always. Douglas notices the resentment in Richard's gaze. He knows that look. He leans into Richard.

DOUGLAS
I take it that's Big Brother?

Richard nods along.

RICHARD
Yup! And he just made Head JV Coach.

Mike approaches the table and sits next to his wife, Kelly, for a nice smooch as he sits.

KELLY
Richard made new friends. This is Jane... and Douglas.

Mike nods with a friendly nod.

A KITCHEN STAFF WORKER delivers Mike a plate on the table, he thanks her politely, and he adjusts himself comfortably.

JANE
Which department do you work in?

MIKE
Activities Director.

Richard is shocked and surprised as Mike takes a big bite of food, stuffing his mouth.

RICHARD
I thought you worked in Merchandise, or was it a forklift operator in the warehouse?

Mike nods and replies with his mouth full.

MIKE
(Mouth full - muffled)
I did. Both actually.

Kelly sees that Mike's mouth is full and talks for him.

KELLY
That was like two years ago. Before
he finally finished his degree.
Now, he's the activities Director.

Jane nods along and turns to Richard with curiosity.

JANE
So, any clues on your first story
yet?

RICHARD
Aw! Nothing yet. Still settling in.
(utters aloud, softly)
I don't even know where to start.

DOUGLAS
Why not join the park tour after
lunch?

JOEY
Yeah! That's a fantastic Idea.

Gerry leans toward Richard, as if to give wisdom and advice.

GERRY
Hey! Trust me, Work ain't going
nowhere. First day's for fun - use
it.

Joey leans in, eager.

JOEY
If you guys hit Mega-Khan, ask for
me. I'll get you front row.

Jane and Douglas Nod along.

DOUGLAS
Sweet!

JANE
Sweet!

JOEY
Anytime. I got you.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE**INT. MOMMAS HOUSE [LIVING ROOM] - DAY**

Mom sits at her desk, looks over her finances, and is upset.

MOMMA PARKER
(talks to herself)
I don't know what I'm going to do.
No mother should rely on her own
children for financial support.

She looks at a framed picture on the wall - her and her husband, younger, happy.

MOMMA PARKER (CONT'D)
(talks to herself)
Everything is going to be ok. We'll
get through this... We always do.

She smiles, a spark of hope lighting her eyes.

EXT. WONDERLAND [MEGA-KHAN ATTRACTION] - DAY**ATTRACTION ENTRANCE AREA**

Richard, accompanied by Jane and Douglas, walks with the orientation group (small group) of future Wonderlanders, led by Instructor Mary, to the entrance of the Mega-Khan (Roller Coaster) attraction, where they gather under the sign.

INSTRUCTOR MARY
Built in 2008, Mega-Khan reigns
supreme as Wonderland's number one
coaster.

Mary hand-gestures (Points) left, revealing the lift hill.

INSTRUCTOR MARY (CONT'D)
Towering over two-hundred feet
tall, Mega-Khan was the biggest
investment the company ever made.

Joey steps out from behind the scenes (staff area) and sees Richard in the group. He approaches as Mary finishes her spiel.

INSTRUCTOR MARY (CONT'D)
Who wants to ride?

The group cheers, and Joey approaches Richard, Jane, and Douglas.

JOEY
Ready for that front row seat?

Douglas and Jane nod along.

DOUGLAS
Oh, Yeah!

Richard plays cool, but it shows that he is nervous.

**CUT TO: LOADING
DOCK**

MEGA-KHAN RIDE LOADING DOCK

Richard, Jane, Douglas, and Mary stand in the gated load queue, front row, as the coaster enters the loading dock. Everyone claps and cheers, ready to ride - excitement.

DOUGLAS
(to Richard, softly)
Here we go!

The queue gates open, and the guests load into the coaster. Richard and Douglas (the men) take the end row seats, and Jane and Mary (ladies) sit centered in the middle seats.

They all strap in, nod to each other, and are ready to go.

**CUT TO: COASTER
LIFT HILL**

MEGA-KHAN - ON COASTER - LIFT HILL

The coaster chain CLICKS & CLANKS [SOUND FX] as it climbs the lift hill - Guest onboard. In the front row: Richard, Jane, Mary, Douglas. Men on the outside, ladies in the center. All four are gripping their handlebars tightly.

INSTRUCTOR MARY
(Huge smiley face)
Isn't this just exhilarating?

Jane and Douglas nod along, excited, but Richard grips tighter, nervous. Douglas leans forward and looks to, and notices Richard.

DOUGLAS
No worries, Richard. These things
run smoothly. Just enjoy the ride.

Richard nods, as if trying to convince himself.

JANE
Hold on!

Richard closes his eyes; he knows this is the worst part.

The coaster reaches the top-over. The chains CLANK [SOUND FX]
and Jerk the ride.

RICHARD
(utters aloud)
Why do they make these things do
this?

MARY hears and turns with an over-enthusiastic smile.

INSTRUCTOR MARY
It's all part of the ride, Richard.
Hang on. Here we go!

**CUT TO: COASTER
CUTSCENE**

EXT. MEGA-KHAN RIDE COASTER MOTION CUTSCENE - DAY

MONTAGE: SEQUENCE OF SHOTS

[AUDIO] PLAY MUSIC - Upbeat or Rockin'

Show various clips of the Mega-Khan Coaster in specific spots
that feature the coaster's dynamic design, with guests
Richard, Jane, Mary, and Douglas on board. The expression of
fun and excitement.

**CUT TO: BACK TO
SHOW**

EXT. WONDERLAND [ACTIVITIES AREA] - DAY

A group of parents stands by, watching their kids play
dodgeball as Mike coaches and referees the game. Mike blows
his whistle and shouts.

MIKE
Okay... Let's go!

The kids play dodgeball. Richard approaches, and Mike sees Richard. Mike excuses himself and walks over to Richard. He stops, blows his whistle, and shouts.

MIKE (CONT'D)
You're out, Chris.

CHRIS, Kid - Sobs to the sideline. Mike approaches Richard.

MIKE (CONT'D)
These little guys think they can
get over on me... not on my watch.

Richard puts his hands on his hips.

RICHARD
(sarcastic)
Coming from the guy who cheated to
win every time we played.

Mike turns to watch the kids as he talks.

MIKE
(Tough guy, come back)
Not my fault, you can't handle the
heat in the kitchen.

[BEAT] Pause awkward look.

MIKE (CONT'D)
If you want a rematch, just say the
word. Any day, little bro.

Richard nods along.

RICHARD
It's a date.

Mike blows his whistle, giving one kid a keen eye for roughhousing. The Kids surrenders, hands in the air. Mike chuckles and gives the nod to keep playing. The kids play.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Oh! Congratulations on making
coach.

MIKE
Thanks! I know it's just JV... But
it's a start.

RICHARD

Not a bad start at all. I know you wanted it. The way Kelly tells it... Sounds like you've worked hard to get there.

Mike leans in.

MIKE

(Softly)

Damn near impossible.

Richard nods along.

RICHARD

Well, I'll let you get back to it.

Mike pats Richard on the back and trots back onto the field. He turns around as he trots.

MIKE

Don't forget that rematch.

As Mike runs off, Richard utters aloud.

RICHARD

(utters aloud)

A hundred bucks says you cheat.

[BEAT]

Cheater.

Mike looks back with a smile, and did not hear. Richard grins back innocently.

INT. RIDE & SHOW HEADQUARTERS [POW-WOW ROOM] - DAY

The Pow-Wow room is packed with staff and buzz. Richard approaches, and Sarah sees him coming in. She rushes over to welcome him to his first meeting.

SARAH

Oh my... A Super Pow-wow on your first day. How exciting.

Richard nods along as he reads the room, full of buzz and co-workers.

Alias bursts in, all urgency, and wastes no time. As he passes Sarah, he hands her a stack of posts/papers.

ALIAS

Be a champ and hang these on the board, would you?

Sarah takes the papers and happily goes to the board to post them. Alias looks to Richard.

ALIAS (CONT'D)
Relax! First day, fun day. But try
to keep up.

Richard nods.

Alias heads to the front to address the room.

ALIAS (CONT'D)
Good news! We got some new leads.

Sarah sorts the papers and begins posting them separately on the bulletin board.

ALIAS (CONT'D)
I want everyone to wrap up your
current stories. Drop the outlines.
Close out your current stories.
We've got big leads from upstairs -
top priority. Finish up what you
got, and I expect your drafts by
tomorrow morning.

Richard focuses on a post Sarah puts up - about teamwork, communication, and problem-solving. [SHOW POST ON BOARD]

ALIAS (CONT'D)
Alright! So, if there are no
questions. I'll let you all get to
it.

Everyone stands up and starts moving around - buzz.

ALIAS (CONT'D)
(over the room)
Remember, my office is always open.

EXT. MOMMAS HOUSE - SUNSET

[FLASH] House centered: Sun setting behind.

INT. MOMMAS HOUSE [LIVING ROOM] - NIGHT

A fire flickers in the fireplace, crackling so gently. Mom sits on the sofa, and Richard walks in, urgently and deeply concerned, holding a letter.

RICHARD
What's this?

Mom plays innocently dumb.

MOMMA PARKER

Oh my... You weren't supposed to see that.

Richard sits.

RICHARD

Are you in financial trouble mom.

Mom unsettles and opens honestly.

MOMMA PARKER

Yes! I am. Sorry!

Richard leans back.

RICHARD

You don't need to apologize, Mom.
I'd like to help.

Mom stands, frustrated.

MOMMA PARKER

No mother should ever depend on
their child.

Richard reaches out and takes her by the arm.

RICHARD

Sit down. You're not the only one.

Mom gives Richard a keen eye.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

I had a friend in the city who went
through a similar situation. He was
able to help his mom. Same
situation.

Mom shrugs.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

It's not easy. You'll have to
adjust--

[BEAT] Mom stares keenly - not pleased.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Okay, you'll have to downsize some
things.

Mom sits. Still nervous, but more open.

MOMMA PARKER
I don't know what to do.

RICHARD
We'll get through this... together.
Consider my help, my portion of the
rent. I won't take no for an
answer.

Mom smiles.

MOMMA PARKER
Good boy! What did I ever do to
deserve you?

Richard leans in and embraces Mom with a hug.

RICHARD
Well, for starters, you raised me
right.

Mom looks at the picture mounted on the wall - She smiles.

INT. MOMMAS HOUSE [LOFT - RICHARD'S HOME OFFICE] - NIGHT

Richard sits at his desk, looking at his article layout (on screen). He reads (narrates his article).

MONTAGE: Sequence of Shots - as Richard narrates his article.
Show episode recaps and clips that match the narration.

RICHARD (V.O.)
(Narration of article)

Wonderland... It works.

We all try to make it on our own, chasing the promise of success. Some achieve it. Some don't. But we try. After my own big-city failure, I came home, stepping back into a life I had nearly forgotten.

Strangely, Wonderland became the cure I didn't know I needed. A place where family, friends, and strangers come together - and somehow, it works.

I found more than a job here. In my first week, I found a connection. My relatives welcomed me without hesitation, and coworkers quickly became friends. Together, we've built something that feels less like a workplace and more like a family - one that fills spaces you didn't realize were empty.

My late father always said, "No one job is above any other." He was right.

From ride operators and maintenance crews to admissions, activities, kitchen staff, and even writers like me, every role matters.

Wonderland runs on trust, cooperation, and mutual respect. Rivalries fade when the gates open. The mission is bigger than any difference. Here, family and work thrive together. Success is shared. Wonderland isn't just a workplace — it's a fellowship in motion.

END OF MONTAGE: BACK TO RICHARD

As Richard finishes narrating, headlights from outside flash through the window onto the wall. Richard looks out the window and sees Mike's truck turning and parking curbside.

EXT. MOMMAS HOUSE [DRIVEWAY HOOPS] - NIGHT

Mike stands at the edge of the driveway, basketball in hand, spikes it hard, and gets a feel as Richard lines up for defense.

MIKE

Nine, Eight. Looks like I'm one up on you.

Richard takes a good stance, rocks left to right, ready.

RICHARD

Not over yet!

MIKE

Just promise me you won't cry after I spank you.

Richard says nothing. Focused as they check the ball.

Mike drives hard right. Richard slides perfectly, chest square as Mike lines up. Richard smacks the ball and it goes out of bounds.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Nice play! Out on you, my ball.

Mike grabs the ball with a frustrated grunt and heads back to the edge of the driveway as they check the ball again.

This time: Mike drives hard left, lowers his shoulder — subtle shove. Richard stumbles. Mike lays it in for a hard charge and rushes to the hoop for a fast lay-up.

RICHARD

No Good!

MIKE

What?

RICHARD

Foul! You charged.

MIKE

Fare enough! No point.

Mike grabs the ball and heads back to the edge of the driveway.

RICHARD

What are you doing? You fouled.
That's my ball... Cheater.

Mike and Richard switch places. Richard takes the ball and checks. Mike sets his stance for a strong defense.

Richard dribbles. He's quicker now. Controlled. A hesitation. Cross. Mike bites. Richard pulls up from midrange and the shot - Swish.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Looks like we're tied up.

Mike looks frustrated as he grabs the ball and passes it to Richard - at the edge of the driveway. They check the ball.

Mike's jaw tightens. They play again. Richard fakes Mike and drives baseline. Mike turns back sharply and elbows Richard right in the face. He loses the ball, rolls away, and grips his cheek.

MIKE

Sorry, I got carried away. That's
my bad.

Richard doesn't move at first. Then, blood wells under his eye, already bruising. He touches it and approaches Mike slowly.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Aw! It can't be that bad. Come
here, let me see that.

Richard steps closer, anger in his eyes. Unexpectedly, Richard punches Mike right in the face. Perfect shot, Mike goes down, hard, holds his cheek, and looks up.

Richard towers over him, looking down angrily.

RICHARD
You might be my bigger brother, and
I love you... But we're not kids
anymore. Got it!

Richard walks away.

Mike lies on the ground, red swollen cheek, watching Richard
walk away. He utters.

MIKE
(utters to himself aloud)
What the hell's his problem?

FADE OUT.

THE END