

The Monte Cristo Kid

Written by
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*Based on
The Count of Monte Cristo
by Alexandre Dumas*

FADE IN.

INT. "LAKE BRADDOCK" SCHOOL - GYM - DAY

SCOREBOARD changes from:

HOME - 45 AWAY - 46 to
HOME - 45 AWAY - 48

REFEREE blows a WHISTLE.

The referee throws the basketball to EDMUND DANTES (15, male, tenacious, funny, naive).

Edmund dribbles down the court and looks for TYRONE MONTEGO (16, male, cocky, handsome, charismatic).

The game clock reads: 30. 29. 28.

EDMUND

Come on Ty, this is our last game.
(nods to Mia in Bleachers)
Mia's hot, right? I mean she's way
out of my league.

Tyrone catches the ball mid-court.

TYRONE

Yeah, man, she's pretty hot and WAY
out of your league...

EDMUND

Gotta keep her interested somehow,
so--
(beat)
-- Let's make this count.
(passes ball)
Just like old times.

TYRONE

Yeah--
(Glances at Mia)
-- Just like old times.

INT. "LAKE BRADDOCK" SCHOOL - GYM BLEACHERS - DAY

JANET DANTES (30s, female, graceful, kind, down-to-earth),
Edmund's mom, and his AUNT MAPLE (30s, female, honest, funny,
smart, aloof) shout from the bleachers.

JANET

Let's go, Edmund! THAT'S MY BOY!

AUNT MAPLE
Where's your husband?

Janet keeps clapping.

JANET
Where's your daughter?

AUNT MAPLE
Zatara!

INT. "LAKE BRADDOCK" SCHOOL - GYM - DAY

ZATARA (12, female, vivacious, curious, quirky) runs up and down the court trying to keep up with her cousin and favorite player, Edmund.

ZATARA
(fisting air)
Go, Edmund! Edmund! Go, Edmund! Z!

PLAYER 1 lunges at Edmund.

TEAMMATE 1 flails wildly.

TEAMMATE 1
I'm open! Edmund!

Edmund looks at Teammate 1 then fakes a lunge at PLAYER 1.

EDMUND
Look at my eyes...
(points to his eye)
Are you watching?

PLAYER 1
You ain't going nowhere

EDMUND
Ball can't tell you anything. Now
you see it.

Edmund dribbles and stares into PLAYER 1's eyes then tosses the Ball to Tyrone.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Now you don't.

Edmund CLAPS his empty Hands and shoves a confused Player 1 out of the way.

PLAYER 1
(to Edmund)
Get off me!

Zatara Points with a Giant Blue Finger.

ZATARA
Get him, Edmund!

Tyrone glances at Teammate 1, flailing his Arms again.

TEAMMATE 1
I'm open!

Tyrone fake passes to Teammate 1.

TYRONE
(to himself)
Sike.

Tyrone shoots and misses.

Teammate 1 rebounds and lands hard on the gym floor.

TYRONE (CONT'D)
Scrub. Gimme that.

Tyrone rips the Ball out of Teammate 1's Hands.

Edmund helps Teammate 1 up.

EDMUND
(to Tyrone)
Chill man.

Tyrone spins and shoots.

The basketball slowly circles the rim.

The ball goes in.

TYRONE
(beating chest)
And one!

The SCOREBOARD now reads HOME - 47 AWAY - 48

Edmund waves at Mia in the bleachers.

INT. "LAKE BRADDOCK" SCHOOL - GYM BLEACHERS - CONTINUOUS

MIA BIRYANI (15, female, pretty, bold, fickle) gossips with her girlfriends in the bleachers.

She avoids eye contact with Edmund and winks at Tyrone.

MIA

My parents are so strict, ya know?
It's like I'm still a little kid.

(winks at Tyrone)

Tyrone makes me feel like I can do
what I want for once.

GIRLFRIEND

What about Edmund?

Mia shrugs and claps, avoiding the question.

INT. "LAKE BRADDOCK" SCHOOL - GYM - CONTINUOUS

Tyrone winks back at Mia, then takes the foul at the Free
Throw Line. He shoots and misses.

Edmund rebounds and walks to Tyrone.

EDMUND

(whispers)

What was that shot?

TYRONE

What?

EDMUND

You winked at Mia too, man. I saw.

TYRONE

Nah.

(wipes sweat)

Got sweat in my eyes.

EDMUND

She winked back.

TYRONE

Maybe she's got sweat in her eye
too? Gimme the ball, Edmund.

Edmund passes the ball forcefully to Tyrone and then shuffles
back into position as he stares at Mia.

Tyrone points to Mia, exhales deeply then shoots wildly, hits
the backboard, and misses.

TYRONE (CONT'D)

(sarcastic)

Oh, Man!

(MORE)

TYRONE (CONT'D)
(Punches the air)
NO!

Edmund grabs the rebound.

TEAMMATE 1
Edmund, I'm open!

TYRONE
Edmund! No. Me!
(whistles)
I'm open!

Edmund passes to Teammate 1 but Tyrone intercepts it.

TYRONE (CONT'D)
Mine.

Edmund stares in horror as Tyrone dribbles slowly to the edge of the court.

The crowd is stunned to SILENCE.

EDMUND
NO! TY?! NOOOO!

GAME CLOCK ticks down from: 05. 04.

Tyrone stops at the scorekeepers table.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
(to Teammate 1)
What's he doing?!

The GAME CLOCK ticks down, 03 to: 02.

TEAMMATE 1
I don't know. I don't know.

Edmund is running full steam towards Tyrone.

Tyrone throws the Game Ball to Mia.

GAME CLOCK reads: 01. 00.

Mia turns to her girlfriends and shows them the ball as they gather around, giggling and clapping.

Zatara is trying to flag Edmund down but he's not paying any attention to her, Janet, or Aunt Maple. They walk out with the crowd.

TIME-LAPSE OF GYM EMPTYING

Edmund is staring at Tyrone in the empty gym.

EDMUND

What was that? We had them. We had them, man.

TYRONE

You wouldn't get it, man. My dad's breathing down my neck about everything. Maybe moving schools is my clean slate.

Edmund slumps over.

EDMUND

We had the... Why'd you throw the ball to MIA?

TYRONE

She said if I liked her I would give her the game ball.

EDMUND

AFTER THE GAME DUDE! We had it! We had it man. We had it. Oh my god.

Edmund walks over and kicks the bleachers.

Mia, hiding under the bleachers STIFLES a cough.

Edmund looks suspiciously at the bleachers.

TYRONE

(loudly)

I mean... It won't matter anymore, anyway.

EDMUND

What do you mean? It's the last game of the season TYRONE! It's our 8th-grade year. It's everything, man!

TYRONE

I'm moving man.

Edmund freezes.

EDMUND

What? Wait? Where? When? How? You didn't tell me?

TYRONE

Yeah. I couldn't bring myself to tell you, man.

EDMUND

I don't get it. Why did you throw the game?

TYRONE

Because I wanted to start next year with a school that wins.

Edmund looks around for an answer.

EDMUND

You're going to play on that team next year.

TYRONE

I didn't pick it, my dad did.

EDMUND

I can't even believe it. What about Mia? I gotta talk to Mia.

TYRONE

She doesn't want to talk to you, man.

EDMUND

Yeah right. You suck man. Your dad sucks. Mia sucks. Man... I can't wait till you move! Dick-bag!

Edmund runs out of the gym leaving Tyrone alone in silhouette under the lights.

TYRONE

(to bleachers)

There!

Mia walks out from under the bleachers with the Game Ball.

TYRONE (CONT'D)

Are you happy?

MIA

I am.

The lights dim in the Gym leaving Tyrone and Mia in darkness.

INT. "LAKE BRADDOCK" SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - LATER

PROF. ARI STOTTLE (40s, male, stern, fair, dull) stands at the head of the class taking attendance.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE
(monotone)
Sheffield?

SHEFFIELD
(raising hand)
Here!

PROF. ARI STOTTLE
Chandra?
(beat)
Chandra?

CHANDRA
(raises hand)
Present.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE
Dantes?

Edmund sits with his head in his hands.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE (CONT'D)
Dantes?

Edmund raises his hand.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE (CONT'D)
Dantes?

EDMUND
(meekly)
Present.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE
(to Edmund)
Don't worry about the loss Edmund,
we learn more from failing.
(beat)
Dumas?

Edmund looks up from his arms.

EDMUND
(to himself)
Doesn't feel like it.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE

Dumas?

(looks up)

Alexandre? Oh, there you are, thank you.

(beat)

Montego. Montego.

(looks up)

Where's Tyrone, Edmund?

(looks at clock)

He's gonna be...

Tyrone slams through the closed door of the classroom. Smiles and then slowly grabs his seat next to Edmund.

Prof. Ari Stottle stares at Tyrone.

TYRONE

Present!

Prof. Ari Stottle looks up from his attendance sheet.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE

Better late than never I suppose.

TYRONE

(sarcastic)

That's what I always say...

PROF. ARI STOTTLE

Biryani?

Pro. Ari Stottle looks around the class.

Tyrone slumps in his seat.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE (CONT'D)

Biryani?

Mia SLAMS through the classroom door.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE (CONT'D)

Late. Please take your seat.

MIA

Sorry, Mr. Stottle.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE

The game was out 30 minutes ago.

Prof. Ari Stottle motions to Edmund and Tyrone.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE (CONT'D)
These two have an excuse.
(points)
You do not.

MIA
I had to freshen up.

TYRONE
(loudly)
Yeah. #1 Professor.

MIA
Gross.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE
Enough.

Edmund looks over at Mia.

Mia looks at Tyrone.

Tyrone nods to Mia.

Edmund looks at Tyrone.

Tyrone looks awkwardly around.

EDMUND
(to Mia)
(whispers)
Where were you? I didn't see you
after the game.

MIA
I had to do some stuff.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE
OK! I hope everyone studied for the
test! The last one of middle
school. And if you don't pass--
I'll see you this summer.

Prof. Ari Stottle grabs a stack of papers and hands them to
the head of each row.

Tyrone is staring at Mia.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE (CONT'D)
Take one, and pass it down. You
know the drill.
(to Tyrone)
Keep your eyes to yourself, Tyrone.

TYRONE

(salutes)

Yes sir. Only on the test sir. You said we could use our notes right?

PROF. ARI STOTTLE

Did you take notes? It is an open book... Yeah sure. If you, *TYRONE*, took notes then yes you can use them.

Edmund shakes his head.

Edmund looks at Mia and Tyrone staring at each other.

Tyrone takes out a folded piece of Paper.

TYRONE

Ready Professor.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE

Interesting.

Edmund reaches down into his backpack to pull out his notes.

EDMUND

Where are my...

Edmund glares at Tyrone.

TYRONE

(whispers)

I can't fail. My dad will kill me.

Mia looks at Sean and then down at her test.

EDMUND

(to Mia)

(Whispers)

Mia. Did you give him my notes?

PROF. ARI STOTTLE

Quiet down Edmund.

Prof. Ari Stottle looks at the Clock and then his watch.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE (CONT'D)

The test starts--

(checks clock)

-- Now.

Edmund opens his book and flips pages with a blank expression on his face.

Mia folds a piece of paper and hands it to her friends.

Prof. Ari Stottle has his back turned, looking out of the window.

Edmund sees the piece of paper pass from person to person and as each one reads it they laugh. He grabs the paper. It's marked 'Edmund' on the front. He opens the letter.

Edmund stares at the piece of paper.

TIME-LAPSE OF
CLOCK

The classroom clock spins from 1:30 pm to 2:50 pm.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE (CONT'D)
That's it!
(claps hands)
Pencils down. Hand in your tests
and you can go. Have a great
summer!

Mia hands in her test.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE (CONT'D)
See ya Mia. Good luck at St.
Albarns. It's a good prep school.

Mia takes a glance back at Edmund, still catatonic from the letter.

Edmund moves his head up in time to see Mia leave.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE (CONT'D)
Have a great summer. Bye. Most of
you. Bye. Bye.

Classroom empties.

Edmund is still holding the note.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE (CONT'D)
Edmund.
(snaps fingers)
Edmund.

EDMUND
Yeah.
(looks up)
Yes.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE
Times up. Class is over.
(beat)
Earth to Edmund.

EDMUND
(stands)
No.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE
Do you want to talk about it?

EDMUND
No.

Prof. Ari Stottle lifts Edmund's test. The note marked
'Edmund' falls onto the floor.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE
You didn't write anything on your
test...
(sighs)
Edmund waits.
(holds up his hand)
I'll give you some extra time to
finish it...
(beat)
Otherwise, you'll have to repeat
the course...
(looks at Edmund)
Over the summer.

EDMUND
(shrugs)
Whatever. It's all over anyway.

Edmund reaches the front door of the classroom and grabs the
doorknob which doesn't budge. He pulls so hard the door
groans.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE
Another way Edmund. Wait, the year
is over? Class is over? What's
over?

SEAN
(sighs)
My life.
(beat)
My life's over.

Prof. Ari Stottle nods and then reaches down and grabs the
note marked 'Edmund'. He unfolds it and reads it out loud.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE
Edmund, I didn't know how to tell
you so... I just will...but it's
over. I don't like you anymore. I'm
sorry. Oh no.
(to Edmund)
Hey Edmund...

Prof. Ari Stottle looks up just as Edmund walks out of the
classroom.

PROF. ARI STOTTLE (CONT'D)
See you this summer.

TEXT OVER BLACK:

The Monte Cristo Kid
Based on The Count of Monte Cristo

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. "LAKE BRADDOCK" SCHOOL - DAY

Edmund walks out of the school doors and freezes.

Tyrone and Mia walk past Edmund without even noticing.

TYRONE
Dad's gonna kill me if I don't get
a scholarship. I gotta be the star.
Who cares about Edmund anyway, he
was holding me back.

Edmund unfreezes and watches them walk in front of him the
whole way home.

EXT. "DANTES" HOUSE - DAY

The Rain seems to lift as Edmund opens the gate to his house.

A large banner is Hung up outside his house reading 'Con-
GRAD-ulations!'.
.

Edmund looks up and sighs. He leans over the railing and sees
his father, GREG DANTES (40s, male, bad communicator, stern),
and mother, Janet inside setting out a cake.

Edmund pivots to look into the other window and sees his
cousin, Zatara STARING back at him.

Edmund jumps, startled by Zatara.

EDMUND
(startled)
What the...

Aunt Maple opens the front door, interrupting Edmund.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
(awkwardly)
Heck...
(sadly)
Hey, Aunt Maple--

AUNT MAPLE
(quietly)
What's up? You look...

Aunt Maple closes the door behind her.

AUNT MAPLE (CONT'D)
(smacks lips)
Not well...

Edmund picks his head up and sees Zatara still staring at him, now eating a cupcake like an animal.

EDMUND
Wow. Can you call off your minion?

Edmund nods towards the window.

Aunt Maple looks back at the Zatara.

Zatara backs away and disappears.

AUNT MAPLE
Better?

Edmund looks up at Aunt Maple.

EDMUND
I can't go on vacation because I
have to go to summer school.
(sobs)
Otherwise, I have...
(hiccups)
...to repeat the 8th grade.

Edmund sits down on the porch.

AUNT MAPLE
Yeah. Ok. That is bad.

Edmund lays down and looks to his left to see Zatara standing in the window again with a handful of Pixie Sticks.

EDMUND
And guess what else...

Aunt Maple waves her arms.

AUNT MAPLE
I can't take it. What else?

EDMUND
I think Tyrone and Mia are... ya know.

AUNT MAPLE
Tyrone your best friend Tyrone?

EDMUND
Yeah.

AUNT MAPLE
You're gonna have to write his number down too.

Edmund and Aunt Maple share a laugh.

AUNT MAPLE (CONT'D)
Come on. Get up. Let me grab your bag.

Edmund stands.

AUNT MAPLE (CONT'D)
How do you want to do it?
(mimics quarterback)
Do you need me to run interference?

INT. "DANTES" HOUSE - DINING ROOM

Edmund, now alone, walks into the Dining Room.

GREG
(to Edmund)
Hey buddy! Are you ready to party at the beach, man?

Edmund LOOKS down at his feet.

JANET
That was a terrible accent.

Greg shrugs.

GREG
Can you do better, mon?

Janet nods and sways to the beat.

JANET
(to Edmund)
Fun in da sun boi.
(dancing)
Cool breezes.
(laughs)
Lotta mercy.

Edmund shakes his head and looks up at the cake and sparklers.

JANET (CONT'D)
What's wrong? Get those hips moving!

Janet tries to slow her dancing, but Greg keeps spinning her.

GREG
Party time! Leave the boy.
Teenagers are fun sponges.
(spins Janet)
Dance momma!

Sean turns red.

JANET
Where's your aunt?

Edmund nods towards the bathroom.

EDMUND
(over the music)
Aunt Maple...
(cups his hands)
(loudly)
Took Zatara to wash up.

Janet grabs Edmund's hands and tries to make him dance.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
I um... I didn't... um...

JANET
I can't hear you?! I'm having too much fun!!!!

Janet spins again and catches Edmund's lifeless arms.

EDMUND
I said I... I...

Greg abruptly stops the music.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
(shouting)
FAILED...

Edmund's words cut through the sudden silence.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Oh god. I have to do summer
school... again.

Aunt Maple is holding her hand over Zataras's mouth behind the wall of the Dining Room.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Mia broke up with me.

GREG
(to Janet)
Who is Mia?

Janet raises her eyebrows at Greg and glares at him with one eye.

JANET
(to Greg)
His girlfriend.

GREG
I don't give a darn-- if it's Helen
of Troy! We already booked the
tickets! Non-refundable tickets!
You promised! You said AND I QUOTE,
(uses air quotes)
I WILL PASS ALL MY CLASSES THIS
YEAR, I PROMISE. CROSS MY HEART AND
HOPE TO DIE. You did say that
didn't you?

Greg moves the cake closer to him.

GREG (CONT'D)
My cake now. And Zataras's. And Aunt
Maple's And your mom's. But not
yours.

Greg grabs a big piece of cake with his hands and shoves it into his mouth.

Zataras runs around the corner.

AUNT MAPLE
No. Zataras Freeze!

Zataras freezes in motion.

GREG
Unfreeze.

Zatara runs over to the cake and shoves it into her mouth just like Greg.

GREG (CONT'D)
Good isn't it?

Zatara looks back at Edmund and then slides her plate away.

ZATARA
I don't want anymore.

GREG
More for me.

JANET
Greg.
(to Greg)
GREG.
(scoffs)
It's no wonder he failed with an example like you Greg.

Janet walks out of the room.

GREG
Now what. Huh, Edmund? Oh, WE are going. It'd be a shame not to. This is my only time off. All year. I gotta take it, right Janet?

AUNT MAPLE
I have an idea. It's crazy but just maybe.

GREG
You do have some good ideas.

AUNT MAPLE
Go get cleaned up Edmund. You're coming with me.

Greg stares up at Aunt Maple.

GREG
Wait. What? You'll take him for the summer?

AUNT MAPLE
As long as he doesn't mind the kids and vice versa. They are a tough crowd.
(MORE)

AUNT MAPLE (CONT'D)
It'll be a squeeze but we can do
it.
(to Zatara)
Right Zatara?

Zatara climbs down from the chair and puts her dirty hands
around Edmund's.

GREG
Do you hear that Edmund? You're
going to have so much fun learning!

AUNT MAPLE
Everyone is pretty disciplined
though... it will take some getting
used to.

EDMUND
Is it a military school?

AUNT MAPLE
No. It is a School for the Gifted.

EDMUND
Wait... Like Professor X or The
Nutty Professor?

AUNT MAPLE
Little of Column A and a little of
Column B. I have one rule though.
Everybody contributes and nobody
quits.

Aunt Maple glares at Greg.

EDMUND
What about my summer school?

AUNT MAPLE
I can take care of that. I'm in the
system.

EDMUND
Do you have a basketball court?

AUNT MAPLE
Sort of but that's not all we have.
What do you say? Up for the
challenge?

EDMUND
What's it called?

INT. "AUNT MAPLES" CAR - DAY

Edmund rolls the window down in the backseat of Aunt Maples's car as a sign reading, 'Monte Cristo School For The Gifted' emerges from the overgrowth.

EDMUND

This is your school?

AUNT MAPLE

Mmm-hmm. Yep, that's it.

EDMUND

Is it for gifted kids?

(sighs)

Special needs.-- I'm not...

(attempts a whistle)

(twirls hand)

I mean. Ya know. No offense.

Aunt Maple GLANCES at Edmund out of the corner of her Eye.

AUNT MAPLE

You know what the name is from,--
Monte Cristo?

EDMUND

(sarcastic)

It was in those things people used
to... read...

(puts index finger under
chin)

What did they call it? A BOOK...
Right?

AUNT MAPLE

Jeez. Yeah. A book. The Book. Did
you read it?

EDMUND

Sure. Read it.

AUNT MAPLE

What's it about?

Edmund ROLLS his Eyes then SHUTS them to try to remember.

EDMUND

Ya know. Stuff.

AUNT MAPLE

Did you read it?

EDMUND
Ok, I browsed it.

AUNT MAPLE
Well, it's an ETHOS here. Make
yourself better.
(SNAPS fingers)
That is a real escape.

EDMUND
I don't know what that means.

AUNT MAPLE
(Yoda Impression)
You will.

CHELSEA (16, female, strong-willed, pragmatic, adventurous)
GALLOPS alongside the fence on a White Horse, keeping pace
with the car.

EDMUND
Yeah, ok. Who's that?

AUNT MAPLE
That's Chelsea. Third Year.

EDMUND
Third year? She hasn't managed to
escape?

AUNT MAPLE
Not yet.

EDMUND
She's um, she seems happy.

AUNT MAPLE
It's hard not to be happy when you
ride the master of all horses.

EDMUND
Oh, you got Shadowfax here, huh?

Aunt Maple's eyes widen.

AUNT MAPLE
You know Tolkien. Good. Not a
complete loss.

EDMUND
I love Lord of the Rings. Don't
tell anyone.

AUNT MAPLE

That information will go over
slightly differently with her...
but yeah... I'll keep it a secret.

EDMUND

Is that kid loading a Cannon?

The car passes as Zatarra and CLARION (16, male, husky, shy,
nice, easily scared) load a black rubber ball into a cannon.

AUNT MAPLE

Ah, yes. We've gotta rehearse to
get the pyrotechnics right...
before we film.

EDMUND

What now? Film?

AUNT MAPLE

We're doing a shot-for-shot
recreation of The Last of The
Mohicans.

EDMUND

Oh god, No.

AUNT MAPLE

This is an Art School, Edmund.

EDMUND

Let me out.

Edmund pretends to grab for the Door.

AUNT MAPLE

In filming something we learn how
to create effects in Camera,
Chemistry. In writing dialogue, we
learn the fundamentals of language.
In staffing we learn... patience
and in marketing we learn...
consequence.

EDMUND

I don't believe it.

AUNT MAPLE

(as Yoda)

That is why you fail.

EDMUND

And it starts... Actors.

AUNT MAPLE
Filmmakers, Edmund. Filmmakers.

EDMUND
(whispers)
Wack-a-do's.

EXT. "AUNT MAPLES" HOUSE - DAY

Aunt Maple and Edmund pull up to the front of a large, white house.

AUNT MAPLE
Here it is!

Clarion loads the cannon.

CLARION
Loaded!

Zatara measures the angle of the cannon.

ZATARA
Fire! Fire! Fire!

Aunt Maple ducks.

EDMUND
Should I duck?

ZATARA
Misfire!

Edmund is SLAPPED in the face by a black rubber ball.

ZATARA (CONT'D)
Oh! OH! NO!

Aunt Maple runs over to Edmund, now lying on the ground. The black rubber ball is deflated and stretched over his Head like Napoleon's hat.

ZATARA (CONT'D)
Man Down!

CLARION
He looks like Napoleon.

ZATARA
A dead Napoleon.

Chelsea GALLOPS up on a White Horse.

CHELSEA
Welcome to Monte Cristo, kid.

AUNT MAPLE
That's very helpful, thank you,
Chelsea. He's my Nephew.

CHELSEA
He was.

Edmund wakes as Chelsea GALLOPS away.

AUNT MAPLE
Let's get him inside.

CLARION
Does he have a pulse? Can we move
him?

AUNT MAPLE
What?

CLARION
Saw it in a movie.

AUNT MAPLE
He's not dead he's...

EDMUND
(muffled)
OWWWWWWWWW. What... what was that?!

Edmund raises his body with his rubber hat head still
attached.

AUNT MAPLE
Welcome back.

CLARION
Monsieur Clarion at your Service.

Zatara leans over Edmund.

ZATARA
Research.
(curtsies)
Sorry for almost killing you.

Zatara pries the rubber ball hat off Edmund's Head.

EDMUND
Ouch!

ZATARA
I am in your debt.

EDMUND
Yeah. Yeah, whatever.

AUNT MAPLE
And there is the peace. Come on.
Let me show you to your room.

Aunt Maple reaches into the car and POPS the trunk.

AUNT MAPLE (CONT'D)
Grab your stuff.

EDMUND
Right.

INT. "AUNT MAPLES" HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Edmund enters the large foyer of Aunt Maple's House with his backpack and two suitcases.

EDMUND
Wow. This place is something.

AUNT MAPLE
Thanks. We put the studio on
rockers to absorb the noise and in
doing so we had to change the
floorboards so they don't creak so
we can get some clean audio.

EDMUND
English?

AUNT MAPLE
Come on. It's a small room but...

Aunt Maple opens the door to a small room with a small bed
next to a small window.

EDMUND
My cell?

AUNT MAPLE
HM. I thought you never read it.

EDMUND
I said browsing it.

AUNT MAPLE

Breakfast at seven. Lessons at eight.

(beat)

You are coming in a couple of weeks after the rest of the students, so they are well into Pre-Production.

EDMUND

Pre-Production?

AUNT MAPLE

Lingo. On the shelf are some important books. Sidney Lumet's Making Movies is fantastic and will have the Lingo you need. Read it. Don't Browse it. By tomorrow.

EDMUND

Tomorrow?!

AUNT MAPLE

It's only 90 pages long.

EDMUND

90 pages long!

AUNT MAPLE

As long as a script. Should take you about 90 minutes.

EDMUND

Are you punishing me? Auntie, please.

AUNT MAPLE

Tomorrow I trust you will be able to communicate on our terms. Remember this doesn't have to be punishment.

EDMUND

What would you call it?

AUNT MAPLE

Hydrating a Dry Mind. Read the book.

EDMUND

Auntie, please.

AUNT MAPLE

Read it. Sleep tight.

Aunt Maple closes the door.

EDMUND
Yeah right.

Edmund drops his suitcases on the ground and plops his backpack on the bed.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Could be worse I guess.

A small rock HITS the window and bounces off.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
What the?

Edmund runs over to the small window.

Edmund opens the small window as another small rock hits him in the face.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
GOD! OW!

Edmund holds his face.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Zatara! I can see you!

Zatara hides behind a thin tree.

ZATARA
I'm sorry! We are having rehearsals
if you want to come! Sorry!

Zatara runs away.

EDMUND
Thanks!

Edmund slammed the window closed.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
It got Worse.

Edmund rubs his black eye as he stares at himself in the mirror.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Much Worse.

Edmund grabs the book: 'Making Movies by Sidney Lumet' off of the shelf, thumbs through it, and puts it back.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Yeah right, whatever. It's gonna be
a long summer.

EXT. "MONTE CRISTO" SCHOOL - B-BALL COURT - DAY

Edmund still with a black eye, plays basketball by himself.
He shoots and misses.

EDMUND
What! Nah.

Zatara watches from a safe distance.

Edmund rebounds his ball, shoots, and misses.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Shoot!

Zatara moves a little closer.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
I can see you Zatara.

ZATARA
But not the basket?

Zatara smiles.

EDMUND
Yeah. Well, you fixed that.

ZATARA
Jeez-- I said I was sorry.

EDMUND
You also shot a hot rubber ball at
my head.

ZATARA
The math was off.

EDMUND
Well, just stand on my right.
(beat)
So I can keep my EYE on you.

Edmund gives Zatara a quick smile.

Chelsea GALLOPS up on a White Horse.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Oh, Hey Chelsea. I'm uh, just
talking with Zatara.

Zatara runs away.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Right--
(looking around)
-- Zatara?

CHELSEA
You can't just stand around here
all day playing basketball by
yourself. You suck at it.

EDMUND
I'm pretty good at it actually.

Edmund shoots and misses.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Well, you haven't managed to escape
yet.

Chelsea rolls her eyes.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Plus, I can hardly see. Zatara.
Whatever man... girl. Like
whatever.

Chelsea nods, yes.

CHELSEA
Like, whatever. Eloquent.
Rehearsals at 3. You are the second
Vid Operator. Later.

Chelsea gallops away.

EDMUND
Rehearsals? Where?

Zatara reappears behind Edmund.

ZATARA
Main Stage.

Edmund spins around.

ZATARA (CONT'D)
Here's the call sheet.

EDMUND

Zatara-- Where did you come from?

Zatara hands him a piece of paper.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

Call sheet?

Zatara points to the piece of Paper.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

Ah. Of course. Uh... Right, what's
VID OP TWO? I see it.

Zatara runs away.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

Zatara--

(looks around)

How is she so fast?

Edmund shoots and misses.

The ball slowly bounces off the court into a puddle of muddy water.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

Fantastic.

INT. "MONTE CRISTO" SCHOOL - MAIN STAGE - DAY

Aunt Maple, in a period costume, paces with a script in her hand.

AUNT MAPLE

(to Audience)

Duncan... Taken as a whole you are
a man with a few admirable
qualities, but I was wrong to have
put my time into you...

Edmund enters Stage 1 with a basketball between his arms.

AUNT MAPLE (CONT'D)

You're late. Check-in with the Crew
Chief.

Zatara smiles from the Booth.

Chelsea stands on the stage and crosses her arms as she
glares at Edmund.

EDMUND
Lemme guess... Zatara.

Zatara spins in her chair turning the lights on and off and marking her script.

ZATARA
Can we go back to her opening line?

CHELSEA
Copy that. Sending the new kid up.

Zatara spins in her chair.

ZATARA
Confirmative.

INT. "MONTE CRISTO" SCHOOL - SOUND BOOTH - DAY

Zatara is huddled under a studio lamp reading from a thick A/V Script, noting time and lighting cues.

EDMUND
Knock, knock.

Clarion, sitting at the lighting board, turns and points to a chair behind him.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Guess I'll sit here then.

CLARION
(to Edmund)
Shh!

Zatara presses the intercom button.

CHELSEA (O.S.)
(to Zatara)
Kill the Floods on 'Taken' and give me some spots on Cora.

CLARION
(to Zatara)
Does she want it Dynamic with Shadows or softer?

EDMUND
Hey Zatara!

CLARION
Quiet!

ZATARA

Quiet!

Clarion points to a sign, that reads:

"Quiet! The Show Gods Are Working"

Edmund glances up at the sign.

EDMUND

(whispers)

Gods? Zatara. Come on.

ZATARA

(to Chelsea O.S.)

We have a problem up here.

(to Chelsea O.S.)

We can't start him at Vid 2. Too Green. Sending him down.

Edmund shakes his head, No.

EDMUND

I'll be good. Wow, you are so serious.

Clarion points to the sign again.

CHELSEA (O.S.)

Do I need to come up there?

Edmund waves his arms, No.

ZATARA

That got him. Sorry about that.

CHELSEA (O.S.)

Reset... Action.

Zatara snaps her fingers and marks the page.

CLARION

(to himself)

Don't mess this up, don't mess this up. Breathe, you've got this. Why can't I just be normal for once?

The floodlights come one raising the brightness in the booth.

Edmund's eyes widen, transfixed.

AUNT MAPLE (O.S.)

Duncan...

Zatara snaps again.

Clarion lowers the Lighting.

AUNT MAPLE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Taken as a whole you are a man with
 a few admirable qualities, but I
 was wrong to have put my time into
 you...

CHELSEA (O.S.)
 Cut!

ZATARA
 Was that us?

Chelsea points to the ceiling.

CHELSEA
 That's it for today. I'm going to
 Converse with the actors. Take 30.

Zatara and Clarion high-fived each other.

ZATARA
 Nailed that Last one I thought. Is
 three too much?

EDMUND
 Zatara.

CLARION
 Good. Good. Like it. Like it.

Clarion stands.

EDMUND
 Hi Clari--

Edmund holds his hand out to Clarion.

Clarion walks past Edmund and exits the booth.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
 Was it something I said?

ZATARA
 It's his way.

EDMUND
 Special guy?

Zatara stares at Edmund.

ZATARA
 He is my friend.

EDMUND

I only see you; ya know. Out.
Eating Chocolate and destroying
things usually.

ZATARA

I make things.

EDMUND

Sure. But this... I had no idea.

ZATARA

I'm sorry for hitting you with a
cannonball and a rock.

Edmund places his hand over his eye.

EDMUND

Bullseye.

ZATARA

Boy-Eye.

EDMUND

Man-Eye.

ZATARA

Hah! In your dreams!

EDMUND

There's the Zataras I know! So
you're a... Do you run the show?

ZATARA

Cool right?! It's like the control
center for the show.

Zataras pushes her A/V script towards Edmund.

EDMUND

You can read this?

Edmund runs his finger down the middle of the Page.

ZATARA

Mm-hmm. Tells me when to Cue the
Lights, when the background Audio
needs to come up to Line up with
what the actors say... ya know.
Normal stuff.

Edmund smiles and nods.

EDMUND
I'm blown away Z...

ZATARA
It's like when you play basketball.
Ya know how you're the best right?

EDMUND
Ha! I wish.

ZATARA
I think you're the best.

EDMUND
Thanks, Z. Don't worry about the
Eye thingy.

ZATARA
You forgive me?!

EDMUND
I do. I do. I forgive you. You're
family.

ZATARA
Oh, thank god.

Zatara holds her chest.

EDMUND
You were really scared I wouldn't
forgive you?

ZATARA
I don't have a lot of friends. Just
me and Clarion.

EDMUND
You don't get along with Chelsea?

ZATARA
(to Edmund)
The Director... She skips parts
over important CUES and rushes to
get to HER favorite scenes, and--
(whispers)
-- I think some of her lighting
ideas stink but I can't say
anything about it because--

EDMUND
Wait.

Edmund points to a sign that reads:

'Quiet: The Gods Are Working'

EDMUND (CONT'D)

I thought you were--

Chelsea stands in silhouette inside the doorway.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

-- Gods.

Chelsea sticks her head in.

CHELSEA

We are.

Edmund JUMPS.

CHELSEA (CONT'D)

(to Zatara)

He giving you problems?

EDMUND

(startled)

Is there a trap door in here or something?

ZATARA

(shakes head)

I was about to show him the camera.

CHELSEA

You think he can handle it?

EDMUND

I got this.

Zatara and Chelsea share a grin.

CHELSEA

Yeah. Right. Take lunch, and when you are done--

(to Edmund)

Did you sign in yet?

Zatara HOPS off her swivel chair and grabs the back-of-house crew roster.

EDMUND

Ah. So... I just sign?

ZATARA

Date and In-time.

EDMUND

What's the schedule like?

ZATARA

Load-in is typically two hours in the morning. Six to eight. Depending on the job. You have downtime or rehearsal after... Ten to about four.

EDMUND

Strike?

CHELSEA

I can see you have things...

ZATARA

Yeah, I got it. Thanks. The strike is when we demo...

EDMUND

Demo?

ZATARA

Demo. Demolish. Demolition!
(robotic)
DESTROY. DESTROY.

EDMUND

Sounds fun.

ZATARA

It is.
(rubs hands together)
It is.

EDMUND

But that is usually the Stagehands job... Right?

ZATARA

You are lucky.

EDMUND

Lucky?

ZATARA

The camera is fun but hard.

EDMUND

I think I am ready...

Zatara holds her stomach and fakes a deep laugh.

ZATARA
Follow me.

EDMUND
Yes, mam.

Edmund salutes.

Zatara walks past Edmund and out of the booth, down a stairway, through the front of the house, and hops up on the stage.

ZATARA (O.S.)
Come on!

INT. "MONTE CRISTO" SCHOOL - TICKET BOOTH

Edmund walks out of the booth, down the stairs, and opens the rear door.

EDMUND
Wait. That's not right.

MR. BANKS (Male, 70), the janitor, gazes up from his mop bucket.

MR. BANKS
Where are you doing?

EDMUND
I thought I was... Uh... Stage?

MR. BANKS
Which one?

EDMUND
One?

Mr. Banks picks up the mop and uses the handle to point.

MR. BANKS
Ok. Back through the doors. You're gonna make a right, then a little Jog to the Left. There's your door.

EDMUND
Right.

MR. BANKS
Mm-hmm.

EDMUND

Left. Door. Got it. Thanks! Oh Um,
what's your name?

MR. BANKS

Banks. Mr. Banks. Master of the
Custodial Arts.

EDMUND

Thanks.

Edmund tries to open the door.

MR. BANKS

Ya gotta go around. These only open
from the inside. Or ya gotta pound
on them.

Mr. Banks DIPS the mop.

MR. BANKS (CONT'D)

But NEVER do that during a show. Or
rehearsal for that matter. Trust
me. You won't like it.

EDMUND

Well, how do I go around?

MR. BANKS

Two doors down, there's a hallway.
At the end of that hallway is an
office, just beyond it is a door.
Take that door. Then jog on through
and repeat the first two steps.

EDMUND

Got it. Thanks!

Edmund runs around the theater to the door, down the hallway,
through another door, and back out to the hallway.

Mr. Banks glances up from his Mop.

MR. BANKS

You zigged when you should've
zagged, son.

EDMUND

Must've been all the jogging.

Edmund RUNS off again.

INT. "MONTE CRISTO" SCHOOL - MAIN STAGE

Zatara is pacing on the stage waiting for Edmund.

Edmund enters from the front-of-house entrance.

EDMUND

Made it.

ZATARA

What happened?

EDMUND

Met Mr. Banks. Nice guy.

Clarion brings Two A/V Cases on Stage, marked VID 01 and VID 02.

CLARION

I set up this one. You have this one.

Clarion lays the VID 02 case in front of Edmund.

EDMUND

Thanks?!

Clarion opens the VID 01 case.

ZATARA

Let's watch him set up and I can explain along the way.

EDMUND

How do you know so much about this stuff?

ZATARA

Mom.

EDMUND

Cool.

INT. "MONTE CRISTO" SCHOOL - MONTAGE

1. Clarion sets up a tripod.
2. Zatara points as Edmund nods.
3. Clarion sets up the camera.
4. Zatara points as Edmund nods.

5. Clarion smiles and focuses on the camera.
6. Edmund attempts to set up a tripod.
7. Zatarra slaps her head and adjusts the tripod.
8. Zatarra hands the camera to Edmund.
9. Edmund tries to put the camera on the base plate.
10. Zatarra checks her pockets for a coin to change the base plate position.
11. Edmund changes the base plate on the camera with a coin.
12. Zatarra smiles and turns the camera on.
13. Edmund puts his eye on the lens.
14. Zatarra removes the lens cap.
15. Edmund smiles as he looks through the camera viewfinder.
16. Aunt Maple watches in the audience.
17. Chelsea watches from the booth and walks away.
18. Zatarra and Edmund HIGH-FIVE.

INT. "MONTE CRISTO" SCHOOL - MAIN STAGE

EDMUND

Wow! I didn't think I could do that!

ZATARA

Ok. Great,-- I'm glad you liked it.

EDMUND

Yeah, man. Loved it.

ZATARA

Good, now break it down.

EDMUND

I don't even, I mean I can't remember how we...

Zatarra begins to walk out of the main stage.

ZATARA

There's a picture of what it SHOULD look like in the case.

(MORE)

ZATARA (CONT'D)
(snaps and points)
Clarion will check your work.

Clarion gives Zatara a thumbs up.

EDMUND
Uh, um. Right.

Edmund opens the case and grabs the picture.

INT. "EDMUND'S" BEDROOM - NIGHT

Edmund plops down on his small bed.

EDMUND
Oh Bed... Hello. I sleep now.

Edmund opens one eye and glances at the book on the end of his bed, the title reads:

'Making Movies by Sidney Lumet'

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Ok. Ok.

Edmund tries to grab the book with one of his feet.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Come on. Come on.

Edmund grabs the book with two feet and slides off the bed.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Real slick.

Edmund's head is now wedged between the bed and the nightstand.

Aunt Maple stands in the doorway.

AUNT MAPLE
How was your first day?

EDMUND
Wonderful, thank you.

AUNT MAPLE
That bad, eh?

Aunt Maple picks up the book:

'Making Movies with Sidney Lumet'

AUNT MAPLE (CONT'D)
 You've been reading this? I didn't
 think you would. Interesting.

Aunt Maple flips the lights on and off.

AUNT MAPLE (CONT'D)
 Very Interesting. Get some Sleep my
 young... Filmmaker.

Aunt Maple closes the Door.

EDMUND
 Thanks.

Edmund unsticks his head from the nightstand and grabs the
 book.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
 Making Movies with Sidney Lumet.

Edmund flips past the prologue to the first chapter of the
 book.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
 Ok, Sidney.

INT. "MONTE CRISTO" SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Aunt Maple stands in front of a 1/8th Scale British
 Battlement Replica from 'The Last of the Mohicans'.

AUNT MAPLE
 Come in! Come in! Sit Down.

A Mannequin in a British officer's Jacket and a White
 Undershirt stands next to Aunt Maple in the front of the
 classroom.

Clarion and Zatara HIGH-FIVE.

CLARION
 Yay! That's mine.

Clarion points to himself.

AUNT MAPLE
 I had Clarion whip us up a one-
 eighth scale miniature.

Aunt Maple points to the miniature.

Chelsea and Edmund sit on opposite sides of the classroom.

EDMUND
That's awesome.

AUNT MAPLE
That's not all!

Aunt Maple punches the mannequin and a blood packet inside the jacket lining explodes.

EDMUND
Whoa.

ZATARA
Yes!

Clarion smiles.

EDMUND
When did you have time for all this?!

ZATARA
That day that I hit you in the Eye with a rock.

AUNT MAPLE
(to Zatarra)
Oh god, that was you?
(to Edmund)
Your parents are gonna kill me.

ZATARA
(to Edmund)
You mean you never told anyone?

Zatarra stands up and walks over to Edmund and hugs him.

EDMUND
Don't worry about it. It's nothing.

ZATARA
Not. Nothing.

Clarion stands and walks over and lifts them off the ground in a big hug.

CHELSEA
Oh, brother.

Aunt Maple wipes a tear.

ZATARA
Shut up, Chelsea.

Aunt Maple waves.

AUNT MAPLE
Back to the Blood.

Clarion drops everyone and sits.

AUNT MAPLE (CONT'D)
Well, if you hadn't guessed...
Today is all about blood. How to
make it. When to use it and when
not to use it.

Chelsea raises her hand.

AUNT MAPLE (CONT'D)
Yep.

CHELSEA
When's an example of when not to
use it?

AUNT MAPLE
Like at a distance. Either may be
too close or too far away. Depends
on the mixture. How many versions
of a costume do you want to make
and can we get away with just a
stained shirt with a little
moisture and save the costumers...

CHELSEA
Got it.

AUNT MAPLE
... Or whether to eat up the budget
with your lack of...

Aunt Maple points to her head and then to Clarion.

CLARION
Smarts.

AUNT MAPLE
You got it, kid. Here's a treat.

Aunt Maple RINGS a bell and throws Clarion a Mini-Snickers.

CLARION
Thank you, Ms. Maple.

EDMUND
Can I get one of those?

AUNT MAPLE
Earn it. Come on up.

Edmund walks to the head of the classroom.

EDMUND
What are we doing?

Aunt Maple points out.

AUNT MAPLE
Hand me that white bucket over
there.

Edmund grabs the white bucket.

EDMUND
Yup.

AUNT MAPLE
We need one part Corn Starch, one
part Caro syrup or other
substitute, and Red Dye. The darker
the mix the more life-like. The
lighter and brighter the more
comical etc... FYI, this does
stain.

Aunt Maple ties a multi-colored smock with a cat on it around
her waist.

AUNT MAPLE (CONT'D)
SMOCKS!

EDMUND
Auntie... I mean Ms. Maple.

AUNT MAPLE
Yes, Edmund.

EDMUND
So, based on the Book, the script,
and The movie we'd want a like, a
darker blood because we want it to
seem more real right?

AUNT MAPLE
Excellent Edmund.

Aunt Maple grabs a mini-snickers and tosses it to Edmund.

AUNT MAPLE (CONT'D)
(to Edmund)
Here boy.

EDMUND

I can get used to this.

Clarion and Edmund exchange smiles.

AUNT MAPLE

The use of Practical Effects has been supplanted not surpassed by cheaper post-production effects, don't worry if you are unfamiliar with that just know that quantity doesn't necessarily equal quality.

ZATARA

Doesn't practice make perfect though?

Aunt Maple pauses then continues stirring.

AUNT MAPLE

Meaning... what, exactly? Not that you're wrong just that I want you to dig deeper.

ZATARA

Ok. Um, ok. So, if we continue to make this blood and we don't get it right then we can get better at it and then use, like, less of it... better?

AUNT MAPLE

Yep, yep, yep. Keep going.

Chelsea WALKS over while TIEING her smock behind her back.

CHELSEA

I think that's a bit of a mixed bag.

AUNT MAPLE

Explain. Let's add the starch, Clarion if you please.

CHELSEA

OK, Well...

Clarion grabs the starch container and pauses, glancing up at Aunt Maple.

AUNT MAPLE

(to Clarion)

You can dump it in. I measured it for this container.

(MORE)

AUNT MAPLE (CONT'D)
(to Chelsea)
Go on.

CHELSEA
Like if, um, a company, like Disney
or something, prevents the use of
these effects in favor of like,
Computer Graphics stuff in post-
production...

AUNT MAPLE
Yes! Yes, sorry, go on... I think I
see where you're going.

CHELSEA
Then they would have to pre-plan
large scenes ahead of time.

AUNT MAPLE
What does that do to the quality?

EDMUND
It makes it, what's the word...
predetermined?

Clarion stops pouring.

CLARION
That doesn't sound like fun.

EDMUND
Right, so... A director or someone
would get a script with all the
action.

AUNT MAPLE
-- Exaggerated action.

EDMUND
Sure, like under-written garbage a
ten-year-old would write.

ZATARA
So, that's why all the new stuff
kinda sucks.

Chelsea nods her head, Yes.

CHELSEA
So by handing these young directors
a script, with no input on the
effects or the look of the finished
product...

AUNT MAPLE

Don't forget the final cut...
Precisely, I'm an Empire Strikes
Back fan myself.

ZATARA

That's my favorite.

Edmund glances at Aunt Maple.

EDMUND

Anything made after Return of The
Jedi just isn't canon in my
opinion--
(fart noise)
The new stuff sucks.

Everyone LAUGHS.

Aunt Maple grabs another mini-snickers and tosses it at
Edmund.

CHELSEA

Anyway, they'd be chopping the legs
off anything interesting and just
looking for a like, a median.

AUNT MAPLE

The middle way or mediocrity. Like
it or not they and those like them
have become the Patron Saints. To
quote Amadeus, "What...

ZATARA

What can one say but... Salieri.

Aunt Maple and Zatara share a laugh.

AUNT MAPLE

Can you tell we are related?

AUNT MAPLE (CONT'D)

But what I mean is they are not
building on anything, creating
anything new, no new stories just
old ones in a cheap facade...and
nothing that moves the needle
forward other than the bottom line.

EDMUND

One, what does the bottom-line
mean? And,--
(beat)
Two, is there a solution?

AUNT MAPLE

One. The bottom-line is
profitability vs the unknown. A
numbers game.

EDMUND

Is this a trend?

AUNT MAPLE

Is capitalism a trend my dear
Edmund or is it just 19th Century
"Great Man" tactics in another
guise?

EDMUND

I must've missed that lesson.

AUNT MAPLE

Computers don't make movies...

CLARION

I make movies.

AUNT MAPLE

People, yes, people make movies
Clarion!

Clarion and Aunt Maple HIGH-FIVE each other.

AUNT MAPLE (CONT'D)

I digress... How does that look?

EDMUND

Hard to tell.

Aunt Maple points to Edmund's smock.

AUNT MAPLE

Try it out.

ZATARA

Let's see.

Zatara dips her hand in the bucket and quotes, 'The Temple of
Doom.'

ZATARA (CONT'D)

Gali-Mah. Gali-Mah. Shok-ti-de.
Bene-Ja Hardo, Bene-Ja Hardo.

Zatara SLAPS Edmund's smock.

EDMUND

Looks a little runny...

CLARION

Runny. Runny. Starch?

Aunt Maple points to the starch on the counter.

AUNT MAPLE

Starch it is! It's a thickener with negligible effect on color.

EDMUND

But won't the addition of more, um, volume lower the color?

AUNT MAPLE

Brighten, yes... but it's negligible you are right, if you added a ton of syrup, let's say, then you'd have to increase the amount of coloring.

EDMUND

I think I get it.

Aunt Maple glances at Edmund.

AUNT MAPLE

Impressive,--
(impersonating Darth
Vader)
Most Impressive.

Zatara and Clarion add starch.

ZATARA

How's this?

Zatara dips her hand in the fake blood and stamps her face with the blood.

ZATARA (CONT'D)

WE ARE THE FIGHTING URUK-HAI!

EDMUND

Nerd.

AUNT MAPLE

We don't use that word around here, Edmund.

Zatara dips her hand in the bucket and then slaps Edmund in the smock.

ZATARA

How do we look, professor?

Zatara and Edmund pose with the blood-stained smock on an imaginary runway.

AUNT MAPLE
I think we have a winner.

Clarion CLAPS.

INT. "EDMUND'S" BEDROOM - DAY

Edmund paces as he reads aloud from the book:

'Making Movies by Sidney Lumet'

EDMUND
A camera can make up for a
deficient performance. It can
create ugliness. Beauty.
Excitement. Romance.

A doorbell RINGS in the background.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
(loud)
Auntie someone's at the door.
(to himself)
It can stop time. Create Character,
stop pacing--

The doorbell RINGS again.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Auntie! Oh, screw it, I'll get it.

Edmund runs out of his room, slides down the banister, and opens the front door.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Can I help you?

MR. WHITE (Male, 50's) and MRS. BLACK (Female, 40s) in black suits with municipal badges stand at the door.

MR. WHITE
I'm Mr. White and This is Mrs.
Black. Is Ms. Maple available?

EDMUND
She's somewhere. Come on in.

Edmund eyes Mr. White and Mrs. Black as they enter the foyer.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Be back in a second.

Edmund runs Off.

EDMUND (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Auntie! You've got company! Salt
and Pepper are at the front door.

Aunt Maple opens the door to her office.

AUNT MAPLE (O.S.)
Who?

Aunt Maple gazes down the hallway.

EDMUND (O.S.)
I don't know. They've got badges
though.

Mr. White glances at Mrs. Black and both turn to face the
wall of photographs of The Monte Cristo School's previous
graduating classes.

AUNT MAPLE (O.S.)
Ah, Shoot! Right. The County. Ok.
Go, go, go. I got this.

Aunt Maple walks into the foyer.

Mrs. Black watches as Edmund runs up the stairs.

INT. "EDMUND'S" BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Edmund places his ear next to his open door.

MRS. BLACK (O.S.)
Ms. Maple, we're from...

AUNT MAPLE (O.S.)
I know where you're from and I know
what you want.

MR. WHITE (O.S.)
Listen, we aren't here to argue
over what has happened. Your Late
Husband didn't do you any favors.
Your books are a mess.

AUNT MAPLE (O.S.)
You can't take it away. These are
good kids.

MR. WHITE (O.S.)
 What's done is done. We have some
 paperwork for you to sign.

AUNT MAPLE (O.S.)
 So what will happen to my students?

MR. WHITE (O.S.)
 They will be folded into the Larger
 Secondary School. I assure you the
 program is very good.

EDMUND
 (to Himself)
 They are going to a Secondary
 school.

INT. "AUNT MAPLES" HOUSE - FOYER

AUNT MAPLE
 Lake Braddock doesn't have the
 numbers I have. These students have
 been able to gain the skills they
 need to graduate. Join a Union,
 learn a craft, and get good well-
 paying jobs. Functional members of
 society... You want to put them in
 a rat race hand them standardized
 tests and forget about them. No.
 No. I won't allow it.

MR. WHITE
 Unfortunately, your husband's
 finances left the situation...
 untenable.

MRS. BLACK
 Untenable, yes. Ms. Maple. Unless
 you can come up with the
 Outstanding Balance within the next
 2 months. We will have to begin
 enrolling these students in public
 education.

AUNT MAPLE
 Do I have a right to appeal?

MRS. BLACK
 At The Final Hearing, you will have
 an opportunity to prove Financial
 Viability for... how many...

MR. WHITE
For 3 Fiscal Years.

AUNT MAPLE
How am I supposed to get the money
for the next 3 years?

MR. WHITE
As we said, the situation is most
untenable for Ms. Maple.

Mr. White opens a briefcase and hands Aunt Maple some
paperwork.

AUNT MAPLE
When is the hearing?

MR. WHITE
Top of the page. Late August I
believe. Yep.

AUNT MAPLE
God... That's so soon.

Mr. White and Mrs. Black shuffle toward the front door.

MR. WHITE
Social Workers will come by to
evaluate each student and assign
them proper grade placement based
on their test scores.

AUNT MAPLE
Test Scores...

MR. WHITE
The SOL. It's a prerequisite for
Middle and High School placement.
Each student, no matter the ability
must take it for assessment.

AUNT MAPLE
That's not what this school does.

MRS. BLACK
Either you can administer the
tests...

AUNT MAPLE
If I refuse?

MRS. BLACK
I wouldn't.

AUNT MAPLE

But...

MR. WHITE

If you care about your students...

AUNT MAPLE

I do. Of course, I do. These children have learning disabilities that you aren't equipped, no offense, to handle. Pumping them full of drugs and making them take a test is not the right solution.

MR. WHITE

Don't get all worked up now. We know what we're doing here.

AUNT MAPLE

It's not right. This isn't right.

MRS. BLACK

Look... come by the school, open house. Teachers, Administrators, and everyone will be there. You will see... It's not as bad as you're making it out to be.

Aunt Maple opens the front door.

Mr. White and Mrs. Black step out of the house.

MRS. BLACK (CONT'D)

Here's my card. Call me if you have any questions before the hearing. I've put the date of the open house on the back.

Aunt Maple flips the card in her hands.

AUNT MAPLE

Yeah, sure thing. Thank you.

Aunt Maple closes the front door. She flips the card in her hand as she slumps down onto the floor with her back to the door.

INT. "EDMUND'S" BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

EDMUND

(to himself)

Oh no. This is bad. This is... oh man.

Edmund closes the door, QUIETLY.

Aunt Maple can be heard SOBBING.

Edmund picks up the book, and shakes his head, setting it back on the nightstand.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
I can't listen to this.

Edmund opens his bedroom door and opens his mouth to talk when he sees his Aunt Maple CRYING into her hands.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Auntie?

Aunt Maple wipes her tears away and glances up toward Edmund.

AUNT MAPLE
Yes, Edmund.

EDMUND
Are you ok?

Aunt Maple stands still holding the paper and business card.

AUNT MAPLE
Yes. Yeah, I'm fine. Just fine.

Aunt Maple fakes a smile.

EDMUND
You don't look fine. I heard.

AUNT MAPLE
I put everything into this school,
Edmund.
(shakes head)
It's not just brick and mortar,
it's a sanctuary for kids like you.
Like Zatarra and Chelsea and
Clarion. Everyone.
(pats her chest)
Losing it feels like losing a part
of myself.

EDMUND
Then we fight for it, right?

Aunt Maple pats Edmund on the head.

AUNT MAPLE
I don't think so, not on this. How
much did you hear?

Edmund looks at his feet.

EDMUND

All of it.

AUNT MAPLE

We are related.

EDMUND

I heard that we needed to do the
S.O.L. Test.

AUNT MAPLE

Yeah, I'm not even sure what that
is.

EDMUND

Auntie... Standardized tests are my
specialty. Well, I mean except for
the last one.

AUNT MAPLE

I was at the game, I saw what
happened and you told me about your
girlfriend. Nobody can blame you
for flunking the test.

EDMUND

I blame myself.

AUNT MAPLE

You shouldn't. You behaved
admirably... if a bit catatonic.

Aunt Maple strains her neck and freezes her motion, then
LAUGHS.

EDMUND

Yeah. What if though... What if I
could help the students with the
test? Would that help? I know some
good studying techniques; I know
how to eliminate the test variables
to reveal the correct answer... and
I think I could help.

AUNT MAPLE

Wait, That's not a terrible idea.
How do you prepare for it? What
kind of questions are on it?

EDMUND

Don't look at it like questions you
need to cram for or something...

(MORE)

EDMUND (CONT'D)

It's about eliminating the improbable answers.

AUNT MAPLE

You mean...

EDMUND

It's all multiple-choice. No Writing exam, at least not the ones I've taken. So, I just eliminate the bad choices from the four possible answers and then it leaves either the answer or a possibility of two. Then it's a guessing game and that's where a little bit of studying comes in.

AUNT MAPLE

How did you figure this out?

EDMUND

I'm terrible at tests. But I know I'm smart, so I just use it differently.

AUNT MAPLE

Huh... You are a Monte Cristo Kid.

Aunt Maple wraps her arms around Edmund and gives him a long hug.

EDMUND

It will be ok.

AUNT MAPLE

This isn't your burden. It's not your responsibility to fix this.

EDMUND

You helped me, didn't you? It didn't sound like they were willing to help anyway.

AUNT MAPLE

You're becoming one heck of a Young Man, Edmund.

Aunt Maple looks up at a picture of her late husband, Dr. Charles Maple.

AUNT MAPLE (CONT'D)

Oh Charles, you should have told me.

INT. "MONTE CRISTO" SCHOOL - MAIN STAGE - DAY

Chelsea walks behind the Camera.

CHELSEA
(to Edmund)
How are we looking?

Zatara stands next to Edmund, who is on the camera and adjusts the focus via a handheld monitor.

ZATARA
(to Edmund)
I can't get critical focus. He keeps moving.

EDMUND
Yeah.
(to Chelsea)
Chelsea, can we get you to talk to Gary? He Keeps swaying.

GARY (15, Male), SANDY (15, Female), and MARTIN (15, Male), student actors portraying Duncan, Cora, and Hawkeye stand on Black X's of Gaff tape.

CHELSEA
Gary-- Are you hitting your mark?

Aunt Maple stands on a black 'X' portraying Alice. She pushes on Gary's back, moving him onto his mark.

Clarion waits behind the rock scenery for his cue.

CHELSEA (CONT'D)
CUE the water.

Four Hoses with rakes attached to them are tethered together in sequence to create a waterfall effect over a portion of the set that is painted to look like rock.

CHELSEA (CONT'D)
ACTION!

GARY
(to Sandy)
If we go there's a Chance there won't be a fight.

SANDY
Go. I want you to go.

MARTIN
You coward! Are you running away?

GARY
They won't kill you. They will take
you and try to use you as leverage.

Gary grabs Sandy.

GARY (CONT'D)
You're strong. You stay alive.

Edmund adjusts the Zoom.

Zatara adjusts the Focus.

GARY (CONT'D)
You stay alive you hear me?! I will
find you! No matter how long, No
matter how far! I will find you!

CHELSEA
Cut! That was beautiful! That was
great! WOW!

CLARION
Kill the Water?!

CHELSEA
Yeah!

The Waterfall STOPS.

CLARION
Confirmed.

EDMUND
Let's watch it.

CHELSEA
(whispers to Edmund)
Not with the actors here.

EDMUND
Oh. Right, ok.

ZATARA
That was close.

EDMUND
I don't get it.

ZATARA
They will be their own worst
critics. We'd end up shooting all
day.

EDMUND

Ah, ok, because they would keep asking...

CHELSEA

Exactly.

(to Actors)

Great Job. Get outta your wardrobe.

Gary walks up to Chelsea.

GARY

An Absolute pleasure. Thank you all. What a thrill.

Gary, Martin, and Sandy walk off the set.

ZATARA

Yeah, terrific.

EDMUND

Thanks, dude.

(to Chelsea)

How did you know, I mean... that was the one, ya know?

CHELSEA

We could spend all day shooting that one scene and I could get it about 10% better, maybe. It was pretty good. Or We can go do another scene, and save time, and money and get another great one.

EDMUND

Got it. Interesting. So like your gut plus...

AUNT MAPLE

Practical experience. There's nothing better. That's what this school is. The great experiment... but now... I don't know.

ZATARA

What does that mean?

AUNT MAPLE

Meeting. Tonight. Don't worry about the movie for a bit.

ZATARA

Don't worry about the movie.

AUNT MAPLE
I'll explain later.

Aunt Maple walks off the set.

ZATARA
What does that mean?

Edmund starts to break the camera down.

EDMUND
I, uh... I don't know.

ZATARA
You know.

EDMUND
No, I don't.

ZATARA
Then why aren't you looking at me?

EDMUND
I know NOTHING.

ZATARA
You are a big fat liar.

EDMUND
Just let HER tell you, ok? Just
leave it alone.

ZATARA
Ok, NOT!

Zatara and Clarion walk off together.

CHELSEA
What do you know?

EDMUND
Jeez, man. I can't say anything.

CHELSEA
Is it about the film?

EDMUND
No, nothing to do with the film.

CHELSEA
You sure?

Chelsea stares into Edmund's eyes.

EDMUND

Yes! No! I mean No. It has nothing
to do with the film.

CHELSEA

Better not be.

Chelsea walks off set.

INT. "MONTE CRISTO" SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Aunt Maple passes a mock exam to Zatara.

ZATARA

What's this?

Clarion takes a test from Aunt Maple.

CLARION

Yeah. What's this?

Chelsea takes an exam from Aunt Maple.

CHELSEA

Yeah, what is this?

ZATARA

Bubbly.

Zatara and Clarion start to fill in the bubbles.

AUNT MAPLE

No, No, No. Stop. Just stop.

Aunt Maple returns to the front of the classroom.

AUNT MAPLE (CONT'D)

Today is a sad day for me. I don't
know how else to tell you this...

(beat)

Um, your parents and guardians have
already been informed but I wanted
to tell you myself.

CHELSEA

Oh no, here it comes.

AUNT MAPLE

Due to Financial Reasons, the Monte
Cristo School is shutting down.

Clarion stands.

CHELSEA

Wait what? Shutting down what does that mean?

AUNT MAPLE

I know, I know.
(stares at her shoes)
I am so sorry.
(looks up)
I am so sorry, kids.

ZATARA

Like... For good?

AUNT MAPLE

Yeah baby, for good.

Edmund sits with his head lowered.

ZATARA

(to Edmund)
You were lying. I hate you.

Edmund has his head between his hands.

AUNT MAPLE

I told him to keep it a secret. He would have been betraying my trust if he had told you, sweetie.

ZATARA

Where will WE go?
(sniffles)
What will WE do?

AUNT MAPLE

That is... What the TESTS are for.

Edmund raises his head.

CHELSEA

Tests?

AUNT MAPLE

I know we have not prepared for this and we hadn't set the curriculum up to support this but...

CHELSEA

Yeah, no shit.

Aunt Maple, startled by the profanity, gives it a pass this time and softens her stance.

CHELSEA (CONT'D)

You are telling me I have to test
into a grade for what? For GOOD?
No, I CAN'T go back. I CAN'T. I
WON'T.

AUNT MAPLE

I'm sorry dear. I'm going over to
the school to check out the
facilities tomorrow.

(beat)

It's new at least?

ZATARA

(tearing up)

How many kids?

AUNT MAPLE

Graduating class of... One
Thousand, about four thousand
students total.

CLARION

No. No. No.

Clarion runs out the door.

Zatara runs after Clarion.

AUNT MAPLE

Edmund, can you go make sure
they're ok?

(beat)

I don't think they would talk to me
if I tried.

EDMUND

On it.

Edmund runs out of the room.

CHELSEA

You can't make me go back.

AUNT MAPLE

Honey, it's not up to me.

(shakes head)

They want you to use the programs
they provide with they've provided,
instead of us.

CHELSEA

Where will you go?

AUNT MAPLE
Oh, I don't know. One thing at a
time dear.

CHELSEA
This sucks. You suck.

Chelsea runs out of the room.

AUNT MAPLE
Chelsea came back!
(crying)
I'm-- Sorry.

EXT. "MONTE CRISTO" SCHOOL - B-BALL COURT - DAY

Edmund runs through the doors of the school into the warm
rain.

Zatara runs after Clarion.

Clarion stops on the basketball court and starts to pace in
the rain.

ZATARA
Clarion!

CLARION
Can't go back.
(shakes head)
Can't go Back.

ZATARA
I don't want to either.

ZATARA (CONT'D)
But, at least we will be together.

Clarion bobs his head, avoiding her gaze.

CLARION
Yeah.

ZATARA
Yeah. It's ok buddy.
(hugs Clarion)
It's ok. It's ok.

Clarion stops bobbing his head and settles down.

Edmund runs up behind them.

EDMUND

Do you guys ever play basketball in
the rain?

ZATARA

(shakes head)

No.

Edmund shoots and scores.

EDMUND

It's fun.

(rebounds)

Come on.

Clarion faces Edmund.

ZATARA

It's slippery.

EDMUND

I know, don't you love it?

(passes ball)

Here ya go, Clarion.

Chelsea watches on her white horse in the distance.

CLARION

Ok. Ok. Ok.

Clarion dribbles shoots, and misses. He drops his head and
turns around, hands crossed.

EDMUND

Hey, Hold on.

Clarion wipes his hands in the rain.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

You're forgetting one thing, my
man.

Edmund shoots and scores.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

Embrace the rain. Feel it force the
ball down. Feel the slip as it
comes off your hands.

Edmund retrieves the ball.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
You gotta have fun with it. Without
you guys, I wouldn't have learned
anything here. You made it fun for
me.

Edmund runs up to Clarion.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Do you get it? I don't know what
I'm trying to say. I guess.

Zatara steals the ball from Edmund runs to the net, shoots,
and scores.

ZATARA
I think I get it.

EDMUND
Yeah?

Chelsea watches from a distance.

ZATARA
Like Hakuna-Matata kinda-thing.

EDMUND
Yeah.

ZATARA
We aren't gonna know anyone there
though...

EDMUND
You'll know me.
(looks around)
When I first got here,
(shakes head)
I was terrified when I pulled up...
Then Aunt Maple told me about you
and Clarion, and-
(looks in the distance)
Chelsea... but then Auntie said,
(points with index finger)
"You will have more in common with
them than you think."

Clarion scoffs.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Hey! I'm pretty cool.
(tosses ball)
Ya know what... She was right.

ZATARA

Clarion. I'll be there with you.

(to Edmund)

So you're saying we are going to have a lot in common with them?

EDMUND

UMM,

(deflects)

Look, I'm not gonna lie, the tests are gonna suck but I can teach you how to take 'em.

Clarion smiles.

CLARION

Really?

EDMUND

It's all percentages. We are good with that stuff. Clarion, how many gallons of water came through that hose per second and how did you figure out the pump system?

Clarion shrugs.

CLARION

I figured it out. It's all math. I can do the math.

EDMUND

You're damn Skippy. That's all this is. That's all it is. Shoot the ball again.

Zatara passes the ball to Clarion.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

Factor in the wind, and the weight of the rain. And for god's sake... it's raining, man. The misses are just as much fun as the hits.

Clarion dribbles.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

Use what you know. If you take the shot better without a crowd. Block them out. If you're familiar with some of the areas use it to your advantage.

Clarion dribbles to half-court.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Use what you know. Yeah, that's
right. Nobody is judging you and
this is for fun.

Clarion shoots and scores.

CLARION
I did it! I did it! I did it!

Chelsea watches and CLAPS from a distance.

EDMUND
Yeah!

Edmund glances over to see CHELSEA on her white horse.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
What's her story?

Zatara glances over to Chelsea.

ZATARA
Ask her that. Show interest. Girls
like that.

EDMUND
I didn't say I...

ZATARA
Blah, Blah, Blah.

Edmund walks towards Chelsea.

Chelsea Backs her horse away slowly and rides off in the
rain.

EXT. "AUNT MAPLES" STABLES - DAY

A black horse uneasily stands in a barn.

Edmund walks up cautiously to the black horse.

EDMUND
I'm not gonna hurt ya, buddy. Shh.
Shh. Calm down.

The black horse bucks up in the barn.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Did you see which way she went?

The black horse calms down, looking into the distance.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
That's right.

Edmund pets the horse on the nose.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Good Boy.

Chelsea watches in the middle distance.

CHELSEA
Good boy.

Edmund leaps in the air, scared.

EDMUND
Jesus!

The black horse begins to WINNIE.

CHELSEA
You scare easily.

EDMUND
Yeah. Yeah. I'm very human that way.

CHELSEA
He's a good horse. Super easy.

EDMUND
Can you teach me?

CHELSEA
Have you ever ridden before?

Edmund shakes his head, No.

CHELSEA (CONT'D)
Perfect. Nomad is a great Trail Horse.

EDMUND
Trail Horse?

Chelsea pulls the gate open and saddles the horse.

CHELSEA
Hop on.

EDMUND
What are you nuts?

CHELSEA

Yes, but I'm also good. Get on the horse. Don't try so hard. This guy knows the trail. If you pull too hard he will let you know.

Edmund mounts the black horse.

EDMUND

Whoa! Whoa! Wow! I'm riding a horse!

Chelsea leads the horse out of the stable towards her white horse.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

You're not scared of anything, are you?

Chelsea looks down at her feet.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

I suppose you are scared of something I'm sorry.

Chelsea hops on the back of her white horse.

CHELSEA

You know, Edmund, horses used to scare me. A lot. Like everything else at one point. It took time to stop comparing myself, to start trusting myself.

Edmund's black horse waits for Chelsea to start.

EDMUND

Yeah, right.

CHELSEA

Try to have some... Fun.

Chelsea bolts off through the woods, the white horse's hooves splash water as it GALLOPS.

EDMUND

Hey Whoa! Shit!

Edmund's horse matches Chelsea's and it feels like they are parting the rain as they maneuver through the trees.

CHELSEA

That's it! Hold on but try to relax your wrists.

EDMUND
Like this?

CHELSEA
Closer together but relaxed.

Edmund attempts to grip the reigns with her method.

EDMUND
I don't know what you mean! Closer
but relaxed.

CHELSEA
The horse knows whether you know
how to ride it or not.

EDMUND
What?

CHELSEA
Just from the way you approached
him, sat on him, and are holding
him... tells him you lack
confidence.

EDMUND
What?!

Chelsea smiles and GALLOPS past him.

CHELSEA
This is the best part.

Chelsea and Edmund stop at a clearing.

Chelsea dismounts and holds onto Edmund's black horse.

EDMUND
You mean? Ok.

Edmund hops down off his black horse and holds the reins that
Chelsea hands him.

CHELSEA
Be still.

Chelsea and Edmund stop.

EDMUND
It's very pretty.

Chelsea holds a finger to her mouth.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
You're very pretty.

Chelsea smiles still holding her finger to her mouth.

A family of deer is huddled underneath a low branch.

A small family of butterflies has taken refuge underneath the tree leaves.

Edmund squints to adjust his vision.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Whoa.

A clearing in the meadow with a little brook reveals the beginnings of a rainbow.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
So this is where they start.

CHELSEA
Yeah.

EDMUND
I can see why you don't want to go.

CHELSEA
Yeah.

EDMUND
Do you wanna walk the horse back
with me?

CHELSEA
Yeah.

EDMUND
My butt hurts.

Edmund grabs Chelsea's hand and they lead the horses back to the stables.

EXT. "AUNT MAPLES" STABLES - CONTINUOUS

CHELSEA
What's going to happen to all this?

EDMUND
I don't know. Maybe Aunt Maple
does.

CHELSEA
Hope she does.

Chelsea unsaddles the white horse.

EDMUND
You hated it... Out there... Didn't
you?

CHELSEA
I got so anxious about the... Every
day... just constantly being...
judged. I'd make myself; ya know.

EDMUND
I don't, I'm sorry.

CHELSEA
All the girls we all just... I
mean... everybody competed I got
skinnier... I got sick. Too much
pressure, we all compared each
other to the most ridiculous things
and when we would eat and after--

Chelsea rubs her throat.

EDMUND
Ah. Oh god, I didn't uh...

CHELSEA
Whatever.

EDMUND
No, don't be like that. I'd listen
to you talk like... FOREVER.

CHELSEA
That's enough about me-- Why are
you here?

EDMUND
Where do I start?
(deep breath)
My best friend left to go to a new
school.

CHELSEA
Yeah, that sucks, but--

EDMUND
(holds up hand)
Yeah, but-- There's more.
(MORE)

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Before he left he threw the
basketball game, stole my
girlfriend, and used my work to
pass his final.

CHELSEA
But, why are YOU here though?

EDMUND
Ms. Maple's my aunt.

CHELSEA
Right, so what are you going to do
when you get back?

Edmund pats the black horse, very aware of where its hind
feet are in relation to himself.

EDMUND
You are going to be transferred
to... West Potomac, right?

CHELSEA
(shrugs)
Guess so.

EDMUND
That's the school he moved to--
(beat)
I want to make him feel like I
felt. I want revenge.

CHELSEA
Can I help? You have a plan?

EDMUND
Yeah, ya know... This is the most
we have talked about all summer.

Chelsea unsaddles the black horse.

CHELSEA
I made sure of it.

EDMUND
What?

CHELSEA
Yeah.

EDMUND
Why?

CHELSEA
Because... I liked you so much.

EDMUND
I think you are one of the most
talented people I've ever--

Chelsea grabs Edmund's face and kisses him, HARD.

CHELSEA
Shut up, Edmund.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. "WEST POTOMAC" SCHOOL - DAY

Edmund, Chelsea, Clarion, and Zatara walk underneath the school's giant new sign, 'West Potomac High School', and then up a flight of stairs to their first day of school.

MONTAGE - CONTINUOUS

1. Edmund gathers Clarion, Zatara, and Chelsea in the Hallway.
2. Tyrone pushes a kid into a locker in the distance.
3. Edmund, Zatara, Chelsea GASP. Clarion runs away.
4. Tyrone turns and we can see his Jansport backpack.
5. Zatara writes down the initials on his bag, 'TAM'.
6. Zatara holds out hands and makes a money gesture.
7. Clarion and Zatara wait in line at Target.
8. CU of Jansport Backpack getting the initials. 'TAM'.
9. Zatara hands the Backpack to Edmund. He lifts her and Twirls her around. He puts her back down, then smiles and looks over at Clarion who is shaking his head, No.
10. Clarion, smiles and then picks Edmund up and Twirls him around.
11. Clarion sits in the middle of the bus as Tyrone and his new friends, Taheed and Jack, harass the kids. He looks at his watch. Writes the time down and walks off to the next stop.

12. Edmund and Chelsea go Mask shopping and try to scare each other in a Walmart.

13. Chelsea hides in a metal rack and pops out at Edmund.

14. Edmund pretends to faint and then grabs Chelsea's shirt, causing her to fall laughing.

15. Target employees look on at Edmund and Chelsea, nonplussed.

16. Edmund sees the Perfect Mask with no Expression on one side and a Smiling expression on the other. He tries it on.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Tyrone and his two minions, JACK (16, male, tall, awkward) and TAHEED (16, male, aggressive, dumb) harass drivers from the back window of the school bus with spitballs fired from straws.

Clarion and Zatara sit on opposite sides of the aisle in the front of the school bus.

Zatara nods to Clarion.

Clarion grabs a rubber mask with two empty eye sockets and a plain white face with a smile out of his bag.

ZATARA

Now.

Clarion places the smiling mask on his face and stares at Tyrone.

TYRONE

Huh?

Tyrone looks at the smiling mask of Clarion and rubs his eyes.

Clarion takes the smiling mask off and hides it in his bag.

TYRONE (CONT'D)

Did you see that?

Jack and Taheed exchange glances.

JACK

See what dude?

TAHEED

Nerds?

TYRONE

Grab that big kid when we get out?

Jack shakes his head, no.

JACK

Uh, no. Heard he went crazy at his last school and got expelled for hitting a kid or something.

TYRONE

What? Shut up, man.

TAHEED

For real dude.

The school bus stops and kids start exiting the bus.

Clarion and Zatara sit on opposite sides.

Clarion rips an Alka-seltzer tablet in half and puts it in his mouth.

Zatara grabs a frowning mask from her bag, puts it on, and slides her hoodie over the top of her head.

Jack and Taheed walk past Clarion and exit the bus.

Tyrone is the last to leave and walks by Clarion, who is hunched over and frothing at the mouth.

TYRONE

Hey, what gives man?

Tyrone puts his hand on Clarion's shoulder.

Clarion spins around, FROTHING at the mouth.

Zatara stands in her seat and pushes Tyrone.

Tyrone spins around to face Zatara with her frowning mask.

TYRONE (CONT'D)

Oh hell no!

Tyrone drops his backpack and runs off the bus.

Zatara switches Tyrone's backpack with his initials with Zatara's backpack with the same initials.

Clarion takes the backpack from Zatara and runs off the bus after Jack and Taheed exit.

EXT. "WEST POTOMAC" SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Tyrone stumbles off the school bus and runs past a handmade sign that reads, 'HOMECOMING' and 'Home Game versus Lake Braddock' underneath it reads, 'TICKETS AVAILABLE AT THEATER BOX OFFICE'.

CLARION
Hey! You left this!

Jack pauses and turns to face Clarion.

JACK
Gimme that!

Jack grabs the bag and runs after Tyrone.

JACK (CONT'D)
I got your bag bro!

Taheed steals the backpack from Jack and runs after Tyrone.

TAHEED
Hey man! I got your bag!

JACK
Damn, man! Bro hold up!

Tyrone stops outside of the entrance to the school.

TYRONE
That little bit...

JACK
HEY MAN! What happened back there?

TAHEED
Your bag, dude.

Tyrone opens the bag.

TYRONE
Yo, that girl's in my math class.

Jack and Taheed glare at each other.

JACK
Who?

TYRONE
With the MASK!

TAHEED
Mask?

JACK
What... Mask?

TYRONE
That little girl with a mask!

Tyrone rummages through the bag.

TYRONE (CONT'D)
This isn't even my bag, dummies.
It's hers.

JACK
Oh, SNAP!
(snaps fingers)
You mean the one with the mask?

Tyrone takes a piece of paper out of a math bookmarked: 'Test Answers'.

TYRONE
Maybe not a total loss though.

Jack and Taheed HIGH-FIVE each other.

INT. "WEST POTOMAC" SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Tyrone sits in the back of the classroom staring at Zatara.

TEACHER
Test today, but rest easy, Because
it's Homecoming and I am not a
sadist... this one is open book.

Tyrone smiles reaches into the backpack and grabs Zatara's
math book with her paper marked:
'Test Answers' sticking out of the top.

TYRONE
(to Himself)
Sucker...

INT. "WEST POTOMAC" SCHOOL - HALLWAY

Tyrone watches Zatara exit the classroom.

TYRONE
Hey You! Zatara or whatever. I
think you got something that's
mine.

Zatara turns to face Tyrone.

ZATARA
What? I don't have anything...

Jack, standing behind Zatara, shrugs his shoulders.

JACK
She doesn't have a bag yo.

TYRONE
(to Zatara)
What did you do with my bag you
little brat?

Behind Tyrone, Clarion drops his backpack at a nearby locker.

TAHEED
Dude.

Taheed points to a Jansport backpack behind Tyrone.

TAHEED (CONT'D)
Is that yours?

Tyrone swivels and kneels next to his bag.

TYRONE
What the...

Zatara disappears.

TYRONE (CONT'D)
How did you...?

Tyrone turns to where Zatara was.

TYRONE (CONT'D)
Where'd she go?

TAHEED
Who?

TYRONE
Never mind... My gym stuff was in
here. I gotta get to the Locker
room to change before the game.

TAHEED
You got the tickets, right?

TYRONE
For what?

JACK
The dance dudes. I gave you the
money my mom gave me for those.

TYRONE
Yeah. They are in the bag.
(beat)
See you all after the game. --
Remember my suit.

JACK
My mom's got you.

Tyrone SNIFFS the air.

TYRONE
What the--
(sniffs)
-- Hell is that?

Taheed SNIFFS the air.

Tyrone runs down the hallway.

TAHEED
Is that you?

JACK
Your upper-lip, man.

Jack and Taheed exchange punches in the hallway.

EXT. "LAKE BRADDOCK" SCHOOL - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Edmund checks the clock after the practice game. He quickly
throws his gym shorts and socks into a bag. His teammates
HIGH-FIVE each other and joke around.

TEAMMATE 1
(to Edmund)
Good game. You ready?

Edmund nods, distracted.

TEAMMATE 1 (CONT'D)
Who are you going with... Mia?

EDMUND
I... Huh? Oh Hell nah, man. Mia?
Why would you say Mia... Mia?

Mia stands at the doorway to the locker room.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
I'm going with this girl Chelsea...
from West Po.

TEAMMATE 1
You sure?

Edmund shakes his head.

EDMUND
Mia's old news, man.

Teammate 1 pats Edmund on the back and walks through the doorway past Mia.

TEAMMATE 1
(to Edmund)
Alright, dude-- See you tonight.
(to Mia)
Hey Mia.

Mia nods and smiles, keeping her eyes on Edmund.

Edmund, back to the door, freezes as he hears Teammate 1 say Mia's name.

MIA
Hey, Edmund.

Edmund pivots on his heels to face her.

EDMUND
Mia. Hello.

Mia checks the room, and walks in.

MIA
I've seen you around. I wanted to
say hi but--

EDMUND
-- But.

MIA
I felt bad... For leaving things
how we did.

Edmund backs away.

EXT. "LAKE BRADDOCK" SCHOOL - "CHELSEA'S" CAR - CONTINUOUS

Chelsea waits for Edmund in her car outside the school gym. She bobs her head to the music THUMPING from her radio.

INT. "LAKE BRADDOCK" SCHOOL - LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Edmund checks the clock over the doorway.

EDMUND

Okay. You felt bad.

(shrugs)

And, that means what... Now? You are still with Ty, right?

Mia shakes her head, no.

MIA

I know I hurt you, Edmund. But things are complicated, you know? I just want to have fun before... life starts.

EDMUND

Oh.

(nervous)

Why, um, did you... I mean when did you?

INT. "CHELSEA'S" CAR - CONTINUOUS

Chelsea checks her phone, and shakes her head. She turns the ignition off and hops out, SLAMMING the car door.

EXT. "LAKE BRADDOCK" SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Walking fast, Chelsea swings the school doors open and darts her eyes around.

INT. "LAKE BRADDOCK" SCHOOL - LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Edmund ZIPS his backpack shut, and slips it over his shoulder. He starts to walk out.

MIA

Are you going to the dance?

Mia places one hand on his chest, stopping him.

MIA (CONT'D)
After the game, I mean?

Chelsea walks into the doorway. Her eyes double in size as she watches Mia touch Edmund.

EDMUND
Chelsea!

Edmund pushes Mia's hand away.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Hey! I was about to--

Chelsea tears up.

CHELSEA
I have to--
(fights back tears)
Go now. Big game tonight.

Chelsea runs out of the school.

EDMUND
Chelsea!
(to Mia)
Mia! Why? Look what you did!

EXT. "LAKE BRADDOCK" SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Chelsea PEELS out in her car, her music THUMPING.

Edmund runs out of the school doors just in time to see Chelsea speed past the school mascot, a large, concrete castrated bear, and out of the parking lot.

EDMUND
Chelsea!

Mia walks out of the school doors and over to Edmund.

MIA
Need a ride?

INT. "WEST POTOMAC" SCHOOL - GYM FLOOR - NIGHT

SCOREBOARD changes from:
HOME - 45 AWAY - 46 to
HOME - 45 AWAY - 48

The referee blows a whistle.

The referee throws Edmund the basketball.

Edmund dribbles down the court.

GAME CLOCK reads: 30. 29. 28.

EDMUND

Get open!

Janet Dantes and Aunt Maple shout from the bleachers.

INT. "WEST POTOMAC" SCHOOL - GYM BLEACHERS - NIGHT

JANET

Let's go, Edmund! THAT'S MY BOY!

AUNT MAPLE

Where's your husband?

Janet keeps CLAPPING.

JANET

Well... Where is your daughter?

AUNT MAPLE

Oh, around... She's on a mission.

JANET

Your brother felt so awful about leaving Edmund behind he was moping the whole trip.

AUNT MAPLE

Hah! He missed your son becoming one heck-of-a young man.

JANET

I am sorry to hear what happened... Your school, I mean.

AUNT MAPLE

Got to keep the stables, and the kids seem to be acclimating well to their new school.

(shrugs)

I'm just lucky they had an opening for a Theater Teacher-- I love it.

JANET

How is Zatara doing?

AUNT MAPLE

She's doing...

(fake smile)

She is twelve and feels everything
so... Deeply-- But, she will be ok.
I hope.

JANET

Good. Wow, a lot happened while we
were away.

Aunt Maple reaches into her purse and pulls out a white
theater mask with a smiley face.

INT. "WEST POTOMAC" SCHOOL - GYM FLOOR

Edmund SNIFFS the air.

EDMUND

New cologne? What is that-- FECES
by Tyrone?

TYRONE

God, you are such a nerd.

Tyrone glances over Edmund's shoulder at a white mask in the
gym bleachers.

EDMUND

Now you see me.

Edmund dribbles to the left and then to the right.

Tyrone stands and the blood runs out of his face.

EDMUND (CONT'D)

Now you don't.

Edmund scores another basket.

SCOREBOARD changes from:

HOME - 45 AWAY - 48 to

HOME - 45 AWAY - 50

TYRONE

(to Teammate 1)

Did you see that?

TEAMMATE 1

Saw you do nothing! You are gonna
lose this for us, man.

TYRONE
Just gimme the ball when I'm open.
I'll take care of the rest.

Edmund nods to a teammate and they double-team Tyrone underneath the basket.

Tyrone's Teammate throws him the ball.

TYRONE (CONT'D)
Get them off ME!

Tyrone catches the ball and sets up his shot.

Edmund SLAPS the ball out of Tyrone's hand as he shoots.

REFEREE
(whistles)
Personal Foul.

Tyrone spits and walks to the foul line.

EDMUND
Dude, you are a foul.

Edmund rolls the ball to Tyrone as slow as possible.

Three people in white theater masks stand behind the cheerleaders underneath the basket.

TYRONE
What the--
(to Himself)
Stay cool.

Tyrone shoots, and misses.

TEAMMATE 1
Wake up, bro.

The white theater faces begin to slowly drip with blood.

The game clock reads: 03. 02.

Tyrone GASPS. He shoots, and misses.

The game clock reads: 01. 00.

The game BUZZER goes off and the crowd CHEERS.

Edmund walks up to Tyrone after the entire gymnasium empties.

EDMUND
You look like--
(whispers)
-- You've seen a ghost.
(beat)
Hope you dance better than you
play.

TYRONE
You. How did you? Wait--

EDMUND
-- Here.

Edmund throws the ball to Tyrone.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
The game ball.

Edmund Exits the gym.

Tyrone stands alone under the bright white lights.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. "WEST POTOMAC" SCHOOL - GYM - LATER

A bright white light shines down from the gym ceiling on Aunt Maple and a standing microphone.

AUNT MAPLE
I would like to Announce the
Homecoming King and Queen!

Chelsea walks into the light.

AUNT MAPLE (CONT'D)
You're familiar with the Newest
rising star at West Potomac,
Chelsea Newhart!

Tyrone struggles in his secondhand crushed velvet suit behind
the gym door.

AUNT MAPLE (CONT'D)
And of course, you're very familiar
with West Potomac's own Homecoming
King, Tyrone Montego!

Tyrone walks out uncomfortably in his secondhand crushed
velvet suit and waves.

AUNT MAPLE (CONT'D)
Wow. Ok. Now it's time for the
traditional Dance.

Clarion and Zatarra WHISPER to each other in the back of the
gym.

ZATARRA
Was the suit your idea?

CLARION
Not me. Jack's mom hates him.

Zatarra and Clarion laugh as they get into position.

Chelsea and Tyrone hold hands in the middle of the gym.

Tyrone darts his eyes around.

CHELSEA
What are you doing?

TYRONE
Looking.

CHELSEA
For what?

A white theater mask dances in the dark over Chelsea's
shoulder.

TYRONE
AH! You see that!?

Tyrone spins as another white frowning mask appears over his
shoulder.

CHELSEA
See what?

Tyrone grabs for the mask behind him and misses landing on
the floor.

A hand comes in from O.S.

TYRONE
Thanks, man.

Edmund, in a white expressionless theater mask, lifts Tyrone
to his feet.

EDMUND
Tyrone, everything catches up to
us.

(MORE)

EDMUND (CONT'D)
It's time for you to face yours
head-on.

Edmund reveals his face as he takes the white mask off.

TYRONE
You! The whole time?

EDMUND
You're going to have a heck of a
year-- Old friend.

Clarion standing behind Edmund takes his mask off.

Zatara, standing beside Tyrone, takes her mask off.

ZATARA
Boo.

Chelsea puts a white mask on and turns her head to face
Tyrone.

TYRONE
You too?!

Tyrone YELLS and throws his hands up as he runs out of the
gym.

Edmund hugs Clarion and Zatara.

ZATARA
You did it!

EDMUND
WE did it.
(points)
Now I owe you one.
(to Zatara)
You are one of my favorite people.
You know that, right?
(to Clarion)
Thank you, BOTH.

Clarion CLAPS his hands together, and grabs Zatara, Edmund
and Chelsea, hugging them.

Mia steps out of the crowd and walks over to Edmund.

Zatara and Clarion step back. Aunt Maple scowls. Chelsea
stands her ground in front of Edmund.

Mia tries to look past Chelsea.

MIA
You did this all... to get back at
us?

Edmund steps past Chelsea.

EDMUND
Well, HIM, yes.

MIA
And,--
(points to herself)
-- What about me?

Edmund glances at Zatara, and Clarion, who begin to shrink
into the crowd.

EDMUND
Honestly, I haven't really thought
about you since I--

Edmund turns his back on Mia, and grabs hold of Chelsea's
hand.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
(to Chelsea)
-- Met you. God Chelsea, I am so
sorry you had to see--
(shakes head)
I didn't know she would, ya know...

CHELSEA
I am sorry for over--

EDMUND
(interrupting)
-- No, it was all my fault.

Clarion and Zatara step in front of Mia, who disappears into
the crowd.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
I thought I lost you.

CHELSEA
Your guardian over there--
(nods to Zatara)
-- Convinced me that you would make
the right decision.

Edmund hugs Chelsea, and winks at Zatara.

EDMUND
(to Zatara)
Now that's TWO I owe you.
(claps)
You are special.

Edmund lifts and hugs Zatara.

ZATARA
You are not so bad, yourself.

Edmund puts Zatara down and gazes up at Chelsea.

EDMUND
(to Chelsea)
You look beautiful. Thank you for
not giving up on me.

CHELSEA
You are actually a pretty great
basketball player.
(steps closer)
But, that's not why I like you.

Edmund takes a step closer to Chelsea.

EDMUND
(smiles)
Oh, it's not?

CHELSEA
No. I like you because--

Chelsea places a hand on the side of his head.

CHELSEA (CONT'D)
-- You are a good egg, Edmund.

EDMUND
Well, This summer taught me it's
finding where you belong. And
that's here, with you,
(looks around)
With true friends.
(beat)
Wait, a good egg?

Chelsea puts a finger over his mouth.

CHELSEA
Don't ruin everything by talking.

EDMUND
Just one thing--
(holds out hand)
May I have this dance?

CHELSEA
Yes,-- You may.

Aunt Maple drops the MIC, and puts headphones on behind the DJ booth.

Zatara and Clarion dance to their own beat.

Edmund and Chelsea share a kiss under the speckled light of a spinning disco ball.

FADE OUT.