

Operation: Party Pooper

By

Chris Dickens

Copyright: Christopher
Dickens, 2013
WGAW Registration Number:
1554003

Chris Dickens
Irvine, CA 92618
Chris@Chris-Dickens.com
714-497-3456

FADE IN

EXT. CITY PARK - LATE NIGHT (2AM)

Heading: 02:00 - WALTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - OPERATION: NINJA CHALLENGE

In a field next to an elementary school, ANDREW MILLER, a 16 year old, blond Caucasian crouches low scanning the horizon. He blends into the night dressed in black jeans, black sweatshirt, and a black bandana tied around his nose and mouth. The guise looks makeshift and last minute, and it's clear that he doesn't do this often. Still, Andrew is dead serious about this "mission" and he shows it in his actions.

Suddenly two "ninja" silhouettes prowl into view at the school. Stopping briefly at the fence, the first flies up and over with ease. The second and smaller of the two follows. However, as he climbs over the fence, his left pant leg snags. The would-be ninja frees himself, but shakes the fence making a terrible racket as he drops to the grass below.

Andrew smiles at first then his eyes narrow in determination.

ANDREW
(quietly)
Derek.

Near the fence the larger ninja, MIKEY can't believe it. He's agitated, but still speaks in hushed tones.

MIKEY
Are you serious!?

DEREK shrugs his shoulders. They are both African American, fit teenagers. Derek is 16 and Mikey is 18. Their gear is much more professional. They have ninja masks, and wooden ninja swords strapped to their backs with belts. Their shirts are skin-tight athletic wear, but the pants are sweat pants. Mikey has taken the time to tie and blouse his sweat pants, while Derek did not.

DEREK
Sorry homie.

Mikey and Derek fan out searching, presumably for Andrew. As they get closer and closer to his location, Andrew abandons stealth and rushes Mikey launching the sorriest flying kick you ever saw! He barely gets off the ground and you can tell that Andrew has no martial arts training.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW

Hyah!

The fight is on! Mikey blocks or deflects every one of Andrew's attacks. Andrew is clearly outclassed and he knows it. Mikey has ample opportunity to hurt his opponent but he doesn't, opting instead to put him in a painful arm lock, and taking Andrew to the ground.

Mikey glances at Derek. Without a word Derek understands and fans out looking for Andrew's accomplice. Mikey leverages the arm as he interrogates his victim. Derek searches over near the baseball diamond.

MIKEY

Where's your partner!?

ANDREW

I'll never tell.

MIKEY

Where is he!?

ANDREW

Die!

Derek continues searching. He looks at Mikey and shrugs. Mikey loosens his grip on Andrew and points, directing Derek to go further.

Andrew seizes the opportunity and rolls away from Mikey. Back on their feet Andrew throws a punch and... ends up back on the ground exactly in the same position as before. Mike wrenches the arm.

MIKEY

Talk damn it!

Andrew winces in pain but stays strong.

ANDREW

I 'll never talk! You'll have to
kill me.

ZOOM to CLOSE UP of Derek's eyes. He's shocked at the mention of killing Andrew.

MIKEY

(off-screen)

Fine.

(CONTINUED)

From Derek's POV (about 20 yards away) we see Mikey reach down and snap Andrew's neck. Andrew's body lies lifeless in the grass. Mikey stands over him victorious. BACK TO a shocked Derek, who now has a very large man standing behind him.

Derek turns to face NORMAN, a 6'4" overweight, curly haired 16 year old boy. He's a nerd of the highest level. Even in his black Dockers and sweater, he wears a Star Trek communicator badge on his chest.

Derek is surprised to see Norman and stares up at him for a moment before Mikey snaps him out of it.

MIKEY

Get him!

Derek goes to work punching and kicking at Norman who tries to block and counter but fails miserably. Like Mikey, Derek's goal is not to hurt Norman, but basically to "tag" him and let him know that he could have hurt him. Mikey has approached the fight, and surveys the action with arms folded.

After a moment, Norman gets frustrated and tackles Derek to the ground landing on top of him with a thud. Mikey's brow furrows with disapproval as Derek struggles to get free. After wriggling away, Derek jumps on top of the big man and puts him in a similar hold to what Mikey had on Andrew.

DEREK

Give up!

NORMAN

(nonchalant)

No.

DEREK

Give up or I'll break it!

NORMAN

No you won't.

DEREK

I'm serious. You'd better tap!

NORMAN

Did Andrew tap?

From Norman's POV we see Andrew raise his head to respond.

ANDREW

No, I made him kill me.

BACK TO the fight.

NORMAN

Fine, then kill me too.

DEREK

Are you serious?

NORMAN

Yeah. I don't wanna give up if he was killed. Kill me too.

Derek rolls his eyes.

DEREK

Fine.

He reaches down and mock snaps Norman's neck. The fight is over.

INT. ANDREW'S GARAGE - EARLY MORNING

Heading: 03:30 - MILLER RESIDENCE - DEBRIEFING

The boys sit around their table eating fast food, laughing and talking about the fight that they just had.

DEREK

What was I supposed to do!? He knocked the wind out of me! I couldn't breathe.

MIKEY

If you lost to Norman I would never have let you live it down.

Mikey looks at Norman who now wears a Star Trek t-shirt and his faithful communicator badge. Norman is oblivious to the comment. He is staring intently at his iPad mini.

MIKEY

No offense Norman.

Norman looks up.

NORMAN

What?

(CONTINUED)

DEREK

Never mind.

ANDREW

What are you looking up anyway?

NORMAN

Star Trek 3 rumors. They say that it's based on Charlie X.

DEREK

How can they make a movie based on Charlie X? Even that episode was slow.

ANDREW

Yeah but it had good dramatic tension. They'd have to add some action of course--

Derek interrupts.

DEREK

Speaking of action, you're gonna love what I did with the insectoids for the game. But I need Andrew to work out the armor calculations. Are you gonna wake up your Dad if you go grab your stuff?

ANDREW

Dad's gone man. He has a book signing in Boston. Do you really think I'd be doing this if he was home?

DEREK

True.

Andrew stands to go grab his stuff.

ANDREW

I'll get my stuff, but I want a rematch!

DEREK

No problem! When will your Dad be gone again?

ANDREW

Beginning of next month, and this time I'm fighting you fence boy. Norman, you can take on Mikey.

(CONTINUED)

Norman doesn't look up. He is engrossed. Mikey folds his arms stoically and takes a deep breath.

MIKEY

No, he can't.

DEREK

Nobody thinks he's gonna win Mike,
we just--

MIKEY

No seriously, he can't.

Mikey stands up and paces nervously.

MIKEY

I've got to tell you guys
something.

The room focuses on Mikey. Norman even puts his tablet down.

MIKEY

I've been doing some thinking. I'm
tired of working at Freddie's and I
don't wanna spend 4 years in
college getting a degree I'm not
even sure I want.

DEREK

Okay...

MIKEY

So I joined the Army.

The group is shocked. Mikey addresses Derek as he starts.

MIKEY

Uncle Roger's made a career out of
it, and maybe I can too.

He stops pacing and stands facing everyone, his hands in his pockets.

MIKEY

I don't know. I just want to move
forward and this seemed like the
best way.

Everyone is shocked.

ANDREW

When do you leave?

MIKEY

Tuesday.

The words hang in the air as everyone contemplates what this could mean for the group. There is a long silence until Norman finally says something.

NORMAN

Damn.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH CLASS - MORNING

Heading: 08:50 - DAIRY VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL
TWO WEEKS LATER

Andrew and Derek sit in class gathering their things. The bell rings and they stand to walk out. Andrew starts toward STACY, a cute girl with glasses, seemingly out of habit. She glares him a look and he stops short. Andrew hangs his head, turns and exits the classroom.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL QUAD - MORNING

WALK AND TALK as Andrew catches up with Derek.

DEREK

If it isn't Captain Heartbreak.
Fancy walking with you.

ANDREW

Enough dude.

DEREK

Oh I'm just getting started. Stacy had your balls in her purse for more than a year! Always carrying her books, or running to her locker. This is the first time you've walked with me in months! Your ass was on a milk carton before Stacy dumped you.

ANDREW

Whatever.

Norman joins them.

NORMAN

Hey Andrew! It's kinda weird seeing you without Stacy's books.

(CONTINUED)

DEREK

Ha!

ANDREW

Yeah well, she hates me now so
you'll be seeing a lot more of me.
What are we doing today anyway?

DEREK

The same thing we do every day
Pinky: Avoid the jocks, check out
women, and work on the game.

Norman has retrieved his trusty iPad and now shows the guys
some art.

NORMAN

Check out this new piece for the
insectoids!

DEREK

Awesome!

ANDREW

We've got to talk about their armor
class rating.

ERNIE, a freshman in the purest sense joins them.

ERNIE

Hey guys!

DEREK, ANDREW, AND NORMAN

(annoyed)

Hey Ernie.

ERNIE

Guys, I have to talk to you, It's
serious!

ANDREW

What now Ernie?

ERNIE

I'll meet you at our table at
lunch.

Derek motions to Norman, Andrew, and himself.

DEREK

You mean, *our* table?

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW
Give him a break.

DEREK
No way.

DEREK
(to Ernie)
Your brother was cool. He was one
of us and he will be missed, but
you still have to earn your
stripes.

ERNIE
You say that like he's dead.

DEREK
He graduated. Same thing.

The bell rings. Without a word they all split and go their separate ways, except for Andrew who is unfamiliar with the routine.

ANDREW
Later guys.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL QUAD - MID DAY

It's lunch time. The boys sit at a table with game books, assorted dice, and of course food. Engrossed as ever Norman now has a larger tablet (a Cintiq) on which he draws with a special pen. Derek has his netbook on the table, and he sits typing. Andrew rolls dice and makes notes on a tablet.

Ernie approaches with his large freshman backpack.

ERNIE
Hey guys.

DEREK AND ANDREW
(annoyed)
Hey Ernie.

Ernie sits down. He sees Andrew's dice and notes.

ERNIE
You guys look like you're working
hard. Wait, is this the game!?

DEREK AND ANDREW
(still annoyed)
Yes Ernie.

(CONTINUED)

Ernie looks at what Norman is drawing.

ERNIE

Wow. That's badass!

Norman doesn't respond. Ernie looks at Andrew, then Derek. When he reaches Derek he's perplexed.

ERNIE

Okay I get that Norman does the art, and it looks like Andrew does the rules, but Derek, what do you do?

Derek stops typing. He's not amused.

DEREK

I write. The story, character descriptions, you name it. Now what do you want turtle boy?

ERNIE

Why can't Andrew write?

DEREK

Because Andrew would lose in a third grade spelling bee.

ANDREW

Guilty.

DEREK

Sometimes I can't believe we go to the same school.

ANDREW

And you suck at math.

DEREK

Yes I do! Now, do you have something for us or not?

ERNIE

Okay. I was at this party.

DEREK

Sure you were.

Derek goes back to typing.

ANDREW

You were at a party?

(CONTINUED)

ERNIE

Yeah, and Stacy was there.

ANDREW

Okay, now I know you're lying.

ERNIE

No seriously, it was a drum line party and we invited the color guard.

DEREK

I'd buy that. But you're more band geek than drum line. You should be playing the flute or something.

ERNIE

Whatever.

ANDREW

Damn it, what did Stacy say!?

ERNIE

She wants to hurt you.

ANDREW

Hurt me?

DEREK

How?

He looks at Derek and Andrew.

ERNIE

Both of you.

INT. HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT

Heading: 22:30 - PATEL RESIDENCE - DRUM LINE PARTY

The drum line and color guard sit around. There's music playing. Ernie and a few others play video games on the TV. A couple makes out in a recliner. Some guys drum silently on practice pads. Stacy and a few others stand in the kitchen drinking. There are multiple bottles of Boone's Farm (some empty, some full) and one empty six pack Bud Light on the counter. PRANAV PATEL, a handsome young Indian male stands in the kitchen with Stacy.

PRANAV

What are you talking about?
Strawberry Hill is the shit!

(CONTINUED)

Stacy drinks.

STACY

I like it.

CAMERON

I just wish you had some real liquor, like Southern Comfort.

LESLIE

That stuff tastes like cough syrup.

MEREDITH cozies up next to Pranav.

MEREDITH

Cool party Pranav. What do you want to do next?

Stacy, moves in to claim Pranav from Meredith.

STACY

I have an idea.

PRANAV

Oh yeah?

STACY

We should toilet paper Andrew's house.

PRANAV

Oh.

LESLIE

He totally deserves it for stalking you so hard.

STACY

It was cute at first, but then it was like, dude, gimme some room.

LESLIE

I know. He's such a nerd.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL QUAD - MID DAY

DEREK

Aw hell no!

ANDREW

She said that!?

(CONTINUED)

DEREK

We're not nerds! I mean, we're not "cool", but we're not nerds either.

ERNIE

You guys are missing the point.

INT. HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT

PRANAV

I've known Andrew since elementary school. I wouldn't do that to him.

He walks away from Stacy. Ernie has entered the kitchen to get a soda from the fridge.

STACY

Well at *my* party I'm definitely gonna TP his ass. Eggs, Vaseline on the door knobs, pennies on the lawn, the whole nine.

LESLIE

We should get his friend too. The loudmouth that lives next door.

STACY

That's Derek, he's two houses away, but yeah, we'll get him too.

MEREDITH

That guy is such a smart ass!

LESLIE

And Andrew is such a douche bag!

They laugh, then Stacy notices Ernie listening.

STACY

What are you looking at, *freshman*!?

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL QUAD - MID DAY

DEREK

Frack her! I'll be damned if I let a chick on the flag team hate on me. You wanna talk some shit? Make the cheer squad!

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW
My Dad would be so pissed.

ERNIE
So what are you guys gonna do?

ANDREW
I don't know. My Dad would probably
just call the cops.

Norman pipes up.

NORMAN
Finished. Check this out! Spektor,
the boss of the game!

He shows the group some new artwork on his tablet.

DEREK
Whoa!

ANDREW
Awesome!

ERNIE
Aren't you guys worried? What if
she TPs your house?

ANDREW
I doubt she'd go through with it.
She doesn't hate me that much.

The bell rings and the boys pack up.

ANDREW
Does she?

FADE TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL QUAD - AFTERNOON

The final bell rings and Andrew shuffles out of a classroom
with others. He walks to his locker.

Derek walks up.

DEREK
Can you give me a ride, or do you
have rehearsal?

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW

No rehearsals yet. Today we finalize and post the cast list.

DEREK

So more sitting and talking? We should be at home working on the game.

ANDREW

I need to be there for every step of the process, even the boring ones. Besides, this is my first time directing.

They start to walk to the drama room.

DEREK

Assistant directing, and why are you doing it now? You're only a junior. Most guys direct as seniors.

ANDREW

I don't wanna be most guys. I want to say that I have directing experience when I apply to USC, and the more plays I direct, the better.

They arrive at the drama room. There are signs advertising *Little Shop of Horrors* auditions. Norman is there waiting, again engrossed in his iPad.

DEREK

Okay Spielberg.

ANDREW

More like Hal Price, but thanks. What's up Norman?

NORMAN

Episode 9 is gonna feature some Disney kid as the lead!

DEREK

No frackin' way!

ANDREW

Did he just talk Wars?

(CONTINUED)

DEREK

No joke. It's always *Trek* and *Wars* with you clowns. Find me some news on *Battlestar*.

NORMAN

No thanks.

DEREK

Fine, but can you give me a ride to Taekwondo? Hal Price here has rehearsal.

NORMAN

Sure but who's Hal Price?

ANDREW

A famous theater director.

DEREK

But you want to act.

ANDREW

I wanna do both.

DEREK

I don't see why you're not playing Seymour. Rick Moranis was the man in that movie!

ANDREW

Because I want to direct this time. Besides, I already played Seymour in community theater remember? Been there, done that. Now I have to get inside.

INT. AUDITORIUM - AFTERNOON

Andrew enters to the sound of someone singing "On My Own" from *Les Miserables*. On stage is a gorgeous young girl named SYDNEY. She sounds as beautiful as she looks. The stage hands and set builders are transfixed as they listen.

Andrew makes his way down the aisle and sits next to MR. BAKER, his extremely short, effeminate, drama teacher. As Andrew pulls his clipboard from his backpack he leans over to Mr. Baker, and they speak in hushed tones.

ANDREW

Who is this?

(CONTINUED)

BAKER
Last minute audition.

ANDREW
I've never seen her before.

BAKER
New girl. Just transferred.

Andrew's heart sings with the prospect of love as he listens to and stares at Sydney. But Mr. Baker cuts her short.

BAKER
That's quite enough Miss...

SYDNEY
Graham. Sydney Graham.

The stage hands and set builders go back to their work.

BAKER
I'm sorry but we're pressed for time. You sing beautifully Miss Graham, but I also need you to read. Are you familiar with "Little Shop"?

SYDNEY
Yes sir, I did it in middle school.

BAKER
All right. Then I assume you're interested in playing Audrey?

SYDNEY
Yes sir.

BAKER
Fine. Dawn?

DAWN, a pretty girl that was helping on stage stops what she's doing.

BAKER
Go get one of the boys from the drama room to read with Miss Graham here.

Andrew jumps to his feet.

ANDREW
I've got it. I've got it.

(CONTINUED)

BAKER

Got what?

Andrew makes his way toward the stage.

ANDREW

Don't worry Mr. Baker, I'll read with her.

BAKER

Oh. Okay.

Andrew climbs on stage, script in hand.

BAKER

Miss Graham, this is Andrew Miller. He's one of our best actors, but he's elected to direct this play much to my chagrin. Andrew, you read Seymour, page 41 starting at "Don't Cry Audrey."

They read. As they go through the scene and stare into each other's eyes, fireworks go off for Andrew. He is smitten. At the end of the scene, Mr. Baker stands at claps.

BAKER

Thank you Miss Graham. Please wait outside with the others.

She exits as Andrew gathers himself, making his way back to his seat next to Baker.

ANDREW

What'd you think?

BAKER

I think I saw my Seymour and Audrey. It's too bad Andrew, I really think you would make a great--

ANDREW

I'll do it!

BAKER

You will?

ANDREW

Is *she* gonna be Audrey?

Baker smiles.

(CONTINUED)

BAKER

You like her don't you?

EXT. DRAMA ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Andrew opens the door, peeks out and tapes the cast list to the door, then closes it again. WE SEE the names revealing that Andrew is Seymour and Sydney is Audrey. The list also states the rehearsal starts the following Monday at 3:30pm. PULL BACK to see student reaction. Sydney celebrates quietly while others are more exuberant.

STUDENT

I got the dentist!

STUDENT 2

Aw, I thought Andrew wasn't auditioning?

EXT. DEREK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Derek works a heavy bag in his back yard. He's shirtless and wears only his Taekwondo pants.

Andrew emerges from the house through the sliding glass door. This is common. The boys practically live together.

ANDREW

Hey dude, do you have the Spanish homework?

DEREK

Yeah, why?

ANDREW

Wow. Take it easy. You're gonna kill that bag.

DEREK

The tournament's in a few weeks.

ANDREW

Yeah, about the same time as opening night.

Andrew's mind wanders to Sydney and he smiles.

DEREK

What are you smiling at?

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW
Nothing. Is it on your desk?

DEREK
Yep.

INT DEREK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Andrew enters the house. On the mantle is a picture of Derek's Dad in his Army dress uniform, and other pictures of the family.

Andrew heads down the hall walking past GRANDMA, an older black woman, and Derek's caretaker.

INT. DEREK'S ROOM - NIGHT

The room is decorated in geek friendly posters and pictures, but there is a strong martial arts and military element. On the wall is a US Army flag.

Andrew quickly sorts through the papers on Derek's desk and finds what he's looking for, then heads out.

EXT. DEREK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Andrew pokes his head out of the door.

ANDREW
How'd you finish it so fast?

DEREK
I did it before TKD. With Mikey gone, I have a lot more free time on my hands.

ANDREW
Got it. I'll bring it right back when I am done.

Derek gives the bag one last kick.

DEREK
Cool. I'm gonna shower.

INT. DEREK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

As Andrew exits the front door, Grandma who now sits watching Wheel of Fortune says goodbye.

ANDREW
Bye Grandma.

GRANDMA
Bye baby.

Derek emerges from the kitchen with a sports bottle full of water. He stands by Grandma's chair and watches a bit of TV.

DEREK
"T".

GRANDMA
They already said that one.

DEREK
Oh.

GRANDMA
Is Andrew back with Stacy?

DEREK
No, why?

GRANDMA
He just looked so dreamy eyed, I figured they were back together.

DEREK
He did, didn't he?

INT. ANDREW'S ROOM - NIGHT

Andrew's room is decorated in mostly sci-fi and fantasy material, but there are cast pictures and other drama elements as well.

Andrew enters and sits at his desk. As he does the computer flashes and a noise indicates that he's getting an incoming video call. It's Derek. Andrew answers.

INTERCUT LIVE ACTION AND ON SCREEN DIALOG.

DEREK
Are you back with Stacy!?

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW

No way!

DEREK

Then why are you all smiley and shit?

ANDREW

I'm not... well, I decided to play Seymour after all, so maybe it's that.

DEREK

Okay, cool. Did you get a chance to mess with the insectoid armor yet?

ANDREW

Not yet, no time. I still don't know how you did the homework so fast?

The screen chimes and flashes an incoming call.

DEREK

I did it outside of TKD during the children's class. Hold on, Norman's calling. I'll add him in.

He does. Behind Norman we see a Starfleet Academy flag. His room is decorated with all sorts of Star Trek and Star Wars stuff.

NORMAN

I colored Spektor's armor and I must say, it's pretty badass, check it out!

He uploads the picture. Andrew clicks and opens it. The picture is awesome.

DEREK

Dude, you need to work for Marvel.

ANDREW

Screw Marvel, you should be a storyboard artist in Hollywood.

NORMAN

Too boring. I'd rather just make a kick-ass game.

(CONTINUED)

DEREK

Mr. Director hasn't tested the armor rating yet.

The screen flashes as Ernie chimes in on Andrew's desktop.

ANDREW

I'll get to it as soon as I finish my homework. Hold on, I'm gonna add Ernie.

DEREK

Aw man!

Andrew adds Ernie to the call and the freshman's face appears on screen.

ERNIE

Hey guys.

DEREK, ANDREW, AND NORMAN

(annoyed)

Hey Ernie.

ERNIE

So Andrew, tell me about this hot new girl in the play.

ANDREW

Oh she's smokin'!

Derek is exasperated. Andrew tries to play it cool.

DEREK

I shoulda known it was a girl! Yeah, tell us about her Romeo.

ANDREW

There's nothing to tell. It's just a new girl, and she's gonna be in the play.

DEREK

You're in love already. There goes the game. Man, hurry up and bring back my Spanish homework so I can kick your ass.

ANDREW

Stop being so dramatic.

(CONTINUED)

DEREK

I'm gonna test *your* armor class
rating in a minute. Damn.

FADE TO:

INT. CHORUS CLASS - DAY

The class is arranged by vocal range. There are a few familiar faces in the chorus. Stacy stands singing in the soprano section. Leslie and Meredith sing with the altos. Andrew stands singing with the boys in the tenor section. The teacher, MRS. JONES stand in front directing.

Suddenly the door opens and the class stops singing. All eyes are on Sydney as she enters the classroom holding a transfer slip.

MRS. JONES

Can I help you?

SYDNEY

Yes... um... I'm transferring in.

Sydney crosses to Mrs. Jones and hands her the slip. The teacher pats herself down looking for her glasses. When she can't find them she moves to her desk where she puts on her glasses and starts reading. Sydney stands awkwardly by as Mrs. Jones reads the slip.

Andrew offers a little wave which Sydney returns. Stacy notices and gives Andrew a dirty look.

MRS. JONES

Okay then, welcome Miss Graham.
What do you sing?

SYDNEY

Soprano.

MRS. JONES

Excellent. Right over there please.

She gestures and Sydney heads toward Stacy and the other sopranos. ANDREW'S POV. He watches intently following Sydney as she walks. Stacy catches him and her eyes widen. She's knows that Andrew is interested and by her reaction, the notion both surprises and offends her. BACK TO classroom.

MRS. JONES

(to Stacy)

Miss Ward, please share your song
book. Okay class, from the top!

(CONTINUED)

The class starts singing again. Andrew's ex-girlfriend leans in and points out where they are in the song book. Andrew watches closely pretending to sing. Stacy is all smiles as she hands over the song book. Sydney goes to grab it but fumbles and the book drops. As Sydney bends to pick it up, Stacy taunts her ex-boyfriend with a dirty look. Andrew turns away quickly to avoid it. As Sydney straightens, Stacy smiles.

INT. AUDITORIUM - AFTERNOON

Heading: 15:30 - DAIRY VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - FIRST REHEARSAL

The set is built and is being painted. Everyone has gathered on stage for rehearsal. There are a bunch of chairs arranged in a circle. In the background the stage hands build a large Audrey 2 plant. Andrew crosses over to Sydney, nervously folding his script book.

ANDREW

Hey.

SYDNEY

Hey.

ANDREW

I don't think we were ever properly introduced. I am Andrew. I'll be playing Seymour.

SYDNEY

Hi Andrew, I'm Sydney. You know who I'll be playing since you're the Assistant Director.

Mr. Baker enters.

ANDREW

I had to give that up to take the role, but it was worth it.

He pauses, then realizes what he said.

ANDREW

(hurriedly)

I mean, because I think this will be a great show. You have an awesome voice.

(CONTINUED)

BAKER

Okay everyone. Have a seat. Now
where's my script?

Baker digs through his man purse. Sydney takes a seat.
Andrew sits right next to her.

ANDREW

First rehearsals are so boring. I
hate read-through.

SYDNEY

I kind of like them.

ANDREW

(quickly)
But they do have value.

Baker finds his copy.

BAKER

Okay, first I want everyone to go
around the circle and introduce
themselves.

SYDNEY

Don't you think it would be better
if we sat across from each other?

She cranes her neck.

SYDNEY

Otherwise we have to do this for
all of our scenes.

ANDREW

You're right.

He moves across the circle switching places with LARRY who
happily trades.

The folks continue to introduce themselves. Andrew watches
as Larry shakes Sydney's hand. He's bummed out, but then
it's his turn to introduce himself. Andrew straightens up
and smiles.

ANDREW

I'm Andrew and I'm playing Seymour.

Andrew looks across the circle at Sydney. She smiles and
offers a small wave. At that Andrew perks up.

EXT. DRAMA ROOM - NIGHT

Andrew exits the drama room and runs into Derek who carries a Taekwondo duffel bag.

ANDREW
What are you doing here?

DEREK
I jogged here after class. What are you up to?

Sydney emerges from the drama room with Larry not far behind.

ANDREW
Bye Syd.

DEREK
It starts.

Sydney parts ways with Larry and comes over.

DEREK
So you're the new girl, Cindy.

SYDNEY
Actually, it's Sydney.

DEREK
Oh, like the city? My bad.

SYDNEY
Anyway, Andrew I just wanted to say thank you for being so nice to me.

ANDREW
You're welcome.

DEREK
He's nice to everybody.

SYDNEY
I just, I don't know anybody here and--

DEREK
You seem to know Larry.

SYDNEY
Yeah but, I was hoping to meet new friends. I wasn't really looking for a boyfriend.

(CONTINUED)

Andrew is a bit deflated.

DEREK

That's good to know! You don't
wanna rush into anything, new
school and all.

SYDNEY

At least not yet.

Andrew brightens. But his joy is short-lived as he remembers
Stacy.

ANDREW

Haven't you... met anyone in one of
your classes?

SYDNEY

No. Not really.

ANDREW

(leading)

Not even in Chorus class?

SYDNEY

You mean your ex-girlfriend?

Derek laughs.

DEREK

Smooth.

ANDREW

Yeah, I mean... you guys sorta hit
it off the other day.

SYDNEY

She's not my kind of friend.

DEREK

Amen.

SYDNEY

She's two-faced. And she *hates* you.

Andrew scratches his head nervously.

ANDREW

Really?

SYDNEY

She had lots to say about you.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW

Like what?

SYDNEY

I don't know. Nothing I want to repeat. But she said she was gonna egg your house.

Derek is beside himself.

DEREK

Dude, she's serious!

SYDNEY

What are you gonna do?

DEREK

Kick her ass!

ANDREW

I don't think she'll really do it.

SYDNEY

But what if she does?

ANDREW

I don't know. Call the cops?

DEREK

She'd better not come to my house. I'll be waiting for--

SYDNEY

Wait, are you the loudmouthed friend who lives next door?

ANDREW

That's him.

DEREK

Is that what she said about me!?

SYDNEY

Anyway, I wouldn't want to be friends with someone like that. I'm sure I'll meet some friends on my own.

Dawn exits the drama room and heads for the parking lot.

ANDREW

Hey Dawn!

(CONTINUED)

DAWN

Yeah?

ANDREW

Have you met Sydney yet?

DAWN

Not yet, but I heard you sing! You sounded great!

SYDNEY

Thanks! You were great in the read-through today.

DAWN

It's a small part but--

ANDREW AND SYDNEY

There are no small parts--

They stop short, realizing that they're speaking in unison. Dawn finishes the line for them.

DAWN

Just small actors. I know.

ANDREW

You had the lead last year, and I'm sure you'll have a big part in the spring play.

DAWN

Thanks. I've got to go. My Mom's waiting.

SYDNEY

Can I walk with you? My Dad's waiting too.

DAWN

Sure.

They both walk off together. Andrew watches her go.

DEREK

You ready to go?

Andrew snaps out of it.

ANDREW

You need a car.

They start walking to the parking lot together.

(CONTINUED)

DEREK

On a soldier's salary?

ANDREW

Good point. Hey, I had an idea for the insectoids.

DEREK

Now you're speaking my language! I guess since Cincinnati doesn't want a boyfriend right now, we can be friends again.

ANDREW

It's Sydney.

DEREK

I know.

INT. ANDREW'S DINING ROOM - MORNING

The guys sit at the table fully engaged in a role-playing game. They have folders and binders propped up forming mini-cubicles to protect the secrecy of their actions. At the head of the table is Andrew's DAD. He's a mild mannered guy who looks like a nice person. He too is playing and is as engaged as the teens are.

Derek has his netbook handy and Norman has his iPad in hand. Andrew, the game master has the most paperwork with reference binders and materials.

ANDREW

Let's run it again. It's just not adding up.

DAD

Okay.

DEREK

Sure.

ANDREW

You guys ready?

They nod.

ANDREW

Okay. You exit the warehouse and realize that the noise you heard--

EXT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

The game world is like an action movie, video game, and music video all rolled into one. The music pumps, the colors are brighter and more intense, and everything is fantastic!

Derek, Norman, and Dad's characters stand outside of a warehouse. Derek's outfit is a cross between a ninja, a samurai, and Batman with armor, swords, and gadgets. Dad is their sorcerer complete with white beard, long flowing robes, and a magic staff. Norman is the military-spec gunner. A cross between Rambo, Terminator, and everyone in between, he carries a huge mini-gun and plenty of grenades.

The sky is dark with insectoids. They're humanoid, bug-like creatures buzzing around with purplish-black armor.

DEREK

All right Norman. Hit em with everything you've got.

Norman opens up with the mini-gun blasting the insectoids but it has no effect.

DEREK

Pops, hit em with something fierce.

DAD

I'm on it.

Dad casts something dark and nasty.

INT. ANDREW'S DINING ROOM - MORNING

Back at the table Derek compliments Dad on his creativity.

DEREK

Necromancy, nice!

Dad rolls a 20-sided die.

DAD

Seventeen

ANDREW

Hit.

Andrew rolls a 20-sided die.

ANDREW

No effect.

(CONTINUED)

DEREK

Bull!

INTERCUT BETWEEN THE GAME WORLD AND REAL LIFE AT THE DINING ROOM TABLE.

Back in game, sure enough the spell has no effect. The insectoids land and begin fighting and clawing at the members of the group. Derek's character goes to work with his ninja sword.

They fight valiantly but they cannot penetrate the insectoid armor with guns, sword, or magic. In game the characters offer their opinions.

DEREK

This is a joke, right?

DAD

It's not easy.

DEREK

No, it's *impossible*. You know what?
Player conference!

In game, Andrew zooms into the area. He looks like a Bond villain and sits at a hovering desk complete with throne-like chair. He pets an evil looking cat. The gold name tag on the desk says simply, GAME MASTER.

ANDREW

You're serious?

Back in the real world Derek answers.

DEREK

Dead serious! Put em on.

Andrew sighs and then puts on some headphones. He turns on an mp3 player with loud music. Satisfied the players discuss.

DEREK

Pop, you have the strongest staff
in the game.

DAD

Yep.

DEREK

(to Norman)

You have the best gun, and the
exploding, armor piercing ammo,
right?

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN

Yes I do.

DEREK

And I'm using the sharpest,
strongest metal in the universe.

DAD

I think I see what you're getting
at.

DEREK

You do?

DAD

These guys are too strong.

DEREK

Too strong? They're invincible!

Derek signals Andrew who takes off the headphones.

ANDREW

You guys done?

DEREK

Yeah. These things are invincible.
You've got to rework the armor.

ANDREW

I had a feeling you'd say that.

DAD

And?

ANDREW

And I've prepared something.

Andrew hands over a piece of paper with a flourish.

ANDREW

Intro...

Back in game, the Bond villain version of Andrew finishes.

ANDREW

...ducing, Siren!

Clad in a revealing, skin-tight outfit, Sydney emerges from the warehouse. She carries two futuristic pistols, and wears a bandoleer of chemical grenades. The grenades are see-through and contain a blue liquid. As she approaches the dumbfounded group, the music stops and Derek starts to protest.

(CONTINUED)

DEREK

Aw hell...

Back in the real world, he finishes.

DEREK

...no! You did not just Yoko the gaming session?

ANDREW

What?

DAD

Was that a Beatles reference?

DEREK

Yes it was.

DAD

What do you know about The Beatles?

DEREK

I don't know. Yoko Ono was the one that broke em up right?

Dad smiles his approval.

DAD

Yeah.

ANDREW

She is not breaking anything up? What's wrong with an NPC?

DEREK

A Non-Player-Character that just happens to look like your new girlfriend?

DAD

New girlfriend huh?

ANDREW

She's not my girlfriend.

DEREK

Okay, the girl you like. And both their names just happen to start with an "S"?

ANDREW

Her name is Siren, like the mermaids.

(CONTINUED)

DEREK

Do you see any water where we're fighting!?

Andrew has grown agitated.

ANDREW

She's from the planet Syris. It's a liquid planet I created which is also where the solution is made.

DEREK

What solution?

ANDREW

You guys have to find out.

DEREK

C'mon!

Dad steps in.

DAD

Andrew, this is the third time that we've run this scenario. I'm all for developing your game and in fact I have news for you when we're done here, but perhaps you should just tell us how to beat these things.

Andrew considers it for a moment.

ANDREW

It's a chemical. Found only on her planet, it dissolves the armor.

DEREK

So in the whole fracking universe there's one thing that can beat these guys?

ANDREW

These are the boss' minions! They're supposed to be hard.

NORMAN

But how is the average player supposed to know this?

ANDREW

That's where the NPC comes into play. We introduce her maybe 2/3 through the story and--

(CONTINUED)

DEREK

So the only way to finish the story line is with your girlfriend? No way. Vote!

Everyone knocks down their barriers.

DEREK

If you vote for the NPC, raise your hand.

Andrew does.

DEREK

All those against?

Norman, Dad, and Derek raise their hands.

DAD

Sorry son.

DEREK

Make the armor weaker, please, and get rid of your girlfriend. Now Pop, you had something to say about the game?

DAD

You know that I believe in you guys, and I talk about you all the time.

ANDREW

Yeah.

DAD

You also know that my manager Trevor is always trying to make a buck.

They laugh.

DAD

But I can only write so fast, so Trevor got creative. On the way to Boston I was talking about you guys and this game. Well, Trevor reached out to Palladium Books and--

The boys go crazy.

DEREK
Palladium Books!?

ANDREW
Holy crap!

DEREK
Trevor's the man!

Dad smiles.

DAD
They want to meet with you in a few weeks.

The boys go even crazier!

DAD
I know this is the end with Spektor and all that, so you need to finalize this thing as soon as possible.

DEREK
All right, Andrew, you've got to fix the armor. Norman, work up more views and options for Spektor. I'm gonna go over every word I've ever written and make sure it's ready. We'll touch base again Saturday like usual.

INT. AUDITORIUM - AFTERNOON

The set is built and painted. The plant is complete. On stage, Andrew and Sydney sing "Suddenly Seymour". When finished everyone claps. In the audience Mr. Baker speaks.

BAKER
Great! Two weeks to open people.

EXT. DRAMA ROOM - NIGHT

Heading: 18:00 - DAIRY VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL DRAMA ROOM -
OPERATION HOMECOMING

Outside the drama room Andrew waits for Sydney. He is visibly nervous. She exits in step with Larry. They stop and talk for a moment and then Larry walks away disappointed.

Afterward, Sydney walks up to Andrew.

(CONTINUED)

SYDNEY

Andrew, were you waiting for me?

ANDREW

Uh... yeah, I was. What's wrong with Larry?

SYDNEY

Nothing really. He asked me to Homecoming.

ANDREW

Oh.

SYDNEY

I said no. I mean, he's a nice guy but I hardly know him.

ANDREW

Okay. Well, I was going to ask you to Homecoming too but uh... maybe you don't know me either.

SYDNEY

Well, I'm getting to know you.

Andrew fidgets nervously.

ANDREW

Why don't we... well if you want... uh... we could go to dinner or something. That way we can get to know each other better.

SYDNEY

That sounds nice.

ANDREW

Then I'll ask you to Homecoming.

She smiles.

SYDNEY

Okay.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL QUAD - MID DAY

It's lunch time. Derek and Norman hang out at the bench like normal. Andrew approaches with pep in his step and a smile on his face.

Derek notices and is annoyed.

(CONTINUED)

DEREK
God, Friday can't come fast enough.

ANDREW
(undaunted)
No it can't.

DEREK
There's more to life than girls
Andrew.

Ernie walks up.

ANDREW
I know that.

ERNIE
Guys!

ALL
Hey Er--

ERNIE
No! This is serious. You guys, they
egged Meredith's house last night.

DEREK
Who is Meredith?

ANDREW
A senior on the flag team.

DEREK
They egged a *senior*?

ERNIE
Yes. Stacy and Meredith were
fighting over this guy, and it just
went bad. Now they're like, bitter
enemies.

ANDREW
What guy?

DEREK
Does it matter? They were gonna hit
us, remember?

ERNIE
They still are! Stacy bought a
bunch of eggs at Costco. They
didn't even use them all.

(CONTINUED)

DEREK

So?

ERNIE

So they're letting them sit until the party. They wanna throw *rotten* eggs at your houses.

DEREK

That's disgusting!

ANDREW

So they're seriously planning to TP and egg us?

ERNIE

Yeah! Everybody is talking about it. I tried to warn you guys!

DEREK

So when is this going down?

ERNIE

The Friday after the Homecoming dance.

ANDREW

Maybe the cops can put a car outside our houses?

DEREK

Screw the cops. Let's go vigilante on em! We have to defend our turf.

ANDREW

It'd be like defending the wormhole from the Jem'Hadar.

Norman perks up.

DEREK

Exactly!

ANDREW

Okay, so we wait outside with the lights on, ready for them. I'll set up my video camera.

NORMAN

No! We should mine the wormhole!

(CONTINUED)

ERNIE

What?

DEREK

Counter attack! Excellent idea
Norman! Skype me tonight. You too
Ernie!

Ernie is elated.

ERNIE

Really?

DEREK

You've earned it, but I'm gonna
need you to act as our mole.

ERNIE

Awesome.

INT. DEREK'S ROOM - NIGHT

Heading: 18:00 - COUNTER ATTACK PLANNING

Derek is deep in thought as he ponders a crude schematic of
their cul de sac laid out on his desk.

The computer flashes and WE SEE that Andrew is video
calling. Derek answers, and Andrew appears on screen along
with Norman and Ernie.

DEREK

Right on time! Gentlemen, we have
gathered here today to plan a
strategic, counter attack
operation.

ERNIE

Sounds like a wedding.

DEREK

Shut up Ernie.

ANDREW

We should call it...

He thinks for a moment.

ANDREW

Operation: Party Pooper.

(CONTINUED)

ERNIE

Awesome.

DEREK

That's badass. Okay, Operation:
Party Pooper. Ernie, how many
people do we anticipate?

Heading: 18:07 - OPERATION: PARTY POOPER PLANNING

ERNIE

I don't know. She's invited a ton
of folks from drum line to JV
football.

ANDREW

Since when is Stacy cool with the
football team?

DEREK

So... how many people?

ERNIE

Well, we... *they* usually wait
until after midnight, so most kids
will have gone home by then. Last
time they went in two cars so this
time I'd expect three.

Derek arranges three Hot Wheels cars on his map.

DEREK

Okay, three cars. And this is going
down a week after Homecoming right?

ERNIE

Yep.

DEREK

When is Homecoming?

Norman doesn't even look up, but he quickly answers. At the
mention of Homecoming Andrew starts daydreaming.

NORMAN

The 17th.

DEREK

Okay, that means the night of the
23rd. Andrew what are you smiling
at?

Andrew snaps out of it.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW
What? Nothing.

Andrew's phone starts to vibrate.

DEREK
Are you texting? This is important!
Is it Scottsdale?

ANDREW
It's *Sydney*.

Andrew checks the text. It's from Sydney. WE SEE that she can't make their date Friday. Andrew's smile quickly fades.

DEREK
It's her isn't it?

ANDREW
She has a question about blocking
in the play. Hang on.

Andrew texts back "It's okay. Maybe some other time."

ERNIE
He *is* bad isn't he?

DEREK
The worst. Are you back with us yet
Andrew? Are you even paying
attention?

Andrew puts his phone on silent and sets it down.

ANDREW
Yeah, three cars, the 23rd, I'm
with you.

DEREK
Okay. I propose a formal planning
session Saturday night.

Andrew pouts.

DEREK
We're not gaming Saturday because
of my tournament. I expect you
clowns to be there to witness my
victory.

NORMAN
For sure.

Andrew notices the light blinking on his phone indicating a new message.

ANDREW
(delayed)
Of course!

DEREK
So everybody needs to spend this week finalizing the bug armor and Spektor for the Palladium pitch, got it?

As Derek talks, Andrew checks his text from Sydney. It says, "How about lunch Saturday?"

ANDREW
Yes!

Derek notices Andrew's enthusiasm.

DEREK
That's more like it. So after my victory, we'll meet up for pizza and planning. Ernie do you know where we live?

Andrew texts, "Sure" in reply to Sydney's proposal. He's oblivious to the plans the rest of the group is making.

ERNIE
Yeah, on Yvette Avenue.

DEREK
You've got it. All right, I've got homework. Hughes out!

Andrew puts down the phone just as everyone signs out. He grins from ear to ear, happy about the salvaged date.

EXT. DAIRY VALLEY TOWNE CENTER - DAY

Heading: 13:00 - DAIRY VALLEY TOWNE CENTER - OPERATION: LOVE CONNECTION

Andrew walks closely with Sydney.

SYDNEY
Thanks for lunch.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW

Thank you for coming.

SYDNEY

My pleasure. Sorry about rescheduling.

ANDREW

No problem. I just wanted us to get to know each other better.

SYDNEY

I think we did that.

ANDREW

Oh, so is it safe to ask you to Homecoming.

SYDNEY

I think so.

Andrew stops in front of a sporting goods store. He's overly formal as he takes Sydney's hands and prepares to ask her to Homecoming.

ANDREW

Sydney Graham...

Behind Sydney, in the display window something catches Andrew's eye. ANGLE ON a heavy bag much like Derek's.

ANDREW

Aw man.

SYDNEY

Dude, it's not that serious.

ANDREW

No! I forgot something. I've got to go!

SYDNEY

What did you forget?

ANDREW

My friend Derek has a Taekwondo tournament today. I've got to go!

SYDNEY

Yeah, you should be there for your friend.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW

I know. I'll take you home.

SYDNEY

Could I go with you? I love martial arts.

ANDREW

Really?

INT. COLLEGE GYMNASIUM - DAY

The gym is packed. Taekwondo practitioners litter the floor stretching and preparing for their matches. Inside the "rings" are marked by painted squares on the floor.

Down on the floor Derek awaits his turn to fight. Wearing full Taekwondo pads and gear he is in the red corner, therefore he has a red stripe showing on his chest protector. The Korean REFEREE addresses Derek.

REFEREE

Red corner, take your mark.

Derek glances into the stands before entering the ring. In the stands we see Grandma, Norman, and Ernie all cheering him on. Derek searches for Andrew but he's nowhere to be found.

Derek enters. He bows to the judges, then to his OPPONENT. The referee goes over the rules.

REFEREE

This fight is two, 2-minute rounds of nonstop action. The judges will count every punch and kick that lands in the colors, or to the head. At the end of the two rounds the points are tallied. The fighter with the most points wins. Understand?

They nod.

REFEREE

Good. Then char-iot! (Attention)

They come to attention.

REFEREE

Kyung-ye! (Bow)

They bow to each other.

(CONTINUED)

REFEREE

Kyorugi! Joon-bi! (Get Ready to fight!)

Derek and his opponent assume fighting stances.

REFEREE

Shi-jak! (Start)

The fight is fast and furious. It's an even match at first, but Derek starts to take control even knocking his opponent off his feet with a back thrusting kick.

The match is over. Derek's hand is raised. He smiles happily as he searches the stands again and gets a thumbs up from Grandma and Norman, but Andrew is nowhere to be found.

INT. COLLEGE GYMNASIUM - DAY

Now fighting out of the blue corner, Derek gets his chest protector re-tied by his COACH, this time with the blue color on his chest as he prepares to fight a much larger BRAZILIAN OPPONENT. Once laced, the referee calls him into the ring.

REFEREE

Blue corner, take your mark.

Derek once again looks into the stands. This time he sees Andrew making his way down the aisle to where Grandma and the rest are. Derek smiles until he notices that Andrew isn't alone. He's brought Sydney and Derek is not pleased.

REFEREE

Blue corner, to your mark or forfeit.

Derek enters. The referee reminds them of the rules. As he does WE SEE the name of the Brazilian's MMA school on back.

REFEREE

Let me remind you that this is not MMA. That means that kicks to the head are legal, but no contact to the face. Got it?

The two fighters nod their acknowledgment.

REFEREE

All right, Joon-bi!

They assume fighting stances.

(CONTINUED)

REFEREE

Shi-jak!

The first round is back and forth. They are pretty evenly matched. Between rounds Derek takes a little water from his coach.

COACH

Start this next round with an axe kick. Back him up. He can't handle your speed.

DEREK

Okay coach.

Derek looks into the stands. Everyone is enthusiastically supporting him, even Sydney. But Derek can't get over that Andrew was late and that he brought his date. He shakes his head in disbelief.

COACH

What's wrong? Focus!

Round two starts. Derek unleashes a great axe kick that puts the Brazilian on the defensive.

Derek assaults him with speed backing the Brazilian into the corner of their square. Noticeably uncomfortable, the Brazilian panics and throws a punch right to Derek's eye.

The crowd reacts. Even Sydney covers her mouth with her hands, worried for Derek.

REFEREE

Foul! Injury time out!

The referee checks on Derek. There's a cut above his eye. It's bleeding and starting to swell.

COACH

Give me some ice.

An ASSISTANT hands him an ice pack.

COACH

You were doing great Derek but we're gonna forfeit.

DEREK

No way Coach. I have been training for this forever. I wanna keep going.

(CONTINUED)

COACH

With one eye?

DEREK

Yes sir. With one eye.

COACH

Okay. The first round could have gone either way, but this round you're up on points, so just stay away from him and you should win.

DEREK

Okay coach.

Back in the ring the fight starts. Derek circles away from the Brazilian but to no avail. His opponent scores quite a few kicks and punches to Derek's blue color band. Derek lands some punches and kicks when the Brazilian comes in close, but he is clearly being outscored.

At the end of the fight, Derek hangs his head as the Brazilian's hand is raised.

REFEREE

Winner.

EXT. COLLEGE GYMNASIUM - DAY

With a tear in his good eye, an ice pack on the other, his bag over his shoulder, and a bronze medal around his neck, Derek hurriedly makes his way to the parking lot. Behind him everyone struggles to keep up. They call out after him.

ERNIE

You did good Derek!

ANDREW

I was impressed man. That was great!

GRANDMA

You won the bronze medal baby.

Derek wipes the tear before spinning on his heel to address his audience.

DEREK

That just means I won the *loser's* bracket Grandma.

(CONTINUED)

GRANDMA
So. You still won.

DEREK
I wanted gold!

ANDREW
It's not your fault that guy
cheated.

Derek takes offense to Andrew's comment.

DEREK
Well I should have been ready. What
if that was a street fight?

ANDREW
But it wasn't. I think--

DEREK
You know what I think? I think you
shoulda been here to support your
boy, but instead you were out doing
her bidding as usual.

Sydney is offended.

SYDNEY
My bidding!? He picked the time.

Derek is shocked.

DEREK
You ditched me!?

ANDREW
No I just forgot.

DEREK
That's even worse.

He pauses.

DEREK
Look Sydney, I'm sorry. This jerk
off has a tendency to forget his
friends whenever something with
boobs comes around, and that's not
your fault.

ANDREW
Hey!

DEREK

Don't even try to deny it. How many gaming sessions did you miss to hang with Stacy? How many conventions did you skip out on waiting on her hand and foot? We'd have finished the game a long time ago if it weren't for you and Stacy! Right Norman?

NORMAN

He's right.

ERNIE

I heard--

DEREK

Stay out of this freshman!

Derek continues his verbal assault on Andrew.

DEREK

I live one house away but it feels like the next freakin' galaxy when there's a girl in your life! Bros before hoes dude.

DEREK

(to Sydney)
No offense.

Derek goes one by one to each member of the group.

DEREK

Thank you, thank you, thank you,
and even thank you Sydney for
coming and supporting me.

He points a finger into Andrew's chest.

DEREK

And frack you!

He heads to the car again.

DEREK

C'mon Grandma, let's go.

INT. ANDREW'S DINING ROOM - EVENING

The guy's gather round for Derek's counter attack planning session. Ernie is there too and they've made a place for him at the table. Derek's chair is noticeably empty.

ANDREW
I don't think he's coming.

NORMAN
He'll come.

INT. ANDREW'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Time has passed. Derek's still not there.

ANDREW
Let's call it a night.

ERNIE
Figures, my first meeting's a dud.

ANDREW
Sorry Ernie.

INT. ANDREW'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dressed for bed Andrew grabs a drink from the refrigerator. The front door opens and his father calls from the other room.

DAD
(off-screen)
Andrew?

Andrew moves to the living room.

INT. ANDREW'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The living room is well appointed. There are pictures of a younger Andrew, Dad, and his mother on the mantle.

Dad has just entered the house. He carries his luggage having just returned from a book signing.

Andrew hugs him. He hangs on a little longer than normal.

DAD
Everything okay?

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW

Yeah.

Dad sets down his stuff and takes a seat.

DAD

Andrew I want to talk to you about what happened today.

ANDREW

How did you--

DAD

I talked to Derek's Grandma. She said you guys were fighting.

ANDREW

I forgot about his stupid tournament so I got there late. He was pissed about that.

DAD

And there was a girl involved?

ANDREW

She told you that too?

DAD

She didn't have to.

Dad pauses.

DAD

Sit down son.

He does.

DAD

I don't know when it happened, but all boys get a little girl crazy at some point.

ANDREW

We're not gonna have the birds and the bees talk again are we?

DAD

No. You know all that stuff. I'm just worried about your priorities.

ANDREW

What priorities?

(CONTINUED)

DAD

You've known Derek since he moved here in the 4th grade. You guys have been inseparable since then.

ANDREW

Yeah. So?

DAD

So how is it that you forget one of the biggest events of his life?

ANDREW

I was just excited about my date Dad, it happens.

DAD

It shouldn't. With Stacy I chalked it up to first love, but if the same thing is happening again we have a problem son.

ANDREW

I don't have a problem Dad. You're just--

DAD

I don't know what you're looking for with these girls but friends like Derek are once in a lifetime. Girls will come and go but friendship lasts forever. Do you understand?

ANDREW

Yeah Dad. I understand.

DAD

Good. So what are you going to do?

ANDREW

I'll apologize to Derek, but I'm still gonna date Sydney. We're going to Homecoming... I think.

DAD

Homecoming? Already?

ANDREW

Yep.

(CONTINUED)

DAD

Is Derek going? Norman?

ANDREW

I'm not sure about Derek but Norman goes to all the dances.

DAD

Norman's a ladies man huh?

ANDREW

If his lady's an iPad. He goes solo. His parents think it's important that he be social.

DAD

Interesting. Maybe Norman will get a date this time. He's grown so tall now, and girls like tall guys.

ANDREW

I don't know who he'd ask.

Andrew remembers Sydney.

ANDREW

I never officially asked Sydney.

DAD

Then you'd better get to it.

INT. ANDREW'S ROOM - NIGHT

Andrew video calls Sydney. She appears on screen.

ANDREW

Hey Syd. You know at the Towne Center, before we went to the tournament?

SYDNEY

Yeah.

ANDREW

And I was going to ask you a certain question.

SYDNEY

Yes...

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW

I was wondering... maybe... would you want to go to Homecoming with me?

SYDNEY

Yes.

Andrew smiles.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH CLASS - MORNING

The bell rings. Derek, wearing a bandage below his eye hurriedly walks out of the classroom. Andrew grabs his books and runs to catch up.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL QUAD - MORNING

Heading: 08:50 - DAIRY VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL - OPERATION:
RECONCILE

Andrew gets in front of Derek.

ANDREW

Look man, we've got to talk.

DEREK

We don't have to do anything.

ANDREW

Dude, we've been friends since the 4th grade. C'mon!

DEREK

Then act like it! Every play you do I'm there opening night. All the talent shows. Everything!

ANDREW

I know and I'm sorry.

DEREK

Taekwondo is *my* thing and I just wanted you to support me like I support you.

He takes a breath.

DEREK

Mikey's gone. Dad's in Afghanistan. I needed this...

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW

I'm sorry. I can't go back in time
but I can promise it won't happen
again. It won't man, I'm serious.

DEREK

Bros before hoes?

ANDREW

Do we have to call her a ho?

DEREK

I guess not. It just rhymes.

ANDREW

So are we cool?

DEREK

Yeah.

They laugh, and then do their secret handshake before
walking through the quad.

ANDREW

Good. I fixed the insectoid armor
issue too.

DEREK

Sweet.

INT. ANDREW'S DINING ROOM - MORNING

At the table, Derek barks orders at the team.

DEREK

Norman, hit em with a grenade.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

In the game world, the bugs have been slaughtered. Dad and
Derek use their respective talents to kill a few bugs, while
action-hero Norman pulls a pin with his teeth and throws a
grenade at a freshly landed cluster of bugs.

They explode sending yellow blood flying everywhere.

Norman turns his back on the newly dead bugs and says,

NORMAN

Bug out!

INT. ANDREW'S DINING ROOM - MORNING

INTERCUT BETWEEN THE GAME WORLD AND REAL LIFE AT THE DINING ROOM TABLE.

Back in the real world, they all high five and celebrate.

ANDREW

And now...

Back in game SPEKTOR, a more humanoid but still bug-like creature lands. He's intimidating with a huge, muscle-bound physique, and he carries a large weapon. Andrew appears in his floating GAME MASTER desk, stroking his cat.

ANDREW

Game on.

Dad raises his hands defensively, as if begging off.

DAD

This looks like it's going to take a while...

Back in the real world he stands up from the table.

DAD

... and I have some writing to do. I'm sorry guys.

DEREK

No problem. We're not ready for him anyway.

They begin to put their things away.

ANDREW

Remember, we're gaming Sunday instead of Saturday because of the play.

DEREK

And don't forget, we need to plan...

He stops and glances at Dad who is putting away his folders.

DEREK

That other thing.

Dad doesn't even look up.

(CONTINUED)

DAD

I know about Operation: Party
Pooper.

The boys is shocked.

DEREK

What!? Aw man.

ANDREW

How?

DAD

I saw the notes on Andrew's desk.

The boys are disappointed.

ANDREW

You were going through my stuff?

DAD

I wasn't snooping. I was looking
for the Book of Magic. I have a new
spell I want to try on Spektor.

DEREK

(to Andrew)

Unbelievable.

Dad looks at the boys and smiles.

DAD

Just remember, when it comes to
water guns, aim for the crotch on
the boys, and girls hate getting
their hair wet.

The boys smile.

ANDREW

Really?

NORMAN

Awesome.

DEREK

Andrew, try to get some rest this
week. I know how you get before a
show, and we absolutely have to
finish this Spektor thing Saturday
for the pitch.

He pauses.

DEREK
And finalize plans for Operation:
Party Pooper.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Heading: 21:00 - OPENING NIGHT
Andrew greets his Dad, Derek, Norman, Derek's Grandma,
Norman's parents DENNY and HELEN. The boys fist bump, then
the parents shake Andrew's hand and congratulate him on a
great performance.

DAD
Excellent work son.

ANDREW
Thanks Dad.

HELEN
Oh you were so good!

Sydney approaches with her father LEONARD and mother SALLY.

DEREK
Here comes Shenandoah.

Andrew gives him a look.

DEREK
What? It's a city.

Sydney arrives.

SYDNEY
Andrew?

Andrew turns around. Sydney introduces Andrew to her
parents.

ANDREW
Hey Syd! Great job tonight.

SYDNEY
Thanks you too.

She pauses.

SYDNEY
These are my parents.

Andrew reaches out and shakes her father's hand.

ANDREW
How do you do sir?

LEONARD
Great job Andrew.

ANDREW
Thank you.

He shakes her mother's hand.

SALLY
You are an amazing Seymour!

ANDREW
Thank you Miss Graham. I had a
great Audrey.

SALLY
And I hear you guys are going to
Homecoming together.

Andrew's Dad approaches.

ANDREW
Yes we are.

DAD
Andrew, aren't you going to
introduce me?

ANDREW
Sorry Dad. Dad, this is Sydney
Graham, and her parents.

They reach out and shake hands.

DAD
Ken Miller. Nice to meet you.

LEONARD
And where is Mrs. Miller?

DAD
She passed away.

SALLY
I'm so sorry.

DAD
It's quite all right.

ANDREW

Dad, a bunch of us are going for ice cream. Is it cool--

DAD

Just be home by 10. It's still a school night.

SYDNEY

Dad, can I go?

LEONARD

Have her home by 9:30 Andrew.

ANDREW

No problem sir.

Derek leans in to Norman and makes a quiet remark.

DEREK

Ditched again. Saw that coming.

DAD

Clear as the moon.

NORMAN

"That's no moon..."

EXT. DAIRY VALLEY TOWNE CENTER - NIGHT

Sydney and Andrew sit outside an ice cream shop, eating cups of ice cream.

SYDNEY

I'm finally feeling like I have friends.

ANDREW

Of course you have friends!

SYDNEY

Like who?

ANDREW

Larry, Dawn, me...

He can't think of any more.

SYDNEY

Those are cast mates.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW

Ouch.

SYDNEY

Well not you.

She pauses.

SYDNEY

Truth is, I've always been a loner,
but not by choice. I wish I had
someone to hang out with all the
time.

ANDREW

Like a best friend?

SYDNEY

Sure.

She looks down at the ground as she talks.

SYDNEY

Or a boyfriend.

Andrew lights up, then plays it cool.

ANDREW

Sydney, will you be my girlfriend?

SYDNEY

Sure!

They smile and take a bite of ice cream.

SYDNEY

You know it's not official until
you kiss me.

ANDREW

Technically we already kissed on
stage.

She gives him a deadpan look. Andrew takes the hint and
leans in to kiss her. It's magical.

INT. DRAMA ROOM - DAY

MONTAGE of Sydney and Andrew hanging out all week. They have
lunch together, they hang out at the Towne Center, go to
movies, and more. Throughout the montage we see Derek and
Norman working diligently on the game, while Andrew's game
papers sit untouched on his desk.

INT. ANDREW'S DINING ROOM - MORNING

Dad, Derek, and Norman sit at the table. Andrew is missing. We hear him thundering down the stairs.

Andrew enters.

ANDREW

Got it!

DEREK

Finally.

Andrew quickly sets up his barriers and pours out his dice. He shuffles a few papers and then looks at the guys.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

In the game world Spektor leans against a building, bored out of his mind.

Across from him, the trio sit playing cards. Suddenly Andrew's Bond villain desk zooms into the area, and Andrew's voice booms across the battlefield.

ANDREW

Okay. I'm ready.

The guys strike action movie poses and Spektor does the same.

ANDREW

Fight.

They square off each giving Spektor their worst. Spektor is unharmed and counter attacks punishing the trio.

Dad, Derek, and Norman breathe heavily trying to recover as they fall back regroup.

DAD

Something's wrong.

DEREK

Damned right something's wrong. I'm gonna try something.

INT. ANDREW'S DINING ROOM - MORNING

INTERCUT BETWEEN THE GAME WORLD AND REAL LIFE AT THE DINING ROOM TABLE.

Back in the real world, Derek accesses his netbook. He addresses Andrew.

DEREK

We can use anything we want right?

ANDREW

Anything.

Back in game, Derek pulls four vials of blue liquid from inside his jacket. It's clear that they could never fit in there, or if they had they would have been broken, but hey, this is a game.

DEREK

I got this.

Ninja Derek runs toward Spektor with sword in one hand, and vials in the other. As he gets close, Spektor attacks. Derek ducks and throws the vials at Spektor. Three hit and one misses.

At the table Derek rolls a twenty-sided die.

DEREK

23.

Andrew rolls four dice in succession.

ANDREW

Hit. Miss. Hit. Hit.

Derek has become agitated, and grows increasingly hostile toward Andrew.

DEREK

Better have. I have a plus eight to strike.

ANDREW

I know.

DEREK

So what happened?

ANDREW

I don't know. What's in the vial?

(CONTINUED)

DEREK

I don't know Andrew, what's in the vial?

He slides a piece of paper across to Andrew. Andrew looks caught.

In game, the liquid bubbles and corrodes Spektor's armor. As it fizzes away, Derek directs traffic.

DEREK

Hit him Norman!

Norman unloads the minigun into Spektor who is subsequently riddled with bullets.

DEREK

Finish him off Pop!

Dad begins an incantation. Smoke begins to billow up from the ground around Spektor. The villain begins to clutch his throat and cough. Clearly he can't breathe. Spektor crumbles to the ground where below his body the ground starts to move. Suddenly, hands spring up from the ground. They are charred/burned demon hands from hell. They grab on to Spektor and pull him underground into hell.

DAD

I call that one "Raid" because it kills bugs dead.

At the table the boys react.

DEREK

Aw, that was terrible.

ANDREW

Super cheesy Dad.

DEREK

Still, necromancy is bad-ass.

DAD

Yes it is! So what was in the vials that burned off his armor?

Derek glares at Andrew.

DEREK

Betrayal.

ANDREW
Give me a break.

DEREK
No I will not give you a break!
Lemme guess, you were out with your
girlfriend so you couldn't prepare?

ANDREW
We went out last night, so what?

DEREK
All week?

ANDREW
I had the play.

DEREK
The play was last week Andrew!

DAD
I still don't get it.

DEREK
Lover boy recycled the sheet.

Norman reacts as if a crime was committed.

DAD
He did what?

DEREK
He didn't fix Spektor at all. He
just took the invincible bug stats
and gave them to Spektor. Right
Andrew?

DAD
How can you be sure?

DEREK
Because I copied the bug sheet two
weeks ago when we played.

ANDREW
With what copier?

DEREK
My brain and my fingers jerk off.

He spins the netbook around to show Andrew who hangs his
head in shame.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW

He's right.

DEREK

You selfish a-hole. We have the biggest presentation of our lives in a couple weeks. All our dreams could come true, but you're too busy--

ANDREW

You know what!? You're jealous! You're jealous because you don't have a girl to spend time with so you take it out on me! Maybe if you weren't such a--

DEREK

I don't want a girl. Girls are trouble and they always let you down! That's why I trust my bros before hoes.

ANDREW

You said you wouldn't call her that.

Dad tries to intervene.

DAD

Boys.

DEREK

Ho! Ho! Ho! Just call me Santa.

Andrew stands fists clenched.

ANDREW

Don't call my girlfriend a ho!

DEREK

You haven't been in a fight your whole life, and now you wanna fight me? Over her!? Your judgment--

ANDREW

I'm tired of your shit. You're just--

Derek stands.

(CONTINUED)

DEREK

Then do something! Come on 'round this table so I can put a foot upside your head, and you know I can too! You saw *half* of my last tournament.

ANDREW

The *losing* half. Maybe I'll hit you in the eye and you'll crumble like a--

Dad places both hands on the table and prepares to stand.

DAD

Boys!

But before Dad can get up Norman jumps to his feet and starts screaming at Derek and Andrew.

NORMAN

(yelling)

Shut up! Both of you!

They stop and turn to look at Norman, shocked.

NORMAN

You two are the most selfish people I know, and you know what, I still love you! You've got attachment issues since your Mom died. Derek you've got abandonment issues since your Mom left. Both of you just need to... to take a chill pill!

Derek raises an eyebrow.

NORMAN

I've known Andrew since Kindergarten, and you since 4th grade. We have *everything* in common, and we're the best of friends! So why aren't we acting like it?

He takes a deep breath.

NORMAN

(to Derek)

When you couldn't pass Geometry, who studied with you every night so you would pass?

Derek looks down.

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN

Derek?

DEREK

Andrew did.

NORMAN

That's right. And Andrew, even though you never talk about it, when your Mom died, who climbed in your window every night and slept on your floor so you wouldn't have to be alone?

Andrew looks down at the floor.

ANDREW

Derek did.

NORMAN

That's right! You guys are best friends. We all are. Now I have worked my ass off on these drawing for years, and I want this game to be a Palladium game. So you jerk offs better swallow your pride, shake hands, and make up right now.

Andrew and Derek's eyes meet, but then Andrew turns away, while Derek folds his arms defiantly.

NORMAN

Cowards.

Norman grabs his stuff.

NORMAN

I'm outta here!

He walks out.

INT. ANDREW'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Andrew is dressed for homecoming. There's a corsage on the table. Andrew's Dad adjusts his tie.

DAD

There you go.

ANDREW

How do I look?

(CONTINUED)

DAD

Well, you look like me so I'd say
you look great.

Andrew goes to investigate in a nearby mirror where he fixes
his hair and fusses over details. Dad takes the opportunity
to ask a question.

DAD

So, have you talked to Derek? Is he
going to be at Homecoming?

ANDREW

(annoyed)

No Dad, I haven't, and I'm not
going to. He's the one with the
problem.

DAD

Actually--

ANDREW

I've got my girl, that's all I
need.

Dad is disappointed.

DAD

Sit down son.

ANDREW

But Dad I--

DAD

I said sit down.

He does.

DAD

Having a girlfriend is new and
different for you, but take it from
someone with a little more
experience.

ANDREW

Dad--

DAD

No, listen. You need balance son.
Believe it or not, someday you
won't want to spend every waking
moment with your lady. You might
even want some time away.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW

Not Sydney, she's--

DAD

That's why poker night and girl's night out were invented. Couples need time apart to be their own person, and to hang out with their friends.

ANDREW

C'mon Dad--

DAD

I'm just saying, "Too much is as bad as too little." You can't honestly say that you don't miss Derek. What has it been? A week?

Andrew takes a deep breath.

ANDREW

Yeah.

DAD

You need balance son, just keep that in mind.

With Dad finished, Andrew perks up.

ANDREW

So... can I go?

Dad nods. Andrew springs up and heads for the door. He leaves the corsage on the table.

DAD

Andrew.

He turns to see Dad waving the corsage box. Andrew grabs it and once again starts toward the door.

DAD

And drive carefully!

INT. GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

The High School gymnasium has been transformed into a semi-formal dance. Some kids, mostly upperclassmen dance on the dance floor, while others sit talking and laughing at the tables that surround it. There's plenty of punch to go around, guarded by middle-aged chaperons.

(CONTINUED)

At the drama table, Andrew and Sydney sit with Larry, Dawn, and a few other familiar faces laughing and talking. Occasionally Andrew glances at the door.

ANDREW

Baker would never go for *Les Mis'*.
It'd be too hard to pull off.

LARRY

It'll probably be *Guys and Dolls* or
Grease again.

SYDNEY

The staples of high school theater.

ANDREW

We did *Into the Woods* my freshman
year, that was different.

LARRY

And *Flowers for Algernon*.

DAWN

Why don't high schools do *Wicked*?
Syd and I could rock that as
Galinda and Elphaba.

They high five and everyone laughs their agreement. Just then, Norman walks in with ANNE, a tall, nerdy but pretty girl with very long hair. They are dressed appropriately with Norman in a suit and Anne in a nice dress, however they both wear Star Trek communicator badges on their left breast.

They enter and cross to an empty table. Norman pulls out her chair and she sits. Then he does the same. They look around for a moment, and then in unison pull out their mobile devices and start browsing.

Andrew excuses himself.

ANDREW

(to Sydney)
Be right back.

He walks over and greets Norman with a fist bump.

ANDREW

Hey buddy! How's it going.

NORMAN

It's cool. You?

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW
Excellent.

He pauses. Norman goes back to browsing.

ANDREW
Aren't you gonna introduce to me to your date?

NORMAN
You know Anne. From the USS Velocity in Orange County.

Andrew is shocked.

ANDREW
Oh! Wow. I didn't recognize you without your Klingon make up.

ANNE
Half Klingon.

ANDREW
Right. How long have you guys been... hanging out?

ANNE
A couple of years.

ANDREW
Years!?

ANNE
Yes, why?

ANDREW
I had no idea.

At the drama table, Sydney excuses herself and heads over.

NORMAN
Well, we just made it official a few weeks ago.

ANDREW
So this is your *girlfriend*?

NORMAN
Yes.

ANDREW
Why didn't you tell me?

NORMAN
You never asked.

Just then Sydney arrives.

SYDNEY
Hey Norman!

NORMAN
Hi Sydney.

He stands.

NORMAN
Sydney, this is my girlfriend Anne.

Anne stands and they shake hands.

ANNE
Nice to meet you.

SYDNEY
You too. I'm Sydney.

Andrew springs into action.

ANDREW
(proudly)
My girlfriend.

ANNE
So I've heard.

Anne and Norman sit and go back to browsing.

SYDNEY
Okay...

They stand awkwardly for a second, and then Sydney takes action.

SYDNEY
Wanna dance?

ANDREW
Sure.

They head for the dance floor just as Derek and his date NANCY walk in. Nancy is a beautiful, athletic Korean girl. They head straight for Norman's table. Once there they talk.

DEREK

Hey buddy, hi Anne. This is my date
Nancy.

They stand and exchange pleasantries. Nancy recognizes her
friends.

NANCY

There's Molly, I'm gonna go say hi.

Nancy goes over to greet her friend. Derek, Anne, and Norman
sit. Derek leans in to talk with Norman.

DEREK

Did Lover boy stop by yet with
Spokane?

NORMAN

Don't put me in the middle. I said
I'd be friends with both of you no
matter what, and I'm sticking to
it.

DEREK

Okay, okay. I'm not trying to start
anything. What did Anne say?

Anne doesn't look up.

ANNE

They make a cute couple.

DEREK

Cool. I just... whatever.

INT. GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

Later in the night, Andrew is back at the drama table while
Derek and Norman sit with Ernie and his date ELEANOR. Punch
glasses and snack plates both full and empty litter both
tables. Each table is having a good time respectively.
Occasionally Derek glances over at Andrew's table and vice
versa. The DEEJAY gets on the microphone.

A slow song comes on.

DEEJAY

Ladies and gents, our time is
almost over.

The kids in the audience groan.

(CONTINUED)

DEEJAY

So I am gonna slow it down a bit,
to give you a chance to grab your
main squeeze, and have a dance or
two before we go home.

At Derek's table he gestures to the dance floor and Nancy rises. She and Derek head to the dance floor. Norman leans over to Anne.

NORMAN

mamI' DaneH? (Klingon for "Do you
want to dance?")

ANNE

Qapla (Klingon for success or
affirmative)

They rise and head for the dance floor. When they get there, Andrew and Sydney are already there.

On the dance floor they all dance. As they slowly spin Andrew and Derek come across each other's path. Derek quickly looks away.

The rotate, and this time when their eyes meet, Andrew makes a silly face at Derek who looks away, hiding his smile.

When they cross paths again, Andrew points at Nancy and gives Derek a thumbs up as if to say, "way to go". Derek laughs silently, then remembers that he's mad and looks away. When they rotate again Derek brushes his shoulders off and Andrew laughs.

The song ends and the boys go to their respective tables.

DEEJAY

All right boys and girls, give it
up for Homecoming 2014.

The crowd claps, hoots and hollers, but Derek and Nancy go back to their tables. Norman and Anne join him but Andrew and Sydney go to the drama table.

Sydney catches Andrew looking over at Derek and nudges him.

SYDNEY

Why don't you just go talk to him?

Andrew nods, then walks over to Derek who is helping Nancy with her jacket.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW

Dude, can I talk to you?

DEREK

Not until you break up with little miss drama club over there.

ANDREW

Why do you hate her so much?

Derek thinks for a moment. In the background Sydney heads over to join Andrew.

DEREK

You're right, I should hate you.
C'mon Nancy.

NANCY

Is this the guy that ditched you
for that girl named Sacramento?

DEREK

Yep.

ANDREW

It's Sydney.

NANCY

You guys were best friends. What
kinda girl asks you to ditch your
friends?

Sydney has arrived just in time to hear Nancy's question.

SYDNEY

(to Andrew)

I never asked you to ditch your
friends?

ANDREW

I know. It's my fault.

He looks at Derek.

ANDREW

Dude I'm sorry. I put my heart and
soul into my girl, but--

SYDNEY

Don't talk about me like I'm
property.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW
No you're not, but...

He takes a deep breath.

ANDREW
I need to work on balance.

DEREK
Yes you do.

Derek tries to walk past, but Andrew grabs his shoulder.

ANDREW
But do I have to do it alone?

Derek looks at Andrew's hand on his shoulder. He considers it for a moment.

DEREK
No.

ANDREW
Good. I just, I want to hang with you guys, but I want to make sure Sydney's getting what she needs too.

SYDNEY
Honestly, these last few weeks, you've been a little smothering.

DEREK
Burn.

SYDNEY
Frackin' right burn!

Derek lights up.

DEREK
You like *Battlestar*!? Wait, he taught you that to get on my good side didn't he?

SYDNEY
Please, all this guy talks is *Wars* and *Trek*.

DEREK
I know! Man, maybe we can get along after all.

(CONTINUED)

SYDNEY
I don't see why not.

DEREK
Who's your favorite Cylon?

SYDNEY
Simon of course!

DEREK
Good answer. Everyone says--

ANDREW
So are we cool?

Derek looks at him.

DEREK
Yeah.

They do their secret handshake just as Stacy walks by with Pranav.

STACY
What dorks.

Derek's eyes narrow.

DEREK
We have some planning to do.

ANDREW
Frackin' right we do!

Sydney pats him on the shoulder.

SYDNEY
Don't.

They laugh, then start walking toward the door as one big group.

SYDNEY
So... Nancy was it?

NANCY
Yeah.

SYDNEY
How'd you meet Derek?

NANCY
At Taekwondo...

INT. ANDREW'S DINING ROOM - MORNING

Derek unrolls a large, more detailed schematic of the cul de sac across the table.

The boys place Star Wars miniatures on the map as representatives of themselves.

INTERCUT THE BOYS AND THE FIGURES ON THE SCHEMATIC.

DEREK
Andrew, you're Luke.

He smiles.

DEREK
Norman, you're Han Solo.

NORMAN
"Never tell me the odds."

DEREK
And I'm Mace Windu. Andrew, you'll post up behind your fence. Stay low, until I give the signal.

ANDREW
Where will you be?

DEREK
I'll be on the roof with the binoculars, keeping an eye out. I'll be armed, but you'll have back up supplies behind the fence.

ANDREW
Back up supplies?

DEREK
I'll get to that in a second. Norman, I want you behind the side gate to flank them once I give the signal. You'll have the hose for heavy spraying.

ANDREW
And what's gonna keep them from driving away once we start spraying them?

(CONTINUED)

DEREK
Our ringer, Ernie.

ANDREW
You talked to Ernie?

DEREK
Yes, he's been briefed. He'll
disable the vehicles.

ANDREW
How?

DEREK
He's to take the keys from the
ignition, and throw them on the
dash. We just want to keep them
there through phase three.

ANDREW
Phase three? I thought we were
going to shoot them with water guns
and they'd leave.

DEREK
Oh no, I have something much better
planned.

ANDREW
Awesome!

DEREK
Phase two is the girls, they take
over with guns and hose while we
ready the balloons.

ANDREW
Sweet! But what about this area
here?

He indicates an area on the map.

DEREK
Don't worry about that. That's
phase four.

ANDREW
Phase four!?

DEREK
Yeah, don't worry about it.

ANDREW
I don't know...

DEREK
Trust me, it's covered. Now,
supplies.

Derek drops a tablet on the table. Every line is filled.
Andrew lifts a page and the next page is also full.

ANDREW
Dang.

INT. ANDREW'S GARAGE - NIGHT

The boys stand in front of a long folding table full of
supplies. Derek has the tablet and checks things off. WE SEE
the items as each is read.

DEREK
Six tactical water guns?

ANDREW
Check.

DEREK
Hose?

NORMAN
I have something better than a
hose.

DEREK
Are you sure? They have to be
soaking wet for the plan to go off.

NORMAN
They will be soaked. Anne and I are
building it now.

DEREK
Awesome. Water balloons?

ANDREW
Check.

DEREK
Maple syrup?

ANDREW
Check.

(CONTINUED)

DEREK
Food coloring?

ANDREW
Check.

DEREK
Stink bombs?

ANDREW
Check.

DEREK
Fun dip?

ANDREW
Check.

INT. ANDREW'S GARAGE - LATE NIGHT

We transition to the night of the attack. The girls join them. Everyone is dressed in dark tactical gear.

DEREK
Leaf blowers?

ANDREW
Check.

DEREK
Two of em?

ANDREW
Yep. I borrowed one from Sydney's
Dad.

DEREK
Awesome. I think that's it.

At a small adjoining table Norman and Anne go through a check list of their own. The others watch as they run down their list.

ANNE
Detonator?

Norman picks up a black box with a switch.

NORMAN
Check.

(CONTINUED)

ANNE
Water cannon?

NORMAN
Check.

ANNE
Night vision goggles times two?

NORMAN
Check and check.

Derek has heard enough.

DEREK
Wait a minute, wait a minute. Night vision!?

NORMAN
Yes.

DEREK
How did you build night vision?

ANNE
I can build anything. I'm the head of the engineering club at school.

NORMAN
She's already been accepted to Stanford.

SYDNEY
Whoa.

ANDREW
So how did you learn to make this stuff?

ANNE
It's all on the internet. The nightvision, the water cannon, the water nuke.

NANCY
Nuke?

NORMAN
What do you think the detonator is for?

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW

Okay then, let's start making the balloons. Remember, 2 parts water, one part maple syrup.

EXT. ANDREW'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

BINOCULAR VIEW of the street. WE SEE two sets of headlights as they turn onto the street. BACK TO Derek on the roof of Andrew's house. Derek brings the walkie talkie to his mouth and presses the button.

DEREK

Jaguar to Falcon, Jaguar to Falcon, two swans a swimming. I repeat, two swans a swimming.

Behind the fence Andrew has gotten out of his folding chair, and crouches low. Behind him Sydney pulls on her mask.

ANDREW

Roger Jaguar. Kodiak do you copy?

At the side gate Norman sits with his night vision goggles on. There's a huge water cannon in his lap.

NORMAN

Roger that Falcon, we're ready.

INT. STACY'S CAR - LATE NIGHT

The car is full of kids. Stacy drives with Leslie riding shotgun. Ernie sits with two others in the backseat.

STACY

We'll do Andrew's house first, then Derek.

Ernie smiles and nods.

STACY

I can't wait to get these dorks!

EXT. ANDREW'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

DEREK

Everyone be ready. They're parking.

The two cars pull up and park. The five empty out of Stacy's car, and five more (three boys and two girls) pile out of the other.

(CONTINUED)

DEREK
Wait for it.

Stacy hands out toilet paper rolls to everyone from her trunk.

DEREK
"At my signal, unleash hell!"

The first string of toilet paper flies.

DEREK
There it is. Go! Go! Go!

Andrew flies over the fence and comes out shooting. Derek drops down onto the grass below and starts shooting. Leslie squeals.

LESLIE
Stop it!

Norman kicks open the gate and uses his custom made cannon to drench everyone on his side.

DEREK
I'm out!

ANDREW
Me too.

Norman's water pressure starts to weaken. Derek pulls the radio from his waist.

STACY
(sarcastically laughing)
Water guns? How lame! Get the eggs!

Leslie moves toward the trunk for the eggs.

DEREK
Initiate phase two!

Anne pulls out a detonator. She yells into the walkie talkie.

ANNE
Fire in the hole!

As Andrew and Derek fly over the fence a huge explosion of water goes off. It shoots more than a hundred feet in the air and rains down upon Stacy and her crew. Everyone is soaked except Ernie who is in one of the cars.

INT. STACY'S CAR - LATE NIGHT

Ernie pulls the keys from the ignition and throws them on the dash as the water rains down outside the car.

EXT. ANDREW'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

At the side gate, Derek, Andrew, and Anne emerge with buckets of water balloons. Sydney heads into the garage. They set them down, spread out, and start throwing balloons.

In the background Ernie goes and disables the second car.

As the balloons hit, they explode a combination of water, red food coloring, and maple syrup. It sticks to their clothes, faces, and hair.

STACY
It's like syrup.

LESLIE
It's red dye!

Derek grabs the radio again.

DEREK
Phase three go! Go! Go!

The garage door flies open. Out steps Nancy and Sydney wearing leaf blowers. They flank the group and then turn them on.

NANCY
Hope you like Fun dip!

The fun dip flies and sticks to their clothes and skin making them a sticky mess.

Ernie runs and grabs a couple of special water balloons from the bucket.

STACY
I hate being sticky!

ANDREW
I know.

LESLIE
Get back in the car! Let's go!

As the enemies climb into the car, Ernie runs past the cars and throws the special balloons in. They burst and release a smell into the car's interior.

(CONTINUED)

LESLIE

Oh my God! What's that smell!?

ERNIE

It's called Liquid Ass. Look it up!

STACY

Ernie! You asshole! This is my Mom's car!

ANDREW

This is my Dad's house!

Stacy tries to start the car but can't find the keys.

The boys and girls gather on Andrew's lawn and taunt the kids climbing into the car.

STACY

Where are my keys?

DEREK

They're on the dash!

She finds them and they stick to her hand. After a moment she gets them in the ignition and starts the car.

Derek reaches for his radio.

DEREK

Cougar get ready.

The two cars start and start to go around the cul de sac. Suddenly a truck backs into their patch blocking off the only exit. They're trapped.

Mikey steps out of the driver's seat with a video camera.

Andrew and friends walk up to the two trapped cars. Stacy is in tears. Derek nods at Mikey.

DEREK

Phase Four. Our secret weapon.

MIKEY

You know it.

STACY

C'mon Andrew, let us go.

ANDREW

Sure, just as soon as we get everyone's face on film.

(CONTINUED)

Mikey walks around the car filming everyone inside.

LESLIE

Ernie, you're a traitor.

ERNIE

"I have altered the deal. Pray I don't alter it further."

DEREK

Good one freshman!

Mikey lowers the camera.

MIKEY

Got it.

He heads for the truck.

STACY

I'm gonna call the cops.

DEREK

And tell them what? During your attempt to vandalize, you got vandalized? Good luck with that.

Mikey pulls up and the two cars drive off. Andrew and friends high five and congratulate each other in the street.

Lights start to come on in the neighboring houses. Grandma comes out of Derek's.

GRANDMA

What are y'all doing? And what's that God awful smell?

They laugh.

INT. PALLADIUM BOOKS WAITING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The sharply dressed boys sit and wait for their presentation with Dad. An attractive RECEPTIONIST is on a call.

RECEPTIONIST

Yes sir.

She hangs up.

RECEPTIONIST

Mr. Siembieda will see you now.

The three boys and Dad stand. Andrew picks up a brief case.
The group heads into a room.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Norman's parents, Grandma, Mikey, Dad, and the boys sit
celebrating.

MIKEY

I'd like to propose a toast.

They all raise their glasses.

MIKEY

To the newest game in the Palladium
Books lineup--

DEREK

Not yet.

ANDREW

We have some changes to make, and
of course the pros have to verify
the system--

DEREK

It'll be fine. Your system rocks.

ANDREW

But we have a deal, and an advance.

MIKEY

Then here's to a newly signed deal,
an advance, and a future Palladium
game.

DAD

Here here.

They all touch glasses and drink.

INT. ANDREW'S ROOM - NIGHT

Heading: Three weeks later.

Andrew sits at his desk doing homework. The screen flashes
signaling an incoming video call.

Andrew answers.

INTERCUT ON SCREEN ACTION WITH IN-ROOM DIALOG.

(CONTINUED)

Derek appears on screen.

DEREK
Hey man, how are you holding up?

ANDREW
I'm cool. I mean, Syd needs her space right now and I understand that.

DEREK
Yeah, talking about marriage after five months is a bit fast.

ANDREW
I'm working on it. Maybe we'll get back together.

DEREK
Maybe.

ANDREW
Did Mikey get to Germany okay?

DEREK
Yeah he landed last night. It's weird to think that he's on the other side of the world.

ANDREW
That's what he wanted. To see the world.

DEREK
Mission accomplished.

ANDREW
How's the video doing on YouTube?

DEREK
We're up to 204,000 hits!

ANDREW
Awesome.

Norman chimes in.

DEREK
Sup Norman?

NORMAN
Not much. How are you doing post break-up?

ANDREW

I'm good. What's new?

NORMAN

Now they say Jabba the Hutt really didn't die, and he'll be in episode 9.

ANDREW

Again!?

NORMAN

Have we heard back from Mark at Palladium?

DEREK

They liked the revisions. They're testing it with live players now.

NORMAN

Awesome!

ANDREW

I'm not used to you talking so much Norman! Anne has had a positive effect on you.

NORMAN

Affirmative.

Ernie chimes in.

ERNIE

Hey guys.

DEREK, ANDREW, AND NORMAN

(cheerfully)

Hey Ernie.

ERNIE

I thought the drum line would hate me for what we did to Stacy, but instead, these past few weeks I'm like the coolest guy ever!

DEREK

Cool.

ERNIE

We had a field show today and everybody wanted to sit next to me on the bus!

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW

Good for you Ernie.

ERNIE

Everybody was asking how I knew you guys. The more people see this video, the better it'll get.

DEREK

Really?

ERNIE

Yeah, I'm totally popular now. You guys will be like rock stars. All you've got to do is tell people that you did the video.

NORMAN

I don't know how to be popular.

ERNIE

You just do whatever you do now, but you're cool when you do it.

DEREK

I don't know...

(cont'd)

And the girls love me. This one chick--

ANDREW

Girls!?

DEREK

Aw man!

They laugh.

FADE OUT