

FADE IN:

EXT. SCHOOL ROOFTOP - DAY

A school bell RINGS in a high school, indicating that the school day is starting. A teenage boy in a school uniform is standing on the edge of the roof. His name is JACKSON WU. There is an open BACKPACK behind him with scattered SCHOOL UTENSILS and PAPERS on the ground. He has relatively excellent grades, but there are red marks on the English-related PAPERS that show that he is failing in the subject. Jackson steps forward and falls off.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

A teenage boy, DANIEL CHOI, is walking through the hall with a MATH TEXTBOOK clenched in his hands, pouring over it exasperatedly. He looks exhausted with dark circles under his eyes and a slow gait. The other STUDENTS bump into him as they hurry by, laughing with their friends, but he pays no mind to them.

DANIEL (V.O.)

How can a human being live under such regimented, stress-inducing system of constant competition and graded success and still laugh and joke around? How is it even possible? I haven't slept in the last week. I can't sleep. There is too much to learn, so much to memorize. I can't-I can't do this for much longer. I'll collapse. I'll die. How are they doing this? How are they surviving like this?

The students around Daniel begin to surround him with blank, eerie expressions. Daniel's textbook falls out of his fingers with a THUMP, and he begins to hyperventilate.

DANIEL (V.O. CONT'D)

Are these people even human?

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

A class of STUDENTS is studiously taking notes, but one seat at the front is empty. The TEACHER is lecturing, and writing on the chalkboard, which is filled with complex syntax and morphological derivation structures. One corner of the BOARD states the order of the EXAM SCHEDULE for each day of the school week: English, philosophy, physical education, science, and math.

TEACHER

That's all. Final Exams start next week. While the semester is almost over, don't slack off now. Make sure to study through the weekend. Think of it as the final stretch before break. Good luck!

Daniel sits in the seat nearest to the middle of the WINDOW, slouching over as he takes notes in an ENGLISH NOTEBOOK with a sharp focus despite his exhaustion. His PEN suddenly stops. He slowly sits up straighter, setting his PEN down with a look of confusion on his face.

DANIEL (V.O.)

Am I human?

JACKSON'S BODY falls straight down from outside the window with an audible THUMP.

INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE/DINING ROOM - EVENING

DANIEL'S FAMILY is sitting in a lavish, well-furnished dining room with flamboyant, expensive ornaments around them. They sit around a rectangular table that is topped with fancy platters and silverware. They are having CHICKEN, RICE, AND VEGETABLES for dinner.

Daniel's brother, SHAUN, a five year old boy, is gently playing with a small TOY LION, feeding it a spoon full of rice. Daniel's mother, MRS. CHOI, is an elegant lady who is delicately eating. Daniel's father, MR. CHOI, a slick business man in a sharp suit, sets his wine glass down.

MR. CHOI

(in a stern voice)

Daniel, make sure you keep your grades up.

Daniel nods slightly with his head down. His plate is devoid of any of the chicken. He lightly pierces a CARROT with his fork.

MR. CHOI (CONT'D)

I've heard that your classmate, that Jack kid, was going through a rough time, and it's been difficult for you. But see it this way: this is your chance. It's perfect timing actually. He'll miss the exams. You work on your math grades now, and you'll be able to take his ranking by the end of the year.

(mutters)
Maybe I should hire a math tutor.

Daniel looks at his father with an expression of shock.

DANIEL
He was my friend.

Mr. Choi forces a grin at him.

MR. CHOI
He's not dead. Just in the hospital with a few broken bones. He'll be out for the week. But within that time, you can outscore him. Think of it this way-

Daniel stands right up, slamming the palms of his hands on the table, rattling it. The family stops eating to look at him.

DANIEL
(shouts exasperatedly)
He was my FRIEND!

Mr. Choi is furious and bangs his fist on the table.

MR. CHOI
(roars)
Are you stupid! Do you think there is a place for friends?! We don't live in a fair and peaceful society. We aren't civilized beings. Don't be a fool. This is just a dressed-up wild. There is no fairness, no rules but one: we're animals first and foremost.

DANIEL (V.O.)
We're animals.

MR. CHOI
We need to fight tooth and claw for survival, to the top of the food chain. We kill before we're killed and take their place.

Mr. Choi stands up from his chair and intensely stares at Daniel. They hold their gaze for an extended moment, and then Daniel sits back down, defeated.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Daniel is sitting at his school desk. His teacher is at the front, looking at his students seriously.

TEACHER (V.O.)

Despite the recent misfortune, exam week
will continue as scheduled.

Daniel picks up his PEN, and he begins to effortlessly fill out his TEST SHEET for an English test. The other students are regimentally filling out their own tests.

DANIEL (V.O.)

Kill. Verb. Animals. Noun, plural. Animals
kill... Dead. State of being. Dead, dead,
dead. Kill, kill, kill.

Daniel finishes the test quickly, and he looks around to see his classmates' faces morph into WILD ANIMALS (tigers, cougars, snakes, hippos, elephants, ect.) briefly but return back to normal. They are visibly stressed.

DANIEL (V.O. CONT'D)

Wild.

INT. DANIELS'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Daniel is studying at his desk late at night. He SIGHS and rubs his eyes. He gets up and slumps onto his bed. He stares at the ceiling, wide-eyed.

DANIEL (V.O.)

What. Am. I. What is my place?

INT. SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY

Sitting in a desk, Daniel flips through various philosophic ontology BOOKS. Daniel taps his PEN on his desk in thoughtful consideration. He grabs another BOOK off the shelf and the title reads "What is a human being?"

DANIEL (V.O.)

A mind that reasons, a spirit that
thrives. What is a human being, what is
his place? What sets him apart? What tames
him? Society? Laws? Tests? Constantly,
constantly, constantly needing to achieve,
to survive. What's the difference?

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Daniel is sitting in class with a blank stare, as the other students socialize during the break. The teacher is at her desk, going over the lesson plan quietly.

DANIEL (V.O.)
Who is grading my survival?

Daniel looks up and sees the teacher.

INT. TEACHER'S OFFICE - MIDDAY

Daniel is sitting on a chair in front of his teacher.

TEACHER
I'm sorry. I know this must be hard on you. It's hard on all of us. He was such an integral part of the class.

DANIEL (V.O.)
Liar. He never talked.

TEACHER (CONT'D)
However, while he is recovering, we can't just pause in our studies. We would be set back too far from the other classes. He wouldn't have wanted that for us.

DANIEL (V.O. CONT'D)
How would you know? When did you ever talk to him? To any of us?

TEACHER (CONT'D)
Do you see why we can't have an extension?

INT. OFFICE HALLWAY - MIDDAY

Daniel takes a few steps down the hallway, out of the teacher's office but stops just out of view from the office door window. There is a RING from inside of the office, and there are the sounds of SHUFFLING, as the teacher picks up the PHONE.

TEACHER (O.S.)
Hey, let me offload for a bit.
(pauses)
Shit. These kids have it easy. This kid didn't even die, and they act like it's all about them! Some other brat asked for a break. I mean, a break? Really? When was

my last break?! Such narcissistic little brats.

EXT. SCHOOL ROOFTOP - MIDDAY

Daniel stands on the roof of the school, near the edge where Jackson was.

DANIEL

No. I really can't see why.

He places his FOOT on the edge and then backs off.

EXT. STREET SHOP - MIDDAY (FLASHBACK)

A ten-year-old YOUNG DANIEL excitedly watches YOUNG JACKSON play the CLAW MACHINE that is outside of a local shop.

YOUNG DANIEL

You're so close! So close!

Jackson toggles the controls carefully.

YOUNG JACKSON

Just...just a little bit more to the left.

Jackson slams down on the grab BUTTON, and the CLAW reaches down and picks up a LION TOY, the same one that Shaun was playing with. The TOY drops through the slot. The boys CHEER, SHOUT, and jump around happily. Jackson hands the TOY to Daniel, who confusedly takes it.

YOUNG JACKSON

You have a brother now, right? You should give this to him as a present. Say it's from you, though.

Jackson smiles widely at Daniel, who considers the TOY carefully. Daniel returns the smile twofold.

DANIEL (V.O.)

This nice Jackson that lives only in my memories... has disappeared.

INT. JACKSON'S ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK CONT'D A FEW YEARS LATER)

Jackson, a teenager now, is studying in his pajamas. The lights are off in his room, save for one desk LAMP. Stacks of BOOKS and PAPERS fill his desk, threatening to fall off altogether. He taps at his CALCULATOR considerably. He

moves onto the ENGLISH HOMEWORK, scratching his head with a pained expression.

DANIEL (V.O.)

This pure and innocent Jackson is a human.

INT. JACKSON'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK CONT'D)

Jackson is studying, too, but he is more laid back. There is only ONE TEXTBOOK and a FEW PAPERS on his desk. He plays with his PENCIL, balancing it on his upper lip. He leans back in his CHAIR to maintain the balance of it, and he falls off of it.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY (FLASHBACK CONT'D)

Jackson worriedly looks at his REPORT CARD and then at the school BULLETIN, which has all the class rankings in the school. He is near the bottom of the list. Jackson unzips his backpack in a panic and pulls out a bunch of HOMEWORK PAPERS from it.

EXT. STREET - DAY (FLASHBACK CONT'D)

Jackson and Daniel are goofing around and laughing, talking happily. They pass by the CLAW MACHINE, the same as before, and play with it.

DANIEL (V.O.)

A human and my best friend...

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY (FLASHBACK CONT'D)

Daniel walks up to Jackson, who is clenching a mess of PAPERS in his hands. Daniel raises a HAND to greet him warmly, but he is ignored by him. Jackson abruptly turns and stalks down the hall with Daniel staring at his back sadly.

DANIEL (V.O.)

Has rejected me.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MIDDAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

Daniel stands across from Jackson with a VASE OF FLOWERS in his hands. Daniel is wearing his school BACKPACK. Jackson is in a hospital bed, wrapped in bandages and hooked up to a drip; his LEFT ARM and RIGHT LEG is in a CAST. There are a few open TEXTBOOKS on the foot of his bed. They stare at each other. Jackson massages his temples.

JACKSON

My parents are giving me such a hard time, saying that it was so stupid of me to do that. That I'll fall behind all of the other kids. I mean, what the hell.

(mirthlessly)

I guess my GPA will drop. They wouldn't like that, and you'll be at the top. You must be glad that it'll turn out that way. Your parents, so proud. Ugh...Did you bring my homework?

Daniel shuffles his feet and holds out the FLOWERS awkwardly.

DANIEL

You shouldn't be doing homework while you're still recovering.

JACKSON

I'll be on crutches in a few days. It wasn't even that bad. You should-should've given me your notes.

Daniel stares at him.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

(scoffs)

Fuck off! Why are you pretending to be a good friend, like it's for my own good if I rest? Maybe good for you! You did this on purpose, didn't you? Making me fall behind for your benefit!

(curses)

I can't believe this! I thought we were friends!

DANIEL

We haven't talked in years. Are we friends?

JACKSON

(laughs without humor)

That's right! We're not friends, you fucking dumbass loser!

Jackson throws his PILLOW at Daniel, yelling CURSES at him constantly, causing him to drop the FLOWERS. The VASE shatters and WATER spills everywhere. Jackson is throwing more of a tantrum, kicking his BLANKET off, balling it up,

and throwing it, too. He throws his TEXTBOOKS at Daniel, who is cowering against the wall.

JACKSON
(screams)
Just leave! LEAVE!

A NURSE enters quickly.

NURSE
What's going o-

Daniel pushes past her and out the DOOR. He hears GROWLS and looks back to see the BLACK PAW of a panther gash at the WALLS, gripping the DOOR FRAME, before the DOOR closes. Daniel takes an ENGLISH NOTEBOOK out of his BACKPACK, the same one he was writing in before exam week, placing it on the FLOOR.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

Daniel walks past the PEOPLE on the street and sees them morphing briefly into different WILD ANIMALS. A drunk, homeless man looks like a SLOTH, a business man looks like a LEOPARD, and a prostitute propositioning next to the road looks like a COUGAR. He stumbles away from each of them, trying to run. His legs aren't able to carry him well, as he slumps against the store fronts and light poles for balance.

DANIEL (V.O.)
Weak. Weak. I'm weak.

INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Shaun is playing with the LION TOY, running around the room and jumping across the furniture on all fours, imitating the form of a lion. He puts on a CAPE and LION MASK on. He GROWLS and dances around. Mrs. Choi laughs and picks him up, twirling around, and jokingly GROWLING, too.

Daniel enters the house and Shaun runs into him. He briefly sees a ream LION CUB face on Shaun's face.

MRS. CHOI
Hi, honey. After school tomorrow, can you take your brother out to the zoo? He wants to see the lion pen.

Daniel takes the LION TOY from Shaun. Pushing him aside, Daniel rushes to his room.

MRS. CHOI

Hey-

A DOOR SLAMS shut.

INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - EVENING

Daniel throws himself on the BED, throwing the LION TOY aside. He gets up, picking up the LION TOY, and goes inside of the BATHROOM.

INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE/BATHROOM - EVENING

Daniel places the TOY at the edge of the SINK. He splashes WATER on his face, rubbing it off harshly with his hands. He looks up and sees the EYES OF A LION look back at him in the MIRROR. He is startled and stumbles back, and his HUMAN FACE is back. He LAUGHS for a moment and then stops suddenly.

DANIEL (V.O.)

Weak.

EXT. SCHOOL TRACK FIELD - DAY

Daniel and the other students are running laps around the track. The P.E. TEACHER is taking the student's run time on his stop watch. Daniel is very out of breath and stumbles and falls on the grass. From the ground, he sees the faces of CHEETHAS on the students who continue to zip past him.

DANIEL (V.O.)

Weak. Humans are weak. So painfully weak.

Daniel passes out.

EXT. STREET - MIDDAY

Daniel is walking down the street. He stops a few feet away from the OLD CLAW MACHINE. There is some construction being done on the SHOP behind it. Daniel takes a plank of WOOD and smashes the CLAW MACHINE, shattering the GLASS in a fury.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Hey! What are you doing?!

Daniel drops the PLANK and sprints away. A large MAN runs after him. After a long length, he trips and falls, scratching the palms of his hands. He looks behind him, and it seems that he has lost his pursuer. Daniel laughs, rolling on the floor until he stares up at the dark sky from his back.

EXT. ZOO/LION PEN - MIDDAY

Shaun and Daniel are in front of the LION PEN. There are BBANDAGES on Daniel's hands. Shaun is excitedly pointing at the other ANIMALS, and Daniel just stares at a napping LION, seeing himself in its place.

DANIEL

(under his breath)

What makes us different from animals,
then?

Daniel imagines that all of the ZOO ANIMALS are let loose and are rampaging around the zoo. He hears the SCREAMS of the zoo VISITORS and sees them run around in fear. Shaun grabs his ARM, pulling him out of his reverie.

SHAUN

Danny, Danny! I want to see the monkeys
next.

EXT. ZOO/MONKEY ENCLOSURE - MIDDAY

Shaun is imitating the MONKEYS, making OOH and AHH sounds. Daniel is looking like he is dead inside.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY/IN FRONT OF THE SCIENCE WING - DAY

Daniel stands in the middle of the hall, looking at a MURAL of human evolution from apes.

DANIEL (V.O.)

Monkeys. Close. They are close
biologically-speaking. Much of our genetic
code is shared with apes. Evolutionarily,
they are our direct ancestors. But they
are considered more ANIMAL than humans.
Why? What is the difference? What makes me
different from an animal? What makes
humans different from them?

A pretty, petite GIRL passes him. She roughly pushes aside a MOUSEY-LOOKING GIRL to the ground, sneering at her. And

he sees an aggressive HIPPO morph briefly on the pretty girl's face.

DANIEL (V.O.)

Not much.

INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE/DINING ROOM - EVENING

Daniel's family is having dinner. Daniel's plate is devoid of any VEGETABLES and only has two slabs of the STEAK. He roughly stabs at the food with a fork and knife, chewing roughly.

MR. CHOI

(laughs)

I finally got that promotion. Serves that last guy right for not staying competitive. Ever since he got that second kid of his, he's been slacking off work. Asking for pay raises and whatnot, that idiot. He has to work for that kinda money. I only had to put a few bad words with the boss, and he got kicked off the team. Good riddance.

Daniel grabs the steak with his bare hands and gnaws at it violently with his teeth. The family pauses and stares at him, then they begin to do the same. They morph into LIONS that ravage the TABLE, knocking it over, pulling the table cloth and all the plates and silverware over onto the ground. The LION FAMILY continues to eat off the floor.

They morph back into HUMANS, still eating savagely.

DANIEL (V.O.)

Good riddance, humanity.

INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE/BATHROOM - MORNING

Daniel brushes his teeth and spits out the TOOTHPASTE, looking up at himself in the MIRROR. His eyes seem darker, his PUPILS dilated. He smiles arrogantly before wiping off the foam at the corner of his mouth. The LION TOY sits on the edge of the sink. It falls off and onto the floor.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

The classroom has completely morphed into one of ANIMALS at their desks, taking their MATH TEST. Every so often, there is a ROAR or GROWL from one ANIMAL STUDENT or another.

Daniel is the only human in the room. He taps his PENCIL against the table, clearly distressed. His test has a lot of blanks and scrawls on it. A lot of the numbers he had written are crossed out.

DANIEL (V.O.)

The world is made of animals, a food chain where the bottom wastes away to be ripped apart by the top. So helpless, so pitiful.

Daniel stretches his JAW, GROWLING in a deep, guttural voice. He is heaving more and more heavily.

DANIEL (V.O. CONT'D)

In this world, I have become a beast.

He stands up slowly and then quickly picks up his TABLE and throws it across the room at the CHALK BOARD, CRASHING loudly. He begins SCREAMING and GROWLING, kicking things around and throwing CHAIRS. The HUMAN STUDENTS are shocked and they all exit the classroom in a panicked hurry, SCREAMING.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

A stream of ANIMALS rushes out of the classroom.

EXT. SCHOOL LAWN - DAY

Jackson, who is on CRUTCHES with one CASTED LEFT LEG walks across the lawn and looks up when he hears a YELL. He sees Daniel screaming and rampaging from the second floor WINDOW of the classroom. He tilts his head, confused.

JACKSON

What the hell?

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Daniel sits on his knees, surrounded by a MESS of overturned desks, chairs, and paper. It is utter carnage. Jackson enters the room, and he looks around, taking in the mess with a careful expression.

JACKSON

So, I'm guessing the test didn't go well.

Jackson shuffles over and rifles through the stuff on the ground for a moment and picks up Daniel's TEST PAPER. He looks at it.

JACKSON

You got this wrong. You solve for the derivative before going for X. Here, in this one, you have to make a frequency table, and graph the cumulative frequency-

Daniel stares ahead.

DANIEL

(mutters)

We are animals.

JACKSON

(nods undeterred)

Yeah. Biologically, yeah.

DANIEL

(mutters)

We are animals.

Having enough, Jackson rolls up the TEST and hits him across the head.

JACKSON

What animal does calculus?!

Daniel GROWLS and tackles Jackson to the ground, who starts punching him. They roll around the ground, fighting. They morph into a LION and a BLACK PANTHER, snapping and GROWLING at each other. They come back to being HUMANS.

DANIEL

(roars)

We are animals! WE ARE ANIMALS!

JACKSON

Any animal would be smarter than you, dumbass!

Jackson grabs a CHAIR and slams it on Daniel repeatedly until Daniel is in the fetal position on the ground, not throwing punches and kicks back. Jackson throws the CHAIR aside, wincing as he leans on his LEFT CASTED LEG.

JACKSON

Shit. Why were we friends? You're so damn annoying! How did I put up with you?!

Daniel, too tired to move, unwinds from the fetal position and lies on his back for a moment. Jackson stumbles over

and offers Daniel his HAND. Daniel stares at Jackson's LEFT CASTED LEG for a moment.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MIDDAY (FLASHBACK TO WHEN DANIEL VISITED JACKSON IN THE HOSPITAL)

Daniel looks at Jackson, who is in the hospital bed. His RIGHT LEG is actually the one that's supposed to be in a CAST.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

Daniel takes Jackson's HAND and stands. They look at each other in disbelief, CHUCKLING a little.

The SECURITY GUARD rushes in with the teacher. The two slowly raise both of their hands up.

INT. OFFICE HALLWAY - DAY

Jackson waits outside the office, hearing Daniel get REPRIMANDED by the teacher. He sits on the floor and against the wall. He works on Daniel's TEST, filling it out with the correct answers.

EXT. SCHOOL ROOFTOP - MIDDAY

Jackson joins Daniel from where he is standing. He waves his hand, forcing a smile, but Daniel doesn't respond. There are newly erected, METAL FENCE PANELS all around the edges of the roof, akin to a cage. Daniel grips the FENCE with his hands, shaking it slightly.

JACKSON

Do you still think we're some kind of apex predator?

Daniel is silent, as he continues to stare forward into the horizon.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

What would I be anyway? A fish?

DANIEL

(monotone)

Panther.

JACKSON

Hmm?

DANIEL
Panther. A black panther.

JACKSON
(nods approvingly)
Really? Cool. You?

DANIEL
A lion.

JACKSON
That's a bit of a stretch.

Jackson hands back Daniel's TEST, complete with neatly-written, correct answers. This catches Daniel's attention, and he flips through it, amazed.

JACKSON
We'll retake the math test next Monday.
It'll be the same one, I asked the teacher
after the-
(waves hand)
You know. Memorize these answers, and
you'll get a perfect score during the
retake.

Daniel stares at him in awe.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
From now on, I'll do all your math
homework, and tutor you for every upcoming
test. In return, you'll do the same for me
in English.
(pauses for a moment)
I'll feed you my meat scraps, if you
promise to do the same for me. Good?

Jackson holds out his HAND expectantly. Daniel stares at the open palm for a moment, considering it, before taking it with his own.

DANIEL
Good.

Jackson smiles widely and puts an arm around Daniel's shoulder.

The final school bell RINGS from the speakers, as the school day is finished. The other students walk out of the school. Daniel and Jackson both look down as the students

disperse out of the school, like predators looking at their prey.

Jackson gives Daniel a side glance.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK TO EARLIER IN THE DAY)

Jackson is sitting in his hospital bed, but he looks considerably better health-wise. His CASTS are gone, he is off the drip, and he is in his school uniform. His right leg is still in a CAST. A nurse comes in to remove it. In front of him is Daniel's ENGLISH NOTEBOOK.

NURSE

Good thing there were only hairline fractures. Your bones healed so quickly! Seriously, kids these days are like monsters.

(wistfully)

Ah, it's so nice being so young and healthy. I'm jealous.

Jackson nods silently and flips to the beginning of the NOTEBOOK to find detailed notes on slightly worn pages.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK TO ONE YEAR AGO)

Jackson runs into the classroom in a panic, looking unkempt. It is in the middle of the class period and English lecture, and the entire CLASS stares at him.

TEACHER

Playing games all night? Just take your seat.

The teacher continues lecturing. Jackson shakes his head, annoyed, and slumps down in his seat. He sits through the whole period with a blank look.

The end of the period bell RINGS, and the students pack up and leave. Jackson continues to sit there, unmoving. Daniel gets up, packing his own things but the ENGLISH NOTEBOOK. He swiftly walks past Jackson's DESK, dropping it off without looking back and exits the classroom.

Jackson opens the NOTEBOOK and sees the detailed notes.

JACKSON (V.O.)

Every time.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK TO A WEEK OR SO BEFORE JACKSON JUMPS OF THE ROOF)

English class is well underway and Jackson is taking notes. He looks over at Daniel, and he is sleeping through the class.

JACKSON (V.O.)
It happens every time.

MONTAGE

-Jackson leaves the ENGLISH NOTEBOOK in the DESK after a test.

-Jackson checks the DESK, and it's gone.

-Jackson runs into class.

-Daniel briskly drops off the same ENGLISH NOTEBOOK on his way out with new notes.

-The NOTEBOOK drops on his DESK every day for the week, and Daniel is looking more and more worn each day.

-Daniel begins to forget assignments and is falling behind; he searches through his backpack with a worried expression and slumps back, giving up.

BACK TO SCENE

JACKSON (V.O. CONT'D)
Every time I'm late or miss a class...
There it is.

Jackson moves his arm and notes, and there is the ENGLISH NOTEBOOK underneath. Daniel snores and adjusts his sleeping position.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY (FLASHBACK TO A DAY BEFORE JACKSON JUMPS OFF THE ROOF)

Jackson stares at the school BULLETIN with the class rankings. He sees that Daniel is at first place, and he is at second. The teacher comes by and posts the NEW RANKINGS. This time their places are switched.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK CONT'D)

Jackson watches Daniel doze off during math class, as he seriously tries to listen to the teacher's lecture.

INT. DANIEL'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK CONT'D)

Daniel is studying at his desk with several MATH TEXTBOOKS splayed open and math PAPERS everywhere. He is agitated.

EXT. SCHOOL ROOFTOP - DAY (FLASHBACK TO MOMENTS BEFORE JACKSON JUMPS OFF THE ROOFTOP)

Jackson is standing on the edge of the rooftop from the beginning of the play.

JACKSON (V.O.)
It's not fair.

He is just about to take a step off.

EXT. SCHOOL LAWN - DAY (FLASHBACK CONT'D)

Two STUDENTS in gym clothes are carrying a large FOAM MAT across the lawn.

STUDENT 1
This is so stupid. Why is this so heavy?!

STUDENT 2
Shut up, man. At least we got out of running laps. Raise it higher on your end! I'm slip-

Jackson falls on top of the MAT, landing on his back and staring up at the sky with a dazed expression.

JACKSON
(gasping)
Ev-every time. He wins every time. It's not fair.

The two students stare at him in awe.

STUDENT 2
Dude, are you okay?!

STUDENT 1
Oh my God. Is he dead?!

Student 1 looks up and around him.

STUDENT 1 (CONT'D)
Where did he come from?!

Jackson's closes his eyes and SCREAMS animalistically, writhing in pain. The students drop the MAT and back away.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK TO JACKSON BEING IN THE HOSPITAL)

Jackson is in his CASTS, lying in the hospital bed with an empty expression. JACKSON'S PARENTS are standing at the foot of his bed with angry expressions. They are dressed in SHABBY COTHEs and look haggard.

JACKSON'S MOTHER

Ugh, such a useless child! We should've had a girl!

JACKSON'S FATHER

Damn hospital bills! Do you know how much this will cost! If you were planning on doing something like this, you should've just died!

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY (FLASHBACK TO THE DAY OF DANIEL'S RAMPAGE)

The hallway is empty. Jackson stares at the school BULLETIN to see that the new rankings have not changed in terms of his and Daniel's rankings; Jackson is in first place and Daniel is in second. Jackson leans on his CRUTCHES, which are both placed in front of him with his chin resting on top of it, showing that his legs are perfectly fine.

JACKSON

Die, huh? I don't really want to, Dad. Not anymore now that I'm finally here.

A mass of students run out of a classroom up the hall, SCREAMING. Daniel's SCREAMING can be heard from inside the classroom. Jackson stays still where he is, staring at the rankings, as the other students run past him.

EXT. SCHOOL ROOFTOP - MIDDAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

Jackson and Daniel are still on the rooftop, watching the other students leave. Jackson looks away from Daniel.

JACKSON (V.O.)

It's kill or be killed, right? That's the world we live in. It's just for survival. To live, I just need to take out the top, so don't think of me too harshly later on.

Jackson smiles eerily.

FADE OUT:

THE END