

THE WONDER YEARS

"Heart of Darkness"

by

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Production Script

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ACT ONE

1 BLACKNESS...

OR SO IT SEEMS.

MUSIC UP: DOORS "RIDERS ON THE STORM." The sound of thunder and rain: dark-sounding music.

NARRATOR

As seventh grade wore on, I began to have nightmares.

As our eyes adjust, we realize we've actually

FADED INTO

A LONG NARROW DARK CAVE

Kevin moves very slowly, fearfully through the cave. WE THINK WE MIGHT SEE PAUL AND WINNIE beside him. BUT IT'S TOO DARK TO BE SURE...

NARRATOR

I'm walking into sort of a cave...a long dark tunnel...I think Paul and Winnie are with me...

Kevin looks around...

NARRATOR

But then they're not -- I'm all alone. I don't know why I'm going into the cave -- I'm terrified -- but I just know I have to keep going. Deeper and deeper. So deep that it's like I can't even remember what the daylight is like anymore...

Kevin rounds a corner. A CRACK OF LIGHT appears.

NARRATOR

But then I see a light...a tiny crack of light down near the floor.. It's a door-- I open it-- and suddenly--

SMASH TO:

2 INT. MATH CLASS - GARISHLY DAY

An almost blinding lightness, through which we see Kevin's math class.

NARRATOR

I'm in second period math class.

2 (cont.)

KEVIN

squinting, frozen, horrified. He's in bright red footsie pajamas.

NARRATOR

In pajamas. With feet.

THE CLASS

points and howls with laughter.

3 INT. KEVIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

3

Kevin bolts upright in bed, cold sweat on his brow. He stares into the darkness, panting, as shadows play across his face and a restless wind blows at the curtains.

NARRATOR

I guess I was under a lot of stress.

4 EXT. SCHOOL - MORNING

4

Bright sunlight. Busses pull up, kids pour into the school.

NARRATOR

There are a lot of things about junior high life that might seem simple to an outsider. But they're not. Take the fifteen minutes before homeroom every morning.

5 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

5

Noisy, busy, before homeroom. Paul waits as Kevin closes his locker and turns around.

NARRATOR

What you do with those fifteen minutes says pretty much everything there is to say about you as a human being.

They look at each other for a second, then both look quickly at the ground, and then begin to look around the hallway the way a single diner looks around a restaurant.

NARRATOR

If you were cool, you had places to go, people to see...

3 (CONT.)

ANGLE ON COOL KIDS

chatting, laughing, wrestling affectionately. A couple of pom-pom girls practice a routine. Pairs of young lovers stand around or move down the hall, hands in each others' back pockets.

NARRATOR

And if you weren't...

ANGLE ON KEVIN AND PAUL

shifting from foot to foot, as if self-consciousness were poison ivy...

PAUL

(after a beat)

Do you wanna stand or do you wanna walk around?

KEVIN

What did we do yesterday?

PAUL

We walked around for a while, then we stood.

KEVIN

Well...let's stand around for a while, then we'll walk.

NARRATOR

The crucial thing was never to let the conversation die. Then you'd look like two guys with nothing to do.

TWO SHOT

These are very clearly two guys with nothing to do. Paul starts to hum, "Dum-de-dum-dum..."

GIRL (O.S.)

Hi, you guys.

PAUL

(incredibly relieved)

Winnie! Hi!

Kevin tries to look impassive.

PAUL

Kevin, look! It's Winnie!

3 (cont.)

NARRATOR

It was Winnie. all right. Winnie. who  
had dumped me. stomped on my heart.  
trampled my soul. left me in the dust  
for a lousy eighth grader named Kirk  
McCray. But I had my dignity. I  
wouldn't let it snow.

KEVIN

(to Winnie)

Hi.

WINNIE

Hi.

Now the three of them look around. We feel the tension between  
Winnie and Kevin.

WINNIE

(to Kevin)

Did you. um...have a good weekend?

NARRATOR

Okay, now: be carefree. yet restrained;  
aloof, yet available at the drop of a hat.

KEVIN

Yeah. Sure. It was fine.

NARRATOR

Good. good...

WINNIE

So...you guys wanna walk around?

NARRATOR

Okay, steady, boy, steady...

KEVIN

(sudden; bitter)

Where's Kirk? Don't you want to  
walk around with him?

NARRATOR

Oh, nice going. Very smooth.

WINNIE

(earnest; worried)

You guys are still my friends.

KEVIN

(laughing it off)

Oh, I know. I was just kidding.

3 (cont.)

5.

GIRL (O.S.)

Hey, Winnie!

They stop, look.

THEIR POV

A group of good-looking, well-dressed -- let's face it, cool -- seventh and eighth graders. Kirk stands to one side with another good-looking guy. A pretty girl exchanges a conspiratorial smile with them and waves Winnie over.

GIRL

Hey, Winnie, come over here. I think Kirk wants to tell you something!

The girl and a couple of her pretty friends double over in giggles. Kirk is a little embarrassed, but smiles at Winnie. He's clearly in love.

WINNIE

can't help beaming back at him. But then she looks to Kevin and Paul, hesitates.

GIRL

Winnie!

KEVIN

is dying, but trying to hide it.

KEVIN

I think you better go over there or she's gonna pop a vein in her head or something. We wouldn't want that to happen.

WINNIE

Yeah... I guess I'll see you guys later.

KEVIN

Yeah. Later.

Winnie looks at Kevin and Paul one more time, then heads off. The giggling girls immediately surround her, and Winnie is immediately giggling with them. Kirk and his buddy both head over. The buddy drops to his knees as though wildly in love with Winnie; Kirk swats him, then, smiling, puts his arm proprietarily around Winnie.

3. Scene 1:

NARRATOR

And that's when it hit me. This thing was bigger than Kirk McCray. Our Winnie was ascending like an angel into junior high heaven, and Paul and I were two lost souls forever locked outside the gates. Something we couldn't name or control was coming between us.

Winnie all but vanishes in the crowd of good-looking boys and girls.

NARRATOR

Winnie was becoming a cool kid.

WE MOVE IN ON PAUL AND KEVIN'S FORLORN FACES...

WE PRELAP SOUND:

GARY (O.S.)

Pssst...What'd you put for number one?

5 INT. MATH CLASS - DAY

6

CLOSE ON GARY,

a sort of gamey-looking, skinny, tough kid in a black Jimi Hendrix t-shirt and an army jacket.

NARRATOR

And when the Devil smells a lost soul, that's when he makes his move.

WIDER ANGLE REVEALS a math quiz underway. Gary is leaning over the back of his chair onto Paul's desk and directing his question to Paul. Kevin sits across from them in the next aisle.

MRS. RITVO sits at her desk, occasionally looking up to glower at her charges.

PAUL

(between clenched teeth)  
No way! Get outta here!

GARY

Come on, man, don't be such a pussy.

Paul shoots a petrified look at Ritvo.

PAUL

Get outta here!

Kevin is watching. Gary follows Paul's gaze to Ritvo, smirks.

(cont.)

GARY

Don't worry about it -- the old  
weedbag can't even hear herself fart.  
(reaching for Paul's quiz)  
Just lemme--

Paul pulls his paper away and shields it with his arms and body.

PAUL

(slowly; firmly;  
between clenched teeth)  
Forget it, you jerk!

Gary gives him a totally disgusted look.

NARRATOR

Gary Cosay. You know the type. The  
kind of guy who, at the tender age  
of twelve and a half, looks like he  
shouldn't come out by day.

GARY

(turning to Kevin)  
Hey, man, wha'd you get for number  
one?

Kevin and Paul exchange a look. Paul rolls his eyes.

NARRATOR

What a joker. This guy didn't give up.

KEVIN

X-7.

Paul's mouth drops open. He looks between Kevin and Gary, trying  
to figure this out.

GARY

(to Paul; indicating Kevin)  
See? Did he burst into flames?

Gary writes the answer on his paper, glances casually at Ritvo.

NARRATOR

What can I say? It just seemed like  
the thing to do at the time. And look,  
it happened once -- let's not make a  
huge deal out of it.

GARY

(back to Kevin)  
Wha'd you get for two?

Kevin checks Ritvo.

KEVIN

Y is greater than or equal to 14.

GARY

(writing; then)

Great minds think alike. That's what I got.

PAUL

Kevin, are you crazy?!

Gary glances at Ritvo, then reaches over for Kevin's quiz paper. Kevin hesitates a second then, to Paul's horror, hands it to him.

PAUL

You're gonna get caught!

Kevin seems to see something o.s., frowns a little.

KEVIN

(quickly)

Just forget it, Paul.

PAUL

Forget it?! What do you mean, for--

KEVIN

(more furtively)

Paul.

RITVO SUDDENLY APPEARS BEHIND PAUL, seen by everyone except him.

PAUL

(whispering fiercely)

Kevin, Ritvo's gonna nail you! She's not as stupid as she looks you know!?

MRS. RITVO

Thank you, Mr. Pfeiffer.

Kevin's head drops. Gary shakes his head, "bummer." Paul senses the presence behind him, slowly turns.

MRS. RITVO'S POV

PAUL offers a hopeful smile.

PAUL

You're welcome?

Clean-cut Kevin and Paul sit next to Gary and the rest of the future axe-killers of America. Paul looks petrified.

(cont.)

NARRATOR

Detention. Paul and I were a tad out of our element. My hunch was that one or two of our colleagues were repeat offenders.

KEVIN'S POV

A few of the guys carve things into the desks or into their arms: a few are looking at Kevin dubiously, a few suspiciously.

NARRATOR

I felt like Dennis the Menace on a chain gang with Lee Harvey Oswald and the Boston Strangler.

PAUL

(to Gary; bitter; scared)

I-- I thought you said she couldn't hear herself fart.

GARY

Yeah, well I guess you talk louder than she farts.

PAUL

I--

(sneezing)

I-- just can't believe I'm in detention. My mother's gonna kill me.

GARY

Relax, man, your mother's never gonna find out.

PAUL

Oh, yeah, right.

(waving a piece of paper)

She's just gonna sign my detention slip and forget to look at it.

GARY

(grabbing it; nonchalant)

What's her first name, man?

Paul is incredulous, speechless.

KEVIN

Ida.

GARY

(signing; with a flourish)

Ida Pfeiffer.

(handing it back)

Life's not that hard, man. Take it easy.

7 (cont.)

Kevin thinks a moment...then hands Gary his detention slip.

KEVIN

Norma.

Paul watches, astounded as Gary signs and returns.

PAUL

You can't just do that!

GARY

Why not?

Paul looks from Gary to Kevin. Kevin looks from Paul to Gary.

NARRATOR

Paul was right. What was I thinking?  
Cheating in class? Forging my  
mother's name? This wasn't me!

KEVIN

(to Paul; "casually")  
Yeah, why not?

Gary smiles smugly, holds out his hand for a "give me five."

KEVIN

looks from Gary's waiting hand to Gary's cocky smile, then slowly  
breaks into a smug -- if slightly apprehensive -- smile of his  
own. slaps Gary five, then gets a return five from Gary.

Paul looks at Kevin like he's looking at a pod person.

3 INT. ARNOLD KITCHEN - EARLY EVENING

8

It's getting dark outside. NEWS ON THE TV: RICHARD NIXON on the  
campaign trail. Norma prepares dinner. Wayne sits at the table  
doing some homework.

NARRATOR

Once evil enters the heart of a child,  
it quickly takes root and blossoms.

Kevin comes in the back door, tries to casually pass by  
unnoticed.

NORMA

Kevin, it's almost dark out. Where  
have you been?

During the following, Kevin goes to the closet, pulls out a  
cookie, thinks...notices Wayne watching with a sly grin.

NARRATOR

Before you know it, you're avoiding  
the truth like a candidate at a  
presidential debate.

KEVIN

It's not dark out.

Norma seems to consider, peers out the window at the sky.  
Norma suddenly turns and puts her hands on her hips.

NORMA

Kevin, it's a quarter after five.  
School ends at three-fifteen. Where  
have you been?

Kevin looks worried.

KEVIN

School ends at three-twenty.

WAYNE

(sharply; as "dad")  
Kevin, your mother is asking you a  
simple question. Perhaps she could  
have a simple answer.

NARRATOR

Ooh. A young Ted Koppel. I hate that.

Kevin glares at Wayne; turns to Norma.

KEVIN

(shrugging; casually)  
I was with Paul.

NARRATOR

That's good! That's good! Because that's  
completely one hundred percent true.

NORMA

Doing what?

KEVIN

("what a preposterous question")  
I don't know, mom. Just talking and  
stuff.

Kevin slips out of the kitchen. On Norma's look...

PRELAP: "RIDERS ON THE STORM."

9 INT. LONG NARROW DARK CAVE 9

NARRATOR

That night I had another nightmare...

WE SEE what the narrator describes.

NARRATOR

I'm back in the cave... I can't see a thing, it's total blackness... I take a step -- and then suddenly I'm falling...

BLACK WALLS rush by, faster and faster...

NARRATOR

I try to grab on to anything I can. but there's nothing there... I just keep falling and falling... and then finally I hit something! I crash right through!

CRASHING SOUND. BLINDING LIGHT.

NARRATOR

Math class again.

10 KEVIN 10

in jockey shorts and t-shirt, lands with a bump on Mrs. Ritvo's desk. He looks around wildly.

KEVIN'S POV

Everyone points and laughs.

11 INT. KEVIN'S BEDROOM -NIGHT 11

Kevin jerks awake. bolts up, stares into the darkness to get his bearings.

A STIFF WIND BLOWS through the room. Kevin crosses to the window and pulls it down hard. At the INSTANT IT'S ABOUT TO SLAM SHUT,

SMASH TO:

12 INT. HALLWAY - BRIGHT. BRIGHT DAY 12

Before homeroom. Kevin and Paul hang out by Kevin's locker, staring at something o.s.

PAUL

(off the o.s. thing)

You know what it is? It's the contacts. Ever since she got contacts, she thinks she's so cool. She's turned into a real snob.

12 (cont.)

Kevin doesn't say anything, just keeps staring.

THEIR POV

WINNIE hangs out with Kirk and the cool kids by the water fountain.

PAUL

You know when my mother took me to get contacts, and I found out I'm allergic to them? Well, now I'm glad. I'd much rather wear glasses and be a nice person than wear contacts and be a snob.

Kevin is still staring at Winnie, not really listening to Paul.

PAUL

I can't believe she thinks she's better than somebody just because--

KEVIN

Who cares what she thinks, Paul?

As Kevin turns to give him a look, his eye is caught by something behind Paul.

KEVIN'S POV

Gary emerges from the boys room in a billow of smoke. He stops, exhales, blows a few smoke rings -- then notices Kevin and smoothly acknowledges with a point of his finger. He heads over.

NARRATOR

Yeah, who cared? So what if Winnie was making new friends. We were making new friends, too.

GARY

(to Kevin)

Hey, man, can you do me a favor?

KEVIN

Sure, what?

Gary pulls a brown paper bag from his fatigue jacket pocket and hands it to Kevin.

GARY

Could you just keep this in your locker 'till lunch?

Paul, tries to signal Kevin. "No," every way he can without being obvious -- he shakes his head frantically, waves his hands.

KEVIN

Sure. no sweat.

Paul sags as Kevin takes it and starts opening his locker.

PAUL

(suspicious)

What is it?

GARY

Hey, you're paranoid. man, you know that?

(to Kevin)

It's just some stuff I need for Friday night. You know, sometimes I just crash out in the woods all night. My old lady's always hasslin' me, sometimes I just have to get away.

KEVIN

Yeah. I know what you mean.

PAUL

You do?

KEVIN

Yeah, my old lady's the same way.

As Paul mouths the words "Old lady?" in disbelief...

GARY

Yeah.

(beat)

Hey, look, if you guys wanna come. man, that's cool.

PAUL

No, thanks.

KEVIN

Yeah, sure.

Paul gives Kevin a long look.

PAUL

(sotto, to Kevin)

Yeah, like my mother's just gonna let me sleep out in the woods.

KEVIN

Just tell her you're sleeping over at my house.

Paul obviously thinks this is a bad idea.

KEVIN

Don't be so paranoid, Paul.

NARRATOR

Joh. turning a twelve-year-old's sense of manhood against his sense of intelligence. Talk about a cheap trick.

PAUL

(completely against his better judgment)

Okay.

NARRATOR

Cheap, but dependable.

Gary holds out his hand for Kevin to give him five. Then he turns to Paul and waits for a slap. Paul looks like a man being forced to tie his own noose. slowly looks at Kevin, then reluctantly slaps five and waits for the return. Gary slaps him on the face.

GARY

Later.

Gary heads off. Paul gives Kevin a long, questioning look. Kevin meets his eyes for a second, then starts off.

KEVIN

Come on, let's walk around for a while.

Paul follows, shaking his head.

NARRATOR

I could tell Paul was wondering why I wanted to do it, why I was acting this way, why I even liked this guy. The truth is, if he had asked me straight out, I wouldn't have been able to answer him.

They pass Winnie's group, just as she is heading off. She stops in front of Kevin.

WINNIE

(friendly smile)

Hi, you guys.

KEVIN

(passing around her; barely glancing up)

Oh, hi.

WE HOLD on Winnie's face as Kevin and Paul move off behind her down the hall.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

13 BLACKNESS...

13

Or so it seems.

MUSIC UP: DOORS OR NEW TUNEWe have already FADED INTO:THE LONG DARK CAVE

We can vaguely make out Kevin struggling to carry Winnie through the dark cave.

NARRATOR

The night before the campout I had  
 another dream. I'm carrying Winnie  
 through the cave...She's in great  
 pain-- I think her leg is broken...  
 I've got to get her to help...

We see the CRACK OF LIGHT.

NARRATOR

Then I see the crack of light-- I  
 race for the door-- open it--

14 INT. MATH CLASS - BRIGHT, BRIGHT DAY

14

Again Kevin's math class points and laughs at Kevin.

CLOSE ON KEVIN

KEVIN

(frantically)

You've got to help us! Her leg! I  
 think it's broken!

THE CLASS continues to point and laugh.

A WIDER SHOT OF KEVIN as he realizes that what he is holding in his arms is not Winnie, but a GIANT STUFFED PURPLE RABBIT.

15 INT. KEVIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

15

Kevin bolts awake in bed, and JUST AS HE REACHES A SITTING POSITION, WE...

SMASH TO:16 INT. ARNOLD KITCHEN - DAY

16

NORMA

So, who's this Gary character?

16 (cont.)

17.

Late afternoon bright light streams through the window. Norma helps Kevin and Paul make sandwiches.

KEVIN  
Just a kid at school.

Norma gives him a skeptical glance.

KEVIN  
Right Paul?

PAUL  
Yeah, just a kid at school.

NORMA  
How do you know him?

Kevin and Paul exchange a look.

KEVIN  
From school.

Norma gives him a look.

KEVIN  
He's in our math class.

Beat.

NORMA  
Is he a good student?

Another look between Kevin and Paul.

KEVIN  
(shrugging)  
I think he got the same grade I did  
on the last quiz.

Paul looks at Kevin and rolls his eyes.

NORMA  
Well, I think I'll just call this  
Gary's mother and mak--

KEVIN  
(pleading)  
Mo-omm.

Norma looks at him, waits.

NARRATOR

Well, I'd reached a fork in the flatware of childhood. I could march up the road of goodness and light, or I could slither down the slope of darkness and evil.

KEVIN

We're gonna be right behind his house and his mother's gonna be right there the whole time.

Norma still looks undecided.

NARRATOR

Or I could just jump off a cliff straight into hell.

KEVIN

(hurt; writing)

Go ahead, here's the number. call her if you want. I mean, what's the difference if you trust me or not.

Norma, a little guilty, looks at the paper, at Kevin.

OVER KEVIN'S slightly guilty face, PRELAP SOUND: of the night, crickets, frogs, a crackling campfire.

17

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

17

It's dark except for a small campfire. Paul and Kevin sit on the ground. Paul looks uneasy.

PAUL

God, I hope my mother doesn't call your mother.

KEVIN

She won't.

PAUL

I hope your mother doesn't call Gary's mother.

KEVIN

She won't.

PAUL

I hope Gary's mother doesn't--

KEVIN

Paul!!

Somebody pops through the bushes with a flashlight.

17 (cont.)

GARY

Hey, man, sorry I'm late. I had to get some stuff.

KEVIN

No problem. We brought some stuff, too.

GARY

Great. What you got?

As Kevin and Paul start rummaging in their bags, Gary calmly pulls about four cartons of Marlboros out of his.

KEVIN

Lots of good stuff. Marshmallows. Kool-Aid, and I think there's some Twinkies in here...

He looks up, sees the cigarettes, blanches.

PAUL

I got a snake-bite kit, too. Just in case.

Kevin elbows Paul, who looks up and also blanches.

GARY

(sighing; resigned)

I can see it's going to be up to me to liven you guys up a little.

Gary puts an early model cassette player on the ground and pushes on:

THE DOORS. CREAM. JEFFERSON AIRPLANE. whatever...

Gary opens one of the packs of cigarettes and lights up. He takes a deep drag. Kevin and Paul watch, a little out of their league.

NARRATOR

All right, I'd been into this so far, but this was ridiculous. I mean, what did this kid plan to do -- smoke nine hundred cigarettes in three hours?

(narrator snorts derisively)

If he thought it made him look tough or something, he was mistaken. I mean, smoking cigarettes just proves you're stupid. It was pathetic.

KEVIN

(cool)

Got an extra butt?

Gary hands him one. Paul gives Kevin a look.

KEVIN  
(off Paul's look)  
It relaxes me.

Gary offers Paul one.

PAUL  
No, thanks. I don't smoke.

Gary pulls a 16-OZ. can of beer out of the bag, hands it to Paul.

GARY  
You can start on the brew, Pfeiffer.  
Unless you'd rather have Kool-Aid.

Paul takes the can holding it at arm's-length, and looks at it as if it's from another planet.. Paul looks to Kevin, who looks from the can to Paul to Gary, a little awed.

NARRATOR  
I couldn't believe it. A can of beer.  
A 16 ounce can of beer. This thing  
was going too far. Thank God Paul at  
least had a level head. Go on, Paul,  
say it. Just say no.

Paul seems to hesitate.

NARRATOR  
Just say no... Just say no...  
Just say--

PAUL  
Well... maybe just one sip.

NARRATOR  
(deep sigh)  
Well, let's face it. Kids in those  
days were not as smart as kids today.

GARY  
(exhaling a long stream  
of smoke)  
God, I love to party. I could party  
24 hours a day, man.

Paul takes a tiny sip, swallows hard, and hands the beer to Kevin.

KEVIN  
(takes a swig)  
Me, too, man.

17 (cont.)

He hands the can to Gary, who takes a long swig.

GARY

You know the band, Purple Andy? They go to Central?

Kevin and Paul share a blank look.

KEVIN

Uh, yeah...

PAUL

Yeah, sure...

Gary hands the beer back to Paul, who hesitates, then sips.

GARY

I usually party with them. My girlfriend goes to Central, too, man. She's in eighth grade. Got honkers out to here, man.

He holds his hands a foot away from his chest.

PAUL

(not even aware of it)

Whoa.

Paul starts to hand the beer to Kevin, who reaches for it. At the last instant, Paul pulls it back, takes another swig, then, giggling a little, hands it to Kevin.

GARY

You guys goin' out with anybody?

Kevin and Paul exchange a look.

KEVIN

(swigging; casually)

Nah, not right now.

(beat; then)

I used to go out with this girl, Winnie Cooper, but we broke up.

GARY

Whoa, yeah, Winnie. She's pretty cute. A little flat, but cute, man.

PAUL

(taking a big swig; giggling)

Kevin likes 'em flat.

Kevin glares at Paul. But Gary laughs a little, and Kevin slowly breaks into a grin, too.

PAUL

Gimme a butt, man.

GARY  
I thought you didn't smoke?

PAUL  
Only when I drink.

Paul giggles. They laugh with him and Gary hands him a cigarette.

NARRATOR  
Go, Spuds, go.

KEVIN  
Carla Healy's no Raquel Welch, Paul.

PAUL  
(giggling)  
At least she's got a handful.

KEVIN  
Yeah, like you'll ever know.

GARY  
It's stupid to go out with one girl  
for too long, anyway. Before  
you know it they're like all over your  
case, they want you to walk with 'em  
in the hall every day and stuff.

KEVIN                      PAUL  
Yeah.                      Yeah, I know.

They pass the can each swig a little more.

NARRATOR  
I was starting to feel a little  
better about this whole Winnie  
Cooper thing. Hell, she was flat,  
and I'd be damned if I was gonna  
walk with her every day.

KEVIN  
(exhaling cooly)  
Gimme another hit.

Paul starts giggling at apparently nothing.

KEVIN  
What?

GARY  
What, man?

17 (cont.)

PAUL

I--

(laughing too hard)

I--

(gasping)

I dunno.

He grabs the can and swigs, spraying a little out as he cracks up. Gary and Kevin start laughing, too, passing the can.

PAUL

Hey, let's go do something!

Paul springs up...teeters almost falls, then rights himself. Gary and Kevin share a look.

KEVIN

Like what...?

PAUL

I don't care. Anything!

They all think for a beat.

GARY

I know. About a quarter mile from here there's a cave. It's really cool!

PAUL

Let's go!

Paul and Gary jump up to go.

CLOSE ON KEVIN

reacting to the word "cave." He looks like he might be sick.

NARRATOR

Did he say... "A cave"?

18 EXT. CAVE - NIGHT

18

NIGHT SOUNDS; crickets, a whipoorwill; twigs crackling underfoot.

CLOSE ON KEVIN as the three boys come through the woods toward the cave.

NARRATOR

I couldn't believe it -- it was just like my dream. I wanted to stop, but something kept propelling me forward. Beneath my placid, innocent suburban world lurked a subterranean land of nightmare, and I was about to enter it.

The boys stop, look.

BOYS' POV

A large, cylindrical storm drain emerges from under a narrow road.

KEVIN

Okay, that was fun, let's go back.

GARY

What are you talking about, man?

KEVIN

That's not a cave, it's a sewer.  
I'm not going in a sewer.

GARY

It's not a sewer, man, it's a storm drain.

PAUL

Come on, Kevin, don't be paranoid, man!

He dashes for the entrance to the "cave." Gary runs after him, beats him in.

NARRATOR

My god. I'd created a monster.

Kevin sighs, and runs in with them.

19 INT. CAVE - NIGHT

19

Gary, Paul, and Kevin, crouched in single file, creep slowly into the drain pipe. The only light is from their flashlights. We see a face here, a careful footstep there, as the flashlight moves around and illuminates it; in between we see only shadowy blackness.

PAUL

(conspiratorial)  
You know what it's called when you explore a cave?

KEVIN

(tense)  
What?

PAUL

Hey -- you know what it's called when you explore a cave?

KEVIN

What?

PAUL

Hey -- hey you guys -- you know what  
it's called when you--

KEVIN

WHAT??

Paul turns around gleefully to face Kevin.

PAUL

(sputtering in his face)

SPE-LUNKING!!

KEVIN

Hey, say it, don't spray it, Paul.

PAUL

(pretending to be an echo)

Spe-lunking-lunking-lunking-lunking...

NARRATOR

I think I liked Paul better before  
he became such a fun guy.

The narrow tunnel seems to open out into a larger space.

GARY

Okay, this is it. Isn't this cool?

KEVIN'S FLASHLIGHT explores the place. Concrete walls; water  
drips from several smaller drain pipes entering from the other  
side; a huge black beetle scuttles across the floor. Paul is  
enraptured.

PAUL

Yeah, wow, man! This is great!

Gary indicates the first pipe with his flashlight.

GARY

This pipe comes all the way from  
Crestview Shopping Center. You can  
crawl through there and wind up right  
behind Sears.

PAUL

Oh, cool!

GARY

(indicating another pipe)

This one comes from over by the  
rec center. Near where the men's  
room is.

PAUL

Wow...

NARRATOR

I know I was impressed.

GARY

(indicating a third pipe)

And this one...

(ominously)

Nobody knows where this one goes.

(suddenly)

Shh!

Kevin and Paul look around, a little unnerved. They listen for a beat. Water drips. Nothing else.

GARY

I thought I heard something.

(beat)

There was a guy once who went into that pipe to try to find out where it went. He never came out.

Kevin and Paul look at each other.

GARY

They say he starved to death. And then there was a big storm, and this whole thing flooded, and he drowned. They didn't find him until six months later.

NARRATOR

Okay, now I was really scared. And like any twelve-year-old boy who's trying not to show that he's scared, I got argumentative.

KEVIN

Wait a minute -- did he starve to death or did he drown?

GARY

Both.

KEVIN

You can't do both -- it's one or the other.

GARY

(challenging)

How do you know?

KEVIN

Because it doesn't make any sense! I mean, you could get really really hungry, and then drown; or you could starve to death, but then you can't drown. because you'd be dead already!

GARY

Hey, man, I knew this guy! He was a friend of mine's cousin.

KEVIN

So? That means he can die twice?

GARY

Hey -- all's I know is that all they found were parts of him. The rats ate the rest.

(beat)

Unless there are still parts of him in there.

PAUL

(white as a sheet)

Let's get out of here.

KEVIN

Hey, you were the one who wanted to come in here in the first place.

PAUL

(starting to sneeze)

That was before I knew it was full of dead body parts.

GARY

SSHH! I heard it again.

(beat)

Listen.

CLOSE ON KEVIN AND PAUL (who holds a finger under his nose to keep from sneezing)

SILENCE. Then WATER DRIPS. There is a sound like a QUIET FOOTSTEP. And then, starting softly, and building, an eerie WAILING. It echoes through the tunnel, then dies down.

GARY

That was him!

(starting to wail, since obviously it was him in the first place)

Oooooooooohhhhhh..... Aaaaaaaaaahhhhhh....

KEVIN  
(unnerved)  
Shut up, Gary.

GARY  
(louder)  
Aaaaaaaaahhhhhhhh.....

PAUL  
Come on, stop it.

GARY  
Hellllllllp meeeeee.....Hellllllp  
meeeeee.....

KEVIN  
I'm not kidding, Gary, knock it off.

Gary ignores him, just wailing louder and louder. The sound starts to echo and envelop them.

GARY  
I'm dyyyyyyyiinnnnnng.....dyyyyyinnnnnng....

PAUL  
(really getting freaked)  
Gary, stop it! Just stop it!  
Stop it!

GARY  
....dyyyyyyyiinnnnnnnnggg....

As Gary keeps wailing, Paul suddenly bolts, dives for the entrance tunnel. He slips off the concrete ledge, cries out in pain.

PAUL  
Ow, my leg!

GARY  
I'm dyyyyyyinnnnnngggggg.....

Kevin goes to Paul. Paul is practically crying in pain and fear.

PAUL  
Stop it! Stop it!

KEVIN  
Gary, you jerk, shut up!

Gary inexplicably starts laughing hysterically.

GARY

God, I can't believe you guys, you're really scared! I really scared you! What's the matter Pfeiffer, are you crying?! I can't believe it! You're crying!

KEVIN

You're a real jackass, you know that?!

Gary just keeps laughing.

GARY

I'm dyyyyyiiiiinnnnnnnggg.....

KEVIN

Shut up! Shut the hell up!

And as Gary keeps laughing, and Kevin starts to help Paul out of the cave, we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Kevin and Paul make their way down Kevin's street. Paul is limping; Kevin helps him along, their arms around each other.

NARRATOR

I guess when you're a little kid, you're pretty much a creature of the daylight. But as you get older, the night becomes a bigger part of your life. The night can be hard to handle; it can overwhelm you, you can lose yourself in it. When all was said and done, I felt sorry for Gary; I guess he was already lost. Paul and I decided to go back to my house to sleep.

Kevin and Paul go up to Kevin's front door. As Kevin fumbles under the mat for the key, the door opens. Norma and Jack stand there.

NORMA

Kevin? What are you doing home?  
Did something happen? Are you okay?

Kevin and Paul exchange a look, hesitate.

KEVIN

Yeah, we're fine, Mom. We just...  
(beat)  
... got scared.

20 (cont.)

30.

Norma seems to study them for a beat, maybe sniffs something... looks at Jack, back at the boys...

NARRATOR

It was the truth. But not the whole truth, and looking at my Mom and my Dad, standing there in their bathrobes, worried about me. I felt a little sick about that.

CAMERA STARTS TO PULL BACK as Norma hustles them in the door, and we hear her concerned voice fading into the house...

NORMA

Oh -- well, come on in, it's cold out there. You should have called us -- we would have picked you up. Paul, are you limping?

The front door closes and locks for the night: the lights go out one by one...

NARRATOR

I don't know why, but that night, for the first time in a long time, I didn't have a single nightmare.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

21 EXT. STREET - BRIGHT MORNING

21

Kevin and Paul sit side by side on the curb, flipping baseball cards.

KEVIN

That's orange!

PAUL

No, it's not, it's red. Look at the Orlando Cepeda. They're both the same.

KEVIN

No way, that one's practically maroon!

PAUL

But it's the same team...

GIRL (O.S.)

Hi, you guys.

They look up to see...

11 (cont.)

WINNIE

in her jeans overalls, a ponytail, and her glasses. She looks almost scared of Kevin and Paul.

KEVIN/PAUL

(a little cool)

Hi.

WINNIE

(after a beat)

Are you guys mad at me?

KEVIN

(coolly)

What do you mean? Why would we be mad at you?

WINNIE

Well...yesterday in the hall you-- you just looked like you were mad at me.

KEVIN

looks at Winnie, struggles with what to say. He flips another card. Paul flips his, wins, takes the two.

KEVIN

I don't know what you're talking about.

Winnie looks at Paul. Paul shrugs indifferently.

PAUL

Hey -- me neither.

Winnie frowns, hurt, frustrated, struggling to figure out what to do. She looks like she might cry..

WINNIE

Okay. Forget it.

She turns slowly and starts away. Kevin and Paul look at each other. Then Kevin looks down. Paul sizes things up.

PAUL

Hey Winnie.

She turns, waits. Kevin keeps looking down.

MUSIC SLOWLY FADES UP: "HERE COMES THE SUN"

PAUL

How come you're wearing your glasses?

A beat. Winnie looks a little surprised at the question.

WINNIE

Huh?

PAUL

How come you're wearing your glasses?

WINNIE

Oh -- I lost one of my contacts.  
(a little self-conscious)  
I look so stupid in these things.

KEVIN

(finally looking up)  
No you don't. You look good.

She half-smiles, not buying it.

KEVIN

I'm serious. You look much smarter.  
In fact, Paul and I were just saying  
the other day how dumb you look in  
contacts.

WINNIE

(grinning)  
Oh, yeah, tell me about it.

KEVIN

No, really. I'm surprised your  
teachers haven't started grading you  
down just for looking dumb.

WINNIE

Oh, you're one to talk.

KEVIN

Hey -- I'm just being honest..

And as we HOLD CLOSE ON KEVIN: MUSIC FADES UP... "...Here comes the sun,  
and I say... it's all right...doot doo da doo doo, doot doo da doot doo  
doo doo dooo..."

FADE OUT

END OF ACT TWO