

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

LOUD KNOCKING at the side glass door. The house phones RING NONSTOP. Police lights and the rising sun seep through the curtains of the windows.

JOSH, autistic and 13, at the kitchen sink runs the water. All the other sounds are muted. The running water is all that is heard.

He leaves the kitchen and then comes back with a pile of phones that continue to ring off the hook. The sounds of the phones can be heard above everything else.

He drops the phones into the sink, filled to the top with water. He watches as the phones sink to the bottom. The bubbling water is now the only sound.

Josh only pays attention to the phones, relieved that they are quiet.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF JOSH'S HOUSE - MORNING

OFFICER SAM, a friendly looking police officer in his 40's knocks on the sliding glass door and peeks in at Josh.

JANINE, also in her early 40's, cell phone to her ear, wears a worried expression on her face. She puts down the phone and looks to Sam.

JANINE

What's our plan? The siren again?

OFFICER SAM

That might get his attention but how about I drive him today?

JANINE

I don't know, he would like that but... I just.. I don't want to reward him for this

OFFICER SAM

Janine, the kid is nervous.

JANINE

(laughing)

Sam I can't keep calling you to let me into my house. I have to draw the line somewhere

OFFICER SAM

Just lemme do my job.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Josh notices that the noise from outside has stopped. He walks over to the sliding glass door. Peeks outside at his mother and Officer Sam.

Josh waves at Officer Sam with a smile.

OFFICER SAM

Hi Josh.

JOSH

Hey Officer Sam! I can see the lights from your car in here.

OFFICER SAM

Really? Must be pretty cool. I was actually wondering if you wanted to ride to school with me today?

JOSH

WOAH! That would be so cool... b-bu-but I'm not going to school today.

OFFICER SAM

You're not?

JOSH

No.

OFFICER SAM

How come?

JOSH

I don't want to.

OFFICER SAM

But you love school.

JOSH

It's not going to be the same.

OFFICER SAM

Why's that?

JOSH

Mrs. Jackson isn't going to be there.

OFFICER SAM

I heard, but I know Mr. Grant he is very nice, and all the kids from school will still be there.

JOSH
Yea... but I don't think the other
kids like me, they...they look at me
funny.

Officer Sam looks over at Janine, whose heart is breaking as
Josh talks about the kids at school.

OFFICER SAM
The kids probably just need to get
to know you better buddy and they
can't do that if you're not at
school.

Josh stands behind the door quietly thinking.

OFFICER SAM
Josh?

Officer Sam peeks into the door again to see that Josh is no
longer on the other side of the door.

He looks over to Janine confused.

OFFICER SAM
I don't know where....

Officer Sam is cut off when the door flies open and Josh
stands with his back pack on his shoulders ready to go to
school.

EXT. OUTSIDE DAYTON MIDDLE SCHOOL - MORNING

Officer Sam's police car pulls up to the bustling middle
school parking lot. Standing out amongst the numerous
minivans.

Middle-schooler's look at the car curious, whispering about
who could be in trouble, waiting to get the scoop.

INT. POLICE CAR - MORNING

Josh, stares out the window. Then looks down at his shoes.
He lifts his knees up to his chest. Buries his face into
them.

Sam looks over at Josh, squished into a ball beside him. His
face saddens, as he tries to comfort Josh.

OFFICER SAM
Hey now, what's the matter bud?

Josh doesn't move.

OFFICER SAM
You don't have to go in if you don't
want to.

Josh looks up at Officer Sam confused.

OFFICER SAM
I just thought you would want to go
to school.

JOSH
I wanna go home.

OFFICER SAM
Your mother told me you wanted to
make a friend.

JOSH
I do.

OFFICER SAM
Well you can't do that at home can
you?

Josh places his feet back on the ground, and looks out the
window again.

JOSH
I..uh..I think I'll go for a little

OFFICER SAM
Well you have a good day then Josh.

Josh steps out of the car, gently shutting the door and
looks back as the car pulls away forcing him to walk into
school.

INT. SCHOOL MAIN OFFICE - MORNING

Sitting at her desk MRS. ANDREWS, in her 50's, is typing
with a warm smile on her face.

She looks up to see, Josh, walking timidly into the office.

MRS. ANDREWS
Well hello there Josh.

JOSH
Hi Mrs. Andrews.

MRS. ANDREWS
Mr. Grant will be in any minute to
take you to wood shop.

JOSH

Mhhmmm

MRS. ANDREWS

Sit right over there and wait for
him.

She gestures to the seats directly across from her.

Josh takes a seat. He swings his feet back and forth.
Clenches his hands together in his lap, and fiddles with his
fingers.

A young man, MR. GRANT in his early thirties, strolls into
the main office. He glances at his watch and looks to Mrs.
Andrews as if he needs to be directed.

MR. GRANT

I.. Uhh.. I'm sorry I'm late. I'm
Connor Grant here to replace Mrs.
Jackson to.. uh aide a special nee-

Josh, looks up at Mr. Grant and then over to Mrs. Andrews,
who hastily interrupts Mr. Grant before he can offend Josh.

MRS. ANDREWS

First period is about to begin, so
why don't you escort Josh to his
first class and get to know him a
bit on the way.

Mr. Grant turns to Josh.

MR. GRANT

Hi, you can call me Mr. Grant

JOSH

Hi... um you can call me Josh.

Mr. Grant puts his hand out for a hand shake. Josh looks at
his hand. Stands up and walks out of the office.

INT. SCHOOL- WOOD SHOP

The room is surrounded by heavy machinery. In the center
there are big tables with kids scattered around sitting on
tall stools

Josh slumps into the classroom, with Mr. Grant following
behind. He plops down at an empty table. Mr. Grant takes a
seat next to him.

Josh begins to listen to the kids at the table near by.

BOY #1

I heard there's going to be new rides this year. All of 'em brand new.

GIRL #1

And they're raffling off a trip to six flags!

BOY #1

We just said that Emma.

EMMA

Oh shut up Bobby.

The kids are interrupted when MR. ANDRE, walks into the room. A rough-around-the-edges looking man in his 40's.

MR. ANDRE

Alright, enough already. You can talk about the carnival at lunch... not on my time.

Josh pulls a notebook and pencil out of his backpack. He scribbles down the words CARNIVAL TONIGHT.

MR. ANDRE

Today is the last day to finish constructing your final projects. Before we paint them next week, so I suggest you all get to work.

The pre-teens all rush over to lockers located at the back of the room. They gather their projects, put on safety goggles, and fight over the machinery.

Josh stays seated.

The machines make a LOUD ANNOYING noise. Josh places his hands over his ears, the sound is somewhat muted. He rests his head on the table.

Mr. Grant can faintly be heard in the background.

MR. GRANT

Josh.

Josh doesn't move

MR. GRANT

Don't you want to do your project.

Josh continues to ignore him.

Mr. Grant looks around unsure of what to do. He places his hand on Josh back.

Josh flinches at the touch and whips around facing Mr. Grant.

JOSH
Don't touch me.

Emma glances on at the small scene that has emerged.

Mr. Grant looks around unsure of what to do. He reaches to grab Josh's arm.

Josh jumps back off of his seat and onto his feet. His stool falls to the floor.

Mr. Grant steps toward Josh pleading.

MR. GRANT
Come on now, it's time to get your work don-

Josh grabs his bag from the table and hurls it at Mr. Grant. More Classmates turn to witness the scene.

JOSH
No stay away from me!

Mr. Grant dodges the bag and steps closer to Josh.

Josh lunges forward to push him away. Mr. Grant topples back but remains on his feet.

Mr. Andre notices the scene. He runs up behind Josh and grabs him by the arm.

MR. ANDRE
Boy you need to calm down!

Josh pulls away from Mr. Andre's grasp.

Mr. Andre grasps him tighter. He pulls him closer and swoops him into a headlock.

MR. ANDRE
That is enough!

Josh doesn't say a word. He tightens up in Mr. Andre's grip and starts to cry.

Kids huddle around pointing and laughing. Everything is a blur. The sound of their taunting cannot be heard.

Josh looks on at what he created in horror.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL - MAIN OFFICE

Josh sits in the same seat he did earlier that morning. This time slouched with his head hung low.

His mother, Janine, yells behind the closed principles door.

JANINE

This is beyond ridiculous. How can you sit here and defend this type of behavior? That man should be fired!

Mrs. Andrews watches Josh with a sympathetic frown, she reaches into her desk and pulls out a jar of candy.

MRS. ANDREWS

Hey Josh, would you like a piece of candy while you wait?

JOSH

No thank you.

EMMA

I'll take a piece!

Josh is surprised when he hears the girl from his wood shop class.

EMMA, a bubbly blond, skips into the main office and grabs a piece of candy.

Mrs. Andrews smiles and laughs to herself at Emma.

MRS. ANDREWS

Have a seat Emma.

Emma walks over and takes a seat right next to Josh. He looks at her, pauses for a beat and then slides over a seat.

Emma looks over at Josh smiles and slides over next to him again.

EMMA

Hi! It's Josh right?...

Josh looks up at her and nods shyly.

EMMA

My name's Emma.

Emma holds her hand out for him to shake. Josh just looks at it.

JOSH
Hi Emma.

Emma puts her hand down and smiles.

EMMA
My dad's taking me out to lunch today.

JOSH
My mom's yelling at the principle.

EMMA
You win.

JOSH
I win what?

EMMA
You've got the cooler parent.

Josh looks down at his feet again. He watches them swing back and forth.

EMMA
Are you going to the carnival tonight?

Abruptly the principal's door flies open. Janine appears flustered and angry.

JANINE
Come on Josh, let's go.

She rushes out of the office. Josh hops off of his chair and follows his mother.

EMMA
Bye Josh!

Josh looks back at her through the glass of the main office and waves goodbye.

INT. JANINE'S CAR

Janine fights back tears as she drives Josh home.

JANINE
I am so sorry honey. That was very wrong of your teacher.

JOSH
Can we go to the carnival tonight?

JANINE
Huh? What... um Joshie I don't think that's such a good idea tonight.

JOSH
Mom I have to go!

JANINE
I don't have time to go today, I have to go back to work. We'll go another day.

JOSH
I have to go today. I can go by myself.

JANINE
No. No you can't. There are a lot of people there Josh. I need to be there with you.

The car pulls into the driveway.

JOSH
That's not fair. Stop treating me like a baby mom! I'm not a baby. I can take care of myself!

Josh gets out of the car. Slams the door shut and runs into the house.

Janine's knuckles turn white as she grips the steering wheel tighter. Her eyes well up with tears as she watches him run into the house.

She whispers to herself.

JANINE
But you can't...

Tears stream down her face as she backs out of the driveway.

INT. JOSH'S BEDROOM

Josh runs into his room and throws his backpack down on his bed. He sits down at his desk and starts typing on his computer.

He searches HOW TO MAKE A FRIEND in google.

He scrolls down and finds the FIVE STEPS TO FRIENDSHIP.

JOSH
Step one...Introduce yourself.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM

Josh stands in front of the mirror. He takes a deep breath.

JOSH
Hi.. I'm Josh.

CUT TO:

INT. JOSH'S BEDROOM - PREVIOUS

Josh sits in front of his computer again looking at the steps to friendship.

JOSH
Step 2...Make eye contact and Smile.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM

Stuffed animals are lined up on the couch. Josh stands in front of all of them.

He looks at each one of them directly. He smiles and bobs his head each time he moves to a new animal.

CUT TO:

INT. JOSH'S BEDROOM - PREVIOUS

Josh sits at the computer.

JOSH
Step three... Find something in common to start conversation.

CUT TO:

INT. JOSH'S SISTERS ROOM

Josh sits on his sister's bed.

An American girl doll sits across from him.

JOSH
I noticed we both live at 7 Hopper Lane....It's pretty nice here. Do you like it?

CUT TO:

INT. JOSH'S BEDROOM - PREVIOUS

Josh sits at the computer.

JOSH
Step Four...
Initiate a get-together

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM

Josh stands on the couch in front of the stuffed animals again.

JOSH
Anybody want to come to the carnival
with me tonight?

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

Janine walks up to the front door, unlocks it and goes into the house.

JANINE
Josh! I'm home...I was thinking we
could go to the carnival.

Janine walks into the kitchen, then the living room. She searches the house for Josh.

She shouts throughout the house for him.

JANINE
Josh where are you?

She heads upstairs to his room, and starts to worry. She takes out her cell phone and dials his number.

A phone starts to ring from his backpack.

JANINE
Oh no...

Janine begins to dial another number.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOCAL STREET - EARLY EVENING

Josh strides down a local street with a big smile. Cars fly by as he walks.

JOSH
Step five...Be confident.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE CAR - EARLY EVENING

Officer Sam, holds a cell phone to his ear as he drives.

OFFICER SAM
Alright alright.. don't worry I'm
headed there now. I'll keep an eye
out for him.....Ok not a problem
Janine... buh-bye.

Sam hangs up the phone.

EXT. CARNIVAL - EARLY EVENING

In the towns church parking lot a carnival is in full swing.

Game booths surround the outer edges, and a giant Ferris wheel, amongst other rides sit in the center.

Children run around with cotton candy, ice cream and their parents chasing after them.

Josh walks up to the entrance and takes it all in. He scans the crowd for potential friends.

He zones in on a few of the boys from his wood shop class.

They are waiting in line for the tough sledge hammer game.

BOBBY
I'm clearly the strongest out of you
fags, so we all know I'll have the
best score

BOY #2
No way, I got this

BOY #3
Yea right Donnoven that girl'd get a
better score than you

All the boys laugh at his joke.

Josh takes a deep breath. Under his breath he mutters...

JOSH

Step one.. Introduce yourself.

He strides over to the boys.

JOSH
Hi guys, I'm Josh.

All the boys look at him with confused expressions. He looks them all in the eye and smiles.

JOSH
We all have wood shop together with Mr. Andre.

BOBBY
We know...how could we forget this.

BOBBY, suddenly whips around and swoops Josh into a headlock. All the boys start to laugh.

Josh starts to panic. Tears well up in his eyes. He twitches.

His body convulses to get out of Bobby's grip.

EMMA
Bobby what is your problem!

Stunned Bobby releases Josh from the headlock.

BOBBY
Well it's nice to see you to Emma.

EMMA
Leave my friend alone.

With those words, Josh looks up confused. Then a small smile crawls across his face and lights up his eyes.

All the boys laugh at Emma.

BOBBY
Oh Emma...when will you learn?

Bobby reaches to put his arm around Emma and talk to her more "romantically".

Emma pushes him away from her. He stumbles back.

EMMA
Josh lets go.

She reaches her hand out for Josh to grab it.

He looks at it for a beat then grabs her hand with a smile.

Bobby looks at them both with disgust. His face blushes red with embarrassment.

EXT. CARNIVAL - CONTINUOUS

Josh and Emma walk hand in hand through the carnival. They spend the rest of the night together.

MONTAGE

--Josh and Emma ride the Ferris wheel.

--Josh and Emma get cotton candy

--Josh and Emma go through the fun house

-- Josh and Emma ride the roller coaster

EXT. CARNIVAL - WATER RACING GAME

Josh and Emma sit on stools both shooting water at their targets extremely focused on the game.

GAME OPERATOR

And the winner is player number 7!

Josh and Emma look up at their numbers. Josh begins to jump and shout.

People look on at the scene. Emma smiles happy to see Josh happy.

JOSH

(Shouting)

Me! Me! Woohooo..That's me!

EMMA

Wow.. great job Josh!

GAME OPERATOR

What prize would you like?

JOSH

Umm I want! ...well... Emma what one do you want?

EMMA

How about the purple bear!

GAME OPERATOR

Alright. Well there ya go. Have a good night you two.

Emma grabs the bear from the game operator.

Josh turns around to see his mother standing behind him in the crowd.

JOSH
Mom! Hi Mom! Did you see! I won the game! I won Emma a prize!

JANINE
I did. I saw you.. you did so great Josh. I'm so proud of you.

Josh runs over to his mother and hugs her.

She squeezes him tight, not letting go.

JOSH
Mom, I can't breath...

Janine releases him from her grasp. She holds him by the shoulders now sternly.

JANINE
I'm glad you had fun, but don't ever go anywhere without telling me again.

Officer Sam walks up behind them.

OFFICER SAM
She was pretty worried bud! You gave us both a scare this time.

JOSH
I'm sorry Mom.

Emma runs over. She gives Officer Sam a big hug.

EMMA
Dad!

EMMA
You know Josh?

OFFICER SAM
We're good friends.

Josh looks at him and smiles.

EMMA
Look what he won for me!

Emma shows her father the bear.

OFFICER SAM
That was very nice of you Josh.
Janine this is my daughter Emma.

JANINE
Hello Emma it's very nice to meet
you. Josh how about we say goodbye
now and head home?

EMMA
Oh Wait! Mrs. Leone I was wondering
if Josh could ride home with us...in
the police car.

JOSH
Please mom. I want to go with them.
Please!

Janine looks at Josh with a concerned expression that slowly
turns to a smile.

JANINE
Go ahead have fun. I'll see you at
home.

Josh gives her a big thank you hug.

JOSH
Mom your the best!

Janine gives him a tight squeeze again, but this time lets
go.

Emma looks to Officer Sam.

EMMA
Can we ride with the lights on.

JOSH
Can we?!

OFFICER SAM
What the hell... why not.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Sam's police car drives down the road. The police lights
light up the night sky. Josh and Emma's shadows can be seen
through the rear view window.

