

MAGNUS EFFECT

Written by

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EXT. SCHOOL BUILDING - DUSK

The sun is setting on Gordon High School and only a few lights remain on inside of the school building.

INT. SCHOOL BUILDING MAIN OFFICE - DUSK

DEANE SPRING (17) sits in a chair across from a secretary's desk. The secretary's desk has a digital clock that reads 6:00pm. The majority of the office and the hallway outside is darkened since it is after hours.

Deane sits silently with his hands inside his hoodie's pocket. He has his school bag in between his feet and a small duffel bag in the seat next to him. A pair of cleats also sit nearby.

In the office, behind the desk, you can see a light coming through the door and vaguely hear voices coming from behind it.

The voice is that of the school Principal, BRENTON KERR (67).

KERR
(offscreen and slightly
muffled)
Okay... I hope you have a swift
recovery ... Goodbye.

Upon hearing thus parting line, Deane looks up as the door opens and Principal Kerr walks out.

He is a tall, lanky man who looks exhausted after a long stressful day of work.

KERR (CONT'D)
Come on in Dean, we have to talk.

INT. OFFICE - DUSK

The office is rather small with a bookshelf on one end and a messy desk stacked with papers and folders of all sorts strewn about it.

KERR
Take a seat Deane.

Deane silently takes a seat on the other side of the principal's desk.

KERR (CONT'D)

Well, I've got some good news and some bad news.

Deane shifts uncomfortably at this statement. Clearly this is a new experience for this kid.

KERR (CONT'D)

The good news is that Ms. Clements only has a minor concussion plus some bruising. She will be able to return to class starting this Friday.

Deane takes a deep breath.

DEANE

So what is the bad news?

KERR

The bad news is that even though you have a clean record as far as getting in trouble goes, I cannot overlook the severity of your actions. I have to place you on probation for the remainder of the year.

Deane's face drops and he looks physically ill after this statement. He quickly gathers himself and tries to plead his case.

DEANE

Mr. Kerr please! It was an accident!

KERR

I understand but kicking a soccer ball around the hallways like that resulted in a student ending up in the hospital. Regardless of the intent, I have to reprimand you.

DEANE

But sir! If I'm on probation! I'm not allowed to participate in athletics! Soccer playoffs are next week! I'll miss them!

KERR

Deane, I truly wish I didn't have to do this. Your teachers say you are a good student and your coach says you are a hard worker.

(MORE)

KERR (CONT'D)

But, if I overlooked this for athletic reasons it would set a bad precedent.

Deane looks down defeated.

DEANE

I understand.

KERR

But, there is some more news for you. I wouldn't call it good news but it might help you with this problem.

Deane perks up instantly but is still apprehensive.

DEANE

What is it?

KERR

(with a rye smile)

Well, Ms. Clements was very stressed about missing her physics class. Apparently she has a test on Friday.

Deane stares at Kerr trying to figure out where he is going with this news.

KERR (CONT'D)

Because of this she asked me to get one of her classmates to tutor her.

DEANE

Okay. What does that have to do with me? I'm not in physics.

KERR

Well, I was also told by your teachers that you could be in higher level classes than the one's you are in now. So, I thought, maybe I could send you to tutor her.

DEANE

Wait! How can I do that? I have my own classes!

KERR

I spoke with her physics teacher and they said that they will give you a quick rundown of the material after school. After the lesson, you will go see Ms. Clements and teach her.

DEANE

I'm sorry but I still don't see how this affects me.

Kerr grabs a small, yellow slip of paper from his desk and hands it to Deane.

KERR

If you can convince her to sign this paper, you can get off of probation.

Deane consider this for a second.

DEANE

It's Tuesday, so I have until Friday to convince her to sign this paper.

KERR

Yes. Seems simple enough.

Deane considers this for another second.

DEANE

This seems awfully convenient.

KERR

Would you like me to make this less convenient?

DEANE

No, I just didn't think this was something that could happen.

KERR

It doesn't, you're just lucky you blasted Ms. Clements with your free kick and not someone else.

DEANE

Okay, umm.... thank you?

KERR

Don't thank me yet. This could very easily not go your way.

EXT. SCHOOL BUILDING - DAY

Students begin exiting the school building as a bell goes off.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Deane and his teammate, DEWITT LANGOLOIS (18), get up to leave and DeWitt throws an eraser at Deane. It catches Deane in the side of the head.

DEWITT
(with sarcasm)
Oops! I missed! I hope I didn't
give you a concussion!

DEANE
Screw you Witt.

DEWITT
Well, you have fun playing teacher,
I'm going to go get pizza with some
of the guys.

DEANE
Try not to choke. Hate for it to be
a repeat of that penalty kick last
week.

DEWITT
Very funny Mr. Spring.

They exit the classroom and go their separate ways.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Deane walks down the hallway as other students filter out of the school.

He stares briefly at an exit before walking into a classroom.

EXT. CLEMENT HOUSE - DUSK

Deane walks up to the door of the house and is greeted by an adult.

INT. CLEMENT HOUSE KRISTEN'S ROOM - DUSK

KRISTEN CLEMENTS (17) is laying on her bed with the lights dim.

Kristen looks bored and plays with a pillow while staring at the wall. She is dressed for a sick day and is wearing sweatpants and a sweater.

A knock on her door draws her attention and she slowly raises herself into a sitting position.

KRISTEN

Come in!

Deane walks in and is immediately knocked down by a pillow to the face.

KRISTEN (CONT'D)

(angry sarcasm)

Oops! Sorry! I hope I didn't give you a concussion.

Deane lays on the floor for a second before gathering himself.

He bursts up into a sitting position angrily.

DEANE

First off, that was an accident!
Secondly, it definitely wasn't a pre-meditated attack!

KRISTEN

Who cares? You put me in the hospital!

Deane stands up and lifts up his backpack and drops it on the bed, as well as on Kristen's foot.

KRISTEN (CONT'D)

Shit! That hurt you asshole!

Kristen lifts the backpack off of her foot.

KRISTEN (CONT'D)

What's in this thing? Bricks?

DEANE

(emotionless)

Your homework.

KRISTEN

Well, good luck teaching me this.
It's the hardest topic we cover this year.

DEANE

I think I'll be fine.

KRISTEN

Really, a blockhead like you? Why did Kerr think it was a good idea to assign you as a tutor.

DEANE

Hey, if you don't want my help all you have to do is sign this.

Deane holds out the sheet of paper.

DEANE (CONT'D)

Sign this and I can get out of your hair.

KRISTEN

Why would I sign that? You haven't done anything for me, so why should I help you?

DEANE

Since, you don't seem all that willing to let me teach you, I thought I could just drop off your work everyday and let you figure it out.

KRISTEN

Listen, it'll take a lot more than helping me study to make me want to help you.

Deane drops the subject and starts opening the backpack to get the work out.

KRISTEN (CONT'D)

Maybe if you did my chores for the week too and picked up a smoothie for me everyday for the rest of the semester, then I'd help you.

DEANE

Nice try but I'm here to teach you physics, not to let you boss me around.

Kristen lays back down, clearly frustrated.

KRISTEN

Ugh. You probably don't know anything about physics. I'm screwed for this test.

DEANE

Actually, the stuff you're going over isn't that hard.

KRISTEN

Really?

DEANE

Yes, watch. You're learning about the Magnus effect correct?

KRISTEN

Yes.

DEANE

Good that's easy.

Deane pulls out a small whiteboard and a marker.

DEANE (CONT'D)

Now, this might be a little difficult for you, but I've been experiencing this force my whole life so get prepared.

KRISTEN

Wait? You actually know this?

DEANE

All this is, is spin.

He begins to draw a soccer ball on the board.

DEANE (CONT'D)

In soccer, we use backspin to generate this effect and it allows the ball to counteract gravity.

Kristen is slack jawed that Deane is actually capable of teaching her. She spaces out because of her immediate confusion.

Deane snaps in front of her face and gets her attention.

DEANE (CONT'D)

Hey, don't space out! There will be a quiz!

KRISTEN

Hold on, you can't teach me using sports. I don't know anything about sports.

DEANE

Well, I've essentially got you as a captive audience so prepare to learn! I'll kill two birds with one stone.

KRISTEN

(with attitude)

Good luck.

EXT. CLEMENT HOUSE

Rain beats down on the outside of the house as a light comes out from some of the windows.

INT. CLEMENT HOUSE KRISTEN'S ROOM - DUSK

Deane and a tired Kristen are working through more physics problems.

Kristen is spaced out on the verge of sleep.

DEANE

(snapping in Kristen's face)

Hey, still awake?

Kristen snaps back to reality and takes in her surroundings.

KRISTEN

Ugh.

DEANE

Hey, if you're not paying attention then why am I here.

KRISTEN

Hey, not my problem, its your own fault you're here.

DEANE

Well if you want to get some shut eye and not have me bothering you then all you have to do is sign a piece of paper.

KRISTEN

Nice try but that's not gonna happen, especially if you keep bugging me about it.

Deane takes her notes and tosses them aside.

DEANE

You're only struggling really on the Magnus Effect and one or two other things? I think, I've done a great job preparing you! What do I have to do to get you to sign this paper?

KRISTEN

I guess you'd better help me with those few topics, because the test is tomorrow and I expect to get a good grade.

DEANE

Ugh, you overachiever types always drive me crazy. Always so focused on grades.

KRISTEN

You'd understand if you actually took hard classes instead of goofing off and playing games all the time.

They sit silently, both slightly frustrated and a little angry.

DEANE

Listen, you're going to do fine on this exam, we'll go over the last chapter one more time and I think that'll be all of the studying we can really do.

KRISTEN

Okay, you're going to explain the effects of gravity on a sphere again, since you're last explanation turned into us watching highlights of some Spanish soccer match.

DEANE

It was a great example of a sphere's motion when affected by gravity.

KRISTEN

(mocking)

Whatever you say coach.

Deane picks up his whiteboard and begins drawing on it once again.

DEANE
Well, you see...

EXT. SCHOOL BUILDING - DAY

Students start to walk into the school building as a school bell signals the start of classes.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Deane and Kristen walk down the hallway toward a classroom.

DEANE
So, you ready?

KRISTEN
I don't know. I might accidentally start reciting Hakan Calhanoglu's statistics from 2014.

DEANE
Just so long as you also remember his mastery of the Magnus Effect allows him to extend the typical range of motion he can apply to a ball.

A moment of silence occurs and Deane starts to walk away.

DEANE (CONT'D)
Well, good luck!

Kristen grabs Deane's backpack

KRISTEN
Wait!

DEANE
Listen, if you're confused about orbital eccentricity, it's just the ratio of the distance of the orbit.

KRISTEN
(angrily)
Not that you moron! I know that.

Kristen takes a moment to compose herself.

KRISTEN (CONT'D)
Why aren't you taking these classes?

DEANE

What?

KRISTEN

You're easily smart enough. Why not take these classes? You would barely have to try.

DEANE

Well, I never really wanted to do any hard school work. I just want to play soccer.

Kristen tries to absorb this information.

DEANE (CONT'D)

Now get in there and get and do your best!

Deane starts walking away again.

KRISTEN

Sure thing Coach!

Deane gives her a thumbs up as he walks away.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Deane is standing outside the school leaning against a wall playing with a soccer ball at his feet.

Kristen walks outside carrying a piece of paper.

DEANE

So, how'd it go?

Kristen shoves the paper into Deane's face. It reads an 89% on it.

DEANE (CONT'D)

That's a good grade!

KRISTEN

Is it?

DEANE

Yeah! I think it proves that I am a great tutor and deserve to no longer be on probation.

KRISTEN

That depends.

DEANE
Depends on what?

KRISTEN
(with attitude)
Answer my question from earlier
better! Why aren't you in that
class?

Deane stares at her for a second.

DEANE
You're not still on about that are
you?

Kristen just stares back with a mix of intent and anger.

DEANE (CONT'D)
Will you sign the paper if I
answer.

KRISTEN
That depends.

DEANE
(pissed off)
Okay hold up! I worked my ass off
trying to teach you things that I
barely had time to learn! Also,
since when do you care about what I
do with my life?

KRISTEN
Since you decided to give me a
concussion and tried to teach me
physics!

DEANE
That's not any of your business! I
held up my end of the deal! You
can't just change the rules!

KRISTEN
Just listen! I want to know why you
are hiding your intelligence.

DEANE
I'm not hiding it! I'm just
applying it differently!

KRISTEN
What?

DEANE

I don't care about writing out long explanations about why objects move or don't move! I like to apply them. Out on the field I can apply my knowledge and skills all at once to actually use what you're learning about!

Kristen contemplates this before responding.

KRISTEN

I never really thought about that.

DEANE

No shit. You bookworms are all the same! Always looking down on athletic kids as though we're stupid or something!

KRISTEN

I didn't mean that! I was just confused.

DEANE

Confused about what?

KRISTEN

Well, I've been studying my whole life. Trying to learn facts and equations and information. Then you show up, some kid who I don't know, who spends all his time on a field chasing a ball, and you can match me, if not better me in something I've been practicing my whole life!

DEANE

So what? Is that a bad thing!

KRISTEN

No, I guess it just took a while to wrap my head around something!

DEANE

And what would that be!

KRISTEN

You've been practicing this stuff as much as I have. Just in a different way.

They both stop talking for a second.

KRISTEN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry for looking down on you.

DEANE
I'm sorry for calling you a
bookworm.

KRISTEN
And?

DEANE
And for giving you a concussion.

KRISTEN
And?

DEANE
Okay! I have not done anything else
I should be apologizing for!

KRISTEN
Okay! Okay!

She reaches in her backpack and pulls out the sheet of paper.

KRISTEN (CONT'D)
Here. It's signed already.

DEANE
Thanks.

He reaches for it but she pulls it away.

KRISTEN
On one condition!

DEANE
Jesus, what?

KRISTEN
You get me a ticket to the game
tomorrow.

DEANE
(with a smile)
Sure. Not that you'll understand
what is going on.

KRISTEN
Hey, I get it now!

She takes the ball from him and starts to kick it around. But
she trips over it and falls hard.

KRISTEN (CONT'D)

Ow! My head!

FADE TO BLACK.