

The Determinator

by

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FADE IN:

1 INT./EXT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

In a moving bus full of rowdy, laughing sixth-graders, all of them excited for their class trip to the theme park, we focus in on BERT, a glasses-wearing, sweet-faced kid sitting quietly by himself in the front of the bus, staring out the window. He is called by MS. WARREN, his fresh-out-of-college teacher who often finds it difficult keep her students under control and isn't quite ready for the job.

MS. WARREN

So Bertie, which ride are you most excited to ride?

BERT

(Beat) I, uh-

MS. WARREN

Ooh, what about The Determinator? I heard that one's fun!

RICO, the snarky school bully who is never seen without "his boys", interrupts, prompting them to erupt with laughter in the background.

RICO

He's too much of a wuss for that!

MS. WARREN

Last warning, Rico. Cut it out or you'll be spending the entire day next to me.

Rico makes mocking faces towards Bert as he sits back down.

CUT TO:

2 EXT. THEME PARK (ENTRANCE) - DAY

Ms. Warren has the class gathered in front of the park to give last-minute instructions, but the students, eager to just get away from her already, are barely paying attention. Bert is the outlier; in front of the crowd, respectfully listening to Ms. Warren.

MS. WARREN

Okay guys, be sure to meet back here by four; no excuses! And use the buddy system; no one should be alone. Off you go!

(CONTINUED)

Everyone rushes by Bert in excitement, leaving him standing there without a particular place to go. However, not wanting to Ms. Warren to notice him without a buddy, he decides to start walking.

A few steps in, he notices SAM, whose contagious bright smile and sweet personality makes her popular among her classmates, laughing with her gal-pal.

CUT TO:

3

EXT. THEME PARK - DAY

We see Bert sitting on a bench near a concession stand. He is the complete antithesis of the activity and noise going on around him. He hears a conversation going on behind him:

SAM

Are you don't wanna get on with me?

SAM'S FRIEND

I just don't feel good right now...
I haven't eaten all day.

SAM

Well, this sucks. Everyone else already got on... I don't want to go on it alone and--

BERT

(Awkwardly) I'll go on with you.

SAM

Oh, hey Bert! Really? I thought you were terrified of roller coasters...

BERT

Um, not anymore, I don't think...

SAM'S FRIEND

(Whispering to Sam) Uhh, why are you even talking to this weirdo?

SAM

(Whispering back) Be nice to Bert. I don't know why you guys are always making fun of him; he seems nice. (To Bert) Well, okay! Let's get in line before it gets any longer.

CUT TO:

4

EXT. THEME PARK(IN-LINE FOR THE RIDE) - DAY

Bert watches anxiously as the coaster passes by overhead, roaring thunderously with its passengers screaming at the top of their lungs.

SAM

Are you sure you want to get on? I heard this one has a bigger drop and is crazier than the one at the park we went to last year...

BERT

Yeah, no, I'm good. I'm just--

A group of people are seen exiting from the roller coaster's building. From that group, one kid is seen running out, grunting as he holds his mouth and his stomach.

BERT

...excited.

SAM

Well, good. Me too.

From the same group we see Rico and his boys appear, laughing at the kid who just ran by. Rico acknowledges Sam and Bert as his group continues walking.

RICO

Hey Sam! How 'bout you and I-- Oh man, is that Nerdy Bertie? You've gotta be kidding, he'll piss his pants if he gets on this ride.

RICO'S BOY #1

(In laughter) Yeah, he must've forgotten what happened last year.

RICO

(To his boy) No one asked you, McFly. (To Sam) Sam, come find me afterwards sweetheart; I'll be where playas sip champagne and what not.

SAM

Ignore him, Bert. The only thing he's good for is making a fool out of himself.

FADE TO:

5 INT./EXT. ROLLER COASTER BUILDING - DAY

A carny is seen pulling the shoulder harness down on Bert. As soon as he does so, a nervous Bert grips the handles so hard, his knuckles turn white.

SAM

Okay, this is it Bert.

Bert doesn't respond. Suddenly, the coaster jolts forward a bit, and starts to slowly move through the tunnel, towards the bright opening that leads outside.

Once they are outside, the ascension towards the top of the drop begins. Slowly but surely, the coaster inches its way higher and higher. To Bert, the climb up feels like an eternity and he starts to sweat. Sam looks over to Bert with a look of concern on her face.

Eventually, the coaster gets to the top of the peak. It creeps towards the edge of the drop and, for a few brief seconds, Bert and the other passengers are looking straight down a 20-story drop. Bert's face goes blank with fear.

BOOM! The coaster suddenly drops at an intense speed and for the next minute or so, it takes the passengers on a crazy journey full of high-velocity twists, turns, and loops. This does not go over well with Bert. Throughout the ride, he is screaming in genuine fear and is seemingly about to cry.

CUT TO:

6 INT. ROLLER COASTER BUILDING - DAY

As the coaster pulls in from outside, Bert is shaking in fear. In order to spare himself of more embarrassment, as soon as the shoulder harnesses are lifted, he quickly gets off the coaster and runs for the exit.

SAM

Bert, wait!

Sam runs after Bert.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. THEME PARK - DAY

Bert is crying outside when he hears Sam call after him. He turns around to a very pale-looking Sam. She suddenly reaches for the trash can that's a few feet away and starts to vomit!

(CONTINUED)

Bert, in complete shock, goes over to make sure she's okay. The fear in Bert's eyes turns to confusion as Sam lifts her head with a wide grin on her face.

SAM

I guess The Determinator wasn't for either of us, huh Bert?

BERT

Huh? Are you okay?

SAM

Haha, yeah, I'm good. But I was in way over my head getting on that coaster.

BERT

(Starting to smile) Yeah, I guess we were.

Sam starts to laugh and, soon enough, Bert starts laughing as well. Laughing together, for the first time, we see Bert in genuine happiness.

FADE TO:

8

EXT. THEME PARK (ENTRANCE) - AFTERNOON

It's the end of the day and the class is gathering in front of the park. Everyone's tired from a long day of running around.

Bert is seen holding something in his hand. A CLOSE UP reveals that it is a photo taken during the ride. In the photo, Bert and Sam are screaming from the ride's drop. A MEDIUM SHOT then reveals Sam standing next to Bert. She starts happily talking to him, pointing at the photo for reference, both of them reliving the memory.

We zoom out slowly as the new friends are enjoying each other's company, and as Bert is seen appreciating his newfound friend.

We keep slowly zooming as we...

FADE TO BLACK

ROLL CREDITS