

COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

EXT. ROBIN HIGH - MORNING (ESTABLISHING)

Its a grey day [if possible] there is a sad layer of snow on the ground.

INT. COMPUTER LAB - MORNING

Ethan, Blaire, Jules, Sagina, Adrian, and their new friend Paris.

Chelsi runs in.

CHELSEI
(excited)
Guess what day it is?

SAGINA
What if I don't want to.

CHELSEI
Ugh. C'mon. Guess.

BLAIRE
Keep track of your own days,
Chelsi.

ETHAN
Yeah.

CHELSEI
Guys. You have phones. Just look.

They realise she is right. They look in their phones.

ETHAN
November 27th.

BLAIRE
December 1st.

SAGINA
Really guys?

They look at Ethan.

ETHAN
I guess I lost a couple days.

SAGINA
Yah think?

CHELSEI
Hey, morons, it's December 1st.

BLAIRE
So?

PARIS
Yes, why is this so important?

CHELSEI
I'll say it again. It. Is.
December. 1st.

They think for a second. Then they remember. Blaire looks to camera excited.

BLAIRE
Mr. Christmas!

ETHAN
Oh, God.

BLAIRE TALKING HEAD

BLAIRE
We don't know why, but ever since grade three, starting December 1st James becomes who we like to call Mr. Christmas. It is the one time of the year he is not insufferable. And if that hateful bastard can be filled with the spirit of Christmas joy, then there is hope for us all.

INT. COMPUTER LAB - MORNING

ETHAN
Ugh. I hate this time of year. It's like I'm living in a dickens novel. It's the worst.

SAGINA
Okay Scrooge.

There is a jingling. James and Zach are standing in the door.

ETHAN
Oh, boy.

JAMES
Merry Christmas, Everyone!

ZACH
Hi guys!

James looks to Zach. Grabs book out of bag.

JAMES
(whisper)
No, we agreed to say Merry
Christmas.

ZACH
Oh yeah.

He turns to the group.

ZACH (CONT'D)
Hi guys and *Merry Christmas!*

JAMES
Close enough.

BEGIN TITLES.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

EXT. ROBIN HIGH - MORNING (ESTABLISHING)

EXT. ROBIN HIGH - BUS LOOP - MORNING

A bus arrives at the bus loop. Jules and others get off the bus. Zach and his friends are waiting there. They jump with joy seeing Jules.

He says HI in a very happy way [like Zach]. He waves his little hand.

JULES (V.O.)
I usually begin my day by greeting
the children I have dubbed the
Sunshine Kids. They seem to have
sad lives, but are always so happy
about it.

JULES TALKING HEAD

JULES
This is my easiest greeting.

INT. HALLWAY - MORNING

Jules opens the door. A group of people who look like Toby are standing in the entrance. He relaxes his body, and cocks his head to the side.

He says hey to them, his voice low and chill.

They respond similarly. [Low hip-level waves, bit of laughs]

JULES (V.O.)
These children are the burnouts.
All they do is skateboard, spit on
things, lean on things, give chin-
up nods, and make excuses to skip
classes.

MONTAGE - We see the burnout kids: Riding skateboards [except Toby], spitting on things, leaning on things, giving awkward nods to people, and one of them explaining to their teacher why they weren't in class the other day.

JULES TALKING HEAD

JULES

But burnouts are some of the nicest people in a school. They're always the first to welcome a newcomer. I should know.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

He walks up the stairs. He takes off his jacket as stuffs it in a trash can. Paris walks by, wearing a baseball cap. He takes it off her head and puts it on himself. At the top of the stairs, a group of sports kids.

They make an intricate handshake up on the spot. It is way too long.

JULES (V.O.)

The sports kids are always the hardest to win over. Luckily for me I am very good at many sports. Like, Rugby, Football, or as you say [exaggerated American accent] soccer... I am an accomplished Fencer, I've won six nationals in six different countries in water polo...

JULES TALKING HEAD

JULES

My proudest moment was my victory in Dressage. Concours Hippique International Officiel Aachen. Which as you know is basically the Super Bowl of Dressage. I have like between 70 and 127 trophies, awards, medals, and various other cups.

Zoom Out - Paris rolls her eyes so hard she could break them.

JULES (CONT'D)

What?! It's not bragging if it's true!

Paris dead-pans camera.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

They finish the handshake.

Jules walks off across the "Bridge of Disappointment."

He grabs a spare shirt that he has left taped to the underside of one of the benches. He pulls it over a long-sleeve and throws his sweater on the bench.

JULES (V.O.)

The next group are the Dungeons & Dragons kids. I know what you're thinking: "You are much too handsome for them to take you in." But that is why I have these.

He pulls out a pair of glasses and puts them on.

He looks into camera.

JULES TALKING HEAD

JULES

The movies have got one thing right. If you wear glasses you are not hot.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

They are so happy to see Jules. They are all carrying their D&D books and dice, etc.

JULES (V.O.)

They are so excited to play their Rangers, and Dark Elves, and be "murder hobos." And I have learned to say things like: "Why does everyone in town hate us?" "I loot the body. What do I find?" "My dice hate me, can I use yours?" "That's a Nat one, so I hit myself right?" "I attempt to seduce the dragon."

JULES TALKING HEAD

JULES

And I've learned to be annoyed when the DM says: "You can certainly try." (beat) They eat it all up.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

He enters the bathroom to change. He comes out holding books and wearing a whole new outfit.

JULES (V.O.)
The last group are the cool kids.
And in this school, the cool kids
are very academic. That is not
always the case.

JULES TALKING HEAD

JULES
And that is easy for me, because I
have always been cool, and I have
always been smart.

Zoom out - Paris face palms.

PARIS
Oh my God. How does a person become
this arrogant!

JULES
127 trophies.

She groans.

INT. LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

A group of academic kids are sat at one of the tables. He sits down.

They are happy to see them.

He opens his book and helps them with their work. They are enthralled.

JULES (V.O.)
And I do this so perfectly and so
smoothly that no one suspects who I
am or why I am here.

Jules gets a strange feeling, a shiver. He looks up.

James is behind the tapestry. He is hidden behind an open picture book. [I Spy] James and Jules lock eyes. James does the "I'm watching you" gesture.

JULES TALKING HEAD

JULES
(vexed)
Except James.

PARIS
Which is why you are being pulled
from assignment by Gregory. You
could not even fool a silly little
boy with anger issues.

INT. LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

JULES
(cursing)
James...

PARIS TALKING HEAD

PARIS
And now the school is mine. And
just in time for the new school.
Quite and upgrade.

JULES
You will never fit into all the
groups like I have. You do not have
the skill.

PARIS
I don't need any of that. All I
need to do is look like this.

Jules rolls his eyes so hard they could break.

PARIS (CONT'D)
It's not bragging if it's true.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. LIBRARY - MORNING

Daisy, Sid, Ethan, Zach, Corbyn, Paris, and Adrian.

James is still spying of Jules. Zach is standing behind James.

ZACH
Hi friends!

CORBYN
What's he doing? [re: James]

ZACH
Oh, he's spying on his friend.

ADRIAN
Why is he doing that?

ZACH
(giddy)
I don't know, but it's fun. We're
on a stake-out.

BEAT.

ZACH (CONT'D)
What are you guys doing?

DAISY
We're talking about our Christmas
themes. This year, mine is
California winter. Santa is in
fuchsia, obviously. So that's my
highlight colour. My accent is pale
blue. And I'm not using gold like
some newb, I'm using platinum.

ETHAN
Isn't that silver?

DAISY
No it's platinum.

ETHAN
What's the difference?

DAISY
If you don't already understand,
you never will.

She puts up a hand to him.

CORBYN
You get oddly mean at Christmas.

DAISY
(aggressive)
I know. But the aesthetics are important. I don't particularly love Christmas, but I live for the aesthetic.

James hears. He gasps.

CORBYN
Alright, Daisy. (beat) What about you, Sid? Do you get oddly weird about the Christmas aesthetic?

SID
I have no idea what you just said.

BEAT.

SID (CONT'D)
But honestly, I hate Christmas.

James gasps harder.

ETHAN
Right? It's just an inflated commercial holiday designed to sell toys, and useless junk to fuel the Neoliberal machine.

SID
Uh, okay, I guess. Well I've been in foster care since I was two. And something I've noticed is that families usually like to get rid of foster children right around Christmas so they don't have to buy us gifts. At least the families I've been in. And so they can spend more money on their "real" kids. [mimes quotation marks] So honestly other than the year my foster family got really drunk and robbed a gas station for Christmas presents, which was kinda nice, if you think about it, all of my Christmases have been in group homes.

ETHAN
Well, crap.

Everyone is uncomfortable.

James gasps and starts weeping. He runs off.

Paris off to the side, listening:

PARIS
Oh. That just broke my cold Belgian heart.

They are all staring at Sid, sadly and in shock.

ETHAN
Yeah that's another good reason not to like Christmas.

Daisy smacks Ethan on the arm, scolding him.

SID
(switching)
Well, see you later guys. Have a good day!

ADRIAN
(singing)
Womp womp womp woooooommmppp.

Everyone stares at him.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry guys, I'm really uncomfortable right now.

INT. CLASSROOM - NOON

Blaire, Ethan, Sagina, and Chelsi are sat at a table. James is standing, Zach behind him carrying a stack of folders.

BLAIRE
Why are we here, James?

JAMES
You shall see.

BLAIRE
Oh boy.

ETHAN
Here we go.

JAMES

As we all know, Christmas is a time for joy and caring where it is our duty to spread happiness and love to all. With that said, I have something for you all.

They get excited thinking they are about to get presents. They are one-by-one disappointed as Zach hands them each a file folder filled with paper. They open it.

CHELSEI

No! James, no.

ETHAN

What is this?

JAMES

It's a dossier.

BLAIRE

No. You promised.

JAMES

(smiling to camera)

Ladies a gentlemen I present the 2024 Christmas project!

They all groan.

SAGINA

Oh, cool. I'm glad we're doing this. (to camera) I always feel so good afterwards.

JAMES

What's with you?

SAGINA

I've always liked this.

JAMES

(snappy)

I'm suspicious of your motivation.

He squints at her.

ETHAN

I said I was done after last year.

BLAIRE

Yeah I'm not dredging a polluted river again. I don't care THAT much about the fishes, James.

She looks to camera.

BLAIRE (CONT'D)
I was hospitalised for two weeks
with Giardia.

CHELSEI
It was bad.

SAGINA
I got a pet newt.

James snaps his head to her.

JAMES
Never mind that. This, I assure you
is far better, and less likely to
expose you to viral diseases.
(beat) We are going to save Sid's
Christmas!

ETHAN
No, I can't hear that again.

BLAIRE
Who's Sid?

SAGINA
She's a nice kid that skateboards,
but can't skateboard.

They all have a moment of realisation.

CHELSEI
Can we not just have one year where
we exchange gifts like regular
friends.

JAMES
See I thought you would say that
which is why I brought Lock.

CUT TO:

ZACH TALKING HEAD

ZACH
Since I was little I've always had
a good memory. My mom says I have a
photographic memory, as a matter of
fact. For instance, three years ago
my dad and a lady were having a
conversation in our kitchen.

(MORE)

ZACH (CONT'D)
I remembered it word for word, but I didn't understand what the lady was talking about or why she was saying it in a baby voice. So I told my mom about it and she started to cry, so I think she was upset about something, and then because my parents got divorced shortly after I never got to ask her what it was about. Anyway... Oh my god, I think I might be why my parents got divorced. Oh I know what the lady was saying now... Ugh EW no gross! Interview over.

Zach runs off, smacking his head.

ZACH (CONT'D)
Forget. Forget. Forget.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

JAMES
Say it Lock.

Zach repeats what Sid said earlier in the library as if he were reading a court transcript.

ZACH
(plain-toned)
Uh, okay, I guess. Well I've been in foster care since I was two. And something I've noticed is that families usually like to get rid of foster children right around Christmas so they don't have to buy us gifts. At least the families I've been in. And so they can spend more money on their "real" kids. [mimes quotation marks dramatically] So honestly other than the year my foster family got really drunk-

JAMES
Skip to the end.

ZACH
All of my Christmases have been in group homes. (beat) That's all.

BLAIRE
What the hell?

CHELSEI
Okay that was sad.

SAGINA
I cannot wait to make this kid's
dreams come true.

Ethan leans over to them both.

ETHAN
You're lucky you got the robo-
version of that.

BLAIRE
Okay what do you want?

JAMES
Oh, wait you're onboard?

CHELSEI
Yeah we are. That is just sad. No
one deserves to not have a
Christmas. Except maybe Hitler.

They all nod and agree.

CUT TO:

CHELSEI TALKING HEAD

CHELSEI
The problem with James and his
"Christmas Projects," is if I we
say no to JAMES, what does that
make us? That's right! BAD! PEOPLE!

CUT TO:

SAGINA TALKING HEAD

SAGINA
Don't get me wrong, James can still
be the worst, but I don't think
people give him enough credit for
the joy he spreads at Christmas. I
mean honestly, he's one of the only
people who gets the true meaning of
Christmas, and he generously shares
it with us.

(MORE)

SAGINA (CONT'D)
 (beat) But if I find out that you
 told ANY of this to James, I will
 hunt you down like a dog in the
 night and flay the flesh from your
 living body. Am I clear? Awesome.
 Happy Holidays!

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

ETHAN
 What do we need to do, James.

JAMES
 (to camera)
 Alright Operation: Grinches give
 back Christmas is in action.

BEAT.

ETHAN
 I'm sorry are we the Grinches in
 this scenario?

James just keeps smiling to camera.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

JULES TALKING HEAD

JULES

I am not feeling very happy.

A student enters with a giant bag full of Candy-grams.

STUDENT 1

Candy-gram for Jules.

JULES

Oh, yeah that's me. Thank you.

STUDENT 1

I'm not done. This'll be a sec.

Jules doesn't know if he should continue.

STUDENT 1 (CONT'D)

Please continue. Don't stop for me.

JULES

Paris told me she can infiltrate more groups than I could. I of course laughed at this-

The students hands him another candy cane.

JULES (CONT'D)

Thank you. But it seems as if she is making progress. Paris. (cursing).

The student gives him another.

JULES (CONT'D)

Thank you. And now the student council president has fallen suddenly ill just as Paris sets her sites on Blaire. Coincidence-

They hand him another candy cane.

JULES (CONT'D)

Thank you. (beat) I think not.

STUDENT 1

I'm sorry, what's going on?

JULES

What?

STUDENT 1

You were just saying that someone probably poisoned a kid.

JULES

I don't know what you're talking about. This is nonsense.

STUDENT 1

Are you a spy?

Jules looks startled into camera.

JULES

No.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

The student council is in session. Blaire is taking notes. She is a secretary. ORFHLAITH is the interim president.

ORFHLAITH

So, just as a last item, some of us are going to visit Xander tomorrow in hospital. He can have no more than three guests at a time so we'll go in shifts.

Another student, SIMON, lets out a sad little cry.

ORFHLAITH (CONT'D)

I take it you want to go first on the list, Simon?

SIMON

(teary)

Yes.

Blaire, who's typing notes, rolls her eyes.

ORFHLAITH

Of course. Anyways, we all wish him well and hope for a swift recovery.

Blaire rolls her eyes again.

ORFHLAITH (CONT'D)

And for those who haven't signed it already, there is card at the door.

On a table by the door is a massive "get well soon" card surrounded by flowers and pictures almost like a shrine.

Blaire groans. (OS)

ORFHLAITH (CONT'D)
Are you okay, Blaire?

BLAIRE
(to camera, light sarcasm)
Yep. Just trying to hold in my emotions.

ORFHLAITH
Aren't we all. (beat) Sad times.

Blaire glares at camera.

Orfhlaith takes a breath and switches tones.

ORFHLAITH (CONT'D)
Also as a last item, because of Xander's sudden medical incident we will be holding council elections in the Spring.

Blaire's eyes widen.

ORFHLAITH (CONT'D)
And one last thing, I have obtained a picture of our new student council office at the new school. And it even has a president's chair.

ORFHLAITH TALKING HEAD

Orfhlaith is sat holding her phone with the picture of the offices.

ORFHLAITH
When I'm president, I'm going to put a mini fridge here. And here I will put a little plant, but a cactus, because I'm a busy woman. And I'll paint it a beautiful shade of Lavender, because it's calming and trendy. And here I will put my picture of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez [with proper pronunciation]. When she is president, I will be Prime Minister, and we will rule together!

She laughs.

ORFHLAITH (CONT'D)
But no, really.

She sits back and sighs.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

BLAIRE
(to herself)
YES. My time has come. I will be
president.

ORFHLAITH
And for obvious reason we will be
adding a Vice President to the
council. We probably should've done
that before.

BLAIRE
Hmm... I guess I'll have to start
thinking about running mates.

ORFHLAITH
Sorry what was that, Blaire?

BLAIRE
Oh, nothing. Just thinking.

ORFHLAITH
Well less thinking and more typing.

Blaire glares at camera.

BLAIRE
Oh, sorry. I'm just overwhelmed by
Xander and all. Y'know?

ORFHLAITH
Oh yes, aren't we all.

BEAT.

ORFHLAITH (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Anyways. As a last item, winter
dance is next week, Thursday.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Corbyn, Daisy, Adrian, and Ethan are stood in the hall pacing in panic.

ADRIAN

(panic)

What are we gonna do? What are we gonna do? I- Guys I burst out crying in math class. This is awful.

DAISY

(panic)

I don't know? I can't think about anything else. My aesthetic is all off. I just purchased an inflatable Santa. (beat) Christmas is ruined.

CORBYN

I can hear her words echoing through my mind. Now my very soul is on fire.

They all stare at him.

ETHAN

What are you guys talking about.

They look at him, confused.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Sorry, I zoned out.

Zach runs down the stairs.

ZACH

Guys! Guys! I've been looking for you everywhere.

They stop at the bottom of the stairs and catch their breath for a second.

ZACH (CONT'D)

Mr. Christmas has a plan to save Sid's Christmas! It has a code name.

(to camera)

Operation: Grinches give back Christmas.

ZACH TALKING HEAD

ZACH

Some people tell me that James is using me. (cheeky) But honestly sometimes I think I'm using him. I used to just sit around and talk at lunch, but now we do missions. I'm spying on Belgians, I'm getting him pencils, I'm tailing Sagina to see what "hot mess she's gotten into now," and procuring maps of the new school. (beat) Actually, I can't say anything more about that.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

ADRIAN

Who's Mr. Christmas?

ETHAN

Ugh. That's James. Once a year he's filled with the Christmas spirit. It's the worst.

ADRIAN

Okay, what is it? What's his idea?

ZACH

Well. We just kinda find out what Sid wants and then we get it.

BEAT. They all wait thinking more is coming.

DAISY

Is that all?

ZACH

No! We also wrap it and put it in a bag and give it to them.

DAISY

Actually its elegant. Simple, classy. Yeah that'll work.

ADRIAN

(mocking)

Maybe Corbyn can give the gifts to Sid.

DAISY
(mocking)
Yes Corbyn why don't you give her
your Christmas gift.

ETHAN
Ew.

CORBYN
I though we agreed to be kind to
each other. And I'm not feeling the
support.

CORBYN TALKING HEAD

CORBYN
I want to ask Sid out, but I don't
think this is the right time. All
things considered. What if Sid
doesn't even like me? Oh, I never
thought about that. What if I ruin
our friendship? She might leave and
never come back. Oh. Just breath.
Box breath. Box Breath. In two
three four. Out two three four.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

ADRIAN
I just hope this plan is enough to
keep me from crying in English.

They all look at him

ADRIAN (CONT'D)
What? I'm very uncomfortable right
now.

INT. CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

Everyone but Sid is in the room. Sagina closes the bag.

SAGINA
I feel just like Santa.

JAMES
I like your Christmas spirit, but
if anyone's Santa (laughs) its me.

Blaire puts her hand on Sagina's shoulder. She nods affirming
James' statement.

CHELSEI

Um, so what are we doing here, guys? Are we just gonna drag out a bag that looks like garbage, put it at her feet and yell "SURPRISE"?

JAMES

Ew no. Gross. We will sing a carol, present the gifts, and watch as the magic of Christmas unfolds in her heart.

SAGINA

Beautiful.

ETHAN

I draw the line at singing.

Blaire glares at them.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

I might be able to make an exception this one time.

JAMES

Okay everyone! Places.

James picks up the bag. They follow him.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUS LOOP- AFTERNOON

They exit the school. Outside is Sid. Sid is with Corbyn. James gathers them. They walk up to Sid.

They all then sing a Christmas song, loudly. (any song)

They all sing different ones. James rolls his eyes.

JAMES

Okay, that was a nice effort but it sucked. (beat) Sorry that was not within the spirit of Christmas, I apologise.

ZACH

How about "we wish you a merry Christmas?"

ETHAN

Let's not.

SID
Yeah, hey, guys, we're good.

ETHAN
Thank God.

CORBYN
What is this, guys?

BLAIRE
We were attempting, in our own
awkward and terrible way, to bring
you some Christmas joy.

SID
I don't need your charity.

ETHAN
Okay. Great!

Ethan starts to walk off. Blaire grabs him by the collar.

JAMES
We are actually the ones seeking
charity.

SID
Huh? What does that mean?

JAMES
All year long we are caught up in
our own lives. Worrying about our
wants and needs. We are selfish and
unthoughtful.

They murmur in agreement.

JAMES (CONT'D)
But once a year we get an
opportunity to let the needs of
others take precedent. To put
ourselves aside. To be better
people. For me, Christmas is magic
because it feeds my humanity.

The others roll their eyes.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Please give me the charity of good
will. I need to be a better person.

Sid is in shock. The rest are taken back by his sincerity.

CHELSEI
Yeah that's true.

James gives her side-eye.

SAGINA
Are you kidding me! You do that!
But you cant call me SAGE?! GOD YOU
SUCK!

JAMES
Clearly not all of us are able to
be selfless.

He gestures to her with his thumb.

SID
Okay, if this means that much to
you guys.

Sid reaches her hand out to take the bag.

JAMES
Thank you, Merry Christmas.

He turns and walks away and snaps his fingers at Zach.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Say goodbye to your friends, Lock.

ZACH
Bye, friends!

Zach waves goodbye and runs off.

CORBYN
So... What's in the bag?

He nudges her.

SID
I don't know.

She opens the bag. A warm glow comes out (like pulp fiction). She is in awe. She quickly closes the bag. She smiles.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. FIELD - AFTERNOON

James is going home. He has none of his things.

Zach runs up.

JAMES
Where were you?

ZACH
What? Oh I was just getting a
thing.

JAMES
Do that on your own time, okay.

Zach holds out a gift bag.

ZACH
Merry Christmas, James.

JAMES
What's this?

ZACH
I don't know, just a thing.

JAMES
I said no presents.

ZACH
Well its good then that its just a
thing.

He sighs.

He opens the gift. It is a small muffin pan. He smiles.

We hear voices:

MOM (V.O.)
What do you want for Christmas,
James?

LITTLE JAMES (V.O.)
I want a muffin pan.

DAD (V.O.)
C'mon don't you want something for
boys? How about an RC Car?

MOM (V.O.)
Yeah James, you can think of
something better.

LITTLE JAMES (V.O.)
(sad)
Okay...

DAD (V.O.)
Muffin pan... Pfff. Stupid.

James tears up.

JAMES
How did you?

ZACH
I just did.

There is a silence. He doesn't want to show emotion.

JAMES
(quick)
Thank you, Merry Christmas.

ZACH
Merry Christmas.

JAMES
Put this in my bag.

They walk off together.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW