

The Cootie Catcher

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FADE IN:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Kids are filing into school like they normally do.

INT. ENGLISH WING

A casual looking boy turns the corner into the English wing. He has on jeans, a t-shirt, and sneakers. This is CHRIS.

As he walks down the hallway, Chris waves to a couple of his friends and receives several greetings from various students.

When he is about halfway down he hallway, Chris is intercepted by CASHMAN, who has just popped out of his classroom.

CASHMAN
You ready for the meet this weekend?

Chris jumps back a little.

CHRIS
(laughing nervously)
Oh, um.. Yeah, you bet.

CASHMAN
(nodding)
Good. Good. You better be. We're counting on you FOR THE WIN!

CHRIS
Haha okay, Cashman.

Chris continues down the hallway, and the greetings continue.

A tall, muscular boy with a football passes Chris. This is RANDOM KID 1.

RANDOM KID 1
Yo, Chris! Whaddup, man?

The two boys do a quick handshake.

CHRIS
Hey, not much, dude.

Chris arrives at his locker and begins rummaging around for his books.

A nerdy looking kid pops up behind Chris. He has on glasses and a polo. This is BEN.

BEN

Soooo, someone got into Duke! How do I know? Your mom told my mom, who told me. Yup. It's true.

Ben starts to dance around.

BEN (CONT'D)

Uh huhhh! Uh huhhh! You got innn. What up??

Chris laughs lightly, but mostly takes no notice to Ben's dance.

Chris shuts his locker and begins to walk away.

Ben, who is caught up in his dance, doesn't see Chris leave.

He begins dribbling an imaginary basketball and taking shots into the air.

BEN (CONT'D)

(in the Jock Jams tune)

Da da da da da, DUKE! Da da da da da DUKE!

Ben abruptly stops when he realizes that Chris has left.

He acts nonchalant about the fact that he was just dancing in the middle of the hallway by himself and brushes his shirt off.

Ben clears his throat, looks around coolly, and runs after Chris.

BEN (CONT'D)

(muttering)

You could've told me you were leaving.

CHRIS

(laughing)

I didn't want to interrupt.

Ben scowls at Chris.

Time slows down as Chris slowly looks down the hallway in awe. He is staring at a couple standing at their lockers. The girl, pretty and blonde, is wearing an oversized football sweatshirt. This is JAMIE.

She is standing with her boyfriend ZACH, who is leaning against her locker. Zach is wearing sweatpants, boots, and a loose, undone, button-up shirt.

The two are laughing and nudging each other lovingly.

Chris, who is not paying attention to where he is walking, suddenly runs into RANDOM KID 2.

RANDOM KID 2
Whoa, sorry Chris. Didn't see ya there.

Random Kid 2 continues walking and Ben begins to laugh.

BEN
Still pining over Jamie Sullivan, I see.

CHRIS
Oh shut up dude. You know it's your fault.

BEN
(mocking)
Oh, yes it's allll my fault that I interrupted your little game of cootie catcher in the fourth grade.

Ben rolls his eyes and Chris turns to him with an accusing look.

CHRIS
Well, if you just gave me the stupid book then she wouldn't have started playing with Zach.

Chris nods his head toward Zach.

BEN
Hey, I was in the middle of "Encyclopedia Brown". I couldn't just give it up. That book's a life-changer.

CHRIS
It certainly changed my life.

BEN
Yeah, you're right. Zach got to play and then the *magic* cootie catcher made the two of them fall in love. Come on, man. We've been over this a thousand times. It just wasn't meant to be. I think it's time you let it go.

Chris gives Ben a shove and Ben falls into a locker.

CHRIS
Shut up.

Chris glances back at Jamie and Zach, who are now hugging.

Chris sighs with dismay.

INT. PHYSICS ROOM - DAY

Kids are buzzing with commotion before the start of class.

The bell rings.

MR. FISKE
Okay kids, work with your partner
and solve this problem on
Relativity.

Mr. Fiske starts writing a problem on the board that has to do with going back in time.

Chris, seated at a back lab table, is next to his lab partner LINDSEY.

Lindsey is a tall, frizzy-haired girl who is chewing gum obnoxiously.

She is rummaging through her things to get out a pencil and paper when she turns to Chris, sighing heavily.

LINDSEY
Oh my God, you'll NEVER guess what
happened to me this morning!

Chris sighs and rolls his eyes.

CHRIS
(under breath)
Nope, I won't.

Chris begins to copy down the problem from the board trying to avoid Lindsey's story.

LINDSEY
First, my alarm didn't go off, so I
didn't get up till like 6:30. Then,
I had to shower, blow-dry, and
straighten my hair in like ten
minutes. Then, since it was like
frizzy, I had to put product in!

Chris eyes widen and he begins to nod in agreement to what Lindsey is saying.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
Product, I know right? So anyway...

Chris looks away from Lindsey and begins doing his problem.

SMASH CUT.

INT. FISKE'S CLASSROOM - END OF PERIOD

Mr. Fiske is tidying papers on his desk. He looks up.

MR. FISKE
 Alright, class. Remember your
 homework is due tomorrow.

LINDSEY
 (continuation of story)
 ...and that's like a lot of coffee!

Chris looks over to Jamie who is sitting at a lab table diagonal from Chris', she is laughing and joking with her partner.

Fiske looks over at Chris and sees him staring at Jamie. He shakes his head.

The bell rings.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
 Oh and- Ah! I'll finish my story
 tomorrow.

Lindsey gets up and leaves.

Chris gathers his things and walks up to Mr. Fiske.

CHRIS
 Hey, Mr. Fiske? Can I get some
 extra help with that Relativity
 Theorem we were working on today?

Mr. Fiske looks up.

MR. FISKE
 Oh, sure. What don't you get?

CHRIS
 I just can't wrap my head around
 how time can be warped.

MR. FISKE
 Ah yes. Students often have trouble
 with this.

CHRIS
 I don't know how you even
 understand it. I thought only
 Einstein was the only one that
 figured it out.

Mr. Fiske gives Chris a long, knowing stare.

MR. FISKE

He was.

(beat)

Chris, have you ever wanted something so badly, but fate got in the way?

Chris looks confused.

CHRIS

Umm.. Yeah, I guess.

MR. FISKE

Would you be prepared to go to extremes to get it?

CHRIS

I... I don't know?

Mr. Fiske smiles. He pulls out a pen and begins writing on a small piece of paper.

MR. FISKE

Well, if you are, take this to Plimpton and gives it to Mrs. Nota.

CHRIS

Mrs. Nota?

INT. DARK STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Chris is slowly making his way down a dark staircase. Small lanterns line the hall.

Chris reaches the bottom of the stairs and moves towards a door with beads hanging down in the doorway.

Chris pulls aside the beads and enters into the room.

INT. TRINKET ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chris walks through a room filled with various trinkets and Oragami birds hang down from the ceiling.

A mysterious person is standing at the far end of the room behind a long table. This is MRS. NOTA.

MRS. NOTA

Come, come.

Chris approaches the table.

He opens his mouth to speak, but Mrs. Nota holds up her finger and cuts him off.

MRS. NOTA (CONT'D)

No, no.

She pulls a cootie catcher out of her robes and slides the toy across the table to Chris.

Mrs. Nota smiles.

MRS. NOTA (CONT'D)

Be careful!

Chris looks confused at the cootie catcher and looks, but Mrs. Nota had disappeared.

INT. CHRIS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chris lays on his bed, as the clock next to him reads 8:15. He is looking up at the cootie catcher. Each section has a letter written on it. They are 'M', 'D', 'W', and 'Y'. Everything else is blank.

CHRIS

I've never seen one like this before.

Suddenly his DAD enters the room.

DAD

Hey son, have you seen my Game Boy?

Chris quickly tosses the cootie catcher to the side.

CHRIS

Uh, no. Sorry, Dad.

His dad leaves disappointed. He grabs the cootie catcher and looks over at the clock. It is now 8:17. He does the cootie catcher twice. He opens the 'M' flap and is amazed to see that it now says "8:15".

Wish.

Chris is still sitting in his bed. He opens the cootie catcher again but it is blank again. He looks at it confused, when his dad walks in.

DAD

Hey son, have you seen my Game Boy?

Chris stares at him for a moment, trying to make sense of what just happened.

DAD (CONT'D)

Well have you?

Chris shakes his head and his dad leaves.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Chris sits at a desk in MS. LOUGHLIN's classroom.

Chris looks down at his binder and slowly slides it to the side.

The cootie catcher is sitting underneath.

At the sight of it, Chris hears Mrs. Nota's voice.

MRS. NOTA (V.O.)
Be careful!

Chris quickly slides the binder back over the cootie catcher.

INT. HALLWAY

Chris opens his locker in a busy hallway and takes the cootie catcher out. He puts it back on the shelf and walks away from his locker.

CHRIS
It's not worth it.

He looks down the hallway and sees Jamie and Zach talking to each other.

Chris abruptly turns around and gets the cootie catcher out of his locker.

He stares at it for a moment and takes a deep breath.

He counts out loud to ten as he does the cootie catcher eight times and opens the 'Y' flap, as the number '2002' suddenly appears.

Whish.

INT. MRS. ROCKWOOD'S CLASSROOM - DAY

A pair of little hands lie on a desk holding the same cootie catcher Chris was holding moments earlier.

Slowly, the rest of the classroom is revealed. It is a typical elementary classroom, where the seats are arranged in groups. Next to the desks is a rug with a book shelf for silent reading.

CHRIS (V.O.)
Did it work? Am I really here?

MRS. ROCKWOOD, Chris' fourth grade teacher, is writing something on the board.

CHRIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 This is my fourth grade
 classroom...

Kids are sitting in the desks surrounding LITTLE CHRIS. All of them have their crayon boxes out. Some are paying attention, while others are just fooling around.

CHRIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 These are my hands, and my arms,
 and my shirt, and my-

Little Chris' hands stretch out on the desk, revealing all ten fingers. One hand travels up Little Chris' arm. Then the hands fall on Little Chris' colorful t-shirt, stretching it out slightly.

Beat.

CHRIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Oh my god, it worked.

The rest of Little Chris' body is revealed. His face is small and his hair tousled.

Little Chris sits there, pleased with himself, when he hears the girl next to him speak. It is LITTLE LINDSEY.

LITTLE LINDSEY
 You'll NEVER guess what happened to
 me this morning.

Chris turns his head towards her in horror, wishing he did not have to listen to her speak.

LITTLE LINDSEY (CONT'D)
 First, my Dad didn't wake me up. So
 I finally get up... a half an hour
 late! Then, we were out of fruity
 pebbles so my mom made me eat
 toast, and it was all burnt and -

LITTLE JAMIE, who is sitting in front of Chris, turns around, cutting Little Lindsey off. She is holding a cootie catcher.

LITTLE JAMIE
 Wanna play?

Little Lindsey sighs with dismay and turns to listen to Mrs. Rockwood.

Little Chris' eyes widen with excitement.

LITTLE CHRIS
 (snapping out of it)
 Ummm... yes?

Little Jamie looks back weirdly.

CHRIS (V.O.)
Ugh, great. You sounded like a
jerk. Seem interested.

Chris' eyes fall to the desk in frustration.

He quickly looks back up.

LITTLE CHRIS
I mean, uh, yeah! I love those!
Look I have one of my-

Chris begins to pick up his cootie catcher but is cut off by
LITTLE BEN.

LITTLE BEN
(waving his hand in the
air)
Umm...Mrs.Rockwood! It's time for
drop everything and read!

Mrs. Rockwood stops her lesson and glances at the clock.

MRS. ROCKWOOD
You're right Ben. Class it's time
to grab your books and find a spot
to read.

CHRIS (V.O.)
Uh, stupid Ben. Only you would
remind the teacher that.

Little Chris scowls at Little Ben.

CHRIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Alright, moment of truth. Gotta be
cool. Just get a book and get back
to the desk.

Little Chris looks away from Little Ben and gets up
nonchalantly.

He struts over to the bookshelf. He sees little Zach get up
across the room so he decides to just ignore Ben, who has
"Encyclopedia Brown", and grab his own book. He grabs "Sweet
Valley High" without even looking at it and quickly heads
back to his seat.

He looks at Little Jamie.

LITTLE CHRIS
(sighing)
Alright, where were we?

LITTLE JAMIE
(smiling)
Okay, pick a number.

Chris picks a number and she begins to count them out.

Whish.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Chris is standing in the middle of a busy hallway. Students are bustling around him, carrying books and backpacks.

Chris looks around curiously, questioning whether or not anything has changed.

Random Kid 1 passes Chris.

RANDOM KID 1
CHRIS!

Random Kid 1 playfully punches Chris in the shoulder.

CHRIS
Hey man.

Chris begins feeling more comfortable when he spies Jamie walking down the hallway. He awkwardly looks at the floor and then back at Jamie, not sure what is going to happen.

Jamie approaches, and passes Chris. Chris looks heartbroken.

Then Jamie wheels around and begins walking next to him.

JAMIE
I didn't even see you there! How
come you didn't say hi?

Chris looks dumbfounded.

CHRIS
I... I, uh... didn't see you
either.

Jamie laughs and grabs his hand to hold her hers.

Chris smiles with satisfaction.

JAMIE
So where are you taking me this
weekend?

Chris, although confused, plays along.

CHRIS
It's.. A surprise!

JAMIE
Aw come on!

Chris shakes his head, smiling.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
Oh, yeah... Cashman told me he
wants to see you. Something about
practice?

INT. CASHMAN'S ROOM

Chris walks into Cashman's Journalism class as the bell is
ringing.

Cashman looks up from his work with excitement.

CASHMAN
Hey! The man of the hour.

CHRIS
Yeah, hey.

CASHMAN
Okay, so I just have one question
left.

CHRIS
Oh, um, okay...

CASHMAN
So, outside of practice what do you
do to prepare yourself?

CHRIS
(confused)
Prepare myself? Ummm... I... I
guess I drink a lot of water
throughout the day and stretch a
lot.

CASHMAN
Really? Okay that's great. And I
just need you to approve the
picture for the front page.

CHRIS
Front page? Yeah sure.

Cashman points to two pictures on the board with the quote
"Cheerleading is my passion" beneath. Chris looks taken aback
and disgusted.

CASHMAN

Okay so this one is my personal favorite. I think it says I'm graceful but also very masculine.

Chris's eyes seem to be bugging out of his head.

CASHMAN (CONT'D)

Okay or not. This other one definitely says I'm secure with my sexuality and I don't care who knows it.

Cashman turns to face Chris and seems happy with the second choice.

CHRIS

(shaking his head)

No. No.

CASHMAN

(somewhat offended)

That's okay. If the head cheerleader wants a new photo the head cheerleader will get a new photo.

CHRIS

What! This is wrong. This is all wrong!

CASHMAN

I'm so sorry. I told Courtney they didn't fit you at all-

CHRIS

(to himself)

I have to go back.

CASHMAN

Huh?

Chris whips out the cootie catcher and does it eight times.

Whish.

INT. MRS. ROCKWOOD'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Little Chris sits in his desk.

Little Jamie is facing him.

LITTLE BEN

(waving his hand in the air)

(MORE)

LITTLE BEN (CONT'D)
Umm...Mrs.Rockwood! It's time for
drop everything and read!

MRS. ROCKWOOD
You're right Ben. Class it's time
to grab your books and find a spot
to read.

Little Chris jumps up, runs over to the bookshelf, and begins
looking wildly around.

CHRIS (V.O.)
Okay, think Chris. What do you have
to change?

Little Chris looks back to his desk and sees Little Zach
making his way over.

He reaches for the first book he sees without looking at his
choice. The book is "Goodnight Moon".

He quickly runs back to his seat as Little Jamie turns
around.

LITTLE JAMIE
Pick a color.

Chris picks a color.

Whish.

INT. ENGLISH HALLWAY - PRESENT DAY

Chris pops up at his locker. He peers out from behind the
door, nervous to see what the present is like.

There are kids walking down the hallway, going to class.

Jamie, who is now wearing a track sweatshirt, shows up at his
locker.

JAMIE
Hey! What's up?

CHRIS
Not much, just lookin' for some
books.

Chris awkwardly exaggerates the looking of the books. As he
is looking, he notices that there is now a picture of him and
Jamie hanging up on the door.

JAMIE
We're sitting together at lunch,
right?

Chris nods with enthusiasm.

CHRIS
Yes, of course.

JAMIE
I'll save you a seat.

CHRIS
Okay, sounds good.

Jamie leaves and Chris slowly shuts his locker.

He makes his way to Mr. Cashman's room cautiously.

He walks inside.

INT. CASHMAN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Cashman sits at his desk. Kids are filing in to the room and taking their seats.

Chris approaches Cashman's desk slowly.

CHRIS
Hey, uh, Cashman?

Cashman looks up.

CASHMAN
Oh, Chris. Hey! Here to pick up
your uniform I assume?

Chris looks around awkwardly.

CHRIS
Ugh.. Yeah.

CASHMAN
Great, I have it right here.

Cashman reaches for a cheer leading uniform lying next to his desk.

A look of horror comes over Chris.

CASHMAN (CONT'D)
Oh, that's not yours...uh just
ignore that, kids.

Cashman quickly throws the uniform to the side and hands Chris a track uniform.

Chris smiles with relief.

CHRIS

Thanks.

INT. MS. LOUGHLIN'S ROOM

Chris enters as the bell rings.

Most students are already in their seats.

MS. LOUGHLIN stops on her way up to the board and looks at Chris weirdly.

MS. LOUGHLIN

Can I help you?

CHRIS

(confused)

We have English this period right?

MS. LOUGHLIN

You're not in this class...

CHRIS

Then whose class am I in?

INT. MR. RATNER'S CLASSROOM

Mr. Ratner sits staring at Chris, who is the only student in the classroom.

MR. RATNER

Okay, Chris. Let's try to get past page two today.

CHRIS

What class is this?

MR. RATNER

Reading 101. How many times do I have to explain it? Now take out your book.

CHRIS

What book?

MR. RATNER

What do you mean what book?! The one book we've been reading for the past three months! Here, take my copy.

Mr. Ratner pulls out "Goodnight Moon" from his bag and places it on Chris' desk.

Chris looks at the book and gasps.

CHRIS
It's the book!

MR. RATNER
(sarcastically)
It is the book. Good job.

Chris quickly pulls the cootie catcher out and counts to eight once again.

Whish.

MONTAGE -- CHRIS GOING BACK AND FOURTH

-- Little Chris jumps up and runs over to the bookshelf and grabs a book on the yeti.

-- Chris sees Al Brown with a moustache and looks confused. Then he looks around and realizes everybody has moustaches.

-- Little Ben waves his hand in the air

-- Little Chris grabs Ecce: Romani!

-- Mr. Bakale is riding down the hallway in a chariot, whipping Chris and other students as they shamefully drag him.

-- Little Lindsey turns to talk to Little Chris.

-- Little Chris eats a cookie while the other students are running to get books.

-- Chris walks into the bathroom, looks in the mirror, and realizes he is RYAN HOURIHAN. He grabs the cootie catcher quickly.

-- Little Jamie asks Little Chris to play cootie catcher.

-- Chris and every other student is wearing a school uniform as they walk silently down the hall in single-file lines. He passes Jamie and says hi and is immediately handed an hour slip.

-- Little Chris grabs a book on time.

-- Ms. Mac writes the lunch times on the board. 5th Lunch is from 12:35 to 12:50

-- Chris sighs with frustration, mouthing the word "five!?"

-- Little Chris grabs another book.

INT. ENGLISH HALLWAY

Chris looks around and everything appears normal.

A girl at the locker next to him is getting her books when her friend runs up to her.

GIRL
Hurry, we're gonna be late for our
field trip!

FRIEND
Another one?!

They run off together.

The bell rings and Chris runs to Cashman's class.

INT. CASHMAN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

CASHMAN
Hey Chris, you're late.

Chris tries to think of an excuse.

CHRIS
Uh...

CASHMAN
I like your style. Take a seat.

Chris looks at the class to see that all of the desks have been replaced with comfortable chairs and couches and smiles.

CHRIS
(to himself)
I can adjust to this.

He takes a seat on one of the couches.

CASHMAN
Ok kids, since standardized tests
are now illegal, we will begin our
new unit on video games.

All the kids take out their controllers when the door opens and Lindsey walks in.

LINDSEY
Chris!

Chris looks up in horror.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
I didn't know you would be here!

She runs over to sit next to him and puts her arm around him.

LINDSEY (CONT'D)
We're hanging out today right?

The noise from "Psycho" plays.

Chris screams and runs past Lindsey, out the door.

Just after he leaves, a bell rings and a man pushing a trolley enters the room.

CASHMAN
That's a shame. He just missed the
ice cream man.

INT. MRS. ROCKWOOD'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Chris is back sitting next to Little Lindsey.

LITTLE LINDSEY
You'll NEVER guess what happened to
me this morning...

Lindsey continues to ramble on her story.

LITTLE BEN (V.O.)
Ugh, I don't think she's stopped
talking in eight years.

Little Jaime turns to face Chris.

LITTLE JAMIE
Wanna pl-

CHRIS
Yeah!

Chris sees Ben raise his hand out of the corner of his eye as he picks a color.

CHRIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Come on, focus! What have you been
doing wrong?

He looks at Ben again.

CHRIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
"Encyclopedia Brown" is the only
book I haven't tried yet...I just
can't let Ben get it.

MRS. ROCKWOOD

You're right Ben. Class it's time
to grab your books and find a spot
to read.

Little Chris jumps up and sprints to the bookshelf. He grabs
"Encyclopedia Brown" and turns to run back to the seat behind
Little Jamie.

Little Ben is passing Little Chris and he grabs the book
Little Chris is holding.

LITTLE BEN

Hey! I wasn't finished reading
that.

Little Chris glances over his shoulder at the seat. He sees
Little Zach approaching out of the corner of his eye.

Little Chris looks back at Little Ben and shoves him back
then runs to the seat.

MRS. ROCKWOOD

CHRISTOPHER!

Mrs. Rockwood quickly walks over to Chris and grabs him up by
the arm. Little Ben is on the ground trying not to cry.

MRS. ROCKWOOD (CONT'D)

There is NO pushing in this
classroom. Go to the principal's
office.

Mrs. Rockwood begins to drag Little Chris towards the door.

CHRIS

Nooooo. I need to play cootie
catcher. *Please* Mrs. Rockwood.

Mrs. Rockwood continues to lead Little Chris towards the
door.

MRS. ROCKWOOD

I'm sorry Chris but actions have
consequences.

Little Chris is being helped out the door by Mrs. Rockwood.
Little Chris looks back to see Little Jamie about to play
cootie catcher with Little ZACH.

Little Chris scowls.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

Chris is sitting in a chair when the principal, MR. STANTON
walks in.

MR. STANTON

Chris? I'm surprised to see you here.

SMASH CUT

Back in the room, Little Zach picks a number on the cootie catcher.

INT. MR. BALKUS' ROOM - DAY

Chris is sitting in History.

MR. BALKUS is standing over him, screaming and he slaps a detention slip of Chris's desk.

MR. BALKUS

KIDS THESE DAYS HAVE NO RESPECT FOR ME. ALWAYS EATING IN MY CLASSROOM. WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE!? YOU'VE BEEN HEADING DOWN THE WRONG PATH EVER SINCE YOU GOT HERE. YOU BETTER GET YOUR ACT TOGETHER OR YOU'LL BE SPENDING ANOTHER WEEK IN IN-HOUSE! AHFFF!!

Mr. Balkus turns to continue teaching.

Chris frantically whips out the cootie catcher.

CHRIS

(under breath)

I've gotta get outta here.

Balkus sees him and turns back around.

MR. BALKUS

AND THERE ARE **NO** COOTIE CATCHER'S IN MY CLASS! WHAT ARE YOU, IN FOURTH GRADE!?

CHRIS

Um, well actually-

MR. BALKUS

SILENCE!!!

He takes the cootie catcher from Chris.

CHRIS

No! NOOO!

The bell rings.

MR. BALKUS
(cheerily)
Good class today kids! Have a super-
awesome day!

Chris sits gaping at Mr. Balkus. He looks around for something to help him solve his situation.

CHRIS
I need that!

MR. BALKUS
(snide)
Make a new one.

CHRIS
A new one!

Balkus stares at him.

INT. DARK STAIRWELL

Chris sprints down the stairs and rounds the corner.

INT. DARK HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Chris stands in front of an empty wall where Mrs. Nota's room used to be. He hits the wall in despair.

CHRIS
No. No! There was a room here! It
was here!

Beat.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(under breath)
Fiske.

INT. MR. FISKE'S ROOM

Chris runs in to the class out of breath. Fiske is standing at a lab table at the front of the classroom doing an experiment.

CHRIS
Where the hell is she?

MR. FISKE
(confused)
Excuse me?

Chris is frustrated that Fiske doesn't know what he's talking about.

CHRIS
Mrs. Nota! Where is she?!

MR. FISKE
(absent-mindedly)
I don't know what you're talking
about.

CHRIS
Balkus stole my cootie catcher. I
need another one.

MR. FISKE
Why do you have a cootie
catcher...?

CHRIS
You, you sent me back in time with
that stupid cootie catcher, and now
my life is completely messed up!

MR. FISKE
(chuckling)
I would never send a student back
in time.

CHRIS
But you did! You sent ME back in
time!

MR. FISKE
Albert Einstein once told me, "A
man should look for what is, and
not for what he thinks should be."

CHRIS
Wait, he told you?

MR. FISKE
Words don't matter, Chris. But
actions, actions do.

Chris suddenly gets an idea and runs out.

INT. BALKUS' ROOM

Chris awkwardly walks in.

Balkus is hunched over at his desk. He looks up.

MR. BALKUS
What are **you** doing here?

Chris spots the cootie catcher sitting on his desk.

He slowly approaches.

CHRIS

I just wanted to apologize for what I did earlier. It was completely rude and immature of me.

MR. BALKUS

Well it takes a lot of courage to admit when you've been wrong, Chris. And I guess if you openly play with cootie catchers you already get enough trouble from the other students. I mean, I never got picked on in school, so why don't you try to be more like me?

CHRIS

Yeah I'll do that. Anyway, I also just wanted to thank you for giving it back to me.

MR. BALKUS

But I didn't give it back-

Confused, Balkus opens his drawer to see if it's still there, but Chris grabs the cootie catcher and runs out of the room.

MR. BALKUS (CONT'D)

YOU LITTLE-!

Balkus stands up in a fit of anger.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Balkus pursues Chris, who has starts doing the cootie catcher.

CHRIS

(quickly)

Three, four, five, six, seven-

Balkus catches up to Chris and grabs him.

MR. BALKUS

You are in so much trouble-

CHRIS

Eight!

Wish.

INT. MRS. ROCKWOOD'S CLASSROOM - DAY

LITTLE BEN

(waving his hand in the air)

(MORE)

LITTLE BEN (CONT'D)
Umm...Mrs.Rockwood! It's time for
drop everything and read!

MRS. ROCKWOOD
You're right Ben. Class it's time
to grab your books and find a spot
to read.

Little Chris jumps up and runs over to the bookshelf. He
grabs the same book as Little Ben.

LITTLE BEN
Hey!

LITTLE CHRIS
Just read it with me!

LITTLE BEN
Fine.

Little Chris and Little Ben walk back over to their desks.
Little Jamie approaches.

LITTLE JAMIE
Do you still wanna play?

LITTLE CHRIS
No, but I heard Zach really likes
to.

Little Ben is gaping at what is going on.

LITTLE JAMIE
Oh, okay.

Little Jamie cheerily walks over to Zach.

LITTLE BEN
But-

Little Chris shrugs.

Little Jamie begins to play cootie catcher with Little Zach.

INT. ENGLISH WING - DAY

Chris sees Jamie at her locker with Zach, wearing his
sweatshirt. Ben runs up to Chris and begins jumping up and
down.

BEN
Guess who got a 100 on their
Physics test?!

BEN (CONT'D)
 (pointing to himself)
 This guy!

Chris begins to laugh.

BEN (CONT'D)
 Someone's in a better mood.

CHRIS
 Yeah, too bad we can't change the
 way I was this morning.

BEN
 Because that would be impossible.

Chris laughs to himself.

CHRIS
 I have to go ask Fiske a question.

BEN
 Alright, see ya.

Chris begins to walk down the hall. He sees Cashman and Giblin walking towards him, Cashman fist pumps the air while Giblin shoots air pistols at Chris. Chris smiles and keeps walking past normal students.

INT. FISKE'S CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chris walks into the classroom smiling.

CHRIS
 Hey Mr. Fiske.

Fiske seems surprised by Chris.

MR. FISKE
 Hello.

CHRIS
 Ah, you probably don't realize what
 you did but I wanted to say thank
 you. For everything.

MR. FISKE
 Oh, thank Mrs. Nota.

CHRIS
 Wait, you- you've known what's been
 going on this whole time.

MR. FISKE
 (smiling)
 No...

Sniffing can be heard. Fiske looks to the back of the classroom at a girl who is crying alone.

MR. FISKE (CONT'D)
Oh well it appears a student needs
my help.

Fiske winks at Chris. As Fiske is walking down the aisle Chris is standing bewildered and somewhat happy.

Fiske turns around.

MR. FISKE (CONT'D)
Oh, and Chris.

CHRIS
Yeah?

MR. FISKE
Don't worry about Mr. Balkus.

Chris seems confused.

CHRIS
What?

SMASH CUT

EXT. FOURTH GRADE PLAYGROUND - DAY

SUPERSCRIPT: 1979

A ten year old Balkus, who is wearing an Abba shirt, is standing in the middle of the playground.

From the camera's point of view, we see a group of kids around him taunting him.

FOURTH GRADER #1
Phil has cooties! Phil has cooties!

Little Balkus is on the verge of tears.

LITTLE BALKUS
No I don't!

BALKUS (V.O.)
How did I get back in the fourth
grade?

FADE OUT.