

ROBERT

What?!

HEATHER

But, sir-

Mr Gromer says nothing and points to the door, still maintaining intense eye contact with only Robert. Josh and Heather comply and slip out with the rest of the class.

Lingering behind, appear the three nerds from before- as the class is leaving they stop in place by Robert's desk to stare once again, gormless grins on their faces.

ROBERT

(Annoyed)

You three again?! Go away!! Leave!

Shoo!

Mr Gromer, standing by the door, gives an authoritative cough -

MR GROMER

Heh- hemm!

-and gestures towards the exit. Getting the hint, the annoying trio scurry quickly out of the room leaving Robert and Mr Gromer alone.

Gromer shuts the door firmly, twists the lock, then shuts the row of blinds attached to the door window.

He grabs a chair and drags it in front of Robert's desk. Robert sits slouched, as he did with Coach Jim, barely present. Mr Gromer pulls out his notebook and glances in it-

MR GROMER

Robert Crepin.

ROBERT

(mumbled)

...Mr Gromer

Mr Gromer sits down, facing directly opposite Robert - he smiles coldly.

MR GROMER

You are a fine student.

ROBERT
 (slightly surprised)
 ...I *am*?

MR GROMER
*Of course. You just need to learn to
 apply yourself. To focus.*

As Mr Gromer says this, Robert glances down at the party invite lying inside his open rucksack on the floor.

(Sternly)
Robert.

Robert snaps back to attention and looks up from his bag.

You like her?-

Refusing eye contact, his eyes drift downward to Mr Gromer's hands which are overgrown with thick greasy hair-

-The girl?

Robert grimaces. He looks down at his desk instead, sulkily.

ROBERT
 ...I didn't do anything

MR GROMER
Yeah...

Robert looks down at the invite once more, shuffling anxiously in his seat.

Mr Gromer reaches into his blazer pocket and retrieves a black plastic box. He pops open the lid, extracts a small pink pill and holds it inches from Robert's face.

Robert doesn't notice, still staring at the invite. Mr Gromer clicks in Robert's face- ***clickclickclick***

Robert looks up, giving Mr Gromer his full attention for the first time- he sees the pill.

ROBERT
 What's... that?

MR GROMER
*Robert. I'm showing you this because I
 trust you. And quite frankly, I see
 potential in you*

ROBERT
 (unsure how to respond)
 ...thank you...

MR GROMER
 Potential that is presently being
 squandered

There is a pause. Robert does not know what squandered means.
 He looks at the pill again.

ROBERT
 W...What is it?

Mr Gromer exhales deeply.

MR GROMER
 This, boy... is your freedom...

ROBERT
 But... what does it do?

MR GROMER
 It makes you fearless

ROBERT
 (slightly annoyed at vagueness)
 Fearless?

MR GROMER
 (teasing tone)
 I would have thought that would be of
 some benefit to you, Robert

ROBERT
 (slightly defensive)
 I'm not afraid

MR GROMER
 You're afraid of her. And you're
 definitely afraid of him...

Robert reels from this and thinks it over.

ROBERT
 Why are you giving this to me?

MR GROMER
 As I said-- potential.

Mr Gromer holds the pill in place for a few second more

No! Wait! Please.... **wait!**

Heather races through the corridor, weaving through students
-she slowly begins to catch up to Glub-Glub

A teacher suddenly appears in front of her

TEACHER

Heather!! I want you to know -I prayed
for Josh last night-

Heather zooms past her.

Glub-Glub looks behind him, in terror, then zips down another
corridor. She follows closely behind.

Suddenly-

STUDENT #4

(Arms outstretched sympathetically)

HEATHER!!

HEATHER

NO!!

Heather shoves past and barrels after Glub-Glub.

She sees him reach the end of the corridor- a dead end. She
rushes towards him, now defenceless to do anything.

HEATHER

I just want to talk!

SCENE 32: INT. SCHOOL CORRIDORS- AFTERNOON

Suddenly, the door next to Glub-Glub opens and Mr Gromer
exits. He stands directly in front of Glub-Glub.

MR GROMER

What appears to be the issue?

HEATHER

(Panting, out of breath)

Sir! I just need to... talk to
...

MR GROMER

-I understand... Glub-Glub, why don't
you take a seat in my classroom, while
I chat with Miss Bates for a moment?

GLUB-GLUB
Yes sir...thank you sir!

Glub-Glub rushes into the classroom to Heather's frustration.

HEATHER
Wait...what did you just call him...
Glub...Glub?

MR GROMER
We're listening to me now, Miss Bates
I realise you're going through a
challenging time at the moment

HEATHER
But-

MR GROMER
But, that is no excuse to chase one of
my men-

HEATHER
(Interjecting)
-Your "men"?

MR GROMER
Students!- I meant students- That's no
excuse to chase one of my students
down the school corridors

HEATHER
(Raising her voice)
Sir, no, look- he, the way he...

MR GROMER
I am not appreciating this tone, madam

HEATHER
Oh... sorry..... it's just...he looked
at me- he- I think- he knows
something! He -he knows something
about Josh...

Mr Gromer looks down, patronising sympathy smeared onto his face.

MR GROMER
Oh, Miss Bates... do you think, maybe
you've ...returned to school too soon?

HEATHER

Wha-what?...no. *I'm- I'm not crazy!*

MR GROMER

Woah! Woah! Nobody used that word!

You're in a state of shock.
Understandably so. It's only been 3
days since Josh went missing, after
all.

Do you think, maybe you're feeling
slightly... fragile? That's a good
word... fragile

Heather doesn't say a thing- she looks through the classroom door window at Glub-Glub. He peers out anxiously.

Mr Gromer sighs.

I'm going to speak with the school to
get you a few weeks off, Miss Bates. I
think you'll see it's in everyone's
best interests.

Pause.

Take care now.

Mr Gromer walks back into his classroom, leaving Heather ruminating on his words.

Furious but insecure, she glances through the window and sees Glub-Glub and Gromer seeming to conversate with each other. As she leans in closer, the blinds are snapped shut.

SCENE 32: EXT. SCHOOL FRONT ENTRANCE-LATE AFTERNOON

The school bell rings and students flood out of the gates. We linger on the silent, deserted school for, a moment.

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDORS- LATE AFTERNOON

We are slowly guided through the empty school corridors- everyone seems to have gone. Everyone except Mr Gromer.

We see a glimpse of Gromer through his classroom door, marking assignments. He looks up at the clock, puts down his pen and leaves, glancing furtively around before doing so.