

PUPP-I

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. MARTIN ELEMENTARY PARKING LOT - MORNING

JOHN LANDRY (10) is being dropped off at school by his father, MIKE (45). The ground is covered in snow.

John gets out of the car, and looks around at all the kids running around.

MIKE LANDRY
Just think, bud. Two weeks until
Christmas break.

JOHN LANDRY
Yeah. I guess.

Mike gives John a fist bump.

MIKE LANDRY
Have a good one, bud. I'll see you
after school.

JOHN LANDRY
Bye Dad.

Mike drives away.

John gulps.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)
Just two weeks. I can do that...
Maybe.

INT. MARTIN ELEMENTARY HALLWAY - MINUTES LATER

John walks down the hallway. He notices several children playing with Pupp-i toys, which are kind of like a dog version of a Furby, with light up eyes.

Pupp-i is the hottest new toy, and each comes in a variety of colors and personalities.

John wishes he had one of his own.

INT. MRS. KETTLEWELL'S 4TH GRADE CLASS - LATER THAT DAY

The class is working on an assignment. John sits in the back corner, working by himself.

MRS. KETTLEWELL approaches John.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
John, is everything alright?

JOHN LANDRY
Yes.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Would you like to work with a partner?

JOHN LANDRY
No thanks.

Mrs. Kettlewell spies a group of boys, including MATTHEW PRESCOTT and LUKE, working together.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
What about those boys? You can join them.

JOHN LANDRY
No. They are mean.

She smiles and looks at his writing.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Okay, well just continue your work, okay? You're doing an excellent job! Nice job on your spelling.

JOHN LANDRY
Thanks.

EXT. MARTIN ELEMENTARY PLAYGROUND - DAY - AN HOUR LATER

John sits underneath the slide, talking to an ant named CHARLIE.

JOHN LANDRY
Charlie, I'm glad we're friends.
You're the only one who is nice to me... I...

At that moment, John spots SARAH (10), his school crush, walking away from the play fort.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)
Shh! Quiet Charlie! It's Sarah. Try not to look lame.

He continues looking at Sarah.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)
That's it! I'm gonna talk to her.
Today's the day.

He picks Charlie up in his hand, and puts him down on the slide.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)
I'm just gonna say hi. That's all.
Nothing can go wrong.

A child heads down the slide, and crushes Charlie. John freaks out.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)
(yelling)
CHARLIE!

SARAH (O.S.)
What happened?

John turns around in a panic. Sarah is standing right there.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Are you ok?

JOHN LANDRY
I... I...

SARAH
Who is Charlie?

JOHN LANDRY
I... I...

SARAH
You ok? Check this out!

She takes her Pupp-i out of her backpack. It's a light blue color. Its name is MITTENS.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Check her out. This is Mittens!

She presses a button on Mittens.

MITTENS
Hi, I'm Mittens, and I'm smitten to meet you!

SARAH
(laughs)
See? She's nice.

JOHN LANDRY

Yeah.

SARAH

Show me yours!

John pauses.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Oh, you don't have one?

John shakes his head "no."

SARAH (CONT'D)

Well, you should get one. They're cool. What's your name?

John says nothing. Sarah looks at him with wide eyes.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Ah. Ok. Well... I'll see you around, I guess.

She walks away.

JOHN LANDRY

That was crushing.

He looks at Charlie's squashed body on the slide.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)

No pun intended.

INT. LANDRY FAMILY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mike and John are sitting around the kitchen table. John works on his homework while Mike drinks a beer. Mike is still wearing his mechanic shirt from work.

MIKE LANDRY

Don't worry, bud. You'll get another shot.

JOHN LANDRY

I hope so.

Mike picks up John's paper.

MIKE LANDRY

What's this you're working on?

JOHN LANDRY
Just some spelling homework for
class.

MIKE LANDRY
Impressive. I could never write
words like this. Keep at this. You
could write a book one day.

JOHN LANDRY
You think so?

MIKE LANDRY
Of course... I...

An ANNOUNCER voice comes from the TV in the next room.
SpongeBob has just come on TV.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Are ya ready kids?

Mike gives John a reassuring look.

MIKE LANDRY
Go on. Take a break. You've earned
it.

John runs into the family room to watch TV.

INT. LANDRY FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER

Mike enters and sits next to John on the couch. John is still
watching SpongeBob.

MIKE LANDRY
Maybe one day you could write a
show like this.

JOHN LANDRY
What do you mean?

MIKE LANDRY
All these TV shows you watch...
They hire people to write the
stories and stuff.

JOHN LANDRY
That could be fun.

MIKE LANDRY
Seriously, bud. You've got some
talent here. Gotta put talent like
that to good use.

An ad for Pupp-i comes on the TV. John's face lights up.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Hey kids! Have you heard about the coolest toy in town?

MIKE LANDRY

What is this nonsense?

JOHN LANDRY

Shh! Quiet, Dad.

MIKE LANDRY

Sorry.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Introducing Pupp-i, your new furry friend. Eyes that light up! Pupp-i sings! Pupp-i dances! Pupp-i is your new best friend!

The ad ends. John gives Mike a wanting look.

MIKE LANDRY

Sorry, bud. We can't afford stuff like that. I'm still waiting on that raise.

BINKY the dog sits on the floor near John's feet.

JOHN LANDRY

But Dad! Everyone at school has one!

MIKE LANDRY

I feel sorry for their parents. Those things look annoying.

JOHN LANDRY

That's not very nice.

MIKE LANDRY

Plus, you've got Binky. You two are already best friends.

John sees Binky sleeping by his feet.

MIKE LANDRY (CONT'D)

Binky's smarter than any gadget like that, anyways.

Binky farts himself awake.

MIKE LANDRY (CONT'D)
Most of the time.

JOHN LANDRY
But... it would be nice to have a
friend. Someone I can talk to.

Mike gives John a somber look.

INT. MRS. KETTLEWELL'S 4TH GRADE CLASS - DAY - 2 WEEKS LATER

It is the last day of school before the holiday break. During the class party, John draws pictures by himself in the corner of the room.

Matthew and Luke approach him.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
Whatcha doin, John?

JOHN LANDRY
Drawing.

Matthew and Luke see his drawing of Aquaman.

LUKE
Seriously? Aquaman?

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
He's lame.

JOHN LANDRY
I think he's cool.

LUKE
He's not cool! His powers don't
work unless he's in the water!

JOHN LANDRY
Yeah, but he talks to fish. Thats
cool.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
(laughs)
Yeah, like The Little Mermaid!

Luke and Matthew laugh at each other.

JOHN LANDRY
Stop it.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT

Okay. Okay. So, what's your Dad getting you for Christmas, little Johnny?

LUKE

Maybe a paper airplane?

MATTHEW PRESCOTT

No, he can't afford that.

John looks angry.

JOHN LANDRY

My Dad's not poor.

MRS. KETTLEWELL (O.S.)

That's enough, class! That's enough!

Everyone goes back to their seats.

MRS. KETTLEWELL (CONT'D)

Now, before you go home for the holiday, I have something to take home.

She holds a pile of flyers.

MRS. KETTLEWELL (CONT'D)

The school spelling bee will take place during next quarter! I'd love it if all of you participated. First prize is \$10,000!

Matthew whispers to John.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT

Your Dad would be so proud.

JOHN LANDRY

Something your Mom has never said to you.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT

You really wanna talk about Moms, John?

John holds back tears. The class is dismissed, and John walks out.

INT. MIKE'S CAR - DAY - MINUTES LATER

Mike has picked John up from school.

MIKE LANDRY
Why the long face, John?

John says nothing.

MIKE LANDRY (CONT'D)
You ok?

JOHN LANDRY
Dad, are we poor?

MIKE LANDRY
Compared to some.

JOHN LANDRY
Does that make you sad?

MIKE LANDRY
No. Not really. I've got all I
need, and that's enough.

JOHN LANDRY
I guess so.

INT. LANDRY FAMILY KITCHEN - NIGHT - DAYS LATER

It's Christmas Eve. Mike is busy cooking in the kitchen while John helps.

JOHN LANDRY
Can I please open it? Please please
please?

MIKE LANDRY
I swear, you ask me that one more
time, I'm taking it back to the
store.

JOHN LANDRY
But it's Christmas Eve!

MIKE LANDRY
Hand me that bowl over there,
please. Are we out of macaroni?

John hands him the bowl.

JOHN LANDRY
I can't wait until tomorrow
morning.

MIKE LANDRY
Well, you have to, okay? Trust me,
it'll be worth the wait.

The doorbell rings.

MIKE LANDRY (CONT'D)
Oh, crap. That's probably your Aunt
Linda.

JOHN LANDRY
I'll get it.

INT. LANDRY FAMILY HOME FRONT HALLWAY - SECONDS LATER

John opens the door. AUNT LINDA (50s), enters carrying a
fruitcake.

John smiles as she gives him a warm hug.

AUNT LINDA
So good to see you, sweetie.

JOHN LANDRY
Merry Christmas, Aunt Linda.

AUNT LINDA
I brought fruitcake!

She hands the fruitcake to John.

John smiles awkwardly.

JOHN LANDRY
Oh... Ok.

Aunt Linda heads towards the kitchen.

Binky approaches.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)
Here, Binky. Try some of this.

He hands Binky a small bit of fruitcake, and walks away.

Binky tries it, and spits it out immediately.

AUNT LINDA (O.S.)
It's so nice we can all get
together.

MIKE LANDRY (O.S.)
Linda! So good to see you! Glad
you're here!

INT. LANDRY DINING ROOM - AN HOUR LATER

The table is set and full of food. No one has touched the
fruitcake.

Mike, Linda, and John are enjoying the meal.

AUNT LINDA
Excellent job this year, Mike. I
always told Jenny you'd make an
excellent cook!

MIKE LANDRY
Thanks, Linda. How's that new job
of yours going?

AUNT LINDA
Great! I think my boss really likes
me. He's taking me to dinner next
week!

Mike tries a spoonful of mashed potatoes.

MIKE LANDRY
Oh, he definitely likes you it
sounds like.

AUNT LINDA
Johnny, how is school? Have you
made any friends?

JOHN LANDRY
Well, I did.

AUNT LINDA
Wait? What happened?

Mike sticks out his hand.

MIKE LANDRY
No! No. He doesn't like to talk
about it.

JOHN LANDRY
It's okay, Dad. My friend
Charlie... He died.

AUNT LINDA
That's terrible! Are you crushed?

JOHN LANDRY
No, but Charlie was.

AUNT LINDA
I don't understand.

JOHN LANDRY
Charlie was an ant.

AUNT LINDA
Oh.

Pause.

AUNT LINDA (CONT'D)
You know, your mother and I had an
ant farm when we were younger.

JOHN LANDRY
Oh, that's nice.

AUNT LINDA
I guess a love for ants runs in the
family. I should've gotten you an
ant farm for Christmas.

MIKE LANDRY
Imagine a horde of ants invading
our house. I can picture it now.

JOHN LANDRY
Hmmm. Picture. That reminds me of
something.

John gets up from the table.

AUNT LINDA
What's that all about?

MIKE LANDRY
I don't really know.

John returns, holding a wrapped Christmas present for Mike.

He hands the present to his father.

MIKE LANDRY (CONT'D)
What's this?

JOHN LANDRY
Just something we made in art
class.

AUNT LINDA
That's wonderful, John. Your mother
always talked about how creative
you were.

JOHN LANDRY
Really?

AUNT LINDA
Yes. Every time we got together,
she told me about your little
projects. How you liked to build
with LEGOs and what not.

JOHN LANDRY
It's just LEGO, Aunt Linda.

AUNT LINDA
Right! LEGOs. That's what I said.

JOHN LANDRY
Right, but that's wrong. You don't
say LEGOs, just LEGO.

Mike points at John.

MIKE LANDRY
Trust me, Linda. This kid is a
spelling genius! You should've seen
his homework the other night.

AUNT LINDA
I don't doubt it.

MIKE LANDRY
Anyways, what is this thing John?

He shakes the wrapped present.

JOHN LANDRY
DON'T SHAKE IT! IT'S IMPORTANT!

MIKE LANDRY
Ok then. I wonder what it could be.

JOHN LANDRY
I hope you'll like it.

He looks at Mike and Aunt Linda.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)
I hope you BOTH like it.

MIKE LANDRY
Hmm. I'm intrigued.

AUNT LINDA
John, spell "intrigued."

John rolls his eyes.

JOHN LANDRY
I-N-T-R-I-G-U-E-D.

MIKE LANDRY
See? I told you.

JOHN LANDRY
Just open it, Dad.

AUNT LINDA
Go on Mike. Open it!

Mike opens the present. It's a picture frame made with macaroni art. The picture shows Mike, Aunt Linda, and JENNY, John's deceased mother, at their wedding. Jenny holds a small Binky in her hands, dressed in a dog tuxedo.

Mike loves the present.

MIKE LANDRY
Where did you get this picture?

JOHN LANDRY
I dug through your old photo albums. It took a while to find them in the garage.

AUNT LINDA
John, that is so sweet.

Mike sets the picture down on the table. Binky spies the photo, hops on the table, and lovingly gives it a nudge.

Binky was once Jenny's puppy.

MIKE LANDRY
Binky! Off the table!

AUNT LINDA
He just misses her, Mike.

All pause and stare at the picture.

MIKE LANDRY
I can't say I blame him.

INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - HOURS LATER

John is fast asleep. He hears his bedroom door creak open. He pops up in bed, confused.

JOHN LANDRY
Santa? Is that you?

It's Mike. Mike smiles, and sits next to John on the bed.

MIKE LANDRY
It's me, bud. I have something for
you.

John jumps up in bed, excited.

JOHN LANDRY
Really?

MIKE LANDRY
You can open your present early.
Yes.

John darts downstairs.

INT. LANDRY FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER

Binky sleeps softly on the couch. John rushes down to the Christmas tree. There are very few presents underneath it. John only has one big gift.

John grabs his gift and pulls it out from under the tree.

MIKE LANDRY
What do you think it is?

JOHN LANDRY
I hope it's a....

John rips open the present, and sees a giant Pupp-i box. This Pupp-i is yellow, and its name is SUNNY. John is thrilled.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)
It's a Pupp-i! I can't believe you
got me one!

Binky suddenly wakes up, a questioning look upon his face. John notices this.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)
Sorry, Binks. I meant like a toy.

Binky smiles and lays back down.

MIKE LANDRY
That is what you wanted, right?

JOHN LANDRY
Umm, yeah!

MIKE LANDRY
Well go on! Open that bad boy up!

John opens the box, and turns on the Pupp-i.

Sunny's eyes light up.

SUNNY
Hi! I'm Sunny. (laughs) Wow. I sure am one yellow fellow! Say, what's your name?

JOHN LANDRY
Hi Sunny! I'm John!

Sunny lets out a whistle of approval.

SUNNY
Wow! That is so cool! We are going to be best friends!

JOHN LANDRY
Yay!

John gives Sunny a big hug. He looks at Mike.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)
Thanks Dad!

EXT. MARTIN ELEMENTARY PARKING LOT - DAY - A WEEK LATER

Mike drops John off at school. John is carrying Sunny.

MIKE LANDRY
I'll be back at 3:30 to pick you up, and not a minute later, ok?

JOHN LANDRY
Bye, Dad! Have a great day!

Mike drives off. John spies all the other kids with Pupp-i toys.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)
I think you're gonna like it here,
Sunny!

He presses a button on Sunny's paw.

SUNNY
Today will be a great day!

JOHN LANDRY
I think so!

John heads into the building.

INT. MARTIN ELEMENTARY HALLWAY - DAY

John walks down the hallway, holding Sunny. He observes all of the other students playing with their toys.

JOHN LANDRY
See? Now we're just like everyone
else.

SUNNY
This is amazing!

Matthew and Luke approach John, each holding their Pupp-i toys, DEX and RUFUS, both colored red.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
Seriously? You got yellow?

LUKE
Such a lame color.

JOHN LANDRY
No. Sunny isn't lame. He's nice!

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
Sunny? That's its name?

The two laugh at each other.

They start mocking John.

LUKE
"Say, Matthew, what's the weather
like out there today?"

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
"Well, Luke, I'd say it's Sunny."

JOHN LANDRY
That's not funny.

Matthew and Luke show John their toys.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
This is my guy. Dex.

LUKE
And this is Rufus.

They turn on their Pupp-i toys. Their eyes spring to life.
Both dogs have angry expressions.

DEX
Ahhhh! Who woke me up??? Dex needs
his sleep.

RUFUS
I'm ready for this day to end.

They see John backing away.

LUKE
Come on. Say hi.

JOHN LANDRY
I don't really want to.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
Come on. They don't bite! At least
these models don't.

JOHN LANDRY
I don't know.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
Aww. Come on!

John reluctantly pets Dex on the head.

DEX
Hey! Hey! Watch the hair, ha?
Idiot.

The school bell rings. It's time for class.

EXT. MARTIN ELEMENTARY PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON - HOURS LATER

School has just been let out. John walks out of the building with the rest of the students, carrying Sunny.

JOHN LANDRY
Today wasn't so bad, Sunny! Sorry
about those guys earlier.

SUNNY
I'm having so much fun!

Sarah spots John, and waves to him.

SARAH
Hey you!

John whispers to Sunny.

JOHN LANDRY
Okay, Sunny. I think she's cute.
Help me out here.

SUNNY
I love being your friend!

Sarah approaches John and Sunny, holding Mittens.

SARAH
Hey! I didn't catch your name the
other day!

John gets nervous.

JOHN LANDRY
My name? Oh, sorry... I'm...

He looks down at Sunny.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)
I'm Sunny!

SARAH
Cool name.

JOHN LANDRY
Wait no. No. That's not my name.

SARAH
Well what is it, then?

JOHN LANDRY
John. My name is John.

SARAH
Cool. I'm Sarah.

JOHN LANDRY
Yeah. I know.

Sarah spies Sunny.

SARAH
Who is that? He's cute.

JOHN LANDRY
Sunny! This is Sunny! I'm John.

SARAH
Now it all makes sense.

Sarah looks down at Mittens.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Let's make them talk!

JOHN LANDRY
Who?

SARAH
Sunny and Mittens! They can talk to each other, you know.

JOHN LANDRY
Umm... I'm not sure. Let me ask Sunny.

John holds Sunny.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)
Sunny, would you like to talk to Mittens?

John presses a button on Sunny.

SUNNY
I love making friends!

JOHN LANDRY
Ok, then. We'll try.

SARAH
Neat!

They put their Pupp-is on the ground. Sarah presses a button on Mittens.

Mittens springs to life. Its eyes light up.

MITTENS

Hi! I'm Mittens! It's nice to meet you!

SUNNY

I'm Sunny! Today will be a great day.

MITTENS

Hey, let's howl together.

SUNNY

Sure!

Both of the dogs howl.

John and Sarah laugh.

SARAH

So you finally got one?

JOHN LANDRY

Yeah! For Christmas! My Dad got one for me.

SARAH

You look happy.

JOHN LANDRY

Yeah. Sunny makes me happy. I've never had one before.

SARAH

A dog?

JOHN LANDRY

No.... A friend.

SARAH

Oh, well now you have three!

JOHN LANDRY

Three dogs?

SARAH

Three friends!

JOHN LANDRY

Right. Who?

SARAH

Sunny, Mittens, and now me!

JOHN LANDRY
That's nice. I like that a lot.

SARAH
So, is your Dad picking you up from school?

JOHN LANDRY
Yeah, he should be here soon.

A horn honks.

SARAH
Gotta go! That's my Mom!

She waves as she runs off.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Bye!

JOHN LANDRY
Bye.

John continues to wait for his Dad.

EXT. MARTIN ELEMENTARY PARKING LOT - AN HOUR LATER

John and Sunny are still waiting for Dad to come.

JOHN LANDRY
I'm not sure, Sunny.

John recognizes Aunt Linda's car as it pulls up.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)
Aunt Linda?

Aunt Linda rolls down the window.

AUNT LINDA
I'm taking you home today, sweetie.

JOHN LANDRY
Where's Dad? Is everything ok?

AUNT LINDA
Your Dad is fine. He's just having a little bit of car trouble?

JOHN LANDRY
Trouble? What's happening?

AUNT LINDA
He hasn't told me. Now hop in!
We'll go get some ice cream.

John gets into Aunt Linda's car.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

John sits at the table with Sunny, eating his ice cream.

He stares at Sunny.

JOHN LANDRY
I hope Dad is ok, Sunny.

Aunt Linda comes back from talking on the phone.

AUNT LINDA
Alright. Just got off the phone
with him.

JOHN LANDRY
And?

AUNT LINDA
He's doing fine. The car just broke
down. That's all.

JOHN LANDRY
Broke down?

AUNT LINDA
Don't worry, Johnny. Your father
will be fine. Now, tell me a bit
about what happened at school
today.

JOHN LANDRY
Mmmm... Not much.

AUNT LINDA
Nothing?

JOHN LANDRY
Not really. A bunch of kids were
practicing for the spelling bee.

AUNT LINDA
How did you do?

JOHN LANDRY
I'm not in it.

AUNT LINDA

What? Why? You're so good at spelling!

JOHN LANDRY

Too many people watching.

AUNT LINDA

Who cares?

JOHN LANDRY

Something might happen.

AUNT LINDA

Like what?

JOHN LANDRY

I don't really know. People will think I'm silly.

AUNT LINDA

You ARE silly. What's wrong with that?

JOHN LANDRY

They'll make fun of me.

AUNT LINDA

Well that wouldn't be very nice of them.

JOHN LANDRY

No.

Aunt Linda notices the somber look on John's face.

AUNT LINDA

Come on. Let's go home.

INT. LANDRY FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Aunt Linda, John, and Sunny are sitting around the TV, still waiting on Mike to come home.

AUNT LINDA

I'm sure he'll be home soon, John.

JOHN LANDRY

Have you heard from him?

AUNT LINDA

Not in a little bit.

She changes the subject.

AUNT LINDA (CONT'D)
So, did Sunny have a good day at school today?

JOHN LANDRY
I think so! Let's ask him. Sunny, did you have fun today?

SUNNY
I love being with you!

AUNT LINDA
(smiles)
Aww, that's really nice. Do other kids at school have that toy?

JOHN LANDRY
Yeah! They all do. Sunny made a new friend today. Mittens!

AUNT LINDA
Mittens? That's another one of those Pupp-i things?

JOHN LANDRY
Yeah. Sarah is also my new friend.

AUNT LINDA
Sarah? She sounds like a nice girl.

JOHN LANDRY
I think she's cute. I finally talked more to her today.

AUNT LINDA
Too nervous before?

JOHN LANDRY
Yes.

AUNT LINDA
What changed?

JOHN LANDRY
Sunny was with me. That made me feel good.

Suddenly, Mike comes in bursting through the door, exhausted. He sits next to John on the couch.

MIKE LANDRY
Hey bud. Sorry I'm late.

JOHN LANDRY
Dad! Are you ok?

MIKE LANDRY
I'm fine! I'm fine. Car is totaled,
though.

JOHN LANDRY
What do you mean?

MIKE LANDRY
Got hit on the way home.

AUNT LINDA
Mike! That's awful.

JOHN LANDRY
I'm sorry, Dad.

SUNNY
Today is a great day!

Mike looks irritated at Sunny.

MIKE LANDRY
Yes Sunny. Thank you for that...
relentless positivity. John, it's
late. Just get to bed. We'll talk
in the morning.

JOHN LANDRY
But Dad!

MIKE LANDRY
John, go to bed.

John sighs and takes Sunny upstairs.

INT. LANDRY FAMILY KITCHEN - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER

Mike and Aunt Linda are sitting at the kitchen table. Mike is
distressed.

MIKE LANDRY
I don't know what to do.

AUNT LINDA
I'm sure it'll all work out.

MIKE LANDRY
The car is totaled. John and I are
gonna have to take the bus.

Unbeknownst to them, John is eavesdropping from the other room.

AUNT LINDA
How much will it cost to fix?

MIKE LANDRY
Too much, Linda. Too much.

AUNT LINDA
How much are we talking?

MIKE LANDRY
Thousands. Where am I gonna come up with that?

AUNT LINDA
Can't you ask for a raise?

MIKE LANDRY
Ha! I've been working there for five years. I had to beg my boss to let me off for John's birthday last year, and he only gave me half a day!

AUNT LINDA
Maybe it's time to find a different job?

MIKE LANDRY
Tried. Can't. Never shoulda dropped out of school. Got nothing else to offer.

AUNT LINDA
Not true! My sister married you for a reason, you know! You're smart. Funny. Kind to others.

MIKE LANDRY
Everyone thinks that about themselves.

Mike sighs.

MIKE LANDRY (CONT'D)
What am I gonna do?

John heads back up to his bedroom.

INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER

John opens his backpack, and takes out Mrs. Kettlewell's spelling bee flyer from weeks ago.

He notices the \$10,000 prize.

John looks at Sunny.

JOHN LANDRY
Sunny, Dad needs my help.

SUNNY
Helping others is fun!

JOHN LANDRY
I know. Maybe I should enter the spelling bee?

SUNNY
I believe in you!

JOHN LANDRY
Thanks. But I.... I...

John starts to cry.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)
I can't! People laugh at me. Just because my Dad is poor and my Mom is dead!

He presses a button on Sunny.

SUNNY
This place is so cool! Let's look around!

John looks around the room, and sees his picture he made of his Mom, Dad, and Aunt out of macaroni art.

JOHN LANDRY
Dad was happy, then. Sunny, I'm scared.

SUNNY
I'm Sunny! Don't forget, always look on the bright side of things!

JOHN LANDRY
I can't stand up there on that stage alone.

SUNNY

I'll always be with you!

John smiles at this.

EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY - THE NEXT MORNING

The school bus pulls up in John and Mike's front yard. John looks nervous.

MIKE LANDRY

Just until we fix the car, ok bud?
Then I'll be driving you to school
in no time.

JOHN LANDRY

Wait. Dad. I want to tell you
something.

MIKE LANDRY

I love you too, John.

JOHN LANDRY

No. Not that. I'm signing up for
the spelling bee!

MIKE LANDRY

You are? That's awesome! I can't
wait to come see you!

JOHN LANDRY

Well, I just want to show off my
talent.

MIKE LANDRY

That's what I like to hear. What
made you change your mind?

JOHN LANDRY

To be honest, I....

The bus driver honks the horn.

MIKE LANDRY

Tell me later, okay bud? Have a
good day at school! Aunt Linda is
coming to pick you up again today.

JOHN LANDRY

Can I just take the bus back? Her
car smells like cheese.

MIKE LANDRY

She'll be there at 3:30 ok? Now go
on! Get outta here.

He kisses John on the forehead and John runs to the bus.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY - A MINUTE LATER

John gets on the bus. There is so much noise because all of the students brought their Pupp-i toys. They are all singing to each other.

The BUS DRIVER spots Sunny as John boards.

BUS DRIVER

Don't tell me. Not another one.

John gives her an awkward smile as he heads to the back of the bus. No one will let him sit by them. He sits alone.

John grows nervous due to all of the noise going on on the bus.

He holds Sunny tight.

JOHN LANDRY

Don't worry, Sunny. We'll be there
soon.

SUNNY

What a great day for an adventure.

INT. MRS. KETTLEWELL'S 4TH GRADE CLASS - DAY

All of the students arrive in Mrs. Kettlewell's classroom. Several students are still playing with their Pupp-i toys, which are all making noise.

MRS. KETTLEWELL

Okay, class. Time to put up your
toys, ok? You can play with them at
recess.

The class looks disappointed.

MRS. KETTLEWELL (CONT'D)

Now, can someone remind me of
what's coming up in just a few
weeks?

Matthew raises his hand.

MRS. KETTLEWELL (CONT'D)
Yes, Matthew?

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
That stupid spelling bee, right?

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Oh don't say that, Matthew. That's not very nice. But yes... the spelling bee is coming up in just a few weeks. Raise your hand if you're signed up.

Most of the class raises their hand.

John looks nervous. He didn't realize so many people had signed up for the spelling bee.

MRS. KETTLEWELL (CONT'D)
Wonderful! Now, I'm sorry to tell you all this, but practice will be held during recess time over the next few weeks.

There are audible groans from the class.

MRS. KETTLEWELL (CONT'D)
It wasn't my choice, you guys. Now, I have something else to announce.

The class grows quiet.

MRS. KETTLEWELL (CONT'D)
I'm glad so many of you all have signed up this year... But we still have a few more spots if anyone wants to join last minute.

JOHN LANDRY
I.... I do.

Everyone turns around to see John sitting in the back of the room.

Mrs. Kettlewell smiles.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
John! I'm so happy to hear that.

Matthew smirks.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
He's only doing it for the money, Mrs. K.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Nothing wrong with that! John, I'm
happy you've signed up. Good for
you.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
Yeah. That \$10,000 is worth more
than his whole house.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Alright, that's enough class!
Matthew, I think you know where
Principal McGee's office is.

She points out the door, into the hallway.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
WHAT? I was just making a joke.

JOHN LANDRY
Not funny.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Agreed. Not funny, Matthew.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
But....

Mrs. Kettlewell again points out the door.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Just go.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
Fine.

Matthew sulks, and walks out of the room.

Mrs. Kettlewell once again smiles at John.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
John, I'm so glad you're doing the
spelling bee. You really are an
excellent student.

JOHN LANDRY
Thank you.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Alright. With that out of the way,
let's begin today's lesson, shall
we?

INT. PRINCIPAL MCGEE'S OFFICE - DAY - MINUTES LATER

Principal McGee is working while listening to music in his headphones.

He begins sorting through various papers as he sings "Wannabe" by the Spice Girls.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE
"If you wanna be my lover, you
gotta get with my friends..."

JANINE, his office assistant, suddenly appears at his desk.

JANINE
Mr. McGee?

Shocked and embarrassed, Principal McGee drops his papers.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE
Oh, God. Janine! Didn't see you
there.

JANINE
What were you listening to?

PRINCIPAL MCGEE
Oh, you know. Mozart.

JANINE
Yeah. Sure.

Principal McGee regains his composure, and removes his headphones.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE
Anyways.... You need me for
something?

JANINE
There's a student here to see you.
From Mrs. Kettlewell's class?
Apparently it's urgent.

Principal McGee blushes.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE
There's nothing going on between
Mrs. Kettlewell and I. Those are
just rumors.

JANINE
What?

PRINCIPAL MCGEE

What?

Janine looks suspicious.

JANINE

It's that Matthew boy. He's been sent to come speak with you.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE

Oh, this kid again? That's the third time this month!

JANINE

Well, he's not very much liked.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE

There's a shocker. Send him in.

Janine opens the door, and Matthew enters. Matthew takes a seat as Janine heads back to her desk.

JANINE

I'll leave you both to it.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE

Thanks, Janine.

Principal McGee gives Matthew a stern look.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE (CONT'D)

What is it now?

MATTHEW PRESCOTT

I don't know, Mr. McGee.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE

Let's pull up your file, shall we?

Principal McGee pulls up Matthew's student profile on his computer.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE (CONT'D)

Says here you were once again being rude to a fellow student?

MATTHEW PRESCOTT

No. Not really.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE

Mrs. Kettlewell doesn't lie, Matthew.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT

All I did was make a joke about John. He barely talks in class, but he wants to join the spelling bee!

PRINCIPAL MCGEE

I don't see a problem, there.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT

He's just... Weird, Mr. McGee.

Principal McGee continues looking at Matthew's file. His eyes widen in shock.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE

Matthew, this is serious.

He turns his computer screen around, showing Matthew has several absences, bad behavior reports, and failing grades.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE (CONT'D)

Look.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT

What's that?

PRINCIPAL MCGEE

Your progress report. Or in your case, just a report.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT

So?

PRINCIPAL MCGEE

Matthew, I don't know how to tell you this, but... At this rate, you'll never pass into fifth grade.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT

What do you mean?

PRINCIPAL MCGEE

Look, Matthew... (referencing "Wannabe" by the Spice Girls) Here's the story, from A to Z.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT

Just give me the sparknotes, Mr. McGee.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE

At this rate, there is very little you can do to pass.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT

WHAT! Why?

PRINCIPAL MCGEE

Well, for one... Your grades.
They're bad. You've got time to
make it up but... Your behavior.
It's out of control!

Principal McGee scrolls through Matthew's behavior reports.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE (CONT'D)

Food fights in the cafeteria?
Shoving kids in lockers? Giving
teachers wedgies? I can't let you
keep behaving this way. You've got
to learn your lesson.

Janine re-enters.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE (CONT'D)

What is it now, Janine?

JANINE

His parents are here, sir.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE

Oh good. Send them in.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT

WHAT?

BILL and MARCY PRESCOTT, Matthew's parents, enter and sit
next to him at Principal McGee's desk.

BILL PRESCOTT

Your teacher just called us, Matt.

MARCY PRESCOTT

This has got to stop, Matthew.
You're gonna be in fifth grade,
soon.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE

That may not be happening, Mrs.
Prescott.

MARCY PRESCOTT

I'm sorry. What?

BILL PRESCOTT

Why?

Principal McGee shows them Matthew's report.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE

In addition to your son's frankly reckless behavior, he's failing in all subjects. Not to mention his constant absences.

MARCY PRESCOTT

That doesn't make sense. I drop him off every morning.

She gives Matthew a stern look.

MARCY PRESCOTT (CONT'D)

Where do you go?

MATTHEW PRESCOTT

Luke and I... Well, we sometimes sell things behind the 7-11.

Bill looks suspicious.

BILL PRESCOTT

What kind of things?

MATTHEW PRESCOTT

Tic-tacs.

MARCY PRESCOTT

So that's where you got all that money?

BILL PRESCOTT

I told you that lemonade stand he had wasn't that great.

MARCY PRESCOTT

Well this is just terrible. Is there anything Matt can do to improve?

PRINCIPAL MCGEE

To be honest, Mr. and Mrs. Prescott, I really don't know. His grades are bad, but his behavior is what concerns me.

BILL PRESCOTT

Sir, we can't afford to have him be held back a year. Not for a third time...

MARCY PRESCOTT

Are you sure nothing can be done?

Principal McGee ponders.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE

Well, there's a few things he can do. But he'll really have to go above and beyond.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT

Above should be easy. I'm already above everyone else. And beyond, too.

Principal McGee rolls his eyes.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE

So, there's a few things I'll need to see. First, I don't want to see him in my office again for the rest of the year.

MARCY PRESCOTT

That sounds fair.

BILL PRESCOTT

Not bad.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE

Second, obviously his grades will have to improve. Still plenty of time for that.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT

Easy. Anything else?

PRINCIPAL MCGEE

Yes. One last thing. Being kind to others, getting good grades, any student can do that. Matthew, I need to see you go above and beyond. If you win the spelling bee, as well as do those other two things, you'll pass to the fifth grade.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT

The spelling bee?

BILL PRESCOTT

Oh, come on, Mr. McGee. Win the spelling bee? Isn't that a bit much?

PRINCIPAL MCGEE

The prize is \$10,000.

BILL PRESCOTT
The spelling bee sounds great!

PRINCIPAL MCGEE
Alright. I'm glad we're on the same
page.

The family gets up to leave. Principal McGee escorts them
out.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE (CONT'D)
And like I said, Matthew. Just be
nice to your classmates.
(referencing "Wannabe" by the Spice
Girls) Friendship never ends.

Before Bill leaves, he whispers to Principal McGee.

BILL PRESCOTT
(whispers)
You a Spice Girls fan?

PRINCIPAL MCGEE
(whispers)
You know it.

They fist bump each other.

BILL PRESCOTT
Respect.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY - AN HOUR LATER

John sits at his table eating lunch alone.

He is talking to Sunny.

JOHN LANDRY
Don't listen to Matthew, Sunny.
He's rude.

SUNNY
I believe in you!

JOHN LANDRY
Thanks.

He looks down at his disgusting school cafeteria lunch.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)
Does this look like beef to you,
Sunny?

He shows Sunny the food.

Sunny says nothing.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)
Yeah. I thought so.

SARAH (O.S.)
Hey John!

John looks over to see Sarah waving at him. He smiles as she approaches.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Is this seat taken?

JOHN LANDRY
Oh, um... No. Go ahead! Take it!

SARAH
Thanks.

She sits next to him.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Listen... What Matthew said... That wasn't cool.

JOHN LANDRY
It's ok. We don't get along.

SARAH
He shouldn't be mean like that.

JOHN LANDRY
(smiles)
Thanks.

John goes back to eating his food.

SARAH
Are you excited for the spelling
be?

JOHN LANDRY
Eh. Kind of.

SARAH
What's the matter?

JOHN LANDRY
There's gonna be a lot of people.

SARAH
What's wrong with that?

JOHN LANDRY
I get nervous.

SARAH
I'm sorry.

Beat.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Hey, you know what helps me when I
get nervous?

JOHN LANDRY
What?

SARAH
Talking to my friends. That always
helps. Who can you talk to?

JOHN LANDRY
Well, I like talking to Sunny.

SARAH
Ah, ok. Well what about people?

JOHN LANDRY
Like who?

SARAH
Me? Just try talking to me!

JOHN LANDRY
Talking to you makes me nervous,
too.

SARAH
Why?

John pauses.

JOHN LANDRY
It just... Does.

SARAH
Ok, well then, let's talk to Sunny!
Sunny, I think John is gonna do
great in the spelling bee! Don't
you?

She presses a button on Sunny.

SUNNY
That sounds amazing!

SARAH
See? Sunny believes in you!

JOHN LANDRY
I guess so.

John smiles.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)
Thanks for that, Sarah.

SARAH
No problem. I think it's cool
you're trying to win for your Dad.

JOHN LANDRY
Well, he could really use the help,
so...

A lightbulb goes off in Sarah's head.

SARAH
Hey, wait a minute!

JOHN LANDRY
What is it?

SARAH
Can you bring Sunny to the spelling
bee?

JOHN LANDRY
I don't know. Not sure toys are
allowed.

SARAH
Just ask Mrs. Kettlewell. Sunny
could really help you.

The bell rings for recess.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Recess!

Sarah gets up to leave.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Aren't you coming?

JOHN LANDRY
Can't. Spelling bee practice.

SARAH
Oh yeah! Right!

Sarah waves as she runs off.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Good luck, John!

Sarah leaves, and John gazes at her.

JOHN LANDRY
Thanks, Sarah.

INT. MRS. KETTLEWELL'S 4TH GRADE CLASS - DAY - MINUTES LATER

John, along with several other students, is getting ready for spelling bee practice.

STUDENT #1
What words do you think we'll spell?

STUDENT #2
Not sure. Could be anything.

STUDENT #1
"Anything." A-N-Y-T-H-I-N-G.
Anything.

STUDENT #2
Showoff.

Mrs. Kettlewell gets their attention.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Alright, everyone. Ready?

STUDENT #1
Can we have cookies?

MRS. KETTLEWELL
No. No cookies.

STUDENT #2
Why not?

MRS. KETTLEWELL
We don't have any cookies, ok?

She sees John sitting in the back of the room, and smiles at him.

MRS. KETTLEWELL (CONT'D)
Hello, John. So glad you could make
it.

John smiles back at her.

MRS. KETTLEWELL (CONT'D)
I think you're going to enjoy this.
It'll be fun!

JOHN LANDRY
I hope so.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Ok, everyone. Here is how practice
is going to go. You'll be divided
into groups, and I'll call each of
you up one by one. I'll give you
the word, and then you say it and
repeat it back to me, ok?

Everyone nods their heads.

MRS. KETTLEWELL (CONT'D)
John, why don't you go up first?
Oh, and be sure to put your toys
away. I need everyone to pay
attention.

John sighs, and reluctantly puts Sunny in his backpack.

JOHN LANDRY
Ok. I'll try.

John approaches the front of the room.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Alright, John. Your word is
"crumb."

John looks nervous.

JOHN LANDRY
Can you use that in a sentence,
Mrs. K?

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Sure. "I ate the whole cookie, down
to the last crumb."

STUDENT #1
Seriously, where are the cookies?

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Shh! Proceed, John.

JOHN LANDRY
"Crumb." C-R-U-M-B. "Crumb."

MRS. KETTLEWELL
That is correct. Excellent work,
John. Please sit and wait for your
next turn.

John sits down, feeling happy he was able to get up in front of the class without needing Sunny. John and several other class-mates spell their words successfully. Enthused, John gets up for his final word.

MRS. KETTLEWELL (CONT'D)
John, you are doing just wonderful
today.

JOHN LANDRY
Thanks! This is fun!

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Last word. Are you ready, John?

JOHN LANDRY
I'm ready.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
The word is...

Suddenly, Matthew barges through the door. He sulks to his desk.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
Can't believe I gotta do this crap.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Matthew! You're late. Not
surprising.

JOHN LANDRY
Wait, he's in the spelling bee?

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Yes. Signed up last minute, too.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
Not like I wanna be here. McGee
says I gotta win this thing to pass
into fifth.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Is that all he said?

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
He said something about getting
better grades and being nice...
(laughs) Yeah. Sure.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Well, we don't have much time left,
Matthew. John's about to spell his
last word. I'll work you in after
that.

She turns back to John, who is now shaking.

MRS. KETTLEWELL (CONT'D)
Sorry about that, John. Are you
ready?

JOHN LANDRY
I... I... think so.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Don't worry, you'll be fine. It's
an easy one. John, your word is
"pour."

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
Ha!

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Just ignore him, John, okay?

She turns around to Matthew.

MRS. KETTLEWELL (CONT'D)
Behave yourself, Matthew, or we'll
bring your parents up here again!

JOHN LANDRY
Can... Can you use that in a
sentence?

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
"John's Dad is so poor that he goes
to McDonalds for a fancy dinner!"

MRS. KETTLEWELL
That's enough, Matthew.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
Ok! Ok! I'm sorry.

John begins to cry. He takes his backpack, and runs into the hallway.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
John, don't listen to...

John slams the door.

INT. MARTIN ELEMENTARY HALLWAY - DAY - A MINUTE LATER

John sulks by the lockers. He takes Sunny out of his backpack, and gives him a hug.

JOHN LANDRY
Sunny. I can't do this! I can't. I can't.

He presses one of Sunny's buttons.

SUNNY
You can do this!

JOHN LANDRY
No, Sunny. I can't. Not with Matthew in there. This was a mistake.

Mrs. Kettlewell approaches John.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
John, are you ok?

JOHN LANDRY
No. I can't do this.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Yes you can, John! Don't listen to Matthew. He's a bully!

JOHN LANDRY
He's mean.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Don't let him bother you, John! You're one of the best spellers in the class! You were doing amazing before he walked in.

JOHN LANDRY
I don't wanna do this anymore, Mrs. K.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
John, I won't let you give up. You
know who this is all for, right?

JOHN LANDRY
Yeah. My Dad.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Ok, sure. But it's for you too! You
gotta show bullies like him they
can't get to you.

JOHN LANDRY
How?

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Well, maybe I can help.

She looks at Sunny.

MRS. KETTLEWELL (CONT'D)
You like these things too, right?

JOHN LANDRY
Yes.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
All of you seem to have one. What's
his name?

JOHN LANDRY
Sunny. His name is Sunny.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
I like that name. You seem to like
talking to him.

JOHN LANDRY
He makes me happy.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Well with a name like Sunny, I
would hope so!

Mrs. Kettlewell ponders for a moment.

MRS. KETTLEWELL (CONT'D)
You know, that whole "no toys"
thing I said? Maybe I can make an
exception. For you. But only for
you.

John smiles.

INT. MRS. KETTLEWELL'S 4TH GRADE CLASS - DAY - A MINUTE LATER

Mrs. Kettlewell and John re-enter the room, and the spelling-bee practice resumes. John holds Sunny in his hand.

STUDENT #2
Hey, you said no toys!

STUDENT #1
Yeah!

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Well, John just needs a little extra push. That's it.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
That's not fair!

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Alright. Moving on. John, again, the word is "pour."

JOHN LANDRY
"Pour." Got it.

John sees Matthew quickly open his mouth, as if about to say another joke. He looks down at Sunny, and gives him a rub.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)
"Pour." P-O-U-R. "Pour."

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Wonderful John! Wonderful!

John takes his seat as everyone in class besides Matthew claps for him.

MRS. KETTLEWELL (CONT'D)
Matthew, come on up. I'll give you a few words before we go.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
Fine.

Matthew heads to the front of the room with a smirk on his face.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT (CONT'D)
Piece of cake.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Matthew, your word is "terrible."

Matthew looks confused.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
Why? What's so bad about it?

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Matthew... "Terrible"... Your word
is "terrible."

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
So it's like a curse word or
something? I don't think my parents
would like that.

Mrs. Kettlewell groans in frustration. The bell rings.

INT. MARTIN ELEMENTARY HALLWAY - MINUTES LATER

The students leave the classroom. John smiles as he clutches
Sunny.

JOHN LANDRY
Thanks for your help, Sunny. Maybe
I can do this.

Matthew approaches John.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
Yeah, you really need little Sunny.
Poor John. He has no con-fie-dance.

JOHN LANDRY
Confidence.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
Whatever.

Matthew takes his Pupp-i, Dex, out of his backpack.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT (CONT'D)
Imagine needing a special toy to
help you out.

Matthew turns on Dex. Dex's eyes light up in anger.

DEX
Come on! Can't a guy get a nap?

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
That's pathetic. Don't you think,
Dex?

He presses a button on Dex.

DEX
That's the stupidest thing I've
ever heard.

Sunny looks offended.

SUNNY
Hey! That wasn't very nice.

DEX
Neither is your face!

SUNNY
You're mean!

JOHN LANDRY
You said it, Sunny.

John looks at Matthew.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)
Why don't you go bother someone
else?

Matthew looks down at Sunny, and gives a fake sympathetic
look.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
You know, it's not good to get too
attached to things.

JOHN LANDRY
What do you mean?

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
I'm just saying. Dad always says to
never get attached. You could wake
up one day, and it'll be gone.

JOHN LANDRY
Sunny will always be with me.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
Kinda like your Mom said?

John gives Matthew an angry look as he walks away.

JOHN LANDRY
Don't worry, Sunny. He's a bully.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - AN HOUR LATER

The students have been allowed free time to play. Matthew is hanging out with Luke.

LUKE
So, you've got to win the spelling
bee?

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
I know. Stupid.

LUKE
I'm not stupid.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
I know, I meant.... Well, ok you're
kinda stupid.
But winning the spelling bee? Come
on! Can't I just like scrub toilets
with a toothbrush or something?

LUKE
Well, who else is in the bee?

Matthew points over to John.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Little freak?

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
He's actually like really good at
it.

LUKE
He is?

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
I mean... Yeah. Mrs. K lets him
have Sunny, though. I guess it
helps him focus.

LUKE
Is it cause he's like... I don't
know... Different?

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - DAY - MINUTES LATER

John is playing with Sunny in the grass on the field. They are inspecting different types of bugs, and eating them.

JOHN LANDRY
Bugs are cool, don't you think,
Sunny?

SUNNY
Wonderful!

JOHN LANDRY
Thanks for your help in practice
today!

SUNNY
Helping others is fun!

JOHN LANDRY
Well... you really helped me.

Sarah approaches the two of them.

SARAH
What are you guys up to?

JOHN LANDRY
Oh, you know, just... Talking about
cool stuff. Cars. Sports. Not
eating bugs. Isn't that right,
Sunny?

Sunny's mouth begins to malfunction.

SUNNY
I love this dzzz.... I love this
dzzz... I love dz...

SARAH
Is Sunny ok?

Inside, John panics, but tries to keep his composure.

JOHN LANDRY
Oh... Umm... Well... Yes! He's
fine. He just.

Sarah looks concerned as John looks in Sunny's mouth.

Inside Sunny's mouth, John finds a roly poly. This is what
was causing the brief malfunction.

SARAH
So... You were eating bugs, then?

JOHN LANDRY
Fine. Yeah. We were. Sorry I'm
gross.

SARAH

What bug is your favorite to eat?

JOHN LANDRY

Umm... What?

SARAH

Well, there are so many! Ladybugs, they're kinda crunchy, so I like those. Snails are kinda slimy, which I also like.

JOHN LANDRY

You eat bugs?

SARAH

I have an older brother. He's taught me a lot.

JOHN LANDRY

Like what?

SARAH

Always knock before entering a room.

JOHN LANDRY

That's good advice. Why?

SARAH

Well, one time...

She looks around, suspiciously.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I caught him playing with his girlfriend.

JOHN LANDRY

What were they playing?

SARAH

Video-games.

JOHN LANDRY

That's not so bad. I play video-games all the time!

SARAH

It was "Barbie's Fairy Adventure."

They both burst out in laughter.

JOHN LANDRY
Okay. That's pretty funny.

SUNNY
What a neat story!

Sarah sees a soccer ball lying in the grass.

SARAH
You play?

JOHN LANDRY
Oh, no. Not really. I'm not so good
at sports.

SARAH
Come on! Its soccer! I'll teach
you. It'll be fun.

SUNNY
You can do it!

JOHN LANDRY
Sure. Ok. I guess.

Sarah tosses the ball to John. Sarah is the goalie.

SARAH
All you gotta do is get the ball
past me. That's it. Into the net.

JOHN LANDRY
What if I hit you in the face?

SARAH
You won't! Just kick it lightly.
That's all you gotta do!

JOHN LANDRY
K. Here I go.

He kicks the ball so gently it barely moves.

SARAH
Okay. Maybe use a little more force
than that.

JOHN LANDRY
Force? I don't know.

SARAH
Come on, John. What does Obi-Wan
say? "Use the force!"

JOHN LANDRY
You eat bugs AND you like Star Wars?

SARAH
What can I say? I wear a lot of hats.

John looks confused by this.

JOHN LANDRY
You're not wearing any hats.

SARAH
Just kick the ball, dude.

He kicks it fairly hard, but Sarah blocks the goal. The ball hits her in the knee.

JOHN LANDRY
I'm so sorry I hit you!

SARAH
It's ok! It's ok! That's supposed to happen.

SUNNY
You're the best!

Sarah laughs.

SARAH
Is Sunny your cheerleader?

JOHN LANDRY
Always.

SARAH
Thats sweet.

JOHN LANDRY
He's gonna help me win the spelling bee! I can't do it without him!

SARAH
That's not true.

JOHN LANDRY
Says you.

SARAH
Come on. One more try!

She readies herself again at the goal.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You did pretty good last time, but
you've gotta get it past me, ok?
You've got this.

John takes a deep breath.

JOHN LANDRY

Ok. Ok.

He kicks the ball, and it flies past Sarah, into the net.

Sarah cheers in excitement.

SUNNY

That was awesome!

SARAH

John! You did it! You scored a
goal.

John smiles as Sarah gives him a hug.

JOHN LANDRY

Yeah, well, I had a little
encouragement.

SARAH

Nothing wrong with that. You told
yourself you could do it, and you
did!

JOHN LANDRY

Yeah. I guess so.

SARAH

AANNND... You're going to win
that spelling bee.

JOHN LANDRY

Well, we'll see.

SARAH

Do you want a Kiss?

JOHN LANDRY

WHAT?

SARAH

A Kiss? Do you want one?

She pulls out a Ziploc bag full of Hershey Kisses.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I've got a bunch left over from
lunch.

JOHN LANDRY
Oh, um... Sure. Yes. That's very
nice.

She opens the bag.

SARAH
Take as many as you want!

JOHN LANDRY
Are you sure?

SARAH
Of course.

She looks down at Sunny.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Would you like a Kiss too?

SUNNY
I love dz... Love dz....

John takes another bug out of Sunny's mouth.

JOHN LANDRY
I think Sunny has had enough to eat
today.

SARAH
"Slimy yet satisfying" right?

JOHN LANDRY
You like Star Wars and The Lion
King?

SARAH
Who doesn't? Anyways, see ya!

Sarah walks away. John stares at her in amazement.

JOHN LANDRY
She's perfect, Sunny.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT (O.S.)
Hey Landry, catch this!

Matthew chucks the soccer ball at John's face, knocking him
to the ground.

INT. NURSE'S OFFICE - DAY - AN HOUR LATER

John wakes up on the bed, and bandage on his forehead.

NURSE

You ok, hon? You took quite the
fall there.

John scratches his head.

JOHN LANDRY

Yeah. It hurts a little.

NURSE

It's just a little scratch. Nothing
too bad. Would you like a kiss?

John assumes she is talking about the chocolate.

JOHN LANDRY

I've had enough for today.

NURSE

A little sugar always makes the
pain go away.

JOHN LANDRY

Well, ok.

The nurse gives him a large kiss on the forehead, leaving a
lipstick mark.

John gives an awkward smile.

NURSE

You run along back to class now, ok
Mr. Landry?

JOHN LANDRY

Got it. Thanks!

John gathers his things and prepares to leave. As he walks
out, he sees JEFF, another student, laying on a bed, his
forehead covered in lipstick. He is in a trance.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)

What are you doing here, Jeff?

JEFF

I come here every Wednesday!

John awkwardly scurries out of the room.

INT. LANDRY HOME FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Mike and John are sitting on the couch. Mike is furious about John's injury.

MIKE LANDRY
I'm calling his parents.

JOHN LANDRY
No Dad. It's fine.

MIKE LANDRY
Let me see.

Mike brushes back John's hair, revealing a small cut on his forehead.

MIKE LANDRY (CONT'D)
You're right, I guess. It doesn't look too bad. Still, I can call his folks if you want.

JOHN LANDRY
Please don't.

MIKE LANDRY
Ok, then.

Aunt Linda enters through the front door.

AUNT LINDA (O.S.)
Where is he? Let me see him?

MIKE LANDRY
We're in here, Linda.

Aunt Linda enters. She has brought an entire first aid kit.

AUNT LINDA
Terrible what that boy did to him.
Just terrible.

JOHN LANDRY
I'm fine, Aunt Linda.

AUNT LINDA
Are you injured?

JOHN LANDRY
No. Not really.

AUNT LINDA
Bleeding?

JOHN LANDRY

No ma'am.

AUNT LINDA

No leaking fluids at all?

JOHN LANDRY

NO.

MIKE LANDRY

I think he's ok. I checked several times.

AUNT LINDA

Well, where's the scar?

John pulls back his hair to reveal the scar on his forehead.

AUNT LINDA (CONT'D)

A scar on your forehead? That sounds familiar.

JOHN LANDRY

I'm kinda like Harry Potter.

AUNT LINDA

Who is that? Is that another boy being teased by this Matthew bully?

MIKE LANDRY

It's from a movie, Linda.

AUNT LINDA

Oh, well, alright then.

She smiles at John.

AUNT LINDA (CONT'D)

Still, nothing a little kiss couldn't fix.

Aunt Linda smothers John's forehead with a kiss.

JOHN LANDRY

Thanks. I feel much better now.

AUNT LINDA

Well, I should hope so.

She sees Sunny sitting on the floor, and puts him in John's lap.

AUNT LINDA (CONT'D)

Here. Your friend looks lonely.

JOHN LANDRY
Mrs. Kettlewell is gonna let Sunny
help me in the spelling bee!

AUNT LINDA
Hows that?

MIKE LANDRY
Its like an emotional support type
thing.

AUNT LINDA
Oh, he doesn't need that. He's such
a good speller on his own!

MIKE LANDRY
Well, there's been a few...
shakeups in the competition.

AUNT LINDA
What do you mean?

JOHN LANDRY
Matthew is in the spelling bee.

AUNT LINDA
WHAT? That's insane.

MIKE LANDRY
I don't make the rules.

AUNT LINDA
Well, who really cares? Little John
will win anyways.

An alarm beeps on Mike's watch, and he gets up to leave for
work.

JOHN LANDRY
Are you working the night shift
again?

MIKE LANDRY
Sorry, kiddo. Duty calls. Aunt
Linda's staying the night, though.

Aunt Linda tosses Mike her car keys.

MIKE LANDRY (CONT'D)
Thanks. I owe you one.

AUNT LINDA
Don't mention it.

Mike sees the sad look on John's face.

MIKE LANDRY
Hey, don't worry kid. Once I get
the car fixed, life'll get easier.
Ok?

JOHN LANDRY
Sure.

MIKE LANDRY
Alright.

Mike kisses John on the forehead as he leaves.

MIKE LANDRY (CONT'D)
Adios, buddy. Thanks again, Linda.

Mike heads out the door.

JOHN LANDRY
I have to win.

AUNT LINDA
You will win! You're spelling
skills are off the charts. Even
your teacher thinks so.

JOHN LANDRY
Yeah. I guess.

AUNT LINDA
You don't really need Sunny up on
that stage with you, do you?

JOHN LANDRY
Matthew will be there. I'll need
Sunny. Sunny helps me. He keeps me
from getting nervous.

AUNT LINDA
Is there something else?

JOHN LANDRY
Sometimes Tums help calm my
stomach, but...

AUNT LINDA
That's not what I meant.

JOHN LANDRY
Oh.

AUNT LINDA
I mean... Is there something you're
not telling us?

JOHN LANDRY
Well I... I...

John is unsure as he looks around.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)
I need to help Dad.

AUNT LINDA
With what?

JOHN LANDRY
The car. I can help.

AUNT LINDA
Sweetie, you're too little to fix a
car like that. It's....

JOHN LANDRY
I can get the money.

AUNT LINDA
What?

JOHN LANDRY
I know where to get the money.

AUNT LINDA
Honey, your piggy bank isn't that
big. Those hundreds I put in there?
They were just fives.

JOHN LANDRY
No, not that. Wait, really? I
mean... No. The spelling bee.

AUNT LINDA
What about it?

JOHN LANDRY
I win the money. Dad takes the
money. The car gets fixed, and...
no more night shifts.

AUNT LINDA
But don't you love the time we've
spent together?

JOHN LANDRY
I can't watch any more "The Price
is Right" with you.

AUNT LINDA
I understand. When is the spelling
bee?

JOHN LANDRY
Two weeks from now.

Aunt Linda smiles at Sunny.

AUNT LINDA
Well then, maybe you two should get
to practicing. You'll do great up
there, with or without Sunny.

John smiles.

JOHN LANDRY
Thanks.

Aunt Linda gets up to head towards the kitchen.

AUNT LINDA
Now, what are you in the mood for?

JOHN LANDRY
Mac and cheese, please!

AUNT LINDA
No no! You'll need protein! It
helps keep your mind sharp. And I
can't wait to see you kick
Matthew's a-s-s.

JOHN LANDRY
Aunt Linda, it's a spelling bee.
Not a wrestling match.

AUNT LINDA
You heard what I said.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - NIGHT - TWO WEEKS LATER

The night of the spelling bee has arrived. John enters
holding Sunny, while Mike and Aunt Sarah follow behind.

MIKE LANDRY
Seriously. You'd think for an event
like this they'd provide at least a
snack bar or something.

SUNNY

Mmmm. I'm hungry!

MIKE LANDRY

You said it, Sunny. After this I say we make a pit stop at that Wendy's or...

AUNT LINDA

Michael! Sunny! Quit worrying about your stomach! There are more important things going on!

JOHN LANDRY

It's ok, Aunt Linda. I'm hungry, too.

AUNT LINDA

And why did no one eat the casserole I baked before coming here?

MIKE LANDRY

Do you want the truth?

SUNNY

Always be honest with your friends!

JOHN LANDRY

Actually, Aunt Linda, I could go for a cheeseburger.

Aunt Linda sighs.

AUNT LINDA

Fine. I'll get drive thru. I just hope they'll let me bring it in here.

Aunt Linda leaves.

JOHN LANDRY

Dad. I need to say something.

MIKE LANDRY

She knows your order, John.

JOHN LANDRY

No. No. To you. The spelling bee prize. \$10,000.

MIKE LANDRY

What?

JOHN LANDRY
I'll win it for you.

MIKE LANDRY
Do you think I care?

John becomes nervous.

JOHN LANDRY
What? I thought you'd...

MIKE LANDRY
John, you're not doing this for me.

JOHN LANDRY
Yes I am! I....

MIKE LANDRY
I don't care about \$10,000.

JOHN LANDRY
Why? You can fix the car with that!

MIKE LANDRY
A car is a car.

JOHN LANDRY
I know that.

MIKE LANDRY
No, John. What I'm trying to say
is, material things like cars? They
come and go.

JOHN LANDRY
I know. They're cars.

MIKE LANDRY
What I'm trying to say is, tonight
is all about you. Your Aunt? Me?
Sunny? We're all here, to support
you.

SUNNY
You're my best friend.

MIKE LANDRY
And there's someone else here, too.

JOHN LANDRY
I know but... Wait, who else?

Mike hands John the macaroni frame picture of his wedding to
Jenny.

MIKE LANDRY
Who else do you think?

John stares at the picture and smiles.

MIKE LANDRY (CONT'D)
And she doesn't give a rat's ass if
you win or not. Just get on that
stage, and have fun.

JOHN LANDRY
Thanks, Dad.

MIKE LANDRY
Don't mention it, bud. Now, you go
get ready, ok? I'll see you out
there.

John laughs.

MIKE LANDRY (CONT'D)
What?

JOHN LANDRY
You said the "ass" word.

MIKE LANDRY
Well now, you did too. So we'll
both wash our mouths with soap when
we get home, ok? Go on now.

John turns away and heads to Mrs. Kettlewell's classroom.

MIKE LANDRY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Seriously is there like a dessert
table or something?

INT. MRS. KETTLEWELL'S CLASSROOM - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER

All students participating in the spelling bee are
practicing. John walks in with a smile on his face, holding
Sunny.

SUNNY
This is gonna be great!

JOHN LANDRY
I think so, Sunny! And you'll be
there to see it all!

John sits down at his desk, and places Sunny on top.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)
Sunny, I'm glad we're friends.

SUNNY
Friendship makes the whole world
smile!

John sees Matthew glaring at him from his desk.

JOHN LANDRY
Not everyone.

Mrs. Kettlewell comes by with a list of practice words.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Here you go, John! Some words to
help you practice before the bee.

JOHN LANDRY
Thanks Mrs. K.!

MRS. KETTLEWELL
No problem! Everyone is doing their
own practice, as you can see. Good
luck!

John starts reading the list of words.

JOHN LANDRY
Ok. "River."

John puts the sheet face down on his desk.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)
R-I-V-E-R. River. Yes! I... Oh no.

He has the urge to pee, and raises his hand.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Yes John?

JOHN LANDRY
May I use the restroom?

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Of course.

John whispers to Sunny as he leaves.

JOHN LANDRY
I'll be right back, Sunny. Don't go
anywhere.

SUNNY

I'll always be here for you!

John leaves the room in a hurry. When no one is looking, Matthew approaches Sunny.

Matthew picks up Sunny, and removes his batteries.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT

Time for a little nap. Nighty night, Sunny.

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER

Mike enters the auditorium, eating a bag of M&Ms. He passes by several other parents as he looks for his seat.

MIKE LANDRY

Hey. How's it going? Nice to see ya.

He sits down next to Bill Prescott and Marcy Prescott. He continues to eat his candy.

BILL PRESCOTT

Could you be a little more quiet, please?

MIKE LANDRY

Oh, sorry. I always gotta have my M&Ms.

MARCY PRESCOTT

I can see that.

MIKE LANDRY

Hey! If they didn't want me to eat them, they wouldn't have made them so delicious, am I right?

He laughs, and jokingly nudges Bill in the arm. He reaches over to shake Bill's hand.

MIKE LANDRY (CONT'D)

Mike Landry. My son's in the spelling bee.

Bill and Marcy simply glance at Mike's hand.

MARCY PRESCOTT

Best of luck to him.

MIKE LANDRY

How 'bout you two? Y'all got a kid
in this thing?

BILL PRESCOTT

Yes. Our son, Matthew. He's
competing.

MIKE LANDRY

Nice! My son knows a kid named
Matthew. That kid's kind of a
bully, though.

MARCY PRESCOTT

That doesn't sound like OUR
Matthew.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER

John runs up to Mrs. Kettlewell, holding Sunny, and crying.

JOHN LANDRY

Mrs. K! Mrs. K! Mrs. K!

MRS. KETTLEWELL

John! What's the matter?

JOHN LANDRY

It's Sunny, Mrs. K!

MRS. KETTLEWELL

Why? What's happened?

JOHN LANDRY

Look!

John tries talking to Sunny.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)

Sunny! It's time to wake up.

Sunny does nothing.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)

Come on, Sunny! It's a brand new
day.

Still nothing.

MRS. KETTLEWELL

Oh my.

JOHN LANDRY
What can we do, Mrs. K? What's
wrong with him?

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Have you checked his batteries?

JOHN LANDRY
Yes!

MRS. KETTLEWELL
And?

JOHN LANDRY
Look!

He opens Sunny's battery slot, revealing the batteries have
been removed.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
John, I'm sorry. Do you have any
spares?

John begins to cry.

JOHN LANDRY
No. Do you?

MRS. KETTLEWELL
No. I'm afraid I don't.

Tears drop from John's eyes.

MRS. KETTLEWELL (CONT'D)
Listen, John. You don't NEED Sunny,
you know.

JOHN LANDRY
Yes. Yes I do.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
No. You don't. I've seen you spell
just fine even before you had
Sunny's help.

JOHN LANDRY
But that was before...

John spots Matthew laughing at him in the corner. John glares
at him.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
It'll be okay, John.

JOHN LANDRY
Hold on, Mrs. K.

Mrs. Kettlewell stays behind as John approaches Matthew.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)
YOU! You're a bully! You did this!

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
I don't know what you're talking
about.

JOHN LANDRY
Give me back my batteries!

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
You're weird.

JOHN LANDRY
And you're STUPID! No wonder you
keep getting held back.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
I get held back because they like
me here, okay?

JOHN LANDRY
Give. The batteries. Back.

Matthew laughs and walks away.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
See you out there, Johnny Boy. May
the best man win.

John taps Matthew on the shoulder. Matthew turns around. John
socks Matthew in the face, giving him a bloody nose.

Matthew falls to the floor. Several of the kids cheer.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT (CONT'D)
Dude! What the hell? Freak!

Mrs. Kettlewell approaches Matthew.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Boys! Boys! Stop this! Matthew, are
you okay?

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
Yeah. I'm fine. I...

Blood trickles down his nose.

MRS. KETTLEWELL

Matthew, I think you need to go to the nurse.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT

I'm alright, Mrs. K. This twerp just got a little excited, that's all.

MRS. KETTLEWELL

Matthew, I can't let you go out there like this. Please, go to the nurse. She'll get you patched up.

MATTHEW PRESCOTT

But... The spelling bee.

MRS. KETTLEWELL

There's plenty of time. Go on!

Mrs. Kettlewell points to the door, and Matthew exits.

She gives a disapproving look to John.

MRS. KETTLEWELL (CONT'D)

John, why would you do that?

JOHN LANDRY

He's mean, Mrs. K! He took Sunny's batteries! I know it!

MRS. KETTLEWELL

Do you have any proof of that?

JOHN LANDRY

Well, no, but...

MRS. KETTLEWELL

Then you really shouldn't have done that, John.

She smiles as she walks away.

JOHN LANDRY

I mean, it did feel pretty good.

He takes Sunny out of his backpack.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)

I wish you could've seen that, Sunny.

SARAH (O.S.)

That was amazing!

John turns around to see Sarah has been watching. He blushes.

JOHN LANDRY

Oh, Sarah! Hi! I... I'm not usually a violent person.

SARAH

I know that, John.

JOHN LANDRY

So, um... You came to watch the spelling bee?

SARAH

I came to watch you win.

JOHN LANDRY

Oh, um... well, I don't think that's gonna happen.

SARAH

Why not?

John shows Sarah Sunny's empty battery slot.

SARAH (CONT'D)

So?

JOHN LANDRY

Sunny won't work without his batteries. I need Sunny.

SARAH

No. You don't.

JOHN LANDRY

Yes. I kinda do.

SARAH

No. You really, truly don't.

JOHN LANDRY

You're just being nice.

SARAH

You just punched Matthew in the nose! Like, really hard!

JOHN LANDRY

He's a bully.

SARAH

Exactly! And did Sunny help you do that?

JOHN LANDRY
No. No. I guess not.

SARAH
John, watch this.

JOHN LANDRY
Why? What...

Sarah gestures to nearby students.

SARAH
Hey everyone! I have a question.

The students stop in their tracks.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Who here would like to punch
Matthew Prescott in the face?

Most students raise their hand.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Okay. Okay. Now, who here actually
has a good reason to punch him?

No one drops their hand.

SARAH (CONT'D)
K. One more question. Who here has
ACTUALLY punched Matthew in the
face?

All hands point to John.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Thank you.

The students go back to their activities.

SARAH (CONT'D)
See. You did something great. Not
just for yourself, but for
everyone!

JOHN LANDRY
Yeah, but...

SARAH
And you did it all without Sunny.

John looks down as he holds Sunny in his hands.

JOHN LANDRY
You know what. You're right.

She gives him a kiss on the cheek.

SARAH
You're gonna do great.

John smiles.

JOHN LANDRY
Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Okay.

They embrace in a warm hug.

SARAH
But if you ever punch anyone again,
I'll slug you right back.

Mrs. Kettlewell re-enters.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Attention everyone! The spelling
bee begins in just ten minutes! If
everyone can please head to your
spots.

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Mike is still sitting next to Bill and Marcy, waiting for the
bee to begin. Aunt Linda returns, taking the spot next to
him.

AUNT LINDA
Sorry that took so long. Drive thru
was terrible!

MIKE LANDRY
You got the food?

He eyes her purse.

Aunt Linda rolls her eyes, irritated.

AUNT LINDA
Can't believe I had to sneak this
in here.

She opens her purse, and hands him a greasy bag from Burger
King.

Mike drools at the mouth.

MIKE LANDRY

You are a lifesaver. I'm starving.

He unwraps his cheeseburger and starts eating it.

Bill and Marcy look at him, disgusted.

BILL PRESCOTT

I swear, the nerve of some people.

MARCY PRESCOTT

So inconsiderate.

Mike pauses mid-bite. He wipes his mouth.

MIKE LANDRY

Oh, I'm sorry. You two want a bite?

Principal McGee appears at the podium.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.
Welcome to the annual spelling bee!
Can we get a round of applause for
all of our students, and their hard
work?

The audience claps.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE (CONT'D)

I would like to remind everyone to
please silence their cell-phones
for the duration of the program.
And with that said, best of luck to
all contestants!

The curtain opens, and each student has taken their seat on the stage. Bill and Marcy are mortified when they see Matthew has a bloody nose, with a tissue stuck in it.

MARCY PRESCOTT

Bill! Look! What happened to him?

BILL PRESCOTT

It looks like he got punched.

MIKE LANDRY

Ha! Serves him right. That's the
kid that picks on my son.

Bill and Marcy give him an angry look.

MARCY PRESCOTT

Our son? A bully? Never!

BILL PRESCOTT
Yeah, he's kinda stupid, but he's
no bully!

MARCY PRESCOTT
Bill!

BILL PRESCOTT
What?

MARCY PRESCOTT
I'll bet his son punched Matthew in
the face!

MIKE LANDRY
My son? Please. He's too good
natured. He'd never do that.

Mike eyes John on the stage, and gestures to Matthew as if to ask if John really punched him. John subtly nods in agreement.

Principal McGee approaches the podium.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE
Let's begin, shall we?

Matthew approaches the front of the stage.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE (CONT'D)
Alright, Matthew, your word is
"beautiful."

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
Ok. What word is it?

PRINCIPAL MCGEE
"Beautiful."

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
Right. I know it's a beautiful
word, but what word is it? Sunset?
Lilac? Daisy.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE
This is gonna be a long night.

SUPERCUT

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

John stands at the front of the stage.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE
John, your word is "cancel."

John takes a deep breath.

JOHN LANDRY
Ok. Cancel. Cancel. "C-A-N-C-E-L."
Cancel.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE
Congratulations! That is correct.

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Several more students pass through the rounds of the spelling bee. Matthew actually begins to show improvement.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE
Alright, Matthew. Your word is
"shoulder."

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
Shoulder. "S-H-O-U-L-D-E-R."
Shoulder.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE
Wow. That's actually right! Good
job!

Matthew smirks and John as he sits back in his seat.

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

More students pass through the spelling bee rounds. John begins to grow nervous. He didn't actually think Matthew would make it this far.

END SUPERCUT

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

It is the final round of the spelling bee. Matthew and John are the only two contestants left.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE
Ladies and gentlemen, I am happy to
announce that we have reached our
final round, with only two
contestants remaining.

MAN (O.S.)
Oh thank God.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE
Yes, well, before we proceed, let's
have a round of applause for both
of our contestants, Matthew
Prescott and John Landry!

The audience claps.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE (CONT'D)
First, I would like John to
approach the front of the stage.

John appears, and Principal McGee smiles at him.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE (CONT'D)
Congratulations, John. Are you
ready for your final word.

John looks around, feeling anxious. He imagines Sunny in the
corner, cheering him on. He sees his Dad and Aunt Linda
smiling at him.

JOHN LANDRY
Yes, Principal McGee. I'm ready.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE
Okay, then. The word is "Sunny."

JOHN LANDRY
I'm sorry, what?

PRINCIPAL MCGEE
Let me repeat that for you. The
word is "Sunny."

John smiles as he comes to a realization.

JOHN LANDRY
Sunny is always with me. Okay, I've
got this. Sunny. "S-U-N-N-Y."
Sunny.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE
That is correct! Good work!

Mike and Aunt Linda burst out in cheers. Mark accidentally
drops his burger on Bill's lap.

MIKE LANDRY
Awesome! Great work! Amazing!

John smiles at his dad as he sits back down.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE
Matthew Prescott. Our final
contestant! Please approach!

Matthew heads to center stage.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE (CONT'D)
Matthew, your final word is "wait."

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
Ok. For what?

BILL PRESCOTT
Oh no.

MARCY PRESCOTT
Not another year in fourth grade.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE
The word Matthew, is "wait."

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
I can't be here all night.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE
Spell. The. Word. "Wait."

MATTHEW PRESCOTT
Got it. Why didn't you say so?
"Wait." "W-H-E-A-T." "Wait."

PRINCIPAL MCGEE
I'm so sorry, but that is
incorrect. The correct spelling is
"W-A-I-T."

In a fit of rage, Matthew sits back down.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE (CONT'D)
Ladies and gentlemen, it is with
great honor that I give you, our
winner, John Landry!

Mike and Aunt Linda jump for joy in the audience as John
approaches center stage.

MIKE LANDRY
Way to go, John! Love you, buddy.

Bill and Marcy give him a stern look.

MIKE LANDRY (CONT'D)
 Boy, you two must be french fries,
 because y'all sure look salty.

Aunt Linda laughs.

AUNT LINDA
 Oh Lord, Mike.

Principal McGee motions to John.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE
 Congratulations, John! Excellent
 work.

He sees Mike and Aunt Linda in the crowd.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE (CONT'D)
 Family?

JOHN LANDRY
 That's my Dad, and my Aunt.

Principal McGee gestures to them.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE
 Come on up here, family.

Mike and Aunt Linda stand by John on the stage.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE (CONT'D)
 You all should be so proud. This
 truly is a marvelous achievement.
 We are proud to present you with
 this award.

Janine, Principal McGee's office assistant, enters holding an
 oversized \$10,000 check.

PRINCIPAL MCGEE (CONT'D)
 \$10,000... To be used at your own
 discretion.

The family smiles as Janine hands them the check.

MIKE LANDRY
 Oh, um... Thank you so much, Mr.
 McGee.

JOHN LANDRY
 Now we can fix the car!

AUNT LINDA
 It's a miracle.

MIKE LANDRY
Yeah. About that...

Mike looks around at the audience, and approaches the podium.

MIKE LANDRY (CONT'D)
Hey y'all. My family and I, we appreciate this reward. We really do.

Bill and Marcy give audible "huffs."

MIKE LANDRY (CONT'D)
As many of you know, I'm a mechanic, and our car recently broke down. This \$10,000 truly is a gift.

JOHN LANDRY
You said it, Dad!

MIKE LANDRY
But, like I said... I'm a mechanic. I'm a mechanic because I dropped out of school.

While Mike continues speaking, Sarah approaches John onstage, smiling.

JOHN LANDRY
Oh, hi Sarah!

SARAH
That was amazing! You kicked Matthew's ass, again!

JOHN LANDRY
Ha ha. Yeah.

MIKE LANDRY
But, here's the thing. If I stayed in school, I could've done more. Every child deserves to learn in an environment that nourishes them both intellectually and emotionally.

BILL PRESCOTT
Big words coming from the Burger King.

MIKE LANDRY

So, with that said... I'd like to give this \$10,000 back to the school.

The crowd gasps. Suddenly, everyone applauds, except for Bill and Marcy.

JOHN LANDRY

But, Dad... The car.

MIKE LANDRY

Yeah. Don't worry about it. Like I said, I've got everything I need. Now, let's go eat.

AUNT LINDA

You just had a cheeseburger.

MIKE LANDRY

I'm in a celebratory mood.

Mike motions to John.

MIKE LANDRY (CONT'D)

Do you wanna bring your little girlfriend, there?

JOHN LANDRY

Sarah! Umm...

MIKE LANDRY

Go on! Ask her.

JOHN LANDRY

Oh. Okay.

John awkwardly approaches Sarah.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)

Sarah... Would you like to come... eat dinner with my family?

Sarah gives him a big kiss on the cheek.

SARAH

I wouldn't miss it! Let me ask my Mom!

Sarah exits. John smiles as she leaves.

JOHN LANDRY

Not bad. Not bad.

MRS. KETTLEWELL (O.S.)
Wait right there, John.

Mrs. Kettlewell runs up to him.

MRS. KETTLEWELL (CONT'D)
John. That was amazing! You did it
all by yourself!

JOHN LANDRY
Well. Yeah. I did. I just wish
Sunny could've seen it.

John takes the powered-down Sunny out of his backpack.

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Still no batteries?

JOHN LANDRY
Nope.

Mrs. Kettlewell takes a pack of batteries out of her purse.

JOHN LANDRY (CONT'D)
Did you have those all along?

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Of course.

JOHN LANDRY
Why didn't you say something?

MRS. KETTLEWELL
Well, now you know, you don't need
Sunny. But still...

She puts the batteries in Sunny, who springs to life.

SUNNY
It's nice to have a friend!

MRS. KETTLEWELL
I couldn't have said it better,
Sunny.

John smiles as he gives Mrs. Kettlewell a warm hug.

MRS. KETTLEWELL (CONT'D)
Just remember, John. You can do
anything you set your mind to.
Batteries not included.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END.

(CONT'D)