

*Joey in the Forest: how a Television Show can Help Prepare our Future for System Change.*

**By**

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## The Abstract

Capitalism values the Earth through a lens of monetary potential. This, combined with capitalism’s growth imperative has lead to the destruction and wasting of our natural resources leading to the climate crisis we face today. This way of interacting with the world is ingrained within the minds of Americans because it is essential to survival in capitalist life. This project identifies this problem while addressing it through a television show designed to attack this worldview of exploitation. The show seeks to offer discussion on how capitalism impacts the earth while offering alternative systems of value through interconnection and inherent value. I have written the pilot episode, outlined the rest of the season, and prepared a pitch of the show for this project. Goals were created to make sure my goal accomplishes what it seeks to do. My show, titled *Joey in the Forest*, accomplishes these goals to varying degrees. Interconnection and inherent value are portrayed well, but the relationship between capitalism and the earth could be stronger. The show does do a good job of attacking the thought processes behind capitalism, though. Through watching my new show, my audience of 13-16 year olds will learn ways of valuing the world and be able to think beyond capitalism, creating a future population more ready for necessary system change.

## **The Project**

Throughout my years as an environmental scholar I have come to realize the role of capitalism in the issues that I have studied. It began with a book called *The New Possible: Visions of Our World Beyond Crisis*, which came out in 2021. The book uses the Covid-19 pandemic as both a lens to examine the issues of our world and as a starting point to affect change. The pages feature a collection of essays from many different authors about many different aspects of society ranging from abstract things like love to tangible things like food. At the source of all of these problems: the inequitable nature of our society. Kim Stanley Robinson says, in his introduction for the book, that “we have agreed to rule ourselves and run our affairs by way of a political economy that is unsustainable, extractive, and unjust, and yet is massively entrenched in national laws and international treaties.”(pg. xi). On the next page he says “neoliberal capitalism is cruel and destructive, and yet [is] the world's overriding system of laws.” (pg. xii). The cruel and destructive nature of capitalism is what I wish to address with my Senior Comprehensive project. In the spirit of *The New Possible*, I will use this project to identify how capitalism affects the health of the planet, its people, and their worldviews, and then write and conceptualize a television show that offers discussion on how to move forward. It is my goal to influence culture so that future generations have the ability to be able to move beyond capitalism and into a more equitable future. I'll use case studies of industrial agriculture and the American public school system to show how capitalism affects our world and our minds. I'll then illustrate why a television show would be effective in combating capitalism and why my show specifically will be. Lastly, the show will then be presented in written form and analyzed for its effectiveness.

## **The Problem**

Capitalist society has created generations of people that cannot view the world beyond the lens of monetary value. A capitalist society, as ours is, is one that is modeled after constant growth and consumption (Gordon, 2003; Jackson, 2021). Goods and services must constantly be exploited so that the exploiter can live (Boettke, 2022). This system of constant growth through exploitation creates the capitalist mindset - a pseudo religion that pins money as the center and focus of life (Monbiot, 2019; Tarnowski, 2017). People need money to live, so, everything is

viewed through the lens of its own monetary potential. Through capitalism, if something is not thought to be exploitable, then it is not valued. And if something is thought to be exploitable, it is only valued through the money it may provide. This was recognized by Karl Marx in 1876 in his own critique saying “Money is the universal self-established *value* of all things. It has therefore robbed the whole world — both the world of men and the world of nature — of its specific value. Money is the estranged essence of man’s work and experience, and this alien essence dominates it, and he worships it”(pg. 172). Price tags turn materials, lives, and hours of labor into single products, alienating us from the process it took to create it. The issue is that the cheapest way to produce these products is often the most destructive and unsustainable. We can see how profit based thinking is unsustainable using one of the leading causes of the current climate crisis, industrial agriculture, as a case study.

In prioritizing profit, industrial, large scale farms often chose to utilize monocultures, which are fields made up of only one species of crop. The issue with this is that monocultures are unnatural and harmful to the environment and the food. Soil is an interconnected web of nutrients and organisms that rely on biodiversity to cycle nutrients for future generations. When biodiversity is taken from the system (like in a monoculture), nutrients cannot cycle and the next season’s plants cannot grow as well. This degradation of soil is cited as a major contributor to both the dust storms and the prolonged drought of America’s famous 1930s “Dust Bowl”, which was one of the US’ worst environmental disasters (Cook, 2009). To account for this degraded soil, massive amounts of fertilizer must be taken from external sources, fixed, then spread across monoculture fields. This fertilizer then damages the cycles of the surrounding ecosystems while leaving external ones degraded as well. Monocultures also call for a massive use of pesticides because natural pest deterrents come from biodiversity, which is not present during monoculture practice. These pesticides are also extremely damaging to surrounding ecosystems.

Gabe Brown, a practitioner and advocate for Regenerative Agriculture, points all this out in his TED talk while also providing a solution (Brown, 2016). His agricultural techniques utilize polycultures that take advantage of nature’s nutrient cycling and pest deterrents, making his farm not only sustainable, but actually beneficial to his environment. In 20 years, Brown changed his farm to be more sustainable and ended up increasing the depth of his topsoil by 214 percent. Brown shows us that, even though agriculture could be good for the environment, industrial,

capitalist thinking leads us to destroy it. Brown still does profit from his farm though, so then why is his sustainable method not the norm?

The United States government incentivises monocultures of crops like corn and soybeans subsidies because they are needed in large amounts by corporate entities who want to produce vast amounts of preservable, processed food (NSAC, 2023). The legislators who make these decisions to subsidize are lobbied by corporations for the continued support of monoculture farmers. The government allows this because they measure much of the country's value by its GDP, and corporations fueled by global production produce higher numbers for the US' GDP than varied, self reliant farms like Gabe Brown's. Our government allows corporate entities to control food production because massive productions of capital are prioritized in our capitalist system. If government subsidies went to farms like Gabe Brown's then food production could be beneficial to the environment and have the power to feed our massive population, but that is not in the priorities of our current government. Our capitalist food system degrades the environment because corporate entities value land and food as a source of profit, not as a source of life and nutrition. Capitalism and its powers like the govt' and corporations do not act sustainably because they value profit. The corporations are not the only problem though, because, under capitalism, food is also valued by the people through the money it costs. This means that people in western countries waste over  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the food produced because the only consequence is the money they've already spent to acquire the food (Chakraborty, 2018). The true consequence of viewing food and land as a commodity is the climate crisis and the 20,500 people who died from malnutrition in the United States in 2022 (KFF, 2023). If our system sought to feed people and protect our source of food, it would not starve people and it would not degrade our soil.

Under capitalism, all of earth's resources are viewed this way. The Earth is only seen as an obstacle or a resource for money. This combined with capitalism's growth imperative means that the world and its resources will be exploited until they cannot be anymore, creating an inherently antithetical relationship between Capitalism and our planet. Nature is a finite space that recycles its resources for future generations of life (USDA). Capitalism, through its model of linear growth, exploits these resources without regard for the wellbeing of the future (Monbiot, 2019). Capitalist society is one that over extracts resources, wastes said resources, and degrades the natural world in the process (Movahed, 2016). This leads to a lower quality of life for most

and an eventual collapse of society as a whole (Bollier, 2021). There is not a form of capitalism that could work with the planet because of capitalism's inherent growth imperative.

There are several factors that cause capitalism to constantly grow. Firstly, the very point of capitalism is to gain capital, which means making more money so that you can spend it on making more money (Jackson, 2021). This is only driven further by competition, making it a necessity to build capital so that you cannot be undercut or overtaken by another capitalist. Building capital is inherently insecure so people must protect their streams of revenue by continuously growing monetary security (Jackson, 2021; Polermo, 2017). Another reason, which is particularly relevant here, is that efficiency in resource consumption only leads to more resource consumption (Jackson, 2021; Bliss, 2020). Efficiency in resource consumption makes the unit price fall, which incentivises more use of that resource – so growing technology in natural resource harvesting will only lead to a greater use of that resource. This is called the Jevons Paradox, and it shows us that it is capitalism's nature to constantly increase its production and its exploitation. Capitalism is a linear model of constant growth.

We cannot have infinite growth on a finite planet - this view of the world cannot continue. If we are to continue to feed our growing population and live on this planet, then our global systems cannot only value profit. System change must occur, but it can't happen unless people can imagine, process, and view the world outside of capitalism. Capitalism is ingrained into every major institution in the United States, and because capitalism is so ingrained, many of us see it as a reality of life, and have shaped our worldviews and modes of thought around it. A clear example of this mental shaping can be seen in our school system.

Formal education is one of America's key tools in ingraining capitalism into the minds of the population. Actually, it has to be, because if the purpose of school is to prepare children for adult life, then the purpose of school is to prepare children for capitalism. Current schooling emphasizes repetition, compliance, and competition among peers, three pillars of ideal capitalist workers, and not the collaborative critical thinking skills needed for true personal and academic development (Carol, 2011; MenGesha, 2020; Klees, 2017; Williams, 2019). Students are taught that America's economic fortunes are the greatest in the world and that capitalism is the only way to achieve democracy (Carol, 2011). I can remember learning this myself in history class through the lens of the red scare and communist containment foreign policy. It was taught to me as an essential fight against the evils of communism, but now I can understand the American

imperialist values that truly fueled the wars (Appy, 2018; Carliner, 2020). Biased teaching is not the heart of the problem though - it's the structure of formal education that trains children to be capitalist. Children are conditioned to find self worth in test scores and hierarchy, creating a self centered and inherently insecure way of thinking and view of life. In capitalism, to have a high quality of life, you have to be willing to compete with others and be better at earning money than them. Schools teach this system of hierarchy because students need to be able to think selfishly if they are to survive in our system. If our students are only taught to think for the sake of self gain, then of course they will not take care of our planet. This has happened for generations and it is why the climate crisis is as bad as it is. Hierarchical thought cannot be our only way of valuing ourselves and the world around us. People must be given the material and opportunity to think beyond and in comparison to capitalism, that is the only way our necessary system change can begin to occur.

### The Solution

I will address the issue of capitalism by attacking the modes of thought that it creates while also offering an alternative worldview through storytelling - that alternative worldview: seeing all beings on earth as equally valuable through interconnection and inherent value. By offering a view of life as completely equal, I can challenge and contradict the hierarchical thinking that capitalism creates. By interconnection I mean our spiritual and physical dependance on the lives and world around us. Physically we depend on the world to sustain us in a vastly connected ecosystem. The spiritual side of interconnection is the kinship and warmth people can feel by realizing our connection to the world around us. This is an abstract concept that's hard to describe, but I think Alice Walker does a good job through her character Shug Avery in the novel *The Color Purple* (1982). Shug, in the middle of renouncing hierarchical christianity says this: "My first step from the old white man was trees. Then air. Then birds. Then other people. But one day when I was sitting quiet and feeling like a motherless child, which I was, it come to me: that feeling of being part of everything, not separate at all. I knew that if I cut a tree, my arm would bleed. And I laughed and cried and I run all around the house. I knew just what it was. In fact, when it happen, you can't miss it." (pg. 165). I have felt this myself when reflecting on my place in nature, and it is something that I teach others when I can. It's a palpable feeling that I believe to be central to understanding the true importance of environmentalism. There are many

other pieces of storytelling that deal with interconnection, and to inform my own story, I will go over them here.

The book *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho, released in 1985, features a boy who learns to “speak the language of the world”. The boy journeys to find treasure he had in a dream, and along the way he learns to listen to the moment and commune with “the soul of the world”. Eventually, he becomes one with the world and turns into wind. He understands his connection to the world and utilizes it. Coelho is using this tale to discuss, legitimize, name, and advocate for interconnection. A 2021 “ecocritical” analysis of the novel concludes that “Coelho in his novel *The Alchemist* tries to show the deep connection between the human beings and nature. He shows how the lives of human beings are interconnected with nature.” (Pervaiz, 2021). The author also says that “the aim of ecocriticism is to investigate the interconnectedness of human beings and non-humans in literature.” Coelho’s discussion of interconnection through his book is great but it is worth looking into visual storytelling if I am to make a television show. a

*Princess Mononoke* (1997), directed by Mayao Miyazaki, follows a boy’s battle with spirits, representing animal worlds, and industrialization. The movie shows the different perspectives of industrialization – animals, industrial leaders, the women who work the steel mill. Despite the boy’s best efforts for connection and peace, the movie ends in a terrible war where many people and animals are killed. Despite all this, the people and animals begin to rebuild with each other in mind and do not ignore the connections between them as they did before. The movie ends with a feeling of hope, showing us the issues with industry ignoring their connection to the earth through the ending conflict while offering a new, interconnected way forward.

*Avatar: The Last Airbender* (2005) is a tv show featuring, again, a young boy adventuring to complete a mission, learning the connections of the world along the way. Aang, the boy, is deemed the avatar at birth. The avatar historically keeps the nations of element benders in peace because he can bend all four of the elements. Because of his abilities he is deemed to keep the world at peace. The avatar can also communicate with the “spirit world”. The spirits can represent anything but most often represent the natural world or emotions. Aang is thrust into stopping the industrial, imperialist fire nation from colonizing the world. He learns, and the show explores, the effects of industrialization and domination both on people and the natural world, using the spirit world as a device for the interconnected balance of life. Interconnection is a

broad term to define and discuss because it literally deals with all of life, but, as they stories show us, it is not impossible. My show will be able to discuss interconnection in similar ways to these stories, but it also discuss the value of all of these connected lives.

Intrinsic value, the value a being or thing has for simply existing, specifically nature's, has been advocated for and discussed for centuries. An early example being saint francis, who, born in 1181, advocated that all creatures under God should be viewed as equal to man – a bold and important statement to preach within the hierarchical catholic church (D'Ambrosio, 2021). Modern thought of the subject finds itself throughout all kinds of environmentalists, authors, philosophers, educators, and more - most recognizing that viewing nature as inherently valuable is essential for meaningful cultural change (Piccolo, 2017; Louv, 2008; Sandler, 2012). Being an environmental educator, I have seen children develop this perspective of nature first hand, and I feel it strongly myself. Communicating nature's intrinsic value, rather than its monetary value, will work against how capitalism conditions people to think because things are valued for their existence, not by the profit their existence may provide. This will help to create a population more ready for system change because it provides a worldview that values things beyond capitalism (Kureethadam, 2021; Eisler, 2021).

Because of the interconnection we can feel with nature, actual exposure to it is the best way to get its intrinsic value across. Unfortunately though, not everyone has the physical and cultural accessibility to not only find natural space, but feel comfortable in it (Louv, 2008; Rowland-Shea, 2022). Television, however, is only becoming more popular and more accessible, with the world wide number of TV households expected to be 1.81 billion in 2026 (Stoll, 2022). I will use television as my medium for storytelling for this reason. Storytelling is a proven effective way of communicating values because it is able to affect people emotionally. Environmental values are no exception. A famous example of this is *Bambi* (1942) being widely cited as inspiring environmental conservation in the US (Whitley, 2008). Furthermore, in 2010, college students were found to be more conscious and in favor of forest preservation after watching *Medicine Man* (1992) when compared to students who did not watch the film (Bahk, 2010). Similarly, a study from 2022 stated that environmental narrative films improved environmental knowledge and attitude in children ages 6-8 when compared to students who did not watch the videos (Yang, 2022). That study also stated that the duration of the narrative education (over an interval of days) affected the effectiveness in instilling environmental values:

the longer the education the more effective. This means that my narrative, being a television show with episodes, will be more effective in instilling environmental care than say a film or a youtube video.

The use of storytelling to communicate an idea is not a new concept, and has been utilized and discussed for centuries. A recent Forbes article on the subject used Jesus Christ and his storytelling as their primary evidence (Parekh, 2019). The author points out how Christianity has been able to instill values in millions of people through the use of simple, relatable stories. The 2015 book *Houston, We Have a Narrative*, by Randy Olson, a marine scientist and filmmaker, brings the conversation to the filmic medium of storytelling (Olson, 2015). Olson was a tenured professor of marine biology at the university of New Hampshire when he became frustrated with the way academia portrays information. Out of this frustration, he chose to become a filmmaker. His book critiques the current way information is communicated in academia because it is so focused on truth and fact. Academic presentations of “fact” that seek to be unbiased are useful for trying to understand reality, but they are good at making people care and what is being discussed. If the audience is to care about an issue, they must be shown why using methods that interact with the emotional center of a person. The perspective-free goals of scientific academia cannot provide emotion because they seek to remove humanity from information presented. This is why storytelling using emotionally affecting characters and situations is key to getting people to care about environmental issues - we cannot solely rely on facts.

Clearly, storytelling in the television medium could be an effective tool to display the values of interconnection and inherent value, but who should be the audience? I have chosen children from the ages of 13-16 to be the demographic the show must aim towards. I chose this age group because children are the future, and if they are not shown perspectives beyond capitalism, then we are surely doomed. Within children, I chose younger teenagers because I wanted the audience to be as young as possible without having to shy away from content that may be disturbing. If children are too young when shown the nature of environmental issues, they can develop a fear of discussing environmental matters and avoid it altogether. This is called “ecophobia” and it stands in the way of children becoming active parts of the environmental movement (Strife, 2011). By targeting teenagers, I hope to target people who are young enough to be central to our future without scaring them from being involved in environmentalism.

Comparing Earth's intrinsic value and our interconnection with it to capitalism will reveal great injustices built into our system because of the lives capitalism does and does not value through its hierarchy. It is scary to realize the reality of our society's structure, which is why the children I target have to be mature enough to deal with these subjects in brave and productive ways.

The mission of my show is to utilize storytelling to show the value of all lives on earth through the lenses of interconnection and inherent value. By communicating systems of value beyond capitalism to children, I can help to create a population more ready for necessary system change.

### **The Creation**

In order to accomplish the mission of my introduction, I have created goals that I must achieve. The completion of these goals within the show will create a show that accomplishes my mission, targets tweens, and be emotionally affecting. Using these goals, I will write the pilot episode of the show, outline the first season, and prepare a pitch to potential funders. The show will be called *The Boy in the Forest* and it will feature a young boy who discovers the ability to speak to animals. He will meet a society of wolves, who are thought to be extinct on the east coast, and explore their world of the forest. In order to speak to animals, the boy will have to learn to see the world around him as inherently valuable, allowing empathy based communication beyond language. He will have to balance and compare this world with another in the form of a hierarchical math camp that ranks its campers. The camp will act as a vehicle demonstrating the hierarchical thinking behind capitalism. The values of the forest and the values of the camp will be at odds and it will be up to Joey to navigate the two conflicting worlds.

### Mission:

- Explore the perspectives of capitalist worldviews and life.
- Explore the perspectives of the natural world.
- Implore the main character to see interconnection and inherent value of life on earth.
- Ending illustrates why change from the capitalist norm is necessary and provides fodder for thinking about change.

### 13-16 y/o Audience:

- The main character is a young teenager.
- Settings and situations are intriguing to young teenagers.
- The main character is called to action to leave normal life and enter a new adventure.

### Emotionally Affecting:

- The characters are written honestly under the shared experience of living.
- The plot points hold emotional weight for characters.
- The ending is significant to all characters involved.

How I follow through on these goals creatively will be examined, stated, and evidenced during the analysis section of the project. The goals are designed to guide me through writing an effective show, but it's the analysis section that will hold me accountable. As for the pitch, a false one will be done and evaluated by people familiar with the industry. The pilot script and season outline follow below:

**THE BOY IN THE FOREST**

Episode 1 - Pt. 1

**THE SOULS AROUND ME**

Written by:

Jack Thibault

1 EXT. WOODS - DAY

Open to a shot of a path in the woods. The woods are glowing with sunshine and life moves in every corner of the frame. Slow, peaceful music begins. Individual sounds peak in and out. The level of the sound and music fades up and down, like breathing. The sounds and movements seem to move with breath. Ambient sound ebbs and flows. Sounds combine to be harmonious. The music begins to crescendo. Just before the climax, a voice halts the tension.

JOEY

(annoyed)

Grandma, I'm Bored.

Two figures come into view from the furthest part of the path. A boy and his grandmother. The boy, JOEY, walks with wild energy. His arms swing and his eyes are in constant motion. His Grandmother, JUNE, is more still. She walks silently and the energy seems to calm around her. She wears sunglasses and holds a cane.

JUNE

Here, make a friend.

From a branch, JUNE grabs a caterpillar. She hands it to the boy. He holds the bug and eyes it with some intensity as they walk. He trips over a crescent shaped rock sticking out of the ground. JOEY stands up, realizing his blind grandmother has just handed him a caterpillar. He looks up at her as she walks by him.

JOEY

Hey, how do you even know this stuff is here, Grandma?

JUNE

You'll find out soon enough. That's why we're out here.

JOEY

Well whennnnn? This is taking forever.

JUNE

Look now, that's where we're going.

JUNE gestures in front of them. They continue to walk towards what looks like some sort of clearing. We follow JOEY running past his grandmother and into the shining clearing. It is a magnificent view. Below JOEY is a massive canyon with a river flowing through the bottom. Surrounding the river are woods as dense as they can be. It is pure summer. The sun peeks through the clouds as JOEY turns around to see his grandma join him at the view. He is ecstatic, jumping.

JUNE

You be careful now with that ledge, Joey. I don't want to give your mom bad news tonight.

JOEY rolls his eyes and calms himself a bit. He watches his Grandmother as she walks past him and sits near the edge of the cliff.

JUNE

Come, sit.

He sits next to her. They are quiet for a minute. JUNE sits still. JOEY's eyes dart around the view, but eventually land on his Grandmother. As if she can feel his gaze, she speaks.

JUNE

When I lost my sight I felt so alone. All of a sudden all the life around me was dark.

Joey looks up at her

JUNE

I had to find a new way of feeling the life around me, and I did. In a lot of ways, losing my sight opened my eyes to the world around me.

JOEY looks at the caterpillar still in his hand

JOEY

But how did you know about the caterpillar?

JUNE

It is easier to show you. But you'll have to close your eyes.

JOEY

(Protesting)

What?! Grandma, I don't want to meditate.

JUNE

Joey, you're 7 years old now, you can control yourself. Try this with me. You want to know how I found the caterpillar?

JOEY

Ugh, Fine.

JUNE

Now close your eyes and breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.

The shot gets tighter around JUNE as she breathes, but the shot is interrupted by a close-up of JOEY's eyes opening. The tension is broken.

JOEY

Grandma, we've done this a million times and I've never been able to feel a caterpillar.

JUNE

Because you never let yourself. It takes concentration and vulnerability, Joey. Promise me you'll try this time, then we can go back.

JOEY

Alright fine.

JUNE

Well then listen. You've got to surrender yourself. Breathe in slowly through your nose and out through your mouth. Find the rhythm in your breath. What does it feel like? What does it sound like? If you have other thoughts, acknowledge them and then let them drift away. All you have to do now is breathe.

They breathe together. The camera gets tighter as they breathe. The breathing of the forest from the first shot begins to rise and sync up with them. The sun seems to get brighter. The wind begins to blow. Slowly, the image behind them begins to fade to black and stripes of color begin to flow with sounds of wind. The stripes flow around and behind them. The stripes slow as they breathe in and quicken as they breathe out.

JUNE

You're doing well, Joey. Can you feel the wind in your breath?

JOEY

I think so. It feels like it wants to be a part of me.

JUNE

It's the opposite, You're becoming a part of it.

Soon, a colored stripe begins to emanate from both of them. The stripes join the others as they flow with the wind. Joey begins to Grimace.

JUNE

Yes Joey! Feel yourself in the wind. We're getting close.

Joey's eyebrows are furl in to each other as if he is about to cry.

JOEY

Ugnh, Grandma, this feels weird.

JUNE

I know, Joey. You're connecting with the world, it's a big feeling. But we aren't done. You have to let the world in as well. Let the wind bring it to you. Open your heart.

JOEY

How?

JUNE

Relax, trust what the wind will bring you. You can't control the world, you can only accept it. The wind carried souls in it, feel them. Take a deep breath in and out with me on 3. 1... 2... 3...

Both take a deep breath and the stripes move from the wind and into their hearts. When the color hits them, images flash on the screen. The caterpillar, a baby, a fish in the water, people dancing, JUNE. The last image stays the longest. A wolf looks up and at the camera, as if surprised by its presence. The wolf has a scar in the shape of a chain link fence across its face. It approaches the camera with an intensity in its eye. It speaks English.

WOLF

Another Human?

Cut back to Joey, who is smiling. Suddenly red, jagged lines like lightning come in from the corners of the frame and pierce JOEY. Through the red stripes, death and

despair: trees falling, caged animals, people crying. Excavators push trees down and animals run from them. A large, bald man with glasses laughs and shoots at the animals running, he looks at the camera. Cut to a close-up of Joey opening his eyes and stumbling backwards. Before the woods behind him come into view, his stripe shoots back into his body and the other stripes fly away from him. He begins to cry and clutches his heart. June goes over and tries to console him but he stands and runs away, Crying.

FADE TO:

**TITLE: THE SOULS AROUND ME**

...

**7 Years Later**

CUT TO:

**2 INT. CAR - DAY**

Close-up of JOEY with his head against the car door, looking out the window. In the reflection of the window, we can see woods flying by. The sun is rising. His parents can be seen driving in the front. He is older now than he was, about 14. Cut to a bust shot of his parents in the front. His father drives and his mother stares out the window. She is angled away from him.

FATHER

I know you're worried, but it will be good for him.

MOTHER

shh, he'll hear you.

His FATHER darts his eyes in the rearview mirror. Joey's eyes are just out of view.

FATHER

He's sound asleep, he won't hear.

MOTHER

I just feel like we're abandoning him when we shouldn't be. I feel like a bad parent.

Cut to JOEY wide awake, awake blankly staring out the window.

FATHER

It would be foolish to pass up this opportunity. Joey's a smart kid, he can handle it. Besides, it's been 3 months already.

JOEY's mother shoots his father a look. His father is silent for a moment.

FATHER

I'm sorry. I just want what's best for him, and this scholarship is a blessing.

His Mother continues to face away from him.

FATHER

You know these are the same woods June would bring him to.

His mother releases some tension with a breath

MOTHER

He always did love those walks. I just miss her.

Cut to JOEY in the back. A tear falls down his face. He closes his eyes. Fade to black.

Cut to JOEY's eyes opening to his father's voice.

FATHER

Joey! Wake up, take a look.

JOEY looks out the front windshield to see them approaching an arch way with the words MATH CAMP plastered on the sign in serious lettering.

FATHER

Hah? Pretty great right?

JOEY rolls his eyes and ignores his father, turning back to his window. They slow to go through a gate at the bottom of the archway. As they slow, JOEY double takes to see a wolf looking at him from right below the sign. He maintains eye contact as his jaw slowly drops. Suddenly, he lunges in his seat towards his parents.

JOEY

A wolf! Look! There's a wolf there!

JOEY and his parents turn to look but there is nothing but trees. His father speaks up.

FATHER

Joey, we're in New York. There are no wolves left on the East Coast.

MOTHER

It was probably just a dog or something, dear.

FATHER

And it's dangerous to distract a driver, Joey.

JOEY isn't listening. He's still looking at the spot where the wolf was.

CUT TO:

**3 INT. DORM ROOM WITH TWO BEDS - DAY.**

The room has two beds, two desks, and one window with a view of the woods beside him. One side is completely bare and one side is decorated fully with things like superheroes, The Lord of the Rings, and Star Wars. JOEY stands below his parents. The parents stand with their back

to the door, facing JOEY. His father, who is quite tall, takes a knee and puts a hand on JOEY's shoulder. JOEY looks tired, vaguely annoyed, and angsty.

FATHER

Now Joey, I know math isn't your favorite, but you've got the brain for it. This camp could be really great for your future.

(JOEY nods as if he's heard this 100 times)

You proved you're worthy with the scholarship test, but now it's time to earn your place. Show 'em your best, champ.

His Father pulls JOEY in for a righteous hug with two extremely vigorous pats on the back. JOEY's eyes swell with each apparently surprising pat. Joey can't return the hug before his father stands back up. His mother comes for a hug shortly after.

MOTHER

We're proud of you no matter what, Dear. Call me if you need to talk about Grandma or anything else, ok?

She pulls out of the hug a bit and looks at him with an expectant look.

JOEY

Alright, Mom. I will.

She smiles and appears to emotionally melt. She hugs him again, apparently fighting tears, then steps back towards JOEY's father.

MOTHER

We love you kiddo, have a great summer.

JOEY

I love you too, Mom. Bye

FATHER

Mhm yes, and don't forget to work hard!

(Mother starts to push him out the door)

Show 'em what this family is made of!

(In the hallway now)

WOO! Family Johnson!!!

JOEY shuts the door out of sheer embracement. He sits on the bare bed and breathes a breath of pure, long-awaited, relief. He rubs his eyes for a moment, then gazes out the window. The outside is practically glowing with green. The green seems to call him to the window. The camera zooms to the window as the sun comes from behind a cloud, revealing two eyes reflecting light into the camera. The boy stumbles back but continues his gaze. He moves closer to the window, feeling the stare of the two glowing dots. The wind begins to blow and whispers move through his ears. The eyes want something. They're calling to him. The wind blows stronger. The eyes glow brighter. JOEY moves closer, putting his hand on the glass.

GEORGE

HEY BUNK BUDDY!

A boy Joey's age makes JOEY jump. He has thick glasses and his hair sticks up as if there is a leaf blower on his chin. He smiles at JOEY.

GEORGE

I'm George, what's your name?

GEORGE extends a hand for JOEY to shake, JOEY does so with a cool reluctance.

JOEY

Uh I'm Joey, I guess this means we're roommates.

GEORGE holds up a corrective finger.

GEORGE

I Prefer the term Bunk Buddies.

JOEY

Right, well, would you help me unpack?  
A bell tolls from a speaker shown just above the door of  
the room. A deep voice speaks after the bell.

SPEAKER VOICE

Attention all campers. Please report to the gymnasium for a  
welcome from me, your camp director. Thank you.

Quick cuts of the two on the way out, George quickly grabs  
a frisbee.

CUT TO:

**4. EXT. PATHWAY - DAY**

JOEY and GEORGE walk out of the door of a 3 story brick  
building that spreads wide for 100 feet on both sides of  
the door. A small crowd comes out with them, some campers  
before, some after. JOEY hustles down the stairs and GEORGE  
throws the frisbee down to him. JOEY throws it back while  
they walk down the path. GEORGE throws it back but it lands  
at a fork in the road with a sign. The fork is in front of  
them so they approach it. Signs give directions to a "Path  
through woods", "The Math Quad", and "The Math Gymnasium".  
JOEY picks up and holds the frisbee. They walk along the  
path towards the math gymnasium.

JOEY

What even is a math gymnasium?

GEORGE

A gym to do math in.

JOEY looks at GEORGE with a reluctant smile.

JOEY

This is going to be a long summer.

GEORGE

What, you don't like math?

JOEY

Math is fine but no I don't want to do it for a whole summer.

GEORGE

Then why did you sign up to do it for a whole summer?

JOEY

Wellllllllll I did really well on the scholarship test so they let me come for free this summer. I didn't want to but my parents say it's a great opportunity. To be honest I didn't even know the test was happening until it did. I guess I've always been just... good at math.

GEORGE

Well that's something we have in common, bunk buddy.

JOEY

You're good at math too?

GEORGE

No, ha, but I am here on a scholarship.

JOEY

How'd you get the scholarship if you're not good at math?

GEORGE

My Mom. She knew when the test was coming and made me study for it literally every night.

JOEY

Geez.

GEORGE

Yeah, I felt like I was going insane. But boy did I learn algebra. And when the test came, I aced it.

The two are silent for a bit as they walk. They each look in different directions. Then JOEY looks at GEORGE.

JOEY

Well I'm glad they put us in a room together, Bunk Buddy.

GEORGE smiles at JOEY. JOEY shoves the frisbee to GEORGE and runs off with his arms up. GEORGE throws it and JOEY unnecessarily jumps to catch it. GEORGE laughs. JOEY yells.

JOEY

And if you ever need help with a problem set just let me know.

JOEY throws the frisbee to him and jogs back over.

JOEY

If they roomed the two scholarship kids together, I figure we should stay together.

CUT TO:

**5. INT. GYMNASIUM - DAY**

JOEY sits next to his Bunk Buddy, George. They sit on the metal folding chairs aligned in perfect rows. Each chair is filled with a child. The neon frisbee sticks out among the chairs. At the front of the gym, there is a stage with a podium and a projector screen. A large bald man with glasses and a suit steps on stage and stands on the podium.

DR. DIRECTOR DOMINUS

Good afternoon, boys and girls. My name is DR. Director Dominus, I am the director and CEO of this establishment. I have called you all here today to welcome you, personally, ... to math camp.

(He grins, waiting for applause from no one, then takes his smile back and pushes up his glasses)  
Ahem, Now, if you are unaware of the structure with which this camp functions, I will familiarize you.

Cut to a montage visualizing the Director's explanation through JOEY and GEORGE's life at camp.

DR. DIRECTOR DOMINUS (V.O.)

Your basic life here is determined by your daily and cumulative math performance, which is measured and represented by Math Points. You will receive math points based on the daily math challenges assigned by your math teacher, in your math classroom. Math points rankings will be updated daily and put on display here in the math Gymnasium for our morning math meeting. Upon receiving a certain amount of math points, you will begin to earn particular privileges here at Math Camp. Better desserts, school supplies, room decorations, Sports balls, math tablets, and even televisions. However, there are a limited number of these prizes, so only those with the highest ranking can earn them. And, if you are to drop below the place at which you earned the prize, you're liable to lose that prize. It's with this policy of sheer competition that I will mold you all into perfect cogs ready to work in the glorious machine that is America. Any questions?

MONTAGE:

- JOEY and GEORGE sit next to each other in a classroom doing an assignment.
- The teacher hands back their tests. JOEY has received 50/50 math points. GEORGE has received 30.
- The two sit in the auditorium looking at the point rankings, JOEY is in the top ten. GEORGE is somewhere in the middle. GEORGE gives a nervous smile to JOEY.
- Again they do an assignment
- Again they look at the rankings. JOEY is 3rd. GEORGE is in the bottom third.
- In the lunchroom, JOEY has a piece of cake in the shape of pi while George has meatloaf. GEORGE puts on a smile.

- The two sit at their desks on opposite sides of their room. JOEY smiles while playing a math video game, earning him math points. GEORGE hunches over a paper covered in scribbles and eraser marks.
- JOEY and GEORGE walk out of the gymnasium but GEORGE is soon shoved away by people coming up to JOEY.
- A man in his 20s wearing a Math Camp hat takes a television from a girl huddled in the corner of her dorm.
- JOEY smiles as the TV man enters his room and sets it up. GEORGE watches and accidentally breaks the pencil he was trying to work with.
- JOEY and GEORGE look at the rankings in the gym. JOEY is first. GEORGE is second to last. Cut to JOEY on stage bowing with DOMINUS standing next to him. Everyone claps for JOEY. GEORGE doesn't clap. JOEY shakes hands with DOMINUS and laughs.

CUT TO:

**6. INT. CLASSROOM - DAY**

GEORGE and JOEY sit next to each other in a standard classroom of about 25 students. A teacher is walking down the isles handing out packets. The teacher is dressed in a sharply pressed suit and a fresh buzzcut. The classroom itself does not have a soft edge in it. Even the desks have completely cornered edges. When the teacher gets to JOEY he waves the packet away and pulls a tablet from his backpack. GEORGE takes the packet. Another girl also pulls out a tablet. The teacher finishes passing out the packets.

TEACHER

Alright students, you all have 30 minutes to complete as many problems as you can. You may begin immediately.

The camera moves close to GEORGE as sweat begins to drip from his frizzled hair. He stares at the first question.

The teacher plops down in their desk with their face behind a computer screen. GEORGE leans over to JOEY.

GEORGE

Psst... Joey. How do you factor out this side of the problem?

JOEY keeps his eyes on his tablet.

JOEY

Just find the GCF it's not hard.

GEORGE

What the heck is a GCF?

JOEY looks up at GEORGE

JOEY

Look George, Lisa is only a couple points behind me and I need to keep first place.

JOEY looks back down at his paper.

JOEY

I don't have time for you right now.

GEORGE pulls away from JOEY while still looking at him. He looks at JOEY and his face begins to twist into sadness before he turns back to his paper.

CUT TO:

**7. INT. OFFICE - DAY**

JOEY sits across from DOMINUS at DOMINUS' desk. It is extremely organized. A taxidermied Buck head sits on the wall just above DOMINUS. The two are mid conversation.

JOEY

And then he asked me, "what the heck is a GCF"

DOMINUS slams his hand on the table and laughs a few vigorous *HAs* which seem to pull a snicker out JOEY, who then takes it back and remains serious.

DOMINUS

Joey, It has been an honor to have you at camp this year. You remind me a lot of myself when I was your age: better than everyone else.

JOEY blushes and almost smiles. He catches himself and remains serious. DOMINUS goes from smiling to completely straight faced in an instant. He pushes up his glasses as he begins to speak.

DOMINUS

Ahem, but I get your point. You feel you would do better at camp if you were surrounded by people more of your caliber.

JOEY

Yes sir, that is exactly it.

DOMINUS

So what do you propose we do about it then?

JOEY

Well sir, I was thinking that perhaps the better campers could get their own living quarters. Like our own floor in the dorms. We could maybe even have our own classrooms.

DOMINUS

Hmmm

DOMINUS takes a beat to think. He puts his hand on his chin. Eventually he looks up at the deer above him, then back at JOEY.

DOMINUS

Joey, you've done it again.

DOMINUS puts his hands up and spreads them as if to heighten his visualization.

DOMINUS

Premium dorms exclusive for top 10 campers. Huge rooms, full size beds, a pool, air hockey. Wow. Surely that will drive competition like nothing else. Meaning test scores get better and I get paid more. Joey, you are a genius.

JOEY

Our own dorms?

DOMINUS

Yes Joey. Brand new dorms.

JOEY looks to his feet concerned, then flicks his head to the side. A smile leaks out from under a frown. He looks up to dominus slowly and his smile gets slowly wider

CUT TO:

## 8. GYMNASIUM - DAY

The morning math meeting is commencing. Dominus winds down after announcing Joey as first place once again. He continues.

DOMINUS

And speaking of Joey Johnson: he has given a wonderful suggestion towards the improvement of the camp. I will share it with you now.

Dominus switches the projected slide of the rankings to a concept art of luxury dorms.

DOMINUS

Luxury Dorms will be constructed for the top 10 students here at

Math Camp. In fact, construction begins today. In these new dormitories you will find...

Dominus' voice trails off and goes silent as we cut to George looking over at Joey. Bass comes in and rises, implying that George is staring more intensely as JOEY smiles and nods at the Luxury dorm concept art.

CUT TO:

9. INT. DORM ROOM - DUSK

GEORGE and JOEY sit on opposite sides of their room. The window in the middle looks out to a beautiful orange sun setting just through the tree canopy. Sharp beams of orange light split the room through the leaves. The light glares at the computer screen of JOEY, who sits at his desk playing a math game with headphones on. The game flashes FAIL. JOEY rips his headphones off and storms to the window, closing the blinds and shutting the sun out. On his way back to his computer, GEORGE interrupts.

GEORGE  
Hey... Joey?

JOEY continues walking and sits in his chair. He puts his headphones over one ear and looks impatiently at JOEY.

JOEY  
What's up, dude.

GEORGE fiddles with his thumbs and looks at his feet - then up at JOEY

GEORGE  
Did you really suggest those new dorms?

JOEY scoffs and turns back towards his screens.

JOEY

Of course I did. DR. DOMINUS wouldn't lie.

JOEY puts his headphones back over both ears. George looks down and his chin folds and quivers. Then his eyebrows furl and he stands up as if to make a point of it. He takes Joey's headphones off of his head. Joey turns around quickly and *fail* pops across his screen again.

JOEY

(Frustrated)

Dude what is your problem?

GEORGE stammers for a second then gets his words out.

GEORGE

You know you've really changed since the first day. We used to be buddies

JOEY

Who cares George, we're not here to make friends.

GEORGE

You didn't feel that way in the beginning. You used to hardly care about math.

JOEY

Yeah well times change, I'm better now. And naturally, you're jealous. It's ok George I won't hold it against you. I'd be upset if my roommate was better than me too.

GEORGE

I'm not upset that you're a higher ranking, Joey. I'm upset that you've become such a stuck up snob. You aren't better than me.

JOEY

I don't have to care what you think, you haven't even been in the top 20.

GEORGE

...I'm here to get better at math, not to be better than other people. Do you really see me as worse? Do you really think you're better than everyone else just because you can do math?

JOEY balls his fists.

JOEY

What is your point, George?

GEORGE

I'm saying maybe you need a math break.

JOEY's face scrunches with fire behind his eyes.

JOEY

What? Why would I stop? I came here to prove myself. If I stop for a second Lisa will pass me. I have to be the best. And why shouldn't I be the best? Dominus to loves me.

GEORGE

He loves you because you're number one. You're nothing to him but a new record to advertise. He gave you the scholarship so he could charge more based on your test score. You're nothing without your ranking. And you have no real friends because everyone just want t-

JOEY

And you're nothing but a jealous failure who can't help but try to bring me down!... You really are beneath me. I shouldn't have to live like this.

JOEY starts putting on his shoes.

GEORGE

Where are you going?

JOEY

I'm going to DR. Director Dominus to request an immediate room change.

GEORGE sinks into his seat as if to distance himself from the words. He watches JOEY frantically tie his shoes. JOEY leaves without another word.

CUT TO:

**10. EXT. PATHWAY - BARELY DARK**

Rain begins to fall as JOEY walks out the door. His chin begins to quiver but he starts running as if to stop the crying. It doesn't work. We see the tears and rain fall down his face as he runs down a path into the woods. He gets tired and eventually collapses to the ground. The camera cuts out to an extreme wide of JOEY completely isolated around trees.

CUT TO:

**11. EXT. PATHWAY IN WOODS - DAY**

Match cut to young JOEY on the ground in the woods. JUNE approaches him. Cut into her hugging him on the ground. He resists at first, then falls into her arms.

JUNE

I am so sorry, Joey. The world is a scary place and connecting with it means feeling the good and the bad. The pain and the pleasure. ...You weren't ready and I should've known that. I'm sorry. We can go home now and you won't have to think about it anymore.

JOEY looks up at her, tears falling down his face.

JUNE

But Joey, if you can't learn to accept and forgive the world for all of its' good and bad, you'll always be alone.

12. EXT. PATHWAY IN WOODS - NIGHT

Match cut back to JOEY alone in the woods. Grandma is notably absent because of the match cut. Joey looks up and sees a crescent shaped rock. Match cut to that rock in the earliest scene, where JOEY held the caterpillar. JOEY stands up and wipes the tears from his face. He continues down the path and into the clearing. He sits at the cliff and begins to meditate as his Grandmother taught him. The image behind him fades to black and colored lines come in with the wind. This time almost all of them are red and jagged. After some breaths a jagged red line comes from him. He takes a deep breath and lets the other Jagged lines in. Images flash: trees being torn down with the luxury dorm concept art in the foreground, animals running from the falling trees, DOMINUS laughing at the site, GEORGE crying alone in his bed. We cut back to see JOEY taking all the stripes with tears falling down his face, continuing to breathe. We see the jagged red stripe coming from JOEY slowly turn green. He opens his eyes. The woods behind him return, illuminated by flashing lightning. JOEY stands up and walks towards the edge of the cliff, peering over it. We cut extremely wide to isolate him further. Cut back in close to JOEY squeezing his eyes shut.

SOFOS

It is not too late for you, Grandson of June.

A voice comes from behind JOEY and he turns to see who it was. The wolf with a chain link fence scar across its face is standing there. She speaks.

SOFOS

Walk with me.

CUT TO:

**Title: To be continued**

**THE BOY IN THE FOREST**

Episode 1 - pt. 2

**THE SOULS AROUND ME**

Written by:

Jack Thibault

1. EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

This episode begins with the same shot as the first, except it is night time. Life moves in every corner as crickets help to create a pattern of the rising and falling soundscape. After some beats, JOEY and SOFOS come into frame from behind the camera, on the path. They walk and talk through the woods.

SOFOS

I met June when I was still a pup. I was grown enough to sniff around on my own but that was about it.

SOFOS smiles to the ground.

SOFOS

It was doing that when I felt your grandmother for the first time.

She laughs.

SOFOS

It terrified me at first, feeling a human in the wind, especially since we're taught to avoid humans the day we can walk. Regardless, I was young and reckless. The second time I felt her I acknowledged her presence the same way I did for you when you were younger.

JOEY smiles and looks down at the wolf.

JOEY

So that was you that I felt.

SOFOS

Yes, 7 winters ago I felt a second human, you.

SOFOS looks up at JOEY.

SOFOS

I wanted to be friends, you know... but I never saw you again.

JOEY looks at his feet.

JOEY

I know... feeling the world, it scared me.

SOFOS

As it seems to scare most humans, except for your grandmother. Anyway, several times more your grandmother reached out with her soul to me, and each time I became more convinced that I didn't need to hide from her. She had a kind soul, Joey.

JOEY smiles at the ground and then up at the trees.

SOFOS

Eventually I decided to pay her visit...

SOFOS's voice trails off as the image fades.

FADE TO:

**2. INT. JUNE'S HOUSE - DAY**

We see JUNE sitting on a leather chair nestled in a corner of a room encased with bookshelves and lamps. A window is open showing the bright green woods that surround her house. Curtains blow with the wind entering the house. JUNE has her legs folded in the chair and her hands in her lap, her posture is perfect. The head and paws of a wolf appear in the window frame to get a peek inside.

JUNE

Hello?

SOFOS appears scared by the words at first, ducking her head back out of the window. She is smaller and looks

younger than she does with JOEY. She doesn't have the fence scar across her face.

JUNE

Wait! Sorry I didn't mean to scare you.

JUNE breaks her perfect posture and SOFOS sticks her head back in the window.

JUNE

Are you the one I've been... well I'm not sure what to call it... connecting with?

SOFOS says nothing, her head still only peaking in the window.

JUNE

I really don't mean to make you nervous. I- my name is June. Let me get the door for you.

JUNE stands up and goes to the door across the room.

SOFOS

No that's ok, this thing is fine.

SOFOS climbs through the window and thumps as she hits the floor. JUNE takes a step back from the window.

JUNE

Um, well... alright. Would you like something to drink?

SOFOS

No, that's alright.

JUNE

OK, well. Is there anything I can do to make you more comfortable? You seem nervous dear.

SOFOS

I'm sorry I've just never spoken to a human before. I'm actually really not allowed to be here.

CUT TO:

**3. EXT. WOODS - NIGHT**

We cut back to SOFOS and JOEY walking through the woods. SOFOS is smiling and JOEY has his eyebrows folded with focus.

SOFOS

Ha, you should have seen your grandmother's face when I told her I was a wolf. It took me about 20 minutes to convince her. She had to feel my teeth and everything.

JOEY laughs.

SOFOS

Anyway, she had lots of questions for me.

CUT TO:

**4. INT. JUNE'S HOUSE - DAY**

JUNE sits in her leather chair with her elbows on her knees and her hands clasped together. SOFOS sits in a chair catty corner to her.

JUNE

So how is it that you're speaking English to me right now?

SOFOS

What is english?

JUNE

It's the language we're speaking now!

SOFOS

Hmmm, I'm not sure that I am speaking anything. Maybe your brain just makes it seem that way.

JUNE

Then if we aren't speaking then how are we communicating right now.

JUNE scours with confusion but SOFOS snickers at the question.

SOFOS

I'm not entirely sure to be honest. But I can tell you what I know.

JUNE

Alright.

SOFOS

Well, all beings can communicate with each other. I guess I'm not sure how, it's just always been that way. But for whatever reason, humans can't. We've got no idea what you guys are saying most of the time and I'm pretty sure you guys can't understand us.

JUNE

That *was* true, until now, I guess.

SOFOS

So what have you been doing differently?

CUT TO:

**5. EXT. WOODS - NIGHT**

Back to SOFOS and JOEY walking through the woods. JOEY whips his head down to face SOFOS.

JOEY  
Meditating, she was meditating!

SOFOS  
Right,  
(as if reminded)  
that's what she called it. She said it was her way of paying  
attention to her soul, and through that,

CUT TO:

**6. INT. JUNE'S HOUSE - DAY**

Back to JUNE and SOFOS sitting in JUNE's living room.

JUNE  
I've been able to, I guess, feel the souls around me as well. I  
think through the wind.

SOFOS  
So with meditation humans can learn to do what the rest of us do  
all the time.

JUNE  
I think it's more remembering than learning... It's about paying  
attention to what's been there all along.

CUT TO:

**7. EXT. WOODS - NIGHT**

We see the back of JOEY and SOFOS as they finish walking  
and see the dorm building in front of them. JOEY turns to  
SOFOS.

JOEY  
So that's it then, we're communicating with our souls.

SOFOS

That's the way you see it... To me - to the rest of the world -  
it's just life.

JOEY

I guess humans think about our brains too much, so we forget our  
souls. That's why we can't talk to you guys.

They're silent for a moment. SOFOS looks up at JOEY.

SOFOS

We need your help, Joey. I didn't just come up to you to chat.

JOEY

What is it?

SOFOS

It's easier if I show you. Will you meet me here in the morning?

JOEY

Yes. I have the points to be able to skip a day.

SOFOS

Points?

JOEY

It doesn't matter. I'll see you tomorrow. It was nice to meet  
you, Sofos.

SOFOS

And it was nice to meet you, Joey.

SOFOS turns around and disappears into the woods. JOEY  
watches until he cannot see her anymore.

CUT TO:

**8. INT. JOEY'S DORM - NIGHT**

GEORGE lays asleep in a blue-dark room. He lies on his side facing the wall, away from the door. JOEY barges in. He's still a bit damp and covered in patches of dirt.

JOEY  
George!

GEORGE jumps from his sleep and sits up to face JOEY.

GEORGE  
Joey what the- why are you all wet and dirty? Wh-Where have you been?

JOEY  
I just... I took a walk and - it was raining -that's not important. George I'm sorry. I-

JOEY looks at the cluster of screens, devices and notes on his desk as if for the first time.

JOEY  
I've been a terrible bunk buddy.

GEORGE smiles.

JOEY  
I got caught up in the competition and in Dominus's praise. I'm sorry. I thought being the smartest was more important than anything else. I thought my brain was everything. And you were right George, I was nothing without my ranking. And when I went out there in the rain I was... I was so alone, George. I missed who I was before the math points and I missed you. I've been inconsiderate. I should've paid attention to who was right in front of me. I got caught up in Dominus' world.

JOEY gestures to the screens all over his desk.

JOEY

I just hope we can still be roommates, even after what I said.  
I'm sorry, George.

GEORGE gets out of bed, clad in pajamas, and hugs JOEY.  
After only a second he pushes away with a disgusted laugh.

GEORGE  
Ah jeez I forgot you were all wet.

They both laugh.

GEORGE  
I forgive you, Joey. We can still be bunk buddies.

They both smile. JOEY's is huge.

JOEY  
Great! I'll start my math break tomorrow!

CUT TO:

**9. INT. JOEY'S DORM**

GEORGE wakes up to see JOEY leaving the dorm just as the sun rises. He checks the time to see 5:45am. He scrunches his face in confusion.

CUT TO:

**10. EXT. WOODS ENTRANCE - DAWN**

JOEY steps on to the path and is met immediately by SOFOS. He jumps a bit because of how seamlessly she emerges from camouflage.

SOFOS  
Come now, I'll give you the tour.

WIPE TO:

**11. EXT. WOODS - DAY**

JOEY and SOFOS walk on the trail before a person appears further up the trail. JOEY stops dead in his tracks and immediately looks down at SOFOS, who has disappeared completely. He hears her whisper with some urgency.

SOFOS  
Keep walking.

JOEY keeps walking. The person gives him a raised eyebrow but they walk past each other.

WIPE TO:

**12. EXT. WOODS - DAY**

JOEY and SOFOS are still walking. SOFOS remains composed but JOEY is sweating while breathing through his mouth. Soon, SOFOS turns off the trail and into the woods. JOEY follows her.

SOFOS  
We're getting close now.

As they walk, the woods begin to change. The bush begins to change as if more difficult plants have been landscaped. Dense bushes of several sorts slowly become replaced by ferns and moss. Soon, a new, slimmer path begins to take shape in the ground. The path leads them to two trees intersecting to make a gateway. At the gateway lie skulls and bones of deer and other, smaller woodland creatures. As JOEY walks under, his eyes stay fixed on the bones.

JOEY  
Jeez.

SOFOS

We leave those out so everyone knows this is where our territory is. If you were a raccoon, you'd want to know where the wolves' home began.

JOEY

Hm.

They continue to walk and the path splits in two directions. In front of them lies a clearing of ferns, moss, huge, tall pine trees, and a sheer cliff face which slopes off the face towards the left. JOEY turns his head in all directions with his mouth open. At the bottom of the cliff, a cave opens up to darkness. The path to the left goes to the bottom of the slope that leads to the cliff. The path to the right leads to beyond what is visible. The sun shines through the trees illuminating the patch of dirt that lies just in front of the cave. Wolves of all ages/sizes come out from the cave and from behind trees and moss covered boulders. They all take careful steps a few feet closer to SOFOS and JOEY. Two smaller wolves move much closer, within 10 feet. Another wolf, who is comparatively large, stands at the top of the cliff. He yells down to them.

AGERE

Welcome back Sofos. And hello to you, human.

JOEY waves. SOFOS does not acknowledge him. AGERE starts down the slope.

SOFOS

Well, this is it. Our home.

JOEY smiles to SOFOS.

JOEY

It's beautiful.

SOFOS

In the sun there is where we talk and eat and the likes. We sleep in the cave, we hunt beyond the cliff, and we drink from the creek down the path to the right.

SOFOS lifts her head at the smaller wolves who moved closer to JOEY. She speaks to them.

SOFOS

Come now, he won't bite.

The two wolves move closer to JOEY and SOFOS.

SOFOS

Joey, these are two of my children, Amare and Salus.

JOEY

Hey, I'm Joey. It's nice to meet you.

JOEY extends his hand for a handshake. AMARE and SALUS look at each other. JOEY takes his hand back. SALUS snickers.

AMARE

Hi, it's nice to meet you too.

SALUS

Ditto. What's it like only having two legs?

JOEY

Auh, well... I-

SOFOS

Amare and Salus are only two years old, but they should be about your maturity level.

SALUS rolls his eyes and AMARE continues to smile. SALUS speaks with a male voice, AMARE speaks with a female voice. As AMARE is about to speak. AGERE interrupts from some distance, walking towards them.

AGERE

Aren't you going to introduce me to your new friends as well,  
Sofos?

AGERE speaks with a male, raspy voice. SOFOS rolls her  
eyes.

SOFOS

Joey, this is Agere. Agere, this is Joey.

JOEY

Nice to meet you, Agere.

AGERE

It's nice to meet you too, Joey.

AGERE speaks while looking JOEY up and down.

Hm. I'll be frank with you. When Sofos proposed enlisting your  
help I was starkly against it. I dislike humans, and for good  
reason. But Sofos has had it worse, you can see that in her  
scar.

SOFOS bares her teeth a bit, then looks away. The scar is  
in the shape of a fence. AGERE walks closer to JOEY.

AGERE

And despite that she wants to give you a chance. I respect Sofos  
a great deal, so I'll give you a chance as well... but! If you  
slip up even a bit... I'll have no problem putting your skull out  
front.

AGERE gestures to the tree gate. He's right in front of  
JOEY now.

AGERE

Tell no one what you have seen here.

AGERE chuffs from his nostrils and turns away from the four of them. JOEY turns towards SOFOS. A beat goes by.

SOFOS

Agere is right, Joey. You cannot tell anyone of our existence, even generally.

JOEY

... I-I won't.

SOFOS

Good. Now Amare and Salus,

AMARE and SALUS  
(simultaneously)

Yes?

SOFOS

Take Joey to the site and bring him back for the meeting before dusk.

AMARE and SALUS look at JOEY.

FADE TO:

**13. EXT. WOODS - DAY**

We face JOEY, AMARE, and SALUS as they walk down a path with the tree gate and cliff behind them. They come to another fork, one way goes down hill, the other goes up. The three of them go up.

JOEY

Is the water down there?

AMARE

Yes, and... I'm sorry about Agere, he can be... dramatic.

JOEY

No, it's... ok. I understand why he was like that.

SALUS

He's a chuffy guy, but he cares about the pack. Everyone was pretty divided when mom said there was a human she might be able to reach.

JOEY

Your mom is really great. She reminds me of my Grandma.

AMARE

June right? She used to tell us stories.

JOEY smiles big for a moment.

JOEY

Did she ever see the pack?

AMARE

No, you're the first.

AMARE looks away.

JOEY

How come?

Silence for a beat.

SALUS

When our mom was younger, before we were born. The pack had a leader named Pugna. Apparently we were at the prime of our pack, living well. Our mom was playing one day, around our territory - running - not paying attention, when all the sudden...

Silence for another beat.

AMARE

She described it like burning hot rocks shooting through her bones.

SALUS

She hit a fence, a human fence that had some kind of fire inside it. It hadn't been there before, she didn't know what was coming.

AMARE

She was out for 3 days. They couldn't get her to drink. Everyone thought she would die..... What's there now is where you live - those huge towers of stone.....

SALUS

After mom woke up, Pugma banned her from speaking with June any longer. She advocated for her, but Pugma was unsure of it to begin with, and the fence had made up his mind.  
Silence for several steps.

JOEY

What happened to Pugma?

AMARE

He died when they had to move because of the construction. Too many humans were coming too close so they had to leave.. Mom says he starved so the pups could eat.

SALUS

When we move, the creatures around us all know and become uncomfortable, and more aware. Everything gets thrown out of balance and it becomes much harder to hunt. Several wolves die each time.

AMARE

Our mom is the oldest now. I am not sure she can survive another move. That's probably why she was desperate enough to speak to you.

JOEY

And Agere doesn't want me here because he'll be in charge if she dies.

Both wolves stop.

SALUS

We are not so wrapped up in ego that we would risk lives for power. Our mother is not in charge. We look to her because she is wise and kind, not because she is strong or old. Do not mistake us for humans just because you can speak to us.

JOEY

I- I'm sorry.

Silence.

JOEY

I won't do it again.

AMARE

It's alright, Joey. You misunderstood. But now you know. You know why we cannot move again. And you are about to know why we may have to.

The three walk out of the forest and into a clearing that is actually a cliff. They look down and see a fenced off construction site right next to water at the bottom of the canyon the cliff looks over. This is the same canyon and water he meditates at in the first episode, but a different cliff. JOEY can barely make it out but the luxury dorm concept art is signed on the fence.

JOEY

Well, at least it's not too close to the pack this time.

SALUS

It's close enough, but that isn't the main problem.

AMARE

It's the water, Joey. The construction site is dumping dirt and sand into the creek we drink from down there.

AMARE gestures further down the creek.

AMARE

Even when the construction is finished, there will no longer be trees and bushes to hold the soil in place, meaning it will fall into the water. We need that water to be clean, Joey.

SALUS

If the water is dirty, everyone may become unhealthy. I don't know where humans get water but we get it from the creek. We need it. If the creek becomes undrinkable then there's no telling how far downstream we'll have to go.

AMARE and SALUS stand on either side of JOEY on the cliff. They both look up at him.

AMARE

We need your help Joey. You're a human. You have to stop the construction.

Slow zoom on JOEY's worried face taking it all in.

CUT TO:

**14. EXT. WOLF HOME - DAY**

JOEY, AMARE and SALUS all walk into the space in front of the cave. Many wolves are already seated in a circle around the space. SOFOS comes out of the cave and looks to the top of the cliff. She nods at a wolf standing up there. The wolf yells.

WOLF AT CLIFF

THEY HAVE RETURNED. EVERYONE GATHER FOR THE MEETING.

More wolves come from the cave, behind the cliff, and amongst the trees. AGERE comes from behind the cliff. He and SOFOS sit next to each other in front of the cave. The rest of the wolves sit in a circle around JOEY, AMARE and SALUS. AMARE and SALUS look at JOEY.

AMARE

Sorry, Joey.

AMARE and SALUS both go sit next to SOFOS, leaving JOEY alone in the ring of wolves. There are about 20 wolves.

SOFOS

Have you seen the new construction and heard why it plagues us?

JOEY

I have.

SOFOS

Do you agree, as a human, to help us in any way that you can?

JOEY

I do.

SOFOS

Great. Then le-

AGERE

-How exactly do you plan to help?

JOEY

I-... To be honest, it was my idea to build new dorms.

Gasps and angry murmurs echo around JOEY. Even SOFOS looks taken aback.

AGERE

What?!? Youuu? Are the source of our troubles. I *should* put your skull at our gate.

SOFOS

Wait, Agere. Let him finish.

JOEY

It was my idea but I did not carry it out. Men more powerful than I have done that. But since it was my idea and since I have the most math points, I may have some sway on the man who has begun construction.

SOFOS

What are math points and why do you have the most?

JOEY

Math points are an arbitrary way of ranking the people who live in those towers. They are mostly children my age. It's a competition. I have the most because I sunk myself into the rankings and valued myself by them. I felt I was better than everyone else so I wanted my own dorm. I no longer feel that way. Sofos has seen that.

All the wolves look towards SOFOS.

SOFOS

When I first spoke to the boy he was standing alone on the edge of a cliff.

JOEY

I hated myself in that moment. But you all and my grandmother June have given me a new purpose. I'm sorry for what I've done. I promise to do whatever I can to help you all.

Quiet murmurs for a moment among the wolves.

AGERE

Very well. But the boy should not be our only plan. I propose that we begin a new strategy of resisting the construction. I believe we can stop the construction with several planned, quick

strikes of destructive violence against the humans. Many of us agree with me on this as well.

JOEY  
WHAT?!

There is lots of murmuring amongst the crowd.

SOFOS  
HUSH. Who among us agrees with Agere?

About a third of the wolves voice themselves.

AGERE  
I propose we begin training as soon as tomorrow.

JOEY  
The humans will not be forgiving of this. They will not back down to violence. Many men enjoy fighting and killing.

AGERE  
As do I.

Murmuring begins to rise again with AGERE's confidence.

SOFOS  
Enough, Agere. Joey is right. Violence will solve nothing. If Joey is to fail, we'll have to move again. It is not worth giving up our existence.

SALUS  
(softly)  
No-

Murmuring begins again. Several louder voices can be heard.

WOLF

We're sick of fighting!

WOLF

They should know us!

WOLF

Let them regret taking our land!

SOFOS

HUSH!

Everyone quiets once again. SOFOS takes a second to think.

SOFOS

I am against this plan of violence. You all know what will come of it already. I cannot stop you if this is the path you choose.

I only ask that we give Joey a chance.

Music begins to crescendo as murmuring rises. A slow zoom falls on JOEY's worried face again.

**FIN**

## Season Outline

- New Scene
  - Story beat

### Episode 3:

- Joey calls a meeting with Dr. Director Dominus
  - Joey says he has seen the construction and does not feel that the dorms are worth it anymore.
  - Director Dominus feels concerned that his top student is losing his sense of hierarchy. He responds by trying to infect Joey through animosity rather than praise. Dominus tells Joey that Joey is here to do math, not be in the woods. He's says Joey should take advantage of the opportunities presented to him through the camp, although he says maybe Joey isn't as smart as he originally thought.
  - Joey becomes angry at the director's apparent ignorance.
- Joey shares his frustration with George, who understands. They devise a plan to protest the building of the new dorms
- At lunch, Joey uses his old popularity to spread the word about how the dorms will affect the environment. He organizes an after camp protest.
- About 20 people show up to his protest. They walk in the court yard with signs and such and call out dominus.
- During the morning math meeting, Domius announces the names of the protestors and deducts points from all of them, Joey especially.
- Montage of Joey and others having things earned from points being taken away from them.
- The next day at lunch, Joey tries again. But the kids refuse to risk their math points again.
- In the next morning math meeting dominus says that, in order to address concerns of environmentalism, the new dorms will be completely solar powered. The kids are happy, but Joey knows that will do nothing to help the wolves.

### Episode 4:

- Joey tells the wolves of the situation at their home. They are all unhappy.
  - Agere expresses the need to begin training and strategizing for a battle.
  - Sofos wants peace, but Joey's bad news makes the rest of the wolves restless. More wolves join Agere's cause.
- Joey talks with Amare and Salus. The three debate, vent, and worry about their uncertain future. Joey mentions his grandma and wishes he could ask her what to do.
  - The two wolves mention a specific tree - the Elder tree. It sits at the heart of the forest. The wolves say that the tree is hundreds of years old and that is said to be very wise, though no one has been able to communicate with it for some time. Joey says it is worth a shot for him to try.
  - The wolves say they will have to wait until the next day to leave and lie about going deeper into the forest because Sofos would likely not let them. Salus says "There are beings deeper in the forest that will not welcome a human, even if he has learned the world's language."
- The next morning, they embark on their journey.
  - As they walk deeper into the forest, the three hear all kinds of whispers from smaller animals in the trees. They are all freaking out over the human.
- When they get to a clearing, the ambient sound of rustling and movement in the forest seems to stop.
  - Suddenly, three huge bucks charge Joey, Amare, and Salus. Both wolves tell Joey to hold his ground at the same time. The three stand agitated as the bucks rush toward them, stopping only inches from Joey. The bucks are much larger than the wolves, who are not fully grown, and much larger than Joey.
  - Amare speaks up, saying they only wish to pass through.
  - More deer enter the clearing with seemingly endless in the forest behind them. The deer hate humans. They are furious about the wolves bringing a human deep into the forest. They are convinced Joey will tell other humans. Joey swears he will not. The deer wish to kill him. The wolves threaten violent consequences from the wolf pack. The deer say they must speak with the wolves before they allow the human deeper into the forest. They say they will approach the wolves' home in 1 day. Joey, Amare, and Salus all walk out the way they came.

- George sits alone in his room, he looks at his watch, then out the window. A knock on the door. George opens the door to reveal Dr. Director Dominus hulking over him. Dominus looks in. He asks where Joey is. George says he's been outside, that he's been spending a lot of time out there.
  - Dominus says to George that his scores have been improving much more rapidly. He praises George for the good work and says he sees real potential in him. He promises George that just rewards come from hard work. Dominus leaves. George looks out the window, then begins to work on some math.

#### Episode 5:

- Joey, Amare, and Salus crouch between a rock and some bushes. They debate about what to do about the deer situation. Joey is strangely silent and feels guilty about being a human and sneaking around where he isn't welcome. The wolves argue about whether to go back or not. They decide if they go back to the pack they won't be let back out. Joey questions whether it is worth it to talk to the tree.
  - A small box turtle appears out of camouflaging in leaves. He takes some time to stand up and out of his shell, but holds his head high with regality. He expresses that he has seen over 60 winters, and that if they are concerned with the health of the forest, they should speak with the trees. With that, he goes back into his shell and falls perfectly still within the leaves.
  - The human and the two wolves concur. Salus says that they can't just walk through the deer territory or they'll be spotted again. The two look at each other.
  - The wolves explain that, in order to avoid the deer, they'll have to go the long way, through the territory of a mountain lion.
- We wipe to the wolves and Joey walking covered in mud. Amare says they should be getting close to the lion territory. There is a slow transition in the vegetation as they walk. Plant life becomes much more complex in diversity and composition. The plants are visibly more healthy. Joey does a spin while walking to take it all in.
  - The wolves' demeanor changes and they become defensive and scared. A sharp red stripe comes with a gust of wind and pierces Joey's heart. An image of a mountain lion silhouetted by a centered explosion of red lighting flashes for a

fraction of a second. Joey looks at the wolves. Joey says he can feel the lion. The wolves say the lion is letting them sense him on purpose. They run.

- Cut to the heart of the forest. The sunlight begins to fade from the canopy as they slow from running. The forest floor becomes almost bare except for dead leaves, fallen branches, and massive amounts of mushrooms - they carpet the floor. The mushrooms are a huge variety of color, pattern, shape, and size. They cover branches the size of large trees. In front of Joey, Amare, and Salus, stands the source of these branches. Huge roots cover the ground 100 feet from the trunk. The trunk is the width of a basketball court, and the canopy stretches for a mile on both sides.
  - The three walk to the base of the trunk. Joey puts his hand on the trunk and says hello. The wolves glare at him and then look at each other in annoyance. Joey feels unsure of what to do. The wolves ask him what gave him the ability to talk to them. Joey begins to meditate as his grandmother taught him. He invites the wolves to join him and they do. The image behind them begins to fade to black. This time the colored stripes of energy around them do not flow with the wind but radiate up from the mushrooms on the ground. Joey's sitting body is silhouetted by a glowing mass of green color in the shape of the massive tree. He says that usually the wind moves energy into him, but now it's stagnant, only radiating. Amare suggests that maybe they have to reachout, like the cougar did. Joey says he hadn't thought of it like that before. He begins to breathe out with more intensity and his eyebrows begin to furl almost like crying. The wolves do the same. Slowly, a stripe begins to emerge from each of the three of them. The stripes all enter the tree.
- Everything goes black except for Joey, Amare, and Salus, who are made up completely of the color that was eliminated as a stripe from their body. A voice speaks to the three of them from nowhere. The voice says he knows why they have come and welcomes them. Joey asks where he is. The voice says that his identity is not tied to a physical form but if they are wondering, he is the large tree. Joey asks where they are. The tree says they are in a dimension that they're currently unable to perceive, the soul dimension. In this dimension lies the consciousness, soul, and emotions of every living being. The tree explains that it has been 400 years since he last spoke to a human, but had felt the

presence of June. He says that Joey and June have given him hope for humanity. Joey says he doesn't know what to do, he doesn't want there to be violence between humans and animals. The tree reminds him that humans are animals, and that the battle would be between beings who are more similar than different. Joey asks what one person can do. The tree asks what his grandmother did with her connection to the soul realm. Joey says she showed *him* how to find it. The tree leaves it at that and the physical world fades back in around them.

## Episode 6

- At the morning math meeting in the camp auditorium, George sits with the seat next to him empty. George has become 3rd in the ranking, and Dr. Director Dominus praises him in front of everyone for being the most improved. Joey is falling to the bottom. At the end of the assembly, Dominus calls up George to speak privately.
  - Dominus asks George how it feels to be better than 98% of the other campers. George says he's not better than them. Dominus says he is in this world, gesturing to the auditorium. Dominus says that he hasn't told anyone else this yet, but he's just received funds to sponsor 1 college tuition. He tells George that if he keeps up the work, he will never have to worry about paying for college.
- Cut to George in his room looking out the window, it is dark out. Joey barges in, still lightly covered in dried mud. Joey says he has something to tell George. Jump cut to Joey ending an explanation of the past few days, saying that he can teach George to speak to animals as well. George looks concerned and waits a beat before answering. He says that he's noticed Joey's points going way down. George says that they're at camp to do math, not play in the woods. Joey processes that George doesn't believe him. Joey says they can go out right now and he will prove it. George says they better get some sleep. Joey says fine, but they'll go out in the morning.
- Joey wakes up and sees that George isn't there. A moment later George and Dr. Director Dominus walk in. Dominus says that George has told him you think you've been speaking to animals. Dominus says Joey is sick, and that he'll be under house arrest until he begins to regain his mind. From now on, he is not allowed outside. George looks at his feet. Joey says he isn't crazy. George looks guilty but says that Joey will throw away his

future if he doesn't start focusing on math again. George says he's worried about Joey. Dominus says that he can call Joey's parents and he can go home if he does not want to be on house arrest. Joey agrees to house arrest.

- Cut to Domius showing Joey into a room with only one bed and one desk. On the desk is a stack of papers and a cup of pencils. Joey sits down at the desk and Dominus leaves.
  - Joey gets up and looks out the window, all he can see is the wall to another building, a parking lot, no greenery.
- Cut to Amare and Salus looking up towards the sun. They say that Joey said he would have been back here by now. Sofos asks them where he is, they say they do not know. Sofos pauses, then howls a specific melody. From the trees, a Great Grey Owl comes down from the trees and lands next to Sofos. Sofos asks the owl to find Joey in the camp in exchange for food from the next hunt. The owl agrees.
- Cut to Joey back in his Single room, he opens the window leaving only a screen in the way of outside. He is on a high floor. He sits in the middle of his room and begins to meditate. The image goes black around him but no colors begin to flow. His eyebrows furl as he begins to reach out with his soul. Soon, his own colored stripe begins to come from his heart. It flows out of the window.
- We cut to the owl flying over the camp, he sees the stripe in the distance. The owl lands on the window sill. "Are you Joey?" he asks. Joey opens his eyes and turns to the owl saying he is Joey. The owl says the wolves sent him. Joey says to tell them that the humans have trapped him from leaving the indoors.
- Cut to a wolf howling as hundreds of deer begin to approach the wolf pack. The huge buck that questioned Joey leads them. Cut to Sofos, Amare, and Salus looking up, alarmed by the howl. Sofos says for them to stay there then leaves. They go in the direction of the howl, but not as directly as Sofos.
- Cut to the Buck yelling "where is Sofos," as Sofos appears in a small, circular clearing. Sofos says she is here and calls the buck by his name: Fortis. Agere also appears in the circle. Fortis says that the wolves have betrayed the forest and its residents by bringing a human. Agere defensively asks how the Deer know of the human. Fortis tells them of his encounter with two young wolves and the human. Sofos and Agere both glare right at Amare and Salus, who thought they were effectively hiding in some bushes. Sofos scolds

the two saying that they were not ready to share their human discovery and that they have been completely irresponsible. Amare steps out and says that they were able to communicate with the Heart of forest tree. Fortis calls blasphemy and says the deer would have known if they went to the heart of the forest. Salus says they went through the lion's territory. Fortis takes a worrisome step back and looks at the young wolves with confusion. After a beat Sofos says that Ignis must be planning something, and that the three are lucky to be alive. Sofos tells the deer they brought the human because they want his help to stop the destruction of their home. Fortis agrees that dirtied water will cause a lot of problems for the deer. He also says it was foolish to trust a human with knowledge of the forest. Sofos says she knew his grandmother and had been watching him. Agere speaks up, saying he agrees with Fortis. Agere tells Fortis that many of the wolves are sick of running. Agere feels they do not need Joey, and that training has been going well. They have been spying and strategizing against the construction. Amare stands up for Joey's character and says he will figure something out. Fortis says that he will only stand in the way of true retaliation against the humans. Fortis says that if Joey truly cared he would be here now. Agere agrees. Fortis says that Agere can count on the deer when the time for battle comes. Some deer move backwards at this but some holler and stand on their hind legs. Fortis turns and leaves, the rest of the deer follow

- The owl flies down from the trees and tells Sofos, Amare, and Salus that Joey is trapped.

#### Episode 7:

- Amare and Salus rescue Joey from the window. Joey gets to the ground and it is night time. They are caught by George who is on a walk.
  - George realizes that Joey has been telling the truth and that he really can talk to animals.
  - Joey proves it further by telling the wolves to do tricks like roll over, which they find patronizing.
  - As George processes the information, he quickly becomes terrified. He begins to back away from Joey and the wolves. Joey pleads with him but George runs. Joey tells the wolves to leave and chases George, calling for him to wait. George

rounds a corner and we hear yelling about the commotion. Joey turns the corner and sees that George has run right into Dominus. He is furious at them and yells.

- Cut to George and Dominus in his office. Dominus holds up the rankings on a paper and says that George is lucky he is number 1 right now. Dominus asks George why they were out there. George says they were only playing tag. Dominus says he senses George is lying, but is a forgiving person. He says it hurts to see a child that he has supported and given opportunity to not trust him. Dominus proclaims that he will, unfortunately, have to revoke George's right to the scholarship, unless he proves his loyalty. George leaves.
- Now Dr. Director Dominus and Joey in Dominus' office. Dominus says that he is very disappointed in Joey's slide down hill from top of the rankings. He says that Joey has so much potential, it's a shame he let other things get in the way of his drive to work. Unfortunately, since Joey broke the house arrest, Dr. Dominus says he will have to be removed from camp. Joey's parents will be called in the morning and he will be put in a room with no windows for the night.
- Cut to Joey being pushed into his fluorescent lighted, windowless, locked room. There is a bare bed and nothing else. Joey turns off the light and sits in the middle of the room. The dark walls fade to black and Joey starts to reach out with his soul. A pink line moves from his heart, into the air, under the door, down the hallway and out the door.
- Cut to George in a hallway with a line of public phones. George is using it. He says his scholarship might be canceled and that he is sorry. We cut to a middle-aged woman on the phone inside a fast food restaurant. We see her face fall as George's words come through. She says for George to do absolutely all he can, and that his future is up to him.
- Joey's voice brings us back to George. We see that the pink stripe is in George's Heart. Joey is asking if George can hear him. George says he has to go and hangs up the phone. George asks how he's talking to him as he begins to walk away from the phone. Joey explains that he is reaching out with his soul. George expresses his confusion as he walks down the hallway and into his room. Joey says there are whole worlds that humans have cut themselves off from. He pleads for George to let him out so that he can show him the wolves' home. Joey says it was George's words that pushed him to take a look at himself. He only found this world because of George. George agrees to go see the wolves.
- Cut to George opening the door to Joey's room.

## Episode 8

- Joey explains the situation with the new dorms and the tension for battle on the way to the Wolf home. They make it there. Immediately Amare and Salus ask what Joey is thinking bringing another human to their home. Joey says that he trusts George and that if he is to stop construction other humans must see and understand the wolves and soul connections. Amare and Salus are skeptical but they introduce themselves to George anyway. George cannot understand them. This makes Salus and Amare much more nervous. George becomes nervous. They walk further in the wolves' area. They come out but only barely, to look at George. Agere looks down from the cliff. Sofos walks up to them. Joey is about to say what he said to Amare and Salus but Sofos says she heard. She says that Joey better be right about George. She tells him to teach him to communicate with souls and to not bring him back until he can.
- Joey tries to teach George to feel the souls in the wind with meditation at the cliff but it wont work because George can't calm his mind. After a close up of Georges closed eyes, we see images from his perspective: his mother coming home and changing from one fast food uniform to another, his mother crying at the dinner table with papers spread all over it, his mother putting his backpack on his shoulders and telling him to work hard in school, a test coming back with an A+, a paper with the words *math camp* and *scholarship* on the front, his mother screaming with delight as he hands her the letter, his mom helping him move into camp and leaving a camera for him, Dominus in his office from earlier saying loyalty.
- George opens his eyes and says he's sorry to Joey, he then says he just wants to go home. Joey is confused but agrees. He asks if George is ok but George turns away and says he is fine. Joey walks George back but stays out that night.
- Joey goes back to the wolves and Agere charges him straight away. He is angry that Joey has brought another human without their permission. He is even more angry that the other human could not communicate with them. He says that everything could be compromised now. He yells at Sofos, who had joined, saying that she should have never brought a human in the first place. Joey says it is what the elder tree told him to do. Agere says he doubts it, so Joey looks to Amare and Salus but they look away. Joey says

the tree said to do what one person can do: which is to impact other individuals. Agere says Joey did so completely irresponsibly. Joey says he trusts George. Sofos interjects. She says to Joey that Agere is right. George was clearly not ready to see the ways of the forest. She says there is a reason she brought Joey after he learned to communicate through souls. Joey understands but stands up for George. He says that it was George who helped him gain his abilities. Joey says that if people cannot learn to communicate with souls then nothing will ever change. Sofos says nothing. Agere says that all humans have brought is pain and anguish, Joey included. Joey leaves.

- The sun begins to rise as Joey walks through the woods
- Cut to Dominus' office with him and George inside it. The sun is setting through the window. The deer head above dominus appears to glare at George. George is showing him footage of the wolves' home from behind Joey's back. George is using the camera his mother left. He tells Dominus they plan to stop construction. George asks if he can keep the opportunity for a college scholarship. Dominus is happy with George and says the money is his if he remains in first place.

## Episode 9

- Joey tries to do something about the construction with Amare and Salus but they get caught and Amare gets killed. Joey has to mention Dominus. George reaches out to Joey and apologizes and Joey forgives him.
- Joey sits with his legs over the edge of the cliff his grandmother taught him to meditate at. Everything is orange with the setting sun. Amare and Salus find him there, they say they knew they would. The wolves say they won't let their mother die during another move, and they don't want Agere and the others to have to fight. They say they're going to the construction site now to try and do something about it – at least buy everyone some time. They invite Joey, he agrees to come.
- Wipe to the three next to the fence. It is dark except for temporary lights in the site. Joey looks over the concept art. The site is still mostly a plot of dirt with some excavators, piles of gravel and other materials, pits, and the base of a building with scaffolding around it that goes high up.

- The three of them see that there are 3 guards with guns posted around the site. The guards are all men and they stand around in construction clothes. One stands in by the gate, which is to the right of the side of the fence the wolves are at. One stands on the scaffolding, and one is in the excavator doing spins and making the other guard laugh. The wolves comment that guards have never been there before. Something is up. Salus says it's as if they knew they were coming. They devise a plan to distract the guards, take the excavator, and smash the building.
- Cut to George leaving Dominus's office with the sun setting completely. We follow his face and jump cut as he walks down various hallways. We see his face cut through stages of grief. When he gets to his dorm he throws up in the toilet, which we barely see through the bathroom door.
  - After he throws up he opens the window and sits with his legs folded in the middle of the room. He begins to meditate as Joey tried to teach him. The image around him goes black eventually the stripes begin to appear around him through the window. We cut as he opens his heart and pierce him. Several of the stripes are red and jagged.
- Cut to Amare howling over by the fence gate from in the woods. The guard in the excavator stops messing around, they all get serious. The guard by the gate says he'll check it out. Right as he steps out. Salus howls from the opposite side of the site. The guards in the site look towards Amare, who is hidden, as Joey slips through the fence unseen. He hides under the scaffolding. The guard outside the fence says he can't find anything. He begins to walk back to the open gate, soon to discover Joey, who is walking around the building towards the excavatory. Salus picks up a stick and throws it at the fence while yelping as if he's been hit. The man in the excavator is closest to Salus and gets out of the machine to go see the wolf he thinks has been electrocuted. Amare howls again but the guard walking to the gate won't listen. The gate guard gets closer to Joey. Amare makes the decision to push the guard into the fence. He is shocked and yells. The guard on the scaffolding looks towards the shocked guard. The other guard is looking at the tree branch thrown at the fence. Joey runs and gets in the excavator which is still running. He fumbles with the controls. The guards see him and all run towards the excavator, except for the one who was shocked, who is standing, still recovering. Joey

spins the machine and hits the building causing it to collapse. The scaffolding guard is down by then, but has to get out of the way of the falling debris. The guard checking out the branch runs towards Joey but Joey swings the machine's arm to make him get out of the way. The guard that was on the scaffolding runs up to Joey and yanks him out of the machine. Amare runs in and bites the leg of the guard with Joey. The guard lets go of Joey to clutch his leg on the ground. The shocked guard by the gate shoots Amare as she and Joey run out. Salus sees this helplessly through the fence and cries out. The guard near him sees him and Salus is forced to run. Joey turns to the Amare as the guards yell at him to get on the ground. Amare tells him to go. He does, crying. The guards shoot but miss as Joey runs into the dark trees.

- Cut to a massive house with an impossibly perfect lawn of only grass. Cut to Dominus sitting in a robe sitting in a chair in a room surrounded by bookshelves and taxidermied animal heads. A fire roars next to him. He watches a tv on the wall and laughs. He gets a phone call and it's the guards telling him the construction site has been attacked by a boy and two wolves. They got one wolf but the other and the boy got away. Dominus yells at them and tells them to call the rest of his men. Dominus says he will be there soon.
- Cut to George meditating in his room. A stripe begins to emanate from his heart. It goes out the window and we wipe to find it reaching Joey who is sitting in the woods crying. It pierces Joey. He asks "George?". George says it's him and confesses what he's done. Joey stands up in fury. We cut between their sides of the conversation. Joey says Amare is dead now. George says he's sorry and explains he needed to for the scholarship. Joey says money is a terrible reason.
- Cut back to the first episode when June tells 7 year old Joey that "if he can't learn to accept and forgive the world for all its' good *and* bad, you'll always be alone."
- Cut back to Joey with George's stripe in him. He recognizes to George that George has learned to use his soul. George says it's thanks to Joey.
- Cut to Joey saying "It's what you said to me that pushed me to take a look at myself" to George at the phones during episode 7.
- Cut back to Joey in the woods with George's stripe in him. Joey says that, despite what George has done, he forgives him. George is appreciative and says he will do what he needs to do to help. Joey tells George to meet him at the wolves' home.

## Episode 10

- Salus comes back angry. He yells about what the humans have done to his sister. Agere is keen to support his anger. Salus says they must go back for his sister, this time with more animals. Agere howls for the owl Sofos called for in an earlier episode. He tells the owl to get Fortis. Agere rallies the wolves who have been with him. Many join him. At the end of his speech many deer have joined, including Fortis. They march forward out of their home and towards where the construction is. Dominus is already ready. He and 9 other men with guns meet the wolves and deer in the forest. They fight. Agere and Fortis each take a man down. The other animals are not doing as well. Fortis runs to a female deer who has been shot and gets shot himself. Sofos looks around and sees death. Joey arrives in horror. He finds a spot to hide and meditates. Red lighting flashes everywhere. He exerts his soul. His stripe is about to reach Dominus when the mountain lion jumps up and kills Dominus. Two black bears, Salus, and Agere take down the remaining men. The lion pronounces his name, Ignis, and says it is time to rise up against humans – to let their presence be truly known. Ignis says he has supporters over multiple mountain ranges willing to fight. Joey steps in and says that it can be done without violence. Ignis laughs. He tells Joey to look around. George comes out and says that Joey has changed him, and that he did so without violence. Agere asks at what cost. Agere says it is time that we stopped waiting for humans and begin demanding rights. If it comes to violence, it comes to violence. Agere says he will join Ignis and that the wolves should as well. Many of them do, including Salus. Many deer also join. Joey says that anyone looking for peace without violence should join him. The animals do not. The ones who do not join Ignis simply go into the forest.
- The camp closes and kids go home. News vans come to the camp. The guards appear on tv saying what's happened. George and Joey also appear on Tv and explain what happened. They advocate for the animals and say humans should seek to understand the animals as equals so there isn't further conflict.
- We cut to an ultra-wide of the entire construction site. A time lapse shows ivy, bushes, and then small trees grow and take over the site.

## Analysis

In this section I will discuss how I did or did not meet the goals of my methods section titled *The Creation*. I'll begin with the goals relating to the 13-16 y/o audience.

### Audience

The first was that my main character needed to be the age of the audience so that they could relate and immediately identify with the character. In the first scene, June says that Joey is 7 years old, then, at the end of the scene, a title card tells us we're cutting 7 years into the future, making Joey 14 years old. The second scene also begins with a close up of Joey's face, so the aging from 7 to 14 should be apparent. The second goal is that the setting and situations must be intriguing to the age group. By this I mean that situations in the show should be recognizable and relatable while still being new. I believe I have accomplished this with both the Math Camp and the surrounding woods. Summer camp, especially one so similar to school, as the show's Math Camp is, will be recognizable to most children of 13-16 y/o. What is new and exciting is the daily system of competition and the drama it causes throughout the show. The woods are likely less recognizable to the masses of children because not all children have access to green space like forest featured in the show. Regardless of this, introducing the woods using the Grandma should make the woods feel more comfortable and homey, rather than alien. What is new about the woods is the meditation, which I will get to later, and the societies of animals. The different groups of animals represented and explored create a new world within the woods, creating a want to continue to learn about this new world represented as right next to human society. The last goal is that the main character must be called to action - he must be asked to leave normal life to enter a new world of adventure. The wolves do ask him to join their world and they do give him a mission that will cause him to stop living as he normally would; however, it does not happen until about 50 minutes into the show. Part 1 does good work to set up the math camp and Joey's meditation but it only hints at the existence of the wolves, which is the main tension of the show. Part 2 does a lot with the wolves and really gives Joey a lot of stakes. They ask Joey to help them and he agrees to. This completes the call to action goal, but it is possible that some viewers may lose interest in the show because the main tension comes in so late.

## Emotionally Affecting

The second set of goals I will discuss fall under the section meant to make sure the show is emotionally affecting, which is key if people are to care about the values I'm trying to get across. The first goal is that "characters must be written honestly under the shared experience of living." I mean that my characters must be full people that I have thought out and have empathy for. I then have to write their dialogue based on what they would actually say in that situation, given my knowledge of their psyche. I will say that I have accomplished this to varying degrees. I'll start with Joey. In part 1 I explore Joey's background to a great degree, but I believe his transition to true hierarchical thinking could be better. I think Joey really falls victim to the plot during the scene where he asks Dominus for the luxury dorms. It's clear he's beginning to care about the rankings, but asking for his own dorm feels a bit extreme. It's powerful for him to renounce a system that benefits him so much, but it happens too quickly. I wanted to introduce the wolves as fast as possible, and I could only do that after he renounced the hierarchy. I think his actions and development are completely natural for the rest of the show, though, and I am overall satisfied with his arc. Mitigating the issues with Joey's rushed experience in the hierarchy, I think George has a much more natural transition into it and out of it. His transition to it is much slower and it's motivated by a real world college scholarship which he needs, as revealed by images of his working class mother. As for the rest of the characters, I think I have done well to think them out and let them take the actions I truly believe they would. I think the only major character lacking development is Dominus, who I will get to later.

The second goal of this section is for the plot points to hold emotional weight for the characters – if characters have emotional things happen to them, then empathy and care for them is more accessible and easier to feel. I believe I have accomplished this because the drama in the camp is important to George and Joey's friendship, which ends up deeply involving the wolves. The plot of the wolves deals with the very lively hood of the animals, dominus, George and Joey. The characters react emotionally when emotional things happen to them, illustrating the effects these plot points have, which are often based on emotion. The last goal of the emotionally affecting section is for the ending to be significant to all characters involved. I believe I have accomplished this because the show ends in a violent conflict involving the livelihood of each major character.

## Mission

The last section of goals left to discuss is the mission of the show and how it should be accomplished. The mission is to show children ages 13-16 a worldview beyond and in comparison to capitalism – that new worldview being interconnection and the inherent value of life. Capitalism values the world through how much money a thing or person has, could provide, or cost. This is a worldview of hierarchy because money values things and lives unequally. I want my show to present the issue with hierarchical, capitalist thinking, while giving other ways of perceiving the world. The goals of this section are listed as, to explore the perspectives of capitalism and the natural world, to implore the character to see inherent value and interconnection, and to have the ending illustrate the need for change from capitalist hierarchy while providing fodder for thinking about change.

The purpose of the extremely hierarchical math camp is to be a vehicle for extremely accessible discussion on hierarchical thinking, which is central to the perspective of capitalism. Joey is naturally privileged and talented at math – his father says he “has the brain for it.” Joey quickly rises to the top of the camp’s hierarchy but soon realizes through his argument with George how isolating it is to think of yourself as better than others. Because of the hierarchy, Joey cannot connect with who would be his closest friend, George, and finds himself alone except for Dominus, who is his superior. Joey eventually realizes what he has become through his argument with George and through the meditation technique that his Grandmother taught him. In the first episode he realizes the harm he has done and how alone he has become due to hierarchical thinking. Joey’s journey shows the viewer how hierarchical thinking is harmful to yourself and the people around you, even if you appear to be benefiting from it. I find this to be a great discussion on hierarchical thinking but the connection to capitalism is not very strong. I believe Joey’s journey with the math points would lead my viewers to thinking about competition, not capitalism directly. Competition is central to capitalism, though, so showing why excessive competition is bad through Joey is helpful in attacking capitalism’s worldview. George’s journey with the hierarchy, Dominus, the wolves, and his mother does provide more of a direct connection to capitalism as an economic system. George also ends up leaning into the hierarchy, betraying Joey and the wolves, because he needs the college scholarship the camp could provide. It’s clear George is smart but, given his lower class mother, he may not have

options for college. Dominus' money gives him power over George, which leads George to betray Joey's trust and the wolves. Regardless of the consequences of George's actions, Joey forgives him, and George becomes an advocate for the animals by the end of the show. This shows us how a monetary system can often force people to do bad things, and that forgiveness is key for change. What's missing from the capitalist perspective is Dominus' perspective and the connection between capital and the wolves.

Dominus built the math camp in the wolves' old home, which we learn through the story of Sofos' scar, but Dominus' intentions to in building it are never really mentioned. I know Dominus' motivations to be completely selfish and profit based. He wants the highest test scores at his camp so he can charge the most money from parents. This is hinted at in the first episode as he says the luxury dorms with up competition and make him more money. George also hints at this by saying Joey is just a high test score to advertise to Dominus. It's clear that Dominus views the campers for the money they may provide, but it's not clear how he views the forest. If Dominus' capitalist perspective was given more directly, then it would be clear that the destruction of the wolves' home was motivated by profits. This would make for a more complete discussion on how capitalism functions in the real world and it would further connect the two sides of the show. I believe I have sufficient discussion on how hierarchy and competition function, but not enough discussion on how capitalism functions beyond worldview and systems of value. As for exploring interconnection and the perspective of the natural world, I believe I have done a better job.

The colored stripes that come through the wind when Joey meditates are visual representations of souls emanating from lives being carried by the wind. The wind acts as a universal connector for all the souls in the world. Through meditation, Joey learns to interact with his own soul and feel the souls around him. When the stripes enter him, he can feel those lives and images of them pop up on screen. Joey learns the ability to connect to the world around him through souls. The images on screen show all kinds of organisms, putting animals, humans, and plants all on the same level. By showing that all living things have souls the same as humans, the hierarchy that capitalism creates is challenged – all lives are seen as equally valuable. This is the inherent value of life. Once Joey can emotionally connect with the lives around him, dismantling the hierarchy taught to him by math camp, he gains the ability to communicate with them. It turns out that all beings can communicate on the soul level, but that

humans have separated themselves. When Joey abandons hierarchy he becomes able to connect with the world around him in a new way. He illustrates the interconnected nature of life while showing that hierarchy is isolating. Creating this world of souls and communication between all beings legitimizes the perspectives and lives of the natural world because we can value them in both new ways (souls), and recognizable ways (talking). These new worlds give viewers a pathway to view the world around them in a way that values all lives by their souls rather than their monetary value. This world of soul to soul communication also gives agency to animals that we can't perceive in real life. By creating a world in which all beings can communicate in the same way, we're all put on a level playing field, meaning life can be valued equally. My fantasy world portrays all life as equal through the interconnection of souls, dismantling the harmful, capitalist system of hierarchy so prevalent in American culture.

The end of the show, which is meant to illustrate why change is necessary while providing food for thought about change, does so through a tale of caution. The show ends in a violent conflict that happens because Dominus would rather kill the animals than not build the new dorms. His reasoning could be more clear, but he does so because he values forest of the wolves through the profit it may provide through the dorms, not through the lives the forest creates and supports. He values the buildings more than the lives because of money's inherent hierarchy. The wolves do not think of themselves as lesser, so they fight for their right to live. This shows the negative effects of capitalism and how its hierarchy breeds conflict, illustrating the need for change. Joey actually almost has nothing to do with this. In the second episode, Joey is tasked with stopping the construction so the wolves don't have to resort to violence. Joey fails to stop construction and is even partially responsible for the violence that first occurs at the construction site. What Joey does do, is give the human viewer a vehicle to think about what they would do in Joey's situation. Joey is a constant fodder for discussing change against capitalism because he is tasked with stopping something motivated by capitalism for beings that aren't valued by capitalism. Throughout the show, the viewer is given the opportunity to ask themselves what they would do *with* Joey. Through his conversation with the trees and through his memories with June, he decides that impacting other individuals with the soul world is all he can do, and thus he should. He tries to teach George, who ends up betraying Joey's trust, but Joey forgives George anyway. In the end, George joins Joey in advocating for the animals and for the forest. To me, this implies that they will continue to impact individuals and slowly show

people the issues with capitalist values. More discussion is provided through the debates of the animals as well, who have differing opinions on what to do about the construction. Throughout the show, Joey and Sofos have to advocate for non-violence to the animals like Agere who feel it is the only way. Eventually Joey cannot stop the violence, and many animals of the forest fight Dominus and his men. The violence ends up being tragic and terrifying, but it does what the animals set out for it to do. Humans will now know of their animal societies and people will have to think about how they value the animals and plants around them. Does this mean that violence is the only way? Or is Joey's strategy of individual action the true means of change? My show does not answer these questions, but it does ask them through the plot. The conflict at the end of my show is tragic because of the characters who die, but it is productive in showing the faults of capitalism while providing questions about system change for the audience to think about. The audience will feel uncomfortable with the end of season 1 because Joey is not successful in stopping violence and everything did not end up neatly. This will cause the viewer to think about what could have gone differently, what caused the conflict, and how the animals and Joey should continue to change the world. These questions of system change will allow my 13-16 y/o audience to think beyond the current systems and imagine new ways of moving forward. There is no one solution to capitalism, but I believe that my show provides proficient fodder for thinking beyond and against the capitalist systems that threaten us and the other beings on our planet.

If the goal of my show is to introduce 13-16 year olds to thinking beyond capitalism, then I have accomplished my goal. My show demonstrates why hierarchical thinking is harmful through the camp rankings and through the final conflict. This critique is furthered by providing alternative ways of valuing the world through the soul dimension and how that allows all beings to communicate. Finally, the conflict of these two worlds provides great fodder for thinking about system change because of the questions the ending raises. This change-based thinking in the minds of 13-16 year olds will create a generation of people more prepared for necessary system change. Through my show I have provided ways of thinking beyond capitalism and complex questions about moving forward against capitalism. This alternative worldview and forward thinking will impact these children and help our culture move away from capitalism and towards a more equitable future.

### **Concluding Statements:**

After creating a world and finishing the project, I feel satisfied with my product. If I was to watch this show as a 15 year old I believe I would love it. I do not think I would think about capitalism directly, which my intro says I should, but I would begin to look down upon hierarchy and competition. This combined with new perspectives of lives in the woods would, I think, lead me to come to the anti-capitalist conclusion on my own. I would no longer value competition and its hierarchies and I would value lives for the sake of them. This is anti-capitalist because money values lives using hierarchies inherent to the system. In my introduction it is clear that my show should discuss capitalism in comparison to other worldviews. I don't think I achieved the discussion on capitalism directly, but I do believe I have given the tools for viewers to renounce capitalism on their own, which is perhaps more powerful. My show says hierarchy is bad and that lives are valuable inherently. This thinking is in refusion of how capitalism values the earth and its beings, so I believe I have accomplished my mission, even if it wasn't as directly as I had planned. *Joey in the Forest*, if produced, will help children see the world beyond capitalism and prepare them for the necessary fight for system change.

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