

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Allison sits on the steps outside the school.

KYLE (O.S.)
Hey! Hey Allison!

A kid locks up his bike to the fence, waving to her. Cute, skinny, dyed black hair swooshed down across his forehead. This is KYLE MCCURDY, 15. Allison waves back.

ALLISON
Hey Kyle.

But her eyes quickly drift down to... his bike. Allison smiles... rushes into the school.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - COMPUTER LAB - DAY

Allison sits at a computer, pounding the keyboard.

A Word document quickly fills up with an essay: "DIFFERING MODELS OF THE ATOM".

Allison smiles at her work.

Then types in "By Kyle McCurdy".

She goes back over it, liberally sprinkling typos and misspellings.

Hits PRINT.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAYS - DAY

Students mill in the halls before class. Allison marches up to Kyle at his locker.

KYLE
Oh, uh, hey. How are your, uh, experiments and all that goin'?

ALLISON
(frowns)
Do you actually care or are you just asking to be polite?

KYLE
Hey! I care.

ALLISON

Because it seems like it would probably be a thing where I start talking about it but it's really confusing and boring and you have to play along with it and it would be potentially distressing and awkward and I'm just trying to anticipate and pre-empt that.

KYLE

Uh -- yeah. Heh. I guess so.

ALLISON

Let me level with you, the actual purpose of this socialization, it's business, not pleasure.

Allison holds out the essay to Kyle.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

You're failing Applied Science, right?

KYLE

Er -- it's not really my strongest subject, no--

ALLISON

You have an essay due today, yeah? Throw yours out. Hand this one in.

KYLE

Whoa. I can't -- nobody's going to believe I wrote that--

ALLISON

Guaranteed B. Not a B plus, not an A minus, a B. Enough to pull your average to a passing grade, not enough to raise suspicion. I've included strategic misspellings and grammar errors throughout, characteristic of your Facebook and Reddit posts.

KYLE

This is -- why are you doing this?

ALLISON

Let me use your bike. Just for the afternoon. It'll be returned in perfect condition. Cross my heart.

Kyle slowly takes the essay from her. He pulls out a pen and grabs Allison's hand. Allison scrunches her face, not sure how she feels about being touched.

KYLE

Here. The combo for my bike lock.

As he writes on her hand...

KYLE (CONT'D)

You know you coulda just asked to borrow it because we're friends?

ALLISON

(...)

We are?

KYLE

Yeah.

(not an insult)

Weirdo.

Allison smiles at her hand where he's written three numbers.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

Allison rides Kyle's bike through traffic, pedalling hard. She smiles, lets go of the handlebars, steals this one perfect teenaged moment of happiness...

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Allison pushes into this packed auditorium.

COATES (O.S.)

We start with the story of Icarus.

DAVID COATES (62) paces the stage. Black turtleneck, goatee, glasses. Big smile.

COATES (CONT'D)

We all know it. The boy who got too close to the sun, yes? A cautionary parable about the dangers of hubris. Yada yada.

Allison sidles her way to a seat.

ALLISON

'scuze me. Sorry. 'scuze me.

COATES

Well I want to offer you rather a different interpretation.

(MORE)

COATES (CONT'D)

Icarus was the first great martyr to human possibility. If he'd listened to his elders, he never would have shown us how high we could fly.

An EINSTEIN QUOTE pops up on the projector screen.

COATES (O.S.) (CONT'D)

"Truly novel ideas emerge only in one's youth. Later one becomes more experienced, famous... and foolish." Einstein said it, has to be true, right? Well, a few years ago, the most experienced, famous, foolish minds on the planet were stuck. There were irreconcilable problems with all our best models for understanding the physical world. Then -- the Bohm equations.

Complicated numbers and symbols appears on the screen.

COATES (CONT'D)

A revolutionary new string theory model for mapping the movement of particles between dimensions, the Bohm equations changed everything. They did for physics what Bach did for music. The circumstances of their discovery have been classified. Until today.

He lets that linger.

COATES (CONT'D)

They were cracked by a *single ten year old German boy*.

Allison looks up in surprise. The crowd shift in their seats, MURMURING to each other. Coates moves to the next slide: a skinny LITTLE BOY with a thick mop of black hair.

COATES (CONT'D)

Dieter Gallo. When I found Dieter, he was appearing on daytime talk shows as
(spooky voice)
The Calculator Kid.

A VIDEO starts on the screen.

INTERCUT WITH:

A CLIP from a daytime talk show. Dieter sits beside THE HOST. Dieter's PROUD PARENTS stand behind him.

DAYTIME TALKSHOW HOST
374 plus 1278.

DIETER
1652.

DAYTIME TALKSHOW HOST
Divided by 9.

DIETER
183.555555556.

Allison mouths the answers with him, lips in perfect sync.

DAYTIME TALKSHOW HOST
What's its square root?

Dieter pauses. His father GRIPS his shoulders. Dieter FLINCHES as if afraid he'll be hit. After a moment...

DIETER
13.548267621950785.

Coates pauses the video.

COATES
Months later, Dieter did what adult scientists couldn't for decades. Like Icarus and his wings.

CLICK CLICK. Next slide. Black text on a white screen:
"ICARUS: DECLASSIFIED".

COATES (CONT'D)
You see, I believe the children are, quite literally, the future. I've been putting the notion to the test for the past decade. With the help of 29 countries, 9.48 billion in funding...

A list of member states and their financial contributions pops up on the screen.

COATES (CONT'D)
A mutual arrangement. We find the best and brightest. We set new minds to work on old problems.

CLICK CLICK. The photo behind Coates changes to smiling kids Allison's age. Kids with pimples and braces and bad hair. Kids like Allison. Allison stares, entranced.

COATES (CONT'D)

We give them resources, an environment in which their genius can be nurtured. They give us fresh perspectives, innovations, raw processing power. This second, kids at Icarus are working on some of our most stymieing problems. The Farnell Variance, Feedback Resonance...

Coates skips to a slide with a big, complex equation. One half is just a QUESTION MARK.

Allison's eyes widen: the equation from her chalkboard.

She RIPS pages out of her notebook, POPS the cap off her Sharpie, scrawls frantically.

COATES (CONT'D)

Now let's get into some of the ethical issues with--

Allison holds a messy bunch of pages up. Coates freezes. She caught his eye. He squints.

In Sharpie, Allison's written THE EQUATION FROM THE SLIDE.

SOLVED.

COATES (CONT'D)

Hm.

Coates looks back and forth from Allison to his slide...