

AMATEUR TORTOISE

A Young Adult Animated Series

"Teen Tortoise"

By Erika June Smith

**ACT ONE**

**FADE IN:**

**EXT./ESTAB. TORTOISE HOME - MORNING**

The sky is blue, and birds CHIRP over a traditional, colonial style home.

An ALARM CLOCK SOUNDS.

**BEGIN MONTAGE.**

**"PRETTY IN PINK" by The Psychedelic Furs fades in.**

**INT. HERO'S ROOM - SAME**

**HERO THE TORTOISE** opens his eyes and slides out of bed.

He's exactly what you would expect a teenager to be -- awkward, a little pudgy, and insecure -- except, he's a giant, talking desert tortoise.

Hero is the size of a human and walks upright. He's just like you and me but with a shell and scales.

**INT. HERO'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Hero turns on his faucet to the beat.

He showers in a round shower stall - it's custom-built to fit his curved shell.

Once he's done, Hero wipes the mist from his mirror. He rubs his hand over his bald head and walks out.

**INT. HERO'S ROOM - SOON AFTER**

PAN ALONG Hero's massive collection of teen 80's VHS tapes, movie posters, and cassette tapes. Note that every single movie stars a human.

Feeling the music, Hero stuffs his textbooks into his backpack along with a few pencils and notebooks. He throws in a Walkman... Just in case.

MRS. TORTOISE (O.S.)  
(shouting)  
Hero, time for breakfast.

HERO  
 (shouting back)  
 Coming, Mom.

Hero drapes his backpack over his shell. He steals one last look in his mirror.

HERO  
 This is it, Hero. The day your life  
 becomes an 80's film. Shell of  
 steel. Shell. Of. Steel.

Hero takes a DEEP BREATH. He walks to his bedroom door, glides through his round doorway, and starts his day.

**The music fades out.**

**END MONTAGE.**

**INT. TORTOISE KITCHEN - MORNING**

The Tortoise Family's kitchen is cute and well-decorated. Imagine a page out of "Southern Living." **MRS. TORTOISE** chops fruit at the counter, and **MR. TORTOISE** drinks tea at the table. He watches XYZ NEWS on a small TV.

On the television, a fast-talking human reporter named "**PIGEON DEL PERRY**" stands against a soggy desert landscape.

*(A VERY IMPORTANT NOTE: Hero and his parents are the only tortoises. Everyone else is a human, but they're named after animals. For example, Pigeon is not really a bird. She is a human woman.)*

PIGEON DEL PERRY (V.O.)  
 (on TV)  
 Good morning. I'm Pigeon Del Perry coming to you live from the Mojave Desert. Last night, the Mojave experienced its fifth flash flood this year. Tortoise families are continuing to evacuate the region despite President Baboon's latest executive order. He has banned all Tortoise migration -- inside and outside the United States -- until a peace deal is struck with the country of Tortuga...

MR. TORTOISE  
 It's good we got out of the Mojave while we could.

Mrs. Tortoise turns off the TV.

MRS. TORTOISE  
Not today, Steve. Hero doesn't need  
anything else to make him nervous.

Hero runs in.

MRS. TORTOISE  
Look at our little hatchling, all  
spiffed up for school.

Hero sits, and Mrs. Tortoise fills his plate with fruit.

HERO  
I exfoliated my shell. Is it smooth  
enough?

MRS. TORTOISE  
Smooth as an egg.

As soon as Mrs. Tortoise sits down, Hero shoves a strawberry  
into his mouth.

MR. TORTOISE  
Are you sure you want to do this,  
kiddo? Homeschool with your mother  
isn't so bad.

HERO  
There aren't any hit 80's films  
about homsechoolers, Dad.

MR. TORTOISE  
I don't understand why you like  
80's films so much.

MRS. TORTOISE  
We're being supportive. Remember,  
Steve?

Mr. Tortoise GRUNTS.

MRS. TORTOISE  
Now let's thank the Earth and eat.

The Tortoises join hands and look to the sky.

**EXT. TUNA GARCIA'S HOUSE - MORNING**

**SNAKE DUNCAN** rolls up to a lower middle class home on his  
bike.

Snake is a morbid, alternative freak who's not quite emo, but not quite punk either. Most importantly, he is not a snake. He's just named Snake.

Snake WHISTLES at the house.

SNAKE

Tuna!

**TUNA GARCIA** swings open her front door.

TUNA

Coming, Snake.

Tuna is a shy nerd with wide-brimmed glasses who wears chunky sweaters in the middle of July. She is also a human, not a fish.

Tuna slings a loaded backpack over her shoulder.

SNAKE

Your backpack looks heavier than my soul.

TUNA

I'm really bummed I couldn't bring the Honeybee Democracy. The Complete Dictionary of Entomology barely fit.

SNAKE

That's almost as pitiful as a vegan werewolf.

TUNA

I know!

She hops on her bike.

TUNA

Are you ready for our first day of high school?

SNAKE

Is anyone ever ready for their first day of Hell?

Snake and Tuna ride off to Hell. At least, their own personal versions of it.

**EXT./ESTAB. BEEHIVE HILL HIGH - MORNING**

**"PRETTY IN PINK" returns.**

Beehive Hill High is your average, all-human high school.

**HUMAN STUDENTS** shuffle in the front entrance. The sign out front flashes "Welcome 2019 - 2020 Bumblebees!"

Snake and Tuna ride up to school. They park their bikes at a rack.

TUNA

Mrs. Antelope said if I submit my ergatotype to the National Hymenoptera Museum, the selection committee may display it in the sawfly exhibit.

SNAKE

Isn't her class for like, sophomores?

TUNA

Principal Narwhal said that I'm too advanced for the freshman course.

SNAKE

You're blowing my mind. Literally. I wish my head would explode right now.

TUNA

Come on, high school can't be as bad as middle school.

A bright red convertible pulls past all the other cars and speeds up to the entrance. Students turn and stare.

The beautifully revolting **PEACOCK JONES** hops out of the car along with her sidekick **LEMMING ARMSTRONG**.

Peacock is the worst human at Beehive Hill High, and Lemming is her accessory to human horribleness.

Some **JOCKS** and **PREPS** high five Peacock.

JOCK

Ey, Peacock. Dope ride.

PEACOCK

Thanks. Daddy gave it to me for the first day of high school.

She waves to her **DRIVER** (who is a giant, talking chameleon).

PEACOCK

Thanks, Williamson. See you at 3.

The chameleon salutes her and speeds away.

TUNA

Peacock Jones? I thought she was going to that fancy private school in the city.

SNAKE

Welcome to Hell.

They watch Peacock walk in. She gets more CHEERS and high fives.

**"Pretty in Pink" fades for the final time.**

**INT. GYMNASIUM - MORNING**

The high school gymnasium is packed with energetic high school students. They CHEER and CLAP as the **MARCHING BAND** and **CHEERLEADERS** perform. The performers wear the school colors: black and yellow, and a **BUMBLEBEE MASCOT** pretends to buzz around the gym.

Snake and Tuna get pushed around by students who are way more spirited than them.

The **MARCHING TUNE CRESCENDOS**, and the cheerleaders leap into their final formation. It's a big finish.

The gymnasium bursts with APPLAUSE. Snake and Tuna are still unimpressed.

**PRINCIPAL MARTIN NARWHAL** walks to the center of the court with a mic. Narwhal is an overenthusiastic 6-year-old child trapped in a grown man's body, and it's annoying as shit.

NARWHAL

Good morning, Bumblebees!

STUDENTS

(weak)

Good morning, Principal Narwhal.

NARWHAL

I'm BUZZING with excitement! You want to know why?

STUDENTS

(painful)

Why?

NARWHAL

Today, Beehive Hill High is welcoming our first Tortoise student!

The students WHISPER among themselves.

LEMMING

Did he say Tortoise?

PEACOCK

Can they even go here?

NARWHAL

(over the crowd)

Hey, we're all friends here at Beehive Hill High. That's why Officer Spider Crab and I are laying down a few rules.

The school resource officer, **AMADEUS SPIDER CRAB**, nods on the sidelines.

NARWHAL

First of all, when our friend the Tortoise gets here, don't touch his shell. It's offensive. Secondly, you will not call the Tortoise a Turtle. They're not the same thing. Thirdly, do not call our new friend slow. That is a rude stereotype, and him being late is unrelated.

The students SNICKER.

STUDENT 1

(yelling)

Come on, the joke writes itself!

NARWHAL

Failure to comply will result in a stern look from Officer Spider Crab.

Spider Crab glares at the students. They GASP and erupt in PROTEST.

TUNA

(to Snake)

This is not good.

Narwhal tries to calm the students down...



NARWHAL

Woah. There is no need to be grumpy.

...But, the students protest louder.

**INT. TORTOISE CAR - MORNING**

Mrs. Tortoise drives Hero to school in their oversized minivan. They're moving at the speed of molasses. Mrs. Tortoise happily drives along while Hero rides restlessly in the back seat.

HERO

Come on, Mom. I'm already late.

MRS. TORTOISE

You can never be late for safety.

They pull up to the school entrance.

HERO

Finally.

Hero tries to open his door, but the child lock stops him.

MRS. TORTOISE

Mom.

MRS. TORTOISE

At least let me walk you in.

HERO

I need to walk myself in. This entrance is going to define the next 4 years of my life.

Mrs. Tortoise SIGHS and unlocks the door.

MRS. TORTOISE

(sighing)

Okay, call me if you need anything.

Hero gets out.

**EXT. BEEHIVE HILL HIGH - CONTINUOUS**

He stares at Beehive Hill High's looming entrance.

HERO

I can do this.

MRS. TORTOISE  
(calling out)  
I love you, sugar dumpling!

HERO  
(under his breath)  
I love you too.

He opens the school door. As Hero steps in, he pumps his fist to the sky... but his fist hits the top of the doorframe, and his shell gets caught in the rectangular doorway.

Hero's already stuck. This is not good.

**FADE OUT.**

**END ACT ONE**

ACT TWO

**FADE IN:**

**INT. MISS WORM'S CLASSROOM - MORNING**

**MISS GLADYS WORM** is a 60-year-old, depressed English teacher who hates her job. She stands at a lectern and looks dead inside.

Snake, Tuna, Peacock, and Lemming are all in her homeroom. Miss Worm calls roll with even less enthusiasm than a sloth.

MISS WORM  
Armstrong?

LEMMING  
Here, I think.

Lemming looks to Peacock.

PEACOCK  
She's here.

MISS WORM  
Duncan?

SNAKE  
Are any of us really present?

MISS WORM  
Garcia?

TUNA  
Present and ready to learn.

MISS WORM  
Jones?

Miss Worm glances around the room.

MISS WORM  
Jones?

PEACOCK  
Everyone knows I'm here.

MISS WORM  
Tortoise?

CU on the classroom's only empty seat.

MISS WORM  
Tortoise?

The class shifts uncomfortably.

MISS WORM  
Tortoise?

**INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - MEANWHILE**

Beehive Hill High used to be a state-of-the-art facility, but its halls have crusted through time. Rusty lockers and discolored ceilings show the years of wear and tear.

Despite that, the school is a fantasy for Hero. Narwhal leads him down a cruddy hallway, and Hero stares at every last moldy stain with awe.

NARWHAL  
I, for one, am ecstatic to have you  
at my school.

HERO  
Thanks! I'm happy to be here --

NARWHAL  
Some of your classmates aren't  
happy you're here though --

HERO  
What?

NARWHAL  
-- Don't worry. I set them  
straight.

HERO  
Oh, thank you. I appreciate that --

NARWHAL  
But it's probably best to keep a  
low profile over the next few  
days...

HERO  
Days?

NARWHAL  
Or months. Just to be on the safe  
side.

HERO  
Oh...

NARWHAL

I don't want you to worry though.  
Come to me with anything. As your  
Princi-"pal" my door will always be  
open.

HERO

Uhm, thank you.

They stop at Miss Worm's door.

NARWHAL

Here's the best homeroom in the  
entire world -- Miss Worm! Let's  
introduce you to your new learning  
buddies.

**INT. MISS WORM'S CLASSROOM - SIMULTANEOUS**

Miss Worm's eyes have completely glazed over.

MISS WORM

Tortoise?  
(beat)  
Tortoise? Tor --

Principal Narwhal swings the door open.

NARWHAL

Hey, everyone. Look who I brought.  
It's your new friend, Hero the  
Tortoise.

Hero tries to walk in, but BUMP -- his shell gets caught  
again. He backs up and walks in sideways.

Hero awkwardly waves.

HERO

Hey, everyone.

Miss Worm nods and points to the one empty desk.

NARWHAL

Alright, remember Hero --  
(stage whisper)  
PRINCI-PAL.

Narwhal ducks out, and Hero is left like a deer in  
headlights. He wobbles to his desk.

PEACOCK

Ew, he smells like fish poop.

The students scoot away from Hero as he passes. They GAG and make RETCHING NOISES.

Miss Worm speaks over them.

MISS WORM  
Rodriguez?

TOAD RODRIGUEZ  
Here.

MISS WORM  
Wang?

CANARY WANG  
Here.

As Miss Worm calls roll, the class glares at Hero.

He slinks a little into his shell. Tuna watches Hero understandingly. She gets it.

The school bell RINGS. Miss Worm SIGHS with relief.

MISS WORM  
It's 3 o'clock somewhere.

Hero stands up to leave, but his shell gets caught in the seat and pulls the entire desk up with him.

Some of his classmates SNICKER, but Tuna rushes up to help Hero.

TUNA  
Oh, no. Let me help you with that.

Tuna grabs onto the desk and helps Hero shimmy out of it.

PEACOCK  
How cute, the Tortoise doesn't fit in.

Peacock and Lemming LAUGH. As they leave, Tuna rolls her eyes.

TUNA  
Just ignore them. They're jerks.

With one final pull, the desk pops off of Hero and falls to the floor with a CLUNK.

HERO  
This is really embarrassing.

TUNA

You wanna know what's embarrassing?  
Honeybees have hair on their  
eyeballs.

HERO

That's actually interesting.

TUNA

I know right! I'm Tuna and this is  
my friend Snake.

Snake nods.

SNAKE

Dope shell.

HERO

Thanks! Do you know where Mrs.  
Antelope's classroom is?

Tuna GASPS.

TUNA

You have Mrs. Antelope next too?  
You can walk with me.

Hero smiles. Tuna, Snake, and Hero leave together. They  
patiently wait for Hero to turn sideways in the doorway.

**INT. MRS. ANTELOPE'S CLASSROOM - MORNING**

Hero and Tuna sit together at a lab table. Their classroom is  
filled with CHATTY **UPPERCLASSMEN**.

**MRS. JUANITA ANTELOPE** steps in front of the class. She **CLAPS**  
her hands.

MRS. ANTELOPE

All right, class. Can I talk to you  
for a few minutes?

**CUT TO:**

TITLE: "One hour later."

The kids are all bored out of their minds, but Mrs. Antelope  
lectures with more vigor than ever.

MRS. ANTELOPE

That is why it is absolutely empirical that we do not skip Chapter 13, Taxonomy and Classification. Now, stay with me because Chapter 14 is where our syllabus really heats up...

As she talks, Hero's eyes grow more and more sleepy. Then, his wristwatch VIBRATES. It reads: "79°F."

He and Tuna WHISPER back and forth --

HERO

Oh, Dog.

TUNA

What is it?

HERO

I have to regulate my body temperature.

TUNA

Is that a Tortoise tradition?

HERO

Sort of. My body needs to maintain a certain temperature to metabolize correctly, but it's also about strengthening your relationship with The Sun. It's hard to explain.

TUNA

Just tell Mrs. Antelope. I'm sure she'll understand.

HERO

I don't want to make a scene.

TUNA

It's okay. Shakespeare made scenes.

MRS. ANTELOPE

(full volume)

Excuse me. Is cell growth boring to you two?

Tuna's eyes get wide. She elbows Hero. He CLEARS HIS THROAT and talks under his breath --

HERO

No, I have to, uhm, go regulate my body temperature.



MRS. ANTELOPE  
What was that?

HERO  
(clearly)  
I have to regulate my body  
temperature.

MRS. ANTELOPE  
(off-guard)  
Oh, of course. Grab the hall pass  
on your way out.

Hero stands up. He bumps into some desks on his way out.

HERO  
Sorry. Excuse me. Sorry.

His classmates WHISPER.

UPPERCLASSMAN 1  
Why does he get to leave class?

UPPERCLASSMAN 2  
Typical turtle.

They shake their heads.

**EXT. COURTYARD - MORNING**

The courtyard is a small, open space in the middle of the school. Hero lies on a large rock and basks in the sun with his eyes shut.

**INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - SIMULTANEOUS**

Peacock and Lemming walk past the windows to the courtyard.

PEACOCK  
Lemming, the first step in taking  
over this Dogforsaken school is  
getting rid of that salmonella-  
infected tortoise.

She spots Hero sunbathing.

PEACOCK  
Ew, gross. I can't believe he does  
that where everyone can see.

LEMMING  
I know, it's offending my eyes.

PEACOCK

Your skirt is offending everyone's eyes. Pull your wardrobe into the 21st century.

Peacock gazes out at Hero. She squints like she's up to something... Peacock Jones is always up to something.

**INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - LUNCH**

Hero swings open the doors to the cafeteria. Their rusty hinges SQUEAK with the motion.

As Hero enters this promised land, almost **HEAVENLY MUSIC** plays. His eyes twinkle. This is it. The lunchroom.

Fluorescent lights make the crowded tables of teenagers look even more acne-prone than they normally are. They SHOUT over one another and CHEW loudly.

Hero searches for a seat. With every step, a different face glares at Hero. Their WHISPERS follow Hero.

STUDENT 1

Is that the Tortoise?

STUDENT 2

He should go back to the pond he came from.

STUDENT 1

Tortoises come from deserts.

STUDENT 2

Same diff.

Hero spots Snake, eating alone in the back of the cafeteria. The heavenly music **SLOWS DOWN**. Hero walks to him.

Snake looks up at Hero, and the music **CUTS OUT**.

HERO

Hey, you're Snake right?

SNAKE

Yeah.

HERO

Can I sit here?

SNAKE

I guess.

Hero sits.

HERO  
So, what's your favorite movie?

SNAKE  
I don't do small talk.

HERO  
Oh, okay.

They eat in silence for a few moments.

HERO  
Hey, there's Tuna.

**ANGLE ON the lunch line.**

Tuna is checking out with a full TRAY OF FOOD. Peacock and Lemming are behind her.

Hero waves to Tuna. Tuna tries to wave back, but as soon as her hand leaves the tray --

**SLOW MOTION:**

The **SLOW, HEAVENLY MUSIC** returns.

Peacock collides into Tuna.

Tuna falls to the ground dramatically. Her food splatters across the floor and over Peacock's shoes.

**REAL TIME, NO MUSIC:**

Tuna struggles to gather her food and reorganize it on her tray.

PEACOCK  
OH MY DOG! These are Prada shoes!  
The bug girl got filthy floor  
chicken all over my Prada shoes!

TUNA  
(sincere)  
I'm sorry, Peacock.

Tuna tries to wipe her food off Peacock's shoes.

PEACOCK  
Ew! Gross! You're gonna get bug  
guts on me! Lemming!

LEMMING  
Yes, Peacock.

PEACOCK  
Shoes.

Lemming pulls a pair of Gucci heels out of her purse.

PEACOCK  
What the Duck, Lemming? Are these  
last season's Gucci?

LEMMING  
(ashamed)  
Well, yes, but...

PEACOCK  
UGGGGGGGH! You ruined my outfit,  
bug girl.

Peacock kicks MASHED POTATOES in Tuna's face.

PEACOCK  
Let's go, Lemming.

Peacock slips into the outdated Gucci heels then struts to  
the POPULAR KIDS TABLE. Lemming pulls out a chair for her,  
and Peacock takes it with authority.

Tuna struggles to salvage whatever food she can.

**ANGLE BACK ON Hero and Snake's table.**

HERO  
How come no one stopped that girl?

SNAKE  
You know Jaguar Jones?

HERO  
Yeah, he owns Beehive Honey Co.

SNAKE  
That's his daughter.

HERO  
Woah.

Hero watches Peacock eat. She cuts her pizza with a fork and  
knife -- a real posh move.

**INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON**

Principal Narwhal sits in his office. The room is filled with inspirational portraits of fruit. They have captions like: "Berry happy to be here," "Depression is bananas," and "An apple a day keeps the sadness away."

Narwhal carves a self-portrait into an apple.

NARWHAL

Beautiful and delectable.

His desk phone RINGS. Narwhal sets down the fruit/carving knife and answers.

NARWHAL

(into phone)

Hello, you've reached the Principal's office. This is your pal, Martin Narwhal speaking.

ASSISTANT (V.O.)

(through phone)

Mr. Jones will speak with you now. Please hold.

NARWHAL

(to himself)

Oh no.

JAGUAR (V.O.)

(through phone)

Martin!

NARWHAL

(into phone)

Mr. Jones! How is my favorite honey mogul?

**BEGIN SPLITSCREEN.**

**INT. JAGUAR JONES'S OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS**

**JAGUAR JONES** radiates power. A Grizzly Bear rug covers his office floor, and stuffed deer heads stare down from the walls. Jaguar leans back in his real leather chair and props his feet up on his rich mahogany desk.

The only person who's a worse human being than Peacock is her father. He holds a fancy office phone to his ear.

JAGUAR  
 (into phone)  
 Not so good, Martin. I just got  
 this really odd text from my  
 daughter Peacock. She said --

He reads off his cell phone.

JAGUAR  
 "Ew, Daddy. That Tortoise kid is  
 here. Do something, or I'm suing  
 you for child abuse."

Narwhal LAUGHS nervously.

NARWHAL  
 Oh, kids and their words.

JAGUAR  
 My princi-pal Martin would have  
 told me if the Tortoises' son was  
 going to my daughter's high  
 school... right, pal?

Narwhal's face is raining sweat.

NARWHAL  
 Surprise! Steven and Lois Tortoise  
 enrolled their son at Beehive Hill  
 High.

JAGUAR  
 I was afraid it was true.

NARWHAL  
 Mr. Jones, I know this is  
 unconventional --

JAGUAR  
 It's not just unconventional. It's  
 dangerous. Have you seen Coyote  
 News lately?

NARWHAL  
 The Tortoise family has lived in  
 our town for many years without any  
 problems.

JAGUAR  
 Exactly. It's just a matter of time  
 before one of them snaps.

NARWHAL  
 They're not snapping turtles, sir.

JAGUAR  
You enjoy your job. Right, Martin?

NARWHAL  
Of course. I love leading these  
young minds to a brighter future.

JAGUAR  
How do I put this lightly? Get rid  
of the Tortoise student or I will  
get rid of you.

Narwhal GULPS.

NARWHAL  
Yes, sir.

JAGUAR  
That's what I like to hear.

Jaguar hangs up.

**END SPLITSCREEN.**

**INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Narwhal's phone goes DEAD. He stares at a poster of a grape  
on his wall. The caption says "What a grape day to be alive."

Narwhal BURSTS out SOBBING.

**FADE OUT.**

**END ACT TWO**

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. BEEHIVE HILL HIGH - AFTERNOON

Tuna and Snake walk out of school together.

SNAKE

Tuna, are you sure we should be friends with the turtle?

TUNA

He's a tortoise. They're two completely different classification families.

SNAKE

I'm just saying -- You and I are already pretty weird. We don't need anyone to think we're any weirder.

TUNA

Remember the sprinkles?

SNAKE

Why do you always have to throw the sprinkles in my face?

TUNA

Hero needs us, Snake. And you know what? I think we need him.

SNAKE

Fine, but if this turns into a Steven King movie, it's your fault.

They walk up to the bike rack, but their bikes are missing.

SNAKE

Dog-dammit.

TUNA

Someone stole our bikes!

SNAKE

I guess we're walking. Better avoid the cornfield.

Tuna and Snake start walking home.



**EXT. TORTOISE BACKYARD - EVENING**

The sun sets softly over the Tortoise's backyard. The yard houses a luscious garden of fruits, vegetables, herbs, and flowers. It's every herbivore's dream.

Hero and his parents tend to the garden. Hero pulls hefty weeds out of the garden while his parents water and harvest the plants.

HERO

Tuna and Snake are so cool. Tuna knows every bug that's ever been documented in the history of entomology, and Snake likes my shell.

MRS. TORTOISE

That's amazing, blueberry cake. Steve, would you like to tell us about your day?

MR. TORTOISE

Well, I actually have a big announcement... the firm just got a compost bin.

Mrs. Tortoise GASPS.

MRS. TORTOISE

Your campaign worked?

MR. TORTOISE

That's right. Any and all leftover food will be given back to the Earth.

Mrs. Tortoise drops her watering can and hugs Mr. Tortoise.

MRS. TORTOISE

I am so proud of you.

HERO

This is so awesome, Dad. Your office got a compost bin, and I'm going to Beehive Hill High.

MR. TORTOISE

Yeah, your thing's all right too.

Mrs. Tortoise holds her hand out to Hero.

MRS. TORTOISE  
Let's all say thank you for the  
wonderful day the Earth has given  
us.

Hero joins hands with his parents. They look up to the sky.

MRS. TORTOISE  
Oh Soil, oh Rain, and most bright  
Sun, thank you for bringing us into  
your circle and allowing us to  
share in this great cycle of warmth  
and growth.

ALL TORTOISES  
Receive our thanks.

The Tortoises squeeze each other's hands and smile.

**INT. HERO'S ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING**

**Another 80'S SONG plays.**

**BEGIN MONTAGE.**

Hero tries on different hats in the mirror. He spins, twirls,  
and poses with each hat.

The different hats include:

-A denim bucket hat.

HERO  
Too 90's.

-A cowboy hat.

HERO  
Too obnoxious.

-A fez.

HERO  
Fezzes are cool.

-A top hat.

HERO  
Getting warmer.

And finally... a fedora.

HERO  
This is the one.

He winks at his reflection.

**The music FADES OUT.**

**END MONTAGE.**

**EXT. BEEHIVE HILL HIGH - MORNING**

Snake and Tuna walk up to the school. The Tortoise's minivan pulls up, and Hero gets out. He's wearing his fedora.

HERO  
(shouting)  
Hey, guys, wait for me.

Hero catches up.

TUNA  
Cool Fedora!

SNAKE  
I prefer ski masks to hide my identity, but yeah, your hat is cool too.

HERO  
Aw, thanks Snake. I like your nose piercing.

Snake touches his nose piercing. He smiles a little, but quickly goes back to his tough act.

Hero, Tuna, and Snake enter the school.

**INT. BEEHIVE HILL HIGH - SOON AFTER**

Snake, Tuna, and Hero walk through the hall.

They slow down. A crowd of students blocks the hallway by the courtyard. They SHOUT and point.

SNAKE  
Woah, do you think teachers are decapitating students in the courtyard again?

TUNA

(to Hero)

They don't actually do that. Snake likes to joke.

SNAKE

That's what you think.

HERO

My basking rock is there.

Hero pushes his way through the crowd. He steps up to the courtyard's window.

Outside, the courtyard is covered in toilet paper. Its walls are vandalized with images of coyotes and hate speech like "Go back to the desert, Tortoise!"

A tortoise is sprayed painted on Hero's rock, but the tortoise is turned over on it's shell, chocked to death, with x's over it's eyes.

Hero stares out the window in pure shock. Tuna and Snake push through the crowd and join him.

HERO

No. This isn't real.

Hero stares at his classmates, and they stare back at him.

**FROM HERO'S POV:**

Everything grows bigger and more frightening. The **SLOW, HEAVENLY MUSIC** is back again.

Hero BREATHES FASTER.

HERO

No. No. No. No. You're just in a movie. This isn't happening.

His classmates' figures distort like reflections in funhouse mirrors. Peacock leans over Hero. Her voice is hazy.

PEACOCK

Awww, is the Tortoise scared?

She SNAPS her fingers, and the sharp clicks echo through Hero's brain.

PEACOCK

Hello. Earth to Tortoise.

Hero's breath falls short. He collapses, and his world turns **BLACK**.

**FADE IN:**

**INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - LATER THAT DAY**

Hero and Mrs. Tortoise sit facing Principal Narwhal and Officer Spider Crab.

NARWHAL

I am so sorry, Mrs. Tortoise.  
Sometimes our students get a little  
passionate about their beliefs.

MRS. TORTOISE

You told me my son would be safe  
here, and now his basking rock, the  
most precious part of our culture,  
is defiled!

NARWHAL

Don't worry, Mrs. Tortoise. Officer  
Spider Crab and I are handling it.

SPIDER CRAB

Yeah I cancelled a show at Club  
Retro tonight to investigate your  
son's case.

MRS. TORTOISE

Club Retro?

SPIDER CRAB

I'm a part-time school resource  
officer, full-time DJ. Here's my  
mixtape.

He hands Mrs. Tortoise a cassette.

NARWHAL

I don't mean to be a Debby Downer,  
but maybe it wasn't the best idea  
for Hero to come here.

MRS. TORTOISE

You said it was a great idea!

NARWHAL

I've had plenty of bad ideas  
before. Like financing DJ Spider  
Crab's mixtape.

SPIDER CRAB

Whaa?

MRS. TORTOISE

I would not have allowed my son to come here if I knew you were going to be such a piece of moldy toast!

NARWHAL

Well, I would not have allowed your son to come here if I knew you were going to raise your voice.

Hero stands up.

HERO

Shut up!

Narwhal and Mrs. Tortoise GASP. Peggy jumps out of Narwhal's lap and hides under the desk. Officer Spider Crab's mouth is only slightly ajar.

HERO

Why are you both acting like this was your decision? I wanted to come here. This is normal for high school. I mean, come on, have you seen how many people die in Heathers?

SPIDER CRAB

That seems like a bad example.

HERO

But... I don't know if I want this anymore. I didn't know having my own movie would be so hard.

Mrs. Tortoise reaches out to her son.

MRS. TORTOISE

Hero...

HERO

I want to go home.

Mrs. Tortoise gets up too.

MRS. TORTOISE

Okay, we can do that.

She leaves with her son. Narwhal and Spider Crab are left there in silence.

SPIDER CRAB

You meant my mixtape was a rad  
idea, right?

Narwhal pats Spider Crab's arm.

NARWHAL

Yeah, buddy.

**INT. HERO'S ROOM - EVENING**

Hero sits in the dark and eats almond milk ice cream straight out of the container. He's lit only by his TV as he watches "The Breakfast Club" on VHS.

MOVIE (V.O.)

(on TV)

You see us as you want to see us,  
in the simplest terms, in the most  
convenient definitions. But what we  
found out, is that each one of us  
is a brain...

Hero throws his ice cream at the TV.

HERO

Liar!

There's a KNOCK on Hero's door.

MRS. TORTOISE (O.S.)

Hero, your friends are here to see  
you.

HERO

(yelling)

I don't have any friends.

TUNA (O.S.)

Hero, it's Tuna and Snake.

Hero jumps up and hits the stop button on his VCR. He frantically flips the light on. After taking a moment to compose himself, Hero calmly opens the door.

HERO

Hi.

TUNA

Is it okay if we come in?

HERO

Yeah, of course.

Hero lets Snake and Tuna into his room.

SNAKE

Woah, you have a lot of 80's stuff.

TUNA

What are you watching?

HERO

The Breakfast Club. It used to be my favorite movie. What are you two doing here?

TUNA

Hero... What happened at school really sucked.

SNAKE

It sucked worse than a vampire who broke their 30 day fast.

HERO

It's fine. I should have known high school would be an underfunded "Mean Girls" remake. I'll just go back to homeschool.

TUNA

Is that really what you want?

HERO

Not really, but I'm the Tortoise student now. That's all I'll ever be.

Snake SIGHS.

SNAKE

I'll tell you a story, but you must vow to picture me as Edgar Allan Poe with a raven on my shoulder.

HERO

Seems reasonable.

SNAKE

Back when Tuna and I were in kindergarten, Peacock was the same terrible person, and I was her prime target. Every time Peacock would pick on me, it'd make me even sadder than my usual level of depression. Tuna and I weren't friends yet.

(MORE)



SNAKE (CONT'D)

I was jealous of her emotional support tarantula. But, she still stood up for me. Tuna waited until it was Peacock's birthday, and she snuck some fire ants into school. Tuna used them to decorate Peacock's birthday cupcake. That unfortunate soul thought they were sprinkles.

HERO

You did that for him?

Tuna nods.

SNAKE

The next day, we vowed to always protect each other even when everyone sucks.

TUNA

We can protect you too, if you want.

HERO

You'd do that for me?

SNAKE

Yeah, we should make a blood pact, so we can always be comrades.

TUNA

Or we could finish The Breakfast Club?

HERO

Let's start it over.

Hero rewinds his VCR.

HERO

This is gonna take a minute.

**EXT. BEEHIVE HILL HIGH - THE NEXT DAY**

**"HUMAN" by the Killers fades in.**

Hero, Snake, and Tuna hop out of the Tortoise family's minivan.

TUNA

Thanks for the ride, Mrs. Tortoise.

MRS. TORTOISE  
Anything for you, dream puff. And  
Hero?

He rolls his eyes.

HERO  
Yes, Mom?

MRS. TORTOISE  
Promise you'll be safe?

HERO  
I promise.

MRS. TORTOISE  
Okay, have fun with your friends.

Mrs. Tortoise pulls away. Snake, Tuna, and Hero stare at the school from a distance.

TUNA  
I'm not sure about this.

SNAKE  
We could still leave. I've got the  
keys to the town morgue.

HERO  
No. We can do this.

**CUT TO:**

**A LONG SHOT of the school entrance.**

**"Human" plays louder.**

The trio takes a DEEP BREATH and walks in.

Right before they enter, they pump their fists together.

**FREEZE FRAME AND...**

**DISSOLVE OUT.**

**THE END**