

MASCOT

Written by

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FADE IN:

OPENING

(TITLE: "MASCOT")

EXT. DORM - NIGHT

It's dark and there are distant sounds of the city. A bus pulls up dropping off students around outside the dorm, and they all excitedly clamor in through the doors because they are rushing to prepare for the first day of school. Shifting to look at one window, we push in on it to reveal a couple already fast at working planning their first days.

INT. CARRIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

JON and CARRIE each hold a packet of information about Johnson and Wales University, including class schedules. The room is a mess with unpacked clothes and electronics not yet put away where they belong.

JON

Well I think our relationship has blossomed a lot over the past year, Carrie.

CARRIE

Maybe but did you really have to follow me to the same college? I mean we don't know each other that well.

JON

The sports management program is supposed to be pretty good here. It seemed that way at orientation...

Carrie shoves him, but her eyes twinkle.

CARRIE

So, it's got nothing to with the fact I'm going here, then?

Jon leans in and kisses her.

JON
 Maybe a little. Anyway, I'd do
 almost anything for you.

CARRIE
 (teasing)
 Anything huh? Meet the college's
 mascot?

Jon's eyes go as wide as watermelons.

JON
 I said almost anything. That day we
 met is engraved forever in me brain
 with the other incident.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - DAY

FLASHBACK: Jon is watching Carrie, at the time a high school senior cheerleader, perform her halftime cheerleading routine. He's standing with his friend MARK. The crowd is cheering them on.

SUPER: ONE YEAR AGO

JON
 Wow. She's amazing. Man I'd love to
 take her out. Smart, funny. And a
 cheerleader to boot. Not to mention
 single. She's perfect.

MARK
 Bud, you're in over your head. Not
 that she's out of your league, but
 she's just a totally different
 personality. I mean do you really
 want a cheerleader? Why not one of
 my friends?

JON
 Because by that you mean your exes.
 Besides, it doesn't matter that
 she's a cheerleader. Just as long
 as she keeps that mascot far away
 from me. I still don't like those
 things much so- Shoot! She's coming
 over!

MARK
 Must've seen you staring at her
 with that oh-so-endearing gaze.
 Well, good luck.

Mark walks away as Carrie approaches.

JON
 Hey! Mark! What the heck?

Carrie arrives looking at Jon with great curiosity.

CARRIE
 See something you liked?

JON
 Um...You could say that.

CARRIE
 Is it...me?
 (Laughs)

Jon turns five shades of red. Off to the side, Mark laughs.

JON
 Look, I...admit I've been watching
 you for a while - Like ever since
 the start of senior year and - The
 fact is you kind of-
 (beat)
 - fascinate me. And, I bet you're
 really nice so...
 (rushed)
 Wanna go on a date with me? Maybe
 to a movie? I promise I'm not -

CARRIE
 A weirdo? I could say that's false.
 Besides I can't go to a movie until
 after we've had some dinner. I like
 Italian. And it took you long
 enough to ask by the way.

JON
 HUH?

MARK
 WHAT?

A short pause, as Carrie grins from ear to ear.

CARRIE
 Truth is I've been kind of
 wondering what you are really like.
 (MORE)

CARRIE (CONT'D)

All I know are those eyes
constantly staring at me. It's kind
of creepy, really.

ANNOUNCER

And now, your Portsmouth Patriots
cheerleading squad and mascot, Big
Red!

CARRIE

Well, looks likes that's my cue to -

The mascot starts his approach.

JON

Um, I'll be right back. I gotta
go...do something quick.

Carrie watches as Jon speed walks off in the other direction,
toward the stands. Confused, she turns around and heads out
to do the next cheer. Meanwhile BEN, the popular kid, comes
over to taunt him a bit.

BEN

Well, well, well. Look who struck
out. Guess you can't get them all
like I can.

JON

(sly)

Nice try Ben, but it just so
happens I know she turned you down.

BEN

To think we used to be friends...

JON

Ya, until you squashed any chance I
had at being popular when you told
the whole school about - that day.
Still, then I may not have got a
real friend, Mark. And I'm pretty
sure Carrie doesn't want some
hotshot like you.

BEN

OUCH! Shots fired. I give, you win.
One more year and you'll never see
me again anyway.

The performance ends, and Carrie comes over to Jon. She is concerned and confused, as her face clearly shows.

CARRIE

(annoyed)

Okay, what was with the last second ditching action there? That's a move a I'd expect Ben here to pull.

JON

Oh it's nothing, really.

BEN

My old pal here hates mascots.

CARRIE

Ben? You two are friends?

BEN

We were once. A long time ago. But seriously, go on Jon. Tell her. Hm? Tell her how -

Jon shoves Ben off the bench.

BEN (CONT'D)

OK, OK geez. I swear Jon, someday your gonna get in over your head, and you'll need me to help you.

JON

As. If.

CARRIE

What's going on, Jon?

Jon tries to blow it off.

JON

I don't like mascots much. That's all.

CARRIE

Why?

JON

I just find them a little weird. Who'd want to act one-hundred percent like something else? It's weirdly nihilistic.

CARRIE

Nihilistic? It's supposed to be fun Jon. I like fun.

Jon looks at Carrie with a serious face.

JON
(demanding)
Oh really? So then you'd like to be
in that mascot costume?

CARRIE
I didn't say that...

JON

JON (CONT'D)
(calm down)
Oh, sorry, I...damn.

Ben has picked himself back up and is smiling once more.

BEN
Thing is when he was younger,
someone in a Goofy costume snuck up
behind him and bopped him on the
head. It was meant to be playful,
but he freaked out!

JON
Ben!

CARRIE
So you don't like mascots because
some guy dressed up in a Goofy
costume surprised you by giving you
a small pat on the head as a kid?

She smiles.

JON
So happy that's the first fun fact
you found out about me. The guy
with a dislike of mascots, and-
and ruining the perfect chance at a
date too, I bet.

CARRIE
Relax, it was years ago. You can
just stay in the stands at the
games.
(Playfully)
No mean mascot can get you up
there. Now come on, I'm hungry!

Jon looks dumfounded she still wants to go.

JON

Man, you really are something. All right, get changed. I'll make arraignments for a ride.

CARRIE

Sounds good.

She walks away, and Jon turns to walk over to where Mark is standing, watching.

BEN

Lucky. You know I may have underestimated you, even if you are a bit of a wienie.

JON

Um...thanks?

Jon looks back at him as he heads toward Mark.

MARK

(joking)

I'm confused. Are you and Ben becoming friends again?

JON

Funny. Anyway I got the date and that's what matters.

MARK

Ya, but now she thinks you're a Grade A creep.

JON

We'll see about that. But I know one things for sure - I'm not gonna let some mascot get in our way.

FADE TO:

INT. CARRIE'S DORM - NIGHT

SUPER: PRESENT DAY

JON

We'll at least I got you that day. That means when we graduate I can stay in luxury hotels you'll manage and complain about every spec of dust.

CARRIE

(laughs)

O ya? If you do that then maybe I won't use my dad's connections in the sports industry to land you a job once we graduate.

JON

HUH? Your dad has -

CARRIE

There's still a ton we still don't know about each other, Mr. Jon. And that, frankly, is why we aren't the perfect couple...yet.

JON

Well you love me right? That's a good start.

CARRIE

Although I still would've liked you to meet Big Red.

They both laugh, but Jon it noticeably annoyed at the joke.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Also, Jon, don't forget I'll be a lot busier. The college squad travels much more than the high school troop.

JON

No matter. I can still come to all the games, right?

CARRIE

Well actually Jon I already looked into that, and you won't be able to come with me to away games. The buses are nicer, but consequently they are also smaller. So unlike our high school, JWU only lets the sports teams and cheerleaders on. And furthermore -

JON

Man, I wish I could afford a car and gas. In fact I'm gonna have to get a job just to pay for us to go out now...

CARRIE

Oh that's sweet. Hey, maybe you can work for the university!

JON

Great idea! Maybe then I can even get to some away games.

CARRIE

I don't know, Jon. Based on what I know so far our mascot, Wildcat Willie, is seen as- Well maybe not a cheerleader, but a cheer leader. You understand? In any case, as I was trying to say, he actually comes with us.

JON

O come on! If that's the case I can't ride the bus anyway! I don't want be seen with some costumed weirdo. Ah, I suck so at playing sports anyway.

CARRIE

You're great- Well OK at soccer. And a great dancer.

JON

No, I just play it for fun sometimes. In any case I'm not good enough for a division three team. And dancing isn't a sport. Besides it won't help if it's a female only squad like in high school.

CARRIE

Oh. Well, it's okay, even if we're pushed to the edge, we'll eventually get glory in the end.

JON

Did you just quote Lady Rah-rah?

CARRIE

That's Gaga. And I paraphrased. You know I love her music.

JON

Ug. Just no more Lady Gaga marathons. Whatever happens, it's going to take something big to make me like her and become one of her...Little monsters, is it?

CARRIE

Yep. Oh, I'll be right back I have another CD for us to check out.

JON

Great. Hope it's some classic rock.

She starts rummaging through her mess of CDs. Meanwhile Jon opens up a bill for the first year.

JON (CONT'D)

Ouch. How am I supposed to take you out with a bill like this?

They laugh together.

FADE TO:

EXT. STUDENT ACTIVITIES BUILDING - DAY

Jon is looking with a frowning face at all the job postings in the window.

JON

Oh come on. None of these fit me.

Then Jon freezes, stiff like a board, when he notices the "Unleash Your Inner Wildcat: Try Out For Mascot!" sign. He looks away

JON (CONT'D)

You said you'd be busy. Meanwhile I'll just thinking how one of your cheerleading buddies is -

His face scrunches. He looks back at the sign and becomes fixated on the Wildcat Willie picture. He snaps back to reality looking at the ground.

JON (CONT'D)

No, me the mascot? Ya, right! As if I'd ever-.

(beat, cheering up)

Though it would solve the money issue. And that would put me on the bus. And best of all - I can't dislike if I am the mascot- Hey! This could work!

(beat, seriously)

You know what? I'm going to do it. I'm going to beat my dislike for my Carrie!

Jon looks at the picture one more think. His put his hand on his chin in a thinking pose.

JON (CONT'D)
 Or, maybe I'll be scarred for the
 rest of my life.
 (beat)
 Man I hope it's not the latter.
 Nah, worst case I fail to put on
 the suit!

INT. JWU ACTIVITIES BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

He walks into the activities building, unaware he has caught the watchful eye of the cheerleading coach, DAVE, sitting in the other room.

JON
 Hey, who do I talk to about getting
 a tryout to become-

He freezes for a second before choking out the words.

JON (CONT'D)
 Wildcat Willie?

DAVE
 So, what makes you want to become
 Wildcat Willie?

He turns his head to find the voice behind him, then turns around cautiously, silently.

JON
 Who are you?

DAVE
 The cheerleading coach and mascot
 handler. I make sure the
 cheerleaders are getting the
 routines done right, and that the
 mascot is living up to our proud
 wildcat name. And you, potential
 mascot, can call me Dave.

Jon rolls his eyes, but heads over to sit with Dave.

DAVE (CONT'D)
 Hey, what was that for?

JON
 Oh, nothing. Just- Look I need some
 type of extracurricular activity.
 (MORE)

JON (CONT'D)

Then there's that I want to be close to my girlfriend, who will be a cheerleader on the squad -

DAVE

Nope.

JON

Huh?

Dave looks like he's already counted Jon out and lost all interest in him, playing with his fingers, and in a pose making him look like a psychologist.

DAVE

That's not a good enough reason there, son. I want someone who's...unique. What's special about you. WHY should you be Willie? Now as I said: What makes you want to join my cheerleading squad as Wildcat Willie? Well? I'll give you a hint. It was probably the thing you started to say but didn't.

The confusion on Jon's face clearly shows.

JON

What, that I don't like them?

DAVE

(Chuckles)

Now that is what I'm talking about. This is what I'm looking for in a mascot - strength. Not physical strength, but the strength it takes to dive into something new. Uncharted territories not knowing what could happen. A kid becoming his least favorite thing, all to be close to his love? Perfect. Tell me about that.

JON

Okay...

(beat)

Weird. Anyway I kind of have a dislike of mascots from a moment as a kid. But she loves them. Call me crazy but I think I need to beat that dislike for her and me.

(MORE)

JON (CONT'D)

Maybe I can stop people from teasing me about it if I'm able to say I've been a mascot. I hate seeing people trying be what they're not. But it can't hurt to see if anything changes if I'm in control of the costume. After all it's just a fake animal suit.

DAVE

Well, why not be something different for a change? I mean, who would want to be just another guy? It's so boring. Don't you want to be something more extraordinary? The campus king? Live a double life?

JON

No, not really. I'll just stick to beating my dislike, not changing my entire being, thanks.

DAVE

OK. Well if you can at least act the part for short periods of time, then tryouts are tomorrow morning. See you there...potential mascot.

Jon turns to walk out, but has to take a deep breath first.

JON

Potential- O geez, what have I gotten myself into? The things I do for love.

Jon exits the building, with Dave still watching him closely the whole time.

DAVE

Poor kid. He doesn't even see his inner wildcat begging to be unleashed into the world.

INT. JWU RECREATION CENTER - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Jon is looking at himself in a mirror, ready to change, and feels he needs to give himself an impromptu pep talk.

JON

Okay Jon. Easy does it. This time you are in the costume. You control what Willie does.

Struggling, Jon tries to pick up the costume but steps back after he touches it.

JON (CONT'D)

Oh, why couldn't I be a fit for any other jobs? I still can't believe this pays higher than some of them.

Jon closes his eyes and picks up the costume for the 1st time, and turns to the mirror, eyes still closed tight.

JON (CONT'D)

Oh, man. This feel so weird. And I haven't even looked or put it on yet. I'm holding a mascot costume. My body knows it but my mind-

Opens his eyes. They widen in disbelief.

JON (CONT'D)

(shocked)

I can't believe I'm actually going to wear this...thing. Take it easy Jon. Remember it's all for Carrie.

JWU WORKER

Willie hopeful number 4, get on deck!

JON

O geez. Nope. I can't do this. Shoulda known I'd fail. Guess it's no different being than seeing after all. Can't even get into the costume. Sorry, Carrie but this isn't happening.

DAVE

Damn. So much for the easy way...

Jon turns to Dave, who has just entered.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Come on, let's get this thing on you. You shouldn't have tried alone anyway. That's what a handler like me is for. Among other things.

He starts helping Jon suit, who is so shocked he actually goes with it, his eyes shut the whole time, but towards the end:

JON

Come on Jon, you got this. Your fine. If Carrie saw me right now doing this - She'd flip that I even tried. But Dave, I am not doing this. Take this stuff back off, now. I'm just going to fail anyway! I can always find another job out the University.

Jon is now fully in the costume, and Dave looks pleasantly surprised.

DAVE

Not a chance kid. You're going out there, ready or not. And this Carrie of yours is going to get more than a man with money issues.

Dave forces the mascot helmet on Jon who, now fully in the bulky suit, tries and fails to resist. Dave keeps shoving him to the gym.

JON

Okay! Okay! Fine, I'll try it. But I doing it my way.

DAVE

I don't want it any other way but yours.

Jon finally heads out onto the gym floor floor.

INT. JWU RECREATION CENTER - GYM - CONTINUOUS

DAVE

Ladies, here's the one I told you about. I've saved either the best, or worst, for last.

JON

What? What's that supposed to mean?

DAVE

(whispers)

Sh. You're a mascot now. You can't talk. Rule number one.

Jon looks up at all the cheerleaders, and sees they are now all, including Carrie, staring right at him. With no choice, Jon performs a dance and some moves he's known for a while, but never shown to Carrie.

For his final move he want to show off big time, so he does two cartwheels into by three backwards somersaults all ending with him leaping off the last somersault into the air doing a 360 before landing in a pose as if to strike, facing the bench.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Well guys, is this the one, or do one of the other 3 get the position?

The cheerleaders discuss quickly, and then whisper to Dave.

DAVE (CONT'D)

All right Wildcat Willie! Welcome to the team!

A SHOT IN THE COSTUME SHOWS JON IS DUMBFOUNDED HE WAS SELECTED.

CUT TO:

INT. JWU RECREATION CENTER – LOCKER ROOM – DAY

Jon waits in the locker room with the for Dave to help him out of the costume. He can only get off the head.

DAVE

Hey. That was actually a really good performance for a newbie. Looks like I was right about you.

JON

Right about me? My back hairs were standing up for every second of that! I was almost actually scared!

DAVE

Good. It was day one. You should be scared. But not of Willie himself. Because you are Willie now. Underneath that supposedly unbreakable shell I see passion. And the cheerleaders, including your girlfriend, seemed to agree.

JON

Great, but if I'm that good of a dancer then maybe I should just be a male cheerleader.

(MORE)

JON (CONT'D)

I didn't know they had both genders as cheerleaders here so I think I'm just gonna -

DAVE

One problem there. Though it does have two male students on it, I filled the cheerleading team up yesterday. Plus the cheerleaders aren't paid- if that truly is your ultimate goal. Besides you'd still have to be on the bus with Willie and you said you'd be less scared controlling the suit right? You'll like this better anyway. You get to be more unique.

Jon looks at the Wildcat Willie head, then back to Dave.

JON

Well, I still don't much like mascots. And I still can't believe I just did that. Wait a sec! When I show Carrie that was just me she's gonna be so -

DAVE

Whoa! Hold on there Mr. Wildcat! Being Willie means you have got to swear to secrecy about your identity! That is, you won't tell anyone it's you in the suit, lest you'll be stripped of the mascot honor and not be allowed to travel with your girlfriend anymore. If I ever find out you have told anyone, even her, kiss your job goodbye!

JON

(demanding)

What? You mean Carrie won't know it's me if I do this? And no one else can either?

DAVE

(calming)

Carrie can not know for the 4 years you're here at the university while you are the mascot. But on graduation day when you finally get your big reveal, boy won't she be amazed to see how you were living on the edge of glory.

JON

(annoyed)

Oh, great. Another Lady Gaga fan. Well, it looks like I'm going masquerading as a man with a reason. My charade is the event of the season. See? I can quote songs too.

DAVE

Oh, a Kansas fan, huh? Well mister music, just don't forget the next line of that same song goes if I claim to be a wise man it surely means that I don't know!

Jon looks shocked that Dave pulled that out on him.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Look Jon, it's been done before. That is, people in the past succeeded in keeping the secret from their friends.

JON

But Carrie and I are -

(stops, sighs)

Fine, so let me get this straight. I can't reveal myself, otherwise I can't be the mascot and go everywhere with Carrie anymore? Oh man.

(beat)

Well, it's like I've told Carrie before. We'll make this work. I said I'd be there and now I can be. So then, how does this work being mascot deal work exactly then, Coach?

DAVE

Dave. You need a lot of help so we'll start Mascot 1-0-1 right now. It will be up to you Willie to discover-

JON

Stop calling me Willie! And I know I've still got a long way to go, but Carrie will be so disappointed if I fail.

DAVE

(Chuckles)

No. Because you are Willie now. And your an interesting mascot operator. By the way this saying it's only for his girlfriend act isn't fooling me. I swear I'm going to get you to enjoy this.

JON

That will be impossible. What glory does a mascot have?

DAVE

Well if it's done right, more than you would think.

Jon takes sets the mascot helmet down on the bench, carefully pondering what he just did, while Dave unzips the costume's back to take it off.

FADE TO:

INT. JWU RECREATION CENTER – OLD GYM

It's a bit later, and Dave has Jon dancing to music, successfully performing the set of moves Dave has taught him.

DAVE

(impressed)

Wow. You really are a natural dancer. You got that down so fast I think we can put that suit back on already...

JON

Man I don't like this smaller gym. Anyway, thanks I'm - Wait what? I just got out of that thing and you want to put it back on?

DAVE

Well, surely you didn't think the whole thing would be shirts? Time to put on your second skin!

JON

Uh - Kinda creepy there Dave.

DAVE

O come on, wuss. I know you dislike mascots, but I maintain it's only because you don't know what they really are. So just stop being such a bab, and grow up.

JON

(angry)

Baby? You know what? I was right! This was a mistake, and not for the reasons I thought! I don't know what Carrie will think but I plan to tell her that was just me out there and avoid this whole disaster. She'll get that be a literally transforming my entire being wasn't the change I was going for.

Jon looks mad, and is silent as he storms toward the doors.

DAVE

How disappointing. And I had such high hopes for you too. But I guess Carrie can have a boyfriend with low expectations for his life if she wants to.

He freezes. Still facing the door, he clearly is impacted by the comment. There's silence at Dave starts packing up the gear.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Speaking of babies, I guess...

He turns to watch Dave, who isn't even trying to hide a devilish face, ready to trick Jon back in. Jon notices and holds his face as is.

DAVE (CONT'D)

I'll let the runner up know I have to settle for second best. Then again, they become the new best actually. And the old best becomes...

(beat)

Well I don't know...or care.

A long pause. That same expression still cemented on each others faces.

JON

(sighs)

Why are you doing this? Why do you want me to be the mascot so bad?

He stops packing up and turns, trying his best to give a real smile.

DAVE

Because you deserve it. Call it destiny that you came to me. So the really the question of why is back to you, now. Why do you want to be Willie and again don't say Carrie, or your dislike for that matter. I don't think you even know yourself. You need to be someone, right? I think that could have been the wildcat mascot, but oh well.

Jon hardens his gaze as he stares Dave down.

JON

(determined)

Fine. Come help me into the suit. I'll give it a little longer but I'm telling you: If things go wrong I'm out. I'm sick of being teased by everyone, apparently including you. But I'm not letting down Carrie. And someday I'll look back at this and laugh.

Now Dave has a giant grin on.

DAVE

Ha! We'll see. Now, let's go get suited up Willie!

Jon finally loses his face as is changes to once of annoyance.

JON

(groans)

Dave, you've gotta - Aw, whatever. But I've been thinking. Isn't a mascot supposed to do stunts, not dance? I don't think I can do routines with the cheerleaders in the costume.

DAVE

You certainly can if you try hard enough. And you will, or I'll find someone who does.

JON

Okay, okay. Geez, you sure like to rub it in I'm not perfect.

DAVE

Well, you're a weird kid.

Jon walks out with an unsure expression on his face, with Dave right behind.

INT. MCCORMICK AND SCHMICKS RESTERAUNT - NIGHT

It's the first time Jon has taken Carrie out since their arrival on campus. The resteraunt is nice, so both are in casual dress rather than their normal clothes.

CARRIE

So...today was the day to help select the new mascot. 2 of them weren't that great. But the first and the last one...WOW. And that last one just, well, outdid the other. I've never seen a more awesome move. He really put the wild in Wildcat and-Oh sorry! I forgot you don't much like mascots.

JON

It's okay.

CARRIE

Jon, not to doubt you but how can you afford this place?

JON

Well, I got a part time job working for the university.

CARRIE

Doing what?

JON

Oh general cleaning and office work. Nothing big. Don't worry, they'll still be time for you. I'll work it while you're busy with practices and games, you know?

(MORE)

JON (CONT'D)

Actually, they tried to convince me to try out to be the mascot, but I of course said hell no.

CARRIE

Jon, I'm sure you'd be okay with this mascot. He seems really cool and nice.

JON

Based on one sighting you've had.

CARRIE

But Jon, you have to come to some of the games.

JON

I know, I know. I just it's gotten worse. Let's just say I finally realized this dislike is actually a fear. It's called masklophobia.

CARRIE

What? Are you trying to tell me you're scared of a man in a mask now? Come on Jon! You have to get over that dislike now if it's going to escalate into a fear!

JON

Maybe, Carrie, maybe. But it could take years. Truth is I don't want to be anywhere near the mascot.

CARRIE

Jon, come on. Do it for me. You once said you'd do anything for me, right? Remember that? I know you can suck it up and attend some of these games. Work won't make you avoid them all.

JON

Well, ya. Ya I'm sure I can be at some of those games...

CARRIE

Perfect. Maybe you could even take it a step further and let me introduce you to Willie after the next practice?

JON

NO! I mean...I can't go that far. That could take years. You're just gonna have to settle with the fact I have a developing masklophobia for now.

(beat)

I'm - I'm sorry I overreacted there.

Jon looks at Carrie for any indication he overdid it.

CARRIE

No, no you're right. Baby steps. You being at the games will be enough.

JON

A few games. And I'll make you deal. I'll meet Willie by graduation.

CARRIE

You will? Okay, but only because I understand how hard this must be for you. Anyway this was great but I have night class. So here.

She gives him a quick kiss and leaves.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

(shouting back)

Love ya.

JON

Love you too!

Once She's gone, he drops his smile.

FADE OUT

INT. JWU RECREATION CENTER - LOCKER ROOMS - DAY

All the cheerleaders are stretching under the watchful eyes of Dave.

DAVE

All right gals! It's our third cheerleading practice, and the first of the year with the new Willie, so get into positions! I'll come out with Willie in a minute.

In the other locker room, Jon's fiddling around with the suit again.

JON

Man, I still haven't gotten over how freaky this thing is. I still can only imagine what will happen during our first game or family weekend for that matter.

DAVE

This again?

Dave comes over to help Jon finish getting into the suit.

JON

Coach Dave! Well, what do you think? I still don't know if I can even keep this up.

DAVE

Please, just Dave. Anyway you'll be fine. I see a mascot in you, I swear. Just trust me. Besides, I had an arguably harder time as the cougar back in high school. And don't even get me started on what I faced as a mascot hired for birthday parties. Thankfully this job came along.

JON

Wait. What happened in high school? And as a mascot for hire?

DAVE

I had it worse than you- That's what. It was before mascots were fun. People treated mascots like freaks, myself included. And back then they didn't have me keep my identity a secret, so I was a freak to them inside and out. Same for the job really. Oh, but don't worry about that here. Johnson and Wales has Wildcat pride, and that includes?

JON

Um...Pride in their mascot?

Dave puts the head on Jon to complete the costume.

DAVE

Bingo. I've personally seen to that. You're like the living icon of J-WU. Now get out there because whether or not Carrie knows it, her boyfriend's about to give her the dance of her life...or try to anyway.

(Laughs)

Just then, the head cheerleader MARGARET comes in.

MARGARET

Coach Dave! There you are!

DAVE

Ah, Willie, meet the head cheerleader, Marge.

MARGARET

That's Margaret! Come on Willie, We can't start without you!

She leaves in a huff.

JON

(shocked)

What...What did she just say?

DAVE

Basically, that they need you Willie. And that includes Carrie.

JON

(sighs)

Fine. And the plot thickens.

He's again running out to the floor, with Dave right behind.

DAVE

(To himself)

Well, I don't want to pat my own back too early, but good job Dave!

INT. JWU RECREATION CENTER - GYM - MOMENTS LATER

A pop beat starts. Suddenly everyone is dancing to the music, with Willie in a formation. Jon's caught off guard, missing steps at first, but eventually locks in with the grove and he manages to keep up. As it completes, Carrie turns to him.

CARRIE

Great job Willie!

She looks around.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Hm. Thought not.

DAVE

All right! Great job all. Great job Willie. I'll see you in 2 days. Don't forget the first basketball game's in two weeks and we need to get our routine down. Then there's family weekend in three weeks.

CARRIE

Yes! Family weekend! Oh, Jon and I are gonna have so much fun. After the parade of course. See, Jon's my B.F. In fact, he's actually a little scared of you, Willie.
(laughs)

She walks away.

JON IS GRIMACING IN THE COSTUME.

MARK

Oh, come on, please? Pretty please with a cherry on top. And sprinkles! Just one date?

Jon whirls around, turning to see Mark there, talking to Margaret, down on his knees.

JON (V.O.)

Mark and Margaret? Oh man, I'm gonna need to rescue him from this wreck.

MARGARET

Just how dumb are you?

MARK

I'm not! I finished with a three point o average!

MARGARET

Three point o? Mine was a three point five, with activities and cheerleading to boot.

She shoves him off and walks away. Jon bolts into the locker room to get the suit off.

FADE TO:

INT. JWU RECREATION CENTER – GYM – MOMENTS LATER

When he comes out, now out of the costume, he decides to give Margaret a shot.

JON

Hey. Margaret is it? Look, I-

MARGARET

Save it. I've already gotten 10 other offers to dinner.

JON

But have you considered any? Because I can vouch for one.

MARGARET

Oh?

JON

Ya. In fact that guy you were just with a few minutes ago? I know him and he's a good guy. Couldn't you maybe give him a chance?

MARGARET

You must be his wing man.

JON

Well, I was. But I did tell him this is college now, and that smart people rule.

MARGARET

Alright, alright. I'll think about it. Maybe we'll chat next time I see him. Maybe.

CARRIE

Jon! Where were you?

JON

And that's my cue. Thanks Marge.

MARGARET

Margaret!

Jon has walked away, while suppressing a quiet giggle.

CARRIE

There you are Jon! What took you so long, and why were you with the head cheerleader?

JON

Well I saw you talking to Wildcat Willie. I thought you might try to introduce him to me.

CARRIE

No way I would...Wait did you want that?

JON

O no! No! I ran. Then I decided to put a good word for Mark with princess joy over there. Think you could too?

CARRIE

Sure, but don't change the subject. I wouldn't do that to you. And if I did it would only be when you're truly ready. You could take a small step though and join the family weekend parade with the cheerleaders and I. It's in 3 weeks. I know you're a good dancer so-

Jon's unwillingly throws his hands out in a stopping motion.

JON

NO! Too close to Willie. Let's just meet up after the parade.

CARRIE

I...guess. I mean Willie be busy then, after all.

JON

(Surprised)
Wait, what?

CARRIE

Ya, you'll get lucky. Willie has to join all the family events he can, but we can just do the leftover ones or just eat. Man, this Wildcat Willie mascot has you more out of whack than Big Red did. Anyway, I guess you'll have a chance to fix that at my first game.

(MORE)

CARRIE (CONT'D)

It's not like Willie's going to go bother you in the stands.

JON

Oh, Big Red. His image will forever be burned into my brain, right next to Goofy's. And I'm sure here at this college that coach of yours will send him up into the stands.

CARRIE

Um...okay, weird. I'll check with him to see if he goes into the stands first. But enough about this. What's tonight's plan any-
...O hey, speaking of Willie there he is right now!

With a look more confused than scared, Jon spins around.

JON

(confused)
Huh?

CARRIE

(laughs)
Ha! Gotcha! That is for being late to pick me up twice!

JON

Nice. Real original. OK let's just go eat figure out where we'll eat tonight...

CARRIE

Let's just hit that Fire and Ice place. It's cheaper an I could go for a buffet.

JON

Okay I'll meet you there. I just have to go grab Mark. You see if you can get princess over there to agree to a double date.

FADE INTO:

INT. FIRE AND ICE RESTERAUNT — NIGHT

Carrie joins Jon and Mark at a table.

CARRIE
 Hey Mark! What's up? Is Marge
 coming?

MARGARET (O.S.)
 Margaret!

They all turn. Margaret is all dressed up in the latest
 fashion, no doubt to impress.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
 I told you all, I hate that
 shortened version of my name!

MARK
 Oh, I'm sorry Marge-eret.

JON
 (sarcastically)
 Nice save Mark.

MARK
 Jon, Carrie, thanks for helping me
 out by making this a double date.
 You did both after all make this
 happen!

CARRIE
 It's okay. But first sign of
 interference with ours and you're
 outta here, capisce?

MARK
 Capris.

JON
 Mark!

MARGARET
 So, this is the masklophobic lover
 boy, Carrie? He seemed pretty weird
 when he came to convince me to give
 Mark a chance.

JON
 Hey!

MARGARET
 Sorry but, I calls 'em as I sees
 'em. And I see a scaredy cat. Well,
 actually more a of a scaredy
 wildcat.
 (laughs)

JON

Excuse me? Just who do you think you are?

MARK

Sorry. Behave, these are my friends. Just don't bring up the "M" word.

MARGARET

Did you just tell me to behave? I swear I'll - Whatever. Okay, fine, I'll try to be nicer and won't talk about Willie the wildcat mascot.

They sit down as a waiter brings some more menus.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

So what's your major anyway Jon?

JON

Actually, it's sports entertainment. I hear you're the same as Mark, Criminal Justice?

MARGARET

Yep. And you are lucky.

She turns and smiles at Carrie.

CARRIE

Me? How so?

MARGARET

Well, for starters, you got a good boyfriend...probably. Even if he is a masklophobic wienie.

JON

Hey, come on!

CARRIE/MARK

(Laughing)

JON

O come on Carrie! Mark! I thought we agreed no mascot talk!

(beat)

He grins, suddenly recalling a way to even the playing field.

JON (CONT'D)

O well, I guess I'll just have to let that lizard from the petting zoo get you next time, Carrie.

Carrie stops laughing.

MARGARET

Lizards? THAT'S your fear?

CARRIE

Hey, at least I'm not scared of fake lizards - mascots included.

She eyes Jon and smiles.

JON

(Murmured)

Well, I'd love to test that theory.

JON/MARK/MARGARET

(laughing)

CARRIE

(sly)

Hey, you'll never know. If I meet a lizard mascot, you won't be there!
(Quickly laughs)

Jon looks at Carrie, seriously.

JON

I...I can find out from someone, like Marge.

MARGARET

For the last time it's Mar-gar-et! I'm no Simpson! Do you see blue hair? Or yellow skin for that matter?

JON

Well, your personality is kinda-

MARK

(interrupting)

Jon! Can we please eat now?

JON

No one's stopping ya. Then again I do have a wildcat sized belly, so ya let's hit that buffet!

MARGARET

Well, what are we waiting for,
Christmas? The sooner we get up
there the sooner we can start to
chow down!

They head for the buffet.

JON

Well that went...decently.

CARRIE

It sure did. Oh, look Willie's
back.

JON

(Laughs)

Ya, and there's a lizard on your
shoulder there.

CARRIE

(screams)

WHERE?!

JON

O geez, not really! Not really! But
got ya!

CARRIE

Phobia aggravator.

JON

Look who's talking...

FADE INTO THE
NEXT SCENE

INT. JWU RECREATION CENTER – LOCKER ROOM – NIGHT

Jon is noticeably more scared than at practice. He just
stands there. He's already in the suit other than the head,
but he hears the students in the stands. Dave paces around
behind him, but with that same devilish smile.

DAVE

Ah, Wildcat Willie's premier to the
students. J-WU's first game of the
year.

JON

Oh man...

DAVE

The moment they've all been waiting for. As soon as you put on that head it's official: Wildcat Willie for the next 4 years.

JON

O geez. Come on, Coach! Do you really have to torment me like this? I've made great progress but you're not exactly helping me here...

DAVE

(Laughs)

O really Jon. If you can start on a path to change your dislike, what's little stage fright? Then again, maybe I'm wrong and you really can't do this. You know, you don't have to. You could just forget it all.

JON

(Annoyed)

This again? First of all, Coach David-

DAVE

That's Dave.

JON

Whatever coach. Anyway, I never said I totally conquered this dislike I have. I still can't believe I'm actually willingly placing myself in the very same position that's been the focus of my dislike for, well, my entire life, really!

DAVE

Well, either quit or suck it up and get your game on! Just let yourself go because Willie needs to be out there, pronto!

JON

Oh brother. Just think of Carrie, Jon. It's all for Carrie.

DAVE

That's the spirit. Remember why you're doing this - for her and for a necessary evil called money. Although I still think it's as much for you as it is for her, Jon. Imagine it. You're actually doing something great! Not to mention changing your mind about mascots...

JON

Nice try, Dave.
(sighs)

Jon puts on the mascot helmet.

JON (CONT'D)

Okay, okay. Something great.

He runs out of the locker room, repeating that.

JON (CONT'D)

Something great. Something great.
Something great. Something great.

JWU ANNOUNCER

Fellow Johnson and Wales wildcats, we are now proud to introduce you to your mascot for the next 4 years. Here he comes -
Wildcat...Willie!

INT. JWU RECREATION CENTER - MAIN GYM - CONTINUOUS

Jon runs to the gym's center fully suited up. All of the students start going crazy, standing up and cheering. Jon looks around at all the faces, shocked that Willie could cause this much of a commotion. Music starts, and the cheerleaders are dancing. Jon tries to keep up, but he's lagging behind them.

STUDENTS

(screaming, cheering,
applauding)

As the routine completes, Jon eyes Carrie, who gives him a thumbs up. Suddenly, Dave arrives with a basketball.

DAVE

(whispering)
Hope ya like hoops and trampolines.
Oh and try your best to actually
make a shot, too.

He backs away as the cheerleaders clear a straight line to the basket, which Jon realizes now has a trampoline under it.

IN THE SUIT JON GOES BUG-EYED.

Jon runs up and jumps on the trampoline too hard, overshooting the basket. Repeating it, he crashes into the rim, oddly enough managing to get the ball through, and falling on his butt.

The students laugh and cheer.

IN THE SUIT, JON LOOKS SURPRISED AT THE REACTION.

FADE TO:

INT. JWU RECREATION CENTER – GYM CHEERLEADER BENCHES –
MOMENTS LATER

As the 2nd half of the game begins, Carrie is looking for Jon, who is on his way to the locker room, thinking he's done now that he's shown up. Dave intercepts him.

DAVE

And just where do you think you're going in such a hurry, Willie?

JON

(Quietly)

I'm going to get out of this costume. It's not like I'm gonna stay in this thing the whole game!
(laughs)

Dave looks straight at him seriously then smiles yet again.

JON (CONT'D)

Oh, oh no. No, no, no. That was not in the job description!

DAVE

It's implied, Jon. Do you still not get what a mascot is? He's not just some dressed up dancer, he's an icon – the icon. The WILDCAT. You're here now to get school spirit going. We clearly still need work – I need to teach you the using the Quad-E method.

JON

Huh?

DAVE

Where was your big entrance? Where was the emotion? Well, at least you were energetic, but you need more exaggeration. Seriously, really exaggerate every movement in that suit. It's so bulky. But I'm getting off track. When you are in that suit you have GOT to forget about Jon! You might not like it but you are Willie. You represent unity for all wildcats of all 4 campuses - Teachers, students, faculty, me, you. Get it now? Quick lesson.

He points at himself and smiles.

DAVE (CONT'D)

A wildcat. Just one.

Now he gestures to the students.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Wildcats. With an S. Led by the symbol of the University.

Points directly at Jon, and smiles even bigger, forcing is his finger forward with each word.

DAVE (CONT'D)

The wildcat. Mascot. Symbol. Icon.

Smile abruptly fades and the hand goes down.

DAVE (CONT'D)

(Suddenly serious)

Call it what you will. You can't run from the fact you're going to be my Wildcat Willie mascot now. I'm going to give your life meaning if it kills me. Face the students, the rest of your wildcats out there because that, believe it or not Jon, is what being a mascot means.

Dave flips Jon around and shoves Jon back in the direction of the team benches. He sits down next to Carrie.

CARRIE

Great job Willie!

She looks again for Jon in the stands, and frowns.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
Darn. Shoula known. You'll see
Willie. I'll introduce you to that
supposedly masklophobic boyfriend
of mine somehow...

IN THE COSTUME REVEALS JON HAS ON A SHOCKED LOOK.

JWU ANNOUNCER
And Johnson and Wales makes another
basket, taking the lead.

Jon looks at Dave, then to Carrie, then at the crowd. He
stands up, and with Carrie and Dave watching, slowly strikes
a pose as if to roar.

STUDENTS
(Very loud)
GO WILDCATS!

INSIDE THE COSTUME, JON LOOKS SATISFIED.

FADE TO:

EXT. JWU QUAD - DAY

It's the next day, and Jon and Carrie are just walking
around.

CARRIE
So...I didn't see you last night.

JON
You know I couldn't go Carrie.
Wildcat Willie was making his
premier! That's the worst night!

CARRIE
I guess I thought you would be okay
in the stands, like in high school.

JON
Well, I figured...it's a wildcat,
Carrie. Not some human in a human
suit. You understand?

CARRIE

Well, no. So, you really formed a fear of mascots? Darn it. Still, at least we'll hang out on Saturday!

JON

Well, you see Carrie I still have this weird feeling you'll still try to introduce Willie to me.

CARRIE

(caught off guard)

Well...So what if I still want you two to meet? It would mean so much to me if you just gave it a chance to conquer that fear, HEAD ON. That is the way to do it, you know.

JON

But by the standards you just set, that means you can't just spring it on me. I have to make the first move.

CARRIE

Okay. Fine I won't pull anything...at least not until I think you're ready so not at family weekend, or are you ditching that too?

Jon puts on a determined look.

JON

No. I'll be there. I swear.

DAVE

Well, well, well. What do we have here?

Jon whirls around, surprised to see Dave heading their way.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Two little lovebirds taking a stroll through the...Quad? Yes. The quad, with nice trees and grass. I guess it could be called a park. I mean there are other real parks around, but -

JON

(shocked)

What are you doing here?

CARRIE

Hey! How do you know my coach?

JON

Well-

DAVE

Oh, we met last night. He tried to get into the game but as we were talking they said they were revealing Willie and he just bolted off. A little masklophobic there kid?

JON

(Calming down)

Ya, you- you could say that.

CARRIE

You actually tried to come last night? Oh, I knew you would try to conquer this fear at some point, but not this soon! So what was all that a minute ago? Don't be ashamed you failed, at least it turns out you are trying!

Jon turns to glare at Dave, then he looks back to Carrie.

JON

I mean, Carrie, I was kind of hoping to catch the 1st half, before the Willie reveal. But I was too late.

(Awkward force)

Righty there David?

DAVE

Oh ya, total chicken.

He smiles, and Jon glares back.

JON

(annoyed)

Your enjoying this, aren't you?

DAVE

Mm...a little. But I'm sure family weekend will be...fun.

JON

(as if in pain)

Huh?

CARRIE

What? What? You've been putting on a really weird face ever since Coach Dave came over here.

JON

(under breath)

You have no idea how weird the face I wear is.

CARRIE

Wait, what was that?

JON

Just let me just talk to your coach alone a moment, okay?

Jon quickly pulls Dave to the side.

JON (CONT'D)

Listen, I need to spend some time with Carrie at family weekend. Think of it as sealing the deal that it's not me in the costume.

DAVE

Like she'd believe it's you anyway. I think that shipped sailed with that story I just told.

CARRIE

(yards away)

GUYS?

JON

Come on. Please?

DAVE

Hm. Make you a deal. Complete the activities, and you Jon can have Willie's spot in the finals, but then the suit goes right back on for the closing event.

JON

Perfect!

CARRIE

Hey! What's going on over there?

DAVE

Your boyfriend here has the nerves to demand I keep Willie away from you two at family weekend.

JON
(to Dave)
What?

CARRIE
Jon? Go asy on Dave, tiger.

JON
Tiger? That's a new one...

DAVE
Ya. I'm telling him I don't control Willie.

He looks at Jon.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Willie will do what he pleases as long as he's secretive and meets his obligations to show up at events and uphold school spirit. Then again, he may get tired towards the end of the event.

Jon is looking both relieved and annoyed now.

JON
(softly)
O brother. I hate how you're always using that cryptic, suggestive tone. Why not just straight up say I can take off the costume for the last few events?

CARRIE
So what is this all about anyway Jon?

Carrie walks closer.

JON
Let's just say I want Willie to be the least of our issues on Saturday. So I'll see you there once he's gone, I guess.

CARRIE
Awesome! Oh, it'll be so fun!

JON
Just remember it's not until Willie leaves.

CARRIE
Whatever. Bye Dave. Come on Jon.

DAVE
Oh, Carrie! I'll see you and Willie
at our first away game tomorrow
night!

JON/CARRIE
Already?

DAVE
Yep. We're heading to Rhode Island
college. Home of the Anchormen -
and I don't mean news, either.
(laughs)

Dave notices both now have identical faces indicating the
joke was a total flop.

DAVE (CONT'D)
O come on, it wasn;t that bad...

Carrie and Jon start walking away.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVE AND BUSTERS IN PROVIDENCE PLACE MALL - NIGHT

Jon and Carrie are once more on a double date with Mark and
Margaret. It's clear she is finally taking to him. All 4 are
playing games as they chat.

MARK
I don't know man, she's actually
pretty nice, albeit annoying.

MARGARET
HEY!

JON
(Laughing hard)
Oh Mark, you crack me up.

MARK
How are things with you two?

JON
Well -

CARRIE
I'll tell you how things are - He's
gonna be at family weekend!

MARGARET

So what?

CARRIE

So apparently Jon struck a deal with Coach Dave. He agreed once Willie gets tired, Jon could take his spot in the events as Willie's substitute!

JON/MARK

Huh?

CARRIE

Ya, I mean that must be the case isn't it? It's not like Willie's just going to forfeit without a back up. Don't worry Jon. You'll be fine if he's not actually there.

JON

I guess you're right...

MARGARET

Not as right as I am. Just man up and face your fear already. I made Mark face his.

CARRIE

Mark has a fear?

MARK/MARGARET

(Together)

Had.

JON

(Chuckling)

CARRIE

What's so funny, Jon?

MARK

Don't you dare. So help me I will -

MARGARET

Mark has tonsurephobia.

JON

(Bursts out laughing)

Man, I knew that haircut was too good to be your own doing!

MARK

Hey!

CARRIE
I wouldn't talk like that over
there, Mr. Masklophobiac.

JON
Oh, come on I mean a haircut? Who's
scared of that?

MARK
Let me remind you Jon, about Barber
Bob.

CARRIE
Barber Bob?

JON
(reminiscing)
Barber Bob. Oh that brings back
memories.

MARGARET
Basically girl, he cut off too much
hair one time because someone
confused him about the cut length.

MARK
No, o no. Don't turn this on me.
Bob there couldn't tell a pinch
from an inch.

JON
And yet, I got a perfect haircut
from him every time?

MARK
Whatever Jon. Let's see you meet
Willie, huh? Then come talk to me
about my-

He makes air quotes.

MARK (CONT'D)
-silly fear.

A BUZZER goes off as Jon finally hits the 1000 ticket jackpot
of the Spin-N-Win.

ALL 4
OH!

JON
Yes! Yes!

MARK

O man! Good thing you aren't afraid of tickets!

MARGARET

Ya, if anything your afraid of not having enough...

CARRIE

Naw, he has enough for now. What do you say Jon? Sit and eat here on the midway?

JON

Oh ya!

MARK

Uh oh. Jon?

Jon flips around and eyes the Rhode Island College's Anchorman mascot heading towards them. His mouth drops.

JON

Not the midway! Not the midway!
It's too close to the party room!
So let's just sit in the booths on the other side. In the corner.

MARGARET

All right, all right calm down there. Carrie?

CARRIE

Well, it'll be more private anyway. So why not?

As they move for the back, Jon looks back at the mascot.

JON

Stupid Anchorman.

CARRIE

I'm sorry, but did you just call that mascot...by name?

JON

Well, yes. But I mean one has to know their enemy, don't they?

CARRIE

True. I mean the Anchorman may be the one I'm actually scared of. He may even be a challenge in his fight with Willie tomorrow...

JON

WHAT?

CARRIE

I'm just saying...I heard in the past the Anchorman has been a really good mascot and - Oh sorry.

JON

Oh, wow. Now I'm even more scared of mascots...Wait, Willie has to fight him?

CARRIE

It's a fake fight. Besides - Hey wait- Why do you care?

JON

Oh no reason just...I mean I don't want the student hurt or anything. Well, I'm gonna sneak around the Anchorman to get to the bathroom, then I'll meet you guys at the table.

CARRIE/MARK/MARGARET

(Not in unison)

Okay.

Jon starts for the rest room, but once the other 3 are out of view, his face changes once more to one of sheer determination, as he approaches the Anchorman. The three RIC STUDENTS are all gathered there.

MALE RIC STUDENT #1

Hey, man what's up? Come to join the celebration?

MALE RIC STUDENT #2

Hold up a moment, there. This dude was just fraternizing with Johnson and Wales students. He might be one.

JON

Well, nothing gets by you Sherlock.

BOTH

Hey!

JON

Look I just wanted to-
(stops short)

Jon looks to the ground. All at once he changes his face to one of pride.

FEMALE URI STUDENT #1

Well?

JON

Well, I was gonna offer peace, but now that I think about it and I've seen your attitude, I know you actually need to be whooped by my mascot Wildcat Willie in a fight.

He turns to stare down the Anchorman.

JON (CONT'D)

And he'll take you down.

All three RIC students start randomly trying to trash talk Jon as he walks away. Jon looks back at the Anchorman facing him, in some disbelief at what he just did.

FADE INTO NEXT
SCENE SLOWLY

EXT. RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE GYM - NIGHT

It is the first away game, and the cheerleaders, including Carrie, are disembarking the bus, followed by Jon, fully suited up.

DAVE

All right girls, everyone inside!
You too, Willie!

All the cheerleaders follow Dave toward the gym. Jon realizes he left his water inside the bus, so gives one finger up. He doesn't notice the RIC students hiding in the bushes.

MALE RIC STUDENT #1

There he is. That wildcat mascot is gonna pay for what that student said last night.

MALE RIC STUDENT #2

Boy is he in for a surprise. This is our best idea yet! Okay, you know the deal!

MALE RIC STUDENT # 1
 Right - steal the mascot, that way
 he can't beat the anchorman
 tonight.

FEMALE RIC STUDENT #1
 I don't know about this. Isn't it
 kind of kidnapping?

MALE RIC STUDENT #2
 So? It's for the Anchormen. Go.

All 3 move toward the bus and take up positions. Jon exits.

MALE RIC STUDENT #1
 NOW!

JON
 What the heck? Hey, let go of me!

FEMALE RIC STUDENT #1
 Uh-oh. Looks like we got a mascot
 that doesn't follow the number one
 rule: Silence is golden. In fact by
 with that voice you have to be that
 same brat we met last night! We
 wouldn't have it any other way!

Jon is struggling to break free.

JON
 I'm pretty sure that rule doesn't
 apply to kidnapping...And it's not
 like you know my name or anything.

FEMALE RIC STUDENT #1
 No matter. You're ours now - and
 you'll spill it all in time.

DAVE
 Hey!

They all freeze, eyeing Dave as he comes out of the shadows.

DAVE (CONT'D)
 You'd better leave my mascot alone
 or so help me -

MALE RIC STUDENT #2
 RUN!

They all run back into the bushes.

JON
Thanks Dave. I -

DAVE
One sec.
(shouting)
I mean GONE!

MALE RIC STUDENT #2
Oh geez, lets get outta here!

They all run down an alley into the darkness.

DAVE
Ah, another classic. Albeit an unfortunate one. Kidnapping the mascot. Except I expected that when you weren't right behind me. Well, those students won't be stealing Willie tonight.

JON
A mascot classic? Being kidnapped? Are you kidding me?

DAVE
Not at all. You'd be surprised what some people will do. In fact if I'm right, we have to run...Like right now.

JON
Run? Why?

DAVE
Because this is probably one of those cases where there's a more elaborate backup plan that usually involves a getaway vehicle and a 2nd attempt at -

Tires screech as a van comes flying around the corner, with the students driving straight at them.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Sometimes it sucks to be right.

JON
Oh, you have got to be joking!

Jon and Dave rush for the door.

MALE RIC STUDENT #1
One shot at redemption!

That student reaches out and tries to grab the costume but only tugs the mascot helmet out of place. Jon and Dave make it to the door.

INT. RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Jon's adjusting the mascot helmet back to it's normal position in a fury, shaken by the recent minutes.

JON

Stupid nuts trying to kidnap me!
I'm just a college kid! And the
funny thing is it's all because I
said a few things yesterday!

DAVE

Hey! You're not just a student.
You're the mascot, and it's time
you started acting like one! Now
listen. RIC holds secrecy like us,
so I've convinced the coach to
allow a brief one on one with the
Anchorman mascot...Since your new
to this and all.

JON

Wait, you did WHAT? I can't show my
face to the anchorman! Last night I
told him Willie called him out! If
he sees we're one and the same...

DAVE

Too bad...You're about to have your
first mascot fight with him anyway,
so mind as well learn a thing or
two first. You didn't really expect
this to be just dancing and
appearances, did you? No, there
will be times where you'll face
legitimate competitions, like the
one that's coming up in a few
weeks.

JON

Wait mascot competitions? Like that
Capitol One Bowl Mascot Challenge?

DAVE

I wish. That's only for division
one football schools, and we don't
meet either requirement.

JON
I thought we had football.

DAVE
Ya, but that is intramural. Anyway,
it looks like I have to go.

Dave looks to the doorway. Jon turns too and sees the Anchorman mascot standing there, just waiting.

DAVE (CONT'D)
You know the whole secrecy deal. So
I can't be here for this. Good luck
and listen closely.

Dave starts walking out of the locker room to the gym.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Go easy on him - He's not all the
way there yet.

In agreement, the mascot nods before approaching Jon. Dave leaves.

JON
Wha - Dave?! Oh man.

BEN
Oh man is right. You a mascot? This
is priceless! And to think I was
teasing you about that very same
thing a few months ago.

JON
(dumbfounded)
BEN?!

Ben takes off the Anchorman's mascot helmet, revealing a face all too eager to meet Jon again.

BEN
Yep. Odd. I always knew you were
hiding something, but I'da never
pegged it to be a desire to try
being a mascot. Nice cover with the
dislike.

JON
No! I mean - It's no cover. Wait,
what about you?

BEN
I just decided it might be fun to
try being a mascot as well.
(MORE)

BEN (CONT'D)

So over the summer I worked as an operator at various parties for some cash. I liked it so much I decided I wanted to continue doing it. In your case though, it seems sometimes you just don't know what you want and it takes something big to make that last push. What was your big moment? The last time we talked you were cringing as Big Red performed. And now, based on what you said to me last night, it look like you may have grown a set of balls, even if they are small.

JON

Hey! Besides I'm only doing this for Carrie. Nothing huge anyway.

BEN

Jon, I know it was years ago, but I know you enough that if this was just for her you wouldn't be here right now. Like with Mark, you take a seemingly impossible project and do it. You've been at it for about a month. Why did you stay a mascot? What made you keep doing it? That's rhetorical. It's that you're starting to like it.

JON

No!

BEN

Oh really? Just pay attention in our mascot fight tonight. Oh, that just sounds so right - You and me in a mascot fight. I'll go easy like your coach asked, but I plan to win. Well?

JON

Huh? Wait what about the advice?

BEN

That was the advice. Think. And I only have one more question for you to ponder. When you are in the mascot costume you can't be yourself. Same goes for me. So who are you? If you're a wildcat go wild. Now get your head on.

(MORE)

BEN (CONT'D)
Can't have a half-human half-wildcat out there.

JON
Wait! Why are you being so nice?

Ben looks to Jon, this time with a serious expression.

BEN
Don't get the wrong idea there, Jon. I told you some day you'd need my help. And trust me, you need it bad. But now that you've been helped, well...

Ben put the anchorman head back on.

JON
(beat)
Fine. You, my coach, and yes, even Carrie want a wildcat?

Jon pauses again to take a deep breath, considering everything he has learned about mascots up to this point, and places his mascot helmet back on as well.

JON (CONT'D)
You'll get one.

BEN
(laughs)
Well, look who decided to come to the party - Wildcat Willie. I hear he's gonna try to give me a beat down. Fat chance...

Ben runs out to the center of the floor, as the RIC STUDENTS cheer for their icon.

JON
(to himself)
Why does everyone but me think it's possible for me to be a great mascot? Even Ben thinks so.

He follows Ben onto the floor. Suddenly a student handler for the Anchorman brings out a prop shocking Jon - a balloon made to look like an anchor, which he hoists high above his head as if he is super strong. Jon is so mesmerized he doesn't notice Dave is back.

DAVE
Bite him.

JON
(shocked)
What?!

DAVE
Bite him. It will be fake of course, but if you are gonna be a Wildcat act the part. Do something. Claw him maybe. Act it out, Willie. Geez! Did he teach you nothing?

JON
Well, okay fine.

Jon walks over to Ben and taps him on the shoulder to get his attention. As Ben turns, his big introduction interrupted, Jon strikes a battle pose, as if to say he means business. Then he pretends to scratch the arms holding the anchor, which Ben drops, and Jon's first mascot fight is suddenly underway.

RIC STUDENTS
Ooh...

Playing along, Ben pretends one of his arm is hurt, but surprises Jon, socking him with the other. Somehow into it now, Jon decides to act out Willie biting the Anchorman's shoulder, in hopes that may actually do something in a fake fight.

RIC STUDENTS (CONT'D)
OH..! Anchorman! Anchorman!
Anchorman!

Jon looks at the students in the crowd.

JON
So much for easy.

BEN
Well, well, well. Looks like we may have a fight after all. But here's the part where you take a fall.

Still getting the feel for this, Jon doesn't know what to do when Ben picks up the balloon anchor and drops it on Willie's head.

BEN (CONT'D)
It's like improv. You're knocked out now.

Unable to see another option, Jon decides to fall to the floor.

BEN (CONT'D)

That's long enough. You're a mascot
so the big blows last two seconds.

JON

Huh? Oh.

Desperate to do something, Jon tries to trip the Anchorman
instead of getting up.

BEN

Easy, Jon! Let me act it out, don't
actually do it!

Ben does go down, but surprises Jon by landing on him!

BEN (CONT'D)

Ha! Fooled ya!

The RIC students cheer as the Anchorman pounds his hand to
the ground like the final count in wrestling, claiming his
victory.

JON

Oh, man.

Ben stands back up and turns to straight look down at Jon.

BEN

Don't be like that. Bonus lesson:
Win or lose, a mascot is always
happy. They can't be anything but.
Although, I guess in this case I'm
happier...

IN THE COSTUME, AS HE IS WATCHING BEN WALK OFF, JON IS SHOWN
TO BE REFLECTING ON BEN'S FINAL WORDS - TRYING HIS BEST TO
UNDERSTAND.

Jon gets up and walks over to the guest benches.

CARRIE

Oh, don't worry Willie! You'll get
him next time!

MARGARET

He'd better.

CARRIE

Margaret!

MARGARET

Hey, all I'm saying is if we want him to win the college of the year event coming up, he'll need to be better than that. Especially since the Anchorman is in it.

CARRIE

Ignore her, Willie. You'll do just fine! Besides, that competition is dance based.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE THE WILDCAT RECREATION CENTER - DAY

It's family weekend and Jon is leading the parade in the costume, the cheerleaders close behind.

CARRIE

Willie, I need you to meet that masklophobic boyfriend of mine after this. He thinks he's not ready but I have the sinking feeling the longer he waits the harder it will be to get over his fear of you.

IN THE COSTUME, JON'S ROLLING HIS EYES, RECALLING WHEN CARRIE SAID SHE'D ONLY INTRODUCE WILLIE TO HIM WHEN HE WAS READY.

The parade completes.

JWU ANNOUNCER

Willie to the sports fields!

CARRIE

Well, that's my cue to find Jon!

She leaves.

JON

And my cue to do my duty as a mascot. For now, anyway.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELDS OUTSIDE THE WILDCAT RECREATION CENTER - DAY

First he tries to play volleyball, but the bulky so is proving to be hard to maneuver.

After several misses Jon grabs the mascot head, a hand on either side, like he's going to scream from all the frustration. When he finishes, he heads to the potato sack races.

JWU PRESIDENT

As mascot, Willie will not need a partner. As we all just saw, that bulky body is handicap enough.

Everyone laughs. Jon starts hoping before everyone else, but they all catch up. Despite that, the families are surprised when Jon actually does good, placing 3rd and qualifying for the next round. He runs right over to the soccer field, his last game in qualifiers. He gets in goal, shoving a student out of the way.

SOCCER STUDENT

OK! Geez, Willie. Fine you be goalie...

He turns back after a few seconds with a gin just like Dave's and kicks a ball right at Jon, who manages to catch it. All at once everyone is firing balls at him. Another shot hits his belly, and the girl looks sorry, but laughs.

IN THE SUIT, JON IS ACTUALLY SMILING.

Jon starts to chase the girl around, hands raised as if he's after her.

JWU STUDENT

(laughing)

No, Willie! Ah! Look out,
it's...It's an ANGRY WILDCAT
ATTACK!

He chases the families around for a while, until he tires out. His eyes catch the clock, and he sees Dave wataching eagle-eyed as usual. Jon runs up to him, nearly exhausted.

JON

(breathing heavily)

Geez, this...this suit...it's hotter than I thought it'd be. Coach just- Just tell me where my water is. I am so hot in this thing! This so called helmet fan of yours does nothing but blow hot air around and it stinks too.

DAVE

So change out quickly then. And don't worry it gets cleaned in between trimesters. They're all out of food, but I left a burger and a dog in the locker room with some fries. After all, your time with Carrie's limited. I'm sure there's even enough for events and a soda. And once more it's just Dave.

JON

Wait, no time?

DAVE

Yep. You've still got to be at the closing event tonight, remember? So enjoy yourself while you can and be glad I'm letting you do that much!

He growls as he goes running off to the locker rooms.

CUT TO:

EXT. WILDCAT RECREATION CENTER LAWN — DAY

Jon comes running out of the recreation center - costume off.

JON

All right. Time to find Carrie.

He searches for her high and low, finally seeing her off in the distance under in the lunch tent. He speeds over.

JON (CONT'D)

Carrie, hey! Oh boy, Soggy leftovers. My favorite. To think 2 hours ago this passed as classy. But I'm actually not hungry.

CARRIE

Jon! What the heck you missed all the events!

JON

(All excited)

Not true! Willie just left probably because he was super tired. And as we planned, I'm subbing in the finals for those two events!

CARRIE

What? Really?

JON

Ya! And the spots I got from him are our favorites - soccer and 2 person sack racing!

CARRIE

Wait. How can he know what my best events are?

JON

I told him. Duh.

He freezes, and she looks at him.

JON (CONT'D)

O geez no! Not Willie, your coach! I ran into him again and told him. He must have passed it on to Willie. Please, as if I could even get within a few feet of Willie. Anyway sorry to rush you but the finals star now and I have plans tonight so time's limited.

He drags Carrie to the soccer field, running the whole time.

CUT TO:

EXT. WILDCAT RECREATION CENTER SOCCER FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

Jon picks up where he left off dominating goal keeping, though without the mascot costume on. But every time he is hit he grimaces.

JON

(soft voice)

Who would have thought Willie's bulky costume would be so useful in goal keeping? Like a pad. Not to mention people may have gone easier on him a bit. Even if I was dying of heat.

SMASH CUT TO:

In the partner potato sack race Carrie falls flat, taking down Jon with her.

JON (CONT'D)

Oh, that was nuts! So much fun!

CARRIE

And to think, you almost missed it!

JON

No. I wouldn't miss it, Carrie. And you know I wouldn't miss your games too if I wasn't so terrified of Willie.

CARRIE

Well, you're gonna have to get over your fear someday.

JON

And I will in a few years. Like I said - senior year.

CARRIE

(slightly disappointed)

Oh, do I really have to wait for Senior year?

JON

Yes, but it's a promise. One-hundred and ten percent.

He smiles. Carrie does too. They lock eyes and, still flat on the ground, give each other a quick kiss

JON (CONT'D)

Hey I have an idea. Let's check out that Waterfire thing tonight! Gondola ride, on me!

CARRIE

(Excited now)

No way! Oh, I am so in. Oh wait - The final event. I have to be there. And you said you had plans.

Jon looks down at the ground, his forehead scrunched. He is clearly showing he is deep in thought, trying to decide his next move. Holding the face he turns to look bad at Carrie, serious and straight into her eyes.

JON

Let's ditch. I'm sure I can make the guy understand I needed time with you and I bet you won't be missed out of all those cheerleaders. Come on. Please?

Jon changes to a fake pouty face, much like a puppy or a baby would have. Carrie can't help but smile big.

CARRIE
Oh you...fine. Let's be a bad boy
and girl and ditch.

JON
Sweet!

They get up and walk towards the bus stop.

FADE TO:

EXT. WATERFIRE BASIN - NIGHT

They are once more hanging out in Providence, this time at Waterfire, with Jon and Carrie looking all around in amazement at the crowd and the building, all beautifully lit up, some windows like with colors for ambience.

CARRIE
Wow. This is so beautiful.

JON
It is. So, ready to those fires up
close?

CARRIE
Pardon me? You were serious about
that? I thought you were bluffing!
They have got to be really
expensive.

JON
Ya, well have a little faith in me,
cause those gondola rides there? I
really bought us one. My most
recent payday came in. Now hurry,
we ship off in two minutes.

They head over to the gondola boarding area, still smiling
and laughing like nothing has been wrong all year.

FADE OUT

EXT. DORM - NIGHT

As they arrive back at the dorm, they stop short when Dave
emerges from the bushes. They looked concerned.

CARRIE
Dave? Look I'm sorry I -

DAVE

(happy)

It's fine. You are forgiven. But I do have ask you boyfriend here about it, so just go ahead inside.

CARRIE

Um...Okay.

Once she's inside, Dave's smile instantly turns to a frown.

DAVE

(angry)

You on the other hand are not forgiven! Where were you? Letting you take a break from the family weekend events didn't excuse you from your entire appearance at the closing ceremony! What's worse you brought Carrie down with you!

JON

(surprised)

So what? I missed one event. I had the hang out with my girlfriend or I'll lose her. That wouldn't make me a very happy camper.

DAVE

I don't care.

JON

Look, Dave. I did this for Carrie, and only her. The fact you haven't got that yet surprises me. Take a hint!

DAVE

Are you even listening to yourself speak Jon? You're acting like a 5 year old!

JON

If I'm 5, you're a newborn.

(beat)

Look Willie's fun and all but -
(long pause)

DAVE

(very satisfied)

Well, well, well...

JON

(in disbelief)

Wait what? Did I just say that? I'm having fun as Willie?

Dave shrugs.

DAVE

Perhaps you're right. And since your intent is only her I should fire you. A mascot by definition is a character to bring luck. That is what you're for. So I can't have the mascot missing events. Do you realize people actually have to request a mascot appearance for certain special events? The first request, for an Alumni event, is coming up! People who may have not yet seen the new Willie suit in real life! But I guess you didn't grasp this from our first two talks, and you won't listen so I'm afraid I'm going to have to strip you of the mascot title.

JON

NO! You can't do that! Not when I just started having fun doing -

Dave just looks at him now, and puts on the biggest grin Jon has seen on him yet.

JON (CONT'D)

I can't believe what I'm saying. I'm actually having fun as Willie. This really is as much for me as it is for Carrie.

DAVE

Ha! I told you it would be. But anyway, that's how I maintain the integrity of the mascot. After all, I am the person held directly responsible for what the mascot does, since I'm the only one who can actually chat with you about it. So for the last time: Are you able to continue doing it?

JON

(beat, seriously)

Yes. I mean I don't know.

(MORE)

JON (CONT'D)

But as crazy as this is, I can't just stop being Willie now. He's-
(long beat)
-a part of me, like you wanted. I just wish I could let her know what I'm doing and why I really have to do this.

DAVE

(confused)

Excuse me? Don't go back to using a fake fear as an excuse! Not have to. Want to.

JON

You know what? This is just too much right now. I'm still processing the whole change from dislike to- Well I'll say somewhat like. That's a good medium.

He walks toward the dorm entrance. Dave looks around to make sure it's clear.

DAVE

(shouting after Jon)

We'll see, Jon. I've said it once and I'll say it again. You're on the edge of glory. You don't have it all just yet.

He walks away as well, in the other direction. Jon has a blank expression on.

FADE OUT AS THEY
WALK OFF SCREEN

INT. WILDCAT RECREATION CENTER – GYMNASIUM

It's the second home basketball game.

CARRIE

Wow. Look at him go. Big Red would have never been this passionate about striking up all the students! Just look at him Margaret!

Jon is in the costume, up in the stands, getting everyone to stand up and chant:

STUDENTS

Wild-cats! Wild-cats!
Wild-cats! Wild-cats!

MARGARET

What's he up to now?

Jon goes over to where the pep band is playing, and takes the conducting stick from the conductor, flailing it about. The students laugh while the conductor just watches, somewhat annoyed.

CARRIE

He's certainly stepped up his spirit since the last game.

MARGARET

Ya, I've noticed. Even at practice, he's really getting into it.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. WILDCAT RECREATION CENTER - GYMNASIUM

FLASHBACK: It's the practice before the second home game, and Dave is addressing the whole cheer squad. Jon is there with them, already in costume.

DAVE

Alright everyone. Now I know it was our first two games, but those last games were lame. Now, I'm not one to point fingers, so let's just say we need more. From all of you.

He stares right at Willie, causing all the squad's heads to turn.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Hey! Ya, Willie's important, but some people do want to see the routine go down right, and unless you're in top form, there is no show! Willie, squad...It's time to intensify things! So just remember this: We can be an extraordinary cheerleading squad if we just all work together. Right?!

CHEERLEADERS

(together)

Right!

It's a much harder practice, in which Jon is playing a more important supporting role. He is dancing more than the 1st practice, and he is making bigger movements. Then -

DAVE

Pyramid!

CARRIE

Alright! The pyramid! Oh, I've been waiting to do this!

MARGARET

Right, then. Get ready Willie. We promise not to drop ya. Actually just joking. I chose to put Carrie over here up on top. You're the center of the pyramid. Third row up of three in the middle. I'll be in the middle of the 5 person bottom line. Hey! You 6 form lines 2 and 4. You other girls decide between the remaining 6 spots and who will be the rest of the formation.

IN THE COSTUME JON'S EYES ARE BIG.

He runs over to Dave.

JON

YOU-

(Quiets down)

You actually expect me to do this?!

DAVE

Yep.

CHEERLEADER #1

Willie, come on. Let's go!

Jon meanders back over as they start to form the pyramid, and Jon manages to get into position in the center, looking up at Carrie from below.

DAVE

All right girls and guys collapse. You're dismissed. First though Willie, try to condition yourself with a handstand, then a split.

Jon holds the handstand for a few seconds, but fails to do the split. He ends up falling forward instead, flat onto his face.

DAVE (CONT'D)
 Um...Maybe just stick to the
 handstand part for now. We'll add
 your trout move instead.

FADE BACK TO THE
 2ND GAME

INT. WILDCAT RECREATION CENTER — DAY

CARRIE
 Oh man.

MARGARET
 What?

CARRIE
 I just realized- Jon will never
 come now! Not if he finds out
 Willie goes up into the stands!

MARGARET
 Relax. The 4th game will be mascot
 free. Jon will be there.

CARRIE
 Ah, you're right. He's supposed to
 show whenever Willie's not there.

MARGARET
 Weird.

CARRIE
 Ya.

STUDENTS
 (shouting)
 Go Wildcats! Go Wildcats! Go
 Wildcats! Go Wildcats!

The students are getting louder, following a now very lively Willie. Therefore the other team misses the 2nd free throw, causing Johnson and Wales to take their 1st lead of the game, while Willie celebrates by high-fiving the students. Dave walks over.

DAVE
 Like I said - lucky.

JON
 Ok, let's see how far I can push
 this now. Think mascot. I don't
 want to chair slide yet.

(MORE)

JON (CONT'D)

I'm light enough to crowd surf. No,
let's try the old steal a girl
antic you mentioned first.

DAVE

Here comes a real mascot. Even if
he is still in learning the art...

Jon walks over and cautiously takes a girls hand.

GIRL

(playfully)

Oh, Willie! You really are wild.

IN THE SUIT, JON IS DISGUSTED BY THE REMARK.

BOYFRIEND

Hey!

Jon looks at the person next to her.

BOYFRIEND (CONT'D)

Give her back! She's not some toy.
Go fall on you butt dunking a
basketball again or something...

He takes back the girl and Jon walks away back to Dave.

JON

Okay, terrible start. Wait a
minute!

Jon catches Mark in the stands Margaret stretch before the
next cheer.

JON (CONT'D)

Oh that'd be too perfect. I've been
wanting to do something like this
to Mark for so long, and now I
finally can...

He walks over to Margaret and takes her in his arm, parading
her around. Mark looks on in shock as they go by him a few
times, on purpose.

MARK

Hey! Where are you going Margaret?

MARGARET

(ignoring Mark)

Well you certainly know quality,
Mr. Wildcat.

JON (V.O.)
Keep dreaming, sister.

Jon picks Margaret up for a second and plops he down right on Mark's lap, as the crowd laughs. As he towers over them, Maragret loses interest as she looks into Mark's eyes. He looks back and...they take their first kiss.

MARK
Oh man. Oh, man I wish Jon was here to see that. I really wish Jon was here to see that. MY FIRST KISS!

The crowd claps as they kiss again, and they start laughing as Jon copies every move, including the shock when they realize he has been doing so. He heads of toward Carrie, pausing to making a final comment to Dave.

JON
(laughs)
Man, who'da thought a mascot would have some many opportunities. I can't believe how far I've come these past weeks! And no one even has to know!

He looks toward Carrie, now nearby.

MARK
Not even you.

Dave smiles as Jon goes and stands right behind Carrie. In his shadow, she turns her head a to talk to him.

CARRIE
Nice thing you did there, Willie.
Don't know how you knew they were really boyfriend and - WHOA!

Jon heaves Carrie up above him and holds her high for all to see as if she's some trophy, getting big laughs out of the crowd.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
Willie! Ah!
(laughing hard)
Okay, that settles it. No more fooling myself. Jon has to meet you and sooner rather than later!

A SHOT INSIDE THE COSTUME SHOWS JON'S FACE CHANGE TO PANIC.

FADE OUT

INT. WILDCAT RECREATION CENTER – LOCKER ROOM HALLWAY

Jon is waiting for Dave to help him get out of the costume. He realizes something, staring at himself in a mirror, as he pulls off the mascot helmet.

JON

(happy)

Man, me a mascot. Whod'a thought.

DAVE

Well, well, well. Someone's finally getting it.

Dave comes over to help Jon out of the suit.

JON

Dave-

DAVE

(Overjoyed)

Hold it! Hold everything. You finally called me Dave. And without an attitude! Yes! Oh, I may break through to you yet.

(beat)

In fact, it looks like I'm already doing that, based on what you just said. Mr. Spirit himself, finally saying what he really thinks! Although to answer that question..I thought.

JON

I guess it really is just like you said. I feel free out there. I can be somebody else and just let loose! Just think, I used to hate people who pretended to be something they weren't, and now I'm as guilty as they are. No offense.

DAVE

Hey! No one's guilty here! Just remember: When people ask what makes you so special you have an answer now.

(Sighs, then seriously)

Look, I realize I may have been hard on you before, but I just have such high expectations for Willie.

(MORE)

DAVE (CONT'D)

But the students, and even faculty, seem to think your one of the best, if not the best, mascot we've had to date. And some of the professors have been here a long time.

JON

(proud)

Geez. That's the biggest shock of my life. Even more than - Well, the shock that gave me a dislike of mascots in the first place. I still can't quite believe I'm actually the mascot.

DAVE

Believe it. Once you do, you'll be even better. Being Willie is in itself a relationship. But do you see what happened? I did say you would change. And you were helpless to fight it. If I may be so bold I think you were nothing without Willie.

Silence for a while.

JON

(pumped up)

Wow. Know what? You're right! As I've said, I am Willie now! Nothing can stop me!

DAVE

Not quite what I meant...

JON

Whatever. What matters is I can grow as Willie, and when Carrie finally finds out senior year, she'll never doubt me again!

DAVE

Alright Jon, a little too much there. But anyway-

CARRIE

Hey Coach Dave!

JON

Shoot!

DAVE

Head on NOW!

Jon tries, but in the hurry panics.

JON

Uh- Locker room!

Jon runs into the of locker room fast, to avoid being seen.

CARRIE

Oh, Coach Dave! There you are! Look I just wanted to thank you for setting things up so that Jon actually showed up at family weekend. He hasn't been himself lately.

DAVE

Ya, well you know. Even mascots need a break sometimes.

Dave's smile fades, catching what he just said.

CARRIE

Hm. Didn't think about that. Anyway about that performance tonight. I thought I was maybe a little bit too-

Carrie's phone rings.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Oh, hold on I have to answer this. Jon?

JON (V.O.)

Carrie! Look, I'll be there in a few minutes. What do you say we forget Dave and Busters tonight? It's Capital Grille time. We can see a film next week after the away game, and I promise we'll hit Aspire the game after that.

CARRIE

Oh Jon! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! I'll see you soon.

JON (V.O.)

Love you.

CARRIE

I love you too.

She hangs up and screams.

INT. WILDCAT CENTER - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jon looks both happy and relieved as he overhears Carrie's overjoyed scream, and listens in on her reaction.

CARRIE (O.S.)

Jon is taking me too the Capital Grille! Man, I'm so glad Jon took that job with the school!

DAVE (O.S.)

Well, hurry along! We'll chat at the next practice about what can be improved.

CARRIE (O.S.)

Alright. Thanks Coach Dave!

Jon leans against the wall to relax.

FADE OUT

INT. CAPITAL GRILLE - NIGHT

That night it's just the two of them at the Capital Grille, in casual dress, at a candlelit table. The mood is happy while piano music plays.

CARRIE

It truly is romantic here.

JON

I can only imagine what Aspire is like. No mascot suits allowed in this place.

CARRIE

What?

JON

It's just a joke Carrie. Just a joke.

CARRIE

Ya, well, you didn't seem too scared to make it.

JON

I'm just saying the only other wildcat in here tonight is sitting right across from me, and I happen to love her.

He gives her an endearing smile.

CARRIE

Aw, Jon. Still, it's creepy you'd even think to make that joke.

JON

Well, just because I fear Wildcat Willie doesn't mean I have to fear every other wildcat, real or student.

(Teasing Carrie)

That would mean that, you kind of being a Wildcat, I'd have to be freaked out by you - and Mark.

CARRIE

(laughs)

Well, we can't have that now, can we?

JON

(Also laughing)

Nope.

They laugh a little more, but Jon's smile fades away.

JON (CONT'D)

In all seriousness, Carrie. What if I just can't be at any of the games?

CARRIE

(Caught Off Guard)

What? Come on Jon, you're kidding.

JON

No, it's just I -

CARRIE

Jon, I know you. Maybe I've only known you for a little over a year, but that's been enough to know somehow you can get it through your head there is something you need to do - Meet Willie. You have no idea how nice and kind and special he is. He's great-

She catches herself showing an adoration for Willie.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Know what? I'll be honest. He's everything you could be if you just tried. He even dances like you. It's kind of creepy.

JON

(playing)

Well, I guess I can never dance again now. Thanks a lot Willie for stealing one of my passions.

(laughs)

Carrie isn't laughing. In fact she's staring. Jon puts his serious face back on.

JON (CONT'D)

I— I just can't, Carrie. At least not yet. Like I said, I'll meet whoever was Willie upon his graduation. He will be our year, I know that much.

CARRIE

(sarcastically)

My hero.

(beat, questioning)

You've been so different ever since we started college, and that was just over 2 months ago! What is the deal, Jon?

JON

Deal? What deal? I don't know what you could possibly be talking about. Then again, college is gonna change us all. I mean just look at my buddy Mark. He's changed for the better, hasn't he?

CARRIE

Well, you got me there, but now you have kind of an "I'm too cool" attitude! Like that Ben guy. You know that's why I wouldn't date him. Just don't let it get in the way of attending the game in 3 days. Remember they'll be a lack of one Wildcat Willie, so you can be there there this time, I'm sure!

JON

(beat)

Right.

CARRIE
 (Sighs)
 Well, it's a start.

JON
 No. This is a start.

Jon moves closer to Carrie, who freezes up as Jon starts to kiss her again. She can't fight it, and they finally have their first long, meaningful kiss.

VERY SLOWLY,
 FADE INTO NEXT
 SCENE

INT. A RIVAL SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM

It is now the forth basketball game, and the 2nd of which is actually away, so Carrie does not see Jon. Dave is talking to the other coach. Jon is in the costume right by him, with Larry the Lizard, the other teams mascot, on his other side.

DAVE
 Anyway, I think he's ready. How about Larry here?

OTHER COACH
 I donno. What do you think Larry? Want a to try a little fight? Just for show, of course.

Larry nods yes.

DAVE
 All right remember: Those mascot suits might protect you from a accidental blow or two, but no super hard punches. A raised hand, or rather paw, signifies you want to stop, and most of all, no pulling head shots! We don't want you hurt, nor your identities revealed.

OTHER COACH
 Don't worry. After all we were thinking...DANCE BATTLE! I don't think Larry's ready for a fake scuffle yet.

DAVE
 Fake scuffle? I think you mean mascot battle.

(MORE)

DAVE (CONT'D)

In any case Willie does have that big mascot dance competition for the state's College Of The Year title coming up. All right fine, but have Larry ready to fake fight next time we meet.

OTHER COACH

Got it.

The two head out as music starts. They starts dancing and quickly fall into the act. Both coaches are smiling

OTHER COACH (CONT'D)

Well, well, well. Looks like you really do have a bit of a hotshot this year after all. If we were in that competition I'd be a little scared.

DAVE

(laughs)

Oh, if you only knew. Including what it took to get him this far.

OTHER COACH

Well, based on what you told me it was harder for you than me. Think he's really ready? And when are you going to tell him the truth anyway?

Dave instantly loses his smile, and turns to glare at him. The other coach clearly gets the picture, but Dave says what's on his mind anyat.

DAVE

(seriously)

Never. I too keep secrecy.

The other coach is puzzled now, but looks back to the floor where Willie and Larry start throwing air punches and kicks in rhythm, unknowingly starting to fake a fight. Out of rhythm, Jon decides to try a stab move with his right hand as if he had a sword. First Larry acts like he dodged it, but the second time he falls to the ground, nearly taking Willie with him. But Jon recalls his first fight and jumps back. The JWU Wildcat team cheers while the lizard's team students enjoy a good laugh as Larry stands back up. Meanwhile Jon, heads over to his team's bench.

CHEERLEADERS/ATTENDING JWU
STUDENTS/BASKET BALL TEAM

(chanting)

Willie! Willie! Willie! Willie!

MARGARET

(Walking by)

Way to go Willie. You had enough spirit for two teams and one micro-sized Godzilla.

CARRIE

MARGE! Ugh. Willie, I think it's only fair to tell you I hate lizards. And I guess I have to tell Jon he was right about me being scared of lizard mascots too. Still, great job out there. Way to slay Mini-Godzilla.

IN THE COSTUME JON IS SHOWN SUPPRESSING A LAUGH.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Man, you really are amazing. I'm telling you if didn't already have Jon-

She looks at him, he returns the gaze.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

(lovingly)

-I think I'd want you.

(normal)

O geez - Sorry. Sorry.

Jon pats her back.

IN THE COSTUME, JON HAS ON A VERY WORRIED FACE.

Time passes. With minutes left Jon gets up to rally a final cheer, allowing JWU to score the 2 baskets needed to seal the victory.

CUT TO:

INT. A RIVAL SCHOOL - HALLWAY

After the performance, Carrie talks to 2 CHEERLEADERS and Margaret, with Jon in the costume right there as well.

CHEERLEADER #1

So he wasn't here again, I see.

CARRIE

Well, he is masklophobic now. Plus this was two hours away from the campus. Too long for him.

CHEERLEADER #2

90 minutes. 100 tops. You'd think he could overcome his fear for his girlfriend. And I know he could have hitched a ride with his friend Mark. He came to see Margaret.

MARGARET

Speaking of which I've actually kind of been falling for that weirdo.

CARRIE

Well, I guess it's really harder to do than we probably think. I mean I remember just how much he disliked our patriot mascot, Big Red. And that was a mascot of a human...

MARGARET

Still, a fear of mascots is ridiculous.

CHEERLEADER #1

I don't know actually. Is it all that different from a fear of clowns?

CARRIE

Apparently so. Jon doesn't exactly love clowns, but he's never been scared of them.

Dave comes over.

DAVE

What's the topic, girls?

CHEERLEADER # 2

Carrie's B. F. Terrified of our friend Willie here.

INSIDE THE SUIT THERE'S AN ANNOYED LOOK ON JON'S FACE.

CHEERLEADER # 1

Miss perfect over here thinks it's ridiculous. What do you think, Dave?

DAVE

I think you never know. Give him a few years and he will get over it. Just wait, you'll see. Well, what about you, Willie? You're the focus of all this, so what do you think?

Jon shrugs an unspoken "I don't know." through the costume.

CHEERLEADER #1

Well I don't think it odd at all, miss arachnophobia. Honestly, why be scared of something so easily squashed? Mascots tend to be larger than you and more intimidating in that suit, so it makes perfect sense that Carrie's boyfriend would be scared!

CARRIE

I never thought really. How he feels about a total stranger doing what to him is an even stranger thing. Truth is, I even know why. He told me a Goofy mascot surprised him as a little kid when he snuck up behind him and give him a bop on the head. Needless to say he hated it.

IN THE COSTUME, JON IS STARTING TO SMILE.

CHEERLEADER #2

Well then, let's see if he shows at the next home game. Willie has to go to his second mascot appearance that night, and during the game too, so if you let Jon know, he has to be there!

Dave looks to Jon.

ANOTHER SHOT INSIDE THE COSTUME SHOWS JON WITH A TROUBLED LOOK.

CHEERLEADER #1

Oh, he'll be here.

JON'S NOW CRINGING IN THE COSTUME, KNOWING HE CAN'T.

CHEERLEADER #2

Wanna bet?

CHEERLEADER #1

Don't need to. What's he gonna do, go to the event Willie's at? No, he'll be here, as long as Carrie reminds him there's no mascot at this game.

CARRIE

I already have.

They turn to see Willie with his hand on his head, shaking it.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Willie, what's wrong?

He stops for a second, and then gives a thumbs up.

MARGARET

Awkward. Anyway, it looks like Mark will finally have someone to sit with in the stands rather than hound me.

MARK

HEY!

They all flip around to see Mark approaching.

MARK (CONT'D)

Easy does it girl, or I may cancel our reservations at...Flemmings! And don't think I forgot about your little parade with Willie here either.

Jon covers his face with a hand and shakes his head again, while the cheerleaders laugh.

MARGARET

Oh, so that's why you shook your head before. Must've seen him coming. Don't worry I won't let him

-

(stops short)

Wait you didn't!

MARK

I did. And this time it's just us two. No Jon, no Carrie. Sorry there, Carrie. Hope I didn't one-up Jon.

CARRIE

No, it's OK. Jon was planning on a movie night anyway. We didn't want something too expensive after the Capital Grille last night. He's taking me to Aspire after the mascot free game anyway. So food court probably. If the bus gets us home on time, that is. Right Willie?

MARGARET

Watch out there Carrie, or Jon might think you're dating his worst fear. A double whammy.

CARRIE

No! Don't get me wrong, Willie's awesome. Like, really awesome...

(Slower)

Really awesome-

(rushed)

But I mean, I already have Jon and I love him. Jon. I love Jon.

She leaves, and so do all the other cheerleaders, with confused looks on their faces, while Jon stands there contemplating what to do about Carrie's emerging interest in the mascot.

FADE OUT

INT. WILDCAT CENTER - LOCKER ROOM

Back home, Jon is speedily changing out of the mascot costume with Dave.

JON

Come on Dave! Carrie's waiting! We can't have a close call like last time!

DAVE

Okay, calm down.

Dave removes the last piece of the costume.

DAVE (CONT'D)
There. All -

Jon bolts to meet Carrie in the lobby.

DAVE (CONT'D)
- done.

INT. WILDCAT RECREATION CENTER LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

JON
Carrie, hey!

CARRIE
Jon! Hey I- Oh, geez I didn't wanna say anything, but that's the third time you've come up to me reeking of sweat.

JON
Sorry I was in the gym working out again. That's how I can show up a split second after Willie leaves, since the exercise rooms are right here.

CARRIE
You were serious about working out?

JON
Ya. Haven't you maybe noticed a little increase in my strength?

CARRIE
Well, No.

JON
Well, then come here.

Carrie comes over and is caught off guard as Jon hoists her high above him like before when he was in the suit, and she poses into one of the moves the cheerleaders did. He puts her down.

CARRIE
Wow! You are stronger! And how'd you learn one of our moves?

JON
Marge. But, you know, there is another thing I've been doing too.

CARRIE

What?

JON

Well, I wanted to make things up for me missing two games, so I came up with this awesome move I want you to try to use in your performances.

She smiles.

CARRIE

OK, go for it.

Jon has Carrie launch him into the air. He does a combination of flips before adding spins, cartwheels, and a whole bunch of other twists on the ground. He finishes with a second launch into something like a corkscrew.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

No way can I do that!

JON

Yes, you can. If I can be -

He stops himself before spilling his secret.

JON (CONT'D)

If I can, you can.

CARRIE

All right, I'll try.

Her attempt is just okay, plus she falls when attempting the corkscrew finale. Jon catches her.

JON

Nice try.

CARRIE

Thanks. Oh, and don't forget, no Willie at the next home game!

Jon puts on a nervous smile, acting clueless.

JON

So why won't he be there, again?

CARRIE

Willie has to get some photos taken during the next game for some big upcoming mascot competition.

(MORE)

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Then he has some other event too, I believe for Johnson an Wales Alumni. So, he won't be at the game, but I will! You can attend!

JON

Great!

CARRIE

It is, isn't it? Finally, you get to see me perform! Now, go clean yourself up in the locker room. I swear Willie won't surprise you. He's too nice of a mascot to do that, whether you think so or not.

JON

That, and the fact he's gone.

CARRIE

Ya well- Hey! How do you he's gone?

JON

Oh, I saw him on the way out. And kept far away.

Jon starts walking to the locker room to shower. He runs into Dave who is on his way out.

JON (CONT'D)

(whispering to Dave)

Man this is crazy. And I have to lie like this for four years...

As he walks away, Jon's smile fades when sees Margaret is one the other side of the lobby, looking on in disapproval.

FADE OUT

INT. FLEMING'S STEAKHOUSE - NIGHT

Margaret is out with Mark, but Jon is on her mind. Fleming's is dark, also with candlelit tables. A live saxophonist is playing with a band quietly in the corner.

MARGARET

This has been too much, Mark. Jon is being a real wuss. He has got to get over this fear of his, or he's gonna lose Carrie!

MARK

I know, I know. But I honestly don't see any way Jon could conquer his fear other than meeting Willie one on one.

MARGARET

Well, perhaps I'll just have to make that happen...

MARK

Ya, good luck. But if I'm totally honest, I noticed Jon has been oddly upbeat lately, even more so than usual. Actually more energetic too. So as to why he's having so much trouble with Carrie? I'm clueless. It's like the Jon I know disappears when she's around. And I don't know what it means. Still Jon's upbeat-ness has come at a price. I'll stick by my bud forever, but I've noticed a slight decrease in the time we've hung out. The weirdest thing? He seems to be unavailable any time the school has had an event. I guess maybe he's with Carri?

MARGARET

Wait, what?

MARK

He's with Carrie.

MARGARET

No, not that. About him being so busy.

MARK

Oh ya, he's -

WAITER

Dinner is served.

MARK

Oh, thanks. Any way he's just... he's...um...

Mark looks at Margaret, then to the food just place before him. Then to Margaret, and his food again. He loses focus.

MARK (CONT'D)
 (Excitedly)
 Whoa! I've never seen a more B-E-A-
 utiful steak!

He carves a piece and scarfs it down, with Margaret looking on in both amazement and disgust.

MARK (CONT'D)
 (Full mouth)
 Oh, so this is fine cuisine? And
 here I though it was all just hype!
 Maybe I should have done the
 culinary school here instead.

Margaret smiles.

MARGARET
 Oh, to think I almost passed on
 you...

MARK
 Wait, what?

MARGARET
 O come on, you don't remember our
 first meeting?

MARK
 Of course I do!

MARGARET
 Then you'll recall how Jon had to
 chat me up afterwards and convince
 Carrie to finish the job, to even
 give you a chance. He helped you
 big time.

MARK
 Oh did he? Well, on that note, what
 are your thoughts on me now?

MARGARET
 Funny, sweet, cute, and a little
 annoying sometimes.

MARK
 Hey, that's what I originally said
 about you! I - Ah who'm I kidding.
 After all I like a girl that can
 accept her flaws.

She eyes him hard.

MARGARET

(curious)

And what, pray tell, might those
flaws be?

MARK

(false English accent)

Ah, see that is the beauty of this
relationship, madame. We do not yet
know, and shall have to find and
conquer them down the road, just as
Jon and Carrie shall have to do.

MARGARET

(Laughs)

Weirdo.

MARK

Your weirdo.

MARGARET

Ha, ya. Guess I'm stuck with ya.

She starts to dig in too, completely forgetting about the
conversation they started about Jon.

FADE TO:

INT. WILDCAT RECREATION CENTER - NIGHT

Carrie is at the 3rd home game (5th overall). The
cheerleaders are all there and Wildcat Willie is nowhere in
sight. Carrie goes out to perform the halftime show, and
starts looking around for Jon, expecting him to finally be
there. But he is nowhere to be found either. She looks
crushed, and tears start falling from her eyes because she
can't take it anymore. He can't be the man she saw in him
after all.

Margaret comes up smiling, but when she sees Carrie her smile
quickly fades. Also looking into the stands it becomes clear
why. Carrie can't bring herself to perform. Since Dave is at
the mascot appearance (with Jon), she decides to not perform,
and she heads back into the locker room. Everyone watches
this scene unfold as Margaret gives chase. Even Mark jumps
out of the stands and goes after her, hoping some explanation
as to Jon's recent behavior comes to him. Though clueless as
to what, the whole crowd of students knows something has gone
terribly wrong, and the room goes silent.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. PROVIDENCE MARRIOT SMALL EVENT ROOM - NIGHT

Already suited up, Jon is trying to strike and hold a proud pose in front of a camera. His body says it, but his face has a smile that is clearly artificial. As he has his picture taken in the costume, with the head in a nearby box, that was brought by the cameraman, Dave looks on, shaking his head.

JON

(somewhat confused)

Remind me again why I'm doing this with no helmet.

DAVE

Because we need photos to submit to the upcoming competition of our new mascot and the student inside. Don't worry, the judges have to swear to secrecy not to reveal identities or they lose their jobs.

JON

Well, that's kind of harsh...

DAVE

Maybe, but that's how they keep all you mascots secret. But that's beyond the point. See, I dream of -

PHOTOGRAPHER

(interrupting)

Helmet on now, if you please.

Jon grabs it out of the box and puts it on, unaware the static cling has made packing peanuts stick to the head.

DAVE

As I was saying, I dream of - Oh wait a sec!

Dave goes up and wipes the packing peanuts off the helmet. He looks at the photographer.

DAVE (CONT'D)

(jokingly)

Now how'd that get on there?

The man smiles.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Sorry...I use those to keep my equipment safe. Like you keep the student safe Dave.

JON

Ha ha very funny.

Dave looks annoyed.

DAVE

Anyway as I was trying to say - I want to someday see Willie in the spotlight. But we've never even won a local competition before so I want this one coming up to be the first. It's why I push mascots so hard. However good you think you are get better! Who knows. Maybe someday Willie will be in something similar to the Capitol One Mascot Challenge. You know, one for Division three schools.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Alrighty then! All set, Dave.

DAVE

Great! Okay Jon, the alumni event calls to us!

JON

So, how long does this appearance last?

Dave recognizes Jon's attitude change.

DAVE

(seriously)

Jon, Carrie has to wait. She'll understand some day. You even admitted this is what you want to do now. Otherwise I truly believe you wouldn't have lasted this long. Now come on. There's a room full of Alumni who still haven't seen the new suit! Boy are they in for a treat!

JON

All right. Let's just do this. Carrie's gonna be so mad.

INT. PROVIDENCE MARRIOTT LARGE EVENT ROOM - NIGHT

The room is buzzing. As Willie, Jon is meeting all sorts of Alumni, including many who have yet to see the new costume in person, at an event to celebrate the 1st trimesters nearing end. And then:

MALE ALUMNI #1

So, you're our new Willie? The new costume looks pretty awesome at least.

MALE ALUMNI #2

I'll second that. Way better than the last one. More professional. Well, professional by mascot standards.

Jon puts his hands on his hips and tilts his head to one side as if he disapproves of the comment, kidding around, but acting a mascot's part very well. Just then Jon feels some pull on the suit from behind him. He turns around to see a little girl there, tugging on the fake tail as if curious what it is.

FEMALE ALUMNI

O geez sorry about that!

She pulls the child off the suit's tail.

FEMALE ALUMNI (CONT'D)

I guess this future wildcat just couldn't wait until she's a student to meet you, Willie!

They all laugh while the girl giggles along.

JWU PRESIDENT

Ladies and Gentlemen: We are proud to have all you Alumni here to enjoy a night of fine dining from our own JWU culinary students and graduates alike - the Taste of JWU! Well, everyone but Wildcat Willie over there.

Everyone laughs, turning to look at Willie, knowing he can't eat with the costume's head on.

JWU PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
 No, but I'm sure we'll be able to send him home with a bunch of good food to enjoy once he gets back to his dorm and the suit's off.

Now everyone's cheering as he looks around at the crowd.

JWU PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
 Speaking of which, I hear Willie must go do some homework. He is after all still a student, representing all you great Wildcats out there!

Everyone cheers again, to show support.

JWU PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
 Okay, Willie will now go around and meet you all before he leaves. It's your chance to snap a photo with our Mascot, especially if you haven't seen the new costume yet! I hear this could be the one to finally win the big "College Of The Year" event in a couple days!

The alumni, a few present students, teachers, and faculty cheer once more. Then Jon goes around the room meeting people. In one case he even pretends to eat some food, and shrugs as if to ask "Why not?". But then his eyes catch one MASKLOPHOBIC STUDENT staring at him wide eyed, mirroring his moves.

As Jon moves toward the him, the student freezes up. Jon stops too, still several yards from him.

Troubled now, he eyes the door and heads for it. Dave sees Jon leaving in a rush and tries to follow. But at the door, Jon starts running, and Dave has to speed up. There's a concerned look on his face.

CUT TO:

EXT. PROVIDENCE MARRIOT - MOMENTS LATER

Outside the Marriot, Dave finds Jon hiding in a corner, breathing heavily. He has taken off the mascot helmet to catch his breath, but Dave is the only one within visual range.

DAVE

You all right?

JON

I just I need to figure a few things out. That was great and all, and I really am loving being Willie, but I still want Carrie. I just can't stop thinking about what this is gonna do to us. Don't you understand even a little bit how hard that is? On top of all that I'm becoming the one aggravating other people's fear. I mean on one hand there was a little girl that walked right up to me, and on another there was a student legitimately scared of me.

DAVE

(somewhat angry)

Oh, come on! Sorry to say it but there aren't really any masklophobics here. So you ran into one and he got caught off guard. At least you backed off.

(snarky)

Not like that dumb Goofy mascot at your 5th birthday.

Jon's head pops up, catching what Dave just said. His face is in utter shock.

DAVE (CONT'D)

But to answer your question the answer is actually no. Like I said before, when I was a mascot-

JON

Wait! That day you said I was acting like a 5 year old! And how could you know the Goofy incident happened at my 5th birthday? I never told you it was at my 5th birthday!

DAVE

Wha-Duh...Carrie told me. That day we were talking with the cheerleaders. You were there!

A long pause. Jon's dumfounded.

JON
 You're lying. She doesn't know the
 incident was at my 5th birthday.

Silence for another moment. Jon is in disbelief as Dave's
 face changes from one of control to one of pure guilt.

JON (CONT'D)
 It was you.
 (beat, anger)
 It was you?

Jon throws the helmet at Dave, who quickly dodges.

JON (CONT'D)
 I can't believe it! You were the
 reason for my dislike of mascots
 this whole time!

DAVE
 I fixed that mistake!

JON
 By replacing it with a bigger one!
 Ah, I can't believe I was actually
 starting to trust you!

DAVE
 Oh don't be so dramatic. I'm just
 trying to-

JON
 Stop, Dave! You messed up big time.
 Just worry about Willie. Meanwhile
 I'll figure out my own way to fix
 this disaster you -

He stops short, suddenly recalling the game.

JON (CONT'D)
 Ah! Carrie!

Jon picks up and haphazardly replaces the mascot helmet,
 turns, and bolts away, with Dave looking after him, shocked
 by the outcome.

DAVE
 Hey! We aren't done here!

He chases after Jon.

FADE OUT

INT. WILDCAT RECREATION CENTER ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Jon comes out of the locker room with the costume off. He sees Dave there in the lobby and sends a glare his way. Then notices Carrie is still in the main gym waiting alone, with all the lights off. As he walks up she turns to look at him. The light from the lobby mixed with the darkness shows she is wearing a face as long as a horse.

JON

Carrie! Listen, I need to talk to you.

CARRIE

(Yelling, crying)

You missed it! You missed it all! The first game you could be at because Willie WASN'T HERE and you can't even do THAT! Where were you, HUH?

JON

I was...busy.

CARRIE

WITH WHAT?

JON

I...I just can't tell you. But know it was something I had to do and, actually, something I still have to do. In fact, Carrie, it's something you made me want to do. I wouldn't be doing this, if it wasn't for you.

She pauses, and stops yelling now, completely confused once more by his awkward response. Her face scrunches and she throws up her hands in a "what the heck" movement.

CARRIE

What are you doing? Trying to win me back with some cryptic poem? Who are you and what have you done with my boyfriend? I know I've only know you for just over a year, but I know well enough that this isn't you.

JON

Carrie, please. I know what I'm doing is changing me, but I swear it's for the better.

CARRIE

Uh-uh, no way I- You know what, save it. I don't care. I respected your new fear of Willie, but the first game he's not at and you aren't there! You have no excuse!

JON

Carrie if you only knew things would be perfect. Just wait and you'll see. It's just-

CARRIE

(Yelling)

Tell me now! Tell me or we're through. Just what are you doing that it SO important?

Jon is silent. The silence is awkward as it just lingers. Meanwhile Dave continues to watch everything go down, having been stunned speechless. He can't move.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

(Softer)

I thought so. Goodbye Jon. And may you someday realize just how stupid it was. Whatever you've been doing. Unless maybe you think it's worth it? Heck for all I know you may have met Willie already. No that's too much for you. But you know, that's the only way I'd ever even consider getting back together with you. But that's never going to happen, is it?

JON

(Sighs)

No. I'll never meet Willie. Maybe someday I can convince you to give me a second chance.

CARRIE

I don't see any way that will be possible.

(beat)

Goodbye Jon.

She walks away right past Dave, who snaps out of it as she does.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Enjoying the show?

She walks off leaving Dave still somewhat shocked by what he has just witnessed. Carrie walks out the door, and Jon approaches Dave to finish their earlier conversation.

JON

If she only knew. What will happen
in 4 years when she learns the
truth?

He lets his head hang down, now standing directly in front of Dave.

JON (CONT'D)

(obviously depressed)

Well, this wildcat has got a lot of
free mascot practicing time opening
up...Goofy.

Jon starts leave as well, but Dave reaches out to stop him. Jon tries to pull away, but Dave won't let him go.

DAVE

Hey just - just talk to me a
minute.

After failing to break lose, Jon face is once more furious as he flips back around to face Dave.

JON

(shouting, angry)

Haven't we had enough words? I'm
Willie. And now Willie's all I am.
You should be happy. You won. Now I
can devote all my time to the
mascot.

DAVE

(calming)

Look, I just want to give you some
time off to gather yourself. Make a
decision if you really want to
continue with this. I'll just say
you need to regroup after this
taxing first term as mascot. You
can-

JON

No, I'll be all set.

DAVE

(surprised)

What? The first chance you get for
a break and you don't want it? You
know what? I insist!

JON
 (annoyed)
 NO! I'm not a half-rate mascot for
 hire like you were that day!

DAVE
 (angered)
 Hey! Okay, now as both your coach
 and a friend I'm-

JON
 (getting angrier)
 FRIEND? You broke up me and Carrie
 not to mention you almost scarred
 me for life years ago and lied
 about it!

DAVE
 But that's just it! I didn't mean
 to terrorize you and I'm trying to
 keep your life from being
 miserable!

JON
 (anger changes to sadness)
 Too late! It's already there!
 Willie's all I have so what would
 you have me do, huh? It's not like
 you can just wave your magic wand
 and make us the perfect couple with
 Carrie never missing me at a single
 event, fairy godmother.

Dave looks straight into Jon's eyes.

DAVE
 Jon listen. I can make this work!

JON
 No you can't! We're done here. I
 don't want the break so I'll see
 you at the next game. You just do
 what you do best - Worry about the
 mascot.

Jon looks away, heads for the door. Dave just stands there
 watching him leave, a broken look on his face.

EXT. WILDCAT RECREATION CENTER ENTRANCE - NIGHT

From behind the bushes, Mark and Margaret what a disturbed
 Jon come storming out of the recreation center, only to slow
 down his pace halfway to the bus stop.

MARGARET

(whispering)

I told you Mark. Your genius friend just pissed Carrie off for the last time! She actually broke up with him. It's that bad!

MARK

(also whispering)

Um- That's not gonna happen to us, is it?

MARGARET

(still whispering)

You better hope not. Cause if it does, your not getting off easy like Jon did.

They watch Jon sit to wait for a bus back to his dorm.

MARK

Look Something's clearly screwing up Jon. I've known him for years and trust me, this isn't him. There has to be some reason.

MARGARET

(sighs)

Try talking to him.

MARK

(surprised)

What? Now?

MARGARET

Yes, now.

She shoves him out of the bushes He rolls his eyes, and walks towards the bus stop as well.

EXT. HARBORSIDE JWU BUS STOP - CONT.

Jon's looking at photos of him and Carrie on his cell when he hears footsteps. He turns to see Mark, with Margaret not far behind.

JON

(clearly annoyed)

Oh, geez really? Now? Not a good time Mark!

MARK

Geez, I knew losing Carrie was gonna be hard, but you need to cool down, bro!

Margaret come closer.

MARGARET

Wow, talk about sore.

JON

Why are you here? It has nothing to do with you or her, Mark. Just let me be.

MARK

You know what? No, Jon! What's going on? It's like you've become someone totally different. I could care less if you do less stuff with me, but it's killing Carrie. One event man! You can't even do that?

MARGARET

(under her breath)

If you only knew what went on at those events he's not at.

MARK

What? Wait tell me!

She rolls her eyes and pushes him off on the bench, right as the next bus to Jon's dorm arrives.

MARK (CONT'D)

Hey!

She sits in Mark's place, looking directly at Jon, but she softens her face so it's not too serious looking. Jon looks away.

MARGARET

Sorry Mark. Jon, look. You helped me find Mark, so I'll help you with Carrie. You probably think you've blown it, but there's always time for you to make that grand gesture to win her back. That time is limited though, and with Carrie, I'd say you've got a week, tops. She drop any hints?

JON
 (annoyed)
 She wants me to meet Willie.

MARGARET
 Oh, well that's easy enough. Okay
 we'll start small and -

Jon stands up and walks toward the bus.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
 (appalled)
 Hey! Man it's like your not even
 trying! Your being more of a weirdo
 than Mark!

Jon boards the bus.

JON
 Just...Just leave me alone for a
 few days. Both of you.

There's silence as the bus doors close. Margaret and Mark are
 left standing there watching the bus drive off.

MARK
 Oh Man. Forgive me for saying it
 Marge, but I never even dreamed
 that we'd end up having a more
 successful relationship than Jon
 and Carrie...

MARAGARET
 Too be fair...me either.

FADE OUT

INT. JON'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jon is still in his dorm room, now holding Wildcat Willie's
 head. He has on a moping face, but it slowly changes to one
 of sheer determination, and he does his best to put the
 costume on himself.

CUT TO:

INT. CARRIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Carrie hears a knock on her dorm room door. She opens it and
 it amazed to find Willie there.

CARRIE
 (shocked)
 Willie?

He invites himself in as Carrie follows, mouth open a bit.

FADE IN:

INT. CARRIE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Carrie finishes telling Willie the whole story.

CARRIE
 And that's really it. I mean I get
 the fear of you and everything, but
 why couldn't he have been at
 today's game, when you weren't
 there?

Willie shrugs.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
 Man, it's crazy, but, we've only
 know each other a year. And I still
 feel like I love him. At least I'll
 know you for 4.

She forces a laugh.

A SHOT INSIDE THE COSTUME REVEALS JON LISTENING INTENTLY.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
 I mean he's really a great guy
 Willie, and I didn't want to break
 up with him he's just...changed.

Carrie is starting to come out of her slump as Jon leans in
 and gives her the best hug he possibly can with the suit on.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
 You know what Willie? You remind of
 him a little. The old him. The one
 who cared about me. I don't know
 how you found out about this -
 Guess your just that amazing.
 (long beat)
 I'll tell you what. How about I
 give him one final chance, and if
 he's not at the last game of the
 trimester tomorrow, I'll -

She smiles.

CARRIE (CONT'D)
I'll wait for you to be unmasked in
4 years. Then we can have a go at
dating.
(laughs)

They start heading to the door.

INT. OUTSIDE CARRIE'S APARTMENT (DORM HALL) – CONTINUOUS

CARRIE
See you at the game tomorrow
Willie.

She cracks a little smile as she closes the door.

DAVE
(amazed)
Still keeping it a secret even now,
huh?

Jon flips around to see Coach Dave just standing there
against a wall a few rooms down, trying to look cool and even
smiling.

JON
Dave? What's up with acting cocky
after all that's happened to me
tonight?

DAVE
Cocky? I mean I did say I was going
to fix it...

JON
What? Darn it Dave stop being so
cryptic! I already ruined my
relationship thanks to that!

DAVE
Well...Okay. But only because I
can't lose the quality of one of my
best cheerleaders and my mascot.
You see, you're not supposed to
tell your secret because I don't
often trust people. But I trust you
even if you don't trust me, and if
you really trust Carrie...

Jon's face is once more in shock, but this time he starts to
crack a little smile.

JON

You mean Carrie can know I'm-

DAVE

Yes, but you should make it special. Maybe, at the game tomorrow? Let her rest for now and cool off. Right now may still be too soon. Heck, it might be too soon for all 3 of us. In any case I don't care how but the question is can you -

JON

Of course I can trust her! Now, how to tell her - I mean help her see the man behind the mascot.

DAVE

You know Jon I got to thinking. Trust is something that is so hard to gain yet so easy to lose. So this time, if I can ever get it back, hopefully I can keep your trust.

He just leaves Jon standing there.

FADE OUT AS HE
WALKS AWAY

INT. WILDCAT RECREATION CENTER GYM - NIGHT

They are at the last home game of the trimester.

CARRIE

O guys, I meant to tell you. Willie came to my room last night!

CHEERLEADER #1

WHAT?

MARGARET

Ooh, he wants you!

CARRIE

No, no. Well, maybe. I did offer to go on a date in 4 years once he doesn't have to keep his identity a secret anymore. And if Jon doesn't man up and come to one of these games and meet him.

CHEERLEADER #2

There you go girl, that's telling him. Well, I still think it's harsh though.

Carrie walks over to Willie and starts looking up into stands. He copies her.

CARRIE

No, Forget it. He's not going to be up there. I'm yours in 4 years.

She runs out as the routine's song, a modified "On The Edge Of Glory", starts playing.

JON

You've got to be kidding me...Never thought I'd be happy to hear this song.

He joins them to start the routine, but Carrie is not performing well, and Jon is trying his best to make things better, but is failing. At one point things go to slow motion as Carrie watches Willie perform the awesome move Jon was trying to teach her.

CARRIE

(truly amazed)
Impossible...

He lands near her.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

You're-

Jon takes her hand and starts throwing her around before she can saying anything else. They dance a little more as the song fades out. There's a big smile on Carrie's face now.

FADE TO:

INT. CIVIC CENTER - NIGHT

Jon is still in costume, on deck for his big performance. Strangely, he doesn't see Carrie among the cheerleaders, already in their seats.

CARRIE

(playing around)
So I guess this is your idea of an apology?

(MORE)

CARRIE (CONT'D)

Taking my condition to forgive you then one upping it by being mascot for the night? I still want an explanation though.

Jon flips around to see her and Dave approaching.

JON

Actually Carrie it's more like blowing it away. As for the explanation I'll give it to you one last time. For the next 4 years, I can never meet Willie.

Carrie is confused, but her face turns to shock as she finally gets it.

CARRIE

Then the mysterious money source to take me on dates was-

(beat)

And I treated you like-

JON

Wait! Stop there. You don't need to apologize at all.

A SHOT INSIDE REVEALS JON HAS A SMALL SMILE ON.

JON (CONT'D)

Actually, the truth is if it wasn't for you I would have never got to feel this free. You were the original reason all right, but it's only because of you I actually started liking this, which is why I couldn't stop, well, being Willie.

CARRIE

(teasing)

So then, you were trying to break us up? Well, after making it through all this drama, I don't think breaking up is even possible.

JON

Whoa. Talk about making lemons into lemonade...

CARRIE

Anyway, now you don't need to choose.

(MORE)

CARRIE (CONT'D)

I guess I'll just have to learn to love the new and improved Jon.

JON

And lizards. Now you have to meet Larry next time we're at his school.

CARRIE

Hey! Come on!

JON

(laughs)

Oh, now who's scared? Anyway, I guess I just wanted to be someone. Even though I knew we -

Carrie

I said enough. It's over. Everything worked out. And, just so you know, it would have been okay even if I had to wait 4 years -
(beat, playfully)
- as long as I stayed single, that is.

JON

(also playing)

You know, I've created another move. A mascot move. The students are calling it the Angry Wildcat Attack..

He raises his arms as if to pounce.

CARRIE

Uh oh.

DAVE

Cut it out you two!

JON

Oh, calm down Dave.

DAVE

(somewhat annoyed)

Geez. I finally get a mascot almost as good as I was, if not as good, and he wants to change all the rules around.

JON

Hey!

DAVE

Still, I guess having Carrie know Willie is actually her boyfriend is a good thing. Jon's going to need all the support he can get to bring J-WU the victory here.

JON

Well, she already promised me she'd be here.

CARRIE

Technically, I promised Willie.

JON

(sarcastically)
Funny. Real funny.

DAVE

In any case, the student who we chose as mascot is finally ready.

JON

We?

CARRIE

Geez, did you already forget you were my favorite mascot tryout, Jon?

JON

Oh man that's right! You did say that. And since you didn't know it was me at the time that must be a big compliment.

CARRIE

(toying)
Why you little -

DAVE

(interrupting)
OKAY! Well, now that this little love triangle is back to a straight line, we need to focus. The annual "College To Be" title is up for grabs.

CARRIE

He's got this. And I'll be right there to cheer Jon on...by shouting Willie's name.
(laughs)

JON

Hey, I take that as a compliment too now.

DAVE

Don't be fooled. This won't be like the little Larry scuffle, and the Anchorman's out there too. This is bigger than just a few mascots. What's worse Johnson and Wales has not won the "College To Be" award in years. No offense, especially after what we've all learned, but a lot of people don't think this award should come down to a mascot dance off, even if they are living versions of the college icons.

JON

I get it, but you'll see. If you've taught me anything it's that I can do this. I can get this title for J-WU.

DAVE

Alright, do your best then.

JON

'kay. Here goes nothing. Or rather here goes everything.

CARRIE

Forgetting something?

She pulls off the helmet and gives him a big kiss, the most passionate they've ever had.

CARRIE (CONT'D)

For a little extra luck.

JON

(overjoyed)

Oh, I'm lucky all right.

DAVE

And I'm disgusted. Yuck! Maybe that's why I never got the girl. Now get out there before you start making out.

JON

Right!

He starts to run out.

CARRIE
(alarmed)
HEAD! HEAD!

JON
Oh!

DAVE
Carrie...

CARRIE
(laughs)
Sorry. I guess our kisses are more
passionate now that I'm dating the
wildcat mascot.

DAVE
Again, yuck. Whatever. Just get the
helmet back on and we'll go watch.

INT. CIVIC CENTER FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Running out, helmet back on, Jon performs his solo routine,
including the signature move, driving the STUDENTS crazy.
Then the other mascots come back out for the group portion.

DAVE
Well, Carrie. Here we go. If ever
there was a time for Jon to be the
Wildcat, it's now.

All the mascots start dancing, constantly changing it up, but
with all his new passion Jon is a clear front runner.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Yes! That's it! Finally!

Carrie has on a giant smile.

Just then, another mascot accidentally trips Jon, but Jon
stays up as the other mascot bumps into the Anchorman, taking
him down.

A SHOT IN THE ANCHORMAN SUIT REVEALS A GLARE ON BEN'S FACE.

STUDENTS
(Laughs hard)

Ben looks at Jon as he gets back up.

BEN
 (under his breath)
 What the heck? How'd he get this
 good in such a short period of
 time?

Ben walks off the arena floor. The he eyes Carrie, clearly watching Willie with a lot of interest. He walks right up to her. She and Dave turn, puzzled.

BEN (CONT'D)
 Well nice to see you again too
 there, sunshine. I still think
 you'da been better off with me
 though.

CARRIE
 BEN?!

DAVE
 And I think a certain mascot forgot
 silence is golden.

BEN
 Whatever. Tell Jon to enjoy the
 spotlight- Until our next meeting
 anyway. He'll get another beating
 then.

He walks off.

After a few more seconds of the show, it ends, and Willie has the highest score winning him 1st place and winning Johnson and Wales the title of the "College To Be" for that year. The anchorman has placed second.

A SHOT OF JON SMILING IN THE COSTUME, LOOKING OVER TO WHERE CARRIE AND DAVE STAND.

Jon walks up, fresh off his victory.

DAVE
 Brilliant! Just brilliant! You
 truly are our best mascot ever. Way
 better than that year we had a
 griffin. O geez that was nuts.

LOOK INSIDE REVEALS HE'S STILL SMILING IN THE COSTUME.

JON
 So is that it?

DAVE

Far from it, kid. You don't realize just how popular Willie is about to become. Last year a new costume, this year, a new Wildcat completely. But seriously, I may finally be able to actually give more athletic scholarships thanks to you - including starting one to entice better mascot operators.

JON

Sorry but did you say athletic scholarships?

DAVE

I sure did. Mind you I can't give you a full ride like a division one college, but didn't I tell you? Best mascot wins a 50K scholarship.

JON/CARRIE

WAIT WHAT?

DAVE

Don't worry Carrie. I'll throw a little something your way once I get the rest of the scholarship money Willie- I mean Jon -

There's a pause as they look at each other.

JON

No...No, you had it right the first time.

CARRIE

By the way Jon, anything you want to tell me about the anchorman mascot?

JON

You mean other than that the operator once had the hots for you?

CARRIE

HEY! Well, I still think you must have been creepily eyeing me, but as Willie this time.

DAVE

(laughs hard)
Oh, Carrie! hat's a good one.

(MORE)

DAVE (CONT'D)

But seriously, how 'bout we focus on this big win instead.

CARRIE

Ya, you're right. Besides, I think I can learn to love the new Jon. You know I already really liked Willie.

DAVE

(joking)

You know Jon, with all this success, I may have to take you up on your original offer and erase you from Carrie's memory so your life is nothing but mascots.

CARRIE

Dave!

JON

Funny, if you told me I'd be where I am today a few months ago enjoying being a mascot I'd lock myself in my room so it would never happen! In fact Dave, I still have one burning question. Why me?

DAVE

Honestly? I could see a mascot in you. Even when you couldn't. When I was interviewing students I saw you and - It had to be you. It was destiny giving me a second chance - a way to make things right. I may have gone about it the wrong way at first, but can you honestly say that I failed in the end?

JON

(long pause)

No. Still, I can't believe how I lost myself in it. Wait! That's it!

CARRIE/DAVE

What?

JON

Dave, what if we made Carrie a student mascot handler? Carrie likes the mascot. Jon doesn't. It's the perfect cover. Besides, you still owe me from the Goofy incident.

CARRIE

Coach I could do it! I won't let it get in the way of cheerleading, I swear. If there's anyway I can-
 (stops short)
 Wait how does he owe you for your Goofy incident?

JON

Oh get this! The Goofy mascot that started this whole dislike all those years ago? Dave was the operator!

CARRIE

(amazed)
 You have got to be kidding me. I can't believe-

DAVE

Carrie stop and let me talk or you're fired from your new student mascot handler position.

CARRIE/JON

Yes!

DAVE

Well, I guess I have a new headache to train.

CARRIE

Wha-Dave!

JON

All right, enough's enough. Angry wildcat attack!

He starts to chase after her and Dave.

CARRIE

What? No no no no no! Bad- wildcat? Mascot? Jon? Oh, Dave run!

AS HE CHASES THEM OFF SCREEN, THE CAMERA TURNS.

The masklophobic student is just standing there, shocked at what he just witnessed, and can't help cracking a small smile...

FADE OUT.

THE END