

FINALS WEEK

(OR, THE UNEXPECTED FOLLY OF ADDERALL)

written by

Harsh Karthik

BLACK

We hear a pencil scribbling, and a CRACK-

SMASH CUT TO-

INT. POWELL LIBRARY, FIRST FLOOR, NIGHT.

A pencil is clutched tightly in a hand that is on the verge of breaking it, with the nib a good inch away, having left a light jagged trail.

THAT VOICE (o.s.)
How did we end up here?

We tilt up to discover the face of a tense bespectacled STEVEN MEEKS (18), frantically reaching for his sharpener as his attention instead gravitates towards his open MyUCLA GPA page, and as he zooms in onto his GPA...

THAT VOICE (o.s.)
Do people here ever shower?
This place is awful. Smells like balls.

He shuts the momentary distraction as he resumes his search for his sharpener, which is misplaced, and possibly buried under the sea of papers lying in front of him.

His hand is greeted by the speedy hand of JAKE RYAN (21), who reaches out to grab it to sharpen his own pencil. Steven is visibly surprised (and enraged) by this, and scrambles for it.

STEVEN
(Staring at Jake - highly subdued, but highly anxious)
Hey Jake, I need that back.

JAKE
(o.s.)
(speeds up sharpening)
One sec, man.

STEVEN
Dude, I really-

GIRL

(o.s.)

Guys, we need to focus.

We move from Steve to discover the girl, CLAIRE STANDISH (20), sitting next to Jake.

CLAIRE

We're almost halfway done with this.
We can't stall anymore!

STEVEN

I know but he-

Claire returns Steven's reply with a stern look. Jake promptly returns the sharpener.

STEVEN

I... I'm sorry Jake, this final's really getting to me. I've been memorizing these formulas and terms for ten straight hours. I'm just trying so hard to maintain that 4.0.

As the camera pans back, we see three students crowding behind him, like his fanbase.

RANDOM STUDENT

(arriving from the back)

You got 4.0? You got 4.0!

RANDOM STUDENT #2

VOTE FOR USAC ELECTIONS!

RANDOM STUDENT #3

Hi I'm from the Daily Bruin, how do you cope with having to maintain your 4.0 and what is your secret to success?

STEVEN

I-I've downed a good eight cups of coffee, and I've made two cheat sheets for the same fucking subject.

JAKE

Hey man, take it easy, you'll-

STEVEN

That's coming from you Jake, your flashcard folder looks bigger than a user manual.

CLAIRE

Steven, it's okay. at 11AM we'll be done with this. We've tested each other with questions for half a day, we're making progress.

JAKE

Wait, did you guys read the email the T.A. sent us ten hours ago?

CLAIRE

Email?

STEVE

TA?

JAKE

Yeah, it was something about chapter 18.

CLAIRE

I haven't checked my email in a day.

Claire pulls out her laptop, with Steven promptly opening his too.

STEVEN

(stops typing and fretting on laptop)
I'm not in your T.A. section, right?

JAKE

Yeah, I'll just- give me a sec...

Jake pulls out his laptop and looks for the email.

STEVEN

What was it about?

JAKE

(looking for email restlessly)
Chapter 12. Ah, found it.

STEVEN

(mutters "Ah, fuck.")
What? What about chapter 12?

JAKE

Sent.

CLAIRE

What?!

STEVEN

(anxious)
What?

JAKE

Check your email.

CLAIRE

(opens email)
Fuck me.

STEVEN

I prepared so much for this chapter.
(holding up whole cheat sheet)
I made this for it.

CLAIRE

Face it, Steven, it's no longer
relevant!

JAKE

Sorry about that, guys.

(beat)

Anyway, we've got to get back to
this.

STEVEN

(yawns)

Coffee's gonna wear off pretty soon.
I'll ask Jim if he has another 5-Hour
Energy. That asshole is always
stocked up.

Steven walks to another table. Another student, JIM (18) is sitting
there. He finds Jim laughing with another student.

STEVEN

(eyes Jim opening a 5-Hour Energy)
Hey Jim, you wouldn't have another
5-Hour Energy in your backpack, would
you?

JIM

(far from taking Steven seriously)
Nah man, this is my last one, trying
to stay awake. Sorry.

STEVEN

It's all good man. How's it going?

JIM

(nonchalantly)

It's going good man, we were done
yesterday and we're just practicing.
You?

STEVEN

(hiding envy and disgust with smile)
That's nice. We're about half done,
we're going to get it done pretty
soon though.
(eyes 5-Hour Energy on table)

JIM

Oh. Cool!

STEVEN

(puts on show of frustration)
I don't know man, it's just so
strenuous.

JIM

I feel you man.

STEVEN

(begins waving arms a lot)
I just have all these chapters, man,
it's just getting to me so much you
know, not even a single break and-

Steven accidentally knocks down Jim's 5-Hour Energy, and the bottle falls onto his notes and then onto his jeans. Jim stares at Steven as if he just destroyed Jim's phone with a hammer.

STEVEN

(sincere in his words, but
expressionless and uncaring)
Jim I'm extremely sorry. I don't know
how to make it up. It was a really
stupid mistake, man. I'm-

JIM

(begrudgingly, but immediately)
Oh no it's all good man. I'll just
uh, I'll clean this up. You got any
tissues?

STEVEN

(backing away)
Really sorry man, no I don't. Sorry
about that whole thing. I uh, gotta
go. Good luck on the final!

Steven heads off, head down, eyes wide open and anxiously looking left and right. He's greeted by a frenetic Jake, who briefly peeps over at Jim's table.

JAKE

Steve, I've got the flashcards, and you've got the notes and stuff. Test me, like a 30-question quiz, and then I'll test you. And I think I have some coffee candy or something, does Jim need any?

STEVEN

Yeah, uh, I dunno. That uh, the dropping of the bottle, that wasn't an accident.

JAKE

What?

STEVEN

I made that happen, yeah. Motherfucker better not set that curve again.

JAKE

O-kay.

(eyeing Steven)

Are you sleep-deprived?

STEVEN

No shit.

JAKE

Let's get our stuff then. Short nap and then we quiz each other. Wait what's the time again?

STEVEN

(quickly pulling out phone)

Uh, 2:30.

As Jake and Steven get their stuff, we move onto Claire, who is flipping pages back and forth, as if she is seeing something that does not make sense. Claire looks at her slides (she is browsing

through Chapter 13) after which she is flipping pages in her textbook (at that point, around page 280.) We pan back to the slides (now she is at Chapter 16) and then again to the textbook (now page 370.) She checks the time, it is 3:30, and we see Jake and Steven return, arguing.

STEVEN

(to Jake, while sitting down and
putting his face on the table)
I'm so done, I just want to sleep.

JAKE

Come on Steven, you can pull through
this, don't give this shit to me.

STEVEN

I can't. I'm tired, I can't handle
this all-nighter, it's not for me.

JAKE

Shut up! Just shut up for once! Since
we began this study session, we've
become thorough with over 60% of the
material. We can't afford to lose
time, and we can't afford to binge on
sleep. This is about endurance, and
focus, remember? That's what you told
me, that's how you got me into this
study session.

Jake storms to his seat. Steven buries his face in his arms again.

STEVEN

(drowsy, almost drunk)
Ah... I can't handle this. What time is
it?

JAKE

It's 4:00.

STEVEN

(half-asleep, stands up and
stretches)

I need something, I can't stay awake
any longer.

JAKE

(walks up to Steven)

No! Steven, no one is going to come
right behind you and tell you they've
found a miracle drug that will solve
your problems and go "*Ooooh I'm the
genie and I'll grant your wishes.*"

Claire pops in behind the two.

CLAIRE

Jake, can I talk to you for a second?

JAKE

Yeah, what's up?

CLAIRE

I need your flashcards for chapter
18.

JAKE

Yeah, sure. They're in my folder.

CLAIRE

(looking at Steven)

I've got something that can solve *his*
problem.

JAKE

Yeah?

CLAIRE

My roommate's big on all-nighters.

STEVEN

(drowsy)

So-

CLAIRE

-she's got some tablets of...

JAKE
Adderall?

CLAIRE
Adderall XR.

JAKE
Yes!

STEVEN
Jake...

JAKE
How did you get them?

CLAIRE
We share a mini-fridge.

JAKE
(confused, mumbling)
Storing that in a mini-fridge...

STEVEN
You think it'd be helpful?

CLAIRE
Yeah.

JAKE
Ask me if it keeps you awake.

STEVEN
Does it keep me awake?

JAKE
It lights you up like you're a
pinball machine who'll pay in silver
dollars! You're gonna feel like a
superhero, like B-

RANDOM STUDENT #4 (o.s.)
(half-asleep)

Could you keep it down?

JAKE
Sorry!

STEVEN
(looking at Claire)
Alright.

JAKE
(yawns)
Hey while you're at it could I-

CLAIRE
Yeah, you too.

They sit down. Claire pulls out two tablets, and gives one to Steven. He holds it and goes to a nearby water fountain to down the tablet. He then returns to his seat and opens his laptop. As he browses through the Powerpoint slides he has open-

THAT VOICE (o.s.)
We should have gone to that
discussion section, not the Brony
Club meeting. The professor had
office hours too. You are lame,
Steven. Rolling around-

Steven promptly switches to Google Chrome and closes the MyUCLA Grades tab, at which point the voice abruptly cuts.

STEVEN
(softly)
Gonna go to the restroom, change my
shorts to jammies.
(though Claire passively nods, Jake
is confused)
Just feels more comfortable.

As Steven leaves, we see Jake and Claire going through the flashcards like they're blackjack dealers. Jake drops a card, and as he picks it up, we see two pajama-covered legs enter the shot. We go up to see him covered in a blanket.

STEVEN
Kinda cold.

Jake nods and dives back into reviewing. Steven is almost about to lie down until he magically sits upright and looks at his textbook.

STEVEN
Music.

The theme from Birdman begins to play, as he quickly shakes his head in disapproval. As Mozart's *Dies Irae* begins to play he smiles, and flips through pages of his textbook with great speed, with a grin on his face like he has just acquired a superpower. As the composition ends, he closes the book and puts his cheat sheets in his backpack. He checks the five alarms he has set on his phone, and goes to a sofa to lie down, and we-

FADE TO BLACK.

STEVEN (o.s.)
Shit.

His eyelids fling wide open as he checks his phone. The time is 8:01. He runs to his desk, grabs a pen and his Bruincard, stuffs things into his backpack. And in his t-shirt, pajamas and his blanket around him, he runs out of Powell toward...

EXT. POWELL - MORNING

...Haines, to get to his exam hall. He rushes down Royce quad in his pajamas and blanket. As several students spot him, some are excited enough to pull out their smartphones to take a picture of Steven and his unique outfit.

RANDOM STUDENT #5
Hey do you mind if I could take a
selfie with you?

STEVEN
Look, I'm in a real hurry, I-

RANDOM STUDENT #5
(in a cutesy tone)
Please?

The student relentlessly walks beside Steven, with a forced smile, as she gets the selfie.

RANDOM STUDENT #5
(long, musical and drawn out,
emotionless)
Thank you!

RANDOM STUDENT #6 (o.s.)
That's a shitty Birdman reference!

STEVEN
(in a softer voice, cynical)
Fuck you!

EXT. HAINES - MORNING.

Steven finally reaches. He pushes the door open as if almost breaking through it, removes his blanket and enters the hall. He is greeted by at best two dozen students turning their heads, out of almost 200, as well as the professor. A brief burst of laughter quickly dies down as he walks half-asleep forward to find a spot.

He settles down, as a T.A. (28) gives him a paper. He yawns widely, then flips through the pages to see everything blank.

STEVEN
(raising hand, mumbling softly)
Uh, exc-excuse me?

He gets the attention of a TA, who comes over.

TA
What's the problem?

STEVEN
Well first off this first question's
kinda vague, it just asks "What did
you learn?"

TA
I'm sorry, I cannot give any hint.

STEVEN
(flipping through the pages)
And the rest of this is blank.

We pull up to a befuddled TA.

TA
(looks down and sees printed pages)
No, they're right there.

STEVEN
(shakes head and raises eyebrows to
get himself awake)
I'm sorry, my bad. Thank you.

Steven looks down and begins writing really fast, and keeps checking the time. By 9AM he is already on the second-to-last page as he's frantically shaking his pen. As he moves on to the last page, he looks at the blackboard, which says the time is 10:15. He is surprised (mouthing "What?!") but resumes writing. As he is done with the last line, the TA arrives with a bundle of papers, and he hands in his.

He walks outside with all of his belongings, tired and exhausted. There are students gathered around the outside of the hall, as people are leaving.

RANDOM STUDENT #7 (o.s.)
Yeah I think I got #5 wrong too.

JIM(o.s.)
I just got #4 wrong.
(beat)
I'm probably gonna fail.

RANDOM STUDENT #7(o.s.)
Shut the fuck up, man.

JAKE
(bumping into Steven)
Oh hey man how'd you do?

Steven is confused out of his mind, almost in a drunken stupor.

STEVEN
Yeah, good.

CLAIRE
Did you finish it?

STEVEN
Yeah.

JAKE
Son of a bitch, you're probably
setting the curve.

STEVEN
(trying to laugh)
Ha, no way, ha.

Steven then receives a text. He first checks his alarms, which he finds out were accidentally set for the next day. He then checks his text out, and it says "Hey wanna have a study session at like 1 for tomorrow's final lol." Steven is exasperated.

He holds his cellphone on the spread-out palm as the camera pans to the bushes, where the phone is flung as if he telepathically did it. And we-

-CUT TO BLACK

Claire laughs, off-screen.

CREDITS