

PUSSY BOY

Written by

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EXT. PITTSBURGH PUMAS FOOTBALL STADIUM - DAY

"EYE OF THE TIGER" by Survivor plays in the background as we view an aerial shot of a packed football stadium.

A pack of incredibly fit CHEERLEADERS waves their pom poms toward the stands, where thousands of screaming FANS wave foam fingers and chug cans of cheap beer.

Down on the field, the FOOTBALL PLAYERS gather around their COACH.

The most energy in the stadium radiates from center field, where PRINCE THE PUMA riles up the crowds with his stunts.

We zoom in on the mascot's face, revealing his plastic eyes and smiling, fanged mouth peering from under his jet black fur.

Prince's performance wraps up as the players jog back to take the field. Player number 13, DUSTIN DRAKE (27), takes his time leaving the bench, where dozens of fans scream and cheer as he struts back to center field.

The song crescendoes as we zoom in on Prince. When his faux blue eyes lay sight on Drake, he reaches behind his back to reveal a shiny silver knife.

Prince and Drake come closer to one another. Both the fans and the music intensify in energy.

When the two finally brush past each other, Prince quickly whips around and raises the knife above Drake's head. The music blurs into a ringing sound as Prince plunges his weapon down--

TITLE CARD:

"15 YEARS EARLIER"

INT. MINIVAN - DAY

LOLA HELMAN (29) sits in the driver's seat next to EDDIE HELMAN (32). A line of honking traffic lies ahead of them.

LOLA
(yelling)
I told you we should've left
sooner!

EDDIE
(slurring)
Can you just shut up already?

LOLA

Me shut up? You're the one who
hasn't stopped saying stupid shit
since you decided to start drinking
at 9 AM!

MAX HELMAN (13) sits in the backseat, playing with a tattered
little stuffed puma.

EDDIE

It's called a pregame for a reason,
Lola! Pre. Game.

LOLA

(turning to Eddie)
I don't care! I know how much you
drink at these games! The last
thing you need is more!

With Lola's eyes off the road, the car swerves suddenly,
throwing Max's stuffed animal against the window. He
scrambles to pick it back up and clutches it to his chest.

EDDIE

I knew I should've driven. This
always happens.

Lola sighs with frustration.

EXT. PITTSBURGH PUMAS FOOTBALL STADIUM - DAY

The Helman family makes it through the stadium gates, Lola
and Eddie still yelling at each other while Max holds his
mother's hand.

LOLA

(leaning down to Max)
Sorry baby. Dad's just a little
stressed about the game.

Max doesn't answer, focused on the stuffed puma in his other
hand. Lola notices his gaze and stares back down at the
stuffed animal.

LOLA (CONT'D)

We'll get to see Prince today,
remember? Aren't you excited?

Finally, Lola has Max's attention. He looks up at her with a
subtle smile and nods. She rubs his back as they sit down in
their--

EXT. PITTSBURGH PUMAS FOOTBALL STADIUM SEATS - DAY

The fighting between Lola and Eddie continues in the stands. Nobody in the family seems to be focused on the game, with Max still laser-focused on his plush toy.

EDDIE

I just don't understand what you want from me!

LOLA

You're just so absent! Why are we even here right now?

EDDIE

I'm trying to watch the game, but you won't stop talking!

A look down at the field-- the 90'S FOOTBALL PLAYERS wear the same jerseys from earlier, just with a slightly retro feel.

90'S PRINCE takes the field-- he's got the same design as Max's plushie. He seems a little rattier than before, with giant whiskers that seem to be gray and wilted. His energy, however, matches up exactly with the other version of himself.

MAX

Mom, look!

Lola doesn't notice-- she's too busy arguing.

With a sigh, Max turns back to the field. His parents' fighting seems to get louder and louder, but Max's focus remains on Prince. Again, he covers his ears, muffling the yelling and gripping onto his stuffed animal.

LOLA

Did I miss something, baby?

Max shakes his head, his eyes still glued to the mascot.

LOLA (CONT'D)

Oh! Prince is out!

Max doesn't answer.

INT. HELMAN HOME - NIGHT

Still in his football jersey, Eddie stumbles through the door of the house with Lola and Max following closely behind.

EDDIE
(slurring)
Just fuck off! Get off my back!

LOLA
This is not okay! You need to just
go to bed already.

Eddie clumsily grabs a bottle of beer from the fridge.

LOLA (CONT'D)
Oh no no no no, you do not need
another.

Lola reaches for Eddie's arm, attempting to snatch the full
bottle from his hand.

Before she can reach it, Eddie abruptly cracks the bottle
over Lola's arm-- hard enough to shatter the bottom half of
the glass and spill beer all over the floor.

Max's eyes widen as Lola collapses to the floor in agony.

EDDIE
Stop telling me what to do!

LOLA
I'm just trying to help you!

Having forgotten that Max was even there, Lola notices him
still standing by the door.

LOLA (CONT'D)
Go to your room, honey.

EDDIE
Look at me!

Eddie stands over Lola like a bear over its prey, broken beer
bottle in hand. She refuses to look up at him.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
I said look at me!

Infuriated by her disobedience, Eddie slashes her arm again
with his makeshift weapon. Lola screams in pain and
immediately looks up at him, completely surrendered.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
I'm done with you and your
attitude. All you do is make life
fucking hell around here.

Eddie drops the bottle and leaves the room. Lola lays down in pain, her arm bleeding out profusely.

Max, completely stunned from the encounter, runs down to his mother's side.

MAX

Mom? Are you okay?

Lola musters a smile as she weakly stands up from the ground.

LOLA

Yes, honey, I'll be okay. Just get ready for bed. I can come tuck you and Prince in.

MAX

Okay. Promise?

LOLA

Promise.

Taking in how wounded his mom is, Max gives her a hug. In the process, Lola's arm gets blood on his shirt and his stuffed puma.

Unable to walk well after collapsing, Lola starts hobbling toward her room. Max walks back with her, holding her upright.

INT. MAX'S PARENTS BEDROOM - NIGHT

After tucking in his battered mother, Max glances over to see his father fast asleep. Looking at the wounds on Lola's arms, his eyebrow furrows. He heads over to the--

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Max flicks on the light, immediately staring down at the broken beer bottle on the tile floor. He briskly swipes it off the ground and presses one of the shards to his finger, drawing blood instantly.

INT. MAX'S PARENTS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Careful not to make noise as he slips in, Max tiptoes into through the door. Both of his parents are now fast asleep, with Eddie snoring loudly.

As Max makes his way over to his father's side of the bed, he's met with his pale, overweight body wearing nothing but a pair of boxers.

He takes in the sight: the unkept bits of facial hair poking out of his cheeks and chin, the drool trickling out from the corner of his mouth... his eyebrows furrow yet again.

Max glances down at his left hand, which holds his stuffed animal. He then glances over at the right hand, holding on tight to the neck of the broken beer bottle.

The blood from his pointer finger trickles onto the carpet.

He lift the bottle up over his father's bare chest, plunging it down in the dark room--

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

An exhausted JUDGE hammers down his gavel.

JUDGE

I hereby sentence Lola Elizabeth Helman to twenty five years in federal prison for the homicide of Edison James Helman.

Lola immediately turns to Max as two POLICE OFFICERS put her in handcuffs.

LOLA

Max, baby, it's going to be okay--

Max reaches for his mother as they drag her away.

MAX

No, no, it was me! It was me!

It's as if nobody can hear Max at all. Lola hushes him as she exits the courtroom.

LOLA

It'll be alright, I promise. It's not your fault. It's not.

Tears stream down Max's face as he watches his mother lose her freedom, taking the blame for him. Adjourning the case, the judge SLAMS down his gavel, transitioning into--

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

A teenage, lanky MAX (16) slams into a locker at the hands of three older boys. TEDDY (17), the bulkiest, tallest boy of the bunch, pulls on Max's hair as the other two hold him against the locker.

TEDDY

What're you gonna do, huh? Fight back?

Max attempts to free himself, but Teddy shoves his face back against the metal locker.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Oooh, looks like pussy boy's getting a little feisty now, isn't he?

MAX

What do you guys want from me?

Teddy looks back at the other two boys. BECK (15), the scrawniest of the bunch, shrugs. DOMINIC (16) also shrugs, unsure how to answer.

Teddy rolls his eyes.

TEDDY

Give us the dumb toy.

The three boys push Max deeper into the locker.

MAX

No.

Irritated, Teddy spits in Max's face.

TEDDY

I said, give. Me. The toy.

Just before Max can answer, MRS. LARSON (39), a stern, well-dressed woman, passes by.

MRS. LARSON

(scolding)

Boys!

Teddy, Beck, and Dominic immediately drop Max, who falls to the floor.

MRS. LARSON (CONT'D)

With me. Now.

Without a word, the three of them follow behind Mrs. Larson as she escorts them out. As Max stumbles to his feet, Teddy turns around and MEOWS quietly in his direction, chuckling again.

INT. BOY'S LOCKER ROOM - EVENING

Still bruised from earlier in the day, Max changes into his gym clothes. COACH LEVI (47), a bearded man with a warm smile, approaches Max.

COACH LEVI
(putting a hand on Max's
shoulder)
How we feeling today, Max?

Max looks up at him with a slight smile before reaching into his gym locker. He pulls out two furry pieces of leopard-print cloth.

COACH LEVI (CONT'D)
Hey. Chin up, pal. You're
incredible out there.

MAX
Thanks, coach.

Coach Levi pats Max on the back before heading out.

COACH LEVI
Break a leg!

The locker room door opens as Coach Levi exits.

COACH LEVI (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Or paw!

With a sigh, Max pulls up the leopard print sleeves over his legs, followed by his arms and neck. He slips on a pair of leopard-print paws before finally equipping a raggedy, somewhat frightening leopard mascot head.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Max, now in the leopard costume, hops up and down in the tunnel funneling from the locker room to the field.

He hovers awkwardly behind the pack of football players ready to storm the stadium. One of the players separates from the group.

TEDDY
Hey pussy cat!

Teddy nudges Max's shoulder. Hard. Max brushes it off, not responding to the teasing.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
What? Too scared to talk now?

Max continues stretching and ignores Teddy's comments.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
You had no problem earlier when--

BECK
(motioning out of the
tunnel)
Teddy!

The rest of the football team has already made it on the field. Teddy quickly turns around to join his fellow players, making sure to MEOW at Max as he goes.

Max shakes off the interaction and continues warming up.

STADIUM SPEAKER
And now, the one...

Max bounces up and down in his football uniform and cheap leopard costume.

STADIUM SPEAKER (CONT'D)
The only...

He readies himself at the end of the tunnel.

STADIUM SPEAKER (CONT'D)
Leedsville... Leopard!

Taking on an entirely new, enthusiastic energy, Max bolts onto the field. As the MARCHING BAND blasts off-tune music from the stands, Max smoothly initiates several front flips and waves his furry arms with enthusiasm.

The football players gather around the bench, awaiting orders from Coach Levi. When he sees Max takes the field, he turns around and cheers.

COACH LEVI
(clapping)
Let's go! Woo!

Max jogs by Coach Levi as he finishes off his grand entrance, giving him an energetic high-five with his paw.

Completely transformed from his somewhat pathetic true self, Max heads to the stands and is greeted by roaring fans. A LITTLE BOY (6) rushes up to Max with open arms as Max accepts his hug.

LITTLE BOY
You're the coolest leopard ever!

The little boy's FATHER (40) joins the scene.

FATHER
Sorry about all that. He was pretty excited to see you.

Max pulls away from the hug and high-fives the boy, then high-fives his father.

FATHER (CONT'D)
(turning to his son)
Now what do we say?

LITTLE BOY
Thank you!

Max animatedly gestures in appreciation before waving goodbye to the two of them.

Back on the field, the game is in full swing. Teddy, Beck, and Dominic have not left the bench. Finally, Teddy stands up and heads over to Coach Levi.

TEDDY
Hey, uh, can I go to the bathroom?

COACH LEVI
(annoyed)
Seriously?

TEDDY
Yeah...

COACH LEVI
Whatever. Be quick.

Levi turns back around to face the game, yelling at the boys. Teddy flashes a thumbs-up to his two friends, which leads them to sneakily leave their spots on the bench.

INT. BOY'S LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Teddy, Beck, and Dominic's football cleats clack on the hard floor as they slip into the dingy locker room.

TEDDY
Which one of these is it?

BECK
Pretty sure it's back here.

Beck leads the way for the group, making it back towards the same locker Max was at earlier.

TEDDY
Dom, do you have it?

Dominic scrambles around in his pocket, almost as if he's lost what he's looking for. Teddy crosses his arms.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Come on, man. What if Coach wants to put us in?

DOMINIC
I got it, I swear!

Finally, Dominic pulls a crooked paper clip out from his tight football shorts.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)
Told you.

BECK
Dude, hurry up!

After Dominic fiddles with the lock for a few seconds, it pops off. Teddy pushes Dominic aside and peers into the locker, sifting through some clothes until he pulls something out.

DOMINIC
What is that?

TEDDY
No. Way.

BECK
What, show us!

Teddy turns around, displaying a ratty stuffed puma-- the one Max had as a child. They all burst out in laughter.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Back on the field, the energy is high. The scoreboard flashes the current state of the game: "HOME - 28, AWAY - 3."

ANNOUNCER

And that's halftime, folks!

Teddy, Beck, and Dominic trot back onto the field. When Coach Levi spots them, his expression immediately turns to anger.

COACH LEVI

What the hell were you three thinking?

TEDDY

I told you I had to pee.

COACH LEVI

Okay, and you couldn't handle doing it all by yourself? Had to bring your friends along to wipe for you?

Teddy looks at the ground.

COACH LEVI (CONT'D)

Well, if any of you expected any play time today, it's not happening.

BECK

But--

COACH LEVI

Don't wanna hear it. I'm sure you guys weren't even in the bathroom.

Coach Levi walks away from the three of them. Their attention turns to the field as the SCHOOL CHEERLEADERS head out in uniform.

Energetic music starts to blast as the girls break out in their routine. At the center of it all is fully-costumed Max, performing stunts and dance moves alongside them.

As the song wraps up, Max and the cheerleaders head back toward the stands until Coach Levi pulls Max aside.

COACH LEVI (CONT'D)

Hey kid, you've done a great job tonight. The audience is already pretty hyped up from you and the great plays being made. You can head back home, okay?

Max nods and silently expresses his gratitude through hand motions.

COACH LEVI (CONT'D)
See you Monday. Get some rest.

Max gives a thumbs-up with the spotted paws of his costume.

INT. BOY'S LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Max takes off the dingy mask of his costume, revealing his sweat-drenched hair and face. As he shuffles back to his locker, he looks down at the corny mascot face and smiles. It was a good game.

Before he makes it to his locker, a fluffy white clump of stuffing catches his eye. He kneels down and picks it up, noticing a greater trail of fluff around the corner. Max's eyes widen with confusion.

When Max finally turns the corner, he immediately drops the mascot head to the floor and falls to his knees.

His wide-open locker reveals his precious stuffed puma, completely ripped to shreds, limb by limb. Amidst all the remains, "PUSSY BOY" plasters his locker in dark black marker.

Tears well up in Max's eyes as the stadium crowd continues to roar outside. He scrambles to pick up the pieces of his dear toy, holding them to his chest as he cries silently to himself.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Up on a shelf sits the haphazardly reassembled pieces of Max's stuffed puma. A kettle squeals in the background.

Max, now an adult, rushes over to the steaming kettle and pours himself a cup of tea. He tries to take a sip, but recoils immediately-- it's too hot.

Clearly in a rush, Max bustles over to his dryer and quickly removes a pile of clothing. On his way out, he remembers the tea, stopping to take a sip. It's still too hot.

He rushes over to his bedroom closet, looking inside at something hidden from sight. Max shoves whatever's hanging inside into a large duffel bag and runs out of the room.

Almost outside of the door, Max spots the cup of tea again. Still. Hot. Irritated, he dumps it in the sink and dashes out the door.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - MORNING

Duffel bag slung over his shoulder, Max fumbles with his keys.

PENNY (O.S.)
What's the big rush about?

Max flips around to face PENNY (25), a shorter redheaded girl who stands in the doorway across from his.

MAX
(avoiding eye contact)
Oh, uh, late for work.

Max continues to fumble with his keys, clearly unsure as to which one locks his door. He doesn't have time for this.

PENNY
Again?

An awkward laugh from Max. He's still struggling with the keys, which Penny notices.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Do you need help?

Max finally makes eye contact with her.

MAX
I'm good, thanks.

Penny nods and stands in her doorway, continuing to watch Max struggle with his keys. It's painfully quiet, as Max makes no effort to continue the conversation.

PENNY
Well, good luck at work... whatever you do.

MAX
(flatly)
Thanks.

Pursing her lips, Penny gently closes her door.

At long last, Max finally manages to lock it. He sighs and rushes down the adjacent stairwell.

INT. MAX'S CAR - MORNING

Max chucks the duffel bag into the back seat and starts up his car, which has clearly seen better days. A cat-shaped air freshener dangles from his rear view mirror.

Just as Max backs out of the parking lot, we hear a loud CRUNCH.

MAX

Shit.

Max turns around to see that he's run over an active sprinkler, which now gushes water all over the lawn.

He checks his watch. 9:46. No time. He screeches out of the lot and speeds around the corner of the empty suburban street.

INT. PITTSBURGH PUMAS LOCKER ROOM - MORNING

Unlike his high school locker room, this one gleams with beautiful royal blue finishes, a custom carpet with the team logo, and perfectly laid out uniforms.

A sweaty Max shoves his way through the entrance, duffel bag slung over his shoulder.

COLTON (O.S.)

Yo! Max!

COLTON O'CONNELL (27), a fiery redhead with two full sleeves of tattoos, jogs over to Max's locker. The team captain patch gleams on the upper right area of his jersey.

MAX

(awkwardly)

Hey.

COLTON

How was your weekend? Get up to anything crazy?

Avoiding eye contact, Max unzips his bag and takes out several pieces of furry black cloth.

MAX

No. Did you?

COLTON

(laughing)

Boy, am I glad you asked! Yes, dude! Pat, you tell him!

PAT (O.S.)
(yelling)
What?

COLTON
(yelling back)
About our weekend!

PAT (O.S.)
I'm kinda busy right now.

Paying little mind to the conversation, Max starts slipping the pieces of cloth over his limbs and pulls out a Puma head-- the same one from his childhood.

COLTON
Listen man, you gotta come out with us next time. You can't avoid my invites forever.

MAX
It's just... not something I usually do.

COLTON
All good, all good. But hey, I'll take good care of ya. Promise.

Colton gives a suggestive wink.

MAX
Maybe.

COLTON
Swear you'll come with sometime soon?

MAX
(cracking a smile)
Sure. I'll come next time.

Colton WHOOPS in excitement.

A few players turn around, annoyed. They're clearly less energetic than Colton is.

COLTON
See you soon, dude. Good luck out there!

MAX
Thanks. You too.

COLTON
(announcing)
Let's go boys!

The rest of the team rallies as they head out the locker room doors, whooping and chanting with excitement.

Max, on the other hand, continues his manual routine process of equipping his costume, finally zipping up the final pieces and putting on the head.

EXT. PITTSBURGH PUMAS FOOTBALL STADIUM - DAY

Max steps out into the field, exhibiting thousands of seats painted electric blue. Fans pour in from all directions.

Under his mask, we see Max smile for a moment.

LINDSAY
Prince?

Max turns to see LINDSAY (35), a well-dressed woman with a microphone headset and a clipboard.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)
You got the performance plan for today, right?

Max gives a thumbs-up with his comedically large paws.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)
Great. When halftime hits, we need you over by the top of section 271. The actor is wearing a red hat and sunglasses, plus a Pumas jersey. Good?

Another enthusiastic paws-up from Max.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)
Perfect. Good luck.

Right as Lindsay rushes away, she turns around again.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)
Oh yeah-- Marty here will be your attendant for today.

MARTY (20), a wide-eyed intern, steps out from behind Lindsay.

MARTY

Hi, sir! It's an honor! I'm just starting.

Max pats Marty on the shoulder.

LINDSAY

Cool. Let Marty know if you need anything at all. See you out there.

Clearly in a rush, Lindsay hurries away, leaving Marty and Max alone with each other.

MARTY

(whispering to Max)

Y'know, you can still talk to me if you want. It's too loud in here for anyone to notice.

Max shakes his head.

MARTY (CONT'D)

(confused)

Why not?

Max holds up an X with his arms, still shaking his head. Marty looks very disappointed.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Okay.

Hearing cheers from the stands, Max turns to face the front row of seats. He waves excitedly and high-fives a YOUNG FAN (12).

Marty taps Max's shoulder.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Um, Prince, someone is trying to talk to you.

Max whips around, his gigantic tail smacking a LITTLE GIRL (5) in the face. She immediately starts crying and turns to her MOTHER (30s).

MARTY (CONT'D)

So sorry miss, he can't see too well out of the mask--

MOTHER

(clutching her crying daughter)

Unacceptable! Do you understand how much we paid for these tickets?

While Marty attempts to console the girl's mother, Max crouches down and tries to wave gently at the girl.

She turns around to face him... which only makes her cry harder.

MARTY

I'm so sorry, it's my first day and-

MOTHER

Is there someone more important I could talk to about this?

Behind the mask, Max bites his lip, still trying to cheer up the little girl. Worst first week ever.

MARTY

Yes, of course, let me just--

As Lindsay passes by the sideline, she notices the scene that has unfolded.

LINDSAY

Marty, is something wrong?

Before Marty can respond, the mother shoves herself in front of him.

MOTHER

Yes, something is wrong. My husband paid big money for us to get the Deluxe Pregame Package and your little mascot here assaulted my daughter.

When Marty, Lindsay, and the mother turn to face the young girl, they see Max happily playing with her on the ground.

The mother is clearly surprised.

LINDSAY

Assaulted? What do you mean by that?

MOTHER

Well, um, he turned around and whacked her in the face with his tail.

LINDSAY

Intentionally?

MARTY

No, no. He was talking to some people in the stands.

LINDSAY

(to Marty)

We can talk about this later.

Marty's face flushes.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)

(to the mother)

I'm so sorry about that, ma'am.
We'll most definitely make up for this incident. I recommend you go speak with Guest Services over by the End Zone.

Without responding, the mother turns back around to her daughter, who is still playing patty-cake with Max on the turf field.

MOTHER

(to her daughter)

Come on, honey.

Entrenched in her playtime, the daughter doesn't listen. With a sigh, her mother grabs her hand and pulls her away, leading her to cry again.

Stressed, Lindsay turns to Max, who has risen to his feet.

LINDSAY

Listen, we can't have things like that happening on a daily basis. That's why we have Marty here, but he can't do everything. That could be a lawsuit on our hands.

Max nods.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)

I'd stay away from the sidelines for now.

Lindsay quickly bustles away from the two of them.

MARTY

Hey, uh, sorry I didn't warn you quick enough. I didn't realize how tiny that kid was.

Max waves his hand, accepting Marty's apology.

Suddenly, fireworks encircle the stadium as the Pumas take the field, fans screaming from all directions.

Max runs up and down the sidelines, flipping, dancing, and high-fiving fans as Marty awkwardly stands by.

Max's performance settles down as the whistle is finally blown.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Um, it's technically time for your break now. Do you want me to come with you?

Max indicates that he's good on his own.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Okay. Just make sure you're back by the end of halftime.

Max nods and jogs back toward the locker room.

INT. PITTSBURGH PUMAS LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Max takes off the mascot head, his dark hair drenched in sweat. He grabs the water bottle from his locker and immediately chugs it all.

He grabs his tail. How could he have hit a kid? That's never happened!

Ashamed, he rams his head into a locker. BANG!

The locker room door opens and the team piles in. Max tries to brush off how upset he is, but Colton takes notice.

COLTON

(sitting down on the bench
with him)

Hey, what's up?

MAX

Nothing.

COLTON

You good?

MAX

Yeah, just... made a mistake.

COLTON

Dude, don't sweat it. All of us screw up on the field on the daily.

MAX

I guess.

Colton puts his hand on Max's shoulder. Max looks up with a subtle smile.

PAT (O.S)

Things getting hot and
heavy over there, Colton?

The other players erupt in laughter

COLTON

Can you guys shut the fuck up for
once?

The heckler reveals himself. It's PAT JONES (32), a buff
linebacker wearing a sweatband.

PAT

Ooh, looks like someone's getting
defensive over his man.

Colton glares at Pat as Max clenches his fists. The room
falls silent.

PAT (CONT'D)

Sorry, over his kitty cat.

Unable to take the teasing anymore, Max rises to his feet and
squares up to Pat. He's absolutely puny in comparison.

PAT (CONT'D)

Don't think you wanna try that,
kitty cat.

Colton pulls Max back and pushes himself in front of Pat.

COLTON

Give it a rest.

Pat shrugs and turns back to the other players. Casual
conversations start back up.

Colton turns to Max.

COLTON (CONT'D)

Well, I better get back out there.

Colton rests a hand on Max's shoulder.

COLTON (CONT'D)

Don't beat yourself up, okay?

EXT. PITTSBURGH PUMAS FOOTBALL STADIUM - EVENING

Just as Max heads out the tunnel to the field, he's greeted by Lindsay.

LINDSAY

Hey. We've postponed the actor interaction to a later game. We need to talk in private about the incident earlier today.

Max tears up behind the mask, nodding his head.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)

It wasn't really your fault. We'll be talking to Marty too. Just a learning process. Go ahead and take the rest of the day off.

Max nods again and turns back toward the locker room.

INT. MAX'S CAR - EVENING

Completely out of costume, Max fastens his seat belt. He leans forward into his steering wheel and cries.

After a few moments, he leans up and starts the ignition, slowly driving out of the sea of cars in the stadium lot.

INT. PRISON PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Max sits down in a stool, face to face with a glass window. His mother, clearly aged from the hardships of prison, sits down across from him.

LOLA

(softly)

Hi, honey.

MAX

Hi, Mom.

LOLA

So, how was the big game yesterday?
Everything go well?

Unable to mask his emotions, Max's eyes well up.

MAX

Kind of.

LOLA
Hey, hey, honey. It's okay. Talk to me.

MAX
I hit a little girl in the face.

LOLA
(shocked)
On purpose?

MAX
No, of course not on purpose. There was some kid helping me who told me to turn around and didn't warn me about her.

LOLA
Sounds like it wasn't your fault then.

MAX
It was, though. I wasn't careful enough. If I had just--

LOLA
Enough! Do you still have the job?

MAX
Yeah, but they definitely weren't happy with me.

LOLA
Listen to me, Max. This has been your dream since you were a baby. Don't let one hard day ruin that for--

The line cuts out. A teary-eyed Max slowly hangs the phone back up, watching as two brawny PRISON GUARDS quickly escort his mother from the booth.

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tucked into bed, Max rolls over to turn off his lamp. He tosses and turns in the dark for a few minutes before getting up, grabbing his tattered stuffed puma, and repositioning in bed.

He snuggles the puma up against his face before drifting off.

INT. PITTSBURGH PUMAS LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Max, fully in costume aside from the mascot head, turns the corner from his changing room into the players' space.

Just as he's about to leave the door, a familiar voice calls out.

TEDDY (O.S.)

No way.

The blood drains from Max's face as he whips around to face Teddy, who has finally grown into his teenage body.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

(slapping Max's back)

Max fuckin' Hellman.

Max lets out a nervous laugh.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Shit, dude, you're still doing the whole mascot thing?

MAX

Uh. Yeah.

Since when was Teddy actually good at football? Max is at a complete loss for words.

TEDDY

Huh. See you around, pussy boy.

Teddy walks off nonchalantly, leaving Max frozen in shock.

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

Meow.

Max stands completely still as the rest of the players funnel out of the room.

LINDSAY (O.S.)

We need Prince! Fifteen minutes 'till kickoff!

Max stays still. His hands are visibly shaking, even through the big paws. He clenches them into fists and puts on the mascot head.

EXT. PITTSBURGH PUMAS FOOTBALL STADIUM - DAY

Alongside the team cheerleaders, Max flips, dances, and waves at fans. Lindsay hurriedly calls him over from the sideline.

LINDSAY

We're going full out with the fan interaction today. As I said earlier, red hat, blue jersey, sunglasses. Section 271. Head over now.

Max nods and gives a thumbs up.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)

Oh, and we're finding a replacement for Marty. So please hold it together just for today.

Max nods again and ducks out of the main field, water bottle in hand.

As he makes his way to the proper section, several fans stop him for selfies. The clock blares, indicating halftime has begun.

ANNOUNCER

And now... the dance cam! If the camera lands on you, you better be dancing!

The big screen flips between a plethora of excited, sometimes drunk fans dancing awkwardly on the big screen.

Finally, the camera flips to the FAKE FAN in the red hat, blue jersey, and sunglasses. He's on his phone, not paying attention.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Uh oh... Someone's not dancing...

Max enters the frame, standing right behind the fake fan. Hands on his hips, he pretends to check the time. The crowd gawks and cheers.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Looks like Prince isn't too happy about all this.

Max whips out the water bottle and dumps it all over the fake fan. The crowd erupts in laughter.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

And that is exactly why we dance during the dance cam!

Max high-fives surrounding fans as he heads back to the field. Nailed it. We see Max's huge grin underneath the mask.

He glances back up at the big screen and is met with an emotionless player profile of Teddy.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Let's talk for a minute about our newest star player here. Teddy Trimble has been making waves in the league for the past few years.

Max freezes again, clenching his paws. He doesn't even notice the CHILD in the row next to him begging for his attention.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

After trading Colton O'Connell to Minnesota, the team needed a reliable quarterback to strengthen their offense.

Red-headed Colton and his warm smile appear onscreen for just a second. He's gone?

Max's smile falls behind the mask.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

And that's where Trimble comes in. He's already made a few phenomenal plays during his first game here and we're all excited to see what else he can do.

The crowd cheers.

Max remains still, paws clenched, with several fans still trying to get his attention.

He snaps out of it when a LITTLE BOY tugs on his shirt.

LITTLE BOY

Prince? Are you okay?

Brought back to reality, Max switches back into character and kneels down to hug the child.

It's a long hug.

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Laying in his bed in the dark, Max stares at his phone. He opens his texts and types in Colton's contact info.

After typing and retyping a message several times, he lands on a simple "Hey."

The text is immediately "read." He sees Colton start typing, but he stops.

Max stares at the screen and waits.

Nothing.

He slams the phone down on his nightstand and pulls the covers up over his head.

Max leans over and picks his phone up again, slowly typing "Teddy Trimble" into the search bar. A plethora of news articles pop up.

"Superstar Quarterback Teddy Trimble Moves Into \$3.5 Million Pittsburgh Mansion" sits at the top of the list.

Max's brow furrows.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Max, almost entirely dressed in his mascot costume, opens his door face-to-face with Penny, who wears a nurse uniform.

Great.

PENNY
(surprised)
What's got you going away at this hour?

Penny scans Max's outfit with confusion.

MAX
(panicked)
Uh, work.

PENNY
At 3:30? I just got off my night shift!

MAX
Yeah.

PENNY
Oh, okay. Well, before you go, um, "work," I have kind of a weird question.

MAX
(flatly)
Okay.

PENNY
(whispering)
Is it a sex thing?

Max looks at her with utter confusion.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Your job, I mean. And I'm not
judging you of course, I was just
curious, and--

MAX
(annoyed)
No. It's not a sex thing.

Penny's cheery expression falls.

PENNY
Oh. Sorry. I didn't mean that in a
bad way, it's just that you're an
attractive guy, and I--

MAX
I have to go.

Max quickly turns away from Penny and heads down the
staircase. Penny stands in her doorway, shocked and confused.

INT. MAX'S CAR - NIGHT

Max adjusts his rear-view mirror, catching a glimpse of the
sprinkler he destroyed a few days ago now creating a massive
puddle.

He sighs and turns on "Pumped Up Kicks" by Foster the People
on his beat-up car radio.

EXT. WEALTHY NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

The music in Max's car blasts as he whips around gated homes
and perfectly cut grass.

GPS
Go past this stop sign. Your
destination is on your right.

As Max comes to a halt at the stop sign, the most impressive
mansion yet beams on his right hand side.

It's the same one from the news article he was reading in
bed.

INT. MAX'S CAR - NIGHT

Max parks right in front of the mansion, taking a second to stare at it as the song concludes.

He slips on his mascot head and opens the car door.

EXT. TEDDY'S MANSION - NIGHT

Paws shaking, Max walks up to the gated entrance. He reveals a thick butcher knife from his suit pocket.

Max looks down at the knife for a second, then at the mansion.

What the fuck is he thinking? Is he actually insane? No way.

He quickly jogs back to his car and takes off.

INT. PITTSBURGH PUMAS FOOTBALL STADIUM - DAY

Max stands along the sidelines, doing his usual gig of flipping, dancing, and attending to fans.

Teddy carries out a play, almost tripping Max as another player tackles him for the ball.

TEDDY

Sorry about that, pussy boy.

Teddy winks at Max before returning to the field.

Beneath the mask, Max is fuming. His fit of rage is interrupted when Lindsay taps on his shoulder.

LINDSAY

Hey Prince. Fan interaction went great last week. We have a new attendant with us.

LEO (17), a clearly uninterested teenage boy, forcibly gives Max a wave.

LEO

Hi.

Max waves enthusiastically and shakes Leo's hand. Leo wipes it off on his shirt immediately after.

LINDSAY

(smiling)

Leo is actually Trimble's son, so
be extra nice to him! He's super
excited to be here with you.

Max glances back at Leo, whose vacant expression is anything
but excited.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)

Well, I'll leave you guys to it!

Leo stares at Max with his hands in his pockets.

LEO

So do I have to stay here, like,
the whole time?

Max nods his head.

LEO (CONT'D)

(groaning)

I just wanted to check out the bar.
This is stupid.

Max purses his lips behind the mask. He motions to Leo as he
heads up to the stands.

Dragging his feet, Leo follows behind.

LEO (CONT'D)

You know, my dad forced me to do
this.

Shocking. Max doesn't even bother to turn around and
acknowledge the statement.

LEO (CONT'D)

He told me I could learn something
by hanging around a loser. That I
should want to make "better
choices" so I don't end up like
you.

Max freezes.

LEO (CONT'D)

But honestly? I don't care about
any of this bullshit. I think it
was a stupid message.

Leo doesn't notice that Max has stopped and accidentally runs
right into him.

Max turns around, his fake fangs gleaming in front of Leo's face. It's actually kind of frightening.

LEO (CONT'D)

Uh, sorry.

A beat. Max puts his hand on Leo's shoulder and keeps walking.

The two of them are stopped again by a TEENAGE GIRL. Instinctively, Max turns around and gives her an excited wave.

She looks at Max with disgust before turning to face Leo.

TEENAGE GIRL

Um, excuse me, but are you Leo Trimble?

She tucks her hair behind her ear and bats her eyes at him.

LEO

(sighing)

Yeah. Why?

TEENAGE GIRL

Really! Wow, I can't believe I'm getting to meet you! We actually go to the same school, you know.

LEO

Oh. I didn't know that.

TEENAGE GIRL

We have English together?

LEO

Oh.

Max crosses his arms in annoyance. His job isn't to babysit. He starts continuing up the aisle, praying he runs into a fan or two.

LEO (CONT'D)

I gotta go.

TEENAGE GIRL

Can I at least give you my number?

LEO

Sorry, I'm working.

Leo hurries away and stands by Max's side.

LEO (CONT'D)

Thank god you got me out of there.
That's like the third one of those
today.

Max doesn't acknowledge the statement. Just as he reaches the top of the stands, another teenage voice calls out.

TEENAGE GIRL #2 (O.S.)

Leo Trimble! Oh my god!

LEO

Just keep going.

Leo pushes Max ahead of him, causing Max to almost trip over the last step. A few fans turn around at the commotion.

Thankfully, Max pulls it all off with some quirky hand motions to indicate that he's okay.

Max turns around and scolds Leo, pointing his paw in his dissatisfied face.

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Clearly frustrated from the events of the day, Max aggressively throws his duffel bag onto his bed.

His fit is interrupted with a loud DING from his cell phone. He scrambles to take it out of his duffel bag.

A message from Colton occupies the screen. "Hey Max!!! You free tonight?"

Max squints in contemplation for a moment. He types out several potential responses.

"No I'm not." Deleted... he's always free.

"I'm tired." Deleted again. He's ALWAYS tired.

"I'm around." Max stares at the message for a minute before wincing and pressing send.

Colton types back... "Sweet. Meet me at Garrison's?"

Max inhales sharply.

INT. MAX'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

START MONTAGE:

- Max tries on three different shirts before settling on one.

- Max digs through his cabinets until he finally finds hair gel. It expired a LONG time ago. He uses it anyways.
- Max layers his deodorant on at least 5 times per armpit. He smells them and then adds another layer, just in case.
- Max practices his expressions in the mirror. He smiles-- no, too big of a grin. He puts on a serious face-- no, kinda scary. He finally puts his hands in his pockets and gives a relaxed smile.
- All prepped for the evening, Max flicks the light off.

END MONTAGE.

INT. MAX'S CAR - NIGHT

Max pulls up to Garrison's, a bustling nightclub with young men and women flocking to its entrance.

He follows a bold sign labeled "VALET" and rolls down his window to face the PARKING ATTENDANT (35), a clean-cut man in an expensive suit.

PARKING ATTENDANT
You here for valet?

MAX
(stuttering)
Uh, yes.

PARKING ATTENDANT
It's fifty. Cash or card?

MAX
Fifty dollars?

PARKING ATTENDANT
(annoyed)
Yeah, fifty dollars. You parking here or not? Got a long line behind you.

Max turns around to face a line of about six more cars. One of them gives him a honk.

MAX
(rushed)
I'll do card.

EXT. GARRISON'S ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Eyes down with his hands in his pockets, Max walks briskly toward the entrance. Several CLUBGOERS eye him up and down, scowling at his mediocre attire.

Max finally makes it to the doors, where a line a mile long seems to stretch onwards. His jaw drops until he hears a familiar voice--

COLTON (O.S.)

Yo Max!

Max turns around, along with several of the clubgoers in line. Obviously recognizing Colton, they whisper amongst one another.

Colton jogs up to join Max at the front of the line. He looks absolutely fantastic, his ginger hair and beard freshly cut.

COLTON (CONT'D)

(going in for a hug)

Hey! How you been?

Unsure how to react, Max awkwardly shakes Colton's hand instead of hugging him back. Colton brushes it off casually.

MAX

Good.

COLTON

Yeah? Everything okay down there without me around?

MAX

Well--

COLTON

Actually, hold that thought. I need a drink.

Colton turns to face DIEGO (36), the club's bouncer.

COLTON (CONT'D)

Diego, my man! What's good?

The two exchange a fist bump.

DIEGO

Ah, nothing much! Same old same old around here. You going in?

COLTON
Yes sir! My buddy Max is coming too. He's part of the team!

DIEGO
Hm, I don't recognize him. Nice to meet you, Max.

Max smiles shyly.

COLTON
You may not recognize him, but I'm sure you'd recognize him in costume!

Diego laughs awkwardly, clearly confused.

COLTON (CONT'D)
Come on man, he's our mascot! He's Prince!

DIEGO
Ohhh! Very cool! You guys go right ahead.

COLTON
Thanks man. Gonna miss this place.

Colton grabs Max's hand and takes him inside, surpassing the entire line of people waiting.

INT. GARRISON'S BAR - NIGHT

Still holding Max's hand, Colton guides him over to a booth near the crowded dance floor.

Almost instantly, SHARICE (26), an extremely pretty bartender, greets them.

SHARICE
Colton! Great to see you!

COLTON
Great to see you too, Sharice!
Let's get this night started. Max, what do you want?

Max stares at Colton, panicked.

MAX
Uhh... I'll just have water.

COLTON

(to Max)

Come on man, don't be shy! Drinks
are on me!

(to Sharice)

Four shots, please.

SHARICE

What kind of vodka?

COLTON

(winking)

Just the usual. Thanks.

SHARICE

Got it! Be right back with those!

Colton waves farewell to her.

COLTON

So, I take it it's your first time
here?

Max nods.

COLTON (CONT'D)

In that case, welcome! You look
great.

Max smiles and blushes.

MAX

Thanks. You too.

COLTON

Anyways, what did you ask me
outside? Totally blanked.

MAX

Oh. Just about why you left the
team.

COLTON

Yes! That was it. Wasn't much of a
choice. Got traded over to
Milwaukee.

MAX

Why are you still here then?

COLTON

Still finalizing some paperwork and
other shit like that before I head
over.

MAX

Oh.

A beat. Max contemplates for a moment.

MAX (CONT'D)

I miss having you on the team.

COLTON

Aw, thanks man! I'm gonna miss you and the other guys! The guy who's replacing me is apparently pretty great. Haven't met him, though.

MAX

Teddy?

COLTON

Yeah, that's him!

Sharice arrives back with a tray of shots-- and Max's water.

COLTON (CONT'D)

Amazing! Thank you, Sharice!

SHARICE

Of course. Enjoy.

Sharice blows Colton a kiss as she leaves the table.

COLTON

She's a real sweetheart.

Max scoffs.

COLTON (CONT'D)

But yeah, super glad you could come out tonight. One of my last trips here before heading out.

(gesturing to the shots)

Shall we?

Max nods.

COLTON (CONT'D)

Alright! Let's do this!

Colton slams his shot on the table and downs it. Slightly confused, Max follows suit.

Max starts coughing, immediately turning to his water. It's his first shot, but Colton doesn't need to know that...

COLTON (CONT'D)
First shot?

Max's face flushes. Could he seriously tell?

MAX
Maybe.

COLTON
(laughing)
Hey, pretty good for your first
one. I won't make you take the
rest.

Almost instantly, Colton downs the other three shots without
flinching. He raises his hand to get Sharice's attention.

COLTON (CONT'D)
(yelling)
Sharice! Two more?

Sharice flashes a thumbs up.

COLTON (CONT'D)
Dude, tell me more about the whole
mascot thing.

MAX
What do you mean?

COLTON
Like, how did you even figure out
you wanted to do that?

MAX
Oh. Well, I actually grew up really
liking Prince.

COLTON
Yeah? You go to the games?

Max purses his lips as he reflects on attending games with
his dad.

MAX
(quietly)
Yeah.

COLTON
That's sick. Kinda like how I
figured out I wanted to play
football.

Sharice arrives with the other two shots.

COLTON (CONT'D)
Sharice, my love! Thank you!

Colton kisses Sharice's hand. She blushes.

SHARICE
Of course. This round's on me.

With a sly wink, Sharice hurries away. Max twiddles with his thumbs as Colton easily downs the shots.

MAX
You sure you don't need any water?

COLTON
(slurring slightly)
Nah man, I'm totally good.

MAX
Okay.

COLTON
But yeah man, totally dig
everything you've been doing out on
the field for the past few years.
You really get the energy up.

Max smiles with disbelief.

MAX
Really?

COLTON
Duh! You sure as hell get my energy
up.

Colton smile suggestively at Max, who doesn't know how to react.

MAX
Well... I'm glad.

Max reaches gently for Colton's hand, but then recoils.

COLTON
I'm honestly a big fan of pumas in
particular. The Milwaukee mascot is
lame as fuck. Who cares about a
lumberjack?

Max laughs. A beat. He can't remember the last time he had a conversation this long with anyone other than his mom.

COLTON (CONT'D)
Do you wanna hear what I think my mascot would be?

MAX
Sure.

COLTON
I think I'd be a lion. Or a tiger. Some sort of big cat. A predator, for sure. Got a wild side, if you know what I mean.

Colton winks at Max. He chuckles uncomfortably.

MAX
I mean, even though I'm always dressed like a puma, I definitely don't feel like one.

COLTON
You're awesome out there, man. Seriously.

Colton reaches for Max's hand. They lock fingers.

COLTON (CONT'D)
You wanna get out of here?

MAX
Okay. My car is here, though.

COLTON
Down to go back to yours?

MAX
Uh, it's kind of messy right now--

COLTON
Oh please, I don't mind.

Colton comes close to Max's ear.

COLTON (CONT'D)
Drive me home, Prince.

Max gulps awkwardly, his cheeks red. He's literally NEVER been in this position before.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Holding Colton's hand, Max approaches his front door. As he works to unlock it, Penny opens up her door, face-to-face with Colton.

PENNY

Oh! Pardon me!

COLTON

(drunkenly)

No worries!

PENNY

Oh my god-- are you Colton
O'Connell?

COLTON

That's me!

Max finally gets the door open. Without even turning back to greet Penny, he pulls Colton inside and slams the door shut.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

COLTON

She seems nice!

MAX

She's fine. Kind of annoying.

Colton laughs, louder than was necessary.

COLTON

You're funny, Max. You know that?

Max smiles warmly.

MAX

Thanks.

COLTON

So, you got a bedroom here or what?

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Max scrambles to make his bed as he enters with Colton. He throws some dirty clothes off his sheets onto the floor.

COLTON

(gasping)

No fuckin' way.

Max whips around to see Colton making his way toward his stuffed Puma. He quickly whisks it away before Colton can get too close.

MAX

Sorry, it's from when I was a kid.

COLTON

No way! Let me see him!

Clutching tight to the plush toy, Max hesitates before handing it over to Colton.

COLTON (CONT'D)

Why's he look like that?

MAX

(defensively)

Like what?

COLTON

All fucked up.

MAX

(snatching his toy)

It's a long story.

COLTON

Someone's feisty!

Colton sits down on Max's bed.

COLTON (CONT'D)

Why don't you bring that big cat energy over to me?

Max freezes. He's at a loss for words.

Colton sits up and pulls Max down by his shirt collar.

COLTON (CONT'D)

Come on, don't be afraid.

Max breathes heavily, now face to face with Colton. Colton leans in to kiss him... and Max kisses him back.

However, it's very obvious that Max has never kissed anyone before. The kiss is a little hard to watch.

Colton pulls back for a moment.

MAX

Sorry, I don't know what I'm doing.

COLTON
Don't apologize.

Colton looks around Max's room.

COLTON (CONT'D)
Say, do you happen to have the suit
here?

MAX
(taken aback)
Suit?

COLTON
Your costume. Prince.

MAX
Oh. Yeah. Why?

A beat as Colton thinks about what he's about to say.

COLTON
You should whip that bad boy out.

Max shifts with discomfort.

MAX
Why?

COLTON
(getting up from the bed)
It's fine if you don't want to. I
should head back anyways.

MAX
(grabbing Colton's arm)
No, no. I'll go get it.

Colton gives a mischievous smile.

COLTON
Good boy.

Max flushes red as he clumsily opens the closet and grabs the
duffel bag.

MAX
So, uh, what exactly do you want me
to do with this?

COLTON
You know what I want, Prince. Suit
up.

Looking at the floor, Max shifts awkwardly.

MAX

Okay, it takes me a minute, though.

COLTON

I don't mind.

Max starts to unzip his pants before facing the other way. Is it supposed to feel this awkward?

COLTON (CONT'D)

Hey, why'd you turn away? I want to see you.

With a deep breath in, Max faces the other way and continues to undress until he's just in his underwear.

COLTON (CONT'D)

Me-yow.

Flushed red, Max musters a smile before reaching for the furry leg covers.

COLTON (CONT'D)

No no, just the head is good.

MAX

I can't really see that well with it on.

COLTON

As long as you can still feel my touch, that should be just fine.

Relaxing a bit, Max smiles again before reaching into his bag and putting on the mascot head.

It looks massive on top of his pale, skinny body.

COLTON (CONT'D)

Now come here.

Max takes a few slow steps towards Colton, who now sits on the edge of the bed.

Colton grabs Max's hand and pulls him in, staring into the big plastic eyes of the costume.

COLTON (CONT'D)

You're perfect.

A smile underneath Max's mask. He feels safe like this.

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - MORNING

A loud SLAM from what seems to be Max's front door wakes him up. He looks next to him-- Colton's gone.

Prince's empty eyes stare at him from the foot of the bed. Sitting up, he examines it.

His eyes widen when he sees several white splotches on the otherwise spotless fur. He covers his mouth in shock and springs out of bed.

INT. MAX'S KITCHEN - DAY

Wearing rubber gloves, Max stands at his sink, relentlessly scrubbing the spots on the mask with a sponge.

The TV echoes in the background as Max scrubs even harder.

SPORTS NEWSCASTER

Speaking of highlights, it's only necessary we talk a little bit about Teddy Trimble's superstar plays this week as the newest member of the Pittsburgh Pumas.

Shocked by the mention of Teddy's name, Max drops his sponge in the sink. He picks it up and returns to cleaning.

SPORTS NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)

That's right, three touchdowns in one game. That's more than we saw from Colton O'Connell during his five-year run as quarterback.

Scrubber brush in hand, Max turns back to face the TV. He swoons over the photos of Colton.

SPORTS NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)

This is going to be one hell of a season thanks to Trimble.

Colton's gorgeous face is replaced with a photo of Teddy's irritating grin. Max accidentally snaps the brush in half with anger.

Sighing, he turns off the television and sets the head out to dry.

INT. PRISON PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Max sits down facing the divider. The same two prison guards from earlier sit Lola down in front of Max.

LOLA
Hi, honey!

MAX
Hi, mom.

LOLA
You look so happy! I never see you like this.

MAX
Really?

LOLA
I mean, not since you got your job. Tell me-- what's the latest?

MAX
Well... I went to a bar.

LOLA
Oooh, what was the occasion? A date?

Max shifts in his seat.

MAX
I don't know. Maybe?

LOLA
Max! You're getting so old! Tell me everything about this girl.

MAX
It was actually with--

Before Max can finish his sentence, Lola lets out a somewhat concerning cough. She barely manages to catch her breath.

MAX (CONT'D)
Mom? Are you okay?

LOLA
(clearing her throat)
Yes, yes. Of course. Just a nasty cough going around here.

MAX
It sounded really bad.

LOLA
It's okay, honey. What were you saying?

MAX
Oh, um, nothing. The date was good. That's all.

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Max's face is illuminated by the glow of his phone. He opens up his messages with Colton.

"Did you get home safe?"

Max hovers his thumb over the screen for a minute before hitting send.

Read. Colton starts typing...

Then stops.

Max sighs. He pulls his stuffed animal close to his face and closes his eyes.

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Max jolts awake to the sound of his alarm clock. 6:30. It's still dark out.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Duffel bag slung over his shoulder, Max wheels a rolling suitcase behind him as he rushes out his front door.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - MORNING

Just as Max closes the door behind him, Penny opens her door across from his, clad in her nurse's uniform.

PENNY
Looks like we both have the morning shift!

MAX
Yeah. I'm late for my flight.

As Max turns around to leave, Penny continues the conversation.

PENNY

How exciting! Is it a work trip?

Penny winks. Max is unamused.

MAX

Yeah, actually.

He turns around and attempts to leave again.

PENNY

Where to?

MAX

(walking away)

New York.

PENNY

Oooh! Are you going to--

Max heads downstairs before Penny can finish her sentence.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - MORNING

A pack of FOOTBALL PLAYERS from the Pittsburgh Pumas stands tiredly by the boarding area, all wearing matching travel outfits and luxury headphones.

Max, however, stands to the side, wearing a hoodie and some sweatpants.

He checks his phone. Still no reply from Colton.

TEDDY (O.S.)

Pussy boy!

Max looks up immediately, panic in his eyes. They narrow when he realizes it's Teddy. He looks back at his phone.

MAX

Hi.

TEDDY

Ready for the big game in the big apple?

MAX

Yeah.

A beat.

TEDDY

Listen, man. I wanted to give you a heads up about Leo, my son.

Max finally looks up from his phone screen.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

(leaning in, quietly)

He's a good kid. Because he's my kid. But you better be nice to him.

MAX

What do you mean?

TEDDY

He told me you weren't really talking to him.

MAX

I never talk in costume. It's protocol.

TEDDY

Whatever, man. I don't give a fuck about the protocol. Just be nice to my kid. Understand?

Max nods.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Thanks, pussy boy.

Teddy walks away nonchalantly. Max looks a little scared.

INT. TEAM AIRPLANE - MORNING

Max is the last one to board the plane. He squeezes into an aisle seat next to a particularly bulky FOOTBALL PLAYER.

The player, who's wearing headphones, doesn't even acknowledge Max as he crams himself next to him.

Practically hanging off his seat, Max opens his messages. Still no response from Colton.

EXT. NEW YORK AIRPORT CURBSIDE - NIGHT

Snow trickles down from the overcast sky as the players (and Max) wait for their bus to arrive.

A vibration from Max's pocket. It's a message from Colton.

"Got home safe alright."

Max smiles. Colton begins typing again.

"Attachment: 1 Image."

Max repeatedly mashes his screen to see the image, but it won't load.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Max wheels his bag through the front door of his room and lays down on his bed with a sigh.

He opens up his phone and immediately connects to the hotel wifi, then opens up his messages.

Colton's image has finally loaded. It's a shirtless picture of him in the mirror, posing his hand like a paw.

Max stares at the picture for a long time, smiling.

INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - NIGHT

Now naked aside from his tighty-whities, Max awkwardly poses in the mirror. He takes at least ten different pictures and tries out several positions before finally sending one to Colton.

He's typing...

"Nice. But where's Prince?"

Max purses his lips. He leaves for a moment and comes back wearing the mascot head.

Struggling to see through the mask, it takes him twice the amount of time to strike a good picture and send it to Colton.

He takes the mask off immediately.

"That's more like it."

"Let's just say I'm definitely purring right now."

Mask in one hand and phone in the other, Max grins.

INT. NEW YORK STADIUM TUNNEL - DAY

Max waits in the "AWAY" team tunnel, fully suited up. He jumps up and down and shakes his big paws to warm himself up.

A few FOOTBALL PLAYERS stream out from the locker room. As the crowd passes by, he hears a call he's all too familiar with.

FOOTBALL PLAYER

Meow!

The huddle of players chuckles as they take their places at the front of the tunnel. Max stops warming up and clenches his fists.

As more and more players get ready to take the field, each one passes by with a teasing "meow."

Eventually, Teddy escapes from a clump of reporters and makes it to Max's area of the tunnel.

TEDDY

(slapping Max's back)

Pussy boy! Beautiful day to play
some ball in the big apple, huh?

Max stands menacingly still.

MAX

Did you tell them to do that?

TEDDY

Do what? And isn't it "protocol"
not to talk in costume?

MAX

Tell them to meow at me.

TEDDY

I mean, yeah! Fun little team-
bonding thing I thought of as the
new team captain.

Teddy pats Max's back and jogs to join the other players before turning around for a second.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Meow!

Max's fists shake in anger. Fireworks erupt from the other end of the field as the opposing team steps out.

EXT. NEW YORK STADIUM - DAY

Max sprints out behind the players as they sprint onto the turf. The crowd of New York fans boos loudly at them.

Despite the negative chants, Max is completely riled up. He performs several front flips and revs up the small section of Pumas fans in the stadium.

INT. STADIUM BATHROOM - DAY

The deafening roars of the stadium are suddenly contrasted with the silence of a crappy bathroom stall.

Max sits on the toilet staring down at his phone, his mascot head hung up on the stall hook. He's drenched in sweat.

He opens up his message app and goes straight to his conversation with Colton.

His last text to him reads "Can't stop thinking about u." Colton read it last night. No reply.

Max clenches his fists and punches the stall wall. The whole thing rattles loudly.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Max lays awake, staring at the ceiling. He grabs his phone off his nightstand and opens his texts.

After staring longer at his unfinished conversation with Colton, he feverishly pounds his keyboard.

"Everything OK?"

Colton reads it immediately and begins typing. Max bites his lip.

"Don't message this number."

Max's eyes widen.

"Why?"

"Did I do something wrong?"

Colton begins typing.

"Teammate saw pics. Can't happen again."

He's still typing...

"Sorry. Goodbye."

Breathing heavily, Max sends a slew of messages in response.

"What?"

"R u serious?"

"Can I call you?"

"Let's talk about it"

"Colton please"

Colton doesn't read his messages this time.

Max throws his phone across the room and intentionally bangs his head back on the headboard as hard as he can, groaning with anger.

INT. PITTSBURGH AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

Max rolls his bag off the plane alongside the players. A few of them meow at him as they pass by, giggling to one another.

However, Max doesn't notice. His face is glued down at his phone screen, which displays his same texts to Colton from the night before-- still unread.

EXT. AIRPORT PARKING LOT - DAY

Max pops the trunk of his car and angrily throws his suitcase in. The whole car shakes from the force of its landing.

He throws open the car door.

INT. MAX'S CAR - DAY

As Max settles into the driver's seat, he opens his texts again and begins typing.

"Do u even care about me?"

This time, the text doesn't even deliver. Max digs his nails into the leather of his steering wheel, peeling off several chunks.

He taps on Colton's contact on his phone, pulling up his shared location. He transfers the address into his GPS and starts his engine.

EXT. COLTON'S HOUSE - EVENING

Max shuts the door to his car as he approaches the gates of Colton's luxurious home. A moving truck is parked in his driveway.

Hands shaking, Max knocks on his massive front doors.

He hears the door unlocking...

... but it isn't Colton who answers the door. It's Sharice, the waitress from the bar Max went to with Colton.

Except this time, she's not in uniform-- she's in one of Colton's oversized t-shirts and some lacy underwear.

She pulls the shirt down to cover her legs.

SHARICE

Um, hello?

COLTON (O.S.)

Who is that?

SHARICE

Are you with the moving company?

MAX

Um, no.

SHARICE

I feel like I recognize you from somewhere... I'm sorry. What's your name again?

MAX

Max.

Sharice's eyes widen with shock.

SHARICE

Colton! It's that weird guy you were warning me about!

Sharice runs away in fear.

Finally, a shirtless Colton makes his way to the front door. His eyes narrow when they meet Max's.

COLTON

Look, man. I told you to leave me alone.

MAX

But I just wanted to talk to you--

COLTON

There's nothing to talk about. We had some fun, but it's over.

MAX

Why? Just two days ago we were sending photos and--

COLTON

Exactly. And my teammate saw. I can't risk losing this job. It's all I have.

MAX

But you're all I have.

COLTON

Dude, I'm not into you like that. I'm sorry if I gave you the wrong idea.

Max stares at Colton, tears welling up in his eyes.

COLTON (CONT'D)

Please, just go.

Before Max can respond, Colton slams the door in his face. Tears roll down his cheeks as he clenches his fists with rage.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Max loudly rolls his suitcase towards his apartment, eyes still watery.

He doesn't look sad, though. Something in his expression has changed-- his eyes are narrow with rage.

A door opens further down the hallway, revealing a familiar face that Max would rather not see.

PENNY

Max?

Max sighs heavily and clenches his fists.

MAX
(irritated)
That's me.

PENNY
I swear, I see you every single
time I leave my apartment! We're so
in sync!

As Penny and Max get closer to one another, she begins to get a look at his face. It's clear he's been crying.

PENNY (CONT'D)
(warmly)
Hey, hey. Is everything alright?

MAX
I'm fine.

Max tries to wheel his luggage toward his room to exit the conversation, but Penny grabs his arm.

PENNY
Hey, you can talk to me, you know?

Max recoils from her grasp.

MAX
(yelling)
Don't touch me! You don't know me!

Penny backs away in shock, taken aback by his reaction.

PENNY
Oh, um... I'm sorry.

As Penny hurries down the hallway, tears start falling from Max's eyes again. He opens up his apartment door and slams it behind him.

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Max jolts awake to the sound of his phone vibrating. "UNKNOWN CALLER."

He sits up immediately and answers the call.

MAX
(clearing his throat)
Colton?

Silence for a few seconds. A male voice speaks from the other end-- it's clearly not Colton.

DAVID
I'm sorry, this is David from the
Pittsburgh Correctional Center, the
head Detention Officer. Is this
Maxwell Helman?

Max's face drops.

MAX
Yes.

DAVID
Alright. I'm calling on behalf of
your mother, Lola Helman.

MAX
Is she okay?

A beat.

DAVID
Unfortunately, no. I regret to
inform you that your mother passed
away last night at approximately
9:43 PM.

Max clasps a hand over his mouth.

MAX
Are you sure?

DAVID
Yes, we're sure. We believe it was
a serious case of bronchitis that
ultimately lead to sepsis.

Silence. Max can't make sense of what he's hearing.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry, sir. We wanted to
notify you of where we're
transferring the body so that you
can plan her burial appropriately.

Max hangs up his phone. He reaches to his nightstand and
grabs his stuffed puma, curling into a ball with it in his
arms.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY/NIGHT

Max stands silently at his mother's gravesite. A fresh,
marble headstone reads "IN LOVING MEMORY - LOLA HELMAN. 1975 -
2024."

He kneels down, placing a singular flower in front of the stone. Max traces the letters of her name over and over again, silently crying to himself.

Eventually, he lays down in front of the headstone and closes his eyes. Stuffed puma in his arms, he falls asleep until the moon rises above him.

INT. STADIUM LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Fully suited up, Max shoves his way through the dozens of PLAYERS prepping for their game in the locker room. Each time he accidentally bumps into one, they echo back a derogatory "meow."

Finally, he passes by Teddy.

TEDDY

Pussy boy! Long time no see! You have a good vacation?

Silence from Max.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

What were you up to? Go somewhere fancy? The Caribbean with the girlfriend?

Max continues his cold stare at Teddy.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

(mockingly)

Sorry, my bad-- with the boyfriend, maybe? Don't wanna assume anything!

Without a word, Max pushes past Teddy and out of the locker room.

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

Meow!

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Leo approaches Max, who has just positioned himself on the sideline right next to the CHEERLEADERS.

Max gives an enthusiastic wave to Leo, who is actively avoiding eye contact with him. Although he's usually pretty condescending, this feels... off.

LEO

Uh, hey.

Max shrugs it off and waves to fans in the stands. Leo sneakily takes a photo of Max, laughing at his screen as he types away.

Clipboard in hand, Lindsay rushes over to Max.

LINDSAY

Hey. Welcome back. Remember, we have the halftime stunt with the Hartford Hawk.

Almost too excited, Max nods and flashes two big thumbs up.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)

Okay. Good luck. Leo, please make sure everything is in order.

Lindsay scurries away as Leo rolls his eyes.

LEO

I actually used to be pretty scared of mascots as a kid.

Max comedically turns to Leo, gesturing to himself with surprise and confusion.

LEO (CONT'D)

Totally lame, right?

Max waves his hand, reassuring Leo that his fear was not lame.

LEO (CONT'D)

After working here, I could never be scared of mascots.

Taking the strange remark as a compliment, Max gestures warmly to his heart.

Leo scowls.

LEO (CONT'D)

Not because I think you're cool.
But because I know you're a total freak.

Max drops his paws to his sides. He sighs, heading up towards the bleachers. Leo reluctantly follows behind him.

EXT. STADIUM BLEACHERS - DAY

As Max climbs the stadium steps, he waves to the fans-- as per usual. However, this time around, parents seem to be holding their children close.

Several TEENAGERS hold up their phones to take videos of Max. Leo pulls his baseball cap over his face with shame.

Underneath the mask, Max's expression is of total bewilderment.

TEENAGER (O.S.)
(yelling)
Excuse me!

Max whips around, thrilled that at least one fan wants his attention. He's face to face with a TEENAGER, a mischievous-looking boy with messy hair.

TEENAGER (CONT'D)
Yo, can I get a pic with you?

Max excitedly gestures for the teenager to come pose for the photo. Several other FANS stare at the scene with disgust on their faces.

TEENAGER (CONT'D)
Also, can you, like, not touch me?

Max nods with total understanding.

TEENAGER (CONT'D)
(quieter)
Thanks. Don't wanna get any jizz on my new jersey.

Before Max can process what was just said, the teenager snaps the photo and runs away.

LEO
Can we go back to the field? This is embarrassing.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Clearly thrown off by the strange audience interactions, Max stands in the center of the field as players huddle up on the sidelines for halftime.

A goofy-looking hawk mascot, HENRY, sprints out to meet Max, spreading his wings and flapping the enthusiastically.

ANNOUNCER

We have a halftime spectacular
planned for you all today-- a
smackdown between Henry Hawk and
Prince the Puma!

The crowd cheers wildly as both mascots flex their muscles
and hype up the stadium.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Through a series of competitive
events, we'll determine which
mascot is truly superior-- even
though we all know it's Prince.

Max performs a series of stunts and flexes once again as the
crowd continues to applaud and cheer.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Our first event will be a good, old
fashioned foot race! Whoever makes
it to the end zone first wins!
Alright, line up at center field,
Prince and Henry.

The two mascots get in ready-position. Henry extends his
winged arm for a handshake, but Max ignores it.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Looks like Max is feeling a little
feisty today!

Max gives a ferocious paw to the audience.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Alright... on your marks...

In starting position, Max cracks his neck.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Get set...

Henry shakes his tail feathers.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Go!

Both the mascots take off running, clumsily making their way
downfield in their clunky faux animal feet.

Under Max's mask, his face is completely serious.

Max has a considerable lead, leaving Henry several yard
behind.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
Looks like Prince is in the lead!
Only ten yards to go!

Max pulls back, allowing Henry to get close to him again.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
Uh oh, will Prince be forfeiting
this round?

The audience cheers maniacally as Max swings his leg out, tripping Henry and sending him flying. He darts into the end zone and throw up his paws.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
Yikes! That looks like it hurt! But
you know what they say-- you
snooze, you lose!

Henry brushes himself off and runs down to the end zone, holding his hand up for a high five. Max reluctantly slaps his hand with his paw.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
Next up-- who's got a better kick?
Prince and Henry will each get a
chance to kick a field goal.
Whoever kicks closest to the center
of the post wins!

Max and Henry jog back to the 35 yard line, where two footballs await them.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
Up first, we have the one, the
only... Prince the Puma!

Max flexes and flips as the crowd cheers. Henry flashes two big thumbs-downs as Max winds up to make the big kick.

Max winds up...

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
Here we go folks...

He puns the ball with all his strength...

And sends it shooting clean down the center of the posts. The audience erupts with excitement.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
Wow, have you guys ever seen a
cleaner kick?
(MORE)

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

We might need to get Prince off the sidelines and onto the field!

Max bows playfully as Henry gets ready to kick.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Next up, Henry the Hawk. What do you guys think? Will he give Prince a run for his money?

The crowd boos as Henry attempts to rile them up. He finally forfeits the attempt and winds up for his kick.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Alright, let's see what he's got.

Just before Henry can kick the ball, Max lunges forward and kicks it out from under him, causing Henry to fall on his back. The entire crowd gasps and cheers.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

What did I say earlier-- you snooze, you lose! Looks like Prince is our winner for round two!

Henry stomps his feet with frustration as Max jumps up and down in celebration,

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Okay folks, we have one final competition to determine which mascot is superior... A boxing match! Let's see if these mascots have picked any skills up from watching their teams compete!

Max and Henry step into an inflatable wrestling ring set up in the middle of the field. Max throws a few practice punches.

A REFEREE stands in the center of the ring.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Here we go!

The referee blows his whistle. Both mascots hop up and down, mimicking an actual boxing match.

Henry throws a punch, clearly falling on purpose when he fails to land it.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Sheesh, rough start for Henry the Hawk!

Max throws a gentle punch at Henry's shoulder, causing him to again fall very dramatically.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
A powerful swing from Prince!

After Henry recovers himself, he finally lands a gentle punch to Max's stomach.

Surprisingly, Max actually buckles over in pain. The crowd gasps.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
That looked like it hurt!

As Henry faces the audience and shakes his fist in the air, Max charges from behind him. It's much more aggressive from the past moves thrown by the two of them.

Henry lets out an audible groan as Max topples him to the ground. He holds him down, Henry audibly choking.

REFEREE
One!

ANNOUNCER
Looks like Max has it in the bag here, folks.

REFEREE
Two!

Henry struggles to breathe as Max leans harder into his neck.

REFEREE (CONT'D)
Three!

Even though the referee has called the match, Henry continues choking under Max.

REFEREE (CONT'D)
I said three, the match is over!

HENRY
(barely breathing)
Get off!

Finally, the referee pulls Max off of Henry, who sits up and struggles to catch his breath. The crowd cheers loudly.

ANNOUNCER
A clean sweep from Prince the Puma!
I knew he had it in the bag!

Max celebrates as Henry leans close to him.

HENRY
(whispering)
What the fuck, man? That wasn't in
the script!

Max continues to celebrate, not acknowledging what Henry said to him.

INT. STADIUM HALLWAY - EVENING

Now in normal attire and drenched in sweat, Max heads out of the locker room with his duffel bag slung over his shoulder. He notices Lindsay and Teddy engaging in a somewhat tense discussion.

As Max passes by, Lindsay notices him.

LINDSAY
Sorry Max, would you mind waiting
here for a moment?

Teddy doesn't bother to look over at Max.

MAX
Uh, sure.

LINDSAY
(with a plastic smile)
Thanks.

Max sits down on a bench, twiddling his thumbs. He shouldn't have gone so far with that final wrestling match-- that's gotta be why he's in trouble.

Finally, Lindsay clacks over to him in her heels, clipboard in hand.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)
Hey, Max. Thanks for waiting.

Max purses his lips and nods.

MAX
Is this about the halftime event?
I'm sorry, I know I went off
script, I've just been having kind
of a tough time lately and--

LINDSAY
No, that's not why I wanted to talk
to you.

(MORE)

LINDSAY (CONT'D)

I wanted to bring up an issue that
Leo and Teddy brought to us
regarding an... inappropriate
photo.

Max scrunches his face with confusion.

MAX

What are you talking about?

Lindsay opens her phone, pulling up an image and facing it
towards Max. He immediately turns pale.

LINDSAY

Is this you?

We finally get a look at her phone screen. It's the shirtless
mirror selfie he sent to Colton while wearing Prince's head.

MAX

What? How did you get that? I mean,
how did Leo and Teddy get that?

LINDSAY

It's been circulating online. Were
you aware of this?

MAX

Hold on, that's not even me. People
make fake versions of Prince all
the time.

LINDSAY

Are you sure about that?

Lindsay zooms in on Max's employee ID card. Max is silent.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)

We believe that continuing your
position as Prince will result in
even further publicity issues for
our team.

Max's eyes widen.

MAX

I'm sorry, that picture was shared
privately, I never meant for this
to--

LINDSAY

Even if this was a private photo,
this is misconduct of internal
Pittsburgh Pumas property.

(MORE)

LINDSAY (CONT'D)

We will unfortunately be terminating you effective immediately and require that you return all team property at your earliest convenience.

MAX

(tearing up)

Please, you don't understand--

LINDSAY

I'm sorry, Max. Thank you for your time with our team.

MAX

There has to be something I can do. The fans love me.

LINDSAY

The fans don't love you, they love Prince. And Prince is a character. A character that can be played by almost anyone. Just not someone using the character for explicit reasons.

MAX

It's not what you think--

LINDSAY

I'm sorry, Max, but this conversation is over.

Lindsay whips around, clacking down the empty hallway in her heels.

Max's face twists up in anger as his eyes well up. He starts walking towards Lindsay, then breaks into a run. He comes closer and closer to Lindsay until finally...

WHAM!

He punches Lindsay's head from behind, knocking her to the floor. She immediately falls unconscious.

Max looks down for a minute, shaking with rage. He takes a long look at her crumpled body before walking away, duffel bag slung over his shoulder.

INT. MAX'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Max hunches over a cutting board, feverishly slicing up a tomato with a large knife. The juice splatters onto his hands.

As he continues slicing various vegetables and throwing them into a salad bowl, his eyes begin to narrow.

Having become too careless in the process of cutting so many vegetables, he accidentally slices his finger. Blood begins to ooze out almost instantly.

MAX
(yelling)
Goddamnit!

INT. MAX'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Max rummages through his medicine cabinet, holding his finger as it continues to bleed. His palm is now covered with blood.

He throws countless empty medication bottles onto the floor, finally finding a box of band-aids.

They're Pittsburgh Puma themed. Of course.

Max chucks the box of bandages at the wall, scattering them everywhere.

Now breathing heavily, Max takes a second to look at himself in the mirror. His finger continues flowing blood, which drops onto the clean white tile of his bathroom floor.

He drags his bloody finger under his eye, making what seems like a bloody tear stain going from his eyelid down to his chin.

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Max rummages through his duffel bag, throwing parts of the puma costume across the room.

Finally, he pulls out the puma head and immediately puts it on. He smiles underneath the mask.

INT. MAX'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Max continues slicing up veggies for his salad, allowing his finger to bleed freely.

Finally, he takes a raw chicken out of the fridge and begins slicing it up as well. Drops of blood topple onto the raw meat.

As Max cuts faster and faster, he manages to nick his fingers several times in the process.

Under his mask, he starts crying louder and louder until he's full on sobbing.

He continues slicing the chicken into smaller and smaller bits, continuing to damage his fingers in the process, faster and faster until...

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK!

Max freezes, knife in his bloodied hand.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK!

Still holding the knife and wearing the mask, Max walks over and gently opens the door.

It's Penny. As soon as she lays eyes on Max, her face drops.

PENNY

Oh...! I'm sorry, am I interrupting something?

Max stares coldly at Penny through the mask. She looks down at the floor.

PENNY (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry, I just wanted to make sure everything was okay over here. I heard some loud noises and thought I should check in on you--

Penny gasps, then looks down.

Max has plunged his knife directly into her stomach.

Penny looks back up at him, then falls to the floor in shock as she struggles to breathe.

Max slams the door, leaving her body there.

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

In a blind rage, Max puts on the entirety of the puma costume. He throws the kitchen knife into his duffel bag and grabs it, slamming the door as he leaves the room.

INT. MAX'S CAR - NIGHT

Wearing his full costume, Max speeds through a fancy residential neighborhood, refusing to acknowledge any of the stop signs.

Paws on the wheel, his car skids loudly with every turn he makes.

The miniature puma hanging from his rearview mirror flies off and onto the floor from the momentum of the car's movement.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Finally, Max's car screeches to a stop on a corner next to some planters.

He slams the car door shut as he exits, holding the bloody knife in his big furry paw.

As he begins walking down the row of massive houses, he nearly jumps from the loud barking of a DOG.

When Max turns around, he's greeted with an OLDER MAN and his growling dog, pulling on his leash.

The older man, concerned by Max's appearance and the knife in his hand, backs away.

OLDER MAN

Uh... do you live here?

The dog barks again. Max doesn't respond.

Clearly frightened, the man starts walking away quickly as he dials 911 on his cell phone.

Max notices.

He breaks into a sprint, catching up to the man almost instantly. The dog barks and growls as Max draws out his knife, plunging it into the man's chest.

This causes the dog to lunge at Max, biting down on his arm. Max screams in pain, kicking back at the dog in self defense.

Following the kick, the dog whines and returns to the owner, licking his face.

Max sighs and continues down the street. It's completely empty and quiet, aside from the humming of the street lamps.

EXT. COLTON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Max finally appears at a familiar, towering gate. A moving truck sits in the driveway... it's Colton's house.

Max gazes up at the tall gate. The metal bars are too tall and too close together...

So, Max takes parts of his suit off. He shoves the hand and foot paws through the metal bars and throws the mascot head over the top of the gate.

Finally, he pushes the knife through the gate onto the other side.

Slowly but surely, he begins climbing up, his hands white-knuckled as he holds onto the metal bars.

He almost makes it to the top before his foot slips, causing him to fall backward onto the hard concrete.

Max has the wind knocked out of him as his body collides with the ground. He lays there for a few moments as his ears ring, eventually forcing himself back up.

On his second try, Max makes his way to the top. The bars are pointed. Carefully, he maneuvers himself up and over them before leaping down to the concrete below.

CRACK!

MAX

Fuck!

Max grimaces as he looks down at his ankle. Its bone is clearly out of place.

Oh well. He must go on.

Fueled by rage, Max manages to stand up and put on all the loose costume articles he threw over the fence. Finally, he picks up the knife.

EXT. COLTON'S DOORSTEP - NIGHT

Fully costumed, Max limps his way up to Colton's front door. He tries the door handle.

Locked.

He limps over to a massive window next to the front door and peers inside. The house is completely dark, except for the glow of the clock on the microwave: 11:30.

Max fumbles with the window lock using his big paws. Not gonna work. He slips them off, and the window lock clicks.

It was left unlocked.

INT. COLTON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Max quickly and quietly pries the window open and crawls through into the living room. Hardly any furniture is left and cardboard boxes scatter the area.

Several cans of beer and an empty bag of Cheetos litter a small side table.

As Max stares at the mess, he accidentally trips over an empty can.

It CLATTERS loudly across the floor.

MAX
(whispering)
Shit.

Max listens for a second...

Nothing. Maybe nobody's home.

Armed with his knife, Max continues to creep through the empty mansion.

Finally, Max finds his way over to a massive spiral staircase. Boxes litter every other step.

Looks like this is going to be an obstacle course.

Max sighs and begins creeping up the steps. We get a glance of his restricted vision through the mask-- it's pretty bad, especially in the dark.

All seems to be going well... until he trips over a box just out of his mask's peripheral vision.

Max tumbles forward, launching his mascot head off his head. He quickly scrambles to grab the head, putting it back on as fast as possible.

Suddenly, he hears a door slam open.

COLTON (O.S.)
Whoever's in here, I have a gun.
Leave while you still can.

Max holds his breath as Colton walks down the hallway.

COLTON (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I swear to god, I'll shoot!

Max lays flat on the stairs, completely still. He overhears as Colton kicks down another door.

Trying to be as quiet as possible, Max crawls up the final few steps and scurries behind a load of boxes.

COLTON (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Come out, you coward!

Max holds his breath as he watches Colton's slippers shuffle out of the bedroom down the hall. He ducks down and closes his eyes behind the mask.

A beat. Silence, aside from Colton's heavy breathing.

Colton makes his way over to the stairs.

Realizing he doesn't have much of a choice, Max gets up and runs down the stairs.

BANG! BANG!

The gunshots just barely skim Max's shoulder as he scrambles down the final step and around the corner.

COLTON (CONT'D)
Fucker!

Behind the mask, Max hyperventilates. He listens as Colton steps down the stairs, each one creaking as he gets closer.

COLTON (CONT'D)
I should've known it was you. I
always knew something was off about
you.

Another step creaks loudly.

COLTON (CONT'D)
But of course I gave you a chance,
Max. And you had to overstep my
boundaries.

Another step.

COLTON (CONT'D)
(more annoyed)
You had to overstep onto my
property. Not once, but twice.

The final step. Colton's slippers shuffle onto the marble floor outside of his luxurious kitchen.

COLTON (CONT'D)
And you're going to pay for that,
you fucking pussy.

BANG!

Another bullet rips through the wall Max was hiding behind. Still holding up his pistol, Colton enters his kitchen.

COLTON (CONT'D)
I know you're in here.

A box topples to the ground behind Colton. He whips around and fires again. BANG!

Simultaneously, Max sneaks up from behind Colton and cleanly slits his throat. Blood pours from Colton's neck as his knees buckle.

Max stares down at Colton, the plastic, cheerful eyes of his costume staring down at Colton's body.

Colton lets out a few gasps before the light drains from his eyes.

Nonchalantly, Max walks away from Colton's body and opens up his fridge.

Stocked full of nothing but canned beer. Max grabs one and struggles to crack it open with his big paws.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Slowly but surely, Max makes his way down the hall, his mascot suit now stained with blood. He holds the mascot head in his hand as he sips the canned beer.

When he makes it to his door, he nearly trips.

Penny's body is still in front of his door, accompanied by a pool of dried blood surrounding it.

Max sighs. He steps over her and unlocks his door, then drags her inside by the ankles.

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Max gently pushes open the door, still dragging Penny's body. Her head smacks the corner of the doorframe.

Max sighs again. Defeated, he decides to leave her on the floor as he crawls into bed, still in costume aside from the mascot head.

Max reaches onto his nightstand and grabs his stuffed puma. He holds it up to his face, staring at its cute, innocent expression before pulling it into his arms and closing his eyes.

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - MORNING

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK!

Max turns over in his bed.

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)
Police! Open up!

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK!

Max springs to life, grabbing the mascot head at the foot of his bed and putting it on.

He has the painful realization that his knife from last night is in his kitchen.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK!

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
We're entering by force if you
don't open up!

Max peels back his bedsheets and heads for the door-- tripping over Penny's body and falling face-first on the floor.

INT. MAX'S KITCHEN - MORNING

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK!

Max fumbles for the bloody knife sitting on his kitchen counter. He finally grabs it and sprints back toward his bedroom.

INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Max slams the door behind him and carefully steps over Penny's body. He rips open his curtain and fidgets frantically with his window lock.

BOOM! The police have kicked down his door.

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)
Maxwell Helman, you're under
arrest! Come out unarmed!

He hears their footsteps coming closer to his room. Finally, he manages to open the window.

Max looks down. He's on the third floor, looking straight down at a balcony below him.

The footsteps come closer.

Max takes a deep breath, then crawls through the window.

EXT. SECOND FLOOR BALCONY - MORNING

Max plummets down to the second floor, somehow managing to land on his hands and feet. It's strangely ironic, considering he's fully dressed like a cat.

He sees an OLDER WOMAN inside the apartment, making coffee in a pink robe.

Without hesitation, he opens up the screen door and enters the apartment.

INT. SECOND FLOOR APARTMENT - MORNING

As Max enters, the older woman turns around and SCREAMS. She drops her coffee mug, causing it to shatter all over the floor.

OLDER WOMAN
Don't hurt me! Please!

Max shoves past the woman and runs through her front door.

INT. APARTMENT STAIRWELL - MORNING

Max's large footpaws bang on each step as he desperately tries to escape the building.

He passes by a YOUNG MAN, who looks up from his phone with confusion and takes a picture of Max from behind.

Max finally manages to bolt out of the main exit, just as the armed POLICE OFFICER and several other OFFICERS enter the stairwell.

The main officer immediately confronts the YOUNG MAN.

POLICE OFFICER

Did you see a young man passing
through here? Dark hair, skinny?

YOUNG MAN

Uh, I don't think so?

POLICE OFFICER

Are you sure?

YOUNG MAN

Yeah, all I saw was some guy in a
cat suit.

EXT. BUS STOP - MORNING

Out of breath, Max finally slows down as he makes it to a relatively empty bus stop with only a few people nearby.

A MOTHER and her DAUGHTER stare at Max, both scared. The mother pulls her daughter in closer to her with concern.

A loud siren blares in the distance. Max instinctively hides, which freaks out the daughter. She begins to cry.

Finally, a large orange bus pulls up and opens its doors. It's packed inside.

INT. BUS - MORNING

When Max enters the bus, the chatting PASSENGERS fall silent. He looks terrifying. They all stare at him as he struggles to find a seat.

Finally, Max settles on a standing position and grabs onto a handle. The freaked-out mother and daughter are forced to stand right next to him.

The daughter continues to cry, causing concerned stares from all the bus passengers.

The vehicle lunges forward onto the road. Sirens blaring, several cop cars whizz past the bus.

BUS DRIVER (O.S.)

(over microphone)

Alright folks. Next stop is
Pittsburgh Stadium.

Naturally, the passengers begin talking amongst themselves again. A few of them point to Max and whisper, some of them snapping photos of him.

After what feels like an eternity to Max, the bus finally pulls up at the stadium and comes to a halt.

The doors open and several passengers make their way to the exit. Max shoves past them all and sprints outside.

EXT. PITTSBURGH STADIUM PARKING LOT - DAY

Max faces a sea of PITTSBURGH PUMAS fans as he rushes out of the bus. A few of them stare at him as he ducks behind a car.

Suddenly panicked, Max feels around in the back pocket of his costume for his knife.

Relieved, he finally finds it and manages to pull it out. He tucks it back in for safekeeping.

Max peeks out from the car, watching the fans flood toward the stadium entrance.

He leaps from car to car, hiding behind each one as he gets closer to the stadium.

Finally, he makes it to a back entrance marked "STAFF ONLY." He watches as a FEMALE STADIUM EMPLOYEE reaches for her badge and scans into the building.

Fuck. He left his badge at home.

Max watches as several fans walk by until a MALE STADIUM EMPLOYEE makes his way over to the entrance. He's talking loudly on the phone.

MALE STADIUM EMPLOYEE
So anyways, it was a total bust.
She didn't want to come back to my
place, so I ghosted that bitch.

Max pulls out his knife.

MALE STADIUM EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)
Dude, I know right! Hold on.

The employee reaches in his pocket for his badge. Just as he takes it out, Max stabs him from behind. The employee falls to his knees.

Max quickly snatches the badge from his hands and sneaks into the staff entrance, leaving the body there.

INT. STADIUM STAFF AREA - DAY

Careful to hide behind pillars as fellow STADIUM WORKERS pass by, Max sneaks his way toward the locker room.

He follows the signs until he sees the entrance. Several FOOTBALL PLAYERS, including Teddy, pour in.

A SECURITY GUARD follows closely behind them. Max frantically pulls open a supply closet door and hides inside, peering through the door's small crack.

Lindsay passes by, conversing with the guard. She has a very serious set of bruises on her face.

LINDSAY

If you see anything at all, don't hesitate to act on it. This is a very... unique situation.

SECURITY GUARD

Yes, ma'am.

LINDSAY

Thanks again. Appreciate it.

Lindsay clacks away, the guard following close behind her. Max continues staring out into the hallway, which is now relatively empty.

A familiar silhouette comes into view-- Leo. He's playing a shooting game on his phone, eyes glued to the screen.

Max slams open the door to the supply closet.

LEO

(looking up from his
phone)

Max? What the hell?

Max stares at him, emotionless through the mask.

LEO (CONT'D)

I heard what you did to Lindsay,
you fucking freak. It's over.

He steps closer to Max.

LEO (CONT'D)

You're dead, you dumb pussy. It's
over.

Leo weakly punches Max's mascot head.

LEO (CONT'D)
You should get out of here before I
tell the cops.

Without warning, Max grabs Leo by the arm and yanks him into the closet.

His phone clatters to the ground with the shooting game still open. Leo's character gets killed and "GAME OVER" flashes on the screen.

INT. STADIUM SUPPLY CLOSET - DAY

Leo tries to scream, but Max's big handpaw completely muffles his mouth.

He kicks and struggles to escape Max's control, but fails. Leo resorts to biting down on Max's hand, causing him to recoil.

Just as Leo lets out a scream, its sound is canceled out by the loud voice of the STADIUM ANNOUNCER.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
That's right folks, only ten
minutes 'til kickoff!

Leo continues to scream as the stadium roars with excitement.

Max plunges his knife into Leo's stomach, silencing him. Leo slides to the floor, struggling to breathe.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Let's make some noiiiiiiiise!

The crowd erupts with excitement. Max peers through the closet door crack, watching as the players flood out from the locker room.

One of them tramples Leo's phone, causing it to break audibly. The player stops to pick it up.

PLAYER
(talking to someone
offscreen)
Yo! This yours?

Teddy jogs back toward the player. Max holds his breath, staring down at Leo's lifeless body.

Teddy inspects the phone for what feels like an eternity.

TEDDY

Not mine.

The other player shrugs and sets the phone back down against the wall. He and Teddy jog away, catching up with the other players.

Max exhales with relief, turning around to face Leo's twitching body as it bleeds out. Annoyed at the sight of him, he slashes Leo's face.

Max peeks through the closet crack and carefully scans the hallway, observing as the final players and stadium faculty members stream out toward the exit tunnel.

He peeps his head out for a minute, failing to notice a SECURITY GUARD coming toward him from behind.

SECURITY GUARD

(into his walkie talkie)

I got him. Outside the locker room.

The guard pulls his gun and presses it against Max's head, which peeks out of the closet.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)

Show's over, pussycat. Move one muscle and I'll shoot.

Max slowly puts his hands up, seemingly surrendering. As the closet door opens, Leo's body slides out.

The security guard's gaze diverts to the body, his eyes widening in horror as Max slices the guard's hands clean off.

His gun (and his hands) clatter to the floor.

Just before the guard can scream, Max slashes his throat.

He falls to the ground. Max quickly drags the guard's body into the closet with Leo, clumsily shoving them against each other and barely managing to close the door.

Max grabs the gun and sneakily darts down the hallway.

INT. STADIUM TUNNEL - DAY

A mob of CAMERAMEN swarms the players in the tunnel. There's so much happening that nobody even notices as Max sneaks in from behind, fresh blood splattered across his suit.

One pushy REPORTER holds a microphone in front of Teddy's face.

REPORTER

So, how are you feeling about today's big rivalry game? Got any tricks up your sleeve?

Teddy lets out an arrogant chuckle.

TEDDY

I mean, if I did, wouldn't it be a bad idea to share 'em now?

REPORTER

You make a great point there!

TEDDY

But yeah, not stressing too hard. I'm pretty sure I got this in the bag. And it's my son's birthday today.

Behind the mask, Max grimaces. Looks like Leo won't be celebrating later...

REPORTER

Well, I sure hope you can bring home a victory for him today!

TEDDY

Yeah, me too! He's a big fan.

REPORTER

(talking to the camera)

There you have it, folks! That's Trimble's game plan. After the break, we'll be jumping right into kickoff.

(to Teddy)

Thanks so much for your time. Good luck out there.

Teddy nods his head in appreciation as the reporter walks off. As the media team exits the tunnel, Max locks eye contact with another SECURITY GUARD.

He ducks down, but it's too late. The guard is mumbling something into his walkie talkie and holding his hand over his holster.

ANNOUNCER

Let's welcome today's teams to the field!

The crowd roars as Max ducks behind a cleaning cart. He watches as the guard looks around, confused as to where Max went.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
First up, the Cheyenne Cheetahs!

Loud booing erupts from all ends of the stadium. The guard takes off in the opposite direction, leaving the tunnel. Max breathes a sigh of relief.

Suddenly, a JANITOR starts walking toward the cleaning cart, forcing Max to run out into the open.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
Alright, alright. Let's move on to why we're all here...

The booing subsides. Panicked, Max casually faces a vending machine. Under the mask, sweat trickles down his face.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
The Pittsbuuuuuuuuuurgh Pumas!

Screams echo across the stadium walls. Teddy, who has been talking to a fellow player, catches a glimpse of Max out of the corner of his eye.

TEDDY
Yo, what the fuck?

Scowling, Teddy shoves his way past several teammates and walks toward Max.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
(grabbing Max's shirt collar)
Fucking pussy boy. I thought you were fired.

ANNOUNCER
For our starting lineup...

Teddy pauses for a second before allowing the announcer to continue declaring the starting players.

TEDDY
I told Lindsay you were a threat to this fucking team. To my son.

Teddy pulls off Max's mask.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Look at me, you fucking pussy.

He spits in Max's face. The wad dribbles down Max's forehead as Teddy continues.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

You need to get the hell out of
here before I kill you myself.

Teddy wraps his hand around Max's neck. Max struggles to pry away his fingers.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

I thought I was done with your
wimpy ass bullshit when we
graduated high school. But you're
still the same disgusting freak I
remember.

Max's eyes bulge red as his face flushes from the lack of oxygen. The knife in his back pocket nearly falls out.

Behind the two of them, several players stare at them with concern.

ANNOUNCER

Last but not least... our record-
breaking, Pittsburgh Pumas
quarterback...

Max struggles as Teddy tightens his grip. A smile cracks on Teddy's face.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Tedddddddy Trimble!

Teddy immediately releases Max, shoving through the other players and out onto the field. The crowd goes wild.

Max collapses to the ground, wheezing and coughing as he struggles to put his mask back on.

POLICE CHIEF (O.S.)

Police! Put your hands up or we'll
shoot!

Max scrambles to his feet and runs toward the exit of the tunnel. Bullets erupt from behind him as the other players scream in shock.

Before Max makes it to the end of the tunnel, a gunshot strikes him in the leg. He falls to the ground as the OFFICERS sprint towards him, guns drawn.

Miraculously, Max manages to pull himself up and runs out of the tunnel, blood pouring from his leg.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Pushing past any and all people on the field, Max draws his knife as his leg continues to bleed.

ANNOUNCER

Looks like Prince will be joining
the starting lineup today as well!

Unaware of what's going on, the crowd laughs and cheers.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

And he's got a special prop! Maybe
he's looking for a friendly face-
off with Chance the Cheetah?

More laughter... Until the police officers storm the field as well. The audience gasps as bullets fly.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Uh, hold on folks, do not panic...

Hordes of fans begin to leave their seats, scared by whatever's going on. The ambush is being shown up on the big screen.

As the STARTING PLAYERS, including Teddy, turn around to see what's happening, they watch as Max sprints toward them at full speed.

POLICE CHIEF

Freeze! Drop the weapon!

Max pulls out the gun he took from the security guard and fires several shots towards the officers. More gasping and screaming from the audience.

ANNOUNCER

Hang tight... We apologize for the
unexpected delay...

Officers duck and roll out of the line of fire. As the players hustle off the field, Teddy turns around to face Max.

When Max's eyes land on Teddy, they narrow. Knife in hand, Max lets out a barbaric scream as he gets closer to Teddy.

The officers fire another flurry of gunshots.

Just as Max makes it to Teddy, he's struck again through the back. In slow motion, he collapses...

And on his way down, he manages to snag his knife into Teddy's stomach, dragging it down through Teddy's body.

Teddy collapses to his knees.

Max falls face-first on the grass from the force of the gunshot.

Horrificed, flocks of fans run for the stadium exits. The other players hurry off the field.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
Please... make your way to the
nearest exit. This game has been
postponed.

As Teddy's red blood creates a stain on the green grass, a team of PARAMEDICS sprints out from the sidelines.

Meanwhile, the team of armed officers carefully walk toward Max's body, guns still pointed down at him.

One PARAMEDIC kneels down at Teddy's side, pulling off his football helmet. She presses her fingers to his neck.

PARAMEDIC
There's no pulse.

Sirens blare as the paramedic initiates CPR. Another MALE PARAMEDIC opens up a case and removes a defibrillator.

Teddy's eyes gaze lifelessly up toward the sky as blood trickles down the corner of his mouth.

PARAMEDIC (CONT'D)
Still not breathing.

She quickly applies an oxygen mask to Teddy's face.

The male paramedic leans in over Teddy's body, cutting open his now-bloodied jersey. He removes the patches from the device and presses them onto Teddy's chest.

MALE PARAMEDIC
Initiating shock sequence one.

He flips a switch as the crowd of paramedics hovers over Teddy. Nothing happens.

MALE PARAMEDIC (CONT'D)
Unsuccessful. Initiating shock
sequence two.

He flips the switch again. Nothing.

MALE PARAMEDIC (CONT'D)
Unsuccessful. Initiating final
shock sequence.

The paramedic takes a deep breath before flipping the switch
for the last time. They all wait...

But nothing happens.

PARAMEDIC
Time of death: approximately 3:10
PM.

The team of paramedics loads Teddy onto a stretcher,
immediately staining it red. Blood continues to pour out from
his stomach and drips onto the field.

Focus shifts over to Max's body, still in costume.
Miraculously, his mascot head has managed to stay on despite
his fall.

POLICE CHIEF
What do y'all think... is he dead?

PARAMEDIC
We can check.

The paramedic begins kneeling down next to Max.

POLICE CHIEF
Wait.

He removes a pair of handcuffs from his belt and fastens them
over Max's fuzzy wrists before discarding the bloodied knife.

POLICE CHIEF (CONT'D)
Alright, go ahead.

Carefully, the paramedic pulls off Max's mascot head.

After a bit of a struggle, she manages to get it off.

Underneath, Max is smiling. His eyes seem devoid of all life,
but he's got a massive grin on his face.

The paramedic feels for his pulse.

A beat.

PARAMEDIC
He's alive.

Max's eyes move toward the paramedics carrying Teddy's body
out of the stadium.

The officers draw their weapons again, pointing them towards Max as they lift him off the ground.

POLICE CHIEF

You have the right to remain
silent. Anything you say can and
will be used against you in a court
of law. You have the right to an
attorney...

His voice seems to fade into the background as Max watches Teddy get carried off the field.

As he watches him go, he hears Teddy's teenage voice in his head from all those years ago.

TEDDY (V.O.)

What're you gonna do, pussy boy?
Fight back?

Max starts hysterically laughing to himself as the cops escort him off the field. He did fight back. And he won.

CUT TO BLACK.