

EXT. WHITAKER HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

A SCHOOL BELL RINGS. An old traditional, red brick building.

INT. WHITAKER HIGH SCHOOL - SAME

**WILLIAM JOHNSON (15, African American, handsome)**, wearing a black hoodie, uneasily walks through the halls while various STUDENTS his age stare at him, some with GLARING looks --

A BLONDE GIRL (14) whispers to her FRIEND as Will passes her.

BLONDE GIRL

I can't believe he still shows his  
freakish face --

Will looks down on the ground, his hood shielding his diffident and mysterious eyes.

A RED-HEADED BOY (well-built, jock, 16) approaches Will -- soon BUMPING into him, pushing him to the ground.

RED-HEAD BOY

Murderer.  
(stooping next to Will)  
You should be locked up forever.

He stands over Will, who stays stationery.

EXT. WHITAKER HIGH SCHOOL - SAME

The Red-Headed Boy holds down Will's arms from the back as three other WHITE GUYS take turns PUMMELING Will's stomach.

One lands a PUNCH right in Will's face, BRUISING his right eye. SOUND OF THE BELL RINGING --

INT. WHITAKER HIGH SCHOOL - AFTERNOON - PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

**PETER JOHNSON (55, Will's white father through adoption)** sits across from **PRINCIPAL VINCE PARKER (50, curly hair)**.

PETER

I don't see how you could let this happen. I mean no one can identify who did this? NO ONE?

PRINCIPAL PARKER

Mr. Johnson, I hear your concerns, but certain matters are out of my control and this is one of them.

PETER

That's my son out there.

Principal Parker coolly looks outside his Plexiglas window, spotting Will, who sits in the waiting area. Principal Parker notices Will's bruise.

PRINCIPAL PARKER

(stricter tone)

Look... Will refuses to talk about who did this. He has four weeks left in the semester... either he can finish the term here or he can finish somewhere else...

PETER

He's innocent, you know --

PRINCIPAL PARKER

(sighing)

It's just that the students are terrified of him.

PETER

It was an accident.

PRINCIPAL PARKER

Realistically, Will might feel more comfortable in another school. I'm sorry it has to come to this. Maybe this is for the best.

PETER

You're kidding me?

Peter gives the Principal a incredulous look.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - EVENING

Will sits in front of the television, holding a BAG OF ICE to his eye.

He watches the news. On the screen, a NEWSCASTER describes a suspect of an armed robbery who killed three civilians. In the background, a blurred vision of **ADRIEN GALLAGHER (55, African-American woman)**.

Peter walks over, holding two MICROWAVE dinners: chicken slices, mash potatoes, and processed vegetables. He places one in front of Will, soon picking up the remote to click to a station showing a John Wayne Western.

PETER  
How's your eye?

WILL  
It's fine.

Peter sits in a recliner.

PETER  
What do you think of home-schooling  
again?

Will looks at him, nodding.

PETER (CONT'D)  
Home-schooling might not be a bad  
idea in these potentially violent  
times. You never know what you  
could run into out there. We just  
need to find a good teacher you.

Will watches as Peter bites into a piece of chicken.

WILL  
Couldn't you just teach me?

PETER  
I would but I'm scared half to  
death of all that Algebra and Math.  
Plus, I'm not that smart. Not like  
you anyway.

The two exchange a smile.

ON SCREEN: John Wayne dodges some bullets during a shooting  
sequence.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - NIGHT - BATHROOM

Will stands in the mirror with his shirt off. There are two  
long, broad SCARS that run down his shoulders, about five  
inches in length.

Peter stands by the door.

PETER (O.C.)  
Those scars look bigger than I  
remember.

Will begins to put on his shirt, turning to Peter who stands  
by the door.

PETER (CONT'D)

It's enough that other persons are trying to hurt you, I just don't want you hurting yourself, that's all.

WILL

I'm not. I promise.

Peter nod, gently reaching to touch his son's shoulder.

PETER

Okay. Just keep your head up. Alright?

Will nods.

EXT. PETER'S HOUSE - MORNING

Peter stands near his vintage Ford Bronco looking at his cellphone while holding a lit cigarette.

INSERT - CELLPHONE

1 Voice Mail

BACK TO SCENE

A small home in an isolated area. Peter presses the play button on his phone and puts the device to his ear. He smokes his cigarette.

ADRIEN (V.O.)

Good day, Mr. Peter Johnson. This is Adrien Gallagher, Director of Guiding Light Academy. I heard the news about your son Will Johnson, and I would be very much interested in helping out with his situation. Please keep me a call back at your convenience as we here at the academy would love for Will to join our education program.

Peter presses a button on his phone again.

WILL (O.S.)

Who was that?

Peter turns around to meet Will, who wears his black hoodie. Peter throws his cigarette to the ground, stepping on it.

PETER

Hey...

(putting his phone in his  
back pocket)

...just a potential new school  
opportunity. What do you think?  
Should we check it out?

Peter touches his son's head, soon moving Will's face to get  
a better look at the bruise on his face.

PETER (CONT'D)

I think we should.

EXT. FOREST - DAY - THE GUARDIAN CENTER

BIRD'S EYE VIEW: A still terrain populated with tall trees.

Enveloped by a dense forest, Will watches a lone DOVE descend  
from the sky. The bird alights near Will, who stoops down to  
get a closer look.

The dove moves in closer, soon rubbing its head against  
Will's outreached hand.

ADRIEN (V.O.)

Like I said, I saw the newscast.  
I'm sorry you both had to go  
through that.

PETER (V.O.)

Thank you. My son's life has never  
been the same since the death of  
that student.

ADRIEN (V.O.)

Something like that can be  
haunting, but Will need only  
remember the event as an accident  
versus a misdeed. How is he coping?

PETER (V.O.)

To be frank, I don't know what he's  
thinking half of the time.

INT. LOG CABIN - SAME

**ADRIEN GALLAGHER (50, African American woman** from the  
television) shakes Will's hand. There is something reservedly  
militant about her personality. She notices the bruise under  
his eye. She sits at her desk.

ADRIEN

Will, my name is Adrien Gallagher,  
and I'm the director here at  
Guiding Light. Your father has told  
me a lot about you. Welcome.

She gestures for Will to take a seat. He moves over to the  
chair in front of her desk and sits.

EXT. LOG CABIN - SAME

A nondescript log cabin surrounded by green trees.

Peter stands next to his Ford Bronco, attempting to shove a  
loose headlight back in the socket. The Bronco is parked on a  
dirt trail, which leads up to the cabin.

The headlight falls back out of the socket.

INT. LOG CABIN - SAME

Studying Will:

ADRIEN

I would love to hear a little more  
about you.

(beat)

I understand that you don't  
interact with others too often...  
You like to be alone... me too...  
at least for the most part.

Will swallows hard.

ADRIEN (CONT'D)

Listen, I'm really going to cut all  
the meet-n-greet bullshit here...  
if you don't mind me doing so. I  
think you're someone special, more  
than meets the eye and I strongly  
believe that Guiding Light is the  
place for you to explore your  
unique gifts and talents. We're a  
diverse environment that encourages  
our students to tap into their  
greatest potential. I hope you  
would accept my invitation to join  
us here. That's really all I got  
though some of that still sounds  
like bullshit.

Will and Adrien exchange a look.

EXT. FOREST - SAME

Will and Peter take a stroll among the trees. Peter smokes another cigarette.

PETER  
How'd you do in there?

WILL  
I don't know. I did alright.

PETER  
Maybe we should keep looking for the right place. The woods here sort of gives me the heebie jeebies.

EXT. FORD BRONCO - SAME

Will and Peter approach the truck. Will looks over to Adrien who stands in front of the log cabin. She waves at him as he opens the door handle of the Bronco. He waves back.

INT. FORD BRONCO - SAME

Peter and Will strap on their seat belts -- Peter starts up the Bronco. It doesn't start.

PETER (O.C.)  
That's weird. It was fine earlier.

Will watches as Adrien walks back into the cabin. As soon as she closes the door, stark, plasmic LIGHT strikes the ground. SFX: The light instantly transforms into a fallen BATTLE ANGEL, **RAMROK (35)**, dressed in white armor with wings attached. The Angels stands up and pulls out a SWORD, quickly converting into light, streaking upwards --

Will pokes his head out the window and looks up in the sky, only witnessing distant light vanishing.

WILL  
Dad?

Peter turns the ignition again, successfully starting the Bronco.

PETER  
Yeah?

WILL  
Did you see that?