

MY SUPERHERO

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. BRIGHTSTONE RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY - DAY

The sun gleams over rows of cookie-cutter, three-story houses with manicured lawns, pools, and fenced-in backyards.

EXT. JEFFERSON AVENUE - DAY

YOUNG JAMES PEREGRINE JULIANA (10), four feet of innocence, ambles down a sidewalk next to a guardrail.

An orange backpack shifts on Young James' shoulders, as his fingers rub an inscription on a decorative rock. It says:

"LOVE"

He glances beyond the guardrail, where a steep hill leads down into a wooded barren.

SCREECH!

Young James looks as a pick-up truck skirts onto the street.

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK - DAY

TODD (37), a reckless businessman with a forehead scar, dumps skittles in his mouth and surfs a car radio before finally stopping on loud CLASSIC ROCK.

A cell phone BUZZES in the passenger seat.

Todd replies to a text while steering with his knuckles.

His knuckles slip, and he drops the cell phone.

He reaches down; his body turns the steering wheel.

Tires SCREECH. The truck shifts with a violent THUD.

Todd jerks up. The truck forcefully crashes with METAL RIPS and CRUNCHES. An airbag POPS; Todd slams into it. Skittles and loose objects SNAP and CRACK against the windshield.

EXT. JEFFERSON AVENUE - DAY

The pick-up truck has crashed into the guardrail.

Todd clambers out, clutches his chest, and limps towards the front of the truck.

His hand slides along the truck, until...

It slips -- Todd falls and stares at his hand.

It's smeared with blood.

He checks his surroundings, and then his gaze halts on a patch of blood smeared across the guardrail.

EXT. WOODED BARRENS - DAY

Todd leans over the guardrail and gazes into a maelstrom of trees, bushes, leaves, branches, and...

A bloody, torn Young James resting against a tree far below.

Todd leaps over the guardrail and plunges down the hill.

He shakes Young James and checks his pulse... Nothing.

Todd slaps Young James; the boy's head merely flops, and a sliver of blood trickles out of his mouth.

Todd slaps again; Young James' head flops to the other side. Todd slaps him five more times; Young James' body slumps.

Todd's bloody hands crawl over his face in panic.

Children's LAUGHTER arises from Jefferson Avenue. Todd's troubled gaze takes on a wave of sadness and ultimatum, but then he squeezes his eyes shut.

He looks at the sky, performs the sign of the cross, and then grabs a bloody gash on Young James' arm.

Todd breathes deep -- Silence for a few moments. Just the two of them in the middle of the woods.

Silence. The Children's LAUGHTER gets louder. Silence.

A SOFT STATIC CRACKLE emits from around Todd's hand.

Slowly, the gash beneath his hand disappears and reappears on his arm.

A crack in Young James' skull disappears and reappears on Todd's skull. Blood drools out of it and stains Todd's eyes.

Todd's breath hitches -- Young James' chest slowly rises.

EXT. JEFFERSON AVENUE - DAY

Four Children stroll along the sidewalk with backpacks.

A SHORT GIRL (8) listens to MUSIC on an iPod.

The MUSIC turns into WHINING STATIC and CUTS out. The Short Girl frowns but then bumps into a TALL BOY (10), who has suddenly stopped in front of her.

She punches him. The Tall Boy turns her to see something down the sidewalk. Her jaw drops at...

The crashed pick-up truck.

A child's SCREAM arises from the wooded barrens below.

The Children shudder away from it.

EXT. WOODED BARRENS - DAY

The Children peer over the guardrail, looking for the origin of the SCREAMS, which continue to shatter the silence.

They look and look and look -- until they see it... see him.

Far below, Young James screams at Todd's dead body next to him. It's torn, bloody -- the bruises and gashes perfect replicas of the ones that once riddle Young James' body.

His screams rattle as he can't look away from the crack in Todd's skull -- the crack that used to be on his head.

Now, everything along his arms, legs, neck, and head is healthy. Everything except a scar on his forehead.

The scar that once belonged to Todd.

INT. R.E. TAYLOR HIGH SCHOOL - MAIN HALLWAY - DAY

SUPER: "8 YEARS LATER"

STUDENTS stream past lockers and classroom doors.

JAMES PEREGRINE JULIANA (18), portly with slick hair and ironed dress clothes, emerges from the crowd with a backpack.

ADAM JOHN (18), a twig in a long sleeve shirt riddled with Comic Book heroes, follows.

JAMES
I don't care, Adam.

ADAM

She's right there, J.J.!

James stops at a locker and turns a combination dial.

JAMES

She's always there.

ADAM

Yes. Yes she is waiting to melt
your butter and slide it into her.

James gazes down the hall at MARY VALENTINE (17), the luscious brunette subject of James' dreams, who chats with her friends JENNIFER (17) and AMBER (18).

James opens his locker and tries to open his backpack, but the zipper sticks. James yanks and yanks, but it's stuck.

ADAM (CONT'D)

You will not be a virgin by the end
of the year. I refuse to have my
best buddy, my pal--

JAMES

What about you, dude?

ADAM

Me? These ladies wouldn't touch me
with a ten-foot pole, let alone
you, but Mary... Mary peeks at you.
Like all the time.

JAMES

(after a beat)

Fine. If you shut up, I'll say hi.

ADAM

You always say you'll do something
to shut me up, then you mess it up
on purpose, just to be an asshole.
How about not being an asshole for
once? Be a knight in shining armor
or Captain America. She'll love it.

James gives another yank on his backpack, and it RIPS open.

Books, papers, and the decorative rock smack the floor; a PIMPLED STUDENT laughs at the mess.

James glares at him and acts like he's popping pimples and eating them. The Pimpled Student's laugh fades quickly, a flush of embarrassment takes over, and he skirts away.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Once more, how about not being an asshole for once? Hurry up before she leaves, J.J. We're losing daylight... or fluorescent light-- We're losing time!

Adam's hands shake as he covertly opens a bottle of pills and takes one.

James gathers everything back into his bag.

JAMES

How many is that today?

Adam shushes James, wraps an arm around his shoulder, and guides him in the direction of Mary.

ADAM

Pointless, rhetorical question.

JAMES

Take it easy, would ya'? I may not be there the next time you... decide not to come back.

James nods to the wrist's of Adam's long sleeve shirt.

ADAM

Look, look. I'm just slightly suicidal with an obscure and active imagination that needs... distraction throughout the day. No big deal. I'm fine, fine, fine.

JAMES

Keep taking those the way you are and you'll be dead, dead, dead. Take. It. Easy.

ADAM

Okay, okay. See, this is why you're around. To keep an eye on me. See, even assholes have purpose.

(beat)

There she is. Now, remember how Clark met Lois Lane.

Adam and James halt in front of Mary and her friends.

JAMES

Grope and thrust?

ADAM

J.J. this is serious. Don't mess it up. Don't. Look at her, she's--

Adam and James look at Mary, and find the three girls staring right at them, confused and annoyed.

JENNIFER

You two need something?

Adam keeps a big grin and pushes James forward.

He flicks Adam an annoyed look, then returns his gaze to Mary, who meets him with a look of... interest?

THUMP, THUMP -- Her look rams his heart in his chest. A cool sweat peeks on his brow. He utters and clears his throat.

JAMES

Um... Hi, Mary.

That was painful. Enough to make the girls laugh. Mary, however, only chuckles but keeps her smiling eyes on James.

AMBER

Is that it, chubby?

JAMES

Still living at that hotel out on main, Amber? Daddy find a job yet? Mom come home yet?

Amber pushes her tongue into her cheek. Mary's smile coils into a scoff. Adam throws his hands in the air.

MARY

Your father teach you how to be an asshole, Juliana?

James peeks down the hallway at ANDERSON (16), an effeminate boy with a gimpy leg, who limps in their direction.

Adam matches James' look and whispers.

ADAM

J.J., no. Not again.

JAMES

No, Mary. He taught me how to cook, how to dress, how to do... this.

James smiles, backs up, and sticks out his leg. Anderson trips over it and crashes hard.

All the Students halt and watch Anderson grasp his leg and wither in pain.

Some Students laugh, others film the scene on their cell phones, Adam and some others help him, but Mary... her empathetic eyes don't leave James.

He tips an invisible hat to Amber, who flicks him off.

James tips his hat to Jennifer, who rolls her eyes.

He finishes with tipping his hat to Mary, who frowns and pulls out a pocket mirror.

The mirror slips, but with lighting-quick speed...

James catches it. No one *normal* could catch that.

Adam, while helping Anderson, sees this out of the corner of his eyes and suddenly doesn't care so much about Anderson.

Mary, Amber, and Jennifer stand there frozen with peculiar stares on James.

James drops the mirror into Mary's hand, tips his hat, and walks away.

Mary tries to fight it, but a smile flutters along her lips.

AMBER

Fucking fat prick.

Mary still stares after James, then Adam leans into her view.

ADAM

Hi. Look, I know. He's James. He's rude, fat or whatever, but... he has a good heart. Trust me.

Mary glances at the wrists of his shirt.

MARY

One deed isn't enough, Adam. Not enough to save a Juliana.

Adam's eyes light up.

ADAM

One deed, huh? If he di-did more, then that would be enough, right? That a promise? Just good deed after good deed after good de--?

Adam claps and runs off.

AMBER

Guess those meds aren't working.

JENNIFER

No. Only a crazy fucker would stick with a Juliana.

MARY

He saved his life.

JENNIFER

Yeah, but like you said, "One good deed isn't enough."

AMBER

Won't bring his mom back.

Jennifer and Amber laugh.

MARY

Where's your mom?

The laughter cuts. Amber clears her throat and pulls out her own pocket mirror.

INT. R.E. TAYLOR HIGH SCHOOL - EAST HALLWAY - DAY

Adam rounds a corner and catches up to James.

JAMES

Mirror was a nice touch, wasn't it?

ADAM

One nice touch won't get you great touches, my friend.

A FRECKLED STUDENT, in a shirt that bares the face of Mrs. Thompson, thrusts a pink flyer into James' hand.

ADAM (CONT'D)

She digs you, man. How about being a little more... good? Everyone here knows what you did for me. They know you're not your dad.

(beat)

Think of what your mom would--

James snaps a glare at Adam, which shuts him up. His eyes linger on him for a moment, then James reads the flyer:

"Donate to Mrs. Thompson's Cancer Relief Fund Today!"

He snickers and crumples it.

INT. WILSON MEMORIAL MEDICAL CENTER - LOBBY - DAY

PATRONS, in designer clothes, flow past an angel statue in the center of polished wooden walls and granite floors.

DALE SHARPER (65), in a black suit and ear piece, watches the front desk that sits in-between two metal doors, which have key-card readers at their sides.

A BUFF GUARD, in a black suit and ear piece, slides a key-card through a reader. METAL CLANKS; a metal door opens.

The Buff Guard lets two Patrons pass him. He speaks into his fist and exits through the door.

CAROLE DEMARCO (32), a makeup-less tomboy, stares at an DISGRUNTLED PATRON from behind the desk. A nameplate states:

"Carole DeMarco - Front Desk Clerk"

DISGRUNTLED PATRON
What's the reason?

CAROLE
You're not a resident of
Brightstone, and the hospital isn't
willing to permit your husband.

DISGRUNTLED PATRON
Is he not sick enough?

CAROLE
Ma'am, I cannot answe--

DISGRUNTLED PATRON
Hospitals should allow anyone to--

STEPHEN (O.S.)
Ma'am.

Carole and the Disgruntled Patron look at STEPHEN JULIANA (47), drop-dead handsome in an ironed black suit, sits next to Carole. A nameplate states:

"Stephen Juliana - Head of Security"

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Thank you, but Clarksdale Medical
is right down the road. It's a
more... affordable option.

The Disgruntled Patron spits in Stephen's face.

Stephen clenches his teeth and stands with a death stare locked on the Disgruntled Patron.

His head obscurely twitches twice.

The Disgruntled Patron's jaw slightly drops, and Carole brow takes on a questioning gesture.

Stephen's head twitches some more, as his fingers claw towards a red button and press it.

A BUZZER sounds. TWO BALD GUARDS escort The Disgruntled Patron away.

CAROLE
You alright?

Stephen grinds his teeth.

STEPHEN
Perfect.

DALE (O.S.)
Juliana.

Stephen shakes off the violence and smiles. Dale approaches with a grin.

STEPHEN
Mr. Sharper.

DALE
Doing good work, I see. Trying to ease the board's decision for a new Chief of Security after I retire, am I right?

Stephen smiles. Dale leans towards him. A phone RINGS.

DALE (CONT'D)
You were cool and calm. Got the job done. Keep it up. Don't let these degenerates run all over you.

Dale pats Stephen's arm and walks away. Stephen glows in appreciation and takes a seat, but he can't but notice Carole's questioning look.

STEPHEN
You going to get that?

A phone RINGS. Carole grabs the phone and returns to work, yet she can't help her eyes from bouncing over to Stephen.

EXT. R.E. TAYLOR HIGH SCHOOL - BASKETBALL COURT #1 - DAY

An iPod stereo BLARES MUSIC. TEENAGERS disperse into teams.

EXT. R.E. TAYLOR HIGH SCHOOL - BASKETBALL COURT #2 - DAY

James, in a white T-shirt and shorts, dribbles and shoots a basketball by himself.

He makes every shot -- Swish. Swish. Swish.

Adam saunters in with a backwards baseball hat, which has an emblem of a red cape flowing in the wind.

Adam types on an cell phone, clenches a paperback book under his armpit, and sucks on a lit cigarette.

James throws the ball at Adam, who drops everything and catches it; the cigarette falls.

JAMES

Put it out.

Adam kicks the ball to James and grabs the cigarette.

ADAM

Hey, the doc said I needed to try new things. Change things up.

JAMES

I'm sure he meant something that wouldn't kill ya'

ADAM

Maybe another dance with the reaper is just what I need.

James throws the ball hard this time; it hits Adam's head.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Jesus, J.J. It was a joke.

Adam throws the cigarette and passes the ball to James.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I think about that night a lot, J.J. It's like you were meant to find me and save me, ya' know?

James dribbles the ball, and Adam lazily defends.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Like it was your purpose. That's
what the doc has been saying.
"Everyone has a purpose."

Adam steps away and grabs the paperback book.

JAMES

We going to play or what?

Adam tosses the book to James, who ganders at the title:

"P.I.L. Find Your Purpose In Life."

James throws the book off the court.

ADAM

Think about it though. What's your
purpose, J.J.? You're not some
ordinary Joe. No, you're different.

JAMES

Wish your parents knew what this
guy was feeding your imagination.

ADAM

You don't feel it? Like you have a
glimmer of... something special?

James, quick and agile, dribbles around Adam, who stands
still. James performs a fade-away shot, and the ball swishes.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I mean, you never get sick. You can
catch things in mid-air. Your
athletic ability is incredible,
considering your weight.

JAMES

Luck. Skill. Not much more to it.

James spins the ball on his finger.

ADAM

You survived that accident all
those years--

JAMES

Don't.

ADAM

It's a little strange isn't it?
Truck hits boy. Driver dies. Boy
comes out with... just a scar?

Adam pats James' scar; James smacks Adam's hand away and winds up to shoot.

ADAM (CONT'D)
You're meant for great things, J.J.

James shoots; the ball bangs the rim.

ADAM (CONT'D)
You believe it too! You never miss.
Never. Never! It's there. I knew it
You feel it. The glimmer.

JAMES
I've missed before. Shut up.

ADAM
This is like when Superman started
getting ideas about his... nature.

JAMES
I'm not a comic book character.

James closes his eyes and shoots the ball from half-court.
Adam watches the ball swish through the net.

They trade a look.

ADAM
Still won't admit it? Come on. Even
your mom didn't believe you
should've survived that accide--

James punches Adam.

Adam crashes to the pavement and holds his nose. Blood
streams through his fingers.

ADAM (CONT'D)
There's more to you than perfect
basketball shots and punches to the
face. Mary sees it too. She wants
you, J.J. She needs you to be her
saving grace from the real assholes
drooling over her every day.

JAMES
She wants nothing to do with me,
Adam. She goes for football players
and the basketball team. She loves
that attention, and a guy like me
is not going to make her change
that. People don't change.

ADAM

I changed.

JAMES

No. Those pills are what keep you from slicing them back open. You're just as much of an asshole as I am. Only to yourself.

A long beat. Adam pulls back his sleeves, revealing puffy scars across his wrists.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I didn't mean that.

ADAM

No, you're right. I need to find a better route to happiness. A prescription only last so long.

Adam chuckles, but it trickles away as James stands by.

He thinks for a moment, and then extends his hand.

JAMES

I'll admit, I can shoot a basketball pretty well.

ADAM

You throw a better punch.

Adam smiles and grips James' hand with a bloody hand.

EXT. R.E. TAYLOR HIGH SCHOOL - BASKETBALL COURT #1 - DAY

The MUSIC from the iPod Stereo turns to STATIC and HIGH FREQUENCY BEEPS. The Teenagers cover their ears.

EXT. R.E. TAYLOR HIGH SCHOOL - BASKETBALL COURT #2 - DAY

James pulls Adam up, but he's shocked when he sees his face.

Adam's nose is now... healthy.

And in return, Adam gapes at James -- a massive bruise shines over his nose, and blood trickles out of the nostrils.

Adam squeezes his nose and finds nothing wrong.

James touches his nose; blood stains his fingers.

James screams; Adam laughs.