

THE BLANK PAGE
an original screenplay by
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FADE IN:

INT. OFFICE SUPPLY STORE - DAY

TEENAGED HANDS place school supplies into a SHOPPING CART:
pens, pencils, notebooks, backpack, 3-ring binder, ruler,
calculator, stapler, pencil sharpener, and a fresh--

REAM OF PAPER

--Which is gently placed next to the other items.

AT THE CASH REGISTER - MOMENTS LATER

The REAM travels down the conveyor belt, over the scanner--

BEEP!

--And is placed inside a BAG. More BEEPS as the other items
are scanned and placed in various bags.

EXT. OFFICE SUPPLY STORE - MOMENTS LATER

TWO sets of HANDS carry the bags out to a CAR.

BEEP! KA-CHUNK

Up pops the TRUNK. Hands place the bags inside and--

P.O.V. FROM INSIDE THE TRUNK - CONTINUOUS

--As the trunk CLOSES, everything goes DARK.

VAROOM-VAROOM!

The CAR STARTS and moves away, JOSTLING the trunk items.

MUSIC AND MUFFLED VOICES

Accompany the ride. Soon, the car STOPS and the ENGINE cuts.

BEEP! KA-CHUNK

FUZZY P.O.V. FROM INSIDE ONE OF THE BAGS - CONTINUOUS

The TRUNK OPENS and the bag is LIFTED into daylight.

EXT. HOUSE DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

The teenaged HANDS carry bags from the car into a modest,
urban home.

FUZZY P.O.V. FROM INSIDE THE SAME BAG - CONTINUOUS

Surroundings are hard to make out as the bag journeys inside, up STAIRS, down a hall and into a--

INT. TEENAGER'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

--Where it is set on the FLOOR with the other bags. As the DOOR is closed and the LIGHT switched on--

FUZZY P.O.V. FROM INSIDE THE SAME BAG - CONTINUOUS

--DESK LEGS and CHAIR WHEELS come into view. Teenaged FEET kick off SHOES. Then, one by one, BAGS are lifted away.

A commotion of RUSTLING and TEARING ensues ABOVE as wrappers are removed, packaging is tossed into a TRASH CAN, items are placed, pens and pencils are plopped into a container, and...

KA-CHINK

The 3-ring binder is UNLOCKED. Finally, it's QUIET.

The teenaged HANDS reach for the remaining BAG.

FUZZY P.O.V. FROM INSIDE THE SAME BAG - CONTINUOUS

It is LIFTED up and placed on the DESK. After a moment of stillness, the fuzziness is suddenly--

RIPPED AWAY

--And replaced by a--

TEENAGED FACE

It belongs to HENRY, who smiles and continues unwrapping with determination. As he gently sets the ITEM on his desk with the other neatly-arranged supplies, the item's identity is revealed: the exquisite, ivory, 20-lb--

REAM OF PAPER

Henry organizes his new 3-ring binder into sections: Math, Science, History, English, Art, and Creative Writing, dividing the paper EVENLY among POCKET FOLDERS in each.

HENRY'S MOM (O.S.)
Dinner time, Henry!

HENRY
(yelling down)
Coming, Mom!

He places the last bit of paper in then RUNS OUT and down the stairs, leaving the binder OPEN to a BLANK PAGE.

After a long stillness, we ZOOM IN to the PAGE to see--

EYES OPEN

--And light up expectantly, looking around.

P.O.V. FROM THE PAGE - CONTINUOUS

Henry's ROOM comes into view: bed, posters, video games, a RUBBER BALL, a NERF BASKETBALL and hoop, and several FRAMED SCHOOL ASSIGNMENTS, all awarded with big, proud, red "A's".

The EYES WIDEN, then look around to see the other SUPPLIES now neatly organized on the desk.

The EYES look up, down and around, straining to see something.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
(Spanish accent)
Are you looking for something?

The EYES follow the male VOICE to see--

A PENCIL with a SOMBRERO ERASER (SENIOR LAPIZ) spring to life inside the PENCIL HOLDER.

BACK TO SCENE

The BLANK PAGE (PAIGE) responds.

PAIGE
What section am I in?

The pencil JUMPS out of the container.

SEÑOR LAPIZ
Let me see... Looks like you're in Creative Writing!

PAIGE
(dreamily)
Ooh! That's so exciting!

Enthralled, the pencil moves closer.

SEÑOR LAPIZ
I am Señor Lapiz the 2nd.

He turns to show the "NO.2" on his side.

SEÑOR LAPIZ (CONT'D)
Lapiz for short. What is your name?

PAIGE

(thinks)
I'm Paige.

Enchanted, Lapiz tips his sombrero.

SEÑOR LAPIZ

Pleased to meet you, Señorita Paige.

PAIGE

(equally enchanted)
Likewise.

They LOCK EYES for a long moment.

PAIGE (CONT'D)

Where is Señor Lapiz the 1st?

SEÑOR LAPIZ

(leans in)
To tell you the truth... There is no
Lapiz the 1st.

(indicates the pencils)
We are all NO.2s.

(taps sombrero)
This is what counts. As far as Henry
is concerned, 'He who weareth the
sombrero commandeth the name!'

PAIGE

So, you are just a hat.

SEÑOR LAPIZ

Well, that was harsh.

PAIGE

Oh, I'm so sorry! I didn't mean to
insult you!

SEÑOR LAPIZ

I am only teasing! But, to be fair,
you are correct. Without a pencil,
I am just a lifeless sombrero...

(indicates the static
pencils)
And, without me, they are just
pencils. But, I do not concern myself
with such trifle things! Mi hermanos
and I have worked together to keep
Señor Lapiz alive since Henry was a
child. I helped him through Spanish
class and, thus, am his favorite.

PAIGE

You helped him?

SEÑOR LAPIZ

Indeed! He was struggling with his past and future tense conjugations, which are challenging, I must admit. It was really getting him down. His mom gave him the sombrero for inspiration. He took one look at me and started to laugh. He thinks my mustache is, como se dice, 'funny' to look at.

CUT TO:

QUICK FLASH OF YOUNG HENRY WITH DRAWN ON MUSTACHE

SEÑOR LAPIZ (V.O.)

He wore one just like it when doing his Spanish homework. It really seemed to help.

PAIGE (V.O.)

(laughs)
Henry sounds wonderful!

BACK TO SCENE

SEÑOR LAPIZ

He is! He is a straight-A student!
(indicates framed awards)
We've been a great team over the years, Henry and me.

Lapiz JUMPS onto a--

SCRATCH PAD

--And begins SCRIBBLING with flare as he speaks. The Scratch Pad (SCRATCH) suddenly--

COMES TO LIFE

--And WINKS a scruffy eye at Paige.

SEÑOR LAPIZ (CONT'D)

Writing essays, history reports, science projects, drawing sketches... Even doing Algebra problems.

Lapiz scrawls an ALGEBRA EQUATION. Paige watches curiously.

SEÑOR LAPIZ (CONT'D)

(eyes cross)
Very complicated Algebra problems!
(MORE)

SEÑOR LAPIZ (CONT'D)

And don't even get me started on Geometry. Ay yay-yay! So many angles! But, so many wonderful things we've created!

Paige looks from SCRATCH to the FRAMED AWARDS, confused.

PAIGE

Lapiz, there's something I don't understand. If you helped him write all those award-winning papers, why do they look so different?

Lapiz eyes the TYPED PAPERS in the frames.

SEÑOR LAPIZ

Oh, forgive me! I am forgetting the most important part! My work with Henry is never to be turned in. No, no. That would be unacceptable! My role is to help him work out the details.

(off Paige's confusion)

You see, Henry is very meticulous. Everything must be neat and perfect or he gets very upset. Sometimes very, VERY upset...

(indicates Scratch)

So, we do all the thinking and creating on Scratch.

SCRATCH

(scruffy voice)

Pleased to meet ya, kid.

SEÑOR LAPIZ

Then, once he's happy, he types everything on the computer and prints it out for class.

(indicates computer and printer)

That's where you come in!

Paige takes this all in excitedly.

PAIGE

I wonder what I will become?

SEÑOR LAPIZ

That is a good question! And, for the answer, we shall have to wait until Henry gets his assignment.

(MORE)

SEÑOR LAPIZ (CONT'D)

But, as far as I'm concerned, you are in the best section of them all. With Creative Writing, it could be anything! A story, a song, a poem - the possibilities are endless!

PAIGE

Maybe I'll be a great adventure tale about a brave knight who saves a princess from a fierce dragon!

SEÑOR LAPIZ

Or, a sonnet about two star-crossed lovers!

PAIGE

Or, a melody about a cowboy and his horse!

SEÑOR LAPIZ

Or, a limerick about a great Matador who liberates a gentle bull!

PAIGE

Or, a story about a world with magical creatures!

SEÑOR LAPIZ

(both laugh)

As I said, the possibilities are endless!

Paige and Lapid LOCK EYES, affection growing. Lapid indicates the FULL MOON outside.

SEÑOR LAPIZ (CONT'D)

Beautiful, eh? We can dream together under la misma luna. Well, good night, Señorita Paige.

Lapid HOPS into the pencil dispenser.

PAIGE

Good night, Señor Lapid.

Paige looks out the WINDOW, sighs dreamily at the FULL MOON.

FADE OUT:

CUT TO:

MONTAGE: HENRY AND LAPIZ WRITE MANY ASSIGNMENTS

Lapiz and Henry collaborate like a well-oiled machine: Henry writes rough drafts on Scratch, TYPES final drafts on the COMPUTER, removes ivory PAPER from the corresponding POCKET FOLDER, PRINTS final drafts, STAPLES when necessary, and TUCKS them neatly into their POCKET FOLDER to bring to class.

Over SUPERED IMAGES, Lapiz READS to a captivated Paige:

-Essay on Saving the AMAZON RAINFOREST

SEÑOR LAPIZ

"The Amazon Rainforest in Brazil is the world's largest tropical rainforest.

A tree SPIDER slinks past a crouching baby JAGUAR, who pounces toward a MONKEY, who leaps onto a vine and startles a MACAW, who drops a NUT which conks the head of a passing CAPYBARA.

SEÑOR LAPIZ (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It's lush vegetation contains millions of species of birds, insects, plants and animals, some yet undiscovered..."

SAWS roar! The confused macaw flies in circles as its tree home crashes to the ground! Eyes ablaze, the jaguar, monkey and capybara flee in a panic as FIRE rips through the jungle!

SEÑOR LAPIZ (V.O.) (CONT'D)

"But fires and deforestation are rapidly destroying it for lumber, grazing pastures and farmland."

Ordinary COWS munch ordinary GRASS in a now-ordinary field.

-History Report on ALEXANDER HAMILTON

SEÑOR LAPIZ (CONT'D)

"Alexander Hamilton was one of America's Founding Fathers. He authored the Federalist Papers, was the first Secretary to the U.S. Treasury, and was even General George Washington's assistant."

Lapiz-as-HAMILTON SLIDES up to a PENCIL-as-WASHINGTON, WINKS.

-Biology Report on a FROG

SEÑOR LAPIZ (CONT'D)

"Adult frogs live much of their lives on land, but must return to the water to reproduce."

A FROG kicks back, zaps a FLY, then with powerful hind legs, swan-dives into a POND and KISSES her MATE.

-Pencil drawing of a NATIVE AMERICAN

As Lapid quickly SKETCHES, the NATIVE AMERICAN NODS to Paige.

-A long ALGEBRA problem

Lapid scrawls an elaborate EQUATION.

SEÑOR LAPID (V.O.) (CONT'D)

"If plane A is traveling due west at 500mph with a tail wind, and plane B is traveling due east at 550mph with a head wind, at what point will they cross paths?"

Paige's EYES CROSS.

SEÑOR LAPID (CONT'D)

Might as well just ask what the movie is, eh? Heh, heh, heh.

-Each assignment gets stamped with a big red 'A' and FILED in the binder POCKETS.

-Lapid, Scratch, and Paige all collapse in a dizzy finale--

PAIGE/LAPID/SCRATCH

Whew!

--And the BINDER is CLOSED and left on the clean desk.

END MONTAGE

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HENRY'S ROOM - NIGHT

The BINDER now in a dreamy beam of MOONLIGHT. As Henry sleeps, the binder OPENS with effort and Paige--

JUMPS OUT

--Of her UNTOUCHED section and into the moonlight. Scratch SNORES peacefully on his side of the binder.

Paige FLIPS through the binder, smiling at the completed ASSIGNMENTS. As she looks down at her BLANK BODY, her smile fades. She moves to the WINDOW and looks out at the MOON.

PAIGE

When will it be my turn..?

Lapiz opens a sleepy eye and watches Paige compassionately. After a long moment, Paige sighs and returns to the binder. She JUMPS into her pocket folder as if jumping under the covers, then pulls the binder SHUT.

INT. HENRY'S ROOM - DAY

Darkness OPENS into daylight.

P.O.V. FROM SOMEONE'S SLEEPY EYES

--Blinking at the light. They focus in to SEE--

HENRY'S PERPLEXED FACE

Paige SHUTS her EYES quickly, then OPENS one cautiously, watching Henry.

TAP TAP TAP

Paige follows the sound to SEE Lapiz' sombrero head being--

TAPPED

--Repeatedly on Scratch.

Henry suddenly flips a DIZZY Lapiz upright, then WRITES his ASSIGNMENT on Scratch. Lapiz reads ALOUD as he writes.

SEÑOR LAPIZ

"Free-Form Writing: Write one page
on any subject in your format of
choice - poem, song or short story"

Paige LIGHTS UP! Finally, it's her turn! She and Lapiz exchange an excited look.

Henry sighs, kicks back in his chair. He TAPS Lapiz' head again rapidly, then sets him DOWN and swings his chair around.

Lapiz RUBS his aching head.

Henry shoots repeated hoops with the NERF BASKETBALL, who CHEERS itself on.

HENRY

(to himself)

One page, any subject, any format...

Henry swings back around, scrawls a LINE across Scratch. He scrunches his nose, RIPS it off, crumples it and TOSSES it.

Paige's EYES widen as the CRUMPLED PAPER makes a long--

SLO-MO ARC

--Into the TRASH. As she strains to see the TOSSED PAPER, the door OPENS and Henry's Mom peeks in. Paige watches her.

HENRY'S MOM
How's the writing project?

HENRY
So far, nonexistent.

HENRY'S MOM
Hm. You'll think of something.

TIME CUTS OVER SEVERAL DAYS:

-Henry plays VIDEO GAMES.

-Henry SHARPENS Lapid, who GIGGLES involuntarily. The ELECTRIC SHARPENER chews, swallows and BURPS.

-Henry scrawls a new LINE. Rips it, crumples it, TOSSES it.

-Henry hangs upside-down off the bed.

HENRY
(to himself)
Poem, song, short story...

-Henry stares at the blank scratch paper. Nothing. He DOODLES a pair of CROSSED EYES which--

UNCROSS, LOOK AT PAIGE

--As Henry rips, crumples, and TOSSES it! Paige GASPS!

-Henry TOSSES Lapid up and down, up and down. Lapid turns GREEN with nausea.

-Rip, crumple, toss! Rip, crumple, toss! Rip, crumple, toss!

-A panicked Paige eyes the growing mound of--

DISCARDED PAPERS

--Who HUDDLE together in the trash, CONSOLING each other.

PAIGE
What's happening, Lapid? Why isn't he writing anything?

SEÑOR LAPID
I don't know. I've never seen him like this!

Henry looks at the CLOCK.

HENRY

Arrrrrgghh!

He throws the RUBBER BALL angrily against the wall! Paige and Lapid watch in fright as it--

PING-PONGS

--All over the room, then SHAKES itself off. After a beat, Henry calmly turns back to the task.

HENRY (CONT'D)

No time for rough drafts now.

Henry moves away a confused Scratch and--

SLO-MO REACHES FOR PAIGE

Paige and Lapid LOCK EYES in fright, and the--

WORLD DISAPPEARS

--As she is PULLED OUT of her pocket and gently set down.

This is it. Slowly, sadly, she turns her GAZE up to Henry, TEARS welling. Henry STARES at the blank page. Paige STARES at Henry. Lapid looks from one to the other. Paige and Henry stare back and forth, EYE-TO-EYE, until--

HENRY (CONT'D)

Arrrrrgghh!

Henry's mom OPENS the door.

HENRY'S MOM

Henry! What's going on in here?
Have you finished your assignment?

HENRY

No! I haven't even started!

HENRY'S MOM

Isn't it due today?

HENRY

Yes! But, I can't think of anything!
It's just a blank piece of paper.
(looks at Paige)
It's like it's staring up at me!
Asking me to create something amazing.

Paige's EYES widen. *Can he see her?*

HENRY'S MOM

(smiles)

Well, then listen to it. Half an hour til we leave.

The door CLOSES and Henry calmly returns to his assignment. He grips Lapidz firmly and stares at the blank page. Paige and Lapidz share a FINAL TEARY GAZE until...Lapidz is--

TURNED TO FACE HENRY

HENRY

(to the PENCIL)

I need your help, Señor Lapidz. You've never let me down before and I know you won't let me down now.

SEÑOR LAPIDZ

(pause, eyes WIDEN)

Oh, si, Señor Henry! You can count on me! I will not let--

Suddenly, Lapidz is sprung to action and begins to--

WRITE ACROSS PAIGE'S SURFACE

A blank piece of paper stares up at me.

Paige GIGGLES involuntarily at the sensation of lead to paper. Then, the TEARS FLOW and Lapidz' lead flies across her again.

"What will you make of me? What will I be?

Will I be a sonnet? A beautiful rhyme?

Of passioned young lovers suspended in time?"

SEÑOR LAPIDZ (CONT'D)

(reads as he writes)

*"A sweet melody of two turtle doves?
Or, knights who slay dragons to rescue
true loves?" It sees my sharp pencil
and urges me on.*

(eyes WIDEN)

*"Fill me with beauty! Fill me with
song!"*

As Henry pauses, Lapidz turns to Paige excitedly.

SEÑOR LAPIDZ (CONT'D)

He hears you, Paige! Whatever you're doing, keep doing it!

Paige focuses on Henry, who begins to WRITE with a fury.

PAIGE

*Make me a tale meant for the big
screen. Or, musical play where
dancing is seen! Make me a letter
In Spanish or French, from the man
to the Pirate who captured his Wench!*

HENRY

*The blank page stares up at me, dreamy
and white, awaiting the genius inside
to ignite.*

SEÑOR LAPIZ

*It begs for creation, the pressure
increases.*

HENRY

*It's driving me mad, I'm falling to
pieces!*

SEÑOR LAPIZ

*The right combination of letters, I
need.*

HENRY

*In just the right order at just the
right speed.*

SEÑOR LAPIZ

*To make the page happy, to set the
page free.*

HENRY

*To let it rejoice in the brilliance
in me!*

HENRY'S MOM (O.S.)

Henry! Time to go!

Mom OPENS the door--

HENRY'S MOM (CONT'D)

And, I need you to pick up milk,
bread and cheese after school.

Henry scribbles the LAST LINE then puts on his SHOES.

PAIGE

(to Lapid, expectantly)
How does it end?

Lapid looks down at Paige's hopeful face, GULPS NERVOUSLY.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

Henry looks down at the POEM as he reads it to the CLASS.

HENRY

*My pencil is poised, the paige waits
to be pleased. Then out comes the
genius!*

(beat)

"Get milk, bread and cheese."

Paige's eyes WIDEN in terror as Henry GULPS, looks up to the--

DEAD SILENT CLASS

Then to his open-mouthed TEACHER.

Lapiz holds Paige's GAZE and sheds a knowing TEAR as Henry LOWERS the paper.

PAIGE'S P.O.V. OF THE UPSIDE-DOWN CLASSROOM

The class is silent for an eternal pause. Henry braces for impact. Then, instead of boos, come...smiles, giggles and--

APPLAUSE

Paige and Lapiz can hardly contain their excitement!

ANGLE ON PAIGE AS

-She's stamped with a BIG, RED "A"!

-She's slipped into a folder for: COUNTY POETRY CONTEST

-She's tagged with a WINNING BLUE RIBBON

INT. HENRY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Henry's hands gently place a--

FRAMED PAIGE

--On the wall by the PENCIL DISPENSER.

He smiles at the BLUE RIBBON, turns out the LIGHTS, and falls asleep, the smile still on his face.

Under the dreamy MOONLIGHT, Señor Lapiz playfully TIPS his sombrero toward Paige and bows in her general direction. Paige BEAMS back at him then stands PROUDLY in her frame.

It's the best destiny she could ever imagine.

FADE OUT: