

THROWING LIKE A GIRL

Written by  
Bryce Hatch

661-747-2934  
brycehatch@hotmail.com

FADE IN:

EXT. HIGHWAY - EVENING

A run-down dirty U-MOVE-IT truck drives by a dilapidated football field.

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Inside, RACHEL BARNES (17) tomboy brunette in a pony tail, Chapstick her only makeup.

She sits glumly with earbuds planted, a Varsity Football Letterman's jacket with "Stevens" embroidered on the back over an expensive dress.

In the driver's seat is mom, ANITA BARNES (late 30s), in full Louis Vuitton finery. Country music DRONES out of the radio.

Rachel pops out an earbud when she spies the rundown school.

RACHEL

Is that my new school?! It's the size of my *former* bedroom!

Anita strikes out a hand across Rachel's chest as she slams on the brakes and swerves, avoiding an ugly stray dog in the street, wipes her forehead, then presses the gas again.

ANITA

Rach, you haven't even touched your burger!

Rachel lifts a soggy hamburger with wilted lettuce.

RACHEL

This?! This atrocity from some hole-in-the-wall with bad fluorescent lighting and no vegan options -- you're trying to kill me?!

Rachel manually struggles to roll down the window to throw the burger out, but the outside stench is too powerful -- she gags as she rolls it back up again.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Ugh...

ANITA

Manure. They have cows.

Rachel takes out a bottle of perfume and sprays everywhere, then finds old gum stuck from the front dash to her dress.

As she pulls back, the gum stretches.

RACHEL

Ahhh! This is Italian! We've got to go back!

Anita sighs.

ANITA

Sorry kiddo, we're stuck.

EXT. GRAMP'S HOUSE - EVENING

The truck pulls onto the cracked driveway of an eight-hundred and fifty square foot 1950s house.

GRAMPS WALTER (80s), a wiry elderly man in flannel and jeans, pokes his head out -- sneers -- goes back inside -- slams the screen door.

Anita climbs out, hands on her hips, and surveys.

ANITA

Let's go, princess!

At the same time, Rachel dives for the keys in the ignition as Anita deftly pulls them out, then pockets them.

ANITA (CONT'D)

Wasn't born yesterday, sweetheart!  
You can't even drive.

RACHEL

We had a driver! And a chef and a maid! What do we have now?!

Anita walks toward the door as Rachel sits and broods, waiting, trying not to touch anything.

ANITA

Dad, we're here!

GRAMPS (O.S.)

Don' want you around!

Anita continues toward the door.

ANITA

Let's go -- it's gonna get hotter!

Rachel hits the glovebox and climbs out of the truck. She slams the door hard, then tromps to the back.

She fights with the sticky handle, then finally unhinges the roll-top door and slams it upward, after which she takes out a pocket hand-sanitizer and wipes her hands.

With a huff, she grabs a kid-sized bureau, hand-painted in pastel flowers, probably from when she was five, and with difficulty, carries it up the broken path to the front door.

The heel of one of her Jimmy Choos snaps off. Unblinking, she stops and stares as Anita passes going the opposite way.

RACHEL

Not the California you promised!

Rachel GRUNTS as she hobbles forward carrying the bureau.

INT. RACHEL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rachel enters a tiny bedroom and puts the bureau down. Several coats of paint are thick around the edges and an aging ceiling fan wobbles alarmingly above.

ANITA (O.S.)

I don't know how long!

GRAMPS (O.S.)

Jus' don' interrupt my shows!

Rachel closes her door and sits on her bureau. Suddenly, it CRACKS and SPLINTERS underneath -- she falls inside the smashed box spilling keepsakes, her hair sticking to the wall.

Fumbling, she climbs out, then picks up a now-broken picture frame -- last year's prom.

She climbs off and fishes her cell phone out as her hand catches the gum on her dress.

Quickly dialing, she goes to the window and throws opens the threadbare curtains, then starts to climb up when she realizes the smudgy window has decorative iron bars on them!

She grabs the bars and yanks, but they hold fast. She spies a trail of ants coming in from a crack in paint.

RACHEL

Are you serious?!

Voicemail on her phone picks up.

DEREK (V.O.)  
 Hey, it's me. You've heard the  
 news; I'm a free man. So, leave me  
 a message, I'll def call you back!

RACHEL  
 No! No-no-no!

Horrified, she sits on a prison bed and stares at her device.  
 Gramps opens the door without care or concern.

GRAMPS  
 Dinner!

RACHEL  
 Not hungry!

GRAMPS  
 Then starve!

Gramps slams the door closed as Rachel slumps forward, pops  
 earbuds into her ears, then plugs them into her cell phone.

INT. KITCHEN / DINING ROOM - LATER

Anita sits at a tiny oak table. Next to her, a chipped  
 stained bowl of stew and saltine crackers is next to a dark  
 yellow 70s glass filled with Sweet Tea.

Rachel plops down into an aging wooden chair.

ANITA  
 Rach... Rachel!

Rachel can't hear her as takes out her cell phone and types.  
 Gramps approaches from behind with a pair of rusty hedge  
 trimmers and cuts off her earbud cords.

She jumps back and grabs her cords, looking up at him. He  
 points the shears at her face.

GRAMPS  
 My house, my rules! Now, eat up!

Rachel examines the gelatinous swill and shudders.

GRAMPS (CONT'D)  
 'Sides, it's the best canned stew  
 money can buy!

Rachel pushes the bowl away from her.

RACHEL  
I'm a vegetarian!

GRAMPS  
Then pick out the vegetables!

Rachel shoves her chair back, grabs the truck keys from a glass ashtray, and heads to the front door.

She yanks on the knob -- it's deadbolted -- on the inside! She spins around, fuming.

RACHEL  
What if there's a fire?!

GRAMPS  
Asbestos don't burn!

RACHEL  
Aughhh!

She storms back to her bedroom and slams the door.

GRAMPS  
And you've got chores before school!

Rachel lets out another SHRIEK inside her room.

EXT. LONGHILL HIGH FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

PRINCIPAL JERRY PRICE (50s) is a deadhead with long, braided, grey hair, wire-rimmed glasses, and a faded '87 'Longhill Football' tie-dyed tee shirt under a brown sportscoat.

He sits in the stands with a clipboard full of papers in one hand and a corn dog in the other and looks around at the home bleachers.

Only a few parents, while the visiting side bursts at the seams and overflows two-thirds the way around the track.

On offense, the BULLDOGS are a massive team with a deep roster. They dwarf the smaller and scrawnier SPARTANS, who are paper thin on the bench.

JERRY  
Come'on Jake!

The scoreboard shows Spartans-0 Bulldogs-105. The Bulldogs hike the ball; their offense runs right over the Spartans as they score a touchdown.

Hispanic mom MARI (30s) walks by Jerry.

MARI

Senior Jerry, I heard we weren't getting new science books next year. I just wanted to say sorry.

JERRY

Thanks, Mari, we won't give up.

Jerry's secretary ETHEL (80s) makes her way up.

ETHEL

Jerry! Good news for a change -- we made enough tonight to see us through to the end of the year!

Jerry lets out a massive sigh, soaking positive energy in.

JERRY

Yes! Hey, Junior, over here! Who wants nachos?

LITTLE BOY

I do!

Jerry flags down snack vendor JUNIOR (16), fishes out several bills from his wallet, hands them over, then gives the boy his box of nachos.

Suddenly, the field sprinklers come on, causing players coaches and referees to scatter.

Jerry picks up his walkie-talkie laying beside him and keys it on.

JERRY

Ramon! Ramon, come in!

RAMON (V.O)

On it, Jefe!

On the other side of the field, RAMON (40s), a small Hispanic man in a blue Dickies jumpsuit, jumps into an aging gator, speeds down a rampway and disappears around back.

EXT. LONGHILL FIELD - CONTINUOUS

JAKE HERNANDEZ (17), medium-height Latino boy, cut and bruised with an attitude and the Spartans quarterback, is pissed.

JAKE

Chico, you gotta tackle him, ese!

CHICO MENDEZ (17), a much shorter kid with an equal machismo, and their running back, gets up holding a bleeding arm.

CHICO

You want me to take on the whole team?! It's what I'm doing, ese!

The sprinklers reduce in pressure, then shut off.

COACH CORRIGAN (60s), reedy and alcoholic, SHOUTS.

CORRIGAN

Jake! Chico! You're going to get flagged! Get down there for the extra point!

Corrigan looks around as if he's reached a decision, then drops his clipboard on the grass. He looks for Jerry and stoically walks into the stands.

EXT. FOOTBALL HOME BLEACHERS - CONTINUOUS

Corrigan slowly hulks up into the ancient wooden bleachers and approaches Jerry -- a loose board POPS UP, and he almost loses his balance as he extricates his leg.

CORRIGAN

Jerry, I... I can't take this -- I'm done. It's my last day... I really don't care what you do for the rest of the game.

Jerry, the parents, and the kids are shocked as Corrigan shuffles back down the steps, MUTTERING to himself.

The varsity players follow. DIRK (17), fullback, looks around.

DIRK

Corrigan leaves, I leave.

EDDIE (17), wide receiver, and CASPER (17), tight end, follow.

EDDIE

Me too.

CASPAR

Right behind you.



All three players walk off the field. Huge African American REGGIE SMITH (18), a gentle giant with a high-pitched voice, looks over to Jake.

REGGIE

Man, now what I gonna do? First  
the basketball coach tells me  
there's no more ball, and now this?  
How am I supposed to be an MMA  
Fighter if I can't play any  
sports?!

A HIGH SCHOOL REFEREE (30s), steps on the bleachers.

REF

Jerry, what do you want to do?

The fans, players, and staff are in a stupor.

JERRY

I guess... we forfeit?

REF

Out of your misery, okay.

The Ref blows on his whistle and signals the game is over. The other side erupts in CHEERS as Jerry looks over at Ethel.

JERRY

Ethel, would you get the staff  
together and tell'em to meet me on  
the field, please.

ETHEL

Yes, sir.

EXT. LONGHILL FIELD - NIGHT

An empty stadium. Quiet as a church, it sits in contrast to the din of spectacle only an hour ago.

Jerry sits on the back side of a golf cart as the varied and aging school staff approach.

Ramon and Ethyl arrive first, followed by MARY WILLARD (70s), sweet-seeming on the outside but capable of putting the smackdown on any student.

ALBERT (60s), aging hunchback, SAM (40s), a lean man with a scraggly black beard, ESTER (70s), little old lady and HELGA (50s), staunch German woman.

JERRY  
 (sings to himself)  
 Sorry that you feel that way. The  
 only thing there is to say: Every  
 silver lining's got a touch of  
 grey.

Grim faces project a somber mood.

JERRY (CONT'D)  
 Thanks for staying after the game.

RAMON  
 What game?

Nervous CHUCKLES.

JERRY  
 Most of you have heard the back-  
 fence talk tonight.

SIGHS, SWEARS, and GROANS.

JERRY (CONT'D)  
 In short, there's no football team.  
 District's been on me for years  
 about losing. Now that we no longer  
 offer any extra-curricular  
 activities, they'll be shuttering  
 Longhill High... next month.

GASPS and wide-eyes and Jerry holds out his hands.

JERRY (CONT'D)  
 I staved it off as long as I could,  
 folks.

Mary raises her hand.

MARY  
 Because of football?

JERRY  
 It was our only revenue. There's  
 not even money to hire another  
 coach.

There is stillness around the group.

JERRY (CONT'D)  
 So there you have it folks, started  
 in nineteen fifty-three... it's  
 been a good run.

Jerry tries to hide his tears, but the staff won't have it as everyone comes in for a hug.

Everyone except crochety old Albert, unfeeling, staunch math teacher who stands with his arms crossed and scowls.

INT. RACHEL'S ROOM - MORNING

Rachel blinks in the dark of early morning to a strange PANTING sound.

A large, mangy dog's nose is millimeters away, then he licks her face... Dog slobber! She reels back in disgust and finds Gramps in the doorway.

GRAMPS

Wake up, Buttercup! Get moving!

He tosses a pair of black mucking boots at her, then turns and leaves. The dog stays and stares at her.

INT. KITCHEN / DINING ROOM - LATER

Rachel shuffles out, hair in a messy bun, wearing a cropped polo tee, Irish flannel lounge pants, and the black boots.

GRAMPS

You're gonna get dirty.

She looks at him with a glare.

RACHEL

Bring it.

Gramps whistles; the dog bolts out of Rachel's room, sweeps past her -- takes out her legs -- and bounds out the back.

GRAMPS

Let's go, milady.

Rachel breathes in, gets committed, tromps out back, misses a cement step, and tumbles into the grass and dirt.

GRAMPS (CONT'D)

Watch it, first step's a doozy!

He leaves and the screen door shuts NOISLY behind him.

INT. KITCHEN/ DINING ROOM - LATER

The screen door opens, and a shaft of pink morning light floods inside. Rachel, covered in filth, twigs, and hay, lumbers inside, her expensive clothing ruined beyond repair.

Anita, in plain sweats and men's western flannel shirt, sits at the dining room table sipping tea.

ANITA

There you are -- you've got school!

RACHEL

He's got pigs, and chickens, and wait... goats! I just can't even!

She sloughs to the bathroom and slowly closes the door.

INT. KITCHEN / DINING ROOM - LATER

Looking more like her old self, Rachel exits the tiny, dusty, rose pink tiled bathroom, a luxurious robe around her waist, another wrapped around her hair.

Behind her a mountain of makeup supplies are heaped up on the small counter.

Gramps stands in her way holding a steaming mug. She gives him a questioning look.

GRAMPS

Coffee.

RACHEL

It's... black!

GRAMPS

Put some hair on your chest!

He CACKLES. She rebuffs the offering, retreats into her room.

EXT. LONGHILL HIGH - FRONT OF SCHOOL - MID-MORNING

Gramps pulls up in a rusted-out 1958 Chevrolet Apache.

Rachel looks every bit the part of New York private school girl in a plaid A-line skirt and crêped blouse. She doesn't wait for the truck to stop.

She opens the door and slides out, long hair flowing like a shampoo commercial.

Nonetheless, Gramps stops the truck, and it BACKFIRES.

GRAMPS  
Be here right after school!

RACHEL  
(sweetly)  
Will do, Grandfather.

Everyone -- especially the boys in the vicinity -- stares.

Rachel doesn't bat an eye as she walks inside like a supermodel.

INT. ENGLISH CLASS - MID-MORNING

Rachel walks in with Jerry and his Grateful Dead tie.

Mary stops her instruction. Nineteen kids at desks with the student population at 75% Latino, 22% black and 2% percent Asian and 1% white.

JERRY  
Mrs. Willard, this is Rachel. She's from the East Coast.

MARY  
Welcome and consider this your thirty-days notice. Take a seat.

Rachel looks at the only empty seat in the room and walks over to it as Jerry exits. She passes by KELLY JONES (18), a blocky, poor, white trashy kid, who gazes out the window and HANG XIAO (17), tall and lanky with a large book open.

Behind them is REGGIE EAST (18) a hulking giant almost over his desk's capacity, who sits and draws pictures of Spartans and DeShawn EAST (18), Reggie's twin brother.

Reggie stares lovingly at AMBROSIA WASHINGTON (18), large and in charge with a glittering 'Gangsta Flame' female rap artist T-shirt and protective up-do hairstyle.

In the back, Jake sits around his posse exuding cool as the other boys WHISPER and LAUGH amongst each other.

JAKE  
(whispers)  
*Ella es mi novia!*

CHICO  
(whispers back)  
*Mamacita!*

LUPE MERCADO (16), a pistol -- petite, athletic, talkative.

LUPE  
You wouldn't know what a *mamacita*  
was if she...

MARY  
Lupe! Chico!

Mary glares, and everyone falls silent as Lupe flashes Rachel a glare -- someone new is on her territory.

Rachel smiles half-heartedly as she sits next to her.

Mary sighs, then slowly walks toward the window and stares outside, clutching Romeo and Juliet to her chest.

PETER ALLEN (30s), button-up in a sweater-vest who exudes feminine tendencies, enters the room. He walks up and looks out the window next to her.

MARY (CONT'D)  
Peter, I've been recommended for  
early retirement.

In moments, her decades of stalwart resolve crumbles.

PETE  
You've influenced so many students.

MARY  
Tossed aside like yesterday's news.  
Where are they sending you?

PETE  
Maple Leaf Middle.

MARY  
For heaven's sake... you're going  
die.

Pete puts a kind hand on Mary's shoulder as Chico pipes in.

CHICO  
Mrs. Willard, they closing the  
school?

Mary turns around, tears in her eyes.

MARY  
I'm afraid they are.

CHICO  
My dad works here!

PETE  
They're letting all support staff  
go Chico.

Chico sits there, stunned.

CHICO  
Where's he gonna find work now?!

Mary shores up her reserve.

MARY  
You're going to do just as I've  
taught you, and your parents, and  
their parents before that -- you  
never give up, never, never, never!

Mary holds back the tears, then walks out of the classroom.

The bell RINGS, and everyone rushes to the door.

Jake and the other boys scope Rachel while GONZALO (18),  
gangsta-wannabe with a scraggler moustache, puckers his lips  
and makes a kiss.

Lupe, still guarded, hangs back for Rachel.

LUPE  
I can fill you in. Need someone to  
take you around?

RACHEL  
I won't be here long enough.

Lupe laughs and lightens up. She likes this attitude.

LUPE  
That's all of us now -- they're  
closing the school. Come on.

She leads Rachel out the door.

INT. HISTORY CLASS - DAY

The class is engulfed in military posters, ancient battle  
plans, and strategy board games set up with pieces in play.

Pete writes on the whiteboard as Lupe and Rachel enter.

LUPE  
We're all in the same classes, but  
next month we'll be at the richie-  
rich school, and it's gonna suck!

Jake and the boys arrive. Without turning, Pete addresses.

PETE  
Today, you're in groups of four.  
Follow the numbers on your desks.

LUPE  
Psst! Sit here.

Lupe signals Rachel to an open seat by her as the students move their desks into tetrads.

Next to Rachel is CHAD (18), stuck-up bro and backwards hat, leans over and sneers.

CHAD  
Know what'd look good on you? Me.

Lupe smacks his hat off his head.

LUPE  
You're such a Chad... Chad!

Chad puts his hat back on, not fazed.

CHAD  
Lil' Chihuahua lookin' out for ya?

Rachel knocks it off so hard it flies across the room.

RACHEL  
I fight my own battles!

Pete arrests the situation.

PETE  
Lupe... new girl!

LUPE  
Her name's Rachel!

PETE  
Both of you -- detention!

Lupe sighs as she and Rachel get up and make for the door.

EXT. SCHOOL QUAD - LUNCH

Dead grass and weeds surround rusted tables peeling with paint as the girls pass Kelly sitting under a tree by himself and Hang walking and reading the same big book.



Lupe leads Rachel to a semi-green grassy spot under a tree where they sit and take out lunches.

LUPE  
New York sounds so cool.

RACHEL  
It was.

LUPE  
This town's fame is a river bed  
that hasn't had water since ever.

Lupe points to a small deteriorating home across the street.

LUPE (CONT'D)  
See that house over there? That's  
where I live.

Rachel laughs as Ambrosia approaches.

ANA SOFIA (18), strong, slender soccer player in green Mexico National jersey, hair in double braids, and MARISABEL (15), her wiry little sister, stands next to Ambrosia.

AMBROSIA  
Hey lil' thang, this the new gal?

ANA SOFIA  
She the *guera* from New York?

LUPE  
This is Ambrosia.

She snaps and juts her head out, then nods and smiles.

AMBROSIA  
Classy, sassy, and a little smart  
assy! I love your threads!

Rachel LAUGHS.

LUPE  
And this is Ana Sofia.

Arms still folded, Ana nods curtly.

ANA SOFIA  
*Mucho gusto. Nice hair. Mi hermana,  
Marisabel.*

MARISABEL  
(shyly)  
Hi.

AMBROSIA

Good to finally have diversity.  
Rach, you hang with us. And I hear  
you got busted on your first day?!

Ambrosia, Ana Sofia, and Marisabel sit and take out their lunches as Jake and his boys walk by, eyeing Rachel.

Chico WOLF WHISTLES.

ANA SOFIA

*¡Eres estúpido!*

AMBROSIA

Don't listen to them. They're a  
bunch of...

(raises her volume)

-- Dumb boys!

JAKE

Oh, that hurt so much!

Jake fakes doubling over as the group continues to walk, laughing and slapping each other on the back.

AMBROSIA

I'm gonna get thrown out my first  
day at that rich school.

ANA SOFIA

They'll send us back to Mexico!

LUPE

I'm going straight to juvie.

Rachel takes in the situation reading everyone's faces.

As if on cue, a football lands in the middle of the girls, smashing Rachel's lunch everywhere. The girls look up as Jake and his bros stare expectantly.

JAKE

Come on, Raquel! Throw the ball!

Chico stands next to Jake and throws up his arms.

CHICO

Yeah, even though you'll throw like  
a girl. 'Cause you're a girl!

He puts out a fist to bump, but no one wants to touch such a lame insult.

JAKE  
Come'on newbie! What're you,  
scared?! Toss the ball!

Rachel stands, picks up the ball, and wipes her food from it.

RACHEL  
You want this?

JAKE  
Yeah!

RACHEL  
This? This ball?!

JAKE  
Throw it!

Rachel grips the football, positions her body, winds back, then chucks the ball toward the boys.

The ball arcs far over their heads in a beautiful, tight spiral.

Everyone looks at her in awe.

LUPE  
How did you...

RACHEL  
-- I don't want to talk about it.

She sits down and picks food off her backpack. The boys in the background are as still as statues.

AMBROSIA  
So, detention after school?!

This breaks the ice, and the girls LAUGH.

LUPE  
It's not *really* detention. All we  
do is pick up trash.

Ana Sofia hoists up a small, clear sack of papers, lunch waste, and pencil shavings from her backpack.

ANA SOFIA  
We raid the teacher's bins, then  
sit and talk out on the field.

EXT. LONGHILL PARKING LOT - LATE AFTERNOON

A LOCAL COP waits across the street as students are picked up by parents.

Rachel impatiently stands at the curb as Anita pulls up in the old truck. She sighs and opens the door.

RACHEL  
Took you long enough.

ANITA  
Yeah, it's all about you.

Rachel climbs into the truck.

RACHEL  
What is that?!

Anita is dressed in a 60s, vintage, pink waitress uniform.

ANITA  
-- You got detention on your first day?! Unbe-freakin'-lievable! Well, Precious, here's more punishment, because of your dad, I'm working double shifts, so you'll be spending more time with your grandfather!

Lupe and a few other STUDENTS stand and watch the episode as they wait for their parents -- Lupe in particular looks at her, eyes squinted trying to figure Rachel out.

ANITA (O.S) (CONT'D)  
And not only are you grounded, but you're going to have every chore on the planet! I swear, sometimes..

Lupe counts down...

LUPE  
Five, four, three, two one...

-- To the truck BACKFIRING, which it does. The cop dives behind his car, his service weapon in his hands as he looks around for the culprit.

Unfazed, Anita drives off, which causes her truck to backfire again. SIRENS and LIGHTS appear in her rearview mirror.

ANITA  
Are you serious?!

INT. GRAMP'S KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Rachel and Anita enter. Excited, Buck jumps all over them.

ANITA  
Chicken's in the fridge.

GRAMPS  
Buck, get off! Hey, jailbird, how's  
solitary?

Rachel looks inside the fridge; the pickings are scarce.

RACHEL  
They're closing the school... And  
there's no chicken.

Gramps pulls Buck off Rachel, then picks up a dried-blood  
spattered hatchet and hands it to her.

GRAMPS  
Then go get your own food!

She rolls her eyes at him, then flops down in a chair.

RACHEL  
At least I won't have to go to this  
dump, because it looks like I'm  
going to Stine High.

Gramps freezes, and Anita GASPS.

ANITA  
Not there!

Rachel's stunned by their reaction.

RACHEL  
Why not?!

GRAMPS  
'Cause the guy that runs their  
school team is a total crumb! Monty  
Pewter was the mean kid who use'ta  
pick on the other kids 'till I  
knocked him in the schnoze!

Gramps hits a right fist into his left palm.

RACHEL  
You hit their principal?

GRAMPS

And he's never forgotten it -- if you go there, there's no telling what kind of, I tell you...

Gramps gets himself worked up as Anita steps in.

ANITA

-- When I was younger, Monty's daughter stole my boyfriend, just to be mean -- piece of trash!

GRAMPS

The whole gall-darn school is rotten to the core, and you're telling us you're goin' there now?!

RACHEL

As if I have a choice!

The dog trots by with a piece of chicken in his mouth.

INT. RACHEL'S ROOM - LATER

Rachel enters her room, then slides down into a sitting position, head in her arms.

In front of her, Buck has what's left of her Letterman's jacket in his mouth and freezes in mid-tear as he sees her.

RACHEL

Nooo!

Like lightening, he bolts. She dives after him and misses.

INT. GRAMP'S HOUSE - KITCHEN/ DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Buck runs through the dining room and pushes his way out the back screen door with Rachel hot on his tail.

RACHEL

Come back here you stupid dog!

EXT. BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS

Rachel chases Buck all around the yard, both getting dirtier and dirtier. Buck thinks this is a game, while Rachel has tears in her eyes.

Finally, she corners the dog, tackles him, then they compete in tug-of-war with the patch.

RACHEL  
Give it...

She yanks the emblem free, and Buck lays down, his eyes reveal that he knows he did something wrong.

Rachel wipes some of the muck off the patch and looks at it.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
It's all I had left...

She wipes a tear from her face with the back of her hand.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
--The only thing I was really good  
at...

She gets an epiphany.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
...The only thing I'm good at!

She looks at Buck, then surprisingly hugs him tight.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
Here.

She tosses Buck the patch and stands up. Buck finds a place in the yard and starts digging while Rachel goes back inside.

INT. KITCHEN / DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rachel runs up to Gramps.

RACHEL  
Gramps, I need to borrow the truck!

ANITA  
Uh, you're grounded?!

RACHEL  
I think I found a way out -- for  
all of us -- maybe even the whole  
school, but I need to talk to some  
people!

GRAMPS  
Gonna make 'ol Monty pay?

RACHEL  
Hell, yeah!

Gramps grimaces, HARRUMPS, then reaches over and tosses her his keys.

ANITA

Dad! She doesn't have her license!

GRAMPS

Then she'll learn by doing! This is the first she's shown life since she's been here, and I wanna see what she's thinking!

RACHEL

Thank you!

She kisses a surprised Gramps on the cheek, then bolts out the door.

GRAMPS

Don't wreck my truck!

ANITA

Dad!... Rachel!

EXT. LUPE'S HOUSE - EVENING

Rachel drives erratically, pulls up to Lupe's house.

She gets out and walks to the front door, then knocks. Lupe opens the door -- shock registers on her face.

LUPE

What are you doing here Wonder Bread?!

RACHEL

I've got a plan to save all of us and the school too!

LUPE

Thought you were headed down to being a Valley Wildcat.

She closes the door, but Rachel sticks her foot inside.

RACHEL

I'd much rather be a Longhill Spartan... If you'll have me.

She takes her foot away.



LUPE  
 Okay, maybe I'm kinda interested,  
 what'chu got?

Rachel sticks out a regulation football.

RACHEL  
 Football.

LUPE  
 Yeah, we had a team, and coach  
 quit, *fresa*. It's why we're moving!

RACHEL  
 You want to go to college, right?

LUPE  
 What are you on?!

RACHEL  
 College, are you going?!

LUPE  
*Blanquita*, there's no way I'm going  
 to college. Look around, you think  
 we can afford it?!

RACHEL  
 What if you could. What if they  
 paid for you to go?

LUPE  
*Tu estas fumando muchisimo* --  
 You're so high.

RACHEL  
 We don't have enough players for a  
 full team, so you, me, Ambrosia,  
 and Ana Maria got to go out.

LUPE  
 Girls... playing football?!  
 Somebody's seriously trippin'!

RACHEL  
 If we could win some games, the  
 news'll pick it up. Colleges'll get  
 interested, offer scholarships.

LUPE  
 One problem *Gringa* -- girls playing  
 football!

RACHEL  
Remember lunch? Pick a spot down  
the road.

Lupe looks out the door, then back at Rachel. She sighs, then  
walks down the path to the street.

LUPE  
That trashcan way down there.

Rachel eyes the target, then winds up, and hurls the ball in  
an arc. It sails through toward darkening sky then returns  
back to earth and nails the metal can, tipping it over.

Lupe looks at Rachel, and they smirk.

LUPE (CONT'D)  
That... that might work. Do it  
again.

EXT. AMBROSIA'S HOUSE - LATER

Rachel and Lupe stand on Ambrosia's front porch. The large  
girl blocks her entire doorway, arms folded with a giant beef  
rib dripping with sauce in her hands.

RACHEL  
-- You're a powerhouse!

AMBROSIA  
Well, you right -- when I go crazy,  
ain't no one able to stop me.

An older FEMALE VOICE blares from inside as Ambrosia takes  
another bite from the hank.

MAMA (O.S.)  
Amen!

RACHEL  
We'd like you to mow down some  
boys!

AMBROSIA  
I am trying to perfect my  
grandpappy's sauce. I ain't got  
time for...

MAMA (O.S.)  
-- Yes she do!

AMBROSIA  
-- Mama! Okay, maybe I do.

Ambrosia and Lupe exchange a skeptical look at each other, then at Rachel. All break into smiles and bump fists.

EXT. ANA MARIA'S HOUSE - LATER

Rachel, Lupe, and Ambrosia take on Ana Sofia and Marisabel. Ambrosia claps her hands for emphasis.

AMBROSIA

We get-to-get-out-of-here!

ANA SOFIA

I'm gonna leave this town. Gonna make something of myself!

MARISABEL

Me too!

ANA SOFIA

(to Marisabel)

No none is talking to you!

(to the others)

Fine!

The girls stand and all go in for a hug.

LUPE

*Pues*, we need a coach!

RACHEL

And I've got just the guy in mind.

INT. HISTORY CLASS - MORNING

The four girls stride into the empty classroom, confidence beams on their faces.

RACHEL

Mr. Allen!

Pete looks up from his desk, confused, then goes back to his work, his hand shooing them away.

PETE

You still have to do your schoolwork before the transfer.

RACHEL

I was researching last night. Is it true that your grandfather founded our school?

Surprised, Pete puts his pen down and sits up straight.

PETE

In the early 1950s, yes. My father was the first principal, why?

RACHEL

So you want to save the school, and we can help -- but we need yours too. We need a football coach.

Pete SIGHS and puts down his pen.

PETE

Ladies, I know nothing about the game. Literally nothing.

The girls are not convinced.

LUPE

What if you came at it from a historical perspective?

PETE

Come again?

AMBROSIA

What if you were the first person ever to coach football having never played but learned it from books?

ANA SOFIA

The other coaches have grown up around it. They all do the *mismo*, all playing the same game.

RACHEL

But not you. Look back into history, all those battles, all those strategies. It'd be like going to war.

Pete points a pen in the air toward Rachel, ready for rebuttal.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

We're your soldiers, and you would be our general, sir.

Her words strike his heart and he stops and closes his mouth as she salutes him.

She's got him.

PETE  
Okay, I'm interested.

AMBROSIA  
You going down in history as the  
guy saved your grandpappy's school!

And she's sealed the deal.

LUPE  
Make your family proud, Mr. Allen!

PETE  
Intriguing. What's first?

RACHEL  
Players.

INT. PRINCIPAL JERRY'S OFFICE - LATER

Pete and the squad of girls march inside Jerry's office,  
confident but nervous.

PETE  
You said you needed a coach? Well,  
you got one.

Pete points to the girls.

PETE (CONT'D)  
We're doing this, all of us.

JERRY  
That's great...

PETE  
But, we're going to need more  
players and some gear.

JERRY  
You sure, Pete? I get it, man, job  
demoted to junior high, next thing  
you know, you've given up on  
everything and become a slave to  
the system with your wife and kids  
and credit card payments...

He trails off, deep in his own thoughts as Pete responds.

PETE  
The Grateful Dead once said:  
"Without love in the dream, it will  
never come true".

This perks Jerry up, and some life returns to him.

JERRY

Aww, what the hell, if you're serious, I can get us up through the first couple games of the season.

The small group cheers.

JERRY (CONT'D)

But if we lose more than one of'em, we close up shop.

PETE

Ladies?

RACHEL

More than one game lost, we're hosed. Understood.

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - LATER

Ramon sits next to Mary. Beside her sits Albert, Sam, Ester, and Helga.

PETE

I'm coaching the Spartans now.

ALBERT

Aren't you a little dainty to be coaching football?

STIFLED LAUGHTER and TITTERS. Pete ignores the insult and passes out packets.

PETE

And I'm calling in every favor each of you has ever owed me. Ramon, you ran track. Can you get our team get in better shape?

RAMON

Sure.

PETE

Mary, former chess competitor?

MARY

That was a long time ago, Peter.

PETE

Strategy. Football's a big chess game, and I need the brainpower. Al, Sam, we need better gear.

ALBERT

Never tease an old dog Pete; he might have one bite left!

PETE

Ester, does your grandson still do landscaping?

ESTER

Yes, he does.

PETE

Think we could we get him to upgrade the field?

ESTER

Pete, Longhill putting together a winning football team? Do we have any players?

Pete fires up the wall projector, opens his laptop, and begins a slideshow with each student.

PETE

We lost Dirk, Eddie, and Caspar. We need eleven to field a team -- but they'll all be playing both ways. We've been able to salvage five originals.

He presses a button -- a picture of Jake appears.

PETE (CONT'D)

Jake. Our lady's man.

He hits the button again, and Chico's picture emerges.

PETE (CONT'D)

If Chico runs his legs as fast as his mouth, no one will catch him.

He moves to the next slide of Kelly.

PETE (CONT'D)

Kelly, our Fernand the Bull, we've got to find that anger he's hidden way down deep.

Pete presses the button again and twin brothers Reggie and DESHAWN (18) pop up.

PETE (CONT'D)  
And DeShawn and Reggie. Both recently suspended for destroying school property, claimed the desks were too small.

Pete taps the button again, and other pictures appear.

PETE (CONT'D)  
Jerry's made deals with Hang and Phillipe -- both have been in trouble with the school, so we're considering football to be community service.

Pete taps the key, and five girl's pictures show up.

PETE (CONT'D)  
Rachel Barns, our new girl, she's the one behind all this -- she's got one heck of an arm, Lupe, Ambrosia, Ana Sofia, and Marisabel.

ALBERT  
Girls and football?!

ESTER  
And why not?!

ALBERT  
Cause they're going to get hurt!

PETE  
Hate to break it to you Albert, but we've got women in the military now, kicking butt and taking names.

SAM  
That's only twelve players.

Jerry pokes his head in, smiling.

JERRY  
Thirteen! I just nabbed an expulsion from Valley -- and he's agreed to play!

PETE  
Ladies and gentlemen, Longhill's newest football team.



SAM  
We're screwed.

EXT. LONGHILL HIGH FIELD - AFTERNOON

Pete stands in front of a mishmash of players in three groups: the returners, the newbies, and the girls.

Jake and Chico look smug. DeShawn tries to stand by Ambrosia, but she gives him the cold shoulder.

PHILLIPE (18), a varsity soccer player with no team, bounces a soccer ball on his knees.

Reggie approaches Kelly.

KELLY  
If you mention the three hundred  
one more time, I'm gone.

He's caught flat-footed and tries to backpedal.

REGGIE  
... I was just gonna say, it's good  
to see you here, Kelly -- Hey,  
Hang, figure out what you are yet?!

HANG  
I've gone back four generations,  
and I may be... Korean.

REGGIE  
Cool, north or south?

Pete CLEARS his voice and SPEAKS LOUDLY, but his attempt at sounding powerful and strong fails with his basic lack of knowledge.

PETE  
Welcome to Longhill football! Let  
me give it to you straight: We're  
this school's last hope.

CHICO  
Mr. A -- we don't stand a chance!

PETE  
Chico, if we fail, this area'll be  
a strip mall!

KELLY  
This is it, coach? We barely have  
enough for a defense team.

A white school van pulls onto the field. A DEAN and SECURITY GUARD get out.

They walk to the back and open the doors. The assist JEREMY 'WILD' WILDER' (17), Tourette-bound, a little crazed and a lot confused, out onto the grass.

Wild stares at the team as his handlers finalize instructions to him, shake hands, get back inside the van, and drive away.

Wild walks up with some obvious tics, sizes Pete up and down.

WILD  
You the coach?

PETE  
That's me.

WILD  
Name's Wild. I'm supposed to tell you I've got some tics -- special! -- Special! -- some aggression issues, spent a lot of time in Alternative Ed., but I'd really like to try normal -- freakazoid! -- school and play some ball.

PETE  
Glad you could join. We're just getting started.

REGGIE  
Coach, what are girls doing here?

PETE  
Lupe, Ambrosia, Ana Sophia and Marisabel have all agreed to play. Without them, we have no team. And this is Rachel. Our quarterback.

The boy burst out in LAUGHTER and BACK-SLAPPING. Ramon tosses Rachel a football.

PETE (CONT'D)  
Rachel, hit those bushes down there.

Rachel takes the ball -- backs -- throws a tight spiral that arcs -- and hits a clump of bushes fifty yards away.

JAKE  
Beginner's luck.

PETE

Hit the backpack by those bushes.

Ramon tosses Rachel another football. She aims, steps backward, then forward and lets go another tight spiral.

It PLUNK on top of a blue backpack sitting a few feet from the shrubbery. WHISTLES from the boys.

JAKE

We don't need girls on the team!

RACHEL

You do if you want to win.

JAKE

We were doing just fine before you!

LUPE

Coach walked off? Players quit?!  
That's doing fine!

CHICO

*Cállate, Lupe!*

ANA SOFIA

*No degas así!*

Ana Sofia shoves Chico. Jake catches him, then throws Chico into Lupe. All the others intervene, some to throw down, others to break it up.

Phillipe continues to bounce his soccer ball on his knees as Wild looks on in interest.

WILD

I like this team -- punch! --  
block! -- crapcrapcrap!

Pete BLOWS HARD on his whistle! Everyone stops. Reggie, in the middle of the fray, looks around.

REGGIE

It's like we're the three hundred!

GROANS from the bunch as they untangle.

JAKE

Shut up about that. It was just a movie!

PETE

Based on actual history...

CHICO

Yeah, where there were only three hundred of them versus a million.

MARISABEL

It was a billion!

DESHAWN

And the Spartans stopped them all!

WILD

Serious? How -- freak of nature! -- How'd they stop 'em?

REGGIE

They all got together and put their shields up and had their spears sticking out.

DESHAWN

Ain't nobody able to get through!

PETE

Guys, that's not how it really happened!

KELLY

Is that the one where they kicked that dude down that never-ending hole?! I love that film!

PETE

Guys!

LUPE

Maybe we could make that one of our plays!

PHILLIPE

Yeah! A super-secret special play!

Pete BLOWS on his whistle again.

PETE

Guys! That was a motion picture! This is real life! Before you start dreaming up wacked-out plays, we've got to get the basics!

INT. GRAMP'S HOUSE - EVENING

Rachel shuffles in. She's beaten, bruised, and her hair is smeared with sweat.

ANITA

Oh my god! Are you okay?! Who did this to you?!

RACHEL

Football practice, so technically, everybody did this to me.

She smiles through the pain.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

But I get to hit back.

Gramps walks in the room.

GRAMPS

Whoa! How'ya doin' Freight Train?

RACHEL

Sore.

ANITA

I don't know about this, Dad.

GRAMPS

Never thought girls should be in football, but hey, I'm not gettin' involved.

He puts his hands up in surrender as he finds his easy chair, sits down, and turns on the television.

ANITA

I think what you're doin' is great, but look at you, you're a mess.

Rachel stares at her mother with incredulity, then lays down on a threadbare sofa.

RACHEL

This is all I have left. I can do this... but I'm going to need several bags of frozen peas.

EXT. LONGHILL FIELD - THE NEXT DAY

Mary draws plays on a portable white board while Ester crochets on a fold-out chair.

Rachel takes a five-step drop on a pass play. She looks downfield -- catches something out of the corner of her eye.

RACHEL

Oh no!

She tries to move sideways, but Wild picks her up and smashes her to the ground. Rachel GROANS with Wild smiling over her.

WILD

Oh, hey, I already said 'hi' to you yesterday!

He hops off and helps her back up, then sports Phillipe and chases him down.

Pete walks over.

PETE

He likes to hit.

RACHEL

Good to have when you're playing football.

ON JAKE

Running a pattern as Rachel zips him the ball. He bobbles it, holds on for a second, then drops it.

PETE

You're supposed to catch that!

JAKE

I've never played any position except for quarterback!

PETE

Then you better get used to change!

ON RACHEL

Taking snaps from Kelly. Over and over. She's outwardly nervous, having never played a real game before.

Phillipe steps by Rachel, then stops.

PHILLIPE

Why can't we play *futbol* instead?

RACHEL

We are playing football!

PHILLIPE

No, *futbol*!

RACHEL  
Yeah, football.

PHILLIPE  
*Futbol!* Why they call it football  
Americano when you use your hands?!

Rachel is nailed in the side by Wild and goes down in a heap.

WILD  
Oops, sorry, already met, I got it.

He helps her up again.

EXT. LONGHILL HIGH FIELD - LATER

Deja sits behind a card table that states: "STUDENT CHEER SECTION!" with her clipboard. In front of her is a long, roped-off section, empty.

Pete blows his WHISTLE. The team attempts to run through a course of lines, flags, and dummies.

- The players work out on their homemade equipment.
- Deja sits, anticipating, on the edge of her seat.
- Pete and Ramon time the trials. Dead slow.
- Mary takes notes, and Esther quilts on the sideline.
- Albert fixes a bench. Samuel whittles. Hazel draws on a chalk board. Helga passes out lemonade as the kids run by.
- Deja leans back in her chair, stretches.
- Rachel calls a play, after which the team falls all over each other. Pete and Ramon exchange a grimace...
- Times their trials again. A little better this time.
- Deja is asleep. The clipboard falls from her lap onto the ground.
- An incoming pass beans DeShawn in the face. Everyone rushes to attend to his gushing bloody nose, but Ambrosia's right in there with the towel. He looks up at her appreciatively. She blushes.
- A MAN IN THE STANDS watches, dictates into a microcassette recorder, then makes some notes on a pad. This is sports reporter, JACK HOLDEN (40).

MIKE

Hey... yo! Is this where we sign up  
to entertain the masses?!

Deja wakes and suddenly bolts upright... to see --

MIKE AND THE BAND.

Five grunged-out long-haired kids dressed in ripped and  
patched black clothes.

DEJA

Oh... hey... hi... Hi! Yes, we have  
some spots left for try-outs.

Mike and the others high-five as DONNY twirls his drumsticks.

DEJA (CONT'D)

So, who are you, and what will you  
be doing for us today?

MIKE

We're the War Eagles, and we're  
here to rock your world!

The group SCREAMS, catching Deja off-guard.

DEJA

I see... and how will you be doing  
that, per say?

MIKE

Oh, we do both heavy metal songs  
and video game themes!

GONZO steps out with an electric guitar already plugged in  
and SHREDS the solo by Megadeath's 'Tornado Of Souls.'

DEJA

Wow. Okay, you're in!

ON THE TEAM

Standing and staring at the musical prodigy.

EXT. LONGHILL HIGH FIELD - EVENING

An exhausted team of players walk off the field. Everyone but  
Rachel crowds around the elite vendor, forking over money for  
a meal.

JAKE

Hey, rich girl, you coming?



He holds up a corn cob covered with spices, lime, and mayonnaise.

RACHEL  
Yeah, I'm going to pass.

JAKE  
You ever have this before?!

RACHEL  
No, and I don't intend to.

Jake walks over to her.

JAKE  
Then how do you know if you like it unless you try it?

RACHEL  
That corn's been sitting inside a hotbox for hours. It's like rubber by now. The mayo's probably gone bad, and who knows the last time this gentleman's washed his hands!

The ELOTE SELLER looks up and smiles, missing most his teeth.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
I rest my case.

JAKE  
Looks aren't everything, *Guera*.

He holds up his cob.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
One bite won't kill you.

RACHEL  
One bite'll kill me. No thanks.

She swishes around and walks away.

BEGIN MONTAGE

EXT. FIELD - DAY

GRAPHIC: SATURDAY

-- Ramon tows a double row of chain link fence to smooth out the field.

-- Ramon directs his brother PEPE -- who drives an old tractor -- onto the brown, dead grass. He lowers the discs, then begins to plow behind it.

-- They spray down the field with hoses.

EXT. FIELD - THE NEXT DAY

The entire student body GAGS and falls over from the stink as Ramon and Pepe spread manure.

RACHEL  
(muffled)  
How is this worth it?!

JAKE  
(also muffled)  
I thought you'd explain it to me!

Pepe begins to haul in different patches of left-over sod from different construction sites. The field is a patchwork quilt of grass...

EXT. THE STANDS

Pete, Al, Sam, Diane and Gramps fixing up the stands, sawing out bad spots, warped boards, replacing them.

The group paints with a high-gloss polyurethane.

PETE

Repaints the scoreboard Spartan, beefs it up and adds flair.

Mary nods her approval. Pete beams.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Pete talks to the players. Ramon and Mary stand behind.

PETE  
I know it's been hard using our pathetic excuse for a field, so it's with great pleasure that the faculty and I introduce you all to our new home.

Pete opens the double doors to reveal:

## THE NEW PLAYING FIELD

Green grasses. A repainted scoreboard. Shiny newish bleachers. GASPS from the Spartans.

RACHEL  
Beautiful!

RAMON  
Nobody can go on it for two more days, or you'll kill the new sod!

MARY  
And we have something else.

She opens a large box and pulls out cleaned and re-sown jerseys with their names on the back.

LUPE  
Awesome!

REGGIE  
Uh, you got one in extra, extra large, right?

Ambrosia holds hers up and beams with pride.

RAMON  
Coach here redesigned the Spartan logo. I think it's appropriate. What do you say?

Pete hands out repainted black helmets with a red Spartan symbol. The Spartan is fiercer and cooler than the doofy cartoon Spartan they used to have.

PETE  
We did the best with what we had.

## EXT. LONGHILL HIGH FIELD - AFTERNOON

It's another hot, dusty afternoon as a massive wave of cars and people enter the stadium parking lot.

Unfortunately at the Spartan's entrance a trickle of parents show their support. At the Wildcat's entrance it's a deluge.

## INT. LONGHILL BOYS LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lupe and Rachel enter. Boys HOOT and HOLLER.

REGGIE  
They actually showed up!

DESHAWN  
Here.

He hands Reggie some cash.

JAKE  
(quietly to the others)  
Give'em five minutes on the field.  
(to the girls)  
Ah! You're just in time. I was just flexing my pecs.

CHICO  
Yeah, uh, you gals get to get dressed right over here, right by me...

He pats Lupe on the rear.

BAM! She pastes Chico across the jaw! Rachel and Ambrosia try to break her apart, but instead, join in -- within seconds it's a brawl!

In the midst, Rachel swings and connects with Jake, and Ambrosia has Reggie in a headlock.

Pete hurriedly enters the locker room. He's a complete mess as he tries to close a packed binder and trips over a stray duffel bag, then catches himself and stands up again.

PETE  
Okay, I think I've got all the intro stuff done. Now we're on to pre-game. Uh... What the...?! Hey, hey, hey!

Ramon and Pete are there, yanking everyone apart. Pete blows his WHISTLE. Everyone settles.

PETE (CONT'D)  
For cryin' out loud, we've got a game!

Rachel wipes a trickle of blood from her lip, stares down Jake as everyone sits heavily on the concrete benches.

Their old outdated uniforms and busted scraped-up helmets don't help. Ana Sofia's numbers are falling off, and DeShawn's uniform is way too small.

RACHEL

This is where you give a speech,  
coach.

PETE

Speech, speech, yeah, okay,  
something to rile you up I suppose.  
Um, football is a contact sport,  
and you will, uh, go out there and  
contact with them, the best that,  
well, better than they can -- will,  
and score, the points... down the  
field, so that your team, our team,  
we, will earn the victory!

Nothing but crickets.

PETE (CONT'D)

Well then, the strength of the team  
is each individual member...the  
strength of each member is the  
team. Phil Jackson said that!

RAMON

Appropriately motivational.

LUPE

Who's Phil Jackson?

Everyone breaks up to get dressed.

EXT. LONGHILL HIGH FIELD - LATE AFTEROON

The teams walks out by themselves onto the home side of the  
field.

The stands are sparse -- the only excitement comes from the  
"War Eagles" as they play 'Paradise City' by Guns And Roses,  
in the middle of the bleachers.

On the other side, the stands are so packed that the blue and  
white crowd spills around both sides of the track.

There are more cheerleaders than Longhill has students, and  
the football team is one massively ferocious college-bound  
talent force.

DESHAWN

We are gonna die!

The players line up in behind Pete, and the staff are behind  
him. BUTCH (50s), Wildcat head coach jogs across the field  
and extends a hand. Pete shakes.

BUTCH  
 Hey, Pete. Like what you've done  
 here. Sheep must love it.

PETE  
 Thanks.

Butch gets closer.

BUTCH  
 Look, I know what you're doing, but  
 don't think my boys will take it  
 easy, even with a team full of  
 girls. They'll hit as hard as they  
 can.

PETE  
 Let's see what you got.

LAUGHING, Butch huffs away. But Mary, who stands in the  
 background and watches Pete stand up to the big bully, nods.

Pete feels pretty good about himself and moves back towards  
 his players.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - EVENING

Rachel and the Spartans run out onto the field. There is an  
 announcers table set up beside the Wildcat's bench.

CHUCK (16), the kid who will eat anything on a dare, and  
 MERVIN (16), aspiring D&D Master, both dressed in shirt and  
 ties, man the mics.

CHUCK  
 Welcome to a surprise continuing  
 season of Spartans football. As of  
 a few months ago, we had some  
 significant changes to the team,  
 now coached by history teacher, Mr.  
 Allen!

There is sparse clapping and a few whistles.

MERVIN  
 Tonight, they are playing against  
 the defending valley champions, the  
 Stine High Wildcats!

The visiting crowd lets out a massive ROAR as both teams line  
 up.

EXT. LONGHILL FIELD - LATER

The Spartans attempt to line up, but Marisabel fights with Hang.

MARISABEL  
I'm supposed to stand here!

HANG  
That's my spot!

He towers over the tiny girl, prompting Ana Sofia to intervene.

ANA SOFIA  
Pick on somebody your own size  
*chiquito!*

She shoves him backwards. Suddenly, the entire team is back at each other's throats.

WHISTLES BLOW, and penalty flags fly.

REFEREE  
Delay of game! Five yards!

But it doesn't stop the fracas. Rachel looks at Kelly, still standing in his position.

RACHEL  
Break'em up!

Kelly GRUNTS an affirmation, hustles into the middle of the fight, and shoves everyone back in a circular pattern, leaving a circle of downed players.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
Now line up!

EXT. LONGHILL FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

The teams stands, lined-up.

CHUCK (V.O.)  
Here's the kick!

Rachel breathes calmly. She looks over to Philippe who kicks the ball. They burst out in a run.

The ball flies far out in front, then curves in dramatically, hitting a Wildcat player standing on the sidelines.

MERVIN (V.O.)  
 Ooo! First kick of the game goes  
 wild!

Rachel groans inwardly. Not an auspicious start.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - EVENING

Rachel throws, and DeShawn tries to catch it, but it slips out of his fingers and into the waiting hands of a Wildcat for a touchdown.

RACHEL  
 Punt return!

Rachel and the Spartans are already out of breath but plod along as the Wildcats look on and laugh.

BUTCH  
 They can't be serious. They're  
 really gonna play both ways.

The Wildcats kick off, and the ball sails straight to Reggie. The ball slips through his fingers and bounces wildly on the ground.

The Wildcats scoop and score.

CHUCK (V.O.)  
 Touchdown, Wildcats!

ON THE WILDCATS SIDELINE

The cheerleaders go wild in a rhythmic dance routine.

ON THE WILDCAT CROWD

The stands ROAR. Their marching band, easily two-hundred strong, plays LOUD and CLEAR.

ON THE SPARTANS CROWD

The few parents hold their heads in their hands.

ON THE WAR EAGLES

They rock out, but their small amplifiers are drowned out by the massive band on the other side of the field.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - EVENING

The Wildcats kick off, and the ball sails towards Ambrosia.



She catches it, then in a confusing mix of lateral and backwards shovel passes, the ball ends up in the hands of Lupe.

She gives it to Rachel, who runs down the field and makes it to the fifty-yard line before she's tackled.

The ball is stripped out, claimed by a Wildcat, and run in for a touchdown.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - EVENING

Rachel gets the ball. She makes a wobbly lateral to DeShawn, when a Wildcat intercepts it and sprints in for another touchdown. Rachel is hit by the defense and slow to get up.

ON THE SPARTANS CROWD

The fans bury their faces in each other's shoulders.

SCOREBOARD

Spartans 0, Wildcats 49.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - EVENING

Rachel passes the ball to Hang who catches it and makes it to the 40 where he is brought down.

Before he hits the ground, the ball is knocked out and recovered by a Wildcat and run the length of the field for another touchdown.

Chico, standing all by himself on the other side of the field, throws up his hands in frustration.

Rachel watches as Hang and Marisabel get into it. Wild runs over and blind tackles Jake while Kelly holds Ambrosia and Reggie at bay.

PETE

What is going on out there?!

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - EVENING

Rachel passes to Ambrosia who charges straight through the line to the five, met by a group of Wildcat players, one of which strips the ball from her and bounds down the entire length to score... again.

DeShawn saunters over to her.

DESHAWN

Hey.

AMBROSIA

Shut up a second. I can't hear myself think! Molasses, brown sugar... something's missing.

DESHAWN

What?

Jake looks over.

JAKE

What is talking about?!

AMBROSIA

None of your biz-nass, okay?!

She picks up the pace and gets into formation.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - EVENING

Battered, the Spartans line up again. Rachel hands the ball off to Wild, who is knocked down brutally by a Wildcat player. Wild gets up.

WILD

Hi, I'm Wild. Nice hit!

He helps the Wildcat player up.

EXT. ANNOUNCER'S TABLE - CONTINUOUS

Mervin and Chuck look ill.

MERVIN

Things aren't looking so good for Longhill now.

CHUCK

Ya think?!

EXT. LONGHILL FIELD - HOME STANDS - CONTINUOUS

The War Eagles tussle about trying to plug in different wires into their amplifiers, but no one can hear them.

SCOREBOARD

Spartans 0, Wildcats 70.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - EVENING

CHUCK (V.O.)  
Fourth quarter action, the Spartans  
have the ball.

Rachel lines up, and the ball is hiked. She throws the ball to Jake, and it's intercepted for another touchdown. Pissed, Rachel walks up to him.

RACHEL  
What's your problem?!

JAKE  
Your girly throws, that's what!

RACHEL  
Try to catch one!

Several WILDCATS shove Kelly as they go to their line, but he ignores it, like he doesn't even care.

Lupe walks by WILDACAT PLAYER #4.

WILDCAT PLAYER #4  
You're not even good enough to be  
our maid!

SPARTANS SIDE

The few fans pack up and leave.

ANNOUNCERS

Chuck and Mervin sit bummed with their heads in their hands.

SCOREBOARD

Spartans 0, Wildcats 84.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - EVENING

Chico stands all by himself again as Rachel hands off the ball to Ana Sofia, then both get pummeled.

PETE  
Time out!

The girls gingerly get back up again. Ana Sofia walks over to WILDCAT PLAYER #4, takes off her cleat, and WHACKS him over the helmet with it!

The refs BLOW their WHISTLES and throw their penalty flags. Ana Sofia walks over to the nearest REF with her cleat as Rachel tackles her to the ground.

RACHEL

Ana! You can't hit the ref!

ANA SOFIA

Yes, I can! Watch!

Lupe stoops over as both girls extricate Ana and pull her back to their team.

REGGIE

Guys! I think it's time for...

ALL

No!

WILDCAT PLAYER #3 pushes Wild out of the way.

WILDCAT PLAYER #3

Freak!

WILD

You -- kissmydonut -- machine --  
machine! My machine!

Wild goes berserker as he drop kicks the oncoming Wildcat player, sucker punches another, slams a fist into the gut of a third, and piledrives a fourth as more yellow flags fly.

The referees rush in to halt the melee, and Wild is ejected.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - EVENING

The Wildcats, on the Spartan's 2-yardline, toss in a gentle pass as Marisabel is hit so hard, she flies out of bounds!

The Wildcats score, and the fourth quarter comes to an end.

The exhausted Spartans trudge away. Hang is the last off the field.

WILDCAT PLAYER #1

You don't belong here, you Mongol!

HANG  
I'm not Mongolian... at least I  
don't think I am!

The Wildcat players gather in a group.

WILDCAT PLAYER #1  
Stupid! Doesn't even know who he  
is!

The Wildcats CHEER, along with their crowd. Butch walks up to  
Pete.

BUTCH  
You knew this would happen.

PETE  
What?

BUTCH  
There's no one here who can beat  
us. Especially the princess of a  
pathetic school.

Butch walks away.

BUTCH (CONT'D)  
Save yourself the embarrassment and  
call it a season, coach.

Pete looks at his disappointed players.

PETE  
Come'on, gang. Let's get pizza.

INT. PIZZA PLACE - NIGHT

Rachel and the players enter the restaurant, now with a tad  
more enthusiasm. She gathers them at the front. Pete stands  
and raises a glass of root beer.

PETE  
Tonight, we celebrate making it  
through an entire game!

The team LAUGHS, and there are even a few CHEERS.

PETE (CONT'D)  
To mark this momentous occasion,  
the pizza and video games are on  
me. Go have some fun!

The kids bolt for the games area as Pete orders pizza.

Ambrosia and Reggie play air hockey. Ana Sofia and DeShawn start up foosball.

Chico and Phillipe grab the dual guns for the Zombie Gunner arcade game. Wild and Kelly shoot hoops. Lupe leans on the juke box, picking songs.

Which leaves Jake and Rachel standing by themselves.

RACHEL

There's a football throwing game,  
wanna go?

JAKE

Naw... but I'll watch you if that's  
okay.

RACHEL

Sweet.

Pete looks out at the group. They're becoming a team.

The front door opens, and the Valley Wildcat football players and cheerleaders enter, BOASTING, CAJOLING, and TRASH-TALKING the Spartans.

They see the team in the game center, then EXPLODE into laughter, greeting fellow students behind the counter.

Butch walks in behind the team.

BUTCH

Pete. What a coincidence.

PETE

We don't want any trouble.

BUTCH

Oh, there'll be no trouble.

The Wildcat players butt in and oust the Spartan students out from their video games, corralling them into the center of the room.

BUTCH (CONT'D)

Now boys, you've already destroyed  
their hopes and dreams once  
tonight...

There is a thickness in the air.

KEITH BROCK (18), cool, suave, and the quarterback of the Wildcats, steps forward.

KEITH  
 Hey, we're just here for some  
 pizza, right guys?

There is a shiftiness behind that smile. Nonetheless,  
 everyone's mood relaxes as the Wildcats back down.

Keith saunters over to Rachel.

KEITH (CONT'D)  
 So, where'd you learn to chuck a  
 ball?

Jake and Lupe watch Rachel get comfortable with the  
 opposition, jealousy on their faces.

Rachel finds the NFL 2-Minute Drill Football Arcade Game and  
 puts in a quarter.

RACHEL  
 My dad says I've always been able  
 to throw. He's a huge football guy,  
 so growing up, I'd spend hours  
 practicing with him.

The BELL chimes, and the circles outlined with points light  
 up. Rachel takes a football and throws it through the top 50  
 points circle, then continues with perfection.

KEITH  
 Sounds like my parents. It's  
 football or die twenty-four-seven.  
 Your dad even make you do gut-  
 busters?

Rachel laughs but doesn't miss. Keith puts in a quarter next  
 to her and begins his game, nailing his 50 points circle as  
 well.

A crowd of both teams forms as the two make it a competition.

RACHEL  
 Gut-pukers? All the time.

Keith laughs, then changes tactics.

KEITH  
 We could use you on our team.

Rachel stutters and misses a shot. The crowd GASPS, but she  
 recovers quickly -- Keith takes the lead.

RACHEL  
 Thanks, I'm taken.

KEITH

Not for long. Your school's going down, and you're going with it. Save yourself and come over. I could use a backup like you.

Rachel pauses, then looks at her team, their arms crossed.

RACHEL

I have a team, and I'm no one's backup.

The games conclude. Keith has won by a touchdown.

KEITH

Loser, again.

PETE

Hey guys, pizza's here.

The Spartans push their way through the staunch circle, looks exchange and fists are clenched, but no one throws.

They sit down at their table as the servers bring their pizza, then signal to their fellow Wildcats, who watch in interest.

The pizzas spell out 'You Suck' in pepperoni.

PETE (CONT'D)

Now guys...

That's it -- the Spartans erupt from their benches, and all-out war takes place as fists, soda, hair, and pizza are tossed and thrown in all directions.

Wham! A huge Wildcat strikes Jake. Reggie body checks the guy over a bench and into the wall.

A trio of cheerleaders corner Ana Sofia, when Ambrosia charges in and takes them out like bowling pins. Quick as a beat, Ana Sofia takes of her *chancla* and tags several boys around her.

Lupe hops on a table and pours to pitchers of soda on two linebackers, the darts away as they trip over themselves.

Keith cocks a football back, focused on Phillipe. He fires a spiral, when another football, launched from Rachel, intercepts it in mid-flight.

They look at each other, anger flaring, as several Wildcats gang up on Pete.



WILDCAT PLAYER #1  
You call yourself a coach?!

WILDCAT PLAYER #2  
We don't want your kind here!

WILDCAT PLAYER #3  
Go back to San Francisco!

Rachel stands on a table and launches a guttural cry.

RACHEL  
Three-hundred!!

REGGIE  
That's my line!

All the Spartans immediately grab chairs, trays, pool sticks, and pizza cutters, then bunch up into formation around a battered Pete.

Like the Spartan warriors, they form an impenetrable wall -- to the astonishment of the Wildcats, who try to laugh it off.

WILDCAT PLAYER #1  
Someone called the cops!

The players and cheerleaders bolt outside as the Spartans relax and break formation.

JAKE  
You okay coach?

PETE  
It's been awhile since I've been beat up. I forgot how much it hurts.

RACHEL  
Don't worry, coach. We got you now.

Pete looks around to his team and smiles.

PETE  
Yeah, I think you do.

INT. CAFE - MORNING

Pete walks into the cafe. Anita is working a shift while Rachel sits in a corner working on homework.

ANITA  
Sorry about your loss.

PETE

You heard?

He looks over to Rachel who raises her head.

RACHEL

Hi, coach.

ANITA

Heard about the aftermath too.  
Coffee?

Anita sets down a mug.

PETE

Not even one touchdown. I'm not cut  
out for this.

ANITA

Rach says you've never coached  
before.

PETE

We can't beat anybody.

ANITA

You've already given up? Bills and  
Oilers, '93 playoffs, down by  
thirty-two points early in the  
third quarter, and it was all done  
by a backup quarterback -- because  
they believed.

She leaves to serve other guests as Rachel closes her book  
and walks over.

RACHEL

Mr. Allen, did the North give up?  
When the confederates attacked the  
western front in Shiloh? No! Sure  
Grant was caught off-guard, but he  
pulled his troops together...

PETE

To Pittsburg Landing on the  
Tennessee river...

RACHEL

And counter-attacked...

PETE

Drove the confederates to a  
retreat.

RACHEL

You know everything there is about history and war. Why don't you use it to your advantage?

PETE

Go to war.

RACHEL

Like Robert E. Lee, you should take more chances, and take them quicker, than any other general in the country.

She smiles, then heads back to her seat.

EXT. VISITING FIELD - DAY

Game Two -- Spartans vs. The Soldiers. Their Coach is DEAN JACOBS. In the stands, Jack takes notes and talks into a recorder.

On the field, Hang holds out a brown paper bag to Reggie.

REGGIE

What's this?

HANG

Something I thought you'd like.

Reggie opens the bag and pulls out a gleaming, metal Spartan helmet.

REGGIE

This is sweet! Did you make it?

HANG

Yeah, I found some pictures in all the research I'm doing, and I know how much... well, I was hoping you thought it was cool.

REGGIE

Cool doesn't even begin to define it!

Reggie slips the helmet down over his head. A perfect fit!

THE GAME STARTS

Rachel catches the kick off, runs down the field and gets tackled at the fifty yard line. The Spartans set up immediately.

The referee blows his WHISTLE, and Ambrosia snaps the ball to Rachel.

The defense, not ready at all, is caught off-sides. The Spartans line up, not allowing substitutions.

DEAN

Time out!

The Soldiers jog over to their bench.

DEAN (CONT'D)

What are you guys doing out there?

FIRST PLAYER

They don't huddle!

DEAN

If they're running to two-minute offense, you better run to yours, too!

The Soldiers jog out to their positions.

DEAN (CONT'D)

I said run!

They pick up the pace and get into formation.

ON THE VISITORS SIDE

Pete walks back and forth nervously. Mary pours individual cups of water and Ester continues her quilt.

Rachel leads a very heated Ana Sofia off the field to the bench as Ambrosia takes her place.

AMBROSIA

... Tomato sauce, Worcestershire sauce... what in the heck is it?

IN THE VISITOR'S STANDS

The War Eagles set up, this time with more and larger amplifiers, as they play 'Shoot To Thrill' by AC-DC. They're so loud, that they startle the Soldiers sideline.

EXT. VISITING FIELD - NIGHT

Rachel throws the ball, then WHAM! A Soldier DEFENSIVE TACKLE slams into Rachel, and she goes down. She rolls to her right, then springs back up again.

The ball sails through the air to Chico as a SOLDIER DEFENDER intercepts it and is tackled.

ON LINE

Rachel beans a hard throw into Jake's arms. It hits his chest and flings out, bouncing out of bounds. He motions 'it's my fault' to her as he lines up again and she smiles.

RACHEL

Foxtrot 57! Foxtrot 57! Hike!

Kelly hikes the ball, and Rachel does a three-step drop. She lines up Marisabel, and sails a perfect pass into her arms.

Rachel is bashed into the ground again, but Marisabel dashes around a defender and scores a touchdown!

Jake runs over and helps Rachel off the ground.

JAKE

Nice pass! We're on the board!

SCOREBOARD

Soldiers 21, Spartans 6.

ANNOUNCERS

CHUCK

You just witnessed history, folks.  
The Longhill Spartans have  
officially scored for the first  
time in like years!

MERVIN

That's right, Chuck, lightening has  
struck at Soldier field, tonight!

EXT. SOLDIER FIELD - NIGHT

The Spartans sit on their bench at halftime.

PETE

Look, we're still in this game.  
Down by fifteen.

AMBROSIA

That's better than a hundred and  
five!

They LAUGH.

PETE

Come on, focus. We're a team -- we work together. By ourselves, we can't do it -- but together!

ALL

We're invincible!

Pete gathers the team around him.

EXT. SOLDIER FIELD - NIGHT

Phillipe lines up and looks at Rachel. She nods, and his hand goes down. He boots it ten yards. The ball takes a crazy hop, hits a Soldier and ricochets off.

Lupe runs over two guys and grabs the ball on a bounce. She's got it! A swarm of Soldiers descends upon her, and somehow she emerges on the other side.

She bolts down the side of the field, outrunning the entire defense and scores!

ANNOUNCERS

CHUCK

Did you see that! Holy cow!

MERVIN

I can't believe it! I can't believe it! We're in the game!

EXT. SOLDIER FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

Kelly hikes the ball; Rachel drops back and passes it to Chico who clamps down on it as he rolls into the end zone -- 2 points!

SCOREBOARD

Soldiers 21, Spartans 15.

EXT. VISITING FIELD - DAY

The end of the fourth quarter. The Spartans hold the Soldiers on their twenty yard line.

The QUARTERBACK gets the ball, but then it slips through his fingers and bounces behind him. Jake rushes around, picks it up, and runs toward the end zone.

Before he is tackled, he laterals it to Lupe. Wild is in front of her, judo-throwing down everyone in his way.

She scores!

The Spartans refocus as they quickly line up and wait for the refs to signal the play.

DESHAWN

Ambrosia!

AMBROSIA

What you want?!

DESHAWN

Did you add yellow mustard?

AMBROSIA

Did I add... do I look like some two-bit cook?!

The chain-gang gets set and the whistle BLOWS.

RACHEL

Half pass left on two! Hut one, hut two, hike!

She takes the ball, shovel-passes it to Marisabel, who darts toward the corner of the end zone and squeaks past the defenders inside.

The Spartans CHEER and group in the end zone as the refs blow their WHISTLES as time expires.

They won!

ON THE HOME SIDE

Dean throws down his clipboard and YELLS at his team.

ON THE VISITORS SIDE

Pete grabs Ramon; they jump up and down.

IN THE VISITORS STANDS

Jerry CHEERS wildly and hits the man next to him.

ANNOUNCER'S TABLE

Chuck and Mervin erupt into SCREAMS and CRIES OF JOY as they hop around hugging each other and high-fiving the people next to them.

CHUCK

Yes! Yes!

MERVIN

Holy freaking cow!

The few fans in the visitors' stands watch in complete amazement.

INT. LONGHILL SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Posters of the Spartans and banners everywhere as the team marches triumphantly down the hall.

REGGIE

We have entered the zone!

INT. HISTORY CLASS - CONTINUOUS

The team enters Pete's room. There are charts and plays all over the class.

PETE

You guys did an incredible job out there yesterday. But we got lucky.

The team's enthusiasm dies down as Pete tosses each player a thick spiral-bound notebook.

PETE (CONT'D)

Going forward involves a lot more studying.

They GROAN but take their seats and open their notebooks.

PETE (CONT'D)

First slide, the ball is thrown, and the receiver has three blockers in front. So --

Mr. Frost opens the door holding a football.

ALBERT

Another window, Mr. Allen.

Philippe looks sheepish.

PETE

We still have plenty to work on.



EXT. ROAD - AFTERNOON

Rachel drives Grandpa's truck out of the school parking lot, sees Jake walking and pulls over.

RACHEL  
Want a ride?

JAKE  
Cool, man. Been having to bus it.  
Sucks.

Jake gets in.

RACHEL  
And where can I drive you?

JAKE  
Main street.

RACHEL  
Reason?

JAKE  
Job interview.

Rachel guns the engine and tears out of the parking lot.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
(with difficulty)  
I owe you...an apology.

Rachel's impressed.

RACHEL  
You felt threatened, be honest.

JAKE  
Okay, okay, yeah. Maybe I did.

They find themselves beaming at each other.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
Maybe, uh... you feel like going  
out for a milkshake later, talk  
some plays? You know, uh... elevate  
our game?

RACHEL  
I'll talk football with you any day  
of the week.

He points to KC Auto Repair, and Rachel pulls over.

INT. KC AUTOREPAIR - DAY

Jake pauses, then enters and approaches a man working bent over a car.

JAKE  
Hey, where can I find the owner?

KARL, (47), a gruff, Hispanic man looks out from the hood of a car, greasy with a blue work shirt on.

KARL  
That's me. Name's Karl.

JAKE  
(shakes hands)  
Jake. I'm here for the job.

Karl walks over to Jake and looks him up and down.

KARL  
You ever work on cars before?

JAKE  
I work on all the neighbor's cars for spare cash. If it's broken, I can fix it.

KARL  
Okay kid. Jump on that Ford over there, replace the alternator. Do a good job and I'll hire you. Minimum wage. Six to nine everyday, all day Saturdays.

JAKE  
What about Sundays?

KARL  
We don't work on Sundays. Around here I do two things, fix cars and praise God. You still interested?

JAKE  
Yeah.

Jake walks out and flashes a thumb to Rachel as she waits in the truck. She smiles, then pulls out as he turns back.

KARL  
Maybe want to work on your appearance. Grab a suit in the back so you don't get grimy.

Karl watches him, then goes back under the car's hood. Jake goes to the Ford and begins to work.

After a minute, Karl goes over and examines the job.

KARL (CONT'D)  
Okay. Your hired.

EXT. REDWOOD HIGH FIELD - AFTERNOON

Game Three -- The two head coaches meet on the field during warm-ups.

COACH MARK SITZ, 46, a short, burly man, visits with Pete, who's outlining play diagrams on a clipboard with a pencil.

MARK  
Well, Peter, here's to tonight.

They shake hands.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Don't expect us to go easy on you because you're a new team.

PETE  
Don't underestimate us.

MARK  
Kind of hard not to. No offense.

PETE  
None taken.

Mark walks off sniggering.

Hang presents Reggie with a full-size Eagle-crested shield.

ANNOUNCERS

CHUCK  
Hey, Merv. Do you think they could do it again?

MERVIN  
With this team, Chuck, anything's possible.

ON THE FIELD

The Spartans kickoff. The ball sails through the air, and the Redwoods catch it, then are tackled at the ten yard line.

Rachel quickly lines up and stares down the entire offensive line in front of her.

She smiles.

RACHEL

Hike!

The ball is snapped, rolls into her hands, and she steps back, then hurls it. Jake grabs it smoothly and gains twenty yards.

IN THE STANDS

Jack is in the stands recording the game.

ON THE VISITORS SIDE

The 'War Eagles' set up in the middle of the Longhill stands with even more speakers and equipment and surrounded by a small crowd of spectators.

They play "Crazy Train" by Ozzy Osborne for the crowd.

ON THE FIELD

The Spartans are receiving the kick.

ANA SOFIA

My kind of song!

The Spartans crisscross the field, avoid the other players and gain significant yardage before being brought down.

THE NEXT PLAY

The ball is snapped, and Ambrosia turns a player over while stripping the ball and holding on to it.

DESHAWN

Molasses?

AMBROSIA

Nope.

DESHAWN

Garlic?

AMBROSIA

Nope.

DESHAWN

Hot sauce?

Ambrosia turns and faces DeShawn, hands on her hips.

FIELD GOAL

Rachel motions of the ball. Kelly hikes it; she places it, and Phillipe kicks it. It takes a wild curve but swings around again and sails through the uprights!

SCOREBOARD

Patriots 35, Spartans 38.

ANNOUNCERS

Chuck and Mervin stand by their booth, jaws dropped and eyes wide.

CHUCK

They... This is the most incredible moment in my entire life! We're winning... a game!

MERVIN

Even better than Christmas and the Fourth of July all rolled into one!

EXT. HAWK'S FIELD - NIGHT

Game Four -- Another grueling play as each Spartan heaves with their strength, pushing, pulling, GRUNTING and rolling.

IN THE VISITORS STANDS

There are more people in the Spartans' crowd. They MAKE NOISE and jump up and down, their STOMPS reverberate throughout the field.

Reggie's helmet and shield now sit with a breastplate and skirt.

ON THE FIELD

The ball is snapped; Rachel avoids a sack and gets the ball away. She looks over to the player who tried to sack her and says 'no' with her finger.

ANOTHER PLAY

Marisabel spins out of a tackle as she darts down the field, and the Spartans make a touchdown.

IN THE VISITORS STANDS

The 'War Eagles' play 'Eye Of The Tiger' by Survivor crowd. Everyone sings along.

ON THE FIELD

Ambrosia is on defense. The ball is snapped and she takes one lineman, the another, down to the ground and the opposition turns the ball over on downs.

THE NEXT PLAY

Lupe grabs the kickoff, then sprints down the sidelines, side-steps the tackle, and dives for the end zone.

Some NEWSPAPER CLIPS, on one side is the dominant Wildcats and on the other is a surprise article about the Spartans.

SCOREBOARD

Hawks 14, Spartans 14.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Jack reports:

JACK

This small team from Oildale has raised eyebrows. Dismissed as a functioning team just weeks ago, this rag-tag group is showing dominant force. And they've done it in the most amazing way: with girls on the team.

RACHEL

Oh, yeah. We bad.

EXT. LONGHILL FIELD - NIGHT

Game Five -- Rachel hands the ball off to Wild, then blocks a rusher. Wild weaves his way through five defensive players before he is finally brought down.

The OPPOSITION COACH is pissed.

IN THE HOME STANDS

The Spartan stands are almost filled now.

ANOTHER PLAY

Hang, running with a line of Spartans blocking for him, skirts the sidelines with the ball and gains 35 yards.

ON THE SIDELINES

Rachel high fives Jake during a timeout.

IN THE HOME STANDS

Karl and his biker gang, dressed in Spartan gear, CHEER in the stands.

ANOTHER PLAY

Ambrosia body-checks a rusher headed for Phillipe as he kicks a 55-yard field goal.

EXT. LONGHILL HIGH - DAY

The school is decorated, celebrating their football team's wins. In the middle of the school is a rally.

The 'War Eagles' play 'We Will Rock You' by Queen and everyone dances.

EXT. COUGAR FIELD - NIGHT

Game Six -- Play starts and the Spartans push the entire line of scrimmage forward for the first down.

SCOREBOARD

Cougars 24, SPARTANS 31.

Jack conducts interviews on the TOWN FOLK.

JACK

You used to go to Longhill?

GRANDPA

When it was just a one-room schoolhouse.

JACK

What do you think of the team?

GRANDPA

They can take on anyone in the country. Go get 'em, Spartans!

EXT. MUSTANG FIELD - NIGHT

Game Seven -- The ball is hiked, and Chico runs in a touchdown. The visiting crowd, overflowing capacity, goes WILD.

SCOREBOARD

Mustangs 10, Spartans 28.

EXT. GRIZZLY FIELD - NIGHT

Game Eight -- The Spartans celebrate their latest win. Reggie is now in full gear from his head to his toes.

The 'War Eagles', set up in the center of the massively thick crowd, play 'Walk This Way' by Aerosmith.

The Spartans' crowd CHEERS, wears Spartans shirts and hats, while the kids carry Spartan balloons.

There are even a few JUNIOR HIGH GIRLS in rough-made cheerleading uniforms.

PETE

We have cheerleaders now?

Ambrosia does a cheerleader impression. Rachel and Lupe join in, high kicking on the field. The boys on their team shake their heads.

DESHAWN

Onion salt?!

AMBROSIA

No.

DESHAWN

Paprika?!

AMBROSIA

That's not it either!

DESHAWN

Just ignore it!

AMBROSIA

I can't ignore it. This is gonna be my award-winning barbecue sauce!  
It's gotta be perfect!

She stomps off as Pete dances on the sidelines with Anita.



EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - LATE EVENING

Rachel picks up flags and markers on the field next to Hang.

RACHEL  
How's the search?

HANG  
I have family from Korea, Vietnam,  
Laos, now I'm in Cambodia! I'm an  
Asian mutt!

Jake comes out, sees her and walks over.

JAKE  
Hey, need any help?

Rachel looks up, her hair matted and stained with sweat. Her clothes are covered in mud and grass stains. She smiles.

RACHEL  
No, thanks.

JAKE  
Wow, looking extra sexy tonight.

She hits him on the arm.

RACHEL  
Not so bad yourself.

They smile. Jake lugs his stuff behind him.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Game Nine -- Spartans vs. The Clinton High Ravens.

The team surrounds Pete.

PETE  
One more and we'll make the  
playoffs! One more game -- are you  
in?

ALL  
Yes!

PETE  
I said, are you in?!?

ALL  
Yes!!

## ON THE FIELD

Coach Corrigan approaches Pete. Dirk, Eddie, and Casper are alongside him.

DIRK  
This is gonna be cake.

CORRIGAN  
(to Pete)  
Semis huh? Never thought I'd see you here with this team.

## ANNOUNCER'S TABLE

MERVIN  
The football is on the ten-yard line, and it's third and goal.

## THE NEXT PLAY

RACHEL  
Streak left on two. Hike!

The ball is hiked, and the opposition blitzes, bringing Rachel quickly to the ground; the ball bounces out and is picked up by a Raven.

He runs the length of the field until brought down by Lupe, who pops the ball back out before he hits the ground and recovers it on the five yard line.

The Spartans look down, beaten.

## SCOREBOARD

Ravens 21, Spartans 20.

## CLOCK

There are fifteen seconds left to play. Rachel forms a 'T' with her hands.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
Ref! Time out!

The ref BLOWS HIS WHISTLE. Rachel approaches Phillippe.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
How's your leg?

PHILIPPE  
It's all right.

RACHEL

Good, we need to get him into decent field position. One kick through the posts'll end it.

KELLY

Got it!

Everyone CLAPS, then jogs back out on the line. Jake sizes up the defensive positions.

JAKE

They're showing blitz!

Instantly, Rachel changes the play.

RACHEL

Picket fence!

The Spartans line up; their offense lines up every Raven player on the line of scrimmage.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Hike!

Rachel gets the ball and hightails a seven-step drop.

The Spartan defensive line, instead of digging in and blocking, stand straight up and let every opponent pass through -- untouched.

Rachel lobs the ball to Chico, and the line turns around and gets into blocking position, effectively corralling the defenders inside with Rachel.

Chico runs fifteen yards before a running back tackles him.

Rachel looks up at the clock.

CLOCK

0:03 is all that's left.

FIELD

Rachel gets Phillippe's attention.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

It's now or never. Phillippe?

PHILIPPE

Hit me *ma'ma!*

The Spartans line up and spread out all the way across the field with Philippe lined up in the end zone, behind Rachel.

The Ravens looks confused and don't know where to line up. In that moment, Kelly snaps the ball to Rachel.

She gently tosses it in the air, and Philippe runs, jumps in the air, and bicycle kicks HARD!

The ball flies down the field, toward the out-of-bounds on the left, then curves in... and passes through the goal posts!

The players erupt into CHEERING.

IN THE STANDS

The War Eagles rock out as the fans go wild.

ON THE FIELD

The team gathers around Pete. Ramon and Mary high-five.

INT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Pete runs the students through their warm-up activities.

PETE  
One, two, three, go! One, two  
three, go!

The group tosses balls around while slowly taking steps back, deftly keeping their poise -- their balls stay off the ground.

LATER

The team throws perfect passes through the tires.

LATER

Everyone goes through the obstacle course without any mistakes.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - EVENING

Rachel throws at targets with a bin of footballs by an old commercial billboard.

Philippe kicks a football and nails the sign.

It wavers, the wooden stilts rotted away, then slowly bends over and begins to fall, with Rachel underneath.

Jake runs, grabs her and pushes her out of the way as the sign crashes to the ground where she was.

Everyone is momentarily stunned.

RACHEL

Thanks.

He winks.

JAKE

Ain't no thing.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Jake walks with Chico to the parking lot. Rachel runs up.

RACHEL

Jake! Wait up. I never really got to thank you for today.

Chico looks at his arm as if he had a watch.

CHICO

Oh, I forgot something in the locker room. Be right back.

RACHEL

That play we've been working on, the Step Eighty-Four. I don't think we have that one just right yet.

JAKE

What?

RACHEL

I'll show you.

She crouches down in the quarterback receiver position, then motions him to come forward. He gives in.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

After the ball's snapped, spin around here, by my right side.

She physically moves him around her.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
 But instead of pivoting off your  
 right foot and streaking down the  
 sidelines, you need to turn in.

JAKE  
 Like this?

He slowly spins right into her. She wraps her arms around  
 him, they look at each other, then she leans in.

RACHEL  
 Exactly.

Suddenly, a couple of raised pickup trucks storm in. Both are  
 filled with the Wildcat football players. Keith leans out the  
 driver's side window.

KEITH  
 Well, looky what we found!

JAKE  
 What's your problem?

KEITH  
 You're my problem, you and your  
 stupid little team. Bringing girls  
 into the game.

Rachel stares daggers at him.

RACHEL  
 And yet we keep winning. What's  
 wrong with this picture?

KEITH  
 Against other pathetic teams.  
 Don't you remember that we beat the  
 hell out of you?

JAKE  
 Ain't gonna happen again.

KEITH  
 Guess we'll see about that!

Keith's truck rumbles forward and peels out on the field,  
 doing donuts and crazy-eights.

The other truck follows suit as they both tear up the grass.  
 Jake is itching to have at them --

RACHEL  
 Don't. Just chill.

She holds him back. The Wildcats finally leave, YELLING and HONKING their horns.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
We'd better go get Ramon, our  
field's toast.

EXT. GRAMP'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Rachel pulls up in the old truck. Something's wrong--there's a black Mercedes Benz in the driveway.

Horror-stricken, Rachel turns off the engine and sits there, staring. ARGUING and SHOUTING can be heard inside.

She suddenly becomes very angry and gets out, slamming the door, and stomping into the house.

INT. GRAMP'S HOUSE - KITCHEN/ DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rachel finds BARRY BARNES (50s), her father, a classless man with more money than brains, in front of Anita, protected by Gramps, holding a double-barreled shotgun.

BARRY  
Watch it, Wyatt Earp! I just want  
to talk to my daughter!

ANITA  
She's my daughter too, remember?!  
You kicked us both out!

He steps forward.

GRAMPS  
Take another inch you pond scum,  
you'll find yourself well-  
ventilated!

Barry stops.

RACHEL  
What do you want?!

Barry turns around, thankful to find her there.

BARRY  
Sweetheart! Baby!

RACHEL  
Don't sweetheart baby me. Why are  
you here?!

BARRY  
I've come to take you back, to your  
real life!

ANITA  
She's not going anywhere!

Barry pulls out a small, white envelope.

BARRY  
I have all the parental rights  
here, what I say goes.  
(turns to Rachel)  
Get your stuff together, our flight  
leaves tomorrow night.

GRAMPS  
She's not leavin'!

BARRY  
Don't make me sue you, old man.

Barry looks around.

BARRY (CONT'D)  
I sure as hell wouldn't get  
anything though.

GRAMPS  
I could shoot'em an' claim breaking  
and entering.

BARRY  
Rach, you're getting your old life  
back, all of it. I'll even take you  
shopping -- look at you, like  
poverty ad in a hard-up magazine.

RACHEL  
If I say no?

BARRY  
Court says you don't get to say no.  
Go on. I'll be back tomorrow, six  
pm sharp! Anita, Old Man.

Barry nods to them and heads out the door.

GRAMPS  
What in god's grace did you ever  
see in that man?!



ANITA

Before other woman number one, two,  
or three?!

RACHEL

Mother?!

ANITA

Nothing I can do, honey...  
(weakly smiles)  
You get your life back.

Rachel turns and heads to her room, SLAMS the door.

INT. HISTORY CLASS - THE NEXT MORNING

Rachel enters, hair expertly coiffed. She wears a blue cashmere boatneck sweater and a brown, crinkled silk skirt.

Pete sits behind his desk grading papers and looks up. Upon closer inspection, she's been crying.

PETE

Wow, Miss America, for what do I  
owe this state visit -- what's  
wrong?

RACHEL

Mr. Allen, my father is here.

Pete puts his papers down and SIGHS. He gets up and sits on the corner of his desk.

PETE

And all good things must come to an  
end. Who else knows?

RACHEL

You are the only one.

PETE

Our last game for the playoff's  
tonight...

RACHEL

I will be leaving this afternoon.  
Jake will make a great quarterback.

PETE

Yeah, he'll be okay. Can't talk you  
out of it?

She looks down.

PETE (CONT'D)  
Thought not.

There is a long pause in the room.

PETE (CONT'D)  
Well, thank you Rachel Barnes, for giving this place some long-needed energy and excitement.

He sticks out a hand, and she steps forward and shakes it.

PETE (CONT'D)  
You'll make a great QB anywhere.

RACHEL  
And you're a great coach, coach.

She turns and finds Lupe, standing in the doorway.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
Lupe!

LUPE  
You were just going to go, without saying a word?! I knew it, too good for us, *blanquita!* Going back to your posh rich life. Figures, get out while you can, right?!

Tears are in Lupe's eyes.

LUPE (CONT'D)  
I should have never trusted you!

She whirls around and runs right into a smiling Jake.

JAKE  
Whoa *mama!* Who peed in your *taquitos?*

LUPE  
Ask Miss Richie-Rich!

She shoves him out of the way and runs down the hall. Jake looks up.

RACHEL  
Jake, I am heading to New York.

JAKE  
Now?! We've got a game tonight!

RACHEL

And you are going to do great.

JAKE

Bullshit! We can't survive without you! The team needs you! I need you! Your part of us here!

RACHEL

I do not have a choice!

Other students gather around.

JAKE

Reggie told me that in 480 BC, 300 Spartan soldiers were chosen -- for a suicide mission! They knew they were going to die! Tonight, you leave, we've lost. But I'll still show up to fight!

He brushes past her. The other team members are there and walk by in solidarity.

KELLY

Me too.

CHICO

Same.

ANA SOFIA

*Yo tambien.*

MARISABEL

*Aqui mismo.*

Ambrosia stops in front of her.

AMBROSIA

You were the one who got this whole thing started, Miss Thing, now skipping out. Can't say I blame you, but I do.

And she walks off. In the back, Reggie takes off his Spartan helmet, sets in on the floor, and walks the other direction.

Wild, the last remaining player, looks around, abandoned.

WILD

What?!? -- whatthefreakingheck! -- I shoulda'! -- shuthefrontdoor! -- shuthefrontdoor! -- I can't! -- freakthemightyfreakofnature!...

He bags into the wall several times to get himself to stop speaking, fails, then runs down the hallway.

INT. JERRY'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

The phone RINGS as Jerry sits behind his desk signing forms.

JERRY

Jerry... Monty Pewter? What a pleasant... oh... excuse me? I see. Uh-huh. Well, that doesn't... mm-hmm... mm-hmm... now listen... just a minute, those kids... I... hello? Hello?!

Stunned like a deer in the headlights, he hangs up the phone, then gets up from his chair and walks to the open door.

Mary stands there, hand in mid-knock, but frozen.

MARY

It's all over?

INT. HISTORY CLASS - MOMENTS LATER

Pete stands in front of his windows looking out. The entire football team, minus Rachel, sits around TALKING quietly.

A KNOCK at the door and Jerry walks in.

JERRY

Got a moment?

PETE

Sure, Jerry. What can we do for ya?

JERRY

Everybody might as well hear this. I just got off the horn with Stine. Pewter tells me that we've broken some sort of rule replacing all our players.

JAKE

What?!

JERRY

He's already spoken with the team you were supposed to play tonight as well as the school board.

And they're willing to ignore this whole deal... if we call it quits -- right now.

PETE

(dryly)

Pewter's mom's on the school board.

JERRY

Beside the point. Pete, love what you all have done, but we're finished. It's over. If I take one more step on this, they'll fire me, you, and everyone involved.

Pete walks around, his expression difficult to interpret.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Pete, I'm sorry. They're shooting every arrow they've got.

After a moment, Pete stands up straight.

PETE

That's a lot arrows.

JERRY

Too many in my book.

Pete looks over at Reggie.

PETE

Then, we will fight in the shade.

There is steel in Pete's eyes.

PETE (CONT'D)

They brought crowns and heads of conquered kings to our city steps...

Reggie stands out of his desk, catching the direction and continues the recitation.

REGGIE

-- They insulted our queen...

Others join in, getting out of their desks.

PHILLIPE

-- They threatened our people with slavery and death...

ANA SOFIA

-- And you may say *ese es blasfemia...*

LUPE

-- That this is madness...

PETE

And what will you say Jerry?!  
What... will... you... say?!?

Jerry looks around, confused as Reggie gets his attention with his eyes.

REGGIE

(whispers)  
This is Sparta!

Jerry gathers long-forgotten courage, puffs up, and raises his fist.

JERRY

I will say,  
(shouts)  
That *this... is... Spartaaaaa!*

He runs out of the room SHOUTING like a madman down the hallway -- not at all the response they anticipated.

INT. WILDCAT HIGH SCHOOL - GYM - DAY

The Stine Wildcats hold a football prep rally filled with their entire STUDENT BODY, CHEERLEADERS, and streamers.

Jerry marches in from the backdoor as MONTY PEWTER (60s) a small but rotund man, stands at the microphone and addresses the crowd.

MONTY

We stand at sixty-five win and zero losses! The longest-standing record in the entire valley!

The students SCREAM and SHOUT, when Monty sees Jerry and loses his train of thought. Jerry grabs the mike and takes it off the stand.

JERRY

Attention Stine High, I'm Gerald Price, principal of Longhill High school!

A SMATTERING of BOOS, but not enough as students are intrigued with this new situation.

JERRY (CONT'D)  
 And today, your principal has  
 singlehandedly stopped us from  
 playing football tonight!

Everyone quiets down. Monty attempts to get the mic back.

MONTY  
 Give it here, Jer.

But Jerry's on a roll and walks around.

JERRY  
 He thinks we're not good enough!  
 He's threatened us with our jobs  
 and is going to shutter our school!

You could hear a pin drop.

JERRY (CONT'D)  
 You think you're all that and a bag  
 of chips?! Then I'm throwing down  
 the gauntlet -- one game decides  
 it! Tonight -- your house. You win,  
 we close our school! We win, we  
 stay! No trophies, no banners, it's  
 not official, so your league  
 record'll remain perfect. It's do  
 or die Monty, so I wanna know, are  
 you game?!

Jerry folds his arms and hands the mike back to Monty, who looks bewildered when a SHOUT suddenly comes from the stands.

STUDENT  
 Don't back down, Mr. Pewter!

ANOTHER STUDENT  
 We'll kill'em!

The entire student body jumps on board with SHOUTS and JEERS, the loudest come from the cheerleaders and football players.

Bolstered by the fray, Monty stares daggers at Jerry.

MONTY  
 You come into my school and try to  
 push your weight around?! We're the  
 Valley champions, eight times  
 running! You want a game tonight --  
 you got one!

The students ERUPT in complete MAYHAM. Jerry smiles, then walks away.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Game Ten -- Chuck and Mervin are in full suits with headsets and real microphones. Behind them is a Longhill Spartan backdrop, to the sides are portable studio lights.

CHUCK

Both girls and boys make up this multi-cultural roster from little-known Longhill High.

MERVIN

It will be an uphill battle tonight as they take on the defending champions here at Wildcat stadium -- winner take all!

EXT. VALLEY PARKING LOT - DAY

The crowd filters in, the largest percentage going toward the opposition's side, before five old, green busses arrive and stop in front of the parking lot.

The doors open as the town folk of Longhill exit, dressed up in Spartan red and black stream out, CHEERING ON their team.

EXT. NORTH GATE - DAY

Lupe walks toward the gate carrying her gear.

Five large guys come up in front of her. The largest, BRAD STEVENSON, steps forward.

BRAD

Hey, there's one of'em. I think you came to the wrong game. Powder Puff's across town.

Lupe doesn't say anything. Brad pushes her; his gang laughs.

BRAD (CONT'D)

You're too little to be here. The preschool's down the block.

He pushes her again. Lupe stumbles back but catches herself and doesn't fall.



LUPE  
You want to start something?

The gang tightens around her.

BRAD  
Wait 'till they close your school,  
then we'll see you everyday!

LUPE  
I'll kick your...

A voice clears from behind them.

BRAD  
I think she likes me. You like me,  
don't you, you little *Mexicana*.

Karl's voice clears from behind. The group turns around to see that he is sitting on the hood of a pimped out low rider with seven other large and tattooed men and their women.

KARL  
He just say what I think he said?

They wear sunglasses and are ragged out in black and red, the Spartan symbol on their bandanas. Karl gets up and saunters toward the now pathetic looking group of boys.

EMILIO (40s) speaks up.

EMILIO  
I think he did.

KARL  
He said 'Mexicana'?

EMILIO  
Yeah, I think that was it.

BRAD  
But...

Karl gets up to Brad's face.

KARL  
You listen, punk. We're all about  
playing fair here, so we're going  
to give you a chance to apologize  
to our friend, *comprende?*

BRAD  
Yeah, uh, we're just kidding.

KARL  
 Good, and to make sure, we're going  
 to ask you fellas here to support  
 our team.

He holds up several Spartans Football tee-shirts.

KARL (CONT'D)  
 One for everyone. If we see you at  
 any time wearing something  
 different, we might not be so  
 forgiving. You got that?

Brad, horrified, grabs the shirts.

KARL (CONT'D)  
 Too many *idiotas*, what's this world  
 coming to?

LUPE  
 Thanks.

KARL  
 Go out there and give'em everything  
 you got. We got your back.

Lupe knocks Karl, takes her gear and races off to the  
 stadium.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

The Spartans take the field. The Wildcats halt and glare at  
 them.

CAT CALLS from the stands as Pete gathers them together.

WILDCAT SIDELINE

BUTCH makes an "I've got my eye on you" gesture to Pete,  
 trying to unnerve him, then looks at his own team.

BUTCH  
 You want to lose to a bunch of  
 girls?

SPARTAN SIDELINE

Pete has none of it. He laughs, then turns to the group.

PETE  
 We're mighty!

SPARTANS  
We're mighty!

PETE  
We're invincible!

SPARTANS  
*We're invincible!*

Pete takes a deep breath.

PETE  
And we are gonna what?

SPARTANS  
*Dominate!*

PETE  
Say what?

SPARTANS  
*Dominate!*

PETE  
I can't hear you!

SPARTANS  
*Dominate!*

All hands join together. Pete thrusts a fist in triumph.

PETE  
Right! Now Jake, let's go over the  
game plan again.

Everyone stares, concern in their eyes. Jake's voice waivers.

JAKE  
We'll start out with a handoff,  
then a couple pop passes, then I'll  
launch one down the field and we  
score.

There are nods, but most are unsure.

PETE  
Just like we've been doing,  
come'on!

Pete puts his hand in, and the players join.

JAKE  
Spartans on three, one, two, three!

ALL  
Spartans!

## STANDS

Brad and his gang reluctantly enter the Spartan's side of the stands as they sport Spartan's Football tee shirts. They find an empty bench and sit.

## FOOTBALL FIELD - LATER

Thirteen Wildcats hustle out and line up.

CHUCK (V.O.)  
The Wildcats are going with just thirteen of their own players, matching Longhill's own roster.

MERVIN (V.O.)  
We call that *mano-a-mano!*

## PLAY BEGINS

The Wildcats have the ball on the Spartan's 25-yard line.

MERVIN (V.O.)  
After winning the toss and downing the kick in the end zone, the Spartans bring up three running plays, working to perfection, but end up turning over the ball.

A very large AFRICAN-AMERICAN WILDCAT passes, throws his shoulder, and lays Lupe out.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN WILDCAT  
Go back to the ghetto!

The Wildcats make an incredible pass as their RECEIVER jumps up and grabs the ball.

Ana Sofia almost has him, but WILDCAT #6 grabs her long braids and pulls her down, allowing the runner to sprint in for a touchdown.

## ANNOUNCER'S TABLE

CHUCK  
And the Wildcats get on the scoreboard first!

FOOTBALL FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

Jake throws to Chico.

CHUCK (V.O.)

Now Jake Sanchez takes the ball,  
rolls out left and sails one over  
to Chico Mendez, who fumbles the  
ball right into the hands of the  
Saber defense but is brought down  
at the forty.

KELLY

Drops a handoff, then is slammed by three Wildcats.

HANG

Gets hit right when he tries to grab the ball out of the air.

AMBROSIA

Is smothered down by five Wildcat players.

CHICO

Is trampled underfoot.

MARISABEL

Is hit so hard, she flies off the field and into the Spartan's  
empty bench.

JAKE

Time-out!

The ref BLOWS his whistle, and the teams gather. The Spartans  
YELL at each other. They're falling apart.

EXT. FREEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Rachel turns on the radio and adjusts the knob. After dialing  
past COUNTRY MUSIC and a MARIACHI BAND, she finds the  
FOOTBALL GAME BROADCAST.

CHUCK (V.O.)

It's not looking good, folks.

MERVIN (V.O.)

Whadda you talking about, Chuck?  
They're getting murdered out there!  
It's like, whatever was the driving  
force behind the team is gone.

CHUCK

Can't disagree with you, Merv.  
They've lost the will to play, no  
doubt about it!

Rachel SNAPS the radio off and looks out the window, tears roll down her cheek. She sees stadium lights in the distance, then turns to her father.

RACHEL

Stop the car!

BARRY

Don't start with me! It's bad  
enough to come down here to mingle  
with all the scum!

RACHEL

Pull over! I don't want your  
clothes. I don't want your money.  
And I don't want this life!

BARRY

They really brainwashed you, didn't  
they!

RACHEL

If you don't let me out of this  
car, right now, I'll just take off  
back here the first chance I'll  
get! You'll never be able to stop  
me, I don't care what any court  
says! This... This is where I  
belong!

EXT. WILDCAT STADIUM - MOMENTS LATER

Kelly hikes the ball to Jake, and he throws, but it's knocked down by the Wildcat defense.

Two WILDCAT TIGHTENDS bowl into Reggie, slamming him twisted around on his back. He's hurt!

PETE

(angry)

Marisabel, get in there! Jake, what  
are you doing?! Handoff! Handoff!

JAKE

I can make the throw!

CHICO

Not anymore, we just turned it over  
on downs!

Reggie painfully slumps over to the empty Spartan bench.

ANNOUNCER'S TABLE

CHUCK

We've finally come to the end of  
the first half, and folks, it's not  
even close.

MERVIN

At least it's not as bad as last  
time!

CHUCK

Yeah, okay, good point. But we  
still have another half a game to  
go -- what are the Spartans going  
to do now?

MERVIN

They must be asking themselves how  
they're going to get back into this  
game!

INT. VISITING LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Each player YELLS at another. The entire coaching staff is  
enraged. Even Ester is threatening with her knitting needles.

Pete BLOWS long and hard on his whistle until everyone stops.

PETE

We've got to regroup! Come together  
-- we've come this far!

Jake stands up, honest for the first time in his life.

JAKE

Coach, I just can't do it. They're  
too much for me. I'm sorry.

PETE

I know. You've done your best,  
Jake. No one could ask for more.

RACHEL

I'm asking for more. We have one  
more half, right?

Everyone turns and stares as Rachel walks into the room.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
Coach, would you mind if I talked  
to the team, alone?

Pete's caught off guard.

PETE  
Sure.

As Pete leaves, she pulls him to the side.

RACHEL  
(whispers)  
And when I'm done, we're gonna need  
one hell of a pep talk!

PETE  
You got it!

The staff leaves the players by themselves.

RACHEL  
I owe each of you an apology.

LUPE  
Yeah, you do!

RACHEL  
Before I came here, my old  
boyfriend played football, and I  
was a cheerleader, big shock, I  
know. But since I used to play with  
my dad, I helped "Mr. Big stud" out  
with his throwing and because of  
me, he made varsity, got a  
scholarship, and I've not heard  
from him since. Together for three  
years, and then... nothing. He  
never had the decency to dump me.  
Like, I wasn't even worth the  
effort. He just left me behind.  
Like I left you.

She looks at each player.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
I don't want to be that person. I  
don't care about big houses and  
money; I care about you guys.  
You're...

She chokes up a bit.



RACHEL (CONT'D)  
 You're the first real friends I've  
 ever had, and we built this thing  
 together, so -- I'd... I'd really  
 like to play this last half of  
 football with you.

All eyes on Jake as he slowly stands and saunters over, then hands her the football.

JAKE  
 They're killing us out there.

The locker room ERUPTS with CHEERS as everyone comes in for a big group hug.

HARU (60s), an OLDER ASIAN MAN carrying a wooden box, bursts into the room and bee-lines it to Hang.

HARU  
 (in Japanese)  
 Son! We found it!

HANG  
 (in Japanese)  
 Where?

HARU  
 In your grandfather's garage.

He opens the box. Inside are photographs, letters, and a WWII Naval Landing Forces Headband.

HARU (CONT'D)  
 It's official, you are Japanese!

Haru takes out the headband and wraps Hang's head. They bow to each other.

Suddenly, the all the lights turn off. PANICKED CRIES are overshadowed by a faint HISSING sound.

Ramon turns on a colored spotlight from the doorway. The light, filtered through the fog now pouring into the room is met with several other spotlights operated by Mary, Ester, and Helga.

A guitar SOUNDS OFF. It's the old video game theme 'Mortal Kombat', and it's shredded by none other than the War Eagles rolling in on a 6-foot deck platform truck, pushed by crochety Albert!

MIKE  
*Mortal Kombat!...*

Pete stands in the middle of the band, shirt untucked, Spartan towel wrapped like a headband, microphone in hand.

PETE

We are the three hundred! Vastly outnumbered, outgunned, outmanned, but we've got something they don't, we're playing for our school, our jobs, hell, we're playing for all the little guys who've been trampled under foot and right now, we make our stand! Right now we play as one! Right now we... are... Sparta!

The players rush toward him, AMPED UP CHEERS and SHOUTS of "Sparta!", Helmets raised in the air.

Marisabel taps Reggie on the shoulder. He looks down and sees her holding a burlap bag. He opens the bag--it's his Spartan armor!

With all the excitement, Wild bangs his head against the lockers, trying to regain some control.

WILD

Can'tcan'tcan'tcan'tcan't...

Ana Sofia walks over to him, scowling like usual, then gently takes his head into her hands and looks deep into his eyes.

ANA SOFIA

*Si, se puede.*

And she smiles, for the first time ever. Wild stares into her eyes and calms, then regains control as he's infused with her energy as if she's magic.

WILD

Oh yeah!

Albert reverses and leads the group out to the field.

MIKE

(sings)  
*Mortal Kombat!...*

ON THE FIELD

The War Eagles BLAST their video game theme. Mike inserts each players name for the player.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
*... Reggie... Ana Sofia...  
 Rachel... Jake... Lupe...  
 DeShawn... Wild...*

IN THE VISITORS STANDS

The crowd gets back into it as the players emerge. Anita and Gramps walk to the stands from the snack bar as Barry approaches.

BARRY  
 You've brainwashed her! You know, I  
 never loved you...

Anita launches a right hook that stops Barry mid-sentence. He crumples to the concrete.

ANITA  
 Cheat on me, then kick me out?!  
 Here I thought someday you'd take  
 me back! Man that felt good.

She realizes what she's done and looks alarmed at Gramps.

GRAMPS  
 Don't worry, honey. I'll take the  
 trash out.

He hands her his hot dog, then drags Barry to the front.

LOCKER ROOM

Albert tugs on Rachel's jersey.

ALBERT  
 Go get'em, girl!

RACHEL  
 Yes, sir!

She slams her helmet on and rushes onto the field.

ON THE FIELD

Reggie leads the Spartans out, dressed in full armor with mane and flag. He BLOWS on a cow horn, quieting the entire stadium.

EXT. WILDCAT FIELD- EVENING

Third Quarter -- The War Eagles play 'Sparta' by Sabaton as they march and then stand on the field, in unison, as soldiers onto the field of battle.

They stare at the Wildcats as sweat rolls down their faces. They are focused.

MIKE

*...Spartans will never surrender!*

The Spartans line up on offense. Their eyes never leave the team in front of them. The ball is hiked. Each Spartan digs in and pushes the line forward.

ON JAKE

They Spartans blitz, crush the line, and he ends it with a quarterback sack.

ON PHILLIPE

He kicks the ball and nails the Wildcat receiver at his own five yard line.

ON CHICO

Chico slams a Wildcat player hard to the ground.

ON REGGIE

He picks up a guy and runs off with him, waving to the Spartans crowd.

The refs throw their yellow flags.

ON PETE

He shakes his head and tries to hide his smile.

ON ANA SOFIA AND MARISABEL

The two girls dart around two blockers before taking Keith down.

ON WILD

He is in the set position. His fingers curl and uncurl. His sight is set on the guy in front.

The play starts, and Wild heads straight for the Wildcat. He rams into him like a bull.

ON KELLY

Kelly stiff arms his opponent as they try to tackle him. He ends up driving the boy into the ground.

ON KEITH

The Wildcat quarterback throws the ball way downfield. It's intercepted by Hang, who runs it back fifteen yards.

The capacity crowd CHEERS and waves their black and red. Ramon jumps up and down with a towel.

ON RACHEL

Kelly snaps the ball to Rachel. She does a five-step drop and hits DeShawn on a hook and runs fifteen yards for a first down.

SCOREBOARD

Wildcats 28, Spartans 16.

EXT. WILDCAT STADIUM - LATER

Start of the fourth quarter -- Kelly snaps the ball to Rachel. She does a seven-step drop and sails one to Philippe on the post corner.

ON RACHEL

Ambrosia snaps the ball to Rachel. She does a roll out pass, to Lupe who grabs ten yards.

ON THE TEAM

Rachel is in the shotgun formation. Kelly snaps the ball back to her. She winds up and lets one loose to Jake who runs the length of the field for a touchdown!

SCOREBOARD

Wildcats: 28, Spartans 24

ON RACHEL

The Spartans hit a number of quick-outs and hitches with a no-huddle offense, steadily marching down the field that bewilders the defense.

RACHEL

Zone five!

Chico lines up five yards behind Rachel. Hang lines up five more yards behind him, Jake another five yards behind, Philippe another five yards and finally Wild, almost in the end zone behind him.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Hike!

Kelly hikes the ball, Rachel turns and gives it to Chico, who then flares out with a fake.

Chico gives it to Phillipe, then flares out. Hang turns and gives it to Jake, turns and flares as he gives it back to Philippe, who turns and flares. He gives it to Wild, who tosses it to Jake.

The defense rushes from receiver to receiver.

They get more excited as they near Jake and their own end zone, but don't see Ambrosia, who actually has the ball, as she runs as fast as she can down the field.

She tosses the smaller SAFETY aside and lumbers into the end zone. Touchdown!

EXTRA POINT

Philippe kicks the extra point. The crowd breaks into a SPANISH SOCCER YELL.

CROWD

Gooooooooaaaaaalllll!

SCOREBOARD

Wildcats 28, Spartans 31.

VISITORS STANDS

Anita and Gramps jump up and CHEER!

COLLEGE SCOUTS watch the game intently and write on clipboards and speak into digital recorders.

FOOTBALL FIELD

The Spartans kick the ball away. The Wildcats get it and return to the Spartans thirty-five yard line.

THE NEXT PLAY

Keith sets up a quick slant, and they march down the field.

ON RACHEL

The ball is hiked, and Rachel moves inside, untouched. She slams Keith into the ground for a sack. He grabs his right arm.

RACHEL  
That's for our field!

KEITH  
Coach!

Butch and the staff come out and hoist Keith up, helping him off the field.

BUTCH  
Full team!

The Wildcat line comes alive as they began substituting players for all the exhausted ones.

ON JAKE

The second snap -- Rachel is blocked, but Jake isn't -- he moves in from the other side and sacks the NEW QUARTERBACK.

The ball is loose and a Wildcat receiver grabs it, then runs it in for a touchdown.

SCOREBOARD

Wildcats 35, Spartans 31.

FOOTBALL FIELD

The Wildcats kick off, and the Spartans receive the ball. Reggie catches it but is nailed at their fifteen.

As he goes down, he fumbles, and the Wildcats pick it up and rush down the field.

They are about to score when Marisabel squeezes through several defenders, pops the ball out, grabs it, and heads the other way.

The Wildcats turn around but are met with an on-rush of heavy Spartan traffic, getting slammed into the ground as the tiny girl dashes forward.

The last Wildcat lunges forward, catching her cleat in the air and she flies forward, losing the ball mid-air.

A tailing Wildcat scoops it up and heads back down the field, finally getting tackled by Reggie and DeShawn at the five yard line.

THE FIELD GOAL TRY

The Wildcats kick it through the uprights.

SCOREBOARD

Wildcats 38, Spartans 31. With two minutes remaining.

ON RACHEL

She signals the referee.

RACHEL

Time out!

The ref signals a time-out, and the team separates toward their sideline.

PETE

There's two minutes on the clock.  
That gives us enough time to get  
down the field.

He begins showing them drawings on his note pad. The ref signals the play action.

PETE (CONT'D)

When you get down to their end,  
it's time for a little Mary  
strategy. This is her special play,  
so make her proud.

ON THE VISITOR'S SIDELINE

Mary waves, watching from the sidelines with Ramon, both with bated breath.

ON THE FIELD

The teams break and take to the field again. They line up to receive the kick with Lupe and Chico at the end zone for the catch.

The Wildcats kick the ball. It sails through the air, down to Lupe. She catches it, then darts down the field with the team blocking for her.

She is knocked out of bounds at the fifty yard line.



They immediately get up, but instead of lining up to hike the ball, they gather in a huddle!

CHUCK (V.O.)  
Spartans have it on the fifty yard line. And I believe this is the first huddle they have made all season!

The Wildcats look confused as they are lined up and ready while the Spartans take the full time allotted in the huddle, then slowly move toward their positions.

This change in strategy frustrates the Wildcats.

The Spartans hike the ball -- before Rachel can give it to Jake, she's hit by one Wildcat, then another. It's a late hit, but the refs don't catch it.

WILDCAT PLAYER #7  
Girls don't play the game...whaa?!

The Wildcat is lifted off of Rachel, and high into the air, as Kelly holds him up, fire in his eyes, then body slams him down to the ground!

KELLY  
You leave her alone!

He's finally found his rage, and it's frightening. He's a beast transformed -- the Wildcats all take an unconscious step backwards.

THE NEXT PLAY

Ambrosia, DeShawn and Reggie split the defenders, and Jake runs in between them, out into the open field.

He's brought down at the Wildcats thirty yard line. The Spartans line up again.

RACHEL  
Texas Two Step!

Rachel hikes the ball, all the blockers immediately take two quick steps back, sending all the rushers falling to the ground.

Rachel flicks the ball out to DeShawn, who lays flat his rusher and then heads down the field.

He trudges down to the twenty yard-line!

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
Time for Reggie's play!

PETE  
Reggie's play?!

REGGIE  
My play?!? You mean it?! All right!

Rachel looks at Chico.

RACHEL  
You want to be the hero?

Chico looks at everyone.

CHICO  
Naw, I'm good.

They break and head back out to the field. Each player gets into position on the line of scrimmage. Kelly hikes Rachel the ball, and she immediately sprints fifteen yards back.

The other Spartans quickly surround her, then burst apart in all directions.

Rachel runs forward down the field, covering the ball with both hands as the other Spartans follow her, protecting her from the defense. She has the lead as the Wildcats run to catch her.

Rachel is at the fifteen... the ten... the five! She's almost in for a touchdown when several Wildcats tackle her to the ground! She rolls over, anguished... but smiling?

Time expires, and the Wildcat crowd ROARS!

But the refs don't blow their whistles to signal the end of the game -- Suddenly, everyone's attention is focused on the other side of the field at tiny Marisabel.

She's alone at the thirty yard line -- with the football! She darts down the field -- it's a race to see if she can get in before the Wildcats reach her!

She makes it to the fifteen...

The ten... The five... Three Wildcats lunge... They miss! She's at the two... Has her legs grabbed by another Wildcat... She reaches... Reaches... The ball comes down... Into the end zone!

The ref BLOWS THE WHISTLE -- THE SPARTANS WIN THE GAME!

## ON THE VISITING CROWD

The crowd ERUPTS, wild with CHEERS and tears.

## ON THE VISITING SIDELINES

The players SHOUT and dance. Pete hugs Mary, everyone is in complete pandemonium.

## ANNOUNCERS

Chuck and Mervin lay strewn across the table, blown away.

CHUCK

Oh my gosh! Oh my gosh! Can you believe it?!

MERVIN

Holy freaking cows, pigs and chickens! What a football game!

CHUCK

We just beat the valley champions!

MERVIN

Beat the snot out of'em!

## ON THE FIELD

Butch walks over to Pete. Before Butch can talk, Pete starts.

PETE

You knew this would happen.

BUTCH

W-What?

PETE

There's no one here who can beat us. Save yourself the embarrassment and stay home, coach.

They shake, and Butch quickly turns and HARRUMPHS away.

Chico picks Lupe up and spins her giddily. She taps him as if to say, "Let's not get carried away there, buddy."

Brad and his friends stand and CHEER with the rest of the Longhill crowd.

A crowd of soccer fans hoist Philippe into the air.

REGGIE

So, who says we gotta stop playing?  
I'm gonna go and play college ball,  
man!

DeShawn walks up to Ambrosia.

AMBROSIA

Just 'cause we won a game, you  
think you can --

DESHAWN

Piloncillo. Mexican sugar!

AMBROSIA

Mexican sugar! That's it! That's  
the missing ingredient!

Ambrosia grabs DeShawn and plants one on him.

RACHEL AND JAKE

Nervously hover around each other.

RACHEL

Hey.

JAKE

Good game.

RACHEL

I couldn't have done it without  
you.

JAKE

You too.

WILD

Fool, would you kiss her already!

JAKE

Well, I --

Rachel spins him, kisses him. The rest of the team HOOT and cheer.

Just then, the SCOUTS encroach, all offering business cards as they approach the Spartans. One of them, seasoned coach EDWARD BASCOMBE (50s) approaches Rachel.

BASCOMBE

Excuse me? Eddie Bascombe,  
University of Miami. That was some  
game, Rachel Barnes.

RACHEL  
(stunned)  
Thank you?

BASCOMBE  
I was wondering if maybe I could  
tell you a little bit about the  
Hurricanes.

Rachel and Jake trade looks. Jake looks a bit sad. Everyone on the team is surrounded by representatives, even Lupe is enveloped with talent scouts -- until Bascombe shoves a card in Jake's face.

BASCOMBE (CONT'D)  
Jake Hernandez. Excellent work out  
there today. Can I tell you a  
little bit about our program and  
some of the scholarship  
opportunities?

Jake nods eagerly.

CRANE UP AND  
FADE OUT

THE END