

SCENE 1.1 -- Tomb of the Unknown Tool

The stage is dark. A faint hum, reminiscent of a machine room, is heard from the stage. Shadowy figures begin to filter through the audience onto the stage. They wander about the space, speaking in low voices to unseen audiences with flashlights.

SHADOW JACK 0 (HUNTER)

... Once upon a time, there was a boy hacker, and a girl hacker ...
(pause)

SHADOW JACK 1 (PISTON)

... There was a black square, a red square, and a yellow square ...

SHADOW JACK 2 (TALI)

... Thump! There was a cube fridge lodged in the president's lawn ...

SHADOW JACK 3 (ABRI)

(overlapping)
... some read, "No toad sexing," while others read, "Toad sexing allowed" ...

SHADOW JACK 4 (CHROME)

(overlapping)
... Don't touch that! It's a light sensitive biology experiment! ...

SHADOW JACK 5 (FARADAY)

... "I'm just picking grass for my cow, Officer" ...

SHADOW JACK 6 (TESS)

(overlapping)
... "MIT, 1 -- Harvard-Yale, 0" ...

SHADOW JACK 7 (COROT)

(overlapping)
... "Beware the bane of Hartley Rodgers/ Forcing voice and withered codgers" ...

SHADOW JACK 8 (KEPLER)

(overlapping)
... and when the officers got there, the coffee in the cup-holder was still hot ...

SHADOW JACK 9 (CONNER)

(overlapping)
... "Spartans! Who is your professor?" They all shouted back... "Auroux! Auroux! Auroux!" ...

SHADOW JACK 10 (RYAN)

(overlapping)

... The officer smiled and said, "Miss Liberty looked real good up there. Get your stuff and get out of here, kids" ...

SHADOW JACK 11 (BILLY)

(overlapping)

... instead of "Industry, the Arts, Agriculture and Commerce," it said "Industry, the Arts, Entertainment, and Hacking!" ...

The figures slip away into the shadows to reveal STORY JACK, an elegant, but deceitful looking figure garbed in all black, grinning, as if he knows something no one else does. STORY JACK steps forward, attempting to affect a more trustworthy personality upon seeing the audience.

STORY JACK

Hi Everybody!

SHADOW JACKS

Hi Jack!

STORY JACK

Welcome, friends, to the Masochistic Institute of Technology. You have followed me down these many poorly lit corridors for one of two reasons. Either you have exceedingly poor judgement, or a strong desire to learn more about the mysterious world of hacking, or maybe both. Whatever your cause, I am here as your humble guide, to show you a glimpse of this world ...

MY FRIENDS, MY FRIENDS,
COME CLOSER,
COME ALONG AND YOU WILL SEE
A WONDEROUS PLACE,
A MARVELOUS REALM - THE LAND OF MIT!

BELOW THE WELL WAXED TILES,
BEYOND AISLES OF WELL READ BOOKS,
THERE LIES IN WAITING
SOMETHING GREAT:
INVIGORATING!
COME WITH ME, GO AHEAD, TAKE A LOOK FOR YOURSELF!

STORY JACK gestures grandly around the space as different elements of the machine room become more clear.

THIS IS THE WORLD OF THE HACKER:
A WORLD INTENSE AND EXTREME!
HEAR THE GENTLE HUM OF MACHINE ROOMS,

THE CLATTER AND THE HISS OF STEAM!

NOW DESCEND THROUGH THE SHAFTS
 FENDING DARK WITH A SPARK
 OF YOUR HEADLAMP, TO MARK OUT YOUR PATH 'TIL THE END!
 CRAWL 'ROUND PIPES AND ALL TYPES
 OF MACHINES, INBETWEEN.
 I WON'T LEAD YOU ASTRAY!

Lights grow brighter to reveal more SHADOW JACKS surrounding STORY JACK.

Trust us. We're your friends!

STORY JACK and SHADOW JACKS

THIS WORLD IS RULED BY THE HACKER!
 A CREATURE BOTH CUNNING AND QUICK,
 WHO FLITS THROUGH THE NIGHT LIKE A SHADOW,
 A MISCHIEVOUS SPRITE, SUAVE AND SLICK

GHOSTLY, LIKE MOSTLY A SPIRIT,
 SO SILENT, TO HEAR IT'S UNLIKELY, I'D SAY.

STORY JACK

BUT WHO ARE THESE ETHEREAL, SURREAL,
 YET IMPERIAL "HACKERS" ANYWAY?

Hackers are technological pranksters, engineers inspired to intervene with the everyday monotony. You may walk into Killian Court one morning and spy the Apollo lunar lander atop the Great Dome; perchance you may note a fully functional street lamp mounted on building 1; or maybe one day you'll observe that the windows of Medical have been transformed into a giant flashing stoplight! All of these and more are the works of hackers. In order to perform these bold feats, hackers often traverse MIT's more untraveled passageways. As they explore, they often unearth locations long since erased from history, hidden from the common eye, locked away!

STORY JACK turns with a flourish as low lights come up on the wall of a small tomb with two sign-ins along a tall edge. Note: this room will be visited in the second act by KEPLER and BILLY

THIS PARTICULAR ROOM,
 IT'S CALLED A TOMB -
 A BLOCKED OFF CREVICE,
 FORGOTTEN, OUTCAST
 SEE THE SHARPIE SCRAWLS ALONG THE WALLS,
 THE SIGN-INS OF THE HACKERS OF THE PAST!

“Sign-ins” are hackers’ signatures, their ways of marking where they have been. A clue left behind to other hackers saying “someone has been here before.” There are many tombs around MIT campus, like this one for example:

Lights fade up on a wall containing the “Hacking Ethics.”

This tomb contains a very special bit of literature: the “Hacking Ethics!” These are the guidelines to which we noble hackers adhere! Pay attention!

THE SAFETY OF YOURSELF, OF OTHERS, AND OF PROPERTY SHOULD HAVE HIGHEST PRIORITY. SAFETY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN PULLING OFF A HACK OR GETTING THROUGH A DOOR.

SHADOW JACK 0 (HUNTER)

BE SUBTLE; LEAVE NO EVIDENCE YOU WERE THERE.

SHADOW JACK 1 (PISTON)

BRUTE FORCE IS THE LAST RESORT OF THE INCOMPETENT.

SHADOW JACK 2 (TALI)

LEAVE THINGS AS YOU FOUND THEM OR BETTER.

SHADOW JACK 2.5 (ABRI)

CAUSE NO PERMANENT DAMAGE DURING HACKS AND WHILE HACKING.

SHADOW JACK 2.75 (CHROME)

IF YOU FIND SOMETHING BROKEN, CALL F-IXIT*.

**pronounced “Fix it”*

SHADOW JACK 3 (FARADAY)

DO NOT STEAL ANYTHING; IF YOU MUST BORROW SOMETHING, LEAVE A NOTE SAYING WHEN IT WILL BE RETURNED AND REMEMBER TO RETURN IT.

SHADOW JACK 4 (ABRI)

DO NOT DROP THINGS WITHOUT A GROUND CREW

SHADOW JACK 4.5(CHROME)

TO MAKE SURE NO ONE IS UNDERNEATH.

SHADOW JACK 5(PISTON)

SIGN-INS ARE NOT GRAFFITI AND SHOULD NOT BE SEEN BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC. SIGN-INS EXHIBIT ONE’S PRIDE IN HAVING FOUND AN INTERESTING LOCATION AND SHOULD ONLY BE SEEN BY OTHER HACKERS.

SHADOW JACK 5.5(PISTON and FARADAY)

REAL HACKERS ARE NOT PROUD OF DISCOVERING LOBBY 7, RANDOM BASEMENTS, OR RESTROOMS.

SHADOW JACK 5.75(STORY JACK)

KEEP SIGN-INS SMALL AND RESPECT OTHER HACKERS' SIGN-INS.

SHADOW JACK 6(HUNTER)

NEVER DRINK AND HACK.

SHADOW JACKS 7 and 8 (ABRI and CHROME)

NEVER HACK ALONE. HAVE SOMEONE WHO CAN GET HELP IN AN EMERGENCY.

SHADOW JACK 9 (STORY JACK)

KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS AND DO NOT EXCEED THEM.

SHADOW JACK 9.5 (TESS)

IF YOU DO NOT KNOW HOW TO OPEN A DOOR, OR CLIMB A SHAFT, THEN LEARN FROM SOMEONE WHO KNOWS BEFORE TRYING.

SHADOW JACK 10 (COROT)

LEARN HOW NOT TO GET CAUGHT, BUT IF YOU DO GET CAUGHT, ACCEPT GRACEFULLY AND COOPERATE FULLY.

SHADOW JACK 11 (KEPLER)

SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE WITH OTHER HACKERS.

STORY JACK and SHADOW JACKS

ABOVE ALL, EXERCISE COMMON SENSE.

STORY JACK

REMEMBER THE CODE OF THE HACKER,
AS YOU DREAM OF FINDING UNCHARTED NOOKS
THESE ETHICS KEEP US SEPARATE
FROM COMMON BURGLARS AND CROOKS
ASSESS THE GRAND LESSONS THESE FINE WORDS CONVEY

STORY JACK and SHADOW JACKS

MAYBE YOU THINK THAT YOU COULD BE LIKE US ONE DAY!

STORY JACK

YES, THIS IS THE WORLD OF THE HACKER
I THINK THAT YOU'LL AGREE
OUTSIDERS MAY JUST SEE THE SURFACE,

STORY JACK and SHADOW JACKS

BUT THIS IS THE REAL MIT!

SHADOW JACKS exit.

STORY JACK

Hackers come and go, but they are never forgotten. We keep them alive by passing on their stories. Though you're not the smartest bunch I've seen, you've trusted me thus far, so perhaps I should share a bit of lore with you. Would you like to hear a story?

(waits for audience response and responds appropriately)

LEND AN EAR AND YOU'LL HERE A TALE
THAT I DOUBT YOU'VE HEARD BEFORE.
THIS STORY TAKES PLACE BACK IN THE DAY,
WHEN THINGS WERE MORE HARDK0RE...

SCENE 1.1 -- I Want to be Hardk0re

Lights begin to come up on BILLY, an eager young freshman, carrying his luggage.

Our story unfolds with a wee little frosh, ready and eager to begin his journey at this wonderful Institution. His mind was ready to be filled with knowledge, as many froshlings' minds are ...

Lights fade down on STORY JACK. STORY JACK exits.

BILLY

To offstage parents:
Bye mom! Bye dad!

MOM (offstage)

Do you have your sweater?

BILLY

Yeah, mom, it's somewhere in here. I'll see you winter break!

CONNER enters, carrying a textbook, reading without looking up. CONNER bumps into BILLY.

CONNER

Oh! Sorry. Moving in?

BILLY

Yup! My name's Billy!

CONNER

Billy? Hi. My name's Conner.

Billy extends his hand for a handshake. CONNER turns the page without looking up.

BILLY

You're studying already?

CONNER

I'm getting ready for the math placement diagnostic!

BILLY

Does that test count for anything? I thought no one even looks at that.

CONNER

Well, it's not for a grade or anything, but I want my advisor to be impressed! I have to impress him if I want to take 5.12 this semester.... I mean, I really can't wait, right? It really won't fit in the spring, right? I mean, with my current plan... Do you have a plan?

BILLY

My academic plan? I've got better plans...

Music flourishes.

bigger plans.

Music flourishes.

I Want to Be Hardk0re

THE WORLD IS COMPLICATED,
IT'S NOT WRITTEN IN A BOOK.
YOU HAVE TO GO DISCOVER IT.
Like, actually go out and look!
I WANT TO FIND THINGS NO ONE ELSE HAS SEEN,
IT'S THE SPIRIT TO EXPLORE
DOWN IN THE DARK, IN THE TUNNELS AND THE STEAM
I WANT TO BE HARDK0RE.
I'M NOTHING IF I'M NOT HARDK0RE!

The buildings here were built all at different times, and they don't fit perfectly together. It leaves lots of hidden spaces, just waiting to be found. Think of the possibilities!

THERE ARE SHAFTS THAT SHOOT UP MANY STORIES,
AND TOMBS ABOUND IN EVERY CRAG
AND THE FINDER GETS ETERNAL GLORY,
FOREVER EARNING CHANCES TO BRAG!

Doesn't that excite you? Don't you just feel... electric?

CONNER

No, covalent, not charged at all. I can't focus when you --

BILLY

I just get this incredible feeling! I need to tell you! I need to tell everyone!

CONNER

You're gonna sing again, aren't you.

BILLY

I am!

Conner rolls eyes and follows BILLY.

WE IDOLIZE THE ARTIST,
 EMBRACE THE AVANT GARDE.
 WE ALL STRIVE TO BE NOTICED
 AND HELD IN HIGH REGARD.
 I WANT TO FLEX MY CREATIVITY,
 SHOW THE WORLD I'M SOMETHING MORE.
 PUSH OUT AGAINST EVERY BOUNDARY,
 I JUST WANT TO BE HARDKORE!
 PLEASE GOD LET ME BE HARDKORE!

RYAN, STORY JACK, and other wee little FRESHMEN enter. (STORY JACK, formerly our narrator, is now a member of the FROSHSOMBLE, though STORY JACK will occasionally pop out to narrate.) The FRESHSOMBLE buzzes about excitedly. Many of them are carrying backpacks and/or pamphlets as if they have just come from lots of freshman-y activities.

RYAN

And did you hear about the time there was a firetruck on the dome?!

BILLY

Or when it looked like a giant pumpkin?!

CONNER

I guess some of this stuff was pretty cool...

BILLY

Don't you want to learn how to engineer something so epic? It's the best project-based class you could take!

RYAN

WHEN THE HACKERS TOOK THE CALTECH CANNON
 AND TOWED IT BACK TO MIT

BILLY

OR THE HARVARD / YALE BALLOON INFLATED
 IT SHOWED THEIR INGENUITY

BILLY

I can't wait to come up with an awesome hack of my own!

RYAN

I can't wait to figure out how to get on the dome! How do they do it?

CONNER

They must be super l33t ninjas!

Laughing, excited by each other's excitement, the members of the FROSHSOMBLE dance around.

BILLY and FROSHSOMBLE

THEY FLY FROM ROOFTOP TO ROOFTOP
 AT NEAR THE SPEED OF LIGHT.
 NO LOCK CAN BAR THEIR PASSAGE,
 THEY CAN LEAP FROM ANY HEIGHT.
 I WANT TO JOIN THEM, LEARN THEIR EVERY TRICK
 I KNOW SOMEDAY I WILL SOAR.
 I GUARANTEE, IT'S A CERTAINTY
 I'M GONNA BE HARDK0RE
 I SWEAR I WILL BE HARDK0RE!

All except BILLY, CONNER and RYAN exit.

BILLY

THERE'S NOTHING MORE THAN BEING HARDK0RE
 ALL I WANT TO BE IS HARDK0RE

STORY JACK pops back onstage, in narration mode.

STORY JACK

Though it may be difficult to find hackers, occasionally they come above ground. Our freshmen happened upon one of these moments.

STORY JACK pops out of narration mode and exits. TESS and COROT enter, talking. TESS and COROT look otherworldly compared to the freshmen from their torn practical clothes to their dyed hair. It is clear that they are upperclassmen. BILLY, RYAN, and CONNER see them and listen from a distance.

TESS

I'm stoked, Corot! Halloween hacks are the best, I can't wait to get started!

COROT

Hey Tess, when are you free for a planning meeting?

TESS

Tuesday, midnight works for me. Hacker Standard Time?

COROT

Yup, same as always! Man, I want to make this hack special for everyone, especially for the freshmen. Remember our first hack? it was so --

BILLY

Excuse me, I couldn't help but overhearing, but are you pulling...

(pauses, checks to make sure no one's looking, then drops to a whisper)
a hack?

COROT and TESS turn to face BILLY, RYAN, and CONNER, pause, then look at each other skeptically.

COROT

To BILLY:

I don't think I've seen you before.

BILLY

I'm Billy. We'd like to help you! I mean, if that's okay. We're really interested in this kind of stuff!... Well?

COROT

I don't know.

(giving TESS a knowing look)

TESS

(giving COROT a knowing look)

We should test them.

COROT

A little "examination" never hurt anyone. Get used to it kids, welcome to MIT.

BILLY

Sure... What do you want us to do?

*COROT suddenly becomes extremely presentational, over-enunciating and making exaggerated expressions. He is now in "performance mode."
"Performance mode" musical flourish.*

COROT

Question one!

TESS

DUHN, DUHN, DUHN!

COROT

Name a hack!

BILLY

That's easy. There was that police car on the dome.

COROT

Correct! You are sharper than I thought, young froshling, I commend you.

COROT points to RYAN.

Question two.

TESS

Oooooo!

COROT

What was the first hack?
(pointing at Ryan)

RYAN

I... I don't really -

TESS

Whispered to RYAN:
A Ford Model T...

RYAN

To COROT:
A Ford Model T!

COROT

(turning to CONNER)
And where was it?

CONNER

It was on... the... dome --
(never finishes the word "dome")

TESS

Whispered to CONNER:
East Campus rooftop.

CONNER

I mean East Campus roof! East Campus roof! It was a Ford Model T on East Campus roof!

COROT

Correct! Are you now ready for the final question?

TESS

Gasp!

COROT

Question three. Why do you think you have what it takes?

BILLY

To be a hacker?

COROT

(most grandly of all!)
Yes, to be a hacker!!

I Want to Be Hardk0re, reprise

BILLY

I CAN LEARN ALL THAT YOU CAN TEACH ME.

RYAN

DO THINGS NO ONE ELSE HAS DONE

CONNER

RISE ABOVE THE STANDARD EXPECTATIONS

BILLY, RYAN, CONNER

WE REALLY WANT TO JOIN YOUR HACK!

TESS

Yeah, sure, I don't see why not.

COROT

(dropping out of "performance mode")
I'm convinced.

RYAN

Cool!

BILLY

When do we start? What can I help with?

COROT

Chill, we haven't even had our first official meeting yet. By the way, I'm Corot.

TESS

And I'm Tess.

CONNER

When's the first meeting?

TESS

It's Tuesday at midnight, Hacker Standard Time.

RYAN

"Hacker Standard Time"?

COROT

Don't be early!

TESS and COROT exit.

BILLY

My first hack... yes! I'm in!

I'M REALLY GONNA BE HARDK0RE!

I'M GONNA BE HARDK0RE!

Blackout.

SCENE 1.3 -- Police Station

Lights fade up on STORY JACK.

STORY JACK

And so our little freshmen joined his first hack, and merrily returned to his dorm, his head filled with images of UFO's, upside down lounges, and dreams of being the most hardk0re hacker of all time! Meanwhile, there was another group of people on campus. But they didn't wear cargo pants or have multicolored hair. They wore all blue and had these funny octagonal hats...

The lights, fade down on STORY JACK and come up on a cluttered, brightly lit police station. Filing cabinets and desks are littered with important looking and unimportant looking paperwork. The trashcan is full of boxes of "Dunkin' Donuts." A coffee machine sits on a desk, half-full of old coffee. OFFICER BARRY CLAW, an older CP, sits at another desk, reading a copy of The Tech. An empty box of "Dunkin' Donuts" sits nearby. OFFICER FREY PACHINO types furiously at her desk. SERGEANT BRUCE E. SPRINKLES sits in a swivel chair facing an upstage window. CLAW grunts and checks the doughnut box.

CLAW

Hmm... We're out again...

(peers over his shoulder at PACHINO)

Hey, Officer Pachino, we're out of doughnuts.

PACHINO

(doesn't look up from her typing)

Well don't expect me to do anything about it, Claw. I have to type up this stupid incident report because of those rascals last night! If you had taken better notes, maybe I -

CLAW

I'm sorry, Officer Pachino... I didn't think they were doing much harm.

PACHINO

There were five kids! They had backpacks! Of course they were up to no good!

CLAW

All I'm saying is you're making a lot of work for yourself... You could be getting more doughnuts.

OFFICER DEEDEE KALF enters and throws a cigarette butt into the trash.

PACHINO

Oh get your own doughnuts, Claw!

(grumbling to herself)

Well, at least there wasn't a hack.

PACHINO looks up to smirk at CLAW, then primly returns to typing.

KALF

I wouldn't be so sure about that...

PACHINO

None of your sass, DeeDee.

KALF

Don't take my word for it, but Killian sure looks interesting this morning...

PACHINO

What?

PACHINO scrambles over to CLAW and snatches the Tech from his hand.

CLAW

Hey! I was reading that!

PACHINO furiously skims the paper, flipping until she sees a photo of a hacked Killian court. Note: the hack will probably never be seen by the audience. PACHINO let's out an angry squeal and throws the paper back at CLAW. CLAW looks at the page that infuriated PACHINO.

CLAW

Huh... I don't remember that being there...

KALF

That's 'cause it wasn't.

CLAW

But who could have done that?

SPRINKLES

(still facing upstage)

Those goddamn hackers...

(swivels around to face forward)

That's who!

PACHINO

Claw, I told you they were up to no good!

SPRINKLES

Yes, they were up to no good, but this time they've picked a fight they can't win, not in a long shot! They've picked a fight with Sergeant Bruce E. Sprinkles, and no one messes with Sergeant Bruce E. Sprinkles! No one! If we can catch them in the act of pulling a

hack, we can crush those hackers like the weeds they are. In the name of William Barton Rogers, something must be done!

Let's Get Those Fuckers!

SPRINKLES

THEY'RE A MENACE AND A PLAGUE AND THIS SCHOOL IS OVERRUN.
 'TIL NOW WE'VE BEEN OUTDONE.
 WE'LL HUNT THOSE HACKERS DOWN AND GET THEM ALL EXPELLED.
 THE LAW MUST BE UPHELD.
 LET'S GET THOSE HACKERS,
 THEY THOUGHT WE NEVER COULD.
 LET'S GET THOSE FUCKERS,
 AND STAMP THEM OUT FOR GOOD.

KALF

I HAVE A FINE IDEA TO ACCOMPLISH ALL OUR GOALS,
 THE ONLY WAY TO DO THIS IS TO INCREASE OUR PATROLS.

OTHERS

PATROLS?

KALF

PATROLS!
 WE'LL TRIPLE OUR PATROLS
 THE MORE THAT WE CAN SEE, THE LESS THEY'LL WANDER FREE,
 WITH ALL OF US WE'LL KEEP THEM IN CONTROL.

CLAW

BUT AS YOU KNOW THEY'RE CLEVER, THEY WILL BEAT THAT IN A SNAP
 THE ONLY WAY TO DO THIS IS TO LAY SOME BOOBY TRAPS.

OTHERS

TRAPS?

CLAW

TRAPS!
 QUICK! GET A CAMPUS MAP.
 THEY'LL GET TO EVERY DOOR, BUT THEY'LL FIND ALARMS IN STORE,
 WHILE ROOFTOP SENSORS FILL IN EVERY GAP.

ALL

THEY'RE A MENACE AND A PLAGUE AND THIS SCHOOL IS OVERRUN.
 'TIL NOW WE'VE BEEN OUTDONE.
 WE'LL HUNT THOSE HACKERS DOWN AND GET THEM ALL EXPELLED.

THE LAW MUST BE UPHELD.
 LET'S GET THOSE HACKERS,
 THEY THOUGHT WE NEVER COULD.
 LET'S GET THOSE FUCKERS,
 AND STAMP THEM OUT FOR GOOD.

SPRINKLES

NO MORE CARS ON THE DOME,
 OR COWS OR WORKING PHONES.
 WITH SPRINKLES IN CHARGE, THEY WILL MEET THEIR ULTIMATE END.

PACHINO

THERE'S ONE LAST STEP TO GUARANTEE WE'LL END THAT HORDE OF IMPs,
 WE'LL BUILD A FLEET OF SELF-SUFFICIENT FIRE-THROWING BLIMPS!

OTHERS

BLIMPS?

PACHINO

YES, BLIMPS!

OTHERS

Wait, blimps??

PACHINO

YES, BLIMPS!
 LAUNCH FIREBALLS FROM BLIMPS.
 WHEN FLAMES COME FROM THE SKY, THE HACKERS' PLANS WILL FRY!
 I THINK THOSE KIDS WILL FINALLY TAKE THE HINT.

ALL

THEY'RE A MENACE AND A PLAGUE AND THIS SCHOOL IS OVERRUN.
 'TIL NOW WE'VE BEEN OUTDONE.
 WE'LL HUNT THOSE HACKERS DOWN AND GET THEM ALL EXPELLED.
 THE LAW MUST BE UPHELD.
 LET'S GET THOSE FUCKERS,
 WE'LL PUT THEM WHERE WE SHOULD.

SPRINKLES

LET'S GET THOSE FUCKERS,
 AND STAMP THEM OUT FOR GOOD.

Menacing Laughter. Blackout.

SCENE 1.3 -- Planning Meeting

Lights fade up on STORY JACK.

STORY JACK

When you hear evil laughter emanating from the police station, it's a sure sign their plotting another scheme to catch hackers. They've tried nets, over-sized rat traps baited with physics books, and there's the rumored robotic hacker infiltration unit, but none of their attempts are as famous as The Great Fire Throwing Blimp. Left a trail of smoke in the sky that could be seen as far as Wellesely... Meanwhile, our heroes were up to their own plans back in their secret hacker lair!

The lights shift to a casual looking meeting space. Some of the FRESHMEN and UPPERCLASSMEN are already present at the meeting. STORY JACK reintegrates with the FROSHSOMBLE. BILLY enters, looks around, and waves to COROT, who is sitting leisurely with a large rolled up map on his lap.

BILLY

Hey, Corot! Remember me? I'm here for the hack meeting!

HUNTER

Who's this?

BILLY

Hi, my name's Billy!

(extends a hand to HUNTER who looks at him skeptically)

COROT

It's cool, he's just another freshman who wants to join the hack.

BILLY

Yeah, I really think this will be fun. I want to learn how to be a hacker.

HUNTER

You're froshy as hell!

BILLY

I'm not "froshy!" Wait, what does "froshy" mean?

COROT

Don't worry about it.

To everyone:

Lets get started.

RYAN

Hey Billy, over here!

Excited chatter buzzes through the room. BILLY sits with RYAN and CONNER. TESS bursts in, carrying a pile of papers.

TESS

Sorry I'm late, Athena took forever to print the plans. Did I miss anything?

COROT

Nope, I'm just about to start.

COROT snaps into "performance mode."

Planning Meeting

COROT unfurls the map and pins it to the wall. The map is a map of MIT campus, but in addition to the usual hallways and tunnels, "secret" (real or fake or both) paths are marked. Zig-zags and arrows cross the map at all angles in different colors making it look almost like a football play board.

LADIES AND GENTS, WELCOME
TO THE FIRST HACK OF THE SEMESTER!

Because this is the first hack, this is a great time for all of us to learn and hone some new skills. And of course, what's the best way to learn something? By pushing our limits! Setting new standards! By doing something challenging! We won't just be plopping down this hack on the grass of Killian Court. Our target: here!

COROT points to the dome and freshman murmur excitedly. Ad libs: "It's the dome!" "Is this the big one or the small one?"

COROT

SETTLE DOWN NOW, DON'T GET TOO EXCITED
A HACK IS MORE THAN PUTTING SOMETHING CLEVER ON A ROOF
A HACK MUST BE PREMEDITATED, CALCULATED
AN ART OF SAFETY AND NOVELTY
A HACK CAN'T SUCCEED UNLESS WE THINK BEFORE WE ACT
THEN IMPLEMENT DELIBERATELY, PERFECTLY.

WE WILL BUILD AS A TEAM
OUR MINDS BENT TO THE SAME GOAL
AND WHEN WE DEPLOY WE'LL MOVE AS ONE
WITH PRACTICED COORDINATION
WE WILL --

KEPLER enters, and COROT stops in the middle of his sentence, falters out of performance mode and the music stops. KEPLER and COROT stare at each other for a few seconds. KEPLER slinks out of the room. COROT, a bit flustered, struggles to recover.

TESS

(to help COROT recover)

Hey Corot! What are these awesome packets I'm holding?

COROT

Right! Everyone, Tess is my second-in-command. If you ever need anything and can't find me, take your questions to her.

TESS

(as she hands out print-outs of the design plans)

WE'VE BEEN PLANNING THE DESIGN
IT'S AMBITIOUS, BUT THOUGHT OUT

COROT

IF YOU'LL NOTICE THE TIMELINE
I HAVE NO DOUBT
THAT WE CAN DEPLOY BY HALLOWEEN

Each person takes a paper and scrutinizes it. Ad libs: "Is this a resistor or a transistor?" "That's brilliant!" "So... the p-chord goes... where?" "I love when we use dexion. We should use it more often." "Is there a second page? ... Oh! I see!" etc.

NOW THAT YOU'VE SEEN EACH COMPONENT'S DESIGN
LET'S GET INTO BUILD TEAMS

TESS

I'M HEADING UP THE DRAGON WING

FARADAY

I'M IN CHARGE OF THE SCIENCE BOX

COROT

BUT WE STILL NEED A LEAD WITH ROPE EXPERIENCE
TO HEAD THE SQUID NET.

ABRI and CHROME raise their hands.

And bondage doesn't count.

ABRI and CHROME lower their hands. After a beat, BILLY looks a bit sheepish but throws his hand up.

TALI

HEY FROSH, TAKE IT EASY
THIS IS YOUR FIRST HACK
TAKE THE CHANCE TO HELP OUT
WITHOUT THE STRESS OF RESPONSIBILITY
LEADING AT BUILDS IS LOTS OF LOGISTICS
SO I'LL TAKE CHARGE OF THE SQUID NET.

CHROME

YEAH TALI, SHOW US SOME REAL ROPE WORK

TALI

THINK YOU CAN HANDLE IT?

ABRI

OH, YOU'RE ON!

TESS

To BILLY:

DRAGON WING'S DEFINITELY GONNA NEED MINIONS
WANNA JOIN MY TEAM?

BILLY

(looking at the plans)

OKAY!
BUT WHAT IF I HAVEN'T USED POWER TOOLS MUCH?

COROT

NO WORRIES, WE'LL TEACH YOU AS WE GO

TESS and COROT

ASK US ANY QUESTIONS, WE'LL HELP YOU FIND THE ANSWERS

FARADAY

I NEED MINIONS TOO!
ANYONE WANNA LEARN HOW TO SOLDER?
PLEASE, I'M TOO BUSY TO DO IT ALONE

RYAN

I'VE NEVER SOLDERED, BUT I'LL DO IT!

FARADAY

Thank Cthulhu!

TESS, FARADAY, and COROT
WE'LL TEACH YOU ANYTHING YOU WANT TO LEARN

COROT
YOU JUST HAVE TO YEARN FOR UNDERSTANDING
IT WON'T BE EASY,
THIS HACK IS RIDING ON EACH OF US
THERE'LL BE MANY LATE NIGHTS OF BUILDING
AND SOMETIMES WE'LL HAVE TO PUT TOOLING ASIDE

CONNER
What if we have psets? Do we have to come to the builds if we have psets the next day?

The crowd audibly disapproves of CONNER's question. BILLY gives CONNER a look that says "Aw, come on!"; RYAN gently punches CONNER in the arm in a way that says "You're such a tool". Ad libs: "Don't be a tool," "Psets or not, I'll be here,"

PISTON
Unacceptable, you're on pass/no record!

CHROME
The most important equation you learn freshmen year --

ALL
 $A = B = C = P$

COROT
We can help you with your psets too, but it is way more fun to learn by hacking.
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS PUT IN THE TIME
EVEN IF YOU MAKE MISTAKES, I DON'T MIND

So who could make a build session sometime this week?

TESS and BILLY and the rest of the FRESHMEN raise their hands immediately. The upperclassmen take their time but most of them eventually raise their hands. ABRI raises her hand, but not CHROME. ABRI then pokes CHROME and CHROME then raises her hand.

Good!
I'LL EMAIL EVERYONE ABOUT THE BUILD

TESS
UNTIL THEN PLEASE STUDY THE DESIGNS

FINISHING THIS HACK WILL TAKE HARD WORK AND TIME

TESS and COROT
DON'T BE AFRAID TO LEAN ON EACH OTHER

COROT
NO MATTER HOW GRAND THE PLAN
WE CAN ACCOMPLISH IT TOGETHER

COROT removes the map from the wall, and curls it up. He walks over to TESS and BILLY as everyone except for BILLY, TESS, and COROT begin to filter out. Side conversations ensue as people exit.

CHROME
To ABRI:
I have two psets due tomorrow and once we start the hack, I'm gonna be fucked.

ABRI
By psets? I thought that was my job.

CHROME
We could bang while I'm working if you want, but somehow I don't think it's practical.

ABRI
I guess you're right.

PISTON
to TALI:
My only problem is..."Dragon Wing"? Is that really what we're calling this?

TALI
Sure, why not? It's a nice, grand name to impress our little froshlings.

TALI pats CONNER's head (in a non-twinkies way)

RYAN
To FARADAY:
So what exactly do you need me to do?

FARADAY
My friend, the Science Box is the brain of this baby, I have to get it done. If I try to go to sleep, light me on fire.

Everyone has exited except for BILLY, TESS, and COROT.

COROT

So, Billy, what did you think of your first hack meeting?

BILLY

It was really cool! So epic!

HUNTER (*offstage*)

Froooooosssssshhhhhhhhyyyy!!!

BILLY

What the -? Hey, what does froshy mean again?

COROT

Don't worry, you'll grow out of it soon enough. See you at the build!

BILLY

See ya!

BILLY exits. TESS pulls COROT aside.

TESS

Kepler showed up.

COROT

I know... I had a feeling he might, but I was hoping we wouldn't have to deal with him. I don't want him to scare off the frosh.

Blackout. Underscore begins as the scene transforms into the beginning of the build.

SCENE 1.4 -- Building***Building Romance***

TESS and COROT are bustling around the build space, talking logistics and getting ready for the build session. FARADAY and TALI are also already in space, working on the Science Box and the Squid Net, respectively. Other FRESHMEN and upperclassmen begin to enter. RYAN goes to work with FARADAY on the Science Box. On the dragon wing, BILLY goes to work with TESS, CONNER with PISTON, and HUNTER with STORY JACK. STORY JACK stands foremost, ready to narrate.

STORY JACK

Though by day, hackers may seem like ordinary MIT students, at night, they transform into the creatures they truly are. They abandon their problem sets, sleep, and sanity, and pour their souls into their real work.

STORY JACK reintegrates into the FROSHSOMBLE. COROT moves around the build space, checking up on each group's progress.

COROT

HEY HOW'S IT GOIN?

TESS

GREAT, GOT ALL THE TOOLS AND LOTS OF EAGER HANDS

COROT

HEY HOW'S IT GOIN?

TALI

TYING UP THE MONKEY FISTS AND MAPPING OUT THE FRAME

COROT

HEY HOW'S IT GOIN?

FARADAY

HEAT THE IRON, MELT THE SOLDER, CAREFUL WITH THOSE WIRE CUTTERS!

COROT stops to help FARADAY and RYAN as focus shifts to BILLY and TESS. BILLY brings in his drill to drill in a screw, but it just won't go in. He tries several times, each time making disappointed noise at the drill. The drill emits a small click every time BILLY tries to drill in the screw.

BILLY

Hey Tess, this screw just won't go in. What am I doing wrong?

TESS

You're probably just not pressing hard enough. I bet you're stripping the screw. Here, let me show you how to do it.

TESS puts a new screw in place, and navigates the drill, still in BILLY's hand, to the screw. She presses in on the screw to demonstrate the proper amount of pressure.

You feel how hard you need to push? Now you try.

BILLY pushes in the screw.

BILLY

Thanks, Tess!

TESS

You're welcome.

TESS and BILLY look into each other's eyes for a moment. Then the moment breaks and they go back to work.

BILLY

To himself:

Tess... she's really cool, good at what she does. She's a really great teacher, I hope she thinks I'm competent. For a moment just now, I thought... oh, nevermind. I hope she thinks I'm competent...

SPRINKLES and KALF enter.

SPRINKLES

What's all this hammering and to-do all about?

COROT

(performance mode)

Oh hello officers! We're just working on a class project! Isn't it great when an art class gets you to use such practical skills like construction and electrical engineering?

KALF

Let's move on, sir, they're just working on some project.

SPRINKLES

Why don't you tell me a bit about this "art project" of yours.

COROT

(as he jauntily walks the CP's out of the build space)

Let's go outside and I'll tell you more about American Modern art in the 1970s. It requires a lot of black scrap metal ...

COROT, SPRINKLES, and KALF exit.

TESS

(holding up a piece of luan)
Billy, could you give me hand with this?

BILLY

With what?

TESS

(laying the luan down across two blocks)
I just need someone to hold it in place while I cut. Just keep your hands clear and - oh, you should be wearing goggles. Here.

TESS grabs a pair of safety goggles and places them on BILLY's face. She does this slowly, almost sensually, smiling as she pushes back his ears to fit the goggles around them. TESS and BILLY are illuminated with a pink spotlight. Oh baby.

BILLY

Thanks, Tess.

TESS

You're welcome, Billy.
(pause)

BILLY

Um... do you... you still need to saw this?

TESS

Oh! Right! Almost forgot...

The pink light fades. TESS saws the wood and then she and BILLY get back to work.

To herself:

Billy's a good kid. Maybe not the best at doing what he does, but he knows how to ask questions. And he's fun to work with. Just for a moment, just now, I thought he gave me a look. Maybe it was ... Naw, It was nothing. He's just a good frosh. He'll go far.

BILLY and TESS go look at the plans for the roof attachments. KEPLER enters the build space on the way to his room. He looks around as if he smells

something terrible. Conner and Piston work on a frame, while Conner is holding a text book.

PISTON

Will you quit reading your textbook at the build? Your attempt to tool is making our frame crooked.

CONNER

Sorry, I'll hold it better, but I need to keep reading!

KEPLER

You do realize this already looks like a piece of shit, right?

CONNER

Um, what? Who are you?

PISTON

(running over CONNER's line)

Kepler, what the fuck are you doing here?

KEPLER

Is there a reason why you're not using a square?

PISTON

Is there a reason why you're being an obnoxious asshole?

KEPLER

to CONNER:

Nice to see they've got you wasting your time being a talking clamp. Good luck graduating.

KEPLER turns to walk away. RYAN enters in a rush, carrying a milk crate full of supplies.

RYAN

Hey Faraday, I -

RYAN runs into KEPLER and nearly knocks KEPLER over.

KEPLER

What the hell!

RYAN

Sorry! I -

KEPLER

Why are you running with a crate full of power tools? Are you retarded?

FARADAY

Hey man, what's going on?

KEPLER

Keep a shorter leash on your freshmen, "man". This one needs a lesson on using his eyes.

ABRI and CHROME rush over.

ABRI

Kepler, do you really have nothing better to do than to be a jerk?

CHROME

Why don't you go get a lesson on playing nice with others?

KEPLER

Still joined at the hip and nosy as ever. Glad to see that some things haven't changed around here.

PISTON

Look, if you want something, say so, otherwise, bug off!

KEPLER glares at everyone and storms off.

ABRI

To RYAN and CONNER:
Sorry about him.

CHROME

He's messed up and shit.

*RYAN, CONNER, PISTON, FARADAY, ABRI, and CHROME get back to work.
COROT returns from distracting the CP's.*

COROT

HEY WHAT'S YOUR STATUS?

TESS

THE ROOF ATTACHMENTS COULD USE A DESIGN MODIFICATION
BILLY'S GOT A THOUGHT THAT I THINK YOU SHOULD HEAR

BILLY

I'VE BEEN LOOKING AT THESE BLUEPRINTS
WHY DO WE HAVE THIS?

COROT

IT'S A STANDARD WAY TO MAKE THE ROOF ATTACHMENT THAT WE NEED

BILLY

BUT WHAT IF YOU SWITCHED THAT AND THIS --

COROT

NO THEN WE'D HAVE TO WORRY 'BOUT THE --

BILLY

BUT THEN YOU COULD FOLD THIS PART AND TUCK IT ALL AWAY?

COROT

Hmm...huh, you know, that could work!
NOT BAD

BILLY

THANKS!

COROT

YOU'VE GOT A GOOD EYE FOR DESIGN
WHERE'D YOU LEARN THAT?

BILLY

DIDN'T REALLY LEARN IT

COROT

WELL, WOULD YOU LIKE TO?

BILLY

LEARN FROM YOU?

COROT

SURE

BILLY

COULD I REALLY?!

COROT

STICK WITH ME AND YOU'LL BE LEADING HACKS IN NO TIME AT ALL

TALI storms out of the build. COROT turns to CHROME.

HEY, WHAT'S THE MATTER?

CHROME

(retardando)

TALI JUST TOLD US TO GET A FUCKIN' ROOM AND WE SAID WE PICK THIS ONE!

ABRI and CHROME exit. HUNTER walks by with CONNER, who is clutching her textbook. FARADAY falls asleep.

COROT

HEY WHERE YOU GOIN'?

HUNTER

THIS ONE JUST CAN'T SEEM TO PARSE THAT SHE'S ON PASS/NO RECORD BUT WE'VE STRUCK A COMPROMISE - SHE'S HELPING ME BAKE COOKIES

COROT

NICE! WHAT KIND?

CONNER

CHOCOLATE, PISTACHIOS, AND A SURPRISE!

HUNTER and CONNER exit. COROT catches sight of RYAN, who is wandering through the build space as if searching for something.

COROT

HEY HOW YOU DOIN'?

RYAN

FARADAY IS PASSED OUT ON HIS LAPTOP SO I'M LOOKIN FOR A LIGHTER

COROT

WHAT?
NO, BAD, WRONG!

RYAN

BUT HE SAID --

COROT

YEAH, I KNOW,
JUST ME HELP GET HIM TO HIS ROOM.

COROT, PISTON, STORY JACK, and RYAN (everyone who is not TESS and BILLY) carry FARADAY offstage. BILLY begins to drill in a screw and then stops

short. He glances up at TESS, then back at the screw, then back up at TESS. TESS catches his eye.

Yes? **TESS**

Tess, this screw. It's not going in. **BILLY**

Let me see. **TESS**

TESS bends over to examine the screw, putting her hand on BILLY's shoulder to let herself down and not letting go as she examines the screw.

I think it's stripped.

That's what I thought. **BILLY**

I think it needs more pressure. **TESS**
TESS switches the "stripped" screw for a new one. With utmost sincerity:
Maybe we should screw together.

TESS places her hands on BILLY's, which are still on the drill. BILLY and TESS screw. Suddenly BILLY and TESS look up at each other and realize their faces are now at kissing distance.

It's in.

And it feels ... perfect. **BILLY**

SCENE 1.5 -- Hunter's Warning

HUNTER (*offstage*)

Cookies! Chocolate-chip-monster-gingersnap-cookies!

HUNTER enters with a tray of cookies. Other UPPERCLASSMEN and FRESHMEN follow her on stage. Ad libs: "Aw, yes!", "Mmmmm! Were these from scratch?", "These taste vegan. I think they're vegan. Whatever...", "I'm feeling a little jittery." As she hands out cookies, HUNTER weaves her way towards TESS and BILLY.

under her breath to TESS and BILLY:

Stop crushing on each other!

to other UPPERCLASSMEN and FRESHMEN:

Hey, want some cookies?

this time, bluntly to TESS and BILLY:

But seriously, cut that shit out and have some cookies!

TESS

Hunter, we're just building the --

HUNTER

Listen.

(putting down the tray of cookies)

You're totally crushing on each other and I'm not going to pretend that I don't see it.

(grabbing some cookies and handing them to TESS and BILLY)

Seriously, stop while you're ahead. Don't even think about breaking the November Rule.

Upon hearing the words, "November Rule," everyone except BILLY and TESS gasps and ad libs in frantic whispers: "The November Rule??", "Are they mad!?", "Insanity!", "They won't possibly survive!", "Cthulhu have mercy!"

BILLY

The "November Rule?"

Again, upon hearing the words, "November Rule," everyone except BILLY and TESS ad libs in frantic whispers: "No... No!!!", "It can't be so!", "Not the November Rule!", "It hurts to hear the words!!"

What's the -

(pause)

What is... you know...

HUNTER

You mean... the “November Rule”!?

More frightened ad libs ensue. Someone screams. Someone faints.

Well, let me tell you...

The Novembat

MENS ET MANUS MAY BE OUR DECREE
 WHEN HEARD OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL
 BUT HERE IT'S PARETE LEGI NOVEMBRI
 OBEY THE NOVEMBER RULE
 BEFORE NOVEMBER, KEEP OFF THE FROSH
 ALL SKETCHY FEELINGS MUST BE SQUASHED
 THE FOOL THAT BREAKS THIS SACRED LAW
 SOON FEELS CRUEL TOOTH AND NAIL AND CLAW

BILLY

Oh come on, It's not like a nightmare-horror-maw creature will come and devour your body and feast on your entrails if you...

Everyone stares at BILLY.

.. is it?

ENSEMBLE

PARETE LEGI NOVEMBRI! PARETE LEGI NOVEMBRI! PARETE LEGI NOVEMBRI!
 PARETE LEGI NOVEMBRI!
 PARETE LEGI NOVEMBRI! PARETE LEGI NOVEMBRI! PARETE LEGI NOVEMBRI!
 PARETE LEGI NOVEMBRI!
 PA-RE-TE LE-GI NO-VEM-BRI! PA-RE-TE LE-GI NO-VEM-BRI!
 PA-RE-TE LE-GI NO-VEM-BRI! PA-RE-TE LE-GI NO-VEM-BRI!

HUNTER

THE CURSE THAT HAND-HOLDING BRINGS
 THE NOVEMBAT

ENSEMBLE

THE NOVEMBAT!

HUNTER

WITH GIANT LEATHERY WINGS,
 COMES TO INCREASE YOUR P-SET BLUES BY FILLING UP THE PRINTER
 QUEUES,
 THAT'S SURE TO END
 MOST AUTUMN FLINGS!

ENSEMBLE

PA-RE-TE LE-GI NO-VEM-BRI! PA-RE-TE LE-GI NO-VEM-BRI!

BILLY AND TESS

OH NO, WE'RE NOT, WE'RE JUST GOOD FRIENDS,
 THAT'S NOT AT ALL WHAT WE INTEND.

ENSEMBLE

PARETE LEGI NOVEMBRI! PARETE LEGI NOVEMBRI!
 PA-RE-TE LE-GI NO-VEM-BRI! PA-RE-TE LE-GI NO-VEM-BRI!

HUNTER

IF YOU HUG AND LINGER TOO LONG
 THE NOVEMBAT

ENSEMBLE

THE NOVEMBAT!

HUNTER

WITH PUTRID STINKING MAW,
 EXHALES TO CAUSE COMPLETE SEDATION AND LOSS OF THE SKILL OF
 INTEGRATION.
 THAT COULD BE THE FINAL STRAW!

ENSEMBLE

PA-RE-TE LE-GI NO-VEM-BRI! PA-RE-TE LE-GI NO-VEM-BRI!

BILLY and TESS

OH NO, WE'RE NOT, WE'RE JUST GOOD FRIENDS,
 THAT'S NOT AT ALL WHAT WE INTEND.

ENSEMBLE

PARETE LEGI NOVEMBRI! PARETE LEGI NOVEMBRI!
 PARETE LEGI NOVEMBRI! PARETE LEGI NOVEMBRI!

HUNTER

IF YOU KISS YOU SHOULD KNOW IT'S UNWISE.
THE NOVEMBAT

ENSEMBLE

THE NOVEMBAT!

HUNTER

WITH GLOWING DEMONIC EYES,
ERASES THE ANSWERS ON YOUR TEST THEN CAUSES GPA DISTRESS -
THAT SHOULD MAKE YOU BREAK YOUR TIES!

ENSEMBLE

PA-RE-TE LE-GI NO-VEM-BRI! PA-RE-TE LE-GI NO-VEM-BRI!

BILLY and TESS

OH NO, WE'RE NOT, WE'RE JUST GOOD FRIENDS
THAT'S NOT AT ALL WHAT WE INTEND

ENSEMBLE

PA-RE-TE LE-GI NO-VEM-BRI! PA-RE-TE LE-GI NO-VEM-BRI!

HUNTER

IF YOU FUCK 'CUZ YOU COULDN'T RESIST
THE NOVEMBAT

ENSEMBLE

THE NOVEMBAT

HUNTER

WITH KNIFE-LIKE MURDEROUS GRIP
WILL WHISK YOU TO THE GREEN BUILDING ROOF
AND DROP YOU WITH ONE KICK OF HIS HOOF
YOU'LL BE DESTROYED BY THIS LUSTFUL SLIP

ENSEMBLE

PA-RE-TE LE-GI NO-VEM-BRI! PA-RE-TE LE-GI NO-VEM-BRI!

HUNTER

YOU'VE GOTTEN TOO CLOSE, YOU CAN'T DENY
HEED MY WARNING AND DON'T DARE DEFY

HUNTER

So don't even fucking think about it!

HUNTER grabs some cookies, shoves them into TESS's and BILLY's respective mouths, picks up the tray and runs offstage with the crowd.

BILLY

(taking a bite of the cookie)

That was a lot to digest...

COROT enters

COROT

Hey Tess, how's the progress? Sorry for leaving you guys, I had to help Ryan before he killed Faraday.

TESS

(relieved that COROT didn't hear HUNTER's warning)

Don't worry, you didn't miss anything.

BILLY

We're nearly done with the Dragon Wing, but the roof attachments...

COROT

Oh right! Where's that page, let's take a look at it again.

COROT and BILLY grab the design diagrams and lay it out on a table and begin scrutinizing the page. TESS watches them from the other side of the room.

Planning Meeting, reprise

TESS

ASK ME ANY QUESTION, I'LL HELP YOU FIND THE ANSWER

BILLY

Then how does the Science Box talk to the Dragon Wing?

TESS

I'LL TEACH YOU ANYTHING YOU WANT TO LEARN

COROT

If you position it 42 inches away from this lever, the Squid Net can power everything!

TESS

YOU JUST HAVE TO YEARN

BILLY

How do you know all this stuff?

TESS

FOR UNDERSTANDING

COROT

Just wait til you see the skyline from the dome!

TESS

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS PUT IN THE TIME
EVEN IF YOU MAKE MISTAKES, I DON'T MIND

KEPLER enters carrying his laptop. He sits down in the shadows and opens up his laptop, which illuminates his face from below.

COROT

We should measure tonight if we want this up by Halloween. I'll grab Abri and Chrome to scout, and Conner and Ryan should see the roof before deploy.

(while exiting)

I'll try to find everyone. I'll be back in a few.

TESS

I'm gonna grab my jacket.

(pausing to think)

Do you need a headlamp or anything? Billy?

BILLY

Oh. Sure! Thanks, Tess!

TESS exits. BILLY turns to look at the design plans again.

KEPLER

What kind of hacker doesn't even have his own headlamp?

BILLY

Excuse me?

KEPLER

(not looking up from his laptop)

Rushing up to the roof with frosh who have no idea what they're doing - what is Corot thinking?

BILLY

At least Corot's trying to teach us!

KEPLER

How cute. You really think he's worth something, don't you? Stupid freshman.

BILLY

I guess everyone's right, I should stay away from you.

TESS

Hey Billy!

(entering wearing a sweater and carrying a headlamp)

Good thing I had an extra. Here.

TESS hands BILLY the headlamp and their hands touch and they make eye contact. Before the moment can become romantic, the sound of a demonic bat is heard overhead and the lights dim into "Novembat" setting. BILLY and TESS pause, look up in fear, and then immediately recoil and the presence of the NOVEMBAT dissipates. BILLY and TESS take a moment to look around and make sure that their lives are no longer in danger. The moment is broken by the entrance of TALI, ABRI, CHROME, FARADAY, PISTON, RYAN, CONNER, and COROT.

ABRI

Hey Tali, are you on IHTFP?

RYAN

I can't believe we're going to the dome!

FARADAY

(yawning)

Best view on campus, right at the center.

CONNER

I hope this won't take too long, I still have 3 problems left!

COROT

Don't worry, it's just a quick trip to take some measurements.

TESS

to COROT, under her breath:

Pretty big party for a few measurements.

COROT

to TESS:
Naw, it'll be a good learning experience.

TALI

into his IHTFP:
Muse to Flux. Check?

ABRI

Gotchya. I just need to adjust the volume. Check?

COROT

Abri, Chrome, head out. Tali, keep an eye on our tail. Everyone, remember to stay together and act casually. Don't forget, exercise common sense.

KEPLER

(not looking up from his laptop)
That's right kids, just do what you're told and don't ask any questions.

The others turn to look at KEPLER. Most look confused; COROT raises an eyebrow but looks unsurprised.

COROT

Tess, can you take the lead? I'll catch up.

All but COROT and KEPLER exit.

The Call In

COROT

THIS WHOLE PAST YEAR, I'VE PUT UP WITH YOUR SNEERING,
YOUR LURKING, YOUR SMIRKING - EVERY SINGLE DAY!
YOU YELL AT THE FROSH, AND INSULT OUR ENGINEERING
MY PATIENCE IS GONE, THIS BEHAVIOR'S NOT OKAY.

KEPLER

AW, WHAT'S NOT OKAY? TELLING YOU THE FACTS?
YOU KNOW YOUR HACKS A PIECE OF SHIT AND

COROT

KEPLER!
STOP RIGHT NOW!

KEPLER

NOTHING GOOD WILL COME OF IT!

#Another Kepler verse**COROT and KEPLER**

IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT YOU.

COROT

I WON'T BELIEVE THE THINGS YOU
SAY
AT ALL

I'M SURE YOU BELIEVE THAT YOU'RE
SO DAMN COOL

KEPLER

WHAT A PANSY, WHAT A WIMP, YOU'RE
NOTHING!

YOU WANT THEM TO THINK THAT
YOU'RE SO HARDKORE

COROT and KEPLER

YOU WANT THEM ALL TO LOOK YOUR WAY!
BUT IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT YOU.

COROT

KEPLER! YOU'RE WRONG!

KEPLER

YEAH RIGHT! YOU'RE DRAGGING FROSH ALONG

COROT

I'M GIVING FROSH A CHANCE
TO LEARN!

KEPLER

BECAUSE YOU WANT AN ARMY, ALL MARCHING
TO YOUR SONG!

KEPLER

THAT'S WHY YOU LEAD THIS HORDE, BECAUSE YOU WANT TO BE ADORED.
MASTER OVER ALL, YOU'RE THE "MIGHTY OVERLORD."

COROT

NO KEPLER, THAT'S WHY YOU WOULD LEAD,
YOU WANT THE PRAISE, ONLY YOU HAVE THAT NEED
THIS HACK IS NOT FOR ME! IT'S FOR THE FROSH TO SEE
THAT HACKING'S A TRADITION UNIQUE TO MIT.

COROT and KEPLER

IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT YOU.

KEPLER

No one cares about your stupid hack!

COROT and KEPLER

A REALITY CHECK IS

COROT	KEPLER
OVERDUE!	WAY OVERDUE!
I'M NOT GONNA SACRIFICE THIS HACK!	Ha! THEN YOU'LL SEE!

COROT and KEPLER

IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT YOU.

KEPLER

I'm telling you! No one cares!

COROT

(coming right off the end of the singing, to make it seem like Corot is continuing the argument)

Kepler, please. I just want everyone to have a good time and --

KEPLER

Gimme a break, your brainwashing propaganda won't work on me.

COROT

If all you want to do is hate on us, you need to leave!

I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOUR FACE AT ANY MEETINGS,
YOU'RE SCARING THE FROSH, AND PUSHING US OFF TRACK.

(pause)

PLEASE GO AWAY.

STOP TRYING TO BRING DOWN THE HACK.

KEPLER

Bring down the hack? Bring down the hack! Oh, I'll bring down the hack!

THAT'S ALL YOU CARE ABOUT THESE DAYS. HOW HUMBLE!
THIS GODDAMNED HACK AND ALL THE GLORY IN STORE
BUT IF YOU GOT CAUGHT YOUR PLANS WOULD START TO CRUMBLE.
AND NO ONE WOULD FOLLOW YOU ANYMORE.

ENSEMBLE

(repeated, crescendo, accelerando)

BRING DOWN THE HACK

KEPLER

(into phone, feigning a frightened voice)

Hello, officer? ... I was working in lab and I was looking out my window. I saw some dark figures walking on the roof of... building 10 I think... I'm scared someone is trying to do something bad to the school. You'll be there soon? Thank you officer!

(hanging up and dropping his act)

Your services are greatly appreciated.

Blackout.

1.6 -- Distraction Tango

Lights come up on STORY JACK.

STORY JACK

Since none of you have ever been hacking before or ever dealt with a hack, you've probably never heard of an IHTFP. Intercom Hacker Transmission Frequency Photonulators, or IHTFP's for short, are the standard hacker communication devices. IHTFP's were invented by the ancients to allow hackers to send messages at great distances, in a similar fashion to a layman's walkie-talkie, but unlike a child's toy, IHTFPs are powerful, indestructible, and uniquely crafted by each scout. Wannabe scouts must go through months of training, honing their skills in far off mountain temples. Constructing their IHTFPs after months of meditation signifies their ascension to the final level of scouthood.

Lights fade up on Killian Court.

At this moment, two such scouts waited below to provide surveillance to their friends on the roof.

Lights fade down on STORY JACK. STORY JACK runs up to the roof to join the others. BILLY, TESS, COROT, PISTON, FARADAY, TALI, RYAN and CONNER are stationed on the roof. They are obscured by shadows but may be seen as choreography requires: optional stage directions have been included, indicated with a (). ABRI and CHROME are on the ground level. The sound of a police radio is heard from offstage. Distraction Tango underscore starts. ABRI gives CHROME a knowing look.*

Distraction Tango

ABRI

Definitely.

CHROME flashes 7 fingers at ABRI. ABRI nods and they both snap into "distraction mode." They make exaggerated gestures and speak loudly enough that people an unreasonable distance away can still hear them.

PACHINO (Offstage)

You of all people to pick up the phone! You can't even remember what building number? Is this even close?

CLAW (Offstage)

I think so -

OFFICERS CLAW and PACHINO enter, each carrying a radio in one hand and a doughnut in the other. ABRI and CHROME keep their eyes focused on each other as ABRI pulls out her IHTFP.

- though Boston gets pretty cold in October. I don't think anyone would be doing anything tonight.

ABRI

FLUX TO MUSE, ALERT, WE HAVE SEEN SOME CP'S
OUTSIDE OF BUILDING THREE.
THEY'RE HEADING YOUR WAY, BUT THERE'S NO NEED TO RUSH.
WE WILL HOLD UP THE LAW.

(TALI motions to COROT, who waves the others along to begin measurements. Hackers on the roof start to take measurements.*

PACHINO

KEEP A LOOK OUT CLAW. I THOUGHT I HEARD A NOISE.
IT MUST BE SOME OF THOSE HACKERS!

CLAW

YEAH! LIKE ONE OF THOSE "DEPLOYS."

PACHINO

AS THEY SNEAK THROUGH THE NIGHT,
THEY SHOULD KNOW WE DELIGHT,

PACHINO and CLAW

IN UPHOLDING THE LAW

(CONNER asks TALI if she can try being on IHTFP. TALI gives CONNER his IHTFP. FARADAY pulls TALI aside to scorn his decision, but TALI brushes FARADAY off.*

CHROME

(into distraction mode)
MY DARLING, MY ANGEL!
YOUR EYES HOW THEY SHINE!
YOU MUST PRESS YOUR BODY TO MINE

ABRI

(into distraction mode)

SUCH AN INTIMATE FEELING
TONIGHT I KNOW WE -

ABRI and CHROME

(surreptitiously to the audience)
WILL HOLD UP THE LAW.

PACHINO

OH WHAT HAVE WE HERE?
THEY'RE ACTING ODD, NO DOUBT
WHY ARE THEY IN KILLIAN?

CLAW

...THEY'RE MAKING OUT

PACHINO

THOUGH THEY'RE CLEVER, WE'RE KEEN,
TO SEE THROUGH THEIR SCENE,

BOTH

WE'RE UPHOLDING THE LAW

CLAW

Um... Excuse me?

ABRI

(opening eyes sensually)
What? Officers, I'm sorry, did you want something?

CLAW

Well, I didn't mean to intrude, but...

CHROME

(still on top of ABRI)
You're not intruding, we were just sharing an intimate moment.

CLAW

Whispered to PACHINO:
I don't know, they just seem to be sharing an intimate -

PACHINO

Whispered to CLAW:
Don't be so dense! It's a trick! I'm telling you, something's going on... something very strange

CHROME

To ABRI:
Your breasts are amazing!

ABRI continues to make out with CHROME.

() BILLY is playing with a tape measure in close proximity to TESS. BILLY drops the tape measure:*

A loud noise comes from the roof.

PACHINO

You hear that?

ABRI reacts immediately and smacks her hand against the wall in an attempt to repeat the sound.

() Piston approaches BILLY and begins to chastise him.*

CLAW

Are you sure it's not the intimate moment that -

PACHINO

Don't be ridiculous! I'm calling for back-up! ... And stop saying "intimate!"

(speaking into her radio)

Officer Frey Pachino to Sergeant Bruce Sprinkles. Officer Frey Pachino to Sergeant Sprinkles. Sprinkles, are you there?

ABRI and CHROME instantly stop making out, and make eye contact. CHROME holds up three fingers. ABRI nods.

ABRI

FLUX TO MUSE, THERE'S A PROBLEM,
THEY'RE ONTO US NOW.
WE'LL KEEP THEM BUSY SOMEHOW.
YOU SHOULD PROBABLY HEAD DOWN NOW ,
AND TRY TO STAY LOW

() CONNER presses her ear into the IHTFP as PISTON continues to shout. She presses a button on the IHTFP and speaks into the mouthpiece, then frantically begins pressing buttons.*

ABRI AND CHROME

WE WILL HOLD UP THE LAW.

() CONNER runs over to TALI and hands him the broken IHTFP. TALI examines the IHTFP and prods at a few buttons.*

PACHINO

SPRINKLES IT'S PACHINO!
YES, IT'S URGENT I SWEAR.

CLAW

They're sure to be hackers,
they have funny hair.

PACHINO

THOUGH THEY'LL TRY TO SUCCEED,
IN THE END THEY'LL CONCEDE.

CLAW

WE'RE UPHOLDING THE -

ABRI

LONG BAND RADIO WAVES
THE WAVES ARE THE DATA
WE NEED FOR OUR CLASS
AND NOW, WE'LL NEVER PASS

() TALI puts his ear to the IHTFP and recoils as the IHTFP squeals, barely audibly, but very pitifully. TALI pulls CONNER aside and begins questioning her.*

CHROME

PLEASE STOP YOUR TRANSMISSIONS
STAY FIFTY SMOOTS AWAY

ABRI and CHROME

GO UPHOLD THE LAW
SOMEWHERE ELSE

CLAW

HOLD ON, PACHINO,
THEY'RE DOING SCIENCE HERE.
WE SHOULD BE RESPECTFUL -

PACHINO

AND LET THEM DISAPPEAR?

NO, THOSE HACKERS ARE SLICK
IT MUST BE A TRICK,
SO I'M TELLING YOU --

CLAW

YES YOU'RE RIGHT,

CLAW AND PACHINO

WE'LL KEEP UPHOLDING THE LAW!

SPRINKLES enters with a radio in one hand, and a doughnut in the other. KALF follows him on, more casually, with a cigarette in one hand, and a coffee cup in the other.

SPRINKLES

You're sure the phone call wasn't a prank?... Goddammit you'd better be right, I was in the middle drafting the plans for the blimp!

PACHINO

They are exactly where the phone call said, They're on the dome! We know it!

KALF

Who?

SPRINKLES

(crushing his doughnut in his fist on flourish in the music)

I know exactly who's up there... it's that no-good --

ABRI

(cutting off PACHINO with inarticulate screaming that eventually forms coherent words)

Whaaaaaaaaaaaat an exciting night! There sure are a lot of you! This is perfect, I was looking for a ride home..

CLAW

Oh, you should have said so earlier.

() TALI waves COROT over and holds out the IHTFP, puts it away and then gestures to him.*

PACHINO

All right, fine, Claw, take her home.

ABRI

And I need four people to drive me.
(pause, flourish in music)

I have a phobia.

(flourish in music)

() COROT motions for everyone to get down. TESS and BILLY happen to duck down close to each other and -*

The noise of the Novembat is heard and then loud banging and fumbling is heard from the roof and all the CP's look up. The hackers are out of sight.

SPRINKLES

That's it! I'm going up there!

CHROME flashes a five at ABRI and runs over to SPRINKLES and KALF. ABRI rushes over to CLAW and PACHINO.

ABRI

FLUX TO MUSE. PUUUNT!
MUSE, ARE YOU THERE? CAN YOU HEAR ME?
YOU'VE GOT TO GET DOWN
SHIT! WHY AREN'T YOU ANSWERING?
GET OFF THE ROOF!

ABRI and CHROME

WE'LL TRY AND HOLD UP THE LAW...

() PISTON, TESS, and BILLY emerge, PISTON gesticulating angrily at them. TAL emerges, nursing the IHTFP. FARADAY runs over to TAL.*

ABRI and CHROME try to distract all four CPs from heading to the roof. However, SPRINKLES and PACHINO break through. The rest of the stage goes dark. SPRINKLES spotlights the hackers on the roof, who are now completely visible. The hackers look fucked. STORY JACK runs frantically down from the roof.

STORY JACK

Hey everyone! Just a moment, we're experiencing some minor difficulties, not to worry

--

(stripping sketchy clothes and putting on a polo shirt)

OFFSTAGE CP VOICE

Hey! Who's that over there?

STORY JACK

I have to go - wait right here! Oh, and if anyone happens to find you, remember you are...

STORY JACK and OFFSTAGE VOICES

-- on your way to Baker house!

STORY JACK runs offstage. Blackout.