

The Light Catcher

By Don DeMarco

Scene 1: *(A classroom. 6th grade kids are seated in a classroom watching their teacher as she writes a math problem on the board.)*

Teacher: All right, class, who can tell me what negative six times negative four is?
(A boy, Brian raises his hand.) Brian?

Brian: Um...negative 24?

Teacher: Close, but no. Remember, a negative times a negative makes a positive.
(A girl, Jamie, raises her hand.) Yes Jamie?

Jamie: Does every question have a right and a wrong answer?

Teacher: Good question. It's a little hard to explain. I know we learn here that things are either right or they're wrong, but that's not always true. There are some questions nobody knows the answer to, things even great scientists can't explain. Let me tell you the story of a situation where there is no answer.

Scene 2: *(Three kids, Anthony Atom, Atomic Timmy, and Annie Heartbeat, all around 12-years-old, are skateboarding in the streets of their neighborhood on a Saturday morning. They're laughing, racing, and daring each other to do tricks on their skateboards. The two boys get caught up in a race and end up leaving the neighborhood. They come to a gated, private area where they see a sign that reads, "Atomic Energy Plant, KEEP OUT! Giant Atom Smasher in Use." Annie follows behind them.)*

Annie: Who won?

Anthony: What do you mean, "Who won?" The race is only getting started!

Annie: What are you talking about? Can't you see the sign?

Anthony: Sure I see it. I've seen plenty of "KEEP OUT" signs before.

Tommy: Yeah, come on Annie. Didn't you know that to us "KEEP OUT" means "COME IN"?

Annie: You guys are SO bump! What makes you think that just because--- *(before she can finish, the two boys find a corner of the gate where the chain link is loose. They life it up, sneak inside, and continue racing. Annie follows, reluctantly, trying to catch up with them. Not long after they make it in the private area, they discover the path ends, so they can't go any further. Anthony sees a laboratory building with an open door and quickly sneaks inside. Tommy follows excitedly and Annie follows him looking worried. They are looking at all the machinery when they hear footsteps and chatter coming towards the room they are in. Tommy sees a big metal grate on the wall that's covering an air duct. He opens it to hide himself. The others follow and they shut the grate just as the scientists are entering the room.)*

First Scientist: If we can solve the answer to uncertainty then we can take over ANY country! *(They're looking at each other, scared and confused by what the scientists are talking about.)*

Annie: *(whispering)* Do they mean America?

Tom: I think they mean any country in the world.

Second Scientist: Today we will find out in an atom smasher by crashing all these atoms together.

Anthony: What are atoms?

Annie: Don't you ever pay attention in science class? They're the thinnest little

round balls that make up the world.

Anthony: What's inside these little balls that make the world work? *(The three look at each other, puzzled.)*

Third Scientist: When we smash these atoms into each other and see what's inside, we then can control every living person because we will know what nobody knows: where they are hiding and where they are going. Every teacher has wanted to tell their students what's right and what's wrong and no one knows what's inside this atom ball. *(We see the giant atom smasher. It's big and complicated looking with lots of parts and wires. The scientists exit. The kids climb out of the air duct.)*

Tommy: What do we do now?!

Annie: We have to tell our parents! We have to tell the cops! We have to tell SOMEONE!

Anthony: But first we just have to GET OUT OF HERE! *(They race out of the way they came in, but they get lost and soon end up on the atom smasher track. They run down one way and they see a giant boulder-like ball coming towards them. They rush the other way to see another big ball coming at them from the opposite direction. They panic. Anthony runs this way and that with Tommy following him. Annie stands frozen in the middle with her eyes firmly closed. The balls finally collide with the kids between them with a BIG explosion. Dust settles and we see the kids lying confused inside a ball, inside an atom structure. The scientists are looking through a microscope, dismayed to find three strange kids in the atom.)*

Second Scientist: How in the world?!

First Scientist: We have to get them out of there!

Third Scientist: We can't get them out because we don't know whether they're on the electron track or the proton track. The only person who can catch them is the

Light Catcher, and he hasn't been seen for centuries! *(The kids are floating back and forth from proton track to electron track with dozens of other little colored balls. They emit a tiny light every time they switch tracks and go into a new orbit. The evil scientists use a loud speaker to yell at the kids.)*

First Scientist: *(through Loudspeaker)* You kids better find your way out of there or we're going to send in the Light Catcher to take you away! *(The children continue to float from orbit to orbit. We see that they are now having a bit of fun with it, like they are on a carnival ride. Through the scientist's microscope we see that the kids seem to disappear and reappear in different spots. Each time this happens the scientists ask "Where did they go?" Finally, Annie disappears for real.)*

Second Scientist: The girl is gone!

Third scientist: The girl is gone!

Third Scientist: The Light Catcher must have gotten her! But the other two kids are still in there. We have to get the Light Catcher to take them away too. But where is he?

Tommy: What is the Light Catcher?

Anthony: I'm no scientist, but I'm guessing it's someone special who can catch light.

Tommy: How can someone catch light? *(He brings out a tiny flashlight from his pocket. He turns it on and literally tries to "catch" the light.)*

Anthony: I think I know what happened to Annie. The Light Catcher must have taken her because every time we move, we give ourselves away by setting off a signal of light.

Tommy: Then we have to find the Light Catcher. *(We see Larry the Light Catcher looking at his world of atoms. He looks like a biblical character.)*