

KAYLEY is extraordinarily, painfully average. Her moral code and the Clearing Middle School Film Club are her only possessions. After a lot of deliberation, she decides to sacrifice the latter to save the former.

She addresses a room full of eccentric, curious, and awkward-to-an-archetype middle school students. They listen intently. The club is their galaxy and she is Supreme Leader. They are all stars, but she is the sun.

KAYLEY:

... Well... we can get started, I guess – hey, you guys. - ! Ah – welcome back. I hope you all had a really great weekend.

Maybe they did. KAYLEY has no idea, and they'll never let her in on the answer.

... Right. Uh, well, anyway, before we start, I want to take care of – address – a few... housekeeping items.

She malfunctions momentarily. She reboots and continues.

Right. Um. Well, first of all, we actually got t-shirts this year! So that's... great! Um, if you could get your money in to our treasurer, Stacy –

She gives Stacy a wave of acknowledgment.

- by Friday, I would really appreciate it. I think you'll really like them.

They're lavender, so – and we worked really hard on the design, and all.

Oh, and they're \$15. Thanks, you guys. Stacy.

She thinks extremely hard. What can serve as a barrier to what she has to say now?

Anyway, I guess that's actually the only, um –

Right. So, looking at Friday's minutes –

She shuffles through the minutes nervously and noisily.

- I ... I would like to continue our discussion of Christopher Nolan's Inception-

This news is not received well AT ALL.

Guys, come on, just briefly. I would QUICKLY like to recap our debate – discussion – of Inception. And I'm the President, so... we're going to do it. For a minute, I guess.

But, um.

But before we do that, I need to bring up –

Well –

She treads so, so lightly. She loves her little galaxy, and she is opening a black hole right in the middle of it. And she has to.

Actually, I'm just going to say it. I have to make an announcement.

I – you know I respect each of you. And I love this club. And... I made it because... I wanted a place to go. Not to exist, but – somewhere to GO, and somewhere to want to go and plan to go and look forward to going. And not like as escapism – or at least not totally - but as... you know, like when you go somewhere on vacation and you learn all about that culture and the art and the food and just... the perspectives of other people and you get home but all that stuff is still in your mind and it changes you a little bit? And you keep doing that every time you go somewhere new? And you end up at the very end of your life as, like, an old guy but you have this big humongous mind and a good, unique perspective and encouragement and– and just – information, I guess? Information you didn't have before.

Experiences you didn't have before.

Well, I wanted this club to be like a vacation you can take. But three times a week. And we can watch all kinds of movies – films, I guess, sorry – and learn from them, and hear each other's opinions and have theories and stuff, but mostly, just get information. I thought it would be – just - cool.

And it was cool – IS cool! But...

Well, let's just get into it. We left off last week with a pretty heated argument about the ending. There was sort of a group who argues that he was still in one of the tiers of the dream and that the top was still spinning – and the whole thing was like – an exercise in catharsis, or healing or something, and now he will want to wake up and come back to his kids. And the other group was like no way, you can see it start to wobble at the end, which means it's going to fall and it's NOT a dream, and he is with his kids already, happily ever after bye-bye.

Well – it's okay and everything to have different opinions, but you can't just act like your opinion is the answer given by God and/or Christopher Nolan himself all the time. The thing is –

I mean honestly, even just in terms of the structural world of the movie – film – you guys have it all wrong either way, because the fact is, even if we DID see the top fall, he could still be in a dream, because you're not supposed to let other people touch your totem and he DID, and no one's supposed to know how it works, but EVERYONE knows how a top works and on top of that, both the dreambuilder AND his dead wife both know how his SPECIFIC totem works. I guess the point I'm trying to make is, the totem is unreliable, just like Cobb is unreliable, and you're not really supposed to trust anything he says or anything really the movie says, I guess – just how it makes you feel. It's the same as any movie – film – you... need to –

But actually, you know what, it's not, and that's what's so cool about it. Yeah the movie is about the act of inception, but all inception really is on a technical level is planting an idea, and then hoping that person's personal experiences, expectations, and perspectives lead them to the conclusion that you want them to conclude. And what's cool is - that's what Christopher Nolan did to us. He's not going to tell us his opinion on the ending – because – it doesn't even matter at all! It's like with Cobb – he built the world, but now it's out of his control. It's up to the audience. We decide if it's a failed mission or not.

But – I guess that's sort of a tangent, because all I really wanted to say –

Or, I guess, felt like I needed to, as the President, is –

Instead of taking the time to focus on the actual hints and the clues in the cut scenes from the screenplay or actually, even just from the movie as a whole –

I guess I'm a little disappointed because you guys just – picked which answer you wanted and then went with it, without looking at the information to back it up.

You guys yelled at each other. YELLED. For hours.

While I sat in the back of the room taking minutes.

And none of you could stop yelling long enough to notice that every single one of you were missing the whole entire point – the point of why we made a club, the point of why we do all this research – the reason we're paying 15 whole dollars for a purple t-shirt with a picture of a tv with googly eyes on it -

I'm not trying to be - it's just - we used to be here - to - listen to other people and have a productive conversation and maybe - learn something. And it's just - that's not what we're doing here anymore. All we know how to do to each other is - is scratch and tear relentlessly at the foundations of people's earnest and honest opinions and erode it until it just - collapses on top of you. And then, after all that digging... we have the audacity to be... surprised when it falls.

Um. So I guess I wasn't clear, exactly, but yeah, I am officially stepping down as the Clearing Middle School Film Club President. I really don't want to, and if this means I'm out of the club, I get it, I guess, but...

I don't know. I just... Like I said, this started out as a bunch of vacations, but it's turning into... a bunch of battles. A war. I don't know, that's extremely dramatic; maybe it's not a war. Maybe this is just... reality. And I wanted the dream.