SCENE 3.

(An outdoor part of the colony set up to look like a makeshift classroom. RILEY enters. ML—ambushes RILEY and puts her in a choke hold.)

RILEY

AH!

(Seeing ML—:)

ML—!

Hi, Riley! Remember when you taught me how to do a sleeper hold last week?

RILEY

Yeah. You killed it, champ. I’m just a little on edge right now.

ML—

Why?

(RILEY looks at JASON’s phone. LUSTMAN-FINDLING enters.)

LUSTMAN-FINDLING

Sorry I’m late. I thought I saw a surveillance drone so I had to shoot it down. Turns out it was just a weather balloon. ...We have a lot of weather balloons.

ML—

Typical bureaucratic bullshit, right Ms. Lustman-Findling?

LUSTMAN-FINDLING

(Re: ML—’s response:)
These are the moments that make teaching worthwhile.

RILEY

(To herself:)
Ben, where are you...

LUSTMAN-FINDLING

Okay, you two. Turn to page 86 of Math Adventure.

(They turn to the page.)
The first thing you’ll notice is that the perforated edges make a great instrument of blunt force trauma in the event of an invasion. Write that down.

ML—

(Taking notes:)
Perforated edges...

RILEY

Hey, Kitty? If, hypothetically, there was an invasion, like a really bad one and we had to evacuate...where would we do that? I mean we can’t just go through the gate, we’d be seen, right? So there’s gotta be somewhere else.
LUSTMAN-FINDLING
Sharp thinking. The underground tunnel. Now, kids, when the terrorists come, and they will—

RILEY
We...have an underground tunnel?

ML—
Ms. Lustman-Findling? I have a question too. Why is your name so long but mine is so short?

LUSTMAN-FINDLING
...What?

ML—
Your name has a lot of letters in it. But my name is spelled...
(Drawing it in the dirt with a stick:)
...M...L...line. ML—.

LUSTMAN-FINDLING
Oh, that. It’s to keep you from being catalogued in the system.

4. WHAT THEY TELL YOU

ML—
The system?

LUSTMAN-FINDLING
Government records. Lord knows the liberal media could be gathering data about us right now. So when you were born, we coded your name a bit. Make things a little trickier for them.
(Waxing philosophic:)
Yes, we have faced complacency and triumphed. To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else...now that’s an accomplishment. “Self-Reliance,” page 21. Our copies are screw bound. You could take out an eye.