

HERCULES AND ME

Coming-of-Age Feature Screenplay

Inspired by True Events

Logline:

Growing up dyslexic in the rural tea gardens of India—without knowing why he struggles—a quiet, highly observant boy survives childhood through endurance, self-teaching, and imagination, gradually transforming borrowed symbols of strength into an internal moral and cognitive compass.

Overview:

HERCULES AND ME is a memory-driven coming-of-age drama that unfolds in four movements, reflecting how learning, resilience, and identity develop in a neurodivergent child. While formally written in acts, the film is shaped by cognitive and emotional phases rather than conventional plot escalation. The story mirrors survival through repetition, observation, endurance, and quiet integration—moving from inner awakening to embodied strength, without diagnosis, rescue, or simplification.

MOVEMENT I – The Boy Who Asked the Sky

Neil grows up in the misty tea gardens of rural India, surrounded by physical labor and silence. From an early age, his mind is unusually awake—filled with questions about death, the sky, and existence. At school, letters distort, instructions slip away, and shame arrives before explanation. Teachers are stern but not cruel; they expect discipline, not understanding. Neil survives by watching—how others walk, march, speak, and behave. Acts of quiet morality emerge early: defending classmates, choosing honesty when cheating would be easier. When Neil is sent away to a hostel, the first rupture occurs. Childhood safety dissolves.

Cognitive focus: awareness before language

MOVEMENT II – The Silent Training

Hostel life introduces isolation. Neil waits—often forgotten—learning patience as survival. Bullying intensifies. Academic humiliation deepens. Dyslexia remains unnamed, experienced only as failure. Unable to learn through instruction, Neil teaches himself through observation: marching by watching feet, reading by copying shapes, remembering through rhythm and imagery. Creativity becomes refuge—cardboard inventions, drawings, silent games. A moral spine forms through repeated choices: defending the vulnerable, refusing stolen advantage, enduring ridicule without cruelty in return. This is the core training ground of the film.

Cognitive focus: endurance, adaptation, self-mediation

MOVEMENT III – The First Hercules

Returning home, Neil encounters the first physical embodiment of strength: a heavy Hercules Rockshock bicycle. He deliberately chooses difficult terrain—rocky roads, rivers, steep slopes—training his body as his mind has already been trained. Strength becomes embodied. Illness, recovery, and return mark a closing of childhood. Neil leaves the hills behind, carrying with him the discipline he forged alone.

Cognitive focus: embodiment and integration

MOVEMENT IV – The Second Battlefield

Urban life in Siliguri introduces a faster, harsher world. Academic violence escalates. Protective systems vanish. Neil's difference is no longer invisible—it is punished. Yet something fundamental has shifted. When Neil later discovers the television series Hercules, the hero does not teach strength—he reflects it. Hercules becomes an internal question: What is the right thing to do when no one is watching? Neil does not overcome dyslexia. He survives it with dignity.

Cognitive focus: moral clarity and identity

Ending

The symbols dissolve into identity. The sky becomes curiosity. Endurance becomes discipline. Hercules becomes conscience. Neil steps forward not cured or rescued, but structurally changed—aware that the strength he borrowed was always his own.

Core Themes

- Identity formed before language
- Neurodivergent survival without diagnosis
- Self-teaching as cognitive resistance
- Moral strength beyond physical power
- Quiet heroism and dignity