

**How to Disappear Completely**

Screenplay by  
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Based on the film *Vitus*

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OVER BLACK

*We hear intense, passionate CLASSICAL PIANO. And, in voice-over, a 13 year old boy (whose voice has only just begun to change).*

But this is not any thirteen year old boy.

There is a strange, almost syncopated rhythm to his voice - and an odd lilt. As if this boy, whoever he is, speaks - and thinks - in a way far different from other children.

ADAM (V.O.)

*Don't ask me why, but for some reason our teacher is making us all write operas. As punishment, I am going to do mine in German, which I intend to learn over summer break.*

*Music continues as THUNDER and LIGHTNING illuminate:*

ADAM

With large bamboo-and-cloth WINGS on a harness around his waist. Arms out, walking, he is precariously balancing on something.

ADAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*The assignment bears with it the cliche that we must 'write what we know.' Therefore, mine will be about a boy who has a monster growing out of his hands. The only way to kill the monster, of course, is to kill the boy.*

REVEAL that Adam is balancing on a second story balcony railing in the middle of the city.

ADAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*In the opera, the monster lives by devouring dreams. In real life.. well..*

HARD CUTS:

Wings descending.. the ground rising. And SMASH --

QUICK SHOTS: A MOTHER AND FATHER SIT UP IN BED. Race out.

AMBULANCE. LIGHTS.

DEBBIE/TOM

ADAM!? ADAM!?

PUSH IN on TOM AND DEBBIE DAVIS - closer than we think possible. So close we lose track of all shape.. and DISSOLVE THROUGH TO:

EXT. OPEN MEADOW - MASSACHUSETTS - DAY (7 YEARS AGO)

As ADAM - now 5 - wearing the same strapped-on WINGS - runs, grinning, enthralled, full of joy, as he lopez over a rise and..

..toward HIS GRANDFATHER, HOYT, who waits at the bottom.

Part of the wing slips from its anchor point.

HOYT (V.O.) (PRE-LAP)  
*Why shouldn't it lift? Even for a second?*

EXT. HOYT'S GARAGE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

We're on Hoyt's rural property on the outskirts of Boston. Hoyt and Adam work on the wings on sawhorses just outside the garage.

ADAM  
 Well..

HOYT  
 "Well" says the five year old.. Hold the spandrel. Well what?

ADAM  
 Well no mammal has ever been able to have self-powered flight, ever, except bats. People have been making the same mistake since before you were born.

HOYT  
 Hey - smart ass - I can't even remember 98 percent of what happened *after* I was born. Grab this. And we're not talking about flying. Just gliding for a bit. At least, to start..  
 (looks at watch; not the best 'actor')  
 Oh - my gosh! Will ya look at the time? I forgot I gotta run you home for a.. thing..

ADAM  
 My surprise party?

HOYT  
 (a pause; looks at Adam)  
 Okay. Listen - you gotta do me a favor -

ADAM  
 I know. Act surprised, or it'll ruin their entire day.

INT. MIDDLE CLASS APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - LATER

An apartment door opens: TOM and DEBBIE - also 'acting.'

TOM

Oh! Gosh - what are you guys doing here?!

DEBBIE

Come on in. We're just.. hangin'.

As they step aside, suddenly ADULTS AND KIDS leap up --

ADULTS AND KIDS

Surprise!

Adam beams - genuinely. Surprise or not, it's great to have a party. He shares a secret smile with Hoyt as they enter..

LATER

Kindergartners run around, oblivious to the STRING QUARTET, which plays for the adults. (The CELLIST is DEBBIE.)

Only one kid listens: Adam, who is transfixed by his mother's playing. She is engrossed, fluid; in her element. But then something in the piece pulls Adam from his trance:

Adam crinkles his face at the VIOLIST, *as if what (or how) he's playing actually smells bad*. The violist glares. Adam gives him the "thumbs down," exits. The man just gapes.

INT. DEN - A MOMENT LATER

The den is TOM'S WORKSHOP, and it's full of electronics. Adam fingers through stuff as Tom enters with a few GUESTS.

TOM

..and - if the suits who control my destiny actually put the money in, everything in here - everything on this board - can be shrunk into a tiny chip the size of a grain of rice. And *voila* --

(rubs Adam's head)

-- hey buddy --

(lifts what looks like a large  
HEADPHONE with extruding mics)

--the in-ear computer that lets you hear four times better than the average human. Like a cat.

ADAM

Bats hear ten times better.

TOM  
My son, ladies and gentlemen, who never  
resists a chance to let the world know he's  
smarter than his old man.

Tom smiles, winks at Adam, who also smiles - as do the others.

FRIEND OF TOM'S  
What's it's called?

TOM  
This tiny little computer.. is called "Adam."  
Oh! You mean this? This.. is the Cat-Ear..

ADAM  
Bat-Ear would be better.

TOM  
(as if completing his own sentence)  
..but Bat-Ear would be better, apparently.

DEBBIE  
(enters; herds Adam out)  
There you are..

TOM  
I was just showing them my Nobel Prize - I  
mean prototype.

DEBBIE  
Ah, yes.. The reason my husband believes we  
will never have to work again. But alas.. the  
*thing*.. is ready.

She indicates for Tom to get his ass out there.

A MOMENT LATER - IN THE LIVING ROOM

The "thing" is a cake with 5 candles, which comes toward a  
beaming Adam as people sing - accompanied by the quartet:

VOICES  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY DEAR ADAM..  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

A FEW MINUTES LATER

A pile of gifts (finger paints, kids' books, etc).

TOM  
And.. finally.. from Mom and me.

Adam now unwraps a tiny CASIO PLASTIC "PIANO."

DEBBIE

We know how much you like making noise. And we saw the way you were listening to the one at Dashiell's house.

TOM

You can make all different sounds with it.

Tom hits a few keys: a *choo-choo*, an *a-ooga*, a dog barking.

Adam does the same. Then adjusts it to "piano" and - slowly and deliberately - presses each note, chromatically, up the scale. Just staring at the keys - as if 'imprinting.' And then..

He plucks out the first six notes of "Happy Birthday."

DEBBIE

Did Dash teach you that?

Adam shakes his head. Then he puts both hands on the keyboard..  
and plays the song FULLY - with FULL CHORDS.

And the entire room goes silent.

Debbie looks at Tom. They are shocked.

Now we hear *Beethoven's Opus 10 #1* on a real piano and CUT TO:

INT. ROOM - SOMEWHERE - ABOUT A YEAR LATER

Adam, in a tux, plays with passion and finesse - amazing not just because he's six, but because it's actually amazing.

He finishes to THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE. And we realize we're in:

A packed AUDITORIUM. He bows, sees his PARENTS - and smiles. We PUSH IN ON THEM, so proud. Tom takes Debbie's hand as:

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Wow.. That was *six* year old Thomas Adam Davis.  
Wow. Okay. Our final entrant, eleven year old  
Jay Lee playing Chopin's *Fantasie Impromptu*..

INT. TOM AND DEBBIE'S APARTMENT - THAT NIGHT

CHAMPAGNE POPS as a few DOZEN PEOPLE fill the apartment.

A FRIEND OF TOM'S  
 To the youngest winner - ever - of the  
 Steinway Society of Massachusetts piano  
 competition!

Adam, still in his tux, beams as his father rubs his hair.

TOM  
 I know.. Here I am surrounded by musicians,  
 and yet I couldn't carry a tune if it was  
 stapled to my forehead.

Someone whispers to Debbie, who then crosses and kneels by Adam.

DEBBIE  
 Hey. Auntie Ruth wants to know if our 'little  
 genius' can do that 'thing' he does..

INT. LIVING ROOM - A MOMENT LATER

Adam now sits at the piano as Tom pulls a piece of paper from a  
 bowl and hands it to Debbie:

DEBBIE  
*The Itsy Bitsy Spider.. And..*  
 (as Tom hands another)  
*Twinkle Twinkle Little Star.*  
 (off Adam's look)  
 He's rolling his eyes, which means..

TOM  
 Whattya say, Ads? Too easy?

ANOTHER GUEST  
 How about *Beethoven's Fifth*?

BRIAN  
 And *Hey Jude*.

DEBBIE  
 You know that one, Adam?  
 (off Adam's blank look)  
*HEY JUDE.. NA NA NA NAA...*

Adam quickly nods - yeah yeah, he knows it.

TOM  
 Okay.. Drum roll..

Adam looks at the keys.. Then, with his left hand, he plays the  
 first few notes of Beethoven's Fifth: da da da dahhhh..

Then, while continuing Beethoven's Fifth with his left hand, with his right he plays "Hey Jude, don't make it bad.." etc.

And they go together perfectly. People are amazed. CUT TO:

LATER STILL

Adam hides on the stairs wearing the BAT-EARS - which exaggerate the features around his ears. He also has binoculars.

ADAM'S POV - EXTREME CLOSE UPS (WITH SOUND VERY MAGNIFIED)

As Adam swings his view from pocket to pocket of guests.

DEBBIE

*..told us his IQ's so high it's incalculable..*

SWING TO TOM, IN A GROUP:

TOM

*..years of college - and engineering school - to have a 6 year old tell me I'm a moron?!*

Tom laughs - proud - ironic - as if both cutting himself down and bragging at the same time.. SWING TO:

DEBBIE

*..asked why Van Gogh gave his ear to a woman, and I said why do you think, Adam? He said "Maybe he wanted her to hear him?" He was 3.*

SWING BACK TO:

TOM

*I'm like the vessel through which all the good genes flow.. Maybe they stop - you know, to pee, get gas.. check a map..*

*(as the "gene")*

*"Oh - here we go - we want this brain, over here - in the next generation.."*

*(mimes "speeding away")*

*Rrrch! Road sign: "Next brain: 30 years."*

People laugh - again - at Tom's good-natured self-effacing. ECU follows Tom as he joins Debbie in the other group:

ANOTHER GUEST

*..but as a mother - and a musician - you know this: it's a huge responsibility. Huge. Seriously. You don't just owe this to your son, you owe it to Music Itself.*

Debbie looks at Tom, then turns toward camera as --



Adam quickly retreats into his room, where he closes his door.

On his wall, mixed with (but in fact actually dominating) the 'typical' kid stuff, are POSTERS OF GREAT COMPOSERS: BACH, BEETHOVEN, RACHMANINOFF, MOZART, SCHUMANN, SCHUBERT. All staring, impassive, expressionless: a lot of pressure.

6 YEAR OLD ADAM (V.O.)

*In 1873 Johann Strauss wrote an operetta called "Die Fledermaus," which is the German word for bat. However, its literal translation is "The Flying Mouse."*

INT. FIRST GRADE CLASSROOM - DAY

The board says "ANIMAL REPORTS TODAY!" Adam, in front, reads:

ADAM (CONT'D)

Yet, interestingly, a bat is actually far more closely resembled to a human being than to a mouse or a rat. Just look at the bone structure and it would be obvious.

Other 6 year olds are mostly bored. Adam keeps reading.

ADAM

Another reason bats are better than humans is echolocation. By emitting a sound and hearing how it bounces back, a bat knows exactly how big everything is, where it's located, and how it's moving. Also: unlike humans, bats are capable of great acts of altruism to support their colony. For instance, when a bat is ill and cannot hunt for food, other bats from the colony will bring food back to it. There are over 1000 species of bats, which means that of all the species of mammals on the planet, one quarter are species of bats. When I grow up, I want to be the Dr. Jane Goodall of bats.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - RECESS - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Adam moves through the school playground, on the periphery.

Near him, some kids pretend to collide on little rideable 'cars.' As they play act a 'rescue'.. we find Adam, on the sidelines, looking for an opportunity to join in.

ADAM

I read a surprising statistic about vehicular deaths.

(as things sort of grind to a halt)

(MORE)

ADAM (CONT'D)

Did you know that males are twice as likely to die in motor vehicle accidents than females? Yet if you're a female you're thirty percent more likely to be injured.

Adam's losing people, but rather than back off, he moves closer.

ADAM (CONT'D)

It's okay. You're only 20% as likely to suffer a fatality here in Massachusetts as you would be in, like, Mississippi.

Someone comes up and pantses him. Kids laugh; Adam's mortified.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Debbie sits with Adam, who's got a bloody nose. The kid who pantsed him sits with his mom.

KID

Frog-o-dite.

ADAM

The word is *trog*lodyte. And if you don't know what it IS, why'd you get so upset?

KID'S MOM

(a genuine question)

Is it an insult? I don't know..

ADAM

It means a member of a primitive race or a cave-dweller. But for your son it's not an insult, it's actually a *compliment*.

INT. APARTMENT - UPSTAIRS - THAT NIGHT

Adam slams the bathroom door, really really upset.

ADAM (O.S.)

No! NO NO NO NO NO.

TOM

But you hate school. And now they're saying you don't have to go! Open the door!

ADAM (O.S.)

They said I can't go.

DEBBIE

(passing as DOORBELL RINGS)

They said you shouldn't go if you're not challenged. And you can't go if you bully the other kids. Or their parents.

TOM

Open the door now! The downstairs bathroom's clogged and we have to go and I have to pee so open the door NOW!

ADAM (O.S.)

You're not the boss of me!

TOM

I am too the boss of you!

ADAM (O.S.)

You're not even the boss of *yourself*!

Tom balls his fists to punch the door; then stops himself.

TOM

Fine. I'm gonna pee at a gas station. You happy? I'm pissing at the gas station, Adam, I hope you're happy.

ADAM (O.S.)

I'm very happy.

DOWNSTAIRS - SAME

Debbie is showing JEANNIE (14) around.

DEBBIE

He can practice as late as ten. But no later. And be firm. The number's on the fridge; we'll be at Tom's boss's.

TOM

(bounds downstairs)

Getting shit-faced and kissing ass.

(quickly; off Debbie's look)

Sorry. Hi Jeannie. If we're not back in ten years, send him to college. In Shanghai.

And Tom's grabbed his keys and has whooshed out the door.

DEBBIE

Sorry. It's been.. He can sometimes be..

(stops herself)

Good luck.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT - LATER

Jeannie watches TV. Then rises, crosses to the other room, where Adam practices piano.

ADAM  
Please stop looking at me.

JEANNIE  
My job is to watch you.

ADAM  
Watch does not equal look.

He stops, rises, goes into his room, and shuts the door.

INT. ADAM'S ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Adam lies on his bed, reading.

JEANNIE  
I'm bored.

ADAM  
I'm reading.

She walks in anyway, sits on his bed. He continues reading.

She looks around - sees the GREAT COMPOSERS, staring. Then sees two other things on his wall: Hoyt's huge bat wings, and a small, crudely-stitched stuffed BAT. She grabs the little one.

JEANNIE  
Did you know it was me who made the bat? I gave it to you for your first birthday.

Jeannie sits next to him. He takes it. Holds it to his chest.

INT. NICE HOUSE - NEWTON, MASS - SAME

Work-party vibe. Catered. Tom and Debbie with Tom's boss - GENE - and his son: a competitive guy around Tom's age (NICK).

GENE  
..go public, or not go public. Of course, if you'd've asked me *three years ago*..

Gene's voice fades as Debbie's eyes drift all the things they'll never afford: The tasteful details.. The grand piano (unused)..

GENE'S WIFE (LYNN)  
And what is it that you do, Debbie?

Debbie is brought back. She prepares for what, historically, has been a proven conversation-stopper.

DEBBIE

Oh.. I.. am a part-time office manager in an accounting firm.

TOM

And she's a cellist. In a quartet.

DEBBIE

No. *Tom*. Not professionally.

TOM

Not true. Wellesley Art and Wine Festival.. That thing at Barbara's party..

(to the others)

They met at *Julliard*. *Hello*.

DEBBIE

We're not.. It's an occasional thing.

(to clarify)

Time. We're gonna really make a run for it this year - you know, give it a..

(off Tom's look)

Yes. I am a cellist, first.

GENE

Well hopefully - knock wood - Tom's "Bat-Ear" will give you that time..

NICK

Yeah, your husband is either our savior - or our ruin.

(follows an hor d'oeuvres tray)

Excuse me a minute..

The group breaks up as Nick heads away. Tom leans to Debbie.

TOM

No pressure there. Why does he hate me?

DEBBIE

Because your wife is so astonishingly beautiful and talented?

TOM

Ah. Yes.

DEBBIE

He'll change his mind when you save his father's company.

TOM

Or it'll get worse. When I take it over.

He smiles, does a private Snidely Whiplash 'moustachio twist' - as if he has a big Machiavellian plan up his sleeve.

INT. DAVIS APARTMENT - IN ADAM'S ROOM - SAME

Jeannie and Adam on his bed, staring at the ceiling.

JEANNIE

How? And - wait - *what* are they called?

ADAM

Cilia. Do you want to know how they reproduce?

JEANNIE

No! Not from you, at least. And maybe not from anyone, ever.

ADAM

When I grow up I'm going to be a vet for bats.

JEANNIE

Well that is definitely a niche. I'm gonna be a singer.

Adam looks at her. We HEAR the "BLACK EYED PEAS" on piano..

INT. APARTMENT - LATER (8:30 PM)

Jeannie holds a broom as a "mic" while Adam plays piano.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)

Laaadies annnd gentlemennnn! Welcome to Bonnaroo! On piano, the great Adam Davis!

(as Adam nods to the "crowd")

*I GOT A FEELING, THAT TONIGHT'S GONNA BE A GOOD NIGHT.. THAT TONIGHT'S GONNA BE A GOOD GOOD NIGHT...*

INT. APARTMENT - 9:45 PM

Jeannie and Adam - dressed in Tom and Debbie's clothes, sunglasses, hats, jewelry - moving like rappers.

JEANNIE

*SOULJA BOY OFF IN THIS--*

ADAM

OH!

JEANNIE

WATCH ME CRANK IT WATCH ME--

ADAM

ROLL!

INT. APARTMENT - 10:15 PM

Now Jeannie has a shaving cream 'beard,' and Adam wears Debbie's dress and heels. Adam rides the piano bench a la Lady Gaga:

ADAM

MMM MM MM MM MM MM MM MY --

ADAM/JEANNIE

POKER FACE!

INT. APARTMENT - 11:30 PM

Both are sound asleep on the couch, like dogs who ran too much at the park. The room's a disaster zone. Tom and Debbie enter.

DEBBIE

..such a shame to have a Steinway Elora just gathering dust..

TOM

You never know. Maybe somebody uses it.

DEBBIE

Trust me - it was gathering dust. I checked.  
Hey - they left the light on.

(suddenly stops)

Oh my god..

They see an empty bottle of CHAMPAGNE - and two glasses.

INT. STUDY - A MOMENT LATER

Tom takes what looks like a digital clock from a shelf. It's actually a NANNY CAM.

A MOMENT LATER, it's hooked to the computer. *ON THE SCREEN:*  
*Jeannie and Adam rocking out, singing Lady Gaga. Adam now lying on the TOP of the piano, hammering the keys below him.*

TOM

You gotta admit, she's a good dancer.

BEHIND THEM - HIDDEN IN THE DOORWAY - SAME

Is Adam, unseen by Tom and Debbie, watching it all.

Tom skips it forward - randomly - then hits play. Now:

*ON SCREEN, Adam and Jeannie loll about on the floor, inebriated.*

JEANNIE (ON SCREEN)

*No matter what happens.. No matter who in our  
life can't possibly understand us.. lets  
promise - no swear - to always --*

Tom, sensing someone behind him, quickly stops the video, turns -  
as the door closes and Adam ducks back into hiding.

EXT. HOYT'S PROPERTY - DAY

Debbie impatiently waves out her Prius window.

DEBBIE

Sorry - thanks - gotta..

Hoyt, on his side stoop, 'salutes' as Debbie drives off in a  
rush, leaving Adam way down at the other end of the driveway.

HOYT

Welcome to what happens when everyone else has  
someplace to be.

INT. HOYT'S KITCHEN - DAY - LATER

Adam and Hoyt at the table, playing chess.

HOYT

You're kidding.

(as Adam shakes his head)

You're not kidding. Did you set a date?

ADAM

We're gonna see how our lives pan out in the  
next few years. But I'll certainly give you  
plenty of heads up.

(moves his bishop)

Check.

HOYT

Already? Damn.

(moves a rook)

You *better* give me heads up. I'm gonna need  
to get a suit.



ADAM

A tux. Cause you're gonna be the best man.

(another move)

Mate. --It's quite a responsibility. Are you prepared for the responsibility?

HOYT

Adam, I give you my word: I am up for the task.

(re chessboard)

Two out of three?

Adam nods. They turn the board, start to re-set the pieces.

HOYT (CONT'D)

Now listen.. About your bachelor party--

ADAM

Legoland.

HOYT

Legoland it is, then..

They continue setting the board as we cut to:

INT. HOUSE - ANOTHER DAY

Debbie cleans up from breakfast as Adam enters.

ADAM

When is Jeannie coming?

DEBBIE

Adam, I have a surprise for you. You have a new baby-sitter.. Me!

ADAM

But you have rehearsal - and Jeannie is my girlfriend.

TOM

(passes, grabbing keys)

Well your girlfriend is too young for certain responsibilities. And you're gonna practice piano with your mom today.

(stops at door)

Back by seven. Unless the VC guys wanna have a drink or something. I'll call.

And he's out.

ADAM

Can she still come over?

DEBBIE

Her parents aren't allowing it, Adam. And your father and I agree. No more.

(as Adam freezes)

Come on - this'll be fun.

Adam runs to the wall - starts pulling stuff off the shelves.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE THEIR APARTMENT - SAME

Tom is at the elevator as Debbie comes out.

DEBBIE

Tom --

The door slams behind her.

TOM

God-damnit.

(rushes over)

Open the door, Adam! NOW.

DEBBIE

Thomas Adam Davis you open this door this instant!

We hear PIANO start from inside. Tom BANGS.

TOM

Adam - stop that NOW. NOW.

DEBBIE

Sweetheart - will you open up please?

TOM

Damnit! I'm counting to ten, then I'm getting Mr. Langheier with his crowbar. Okay - I'm counting! 1, 2, 3..

Adam just continues to play.

We now HEAR a more complicated piece of music.. and we see it played by older hands.. and PULL BACK to reveal we are:

INT. APARTMENT - **PRESENT DAY**

And ADAM IS TWELVE NOW. But he's playing the same little upright piano. In the same little apartment.

We notice he now has a way of moving when he plays - a kind of rocking, as though he's so absorbed he has lost track of his body. And he hums - like Glenn Gould, or Sviatoslav Richter.

But we hear another sound. And Adam hears it, too. It's..

VOICES OFFSCREEN. Arguing. His playing slows as listens to:

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Tom and Debbie, fighting. Pretty intensively. And we notice:

Though it's only 7 years on, Tom's aged by twice that. He's got easily another 25 pounds - and a considerable amount of grey.

Debbie is thinner - more taut. And is dressed more formally.

TOM

No. No. Don't tell me I don't 'get' it.

DEBBIE

You don't. There are *requirements*-

TOM

Don't patronize me - I know the 'requirements' - he's my goddamn son, too. And by the way? I get enough shit from Nick and Gene during the work day - I don't need it here.

DEBBIE

"Work" day, Tom? Like this isn't--

TOM

(aware of the other room)  
SHHHHH.

DEBBIE

Like this isn't a *full-time* job? I'm like a *concierge-slash-manager-slash-babysitter*-  
(eyes clock, calls offscreen)  
Adam!

INT. CAR - LATER

Tom, Debbie, with Adam in back. Utter silence. Ice. We PRE-LAP PIANO (what Adam was practicing a moment ago at home) and -

INT. SOMEWHERE - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Adam - in a SUIT AND TIE - plays grand piano with focus and passion. He hums along, oblivious, and ends to HUGE APPLAUSE.

Adam hesitantly rises, bows. Then looks around - quite awkward.

He has a very individualized, almost syncopated way about him - like someone who has to remind himself how "normal people" move.

He's motioned over by A CHEERY MAN AND WOMAN.

People are still clapping as he walks - which makes him even more self-conscious. And he's not good at making eye contact - so it almost looks like his eyes are darting furtively.

We now realize we're on the set of "GOOD AFTERNOON BOSTON."

MALE HOST

Unbelievable.. That was amazing. And you're - how old? 35?

Laughter from the studio audience. An awkward beat..

ADAM

Did you want me to answer?

MALE HOST

I'll answer for you: 12 years old, folks!

(as people applaud)

Your parents must be doing *something* right!

Speaking of.. Your mom told us..

(to audience)

You're gonna get a kick out of this.

(to Adam)

Your parents said when you were little you used to do this thing with your left hand and your right hand. Well, before we went on air we had everyone in the audience write down their favorite songs.

(to the audience)

This is the reason, folks..

(back to Adam)

And we're gonna randomly pick two..

Adam looks around - a bit trapped. Offstage, his parents smile.

MALE HOST (CONT'D)

Can we put you back at the piano for a moment?

FEMALE HOST

Adam Davis, once again!

Applause as Adam dutifully rises and trots back to the piano.

MALE HOST

Okay - the two songs are..

(reading from clips of paper)

Left hand.. "Another One Bites the Dust." The Queen song? I think it is the Queen song.

(MORE)

MALE HOST (CONT'D)  
 And for the right hand.. "Candle in the Wind,"  
 by Elton John!

With his left hand, Adam starts "Another One Bites the Dust," then adds the chorus to "Candle in the Wind" with the right ("*And it seems to me, you lived your life..*"). CUT TO:

INT. CAR - DRIVING - A HALF HOUR LATER

Adam is LIVID. Debbie is chastened.

DEBBIE  
 Look - I said I'm sorry.

ADAM  
 (like a bird)  
*Cheep. Cheep-cheep.*

DEBBIE  
 I said please stop that.

ADAM  
*Cheep cheep. Cheep cheep cheep.*

The car comes to a halt. Adam throws open the door.

EXT. CAMPUS OF HIGH SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Adam slams the door - leans into the window.

ADAM  
 If you wanted a trained parakeet, you should  
 have gotten an *actual* one.

And he brusquely turns and moves away.

INT. CAR - CLOSE ON DEBBIE

Thrown, Debbie re-starts the (already-started) car - which  
 GRINDS.. as..

EXT. CAMPUS - ON THE LAWN - SAME

Adam walks, then slows, his expression changing - and he instantly goes from looking like an adult in a child's body to a child in an adult's suit. He picks up his cell phone.

ADAM  
 Mommy?

HARD CUT TO: EXT. CAMPUS - A MOMENT LATER

Debbie and Adam on a BENCH; his head in her lap, rocking.

ADAM

I'm sorry. I'm sorry I said that.

DEBBIE

It's okay. I'm sorry. I thought you'd get a kick out of it. And I was wrong.

ADAM

It's okay.

DEBBIE

Do you want me to cancel your lesson today?

ADAM

No.

DEBBIE

Thursday you were doing that thing - for those inner city kids. We can cancel that--

ADAM

That's okay.

(sits up, wipes his face)

I have to go. I have a test.

DEBBIE

Um.. Okay.. Oh, Adam?

(as he turns)

I'm coming to get you right after school. We need to fit you again for a new tux. You are growing so fast right now..

He nods. Turns. She watches him walk off.

WITH ADAM, AS HE WALKS THROUGH THE GREEN. Out of place among the 17 and 18 year olds, he can feel he's being looked at.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Adam's the first to finish the test. As he drops it off, the teacher eyes the time, then the hand-written "100%" on the page.

TEACHER

Adam - what's this?

ADAM

Oh, I graded it for you.

TEACHER

Then what's *this*?

There's also a "MINUS 4" written on it and some red circles.

ADAM

Mistakes on your questions. Mostly minor.

The teacher looks down - then up - but Adam's already gone.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - A BIT LATER

A PEP RALLY - in EXTREME CLOSE UP. Football players. Kids. Adam watches from the back of the bleachers - focussing on the cheerleaders - with the binoculars and bat-ears. A 'wave' moves through. Adam stays seated as it engulfs - then passes - him.

INT. MALL - TUX SHOP - LATER

Adam stands with his arms outstretched - like a scarecrow in an oversized tuxedo - as one adult runs a tape measure along his arms while another pinches in the material.

Debbie sits to the side, checking email on her BlackBerry as Adam looks through the glass, into the mall, where a small gaggle of twelve and thirteen year olds passes by.

CLOSE ON ADAM'S HANDS

Playing furiously - amazingly. He's in--

INT. MARWOOD CONSERVATORY - CONTINUOUS

In a practice room, Adam finishes with a flourish. His instructor, the distinguished JOHN SYDNEY, sits by him.

SYDNEY

Good. Very good. But the left hand has to hold back a bit, not rush through it. The chord is unresolved - and there's power in that. You need to let yourself experience the lack of resolution, the "not knowing." Not everything has to be answered. Let the yearning to resolve it be the end in and of itself.

(plays a run)

Syncopation: *tenuto!*

ADAM

I don't have to sit here for five minutes to understand where Brahams was going with that. I get the point - and whoever doesn't isn't worth playing for. That was boring. And *obvious*. And this piece is a bunch of treacle anyway.

SYDNEY

What I'm trying to show you is --

ADAM

-- why you teach instead of play?

SYDNEY

(measured)

There is a reason students have teachers.

ADAM

Do you know who invented the cotton gin?

SYDNEY

Eli Whitney.

ADAM

Do you think he ever had a teacher?

SYDNEY

I'm certain of it.

ADAM

Well if his teacher was so great, why didn't he invent the cotton gin?

Adam stares at Sydney - will this adult do anything? Sydney just sucks it up, continues.

SYDNEY

Left hand. Again.

ADAM

No. I'm done for the day.

Adam gets up, walks out.

EXT. MARWOOD CONSERVATORY - CONTINUOUS

Adam heads down the imposing steps into the steel and cement of the city. Below him, Boston is loud, cacophonous; forbidding.



INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tom and Debbie - angry - across from Adam.

TOM

Because it's rude. You're rude. And ungrateful. And I don't like getting the constant calls. The school, the academy..

DEBBIE

He's the best teacher in Boston, Adam. And he's expensive.

ADAM

Then tell him we quit. He'll offer to teach me for free.

TOM

Rude.

ADAM

But true. Did you see the fall catalogue?

Tom - unsure - looks at Debbie for clarification.

DEBBIE

The, uh.. The academy catalogue mentions Adam.

ADAM

I apparently am an attraction, like the state-of-the-art mixing board, or the new underground parking facility. Tom, I believe this conversation has saturated itself.

He starts out.

TOM

No! The conversation has not 'saturated itself' until I say it has! AND MY NAME IS NOT TOM - or, well, to YOU IT ISN'T!

ADAM

(turns)

Fine, *daddy*. Reiterate or elaborate. I'm all ears.

Adam just stands there, looks at them. Finally:

TOM

Conversation is over.

INT. ADAM'S BEDROOM - SHORTLY THEREAFTER

Adam lies in bed, wearing the bat-ears.. listening. The posters on his wall - the composers - are yellowed - but still there.

*TOM (O.S.)  
..supposed to just tell him he's right?*

*DEBBIE (O.S.)  
Supposed to not let him walk all over you.*

*TOM (O.S.)  
I don't --*

*DEBBIE (O.S.)  
You do: here, work - cause you wanna be liked  
- but instead they just walk--*

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL QUAD - DAY

LUNCH. Adam removes crumpled bills, steps up to a folding table where CHEERLEADERS sell tickets to a dance.

*ADAM  
One, please. And one other, please.*

EXT. BOSTON STREET - DAY

ECU, LONG LENS, through the WINDOW of "VINYL FETISH RECORDS," where JEANNIE - now 21 - is working, finishing up with a customer. REVERSE ANGLE:

ACROSS THE STREET - ADAM

Is watching her with BINOCULARS and the BAT-EARS..

He sees her changing shifts. She gathers stuff, then stops - aware she's being looked at. She turns, face brightening.

Outside, Adam drops the binoculars, starts to rise as -

A 22 YEAR OLD GUY crosses in front of Adam as Jeannie exits (now carrying a GUITAR) and gives the guy a kiss.

They walk right past Adam, heading for the guy's car, which they enter and take off in. Adam stares, holding the dance tickets.

INT. GYM - HIGH SCHOOL DANCE - NIGHT

A DJ blasts a beat as 400 teens dance, grind, sing, while --

Adam, the smallest kid by far (and the only one in a tie), stands in back, holding punch, watching.

EXT. HOYT'S GARAGE - DAY

Adam and Hoyt in the indoor/outdoor workshop. They are working on a small balsa wood AIRPLANE. Hoyt nurses a scotch.

Hoyt's aged a lot - his thin hair is wispy and mismanaged.

HOYT

Well.. It was seven years ago. I do believe there's a statute of limitations on proposals. And - if I remember correctly - you were drunk. Which is, by the way, the only reason I got your grandmother to say yes. And that.. was the last time I ever heard that word from her.

(re plane)

Did I hollow this out enough?

Adam looks into the "belly" - it's hollowed out like a bird's belly. Adam shrugs - possibly.

HOYT (CONT'D)

Well grab the sander - give it a run.

(as Adam stands there)

Hey. Pull your weight or feel free to leave.

Adam grabs the sander, starts helping.

HOYT (CONT'D)

Okay - you're the pointy-head, here's my question for you: how do I shrink myself so that I can launch myself in the cockpit?

ADAM

Who would throw it?

HOYT

Ahh -

(touches his head as if to say "I already thought of that")

Before I shrink myself, I clone a big myself to throw little myself.

ADAM

I see no flaw in this plan whatsoever.

HOYT

I know. I know. And yet - no one's done it. Go figure.

DEBBIE (O.S.)  
HEY! What are you doing?!

Both turn - surprised to see Debbie rustling out of her hybrid.

HOYT  
See, that's the problem with the damn  
Priuses.. Pri-i? You can't hear the dreaded  
things sneakin' up on ya.

Debbie grabs the sander from Adam and the scotch from Hoyt.

DEBBIE  
Have you gone mad? One slip - *one slip*.  
Hoyt, Jesus..  
(dumps drink)  
..it's not even three o'clock.  
(grabs Adam, drags him into Hoyt's)  
Hey - Buster - we have a two hour drive and  
you're not even dressed yet. Christ.. it's  
like having two twelve year olds..

HOYT  
(calls after them)  
Oh - Addo - next time you come - we gotta do  
that thing where we stick your hand in the  
propeller to see if it's working.

DEBBIE (O.S.)  
Ha ha ha.

INT. CAR - DRIVING - TWO HOURS LATER - VERMONT

Rural Vermont. With Mozart playing in the car, Debbie and Adam  
(now in a suit) turn down the extremely long driveway of a huge  
estate with a vast lawn.

DEBBIE  
You know, his Saint-Saens - he did this  
rendition, with Yo Yo Ma. 2003? 2004? It  
was, literally, I think, the *quintessential*  
classic cello concerto.. Wow. He lives in a  
castle.

Debbie cuts the engine - and therefore Mozart. Which now makes  
it impossible NOT to hear the LOUD ROCK AND ROLL playing within  
the huge estate. (It's "London Calling" by the Clash.)

And it gets louder as the front door opens and out steps:

The long-haired man-child, PAUL ALAN SMITH - a kind of Peter  
Sellars/Gustavo Dudamel styled composer/conductor/pianist;

a former prodigy himself. He wears low-cut ratty jeans and a black vintage Ramones t-shirt. And has bare feet.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Is that him? Oh my God.. It is him. It's Paul Alan Smith.

Smith widens his arms as Debbie and Adam get out of their car.

SMITH

See this is what I love about my life: some call up and order in a pizza and wings. I order in Thomas Adam Davis and his beautiful mother. And voila - it arrives.

(re Adam)

On time..

(re Debbie - playful)

And hot.

(then, quickly)

Sorry.

(equally quickly)

But true.

INT. LIVING ROOM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Adam at the piano, Debbie in a chair, Smith pacing like an excited bird.

SMITH

..And why I'm watching a Tuesday afternoon talk show is beyond me.. But there I was: trashy tv, me, and the cat. And what do I hear? This child. And Rachmaninov's Prelude in G Minor. Was it good? Honestly - *it might have been*. But unless I hear it myself, with *these*, I can't tell. So I make a few calls, badabing, badaboom, and.. May I say: thank you for coming.

There's a pause - as if Adam should know what to do.

ADAM

Are you asking me to play it?

SMITH

(laughs)

Did I say I love my life? Well I couldn't *always* say that, Adam, I assure you. Trust me. Anyhow.. Who would you like to meet? In the entire world?

ADAM

Dr. Jane Goodall.

SMITH

Well you can. You can meet anyone, go anywhere. If my suspicions are correct and you can hear the whispers. Of the angels. Can you, Adam? Where are you in school?

ADAM

Saint Mary's.

DEBBIE

Adam is a senior in high school.

SMITH

Have you heard of The Boswell School?

DEBBIE

Um.. Yes.

SMITH

Your mother knows it.

(an aside - to Debbie)

They've had *several* cellists - Arentzen, Sawitzke..

DEBBIE

You knew I was a cellist?

SMITH

The Worchester String Ensemble.

Debbie's surprised - even flattered - *briefly*, until:

SMITH (CONT'D)

Well, I Googled you. Well, *him*.

Debbie nods with resignation as Smith turns back to Adam.

SMITH (CONT'D)

Boswell is in, of all places, Dallas, Texas. 64 students, total. 8 matriculations a year. From all over the world. Many like you. Young, gifted - in unique ways. I went there. I am on the board. Would you like to go there?

ADAM

Would I have to go away?

SMITH

Well I could see if they'd bring the school to you.

ADAM

I believe I'd like to go to vet school.

DEBBIE

Adam - seriously - you're taking up Mr. Smith's time.

SMITH

No no no no no. Adam - you are to play not for your mother - nor for me. You play for yourself. And the angels. No one else. What is it my teacher said? "Cold rationality and a warm heart." That's what makes a pianist. You come when you're ready.

(then)

Hey. Idea. Would you like to play something *together*?

INT. SMITH'S DEN - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Adam and Smith, on the couch, playing X-Box. Now Adam's in bare feet as well.

INT. CAR - DRIVING

Debbie and Adam, on the Turnpike, in silence. Finally:

DEBBIE

*He called you. Paul Alan Smith called you. And we drove to Vermont so you could play NOT Rachmaninov's Prelude in G Minor, but rather "Mortal Kombat."*

ADAM

*"Call of Duty."*

DEBBIE

*Same thing.*

ADAM

*They are not the same thing.*

DEBBIE

*Like you'd know. You've never played a video game in your life. Till you could do it as a 'fuck you.' Yes - I said 'the f-word.'*

ADAM

*I believe I do wanna go to vet school.*

DEBBIE

*I believe you were being a smart-ass. And I believe you still are being a smart ass.*

A pause. Adam nods.. Then just looks out the window.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

People would fly halfway around the world for an opportunity like that. And not just children - *adults*. Wasted. A wasted opportunity. Wasted.

ADAM

It's not my fault your cello's been in the closet for two years.

DEBBIE

*Is that what you think this is about??*

Debbie's so unnerved that she's swerved halfway into the next lane. A car HONKS LOUDLY as she quickly readjusts.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

*Is that what you think this is about???*

ADAM

I'm sorry.

DEBBIE

*You'd better be sorry. You'd better damned well be sorry.*

INT. ADAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adam, on his bed, wearing the bat-ears, hearing:

DEBBIE (O.S.)

*My life on hold. Why? So he can reject every opportunity cause he thinks he's smarter - better - whatever - I hate it. It's suffocating me.*

EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Debbie and Tom outside, talking quietly.

TOM

*What is?*

DEBBIE

*IT! IT! This.. creature. This fourth creature that's living with us. You. Me. Adam. And his.. whatever. His 'gift.'* Ha. More like the monster that's sucking the air out of everything.

It starts to rain outside. With thunder. Debbie rises - enters the apartment - BUMPS the coffee table.



DEBBIE (CONT'D)  
OW! OW - damnit.  
(kicks table)  
Damnit. I swear to god, this apartment is  
shrinking. I hate this place.

INT. ADAM'S BEDROOM - SAME

Adam lies there, listening.

TOM (O.S.)  
*Look - things at work took a turn for the  
worse - but we'll get back --*

DEBBIE (O.S.)  
*It's not the 'job' - the 'apartment.' Christ -  
do you love your life? I need air. Get away  
from me.*

TOM (O.S.)  
*But you were just ou--*

Adam hears the door slam. It's just after midnight. Lighting  
illuminates the POSTERS on his wall. Maybe it's the mood - or  
maybe it's the light - but the 'impassive' faces of the Great  
Ones look more severe, more harsh, more judgmental.

Adam rises - starts to tear them off the wall.

EXT. BOSTON - NIGHT

Thunder. Lightning. Pouring rain.

INT. ADAM'S BEDROOM - HOURS LATER

Adam lies on his bed, eyes open, staring at his hands in the  
flashing lightning. Suddenly his eyes widen as --

Something is growing out of his hands. It's a CREATURE - a bird-  
like MONSTER - which snarls and GNASHES ITS TEETH AND --

Adam opens his eyes. He was dreaming. He looks through his  
fingers at the clock - it's 2:09 AM.

The door closes downstairs - that's what must've awakened him.  
He hears footsteps coming up the stairs. Wet, heavy footsteps.

Adam listens while his mother's shadow passes under the door.

LATER STILL

Posters half-torn. Those composers whose faces remain appear to be positively *scowling*.

Adam stares at the big wooden bat-wings which hang on his wall, lined in deep black shadow. Lightning flashes outside.

EXT. APARTMENT - BALCONY

Adam slides the glass door open. And steps out into the pouring rain - the wooden wings strapped around his waist.

A MOMENT LATER

Adam is balancing, wearing the wings, on the railing. He looks down at the street two stories below.

He turns toward it. Lifts his feet.

INT. BEDROOM - SAME

Debbie and Tom are awaked by a CRASH from outside. BOLT UP.

ADAM'S BEDROOM - A SPLIT SECOND LATER

Tom and Debbie race in and find the wings gone (just the outline, in faded paint) - and the balcony door open.

DEBBIE

ADAM!

EXT. STREET - NIGHT - SAME

Adam, scraped and bleeding - and unconscious - lies beneath the shattered wings in the pounding rain.

Neighbors and passersby are gathered as Tom and Debbie race out into the street, frantically yelling, waving over the ambulance.

PUSH IN on them as the lights play off them.. and KEEP PUSHING IN, so close it's all just blurry shapes as we DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

A monitor on Adam's ear, in his nose. Bandages covering huge scapes. He opens his eyes and finds.. Tom and Debbie hovering.

ADAM  
You're both here.

TOM  
Of course we're both here.

ADAM  
How long.. How long was I..

He closes his eyes, asleep again as the DOCTOR enters.

DOCTOR  
He was lucky. Very lucky. There are miracles, though, especially with children. At the moment the big issue is the concussion. He shouldn't play any football for a while.

TOM  
I don't think you need to worry about that.

DEBBIE  
What do you mean "at the moment?"

DOCTOR  
Some injuries only show up after a few days. Or longer. It's the brain.. so..

DEBBIE  
(leans close to Adam)  
Were you trying to fly away from me? You could have killed yourself. You realize that?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Adam, sitting up in bed, plays chess with Hoyt.

HOYT  
You're taking a long time.

ADAM  
Sorry.

HOYT  
Well I have plenty of time.  
(off Adam's move; a counter)  
Check.

Adam just stares at the board. Hoyt looks at him.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Leaving the hospital, Adam tries to open a car door; can't.

DEBBIE

Adam - what are you doing? Over here.

Debbie leads Adam to their car - which looks vaguely similar.

AT HOME - THROUGHOUT THE EVENING:

1. Adam, at the piano, tries to - but can't - read a Liszt Etude. He bangs the lid closed. Eyes his mother, ashamed.

2. Tom and Adam sit at the table with Adam's text books. Adam shakes his head - he's not following something in it.

TOM

You had this last week. All you're doing is following the line of thought..

(a pause)

Do you wanna take a break for a minute? Come back to it later?

3. Adam sits in his room, lights on. Just sits. The impassive expressions of the Composers - taped together now and a bit washed out in the light - are inert, listless. He hears the TV.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - A MOMENT LATER

Adam enters and sees his parents on the couch, arm in arm, watching a sitcom. They slide over, pat a spot for him.

ADAM

What is this?

TOM

This..

(as if introducing King Lear)

..is *Two and a Half Men*.

They watch for a minute - and chuckle.

ADAM

(as if a Royal Edict)

I like this "Two and a Half Men." It is good.

Tom laughs at Adam's silliness. Debbie does, too - though it's hard to know if she's laughing because it's actually *funny*, or because she's so desperate for the levity.

LATER - ON THE COUCH

Adam sleeps between Tom and Debbie as they watch Letterman.

INT. ADAM'S BEDROOM - A MOMENT LATER

Tom drops Adam - clothed - in his bed.

TOM  
Shh shh. Stay asleep.

Adam nods. His dad kisses him. Walks out, closing the door.

Adam opens his eyes, sees his BAT-EARS, puts them on. Listens.

TOM (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
*This was nice.*

DEBBIE (O.S.)  
*What?*

TOM (O.S.)  
*Tonight. Sitting there. That was nice.*

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Debbie and Tom, cleaning up. Debbie looks over. Smiles.

TOM  
Let's do this more.

DEBBIE  
(nuzzles into him)  
Mmmnn.

INT. ADAM'S BEDROOM - SAME

Adam listens to the ensuing silence. The last thing he sees before he his head lolls and he falls asleep is that little stuffed toy BAT - the one Jeannie made. It blurs as we CUT TO:

CLOSE ON JEANNIE

Magnified - through BINOCULARS. She's laughing - at a cafe.

STREET - REVERSE ANGLE

Adam watches as she rises, hugs a couple girlfriends, then hurries across the street to catch a streetcar.

Adam turns, runs to catch the trolley, but can't.

INT. STREETCAR - VIEW THROUGH BACK WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

As it pulls away, Jeannie comes to the back - and suddenly squints: *does she recognize him?* Adam waves. But the trolley's turning and she's obscured in glare. Adam's left there.

INT. NURSE/SPECIALIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Debbie with a specialist.

SPECIALIST

I have - I believe - good news. Please..

(as Debbie sits)

We've tested his speaking and reading skills, his memory, and his sense of perception. And we got normal levels.

DEBBIE

What does "normal levels" mean?

SPECIALIST

Normal for his age group. He's even slightly above average, especially in his logical thinking.

DEBBIE

And the IQ test..?

SPECIALIST

Yes?

DEBBIE

Did you do..?

SPECIALIST

Well, to be honest, these tests are irrelevant. But if you really want to know, it's around 120.

DEBBIE

120? It used to be literally off the charts. How is that possible?

SPECIALIST

It's hard to say. Even for those of us in the field, the brain is still a crazy mystery. No one knows where it comes from - or where it goes, frankly.

Debbie nods, distant.

## SPECIALIST (CONT'D)

Um.. Forgive me.. but I don't understand your disappointment. You have a healthy, normal child. I have to give far worse news to a lot of parents.

Debbie really wants to be consoled by this.

## INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Adam - in the waiting area - looks up as Debbie steps out and keeps walking. Adam rises, catches up to her.

ADAM

Is it good?

DEBBIE

Oh - it's great. Really. Super great - um - can you excuse me one second?

As if someone had suddenly cut all the oxygen in the hospital, Debbie abruptly turns and pushes through a side door and is -

## EXT. OUTSIDE INNARDS OF THE HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

- in that space no one ever enters: that place between buildings nestled within the city block that's all air conditioning ducts and fire escapes and pigeon roosts.

Blanched in sunlight, Debbie just breathes as the door closes and she's alone, awash in machine noise and muffled city sounds.

On her face: many things - not the least of which is shame, rooted in her confusion as to why she's not jumping for joy.

There's a knock from the other side.

ADAM (O.S.)

Mom?

Debbie turns, but there's no door handle on this side. She hesitates, putting off for as long as possible the moment of reentry.. then knocks lightly. It opens. She revs up a smile.

DEBBIE

Well *that* sure was a wrong turn!

And she starts to pull herself back in.

INT. PUBLIC JR. HIGH CLASSROOM - DAY

Kids mess around, as kids will do. Adam enters with a teacher.

TEACHER

Listen up - people - silence, please! This is Adam. He's changed schools, and he's with us now. Adam, you can sit by Evan.

Adam sits. Evan, in a hoodie, offers up a 'fist-bump.'

EVAN

Hi, Adam, what's up?  
(re Adam's confusion about his fist)  
Like this. Loosen up. Now make a fist. Yeah  
yeah - right. And again.

Adam does it, nods, turns to his book: INTRO TO PRE-ALGEBRA.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - RECESS

Adam moves through the playground. Just watching.. floating..

Adam spots Evan playing basketball with other kids. Evan motions for Adam to join and passes him the ball. But when Adam gets it he dribbles with two hands - and not even that well.

A kid grabs the ball back and the game continues up the court without Adam, who just stands there as the game goes on.

EXT. STREET - LATER

A SCHOOL BUS drops a bunch of kids, including Adam, on a corner.

EVAN

..well, by 'going out' he means, basically,  
she 'friended' him.

(to Adam)

Rack City?

Adam has no idea what Evan's referring to.

ADAM

Yes. Certainly.

'RACK CITY' SKATE PARK - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Adam sits while Evan skids up to him, flips the board up.

EVAN

Wanna try? It's easy.



A MOMENT LATER

Adam - motionless - rides down a ramp, across the pavement, and up another ramp. The kids are yelling at him:

EVAN/OTHER KIDS  
Stop!!/TURN IT!/You gotta stop or turn!

He gets halfway up the ramp.. but remains motionless, and--

INT. APARTMENT - LOBBY - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Adam hobbles - bruised and a bit bloodied - as Evan opens the door for him. His pants are ripped; he's covered in scrapes.

EVAN  
Dude. That was sweet. You were all..

Evan mimes a gnarly crash. Adam nods, not displeased. Not displeased at all.

EVAN (CONT'D)  
Later.

ADAM  
Okay. Later.

They do the fist bump. Initiated by Adam.

INT. APARTMENT - LOBBY - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Adam gets the mail. Hobbles to the elevator.

INT. TOM AND DEBBIE'S APARTMENT - A MOMENT LATER

Debbie's doing their taxes - not pretty. Adam enters, hands her some mail: "Massachusetts State Realty Board Qualifying Exam - RESULTS." She notices him limping to the kitchen.

DEBBIE  
You okay?

ADAM  
Skateboard accident.

Adam looks back. A pause.. Is she gonna say anything?

DEBBIE  
Grab me a water, will you?

Adam smiles, continues into the kitchen.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

Adam plays piano - but not well. Debbie is beside him.

DEBBIE

Play the run, and take your time. C sharp..  
then C again.. Then B.. okay?

He follows.. measured. Stumbling a bit.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

C sharp! *Sharp.*

(then)

Sorry.

He gets up, comes behind her, puts his arms around her.

ADAM

Sorry.

DEBBIE

I'm sorry.

ADAM

(notices realty exam results)  
You never opened that.

DEBBIE

Oh. Right.

She opens it.

ADAM

Is it good?

Debbie nods, emotionless. Then turns to him..

DEBBIE

Hey, Ad.. Hey - would you like to..

INT. SYMPHONY HALL - NIGHT

The Boston Symphony plays Beethoven's 6th - conducted by Paul Alan Smith. Smith is animated - engaged - masterful.

IN THE AUDIENCE

Are Debbie, Tom and Adam. Watching, listening.

BACKSTAGE - AFTER THE SHOW

Smith's dressing room door opens - he beams.

SMITH

Adam!

(feigning disappointment)

..and parents.

He laughs. High-fives Adam, then hugs Debbie.

SMITH (CONT'D)

Beautiful as ever.

(turns)

You must be the engineer. Wait --Tom?

Tom nods - shakes. *There's an instant wariness between the two men* - an instinctual thing. Nothing too pronounced.

SMITH (CONT'D)

Adam. Wanna show you something. Just us.

SMITH'S DRESSING ROOM

He closes the door. Picks up two basketball tickets.

SMITH (CONT'D)

You won't believe this, but Kevin Garnett is a huge classical music fan. Problem is.. I am in Detroit on Tuesday. Know anyone who can use these?

ADAM

My grampa loves the Celtics.

SMITH

(hands them to Adam)

Well there you go.

ADAM

..Thank you.

SMITH

You're welcome. And call me - I want to hear every single direction the basketballers run around in. Promise?

(off Adam's nod)

And - oh - Adam.

(kneels right in front of him)

*There's no such thing as what you're looking for.*

ADAM  
I don't understand.

Smith waves a knowing finger at him - as if he knows Adam better than Adam knows himself.

For reasons that are unclear to us, this seems to set Adam back on his heels. Especially when --

Smith glances back at Adam and winks - briefly - before wheeling back into the hall, where he addresses Tom and Debbie.

SMITH  
You coming to the reception? It's a meet and greet - for the patrons. Free drinks.

TOM  
We're not exactly patrons--

SMITH  
(waves them off)  
Oh, *please*.

Finally Adam starts in toward the hall as Tom's phone rings - startling Adam. Tom looks at it. Picks up as we cut to:

INT. CAR - DRIVING

Adam in back, half-asleep. Debbie's energized; Tom's not.

DEBBIE  
You know why he's going to Detroit? To meet Eminem. He had an idea to do something with Eminem, and now he's doing something with Eminem. One minute it was in his brain - and now - poof - it's in the world. *Eminem!* Hey - do you think they have a special Directory Assistance for celebrities? Like if one famous person wants to reach another, they have a special info line only *they* can use? Like four *and a half* one one? Hello? Earth to Tom?

TOM  
Dad called.

DEBBIE  
Oh no..

TOM  
He needs another six thousand. His roof guy says they can't just patch.

DEBBIE  
What'd you tell him?

TOM  
I told him the truth. I don't have it. I  
mean - what am I supposed to *do*?

Adam's eyes are semi-closed; but he's listening to everything.

INT. TD GARDEN ARENA - NIGHT

Adam and Hoyt - courtside - at a Celtics game. Hoyt tries to actually *touch* a couple of the players as they race past.

HOYT  
Unbelievable. Un-friggin-believable. Adam -  
I used to tell you the best things in life,  
money can't buy. And you know what? I had no  
idea what I was talking about.  
(leaps to his feet; to the ref)  
That was horseshit! He was already out of  
bounds!  
(off the ref's look)  
Because I'm standing closer than you are! If  
you can believe that!

INT. CAR - DRIVING - NIGHT

Thelonious Monk plays as Adam rides shotgun, no seat-belt.

HOYT  
..so while my platoon's dropping face first  
into the rice fields, I'm in the infirmary  
getting penicillin shot into my ass. What was  
the point? Oh - point being: the clap  
*literally* saved my life. ..Wait. That wasn't  
the point. What was I getting at?

ADAM  
Relationships.

HOYT  
Right! The thrill of the chase! If you miss  
her, go talk to her. It took me ten years to  
get your grandmother to marry me.

ADAM  
Are you glad?

HOYT  
It was a horrible hell, but I never was  
happier.

(MORE)

HOYT (CONT'D)

(then)

Listen, as I think about it.. maybe that clap story we best keep between--

ADAM

(ahead of him)

Yeah yeah.

Adam notices - but Hoyt doesn't - that Hoyt's just driven through a red light.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Adam enters, hears the "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" song in another room.

INT. HIS PARENTS' BEDROOM

Debbie's in bed watching a DVD as Adam enters, comes over.

DEBBIE

Hey.

Adam watches a moment: it's his 5th birthday - the part where Adam played "Happy Birthday" back to everyone's astonishment.

ADAM

Where's Dad?

DEBBIE

Work thing.

ADAM

Is work bad?

DEBBIE

It's.. work. How was the game?

ADAM

Grampa swore a lot and yelled at everybody. Rajon Rondo actually told him to shut up. It was pretty funny.

DEBBIE

Hey - c'mere.

(she hugs him)

Brush your teeth - I'll be in in a minute.

DEBBIE

Watches him go. Then rewinds and un-pauses the DVD and watches that moment come to life again. And then again.

INT. ADAM'S BEDROOM - LATER

Adam in bed as Debbie kisses him. Looks at him sleeping. She finally steps out. Closes the door. And Adam opens his eyes.

A MOMENT LATER, Adam hears something he hasn't heard in years:

From downstairs, it's the CELLO LINE from Suite #2 in D Minor by JS Bach. Soft, muted. And very tentative.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Debbie is playing - practicing - but haltingly. She's rusty. And she feels it. She plays a bit more.. Then stops. Sags.

ADAM'S VOICE

That sounded nice.

She turns. Adam is standing on the stairs.

DEBBIE

Oh - sorry - is it keeping you up?

ADAM

Yes. But in a good way. Seriously. Can you keep going?

DEBBIE

Really?

(off Adam's nod)

Cause I saw an ad - have you heard of the Chesterfield Quartet?

(as Adam shakes his head)

Me either. But they work a lot, and they pay - *not much*, but, still.. anyway. You sure it's not..?

He nods again. She picks up the bow. INTERCUT WITH:

INT. ADAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - LATER (1:15 A.M.)

Adam, in bed, bat-ears on, listening to Debbie play. What she lacks in practice she makes up for in soul and feeling.

Suddenly it stops as Adam hears a door open and then close.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Tom trudges through the semi-darkness. Makes a (pre-occupied) nod to the cello - an acknowledgement of its return.

TOM  
Wow - hey.

DEBBIE  
Was it bad?

INT. ADAM'S BEDROOM - SAME

In his bed, Adam listens through the bat-ears:

TOM (O.S.)  
*Worse. Results come out a week from Monday.  
At noon. It's gonna be ugly.*

DEBBIE (O.S.)  
*How ugly?*

TOM (O.S.)  
*Fugly ugly. Gentronics stock's gonna plummet  
like the Hindenburg. Remember when we thought  
it was such a good idea to take shares in the  
company in lieu of pay? Ha. Want some?*

*Adam hears ice clink - then liquor poured into a glass..*

TOM (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
*Don't you just loooooove being a grown up?*

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Daylight, silence. The family eats breakfast. Finally:

ADAM  
How's work?

TOM  
What? Fine.

Adam clears his plate, crosses to the kitchen - listening to:

DEBBIE  
You know I got an actual client--

TOM  
Hey..

DEBBIE  
--but before you get too excited: it's your  
father.

Adam moves to the doorway where he can hear better.



TOM

Really? He's gonna.. Really? When did --

DEBBIE

We put the sign up yesterday. I was gonna tell you last night, but..

TOM

Yeah.. thanks. Wow.

DEBBIE

He's not what I'd call a '*motivated* seller,' but I think he's a realist..

(aware of Adam - turns)

Hey. School.

EXT. JR. HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

Kids exit the bus. Adam - in a 'hoodie' not dissimilar to the one Evan was wearing a while ago (yet not *quite* pulling it off with the ease that Evan does) - goes in a different direction.

EVAN

You coming?

ADAM

I'll be back..

EXT. BOSTON - DAY

Adam turns a corner. Goes down into the subway.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Adam rides out of the city, in his hoodie and shades.

EXT. HOYT'S ROAD - DAY

Adam walks toward Hoyt's driveway - slows as he sees a FOR SALE SIGN with "DEB DAVIS" as the listing agent.

EXT. HOYT'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Hoyt is sanding the potting shed, prepping it to paint.

ADAM

Hi, Grampa. May I use your computer?

HOYT

For?

ADAM

World of Warcraft.

Hoyt shrugs - be my guest - and gestures 'go on in.'

INT. HOYT'S KITCHEN - A MOMENT LATER

Adam awakens the computer. But the screen requires a PASSCODE.

ADAM

Grampa!

HOYT (O.S.)

"YASTRZEMSKI 1967."

Adam enters the code, then looks out the window.. Sees that Hoyt is still sanding the shed. Now..

Adam takes a NOTEBOOK out of his backpack. Lays it on the desk.

It's hard to know exactly what it is - but we see the word "GENTRONICS" and a lot of very complicated charts and graphs.

Then.. on screen, Adam searches through Hoyt's files and finds something. Opens it. It also requires a passcode. Adam types in "YASTRZEMSKI1967." And..

..gains access, just as Hoyt - having forgotten something - is coming back inside. Adam quickly slaps the keyboard and -

As Hoyt passes, Adam is playing WORLD OF WARCRAFT.

Hoyt grabs a rag and some masking tape off the counter - then turns, exits again. And the minute the door closes..

Adam returns to the other screen. And now we see it clearly:

It's Hoyt's bank account.

Adam leans over, re-opens his notebook and refers to some of the hand-written figures and very complex formulas..

..and - once more checking over his shoulder - Adam begins typing on the keyboard.. for a while. He enters some figures. Waits. Enters some more. Waits again..

..then nods, closes the page, then clears the 'history.'

OUTSIDE - AT THE POTTING SHED - HOYT

Is laying down primer with a paint brush when he hears something that makes him stop in his tracks. It's:

Chopin's Piano Sonata #2, coming from inside his house.

Still holding his brush, he turns and slowly crosses the gravel driveway toward the house. He mounts the stoop and cautiously creaks the door open. Through the crack, he sees:

Adam sitting behind the piano, his hands obscured from view.

Hoyt slowly takes another step - so he can see Adam's hands..

..which are on his lap. In Adam's right hand is the remote control for the stereo. Adam raises it, pauses the music.

ADAM

Yes?

HOYT

Sorry. I thought.. Sorry.

Adam nods. As does Hoyt - who backs up. Adam unpauses the remote and the music resumes as Hoyt exits.

Through the window we see Hoyt return to the potting shed as..

The piece comes to a natural break between movements. And Adam hits 'pause.' Then sets down the remote.

And turns toward the piano. Raises his hands..

..and plays the second movement of the Chopin sonata - flawlessly, fluidly - on his own.

His eyes close and his body loosens as he plays. And plays.

OUTSIDE - SAME

Hoyt slows, but never stops painting. Finally this movement comes to an end. And there's another beat of silence.

Then the third movement begins and..

The door opens, as Adam, hoodie on and backpack slung over his shoulder, scuttles down the stoop and continues toward the road.

ADAM

Thanks.

HOYT

You bet.

Chopin continues from inside as Hoyt watches Adam walk all the way down the driveway and out to the road, never looking back.

INT. TRAIN - SHORTLY THEREAFTER

Adam rides toward the city, hoodie covering most of his face.

INT. JR. HIGH CLASSROOM - EARLY AFTERNOON

A teacher talks as Adam - late - hurries toward his seat.

JR HIGH TEACHER

Someone else? Square root of 144? Who knows what the square root of 144 is?

(as Adam raises his hand)

Okay - Adam - who is apparently late because he was out *finding the answer*.

ADAM

14?

JR HIGH TEACHER

No. 12. The square root of 144 is 12. We all know what 12 *squared* is - it's 12 times 12.. so the square root..

Adam slides into his seat. Takes a deep, deep breath..

EXT. BOSTON STREET - AFTER SCHOOL

SIX 12 AND 13 YEAR OLDS on skateboards, moving fast. Evan is 5th. The last in line - by a lot - is Adam.

The band veers around a corner. Stay with Evan - who gets a funny feeling and turns - then hurries off his board as..

EVAN

Whoa! Dude - you okay?

Back at the corner, Adam extracts himself from a hedge. Picking leaves from his shirt, he rises with a thumbs-up, then leaps onto his board and they hurry to catch up with the others.

INT. MALL - SHORTLY THEREAFTER

Boards in hand, the gaggle of 6 enter "YE OLDE ARCADE SHOPPE" - a vintage video arcade.

LEADER (DEREK)  
Slurpees. Low buys high.

EVAN  
(to Adam)  
Lowest score has to pay for highest score's  
Slurpee.

INT. YE OLDE ARCADE SHOPPE

Space Invaders, PacMan, even Pong. Derek plays vintage TETRIS.  
Adam watches over Derek's shoulder as Derek finishes, proud.

DEREK  
8550. I'm ready for my free Slurpee. Who's  
left? Who wants to get beasted?

Fingers point to Adam as the only one who hasn't gone.

ADAM  
I'm not.. I haven't done this before.

DEREK  
Good. Double or nothing. Adding Quizno's.

Adam nods, sits. Inserts money. And the game begins. Bricks  
drop - and Adam places them, spacially, where he wants them.

Time passes. And Adam's at 4500.. And very focussed. No one's  
really paying all that much attention.

More time. A few are watching as Adam's score passes 7500. By  
8000 everyone's watching. By 8500 everyone's - including  
Derek's - jaw has dropped. Adam hits 8530, 40.. 50.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
*What? Really?*

More time passes: And people are speechless as Adam's now at  
9500... and rising. Strangers are watching as Adam passes  
12500. Employees now, too, as he crosses 16000.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
Okay this is bullshit. This dude's a liar.

Adam looks up - causing him to miss a brick - and his game ends.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
You've totally done this before.  
(pause)  
Dude's a shark! We got card-sharked! Fess  
up. Truth time. What's up with that?

Derek just glares at Adam. Finally, Adam "relents" and nods. Derek stares a moment, then breaks into a smile and fake "bows."

DEREK (CONT'D)  
This man deserves one hundred percent free  
Slurpification.

ADAM  
And --

DEREK  
Slurpification, with additional Quiznos-osity.

INT. MALL - QUIZNO'S - A MOMENT LATER

All 6 around a table, drinking Slurpees and eating Quizno's.

DEREK  
Over the bra or under the bra?

EVAN  
Under.

EVERYONE  
Bullshit!/No Way!/I know her - you're lying!

DEREK  
What about other dude? Minnesota Fats-  
friggin'-Tetris-Beastie-dude?

ADAM  
Me? Um.. You know, mostly over the bra.  
Well, under first, then she let me go over.  
It was awesome.

DEREK  
Are you serious?

Adam - sensing (and covering for) his mistake - rolls his eyes.

ADAM  
Of course I'm not serious. Jesus. Anyways,  
my girlfriend and me have a 'don't ask don't  
tell' policy regarding third parties.

Adam returns to his Slurpee, hoping this ends things cleanly.

INT. VINYL FETISH RECORD SHOP - AFTERNOON

Jeannie, behind the register, hands a bag to a customer.

JEANNIE

Here you go, ma'am. Thank you.

(turns)

Next customer?

She is handed something wrapped in paper. She looks at it, looks at the person who handed it to her (Adam, now in a hoodie and beanie), then unwraps.. the little stuffed BAT.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)

Wait.. Oh my god! Adam! Hang on. Mike?

She signals another employee, then comes around, hugs Adam.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)

Oh my god. Look at you. You're like a *little man*. I totally heard about your.. thing. Your accident. Yeah, it's like - you'd think you would have *died*, the way they were talking about it. Does it suck?

ADAM

It's okay. How are you?

JEANNIE

Me? Whatever, my parents are on me all the time. My year off after high school kinda became three..

ADAM

You play guitar now.

JEANNIE

I do - kind of. How do you know about that? Have you been stalking me?

(off Adam's nod)

That was you the other day - behind the train-thingy! I love that! I love that I have a stalker!

JEANNIE'S BOSS

(passes, indicates "you're at work")  
Jeannie?

JEANNIE

Dude, I'm with my stalker.

She grabs Adam's CD's, crosses to the register.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)

Here, I'll ring you up..

(eyeing the CD's)

Really? Ke\$ha? Katie Perry?

(MORE)

JEANNIE (CONT'D)

Okay - *this*, to me, is the real tragedy of the accident. This, and the lame beanie.

ADAM

Can I come by again?

JEANNIE

It's a *store*. They let anyone in. Besides - stalkers don't ask permission. Otherwise they're called "friends."

EXT. STREETS - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Adam walks through the city - a spring in his step. He passes an industrial loft complex advertising spaces for lease, slows..

INT. INDUSTRIAL ELEVATOR - A MOMENT LATER

Adam rides up the metal elevator with a (very wary) BUILDING MANAGER - a guy in his early 20's who'd rather be elsewhere.

INDUSTRIAL HALLWAY

Adam's led down the cement/metal/exposed duct hallway to a door.

BUILDING MANAGER

So.. okay.. What is your girlfriend's band's name?

ADAM

Oh. Yes. Um.. Echolocation Ensemble.

BUILDING MANAGER

"*Echolocation Ensemble?*"

(warily inserts key)

Listen - if this isn't serious, I got like a lot of..

ADAM

It is. This is very serious.

INT. HUGE LOFT SPACE - CONTINUOUS

Adam steps into this open, empty loft in the middle of downtown.

ADAM

Yes. I believe this will be sufficient rehearsal space. How much?



BUILDING MANAGER

Year lease minimum, six thousand a month,  
and a two thousand a month building fee.

ADAM

Dollars?

BUILDING MANAGER

Yes. Dollars.

ADAM

May I just sit in here for a moment?

The guy sags - there went a half hour of his life.

BUILDING MANAGER

I have to show another unit - I'm coming back  
to get you after that. By the way? Your  
girlfriend's band name? No offense - but it's  
*retarded*.

A HALF HOUR LATER

The Manager lets other prospective clients out the front, turns.

INT. HUGE LOFT SPACE - SAME

On the floor in the middle of the room, Adam leans against a  
post, his computer open.

CLOSER: Adam is on a BRITISH WEBPAGE. We don't see too much -  
just the words "AMOUNT OF BET IN POUNDS STERLING."

Adam types in the number 1. Then a 0. Then four more. And he  
hits "enter." A beat. Then the screen reads:

"Please confirm your wager of 100,000 BRITISH POUNDS."

Adam hits confirm -- then suddenly slams his screen closed as-

The Building Manager pushes the creaking door open..

BUILDING MANAGER

Hope that wasn't porn.

INT. INDUSTRIAL ELEVATOR - A MOMENT LATER

Riding down. After a moment of silence.

BUILDING MANAGER

Do your parents know you're here?

ADAM  
Am I gonna get in trouble?

BUILDING MANAGER  
Am I?

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - LATER

Adam swoops at his front door and picks up a PACKAGE wrapped in a Vinyl Fetish bag with a note that says: "YOU MUST LISTEN TO ALL OF THESE IN ORDER BUT CALL ME FIRST."

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - A FEW MINUTES LATER

PILES OF CDS (some factory, others burned) with post-its on them. Adam is on the phone.

INTERCUT with JEANNIE, AT WORK, also on the phone.

JEANNIE  
Then sixth: Eels, "*Electro-Shock Blues*." I  
love them. *Love*.

Adam writes #6 on a post-it, puts it on the Eels record.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)  
Number seven.. If you've never heard Brian  
Wilson's *Smile*..

INT. APARTMENT - LATE AT NIGHT

Adam lies on the floor listening to The Eels.

INT. HIGH RISE CONDO - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Adam twirls at the counter-stool of this empty high-rise condo while Debbie shows a YOUNG COUPLE through the space.

DEBBIE  
..as you see on the set-up, the den opens up  
to incredible light.

HUSBAND  
(to wife)  
What about this - for the piano?

DEBBIE  
Oh, which of you is the musician?

Adam watches as the couple makes a vague noncommittal gesture - clearly not interested in getting personal with some *broker*.

We HEAR SOLO CELLO and cut to:

INT. ADAM'S BEDROOM - LATER IN THE NIGHT

Adam, on his bed, listening to Debbie play cello downstairs. It's the haunting cello line from Dvorak's *Quartet in F, Op 96*.

INT. TOM'S STUDY - NIGHT

Tom does the same thing from the couch in his den. Eyes wide open, he stares glassy-eyed, as his wife plays in the next room.

Then Debbie's solo line is overlapped by THREE OTHER PARTS (two violins and a viola) and we CUT TO:

INT. SMALL MUSIC ROOM - DAY

In a space we've never seen, Debbie plays, intense, with three others. They finish. Debbie looks up, anticipatory. As:

The First Violinist - an older man - glances at the others, then turns to Debbie.

OLDER MAN

Good. That was good. So.. what happened to the..

(checking a resume)

'Worcester String Ensemble?'

DEBBIE

Our second violinist's husband was transferred a couple years ago.. And I think it kinda.. You know, I don't have to tell you what the market for string quartets is..

The others nod - some agreement there.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

You mentioned on the phone another piece - the Razoumofsky thing. Do you still..?

WOMAN

I think we're good.

A MOMENT LATER

Debbie lugs her cello into the WAITING ROOM - where THREE OTHER CELLISTS are sitting. The Man comes out, reads from a list:

OLDER MAN

Elizabeth?

Another cellist rises, revealing ADAM, waiting.

ADAM

You sounded great.

DEBBIE

Yeah - well - thanks, but.. I could tell two measures in that it wasn't gonna..

Debbie turns - but Adam's not in the room. He is, instead:

BACK IN THE SMALL MUSIC ROOM - SAME

Adam, petulant, chastises the Older Man and the two others.

ADAM

Who are you anyways? What's the "Chesterfield Quartet?" If you were any good why haven't I heard of you? Cause you know why? You're actually not good.

(to the Older Man)

You in particular. Your phrasing is as trite as it is old fash--

The door suddenly swings open -

DEBBIE

Adam!

(rushes in, grabs his arm)

I'm sorry. I'm so so sorry.

INT. APARTMENT - HALLWAY - LATER

Elevator dings, Adam and Debbie head to the door. Deb laughs.

DEBBIE

*"If you were any good why haven't I heard of you!?"* I swear to god I if actually had a shot at it I'd've been pissed.

ADAM

I read a thing where they said to truly recognize rarified talent of a specific level you need to actually possess the very same qualities of that which you are judging.

DEBBIE

That's sweet.

ADAM

It's true.

Debbie bends, picks up another PACKAGE in a Vinyl Fetish bag.

DEBBIE

(reads)

"Listen in order. No exceptions."

(hands it to him)

More from Jeannie, I think.

INT. ADAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adam listens to a CD from Jeannie. But his focus is on..

The basketball ticket stub. Which contains a phone number. He hesitates... and then dials. A pause... then..

ADAM

This is Adam Davis.

And now we INTERCUT Adam in his room at night with:

EXT. BUDAPEST, HUNGARY - DAY (IN EUROPE)

Paul Alan Smith strolls the banks of the Danube.

SMITH

I'm sorry - is this *truthful* Thomas Adam Davis or *little lying man* Thomas Adam Davis?

ADAM

Where are you? Are you still in Detroit?

SMITH

Was. Till I heard this somewhat *outré* hard-to-say-if-it's-techno-inspired Hungarian pseudo-retro string-punk *ensem-bl*ay. You'd like them. It's as if Bela Bartok sat in with Radiohead on a record produced by Brian Eno and, I dunno, Dr. Dre. My Detroit friend played them for me online.. when?

(MORE)

SMITH (CONT'D)

Yesterday at dinner - and now - *presto* - I'm here, enjoying a delicious breakfast burger in Budapest. And Monday, if all goes well, they'll be there. I LOVE this century almost as much as I love all the others. Where are you?

ADAM

Boston.

SMITH

No - I mean in your ever-evolving narrative?

ADAM

I want to see you.

SMITH

Do you have a confession for me?

ADAM

I want you to help my mother.

SMITH

Do what?

ADAM

I'll tell you in person.

SMITH

Come to symphony hall on the 14th after school. You still do go to school, do you not?

EXT. JR. HIGH SCHOOL - RECESS - DAY

Kids run around, play. Evan looks around - no Adam.

INT. VINYL FETISH RECORDS - DAY

Jeannie, working. Adam drops a pile of CD's in front of her.

JEANNIE

Radiohead - excellent, I approve. You need to listen to track four on Kid A. "How to Disappear Completely." It was my theme song for like all of high school

(next CD)

*Dr. Dre.* Ooh, old school.

ADAM

Perhaps you could direct me to the works of Brian Eno?

JEANNIE

Yes - "perchance I shall." "Indubitably, indeed."

ADAM

*What?*

JEANNIE

You're *hilarious*. Little Man. This way.

EXT. BOSTON - DAY - SERIES OF SHOTS

1. Adam walks, alone, through the streets of Boston. He's listening to BARTOK on his iPod.

2. ECU'S: Adam, in a public square, watches businessmen through his binoculars. He's listening to DRE.

3. Adam, by the River, watches a family of ducks. Now he's listening to Radiohead's haunting "HOW TO DISAPPEAR COMPLETELY."

RADIOHEAD

*THAT THERE, THAT'S NOT ME  
I GO WHERE I PLEASE  
I WALK THOUGH WALLS  
I FLOAT DOWN THE LIFFEY  
I'M NOT HERE  
THIS ISN'T HAPPENING*

INT. BUILDING MANAGER'S OFFICE - INDUSTRIAL LOFT SPACE

The BUILDING MANAGER looks up. Sees Adam in the doorway.

ADAM

May I sit in the space again?

INT. HUGE EMPTY LOFT SPACE - DAY

Adam, on the floor against the wall, still listening to Radiohead. He looks at his watch: 12. He opens his computer.

A MOMENT LATER

He is watching his screen closely. An account of some kind. A lot of numbers. He's waiting. Keeps checking the clock.

It's well after noon. He checks his screen again. Then the clock. Then the screen. And then suddenly..

The numbers on his screen start to change.

Adam just watches.. eyes widening as we cut to:

A BEAUTIFUL PIANO

In the window of a piano store. And Adam's reflection looking in. He crosses to the door.

INT. PIANO STORE - A MOMENT LATER

A SALESPERSON hears ELABORATE RAGTIME, moves to where--

Adam sits at a PLAYER PIANO. He nods to a nearby GRAND PIANO.

ADAM

How much for the Boesendorfer?

SALESPERSON

(chuckles)

Way more than mommy or daddy can afford.

Adam nods. Continues to watch the keys play themselves as -

EXTREME CLOSE UPS - THROUGH BINOCULARS

People, seen in an office, move about morbidly - yet with a kind of comic air, as if there's some weird gallows party happening.

EXT. BOSTON - AFTERNOON - SAME

Adam is standing across from the 'GENTRONICS' building. After a moment he lowers the binocs and starts across the street.

INT. TOM'S OFFICE - SAME

Tom - weary - is on the phone..

TOM

Right.. Yeah.. Okay..

He hangs up. Sees Adam seated across from him.

ADAM

Hi Tom. Bad time?

TOM

You mean for you to be here? On in terms of Life In General? Aren't you supposed to be in school?



Suddenly NICK appears in the doorway - quite tipsy. He has a bottle of Moet and two paper cups. He puts one by Tom.

NICK

I'm not blaming your Bat-Ear. Do I look like I'm blaming your Bat-Ear? If I was, why would I be splitting this very expensive champagne that's been in my desk since I think just after we went public?

(just now noticing Adam)

--Oh, it's the genius. Ex-genius. Sorry. For a while we thought your father was the genius. *Ooopsie, guess not.* What do they call you now?

ADAM

Adam.

NICK

You know what, Adam, be good to your father, be good to this man here because you know what I did? I promised my own father that we could save all this. Never give your word based only on hope. That's my advice to you, Adam, son of Tom, grandson of whatever his name is.

ADAM

Hoyt.

NICK

Hoyt, who is in fact grandson of someone, etcetera, all the way back to the Birth of Man - which weirdly seems to make us all related - you aren't drinking your cup - which I will take and bring to HR - well, what's *left* of HR. More like "R." Resources, *sans* Humans.

And Nick is gone.

TOM

He's a bit drunk.

ADAM

('no shit')

Really?

Tom smiles.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Is this..

TOM  
..how adults always behave when kids aren't  
around? Absolutely. This is a typical day.  
Very very typical.

Tom's phone rings. He eyes the caller ID, realizes something.

TOM (CONT'D)  
Oh my god - oh no - he had half his pension in  
stock. He's gonna blame me for this. Hold on.  
(picks up phone)  
Dad - it'll be okay - we'll figure something  
out..

EXT. HOYT'S YARD - SAME

We now INTERCUT Tom with Hoyt, on his cordless phone, paces.

HOYT  
So what do I tell my money guy?

TOM  
I don't know. What'd he tell you?

HOYT  
That there was a drastic change in my balance,  
but he didn't want to leave it on voice mail.  
I avoided calling him back so as to prolong  
what I'm sure will be a certain heart attack.

TOM  
Okay, first, don't panic..

HOYT  
Does that ever work? Does asking people not  
to panic ever get them-- ?

TOM  
(sharp)  
Dad - Jesus - cut me some --  
(pauses; resets)  
Just let me talk to our analysts - we're  
trying to get a read on where the bottom  
actually is. I'll get back to you. Can you  
sit tight? Till I do? --Dad?

HOYT  
I'm nodding. Sorry.

TOM  
Just hold tight - I'll call you back.

Hoyt hangs up. We're back with Adam and Tom, in the office. Tom exhales. Huge. Rugs his eyes with his palms.

ADAM  
Can I go over there?

TOM  
School night.

ADAM  
Can I go on the weekend?

Tom, distracted by more stuff flashing on his computer, nods.

INT. TRAIN - DAY - SATURDAY

Adam rides the train, listening to Radiohead again.

EXT. HOYT'S ROAD - SAME

Adam walks up the road to Hoyt's property - sees that the FOR SALE SIGN is no longer there. He turns up the driveway, hearing, as he gets closer to the house, a strange WHIRRING SOUND. As he approaches the garage, his eyes widen as he sees:

INT. HOYT'S GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

A small version of one of those AIRPLANE FLIGHT SIMULATORS gyrating noisily. His mouth drops.

ADAM  
Grampa?! HEY GRAMPA!

Adam runs to it as it grinds to a stop. Hoyt's voice echoes:

HOYT (O.S.)  
Adam? Hang on, hang on.  
(popping open door)  
Whoo, boy! Had the thing two days, already  
survived 68 plane crashes! If only *life* had a  
reset button..

He steps out of the machine. Adam peeks in: it's like an airplane cockpit - with a screen instead of a windshield.

ADAM  
Did you buy this?

HOYT

Guy in Wichita makes em. I got number three. This internet - I'm telling you, if it ever catches on, it's gonna be huge. Know what I'm ordering next? An entire train.

ADAM

Can I try it?

HOYT

Later, I need a break. I was kidding about the train.

Adam turns, follows Hoyt out of the garage.

ADAM

I figured.

HOYT

You have something you wanna tell me?

ADAM

No, why?

HOYT

Just wondering.

INT. KITCHEN - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Hoyt and Adam playing chess.

ADAM

So you're not selling your house?

HOYT

Damnedest thing. Beginning of last week, best I could tell, I was dirt poor; nearly broke. Finally got the balls to call my money guy - turns out I suddenly had six hundred thousand dollars in the bank. Don't even know which stock it was. Very strange.

(moves bishop)

Check.

ADAM

What did your money guy say?

HOYT

He asked what your father knew about it - and I told him he knew nothing - and he said good, then he asked me to sign a pdf saying he knew nothing. Then he resigned as my money guy. You have any idea why he would do that?

Adam shakes his head, makes a chess move. Hoyt counters.

HOYT (CONT'D)

And.. mate.

Hoyt tips Adam's king. Then just stares at Adam.

ADAM

*What?*

HOYT

You moved pawn to rook 4.

ADAM

So?

HOYT

That was calculated to draw my bishop to the next logical position - which was there. Which meant you could only move there.. which put your king directly in danger.

ADAM

What are you saying?

HOYT

That you were trying to lose.

ADAM

(rises, gathers things)  
I believe I need to head home.

HOYT

Adam.

Adam stops. Turns.

HOYT (CONT'D)

Where do you go?

ADAM

What do you mean?

HOYT

In the afternoon. When you're supposed to be in school. Where are you?

ADAM

At school.

HOYT

Adam.

Adam remains motionless.

HOYT (CONT'D)

I got a call. Last week. About your attendance. Actually, your *parents* got a call. At *my* number. I thought: why would the school call *your* parents at *my* number? Then I thought: they would, if Adam had changed the contact info in the school computer. Did Adam do that?

ADAM

What did you tell them?

HOYT

You had the flu.

ADAM

Why didn't you say anything to me?

HOYT

I figured you'd tell me when you were ready. But then you pissed me off.

(re chessboard)

I was trying to win. I don't like it when I find out we both have the same goal. A man doesn't do that to another man. It's not manly. Do you hear me? *Not manly*. So. Adam. One more time: Where do you go?

INT. INDUSTRIAL ELEVATOR - LATER

Adam and Hoyt ride up, saying nothing. It stops on the 11th floor: the same floor Adam got off with the Building Manager.

Only this time Adam has his own set of keys.

INT. HALLWAY OF INDUSTRIAL LOFT BUILDING

Hoyt looks around as Adam opens the door and indicates for Hoyt to step inside. Hoyt enters --

INT. HUGE LOFT SPACE - CONTINUOUS

The vast, empty corner loft in downtown Boston. There is absolutely nothing in there except for two things:

That BOESENDORFER GRAND PIANO, and a DESK with a computer.

Hoyt walks in.. slowly. Taking it all in. Walks along the window.. looking out at the city rising around him.. then..

He hears a simple note on the piano. Followed by another.

Slowly he turns and sees..

Adam, at the piano, just looking at him. Then Adam turns..

And plays the first movement of Beethoven's Piano Concerto Number 5 in E Flat Major; Opus 73. Flawlessly.

The whole while Hoyt just watches.. moving slowly to the one chair in the space, where he sits, silently, as Adam finishes.

A long pause. Finally..

HOYT

So.. The wings. You just - what? Threw em off the balcony?

*FLASHBACK: RAIN. Adam walks along the railing, illuminated in flashes of lightning. He turns. Unstraps the wings.*

ADAM (V.O.)

More or less.

*HARD CUTS: Wings descending.. the ground rising.*

HOYT (V.O.)

What about the scrapes? The bruises?

*FLASHBACK: Adam winces as he carefully and deliberately runs his arm along the pavement until his own skin is peeling. He does it again - then again with his forehead. And his cheek.*

*Face bleeding, he lifts a brick.. and brings it down on his leg - hard. So hard his eyes tear and he lets out a whimper of pain.*

*FAST CUT: Adam loudly bangs a two-by-four into some trash cans. Then quickly hobbles to the wings, which he re-straps to himself, and climbs under, and closes his eyes as we hear:*

DEBBIE/TOM

ADAM!? ADAM!?

THE LOFT - PRESENT

Silence. Hoyt takes a moment to take this all in. Finally:

HOYT

Those were your birthday wings.

ADAM

I'm sorry.

HOYT  
Those were your goddamned birthday wings,  
Adam. That was not what they were meant for.

ADAM  
I know, I'm sorry.

HOYT  
I'm sorry.

ADAM  
It's not your fault.

HOYT  
No. I'm sorry for whatever pain you were in  
that made this seem like a good idea.

Adam looks at Hoyt, then looks away.

INT. HOYT'S CAR - DRIVING - NIGHT

Thelonious Monk on the radio. Adam in the passenger seat.  
Silence. For a while. Finally:

HOYT  
So what'd I buy that made me so rich?

ADAM  
You didn't *buy*, per se. You borrowed on  
margin, then made a few advance trades on a  
flat fee, then transferred your short gain  
and used it to open an account on this  
British website, where you bet on some other  
stock type stuff.

HOYT  
You can do that? You can bet on stocks?

ADAM  
Well, you bet *against*, really..

HOYT  
Gentronics?  
(off Adam's nod)  
Is that why my money guy quit?  
(quickly)  
You know what, don't tell me. I'm not sure I  
wanna know.

A pause. Adam watches his grandfather listen to the music.



INT. APARTMENT - ELEVATOR - GOING UP

Adam and Hoyt. Again, quiet. Followed by:

HOYT

Listen.. Since we're confessing things..  
There's something I never quite knew how to  
tell you.

(as Adam looks over)

I hate classical music. I know it's  
sacrilege, but to me, it's just a bunch of  
people doing exactly what they're told. You  
ask me, real music began and ended with one  
man: Thelonious Monk. I could listen to that  
man play *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star* and I  
would be happy.

(a big exhale)

I feel a lot better now.

The elevator dings. Hoyt and Adam step off and into --

THE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

And make their way to the apartment.

ADAM

Um.. Grampa? Do we have to tell my parents?

HOYT

That I hate classical? They'll kill me.

ADAM

No, I meant --

HOYT

I know what you meant.

(as they arrive at the door)

One of us has to. Either I do it now, or you  
do it when you're ready. Your call.

ADAM

Me.

HOYT

Man to man?

ADAM

Man to man.

Hoyt and Adam shake hands. Now Adam gets the key from the mat.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
By the way - the hardest part..? Harder than  
lying all the time..?

HOYT  
Lemme guess: losing at chess.

ADAM  
(nods, rises)  
Oh - also. Your money. Is it okay if I keep  
playing with it?

Hoyt kneels by Adam as if to admonish him. Instead:

HOYT  
Do I get to keep my simulator?

Adam nods.

HOYT (CONT'D)  
Then hell yes.

INT. HUGE LOFT SPACE - DAY

Adam lies on the floor listening to THELONIOUS MONK as he tears  
open a FED-EX PACKAGE. It's an ATM CARD.

EXT. BANK - ATM - A MOMENT LATER

Adam inserts the card, then enters a PIN. Pause. He pushes a  
button. Then another. Pause. He waits. Then.. like magic..

Money comes out. Adam gapes.

EXT. OUTDOOR CAFE - DAY

Adam and Jeannie eating lunch. Adam has a note pad.

JEANNIE  
..and then if you like the Eels you'll like  
this other group, Saint America. Hey - what's  
the deal with *school*? Am I gonna get like  
*arrested* by the truancy police?

ADAM  
We don't have school today.

JEANNIE  
Really? Why?

ADAM

It's a long lunch I mean.

Jeannie looks at him warily.

JEANNIE

Are you.. I hope this isn't rude, but maybe it's the accident, or whatever.. But you seem like something's.. *off*. I don't remember you as having like such *beady little eyes*.

ADAM

No, it's good. I'm good.  
(as the check comes)  
I got this.

JEANNIE

Adam. Seriously. I have a job.

ADAM

So do I.

JEANNIE

Right - what, are you making Nikes for some Taiwanese overlord?

(wrests check from him)

No. Sorry. You're 12.

ADAM

I'll get the next one.

JEANNIE

Oh. Okay. Little Man. You 'get the next one.'

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE CAFE - A MOMENT LATER

They exit. Adam has a list, Jeannie has a latte in a to go cup.

JEANNIE

Okay - two of those you can't download cause they're on vinyl, so I'll make sure I--

ADAM

(abruptly)

Would you like to come back to my place?

Jeannie abruptly LAUGHS WHILE DRINKING - nearly doing a spit-take. She folds - half-laughing, half coughing.

JEANNIE

Oh my god! Oh my god did you just say that?  
I'm sorry. I'm sorry..

ADAM

What..?

JEANNIE

I'm sorry - you literally made me *laugh my coffee through my nose*.. Oh my god.. this is disgusting, I need a napkin.. Hang on..

(grabs napkin from seating area)

Sorry - thanks. No, I'm sorry, I can't "come back to your place." That is hilarious. I have to help James with a - thing. He got into biz school - at Duke. Which is in North--

ADAM

Yes I'm aware of where it is.

Adam's sudden change of tone wakes her up.

JEANNIE

Sorry. Really. Are you okay?

ADAM

My father's company's falling apart. And my mother is lost.

JEANNIE

Really? That's bad, I guess. But why is any of that your problem?

A pause. Adam isn't sure how to respond. She hugs him. He doesn't know what to do with his arms.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)

Adam..

ADAM

(as they break apart)

By the way, The Eels are playing next week at the Royale. Would you like to go?

JEANNIE

I have plans with James. And it's sold out, cause I checked.

ADAM

I have three tickets. Front row. My grampa won this silent auction for this charity thing. Anyways, James can come.

JEANNIE

Are you for real?

INT. HUGE LOFT SPACE - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Adam is at his computer on a TICKET SCALPER WEBSITE. On screen it tells him 'I'm sorry, your request can only be processed in quantities of 2 or 4.' Adam chooses 4.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY

Adam unlocks the front door and opens it.. And steps --

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Where he stops in the doorway as he sees HIS PARENTS in the kitchen. Tom looks bad. He's got a scotch.

DEBBIE

Where were you?

ADAM

I told you. Jeannie's.

DEBBIE

You didn't tell me -

ADAM

I left a message -

DEBBIE

Go on upstairs.

ADAM

Is everything okay?

DEBBIE

Go on upstairs, I'll be with you in a minute.

(off Adam's hesitation)

Now. Please.

INT. APARTMENT - NOT TOO LONG AFTER

EXTREME CLOSE UPS. With the VOICES AMPLIFIED as Adam watches his parents from the stairs with the BINOCULARS and BAT EARS. Tom weaves about - tipsy. Adam's magnified view is partially obscured. (Adam's also recording with a BOOM MIC.)

TOM

*And he doesn't just fire me - right? That's not degrading enough - no - he has to do it by text! Oh! - and it's on his stupid auto-correcting iPhone! So in fact it said 'I "EGRIT" to inform you that we are paring down further and you've been "FRIED."*

DEBBIE

You've got to be kidding.

TOM

Whatever, they "fried" everyone but four. Nick's talking to the Chinese, trying to unload the whole company. It's basically a garage sale at this point. I keep waiting to like wake up. Like I'm gonna snap my fingers..

(tries a snap)

Christ - I can't even.. there.

(snaps)

Is this happening? Is this really happening?

DEBBIE

I don't know what you want me to say..

TOM

It's like I'm me, in my guidance counselor's office, looking at me now going, like, yup - what you were afraid you'd amount to? Boom. Nada. Why was it okay before the fall?

DEBBIE

What are you talking about?

TOM

The fall. Of Adam the Great. The literal fall.

DEBBIE

Now you're scaring me --

TOM

No no no no no - think about it: every year, practically every year since we've known each other, we've been on a slow, steady descent --

DEBBIE

I'm not doing this, Tom..

TOM

No - it's is a fact: every year my salary's dropped - the company's slid - your whole music dream just, whatever, faded. But it was always fine. Cause when you were trotting him around, doing the, whatever, the dog and pony show, at least you knew where to put yourself. Cause we had this.. thing we created. Who was gonna rise above it all. Like this floating piece of.. of magic. In fact, he was the only thing I ever made that didn't completely tank. Till it did. And now we're just two middle-aged sacks of flesh in the same shitty apartment.

UPSTAIRS Adam lowers the binocs but keeps listening.

*TOM (CONT'D)*

*You know what it's like? 'Member that song?*

*(sloppily mimicking "Talking Heads")*

*You may ask yourself.. What is that beautiful house? You may ask yourself, how did I get here?*

*(distorting it)*

*Well howwww did I getttttt here?*

INT. ADAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Adam lies on his side in bed, eyes open, staring ahead, when a SHADOW appears under the door behind him and the doorknob turns.

His father sticks his head in.

*TOM*

*Ad? You up, bud?*

Adam is silent and motionless as Tom feels his way into the dark room, stands for a moment above his son, and then sits. Adam looks so peaceful, so small just under him.

Then Tom, work shoes still on, hauls his legs up and lies next to Adam, big chest against Adam's tiny back, heavy arm draped over Adam's side, head just above Adam's on the pillow.

What Tom doesn't know: Adam's eyes are wide open.

Tom closes his eyes. Squeezes Adam tight. Very tight. Inhaling as he does - drinking Adam in.

Adam continues to lie there. Finally reaches out from under his covers - and takes his father's hand. But it's limp, now, as..

Tom's fallen asleep.

Adam lies there, eyes still open, holding his father's hand as Tom sleeps behind him in his bed.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

The FLIGHT SIMULATOR whirs as it gyrates.

INT. SIMULATOR - SAME

"Flying" over the nightscape of Boston city lights. Adam at the controls, Hoyt beside him.

HOYT

Good. Now bring 'er around, slowly.. Not too much, good. That's Logan down there. Careful now - touch down is the most dangerous part.

Hoyt helps him bring it in.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Tom - not used to sitting in the apartment mid-morning mid-week, stares at his phone. Finally he picks it up, dials. This is hard for him. We can hear an OUTGOING MESSAGE - then a BEEP.

TOM

Hi, Nick. Tom. Listen, I know you're swamped, but.. I'm wondering if I can see you..

EXT. SYMPHONY HALL - DAY

Adam walks up the steps of the Hall.

INT. SYMPHONY HALL - A MOMENT LATER

Adam follows someone down a hallway and into -

A LARGE REHEARSAL ROOM

Where Paul Alan Smith is in the middle of a work session with a small GROUP OF MUSICIANS and a TALL MAN in his early twenties.

(The group is the ensemble from Budapest. It's not commented on, but the tall man is EMINEM, whom Adam doesn't recognize.)

Smith stops the moment he sees Adam and turns.

SMITH

Ah! Tibor, Vilmos, Hajna, Marshall - this is the young man I've been telling you about.

EXT. CHARLES RIVER - ESPLANADE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Smith is walking with Adam.

SMITH

Okay - first - before you go into why we're talking - I can only sustain this charade for so long.



ADAM  
What charade?

SMITH  
(stops, looks at him)  
Adam. Really. Please.

Adam doesn't say anything. He doesn't have to. He just nods.

ADAM  
Okay.

SMITH  
Thank you.

They resume walking.

SMITH (CONT'D)  
One day, Adam, you will realize you're part of  
a *lineage*, not a chain gang.

ADAM  
So will you listen to my mother?

SMITH  
Do what? Eat? Fish? Run on the treadmill?

ADAM  
Play cello.

SMITH  
Why?

ADAM  
Well.. I believe she would very much like if  
it you would hear her.

SMITH  
I believe you would very much like it if *she*  
would hear *you*.

ADAM  
I'm serious. Would you help her?

SMITH  
Only if you promise me I can really help her.

ADAM  
That's what I'm saying.

INT. SYMPHONY HALL - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Adam and Smith re-enter the rehearsal space. Eminem and the Hungarians are in the middle of a work session.

SMITH  
So where are we?

EMINEM  
They got something to play for you.

SMITH  
I was, am, and always will be all ears.

A MOMENT LATER

Smith and the Hungarians listen to playback as --

NEARBY - IN SMITH'S OFFICE

Adam and Eminem on the PlayStation on Smith's couch.

EMINEM  
P A says you're a hell of a pianist.  
Adam shrugs. They play for a moment more. Then:

ADAM  
So what is it you do?

EMINEM  
Really?

EXT. BOSTON - DAY - SAME

Tom - wearing a coat and a tie - exits a cab and crosses into--

INT. RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Tom sees NICK at a table. Nick waves him over. Tom comes, sits. This is brutally hard for Tom.

TOM  
Before you say anything - first, thank you.  
For seeing me. There were like 40 of us and  
I'm sure if you sat for everyone's -

NICK  
Tom.

TOM

Please let me finish - I've been rehearsing -

NICK

Tom. I'll save you the trouble. I don't work there any more.

Tom just looks at him.

NICK (CONT'D)

As of eleven o'clock. They sent out an email - which was weird. I figured they'd've at least called you.

TOM

No.. And I didn't check emails cause I was - honestly, I was trying to get my head together for this. So wait. If you don't work there, why'd you still meet me?

NICK

Because I was expecting you to bail on me. But when you didn't, I figured I would take the chance to make a pitch to you about what is unassailable, which is that I know the insides of that company better than anyone. But I think it's pointless until you check your email.

TOM

I'm extremely confused.

NICK

I'd suggest you check your email.

EXT. RESTAURANT - A MOMENT LATER

Tom exits, checks his BlackBerry. His jaw drops.

INT. SIMULATOR - 'FLYING'

Hoyt pilots the plane over virtual Canada.

INT. HOYT'S KITCHEN - DAY - SAME

Adam is at the computer - working - when the DOORBELL RINGS. He crosses, opens the front door.

There's a HUGE TRUCK in the driveway and a guy with a clipboard.

GUY

Your airplane's here.

Adam's eyes widen.

ABOUT AN HOUR LATER

The huge truck lumbers off, leaving Adam and Hoyt with DOZENS of VARIOUSLY SIZED AND SHAPED BOXES stationed around a partially (about half) assembled light sport aircraft.

Hoyt has a packing slip on the clipboard, checking off items as he goes from box to box. Adam starts poking around.

ADAM

You can just get it in a *kit*? And then *put it together*? A whole airplane?

Hoyt nods. IN THE GARAGE - on the wall - is the BLUEPRINT: a drawing of what the plane would look like finished.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Then what are you gonna do? Fly it?

HOYT

No, I'm gonna fill it with balled up plastic bags and push it around. Of course I'm gonna fly it. That's the damn point.

(hunting for labels on boxes)

"Fixed Leading Edge Wing Slats." There's supposed to be this island, somewhere north of Maine, south of Nova Scotia. Guess what lives on it?

(off Adam's shrug)

Nothing. Can't moor a boat to it, can't land on it. Totally uninhabitable. I wanna see it. See for myself. The last, uncharted..

(searching for another item)

Ah.. Here we go. "Flaperon Assembly." Okay. All set. So.. Shall we start?

Adam nods - excited - when they hear a CAR pull up, honk.

HOYT (CONT'D)

You expecting someone?

Adam turns - at the end of the driveway is a LIMOUSINE.

ADAM

I believe it's time for my date.

Off Hoyt's look, we cut to:

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

The door opens and Tom - beaming - enters with champagne.

TOM  
Hel-looooooooooooo? Wifely-wife-wife?

DEBBIE  
(stepping into room)  
Tom?

TOM  
I believe the proper monicker is "Mister President."

EXT. BOSTON - NIGHT

The LIMO waits outside a small apartment building as --

Adam stands at a doorway holding FLOWERS and --

A 22 YEAR OLD GUY (JAMES) steps out of his apartment.

JAMES  
For me!? --Kidding. But I'll put em in water. I'm James, by the way.

ADAM  
Hey. Adam.

Adam initiates his now-practiced fist-bump. James is a cool guy - a decent guy. And he understands full well the situation. Still - how can you pass up free front row tickets - and a limo?

JAMES  
It is totally a pleasure to meet you, Adam.  
And thank you for the extremely nice ride.  
(as he enters past Jeannie, who exits)  
Look what you got..

JEANNIE  
(bopping James good-naturedly)  
Flowers - take a hint.  
(to Adam)  
Notice anything?

ADAM  
Um..

JEANNIE  
(re her piercings)  
I got two more. My mom like shit a Twinkie, I think. "  
(MORE)

JEANNIE (CONT'D)  
 You still live in this house, you follow our  
 rules young lady."  
 (turns, spots huge limo)  
 Okay - that'll do. But I'd prefer a little  
*legroom*.

James exits again, now filming with his phone. Jeannie plays  
 for the camera.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)  
 Okay - well - seeing as our normal car's in  
 the shop, I *guess* we can take the maid's  
 beater P.O.S.

James follows her to the limo door - holds it open for Adam.

JAMES  
 Please. After you.

INT. ROYALE THEATER - LATER

THE EELS on stage. Adam, James, Jeannie, and an empty 4th seat  
 in the front row. Adam is actually TOO close, given his size  
 and the height of the stage.

James and Jeannie are having the time of their life - sing along  
 with *Novocaine For the Soul*.

INT. HUGE LIMO - LATER

Adam, alone, in the quiet back, after Jeannie and James have  
 been long ago dropped off. It pulls up to his apartment.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY

Adam - spent - approaches the door. Hears SCALES on the cello.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The place looks like a small party happened.

DEBBIE  
 Well?

ADAM  
 It was fun.

DEBBIE  
 Did you say hi to Jeannie for me?  
 (off Adam's nod)  
 (MORE)

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

That was really nice of her to invite you.  
How is she doing?

ADAM

Good.

(re the empty champagne and glasses)  
What happened?

DEBBIE

Your father got his old job back. Scratch  
that - he got *Nick's* old job back.

ADAM

Really?

DEBBIE

Some Swiss guy swooped in and outbid the  
Chinese. His name is Thaddeus Wolf. Isn't  
that funny?

ADAM

Where's Tom?

DEBBIE

(indicates the den)  
He's already plotting away. His new boss  
wants him to 'think outside the box.'

Debbie watches Adam as he goes into --

THE DEN - CONTINUOUS

Tom is hard at work as Adam enters.

TOM

Pretty cool, huh? Your old man is "President  
of Worldwide Development and Production." Of  
course, we only have six employees - for now.  
Till I turn it into a raging leviathan of  
acoustical.. Whatever..

DEBBIE

(stepping in)  
Do you not remember your friend Thaddeus Wolf?

ADAM

Who? No. Why?

DEBBIE

From Mommy and Me? He was only in for a few  
weeks. You were like 2. Well dad's new boss  
is named Dr. *Thaddeus Wolf*.

(MORE)

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

I just thought it was funny - I mean - how many Thaddeus Wolfs are there in the world?

ADAM

(oddly abrupt)

Apparently at least two. And one is Swiss and old.

DEBBIE

I'm just saying it's a funny coincidence. And it's late. And you need to get to bed.

A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Tom finishes an email - to "Dr. T Wolf" - and hits SEND.

INT. ADAM'S BEDROOM - SAME

Adam's BLACKBERRY - which he keeps under his pillow - DINGS.

EXT. HOYT'S DRIVEWAY - NIGHT (SAME)

Monk plays as Hoyt's plane continues to take shape: The wings have expanded out. It's started to look more 'whole.'

Hoyt's outside working on it, working late, engrossed.

INT. GENTRONICS OFFICE - CONFERENCE ROOM

Tom, animated, talks to the small, pared-down office. There are designs up on the board behind him.

TOM

..idea here is the hearing aid as jewelry. In the same way that, say, eyeglasses have become a cosmetic accessory.. It's an idea of Dr. Wolf's actually. He said he got it while looking at his granddaughter's piercings. The notion is that we can be both *smaller* and more conspicuous - at the same time..

INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

Tom, Debbie and Adam, at dinner. Tom is lively, still animated.

TOM

-- oh - oh - you should have seen the look on Nick's face when I brought him in. Two days a week. And he *took it!*

(MORE)



TOM (CONT'D)  
I love that he's working *for me* now! Part  
time. Till we get those new casings  
launched..

Adam watches. Debbie looks at him - then back at Tom. Curious.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

Debbie is looking around Tom's desk. Suspicious of something -  
though unsure what. She shuffles through some of his papers.  
The door suddenly opens and Debbie, startled, drops the papers.

ADAM  
What are you doing?

DEBBIE  
What? Nothing. Cleaning up.

INT. JR. HIGH CLASSROOM - DAY

Adam - bored out of his wits - leans back in his chair,  
listening to a teacher talk about capital cities.

A MOMENT LATER

The teacher, at her desk, reads a note signed by 'TOM DAVIS.'

TEACHER  
Really? Another doctor's appointment?

ADAM  
It's just to go over the lab reports. It's  
just a routine thing.

The teacher looks at him.

INT. APARTMENT - SAME

Debbie is in the living room, practicing scales. Working hard.

EXT. JUST OUTSIDE HOYT'S PROPERTY

Adam walks. Turns into Hoyt's driveway.

HOYT (O.S.)  
Addo! Perfect timing! Come gimme a hand,  
will ya?

EXT. HOYT'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

The airplane is nearly finished. Adam is holding up a piece of metal so that Hoyt can affix a decal.

HOYT  
.. 'ere we go. What do you think?

Hoyt peels off a piece of paper, revealing: a name. In black letters affixed to the side of the plane. *Blue Monk*.

ADAM  
The Monk song?

Hoyt nods as Adam's BLACKBERRY BEEPS with an instant message. Hoyt looks - sees it's from Tom - to Dr. Wolf.

HOYT  
Dr. Wolf?

ADAM  
It's a work thing. I mean, a school thing.

HOYT  
Adam.

ADAM  
(a pause)  
We bought Gentronics.

Hoyt stops what he's doing. Exhales deeply. This is *huge*.

HOYT  
Ooh-boy. And you expect this to end *how* exactly?

THE KITCHEN - A BEAT LATER

Hoyt puts ice in a glass, pours a Scotch. Adam follows him in, sits at the kitchen table.

ADAM  
It actually was quite a steal.

HOYT  
(pours a second shot)  
Right. Great.  
(turns)  
Lemme ask you something. Your dad. Why do you think his old boss never promoted him?

ADAM  
What are you getting at?

Hoyt sits at the table.

HOYT

Adam, there are people who design planes, and people who fly them. And I suspect they are entirely different skills altogether.

ADAM

Tom said you always thought of him as a failure, no matter how well he did.

HOYT

Not a 'failure.' Just that there was always a pronounced difference between what he aspired to and what he actually achieved.

ADAM

I think you're a better grampa than father.

Hoyt just looks at Adam. Has nothing to add.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

EXTREME CLOSE-UPS as:

Adam on the stairs with the binoculars and bat-ears. There's a party going on. A banner reads "CONGRATULATIONS MR. PRESIDENT!"

It's for Tom. He's in the middle of regaling people:

TOM

..Oh! And get this --

DEBBIE

This is great!

TOM

-- Nick's working for me now. Part time. I ask Dr. Wolf: "Hey, I'd like to give this guy a shot." Well I don't ask him, I email him, cause it's all email - cause he's deaf - which - and he never said this, but it explains his interest in a hearing aid company.

A FRIEND

To Dr Wolf!

TOM

And his bad taste in companies!

DEBBIE

But great taste in company presidents!

People raise a glass.

TOM  
And Debbie's got news!

DEBBIE  
Tom - no -

TOM  
Yes yes. Guess who called her - wants to  
listen to her play --

On the stairs, Adam's BLACKBERRY buzzes. He puts down the binocs, looks. His text says, simply: "OUTSIDE."

A MOMENT LATER

Adam - in a sport coat and tie - comes downstairs.

DEBBIE  
No, I don't know. According to my snoops at the Symphony Society he's putting together some piece with a Hungarian string ensemble and Eminem.. Maybe he needs back up? I don't know..  
(sees Adam)  
Hey. Gimme a kiss.  
(kisses the top of his head)  
Say hi to her.

ADAM  
I will.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT ("O YA") - EVENING

Adam and Jeannie sit across from each other. A 21 year old in jeans and t-shirt, and a 12 year old in a sport coat and tie.

JEANNIE  
And James is all "Maybe if I'm going there for grad school you could like go to undergrad." -- Let's go 50-50 on this, okay? But I'm like.. I don't know - it's like *North Carolina* - I might be in a *total rut* here but at least it's a rut I *know*. What are you doing?

He is holding a jewelry box - which he slides over.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)  
Seriously - wait - what are you doing?

ADAM  
Small gift.

She hesitates.. Then opens it. It's a DIAMOND RING.

JEANNIE

Is this real?

ADAM

Of course. It's a round brilliant octahedron.

JEANNIE

You're crazy. I can't take this. Anyway, why would you give me a diamond ring?

ADAM

Because I love you.

JEANNIE

Because you love me?

(as he nods)

For real? With all the bits and pieces?

ADAM

Yes.

JEANNIE

Listen, whatever, when I was your babysitter - which I sucked at, by the way - you were like a brother to me. And I still feel the same. And I have a boyfriend. Who you *know*. Who *adores* you.

He nods, looks off; this isn't what he wanted to hear.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)

Are you listening to me?

ADAM

Statistically, women are usually 7 years younger than their partners, but that's really stupid because men die 7 years earlier, so women are widows for 14 years.

JEANNIE

Okay - seriously - your bonk on the head? It made you crazy and stupid. I should go.

ADAM

Wait. We would die at the same time. Besides, a woman's libido's at its peak 10 years later than a man's.

JEANNIE

The *libido*? Really?

ADAM

That's why so many relationships fail. Women should be older than their men. We would make the perfect couple.

A waitress brings a menu.

JEANNIE

I don't think we're ordering.

ADAM

Yes. We are. Just - give us a moment.

The waitress leaves the menus, departs.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Jeannie, you're the love of my life.

JEANNIE

Your "life" hasn't even started. And what about sex? I bet you didn't think *that* through, did you? Mr. *Libido*.

ADAM

Well, that could wait for a while. It's just an optional exchange of DNA anyway.

JEANNIE

Okay - see - yeah. You're just proving my point. Adam, I'm a woman and you're 12.

ADAM

But that's just a number. These are all just numbers. I can't live without you.

JEANNIE

Adam - I'm sorry. I can't do this.  
(slides ring back)  
I can't take this. I can't do this.

EXT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Jeannie's hailing a cab when Adam comes out.

ADAM

Okay. I'm sorry. We don't have to like - whatever. But I.. I made something for you.

INT. INDUSTRIAL ELEVATOR - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Adam and Jeannie ride up. It stops at the 11th floor, opens.

INT. HALLWAY OF INDUSTRIAL LOFT BUILDING

Jeannie looks around as Adam leads her to a door. Removes keys.

ADAM

What?

JEANNIE

It's just.. A 12 year old with keys. It's just funny.

He inserts one into the lock. Opens the door into -

INT. HUGE LOFT SPACE - CONTINUOUS

The vast, empty corner loft in downtown Boston.

JEANNIE

They just.. Let you do this?

ADAM

Anyways it's a write-off. For my business.

JEANNIE

Your business. Why is there a piano in here?  
Are you playing?

Adam crosses to the (new) incredible sound system. Indicates for her to sit on one of two super-fancy arm chairs.

ADAM

This is what I made for you.

Adam sits in the chair next to her and lifts a remote, then hits "play." We HEAR a bit of a Beethoven's Opus 10 #1 for piano.

JEANNIE

What is this?

ADAM

Just wait.

*..then a beat starts - a modern, electronica-inspired beat - taken from the music Jeannie gave him. And over it the classical riff repeats. Then it repeats again. And again.*

*Then we hear 14 YEAR OLD JEANNIE'S VOICE - from the NANNY CAM RECORDING 7 YEARS AGO:*

*JEANNIE'S VOICE (FROM 7 YEARS AGO)*

*..Ladies and gentlemen.. On piano.. The great Adam Davis!*

Jeannie looks at Adam. He just stares up at the ceiling as we now hear *HIS FATHER'S VOICE* - in time to the music.

*TOM'S VOICE*

Keep waiting to like wake up. Like, you know, I'm gonna snap my fingers..

We HEAR THE SNAPPING of Tom's fingers - cut in and repeated, rhythmically. The mix is starting to build. Debbie's cello weaves in and repeats.

*DEBBIE'S VOICE*

Don't know what you want me to say. You're scaring me. Tom - Tom - Tom - you're really scaring me.

*TOM'S VOICE*

Is this really happening? Is this - is this - is this really happening?

And then, extremely softly - and getting softer - as if it's tumbling off a very, very distant cliff:

*JEANNIE'S VOICE (FROM 7 YEARS AGO)*

SOULJA BOY OFF IN THIS--

*ADAM'S VOICE (FROM 7 YEARS AGO)*

OH!

Now OTHER SOUNDS are woven in: sounds of the city; sounds from outside their apartment.. the saxophone player (from out their window), edited to accompany his parents' words:

*TOM'S VOICE*

Every year, practically every year since we've known each other, we've been on a slow, steady descent --

*DEBBIE'S VOICE*

Tom - T-Tom - Tom - you're really scaring me.

Softly - like a very distant echo - we hear:

*TALKING HEADS*

Letting the days go by, letting the water hold me down..

*DEBBIE'S VOICE*

Don't know - don't know what you want me to say..

*TOM'S VOICE*

Is this - is this - is this really happening?

*JEANNIE'S VOICE (FROM 7 YEARS AGO)*

WATCH ME CRANK IT WATCH ME--



ADAM'S VOICE (FROM 7 YEARS AGO)

ROLL!

TOM'S VOICE

..Cause when you were trotting him around, at least you knew where to put yourself..

TALKING HEADS

(still extremely soft)

Into the blue again, after the money's gone..

TOM'S VOICE

Cause we had this.. thing we created. Like this floating piece of.. of magic.

DEBBIE'S VOICE

Don't know - don't know what you want me to say..

TOM'S VOICE

..look at myself now going, like, yup. BOOM.

TALKING HEADS

You may ask yourself: where is that large automobile?

DEBBIE'S VOICE

Tom..

TOM

No. No no. Yup. BOOM

(The "Tom" and the "no - no no - yup - BOOM" continues)

TOM'S VOICE

Two middle-aged sacks of flesh in the same shitty apartment..

TOM'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Like this floating piece of.. of magic.

TOM'S VOICE

You know what it's like? That song:  
(mimicking the "Talking Heads")

You may ask yourself.. What is that beautiful house?

TALKING HEADS

You may ask yourself: what is this beautiful house?

(Add in Debbie's "Don't know what you want me to say")

TOM'S VOICE

You may ask yourself, how did I get here?

TALKING HEADS

(gaining in volume)

Letting the days go by, let the water hold me down..

TOM'S VOICE

*Well howwww did I getttttt here?*

TALKING HEADS

*Letting the days go by, water flowing underground..*

TOM'S VOICE

*Well howwww did I getttttt here?*

Sudden silence - then:

TOM'S VOICE (CONT'D)

*Cause we did it. This floating piece of.. of magic.*

*And a CRASHING cacophony: horns, trash cans, street musicians -- and emerging out of that: classical piano - which is overwhelmed by more city sounds.. Out of which emerges more classical music.*

PUSH IN ON Adam as these two things battle for primacy.. And under it, the whole time..

*The modern beat grows louder. Until there's SILENCE again, and:*

JEANNIE'S VOICE (FROM 7 YEARS AGO)

*No matter what happens, no matter who in our life can't possibly understand us.. let's promise - no swear - to always be there for each other, throughout all time. Do you promise?*

ADAM'S VOICE (FROM 7 YEARS AGO)

*I promise.*

And it's over. Pause. He hits "stop." Then turns to Jeannie.

She's just looking at him. She's very emotionally affected - but it's not just sadness; it's far, far more complex.

ADAM

What?

JEANNIE

I can't help you, Adam.

ADAM

I don't understand.

JEANNIE

I just.. I have to leave.

ADAM

What are you talking about? Leave where?

JEANNIE

I don't know. Leave Boston, I think.

ADAM

And leave me?

JEANNIE

I don't know. Yes. I have to go to North Carolina. Whatever - I have to get out of here. I have to get out of this space. It creeps me out. Cause all this..

(referring to the loft)

This is bad. I wanted to give you music so you could, I don't know, like - what do you call it when something.. whatever, blends?

ADAM

Assimilate?

JEANNIE

Yeah, sure. Because you should live in the world, Adam. Not this crazy - whatever - *supervillain's lair*. This.. *Bat Cave*.

ADAM

But you promised --

JEANNIE

I was a kid! Kids say stuff! Adam. This is over my head. All of it. Seriously. Please.

A pause. Adam nods. Jeannie turns.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

And she's gone.

Adam is motionless. For a long time. Many things play over his face. Is he going to break things? Throw something? Finally--

He slowly - deliberately - crosses to the piano. And sits.

Brings his hands forcefully - almost violently - down onto the keys. And with intense feeling his playing continues over:

EXT. BOSTON - NIGHT

Adam wanders, alone, trying to make sense of what just happened.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

Adam enters - sees the post-party remains of a partially cleaned up mess. Hears his parents upstairs getting ready for bed.

Something catches his eye: on the kitchen table is a piece of paper with Debbie's writing and the words: "WOLF INVESTMENTS." "DR WOLF HOLDINGS" and "THADDEUS WOLF?" "TADEUS WOLF?"

The piano music stays dark, ominous, dramatic. Continues over:

INT. TOM AND DEBBIE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Adam steps in as Tom is brushing his teeth.

ADAM

Hi.

TOM

Oh, hey. Fun dinner?

Adam nods. Debbie passes by, closing up the upstairs.

ADAM

Was the party good?

DEBBIE

It was great. But you're late - you said 10:30 and it's nearly midnight.

ADAM

Sorry. We listened to some music after.

(a pause)

Um.. I happened to notice something on the kitchen table. You were curious about Dr Wolf Holdings?

TOM

Yeah - your mom thinks it's too good to be true.

DEBBIE

No. Tom. Just -

TOM

See?

ADAM

I don't understand - why would it be too good to be true?

TOM

That's what I said.

DEBBIE

No - guys - you're taking this too far. I just.. Nothing. It's late - Adam - bed time. Now.

Debbie - again - watches Adam wander off to his room. And is still watching when Adam turns back to look at them.

INT. TOM'S DEN - NIGHT - LATER STILL

Alone now, Debbie is on Tom's computer, looking through Tom's emails. The letter chains between Tom and "Dr Wolf."

A MOMENT LATER

Debbie Googles "T. Wolf." Then "Thaddeus Wolf Swiss Doctor." "Switzerland Thaddeus Wolf Hearing Aids Gentronics." Each time she gets nothing. Pause. She hits "sleep." Music ends.

EXT. BOSTON - DAY (SAME)

Debbie gets out of a cab at Symphony Hall, lugging her cello. She makes her way up the imposing steps.

INT. SYMPHONY HALL - A MOMENT LATER

Debbie checks in with a RECEPTIONIST. She's sent down a hall.

INT. TOM'S OFFICE - GENTRONICS - DAY - SAME

Tom is working when his secretary sticks her head in.

SECRETARY

Tom - it's Adam's school.

TOM

(picks up phone)

This is Tom.

INT. REHEARSAL HALL - DAY

Debbie sits in a folding chair across from Paul Alan Smith.

DEBBIE

So.. Do you want a modern piece, like Samuel Barber, or like a Lalo thing, or Dvorak..?

SMITH

Whatever makes you comfortable. I just wanna get a sense of you through your instrument.

A pause. She nods. Is about to start - then stops.

DEBBIE

Did Adam..?

SMITH

He asked me to hear you. Yes.

She nods. Looks off.

SMITH (CONT'D)

If that makes you want to stop, I understand.

DEBBIE

No. You did this thing - maybe eight years ago - the Saint-Saens - was it 2004?

SMITH

Cello Concerto Number 1. It was 2002.

DEBBIE

I heard it at Tanglewood. We drove all the way - my boss was giving me shit, we had sitter issues - yes! 2002, cause I worked at Mann-Gelon - anyway, we finally got there. Remember that thing you said - when you said that thing, to Adam, in Vermont, at your house, about hearing the whispers of angels..?

SMITH

Some can hear them. Others - very few others - can make it so *others* hear them.

DEBBIE

Yes, well.. I think I heard them that night. In Tanglewood. Anyway.. I want to.. No, I need to do this.

SMITH

Okay, then..

DEBBIE

So..

She takes a breath. And she starts. Music continues over:

INT. JR. HIGH CLASSROOM - DAY

Tom stands in the back with the Administrator. Adam's seat is not just empty - it looks as if it's been empty for a long time.

TEACHER

It was only last week we suspected that these were forgeries. Did you write any of them?

She hands Tom a pile of notes. From his face we see the answer.

INT. REHEARSAL HALL - SAME

Debbie plays.. And plays. With intensity. Finally finishes. A pause. Smith thinks. Then..

SMITH

Do you love playing?

DEBBIE

Oh my god I do.

SMITH

Then you should play. If it gives you joy.

DEBBIE

Okay. I can do that.

(then)

I'm sorry. I'm not sure what you mean.

SMITH

On the good side: your bowing is suitable for most sectional work; a little pressed, but a good, open sound. A tad analytical, at times - a bit *Germanic*, I think, for Edouard Lalo. But you've got a lot of soul - and that comes through. And is rare, actually. Of the thirty thousand or so cellists in the world, you're in the top - whatever - five or ten percent, easily, in terms of technique; rusty, sure, but you can see the chops. But if you're asking does the world need another cellist of your caliber.. The answer is most certainly no.

A pause. Debbie takes this in. Nods silently.

SMITH (CONT'D)

You seem disappointed.

DEBBIE

I am disappointed. Of course I'm disappointed. What did you expect?

SMITH

That you would be devastated. But the fact that you're not makes me think that perhaps you knew this coming in.

A pause. Debbie has to think about this a moment.

Then she nods.

SMITH (CONT'D)

Why did you come then?

DEBBIE

I guess I had hoped.. I don't know.

SMITH

Yes. I did, too, to be honest. I really wanted you to be special. In that way.

Another pause.

DEBBIE

But I'm not.

SMITH

No. You're not.

Debbie nods again. Lifts her cello - and her case, separately, with a separate hand - and drags both out of the room.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Adam exits the T and starts toward his apartment building when he stops - seeing his mother, ahead of him, exiting a taxi.

She looks heavy. As if she's carrying a lot along with her cello. So he slows.. Lets her go in ahead of him.

INT. APARTMENT - A MOMENT LATER

Debbie opens the door and enters - surprised to see Tom sitting in the living room.

DEBBIE

What are you doing home?

TOM

I was actually expecting Adam. I was just at his school.

(then)

Are you okay?



There's a pause.

DEBBIE

No.

INT. SYMPHONY HALL - HALLWAY - SHORTLY THEREAFTER

Adam charges down the hall, enters the rehearsal space, where Smith is with the Hungarians, Eminem and some orchestra people.

ADAM

What did you say to her?

SMITH

(to the others)

I'm sorry.. give me a minute.

HALLWAY

Adam and Smith step out, close the door.

SMITH (CONT'D)

I told you I would help her. So I did. Trust me - she's free now to get on with her life.

ADAM

What life? How?

SMITH

Why is that your problem?

ADAM

Cause.. I don't know..

SMITH

Cause she's special?

ADAM

Well.. Yes.

SMITH

Oh, grow up, Adam. No one's special and everyone's special, and you can't save your parents, and you can't destroy them.

ADAM

I can. I did.

SMITH

Well maybe that's not so bad either.

ADAM

No. Where are you going?

SMITH

To do my job. Because I think I'm done with you.

Adam follows him into the -

REHEARSAL HALL

ADAM

You mean now or always?

SMITH

I *meant* now but I'm changing it to always.

ADAM

Wait. Why?

SMITH

Why? Because you're a little liar, Adam. With the biggest tragedy being the lies you're telling to yourself.

ADAM

Well you're a show-off.

SMITH

Not gonna work, Adam.

ADAM

Your best work is behind you.

SMITH

I don't care! I don't care if it *actually* is, and I certainly don't care if *you think* it is.

ADAM

You do care because you see yourself in me. I'm just another way to keep you immortal.

Smith whirls back and gets right down in front of Adam.

SMITH

Adam. Believe it or not, there are others like you. *Thousands*. No, more. And guess what else? *I see this all the time*. 'The March of the Little Elfin Prodigy People.' Cause Adam - special as you think you are, the road from then to now is littered with the carcasses of people like you. People who hear beautifully but have no idea how to listen. So go away.

(MORE)

SMITH (CONT'D)

My little project is over. I'm done. I'll tick the 'fail' box and go back to the pool. Next!

ADAM

You can't just *make* me leave.

SMITH

Really? *How* much do you weigh?

EXT. SYMPHONY HALL - A MOMENT LATER

Smith literally deposits Adam on the street and closes the door. Beat. Adam stands there. Pulls out his cell phone. Dials.

INT. HOYT'S KITCHEN - DAY

Hoyt's phone rings and rings.. Out the window we see into the --

GARAGE - SAME

Where the simulator whirs - occupied.

INT. APARTMENT - SAME

Tom and Debbie sit in the living room. Debbie's had a good cry. But that's over now. Her cello is in the case on the floor.

Tom watches as she picks up the cello, carries it into the closet, then closes the door - then returns to the couch.

They sit there. Silently. Tom takes her hand.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Adam rides out to the suburbs, looking out the window.

INT. APARTMENT - SAME

More silence. Neither Tom nor Debbie look at each other. Rather, they both just stare straight ahead. Until..

Debbie lets go of his hand and rises, then returns to the closet, opens it, and removes the cello. She opens the case..

Then carries the cello back to the living room. Sits at her chair. Takes her bow.. and Tom watches as..

She starts to play scales. Which continue over:

EXT. HOYT'S PROPERTY - DAY

Adam walks down the road, turns at Hoyt's driveway. Sees the simulator on in the garage, whirring. But there's something odd about it. Something disturbingly *rhythmic*. He walks to the -

GARAGE

Where the simulator is just going around - and around - and around - and around. He walks up. Knocks.

ADAM

Grampa?

It just continues.

INT. APARTMENT - SAME

Debbie is playing as the phone rings. Tom eyes the caller ID.

TOM

Dad - can I call you right back? I'm --

ADAM'S VOICE

Daddy!

EXT. HOYT'S PROPERTY - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Ambulance is parked, lights flashing - but the attendants not really rushing as..

Tom and Debbie's car screeches to a halt and they run out without bothering even to shut it off as they bolt to --

The garage - where Adam runs to them.. And we CUT TO:

INT. MEMORIAL CATHEDRAL - DAY

The funeral. Family, friends. Adam, Debbie, Tom. But not a lot of people. One gets the sense this is a less densely attended service than the site is used to holding.

TOM

..just want to thank you all - say how grateful we are that you came out - whether it's dad war buddies.. grade school friends - gotta love Facebook - his old cronies from the print shop. I guess, finally, before we head over to the house, is there anyone else who would maybe wants to say something?

There is a pause. People look around. No one really has anything left to say.. But before Tom continues..

He notices that Adam has raised his hand.

TOM (CONT'D)

Adam. Okay. My son - Hoyt's grandson - Adam.

Adam rises. Tom steps from the podium - and passes Adam, patting him on the shoulder before sitting by Debbie as -

Adam walks toward the podium but then past it - and instead crosses to the PIANO, which has been unnoticed until now.

He sits. And opens the cover.

Tom and Debbie look at each other.. Then at Adam as..

Adam takes his left hand and places it gently on the keyboard..

And slowly, simply - he plays *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*. As he continues with his left hand (*Up Above The World So High*)..

He lays his right hand on the keys. And with it he starts a counter melody - Thelonious Monk's *Blue Monk* - which, although it begins quite simply, slowly, elegiacally..

..it is masterful. And increasingly complex and sophisticated.

All the while, the left just continues on, slowly, simply, never varying - as if a child is playing Adam's left hand - and a sophisticated adult is playing the right.

TOM AND DEBBIE

Watch their son play. PUSH IN.. As if things are dawning on them.. KEEP PUSHING IN.. so close that things start to BLUR, and, as the MUSIC CONTINUES, we DISSOLVE THROUGH to:

INT. TRAIN - DAY

The countryside blurs by as Adam rides the train.

EXT. HOYT'S PROPERTY - DAY

Adam, a duffel over his shoulder, enters the quiet, slightly overgrown yard. Crosses the long, empty driveway. Takes a key from a log, enters the house.

INT. HOYT'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Adam crosses through the kitchen.. Heads down into --

HOYT'S WOODSHOP - CONTINUOUS

And sees the things on the wall - things they worked on together over the years, carved, sanded.. Reaches, takes down the SMALL WOODEN PLANE (the one they hollowed out so many years ago).

Music continues as--

EXT. HOYT'S PROPERTY - DAY

Adam approaches Hoyt's plane. Unzips the canvas, pulls it to the ground, then opens the door and climbs inside.

INSIDE THE PLANE

Adam sits at the controls. Takes a breath. Then hits the ignition. And it starts.

EXT. HOYT'S PROPERTY - CONTINUOUS

Adam takes the throttle, then disengages the brake. It turns.. And starts rolling down Hoyt's driveway and onto..

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE HOYT'S PROPERTY - CONTINUOUS

Where it turns again.. And is now facing the long straightaway that is the rural street outside Hoyt's house.

Adam looks straight ahead. Pulls back on the throttle and..

The airplane accelerates down the street.. Faster.. Faster..

Until it starts to rise into the air. And starts to arc up.. and turn..

Music continues, and starts to (ever-so-slightly) change in tone. There's a barely-discernible modern beat emerging from within, as..

INT. APARTMENT - DAY - SAME

Debbie and Tom go into Adam's room, together, and go to Adam's desk. Tom opens the drawer. And now they dig through.

At the bottom of a bunch of things they find the LOFT CONTRACT. And a set of spare KEYS. They look at it..

The contract is between "CITY LEASING" and "DR WOLF HOLDINGS."

INT. AIRPLANE - FLYING - SAME

Adam eyes where he's heading, looks at the GPS.. He's passing the northernmost tip of Maine.. continuing out over the blue..

EXT. BOSTON - DAY

Tom and Debbie exit a cab.. And walk into the office lobby of the LOFT SPACE. They enter, speak to the BUILDING MANAGER.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Adam looks out the window, scouring the landscape for something. Finally - he spots something, and starts to bank the plane..

INT. LOFT BUILDING - HALLWAY

Tom and Debbie get off the elevator. The Building Manager points them toward --

ADAM'S LOFT

Where they insert the key. Enter. And see the piano, the desk, the stereo..

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Adam seems to be heading toward somewhere specific now. He locks in on what he's looking for on the GPS - a tiny land mass.

INT. LOFT - SAME

Tom and Debbie look at Adam's computer screen. At the long list of emails and IM's from Tom to Dr Wolf..

Debbie puts her hand on Tom's shoulder as Tom has to sit.

EXT. LOFT BUILDING - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Tom and Debbie exit the building.. Pausing on the steps, taking in what they just saw. Full of feelings - complex, unclear.

INT. AIRPLANE - FLYING - SAME

Adam flies over the island, surveying the landscape. He reaches behind him - picks up the small wooden airplane.

And now he reaches for something that's been under his seat.  
It's an URN.

He lifts it. Then carefully empties the contents of the urn into the tiny hollowed "cockpit" of the wooden plane.

He then slides open his window, turns.. lifts the wooden plane.. and throws it--

OUT THE WINDOW

Where it swoops down - then arcs up - then swoops again, ashes from the wooden cockpit fanning in a grey rainbow of dust as --

The wooden plane ducks and dives down and around, and..

ADAM

Banks the Blue Monk so that he can watch as..

THE LITTLE WOODEN PLANE

Continues its downward swoops.. Empty now.. But arcing and diving until, finally, it smashes silently against the rocks of the island, and..

ADAM

Yanks the throttle and the Blue Monk arcs and curves, music continuing - and starting to fill out rhythmically: some guitars are heard, and a bass. Some horns. Strings. The beat is becoming more pronounced, more modern, still, as..

EXT. CAB - BOSTON - DAY

Debbie rests in the taxi outside the GENTRONICS OFFICES as Tom looks at her.. Then goes up the steps..

INT. GENTRONICS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

NICK looks up from his desk as Tom enters, sits across from him.



NICK  
Hey - you okay?

TOM  
Nick, I.. I think I'm in the wrong job.

NICK  
I don't understand.

Tom reaches in to his pocket, pulls out his keys. Takes his office key off. Slides it across Nick's desk, as..

EXT. GENTRONICS OFFICE - SAME

Debbie, in the taxi, looks into Nick's office window as she sees her husband shake hands with Nick, then rise - for the first time in what we have to assume is a while - to his full height.

Ever so slightly, she smiles.

INT. AIRPLANE - FLYING

Adam is flying outside of Tunbridge, Vermont - over farmland.

He looks on his map. Sees where he is trying to go. He starts to bank the plane and begin its descent..

EXT. RURAL VERMONT - SAME

The plane is coming down now. Approaching a vast green lawn.

Now, within the music, an acoustical piano is starting to make its way forward through the growing electronic groove, as:

EXT. GREAT LAWN - DAY - SAME

The Blue Monk touches down on the grass and bounces a bit before rolling. And then finally it slows to a stop near the base of a lavish estate. A pause.

Adam gets out. He starts toward the imposing estate..

..and sees Paul Alan Smith standing there, on the steps, looking at him. He's at Smith's house.

SMITH  
And how may I be of service to you, young  
Thomas Adam Davis?

Adam smiles as..

The piano takes full control of the soundtrack - and we CUT TO:

INT. STAGE - *SOMEWHERE*

HANDS on a keyboard - masterful, vibrant - classically influenced but fully modern in sound.. as we PULL BACK AND FIND:

ADAM

At 14. Fully engaged. Hair wild - unkempt; forehead beaded in sweat (he's clearly at the rousing end of what he's playing); dressed formally - but unconstrained as he moves with the music as it builds.. his hands flying across the keys like a flock of birds.. as --

WIDER

He swings around and now faces the array of ELECTRONIC KEYBOARDS on a stand between him and --

THE REST OF THE STAGE

Which we now see for the first time:

Artfully designed - we're the end of some kind of modern fable, or rock opera. Bat-themed, it would appear from the:

GIANT WINGS - huge theatrical representations of Hoyt's 'birthday wings' - high in the center back of the stage.

PERFORMERS - singers - are arranged artfully throughout the many levels of the stage. And -

MUSICIANS, similarly arranged - guitars, and horns, and strings. All with one thing in common:

They are all kids - between the ages of 10 and 18.

Adam plays a riff on the keyboard as he's facing them and..

They return a riff back - fully orchestrated as we cut:

WIDER STILL

A sign above the proscenium arch says "THE BOSWELL SCHOOL."

## IN THE AUDIENCE

TOM, DEBBIE, and, in a separate section, PAUL ALAN SMITH - among other proud PARENTS, and SIBLINGS are all totally into the music as --

## ADAM

Gestures to someone offstage (another student) - who releases --

A SCRIM which falls just as the music reaches a rousing climax and Adam gives another signal and -

The PERFORMER in the huge bat wings leans forward and steps off a high ledge, and as he's falling -

The LIGHTS SHIFT so that in one continuous motion --

ON THE SCRIM NOW, the bat - rather than plummet, instead swoops down and arcs up - as if in full flight. And..

As the bat rises, higher, higher still, wings beating, the actor at the center (on film on the scrim), sublime, peaceful..

Adam hits the final note and his fellow musicians follow with theirs.. and the piece comes to an end and..

The curtain falls.

The audience bursts into cheers and rises to their feet. Tom and Debbie are up in a flash. But ahead of them, even, was Paul Alan Smith - who applauds wildly as the curtain rises now and..

## ON STAGE

Aligned, arm in arm, are ALL 64 STUDENTS of the Boswell School. Actors, singers, musicians, technicians, artists -- all involved in this (and every) production. Lovely and awkward, beaming and proud. Prodigies. Misfits, perhaps, elsewhere. But not here.

Linked arm in arm with them is, of course --

Adam, who smiles, proud, as his eyes go from Smith to his parents, to his fellow artists.. And we cut..

## EXT. BOSWELL SCHOOL CAMPUS - DAY

A BANNER over the front door reads "HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!"

PARENTS AND KIDS all leaving - with suitcases, instrument cases, trunks.. Loading things into taxis, into cars.. families among masses of families. 64 families, to be exact. A community.

BY A TAXI

Tom and Debbie are loading the trunk of the cab. Tom is trying to shove stuff in; Debbie moves him aside - gives it a push.

Then Tom moves Debbie aside a bit - and Debbie (playfully) shoves Tom back. He turns. Does it back. And now -

ON THE TOP OF THE STEPS OF THE SCHOOL - SAME

Adam steps out, carrying a school duffel as two friends - new friends, friends from this year - help carry his keyboard cases. He pauses at the top of the steps and looks around - then sees something that makes him actually stop in his tracks:

ADAM'S POV - ON THE BIG LAWN

About 100 feet away, his father is literally chasing his mother on the grass, kicking up leaves as he dives, tackling her.

Tom grabs some leaves now and covers her with them. And..

They are both hysterically laughing. Really cracking up. And gradually they notice the same thing: Adam is watching.

They turn - like two kids who have been "caught" rough-housing.

TOM

Oh. Hi. Sorry.

Adam is just motionless. But in a good way. He breaks into a wide grin. And we cut to:

INT. AIRPLANE - AFTERNOON

Sunlight through the window as Tom sleeps against the window and Debbie and Adam sit beside him.

DEBBIE

I've tried to move as much of my studio out of your room as I could. So I'll take my students in the living room as long as you don't mind a little clunky cello music around the house. That okay?

ADAM

Yeah - no it's great. I love clunky cello.

(then)

Hey.. Um. Speaking of that.. I was wondering.  
Before we went home. There's someplace I'd  
like to stop. Would that be okay?

EXT. BOSTON - MARWOOD CONSERVATORY - LATE AFTERNOON

A taxi is in front of this stately music conservatory as --

Tom and Debbie, waiting outside the taxi, watch as Adam makes  
his way up the steps, opens the large wooden door.

INT. CONSERVATORY - CONTINUOUS

Adam walks the marble hall. We hear music from various practice  
rooms. Adam finds the room he was looking for. Moves to it,  
and knocks gently. The music inside stops.

VOICE

Yes?

Adam pushes open the door. Enters --

A PRACTICE ROOM

Where distinguished JOHN SYDNEY - with another student - turns.

SYDNEY

Adam?

ADAM

I'm sorry to interrupt.

SYDNEY

(to his student)

Give us just a moment, please, Millicent.

(as his student leaves)

So to what do I owe this honor?

ADAM

Um.. Yes. I just wanted to say.. Well, what I  
wanted to say was thank you. For the lessons.  
That you gave me, before.

SYDNEY

Adam.. Really..

ADAM

Yes. And also: you were right, about the power of the unresolved chord. And I should have rested in it, longer, as you'd suggested. And so I'm sorry about the things I said, about that. And other things. So.. Thanks. Very much. For everything.

SYDNEY

Thank you, Adam. Thank you very much.

Adam nods. Awkwardly - almost as an afterthought - he walks over, shakes Sydney's hand. Then backs out of the room.

Sydney watches him go, then, uncharacteristically we would suppose, he smiles, more than a little moved.

EXT. MARWOOD CONSERVATORY - CONTINUOUS

Adam exits the large wood doors and onto the steps which lead down into the majestic city. He takes a deep breath, exhales.

He sees his father outside the taxi, holding the door open.

TOM

Anywhere else you want to go?

Adam slides into the back of -

THE TAXI - CONTINUOUS

Where he gets in the center, next to Debbie, as Tom slides in the other side and closes the door.

ADAM

No. Home is good.

DEBBIE

Home it is, then.

And as the cab takes off into the city, Adam leans back in the back seat, takes his mother's hand.. Rests his head on his father's shoulder. And we..

FADE OUT.

THE END