

Arpeggio
by
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Registered WgaW

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ARPEGGIO

FADE IN:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

White turns to sprinkles of dust. We're slowly spiralling down towards dough craters then -- WHAM, a hand PUNCHES on the moon-like surface and flattens it.

A pair of hands tear the dough in half and flattens it into a circular shape. Then in a few repeated motions the skillful pair of hands throws and tosses it around before it lands with a THUD on the kitchen island, KICKING up flour.

A ladle of sauce is deftly spread on the dough. A pair of hands swiftly grabs shredded cheese and rains it on top of the sauce. Slices of pepperoni and salami are tossed like drawing cards on top then follows by the rest of the remaining vegetables. A shovel shoves the pizza into a wood-smoked oven and the oven SLAMS shut. Inside the wood-fire oven, the pizza starts to transform; the melting cheese sinks into the sweating meat and vegetables; the sauce begins to fuse with the dough. The dough and the bubbly cheese turns GOLDEN BROWN. And then oven door OPENS and we see the shovel coming towards it.

INT. RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

We're in a rustic neighborhood-type pizza joint. The hot pizza is served to JOE, a big size middle-age man, sitting at the counter. He stares unpleasantly at the pizza.

JOE

That's the best you could do?

ROY, an early 30s man, dressed casually in jeans and his worn out T-shirt, with a flour-smearred black apron, crosses his arm and stares back intently at Joe from behind the counter.

JOE

Well, if that's the best you could do...

(lifting away a slice of pizza with trailing gooey cheese)

...then it looks like I've to force it down with my utmost ravage!

Joe stuffs it into his mouth.

ROY

Don't crack me up big man. I know I'm good, *really good*.

FRANK, a stocky man in his 60s with a receding hairline, snaps at Joe from the cashier station.

FRANK

You eat up well. This maybe the last he's making for you.

ROY

Don't listen to him. It's just for a short while. If I don't make it, I'll be back here before you know it.

JOE

Make what?

FRANK

Roy is going to New York. He wants to play music!

Frank raises his hands to heaven.

FRANK

For heaven's sake, I'm giving him the business and what does he want? Join an orchestra!

ROY

I'm not just joining an orchestra.

FRANK

Then why can't you write or compose here? It's the same.

ROY

It's not the same. Look, gramps started it there and I'm sure he wanted it to end there too. If I managed to join the orchestra at least I'll know how it felt. You know how much I wanted to do this. Just as much as you wanted this restaurant in the first place.

Joe continues to tuck his mouth full.

ROY

Look, if things don't work out --

FRANK

It'll work out! I know!

(a beat)

(MORE)

FRANK (cont'd)
It has for me, and that's what
worries me...

Frank pats Roy on the shoulder when he makes his way to the front. A TAXI arrives in front of the shop and HORNS.

ROY
Oh, I gotta call Tricia!

Roy removes his flour-strewn apron and heads to the phone on the counter.

FRANK
...like it makes a difference.
Don't see what you see in her...

Roy dials her number and an answering machine answers.

TRICIA (FILTERED)
Leave a message after the beep --
and oh, if you're from the credit
card company, don't bother.

The answering machine BEEPS.

ROY
Hey Tricia, I'm leaving now.
Wished we had more time to talk
things out. Let's see how things
work out for both of us. You
take care, okay. Bye.

He hangs up hesitantly and hugs Frank on the way out.

FRANK
Be nice to your Uncle Martin.

ROY
Will do.
(turns to Joe)
And you Joe, don't choke on it!

Mouth full of food, Joe waves him goodbye. Roy heads out to the taxi with his duffel bag and flute case.

JOE
I'm gonna miss that guy.

FRANK
Me too, me too. Well, he's the
only one musically inclined here.
Hope he makes my old man proud.
He sure had hopes on him than me!

EXT. EUGENE AIRPORT RUNWAY - LATER

A propeller plane takes off from the runway.

INT. AIRPORT TRANSIT AREA - MOMENTS LATER

He sees the transit sign to NEW YORK and heads that direction. In the maze of people, he walks briskly to his next boarding hall. A man in a business suit walking in the opposite direction stares at him.

ROY

Kevin?

KEVIN, a debonair looking man in his early 30s, greets Roy.

KEVIN

Roy!

They hug and trade friendly punches.

KEVIN

You little scoundrel! It's good to see you again. Where have you been man?

ROY

The same place as always. Man, look at you...

KEVIN

I've been sending you Christmas cards with my e-mail on it. How come you never replied?

ROY

Well, you know, I'm pretty much whacked running the place back home and these oily hands are not that good with smartphones and all those stuff. And you left out your return address on your cards anyway. You look great. Where you off to?

KEVIN

I'm going back to Eugene for work. Some things to settle there. I thought you'd be there. Where you heading to?

ROY

New York.

KEVIN

Hey, I just came from New York.

Kevin suddenly grabs Roy in a headlock.

KEVIN

Let's go for a drink.

ROY
But I've to catch my flight in
thirty minutes!

KEVIN
So do I!

He drags Roy away.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT/BAR - CONTINUOUS

Roy and Kevin are sitting at the bar counter. Kevin takes a sip of his bourbon while Roy gulps his beer.

KEVIN
So you're gonna be a flutist
huh. Must have flipped your old
man out pretty well. I mean, he
was bent on making you heir to
the throne.

ROY
Well, this prince decides to
rebel.
(a beat)
I mean, I'm not just being a
flute player in an orchestra.

KEVIN
What? You have other things in
mind?

ROY
Of course! You think I'd be
contented sitting on stage? I'm
gonna compose. To finish what
his old man left.

KEVIN
Oh, yeah. I remember that piece
your dad found when he was
clearing his stuff. He went nuts
over some old papers of sort.
Compose huh? You don't seem
like...well, good for you. So
how's that chick you were
dating...err, what's her name?
Joan of Arc or something like
that?

ROY
Dude, that's history. Decade old
story.

KEVIN
Hmm, been that long?

ROY

My life has no excitement,
period.

KEVIN

But you make the best pizza in
the west --

ROY

You call that excitement? I'm
only trying now, and that's just
for continuing a dream not mine.
But look at you -- a successful
corporate guy and everything...

KEVIN

Underneath this suit is man whose
job is to chase for numbers. You
hit your target, they pat you on
the back and give you a higher
number. Soon those numbers can
feed the population of a small
African nation. And the money I
make, is not even mine.

ROY

At least, I know you must have
chicks clamoring for you!.

KEVIN

As for that, well --

He downs his bourbon.

KEVIN

(turns to bartender)
Another shot please.

The BARTENDER places another drink for Kevin.

KEVIN

She's a lil' bit like you.

ROY

You mean a man?

KEVIN

(laughs)
You wish! Melinda is, or was,
like you. A musician. Used to
be a concert pianist.
(a beat)
Weird, to somehow find someone
who has some of your nasty
habits. Maybe familiarity brings
comfort. Not that I'm implying
anything 'bout you.

ROY

I take that as a compliment.
Well, opposite attracts my
friend.

KEVIN

Like any relationship, it's
thrilling in the beginning but
when there's too much opposition
than attraction the fun just
fades away.

ROY

I'll drink to that.

KEVIN

Sometimes I don't get it, I give
her everything, yet she wants it
simple. When I make it simple,
she wants it creative. I get a
head rush just thinking how to
please her.

ROY

Funny, I can afford only simple
and creative things, and my
Tricia jumps.

KEVIN

You too, huh.

ROY

And you know, I'm not a
businessman.

KEVIN

I can see from that.

ROY

Tricia...she really wants me to
take over my dad's business. She
thinks I should sell it and cash
out. You know how much my dad
loves his little place. I'm not
sure if she loves me or my dad's
business. I thought my old man
is mad enough when I told him I'm
leaving...well, we all have women
problem.

A beat.

KEVIN

Don't look at me like this, but
beneath this full suit is a
normal sensitive man --

Roy raises his eyebrow. Kevin leans forward to Roy.

KEVIN

The moment a man doesn't have women or money problem is...is...geez, I can't think of any living moment when a man is free from both of these.

ROY

Then we better not have one or the other.

KEVIN

Well, if we're not happy about it, I think we can do something 'bout it.

ROY

What'd you suggesting?

A smirk wipes over Kevin's face.

KEVIN

We're not happy with status quo. We can help each other end our misery.

ROY

I don't like the look on your face?

KEVIN

Since I'm heading to Eugene and you're heading to New York, I'll help you break-up with Tricia and you take care of Mel for me! We'll do this clean, nice, and no baggage left behind to face!

ROY

I help you break-up with your girlfriend and you help me with mine? You never ceased to amaze me even after all these years. Are you nuts?

Kevin raises his glass to toast on his proposition.

ROY

You're serious?

KEVIN

We're just messengers for each other. How hard can that be?

ROY

Very hard! A stranger coming to break up with you? That'll kill them and not to mention us!

KEVIN

We're two oceans away from them.
Would you want the sobbing, the
tantrum, the stalking, the flying
golf clubs and a dead cat over you?

ROY

Dead cat?

KEVIN

Look, you're on a new quest. So
am I. We're both on a start to e
a new beginning. How much
baggage do you want to carry
along with you? Think about it.

A beat.

ROY

Not much, I guess. Not much
anymore.

They clink glasses in agreement and down their drinks.

EXT. JOHN F. KENNEDY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - LATER

Sweeping view of the runway with a Boeing 747 landing.

EXT. IN FRONT OF UNCLE MARTIN'S BAKERY - NIGHT

An CHEVY PICKUP stops in front of shop. The sign reads
HENDERSON BAKERY. The street is quiet. UNCLE MARTIN,
early 60s, big size man with a slightly bald head exits the
car with Roy's duffel bag. Roy follows behind with his
flute case. Uncle Martin unlocks the metal shutter door to
the bakery.

UNCLE MARTIN

It's nothing much to look at but
it's comfortable. Your room is
above the bakery.

ROY

I'd really appreciate. When I
find my own place, I'll be out
before you know it.

The metal shutter slides up completely.

UNCLE MARTIN

Hey, no worries. How often do I
get to see you or your dad. Take
your time. It's not often that I
get a maestro staying here.

ROY
I'm not one yet.

UNCLE MARTIN
But you'll be. It's in our
blood. When we put our hearts
into it, we always get it done.

They enter the bakery.

INT. UNCLE MARTIN'S BAKERY/STUDIO APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

A flick of the switch, the ceiling lamp illuminates the small sparsely furnished studio apartment. Uncle Martin places Roy's duffel bag on the bed.

UNCLE MARTIN
This is where I come to get away
from your Aunt Veron.

ROY
It's more than I expected.

Roy opens his flute case to inspect it.

UNCLE MARTIN
See you got grandpa's flute
there.

ROY
Yeah.

UNCLE MARTIN
You're the only know in the
family that's patient enough to
listen to him.

He raises his hand to heaven.

UNCLE MARTIN
Your dad and I, well, we're too
difficult for him.

ROY
It runs in the family.

UNCLE MARTIN
Now, you hit the sack. You had a
long day.

Uncle Martin leaves him.

ROY
Thanks Uncle Martin.

Roy takes out a set of WORN OUT MUSIC SHEETS from his duffel bag. He gazes intently at it and then looks out of the window --

EXT. CITY SKYLINE - CONTINUOUS

An skyline of New York at night.

INT. FINE DINING RESTAURANT - DAY

Lunch time. The restaurant is packed with business people. In the middle table of the restaurant is Kevin with his stressed out 20s male EXECUTIVE. Sitting across them is MR. DAVENPORT, a no-nonsense white-haired CEO in his 50s, with his snobby looking late 20s female PERSONAL ASSISTANT.

MR. DAVENPORT

You know you've already lost us.
So why bother to come when the
doors are closed?

KEVIN

Well, Mr. Davenport. With due
respect, locked doors are for
those who are not hungry enough.
Anyway, the air is fresher in
Oregon and it helps people think
better.

A WAITRESS is making her rounds filling their coffee cup.

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

But you haven't thought about us
lately. Your competitor did and
we're giving them the business,
quite unfortunately.

KEVIN

On the contrary --

Just then a WAITRESS clumsily SPILLS some coffee on Kevin's lap. Instinctively, he pulls back a little. The Executive jumps at Tricia.

EXECUTIVE

Look what you've done!

The waitress, late 20s brunette, takes a napkin and wipes the stain from Kevin's pants.

WAITRESS

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

Mr. Davenport sits back and observe. Kevin does not seem perturbed by it. A stern looking MANAGER appears.

MANAGER

(to waitress)

What have you done this time?

(to Kevin)

Is everything all right?

KEVIN

Things like this happen. I guessed I was too excited and I hit her when she was pouring coffee. No fault of hers. Everything's fine. It happens.

He gives her an assuring smile.

WAITRESS

I am really so sorry.

She helps Kevin wipe the remaining stain.

KEVIN

I know you are. If you wipe anymore, you'll be cleaning more than my pants.

WAITRESS

Here you go...

She makes one last wipe on his shirt while locking eyes with Kevin.

MANAGER

Nonetheless, our apologies.

The manager and the waitress leave the table.

KEVIN

...now as I was saying. As long as nothing is signed on the dotted line, there's always room to negotiate.

MR. DAVENPORT

What makes you think we want to negotiate?

KEVIN

If there's no room for negotiation, you would have signed the contract three days ago with Retcom Technologies. You know we could do this job as well as them.

MR. DAVENPORT

But your price --

KEVIN

Our price is not the cheapest. It's a fact. Here's another fact: Davenport Timber has one of the world's best practise in forest management. You'll be Retcom's first customer in the timber industry. They'll learn from you and incorporate what they have learned into their new software, and then sell it to your competitors. Webber Timber is your number one competitor, and Retcom is currently bidding for a project there. Imagine your know-how goes to Webber?

Mr. Davenport and his Personal Assistant ponders this revelation.

MR. DAVENPORT

So what are you proposing?

KEVIN

We'll offer you a moratorium, and we'll throw in another software for your Canadian plant for free. You just pay for the services.

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

A moratorium?

KEVIN

Yup, for the next twelve months after your software goes live, we will not sell it to anyone else. So you'll have the lead for a year. We know Retcom can't do it because they have your competitors lined up to sell to.

Mr. Davenport leans back with a poker face gaze at Kevin. Kevin sits back and coolly takes a sip of coffee.

MR. DAVENPORT

(turns to the Executive)

You have a lot to learn. Come by my office next week to get the papers from Larry.

EXECUTIVE

Thank you Mr. Davenport!

Mr. Davenport and his Personal Assistant stands to leave. They exchange handshakes.

MR. DAVENPORT

Fresh air does do wonder to people, doesn't it? You have a good stay here.

KEVIN

I will.

Mr. Davenport and his Personal Assistant walk towards the restaurant door.

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

He's a very persuasive salesman. He'll say anything to get the deal.

MR. DAVENPORT

That's his job. You know, they say you can judge the character of man by how he treats a waiter.

They walk out of the restaurant. Back at the table, the Executive breathes a sigh of relief.

EXECUTIVE

I almost lost this deal. You do live up to your name.

KEVIN

What's that?

EXECUTIVE

They call you the fireman.

KEVIN

Fireman? You guys are disappointing. I thought it'll be like Maverick or something cooler.

EXECUTIVE

Top Gun is old school. Pass my time.

Then two sumptuous plates of DESSERT are placed in front of them. Kevin turns back and sees the waitress.

WAITRESS

This is on me.

KEVIN

The person who recommended me this place was correct -- the food is great, and the service impeccable. Thank you Tricia.

The waitress is Tricia.

TRICIA
How'd you know my name?

KEVIN
You can say we have a mutual
acquaintance.

TRICIA
Oh?

EXT. AVERY FISHER HALL - DAY

An established external view of the Avery Fisher Hall.

INT. AVERY FISHER HALL/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

A NOISY hallway with a mesh of instruments clashing loudly together. Throngs of MUSICIANS dressed in black tie line the hallway. Roy in his jeans and leather jacket strides in coolly, inviting the occasional stare. He makes his way to the registration table at the end of the hallway. A glum-looking RECEPTIONIST in her 50s mans the registration table.

ROY
I'm here for the audition.

She's not bothered to look up at him.

RECEPTIONIST
Oh, really? Name?

ROY
Roy Henderson.

She ticks off his name on her sheet.

RECEPTIONIST
All right Mr. Henderson. Go to
the holding room behind me. When
they call your name you'll be
next.

ROY
Thank you.

Roy proceeds to the next room.

INT. AVERY FISHER HALL/HOLDING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The holding room is packed with MUSICIANS waiting for their turn. He sees an empty chair and approaches it. PETER, a pompous English violinist in his late 20s, seating besides the empty chair places his violin on the chair.

ROY
This seat taken?

PETER
(English accent)
Can't you see?

He ignores Roy and goes back talking to his friends.

ROY
Not by anything human.

Roy reaches for the violin but before he could do so Peter SNATCHES it away and snaps at him.

PETER
Hey! What do you think you're doing?

There's a hush in the room.

ROY
Taking a seat. You think I wanna play your violin?

PETER
This is a Guarneri. Worth more than the sum you can afford. It *deserves* this seat.

ROY
Oh, as you fine chaps always say -
-

He turns and points his ass to Peter.

ROY
This is my ass. Probably the one and only in the world -- priceless. No money can buy it.

And Roy takes his seat. Peter rises to confront Roy. Just then a young STAGE HAND calls --

STAGE HAND
Mr. Peter Tucker, you're next.

Roy waves him goodbye.

ROY
Tada.

Peter glares at Roy as he makes his way to the stage. COREY, a geeky bespectacled violinist in his late 20s, sits in Peter's seat.

COREY

Man, I've never seen anyone speak to him like that before!

ROY

If he's here for the audition, he's just like anyone else.

COREY

I'm Corey Lyndon.

ROY

Roy Henderson. So who's that dude anyway?

They shake hands.

COREY

That dude is probably one of the finest violinist in the world.

ROY

What? A prick like him?

COREY

He has played all over Europe and it's a privilege he's here. So where have you played? LA, Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia?

ROY

Do I look like someone who has played the world?

COREY

There must be a couple hundreds people who tried to get in here. So you must either be two things: lucky or real good.

ROY

I'd guess a lil' of both.

COREY

See that big man there?

Corey points to a TINO, a muscular man who looks more like a bouncer, practising his cello across them.

COREY

Tino there, he's been coming here for four years. Never gave up.

Then Corey points to LINDA, a beautiful redhead, chatting with other musicians. She gives Roy a friendly smile and turns back to her friends.

COREY
This is the third time Linda's
been here and --

ROY
And you?

COREY
Enough to know that this would be
my last.

ROY
I'm only giving myself one shot.

COREY
I wish you luck.

ROY
Luck, my friend, is hope skimming
for those who can't tread water.

COREY
For someone not in a tux, you
speak deep.

ROY
So how long you reckon we've to
wait?

COREY
Just make sure your bowels are
half-empty all the time.

Roy slouch in his chair. The room is getting NOISIER with sounds of mixed instruments. In FAST FORWARD MOTION musicians move in and out of the room. The NOISE dies down. Only a few are left sitting. Roy is nodding off...

STAGE HAND
Mr. Roy Henderson, you're next.

Roy stirs himself up and proceeds to the stage.

INT. AVERY FISHER HALL/STAGE - CONTINUOUS

A spot light from across glaringly illuminates the stage. Roy makes his way to the middle with his flute in hand. He can see the silhouette of THREE PEOPLE sitting in the middle of the hall.

CASTING DIRECTOR
Mr. Roy Henderson from Eugene,
Oregon.

ROY
That's me.

CASTING DIRECTOR
Quite under dressed aren't you?
Your resume seems -

The CASTING DIRECTOR flips through his clipboard.

CASTING DIRECTOR
Short. No performing experience.
Upon graduation with a music
degree, you teach music in high
school and you work as a pizza
delivery --

ROY
Pizza maker, and I compose a
little, yeah.

CASTING DIRECTOR
Don't we all. Nonetheless, your
recording which you emailed us
has passed our required
conditions. You have exactly one
minute to play any piece you so
desire. Please begin.

Roy licks his lips and clears his throat. He places his
lips on the flute and -- blows a WRONG NOTE.

ROY
Oops...

He recomposes himself again. He closes his eyes and then
performs a mesmerizing flute solo.

In the dark corners at the end of the hall, sits MR. LOUIE
TABERSKI, a dignified conductor in his 60s. He sits with
his eyes closed liked in a prayer taking in the music.

When Roy completes his one minute of intense playing, he
opens his eyes to face the silent group.

CASTING DIRECTOR
Who taught you?

ROY
I went to college --

CASTING DIRECTOR
College don't teach that.

The Casting Director lights his cigarette.

CASTING DIRECTOR
Who did you understudy with?

ROY
My late grandfather.

CASTING DIRECTOR
Family thing?

ROY
Yeah, he taught me when I was a kid. I'm not sure but I think I learned more from him than from anyone else.

CASTING DIRECTOR
I see. Well, Mr. Henderson we'll call you back. Thank you for your time.

ROY
Sure.

INT. UNCLE MARTIN'S BAKERY/KITCHEN - DAY

BANG -- a big lump of pastry dough is slammed on the kitchen table.

UNCLE MARTIN
Kid, we ain't making any rock buns today.

ROY
Sorry. I just thought that I could have done better.

UNCLE MARTIN
Good day, bad day. It ain't over till you say so.

Roy kneads the dough with a frustrated look on this face. Uncle Martin walks out of the kitchen

INT. UNCLE MARTIN'S BAKERY - CONTINUOUS

In his rustic bakery, a finely dressed gentleman in his 50s enters the shop.

UNCLE MARTIN
Mr. Roitman, what a surprise to see you here.

MR. ROITMAN is accompanied by two Mafia-looking GOONS behind him.

MR. ROITMAN
I always love the aroma of freshly baked bread. Can smell 'em a mile away.

He takes a whiff around while the two Goons guard the door.

MR. ROITMAN
So, how's business?

UNCLE MARTIN
Not too bad. Enough to pay
bills, and with some spare change
back.

MR. ROITMAN
That's good then. You're doing
pretty okay.

Mr. Roitman picks up some pastries with one of the goon following him with a tray. Then he LIGHTS up a cigarette. Roy notices the them through the partition from the kitchen and comes up to Uncle Martin.

ROY
No smoking in here.

Mr. Roitman eyes Roy.

UNCLE MARTIN
That's okay. He's my nephew. He's
staying with me for a short while.

The goon places the tray of pastries on the counter.

MR. ROITMAN
How much do we owe you?

UNCLE MARTIN
It's on the house.

ROY
(to Uncle Martin)
Are you sure? That's a lot of
stuff.

Uncle Martin ignores Roy and packs the pastries for Mr. Roitman.

MR. ROITMAN
Thank you. You're very gracious.

The goon take the bags and make their way to the door.

UNCLE MARTIN
(to Roy)
He's a very important man here.

As. Mr. Roitman approaches the door --

ROY
If he's such an important man,
surely he can afford to pay for
it?

Mr. Roitman pauses. Uncle Martin quickly approaches Mr. Roitman at the door.

UNCLE MARTIN

Enjoy. My nephew from Oregon, he's new in town. Don't mind him.

MR. ROITMAN

He has a very smart mouth. Lucky he has someone like you to watch over him.

They exit the shop.

UNCLE MARTIN

Put it this way, we don't want to cross him.

ROY

I mean if he's that important, he could afford to pay for his bread. What does he do to make him that important?

UNCLE MARTIN

He ensures business is smooth for us. He's a nice man. You could say he's our community banker.

ROY

Since when does a banker needs the mafia to follow him around...

Then Roy's cell phone RINGS from his pocket and he answers it.

ROY

Hello.

KEVIN (FILTERED)

Roy, my buddy!

ROY

Hey Kevin! You back here?

KEVIN (FILTERED)

No, not yet.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kevin, holding his cell phone with one hand, is standing in front of the dressing table adjusting his tie and vainly touching his hair.

KEVIN

Remember our little proposition?

ROY (FILTERED)

Ah, yeah...

KEVIN

Well, I met Tricia and ended it for you.

ROY (FILTERED)

Geez, how did she take it? Was she like...

KEVIN

As predicted.

ROY (FILTERED)

Was she like mad at me, bonkers, heart-broken, or anything like that?

KEVIN

She was all of those. The wrath of women-kind in many languages were rained on you that day my friend. Well, I talked to her and calmed her down. She seems to be fine now.

ROY (FILTERED)

That's it. Just over like that...

KEVIN

Yeah, not that difficult. Hey, have you spoken to Melinda yet?

ROY (FILTERED)

Actually no, not yet. I haven't found the time.

KEVIN

Do me a favor, try to speak to her before her birthday, which is coming up soon. I rather it ends before that so she wouldn't expect anything from me. I hope you understand.

ROY (FILTERED)

Yeah, sure. I understand.

Kevin sits at the edge of the bed. From behind him a woman wrapped in the bed sheets appears and then nibbles his ear from behind - it's Tricia.

KEVIN

Hey, I gotta go now. I'll be spending a few more days here. Call me when it's over.

ROY (FILTERED)

Yeah, hey when you --

Kevin hangs up.

INT. UNCLE MARTIN'S BAKERY - CONTINUOUS

Uncle Martin returns with a tray of bread.

UNCLE MARTIN

Everything all right?

ROY

Yeah, fine. Just some errands to run for someone back home.

EXT. MUSIC SCHOOL - DAY

Roy stands hesitantly in front of a music school.

INT. MUSIC SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

The door chime RINGS when Roy walks in. We're inside a chic music school tastefully adorned with an assortment of musical instruments. GRACIE, a young cheery college student working part-time, greets Roy.

GRACIE

Hi. Can I help you?

ROY

Yeah, I'm looking for Melinda.

GRACIE

She's here. Anything I could do for you?

ROY

I'm a friend of friend.

GRACIE

A friend of a friend?

ROY

I'm a friend of Kevin Anderson.

GRACIE

Oh, Kevin! Haven't seen him here for some time. Well, she should be out soon --

MADELINE, a cute 9 year old girl walks out of the adjoining piano room.

MADELINE
Goodbye Miss Roitman.

Following behind her is MELINDA. She is in her late 20s, a conservatively dressed sweet looking brunette.

MELINDA
Be a good girl. Don't forget to practise at home and go straight home!

MADELINE
I will, bye!

She heads quickly to the door.

GRACIE
Miss Roitman, someone for you. A friend of Kevin.

ROY
Hi, I'm Roy Henderson.

They shake hands.

MELINDA
Oh yes, Kevin told me you would be coming soon.

ROY
He did?

MELINDA
Yeah, he text me. He told me you would be visiting soon. He sounded very busy.

ROY
I guessed he would be...

MELINDA
So he told me you guys were college buddies.

ROY
Yeah.

MELINDA
We lost touch for awhile ever since he moved here.

Melinda clears her belongings from a table.

ROY
Nice place you got.

MELINDA

Thanks. Have a look around.

Roy browses around and plunks a short melody on a nearby piano.

MELINDA

Looks like you play.

ROY

Not a piano. Just messing around.

MELINDA

Hey, I'm done for the day. That was my last class. You wanna walk with me?

ROY

Sure.

MELINDA

(to Gracie)

I'm leaving.

GRACIE

All right. See you tomorrow.
Bye.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - MOMENTS LATER

A beautiful day. Joggers and cyclists everywhere. Roy is holding a cup of coffee. He notices Melinda is holding two cups in her hand. They stroll in the park.

MELINDA

Kev once told me you make the meanest pizza in the west. He raves about you a lot.

ROY

My dad runs a small pizza place. I help out there. Our family is in the food business. My uncle runs a bakery here.

MELINDA

What brings you to New York?

ROY

A career change. To try my luck in music.

MELINDA

What type of music?

ROY

Classical.

MELINDA
 (disbelief)
 You?

ROY
 Why? Don't I look like I have
 appreciation for the classics?

MELINDA
 First impression -- no.

ROY
 Actually, I auditioned for a
 flute position, yeah.

MELINDA
 At the philharmonic orchestra?

ROY
 Yeah.

MELINDA
 That's great! It must be
 exciting for you! I'm surprised
 Kevin has a buddy who appreciate
 the finer things in life.

ROY
 You play professionally? I know
 you run a music school. I mean
 do you still play any gigs or so?

MELINDA
 Well, I've stop playing for
 sometime. So, I opened my own
 music school.

Their attention shift to an old shagged BUSKER, engrossed
 with playing his violin that is out of tune. Roy and
 Melinda sit on the bench across him. When he finishes,
 Melinda CLAPS and she walks up to the busker and hands him
 the extra cup of coffee.

MELINDA
 That was just great.

BUSKER
 Thank you. You're a lifesaver.
 I thought I was a little out of
 tune there.

MELINDA
 Honestly, it was just a little out
 of tune but no one seems to noticed
 it. Warm your fingers and play us
 another one.

She walks back to the bench. The busker takes a sip of the hot coffee. Energized, he plays another piece.

ROY

Man, that's some screeching.

MELINDA

Music, like art, is a matter of perception. Jake there was once an accomplished violinist. Then one day he had a fight with his wife. When he tried to chase her, she slammed the door on his finger.

ROY

Ouch. Did that end his playing career?

MELINDA

No. It's when his wife took his kid away. It broke his heart. That's what ended his career.

ROY

That's sad.

MELINDA

If you listen properly. Amidst everything, you can actually hear him play. He is playing pain.

Roy smiles in admiration of Melinda's compassion.

MELINDA

Like he cares who's listening than expressing.

They both listen to the busker until he finishes and then CLAPS in appreciation.

MELINDA

We just made his day.

The busker bows to all sides, to his imaginary audience.

ROY

I've something to tell you.

Melinda all radiant and cheery.

MELINDA

What?

ROY

How do I put this...

MELINDA

Well what?

ROY

Kevin wants to...he wants me to --
tell you how sorry he is for
being a jerk.

MELINDA

A jerk?

ROY

Yeah, the long hours, away from
you. He's so busy with work,
chasing the numbers. I met him
at the airport on transit here
and he told me that. He wants to
apologize for not spending enough
time with you.

MELINDA

Is that all?

ROY

Yeah, that's all.

MELINDA

For a moment, it sounds like he
was gonna leave me or something
like that.

ROY

That would be very unfortunate.

INT. UNCLE MARTIN'S BAKERY - DAY

Roy hesitantly calls Kevin from his cell phone.

ROY

Hi, Kevin.

KEVIN (FILTERED)

Hey.

ROY

I met up with Melinda.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. KEVIN'S BRANCH OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Kevin paces around his office with his cell phone.

KEVIN

And did you break-up with her?

ROY
I don't get it?

KEVIN
Get what?

ROY
She seems nice. I don't know. Why do you want to break-up with her?

KEVIN
Everyone's nice to strangers. Remember Priscilla Newton in high school? You were so crazy about her. But then you were totally turned off when you found out that you're really not into that fetish piercing thing she's doing. Well, I'm almost like that. I'm not so crazy about her anymore.

ROY
That's different.

KEVIN
The situation maybe different but not the emotion. I don't have that feeling for her anymore. It's like pulling a extra luggage around when all you actually want is a knapsack to move around. You understand that feeling?

ROY
Yeah.

KEVIN
Hey, I've done you a favor, for your happiness. Help me move on.

ROY
Man, this is gonna break her heart.

KEVIN
And it'll break mine too, trust me. Just pass the message. You're just the messenger. All right buddy, I gotta go. Call me when it's over.

ROY
All right.

They hang up.

INT. GYM/ROCK CLIMBING WALL - DAY

We're looking at a piece of smooth ROCK -- then a HAND grabs it. Melinda is rock climbing in a gym. She is making her way up. She is now hanging diagonally upside down. A few awkwardly placed rocks separate her from reaching the top. Her breathing is HEAVY with sweat trickling down her face. She closes her eyes like she's going to surrender.

ROCK CLIMBING INSTRUCTOR (O.C.)

Okay, that's enough for the day.
You can come down now.

The ROCK CLIMBING INSTRUCTOR at the bottom holding the safety line tugs her to quit. She hangs for a second -- then she LUNGES for the rocks above -- and misses it sending her descending down with the safety rope slowing her down. Roy catches her as she lands on the ground. She PANTS heavily catching her breath.

ROY

You okay?

MELINDA

How'd you know I'm here?

ROY

Little Madeline told me when I passed by the park.

MELINDA

She should be practising at home.

ROY

Apparently not. For a piano teacher, this is like dangerous stuff.

MELINDA

We all die someday. Might as well go down gloriously than in the pits. Lemme change.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

They walk down a busy street.

ROY

Excitement is not in my middle name.

MELINDA

Oh, c'mon, someone like you have no excitement in life.

ROY

Well, my definition of excitement
is nothing physical. Unlike you,
I'm afraid of heights.

Roy stops in front of a fruit shop. A variety of fruits
are displayed outside the shop. He picks up a bunch of
BANANAS.

ROY

However, it still involves using
my hand.

She returns a mischievous smile.

MELINDA

Hmm, kinky.

Waving the bananas, with a naughty grin on his face --

ROY

It's very gratifying. Spare me
the next few hours?

MELINDA

Bananas with excitement? Naughty
but nice.

INT. UNCLE MARTIN'S BAKERY/KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Roy and Melinda are dressed in white aprons and chef hats.
They glare at the bananas on the kitchen table. Uncle
Martin yells from the front of the shop.

UNCLE MARTIN (O.S.)

Make sure she doesn't mess things
up.

ROY

Don't worry. She's quite good
with her hands.

He turns to Melinda dangling the bananas.

ROY

Ready for some excitement?

Roy hits the PLAY button on the CD PLAYER behind him for
some ROCK MUSIC, and then he fires up the oven.

Roy GLIDES around the kitchen grabbing ingredients; a box
of flour, eggs, a bar of chocolate, butter, sugar and
cream. He waves a bottle of rum at Melinda and they both
take a shot of it.

Roy PEELS the banana and SLICES it deftly. Melinda SIFTS
the flour into a large mixing bowl.

With a **HANDHELD ELECTRIC MIXER**, Roy beats sugar and butter in a mixing bowl. It turns fluffy and Roy breaks some eggs into it. The mixture turns into a smooth yellow batter.

Melinda accidentally switches on mixer to high and flour **SPLASHES** comically all over her. Roy wipes some flour from her face with the back of his messy hand. Then Melinda lightly **SMACKS** his face with flour. Stunned, Roy returns a light **SMACK** to her head with a handful of flour. They both look stupid covered in flour and laugh at each other.

Roy **SMASHES** a chocolate bar and feeds some to Melinda who is attending to the mixer. The dark melted chocolate is poured **SLOWLY** from a metal bowl into the mixer with the yellow batter. It turns the yellow batter chocolate. **DANCING** around, Roy pours some cream into the batter.

They cheers to another round of rum and pour a shot into the chocolate batter. Like a frisbee, Roy **TOSSES** a round baking pan on the table. He pours a layer of chocolate batter into the pan and then layers it with the sliced bananas. He continues to layer it with batter and sliced bananas until it is 3/4 full. He takes the pan and --

INT. OVEN - CONTINUOUS

Puts it into the oven. The cake **RISES** beautifully in the oven -- **DING**.

INT. UNCLE MARTIN'S BAKERY/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Roy takes the cake out of the oven. He removes it from the pan and places it on a cake stand.

Using an **ICING KNIFE** like a master painter, he spins the cake around while spreading the melted dark chocolate on the cake.

When the glazing is done, he sprinkles the cake with some crushed nuts on the side and decorates it with some colorful figs.

The cake is ready and looks sinfully delicious.

ROY

Done. Royal Chocolate Banana Rum
Cake.

He slices a piece out and we can see the melted chocolate enveloping the cake and the layers of sliced bananas between the cake. He takes a fork and feeds the cake to Melinda.

ROY

Here, try it.

Melinda eats from his fork.

MELINDA
Heavenly.

ROY
I always love dark chocolate.
It's so --

Roy takes a bite himself.

ROY
Sensual...mmm...
(a beat)
What?

MELINDA
Nothing. You're a very
engrossing person to watch.

ROY
Engrossing? I'd guess that's a
compliment.

Just then they noticed Uncle Martin is talking to Mr.
Roitman in front.

ROY
Geez, what's he doing here again?

Melinda and Mr. Roitman lock eyes. They glare at each
other.

ROY
You know that guy?

MELINDA
Yes, he's my dad.

ROY
Your dad?

MELINDA
(removes her apron)
I gotta go. Thanks for a great
time.

She walks out.

ROY
Wait.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

We're in a rather empty bar. A JAZZ BAND is playing on
stage. Roy and Corey are drinking by the bar.

COREY

I first started to play when I was six. My mom thinks that all nice boys must know how to play a musical instrument. Not that I really liked it, but at least I've made something out of it. She's pleased. If I had a choice, I would join the navy and see the world.

ROY

You in the navy, I can imagine that.

COREY

Playing some dead man's music that's been played for hundreds of years isn't the most exciting thing in the world.

ROY

That's why I wanna compose.

COREY

The work of a living composer is worthless unless he's dead. That's the drill.

ROY

Rubbish. There's always the exception.

COREY

Your optimism is really rubbing on me. Look, what good if you really finished a so-called work, if you think this is the one. You're an unknown in New York. You got no network, you got no credibility. It ain't gonna be that easy. Dreaming is easy. Effortless work.

ROY

Neither is being a nobody. You know what I've learned from the pizza delivery business?

COREY

That thirty minutes is all you have to get the job done otherwise it's free?

ROY

You always got to make sure you knock on the right door to get paid.

He toasts to the SAXOPHONE PLAYER on stage.

EXT. SUBURB - DAY

Roy walks along a sidewalk of an upper middle class SUBURB lined with mature trees and luxurious houses rolling with pristine lawn. Roy locates Melinda's house and approaches it.

EXT. ROITMAN HOUSE/PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Roy KNOCKS on the door. When the door opens, a muffled piano rendition of CHOPIN'S POLONAISE IN C is playing in the background. A rather tipsy MRS. ROITMAN, elegant in her 50s, opens the door.

MRS. ROITMAN

Well, well, well. Who do we have here?

ROY

Hi, I'm actually looking for Melinda. Name is Roy. I'm a friend of Kevin.

MRS. ROITMAN

Haven't seen that boy for weeks. Well, c'mon in. I'll take you to Melinda. She's been in her room for hours practising. Some company will do her good.

Mrs. Roitman ushers Roy in.

INT. ROITMAN HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mrs. Roitman leads Roy to the piano room through the lavishly furnished house. The music gets clearer as they make their way to the piano room.

ROY

Nice.

She picks up a glass of wine from the table.

MRS. ROITMAN

Wine?

ROY

No, thank you. Maybe later.

MRS. ROITMAN

My boy, it's never too early for a vintage.

As they are approaching the piano room --

MRS. ROITMAN
(whispers)
Why couldn't she play anything
happier?

Mrs. Roitman leaves Roy besides the open door of the piano room and waves her glass goodbye to him.

INT. ROITMAN HOUSE/PIANO ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MELINDA is playing a BABY GRAND PIANO in the middle of her piano room with her back facing the door. She's not aware of Roy's presence. Silently, Roy sits on a stool besides the entrance.

Melinda's fingers are just flying across the keys, occasionally stopping to clear her throat. When she hits the last key completing the piece --

ROY
Breathtaking.

MELINDA
Roy!

He walks up to her.

ROY
I'm sorry. I didn't mean to
surprise you.

MELINDA
Yes, you did! Wasn't expecting
company.

ROY
Actually, I should have done this
earlier. I got something to tell
you.

He paces uncomfortably around the room.

MELINDA
What?

ROY
It's about Kevin.

MELINDA
Stop walking around. You're
freaking me out. Is he okay?

ROY

Yeah. Actually no. He's good but -- this is gonna be difficult, for you and for me!

MELINDA

He's not like in jail or dead.

ROY

No, no. Not like that. He wants to break up with you.

MELINDA

What?

ROY

He wants to break up with you.

MELINDA

Oh, really?

ROY

Umm, yeah. He really wants to break-up with you. He wants me to tell you this.

MELINDA

You're joking? Is that why I couldn't get through his cell? He's not busy, he's avoiding me! And he sends you! You!

ROY

I'm sorry.

MELINDA

Did he tell you why?

ROY

He said something like incompatible expectations or something like that, and that it wasn't your fault. It's his. He's really sorry.

MELINDA

Is he?

ROY

Did you hear what I said?

MELINDA

Yes.

ROY

Well, aren't you gonna yell at me?

MELINDA

Should I?

ROY

Yeah, you should be angry, mad.
I would be.

MELINDA

Me, mad? His friend coming from
nowhere to tell me this. Who
should I be angry with? You or
him?

A beat.

MELINDA

Did he convinced you with some
hair-ball scheme of his to do
this? Do you know how
embarrassing this is?

ROY

Well, no...

Melinda stares sternly at him with disbelief.

ROY

Err, yes.

MELINDA

Why? Was he too coward to face
me.

ROY

Well, no. He was --

MELINDA

Too busy?

ROY

Yeah, something like that.

MELINDA

So he sent you to do his dirty
work. To thrill himself?

ROY

No! It's not thrilling!

MELINDA

Too Mr. Nice Guy to do his own
dirty work. I should have seen
this coming. Everything is
business to him, including this
relationship.

ROY
I'm really sorry. I'm just the messenger.

MELINDA
I need to practise now. Can you leave me alone?

ROY
Yeah, sure.

Roy heads for the door. When he reaches the door --

MELINDA
Since you're the messenger, can you pass him a message for me?

ROY
Yeah, sure.

MELINDA
Tell him, for the jerk that he is, I hope he is happy for what it's worth.

ROY
I'll do that. I'm really sorry.

He leaves the room.

EXT. SUBURB - CONTINUOUS

As Roy walks away from the her house, his cell phone RINGS and he answers it.

ROY
Hello.

A female voice replies him.

CASTING DIRECTOR'S ASSISTANT
(FILTERED)
Is this Mr. Roy Henderson?

ROY
Yes, this is him.

CASTING DIRECTOR'S ASSISTANT
(FILTERED)
This is Linda Taylor. I am calling on behalf of Mr. Taberski.

ROY
Yes, I understand...you're absolutely right...definitely need more practise...all right...thank you.

He hangs up and speed dials his father.

ROY
Hi, dad. Yeah, things are all right. Hey, you know. I don't think you're gonna be very happy with me. I am not coming back so soon because --

He breaks into a smile.

ROY
-- I'm gonna play for the New York Philharmonic Orchestra!

INT. AVERY FISHER HALL/MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Inside the music room, some musicians are tuning their instruments while the rest chatting away. Roy makes his way to the front left side of the room where the flutists sit, behind the violinists. Peter, seating at the first chair in front sees him.

PETER
(to violinist next to him)
Did we just lower our standards?

He gives a friendly nod to the other woodwind players. He sees Corey sitting in front of him and taps him on his shoulder.

ROY
Hey.

Corey turns back.

COREY
Got a feeling you'll be back.

ROY
Wouldn't want to disappoint you, do I.

There's a TAPPING sound. Mr. Taberski is at the conductor's podium in front TAPPING his baton.

MR. TABERSKI
Ladies and gentlemen.

The musicians HUSH and quickly get seated.

MR. TABERSKI
Welcome to the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.
(MORE)

MR. TABERSKI (cont'd)
Among the thousands who have auditioned, you are selected and now have the privileged to play with your peers, who are among the best in the world.

Mr. Taberski SCANS the room.

MR. TABERSKI
My expectation is high. Actually higher than you think. Basically, you are expected to be perfect. When people spend time and effort to come hear us play, we respect and honor them by giving them nothing but perfect tunes. I hope we are all clear on that. Now, shall we begin?

Everyone FLIPS OPENS up their music sheet on their stand. Mr. Taberski LIFTS his baton. Musicians ready their instruments. He waves and the orchestra PLAYS.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - MOMENTS LATER

Roy and Corey are sitting together inside the train.

COREY
Anyone coming for your first show?

ROY
No. Why?

COREY
What do you mean why? It's your first show and you don't have anyone to see you?

ROY
My uncle works late. I don't have many friends here.

COREY
Get outta here. With your charming personality? To be lonely here is depressing.

ROY
I was not that alone! I had someone in mind.

COREY
You had? Sounds like women problem.

ROY

Me? No, never. I can live with or without them.

COREY

Yes, you do have women problem.

The train STOPS at Corey's destination. He stands up to leave.

COREY

Well, someone is better than no one. I'll catch you later.

Corey exits the train. The door closes and the train continues on.

INT. MUSIC SCHOOL/PIANO ROOM - DAY

Inside the room Melinda is finishing the lesson for Madeline.

MELINDA

Good. Well, that will be all for today. I'll see you next week. Don't forget to practise at home.

MADELINE

I will.

The girl packs and heads for the door. Melinda clears the music sheets from the piano when Roy steps in.

ROY

Hi.

She continues clearing the sheets without looking at him.

MELINDA

More bad news for me?

ROY

No, no. Just to see how you're doing.

MELINDA

So that you could report back to him? To fill-up that big ego of his?

ROY

No, nothing like that. Hey, I'm really sorry about that. It's not that I like being bearer of bad news. I really felt like a stupid jerk.

MELINDA

Isn't that what buddies are for?
You do stupid things and slap
each other on the butt.

ROY

No, we don't do the butt thing
anymore. The truth is, I haven't
seen him for years. We met in
the airport while we were on
transit and somehow after a few
drinks, we agreed to help each
other out.

MELINDA

Help each other out?

ROY

Yeah. He helped me break-up with
my girlfriend and I help him
break-up with you.

MELINDA

Oh, my god. You guys completely
redefine the concept of jackass.
And what, you're here to justify
yourself, being apologetic?

ROY

Yes, and as a low life, I'm not
going to argue with you on that.
Ending a relationship is
something personal between two
person.

Roy places a ticket for the gala performance on the piano.
She picks it up.

MELINDA

You're inviting me while I'm still
mad? This is only one ticket.

ROY

I know.

MELINDA

You're inviting me to watch this
alone?

ROY

No, I'll be there, on stage.

MELINDA

On stage?

ROY

Yup, I got in. Gonna play the
flute.

(MORE)

ROY (cont'd)

And if it's okay with you, I'd like you to be my guest to make up for my stupidity. I know you're still mad. If you don't come, it's totally understandable. But I hope this would make for a better start. That's all.

Roy retreats and leaves the room.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Tricia and Kevin are having a candlelight dinner at a fine dining restaurant. A WAITRESS serves Tricia the main dish.

TRICIA

It's nice to be on the receiving end.

They dine.

KEVIN

It's also nice to give.

TRICIA

I've been serving almost all my life. I give the customers this, they want that or they want less salt on this, yakkity-yak. It's not something I wanna do for the rest of my life. I have dreams too like the rest of them!

KEVIN

Well, you could be served more if you want.

TRICIA

What I want is to move out of here and chase my dream. No more worries.

KEVIN

Then why not? Just go.

TRICIA

You can't just go like that. Ain't going to a big city to end up being a broke waitress again. If I leave, I need some capital.

KEVIN

You're thinking like a businesswoman.

TRICIA

This is one thing Roy doesn't understand. I tried to help him build his business into a franchise chain. But oh no, he wants purpose and leaves for New York. What's purpose if you don't have the money to make it.

KEVIN

Roy is not a businessman. He's sorta an artist.

TRICIA

You know, you and I, we make a great team. I can follow you to New York start a --

KEVIN

Whoa, let's talk business later. I think we'll have plenty of time for that. It's very romantic here and --

Kevin cell phone RINGS.

KEVIN

Excuse me.

He answers.

KEVIN

Kevin here...what...what do you mean don't agree with the moratorium.

He clenches his fist and almost slams the table.

KEVIN

I gave him my word! He's not signing...don't screw me up...you know how much I gave to the company and this is how you repay me! Don't do this to me...hello...hello?...damm...

Kevin hangs up.

TRICIA

Something wrong?

KEVIN

Yes, Davenport is not signing the contract. My company does not like this deal I made...this moratorium thing.

TRICIA

But baby, you can turn this
around.

Kevin pushes his food away and slumps back on his chair.

KEVIN

I think they found just the right
reason to kick me out.

TRICIA

Oh, really?

KEVIN

This is a set-up. I should smell
it when I left New York. Sending
me all the way here for two weeks
while they work on my clients
back home.

TRICIA

You mean, they are trying to get
rid of you?

KEVIN

That's what they've done.

TRICIA

Can they do that?

KEVIN

When the partners want to get rid
of someone, they can resort to
anything.

Tricia gets up from her chair.

TRICIA

You know what, I have to go. My
mom, she's not feeling that well
and --

KEVIN

Whoa, what's happening?

TRICIA

I'm so sorry about this. The
truth is I need to be with
winners and not the opposite. I
don't want to be with another Roy
again.

KEVIN

What do you mean another Roy?
You calling me a loser?

TRICIA

No, no, but I think you need to sort things out. Well, thanks for the dinner.

She walks out leaving a flabbergasted Kevin.

INT. AVERY FISHER HALL/STAGE - NIGHT

Roy, carrying his flute case, is walking with some musicians towards the exit. He is casually chatting with some of them. Then he passes by the dark auditorium with the lit stage. The lone REPAIRMAN is just leaving the stage.

ROY

You guys go ahead. I'll catch you tomorrow.

He waves them goodbye. When the rest of the musicians are gone, he walks into the auditorium.

INT. AVERY FISHER HALL/STAGE - CONTINUOUS

No one is on stage. The chairs have been positioned on stage for the orchestra. He walks up to front of the stage and turns to faces the empty hall. He takes out his flute from the case.

ROY

May I present to you Henderson Symphony Number One, Gramp's Mystery Piece.

He performs his grandpa's beautiful composition but STOPS abruptly after a minute.

ROY

So much for this piece.

Then he hears someone CLEARING HIS THROAT. Mr. Taberski walks up from the darkness towards the stage.

ROY

Mr. Taberski! Sorry. Didn't know you're here.

MR. TABERSKI

Plenty of free time Mr. Henderson?

ROY

Just jamming around. Thought there was no one around so...

MR. TABERSKI

No one jams on it without my permission.

He quickly packs his flute and gets down from the stage.

ROY

Sorry. Wouldn't happen again.

Sheepishly, Roy walks toward the exit.

MR. TABERSKI

Although calling it Henderson Symphony Number One may not be most appropriate...

Roy turns around.

ROY

Excuse me?

MR. TABERSKI

There's nothing mysterious about it. I've heard it before.

ROY

You have?

MR. TABERSKI

Oh yes, it should have been called The Song for Florentine.

ROY

Florentine is my grandma's name.

MR. TABERSKI

I know.

ROY

Huh?

MR. TABERSKI

That was what your grandfather would have wanted it to be.

ROY

You know him?

MR. TABERSKI

Do I know John? Oh, I knew John. He was then the upcoming conductor here. Your grandmother, well, she was like an angel behind the piano. They were a great couple. Obviously, you weren't born yet. Your grandparents were composing that music you were playing.

(MORE)

MR. TABERSKI (cont'd)
 Unfortunately, your grandmother
 died young. John was devastated,
 like his right arm has been cut
 off. He left New York and that
 piece was never completed.

ROY
 Why did --

MR. TABERSKI
 Now, that will be all Mr.
 Henderson. Please look your best
 tomorrow. We have a big night.
 Good night.

Mr. Taberski leaves the room. Roy stares at the empty
 stage and it changes to --

INT. AVERY FISHER HALL/CONCERT HALL - NIGHT

This is the gala performance night and a well-dressed crowd
 in black tie fills the hall.

INT. AVERY FISHER HALL/BACK STAGE - CONTINUOUS

The musicians are on stage separated from the audience by
 the stage curtains. Roy is uncomfortable in his tux and
 neatly combed hair. Corey turns around to him.

COREY
 Now you look like one of us. And
 stop playing with your neck.

ROY
 It's just that I'm always not
 used to a tux. It's so --

COREY
 We know it's so not you. So is
 your date coming tonight?

ROY
 I'm not sure. Doesn't matter.

INT. AVERY FISHER HALL STAGE

The stage curtain lifts up and Peter as the Concertmaster,
 comes on stage with the rest of the musicians following
 behind. He walks toward the first chair at the first row.
 The audience CLAPS. Peter takes his seat.

The nervous Roy breaks into a smile when he sees Melinda
 getting to her seat. At the conductor's podium, Mr.
 Taberski LIFTS his baton and waves -- the orchestra
 PERFORMS spectacularly.

INT. AVERY FISHER HALL/BACK STAGE - LATER

In a cocktail reception after the concert, musicians mingle with their friends. Roy spots Melinda and walks up to her.

ROY
I'm glad you made it!

MELINDA
Curiosity got onto me. I have to admit that it was good. I'm glad I came.

ROY
You wanna have a drink?

MELINDA
Glass of wine.

He gets her the wine from a passing WAITER.

ROY
I see you're in a better mood.

MELINDA
It's not better yet. It's just under control. There's a difference.

Mr. Taberski approaches them.

MR. TABERSKI
Melinda!

MELINDA
Mr. Taberski!

He pecks her on the cheek.

MR. TABERSKI
It's good to see you again. You look wonderful.

MELINDA
Likewise, always flawless and I don't mean only the performance.

MR. TABERSKI
You still know how to capture people's heart. If you ever want to play again, you know my door is always open for you.

MELINDA
You're most generous.

MR. TABERSKI
I see you have met Mr. Henderson.

MELINDA
Oh, yes. He invited me.

MR. TABERSKI
Well, Mr. Henderson, fine job today. Doesn't hurt to have your hair combed once awhile.

ROY
I'll try to make that a habit.

MR. TABERSKI
(turns to Melinda)
It's good to see you again. I hope you can excuse me now. I have other guests to attend to but please come visit me again.

MELINDA
I will.

He leaves them.

ROY
What's wrong with my hair?

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Roy and Melinda are strolling along a bustling street downtown New York.

ROY
What does he mean when he said you could come back to play anytime?

MELINDA
Nothing.

ROY
Then why not? Some people are dying for it!

MELINDA
Dying for it. I supposed it maybe worth it for some people.

ROY
But not for you?

Roy removes his bow tie while holding on to his flute case.

MELINDA
You're not really a tie person, aren't you?

ROY

Actually, I think we'll look even cooler in black leather jackets on stage!

MELINDA

You think!

(a beat)

It's not that I don't want to. I would really loved to if I could.

ROY

Then what's stopping you? I've heard you play.

MELINDA

Priorities changed. Fulfillment level changed. Things like that.

ROY

You're in the prime of your life and you'd rather teach kids in a music school than play to the world?

She smiles at him.

ROY

Maybe I have a lower level of fulfillment...

MELINDA

So were you fulfilled tonight?

ROY

Sitting at the back, playing to hundreds of paying audience, partially.

MELINDA

Partially? It takes a lot to make you a happy man.

ROY

You know what, I'm really not like him. As a matter of fact, the only thing I'm like him, or he is like me, is that we both have ambitions.

MELINDA

I'm sorry but...

ROY

We are both jerks and the sorry should come from both of us.

(MORE)

ROY (cont'd)
If I could, I would really love
that tonight you came for a
different reason.

MELINDA
I did.

They stop in front of a BAR.

ROY
Hey, you wanna go for a drink?

MELINDA
You know what, it's getting late.
I really got to get going.

ROY
But --

MELINDA
Maybe some other time.

She hails a CAB and enters.

MELINDA
(through the cab window)
I really enjoyed myself tonight.

ROY
Maybe we could do it some other
time.

MELINDA
Maybe. Good night.

The cab drives off.

EXT. EMPTY STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Roy is walking along a row of closed shops. Dogs are BARKING. He hears FOOTSTEPS. Turning around he sees two suspicious MEN following him. He QUICKENS his pace. Suddenly one of the men pushes him into a dimly-lit alley.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

The men surround him.

ROY
(hands his wallet)
Here, take it. No trouble.

One of the men comes inches to Roy's face.

ROY
Hey, I've seen you before.

He is one of the Mr. Roitman's goon. The FIRST GOON lands a HARD PUNCH on Roy's face. He FALLS down disoriented.

FIRST GOON
That was for insulting my boss.

The other goon then KICKS Roy on the stomach.

SECOND GOON
This is for coming to the house
and upsetting his daughter.

FIRST GOON
What'd we have here --

He opens up this flute case and toys with the flute.

ROY
Put that down!

FIRST GOON
Piece of junk.

He CHUCKS the flute into a garbage bin.

ROY
No!

HAL
Next time, that'll be your
fingers!

They walks away into the darkness. Roy MOANS in pain.

EXT. UNCLE MARTIN'S BAKERY/ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Uncle Martin is closing the shutter when Roy STAGGERS up to him. He is disoriented with a bloodied face and shambled tux, still clutching his dismantled flute.

UNCLE MARTIN
What the...

Uncle Martin grabs Roy before he collapses.

INT. UNCLE MARTIN'S BAKERY/STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Roy MOANS. Two BLURRY HEADS comes into focus; Uncle Martin and Corey are looking down at him. Roy prods himself up from the bed.

UNCLE MARTIN
Whoa, slowly. How you feeling?

ROY

Like a ten-ton truck just smashed
on my head.

UNCLE MARTIN

What happened?

ROY

Some dude...yeah the guys that
came to the bakery that day, that
took the free stuff.

UNCLE MARTIN

You mean Roitman's guys? They
did this?

ROY

Yeah.

MELINDA (O.C.)

I know who they are.

Melinda is standing by the door.

ROY

My head...

Melinda walks up to him.

MELINDA

I should have known...

ROY

My flute?

Corey picks it from the table and passes it to him.

COREY

Not much to look at.

The flute is bent; a total wreck.

ROY

What am I gonna do?

UNCLE MARTIN

I'll get you a new one.

ROY

No, it's not about getting a new
one. This was gramp's flute! All
that I have of him.

UNCLE MARTIN

I know, I know...

MELINDA

I'm so sorry.

ROY

Maybe Kevin is right! Now I know why he wants to break up with you! I wouldn't wanna be near you if I knew this would happen!

MELINDA

I'll sort this out. I'm really sorry.

ROY

Yeah! Go sort this out!

Melinda leaves the room. Roy flings his flute across the room.

INT. MR. ROITMAN'S OFFICE/SECRETARY AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Melinda barges toward her father's office. The SECRETARY tries to stop her. The First Goon is standing by the door.

SECRETARY

Miss Roitman, you can't go in there!

MELINDA

Oh, yes I can!

The First Goon stands between her and the door.

MELINDA

I know you did it! Did he ordered you to hurt him?

FIRST GOON

We're just taking care of you.

MELINDA

I don't need any of you to take care of my business. This is between my father and I.

HAL

I can't.

He stands adamant.

MELINDA

Unless you are family, get lost!

Melinda pushes him aside and BARGES into her father's office.

INT. MR. ROITMAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The room is big and plush with dark oak walls and leather furniture. Mr. Roitman is sitting behind his big desk talking on the phone while puffing on his cigar.

MR. ROITMAN

...if I were to come down there to solve your problem, why do I need you anymore? You take care of this and don't call me unless you solved it!

He hangs up. His angry demeanor changes to a smile seeing Melinda. Melinda marches up to his table.

MR. ROITMAN

I'm surprised you're here. It's so rare to have my own daughter visiting my office.

MELINDA

You know why I am here. Why did you beat up Roy? He's done nothing wrong.

MR. ROITMAN

What are you talking about?

He presses his cigar on the ashtray.

MELINDA

You know what I'm talking about. You sent your monkeys to beat him up. So don't pretend you don't know anything about Roy.

Mr. Roitman leans backwards in his oversized chair. He takes out another cigar, snips it and lights it up. He draws it slowly and PUFFS at Melinda. Melinda stands adamant but COUGHS a little.

MR. ROITMAN

You mean that Roy? The kid who works at the bakery? You have a thing with him? I don't like him. He insulted me. He came to my house without my knowledge and --

MELINDA

He is my friend!

MR. ROITMAN

Hey, I know guys like him. That baker boy thinks he's very smart.

MELINDA

Yeah, he's smarter than you!

Mr. Roitman rises up from his chair.

MR. ROITMAN

You watch your mouth lady! You should have some gratitude. I took care of him for you.

MELINDA

I don't need you to take care of me. If it's isn't for mom, I would have...

MR. ROITMAN

You would have what, huh? Your mom is drunk half her life! If it's not because of me, she'd be in the streets with you!

Melinda turns around and heads for the exit.

MR. ROITMAN

Hey, I'm talking to you! Don't turn your back on me when I'm talking to you! As long as you're under my roof, what I say, what I do, goes!

She SLAMS the door on the way out.

INT. MELINDA'S MUSIC SCHOOL - DAY

Melinda is sitting in front of her notebook while talking on the phone.

MELINDA

...yes, a Godfroy.

LOUIE (FILTERED)

(French accent)

Your friend has good taste. Rare piece. Don't think I could lay my hands on it.

MELINDA

Rare, huh. How much you'd think it'll cost?

She leans backwards, running her hand through her hair.

LOUIE (FILTERED)

The think is not about the money but locating one that matches your requirement.

When she pulls her hand out, a small CLUMP OF HAIR comes out. She stares at it.

MELINDA

Thanks Louie. Send my love to
Philippe too.

INT. AVERY FISHER HALL/HALLWAY - NIGHT

The next performance night. Roy, face with bruises, is PACING FRANTICALLY alone in the hallway alone. He is holding his BROKEN FLUTE with missing bits and pieces. You can hear the musicians TUNING their instruments in the background. Corey pops his head out from the staging room --

COREY

C'mon, get in here!

ROY

What'd you expect me to do?
Whistle? I don't have a flute. I
don't have anything!

COREY

You gotta be in here, otherwise
you'll be goner.

ROY

Don't you think I know that!

COREY

I'll be right back.

He pops his head back in. Roy continues pacing frantically. Corey pops back in.

COREY

Here!

He hands Roy a PICCOLO.

COREY

Some dejected guy left this here
during the audition.

ROY

It's a piccolo! I can't play
this!

COREY

It's a wind instrument. It's the
best I can do. You have to be on
stage.

ROY

No, no, no, no...

We hear FOOTSTEPS coming towards them and sees Melinda approaching. She is holding a FLUTE CASE.

MELINDA
Hello, gentlemen.

Roy doesn't seem pleased to see her.

ROY
(coldly)
Hi.

Melinda is all cheery.

MELINDA
I've something for you.

She hands the flute case to Roy.

ROY
What's this?

MELINDA
Open up.

He opens it up and inside is a flute that is the same replica.

ROY
How did you...

He takes it out and admires it.

MELINDA
Go ahead.

ROY
It looks the same...

He BLOWS a few notes.

ROY
This is great!

MELINDA
I'm so sorry 'bout what happened.
My dad, he's a little --

ROY
Hey, we don't have to talk about
it now.

MELINDA
I mean you taking a beating for
no reason for me. I don't have
much time left and --

ROY
You got my flute back. I'm still
standing here.
(MORE)

ROY (cont'd)

The other day, I don't really mean what I said. About Kevin, about you.

MELINDA

Yeah, I know.

ROY

There's always a reason for everything but right this moment, now, I don't have much time to talk about it. Let's meet up later.

MELINDA

I can't, I've something to clear at home.

Corey pops his head through the door.

COREY

Roy, it's starting!

ROY

I gotta go!

MELINDA

Well, the show must go on. Go.

He steps back and looks at her momentarily with a smile.

ROY

Thank you.

He rushes out of the corridor towards the stage.

INT. UNCLE MARTIN'S BAKERY/STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Late night. Roy tosses around on his bed. The moonlit flute on the table catches his eyes. He gets out of bed and goes downstairs.

INT. UNCLE MARTIN'S BAKERY/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

He turns on the lights and goes to the fridge to grab a carton of juice. Sitting alone among the utensils, a mischievous smile breaks on his face. He puts on his APRON and KNEADS dough.

He gingerly FLATTENS small pieces of dough into PETAL SHAPES. He then painstakingly PAINTS the dough RED and assembles it into a ROSE. Deep into the late night he completes a dozen perfect life-like dough roses.

EXT. ROITMAN HOUSE/PORCH - DAY

Roy rings the doorbell. Mrs. Roitman, jovial but slightly tipsy, opens the door.

MRS. ROITMAN
Hello there handsome.

ROY
Mrs. Roitman. See you're in a jovial mood today.

MRS. ROITMAN
This is actually one of my bad days.

ROY
I can't wait then to see you on your better days.

MRS. ROITMAN
Sly boy. Are those for me or for my Melinda?

ROY
Oh, this.

Roy holds out the BOUQUET OF DOUGH ROSES behind him.

MRS. ROITMAN
Interesting flowers. Some new breed isn't it?

ROY
Yeah.

MRS. ROITMAN
C'mon, I'll take you to see her.

She grabs Roy's arm and leads him in.

INT. ROITMAN HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MRS. ROITMAN
She's in the piano room, or whatever that's left of it.

ROY
What do you mean?

MRS. ROITMAN
She's doing some moving, I guessed. Kevin is also here.

ROY
Is he?

MRS. ROITMAN
You know where to look for her.
I'm gonna fix myself something in
the kitchen.

ROY
Sure, thanks.

Mrs. Roitman excuses herself. Roy proceeds to the piano room.

INT. ROITMAN HOUSE/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

As he approaches the music room, he hears Kevin and Melinda CHATTERING. He peeks from the side of the open door and --

INT. ROITMAN HOUSE/PIANO ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Catches sight of the brilliantly shining necklace placed on the piano.

INT. ROITMAN HOUSE/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

He looks at his dough roses in comparison to the necklace. Then he places it on a side table by the hallway. Hesitant to leave, he eavesdrops on the conversation.

INT. ROITMAN HOUSE/PIANO ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Melinda is sitting at her piano chair with Kevin on a stool besides her.

KEVIN
...I never wanted to end our
relationship. Miscommunication,
really!

MELINDA
You tell me.

KEVIN
C'mon, we make such a good
couple!

MELINDA
Do we?

KEVIN
Of course we do! Hey, I know my
work has taken a lot of time from
us. But I promise you, things
would be different now. You know
how much I love you. Let's work
things out like we always do.

INT. ROITMAN HOUSE/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Dejected, Roy turns around and begins to walk away.

INT. ROITMAN HOUSE/PIANO ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MELINDA

Then why did you have to send Roy to say that you want to break up with me?

KEVIN

He's just being a pal. He thought I was unhappy and just wanted to help me out.

INT. ROITMAN HOUSE/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Roy stops and yells a silent WHAT!

INT. ROITMAN HOUSE/PIANO ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MELINDA

He told me you convinced him to help you break-up with me.

KEVIN

Nah, he's lying. That's so stupid. What? You think I'm not man enough to handle my own affairs? He's an envious --

Roy barges into the room.

KEVIN

Roy! Buddy, what you doing here?

ROY

Don't buddy me you liar! You put me up to this!

KEVIN

Whoa, what are you talking about?

ROY

Oh, you know, the buddy thing -- clink on the glass, your word is my honor, our happiness is more important stuff!

KEVIN

I think you came at a bad time. We're having a private conversation here. Why don't I give you a call later?

ROY

This has to do with me so I'm staying!

KEVIN

Calm down man.

ROY

I'm not the liar here! You set me up on this and now you want her back.

KEVIN

I've always wanted her.

ROY

You're so full of shit, you know.

Kevin confronts Roy face to face.

KEVIN

You have a problem with me?

ROY

Yeah!

MELINDA

(to both of them)

Cut it out...

They ignore her.

KEVIN

Why you like her? You like Melinda? Wanna two-time me behind my back, buddy?

ROY

What's your problem?

KEVIN

Yeah, you! Because you made her like you! Happy?

ROY

You watch your mouth.

KEVIN

Or what? Pizza boy.

ROY

What'd you call me?

MELINDA

Stop it both of you!

KEVIN

Look at you. A pizza boy from Oregon talking like you're some big shot here.

ROY

(to Melinda)

You see him. The real him. He doesn't care about you! He never cared for anyone as far as I'm concerned. The only thing he cares about is himself!

MELINDA

Roy, I'll talk to you later.

ROY

(to Kevin)

A pizza boy, huh. After all these years, you ungrateful bastard. When you're broke, when you're down, my dad and I took you in like family. Now you're some big shot and this is how you talk to me!

MELINDA

Roy! I'll talk to you later.

ROY

Fine. It's between both of you. I'm not getting involved in this charade anymore!

Roy storms toward the door. Before exiting, he turns to Melinda.

ROY

He's right, you know. I'm just a pizza boy.

Roy leaves the room.

MELINDA

(to Kevin)

Sometimes you can be such a jerk.

KEVIN

He asked for it.

MELINDA

No, you asked for it! At the end of the day, you're just a salesman trying to sell your way out.

KEVIN

Sell what out?

MELINDA

Cindy told me two days ago, they fired you. If you think I'm gonna call my cousin to help you get your job back, you can forget about it. Our relationship was for my family's business. Everything is business to you.

KEVIN

That's not true.

MELINDA

Once you got the deal, you slowly became very busy.

KEVIN

My work requires me to be busy. They pay me for it!

MELINDA

Let me tell you something. I have nothing to do with my dad's business, my cousin's business or anyone's business for that matter. So, you can take your precious little gift here --
(she shoves the necklace to Kevin)
and pass it on to the next waitress you meet.

KEVIN

What?

MELINDA

You heard what I said. Do you think that I would not know? Who do you think her employees are more loyal to you or her. Who pays them their salary?

A beat.

MELINDA

Just leave.

Kevin walks out of the room. Furious, Melinda walks up to the bay window and stares out at the sky. Suddenly, she lets out a excruciating COUGH and BLOOD SPLATTER all over the window.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Melinda sits across the doctor's desk. A WOMAN DOCTOR, in her late 30s, comes in with a medical file.

DOCTOR
How you feeling today?

MELINDA
That question is like a double
edge sword to me.

The doctor takes her seat and flips through some paper.

DOCTOR
We been through this for the past
few months. I wished I had a
better way to put it to you but
it's not great. It's high time
you break this to your folks.
They should know about this.

MELINDA
In due time.

DOCTOR
And quite honestly, there's not
much left.

MELINDA
How much left?

DOCTOR
Hard to say, two maybe three
months. Maybe less, maybe more.
Your lung cancer has reached an
advanced stage.

MELINDA
Any chance to...

DOCTOR
We can always continue.

MELINDA
That's bleak.

DOCTOR
Bleak or heartening, it depends
on you. There are some people
who live till seventy five and
still makes no difference to
others. It's not my business to
interfere in your personal life
but why not tell your family?
Their support will come in handy.

MELINDA
My mom has enough problems of her
own. Surprised that the alcohol
doesn't kill her earlier than me.

DOCTOR
 We did not come into this world
 alone. You need to talk.

INT. UNCLE MARTIN'S BAKERY/STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Rocking his chair, Roy stares blankly at the unfinished composition on his table. When he picks his flute and decides to play someone KNOCKS at the door.

ROY
 It's not locked.

Melinda pokes her head in.

ROY
 Hey...

MELINDA
 Catch you at a bad time?

ROY
 No.

MELINDA
 Can I come in?

ROY
 Yeah, sure.

Melinda enters.

MELINDA
 See you're practising.

ROY
 Just messing around.

Roy clears up the music sheets and puts it neatly at a corner of the table.

ROY
 Have a seat.

Roy offers his chair to Melinda.

MELINDA
 About the other day --

She takes his seat.

MELINDA
 I broke up with Kevin.

ROY
 Wow, I really don't know what to say...

(MORE)

ROY (cont'd)
(a beat)
Did I make you like me?

MELINDA
What do you think?

ROY
He's a buddy of mine. I would
have never --

MELINDA
Two timed him? Considering that
he called you a liar and never
thought twice about hurting you?

ROY
Man, I look up at him in college.
He's the complete opposite of me.
Good looking, confident,
successful...

MELINDA
And a complete empty suit. Strip
him of that, he's nothing. Sweet
words flows like honey from a
dripping hive. It's always sweet
at the beginning.

Melinda notices the music sheets on the table and picks it
up.

MELINDA
What's this?

ROY
Nothing. Just stuff I was
composing. Well, not really me.
My grandpa did the first half and
I'm trying to finish the second
half.

She scans the music sheets.

MELINDA
How come he didn't finished it?

ROY
He died before he completed it.

MELINDA
I'm sorry.

ROY
It's not tragic. He wrote it for
my grandma.

MELINDA
Well, why don't you play it?

ROY

Nah, it's not done. Wouldn't be nice.

MELINDA

C'mon, play it. Someone needs to critique it anyway. Might as well do it early.

Roy picks up his flute and performs the incomplete composition to an abrupt end.

MELINDA

Something wrong?

ROY

That's it. This is the point where I have to complete. And this is where I'm stuck.

He sits back on his bed.

MELINDA

Do you have a purpose to complete it?

ROY

What do you mean?

MELINDA

Obviously, he wrote it for a purpose.

ROY

Well, he loved my grandma a lot and she died early. I think he was too heart broken to continue.

MELINDA

So, he was in love with her. All great composers compose for a reason, for a lover, for a revolution, for her majesty. Do you share his passion?

ROY

Maybe. Otherwise I wouldn't be here in the first place.

MELINDA

You can't maybe on this. Then you'll never finish it! He wrote a beautiful beginning. How do you want it to end?

ROY

Nicely of course. Something to make him proud of.

She grabs a pencil and an empty music sheet on the table.
Roy walks up to her.

ROY
What you doing?

She starts to scribble on the sheet.

MELINDA
As a music teacher, I'm gonna
give you some inspiration. I am
helping you make it nice.

She completes a page of music and hands it to Roy.

MELINDA
There.

Roy takes it and paces around the room HUMMING the notes.

MELINDA
So?

ROY
Not bad. Not bad. But I think
we could --

Roy puts the sheet back on the table in front of her.
Leaning besides her, he picks up the pencil and scribbles
on the sheet.

ROY
...add a few more chords here.
There. What do you think?

Melinda HUMS softly while Roy gazes at her.

ROY
Why are you doing this?

They lock eyes.

MELINDA
Because since you made me like
you --

Roy and Melinda bring their face closer to each other.

MELINDA
(slowly)
...and because I don't have much -
-

They are about to kiss her when --

TRICIA (O.C.)
Honey pie!

Tricia is standing at the door with her bags. Roy and Melinda immediately break off their near embrace.

ROY

Tricia! What are you doing here?

Tricia comes in and throws her bags on the bed.

TRICIA

You're not the only one who has dreams! Since I don't have any friends here, I'm gonna bunk with you for awhile.

ROY

No, you can't!

TRICIA

(to Melinda)

Who's she?

ROY

Oh, Melinda. This is Tricia.

MELINDA

You know what, I better be leaving.

Melinda walks toward the door.

ROY

No, you stay.
(to Tricia)
You go!

TRICIA

Uh-uh.

Tricia stands her ground and gives Melinda a bitchy look.

MELINDA

Well, thank you for the flowers.
It was beautiful.

ROY

(to Melinda)

Wait...

Melinda leaves the room. Then Roy turns to Tricia.

ROY

What do you think you're doing?
Are out of your mind? We broke up!
I told Kevin to break up with you.

TRICIA

It's from Kevin not from you. So if it's not from your mouth, it's not counted. I think you're confused. You're under a lot of stress, baby.

ROY

No, I'm not! I'm very clear now!

Tricia puts her arms around Roy's neck.

TRICIA

Honey, look at you. Do you think you could live without me?

Roy removes her arms and backs off.

ROY

Yes, I could. It's over. It really is.

(a beat)

You're a smart girl. A beautiful woman. You have dreams and what we want from each other is totally different.

TRICIA

Well, I don't care!

She throws her tantrum and sits firmly on his bed.

TRICIA

I'm gonna stay here! You'll be sorry later!

ROY

No, I won't.

TRICIA

Yes, you will!

ROY

Listen. It's over. It's really over. As over as plain daylight.

TRICIA

You're such a loser! You're just a day dreamer. You're lucky to have someone like me!

Roy grabs her bags and drags her forcefully towards the door.

TRICIA

Let go of me! What are you doing? Are you going to kick me out on the streets?

ROY
Good luck to both of us in our
new lives.

He THROWS her out of his room.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Melinda is teary as she walks briskly down the street.

ROY (O.C.)
Hey!

Melinda ignores and quickens her pace.

ROY
Melinda!

Roy catches up to her and cuts her off.

ROY
Stop, please. Tricia and I, we
have nothing to do with each
other anymore.

Melinda continues walking quickly with Roy keeping up with her.

ROY
I'm sorry.

MELINDA
No, I'm sorry! I'm sorry for
myself! I'm sorry for my life!
I'm sorry for my family! I'm
sorry for meeting you!

She stops and covers her face sobbing.

MELINDA
I'm dying here.

ROY
I know. I'm really sorry for the
mess and --

MELINDA
No, I'm really dying. I have
lung cancer.

ROY
What?

MELINDA
Now, do you feel sorry for me?
Or should I feel sorry for
myself?

Roy stands there speechless. Melinda walks away into the crowd.

INT. AVERY FISHER HALL/MUSIC ROOM - DAY

The musicians are practising a classical piece. Mr. Taberski waves to end the session. Not attentive, Roy blows a WRONG NOTE when everyone has stopped.

ROY

Sorry.

MR. TABERSKI

That's it for the day.

The musicians pack their instruments and begin to leave. Corey turns back to him.

COREY

You okay?

ROY

Yeah. Just one of those days.

COREY

Men only have two things they worry about -- money and women. You don't look like a money person and...

ROY

It's Melinda.

COREY

Problem with the ladies again, huh. Lovesick?

ROY

Well, that depends on whether it's spelt in one word or two.

COREY

Are you being complex just to impress people?

ROY

Well, if it's love then I think that possibility is still unknown but if it's sick then it's very real.

COREY

Talk with sense to me.

ROY

Melinda is not well. I mean really not well. She has cancer.

COREY

Man, that sucks. I'm sorry to hear that.

ROY

So now you tell, how do I fulfill the first word? How can I even begin to like someone who I know is going to die on me soon?

COREY

I don't know. Probably you gotta figure out whether is it worthwhile to do so.

ROY

Probably.

INT. MUSIC SCHOOL - DAY

Gracie, with a gloomy look, is doodling on some flyers and did not pay attention when Roy walks in.

GRACIE

Classes are cancelled for the week --

ROY

Yeah, I know.

Gracie looks up.

ROY

Hey. Is she in?

GRACIE

I'm not sure if she wants to see anyone. This is not really the best of her days.

ROY

Neither is mine. At least we have something in common.

GRACIE

She's in there.

ROY

Thanks.

GRACIE

I really don't know how to cheer her up.

Roy walks toward the piano room.

INT. MUSIC ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Melinda, looking lost, is sitting at the piano with a scarf wrapped on head. Roy knocks softly on the door and enters.

MELINDA
Why are you still here?

ROY
That's what I'm trying to figure out.

MELINDA
There's nothing to figure. Look at me.

ROY
And you look much better than me on any given day.

MELINDA
I'm not really into humor right now.

She walks away from the piano.

MELINDA
Didn't I make it clear to you that I'm dying?

ROY
So?

MELINDA
I don't need the pity!

ROY
Is that what you think I'm here for? There's no benefit for being sorry for ourselves.

MELINDA
I can take care of myself like I always do.

ROY
Why are you so hard on everyone? Did we do something wrong to you?

MELINDA
Things are just so unfair.

ROY
I wished I could say I understand but I don't. The least I could do is try, if you let me to.

MELINDA

I'm so alone.

ROY

You have your family and friends.
We are here for you.

MELINDA

Sometimes I just wish my mom
would be a bit stronger. You've
seen my family.

ROY

I can't really say that I know
them that well.

MELINDA

I brought myself through college,
scholarship and all. I owe no
one. Music is my life, was my
life. It gave me solitude. I am
at peace when I play.

Melinda gestures around the room.

MELINDA

This gave me life and distracted
me from pain.

She breaks down.

MELINDA

Why me? I don't deserve this!

ROY

No, you don't. You deserve this
at all.

Roy hugs and comforts her.

ROY

But hey, listen, as long as you're
still breathing, we're gonna do
something about it! It ain't over
till we say it's over! Some people
may live to a hundred but if it's a
sad existence then what for? I
don't know how long more you have,
but I know one thing -- I have one
uncompleted piece of music, and if
music makes you happy, let me write
this for you. Or we could write
this together. Either way, I want
to make you happy. Unlike Kev, I
don't have much to offer but only
this.

MELINDA
No, thank you.

Roy is disappointed.

MELINDA
But I would rather play than
write. You write. I play.

She breaks into a feeble smile.

INT. UNCLE MARTIN'S BAKERY/STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Pencil TAPPING on the table and gazes at the strewn music sheets all over the table. Then begins to compose furiously.

MONTAGE

Roy paces around the room playing with the flute while editing the music sheets; Melinda, getting weaker, continues to undergo treatment in the hospital; Roy composes while working in the bakery; both of them practise the unfinished piece in Melinda's music school; Roy run between rehearsals to visit her during the hospital treatment; they visit and applaud the old busker in Central Park; Melinda continues giving piano lesson in her school --

END OF MONTAGE

INT. MUSIC SCHOOL/PIANO ROOM - DAY

Melinda listens to Madeline play a difficult piece.

MELINDA
Well, Madeline it sounds like
you've been letting up on your
practise.

Madeline stops playing.

MADELINE
Are you really dying?

MELINDA
Why who told you that?

MADELINE
Gracie told me.

MELINDA
I may not be your teacher
forever.

(MORE)

MELINDA (cont'd)
While I still am, lessons will
still continue. Now let's
continue.

MADELINE
But it's a hard piece!

MELINDA
It's not that easy but it's
playable. Let me show it to you.

Madeline moves aside for Melinda. Melinda hit the wrong
keys. She shakes her head, clearing the drowsiness.

MELINDA
Now, it's like this...

When she hits the keys, she FAINTS and SLUMPS on the piano.
Madeline tries to shake her awake.

MADELINE
Miss Roitman! Miss Roitman!

Madeline runs out of the room.

MADELINE (O.C.)
Gracie! Gracie! Help!

BLOOD oozes from Melinda's nose.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Melinda is lying the bed, pale and weak. Mrs. Roitman, sad
and sober, sits besides her holding her hand. Roy rushes
in.

ROY
Mrs. Roitman.
(turns to Melinda)
Are you all right?

MELINDA
(weakly)
Yeah, I'm fine. Should be out in
a couple of days.

MRS. ROITMAN
I'll leave you both alone. I'm
gonna get myself a drink. Don't
worry. It's coffee. You want any
Roy?

Mrs. Roitman exits the room and Roy takes her seat. He
holds Melinda's hand.

MELINDA

I don't think I'm able to play
your music anymore.

ROY

Don't say that. I'm almost done.

MELINDA

So am I.

ROY

We're gonna finish this together!
You're my reason that I see
completion. My gramps couldn't
complete it because he was too
heartbroken when my grandma died. I
don't want to be heartbroken.

Mr. Roitman BARGES in with Mrs. Roitman tugging him back.

MRS. ROITMAN

Leave them alone!

MR. ROITMAN

(turns to Roy)
You done enough!

ROY

What?

MRS. ROITMAN

Stop it! Leave them alone!

MR. ROITMAN

I'm not leaving her alone with
him!

A NURSE comes in.

NURSE

What's the problem here? The
patient needs rest. I think you
gentlemen better take it outside.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

MR. ROITMAN

You listen here young man. You
and that Kevin guy have caused
her enough misery. I don't want
you to show your face anymore in
front of her!

ROY

What have I done?

MR. ROITMAN

You stop giving her false hope!

ROY

Because none of you gives her the real one.

MR. ROITMAN

Watch your mouth! You're damm lucky we're in a hospital.

ROY

Or what? You're gonna do send someone to do your dirty job?

MR. ROITMAN

She is my daughter, and I love my daughter --

ROY

So do I!

MR. ROITMAN

What do you know about loving her? What do you know about loving a dying woman? Tell me. You know nothing!

Mr. Roitman leaves Roy and goes back to the room.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - NIGHT

Roy and Corey are sitting together in a moving train.

COREY

So what are you going to do now?

ROY

Don't know. Life's a bitch. You know, sometimes all the talent you have is practically, completely useless, if destiny doesn't side you. Zilt, Zitch, nothing. Everything can be taken away from you just like that.

COREY

You're speaking like she's dead. She's still here. Give her a lil' respect. You can do something about it. If she can't do it, then you do it for her.

Roy pulls out a stack of music sheets, the completed composition from his bag and passes it to Corey.

ROY
It's here. I've completed it.

Corey flips through it.

COREY
This is really complex but really
good stuff!

The train stops. Peter and a few of his FRIENDS enter in front of them.

PETER
Well, hello there chums.

COREY
Hey.

PETER
What do we have here?

Peter snatches the music sheet from Corey's hand.

PETER
(turns to his friends)
Check this out.

He scans through it.

PETER
Not bad, not bad.

ROY
Give it back to me.

Roy tries to grab it back.

PETER
Is this yours?

Peter's friends block him.

ROY
I'm not kidding. Give it back to
me.

PETER
Or else what? You know, your
presence in the orchestra is an
insult to me. I have no idea why
they chose you to sit on the same
stage with me.

ROY
Hasn't it occurred to you, in the
completely moronic brain of yours
that this is because I have
talent.

The train stops and the door OPENS. Some commuters are leaving and entering.

PETER

On the contrary, there are many
who are better than you.

He THROWS the music sheets out of the train as the doors are closing.

ROY

(yells)

No!

Roy jams his hand at the door and scrambles himself out.

INT. SUBWAY STATION PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

The paper scatters all over the platform.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - CONTINUOUS

PETER

Talent? Who do you think he is?

Corey furiously comes up face-to-face with Peter.

COREY

That was uncalled for. Do you
know what you just threw out?

INT. SUBWAY STATION PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

Roy frantically collects the sheets on the floor. As the train leaves the station, some of the sheets are strewn across the track. He stands there lost.

ROY

Not this way! Not this way! I
don't have much time left! I
don't have much time left!

INT. UNCLE MARTIN'S BAKERY/STUDIO APARTMENT - LATER

Placing the recovered music sheets on the floor like a jigsaw puzzle, Roy tries to re-write the missing pages again. He crumples paper after paper in frustration.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Mrs. Roitman is dozing on the chair while Melinda is sleeping. Melinda is weaker and balding to the scalp. She's wheezing through an oxygen mask.

MELINDA

Mom...

Mrs. Roitman goes to her bedside.

MRS. ROITMAN

I'm here.

MELINDA

Mom, I'm sorry.

MRS. ROITMAN

Sorry for what?

MELINDA

I should have been there for you.

MRS. ROITMAN

What are you talking about?

MELINDA

I wished I had spent more time with you. I closed my eyes on what's been happening between you and dad. I only gave you minimum support when I knew I could have given you more. And now I could not give you anymore. I'm so sorry.

MRS. ROITMAN

You're always there for me, sweetheart. It's me who should be at fault, not you. Don't say that. I'm sorry. I am the one who is very sorry because I should be the one who stands for you.

MELINDA

Mom, I'm really gonna die. I'm scared. I'm really scared. I miss you.

MRS. ROITMAN

(breaking down)

Shh, Melinda. I'm here now. I'm always gonna be here for you.

MELINDA

Will you take me home? I don't want to die here. I don't to die in a hospital. Take me home, mommy.

MRS. ROITMAN

All right. We'll go home. We'll go home.

INT. AVERY FISHER HALL/MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Musicians are leaving after practise. The room is almost empty. Roy is preparing to leave when --

MR. TABERSKI

Mr. Henderson, will you stay for a minute.

ROY

Yeah.

Mr. Taberski standing by his podium gestures him over.

MR. TABERSKI

Come here.

(points to a chair near him)

Grab a seat.

MR. TABERSKI

Mr. Henderson, you seemed to be rather dreamy lately. Is there a problem?

ROY

No problems.

MR. TABERSKI

Do you know why you're in this orchestra?

ROY

Because you needed a good flutist?

MR. TABERSKI

I can get flutist all over the world. You remember your audition?

ROY

Yeah.

MR. TABERSKI

Play me the same piece that you did.

Roy takes out his flute and plays. Halfway --

MR. TABERSKI

(waves)

No, no. That's not it.

ROY

It's the same one.

MR. TABERSKI
It's the total opposite. I can't
hear you.

Mr. Taberski paces in front of him.

MR. TABERSKI
Why do you think people come to
listen to us play night after
night?

ROY
We entertain them.

MR. TABERSKI
So could popping a CD at home.
That's also entertainment. We're
a little different than a CD
player. And you know why?

ROY
Because we're human players?

MR. TABERSKI
And we have heart. We play with
our hearts. That's why people
come to listen to us. It's live!
It's breathtaking!

A beat.

MR. TABERSKI
I know about Melinda. I know what
she's going through. She was my
brightest.

ROY
And what happened?

MR. TABERSKI
I knew of her illness at the
beginning. It has robbed her of
her dreams but not her will.

A beat.

MR. TABERSKI
Remember, why you came here in
the first place? What has your
grandfather left for you? The
works of many great composers
stood before time because it was
written for a purpose. Some at
the worst moments of the lives.

ROY
What are you telling me?

MR. TABERSKI

I know about the subway incident. I have reprimanded Peter for his ungentlemanly conduct to his fellow colleague. What I'm telling you is to see everything to the end. Everything must have closure. When you know how it ends, getting there is a matter of choosing the path. We never walk out halfway from our audience. Do you understand?

Roy replies with a nod.

MR. TABERSKI

Well then, good evening to you Mr. Henderson.

Mr. Taberski exits.

INT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

The busker plays the violin in the park. No one pays attention to him. Roy is sitting on a bench nearby eating his sandwich and having two cups of coffee with him. When the busker is done, he walks over to him.

ROY

Business's bad huh?

BUSKER

Well, you have your days. My fingers too stiff now. You should have heard me when I was younger.

He passes the extra cup of coffee to him.

BUSKER

Thanks. You alone today? Where's she?

ROY

Well, she's not feeling well. Hey, you mind if I play here with you?

BUSKER

Be my guest.

Roy puts his coffee down and takes out his flute.

ROY

Try and follow me if you can.

He blows a POWERFUL note. Soon people stop and crowd around. He begins to perform an UPLIFTING CLASSICAL piece. The busker tries to follow. A SMALL CROWD begins to form. When it ends the crowd erupts with ENCORE and fills the busker's hat with money. They both take a bow.

BUSKER
(to Roy)
Thank you.

ROY
No, thank you.

INT. UNCLE MARTIN'S BAKERY/STUDIO APARTMENT - LATER

Standing before the jigsaw pieces of music sheets on the floor, he picks up the pieces again. Then he begins to re-compose the missing pieces like a man possessed from sunset to sunrise.

INT. ROITMAN HOUSE/MELINDA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Melinda is resting soundly when Roy enters and kneels besides her. He holds back his tears seeing the skeleton-thin Melinda. Sensing his presence, Melinda opens her eyes.

MELINDA
(weakly)
Hi.

ROY
How you feeling?

MELINDA
Could be better.

ROY
We've done it.

Roy takes out the composition and shows it to her.

ROY
Look, we've finished it!

MELINDA
No, you've done it all by yourself.

ROY
Now I just got to find an orchestra to play it for you.

MELINDA

Don't waste it on me.

(A beat.)

Why Roy?

ROY

Why what?

MELINDA

Why are you doing this? I can't give you anything.

ROY

(smiles)

It's not about what I can get from you, but what I can give to you. You've been part of it from day one.

MELINDA

Fate is very cruel to both of us.

ROY

Yeah, it is. I've lodged a complain with God but the e-mail kept bouncing back.

Melinda tries to laugh. Roy touches her cheek softly.

ROY

I love you.

MELINDA

Why do you love me? A dying woman. Look, I'm bald. I'm not even into punk rock.

ROY

Rest assured, it's not the looks that is the attraction.

MELINDA

Then what attracts you to a dying woman?

ROY

You sure are hard to please.

MELINDA

I shouldn't be so demanding but I just want to know whether am I worthy of what you are going through?

ROY

Fate maybe cruel but I should be thankful. Because in my lifetime it had brought you to me.

(MORE)

ROY (cont'd)

I love you because you brought
out the best in me which I could
not see.

Tears begin to well in Melinda's eye.

ROY

It hurts to know that I may not
walk you to the park or make you
a cake or pull you off a
precarious rock cliff anymore.
My definition of love does not
end with your departure. We all
will eventually move on. We may
not remember the faces of the
people we love, the smell they
used to have, but we will always
remember the feeling of life they
give to us in a complete package.

MELINDA

For someone from Eugene, Oregon,
you sure make complex sentences,
but I love it.

Roy kisses her.

INT. AVERY FISHER HALL/STAGE - DAY

Beginning of another practise session. Musicians are
coming in to take their seat. Roy taps on Corey's shoulder.

ROY

Hey, I'm done with it.

He proudly shows the finished composition to Corey. Corey
takes it and flips through it.

COREY

Man, that was quick. You really
love her don't you? She's lucky
to have someone like you.

ROY

Maybe I'm the lucky one.
Otherwise, I may still be
procrastinating on this.

Then Roy's cell phone beeps and turns anxious as he reads a
text message from it.

ROY

Her mom just messaged. She's not
good. I gotta go! I really gotta
go!

COREY

Now?

ROY

Talk to you later.

Roy grabs his knapsack and flute case and rushes out.

COREY

Hey, wait. You forgotten these!

Corey is waving his music sheets. Peter comes up to Corey.

PETER

What's up with him?

INT. ROITMAN HOUSE/MELINDA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Melinda is propped up motionless on her bed. She is wheezing slowly through the oxygen mask and her eyes are already glazed. A teary Mrs. Roitman sits besides her holding her hand. Roy rushes to her side. Mr. Roitman enters and heads straight to the opposite side of Roy.

MR. ROITMAN

(sternly to Roy)

What are you doing here? You have said your last to her. Please leave us alone. This is a private family matter. Are you family? No, so get out. Don't make it harder for all of us.

ROY

Can I not see her?

MR. ROITMAN

You have now. Please excuse us. I really don't want to make anymore scene in front her, please. It is very painful. Let the family be together.

Roy reluctantly leaves the room.

EXT. WALKWAY IN FRONT OF ROITMAN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

When he walks out of the compound, he stops and faces the house. He DROPS his knapsack takes out his bow tie. He wears his bow tie and puts on his jacket. He takes out his flute and then begins to perform the music he composed for her. There is no reaction from the house. He continues to play like a man possessed. Still no reaction from within the house.

Then he hears VIOLIN PLAYING. He turns around and sees Peter playing -- and the rest of the orchestra members, casually dressed, behind him settling down in position quickly. Corey is running around putting copies of Roy's composition on everyone's make-shift music stand. Roy now has the backing of a full orchestra Mr. Taberski is conducting and NEIGHBORS begin to gather around.

Mr. Roitman rushes out distraught with the two goons trying to restraint him.

MR. ROITMAN
(yelling)
What the hell are you doing? Get
outta her before I call the cops!
Are you mad?

Mrs. Roitman pushes Melinda out on a wheelchair to help her witness her final show.

MRS. ROITMAN
Get her back in!

Upon seeing Melinda, Roy plays with vigor. Mr. Roitman comes face to face with Roy, who ignores him and continues performing.

MR. ROITMAN
I said stop playing!

Though motionless, tears stream through Melinda's glazed eyes as she listens to her final symphony.

Unable to control his anger, Mr. Roitman throws a hard punch on Roy's face. Roy staggers and falls. The orchestra stops. Tino, the cello player stands up on guard. Mr. Taberski motions him to sit. The goons hold back Mr. Roitman. Roy staggers up.

ROY
I promised Melinda a symphony.
This is all I could give, nothing
more, nothing less. My last gift
to her.

Roy brings the flute to his lips with BLOOD dripping down the flute. Wrenching in pain, he forges on to perform this powerful and moving piece for Melinda. Mr. Roitman unable to control his emotions drops to his knees and breaks down in tears.

When the orchestra completes the spirited performance, Melinda's final tear stop streaming -- she passes away peacefully.

EXT. CEMETERY/MELINDA'S TOMBSTONE - DAY

Roy kneels in front of her tombstone. He puts the completed music sheets on her tombstone.

ROY

We've completed this together.
There's no title to this piece.
It is all yours to name as you
see fit. You helped me fulfilled
my reason for it.

He kisses her tombstone and walks away leaving the music sheets fluttering up towards the sky.

FADE OUT.