

The Sound of Christmas

Current Revisions by

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- Writer's Draft - Oct. 2 - Complete Script
- WHITE - Oct. 3 - Complete Script
- proto-PINK - Oct. 9 - pages
- proto-YELLOW - Oct. 14 - pages

C/P XMAS PRODUCTIONS VI INC.
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ACT ONE

1 EXT. MUSIC STORE - FRONT - NIGHT 1

Jaunty Christmas music is heard as we see a cheerily decorated music store in New York City -- the kind that has everything from sheet music to grand pianos.

2 INT. MUSIC STORE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS 2

The jaunty tune continues as we look around the store, which has big red bows on the high-ticket items. A beautiful grand piano sits at the center of the store.

LIZZIE MOORE, mid-30s, a natural beauty with a gentle demeanor, is standing next to the piano, a wistful smile on her face. She wants to reach out and touch the piano but stops herself.

SAMANTHA WASHINGTON, late 30s and the embodiment of New York City, steps up next to her with an armful of sheet music.

SAMANTHA

"Hark the Herald Angels Sing" or
"Ring Christmas Bells"?

LIZZIE

What?

SAMANTHA

Which song? For the Christmas
concert? Lizzie, are you in there?

LIZZIE

(snaps out of it; smiles)
Sorry. Distracted by the piano.

SAMANTHA

It is beautiful.
(checks price)
And it costs more than my car!

LIZZIE

Yeah... it's a little pricey. But
couldn't you just picture our
students playing this? We could
put it on the cover of the
brochure.

(CONTINUED)

2

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2

SAMANTHA

(as if reading a headline)
"The Brooklyn Music Academy: Now
With Really Expensive Pianos!"

LIZZIE

(smiles)
It would make me want to go there.

SAMANTHA

Sweetie, there's a reason why you
teach piano and I do all the
business stuff. You dream of
beautiful music and I dream of
paying the rent.

*
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*
*

LIZZIE

Maybe Santa will bring us one for
Christmas.

SAMANTHA

That's the spirit. Hey, why don't
you play something?

LIZZIE

What? No...

SAMANTHA

Come on! They won't care.

LIZZIE

You know I don't like playing in
front of an audience.

SAMANTHA

What audience? There's no one
here.

They look around and sure enough -- they are the only ones in
the room other than a really bored salesman.

SAMANTHA (cont'd)

Come on. How many chances like
this are you going to get?

Lizzie thinks about it for a moment and then smiles.

LIZZIE

Okay...

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: (2) 2

Lizzie sits down at the piano reverentially and then places them on the keys lightly -- touching the instrument with affection and respect. She takes a breath and launches into a familiar Christmas tune, but the way she plays it... it's magical. *

3 EXT. MCKINLEY HOLDINGS BUILDING - FRONT - NIGHT 3

Establishing shot #1.

The Manhattan office building for McKinley Holdings. The song Lizzie is playing continues under.

4 INT. MCKINLEY HOLDINGS - BRAD'S WORK OFFICE - NIGHT 4

We start on the nameplate for the office belonging to BRAD OWEN. In this large comfortable office we find ABIGAIL OWEN (15), a sweet-faced girl who is sitting in a guest chair, bored and a little impatient. Behind the desk is BRAD OWEN (30s), handsome in a mature way and more focused on a phone call right now than on his daughter.

BRAD
(into phone)
Yes, Mr. Akimoto... Yes, Travis McKinley is very interested in your building in Tokyo.

ABIGAIL
(whispers)
Dad...

He holds up a finger as if to say, One minute.

BRAD
(into phone)
Well yes, McKinley Holdings has hotels, retail, and residential properties all over the world. But we treat each of our assets as if they were our only one.

ABIGAIL
(whispers)
Dad, it's getting late!

BRAD
(nods; into phone)
Yes. Of course I can get that for you. Hold on just a moment.

(CONTINUED)

4

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4

He starts looking for a file on his desk and as he searches, a young woman enters. This is MEG HOOPER (early 20s), his assistant, who somehow always anticipates his needs before he knows them. She always has a tablet computer with her, and at this moment has a file folder as well.

BRAD (cont'd)
(covers phone)
Meg, I need the --

She hands him the file he was looking for.

BRAD (cont'd)
(into phone)
I've got it right here.

ABIGAIL
(to Meg)
How do you do that?

MEG
Do what?

ABIGAIL
Always know what Dad wants before
he knows he wants it?

BRAD
(into phone)
Yes sir. I'll talk to you
tomorrow. Goodbye.

MEG
(to Abigail, smiling)
Being psychic was part of the job
description.

BRAD
I heard that.

Abigail laughs as Meg walks out, smiling.

ABIGAIL
Dad, can we go? The Christmas tree
lot is going to be closing soon!

BRAD
Abigail, we have plenty of time.

ABIGAIL
But what if we're late?

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: (2)

4

BRAD

Then we'll get a Christmas tree tomorrow.

ABIGAIL

That's what you said yesterday.

BRAD

I did? So much for the Father of Year Award, huh?

ABIGAIL

It is at risk, yes.

BRAD

Okay. Let's get out of here. Tokyo will be there in the morning.

She stands happily. Then CYNTHIA BROOKS (30s), successful, smart, and pretty, enters with a stack of folders.

CYNTHIA

Oh good, Brad, you're still here.

Abigail rolls her eyes and sits back down.

5 INT. MUSIC STORE - NIGHT

5

RESUME SCENE

Lizzie is so lost in the moment that she doesn't notice that a handful of people have come in the store and they, along with the salesman, are enjoying her performance. She finally finishes with a flourish and the small crowd applauds.

Self-conscious and a little embarrassed, she goes to Samantha

LIZZIE

Where did they come from?

SAMANTHA

Sorry. Next time I'll barricade the door.

LIZZIE

(smiles)
I'd appreciate that. Can we go, please?

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: 5

Lizzie heads toward the cash register to pay for the sheet music. Samantha takes a beat to feel a little bad for her friend, whose embarrassment is obvious despite the smile.

6 EXT. MUSIC STORE - FRONT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS 6

Lizzie and Samantha come out of the store.

(CONTINUED)

6

CONTINUED:

6

SAMANTHA

You know you really were incredible in there. You should consider performing again.

LIZZIE

Thank you, but I'm perfectly content being a music teacher. I don't miss being on stage at all.

SAMANTHA

Lizzie, I know what happened was embarrassing but it was ten years ago.

When Lizzie talks about what happened she is not dramatic or upset. It's not that it didn't bother her but she attempts to shrug it off.

LIZZIE

Sam, it was more than just embarrassing. It's not like I missed a note during a talent show, I froze during my debut concert in front of a thousand people.

SAMANTHA

You play in front of your students in the classroom all the time.

LIZZIE

There's a difference between a classroom and a stage. Listen, it happened, I moved on, and I am fine right where I am..

Samantha puts her arm around Lizzie.

SAMANTHA

I get it... I could teach someone how to balance their checkbook but I wouldn't want to do it in front of thousands of people.

LIZZIE

Thank you.

SAMANTHA

Come on. Let's go get a tree for the Christmas concert.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: (2)

6

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

(beat - teasing)

I just hope we can find one that
won't be too embarrassed to be on
stage.

LIZZIE

(tries not to laugh)

That's not funny.

SAMANTHA

(laughing)

It's a little funny.

Lizzie laughs, joining in on the joke as they walk away from
the store.

7 EXT. MCKINLEY HOLDINGS BUILDING - FRONT - NIGHT

7

Establishing shot #2.

8 INT. MCKINLEY HOLDINGS - BRAD'S WORK OFFICE - NIGHT - CONT.

8

RESUME SCENE

We pick up where we left off -- Cynthia has just come in with
the files, much to Abigail's displeasure.

BRAD

Hey Cynthia, I was just on my way
out the door. Oh, Abigail, you
remember Cynthia? She used to work
with me but now she's the VP of
Business Strategy for Mr. McKinley.

*
*

ABIGAIL

What does that mean?

CYNTHIA

It means I work too much. And I
sometimes have to beg other people
to work too much.

BRAD

I don't like the sound of that.

Cynthia laughs enthusiastically. It's obvious she likes Brad
but he's oblivious to it -- always more focused on the work.

(CONTINUED)

8

CONTINUED:

8

CYNTHIA

You're so funny.

ABIGAIL

He is?

CYNTHIA

Travis saw an article about this up-and-coming neighborhood in Brooklyn where a lot of tech companies are going and he wants in. Find an older building and update it into high-end office space.

BRAD

Okay. I'll pull the available properties tomorrow morning.

She hands him the stack of files.

BRAD (cont'd)

Or, we can do it your way.

CYNTHIA

I know, I'm sorry. The company made a mint from the sale of the hotel on the west side so Travis wants to re-invest before the end of the year to avoid a big capital gains hit.

BRAD

End of the year? That's two weeks.

CYNTHIA

(shrugs - smiles)
Merry Christmas?

BRAD

(beat - capitulates)
Tell Travis he's going to be getting a visit from the Ghost of Christmas Past tonight.

CYNTHIA

(laughs)
Thank you. I'll talk to you tomorrow. Goodbye Abigail.

Abigail waves and then turns to her father. They both look at the big stack of files. Brad sighs and picks them up.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: (2)

8

BRAD
It'll give me something to do while
you're picking out a tree.

ABIGAIL
Yay!

She jumps up and heads for the door.

9 EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE LOT - NIGHT - LATER

9

Lizzie and Samantha come into the lot and look around at the
aisles of trees.

SAMANTHA
Hmmm... Which way?.

LIZZIE
I think the one we want is...
(closes her eyes and
points)
That way.

SAMANTHA
Good enough for me.

They do a high-five and are off.

10 EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE LOT - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

10

In another part of the lot, Brad (who is carrying the files
Cynthia gave him) and Abigail are looking at trees.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

ABIGAIL
(points)
What about that one?

Brad surveys it for a moment.

BRAD
It would look good by the piano.

ABIGAIL
(rolls her eyes)
That was subtle.

BRAD
You said you were ready to start
taking lessons again.

ABIGAIL
I said I was thinking about it. I
didn't say go hire a new teacher.

BRAD
I didn't hire her. I haven't even
talked to her. Meg found her and
set up an interview tomorrow night.
If you don't like her...

ABIGAIL
(shrugs - looks at tree)
I don't know... It's too... fluffy.

BRAD
Well, we wouldn't want that.

ABIGAIL
I say we keep looking.

BRAD
You're the boss.

She walks and he follows a few feet behind and opens a file.

Lizzie and Samantha comes down one of the aisles of trees.
Lizzie stops at one to appreciate it while Samantha keeps
going. Lizzie backs up to get a better view... and runs
directly into Brad, who drops all of his files into the snow.
They both scramble to pick them up.

LIZZIE
Oh, no! Oh, I'm so sorry.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED: (2)

10

BRAD
No, it's my fault. I wasn't
watching where I was going.

She has collected a bunch of the files and hands them back to Brad, and they lock eyes for the first time. There is a brief moment -- one of those flashes of attraction -- and then they both dismiss it with shy smiles and stand up.

Abigail yells from nearby.

ABIGAIL
Dad! Come on!

He smiles again.

BRAD
Duty calls.

LIZZIE
Sorry again.

BRAD
No, it's okay. Merry Christmas.

LIZZIE
Merry Christmas to you, too.

Brad starts to walk away and Lizzie glances down. There is one more file on the ground. She picks it up but doesn't really look at it.

LIZZIE (cont'd)
Wait... one more.

She hands him the file.

BRAD
Thanks.

LIZZIE
Sure.

She smiles and walks away, and Brad watches her go. Then he glances down at the file she gave him, which is open with a picture of the property it is about.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED: (3) 10

The building in question is a beautiful multi-story brick affair with lots of character.

DISSOLVE TO:

11 EXT. MUSIC ACADEMY - FRONT/STREET - MORNING - NEXT DAY 11

Establishing shot #1.

The only difference between the photo and real life is that there is more snow on the ground and there are Christmas decorations in the windows and around the main door.

We can also now see a sign better -- it reads BROOKLYN MUSIC ACADEMY and advertises CLASSES, PRIVATE LESSONS, ALL AGES.

Lizzie is coming down the street towards the Music Academy, chipper on this nice December morning. She greets people at merrily decorated stores and homes that neighbor the school, which is obviously an important part of this community.

As she reaches the school she finds JORDAN CRAWFORD (16) sitting on the steps out front. He is handsome band-geek type who never goes anywhere without his beat-up oboe case and the very nice oboe that is inside it.

*
*

LIZZIE

Hey, Jordan.

JORDAN

Hi, Ms. Moore.

LIZZIE

What are you doing sitting out here in the cold?

JORDAN

(dejected)

I forgot my Vivaldi.

*

LIZZIE

Your what?

JORDAN

Vivaldi Concerto in A Minor. I left the music at home and Mr. Flannery is going to yell at me.

*

LIZZIE

He's not going to yell at you.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

JORDAN

He's going to say I'll never get into Juilliard if I keep forgetting my music. Maybe he's right.

LIZZIE

Jordan... What's going on?

JORDAN

(pause; sighs)

My mom said she hasn't heard about the scholarship for next year. I can't keep going here if we don't get one.

LIZZIE

Hey, we're having our big concert on Christmas Eve, and that brings in all the donations we need to cover the scholarships. Tell your mom not to worry.

JORDAN

Yeah?

LIZZIE

Yeah. And tell Mr. Flannery that I got into Juilliard and I forgot my music all the time.

*
*

That cheers Jordan up. He goes into the school with Lizzie.

12 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - LOBBY - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

12

Jordan and Lizzie come into the lobby, which has elevators, a staircase, a hallway, and a door off it marked BROOKLYN MUSIC ACADEMY MAIN OFFICE.

Jordan heads off down the hall.

JORDAN

Thanks, Ms. Moore.

LIZZIE

You're welcome. Have a good lesson.

Lizzie heads toward the office.

13 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - OFFICE - MORNING - CONTINUOUS 13

Lizzie comes into the simple office, which has a few desks, and file cabinets. Samantha is speaking to a middle-aged woman and her daughter. *

SAMANTHA *

We do both one-on-one and group lessons for piano, strings, brass, you name it. *

Samantha sees Lizzie. *

SAMANTHA (cont'd) *

In fact, this is Lizzie, one of our piano teachers. *

LIZZIE *

(smile and a wave) *

Hi. Welcome. *

SAMANTHA *

(to the mom and daughter) *

I actually need to discuss something with Lizzie so I'm going to let Ellen take you on a tour and I'll catch up with you, okay? *

A young woman escorts the mother and daughter out of the office. Samantha retains her smile until they are gone and then goes immediately from cheery to panicked. *

SAMANTHA (cont'd) *

Oh, thank goodness you're here. *

LIZZIE *

What's going on? *

SAMANTHA *

They're selling the building. *

LIZZIE *

What? Where did you hear that? *

SAMANTHA *

The dentist on the fourth floor. He heard it from the accountant on three, who apparently has a cousin who knows a guy who works in the property manager's office. *

(CONTINUED)

13

CONTINUED:

13

LIZZIE

Oh, well, as long as you got it
straight from the horse's mouth.

SAMANTHA

Lizzie, this is serious. What if
the rent goes up? The school has a
great deal here.

*

LIZZIE

Samantha, breathe... You don't even
know for sure that the building is
for sale.

*

(CONTINUED)

13

CONTINUED: (2)

13

SAMANTHA

The dentist seemed very sure.

LIZZIE

Yeah, well, the dentist works with laughing gas so I don't know how much stock you should put in him.

*

SAMANTHA

Did you not hear me say this is serious?

LIZZIE

Sam, until you know for sure why not worry about all the other stuff we have to worry about... Like the Christmas concert. There are rehearsals to do, programs to print...

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SAMANTHA

Have you settled on a theme?

LIZZIE

The Sound of Christmas. Showcasing holiday songs over the centuries from Bach to Bubl .

SAMANTHA

Nice. I'll call the printer.

LIZZIE

See? You've forgotten about the building already.

SAMANTHA

(smiling sarcastic)

Sure. Not worried about it at all.

LIZZIE

I have a lesson. Keep me posted.

Samantha gives a thumbs-up as she picks up the phone and Lizzie heads for the door.

14 EXT. MUSIC ACADEMY - FRONT - DAY - LATER 14

Brad and Meg are walking up to the building -- she is taking pictures with her tablet and he's taking notes.

BRAD

This could work. Good neighborhood. Not far from the subway. Parking might be an issue. We should check the --

MEG

(looking at tablet)
Zoning requirements. Already got it. I'll send you a link.

BRAD

(smiles)
You know, Meg, one of these days I'm going to ask you a question that's going to stump you.

MEG

Yeah. Good luck with that.

She heads up the stairs. Brad laughs and follows.

15 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - LOBBY - DAY - CONTINUOUS 15

Brad and Meg come into the lobby and go to the directory listing by the elevators to take some notes.

Lizzie comes out of the office and starts down the hallway towards the music rooms. She glances at Brad and Meg, but they have their back to her so there is no recognition. She continues on her way.

Brad glances over as Lizzie is walking away -- he also can't see her face so he doesn't recognize her. He turns back to the building directory.

16 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - MUSIC ROOM - DAY - MOMENTS LATER 16

This is a pretty standard music room -- think the choir room on "GLEE" -- with a piano and other instruments, sound-proofing on the walls, and a few tiers that could accommodate multiple musicians.

EARL (70) is sitting at the piano waiting patiently. He is a kindly sort, if a bit reserved -- and wears simple JC Penney clothes. Lizzie comes in and he smiles politely.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

LIZZIE

Earl, sorry I'm late.

EARL

(shrugs)

I'm retired. I've got time.

LIZZIE

Still, you shouldn't have to spend it waiting for me. So, let's get started. Have you done your homework?

EARL

I have. I'm ready, I think...

LIZZIE

Okay. Let's hear it.

Earl takes a moment to get settled and then launches into a Christmas standard. He's very good -- maybe not flawless, but better than perhaps you'd expect from the way he looks.

He gets to a part that he messes up a little and stops.

EARL

Rats. I always get tripped up on that part.

LIZZIE

Earl, that was fantastic. You've been practicing.

EARL

Well, it's not a very hard song.

LIZZIE

Don't be modest. You sounded great.

EARL

(embarrassed)

Oh, I don't know.

LIZZIE

Have you thought any more about playing for the Christmas concert?

EARL

You think I'm ready for an audience?

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: (2)

16

LIZZIE

Are you kidding? Yes!

EARL

(shakes his head)

I ran a company for fifty years.
Loved every minute of it. But not
as much as I love this.

LIZZIE

I know exactly what you mean.

EARL

I should've turned the business
over to my son years ago.

LIZZIE

I didn't know you had a son.

EARL

(shrugs)

We're not... close. He took piano
lessons when he was a boy and
played this song one year.

(pause)

I'm sorry, you don't want to hear
all this.

LIZZIE

Tell you what... if you agree to
perform in the concert, I'll
reserve the best seats in the house
for your son. It's never too late
for Christmas.

Earl is moved by this idea.

EARL

I'll think about.

LIZZIE

Okay. Now move over and let me
show you how to get through that
hard part.

He does and she sits next to him to begin playing.

17 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - HALLWAY/MUSIC ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS 17

We are in the hallway outside the music room, and the sound of Lizzie's playing is heard through the door.

The hallway bustles with students and teachers.

Brad and Meg come down the hallway and Brad is drawn by the sound. He goes to the door of the music room and looks through the small window set into it.

Lizzie is turned towards Earl so Brad still doesn't recognize her as the woman he met briefly in the Christmas tree lot, but he smiles appreciatively at the song and the expertise with which it is played anyway.

After appreciating the song for a moment, he walks away.

18 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - MUSIC ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS 18

Lizzie is still playing and showing Earl the finger-work. She glances up at the window in the door, a heartbeat after Brad is no longer visible. She turns back to Earl.

19 EXT. MCKINLEY HOLDINGS BUILDING - FRONT - DAY - LATER 19

Establishing shot #3.

20 INT. MCKINLEY HOLDINGS - TRAVIS'S OFFICE - DAY 20

TRAVIS MCKINLEY (40s) and his office go well together. Both are formidable, outsized, and no-nonsense. He rarely stops looking at the computer or his smartphone while talking.

Brad is standing by while Cynthia updates the boss.

TRAVIS

Where are we with Toronto?

She hands him a file.

CYNTHIA

It's done. The contracts are ready for your signature.

TRAVIS

And that's how you negotiate a deal. Nicely done. What else?

CYNTHIA

The company Christmas party?

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

TRAVIS

Just tell me where to be and how much it's going to cost me. Next?

CYNTHIA

Brad has a proposal for the Brooklyn project you wanted.

TRAVIS

Excellent.

He holds out his hand and Brad puts a file into it. Travis takes a look.

BRAD

The building is in great shape, about seventy per-cent leased, but everyone is on month-to-month deals so that's not an issue.

TRAVIS

What's on the ground floor?

BRAD

A music school. It's nice but not essential.

TRAVIS

Any problems with the neighbors?

BRAD

It might go over better if you added some conveniences. Maybe a coffee shop or a market?

TRAVIS

The gourmet market thing is very hot right now. Good idea, Brad. What's the downside?

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: (2)

20

BRAD

None, that I can see. The price is right and there's plenty of space once we move everybody out.

TRAVIS

Let's push it forward. The accountants showed me how big our tax bill will be if we can't reinvest by January one. We need this so as long as there aren't any surprises, I want something to sign by next week.

BRAD

Thanks, Travis.

Brad and Cynthia exit.

21 INT. MCKINLEY HOLD. - BRAD'S WORK OFFICE - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

21

Brad and Cynthia come into his office.

CYNTHIA

That went well. Do you want help with the offer letter? I just did one for the building over on Fifth.

BRAD

Yeah, that would be great. We're going to have a lot to do if we're going to get this all done before the end of the year.

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*

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

CYNTHIA

Well, if you want, we could go over
it tonight.

(pause)

Maybe over dinner?

Brad totally misses the point of that suggestion.

BRAD

Oh, I can't tonight. Abigail's got
a thing at home.

CYNTHIA

I could bring it over later.

Again, Brad does not get it -- he thinks it's all business.

BRAD

Okay. Sure.

CYNTHIA

(smiles)

Great. I'll see you around
seven-thirty?

BRAD

Sounds good. Thanks Cynthia.

She smiles and leaves the office as Brad gets back to work.

22 EXT. MUSIC ACADEMY - FRONT - NIGHT

22

Establishing shot #2.

23 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - OFFICE - NIGHT

23

Samantha is hard at work at her computer when Lizzie pokes
her head in the door.

LIZZIE

Hey. I think I got Earl to be in
the Christmas concert.

SAMANTHA

That's great! And I got another
sponsor so that means more of the
donations can go toward
scholarships.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: 23

LIZZIE
So we've both had productive days.

SAMANTHA
Yes, we have. Are you out?

LIZZIE
Yeah, I have a first meeting with a
new private student and her dad in
Manhattan.

SAMANTHA
Good luck. If it goes well, bring
them around here. We could always
use some Manhattan parents come
donation time.

LIZZIE
(smiles)
I'll see what I can do. Good
night.

SAMANTHA
Good night.

Lizzie leaves and Samantha returns to work.

24 EXT. BRAD'S APARTMENT BUILDING - FRONT - NIGHT - LATER 24

Establishing shot #1.

Brad's apartment building is a nice place -- not fancy by any
stretch of the imagination, but he does well for himself.

25 INT./(EXT.) BRAD'S APT. - LIVING RM./BUILDING CORRIDOR - NIGHT 25

The apartment is comfortable and spacious, with nice decor
and furnishings. There's a living room with a small foyer
directly off it and a hall leading to the kitchen, dining
room, and bedrooms.

An undecorated Christmas tree stands next to the piano where
Abigail sits plunking a few random notes. Brad is tidying.

BRAD
What is that? Beethoven?

ABIGAIL
Ha-ha.

(CONTINUED)

25

CONTINUED:

25

Brad stops what he is doing and looks at his daughter, who doesn't seem thrilled. He goes over to sit next to her on the piano bench.

BRAD

You don't have to do this, you know.

ABIGAIL

I know.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: (2)

25

BRAD

I mean, you have to meet with her because she'll be here in about a minute, but if you don't want to take lessons with her or if you don't want to take lessons at all. Or if you do, that's fine, too. No pressure from me...

ABIGAIL

Dad. Chill.

BRAD

All I'm saying is I know it's complicated... but I think your mom would be happy that you were playing again.

ABIGAIL

Thinking about playing again.

BRAD

Right.

The doorbell rings. He kisses her on the forehead and she smiles.

BRAD (cont'd)

I'll get it.

Lizzie is standing there.

Both of them take a moment to put together how they know each other and are both a bit taken aback by the surprise.

BRAD (cont'd)

(smiles)

Hi.

LIZZIE

(smiles)

Hi.

And we leave them there on this happy coincidence.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: (3) 25

ACT TWO

26 EXT. BRAD'S APARTMENT BUILDING - FRONT - NIGHT 26

Establishing shot #2.

27 INT. BRAD'S APT. - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 27

Lizzie is taking a seat in the living room with Abigail as Brad is hanging up Lizzie's coat.

LIZZIE

So I see you found a tree.

BRAD

We did.

ABIGAIL

And we're going to decorate it tonight, right Dad? *

BRAD *

Well, I do have some work to get... *

Abigail gives him a look. He pivots quickly. *

BRAD (cont'd) *

Absolutely, decorating the tree tonight. *

Lizzie smiles and heads to the piano. Brad and Abigail follow *

BRAD (cont'd)

So I work with Dave Novotsky. You taught his son?

LIZZIE

Evan. Yeah, he was great. He plays keyboards in a rock band now so all of those Mozart Sonatas I taught him really paid off. *

BRAD

How long have you been teaching?

LIZZIE

About ten years. I've been playing since I was three or so my Dad said. "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" was a big hit in my house. *

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

BRAD
Where did you study?

*
*

LIZZIE
I went to Julliard.

*
*

BRAD
(nudges Abigail)
Impressive.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (2)

27

LIZZIE

I'm really glad I went there. It taught me a lot about teaching.

BRAD

And how many students do you have?

ABIGAIL

Dad, we don't need to know every last detail of her life.

LIZZIE

It's okay, ask as many questions as you want. One of my piano teachers had a plaque on the wall with a quote from Hans Christian Andersen. It said, "Where words fail, music speaks." You need the right person to help you find your voice.

Brad sits back, impressed.

LIZZIE (cont'd)

So, what other questions do you have? Ask me anything.

*
*

Brad looks at Abigail who pauses, then nods. Brad turns back to Lizzie.

BRAD

When can you start?

LIZZIE

How about right now?

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (3) 27
There are smiles all around at this agreement.

28 EXT. MUSIC ACADEMY - FRONT - NIGHT 28
Establishing shot #3.

29 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - OFFICE - NIGHT 29
Samantha still working as we start to hear music coming from *
somewhere in the building -- an oboe playing a sweet *
Christmas tune.
It takes Samantha a moment to register the sound, and then
she looks towards the office door, curious.

30 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - HALLWAY/MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER 30
Samantha walks down the hallway, trying to find the source of
the music. She approaches the music room we saw Earl in
earlier and looks through the window in the door.

31 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS 31
Jordan is in front of a music stand, playing the Christmas
song on his oboe. He's really good. Samantha enters and *
Jordan stops playing.

SAMANTHA

Jordan?

JORDAN

Oh, hi, Ms. Washington. Am I
playing out of tune?

SAMANTHA

No! But what are you doing here
this late?

JORDAN

Practicing for the Christmas
concert. Ms. Moore told me how
important it was so I wanted to *
make sure I'm like extra good and I
can't practice at home.

SAMANTHA

Why not?

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

JORDAN
It's just so loud there. My
brothers are always goofing around
and my dad is always watching
football or basketball or whatever
and always yelling at the TV and...

*
*

SAMANTHA
I get it... It's loud.

JORDAN
In the music room I can actually
hear myself play for a change.

*

SAMANTHA
Does your mom know you're here?

JORDAN
Yeah. She said I could as long as
one of the teachers was around.
And I know you're not technically a
teacher, but you run the school so
it's not a total lie, right?

SAMANTHA
I think we can let it slide.

JORDAN
Cool. So it's okay if I stay?

*

SAMANTHA
Absolutely. I'll be in the office
so say good night before you leave.

JORDAN
(happy again)
I will. Thanks Ms. Washington.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: (2) 31

SAMANTHA
You're welcome, Jordan.

Jordan starts to play again as Samantha leaves.

32 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - OFFICE - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER 32

Samantha comes back into the office and starts turning on the lights as Jordan's Christmas song wafts down the halls. She sits at her desk and smiles.

33 EXT. BRAD'S APARTMENT BUILDING - FRONT - NIGHT 33

Establishing shot #3.

34 INT. BRAD'S APT. - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 34

Brad and Lizzie approach the piano where Abigail is seated

LIZZIE
That's a beautiful piano.

ABIGAIL
Thanks... it was my mom's.

Lizzie glances up at Brad and he gives a tight smile.

LIZZIE
I can't wait to hear you play.

The doorbell rings.

ABIGAIL
Who is that?

BRAD
Oh, that must be Cynthia. Work thing. Hold on.

Brad goes to the door while Abigail grows impatient. He lets Cynthia in.

BRAD (cont'd)
Hi.

CYNTHIA
Hi. I brought the draft of the offer letter. And some wine. A little reward for working late --

Cynthia sees Lizzie and Abigail.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

34

CYNTHIA (cont'd)
Oh, hi. Am I interrupting?

ABIGAIL
Yes.

BRAD
No, it's okay. Piano lessons.

CYNTHIA
Oh wonderful.
(to Lizzie)
Hi, I'm Cynthia Brooks.

LIZZIE
(shakes her hand)
Lizzie Moore. Nice to meet you.

CYNTHIA
I'll bet she's a great student.

BRAD
You know, we should let them get to
it. Abigail, I'll be in my office
if you need me.

ABIGAIL
It's just a piano lesson, Dad, not
math homework.

BRAD
In other words, Go away Dad.

ABIGAIL
You said it, not me.

Brad smiles and leads Cynthia down the hall.

35 INT. BRAD'S APT. - BRAD'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

35

This was probably a bedroom in a previous life, but now is a comfortable, albeit a bit messy, home office with a desk, a couple of chairs, and some book cases.

BRAD
Sorry about that. It's her first
lesson with a new teacher so it's
very dramatic.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

35

CYNTHIA

I get it. Do you want some wine
while we do this?

BRAD

Oh, no, I'm good. I can open it
for you though if you want?

CYNTHIA

(covers nicely)

No. I'm good. Probably should
keep my wits about me anyway.

Brad sits behind the desk and Cynthia takes a guest chair, a
bit disappointed, as they get to work.

36 INT. BRAD'S APT. - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - SAME TIME

36

Abigail is at the piano and Lizzie is standing next to it.

LIZZIE

So, how long have you been playing?

ABIGAIL

I started when I was six and then I
stopped when I was twelve.

LIZZIE

What made you stop?

ABIGAIL

(shrugs)

My mom was really into music. When
she died... I guess it just didn't
feel the same without her.

LIZZIE

That's how I felt when I lost my
dad. He taught me how to play.

They leave that shared connection there for a moment, and
then Lizzie claps her hands together.

LIZZIE (cont'd)

Okay... Let's see what you've got.

Abigail nods and thinks about it for a moment, then puts her
fingers on the keys with respect -- much in the same way that
Lizzie did at the music store. Lizzie notices and smiles.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

Abigail takes a breath and then starts playing a happy Christmas tune. She's a little rusty, but it's obvious this girl knows her way around a piano. She looks up at Lizzie.

ABIGAIL
Do you know this one?

LIZZIE
Of course.

Abigail scooches over on the bench and Lizzie slides in next to her. While Abigail plays the right side, Lizzie joins in on the left, adding in the third-tier melody to complete the song. Abigail breaks into a smile, staying with the simple notes, while Lizzie handles the more complex ones. Abigail falls back into the piano like she never left.

As they finish the song, Abigail shines with enthusiasm.

LIZZIE (cont'd)
You're a natural!

ABIGAIL
That song is easy.
(softly)
It's the first one I ever learned.

Abigail looks down at the keys. Her heart swells with memories. Lizzie smiles, happy she's awakened the artist.

37 INT. BRAD'S APT. - BRAD'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT - LATER

37

It's a bit later, and Brad and Cynthia are still working on the documents. Cheery Christmas music that starts and stops is coming from the living room as they talk.

BRAD
So if we take this paragraph and move it up here... I think that's it, yeah?

CYNTHIA
Looks good to me.

BRAD
Great! Well, that was easier than I thought it would be.

CYNTHIA
It's a nice change of pace to not have to work until midnight.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

37

BRAD

Travis is a taskmaster.

CYNTHIA

Yes. Although I've gotten so used to it that I don't know what to do when I have a night off.

BRAD

Nothing. You sit on the couch and watch TV and eat food that's bad for you. That's a night off.

CYNTHIA

That sounds terrific. Maybe the next time we have a night off on the same night we could do that...

Just as before, Brad is oblivious to what she means.

BRAD

Yeah, that would be fun. .

CYNTHIA

(smiles)

Great.

Cynthia doesn't see the disconnect between them.

38 INT. BRAD'S APT. - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

38

Abigail plays the final notes of the Christmas song at the piano as Lizzie watches. A few slips, but she's pretty good.

LIZZIE

You know, I also teach at a music school in Brooklyn and we do this big Christmas concert every year. You should be in it.

*
*
*
*

ABIGAIL

Me? I'm not good enough.

LIZZIE

You're more than good enough.

ABIGAIL

I haven't played in years.

(CONTINUED)

38

CONTINUED:

38

LIZZIE

(beat)

I see we have something else to
work on, then.

*

ABIGAIL

What?

LIZZIE

Your confidence.

Abigail kind of blushes and looks down at the keys.

LIZZIE (cont'd)

And we can also do your lessons at
the school any time. We have lots
of kids your age who are studying
all different kinds of music.

*

*

*

ABIGAIL

(interested but cool)

I'll think about it.

*

*

(CONTINUED)

38

CONTINUED: (2)

38

Brad comes into the living room with Cynthia.

BRAD
How are we doing?

LIZZIE
We just wrapped up.

BRAD
Is she ready for Carnegie Hall?

LIZZIE
Absolutely.

BRAD
Good. She needs to support me in
my old age.

CYNTHIA
Brad, see you tomorrow. Night,
Abigail. Nice meeting you, Lizzie.

*

LIZZIE
You, too.

Brad walks Cynthia to the door and sees her out.

ABIGAIL
(to Lizzie)
I'll be right back.

Abigail hurries down the hall towards the bedrooms. Brad
shuts the door and comes back to join Lizzie with her coat.

BRAD
So it went well?

LIZZIE
I think so. She's fantastic. It's
like music is in her DNA.

BRAD
Then it came from her mother. I
don't have a musical bone in my
body. Trust me, you don't want me
anywhere near a piano.

Abigail comes back into the living room with a big box.

BRAD (cont'd)
What's that?

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: (3)

38

ABIGAIL
Christmas tree ornaments.

BRAD
Ah, yes. Decorating the tree.

*

Abigail pulls out a crudely formed reindeer ornament.

ABIGAIL
Hey Dad -- you remember this one?

LIZZIE
Abigail, did you make that?

BRAD
No, actually that was me.

Lizzie looks a little stunned. Abigail cracks up and pulls out a matching reindeer that is much nicer.

ABIGAIL
This one's mine. We made them when I was in third grade.

Lizzie can't help but laugh. Abigail goes to put the reindeer on the tree.

LIZZIE
I better get going.

ABIGAIL
Thanks, Lizzie. I'll see you Thursday night?

LIZZIE
If that's okay with your dad.

BRAD
Works for me.

LIZZIE
Great. Have fun with the tree. I can see myself out. Good night.

BRAD
Good night. Thanks again.

Their eyes meet for a moment and then Lizzie turns to go. Brad and Abigail go back to the box while Lizzie goes to the door.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: (4)

38

BRAD (cont'd)
What else is in there?

He starts pulling things out of the box and the two of them laugh at the next silly ornament.

ABIGAIL
Oh no! I love that one!

Lizzie opens the door and turns back for a moment, taking in the sweet scene of Brad and Abigail decorating the tree. Brad looks up at her, smiles, and gives a little wave. Lizzie smiles back and leaves.

39 EXT. MUSIC ACADEMY - FRONT - DAY - NEXT DAY

39

Establishing shot #4.

40 EXT. MUSIC ACADEMY - FRONT/STREET - DAY

40

Brad and Meg are walking down the street towards the music school. He is jaunty and whistling a little Christmas tune.

MEG
You're very chipper today.

BRAD
I'm in a good mood.

MEG
Why?

BRAD
Can't I just be in a good mood?

MEG
Not usually. What gives?

BRAD
We're about to submit an offer on a building that could be a great opportunity for us.

*
*

MEG
And...

BRAD
And... that's it.

Meg casts him a suspicious glance but doesn't press it.

41 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - HALLWAY/LOBBY - DAY - CONTINUOUS 41

Lizzie and Samantha are heading down the hallway towards the lobby.

SAMANTHA
How did the lesson go last night?

LIZZIE
(smiles - then catches
herself)
Good. It was good.

SAMANTHA
What was the smile?

LIZZIE
What smile?

SAMANTHA
You smiled. Like an "I have a
secret" smile.

LIZZIE
I did not.

Samantha casts her with a suspicious look as they enter the lobby at the same time Brad and Meg are coming inside.

Brad and Lizzie are stunned once again at the coincidence.

BRAD
Lizzie?

LIZZIE
Brad? What are you doing here?

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: 41

BRAD
I just came to drop off some
paperwork. My company is trying to
buy this building - turn it into
high end office space.

Lizzie's and Samantha's faces drop.

BRAD (cont'd)
What are you doing here?

LIZZIE
I work at the music school. The
one that can't afford high-end
office space. *

She points at the sign for the Brooklyn Music Academy.

The smile fades off Brad's face as well.

ACT THREE

42 EXT. MUSIC ACADEMY - FRONT - DAY 42

Establishing shot #5.

43 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - AUDITORIUM - DAY 43

Lizzie, Brad, Samantha, and Meg come into the school's small
auditorium. It seats about one hundred people but is empty,
other than the beginnings of some holiday decorations for the
big upcoming show. *

Lizzie pulls Samantha aside. *

LIZZIE
(ready for battle)
Let me talk to him. *

SAMANTHA
(fretting)
This is really bad. *

LIZZIE
Don't worry. He seemed like a
really reasonable guy last night,
so I got this. Just give me a
minute, okay? *

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: 43

Samantha nods and starts toward the door. Lizzie turns to
Brad and Meg. *

LIZZIE (cont'd) *
(to Brad) *
Can I talk to you privately? *

BRAD *
Sure. *

He looks at Meg and she nods then exits with Samantha. *

LIZZIE
I can't believe this.

BRAD
I don't know what to say. I'm --.

LIZZIE
Say you're not going to buy the
building.

BRAD
Now, hold on... I'm not buying the
building, the company I work for
is.

LIZZIE
Then tell them they shouldn't.

(CONTINUED)

43

CONTINUED: (2)

43

BRAD

I just told them they should.

LIZZIE

This was your idea?

BRAD

Uh... well... technically, yes, but
I didn't know --

LIZZIE

Did you know there was a music
school here?

BRAD

Well, sure, but I didn't know you
worked here. I didn't know *you*
until about twelve hours ago.

*
*

LIZZIE

Expensive offices. This
neighborhood doesn't need expensive
offices.

BRAD

Okay, but we're also talking about
putting in a market. A *gourmet*
market.

LIZZIE

Great. So this important cultural
arts center that serves the entire
neighborhood is going to be
replaced by gluten-free cookies and
overpriced blocks of cheese?

BRAD

(trying to charm her)

Don't you hate those cookies? They
say they taste like the regular
ones but--.

LIZZIE

I don't care about the cookies!
Brad, this is our home. This is
our community! We are two weeks
away from the Christmas concert
that funds our scholarship program.
We can't have a scholarship program
if we don't have a school.

(CONTINUED)

43

CONTINUED: (3)

43

BRAD

Lizzie, I'm sorry...

LIZZIE

That's it? I'm sorry? I can't
believe I thought I liked you.

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: (4)

43

BRAD
(pause; smile)
Wait. You thought you liked me?

LIZZIE
Oh, no. No, no, no. You do not
get to be smug about that.

BRAD
I'm not being smug. I just think
it's noteworthy that you like me.

LIZZIE
Liked. Past tense.

They have reached a stand-off.

44 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - HALLWAY - DAY - SAME TIME

44

Meg and Samantha are in the hallway outside the auditorium,
both trying to listen to the conversation between Brad and
Lizzie. Meg backs away from the door.

MEG
Okay, this just got personal. We
really shouldn't be eavesdropping

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

44

SAMANTHA

You're right. We're terrible.

(beat)

But if we went around back we'd be terrible but we could hear better.

MEG

Then what are we waiting for?

They rush off.

45 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - AUDITORIUM - DAY

45

RESUME SCENE

LIZZIE

We have our big concert on Christmas eve. What am I going to tell all the students?

Brad doesn't have a reply to that.

LIZZIE (cont'd)

We can't afford to move and I'm sure we can't afford your "high-end offices." Samantha says if you buy this building, the school will have to close.

*
*

BRAD

Lizzie, the building is for sale. Somebody is going to buy it and there's nothing I can do about that.

LIZZIE

Then talk to your company. Get them to leave the building like it is.

BRAD

That's... that's not what we do. It doesn't make any financial sense. And yes, I know how that sounds, but... It's just business.

*

LIZZIE

This isn't just a business to our students. It isn't just a business to me.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

45

BRAD
I'm really sorry.
(beat)
I would hate to see this get in the way of you being Abigail's teacher. She... I liked seeing her play the piano again.

LIZZIE
I'm not mad at her.

BRAD
Good. Then I'll see you tomorrow at seven-thirty.

He starts walking towards the door.

LIZZIE
I will find a way to save this school. I'm not going to give up.

Brad stops at the door and turns back to her with a smile.

BRAD
Good.

He exits.

46 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - OFFICE - DAY - MINUTES LATER

46

Lizzie is pacing while Samantha decorates the office with Christmas stocking, garland, etc.

LIZZIE
Infuriating.

SAMANTHA
It's an impossible situation.

LIZZIE
No, him. He's infuriating. He's impossible. It's just business? This is our lives!

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

46

SAMANTHA

Well, he's just doing his job.

LIZZIE

He has a terrible job. How can you decorate at a time like this?

SAMANTHA

We all have our ways of coping.
So... you think you like him?

*

LIZZIE

Absolutely not the important part of this discussion, Sam.

SAMANTHA

I know, I know!
(pause)
But he's kinda cute.

LIZZIE

Sam!

SAMANTHA

Okay! So what are we going to do?

LIZZIE

I have no idea. But I'll figure this out. Don't worry, okay?
(looks at the clock)
I've got Earl in ten minutes.

*

*

SAMANTHA

We shouldn't tell the students.

LIZZIE

No, absolutely not. It would ruin the Christmas concert. It would ruin Christmas. He's Scrooge!

SAMANTHA

I'll talk to the other tenants in the building. Maybe the dentist knows a good lawyer.

LIZZIE

Maybe the dentist knows Santa Claus. Because what we could really use is a Christmas miracle.

Lizzie starts for the door while Samantha picks up the phone.

47 EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE - FRONT - DAY - LATER 47

Establishing shot #1.

A busy Manhattan department store, all dressed-up for Christmas.

48 INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY 48

Brad and Meg are working their way through the store, which is loaded with Christmas decorations and sales.

BRAD

I don't understand how I became the bad guy in all this.

MEG

You're the one who told Travis to buy the building.

BRAD

Whose side are you on?

He picks up a young woman's sweater. *

BRAD (cont'd) *

Do you think Abigail would like this? *

Meg takes it from him and puts it back down. *

MEG

No. Look, I'm on your side but I see their side, too. *

BRAD

Well, so do I. I'm not a monster. I like music. But I'm not the one who put the building up for sale in the first place.

He holds up a purse. Meg puts it back down.

MEG

Maybe Travis will let them stay.

BRAD

Not at the rent they're paying.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

48

MEG

So? What now?

*

BRAD

I don't know. Isn't this one of those moments when you'll just tell me the answer?

MEG

Sorry boss. This one's above my pay grade. You'll figure it out.

Brad sighs and then pulls a dress off a rack. Meg grabs it from him and puts it back.

MEG (cont'd)

But you're never going to figure this out. Get out of the way.

Meg goes to work and starts picking things off the rack.

49 EXT. MUSIC ACADEMY - FRONT - DAY - LATER

49

Establishing shot #6.

50 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - MUSIC ROOM - DAY

50

Earl is playing the same song he was playing the last time we saw him here. He has mastered the tricky part and finishes with gusto. Lizzie is paying attention, but perhaps with less enthusiasm than normal.

LIZZIE

You did it. Nice job, Earl.

EARL

I practiced for hours last night. I think my neighbors hate me.

Lizzie smiles, but can't quite work out a sincere laugh.

EARL (cont'd)

Is everything okay?

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED:

50

LIZZIE

What? Yeah, fine. Sorry, I'm just a little distracted today.

EARL

Anything I can help with?

Lizzie really wants to tell him but can't.

LIZZIE

You ran a company for a long time, right?

EARL

I did, yes.

LIZZIE

Did you ever negotiate with really tough business people? Like heartless, only-in-it-for-the-cash type people?

EARL

A few, yes. Most, actually.

LIZZIE

How do you do it?

EARL

Negotiate with them? Well, I guess the first thing is you have to know what you want. I can't tell you how many times people don't have a clear idea as to what they want. What does winning look like?

LIZZIE

Okay...

EARL

And then it's all about strategy. Try to learn their weak spots and don't let them see yours.

LIZZIE

Okay. This is good...

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED: (2)

50

EARL

Oh, and this is important. Always do the negotiation on your turf. Don't go to them and give up the home-field advantage.

LIZZIE

Home field, huh?

A smile starts to form on her face.

LIZZIE (cont'd)

I can do that.

She pats Earl on the back.

51 EXT. MUSIC ACADEMY - FRONT - NIGHT

51

Establishing shot #7.

52 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - LOBBY - NIGHT - NEXT DAY

52

Brad and Abigail come into the lobby of the Music Academy, where Lizzie is waiting for them.

ABIGAIL

Hi Lizzie!

LIZZIE

Hey, Abigail. How are you?

ABIGAIL

Good. Cool place.

LIZZIE

Yeah, it's nice isn't it?

Lizzie eyes Brad, who gives her a patient smile. He totally knows what she's doing but he plays along.

LIZZIE (cont'd)

Listen, I'm sorry I couldn't make it to your place for your lesson tonight. I hope it wasn't too inconvenient to come all the way out to Brooklyn.

BRAD

No. Not a problem at all.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED:

52

LIZZIE
Great. Why don't I give you a
quick tour?

ABIGAIL
Cool. Dad?

BRAD
(pause; still smiling)
Sure. Why not?

Lizzie smiles and starts to guide them down the hallway.

ACT FOUR

53 EXT. MUSIC ACADEMY - FRONT - NIGHT

53

Establishing shot #8.

54 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - HALLWAY - NIGHT

54

Lizzie is escorting Brad and Abigail down the hall where the
music rooms are located. As they go, they glance in rooms
where students are rehearsing Christmas tunes with teachers.

LIZZIE
I was one of the first teachers
Samantha hired when she opened the
school. There were just a few of
us then. Today we have six
teachers and about forty students
every year.

*
*
*
*

ABIGAIL
That's a lot.

LIZZIE
It keeps us busy. But you know, we
keep our regular tuition low
because it's not a very high-end
neighborhood.

She directs the "high-end" comment at Brad.

LIZZIE (cont'd)
We try to help out the community as
best we can but it's a challenge.
We really depend on our Christmas
concert to get us through.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED: 54
She leads them into a classroom.

55 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER 55
Lizzie leads Brad, and Abigail into the music room, where Jordan is playing a beautiful Christmas piece with his instructor watching over him.

LIZZIE *
We're really proud of our
scholarship program that rewards
great musicians, like Jordan here.

Jordan gives a winning smile.

LIZZIE (cont'd)
Jordan wants to study music at
Juilliard just like I did.

Jordan turns and gives them his most sincere moppet look *
while playing the emotional Christmas song. *

Brad smiles and shakes his head at the manipulative pageantry *
of it all, then motions Lizzie over to the side of the room.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED:

55

LIZZIE (cont'd)
What did you think?

BRAD
Shamelessly manipulative. I'm
surprised you didn't have a choir
of orphans singing "Silent Night."

LIZZIE
We tried, but it was short notice.

Brad laughs.

LIZZIE (cont'd)
Did it work?

BRAD
Lizzie, I know you don't want to
believe me, but this really isn't
up to me.

LIZZIE
But you can talk to your boss.
Tell him that we want to stay here.
At the same rent we're paying now.

BRAD
You know that probably isn't
possible. I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: (2)

55

LIZZIE
(crestfallen)
I better give Abigail her lesson.

BRAD
Yeah.

Lizzie takes a moment and puts on a big smile, then goes over to Abigail. It's obvious that Brad feels bad.

56 OMITTED

56

57 OMITTED

57

58 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

58

Abigail is finishing up another Christmas tune while Lizzie keeps a close eye on her hands.

LIZZIE
Okay, that's good. Really good.

ABIGAIL
I keep having a problem with the intro. It's like my hands can't move fast enough.

LIZZIE
It's because you're keeping your wrists too stiff. Do this...

Lizzie flaps her hands back and forth. Abigail laughs.

ABIGAIL
Really?

LIZZIE
Yes, really. The teacher commands.

Abigail shrugs and flaps her hands like Lizzie for a moment and then they stop.

LIZZIE (cont'd)
Good. Let's try it again.

ABIGAIL
(pause)
What's up with you and my dad?

LIZZIE
What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

58

CONTINUED:

58

ABIGAIL

Hushed conversations, sideways
glances... the tour. That
obviously wasn't for my benefit.

LIZZIE

We're... negotiating.

ABIGAIL

I don't suppose you can tell me
what you're negotiating?

LIZZIE

No, I can't. Sorry.

ABIGAIL

Okay. But can I give you a little
advice? You know, from a person
that's been negotiating with him
for my entire life?

LIZZIE

Sure.

ABIGAIL

He wants to do the right thing.
It's just sometimes his version of
the right thing might not look like
yours. It doesn't make him a bad
person.

Lizzie thinks about that for a moment.

LIZZIE

Okay, let's try the intro again.

Abigail dives into the intro and it is flawless.

LIZZIE (cont'd)

Nice! See? The hand flap worked!

*

They laugh.

*

59 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - HALLWAY - NIGHT - SAME TIME 59

Brad is outside the room, texting. When he hears his daughter's laughter and happiness, he looks up and smiles.

He looks around the hall at the place that is giving his daughter such obvious joy.

59A EXT. STREET - NIGHT - LATER 59A

Brad and Abigail are walking down the street.

BRAD

So you had fun tonight?

ABIGAIL

Yeah. Lizzie is pretty cool.

BRAD

(beat)

Yeah. She is.

ABIGAIL

She wants me to be in the Christmas concert.

BRAD

(beat)

Are you thinking about doing it?

ABIGAIL

I don't know if I'm good enough. Lizzie says I am, but...

BRAD

I've heard you play. I think you're good enough.

ABIGAIL

Yeah, but you're my Dad so it doesn't count.

BRAD

(smiles)

I should probably be offended by that.

ABIGAIL

If I did do it... I'd want to do one of the songs Mom taught me.

(CONTINUED)

59A CONTINUED:

59A

BRAD

(beat)
She loved Christmas music. She
loved Christmas.

ABIGAIL

Yeah. I remember.

Just then Abigail spots a friend of hers down the street,
waiting.

*
*

ABIGAIL (cont'd)

There's Jen. I gotta go.

*
*

BRAD

Be sure to tell Jen's mom thank you
for letting you stay over.

*

ABIGAIL

I will. Good night, Dad.

BRAD

Good night, sweetheart.

They hug and she runs up the stairs. Brad watches her go
inside and stands there for a minute, then glances at his
watch. He turns and starts back down the street

60 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - LOBBY - NIGHT - LATER

60

Lizzie comes out of the office with Samantha and a few of the
other students and teachers we saw on the tour. As they are
bidding each other good night, Lizzie looks over and sees
Brad. He gives her a little wave. Lizzie walks over to him.

LIZZIE

Hi. Where's Abigail?

BRAD

Spending the night at a friend's.

LIZZIE

You took her all the way there and
came all the way back here?

BRAD

I did.

LIZZIE

Why?

(CONTINUED)

60

CONTINUED:

60

BRAD

I thought we might call a truce.
Or at least a temporary cease-fire.

LIZZIE

(smiles)
I think we can do that.

BRAD

Can I walk you home?

LIZZIE

(pause)
Sure. But I want to show you
something first.

Lizzie looks over at Samantha, who is watching this with intense curiosity. Lizzie gives her an "it's okay" shrug and nod, and Samantha gives her an encouraging thumbs-up. Brad and Lizzie start walking.

61 EXT. CHRISTMAS ALLEY - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER 61

Brad and Lizzie have reached an alley that has been transformed into a Christmas wonderland by a neighborhood association -- there are lights, candy canes, snow (both real and fake), jolly Santa statues, and more.

There are a few other people strolling down the alley enjoying the displays and the Christmas music playing over hidden speakers.

Brad and Lizzie walk down a pathway that wanders through the colorful lights and props that have transformed this utilitarian space with holiday spirit. They are smiling and pointing at things along the way.

BRAD
This is incredible.
(pause)
Abigail really had fun tonight.

LIZZIE
She's a pretty amazing kid.

BRAD
Yeah, she is.

LIZZIE
Did you get your tree decorated?

BRAD
Oh yeah. It's fully decked. I keep forgetting how much work it is for just two people. We used to have tree-trimming parties with our friends where we'd all go from house to house on different nights and decorate as a big group.

LIZZIE
You let people see that reindeer ornament?

BRAD
(laughs)
I live on the edge, yes.

LIZZIE
That's a nice tradition. Why did you stop?

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

61

BRAD

Amy... my wife... was kind of the glue for that particular group of friends. When she died everyone just kind of drifted away. We still get together every now and then, but when we do there's always an Amy-sized hole in the room.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED: (2)

61

LIZZIE

I'm sorry. It seems like Abigail is doing okay. You've done a good job with her.

BRAD

I don't know how much credit I can take for it. Amy set a good example. And if I'm being honest, you've had a little something to do with that, too.

LIZZIE

Me?

BRAD

The last couple of days it's been like... She hasn't touched the piano in years. Now, she's on it all the time. I think you've made her love music again.

LIZZIE

She never stopped loving music. She just may have stopped listening for a minute, that's all.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED: (3)

61

The two of them reach a sign that says "Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow" above a button that says "Press Me." Lizzie presses the button and snow gently starts wafting down from above. They both laugh and look up, then at each other.

There is a moment between them. As a very familiar Christmas tune plays, they don't kiss or even touch, but the connection in that moment is impossible for either one of them to deny.

Then Brad's phone rings, breaking the spell.

BRAD

Sorry...

He answers his phone.

BRAD (cont'd)

(into phone)

Hello?

INTERCUT WITH:

62 OMITTED

62

63 INT. MCKINLEY HOLDINGS - CYNTHIA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

63

Cynthia is working late in her office, a nice space that is similar to Brad's with a desk, guest chairs, a sofa, and a small table.

CYNTHIA

Hey, Brad, it's Cynthia. I'm sorry to call so late.

BRAD

That's okay. What's up?

CYNTHIA

I just thought you'd want to hear the good news. They accepted our offer... on the building. Isn't that great?

Brad looks at Lizzie, who is looking up at the fake snow, smiling -- the Christmas lights dancing around her. It's impossible not to be smitten by her in that moment.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED:

63

BRAD
Yeah... great.

But probably not.

ACT FIVE

64 EXT. MCKINLEY HOLDINGS BUILDING - FRONT - DAY - TWO DAYS LATER

64

Establishing shot #4.

65 INT. MCKINLEY HOLDINGS - CYNTHIA'S OFFICE - DAY

65

Cynthia is at her desk, Brad is pacing, Meg is at a table.

CYNTHIA
I don't understand. You don't want
Travis to buy the building?

BRAD
No, I *want* him to buy the building,
I just want him to keep the music
school in it.

CYNTHIA
He doesn't want a music school. He
wants office space.

BRAD
He can have that. He just needs to
also have a music school.

CYNTHIA
I don't understand. And Travis is
definitely not going to understand.

BRAD
Meg?

MEG
Sorry, I got nothing.

BRAD
Great. The one time when I *need*
you to be smarter than me...

Travis enters, checking his smartphone.

CYNTHIA
Travis! Good morning.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED:

65

TRAVIS
Good morning, do we have the
projections for London?

CYNTHIA
I sent them to you last night.

TRAVIS
Great. Thank you.

He turns to go and Brad dives in.

BRAD
Travis, do you have a minute?

TRAVIS
Half of one, maybe...

BRAD
I have some concerns about building
in Brooklyn.

TRAVIS
Specifically...

BRAD
One of the tenants is a music
school. They do a lot of great
work in the community and I think
we should find a way to help them.

TRAVIS
Help them? I don't understand.

Cynthia gives Brad an "told you so" look.

BRAD
If they move --

TRAVIS
If? No, they *have* to move. No one
wants to see a music school there
when they could see a gourmet
market. Your idea, not mine,
remember? Is this going to be a
problem?

*
*
*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: (2)

65

CYNTHIA
No, not at all.

TRAVIS
Great. Then let's get busy.
Contracts, people!

Travis leaves.

BRAD
Now what am I going to do?

CYNTHIA
This place is really important to
you, isn't it?

BRAD
Well... it's important to Abigail.

CYNTHIA
Why don't you and I brainstorm on
it? Maybe we can talk about it
over dinner... say tonight?

BRAD
Absolutely. Yes, that would be
great. Thank you, Cynthia.

CYNTHIA
My pleasure.

Brad and Meg leave her office and Cynthia is pleased.

66 INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY - LATER

66

The auditorium is in the process of being decorated for the big concert and a string quartet is on stage rehearsing a Christmas tune. Lizzie and Samantha are in seats in the middle of the auditorium watching and having a hushed conversation.

(CONTINUED)

66

CONTINUED:

66

SAMANTHA

So, you had this romantic Christmas moment and then he got a mysterious call and that was it?

LIZZIE

Pretty much.

SAMANTHA

And you haven't talked to him since?

LIZZIE

It's been two days.

SAMANTHA

Do you think he's avoiding you?

LIZZIE

I don't know.

SAMANTHA

Because of the building?

LIZZIE

Well, I hope so.

SAMANTHA

You do?

LIZZIE

Yes, because if he's not avoiding me because of the building, he's avoiding me because of me.

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED: (2)

66

SAMANTHA

Do you like him? I mean, do you like him again? Or still? I've lost track where you're at with the whole "like Brad, hate Brad" thing.

LIZZIE

I guess I'll find out tonight. I've got a lesson with Abigail.

SAMANTHA

Why don't you just ask him what's going on? Is this about the building or is it about... "Us"?

LIZZIE

Because I'm afraid of what the answer is going to be.

The quartet is finishing their song. Lizzie stands.

LIZZIE (cont'd)

That was great guys! Let's do it one more time and have fun. Our audience spends Christmas Eve with us so we want it to be festive!

67 EXT. MUSIC ACADEMY - FRONT - NIGHT

67

Establishing shot #9.

68 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - MUSIC ROOM - NIGHT

68

Lizzie is getting things ready when Abigail comes in.

ABIGAIL

Hi, Lizzie.

LIZZIE

Abigail. Hey!

Lizzie looks behind her for Brad. He's not there.

LIZZIE (cont'd)

Where's your dad?

ABIGAIL

He just dropped me off. He's got some kind of dinner thing with --
(eye roll)
-- Cynthia.

(CONTINUED)

68

CONTINUED:

68

LIZZIE
(disappointed smile)
Oh. Okay.

Abigail gets situated at the piano.

LIZZIE (cont'd)
(pause)
So... You said he's having dinner
with Cynthia.

ABIGAIL
Yeah. She's okay, I guess. I mean,
it's so obvious that she likes my
dad. Of course he's just oblivious
to it.

*

*

That throws Lizzie a bit.

ABIGAIL (cont'd)
(beat)
So, I was wondering if you could
look at these...

She hands Lizzie some sheet music.

LIZZIE
These are great songs. Holiday
classics.

ABIGAIL
Yeah... If I was going to do the
Christmas concert - and I'm not
saying that I am - but if I did...
I'd want to do one of these.

LIZZIE
(smiles)
Well, if you do decide to be in the
concert - and I know you aren't
saying you do - but if you do... I
think you should do this one.

Lizzie puts the sheets on the piano's music desk. Abigail
looks at it and smiles hesitantly.

ABIGAIL
Yeah?

LIZZIE
Yeah. Go ahead.

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED: (2) 68
Abigail starts to play the song - it's going to be beautiful.

69 EXT. RESTAURANT - FRONT - NIGHT - LATER 69
Establishing shot of a nice restaurant in Manhattan that has
some subtle Christmas decor on the outside.

70 INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT 70
We join Cynthia and Brad in the middle of their meal as they
discuss the building and review a few files.

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED:

70

CYNTHIA

Why can't they just move?

BRAD

They can't afford it. We could get four times what they are paying for that space.

*

CYNTHIA

You know, it's really sweet of you to be doing all this for the kids.

BRAD

(pause)

Right. The kids.

CYNTHIA

You're like their own personal Santa Claus.

BRAD

I don't know about that.

CYNTHIA

(pause)

So what are you doing for Christmas?

BRAD

Well, Christmas Eve there's a concert at the music school that Abigail might be doing. And then Christmas day is the usual -- presents, food. I pretend like I can cook. We usually watch a Christmas movie marathon.

CYNTHIA

Oh yeah? I love Christmas movies. They're so... romantic.

BRAD

Oh and of course we have the big company party this weekend.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED: (2) 70

BRAD (CONT'D)

Who is going to be the most embarrassed on Monday morning?

CYNTHIA

(laughs)

Oh, it'll be Debra from accounting. You can take that one to the bank.

BRAD

She does like the dance floor, doesn't she?

CYNTHIA

Well, who doesn't?

BRAD

I don't remember seeing you out there last year.

CYNTHIA

I guess no one asked last year.

BRAD

Well, we will rectify that then. You, me, dance floor. *

CYNTHIA

(smiles)

Okay. Sounds great *

Brad, still oblivious, turns back to the files. Cynthia, thinks they have just taken a major step forward.

71 EXT. MUSIC ACADEMY - FRONT - DAY - NEXT DAY 71

Establishing shot #10.

72 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - AUDITORIUM - DAY 72

The Christmas decorations are still in progress and Earl is at the piano on the stage while Lizzie stands nearby.

LIZZIE

You want to make sure when you're performing that you're not just staring at the piano. You have to remember your audience

EARL

What if I want to forget the audience?

(CONTINUED)

72

CONTINUED:

72

LIZZIE

Earl, you're not nervous are you?

EARL

Put me in a conference room with a bunch of business people and I'm great. Put me on a stage? How do you handle it?

LIZZIE

Oh, well... it's been a while...

EARL

Why is that?

LIZZIE

I had a bad experience. Kind of soured me on the whole playing-in-public thing.

EARL

Now you just make other people play in public.

LIZZIE

The benefits of being a teacher.

EARL

I guess I feel lucky, then.

LIZZIE

Why?

EARL

Because I get to hear you play. You're wonderful, you know.

LIZZIE

Thank you.

(pause)

Oh, I'm still holding those tickets for your son...

EARL

Right... I don't think I'll be needing those.

LIZZIE

Did you call him?

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED: (2)

72

EARL

No, he's... very busy... I didn't want to bother him.

*
*

(changes the subject)

So, you never told me how your negotiation went.

LIZZIE

Not sure. The ball is sort of in their court right now.

EARL

That's actually another good lesson in the art of negotiation -- never let them take the ball. And if they do, take it back.

Lizzie considers that as Earl gets ready to start playing.

73 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - HALLWAY - NIGHT

73

Lizzie walks down the empty hallway. Suddenly she stops, looks around, and then takes out her cellphone and dials. We hear the recording that she hears.

BRAD (o.s., on phone)

Hi, this is Brad Owen. Please leave a message and I'll get back to you as soon as possible.

Lizzie waits for the beep.

LIZZIE

(into phone)

Brad, hi, it's Lizzie. I know we were going to do Abigail's lesson here at the school again tomorrow night but all of the rooms are going to be full for the Christmas concert rehearsals, so I need to move my lesson with Abigail to your place. I hope that's okay. Thanks.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

She disconnects the call.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED:

73

LIZZIE (cont'd)
(to herself)
Take back the ball...

She is more than a little anxious about what might happen.

ACT SIX

74 EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE - FRONT - DAY - NEXT DAY

74

Establishing shot #2.

75 INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

75

It's the same busy department store we saw Brad and Meg in earlier, but this time it's Cynthia doing the shopping. Travis is looking at his phone. Cynthia carries a garment bag with her throughout.

CYNTHIA
Okay, that takes care of the board members, all of the property managers, and your kids. I think all we have left is your wife and your dad.

TRAVIS
Jewelry for the wife. If it ain't broke don't fix it. And for my dad... I don't know. A tie.

CYNTHIA
You got him a tie last year.

TRAVIS
I did? All right, uh... cufflinks. Nice ones.

CYNTHIA
He's retired, though. Does he need cufflinks?

TRAVIS
He used to say to me you only need two things to be successful in business -- the ability to recognize a lie when you hear it and a really good pair of cufflinks.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED:

75

CYNTHIA

Okay. Done.

TRAVIS

Great. Let's go. I'm starting to
itch with all this holiday cheer.

They start making their way to the exit.

TRAVIS (cont'd)

Everything is set for the party?

CYNTHIA

Absolutely. Meg really stepped up
to help this year.

TRAVIS

Who?

CYNTHIA

Brad's assistant.

TRAVIS

I thought her name was Peg.

CYNTHIA

Nope. Meg.

TRAVIS

Are you sure?

CYNTHIA

Pretty sure.

TRAVIS

Okay. What's going on with the
Brooklyn building?

CYNTHIA

We're still putting that together.

TRAVIS

What's the hold up? Does this have
anything to do with that nonsense
Brad was talking about with the
music school?

CYNTHIA

No. Don't worry. We'll have the
contracts soon.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED: (2)

75

TRAVIS

We better. If we take a hit on our taxes I'll be unhappy and you know nobody likes it when I'm unhappy.

CYNTHIA

I understand. We'll handle it.

Travis heads out of the store and an anxious Cynthia follows.

76 EXT. HOTEL - FRONT - DAY - LATER

76

An establishing shot of an upscale hotel in Manhattan, lovingly decorated for Christmas.

77 INT. HOTEL - BALLROOM - DAY

77

The big ballroom is fully decorated for the upcoming party, but empty of people. Brad and Meg are doing a walk-through.

MEG

The food will be set up in several rooms. This will be the main bar. I was thinking that right in front of the band would be the spot for Travis's inspirational speech on the magic of Christmas...

Brad gives her a "really?" look.

MEG (cont'd)

Or the one he usually gives about corporate profits and stock value.

BRAD

That's the one.

MEG

The dance floor will be here. Plenty of room for Debra from accounting. The band over there.

BRAD

Sounds like you have everything taken care of.

MEG

Yes, I do.

BRAD

So... why I am here?

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED:

77

MEG

You needed something else to think about other than Brooklyn music schools and pretty piano teachers.

BRAD

So about these psychic powers...

MEG

I'm not psychic. I just pay attention.

BRAD

Well, thank you, but you could have Santa Claus and his reindeer flying through here and I don't think that would be enough of a distraction.

MEG

From the school or the teacher?

BRAD

Both. I've looked at this from every angle and I just can't figure out a way to save the school. And if I can't save the school, I can forget about the teacher.

MEG

You really like her. That hasn't happened since I've known you.

BRAD

(pause)
That hasn't happened since Amy...

MEG

You should invite her to the Christmas party.

BRAD

No. We're the enemy, remember?

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED: (2)

77

MEG

Brad, you've spent the last couple of days trying to find a way to make her happy. That doesn't sound like the enemy to me.

She leaves him to think about that.

78 EXT. BRAD'S APARTMENT BUILDING - FRONT - NIGHT

78

Establishing shot #4.

79 INT. BRAD'S APT. - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

79

Lizzie is seated next to Abigail on the piano bench and the two of them are engaged in a heated piano duel on a classic Christmas carol. They are both smiling, laughing, and showing off a little. They come to their big ending and then they collapse into one another with more laughter.

ABIGAIL

That was so great!

LIZZIE

I'm having a hard time keeping up with you.

ABIGAIL

Oh, please. You were holding back and you know it.

LIZZIE

I wasn't. You keep this up and you're not going to need me at all.

ABIGAIL

We should do that for the concert.

LIZZIE

I am just the director, the students are the stars.

ABIGAIL

Oh yeah. I forgot about your whole "don't perform in public" thing.

LIZZIE

How do you know about that?

(CONTINUED)

79

CONTINUED:

79

ABIGAIL

The kids at school were talking.
The leading theories on what
happened are a wardrobe malfunction
or your piano caught fire.

LIZZIE

(laughs)
It was nowhere near that dramatic.

ABIGAIL

Then what was it?

LIZZIE

(shrugs)
I froze... my big debut concert and
I just sat there, staring at the
piano as if I'd never seen one
before.

ABIGAIL

That's awful. But it turned out
okay, right? You started teaching
and you like that, right?

*

LIZZIE

Absolutely.
(pause)
You know, I don't tell a lot of
people that story, so let's just
keep it between you and me.

ABIGAIL

Of course. If anyone asks I'll go
with the piano-on-fire version.

(CONTINUED)

79 CONTINUED: (2)

79

LIZZIE

Thank you.

(looks at her watch)

I guess I better get going. Tell your dad I'm sorry I missed him.

ABIGAIL

Yeah, I don't know where he is. I'm sure it has something to do with his job. He needs to get home soon because he was going to help me make Christmas cookies for school tomorrow.

*

LIZZIE

Well, if you want... I happen to be a Christmas-cookie master.

ABIGAIL

Really? They trust you around ovens with your propensity for setting things on fire?

LIZZIE

Do you want my help or not?

ABIGAIL

Yes, please.

They head for the kitchen.

80 INT. BRAD'S APT. - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

80

Brad enters the apartment to hear the sound of loud Christmas music and laughter from the direction of the kitchen. He stops and listens for a moment.

81 INT. BRAD'S APT. - KITCHEN - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

81

Lizzie and Abigail are in the kitchen working on the cookies, laughing, and dancing to the music. By the looks of things they have gotten more flour on themselves and their aprons than in the cookies.

Brad comes to the doorway and just watches the two of them having fun for a moment. If he liked Lizzie before, this is the moment when he probably starts to fall in love with her.

BRAD

(smiling)

Hey, what's going on in here?

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED:

81

Lizzie is both happy and anxious about seeing him.

ABIGAIL

Oh, hey Dad! We're making the Christmas cookies you said you were going to help with.

BRAD

I see that. Did any of the flour make its way into the cookies?

ABIGAIL

We figured since you weren't here to bake, you're on clean-up duty.

BRAD

Oh, I don't like that deal at all.

ABIGAIL

You snooze you lose.

BRAD

Well, can I at least have a cookie?

ABIGAIL

I don't know. Lizzie?

LIZZIE

(smiles)

I think we can spare one.

Brad comes to join in on the fun and we hold on the three of them there, looking more and more like a family every minute.

82 EXT. MANHATTAN STREET NEAR BRAD'S APT. BLDG. - NIGHT - LATER

82

Brad and Lizzie are walk up to a subway station entrance in a companionable silence.

BRAD

Thank you for tonight. It was fun.

LIZZIE

Yeah, it was.

The silence grows a bit awkward.

BRAD

So listen, I'm sorry I've been out of touch.

(CONTINUED)

82

CONTINUED:

82

LIZZIE

It's okay.

BRAD

No, it's not. I want you to know I tried to come up with a solution, but...

LIZZIE

There's still time, right? It's not a done deal yet.

BRAD

(pause)

No... not yet. But Lizzie... they accepted our offer. They're drawing up the contracts now and my boss wants to have it done before the first of the year.

LIZZIE

Oh... that's fast.

(pause)

What if I talk to him?

BRAD

You want to talk to my boss?

LIZZIE

Sure. Let me make the pitch to him directly. I convinced you that the school was worth saving. I can convince him.

BRAD

I don't know. Travis is... he's not exactly the warmest guy on the face of the earth.

LIZZIE

We can invite him to the concert. Nobody can resist cute kids and Christmas music.

BRAD

Well... I guess its worth a shot.
(an idea)
Hey... Why don't you come to our company Christmas party this weekend?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED: (2)

82

BRAD (CONT'D)

I promise it's not boring -- we have some serious fun. I have been known to loosen my tie.

LIZZIE

(smiles)

Now *that* I'd like to see.

BRAD

It'll be our best shot to catch Travis in a good mood.

LIZZIE

Okay. Let's do it.

BRAD

Great. I'll have my assistant send you all the details.

LIZZIE

Okay. Thanks. Good night.

She starts to head for the subway station, but then stops and turns back.

LIZZIE (cont'd)

Oh... What do I need to wear?

BRAD

It's a formal affair, but wear something comfortable. Something you can dance in.

83 INT. MCKINLEY HOLD. - CYNTHIA'S OFFICE - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

83

Cynthia is getting ready to head out for the night. She takes her coat from a hook on the back of her office door, and the garment bag we saw earlier is hanging there. She unzips it to reveal a very pretty dress.

She takes a moment to admire what she's going to be wearing when she dances with Brad.

ACT SEVEN

84 EXT. BRAD'S APARTMENT BLDG. - FRONT - NIGHT - SEVERAL DAYS LATER

84

Establishing shot #5.

85 INT. BRAD'S APT. - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 85

Abigail is at the piano as Brad comes out in his tuxedo.

BRAD
How do I look?

Abigail plays a quick flourish on the piano -- "Ta Da!"

BRAD (cont'd)
I will take that as a compliment.

ABIGAIL
It was meant as one.

He gets his overcoat, keys, etc.

BRAD
I don't know what time I'll be home. Shouldn't be too late.

ABIGAIL
I'll make sure the wild party I'm throwing is all done by then.

BRAD
I appreciate it.

Abigail pauses for a moment.

ABIGAIL
Dad... can I ask you a question?

BRAD
Don't worry. Meg, helped me pick out your Christmas present.

ABIGAIL
Well, that is a relief, but that's not what I was going to ask.

Brad picks up on her serious tone.

BRAD
Okay. What is it?

ABIGAIL
You know it's okay for you to date, right? I mean, you know that I'd be okay with it, right?.

(CONTINUED)

85 CONTINUED:

85

BRAD

You are?

ABIGAIL

Yeah. I just want you to be happy.

Brad goes to her and hugs her.

BRAD

I am happy. And I love you.

ABIGAIL

I love you, too.

He kisses her forehead and goes to the door.

BRAD

For the record, I am totally not okay with you dating until you're like thirty-five. Got it?

ABIGAIL

Good night, Dad.

He smiles and leaves.

86 EXT. MUSIC ACADEMY - FRONT - NIGHT - SAME TIME

86

Establishing shot #11.

87 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

87

Samantha is seated in the front row of the auditorium having a conversation with Lizzie, who is hidden behind stage curtains.

LIZZIE

I really shouldn't be going to this party.

SAMANTHA

Why not?

LIZZIE

Because the concert is in two days. We should be rehearsing.

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED:

87

SAMANTHA

The musicians sound fantastic, the decorations are done, we're sold out... what else is left?

LIZZIE

This could be our last Christmas concert. It has to be perfect.

SAMANTHA

Or it's our last Christmas concert, so who cares if it's good or not?

LIZZIE

That's not funny.

SAMANTHA

It's a little funny. But this isn't about the concert. This is about the party and the guy that will be at the party.

LIZZIE

Yes! It *is* about the party. I didn't have time to go home to get ready so I'm changing backstage and I'm going to be late and yes, it's about the rich, powerful guy that I have to go beg to save the school.

*

SAMANTHA

That's not the guy I was talking about and you know it.

There is no response from backstage.

SAMANTHA (cont'd)

Lizzie?

LIZZIE

(quiet)

What if I fail? Again. I failed at performing and now I'm going to fail the school. Fail everyone.

SAMANTHA

Come out here.

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED: (2) 87

There is another pause and then Lizzie comes out. We can't see the dress - just a silhouette and her face -- but from Samantha's reaction, the dress and Lizzie must be beautiful.

*
*
*

SAMANTHA (cont'd)
(smiles)
Lizzie, that is not a failure.

Lizzie smiles.

88 EXT. HOTEL - FRONT - NIGHT - LATER 88

Establishing shot #2.

89 INT. HOTEL - BALLROOM - NIGHT 89

The party is in full swing and the room is beautiful -- lots of Christmas decorations, fancy tables, a small trio playing Christmas music, people dancing. It seems to be a hit.

90 INT. HOTEL - BALLROOM - BUFFET AREA - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS 90

Meg is standing by the buffet table, looking beautiful in a simple gown, as she looks around the room and occasionally taps on her tablet. She looks pleased with the results.

Travis, phone in hand, walks by and stops when he sees Meg.

TRAVIS
You're Brad's assistant, right?

MEG
Yes, sir, I am.

TRAVIS
I'm told you played a big part in pulling this event together.

MEG
I was happy to help.

TRAVIS
Well, it's very well done.

MEG
Thank you, sir.

TRAVIS
So tell me... What do you picture for the future? What does your career path look like?

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED:

90

MEG

Oh, I fully intend to have your job
some day, sir.

Travis can't help but smile.

TRAVIS

That would not surprise me at all.
Merry Christmas -- Meg.

MEG

Merry Christmas, sir.

Travis walks away and Meg allows herself a satisfied smile.

91 INT. HOTEL - BALLROOM - DANCING AREA - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

91

Brad is standing near the foot of a grand staircase with a
drink, chatting with a co-worker, when someone comes up and
taps him on the shoulder. He turns to find Cynthia standing
there -- she looks terrific in her gown.

BRAD

Cynthia, you look fantastic!

CYNTHIA

Thank you. You look pretty good
yourself. Nice tux.

BRAD

Thanks. Have you seen Travis?

CYNTHIA

Yeah, he's over by the bar I think.

BRAD

What kind of mood is he in?

CYNTHIA

Not bad. I think he's happy with
the way the party turned out. Why?

BRAD

Well, I'm kind of going to ambush
him tonight.

CYNTHIA

Ambush? With what?

At that moment Brad looks up and his breath is taken away.

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED:

91

Coming down the staircase is Lizzie, in a stunning gown. It is contemporary and stylish -- more Governors' Ball than fairy-tale castle -- but this is her Cinderella moment. She sees Brad and smiles.

Brad is gobsmacked, but manages to get out one word.

BRAD

Her.

Cynthia looks and sees Lizzie, then looks at Brad and sees the expression on his face. In that moment, she knows that her feelings for him will not be reciprocated.

BRAD (cont'd)

(to Cynthia)

Excuse me...

Brad turns to Lizzie, away from a disappointed Cynthia.

Lizzie reaches the bottom of the stairs.

BRAD (cont'd)

Wow.

LIZZIE

Wow, yourself.

BRAD

I have to tell you, I am rarely at a loss for words --

LIZZIE

That has been very evident, yes.

Brad smiles appreciatively at the banter as the band strikes up a romantic Christmas ballad.

BRAD

-- but, in this moment... I can only think of one thing say.

LIZZIE

What's that?

BRAD

Would you like to dance?

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED: (2) 91

He holds out his hand and she smiles, then takes it. He leads her towards the dance floor.

92 OMITTED 92

93 INT. HOTEL - BALLROOM - BAR AREA - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS 93

Cynthia is watching as Brad takes Lizzie out onto the dance floor. He puts his arms in the classic formal dance pose and she steps into him. They begin to sway to the music.

Cynthia isn't angry, just disappointed, and resigned to the fact that Brad has eyes for someone else. Meg approaches.

MEG
Merry Christmas, Cynthia.

CYNTHIA
(sad smile)
Merry Christmas, Meg.

MEG
Are you okay?

CYNTHIA
Yes, I'm fine.

Meg follows her gaze to Brad and Lizzie on the dance floor. Meg gets it and respectfully gives Cynthia some room just as Travis walks up to join Cynthia.

TRAVIS
Nice work on the contracts.

CYNTHIA
I'm sorry?

TRAVIS
Legal sent up the contracts on the Brooklyn building this afternoon.

That gets Cynthia's attention.

CYNTHIA
They what?

TRAVIS
I signed them and sent them back.
Done deal.

(CONTINUED)

93 CONTINUED:

93

CYNTHIA

Oh, no...

TRAVIS

What's wrong? Is there some reason
I shouldn't have signed them?

Cynthia looks over toward Brad and Lizzie on the dance floor. What she does is not meant to be mean -- in fact, she actually starts to move towards Brad as if to get his attention -- but then she realizes the reality of the situation regarding the building is just as impossible as her feelings for Brad.

She turns back to Travis.

CYNTHIA

No. It was the best deal.

TRAVIS

And to all a good night.

He walks away, leaving Cynthia with her conscience.

94 INT. HOTEL - BALLROOM - DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

94

On the dance floor, the song comes to an end. Brad and Lizzie reluctantly separate and applaud politely. Brad points towards the bar.

BRAD

Do you want to get a drink?

LIZZIE

Sure.

He leads her off the dance floor.

95 INT. HOTEL - BALLROOM - BAR AREA - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

95

Brad and Lizzie join the line at the bar.

LIZZIE

We're still talking to your boss?

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED:

95

BRAD

If you're up for it. I'm told he's
in a pretty good mood.

LIZZIE

Good enough to save the school?

Brad notices Travis walking towards them.

BRAD

Well... we're about to find out.

Travis walks up to join them in the line.

TRAVIS

Brad. Merry Christmas.

BRAD

Merry Christmas, Travis.

TRAVIS

And who is this beautiful lady?

BRAD

This is Lizzie Moore of the
Brooklyn Music Academy.

TRAVIS

(surprised)

Nice to meet you.

LIZZIE

Nice to meet you, too. Sir, I'd
like to invite you to our Christmas
Eve concert. It's an great night
of music that raises funds for our
scholarship program. I think if
you saw the kind of work we do
you'd understand why the school is
so important.

TRAVIS

Well, I appreciate the invitation.
I would love to attend.

(boastful pride)

You know, when I was young I
tickled the ivories myself.

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED: (2) 95

LIZZIE
You did? That's great!

Lizzie gives Brad a look as if to say "I got this."

96 INT. HOTEL - BALLROOM - BUFFET AREA - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS 96

Over near the food station, Cynthia sees Brad and Lizzie talking to Travis. She rushes towards them.

97 INT. HOTEL - BALLROOM - BAR AREA - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS 97

The conversation continues between Lizzie, Brad, and Travis.

LIZZIE
(to Travis)
Maybe you can pick it up again. I know a good piano teacher.

BRAD
She's a great piano teacher. Abigail loves her.

TRAVIS
I think I'm a little too old.

LIZZIE
No! One of my favorite students is seventy. He's going to be in the show.

TRAVIS
I guess you can never say never, right? Thank you for the invitation. I look forward to seeing the concert.

Cynthia comes up quickly.

TRAVIS (cont'd)
I'm glad there are no hard feelings.

LIZZIE
About what?

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED:

97

TRAVIS

About the school. I'm sure you'll be able to find a new home.

BRAD

Uh, Travis, we still need to work out the specifics of that...

TRAVIS

Actually, no, it's all done. I signed the contracts this afternoon to complete the purchase of the building. Isn't that right, Cynthia?.

Brad and Lizzie look at Cynthia, who looks a little guilty.

TRAVIS (cont'd)

Anyway, I look forward to the show. Nice meeting you, Ms. Moore.

He walks away, leaving behind a stunned Brad and Lizzie and a guilty Cynthia. Brad turns to Lizzie.

BRAD

Lizzie...

She looks at him with an expression that is pure heartbreak in a lot of different ways.

LIZZIE

Excuse me...

She runs off as quickly as she can.

BRAD

Lizzie!

He turns to Cynthia.

BRAD (cont'd)

What happened?

CYNTHIA

Brad, it's not what you think.

Brad shakes his head.

ACT EIGHT

98 EXT. MUSIC ACADEMY - FRONT - DAY - NEXT DAY 98

Establishing shot #12.

99 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - AUDITORIUM - DAY 99

Several of the students, including Jordan and Earl, are on the stage getting ready to rehearse. Lizzie and Samantha are sitting in the audience several rows back, talking quietly.

LIZZIE

I'm sorry.

SAMANTHA

For what?

LIZZIE

As predicted, I failed.

SAMANTHA

Lizzie, you didn't fail. This is not your fault.

LIZZIE

Feels like it is.

SAMANTHA

Don't be silly. You can't blame yourself any more than we can blame, I don't know, the dentist up on the fourth floor.

LIZZIE

Can we blame the dentist up on the fourth floor?

SAMANTHA

(pats her hand)

Sure, sweetie.

LIZZIE

(pause)

It's funny... I always thought what happened to me on stage was... a loss, you know? A little part of me always felt like I lost something. The last couple of weeks fighting for all this and now I get that this is what mattered all along. This is the real loss. Funny, huh?

(CONTINUED)

99

CONTINUED:

99

Samantha holds Lizzie's hand as they both try not to cry.

LIZZIE (cont'd)
What do we tell the students?

SAMANTHA
Nothing. It would break their hearts and ruin the show. If this is going to be our last Christmas concert, then it's going to be our best, okay? A big, loud, celebration, okay?!

LIZZIE
(nods; smiles)
Okay.

SAMANTHA
Loud!

LIZZIE
Okay!

Lizzie puts on her game face and stands.

LIZZIE (cont'd)
Let's take it from the top!

The students take their places.

100 EXT. MANHATTAN STREET NEAR MCKINLEY HOLDINGS BLDG. - DAY - LATER 100

Brad and Meg are walking down the street with cups of coffee.

MEG
You know it's not too late...

BRAD
The contracts are signed, Meg. It *is* too late.

MEG
Contracts can be torn up.

BRAD
Travis is not going to tear up the contracts. It would cost him too much money at this point.

(CONTINUED)

100

CONTINUED:

100

MEG

(pause)

Have you talked to Lizzie?

BRAD

She's not returning my calls.

MEG

Give her time. She'll come around.

BRAD

I just don't understand Cynthia.
Why didn't she stop Travis? I
thought she was on our side.

MEG

She was hurt by you and Lizzie.

BRAD

Why would she be hurt?

MEG

Brad, come on. You know she has
feelings for you.

BRAD

What? No she doesn't.

MEG

Brad, seriously? I noticed it the
first day I saw her in your office.

BRAD

Cynthia doesn't have feelings for
me. We're co-workers. We're
friends... We're...

We can see Brad reviewing his relationship with Cynthia in
his head quickly. The realization hits him hard.

BRAD (cont'd)

Oh no... I honestly never saw it.
I feel terrible.

MEG

You should probably tell her that.

BRAD

(nods)
Thanks, Meg.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

100 CONTINUED: (2) 100
He hands Meg his cup of coffee and rushes off.

101 EXT. MCKINLEY HOLDINGS BUILDING - FRONT - DAY - MINUTES LATER 101
Establishing shot #5.

102 INT. MCKINLEY HOLDINGS - CYNTHIA'S OFFICE - DAY

102

Cynthia is on the couch, halfheartedly going through some paperwork. Brad knocks on the door.

BRAD
Can I come in?

CYNTHIA
Of course.

He comes in and sits on the couch next to her.

BRAD
About last night...

CYNTHIA
I really didn't mean for it to happen that way. I just...

BRAD
Cynthia, no... I'm sorry.

CYNTHIA
For what?

BRAD
(this is hard)
You know I have the utmost respect for you. I love working with you. You make things easy and challenging all at the same time. But more than that, I consider you a friend. And I realize now that I haven't been a very good one.

CYNTHIA
Brad, you don't have to --

BRAD
I do. And I'm really sorry.

CYNTHIA
Still... I should've told legal to hold the contracts. I should have told Travis not to sign it.

BRAD
He was going to sign it no matter what.

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED:

102

CYNTHIA
I tried to get him to reconsider.
But he won't budge.

BRAD
I wouldn't expect anything less.

CYNTHIA
(pause)
Lizzie seems very nice.

BRAD
She is.

CYNTHIA
Can I give you some advice? As a
friend?

BRAD
Of course.

CYNTHIA
Don't miss your shot with her.
You'll regret it later.

Brad holds out his hand and Cynthia takes it.

103 EXT. BRAD'S APARTMENT BUILDING - FRONT - NIGHT

103

Establishing shot #6.

104 INT. BRAD'S APT. - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

104

Brad comes in and stops. Abigail is at the piano with Lizzie.

ABIGAIL
Hey, Dad.

BRAD
(to Lizzie)
What are you...

LIZZIE
Piano lesson?

BRAD
Yeah, no... I just figured...

LIZZIE
We have to make sure she's all set
for the concert tomorrow night.

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED:

104

BRAD
Right. Of course.
(to Abigail)
You decided to do the concert?

Abigail touches the sheet music - a memory of her mother.

ABIGAIL
Yeah. I think it'll be good.

BRAD
So do I.
(to Lizzie)
Can I talk to you for a minute?

LIZZIE
We really need to practice.

BRAD
Okay. I'll just...

He goes down the hall. Abigail watches with concern.

LIZZIE
(to Abigail)
Okay. Let's try it again, but this
time really hit the chorus hard.

Abigail turns towards the piano.

105 EXT. MUSIC ACADEMY - FRONT - NIGHT - LATER

105

Establishing shot #13.

106 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

106

The musicians are packing up their instruments after rehearsal. Jordan puts his oboe in its case and walks over to Earl, who is gathering his sheet music at the piano.

*

JORDAN
You were really good today, Earl.

EARL
Oh. Well, thank you, Jordan. You
were very good yourself.

JORDAN
It's gonna be a great show. Too
bad it's the last one. I'm really
going to miss this place.

(CONTINUED)

106 CONTINUED:

106

EARL

What are you talking about?

JORDAN

I overheard Ms. Washington and Ms. Moore talking. I wasn't eavesdropping or anything, I just happened to be listening when she was talking... I guess that is eavesdropping...

EARL

What did they say?

JORDAN

Something about the building being sold. I guess they're shutting down the school.

EARL

Are you sure you heard correctly?

JORDAN

Pretty sure.

(disappointed)

I guess Juilliard is going to have to wait.

(beat)

Well, anyway. I'll see you tomorrow. Night, Earl.

EARL

Good night Jordan.

Earl quickly grabs his sheet music and gets up.

107 INT. BRAD'S APT. - BRAD'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

107

Brad is at the computer as Abigail comes in and sits.

ABIGAIL

What's up with you and Lizzie?

BRAD

What do you mean?

ABIGAIL

You know what I mean. You're upset, she's upset. You could barely look at each other earlier.

(CONTINUED)

107

CONTINUED:

107

BRAD
Did she say anything?

(CONTINUED)

107

CONTINUED: (2)

107

ABIGAIL

No. And I asked her. She said concentrate on the concert.

BRAD

She's right. The concert is the most important thing right now.

ABIGAIL

No, Dad, you're the most important thing. And Lizzie's pretty important, too. What is going on?

BRAD

(pause)

My company just bought the building where the Music Academy is. It probably means it's going to have to close.

ABIGAIL

What?! Dad!

BRAD

We tried everything to find a way to make it work, but

ABIGAIL

Well, try harder!

BRAD

Abigail, sometimes things don't work out the way we want them to. It's just business.

ABIGAIL

Dad, that school is not just a business to her. It's personal.

BRAD

Honey, I'm sorry...

ABIGAIL

(stands)

No. Dad, you're right. Sometimes things don't work out and there's nothing we can do. Sometimes things break and we can't fix them. Sometimes we lose people and we can't get them back.

--

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

107 CONTINUED: (3) 107

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

But you can get her back. You can
fix this. So fix it.

Abigail storms out of the room. Brad sits there stunned for a moment, and then he takes a deep breath. He turns to the bookshelves lining his office walls and he stands up, takes a couple of the books, and starts to thumb through them looking for a solution.

108 EXT. MCKINLEY HOLDINGS BUILDING - FRONT - DAY - NEXT DAY 108

Establishing shot #6.

109 INT. MCKINLEY HOLDINGS - BRAD'S WORK OFFICE - DAY 109

Brad is at the desk surrounded by books, files, and notepads. He shakes his head and slams a book closed. He thinks about it for a minute and then gets up.

INT. MCKINLEY HOLDINGS - TRAVIS' OFFICE - DAY

Travis is working and unlike everyone else on Christmas Eve, he is not dressed casually.

Brad knocks on the door.

BRAD

Travis. Can I talk to you?

TRAVIS

(eyes on the computer)

Sure. Come in.

Brad enters and sits.

BRAD

It's about the music school.

TRAVIS

(sighs)

Brad, I thought we settled this. A music school doesn't fit in our plans.

BRAD

But what if...

TRAVIS

Brad, the answer is no. It's just business.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRAD

(beat)
Maybe it shouldn't be.

TRAVIS

I'm sorry?

BRAD

Maybe sometimes business gets in the way of what people need. Of what makes them happy. Family, friends, community... I mean, here it is Christmas Eve and we're both here working.

TRAVIS

What's your point?

BRAD

My point is... You won't reconsider about the music school?

*

TRAVIS

No.

BRAD

(beat)
Then you'll have my letter of resignation first thing on Monday.

TRAVIS

(beat)
This is that important to you?

BRAD

Yes it is.

Travis nods and stands up. He goes to Brad.

TRAVIS

Good for you for standing up for what you believe in.

Travis heads toward the door.

TRAVIS (cont'd)

You can put the letter on my desk.
Merry Christmas.

Travis exits leaving Brad behind, stunned.

INT. MCKINLEY HOLDINGS - BRAD'S WORK OFFICE - DAY

Brad comes back into his office, a little shell-shocked and sits at his desk. A moment later there is a knock at the door and he looks up to see Earl.

EARL

Excuse me. I'm sorry to bother you. Are you Brad?

BRAD

Yes.

EARL

I'm sorry to bother you, on Christmas Eve, no less, but I got your name from Samantha Washington at the Brooklyn Music Academy. I'm taking piano lessons with Lizzie Moore.

BRAD

Oh, right. Earl. She's talked about you. You're one of her favorite students.

EARL

Well, she's a remarkable teacher. And a remarkable young woman.

BRAD

Yes, she is. How can I help you?

EARL

Actually, I came here to see if I might be able to help you.

Brad looks at him with curiosity.

110 OMITTED 110

ACT NINE

111 EXT. MUSIC ACADEMY - FRONT - NIGHT 111

Establishing shot #14.

112 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS 112

The room is quickly filling up with people. Among them are Travis, Cynthia, and Meg, who come in together and find their seats a few rows from the front.

113 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - AUDITORIUM - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT - CONT. 113

Samantha, with a headset and a clipboard, is peeking through the curtain. Lizzie comes up behind her.

LIZZIE

Hey. Are we ready?

SAMANTHA

It's a full house.

LIZZIE

That's great. I guess we're going to go out with a bang.

SAMANTHA

Don't lose faith. You never know what might happen.

(CONTINUED)

113 CONTINUED:

113

Lizzie peeks through the curtains. She sees Travis and Cynthia.

LIZZIE

Oh, he's here.

SAMANTHA

Who?

LIZZIE

Travis McKinley. Our new landlord.

SAMANTHA

Well, good. I hope he feels just terrible by the end of the night.

LIZZIE

Me, too.

(pause)

Have you seen...?

SAMANTHA

(shakes her head)

Abigail came in by herself.

Lizzie is obviously disappointed.

SAMANTHA (cont'd)

Okay... Showtime. Are you ready?

LIZZIE

Ready.

Samantha talks into the headset.

(CONTINUED)

113 CONTINUED: (2)

113

SAMANTHA

Okay, places. Dim the house.

Lizzie walks out onto the stage.

114 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

114

The house lights dim and the curtain opens to reveal Lizzie standing among the winter wonderland set decoration and lights and various instruments, seats, and music stands. The spotlight comes on and the audience applauds warmly.

Lizzie smiles and steps to the front of the stage.

LIZZIE

Merry Christmas everyone, and welcome to the tenth annual Brooklyn Music Academy Christmas concert, entitled The Sound of Christmas.

More applause from the audience.

LIZZIE (cont'd)

We deeply appreciate your support over the last ten years...

She starts to get emotional but pushes it down.

LIZZIE (cont'd)

Okay! Let's get things started. Accompanied by one of our teachers, Juliette Hasting on the piano, ladies and gentlemen, please welcome our first student Jordan Crawford.

The audience applauds warmly as Jordan and his pianist come out to take their places.

(CONTINUED)

114 CONTINUED: 114

They launch into a stunning rendition of a classical piece with a holiday theme to it. We hear a few moments of this and then we --

DISSOLVE TO:

115 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT - LATER 115

A little while later, the same string quartet we saw in rehearsal is performing another holiday song. They finish and the audience cheers. The performers stand to take a bow.

116 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - AUDITORIUM - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT - CONT. 116

Lizzie is backstage with Samantha and Abigail. They are applauding the quartet. Lizzie turns to Abigail.

LIZZIE
Are you ready?

ABIGAIL
(nervous smile)
Ready.

LIZZIE
I'm really proud of you.

ABIGAIL
(moved - smiles)
Thanks. I am too.

They hug and Lizzie goes onto the stage.

117 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER 117

Lizzie comes out to make the next introduction.

LIZZIE
Our next performer is one of our newest students, and it has been a pleasure getting to know her. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome, Abigail Owen.

(CONTINUED)

117 CONTINUED: 117

Abigail walks onto the stage to applause as Lizzie walks off, giving her a big thumbs up.

In the audience, we now see Brad standing at the back of the room. Abigail sees him, too, and gives a smile and a wave. He waves back, his heart swelling with pride. *

Abigail sits at the piano, takes a moment, and then begins to play one of the holiday pieces we heard her practicing earlier. She is flawless. *

While she plays, we see a few shots of the audience enjoying the performance, including Travis, Cynthia, and Meg in the auditorium, and... *

117A INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - AUDITORIUM - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT - CONT. 117A

a very proud Lizzie and Samantha backstage. *

DISSOLVE TO:

118 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER 118

A few minutes later, Abigail is reaching the triumphant end of her performance, which brings down the house. The applause is loud and enthusiastic. She stands and takes a bow and then practically floats off the stage.

119 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - AUDITORIUM - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT - CONT. 119

Abigail comes off the stage and Lizzie envelops her in a hug.

LIZZIE
That was amazing!

ABIGAIL
I couldn't have done it without
you. Thank you.

They hug again. Samantha steps in with Earl.

SAMANTHA
Lizzie, you have to introduce Earl.

LIZZIE
Right. Okay, Earl, knock 'em dead!

EARL
I'll do my best.

(CONTINUED)

119 CONTINUED: 119
Lizzie goes onto the stage.

120 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT 120
Lizzie takes the stage.

LIZZIE
Our next student proves that music
is not just for the young, but also
for the young at heart. Ladies and
gentlemen, please welcome Earl
McKinley.

Lizzie walks off as Earl is walking on.
Meanwhile, in the audience, Travis sits up and turns to
Cynthia, then Meg.

TRAVIS
What did she say? Earl who?

Earl comes to the piano and sits, then picks up a microphone
to speak to the audience.

EARL
If you'll indulge me for just a
moment... I'd like to dedicate this
song to my son, Travis.

Travis is stunned.

121 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - AUDITORIUM - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT - CONT. 121
Backstage, Lizzie hears this and turns to Samantha.

LIZZIE
Wait. Travis? Travis McKinley...?
Earl is his father?

Samantha shrugs, but does so with a smile. She knows
something.

122 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS 122
Earl continues.

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED:

122

EARL

Travis, I hope you remember this
song as fondly as I remember you
playing it when you were young.
Merry Christmas, son... I love you.

Travis can't believe what is happening.

Earl turns to the piano and starts to play one of the
Christmas songs we heard him practicing earlier.

It's a beautiful moment, and we stick with it with reaction
shots from all of our major characters.

When Earl finishes, the applause is thunderous, led by
Travis, who starts a standing ovation for his father.

Earl stands and smiles. As he does, Brad walks up on stage
from the audience and takes the microphone..

*
*

BRAD

Folks, if you could all please
welcome to the stage the founder of
the school Samantha Washington and,
the director of tonight's concert,
Lizzie Moore.

*
*
*

He turns to the side and starts applauding again.

123 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - AUDITORIUM - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT - CONT.

123

Lizzie turns to Samantha.

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED:

123

LIZZIE

What's going on? Is that Brad?

Samantha gently pushes her onto the stage.

SAMANTHA

Just go. Go...

They go towards center stage.

124 INT. MUSIC ACADEMY - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

124

Lizzie and Samantha walk onto the stage and the ovation increases in volume and enthusiasm. As they wave and smile, the performers we have seen tonight, including Abigail and Jordan, plus others we have seen around the school, walk on stage to join in the applause. As it dies down, Brad continues.

Lizzie is stunned. She turns to Samantha and Abigail, who both have cat-that-ate-the-canary grins.

LIZZIE

What's going on?

They gently nudge her to center stage next to Brad.

BRAD

(to the audience)

My name is Brad Owen and I work for McKinley Holdings. Or at least I used to. We'll see what happens.

(pause)

Earlier tonight, there was an emergency meeting of the Board of Directors, called by chairman emeritus Earl McKinley. I'm pleased to announce that the company is going to match all of your donations tonight and add it to an endowment fund for the Brooklyn Music Academy.

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

124

CONTINUED:

124

The audience applauds loudly. Travis takes a beat and then smiles at his dad and joins in the applause.

BRAD (cont'd)
We're going to use that money to
turn this place into the finest
music school in the country.

*

LIZZIE
(shocked - to Samantha)
Did you know about this?

SAMANTHA
Shhh. Listen.

Lizzie turns back.

BRAD
And to get things started off
right, we have a little Christmas
gift. Guys?

From the back of the stage, several people roll out the piano we saw in the music store in the very first scene.

Lizzie can't believe her eyes. Brad holds out his hand to her and she walks over to join him.

BRAD (cont'd)
(to the audience)
Before our final song, I was hoping
you could do me a favor. Would
everyone who has gotten lessons
from Lizzie stand up.

*

It isn't one or five or fifteen - it's dozens of people of all ages and types and they all beam at Lizzie who is overwhelmed.

BRAD (cont'd)
(to Lizzie)
I'm glad we were able to save the
school but in the end it's just a
building. Samantha and all the
other teachers and students and
you... Lizzie, you're the reason
this place is so special.

*
*
*
*
*
*

He points to the former students who start applauding again.

*

(CONTINUED)

124

CONTINUED: (2)

124

LIZZIE
I don't know what to say.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

124

CONTINUED: (3)

124

Brad leads Lizzie to the piano.

BRAD

"Where words fail, music speaks."

*

She eyes the piano for a moment, afraid, but then turns to him.

LIZZIE

How about a kiss for good luck?

BRAD

(smiles)

Why didn't I think of that?

He leans in to kiss her and Abigail, Samantha, Meg, and even Cynthia watch happily.

The kiss ends and Lizzie takes a deep breath. She sits down at the piano and begins to play -- hesitantly at first, and then with increasing gusto.

She has found the music again.

We start to PULL BACK as Bard is joined by Samantha, Earl, Jordan, and Travis, who gives his father a hug.

*

*

Abigail comes to hug her dad and then stand near the piano, Lizzie beaming at them and vice versa.

As the song reaches its conclusion, we --

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END