

## ACT ONE

### **EXT. CHICAGO - DAY**

Classical music plays as we establish Chicago in the fall; the leaves are turning, the people are bustling about in sweaters and jackets.

### **EXT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY**

The music continues as we see a very nice building on Lakeshore Drive overlooking Lake Michigan.

### **INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - ELLIE'S ROOM - DAY**

The music continues as we see a bedroom, filled with quirky vintage ephemera (a 60s clock, a hobby horse, etc.).

ELLIE MATTHEWS (40s, lighthearted, down-to-earth) comes in dressed in a brown business suit. As she gathers her things, we see her absently nodding along with the music, her hands occasionally playing "air piano" or acting as a conductor.

She struggles against the suit for a moment - it fits, but isn't her style and she's clearly not happy wearing it.

### **INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

The music continues as Ellie comes out into the living room, which has a similar vintage style as the bedroom. It's a nice place with an outdoor terrace looking on the lake.

She grabs a travel mug of coffee (continuing to "direct" the music with her free hand), heads for the door, and stops to take a look at herself in a mirror. The conducting stops - she really hates this suit - but the music brings her back and she conducts the air as she exits.

### **EXT. HOTEL - DAY**

The music continues as we establish a very nice hotel on Michigan Avenue in Chicago.

### **INT. HOTEL - CORRIDOR - DAY**

The music continues as we see Ellie, coming down a hall with a clipboard. She says hi to people - guests and staff alike.

She passes an open door, giving it a quick glance, then continues on. But she backs up and looks, then looks around almost guiltily. She goes in as the music fades out.

**INT. HOTEL - BALLROOM - DAY**

A grand piano is in the otherwise empty ballroom. Ellie sits down at the piano gingerly, almost reverently, takes a beat, then starts to play the song we've been hearing.

She's fantastic, classically trained, and plays with passion.

After a moment, Ellie's boss HELENA WARD (50s, tough but fair) enters the room.

HELENA  
Ellie... Ellie!

ELLIE  
(startled; stops playing)  
Helena! Sorry, I...

HELENA  
You told me you studied music but I had no idea you were a virtuoso.

ELLIE  
(plays cutesy notes)  
Oh, no. I just... futz.

HELENA  
Well, as much as I like fine music, it would be best if you futzed when you're not on the clock.

ELLIE  
I know, yes. It's just... have you ever woken up with a song in your head and it won't go away until you hear it out loud?

HELENA  
Ellie, autumn is one of our busiest times for events and I need to know you're fully focused.

ELLIE  
I am. One hundred percent.

HELENA  
So you're ready to meet Mrs. Hill? She'll be here soon and she wants ideas for the centerpieces.

ELLIE

Gourds!

(off Helena's look)

For the centerpieces. I was on my way to call this gourd guy I found.

(chuckles)

That sounds funny. Gourd guy. Hi, I'm the gourd guy...

(off her look)

Sorry. She's going to love them.

HELENA

Ellie, don't get me wrong...

(air quotes)

...you do "fine" work...

ELLIE

(air quotes also)

"Thank you?"

HELENA

And you're still new at this...

ELLIE

I've been here for a year.

HELENA

And I like you. I do. But sometimes it just seems like your heart isn't it.

ELLIE

Why would you say that?

HELENA

Because you got distracted by a piano instead of calling the gourd guy.

ELLIE

(chuckles)

Still sounds funny.

(off Helena's look)

Helena, I am 100% dedicated to this job. I promise. No more distractions.

HELENA

Okay. Thank you.

(off Ellie's inaction)

Gourds?

ELLIE

Right! It'll be "fine."

Ellie pulls out her phone and Helena leaves the room. Ellie dials a number and starts to leave, but takes one last look back at the piano and we hear the music start again. It's clear that's where her heart is.

**EXT. HIGHBRIDGE MANOR - DAY**

The music continues as we establish Highbridge Manor, a palatial estate in the rolling hills of Ontario, Canada, surrounded by a blaze of autumn leaves on the trees.

ISABELLE (30s, glamorous, dramatic), wearing a stylish autumn ensemble, rushes out of the house with a suitcase toward a very expensive car parked in the drive.

A man chases her out - JACK (40s, dashing, roguish).

JACK

Isabelle! Where are you going?

ISABELLE

Anywhere. I can't do this anymore.

JACK

So, you're just going to run away?  
Without even saying goodbye?

ISABELLE

We've said goodbye too many times,  
Jack. It never seems to hold.  
Besides, it's autumn. It's a time  
when things come to an end.

The sound of a cell phone ringing is heard. Jack and Isabelle look around, then Jack looks directly at the camera.

JACK

You forgot to turn off your phone?

QUICK CUT TO:

**INT. LEO'S HOUSE - DEN - DAY**

Start focused on a computer screen, where we see an in-progress manuscript about Jack and Isabelle.

PULL BACK to reveal that we are in a cozy, book-lined den - a fire crackles in the fireplace.

LEO CARPENTER (40s, appreciates simplicity and order) is sitting at a desk, a ringing cell phone next to it. The caller ID says "ELLIE." He hits the speaker button.

LEO  
I can't talk. Jack stopped  
Isabelle just as she was leaving.

**INT. HOTEL - CORRIDOR - DAY**

Ellie is walking down the corridor on the phone. We begin  
INTERCUTTING between them.

ELLIE  
He always stops her just as she's  
leaving.

LEO  
Yeah, but it's autumn, so there are  
pretty leaves in the background.

ELLIE  
The only way to make that different  
is if they're raking the leaves.

LEO  
I gotta go...

Leo disconnects the call and turns back to the computer  
screen. He thinks, has an idea, then starts to type...

**EXT. HIGHBRIDGE MANOR - DAY**

The same set-up as earlier. Isabelle comes out of the manor  
toward the car.

JACK (O.S.)  
Isabelle. Where are you going?

Isabelle looks - Jack is next to the car raking leaves.

Jack looks at the camera.

JACK (CONT'D)  
This is terrible.

QUICK CUT TO:

**INT. LEO'S HOUSE - DEN - DAY**

Leo puts his head down on his desk in frustration. His phone  
chimes with an alert and he raises his head to look at it.

**REMINDER: REHEARSAL WITH SAM**

Leo looks almost relieved. He shuts off the computer and gets up to leave, grabbing his coat as he goes.

**EXT. PINWOOD - DAY**

Establishing shots of the charming village of Pinewood, Ontario Canada. It's woodsy, with stone buildings and lots of autumn decorations on the lampposts and storefronts.

Leo is walking down the street, enjoying the crisp air, when his phone rings. The caller ID says KAREN WU. He considers ducking the call but then answers it with a cheery voice.

LEO

Karen! How's my favorite editor in the whole wide world?

KAREN (O.S.)

I'll be better when you tell me you're working on the new book.

LEO

I'm working on the new book. I'm at my desk typing away as we speak.

KAREN (O.S.)

You must have long arms if you can reach your desk all the way from here.

Leo stops - looks around. A woman on her phone steps out of a doorway with a smile. This is KAREN WU (50s, a quintessential book editor). Leo tries to joke it off.

LEO

I'm working remotely.

They hug - old friends who know each other too well. Leo starts walking again - Karen joins.

LEO (CONT'D)

How did you know I wasn't writing?

KAREN

Your voice gets squeaky when you're blocked.

LEO

(a little squeaky)  
I'm not blocked! I'm...  
(lowers voice)  
...stuck.

KAREN

How is that different?

They have reached a store window that has a big display focused on "Pinewood's Native Son Leo Carpenter" and his "HIGHBRIDGE MANOR" series

The poster features stylized versions of Jack and Isabelle with several other characters, the manor, a lumber mill, and the drama - think *Dynasty* set amongst the timber.

Each of the dozen books on display has a title with a season and trees... "THE WILLOWS OF SPRING;" "LOVE IN THE SUMMER SPRUCE;" "WINTER PINES;" etc.

LEO

I don't know what's going on. I've been doing this series for fifteen years. I can write these books in my sleep.

KAREN

Maybe that's the problem. I mean, Leo... another autumn book?

LEO

There are only so many seasons!

KAREN

Maybe you need to mix it up a little. Get them off the estate and out of Pinewood.

LEO

And go where?

KAREN

Anywhere. What's the last place you went to that you loved?

LEO

It's... I guess it's been a minute since I've traveled.

KAREN

Maybe you're too comfortable here.

LEO

What's wrong with comfortable?  
It's worked for fifteen books.

KAREN

Yeah, but Leo come on...  
(gently)

(MORE)

KAREN (CONT'D)

...the last few didn't do so hot. You gotta do something. The publishers want to see the first three chapters by October - that's four weeks... or they're going to want a serious discussion about your future.

Karen starts walking, leaving a shaken Leo behind.

**EXT. HOTEL - DAY**

Establishing the hotel in Chicago.

**INT. HOTEL - BALLROOM - DAY**

Ellie is back in the ballroom talking to CHARLOTTE HILL (60s, patrician in demeanor, demanding) as Ellie scribbles notes furiously on a pad.

CHARLOTTE

I want the flowers to be nice, but not gaudy. Fall colors. Reds, yellows, oranges, but not brown. Brown is out this season.

ELLIE

(looks at her brown suit)  
Good to know.

CHARLOTTE

The décor should be tasteful but with a bit of whimsy. Can you do whimsy?

ELLIE

(joking)  
If you hum a few bars.  
(off Charlotte's look)  
We can do whimsy. I ordered pumpkins and gourds for the centerpieces.

CHARLOTTE

Absolutely not! I want the room to whisper autumn, not scream it.

ELLIE

Pianissimo, not fortissimo. Heard.

CHARLOTTE

Now, about the food...

ELLIE

Don't worry about that. We have a fantastic chef and he can cook just about anything. Even whimsy.

CHARLOTTE

Do you have the sample menus I asked for?

ELLIE

(looks on clipboard)

I do. I did. I don't. But I'll go to the kitchen and get them right now.

Ellie rushes off while Charlotte appears less than thrilled.

**EXT. MUSIC STORE - DAY**

Vivaldi's "Autumn" plays as we establish a cute music store in Pinewood.

**INT. MUSIC STORE - DAY**

The music continues as Leos come into the music store, which is filled with lots of instruments, sheet music, and more.

A sign on an easel points toward the back - it reads PIANO Ball rehearsal and explains that PIANO stands for the Pinewood Institute's Autumn Neighborhood Outreach, a fundraiser for a local music conservatory.

Leo follows the sign.

**INT. MUSIC STORE - REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY**

The music is coming from a stereo system in a small rehearsal space within the music store. There we find SAM PERKINS (40s, traditional, casual, guy's guy) standing in front of four people, each of whom has a string instrument.

They are WENDY (early 20s, offbeat, rebellious, part of the indigenous people of the area); BEAU (20s, POC, nice guy, out of his depth here); DARCY (40s, exuberant, enthusiastic); and FAITH (60s, curmudgeon with strong opinions).

Leo enters.

SAM

Hey, there he is.

LEO

I'm sorry I'm late, Sam...  
everybody. I got ambushed.

SAM

That's all right. I was just about  
to make introductions. I'm Sam  
Perkins of Pinewood Nature Tours  
and I'm heading up the planning  
committee for the PIANO Ball...

DARCY

Can I just say how excited I am to  
be doing this? It's, like, the  
biggest thing that happens in  
Pinewood all year.

WENDY

So, no pressure.

SAM

It'll be great, I promise. So, our  
string quartet... on cello we have  
Wendy. Beau is playing violin.  
Darcy is on viola. And Faith is  
also violin. And this is Leo  
Carpenter. He's going to be  
helping you learn Vivaldi's  
"Autumn."

WENDY

(looks up from phone)  
Leo Carpenter, the writer? And  
you're in charge of the music?

LEO

Yeah, I know. Everybody with a  
music background was busy and I  
owed Sam a favor...

SAM

I begged. There was begging...

LEO

But don't worry, I was in the  
orchestra and I played this piece.

WENDY

Recently?

LEO

No. But luckily Vivaldi hasn't  
changed much in the last 300 years.

Wendy seems unconvinced - goes back to her phone.

BEAU

Well, it was new to me. I usually only play hip-hop.

FAITH

Hip-hop... violin? That's a thing?

BEAU

Yeah, I have over 10,000 followers on my YouTube.

WENDY

(to Faith)

YouTube is like TV on your phone.

Faith gives Wendy a tight smile.

DARCY

Mr. Carpenter, I love your books. I think "Winter Pines" is my favorite. When Jack tried to stop the hostile takeover from the rival timber company? And Isabelle turned down his proposal? I died. It's the best book, ever.

Faith leans over to Wendy, who is still on her phone.

FAITH

Books are like Instagram but without the pictures.

Wendy gives her a tight smile.

LEO

Well, thank you, Darcy. And thank you all for volunteering your time. This is going to be a lot of fun. I love Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" concertos and I think "Autumn" is my favorite one, so...

WENDY

Don't you think it's kinda done?

FAITH

It's an enduring classic.

WENDY

It's a boring snooze fest.

BEAU

Maybe we could add something to it?  
Some beats, maybe?

FAITH

Vivaldi doesn't need "beats."

DARCY

I love it, too, Mr. Carpenter. I picture Jack and Isabelle walking through the woods, professing their undying love for one another as the leaves gently fall around them.

(off their looks)

I may have written a little fan fiction from time to time.

Wendy, Beau, Faith, and Darcy devolve into a back and forth about the pros and cons of Vivaldi as Sam pulls Leo aside.

SAM

Is this the fun part?

Leo forces a smile.

**EXT. HOTEL - DAY**

Establishing the hotel.

**INT. HOTEL - KITCHEN - DAY**

The large kitchen is bustling as the staff prepares various autumn flavors - soups, pumpkin pie, and more.

Ellie enters and is approached by MATT PADILLA (30s, enthusiastic, optimistic) who holds out a spoon and (gently) gets her to take a taste. Ellie is surprised, then thrilled.

ELLIE

Okay, wow. Matt! That's delicious. What is that?

MATT

Pozole Rojo - it's a Mexican stew that's popular at the holidays but I gave it a little autumn twist with corn, potatoes, and squash.

ELLIE

You need to serve this at *your* restaurant.

MATT

(looks around)

Shhh! The appliances have ears.

(pulls her aside)

Are you sure it's okay to use your sister's condo for the investor dinner next month?

ELLIE

It's not my sister's, it's mine. I pay the rent.

MATT

That she gives you at a huge discount.

ELLIE

You're getting a designer kitchen and a view of the lake. You really want to quibble about real estate?

MATT

I'm asking people to give me money. I need this to go well.

ELLIE

You need to serve this stew.

MATT

I keep going back and forth on the menu. Do I do upscale or casual? Should I do seafood or steak? Do I do Latin food or do I break my mother's heart?

ELLIE

You have 4 weeks to figure it out.

MATT

Maybe it's too soon. I don't know what kind of restaurant I want to do. I don't have a location. Do I even want to do it in Chicago or should I go somewhere else?

ELLIE

Matt, relax. You're an amazing chef and no matter what you do, it's going to be a huge success. And when it is, I get to eat there for free every night.

MATT

Once a month.

ELLIE

I'm planning your investor dinner!  
That deserves at least once a week.

MATT

Every two weeks.

ELLIE

Two weeks and free desert for life.

MATT

Deal.

They shake hands on it just as Helena walks in.

HELENA

Ellie! Mrs. Hill has been waiting  
in the ballroom for ten minutes.

ELLIE

Yes, I know. I was getting the  
sample menus but I...

HELENA

Got distracted?

(gently)

Ellie... you asked me earlier if I  
ever wake up with a song in my head  
and I don't. I wake up thinking  
about my job... that I love. I'm  
excited to come here every day.

Are you?

(off her silence)

Why don't I take the menus to Mrs.  
Hill and then you and I can talk in  
my office?

Matt hands menus to Helena who leaves. Ellie exchanges a  
look with Matt that says "uh-oh."

**EXT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT**

Establishing Ellie's building.

**INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - ELLIE'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Ellie comes into her room with a box, which she puts on the  
floor. She takes off the jacket of her suit with relief and  
throws that on the floor, too, then flops down on the bed.

We hear a chiming noise from her nearby laptop. She opens it to reveal a video call coming in from Leo. She hits a button and we see Leo in his kitchen.

**INT. LEO'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Leo is in his cozy kitchen eating from a takeout container while talking on the phone.

LEO

Hey. Sorry, it took me so long.  
It's been a day.

We begin INTERCUTTING between the two scenes.

ELLIE

Did you get fired? Because, I did.

LEO

Ellie?! What?

ELLIE

It's okay. I didn't love that job.

LEO

Then why were you doing it?

ELLIE

Rent, food, clothes...

LEO

Maybe it's a sign. Do you remember  
the last job you got fired from,  
when we were in college?

ELLIE

Yes! You're the one who fired me!

LEO

Because you were a terrible  
waitress! You kept playing  
Beethoven on the wine glasses.

ELLIE

I only broke a few.

LEO

A few dozen, maybe. The point is,  
you were my friend and I knew you  
were wasting your talent. If I  
hadn't fired you, you never  
would've gotten into Julliard.

ELLIE

And look how that turned out.

LEO

Maybe it's the universe telling you to give it another shot. I never understood why you gave it up.

ELLIE

Rent, food, clothes! It's okay. I needed a break anyway. This will give me a chance to clear my head and figure out what I want to do with the rest of my life. Maybe I'll come see you.

LEO

Except I might not be here.

ELLIE

You're always there. I mean, like, always... you never go anywhere.

LEO

That's not true. I go places.

ELLIE

When was the last time you took a vacation? A romantic trip with your boyfriend?

LEO

What boyfriend?

ELLIE

Well, that's a whole other issue. Where are you going?

LEO

I don't know if I am. Karen thinks I need to get out of Pinewood for a couple of weeks to find inspiration for the new novel.

ELLIE

You should come here! Chicago is beautiful in the fall.

LEO

I don't know. Highbridge is all about long heartfelt conversations while walking through the forest by a babbling brook. Not dodging traffic on Michigan Avenue.

ELLIE

Then write something else. What about that idea you had about the rival architects?

LEO

I can't do that. The publishers, my editor, my readers... they want more Jack and Isabelle.

ELLIE

Then maybe you can find something new for them to do in Chicago when you come visit me.

LEO

I thought you wanted to come here?

ELLIE

Hey! What if we do a swap? I'll stay at your place for a week and you stay at mine! It's like a gift exchange only with living rooms and no actual gifts.

LEO

I don't know... I was thinking Toronto. Maybe Ottawa.

ELLIE

What, are you on parole? You're allowed to leave the country. You haven't been here since college. I've never been to Pinewood.

LEO

I can't just fly off to Chicago. I'd have to...

ELLIE

Actually leave your house?

LEO

I go places!

ELLIE

Prove it.

LEO

(beat)  
Fine! We'll exchange living rooms.

ELLIE

Yay!

(looks around)

Oh... I gotta clean. Bye.

We stick with Ellie as she disconnects the call and jumps up to start cleaning her room and classical music plays.

**INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - KITCHEN - DAY**

The music continues and we see Ellie cleaning the kitchen as she acts as a conductor for the non-existent orchestra playing. TBH, it's more conducting than cleaning.

**INT. LEO'S HOUSE - DEN - DAY**

The music continues as we see Leo creating a color-coded binder with instructions for the house.

**INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY**

The music continues as we see Ellie "packing," which involves her throwing things from the closet in the general direction of a suitcase. She pulls out one of her business suits.

ELLIE

Nope.

She pitches it back in the closet.

**INT. LEO'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY**

The music continues as we see Leo's meticulously folded clothes on the bed. He is rummaging around the back of a closet looking for something. It's not there. He pulls out his phone and dials.

**EXT. LEO'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - DAY**

Sam rings the bell and moments later, Leo opens the door as Sam demonstrates the rolling suitcase.

SAM

One suitcase, ready to roll.  
Literally.

LEO

Sam, you are a lifesaver. I must  
have put my luggage in storage.

SAM

Well, sure. You never go anywhere.

LEO

I go places! I... never mind. Do you want to come in?

SAM

No, I have a fall leaves tour group in an hour. Plus I have a million things to do for the PIANO Ball. I can't believe you're abandoning me.

LEO

It's only for two weeks. And, oh! If you need help with anything, you can ask Ellie.

SAM

Who?

LEO

My friend Ellie from Chicago is staying here while I'm gone. She was a concert pianist so she can run the string quartet.

SAM

Was. Past tense?

LEO

Yeah, she does event planning now so she could probably help you with that part, too. Although she did just get fired...

SAM

And this is supposed to convince me that she should help?

LEO

She's a fantastic pianist. And she misses music. This is going to be great. Trust me.

Sam does not look as though he fully trusts Leo.

**EXT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY**

Establishing Ellie's building.

**INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Ellie rushes to the door with her suitcase and opens it to find Matt there with grocery bags.

MATT

Hey, I brought...  
(sees suitcase)  
Why do you have a suitcase?

ELLIE

Because airlines frown on using a laundry basket as luggage?

MATT

Where are you going?

ELLIE

Canada.

MATT

Are you fleeing the country? You trashed Helena's office after she fired you, didn't you?

ELLIE

No, I'm swapping places with my friend Leo.

MATT

But what about the investor dinner?

ELLIE

I'll be back in a couple of weeks.

MATT

You said I could use the kitchen to test menu items.

ELLIE

Leo's not going to mind.

MATT

Who's Leo?

ELLIE

The friend that's going to stay here while I'm gone. I'll send you a text later. I'm going to miss my flight. Bye!

Ellie rushes off leaving a confused Matt behind.

**EXT. CHICAGO AIRPORT - NIGHT**

Establishing Chicago's O'Hare airport.

**INT. CHICAGO AIRPORT - CONCOURSE - NIGHT**

Leo walks through the concourse looking around desperately as he struggles with his carry on bag amidst the sea of people. Ellie rushes by in the other direction with the shoulder bag and they almost miss each other.

LEO

Ellie!

ELLIE

Leo?

They two struggle against the tide of people until they can step off to the side. They hug each other fiercely.

LEO

My plane was late.

ELLIE

Mine's early. Well, it's on time, which never happens so it's the same as being early.

LEO

We were going to get bad airport food and overpriced cocktails.

ELLIE

My flight is boarding.

LEO

(they exchange keys)  
Okay, here's the key.

ELLIE

Is there anything I need to know about the house?

LEO

I left you a binder with detailed instructions. What about yours?

ELLIE

I left a hastily scribbled note taped to the mirror in the hall.

LEO

Perfect. Oh, one more thing...

ELLIE

I have to go! Have fun!

She gets swept up in the crowd just as Leo gets pulled the other direction. They shout back and forth to each other.

LEO

No, wait, there's this guy Sam.  
I told him you'd help...

Ellie has not understood what he has said...

ELLIE

Oh, and my friend Matt is going to  
be there to use the kitchen!

LEO

What about your pigeon?

But she is gone and whatever they were trying to say is lost in the airport hustle and bustle.

**EXT. CHICAGO AIRPORT - NIGHT**

Leo is standing outside the airport almost at the head of a long line of people waiting to get a taxi. He makes it to the front and the driver puts his bag in the trunk.

LEO

I've been in that line for an hour.

CAB DRIVER

Is that all? Must be a slow night.  
Where ya headed?

LEO

651 Cleveland Street. Is that far?

CAB DRIVER

Shouldn't take long. Hopefully no  
more than an hour.

Leo looks less than thrilled.

**EXT. PINWOOD AIRPORT - NIGHT**

Ellie comes out of a small airport with her shoulder bag, talking on the phone to an annoying automated systems.

ELLIE

Existing flight. Lost luggage.  
No, lost luggage.

(MORE)

ELLIE (CONT'D)  
No, not mileage rewards, what?  
Lost... luggage... I don't have  
anything to wear except what I've  
got on, you dumb machine!

She hangs up, frustrated, and hails a cab.

**EXT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT**

The driver puts Leo's suitcase on the curb in front of Ellie's building. Leo looks at the very fancy building and appears suitably impressed.

Leo tips the driver and takes his suitcase toward the door.

**EXT. LEO'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

A cab pulls up in front of Leo's house and Ellie gets out with her shoulder bag.

The cab drives off and Ellie looks around for a moment - it is quiet and there isn't another living soul or house or anything in sight.

Ellie smiles at the serenity of it and heads to front door. She reaches into her bag and searches for the key.

ELLIE  
Key... key, key, key...  
(sags shoulders)  
Oh, come on!

She continues the hunt.

**INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - ENTRYWAY - NIGHT**

Leo comes into the apartment and, sure enough, there is a hastily scribbled note on the mirror. He tries to read what it says but it is indecipherable.

LEO  
Don't forget to feed the... what  
does that say? Alligator?

He laughs and shrugs it off, then looks around with paranoia.

LEO (CONT'D)  
I would not put that past her.

Suddenly - a crash from the kitchen - pots clattering.

Leo goes on guard. He looks around for something to use as a weapon, finding only a decorative statue of a giraffe.

He goes to investigate.

**EXT. LEO'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Ellie is trying to open the locked front door but with no success. She looks around and spies a nearby window that is partially open, so she goes to it, pushes it open, and attempts to get through but gets stuck.

ELLIE

So much for a relaxing getaway to clear my head.

She struggles to get free but to no avail.

Sam's truck pulls into the driveway and he gets out, seeing the legs sticking out of the window. He goes to investigate.

**INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

There is more noise from the kitchen as Leo approaches with the giraffe held high. He enters the kitchen with drama to find Matt there cooking.

Matt looks up and sees him, taking a spoon out of the pot and approaching him with it to taste.

MATT

Oh, hey. Are you Leo? Taste this.  
(puts spoon in Leo's  
mouth)  
What do you think? Too salty?  
Yeah, that's what I thought. Hey,  
what's with the giraffe?

Matt heads back to the stove. Leo is confused.

**INT. LEO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Sam enters the house using a spare key, turns on the lights and finds the other half of Ellie hanging in the window.

SAM

How's it going?

ELLIE

Not bad. You?

SAM  
Good. Whatcha up to?

ELLIE  
Just... hanging around.

SAM  
Breaking and entering?

ELLIE  
No, not breaking, just... entering.

SAM  
A distinction you can explain to  
the police.

ELLIE  
I'm staying here but I lost the key  
and...

SAM  
Oh! You're Leo's friend. Ellie.

ELLIE  
Yes!

SAM  
The one that's going to help me  
with Vivaldi string quartet.

ELLIE  
Right! Wait... what?

We hold on a very confused Ellie who is stuck in more ways  
than one.

**END ACT ONE**

ACT TWO

**EXT. LEO'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Establishing Leo's house.

**INT. LEO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

A now unstuck Ellie is talking to Sam.

ELLIE

I'm sorry, who are you again and what about Vivaldi?

SAM

I'm Sam Perkins. I'm a tour guide. Mainly nature walks.

ELLIE

And you run into a lot of classical music out in the woods?

SAM

It's for the PIANO Ball.  
(off her confusion)  
The Pinewood Institute's Autumn Neighborhood Outreach - it's a fundraiser for the local music conservatory. I volunteered to help out. Then wound up getting put in charge.

ELLIE

Okay, and Leo said I would...

SAM

Most of the music is from students at the institute, but there's a string quartet of musicians from the community. Leo told me you used to work in music.

ELLIE

Yeah, used to, but I don't anymore.

SAM

Right, yeah. He said you did event planning until you got...

ELLIE

He told you I got fired, didn't he?

SAM

He may have mentioned...

ELLIE

I was very good at my job.

SAM

I'm sure. The getting fired part was just a misunderstanding.

ELLIE

Let me guess. He also said I wish I was still doing music.

SAM

(looks at watch)  
You know, I really should...

ELLIE

I don't miss music at all.

SAM

Because you liked planning events.

ELLIE

Exactly.

SAM

Did I mention I'm planning an event?

ELLIE

I walked right into that one, didn't I?

(off his nod)

Look, I'm just here to relax and clear my head so I can figure out what I want to do next. I need to not have any... distractions.

SAM

I get it. Well... if you need anything while you're here, just give me a shout. I live next door.

ELLIE

So, I could literally shout?

SAM

You could. But it might attract bears, so...

(off her look)

I'm kidding. But maybe send a text anyway. Number's on the brochure.

Sam hands her a brochure for his tour company.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Enjoy your stay.

Sam exits while Ellie looks at the brochure, then at her surroundings. She looks unsure about all of this.

**EXT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT**

Establishing Ellie's building.

**INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Leo and Matt are standing in the kitchen.

LEO  
Ellie said you could do what?

MATT  
I'm having a dinner here in three weeks for potential investors for a restaurant. She said I could use the kitchen to do some test meals.

LEO  
I'm going to be here working on my next novel and I'm on a deadline.

MATT  
Oh, yeah! You're her writer friend. You do those "Highcourt Mansion" novels?

LEO  
"Highbridge Manor."

MATT  
Right. I haven't read them, sorry.

LEO  
That's okay. If I don't come up with some brilliant ideas soon, there may not be any more so you'll have time to catch up.

MATT  
Chicago is a great place to find brilliant ideas. Fall is one of the best times to explore the city.

LEO

I need to focus on my novel. And to do that I need peace and quiet.

MATT

Then why did you come to Chicago?

LEO

I'm starting to wonder that myself.

MATT

Listen, I understand. I'll do my test meals in my kitchen at home.

(looks at kitchen)

Which you could fit about four of in this kitchen.

LEO

I'm sorry...

MATT

That's okay. I'll just clean up and get out of your hair. Good luck with the book.

LEO

Good luck with the cooking.

MATT

Thanks. Oh, and get out and see Chicago okay? It's a pretty magical place this time of year.

Matt starts cleaning up the mess. Leo stands there for a moment feeling a little guilty then exits.

**EXT. LEO'S HOUSE - DAY**

Establishing Leo's house.

**INT. LEO'S HOUSE - LEO'S BEDROOM - DAY**

Ellie enters the bedroom wearing a long bath towel after taking a shower. She looks at the clothes she was wearing the night before - her only clothes, which are ripped and stained from the window adventure. She looks at the closet.

She opens the closet to reveal Leo's clothes.

ELLIE

I'm sure he won't mind.

She starts looking at the clothes.

**INT. LEO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Ellie enters the living room wearing what are obviously Leo's clothes with a mug of coffee and one of Leo's books. She settles down into a big comfy chair, takes a deep breath.

ELLIE

Relax. Clear your head.

She opens the book to read but before she does she notices that there are some leaves under the window that she crawled through the night before. A look of consternation follows.

**INT. LEO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Ellie is vacuuming, humming along as music plays. As she finishes, she glances in the next room and shrugs, moving on to vacuum in there as well.

**EXT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY**

Establishing Ellie's building.

**INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Leo is sitting at a desk in front of his laptop computer, which is open to a blank page. He takes a minute to make sure everything is "just so" - straightening the things on the desk, the computer, his cup of coffee.

He takes a deep breath and poises his fingers over the keyboard and starts typing.

**EXT. HIGHBRIDGE MANOR - DAY**

Isabelle comes running out of the house, followed closely by Jack who stops her.

JACK

Isabelle! Where are you going?

ISABELLE

I need to find something, Jack!  
I'm so...

JACK

What?

ISABELLE

I'm so... hungry. Is there  
anyplace good to eat around here?

QUICK CUT TO:

**INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Leo shakes his head and goes to a search page on the computer to look for nearby restaurants.

**INT. LEO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

The vacuuming complete, Ellie looks around the house, satisfied. She sits back down in the chair, takes a deep breath and tries to get comfy. But she can't so...

**EXT. LEO'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - DAY**

Ellie sits in a rocking chair on the front porch, which has a spectacular view of the surrounding woods. She has a moment of what seems like she's going to be comfortable here, but then starts squirming, clearly not.

She stands and inspects the chair, looking for something wrong. Her frustration is evident as she literally shakes it.

Sam walks up and watches, clearly amused. Ellie slowly realizes that she has an audience and stops.

SAM

What did that chair ever do to you?

ELLIE

Crawling through the window last night was its idea.

SAM

I've got an axe at my place if you really want to show it who's boss.

ELLIE

Do you have a big blue ox named Babe, too?

SAM

Lumberjack jokes. Well done.

ELLIE

I just... I can't get comfortable in any of Leo's furniture.

SAM

Looks like you're comfortable in his clothes.

ELLIE

(more embarrassed)

Oh, yeah. The airline lost my luggage. Last I heard it's in Miami. I hope it's having fun.

SAM

I've heard the beaches are nice.

ELLIE

Maybe it'll go dancing.

SAM

Listen, about last night... I just wanted to apologize for putting you on the spot. I thought Leo had talked to you about the PIANO Ball.

ELLIE

It's okay. And I'm sorry I can't help out. I need a brain break, you know?

SAM

Well, hey... if you're looking for a good way to clear your head, do you want to go for a walk?

ELLIE

(beat - taken aback)

Uh... with you?

SAM

Yeah. And like ten other people.  
(off her confusion)  
I'm a tour guide?

ELLIE

(fully embarrassed)

Oh! Right. Of course. I thought... never mind. Walking. Walking would be good. Yes, let's go walk.

Ellie goes off the porch and walks off out of sight. Sam smiles and doesn't move.

SAM

(calls out)

We're actually going the other way.

There is a beat and Ellie walks back into view then off the other way. Sam smiles and follows.

**EXT. HOTEL - DAY**

Establishing the hotel where Matt works.

**INT. HOTEL - KITCHEN - DAY**

Matt is busy at work when a waiter approaches.

WAITER

Chef, a guy out there want to know if he can get the Turkey Banh Mi without the pickled vegetables or the vinegar, on regular bread.

MATT

So... he wants a turkey sandwich?

WAITER

Pretty much.

MATT

Who is this monster?

Matt follows the waiter to the door into the restaurant. The waiter points.

**INT. HOTEL - RESTAURANT - DAY**

Leo is sitting at a table when Matt approaches.

MATT

Your first meal in Chicago and you want a plain turkey sandwich? No. Come with me.

A surprised Leo looks around, then reluctantly follows Matt to the kitchen.

**INT. HOTEL - KITCHEN - DAY**

Matt has put a dish of food on the prep counter in front of Leo. Leo looks at it suspiciously.

LEO

I'm not a very adventurous eater.

MATT

I kinda got that. Just try it.

LEO

What is it?

MATT

Kefta tagine. It's a Moroccan dish with lamb meatballs, tomato sauce, and poached egg.

Matt holds out a fork. Leo is wary but tries it - and obviously likes it.

LEO

That's not bad.

(off Matt's look)

Okay, it's delicious. I didn't see this on the menu.

Matt looks around to make sure they are out of earshot.

MATT

The hotel likes to play it safe, but every now and then I slip in a special when they're not paying attention.

LEO

Is this the kind of food you want to do at your restaurant?

MATT

That's a great question. I guess I'm still looking for inspiration.

LEO

I guess I can identify with that.

MATT

Oh, yeah. You said something about trying to come up with a brilliant idea for your novel?

LEO

Brilliant ideas are elusive. The delete key on my computer has been replaced several times because of overuse.

MATT

Remind me to tell you about the great mint-mustard chicken massacre of 2021.

The two of them share a laugh. Leo considers.

LEO

I'll tell you what... If you promise to make me more of this you can use Ellie's kitchen.

MATT

You let me use that kitchen and I'll make you lifetime supply. I'll ship it back to Canada.  
(hand out)  
Deal!

They shake on it.

**EXT. PINWOOD - PARK - OVERLOOK - DAY**

Sam leads a group of people, including Ellie, up a trail.

SAM

A lot of people equate autumn with an ending... they've even written songs about it. But I always think of it like a great love. It bloomed bright in the spring, became a summer of romance, and in the fall it becomes... familiar, but in a good way. The thing you know will always be there. Autumn reminds us that the tree lives on even though the leaves fall... I think that's why they burn so brightly on the way down.

The trail curves to an overlook and suddenly there are trees ablaze with color in a wide valley in front of them. The group gasps and reaches for their cameras.

Ellie just stops and stares, bowled over by the beauty of it.

While the group is busy snapping pictures, Sam goes to Ellie.

SAM (CONT'D)

Not bad, huh?

ELLIE

Yeah... that stuff about love...

SAM

I meant the leaves, but yes. I used to talk about photosynthesis and chlorophyll but I found that a really good metaphor sells more tickets. Fall is my busiest time of year.

ELLIE

What's it like to work out here every day?

SAM

I get to have this as my office. That's hard to beat.

ELLIE

I don't know. My last cubicle had a view of the copy machine, so...

SAM

Leo told me you were a concert pianist. What were you doing working in a cubicle?

ELLIE

The bank wouldn't let me play a Beethoven concerto in exchange for my car payment.

SAM

Yeah, they're sticklers about those kinds of things, aren't they?

ELLIE

But it's okay. I don't miss it.

Even Ellie knows that isn't true. Sam doesn't push.

SAM

I understand. I used to have a much bigger company. We were actually the biggest tour operator in the region. But now I'm just a one-man band, so to speak.

ELLIE

And you don't miss it?

SAM

Not really. I guess losing everything makes you appreciate what you have a little more.

That turn of phrase resonates with Ellie.

SAM (CONT'D)

Having said that, doing everything by myself does keep me very, very busy. Sure wish I had some help.

ELLIE

(sighs)

Fine. I'll give you a hand with event coordination until Leo gets back.

SAM

Most of that is done. What I really need help with is the music.

ELLIE

Oh... uh, no. Sorry. I don't do music anymore.

SAM

You don't do event coordinating anymore, either.

(off her look)

Okay, great. I'll take whatever I can get.

(smiles)

I knew the trees would do the trick.

ELLIE

What? You brought me out here to beguile me with fall leaves?

Sam walks back toward the group, smiling, his arms wide.

SAM

I just asked you if you wanted to take a walk.

Sam goes back to the tour group, leaving Ellie to be both annoyed and a little bit impressed by his gambit.

**END ACT TWO**

**ACT THREE****EXT. PINWOOD STREET - DAY**

Ellie is walking on a street, wearing another cobbled together outfit of Leo's clothes, talking on her phone. She is looking around and at a piece of paper, clearly lost.

ELLIE

The next thing I know, I'm agreeing to help with event planning.

**EXT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Leo is at the desk in front of the computer on his phone. We begin intercutting between them.

LEO

He took you to the outlook and did the whole autumn is a metaphor for love thing, didn't he?

ELLIE

How did you know?

LEO

Because I wrote it for him!

ELLIE

Leo!

LEO

He fixed my furnace. I owed him.

ELLIE

Well, now you owe me. I'm supposed to meet him at...

(looks at paper)

I'm at Maple and 4th Street now. Am I anywhere near 612 Evergreen?  
(off his laughter)

What?

LEO

Nothing. Just keep going another couple blocks. You'll see it.

ELLIE

This is all your fault. You told him I'd help him without asking me.

LEO

You told your friend Matt he could use the kitchen without telling me.

ELLIE

Oh, yeah, sorry. Are you getting any writing done?

LEO

I'm still looking for inspiration.

ELLIE

You went to Chicago to try something different. Please tell me you haven't been sitting in front of the computer the whole time.

LEO

Not... the whole time. But okay, you went there to relax and clear your head to figure out what to do next. Have you done that?

ELLIE

I can't relax in your furniture.

LEO

Maybe that's not the furniture's fault.

Ellie comes around a corner and sees where she is going - the Music Store.

ELLIE

Is that... *that's* 612 Evergreen Street?! Leo...

LEO

(laughs)  
Have fun!

Leo disconnects the call and we stay with him for a moment. He looks at the computer, his hands poised above the keys.

**EXT. HIGHBRIDGE MANOR - DAY**

Jack and Isabelle are standing in front of the house looking bored. Jack glances at his watch and then at Isabelle. She shrugs and shakes her head as if to say, "I don't know."

**INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Leo starts to type. Then he stops. Deletes. Types. Deletes. This vicious cycle continues until the doorbell rings. Leo looks up toward the heavens and mouths a silent "thank you."

He gets up, crosses to, and opens the door to find Matt.

MATT

I don't know what to cook.

LEO

Like, right now or... ever?

MATT

Both. I know I said I was going to use Ellie's kitchen this morning, but I spent hours staring at *my* stove, putting pans on then taking them off, pre-heating the oven then shutting it off... I sound crazy.

LEO

Actually, I've had a very similar morning. Just with less cookware.

MATT

Want to avoid work for awhile?

Leo looks back at the computer.

**EXT. HIGHBRIDGE MANOR - DAY**

Jack and Isabelle are still standing in front of the house. They look directly at the camera.

JACK

Oh, just go.

Jack and Isabelle turn and go into the house.

**INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

We cut back to the scene just in time to see Leo and Matt exiting out the front door.

**EXT. MUSIC STORE - DAY**

Establishing the music store.

**INT. MUSIC STORE - DAY**

Ellie comes into the store reluctantly but as soon as she sees all the instruments, including a big piano, she softens. This feels like home to her.

She walks up to the piano and touches it, tempted. Sam comes out and sees her, then approaches.

SAM

That's a beautiful piano.

ELLIE

It really is...

(shakes it off)

Why are we meeting here?

SAM

It's a convenient location.

ELLIE

I see what you're doing. You beguiled me with trees and now you're seducing me with a piano.

SAM

No! There is no ulterior motive.

(beat)

But as long as we're here, do you want to meet the string quartet?

ELLIE

I said I'd help with the event. Chairs. I will order chairs. I'm not doing the music.

SAM

I'm not asking you to. But what's it going to hurt to meet a few people? Come on.

Sam heads toward the rehearsal room. Ellie takes a beat and then follows begrudgingly.

**EXT. CHICAGO STREET - DAY**

Leo and Matt walk down a city street, the crisp autumn day evident in the trees and the people in sweaters and jackets. They are eating Italian beef sandwiches.

LEO

These are delicious.

MATT

Best Italian beef in the city. I want this at my restaurant, but I could never do it this well.

LEO

So what are you going to serve?

MATT

That's the question. There are too many choices. Latin. Pasta. Thai. I love Thai.

LEO

I've never had it.  
(off Matt's shock)  
I've spent most of my life in Pinewood, Canada! The most exciting culinary option we have is Taco Tuesday at the one decent restaurant in town.

MATT

I will never turn down a good taco.

LEO

I didn't say they were good.

MATT

I love Chicago, but there's so much competition. Maybe I can come to Pinewood and show them how to make real tacos.

LEO

We would appreciate that.

MATT

But only if goes in your next book.

LEO

They don't usually serve tacos at Highbridge Manor.

MATT

Have you ever thought about writing something else?

LEO

Sometimes. I never intended to do fifteen of these books, but the first one was so popular and they kept wanting more, so it became... Jack and Isabelle keep me busy.

MATT

But if they weren't... what would you write?

LEO

(a little shy about it)  
I have an idea about architects who compete to design a building.

MATT

Really? We should take a Chicago architecture tour. Maybe that would inspire you.

LEO

Oh... I really need to concentrate on "Highbridge Manor." I don't want to get distracted.

MATT

One man's distraction is another man's inspiration.

Matt smiles questioningly. Leo takes a moment and then smiles also and they head off.

**INT. MUSIC STORE - REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY**

Ellie is with Sam in the rehearsal room in front of Wendy, Beau, Darcy, and Faith who are all seated with instruments.

SAM

Wendy, Darcy, Faith, and Beau... this is Ellie. She is filling in for Leo while he's traveling.

FAITH

(re: clothes)  
That's an interesting ensemble.

ELLIE

Yeah... it's a long story.

DARCY

Are you a writer, too?

ELLIE

No, I'm an event coordinator. I mean, I was. Also a long story.

WENDY

Great. Another person who doesn't know music in charge of music.

ELLIE

No, I'm not in charge of music.  
I'm doing chairs.

SAM

But she does know music. She was a  
concert pianist. Trained at...?

ELLIE

(undersells this)  
Uh... Julliard.

BEAU

Then why are you doing chairs? We  
need help. Or at least I do.

DARCY

Me too. I'm used to having a full  
orchestra around me. But I'm  
really excited to try!

FAITH

I've done this piece before, but  
it's been thirty years. I'm a  
little rusty, to say the least.

WENDY

Well, I've done Vivaldi but not  
this piece. I've tried, but I keep  
falling asleep.

ELLIE

Which concerto are you doing?

SAM

"Autumn" from "The Four Seasons."

ELLIE

Oh! Great choice. It just... it's  
like you close your eyes and you  
can almost see the falling leaves.  
I loved playing that one.

SAM

You did this concerto?

ELLIE

Yeah... but it was a long time ago.

FAITH

If it's less than thirty years,  
you're the expert in the room.

Everyone looks at Ellie expectantly.

**EXT. CHICAGO STREET - DAY**

Music plays as Leo, Matt, and a group of tourists are looking at a building being described by a tour guide.

**EXT. CHICAGO - PARK - DAY**

Leo and Matt are walking through a Chicago park.

LEO

The building with the food hall was beautiful. If I ever write this book, I'm going to use that.

MATT

Yes! You could make it that one of the architects is this young, handsome guy who secretly wants to be the chef at his own restaurant. And of course his name is Matt.

LEO

Naturally.

MATT

Did you always want to be a writer?

LEO

Ever since I was a kid. A teacher in fourth grade made me enter a poetry competition.

MATT

And you won?

LEO

No. The poem I wrote was awful.

MATT

Okay, now I want to hear it.

LEO

I usually have to know someone better before I mortify myself in front of them.

MATT

You're here for two weeks. We've got time. But even though you didn't win, it made you want to write?

LEO

I was hooked. A college buddy worked at a publishing company and he got me my first book deal.

MATT

Where did you come up with the idea for "Highbridge Manor?"

LEO

Pinewood... There's something about it... the people, the nature... You should see it this time of year. It's like... the leaves don't fall, they fly.

Matt sees the look in Leo's eyes - and appreciates it. Leo sees Matt looking and gets a little embarrassed.

LEO (CONT'D)

Anyway, for a long time the books wrote themselves. Until recently.

MATT

Some of the best dishes I come up with happen when I throw away the recipe and try something new.

LEO

Cooking and writing are very different things. Besides, after so many of these books, I kind of only know how to write one way.

MATT

When I make the same dishes every time it gets boring. If you don't try something new, you can miss out on some pretty remarkable things.

We see Leo considering both what Matt said and Matt himself. They head off through the park.

**EXT. MUSIC STORE - DAY**

Establishing the music store.

**INT. MUSIC STORE - REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY**

Ellie watches as Wendy, Beau, Faith, and Darcy are leaving the rehearsal room, obviously not very happy.

ELLIE

I'm sorry... You guys sounded great, though.

They all exit. Sam starts to follow.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

(to Sam)

Couldn't you have done a concerto that I hate? Why did it have to be "Autumn?"

SAM

Because it's... autumn?

(beat)

Listen, don't worry about the music. I'm sure they'll be fine until Leo gets back.

ELLIE

Okay. Yeah, thank you.

SAM

Let me just say goodnight to them and I'll come back and we can talk about chairs.

Ellie smiles and nods as Sam walks off. She looks at the rehearsal piano and then reaches out to plunk out a little bit of the main melody of Vivaldi's "Autumn."

She takes a beat, then sits and starts to play the piece. It's beautiful and she is in her element.

Sam, Wendy, Beau, Faith, and Darcy come back into the room and stand listening, all in awe of Ellie's talent.

Ellie realizes she has an audience and stops suddenly. She looks at the group, who are looking at her with anticipation.

ELLIE

(sighs)

Okay, fine.

The group cheers. Ellie can't believe she agreed to this.

**END ACT THREE**

**ACT FOUR****EXT. MUSIC STORE - NIGHT**

Establishing the music store.

**INT. MUSIC STORE - REHEARSAL ROOM - NIGHT**

Ellie - still wearing Leo's clothes, but adjusting them to her style, is acting as conductor while Wendy, Beau, Darcy, and Faith struggle through "Autumn." It isn't great. They finish and look at Ellie.

ELLIE

Okay. Good job. You know, it's a work in progress.

WENDY

The PIANO Ball is in two and a half weeks. We need a *lot* of progress.

ELLIE

That's what rehearsals are for.

FAITH

Are we going to rehearse twenty-four hours a day? Because that's the only way we're going to be ready in time.

BEAU

It's this piece. Vivaldi did not mess around.

DARCY

It is a little intimidating.

ELLIE

(brainstorm)

Let's try something different. Beau... play something.

BEAU

Like what?

ELLIE

Anything. Whatever you want. Just give me a few seconds of something.

Beau thinks for a moment, then starts to play a snippet of a hip-hop song on his violin. He finishes with a flourish.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Great! I love it. Faith. Go.

Faith thinks and then plays what sounds like country music. Afterward she looks at the surprised group.

FAITH

I grew up on a farm.

ELLIE

Perfect. Darcy.

Darcy launches into a romantic waltz. She finishes.

DARCY

Waltzes are my favorite. They're so romantic.

ELLIE

It was beautiful. Wendy?

WENDY

Pass.

ELLIE

Oh, come on. Just play anything.

WENDY

I get the point. We're all good musicians when we play the stuff we know. But how does that help us with Vivaldi?

ELLIE

(goes to piano)

When I had to do a piece that intimidating me, I had to find a way to get out of my head and back into the music, so this is how I'd start every practice.

Ellie plays a bit of a boogie woogie piece, which segues into a bit of Vivaldi's "Autumn." She finishes to applause.

DARCY

You're so good. Why did you stop?

ELLIE

(beat)

Why don't we try it again?

She returns to face them as conductor and the group gets ready to play.

**EXT. PUMPKIN PATCH - DAY**

Ellie and Sam walk into a pumpkin patch filled with pumpkins, gourds, and other fall festivity.

SAM

You had them play other songs? Did that help?

ELLIE

A little. They still have a long ways to go, but I think Leo will be able to get them there.

SAM

I hope so. The string quartet opens the program, so it has to be a showstopper.

(re: pumpkins)

What do you think?

ELLIE

About pumpkins? They make good pie.

SAM

As decoration for the ball.

ELLIE

Oh, well, you're probably asking the wrong person. I recommended this kind of thing to a client in Chicago and then I got fired.

SAM

Because of pumpkins?

ELLIE

No. But it makes me feel better to believe that. Don't you have people on your committee for this?

SAM

Turns out I'm not great at delegating.

ELLIE

You did a pretty good job with me.

SAM

I trust you.

ELLIE

(surprised)

Why?

SAM

(beat)

Leo vouched for you. That's good enough for me.

ELLIE

Have you been neighbors long?

SAM

Yeah, like fifteen years. Leo came to me to help research the nature parts of one of his books. And I must say, having a writer next door has come in handy.

ELLIE

"The tree lives on even though the leaves fall..."

SAM

(laughs)

I'm good with nature, he's good with words. It was the difference that helped my first company grow so fast. Too fast as it turns out. I think it was the helicopter that did us in.

ELLIE

You bought a helicopter?

SAM

Seemed like a good idea at the time. But I'm going to do it right with this new company. Build slow. Re-establish a good reputation.

ELLIE

Prove yourself with pumpkins?

SAM

And great music. It's too bad you're won't be here to see it.

ELLIE

I need to get back to Chicago.

SAM

For what?

ELLIE

(beat - changes subject)

So... pumpkins!

She heads off to look at the selection.

**EXT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY**

Establishing Ellie's building.

**INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Leo is at the computer, typing in fits and starts, clearly not happy with what he's doing.

Matt comes in from the kitchen.

MATT

Hey, sorry to interrupt.

LEO

That's okay. You're not interrupting much.

MATT

I've been trying a bunch of different ingredients for this soup I want to make and I think I fried my taste buds. Can I borrow yours?

LEO

Do I get a free lunch out of it?

MATT

Yes. But we have to go to the farmer's market first. I'm out of... everything.

Leo looks at his computer - he really should work.

MATT (CONT'D)

Sure. Let's go.

Leo shuts his computer screen and gets up.

**EXT. CHICAGO FARMER'S MARKET - DAY**

Leo and Matt are walking through a farmer's market with stalls filled with the fresh flavors of autumn harvest. Matt gets a sample from a vendor and holds it out to Leo.

LEO

What is it?

MATT

You tell me.

Leo takes a bite cautiously.

LEO

It's kind of like if a tomato woke up on the wrong side of the bed.

MATT

See? This is why you're a writer. It's a tomatillo. It's sort of a tomato's less sweet cousin. Too sour for the soup, though.

Matt examines a loaf of bread.

MATT (CONT'D)

Maybe nice crusty bread with the soup? That might work. I don't bake, though...

LEO

There's a difference between cooking and baking?

MATT

Huge difference. Baking is about precise measurements - it's almost a science. Cooking is more about going with the flow. Adding a bit of this and a bit of that until you come up with the perfect recipe.

LEO

This is why I usually order out.

MATT

My ex-husband was the same way.

LEO

You were married?

MATT

Yeah. We split up a few years ago. Nobody's fault... we're better as friends. I'm sure you know what that's like.

LEO

Not really.  
(off Matt's surprise)  
Small town, limited dating pool.

MATT

Don't feel bad. Even when the pool is bigger, you still throw back most of what you catch.

LEO

It doesn't really bother me. I've gotten used to being single.

MATT

Getting used to something and liking it are two different things.

That gives Leo pause - he hadn't thought of it that way.

They stop at another vendor and Matt gets a sample.

MATT (CONT'D)

Oh, here. Describe this.

Leo tries it.

LEO

That's good - spicy. Cranberry? It's like a cranberry that wants to be the main dish instead of letting the turkey take all the glory.

MATT

(laughs)

You're very good at this. It's got chipotle in it. Goes great with my mom's carnitas.

LEO

Family recipe?

MATT

Yeah. She's an amazing cook. We've been having these huge family meals almost every weekend since I was a kid. Tamales, paella... the kitchen on a Sunday afternoon was always my favorite place to be. The smells, the flavors; lots of laughter.

LEO

It sounds fantastic.

MATT

You should come. I told my mom that I met you and she freaked out. She loves your books.

LEO

That's very nice, but if she ever wants to read another one, I have to work.

MATT

Sure. I get it.  
(gets another sample)  
One more...

Leo takes a bite.

LEO

Mmm... a pumpkin fell in love with a chestnut tree?

MATT

Red kuri squash and that is exactly right. I know you said you only know how to write one thing, but when my restaurant is a huge success, will you ghost write my cookbook?

(smiles - to vendor)

Hi. Can I get this, please?

Matt goes to buy the squash from the vendor. We can see Leo's gears turning.

**EXT. HIGHBRIDGE MANOR - DAY**

Jack and Isabelle are standing outside the manor.

JACK

Isabelle... This can't be the end of our story.

ISABELLE

Maybe it's not the end... Maybe it's just time to tell a new story.

JACK

I don't know how to do that.

Isabelle looks out at the camera.

ISABELLE

You're never going to know if you don't try.

Jack looks at the camera, also.

JACK

Good luck.

They both smile.

**INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Leo is at the computer staring at the screen. He takes a deep breath...

He types something and we see it...

"BUILDING US" a novel by Leo Carpenter.

Leo pauses for a moment... a little freaked out, but then he starts typing... slowly at first, then picking up speed as he gets lost in what he is writing.

**EXT. MUSIC STORE - NIGHT**

Establishing the music store.

**INT. MUSIC STORE - REHEARSAL ROOM - NIGHT**

Ellie is with Wendy, Darcy, Beau, and Faith who are sitting with their instruments. Sam sits on a stool in the back.

DARCY

Will you play that part with us?

Ellie hesitates, then sits at the piano.

ELLIE

Here, we go... one, two, three...

Ellie accompanies the group and it's better. They stop.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

See? You're getting it.

BEAU

We sound better when you play with us. It covers up our mistakes.

FAITH

We could add piano. It's not written that way, but...

DARCY

Yeah! Ellie you should join us!

ELLIE

(there's a story here)  
I don't play for people anymore.

WENDY

Besides, she won't be here for the concert, remember? I don't suppose the writer can play the piano?

ELLIE

You could find someone else.

BEAU

We were just starting to make some progress.

SAM

Guys, it's late, so let's call it a night. We'll talk to Leo when he gets back and we'll see what we can figure out, okay?

Wendy, Darcy, Beau, and Faith get up, taking their instruments as they walk toward the door, passing Ellie.

Everyone exits except for Wendy. She stops at Ellie, plants her cello, and plays a few bars of what sounds like folk music. After she finishes...

ELLIE

That's beautiful. What is that?

WENDY

My family is Algonquin - it's an indigenous song that my dad played when I was growing up. It's what I've used to get out of my head.

(beat)

So, you know... thanks.

Wendy hurries out with her cello. Ellie looks at Sam.

ELLIE

Did you put them up to that?

SAM

I'm just sitting here!

Ellie sighs, obviously conflicted.

**END ACT FOUR**

**ACT FIVE****EXT. PINWOOD INSTITUTE - PARKING LOT - DAY**

Sam's truck pulls into a parking space. Sam and Ellie - now settling in to her adaptations of Leo's outfits - get out. Sam is looking at a checklist.

SAM

After we pick up the brochures here, I have to call the caterer, approve the program design, double check the VIP list... there is too much to do in two weeks.

ELLIE

Do we have to have the delegating conversation again?

Sam gives a resigned shrug and they start walking.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

I'm here one more week. I can help.

SAM

You should focus on the quartet.

ELLIE

The rehearsal this morning went better but Vivaldi is not easy. It's like learning a foreign language.

SAM

Was it like that for you?

ELLIE

No. Sometimes I hear a piece of music and I just connect. It becomes a part of me. Or maybe I'm a part of it. That sounds dumb.

SAM

No, I get it. It's how I feel when I'm outside. Connected.

As they approach the front doors of a building we have not yet identified, they hear violin music, laughter, and cheers from nearby. They exchange a glance and go to investigate.

As they do, we see where they are at - a sign says PINWOOD INSTITUTE OF MUSIC.

**EXT. PINWOOD INSTITUTE - LAWN - DAY**

A group of students are outside on the grassy lawn under a canopy of trees and their leaves of blazing autumnal colors.

As Ellie and Sam approach, they see two of the students engaged in the violin version of a rap battle - one plays something and the spectators cheer, then the second plays and there are more cheers.

Ellie and Sam watch, joining in on the laughter and cheers as leaves fall to the ground under the clear blue sky.

ELLIE

See what I mean? That what connecting to music looks like.

SAM

Can I ask... why did you quit?

ELLIE

Rent, food, clothes. Why do I have to keep explaining this to people?  
(off his look)

After Julliard, I played with an orchestra for years. Then I toured with a couple of chamber music groups. Traveled all over the world. Met someone. Fell in love. Played less because of it. Fell out of love.

SAM

Been there.

ELLIE

Anyway, after that I auditioned for an orchestra in Philadelphia and was told by the conductor that I was playing like music was a job instead of a passion. It kinda... it got in my head. I can't play in front of people anymore.

SAM

You've played in rehearsal.

ELLIE

Well, that's like a job, I guess. It doesn't matter if I'm passionate or not. But up on a stage? In front of an audience? No way.

SAM

So, you went into event planning?

ELLIE

No, first I went advertising and by that I mean fetching coffee for people who did advertising. Then it was an accounting firm, a lawyer's office, and a day spa. Coffee, coffee, mineral water.

SAM

Nothing stuck?

ELLIE

They were good jobs...

SAM

But not a passion.

ELLIE

About a year ago my sister was looking to move to the suburbs and rent her place out so she said, "move to Chicago, my friend can get you a job doing events at a hotel."

SAM

And the rest is history.

ELLIE

That job certainly is.

SAM

My two cents? I've heard you play. That conductor obviously wouldn't know passion if it wore a name tag. Maybe you just needed a little push.

Ellie considers this for a moment, then shakes it off.

ELLIE

We should probably go get those brochures. Your to-do list isn't getting any shorter.

Ellie heads off. Sam takes a moment and then follows.

**EXT. PADILLA FAMILY HOUSE - DAY**

Establishing a nice but modest house in a working class neighborhood of Chicago.

Leo and Matt walk up to the front door.

MATT

Are you sure you want to do this?  
My family can be... a lot.

LEO

I think I can handle it.

MATT

What about your deadline?

LEO

I'm actually making some headway on something new. Although, to be honest, I'm not exactly sure what I'm doing. It's different than anything I've ever written... and a little scary.

MATT

Vampires?

LEO

Something like that. But it's the first time I've felt this excited about writing in a long time.

MATT

That's great! But if it's not "Highbridge Manor," don't tell my mother. She will lock you in the basement and make you write another Jack and Isabelle story.

The door to the house opens to reveal Matt's mother, VAL (60s, energetic).

VAL

What are you doing out here?

MATT

Hi, Mom.

VAL

Come in, come in, come in!

Val hurries them in the house.

**INT. PADILLA FAMILY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY**

The kitchen lives up to Matt's hype, filled with people, laughter, and food.

Leo sits at the table with several people including Val, while Matt is cooking. Val hands Leo one of his own books.

VAL

I only have three more for you to autograph.

MATT

Ma! Leave him alone.

VAL

Matteo! Hush. Now, Leo, tell me... in the last book, Jack's brother Constantine went to prison for insider trading. But he's going to get out, right? He's going to escape or something?

Leo looks around, leans in, and whispers into Val's ear.

VAL (CONT'D)

(gasp)  
I knew it!

While Leo and Val share this secret, Matt watches, smiling.

**INT. PADILLA FAMILY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY**

Awhile later, Leo and Matt mix ingredients into bowls as Matt tries to teach Leo some Spanish.

MATT

Torta...

LEO

Torta...

MATT

Ahogada. It's a sandwich with confit pork, chiles, hot sauce.

LEO

Torta Ahogada.

VAL

(as she walks by)  
He doesn't need to be able to say it to eat it.

She walks off as Leo and Matt laugh and keep mixing.

**EXT. PADILLA FAMILY HOUSE - DAY**

Leo is on the front stoop of the Padilla house as the festivities continue inside. Matt comes out to join him, carrying a slice of cake.

MATT  
Needed a break?

LEO  
No. Your family is great. I was just thinking about the new book.

MATT  
We need to get you home so you can get back to it. But first, you have to try this - Pastel de Elote - sweet corn cake with caramel.

LEO  
(skeptical)  
Corn in a cake?

MATT  
It can be good if done right.

LEO  
There's a right way?

MATT  
Just try it.

LEO  
Okay, I've been very adventurous with the things you've made me taste, but I'm not eating cake with corn.

MATT  
You're not jumping off a building. It's cake.

Matt holds out the plate. Leo takes it then sets it aside.

LEO  
I'll save it for later.

MATT  
Ya big chicken.

LEO  
I thought you said you couldn't bake.

MATT

I said I *don't* bake. But unlike certain people, I'm willing to take a risk every now and then.

LEO

This is another family recipe you've made a million times, right?

MATT

I keep coming back to the classics.

LEO

Why are you spending all this time experimenting with different types of food when it's obvious this is what you love?

MATT

Just because I love it doesn't mean it's right for me. Or for Chicago.

LEO

If there was a restaurant in Pinewood serving the food we had for dinner, you'd have a line out the door all year round.

MATT

I don't think I could handle the commute. Besides, it would break my heart if I made Pastel de Elote and nobody ate it.

Leo sighs then picks up the plate. He takes a bite. He chews... swallows... and smiles.

LEO

Okay, you changed my mind.

Matt whoops with delight, jumping up and down and pumping his fist like his team just won the big game.

MATT

Yes! Yes! Bow down and worship me for I am the Sweet Corn Cake King!

LEO

I don't think that sounds as good as you think it does.

MATT

(arms wide)  
Sweet Corn Cake King!

Matt pulls Leo into a hug and kisses him on the cheek, then walks back into the house crowing over his victory.

Leo is more than a little taken aback by that and it's obvious that he is starting to feel the feels for Matt.

**EXT. EVENT VENUE - DAY**

Establishing an event venue in Pinewood, where the charity ball will be taking place.

**INT. EVENT VENUE - DAY**

Ellie and Sam are in a banquet hall which has big windows looking out toward the bucolic surroundings.

They are at a table counting paper cut-outs of leaves. They finish and look at each other.

SAM

What did you get this time?

ELLIE

136. You?

SAM

119. How are we coming up with different numbers ever time we count these?

ELLIE

Can't we just round it off? That's what I do when I'm balancing my checkbook.

SAM

Each one will have a name of a donor on it. We have to make sure we have enough.

They both sigh and start counting again.

SAM (CONT'D)

We have to get this done. I have a tour in forty-five minutes.

ELLIE

Forty-five, forty-six... stop saying numbers!

SAM

Sorry.

ELLIE

Is this another autumn walk?

SAM

'Tis the season. I do the snowy pines in the winter, maple syrup tapping in the spring, the greenery of summer, but autumn is all about the leaves.

ELLIE

Aren't you worried you're going to get leaf overload?

SAM

Never. But I do need to diversify at some point if I want to grow. It's just hard to take that leap again.

ELLIE

Maybe you just need a little push.

SAM

Maybe. Although it would help if I knew what I was being pushed to.

ELLIE

Okay, well, let's think. How do you make nature connect to people who might not get it?

(has an idea)

What about connecting it to other interests like... food - picnic tours? Or maybe music. You could have songs playing that relate to the things you're showing your group. Trees, waterfalls, rivers?

SAM

That's not a bad idea.

ELLIE

I have them every now and then. Not for myself.

Sam takes a finger and gently "pushes" Ellie.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

If only it were that easy.

Ellie stops as she gets a brainstorm.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Wait... maybe it is that easy.  
I've been trying to get the string  
quartet to connect to the music but  
I forgot to explain what the music  
is connected to.

SAM

I don't understand.

Ellie smiles and takes the pile of paper cutout and tosses them in the air - they rain down like leaves.

The two of them have a moment, laughing as their eyes meet and the paper leaves fall around them.

Sam is the first to break the spell.

SAM (CONT'D)

You know we still have to count  
these, right?

ELLIE

(looks around)

I don't suppose you have a rake?

They start cleaning up, stealing little glances at each other as they do. We FOCUS on the fake leaves on the ground and...

DISSOLVE TO:

**EXT. PINWOOD - PARK - OVERLOOK - DAY**

Start TIGHT on real leaves on the ground then PULL BACK to reveal Wendy, Beau, Darcy, and Faith with their instruments as they walk up to the overlook we saw earlier - the valley with the beautiful trees in front of them.

They are agog at the sight.

Ellie walks up with Sam to join them. Sam leans over to whisper to Ellie.

SAM

Now I understand.

ELLIE

Let's hope they do, too.

Ellie looks at the musicians as they look out to the scenery.

**END ACT FIVE**

**ACT SIX****EXT. PINWOOD - PARK - DAY**

Picking up where we left off, Ellie is standing in front Wendy, Beau, Darcy, and Faith.

There are four chairs and a portable keyboard arranged in a circle. Sam stands off to the side.

FAITH

What are we doing out here?

ELLIE

Connecting to the music. Or rather connecting the music to what the music is about.

BEAU

Which is...

ELLIE

Autumn! It's literally right there in the title. And it's literally all around us. Look!

She points to the trees and colorful leaves around them.

WENDY

Okay, it's pretty, but I don't understand how this is going to help us play better.

ELLIE

Grab a seat and I'll explain.

They all sit as she takes a seat at the keyboard.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

When I was having you do those other songs as warm-ups, I was trying to distract you so you weren't intimidated by piece you were about to play.

DARCY

But now you want us to be intimidated?

ELLIE

No, I want you to pay attention.

She motions to Sam who steps forward.

ELLIE (CONT'D)  
Listen... look around... and join  
in when you want to.

Ellie begins to play Vivaldi's "Autumn" on the keyboard as Sam reads from a poem.

SAM  
The Autumn by Elizabeth Barrett  
Browning. "Go, sit upon the lofty  
hill... And turn your eyes  
around... Where waving woods and  
waters wild... Do hymn an autumn  
sound..."

As he reads, Wendy, Faith, Darcy, and Beau listen to the music and look around at the scenery.

SAM (CONT'D)  
"The summer sun is faint on them...  
the summer flowers depart... Sit  
still, as all transform'd to  
stone... except your musing heart."

Darcy is the first... she picks up her instrument and begins to play along with Ellie - sweet and clear.

Beau starts playing next... then Faith... and then finally Wendy. They sound better than we have heard them so far.

During this, Ellie and Sam exchange encouraging smiles and glances - the connection between them becoming obvious as well.

**EXT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT**

Establishing Ellie's building.

**INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

The music continues as we see Leo hard at work at the novel, clearly into it.

**EXT. EVENT VENUE - DAY**

Establishing the event venue.

**INT. EVENT VENUE - DAY**

Ellie and Sam walk into the event venue, which is being set up for the event with tables, decorations, and more. They are accompanied by Wendy, Darcy, Beau, and Faith.

DARCY

It's bigger than I thought it was going to be.

BEAU

Yeah. I usually only perform to my cell phone.

ELLIE

You guys are great. There's nothing to be nervous about.

WENDY

Says the person who's going to be 500 miles away.

ELLIE

I know. I'm sorry I won't be here.

FAITH

It's not like you were going to be performing with us.

DARCY

You should, though! Oh! Yes, stay and play with us.

ELLIE

No, I don't... We've talked about this. I don't perform anymore.

WENDY

But you should. You're... I mean, you're pretty good or whatever.

ELLIE

Thank you. But you guys don't need me. I wouldn't... I mean, I...

Sam sees that Ellie is drowning a bit, so he steps in.

SAM

Why don't you all go check out the stage while Ellie and I finalize a few things.

Wendy, Darcy, Beau, and Faith head toward the stage while Sam motions for Ellie to join him outside.

**EXT. EVENT VENUE - DAY**

Ellie and Sam are outside the event venue surrounded by the beautiful wooded scenery.

SAM

Are you okay? You looked a little seasick in there. Which is weird because we're not on a boat.

ELLIE

I'm okay. I just needed some air. The idea of playing the piano with them at the concert made me...

SAM

Want to do it?

ELLIE

No! No. Uh-uh. Nope. Not even a little bit. Zero interest. Less than zero interest. Like negative amounts of interest.

Ellie takes a beat while Sam looks at her smiling. Her shoulders sag with a sigh.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Okay, fine. Yes. A part of me wants to play.

SAM

Do I need to push you again?

ELLIE

No. Because a bigger part of me doesn't want to open that door again.

SAM

Why would that be so bad?

ELLIE

I feel more... connected than I have in a long time. Certainly more so than any of the jobs I had that I...

SAM

Hated?

ELLIE

I didn't hate them. I just...

SAM

I bet you could have been an incredible coordinator if you had been passionate about events or bicycles or whatever else it you were coordinating. But you weren't. You care about music. It doesn't matter what that conductor said, you're passionate about music.

ELLIE

Passion doesn't pay the rent.

Ellie shrugs and walks off, frustrated. Sam doesn't know how to fix this.

**EXT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY**

Establishing Ellie's building.

**INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Leo is at the computer, completely in the zone as he works on the novel. There is a knock on the door and Leo tears himself away to go answer it. Matt is there holding out a piece of paper.

MATT

I present to you... the menu.

LEO

For your investor dinner?

MATT

No... for the restaurant.

LEO

You finally decided?

(looks at paper)

Tamales. Carnitas. Torta Ahogada.

(smiles)

Pastel de Elote.

MATT

You were right. This is the kind of food I love and it's what I should be serving at my restaurant.

LEO

I think it's perfect. You've got at least one investor on board.

MATT

Oh, no. Leo, stop. I didn't show you this because...

LEO

I know.

MATT

Leo, I can't let you do that.

LEO

Why not?

MATT

Because I don't take money from people that I...

The two of them look at each other - it's pretty clear what Matt is about to say, but he pulls away from it.

MATT (CONT'D)

People that I'm friends with.

Leo knows what Matt was going to say as well and maybe is a little disappointed that he didn't.

MATT (CONT'D)

So, anyway... thank you.

LEO

For what?

MATT

Inspiring me.

LEO

You inspired me, too. The book... it wouldn't be happening if it weren't for you.

They look at each other again and this time the connection is even more obvious. Matt takes a beat then leans in for a kiss. Leo looks like he is ready to kiss Matt, too, but at the last second pulls back.

LEO (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

MATT

No, that's okay. I...

LEO

I'm going home tomorrow...

MATT

I understand. I mean, I... I wish you could stay for another week for the investor dinner. It would be nice to have a... friend there.

(beat)

I should get back to work.

LEO

(extends hand)

Me, too. Well... it was nice meeting you.

MATT

(beat - shakes hand)

You, too. Bye.

Matt walks away and Leo closes the door, clearly trying to process everything that just happened.

**EXT. LEO'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Sam's truck pulls up in front of Leo's house. Ellie and Sam get out and walk up to the porch to find Ellie's suitcase.

SAM

Well... at least you're already packed.

ELLIE

I wonder where it'll go next?

SAM

I've heard Europe is nice this time of year.

ELLIE

Indeed.

Ellie and Sam stand there for a moment.

SAM

So, you leave tomorrow?

ELLIE

I do.

There is another pregnant pause.

SAM

Well... thanks again for the help with everything.

ELLIE

You're welcome. Thank you for... I had fun.

SAM

I'm glad.

Another awkward pause.

SAM (CONT'D)

Okay, then. Travel safe.

ELLIE

Thanks.

They go in for an awkward hug that lasts for a beat or two longer than it would have if it didn't mean anything.

They separate and Sam goes back to his truck, gets in, and drives away as Ellie watches.

She takes a beat, then takes out her phone.

**INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Leo is at the computer again, working, when his phone rings. He answers and we begin INTERCUTTING between them.

LEO

Hi.

ELLIE

Hi.

LEO

Everything okay?

ELLIE

They finally delivered my suitcase.

LEO

Good timing.

ELLIE

Yeah... about that... I was thinking I might stay. Just through the concert. I want to see how it turns out.

LEO

Yeah, I'm... I kind of want to see how things turn out here, too.

ELLIE

You don't think Matt will mind?

LEO

I think he'll be okay with it.  
What about Sam?

ELLIE

He's... yeah, he's good.

There is a beat of silence as they both smile, happy in ways we haven't seen them since all this started.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Are you okay? You sound...  
different.

LEO

So do you.

ELLIE

Different good or different bad?

LEO

Good, I think. Me?

ELLIE

Definitely good.

LEO

(smiles)

I have to get back to this. Let me  
know if you need anything.

ELLIE

You too. Bye.

We stay with Ellie as she disconnects the call, looking both hopeful and a little afraid of what all this might mean.

**END ACT SIX**

**ACT SEVEN****EXT. LEO'S HOUSE - DAY**

Ellie is sitting in a chair on the front porch, looking happy and more at peace than we've seen her. She's also finally wearing her own clothes.

Sam walks up the drive toward her.

SAM  
You're still here.

ELLIE  
I am.

SAM  
And you unpacked.

ELLIE  
All of Leo's clothes were dirty.

SAM  
Were they before you got here?

ELLIE  
Can you prove they weren't?

SAM  
(smiles - beat)  
Does this mean you're staying for  
the concert?

ELLIE  
If that's okay?

Sam takes a beat then turns and starts walking away. Ellie is a little shocked, but then Sam turns back with a smile.

SAM  
Don't just sit there! The PIANO  
Ball is in a week. We've got work  
to do!

Ellie smiles and jumps up to follow as another part of the Vivaldi "Autumn" concerto plays that we haven't heard yet.

**INT. EVENT VENUE - DAY**

The music continues as Sam, Ellie, and others are putting up autumnal decorations in the event venue.

Ellie and Sam appear to be having a spirited conversation about centerpieces for the tables, with Sam pointing to one version and Ellie insisting on another.

Sam puts the centerpiece he likes in the middle of the table and walks away. Ellie takes a beat and then replaces his with the one she likes and smiles, satisfied.

**INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

The music continues as we see Leo at the desk looking at his phone. He types a text:

**Hey Matt - I'm staying in Chicago another week. I'll see you around the kitchen?**

Leo waits a moment, then hits send. Moments later, Matt replies with a HEART EMOJI.

Leo smiles.

**EXT. PINWOOD - PARK - OVERLOOK - DAY**

The music continues as we see Ellie at the keyboard leading Wendy, Beau, Darcy, and Faith as they rehearse at the overlook again. Everybody seems to be really into it and connecting.

Sam is watching Ellie, who is obviously in her element.

She sees him watching and they exchange a smile.

**INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY**

The music continues as we see Leo and Matt in the kitchen, cooking, eating, laughing, and enjoying each other's company.

**INT. EVENT VENUE - DAY**

The music continues as Ellie comes by the table and sees that "her" centerpiece has been replaced by the one Sam liked.

She makes the swap again just as Sam walks up behind her.

She turns and sees him. Smiles, then grabs the centerpiece that Sam liked and runs off. Sam laughs and gives chase.

**EXT. EVENT VENUE - DAY**

As the music continues, we see Ellie playing "keep away" with the centerpiece, laughing as he finally gets ahold of her and they both collapse onto the leaf-covered ground, looking up at the trees and sky above them.

The music fades to background.

ELLIE

My centerpiece is better. I know about stuff like this. I'm an event planner.

SAM

No you're not. You're a musician.

ELLIE

How many times am I going to have to say...

SAM

Yeah, yeah, rent... I actually have an idea about that. I was thinking about what you said - doing specialty tours for specific interests like music. But if I were going to do that, I'd need to hire someone who knew music to help me find songs about nature.

ELLIE

Are you offering a me a job?

SAM

Well, you'd have to interview first. There are a lot of potential candidates.

ELLIE

(laughs)  
Okay. What do you want to know?

SAM

What's a great song about a natural part of the landscape?

ELLIE

Oh, uh... Sitting on the Dock of the Bay?

SAM

We don't have a bay. We've got ponds.

ELLIE

I don't know any songs about ponds.  
There are lots of songs about  
rivers. Got any rivers?

SAM

Not within walking distance.

ELLIE

You could fly them there in a  
helicopter.

SAM

(starts to get up)  
Thank you very much for coming in.  
We'll be in touch.

ELLIE

(laughs - pulls him back)  
No, no, give me a second...

They lay there looking at one another and it looks like this is going to lead to a kiss, but then Wendy comes out of the event venue nearby.

WENDY

Ellie! We're ready to rehearse!

The spell broken, Ellie and Sam pull away from each other. He gets up and then helps her up. They exchange an awkward smile and then head inside.

**EXT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT**

Establishing Ellie's building.

**INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Leo is standing in front of the computer, staring at an email that he has written. It's to his editor Karen and the subject line is "BUILDING US: FIRST THREE CHAPTERS." The cursor is hovering over the send button.

He hesitates, paces a bit, hesitates more, and then finally walks away from the computer.

**EXT. CHICAGO STREET - NIGHT**

Leo is walking down a street with boutiques and bistros, all done up with twinkling lights. As he passes a diner, something catches his eye - he stops and looks.

Inside, Matt is sitting a table with a cup of coffee reading... one of Leo's "Highbridge Manor" books!

**INT. DINER - NIGHT**

Leo walks up to the table where Matt is reading.

LEO  
Read any good books lately?

Matt looks up, surprised - caught, and a little embarrassed.

MATT  
Oh... uh, well... I thought I should at least, you know, read a little of one... just to be polite.

LEO  
That's the fourth book in the series.

MATT  
Really, really polite.  
(off Leo's smile)  
Okay, they're so addictive! Jack and Isabelle need to get over themselves and admit how much they love each other. And Michael and Constantine? I love that there's a gay couple, too!

LEO  
(sits at table)  
And you haven't even gotten to the part with the pirates, yet.

MATT  
Pirates? That's...  
(sees Leo's smile)  
You're messing with me.

LEO  
Just a little.

MATT  
Okay, even without the pirates, they're good, Leo. I mean, really good. I can hear you in them.

LEO  
(looks at Matt)  
What do you mean?

MATT

The characters are smart and funny and quick. And they obviously love the place they call home. Kind of makes me want to visit.

LEO

"Highbridge Manor" isn't real.

MATT

The inspiration was. "The people, the nature..."

Leo is surprised and moved that he remembered that. There is a beat of possibility there, but before it can lead anywhere, Leo takes a deep breath and looks out the window.

LEO

I finished the first three chapters of the new book.

MATT

That's terrific!  
(sees Leo's hesitancy)  
It is terrific isn't it?

LEO

It's not a "Highbridge Manor" novel. What if they don't like it?

MATT

They're going to love it and don't say "how do you know?"

LEO

(smiles)  
I wasn't going to say that.

MATT

Here's how I know... You found the inspiration you needed to finally write what you wanted. You listened to your heart. That will always win in the end.

LEO

I have you to thank for it.

MATT

Well, then I have you to thank for helping me find the inspiration I needed to figure out what I wanted to do with the restaurant.

LEO

You listened to your heart, too?  
(off Matt's smile)  
I guess it's a good thing we met  
then.

MATT

Yes, it is.

The two of them have a moment - the connection palpable. Leo takes a moment, then a deep breath...

LEO

The sun sets at night/The field in  
the moonlight/The scarecrow does  
not sleep/For he's in too deep...  
(off Matt's confusion)  
The poem I wrote when I was a kid.

MATT

That's... terrible.

They laugh together as the twinkling lights outside reflect on the window behind them.

**INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Leo stands in front of the computer, a bit of a goofy smile on his face. He hits send.

The "whoosh" of the email being sent matches the exhalation of breath from Leo.

**EXT. EVENT VENUE - DAY**

Establishing the event venue.

**INT. EVENT VENUE - DAY**

Wendy, Darcy, Beau, and Faith are on the stage playing while Ellie is in front of them. We hear the last few notes of Vivaldi's "Autumn."

Sam is in back, directing people on set-up tasks, but keeping one eye on the stage.

ELLIE

Great job, you guys! Nice.

WENDY

We messed up the beginning.

FAITH  
And the middle.

BEAU  
And a little bit of the end.

DARCY  
But the rest was great!

ELLIE  
It's okay, we still have four days.  
We'll run it again.

FAITH  
It would really help if you could  
play along with us again like you  
have in other rehearsals.

BEAU  
Yeah, it helps keep us together.

ELLIE  
You don't need me. Besides,  
there's no piano.

SAM  
(pipes up from back)  
Yes, there is. It's behind the...  
guys could you bring out the piano?

A couple of workers go up to the stage and wheel out a piano  
from behind a curtain.

ELLIE  
Why is this here?

SAM  
It's called the PIANO Ball... it's  
right there in the title.

Everyone looks at Ellie expectantly.

ELLIE  
Okay. But only this one more time.

Ellie sits down at the piano and counts off. The group  
starts again with Vivaldi's "Autumn" and it sounds incredible  
with Ellie on piano.

Sam takes out his camera and begins to record a video.

**EXT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY**

Establishing Ellie's building.

**INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

A ring indicating there is a video call comes from Leo's computer. Leo enters, sits, and launches the chat. A video window pops up with his editor, Karen, in her office.

LEO

Hey, Karen. That was fast. Did you read the chapters?

KAREN

I read them.  
(beat)  
Listen, Leo...

LEO

You didn't like it.

KAREN

It's not that I didn't like it...  
it's good writing, it really is,  
but it's not "Highbridge Manor."

LEO

You told me to shake things up!

KAREN

Yes, shake them up, not blow them up. I mean, come on, Leo. A novel about architects falling in love? And one of them is a chef that wants to open his own restaurant?

LEO

Is this about the main characters being Lucas and Mark?

KAREN

No! You know I don't care about that. All I care about is that they're not Jack and Isabelle. That's who your readers want.

Leo doesn't know how to respond to that.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Listen, I'll get the publishers to give you a little more time to come up with a new "Highbridge Manor" story. We'll just pretend this whole thing never happened.

Karen disconnects the call and Leo sits, a bit heartbroken about what has just happened. He sees the stack of printed manuscript pages and we see the title "BUILDING ON."

He picks it up the pages and throws them in the trash.

**EXT. LEO'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Establishing Leo's house.

**INT. LEO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Ellie comes into the living room humming and playing "air piano" again. Despite her protestations, it's clear that she has tapped into something magical again.

There is a knock at the door. Ellie goes to answer it and finds Wendy, Darcy, Faith, and Beau standing there.

ELLIE

Hey! What are you guys doing here?

WENDY

We took a vote.

ELLIE

On?

FAITH

You.

DARCY

We want you to play piano in the show with us.

BEAU

And we're not going to do it if you don't.

We hold on Ellie's stunned look.

**END ACT SEVEN**

**ACT EIGHT**

**EXT. EVENT VENUE - DAY**

Establishing the event venue.

**INT. EVENT VENUE - DAY**

The last few finishing touches are being put on the room under the supervision of Sam.

Wendy comes into the room, heading toward the stage.

SAM

Hey, Wendy. What's up?

WENDY

I left a bow here.

SAM

And you couldn't get this afternoon when you rehearse?

WENDY

We're not rehearsing.

SAM

Why not?

WENDY

Because we're not playing.

SAM

Today?

WENDY

At all. Didn't Ellie tell you?

SAM

Tell me what?

WENDY

We all agreed that the only way this was going to work is if Ellie played piano with us. She won't. So, we're not either.

SAM

No, no, no. Wendy, wait. You can't pull out now. The ball is in three days.

WENDY

Sorry.

SAM

But it's for charity!

WENDY

Even more reason for us not to play. If you want people to give money to support a music program, you need good music. We weren't going to be good.

Wendy has gotten her bow and starts heading toward the door.

SAM

Wendy, can we talk about this?

WENDY

It's not us you should be talking to.

Wendy exits. Sam is clearly flabbergasted by this development.

**EXT. HOTEL - DAY**

Establishing the Chicago hotel where Matt works.

**INT. HOTEL - KITCHEN - DAY**

Matt is cooking when Leo comes in, hovering near the door. Matt sees him and turns the cooking duties over to someone else, then approaches Leo.

MATT

Hey! You're just in time. I'm making sweet corn cake.

LEO

I'm not hungry.

MATT

Are you sure? I am the Sweet Corn Cake King, remember?

LEO

(smiles)

I remember.

(smiles fades)

But, listen, uh... you're going to get a call from a lawyer...

MATT

Okay, I won't make you eat the cake.

LEO

No, it's about the book. You gave me the idea for it.

MATT

I don't understand.

LEO

The architect who's really a chef and wants to open his own restaurant? You deserve to be compensated. The money will help you get your restaurant open.

MATT

Leo, that's very sweet, but we talked about this. I can't take money from... a friend.

LEO

Just talk to the lawyer, okay?

Leo goes to the door.

MATT

Wait. Where are you going?

LEO

Home - to Pinewood. I need to get back to work on "Highbridge Manor."

MATT

What about the other novel?

LEO

They rejected it.

MATT

What? Why?

LEO

It doesn't matter. This whole thing was a mistake.

MATT

Leo, no, it's never a mistake to listen to your heart.

LEO

It is when it's wrong.

MATT

(beat)  
You loved working on that book. I  
saw it.

LEO

(beat - sad smile)  
That day at your mom's house... you  
said just because you love  
something doesn't mean it's right  
for you.

Both Leo and Matt know he isn't just talking about the book.

LEO (CONT'D)

Good luck on your investor dinner.

Leo opens the door, stops, but doesn't look back.

LEO (CONT'D)

You're going to be great.

Leo leaves. Matt has no choice but to let him go.

**EXT. LEO'S HOUSE - DAY**

Ellie comes out of the house just as Sam pulls up in his  
truck. He gets out and approaches her.

SAM

Why didn't you tell me?

ELLIE

I thought I could fix it. I've  
been on the phone all morning with  
Faith and Beau. I think I can get  
them back. Darcy, too, but  
Wendy...

SAM

You should have called me.

ELLIE

I knew what you'd say.

SAM

And what would that be?

ELLIE

You'd say that I'm missing out on a  
huge opportunity. That I should be  
playing music and not working a  
bunch of boring jobs.

(MORE)

ELLIE (CONT'D)

That by not doing this I am making the worst decision in my entire life and I'm going to end up alone, renting my sister's condo, and eating gruel for dinner.

SAM

I don't think I would've gone all the way to gruel...

ELLIE

But do you know what I would've said to you?

SAM

Yes! You would've said that it's a huge risk. What happens if nobody likes it? What happens if you fail?

ELLIE

Exactly!

SAM

But do you know what I'd say next?

ELLIE

(beat)  
Actually, no.

SAM

Ellie, this is what you're supposed to be doing.

ELLIE

Sam, I... If it doesn't work I'm afraid I'm going to disappoint the group and you...

SAM

This is not about you being afraid to disappoint anyone other than yourself. Yes, it's risky, but all the things worth doing are risky!

There is a beat of silence. She shakes her head.

ELLIE

I can't. But listen, we can still rescue this. If I can just convince Wendy...

Sam pauses a second and makes a decision.

SAM  
You're fired.

ELLIE  
What?

SAM  
You can't help with the string quartet unless you change your mind about performing with them.

ELLIE  
(beat)  
I'm not going to do that.

SAM  
Then... I'm sorry. I believe in you. I just wish you did, too.

Sam goes to his truck, gets in, and drives away. Ellie is devastated.

Her phone buzzes and she looks at it - it's a text from Leo. We see what it says.

**INSERT: TEXT FROM LEO**

*"I'm coming home" along with a link with "FLIGHT DETAILS."*

**BACK TO SCENE**

Ellie hesitates, then sends her own text back.

**INSERT: TEXT FROM ELLIE**

*"Me, too. I'll meet you at the airport so we can trade keys."*

**BACK TO SCENE**

Ellie looks up, barely holding on to her emotions.

**EXT. CHICAGO AIRPORT - NIGHT**

Establishing Chicago's O'Hare airport.

**INT. CHICAGO AIRPORT - CONCOURSE - NIGHT**

A melancholy Ellie and Leo approach each other in the busy concourse. Unlike the last time, now it seems like they are in a bubble where the rest of the world doesn't exist.

ELLIE  
Hey.

LEO  
Hi.

ELLIE  
Here's your key.

Ellie hands him his key; he returns hers.

LEO  
Thanks. Were you able to help Sam with the concert?

ELLIE  
(beat)  
Uh... not really. But they still have a few days so I'm sure they'll figure it out. They didn't really need me. What about Matt? Is he all set for his investor dinner?

LEO  
He is. I left you a note about what he might need that night.

ELLIE  
Okay. And your book?

LEO  
(beat)  
I tried something. It didn't work. So, I'm going back to "Highbridge Manor" where I belong.

They stand there looking at one another for a moment.

ELLIE  
Do you want to go get some bad airport food and overpriced cocktails?

LEO  
(beat)  
No... my flight is leaving soon. I just want to get home.

ELLIE

I can understand why. It's a pretty special place.

They regard each other for a moment and then hug.

LEO

I love you.

ELLIE

I love you, too.

They let each other go and head their separate ways.

**EXT. LEO'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

A car drops off Leo at his house. He looks up at it for a moment, then heads inside.

**INT. LEO'S HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT**

Leo comes into the den and sits down at the computer. He starts to type.

**EXT. HIGHBRIDGE MANOR - DAY**

The same set-up that we've seen many times... Isabelle runs out of the house and Jack follows.

JACK

Isabelle, wait!

ISABELLE

No, Jack. I can't. I'm leaving.

JACK

Without saying goodbye?

ISABELLE

Saying goodbye is too hard, Jack. I don't ever want to do it again.

Jack and Isabelle take a beat, then look at the camera - at Leo - with a little sadness and compassion. That last line was written by someone who has just experienced it.

**INT. LEO'S HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT**

Leo looks at what he has written, pauses, and then keeps typing.

**EXT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT**

A cab drops off Ellie at her building. She looks up at it for a moment, then heads inside.

**INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - ELLIE'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Ellie is unpacking as classical music plays in the background. Unlike the scene at the beginning, she isn't doing "air piano" or conducting an unseen orchestra.

She does stop to listen to the music for a moment, then goes to the stereo system on a shelf and shuts it off.

Ellie goes back to unpacking in silence.

**END ACT EIGHT**

**ACT NINE**

**EXT. LEO'S HOUSE - DAY**

Establishing Leo's house.

**INT. LEO'S HOUSE - DEN - DAY**

Leo is at his desk while Karen reads the final page of a stack of loose leaf papers. She looks up and smiles.

KAREN

How did you do this in three days?!

LEO

It's like riding a bike.

KAREN

I love that you're opening with Jack and Isabelle breaking up in the kitchen of a restaurant. The readers are not going to see that coming.

LEO

I'm glad you like it.

KAREN

Like it? I love it! I want to marry it. I want to marry you.

LEO

I don't think your husband would approve. You know, you didn't have to come all the way up here to read this. I could've emailed it to you.

KAREN

When you told me you had three new chapters of a "Highbridge Manor" book already, I had to come. Did I interrupt any plans?

LEO

I'm going to a charity ball in town later tonight. You're welcome to tag along but it is fancy.

KAREN

Three new chapters and an excuse to buy a gown? Best trip ever! I'm going to go call my other husband.

She starts to leave the room but stops.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Oh, and we got the rights release from the chef in Chicago. Easy-peasy. He didn't want a dime.

LEO

He... he just walked away?

KAREN

Yeah. Said it was all yours. You were smart to do that. Who knows... maybe we can do something with it someday.

Karen leaves and Leo takes a moment.

LEO

Someday...

Leo turns back to his desk and checks his email, seeing one from Sam. He opens it and we see it says:

*I thought Ellie might want to have this.*

Attached is a video file. Leo presses play and we see the video of Ellie and the string quartet playing at rehearsal.

Leo sits back and watches.

**EXT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY**

Establishing Ellie's building.

**INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Ellie comes into the living room - notably, there is no music playing - with a cup of coffee and her laptop. She sits at the desk and opens the laptop. We see she has opened a page for job listings. It's clear she's not happy about this.

As she is looking at it, she notices something in the nearby waste basket. She looks and sees a stack of papers - pulls out the top sheet to see it says "BUILDING US." Ellie is intrigued.

**EXT. HOTEL - DAY**

Establishing the Chicago hotel where Matt works.

**INT. HOTEL - KITCHEN - DAY**

Classical music is playing from a sound system in the kitchen where Matt is busy at work. Ellie walks in and approaches with the manuscript.

MATT

Ellie! What are you...

ELLIE

He's falling for you. Or he's already completely fallen, I'm not sure. But there's definitely serious falling happening here.

MATT

Uh... what?

Ellie puts the manuscript on the counter.

ELLIE

I found this in the trash. These are the first three chapters of a book Leo wrote while he was here. It's about rival architects...

MATT

I know about all this...

ELLIE

Okay, but what I'm guessing you don't know is that it's a love story... between a creative type named Lucas and a guy who wants to open his own restaurant named Mark.

That gets Matt's attention.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

It's only three chapters but it's the best thing Leo has ever written. It's funny and smart and a little offbeat... just like him. And he wrote it because of you.

MATT

(beat)

Even if that's true... he still threw it in the trash.

ELLIE

Because he was scared. He doesn't take risks. He needs to be comfortable and safe.

MATT

And alone.

ELLIE

(points to manuscript)  
This is not him wanting to be alone. This is him taking a chance. There was someone that made it okay to try because...

Ellie takes a beat as a realization starts to unfold. As it does, we see her start to play "air piano" again.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

...because it's okay to fail, too. Someone that was going to be there no matter what happened. Someone who understood they just needed a little push.

Ellie smiles as she appreciates the music, finally putting the pieces together.

MATT

Are we still talking about Leo?

Ellie refocuses on Matt. She hands him the manuscript.

ELLIE

You can read this in the cab.

She grabs his arm and pulls him toward the door.

**EXT. EVENT VENUE - DAY**

Establishing the event venue.

**INT. EVENT VENUE - DAY**

Last minute preparations are underway for the ball with Sam directing the action. Leo comes in, looks around, and goes to Sam.

LEO

I watched the video. Tell me everything that happened with Ellie.

Sam is a little taken aback.

**EXT. EVENT VENUE - NIGHT**

Re-establishing the event venue at night, all lit up, with people streaming in for the ball.

**INT. EVENT VENUE - NIGHT**

The attendees are filling in. Leo is watching from near the back with Karen when Ellie comes in. Leo sees her and goes to join her.

LEO  
You got my message.

ELLIE  
What message?

LEO  
I left you a voicemail.

ELLIE  
I was on a plane. Coming to Canada. What did it say?

LEO  
It said come to Canada.

ELLIE  
Okay. I'm here. I'm confused, but I'm here.

LEO  
I see that. But if you didn't come because of my message...

ELLIE  
I had some unfinished business.

LEO  
Vivaldi?

ELLIE  
Not just Vivaldi.  
(beat)  
I know it's too late to do anything about it, but I need to tell Sam that he was right and...

LEO  
And that you care about him.

ELLIE

No, to thank him for...

LEO

For being the guy that you care about.

ELLIE

I will get back on that plane...

LEO

Okay, okay. Baby steps. But listen, you need to get ready.

ELLIE

For what?

LEO

You have a performance to do.

Leo points to the near the stage where the string quartet is assembled. They wave, happy to see her. Wendy points at the piano on the stage.

ELLIE

How did you... how did you know I'd be here?

LEO

I had faith in you. And so did he.

Leo points to the side where Sam is standing. Ellie and Sam exchange a smile.

Ellie hugs Leo fiercely. During the hug, Leo notices that Matt has entered the town hall. He sees Leo and smiles.

LEO (CONT'D)

(to Ellie)

What is he...

ELLIE

I think you have some unfinished business of your own.

They hug again and then head their separate ways, Ellie toward Sam and Leo toward Matt.

**INT. EVENT VENUE - NIGHT**

Near the stage, Ellie approaches Sam.

SAM

You came back.

ELLIE

Actually, I got lost on the way to the airport. I just stopped here to get directions.

SAM

Oh, okay. Yeah, you head down route 17, hang a left at the big red barn, and you can't miss it.

ELLIE

Great. Thanks. I'll see you.

SAM

You know, as long as you're here, the string quartet could use a little help with a song they're doing.

ELLIE

I don't have anything to wear. And I don't think Leo's wardrobe is going to work for this.

SAM

Probably not. But his editor Karen was heading to a dress shop anyway... Go backstage.

He smiles - she returns it - and she heads toward the stage.

**INT. EVENT VENUE - NIGHT**

By the doors to the hall, Leo approaches Matt.

MATT

Cute town.

LEO

Told ya.

MATT

You know what's missing, though...

LEO

Tacos?

MATT

I was thinking more like a handsome chef who falls in love with a creative genius.

LEO

How did you...

Matt nods toward Ellie, who is walking toward the stage with Sam. Leo looks, smiles, and then turns back to Matt.

MATT

I haven't read all of your books yet, but I think it's the best thing you've ever written. Ellie says it's because of me, but I think it's because you...

LEO

It's because of us.

MATT

Don't throw it away.

Leo thinks about it for a moment then takes Matt by the hand. They walk a few steps over to where Karen is standing.

LEO

Karen? I'm going to finish that new "Highbridge Manor" novel but only if the company agrees to publish "Building Us" as well. If they won't, I'll find another company that will.

Karen is stunned for a moment then sees Matt. She points at him.

KAREN

(to Leo)

I'm presuming this is "Mark?"

Leo shrugs and nods.

KAREN (CONT'D)

I'll see what I can do.

Leo hugs Karen and turns back to Matt, but before they can go any further, the lights go down and they join in the audience applause as Sam and the string quartet take the stage.

**INT. EVENT VENUE - STAGE - NIGHT**

Sam walks up to the microphone as the string quartet sits.

SAM

Good evening everyone. Welcome to the PIANO Ball. We're here tonight to support music education and performance throughout the community of Pinewood. And we thought there would be no better way to start our program than with members of our community - a string quartet accompanied and directed by Ellie Matthews.

Sam holds out his hand and Ellie comes on stage, looking radiant in a lovely gown, to applause. She goes to piano and sits.

It's clear she's nervous, but as soon as she puts her hands on the keys, it's like she could never be anywhere else.

She looks at Wendy and nods and the performance of Vivaldi's "Autumn" starts.

As they perform it, we see reaction shots from Leo and Matt, and also see Ellie and Sam exchanging meaningful glances during the song.

They end to cheering applause from the audience.

Ellie gets up and takes her bow with the quartet and then is joined by Sam.

He takes her hand and they pull each other close and kiss.

**INT. EVENT VENUE - NIGHT**

At the back of the hall, Leo and Matt cheer and then turn to each other and share their own kiss.

**INT. EVENT VENUE - NIGHT**

The audience applause continues as Ellie and Sam kiss on stage and Leo and Matt kiss in the audience and the quartet starts in playing the triumphant ending of Vivaldi's "Autumn."

**END**