MOZART IN THE JUNGLE

Sex, Drugs, & Classical Music

Written by

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Based on the memoir by Blair Tindall

WOMAN (V.O.)
It’s easier with the lips slightly wet.

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - DUSK

A spectacular view of Central Park. PULL BACK to REVEAL: we are in an incredibly luxurious Manhattan penthouse.

EXTREME CLOSE UP of a young woman’s lips. She breathes in gently.

WOMAN (V.O.)
...in through the nose,
(exhaling)
out through the mouth.

EXTREME CLOSE UP: the lips part and exhale sensually.

Wider to reveal: HAILEY RUTLEDGE, about 24, with short dark hair and good hyper-intelligent eyes which exude a stealth sexuality mixed perhaps with a youthful self-consciousness.

HAILEY
Remember, each breath is a bridge to another breath. A story is being formed...

Hailey raises an oboe to her lips. BZZZT BZZZT. A text message alert goes off.

VIEW ON: DUNCAN, Hailey’s 12 year old pupil, texting.

DUNCAN
(distracted)
Uh huh. Each breath is a bridge.

HAILEY
(discouraged)
Alright. I think that’s enough for today.

Hailey leans over to pack her oboe and Duncan stares at her legs. BZZZT. Duncan receives another text.

HAILEY (CONT’D)
Duncan, listen to me, OK?

DUNCAN
Yes, Miss Rutledge.

HAILEY
Tomorrow’s a really important day, ok? For both of us. Everyone’s coming. So can you do me a big favor please: try to practice before bed? Just a little.

DUNCAN
I will, certainly. Oh, my mom left your check. Hold on.

He darts off. BZZZT.

Hailey pauses, then decides to pick up Duncan’s phone.

INSERT ON TEXT: “My teacher just bent over.” “Is she wearing a bra?” “Can’t tell looks like it” “Sucks!” “I wish my dick was a woodwind.”

Hailey rolls her eyes and picks up her oboe case.

CUT TO:

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

CLOSE on TWO ATTRACTIVE MEN shooting the shit.

MAN 1
I'm in the car heading back from Sag Harbor...

MAN 2
Some rich bitch gig?

MAN 1
Exactly. And she's working my shaft, my balls, my shaft, my balls and at this point I'm totally fucking hammered off six glasses of Riesling from the reception. Muttering "Oh yeah, oh yeah" but I'm, like, drifting...

Man 2 CHUCKLES darkly. Man 1 takes a dramatic beat.

MAN 1 (CONT'D)
And then I pass out.

MAN 2
No! Was it the Lipitor?

MAN 1
Perhaps. Anyways, I’m out for I don't know how long, but next thing I know I'm awoken with a chomp. And I'm screaming, and she's screaming, slapping me in the face. "You motherfucker, this, you motherfucker that."

MAN 2
(impressed)
Sounds like a complete shit show.

MAN 1
Get this. Miracle is two minutes later I had her back downstairs finishing the job.

Man 2 doubles over with LAUGHTER. Interrupted by a voice--

STAGE MANAGER (O.S.)
They're ready for you.

SLOWLY PULL BACK to reveal them both clad in tuxes. Man 1 leans over to Man 2, pats him on the back conspiratorially.

MAN 1
To be continued...don’t let me forget to tell you what she asked me to call her!

A small stage door behind them swings open. The two men straighten their jackets, their bow ties, take a breath, then strut through the doors--

INT. NY SYMPHONY HALL - STAGE - CONTINUOUS

--onto the stage of a large symphonic hall, where they're greeted with throngs of APPLAUSE and a STANDING OVATION.

It's clear: classical musicians are totally bad-ass.

OPENING CREDITS SEQUENCE:

Thrilling CLASSICAL MUSIC played with virtuosity:

* A violin section bows in perfect unison.

* Sheet music pages flip past.

* A conductor’s baton stabs the air.

* An intense PERCUSSIONIST holds his mallet, waiting for his cue. Finally he strikes--BONG!

CREDITS END

Beethoven’s 9th Symphony ends powerfully.

The conductor, THOMAS PEMBRIDGE,(60’S) turns and bows to a packed house. He is handsome. An old lion.

The mostly elderly audience applauds enthusiastically. Wives help their husbands to their feet. Thomas quiets the crowd:

THOMAS
Thank you for attending this evening’s performance of Beethoven’s 9th and final symphony. What a perfect ending to another magnificent season.

He pats his forehead with a silk handkerchief.

THOMAS (CONT’D)
As most of you know, tonight’s concert will mark my final performance as conductor of this orchestra.

Regretful murmurs mix with thankful applause.

THOMAS (CONT’D)
Now, just because you won’t see me here, doesn’t mean I won’t be here. In fact, quite the opposite. I have gratefully accepted the newly minted role of Executive Musical Director. So I won’t be going anywhere--just yet.

The audience cheers.

THOMAS (CONT’D)
Before I go, I want to thank some very special people here tonight. Actually, they are here every night; week after week, season after season; working tirelessly to bring these great works to life. Sometimes, we see each other more often than our own families do. Sorry.

Thomas blows a kiss to his wife somewhere in the darkness. The audience laughs.

THOMAS (CONT’D)
They are my colleagues, my friends, my family. They are the men and women of your Philharmonic.

He turns and acknowledges the orchestra. They, in turn, tap their instruments as a sign of respect.

THOMAS(CONT’D)
And on that rather suspended note, please welcome the woman behind the curtain, our board chairperson Mrs. Gloria Windsor.

Gloria Windsor (60’s, Glenn Close type) approaches the spotlight. Thomas steps off to the side. She applauds him.

GLORIA
Good evening and thank you Thomas. For everything. And so, as one movement ends, another must begin. It is my honor to introduce you to someone special. A man who has set the classical world ablaze.

Audience members start murmuring with excitement.

GLORIA (CONT’D)
We first heard about him when he headlines as youngest person ever to claim the Mahler Award For Young Conductors. He was 12.

LIGHTNING-QUICK "WEEK IN THE LIFE OF GUSTAVO" MONTAGE:

A silhouetted FIGURE swings his baton with passion.

GLORIA (O.S.)
In no time at all, he has risen to the top of the international concert circuit.

VIEW from behind, the MYSTERIOUS MAN in skinny jeans and designer shades ducks into a limo.

GLORIA (CONT’D)
At 23, he conducted at La Scala.

VIEW ON: A jet taking off.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
At 25, he lifted the Warsaw Phil out of bankruptcy and placed them amongst the finest on the world's stage.

The man leads an ensemble of young South American children who play hand-crafted instruments.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
He has been courted by Boston, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Munich.

FAST CUTS as the SYMPHONIC MUSIC drowns out any other sounds.

-Paparazzi chasing this silhouette of success down cobblestone side streets -- arm around a beautiful ballerina.

-The cover of Rolling Stone.

-In an Eastern European town square, an enormous tarp is yanked to reveal a flamboyantly-posed bronze statue.

-A trans-continental orgy of celebrity!

BACK TO:

INT. NY SYMPHONY HALL - STAGE

The audience erupts.

GLORIA
Please join me in welcoming a man who need only be introduced by his first name: your new conductor and Musical Director, the spectacularly talented GUSTAVO!

She points to the balcony nearest the stage. A spotlight finds Gustavo, 28, devastatingly handsome, trim, with long curly hair. He stands and waves. He wears designer shades and a black button up shirt with no tie, and a super-thin black leather tuxedo jacket.

The orchestra and audience leap to their feet and applaud the young conductor.

Gustavo pulls out a baton and taps the banister. The crowd falls silent. The orchestra, caught off guard, immediately take their seats.

Gustavo, raises his baton as if he is about to begin conducting and MAGICALLY it transforms into a FLOWER. He offers it to the crowd with a radiant smile.

The orchestra and audience laugh uproariously. With this playful gesture, Gustavo has won over the auditorium.

SIDE of STAGE: Thomas smiles with teeth gritted tightly, he is covering it well--but inside he burns with jealous anger.

The two conductors - Thomas and Gustavo - bow to one another.

The torch has been passed.

Gloria puts her hand on Thomas' shoulder.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
See you tonight?

THOMAS
(sharply)
Gloria, I love you--but don't underestimate me.

INT. NY SYMPHONY HALL - BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

MOVING VIEW: Thomas bursts through the stage doors. A stage manager gives him the thumbs up.

STAGE MANAGER
Great performance, maestro!

Thomas flashes a pained smile.

His assistant, SHARON, approaches him holding out a folder.

THOMAS
Not now.

Thomas peels off his jacket and tosses it to her as he marches off.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
Was he really wearing a leather tuxedo?

Thomas exits.

On Sharon, stunned by the outburst. She continues after him, as CAMERA continues past her, through a door--

INT. BACK STAGE DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

TRACKING ACROSS musicians as they wipe down their instruments and pack up.

--A violinist takes off his clip-on tie and tuxedo jacket, revealing ordinary street clothes beneath.

--The timpanist and the French horn player make a quick, discrete drug transaction.

--An attractive woman in her early 50’s, CYNTHIA (think Susan Sarandon) zips up her cello case and WE FOLLOW her as she steps out into:

EXT. NY SYMPHONY HALL - BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

The pouring rain. Taxis honk and swerve around double-parked town cars.

Musicians litter the alley, smoking cigarettes, and taking swigs from shared flasks.

Cynthia walks up to an older man, BRUNO, who is holding a large upright bass as he manages to flag a taxi.

CYNTHIA
Hey sexy, you going downtown?

BRUNO
Sorry, I’m going up, Cyn.

CYNTHIA
Shit, I gotta be in Times Square in 20 minutes.

BRUNO
Two-a-nights. Ouch! Here, you take this one.

Cynthia gives Bruno a kiss and a hug, then hops in the taxi.

Bruno admires her perfect body as she hikes up her black evening gown a bit to step into the back with her instrument.

PAN TO REVEAL Thomas who is also taking a moment to watch Cynthia’s sexy ass.

Sharon stands impassively behind, holding an umbrella over him.

THOMAS
Bruno, she played you beautifully.

BRUNO
(smiling)
Bravissima.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Thomas, darling--over here!

But Thomas doesn't notice--he is still staring at Cynthia.

Sharon taps Thomas on the shoulder.

SHARON
Sir, your wife is trying to get your attention.

A matronly woman, 60s, waves a bejewelled hand out the window of a Town Car. Thomas' face tightens as he gets into the car. A Chauffeur shuts the door.

Sharon raps on the tinted window. Thomas rolls it down.

SHARON (CONT'D)
(holding out the papers)
Mr. Pembridge. Please. They will need a quote from you.

Thomas snatches it. The car pulls away, gets about ten feet, screeches to a halt. He rolls down the window.

THOMAS
What's this?!

SHARON
The press release is going out tonight.

CUT TO:

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - NIGHT

The Imperial Theater marquee glows with:

"STYX's Oedipus Rocks!"

Cut to:

INT. IMPERIAL THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Curtain rises to reveal:

Distressed Grecian columns in front of a cyclorama depicting the Parthenon. A man in a tunic stands downstage, belting--

OEDIPUS
I'm sailing away...
Set an open course for the Virgin
Sea...

INT. ORCHESTRA PIT - CONTINUOUS

CAMERA TRAVELS DOWN: As we discover a conductor with a comb-over, lustily swinging his baton.

STILL LOWER: To find the cramped orchestra, bored and sawing away.

The ensemble is a fusion of rock and classical. There are about 15 musicians including Hailey.

Cynthia enters through a small door and expertly navigates her way through the dimly lit pit. She takes her place at an empty chair just in front of Hailey.

Cynthia is very late and the conductor shoots a disapproving look. Clearly not the first time this has happened.

Cynthia removes her cello, clicks on her lamp--but stumbles to find her place in the sheet music.

Hailey reaches forward and flips Cynthia’s music to the correct page and Cynthia comes in JUST in time.

ONSTAGE:

The Grecian columns rotate to reveal six slutty Vegas-style dancer girls in fishnets and boots.

OEDIPUS AND GIRLS
Come sail away, come sail away,
come sail away with me lads!

TIME CUT:

INT. ORCHESTRA PIT - NIGHT

Hailey and Cynthia put away their instruments and sheet music.

The conductor, BERNARD, approaches.

BERNARD
Cynthia, you’re killing me.
If it wasn’t for this pretty young
lady, tonight would have been a
disaster.
(MORE)

BERNARD (CONT'D)
(looking to Hailey with a smile)
I owe you. May I offer you...

CYNTHIA
Easy Bernard. (To Hailey) What’s your name?

HAILEY
I’m Hailey...

CYNTHIA
Hailey your coming with me.

Cynthia leads Hailey towards the exit.

CYNTHIA (CONT’D)
You’re welcome.

HAILEY
For what?

CYNTHIA
Keeping Bernard out of your pants. I thought I knew every oboist in town. I’m Cynthia...

HAILEY
(finishing for her)
...Deblassio. I know. Second Cello in the New York Symphony. It’s a real honor.

CYNTHIA
(grins, then darkly)
You drink, I hope.

Cut to:

A Champagne cork POPS!

INT. FIORELLO’S RESTAURANT - BACK ROOM

Gloria Windsor and a group of symphony management and members of the press mingle around Gustavo.

GLORIA
To Gustavo!

Gloria raises her glass.

GLORIA (CONT’D)
I just love these ideas! So fresh, so innovative. Thank god!
(MORE)

GLORIA (CONT'D)
It's the first time in a decade I can hear a beating heart again!

WE HEAR the door burst open. Her face freezes.

ANGLE ON: Thomas, soaking wet, standing in the doorway brooding. Sharon stands behind him, meekly.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
(shocked-then covering)
Thomas, I'm so glad you came. Can someone get a glass of champagne?

THOMAS
(sharply)
Not necessary, I wont be staying long.

Thomas surveys the room. A chilled silence. He holds the press release in his fist.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
Is this a joke?
(reading in a condescending tone)
"Under the guidance of our new Conductor Gustavo DeSousa, our coming season will feature some surprising highlights, such as turning off the house lights and playing selected pieces in complete darkness..."

GLORIA
(gently, interrupting)
...just preliminary ideas, Thomas--nothing is set in stone.

THOMAS
What's next--Bring Your Pet to the Symphony Day?

GLORIA
We hired Gustavo to bring new ideas, a youthful point of view.
(diplomatically)
You were part of the decision. You continue to be part of the...

THOMAS
Are you trying to kill everything we've worked for?

Gustavo cooly pours himself champagne.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
Our subscribers will not stand for tinkering with the integrity of...

Thomas notices Gustavo bringing the glass to his lips.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
(snaps)
Put that champagne down, Mr. Hair. Champagne is for celebrating. I do not consider the erosion of an institution...

GLORIA
(embarrassed)
Stop being so dramatic.

GUSTAVO
Perhaps I should leave.

Gustavo double-kisses Gloria goodbye.

THOMAS
Well? Don't you have anything to say for yourself?!?
(cutting)
Say something--in English.

Gustavo stops at the door. With his back to the room, he speaks decisively.

GUSTAVO
Your first chair violinist, Emily Wu, played sharp seventeen times in the first movement. French Horns came in half a bar late in the adagio, throwing off the bassoons, ultimately destroying any possibility of Beethoven's desired dynamic shift in bars forty-five through fifty three. And the second chair bass, Bruno Cassel, is so old he can barely hold his bow. I couldn't tell who you were torturing more, me or him.

Long, awful silence.

THOMAS
You prick.

Gustavo turns to face them all.

GUSTAVO
I’m replacing six chairs immediately.
(to Gloria)
Gloria, you’ve been an exceptional hostess.

He drains his glass and turns to Thomas.

GUSTAVO (CONT’D)
(sincerely)
Maestro, I hope I don’t disappoint neither you nor the traditions of this great institution.

Gustavo walks past Sharon. She smiles at him, turned on by his charisma. Thomas, for once, is speechless.

Cut to:

INT. JOE ALLEN BAR - NIGHT

PAN PAST: Rows of framed Broadway posters of famous flops. “Capeman,” “Carrie,” “Dance of the Vampires”...

This Broadway post-show haunt is a lot dingier and more homespun than the luxe Fiorello’s.

A cute WAITER, 20’s, tall and thin places a pair of tumblers on Cynthia and Hailey’s table.

WAITER
Two whiskies. Straight up for the silver fox.

Hailey watches him walk away. Cynthia picks up on it.

CYNTHIA
Cute ass, right?

HAILEY
(embarrassed)
Totally.

Hailey takes a sip of the whiskey, shakes at its strength.

CYNTHIA
I bet he’s a dancer. They’re the best.

HAILEY
The best?

Cynthia leans in conspiratorially.

CYNTHIA
Anecdotal evidence and my personal scientific research suggests there’s a direct correlation between what a man DOES for a living and the way he fucks.

Hailey almost spits out her drink.

Cynthia nods to a nearby table of men. Little black instrument cases hang from their seats:

CYNTHIA (CONT’D)
Violinists, for example, come quickly.

CUT TO:

A DARK BEDROOM: a WOMAN (with a late 70’s hairstyle) straddles a MAN. He becomes over-excited and comes instantly. She rolls off of him in total disappointment.

CUT BACK TO:

BAR: Hailey is in shock, but swept up by Cynthia’s racy charm. Cynthia nods to another table.

CYNTHIA (CONT’D)
Percussionists. Pound you like you’re in a porno.

CUT TO:

HOTEL ROOM: A portly percussionist jack-hammers a woman. She has an 80’s hairdo.

PERCUSSIONIST
(German accent)
I vant to gong your fucking ass!

BACK TO:

BAR:

CYNTHIA
Kind of fun, for about ten minutes. Good cardio though.

Hailey laughs and downs the rest of her drink. She scans the room and spots two men in turtle necks at the bar.

HAILEY
(playing along)
What about them?

CYNTHIA
Pianists. Tricky. Typically they'll fall into two general groups. Jazz and Classical. I go for Jazz.

HAILEY
Why?

BATHROOM STALL: Door opens and Cynthia (now with a 90's hairstyle) tumbles in to the stall with a pianist. He runs his hands across her body and up her skirt, fingering her.

CYNTHIA
Improvisation--they play off YOU. Also, they're into ensembles.

She moans in delight. The stall door opens and they are joined by another woman.

BACK TO:

BAR: Cynthia considers the memory fondly.

Hailey grins wide like a Cheshire cat. It's clear that deep within her lies an untapped sexuality.

HAILEY
What about conductors?

Cynthia downs her whiskey.

CYNTHIA
Trust me, too complicated.

Suddenly, Cynthia fumbles for her phone--

INSERT: Text message: "Where are you?" Cynthia takes a deep breath, tucks the phone away. She motions to the waiter.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
Hailey, oboists are a rare commodity these days. Strings, on the other hand? We're like hyenas fighting over the same dead animal. (Sincerely) You're really good.

Hailey smiles, flattered. The waiter approaches their table.

WAITER
Anything else ladies?

CYNTHIA
Your name.

WAITER
Excuse me?

CYNTHIA
Your name, hotshot?

WAITER
(taken aback, smiles)
Joshua.

Hailey looks mortified.

CYNTHIA
You look like a dancer Joshua, am I right?

He laughs, good-natured, self-confident.

JOSHUA
Yes--ballet, studying at Juilliard.

CYNTHIA
Well then, Joshua, Hailey. Hailey, Joshua.
(to Joshua)
Hailey is an oboist from North Carolina. (to Hailey) Joshua is a ballet dancer here in New York.

She winks at Hailey.

HAILEY
(trying not to turn red)
Nice to meet you.

JOSHUA
(laughs)
You too, Hailey.

He stares at her for a moment, infatuated. Hailey doesn't know whether to swoon or jump out a window.

Just then, Cynthia's phone vibrates with another text.

INSERT: "I need to see you NOW."

Cynthia texts back.

CYNTHIA
(while typing)
Listen, I better be going.
(MORE)

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
(to Joshua)
Why don’t you sit down and the two of you chat a while?

Hailey’s eyes widen. Josh smiles.

HAILEY
(panicky, to Cynthia)
But... We could share a cab.

Cynthia places a hand on Hailey’s shoulder as she collects her purse.

CYNTHIA
I’m not taking a cab. Give me your phone number. Let’s stay in touch.

Hailey pulls out a home printed business card. Cynthia takes it, throws some cash on the table and leaves.

There is an awkward moment between Joshua and Hailey.

HAILEY
You don’t actually have to stay here and talk to me.

JOSHUA
Well, I was about to take off. A bunch of us are going out tonight if you want to come with?

HAILEY
I’d love to but I have to get up early tomorrow.

JOSHUA
My loss.

Off Hailey. Smitten.

INT. TOWN CAR/MANHATTAN STREET - NIGHT

VIEW THROUGH the tinted window of an idling town car: WE SEE a figure waiting on the sidewalk. The window rolls down, it’s Cynthia.

CYNTHIA
(annoyed)
This is a hundred and fifty thousand dollar-priceless cello, you asshole.

VOICE (O.S.)
Just get in.

CYNTHIA
Don’t treat me like a hooker. I shouldn’t have taught you how to text. Pop it.

The trunk opens.

INT. TOWN CAR/MANHATTAN - NIGHT

Cynthia and Thomas ride in silence. Finally:

THOMAS
My world is falling apart.

He takes a sip of scotch.

THOMAS (CONT’D)
He’s good, isn’t he?

Cynthia stares at him, not sure what to say.

THOMAS(CONT’D)
Would you fuck him?

CYNTHIA
(annoyed)
Oh please. (beat)
Is this the kind of night it’s going to be?
(to the driver)
Let me out.

THOMAS
(to driver)
Keep going.

CYNTHIA
If you have to ask the question, you already know the answer: yes he’s good. He’s a monster.

THOMAS
He’s making cuts.

He has Cynthia’s undivided attention.

THOMAS (CONT’D)
Woodwinds and brass. For now.

Thomas chuckles ruefully, staring out at the night skyline.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
I was him once.

CYNTHIA
You still are.

Then with one flick of her hand, Cynthia springs open his belt buckle. He grabs the back of her head and pulls her close.

CUT TO:

EXT. HAILEY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Hailey approaches an industrial looking building in a sketchy neighborhood.

INT. HAILEY'S APARTMENT-CONT'D

A party is going full swing in the tiny apartment. Forty people smoke, drink and shout over loud classical music.

-TWO NERDY GUYS share a bottle of Schnapps and listen intensely as they read along to the sheet music.

GUY #1
Listen to that legato!

GUY #2
(deeply impressed)
I just came.

-A super stoned girl smokes pot from a bassoon crudely fashioned into a bong.

-A hand reaches into a secret compartment inside a violin case and pulls out a baggy of coke and a rolled up bill.

-A petite and sexy blonde puts on a Georges Bizet LP. This is LIZZIE, Hailey's gregarious roommate and best friend.

LIZZIE
Let's get Bizet!

She scratches the record DJ-style.

Hailey opens the front door and enters. The look on her face tells us that these parties happen all the time. She just wishes it wasn't tonight.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)
Ohhh shit--look who's here--the party's about to get craaazzee!

People cheer. Hailey gives a mocking 'raise the roof' gesture. She tosses her keys into the bowl.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)
You gotta see my new invention, try it.

PAN TO REVEAL:

Partygoers crouching around a joint taped to a metronome. A person takes a hit each time it goes back and forth.

HAILEY
Awesome--but I need my lungs tomorrow morning. I'm going to bed everybody.

LIZZIE
Bed?! Looks like your bed's taken.

Lizzie points to a funky brown couch. A sexy Japanese girl sits with a cello between her legs. An intense guy with a goatee sits behind, guiding her bow.

HAILEY
Ugh. Then I'm sleeping in your bed.

LIZZIE
Just stay up--have a drink, relax, go nuts.

HAILEY
(dry)
Relaxing and going nuts are opposites. I love you. Goodnight.

INT. BEDROOM

Hailey stands in her bra and panties brushing her teeth.

She applies face cream.

She lays out her one nice dress and a pair of shoes for tomorrow's recital.

She sets her phone alarm, hits the light and gets into bed. She feels something--pulls out some men's briefs and tosses them onto the floor.

Darkness. The party THUMPS on the background.

SUDDENLY, the door swings open. Light floods in.

LIZZIE
Hot guys are on their way over.
Want me to save one for you?

HAILEY
No.

She shuts the door. Then comes back in.

LIZZIE
There’s a flutist out here who
wants to play you in ‘showdown’.
He says he’s awesome but I think
you can take him.

HAILEY
No.

LIZZIE
That’s what I told him.

Hailey puts the pillow over her head.

A muffled chant from the living room grows louder:

EVERYBODY
Hailey! Hailey! Hailey!

She opens the door, squinting in the bright light.

HAILEY
(a smile cracks)
I hate you guys.

Cut to:

Knuckles crack. A flute is assembled. Shots are poured.

Hailey sits opposite her opponent, a frail yet confident FLUTIST. They stare each other down as they warm up.

A Chianti bottle whirls on an old piece of cardboard that has a pie chart indicating an era of music (Romantic, Baroque, 20th Century) as well as drinking instructions.

The bottle lands on “ROMANTIC--2 shots”. “Oohs” from the gathered crowd.

The flutist downs the drinks. He gags and recovers. The referee passes over some sheet music. The flutist plays--he's very good. The crowd is rapt.

Now it's Hailey's turn to spin the bottle. Lizzie rubs her shoulders like a coach.

LIZZIE
Soon, he'll be begging someone to pull the flute out of his ass.

Hailey downs the shots and takes the sheet music.

She licks her lips and begins to play. She is quite incredible and plays flawlessly.

The flutist raises his eyebrow: 'not bad'.

The bottle spins. Another shot. It goes back and forth intensely: the passages are becoming more complex and the alcohol taking effect.

The crowd is on the edge of their seats.

The flutist finishes with a flourish. Sneers.

Now it's Hailey again. She downs 2 shots. Amazingly, she is able to play an very elaborate piece with precision. The crowd all recognize that she is bound to be the winner.

Lizzie gestures "smack-down!"

Unbeknownst to Hailey, Josh, The waiter from Joe Allen comes in the door with some friends.

He is transfixed as he watches Hailey's fingers. It is beyond sensual.

JOSHUA
(to himself)
Incredible...

Suddenly Hailey notices Josh watching her and sharps a note, badly. She turns bright red. Loses focus, stops DEAD.

The crowd all hoot and laugh. The flute nerd pumps his fist!

CUT TO:

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - LATER

Hailey, drunk and embarrassed, sits outside on the fire escape. Lizzie comes out and joins her.

LIZZIE
(urgently)
OMG. How do I look? Tranny trainwreck?

HAILEY
You look fine. Totally fine. Why?

LIZZIE
Those dancers are here! One of them--Joshua Merriweather--my friend says he's the hottest thing at Juilliard.
(beat)
I'm going to seduce him.

A knock on the window. The two girls turn to find Joshua poking his head out the window.

LIZZIE (CONT'D)
(trying to cover)
...so yeah, I was like, "It's been totes hard since my ex-boyfriend died..."

JOSHUA
Mind if I join you?

Joshua climbs out onto the fire escape.

LIZZIE
(seductive)
Heya. I'm Lizzie, this is my place. That's my roommate...

JOSHUA
Hailey. We met.

Lizzie, taken aback, is instantly jealous.

Just then a drunk boy sticks his head out the window.

DRUNK BOY
Lizzie. You better get in here...
(shameful pause)
Um, it's kind of an emergency. Vomit in your victrola.

LIZZIE
Fuck, that's an antique!
(to Joshua, all flirty)
The duties of the host beckon... I won't be long.

Joshua smiles, watching her go and rolls his eyes to Hailey. He removes a one-hitter from his coat and takes a deep hit.

JOSHUA
(exhaling)
Want some?

HAILEY
No thanks. Smoke is the enemy.

Hailey shivers. Joshua wafts it away.

HAILEY (CONT'D)
It's freezing.

JOSHUA
Here.

He unwraps the scarf from his neck and puts it around Hailey.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)
You play amazingly well.

HAILEY
Thanks.

Awkward pause.

JOSHUA
North Carolina, huh?

Hailey nods.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)
I'm from Nashville. Kind of close.
(beat)
Pretty overwhelming place, huh?

Hailey looks up. A kindred spirit.

HAILEY
(gently)
Totally. I feel like all I do is spend my time doing is figuring out how to make money, how to be a good roommate, a good daughter, a good girlfriend--
(a moment between them)
Like none of it's about the art. When I'm successful--

She drifts off.

JOSHUA
You think it will be easier?

A beat. Hailey considers this darkly.

HAILEY
It better be.

JOSHUA
(meaningfully)
I always wondered, do your lips hurt after playing like that?

Hailey is uneasy. He is clearly hitting on her, but in a very sweet way. He moves in closer and puts his fingers on her lips.

HAILEY
They used to. Now they are kind of used to being used I guess.

Joshua leans in and kisses Hailey softly. Then, interrupting the moment, Lizzie sticks her out head the window.

Joshua and Hailey pull apart. Hailey is very embarrassed.

LIZZIE
(still jealous)
Sorry to break that up, but Hailey, I think Hank had an accident on your bed as well.
(to Joshua)
My couch.

Hailey stands up quickly and bumps her head on the fire escape.

HAILEY
Shit!

She hurriedly gives Joshua back his scarf and goes inside. Lizzie comes out and casually sits next to Joshua. Close.

LIZZIE
(forced flirtation)
It’s cold outside of my apartment huh?
(re: the scarf)
Mind if I borrow that?

CUT TO:

BLACK

The sound of a ringtone: Pachalbel’s Canon.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Sunlight streaming in through dirty windows.

Hailey, asleep on the couch, blinks awake. She fumbles for her ringing cellphone alarm.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Her hair is a mess, her eyes are bloodshot.

She takes four Advil and splashes water on her face.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Hailey, wearing her nice black dress, steps over zonked out musicians and beer bottles as she spots her oboe case beneath a drunk girl's head. She grabs it.

DRUNK GIRL
What the fuck, mom!?

CUT TO:

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - DAY

Elevators doors open to REVEAL:

Hailey wearing huge sunglasses. She steps out, moving slowly.

Her POV: moving through the tony apartment (from the opening scene). Chairs are arranged by a little stage in the living room. Well-dressed guests mill about.

INT. DUNCAN'S ROOM.

Duncan holds the oboe.

DUNCAN
I practiced last night. Focused on my breathing--like you said...

HAILEY
Duncan, shut up. (Deliberately) Get me some water. I'm extremely hung over and I'm not proud of it.

A KNOCK on the door. Duncan gets the water.

WOMAN’S VOICE
(through door, enthusiastic)
Ten minutes till showtime!

Duncan brings the glass.

CLOSE ON DUNCAN

DUNCAN
(seriously)
Each breath is a bridge to another breath. Like a story unfolding...

A message alert BUZZES. Duncan looks at Hailey, slightly annoyed.

Hailey plays the message on speakerphone.

CYNTHIA
(voice mail)
Hailey. It’s Cynthia. I don’t care what the fuck you are doing right now, drop it and get over to the Symphony Hall. Gustavo is holding auditions! They are seeing woodwinds until 11. You didn’t hear it from me.

Hailey rubs her temples.

HAILEY
I can’t fucking believe this is happening.

Duncan is pleasantly surprised by her choice of language.

She shakes her head, crestfallen.

HAILEY (CONT’D)
Ok, where were we?

DUNCAN
--You’re going to be late.

HAILEY
I can’t...

DUNCAN
Hailey--go.

Hailey slips her sunglasses back on and grabs her oboe case.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)
You can sneak out through the service elevator.

HAILEY
What about your mom?

DUNCAN
You kidding? If you get that job my mom will brag to everybody that her son takes lessons from the oboist of the New York Phil. Get out of here.

She kisses him on the cheek and is out the door. His face turns RED and he instantly reaches for his phone to send a text.

CUT TO:

SYMPHONY HALL STAGE - DAY

A LARGE WHITE SCREEN stands alone on the stage.

The SILHOUETTE of an auditioning oboist is cast by a lone spotlight. (Note: the screen keeps those who are auditioning anonymous.)

INT. NY SYMPHONY HALL

A dim music stand light in the audience illuminates Gustavo and his assistant, Sharon. (Previously Thomas' assistant)

Eyes shut, he listens intensely to the music. Suddenly:

GUSTAVO
(to Sharon)
NO.

CUT TO:

INT. TAXI

Hailey checks her watch.

She is trying her best to cut a reed for the oboe as the car lurches through the halting traffic.

CUT TO:

INT. NY SYMPHONY HALL

Gustavo watches another audition, through fingers folded across his face. Leans over to Sharon.

GUSTAVO
(insistent)
Not perfect. Needs to be perfect.

Cut to:

INT. TAXI - DAY

Hailey leans forward.

HAILEY
Excuse me sir, how much longer?

The driver, who has been talking on the phone in a foreign language, shouts back:

DRIVER
Faster if you walk.

Hailey urgently shoves a wad of crumpled bills, coins, and a METROCARD through the divider.

HAILEY
It’s got like five dollars on it--
sorry!

She stumbles out the cab door, only a few blocks left to go.

CUT TO:

INT. NY SYMPHONY HALL

The final audition has ended. Only the empty chair is in silhouette.

GUSTAVO
(to Sharon)
Next?

SHARON
It’s over, sir.

Gustavo takes this in. Deep, disappointed breath.

He rises, collects some papers, and leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. NY SYMPHONY HALL - FRONT STEPS - DAY

Hailey races up the steps--two at a clip. She passes a HOMELESS MUSICIAN playing the violin. The sight stops Hailey for a moment dead in her tracks. She shakes her head in dismay.

Then ducks under a canopy and through the stage door.

Cut to:

INT. NY SYMPHONY HALL - CONTINUOUS

Hailey steps onto the stage and stares at the empty seats.

It’s over. Crushed that she has missed her chance, she begins to cry.

She starts to walk off the stage--but stops.

She slowly walks towards the auditioning chair and sits down. She opens her oboe case.

Inside, something surprises her: wrapped around her oboe is Joshua’s scarf. A note written on sheet music reads:

“If found please call Joshua Merriweather at 212 555-6768”

She smiles as she puts the scarf around her neck.

Then, as if it were the audition, she takes in the deepest breath of her life.

IN THE DARKNESS behind a curtain of a box seat--Gustavo is pressing his body against Sharon as he works his hand under her shirt. She breathes heavily.

Then Hailey begins to play.

The sound stops Gustavo dead in his tracks. He looks up.

He sees the lone silhouette of Hailey playing.

Gustavo leaves Sharon standing there. He sits down. Closes his eyes.

He DIMS his reading lamp slowly until it is...

...BLACK.

All we hear is the rapturous melody of the OBOE.