ABOUT A BOY

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Based on the book by

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COLD OPEN

INT. ANDY AND LAURIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

WILL (36), a man child, musician slacker with unanticipated depth and charm, awkwardly holds a squirmy newborn baby. Watching him are ANDY (30s), Will's slacker and thoroughly whipped stay at home dad best friend, and LAURIE (30s), Andy's P.R. exec wife with the edge of a thousand moms. Wreaking havoc elsewhere are their other kids BEN, (4) and STACY (3).

LAURIE
Is this little Angel beautiful or what?

Will looks at BABY JONAH'S FACE -- not a particularly beautiful baby.

WILL
I'm going with "what".

LAURIE
Smell him, Will. Smell his face. There's nothing more beautiful than the smell of baby face.

Will gingerly leans in a few inches away--

WILL
I'm getting nothing.

ANDY
Honey, he'll smell Jonah later.

WILL
I'm pretty sure I won't.

LAURIE
Will. This is important. I love you and I want you to become the mature semi-grown up person I know is hidden somewhere deep down inside of you. Get your head in there. Smell our baby.

Laurie pushes Will's head right into the baby's face just as the baby throws up on his face!

WILL
MOTHER OF GOD!

Will starts wiping the throw up off his face using Baby Jonah's onesie.

LAURIE
Stop that! You two need to bond. You're going to be his Godparent forever. Until the end of time.

WILL
His Godparent?

ANDY
You know, his guardian. In case anything should ever happen to us.

They both look at Will, smiling expectantly. Will considers--

WILL
Let's just play this out. Say you two are on a plane, and the plane goes down. Mechanical error. Tragic, of course, and I'm sure it would never, ever, ever happen. But let's say it did. You go down. You nose dive into the side of a mountain which happens all the time. Or into the side of another plane, which doesn't happen as often as you'd think. Or into a cruise ship which never happened but would be really cool.

ANDY
What's your point here, Will?

WILL
Either way, no survivors. So. Where does that put me and Jonah?

LAURIE
Where does it <u>PUT</u> you?

WILL
It doesn't mean I'd be, like, his... the guy who... His...

LAURIE
<u>Father</u>. You'd be his father.

WILL
(looks to Andy)
Dude, didn't you say we had to--

ANDY
Shop. Yes. We've gotta shop.

Andy quickly starts to pack up the kids to get ready for their escape. They start out the door. Laurie explodes.

LAURIE
See, Andy? I told you, he's a terrible choice. He's still a child. He's pathetic. He cares more about his stupid guitar collection than people. Go ahead, run away with your friend. Children!

ANDY
Love you, babe. We'll be back soon.

LAURIE
(calling after them)
FUCKING CHILDREN!

And they're gone.

SMASH TO:

TITLE CARD: <u>ABOUT A BOY</u>

ACT ONE

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - DAY

Ah. Much more peaceful. Will and Andy stroll down one of those beautiful hilly streets in San Francisco. Andy is laden with Jonah in a baby bjorn and Ben and Stacy in a double stroller. Will holds a shopping bag filled with diapers and other baby products.

WILL
You are living my nightmare. Your life is my cautionary tale.

ANDY
Knowing I play such a critical role in your life makes me whole.

WILL
Why would you ask me to be a Godparent? You know me.

ANDY
I fought for you. It was you or Laurie's crazy sister.

WILL
Right, I keep forgetting Laurie's the sane one in her family. The point is I don't have room in my life for another child. I have me.

Will stops cold as a GORGEOUS WOMAN gets out of a Mini Cooper. This is DAKOTA (30s).

WILL (CONT'D)
Hold the phone. Look at that woman. She's a Goddess.

ANDY
Yeah. Whatever. She's hot.

WILL
(indicating Andy's kids)
Does your penis remember what life was like before them?

Will sees her take a cello out of her car.

WILL (CONT'D)
Oh my God. A cello? Hot. That's like a big guitar.
(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)
I've gotta make some magic happen. I've gotta get pumped. Chest bump. Get me pumped.

ANDY
I have a kid on my chest.

WILL
Wow, is that not getting me pumped.

Will rushes over to Dakota.

WILL (CONT'D)
(hello)
Cello.

DAKOTA
Hah. I've never heard that one.

WILL
Listen, I'm going to be honest with you right now. I am a cello freak. Okay? I'm obsessed with cellos. So it's one thing to be the most beautiful woman ever, but then to pull a cello out of your car is just not fair.

DAKOTA
That's very nice, but really I'm--

WILL
You don't believe me.

DAKOTA
What?

WILL
You think I'm just saying I'm into cellos cause you're gorgeous.

DAKOTA
No...

Will starts listing. As he does, Dakota becomes more and more stunned--

WILL
Top cello pieces ever: Kabalevsky's #2, in G major. Dark, brooding, and virtuosic. Rubinstein's #2, in D, Opus 96, why this isn't way better known, I have no idea. Haydn, D.
(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)
D'Albert C, Opus 20, lyrical, mellow, and haunting; another one whose neglect I cannot understand. But the greatest of all is the Dvorak Concerto--

DAKOTA
--in B Major. Oh my God, it is the greatest cello piece ever.

She is totally blown away.

WILL
So I say again, “Cello.”

She cracks up, can only join in--

DAKOTA
Cello...

WILL
I’m Will.

DAKOTA
I’m Dakota. And I’m late.

She starts toward the building. Will sees the sign on the door, for Single Parents Group. He makes a snap decision.

WILL
Me too. I’m late too.

DAKOTA
Oh my God, so you’re a single dad?

WILL
Yes, I am.

Andy watches them walk in. Where the fuck is he going?

INT. SINGLE PARENT SUPPORT GROUP - DAY

A room full of bitter, angry single Moms. And Will. Everyone stares at Will. EFFIE, the group leader, smiles at him.

EFFIE
Will, we encourage people to jump right in and share.

WILL
Really? I was kinda hoping to observe. You know, just enjoy everyone else’s problems.

EFFIE
What's your child's name?

WILL
His name? My little guy? Jonah.

The Moms love the name. We hear them say, "Adorable." "Beautiful name." "Biblical."

EFFIE
So what's your relationship like?

WILL
Our relationship. Close. We're inseparable really.

A collective "awww" from the Moms. Dakota grows more interested.

EFFIE
Tell us, Will, how do you keep such a close relationship? It's something so many single parents struggle with. What do you two do together?

WILL
What don't we do together, Effie? What don't we do?
(searching)
We talk. We hang. We do all kinds of activities together. Skiing, surfing, sky diving.

The Moms are all suddenly uneasy.

ANOTHER MOM
You let your child jump out of an airplane?

Will realizes he made a very bad faux pas.

WILL
We were low. Very low. It was a low flight. We were barely aviated. And the poor kid was ill. Sickly. I needed to lift his spirits.

RUTH
What did he have?

WILL
Leukemia.

The whole room is transfixed. Will realizes that he might have taken this too far, but seeing Dakota hang on his every syllable, he realizes there is nowhere to go but further...

EFFIE
Is he okay?

WILL
They told us it was over. But we went to Africa to a healer. Spent months there. There were sweat lodges and prayers and voodoo dolls. I'm telling you, this place was not for the faint of heart. One night, Jonah said to me, "Daddy? I'm sorry I'm so sick." And I looked at him and said, "Son, you are the greatest thing that's ever happened in my life. And I would gladly give my life to make you healthy."

Every single woman in the room is riveted and tearing up.

A MOM
What happened?

WILL
After six months in Africa we returned. The doctors examined him and the cancer was gone. I have him back. I have my boy back.

They all walk up to him, gather around him and pull him into a hug. Will looks at Dakota who looks back at him. She wipes away a tear. And BOOM!

INT. WILL'S CONDO - LATER

Sexy time. Will and Dakota are on the bed. Clothes are a' flying.

DAKOTA
I just want to let you know that I'm not a hooker.

WILL
Awesome, so this is free.

DAKOTA
I'm raising two girls on my own. I have rehearsals in the afternoons, eight performances a week.
(MORE)

DAKOTA (CONT'D)
So I need to schedule me-time Tuesday and Thursday mornings.

WILL
I am free every Tuesday and Thursday forever, so that works.

More clothes come off! Yea! Then a phone BUZZES.

DAKOTA
Ooh, that's me. Hold on...

Will laughs, but then does a double take when Dakota ungracefully rolls off the bed and digs into her bag for her phone.

WILL
Are you kidding?

DAKOTA
I just have to make sure it's not one of my girls. I'm like umbilically attached. You know what that's like.

WILL
Of course I do, but my umbilical is, like, wireless.

Dakota reads her text. Her entire expression changes. She rises, starts to button up.

DAKOTA
Oh no. They changed my daughter's hot lunch menu at school at the last minute. They tried to give her Kung Pao chicken.

WILL
Too spicy? Cause if you drown it in soy sauce...

DAKOTA
Kung Pao chicken has peanuts. She has a nut allergy. She could die.

WILL
Oh. OH.

Now a little pissed, Dakota walks out. Will realizes--

WILL (CONT'D)
Shit! Your number! Wait.

EXT. WILL'S CONDO - DAY

Will emerges in his tighty whities and runs past FIONA (late 30s) exudes vegan throwback hippie-ness, holding moving boxes. She is not happy to see this half-naked man who apparently is her new neighbor.

FIONA
Um, HELLO!?

Will runs straight to Dakota, who is rushing into her car.

WILL
Wait. Dakota. I need your number!
You owe me an orgasm!

Fiona is appalled. Watches Will get Dakota's number. Fiona watches as Will charms Dakota, leaning over into the driver's window and kissing her, so that Fiona is staring at his butt.

Dakota drives away. Will turns, does a little victory dance, waving Dakota's phone number in the air, and comes face to face with Fiona, who looks at him, livid.

WILL (CONT'D)
Welcome to the building. Very friendly.
(re: his underwear)
By the way, if you see a pair like these in the laundry, they're mine.

He extends his hand to shake it.

FIONA
Why don't we try this another time, when there's less of you flopping about?

Fiona goes in her apartment and slams the door. Behind the door, REVEAL MARCUS (11), weird, wearing John Lennon glasses and a hat that belongs on a 70-year-old Frenchman. He stares at Will, fascinated.

EXT. FIONA'S BACKYARD - ANOTHER DAY

Fiona in her tiny backyard, practicing sun salutation positions. She's not very good at it, she keeps stumbling. Clearly, this is someone trying to find herself and is failing. She becomes distracted by the sound of hip hop emanating from next door. Then she smells something -- something bad. She walks over and sees in Will's identical back yard, Will is grilling steaks on the Hibachi and grooving to hip hop.

FIONA
Excuse me...?
(he turns)
Oh, how nice to see you clothed.

WILL
Oh, yeah, I had a situation.

FIONA
Yes, you were owed an orgasm.

WILL
I may ask you to repeat that in court.

FIONA
I was wondering if you could not cook dead animal here. I run a vegan household.

WILL
And that affects me, how...?

Marcus comes out of the house.

MARCUS
Hi. I'm Marcus.

WILL
Hello, Marcus.

MARCUS
My Mom and Dad got divorced so we moved here to improve our lives and discover ourselves.

FIONA
Marcus--

MARCUS
My Mom's doing yoga and expressionistic dancing, oh, and you're thinking about doing a drum circle at--

FIONA
Marcus! Well, yes, as Marcus said, I'm in a bit of an exploratory phase.

MARCUS
And she's single.

FIONA
Okay, Marcus, why don't you go do your homework now?

MARCUS
I don't have any.

FIONA
Do yesterday's.

MARCUS
Alright. See you.

WILL
Welcome to the neighborhood, Marcus. You and I will have to go out and hit the bars, cruise chicks. You could be my wing man.

MARCUS
Cool.

Marcus reluctantly leaves. Fiona fixes on Will.

FIONA
So I would appreciate in the future if you don't talk to Marcus like that.

WILL
It was a joke. I already have a wing man. He's kind of a wuss and his wife's got him whipped but--

FIONA
--I plan to use my yard as a place of reflection. I would appreciate it if you refrained from cooking meat out here unless there's a southwesterly wind. Also, my son, as you can see, is at an impressionable age, so please keep your semi-nude sexual exploits inside your apartment.

WILL
So in the past year, have you gotten laid even once?

Fiona, enraged, storms inside slamming the door. Marcus stands in the window, he shakes his head and mouths, "No."

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

Marcus enters the terrifying war zone that is a middle school cafeteria. Everywhere he looks, terror lurks. Dressed in his weird glasses and weird hat and unhip wardrobe, he looks like a complete freak. It turns out a San Francisco public middle school is full of the same terrifying people as the public school in El Segundo -- he passes tables of Jocks, Losers, Developed Girls, Druggies, Nerds. The one unifying characteristic of all of these groups seems to be that they all think Marcus is a freak. He starts to sit at an empty table, but before he can a hand comes into frame and pulls the chair out. He is face to face with DOUG (13), a mean shit head. Around him, a POSSE of bullies.

DOUG
Don't even think about sitting here, freak.

Marcus moves along to another empty table as Doug hurls a milk carton at Marcus, it splatters all over him.

BULLY
Nice hat, homo.

Marcus sits at a table. Reaches into his lunch bag and opens a container of gluten free pudding. Starts to eat.

INT. WILL'S APARTMENT - ANOTHER EVENING

Will is preparing for a date with Dakota. He pours wine. Puts out cheese and crackers. He has the sexy time music playing and he's totally dancing to it. There's a knock on the door.

WILL
Someone's early!

He opens the door. It's Marcus. He looks out of breath and scared. Will looks up and sees DOUG and the other bullies from the cafeteria standing on the corner. It doesn't take much to realize they have been antagonizing Marcus.

MARCUS
My mom isn't home. And anyway, I, um, I think I lost a ball in your yard the other day.

WILL
Uh, sure. Come on in.

Marcus walks in. Will takes a last look at the bullies and closes the door.

Marcus walks in and immediately notices Will's home recording studio, his prized guitar collection. Will heads to the backyard and looks for Marcus's ball.

MARCUS
So whatever happened to Fortitude?

WILL
My band? That was years ago. How do you know about my band?

MARCUS
Googled it. What's it like to be arrested?

WILL
I'd prefer if you didn't Google me.

MARCUS
It's not really up to you. So you wrote that Christmas song? "Santa's Super Sleigh?"

WILL
Yes, I hate that song.

MARCUS
So does my Mom.

WILL
She does?

MARCUS
Did you get a lot of money for it?

WILL
A ton.

Will comes back from the yard.

WILL (CONT'D)
Dude, there's no ball here, and I have someone coming over.

MARCUS
Like a girl?

WILL
Like a <u>woman</u>.

MARCUS
Why don't you date my mom instead? She's single.

WILL
Yes, you mentioned that.

MARCUS
You should come over for dinner. Do you like soy cheese?

WILL
Yeah, that won't be happening.

There's a knock on the door.

WILL (CONT'D)
Damn.

Will opens the door. It's Dakota.

WILL (CONT'D)
Hello...!

DAKOTA
Hi...!

MARCUS
(to Will, under)
My mom has brown hair too.

Dakota sees Marcus and completely melts.

DAKOTA
Oh my God! You must be Jonah!

Dakota engulfs a confused Marcus in a hug. OFF Will...

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. WILL'S CONDO - SECONDS LATER

Dakota, Will and Marcus are walking in.

WILL
Actually, Jonah was just leaving. He has a friend next door.

DAKOTA
Jonah, from everything I've heard about you, it's just an honor meeting you. You are so brave.

MARCUS
I don't know what you're talking about.

DAKOTA
You're so humble. Tell me what it was like in Africa.

MARCUS
I've never been to Africa.

WILL
He blocks it out. He's having a night terror.

DAKOTA
It's day time.

WILL
Not in Africa.

MARCUS
I don't know what you're--

Will grabs Marcus, pulls his face into his chest and wraps him in a hug--

WILL
He just starts shaking and screaming. The only thing you can do is hold him.
(looks right at Marcus)
Jonah, don't say anything, Jonah. Don't speak. Just take breaths. Jonah. Jonah.

DAKOTA
So he doesn't remember anything about the leukemia? The sweat lodges? The voodoo?

Marcus looks at Will. It's all sinking in. This is a huge lie and Will needs Marcus to be part of it. He needs him. Huh, interesting.

MARCUS
I think I know what's going on, and I have to tell you the truth.

Will looks at Marcus, terrified.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
I would say that if it wasn't for my father, I would be dead right now. I owe him my life. Dad...

Marcus walks to Will and gives him a huge tight hug. Dakota melts. Marcus whispers in Will's ear.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
You owe me. Big.

OFF Will...

INT. ANDY AND LAURIE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Andy cooks dinner. Will is helping sort of, chopping onions. Laurie is with the kids, taking care of them.

LAURIE
Really, Will? You invented a kid and then you gave him leukemia?

WILL
But I cured him. I'm an imaginary miracle worker.

LAURIE
This is how you spend your time? Did you even crack the book I gave you on Godparenting?

WILL
Yes, riveting.

LAURIE
Really?

WILL
No.

ANDY
You need to tell her the truth.

WILL
I can't. You don't understand. Fake Will is so much better than real Will. She is like super into fake Will. And I am too. He's awesome!

LAURIE
But she's over twenty-two, isn't that a little old for you?

WILL
I don't judge your boring sex life, why do you judge my awesome sex life?

ANDY
You judge my boring sex life all the time.
(to Laurie, realizing)
He calls it boring. I call it reliable.
(sees that's a bad choice)
Steady... Consistent?

LAURIE
Can you not see how badly this is going to blow up in your face?

WILL
You know what? What's the harm in playing this out? I'm a much better person pretending to be fake Will. And Marcus seems to be okay being fake Jonah.

LAURIE
JONAH? You named your fake kid JONAH?

INT. WILL'S CONDO - DAY

Will sits there watching TV and there's a knock on the door. He gets up, answers it. It's Marcus. He just walks in.

MARCUS
Hey. Got any more of that cheese left?

Will watches him walk right into his apartment.

WILL
Marcus? I don't want you to get the wrong idea. I appreciate you running with me the other day, but I'm not your... We're not going to be friends.

MARCUS
Why not?

WILL
Well, for one reason I'm thirty six and you're like eight.

MARCUS
I'm eleven.

WILL
Still a pretty wide spread.

MARCUS
I think we can become friends. Honestly, I think we're already pretty close. And anyway, you owe me a dinner for what I did for you.

WILL
I didn't say a dinner.

MARCUS
I'm saying a dinner.

Marcus just walks past.

INT. WILL'S CONDO - LATER

Marcus and Will sit in front of the huge flat screen eating from takeout containers. Marcus drinks straight from a bottle of soda, Will from a bottle of beer. Marcus imitates Will's slouchy couch potato stance on the couch.

Marcus reaches out for a spare rib.

WILL
What are you doing with that?

MARCUS
I'm going to eat it.

WILL
Don't touch those ribs. Those are my ribs. You eat the slimy vegan beans. Do you want your mom to kill me?

MARCUS
I'm already drinking soda from the bottle. We're through the looking glass.

Marcus takes a bite of the spare rib. At first just a small bite. He chews. Swallows. Registers it. Then, he takes another bite. And another. Until he eats the entire thing. He reaches for another spare rib. Ravishes it. Another one. Another. He's taking a spare rib bath. Will watches.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Okay. That tastes nothing like soy.

This gets Will to smile.

INT. WILL'S CONDO - ANOTHER DAY

Will opens the door. It's Marcus again. Will reluctantly lets him in.

INT. WILL'S CONDO - LATER

Will grudgingly watches "Rudy" with Marcus on his big flat screen TV. Marcus is totally engrossed in the movie as he munches popcorn. Offers the bowl to Will.

MARCUS
Popcorn?

Will takes it. Eats some. Steals another look at Marcus; he'd never admit it but he's kind of getting used to the company.

INT. WILL'S CONDO - ANOTHER DAY

Will opens the door. Marcus walks in again. Will looks at him. Really? Again?

INT. WILL'S CONDO - GARAGE - DAY

Will and Marcus play ping pong.

WILL
So one by one, all my friends get married, they start having kids, and their lives as they know it are taken away from them. My friend Andy? Has to ask permission to go out and shoot hoops.

MARCUS
What a puss.

WILL
Exactly. To Freedom!

MARCUS
To Freedom!

INT. WILL'S CONDO - ANOTHER DAY

Will opens the door, Marcus walks in. Will rolls his eyes, but he is getting used to this.

INT. WILL'S CONDO - DAY

Will and Marcus play chess. Marcus is beating Will. Will thinks long and hard and finally moves his knight. Marcus immediately captures it with a pawn.

WILL
Shoot! Can I take that back?

MARCUS
Better to lose with dignity.

WILL
You're right. More guac?

MARCUS
Sure.

They get up. As Will goes to the fridge Marcus turns on a synthesizer and starts hitting some keys.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
What do you do with this?

WILL
That machine turns an ordinary white man into a brother. Check it out.

Will pokes out a melody on the keyboard.

WILL (CONT'D)
Pretty lame, right?

MARCUS
I like it.

WILL
Trust me. It's lame. Okay, now listen.

Will codes a rhythm into the synth, and the same melody plays, but now under a hip hop rhythm. Marcus is totally enchanted.

MARCUS
Wow.

Will totally dances to the beat. Cracks Marcus up. Then they go to the guac and chips. Marcus wonders whether to bring something up, then--

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Did you get made fun of at school?

Will gets that Marcus is going into territory that he's vulnerable about.

WILL
A little, I guess. Why? Do you?

MARCUS
Constantly. Everyone makes fun of me. Even the nice kids. I guess I bring it out in people.

WILL
And those kids that were standing on the corner the first day you came over? Were they hassling you?

MARCUS
If you call following me home from school and picking me up and throwing me headfirst into a trash bin hassling me, then yes.

WILL
You can't let them do that.

MARCUS
Thanks. Next time I'll activate my super powers.

Will tries to figure out what to say, then...

WILL
You just need to find your thing. When I was in middle school, I discovered music.

MARCUS
Me too. I'm gonna sing in my school talent show. I'm kind of doing it to cheer up my Mom.

WILL
Why, is she sad?

MARCUS
She cries sometimes. Which again, is why you should come over for dinner.

WILL
As much as I love a crying woman...

MARCUS
I'm not asking you to date her anymore. Maybe you could at least be friends with her. Please.

WILL
Marcus...

MARCUS
If you needed me to be Jonah again, I'd do it.

OFF Will, stuck, we, PRELAP: two voices singing Adele's "Someone Like You," and --

INT. FIONA'S CONDO - ANOTHER NIGHT

Fiona plays piano. Marcus stands next to her. They sing in two part harmony with complete reverence. They're both really into it, both belting it out. It's super uncool. And super endearing.

FIONA & MARCUS
Never mind, I'll find someone like you/I wish nothing but the best for you too...

PAN TO REVEAL: Will watching this remarkably strange sight, a frozen smile glued on. They get to the end of the song. They turn to Will. Will is frozen until he just starts clapping.

WILL
Wow.

FIONA & MARCUS
Yeah?

WILL
Yeah. Wow.

CUT TO:

DINING ROOM - LATER

Dinner! Fiona serves Marcus and Will heaping portions.

FIONA
Seitan spare ribs. Delish.

Marcus and Will exchange a furtive look, they've had the real thing. Will takes a bite, fights to keep it down.

FIONA (CONT'D)
It was so nice of you to invite yourself over.

WILL
I didn't.

They both stare at Marcus.

WILL (CONT'D)
So, how are you finding San Francisco?

FIONA
Oh, it's wonderful. I mean, the sights. The Wharf is just beautiful. And Golden Gate Park. And the other day I walked all the way from the Presidio to... the... the...

Fiona just starts to become emotional. Will cannot believe what's happening. Marcus chimes in, tries to lighten the mood.

MARCUS
More seitan?

WILL
God, no.

FIONA
(tearing up)
Anyway, as I was saying... I went to Russian Hill. We never had any of those shops back home. Where I was happy. And married....

And now she is in full blown crying mode. Will wants out. Really bad.

WILL
Maybe I should...

MARCUS
Don't go. We're having tofu cheesecake for dessert.

WILL
Well in that case...

FIONA
(through tears)
I'm sorry, I wasn't so sure about you coming over. I'm very sure I don't want you to see me melting down.

She leaves. They hear huge sobs from within. Awkward.

MARCUS
I think she had a really bad drum circle.

Fiona pops her head in, through her tears--

FIONA
Try the quinoa. Really good for you and really tasty.

WILL
You have a snot bubble.

FIONA
I know.

She leaves again. More sobs from within.

MARCUS
Wanna see my Mom's glass bird collection?

OFF Will...

INT. WILL'S CONDO - EVENING

There's a knock on the door. Will opens the door. It's Dakota. She wears a cute dress.

WILL
Well, hello.

DAKOTA
I know we don't have plans, but I have a crazy idea.

WILL
I think I know where this is going.

Will suddenly grabs her, kisses her, twists her, grinds into her against the door, grabs her ass.

DAKOTA
Whoa, that's not what I... Will!

Will turns and sees Dakota's daughters MAKALA (10) and EDEN (6) standing in front of the car holding groceries.

EDEN
He's touching your butt.

Will removes his hand.

DAKOTA
Makala's going to middle school next year and my crazy idea is we all have dinner and maybe Jonah could tell Makala a little bit about life at Oakwood.

WILL
That is a crazy idea. But Jonah just has a ton of homework. The poor kid's under water--

DAKOTA
Well, we came all this way, at least let us say hello...

Dakota and the girls start to walk in...

WILL
Let me see if I can tear Jonah away from what he's doing.

SMASH TO:

EXT. FIONA'S BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Will stands on top of a tool shack and urgently raps on Marcus's window. Marcus opens it. They speak in urgent whispers:

WILL
Marcus, where's your mom?

MARCUS
She needs to meditate. She had a horrible day.

WILL
Perfect. Come with me.

INT. WILL'S CONDO - LATER

Marcus and Will look miserable, wearing tiaras and having a tea party with Makala and Eden. Will looks back over to the kitchen, smiles at Dakota. She smiles back. It's all worth it.

MAKALA
Okay, time to play dress up!

Marcus pulls Will aside.

MARCUS
No way I'm getting into a dress.

WILL
I'll get you ribs.

MARCUS
Full rack.

WILL
Half rack.

MARCUS
Half rack and two sides.

WILL
Okay, but not potatoes and rice, that's all starch.

MARUCS
Bottomless sodas?

WILL
Deal.

Will looks over at the kitchen to get one more look at Dakota. But she isn't there. She's in the backyard, putting steaks on the grill. They sizzle. Noooo!

WILL (CONT'D)
Hold on!

Will gets up and runs to--

EXT. BACKYARD - SAME

Will runs up to the grill, panicked.

WILL
We need to take those off. Now. There's a crazy vegan bitch next door and we have a Northerly wind.

Fiona appears--

FIONA
She may be a crazy vegan but she is not a bitch. Not always anyway.

Fiona stares at Will in a tiara, starts to ask--

FIONA (CONT'D)
Why are you wearing a--

But then Marcus comes out in a tiara, shoving a big piece of salami in his mouth.

MARCUS
Hey, Dad, how are the steaks coming? I'm starv--

FIONA
(aghast!)
What!? Marcus!?

MARCUS
(busted)
Hi Mom.

DAKOTA
Who's Marcus?

MARCUS
I am.

Dakota looks at Will confused--

DAKOTA
Your son is Marcus?

FIONA
<u>YOUR</u> SON? HE'S <u>MY</u> SON!

DAKOTA
What's she talking about?

FIONA
You used my son and forced him to eat meat in order to have sex with her?!

WILL
It is all free range meat.

MARCUS
They lived happy lives.

DAKOTA
(to Will)
Do you even have a son?

WILL
Does a Godson count?

DAKOTA
Asshole.

FIONA
Criminal.

DAKOTA
(to her girls)
We're going.

FIONA
(to Marcus)
Marcus, get over the fence, now!

Everyone makes a hasty exit. Marcus turns back to Will.

MARCUS
Are we still on for ribs?

Fiona helps Marcus into the yard and slams the door as they head inside. OFF WILL...

<u>END OF ACT TWO</u>

ACT THREE

INT. WILL'S CONDO - NIGHT

Will sits dejected. At a low. There's a knock on the door. He opens it. It's Marcus.

MARCUS
Hey.

Marcus just walks in. What was funny before isn't funny anymore to Will.

WILL
You gotta stop coming over here.

MARCUS
But we're friends.

WILL
Look, Marcus...

MARCUS
I brought you a flyer for my talent show. Just in case you want to come.

Marcus hands Will a flyer, which he folds without looking at it and puts in his pocket.

WILL
Marcus. Considering what happened the other day, I don't need any more trouble with your mom. From now on, we see each other, we nod, we smile, and that's it. Sorry, Marcus. We're not friends.

Marcus is visibly stung. Will feels bad, but he knows he needs to make a clean break here. OFF this...

EXT. GOLDEN GATE PARK - DAY

Andy has all three of his kids in the kiddy park. He pushes two of them on a swing while he holds Jonah in a baby bjorn.

WILL
I had to do it. I had to cut the cord with Marcus, right?

ANDY
Uh huh.

WILL
I mean, these people are officially weird. I can't take this on right now.

ANDY
You have to cash the checks from that stupid song. Chase women. Full plate.

WILL
Hey, how about a little support?

ANDY
You don't want to be Jonah's Godparent, you don't want to help out the weird kid next door. You don't want to care about anyone who isn't you. You never wanted to care about anybody who isn't you.

Andy walks away to focus on his kids, leaving Will stunned. Will watches his best friend with his children -- it's a sweet moment of Andy just loving his kids. Soaking them in.

Will reaches into his jacket pocket, and finds the crumpled up flyer from Marcus's talent show. He looks at it. Alarm building.

We see what he's looking at: a flyer for the Oakwood Middle School talent show. And listed as one of the featured performers is: MARCUS BOWA, PERFORMING ADELE'S "SOMEONE LIKE YOU." A CAPELLA.

WILL
Oh no. Oh no.

Then he sees the date on the flyer: September 14th, 11:30 AM. He looks at his watch: 11:14!

WILL (CONT'D)
ANDY!!!!!

EXT. OAKWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

Will and Andy, kids in tow, sprint through the front entrance.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

A middle school JAZZ QUARTET plays. The back door opens and Will and Andy enter along with Andy's three kids.

Every seat in the house is filled with students and parents. Will takes a look around. Mean girls. Jocks. The BULLIES that Will saw on the corner the first day Marcus came over. This is a disaster waiting to happen. Fiona sees him, strides up.

FIONA
What are you doing here?

WILL
You need to stop Marcus from doing this. It will be humiliating for him.

FIONA
As opposed to putting him in a tiara? You are the most selfish and insensitive person I've ever met and now you're telling me how to parent my son? Marcus really looked up to you and all you did was force feed him dead animal and break his heart.

WILL
Okay, I'm tired of being called insensitive and selfish. You dragged your son to a new town and while you're busy discovering your inner Chakra, he's getting bullied at school.

FIONA
What?

WILL
And it will get insanely worse if you let him do this. It's social suicide. And for the record, I didn't force him to eat meat. He likes meat. He loves it. He's a carnivore. You don't want to be in a plane crash in the Andes if Marcus is on board. And if you're not going to stop this, I will.

He starts down the aisle.

ANDY
(to Fiona)
Nice to--

WILL
(without turning back)
Andy!

Andy follows Will. But Will stops, seeing Dakota in the audience with her daughters.

WILL (CONT'D)
Hey. Listen, about the other day...

DAKOTA
Do not talk to me. Don't ever talk to me.

They continue down the aisle.

ANDY
Are there any women here you haven't pissed off?

INT. BACKSTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The rest of the acts are all groups, but Marcus stands alone. Will runs up to him.

WILL
Marcus.

MARCUS
What are you doing here?

On stage the EMCEE announces--

EMCEE
And now, performing Adele's "Someone Like You," Marcus Bowa.

WILL
Look, Marcus, I don't think this is a good idea.

MARCUS
You won't be my mom's friend and my singing makes her happy.

The Emcee turns to Marcus...

EMCEE
Marcus!

WILL
Don't go out there.

MARCUS
So just walk away from it. Figures that would be your advice.

WILL
Listen, I'm sorry if I was harsh the other day, but I'm not nearly as harsh as middle schoolers. They suck. They're cruel and mean and they have long memories. Do not go out there, Marcus. I'm serious.

MARCUS
You're talking to me like we're friends. We're not friends. Remember?

Will watches helplessly as Marcus walks out to the stage. There's a single spotlight on him. Even before he opens his mouth there are giggles from the audience.

Marcus looks at Will backstage, then turns back to the audience.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
This is dedicated to my best friend. My Mom.

Will cringes. This couldn't get any worse. Until he starts to sing.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
I heard that you're settled down. That you found a girl and you're married now...

At first, the audience watches with stunned open mouthed expressions. But as Marcus continues, the giggling increases.

Hearing the giggles, Marcus realizes he is going down in a blaze of glory. Nothing else to do, he just digs deeper and sings even louder. The laughter grows. The BULLIES throw heckles out from the darkness.

ON WILL -- he can't let this happen. Looks to Andy, who has just arrived--

WILL
We've got to do something.

He turns and sees a synthesizer set up for one of the acts.

IN THE AUDIENCE

Fiona watches, pained, as the entire school laughs at her child. Will was right.

Dakota watches, feeling for Marcus. As one of her daughters lets out a giggle, she sternly shushes her.

MARCUS
I hate to turn up out of the blue uninvited/But I couldn't stay away, I couldn't fight it./I had hoped you'd see my face and that you'd be reminded/That for me it isn't over.

Then suddenly, the stage goes black. It's totally dark. Confusion in the audience.

Then, a HIP HOP BEAT comes from the darkness. The same beat that Will played earlier.

ON MARCUS in the darkness, is that the beat he recognizes?

AT THE LIGHT BOARD - Andy hands a PIMPLY KID a twenty, and he punches some keys and the stage lights come up with a sexy blue glow.

ON STAGE

Marcus, as confused as everyone, turns and sees next to him on stage - WILL! The synthesizer is in front of him.

Will looks at Marcus, smiles. Marcus looks at him, still completely confused, but moved to see Will come to his aid.

WILL
Two, three, four...

Marcus and Will start singing the chorus together to the syncopated hip hop beat.

WILL AND MARCUS
Never mind, I'll find someone like you/I wish nothing but the best for you too...

The Audience starts to get into it. With the hip hop beat and the lights, Will has turned this into something cool. Well, cooler than it was.

WILL AND MARCUS (CONT'D)
Don't forget me, I beg/I remember you said/Sometimes it lasts in love but sometimes it hurts instead/ Sometimes it lasts in love but sometimes it hurts instead.

We watch as the crowd comes around, getting into it. And the more they do, the more Will gets into it. Maybe this isn't just all for Marcus, it seems pretty cathartic for Will too.

In the audience, Fiona watches, seeing her son embraced by the entire school.

Dakota watches -- clearly moved by Will and what he has done.

Andy dances with his kids and sings along under his breath.

As they near the final chorus... Fiona wipes a tear from her eye.

They finish the song. As they take their bows.

WILL
Friends?

MARCUS
Double rack of ribs and a cheeseburger for dessert.

WILL
No way. Double cheeseburger.

On Will and Marcus, arm in arm, taking their bows...

END OF ACT THREE

TAG

INT. ANDY AND LAURIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Will holds Baby Jonah in their makeshift Godparent ceremony as Andy videotapes. Laurie mouths along, as Will reads a speech that Laurie clearly wrote.

WILL
I vow to be there for you. And I vow to better myself -- becoming a more mature person so I can be a better Godparent to you.

Will looks at Laurie, gives her the stink eye. Laurie nods, keep reading.

WILL (CONT'D)
And I vow to always love you as if you were...
(he looks to Laurie)
I'm not going to say this.

LAURIE
Say it.

WILL
This is stupid.

LAURIE
"I vow to love you as if you were the fruit of my own loins." Say IT.

WILL
That's gross.

LAURIE
It's beautiful.

WILL
It's sick. I'm done.

Will hands the baby to Laurie. Andy keeps videotaping. He follows Laurie, who follows Will out onto--

EXT. STREET - DAY

Laurie screams at Will.

LAURIE
You're never gonna grow up. You're an infant, Will. An infant. Good. Run. That's perfect.

Will runs down the street. Laurie turns back to camera.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
Why are you still recording. Turn that stupid thing off.

And as the video goes black...

END OF PILOT