

THE MANNY

"Pilot"

Written by

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COLD OPEN

INT. AQUARIUM AUDITORIUM - MORNING

A group of SCHOOL CHILDREN watch an edutainment song: OTTO OCTOPUS on keys, PEGGY PENGUIN on percussion, and TINA TAMBORINA - a tambourine-playing turtle - as front-woman.

TINA

There's harmony under the sea. /
You don't eat me, we eat algae. /
And even if we sometimes disagree /
There's a harmony under the sea.

Tina dances over a percussion solo, then turns to the kids.

TINA (CONT'D)

We have another good friend under
the sea! Do you want to meet him?

The kids scream "YEAH!!!"

TINA (CONT'D)

Here he is - Grayson Gray Whale!

DERBY PIPER (28) enters on a wailing guitar solo, dressed as a whale, but looks like a shark. The children scream.

VARIOUS KIDS

Shark! No! Don't eat me! MOOMMM!

Kids run screaming. Teachers scramble. Tina scowls at Derby.

INT. STAFF LOCKER ROOM - MINUTES LATER

The musicians change clothes and pack. Derby - still in costume - straps his guitar to a cart with his amp.

DERBY

You can't fire me! I'm endangered!

TINA

Derby, We can't keep losing kids
before the end of the number.

DERBY

But I'm not a shark - we have to
teach those kids about whales!

TINA

It's not just the costume. With
Otto on piano, we don't need you.

Otto shrugs his eight arms.

DERBY
Every band needs a guitar.

TINA
Kids today want beats. Hip hop.

PEGGY
I bought a DJ set up. Kids love it.
(using flippers like a DJ)
Whicca whicca womp.

Derby slams his locker.

DERBY
Fine. I'll take my six string, my
Masters of Music, my costume, and -

TINA
You can't take the costume, Derby.

DERBY
I paid for it. At least let me keep
my dignity.

He grabs his gear and turns at the door.

DERBY (CONT'D)
I hope a real shark gobbles you up!

EXT. UNEMPLOYMENT OFFICE - LATER

Derby - still wearing his whale costume - rolls his guitar
cart down the sidewalk, and into the unemployment building.

INT. UNEMPLOYMENT OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Derby reaches the front of the line and hands his paperwork
to a CLERK, who looks him up and down.

CLERK
Oh. You're a part-time contractor?

DERBY
Yes - at the Aquarium.

CLERK
("obviously")
Mm-hmm. Contract employees are not
eligible for unemployment.

DERBY
I've got student loans. I live with
my ex - I've got to get out!

CLERK
Maybe you can work as a pool shark.

DERBY
I'm not a shark, I'm a whale.

CLERK
Whale-fare office is down the hall.

She snickers. He grimaces.

CLERK (CONT'D)
What skills do you have?

DERBY
My music brings people to their
knees. And I have this whale suit.

CLERK
(a la Jaws)
Dun-uh. Dun-uh.

She laughs in his face.

DERBY
I'm not a shark. I'm a -

CLERK
("whale")
Well, sir. Teach a man to fish, you
feed him for a lifetime.

She laughs. Derby's face lights up with an idea.

CLERK (CONT'D)
Next!

SMASH TO TITLES:

THE MANNY

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

EXT. BOSTON COMMON - EARLY AFTERNOON

Derby drops his gear, lights a cigarette and dials his phone.

DERBY

Hey pops. It's Derby. Uh. I could
use your help. Call me back, kay?

He watches a kids' birthday party in progress nearby.

Derby takes his guitar out and plays a blues song - a la
Catfish Blues - full of anguish. But he's still a whale.
Lawyers, professors and tourists walk by, double-taking at
the singing whale. Several drop cash in Derby's case.

Parents gossip at a picnic table, full of gifts and food.
MARGOT PALMER (40s), WASPish and stuffy, skirts the edges.

MARGOT

(on the phone)

Nannies can't quit after a month.
What does that mean, 'unstable
environment'? My kids adore her.

Other parents look at her, embarrassed.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

Me?! Oh. I only want the best for
them, if she can't deliver -. Fine.
Then send me someone else. No, I
need a new nanny: TODAY.

Her face drops.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

Fine - if sending me three failed
nannies in six months is what you
call representing me, you will no
longer get my business.

She hangs up, and sees ED and BLAIR (20s) staring at her.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

Redoing the kitchen is hell, huh?

The children gather around Derby as he finishes. WILLA (8)
and EDMUND (5) push to the front. Edmund can't say his R's.

EDMUND

You've silly!

DERBY
 (in a whale voice)
 Not silly. I'm sad.

WILLA
 I play cello!

DERBY
 I knew a fellow who could play the
 cello.

EDMUND
 Why don't you talk nohmal?

DERBY
 Isn't this how everybody talks?

The kids cry out in laughing protest. Derby plays a new song.
 Margot noses into a circle of TODD, TASIA, and BROOKE.

MARGOT
 Hi. Hi. Great party, Brooke.

BROOKE
 Thanks, Margot. I'm thrilled Willa
 joined us.

MARGOT
 Wouldn't miss it. I'm glad she's
 made friends with the, uh-

BROOKE
 With who?

MARGOT
 Oh, the, uh, I was going to say
 scholarship kids, but -

Brooke smiles, glugs the rest of her wine, and walks away.

BROOKE
 Oops. Need a refill.

MARGOT
 Do you two have a nanny? Or a
 babysitter? I've got this
 fundraiser tomorrow night and -

TASIA
 Todd's actually a stay-at-home dad,
 so he's got childcare covered.

MARGOT
Oh, wow. Great skill in a husband.

TODD
Which one's yours?

MARGOT
Oh, my husband's dead.

Todd's face drops.

TODD
I, uh, meant your kid.

MARGOT
Oh - they're -. Where are they?

Kids surround the table, chowing down. Margot looks beyond them and sees: Edmund bashing a tambourine, and Derby showing Willa a chord on guitar. Margot walks over to them.

WILLA
Mom! Listen, I learned a C Chord!

EDMUND
Mama! Mama! I leawned tambowine!

MARGOT
Tambourine, Edmund. Why don't you both go grab a piece of cake?

Edmund tears away at this exciting suggestion.

EDMUND
CAAAAAAAAAAAAKE!!!

Willa looks at her feet.

MARGOT
(to Willa)
Don't be nervous, honey. Go play with your friends.

WILLA
I wish they were my friends.

Margot is about to speak when Derby leans over to Willa.

DERBY
Psst. The best way to make friends is to just be with them. You spend enough time together and suddenly -
(he snaps)
Fast friends!

Willa smiles and goes to join the crowd.

MARGOT

You have the magic touch. Usually when she pouts like that we leave the party early.

DERBY

Oh, it's easy. I just treat them like small people.

MARGOT

I hope Brooke is paying you what you're worth.

DERBY

I wish I could get paid for this.

Margot gapes at him.

MARGOT

Don't tell me she makes you do parties on top of the day to day.

Derby shrugs, confused.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

I offer great compensation if you're interested in a new job.

DERBY

What kind of job.

MARGOT

I'd want you to do music lessons.

DERBY

Done.

MARGOT

How do you feel about breakfast?

DERBY

Most important meal of the day.

MARGOT

I'm hosting a fundraiser tomorrow and, well, I can't have them seen or heard. Can you start that soon? Brooke won't be sad to lose you?

DERBY

We don't have a formal commitment.

Margot smiles.

MARGOT

Great. When can you move in?

DERBY

Oh. I'm not looking for a relationship.

MARGOT

It's a live-in job. You have your own entrance to a private apartment. Food's included.

DERBY

This sounds too good to be true.

MARGOT

Fine. Why don't we do a one week trial, if you insist? Here's the address, and the salary - I hope that works?

She hands him her business card; "1k/week, room and board" is handwritten on it.

DERBY

Oh. I can work with that.

They shake hands. Margot walks away.

DERBY (CONT'D)

Can I stay there tonight?

EXT. PALMER HOUSE - EVENING

Derby parks an old and busted car out front of a gorgeous - and expensive - three storey home in Cambridge. He gawks at the neighborhood - filled with trees, groomed lawns, a park, and large 19th century homes.

He opens his trunk and takes out a dusty cardboard box full of clothes, when a voice stabs him from behind.

PATTY

You must be the new experiment.

Derby turns to find PATTY (27), a young Black woman in classy casual, coming down the drive.

DERBY

Sorry?

PATTY
 I'm Patty. Margot's house manager.
 I handle the logistics for the home
 - including the temporary help.

She hands over a set of keys.

DERBY
 The welcoming committee. Thanks.

Patty sniffs.

PATTY
 You don't smoke?

DERBY
 No! It's not me - it's the car.

PATTY
 The kids will be in the car.

DERBY
 I'll get some air freshener.

She eyes the car, doubtful.

PATTY
 It does run?

Derby closes the trunk.

DERBY
 No. It drives.

PATTY
 Good.

She starts away.

DERBY
 Why do you say "temporary?"

PATTY
 These kids have been through a lot.
 Did she tell you?

Derby sighs.

DERBY
 They're adopted, huh?

PATTY

No. I mean, yes, they are. Edmund's Haitian and Willa's Vietnamese. Did she tell you about Richard?

DERBY

No. He's what, Italian?

PATTY

He's her husband. He died three months after the children came. They went from rural orphanages, to this, to losing their new father.

Derby shakes his head.

PATTY (CONT'D)

And we haven't had a nanny last more than two months. So I'm protective. And it's not fair to you or me - or to those babies - to pretend that this -

(she dismisses Derby and his stuff with a finger)
- is going to last.

She smiles, and gives him the keys. Derby starts up the walk.

PATTY (CONT'D)

Ahem. Staff enter on the side.

She points down the driveway.

PATTY (CONT'D)

And breakfast starts at 6.

Patty starts down the street. Derby looks after her.

DERBY

(whale voice, to himself)
With a welcome like that, who'd stay?

INT. PALMER HOUSE STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Derby climbs the stairs. On a landing, he passes a closed door - through it he hears Edmund crying. Derby frowns, and goes upstairs.

INT. PALMER HOUSE THIRD FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Derby enters his "attic apartment": spacious, furnished, elegant. CLEAN. He lays his jacket on the coffee table and the box on the jacket.

Derby looks out the window at the moon rising over the city.

DERBY

Definitely too good to be true.

INT. DERBY'S 3RD FLOOR APARTMENT - THE NEXT MORNING

Derby's alarm goes off: 5:45am.

Bleary-eyed, he gets in the shower of a pristine bathroom. He lets the hot water batter the exhaustion off of him.

He doesn't see the flicker of movement behind him as he rubs his eyes. But a small voice grabs his attention.

EDMUND

Morning Dehby.

Derby's eyes explode wide. He peeks out from the curtain to see Edmund, bright-eyed, sitting on Derby's toilet.

DERBY

Good Morning, Edmund.

EDMUND

Did you sleep ok?

DERBY

I did. Did you?

EDMUND

I had a nightmare. But I fohgot.

Derby holds the curtain firmly over his nethers.

DERBY

What are you doing up here, buddy?

EDMUND

A number two. I'm learning how. See you at breakfast!

Edmund flushes and zooms his action figure out of the room.

Derby - perplexed and now wide awake - looks after him in wonder and dread, before the super-hot post-flush shower water hits him and he scrambles to turn down the heat.

INT. PALMER RESIDENCE FIRST FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Derby comes down the stairs, dressed and ready...until he hears the cacophony coming from the kitchen.

INT. PALMER KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Derby enters the kitchen to find Margot, Edmund, and Willa in chaos. Edmund stamps and screams on the banquette, his shirt half-way off and covering his head. Willa yells and spells her spelling homework to Margot, who is trying to open a K-Cup with a large butcher knife.

DERBY

Good morning!

WILLA

Derby! D - E - R -

MARGOT

Where were you?! Breakfast is at 6!

DERBY

It's 6:01. I'm starving!

Margot puts her hands on hips; her "I mean business" move.

MARGOT

You. Serve the breakfast.

DERBY

Oops.

Edmund's head pops out an arm hole.

EDMUND

Ha ha! Oops! Oops!

WILLA

Breakfast! B - R -

MARGOT

Derby - HELP.

Derby blinks to gather himself and moves into gear.

DERBY

I'm on it. What can I get you?

MARGOT

Coffee. Cream. Two sugars. Thanks -
I've got a meeting in...oh.

She looks at her watch, shakes her head, and leaves.

DERBY
 (Grayson voice)
 Cream and Two sugars? That's not
 coffee, that's a milkshake.

Edmund giggles.

WILLA
 Milkshake. M - I - L - K - S -

DERBY
 Eddie-baby, fix your shirt.
 Willa! A moment of silence.

WILLA
 I have a spelling test.

Derby hands her paper and a pen, then pops a K-Cup in the
 coffee machine.

DERBY
 Write it down. I'll grade it.

Derby peers in the fridge.

DERBY (CONT'D)
 Now: who wants bacon?

Edmund and Willa raise their hands.

INT. PALMER KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Edmund taps and bangs on the table, humming to himself. Willa
 nervously watches Derby who cooks and looks at her spelling.

EDMUND
 Wewe you bown in the ocean?

WILLA
 He's not actually a shark.

DERBY
 No. I was born in Texas. And I'm a
 whale, not a shark. Nicely done on
 "composer," Willa.

EDMUND
 Whewe is your Texas accent?

DERBY

I only have an accent in Texas.
 (now with accent)
 And at parties. "Conductor" - 'o'
 at the end, not 'e.'

Willa drops her head.

DERBY (CONT'D)

No, you did really well! Even got
 "musician," which I can't spell.

Willa perks up and chows down. The coffee beeps.

DERBY (CONT'D)

I will be back...for Bacon!

He leaves with the coffee. Willa slaps Edmund's hands. He glares, then drums again, using her head as a cymbal.

INT. PALMER LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Margot sits with LINTON (50s) - a raffish and...uniquely dressed... antique dealer and Margot's business partner. Though he hopes to one day add pleasure to the list. Margot sifts emails on her phone.

MARGOT

Regrets from Yo-Yo Ma. Regrets from
 Chick Corea. Our fundraiser to get
 the arts back in underserved
 communities won't have any artists.

LINTON

There's something poetic about
 that. Relax, Margot - The "money"
will be in the room!

MARGOT

Hopefully some of it will stay here
 when the people leave.

Derby brings coffee to Margot.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

Linton, this is Derby, the nanny.

Linton stands to shake hands.

LINTON

You look younger and whiter and
 maler than the last time I saw you.

MARGOT
That was the old one. Derby's new.

LINTON
Getting along with the little
monsters?

DERBY
Day one seems to be going well!

A scream from the kitchen brings Margot to her feet.

DERBY (CONT'D)
That'll be the bacon.

Derby rushes to the kitchen.

LINTON
One breakfast is a record, even for
you, Margot.

INT. PALMER KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Derby runs in to find Edmund's mouth open in silent emotional
agony, and Willa yells out spelling.

WILLA
S - W - O - R - D. S - W - O - R -

DERBY
Willa! What's going on?

EDMUND
(inconsolable)
She's being me-e-ean.

WILLA
It's not mean it's just spelling. S
- W - O - R - D.

Edmund erupts, sobbing. Patty comes in from the back door
with groceries, surveys the scene, and smiles.

PATTY
What a peaceful morning!

Derby kneels down to Willa.

DERBY
(whispered)
Why are you spelling "sword."

WILLA
(whispered)
Not "sword." "S-word."

DERBY
(whispered)
Why are you saying the s-word?

WILLA
(whispered)
Because he was being it.

Derby is baffled.

DERBY
(whispered)
Which S-word?

Willa looks at Patty, who's putting away groceries.

DERBY (CONT'D)
You're allowed to say it if I ask.

WILLA
"Stupid."

Despite all their attempts, Edmund has heard this, and explodes into new screams. Derby looks at Patty with "help me!" eyes.

PATTY
Tick-tock. Tick-tock.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. DERBY'S 3RD FLOOR APARTMENT - LATE MORNING

Derby blasts rock music and dances as he makes himself at home. Which doesn't involve much...

He opens his suitcase and transfers his jeans, shirts, and underwear to the top drawers of the dresser in the room. He looks questioningly at the remaining empty drawers.

DERBY
(to himself)
Home sweet home.

INT. PALMER LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Margot crosses an item off her list as Linton brings in tea.

MARGOT
And after the paté, I'll call for
attention.

Linton demos, with a spoon against his tea cup, spilling it.

LINTON
Whoop! Sorry.

MARGOT
Without quite that much enthusiasm.
And we'll turn to the video
testimonials.

Linton tries to sip his tea around the chip.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
You did collect the videos?

LINTON
Oop. Yes! Right here.

He holds up a thumb drive.

MARGOT
We'll need to run the laptop to the
television so that -

LINTON
Allow me. Mr. Connection at your
disposal.

Linton opens a box, revealing a rats' nest of cables.

LINTON (CONT'D)
All right. Eenie, meenie, miney -
(he picks one.)
Moe?

Margot sips her tea. Derby and Edmund come in from the kitchen.

EDMUND
Hi mama. What's that?

MARGOT
This is a list of the food for tonight. "Paté, skewers, a crudité."

EDMUND
What's a cwudité?

MARGOT
You'll hate it: sliced vegetables.

Edmund makes an "ewww" face.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
That's why this party is for adults! Which reminds me, Derby: tonight, bring the children down but keep a short leash, please.

Edmund pulls cords out from Linton's box and quickly gets tangled in them. No one notices.

DERBY
Yes ma'am.

MARGOT
And you can all disappear after supper. I have important guests tonight and we need to keep these two from being underfoot!

Edmund is fully wrapped in computer cords.

EDMUND
What's "undahfoot?"

Derby rushes to help untangle him.

DERBY
You are.

MARGOT
Unwrap yourself, Edmund - it's time
for piano.

EDMUND
Sowwy.

Edmund sulks and spins as Derby pulls the cords off of him.

MARGOT
I don't know where you get that
Brooklyn accent.

EDMUND
Bwooklyn.

DERBY
("um...what?")
What Brooklyn accent?

MARGOT
("Those 'Rs')
Dose Aws.
(answering her ringing
phone)
Can you work with him on that,
Derby?

DERBY
Oh. Sure.

Derby leads Edmund up the stairs. Linton connects a new cord
between the laptop and TV.

LINTON
This should be the one...Got It!

The screen flashes with static.

INT. PALMER SECOND FLOOR LIVING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Derby and Edmund sit at the piano. Edmund struggles to play
and sing a progression of scales with one hand. Derby's phone
rings. He glances at it then silences it.

EDMUND
You don't have to answer?

DERBY
Not while we're playing music.

EDMUND
Mama always answers.

DERBY

It's just my dad - I can call him back.

Edmund tries another scale - a sad one.

EDMUND

What is it like to have a dad?

DERBY

It's nice. I called him for some advice.

Edmund fidgets and plays something childish and beautiful.

EDMUND

I miss mine dad.

DERBY

I bet you do. I miss my dad too. When I feel sad, I play music to let the sad out.

EDMUND

Oh. Piano just makes me mowe sad.

He plunks angrily on the keys.

DERBY

Why's that?

Edmund stops playing and stares at his hands.

EDMUND

It's hawd to play good. I want to play dwums but mama says I have to leawn a impowtant instwument.

DERBY

She said drums aren't important?

Edmund tinkles the keys. Derby sits next to him at the piano.

Then he suddenly smashes his hand on the keys, making a loud, drum-like boom. Edmund looks up at him, scared, but then smiles. Edmund slams the keys too.

They bang and howl. Edmund laughs - this kind of playing does not make him feel sad.

INT. PALMER LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Margot and Linton look up at the ceiling as booming piano sounds crash through the house. Margot covers her phone from the noise.

MARGOT

All right, Julia, I'll see you this evening.

She hangs up. Patty leads a sullen Willa in from the kitchen.

PATTY

What is that?

MARGOT

Piano practice. I guess this is Derby's music school technique.

Patty scowls.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

How was the quiz?

WILLA

I got a 92.

Margot checks her phone, absently.

MARGOT

Well. That's not terrible.

PATTY

Come, Willa.

Patty takes Willa upstairs. Linton untangles cords on the floor, humming with the piano.

LINTON

I like it.
(German accent)
Ist very Vagner, ya?

He plugs in the latest cord.

LINTON (CONT'D)

Och. Nein!

INT. PALMER SECOND FLOOR LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Patty and Willa open the door to cacophony from the piano.

PATTY
Derby? Derby!

The noise continues.

WILLA
(screaming)
STOPPIT!

Silence falls as Derby and Edmund turn.

EDMUND
That was wude.

Willa plops on the couch, pouting. Patty sets a snack on the table in front of Willa and goes to the door.

PATTY
Time for cello lesson. Maybe keep
the volume down on this one?

Patty goes to the stairwell.

DERBY
How about another scale, buddy?

Edmund plays scales. Derby sits on the couch next to Willa.

DERBY (CONT'D)
The magical invisible cello lesson?

Willa grouchily chomps on carrots and glares at him.

DERBY (CONT'D)
How was the spelling test?

WILLA
A. W. F. U. L.

DERBY
Did you get a score on it?

WILLA
(like it's cancer)
Ninety - two!

DERBY
Whew. That's tough.

WILLA
Mom is so disappointed.

DERBY
You think?

Willa sulks.

WILLA

She couldn't even look at me.
 (she takes a deep breath
 and the words flood out)
 It's just hard to learn so many
 words and do my science project and
 keep up with cello and I'm good but
 she says I'm only fourth grade
 level and I need to be fifth or
 even sixth grade level by -

DERBY

Whoa. But you're in third grade.

WILLA

Right. So if I'm not playing cello
 at a sixth grade level yet then I
 may as well quit.

DERBY

No one's any good after one year.
 Did your mom say that?

Willa wipes her nose.

WILLA

No. But Yo-Yo played for the
 president when he was 7.

DERBY

Dang. I guess I should quit too.

Edmund stops playing and turns around.

EDMUND

But you've so good!

DERBY

(in a silly whale voice)
 But I never played for any
 presidents. I only ever played for
 penguins. And seals. And lobsters.

Edmund smiles. Willa tries to turn her smile into a scowl.

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Patty stands in the stairwell, listening at the barely-opened
 door, to Derby talk with the kids.

DERBY (V.O.)
 All the fish I ever play for say
 I'm just stringing them along.

Patty smirks.

INT. PALMER SECOND FLOOR LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Derby sticks two carrots in his upper lip, like walrus tusks.

DERBY
 (silly walrus voice)
 If you don't do your lesson I'll
 have to take you to tusk!

Willa and Edmund fall about, laughing.

DERBY (CONT'D)
 You are definitely the smartest,
 best cello-playing eight-year-old
 I've ever met.
 (back to walrus voice)
 And I don't say that to all the
 gulls.

Edmund laughs. Willa smiles. Patty enters.

PATTY
 Sorry to interrupt your cello
 lesson, but...

Derby takes the carrot tusks out of his mouth

PATTY (CONT'D)
 You all should probably get changed
 for the party.

She leaves.

DERBY
 (walrus voice: "to ask")
 A Party? Don't have tusk us twice!

EDMUND
 BAH-HA!

INT. PALMER LIVING ROOM - EVENING

A swank shindig is in mid-swing. Boston's wealthiest fill the
 room. A pianist plays in the background.

Margot approaches Linton, who's mid-bite of an hors d'oeuvre.

MARGOT

It's going well, don't you think?

Linton chews, grunting a response.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

One of the Kennedy's is here - a distant one, judging by the check.

Linton still chews, smiling and nodding.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

These video testimonials should put us over the top! What are we up to?

Linton tries desperately to swallow.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

Don't let me interrupt your dinner.

Edmund and Willa - both dressed in childhood business formal - come down the stairs, followed by an...underdressed Derby.

DERBY

You two stay with me, okay?

WILLA

You don't want us mingling with the adults, I suppose?

DERBY

No, I don't want to mingle with the adults.

EDMUND

I'm hungry. When is dinner?

Patty brings over a plate.

PATTY

Mini sandwiches?

Derby takes the whole tray.

DERBY

Perfect - thank you.

Patty frowns and walks away. Edmund and Willa dig in.

Margot chats with PAUL (40s).

MARGOT

I appreciate you're coming tonight.
Of course, I would appreciate a
donation even more.

PAUL

It takes a lot to convince me, but
once my support is won, I promise
you - it is ample. Those must be
your children?

MARGOT

Yes. I hadn't noticed them coming
in - exactly how it should be!

Willa tugs at Margot's elbow, ignored.

WILLA

Mom?

PAUL

They are very well-behaved.

MARGOT

They are - occasionally. Not now,
Willa.

Willa groans and goes to talk with Linton. Margot grabs
Derby's elbow as he passes her with Edmund.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

And here's the reason. Paul, this
is my new nanny, Derby Piper.

DERBY

I prefer "Manny."

MARGOT

Paul is at Harvard.

DERBY

I have a buddy there - what class?

Margot pulls Derby in for a whisper.

MARGOT

No, Derby: Paul runs Harvard.

Margot strides away, to another clump of adults.

PAUL

Margot tells me you're a doctor of
music.

DERBY

Oh, no. I'm in a band called
Doctor.

Paul smiles politely and looks for an escape.

DERBY (CONT'D)

But I'm told my music has a
soothing effect.

Derby sees Edmund sitting with the piano player.

DERBY (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

Derby heads towards Edmund, leaving Paul's mouth open in awe
that he was abandoned by a Manny.

Margot dings her champagne glass and the room falls silent.
Derby tries to reach Edmund but the crowd blockades him.

MARGOT

Thank you all for joining us
tonight, to support the Cambridge
Arts Fund, bringing arts and music
to children in communities who need
it most.

Edmund plays the banging-on-the-piano tune. Derby rushes to
the piano to stop him.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

Clearly my children have plenty of
it here!

The crowd laughs politely.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

Maybe it's time for them to have it
upstairs, Derby?

Derby nods and carries Edmund to the stairs. En route he
snags Willa away from Linton and takes the kids upstairs.

INT. PALMER SECOND FLOOR LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Derby carries Edmund in, and drags Willa by the arm as she
fights him off.

DERBY

What is wrong, Willa?

WILLA

She always does this - throws parties for grown ups and says we can come then won't let us do anything.

DERBY

She's working.

EDMUND

(very sleepy now)
Mama's always working.

Willa gives Derby a "what he said" look.

DERBY

I'm sure it feels that way. But this is an important night for her.

WILLA

When is going to be an important night for us?

Derby sets Edmund down on the couch.

DERBY

I'll tell you what. We never did your cello practice.

WILLA

That's not special.

DERBY

Not normally. But I have an idea.

INT. PALMER LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul nudges Linton, standing next to him.

PAUL

Where is the, ah, euphemism?

LINTON

(whispered)
Top of the stairs, on the right.

Paul climbs the stairs. Margot stands by the TV, speaking to the group.

MARGOT

I want you to hear directly from the children who benefit. Next is CeCe, a young girl in Roxbury.

She pushes a button and CECE (12), appears on screen with a painting.

INSERT: ON SCREEN

CECE

My name is CeCe and I like to make
paintings with -

But poor Cece's statement is interrupted by a SCREAM of sound from above, and a CLASH of drums. The crowd cover their ears and huddle.

MARGOT

Pardon me, the music has arrived
early!

Margot rushes upstairs.

INT. PALMER SECOND FLOOR LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Willa plays cello, connected to Derby's amp, and Edmund smashes a snare drum, whack-a-mole style. Derby plays guitar.

In the stairwell, Paul looks on, smiling. Margot pushes through - livid.

MARGOT

What in the world is going on?

Edmund raises his drumsticks in celebration.

EDMUND

Cello lesson!

Patty enters behind Margot. Paul smiles and descends.

MARGOT

Cello lesson is over.

She yanks the amplifier cord out. The children groan.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

Patty would you put them to bed,
please? Not another sound from you
two.

Patty takes Edmund's hand, and Willa follows.

DERBY

I thought I was on bedtime duty
tonight -

MARGOT

You are not on any duty anymore.
Tonight, or any other night. This
experiment has failed.

DERBY

But I haven't had a chance to -

MARGOT

Yes you have. You've had several.
And you've blown them. No. You're
fired.

DERBY

It was one cello lesson!

MARGOT

No. It's a major fundraiser,
ruined, after months of work.
Excuse me - I have to repair what I
possibly can of this evening. I
expect to you be gone in the
morning.

She goes to the door...

MARGOT (CONT'D)

And there is no need to join us for
breakfast.

And slams it in his face.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. DERBY'S 3RD FLOOR APARTMENT - MORNING

Edmund enters from the staircase, humming. He goes to the bathroom and sits on the toilet.

EDMUND
Good morning Derby!

He listens. Silence.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Derby?

He flushes the toilet and leaves.

INT. PALMER KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Willa sulks. Edmund drums and hums Derby's song from the night before. Margot cooks bacon.

EDMUND
Will he be back to babysit?

MARGOT
I don't think so, Edmund.

WILLA
What about cello lessons?

EDMUND
Yeah! And dwums!

MARGOT
No drums. And I wouldn't call what he did "lessons."

Edmund plays air keyboard and sings the scale he learned with Derby. Margot gazes and listens. Her phone dings and she ignores it.

Margot sets the food in front of the kids.

WILLA
Can't you make the bacon crispy?

Margot fixes her with a glare.

MARGOT
Someone's feeling confident this
morning.

Willa sulkily eats the limp bacon. Patty enters from outside.

PATTY
Good morning. Margot - this was in
the mailbox.

She hands an envelop to Margot, who opens it. Her face
freezes in shock.

PATTY (CONT'D)
What is it?

MARGOT
It's from Paul.
(she reads)
"How rare to see someone living out
their mission the way you've done
with your musical children and ...
and your dedicated 'Manny.'

A slip of paper falls and she picks it up.

EDMUND
What's that?

MARGOT
It's a check. A donation. "I hope
my small contribution helps to
spread your vision widely."

PATTY
Dare I ask, how much?

Margot holds up the check to Patty, who's eyes explode.

PATTY (CONT'D)
That's five zeroes.

EDMUND
(counting on fingers)
One two three four five.

PATTY
I hate to interrupt the party, but
it's 7 o'clock.

MARGOT
Oh gosh! OK kids - let's get your
teeth brushed, please. Hurry.

EDMUND
(mouth full of bacon)
But I'm not finished!

MARGOT
Help your brother, Willa.

Willa pulls Edmund out of the room.

PATTY
Is Derby not taking them?

MARGOT
I let him go after that disruption
last night.

PATTY
Oh.

MARGOT
You didn't like him.

PATTY
No. But he was great with the kids.
I thought that's what mattered?

Margot pours coffee into a to-go mug.

MARGOT
Could you take the kids to school,
Patty?

PATTY
Sure.

She heads out of the kitchen, but turns.

PATTY (CONT'D)
If you're going to look for Derby,
you won't have to go far. He's in
the playground.

She nods out the window. Margot turns to look out.

EXT. PARK ACROSS FROM PALMER HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Derby sits at the bottom of a slide, playing a song.

A SMALL CHILD (3) approaches him as he finishes.

DERBY
Any requests?

SMALL CHILD

Move please. I want to slide.

Derby stands aside. The Small Child climbs up to slide.

Margot clears her throat to get Derby's attention.

DERBY

Good morning.

MARGOT

(nodding at a bench)

Sit with me for a moment?

They sit. Derby sets his guitar down.

DERBY

We seem to always be talking on
park benches.

MARGOT

They make for good neutral ground.
You didn't get far this morning.

DERBY

I thought I'd move my stuff out
once the kids were off to school.
Avoid any sad goodbyes.

Margot peers at him, nods.

MARGOT

You should always say goodbye when
you can. They've missed too many
chances at that.

She watches the small child play in the sand.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

It's hard. Parenting. Impossible.
You try to protect them and do the
best, but who knows what that is.

Derby looks over at her.

DERBY

That's true with everything.

MARGOT

Sure. But most things don't have a
child's happiness at stake.

She sips from her coffee.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

I should have told you more about our family. We adopted them both last year. Then Richard -

She chokes back tears. She takes a moment to speak again.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

Out of nowhere he got sick. And was gone. Their lives upturned, landing in a new home and then -

(she snaps her fingers)

Just as they get used to us, one of us is gone.

They watch as the small child rotates in a swing seat, then lets go, swirling as the chains straighten out.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

I try to give them every good thing I can, try to make a perfect life.

DERBY

There's a reason for minor chords in songs. It's so the major chords sound brighter. You can't protect them from loss, just teach them how best to deal with it.

Margot nods, painfully.

MARGOT

This morning Edmund hummed a scale perfectly, and smiled. One lesson with you and he's Mozart.

DERBY

That's a stretch.

MARGOT

And Willa - anxious, shy Willa - gave me directions to cook bacon.

DERBY

Just because the world's not perfect doesn't mean bacon can't be.

MARGOT

The best thing for them is to help them feel happy being the people they are.

She fixes Derby with a look.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
And you do that.

Derby links eyes with her.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Let's try again. Will you move back
in?

DERBY
Technically I never moved out.

He smiles. They stand, he brings his guitar.

DERBY (CONT'D)
Can we still do amplified cello
lessons? I think the kids liked it.

MARGOT
Let's schedule those for when I'm
not home.

They walk back to the house. Derby plays his whale song from
the beginning as they cross the street.

END OF EPISODE.