

THE MANNY

"Pilot"

Written by

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COLD OPEN

INT. AQUARIUM AUDITORIUM - MORNING

SCHOOL CHILDREN watch an edutainment song, sung by OTTO OCTOPUS, PEGGY PENGUIN, and TINA TAMBORINA - a tambourine-playing turtle.

TINA

(singing)

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 with 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, the shark scares kids away  
before we even finish the song -

DERBY

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

TINA

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

Otto shrugs his eight arms.

DERBY

Every band needs a guitar.

TINA

Kids today want beats. Hip hop.

PEGGY PENGUIN

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

Derby slams his locker.

DERBY

OK. I'll take my Masters in Music, my six string, my costume, and -

TINA

You can't take the costume, Derby.

DERBY

I don't have a change of clothes.  
At least let me keep my dignity.

Derby trips on his tail and falls to the floor.

OTTO OCTOPUS

Too late.

DERBY

Help me! I'm beached!

Otto and Peggy help Derby up, laughing.

DERBY (CONT'D)

(dragging his cart out)  
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

What am I supposed to do?

CLERK

I don't know; 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)

(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 smokes on a park bench, phone to his ear.

DERBY

Tomorrow? No, Melissa, that's not enough time. I don't want to live with my ex any longer than you do.

He stares at the phone; she hung up. Derby sings a sad blues.

DERBY (CONT'D)

I'm a gray whale, but my baby left me feeling blue. / I know there's other fish in the sea, but I just keep swimming after you...

Lawyers, professors and tourists walk by, double-taking at the singing whale. A WOMAN drops cash in Derby's case.

Behind him, a kids' birthday party in progress. PARENTS gossip at a picnic table, full of gifts and food. LYDIA PALMER (40s), WASPish and stuffy, skirts the edges.

LYDIA

(on the phone)

Nannies can't quit with no notice. 'Unstable home'? I just renovated!

Other parents look at her, embarrassed.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Fine. Send someone else. No, I need a new nanny: TODAY.

(her face drops)

If sending three failed nannies in six months is what you call service, I don't want it!

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

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Redoing the kitchen is hell, huh?

CHILDREN gather around Derby. WILLA (8) and EDMUND (5) push to the front. Edmund can't say his R's.

WILLA

I play cello!

DERBY  
I knew a fellow who played 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.  
Lydia noses into a circle of TODD, TASIA, and BROOKE.

LYDIA  
Great party, Brooke.

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

LYDIA  
I'm glad she made friends with, uh-

BROOKE  
With who?

LYDIA  
Um, kids from other neighborhoods.

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

BROOKE  
Oops. Need a refill.

Lydia turns to Todd and Tasia.

LYDIA  
Do you two have a nanny? Or a  
babysitter? I have a fundraiser  
tomorrow and I'm desperate -

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

LYDIA  
Oh, wow. Great skill in a husband.

TODD  
Which one's yours?

LYDIA  
Oh, my husband's dead.

Todd's face drops.

TODD  
I, uh, meant your child.

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

Behind the party, Lydia sees: Edmund bashing a tambourine, and Willa playing a guitar with a whale. Lydia walks to them.

WILLA  
Mom! Look, I learned a C Chord!

EDMUND  
Mama! Mama! I leawned tambowine!

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

Edmund tears away at this exciting suggestion.

EDMUND  
CAAAAAAAAAAKE!!!

Willa stares at her feet.

LYDIA  
Go play with your friends.

WILLA  
I wish they were my friends.

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

Willa smiles and goes to join the party.

LYDIA  
Great costume. 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.

LYDIA  
I hope Brooke pays you well.

DERBY

I wish I could get paid for this.

Lydia gapes at him.

LYDIA

She doesn't pay overtime for parties? I offer great compensation if you'd consider coming over.

Derby shrugs, confused.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

How do you feel about breakfast?

DERBY

Most important meal of the day.

LYDIA

Can you do music lessons.

DERBY

Done.

LYDIA

When can you start? I'm hosting a fundraiser tomorrow and, well, they can't be seen or heard. Brooke won't be sad to lose you?

DERBY

We don't have a formal commitment.

Lydia smiles.

LYDIA

Great. You can move in tonight.

DERBY

Oh. That's a bit fast, isn't it?

LYDIA

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 CARD.

DERBY

One thousand a week?

LYDIA

If that's OK? Food and a private apartment, of course.

DERBY

Of course. I can move in tonight.

EXT. PALMER HOUSE - EVENING

Derby parks a busted car in front of an expensive three storey home in Cambridge. He gawks, grabs a dusty cardboard box full of clothes. A voice stabs him from behind.

PATTY

You must be the experiment.

PATTY (27, BLACK), in classy casual, walks down the drive.

DERBY

Sorry?

PATTY

I'm Patty. I manage Lydia's home, including the temporary help.

She hands over a SET OF KEYS.

DERBY

The welcoming committee. Thanks.

Patty eyes the car, doubtful.

PATTY

Does it run?

Derby closes the trunk.

DERBY

No. It drives.

PATTY

Good.

DERBY

Why did you say "temporary?"

PATTY

Didn't she tell you?

Derby shrugs.

PATTY (CONT'D)

These kids have been through a lot. Both adopted - Edmund's Haitian and Willa's Vietnamese. Lydia's husband Richard, died three months later.

DERBY

Jeez.

PATTY

They went from rural orphanages, to this, to losing their new father.

Derby shakes his head.

PATTY (CONT'D)

So I'm protective. We haven't had a nanny last more than two months. And it's not fair to those kids to pretend that this -  
(her hand waves at Derby)  
- will 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 heads down the street.

DERBY

With a welcome like that, who'd stay?

INT. PALMER HOUSE STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

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

INT. DERBY'S 3RD FLOOR APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Derby enters a spacious, furnished, elegant attic apartment. He looks around, in awe, and texts with his phone.

DERBY

'Nevermind; I moved out tonight.'

He smiles, drops his box on the coffee table. The box bursts, scatters clothes, sends up dust.

DERBY (CONT'D)

Maybe it is too good to be true.

INT. DERBY'S 3RD FLOOR APARTMENT, BEDROOM - MORNING

Derby's alarm SCREAMS and FLASHES: 5:45am. He slams it.

INT. DERBY'S 3RD FLOOR APARTMENT, BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Derby lets hot shower water batter the exhaustion off of him. He doesn't see the flicker behind him as he washes his hair.

EDMUND  
Morning Duhby.

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

DERBY  
Good morning, Edmund. You sleep OK?

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 shakes his head, before the super-hot post-flush shower water hits, 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 CACOPHONY coming from the kitchen.

INT. PALMER KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Derby enters to chaos: Edmund stamps on the banquette, his shirt up over his head; Willa yells her spelling homework at Lydia, who stabs at a K-Cup with a butcher knife.

DERBY  
Good morning!

WILLA  
Derby! D - E - R -

LYDIA  
Where were you?! Breakfast is at 6!

DERBY  
I know, I'm starving!

LYDIA  
You. Serve. Breakfast.

DERBY  
Oh. Whoops.

Edmund's head pops out an arm hole.

EDMUND  
Ha ha! Whoops! Whoops!

WILLA  
Breakfast! B - R -

LYDIA  
Derby - HELP.

Derby blinks to gather himself and moves into gear.

DERBY  
What can I get you?

LYDIA  
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. He's still lost in his shirt.

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 starts the coffee.

DERBY

Write it down. I'll grade it. Does your mom really have a 6am meeting?

EDMUND

Yes. She works always.

Derby peers in the fridge.

DERBY

Huh. OK: who wants bacon?

Edmund and Willa raise their hands.

INT. PALMER KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Edmund drums on the table. Willa watches as Derby, anxious.

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

(with accent)

I only have an accent at parties.  
"Conductor": 'o-r', not 'e-r.'

Willa drops her head. The coffee BEEPS.

DERBY (CONT'D)

No, you did great! You got  
"musician," which I can't spell.

Willa perks up and chows down. Derby makes Lydia's coffee.

DERBY (CONT'D)

I will be back...for Bacon!

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

INT. PALMER LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

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

LYDIA

Regrets from Yo-Yo Ma. Regrets from Skip Gates. There's something poetic about an arts fundraiser with no artists.

LINTON

Relax, Lydia - The "money" will be in the room!

LYDIA

Hopefully some of it will stay.

Derby brings coffee to Lydia.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Linton, this is Derby, the nanny.

Linton stands and holds out a hand.

LINTON

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

LYDIA

The new nanny.

LINTON

I can never keep up. Getting along with the little monsters?

DERBY

Day one seems to be going well!

A SCREAM from the kitchen snaps Lydia's face up.

DERBY (CONT'D)

That'll be the bacon.

Derby rushes to the kitchen.

LINTON

Gone in one breakfast; that's a record, even for you, Lydia.

INT. PALMER KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Edmund's mouth wags in agony, and Willa yells out spelling.

DERBY  
(rushing in)  
Willa! What's going on?

EDMUND  
She's being me-e-ean.

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

Edmund sobs. Willa yells. Patty comes in with GROCERIES.

PATTY  
(smiling at Derby)  
What a peaceful morning!

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

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

DERBY  
Why are you spelling the s-word?

WILLA  
Because he was being it.

DERBY  
Which S-word?

Willa looks at Patty, who's putting away the food.

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

WILLA  
Stupid. S-T-U-

Despite their attempts, Edmund hears this, and combusts.

PATTY  
Heh-heh-heh-heh-heh!

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. PALMER LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Lydia reviews her LIST as Linton brings in TEA.

LYDIA  
After the pat  , I'll call for  
attention.

Linton demos, hitting a spoon against his cup, spilling it.

LINTON  
Whoop!

LYDIA  
Without quite that much enthusiasm.  
And we'll turn to the videos. You  
have the testimonials?

Linton spits out his too-hot tea back into the cup. He takes  
a THUMB DRIVE from the table.

LINTON  
Oop. Yes! Right here.

LYDIA  
We need to run the laptop to the TV-

LINTON  
Mr. Connection at your disposal.

Linton opens a BOX, revealing a rats' nest of CABLES.

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

Derby and Edmund come in from the kitchen.

EDMUND  
Hi mama. What's that?

LYDIA  
This is the food for tonight.  
"Pat  , skewers, a crudit  ."

EDMUND  
What's a cwudit  ?

LYDIA

You'll hate it: sliced vegetables.

(Edmund's face goes "ew")

That's why this party is for adults! Which reminds me, Derby: bring the children down for dinner, but keep a short leash, please.

Edmund plays with cords and gets tangled. No one notices.

DERBY

Yes ma'am.

LYDIA

It's an important night and we can't have these two underfoot!

Edmund has fully wrapped himself in computer cords.

EDMUND

What's "undahfoot?"

Derby rushes to help untangle him.

DERBY

You are.

LYDIA

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

EDMUND

Sowwy.

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

LYDIA

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

EDMUND

Bwooklyn.

DERBY

What Brooklyn accent?

LYDIA

("Those 'Rs'")

Dose Aws.

(answering her phone)

You can fix that, right, Derby?

Derby and Edmund go upstairs. Linton aims a remote at the TV.

LINTON  
This should be the one!

The screen flashes with STATIC.

INT. MUSIC ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Derby and Edmund sit at the PIANO. Edmund struggles through scales. Derby's phone RINGS. He glances but ignores it.

EDMUND  
Don't you have to answer?

DERBY  
Not while we're playing music.

EDMUND  
Mama always answers.

DERBY  
It's just my ex-girlfriend.

EDMUND  
Do you miss huh?

DERBY  
Maybe.

Edmund tries another scale - a sad one.

EDMUND  
I miss mine dad.

DERBY  
I bet. When I feel sad, I play music to let the sad out.

EDMUND  
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.

BOOM! Derby smashes the keys - a storm. Edmund looks at him, scared, then smiles. Edmund slams the keys too. They BANG and HOWL. Edmund laughs - playing like this feels good.

INT. PALMER LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lydia scowls at the ceiling as booming piano crashes through the house. She covers her phone.

LYDIA

I have to go. See you tonight.

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

PATTY

What is that racket?

LYDIA

Derby's music school. How was the quiz?

WILLA

I got a 92.

LYDIA

(on her phone, absent)  
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. STATIC.

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. Derby and Edmund turn.

EDMUND  
That was wude.

Willa pouts on the couch.

PATTY  
Time for cello. 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,  
who chomps 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! Mom is so mad.

DERBY  
You think?

WILLA  
She couldn't even look at me.  
(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

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 only one year. Did your mom say that?

Willa wipes her nose.

WILLA

Yo-Yo Ma 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 the best cello-playing  
 eight-year-old I've ever met.  
 (back to walrus voice)  
 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 get dressed.

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 by the bay window. Lydia goes to Linton, who's mid-bite of an hors d'oeuvre.

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

Linton chews, grunting a response.

LYDIA (CONT'D)  
 One of the Kennedy's is here - a  
 distant one, judging by the check.

Linton still chews, smiling and nodding.

LYDIA (CONT'D)  
 What are we up to?

Linton tries desperately to swallow. Lydia rolls her eyes.

LYDIA (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

Don't you think we know not to mingle with the adults?

DERBY

Sure, but I don't want to mingle with the adults either.

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.

Lydia chats with PAUL (40s) - a big fish in a bowtie.

LYDIA

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

PAUL

You'll have to do more than merely ask. I need proof your program works - then my support will be ample. Those must be your children?

LYDIA

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

Willa tugs at Lydia's elbow, ignored.

WILLA

Mom?

PAUL

They seem very well-behaved.

LYDIA

They are - occasionally.

She pushes Willa away. Lydia grabs Derby as he passes.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

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

DERBY

I prefer "Manny."

LYDIA

Paul is at Harvard.

DERBY

I have a buddy there - what class?

Lydia pulls Derby in for a whisper.

LYDIA

No, Derby: Paul runs Harvard.

Linton pulls Lydia away by the elbow.

PAUL

Lydia tells me you're a doctor of music.

DERBY

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

Paul smiles politely and looks for an escape.

DERBY (CONT'D)

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

YOUTHFUL TINKLING pulls Derby's eyes to Edmund, sitting with the piano player.

DERBY (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

Derby goes to Edmund, leaving Paul's wagging. Lydia DINGS her champagne glass and the room falls silent. Derby tries to reach Edmund but the crowd blockades him.

LYDIA

Thank you for joining us tonight,  
to support the Cambridge Arts Fund,  
bringing arts and music to children  
in underserved communities.

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

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Clearly my children have plenty of  
it here!

The crowd laughs.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

Derby? Upstairs. Please?

Derby carries Edmund from the piano, snagging Willa en route.

INT. MUSIC ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Derby carries Edmund, and pushes Willa into the room.

DERBY

What is wrong, Willa?

WILLA

She always does this - throws  
parties and then won't let us do  
anything.

DERBY

She's working.

EDMUND

Mama's always working.

Willa gives Derby a "what he said" look.

DERBY

This is a special night for her.

WILLA

When is going to be a special 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

Lydia stands by the TV, speaking to the group.

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

Paul nudges Linton, standing next to him.

PAUL  
Where is the, ah, euphemism?

LINTON  
Top of the stairs, on the right.

Paul goes. CECE (12), appears on the TV with a painting.

INSERT: ON SCREEN

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

A SQUEAL and CRASH of drums cuts CeCe off. The crowd cover  
their ears.

LYDIA  
The, ah, entertainment is warming  
up early. Pardon me.

She rushes upstairs.

INT. MUSIC 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. Lydia pushes  
through - livid.

LYDIA  
What in the world is going on?

Edmund raises his drumsticks in celebration.

EDMUND  
Electric cello!

Patty enters behind Lydia. Paul smiles and descends.

LYDIA  
Electric cello is over.

She yanks the amplifier cord out. The children groan.

LYDIA (CONT'D)  
Patty, put them to bed? Not another  
sound from you two.

Patty takes Edmund's hand, and Willa follows.

DERBY  
I thought I was on bedtime duty  
tonight -

LYDIA  
You are not on any duty anymore.  
Tonight, or any other night.

DERBY  
But I haven't had a chance to -

LYDIA  
Yes you have. You've had several  
chances. And you've blown them.  
This experiment has failed.

DERBY  
It was one cello lesson!

LYDIA  
No. It's a major fundraiser, months  
of work, ruined. 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...

LYDIA (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 BATHROOM - MORNING

Edmund hums in and sits on the toilet.

EDMUND  
Good morning, Duhby!

He listens. Silence.

EDMUND (CONT'D)  
Duhby?

He looks over at the empty shower

INT. PALMER KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Willa sulks. Edmund hums Derby's blues. Lydia cooks bacon.

EDMUND  
Will he be back to babysit?

LYDIA  
I don't think so, Edmund.

WILLA  
What about cello lessons?

EDMUND  
Yeah! And dwums!

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

Edmund sings his new scale. Lydia listens. Her phone dings; she ignores it. Lydia sets the food in front of the kids.

WILLA  
I like my bacon crispy.  
(off Lydia's glare)  
Please?

LYDIA  
Someone's feeling confident today.

Willa eats limp bacon. Patty comes in with an ENVELOPE.

PATTY

Good morning. Lydia - this was in the mailbox.

LYDIA

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 ... your dedicated 'Manny.'

A SLIP OF PAPER falls and she picks it up.

EDMUND

What's that?

LYDIA

A donation. "I hope my contribution helps spread your vision widely."

PATTY

Dare I ask, how much?

(over Lydia's shoulder)

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.

LYDIA

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

EDMUND

(mouth full of bacon)

But I'm not finished!

LYDIA

Help your brother, Willa.

Willa pulls Edmund out of the room.

PATTY

Is Derby not taking them?

LYDIA

I let him go after last night.

(off Patty's look)

You didn't like him.

PATTY

No. But he was great with the kids.

Lydia pours coffee into a TO-GO MUG.

LYDIA

Would you take them to school?

Patty nods. She heads out of the kitchen, but turns.

PATTY

If you're going to look for Derby,  
he's in the playground.

She nods out the window. Lydia 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. Lydia clears her throat to get Derby's attention.

DERBY

Good morning.

LYDIA

(nodding at a bench)  
Sit with me for a moment?

Derby sets his guitar down.

DERBY

We always seem to be talking on  
park benches.

LYDIA

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.

Lydia peers at him, nods.

LYDIA

You should say goodbye when you can. Sad or not, it's better than losing the opportunity. They've missed too many goodbyes already.

She watches the small child play in the sand.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

It's impossible. Parenting. You try to do the best, but who knows what that is.

Derby looks over at her.

DERBY

That's true with everything.

LYDIA

Most things don't have a child's happiness at stake.

She sips from her coffee.

LYDIA (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.

LYDIA (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.

LYDIA (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. They make the major chords sound brighter. You can't protect them from loss, just teach them how best to deal with it.

Lydia nods, painfully.

LYDIA

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

DERBY

That's a stretch.

LYDIA

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

DERBY

The world's not perfect, but that doesn't mean bacon can't be.

LYDIA

I want them both to be happy, being the people they are.

She fixes Derby with a look.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

And you do that.

Derby links eyes with her.

LYDIA (CONT'D)

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.

LYDIA

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.