

Monday July 21, 2008

glee

written by:

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BLACKNESS. In the void, a sound...CLAPPING. In SYNCOPATION with FOOT STOMPING...a crazed crowd demanding a show.

Suddenly, a slit APPEARS in the blackness...which we now realize is a black velvet curtain. A SWEET NERVOUS TEENAGE BOY peers out. His POV: it's terrifying...a HUGE SOLD OUT AUDITORIUM, everyone vibrating with anticipatory frenzy.

TITLES UP: **EPCOT CENTER, GLEE CLUB NATIONALS, 1993.**

INT. BACKSTAGE EPCOT THEATRE -- DAY -- CONTINUOUS

The NERVOUS TEEN, in a TUX, joins twenty other or so TEENS as they stretch, practice scales, etc. One GIRL is even looking in a mirror, practicing a HUGE SMILING SHOW FACE. Suddenly, their teacher LILLIAN ADLER, 50s, appears from the wings, claps her hands for their attention.

MRS. ADLER
Show circle, everybody.

The teens grasp hands in a circle around Mrs. Adler, which is difficult to do because she's obese.

MRS. ADLER (CONT'D)
Welcome to nationals.

The kids whoop and scream with delight.

MRS. ADLER (CONT'D)
Fantastic. Use that excitement on the stage today. But I want you guys to remember something.

PUSH IN ON THE YOUNG NERVOUS TEENAGE BOY as she continues.

MRS. ADLER (CONT'D)
Glee club isn't about competition, it's not about shiny trophies. It's about something deeper than that -- realizing your potential. Utilizing your gifts. Even by its very definition in Mr. Webster's book, glee...is about opening yourself up to joy.

(then, off their awe)
Eyebrows up, everybody.

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE
Ladies and gentlemen...please welcome to the stage, from Lima, Ohio...The Harrison High Singstations!

INT. EPCOT THEATRE -- DAY

Horns BLARE. Hips SHIMMY. Clumps of students whip around in succession, beaming with optimism and enthusiasm, painting rainbows of joy with their arms as they sing "Brand New Day" from "The Wiz."

THE SINGSATIONS
 "CAN YOU FEEL A BRAND NEW DAY? CAN
 YOU FEEL A BRAND NEW DA-A-A-AY!!!"

The group FLIES into an impromptu dance break, whooping to each other and exchanging ad lib high fives, then WHIPPING back into formation with military precision. Their dancing is youthful and acrobatic, and the crowd roars to its feet. As tambourines fly into their hands and the lights start to strobe, we PAN the young sweaty faces. The kids are excited, overwhelmed with joy.

THE SINGSATIONS (CONT'D)
 "CAN YOU FEEL A BRAND NEW DAY!!!"

The band screams to the finish, and the choir hits its final position, arms straining, faces busting with smiles that they try to hold through their panting, trying desperately not to scream in ecstasy. CLOSE on our NERVOUS YOUNG MAN near the back, arms up, eyes open wide: the world has just opened up to him. SMASH TO BLACK.

TITLE UP

"GLEE"

INT. SCHUESTER APARTMENT -- DINNERTIME -- 2008

TIGHT on a HALF-EMPTY BOTTLE OF KRAFT LITE RANCH DRESSING. WILL SCHUESTER -- thirty, naturally optimistic -- pours a DOLLOP on his iceberg salad, then smiles at his wife TERRI across the card table they use as a dining room.

WILL
 How was work today?

TERRI
 (dry)
 I manage a store called Sheets N'
 Things. I folded sheets.

Silence as they eat. Then, trying really hard --

WILL
 I wish you could have seen Glee
 Club rehearsal yesterday, Terr.

TERRI

God I miss smoking...

WILL

The new number is going to take us to nationals. I'm feeling it.

(then, sexy)

You know, the District pays for the trip to Orlando. Maybe I could convince them to let you tag along as my "assistant."

That gets Terri's ear.

TERRI

They pay for the whole trip?

WILL

Hotel, bus tickets -- three days four nights of sun, fun and show stopping excitement.

TERRI

Wow. Epcot. You don't think they'd put us up in the Grand Floridian do you? The Polynesian's nice too.

WILL

I think they usually get us rooms at the Motel Six.

(as she deflates)

Maybe I could get them to book us at the Floridian if I offered to pay the difference?

TERRI

Sure, maybe we could trade in some of your stock options.

(then)

All I'm going to say is they're hiring at HW Menken...

WILL

I'm not going back to accounting, Terri. Remember what happened? I got a vitamin D deficiency from the florescent lights.

TERRI

All I remember is your paychecks were twice as big. You were an economics major in college, Will.

WILL

And when I tried it I was miserable. I need something more...creative.

The moment resonates. This was and will always be the central conflict in their marriage. Terri pours what's left of the DRESSING on her salad. Then, pissed --

TERRI

You need to get more when the bottle is half-empty.

WILL

Or half-full. I just figured that since Sheets N' Things is next to the supermarket, you could pick up whatever we need on the way home.

TERRI

Doctor Musky said I have to start relaxing if we want to conceive. You know what she told us about the shape of my uterus. I'm in charge of two part-time employees. I don't need the added stress of making sure we have enough condiments at home.

(then)

Sometimes I think you care more about those kids than you do about me.

WILL

Baby, no. You're right. I'll stock up on everything tomorrow.

She smiles -- mission accomplished.

WILL (CONT'D)

Hey, maybe after we do a little conceiving this weekend you could come with me to Wal-Mart. I need to pick up some more top hats and canes.

TERRI

Is the District paying for them, too?

WILL

They're just felt hats, I didn't think...

TERRI

You never think, Will, you just do what feels good. You teach high school, you're not in it anymore. Anyway, you can forget it. We need to dip into the emergency fund, the muffler fell off the Civic again.

She clears her plate, leaving him alone at the table. As Will SLUMPS, a GLEE CLUB starts singing a MEDIOCRE version of "Sit Down You're Rocking the Boat."

EXT. WILL'S CAR -- THE NEXT MORNING

TIGHT on the busted muffler, DRAGGING along the blacktop. The song continues as we drive through downtown Lima, Ohio.

EXT. HARRISON HIGH -- MORNING

Will, brown bag lunch in one hand, briefcase in the other, passes a PACK OF JOCKS and an INDIAN STUDENT -- RAJEESH.

WILL

Making some new friends, Rajeesh?

PUCK, a MANCHILD answers for Rajeesh.

PUCK

Totally, Mr. Shue.

Will points at FINN HUDSON, a handsome jock who looks too kind to be hanging out with the rest of the motley crew.

WILL

You still owe me that report on "*Que Hace in su verano pasado*", Finn.

(off Finn's confusion)
What you did last summer.

FINN

Almost half way done with almost all of it, Mr. Shue.

Will likes Finn. Then with a wink --

WILL

Four o'clock in the auditorium, Rajeesh.

He smiles at them and enters the school, feeling good about his connection with the student body. As soon as he's gone, Puck SCOOPS up Rajeesh and carries him towards a DUMPSTER.

RAJEESH

Please -- this is my new satin
Browns jacket purchased from Dick's
Sporting Goods.

FINN

Wait.

He pulls Rajeesh down, then gently pulls off the scared
freshman's new orange jacket, folds it under his arm.

FINN (CONT'D)

Ok.

Puck picks up a jacketless Rajeesh, TOSSES him in the
dumpster.

INT. HARRISON HIGH -- MORNING

Will walks the halls. Typical Midwest student body. A few
KIDS greet Will with an "hola."

He passes the school's TROPHY CASE and stops, moved. We PUSH
IN on A FRAMED PICTURE OF MRS. ADLER. Underneath the picture:
"LILLIAN ADLER, 1937-1997." And then a quote: "By its very
definition, Glee is about opening yourself up to Joy."

Next to the photo tribute: a LARGE TROPHY. PUSH IN on the
award, the engraving reads 1993 SHOW CHOIR CHAMPIONSHIPS,
ORLANDO FLORIDA -- HARRISON HIGH FIRST PLACE. The trophy and
all it represents HAUNTS Will. "Sit Down" continues as we
enter --

INT. GIRLS BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

FIND RACHEL BERRY, at the mirror, making herself up. Her
makeup is way too THEATRICAL. A couple of other GIRLS come
in, check her out, giggle.

GIRL

Getting ready for the tranny prom,
Rachel?

Rachel takes out her can of AQUA NET and unapologetically
sprays her hair -- HEAVILY, gassing the girls away. As soon
as they're gone, Rachel takes herself in, has a moment of
doubt -- she's so lonely. She pushes the feelings way down
inside, regains her determination and continues SPRAYING.

INT. WILL'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

The song CONTINUES. The room is decorated with MAPS of
MEXICO.

Will is running a full classroom of STUDENTS through the conjugation of the verb "to be." He spies the clock on the wall. RACK FOCUS to the clock -- 2:45. He speeds up the exercise until the BELL RINGS and everyone rushes out.

WILL

Hasta manana.

Will excitedly loosens his tie, grabs a pile of SHEET MUSIC from his drawer and is out the door before the last student.

INT. AUDITORIUM -- DAY

Will carefully watches what we now see is the source of this particular rendition of the "Guys and Dolls" classic -- Harrison High's Glee Club. The kids aren't just singing, they're dancing, waving their jazz hands.

It's not much of a choir. Just five kids, all OUTCASTS. One, ARTY ABRAMS, is paralyzed from the waist down. Arty belts out his solo.

Arty's got heart, but he can't really sing. Rachel tries to LINE DANCE with Rajeesh, but he's dyslexic and can't figure out his rights from his lefts. The song and TITLE SEQUENCE ENDS, everyone turns to Will for guidance. Until --

RACHEL

We suck.

WILL

It will get there -- we just need to keep rehearsing.

RACHEL

Mr. Schuester -- do you have any idea how ridiculous it is to give the lead solo in "Sit Down You're Rocking the Boat" to a kid in a wheelchair?

A beat, he hadn't. Arty jumps in to save him.

ARTY

I think Mr. Shue was using *irony* to enhance the performance.

Will nods. Yeah, what he said. Rachel vibrates with fury.

RACHEL

There's nothing ironic about show choir!

She storms out. Slow PUSH IN on Will's sad face as --

WILL (V.O.)

Rachel was right...we do suck. We might be the worst glee club in the state. I guess now's as good a time as any to explain how I ended up coaching these kids. It all started in the late '90s, with Mrs. Adler's replacement...Sandy Ryerson.

CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM -- DAY -- FLASHBACK

SANDY RYERSON, 35, with highlights and a pastel sweater thrown over his shoulders, coaches the kids. It's a mess. He keeps moving all of the girls to the back in order to feature all of the young, buff boys, regardless of their skill. For some reason, every member of the choir is holding a STOOL.

WILL (V.O.)

Sandy loved props. Mrs. Adler used to say that the only prop you really needed to perform well was your enthusiasm. In the span of one year, Harrison became the bottom feeders of the glee world -- we were a "stool choir."

As the rehearsal continues, girls begin DISAPPEARING. They're dropping out, so are some of the better boy dancers -- just DISSOLVING away.

WILL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Years passed. Glee fell from grace. It was no longer a place where you went with dreams of being a star, it was a haven for outcasts, kids with no self-esteem who weren't smart enough to join the math club but needed a place to go after school to keep from getting beaten up.

Finally, everyone has disappeared except for Rachel, Rajesh, Arty, MERCEDES (a heavysset African-American) TINA, who TWITCHES and HANK -- the last of the "in crowd" still in Glee Club.

INT. CHOIR ROOM -- DAY -- FLASHBACK

Hank leans on the baby grand holding his stool, nervous, as Sandy, now 45 and still sporting highlights despite a bad bald spot, enters, spraying breath spray in his mouth.

WILL (V.O.)

Still, the school didn't care -- as long as Sandy came in under budget. He would probably still be teaching today if he had been able to control himself.

SANDY

This is a song about wanting someone, Hank. You know you shouldn't give into temptation, but something about it feels so right...

HANK

I don't know, Mr. Ryerson. I mean, I'm only here because the guidance counselor said being in Glee Club would help me get into OSU. I mean, this is kind of not cool anymore.

SANDY

Is that why you're here? To be cool? Guess what, bud, stars aren't cool, they burn -- hot.

HANK

What do I do with the stool?

SANDY

Forget the stool. Sing.

Hank thinks he understands. Sandy starts playing the PIANO and Hank breaks into a mediocre rendition of "Where Is Love?" from "Oliver!" Sandy is moved by the performance. When Hank gets to the chorus, Sandy softly sings along with him.

As they continue, Sandy takes a hand off the keys and places it firmly on Hank's. He's coming on to Hank, there's no doubt about it. ZAP ZOOM to the closed glass doorway, revealing RACHEL. She's jealous Hank is getting the solo.

INT. PRINCIPAL FIGGINS' OFFICE -- DAY -- FLASHBACK

A CRYING Sandy, a SECURITY GUARD behind him, sits across from a stern looking PRINCIPAL FIGGINS, 40s.

FIGGINS

My hands are tied, Sandy. We cannot afford another lawsuit.

SANDY

But I'm not even gay!

As Sandy weeps gay tears --

WILL (V.O.)

There was a vacancy, and fate called on me to fill it.

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE -- DAY -- FLASHBACK

Will goes to get coffee, but there's no pot. He turns to his buddy, KEN TANAKA, the history teacher/football coach.

WILL

Where's the coffee machine?

KEN TANAKA

Figgins got rid of it. Budget cuts. I know for a fact they're still getting hot java over at Carver. We should strike.

As Will sighs, sits and starts eating his brown bag lunch, EMMA PILLSBURY, the school guidance counselor, enters and sits. Emma's pretty, but she doesn't think she is.

KEN TANAKA (CONT'D)

(flirty)

Hey Emma.

EMMA

(not flirty)

Hey, Ken.

(then, trying to be cool)

Hey, Will.

Emma pulls a HANDY WIPE out of her purse, starts CLEANING the table in front of her. Will watches as she meticulously scrubs her place setting, then takes her own plastic silverware, plate and cup out of her bag. She notices the stares, smiles nervously hoping they won't talk about her OCD, then puts her LUNCH on her plate and starts eating.

KEN TANAKA

I didn't see you at the singles mixer last weekend, Emma.

EMMA

Oh, yeah, I didn't go. A pipe exploded in my building. It was wild. Fire trucks, police. I think it was on the local news. Did you see it Will?

WILL

(trying to be nice)
Sure, maybe.

A beat. She desperately wants to get Will's attention.

EMMA

I hate those mixers, anyway. Just a big meat market.

(then)

I gave one of the firemen my phone number, but he hasn't called yet.

WILL

Forget him. You need to wait for someone special. You deserve it, Emma.

She smiles, blushes, goes back to her food. Then --

EMMA

Hey, did you hear they fired Sandy Ryerson?

Will's ears perk up.

WILL

Really? Who's going to take over Glee Club?

INT. PRINCIPAL FIGGINS' OFFICE -- DAY -- FLASHBACK

An excited Will sits across from Figgins.

WILL

I'd like to take over Glee Club.

FIGGINS

You want to captain the Titanic, too?

WILL

I think I can make it great again. Everything is standardized nowadays -- fill in the bubble, there's no joy in these kids.

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)

They feel anonymous, invisible. That's why every one of them has a Myspace page. They need outlets like Glee where they can explore unknown parts of themselves, find out who they are and what their potential is.

Figgins thinks. Then --

FIGGINS

Sixty bucks a month. That's what I need to keep the program up.

WILL

And you expect *me* to pay it?

FIGGINS

I'm certainly not going to. These toe-grabbers down at the budget office count me down to the penny, Shue. The penny. And you've got to use the costumes and props we already have -- no new stuff. Oh, but we need the stools for wood shop.

Off Will, unsure, we CUT TO:

INT. SCHUESTER APARTMENT -- DAY -- FLASHBACK

TERRI

Sixty dollars a month!

WILL

I'm sure it will only be for a couple of months. Once we win a few competitions, I'll be able to ask for a raise, Terri.

Terri just stares, deeply disappointed, before heading to the bedroom.

WILL (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

TERRI

To bed. Don't forget to vacuum.

She slams the door shut.

INT. SCHUESTER BEDROOM -- THE MIDDLE OF THAT NIGHT

Will stares up at the ceiling.

WILL (V.O.)

I knew Terri would understand once she saw us perform. But how was I going to get these kids motivated again? One thing I knew for sure, we needed a new name. Sandy's "Rhythm Explosion" didn't cut it. We needed something worthy of Mrs. Adler. Something that would bring Harrison High back to its glory days.

Will pops up in bed, eyes wide with excitement -- he has it.

INT. HARRISON HIGH -- AUDITORIUM -- DAY -- FLASHBACK

Will pins up a SIGN UP SHEET, then walks away to reveal the NAME printed in bold letters on the top of the page -- "SIGN UP HERE FOR "NEW DIRECTIONS!"

QUICK CUTS: Shyly, Arty, Rajeesh, Mercedes and Tina sign in, then exit, hoping no one picks on them. Finally Rachel proudly strides to the sheet, and signs in. After her name she draws a big, cartoon STAR.

RACHEL (V.O.)

You might laugh because every time I sign my name I put a gold star after it. But it's a metaphor, and metaphors are important. My gold stars are a metaphor for me being a star.

She turns around, very self-satisfied. Puck throws a Big Gulp at her head. Freeze frame as it hits her.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY -- DAY -- FLASHBACK

Rachel speed walks down the hall, on a mission.

RACHEL (V.O.)

And just so we're clear, I want to clear up that hateful rumor that I was the one who turned Sandy Ryerson in. That's horsepucky.

INT. PRINCIPAL FIGGINS' OFFICE -- DAY -- FLASHBACK

Rachel sits across from Figgins, crying melodramatically.

RACHEL

...and he was touching Hank, caressing him...it was so wrong!

Principal Figgins, upset growing, hands her a Kleenex.

RACHEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I am NOT homophobic. In fact, I
have two gay dads.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY -- FLASHBACK

TIGHT ON AMBER, A YOUNG WHITETRASH MOTHER, screaming in agony
as she begins her final contractions.

RACHEL (V.O.)
See, I was born out of love.

REVEAL A GAY COUPLE -- JOE, white, 40s and fat, and BRUCE,
black 40s and very thin -- assisting in the delivery.

AMBER
Get this thing out of me!

RACHEL (V.O.)
My two dads screened potential
surrogates based on beauty and IQ.
Then they mixed their sperm
together and used a turkey baster.

INT. JOE AND BRUCE'S HOUSE -- DAY -- FLASHBACK

Amber devours free ice cream as Bruce and Joe coo to her
pregnant stomach and rub coco butter on it.

RACHEL (V.O.)
Every day until I was born, they
talked to me through my host
mother's uterine wall.

JOE
(to the belly)
You're the chosen one, baby.

BRUCE
(to the belly)
You're destined for greatness.

RACHEL (V.O.)
To this day, we don't know which
one is my real dad, which I think
is pretty amazing.

INT. BALLET CLASS -- DAY -- FLASHBACK

Little Rachel takes her first class.

RACHEL (V.O.)
 My dads spoiled me in the arts, I
 was given dance lessons, vocal
 lessons --

Joe and Bruce snap photos wildly, blinding one little girl
 who crashes into a wall.

INT. OHIO TANNING SALON -- DAY -- FLASHBACK

Rachel, wearing a swimsuit, scrunches up her eyes as she is
 given a spray-on-tan by a gum-chewing TANNING REPRESENTATIVE.

RACHEL (V.O.)
 From modeling to beauty maintenance
 that gives me a competitive edge,
 my gay dads have inspired me to be
 the very best.

Rachel is vaguely orange now, an ambitious Oompa Loompa.

INT. RACHEL'S ROOM -- DAY -- FLASHBACK

Rachel is at her computer in a Pepto Bismol pink bedroom.
 Canopy bed, Hannah Montana posters and pageant sashes
 EVERYWHERE.

RACHEL (V.O.)
 You might think that all the boys
 at school would totally want to tap
 this, but my YouTube schedule keeps
 me way too busy to date.

She types vigorously.

RACHEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I try to post a YouTube video every
 day, just to keep my talent alive
 and growing.

Rachel checks her video recorder, jumps up on her bed and
 belts "Look At Me, I'm Sandra Dee!" from "Grease."

RACHEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Nowadays, being anonymous is worse
 than being poor. Fame is the most
 important thing in our culture now.
 And if there's one thing I've
 learned, it's that no one is gonna
 just hand it to you.

LATER

Rachel, biting her lip, scrolls through her YouTube feedback:

"Why don't you die already?"

"Your videos make me want to kill my entire family."

RACHEL (V.O.)
My YouTube feedback is always
encouraging me to take my starpower
to a national level...

CU on a single line of feedback: *"You should go on American Idol."*

RACHEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...because what's the point of
doing anything anymore if nobody's
watching you do it?

INT. AMERICAN IDOL AUDITION -- DAY -- FLASHBACK

Rachel finishes her "Sandra Dee" number. But she's nervous, trying too hard, not at her best. Silence. The judges regard her, then --

RANDY JACKSON
Naw, dawg. Too pitchy.

PAULA ABDUL
(struggling to be nice)
You're a doll, you really are, but
I don't think this competition is
for you, sweetie.

Rachel is shocked. Then --

SIMON
Rachel, you strike me as a girl who
people don't like very much.

EXT. IDOL AUDITION ROOM -- THIRTEEN SECONDS LATER

Rachel comes bawling out of the room, no golden ticket. Her dads envelop her supportively. Rachel just cries and cries, feeling the universal pain of rejection.

JOE
(gently)
Maybe next year, honey. There's
always next year...

INT. AUDITORIUM -- DAY

TIGHT, at ground level, on a pair of Hush Puppy covered FEET. The right one starts TAPPING.

WILL (O.S.)

Five, six, seven, eight...

The feet start DANCING. PAN UP to reveal Will, singing "Sit Down" as he patiently demonstrates some choreography to the glee club. SHIMMY, SHUFFLE STEP, HOP -- he's actually pretty good. More than that, he's HAPPY.

The kids are another matter. They're in costume -- the girls in POLYESTER, PLEATED BURGUNDY DRESSES (castoffs from an upscale hillbilly wedding or a prom during the Carter administration); the boys in POWDER BLUE TUXEDOS.

WILL (CONT'D)

Pretty simple stuff -- any questions?

MERCEDES

I'm not wearing this.

WILL

Those costumes are good luck. The '93 team took nationals wearing them.

MERCEDES

I know -- I can still smell them. Whoever wore this dress before me clearly had the stink ass.

(adamant)

I want a new costume. I sew all my own clothes anyway. I'm the only designer that can make this booty sing.

WILL

I'm sure you do a heck of a job, but we don't have the money to buy enough fabric for you to make new costumes for everyone. I'll take it to the dry cleaners for you.

MERCEDES

You can take it to the moon, baby -- everyone knows you can't get stink ass out of polyester.

Rachel shakes her head, unable to hide her frustration.

MERCEDES (CONT'D)

You want to be startin' somethin',
Britney?

Staredown, until Rachel breaks and storms out.

WILL

Take five, everybody.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD -- BLEACHERS -- DAY

Rachel, in her horrible dress, sits high up in the stands. She stares down at THE CHEERLEADERS...the popular ones. Everything seems so easy for them. REVEAL Will climbing up. He sits next to her. Silence, then --

WILL

You're the best kid in there,
Rachel -- but that comes with a
price. The other kids are looking
to you for guidance. You've got to
be more optimistic.

RACHEL

You sound like my dads -- "power of
positive thinking," "there's always
next year" and all of that.

(with emotion)

I know I'm just a sophomore but I
can feel the clock ticking away. I
don't want to leave high school
with nothing to show for it.

WILL

You get great grades, you're a
fantastic singer...

RACHEL

(vulnerable)

Everybody hates me.

Now he understands.

WILL

And you think Glee Club is going to
change that?

RACHEL

Being great at something is going
to change it. Being part of
something special...makes you
special. Right?

Will can certainly relate to that. A beat, he thinks.

WILL

What if I give you all the solos?

RACHEL

Glee club isn't about solos -- it's about duets, it's a team sport. I need a male lead who can keep up with me vocally.

WILL

Maybe if I tutor Arty a little...

RACHEL

Look, Mr. Shue. I really appreciate what you're trying to do, but if you can't get me what I need, I'm sorry...I'm not going to make a fool of myself. I can't keep wasting my time with Glee -- it hurts too much.

Will sits there, pondering his next move when A WHISTLE BLASTS. Will sees Coach Ken, at the base of the bleachers.

KEN TANAKA

Schuester! Figgins wants you.

INT. PRINCIPAL FIGGINS' OFFICE -- DAY

A dejected Will looks RIGHT INTO THE CAMERA.

WILL

But we just started rehearsals.

FIGGINS

My hands are tied, Shue, I need the auditorium. Alcoholics Anonymous wants to rent it out for their afternoon meetings. Lots of drunks in this town, and they're paying me ten bucks a head. I'm sorry, you gave it a hell of a run, but Glee Club is over.

A beat, as Figgins waits for Will to leave. Will sits still, though -- he won't give this up. PUSH IN on his PANIC, then --

WILL

Give me two months. If we show at Regionals, Glee stays, if not the bar's open in the auditorium.

FIGGINS

What is it with you and this club, Will? I love to see passion in my teachers, but this is bordering on obsession.

SLOW PUSH IN on Will. Then, with personal conviction --

WILL

I was reading a study where they put these rats in a maze -- not a normal one, a really hard one. In three months, not one rat had made it through. Then they started giving rats creative tasks, stuff to stimulate the "artistic" part of their brains. Within a week, every single rat had found its way out.

FIGGINS

Will, it's time to let it go. You've only got five kids -- one of them's a cripple.

WILL

Then I guess you've got nothing to worry about.

Figgins leans back in his chair, thinks.

FIGGINS

Fine, two months -- but you're running detention for free to make it up to me.

WILL

Deal.

They SHAKE on it. Off Will, having no idea how he's going to pull this off we --

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. WILL'S CAR -- DAY

TIGHT on the MUFFLER, still DRAGGING.

EXT. SHEETS N' THINGS -- PARKING LOT -- DAY

Will gets out of the car. When he closes the door the muffler finally FALLS OFF and crashes to the asphalt, DEAD.

INT. SHEETS N' THINGS -- DAY

Terri is showing GINNY, a twenty-something employee with bad ROOTS, how to fold a FITTED SHEET.

TERRI

You've got to stick your hands in the corners like this, see? Then bring them together. If you can't fold a fitted sheet you can't work at Sheets N' Things, Ginny.

INTERCOM VOICE

Associate to returns.

TERRI

Make sure they have a receipt.

Ginny slinks off as Will arrives. Terri smiles.

TERRI (CONT'D)

To what do I owe this pleasure?

He goes to kiss her, she pulls away, makes sure no one saw.

TERRI (CONT'D)

Not at work.

Will hides his hurt and holds up a deli bag.

WILL

We've been fighting so much I just thought I'd bring you a peace offering. Roast beef on pumpernickel -- your favorite.

She takes the bag, willing to forgive. She inspects the sandwich, then --

TERRI

You call this light mayo? Are you trying to sabotage my diet?

(MORE)

TERRI (CONT'D)

If my diabetes comes back I can't get pregnant.

(then)

What do you want, Will? I know you -- something's up.

WILL

I just wanted to tell you that I have to start working late for the next couple of months. I'm monitoring after-school detention.

TERRI

They paying you extra for that?

WILL

No, I made a deal with Figgins so he wouldn't kill Glee Club.

TERRI

I'm on my feet six hours a day here, then you want me to come home and cook dinner for myself?

WILL

I'll cook in the morning. All you have to do is warm it up.

(a beat, then vulnerable)

Things are a little hard at school right now. I guess I just wanted to come by to talk to you about it.

Before Terri can respond, Ginny returns.

GINNY

This lady wants to return these sheets, but something tells me we've got another bedwetter.

She holds up the sheet -- there's a HUGE STAIN in the middle.

TERRI

We'll talk about it over dinner, okay?

Will smiles, nods as they exit. Suddenly, as he goes to leave, he hears a FAMILIAR VOICE coming from the aisle.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

And two-hundred is the highest thread count you have?

Will peeks around a display of VELVETEEN COUCH COZIES to see Sandy Ryerson talking to a STOCK BOY. The stock boy runs off to check Sandy's request. Will tries to sneak out, but --

SANDY

William?

WILL

(faking it)

Sandy. Hey!

SANDY

(a little cool)

Well hello. How are things? I hear you took over Glee Club.

WILL

Yeah, I was going to call you about that. I hope you're not too upset.

SANDY

Are you kidding? Getting out of that swirling eddy of despair was the best thing that ever happened to me. Don't get me wrong, it wasn't easy at first. I mean, being dismissed for what I was accused of? My long distance girlfriend in Cleveland nearly broke up with me. It's taken me *weeks* to get over my nervous breakdown.

WILL

Did they put you on medication?

SANDY

Better -- medical marijuana. It's genius. And as long as I tell my Doctor Feelgood that I can't sleep, I can get as much as I want.

WILL

(joking)

You should start selling it.

Sandy just stares at him. Will is shocked, then whispering --

WILL (CONT'D)

You're dealing drugs?

SANDY

I make five times more than I did teaching. I keep some for myself and take money baths with the rest.

WILL

But who do you sell it to?

EXT. HARRISON HIGH PARKING LOT -- DAY -- FLASHBACK

Sandy hands a BAGGY of weed to KEN TANAKA, who gladly pays him while looking over his shoulder.

INT. SHEETS N' THINGS -- PRESENT DAY

SANDY

You want in?

WILL

No -- I mean I tried it once in college, but you know, Terri and I are trying to get pregnant.

Sandy tries to STUFF a bag of weed in Will's blazer jacket.

WILL (CONT'D)

Sandy, no!

SANDY

Take it -- first sample's free. You're coaching those tone deaf retards, you're going to need it.
(flirty)
Call me.

Will, head down, sneaks out of the store.

INT. EMMA'S GUIDANCE COUNSELOR OFFICE -- AFTERNOON

A compassionate Emma sits across from JULIETTE, 16, crying, nine months PREGNANT.

EMMA

I'm not letting you drop out. Your grades and SAT scores are certainly good enough for community college. You made a mistake, you got pregnant, don't make another one and throw your life away.

Juliette is sobbing too hard to respond. Emma hands her a tissue box, Juliette takes one, BLOWS HER NOSE in it, then puts the dirty tissue on Emma's desk.

JULIETTE

I just feel so stupid and
worthless...

Emma is trying to listen, but she can't take her eyes off the dirty tissue soiling her desk. Her OCD is kicking in.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA -- AFTERNOON

Will is running afternoon detention. There are three kids in there, one asleep, DROOLING on his desk, there's a girl writing I LOVE MARIO over and over in her note pad and a kid with a large scar on his head just staring into space. Will's agitated, bored, thinking about something important. Finally, he gets up and sneaks out. No one notices.

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

Juliette leaves the office, followed a beat later by Emma, holding the girl's dirty tissue between two MANILA FOLDERS. She throws everything into a TRASH CAN as Will walks up.

WILL

Hey, you have a minute?

EMMA

(excited, but covering)

Sure, what's up?

WILL

It's about Glee Club -- I need some guys -- some "guys' guys." You talk to almost every kid in this school, can you think of anyone who might be interested?

EMMA

Kids follow the leader, Will. Get a couple of the popular kids to commit, the rest will fall in line.

WILL

The leaders in this school are the jocks -- they're not going to do it.

EMMA

Teenagers are all about appearances, they do what they think is cool, but it's not always who they are.

(MORE)

EMMA (CONT'D)

Most of these kids are desperate to get out of their boxes. Go ask, maybe you'll be surprised.

They share a warm smile.

INT. LOCKER ROOM -- THE NEXT DAY

The FOOTBALL TEAM is changing. Ken BLOWS HIS WHISTLE.

KEN TANAKA

Circle up, find a seat. Mr. Schuester is going to talk to you. You don't listen, you do laps, you mouth off, you do laps. Take it, Will.

Will takes center stage. He's endearingly nervous.

WILL

Hey, guys. I think I know most of you from Spanish class, but I wanted to talk to you about something else -- music. Who are some of your favorite musicians?

PUCK

Lil' Wayne.

JOCK #1

Usher.

WILL

Great. All of those guys started somewhere, right? They didn't just wake up one morning and record a hit album. I'm here to offer you guys a chance to be like your heroes, get up on stage.

ANGLE ON Finn...silently riveted...inspired even. But he is too afraid of peer pressure to show it.

WILL (CONT'D)

Here's my point -- Glee Club needs guys.

The guys look at each other -- is this dude serious? Then --

PUCK

I can sing.

WILL

Really? That's fantastic.

PUCK
Wanna hear?

He gets up and stands next to Will. He closes his eyes as if about to sing, then FARTS. The crowd goes wild. Puck FLEXES his biceps. Ken glares at him and MOUTHS "Laps."

WILL
(trying not to be discouraged)
I'm going to hang a sign-up sheet by the door to the locker room for anybody's that interested.

The guys grumble. Ken BLOWS HIS WHISTLE again.

KEN TANAKA
Dismissed.

They disperse. Will looks into Ken's eyes.

WILL
You been sleeping okay? Your eyes look bloodshot.

Ken shrugs. As soon as Will's gone though, a PARANOID Ken pulls out a tiny bottle of VISINE and drops some in his eyes.

INT. LOCKER ROOM -- TWO DAYS LATER

Will, filled with hope, walks up to the *New Directions!* sign-up sheet. People have signed up! The sheet reads: "Gaylord Weiner." "Butt Lunch." "Dick Taco." A few lines down, just "Penis." Will deflates. PUSH IN on his despair as --

WILL (V.O.)
I honestly thought that was the end of the very brief fever-dream that was *New Directions!*

He hears something.

WILL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
But then, on that fateful day, I felt the little hairs on the back of my neck that Terri always told me to shave stand at attention.

He hears an echoing voice from the locker room singing REO Speedwagon's "Can't Fight this Feeling." Will follows it.

INT. LOCKER ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Someone is alone in the showers. Will stands listening, hidden in the shadows, entranced.

VOICE (O.S.)
*"And even as I wander/I'm keeping
 you in sight..."*

It's FINN HUDSON.

FINN
 (stumbling on the lyrics)
*"You're a candle in the window and
 a corndog late at night..."*

WILL (V.O.)
 I realized why I had wanted to do
 this thing in the first place...it
 was seeing a gift in a kid that
 they didn't even know they had.

FINN
*"And I'm gettin' closer than I-I-I
 ever thought I M-I-I-I-GHT!!!"*

It's totally a '70s rock power-ballad-lighter-anthem voice.

WILL (V.O.)
 It was pure talent.

FINN
 (really wailing now)
*"AND I CAN'T FIGHT THIS FEELING
 ANYMORE / I'VE FORGOTTEN WHAT I'D
 STARTED FIGHTIN' FO-O-O-RRR..."*

Will's eyes widen. Something occurs to him.

WILL (V.O.)
 What I did next was the blackest
 moment of my life.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. WILL'S EMPTY SPANISH CLASS -- DAY

Will coolly slides Sandy's bag of marijuana across the desk.

WILL
 Wanna tell me how long you've had a
 drug problem?

REVEAL Finn, across from him. Really about to lose it.

WILL (CONT'D)

Look, if it were up to me, we wouldn't have mandatory bi-weekly afternoon locker checks...

FINN

But I've never seen that before, Mr. Shue! I swear!

Finn is so moving in his sincerity, he's such a good kid, that it takes everything Will has to continue the charade.

FINN (CONT'D)

It isn't *MINE*! I'll pee in a cup!

A beat. Will is momentarily stymied by this, then --

WILL

It wouldn't make any difference, possession is eight-tenths of the law. I'm pretty sure this much pot is a felony. You'll get kicked out of school, lose your football scholarship...

FINN

Wait, I was gonna get a scholarship? To where?

No idea. A beat. Struggling, getting back on track --

WILL

You could land in prison, son.

FINN

Oh my God. What is my *mom* gonna say?!? Please don't tell my mom...

WILL

I'm really...I'm more worried that you have a serious problem. That's my main concern. I see a lot of myself in you. I know what it's like to struggle to make good life choices, and I don't want to see you throw away everything you have to offer the world.

(then)

I just expected more out of you, Finn.

FINN looks up, destroyed. Freeze frame.

FINN (V.O.)
That really got to me, when Mr.
Schuester said that. Because every
day of my life, I expect more out
of myself.

EXT. DRIVING -- NIGHT -- FLASHBACK

A bunch of football players drive around in PUCK'S MOM'S Escalade. One of them has a paintball gun. Another videotapes, so they can post it on YouTube.

FINN (V.O.)
See, I might look confident and
everything? But I really struggle.

PUCK
Finn. Smell my fingers.

FINN
No.

JOCK #1
Finn, feel my lats.

PUCK
Dude, you've got so much bacne!

JOCK #1
It's the steroids, dude.

They pull up next to a HOMELESS MAN, pushing a grocery cart.

PUCK
Finn. Do it, dude!

Finn hesitates. He takes the paintball gun.

FINN (V.O.)
I knew what it was like to be poor.

PUCK
I said do it, what are you, a homo?

FINN (V.O.)
I knew how embarrassing it was to
pay for groceries with food
stamps...

Finn closes his eyes, squeezes the trigger, splatters pink on the homeless man, who maybe doesn't even notice.

The Escalade erupts with laughter. Puck peels out. CLOSE on Finn's guilty face as they all slap him on the back.

EXT. FINN'S HOUSE -- AFTERNOON -- FLASHBACK

A rundown split-level with a brown, patchy lawn. A ten-year-old Finn and his MOM, CAROLE, bring in groceries from a Honda.

FINN (V.O.)
I never knew my dad. He died in
Iraq when we were fighting Osama
bin Laden the first time.

INT. FINN'S HOUSE -- AFTERNOON -- FLASHBACK

QUICK CUTS: young Finn puts away the groceries, upset as his mother battles a bill collector on their rotary wall-phone.

FINN (V.O.)
My mom and me, we're real close.
But being a single parent can be
really hard. The only good time for
Mom was when we splurged a little
bit and ordered Chem-Lawn.

HEAR the doorbell ring as --

INT. FINN'S HOUSE -- DAY -- FLASHBACK

-- the door opens on a GUY with a mullet and gas-station flowers.

FINN (V.O.)
Darren was good to her, and he was
really good about letting me tag
along.

EXT. LIMA, OHIO -- DAY -- FLASHBACK

The three drive along, each with a Big Gulp. Finn beams from the backseat, as Carole leans over and kisses Darren.

CAMERA PUSHES IN on Young Finn's blue Slurpee smile.

FINN (V.O.)
That was the first time I really
heard music.

Shots of Young Finn and Darren taking in the sights of Lima, Ohio in the Chem-Lawn truck. They both sing very loud harmony parts to Journey's "Lovin' Touchin' Squeezin'."

DARREN
You gotta voice, buddy.

Finn blushes, he's never gotten a compliment before.

DARREN (CONT'D)
Seriously. If I had your voice, my
band would still be together.
Stick with it buddy.

EXT. FINN'S HOUSE -- DAY -- FLASHBACK

Young Finn plays football with himself on the now beautiful, green front lawn, throwing the ball across the yard and running to try to catch it, as Carole sits despondent on the stoop, staring into the distance.

FINN (V.O.)
My mom took it real hard when
Darren left her for this blonde
woman who was ten years younger...

The CHEM-LAWN truck passes, blasting Journey, a cute BLONDE GIRL inside. Carole grabs the ball away, runs after the truck and whips the football at it. It thumps against the back of the truck, which keeps driving. She remains standing in the middle of the road, limp, crying, destroyed. PUSH into Young Finn's reaction.

FINN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
It was at that moment I decided to
do whatever it took to make my mom
proud of me...make her feel all her
sacrifice was worth it.

INT. WILL'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

We're back at the weed accusation. ANGLE: tears roll down Finn's cheeks. Will feels awful.

WILL
Look. We have two options. I'm
running detention now, so you can
do six weeks after school...

Finn nods furiously.

WILL (CONT'D)
...but that'll be on your permanent
record.

FINN
What's the other option, Mr. Shue?

INT. AUDITORIUM -- DAY

MOVE down a line of SNAPPING FINGERS. The Club is lined up on stage, snapping, tapping their feet and singing the "ba-dum, ba-da-da-da-dums" from the top of "Summer Lovin'." Rachel stands nearby, confident, head bopping to the beat.

WILL

All right, nice work background.
Now remember, Finn, the tempo is fast, but this is a love song.
Let's see what you can do.

Finn, nervous, studies the sheet music, then, after a beat --

FINN

Summer lovin', happened so fast.

RACHEL

Summer lovin', had me a blast.

FINN

(perfect pitch)
Met a girl, crazy for me.

Rachel tosses down her sheet music and SASHAYS towards Finn.

RACHEL

Met a boy, cute as can be.

They're looking right at each other, she's totally in love, he's a little taken aback by her enthusiasm. The CHORUS kicks in and the whole gang performs a couple of verses. PUSH IN on Will...riveted. This is working.

After a lyric or two, the group stops, looks to Will for direction. He is over the moon. But before he can speak --

MERCEDES

Hold up, I'm not down with this background singing nonsense. I'm Beyonce, I ain't no Kelly Rowland.

WILL

It's just one song, Mercedes.

RAJEESH

And it was the first time we have ever been good.

The rest of the crew agrees. Even Mercedes has to agree.

MERCEDES

Ok, you're good white boy, I'll give you that.

They gather around Finn, WELCOMING. Rachel smiles up at him, totally smitten. Finn doesn't know what to make of any of this, he is completely bewildered. Who are these freaks? And why is this Rachel girl smiling at him like a crazy person?

Will doesn't care about any of the drama. He just sees Rachel and Finn standing near each other and feels, for the first time, a glimmer of hope.

WILL

From the top.

INT. SCHUESTER APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Will and Terri are at the card table, silently putting together an AMERICAN GOTHIC JIGSAW PUZZLE.

TERRI

Isn't this fun? And it's so challenging.

WILL

So...you want to do this every week?

TERRI

(with optimism)

Every Wednesday we'll have puzzle night. I know how important it is for you, having a creative outlet, so I've cleared my schedule.

Terri smiles sweetly. A long beat, then --

WILL

The kids have been working so hard. I was thinking about taking them on a field trip next Saturday. Carmel High's performing a showcase down in Akron -- can't hurt to check out the competition, right? Carmel's going to be the team to beat at Regionals.

She doesn't react, just completes the pitchfork.

WILL (CONT'D)

I thought you might want to come
chaperone it with me -- I don't
think I can handle six hormonal
kids on my own.

She gets up.

WILL (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

TERRI

To bed.

WILL

But it's puzzle night.

TERRI

I'm tired -- from trying. And I
can't make it on Saturday, I picked
up an extra shift at the store so
you won't have to steal baby
formula one day. Find someone else.

Off Will, disappointed we CUT TO:

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE -- BULLETIN BOARD -- DAY

Will PINS up a CHAPERONE SIGN UP SHEET. Emma secretly
watches him from a table occupied by TWO OTHER TEACHERS. As
soon as he's gone, she heads for the sheet, checks it out.

Then, making sure no one is looking, she uses her napkin to
CLEAN the PEN hanging from the sign and volunteers her
services. She looks at her name on the sheet and smiles,
excited for the opportunity to spend time with Will as we...

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. PRACTICE FIELD -- DAY

Puck SLAMS into a practice dummy, hard. His tackle partner doubles over in agony. Puck looks across the field where he sees Coach Tanaka gesturing wildly at Finn. Finn slumps back onto the field as Puck catches up to him.

PUCK
What's going on?

FINN
Oh. Um, I just have to miss practice Saturday.

PUCK
All afternoon?!

FINN
(bad lying)
It's my mom. I gotta, like, help her cook. Do...things.

PUCK
Why?

FINN
Um, she just, like, had surgery.

PUCK
What kind of surgery?

FINN
She, um, had to have her prostate out.

Puck nods empathetically.

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE -- DAY

Will is happily flipping through "Jazzhands!", the Glee Club supply catalog. It's suddenly SMACKED out of his hands and goes flying. It's Ken Tanaka. He's furious.

KEN TANAKA
What the hell, man?! *Glee Club*?!
You stole my quarterback!

Will pauses, not wanting to reveal too much.

WILL
Finn's got a great voice, Ken. He wants to express himself.
(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)

It's a one-time thing. He won't have to miss games or anything...

KEN TANAKA

TRAITOR! You're SCREWING UP MY LIFE!!!

Will is entirely confused by this passion.

WILL

Ken, you hate football. What's this really about?

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT -- AFTERNOON -- FLASHBACK

Emma is cleaning her door handle with Purell sanitizer before she touches it. Ken suddenly sidles up.

KEN TANAKA

Hey, Eminem. Soooo...I got me some tickets to Monster Trucks this weekend.

(sexy)

Loge tickets.

EMMA

No thanks, not my thing.

KEN TANAKA

Truckzilla vs. Truckasaurus. And get this...the trucks *breathe fire*.

Emma pauses, wanting to be kind. Then with a deep breath --

EMMA

Ken, you know how every time you ask me out I tell you I'm on my period?

KEN TANAKA

Which doesn't bother me.

EMMA

Or I say I'm suffering from cluster headaches? Or how I'm allergic to nighttime? None of those things are true. I'm just not interested in dating you.

KEN TANAKA

What do I have to do...to get your fine behind in my Scion?

EMMA

(tortured)

Fine Ken, make me say it -- I like somebody else, okay? There's nothing I can do about it, he's not even available, it's just something I have to deal with.

Ken suddenly realizes who they're talking about. Hurt, he turns to go, then comes back, LICKS HIS HAND and SMEARS IT on her CAR DOOR HANDLE. Off Emma's horror --

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE -- DAY

Ken backs off.

KEN TANAKA

You're right, I'm over-reacting. The herd will take care of it.

WILL

The herd?

KEN TANAKA

The student body. The second someone tries to rise above, be different, the herd pulls him back down. Contrary to your opinion, highschool isn't about being special -- it's about communal pain. Word travels fast, as soon as they hear about Finn, they're going to trample him.

He exits. Off Will, worried that this is the truth --

EXT. PARKING LOT -- SATURDAY MORNING

Arty is LIFTED into the bus with a HYDRAULIC ELEVATOR as the kids inside watch, disinterested.

INT. BUS -- DAY

THROUGH THE WINDOWS, the Ohio countryside whizzes past -- CORNFIELDS, CHURCHES. Arty and Tina play rock/paper/scissors in the back of the bus. Rajeesh is next to Mercedes, SLEEPING. His head keeps falling onto her shoulder, she keeps SHOVING it off, irritated, until --

MERCEDES

Rajeesh!

He wakes up, startled.

RAJEESH

I wasn't touching it, Mom.

MERCEDES

I'll have you know I ain't no holla back girl. I saw the way you were drooling over my milkshakes.

(off his confusion)

Look, Raj, I know you have feelings for me, it's only natural. But you wants to play, you gots to pay.

Raj is suddenly excited. A girl likes him!

RAJEESH

You mean like a date? Fantastic! Would you like to go to the Fun and Games arcade with me tomorrow?

MERCEDES

Arcade? Ain't you been listening? Mary J. Blige is in town next week -- if the tickets aren't on the floor, don't bother.

She turns to look out the window. Rajesh just sits there, unsure about what just happened to him.

FIND Finn, alone playing a HAND-HELD VIDEO GAME. Rachel makes her way back, sits down next to him.

RACHEL

You're very talented.

FINN

Thanks.

RACHEL

I would know -- I'm very talented, too.

(then)

I think the rest of the team expects us to become an item -- you the hot male lead, me the stunning ingenue who everyone roots for.

FINN

Oh, well, I have a girlfriend.

RACHEL

(clenching her jaw)

Really? Who?

FINN
Liz Fabray.

RACHEL
The president of the "Celibacy
Club?"

INT. FINN'S LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT -- FLASHBACK

Finn is MAKING OUT with Liz on the couch. He tries to get up her shirt, but she stops him, pulls away, then gets down on her knees. He's excited for a beat, but then --

LIZ
Let's pray, Finn.

Off Finn, disappointed --

INT. BUS -- DAY -- PRESENT

FINN
Yeah, for like three months. She's cool.

Rachel fumes, then suddenly slaps his face. He's stunned.

FINN (CONT'D)
What's that for?

RACHEL
For leading me on.

She flounces to another seat. AT THE FRONT OF THE BUS, Will sits near Emma. He looks back at the team, all seems well.

WILL
Kids seem to be getting along.

EMMA
You want to go halvesies on a PBJ?

WILL
That sounds perfect.

She reaches into her backpack, puts on a PAIR OF RUBBER GLOVES then pulls a sandwich out of a CAREFULLY WRAPPED sheet of TIN FOIL before handing half to Will. He grins -- he finds her eccentricity endearing -- then takes a bite.

WILL (CONT'D)
I haven't had one of these in a long time -- my wife is allergic to nuts.

EMMA

That's sweet of you -- not eating something because she can't. How long have you guys been married?

WILL

Three years last March -- but we've been together since highschool. She was my first girlfriend, actually.

EMMA

Romantic -- she must be pretty great to have lassoed you.

WILL

Thanks. We're just real compatible, you know? She's the realist, I get to be the dreamer. I'd be lost without her. Don't get me wrong, she can be tough on me, but it's only because she wants me to be a better person. That's what marriage is about -- you make a commitment that no matter how good or bad things are, you're going to stick it out, keep struggling to get better...be better.

Emma smiles, bittersweet but really impressed with him. Will smiles back -- she has a dollop of JELLY on her face. He reaches up to wipe it off, then remembering her OCD, stops.

WILL (CONT'D)

You have some jelly.

She blushes, wipes it off herself -- wishing he had done it.

INT. CARMEL HIGH AUDITORIUM -- AKRON -- NIGHT

State of the art and PACKED. It's a sold out house. PICK UP Rajeesh, overloaded with huge sodas and treats he's just been forced to purchase for Mercedes.

MERCEDES

Next time, don't even bother asking. I like *everything* supersized.

Rajeesh is suddenly nervous as they take their places at the end of the row. PAN DOWN to reveal all the Harrison High Glee Clubbers, reading programs, a little nervous.

Will picks up on this, leans in to address the row.

WILL

Okay, now I've heard these guys are pretty good, but I honestly don't think they've got the talent we've got.

The kids smile, this makes them feel better.

WILL (CONT'D)

But let's be a good audience, guys, they've worked really hard. Let's give 'em some of that ol' Harrison High respect.

Emma smiles shyly, Will is a great teacher. Suddenly, the lights go down and the audience erupts with anticipation. Lights start whizzing around as an announcer bellows:

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen...welcome to the Carmel High Fall Invitational Showcase. We'd like to remind you that video-recording and flash photography is prohibited.

The curtain rises and the Carmel High Glee Club is revealed with their backs to the audience, they are wearing stunningly beautiful couture dresses and black tuxes. The Harrison High Glee Clubbers share a worried look -- by costume comparison, they look like homeless people.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

AND NOW...let's give a warm Buckeye State welcome to last year's regional champions...Vocal Adrenaline!

The crowd explodes, unable to contain themselves.

VOCAL ADRENALINE SINGER

Five six seven eight!

And the show begins. Vocal Adrenaline begins to roar through "Let Me Entertain You," a quick-paced Robbie Williams number.

VOCAL ADRENALINE

"LOOK ME UP IN THE YELLOW PAGES/
WILL BE YOUR ROCK OF AGES/YOUR SEE
THRU FADS AND CRAZY PHASES YEAH..."

They jump, they bend, they look like they've been doing this for years. All these kids could be on Broadway.

Rachel's eyes are saucers. This is the most amazing thing she's ever seen.

The group splits in two, and the guys come down to the center. THREE MIRRORED PANELS turn around from the back of the stage, revealing THREE HORN PLAYERS, who blast the trumpet part as the rest of the band pulls away.

The crowd is now losing it. Some kids in the audience are standing, *Vocal Adrenaline has groupies*, they are trying to scream above the tidal wave of pitch-perfect sound.

VOCAL ADRENALINE (CONT'D)
 "I'M A BURNING EFFIGY/OF EVERYTHING
 I USED TO BE/YOU'RE MY ROCK OF
 EMPATHY MY DEAR!"

Now the whole choir is moving, formation after stunning formation, the kids are having the time of their life. They are black, white, Asian, beaming, singing their hearts out, dancing their asses off, possessed by the disease known as "show face." They are really, really good. It's breathtaking.

Finn cannot believe what he's looking at. Rajeesh is near tears. Mercedes shakes her head back and forth in horror.

VOCAL ADRENALINE (CONT'D)
 "LET ME-E-E-E-E ENTERTAIN YO-O-O-
 O-O-U!!!"

The big finish now. Suddenly, two male Adrenaline members start executing Olympic-worthy BACKFLIPS ACROSS THE STAGE.

Vocal Adrenaline hits their final position. Sweaty, panting, looks of complete ecstasy on their faces, they know they are special. A moment of silence, then the audience leaps to its feet in a deafening ovation.

Only the New Directions remain in their seats, too flabbergasted to move. Will looks ashen, Emma looks sick to her stomach, the kids all look at the floor. PUSH IN ON Tina, who through her stutter finally says something.

TINA
 We're d-d-d-d-d-doomed.

EXT. LIMA, OHIO -- LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Finn, depressed, is walking home. He senses something behind him -- is he being followed? He turns, sees nothing, and continues on.

Behind him, we suddenly see PUCK'S MOM'S ESCALADE come silently around the corner. Finn can feel it back there, stalking him. A beat, then he BREAKS OFF RUNNING. Puck hits the gas, peeling out after him.

Finn turns down an alley, jumps a fence. A couple of JOCKS jump out of the truck and follow ON FOOT. Puck screams around the corner, trying to cut Finn off. Finn sprints down the alley, the guys gaining ground. He's almost away when Puck SLAMS ON HIS BRAKES right in front of him, blocking his path. He's TRAPPED.

Puck and a couple more JOCKS get out of the car, carrying PAINT BALL GUNS. They herd Finn toward the wall.

PUCK
Chicks don't have prostates, I
looked it up.

He fires a WARNING SHOT that blasts FLORESCENT GREEN PAINT onto the wall behind Finn.

PUCK (CONT'D)
There are rules, Finn. I don't know
what they are, but you broke a big
one when you chose those tards over
practice today.

Puck gets Finn's sleeve with the next shot.

PUCK (CONT'D)
And when you break the rules, you
have to be punished.

Finn's back is up against the wall now. He's HELPLESS. And he knows what's coming. All the guys aim their guns like a FIRING SQUAD. Suddenly, they OPEN FIRE --

PEPPERING HIM WITH PAINT. The shooting is relentless...like Sonny Corleone on the causeway.

INT. SCHUESTER APARTMENT -- NIGHT -- LATER

A wary Will enters to find a CONGRATULATIONS BANNER draped in the ENTRY WAY. Terri skips out of the kitchen, two PLASTIC FLUTES of what appear to be CHAMPAGNE in her hands. She gives him one, then wraps him in a BEAR HUG.

TERRI
There's my baby!

WILL

(moved)

Wow, honey, this is amazing.
But...what's the congratulations
for? The kids haven't won anything
yet.

TERRI

(with quiet emotion)

I'm pregnant, Will.

Will needs a moment to take that in -- really? She nods, then smiles, EXCITED. Will's OVERWHELMED. He grabs her, pulls her tight to him, kisses her deeply.

WILL

Oh my God, Ter, this is it -- we're
going to become...a family.

He's suddenly aware that Terri's crying.

WILL (CONT'D)

Honey...what's wrong?

TERRI

Sheets 'N Things might be closing,
they just shut down the outlet in
Ogden. I don't know what we're
gonna do, Will.

(then)

We need to start saving for a place
with a third bedroom. This baby
needs a nursery, vaccines...a pony
-- all the things we never had.
They're still accepting
applications at HW Menken. It's not
too late...

WILL

It's just that...I hate the idea of
letting the kids down.

Terri stares for a moment, then with honest reason --

TERRI

Will, this isn't about them -- this
is about you...trying to recapture
your glory days. I'm not the hot
cheerleader anymore, and you're not
the golden boy. High school is
over, okay? For both of us.

WILL

But it's not over for them. Why is it so wrong to want to give them some of the joy we had?

TERRI

Because we don't have any left to spare. I've spent years giving up dreams, letting go of the past, trying to move forward with you -- now you need to let go of who you were and accept who you are.

WILL

You fell in love with who I was back then.

TERRI

I fell in love with who I thought you had the potential to become.

(then)

Become that promise, Will. If not for me, for him.

She puts his hand on her belly. DISSOLVE TO...

INT. EMMA'S OFFICE -- DAY

Will enters, depressed.

WILL

Can I have a minute?

The door closes on her look of concern.

INT. AUDITORIUM -- DAY

The kids are absolutely SHOCKED. Then --

ARTY

You're leaving us?

Reveal Will, addressing them.

WILL

Ms. Pillsbury's agreed to take over until the school can find a permanent replacement.

MERCEDES

Is this 'cause those Carmel kids were so good? Because we can work harder.

(MORE)

MERCEDES (CONT'D)

I've been coaching Rajeesh on his rights and lefts, he almost has them down.

RACHEL

This isn't fair, Mr. Schuester -- we can't do this without you.

Reveal Finn, his face and arms covered in faded green blotches, remnants from his paintball attack that soap and a good scrubbing could still not remove.

FINN

Does this mean I don't have to be in this club anymore?

Will is so moved, this is even harder than he thought it would be. A beat as he thinks about what to say, then --

WILL

This isn't about you guys. Being an adult is about having to make difficult choices. It's not like high school, sometimes you have to give up the things that you love. One day you guys are going to grow up and understand that.

(then, with emotion)

I have loved being your teacher.

This doesn't matter to them -- all they understand is that they're losing the one person at this school who believed in them -- and Will knows it.

With nothing more to say, Will walks down the aisle, leaving their lives forever as we --

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. AUDITORIUM -- DAY

Emma sits at the piano, playing "Chopsticks." The choir sings along, bored.

EMMA

Good! One more time, guys.

RACHEL

We've been singing this for an hour. We're warmed up.

A moment of hopelessness on Emma's face, then admitting --

EMMA

Okay, it's the only song I know how to play.

MERCEDES

Ms. Pillsbury, you're a nice lady and all, but you saw Vocal Adrenaline, right?

RACHEL

I cannot carry this choir by myself. We need to get Finn back.

MERCEDES

Oh, come on, Miley Cyrus. Are you honestly surprised he didn't stick around?

EMMA

Guys, I know Glee Club has faced some trying times this week. But the most important thing is to not give up.

RAJEESH

Why? Mr. Schuester did.

The moment resonates.

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY -- LATER

Finn retrieves a textbook from his locker. He slams it shut, and Rachel is right there, startling him.

RACHEL

Didn't see you at Glee Club today.

FINN
Yeah, it conflicts with --

RACHEL
Your reputation?

FINN
Are you going to slap me again?
Just do it and get it over with.

RACHEL
Actually, I'm here to apologize for that. I didn't do it because I'm jealous. I slapped you because I *knew* you were going to do exactly what you did -- quit Glee. It was a pre-emptive slap.

Finn just stares, not understanding.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
You've really got something, Finn,
and you're throwing it away.

(then)
It took years of discipline and hard work to get people to look at me. And all you have to do is roll out of bed and people can't take their eyes off you.

(vulnerable)
I'd kill for that.

A herd of CHEERLEADERS pass, staring at them, wondering what he's doing even talking to an outcast like Rachel.

FINN
I'm gonna be late...

RACHEL
You can't worry about what people think of you, Finn. You're better than all of them.

She gently squeezes his hand, then walks away. Off Finn --

INT. HW MENKEN -- DAY

Will, wearing a BLUE OXFORD, KHAKIS and a BLUE TIE walks briskly with PETER, wearing the EXACT SAME THING. Peter is giving Will his orientation as they hustle through the MAZE of cubicles that make up the accounting floor. The cubicle walls are SEVEN FEET HIGH, making it impossible to figure out where you are or where you've come from.

PETER
 (handing passes to Will)
 This is your parking pass, this is
 your entry pass, this is your men's
 room pass.

Will looks the passes over, they all look the same.

PETER (CONT'D)
 This is your lunch room pass --
 you're slotted for the three until
 three-forty-five lunch shift.
 Don't bother trying to use it for a
 different shift, it won't work and
 they'll flag you. Three flags and
 you lose a dessert ticket.

They come to an IMPASSE -- like rats in a maze.

PETER (CONT'D)
 Crap.

Peter turns them around and they head back the way they came.

WILL
 Isn't three o'clock a little late
 for lunch?

PETER
 Lunch slots are divvied out
 according to seniority. You move up
 fifteen minutes every four point
 two years.

Will does the math in his head -- he'd better bring a snack.
 They arrive at a CUBICLE. It's gray, industrial. A
 COMPUTER, a CHAIR and a DESK.

PETER (CONT'D)
 Here we are. Feel free to decorate,
 but don't go too crazy.
 (re: a huge stack of
 files)
 That's your inbox.

Will enters, nods, tries to keep his head up. Peter, in a
 rush, shakes his hand.

PETER (CONT'D)
 By the way, if you hear a fire
 alarm, ignore it, there's no way
 you'd find the exit anyway.

He leaves. Will turns on his computer, looks through the pile of files -- spreadsheet after spreadsheet. He opens his BRIEFCASE, takes SOMETHING out of it and PINS it to the wall.

It's a photo of WILL AND TERRI, on their honeymoon at UNIVERSAL CITY. He stares at it for a beat, remembers what he's doing this for and gets to work. After a few keystrokes he hears something coming from the next cubicle. A muffled, SNORTING sound. Curious, he rolls his chair over and stands up on it so he can peek over the side.

He looks down into the other cubicle to see a MAN, a little older than Will, working at the computer, QUIETLY SOBBING.

WILL
Hey, you okay?

The Man looks up at him with a THOUSAND YARD STARE, nods, then goes back to his work. Will shrugs, then looks out at the SEA of cubicles from above. They seem to go on FOREVER.

Suddenly, to his shock, he sees Emma at the end of the maze, lost, clearly looking for someone.

WILL (CONT'D)
Emma?

She sees him, waves with relief.

WILL (CONT'D)
Follow the sound of my voice.

She smiles. He gets down off the chair, and she's there in his cubicle.

WILL (CONT'D)
This is a treat. What brings you here?
(getting it)
Oh, right. Tax time.

EMMA
Actually, I'm here to see you, Will. I made an appointment for you -- next Monday in my office at three o'clock. You need some career guidance.

WILL
Why? My career is finally on track. The benefits package is amazing here.

EMMA

That's great, Will, but just come --
for me?

He's moved by her concern.

WILL

Fine, for you.

They share a smile -- they've missed each other.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD -- DAY

Finn and Puck, still in PRACTICE PADS, walk off the field. Tanaka's prediction proved to be correct -- Finn has rejoined the herd. But he's a little hurt at what he was subjected to.

PUCK

What do you want me to do,
apologize? That's not me, dude.

Finn ignores him.

PUCK (CONT'D)

Look, if I joined the Flag Team,
you'd beat the crap out of me. I
just don't understand why you did
it.

FINN

Schuester told me he'd give me
enough extra credit to pass Spanish
if I joined the club -- I had no
choice. If I failed another class
I'd be off the team. But I quit,
okay? It's over.

PUCK

Cool. And as a welcome back to the
world of the normal, I got you a
present.

They arrive at a LARGE, BLUE PORT-A-POTTY surrounded by the JOCK GANG who threw Rajeesh into the dumpster. There's a rhythmic BANGING coming from inside the port-a-potty.

FINN

What's that noise?

INT. PORT-A-POTTY -- CONTINUOUS

Arty is SLAMMING his wheelchair into the door in a vain attempt to escape.

EXT. PORT-A-POTTY -- CONTINUOUS

PUCK

We got that wheelchair kid inside,
we're gonna flip it.

FINN

Isn't that kind of dangerous?

PUCK

He's already in a wheelchair. Come
on dude, we saved you the first
roll.

Everyone looks at Finn, waiting, laughing, expecting him to follow through. Finn HESITATES as Arty continues his BANGING. Is he going to do it? Then, after a few long beats, Finn goes to the port-a-potty and OPENS THE DOOR. Arty wheels out, grabs on to Finn's arm.

ARTY

Thank you, thank you so much. Oh my
God, the smell...

PUCK

What the hell, dude? I can't
believe you're helping out this
loser.

FINN

Don't you get it? We're all losers.
Everyone in this school, hell
everyone in this town. No one has
any money, most of our parents are
divorced or hate each other. Only
half the kids who graduate ever go
to college and maybe two leave the
state to do it. Our football team
is one and seven and the only win
we have is against that school for
the deaf.

Finn's passion just roars out of him.

FINN (CONT'D)

You can haze other kids because
that's what your brothers did when
they were here, but someday you're
going to end up just like them,
laid off, playing beer pong every
night and trying to score with high
school girls.

Puck doesn't understand what's so bad about that, but whatever.

FINN (CONT'D)

I'm not afraid of being called a loser because I can accept that that's what I am. I *am* afraid of turning my back on something that actually made me happy for the first time in my sorry life.

A beat, then Finn pulls off his pads and THROWS them at Puck.

FINN (CONT'D)

Get yourself a new quarterback -- I quit.

He turns and wheels a beaming Arty away. As they go, Arty licks his finger, touches his ass and makes a SIZZLING SOUND.

Finn isn't smiling, though, that was harder for him than it looked. Then, he hears something. He looks to the other end of the field and sees his mom's ex DARREN standing beside his CHEM-LAWN TRUCK, cigarette dangling from his mouth, hosing down the field. There's a new HOTTIE in the cab and Journey's "Don't Stop Believin'" is BLASTING from a BOOM BOX.

Finn takes the sounds in, remembers how much he loves the music of that time, how it touches his SOUL. Then, as if struck by a lightning bolt of INSPIRATION, he wheels Arty away.

INT. AUDITORIUM -- CONTINUOUS

The club is rehearsing a dance move. There's an argument.

RACHEL

I know what I'm talking about. I won my first dance competition when I was *three months old*.

Finn slams Arty through the doors, which fly open. They all look at him. Then --

RAJEESH

This is a closed rehearsal.

FINN

Look, I owe you guys an apology. I shouldn't have quit.

MERCEDES

Whatever. I'm about to quit. Take my man to Ponderosa.

FINN

For too many years, I've been a total douchebag. I don't want to be the guy who just drives around throwing eggs at people.

RACHEL

That was you?

RAJEESH

You and your friends threw pee balloons at me.

FINN

I know.

RAJEESH

You nailed all my lawn furniture to my roof.

FINN

I wasn't there for that, but I'm really sorry.

(then)

Look, that isn't who I am and I'm tired of it. *This* is what I want to be doing. With you guys. I used to think that this was like the lamest thing on earth. And maybe it *is*, but...there's a reason why we're all here.

They all look at him.

FINN (CONT'D)

It's because we all want to be *good* at something.

They're taken aback. Then:

FINN (CONT'D)

Arty, you play guitar, right? Think you could recruit the jazz band?

ARTY

Sure.

FINN

Mercedes. We need new costumes.
And they have to be cool. Can you
do that?

MERCEDES

DAMN, don't you see what I got on?

FINN

Great. Rachel, you're gonna
choreograph.

She smiles despite herself, thrilled to use her talents.

FINN (CONT'D)

Tina, what are you good at?

TINA

W-w-w-w-w-w-...

Awkwardness.

FINN

We'll figure out something for you.

MERCEDES

What are you bringin' to the table,
Justin Timberlake?

Finn's face lights up.

FINN

I've got the music.

INT. EMMA'S GUIDANCE OFFICE -- DAY

TIGHT on the sharpened tip of a NUMBER TWO PENCIL as it fills
in the BUBBLES of a standardized test.

WILL

I think I'm a little old to be
taking a "Career Guidance Test."

EMMA

You're almost done.

Will finishes, hands the test to Emma. She smiles, primly
starts to tally the score.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Each one of your responses has a number value and when I add them all up, it will tell us what your ideal career should be.

(some more score keeping,
then)

Four-eighty-three.

She takes out a KEY and works her way down to find Will's number. TIGHT ON her finger, moving down the sheet, past career possibilities like CLERK, NEUROSURGEON, BALLET DANCER until she arrives at 483 -- RODEO CLOWN. She's shocked.

WILL

(excited)

What's it say?

Emma takes a beat, files the test away. Then --

EMMA

I'll tell you what it doesn't say -- best suited to cubicle dweller.

WILL

Look, Emma, this is very sweet of you, and I'll admit that my new line of work isn't as challenging as I'd like it to be, but it's the right move for my family.

EMMA

I want to show you something.

She grabs a VIDEOCASSETTE from her desk, puts it in the VCR.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I was researching past Glee teams for the kids, thought maybe I could steal some moves. This is a tape they had in the library of the '93 team at Nationals in Epcot.

The GRAINY IMAGE begins to play on the screen. After a few seconds she PAUSES the tape, just as the camera catches a CLOSE UP of a JOYFUL young BOY, his mouth open in mid-song (we should remember this featured face from the opening).

EMMA (CONT'D)

Do you know who that is?

Will just stares with quiet emotion -- this is hard for him.

EMMA (CONT'D)

It's you, Will -- happier than I've ever seen you.

WILL

(softly)

That was the greatest moment of my life.

EMMA

Why?

WILL

Because I loved what I was doing. You don't get to be great at something every day. I knew before we were half-way through with that number that we were going to win. Being a part of that, in that moment...I knew who I was in the world.

EMMA

Was it a guy in a tie who bragged about his benefits program?

WILL

No -- but the only time I've felt that way since then was when Terri told me I was going to be a father.

(then)

I need to provide for my family.

EMMA

Provide what? The understanding that nothing is more important than money? Or the idea that the only life worth living is one that you're passionate about?

That hits Will right where he lives. PUSH IN on his face as the first notes of a Glee Club VERSION of "Don't Stop Believin'" begins to play...

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

Will walks down the hallway, passing the auditorium. He hears singing. He pauses, then sneaks in the door. New Directions is on stage in new costumes, cute cut-up tops over torn jeans and Chuck Taylors. Finn and Rachel sing a capella in front of the choir, who hums a simple harmony.

FINN

"JUST A SMALL TOWN GIRL/ LIVING IN
A LONELY WORLD.../ SHE TOOK THE
MIDNIGHT TRAIN GOING ANYWHERE..."

RACHEL

"JUST A CITY BOY/ BORN AND RAISED
IN SOUTH DETROIT.../ HE TOOK THE
MIDNIGHT TRAIN GOING ANYWHERE..."

It's JOURNEY. And it's incredibly emotional...because the kids are really FEELING it. Arty wails a sick guitar lick, and the JAZZ BAND surges in. The choir starts to dance behind them. They look and sound really different...what they lack in expertise they make up for in sweet youthful enthusiasm. Everyone starts to sing:

EVERYONE

"WORKING HARD TO GET MY FILL/
EVERYBODY WANTS A THRILL.../
PLAYING ANYTHING TO ROLL THE DICE
JUST ONE MORE TIME..."

PUSH IN on Will, unseen in the back of the theatre, overwhelmed by what he's seeing. For a moment he can't move, then turns and hurries back out. "Don't Stop Believin'" continues under:

INT. SCHUESTER APARTMENT -- DAY -- LATER

Will rushes in, out of breath. Terri sits at the table idly eating pickles.

WILL

I'm going back.

(off her look)

I'm a teacher. You want me to fulfill my promise? This is how I'm gonna do it. I'll figure out the money, get a part-time job on the weekends to pull us through if I have to.

She is stunned.

WILL (CONT'D)

What would you rather have, Terri? A kid with a pony, or a kid with a father who's proud of what he does for a living? This is my passion. I have to do this.

(then)

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)

And I don't want to hear anymore about how we don't have joy in our lives. That's something we have to open ourselves up to, every day.

She slowly stands, then exits to the bedroom. She comes back, and smoothly hands him a BLANKET and A PILLOW.

WILL (CONT'D)

What's this for?

TERRI

The couch. It gets cold out here at night.

She exits, closes the bedroom door. Off Will, realizing there will be repercussions for living up to his potential --

INT. AUDITORIUM -- DAYS LATER

The New Directions have found their groove as they continue practicing "Don't Stop Believin'." The jazz band sinks their teeth into the chorus, and the choir sings in a piercing seven-part harmony. Even Tina has found a place here -- she's a HUMAN BEAT BOX.

As they move through their positions, they share looks across the stage, laughs and smiles between them, breathless, sweating...they're on fire.

EVERYONE

"DON'T STOP BELIEVING...HOLD ON TO
THAT FE-E-E-ELING...STRE-E-ET
LIFE...PE-E-OPLE..."

Finn and Rachel share a look that hints of something to come.

EVERYONE (CONT'D)

"DON'T STOP BELIEVING... HOLD ON TO
THAT FE-E-ELING! DON'T STOP!!!"

They hit their final position, hold it, panting through ecstatic smiles. The camera PULLS OUT to find Will and Emma, glowing, standing in the audience.

WILL

Good, guys. It's a 9, we need a 10. Finn, I think if we worked on it, you could hit a high E. Rachel, easy on the jazzhands and let's try to get those bangs out of your face. Mercedes, sometimes when you sing, it looks like you're in pain.

MERCEDES

'Cuz it HURTS to be this good.

They all smile. Then, overwhelmed with pride and potential:

WILL

From the top.

END PILOT