

AMERICAN HORROR STORY: NEST

"Poking The Nest"

by  
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TEASER

TITLES UP: **Georgia colony, America, 1734.** The words dissolve, as moonlight BEAMS DOWN upon a young lady, cowering amid the valley's ridge.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

SOFIA (late-twenties), brunette in a tattered colonial petticoat, makes the sign of the cross. She utters a prayer in Romanian, for which we are given the benefit of SUBTITLES:

SOFIA  
(in Romanian)  
*Be present, O Lord, and protect us  
through the silent hours of this  
night, that we who are wearied with  
the work and changes of this  
fleeting world --*

A hand grips her shoulder. Sofia turns, stares into the eyes of her lover, GABRIEL (mid-thirties), a thick bob of dark blond hair past his ears. He adjusts a cross-belt on his overcoat.

SOFIA (CONT'D)  
(in Romanian)  
*-- may rest upon thy eternal  
changelessness. Amen.*

GABRIEL  
(in Romanian)  
*Another settlement is past that  
ridge. We shall take refuge from  
the monsters. Neither will the  
Plague know we are there.*

SOFIA  
(in Romanian)  
*It knows. It always knows.*

He hushes her, leans in to share a kiss. It's cut short by -- nearby RUSTLING through the brush.

They stop short, as Gabriel seizes his lover around her waist. They plunge headfirst onto the grass.

GABRIEL  
(whispers; in Romanian)  
*Be silent, Sofia. I won't let them  
hurt you.*

SOFIA  
 (whispers; in Romanian)  
*There is nowhere to hide.*

TORCHES ILLUMINATE the pitch black forest, as...

LUCIAN (late-forties), stands over them... his chiseled, sinister face filled with anticipation. Several COLONISTS flank him, along with a YAMACRAW CHIEF.

A British accent flows from his voice:

LUCIAN  
 Get up.

He yanks Sofia to her feet. Gabriel lunges, but the colonists hold him back. Both Sofia and Gabriel switch to guttural English:

SOFIA  
 Gabriel!

GABRIEL  
 Unhand her!

Lucian -- still holding tightly to Sofia -- stares Gabriel down. Then, he turns to the young woman, and...

BITES HER in the neck!

Sofia screams. Blood streams down her collar. Gabriel struggles, but one of the colonists kicks him in the gut.

Lucian finishes his drink, then licks the nape of Sofia's now-crimson neck. She loses consciousness, falls to the ground.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)  
 You vile louse! May thy tongue be  
 leaden!

Lucian stands inches away from where Gabriel is being held in place. Cocks his head, and then...

PUNCHES Gabriel squarely across the jaw.

LUCIAN  
 You left Romania to escape  
 persecution, fool. Yet, you would  
 commit those same sins against us.

He delivers two more rough punches.

GABRIEL

(gasping)

You... are the sinner, Lucian.  
Someday... the meek shall... rise  
against you and... your kin.

He glances over Lucian's shoulder. The SILHOUETTE of a TALL MALE FIGURE -- who holds a cigar to his mouth, puffs out smoke -- watches them.

LUCIAN

Clearly, you never had a father of  
divine resilience.

Lucian strikes blow after blow, causes Gabriel's face to become bloodier by the second.

As Gabriel braces for another impact...

SMASH CUT TO:

A new, younger, adolescent male face is slammed by a fist with equal ferocity.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY

**SUPER: Toronto, 2014.**

NOAH LEWIS (15) -- a Caucasian teen with ear-length, scraggly dark-blond curls -- takes several punches in a row.

A group of TEENAGED CLASSMATES have him pinned against the wall. One of them, ZEKE, pummels Noah. The others, including QUENTON, goad Zeke on. Their accents are noticeably Canadian.

ZEKE

You like staring at my ass, faggot?

Another punch to Noah's eye socket.

QUENTON

He'll have a hell of a time staring  
at anything, now!

ZEKE

You want to be my bitch? I'll make  
you my bitch!

He kicks Noah in the gut. The other guys whoop.

ZEKE (CONT'D)

Let's see how good you can piss  
when it burns...

QUENTON

In the nuts!

Zeke knees Noah in the groin. Noah keels over, bloodied and weakened.

ZEKE

No more squirting baby batter on  
your boyfriend's face!

A teacher, MR. COLLINS, intervenes.

COLLINS

Enough!

He breaks it up, helps Noah to his feet.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - ONE WEEK LATER

PRINCIPAL DUPREE, a rigid spinster in her mid-fifties, sits across from a heavily-bandaged, black-eyed Noah, as well as...

His mother, VIRGINIA (early-fifties) -- heavysset, with a graying pageboy bob.

DUPREE

Zeke Rushfeldt has been expelled.  
Zero tolerance means zero  
tolerance.

VIRGINIA

Criminal charges?

DUPREE

His counsel is claiming consent.  
That Noah instigated them with  
sexual harassment.

NOAH

Bullshit.

DUPREE

You have the option to sue.

VIRGINIA

We can't afford any lawyer.

DUPREE

Your teachers are concerned, Noah.  
They say you've been riling up your  
classmates. Daring them to lay a  
hand on you.

Noah remains silent, sullen. Virginia turns on her son.

VIRGINIA

Why do you have to go stirring things up like that? The Lord is rendering punishment onto you for your sins. All because your fellow infidels desire a reprieve from your prurient scorn.

NOAH

Then maybe they should quit calling me a queer.

DUPREE

Ms. Mayencourt, one of our guidance counselors, has recommended Noah for this program.

She slaps a brochure for "ALNWICK MANOR" down in front of Virginia.

VIRGINIA

I can't afford some fancy boarding school, either.

DUPREE

That won't be an issue. It's in the States. Alnwick offers grants for international students.

Virginia gazes down at the brochure -- then stares at Noah, disappointment in her eyes. He avoids eye contact.

EXT. INTERSTATE - MORNING - A COUPLE OF WEEKS LATER

A station wagon crosses the Canadian/American border onto the New York State Thruway.

INT. STATION WAGON - TRAVELING

Virginia drives in silence. Noah -- seated in the passenger side, wrapped in fewer bandages -- remains stoic.

VIRGINIA

Now don't you be getting any delusions of grandeur, son. Hedonism and godlessness only beget wrath. Them Yanks aren't going to take it any easier on you.

NOAH

Go to hell.

VIRGINIA

That's exactly where you'll find  
yourself if you don't shape up.

NOAH

Couldn't be any worse than living  
with you.

Virginia scowls but says nothing, as she continues to  
drive...

EXT. ALNWICK MANOR - DAY

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

Noah and Virginia take in the sight of the Gothic mansion.  
Arched windows and doors, crow-stepped gables, and baronial  
machicolations highlight this granite giant.

VIRGINIA

Behold your new home. And may it  
somehow lead to your salvation.

He ignores her, slumps out of the vehicle. Virginia also  
exits the driver's seat, gives the door a disgusted slam as  
they face Alnwick Manor.

Mother and son make their way toward the imposing palatial  
estate, as...

FROM THE SHADOWS

A young male TEENAGER watches them, his face masked by the  
darkness.

Under his breath, VOICE INDISTINCT, the teenager whispers:

TEENAGER

He's here...

Noah and Virginia move closer to Alnwick Manor -- with Noah  
clearly in no hurry, as we

FADE TO:

OPENING TITLE SEQUENCE:

"American Horror Story: Nest"

ACT ONE

EXT. ALNWICK MANOR - NIGHT - CONTINUED

Noah and Virginia now stand on the front steps, avoid eye contact with each other.

THE PORCH - A MINUTE LATER

Virginia's hand rings a doorbell, which PLAYS a string of bars from Mahler's "SYMPHONY NO. 2 - IN C MINOR." They react to the digitized tune, as the door opens, revealing...

INT. ALNWICK MANOR - FOYER

PAISLEY SUTTON (late-sixties), shoulder-length blonde hair defying her age. She speaks with the same elegance that radiates from her simple-yet-classy attire.

PAISLEY  
Noah Lewis, I presume?

NOAH  
You saw my mug shots?

VIRGINIA  
Forgive him. Manners aren't his strong suit.

Paisley's smile seems forced, as she escorts them inside.

PAISLEY  
I'm Paisley Sutton. My husband, Raphael, will be your Headmaster. Please, make yourselves at home.

She leads them from the foyer toward a large central parlor, where various ADOLESCENTS dwell.

FOYER - WALKING

Virginia murmurs to Noah, as he looks away:

VIRGINIA  
Now don't sass these people.

NOAH  
Fine, I'll just lick their sphincters.

Virginia fumes, as Paisley keeps her mouth shut.

## PARLOR - WALKING

Paisley forces vivacity, leads them through the parlor decorated with sectional couches and comfy-looking armchairs. Victorian lamps, potted plants, sylvan wall-pieces, and a Rumford fireplace give this area a "post-colonial" feel.

PAISLEY

We're a Plane Three Montessori School. One-hundred-and-forty-eight students can be enrolled at a time. Seventy-four boys, seventy-four girls. No more, no less.

VIRGINIA

*Monte-what?*

PAISLEY

Our curriculum allows young people to customize their preferred emphases of study.

NOAH

Great. Sign me up for Advanced Masturbation.

Paisley turns, faces them.

PAISLEY

I wouldn't suggest letting the Headmaster hear you crack jokes like that. His sense of humor is rather... lacking.

Virginia nudges Noah, as Paisley leads them into a...

## LIBRARY

An ocean of bookshelves stretches from wall-to-wall in front of them. Some STUDENTS read or write quietly at tables.

PAISLEY

Our library boasts collections from a cacophony of renowned authors. It's our pride and joy. Also amid these two-hundred-thousand-square-feet of rich history, you'll find a music conservatory, a solarium and adjoining greenhouse, a rather spacious dining hall --

NOAH

Do I get my own room?

PAISLEY

We house four students per unit,  
divided by gender. Young men in  
the west wing, ladies in the east.  
Each wing has one community  
lavatory.

Paisley leads them over to:

A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN (41) -- long blonde hair, dressed in a  
pants suit -- who sits alone at a table. She pulls her  
attention away from a textbook, rises.

PAISLEY (CONT'D)

This is Dr. Eliza Cross, chair of  
our music education program. She  
will be your academic advisor.

ELIZA

Very pleased to meet you, Noah.

She extends her hand, but he just stares at it.

ELIZA (CONT'D)

Your guidance counselor tells me  
you play the guitar. And a little  
piano.

NOAH

I had a band. Our lead singer went  
to Juvie after he beat the shit out  
of his chemistry teacher.

VIRGINIA

Language!

ELIZA

Well... I can assure you every  
professor at this academy will give  
you nothing but compassion and  
personal attention.

NOAH

Yeah. Okay.

VIRGINIA

So what's he going to be studying?

ELIZA

As Noah designated on his entrance  
form, most of his classes will be  
in music. But he will also take  
natural sciences, kinetics --

VIRGINIA  
 (stupefied)  
 What?

ELIZA  
 "Gym class."

NOAH  
 I don't like sports.

ELIZA  
 -- fine arts, theatre, philosophy,  
 theology...

VIRGINIA  
 How the hell are all those things  
 going to prepare him for the real  
 world?

PAISLEY  
 Aren't you Canadians supposed to be  
 a bunch of liberal hippies?

She smirks at her own joke, but Virginia's glare turns ice-cold.

PAISLEY (CONT'D)  
 Dr. Cross, why don't I place the  
 remainder of this tour in your  
 care. Show Mr. Lewis and his  
 mother our classrooms, the dining  
 hall, and Professor Boyd will bring  
 him to his dormitory.

ELIZA  
 It'd be my pleasure. Come along,  
 Noah... Mrs. Lewis.

She ushers them up a staircase from the library's interior. Paisley watches their newest student depart... and sighs.

EMPTY CLASSROOM - TEN MINUTES LATER

Eliza escorts mother and son between rows of empty desks. Virginia scrutinizes every nook and cranny, while Noah remains disinterested.

ELIZA  
 Although the manor was built in  
 1865, it's been retrofitted to meet  
 state safety requirements. All  
 rooms have a satellite television  
 signal, high-speed Wi-Fi...

VIRGINIA

You expect me to buy a laptop for him?

ELIZA

We provide our students with a state-of-the-art computer lab. Master Alnwick believed in hands-on, student-centered education.

NOAH

Master Alnwick?

ELIZA

His great-great-grandparents established this institution, eighty-two years ago. Modeled it after a similar program they'd started in Great Britain.

Noah stares at the chalkboard and rows of desks, almost despondent.

ELIZA (CONT'D)

When he relocated back East, Headmaster Sutton took over.

VIRGINIA

So you do teach them math, science, history?

ELIZA

Of course. It's interwoven into several courses. In fact, our proximity to Lake Erie lends itself to biology and nature labs.

NOAH

Great. More tests to fail.

Eliza laughs.

ELIZA

I think you've got the wrong idea --

A Caribbean accent FLOWS from the open doorway:

CARIBBEAN VOICE

It's not so bad here, baby-doll. We're a really nice lot, we are.

FRANCILLE CHARBONNEAU (late-teens) -- Afro-Caribbean, overweight -- holds an oboe in one hand, adorned in a West African print faux wrap dress. She saunters inside.

FRANCILLE

A cute little thing, this one.

ELIZA

Francille, aren't you supposed to be practicing?

FRANCILLE

I got bored, Dr. Cross. A gal can only toot her pipe for so long.

ELIZA

Well toot it for another half hour, okay? I'm showing these nice people around.

Francille nods at the Lewises, trudges back the way she came.

VIRGINIA

How are you going to make sure my son stays out of trouble?

NOAH

Mom, give it a rest, already!

ELIZA

We have a strict curfew. Besides, most students don't want to leave.

NOAH

What about the ones who do?

Eliza hesitates, then changes the subject.

ELIZA

I think it's time to show you where you'll be living.

Virginia shoots Noah a stern Look, as Eliza leads them down the hall.

THIRD FLOOR - WEST WING OF THE MANOR - FIVE MINUTES LATER

The trio ascends from a spiral staircase, where Eliza raps against the door to a bedroom. It opens, revealing...

CONNOR BOYD (29) -- Caucasian, with longish brunet hair and boyish good looks. He's dressed in a vogueish blazer and slacks, speaks with a Canadian accent.

CONNOR

Hey, you must be Noah. I'm Connor Boyd -- dorm master for your wing.

He extends his hand. Noah contemplates... then reluctantly accepts the handshake.

ELIZA

Professor Boyd will be your residential advisor. He also teaches physical fitness and health studies.

CONNOR

Dr. Cross tells me you're from the Motherland, too. I was born in Woodstock. Grew up in Kitchener.

NOAH

Yeah! Oktoberfest!

VIRGINIA

Which got him grounded.

CONNOR

How about I show you your new digs?

VIRGINIA

I've seen enough.

(to Eliza)

Clearly, you're legit. And it's a long drive back.

ELIZA

I'll walk you out.

Virginia turns to her son. No hug or farewell smile.

VIRGINIA

I swear, if you do anything to make me have to come back here --

NOAH

That's the last thing I want.

She turns, followed by Eliza -- who tries to give Noah a sympathetic smile.

CONNOR

I promise I'll take good care of him, Mrs. Lewis.

No response. Connor leads Noah down the hall.

CONNOR (CONT'D)

Come on. Us guys from across Lake Erie have to stick together.

Noah allows himself to be guided away.

FOYER - TEN MINUTES LATER

Virginia pushes past RANDOM STUDENTS, makes a beeline for the door. Eliza approaches from behind her.

ELIZA

Are you sure you don't want to look around a little more? Maybe I could get you some --

VIRGINIA

No. Just watch him carefully. He manipulates his way into getting what he wants.

ELIZA

I can't help but feel you're a bit ill-at-ease about our school.

VIRGINIA

I'll admit, I would've preferred Noah be placed in a good, wholesome, Christian environment with a lot more structure. Costs too many Bordens, though.

Eliza bites her tongue, flags down a couple of STUDENTS.

ELIZA

Kristoff, Wrennyn -- will you guys bring these bags up to Third West? Professor Boyd's wing.

The boys pick up Noah's bags and guitar case, haul them upstairs. Eliza turns her attention back to Virginia.

ELIZA (CONT'D)

I promise, your son is in good hands.

VIRGINIA

Don't let him try to force himself onto those other boys.

She exits the manor, trudges out into the now-sprinkling rain.

INT. WEST WING - BOYS' DORM HALLWAY - WALKING

Connor leads Noah through the corridor.

CONNOR

Headmaster Sutton and his advisory staff feel confident about the guys they've matched you with.

NOAH

You mean they're not going to make me sleep on the floor?

CONNOR

Noah... I get it. Being the newbie in a close-knit group really sucks. You feel you're intruding, as though you're forcing yourself where you don't truly belong.

NOAH

Yeah, something like that.

CONNOR

Trust me. You're meant to be here.

Noah doesn't respond, as they turn a corner.

CONNOR (CONT'D)

Since I'm your dorm advisor, you can come to me anytime there's a problem or you're feeling any stress. I'm responsible for the twenty-four guys on this floor.

NOAH

So when do I get to meet the mysterious headmaster?

CONNOR

Headmaster Sutton limits his interaction with our students. He's a rather... private person. Might emerge during lunch or dinner, to make announcements.

NOAH

Sounds like a hermit, pretty much.

CONNOR

I wouldn't say that.

NOAH

Look, I just want to get this whole thing over with. I don't care if --

A GRUESOME ANIMAL HEAD, on a zip-line, careens straight toward Noah. He and Connor react, jump out of the way.

NOAH (CONT'D)

What the -- !

Noah watches the full-bodied, stuffed CHUPACABRA as it dangles from above -- menacing eyes, spiky mane, and long fangs. Like the devil was shoved into a coyote's body.

An echo of laughter. From around another corner emerges...

SILAS CLARK (16), athletic, Caucasian, brunet, cocky grin -- basically resembling the all-American teen stud.

CONNOR

Noah, this is Silas. He'll be one of your roommates this year.

SILAS

The ladies call me Sy.

NOAH

(off the Chupacabra)  
Is that one of them?

Silas shakes his head, sizes Noah up and down.

HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - SAME

Bookshelves line the walls of the den, which is decorated with a motif of blacks, grays, blues, and greens. Various Renaissance STATUES and BUSTS pepper the dank enclave.

Paisley creaks open the door, makes her way inside.

PAISLEY

Rafe?

She plods closer to an armchair, which is turned away from the entrance. Only a thin tip of bushy grayness lingers above the chair's headrest.

PAISLEY (CONT'D)

Dearest Raphael, must you be such an antisocial creature?

GRAVELY MALE VOICE

My sparkling personality only goes so far.

PAISLEY

Still, could it hurt for you to put in an appearance at dinner tonight? At least for the upperclassmen?

GRAVELY MALE VOICE

And why would I do that?

He swivels -- HEADMASTER RAPHAEL SUTTON (75), pale, a graying beard running down his ovular face. The Headmaster's head remains shiny and bald, except for a lone tuft at its apex.

Headmaster Sutton dangles an e-cigarette between his fingers.

RAFE

I have you to fill me in on everything regarding the new boy.

PAISLEY

Noah Lewis seems like a nice, yet misguided kid. He's a homosexual -- it's why he had so much trouble at his former school.

RAFE

I loathe the public school system in this country.

PAISLEY

He's Canadian, Rafe. They have bigotry north of the border too.

RAFE

I'd expect nothing less.

PAISLEY

His mother's a real piece of work. Must have been an utter nightmare to live with that bitch. It took everything I could muster to keep from spitting in her face.

RAFE

And he never has to reside with her again, if that's what he chooses. Any sense of what he makes of us?

PAISLEY

He's understandably skeptical.

Rafe rises, wafts over to his wife. With his free hand, he strokes her hair. She demurs.

RAFE

That shall change. But not right away. Everything must happen in its own time. And it will.

PAISLEY

Please, Raphael. The poor child has been through enough. Oh, he pretends to be a tough cookie... but underneath, there's a young man quite frightened by this world.

RAFE

He should be.

PAISLEY

You have a responsibility to these little sprouts, Rafe. If things get out of hand --

Rafe smacks his wife across the face with a bare palm.

Paisley flinches, her cheek flushed and eyes appalled. He leans in, unwavering:

RAFE

It's a bad idea to get too close to them. Almost as bad as telling me what to do.

Her eyes bore holes into him, as she trembles. Backs away.

OFF the Headmaster, who puffs away at his e-cigarette as he eyes his wife inching toward the exit.

PAISLEY

I wish you'd just go back to smoking the real thing. Not that it matters.

RAFE

No, it doesn't.

He exhales a stream of vapor, as Paisley shuffles into the:

HALLWAY

She treks away from her husband's den, lifts up the left sleeve of her blouse while massaging...

A nasty SERIES OF SCARS.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. DORM ROOM - DUSK

A pair of brown hands maneuvers a PS3 CONTROLLER.

INSERT COMPUTER SCREEN

FINAL FANTASY XIV: an EORZEAN GLADIATOR sprints across the landscape amongst his comrades.

TAJID NAIDU (15), slender, Indian, adorned in "geek chic" attire -- sits at his PC, engrossed in the MMORPG (Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game).

A plate of Oreos and a tall glass of milk sit next to Taj's keyboard. He speaks with a Rajasthani accent:

TAJ  
Watch out, Titan -- I'm going to  
blast your ass to pieces!

BRYCE RAMIREZ (16), athletic, Hispanic, spiky hair frosted with pink tips -- creeps up behind Taj, reveals...

A NAPOLEAN DYNAMITE action figure, which Bryce causes to "talk."

BRYCE  
(impersonating)  
Tajid, you fat lard, come get some  
dinner! Tajid, eat. Eat the food.  
Eat the FOOD!

Bryce makes the action figure "nudge" some of Taj's cookies.

TAJ  
Dude, I'm not a llama.

BRYCE  
(still impersonating)  
I see you're drinking one-percent.  
Is that cuz you think you're fat?  
Cuz you're not. You could be  
drinking whole if you wanted to.

TAJ  
Knock it off!

With one hand, Taj flings a cookie at Bryce, who just laughs.

COMPUTER SCREEN

Taj's Gladiator falls off the arena's RED RING, and DIES.

TAJ  
Shit! Look what you made me do!

BRYCE  
Bro, you have a serious problem.

A KNOCK at the door, as Silas enters. Bryce and Taj look up, see Connor accompanying Noah inside.

SILAS  
Gentlemen, I lead another victim to the slaughter.

CONNOR  
(warning)  
Silas.  
(to Bryce and Taj)  
Guys, meet Noah -- he'll be your new roommate. Noah, this is Bryce and Tajid.

SILAS  
They're both freaks.

BRYCE  
Yeah, you're one to talk, Varney.

TAJ  
Hey, don't mistake freaky for eccentric.

SILAS  
You wish.

Silas notices Noah surveying the bedroom.

Two sets of bunk beds. Two prominent posters on the wall: one of JESSICA ALBA in a bikini. The other of DARREN CRISS, shirtless.

NOAH  
Whose posters?

TAJ  
Jessica's mine.

BRYCE  
And I've got Darren.

CONNOR  
I'm going to let you boys get acquainted. Dinner's in half an hour.

(MORE)

CONNOR (CONT'D)

(to Noah)

Let me know if you need anything.

Connor leaves the four guys alone. Noah faces his new dormmates. Taj breaks the awkward silence.

TAJ

So what track are you studying?

NOAH

Music.

BRYCE

(holds up his action figure)

You like comedy?

NOAH

Sort of.

SILAS

What time of day do you take your showers?

NOAH

Late.

SILAS

I can work with that.

Noah scrutinizes Silas, who leans in toward the new guy.

SILAS (CONT'D)

You're so tense. I wish you'd calm down and let us show you how things are done here.

BRYCE

(at Silas; impersonating)

I wish you'd get out of my life and shut up!

SILAS

Go screw yourself, Bryce.

(to Noah)

Okay, kid. I'm on top of you.

Silas gestures to one of the bunk beds -- the bottom bunk has an unmade mattress with folded sheets sprawled across it. The top bunk is clearly lived-in.

Noah trudges over to the bottom bunk, plops down his tote bag. The three guys seem to watch him like hawks.

NOAH  
Who had this bed before me?

TAJ  
Donovan. He had to leave the  
academy.

NOAH  
Why?

Another awkward silence. None of them answer.

NOAH (CONT'D)  
Whatever.

He begins to unpack... still under their watchful gazes.

DINING HALL - NIGHT

A hand plops a ladle full of Colcannon -- mashed potatoes with kale -- onto Noah's plate. Alongside it are apple slices and some darkened meat patties.

KIERAN ALDEA (55) -- a gravely pale Caucasian, with shoulder-length brown hair tied into a queue -- stares back at him through hollow eyes. The chef speaks with an Irish accent.

NOAH  
Looks yummy.

KIERAN  
It is.

Noah interweaves his way between tables of UPPERCLASSMEN DINERS. He sits at the edge of a long table across from Taj, who's already digging into a sandwich.

NOAH  
What's that?

TAJ  
(swallows)  
I eat vegetarian. Fried tomato sandwich. Kieran always has special options for us.

NOAH  
Kieran?

Silas plunks himself down right next to Noah, who glances at Sy's plate -- lamb stew, a baked potato, and steamed peas.

SILAS

Our very own Irish Emeril. He's freaky...but he makes a damn good shephard's pie.

NOAH

So he only does Irish food?

TAJ

He must think he's going to get lucky with a leprechaun.

NOAH

Dude, that makes no sense.

Noah bites his lip to keep from smiling. Then, he forks a bite of the meat patty into his mouth.

SILAS

You do realize that's "Black Pudding" you're eating.

NOAH

(mouth full)  
What's that?

SILAS

Blood sausage.

Noah spits it out into a napkin.

SILAS (CONT'D)

Should've stuck with the normal stuff.

(across the table)

Hey, Taj... pass me some sour cream for my spud.

Taj pushes a saucer across the table. Silas dunks his spoon into the creamy condiment, then...

FLINGS it at Noah, whose temples and curly locks are now covered. Lobs three more spoonfuls at Noah's face and hair -- in rapid succession.

Silas and Taj both snicker.

NOAH

What... the... hell?

SILAS

Oops, looks like you got some white stuff on your face.

Noah rises from his seat, tray in tow. He circles around to the other end of the table, takes a seat next to Taj.

TAJ  
Dude, that was so gay.

SILAS  
It's not "gay." It's funny.

As Noah glares at Silas, three girls join the guys -- Francille, and two others: HELEN and ATHENA.

Athena (16) -- Caucasian, auburn hair, boho-chic attire -- sits on Noah's other side. Helen (15) -- Caucasian, brunette, chubby, casual-chic -- and Francille both take seats next to Silas.

FRANCILLE  
Mind if we cut in on the fun?

ATHENA  
Let me guess? Emperor Clark tried to start a food fight.

HELEN  
Lame!

It's clear from her voice and mannerisms that Helen has Down's Syndrome. Athena takes a napkin, wipes the gunk off of Noah's face.

NOAH  
I'm okay, really.

SILAS  
He's probably used to it.

FRANCILLE  
Oh, hush up, little man.  
(to Noah)  
This is Helen...

Helen waves. Noah still scowls at Silas, as Athena finishes cleaning him up.

FRANCILLE (CONT'D)  
...and Athena. Two of my three favorite roommates.

NOAH  
Athena. The Greek goddess of wisdom.

ATHENA

The boy knows his mythology.

FRANCILLE

Mister Noah is a musician.

NOAH

Who told you that?

FRANCILLE

Word got around how you brought one spiffy guitar with you.

ATHENA

Hey, I play the flute. Maybe we can jam sometime?

TAJ

I'll jam with you, Athena.

ATHENA

In your dreams, Rudyard Kipling.

As Bryce approaches and sets his tray down next to Silas, Athena notices Noah checking out Bryce's butt right before Bryce sits. Silas notices Athena noticing.

HELEN

(to Taj)

Oh, snap! You got burned!

BRYCE

In all fairness, Helen, that's hardly a challenging feat.

TAJ

You mean like your ability to get an erection?

ATHENA

Okay, Taj... totally gross.

FRANCILLE

Gross but true?

BRYCE

What's gross is all that Black Pudding you've loaded up on.

FRANCILLE

I'm a big girl, smart-ass. I need my protein.

HELEN

She loves her protein.

Athena gazes at Noah, who picks at his Colcannon.

ATHENA

I could show you the gardens tomorrow. You'll want to stake out a quiet place to study. It gets pretty rowdy around here.

SILAS

Oh, nice try... but no cigar, Athena. He is a snake-charmer.

Noah throws his plate to the ground. It smashes, and food splatters everywhere. He towers above all of them -- his poisonous glare focused on Sy.

Dead silence at the table... and in the cafeteria. Even Kieran stares from the serving area.

Eliza hurries over, intervenes.

ELIZA

Mr. Lewis, please pick up your plate.

Noah makes a beeline for the exit.

SILAS

Aw, don't tell me he's ophidiophobic.

ELIZA

Eat your peas, Mr. Clark.

ATHENA

Sy, you can be such a dick.

Silas just slices into his baked potato.

SIDE PARLOR - MOMENTS LATER

Noah sits on a carpeted set of steps, reaches into his pocket. He pulls out a PHOTOGRAPH of himself with one arm around ANOTHER DUDE (17) -- blond, athletic, slightly preppy.

FLASHBACK:

NOAH'S BEDROOM

Virginia towers over her son, who's curled up atop his bed -- in tears.

VIRGINIA

Ethan's parents have requested that we not attend the funeral.

NOAH

I want to say goodbye to him!

VIRGINIA

This is what happens when you go against nature. Why couldn't you just do what God intended?

NOAH

GET... OUT!

Noah grabs a set of drumsticks off an end table, flings them at his mother -- who darts out of the way, as...

Her son immerses himself in a fresh flood of tears.

END FLASHBACK

FROM THE HALLWAY

Eliza gazes at Noah from afar, forlorn. Connor approaches from behind, walks up next to her.

ELIZA

I was afraid Silas might push his buttons.

CONNOR

It's the only way he'll ever realize his full potential.

ELIZA

If he doesn't destroy himself, first. Or allow them to destroy him.

CONNOR

Let me talk to him.

Eliza nods. Connor makes his way across the parlor, takes a seat next to Noah on the steps.

CONNOR (CONT'D)

We don't tolerate violence, here. Headmaster Sutton doesn't.

NOAH

For someone so powerful, this headmaster sure seems chickenshit about being around us kids.

CONNOR  
He values his privacy.

NOAH  
I can't go through this crap again.  
I'm not strong enough.

CONNOR  
This isn't a normal school.  
Everyone here has strength within  
them. You guys will teach each  
other cooperation and self-respect.  
(beat)  
We encourage our students to  
embrace those traits.

NOAH  
Yeah, you mean the way Sy does?

CONNOR  
Silas comes off like a jerk, but  
there's more to him than that.

NOAH  
Like what?

CONNOR  
He's your roommate; you need to  
discover that for yourself. And  
take some time to show him how  
there's more to you, too.

Connor stands, pats Noah on the shoulder as he leaves. Noah rolls his eyes.

KITCHEN - HOURS LATER

The clock inches closer to midnight.

Kieran, wearing an apron, peels potatoes at the counter; endless containers of skinned potatoes line its surface.

A set of hands grabs Kieran around the waist, caresses him.

Paisley nuzzles her chin against the back of his neck.

PAISLEY  
Oh, how you slave away at  
perfecting such sublime morsels  
that are destined to become bile in  
the stomachs of whippersnappers.

KIERAN  
Time is of the essence.

PAISLEY

And you always speak in those Old World clichés -- so sexy.

He keeps peeling.

PAISLEY (CONT'D)

Honestly, Kieran, you need some slumber, do you not? In merely a few hours, you'll be serving them one of your scrumptious breakfasts.

KIERAN

The Colcannon requires several hours to set.

PAISLEY

Oh, you can do it after lunch. Aren't you rather sleepy? I certainly am.

KIERAN

What would your husband say if he were to walk in here, right now?

PAISLEY

The kitchen is the last place you'll find Mr. Sutton.

The door CREAKS OPEN -- startling them both. They swivel around, seeing...

ORLA (late-twenties), Caucasian, reddish-auburn hair. She wears a simple nightgown, her face mostly hollow.

PAISLEY (CONT'D)

Oh, it's you, my dear.

Paisley leaves Kieran's side, approaches the young woman. She wraps her arms around Orla, reacts to the girl's skin.

PAISLEY (CONT'D)

Her flesh is clammy, Kieran.

Kieran's face softens immensely, at the sight of Orla -- shivering and vulnerable.

KIERAN

Orla, go back to your bedroom, little one.

PAISLEY

She must have had another nightmare.

Orla grunts, shakes Paisley's arm. Kieran's demeanor become strained, as he hushes his daughter.

KIERAN  
Orla, go back to bed...

PAISLEY  
Don't reprimand her. She's frightened.

KIERAN  
Don't tell me how to treat my own daughter.

Paisley leaves Orla's side. She places her face inches away from Kieran's... her soft features having turned to stone.

PAISLEY  
Oh, I will. Never forget that.  
(to Orla)  
Let's go, sweetheart. I'll read you a nice fairy tale.

KIERAN  
Stop.

Paisley halts. Kieran gently clutches Orla by her shoulders, pulls her toward him. Paisley relents.

KIERAN (CONT'D)  
I shall put her back to bed.

He walks Orla out of the kitchen. The young woman continues to whimper.

Paisley stands by herself, slightly shaking. Then, she walks over to the counter, picks up Kieran's knife, and...

STABS it straight through one of the unpeeled potatoes.

Paisley holds the "potato-kebab" in front of her -- her face darkening with each passing second.

If facial expressions could kill, that potato would be bisque.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Noah -- dressed in a bathrobe -- gathers his toothbrush, shampoo, and bathroom caddy. Taj walks in, but Noah quickly looks down... more nervous than hostile.

TAJ  
You can't take Sy seriously. He's a big jokester.

NOAH  
Whatever.

TAJ  
Trust me, man. He likes you. If he didn't, he'd barely be saying a word to you.

NOAH  
I don't care what he thinks of me.

TAJ  
I don't believe that. We'll be spending a lot of time together... don't you want us to get along?

Noah heads toward the door.

TAJ (CONT'D)  
I like you, bro. Bryce does, too.

NOAH  
He said that?

TAJ  
He didn't have to. We're besties. I can tell.

Noah turns around, reads Taj's face.

TAJ (CONT'D)  
So... one a scale of one to ten -- please tell me I'm at least a seven.

For the first time since his arrival, Noah's face seems to light up with an almost jovial sense of relaxation.

NOAH  
You're not bad. Eight-a-half.

TAJ

Cool.

As Noah resumes his trek to the bathroom...

TAJ (CONT'D)

I play a little *damaru*. Maybe we could jam sometime?

(beat)

You know... as bros.

NOAH

Yeah. Maybe.

Noah's smile eclipses his face, as he heads down:

THE CORRIDOR - WALKING

Empty, with no other students in sight. Noah strolls into:

THE MEN'S BATHROOM

Stalls, urinals, and sinks/mirrors line the spacious lavatory. Again, an eerie silence -- with a lack of bodies. Only some faint echoes of showers spraying from an adjacent section.

As Noah steps into:

THE SHOWER ROOM

...he disrobes, hangs his bathrobe up on a hook. Slips off his boxers, now completely naked from the rear.

Noah clutches his bathroom caddy, ventures into the communal shower area. He encounters the bare buttocks and spine of ANOTHER GUY. Upon closer glance, Noah sees...

The guy passionately making out with a nude FEMALE STUDENT -- their arms wrapped around each other.

NOAH

Holy shit!

The female student gasps, breaks away from her male lover -- and that dude turns around to face Noah...

It's Silas, who visually gives Noah the once-over.

SILAS

Not bad.

Noah backs away -- but seems unable to bring himself to flee from the shower room.

The female student tries to conceal herself behind a shower pole. Noah's eyes dart back and forth between her and Silas.

NOAH

I don't think you're supposed to have girls in our bathroom.

SILAS

You're right.  
(to his lover)  
Get out of here, Greta.

She speaks with a German accent:

GRETA

I thought we had this place to ourselves for another hour. You caused the other boys to --

SILAS

GET OUT!

Greta sprints across the shower room -- almost slipping on the floor tiles. She grabs her towel off a hook, disappears around the corner.

Silas steps closer to Noah -- who stands there, seemingly paralyzed. He cannot break his gaze away from Silas.

SILAS (CONT'D)

You like what you see, huh?

NOAH

You think you're a player? That you can just do whatever you want?  
(beat)  
I'm not afraid of you, asshole.

SILAS

Then prove it.

Silas uses his fingers to give Noah one solitary -- and brazen -- poke in the chest.

Noah seethes, as the two dudes face each other. Then...

He shoves Silas, who finds himself slightly off-balance.

Silas grins... then -- attacks! Takes Noah down to the floor.

Noah tries to get Silas in a headlock. They struggle -- and Silas performs a "duckunder" to bring Noah down to the floor tiles.

As they hit the ground, each still maneuvering for dominance...

Noah busts his lip against a shower pole. He stops resisting, sits up.

Silas notices the blood dribbling from Noah's mouth, slowly leans in --

SILAS (CONT'D)  
A noble effort, there.

-- and licks it off of his rival's face. Savors the taste.

Noah reacts, flabbergasted. He stumbles to his feet, rushes out of the shower room. Grabs his bathrobe on the way out. Sy calls after him:

SILAS (CONT'D)  
And you've got one nice ass, bud!

Silas claps his hands together -- turns to face the spigot and shower head, allows its spray to cascade upon him.

HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - SAME

Rafe scrawls a letter by hand, IN LATIN, on plain paper. He doesn't look up from his work, even as...

FOOTSTEPS approach his office door -- which is slightly ajar.

A LARGE SHADOW inches its way behind Rafe, who continues writing on the document.

RAFE  
Shouldn't you be retiring for the night?

Francille towers over him, dressed in rather colorful sweats.

RAFE (CONT'D)  
You have Persian Literature in the morning.

FRANCILLE  
Ferdowski can wait.

She clasps one hand upon his shoulder. Rafe sets down his quill pen, looks up at her.

RAFE  
Can he?

Francille kneels, leans in... and plants a sensuous kiss on the Headmaster's lips. He reciprocates, in kind.

As Rafe loses himself in their passion... Francille covertly reaches over to the adjacent bookshelf, slips a SILVER LETTER-OPENER out of a full utensil-holder upon one of the shelves.

She nestles it into her back-pocket, just as a VOICE interrupts them:

PAISLEY (O.S.)

Raphael!

They break apart, turn to see Paisley standing in the doorway.

PAISLEY (CONT'D)

Can you not at least keep your door shut? Bring some modicum of propriety to your incorrigible smut?

RAFE

What do you want?

PAISLEY

Orla got out again.

RAFE

And that is my problem, how?

PAISLEY

Don't you suppose it might be wise to hire a second cook? To take some of the workload off of Kieran.

RAFE

Work is good for the soul.

She snorts. He ignores her insolence.

RAFE (CONT'D)

You are not in charge of this school, dearest wife. I encourage you to keep that in mind.

He approaches her, invades his wife's personal space.

RAFE (CONT'D)

You are not the boss.

PAISLEY

Not yet. But what happens if you get run over by a car?

(MORE)

PAISLEY (CONT'D)  
 Or, God forbid, find yourself  
 smothered by carbon monoxide fumes?

Rafe laughs, raucously. Francille steps aside, as he sits back down.

RAFE  
 I have correspondence to finish.  
 (waves them away)  
 Be gone. Both of you.

Paisley turns, flounces out of the office. Francille follows, her head down like a scolded puppy. She closes the door behind them.

Once the two females are outside:

IN THE HALLWAY

Paisley swivels around, slaps Francille squarely across the face. Then, the older woman whispers:

PAISLEY  
 You stupid, stupid girl.

FRANCILLE  
 Let me guess? I should know better  
 than to linger in his dark, scary  
 lair... after hours?

PAISLEY  
 Oh, this may seem like fun and  
 games at present. But you have no  
 clue what you're getting yourself  
 into.

FRANCILLE  
 I know exactly what I'm getting  
 myself into.

Her unapologetic smile taunts Paisley, who holds her gaze for a few more seconds -- and then storms off into the night.

EXT. ALNWICK MANOR - MORNING

As the sun shines down upon pointed turrets and stained glass lancet windows...

INT. MUSIC CLASSROOM - APPROACHING NOONTIME

Eliza, seated tailor-style on the floor, plays the digiriedoo -- stretches out one long note after the other.

STUDENTS sit around her in a circle -- Noah, Taj, and Francille among them. Noah appears incredibly bored, cannot stop glancing back and forth at the clock.

As she finishes her tune, Eliza launches into "teacher-mode"...

ELIZA

Aboriginal tribes of Northern Australia usually did not permit women to play the didgeridoo during ceremonies. They were, however, allowed to blow into it recreationally.

Everyone laughs, including Eliza. She stops, focuses on Noah... who's now lying on his back.

ELIZA (CONT'D)

...um, who remembers, from your reading, the most common materials used to construct it?

FRANCILLE

Eucalyptus and bamboo.

ELIZA

Yes. Although nowadays it's often manufactured from plastic.

TAJ

I guess plastic covers many different kinds of tubes in the modern world.

Everyone laughs, including Eliza.

ELIZA

Yeah, very funny.

She sees that Noah has dozed off, as OTHER STUDENTS point and snicker.

ELIZA (CONT'D)

Okay, gang. I want you guys to partner up in groups of two or three. Brainstorm a list of settings where the digiriedoo could be used. Think of some styles of music in which one might creatively fuse and absorb this wind instrument into an arrangement.

The students organize themselves into groups. As Eliza moves over to where Noah has sprawled out for his late-morning "nap"...

TAJ  
 (to Francille)  
 Want to be my partner?

FRANCILLE  
 Only because I pity your socially-  
 inept tendencies.

TAJ  
 I'll take it.

Eliza shakes Noah, who makes a big show of opening his eyes.

NOAH  
 Oh, is it morning already?

ELIZA  
 Mr. Lewis, let's take a little  
 walk, okay?

She gestures for him to follow her, and they exit the classroom out into:

EXT. ALNWICK MANOR - WEST EDGE (BEER GARDEN) - ADJACENT

Eliza leans against the portico, overlooking Ohio's countryside, westward.

Noah picks at petals from red carnations along the edge of the beer garden. She faces him.

ELIZA  
 Please don't disrupt the flora.  
 Our Botany students worked hard on  
 those.

NOAH  
 You sure say "please" a lot.

ELIZA  
 I know what you're doing. Very  
 subtle, but I can still see.  
 You're trying to get kicked out.

NOAH  
 Yeah, right. Did you meet that she-  
 monster who spawned me?

ELIZA  
 Tell me, Noah -- what happened?  
 You haven't even been here two  
 days. Something happened.

NOAH  
 Nothing happened.

ELIZA  
 Something happened.  
 (beat)  
 Was it Silas Clark? Did he put his  
 hands on you?

Noah looks down at the portico's tiles.

ELIZA (CONT'D)  
 He has trouble relating to peers  
 his own age. I honestly don't  
 believe Mr. Clark wishes to harm  
 you.

NOAH  
 Tell him that.

ELIZA  
 I will mention, however, that I've  
 been trained in martial arts. I've  
 also been known to pack a mean bolo  
 and bludgeon. So, if you ever need  
 a hand when dealing with him...

NOAH  
 Couldn't you lose your job for  
 that?

ELIZA  
 No. Not really.

She gestures for him to follow her inside. As Eliza heads  
 back indoors...

ELIZA (CONT'D)  
 And try a little harder to stay  
 awake in class, hmm?

She tousles his hair. Once she's turned fully away from him,  
 Noah releases a grin... trailing her into the classroom.

INT. HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Rafe chews on a sandwich -- bloody pink shreds of steak  
 hugged by a hoagie roll. Strands of raw meat hang from his  
 mouth. Rays from the afternoon sun cascade onto his desk.

He sucks the unchewed tentacles up through his lips, into his mouth... savoring every morsel, as he closes his eyes in euphoria.

A voice interrupts:

ELIZA (O.S.)  
I apologize for disrupting your  
lunch, Headmaster Sutton.

He blinks his eyes open. Eliza stands in front of him, holding a crossbow.

ELIZA (CONT'D)  
I'm assisting Professor Boyd with  
his archery unit in half an hour.  
Thought I'd pop in to bring  
something important to your  
attention.

Rafe swallows his mouthful of sandwich.

RAFE  
That's a rather elaborate crossbow  
for archery. I highly doubt Robin  
Hood wielded one of those.

ELIZA  
Oh, I'm sure he didn't. This is  
only for our exhibition segment.  
Connor teaches them to shoot with  
standard bows-and-arrows.

RAFE  
As I would expect. So what brings  
you uninvited into my chambers, Dr.  
Cross?

ELIZA  
It's the new student. Noah Lewis.  
He's having trouble adjusting.

RAFE  
And that's a surprise?

ELIZA  
You put him with those boys for a  
reason. But Silas Clark is coming  
on too strong.

RAFE  
With all due respect, Dr. Cross --  
you're a female.

ELIZA

Thank you for informing me.

RAFE

You can't relate to the mindsets of young men. They have certain ways of bonding. Including when it's with boys who fancy other boys. Since the beginning of time, that has been the case.

ELIZA

Talk to him yourself, then. You'll see his mouth is bruised.

RAFE

Survival of the fittest. Even the meekest of wallflowers ultimately blossom.

ELIZA

It's too early. He's not ready yet.

RAFE

I will decide when he's ready.

She holds a hard stare on the Headmaster, which he meets in kind.

RAFE (CONT'D)

But, if it will make you feel better, I will speak to him.

ELIZA

Thank you, sir.

RAFE

Do you remember what your life was like, before you arrived here? You toiled away your evenings, singing at cabaret shows. Doing cartoon voiceovers for a paltry salary... until I rescued you.

(beat)

Before I gave you new life.

ELIZA

And I'm grateful for that, Headmaster.

RAFE

As young Mr. Lewis shall be.

(waves her away)

(MORE)

RAFE (CONT'D)

Have a good time with your...  
exhibition.

ELIZA

Thank you. I will.

She adjusts the crossbow, flashes him a fake smile. Rafe simply toasts his glass of iced tea in the air.

INT. MUSIC CONSERVATORY - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Noah sits in the middle of the ornate music room. He PLAYS HIS GUITAR -- some RANDOM STUDENTS watch and listen as John Mayer's "GRAVITY" reverberates from its chords.

Rafe walks in, listens to the even-tempered harmony. He makes his way over, puts a hand on Noah's shoulder.

Noah stops playing, looks up.

NOAH

Who the hell are you?

RAFE

Headmaster Raphael Sutton. I'm sure you've heard of me.

NOAH

Finally emerged from your cave?

Rafe chuckles. To the other students:

RAFE

I'd like a word alone with Mr. Lewis, if you don't mind.

They immediately disperse, exit the room. No questions asked.

NOAH

You're popular.

RAFE

My staff tells me you've felt bit ill-at-ease here. I'd like to do my part to help with... softening that transition.

Noah looks down at his guitar. He caresses the chords with his fingers.

RAFE (CONT'D)

I see you busted your lip. How did it happen?

NOAH

Bumped it on my headboard this morning. I'm a restless sleeper.

RAFE

Well, perhaps we can remedy that. You know, we placed you with Silas Clark for a reason. Is he a bit pugnacious? Most certainly. But I'm confident he will be a remarkable mentor to you.

(beat)

You can learn a lot from him.

Rafe gestures to a grand piano on the far side of the conservatory. Noah follows his gaze.

RAFE (CONT'D)

Your previous school reported to us that your mother required you to take piano lessons. Are you any good?

NOAH

Not really.

RAFE

I would like to hear for myself.

NOAH

I don't play the piano.

RAFE

You sell yourself short, I'm sure. You must give yourself the chance to --

NOAH

I don't play the piano!

Rafe hardens his stare on Noah, who appears stoic.

RAFE

Change is inevitable, Mr. Lewis. As natural selection takes its toll, some species thrive while others perish. Proteins mutate, neurons speed up, metabolism hastens. History's corridors are riddled with the bodies of those who were unable to adapt -- who failed to join their contemporaries in embracing new worldviews.

(MORE)

RAFE (CONT'D)

Who stubbornly resisted innovation  
or upturn.

Noah's face doesn't break.

RAFE (CONT'D)

Alnwick has nurtured countless  
students who've gone on to become  
revered and envied. Many of our  
alumni have revolutionized the  
world of music. Danish composer  
Andreas Kierkegaard, currently  
teaching at Bruckner. Xiao-hong  
Chu, a skilled violinist who now  
performs with the China National  
Symphony Orchestra. And a fellow  
countrywoman of yours, Etienne  
Papineau -- such a talented  
soprano, who has used her  
considerable stardom in Montreal to  
revitalize the *Bloc Québécois*  
movement.

(beat)

It is best to be on the victorious  
side of history.

He leans in, before making his exit --

RAFE (CONT'D)

You will play the piano for me,  
young man.

-- and the Headmaster strides out of the conservatory, not  
looking back.

Noah's fingers tremble. The teen looks down at his guitar's  
strings, and...

He slowly begins to strum them again.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT (DUSK) - WALKING

Bryce, Silas, and Taj follow a small crowd of OTHER STUDENTS toward the dining hall. Athena and Helen join them.

ATHENA  
Where's Noah?

SILAS  
Forget it, Athena. He's not going hetero for you.

BRYCE  
Sy. Shut it.

HELEN  
Too bad... he's cute.

Athena stops them, blocks Sy's path.

SILAS  
Get out of my way.

ATHENA  
Why do you always have to be such a jerk? You humiliated him! Noah's probably going to try to run away.

Bryce and Taj step in-between them.

TAJ  
Don't fight. It's Boxy Night.

BRYCE  
I'll go find him.

A side-glare at Silas, before Bryce separates from the group.

EXT. BEER GARDEN - TEN MINUTES LATER

Bryce hurtles himself over the portico. He snakes his way past umbrella tables, through some hedges and flower beds. He approaches...

Noah, who sits next to a wishing pool. He looks up at Bryce.

BRYCE  
You can't do it, can you?

NOAH  
Do what?

BRYCE

Run away.

He gestures to the packed duffel bag next to Noah's feet.

BRYCE (CONT'D)

I'm guessing you've got three days' worth of clothes in there, tops. And I know you wouldn't leave that sick guitar behind.

NOAH

You think you know me. You don't. You don't want to know me.

BRYCE

You can't deny who you are. As much as everyone else wants to turn you into someone you're not...

Noah makes eye contact with Bryce, who puts one hand on Noah's thigh.

NOAH

Whenever I'm around Sy... it's like he has this... "hold" over me. I want to run away -- but I can't.

BRYCE

So don't run.

Bryce leans in, as Noah follows his lead -- and the two young men kiss. They slowly part lips, and Noah loses himself in Bryce's gaze.

BRYCE (CONT'D)

I promise you'll be safe here. If you just trust me.

NOAH

The last guy I trusted... he's... gone.

BRYCE

I'm sorry.

He takes Noah's hand, gives it a soft peck with his lips.

BRYCE (CONT'D)

It's up to you. Even if you don't feel like having dinner... I hope we'll see you afterward.

He stands, prepares to leave the gardens.

BRYCE (CONT'D)  
 I can feel that, deep down, you  
 want to be here. And we want you  
 here. Even Silas.  
 (walks backward)  
 So don't hold back. Show us who  
 you really are.

He smiles, goes back inside. Noah gazes down into the  
 wishing pool.

INT. MUSIC CONSERVATORY - SAME

Eliza watches Noah and Bryce through the window. She turns,  
 exits the music room.

BEDROOM - FIVE MINUTES LATER

Paisley unfolds a fresh set of clothing for the next day.  
 She holds up a cardigan sweater, then freezes. Gradually  
 turns around...

Eliza stands in the doorway.

ELIZA  
 Hello, Paisley.

PAISLEY  
 Dr. Cross. You're not supposed to  
 be in this part of the house.  
 Especially not during dinnertime.

ELIZA  
 They're bringing Noah into the  
 fold. He's coming to trust Bryce.

PAISLEY  
 And soon he'll trust Silas.

ELIZA  
 But can we?

PAISLEY  
 We have no choice.

She spreads the sweater across her bed.

PAISLEY (CONT'D)  
 How else are we supposed to take  
 down my husband?

ELIZA  
 Separate bedrooms really must put a  
 damper on one's marriage.

PAISLEY

Oh, you have no idea, young lady.

ELIZA

I sensed something was different about that kid. He's irritable, self-loathing, resistant to change... like most teenagers from the suburbs. But as much as he tries, he can't hide the cavalcade of emotions just itching to escape from underneath that frown of his.

PAISLEY

How poetic. Perhaps there's hope for you, yet.

(beat)

Besides that... you, more than anyone, should know that you can't deny who you are.

She smooths out her sweater atop the bed.

ELIZA

Maybe not. But you can overcome it.

Paisley looks over at Eliza -- and flashes her a hearty, vigilant smile.

THE GUYS' DORM ROOM - SAME

Noah walks in from his nightly shower -- hair damp, clad in only a towel. He sees Silas, Bryce, and Taj back from their evening meal... hesitates, then walks over to his dresser.

TAJ

Hey, man. We missed you at dinner.

SILAS

I think he wanted to take a shower all by himself. For obvious reasons.

BRYCE

Dude, leave him alone.

SILAS

Or he's really shy... and just doesn't want us to see him naked.

Noah merely stands there, his back to them. He breathes in, and out. Opens his dresser drawer.

Silas slips off his own shirt. He grabs a towel off one of their shelves. Bryce gives him a warning Look, while Taj simply watches the drama unfold in awe.

SILAS (CONT'D)

Looks like you dodged a bullet,  
Noah. I was just about to take  
mine.

BRYCE

Knock it off, Sy.

Noah, still facing away from them, removes his towel.

SILAS

Ah, trying to prove me wrong, I  
see.

With one swift motion, Sy rolls up his fresh towel and twists it. Then...

SNAPS it against Noah's bare butt.

BRYCE

Sy! Quit being a dick!

Noah recoils, slowly turns around. He locks eyes with Silas, stone-cold and ruthless.

NOAH

Do that to me again... and I'll  
jack off all over your faces while  
you sleep.

Sy reacts, slightly bemused... and, somehow, almost humbled. Bryce grins, while Taj appears squeamish.

TAJ

Dude, gross...

BRYCE

I like him.

TAJ

(to Noah)

Look, man... I don't care that  
you're gay -- just don't plant one  
on my luscious lips while I'm  
asleep.

SILAS

Hold on there, Mowgli. Bryce has a  
point...

(MORE)

SILAS (CONT'D)

I think this one's got guts. And he's definitely got balls -- a nice pair of them.

He unbuttons his jeans, steps out of them -- now standing clad only in his boxer-briefs. Sy moves closer to Noah, who tenses up. Reaches out... and clamps his hand on Noah's shoulder, with affection.

SILAS (CONT'D)

He could help us concoct some delectable pranks to play on the ladies.

NOAH

Okay, then.

Noah pulls on his boxers. Silas picks up his own shower caddy off a nearby hook.

Bryce nods at Noah, who forces himself to devote his full, uninhibited gaze at Silas.

NOAH (CONT'D)

So I just want to know one thing, Sy.

SILAS

Shoot.

NOAH

Last night... you went all *Fight Club* on me in the shower. Why?

SILAS

Wanted to see how far you'd go. You don't take shit from people. I admire that.

NOAH

But... you licked my face.  
(beat)  
You licked blood off my lips.

SILAS

And your point is?

NOAH

Why the hell would you do that?

Silas just looks over at Bryce and Taj, doesn't respond.

NOAH (CONT'D)

Are you going to answer me?

Silas looks back at Noah, with confidence frozen on the hotshot's face. Then...

Bryce reaches into a pocket of his jeans, pulls out a Swiss army knife. Clicks it open. And...

He PLUNGES it into Sy's arm. Thrusts it lengthwise across Sy's flesh, tearing a bloody gash out of the forearm

Noah's jaw drops in pure, blatant shock.

Bryce slashes the knife across Sy's bare chest -- twice! More blood rises to the surface.

Noah's eyes widen. He glances from Bryce to Silas... and back again. Utterly perplexed by Bryce's casual demeanor.

BRYCE

Wait for it...

Noah watches as the blood upon Sy's chest SLOWLY HARDENS. These awkward gashes also proceed to NARROW in width -- although they don't disappear completely.

Staring at Sy's rapidly-scabbed-up wounds, Noah stumbles for words.

NOAH

What are you? Some sort of vampire?

SILAS

Hey, don't hate. Can't have any of that interspecies discrimination.

Noah watches Silas lick a portion of his own arm that hasn't entirely healed yet. Reads his roommate's face, takes a few seconds to process this...

NOAH

Hold on -- you're serious?

SILAS

It's not as bad as you think. We aren't trying to kill people.

(beat)

Well, most of us aren't.

NOAH

Okay, joke's over.

SILAS

Alright, got to be more accurate, I guess. Half of us aren't.

Noah looks to Bryce and Taj. Their eyes confirm it.

Horrified, Noah breathes in and out again.

TAJ

It's okay. They're still human.

NOAH

Vampires aren't human. It's what makes them VAMPIRES!

SILAS

And I bet you believe the Hollywood propaganda about sunlight and holy water too, huh? We're a misunderstood people.

NOAH

But... I've seen you eat regular food.

BRYCE

The blood just gives them extra mojo. Call it "liquid Viagra."

SILAS

By tomorrow, you'll see only a thin scar. In a week, it'll be like it was never there.

Sy proudly displays his arm for Noah... who observes certain non-congealed areas of blood upon Sy's arm almost "dance" in an unassuming manner.

TAJ

It's kind of cool. Not sure if I'll ever do it, though.

SILAS

(irritated)

It's not a "lifestyle choice," Tajid. It chooses us.

NOAH

So what if I put a stake through your heart?

SILAS

Wouldn't have any effect. I've been bloodletting for way too long. After awhile, it hardens our insides. Fuels our ability to self-heal and withstand pain.

BRYCE

Including bullets. If you pull a gun on him, you'll just be wasting ammo.

NOAH

So... you can't be killed?

SILAS

Oh, we can die. Probably. I'm not entirely sure how. Dynamite, I'd assume. Maybe the guillotine. Nuclear holocaust.

Noah shakes his head, beside himself. He plops down onto his bed. Stares back up at the guys.

SILAS (CONT'D)

You don't need to look so freaked. I'm not going to come after you. At least, as long as you don't come after me.

NOAH

And... you drink blood...

SILAS

I like the taste.

He slaps Noah on the shoulder, in almost a neighborly manner. Then, Sy heads toward the door, slips off his boxer-briefs.

As Noah sits there, dumbfounded... the other three guys CHAT. He appears more and more perplexed by the second.

And, when Noah looks back over at them.

Moonlight from the window SHINES UPON both Bryce and Taj.

But Silas -- now wearing only a towel -- remains untouched by the nocturnal reflection.

EXT. ALNWICK MANOR - THE NEXT MORNING

The sun rises over the Gothic mansion.

INT. MUSIC CONSERVATORY - SAME

As Noah plays the piano score of "METAMORPHOSIS" by Phillip Glass...

Bryce approaches him from behind, pats him on the shoulder.

Rafe watches both young men from the doorway.

## MONTAGE

While Noah continues to PLAY...

## KITCHEN

Kieran cleans knives, in the midst of preparing food. Paisley stands next to him, sharpening the cleaned knives -- while Orla looks on.

## BEDROOM

Eliza opens her closet, takes out her crossbow. She caresses it with her hands, then places it back on a shelf.

The crossbow rests next to a variety of other tools: machetes, swords, rope, chains, and flashlights.

## PARLOR

Francille waits by the fireplace, as OTHER STUDENTS go about their morning business.

Connor walks into the parlor, passes by her.

She discretely hands him the silver letter-opener, which she stole from the Headmaster's office.

## ELIZA'S BEDROOM

Eliza prepares herself a Bloody Mary. She mixes vodka and tomato juice into a glass. Then...

Holds up a vial of blood, marked "SUS SCROFA DOMESTICUS."

She empties the thick red liquid into her Bloody Mary. Stirs it, and takes a hearty swig.

## MUSIC CONSERVATORY

Bryce exits the music room, passes by Paisley on his wife out.

The Headmaster's wife approaches the grand piano. Noah STOPS PLAYING.

## PAISLEY

No, please, young man. Don't stop on my account.

She pulls up a stool, sits.

PAISLEY (CONT'D)

We have much to discuss. But  
finish your score. It's beautiful.

Noah glances at her, hesitant. But he RESUMES PLAYING the piano. Paisley turns her head, gazes at the corridor.

CORRIDOR - WALKING

Rafe strolls through one of the school's majestic hallways, stops in front of a painting.

The oil portrait depicts a MIDDLE-AGED NUN, solemn, with deep mahogany hair uncharacteristically flowing freely outside of her habit.

He stares at the woman's likeness, intense.

EXT. MONASTERY - NIGHT

SUPER: **Brasov, Romania. January 1736.**

The NUN FROM THE PORTRAIT (late-fifties), Caucasian, tucks her locks of deep mahogany hair underneath her habit. She picks up a candle, walks down:

A DARK CORRIDOR

She enters:

THE ABBOT'S QUARTERS

More candles light up the room, which is furnished simply. Biblical portraits line its walls.

A gravely MALE VOICE addresses her in Romanian, for which we are once again given the benefit of SUBTITLES.

MALE VOICE

(in Romanian)

*Sister Diana.*

SISTER DIANA

(in Romanian)

*I bring you the latest report from  
the Colonies, Father.*

MALE VOICE

(in Romanian)

*And what say you?*

SISTER DIANA

(in Romanian)

*More than three dozen have turned  
at St. Augustine. Another twenty  
at Jamestown.*

MALE VOICE

(in Romanian)

*Soon, we shall be everywhere within  
that forsaken continent.*

He stands, turns around...

It's RAPHAEL SUTTON, barely a few years younger! He's adorned in a grayish-brown tunic, embroidered with a gold pectoral cross.

RAFE

(in Romanian)

*How has our "guest" been faring?*

SISTER DIANA

(in Romanian)

*He refuses our gifts, Father.*

RAFE

(in Romanian)

*We have brought him a great  
distance from that place he longed  
to call home. It must be his  
choice.*

Rafe waves his underling forward. Sister Diana follows him out of his quarters.

DUNGEON - SEVERAL MINUTES LATER

Rafe and Sister Diana descend into a forlorn cellar. Torches light the walls, against which...

SISTER DIANA

(in Romanian)

*He only consents to feast once a  
day. And only bread, roots, or  
water.*

Gabriel -- nearly two years older, his skin battered and pallid, clad in only a thigh-length animal skin (*tunica molesta*) that's wrapped around his waist -- is chained to a wall, sprawled across a bench.

Their prisoner looks up, regards both of them with disgust and contempt.

RAFE  
 (in Romanian)  
*Gabriel. My dour, obtuse little  
 lamb.*

Gabriel looks away.

RAFE (CONT'D)  
 (in Romanian)  
*Would it not be a shame if you were  
 sent back to the very place where  
 you began your life's journey --  
 only to perish, due to your own  
 obstinacy?*

GABRIEL  
 You had no grounds for bringing me  
 back here. I treasured my freedom.  
 We both did.

RAFE  
 (in Romanian)  
*You continue to insist upon  
 eschewing your mother tongue? So  
 be it.*  
 (switches to English)  
 I realize you believe you loved  
 that woman. Take heart -- over  
 time, you shall come to see you are  
 better off without her.

GABRIEL  
 "That woman" had a name. It was  
 Sofia. Your people deprived her of  
 a sacred life she will never be  
 able to realize.

RAFE  
 Do not lecture me about sanctity,  
 my good gentleman.  
 (in Romanian again)  
*We are the extenders of life. It  
 is God's will.*

He raises a cigar with one hand, blows into it. Puffs out a  
 tiny gust of smoke through his lips.

RAFE (CONT'D)  
 (back to English)  
 The longer you resist... the longer  
 you suffer.

GABRIEL

I shall not allow the Plague to  
devour me.

RAFE

One cannot escape the Plague.  
(to his cohort)  
Do you agree, Sister Diana?

SISTER DIANA

Your words are true, Father. The  
Plague cannot be avoided.

RAFE

Especially when that Plague...

Rafe leans down, presses his lips against Sister Diana's.  
They pull apart, momentarily.

RAFE (CONT'D)

(in Romanian)  
...*is us.*

They both lean back in. As they kiss, passionately...

Blood TRICKLES down each of their chins.

Gabriel closes his eyes, shudders.

And as the fiendish clerics continue to enjoy their carnal  
exchange of blood and saliva -- right in front of their  
averse prisoner...

Over credits, "Metamorphosis" continues to play.

**END EPISODE**