

Carl stays still. *What...?* Andrew looks just as shocked.

But Fletcher keeps on staring. He's dead-serious. Finally, Carl slides off, stunned, as Andrew takes his place... And, calmly tossing this off even though he knows how much it hurts--

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

Tanner, make sure to turn Neiman's pages.

Then he raises his hand. Andrew holds his sticks, still shocked. This is as clear a verdict of his playing at Overbrook as he'll ever get.

He's the new core drummer.

Fletcher CLAPS the band off, and before we hear any music we're--

48

INT. ROAD TO NEW JERSEY - BUS - DAY

48

Andrew watches a VIDEO on his iPhone... It's 70's footage and audio of a grey-haired DRUMMER, a face we've seen before... BUDDY RICH. Andrew smiles. Relaxed. Proud.

A bubble pops up: "1 NEW VOICEMAIL, 1 NEW TEXT MESSAGE".

Andrew opens the text. The name on it: "NICOLE". It reads: "*You free Thursday?*"

Andrew is about to answer. Hesitates. Plays the voicemail.

CARL (O.S.)

Neiman... You lost that folder on purpose. You knew I didn't know the chart by heart... Answer me... I've been core for two years. I've been drumming since I was three. I earned my spot you asshole--

Andrew hangs up. Looks back at the text message. Considering again...

Then he just resumes watching the video.

49

INT. NEW JERSEY - JIM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

49

Jim grabs a platter from the stove, Andrew by his side.

JIM

How's it going in Studio Band?

ANDREW

Good. I think he likes me more now.

JIM

His opinion means a lot to you, doesn't it?

Jim looks at Andrew. Almost accusatory. A moment...

ANDREW

Yeah...

JIM

Grab the shakers please.

50

INT. JIM'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

50

Seven people seated at the table: Jim and Andrew, Andrew's uncle FRANK, aunt EMMA, and 18-year-old cousin DUSTIN. To Jim--

UNCLE FRANK

Jimbo -- overcooked!

(to Emma, laughing re: the meat)

I can barely chew this thing.

Jim laughs along. Andrew watches. There's an undercurrent to the joking. The power dynamic between the brothers is clear.

UNCLE FRANK (CONT'D)

He just laughs.

Jim keeps laughing.

AUNT EMMA

And how's your drumming going, Andy?

Andrew, put on the spot, hesitates. But then, excited--

ANDREW

Well... Actually, it's...it's going
really well. I'm now the core drum--

The door OPENS. In steps TRAVIS, another cousin, 21, football player, real looker. All eyes swerve in an instant from Andrew to him.

UNCLE FRANK

Well, well, well -- Tom Brady!

TRAVIS

Sorry I'm late.

AUNT EMMA

Did you hear, Jimmy?

UNCLE FRANK

They named Trav the season's MVP.

JIM

That's incredible, Tra--

AUNT EMMA

(interrupting)

And Dustin heading up Model UN, soon-to-be-Rhodes-Scholar or who knows what, Jim "Teacher of the Year"... I mean, the talent at this table -- it's stunning.

Beat. Then--

AUNT EMMA (CONT'D)

And Andrew. With his drumming.

UNCLE FRANK

Yeah, you said that was going ok, Andy?

ANDREW

(a little peeved,)

It's going spectacularly well, actually. I'm...I'm in Shaffer's top jazz orchestra, it's the best in the country -- and I was just made a core member.
(there's no reaction)
...Which means I play in competitions. I'm one of the youngest they have.

TRAVIS

How do they know who wins in a music competition? Isn't it subjective?

ANDREW

...No, not really.

UNCLE FRANK

Does the studio help get you a job?

ANDREW

It's...it's not a studio, that's just the name of the ensemble... And yes, it's a big step forward in my career.

UNCLE FRANK

I'm just curious how you make your money as a drummer. After graduating.

Andrew glances at his dad. Wondering if maybe he'll chime in in defense... But no. His dad stays meek and quiet.

AUNT EMMA

I saw a TV commercial for credit reports where a young man was playing the drums. You could do that.

ANDREW

Yes, or the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. But the credit reports gig is a wonderful backup.

UNCLE FRANK

(missing Andrew's sarcasm)

Well I'm glad you have it figured out. It's a nasty business, I'm sure.

(to Travis)

Oh, you gotta tell them about your game last week. I'd say you lived up to your title.

TRAVIS

43-yard touchdown to win it.

UNCLE FRANK

That's what I'm talking about! On your way to the pros.

ANDREW

It's Division III.

Everyone at the table looks at Andrew -- including his dad.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

He plays for Carleton. It's Division III. It's not even Division II.

(silence, shock around the table)

The tilapia is delicious, by the way.

UNCLE FRANK

(I'll get you back for that)

You got a lot of friends, Andy?

ANDREW

Not really.

UNCLE FRANK

And why's that?

ANDREW

I don't see the use.

UNCLE FRANK

Well who will you play with otherwise?
Who'll give you your break? Lennon and
McCartney were school buddies, am I right?

ANDREW

Charlie Parker didn't know anyone 'til Jo
Jones threw a cymbal at his head.

UNCLE FRANK

And that's your idea of success, then?

ANDREW

Becoming the greatest musician of the
twentieth century would be anyone's idea
of success.

JIM

Dying broke, drunk, and full of heroin at
34 would not be my idea of success.

Andrew turns and looks at his dad. Can't believe he joined in.

ANDREW

(to his dad)

I'd rather die broke and drunk at 34 and
have people at a dinner table somewhere
talk about it than die rich and sober at
90 and have no one remember me.

UNCLE FRANK

Ah, but friends remember you. That's the
whole point.

ANDREW

No, none of us were Charlie Parker's
friends. That's the whole point.

UNCLE FRANK

Well there's such a thing as feeling
loved and included.

ANDREW

I prefer to feel hated and cast out. It
gives me purpose.

JIM

That's ridiculous. You don't mean that.

UNCLE FRANK

Travis and Dustin have plenty of friends,
and I'd say they have plenty of purpose.

ANDREW

You're right, they'll make great School Board presidents.

DUSTIN

Oh -- so, that's what this is all about -- you think you're better than us?

ANDREW

You catch on quick. You must be in Model UN.

TRAVIS

Well I've got a reply for you, Andrew. You think Carleton football's a joke?
(Andrew only nods)
Come play with us.

ANDREW

Four words you will never hear from the NFL.

AUNT EMMA

Who wants dessert?

JIM

And from Lincoln Center?

A moment of silence. Andrew looks at his dad, and his dad just looks right back... A simmering anger in his eyes, Andrew turns to the others, and, slowly--

ANDREW

In 1967 a scientist named Laszlo Polgar decides to prove talent isn't about what you're born with but about conditioning. Has three kids, Susan, Sophia and Judit, and gets them practicing chess for hours and hours before they can even talk. Fifteen years later Susan and Sophia are the two top female players in the world, and Judit's on her way to entering the history books as the greatest female chess master of all time.

Silence once again. Andrew glances at his dad, and delivers back that same accusatory look he saw in the kitchen...

UNCLE FRANK

So not only do you want to die at 34, broke, drunk, and addicted to heroin, but you also wish you were a lab rat.

Andrew says nothing. Rises, plate in hand. Walks to the door--

DUSTIN

Enjoy band camp.

ANDREW

Enjoy pretending you're an ambassador.

--and swings it shut behind him.

51

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

51

ANDREW

Ok, I'm going to just lay it out. This is why I don't think we should be together.

We're back in the city, at a coffee shop. Andrew is seated across from Nicole, who just looks at him. Clearly she did not think this is how the conversation would begin.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

I've thought about this a lot. If we're together this is what's going to happen. I'm going to keep pursuing what I'm pursuing, and it's going to take up more and more of my time. You're going to see me less and less. When you do, I'll be distracted, I'll be upset, I'll be playing things in my mind. And you're going to just grow to resent me. At a certain point, you'll tell me to ease up on the drumming, to spend more time with you. And I won't be able to. And I'll start to resent you for even asking me that. I'll feel like you're dragging me down, you'll feel like you don't matter -- and before long, we'll hate each other. So I think we should just cut it off now, cleanly, for those reasons.

A beat. Nicole is silent. Finally, Andrew adds--

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Because I want to be great.

NICOLE

And you're not.

ANDREW

I want to be one of the greats.

NICOLE

And I would stop you from doing that.