

TITLE: ACT I

FADE IN:

AUTUMN

TORONTO - SEPTEMBER 1988

1 INT. SPORTING GOODS STORE - MID-AFTERNOON 1

JUSTIN MALONEY, a shy 14-year-old with bad acne on his forehead which he hides with his bangs, laces up a pair of new skates and walks around the rubber-padded floor.

A bald SALESMAN (40s) has his hands on his hips. A few feet back is Justin's mother, MERLYN ABBOTT (late 30s). She's dressed in a jean mini-skirt and stiletto heels. She chews on a cuticle while watching her son.

SALESMAN

How do they feel?

JUSTIN

Pretty good.

SALESMAN

They've got a great advanced level of performance. I bet they feel pretty light on your feet as well, eh?

Justin nods.

MERLYN

(nervously)

Well? What do you think? Should we get them, hun?

JUSTIN

They're kind of expensive.

Merlyn makes a face at the salesman like Justin just said the silliest thing in the world.

MERLYN

I *meant*, would you like to get them, baby?

JUSTIN

Yeah, I guess that'd be pretty cool.

Merlyn looks at the salesman's nametag.

MERLYN

Stanley, we're going to take them.

Justin unlaces his skates and Merlyn walks to the front counter, where a NO PERSONAL CHEQUES ACCEPTED sign is taped to the cash register.

MERLYN (CONT'D)

I know it's asking a lot, Stanley, but I left all my cash and credit cards at home. In my wallet, I should say. I rushed out of the house so quickly...well, I only had time to grab my purse and chequebook. I know this goes against store policy, but do you think there's any way this one time, just this one time, you could find it in your heart to make an exception?

The Salesman puts his hands up in defence, almost like he's being robbed; Merlyn starts playing with one of her golden locks with an index finger.

MERLYN (CONT'D)

(more agitated)

I know, I know, I know. I really don't want to put you in a bind here, Stanley. I used to work in retail so I know this isn't easy. I do. I really do. And if you want me to leave my son here, I can drive home and grab my wallet and be back in a jiffy. Well, not exactly a jiffy, see, on account of the fact we don't live that close by. But it's fine. Tell you what...

Merlyn lowers her voice, as if crestfallen, and puts the chequebook back in her purse.

MERLYN (CONT'D)

I'll just go and scoot home and...

The Salesman exhales and bears a set of yellow, crooked teeth; Merlyn looks as if she could start crying.

SALESMAN

It's okay. I think we can make an exception this one time. And please, call me Stan.

Merlyn reaches for one of Stan's hands and shakes it furiously.

MERLYN

Thank you, Stan.

SALESMAN

Don't mention it, Mrs...

MERLYN

Ms. Abbott. Merlyn Abbott. But, please, call me Merlyn.

SALESMAN

Don't mention it, Merlyn. Now, as for the cheque, I will need to see one piece of picture ID.

MERLYN

Then let me find the piece of ID with my most flattering picture.

Merlyn and Stan both laugh.

Justin walks out of the store and doesn't look back.

2 INT. MERLYN'S CAR - MID-AFTERNOON

2

Merlyn isn't paying attention to the road as she drives. She keeps looking at Justin, unsure if her son is happy.

MERLYN

Are you hungry, baby?

JUSTIN

Nah. Not so much.

MERLYN

Can I make you a grilled cheese and tomato soup when we get home?

JUSTIN

I'm fine.

Merlyn steals a quick glance in the rearview mirror; Justin keeps quiet and stares out his window.

MERLYN

So you really like your new skates?

JUSTIN

Yeah. They're cool. Thanks, Mom.

MERLYN

Oh, you don't have to thank your old Mom.

Nervous, Merlyn tussles Justin's hair with one hand.

JUSTIN

MOM!

Justin sweeps his bangs across his forehead. Suddenly, a siren starts BLARING from an unmarked police car.

Merlyn pulls over to the side of the road and rolls her window down, sweat forming on her brow, as a POLICE OFFICER makes his way towards her vehicle.

MERLYN

(to herself)

Sacred heart of Jesus it's hot in here.

POLICE OFFICER

License and registration, please.

Merlyn's hands are shaking as she looks for her license. She eventually finds it in her oversized purse, and then reaches over Justin's knees and finds the registration in the glove compartment.

She hands everything to the Police Officer, who then returns to his car.

MERLYN

(to herself)

I'm such an idiot. Sometimes I think they should just lock me up and throw away the key. (pause) God, I'm cold as blue blazes.

As Merlyn is checking her makeup in the rearview mirror, the Police Officer returns, removes his sunglasses and looks inside at Merlyn.

POLICE OFFICER

I'm going to have to ask you to step out of the vehicle and put your hands on top of the roof, ma'am.

Justin reaches for his mother's arm.

MERLYN

What the...

JUSTIN

What's going on, Mom?

POLICE OFFICER

Ma'am? Please step out of the vehicle and place your hands on top of the roof.

JUSTIN

Mom!

Justin becomes frantic and practically lunges into the driver's side seat to stop his mother.

Merlyn exits the vehicle, but before she puts her hands on the roof, she crouches down and looks inside at Justin.

MERLYN

It's okay, baby. I promise. Everything's going to be just fine.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

3 EXT. DOWNTOWN - EARLY EVENING 3

Justin and a POLICE OFFICER get out of the cop car at the same time and walk into a dilapidated apartment building. In the lobby, the Police Officer scans the list of names on the wall before BUZZING 804.

4 INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - EARLY EVENING 4

Upstairs, the Police Officer KNOCKS on 804. RICK MALONEY, 49, answers, a cigarette burning away in one hand. Justin gasps at how much his father has aged in the four months they haven't seen each other. His hair is now fully grey, his aged skin almost hanging off his jowls.

Rick locks his hands behind him, eyeglasses halfway down his nose. CLASSICAL MUSIC plays in the background.

RICK

So Merlyn has finally been caught with her hand in the financial cookie jar, has she?

POLICE OFFICER

Well, as I mentioned to you on the phone, sir, Ms. Abbott was arrested and charged with cheque kiting and driving under the influence this afternoon.

Rick looks down at his worn loafers and shakes his head.

RICK

Sunt pueri pueri, puerilia tractant.

POLICE OFFICER

(confused)

What was that, sir?

RICK

Kids will be kids? You reap what you sow?

(MORE)

RICK (CONT'D)

Something along those lines. In any event, my ex-wife always had a penchant for decadence but, sadly, never the means to attain it. Legally, at least.

POLICE OFFICER

(suspicious)

Mr. Maloney, have you been drinking tonight?

RICK

That, sir, is none of your business. Now, if that will be all, thank you for bringing my son home.

The Police Officer hesitates, but eventually turns and walks to the elevator.

Justin enters his father's apartment, which is a shoe box in size, smells like an ashtray, and is empty of almost any furniture except a bed, sofa, table, and TV.

Rick stands beside his son and extends an arm like a restaurant waiter might.

RICK (CONT'D)

It obviously goes without saying that you will take the bed, Justin.

JUSTIN

Where are you going to sleep?

Justin sits down on the bed as his dad walks across the room and drains his glass of whiskey in one swift motion.

RICK

The chesterfield will suffice.

Justin looks around, as if searching for something in particular.

JUSTIN

(shocked)

Dad...where are your books?

Rick refills his glass, pauses and finds it difficult to tell his son the truth. He takes a large sip of the whiskey to subdue the regret in his voice.

RICK

I sold them. Anyway, why don't I put something together while you regale me with tales from your Homeric odyssey today?

JUSTIN

I'm fine.

RICK

Come now, Justin. You're a growing boy. There must be something here you want.

JUSTIN

I mean it. I'm fine.

Suddenly, the fire alarm RINGS throughout the building. Justin covers his ears and yells towards his dad.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Should we get out of here!?

Calmly, Rick drains the last of his whiskey and goes to pour some more. He grins and looks at his son.

RICK

False alarm. Pun intended. Nothing to worry about, kiddo.

A few seconds later the RINGING STOPS. Justin hesitantly lowers his hands from his ears. He's tired, hungry, and frustrated.

JUSTIN

Do you mind if I watch the game on TV?

Rick walks over to the record player, lifts the needle and then carries a foldable chair back towards his son.

RICK

Let's watch together.

Justin turns the TV on and the CBC's Ron MacLean and Don Cherry can be heard talking about tonight's game between the Edmonton Oilers and Toronto Maple Leafs.

5 EXT. AROUND TONY'S HOUSE - NOON

5

Rick and Justin pull up in a 1978 Volare outside Merlyn's ex-boyfriend's rickety old bungalow, Italian-Canadian TONY MANCINI (40s).

Justin is about to get out of the car to fetch his belongings when Rick sneers.

RICK

(shaking his head)

This is what your mother moved up to?

Justin ignores the comment and opens the car door.

RICK (CONT'D)

Want to me to come in and help you pack your stuff?

JUSTIN

No, I'm good.

6 EXT./INT OUTSIDE TONY'S FRONT DOOR/INSIDE THE HOUSE

6

Justin slowly walks up to the door, unlocks it and goes into the living room, where Tony is sitting in an armchair, watching WWF and drinking a beer. As soon as he sees Justin, he flies out of his seat and comes racing towards Justin.

TONY

Where the hell'a you and your mother been, huh? Ya think you two can come and go here like this is a god damn hotel? This is my home and that means my rules, ya little shit. I swear to God, if that slut has hooked up with someone else...

Justin begins backing away in fear. Tony raises his index finger and points it at Justin.

TONY (CONT'D)

I'm gonna give ya five seconds to fess up to what you and your sidekick have done behind my back or so help me God I'm gonna slap ya into next week.

Justin begins shaking, tears forming in his eyes.

JUSTIN

(staccato-like)

Mom was arrested yesterday; I'm moving to my Dad's; I need to grab my things.

This makes Tony angrier, so he reaches for Merlyn's cherished Greek amphora on the bookcase and smashes it on the floor. Then he starts pacing back and forth like a rattled tiger.

TONY

Well? What are ya waitin' for? Go grab your shit.

Justin is too scared to move a muscle.

TONY (CONT'D)

(yelling)

Now!

In his bedroom, Justin throws everything into two big bags - clothes, shoes, textbooks, notebooks, tapes - before going outside to give it to his father.

Justin zips inside again and gathers his hockey equipment, then runs back outside with it.

On his last trip, he retrieves his aquarium, moves towards the front door at a snail's pace, and places it on the floor as he turns the doorknob.

This catches the attention of Tony, who finishes his beer and jumps out of his chair. By this point, Justin is crossing the lawn, praying Tony won't come outside.

TONY (CONT'D)

Hey. Hey! I'm talking to you, punk.
What am I supposed to do with your
mom's shit, huh?

Tony cuts Justin off at the sidewalk and grabs the aquarium, throwing it into the air. A few seconds later the glass SMASHES against the street. Mortified, Justin watches his 6 fish flip from side to side on the cement.

Rick comes charging out of the car and tackles Tony on the front lawn.

TONY (CONT'D)

Vaffanculo!

Rick and Tony wrestle each other until they are both exhausted and fall on their backs. Tony then gets up and goes back into his place.

Justin and Rick, who has a black eye forming, get in the car. Lighting a cigarette, Rick takes a deep haul and starts the ignition.

RICK

I don't think he would have made a
very suitable step-father.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

8 EXT. OUTSIDE A HOCKEY ARENA - EARLY EVENING 8

Justin gets out of his dad's car, which is parked in a handicap space, and walks into the arena with his bag hanging off his shoulder by one strap.

SMASH CUT:

9 INT. ARENA - MONTAGE 9

Quick images showing Justin and his team playing a game

and winning 7-2.

10 INT. HOCKEY ARENA SNACK BAR - AFTER THE GAME 10

Justin and his teammate/best friend, KEITH (14), sweaty and exhausted, walk towards the arena's snack bar, where a pretty blonde girl, ALI (14), works behind the counter.

ALI

Hiya. What can I get you guys?

KEITH

(grinning)

I'll take a large strawberry
Slushie.

Ali looks Justin's way with an effortless smile.

ALI

And what can I get you?

Justin is dumbstruck, nervous, and can't respond.

ALI (CONT'D)

Hello? McFly? Anyone home?

Justin brushes the bangs out of his eyes with an unsteady hand.

JUSTIN

Umm...a small raspberry Slushie.
(pause) Please.

Ali goes to get the drinks and Keith kicks Justin behind his knees.

JUSTIN

Ow! What was that for?

Keith has a goofy grin on his face and doesn't take his eyes off Ali. A moment later, Ali returns with the two drinks.

ALI

For the record, these two flavours
are waaay inferior to orange
Slushies. Now, is that together or

separate?

JUSTIN

Sep...

KEITH

...Together.

Ali accepts the \$20 bill and gives Keith his change. Too shy to look back, Justin slinks away without another look as he and Keith move on towards the hallway.

11 INT. RICK'S APARTMENT - EVENING

11

Rick walks out of the kitchen, cigarette in one hand, a plate of food in the other. He has a droopy chef's hat on and an apron that reads REAL MEN DON'T USE RECIPES.

Justin pulls out Rick's desk and two foldable plastic chairs. Rick places the plate on the table.

JUSTIN

(sitting down)

So what is this anyway?

RICK

(sitting down)

Breaded veal cutlet with
artichokes and scallops.

JUSTIN

(mystified by the food)

So which one is the artichoke?

Rick leans over and points it out with his fork.

RICK

Artichokes are high in fibre,
potassium, calcium, iron and
phosphorus.

Justin peels off a layer of the artichoke, closes his eyes and runs his tongue along it. He immediately makes a sour face because he is so grossed out.

He then tries to cut through the cutlet, which is rock

hard, and takes a bite.

RICK (CONT'D)
How is it?

Justin tries to swallow, but it's so burnt he needs some water to help get it down.

RICK (CONT'D)
Go ahead and try the scallops.
They're a wonderful source of
omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin
B12.

Justin does as he's told and feels like he's eating poison. He lowers his cutlery, but can't bring himself to look at his father.

Rick lowers his cutlery as well and then removes his chef's hat.

RICK (CONT'D)
I know it's not cooked perfectly,
but these things really are
excellent for you.

JUSTIN
I can't.

RICK
You *can't* or you *won't*?

Justin flips his bangs to one side out of nervousness.

JUSTIN
I'm sorry. It's not your cooking.
I've had an upset stomach since
the mystery meat they served us at
lunch. Plus, Keith's mom gave us a
snack earlier, and, you know, so...

RICK
(lighting a cigarette)
Do you know why there is no such
thing as a list of reasons, Justin?

Justin keeps his eyes averted.

RICK (CONT'D)

Because in life you either have one adequate reason or a list of excuses.

Rick picks up his knife and fork and continues eating as Justin stares down at his plate in shame.

RICK (CONT'D)

By the by, I heard from the police yesterday. Your mother, the Right Honourable Merlyn Abbott, was arraigned in court. It would seem she has been granted a reprieve from the real world and will get to spend 60 decadent days living on the taxpayers' dollar.

JUSTIN

(looking up)

What...what do you mean?

RICK

I'm sure your mother's adamantine tragedy will lead her to pursue a more virtuous life in the future. Tragedy, after all, is the invisible hand that spawns reflection, and reflection bears its fruit in the deepening of one's character.

Rick stubs out his cigarette.

RICK (CONT'D)

In short, she will be a guest at a women's detention centre for the next two months.

JUSTIN

Where...which *detention centre* is she in?

RICK

I can't recall the name. I didn't write it down.

JUSTIN

What do you mean you didn't write it down!

RICK

Justin, I beseech you to remember that I'm still your father.

JUSTIN

And she's my mother, Dad. You don't think I have a right to know where she's, you know, been...

Rick empties his glass with a flick of the wrist.

RICK

I don't know.

JUSTIN

You don't *know*? She's my mother and you...

RICK

Get a hold of yourself, Justin.

JUSTIN

(fuming)

I'm going out for a bit.

Justin gets up from the table and reaches for his pullover.

RICK

As you wish.

12 INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE RICK'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON 12

An Asian girl, KIM JUNG-HO (10), is tightrope walking down the hallway when Justin gets out of the elevator. He looks at her briefly as he unlocks the apartment door.

JUNG-HO

I hear you're a famous hockey player.

As she speaks, Jung-ho keeps her head down and doesn't look at Justin.

JUSTIN

Who'd you hear that from?

JUNG-HO

Your dad. He talks about you with everyone in the building.

Jung-ho tightrope walks closer to Justin. She comes to a stop, crosses her hands over one another and stares down at the fraying carpet. Then she begins kicking at the floor with the heel of her shoe.

Justin studies the girl, frustrated not by her but by his father talking about him around the building.

JUSTIN

What's your name?

JUNG-HO

Kim Jung-ho.

JUSTIN

Well, Kim...

JUNG-HO

No. Kim is my family name. You can call me Jung-ho.

Shifting his weight from one foot to the other, Justin remains vexed.

JUSTIN

How old are you anyway?

JUNG-HO

Ten.

JUSTIN

Right. Well, it's been nice meeting you. I'm going inside my apartment now, okay?

Justin pushes down the door handle.

JUNG-HO

Do you know how to swim?

Justin turns around.

JUSTIN

What?

JUNG-HO

Could you teach me to swim in the pool upstairs?

Jung-ho finally looks up at Justin with innocent, almond-shaped eyes.

JUSTIN

Right. Listen, I'd love to help you out and all, but I'm kind of busy these days.

JUNG-HO

Please, Justin. I don't know anyone else who can swim and I really, really, really want to learn. (pause) Your father says you're very kind.

JUSTIN

(rolling his head
back in frustration)

Okay. Tell you what. Let me check the pool later on. If it's clean enough to swim in, then, yes, fine, I'll teach you. Drop by around four p.m. tomorrow, okay?

JUNG-HO

You promise?

JUSTIN

(exasperated)

Yes, I promise.

The two shake hands before Jung-ho slides her palm across the length of Justin's.

JUSTIN
What's that for?

JUNG-HO
It's a photocopy of our promise.

Shaking his head in disbelief, the apartment door closes behind Justin.

13 INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON 13

The elevator doors open and Justin walks out. Jung-ho is tightrope walking her way down the corridor.

Without looking at Justin, she addresses him very matter-of-factly.

JUNG-HO
You're late.

JUSTIN
I had to take care of something.

JUNG-HO
Something important?

JUSTIN
Yeah.

Jung-ho falls quiet as Justin fishes around his pockets for the keys to the apartment.

JUNG-HO
Can you teach me how to swim today?

Justin pulls out his keys and looks at Jung-ho. Their eyes meet and neither wavers.

JUSTIN
All right. Go and get your things.

Jung-ho lights up and starts clapping.

14 INT. RICK'S APARTMENT/DOOR - 10 MINUTES LATER 14

Jung-ho's wearing a bright-pink swimsuit, with nose plugs, earplugs and arm flotation devices. She and Justin, who's wearing swimming trunks and a T-shirt, ride the elevator up together. The whole time, Jung-ho looks both elated and terrified.

15 INT. AT THE SWIMMING POOL

15

When they reach the pool, they take a seat at the edge and Justin can be seen explaining something to Jung-ho. All the while, they make mini-whirlpools with their feet.

Justin gets in the water and uses his arms and legs to show Jung-ho how to stay afloat.

Jung-ho is giggling at Justin's wild interpretation of swimming.

JUNG-HO

You look like a funny monster when you do that.

JUSTIN

(Dracula-like voice)

Maybe I am a funny monster!

Jung-ho shrieks in delight.

JUSTIN

I am the boogeyman!

JUNG-HO

Eek!!!

JUSTIN

Now it's your turn. Come on in the pool with me.

Jung-ho, frightened, lowers herself into the water. Soon, she is thrashing about wildly, but Justin guides her safely around the shallow end, Jung-ho kicking madly the entire time.

After doing this for some time, they climb the ladder out of the pool and dry off by the benches, Jung-ho panting loudly.

JUSTIN
(proudly)
You just had your first swim
lesson.

JUNG-HO
But I wasn't really swimming.

JUSTIN
That's how it starts, Jung-ho. And
you did amazing.

JUNG-HO
Do you mean it?

JUSTIN
You'll be swimming on your own in
no time.

16 INT. INSIDE ELEVATOR

16

On the ride down, Jung-ho reaches for Justin's hand. At first, Justin looks down and is confused, but when he sees Jung-ho beaming, he smiles.

17 INT. RICK'S APARTMENT

17

As soon as he's back in the apartment, the phone starts RINGING. Rick isn't home, so Justin races over and picks it up. His cousin, DALE (20s), is on the other end.

JUSTIN
Hello?

DALE (O.S.)
Cousin Justin!

JUSTIN
Cousin Dale! How are you?

DALE (O.S.)
I'm well, big guy. Yourself?

JUSTIN
Not bad. Just got back from a swim.

18 INT. DALE'S APARTMENT

18

DALE

Very good, very good. Listen, I talked with your dad a few days ago and I have some news for you about your mom.

Justin switches hands with the phone, a look of anxiety on his face.

DALE (CONT'D) (O.S.)

I made a couple of calls to the cop shop and found out where she is.

JUSTIN

Okay...

DALE

And I wanted to know if you'd like to go visit her. This place has visiting hours on Sunday if you want me to drive you out.

JUSTIN

I...sure. That's okay with you? I mean, you don't mind?

DALE

Of course not! We need to be out there for 1 p.m., so why don't I swing by around noon. Sound good?

JUSTIN

(nodding to himself
blankly)

Yeah. Sure. Thanks, Cousin Dale.

DALE

Don't mention it. I'll see you Sunday, then.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

19 INT. HOCKEY ARENA - EVENING

19

After their game, Justin and Keith go to the arena snack bar. The same girl as last time is working.

ALI

Hiya.

Ali puts her elbows on the counter, blows a big bubble with her gum and leans forward.

ALI (CONT'D)

Let me guess.

Ali closes an eye and makes a gun with her hands pressed together. First she aims at Keith.

ALI (CONT'D)

Large strawberry Slushie...

She moves the finger gun towards Justin.

ALI (CONT'D)

...and a small raspberry Slushie.

KEITH

Nice!

JUSTIN

No!

KEITH

(confused)

What the France?

ALI

(crestfallen)

I thought I did really good.

JUSTIN

No, you did. I mean, you're right. I usually get raspberry - and I did last time - but, well...I thought I'd mix it up tonight.

KEITH

(disbelieving)

But you don't know how to mix it up.

ALI

What can I get you, then?

JUSTIN

(coyly)

I don't know. I thought I'd try, you know, an orange Slush Puppy.

Ali smiles.

ALI

One large strawberry Slushie and one small orange Slushie coming right up.

Ali turns around to get the drinks while Keith kicks Justin in the back the knees.

JUSTIN

Ow! What's your deal?

KEITH

Me? I've got no deal. You, however, seem to have a raging case of...

JUSTIN

(conspiratorially)

Hey! Keep your friggin' trap closed, would you?

KEITH

Man, someone has a raging case of Snack Bar Girl-itis. Maybe I should take your temperature, Baloney.

Keith moves his hands towards Justin's forehead, but Justin slaps the hand away at once.

Ali returns and puts two drinks on the counter. Keith pays for both of them, but this time Ali holds Justin's gaze as he turns to leave. Justin is given a jolt by

the look and nearly trips while walking away, spilling part of his drink.

KEITH
Smooth move, Ex-Lax.

20 INT. RICK'S APARTMENT - MORNING

20

Rick is standing over Justin, who is still asleep, a drink and cigarette in his hands. Rick is dressed in a pair of khakis and a clean white button-down shirt.

RICK
Late night, Señor Quixote?

JUSTIN
(half-asleep)
Huh?

Rick goes to the kitchen to check on the eggs and bacon he's making. Then he tops himself up and returns to Justin's bedside.

RICK (CONT'D)
I trust you weren't roaming the malignant downtown core of our troubled city last night.

JUSTIN
No. Keith and I had a video game Olympics and then watched a couple of flicks.

Justin swings his legs over the side of the bed and sighs, bleary-eyed, as he tries to focus on his watch.

RICK
You know, those things aren't good for your eyes.

Justin sighs and ignores the comment.

JUSTIN
Do you have any plans today?

RICK

As a matter of fact, I do, thank you for asking.

JUSTIN

And?

RICK

And what?

JUSTIN

(shake of the head)

And what are your plans?

RICK

Well, you and I are going to the Toronto Marlies game this afternoon. They're playing the London Knights at one-thirty and your father...

Rick walks over to the far table and pulls out two tickets.

RICK (CONT'D)

...secured two seats in the - drum roll, please - gold section. Now, how would you like your eggs?

Justin looks defeated, like he's been told of a loved one's passing.

JUSTIN

Umm...however you're having them.

Rick marches into the kitchen again, stubbing out one cigarette and replacing it with another right away.

RICK (CONT'D) (O.S.)

Sunny side up, it is, then. And do you want your bacon crispy or soft?

JUSTIN

(sighing)

Whatever's easiest.

Justin finds it hard to swallow with the impending news

he has to deliver to his father.

Ricks comes out to see Justin, sensing something is up.

RICK
Everything copasetic there,
Harmonia?

JUSTIN
I'm fine. It's fine. Everything's
fine.

Justin lies down in bed again and turns to face the wall.
Rick takes a measured sip of whiskey.

RICK
Something on your mind, kiddo?

JUSTIN
I don't know. It's just...

RICK
It's just what?

JUSTIN
(sheepishly)
I'm supposed to...go and see Mom
today...at the, you know...

Rick taps the end of his cigarette delicately against the
side of an ashtray.

RICK
With whom will you be taking this
penal sojourn?

JUSTIN
(weakly)
Dale.

Rick blanches, the thought of his favourite nephew going
behind his back a sharp stab in his chest.

RICK
(detached)
How long have you been
orchestrating this scheme?

JUSTIN

Dad...

RICK

(methodically)

How long?

JUSTIN

Since last week.

RICK

And you didn't think it relevant to tell your father the moment you hatched this plan?

JUSTIN

It's not that, Dad. I didn't want to hurt you or...disappoint you.

RICK

Very well, then. I'll vacate the premises so you can get ready. I'll see you here for dinner, I trust.

JUSTIN

(forlorn)

Dad, I never meant to screw up your plans.

Rick walks to the door and unlocks it.

RICK

Justin, as you will come to see, everything in life comes at a price. Nothing is free, not a single thing, tangible or intangible. There is an equilibrium at play all the time. For every gain, there is a loss of equal value. For every heart that is broken, one is sutured. It's called balance.

(MORE)

RICK (CONT'D)

And it's the only reason the
universe doesn't collapse onto
itself at any given moment.

Rick exits the apartment as the door closes behind him.

FADE OUT.