

# "REALLY OLD SCHOOL"

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11-22-2025

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST LAWN MEMORIAL PARK, OMAHA, NE - DAY

A funeral wraps up at a cemetery in the north central part of Nebraska's largest city on an early September afternoon.

A RATHER LARGE, DIVERSE CROWD OF PEOPLE huddles around an already-lowered casket.

Some people shed tears...but overall, the mood is a little more upbeat than you might expect.

The casket receives a coat of dirt, and the participants walk toward an access road to reenter vehicles of various ages.

EXT. ACCESS ROAD - DAY

GREG GREENWOOD (Black, 40s, good-looking, hyperactive) and his three children, JASMINE (16, calm, outgoing; cute), ISAIAH (15, compliant), and MATTHEW (12, quiet), stroll.

GREG

Two years ago, it was your mom.

MATTHEW

Yeah.

GREG

Now it's your Grandma Waters.

JASMINE

She packed a lot into those one hundred twenty-four years of hers.

ISAIAH

At least Grandma Waters didn't go down in a drive-by shooting like Mom did. And Mom wasn't even their target!

Greg, Jasmine, Isaiah, and Matthew reach a late-model limo whose CHAUFFEUR (a woman in her 40s) opens the door for the family.

As soon as Greg, his daughter, and his sons board the limousine, WILL HILL (50s), his wife JANET (50s), and their daughter AMI (13) jog toward the still-open vehicle.

JANET

You got any room for us?

JASMINE

Hi, Uncle Will, Aunt Janet, Ami.

GREG  
 (to Ami, Janet, and Will)  
 Sure. C'mon in.

The chauffeur nods her approval and turns to Ami.

CHAUFFEUR  
 Ever rode in the front seat of a  
 limo before?

AMI  
 Aw, what the heck?

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

As Ami climbs into the front passenger seat of the limousine, Greg, Jasmine, and Matthew take the middle seats. Isaiah, Janet, and Will occupy the back seat.

WILL  
 (toward middle seats)  
 You know, Charlotte Waters went  
 down the right way.

Greg and Matthew turn around.

WILL (CONT'D)  
 In her sleep and with lots of  
 stories to tell Saint Peter.

While several heads nod, Jasmine turns to Will.

JASMINE  
 I started to laugh when the pastor  
 talked about the time when Grandma  
 Waters was getting ready to be the  
 musical director for this up-and-  
 coming vaudeville singer.

The window-seat passengers close the limo's doors, and the chauffeur boards the vehicle herself, shuts the driver's-side door, and drives the two families out of the cemetery.

JASMINE (CONT'D)  
 And she sneaked up and threw that  
 woman's can of burnt cork in the  
 trash!

Greg, Will, Janet, and Isaiah laugh.

ISAIAH  
 What's burnt cork?

JASMINE

Isaiah, you know that lampblack  
some football players wear? Well,  
burnt cork was like that...except  
White entertainers back then used  
to wear that to look Black.

Ami reaches into her purse (or jacket) to pull out an MP3  
player or smartphone. Then she pulls out her earbuds.

CHAUFFEUR

(to Ami)

Let me turn on the radio. It's all  
right.

Ami nods. As she puts her earbuds and device away, the  
chauffeur turns on the limo's radio...and A COMMERCIAL comes  
on; ITS SCREAMING ANNOUNCER hawks cars.

WILL

Greg, you know we don't have that  
kind of thing on the radio anymore  
on our stations in Des Moines.

Greg looks sheepish.

MAIN TITLES APPEAR OVER ACTION.

CHAUFFEUR

This limo's got XM.

MATTHEW

Dad...is it all right?

GREG

It's okay. Go ahead and check out  
the competition.

Ami, Janet, and Jasmine have a good laugh.

JASMINE

No offense, Dad.

Greg nods and smiles as the chauffeur switches the radio fare  
to an XM station.

EXT. GREENWOODS' HOUSE - DAY

It's a nice, medium-size house in this eclectic neighborhood.

A 2009 Nissan Altima sits in the driveway.

INT. GREENWOODS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

The room's furnishings range between Goodwill and Best Buy.

Jasmine, Greg, Isaiah, and Matthew eat popcorn and watch a nonconference Nebraska Cornhuskers FOOTBALL GAME on a big-screen TV this Saturday afternoon.

Greg looks a little worried about the outcome.

Jasmine gives him a blank look.

JASMINE

You think the Huskers are gonna do it this year?

GREG

Jasmine...I hope you don't mean turn the ball over and let the other team come back and beat 'em.

MATTHEW

Nah, Dad. We're better this year.

ISAIAH

We better be!

When A COMMERCIAL comes on, Greg gets up.

GREG

Jasmine...you wanna come out with me to the car?

Jasmine draws a blank look.

JASMINE

Aw, what the heck?

Jasmine follows Greg out of the house.

EXT. GREENWOODS' HOUSE - GREG'S NISSAN - DAY

Both rear doors of Greg's car stand open; he and Jasmine (at opposite ends of the vehicle) negotiate removal of a 1920s-era trunk from the automobile's back seat.

GREG

Push that trunk toward me, Jasmine.

Jasmine grunts as she carefully pushes the Jazz Age trunk toward her father, who pulls the trunk out of the back seat.

Greg wrestles the trunk to the ground.

GREG (CONT'D)  
 Now...I'll lift this end, and you  
 lift the other end.

It doesn't look easy, but Jasmine and Greg tote the trunk toward the house.

INT. GREENWOODS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

Matthew and Isaiah watch Greg and Jasmine fight to move the trunk into the house...the two boys rise from their seats to let their father and sister back inside the abode.

ISAIAH  
 Dad...Jasmine...  
 (toward Jasmine and Greg)  
 Can I help you with that?

JASMINE  
 Thanks, Isaiah...but we're good.

Isaiah and Matthew go back to their seats as Jasmine and Greg, slowly but surely, move the trunk to:

INT. JASMINE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sports posters and pennants dominate in this tastefully-furnished, neutral-colored space...which also features an acoustic guitar (on its stand) and an electronic keyboard.

Greg and Jasmine set the trunk down oh-so-carefully in the middle of the carpeted floor.

JASMINE  
 (eyeballing Greg)  
 They must have magicians over there  
 at the assisted-living facility  
 where Grandma Waters lived.

Greg flashes a bewildered look.

JASMINE (CONT'D)  
 To get her trunk into the car.

GREG  
 Yeah...yeah.

Jasmine nods...Greg opens the 1920s-era trunk. Both dive in and inspect the contents.

Jasmine lifts up, by the hanger, a 1910s-looking suit in a plastic bag.

The suit looks as if Jasmine could fit inside it.

JASMINE

Oh, my God! This is the suit she wore when she was trying to get a gig at the Cotton Club.

GREG

Actually, Jasmine...that's Suit Number Two.

Greg looks at some old newspaper clippings and other Charlotte Waters keepsakes...Jasmine fondles the suit.

GREG (CONT'D)

The first got eaten up by moths.

Jasmine nods.

Greg still fishes through the trunk, where he unearths a small, well-worn cardboard box.

He opens the small box...and pulls out a harmonica, which he hands to Jasmine.

GREG (CONT'D)

Here...think you might like this.

Jasmine puts the suit on her bed and grabs the harmonica.

JASMINE

Thanks, Dad.

Jasmine toots away...Greg continues to look in the trunk.

GREG

One thing about your great-grandma: She could play just about any instrument in sight. There was the time she and her band were in New Orleans. The rest of the band left the stage, and Grandma Waters ended up playing the rest of--

Matthew sprints into Jasmine's bedroom.

MATTHEW

Dad! Jasmine! Nebraska just scored! Raiola threw a bomb to--

GREG

Matthew...are they ahead?

MATTHEW

Nah. They're still down by three.

Jasmine stops playing that harmonica and turns her TV set ON.

Sure enough, the TV's tuned to the SAME NEBRASKA GAME.

Matthew's the only Greenwood who watches in real attention.

Jasmine and Greg go back to the old trunk.

Greg and his daughter reach the bottom of the trunk...where they find several pages of handwritten sheet music.

The first page says, in handwriting: "RIVER CITY BLUES."

Below that, in smaller, handwritten letters: "BY CHARLOTTE WATERS (1917)."

Jasmine takes the sheet music and spreads it out on her bed.

GREG

(to Jasmine)

You know she wrote that when she was sixteen.

JASMINE

Oh, my God.

GREG

Why don't you try it out on your keyboard?

JASMINE

Well...I'd rather wait 'til Monday to try it out.

(walking toward Matthew)

Besides...I wanna see the Huskers pull this one out.

Matthew and Jasmine watch THE ACTION unfold on the latter's TV screen. Greg joins them after a second or two.

EXT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Benson High School's a two-story, 1920s-era reddish-brick building whose front entrance features six columns.

INT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL VOCAL MUSIC ROOM - DAY

BENSON'S SWING CHOIR (ten boys and ten girls) typifies the school's highly-diverse student body.

Sixteen of the singers (they wear headset mikes) strut their stuff on a riser as the choir does Orleans' "Still the One."

The remaining four vocalists (out there in front) use handheld mikes while the foursome bob to the beat.

Jasmine's one of them...she gazes at RAHIM THOMAS (17).

JASMINE

*You're still the one--*

RAHIM

*Who can scratch my itch.*

JASON SKOMAL (15) and MOLLY ENGBRETSSEN (16, some kind of confident, feisty) round out the out-front foursome.

Jason and Molly eyeball each other.

JASON

*You're still the one--*

MOLLY

*And I wouldn't switch!*

JASMINE, MOLLY

*We're still having fun--*

JASON, RAHIM

*And you're still the one.*

JASON, MOLLY

*You--*

JASMINE, RAHIM

*Are--*

MARY KATE O'CALLAGHAN (18, spunky, cute; she plays a 1960s-1970s studio piano), her brother PATRICK (15, a worrier; he's on electronic keyboard), DEREK RODRIGUEZ (17; he rocks out on a V-neck guitar), and BRITTANIE ROSS (17; she's on drums) lay down the music while in front of the swing choir.

SWING CHOIR

*Still the one that makes me  
shout./You're still the one that I  
dream about./We're still having  
fun,/And you're still the one.*

The swing choir continues to strut its stuff.

SWING CHOIR (CONT'D)  
*You're still the one./You're still  
 the one./We're still having  
 fun,/And you're still the one.*

Everybody's deep in the good times...especially swing choir director PAULETTE RODGERS (60s, Black, fun-loving).

PAULETTE  
 Good job, everybody!

Paulette watches the singers strut their stuff on the riser as Brittanie, Derek, Mary Kate, and Patrick bring the accompaniment to a rousing end.

Once the song ends, some swing choir members whoop it up.

PAULETTE (CONT'D)  
 Good job of singing.

Several singers nod in agreement.

PAULETTE (CONT'D)  
 Now...if we can get some of you to  
 shake your groove thing a little  
 bit better.

Vocalists look at each other in bewilderment.

PAULETTE (CONT'D)  
 Molly...you're one of the best  
 cheerleaders in this whole school.

MOLLY  
 Thank you, Ms. Rodgers.

PAULETTE  
 If you can show the same fire here  
 that you do when you're cheering on  
 the Bunnies...I mean with your  
 dance moves...I know you can do it.

Molly receives stares from about a dozen swing choir members.

MOLLY  
 Okay...I'll work on it.

Paulette nods her approval.

The school bell RINGS...accompanists and vocalists scramble to retrieve their notebooks and textbooks (to say nothing of backpacks) prior to leaving the vocal music room.

PAULETTE

Everybody...be ready to bust some moves next time!

Some choir members shake their heads "yes" while they follow Patrick, Brittanie, Derek, Mary Kate, and most of the remaining singers out of the room.

Jasmine (books and all) goes over to the studio piano.

She sets her books on top of the piano, fishes the "River City Blues" sheet music from a notebook, spreads the sheet music on the piano's music rack, and sits down to play.

The whole thing catches Paulette's attention.

JASMINE

I...hope it's all right, Ms. Rodgers.

PAULETTE

It's all right, Jasmine.

As Jasmine plays, Paulette moves toward the piano and notices Charlotte Waters' name on the sheet music.

PAULETTE (CONT'D)

(sitting down at piano)  
Charlotte Waters...I read about her in the obituaries. She died last week.

Jasmine looks more confident as she works her way through "River City Blues."

PAULETTE (CONT'D)

Play on, child! Man, that's good!

JASMINE

It got her kicked out of the house. At sixteen. And that's how she ended up catching a train from Omaha all the way to New York City.

Jasmine's playing entices Molly to run back into the vocal music room...where she heads toward the studio piano.

Paulette moves out of the way.

MOLLY

(to Jasmine)  
Scoot over and we'll make this a duet.

JASMINE  
Aw...what the heck?

Jasmine scoots over and gives the piano's lower register to Molly...who expertly delivers a standard ragtime bass line.

JASMINE (CONT'D)  
Molly...you really know this song?

MOLLY  
Not really...but I recognize how  
the bass line's supposed to work.

Molly and Jasmine play on. The cheerleader turns to the composer's great-granddaughter.

MOLLY (CONT'D)  
Did your great-grandma write any  
other rags?

JASMINE  
Well...uh...nope. But she was one  
heck of an arranger.

INT. ADJACENT CLASSROOM - DAY

All the desks are pushed back in this smaller space...where ROCK (OR HIP-HOP OR COUNTRY) MUSIC blasts out of a laptop or MP3 player.

VERONICA KWAN (15, philosophical), ANYA PETROVIC (14, uptight; adorable), JANAEE KING (14, Black, gentle), and GUADALUPE "LUPE" CABRAL (15, good-humored), all four in leotards, give the tune the "Swan Lake" treatment.

Anya notices the O.S. music from the vocal room...so she breaks the line to turn the device UP.

Janae, Lupe, and Veronica continue to dance.

ANYA  
(returning to the line)  
Must be Mary Kate.

LUPE  
Are you kidding, Anya? Mary Kate  
wouldn't play that stuff if her  
life depended on it.

Veronica lifts Anya...Janae hoists Lupe.

As best as they can, Janae and Veronica twirl around the classroom's open space.

Janae looks sideways at Veronica...and she's impressed.

JANAE  
Veronica, you've been working out!

VERONICA  
Thanks, Janae.

ANYA  
Hey, Veronica! Watch it!

VERONICA  
All the time.

Veronica and Janae move to the middle of the open space to set Anya and Lupe down...while the rock/hip-hop/country music CONTINUES TO CLASH with the O.S. ragtime.

EXT. GREENWOODS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Some cars cruise along the street in front of the house.

INT. GREENWOODS' DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Everybody wears casual clothes in this open, inviting space with the same hybrid Best Buy-Goodwill look.

Matthew, Jasmine, and Isaiah sit at the table while Greg stands there; with pride, he sets a casserole dish down.

GREG  
This is it...my patented surf-and-turf casserole. Shrimp and chicken.

Isaiah and Matthew nervously dig into the casserole dish...Greg and Jasmine do so in pride.

GREG (CONT'D)  
I mean with this and Jasmine's award-winning four-bean salad...that oughta get Gordon Ramsay off our backs.

Matthew and Isaiah exhibit nervous laughs.

After a few seconds, all the Greenwoods chow down...and the nervousness morphs into nods of approval by the foursome.

ISAIAH  
(to Jasmine)  
Speaking of award-winning...how're you doing with Grandma Waters' song?

JASMINE

Uh...I'm getting the hang of it.  
 (takes bite of casserole)  
 It sure helped when Molly  
 Engebretsen came over and jammed  
 along with me.

Three sets of eyeballs stare at Jasmine in disbelief.

ISAIAH

Molly Engebretsen? I thought Mary  
 Kate O'Callaghan was the piano  
 player in the swing choir.

JASMINE

Nah...Mary Kate's more into Mozart.

Jasmine takes a swig of pop or juice or milk or water.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

She'll take Janis Joplin over Scott  
 Joplin...any day of the week.

GREG

I just wanna know: What's Molly  
 know about Grandma Waters's music?

JASMINE

Well, Dad, it's just that Molly's  
 one heck of a sight reader.  
 (takes a bite of salad)  
 Matter of fact...I went online and  
 downloaded a bunch of rags.

MATTHEW

Huh?

JASMINE

Other people's rags, Matthew. And  
 when I get 'em printed off tonight,  
 I'm gonna email 'em to Molly so,  
 next time we get together, we'll  
 work on 'em together.

MATTHEW

Jasmine...who's Janis Joplin?

Matthew takes a bite of salad and flashes that "something's  
 missing" look.

JASMINE

You got a couple of hours?

Matthew looks confused.

JASMINE (CONT'D)  
Well...how about some salad  
dressing?

Jasmine passes a bottle of salad dressing to a grateful-looking Matthew.

INT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL VOCAL MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Swing choir rehearsal ends...Paulette watches her singers and accompanists grab their belongings and file out of the room.

Well...most of them: Molly and Jasmine set their belongings next to the room's studio piano and the electronic keyboard.

Jasmine goes to her notebook (or backpack) and produces two stacks of computer-printed sheet music. She hands one stack to Molly and sets the other aside for herself.

MOLLY  
(accepts stack of music)  
Five more rags?

Jasmine nods.

MOLLY (CONT'D)  
That brings us up to fifteen of  
'em, doesn't it?

JASMINE  
That's right.

MOLLY  
And none of them's by Scott Joplin.  
(points to sheet music)  
They weren't even in "The Sting!"

JASMINE  
Molly...I'm just saving the best  
for last.

Paulette watches Jasmine and Molly banter...and gets a kick out of it all.

MOLLY  
Tell you what, Jasmine:  
(goes to studio piano)  
See if you can do this.

Molly sets her music on the piano and plays the opening bar to "The Entertainer."

Jasmine strides over to the electronic keyboard to deliver "The Entertainer's" opening bar.

MOLLY (CONT'D)  
 (nodding her approval)  
 Good! Now let's see you try this!

Molly handles the second bar to that landmark Scott Joplin rag; Jasmine follows suit, playing the second bar a la Molly.

In each subsequent "Entertainer" bar, Jasmine copies Molly.

MOLLY (CONT'D)  
 Let's face it: It's the only rag I  
 can play by heart.

PAULETTE  
 You two really crack me up.

LATER

Jasmine (still on electronic keyboard) and Molly (still on studio piano) play "The Entertainer" together...and nail it.

INT. ADJACENT CLASSROOM - DAY

With desks shoved against one end of the room, Veronica, Lupe, Janae, and Anya (back in their leotards) plie their way across the room to the strains of A DIFFERENT ROCK/HIP-HOP/COUNTRY TUNE on that laptop (or boombox or MP3 player).

The music CLASHES with Jasmine's and Molly's O.S. playing (if not the other way around).

Anya seethes...and jumps out to turn that device OFF.

Now nobody dances.

LUPE  
 Anya, why'd you stop the music? I  
 was just getting in the groove!

ANYA  
 Lucky you, Little Latin Lupe Lu.  
 (storms toward door)  
 I'm gonna get to the bottom of  
 this.  
 (points at her colleagues)  
 They're disturbing something  
 important here!

Lupe, Janae, and Veronica follow Anya out of the room...but Janae jumps out ahead of Anya and blocks Anya's path. Veronica and Lupe stop in their own tracks.

JANAE

Maybe you'd better not go in there.

Anya's mouth flies open.

JANAE (CONT'D)

The way you're acting, you're liable to kill somebody.

ANYA

That's right, Janae!

Veronica gestures Janae, Anya, and Lupe into sitting down.

VERONICA

C'mon, everybody, chill...I'll go in there.

Anya, Janae, and Lupe take seats...Veronica walks out.

ANYA

(to Veronica)

Don't come back until you bust some heads!

Lupe and Janae try to calm Anya down.

INT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL VOCAL MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Molly moves over to the electronic keyboard and Jasmine sits down at the studio 88s when Veronica opens the door and enters the room, then closes the door behind herself.

Both musicians arise when they spot Veronica's presence.

JASMINE

Hi, Veronica.

She and Molly wave at Veronica, who returns the greeting with a wave all her own.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

I never had the chance to tell you I loved the comic ballet routine you did at last year's talent show.

MOLLY

(to Veronica)

Yeah. You cracked everybody up.

VERONICA

Well, thanks.

JASMINE

You gonna dance this year, too?

VERONICA

Yeah. Three other girls and I are doing a takeoff on "Swan Lake."

Molly and Jasmine shake their heads "yes."

VERONICA (CONT'D)

It's supposed to be fun...but it seems like Anya Petrovic isn't buying it.

Veronica shrugs.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

I mean, ever since she got back from visiting her relatives in Russia over the summer...we can hear you playing in the other room.

Jasmine and Molly shoot each other that "uh-oh" look.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

And it sounds like you two are having a ball.

Molly's and Jasmine's "uh-oh" looks turn into relaxed ones.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

I'd sure love to sit in with you.

A grinning Jasmine gestures Veronica over to the studio piano...where Veronica takes a seat.

MOLLY

Wait a minute, Veronica...can you play ragtime?

VERONICA

Well, I can play "The Entertainer."

Jasmine and Molly eyeball each other in pride.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

But mostly, I love to take classical pieces and rock tunes and play them the way Scott Joplin would've written 'em.

JASMINE

Veronica...be our guest. Let's hear  
how you sound.

At the studio piano, Veronica tears into "Flight of the Bumble Bee" or some similar classical selection...and turns it into a rip-roaring two-step.

Molly and Jasmine look blown away by Veronica's musicianship.

Halfway through the classical piece-turned-rag, the door to the vocal music room barely opens. Lupe, Anya, and Janae peek through the crack.

Anya turns to Janae and Lupe in disgust...a disgust Janae and Lupe don't share.

While the door closes again, Veronica ends her number with a bang, triggering strong applause from Jasmine and Molly.

MOLLY

Veronica...can you come back  
tomorrow?

Veronica puts her hands on her chin for a few seconds.

VERONICA

You bet I can!

Molly and Jasmine jubilantly hug each other before Veronica jumps up from the ivories to join in the hug.

EXT. ENGBRETSSENS' HOUSE - DAY

This stout-looking red-brick house features a driveway off to the side. A 2015 Chevy truck and a 2005 four-door Ford truck rest in the driveway.

Plus: A 1999 Mercury and a 2004 Toyota rest in the street.

INT. ENGBRETSSENS' DINING ROOM - DAY

The Engebretsens sit at the breakfast table in this somewhat cozy, well-lived-in space with that eclectic look.

Molly starts a bowl of scrambled eggs around the table; her brother SEAN (17, laid-back) grabs the bowl and digs in. Their sister MADISON (18, a complainer) looks exasperated.

MADISON

Sean...save some for the rest of  
us, huh?

Madison grabs the bowl of eggs and spoons out a small amount.

MARK (mid-50s, friendly) and HEATHER (late 50s, a worrier), the teenagers' parents, look amused as they wait on the bowl of scrambled eggs.

Heather watches Mark spoon out some scrambled eggs for Heather, then for himself.

HEATHER  
(to Mark)  
Hon...I could've gotten those  
myself.

Molly takes back the bowl...and spoons out the remaining eggs for herself.

MARK  
Aw, that's okay.

Mark takes a bite of his eggs...but sets his fork down.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Honey...Molly...Sean...Madison...  
(takes a swig of juice)  
I'm just gonna go ahead and cut to  
the chase.

Four sets of eyeballs look at Mark.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Kids...your mom and I have spent  
the last ten years trying to make  
that G&R restaurant on Farnam work.

SEAN  
Yeah...ever since the sequester  
that Congress imposed.

MADISON  
Yeah, Dad.  
(takes a bite of eggs)  
And you got so disgusted you quit  
the Army Corps of Engineers.

HEATHER  
(to Madison)  
Is that all the eggs you want?

Madison nods.

HEATHER (CONT'D)  
Molly...why don't you give your  
sister some of your scrambled eggs?

MADISON  
No, Mom. I'm good.

MOLLY  
(nodding)  
Yeah. Me, too.

Molly digs into her scrambled eggs.

MARK  
Speaking of good...I got to  
thinking: "If we can't make it here  
in Omaha...how do you all feel  
about moving to Branson, Missouri?"

Molly stops eating.

SEAN  
Whatcha gonna do over there, Dad?

MARK  
Your mom and I are gonna manage  
Molly's show-business career.

Madison stares at Molly.

HEATHER  
I mean, look: Molly can do it all.

Molly's face shows a small grin.

MARK  
Yeah...she can sing, act, play a  
bunch of instruments.  
(eating some more eggs)  
And she's starting to be a  
magician.

Mark takes a swig of juice.

MARK (CONT'D)  
That kind of talent needs to get  
out into the world...one way or  
another.

Several Engebretsen heads nod as Sean and Molly rush to  
finish eating.

MADISON

Mom, Dad...you mean I can't inherit this house from you if you and Molly and Sean move to Branson?

HEATHER

On your salary as a free-lance photographer? You'd better hook up with Lady Gaga or somebody. Better yet...why not go back to school?

Madison just shrugs...Mark turns to Heather.

MARK

Hon...remember the last time Lady Gaga came to town?

HEATHER

Yeah!

MARK

And you were hoping to get hold of her meat dress...and put it on one of the pizzas at G&R and cook it?

Molly and Sean break out in laughter.

HEATHER

They wouldn't let us. The Douglas County Health Department would've closed us down in a minute!

Sean and Molly rise up from the table, grab their books and/or backpacks, and make their way out of the house.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Wait a minute, you two.

The two youngest Engebretsens stop and hug their parents.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Be careful out there.

MOLLY

Don't worry, Mom. We will.

SEAN

Take care, Mom, Dad.

Molly and Sean wave at Heather and Mark before leaving.

Mark, Madison, and Heather rise from the table to clear it...when A RINGTONE emanates from Mark's shirt pocket.

Mark digs his cell phone from said pocket and puts the phone to his ear.

MARK  
 (into phone)  
 Hello?

INT. OFFICE AT G&R TOWER, SAN ANTONIO, TX - DAY

SCOTT SANDERFORD (late 40s, a smart-aleck's voice) reclines in his spacious, cluttered office.

SCOTT  
 (into his cell phone)  
 Mark, this is Scott Sanderford from headquarters. How you doin'?

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

MARK  
 Well, uh...fine. How about you?

SCOTT  
 Fine! Got some great news for you!

MARK  
 I can sure use some, Scott.

SCOTT  
 We've just started to implement your pet suggestion of introducing live entertainment at one of our G&R restaurants.

MARK  
 Well...that's great.

SCOTT  
 Last week, we hired a mariachi band to play at our G&R across from the UTSA campus here in San Antonio...and business is now up fifty percent from last year.

MARK  
 Man, that's great!

SCOTT  
 So now...it's you and, uh, Heather's turn to turn your G&R into a live-music venue, too.

MARK

Hot dog!

Heather and Madison quit their work and move toward Mark.

SCOTT

You know we don't serve those at  
G&R Mexican Food and Pizza.

MARK

I know.

SCOTT

Anyway, your G&R is the most  
underperforming one in the  
Omaha/Council Bluffs/Bellevue area.

MARK

I know. Heather and I have been  
wracking our brains trying to find  
a way to turn it around...even with  
all those restaurants in Midtown  
Crossing taking business from us.

SCOTT

Now you've got a way to beat 'em.  
You've got seven months to show a  
twenty-five percent sales increase  
from last year. Got it?

MARK

Got it!

SCOTT

We sure don't want to close you  
down...do we?

MARK

Right!

SCOTT

I'll be checking on you later. Bye.

MARK

Bye.

INT. ENGBRETSSENS' DINING ROOM - DAY

As Madison and Heather watch, a beaming Mark turns his cell  
phone off and puts the device back in his shirt pocket.

MADISON

Dad...are we still going to have to move to Missouri?

MARK

No, Maddy...we won't have to.

Mark hugs Heather and Madison.

MARK (CONT'D)

We're gonna turn our restaurant into a showcase for Molly...and Jasmine and Veronica. We just need to get that stage that interdenominational church on Fort Street's been trying to get rid of.

HEATHER

Honey...how many tables are we gonna have to take out?

EXT. THE FARNAM - DAY

The Farnam is a church-cum-wedding chapel in Omaha's Midtown.

A U-Haul truck, Greg's Nissan, and that 2005 Ford pickup rest alongside the building.

INT. RECEPTION ROOM AT THE FARNAM - DAY

This Fellowship Hall-sized room features large, tall windows.

Greg, Heather, Mark, Isaiah, Jasmine, Matthew, Molly, and Veronica (all in T-shirts and jeans or overalls) surround building coordinator KENT HINELINE (late 30s).

HEATHER

(to Kent)

We called you about the old piano you're trying to get rid of.

A grinning Kent nods.

KENT

Let me get this straight: You're gonna start having live music at the G&R restaurant down the street from here?

MARK

Yep, Kent. That's us.

KENT

Has the food gotten that bad?

Kent, Mark, and Heather talk it over...Veronica, Molly, and Jasmine walk over to inspect the piano.

It's a battered upright from the 1900-09 period. (The fallboard covers the keys.)

The bench is in less-than-ideal shape.

The three teenage pianists open the old upright...and find...most of its white keys lack their keytops.

MOLLY

(backing away from piano)

I'm not putting my hands on those keys! Forget it!

Molly's remark attracts the attention of Greg, Mark, Kent, and Heather.

JASMINE

What happened to ol' fearless Molly?

MOLLY

Don't ask!

VERONICA

Wait a minute...don't you wanna hear how it sounds?

Jasmine nods...Molly stares in space.

Veronica removes the upright's music rack. The rack almost comes apart!

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Where this piano's going, we don't really need a music rack.

(sets music rack down)

And besides...you can't judge a book by its cover.

Veronica goes back to the piano, sits down, and pounds out a classical number that receives the ragtime treatment.

This piano's out of tune, all right...but Veronica's playing perks up everybody else's ears.

Jasmine turns to Molly.

JASMINE

You've gotta admit...it's got that honky-tonky sound.

Molly's nod is slow.

Isaiah, Greg, Mark, Matthew, Jasmine, Heather, Kent, and Molly crowd around the upright as Veronica continues to play.

Once Veronica finishes her classical piece-turned-rag with a bang, she looks up at Kent.

VERONICA

We'll take it!

Kent nods in enthusiasm...Heather, Mark, Jasmine, and a shrugging Molly show their agreement.

MOLLY

Okay, Veronica...but you've gotta make sure you get new white keys for that thing.

VERONICA

Are you kidding?

(pointing at Molly)

Whaddya think gives this old piano its character?

JASMINE

Molly...Veronica's got a point.

MOLLY

Okay, Jasmine. She's got a point. But we're gonna stop at the drug store at Saddle Creek and Davenport and buy out their bandage section.

Molly's crack yields strong laughter from some colleagues.

EXT. VEVERKAS' HOUSE - DAY

This brightly-painted split-level house is one of the many nice abodes on Omaha's southwest side...the Millard section.

Parked in front of the house on this overcast day: The same car and same two trucks as at The Farnam.

INT. VEVERKAS' GARAGE - DAY

A garage big enough for two cars has just one in it...and an ornate 1890s upright piano takes up the remaining space.

Jasmine, Veronica, Molly, Matthew, Isaiah, Greg, Heather, and Mark meet RONALD and ANITA VEVERKA (both 70s).

MARK

(to Ronald and Anita)

I saw your ad online...and you said you were willing to give this piano to a good home...how do you both feel about giving it to a good restaurant?

ANITA

Which one is it, Mr. Engebretsen?

MARK

It's that G&R Mexican Food and Pizza over on Farnam.

Anita and Ronald look puzzled.

HEATHER

Home of Omaha's best fish tacos.

Ronald and Anita nod their approval.

RONALD

Where are you gonna put it?

HEATHER

Don't worry, Ronald. It'll be right up on stage alongside another old upright we found yesterday.

Molly, Veronica, and Jasmine already inspect that 1890s upright...and it brings a big smile to Molly's face.

MOLLY

Feast your eyeballs, you two. Not a yellow key in the bunch.

Jasmine and Veronica nod in approval...Anita, Greg, Heather, Mark, and Ronald move alongside them and Molly.

RONALD

We got this piano from the Crystal Palace Saloon in Ogallala...back in the Seventies.

GREG

(to Ronald)

What happened?

The others watch Molly take a seat at the piano's old-fashioned stool...which she immediately spins around on.

RONALD

Well, Mr. Greenwood, it got worn out...so they replaced it with another old upright.

ANITA

But we got it fixed up so that it sounds like a real saloon piano.

Molly jumps up, wrestles the piano's music rack loose, sets it aside, sits back down, and...

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

Just like on--

...launches into Taylor Swift's "Blank Space."

Molly bangs out a two-bar intro, then adds her own vocals.

MOLLY

*Nice to meet you. Where you been?/I could show you incredible things.*

Ronald and Anita look at each other in surprise while Heather, Isaiah, and Matthew (who flash their own looks of surprise) go over to the piano.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

*Magic, madness, heaven, sin./I saw you there and--*

MATTHEW

Molly, I thought they said it was a saloon piano.

Molly stops playing (and singing). She turns around to look at Matthew.

ISAIAH

(eyeballing Molly)

Yeah. Maybe you better play something Ronald and Anita dig.

Molly turns back around to face the keys...and polishes off "Skip to My Lou."

She gains the full attention of the others in the garage. Heather looks at Mark, who gestures his approval.

MARK

That's our youngest daughter: Some kind of versatile, isn't she?

Several heads nod.

EXT. DOUGLAS COUNTY LANDFILL, BENNINGTON, NE - DAY

BRENT YEUTTER (40s; his last name rhymes with "cider") uses a backhoe or a crane to lift a 1910-19 orchestral (five-pedal) upright piano off the ground...when Isaiah, Veronica, Heather, Greg, Molly, Matthew, Jasmine, and Mark sprint, arms wildly waving, into the area.

The eight of 'em wear the grubbiest of clothes as they seek to gesture Brent out of giving this piano a funeral.

GREG

(wildly gestures at Brent)

STOP!

Brent turns the crane's (or backhoe's) ignition off. He climbs out of the vehicle and runs to meet the five youngsters and three adults.

BRENT

(pointing at Greg)

You called about coming over here to get an old piano.

Greg looks excited.

GREG

Yeah...and we're gonna stick it in a restaurant!

Greg, Heather, and Mark shake their heads "yes." Brent looks dumbfounded.

BRENT

It's gonna be where people are trying to eat?

HEATHER

Yep! We're taking it to our G&R restaurant on Farnam.

Jasmine, Molly, Veronica, Isaiah, and Matthew walk over to the crane/backhoe...to lift the old upright off the device.

An incredulous Brent runs over to the five youngsters.

BRENT

What are you kids doing?

VERONICA

It's all good. All of us lift weights.

Brent gives Isaiah, Jasmine, Matthew, Molly, and Veronica a helping hand (if needed, Mark and Heather help out, too). They place the piano back on solid ground.

JASMINE

(waving at Brent)

Thanks!

Jasmine eyeballs a nervous Greg.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

Dad...we're all right.

A smiling Greg nods...Jasmine pulls the instrument's music rack out, then sets the rack off to the side.

Jasmine, now erect, wallops out "St. Louis Blues" while Molly, Isaiah, Veronica, and Matthew look on...and Greg moves over to join them.

Brent, Heather, and Mark team up to find something Jasmine can sit on while she continues to play an upright that's Jack Nicholson-"Five Easy Pieces" out of tune.

Jasmine finishes the song's slow, melancholy nine-bar intro when she turns to her audience.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

Now this is the way Grandma Waters played "St. Louis Blues."

Jasmine turns the W.C. Handy anthem into an uptempo romp.

Several bars into "St. Louis Blues'" transformation, Heather finds an aluminum keg...and sets the keg behind Jasmine.

HEATHER

Here, Jasmine! Have a seat!

As she continues to tickle the keys, Jasmine sits on the keg.

Greg, Isaiah, and Matthew dance to Jasmine's music.

Brent walks over to the piano, then turns to Jasmine.

BRENT

Try the pedal on the far left.

Jasmine pushes the far-left pedal...and finds a weak dulcimer-like sound.

VERONICA

(to Brent)

Don't worry! We'll get it fixed!

Jasmine's cohorts tap their feet to the beat or keep dancing.

Everybody's festive!

EXT. G&R MEXICAN FOOD AND PIZZA MIDTOWN, OMAHA, NE - DAY

Greg, Jasmine, Isaiah, Matthew, Veronica, Mark, Heather, and Molly occupy the parking lot of a car dealership repurposed as a restaurant (the garage doors give the game away).

The three grown-ups and five youngsters spray cans of air freshener at the five-pedal upright, whose music rack is still off.

Molly shakes her can of air freshener. When she finds the can is empty, she sets it aside.

MOLLY

That's it, you guys. That's the twentieth and final can of air freshener we brought with us...now let's go find a pig and put some lipstick on it!

VERONICA

(wags a finger at Molly)

Did Jasmine and I make fun of the piano you tried out?

A sheepish Molly shakes her head "no," then prepares to help her seven colleagues move the upright into the eatery.

INT. G&R MIDTOWN DINING ROOM #1 - DAY

Veronica, Molly, Mark, Matthew, Jasmine, Isaiah, Heather, and Greg (each in cleaner, nicer clothes) sit at back-to-back tables in this bright space awash in green, orange, and red.

Some booths line one side, but tables dominate the room.

Veronica's two brothers, WARREN KWAN (17, a thinker) and PETER SHIN (13, a quipster), join the eight of them.

ISAIAH

(to whoever's next to him)  
Mom would've been cool with this. I  
know Grandma Waters would've been.

(to Peter and Warren)  
How come your mom couldn't make it  
here?

WARREN

Well, Isaiah, she said something  
about having to do a psychology  
seminar at UNO today.

PETER

Yeah. Every time one of us wants to  
try something new in life...that's  
when Mom's got a psychology seminar  
at UNO.

NOT TOO MANY OTHER CUSTOMERS chow down; they're scattered all  
around the dining room.

CAROL SKANES (70s, Black, sassy; the restaurant's assistant  
manager) and BARBARA CANIGLIA (30s, White, kooky; a server)  
run toward Dining Room #1...and spot Mark and Heather.

Carol's and Barbara's shirts feature name tags.

G&R Midtown now has a stage at the front end of Dining Room  
#1, all right; the stage sports, from left to right, the  
battered upright from The Farnam, the 1890s saloon upright,  
and the five-pedal upright saved from demolition.

Each piano's music rack has been removed...and a microphone  
and its stand rest next to each piano.

CAROL

Hey, Mark and Heather, what's with  
all the pianos up there? You gonna  
sell 'em?

Carol watches Heather and Mark break out their own name tags  
to stick them on.

Barbara chuckles.

MARK

Heather, I think it's time we told  
everybody.

BARBARA

Told everybody what?

Heather, Molly, Mark, Veronica, and Jasmine jump up from the tables and go to the stage to face the other eaters. Veronica, Molly, and Jasmine grab mikes, then tap on them to make sure they're on.

They're not.

Peter and Warren sprint to the back of the room, where they find a small sound system. Warren and Peter make adjustments until all three mikes come on.

Jasmine eyeballs Molly, who gestures her parents into flanking her.

Molly points her mike toward Mark.

MARK

Folks, starting next Saturday, we're gonna have a new policy here at G&R Midtown.

(to Heather)

Honey...I mean Heather...why don't you tell the folks about it?

Molly points her mike toward Heather.

HEATHER

Next Saturday night, at seven o'clock Central daylight time...we're gonna start having...live entertainment!

Some of the eaters groan.

As Heather explains, Sean and Madison stroll into the room...and look toward the stage in shock.

JASMINE

(into her mike)

Mrs. Engebretsen...I mean Heather...Heather's right...Molly and Veronica and I have been rehearsing for almost three weeks now, and...we've formed a band.

Madison and Sean sit at one of the many empty tables.

VERONICA

(into her own mike)

Ladies and gentlemen, Jasmine and Molly and I are a ragtime band. That's why these three old pianos are up here behind us.

MOLLY  
(into her mike)  
Folks, we're gonna be playing for  
you starting next Saturday  
night...so tell all your friends!

Warren and Peter run back to rejoin Greg, Matthew, and Isaiah  
at the back-to-back tables.

PETER  
Ragtime? What's that?

GREG  
Well, that's the music that was  
popular over a hundred years ago.

Peter looks confused.

WARREN  
Peter, it was the hip-hop of over a  
hundred years ago.

Matthew turns to Isaiah.

MATTHEW  
I guess that makes it older than  
old school.

ISAIAH  
You're right, Matthew. In fact,  
that's really old school.

Mark and Heather leave the stage to go do their real job.

Veronica, Molly, and Jasmine turn to each other.

JASMINE  
You know what? Isaiah just gave us  
our name.

Jasmine, Molly, and Veronica saunter back to the mike stands  
to put the microphones back in place, then stroll off the  
stage to return to the back-to-back tables.

Along the way:

MOLLY  
Huh?

JASMINE  
You can't get more old school than  
ragtime.

Molly and Veronica nod.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

After all, all the forms of American popular music that came along during the Twentieth Century, from jazz to hip-hop, owe something to ragtime.

The three pianists take seats at the tables, where Veronica fishes a piece of paper from her pants pocket.

VERONICA

I'll be right back.  
(getting up)  
I'm gonna throw my list of band names away.

Jasmine and Molly watch Veronica head for a wastebasket.

INT. CLASSROOM AT BENSON HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

BRENDA LINGENFELTER (late 60s, cheery) wraps up her American Studies class...Jasmine, Molly, and EIGHTEEN OTHER STUDENTS.

BRENDA

Now...somebody tell me one of the biggest things the Great Migration did.

Several hands go up...and, after a second, Brenda points to JAJUAN GRANT (16, Black, and almost NFL-sized).

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Jajuan?

JAJUAN

Well, it helped turn America into a predominantly urban country.

As Jajuan gives his answer, the bell RINGS. Most of the students walk or run out of the classroom.

BRENDA

Right!  
(watching students leave)  
See you next time! We're having a pop quiz!

Molly and Jasmine (books, laptops, and all) move to the front of the room. As other students leave, Veronica sneaks in.

Jasmine takes out her laptop and hooks it up to a projector so that the computer's images will show up on a white screen.

JASMINE

I hope it's all right, Mrs.  
Lingenfelter.

BRENDA

Aw, what the heck...just as long as  
you're not showing pornos.

Veronica, Jasmine, Molly, and Brenda take seats at the front of the classroom, where, after some mouse clicks on the laptop, the foursome watch...VIDEOS of ragtime pianists.

Jasmine turns to Molly and Veronica as the first video PLAYS.

JASMINE

Now...you see how Jo Ann kept the  
beat with her feet?

Veronica, Molly, and Brenda nod...and Brenda's eyes light up.

BRENDA

Yeah, when I was little, I used to  
watch "The Lawrence Welk Show"  
every Saturday night. I got a kick  
out of Jo Ann Castle.

The three teens turn around and look at Brenda in surprise.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

And that tap dancer they had on  
there...Arthur Duncan was the bomb!

Jasmine's and Veronica's eyes light up.

INT. G&R MIDTOWN DINING ROOM #1 - NIGHT

The dining room is half full, dominated by CUSTOMERS in casual clothes.

Greg, Isaiah, Matthew, Madison, Sean, Peter, Warren, and MARGUERITE SHIN (late 40s, smothering; she's Warren's, Veronica's, and Peter's mom) chow down here, too.

The eight occupy back-to-back tables in front of the stage.

Marguerite looks nervous.

GREG

Don't worry, Marguerite. Our kids and Molly are gonna do...well, they're gonna work it.

MARGUERITE

Greg...I'll stop worrying when you stop worrying, too.

Greg's legs bounce!

Jason and Rahim find seats in the middle of the dining room; fellow Benson swing choir members LILY BAUGHMAN (17) and KAITLYN WINTERBOTTOM (16) join them...and all four of 'em AD LIB chit chat.

Ronald and Anita come into the dining room and sit at one of the booths...then spot Jasmine, Molly, and Veronica each seated at an empty table. (Veronica wears a T-shirt that reads: "PLAY, BALLERINA, PLAY!")

Heather and Mark run to the stage, where the three old uprights (hammers still exposed) and the three microphones on stands remain in place.

Mark and an equally-excited Heather each grab a mike, then look at the crowd.

MARK

Hey, folks...did you ever think you'd walk inside a G&R restaurant, sit down and eat, and...get treated to some live entertainment?

While those eating give Mark their AD LIBBED answers, Mary Kate, Patrick, Brittanie, and Derek walk into the dining room...with Brenda and Paulette not too far behind. (They all find seats someplace.)

HEATHER

Well, everybody, that's what we've got for you this evening...ladies and gentlemen, this is their first time performing together for anyone, so let's hear you show your love for...Really Old School!

The audience cheers...Really Old School's three members run to the stage. Heather and Mark put the mikes back in place and run off the stage.

Veronica gets seated at the battered upright, Molly sits down at the saloon upright, and Jasmine takes a seat at the five-pedal upright.

They look at each other, then launch into the seven introductory bars of Zez Confrey's "Kitten on the Keys."

Jasmine takes the next sixteen bars (the first strain of this 1921 ragtime classic) before nodding Molly and Veronica into joining her in repeating the first strain.

Jason, Kaitlyn, Lily, and Rahim look confused...and Paulette and Brenda watch the three pianists with real enthusiasm.

Molly's got the next strain...another sixteen-bar passage. When her solo ends, Molly gestures Veronica and Jasmine into teaming up with her for a repeat of Strain Number Two.

Patrick's and Mary Kate's faces show "huh?" looks.

Molly, Jasmine, and Veronica go back to the seven introductory bars of "Kitten on the Keys;" they follow it up by going back to the first strain.

Anita, Ronald, Derek, and Brittanie look impressed.

The three ragtimers reach "Kitten's" trio...where Jasmine takes a bar, Molly plays the next bar, Veronica the trio's third bar, and the three musicians pound out the trio's fourth bar together.

They playfully eyeball each other for a few seconds.

Veronica shrugs to the crowd before expertly delivering the number's third strain, "Kitten's" thirty-two-bar payoff.

Warren and Peter go wild...Isaiah, Madison, Matthew, and Sean show their enthusiasm as well.

Brent and Kent walk inside the eatery.

Veronica nods Jasmine and Molly into reprising the rag's third strain with her.

Really Old School ends the tune with a bang...and earns some good applause.

When it dies down, Kaitlyn shouts toward the stage.

KAITLYN

Hey, Molly and Jasmine...why don't  
you sing?

RAHIM

Yeah! You're in the swing choir  
alongside us!

JASON

C'mon! Get it on up there!

LILY

Yeah! Show your real stuff!

Several other eaters AD LIB their agreement with Lily, Rahim, Jason, and Kaitlyn...so Jasmine, Molly, and Veronica rise up to form a huddle.

LATER

Jasmine now plays the battered upright, Veronica plays the five-pedal upright, and Molly still tickles the saloon upright's keys.

But now, the three teenage pianists sing, too. They bring "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" down the home stretch:

JASMINE, MOLLY, VERONICA

*Let me call you "Sweetheart."/I'm  
in love with you./Let me hear you  
whisper/That you love me, too./Keep  
the lovelight glowing/In your eyes  
so true.*

The eaters also find out that Veronica sings in a deep, basslike voice.

Result: Jason, Kaitlyn, Lily, and Rahim look confused.

JASMINE, MOLLY, VERONICA (CONT'D)

*Let me call you "Sweetheart."/I'm  
in love with you.*

Veronica, Molly, and Jasmine, still banging the keys, add thirty-two bars of wordless vocalizing.

At the very end, Molly points to Veronica.

VERONICA

*(in deepest singing voice)  
I'm in love with you.*

Molly's, Veronica's, and Jasmine's siblings and parents (as well as Brenda, Anita, Paulette, and Ronald) applaud.

Everybody else in the place looks stunned.

And Heather looks ticked off.

HEATHER

Come on, you guys! Don't you remember what three-part harmony sounds like?

Now everybody applauds! But when it dies down, Derek shouts toward Really Old School's three members.

DEREK

Play "Smoke on the Water!"

INT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL VOCAL MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Paulette watches Jasmine, Veronica, and Molly wheel in a studio piano and place it next to the electronic keyboard.

Swing choir rehearsal gives way to Really Old School rehearsal as some singers leave the room.

PAULETTE

I really like what you're doing at the restaurant.

VERONICA

Thanks, Ms. Rodgers...but just in case, maybe we should learn "Smoke on the Water."

Veronica gains three suspicious looks.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Who knows? It might get the crowd on our side.

PAULETTE

Speaking of crowd...how do you three feel about doing "Bunny Tracks" this coming April?

Molly and Veronica nod.

MOLLY

Veronica...you did say you were gonna do "Bunny Tracks."

VERONICA

Yeah. I think I can make two acts work.

PAULETTE

Jasmine, what do you think?

JASMINE

Well, Ms. Rodgers...Veronica and Molly and I wanted to talk to you about that...maybe we'd better sit down for this.

Paulette and the teens take seats wherever possible.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

We're planning on doing a lot of more challenging stuff in our ragtime band, and Molly and Veronica and I wanted to get our act on firmer ground.

Molly and Veronica nod in agreement with Jasmine.

VERONICA

And to think they're even paying us to play at that restaurant!

MOLLY

And so, because of all of that...well, Jasmine and I have decided to drop out of swing choir.

Paulette looks shaken.

As Veronica looks on, Jasmine and Molly offer to hold Paulette's hands...to no avail.

PAULETTE

You realize that leaves the swing choir with eight girls to go along with ten boys...don't you?

VERONICA

(to Paulette)

Well, I've heard the two extra boys have a thing going on.

Paulette, Molly, and Jasmine rise and, at last, hold each other's hands.

PAULETTE

Jasmine...we're gonna miss your sweet, sweet voice.

Jasmine slowly nods.

PAULETTE (CONT'D)

One of the sweetest voices I've ever heard...Molly, you've got one of the most powerful voices we've ever had in the swing choir.

MOLLY

Even if I'm not that good a dancer.

JASMINE

Ms. Rodgers, we'll be glad to bring our ragtime act to the talent show. And we'll make you proud.

MOLLY

Doubly proud.

VERONICA

How about triply proud?

With good, honest laughter, Molly, Paulette, Jasmine, and Veronica embrace each other.

PAULETTE

Good luck, you three.

The three ragtimers and the school's swing choir director strengthen their hug.

EXT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The school's MARCHING BAND (members in their regular clothes) rehearses in the middle of the field on a nippy morning.

Off to the near sideline: BENSON'S CHEERLEADING SQUAD...which consists of Molly and eight other girls in their regular clothes. They finish up an AD LIBBED chant.

When she looks satisfied with the chant, KEILANI FREEMAN (17, Black, no-nonsense) gestures the other cheerleaders to relax.

KEILANI

All right! Save that to a flash drive!

Keilani zeroes in on Molly.

KEILANI (CONT'D)

You think you're something special, don't you?

MOLLY

Keilani...I thought we all were.

KEILANI

I heard you and that Jasmine  
Greenwood left the swing choir  
'cause y'all wanted to concentrate  
on that ragtime band of yours.

Another cheerleader, EMMA KARASEK (18, stuck-up; attractive),  
strides over to Keilani and Molly.

EMMA

Yeah! Nobody wants to hear that  
stuff.

(wags a finger at Molly)  
You made a bad trade.

KEILANI

And another thing, Engebretsen: You  
broke Ms. Rodgers' heart.

All the other cheerleaders encircle Molly.

MOLLY

Now wait just a damn minute--

KEILANI

You did everything but call  
Michelle Obama fat!

As Molly and Keilani come almost face to face, fellow  
cheerleader SMITH FORBES "FORBESY" RICKETTS (16; an  
incredibly cute girl) moves in between them.

FORBESY

Now wait just a minute, you two!

EMMA

Stay outa this, Forbesy!  
(zeroing in on Molly)  
You gonna quit the cheerleading  
squad, too?

MOLLY

Does Donald Trump have purple hair?

Several cheerleaders crack up in laughter. One of those  
laughing, ADRIENNE ACEVEDO (18), walks over to Molly.

ADRIENNE

Good one, Moll!

Molly and Adrienne exchange high fives as five of the  
remaining seven cheerleaders laugh (Emma and Keilani don't  
look amused).

INT. FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY AT BENSON HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The school day ends...Veronica, Molly, and Jasmine stand outside the vocal music room as they attempt to get in to rehearse their ragtime act.

Jasmine tries the door...only to find it's locked.

Patrick and Mary Kate come down the hallway; they watch Jasmine try to open the still-locked door.

The three young ragtimers walk away when Mary Kate addresses them...stopping Jasmine, Veronica, and Molly in their tracks.

MARY KATE

That's what you get for leaving our swing choir!

VERONICA

Hey, Mary Kate, I didn't leave anything!

PATRICK

(to Really Old School)  
Because of you three, I saw something I thought I'd never see in my life.

MARY KATE

Patrick...tell 'em what you saw.

PATRICK

This afternoon, while we were rehearsing songs from "Grease," the two extra boys in our swing choir sang "You're the One That I Want." To each other!

The Two O'Callaghans and Really Old School go down the hallway in opposite directions.

JASMINE

(to Veronica)

It's just like Chris Matthews said one time on "Hardball:" Nebraska's the ultimate Republican state.

VERONICA

Tell me about it.

Molly goes into her notebook or backpack for her cell phone.

Jasmine and Veronica watch Molly punch in a phone number.

MOLLY  
 (into phone)  
 Hi, I'm Molly Engebretsen...one of  
 Mark's and Heather's kids...I was  
 just wondering if it was okay to  
 come over and get some practice in  
 on the piano downstairs.

Veronica and Jasmine look at each other in confusion while Molly's phone conversation continues...and the threesome continue down the hallway.

EXT. BENSON LUTHERAN CHURCH - DAY

Across the street from an early-Twentieth-Century dark-brown brick building, the 2005 Ford pickup truck pulls into the church's smallish parking lot.

Molly (the driver), Veronica, and Jasmine jump out and head toward the church.

MOLLY  
 As long as there's a place with  
 three old pianos, we'll be fine.

Jasmine, Veronica, and Molly look jubilant.

INT. BENSON LUTHERAN CHURCH SOCIAL HALL - DAY

This multipurpose warhorse in the church's basement features an unusual floor...in a few places, dark tiles are arranged to form crosses. The walls are paneled (but not completely).

Some folding tables remain erect in the back of the room, and folding chairs ring the tables.

A room originally with one 1890s-1920s upright piano now has three: Building engineer SAM TATE (70s, Black) helps Jasmine and Molly roll one old piano into the front of the room.

Sam returns to help Veronica and lead pastor JESSICA STINCHCOMB (60s; South Carolina twang) roll (okay, push) the third old upright into place, next to the other two.

SAM  
 Jessica, when you first became a  
 pastor, did you ever think you'd  
 end up being a piano mover, too?

JESSICA

Wail, Sam...not really.  
 (leaning on piano)  
 But when the first church Ah ever  
 preached at got a new water heater,  
 Ah had to help haul out the old  
 one.

JASMINE

Whaddya say we all catch our  
 breaths?

Jasmine, Jessica, Molly, Sam, and Veronica slither into seats  
 on the three piano benches.

MOLLY

(eyeballing Jessica)  
 Pastor, thanks so much for letting  
 us come in and rehearse.  
 (flips piano lid)  
 How can we repay you and Sam?

JESSICA

Wail, Molly, next time Ah'm at that  
 restaurant you and Jasmine and  
 Veronica play at...you can play  
 "Solace."

Jasmine opens the piano at which she's seated.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

That's mah all-time favorite piece  
 from "The Sting."

Veronica opens the piano; Jasmine digs in her notebook (or  
 backpack) and produces three copies of sheet music...all  
 copies of "Solace."

Veronica looks as if she's struck oil: The piano she's about  
 to play features several white keys that lack their tops.

She claps with delight...and draws three bewildered looks.

Jasmine, who doesn't look bewildered, hands a "Solace" copy  
 to Veronica and a copy to Molly.

Veronica looks at Sam and Jessica.

VERONICA

Now you know I love me some broken  
 keytops.

As Molly and Jasmine nod, they and Veronica launch "Solace."

INT. CLASSROOM AT BENSON HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Just before homeroom, Lupe, Janae, and Anya warm up in their leotards. After a few seconds, Veronica (still in her school clothes) comes into the room...a small cooler in her grasp.

Anya stops rehearsing and strides over to Veronica, who sets the cooler on a desk.

ANYA

Veronica Kwan, why aren't you dressed? You know, you've been slacking off lately, and--

VERONICA

That's what I wanted to talk about.

ANYA

Another thing: We don't coast! So--

Veronica gestures Janae and Lupe into joining her and Anya.

VERONICA

Let's all sit down.

All four girls do just that.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Anya...Janae...Lupe...I've been thinking it over this last week.

LUPE

Uh oh.

VERONICA

I've been having more fun playing piano than I've ever had as a ballerina. Much more fun.

Veronica goes into the cooler and takes out three twenty-ounce bottles of pop/bottled water/thirst quencher. She hands a bottle each to Lupe and Janae.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

And Anya's right. I don't want to be the weak link in this outfit anymore.

Anya nods in enthusiasm.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

So...I'm quitting the Four Ballerinas.

Veronica draws surprised looks from Janae and Lupe, who open their bottles.

Anya does a slow burn.

ANYA

We moved our rehearsal time for you! Is this how you pay us back?

Veronica opens her own bottle.

JANAE

You sure you really wanna do this, Veronica?

(takes a swig)

I mean, you're our best dancer.

Anya shoots Janae a dirty look.

JANAE (CONT'D)

After Anya.

ANYA

And where's my drink?

Veronica goes to the cooler and pulls out the remaining bottle. She hands it to Anya, who discovers it's green tea.

ANYA (CONT'D)

How come I got green tea and everybody else didn't? HUH?

VERONICA

Well, when Mom and I feel uptight, we both go brew us some green tea.

A reluctant Anya opens her bottle and drinks from it.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Something else I need to tell you.

LUPE

Uh oh.

VERONICA

After we had the worst rehearsal in ballet history, I saw Anya talking with some friends by her locker.

(pointing to Janae)

And she called you the "N" word.

(pointing to Lupe)

On top of that...she said you oughta be deported back to Mexico.

Janae sits frozen...Lupe rises and stares Anya down.

LUPE

Now see here, Anya Ludmilla  
Petrovic: I was born and raised  
right here in Omaha! Nebraska!  
United States of America! JUST LIKE  
YOU!

As Lupe continues her rant, Veronica and Janae (drinks, cooler, and all) leave the room.

EXT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

The stands teem with FOOTBALL FANS of all ages...fans who watch a football game between THE TEAMS from Omaha Benson and Omaha Bryan.

It's a night for light-to-medium jackets...although some younger fans look comfortable in T-shirts.

Benson's Bunnies (black helmets, green jerseys, white numerals, black pants) find it tough against the visiting Bears from Bryan (gold helmets, white jerseys, green numerals with gold trim, gold pants).

The Bunnies have the ball right now...and no matter how hard Benson's cheerleaders (with Adrienne, Emma, Forbesy, Keilani, and Molly right there in the middle) work to pump up the crowd, the team continues to march backwards.

Led by quarterback MIKE PARKER (17, Black), offensive tackle Jajuan Grant, and running back Isaiah Greenwood, the Benson offense forms a huddle.

ISAIAH

Where's the blocking, you guys? I mean, we don't need to quit now!

JAJUAN

Yeah. We need you receivers blocking, too.

Wideouts BRANDON CHU (16) and DEVONTE HUGHES (18) point at each other, then at Isaiah.

BRANDON

Look who's talking!

DEVONTE

Yeah, Isaiah. Your sister quit swing choir, remember?

Some of the other players in the huddle crack up.

MIKE

We've gotta get serious...throwing  
the bomb. On "Go."

As the Bunnies break the huddle, Greg, Jasmine, and Matthew watch from the stands. NEAL WALLENTINE (17, sensitive) and MARY JO PROCHASKA (17, cool as a cucumber), both of whom brandish a box of popcorn and a bottle of pop each, join 'em.

JASMINE

Hi, Mary Jo. Hi, Neal.

MARY JO

Hi, Jasmine.

Mary Jo and Neal take seats.

NEAL

Anything happen since we left?

MATTHEW

Nah. We're still getting our clocks  
cleaned.

Mike uncorks a long pass...and Isaiah's the main target.

Excitement fills the air for Benson fans.

MARY JO

(to Jasmine)

Now that you're playing every  
Saturday night at the G&R on  
Farnam...Neal and I are gonna start  
eating there.

Greg jumps up and down...because Isaiah makes the catch and heads toward Bryan's end zone.

GREG

Come on, Isaiah!

Matthew, Jasmine, Mary Jo, and Neal jump up and down,  
too...but the two 17-year-olds spill popcorn.

The crowd cheers itself hoarse when Isaiah crosses the enemy goal line to put the Bunnies on the scoreboard.

The celebration is short-lived...because a penalty marker lands on the field.

Benson's guilty of holding.

EXT. GREENWOODS' HOUSE - DAY

It's Thanksgiving Day...and cold grips Omaha.

A 2016 Hyundai and a U-Haul truck rest on the street along with Greg's Nissan.

INT. GREENWOODS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jasmine, Isaiah, Matthew, and Ami sit, snack, and watch the FOOTBALL GAME on the Greenwoods' big-screen TV.

The Dallas Cowboys host it...and struggle to move the ball against the New York Giants.

Greg, Janet, and Will come out of the kitchen and into the living room.

GREG

You kids save those snacks for when Mike and Cris and Melissa come on tonight.

MATTHEW

Okay, Dad.

Matthew, Isaiah, and Jasmine push the snack bowls away while Ami shrugs.

GREG

We're gonna be eating dinner in about an hour.

The Greenwoods and the Hills watch as Dallas rallies to move the ball on the SCREEN.

JASMINE

(to Isaiah)

You see how Dak Prescott was able to get the ball in a spot where only CeeDee Lamb could catch it?

ISAIAH

Yeah. I've got it.

Halftime comes...Will turns to Janet and Greg.

WILL

You two wanna go out to the truck with me?

Janet nods with a grin...Greg flashes that puzzled look.

Greg, Will, and Janet head outside...and Ami turns to Isaiah, Jasmine, and Matthew.

AMI  
We better get in the kitchen. We  
don't want this good food to burn.

Matthew, Jasmine, Isaiah, and Ami go to the kitchen.

EXT. GREENWOODS' HOUSE - U-HAUL TRUCK - DAY

Janet, Greg, and Will meet at the U-Haul truck.

GREG  
Will...is this bigger than Grandma  
Waters's old trunk?

WILL  
Yes it is, Greg.

JANET  
And a whole lot of fun!

Janet opens the truck from the back.

A painted upright piano from the 1900-1919 period takes up most of the truck's trailer space.

Greg looks fit to be tied.

GREG  
Where do you two expect this thing  
to go?

JANET  
Don't worry, Greg. There's plenty  
of room for it.

INT. GREENWOODS' BASEMENT - DAY

Old-fashioned piano stool in hands, Janet directs traffic while Greg and Will oh-so-carefully move the old piano downstairs...and into the middle of the room.

Will and Greg recline on the instrument as Janet gets seated on its stool.

Isaiah and Jasmine run down the stairs and into the basement.

ISAIAH  
(to the three adults)  
Are you gonna be all right?

JASMINE  
Dad...Uncle Will...Aunt Janet...can  
we get you anything?

WILL  
Well, Jasmine, how about a tune?

Jasmine looks surprised.

GREG  
Your Aunt Janet and Uncle Will  
found this old piano for you.

Will and Greg move away from the piano as Janet gets off the old-fashioned stool to wheel it next to the piano.

JANET  
Yeah. Your dad said that now that  
you're playing ragtime, you can't  
do too much on your electronic  
keyboard--

WILL  
So we got you this.

Jasmine sits at the piano, jumps up to remove the music rack, sets it aside, sits down again, and plays some arpeggios.

She looks delighted.

JASMINE  
Thanks a bunch!

Isaiah, Janet, Will, and Greg move toward Jasmine, who plays at a faster pace.

Jasmine looks up, sees her audience, and hugs its members.

INT. G&R MIDTOWN DINING ROOM #1 - NIGHT

Two-thirds of the seats teem with CUSTOMERS; they eat while they watch Really Old School jam.

Greg, Marguerite, Matthew, Isaiah, Warren, Peter, Madison, and Sean sit at the tables closest to the stage...and they tap their feet to the rhythm.

Veronica plays the battered upright, Molly tums the saloon upright's keys, and Jasmine plays the five-pedal upright. Together, they knock out (in waltz time) the eight introductory bars of "I'm Sorry I Made You Cry."

The three young pianists vamp, with Veronica handling the next two bars, Molly joining her for two more bars, and Jasmine (with her arpeggios) making it a threesome for the next two bars.

As the threesome still play, Veronica adds vocals (in that basslike voice of hers):

VERONICA

*Dear little boy, have I made you  
sad?/Your lips are trembling  
so./Those bitter tears will drive  
me mad./Jealous of me, I know.*

Lupe and Janae, splitting a pizza, look pleasantly surprised.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

*Do you believe there's another  
boy?/Do you believe me  
untrue?/Though I've been wandering  
in life's big old spree,/You've  
called me back to you.*

In pride, Mark and Heather look up from what they're doing.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

*I'm sorry, dear, so sorry,  
dear./I'm sorry I made you  
cry./Won't you forget, won't you  
forgive?/Don't let us say  
goodbye./One little word, one  
little smile,/One little kiss.  
Won't you try?*

Peter and Warren do a high five...a real shock to Marguerite.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

*It breaks my heart to hear you  
sigh./I'm sorry I made you cry.*

In one of the booths, Neal sobs...into his own glass of pop.

MARY JO

*(pushes Neal's glass away)  
You're crying in your pop.*

NEAL

*(still weeping)  
Well, I'm too young to cry in my  
beer!*

Veronica, Molly, and Jasmine vamp their way into the second verse...two bars at a time, just like at the beginning.

VERONICA

*Roses enrapture my thoughts with  
love./Boy, you're in every  
rose,/And like the golden sun  
above,/Your smile with heaven  
glows.*

At another booth, it's Brenda and Paulette; the latter tries her best to pay attention...between bites of fish tacos.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

*My soul is thrilled when the  
songbirds sing.*

Jasmine and Molly now try (and fail) to whistle.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

*I hear your voice calling me.*

JASMINE, MOLLY

*(singing backup instead)  
Calling me!*

VERONICA

*Come on, let's woo like the birds  
in spring./Oh, listen to my plea!*

JASMINE, MOLLY

*To my plea!*

Anita and Ronald sit at one of the dining room's back tables...and dig "I'm Sorry I Made You Cry," ROS style.

VERONICA

*I'm sorry, dear--*

JASMINE, MOLLY

*Sorry, dear!*

VERONICA

*So sorry, dear.*

JASMINE, MOLLY

*Sorry, dear!*

VERONICA

*I'm sorry I made you cry./Won't you  
forget, won't you forgive?/Don't  
let us say goodbye.*

JASMINE, MOLLY

*No goodbyes!*

VERONICA

*One little word, one little smile, / One little kiss. Won't you try?*

JASMINE, MOLLY

*Won't you try?*

VERONICA

*It breaks my heart to hear you sigh. / I'm sorry I made you cry.*

Neal (he's no longer in tears) and Mary Jo embrace while Molly, Jasmine, and Veronica do their piano vamping.

Barbara comes to the booth and eyeballs the two lovers.

BARBARA

You two gonna be all right?

Mary Jo and Neal use their free hands to give Barbara a "thumbs up" apiece.

EXT. LIBERTY FIRST CREDIT UNION ARENA, RALSTON, NE - DAY

Bundled-up PEOPLE hurry into this modern sports-and-entertainment complex...whose parking lot teems with cars.

INT. LFCU ARENA - BASKETBALL FLOOR - DAY

This suburban venue hosts the annual Omaha Metro Conference Holiday Basketball Tournament, where all the league's boys' teams and girls' teams mix it up.

This first-round game (a sizable CROWD watches it in this small arena) pits the girls' basketball TEAMS from Omaha Benson (white unis with green numbers and trim) and Omaha Millard North (silver unis, blue-and-white numbers and trim).

It's late in the fourth quarter as Millard North's Mustangs lead the Bunnies by five points.

The Mustangs' point guard, LEXI CUNNINGHAM (18), sets out to keep the ball away from her Benson counterpart, SHAWNTELLE CLARK (18).

As the clock winds down, Shawntelle pokes at the ball...but nicks Lexi's dribbling hand. THE REFEREE calls a foul.

It's Shawntelle's fifth and last foul...she heads for the Bunnies' bench. As a glum Shawntelle leaves the basketball court, she turns to her team's two head coaches: JEFF LINTON (40s, Black) and MARTHA ARKFELD (30s, White).

SHAWNTELLE  
I didn't foul her!

Jeff nods at Shawntelle, who sits down.

Martha looks at the bench, where Benson's only two non-Black players sit next to each other: Point guard ANA ALICIA "ANNIE" PICASSO (14, bespectacled, mentally tough, fun to be with) and center CANDACE PAVELKA (15).

MARTHA  
Picasso...you're our last hope at  
the point.

Annie stands up and readies herself to enter the game.

Jeff approaches Annie as she prepares to leave the bench.

JEFF  
Annie, help paint us a win.

Candace stands up, too, to pat Annie on the back...then sits down again.

ANNIE  
Got it!

LATER

Lexi, shooting one-and-one, misses the first free throw...and Benson's starting center, NATASCHA OLELE (17), rebounds.

Natascha fires the ball to Annie, who dribbles, pulls up, and shoots a three-pointer.

Swish! Benson now trails by two.

Annie moves back quickly to cover Lexi, who tries to inbound the basketball.

Instead of calling a timeout, Lexi throws a wild pass...that the Bunnies' shooting guard, AYELE OLATUNJI (16), intercepts.

Ayele (rhymes with "Hayley") can't find the shot, so she passes the ball to Annie, who's behind the three-point line.

With the fourth quarter about to end, Annie lets it fly...and gives Benson a one-point win (and sets off jubilation from the team and its fans).

INT. LFCU ARENA - BASKETBALL FLOOR - DAY

Benson (now in its black uniforms with green-and-white numbers and trim) takes on THE TEAM from Omaha South (white uniforms with red-and-black numerals and trim)...and needs some more last-minute heroics.

ONE OF SOUTH'S FORWARDS goes up for a layup to put the game out of reach...but Natascha cleanly blocks the shot.

Shawntelle grabs the rebound, passes to Annie, who throws the ball to Ayele, who drives past SOUTH'S CENTER, flips the ball toward the basket...and the Bunnies beat the Packers.

INT. LFCU ARENA - BASKETBALL FLOOR - DAY

It's late in the fourth quarter of a tourney semifinal...and the Bunnies wear their black unis. Their opponent: THE TEAM from Bellevue West (in the white uniforms with purple-and-gold numbers and trim).

Annie draws a foul on a three-point try.

She drains all three of her charity-stripe tosses.

INT. LFCU ARENA - BASKETBALL FLOOR - NIGHT

With A CAPACITY CROWD watching, Benson (still in black) takes on THE TEAM from Omaha Westside (white uniforms, black-and-red numbers and trim).

It's late in the fourth quarter and...you guessed it...Benson's in trouble.

Shawntelle inbounds it with time running out; she throws the basketball as far as she can.

A wild scramble for the ball ensues...Annie emerges with it.

Annie heaves a wild one from about the middle of the court.

The ball finds...nothing but...net!

Jeff, Martha, THEIR ASSISTANT COACHES, Benson cheerleaders (led by Molly, Emma, and Keilani), and the Bunnies' reserves storm the court, where they join the team's remaining players...while the Warriors trudge off.

INT. G&R MIDTOWN DINING ROOM #1 - NIGHT

The place is about three-fourths full of CUSTOMERS on this chilly January night; they watch (and enjoy) Really Old School deliver "Solace's" last strain.

Veronica's at the five-pedal upright, Jasmine plays the saloon upright, and...Molly plays the battered upright.

At a table in the middle of the room, Jessica, her husband CARL STINCHCOMB (60s), and Sam eat it all up...the music and the Mexican food, that is.

Once "Solace" ends and strong applause results, Molly jumps up from the battered upright's bench, checks her hands, then opens the bench...which now contains unopened boxes of various brands and sizes of bandages.

Jasmine and Veronica leave their pianos and gesture Molly into closing the bench and joining them...Annie, Ayele, Candace, and Natascha stride into the restaurant and take seats toward the front.

All three pianists grab mikes and turn to the audience.

JASMINE  
 (into her mike)  
 This is great...thanks so very  
 much! Thanks for keeping honky-tonk  
 piano alive in the Omaha Metro!

Jasmine's remark sets off some more customer applause.

VERONICA  
 (into her mike)  
 Any of you have any requests?

Nobody in the audience says a word.

MOLLY  
 (into her mike)  
 Don't be shy!

Annie raises her hand.

JASMINE  
 Uh...yes, Annie?

ANNIE  
 I'd really love to get up there and  
 jam with you.

Annie gets surprised looks from Natascha, Candace, and Ayele.

NATASCHA  
 Annie, you don't want to get up  
 there.

CANDACE

They've got epic piano skills.

With Jasmine, Molly, and Veronica gesturing her on, Annie climbs up to the stage.

MOLLY

(to Annie)

What's your specialty?

ANNIE

Well, I've been playing piano for a year now. My little sister's the real pianist in our family. I've been watching her play...how are you guys on "Peacherine Rag?"

Molly, Veronica, and Jasmine slowly nod.

JASMINE

(nodding at Annie)

We'd love to play "Peacherine" alongside you.

Veronica, Jasmine, and Molly put their mikes back into place...and Molly hurries over to the saloon piano.

VERONICA

Annie, go ahead and pick any piano you want to play.

Annie gravitates to the five-pedal upright.

Veronica and Jasmine stroll, arm in arm, to the battered upright.

Now four water glasses, four glasses of pop, and nachos and/or breadsticks rest on the table.

Ayele watches Annie, Molly, and the team of Jasmine and Veronica take seats at the three old uprights.

AYELE

(yelling toward Annie)

You better not embarrass yourself!

Annie nods at Ayele...then expertly delivers "Peacherine Rag's" introductory four bars.

Annie tackles the first strain (a sixteen-bar affair). And she shows that she can get it done on the ivories.

Ayele's the one who looks embarrassed as she fumbles a breadstick while watching Annie pound those keys.

Annie gestures Veronica, Jasmine, and Molly into joining her in a repeat of the first strain.

The ballerina and the two former swing choir members drop out (musically, that is) and leave Annie the first crack at the second strain...a passage that takes up sixteen bars.

Jeff and his wife SHONDA LINTON (40s), along with Martha and her husband ADAM ARKFELD (30s), amble inside Dining Room #1.

As they take seats and watch Annie jam alongside Molly, Jasmine, and Veronica, the two head coaches and their spouses look stunned.

MARTHA

Jeff...I hope to Pat Summitt that's a double up there.

Annie nods her fellow ivory ticklers into joining her on the second strain's second go-'round before the four pianists bring "Peacherine Rag" back to Strain Number One.

Toward the back of the dining room, Adrienne and Forbesy split a large pizza...when not watching the four musicians.

FORBESY

Adrienne, I wish I could play like that.

ADRIENNE

You really wanna get in Keilani and Emma's doghouse?

Veronica, Molly, Jasmine, and Annie guide "Peacherine Rag" into its third strain...and repeat that strain together.

Greg, Matthew, Isaiah, Marguerite, Peter, and Warren sit together...and five of them dig the music. (Only Marguerite looks at it all with a critical eye.)

Someplace else in Dining Room #1, Mark and Heather wait on Janae and Lupe.

LUPE

(to Janae)  
This oughta go on YouTube.

MARK

(to Lupe)  
That won't be a problem.

Toward the front of the room, Madison and Sean shoot videos of this eight-handed, three-piano "Peacherine Rag."

Annie rises from the 1910s upright to do...a crazy dance.

The 1901 Scott Joplin number's fourth strain is now in the hands of Molly, Veronica, and Jasmine.

As they and Molly prepare to repeat the fourth strain, Veronica and Jasmine switch places at the battered upright.

Annie takes her dance into and around the ecstatic audience.

Carol, Barbara, and server PHILIP STRITTMATTER (mid-30s) stop their work to watch Annie dance.

Philip gets back to work when Martha and Adam eyeball him.

PHILIP

What can I get you folks?

MARTHA

Can you get us another Annie Picasso?

Philip shrugs.

ADAM

Martha, honey...why don't you have another breadstick?

SHONDA

Don't mind if I do!

Shonda and Martha help themselves to a bowl of breadsticks.

The rag's fourth strain goes into a third go-'round when Sam turns to his tablemates.

SAM

Really something how those kids are waking up music we turned our backs on ninety-five years ago.

CARL

We?

JESSICA

Wail, Carl...you know.

Sam nods.

Annie goes back to the five-pedal upright to join Veronica, Jasmine, and Molly to beat out "Peacherine Rag's" Strain Four one last time.

The ensuing applause is...tremendous.

During it, Jasmine, Veronica, Molly, and Annie hold hands and bow and bow and bow.

JASMINE

Annie, that was awesome!

ANNIE

Thanks! Thanks for the chance!

MOLLY

Now...if you can come back next Saturday...in fact, if you can be our fourth member...

Annie looks surprise...and puzzled.

EXT. PICASSOS' HOUSE - NIGHT

A nice-looking split-level house in Omaha's Keystone area.

INT. PICASSOS' KITCHEN - NIGHT

Well-furnished, nicely-appointed, with a mix of modern conveniences and time-tested, time-honored things.

The family sits around the dinner table, where Annie, her sister ALYSSA (13, glib), and their mother VALERIE (late 50s, a free spirit) try to eat.

RICARDO (late 50s, paternalistic), the father, doesn't eat.

He's fit to be tied.

RICARDO

So, Annie, you went on and did it.

ANNIE

Well, Dad, I had no choice. Really Old School practices at the same time both the basketball teams do.

RICARDO

Yeah? Well, you made a bad move.  
(standing up)

RICARDO (CONT'D)

You just got through leading Benson to the Metro Conference Holiday Tournament championship...and then you quit!

Ricardo shrugs wildly.

RICARDO (CONT'D)

You quit basketball to play in a ragtime band? Bad move!

VALERIE

Look, Ricardo...I like to think Annie found her passion in that restaurant the other night.

Ricardo swiftly turns to Valerie.

RICARDO

Yeah? Well, she lost her head!  
(to Annie)  
Know how Coach Arkfeld felt about what you did to her and the team?

ANNIE

Dad, the coaches and players understood. We all made our peace.

Valerie, Annie, and Alyssa try their best to keep eating.

RICARDO

Yeah? Well, Coach Arkfeld was so angry about what you did that her husband kept feeding her breadsticks from G&R to keep her from swearing all the way home!

Alyssa laughs.

RICARDO (CONT'D)

You think that's funny, Alyssa?

ALYSSA

Well, uh, Dad...it seemed like it.

RICARDO

Zip it, Alyssa!

Alyssa pretends to zip her mouth while Ricardo eyes Annie.

RICARDO (CONT'D)

You know what you threw away? You could've been an All-Nebraska point guard!

RICARDO(CONT'D)

You could've gotten a scholarship to UConn! You could've played for Geno Auriemma, for crying out loud!

ANNIE

Dad, I got in only because Maya Mitchell...our starting point guard...got injured in the tournament's first game...and Shawntelle Clark kept fouling.

VALERIE

(to Ricardo)

And don't forget...they've still got Latifah Williams. And she can play all five positions.

(takes a bite)

Just like Magic Johnson did.

RICARDO

Well, so what?

(pointing to Annie)

You could've played in the WNBA! You could've set us up for life!

ANNIE

On a WNBA salary?

Alyssa laughs again...but Ricardo gestures her out of it.

VALERIE

(to Ricardo)

Hon...don't you remember the 2015 Women's World Cup?

RICARDO

Woman, we're not talking about soccer! We're talking about an ungrateful--

VALERIE

When the American women won the World Cup in 2015, they earned four million bucks...while the men earned ten million the year before.

(pointing at Ricardo)

And the men couldn't get past the first round!

RICARDO

You made a bad move, Annie! Nobody wants to hear that old-fashioned music of yours anymore!

ALYSSA  
Dad...Annie was working it at that--

RICARDO  
Zip it, Alyssa!

Alyssa goes back to the old "my mouth is a zipper" mime.  
Now nobody's eating.

ANNIE  
May I be excused, Dad?

RICARDO  
That's right, Ana Alicia Picasso!  
Quit!

Annie jumps up from the table.

RICARDO (CONT'D)  
(watching Annie leave)  
YOU'RE A LOSER!

Alyssa rises, too, and follows Annie out.

VALERIE  
Ricardo...don't you think you're  
being too hard on Annie?

Ricardo stares in anger at Valerie.

INT. PICASSOS' BASEMENT - NIGHT

As calmly as possible, Annie walks down the stairs to what's really a combination laundry room-storage room-weight room. Right behind Annie, Alyssa tiptoes down the stairs.

Annie zeroes in on an inflatable, lifesized clown: "Bobo."

Annie practices her taekwando moves on "Bobo" with shouts.

Alyssa watches...and nods in understanding.

Annie's attacks on "Bobo" turn more violent...and the shouts grow louder.

The session ends...Annie leans against a washer or a dryer.

ANNIE  
I still like basketball,  
Alyssa...but I like music more.

Alyssa leans on the other side of the washer-dryer combo.

ALYSSA  
I know you do.

ANNIE  
The coaches told me to choose  
basketball or ragtime.

Annie and Alyssa stop leaning and walk over to each other...

ANNIE (CONT'D)  
It's gonna work out fine.

...and they hug each other.

EXT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Jasmine, Molly, Veronica, and Annie congregate next to Molly's truck, in a space in the middle of the parking lot.

As the four ragtime pianists open the truck's doors, a 2010 Kia stops in front of the truck.

Brandon rides shotgun...Shawntelle drives.

They don't look happy at all.

Brandon rolls down the window on his side to yell at Really Old School's four members.

BRANDON  
TEAMWRECKERS!

Molly moves toward Shawntelle's car.

MOLLY  
SHUT UP!!

As Shawntelle's car pulls away, Molly, Jasmine, Annie, and Veronica finally get inside the truck.

INT. MOLLY'S TRUCK - DAY

Molly and her passengers buckle up. Once Molly starts her pickup, Jasmine turns to Annie.

JASMINE  
Don't worry: We've got your back.

MOLLY  
(eyes still on the road)  
And your front.

VERONICA  
 (to Annie)  
 And your sides.

A grin forms on Annie's face.

ANNIE  
 Oh, man...thanks, you guys.

The truck pulls out of the parking lot.

EXT. KEYBOARD CENTER OMAHA - DAY

A medium-sized retail store on Omaha's busiest east-west thoroughfare, Dodge Street.

Molly's truck pulls into a half-full parking lot.

INT. STORE BASEMENT - DAY

This space features some used pianos (spinets, studio models, mostly older uprights)...at marked-down prices.

Jasmine, Molly, Veronica, and Annie look at a 1920s upright player piano whose player mechanism got removed.

Heather and Mark jog into the room; a second or two later, MARIANNE CUNNINGHAM (60s; she's a clerk) joins them.

MARIANNE  
 Hi, folks. What can I do for you?

HEATHER  
 Well, we wanted to take a look at the converted player piano you advertised online.

MARIANNE  
 The one the kids are looking at?

Annie removes the music rack from the 1920s upright and sets the rack out of harm's way.

MARK  
 Yeah. We're gonna put it in our restaurant.

Marianne draws a blank look.

HEATHER  
 It's the G&R Mexican Food and Pizza on Farnam.

MARIANNE

When'd they start having a need for  
a piano?

MARK

Well, since last October. Our  
youngest daughter and three of her  
buddies play in a band called  
Really Old School...and they play  
over there.

MARIANNE

Hang on...I'll be right back.  
(backing away)  
Wait 'til I tell John this!

Heather watches Marianne walk away.

HEATHER

You'll love our fish tacos! Best in  
Nebraska!

Annie sits down at the former player piano (it comes with a  
bench)...and comes up with a Chopin polonaise or some other  
familiar-yet-powerful classical piece.

Eight bars or so into the piece, Annie turns it into a  
rousing rag.

Marianne and another sales clerk, JOHN KOTERBA (40s), walk  
toward the four teenagers and two adults.

Marianne also holds a mug full of coffee (or hot chocolate or  
tea); she drinks out of it as she listens to Annie play.

When it hits Marianne that the piece has been turned into a  
rag, she spits her drink out.

JOHN

Wait a minute, Marianne. Let me get  
a paper towel and wipe that up.

MARIANNE

Okay...but wait 'til she's done.

John and Marianne stop at the one-time player piano, where  
Mark, Molly, Heather, Veronica, and Jasmine watch Annie wrap  
up her classical number-cum-rag.

JOHN

(to Annie)  
Whaddya think?

Annie eyeballs Heather and Mark.

ANNIE  
You first.

MARK  
No, Annie...you first.

A grinning Annie nods at Marianne and John.

ANNIE  
We'll take it!

Cheers and applause rise from Annie's audience.

INT. G&R MIDTOWN DINING ROOM #1 - NIGHT

The G&R Midtown stage barely has room as that 1920s upright piano stands in between the 1890s saloon upright and the 1910s five-pedal upright...with the 1900s battered upright still on the far left. (The hammers stand exposed on all four old pianos.)

Veronica unscrews the foot pumps out of the 1920s upright to complete its transformation from player piano to regular one.

Annie (she wields a drill) fastens a seat cushion to the five-pedal piano's keg.

Anita and Ronald eat chimichangas...and watch Annie.

RONALD  
Anita, that's what I call a real stool softener.

ANITA  
Ronald...I'm trying to eat!

At another table, Brittanie and Derek share a pizza.

BRITTANIE  
You know, Derek, I really like Really Old School. They're pretty darn good.

DEREK  
Yeah, but I wish they'd play "Smoke on the Water."

Derek watches Annie turn that keg into a real piano seat, then turns to Brittanie.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
You know how they could get more  
customers here, Brittanie?

BRITTANIE  
More menu items?

DEREK  
Well, actually...they need to put  
something in that keg.

Lexi Cunningham comes into the dining room and finds a seat  
toward the stage...and looks stunned once she sees Annie.

LEXI  
Annie Picasso...is that you?

Annie, now done upholstering, has a shocked look of her own.

ANNIE  
That would be me.  
(puts drill down on stage)  
Lexi, I didn't know you ate here.

Annie joins Lexi at the latter's table.

LEXI  
I heard you quit basketball...you  
were pretty darn good...I mean, you  
were great!

ANNIE  
Well...thanks.  
(points toward stage)  
It's just that I'm more into making  
music than making three-pointers.

Annie shrugs.

ANNIE (CONT'D)  
Still, if I'd tried to be a solo  
musician, I'd still be on the  
basketball team. But I joined a  
band, and they wanted me, and...

Lexi and Annie look up...and find Barbara standing on the  
other side of the table.

BARBARA  
Hi! What can I get you two to  
drink?

ANNIE  
Water's fine.

LEXI  
Me, too.

BARBARA  
I'll be right back.

As Barbara leaves, Annie and Lexi pick up their conversation.

LEXI  
My grandma sold you that old piano.

Annie's mouth flies open.

LEXI (CONT'D)  
In fact...I used to play the piano.

ANNIE  
What happened?

LEXI  
Well, uh, when I was twelve, I  
found out I liked playing sports  
more than I liked playing music.

Annie nods at Lexi as Barbara comes back with two glasses of water (as well as knives, forks, and spoons).

LATER

Veronica sits at the battered upright, Jasmine sits at the saloon upright, Annie sits at the ex-player upright, and Molly sits at the five-pedal upright.

Each member of Really Old School holds a mike as the dining room adds CUSTOMERS.

JASMINE  
(into her mike)  
Glad you're here, everybody. Glad  
you're showing that honky-tonk  
piano is alive and well here in the  
Omaha Metro.

In the middle of Dining Room #1, A HUSBAND AND WIFE (both 60s) eat combination platters.

HUSBAND  
(to Wife)  
She gets to say "honky," but I  
don't get to say--

As she points to Jasmine, the wife eyeballs the husband.

WIFE  
Honey...she also said "tonk."

Onstage, Molly addresses the audience.

MOLLY  
(into her mike)  
You folks know what that calls for?

Molly sticks her mike out toward the audience...no answer.

VERONICA  
(into her mike)  
Well...how about some "Pickles and Peppers?"

A few of the eaters laugh.

ANNIE  
(into her mike)  
Written by Adaline Shepherd in  
1906, we're starting out  
with...good ol' "Pickles and  
Peppers."

Annie, Jasmine, Molly, and Veronica put their mikes back into place, then bang out "Pickles and Peppers'" four-bar intro.

Veronica gets first crack at the tune's first strain...all sixteen bars of it.

Greg, Isaiah, Matthew, Madison, Sean, Marguerite, Peter, Warren, and...Alyssa, Lexi, and Marianne watch and eat from up front. (Lexi's original table stands in a new place, resulting in a back-to-back-to-back arrangement.)

PETER  
Mom...Veronica's a real Renaissance woman.

Marguerite shoots Peter a blank look.

GREG  
(eyeballing Marguerite)  
Yeah. She sings, dances, plays a mean piano, she lifts weights, she's smart, uh...

WARREN  
She even put a new starter on my car!

MARIANNE

Marguerite, sounds like Veronica takes after you.

(taking a bite)

She gives you a lot to be proud of.

SEAN

There you have it, Ms. Shin! Is there anything Veronica can't do?

Jasmine plays "Pickles and Peppers'" first strain.

MARGUERITE

I just wish she'd pick a hobby and stick with it.

Warren and Peter look exasperated.

Matthew's and Isaiah's mouths hang open in disbelief.

INT. CLASSROOM AT BENSON HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Brenda Lingenfelter's American Studies class reaches the closing minutes...and most of its students look antsy.

Not Jasmine. She's still fired up.

JASMINE

Did you know that the 1928 presidential election was the last time the Republicans won in the Twentieth Century without a Nixon or a Bush on the ticket?

A cheerful-looking Brenda nods.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

And did you know that when Al Smith lost to Herbert Hoover, Smith carried only eight states...none of them New York, his home state? All forty-five of New York's--

The bell RINGS...and every student but Jasmine and Molly bolts for the door.

BRENDA

All right, that's it! Next time, we look at the symptoms of the Great Depression!

With the door still open, Annie and Veronica swerve, dodge, and weave their way into the classroom...and sit next to Molly and Jasmine.

As Jasmine pulls out her laptop and hooks it up to the projector, Brenda takes a seat alongside the four pianists.

ANNIE

Hi, Mrs. Lingenfelter.

VERONICA

Hi, Mrs. Lingenfelter. How's it going?

BRENDA

Oh, it's going fine...you four still gonna sign up for "Bunny Tracks?"

JASMINE

Darn right...soon as we get done watching these videos.

With a few mouse clicks, Jasmine sets this session's first video ROLLING.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

Now...notice how long Eubie Blake's fingers were.

MOLLY

That's right. Make us feel bad.

Four sets of eyes turn from the video to Molly.

BRENDA

I thought ragtime was "feel good" music.

Veronica and Annie have a laugh over Brenda's remark.

#### MONTAGE SEQUENCE

INT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL VOCAL MUSIC ROOM - DAY

As Paulette looks on, Molly, Jasmine, Veronica, and Annie team up to make Really Old School the first act to sign up for "Bunny Tracks."

It's hugs all around for the swing choir director and the four ragtimers.

INT. GREENWOODS' DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Matthew, Greg, and Isaiah still eat dinner when Jasmine comes into the dining room...in Grandma Waters' suit.

Result: Three stunned males.

INT. ENGBRETSSENS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Molly's at the family piano (a well-worn 1900-09 upright), where she works hard to polish up her ragtime skills.

INT. ENGBRETSSENS' DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Heather, Madison, Mark, and Sean eat dinner when...the four of them jump up from the table and go to the piano to cajole Molly into chowing down.

EXT. SHINS'/KWANS' HOUSE - NIGHT

This fine-looking, brightly-painted split-level house is in the Boys' Town area.

INT. SHINS'/KWANS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Peter, Veronica, and Warren tote flyers touting Benson's upcoming talent show in an attempt to sell the event to Marguerite...who just doesn't look convinced.

INT. ALYSSA'S AND ANNIE'S BEDROOM AT PICASSOS' HOUSE - NIGHT

This bedroom with twin beds (or bunk beds) also has space for a full-size electronic keyboard (if not a spinet piano).

Annie and Alyssa play a closed-door duet when...the bedroom door opens.

When the Sisters Picasso find Ricardo's at the door, the concert ends.

INT. BENSON LUTHERAN CHURCH SOCIAL HALL - DAY

Social Hall's got a fourth old upright...and Annie, Veronica, Molly, and Jasmine work on another tune.

Jessica and Sam are the audience...they enjoy Really Old School's music.

END MONTAGE

EXT. G&R MEXICAN FOOD AND PIZZA MIDTOWN, OMAHA, NE - NIGHT

Things look up for Heather's and Mark's restaurant: Its parking lot is completely full on this cold night.

INT. G&R MIDTOWN DINING ROOM #1 - NIGHT

NOT ONE SEAT IS EMPTY...and Mark (he looks after Anita and Ronald) and Heather (she looks after Paulette and Brenda) look delighted.

Carol's ecstatic as she looks after Janae, Lupe, Adrienne, and Forbesy. Barbara and Philip look after OTHER CUSTOMERS.

It's "12th Street Rag," where Annie plays the battered upright, Jasmine's back at the saloon upright, Molly pounds the keys of the former player piano, and Veronica works the five-pedal upright's 88s.

It's the rag's third (and final) strain...and Molly shows her skills during the first sixteen bars of that strain, while Annie takes the strain's final sixteen bars.

Seated in front of the stage, Alyssa, Isaiah, Matthew, Peter, Sean (he snaps pictures), and Warren look excited.

Greg and Valerie look a lot more enthused than Marguerite.

Jasmine moves over to the five-pedal piano, Molly goes to the saloon piano, Veronica worms her way to the battered piano, and Annie runs to the used-to-be player piano.

Madison captures all this with a camcorder...and her mouth flies open as Really Old School completes the switch and the band's four members pound out a repeat of the final strain to end this 1914 Euday Bowman classic.

The applause from the eaters (especially Mary Jo and Neal) is wild...well, most of the eaters.

Valerie gives Marguerite a perplexed look.

VALERIE

Those kids are playing their hearts out...especially Veronica.

MARGUERITE

She's gotta show me she won't quit. Then I'll be satisfied.

PETER

(to Marguerite)

I guess she's gotta leave blood on the keys every time she plays.

Peter rests his chin on his fists.

Veronica, Molly, Annie, and Jasmine rise up from their old uprights and address the audience.

MOLLY

Thanks for all your support! You're awesome!

JASMINE

We'll be back in fifteen minutes!

As Annie, Jasmine, Molly, and Veronica head off the stage, GARY PETITO (30s; holds a microcassette recorder or a digital recorder) runs from his table and toward the stage.

GARY

I'm Gary Petito from "Omaha" magazine. You got time for an interview?

JASMINE

Aw, what the heck? Why not?

Molly, Annie, Jasmine, Veronica, and Gary sit at the stage's two benches, piano stool, and upholstered keg.

GARY

First of all, let me say that you girls are really awesome!

ANNIE

Well...thanks, Gary.

GARY

How'd Really Old School get started?

VERONICA

Well, one day last September, Jasmine brought to school a piece of sheet music her great-grandmother had written when she herself was a teenager. And...

LATER

Gary wraps up his interview with the four young ragtimers.

GARY

Last, but certainly not least...you've been voted best local band in this year's "Best of Omaha" competition.

Gary shakes hands with Annie, Veronica, Jasmine, and Molly.

GARY (CONT'D)  
 Congratulations...and thanks for  
 all you do for ragtime.

The four young musicians watch Gary leave the stage. Once Gary heads back to his table, the four ragtimers grab mikes and turn to the eaters.

JASMINE  
 (into her mike)  
 You folks who've been supporting us  
 did it...you got us named the best  
 local band in this year's "Best of  
 Omaha" competition!

VERONICA  
 (into her mike)  
 Give yourselves a hand! You deserve  
 it!

All the audience members except Madison clap.

Madison, in fact, comes up on stage as the musicians put their mikes back into place.

MADISON  
 Hate to tell you this, but...you're  
 not really a band.

ANNIE  
 Madison...is this really the right  
 time to say this?

MADISON  
 You're not a band. You're just four  
 girls playing piano.

A peeved Molly charges over to Madison.

MOLLY  
 Look, Madison Marie Engebretsen: We  
 get enough hate as it  
 is...especially at school!

MADISON  
 You're not a band, Molly! A band  
 doesn't--

MOLLY  
 (pointing at Madison)  
 Who the hell are you to go hating  
 on us, especially--

MADISON  
 You all play the same instrument!  
 That's not--

Jasmine moves in between Madison and Molly.

MOLLY  
 (leans toward Madison)  
 Go rain on somebody else's parade!

Jasmine puts her hands on Molly and Madison to separate them.

EXT. GREENWOODS' HOUSE - DAY

Molly's pickup truck rests in back of (or in front of) Greg's car during this late afternoon.

INT. JASMINE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jasmine, Molly, Veronica, and Annie wear their church clothes (if not something more casual); the foursome sit on the bed.

Molly still looks ticked off.

MOLLY  
 You're not a band. You're just four  
 girls playing piano.  
 (rests chin on fists)  
 Pastor Jessica talked about how  
 today was the first time in eleven  
 years Madison and I didn't sit  
 together in church.

Jasmine hugs Molly.

JASMINE  
 Molly, it's gonna be all right.  
 We'll get through this.

VERONICA  
 I thought we were gonna do this  
 down in the basement.

ANNIE  
 Well, we were, Veronica...except  
 LeBron James and Stephen Curry are  
 mixing it up today.

Jasmine runs to her TV set to turn it ON.

JASMINE

And we don't have a TV in the  
basement.

A BASKETBALL GAME (Los Angeles Lakers against Golden State)  
is on the channel Molly, Jasmine, Veronica, and Annie watch.

A break in the game's action comes; Jasmine turns to Molly.

MOLLY

What're you thinking, Jasmine?

JASMINE

Well...I got to thinking about the  
time last year...when you brought  
your twelve-string guitar to swing  
choir rehearsal.

MOLLY

I broke six strings on it...but Dad  
let me use his old Gretsch electric  
when it came showtime.

JASMINE

And you brought the house down.  
With your version of George  
Benson's version of "On Broadway."

VERONICA

Molly, why don't you bring your  
guitar next rehearsal?

Annie and Jasmine gesture Molly into saying "yes."

VERONICA (CONT'D)

I'm bringing mine.

MOLLY

All right, Veronica. It's on!

ANNIE

I studied at the Omaha Conservatory  
of Music for four years.

Jasmine, Molly, and Veronica look at Annie.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

My folks pulled me out because they  
couldn't afford it anymore. But  
anyway...I can play violin, cello,  
and bass.

JASMINE  
 (to Annie)  
 Fist bump!

Annie and Jasmine bump their fists together.

VERONICA  
 Annie, I can play violin, too.

Annie nods in enthusiasm...then casts a worried look.

ANNIE  
 Are we still gonna tickle the  
 ivories?

JASMINE  
 Doggone right we are!

Jasmine's message brings cheers from her bandmates.

JASMINE (CONT'D)  
 We're still gonna do the four-piano  
 thing. That's part of our DNA.

ANNIE  
 (to Jasmine)  
 Fist bump!

Jasmine and Annie bump their fists together again.

JASMINE  
 But at least we can hit people with  
 another side of us.

Molly takes a look at Jasmine's acoustic guitar, then  
 eyeballs Jasmine.

MOLLY  
 How's your own guitar playing?

JASMINE  
 Well, uh...I'm working on getting  
 better...but there is one  
 instrument I've been interested in  
 ever since I was little...

Veronica, Molly, and Annie watch as Jasmine rubs her hands in  
 total glee.

EXT. DRUMSVILLE - DAY

It's a store located in a medium-sized shopping center in the  
 Millard section of town.

INT. DRUMSVILLE SALESFLOOR - DAY

Drums aren't the only instruments sold in this store...just the main focus. (One wall features guitars and basses, for instance; another wall's got keyboards.)

Several columns of drum sets (sets of various sizes) stand proudly on the floor...and Jasmine sits at one of the smaller drum sets while LONNIE HALL (a clerk, 20s) watches.

LONNIE

How long you been playing drums?

JASMINE

Not long enough.

Jasmine grabs a pair of drumsticks from the set's snare and tries a drum roll.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

I was in fourth grade and was still going to school in the Jackson, Mississippi area...and I wanted to play drums in the school band.

Jasmine puts over a stronger drum roll.

LONNIE

What happened?

JASMINE

Well, the music teacher there wouldn't let me play drums.

A more confident Jasmine takes her drum roll to as many parts of the set as possible.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

You know what he told me and Mom and Dad?

(squeaky Southern accent)

"Wail, at our school, we don't let the girls touch the drums!"

(back in her real voice)

That teacher probably went to the bathroom during Super Bowl 38's halftime show.

LONNIE

You mean to tell me that sexist pig missed the wardrobe malfunction?

Another clerk, KIMIKO UMEKI (20s), joins Jasmine and Lonnie.

JASMINE

Not only that...he missed watching Stefanie play drums in Kid Rock's band.

LONNIE

How'd you wind up here in Nebraska?

JASMINE

Well, not long after the drum incident, Dad ended up getting a job offer.

(adds bass drum work)

Poppin' 107 needed a new program director...so, they emailed him and said: "Come back to the Midwest!"

Jasmine speeds up her drum work.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

Mom was even more excited than Dad, 'cause she was born and raised here in Omaha.

Kimiko and Lonnie watch Jasmine try some drum fills.

KIMIKO

(to Jasmine)

Aren't you in that all-piano group?

JASMINE

I sure am.

KIMIKO

But...you're playing drums.

LONNIE

Kimiko...we're trying to make a sale.

With a cymbal crash, Jasmine ends her drum-set audition.

JASMINE

Lonnie...Kimiko...you've got yourselves a deal.

Jasmine puts the sticks back in place, gets up, and shakes Lonnie's and Kimiko's hands.

EXT. PICASSOS' HOUSE - NIGHT

It's late at night, and only one light burns in the house.

INT. RICARDO'S AND VALERIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Annie's and Alyssa's parents sleep in a well-furnished (maybe even cluttered) space.

Valerie and Ricardo lie in the bed and in their pajamas. The bedroom TV beams A TALK SHOW. It's toward the end of the show, because A ROCK BAND plays.

Ricardo grabs the remote control and turns the TV OFF...despite the fact the show isn't over.

VALERIE

Ricardo, you shouldn't have done that.

Valerie seizes the remote and clicks the TV back ON.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

I suppose that band reminds you of Annie, doesn't it?

RICARDO

You got it, Valerie.

VALERIE

It's been about two weeks since Annie quit the girls' basketball team and joined Really Old School.

Ricardo takes the clicker and shuts the TV OFF.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Everybody's moved on but you.

RICARDO

Well, look: Annie's gonna quit music sooner or later. So will Alyssa.

Valerie takes the clicker from Ricardo...and ON goes the TV.

VALERIE

Yeah? Well, don't be too sure.

RICARDO

They all do.

VALERIE

Then why are Beyonce Knowles and Taylor Swift still going strong?

It's Ricardo's turn to handle the remote control.

RICARDO  
 They're gonna quit, too.  
 (turns TV set OFF)  
 Just like you did.

VALERIE  
 I felt like I had no other choice  
 at the time!  
 (snatches clicker)  
 You did tell me: "Listen, Valerie  
 Hickenlooper: It's me or your  
 music!"

Valerie bolts up and puts the remote control next to the TV.

VALERIE (CONT'D)  
 You remember how we first met?

Valerie goes to a chest of drawers, pulls out a drawer,  
 and...

RICARDO  
 Duh? We met at a party at my dorm  
 when we both went to Northwestern.

...tosses the remote into that drawer.

VALERIE  
 I'm gonna tell you a little story.  
 (walking around)  
 The resident assistants in your  
 dorm hired the band I was in to  
 play for that party.

Ricardo shakes his head "yes."

VALERIE (CONT'D)  
 But I remember you telling Ike  
 Johnson...the RA on your  
 floor...that you didn't want to go  
 to the party because you thought  
 "chick bands suck."

RICARDO  
 I didn't say that!

VALERIE  
 You did, too! But you stayed  
 because of the free food.

RICARDO  
 Well...the chili dogs were great.

VALERIE

Anyway...I loved being the bass player in Raging Kitchen Fire. We had a very good following in the Chicagoland area.

(sits on the bed)

We were going places. In fact, we could've gone national.

Ricardo looks unimpressed.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

We had to split up after our keyboard player and one of our guitarists left to go back to Minneapolis.

RICARDO

They were too hot for Chicago.

VALERIE

(gets back in bed)

They were good enough to back up Prince.

(points at Ricardo)

They wanted me to come along...but I let you talk me out of it.

While Valerie looks exasperated, Ricardo grins.

RICARDO

See? It worked! Prince died...and we're still alive.

VALERIE

I let you steal one of my dreams.

(points at Ricardo)

I'm not gonna let you steal our daughters' dreams! Especially when Annie's having the time of her life jamming with Jasmine and Veronica and Molly!

Valerie turns around so she doesn't have to see Ricardo...but that only works for a few seconds.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

You know...I could've been the next Tina Weymouth! I gave that up for you!

Ricardo buries his head in his pillow.

VALERIE (CONT'D)  
YOU! Remember?

A disgusted Valerie bangs her hands on her own pillow.

EXT. G&R MEXICAN FOOD AND PIZZA MIDTOWN, OMAHA, NE - DAY

It's still cold outside...Greg, Jasmine, Isaiah, Matthew, Peter, Veronica, and Warren wear heavier clothes.

Greg and his three children carry that newly-purchased drum set into the restaurant.

Not far behind the Greenwoods, Veronica and her two brothers tote an amp, some extra mikes, and a guitar case.

INT. G&R MIDTOWN DINING ROOM #1 - DAY

Heather and Mark watch as Molly and Annie place mike stands in front of the stage while Warren pushes the amp next to an existing one.

The back-to-back-to-back tables are pushed further back to accommodate the mike stands (and the drum set the Greenwoods reassemble).

Showtime is several hours away, and the place is about a quarter full of EATERS. Annie, Jasmine, Molly, and Veronica are as casually dressed as the customers.

Mark watches some of those customers...in this case, A YOUNG FAMILY OF FOUR seated at a booth.

MARK  
How do you guys like the fish  
tacos?

YOUNG MOTHER  
Best in America!

The other family members signify their gestured (or AD LIBBED) approval.

As Mark walks from the booth, Heather sprints toward him.

HEATHER  
Mark, we had to get rid of four  
tables for this.

Mark and Heather watch Peter stick those extra microphones onto the mike stands.

HEATHER (CONT'D)  
I hope this doesn't cost us  
customers.

MARK  
Honey...we can knock down the wall  
between the two dining rooms.

Molly's parents take seats at an empty table.

HEATHER  
When? We've got three months to  
turn this whole thing around!

From that previously-empty table, Heather and Mark watch  
Annie stand her bass fiddle upright.

MARK  
Don't worry, Heather. I called  
headquarters and they're gonna let  
us offer carryout service here.

Heather breathes a sigh of relief.

MARK (CONT'D)  
It's gonna be all right.  
(holding Heather's hands)  
We won't have to worry about this  
becoming a used-car lot.

Barbara and Carol come into Dining Room #1.

BARBARA  
(sees Mark and Heather)  
What happened to those four tables  
that were in here yesterday?

CAROL  
Barbara, I think they sold 'em.

Barbara, Heather, and Mark have a good laugh.

LATER

Dining Room #1 is PACKED!

Lots of students, lots of older people, and quite a few  
families sit there and enjoy Really Old School's music.

Jasmine (at the battered upright), Annie (at the saloon  
upright), Veronica (at the former player piano), and Molly  
(at the five-pedal upright) now wear traditional, nonmatching  
men's shirt-vest-bow tie-slacks-hat-arm garter outfits.

The four teenage ragtimers wrap up the last twenty-four bars of a blistering "Piano Roll Blues."

At a booth, Brenda, Paulette, and their school's principal, LINDA REYNOLDS (early 40s), join the other customers in applauding the performance.

BRENDA

Now that's the way you play  
ragtime!

LINDA

Wait a minute, Brenda. What in the  
world is ragtime?

Paulette and Brenda eyeball Linda in disbelief.

PAULETTE

Linda...haven't you heard of "The  
Entertainer?"

LINDA

Oh...you mean Cedric! Man, I loved  
him on "The Steve Harvey Show."  
(impersonates Cedric)  
What up, dog?

Onstage, Jasmine, Annie, Veronica, and Molly hold mikes.

VERONICA

(into her mike)  
Thanks so much for your support. We  
really appreciate that!

The crowd cheers more loudly. Once the applause dies down:

ANNIE

(into her mike)  
Now...there's a rumor going around  
that we're not really a band.

MOLLY

(into her mike)  
We're gonna fix that right now.

Really Old School's four members put the piano mikes back into place.

Veronica moves over to the saloon upright...Jasmine, Annie, and Molly strut off the stage. Annie grabs her bass fiddle, Molly puts on that Gretsch electric guitar (a vintage model), and Jasmine goes over to the drums.

In front of the stage: Four mike stands (one of them's next to the drum set).

JASMINE

(into the drum set's mike)

How about some "Words of Love?"

Jasmine starts off this 1967 smash (by the Mamas and the Papas) with a drum roll. Veronica adds to the intro by playing four bars of tinkly, raggy piano...establishing "Words of Love's" music-hall (strip-joint?) pace.

The intro's out of the way...Annie and Molly come in (on bass fiddle and guitar, respectively).

MOLLY

(singing lead, too)

*Words of love, so soft and  
tender,/Won't win a girl's heart  
anymore./If you love her, then you  
must send her/Somewhere where she's  
never been before.*

With Veronica's piano playing driving the song, Molly and Annie sway to the beat.

Out in the audience, Rahim, Derek, Brittanie, Lily, and Kaitlyn (they feast on tacos and burritos) look impressed.

Forbesy, Adrienne, Mike, Jajuan, Neal, Mary Jo, Janae, and Lupe (they eat pizzas) like what they see onstage.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

*Worn-out phrases and longing  
gazes/Won't get you where you want  
to go.*

ANNIE, JASMINE, VERONICA

No!

MOLLY

*Words of love, soft and  
tender,/Won't win her...*

Jessica, Sam, Carl, Kent, Brent, Lexi, Marianne, Lonnie, and Kimiko (to say nothing of Anita and Ronald) eat up (and try to keep up with the beat).

Jasmine and Veronica team up to keep the beat rowdy.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

*You oughta know by now.*

ANNIE, JASMINE, VERONICA  
*You oughta know by now!*

MOLLY  
*You oughta know.*

ANNIE, JASMINE, VERONICA  
*You oughta know!*

MOLLY  
*You oughta know by now.*

ANNIE, JASMINE, VERONICA  
*You oughta know by now!*

MOLLY  
*Words of love, soft and  
 tender,/Won't win her anymore.*

An eight-bar instrumental break kicks in; in it, Molly and her backup singers/instrumentalists make animal sounds...and cajole the eaters into making those animal sounds, too.

MOLLY (CONT'D)  
*You oughta know by now./You oughta  
 know, you oughta know by now.*

Veronica, Jasmine, and Annie now (and until the song's end) use an AD LIBBED backup chant.

MOLLY (CONT'D)  
*Words of love, soft and  
 tender,/Won't win a girl's heart  
 anymore./If you love her, then you  
 must send her/Somewhere where she's  
 never been before./Worn-out phrases  
 and longing gazes/Won't get you  
 where you want to go.*

The music (instrumental and VOCAL) drops out...except for a few guitar strokes from Molly. When she sings again, the instrumentation picks back up...and Veronica, Jasmine, and Annie sing a different AD LIBBED backup line.

MOLLY (CONT'D)  
*Words of love, soft and  
 tender,/Won't win her...  
 anymore...anymore.*

As Molly stretches out the song's next-to-last "ANymore," Jasmine's drumming and Veronica's piano playing become more percussive.

After Molly's final "ANYMORE," the song bumps-and-grinds its way to an ending.

Valerie, Greg, Madison, Sean, Alyssa, Isaiah, Matthew, Peter, and Warren eat it up as they lead the other customers in tremendous applause.

EXT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

A JOGGER runs by on this January day.

INT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Annie, Jasmine, Molly, and Veronica sit at a table in the middle of the cafeteria. Veronica's the only ragtimer with a sack lunch; her bandmates eat today's school menu items.

MOLLY

Veronica, I don't get it.

(taking a bite)

Your mom's a best-selling author  
and a psychology professor at UNO.

Veronica nods.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

Every time there's a mass shooting,  
they interview her on cable  
news...you mean to tell me she  
can't afford to buy you and your  
brothers lunch?

VERONICA

I made this myself.

Veronica takes a swig of milk/juice/pop/water/what have you.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Yeah, Peter and Warren and I get to  
make our own lunches.

(takes a bite)

There's just one stipulation:  
They've gotta be healthier than the  
lunches they sell right here.

Molly, Jasmine, and Annie stare at the food on their trays.

JASMINE

Well, let's talk about something  
less contentious:

(taking a bite)

JASMINE (CONT'D)

Anybody got any ideas about what we're gonna play when we do "Bunny Tracks" this April?

Jasmine receives grinning looks from Veronica and Annie.

ANNIE

We wanna learn that song your great-grandma wrote.

VERONICA

Yeah, Jasmine: "River City Blues."

A smile forms on Jasmine's face as she turns to Molly.

JASMINE

Whaddya say, Molly?

Molly continues to eat for a few seconds.

MOLLY

Let's do it!

Veronica, Jasmine, and Annie cheer Molly's decision.

JASMINE

How do you all feel about doing this? All four of us start the first strain playing piano or keyboards.

Molly, Veronica, and Annie nod.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

Then, when we repeat the first strain, Molly, you grab your guitar and rock on.

Annie grabs a piece of paper to write down song strategy.

ANNIE

Meanwhile, the rest of us are still playing keys.

JASMINE

That's right! Then, Annie, you grab your bass and start playing under Molly when we do the first strain a third time.

Jasmine's bandmates look excited.

MOLLY

Then, Jasmine, you go to the drums  
and you rock out.

Molly imitates a machine-gun type drum fill.

VERONICA

You know what this song needs?

Jasmine, Molly, and Annie eyeball Veronica in expectant hope.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

A rap.

Annie and Molly look at Veronica in confusion.

MOLLY

You can't put a rap in a rag!

JASMINE

Actually...Mimi Blais did just  
that. At the end of "Maple Leaf  
Rag." I've got the CD to prove it.

Annie and Veronica nod.

ANNIE

Well...that's really cool.

JASMINE

Matter of fact...Annie, how'd you  
like to do the rap?

ANNIE

Aw...what the heck?

Jasmine and Annie do a high five, then Annie celebrates the  
same way with Veronica.

INT. ALYSSA'S AND ANNIE'S BEDROOM AT PICASSOS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Annie wears her headphones; she listens to her MP3 player (or  
other device) while she reclines in a chair by her desk.

Annie bobs her head to the music and she digs it all when  
Valerie comes into the room (with a large package).

Valerie's arrival doesn't faze Annie, who continues to  
groove. Valerie sets the big package down and taps Annie on  
the shoulder.

Annie wrestles the headphones off her head.

VALERIE  
Who're you listening to?

ANNIE  
Megan Thee Stallion.

Confusion grips Valerie.

ANNIE (CONT'D)  
Three-time Grammy winner.

Valerie's confused look morphs into a smile.

VALERIE  
How about something for a budding  
rapper?

Valerie gestures Annie toward that large package...Annie puts her music player on her desk and opens the package.

Annie pulls out...a guitar case.

VALERIE (CONT'D)  
Open it up!

Annie does just that...and removes an electric bass guitar from its case.

She examines the instrument, then looks at her mom.

ANNIE  
Mom...this used to be your bass  
guitar.

VALERIE  
Yeah...I found it on eBay. I bought  
it back from somebody in Peoria.

Annie tugs the instrument's strings.

VALERIE (CONT'D)  
I lucked out when the staff at the  
used-car lot allowed me to keep the  
bass in storage...otherwise, your  
dad would've set the thing out  
front for the garbage collector to  
pick up.  
(gesturing)  
I wanted you to have that bass.

Annie sets the bass on her bed, then she and Valerie embrace.

ANNIE

You didn't have to do that...but  
I'm glad you did.

VALERIE

I'm glad, too.

ANNIE

Thanks, Mom...I love you.

Valerie and Annie strengthen their already-warm hug.

EXT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The parking lot fills on this warm April afternoon.

INT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL ANNEX - AUDITORIUM - BACKSTAGE - DAY

A festive air dominates as ACTS run sound checks (or wait to do so) under Mike Parker's supervision.

Emma and Jajuan engage in an AD LIBBED discussion with Paulette about "Bunny Tracks," the school talent show that's a few hours away from launch.

The door to the green room opens...Anya, Jason, Keilani, and Natascha (all heavily disguised, maybe as rabbits) come out of the green room and go backstage.

As SOUND CHECKS continue, Paulette, Jajuan, and Emma continue to talk shop...AD LIB style.

Veronica, Molly, Jasmine, and Annie come backstage. All four wear nonmatching traditional men's suits, shirts, slacks, vests, ties, and hats...from the 1910-19 period. (In Jasmine's case, that means Grandma Waters' outfit.)

Jajuan high-fives it with Really Old School's four members.

JAJUAN

You guys are really killin' it!

JASMINE

Oh, man, thanks, Jajuan.

JAJUAN

Glad your band's in the show.

Annie, Jasmine, Veronica, and Molly AD LIB their appreciation while Paulette enthusiastically nods.

EMMA

No you're not.

MOLLY

Emma...don't go there! We were the very first--

EMMA

You're not on the bill! You must be smoking something very powerful if--

VERONICA

Ask Ms. Rodgers! She'll tell you!

Emma covers up her own ears.

Keilani, Natascha, Anya, and Jason tiptoe over to the Annex' piano (a 1980s studio model).

The four of them find it closed, so Anya and Keilani flip it open...somewhat quietly.

Keilani and Anya reach into their costume pouches (or pockets) to pull out a bottle of glue apiece. Both girls apply glue to the keys and to the space in front of the keys.

Natascha and Jason open the piano's top lid, then break out glue bottles, too...to smear up the opening at the top.

As the vandalism takes place, Emma continues to argue with Molly, Veronica, Jasmine, and Annie.

ANNIE

Listen, Emma: We signed up. Fair and--

EMMA

No you didn't!

PAULETTE

They did, too, Emma!

Emma's mouth flies open.

PAULETTE (CONT'D)

Every time an act signed up for "Bunny Tracks," I'd put an announcement on Facebook.

(points at Emma)

And Twitter. And TikTok.

Paulette comes toward Emma, who backs up with each step the swing choir director takes.

PAULETTE (CONT'D)  
 And Pinterest. And Bluesky. And  
 Instagram. But not Truth Social!

Jajuan, Jasmine, Annie, Veronica, and Molly enjoy Paulette's sermon.

The four vandals put their glue bottles back in their pockets, then close the piano's fallboard and top lid shut.

NATASCHA  
 Jason, let's...  
 (disguises her voice)  
 Uh...let's make sure this is glued  
 up real good.

JASON  
 (disguising his voice)  
 Uh...okay.

Jason and Natascha climb on top of the piano and sit there.

ANYA  
 This'll teach those ragtimers.  
 (in a deeper voice)  
 This'll teach those ragtimers.

Keilani and Anya rest their hands on the fallboard.

KEILANI  
 (almost whispering)  
 Come on! Look natural!

Anya, Natascha, Keilani, and Jason try to look relaxed.

That all ends when Neal and Mary Jo pass by to take pictures with their cameras or cell phones.

Result: Jason, Anya, Keilani, and Natascha jump off the piano and scurry out of the area.

EXT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

A 2023 Chevy van pulls into the school's parking lot. On both sides, and maybe the front, too, "POPPIN' 107" appears in big letters. In smaller letters: "HOTTEST JAMZ IN OMAHA!"

Driver Greg jumps out of the vehicle; a second or so later, STEVE "MR. SMOOVE" KENNEDY (Black, 20s) climbs out on the right front side.

Steve and Greg converse as they walk toward the Annex.

GREG

Steve...

Steve shoots Greg a dirty look.

GREG (CONT'D)

I mean "Mr. Smoove..."

Steve flashes a smile.

GREG (CONT'D)

It's really cool that you're coming to "Bunny Tracks" to help support Jasmine and her buddies.

STEVE

Greg, I still think your daughter shuffles.

GREG

She doesn't shuffle! She's just into playing the music our great-grandparents dug way, way, way back in the day.

STEVE

All I know is: She better be good. Here I am, giving up my time slot--

Greg and Steve reach the front door of the Annex.

GREG

If it'll make you feel any better, Jasmine told me one of the acts tonight is a singer so good he makes Usher look like a piker.

STEVE

Well, pull my pants down! Let me in there!

Greg opens the building's front door and gestures Steve in.

INT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL ANNEX - HALLWAY - DAY

Jasmine, Veronica, Molly, and Annie start out for the green room. The door's closed.

INT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL ANNEX - GREEN ROOM - DAY

Keilani, Anya, Jason, and Natascha (still in their disguises) watch the room's door open.

When the disguised foursome find Really Old School's four members on the other side of the door, Jason and Anya charge after Jasmine and Veronica.

Veronica, Jasmine, Annie, and Molly back away; one of the ragtimers closes the green room's door.

Natascha holds Jason back; Keilani does the same with Anya.

NATASCHA

Jason, save your strength.

KEILANI

(sees Jason, holds Anya)

Yeah. You two are gonna be performing tonight.

JASON

All right, Natascha. You win.

Keilani lets go of Anya while Natascha breaks her hold on Jason...and all four sit down someplace.

ANYA

I was this close. This close!

Anya bangs her hands in disgust.

INT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL ANNEX - HALLWAY - DAY

Mary Kate (she's in a gown) walks toward the auditorium while swing choir members CHAD CLAPPER (18) and KODY VANDERLINDEN (18) go in the opposite direction when all three meet up.

Kody and Chad still wear their regular clothes.

MARY KATE

You two knock 'em dead tonight.

Chad and Kody look at each other in confusion, then eyeball Mary Kate.

KODY

Oh...kay.

CHAD

Yeah, Mary Kate! We will!

Chad and Kody trade high fives upon leaving the space.

INT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL ANNEX - AUDITORIUM - BACKSTAGE - DAY

Mary Kate reaches her destination...the now-glued-up Annex studio piano.

The swing choir's pianist tries to open the instrument...only to grit and strain and struggle to get to the keys.

INT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL ANNEX - HALLWAY - DAY

The green room's door opens from inside, and Anya, Keilani, Jason, and Natascha (one after another, shortest to tallest) catch a peek at the struggling Mary Kate.

INT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL ANNEX - GREEN ROOM - DAY

The quartet are back in their regular clothes.

And man, do these four students look disgusted!

ANYA  
(pacing the floor)  
We didn't want Mary Kate to find  
out!

Anya stops pacing long enough to get up in Jason's face.

JASON  
Well, don't look at me!

Anya paces the floor again.

INT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL ANNEX - HALLWAY - DAY

Brenda, Linda, and Paulette launch AD LIBBED conversation when Martha, Adam, Jeff, and Shonda come into the hallway.

JEFF  
Paulette, this is gonna be the best  
"Bunny Tracks" we've ever had.

Several heads nod in agreement.

PAULETTE  
I hear that, Jeff. I'm really  
excited about Really Old--

Martha shoots Paulette an angry look when WAYNE STOLTENBERG (40s), the school's head football coach, joins the confab.

BRENDA  
Martha, I thought you were cool  
with this.  
(to Wayne)  
I can't wait to hear Devonte rap.  
You ever heard him rap in the  
locker room?

WAYNE

The clean raps or the X-rated ones?

A sprinting (and livid) Mary Kate meets up with the teachers, spouses, and Benson High School's principal.

MARY KATE

Somebody's going down! Down to the GROUND!

Paulette and Mary Kate hug each other.

PAULETTE

It's all right, child...slow your roll. Catch a breath.

MARTHA

Who's going down to the ground?  
What happened?

SHONDA

That's gotta be some kind of serious if you're gonna talk about taking somebody down to the ground.

Mary Kate strains to catch her breath.

MARY KATE

I can't get the backstage piano open! It's all glued up.

ADAM

(looking at Martha)  
Pre-show jitters. Kinda like pregame jitters.

Mary Kate shakes her head "no."

LINDA

Adam...it sounds more serious than that.

MARY KATE

Follow me and I'll...I'll show you.

Mary Kate leads Adam, Brenda, Jeff, Linda, Martha, Paulette, Shonda, and Wayne to...

INT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL ANNEX - AUDITORIUM - BACKSTAGE - DAY

...where Mark, Heather, Greg, Isaiah, Veronica, and Annie push the Engebretsens' 1900-09 upright piano next to the 1980s studio piano. Jasmine and Molly give directions.

MARK

(to Heather)

Honey...when we got married, did you ever think you'd end up being a piano mover?

HEATHER

We'll talk about that later.

Heather sets the piano's stool on the floor, and Annie removes the music rack from the older upright and sets the rack aside.

Warren and Peter carry, respectively, Molly's Gretsch electric guitar and Annie's newly-inherited bass guitar. Sean, Matthew, and Madison tote a camera (or camcorder) each.

While some in the two groups trade AD LIBBED salutations, Mary Kate shows Linda, Paulette, and Brenda the ruined piano.

Wayne eyeballs Molly, Jasmine, Veronica, and Annie.

WAYNE

I love your suits. Great duds.

Annie, Veronica, Jasmine, and Molly nod in pride.

JASMINE

Thanks, Mr. Stoltenberg.

In the background, Brenda and Paulette try to wrestle the newer piano open. They can't.

MOLLY

(to Wayne)

Did you know Jasmine's wearing a suit her great-grandma put on?

Jeff and Adam try to get the 1980s instrument open...but they strike out, too.

JASMINE

Actually, this is Suit Number Two. The first one Grandma Waters bought got eaten up by moths.

Greg overhears the conversation and comes to Wayne's side.

GREG

Anyway, Wayne, Grandma Waters put on Suit Number One when she was trying to get a gig in New York City back around 1923...four years after she bought the suit.

ANNIE

(to Wayne)

She was dressing like this long before Janelle Monae came along.

Shonda and Martha now try to open the 1980-89 piano. When they can't budge it, they stride over to Wayne.

WAYNE

Hey, Jasmine...did your great-grandma get that gig?

JASMINE

Well...no. But wearing that suit sure saved her life.

Wayne, Veronica, Molly, and Annie nod.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

You see, if she'd gone to the club in a dress, well, Grandma Waters wouldn't have--

Martha puts a hand on Wayne's shoulder.

MARTHA

Wayne...we need you.

Wayne follows Martha over to the newer piano; Veronica makes the same trek.

Wayne tries with all his might to open that thing.

VERONICA

We need a crowbar.

Wayne shrugs as he backs away from the 1980s piano.

Mary Kate walks over to Heather and Mark.

MARY KATE

Mr. and Mrs. Engebretsen...would you mind if I warmed up on your piano?

MARK

It's okay, Mary Kate.

Heather just nods.

Before she sits down to play the ancient piano, Mary Kate notices each hammer features a thumb tack.

She reaches for a tack from the piano when:

SEAN (O.S.)

Leave those thumb tacks alone, Mary Kate!

Mary Kate shrugs, then sits down to tickle the keys.

EXT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL ANNEX - NIGHT

Valerie and Alyssa flank a blindfolded-and-gagged-and-handcuffed Ricardo as they lead him into the addition.

INT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL ANNEX - HALLWAY - NIGHT

As Alyssa, Ricardo, and Valerie enter the Benson High School Annex, Marguerite comes over to meet them.

The teenager and the three adults receive stares from PEOPLE who congregate in (or walk up or down) the hallway.

VALERIE

Glad you could make it, Marguerite.

Marguerite and Alyssa nod.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Glad you've made the decision to support your daughter.

ALYSSA

Yeah. I mean, Veronica's amazing.

MARGUERITE

Actually...I'm not here because of Veronica.

It's Alyssa's and Valerie's turn to look stupefied.

ALYSSA

No offense, but...if Veronica heard you say that, well...

MARGUERITE

Well, I came for the comedy duo.

Over by the auditorium entrance, Linda greets SOME MORE PEOPLE when Anya slips into the line...in a tutu.

LINDA  
Knock 'em dead tonight, Anya.

ANYA  
Of course, Ms. Reynolds!

Anya and Linda shake hands...but Linda finds out Anya's right hand still has some patches of glue.

LINDA  
You and I are going to the principal's office. My office.

Linda takes Anya by the arm on the way out of the Annex. Along the way, Anya AD LIBS loud epithets of protest.

Alyssa watches Anya and Linda leave the Annex. The youngest Picasso and her mother continue to hang onto Ricardo...as Marguerite looks on in puzzlement.

MARGUERITE  
Valerie...is your husband gonna be all right?

ALYSSA  
(to Marguerite)  
Well...we'll see.

Valerie just nods as the foursome head for the auditorium.

INT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL ANNEX - AUDITORIUM - STAGE - NIGHT

"Bunny Tracks" is under way at last; Emma, who wears a tuxedo and holds a mike, addresses THE AUDIENCE...a packed house.

EMMA  
Ladies and gentlemen...meet my cohost...Jajuan Grant!

A sort of Anne Hathaway-James Franco vibe emerges: Jajuan comes out in a...a gown!

His entrance touches off laughter from this crowd of people...howling, laughing, happy people.

Jajuan grabs a mike.

JAJUAN  
Hey, folks...this was the only gown in the world that could fit me!

Tons of laughter come from the crowd.

LATER

Devonte Hughes launches things when he strides onto the stage and grabs a mike at center stage.

DEVONTE

C'mon, everybody! This is "Easy D!"  
Put those hands in the air!

When Devonte gains his wish, he cuts into an AD LIBBED rap.

LATER

FIVE MORE STUDENTS (this time, three boys and two girls) do a skit that looks like a "Saturday Night Live" reject.

But it energizes the crowd...especially Marguerite, Peter, and Warren.

EXT. G&R MEXICAN FOOD AND PIZZA MIDTOWN, OMAHA, NE - NIGHT

A 2022 Cadillac pulls into the parking lot...a lot that just isn't that full right now.

Scott Sanderford climbs out from the driver's side; from the right front side, MARTIN ECHEVERRIA (60s) comes out.

A 2009 Honda truck pulls into a space alongside the 2020s car...and out comes its driver, Texas-tongued MELISSA CULPEPPER (50s), who totes a laptop.

Scott, Melissa, and Martin wait before they enter the restaurant together.

SCOTT

Well, this is it. In four hours,  
we'll see if this G&R goes down.

MARTIN

Don't count this place out yet,  
Scott.

Martin holds the door for Melissa and Scott before he goes in himself.

INT. G&R MIDTOWN LOBBY - NIGHT

Melissa drapes an arm around Scott while Martin pulls out his cell phone to take pictures.

MELISSA

(to Scott)

One very interesting thang about  
you: You sho' know how to smell red  
meat.

Carol comes into the lobby and shakes the threesome's hands.

CAROL

Well, this is it.

(nodding at Martin)

We've got the Big Cheese.

(nodding at Melissa)

We've got the chief financial  
officer.

(nodding at Scott)

And then there's...good ol' Scott.

Carol, Melissa, Scott, and Martin head for Dining Room #1.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Welcome to G&R Midtown. Sit any  
place you like.

Carol grabs her own cell phone to do some texting.

INT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL ANNEX - AUDITORIUM - STAGE - NIGHT

Mary Kate's at the Engebretsens' old-fashioned upright, where  
she more than ably coaxes a Mozart piece out of those keys,  
hammers, and strings.

LATER

Vocalists Kody and Chad (each holds a mike and looks at one  
another) take over with "You're the One That I Want."

CHAD

*I got chills. They're multiplyin',  
and I'm losin' control, 'Cause the  
power you're supplyin', it's  
electrifyin'.*

KODY

*You better shape up, 'cause I need  
a man, and my heart is set on  
you./You better shape up, you  
better understand: To my heart I  
must be true.*

Some audience members walk out of the auditorium...but it  
doesn't bother Chad or Kody.

CHAD

*Nothing left, nothing left for me  
to do.*

CHAD, KODY

*You're the one that I want, ooh,  
ooh, ooh, honey,/The one that I  
want, ooh, ooh, ooh, honey.*

Now some remaining audience members clap to the beat.

In the orchestra pit, Patrick (he's in a suit and necktie) leads A DOZEN (OR SO) OTHER STUDENTS into accompanying Kody and Chad...and tries not to look nervous or indignant.

LATER

Rahim holds a mike; it's his turn to sway the "Bunny Tracks" audience...with "How Sweet It Is (to Be Loved by You)."

RAHIM

(singing)

*I needed the shelter of someone's  
arms,/And there you were./I needed  
someone to understand my ups and  
downs,/And there you were.*

Rahim strolls from one end of the stage to the other.

RAHIM (CONT'D)

*With sweet love and  
devotion,/Deeply touching my  
emotions./I wanna stop...and thank  
you baby./I wanna stop--*

He points his mike toward the audience.

AUDIENCE

*STOP!*

Out in the middle of the audience, Greg, Isaiah, Matthew, and especially Steve eat it all up.

LATER

Derek (brandishing his V-neck guitar) and Brittanie (she's on drums) lead THREE OTHER STUDENTS- two more boys (they're on guitars) and an additional girl (she's on bass)- in a death-metal band called Yeast Infection.

Yeast Infection's guitarists raise Cain in the manner of Kiss or Van Halen...and they've got the crowd in convulsions.

INT. G&R MIDTOWN DINING ROOM #1 - NIGHT

The place is just about one-third full as Barbara and Philip wait on CUSTOMERS...and, at times, even Carol pitches in to wait on eaters.

Music's in the air here, too, but instead of Really Old School providing it...A MAN (60s) plays the battered upright, A WOMAN (70s) tickles the saloon upright's ivories, A SECOND MAN (30s) is at the former player upright, and A PRETEEN GIRL holds her own playing the five-pedal upright.

Still, the overall results sound uneven.

In the middle of the room, Melissa, Scott, and Martin eat combination platters and/or split a pizza or two.

SCOTT

Melissa...you got any aspirin?

MELISSA

Nope.

SCOTT

You got any antacids?

MARTIN

(pointing at Scott)

Don't tell me you left 'em at the hotel!

Martin bolts up, goes to a soft-drink dispenser, grabs a glass, puts the glass underneath the spigot, and pushes the lemon-lime button.

Out comes that sparkling, bubbly drink.

Martin goes back to the table and sets the full pop glass in front of Scott.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Try this, Scott.

A grateful-looking Scott drinks up.

INT. BENSON HIGH SCHOOL ANNEX - AUDITORIUM - STAGE - NIGHT

With Anya out, her troupe is now called the Three Ballerinas...Janae, Lupe, and Veronica's replacement, Lily.

Patrick prepares to strike up the pit orchestra...but Lily, Lupe, and Janae wave him off and point to Mike, who uses a few mouse clicks to fire up A ROCK/HIP-HOP/COUNTRY TUNE.

The Three Ballerinas begin their "Swan Lake" shred.

LATER

The 1980s studio piano has been replaced by the one in the vocal music room. And this time, its hammers stand exposed.

Forbesy (she's in a tuxedo) sits at its bench...bow in one hand and a musical saw in the other, she plays the Eagles' "Desperado" or some other 1970s soft-rock tune.

When Forbesy's number ends to good applause, Kaitlyn sprints onstage...shocking Emma, Forbesy, and Jajuan.

Kaitlyn goes to the same replacement piano...and she gives it quite a workout as she plays the famous intro to Vanessa Carlton's "A Thousand Miles."

Forbesy (saw, bow, and all) sprints offstage. She waves to the audience.

After the intro, Kaitlyn adds vocals to her playing:

KAITLYN

*Making my way downtown,/Walking  
fast./Faces pass,/And I'm  
homebound.*

She looks at the audience and flashes that look of victory.

KAITLYN (CONT'D)

*Staring blankly ahead,/Just making  
my way,/Making a way/Through the  
crowd.*

The "Bunny Tracks" orchestra jumps in to back Kaitlyn up.

LATER

Ayele and Shawntelle (each holds a mike) stand front and center for their brand of comedy.

SHAWNTELLE

Ayele, you've gotta be kidding!

AYELE

You're embarrassing yourself...and  
us...as we speak.

SHAWNTELLE

You know better than to think all  
the great spies in history came  
outa Europe or Asia.

Quite a few heads in the audience nod.

AYELE

Look, Shawntelle--

SHAWNTELLE

Don't you know we've got some great spies right here in this country?

Most of the crowd cracks up with laughter...and Marguerite's one of those laughing the loudest.

SHAWNTELLE (CONT'D)

And some of those spies are right here in this school!

As the laughter continues, some of the Benson students look around at each other.

LATER

Jajuan and Emma return to the stage...and this time, both emcees wear tuxedos. In addition, the cohosts grab mikes.

EMMA

Well, folks, that's all the time we have. Give yourselves a hand!

The audience does just that.

Paulette, wearing a headset mike, sits in the front row and frantically waves her arms.

Jajuan turns to Emma.

JAJUAN

No, Emma...there's room for one more act.

Jasmine, Molly, Veronica, and Annie stand on the edge of the stage...where Molly seethes. Her bandmates try to calm her.

Jajuan walks away from Emma as he addresses the crowd...Paulette stops waving her arms.

JAJUAN (CONT'D)

In fact, this band was the first act to sign up for this year's "Bunny Tracks."

Emma looks embarrassed.

JAJUAN (CONT'D)

If you ever wondered what the music  
the kids of a hundred years ago  
were digging sounded like,  
well...Jasmine and Annie and Molly  
and Veronica are ready to show you  
right now...with some wrinkles.

Jajuan gestures to a buzzing audience.

JAJUAN (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen...put your  
hands together for Really Old  
School!

The audience erupts with tremendous applause.

Jajuan and Emma put their mikes back into place and leave the  
stage...Molly sits at the vocal music room's piano, Veronica  
sits at the Engebretsens' old upright, and Jasmine and Annie  
sit at an electronic keyboard each.

JASMINE

(into her keyboard mike)

We'd like to do a number that my  
great-grandma wrote in 1917...when  
she was a teenager.

Molly, Jasmine, Annie, and Veronica pound out the first  
strain of "River City Blues." It's a sixteen-bar affair.

During a vamp of a bar or two, Molly gets up and straps her  
electric guitar on...to add sixteen bars of bluesy pickin'  
while Annie's, Jasmine's, and Veronica's keyboard work  
continues. (It's all a repeat of the first strain.)

Another vamp is a cue for Annie to jump up and grab her bass  
guitar. When the band does the first strain again, Annie  
doubles up on Veronica's and Jasmine's steady left-hand  
playing. All the while, Molly's bluesy guitar work continues.

Annie and Molly reach center stage (and stand behind mikes)  
during the next vamp...when Jasmine sprints over to a drum  
set to bang out a machine-gun-pace drum fill.

Now Veronica's the only bandmember tickling any ivories.

When it's time to do the first strain again, it's got vocals.

JASMINE (CONT'D)  
 (into her drum-set mike)  
*I'm on my way to a brand-new  
 place./Don't worry 'bout me. I  
 won't be a disgrace.*

MOLLY  
 (into her mike)  
*I'm gonna sing it strong, I'm gonna  
 sing it loud:/I'm gonna make this  
 big ol' River City proud.*

ANNIE  
 (into her mike)  
*I'm leaving today.*

VERONICA  
 (into her mike)  
*Yes, I'm on my way.*

Toward the front, Mark and Heather look proud.

Several rows back, Warren and Peter flank Marguerite...who looks pleasantly surprised while her sons give her a we-told-you-so look.

Really Old School's up to the tune's second strain.

JASMINE  
*You know, my tank is full/And so's  
 my belly, too.*

VERONICA  
*I've got a lot of places to see/And  
 lots of things to do.*

ANNIE  
*Come look for me./I'll be heading  
 your way.*

MOLLY  
*I've gotta sing it strong, I'm  
 gonna sing it loud:/I'm gonna make  
 this big ol' River City proud.*

ANNIE, JASMINE, MOLLY, VERONICA  
*We've packed up today,/And we're on  
 our way.*

Veronica, Molly, Jasmine, and Annie take "River City Blues" back to Strain Number One, with Molly's guitar and Veronica's piano leading the way.

Valerie and Alyssa, who love the music, flank the still-handcuffed, still-blindfolded, still-gagged Ricardo.

ALYSSA  
(to Ricardo)  
Well...at least she's playing something.

Brenda, Linda, Jeff, Shonda, Wayne, Martha, and Adam sit together...and Martha's the only septet member who still looks annoyed about the ragtime act.

The band vamps its way out of the first strain by thinning the instrumentation down to Jasmine's drums.

While Molly and Annie set their instruments aside, Veronica jumps up from the old upright, grabs its mike, and...becomes a beatbox.

Molly claps to the beat...Annie grabs her mike, then strolls the stage.

ANNIE  
(rapping)  
*Don't you know that you're  
unique,/Like no one else now, don't  
you see?/They broke the mold there  
on the day that they made you.*

Many of the youngest "Bunny Tracks" attendees clap to the beat...as do Adrienne, Mary Jo, and Neal (seated together).

ANNIE (CONT'D)  
*You've got dreams you wanna  
share,/Things for which you really  
care./Don't you let 'em take away  
the things that make you you.*

Annie looks more confident with each line she raps. Now she really struts her stuff onstage.

ANNIE (CONT'D)  
*You belong here on this Earth,/So,  
go for all the things you're  
worth./Don't let no one define  
you./Don't let no one confine  
you./You've got your whole life  
ahead of you, so c'mon and--*

ANNIE, JASMINE, MOLLY, VERONICA  
*BE YOURSELF!*

In the audience, Neal rises and punches a fist into the air.

NEAL

YEAH!!

Mary Jo and Adrienne nod as Neal sits back down; all three join in the wild applause.

Isaiah, Matthew, and Greg look more than ecstatic.

GREG

(to Steve)

See anybody up there shuffling now?

An embarrassed Steve shakes his head "no."

Onstage, Jasmine rips into a fire-breathing drum solo.

During it, Veronica puts the upright piano's mike back into place and sprints over to Molly's side.

Molly grabs her guitar and puts it on Veronica, then sprints over to the 1900s piano...Annie grabs her bass to riff away.

All that riffing evolves into a repeat of the tune's first strain once Molly bangs the old upright's keys and Veronica adds her own bluesy guitar playing.

Led by the bandmembers' parents and siblings, the audience erupts into heartfelt applause while Really Old School keeps the first strain going.

Several people even dance in their seats.

Paulette gives the whole thing a "thumbs up."

INT. G&R MIDTOWN DINING ROOM #1 - NIGHT

Melissa, Martin, and Scott, at the same table as before, gaze at Melissa's laptop when Molly, Jasmine, Annie, and Veronica (and their siblings and parents) come into the dining room.

Enough "Bunny Tracks" performers and attendees to fill up the restaurant's two dining rooms follow. (Some members of those two groups wear jackets/T-shirts/hoodies that say "BENSON" and/or "BUNNIES" on the front.)

Martin and Melissa look grateful...Scott looks dumbfounded.

MARTIN

(getting up)

I've got this...I just wanna show  
I've still got it as a server.

Martin walks over to the first table he can find to wait on its occupants. Scott watches some of the new eaters sit down...then looks at Melissa.

SCOTT  
I don't get it.

MELISSA  
Git what, Scott?

SCOTT  
Most of the high schools here in the area have real nicknames for their teams...like Warriors and Eagles and Huskies and Bears and Cougars and...

Melissa looks annoyed.

SCOTT (CONT'D)  
Crusaders and Monarchs and Titans and Mustangs and Patriots and Vikings and Packers.

Scott thumbs toward a table whose occupants wear Benson gear.

SCOTT (CONT'D)  
Melissa, what kind of school calls its teams the Bunnies? The Bunnies? Couldn't they pick--

MELISSA  
Wail, Elmer Fudd and Yosemite Sam never, ever, ever outfoxed Bugs Bunny, did they?

Scott shows that deer-in-the-headlights look.

MELISSA (CONT'D)  
Mah God, didn't you ever watch any cartoons on TV when you were knee-high to a frog?

Now Scott just shrugs.

Greg, Jasmine, Isaiah, and Matthew sit at a table in the middle of the dining room while Martin, Carol, Barbara, and Philip work tables in the vicinity of the Greenwood family's.

ISAIAH  
I know Grandma Waters is smiling down tonight.

Greg and his children high-five it when Kody and Chad arrive.

MATTHEW

Way to work it, Jasmine!

Jasmine AD LIBS her thanks before she stands up and eyeballs Chad and Kody.

JASMINE

Kody...Chad...great job, you two!

Kody stands there in shock.

CHAD

You, too, Jasmine!

Chad and Jasmine exchange high fives.

KODY

Aw...what the heck?

It's high fives for Jasmine and Kody.

Toward the back of the room, Molly (who whips out a deck of cards), Sean, and Madison sit with Mark and Heather when Martin comes over.

MOLLY

Pick a card, Sean. Any card you want.

While Sean selects a card, Mark looks up at Martin.

MARK

Martin...you sure Heather and I can't help?

HEATHER

This is great!  
(looking around)  
In fact, this place is getting more attention than Hillary Clinton's emails.

MARTIN

How'd you guys get this place packed tonight?

SEAN

(to Martin)  
Molly and Jasmine and Veronica and Annie invited the audience at the talent show to come over.

MADISON

And they said: "Just like ragtime's  
worth saving...there's a certain  
restaurant that's worth saving."

(to Sean)

Tell Molly what card you picked.

Molly shakes her head "no" and reveals Sean's card choice.

Veronica, Warren, and Peter smile...as does Marguerite. (This quartet sits at a table at the front of the room.)

MARGUERITE

You know, Peter and Warren...you  
were absolutely right...you've got  
an amazing sister.

VERONICA

Aw, Mom.

MARGUERITE

Veronica, you've more than stepped  
up since your dad and I got  
divorced.

WARREN

Don't forget: Really Old School  
wouldn't be a band without her.

(holds Veronica's hands)

Great job tonight, sis.

MARGUERITE

(to Veronica)

I'm so sorry I ever doubted you.

VERONICA

Aw, Mom, it's all good.

PETER

Now that calls for a toast!

Marguerite and her children raise their pop glasses/water  
glasses/tea glasses before clanging them together.

Ricardo's no longer handcuffed, gagged, or blindfolded.  
Still, he looks somber as he shares a booth with Alyssa,  
Annie, and Valerie.

RICARDO

Annie...Annie, you had everybody  
eating out of your hand at the  
talent show tonight...you and your  
fellow musicians.

ANNIE

Well, once we got up there, we had a ball.

RICARDO

I wasn't gonna go tonight, but your mom and your sister had to tie me down to get me to go support you.

Valerie and Alyssa shake their heads "yes."

RICARDO (CONT'D)

Annie...I realize how much playing in a band...especially this one...means to you.

Annie's is a slow nod.

RICARDO (CONT'D)

I stole your mom's dreams a long time ago. And now, she's warned me not to steal your dreams.

Ricardo chokes up.

RICARDO (CONT'D)

You and your sister and your mom are the three most important people in the world to me...all I want for all three of you is to feel happy.

Ricardo and Annie grasp each other's hands.

RICARDO (CONT'D)

You're every bit a winner. I'm proud of you.  
(sobbing)  
I'm truly sorry...for stealing your dreams.

Annie and Ricardo arise and stand next to the booth; still crying, he buries his head in her embrace.

ANNIE

It's all right...it's all right.

Carol (she brings menus with her) comes over to the Picassos' booth...only to notice Ricardo's and Annie's embrace.

CAROL

(to Alyssa and Valerie)  
Is everything all right?

A smiling Valerie nods...Alyssa points a thumb upwards.

INT. G&R MIDTOWN MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Scott and Heather (both use their laptops) sit at the desk of a rather tidy, rather orderly, good-sized space. Melissa, Martin, and Mark stand right behind them.

The door's closed.

MARK

Everybody...if you'll excuse me...

Mark opens it and finds...Annie, Jasmine, Madison, Molly, Sean, and Veronica standing on the other side.

MARK (CONT'D)

Come on in.

(gesturing)

I think you all need to hear this, too.

The six teens saunter inside the office, where they find Heather and Scott painstakingly crunching numbers.

After a few seconds, Madison hums the theme from "Jeopardy!"

SEAN

(whispering)

Madison...don't go there.

Madison stops her humming when she receives dirty looks from Heather and Molly.

All the ciphering ends...and Scott turns to Mark and Heather (both of whom hold hands).

SCOTT

Do you two remember when we asked for a twenty-five-percent sales increase over last year by this time seven months ago?

Sean, Molly, and Madison hold each other's hands.

HEATHER

Yep.

SCOTT

Well..you gave us a thirty-percent increase.

Scott shakes Heather's hand, then shakes Mark's hand.

SCOTT (CONT'D)  
 Congratulations. You did it.

That proclamation touches off handshakes, hugs, and other displays of jubilation from the five adults and six teens.

Heather and Mark seek Molly, Veronica, Annie, and Jasmine.

MARK  
You did it.

Really Old School's four members eye each other in disbelief.

HEATHER  
 That's the truth...I mean, if it weren't for you four girls, this restaurant would be...well, a used-car lot.

Veronica and Annie look at each other before shrugging. Madison and Molly hug.

MOLLY  
 Maddy, you did it!

MADISON  
 What'd I do?

MOLLY  
 Well, if you hadn't said that we were just four girls playing piano, well...you gave us a spark.

Madison looks shocked.

MOLLY (CONT'D)  
 Thanks!

MADISON  
 You're welcome!

When Molly and Madison break their embrace, Jasmine gestures her bandmates out of the office.

JASMINE  
 We can't keep this a secret!

INT. G&R MIDTOWN DINING ROOM #1 - NIGHT

Jasmine, Molly, Veronica, and Annie sprint onto the stage; each ragtimer grabs a mike to address the crowd.

Veronica spots Brittanie, Derek, and their colleagues from Yeast Infection.

VERONICA  
(into her mike)  
You guys still wanna hear us do  
"Smoke on the Water?"

DEREK  
Doggone right!

JASMINE  
(into her mike)  
Tell you what, Derek: Come right  
back here tomorrow.

MOLLY  
(into her mike)  
Seven o'clock PM...sharp!

ANNIE  
(into her mike)  
Besides...that tune works better  
with an organ.

FREEZE FRAME on the eaters' jubilant reaction.

FADE OUT.

THE END