

THE DANGEROUS BOOK FOR BOYS

"How To Play Poker"
(EPISODE 2)

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*Based on 'The Dangerous Book for Boys'
by Conn Iggulden and Hal Iggulden*

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MOON SHOT ENTERTAINMENT

INT. MCKENNA HOME - KITCHEN - A SATURDAY MORNING

CLOSE ON MR. FOSTER, dour, middle-aged, dandruff powdering the shoulders of his Men's Wearhouse suit. He checks his watch and sighs impatiently.

VOICE (O.C.)
AAAAAGHHHHH!!!

Mr. Foster jumps. He turns and looks toward the family room. Dash walks through, wearing virtual reality goggles.

MR. FOSTER
Excuse me, son, will your mother be much longer-

DASH
Die, zombies! DIE!!!

Dash runs off, karate chopping at virtual zombies. Mr. Foster turns forward and is startled to see Liam standing in front of him, wearing headphones, staring at him.

LIAM
(in Mandarin, with subtitles)
I have a stomach problem. Where is the bathroom, please?

Liam repeats the phrase as he grabs a drink and exits. Wyatt enters, holding a book, and opens the lid of an appliance that looks like a juicer. He places a whole pineapple into it. He flips the switch which makes an INSANE RACKET. Wyatt places a bowl under a spout. The machine starts spitting out bite-sized chunks of pineapple, ready to eat. Pretty cool.

Uncle Terry enters with a bucket full of god-knows-what and heads to the sink. He makes eye contact with Mr. Foster -- he freezes, slowly does a nervous about face, and quickly exits.

MR. FOSTER
(yelling to Wyatt)
WOULD YOU PLEASE TELL YOUR MOTHER --
(Wyatt silences the machine)
THAT I HAVE another appointment.

WYATT
Oh my mom, says she'll be out in a minute, she's sorry.

Wyatt exits into the family room with his book and pineapple chunks. But Dash is going bananas, blowing off zombie's heads. Wyatt leaves.

INT. THE BOYS' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Wyatt enters to find Liam, still with headphones on.

LIAM
(in Mandarin, with
subtitles)
I need a doctor, my mucus is
discolored.

Wyatt sighs and exits.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Foster looks at his watch. Tiffany enters from the front door - dressed to the nines - but it was a very long night. Wyatt passes by in the background. She sleepily walks right up to Mr. Foster, turns her back and lifts her hair.

TIFFANY
Would'ja undo me?

Mr. Foster stands and nervously unhooks the clasp on her dress. She peels off her high heels to great relief.

TIFFANY
Start the zipper for me, will ya hon?

An uncomfortable Mr. Foster complies.

TIFFANY
Such a gentleman. Night.

She saunters off. Mr. Foster looks pale as he drops his head into his hands.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - NOT LONG AFTER

Beth studies a check in her hand with disbelief. She and the persnickety Mr. Foster are having a hushed conversation.

BETH
Please tell me this is the first
installment.

MR. FOSTER
I'm afraid not Mrs. McKenna. That
represents the entire payout for the
policy on your late husband.

BETH
I'm responsible for my three children,
my mother-in-law, and my brother-in-
law, so let's just say five children.

MR. FOSTER

If you'll recall, several letters were sent regarding being under-insured.

BETH

I thought those letters were just trying to sell me more insurance.

MR. FOSTER

Well, yes, that's exactly what they were. I understand that you're going through a very difficult time-

BETH

Please, I don't want compassion right now - I need solutions. This is financially disastrous for my family.
(as she stands up)
Thank you for your time, Mr. Foster.

Mr. Foster closes his briefcase and stands.

MR. FOSTER

My condolences, Mrs. McKenna.

He exits. Beth's guard falls. She is really worried.

BETH

Oh, God.

Beth exits. After a beat, Wyatt emerges from behind a big chair, his book in his hand. He heard the whole thing. Now he's worried too.

INT. KITCHEN - THAT NIGHT

Everyone has gathered for dinner. Tiffany sympathetically looks over at Beth, who is unusually silent as she eats.

TIFFANY

(sotto voce)
We'll figure this out. You'll find something, and we'll all pitch in.

Terry smiles at Beth. He starts series of a mimes - "don't worry", "I have an idea", "a BIG idea", "to make money". The boys are watching this routine with confusion.

LIAM

Are you having a stroke?

UNCLE TERRY

No no, just - adult talk.

TIFFANY

Yes, very adult. You wouldn't understand. It's an advanced language.

DASH

Like Spock?

WYATT

Mom, is there a, a money problem?

BETH

(inhales deeply and smiles convincingly)

No. No problem. We're, we're fine. Just fine. Really.

The boys stare at her, then shrug. Wyatt looks uncertain.

INT. BOYS' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Liam and Dash are involved in some weird stunt that Liam is going to record. It involves Dash consuming some vile looking liquid, in his other hand is a jar of live crickets. Wyatt enters and takes in the set up as he talks.

WYATT

Guys, mom's worried about money...What are you - are you eating crickets?

DASH

Not eating. Swallowing. Learn the difference.

WYATT

(with deliberate concern)

What is going on?

[note: each time we cut back to Dash there are fewer crickets in the jar]

DASH

(while burping)

Liam's a genius is what.

LIAM

We're recording a video that'll go viral and make me rich, so I can buy an island and put you all in exile.

DASH

(an aside to Wyatt)

Exile is the name of the island.

WYATT

No, that's not what exile --

LIAM

Wyatt, shut up! Okay, Dash. Finish!

Dash sets the now empty cricket jar and liquid container down, then stuffs a wad of knotted string in his mouth, figuring out how to swallow it.

WYATT

Dash! Are you friggin' crazy? You'll choke to death!

On Dash - it's too late - he's swallowed it. All that remains is a long leader of string coming out of his mouth.

DASH

Your jealousy is ugly Wyatt. Face it, we're going to be on Tosh.0 and you can't stop us. Exile, here I come!

Liam ties the string to pulley-system involving a dumbbell and a door knob, as Wyatt gets back on point.

WYATT

Guys, listen. I overheard mom talking to that insurance man this morning. She was saying something about a financial disaster.

The string is taugt in Dash's mouth, like a fish on a line.

DASH

No, mom said everything's fine.

LIAM

Yeah, who are we going to believe, you or mom? We're rolling, Wyatt, move away!

Wyatt sighs. He grabs the Dangerous Book off the shelf, takes one last look at his brothers' lunacy, and exits.

LIAM (O.C.)

3, 2, 1, now!

In the Hall WE HEAR a DOOR SLAM, then the sound of Dash HEAVING, quickly followed by a GEYSER of LIQUID - followed by the CHIRPING OF DOZENS OF CRICKETS. Wyatt grimaces.

EXT. BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Under the porch light Wyatt, seeking consolation, sits with the Dangerous Book. He's slowly flipping through the pages, trying to decide on an entry to discover. We see flashes of illustrations, maps, old photos... something catches Wyatt's attention. He backs up a page.

HOW TO PLAY POKER

-- accompanied by many illustrations of various poker hands.

PUSH IN ON Wyatt's face as he begins to take in the rules and strategies of this gambling pastime...

INT. KITCHEN - LATER - FANTASY - [ALL FANTASIES IN ITALICS]

CLOSE ON CARDS being dealt onto the table. WYATT is watching.

VOICE (O.C.)

Should I deal you in, son?

Wyatt turns. His father is sitting at the table, wearing a green casino visor. We are in the first FANTASY!

PATRICK

Five card draw?

WYATT

Uh... sure. Hi dad.

PATRICK

You look good, Wyatt. Little taller.

Now, also at the table are Beth, Liam, Dash -- and Mr. Foster! Patrick deals Wyatt in and off we go...

FAST CUTS -

of hand after hand. Tiffany throws down a full house, scoops up the chips. Liam bluffs his way to the next win. Dash leans back to sneak a look at Mr. Foster's cards -- Beth snaps her fingers at him to stop. Meanwhile, Wyatt's stack of chips gets smaller and smaller...

We slow down to watch the end of a hand.

TERRY

Two knuckles, and three shovels.

WE SEE Terry's cards laid out. Two Clubs & Three Spades.

TIFFANY

A full house of nothing. Still, it's an improvement. Beats me.

BETH

Me, too.

WYATT

*(smiling)
Pair of Aces.*

BETH

Hey, good hand Wyatt.

LIAM

Motown. Jacks 'n Fives.

Liam lays down his two pair and collects his pot. Dash grins at Wyatt, who is down to his last chip.

DASH

You're getting owned, Wyatt.

The room goes black -- Spotlights up on Wyatt and Patrick.

PATRICK

You are getting owned.

WYATT

I'm not good at this. I'm too young to gamble anyway, what's the point?

PATRICK

Son, poker is more than just gambling. Those fellas on the Mississippi riverboats and saloons of the Wild West knew that there were great powers to be unlocked from poker.

WYATT

When Tiffany plays it on her laptop it just makes her curse a lot.

PATRICK

Ah, yes... Your grandmother is true to her hippie nature - "stick it to the man!" Some day I'll tell you about your grandfather. He was a sea captain. Or a foreign diplomat - I forget which one my mother finally decided on.

(Wyatt looks confused)

Now, winning poker requires sharp wits and nerves of steel. Wouldn't you like sharper wits and steelier nerves? Might help you get up the courage to talk to Riley Fleishacker.

WYATT

Wait, how did you --? Oh, right. This is my imagination.

PATRICK

And you have a great one! Even as a baby your mom and I would watch you go into an animated state of wonder.

(MORE)

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Your face would contort, then look curious, then finally smile. We thought it was some kind of "baby mind traveling", but it just turned out that you had a full diaper.

WYATT

(trying to process)

Dad, I think mom has money trouble. What should I do?

PATRICK

Your mom is the smartest person I know. And she's also wonderfully sensitive. She'll need some help.

WYATT

Can't you just tell me what to do?

PATRICK

I'm afraid it doesn't work that way, son. Life is an amazing journey, Wyatt. Full of adventure. So, buckle-up and enjoy the ride... Ready to learn about poker?

Wyatt nods, but not very confidently.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Okay well, let's help you find those powers, Wyatt. Now first rule - you can't just play your cards, you have to play your opponent's.

WYATT

Huh? But how am I supposed to know what they have? Cheat? It's all just about luck, isn't it?

PATRICK

No. That's what's so interesting about it. It's about observing human behavior. This happened a little while ago, remember?

Patrick snaps his fingers and a spotlight appears over Terry.

Uncle Terry is dealt two cards. He looks overly displeased.

UNCLE TERRY

Aw, darn it. Can't get a break.

Patrick snaps his fingers and Terry freezes.

PATRICK

How do you think he's behaving?

WYATT

Like a bad actor?

PATRICK

Good observation. Your uncle seems to put on a little performance... but why? Does he do that with good cards or bad? Think about it. Now, here--

Liam is dealt his final cards and picks up his hand. He re-orders the cards and puts them down. He reveals no emotion -- but he absentmindedly rubs his hands together.

PATRICK

By observing his behavior, what would you say Liam just got?

WYATT

A good hand? He rubbed his hands together like he might be excited.

PATRICK

I can't say - that would be cheating. You have to decide what it all means.

He snaps his fingers and a spotlight appears over Tiffany.

TIFFANY

(cocky)

I'll see your two chips and raise you three.

PATRICK

Is she sitting on a good hand or bluffing?

WYATT

How can I know? She's a way better actor than Uncle Terry.

PATRICK

Carefully observe her, Wyatt. Watch it again.

Patrick snaps, and we see a repeat of Tiffany from a moment ago. CLOSE on Tiffany's hand - she's drumming her fingers.

TIFFANY (O.C.)

I'll see your two chips and raise you three.

WYATT

She drums her fingers...Wait. I remember that hand. She was bluffing. Cool.

Patrick smiles. This is getting fun. SNAP! - a spotlight appears over Beth studying her cards. Wyatt is watching with hyper-focus. He sees her steal a deep inhale.

WYATT

There! She did a little breath. Like, like she was hiding a yawn at the table. But what does it mean?

PATRICK

Let's see how it plays out.

Mr. Foster calls Beth's bet. Beth let's out a huge exhale.

BETH

(laughingly)
You caught me.

WYATT

So, she sneaks an inhale when she's bluffing?

PATRICK

Maybe. That's for you to figure out. When you do, you've discovered a player's "tell." Very useful.

WYATT

A "tell", yeah, I read about that. An indicator that could mean if a player is telling the truth or lying.

PATRICK

Exactly, Wyatt.

SNAP! Dash, studying his cards, digs a finger into his nose.

WYATT

Aha! Dash's tell!

PATRICK

Ah, no I think he's just picking his nose. Oh, Dash. But you just got your first lesson in poker. Well done.

Wyatt and his father share a smile.

EXT. MCKENNA HOME - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Wyatt breaks from a distant stare. He enjoyed his journey.

INT. KITCHEN - MONDAY MORNING

Wyatt, dressed for school, crunches on a waffle as Beth reads off an iPad, sipping coffee.

WYATT

Mom, I'm thinking of starting a business. Like a lemonade stand. But Liam says to succeed I gotta build a better rat trap. So, it'll be made from the best ingredients and I'll call it: Rat Trap Lemonade. And you can have all the money I make.

Beth is touched by her son's compassion, but still can't come clean about the family's financial status.

BETH

I think that's a great idea, Wyatt... but you might want to think of different names.

INSERT IPAD -

Employment heading on Monster.com fills the screen. A drawing is dropped right on her iPad. A crude sketch of a storefront, with palm trees and a sign reading: "ALOHA AKRON"

Beth looks up. Uncle Terry is smiling down at her.

BETH

This is...?

UNCLE TERRY

The answer to our -
(a look toward Wyatt)
our M-O-N-E-Y problems.

Wyatt rolls his eyes. Beth lets it go without comment.

UNCLE TERRY

A "surf shop."

Did Wyatt just notice Beth inhaling slightly?

BETH

Um, Terry, there are no surf shops in Akron, Ohio.

UNCLE TERRY

Exactly! We'll corner the entire market!

Beth inhales stealthily. Yep, Wyatt definitely saw that.

BETH

Right. Well, that's a, a good idea,
Terry. We'll explore that further.

UNCLE TERRY

Great. I'm going to start working on a
proboscis.

BETH

A prospectus. A proboscis is a nose.

UNCLE TERRY

(covering his mistake)

I know. I'm gonna "sniff" out a plan.

WYATT

Mom, you're not telling the truth.

Beth and Terry turn to Wyatt, who is fascinated by his realization, not punitive.

WYATT (CONT'D)

You think his idea stinks. And it
does, Uncle Terry, it's terrible.

Uncle Terry turns to Beth, who tries to explain.

BETH

I, uh... I just think it needs more --

UNCLE TERRY

You think it stinks. Why didn't you
just say so?

Uncle Terry, looking a bit hurt, slinks out of the room.

BETH

(after a pause)

Wyatt, why did you say that?

WYATT

I picked up your tell.

BETH

My what? Never mind... Honey, I just,
I wish you hadn't said that.

WYATT

But... Mom, you have to be honest,
right?

She squeezes his shoulder gently - she's not mad.

BETH

Not always, Wyatt.

Beth walks away, leaving her very confused son.

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

A fourth grade classmate, RILEY, really cute, lively, talks with her friends before class has started.

Wyatt, pining for Riley from afar. He sits with Sam.

SAM

Why don't you talk to the new girl?

WYATT

What would I say?

SAM

How about "Hey Riley have you read Fifty Shades of Grey?"

WYATT

What's that?

SAM

Some book my mom really liked. She couldn't put it down. I think it's about decorating.

WYATT

Why would Riley read books that your mom reads?

SAM

(shrugging)

'Cause girls mature faster.

(whispering)

Oh God, she's looking this way!

Indeed, Riley is glancing over at Wyatt. She immediately runs her fingers through her hair, then looks away. Wyatt smiles.

WYATT

That's her tell!

SAM

What is she telling you?

WYATT

I don't know... yet.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - DAY

Dash is lying on the floor, VR goggles strapped to his face. The DOORBELL RINGS.

BETH (O.S.)
Can you answer that?

DASH
Whoa, Dude, you lost your head!

INT. FRONT HALL - CONTINUOUS

A frazzled Beth opens the door. A pretty eleven-year-old girl (ARIANNA) is on the stoop.

BETH
Hello?

ARIANNA
Hi, I'm Arianna.
(off Beth's silence)
I'm here to tutor Dash?

BETH
Oh, Gosh! Uh, please come in.

Arianna enters.

BETH (CONT'D)
I need to apologize, Arianna. You see, when I asked the school for a tutor, I thought we could... afford it, but--

Dash wanders in, "goggle blind" bumping into furniture.

BETH
Dash, this - would you take those off?

He removes the goggles.

BETH (CONT'D)
This is Arianna.

DASH
Yo. Hey, you look familiar.

ARIANNA
(sarcastically)
I do? I don't know why. We've only been in the same class for two years.

DASH
(sincerely)
Maybe that's where I've seen you.

BETH
I hired her to tutor you in math - but we can't right now. Arianna, I'll pay you a little something for your time.

ARIANNA

It's okay. Since I'm here, I might as well do it. You don't have to pay me.

DASH

I don't need a math tutor.

BETH

You're failing math.

DASH

How good can she be if she's free?

BETH

(showing teeth)

Dash. Go to the dining room with Arianna and - learn something.

EXT. STORE - DAY

A massive box store. **PLETHORA**: "From Food To Formals!"

INT. PLETHORA STORE - CONTINUOUS

Tiffany is at a return window with articles of clothing.

CLERK

Didn't these fit?

TIFFANY

Didn't fit my budget, honey. Store credit is fine - I need to do some grocery shopping.

PRODUCE SECTION

A fork lift hauls an immense crate of watermelons. Tiffany, with a hand basket, is nearby selecting bananas.

A VIOLENT CRASH draws her attention.

The immense crate of watermelons has fallen off the fork-lift, bursting open, the contents spilling out -- and they're all rolling toward her like a bowling pin's worst nightmare! Tiffany sees it at the last second and screams!

The pitch of her WAILING CRY happens to perfectly match --

An Ambulance's SIREN

EXT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ENTRANCE

The ambulance fast approaches the ER entry doors.

INT. HOSPITAL - PRIVATE ROOM - LATER

Beth and the boys enter. Tiffany in bed, talks to a male DOCTOR.

DOCTOR

Good news. The X-rays came back negative. No internal bleeding. No broken bones. Just the small contusion on your arm, and the bruise on your noggin. You should be good to go.

TIFFANY

Are you sure? My back is killing me... and my neck.

DOCTOR

Well, that does concern me.
(contemplating)
Let's keep you here, do a few more tests. But overall you're in wonderful shape.

TIFFANY

(flirtatiously)
Why thank you, doctor.

DOCTOR

(a bit thrown)
Okay. Well, I'll check in with you a bit later.

He hurries out.

BETH

Thank god you're okay.

TIFFANY

I am not okay. Look at this, I can't lower my head any further than this.

DASH

That's so freaky.

LIAM

Tiffany, when you do that it looks like you have three chins.

TIFFANY

Shush, Liam, I'm in trauma.

A female NEUROLOGIST enters. Tiffany feigns discomfort.

NEUROLOGIST

Hi, Mrs. McKenna, I'm --

TIFFANY

Ms. McKenna.

NEUROLOGIST

Ms. McKenna. I'm Doctor O'Neill, a neurologist. May I ask you a few questions?

TIFFANY

I'll try to answer, doctor, but things are very foggy right now.

NEUROLOGIST

I understand. We'll keep it simple. Ms. McKenna. Can you tell me what year it is?

TIFFANY

Hmm. Let me think...twenty...thirty-five - no, twenty thirty six!

Wyatt notices something. Tiffany slightly drums her fingers on the bedspread -- her tell. Is she bluffing?!

NEUROLOGIST

Ah. And who is the president?

TIFFANY

That I know. President Beyonce.

LIAM

Awesome.

DASH

Did I miss the election?

INT. MCKENNA HOUSE - KITCHEN - NEXT MORNING

Beth is loading up the dishwasher, post-breakfast.

BETH

(calling out)

Let's go boys, The Mom Bus leaves in ten!

She looks up from the sink -- AND IS FACE-TO-FACE WITH A LLAMA, peering through the open kitchen window.

She SHRIEKS!

EXT. MCKENNA HOUSE - BACKYARD - LATER

Beth, Liam and Wyatt stand in front of Uncle Terry, who is holding a rein attached to the llama.

UNCLE TERRY

Found him on Craig's List. All I need is a trailer. And a truck. And llama food. And somewhere to put it.

LIAM

So, a one-animal petting zoo?

UNCLE TERRY

Exotic petting zoo. I also have a lead on a two-headed gopher sealed in a jar of formaldehyde. We'll make a mint!

Beth steals a deep inhale and smiles at Terry. She's about to speak when she clocks Wyatt watching her.

BETH

School. Now. Move it. Dash!

Beth heads off, the boys follow. Dash comes out of the house.

DASH

Whoa, what a freaky-looking horse. Let's ride that thing!

EXT. MCKENNA HOME - THAT AFTERNOON

Kids are home from school, playing on their lawns. Arianna rides her bike up to the McKenna house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Wyatt opens the door -- Arianna is on the stoop.

WYATT

Dash! It's for you!

Dash jogs down the stairs. She sees him first, and rolls her eyes thinking of the task ahead. Dash freezes when he spots Arianna.

DASH

Wha- what are you doing here?

Liam passes Dash on the stairs.

LIAM

The Sisyphean task of trying to teach you math.

DASH

You're a sissy-fiat, dork.
(to Arianna)
We can't afford you, so 'bye.

Beth enters just in time to hear...

ARIANNA

My mother said I'll get school credit
if I volunteer to help poor people.

Despite the embarrassment, Beth accepts the offer.

BETH

Dash, living room, now.

DASH

UGGGHH! I wanna live in exile!

Beth and Arianna watch him walk away then look to each other.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The McKenna minivan pulls into the hospital parking lot.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY/TIFFANY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Beth's in the hallway talking to the Doctor. Liam and Dash are annoying each other in the waiting area. In the room, Wyatt sits with his grandmother. Something's on his mind.

TIFFANY

Wyatt, go out there and listen to what
your mom is saying to that quack.

WYATT

Tiffany, Mom said that sometimes it's
okay to lie. Is it?

Tiffany is a bit startled by the question.

TIFFANY

Uh, well, yes. Your mother is right.

(Wyatt stares at her)

It's okay if it's only a little white
lie or a fib, for when... when the
truth would get someone in trouble.

(More confused stares)

Like when Uncle Terry told the
policeman that my herbal suckers are
for my migraines.

WYATT

But that is true, isn't it?

Tiffany stares at Wyatt in a long, locked-eyes pause...

TIFFANY

Yes.

WYATT

Any other times it's okay to lie - or fib?

TIFFANY

Well, it's okay to do it if telling the truth only hurts someone's feelings.

Beth enters and waits by the open door. She looks disheveled.

Tiffany smiles at Beth.

TIFFANY

Beth, your hair looks nice today.

BETH

(smiling)

What? Oh, gosh. Thank you.

Tiffany gestures to Wyatt "see?" Wyatt processes it.

Behind Beth, Liam & Dash are now engaged in full-on wrestling holds, as they slam into a food cart.

EXT. SCHOOL - NEXT DAY

Wyatt and Dash are waiting. Beth pulls up in the minivan and the boys get in.

BETH

After I drop you off at home, there's something I have to do. Uncle Terry will make dinner tonight.

DASH

'member last time? Snickers on a bed of Fritos. Awesome!

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - WAITING AREA - DAY

Beth sits in a waiting area filled with MILLENNIALS! They're engrossed in their iPhones and iPads. Beth is iAnxious.

A BUTTON-DOWN WOMAN comes out and addresses the group. She speaks with the efficient speed of a soulless drone.

BUTTON-DOWN WOMAN

Attention please. We're ready to start the interview process. All applicants should know that this is an entry-level position. You'll be expected to work at least sixty hours a week including most Saturdays.

(MORE)

BUTTON-DOWN WOMAN (CONT'D)
Salary is a generous \$11.00 per hour. Benefits, including a three-day vacation and one holiday - of the company's choice - begin if you last through the first year. And for the person who asked for a pen because she didn't follow directions by signing-in online - I found one. Lucky you. It was next to a Fax machine and a typewriter that we have in our nostalgia display case.

Beth looks innocently around and sinks into her seat.

INT MCKENNA HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - DAY

Wyatt watches Dash and Arianna working.

ARIANNA
So, Dash if this is "A" and this is "B", what does "C" equal?

Dash pushes back from the books, irritated.

DASH
Now you're just messing with me! Math is numbers not letters. Even I know that!

Frustrated, he exits to the kitchen, passing Wyatt. Arianna watches Dash walk away, rolling her eyes. Wyatt sits beside her.

WYATT
I didn't see it at first. You're good. But then I saw you roll your eyes.

ARIANNA
What are you talking about?

WYATT
You like my brother. That's why you're tutoring him for free.

ARIANNA
Pfft. Are you mental?

BOOM! Wyatt and Arianna look toward the noise.

IN THE KITCHEN --

Dash and Terry gleefully dance around the microwave, high fives! Smoke from the microwave sets off the fire alarm.

DASH

(calling out)

See, it's not just metal that explodes
in a microwave, Wyatt. It's eggs too!

ARIANNA

That is why I rolled my eyes. Your
whole family is weird.

Wyatt nods, now not sure what to believe.

INT. MCKENNA HOME - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Wyatt walks down the hallway, lost in thought. He turns into his bedroom -- *passing through swinging louvered doors that were never there before...*

INT. WESTERN SALOON - CONTINUOUS - FANTASY

Wyatt enters. He's now dressed in all black western-garb. A piano player stops playing, all eyes turn to Wyatt. A hush stifles the room. Wyatt, with bravado, saunters into the saloon, his spurs jingling. A saloon dancer, Riley, the cute girl from his class, flirts with him, running her hands through her hair. Wyatt tips his hat. But it's the poker table that's got his attention.

Wyatt approaches. Mr. Foster (the insurance man) suddenly hops up from his seat and hightails it out of the saloon with a frightened SQUEAL. Wyatt pops a matchstick in his mouth to chew on, but his coolness drops when he sees his dad, smiling and looking the part as the dealer at the table.

PATRICK

How much fun is this, Wyatt? I mean,
(takes on an old west
voice)

Welcome stranger, take a load off.

WYATT

Deal 'em Dad - I mean, dude.

The other players are some rough-looking hombres: Tiffany and Beth, both dressed as men with fake mustaches, Tiffany's male Doctor, Liam, Arianna, and Sam, Wyatt's friend from school, and Patrick our dealer. He tosses the cards to everyone.

Later.

A tense hand. We just see eyes. Wyatt looks smug. Riley is now standing behind Wyatt, completely taken with him.

WYATT (CONT'D)

All my chips are on the table.

The other players look confused.

ANGLE ON TABLE

There is a pile of potato chips in the center of the table. Wyatt notices the mistake.

WYATT (CONT'D)
Not those chips.

The potato chips disappear. Replaced by poker chips.

WYATT (CONT'D)
Those chips.

One by one we see Wyatt's competition up close:

BETH
(breathes in)
I'm in.

TIFFANY'S DOCTOR
(now wearing full scrubs & mask)
I'm in.

SAM
Give me all your sevens.

WYATT
Sam, what are you doing here?

SAM
I don't know - it's scary... And I think I peed a little.

POOF! Sam disappears. Wyatt looks to Arianna.

ARIANNA
Can I POOF away too?

WYATT
No. You stay.

ARIANNA
(whining)
But I don't want to be here.

TIFFANY
(drumming her fingers)
I'm in.

LIAM

Good luck trying to read me, Wyatt. I practice my poker face by lying to a lie detector. My pulse is that of a dead person.

Wyatt assesses his opponents with disdain.

WYATT

Y'all a bunch a no good fibbers. Lower than snakes in a wagon-wheel rut.

(Wyatt indicates the doctor)

Except maybe you.

DOCTOR

No, don't POOF me! I've got a really good hand!

POOF! The doctor disappears.

Wyatt looks to Patrick.

[Light shifts to just them. All other action freezes]

WYATT

Dad, I'm right aren't I? You should always tell the truth.

PATRICK

Normally a good philosophy, son. But you'll have to figure that out for yourself. Although you are observing others quite well. Now, another key to successful poker - you have to master the art of the bluff.

Wyatt contemplates that for a second, then turns to the Saloon girl, Riley, and can't help but give her a slight smile, but then declares before everyone...

WYATT

Run along ya little Cow Pattie, don't want ya here, you'll bring me bad luck.

A beat. Blank faces. Then everyone laughs at Wyatt. He clearly isn't able to lie effectively. Riley thinks he's adorable and starts to kiss his face... Wyatt has to smile.

EXT. MCKENNA HOUSE - BACKYARD - COMING OUT OF FANTASY

Wyatt sits at the picnic table. Eyes closed, as the llama licks his face. Wyatt suddenly becomes alert.

He recoils in disgust, wiping his face in his sleeve. Liam has been recording on his Sony cell phone that he bought on Amazon.

LIAM

Perfect. Wyatt, you're going to become my personal servant or this goes viral. "Llama Boy" Takes a Licking.

EXT. MCKENNA HOME - DAY

Wyatt sits on the front porch, doing homework. He looks up to see Dash and Arianna walking home from school together.

DASH

I am too. I'm stupid.

ARIANNA

You are not stupid. A lot of people can't do multiplication - or subtraction - or even simple addition.

DASH

Really?

ARIANNA

Really.

Dash smiles a little and hurries into the house. Arianna hadn't seen Wyatt until now. A pause.

WYATT

He's horrible at math.

ARIANNA

The worst!

They laugh. She rolls her eyes.

WYATT

So that...that was like a fib, right?

ARIANNA

(nodding guiltily)

I don't want him to give up.

WYATT

But, you said you didn't like him.

ARIANNA

Okay! I do. Can that be our secret?

WYATT

Why don't you just tell him?

ARIANNA

I don't know. If I tell him the truth, maybe he won't want me to come here anymore.

WYATT

He already doesn't want you to come here because you make him work.
(off her sad smile)
Okay, okay. It'll be our secret.

Arianna smiles at him with gratitude. Beth exits the house.

BETH

Oh, Arianna. How's Dash doing?

ARIANNA

Great!

BETH

Oh, that's so good to hear. Thank you. There's snacks in the fridge, help yourself.

Beth heads to the car. Arianna and Wyatt share a conspiratorial look before she goes inside. Wyatt follows his mom to the car.

INT. HOSPITAL - PRIVATE ROOM - LATER

Through a window, we see Beth conferring with the neurologist. Meanwhile, Tiffany lies in bed. A lawyer, MS. CHEN, shuffles paperwork while Wyatt looks on.

MS. CHEN

Our in-house Plethora Law team has taken care of the plethora of medical bills, of course.

TIFFANY

The store has their own legal department?

MS. CHEN

Yes, ma'am. It's right next to housewares. Plethora offers a plethora of opportunities. We can handle your physical therapy too - it's located behind sporting goods.

(delicately)

And if things here were to take a... a downward turn - we also have funeral services.

(off Tiffany's stare)

I'll leave you a brochure.

(MORE)

MS. CHEN (CONT'D)
(regrouping)
Now, Plethora would like to offer you
this very generous cash settlement.

Ms. Chen shows the amount to Tiffany, who hides her pleasure.

MS. CHEN (CONT'D)
I know that money is small
compensation for the suffering you've
endured, but--

TIFFANY
It helps. It does help.

Wyatt sees his grandmother's fingers drumming the top sheet.
Whoa. She has been bluffing all along! Lying, really.

MS. CHEN
Do you need time to think this over?

TIFFANY
(quickly)
No, I think it's best if we settle
this, and all move on.

Tiffany notices Wyatt out of the corner of her eye -- he's
backing away and staring at her with profound disappointment.

MS. CHEN
I appreciate that very much, as will
my plethora of superiors. Here are the
papers I will need you to sign...

Ms. Chen places the documents in front of Tiffany, who
doesn't break eye contact with Wyatt. She knows that he's on
to her deception.

MS. CHEN
(turning to Wyatt)
Are you going to help your grandmother
when she gets home?

Wyatt is unsure what to do. Tiffany silently pleads for
support from her grandson. He attempts to cover for her.

WYATT
Um, well... her injuries are really -
really bad. Brain damage, I think. So,
she might need a new head - or, no, I
mean, um - she's, she's in lots and
lots of pain -- and... and...

Tiffany watches Wyatt lie and is overcome with guilt.

TIFFANY

(stopping him)

Wyatt, it's okay. It's okay.

(composing herself)

Ms. Chen, I was at Woodstock, so I'm sure I have some brain damage - but it wasn't from the accident. I'm fine. I can't take your money.

MS. CHEN

(taken aback)

So, what your grandson said...

TIFFANY

Wasn't true.

Ms. Chin does a slow burn look at Wyatt.

MS. CHEN

I see. Well, Mrs. McKenna, a plethora of thanks for your honesty. Just sign here for agreeing to a no cash settlement, and we'll be done.

Tiffany signs the paperwork. Ms. Chen sends a steely look to Wyatt and gathers her things to leave. Stopping abruptly near Wyatt, she admonishes him.

MS. CHEN

Shame on you. You should learn to be more honest, like your grandmother.

Wyatt nods sheepishly and Ms. Chen exits. Tiffany, slides out of bed and goes to Wyatt. Hugging him. After a few moments...

TIFFANY

Come on Pinocchio, let's go home.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - LATER

Wyatt walks alongside Tiffany, looking at her curiously in a wheelchair - pushed by Beth.

TIFFANY

(sotto to Wyatt)

The wheelchair is hospital regulation... Well, we'll just have to figure out a different money making scheme...

BETH

Scheme? What about a scheme?

The conspirators share a smile. Wyatt, gathering his thoughts, looks up at the ceiling.

WYATT'S POV: The harsh fluorescent lights going by on the ceiling, become one bright sparkling light shining from the heavens. As the light comes into focus, Wyatt is looking at--

VEGAS BABY!

EXT. RIO HOTEL LAS VEGAS - THE MARQUEE - FANTASY

THE SIGN READS: WELCOME TO THE WORLD SERIES OF POKER

INT. RIO HOTEL LAS VEGAS - NIGHT

Wyatt is seated at "the final table" surrounded by some of the world's best poker players -- FOR REAL!

LON MCCARRON the 'hand by hand' announcer, and NORMAN CHAD the humorous analyst, guide us through the action.

LON MCCARRON

Welcome to the 'final table' of the World Series of Poker. Occupied by eight pros and one rookie.

WE CUT around to the players as the announcer discusses them.

LON MCCARRON

We've got four guys named Phil. Hellmuth, Locke, Gordon, and Ivey.

NORMAN CHAD

Wait a second. What are the Phillies doing here? This is Las Vegas not Philadelphia.

LON MCCARRON

(courtesy laugh)

Well, they have arrived at the Rio Hotel, along with Annie Duke, Johnny Chan, the old master Doyle Brunson, Joanne JJ Liu, and a newcomer from Akron, Ohio... Wyatt McKenna.

Wyatt gives the stink-eye to his opponents. They return it.

NORMAN CHAD

McKenna is small in stature but plays a big game. He is our chip leader and is looking to make mince meat out of the competition. And I'm betting Wyatt doesn't even know what mince meat is.

TV CAMERAS are all now on Wyatt, who gives a little wave.

The tournament director steps into view. It's Patrick.

PATRICK

*Players ready? Alright, letttttttt's
shuffle up and deal.*

Patrick gives Wyatt a big thumbs up! Wyatt looks worried.

WYATT

*Dad! I thought you would be dealing.
This is for all the money. Mom needs
it!*

PATRICK

*Just put together everything you've
learned. You can do it. I believe in
you, son.*

IN A FAST-PACED MONTAGE --

*We see hand after hand of poker. Cards dealt, cards drawn,
chips tossed into the pile, players winning or folding.
Stacks of chips building or depleting.*

Players gradually, but literally disappear from the table.

NORMAN CHAD

*Is the remaining field going to gang
up on little Wyatt? Wyatt Not? I
would. That's poker.*

CLOSE ON Wyatt's eyes --

*THE CAMERA PANS from his opponents seemingly blank faces,
taking in the slightest detail. A bead of sweat, a pinkie
finger extended, a sniff, a twitch, flaring nostrils, etc...*

LON MCCARRON

*This is the when the best of the best
face off to determine who among them
rises to the occasion and takes down
the grand prize. It's crunch time.*

*Wyatt turns over a straight. The other players stare at him
in amazement. Wyatt sweeps a big pile of chips to himself.*

LON MCCARRON

*The gritty play by boy wonder Wyatt
McKenna continues to impress. Except
all those who must face him at the
table. I've never seen a more
accomplished young player.*

NORMAN CHAD

*He is - without a doubt - the very
best player who ever sat down at a
poker table. Period.*

Every remaining player turns to look at Norman with scorn.

NORMAN CHAD

Hey, it's his fantasy. He can have me say anything he wants.

Wyatt keeps winning. His pile of chips grow as the other players' piles shrink. Doyle Brunson rises after busting out.

DOYLE BRUNSON

Gotta hand it to ya kid - you're good.

Wyatt, gives him a cool-looking, respectful goodbye salute.

Three players left. McKenna, Hellmuth, and Duke.

Wyatt goes all-in adding to an already huge pot. Phil and Annie want to stay in, but fold. Wyatt turns over his cards... a pair of twos! Phil and Annie are upset.

NORMAN CHAD

Unbelievable bluff by McKenna! The Ohio Tornado. The Akron Assassin.

LON MCCARRON

Trying out nicknames?

NORMAN CHAD

Yeah, gotta see what sticks. Maybe he should be called Kid Kryptonite, because no one can penetrate the kid's surface. He's got ice in his veins. I've never seen anything like it.

Later...

Wyatt turns over a monster hand to take another big pot and bust out Annie. She is bitter as she leaves the table.

ANNIE DUKE

You're not even old enough to be in a casino!

It's now down to just two players: Wyatt and Phil Hellmuth.

LON MCCARRON

We've come to the end. It's "heads up" play between rookie sensation, Wyatt McKenna, and two-time world champion, "The Bad Boy of Poker", Phil Hellmuth. As is the tradition, the millions of dollars in cash for the winner is brought out onto the table for everyone to feast their eyes.

The stacks are a couple feet high. Literally millions of dollars. Wyatt wants it badly - but so does Phil.

NORMAN CHAD

If Phil loses this tournament to a kid he will be embarrassed beyond anyone's imagination. He'll go berserk! Pride is on the line for him. On the other hand, Wyatt is playing for his family's financial security, and the affections of a young lady named Riley at Sunny Brae Elementary School, who he pines for but doesn't have the courage to actually talk to.

Wyatt is horrified by the personal things being said about him. He snaps a look at them.

*Norman suddenly **HAS NO MOUTH**, yet he continues to attempt to talk. His partner loves the new version of Norman.*

LON MCCARRON

Ha! Thank you, Wyatt. I've been trying to do that for years. Finally - peace. Let's get back to the game.

The mood is deadly serious as these two square off in hand after hand. It's a back and forth.

LON MCCARRON

*One of these two players will become the Champion of the World Series of Poker. Wyatt McKenna is heads up with seasoned pro Phil Hellmuth - who has just moved **all-in!***

Wyatt watches Phil closely. Phil puts on his sunglasses. He seems impenetrable. Wyatt patiently studies his subject. It's getting intense. Neither man moves. It's unbearable. Finally,

WYATT

Sitting on a monster hand, Phil?

Silence. Wyatt can't spot his tell. What's he going to do? He looks to Patrick, who smiles lovingly. Then...

PATRICK

We need to resume play, Wyatt. It's your call. What are you going to do?

Wyatt just doesn't know. Silent tension mounts. Until...

PHIL HELLMUTH

Take your time, Wyatt.

Wyatt's eyes cast up. Something has come to him. But what?

WYATT

I call.

Cards are flipped over. Wyatt's high two pair easily beat the small pocket pair that Phil was bluffing with!

LON MCCARRON

That's it. It's over! Wyatt McKenna has just upset the entire poker world! A new champion is crowned. And it's the Kid from Akron, Ohio who wins the World Series of Poker!!!

Phil Hellmuth is going bananas. Ranting and raving about how he was robbed. Misbehaving terribly. Throwing a huge tantrum.

A jubilant Patrick hugs Wyatt.

PATRICK

I'm so proud of you son! But how did you know he was bluffing?

WYATT

I caught his tell. Look at him. That's his reputation. When he said 'take your time' so nicely, I knew he must be bluffing.

PATRICK

Wow, he really is a bad boy, isn't he?

AS WE HEAR THE CROWD GOING NUTS...

IN SLOW MOTION - Wyatt falls backwards onto the poker table into a pile of millions! Money rains down on him. WE CRANE UP on a grinning Wyatt doing a "money angel" on the table...

INT. MCKENNA HOME - FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Wyatt's lying on the floor, still doing the "money angel." He opens his eyes and realizes where he is. No money in sight.

BETH (O.C.)

I just feel terrible about it all.

Wyatt remains on the floor, looking toward the kitchen. His mother sits with Mr. Foster, who we hear explain something.

MR. FOSTER (V.O.)

What's done is done. Now, it's about the future. I know they're extremely boring, but you have to know what you're signing. And while there is a monthly cost...

During this: Uncle Terry enters from the back (unseen from the kitchen). He struggles with a **huge snake** wrapped around his neck and body. Terry smiles proudly at Wyatt. For a moment Wyatt is shocked, but quickly waves Terry to not come in right now. Terry, insulted does an about face and exits.

TERRY

We're not wanted in the house, Lester.
Boy, who's cold-blooded now?

Wyatt eavesdrops on his mother's conversation.

Mr. Foster is showing Beth some contracts.

MR. FOSTER

It's critical not to be under-insured
again, Mrs. McKenna.

BETH

Thank you. Yes. I understand.

Mr. Foster stands and takes his briefcase.

MR. FOSTER

Call me if you need anything.

He exits. Beth stares dejectedly at the contract. Anguished.

BETH

What am I going to do?

Wyatt emerges from behind the doorway. He gently speaks...

WYATT

Are you okay, mom?

BETH

(inhales and smiles)
Yeah, I'm, yeah, I'm okay.

WYATT

Mom. You can be honest with me.

BETH

Did you hear all that?

WYATT

Um. Maybe, yeah.

BETH

(starting to tear up)
It was my fault. The insurance. I let
the policy lapse and now...

WYATT

It's okay.

BETH

But, it's not, Wyatt, we, we --

Wyatt gently takes his mother's face in his hands.

WYATT

Mom... Everything is going to be great.

BETH

(through hopeful tears)
How can you be so sure?

WYATT

Because. I just know it... I promise.

She wills herself to believe him. She hugs Wyatt, deeply.

BETH

Thank you, Wyatt. Ugh, I needed that.

WYATT

Plus, we can always make llama-hair sweaters and scarfs and underwear.

Beth looks puzzled, then Wyatt smiles broadly.

BETH

(laughing)
Ugh, that thing smelled!

They laugh together. Beth hugs him again. Then she gazes adoringly at her maturing, loving son, kissing his forehead.

BETH (CONT'D)

I needed that too... Okay, would you get your brothers? Dinner's ready.

Wyatt smiles at his mother. WE PULL with Wyatt exiting the kitchen. Now out of sight and alone, he stops at the front door, squeezing his eyes shut. He takes a deep breath, but he can't hide his profound worry. He has no idea if things'll be - even okay, let alone, great. But, you know, he's learned something. Sometimes a white lie is necessary - even kind.

THE END

TAG

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Dash sees Arianna at her locker. He crosses to her.

DASH
(intensely)
I got a 'D' on my math test!

Arianna flashes a grimaced 'sorry' smile.

DASH (CONT'D)
I never got a "D" before. This is
awesome! Thanks, Arianna.

With that, he impulsively hugs her, then walks away. Arianna needs a beat to get over the shock -- then she rolls her eyes and beams. Wyatt, smiles too, watching from across the hall.

Riley walks past. Wyatt takes a deep breath and decides to make his move.

WYATT
Hey, Riley.

RILEY
(surprised)
Oh. Yeah?

WYATT
Here's the thing. You're new in school, probably a little shy. Name's Wyatt. Let's cut to the chase... we will definitely be going to the dance together. How awesome is that?
(reading her silence)
See I spotted your tell. The way you run your fingers through your hair whenever you look at me. It means you like me - like - a lot. So...

RILEY
First of all, I don't even know what a "tell" is, but I am going to "tell" Mr. Tree that you're bugging me. And no way am I going to a dance with you! You're a conceited brat, Ryan or Wade or whatever you said your name is. And FYI -- I'm messing with my hair because some stupid idiot brought head lice to school and now I think I have it. It was probably you, you jerk!

Riley punches Wyatt in the chest and walks off. Wyatt is dumbfounded and doesn't even notice all the students who just watched his epic fail. He slinks off to class...

Easy, Wyatt. Take baby steps.