

CHAD

Written by

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ACT ONE

INT. CHAD'S ROOM. MORNING. (D1)

A teenage boy CHAD (14, awkward) meticulously lays out clothes for the school day. His bedroom's an odd mix of child and adult that reflects the transitional period he's in: pirate sheets, Nerf gun, lingerie catalogue, deodorant, etc.

Chad struggles to choose between two nearly identical striped polos, looking at them intensely: this is a life or death decision. Finally, he goes with the blue one. As opposed to the *other* blue one. Chad checks his look in the mirror, nodding: "Yep. This was the right choice." He bounds out.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM. MORNING. (D1)

Chad sits in class, mortified. REVEAL his teacher MR. WROBLICKY at the chalkboard wearing the EXACT SAME SHIRT as Chad. It was not the right choice. KIEFER SUTHERLAND begins to narrate as the voice of adult Chad:

KIEFER SUTHERLAND (V.O.)

That's me: Chad. I was fourteen years old, just at the beginning of that long, confusing, nightmarish journey of being a teenager.

Older Chad's *not at all* what we'd expect this small, gawky young man to grow up to sound like. Kiefer continues to narrate as we BEGIN MONTAGE:

INT./EXT. VARIOUS. MONTAGE.

ON a modest, single-story house in a typical suburb.

KIEFER SUTHERLAND (V.O.)

That's my house.

Inside we see Chad's mom NAZ (30s, loving, a bit scattered, think a young Allison Janney), male cousin HAMID (50s, sweet, naive, Persian accent) and sister NIKKI (10, confident, way cooler than Chad).

KIEFER SUTHERLAND (V.O.)

That's my family. We're Iranian. Some people say Persian. They're the exact same thing, I don't want to get into it. I lived with my mom, my sister Nikki, and my mom's very foreign cousin Hamid. And this is my dad...

ON a FRAMED PICTURE of a handsome Middle Eastern man with a notable moustache.

KIEFER SUTHERLAND (V.O.)
Dad moved to Iran for work after the divorce. We kept in touch as much as we could. For my twelfth birthday he sent me a tuxedo that didn't fit. Cousin Hamid moved in after my parents split to help mom.

Hamid helps Naz try to kill a fly. He's freaking out.

KIEFER SUTHERLAND (V.O.)
But really he needed more help than anyone. He's just too innocent for this world.

Hamid smiles and sips tea as he examines a Persian coin.

KIEFER SUTHERLAND (V.O.)
We weren't rich. We weren't poor. We were just sort of... in Delaware. Oh yeah, I lived in Delaware. There wasn't a whole lot to do.

Chad HOVERBOARDS past his friend PETER, who hands him a large fountain soda that Chad seamlessly scoops up and drinks.

KIEFER SUTHERLAND (V.O.)
But I found ways to occupy my time.

Chad is in his bed under the covers, a tiny outline of a boy, slowly grinding on his mattress. Yes, it's a sex moment.

KIEFER SUTHERLAND (V.O.)
And deep down, I knew I was bigger than this place. That I was destined for greatness. The problem was, nobody else did. Hell, no one at school even knew my name.

Chad walks at school and gets bumped by a BIG DUMB TEEN.

BIG DUMB TEEN
Sorry Gor, didn't see you there.

CHAD
My name is Cha--

BIG DUMB TEEN
(ignores him, calling off)
Hey guy's watch out for Gor. He's tiny and hard to see.

Chad's swallowed up by a mass of students.

KIEFER SUTHERLAND (V.O.)
Little did I know, *everything* was
about to change.

Chad gazes out at the horizon, thoughtfully appreciating a very mediocre sunset. A CAR HONKS and we REVEAL Chad is standing in the middle of the school parking lot. He snaps out of it and CLUMSILY STUMBLES out of the way.

CHAD
Sorry, I was looking at the sunset--

DRIVER
I don't care!

Chad smiles, awkward, and we cut to...

MAIN TITLES

INT. KITCHEN. EVENING. (D2)

The family eats Chinese take-out and drinks tea. Hamid finishes a story:

HAMID
...So I threw the ball and the dog runs to get it and comes back to me like, "Hello, Mister." I am telling you, this is a genius dog.

NAZ
I kind of feel like a lot of dogs do that, Hamid.

HAMID
No, not in my experience. This dog was crazy smart. He was like a wise Iranian man, except he was a dog.

Naz turns to Nikki, who's been texting the whole time:

NAZ
Nikki, sweetheart, if you don't get off your phone I'm going to throw it out the window.

NIKKI
But I'm texting an f-boy.

CHAD
(under his breath)
Jesus.

NAZ

Okay, I'm terrified to ask, but what is an f-boy?

HAMID

It probably stands for freakazoid or fantastic or fartboy --

NIKKI

It's just, like, a guy you're talking to. Like Jerry for you.

HAMID

Uh-oh!

This is the most fun Hamid's had all day.

NAZ

Jerry is not an f-boy. Jerry is my
(sing-songy buildup)
Dun-dun-dun! Boyfriend.

CHAD

WHAT? He's your what?

NIKKI

How do you have a boyfriend? You're a *mom*.

NAZ

(smiling)

Okay, well that speaks to my deepest fears about how society perceives me. Guys, this is good, I'm living my life again.

CHAD

Why?

NAZ

Because that's what people do. Remember the year after your father and I divorced? Where I just sat around and didn't do anything?

CHAD

Yeah, it's called being a mom!

NAZ

Moms do things! I know this is hard for you to understand, but-- I'm a *person*. Did you know that? Does everyone here know that? That I'm a person?

(MORE)

NAZ (CONT'D)

(beat)

Very concerned no one's responding.

HAMID

Kids, what she means is... a woman in her thirties has sexual--

NAZ

Nope. Let's not-- not that.

NIKKI

My teacher thinks you're hot.

NAZ

That's very inappropriate.

(then)

Which teacher?

NIKKI

Mr. Hong.

NAZ

Hm.

Not the one she wanted.

NAZ (CONT'D)

The point is, I love my family, I love being your mom, but I also have a boyfriend and that's okay, too.

CHAD

So what, Jerry's just gonna come over all the time now? What if he's here and I wanna have a gathering?

NAZ

If and when you have a gathering, we will accommodate it.

NIKKI

Who would you even invite? The only person in your phone is Peter.

CHAD

What are you talking about-- I have tons of people in my phone.

NIKKI

Can I see?

CHAD

No, it's not charged! And you're out of control. Please respect me.

NIKKI

Why, because Dad said you're "the man of the house"?

CHAD

He *did* say I'm the man of the house, so yeah.

HAMID

(to Naz)

Didn't we decide he just said that to depart on a positive note?

NAZ

Hamid-- Just, Chad's the man of the house, everyone.

Chad nods, "exactly". Nikki winks at him.

CHAD

Don't wink at me!

Nikki winks again.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Mom, tell her to stop. I'm gonna flip out!

HAMID

You can wink at me. I don't mind.

Nikki and Hamid wink back and forth as Chad looks at them: *Who are these people?* Naz shifts gears.

NAZ

So, *man of the house*. Any plans for the weekend?

CHAD

(shrugs)

I don't know. Gonna go hoverboarding with Peter. Maybe read about California on the internet.

NAZ

That's fun... Just you and Peter or is there a new friend or a girl or does Peter know of a new person you guys can hang out with--

It's a sensitive subject for Chad.

CHAD

Mom, you can't just run around asking people, "Do you want to be my friend?" That's not how it works.

HAMID

He's right. I've tried that and people are confused by it. Chad, maybe I should read your tea leaves!

CHAD

No, I don't believe in that stuff-- I'm an American boy.

HAMID

It's the most ancient of Persian traditions and it's foolproof!

NIKKI

Chad, you'd have more people in your phone if you didn't say weird stuff like "I'm an American boy".

CHAD

Nikki, get off my frickin' back!

HAMID

(reading Chad's tea)

This is going to be good. What do we have in store for Mister Cha--

Hamid looks at the leaves and goes dark. Whatever he's looking at, it's terrible. Chad clocks this and worries.

NAZ

Honey, I'm just saying maybe try putting yourself out there a little more. That's what I did and now I have a boyfriend. Nikki does, and look how many friends she has--

CHAD

NIKKI'S GONNA BE DEAD IN A YEAR!
AND I'M NOT NIKKI! I'M CHAD! OKAY,
EVERYONE? NICE TO MEET YOU!

Chad runs out, way too dramatically.

NIKKI

(on her phone)

I'm not gonna be dead in a year.
That's so extreme.

NAZ

Your brother's going through some changes, honey.

HAMID

(re: his tea leaves)

Looks like a friendly visitor will be entering my life.

(shrugs)

Hey, I'm ready!

INT. SCHOOL. LOCKERS. MORNING. (D3)

Two girls CHLOE (14) and KELL (14) talk at their lockers.

CHLOE

No, I mean, you can get bangs but it's like, a full commitment.

KELL

I know, I'm freaking out so much.

REVEAL Chad staring at them from his nearby locker, waiting for an opportunity to interject. Finally:

CHAD

You guys talking about haircuts?

The girls stare back at him blankly.

CHAD

I was just-- you were talking about bangs so-- and I was like, "Oh, they're talking about haircuts."

CHLOE

Who are you?

CHAD

Chad. Our lockers are right next to each other. And Kell, I was your lab partner in bio? We did that photosynthesis presentation together. Remember, you thanked me for doing all of it and then I smiled?

KELL

...Oh, yeah. Thanks.

CHLOE

What's your name again?

CHAD
(nervous giggling)
Chad! I just said it to you.

He shakes their hands. It takes way too long and they're confused by it. A cute boy, REID (15) swoops in for a group hug with the girls. Chad's slightly tussled into the lockers.

Hey Reid!

KELL

CHLOE
Oh my god, hi!

REID
You guys pumped about the talent show?

CHLOE
Yeah, it's so cool you're performing. But I heard your band like, broke up?

REID
For real, there was just way too much drama, so I'm gonna rock solo. It's kind of legit where my heart's at right now.

KELL/CHLOE
Awesome. / Totally.

CHAD
That's really exciting.

Reid looks at Chad, unsure who he is.

CHAD
I'm Chad.

REID
...Cool, man.

No one knows what's happening. Chad fills the silence:

CHAD
I, um, watched a documentary on Maroon 5 last night, it was over two hours long... They really focused on the lead guitarist James, which was nice. It's like, it's not just Adam's band. Reid, I'm sure you can relate.

From Reid's look, he can't.

MR. WROBLICKY (O.S.)

Whoa! Getting weird!

Mr. Wroblicky (teacher from cold open) approaches in ANOTHER IDENTICAL SHIRT TO CHAD'S. The life from Chad's eyes drains.

REID

You guys match.

CHAD

How can--

MR. WROBLICKY

Chad, you left this drawing of the Hollywood sign on your desk. I like how your signature has a lighting bolt in it--

He tries to hand CHAD his drawing. Chad's mortified.

CHAD

It was a joke. I don't need that.

MR. WROBLICKY

Alright, well on the back it says "If found please return to Chad" with directions to your locker--

CHAD

Okay, thank you!

Chad grabs the drawing and crumbles it up. Wroblicky walks off, confused. A beat, then Chad slinks back to his locker.

REID (O.S.)

What was his name again?

CHLOE (O.S.)

I don't remember. I think it's something ethnic.

Chad hears this, exasperated. Then he notices a flyer for the TALENT SHOW on a nearby wall. He eyes it, wheels turning...

INT. CAFETERIA. LATER. (D3)

Chad eats lunch with his best friend PETER (14, aloof, unbothered that puberty is destroying him). A flyer of the talent show is on the table. Chad's upset.

CHAD

My name's not ethnic! It *used to be* ethnic. That's why I changed it to Chad.

PETER

Oh yeah, what did your name used to be again?

CHAD

Fereydoon.

PETER

Your name was *Fereydoon*?

CHAD

Peter, can I live? Please?

(then)

By the way, I told them about the Maroon documentary and they freaking looked at me like I had poop comin' out of my ears.

PETER

That's terrible.

CHAD

I'm not sure if they didn't know who James Valentine is or--

PETER

That's the thing! A lot of people don't. He's the lead guitarist.

CHAD

And a songwriter! But Adam gets all the credit. It's a joke. Then Mr. Wroblecky shows up wearing the same shirt as me again, which-- is the guy watching me get dressed in the morning? The whole thing was a mess.

PETER

Uh-huh. And so... now you want to enter the talent show?

Per usual, Peter's doing his best to keep up.

CHAD

Not just because of today, Peter. It's every day!! We're nobodies! I mean, look at where we eat--

REVEAL Chad and Peter alone at a TINY, SHELF-LIKE TABLE jutting out of the wall.

CHAD

We look like we're on a date! Is this okay with you?

PETER

I have always felt strange about this table. I'm glad you said something.

CHAD

Remember our list of goals for the year? We haven't hit any of them. No parties, no kissing girls--

PETER

I kissed that girl at the gas station.

CHAD

She was a homeless woman and she assaulted you, Peter. It was very scary. We deserve better than this!

PETER

Why?

CHAD

Why *not*? Why don't we get to be like everyone else? My mom has a *boyfriend* now. And my sister Nikki-- don't even get me started on Nikki. If they can do it so can I! I'm not some clown. I'm a great teenager! And you... there's nothing wrong with you.

PETER

I still have a few baby teeth.

CHAD

What?

PETER

In the back--

CHAD

The point is, we gotta take a chance on ourselves.

(re: flyer)

This is that chance. For people to notice us. Or at least know our names.

PETER

Some girl in my class thinks you're that Armenian kid Gor.

CHAD

I don't know how this Gor thing got started.

PETER

You do look exactly like him.

CHAD

Gor's in a wheelchair, Peter. And my heart breaks for him, but I have legs.

PETER

Gor has legs, they're just bad ones--

CHAD

(rubs temples, frustrated)
Peter. Please just say you'll do the talent show.

(locking eyes)

I need this. We need this. You can be anything you want in this country. And I wanna be popular. You know why? Because fitting in ROCKS.

Peter nods. That got him.

PETER

Let's do it.

They high-five, full of hope. Peter pumps his fist on the lunch table and it FALLS OFF THE WALL, their food CRASHING TO THE GROUND. Heads turn. Chad reacts, "of course."

PETER

Definitely not a real table.

Peter reaches for his burger. Chad stops him, self-conscious.

CHAD

Leave it, don't bring attention--

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY. (D4)

Chad and Peter watch a talent competition show on TV where a man is juggling stun guns in a pool of water.

PETER

I think we could learn that.

CHAD

We definitely could, but it's too weird. We need something cool. Let's just think-- who are the coolest people in the world?

PETER

Magazine editors.

CHAD

No.

PETER

People who design zoos.

CHAD

Those are the coolest people in the world? *People who design zoos?*

PETER

Opening a zoo without a good designer would be complete chaos.

CHAD

(concentrating)

Peter, please just shut up a little bit.

PETER

Maybe we should ask Nikki what to do. She's cool.

CHAD

What are you talking about? She's ten. And she's not that cool. We're not-- No. No way.

JERRY (O.S.)

Knocky-knock.

JERRY (40, think Will Forte, sweet but odd, favors bootcut jeans and Skechers slip-ons) appears. Chad bristles.

CHAD

Hey, Jerry.

JERRY

Heard about the talent show. I wanna let you know I'm here for you. For this or anything else-- advice, someone to talk to about sex or race... I know you don't have a dad.

CHAD

I have a dad, Jerry. He just doesn't live here--

JERRY

Pop quiz, raise your hand if you have a dad.

Chad, Peter and Jerry all raise their hands.

JERRY

Full house. We all have dads. So what's your act? Get me up to speed.

PETER

We haven't landed on anything.

CHAD

But we got it under control, Jerry. Thank you so much for coming by and everything...

Jerry takes a seat, missing his cue to exit. He looks at Chad sympathetically.

JERRY

I can't imagine how hard it is being a tiny little Muslim runnin' around a high school in Delaware.

CHAD

I'm not Muslim. I mean I *am*, but we don't like, go to stuff. We're just Persian.

PETER

(recapping)

He's Persian, I'm white, the president's black-- the problem is we're not *talented*.

Chad shoots Peter a look: "don't engage him."

JERRY

Sure you are. *All* people, even stupid idiots, got talent. Sometimes they're just hidden inside. Take me for example: I didn't have a clue I could do a backflip until one day I was at a barbecue and decided to try.

PETER

What happened?

JERRY

Nailed it. People went nuts.
(off Chad's look)
Don't believe me, do you?

CHAD

I don't know, Jerry. In the middle of a barbecue, you just decided out of nowhere to do a backflip? Having never done one before?

JERRY

That's it. Time to put my money where my mouth is.

Jerry gets up, dragging furniture and clearing an area.

JERRY

They didn't believe Milk when he said he was gonna be mayor. And, god bless him, that sweet little gay guy almost made it to the White House.

CHAD

What are you-- Don't try to do a backflip--

REVEAL Hamid is now watching.

HAMID

What's going on bros?

PETER

Jerry's gonna do a back-flip!

Hamid mouths "yes" and sits. Jerry braces himself on the carpet. Peter's already taking video on his phone:

CHAD

Jerry please! I'm nervous-- you're gonna hurt yourself--

Before Chad can stop him, Jerry FULL-ON DOES A BACKFLIP. The landing is loud and awkward. He stumbles to the floor knocking over a pile of DVDs, dizzy and gasping for breath.

JERRY

(to Chad, from bended knee)
Come here. Give me a hug.

A confused Chad has no choice but to hug the man. Naz walks in on their embrace.

NAZ

What am I looking at here?

HAMID

You wouldn't believe me if I told you. It was a backflip.

NAZ

Jerry, remember how I said not in the house?

JERRY

If I did everything you said you wouldn't be this attracted to me.

NAZ

Okay, that's... weirdly true on some level. Shall we?

JERRY

Can I get a smooch first?

Chad's mortified. Naz is uncomfortable and offers a peck on Jerry's forehead. They linger for a beat. Naz fills the silence with a finger snap and mouth noise. Finally:

NAZ

Ok, let's bounce!

They head out. Nikki enters.

NIKKI

I need to watch TV.

CHAD

We're having a meeting!

PETER

Yeah, we're trying to figure out how to look cool.

CHAD

No, we're not. That isn't-- We know how to be cool.

NIKKI

Coolness is all about confidence, Peter. My boyfriend's 12 and he says there's nothing cooler than being yourself. So like--
(double peace sign)
--just do you.

CHAD

Nikki, please leave! You don't know what you're talking about and it's annoying!

Nikki exits. Chad immediately turns to Peter.

CHAD

Maybe we should just be ourselves.

PETER

Yeah, like Nikki said--

CHAD

No, I was already thinking that. Because it's true.

PETER

So what do we do?

Chad gives Peter a look: "I think you know." Peter looks back, anxious: "Can we pull it off?" Chad: "Absolutely."

CHAD

Let's just listen to our gut and do what we love.

PETER

Hell yeah.
(then, checking)
Can I just whisper it to you to make sure I know what you're talking about?

Peter whispers to Chad, who nods.

CHAD

Yeah, what did you think I was talking about?

PETER

Okay, just making sure.

PETER

I can't believe Nikki's dating a
twelve-year-old.

CHAD

It's sick. She's moving way too fast.

INT. KITCHEN. EVENING.(D4)

Hamid helps Nikki paint her nails, ignoring the MUFFLED MUSIC
and CRASHING NOISES coming from the basement.

Naz enters with a restaurant bag as Chad and Peter yell O.S.:

CHAD (O.S.)

Don't put your leg there!

PETER (O.S.)

Where am I supposed to put
it?

HAMID

The boys are practicing for the
talent show. We've been demanded to
stay out of their way.

NAZ

Well, let's just remember to
support them and keep all of our
concerns to ourselves.

Naz sets her leftovers on the table and takes a seat.

HAMID

Did you have a good time tonight
with your new sporty boyfriend?

NAZ

(mumbles, thrown)

Sporty.

(then)

I did. We went to a nice dinner...
and then we saw a movie with his
parents.

NIKKI

Yeah, see that's weird. Jerry's
weird.

NAZ

(not convincing)

Jerry is one of the coolest guys
I've ever met.

(off Nikki's blank stare)

He's up there.

NIKKI

Didn't you say he falls asleep in the car like every time you drive?

NAZ

Almost immediately. That is something that concerns me-- why am I talking to a nine-year-old about my relationship?

HAMID

I love Jerry. He's not good, he's not great, he's not the best, he's awesome.

A beat.

NAZ

Okay.
(turns back to Nikki)
I'm trying to give him a chance, Nikki. He's my first boyfriend since your father.

NIKKI

You've only had two boyfriends? I've had more boyfriends than you.

Hamid laughs way too hard at this.

NAZ

Hamid, don't laugh at that. And I don't even think you totally know what you're laughing at.

HAMID

(laughter tapering)
I don't.

NAZ

Guys, I'm doing my best. He's an upgrade from the last guy who took me out. Remember Sal?

NIKKI

Ew. Sal stole my cough medicine.

HAMID

And then this Sal drinks it all in one sip and sleeps in the bathtub. It's like, what? Go to the doctor, Sal!

There's a LOUD CRASH off-screen. A beat, then Chad emerges, winded and dripping with sweat.

Without a word, he crosses to the fridge and grabs a giant sports drink. He doesn't break eye contact with them as he DOWNS THE ENTIRE THING while everyone stares back in silence. After a long beat:

NAZ
How's everything going down there?

CHAD
(distracted)
What?

NAZ
You and Peter. You guys land on something?

CHAD
Yeah. It's private though so I can't tell you what it is.

Chad puts the bottle in the trash, which is full and he has to stomp down to close the lid.

NAZ
Alrighty. But you're excited?

CHAD
I'm really excited. I think it's gonna be tight.

NAZ
Well it's getting late and I don't want Peter's mom thinking he's been kidnapped again. Let's wrap it up--

CHAD
We're not done yet!

NAZ
Chad--

CHAD
Mom please!
(hopping up and down)
Please-please-please-please-please
please-please-please-please-please--

NAZ
Okay, *half an hour*.

CHAD
(to himself)
Yesss.

Peter emerges, even SWEATIER.

PETER

I've got an idea for the ending--

Chad motions for Peter to be quiet: "not here." The boys shove their bodies through the door, barely opening it, being way too secretive about whatever it is they're rehearsing.

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM. TALENT SHOW. DAYS LATER. (D6)

The TALENT SHOW is underway. Reid plays guitar on-stage, ripping through a passionate rendition of Hozier's "Take Me to Church" for a packed crowd.

REID (SINGING)

*Take me to church! I'll worship
like a dog at the shrine of your
lies...*

In the audience, we find Naz, Jerry, Hamid and Nikki. Hamid and Jerry sing along. Hamid clearly doesn't know the words.

JERRY

I'll tell you my sins and you
can sharpen your knife...

HAMID

I'll tell you... and I'll...
tell you the knives...

INT. BACKSTAGE. SAME. (D6)

CLOSE ON Chad's and Peter's faces as they peer through the curtain, watching Reid, impressed.

PETER

Reid doesn't even need the rest of
the band. He's totally making the
song his.

CHAD

(nervous)

I know, Peter. I know he is!

The scope of the event is starting to hit Chad, who scans the crowd, overwhelmed by its size. Reid finishes to rousing applause and a ASIAN DANCE CREW acrobatically takes the stage. They begin an INSANELY IMPRESSIVE routine.

CHAD

You've gotta be kidding me.

PETER

Yeah, I can't do that.

Chad pulls away from the curtain, nervous. Peter follows. REVEAL they're in matching khaki shorts and shiny black windbreakers that SWISH as they walk.

CHAD

Look, Peter, we don't have to do this if you don't want to.

PETER

I want to.

CHAD

It's okay, I know you and I know you're flipping out and it's fine. I won't make you do it.

PETER

I'm not flipping out. I think we should go for it.

CHAD

So you can freak out on me? No way. We just won't go up, it's not a big deal.

PETER

But I do want to do it--

CHAD

HOW DO YOU WANT TO DO IT?! Are you out of your mind? We can't compete with these guys. Apparently we go to some sort of performing arts high school!

ON STAGE a DANCER spins on his head.

CHAD

That kid gets straight A's, when'd he have time to learn to dance on his head like that?! These people should be playing at Radio City Music Hall. I'm not a Rockette! I'm not Chris Rock!

PETER

We're at least as good as her--

Peter points to a MEEK, UNKEPT GIRL who looks like the teenage version of Steven Avery's mother. She BELTS OUT a vocal warmup that sounds EXACTLY LIKE FRANK SINATRA. Chad and Peter, watch, awestruck.

PETER

Gorgeous.

Chad notices Peter's hair.

CHAD

Did you blow dry your hair? Why is it so crazy?

PETER

Yeah, I wanted it to be big. My mom helped me-- it's a set.

CHAD

What the hell is a set?!
(spinning out)
I can't do this! I'm so friggin' stressed. Look at these outfits! We look like European security guards.

PETER

We're just being ourselves.

CHAD

Maybe that's the problem. Maybe there's nothing cool about us.

PETER

But the lunch table, and our goals, and the American dream-- no one knows who we are!

CHAD

I'd rather people not know me than know me and think I'm an idiot! Our lives are fine! We don't get cyber-bullied! I'm not the victim of harsh pranks! It could be worse!

Chad's done. He dramatically peels off his windbreaker. But it gets caught on his head and he flails about. Peter helps him remove it. Chad finally frees himself and storms away, passing a kid in a wheelchair. This is GOR.

GOR

Hey, everyone says we look alike--

CHAD

I KNOW, GOR!

Gor looks to Peter: "Yikes." Peter watches Chad walk off, bummed.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. SCHOOL. NIGHT. (N6)

A dejected Chad sits on the curb in front of the school. Naz, Hamid and Nikki look on concerned.

NIKKI

Where's Jerry?

NAZ

The vending machine ate his dollar
and he's waiting for security.

Naz delicately approaches Chad.

NAZ

I brought you a soda.

Chad shrugs and takes the soda. Drinks it in one long sip.

NAZ

Honey, what happened? You were so
excited to do this--

CHAD

I'M AFRAID ALRIGHT?! I'M AFRAID!

NAZ

Okay, take it easy. You're yelling--

CHAD

I'm letting Peter down and myself
down and the entire family down and
I feel like a piece of crap.

NAZ

Chad, you're not letting anyone
down. Well, Peter maybe. And,
yourself I suppose. But why would
you think you're letting us down?

CHAD

Dad said I'm the man of the house.
And men aren't supposed to get
scared.

(reflecting)

I guess I thought I was a lot of
things that I'm not.

NAZ

Chad, you're 14 years old. I think
you're putting a little too much
pressure on yourself, sweetheart.

More shrugging from Chad. Hamid approaches.

HAMID

May I have a word? Man on man?

Naz doesn't have a ton of confidence in this but what the hell. She steps back. Hamid sits down. Then looks at Naz:

HAMID

Could you step back further?

(she moves, then)

Further?

(she moves, then)

Could you step back further please?

(she moves, then)

You don't need to step back that far. If you'd like to stand closer--

NAZ

It's fine. I'm okay here.

Hamid turns to Chad:

HAMID

Chad, my little friend, I know what it's like to be afraid.

Chad barely glances at him.

HAMID

I know it's hard to believe because you see me as this strong, confident rock in your life. But when I came to this country it was a true panic for me. I was smuggled out of Iran in the trunk of a hot car. For three days I had no water, no food, no entertainment. I finally escape to Turkey where I am transferred and smashed into a plastic box full of wigs. I can't breathe good and fake hair is literally jamming me in my face. For two weeks I am in this box as it travels by ship to North America. I must have thrown up a thousand times.

CHAD

Inside the box?

HAMID

Yes. The wigs were ruined and the smell was pure terror.

(MORE)

HAMID (CONT'D)

It began to attract rats that would gnaw at the box, trying to get in. Finally the ship lands in Mexico and I get a job working for a drug lord for money to get to the US of A. This hot-shot drug man had a major attitude problem. When I say this job was stressful, Chad, you have no idea. The beatings were heavy and on my face, and Carlos screamed at me in a way that was truly unnecessary. One day I walked into the building and sat in the chair Carlos liked me to sit in, and after five minutes of silence, he dropped down from above and slapped my face so hard. It was beyond elaborate what this man did to startle me. I finally said screw this and just started walking to America. Luckily, I stole enough cocaine from Carlos that I did not have to take any breaks until I hit Texas. By then I just had bloody pieces of feet meat. To this day when I think of cocaine, my toes hurt. I worked and slept at a bowling alley while I saved up enough cash for a bus to Delaware, where my cousin, your mom, greeted me with open arms. You were just a baby then.

Chad's speechless. And perhaps looking at Hamid in a whole new light.

CHAD

You did all that? Just to live in Delaware?

HAMID

It was hard. And I was scared. But did I give up? No. Because it is not fear, but what you do with it, that defines you as a man.

A moving beat as this lands with Chad, who's incredibly inspired. His eyes narrow, a fire rekindling inside of him.

INT. BACKSTAGE. MOMENTS LATER. (D6)

Chad and Peter, back in their outfits, run up to the stagehand.

PETER

Sir, I found him.

STAGEHAND

What's the name of your act again?

PETER

Shoot, we didn't come up with a name--

Chad thinks a beat, then, dramatically:

CHAD

The All-American Boys.

Peter can't believe how awesome that is. The stagehand shrugs, indifferent, and cues up their music on a laptop.

PETER

Chad?

CHAD

Yeah?

PETER

I'm excited.

CHAD

Me, too.

They bump fists. It's on.

INT. AUDITORIUM. SAME. (D6)

Naz and the family sit in the audience, waiting with anticipation. Naz thinks, then grabs Jerry's hand. He looks at it, looks at her, "interesting."

The lights dim. Then MAROON 5's ballad "SHE WILL BE LOVED" BLASTS from the speakers. After a beat, Chad and Peter EMERGE on HOVERBOARDS and begin an ELABORATE CHOREOGRAPHED ROUTINE. They move around the stage in sweeping arcs and spins, gliding, almost dancing, to the music. THIS is their act. And it's AWESOME. Chad grins, amazed at how well things are going. Then he notices Chloe and Kell (the girls from the lockers) smiling in the audience. Chad and Peter high-five. They're totally crushing it! The stage lights twinkle and the wind flutters through their hair...

We then PULL OUT to the AUDIENCE'S POV and REVEAL it is actually THE MOST AWKWARD PERFORMANCE OF ALL TIME. What we were seeing before was from Chad and Peter's perspective, and nothing like what was actually happening in real life. It's less of a "routine" than it is Chad and Peter cautiously traveling in figure-eights around the stage with Chad occasionally calling out commands like "cross" or "grip". Even the quality of the audio is way worse than the powerful symphony they heard in their heads.

Naz and the family look on from the audience, confused. Everyone is mostly confused. A few students LAUGH. Some turn away, embarrassed. The laughter builds with Chad registering that his WORST FEAR is being realized.

INT. CAR. LATER. (D6)

The family drives, silent. Chad's shriveled in the backseat.

NAZ

Sweetheart, I just want you to know
I'm proud of you for trying.

CHAD

Great, I'll tell all the kids at
school! Hey, everybody it's cool,
my mom's proud of me! By the way
I'm not Gor!

No one understands what he's talking about.

HAMID

Chad, I'm not going to lie. That
performance was insanely like "what is
happening?" Then I remembered the tea
leaves predicted it so I was not too
rattled. But I am also proud of you.

NIKKI

Do I have to be proud of Chad?

NAZ

Yes, we all have to be proud of him.

Chad sinks into his seat as Older Chad's voice returns.

KIEFER SUTHERLAND (V.O.)

I got my ass handed to me that
night. But part of putting yourself
out there is being okay when it
doesn't work out. Sometimes you
humiliate yourself with a
hoverboard routine set to coffee
house rock in front of the entire
school. Or date a strange mattress
salesman because you've been out of
the game for fifteen years and
you're just happy to find someone,
then he surprises you too...

JERRY

Nazzy, we gotta break-up.

NAZ

Excuse me?

JERRY

I just don't think this horse is ready for the barn yet. I'm sorry.

NAZ

Let me get this straight. You're breaking up with me on the way home from a my teenage son's talent show, in front of my entire family? Do you realize how inappropriate that is?

Jerry considers this.

JERRY

Seeing it on its feet, yes. Yes, I do. Okay, I take it back, I'm not breaking up with you--

NAZ

What? No! We're definitely breaking up now. Because, you know what? This isn't working for me either.

HAMID

Is it okay that I can hear this conversation?

A long beat as everyone drives in even *more* awkward silence. Jerry dozes off.

INT. LIVING ROOM. LATER. (D6)

Naz watches TV slouchy and defeated. Chad peeks in.

CHAD

You okay, mom? I brought you hot cocoa and some lotion.

He hands them to her.

NAZ

Thanks, honey. I'll be fine. Let's face it, Jerry was a disaster.

CHAD

He wasn't a bad guy. I hope he finds what he's looking for.

Naz cocks her head. Chad surprises her sometimes.

CHAD

Did you love him?

NAZ

Jerry? I don't even know if I *liked* him. I was just excited to be in a relationship again.

Chad nods. He's come around on the idea.

NAZ

This is all very new to me. I guess I just have to figure it out as I go.

CHAD

You and me both, sister.

A beat.

NAZ

Hey, at least I had a boyfriend for a few days! It's good to know that's possible. Even when you're a divorced mother of two on the prowl in suburban Delaware.

CHAD

Mom, someday the right guy's gonna come along. Until then, just worry about being the right *woman*. If you ask me, you're doing a pretty great job of that already.

Who is this kid? Chad lovingly lays a blanket over her and pats her on the knee. Naz is amused.

NAZ

You're a sweet kid, Chaddy-joon. Your dad would be very proud of you.

CHAD

Thanks. But who needs dad when I have you. I mean, yeah, it'd be nice to have him around. I hope his commercial shoe business in Tehran is flourishing but I do miss him and have questions about my body and stuff I don't want to ask Hamid--

NAZ

I understand.

A nice beat. Hamid cautiously enters.

HAMID

Helloooo.

NAZ

What's up, Hamid?

HAMID

What is up is Jerry has requested me to join his professional network on LinkedIn.com. I realize this is a delicate situation but it is also a true honor and I'd like to pursue his friendship. May I accept?

NAZ

(baffled but supportive)
I mean... sure?

HAMID

Thank you for allowing it.

Hamid exits. Chad and Naz look at each other and laugh.

NAZ

Why is Hamid on LinkedIn? He's a receptionist at a yoga studio.

CHAD

I guess Jerry's stickin' around after all.

More laughter. Naz' laughter slowly fades as the reality of that sinks in.

KIEFER SUTHERLAND (V.O.)

It felt good to laugh. But that didn't change the fact that I still had to face the school, which I was not looking forward to.

INT. SCHOOL. LOCKERS. MORNING. (D8)

Chad slinks down the hall, trying to go unnoticed.

REID

Yo, Chad!

Chad startles, bracing himself for the worst.

REID

That hoverboarding thing was crazy funny! I was cracking up man. And I usually don't laugh at people who are new to this country.

The weird thing is Reid seems to mean this as a compliment. Another teenage dingbat MARCUS approaches.

MARCUS

Way to make fun of the talent show, dude. At first I was like 'this guy gotta be special ed' and it made me sad. Then someone said you weren't special ed and I was like 'oh, this guy's hilarious.'

Others chime in, praising Chad for his humour and irony.

KIEFER SUTHERLAND (V.O.)

Of course, I wasn't trying to be funny at all, so the comments were actually quite insulting. But they knew my name and thought I was funny. So I played along. I'm not an idiot.

Chad rolls with it, acting like it was all a joke. He opens his locker and makes a show of ripping down the numerous Maroon 5 posters that decorate it.

CHAD

I had these up because-- I was planning this for a long time and I wanted to set it up right.

Everyone laughs. Kell approaches.

KELL

Chad, sooo weird and funny. I was *dying*.

CHAD

Thanks! It was supposed to be funny so it's good that's what it was to you.

Chad relaxes, getting comfortable.

KELL

Listen, you should check out our sketch comedy group. We're always looking for new people.

CHAD

Uh, sure. That sounds cool. I love comedy. I love to laugh.

KELL

Do you do any characters?

CHAD

Yep. I can do, uh... Joe Biden.
Lebron James... British people--

MARCUS

Yo, do one bro. Chad's gonna do an
impression!

People turn, excited. This has gone completely off the rails.
Feeling everyone's eyes on him, Chad finally offers:

CHAD

You're pissing me off, Obama!
(explaining)
That was Joe Biden.

The impression doesn't land. He scrambles to try another.

CHAD

Here's Lebron.
(normal voice)
"I'm great at basketball, but I
also do movie comedies."

Confused looks as whatever social capital Chad earned starts
to incinerate before his eyes.

KIEFER SUTHERLAND (V.O.)

And just like that, it got real
awkward again. Guess I'd won the
battle but I was far from winning
the war. I knew it wasn't going to
be all peaches and blow jobs going
forward. But that's life, huh? And
we've got no choice but to live it.

As Chad soldiers on, flailing, we...

ROLL CREDITS

END OF SHOW