

**THE MUSICIAN**

Story by

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Four friends (Youngest, Junior, Senior, and Cly) in school uniforms make their way across the courtyard.

One of them, the YOUNGEST, hoists up a MATH BOOK. He leafs through it while yapping away.

YOUNGEST

(continuing/more and more elated)  
Aweesome! This book is just the ticket  
to graduation! Where did you find...eh?

Someone's LEG trips the Youngest, throwing him off-kilter just as a HAND SNATCHES the book away from his grip.

YOUNGEST

Whaaa - !

The friends see TWO SENIORS smirking between themselves, one now with the book in hand. The snatchers run off, one ahead of the other.

SENIOR #1

(to Senior #2/conspiratorially)  
Quick! To hideaway #9.

Junior and Senior motion to lunge after them, but CLY holds them back.

Cly is nonplussed - a look of mild amusement merely crosses his face. He holds up his RING and ZIIING - there's a wire and cord attached to it, unbinding the book's contents, CREAKING it loose, and pulling it right back to him.

The stealthy seniors didn't expect this. Their mouths slack open.

CLY

(to Seniors)  
Good move guys. With a little more  
practice you might stand a chance  
against the kindergarteners

SENIOR #1 HURLS the book's cover at Cly, but he catches it, like a glove to a hand.

CLY  
(to Seniors)  
...Thanks.

Cly slips the book in between his stack, so not to call attention to it.

Annoyed, the Seniors scamper off. The moment they are gone, Junior and Senior glare at the Youngest.

JUNIOR  
(to Youngest)  
Brilliant move YOUNGEST. For someone who wants to stick around here for the rest of his life!

The Youngest winces.

JUNIOR  
(continuing)

Jeez...I mean you might as well have broadcast the book over the loudspeakers.

SENIOR  
He's right. You can't be too careful. Cly just handed us a lifeboat. You almost capsized it.

The youngest looks away, embarrassed.

YOUNGEST  
(muttering/under his breath)  
My bad..

Cly smacks the Youngest's back, encouragingly.

CLY  
Don't sweat it. Actually, that was kind of fun.

JUNIOR  
(shaking his head)  
You're enjoying this too much... You do realize that there are only three of those

Math Books in the library. If we would have lost that one...

SENIOR

(curious/switching modes)

Getting a hold of another one would be impossible. Wait...Getting a hold of this one is impossible! How on earth did you get this, Cly?

CLY

(looking dark)

I have my methods.

YOUNGEST

(in anticipation and fear)

You didn't (gulp) kill anyone...I hope.

Cly's stomach growls and everyone looks at him awkwardly.

CLY

Well, I might die of starvation because of that book... I found it being used as a door stopper by the middle schoolers so I struck a deal with them.

CLY

My lunch'll be a little light for the next two years...

JUNIOR

(waving his hand/disgusted)

Doorstopper!?! Who are these morons?

CLY

Hey, one's goldmine is another's Doorstopper...thing.

Cly lifts up his hands in a "too bad for them" gesture.

SENIOR

(laughing)

Well, we'll spot you in the lunch department. Least we can do.

JUNIOR

Alright, guys. We've got our work cut out for us, hand-copying this book.

YOUNGEST

Sheesh...Four copies...by hand...

-

CLY

Hey, if it helps us get out of here, I'm all for it.

-

Suddenly, LOUD CLAPPING veers their attention towards the auditorium.

YOUNGEST

(continuing/suspicious)

Tsch, what's all this...clapping?

A COUPLE of well-dressed, NEW WORLD PATRONS are ushered inside by the guards.

CLY

(turning his back on the auditorium)

What kind of nonsense did they cook up today to impress the *bureaucats*?

JUNIOR

Probably another keynote 'challenges of educating the lowlifes' speaker.

As they are laughing at this, the FLUID NOTES of a PIANO breaks through their contempt. Their expressions change, softening.

But none more than Cly's. His EYES WIDEN, glazing over. He FREEZES. A FLOOD of light spotlights him, blowing his hair and clothes back as he stands in utter, stunned silence.

Music notes embrace him, washing over him like waves, drawing him with little resistance into the sea.

YOUNGEST

That's a first. There was never a concert before.

Cly turns to face the auditorium, his hand weak and clutched in front of his chest. He stands there, awestruck.

SENIOR

A piano. Cool...

A SWISHING sound is heard. The senior turns back towards his friends. Cly's no longer there.

SENIOR

Where did Cly go?

EXT. AUDITORIUM - NOON

Cly walks up the auditoriums steps in a daze, following the notes emanating from it. His friends trail a few steps behind.

YOUNGEST

Whatcha doing?

CLY

(on a mission/transfixed)  
This is wicked.

JUNIOR

Eh?

CLY

A Grand Piano... I've never played one.  
Not with this tonal resonance.

YOUNGEST

(like he knows)  
Uh huh?

CLY

Probably a Cleinway. Model D - a  
a true classic. With the soundboard of  
violins for an even and clear sound.

SENIOR

Oh, that's right, you used to be a  
pianist on the outside.

CLY

(in a trance)

One of the finest concert pianos ever made. Sumptuous sound...The inharmonicity... I have to see it for myself.

SENIOR

Whoa, Cly...Wait! The guards!

But it's too late. Cly either doesn't hear him or doesn't care. He moves right through the THRONG OF STUDENTS gathered outside the auditorium's entrance.

He makes it to a grassy plot beside the Auditorium entrance, from where he gains a privileged view of the PIANO and its PLAYER reflected in the auditorium's CEILING MIRROR. Cly's vision zooms in on the piano.

Reflection: A SILKY MANE of long blond hair striking the keys of an ebony, intricately-carved, classic Grand Piano.

Cly smiles, in awe at the object capable of producing such awe.

Suddenly, a BATON slams down his shoulders.

CLY

(startled from a trance)

...ah!?

Cly grabs his shoulder and turns to see a GLOWERING GUARD next him.

GLOWERING GUARD

Stand back!

Cly starts to turn back, but is struck motionless by a surge of applause. He looks up at the auditorium again.

A FIST hits his CHEST.

GLOWERING GUARD

(with eyes promising violence)  
Get back, I said!

Cly stumbles back while holding his chest.

Just then, the assembled students step aside for the SENIOR PRINCIPAL and TWO LOWER-WORLD GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS as they make their way to the entrance. It's like the parting of the red sea; the students are all nervous, their postures assuming a rigid stance.

STUDENT #1  
(whispering to another)  
It's the Senior Principal.

STUDENT #2  
(whispering back to friend)  
You mean hell's Taskmaster.

STUDENT #1  
(whispering)  
Who's that with her?

STUDENT #3  
(whispering/interjecting from behind)  
Government big shots. The usual do-nothings.

Cly takes the scene in. The Glowering Guard turns towards them.

CLY  
(caustic smile)  
Ah, I see. Your master's coming.

That's all the provocation the Glowering Guard needed. He turns back towards Cly and raises his BATON and swings it, aiming at Cly's head.

The guard misses, but Cly still makes a show of stumbling back, all the way through a line of students. Everyone is watching, including the Principal and the officials.

CLY  
(looking puzzled)  
OUUUUCH! Ah... Whaaat?

Cly looks up at the guard like he's about to cry as he's now coiled in a defenseless position. The officials stand there watching in rapt attention. The Principal, mortified, takes the Guard aside.

SENIOR PRINCIPAL  
(menacingly/to Guard)  
What do you - THINK - you're doing?

GLOWERING GUARD  
But, but...The twerp's faking it.  
Look at him!

SENIOR PRINCIPAL  
(deliberately calm)  
I. Don't. Care. Word gets  
out of something like this,  
there goes half our funding  
for the year. APOLOGIZE...

The Glowering Guard needs no further prompting. He lowers his head to hide his FLASHING EYES:

GLOWERING GUARD  
  
I am sorry. I don't know what  
came over me.

SENIOR PRINCIPAL  
What're you waiting for? Let us  
in!

The Glowering Guard unbolts the entrance door, ushering the authorities in. As the doors open, a BURST of music briefly spills from its luxurious interior, throwing Cly off-balance - this time for real.

He's about to fall back when the Senior catches his back. The Youngest and Junior join them.

YOUNGEST  
Whoa, Cly!

The Guard is watching them - with a livid SCOWL. The three friends run off, pulling Cly along.

Cly smirks.

EXT. PATHWAY TO SENIOR CLASSROOMS - NOON

The four friends are silent, each lost in their own thoughts as they walk down the pathway. Cly is the first to break the silence.

CLY

Did you see the look on that guard's face? Priceless.

They all look tense - except for Cly, who is beaming at them.

No one responds. The Youngest fidgets; the Junior looks away; and the Senior looks down at his feet.

CLY

C'mon, guys. Guard-dog catch your tongues?

SENIOR

Cly, seriously. I don't get it. What were you doing back there?

CLY

What do you mean?

JUNIOR

"What do we mean?" Uh, how about explaining the sudden urge to commit suicide?

CLY

Whaaat! Junior, relax...That guard? All froth and no bite.

YOUNGEST

Tsch, pretty lethal froth, if you ask me...

CLY

Oh come on. It's been years, guys. The main reason I signed up for this hellhole is so I could cross over to play in a real concert hall. It's been my dream for

as long as...

SENIOR

(cutting him off)

We've all got our dreams Cly. But the only thing a stunt like that will get you is a cross over your grave.

JUNIOR

Pulling us under with you. You think that guard is going to let this slide?

Cly faces them, in all seriousness.

A pause as it dawns on him: this is no joking matter.

CLY

(genuine)

You're right. I'm sorry.

They all regard him, searchingly.

CLY

Don't know what I was thinking. Guess I wasn't...thinking.

SENIOR

(encouraging)

You'll be playing those concert halls, Soon enough Cly. In the surface world. With no help from them. You'll see.

CLY

(trying to believe it himself)

Yeah...

JUNIOR

Come on Cly. We should head to class.

Cly cracks a dejected smile.

SENIOR

(to youngest/then Cly)

Well, we'll get this book somewhere safe and start copying it. Thanks again, Cly. Lifesaver.

Youngest  
 ...and wrecker.

The way the Youngest delivers his vehement disapproval lightens them up, and they all crack a smile. The Senior and Youngest wave him goodbye as they walk off.

INT. SENIORS' MATH CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

The Senior Math teacher furiously scribbles algebra equations on the chalkboard. She looks by turns irritated and bored - this is drudgery for her. The board is littered with equations, barely legible ones.

MATH TEACHER  
 This is like throwing pearls to swine, but whatever. Scribble away - who knows, maybe IQ lightning will strike.

Students strain to keep up, not so much because of the equations themselves but for their teacher's frenzied hand gestures and rapid-fire delivery.

Cly sits at a desk in the window corner row, taking notes like the rest of the students.

MATH TEACHER  
 (monotone)  
 ...Listen up, I'm not going to explain this again, if  $f(x)$  is a polynomial in  $x$ , then  $f(x) = 0$  such as...

Cly sighs. As the teacher hammers on, her words become unintelligible.

He looks down at his notebook, widening his eyes to focus on the equations.

CLY  
 (VO/Internal Monologue)  
 $F(x) = 0$  as polynomial in...

His eyes glaze over.

CLY  
 (pulling his hair)  
 C'mon. Concentrate! .

But as he strains to pay attention, the equations he's looking at - first on the page, and then on the board also - take the shape of music notes.

CLY  
 (V/O Internal Monologue/blinking)  
 Ah...

Cly shakes his head, trying to snap himself out of it.

CLY  
 (V/O Internal Monologue/looking away)  
 Jeez, what's happening to me...  
 Focus!

But he can't. The pull is too strong. He looks back down at his page and gazes in astonishment at the seductive score before him.

Cly gives a light smile and starts to hum the tune, his pencil tapping on the desk to the rhythm of the music in his mind.

The teacher suddenly notices him. BRISTLING at the audacity she's hearing, she points her chalk at him.

MATH TEACHER  
 Hush. You! - stop that noise.

Cly doesn't hear her.

His friend Junior is sitting a couple of rows over. He looks at Cly, alarmed. The other students also glare at him, some annoyed; others confused or downright scared.

STUDENT #1  
 (to student in front)  
 What's he doing?

STUDENT #2  
 He's asking for it.

JUNIOR

(defending Cly)

Ah. He wasn't feeling well earlier.

Cly doesn't see or hear any of this, absorbed in his own soundscape.

Suddenly, the teacher SLAMS her hand down on his notebook, sending violent sound waves to intermingle with Cly's internal show.

She BALLS up his paper and glares down at him, with an unmistakable look of hatred, but also power...Power that is sure to win this round.

This effectively snaps Cly out of his reverie and he regards her with some surprise.

CLY

(confused)

Uh?

Cly stares at her hostile face, somewhat dumbstruck. Not quite comprehending what has happened.

MATH TEACHER

One more peep from you, and I'll have you slammed in detention. Got that?!

CLY

(mouthing words, half dazed)

Uh? Detention? Okay, that sounds good...Wait, I mean -

The class laughs, before getting chastised by their teacher's no-nonsense glare.

Sneering, she shoots him "the look of death." She opens her mouth to say something else but changes her mind. This is not worth pursuing now. Besides, there are other means.

She resumes her place in front of the classroom, her chest inflating with newfound zeal.

MATH TEACHER

(like she's talking about  
a terrific vacation)  
Ah...Detention. The deluxe loser  
getaway.

Cly looks out the window, downcast, as the teacher goes on.

MATH TEACHER

(continuing/with sadistic glee)  
Solitary confinement... Grimy cells.  
The nostalgia of it may even remind you  
of your home-sweet-homes.

A couple of students tense up at hearing this, slight anger  
crossing their faces. The teacher returns to writing on the  
board.

CLY/)

(VO/Internal Monologue)  
Four years of this, giving up my  
freedom, for what?

Cly keeps on staring outside, growing increasingly  
dejected, as the teacher keeps on painting the picture.

CLY

(VO/Internal Monologue)  
For this...silent life.

As Cly keeps looking out the window, he notices the senior  
principal and a guard walking into their building. Struck  
by an idea, his face suddenly lights up.

Cly raises his hand.

CLY

May I go to the restroom?

The teacher gestures for him to go, dismissively. Cly  
exits.

Junior watches Cly walk out the door, and is suddenly  
suspicious. His hands go up as well.

MATH TEACHER

Now what?

JUNIOR

I also need to go.

The teacher scowls.

MATH TEACHER

Fine. Just get out of my face.

INT. SENIORS' FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

The principal and the Glowering Guard make their way across the hallway just as Cly is walking towards them.

Cly comes to a halt as he approaches them. The guard gives him a look that defines the 'glowering' designation. Cly ignores him altogether, his attention solely on the Principal.

CLY

(to Principal)

Excuse me, M'am. I know it's not customary, but I would like to offer my services to play the piano at your concerts.

SENIOR PRINCIPAL

(taken aback)

What?

CLY

The concert piano in the auditorium.

SENIOR PRINCIPAL

I know where the piano is.

CLY

Well, back in the lower world I was a concert-level pianist myself. I could outplay that pianist you had in there in a heartbeat.

SENIOR PRINCIPAL

You shouldn't brag about yourself.

In any case, that's out of the question.

CLY

Excuse me, I didn't mean to brag. Anyway, perhaps we could have student concerts now and then?

SENIOR PRINCIPAL

Our musicians are trained professionals from the new world, okay boy? You should concentrate on your studies, instead of wasting your time.

The senior principle begins to walk away. At that, an exasperated Cly splays himself on the floor, prostrating himself by her feet and beseeches. Students in the hall way stand back watching in awe and disbelief:

CLY

Please? I'll do anything!

SENIOR PRINCIPAL

What is this? Get up!

She motions for the Glowering Guard to step in.

GLOWERING GUARD

This is the same wacko from earlier.

SENIOR PRINCIPAL

(suddenly aware)

Well well, I was going to let that one go, but you couldn't help yourself, eh? This is strike two, my boy.

(to G.Guard)

Handle it!

GLOWERING GUARD

(truer words were never spoken)

With pleasure.

The guard picks Cly up by the shirtsleeves. Under the guard's grip, Cly thrashes around, flailing out of control to get away.

SENIOR PRINCIPAL

Jesus! What a nuisance. Listen you,  
I don't dole out favors. Get with the  
program, or the program will get rid  
of you!

The guard hoists him up, slams him against the wall, and  
down on the ground again. Thrown back, Cly finds the  
momentum to spring onto his feet and runs off.

The guard starts after him, but the Principal holds him  
back.

SENIOR PRINCIPAL

Leave it. His time will come.

Junior, until now hiding behind a corner listening, goes  
back another way, frazzled by the recent turn of events.

JUNIOR

(VO/Interior Monologue)

Cly...What tha hell are you doing..

The Principal walks to the office across.

SENIOR PRINCIPAL

(to guard)

Open it.

The guard feels for his keys, but finding none, turns to  
look up, confused.

SENIOR PRINCIPAL

What're you waiting for!

GLOWERING GUARD

(patting his trousers)

They were just here.

SENIOR PRINCIPAL

Idiot! I feel dumb just looking  
at you.

The Glowering Guard speaks on his walkie talkie.

GLOWERING GUARD

Need spare keys for Building C-2,

first floor offices.

The Principal stands at a distance from the guard, her back turned as she waits for the goons to arrive with the keys. The students move away and continue on.

PRINCIPAL

(muttering)

Just you people wait.... When I am done with this school, you'll all know the meaning of ORDER!

The Glowering Guard continues to look for the keys, in utter confusion as to what could have happened to them.

EXT. SENIORS' BUILDING ROOFTOP - SUNSET

Cly stands high above the grounds, facing the auditorium, holding up a set of HEAVY SKELETON KEYS. He looks feral, hair blowing against the wind.

His expression reveals a mixture of triumph and mischief.

CLY

(V/O Interior Monologue)

Can't say that was one of my best performances, but one must adapt to the audience.

He laughs.

CLY

(rejoicing)

Tonight...

A voice suddenly breaks through his musings.

JUNIOR

(Off screen)

What about tonight?

Surprised, Cly turns around, dumping the keys in his pocket.

He sees Junior, Senior, and the Youngest standing there in front of him. They don't say anything for a long while, until Senior breaks the silence.

SENIOR

We heard, Cly.

CLY

Heard what? That I got a little carried away in class?

JUNIOR

And that you went ballistic on the Principal and that guard again.

Cly looks at Junior, puzzled.

JUNIOR

I was there. I saw you.

CLY

That was... just an act. I wanted to get back at him for-

JUNIOR

-Cly, you took the guard's keys! Do you have any idea what they'll do to you if they find out-

A pause.

SENIOR

Cly, Why are you doing this all of a sudden? You're risking everything-

CLY

I've already risked everything just by coming here, to this dreadful school. You don't understand. This music has been bottled up in my head for...

He stops in mid-sentence, and turns away in frustration, looking for a way to get it across to them.

CLY

(continuing)

It's eating away at me. I need to get it out!

SENIOR

(understanding)  
Being here is hard, I know.

CLY  
Hard? It's worse than death, living like this, striving and pining for something that...You guys know, may very well never come.

YOUNGEST  
It will. With the math book, you'll see! We'll graduate. We'll get out of here and make it to the new society Cly!

SENIOR  
He's right. We've made it this far because the four of us have stuck together until now. We just need to keep it up.

CLY  
(doubtful)  
What if I can't...

JUNIOR  
(perturbed)  
Senior is sure to graduate this year. One more year and you'll be off too. If you stop what you're doing. NOW.

CLY  
Another year, two, three...  
Then maybe, just maybe, if I'm reeeally lucky...and if I don't go crazy.

JUNIOR  
(irritated)  
Dammit, Cly! Quit talking like that. That won't get you anywhere. Not here.

YOUNGEST  
(sternly)  
Tsch, yeah...- that kinda talk will get ya killed.

CLY

(screaming, desperate to get through to  
them)  
I'm dead already!

A beat.

Everyone grows quiet, lost in their own thoughts.

JUNIOR

Look, Cly. Whatever you've got in  
mind...just drop it. And drop those  
keys somewhere where it'll look like  
the guard lost it.

Cly walks off.

SENIOR

Cly...

The friends look at each other, and then at Cly, who walks  
off alone. They watch him go.

EXT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

Cly SLULKS along the buildings, dodging lights, as he makes  
his way across the courtyard to the auditorium.

As he reaches the auditorium's steps. Something on the  
ground catches his attention: The hailed math book.

CLY

(V/O Interior Monologue)

Guys...

He picks it up. Opening it, he sees that there's nothing  
inside - only the casing remains.

He takes a long GULP of air.

He crouches over the DARK END of the steps, racked by doubt  
and grief. He lowers his head, facing the ground.

CLY

(V/O Interior Monologue)

Why can't I give up this insane idea?  
Pry these keys from my hands and drop  
them so no one would know. Why can't

I go back?

Then, the FLAPPING wings of a bird go by, suddenly grabbing his attention. He doesn't quite see it, only a feather WISP at most, but he hears its HIGH PITCH all the same.

CLY  
(startled)  
Aah?

He looks up and...sees nothing. Just the same night sky. After looking at the book one last time, he clamps it shut.

CLY  
(V/O Internal Monologue/with the  
book)  
Because... Without this, I'd be as  
hollow as this book...Just an empty  
shell with nothing left inside.

He steps out from the moonlit shadow, emerging into the brightened steps of the auditorium.

EXT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

With newfound resolve, he makes his way over to the auditorium.

Cly rushes to CLIMB up the auditorium's steps. As the tallest building in the premises, he has an omniscient view of the surroundings. The higher society twinkles imperiously in the distance. He takes it all in.

CLY  
(V/O Interior Monologue)  
No time for vertigo.

He assesses all of the domed top-floor's THREE windows; one is inaccessible to the stairs; another is directly facing the stairs; one is curved to the side but still accessible.

CLY  
(V/O Interior Monologue)  
When in doubt, choose the path less  
trodden.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

KEYS TURN THE LATCH. Cly CREAKS open the auditorium doors, slowly and deliberately sneaking in.

The auditorium, although dark, is illuminated by the bright night sky filtering through the overhead windows.

He gets to work.

Scanning the area, he proceeds to grab and place one of the loose chairs by the front entrance. He piles another chair on top of the first one. And then another. Until a cobweb-of-chairs barricade has been set up. He does the same to the exit doors, now all barricaded.

A LITTLE LATER:

He stands there looking around, until he catches a glimpse of the PIANO on the same mirror he first saw it through, now imbued with a magic, night radiance.

The piano's SINEWY CONTOURS mesmerize him. He notes its grandeur at a distance. In silence. In reverence.

Finally, he takes a hesitant step forward. He goes on. He keeps going until he approaches it, so close he can touch it now. He's about to, when:

GLOWERING GUARD

(Off camera)

Thought you'd get away with it,  
eh?

Startled, Cly turns around to see the Glowering Guard emerge from a shadow. His towering figure looms over Cly and the piano, obscuring both.

CLY

(at a loss)

Ah? How did...

GLOWERING GUARD

How did I know what you were up to?  
Think you're the first weasel I ever  
met? Think again!

CLY

I just...

GLOWERING GUARD

(mocking)

I just-I just what? You're done kid!  
Those keys. My losing them right when  
you showed up was VERY convenient.  
For you.

CLY

I...

GLOWERING GUARD

(relishing it)

Now that I know for sure, I can  
call it in.

CLY

Wait!

The Glowering guard pulls out his WALKIE TALKIE, grinning  
all the while.

GLOWERING GUARD

(laughing)

Six months or so in the hole will put your  
head straight.

(on walking talkie)

I've got a 602 in the Auditorium. Student  
trespassing-

Cly lowers his head, at a loss.

CLY

(V/O Internal Monologue/  
sweating)

Oh, shit! Once they get here...I'll  
be put away for so long...I'll never  
graduate. And music...Maybe music too,  
NEVER again!

That last thought is too much for Cly. The dam cracks open.

Suddenly, Cly raises his head and LUNGES towards the guard,  
in an attempt to wrestle the walkie-talkie off.

GLOWERING GUARD  
(indignant but confident)  
The hell you doin'?

The guard pulls out his baton, charging towards Cly. Desperate to escape, Cly runs to the top window. The guard follows suit.

Cly reaches the window, but the guard GRABS hold of his ANKLE, pulling him down. The guard SMACKS him with his baton - ONCE, TWICE, and then, Cly suddenly JERKS SIDEWAYS, throwing his attacker off-guard.

The guard TRIPS on Cly's feet and...CRASHES right through the GLASS window, his figure dangling and then plummeting below.

CLY's eyes WIDEN, disbelieving what just happened.

He closes his eyes.

CLY  
(V/O Interior Monologue)  
Oh God...

He goes to look:

His mouth is now frozen in dumbstruck horror.

He stands there observing as FLASHLIGHTS make their way across the courtyard below, approaching the auditorium.

CLY  
(V/O Interior Monologue/panic)  
Shit!

A POOL of light illuminates the GUARD, splayed dead on the ground.

Cly shivers. And then BOLTS towards the door. He stops in front of the barricaded doors.

Looking up, he sees the flashing RED light on the security cameras.

He scans the room, looking for a way out. He dashes towards a window - sheer reflex. But suddenly, he comes to a halt and stumbles slowly to his knees.

CLY  
(V/O Internal Monologue/dread)  
Oh god!

His eyes moisten, a TEAR spilling over.

Slowly, he looks around but does not see, objects now FLASH past his view. Everything is OUT OF FOCUS.

CLY  
(V/O Internal Monologue)  
I-I...I'm D-O-N-E.

He plops down onto the floor. He sits there, eyes fixed at nothing in particular.

He BURROWS his face in his knees, SOBBING.

CLY  
(V/O Internal Monologue)  
Guys, you were right...  
I didn't stand a chance...

Cly sits in cold silence. A single shard of glass falls from the broken window and hits the ground. He looks up towards it. There he sees the Piano slowly coming into FOCUS, the only thing in focus now.

Slowly...he CRAWLS towards the piano in dazed sorrow.

As he nears it, he stands and sees his reflection in its polished wood.

His hands reluctantly reach towards his image...and the keyboard below.

And then:

He descends into the Piano's plush seat. His right hand lays over the keys, weak and lifeless.

His hands slowly sink into the keys. A harsh crying note escapes at the impact.

Leaning into the keys, he steps across them. The softest harmony emanates - a DRIZZLE of notes.

INTERCUT TO:

GUARDS and their DOGS make their way up the step.

They inspect the auditorium on their HAND-MONITORS, which shows the heavily barricaded FRONT and EXIT doors.

GUARD #1  
(to partner)  
Get the ladder.

BACK IN THE AUDITORIUM:

Slowly...the air rises and falls from the momentum of the music.

Hands sweep across the keyboard

Streams of notes exhale into the room, one by one, in a flow. NOTES side-step each other, twirl around each other, dance on top of one another.

INTERCUT TO:

Guards THRUSTS the weight of a BULKY LADDER against the door.

BACK IN THE AUDITORIUM:

Cly's eyes remain closed, but he's no longer sweating. Soothed by the sounds.

The more he plays, the more notes fill the room, into a continuous flow of notes exploring its contours, FLOATING above the dome, SEEPING through the window CRACKS.

INTERCUT TO:

EXT. STUDENT DORMS - THAT SAME MOMENT

One by one, STUDENTS pull their BARRED windows open and peek their heads out, drawn by the notes wafting through the night air.

Pretty soon, nearly every dorm window has a student propped against the metal bars, which look like armor masks on their faces. In spite of it, they're all gazing dreamily out, momentarily freed by the music.

STUDENT #1

(VO Interior Monologue)

Unbelievable...Something so beautiful  
in this awful place...

STUDENT #2

(VO Interior Monologue)

Too beautiful...

In one of the windows are Junior, Youngest, and the Senior - one stunned; the other sad; and the last in admiration.

SENIOR

(bittersweet smile)

Cly...

BACK IN THE AUDITORIUM:

Cly is furiously playing the piano, wholly engrossed in the moment. His skin's aglow, his posture erect and confident - a strange aural glow hovering around him now.

He takes no notice of the reverberating doors and the piles of chairs now wobbling with the intruding force.

The door is rammed continually, casting the chairs aside, in counterpoint with the swirls of notes swimming around Cly and the auditorium.

The violent, JAGGED notes coming from the door join in with Cly's own. Cly's notes incorporate them as punctuation for the others.

Music swells into a feverish pitch - a squall.

Cly inhales, his hand lifting from the keys. He's reached the climax.

Just Then:

GUARDS, in heavy combat mode, burst through the door, running towards him on the podium. They surround him from every angle, taking their places, GUNS DRAWN and AIMED.

Silence freezes them all. In wait...

Cly opens his eyes...only to be met with vicious SCOWLS. His hand hovers high above the keys, stuck in place, ready to strike.

GUARD #1  
Step away from the piano.

GUARD #2  
Get up! NOW!

Cly hesitates. His hands rising slightly, away from the piano.

INTERCUT TO:

EXT. DORMS - THAT MOMENT

The students in the windows, holding their breaths, mouths agape. In anticipation. In fear... And hope.

One GIRL looks like she's praying; a BOY has his hand in his mouth.

MONTAGE:

ANTICIPATION.

EARS PRONE: Three Ears, ready.

Junior's, Senior's and the Youngest's EYES WIDE: One wide open; another shut tight in ANGUISH.

HANDS: Outstretched and pressing against the bars.

BACK IN THE AUDITORIUM:

Cly grins, slowly and...triumphantly.

He strikes. His fingers hitting the keyboard for one last note.

Time slows down. The note flutters and BREAKS in mid-air like an explosion.

Startled by the aching sound, GUARD #1 pulls the trigger. As soon as the BULLET in on its way, the guard regrets it.

GUARD #1  
(V/O Interior Monologue)  
Oops.

But it's too late. The first bullet prompts the others. And so goes a round of BAM! BAM! BAM!

Bullets rain over Cly's distant form: the CLAPPING of THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE. Just as Cly folds in half, as if taking a bow, head swung low.

Before it all grows quiet. Time returns to normal.

GUARD #2  
Oh, shit. That wasn't supposed to happen. MARKO!

GUARD #1  
Sooorry. It startled me.

GUARD #3  
(resigned/ready to walk away)  
Fuck!

At a distance:

The guards start walking away, positioning themselves by the door. One of the guards summons for assistance with a walkie talkie.

GUARD#3  
Need UNIT B-Squad in the auditorium. Student casualty.

By the piano, closing in on:

A ribbon of BLOOD streaks the piano's keys.

CLY  
(VO/Internal Monologue)  
At last, I played the performance of my life.

Cly lies draped over the piano. He appears serene.