

THIS IS A PAGE TURNER

Written by

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INT. A CONCERT HALL

An empty stage, save for a beautiful grand piano.

MO - young, attractive, sweet - walks out on stage. He humbly accepts the thunderous applause.

He sits at the piano, takes a breath and PLAYS! It's beautiful, inspired, gorgeous.

Then, just as he's about to hit the top of a crescendo....

LORI (O.S.)

Hey!

INT. DRESSING ROOM

Mo jolts up from his reverie. LORI, late 30's and pretty, stands over him.

LORI

You almost ready? You know where Tomer is?

Mo shakes his dream away and sits up.

MO

No, sorry...I mean, I guess he'll be here any minute.

Lori sits down and picks up a cello to warm up.

LORI

You OK?

MO

Yeah - just a little nervous.

Just then, TOMER bursts in. Tall, severe. And Israeli.

TOMER

Nu? Ready?

Lori smiles. Mo nods.

TOMER (CONT'D)

(to Mo)

You sure?

MO

Yeah.

TOMER  
You go over the score? Gonna be OK?

MO  
Yeah.

TOMER  
(to Lori)  
Pamela Barnard made it in.

LORI  
(in shock)  
What? I didn't know she'd be here?

TOMER  
(innocent)  
Oh, I thought I had told you.

LORI  
What the hell?! This piece isn't  
ready for her!

TOMER  
(snaps)  
Don't give me this shit now! We're  
FINE, OK? Let's GO!

He stalks out.

MO  
He has a bit of a temper, huh?

LORI  
You have no idea.

Mo, petrified, follows Lori out.

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Tomer pushes on ahead. Mo turns to Lori as they walk,  
quietly, down the backstage hall.

MO  
Is Pamela Barnard important?

LORI  
She can make careers. I can't  
believe he didn't tell me...

MO  
Well for what it's worth, I heard  
you practicing. You sound great.

Lori, touched, smiles.

LORI

Thanks...so why is he on your case?

Mo hesitates...

MO

I...uh...haven't done this much before.

LORI

It's easy. You just have to follow along and not lose count.

MO

Yeah, the thing is...I don't really read music that well. His other page turner dropped out at the last minute. I just work here. I'm kind of...the only option.

Lori's face drops in fear and sympathy.

LORI

Do you even play the piano?

MO

Well...I mean, I took some lessons. I wish I did.

Lori can't even respond.

MO (CONT'D)

(reassuring)

I know the piece, though. It should be OK.

They arrive at the stage. Lori smiles, faking encouragement.

INT. CONCERT HALL - STAGE

To applause from the audience, Lori and Tomer enter the stage.

They move to the front of the Grand Piano that sits on the stage in the intimate hall. Taking hands and smiling, they give a deep bow.

Behind them, Mo walks over to the piano and puts the score on the stand.

The applause subsides. Tomer steps forward, to Lori's surprise.

TOMER

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for coming tonight. I just wanted to say that tonight's performance you will hear is dedicated to my grandfather, who died of cancer ten years ago.

Lori tries to hide her surprise. It's clear that she didn't sign off on this.

TOMER (CONT'D)

This was his favorite piece, and we would like to play it in his memory.

He takes Lori's hand and bows again, to applause. She submits to it, but isn't happy.

They take their places. Mo fights his panic.

Tomer leans over to him.

TOMER (CONT'D)

Just count, OK? Don't fuck this up.

Mo nods, petrified. Tomer gives Lori a downbeat and they begin.

It's Mendelssohn's Cello Sonata, and the page-turning starts out well, but deteriorates.

First quickly, then slowly. Mo misses some cues, then gets lost.

Tomer curses under his breath, nodding violently when the page needs to be turned. Lori is clearly uncomfortable.

Mo pulls the page back but grabs it from the bottom, obscuring Tomer's view.

TOMER (CONT'D)

(under his breath, while playing)

*Take it from the TOP!*

Mo - misunderstanding - looks a little surprised, but he quickly grabs the front of the score and turns all the way back to the beginning.

Tomer HISSES.

TOMER (CONT'D)

NO!

Mo immediately realizes his mistake, and tries to correct it...

Then: it happens. He knocks the score off, onto the keys, and onto Tomer's hands. The binding strikes Tomer's knuckles, forcing him off.

A gasp from the audience. The music stops. The score lays on the keys, preventing any further progress.

Mo stands, mortified. He looks like he might cry.

Tomer, livid, eyes blazing, stands and faces Mo. Lori looks at them, scared.

The audience is deathly silent, clearly aware of Tomer's anger - but kind of enjoying the show.

Tomer stares down Mo, then:

POW! Tomer pops Mo across the face, splitting Mo's nose.

Another gasp from the audience. He turns and stalks offstage as Lori jumps up to run over Mo.

CU on Tomer as he walks off, livid, shaking his hand in pain.

FREEZE on his demented, angry face:

VO

And with that untimely display of temper, the pianist broke his hand in six places. Forced to abandon his career...

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE

Tomer sits, dejected, filling in some forms on a computer.

VO

...he lived out the rest of his days in his father's insurance office, angry and bitter.

BACK TO:

INT. CONCERT HALL - STAGE

Lori, on the stage helping Mo. He looks at her in the eyes and she smiles, sweet and warm.

FREEZE on her beautiful smile:

VO

Though they only got through half of the first movement, Pamela Barnard heard enough from the cellist to sign her to a contract.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER CONCERT HALL - STAGE

Lori on a stage, bowing, happy as an audience roars

VO

With Pamela's guidance, she quickly became one of the most famous musicians in the world.

BACK TO:

INT. CONCERT HALL - STAGE

Mo, lying on the stage, smiling at Lori through his bloody nose. Under the VO, she helps staunch his bleeding and guides him to his feet and off the stage.

VO

And as for our Page Turner? Well acting on a tip from his plastic surgeon, he invested \$100 dollars in a social media startup and within three months became a billionaire. He and the cellist stayed in touch, and went on to be married and have two children together.

CUT TO:

INT. MO'S HOME

Mo sits at the piano, struggling through a piece. Lori sits down next to him.

VO

With his wife's encouragement, he started taking piano lessons too. And though he never stopped loving music, he also never turned pages again...

END on the SHEET MUSIC on the piano - the book closes to reveal a beginner's piano book.

FADE TO BLACK.