

## THE ACCOMPANIST - THE TUTOR

POPS

It is big. Yes.

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START

TUTOR

It is a big life, your daughter's life. You see my / meaning?

POPS

I see your meaning.

TUTOR

And it is because of *your* life that she has it.

POPS (*edged*)

My *little* life -

TUTOR

In scale alone. Not importance. Because it is you who have set her on this path, yes? You have given her shoes with the thickest of soles. You have provided her a knapsack full of sustenance, and a map, perhaps, to guide her, and you have led her through the garden to the front gate, and you have opened the gate, and you have set her on this path with a wink, like so – (*the Tutor produces a wink, like so*) YES and now, sir, NOW what is next for you to do?

POPS (*uncertain*)

To close the gate?

TUTOR

Precisely. And to wait for her big life to begin – *in the lobby*, if you would.

POPS

Do you have children?

TUTOR (*at the end of his rope*)

I have students. My students are my children. Now, I must ask that you PLEASE / step outside -

POPS

It's not the same thing, students and / children –

TUTOR

I'm sure you're right.

POPS

Students and children, teachers and parents – these are not the same thing. And only a teacher would make that analogy - the stroll through the garden, as if adolescence were a garden - the winking of an eye, as if anxiety could be dispelled with an optic twitch, and this final act, this nonchalant CLOSING OF THE GATE –

TUTOR

Please lower your voice -

POPS

Only a teacher would make that analogy because only a teacher closes the gate. Parents leave it open.

TUTOR

Yes, so their children might return to them -

POPS

Precisely.

TUTOR

She won't return to you, Mr. *Pops*. Not as you imagine. Nor, might I add, should this be the goal. And if she does return, however briefly, she will be like Alice in her (*emphasizing both words*) *Wonder Land*. You will discover her too large for your house to contain.

POPS

You're all about the analogies / aren't you -

TUTOR

I am Russian, it is my cross to bear... (*a brief rest*) I am not a parent, this is true. But I have witnessed many parents calling to their children - to their phoenixes rising - Will you be home for Christmas! Can we expect a call! Do you not see us suffering in your shadow? Do you not remember who gave you life? They call this at the horizon, year in and year out, and their voices become like lassos, and the lassos become a noose and the noose after tightening year in and year out - it *chokes* the *child* to *death*. (*a brief rest*) So I must ask you, as one who is *not* a parent. Why do you have children, if not so they may surpass you? And once they surpass you - why do you not let them go?

*Kiddo has appeared from the wings, with a bouquet of flowers in her arms. She clears her throat.*

POPS (*startled*)

Hiya, Kiddo.

KIDDO

Hiya, Pops.

TUTOR

(*to Kiddo*) You have ten minutes. (*to Pops*) Ten minutes. *Pops*.

END

*The Tutor disappears into "the wings," where he becomes The Accompanist once again. Kiddo and Pops consider each other. It's been awhile.*

POPS

Look at you. How old are you now, nineteen?