

START

TUNER

So *that's* the tragedy - he hasn't heard it yet. Might be he's not listening for it either.
On accounta he's busy listening to you.

Tuner shuffles off the way he came, gradually becoming the Accompanist once again.

Kiddo is alone for a brief moment before Pops charges back into the room. Kiddo hides the glass behind her back.

POPS

Look before you say anything, I need you to know what it took, getting that piano.
I had to sit down with your grandparents.
I got a haircut, I wore a tie, I ate escargot for god's sake!
... Where's Tom?

KIDDO

Don't quit the bar.

POPS

Quit the bar? What are you talking - I'm not quitting the bar.

Kiddo slams the lowball onto the upright piano.

POPS

Okay, maybe I'm considering quitting the bar.

KIDDO

You can't quit the bar, Pops, you love the bar.

POPS

I love a lot of things, Kiddo. You, for instance.

KIDDO

But the bar is where you're inevitable, it's where you're most *in tune* –

POPS

Oh don't say that - why would you say that - what does that even mean?
That I was put on this earth to play "Some Enchanted Evening," to strangers downing
Dewars 'til they can't tell their fingers from their fork?

KIDDO

Is that what it's like?

POPS

Don't get me wrong, it's a hell of a place til eleven and after that if you squint your eyes,
but I think I've earned my right to something more.

KIDDO

So you're not quitting for *me*.

POPS

My reasons for quitting are many-fold, Kiddo, but if, on the list of reasons, *you* feature prominently - would that be such a bad thing? Because I can tell you what it's like to have a Pops who couldn't care less about your well-being, who – after a drink or two or ten – wouldn't have remembered your first name... (*softening*) I want to contribute to your life, Kiddo. I was absent for a while –

KIDDO

What about *your* work, Pops? What happened to your dead period line period?

POPS

Well yes, *yes*, I'd have more time for that too - look, what does it matter if I quit the bar -

KIDDO

Because one thing leads to another, doesn't it. It's like... (*working it out*) it's like at the airport, there's sometimes a choice between a moving walkway (*referencing the grand piano*) and a leisurely walk (*referencing the upright piano*) And the moving walkway gets you there faster, the moving walkway gets you there first. But if you choose the walk then you get coffee, and pretzels, and all manner of memorabilia. And my fear is I'll choose the walkway, and at the end of that walkway's another one, which leads to another which leads to another and I'll get there faster, wherever *there* is, I'll get there first, for what it's worth, but I'm going to miss the memorabilia – and I'm not ready yet – I'm not ready, I'm not ready, I'm not –

Kiddo attempts to push the grand piano out of the room. Pops manages to squeeze himself between them.

POPS

All right now calm down – CALM DOWN... What does your shrink say about this?

KIDDO (*unbelievable*)

What does my *shrink* / say?

POPS

We're paying him a small fortune, what does he have to say / about -

KIDDO

He says the same as Mom –

POPS

Ah, well that makes sense, seeing as you share the same shrink -

KIDDO

Pops –

POPS

I'm sorry, what does your mother say, your mother *and* your shrink –

KIDDO

That I shouldn't put undo pressure on myself, especially at my age.
That I shouldn't push myself beyond my *(quotes)* "comfort zone."

POPS

Bullshit. These people. What do they know about pressure - undo or otherwise.
A man who spends his life judging other people's aspirations and a woman who aspires to nothing at all.

KIDDO

POPS!

POPS

Well I'm sorry. Of course she aspires to something, she aspires to raising *you*, but your mother doesn't understand what we're doing here, she never has. And it's bad advice, Kiddo. Don't push yourself? You get *one life*, of course you push yourself. And greatness doesn't come from comfort, I'll tell you that. You want comfort, Kiddo? You want to go through life *just fine*?

KIDDO

END

I don't know what I want anymore, all right?
And more importantly, I don't know who I want it for.

POPS

Let me ask you something - when you left Catholic school to join Riverdale Academy, why'd you do that?

KIDDO

Why'd I DO that?

POPS

Yeah, why'd you / do that?

KIDDO

Because it had a top of the line music program and top of the line teachers, and Gramma and Grandpa's name wasn't plastered across the school -

POPS

So not for me?

KIDDO *(seeing what he's getting at)*

No. Not for you.

POPS

And when we went to France last year, you entered that festival why?

KIDDO

Because they were asking for Rachmaninoff and I'm good at Rachmaninoff -