

STILL HERE

Second Draft

Written by

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INT. MR.SIKORA'S CLASSROOM - DAY OCTOBER 2014

MR. NICHOLAS SIKORA stands in front of a gleaming whiteboard hastily scribbling away. He's 48, six-foot tall, and has a build like Santa Claus: sizable round belly, constantly rosy cheeks, and a pair of thin wire glasses. The only difference is Mr. Sikora's fairly wild short blonde curls.

His handwriting is so sloppy one can barely tell its math at all, but his focused eyes and side-smile tell us that the gibberish on the board is about to be a correctly solved problem.

The whiteboard is at the front of a larger classrooms at Sayre High School. In the front corner sits a crude looking metal desk scattered with an array of textbooks, papers, peppermint candy wrappers, two small-size empty bottles of Coke, and a bulky desktop computer. Next to the computer sits a small joke-of-the-day calendar showing that today is the twentieth of October, 2014.

Every wall is filled with posters placed in a rather odd order, but upon further inspection create symmetrical shapes unique to each wall. In the back sits a single row of desktop computers on a long black table with eight chairs. Stacks of graphing calculators sit on each end.

In the center are thirty-two desks with attached chairs in eight rows of four, perfectly aligned. TWENTY-THREE SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS sit barely paying attention. We've got your typical note passers probably asking do you like me? Check yes or no. The texters who think their sly placing their phone underneath the cover of their textbook. And of course your classic daydreamers glazed-over looking out the window.

Four students sit in the front row and one female student named ALLIE PEET is actively paying attention, taking notes just as fast as Mr. Sikora. She pauses momentarily here and there trying to decipher Mr. Sikora's impossibly messy handwriting.

The room is filled with hushed GIGGLING as the sound of Mr. Sikora's marker forcefully HITTING the whiteboard builds with intensity. With one final GAB of the marker, Mr. Sikora turns to face his students, adjusting his glasses in the process. Students bolt upright in their chairs in a last-ditch effort to look attentive.

MR. SIKORA

Alright folks, your answer is x
equals 87.

Allie nods her head in agreement and finishes writing down her work.

MR. SIKORA (CONT'D)
Any other questions people?

Allie energetically shakes her head no and her classmates mumble something incoherent.

The school bell RINGS and the students hastily pack up their textbooks and head for the door.

Mr. Sikora caps the marker.

MR. SIKORA (CONT'D)
Perfect. See you guys tomorrow.

Mr. Sikora wipes the board clean with his hands as students leave.

Allie takes the longest to gather her belongings considering she was one of the only ones actually taking notes. She zips up her galaxy print backpack and heads for the door.

MR. SIKORA (CONT'D)
Ms. Peet, you talked to any aliens lately?

Allie pauses, smiling, enjoying this little routine.

ALLIE
(jokingly)
No, Mr. Sikora. Why do you ask?

MR. SIKORA
Well I just thought you might have since that backpack is out of this world!

Mr. Sikora and Allie share a laugh.

ALLIE
See you later Mr. Sikora.

MR. SIKORA
Good day Ms. Peet.

Mr. Sikora finishes wiping down the board and turns to face the desks.

MALE VOICE O.S
(sarcastically)
An exciting bunch as always.

Mr. Sikora laughs and heads to his desk. Unseen until now, LOGAN MCKINLEY is sitting in the back.

He's 18, a senior at Sayre, and is six-foot with broad shoulders and a stocky build - making him seem older than he is. He has semi-styled blonde hair, Clark Kent style glasses, and is wearing a t-shirt from the drama department's latest show Little Shop of Horrors.

It takes him a moment to close his laptop, puts away his snack, and picks up a travel coffee cup. He all to the front and pulls a desk next to Mr. Sikora.

MR. SIKORA

You know seventh graders, they're for the most part the same. That's why they're at the bottom of my list.

The two laugh and pull out lunch bags. Logan's a nice quality, blue, insulated one Mr. Sikora's a brown paper bag.

LOGAN

Except for me, I've always been at the top.

Logan gives a cheesy smile as he reaches in.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Alright, I've got peanut butter and fluff today.

Logan extends half towards Mr. Sikora.

MR. SIKORA

Too sweet, I'm trying to watch my sugar.

Mr. Sikora reaches into a drawer and takes out a full small-sized Coke. He opens the lid and sips. Logan is eyeing him the whole time.

MR. SIKORA (CONT'D)

Hey I switched to the mini-bottles. That was hard for me.

LOGAN

(laughing)
Doesn't work if you drink twice as many.

Mr. Sikora removes his lunch.

MR. SIKORA

Alright, your turn. Any updates on your applications?

Logan eats his sandwich, talking in between bites.

LOGAN

(feigning seriousness)

Oh ya know, we've got Dartmouth over here and like Georgetown over there, a little Columbia here and there. It's all very exciting and such.

MR. SIKORA

And what about Carnegie Mellon?

Logan slouches back and sighs.

LOGAN

I still haven't talked to him...

Mr. Sikora finishes his sandwich and washes it down with some Coke.

MR. SIKORA

Good thing you don't need a parent's signature to complete a college application.

Logan scoffs.

MR. SIKORA (CONT'D)

You're applying to a graphic arts program, not hacking into someone's bank account. I'm telling you you're under-estimating him.

Logan pokes at the remnants of his lunch.

LOGAN

I wish.

A beat.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

I could be happy at law school ya know.

Mr. Sikora leans back, placing his hands behind his head.

MR. SIKORA

I don't doubt that you could succeed at law school Mr. McKinley.

A moment passes. Logan rests his chin on his hand, looking down.

LOGAN

What if they don't want...?

MR. SIKORA

Allow me to rephrase. I don't doubt that you could succeed Mr. McKinley.

He leans forward, opens a drawer and pulls out a handful of peppermint candies. He selects two and places the rest in his pocket. They each share a piece.

MR. SIKROA

Finish the portfolio, apply, get in, then talk to your dad.

Logan pops the peppermint in and lets out a deep sigh.

INT. SAYRE HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The school bell RINGS. Time is passing quickly as Logan goes about his day, walking in and out of a variety of classrooms. He goes up and down multiple stairways and hallways, occasionally stopping at a locker. He is frequently approached, laughing and making conversation with classmates.

Logan walks past Mr. Sikora's classroom. Mr. Sikora stands outside with his back against the wall, his hands splayed at his sides. He carefully monitors students walking by. Years of standing here combined with wiping his whiteboard with his hands have caused Mr. Sikora to leave behind handprints on this spot of the wall in blue whiteboard marker.

Logan passes Mr. Sikora.

LOGAN

They paint over your handprints yet?

Mr. Sikora smiles but lifts his hands to show Logan the marks.

MR. SIKORA

Still there.

EXT. MCKINLEY HOUSE - EVENING

Logan pulls in the driveway of a nice, white, ranch style house in his silver 2013 Toyota Prius. "MONEY ON MY MIND" BY SAM SMITH blasts.

INT. MCKINLEY HOUSE LIVINGROOM - 11:37 P.M.

Logan sits in a well-furnished living room on a grey leather sofa, feet resting on a dark colored coffee table, and a laptop on his lap.

Logan is assembling his best graphic designs in a folder labeled portfolio. The time reads 11:37 p.m.

A door CLOSES and moments later Logan's dad CLIFF MCKINLEY enters. Cliff is 47, a single parent, stands at six-two with the same broad build as Logan, and has a head full of short salt-and-pepper hair.

Cliff carries a large briefcase and a stack of manila folders wearing an expensive looking suit, which he's worn for a while given it's many wrinkles present and an undone tie and cuffs.

LOGAN

Hey

Cliff nods in Logan's direction as he sets the folders and brief case on the coffee table.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

How'd your day go?

CLIFF

Long. Somehow one of the insurance providers didn't have an experimental treatment labeled correctly and they're trying to deny patient reimbursement.

Cliff sits opposite Logan on the sofa.

CLIFF (CONT'D)

They also think they can sue the pharmaceutical company on the grounds of withholding information.

Cliff closes his eyes and the two sit in silence for a moment.

LOGAN

(mildly annoyed)

My day was okay.

Cliff doesn't react to Logan's tone.

CLIFF

(genuinely)

That's good.

After another moment, Cliff finally opens his eyes and glances over at Logan's laptop.

CLIFF (CONT'D)
Whatcha doing?

One of Logan's graphic designs is open on his screen. His hand is gripping his laptop, ready to close it.

LOGAN
Uhh-

Logan pauses for a moment and then turns his screen towards his dad.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
I found this cool design, I think
I'm going to make it my new
background. What do you think?

Cliff scans the image on the screen. It's a stunning graphics piece. It shows a young boy up in the left hand corner leaning back in a wooden chair. It teeters on a ledge overlooking a brightly colored ocean. The waters are filled with an intricacy of words and small symbols. This piece clearly took a lot of time to create.

CLIFF
Weird, but it's your laptop kid.
Hey, how about your applications?
Hear anything?

Logan turns his computer back, looking slightly disappointed.

LOGAN
No, but I heard that admissions
offices enjoy making students
suffer.

Cliff stands and picks up the manila folders.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
Something about that being the
only joy they get from their jobs.

Cliff laughs, but drops some of the files.

CLIFF
Dammit.

Logan hops up and helps his father collect the papers. Cliff scoffs, sarcastically laughing at the mess.

CLIFF (CONT'D)
 Well that's the first of many
 frustrations of studying law. Hang
 in there kiddo.

Cliff makes his way to another room with he folders.

LOGAN
 (to himself)
 Will do.

INT. MR. SIKORA'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Mr. Sikora writes out another equation. Logan and SIX OTHER
 OLDER STUDENTS fill the first two rows. Their books read
 "Calculus I".

The dynamic is entirely different than Mr. Sikora's seventh
 grade class. Each pays attention and jokes around with Mr.
 Sikora. he turns and faces them.

MR. SIKORA
 Alright people, any more questions?

TARAH KELLEY next to Logan in the front row is tall and lean,
 with long golden hair.

TARAH
 You heard any of Taylor Swift's new
 music?

Mr. Sikora isn't even phased by the question. He caps his
 marker.

MR. SIKORA
 Isn't there that one with a lot of
 shaking?

Mr. Sikora starts doing a dance somewhat resembling "the
 twist".

MR. SIKORA (CONT'D)
 (singing very out of
 rhythm)
 Shaking it off, shaking it off.

Tarah pulls out her phone and takes a video.

TARAH
 (laughing)
 This is a fantastic answer, thank
 you.

The school bell RINGS and Mr. Sikora stops. Everyone laughs, talking as they pack up. Mr. Sikora wipes away the board with his hands.

Logan packs up only to move to the back. As he sets up his laptop, Mr. Sikora takes a quick sip of Coke and grabs a peppermint before heading out towards the hallway.

MR. SIKORA
Duty calls!

As Mr. Sikora is leaves, Allie makes her way in. He makes the "live long a prosper" hand.

MR. SIKORA (CONT'D)
Greetings Earthling.

ALLIE
(laughing)
Morning Mr. Sikora. Hey Logan.

Allie waves as she takes her front-row seat, same one Logan was just in.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SAYRE HIGH SCHOOL - DAY FIVE YEARS EARLIER

A younger Logan, 12, walks towards Mr. Sikora's classroom. Mr. Sikora leans, looking rather the same, against his spot on the wall.

Logan slowly approaches, clearly nervous. Mr. Sikora greets him with a kind smile.

MR. SIKROA
Ready to learn about math, young man?

Logan nods. He's wearing a Darth Vader t-shirt, some dark blue jeans, and a pair of black Vans.

MR. SIKORA
Cool shirt. One might even say it's out of this galaxy.

Logan bluntly responds.

LOGAN
My dad doesn't get why people would like the villain. He wanted me to get the Skywalker shirt.

Mr. Sikora takes a minute then breaks out into a laugh.

MR. SIKORA
Well, some might argue that Vader
is just misunderstood.

Logan finally smiles.

LOGAN
That's what I said.

MR. SIKORA
Well go pick a good seat.

Logan nods and heads in.

INT. MR. SIKORA'S CLASSROOM - SAME TIME

Logan looks around and decides upon the seat he and Allie sit
in.

The school bell RINGS.

CUT TO:

INT. MR. SIKORA'S CLASSROOM - PRESENT DAY

Mr. Sikora walks back in, closing the door.

MR. SIKORA
Alright people, today were doing
more on 4.6...

Mr. Sikora's voice trails off as Logan puts his headphones
on. "STAY WITH ME" BY SAM SMITH starts as he types.

CUT TO:

INT. MR. SIKORA'S CLASSROOM - AN HOUR LATER

Logan sits along side Mr. Sikora as he reviews Logan's work.

Logan fidgets with a zipper on his lunch pail, waiting.

MR. SIKORA
You know I'm not a very artsy
fellow, but your work looks good
and your application's strong.

Mr. Sikora turns the laptop to Logan. On the screen is Logan's online application for Carnegie Mellon's School of Design. Logan nervously rubs his hands together.

LOGAN

Okay.

He scrolls down to the submit button. He pauses, looks up at Mr. Sikora's but with a deep breath, hits submit.

Mr. Sikora pats Logan on the arm.

MR. SIKORA

Enjoy the feeling Mr. McKinley.
Being uncertain of the future is
what makes life interesting.
Routines grow boring.

LOGAN

(jokingly)
But never this one right?

Mr. Sikora sits back as he fishes two peppermints out of his pocket.

MR. SIKORA

(smiling)
For the most part.

Mr. Sikora hands Logan a peppermint.

MR. SIKORA (CONT'D)

Welp, now you wait.

Focus shifts to the calendar. Pages FLIP by quickly as time progresses.

The date on the calendar stops on December 8th, 2014. The pair are having lunch again.

The room hasn't changed much except for a printed-out picture of a cartoon Christmas tree taped to the front of Mr. Sikora's desk.

Mr. Sikora, looking run-down, reads Logan's laptop carefully. Logan is pacing.

He looks up.

MR. SIKORA (CONT'D)

I don't know what to tell you. I'm
sorry you got into a very nice
graphic design and animation
program.

Logan stops and rolls his eyes.

MR. SIKORA (CONT'D)
Logan talk to the man. Besides,
there are ways to afford college
even if your dad doesn't help
because, believe it or not, you
also don't need your parent's
signature to attend college.

LOGAN
I know that but, it's like I don't
know that. I don't know how to
function in a world where I'm not
looking for his approval.

Mr. Sikora pats the desk next to him and Logan sits.

MR. SIKORA
What makes you think he won't
approve? You've got in. This place-

Pointing to the screen.

MR. SIKORA (CONT'D)
Thinks you've got what it takes.
I'm fairly certain they know more
about graphics than your dad.

Logan lays his head down on his hands.

LOGAN
It's not that, it's just...he's
excited about his work, or at least
he pays attention to it. I guess I
always felt like if I did that same
work. he'd pay a little more
attention to me.

Logan lifts his head up to see Mr. Sikora extending a
peppermint. He begins to unwrap it.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
Law school is the only thing that
we seem to talk about these days
and now I have to let that go.

Logan puts the candy in his mouth.

MR. SIKORA
You think too much Mr. McKinley.
Just talk to him.

Logan sighs and reaches for his phone. Mr. Sikora retrieves a full-size bottle of Coke from one of his desk drawers. Logan raises an eyebrow but Mr. Sikora smiles as he unscrews the cap.

MR. SIKROA

Eh, I decided not to deny myself anymore.

The two laugh and Mr. Sikora sips.

INT. CHINESE BUFFET - EVENING

Logan and Cliff sit at a worn-out booth eating.

The buffet is pretty small and poorly lit yet still draws in a big crowd. A few booths line the walls and there's a small assortment of tables in the middle. Families are seated at almost every one, filling the room with CONVERSATIONS. Partitions with Chinese symbols and gold painted embellishments separate the dining area from the six different rows of food. The entrance consists of a big green arch with a small tank of fish immediately to the left

CLIFF

Accepted into Columbia, God that's amazing! Can I see the letter?

LOGAN

Yeah, of course.

Logan digs in his back pocket and pulls out an opened envelope from Columbia University.

Cliff scans the paper as the waitress returns with his drink.

CLIFF

Awesome kiddo. Hey YOU Got this last week. Why didn't you tell me?

Logan shrugs nonchalantly.

LOGAN

I didn't check the mail for a few days.

CLIFF

Well you've gotta be on top of that. Hopefully Columbia's financial aid packet is coming soon.

Logan gives a wry smile.

CLIFF (CONT'D)

And don't you worry, I can make it happen no matter what these places offer. You won't have to worry about so much student debt like me.

Logan pushes his food around.

CLIFF (CONT'D)

God you'll love Columbia. We should go take a tour sometime. I had a conference there one year and they had this phenomenal little Mexican restaurant called Casa Mexicana.

LOGAN

I got accepted to Carnegie Mellon University.

Cliff finally pauses.

CLIFF

What?

Logan tries to be more upbeat about the news.

LOGAN

Carnegie Mellon University, in Pittsburgh.

CLIFF

I don't really know much about their program. How is it?

LOGAN

Well, their law program is decent. You work with the University of Pittsburgh. It's pretty solid.

CLIFF

(jokingly)

Pretty solid, this is Columbia we're talking about.

LOGAN

Yeah, I actually didn't apply for their pre-law track. You see they have this phenomenal program for multimedia graphic arts. Like design and animations and stuff.

CLIFF

You're pulling my leg here right?
You got accepted to Columbia, for
law. Why would you want to go some
online art school?

Logan pauses, dropping his head.

LOGAN

(jokingly)

Yeah, I don't know what I was
thinking. Just keeping my options
open I guess. I'm honestly
surprised I even got in.

CLIFF

Well ya got in to Columbia, of
course you'd get into some
community college.

LOGAN

Yeah, I guess you're right.

Logan sighs.

INT. ENGLISH CLASS - MORNING

Logan stares blankly at a copy of MacBeth lying open on his desk. The room is about half the size of Mr. Sikora's and has bright yellow walls filled with posters about Edgar Allen Poe, Mark Twain, Shakespeare, etc.

In the center are twenty desks arranged in neat rows. SENIOR STUDENTS fill these seats each with their own copy of MacBeth. The teacher MR. FRANTZ, a short older man with tufts of white hair, sits at his desk reading along as well.

Students are taking turns reading their lines from the play. Many of the students reading are from Logan's calculus class as all seven of them are in this class too.

Tarah is reading the part of Lady MacBeth and is about to deliver her next line when MR. RILEY, the principal, enters.

He is 39, six feet tall, has short brown hair, and a handsome face.

He slowly makes his way to the front. His face is grim and his right hand is forming a fist, which he is holding with his left hand over his stomach. Every student sits up, anticipating an announcement.

MR. RILEY
(quietly)
Uh, hey guys.

Mr. Riley clears his throat and slowly scans their faces.

MR. RILEY (CONT'D)
So I've got some bad news. As of
this morning...Mr. Sikora is no
longer with us.

Everyone breathlessly ask "what?" at the same time.

TARAH
(confused)
Are you serious?

MR. RILEY
Yes guys, I'm afraid I am.

The realization blankets the room and students begin crying. Logan sits back in his chair, starring down. He's completely still, expect for the tears that stream silently down his face.

Tarah is hysterically crying and a FRIEND from the next row gets up to hug her. She turns her attention back to Mr. Riley who is clearly struggling to keep his composure.

TARAH
What happened?

Mr. Riley really takes a moment here. He looks at the sad faces of his students and at Mr. Frantz silently crying behind his desk.

MR. RILEY
Look guys I can't really...

He takes another hard look at his students and lets out a sad sigh.

MR. RILEY (CONT'D)
(voice shaking)
It was a suicide.

Logan's trance is broken as he looks sharply up. Utter disbelief in his eyes.

MR. RILEY (CONT'D)
We don't really know any other
details. Ms. Davis went to check on
him this morning since he didn't
call in for work, and...

Mr. Riley is really struggling to keep his composure now and one tear manages to escape.

Logan's bottom lip is shaking as his face contorts slightly in pain. He looks back down and grabs ahold of each side of his desk. He closes his eyes as tears really begin to fall.

Mr. Riley wipes his face and clears his throat again.

MR. RILEY (CONT'D)

Unfortunately school will continue on its normal schedule. Mrs. Richmond and some other counselors are going to be in the auditorium all day if you need a place to go.

Mr. Riley shakes his head.

MR. RILEY (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry guys.

He scans their face again, nodding at Mr. Frantz, before he makes his way out.

Students console one another. Mr. Frantz seems to come to life again as he wipes his tears. He puts on an over-happy face.

MR. FRANTZ

Would it help if we looked at some pictures? Let's try to remember the good things!

Mr. Frantz turns on the projector and pulls up the school photo drive. He finds a file labeled Sikora and opens it. Hundreds of photos of Mr. Sikora and his students fill the screen, including pictures of Logan and his calculus class.

MR. FRANTZ (CONT'D)

See, isn't this nice. Oh that's a good one right there...

The room around Logan blurs. He hears only his HEARTBEAT and BREATHING as he cries.

The RINGING of the bell makes the whole room jump, and looks up. His tears have stopped.

He surveys his classmates as most file out into the hallway. His calculus class stays behind though looking at one another, confused.

WILL looks at Logan.

WILL

Are we suppose to go?

Logan thinks for a minute and responds with a weak shrug.

LOGAN

I don't know.

After a pause Will picks up his book bag and stands up. The six other calculus students do the same and together they make their way into the hallway.

INT. MR. SIKORA'S CLASSROOM - MINUTES LATER

The seven students stand at the doorway.

TARAH

(through tears)

I don't think I can do this.

Tarah retreats and walks down the hall. Three others follow. Logan, Will, and one other remain.

Logan makes his way in and sits at his usual desk. No one says anything and Logan stares forward at the empty whiteboard. "PRAY" BY SAM SMITH starts.

INT. LOGAN'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Logan sits at his desk in the corner staring down at his calculus book.

The desk is also home to a cup of pencils and pens, a stapler, some post-it notes, and a small stack of papers.

A few moments pass until Logan erupts. He lets out a frustrated SCREAM and sweeps his arm across the surface of his desk. Papers and pencils go flying and the textbook and stapler hit the floor with a THUD.

Logan brings both of his fists down hard on the desk.

LOGAN

(shouting angrily)

Why! Why! Why!

With each word he bangs his fists again.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

(losing intensity)

Why! Why? Why?

Logan is now crying hard. He plants his elbows on the desk, face in his hands. MUSIC ENDS.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
(through tears)
Why did you do this? How did I let
this happen?

CLIFF
Logan? Are you home?

Cliff knocks on Logan's door.

LOGAN
One second.

Logan wipes his face and clears his throat. He opens his door and steps into the living room.

Cliff is sitting on the sofa on his phone, texting vigorously. On the coffee table sits a pizza box, paper plates, and a stack of napkins.

CLIFF
Hey bud. I heard what happened, I'm
really sorry about your teacher. He
taught math right?

Cliff sets his phone down and gets a slice of pizza. Logan stays still.

LOGAN
(quietly)
Yeah.

CLIFF
Well I got margarita pizza, that it
might help.

Cliff's phone BUZZES. He checks it.

LOGAN
(quietly)
Yeah, I'm sure that will fix
everything.

CLIFF
Hmm?

LOGAN
Nothing.

Logan goes to the table and opens the pizza box.

CLIFF
How are ya holding up?

LOGAN
(annoyed)
Fantastic.

Cliff's phone BUZZEZ again.

CLIFF
(distracted)
Good.

Logan scoffs, turning towards his room.

CLIFF (CONT'D)
Hey wait. Shit, I'm sorry.

Cliff turns his phone off.

CLIFF (CONT'D)
This rep from work isn't do
anything - um, ya know what? That's
not important.

Logan turns back and sits down in a recliner on the other
side of the coffee table.

CLIFF (CONT'D)
Really, how are you doing?

Logan's demeanor is stony and expressionless as he starts to
eat a slice of pizza from the plate on his lap.

LOGAN
Well I'm still alive. That's
probably a good sign.

CLIFF
(trying to lighten the
mood)
I would say so.

A beat.

CLIFF (CONT'D)
Well let's think happy thoughts.
Uh...any news from Columbia?

LOGAN
(flatly)
No.

CLIFF

Well it hasn't been very long and you've got nothing to worry about. I'll make it work.

LOGAN

Great dad and ya know that news would be even better if I actually wanted to go to Columbia.

The pizza heading for Cliff's mouth stops short.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

And you would have known that if you were remotely interested in anything I've been doing for the last decade.

CLIFF

(astonished)

You've never told me-

LOGAN

(anger building)

No dad, you never asked me about anything besides law school. You just decided that's what I wanted to do. Mom had already left and I wasn't about to lose another parent's interest.

CLIFF

Logan, your mom had her own issues. You shouldn't blame yourself for that.

LOGAN

That's not the point dad. After she left you just...stopped.

Logan gets up.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

I understood needing to grow up pretty quickly after mom left but my God there's a difference between having a kids that's independent and ignoring him.

Logan enters his room, closing the door.

Cliff sits in shock. Logan sits on his bedroom floor, head on his knees, crying.

INT. MR. SELLECK'S CLASSROOM - MORNING

Logan, slouching his arms crossed, sits among four of his calculus classmates in a small brown room, half the size of Mr. Sikora's.

At the front of the room is a chalk board and an old fashioned overhead projector. Standing behind it with arms crossed is MR. SELLECK; 50, math teacher at Sayre with a short, stocky build and a balding head of hair. His eyes are red and puffy.

MR. SELLECK

Well hello again. I wish we were meeting under better circumstances, but here we are.

The students stare back at Mr. Selleck with a mix of emotions. Logan's face remains hard and unimpressed.

MR. SELLECK (CONT'D)

The idea is for us to eventually pick up where you guys left off.

He scans their faces.

MR. SELLECK (CONT'D)

But I think that can wait till next week.

"WAIT" BY M83 starts.

MONTAGE

Logan goes through his day in the same angry disposition. He talks to no one and no one makes an attempt to talk to him. When he walks by Mr. Sikora's classroom and his handprints on the wall he keeps his head down.

At home Logan keeps to himself in his room and spends most of the night in fits of rage and sadness.

END MONTAGE

INT. MR. SELLECK'S CLASSROOM - MORNING

MUSIC ENDS.

The class sits at desks forming a circle.

MR. SELLECK

Alright, anybody want to start?
Something good, funny, favorite
joke?

A beat. Tarah leans forward.

TARAH

You guys remember the time he
thought there was a sniper across
the street?

Everyone laughs a little.

LOGAN

(quietly)

And it turned out it was just a
surveyor hired to redo the windows.

WILL

To be fair binoculars or whatever
did kind of look like a gun.

TARAH

I mean I guess it's good to know
he's paying attention. Or was

Logan sits up in his chair a little straighter.

LOGAN

I for one was impressed at his
actual inability to sing anything
on key or in rhythm.

WILL

Like the avocado song!

Will sings Dr. Jean's Banana Dance horribly out of rhythm
while doing well-known dance. Tarah and Logan sing along.

MONTAGE

Logan once again goes through the rest of his day, this time
slightly less closed off. He still keeps his head down though
when he passes by Mr. Sikora's room. We hear INAUDIBLE
CONVERSATIONS in the hallway.

END MONTAGE

INT. LOGAN'S ROOM - EVENING

Logan sits on his bed, laptop in his lap. His bedroom door is open.

A DOOR CLOSSES and moments later Cliff pokes his head in. Logan keeps his head down.

CLIFF

Hey bud...how was school?

LOGAN

Fine.

CLIFF

Great. So uh, do you want anything for dinner?

LOGAN

I already ate.

CLIFF

Okay, well uh, I'll leave ya to it then.

Cliff leaves. Logan looks up at the doorway.

INT. MR. SELLECK'S CLASSROOM - MORNING

The desks are returned to their normal rows and the students stand gathered around one desk in the front. On this desk is a small wicker basket filled with red Easter grass, small cans of Coke, bag of peppermints, and some blue expo markers. A red and blue ballon is tied onto the backside of the basket float above it.

TARAH

I just felt like it would be nice.
A makeshift memorial, ya know until we make a real one.

MR. SELLECK

Where do you want to put it?

LOGAN

I know.

INT. SAYRE HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

Logan places the basket on the floor in the hallway, underneath Mr. Sikora's hand prints on the wall. As he stands he pauses to brush his hand over the marks.

LOGAN
(to himself)
Still there.

INT. LOGAN'S ROOM - EVENING

Logan cleans up the mess he made of his desk. He carefully lay an outfit on the desk comprised of dark jeans and a Darth Vader t-shirt.

CLIFF
That for tomorrow?

Logan faces Cliff standing in the doorway.

LOGAN
Yeah.

CLIFF
Sorry I can't go. You think you'll be okay.

LOGAN
Yeah.

Logan takes a deep breath.

INT. SAYRE HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - AFTERNOON

Logan enters the small auditorium with a capacity of about 700 people. To Logan's amazement it's almost full. It takes him a minute to locate his classmates sitting in the middle.

As he sits down he opens the small, flimsy pamphlet in his hand. The front reads "In memory of Nickolas W. Sikora" and has a picture of Mr. Sikora giving a thumbs up.

The chattering crowd silences as a REVEREND makes his way onto the stage. He looks to be in his late twenties and has clean cut, short, brown hair.

REVEREND
Thank you for joining us today as we remember the extraordinary life of Nickolas Sikora, a beloved educator, friend, brother, and son.

The service moves forward and we see a variety of individuals take the stage.

First a MAN in his early twenties.

MAN

I remember my senior year he chaperoned our class trip. He got half the class sneaking out of the hotel one night...

Mr. Riley takes the stage.

MR. RILEY

Soon after I started working here I was in a meeting where we reviewed test scores from the previous years and I remember thinking "wow these kids are really good at math." That's when vice principle Polk looked at me and he said "it's Sikora. He makes them love math." I thought that was absolutely incredible that one man...

Tarah speaks next.

TARAH

I'm very honored to be speaking on behalf of Mr. Sikora's most recent calculus class but I think I can speak for everyone in this room when I say Mr. Sikora taught more than just math...

Finally Jamie Stryker, a sixth grade science teacher at Sayre Elementary, speaks. Jamie is tall, in good shape, and looks to be in his late thirties. He has black hair that is slicked back and he is currently wearing an over-sized Pittsburgh Penguins hockey Jersey.

Tears silently stream down his face.

JAMIE

I never thought I would have to say goodbye to my best friend this early in life, but it comforts me to know that Nicki lives on in the heart of every person in this room a countless more. Now if you could all join me I'd like to give one final send off.

Jamie fishes a peppermint out of his pocket and some teacher carrying grocery bags stand in the front. They make their way around, passing out peppermints to the audience.

Logan gets his from his pocket. "HAVE YOU EVER SEEN THE RAIN?" BY SAWYER FREDRICKS AND NOELLE BYBEE plays.

Jamie lifts his peppermint up in his hand and looks up at the ceiling.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
 (voice breaking)
 This ones for you buddy.

Jamie unwraps his candy and the audience follows suit. The room fills with the sound of five-hundred plastics candy wrappers RUSTLING.

Logan is looking at the unwrapped candy in his hand and crying. He squeezes his eyes shut for a brief moment then pops the candy in his mouth.

After a deep breath, Logan opens his eyes and smiles.

INT. MCKINLEY HOUSE - EVENING

Cliff makes his way through the living room and into the kitchen. He pauses a moment when he sees a pizza box sitting on the counter. He inspects the contents.

LOGAN (O.S)
 I figured I'd cook tonight.

Cliff turns around to see Logan standing in the hallway between the living room and kitchen.

CLIFF
 (hesitantly)
 Hey bud. uh, how was the service?

LOGAN
 It was nice. I learned a lot about him. Kind of crazy when you realize someone wasn't just your teacher. I forget teachers have a life outside of the school.

Cliff nods his head and a moment passes between them.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
 Look dad-

Cliff quickly turns back to the pizza box and closes the lid.

CLIFF
 Don't you say you're sorry. I'm the one who's sorry, you were right...
 (MORE)

CLIFF (CONT'D)

Your mom leaving, that was hard...but my God Logan you made things so much simpler, and I don't think I ever appreciated it. I just sort of came to expect you to be so independent all the time. I don't know why I did that I just... I should have been there for you.

Logan drops his head, staring down at his hands.

LOGAN

I didn't exactly make it easy. I should have spoken up sooner.

They move to hug, tears brimming in their eyes.

Cliff pulls away.

CLIFF

And hey Picasso, if you want to do art that's fine by me. I'll make it work, whatever I have to do.

LOGAN

(laughing)

It's not quite the same as Picasso but graphic design is pretty cool. Plus I think you'll like Carnegie. I googled it and the closest Mexican restaurant is .7 miles away from campus.

Logan and his dad laugh.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. SAYRE HIGH SCHOOL - AFTERNOON MAY 2015

Logan stands next to his six other calculus classmates and Mr. Selleck. Logan and his classmates are dressed in long blue and red graduation robes, blue for the boys and red for the girls. Mr. Selleck stands in his long black robes. All of them are admiring something before them.

Mr. Selleck places an arm around Logan's shoulders.

MR. SELLECK

He may not have been an artsy man, but he would have appreciated this.

Cliff walks over and stands by his son.

CLIFF
(surprised)
You designed that?

Logan smiles and nods his head yes.

CLIFF (CONT'D)
Shit, my kid is talented.

Logan shrugs his shoulders as the others laugh.

LOGAN
(jokingly)
Eh, it's okay. My painters really
helped brings things together.

Logan gestures to the students around him.

MR. SELLECK
Ya did good kids.

It's the wall across from Mr. Sikora's classroom. A small section, about four feet by six feet, has been turned into a mural. The focus of the piece is the set of handprints left by Mr. Sikora which now have hundreds of tendrils of color extending out from them. There is a space between the two handprints where in bold, black lettering are the words "Still Here".

FADE OUT.