

SING ALONG

by

Mark Oxman

Original Lyrics by

Mark Oxman

(except for "Never Say Never,"

Lyrics by Kathy Fisher)

Original Music by

Ron Wasserman

SHOOTING DRAFT
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1 EXT. NEW YORK FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT 1

A SOFT HAUNTING BEAT BEGINS. *THE LIFE (EMT MIX)*

A shooting star explodes in the night's sky over a seven story apartment building in Midtown West. Below, a teenaged boy, STEPHEN, is watching from a fire escape. He steps inside through a window.

2 INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 2

THE MUSIC GROWS LOUDER. *THE LIFE*

Stephen walks slowly down the hallway, expressionless. Makes his way to an apartment door.

STEPHEN
I'M TALK OF THE TOWN--
BUT WHEN I DON'T SPEAK.

3 INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 3

He walks through the living room to his bedroom--

STEPHEN
I OPEN MY MOUTH;
WORDS DON'T FORM THAT EASILY.

4 INT. BROADWAY THEATER - BACKSTAGE 4

His bedroom door has magically led to the backstage of a Broadway theater. Stephen nonchalantly walks through the wings, singing --

STEPHEN
MY THOUGHTS JUST DON'T
MANIFEST FOR ME.

He stands in front of a closed curtain, waiting.

STEPHEN
IF I HOLD MY TONGUE,
THEY THINK LESS OF ME.

From behind him, the stage curtain begins to draw.

STEPHEN
IT'S EASY TO LOOK IN SOMEONE'S EYES

He is now standing in front of a packed audience, filling the orchestra and mezzanine.

STEPHEN
AND NOT SEE THEIR DISGUISE.

Now wearing colorful, baggy clothes, Stephen begins to dance for the crowd, while singing--

STEPHEN
YOU'RE LIVING THE LIFE.
CAN'T YOU SEE
YOU ARE LIVING THE LIFE?
YOU'RE LIVING THE LIFE THAT I--
ONLY DREAM.

A set piece rolls on stage behind him -- a giant gray projector screen.

STEPHEN
AHH AHH AHH AHH AHH.

Stephen steps into position in front of the screen. Images are projected behind him. He interacts with the video, even though it is one-dimensional.

In Times Square, he is overwhelmed by a crowd.

STEPHEN
I COULD SPEND MY LIFE--

Faces stare at him, overwhelming him. He hides his face with his hands.

STEPHEN
HIDING IN THE SHADE.

A new image appears -- a crowded high school hallway. He crouches behind a locker projected to the far right, hiding from the other teens.

STEPHEN
LURKING IN SHADOW--

He slides down to the ground. An image of the bottom of the locker appears where he was previously and exaggerated legs of the teens are on the left, presenting the illusion that he has slid to the ground.

STEPHEN
WAITING FOR THE BIG PARADE--

The screen turns to gray, leaving Stephen alone in a fetal position, singing--

STEPHEN
 --TO PASS ON ITS WAY 'CAUSE IF I
 RUN--

A puppet stage is rolled on from stage left. Stephen comes out of hiding, notices.

STEPHEN
 --WOULD I FIND A PLACE IN THE SUN?

The puppet begins to dance.

STEPHEN (V.O.)
 YOU'RE LIVING THE LIFE.

Stephen repeats the puppet's moves, dances for a crowd that is entranced by him from their seats.

STEPHEN
 HMM, SEEMS TO ME YOU ARE LIVING THE
 LIFE.
 YOU'RE LIVING THE WONDERFUL,
 WONDERFUL LI-I-I-I-I-I-IFE.

Scenery begins to move again. The puppet stage and projector screen are gone, replaced by a free-standing bedroom set.

Stephen takes his spot, downstage center, illuminated by an overhead light. He sings passionately to the crowd, his vocals reverberated in song.

STEPHEN
 TELL ME (TELL ME)
 WOULD YOU (WOULD YOU)
 REALLY (REALLY)

5 INT. STEPHEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

5

BAM! The fantasy is over. Stephen is in his bedroom, singing a cappella to his song, to an invisible crowd. He lacks the confidence exhibited in his fantasy. His mother, ANNA MARIA, is standing in the doorway, glaring at him.

STEPHEN
 --RATHER BE A NOBODY NOBODY KNOWS?

ANNA MARIA
 What are you doing?

Stephen spins around, immediately embarrassed.

STEPHEN

I- I- I- I...

ANNA MARIA

You're just acting like a moron.

Deflated, embarrassed, he crosses to his bed. Picks up his history book, his notebook, his pen. Hopes his mother will go away. She doesn't.

ANNA MARIA

What if the neighbors hear?
They'll think we're crazy.

STEPHEN

(struggling to get his
words out)
Th- *they already do!*

ANNA MARIA

You're not going to be on Broadway.
So just stop.

She flips off the light switch, exits the room.

In the illuminated darkness, he marines in the somberness for a bit. Stares out the window with its moonlit glow.
NOISES FROM THE CRAZY WORLD OUTSIDE BLEED IN.

6

EXT. SIDEWALK - NEXT DAY

6

Stephen gingerly walks through Midtown West, a backpack strapped to his back, on his morning commute to school. A bustle of people push past Stephen, all around him, causing him anxiety.

A few feet away, a homeless guy seated in front of a storefront calls out to various people.

HOMELESS GUY

Share it if you got it.

They all ignore him. Stephen takes a deep breath, fearful, not of the man but of the circumstance. As he passes, the man calls out --

HOMELESS GUY

Got any change?

Stephen exhales sharply, turns to face the man.

STEPHEN
I- I- it's- I...

The homeless man listens, expressionless.

STEPHEN
The- the- I- I- it- the- I- I- we-
the- it- I-

HOMELESS GUY
It's okay.

STEPHEN
I- I- I- I- I- I don't!

He runs off.

7 EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - LATER 7

Stephen gets to the cold, looming building of his public high school. Teenagers talk excitedly amongst each other, huge clusters leaving very little breathing room. Stephen has to collect himself before ascending the steps to the entrance.

8 INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER 8

A gaggle of teen girls, talking incessantly amongst each other by their lockers. One of them, a petite brunette named JULIANNE is being teased by her friend, TEAL.

JULIANNE
Okay, that's not what I said. I
said he is *bril-liant* -- not a
genius! He's only had one album
out so nobody knows for sure yet.

The bell rings. Everyone walks to class as we pull back to discover Stephen is hiding in the corner, waiting for the hallway to clear before he can follow behind.

9 INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - THAT AFTERNOON 9

Kids continue to behave disorderly, in the class. Only Stephen sits silently, in the back of the room, removed from everyone else. His attention is turned towards the window.

STEPHEN'S POV - He sees himself on the other side of the glass, dressed in the same outfit as in his earlier fantasy, turning, rapidly -- round off, back handspring, back handspring. SHARP VIOLINS SOUND. Intro to *PARADISE*

10

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA - AFTERNOON

10

Rows of kids are lined up in the cafeteria line. A CAFETERIA LADY scoops from large silver trays.

Stephen gingerly walks towards her. From his POV, SHE STARES DOWN MENACINGLY AT HIM.

In reality, she has a friendly disposition.

CAFETERIA LADY
What would you like?

Stephen swallows hard. Can't reply.

CAFETERIA LADY
What would you like?

He looks all around him. Kids are amused, smiling, gleefully at the torture of human contact.

An adult woman leans towards two students, whispers loudly...

BIOLOGY TEACHER
He's in my Biology class. He's afraid to talk.

Stephen panics. Turns back to the Cafeteria Lady.

Magically, she breaks into song. Her voice booms like SHIRLEY BASSEY. *CAFETERIA SONG*

CAFETERIA LADY
SPEAK A LITTLE LOUDER, BOY.
I WANT TO HEAR YOUR VOICE.
YOU HAVE A LOT OF OPTIONS;
MAKE YOUR CHOICE.

Stephen peaks to the side. His classmates are listening, unnerved by the song.

CAFETERIA LADY
WOULD YOU LIKE SOME APPLE JUICE
TO GET YOUR MOUTH WET?
OR YOUR FAVORITE MILK - CHOCOLATE?

Stephen is frozen; can't speak. The beat picks up in crescendo, exploding into the chorus...

CAFETERIA LADY
 STEAMED PEAS AND CARROTS,
 THEY'VE GOT THIAMIN.
 DON'T YOU SAY YOU DON'T WANT THEM
 'CAUSE YOU DO.

STEPHEN
 I- I- I don't.

All the kids are now dancing in the background. She stands up on the counter, passionately croons...

CAFETERIA LADY
 STEAMED PEAS AND CARROTS.
 OH, WOW, THEY'RE SO GOOD FOR YOU.
 YOU NEED VITAMIN A, BOY
 AND PEAS AND CARROTS
 WILL COME THROUGH...

The music slows down again.

STEPHEN
 A- a- actually, I r- r- really h- h-
 hate p- peas and c- c--

The cafeteria ignores him. She begins to walk along the counter, holding up samples as she sings--

CAFETERIA LADY
 NOW DON'T GET ME WRONG, YOUNG MAN.
 THERE'S SO MUCH MORE FOR FEED.
 LUNCH IS A MOVIE?
 FRIED STEAK'S THE LEAD.
 THERE'S WHITE RICE ON THE SIDE HERE
 A HOT DINNER ROLL
 AND CHOCOLATE CHIPS
 BAKED IN COOKIE DOUGH.

The beat kicks back up. The kids go crazy again, dancing along.

CAFETERIA LADY
 BUT STEAMED PEAS AND CARROTS,
 FIBER FOR YOU,
 THIRTY FOUR PERCENT DAILY VALUE.
 STEAMED PEAS AND CARROTS,
 PRETTY PLEASE TELL ME YOU WANT THEM
 YOU NEED VITAMIN K, KID
 AND PEAS AND CARROTS HELP--

BAM! We're back to reality.

CAFETERIA LADY
What do you want?!

Defensively, Stephen shouts at the top of his lungs--

STEPHEN
P- P- PEAS!!!! And C- CARROTS!

Silence. He turns to see that every kid has been served but him, the students having cut in front while he daydreamed. His classmates glare at him, awestruck. The cafeteria lady's eyebrows arch, taking in his request.

11 INT. CAFETERIA - MOMENTS LATER 11

CU on Stephen's plate -- filled with nothing but peas and carrots, his least favorite food. He shifts them around the plate with his fork.

He sits a few feet away from any human being at a long table, miserably staring at his food. Then stands up and dumps his entire plate into the trash.

12 EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - EVENING 12

Stephen gets back to his run-down neighborhood, passing the multitude of people cluttering the sidewalk in loud conversation. He avoids eye contact. Makes his way to his building's stoop and enters the lobby.

13 INT. APARTMENT 13

He steps into his apartment to find a smiling young man, GAVIN.

STEPHEN
Gavin! Why are you here today?

GAVIN
Your mom said you had an important History test this week.

They begin to walk towards Stephen's bedroom.

STEPHEN
(outraged)
She's been going through my backpack!

GAVIN
She means well.

STEPHEN
I can't keep anything in here!

GAVIN
Moms just want what's best for us.

Gavin starts for his bedroom.

14 INT. STEPHEN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

14

Stephen enters, removes items from his backpack, stuffs them into a writing desk. He returns to Gavin in the living room. The two sit at a table.

GAVIN
So the most important thing to remember when it comes to History is that it once happened. So the best way to remember things is...

STEPHEN
Think of it as a story.

GAVIN
Yeah! You remember. So U.S. History is easy because it happened all around you. Now reconstruction took place for most of the decade following the Civil War...

Stephen lets Gavin's voice

TRAIL OUT

imagining Gavin as a character in a Broadway show, illuminated by a spotlight as he tells the audience about History. Stephen enters, doing leaps behind him.

The vision fades. A slightly irritated Gavin is gazing sharply at the absent Stephen.

STEPHEN
S- sorry.

Gavin takes a deep breath, regains his patience.

GAVIN
That's okay, buddy. But you're
going to have to pay attention if
you want to pass this class.

Stephen nods.

GAVIN
What do you see when you're not
here?

STEPHEN
The most beautiful thing in the
world... Music.

15 INT. CLASSROOM - THE NEXT AFTERNOON

15

Sharp violins play over Stephen getting into position. He then begins to dance on the lawn we previously saw him do gymnastics. *PARADISE*

STEPHEN
THERE ARE DAYS I SEE THE SKY
RIGHT THROUGH THE CEILING
OR I'M FLYING WITH MY FEET
STILL ON THE GROUND.
AND WHEN I COME BACK DOWN
IT LEAVES ME WITH THIS--

His serenity is interrupted by--

TEACHER (V.O.)
Stephen!

We're in his classroom, Stephen having snapped back to reality.

From STEPHEN'S POV, we see the entire class turned around, focused on him. At the front of the room, MS. KELLY, a kind woman, has grown annoyed.

MS. KELLY
Do you not hear me when I call?
The lesson is INSIDE the classroom.

The students giggle.

MS. KELLY
Did you hear my question?

STEPHEN
N- no.

MS. KELLY

You have an important test tomorrow. Are you ready for it?

STEPHEN

Y- yes.

MS. KELLY

I hope so. Because I'd hate your mom wasting her money on a tutor if it does no good. So let me ask again -- who invented the term "Gilded Age" and what does it mean?

STEPHEN

I - I don't know.

MS. KELLY

What?

STEPHEN

I don't know!

MS. KELLY

Mark Twain did. It was a time in the late 1800s when America's wealth and prosperity had been expanded. What led to the Progressive Movement?

STEPHEN

I don't know!

MS. KELLY

Do you really not know or are you just shaken up now? Because I embarrassed you?

STEPHEN

I- I don't know! I'm bad at History!

MS. KELLY

You're not bad at History.

STEPHEN

I- I am. It just doesn't interest me.

Julianne goes berserk at the suggestion.

JULIANNE

Us either!

She continues to fume, then whispers to no one in particular...

JULIANNE

Who cares if it interests you?
It's school.

MS. KELLY

You know what? Teal, switch seats
with Stephen.

Teal, in the front, gathers her books, begins to stand up.

MS. KELLY

I'll make sure you pay attention
and you'll learn that History isn't
as--

STEPHEN

No!

The teacher is stopped abruptly.

MS. KELLY

Stephen, I should have had you sit
in the front from the beginning.
It's my fault--

Stephen is terrified, looks around at all the people, staring at him, the masses of judgmental eyes. He doesn't want to move from his spot, deep in the back of the room.

STEPHEN

(sobbing)

N- no! Please! I like it back
here. Don't make me move. Don't
make me move.

The teacher sighs. She turns to her desk, grabs a pad of disciplinary notes, begins to fill one out.

MS. KELLY

Okay, well, then I'm going to have
to tell your mother that we have an
important test tomorrow and you're
having trouble in class. I'll need
a signed copy by tomorrow. And I
hope you have a study session
planned for tonight.

She has crossed up the aisle, handing the note over. Stephen's head is buried in his arms. He looks up, takes the note, then continues to hide himself from the world.

16 INT. CLASSROOM HALLWAY - THAT AFTERNOON

16

Floods of students exit the classroom after A BELL RINGS. Stephen is one of the last to leave. Teal and Julianne have waited for him; they approach.

TEAL

What is your grade right now?

STEPHEN

(suspiciously)

Why?

Teal turns to Julianne, not expecting his reply; Julianne stays stone-faced.

JULIANNE

We don't think it's fair if you are getting a good grade because you have some social disorder when we actually have to do things the right way because we're normal.

STEPHEN

D- don't worry. I'm f- failing.

He walks away as the girls perk up, cheer collectively.

17 INT. STEPHEN'S APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING

17

CU ON DISCIPLINARY NOTE

which is dropped down to reveal a guilty-faced Stephen.

ANNA MARIA

I'm not surprised.

STEPHEN

Mom! It's not my f- fault!

ANNA MARIA

You spend all your time listening to Broadway, talking about it, thinking about it. It's not going to happen! Use common sense!

STEPHEN

Why not?

ANNA MARIA

Because it's hard!

STEPHEN

So? Lots of people do it!
All around me!

ANNA MARIA

Because you stutter! Because an
audience isn't going to be patient
with someone who can't speak!

STEPHEN

I won't stutter when I get older!

ANNA MARIA

You've been this way since you were
three years old. If you haven't
grown out of it yet, you're never
going to!

Stephen is now in tears.

STEPHEN

(broken)

M- mom.

She looks at him, feeling nothing, her sociopathic tendencies
revealing herself. Anna Maria sighs; now she has no choice
but to play a motherly role.

ANNA MARIA

It doesn't mean you can't go on to
have a great life. You can go to
medical school and be a doctor. Or
an accountant. You will be fine.
But it's ridiculous to choose a
career where you can't just go to
school, gain some expertise, and
jump into the field.

STEPHEN

(exploding, no stutter)

I DIDN'T *CHOOSE ANYTHING!*

His articulation booms throughout the room. Anna Maria is
frozen. The lights dim, leaving the two in independent pools
of light. He takes loud footsteps out of the scene, leaving
her behind. She watches him go. Exits in the opposite
direction.

A matinee performance has ended at dusk. From across the
street, Stephen watches, fixated.

The stars of the show greet fans, sign autographs, glow.

ZOOM IN ON Stephen, envious but inspired. His thoughts running a mile a minute.

19 EXT. TIMES SQUARE - MOMENTS LATER 19

Stephen walks past the billboards of Times Square. Elphaba and Glinda are illuminated 50 feet up, giant representations of the everyday women he just saw. They begin to move, smile, wave at Stephen.

Stephen takes it in, then, expressionless, turns and walks in the opposite direction.

20 INT. APARTMENT - LATER THAT EVENING 20

Stephen steps inside his apartment, aggressiveness on his face, ready for a fight. But his mom is not there. Instead, he sees

GAVIN

smiling at him from behind the family piano.

STEPHEN

W- where's my mom?

GAVIN

Out. She told me about this --

He holds up the disciplinary note.

GAVIN

So we're going to have to really buckle down. But I have an idea.

Gavin pulls out a keyboard, sets it on its stand.

GAVIN

You like music, right? So what if we turned your lesson into a song.

HE BEGINS TO PLAY A MELODY.

GAVIN

1893 WAS DEPRESSING
BY 1920, THINGS GOT BETTER...

The last note ECHOES harshly, carrying us over to--

21 INT. CLASSROOM - NEXT DAY

21

Stephen's test lands on his desk. Confidently, he turns it over, stares at the first page.

HIS FACE DROPS.

He doesn't remember the facts. The test becomes DISTORTED.

Stephen begins to panic. Looks around. Is it just him?

Other students pull out their pencils, start writing.

Sweat drips off his forehead. But rhythmically. In his mind.

The beginning of a beat.

After moments of stress, the torture is broken up by

GAVIN

popping up from behind Ms. Kelly's desk.

A beat kicks in. *HISTORY LESSON*

GAVIN
1893 WAS DEPRESSING.

Stephen looks around. No one is responding.

Gavin crosses to the back, where Stephen is sitting. He sings directly to him.

GAVIN
BY 1920, THINGS GOT BETTER.

Stephen stares at him, blank.

Gavin points at the paper, taps it.

Stephen realizes -- begins to write this down.

Gavin dances backwards up the aisles, dressed as a miner.

GAVIN
HEAVY INDUSTRY
FED THE ECONOMY.
SO THE GILDED AGE
LED THE COUNTRY
TO INDUSTRY.

He throws money over the crowd; the kids are oblivious. Then, in the front of the room, Gavin now has a woman's hat on and a sign reading "VOTES FOR WOMEN."

GAVIN
AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS
WERE EARNED THROUGH FIGHTS.

He waves it a few times, then tosses it over his shoulder with the hat, running to the the chalkboard, which animates behind him as he sings --

GAVIN
A POWERFUL NATION
LED US TO THE SECOND
INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION.

He continues to act the song out from all corners of the room, by Ms. Kelly, up and down the aisles, messing with Julianne, back to Ms. Kelly. The classmates' eyes stay fixated on their tests.

GAVIN
PROGRESSIVISM AROSE IN THE 1890S.
ACTIVISM AND POLITICAL REFORM.
ROOSEVELT TOOK OVER
WHEN MCKINLEY WAS SHOT...

He falls to the ground, emulating being shot. Then he pops up to remind Stephen --

GAVIN
AND I MEAN THEODORE.

Stephen smiles, nods.

Gavin is at Ms. Kelly's desk, his feet propped up, holding a newspaper as he explains --

GAVIN
MUCKRAKERS WOULD EXPOSE,
IN THEIR PRINTS, ALL THE SCANDAL
THAT WOULD FIT.
PROGRESSIVES HATED INJUSTICE.

He jumps on the desk, singing full out--

GAVIN
RULE DIRECTLY!
DEMOCRACY!

Stephen confidently finishes his test, writing frantically on every page, flipping to the next, using the song as a guide.

22 INT. CLASSROOM - LATER THAT WEEK 22

CU ON TEST - AT THE TOP IS A BIG RED "D."

MS. KELLY
I thought you studied.

Stephen is wearing different clothes, establishing it is a new day.

STEPHEN
I d- did!

MS. KELLY
But almost all of your answers were just lyrics to a song about History.
(reading from the paper)
"Progressivism arose in 1890s. Activism and political reform."
But you don't really say what led to it. Or who took up the cause for progressive reform.

STEPHEN
(explosively)
Okay, I'm sorry. I'm a moron.

Ms. Kelly holds his test out; he snatches it from her hands, bitterly, cold, broken.

MS. KELLY
Show it to your tutor. It can help him prepare for the next one.

Tears forming in his eyes, Stephen pivots and exits the classroom.

23 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 23

Stephen rushes through the crowds of teenagers, claustrophobic, exposed, panicked. Their chipper voices are muted, as if trapped inside a seashell or in a tunnel. His world is closing in on him. There is no escape.

24 EXT. STAGE DOOR - EVENING 24

Stephen saunters miserably past the same theater stage door from the previous night. There are no barricades;

it is still light outside. The magic is lost. They're just doors on the side of a building.

25 OMITTED 25

26 INT. APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER 26

Stephen enters his apartment but finds himself in the dark.

Nobody is home. Relief turns to self-pity and he

CRUMBLES UP THE TEST.

He tosses it in the garbage can, exits frame --

-- then realizes he should save it for Gavin. He returns for it, smooths it out, shoves it in his backpack. Remembers

HIS MOM IS NOSY.

He goes to his desk, pulls out the drawer but all of his things from before are still shoved inside.

Stephen goes to the hall closet, pulls things out. He finds an old storage case. Pulls it down, then snaps it open to see if it's a proper hiding place.

But while shoving his test in, he pulls something out --

AND HIS MOUTH DROPS.

We don't see what has caught his attention.

He drops it to the ground, reaches in to find other things. We tilt down to the item --

A NEWS ARTICLE, lifeless on the hardwood floor. LOCAL NEWS section. The front page headline -- "LOCAL GIRL MAKES BROADWAY DEBUT." A photo of his mother, 20 years younger.

In big, bold letters accompanying the article

"EVEN THOUGH I DON'T HAVE ANY LINES, MY DREAM HAS STILL COME TRUE" - ANNA MARIA SCHWARTZ

Stephen pulls out more and more items -- high school programs, photos of his mom in community theater, postcards from New York with the back saying "I MADE IT HERE SAFELY!"

Behind Stephen,

A LOOMING FIGURE

walks towards him, menacingly.

ANNA MARIA
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? DON'T LOOK AT
THAT!

Frenetically, Anna Maria slaps the items out of his hands,
kicks the box over, items scattering out of his reach.

STEPHEN
Y- you were on B- Broadway.

She is gingerly picking everything up, caressing each piece
of her past as if they were her children. Ignoring her real
child, a few feet away.

ANNA MARIA
Well, I learned the lesson the hard
way. Not everybody is meant to be
a star.

She stands up, exits frame. Stephen takes a beat, lets it
soak in.

Moments later, he is loitering in her doorway; she is seated
on her bed, in the dark, lost in deep thought

STEPHEN
Why didn't you tell me?

Anna Maria smiles weakly at him as he takes a seat beside
her.

ANNA MARIA
It was the worst years of my life.
I just thought, it would be easy.
I was stupid.

STEPHEN
D- did you --

He struggles, not knowing how to describe it.

STEPHEN
Did you hear music? Everywhere you
went?

ANNA MARIA
No! I didn't! I just thought, I
was pretty.

(MORE)

ANNA MARIA (cont'd)
I got the lead in two plays in
Kentucky. I felt... entitled to be
a Broadway star.

STEPHEN
(in tears)
But I never felt like that!

ANNA MARIA
Stephen, it's good to have dreams.
But mine crushed me. It ruined my
life. I never learned how to do
ANYTHING. Now I can't make money
for us. You have a horrible life
because of this stupid pipe dream.
It's glamorous! I get it! The
lights and the attention and all
the fans clapping for you. But
it's not healthy to want it. I
mean, unless you're really a star
which you're not.

He doesn't respond. Just stares at her, in tears.

ANNA MARIA
But I'm not either! It's not just
you. Most people aren't!

STEPHEN
I don't care about being a STAR!!!
You say I chose this career.
Well.... YOU DONT'T KNOW ME AT ALL!
Artists don't choose anything! It
STINGS us and we're pierced for
life.

ANNA MARIA
Stephen, I used to feel the same
way...

STEPHEN
You didn't! What I feel was not a
decision, not a choice! It is in
everything I do and see and feel
and I will NEVER... BE.... LIKE
EVERYONE ELSE!!! It's not selfish.
It's not a dream! It's the only
way I'll ever be able to see the
world. Forever. I could spend my
life waiting tables, sweeping
floors, and what's inside will
STILL... BE THERE!

ANNA MARIA

I used to feel the same way.

STEPHEN

You will NEVER know how I feel. If you did, you wouldn't make me doubt myself. You can think this is selfish. It's.... .NOT! You can think I can turn it off...

ANNA MARIA

You can try. And pay attention to things...

STEPHEN

It WON'T... DIE! EVER! If it did, I wouldn't be me. I'd be a shell of who I was. I will not be less of who I am!

ANNA MARIA

Then drop out of school. Because you can't concentrate and this thing...

He starts for the door.

ANNA MARIA

...that is apparently you, is ruining your life. Just like it ruined mine.

He turns back. Looks her in the eye. Taking his time to speak eloquently, without stuttering, defiantly saying...

STEPHEN

I... WILL... NEVER... GIVE UP...
ON... MYSELF.

27

EXT. LINCOLN SQUARE - NIGHT

27

Somberly, Stephen walks the streets of New York under a blanket of darkness. His footsteps resonate in rhythm, the start of a beat.

It sounds identical to PARADISE.

Are we about to see a fantasy?

No. It's just a bulldozer reversing in a construction zone. The footsteps lose their rhythm. The city is gloomy. Hollow. Empty.

Stephen has become self-conscious, tries to see life from the point of view of the normal-minded. Will this prove he can be unselfish, not want stardom in the form of success?

The city is raw and honest. No glamour or shine. Just boring, polite people in eerie quietness.

28 EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NEXT WEEK 28

A miserable Stephen passes teenagers who ignore him as he makes his way up to the school's front doors. The only sound we hear is obnoxious teenagers.

29 INT. HALLWAY - LATER THAT DAY 29

The loud murmur of teenage gossip fills the halls. Stephen barrels past fellow students, fearlessly, irritated.

30 INT. CAFETERIA - LATER THAT DAY 30

Stephen steps up to the cafeteria lady.

CAFETERIA LADY
What would you like?

He points. She scoops. He takes it, shuffles along.

31 INT. CLASSROOM - LATER THAT DAY 31

Stephen is seated in the center of the room instead of by the window.

MS. KELLY
Then what happened in 1929 to
change that?

A few students raise their hands, including Stephen, now second from the front. He is called on.

STEPHEN
(miserably, with no
stutter)
Stock Market Crash.

32 EXT. TIMES SQUARE - THAT EVENING 32

Stephen commutes through the tourist-ridden site, now scummy and jam-packed with too many people. He is not afraid of the crowd but ANNOYED at the stragglers.

33 INT. APARTMENT - THAT EVENING

33

Still forlorn, Stephen steps into his apartment. But instead of silence, like he is used to, he hears--

MUSIC PLAYING FAINTLY IN THE BACKGROUND.

He walks forward towards it, straining to hear.

By the time he gets into his bedroom, it is obviously some Broadway show tune -- *MAMA WHO BORE ME* from Spring Awakening.

Stephen steps up to the CD player, stares down at it while its music permeates the room.

The song gets

MORE AND MORE UPBEAT

but is stopped shortly

when Stephen punches the Power button off.

He crosses to his bed, pulls text books out of his backpack, pulls out a notebook, a pen. Begins homework.

We drift towards his doorway, to find his mom crouching down, watching. She steps backwards, away from his room, into the living room.

THE WALLS VANISH

just like they did for Stephen.

And she begins to sing

IN HER POWERFUL VOICE.

It is not his fantasy this time -- it is hers.

As she moves backwards through the dim room, the complex has become a stage for her. She exits, moves down the long hallway towards the window at the far end. *NEVER SAY NEVER*

ANNA MARIA
 "DON'T FLY INTO THE SUN.
 YOUR WINGS WILL MELT
 AND YOU'LL COME DOWN"
 YOU SAY, "I'LL NEVER KNOW
 UNTIL I TRY."
 AWAY YOU GO--

She steps out of frame, finds herself outside.

34 EXT. PLAYGROUND - NIGHT

34

She looks up at the stars, birds in flight overhead.

ANNA MARIA
 --TO THE SUN.
 I'M WAVING FROM BELOW.
 I'M LEFT WAY DOWN HERE.

Anna Maria pauses, begins walking along an empty, dark playground.

ANNA MARIA
 WHEN I WAS YOUNG,
 I WOULD TRY
 ANYTHING ONE TIME AND I'D
 NEVER SAY NEVER; WHY SHOULD I?
 YEARS WENT BY
 AND ONE MORE TIME,
 I WILL SAY, NEVER SAY--

35 EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

35

Anna Maria is now on the fire escape, looking down.

ANNA MARIA
 NEVER; SAY, NEVER ASK WHY

ANNA MARIA'S POV. She scans the view of the skyscrapers and city in front of her, sparkling, electric.

She shrugs, hopeful, her own dream regenerated. There is a twinkle in her eye that we haven't seen

ANNA MARIA
 AND MAYBE ONE DAY
 YOU'LL BE WAVING AT.... ME.

From behind her, Anna Maria gazes at the beautiful view of Manhattan. We push in past her and tilt up to show shooting stars in the sky above, spitting out the image of both Anna Maria and Stephen, stars in the making.

CUT TO BLACK.