

**Act I, Scene 1- The past**

*A blank stage. It is dark and shadowy. A man walks on, down on his luck, pink slip in hand. This is ALEX. He carries a garbage bag. He takes off his suit coat, shoves it in the bag. From the bag, he pulls out a baseball cap. He puts on the hat. Thinks. Puts it on backwards. A man enters, ALEX goes up to him as if he were a child. The man scoffs and walks away. ALEX goes back to his bag. He takes off his shirt, puts on a kid's shirt. A woman enters, he goes up to her acting like a kid. She scoffs, walks away. He sighs. Goes back to the bag. He takes off the shirt and his pants, so he stands in his underwear. He pulls footie pajamas out of the bag, with a big smile, he pulls them on, puts his baseball cap back on. Another woman enters, he goes up to her, begins to look sad, she looks concerned and begins to look around for help. It has worked. She exits, to look for someone to help this child. ALEX runs to different points on the stage, seemingly talking to other adults.*

ALEX

Are you my mother? Are you my mother?

Are you my mother are you my mother are you my mother? (Pause.) ARE YOU MY MOTHER?

**Scene 2- Past**

*Breakfast at Alex's house. It is a school day. Your average suburban home. A little cramped, but MOM and ALEX can live there comfortably. ALEX bounds into the kitchen wearing his footie pajamas and baseball cap. No one questions his wardrobe choices.*

ALEX

Morning!

MOM

Hey, kid. You're pretty hyper this morning.

ALEX

Yeah!

MOM

Did you snort some sugar when you woke up or what?

ALEX

Nah, I'm just awake. The sun's shining, Sam and I are gonna race from the porch to the bus stop, and I think we have an assembly today.

MOM

Big day. What kind of assembly?

ALEX

I think musicians or something. Rock music. It should be really cool.

MOM

Very cool. Are you getting along with the kids at school now?

ALEX

Yup.

MOM

No one's making fun of you anymore? No hurt feelings?

ALEX

Nuh-uh. It's great. I've got a whole group of friends now. We're all boys. We call ourselves The Really Cool Kids, because there's the other group called The Cool Kids, and we wanted to show them that we're way cooler than they are.

MOM

Sounds fun. What do you really cool kids do?

ALEX

Secret stuff. I couldn't tell you.

MOM

Please?

ALEX

Nope. I can't tell a girl. Boys only.

MOM

Come on, I'm not a girl. I'm your mom. *(Pause.)* Sorry. Should I not have said that? I don't want you to feel weird.

ALEX

Um. No. No, it's cool. *(Pause.)* Do you want me to call you Mom?

MOM

That's completely up to you, Alex. I don't want to make you feel uncomfortable.

ALEX

Okay.

MOM

Okay you will?

ALEX

Okay I'll think about it.

MOM

Okay.

ALEX

Okay.

*(Awkward silence.)*

ALEX

Oops. I gotta go! Sam's gonna be waiting for me!

MOM

Oh wow. Yeah, bus is almost here. Here's your lunch. *(Hands him a brown paper*

*bag that he hurriedly shoves in his backpack.)* And breakfast. *(Hands him Pop-Tarts.)* Have a good day at school!

ALEX

*(He high fives her as he rushes out the door.)*

Yup! Thanks! Bye!

*(He exits and meets SAM outside. SAM is also twelve years old and should be played by an actual child. They do an elaborate best friends handshake. They have practiced it many times. In the middle, SAM screws up, they both sigh and start over.)*

SAM

Hey.

ALEX

Hey. What's up?

SAM

Nothin. Excited for this assembly. I hope they play the drums. I love the drums!

ALEX

Dude. I used to play the drums!

SAM

*(Not quite believing.)*

Nuh-uh.

ALEX

Uh-huh.

SAM

When did you play the drums?

ALEX

Um, at my old school. We had music class. It was way cooler than this school. I learned how to play the drums. I was so good. I was like *(HE pantomimes rock drumming.)*

SAM

Fine. Whatever. What's up with you?

ALEX

Not much. Jodi just called herself my mom.

SAM

Weird. Do you call her Mom?

ALEX

No, that's the weird part.

SAM

Woah. You think you're gonna?

ALEX

I dunno, man. How do you decide when someone's like...your parent?

SAM

I mean, most people don't. They're just born with 'em. If I could decide who my parents were, I'd pick like...Adam Sandler or something.

ALEX

Yeah, I guess.

SAM

Do you ever miss your parents? You know, your real parents?

ALEX

Not really. I try not to think about them, because when I do, I have to think about how they weren't really nice. They were kinda jerks.

SAM

Dude, that sucks. Do you think you'll ever see them again?

ALEX

Probably not.

SAM

Do you want to?

ALEX

Not most of the time.

SAM

Do you think about them a lot?

ALEX

I think about weird things, like my mom's cooking.

SAM

Yeah?

ALEX

Yeah. She was an awesome cook. She would make huge breakfasts, like pancakes and eggs and bacon. I remember one time when I was really little, she made me a pancake with a bacon and egg smiley face, you know, like in cartoons. *(Pause. Remembering. An honest memory.)* She always smelled like cooking. I don't know how to explain it better than that. She smelled like the kitchen, I guess. So when she would kneel down in front of me to give me the biggest hug possible, I would be surrounded by all of those comforting smells. I don't think anyone could ever be as good of a cook as my mom.

SAM

What about your dad?

ALEX

He didn't cook.

SAM

Alex. What was he like?

ALEX

My dad smelled like beer most of the time. Like beer and dirt. But not like this dirt *(he kicks up some soil)*, like...dirty. Grease and dirt and...I don't know. That's what he smelled like, because that's what he did. He drank a lot and worked on cars and smelled like dirt. But he wasn't home much, so I guess I didn't really have to deal with it. It was usually just me and my mom. Everyone was like really tired all the time.

SAM

*he's supposed to say. Looks at*  
We're gonna miss the bus.

*(Waits for a minute. He doesn't know what his watch.)*

ALEX

*(Looks at his watch.)*

You're right. Good thing we're running. You'll probably still be late though. *(Laughs.)*

SAM

Whatever. You'll be crying after I beat you.

ALEX

Heh. Yeah right. You wish.

SAM

Psh. You wish.

ALEX

I don't wish, I know.

SAM

Whatever, let's do this.

*(They spit on their hands and shake.)*

ALEX

To the bus stop.

SAM

To the bus stop.

ALEX

On your mark.

SAM

Get set.

ALEX

GO!

*Blackout.*

**Scene 3- Present**

*An office at a police station. DETECTIVE JACKSON, a formidable woman in her early thirties, sits at her desk. There are pictures on the desk, but it is otherwise pristine. JACKSON is all-business. She sits for a few moments looking over paperwork. Sighs. Looks up at ALEX, who sits across the desk.*

JACKSON

So. You're Steven Jacoby.

ALEX

Yes, ma'am.

JACKSON

Wanted in how many states?

ALEX

Five, I believe.

JACKSON

And how many states should you actually be wanted in?

ALEX

*(A small smile. Testing the waters, seeing if his charm will work here.)*

Zero.

JACKSON

How many, Mr. Jacoby?

ALEX

Seven.



**Scene 4- Past**

*Nighttime at MOM's house. Time for ALEX to go to bed. He is watching TV.*

MOM  
Hey, kiddo. Time for bed.

ALEX  
But mom...

MOM  
No buts.

ALEX  
There's only 5 minutes left in the show!

MOM  
That's what you said 5 minutes ago. Upstairs. Bed. You've got school tomorrow.

ALEX  
Ugh.

MOM  
Oh, I know. I am such a mean mom.

ALEX  
You are.

MOM  
Hey...

ALEX  
Just five more minutes?

MOM  
Sorry, bud. No can do. *(She points. Kindly)* March.

*ALEX begins walking. Stops.*

MOM  
What now?

ALEX

I know I'm too old for it. But...would you come tuck me in?

MOM

Of course.

ALEX

And.

*He stops. Shakes his head, starts up the stairs.*

MOM

What is it?

ALEX

Could you...could you tell me a story?

MOM

Not unless we get you up in that bed. *(ALEX bounds upstairs. MOM follows.)*

*We are in ALEX's room. It has a poster of Will Smith, circa 1988; a few touches of a younger kid—teddy bears, board games, etc; otherwise fairly sparse.*

MOM

Hop in. *(He lies down in bed. She pulls up the covers, tucks him in.)* So...a story, huh?

ALEX

Yeah.

*Throughout the following, MOM keeps a hand on ALEX, strokes his hair, is generally affectionate and comfortable.*

MOM

Once upon a time...

ALEX

That's how girl stories start!

MOM

Hey, who's telling this story? *(She uses an imaginary key and "locks" his lips.)* Sh. Once upon a time, there was a brave little knight. The little knight endured battles beyond the scope of his years. His secret? When he was born, a nice magic woman gave him an indestructible suit of armor. But as the brave knight got older, he could feel the armor getting tighter and weaker. The magic woman neglected to tell him that this armor was only protected for ten years.

So the boy continued fighting with fire-breathing dragons five times his size, but after each fight, he felt just a little weaker. And the bad guys he fought seemed to be getting stronger. After one final battle with two terrible ogres, the little knight fled the kingdom searching for a safer place where he didn't have to protect himself and he could take time to sleep and repair his armor.

On his journeys, he met a princess who was older and bigger than the little knight but just as weak. She needed someone in her life. She was lonely. She didn't have anyone to share her beautiful castle with. Her days were simple and monotonous. She, like the knight, was searching for purpose. The knight and the princess met in a place for others who were lost like they. They recognized something in one another: a person who is lost but not losing. They clung to one another and began a magnificent journey together.

ALEX

What did they do together?

MOM

They slayed giants, they climbed mountains, they ran races faster than anyone would have imagined. And she patched the little knight's armor so he could never be hurt again.

ALEX

And they lived....?

MOM

Happily ever after. *(She kisses his forehead, pulls up the covers, and turns off the light.)*