

Metal & Melody

written by

K.J. Wintz

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OVER BLACK we hear heavy metal music playing. A singer SCREAMING with aggressive drums and high distortion...

**INT. SCHOLTZ ACADEMY - BAND ROOM - DAY**

SAMMIE, 16, beautiful native girl, gazes into space, listening to the music in her head—

She's interrupted by MS. FILES, the musical conductor of the school wind symphony, wearing a turtleneck.

MS. FILES  
(tapping the stand)  
Earth to Samantha, can you hear  
me?!

Laughter. Symphony members are dressed in button downs, ties, dresses and blouses. Sammie is first-chair clarinet player. Wearing her hoodie and jeans.

SAMMIE  
Sorry, Ms. Files.

She readies her clarinet in standby. Ms. Files steps from the conductor's podium—

MS. FILES  
Let me ask, Samantha, do you like  
it here at Scholtz Academy?

Sammie squirms.

MS. FILES (CONT'D)  
No, yes?

SAMMIE  
(dutifully)  
I love it here, Ms. Files.

MS. FILES  
Clearly, you do not show it.  
(off her silence)  
Play the last two bars.

Sammie looks away.

MS. FILES (CONT'D)  
Can you play the last two bars or  
not?

Seated next to Sammie is second-chair clarinet player, AMY.

AMY  
 (whispering)  
 Come on Sammie, play something.

MS. FILES  
 (to Sammie)  
 If you don't want to be here, then  
 administration will surely find  
 someone who does...  
 (last chance)  
 Play the last two bars.

Pause. Sammie peers around at all her fellow symphony members  
 -- They all stare back at her. Quiet. Stoically.

Feeling the pressure, Sammie raises her clarinet to her lips  
 and starts playing. For two bars, Sammie demonstrates she's  
 an exceptionally good clarinet player...

She finishes. Ms. Files stares sharply at her.

MS. FILES (CONT'D)  
 (indignant)  
 See? I knew you could play.  
 Play like that for festival this  
 Saturday and I'll let the admins  
 know you really do belong here.

Ms. Files turns and steps back onto her podium. She faces the  
 rest of the band--

MS. FILES (CONT'D)  
 Let's take it again from the top!

**INT. SCHOLTZ ACADEMY - HALLWAY - DAY**

Private high school. Students roaming between classes. All  
 adhere to school dress code.

KYLIE -- 16, lovable freckles -- walks with Sammie...

KYLIE  
 (mid conversation)  
 Does Ms. Files do that often? Get  
 up in your face like that?

SAMMIE  
 She's anxious about Saturday's  
 festival. Especially since our  
 school is hosting. Gotta put in a  
 good performance.

KYLIE

You should just not show up.

SAMMIE

I have to show up, I'm first chair  
clarinet. I've got a solo to do.

They reach Sammie's locker -- the only one with numerous  
stickers of heavy metal bands (Metallica, Slipknot, Cannibal  
Corpse) plastered all over.

SAMMIE (CONT'D)

Thanks for walking with me.

KYLIE

Ever need someone to talk to, you  
know who to text.

Kylie heads off. Sammie swaps textbooks from the locker into  
her backpack when--

TOM, pale boy, strolls up. He speaks in an English accent--

TOM

What's up spice girl...

Sammie looks at him.

TOM (CONT'D)

... guess what?

He holds a graded worksheet ("A+" next to his name) for her  
to see.

TOM (CONT'D)

And it's all thanks to you.

SAMMIE

Congratulations. As long as you  
keep getting me free admission over  
at the Envy, you can copy my work  
all you want.

TOM

Guess what else?  
(jingles some car KEYS)  
I got the stingray this weekend!

SAMMIE

Does your dad know this time?

TOM

It's for good grades; can you  
believe that! The idiot.

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)  
 Hit me up anytime you need a ride.  
 (he leaves)

Sammie ZIPS up her backpack, SHUTS her locker...

### **AROUND THE CORNER**

A girl is being picked on by a couple of PREPPY BLONDES. From around comes Sammie -- she sees the bullying going on -- the Blondes leave the girl, start heading Sammie's way -- immediately, Sammie ducks out into--

### **INT. GIRLS RESTROOM**

Where she HURRIES over into one of the stalls. She CLAMPS the door shut. LOCKS it. Gets both her feet up on the toilet seat. Covers her mouth. The blondes are heard entering--

BLONDE #1 (O.C.)  
 Is that all, that's it?

Sammie listens.

BLONDE #2 (O.C.)  
 (counts some coins)  
 Four bucks.

BLONDE #1 (O.C.)  
 For a welfare queen, I thought  
 they'd have more to pay up.

BLONDE #2 (O.C.)  
 What do we really need with this  
 chump change? If we need money,  
 let's just get it from our folks.

BLONDE #1 (O.C.)  
 (scoffs)  
 Where would the fun be in that?

We hear the girls leave the restroom... Sammie sets both feet down on the floor as she exits the stall--

Only to find JENNETTE, a junior socialite brunette, checking her delicate fingernails at the sink.

In the mirror: They make stern eye contact.

Sammie tries to play it cool. She steps up beside Jennette and switches on the faucet. Rinses her hands.

Jennette leers at her like a snake.

Once finished washing, Sammie makes for the door -- feeling Jennette's eyes on her the entire time...

**INT. HALLWAY**

Outside, Sammie takes a big sigh. Shakes her head.

**EXT. SCHOLTZ ACADEMY - DAY**

Back door. Sammie exits. Proceeds down a series of steps. At the bottom, a group of students snicker at some graffiti on the brick wall. They SCATTER when they see Sammie coming.

She stops at the wall and looks--

Vandalism on the wall:

"SAMMANTHA IS A SAVAGE"

**INT. TOWN HOUSE - SAMMIE'S BEDROOM - DAY**

Music sheets scattered. Hard rock posters cover her walls. On the floor lies a skateboard, backpack, shoes and socks.

ON bed, Sammie is curled up in her blankets with her face protruding. She gazes down at the floor. Despondent.

**INT. DINING TABLE**

NATHAN, 40's, white, hunched over the dining table. Sleeping. Surrounded by paperwork and a calculator.

**ON THE SOFA**

LINDA, 30's, white, blandly watching some tv game show...

From down the hallway comes Sammie--

SAMMIE

Can I go to the Envy tonight?

LINDA

We gonna bring this up again?

SAMMIE

Come on. Tom will be there.

LINDA

No.

SAMMIE  
 (seeking second opinion)  
 Dad?

Nathan budes, slightly.

LINDA  
 Shush. He's sleeping.

SAMMIE  
 This is neglect.

LINDA  
 What?!

Linda almost gets out of her seat. Sammie crosses her arms—

SAMMIE  
 Why can't we move back to Rio  
 Grande Vista?

LINDA  
 This is not up for discussion.

Linda sits back down, arms crossed.

LINDA (CONT'D)  
 Your father and I could only wish  
 we had the opportunity you have at  
 Scholtz, Sammie.

SAMMIE  
 (under her breath)  
 Of course, you two would think  
 that.

LINDA  
 What was that?

Sammie MARCHES back to her room. We hear her door SLAM shut!  
 Nathan is startled awake—

NATHAN  
 (rubbing his eye)  
 What was that?

LINDA  
 Sammie.

Nathan looks down the hallway.

NATHAN  
 Again?

LINDA  
I'm afraid so.

NATHAN  
(thoughtfully)  
Do you think we're doing the right  
thing, Linda?

Linda sighs, exasperated. Eyes on tv...

LINDA  
Ask yourself, Nathan: What would  
you do if you were in her shoes?

Nathan reflects to himself. He holds a piece of paper to his  
eyes: "*So much paperwork...*"

NATHAN  
Well, I certainly wouldn't wanna be  
doing this crap.

In protest, he STREWS his papers all around in the air.

#### **INT. SAMMIE'S ROOM**

ON tablet, Sammie navigates to a playlist -- she hits PLAY--  
SCREAMO music BLARES from a speaker on top of her nightstand.  
She lowers the volume on the tablet, just a tad: Not too  
loud, just loud enough. Then she tosses the tablet aside.

#### **AT THE WINDOW**

Sammie -- dressed warmly -- gently lifts the panel and throws  
one leg out... then the other...

From outside, she very carefully closes the window... Then  
she sinks out of view. The music is left playing on inside.

#### **INT. THE ENVY - NIGHT**

Small live venue. Max capacity of two hundred.

#### **ON STAGE**

A local PUNK BAND performs wildly underneath bright colorful  
stage lights, dressed in leather, denim, and metallic spikes.



**IN THE AUDIENCE**

Attendees SCREAM and throw DEVIL HORNS at the band on stage. Deep in the crowd, Sammie CHEERS and HOOTS with everyone.

It's chaotic: PUSHING and SHOVING going on. One man hunches over and VOMITS over other attendees' feet. A PUNCH is thrown. People are TOSSED. Glasses SMASHED over heads...

A big fight has ensued...

**ON STAGE**

The band keeps on playing... Almost encouraging the mayhem.

**AT THE BAR - LATER**

A WAITRESS breaks from the counter with a drink tray. She passes by Sammie and Tom at a-

**HIGH TABLE**

Sipping on blue mocktails. Overseeing the stage where another band performs for the crowd down below.

Tom holds his phone's camera out at Sammie -- They have to yell over the music-

TOM  
Come on, do it!

SAMMIE  
No.

Sammie looks away.

TOM  
Just this once, please?

SAMMIE  
(rolls her eyes)  
Ugh...

Sammie begrudgingly stands and DANCES for Tom's camera. She's good. Shuffles like Janet Jackson. Tom laughs. Exhilarated.

Suddenly. Inadvertently, LOGAN, 40's, clean shaved, casual business bloke, passing by -- notices Tom-

LOGAN  
 (American accent)  
 Thomas?

Tom looks at his father, unsurprised.

TOM  
 Hey dad, what's up?

Sammie is still dancing... Doesn't notice a thing.

LOGAN  
 How's that mocktail, son?

TOM  
 (smacking lips)  
 Could use a little more bourbon...  
 You remember Sammie, right dad?

Sammie hears her name. She stops dancing. Looks at Logan—

LOGAN  
 (to Sammie)  
 Enjoying the show?

She calmly takes her seat.

SAMMIE  
 It's cool.  
 (gives him a big smug  
 smile)

LOGAN  
 Thomas, could you do me a favor...  
 (pulls out a wad of cash)  
 Go backstage and pay these guys  
 (the band)  
 their due, would you?

Tom is finishing his mocktail...

LOGAN (CONT'D)  
 (pointedly)  
 And don't forget the receipt this  
 time, or you lose the stingray.

TOM  
 What am I your employee?

Tom snags the cash from his dad and scurries off, leaving Logan alone with Sammie.

LOGAN  
So, *Samantha*. You like my fine  
establishment?

Sammie is irked. But she hides it nicely...

SAMMIE  
It's really nice, sir.

LOGAN  
It's not like them squalors in the  
tumbleweeds where nomads and rebels  
like to indulge. Here, in the city,  
you have to respect the law. You  
have to conduct yourself like a  
gentleman... or woman...

Logan rests his arms on the table, getting to her level.

LOGAN (CONT'D)  
... You and my son are getting  
close I see. Where were you from  
again? I forget.

SAMMIE  
Rio Grande Vista, sir.

LOGAN  
That's out west, isn't it? What  
brings you back east?

She scratches her ear-

SAMMIE  
Well, sir, I didn't really have a  
choice.

A beat.

LOGAN  
You know what they say about a home  
on fire: *Keep your distance*.

Logan brushes his shirt off to her. He gets up off the table  
and leaves. Sammie watches the punk band perform.

Sound of a whistle blow...

**INT. SCHOLTZ ACADEMY - GYMNASIUM - DAY**

P.E. Sammie gets ANNILATED with dodgeballs -- She crumbles to  
the floor, shrivels up.

**INT. LOCKER ROOM - LATER**

On the bench, Sammie laces up her sneakers -- Jennette, from behind a row of lockers, sneaks up on her--

JENNETTE  
 (points)  
 I like your shirt...

Sammie looks -- Jennette is pointing to her shirt: a graphic T of some death metal band.

SAMMIE  
 (blase)  
 Thanks.

Jennette sits on the bench with her.

JENNETTE  
 Look, I know we don't talk much, or  
 like, ever...  
 (off her silence)  
 You're Sammantha, right?

SAMMIE  
 (pause)  
 Sure.

JENNETTE  
 You're new here.

Sammie shrugs.

JENNETTE (CONT'D)  
 You're really quiet. Has anyone  
 ever told you that?

Something is really bothering Jennette. She scoots closer--

JENNETTE (CONT'D)  
 You're hair: It's black and shiny,  
 like silk.

Jennette delicately feels on Sammie's hair... Sammie doesn't move. She's confused. Disturbed.

Then Jennette stops.

JENNETTE (CONT'D)  
 You are really gorgeous. But you  
 know that, don't you?

Sammie fidgets.

SAMMIE  
 (hesitantly)  
 Says who?

JENNETTE  
 (nodding)  
 Wow... and you're smart. So, we  
 understand each other, don't we?

SAMMIE  
 (cautiously)  
 Sure.

A beat.

JENNETTE  
 (perks up)  
 Great! Well, I'm glad we had this  
 talk. I'll see you around.

Jennette leaves the locker room and vanishes. Now alone,  
 Sammie cocks her head: *"What the hell was that about?"*

**EXT. SCHOLTZ ACADEMY - DAY**

Lunch time. Students huddling around. Eating. Chatting.

**BASKETBALL COURT**

Sammie is shooting hoops by herself. Throw after throw, she  
 sinks in baskets, effortlessly. From courtside, comes—

BARRETT, 17, Mr. Tall and handsome, seemingly impressed by  
 her basketball skills.

BARRETT  
 Where did you learn to shoot like  
 that?

Sammie sighs, exasperated: *"Another one encroaches."* She  
 ignores him. She's about to throw again when—

Barrett KNOCKS the ball out of her hands.

BARRETT (CONT'D)  
 What's the matter, don't wanna  
 talk?

She scowls at him. She goes to fetch the ball -- Barrett  
 THROWS his backpack to the side -- They have a little game:

Sammie tries to DRIBBLE AROUND Barrett, but his reflexes are quick! -- His arms and hands spread out, putting her in check -- Sammie LUNGES to his left -- he tries to stop her, but she PIVOTS around him -- and RACES to the hoop as Barrett watches her easily lay up a shot.

BARRETT (CONT'D)  
You're good.

Sammie picks up the ball and THROWS it back into his HANDS--

BARRETT (CONT'D)  
You're not going to say anything?

She faces him, ready for another game. Pause. Barrett HEAVES the ball -- OVER THE FENCE -- far away from the court. He gets right up into her face--

BARRETT (CONT'D)  
You doing anything later?

Sammie gets a feeling. She looks--

Her POV: Across the school yard, Jennette (and her friends) are checking them out from a distance.

Back on Sammie, pondering to herself... She nervously chuckles. Moves around Barrett. Exits off the court.

**INT. SCHOLTZ ACADEMY - BAND ROOM - DAY**

Wind symphony rehearses. Students' faces are puffed and red from the strain of blowing into their instruments... On the podium, Ms. Files CONDUCTS vociferously...

She stops the band with one wave of the hand--

MS. FILES  
I want everybody to mark down the semibreve on the sixth bar. We don't need it, it's filler.

One of the Trombonist blows spit out of his mouthpiece.

MS. FILES (CONT'D)  
And Sammie...

Sammie BRACES for it--

MS. FILES (CONT'D)  
... that was immaculate!

Ms. Files commends her with a beaming nod...

Sammie is dumbfounded.

**EXT. SCHOLTZ ACADEMY - DAY**

School bell rings. Main doors BLOW open, students POUR out.

**BACK DOOR**

Sammie BURSTS out in good spirits. Hurries down the steps...

BLONDE GIRL #1 stands right in Sammie's way: "*Trouble.*"  
Sammie reverses back up the steps only to find-

BLONDE GIRL #2 at the top. Blocking her escape.

Trapped. Sammie turns around and comes face to face with  
Jennette -- the two Blondes converge on them. It's an ambush.

SAMMIE

What is this?

Jennette sizes her up: "*What to do with you*". Then she HITS  
Sammie across the face. Not hard. Sammie steps back, wide-  
eyed. Jennette HITS her again. A little harder. Then she hits  
her once more, HARD...

Jennette launches into a flurry of SMACKS onto Sammie. Sammie  
shields herself with an arm -- Jennette doesn't stop...

Sammie responds with a firm PUNCH! Jennette DROPS like a fly  
-- The Two Blondes STEP BACK. Aghast.

Sammie peers down at Jennette's unconscious body laid out  
over the concrete. Still holding her fist like a weapon,  
Sammie looks at the Two Blondes' stunned faces.

BLONDE #1

(calling out)

Help! Somebody!

Instinctively, Sammie RUNS for it!

**INT. TOWN HOUSE - SAMMIE'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Bed is empty. Sheets missing...

**ON THE FLOOR**

Sammie lays swaddled up in her bed sheets. Her face concealed  
this time. At her door are a few KNOCKS-

NATHAN (O.C.)  
Sammie, can you hear me...?

**INT. HALLWAY**

Nathan dressed in tux. Linda down hall brushing up herself at a mirror.

NATHAN  
... We'll be out, probably late,  
okay? Please, turn off the stove  
when you're done using it.

Nathan paces down hall to Linda who is all ready to go.

**INT. SAMMIE'S ROOM**

We hear the front door close. Sammie pops her head out from underneath the blanket. A thought occurs to her: She GRABS her nearby phone and starts texting.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER**

On the coffee table is an unopened wine bottle.

SAMMIE  
She hit me.

Kylie is with Sammie on the couch, commiserating.

KYLIE  
Jennette's a psychopath, she's got  
real issues.  
(starts peeling the seal  
off the lid)

SAMMIE  
This is my life: People just show  
up and hit me. Why?!

KYLIE  
Because you're a little different.

SAMMIE  
How?

KYLIE  
You're native.

Sammie looks caught off guard.



KYLIE (CONT'D)  
 (off her reaction)  
 What, is that a bad thing?

Kylie gets the seal off the lid.

SAMMIE  
 I try so hard to stay out of  
 people's way.

KYLIE  
 Maybe that's why they pick on you.  
 It's like a flower: When people see  
 something so pretty, so pure, they  
 can't help but pick it apart until  
 there's nothing left...

-Sammie takes that in. With the seal off, Kylie starts  
 POURING a glass for Sammie...

KYLIE (CONT'D)  
 (pouring)  
 ... Forget about Jennette. Forget  
 about everyone...

Kylie sets the bottle aside. Holds the glass cup for Sammie.  
 Instead, Sammie nabs the bottle itself and presses it to her  
 lips. She takes a swig. Swishes it around. Kylie downs the  
 glass she just poured.

SAMMIE  
 (looks at bottle)  
 What is this stuff?

KYLIE  
 Giesen chardonnay. Got it from my  
 parents' cabinet. Try some.

SAMMIE  
 I just did.

KYLIE  
 Well then try some more.

Reluctantly, Sammie drinks...

**EXT. TOWN HOUSE - BACK YARD - NIGHT**

CRASH! A skateboard runs right into the trash can. Sammie, in  
 hoodie, turns and faces Kylie on the porch steps-

SAMMIE  
 Let me see that again...

Kylie hands her the bottle.

KYLIE  
Make it count!

Sammie gulps down some more. She gasps! Hands the bottle back. She throws her skateboard to the concrete. Mounts it-

SAMMIE  
(metal scream)  
Rrrraarghh!!!

She TAKES OFF on her skateboard! And performs an OLIE.

SAMMIE (CONT'D)  
(loses balance)  
Woah!

She FALLS off the board. Kylie LAUGHS obnoxiously. Sammie -- on the ground -- starts laughing with her!

**INT. SAMMIE'S ROOM - LATER**

On the floor, Sammie stares at the ceiling. Kylie's body is draped over the bed. They've settled down. Inebriated.

KYLIE  
(slurred)  
I feel like death.  
(burps)  
Tell me a story.

SAMMIE  
(mumbling)  
A story?

KYLIE  
You've always got great stories.  
Tell me something.

SAMMIE  
(squirms)  
I don't know.

KYLIE  
Just talk. Say something.

SAMMIE  
Well...

Kylie grabs a pillow, ready to sleep. Sammie takes her time putting it all together in her head before she speaks...

SAMMIE (CONT'D)

(a beat)

... I was just thinking about when I was little. There was this play we did at our school about these villagers and townsmen. We had eight roles to be filled: Two local villagers; two townsmen from the city; a hermit that never left the house; and a King with his two knights intruding from far away...

Kylie snuggles tightly into the pillow.

KYLIE

(half-listening)

Emm-hmm.

SAMMIE

So, the teachers throw these little slips into a hat with the names of each character, and we all have to randomly pick one out.

KYLIE

(dozing off)

Okay.

SAMMIE

And of all the parts to get, I nail the role of the hermit who never leaves the house.

KYLIE

That's cool.

SAMMIE

By the way, the hermit's house was just a cardboard box we taped together with some scotch tape...

Kylie starts snoring.

SAMMIE (CONT'D)

(keeps going)

... On performance night, I'm in the box, only coming out to say a few lines before I go back in and wait for my next cue. So, I listen, alone, waiting for my next cue. Listening to the whole play go by outside, all the laughter, all the action, all the drama.

(MORE)

SAMMIE (CONT'D)

And I'm just sitting there in the box, doing nothing... nothing but waiting... Thinking to myself, "*Of all the parts, why did I have to get this one?*".

Kylie is asleep. Sammie giggles to herself.

SAMMIE (CONT'D)

(seriously)

Why me?

A tear drizzles. Her eyes close. She's fast asleep.

BLACK.

**INT. SAMMIE'S ROOM - DAY**

AT the window, TWO LITTLE BIRDS. Chirping. Whistling. Poking each other right beside a couple of blooming flower vases.

Sammie SITS UP from the floor, hand on forehead. She groans. Eyes blink open: "*Something's not right.*"

She looks around. Sees the empty bottle on the floor tipped over. She reaches over, grabs it, and reads the back label:

"ALCOHOL FREE"

On the bed, Kylie is still crashed out, hasn't even budged.

Back on the floor, Sammie stares at the birds outside her window: They fly off. Now, Sammie focuses on—

The flowers on the window sill.

A beat.

She clamps her eyes shut. Brow furrows. Absorbed in deep concentration. Bottle in her hand shaking from her grip.

Something in her clicks! Her eyes OPEN.

She TOSSES the bottle. Takes out her phone, starts texting.

**AT HER CLOSET**

She opens the door and looks inside. She grabs a SPRAY CAN. Drops it into her backpack. She grabs something else...

**INT. SCHOLTZ ACADEMY - AUDITORIUM - DAY**

Some concert band from a different school performs on stage before an audience of family members and community attendees. Everyone's dressed their best for this occasion.

**STAGE SIDE**

Ms. Files -- in a black slim suit -- stands with her band, the wind symphony, watching the stage from behind curtains.

They all look ready to go: Girls donning silk dresses with a little sparkle. Boys dolled up like penguins. Instruments newly shined. Nervous, stiff, but poised.

Ms. Files checks her watch. Aggrieved, she approaches Amy and speaks quietly to her--

MS. FILES

Any response?

Amy checks her phone.

AMY

No.

MS. FILES

(sighs)

We got another minute... Do you know the solo?

AMY

Um... maybe.

MS. FILES

(didn't hear her)

Good, you take first chair.

Ms. Files faces back to the stage. Amy looks extremely nervous as she practice mutes on her clarinet.

**INT. TOWN HOUSE - DAY**

In through the front door comes Nathan and Linda, both in a jubilant, silly mood. Back from a long night out.

LINDA

Oh my God, I'm gonna go fix me a bath, will you check on Sammie?

Linda heads off to the bathroom. Nathan throws his car keys on the cabinet and shuts the door behind him. He loosens up his collar...

**INT. HALLWAY**

As he removes his bowtie he knocks on Sammie's bedroom door--

NATHAN  
Sammie, we're home.

No answer.

NATHAN (CONT'D)  
Sammie?

He twists the knob. It's locked. He presses his ear to the door and listens...

**INT. SAMMIE'S ROOM**

Kylie snores peacefully on the bed.

**INT. HALLWAY**

Hearing the feminine snores, Nathan thinks nothing of it. He continues down hall, unbuttoning his shirt, singing.

**INT. SCHOLTZ ACADEMY - AUDITORIUM - ON STAGE**

The PRESENTER, young female, takes the center of stage. She TAPS the microphone on a stand. Speaks into it:

PRESENTER  
(into mic)  
The next band is the Scholtz Academy Wind Symphony, under the direction of Wendy Files. Their musical selection includes Fanfare of the Heights, Symphony in B flat -- the first movement and then the third movement. Please join me in welcoming the Scholtz Academy Wind Symphony.

The audience CLAPS, dutifully, as the Presenter retreats from the limelight. Ms. Files steps forward -- her wind symphony already in their seats on stage -- she bows to the audience, faces her band. Takes a deep breath. This is her moment. She raises her hands. Wind Symphony readies their instruments.

Amy in first chair beside Ms. Files. Then Ms. Files cues them in-

RIGHT AWAY they open with a LOUD FANFARE. Filled with a catchy, complex melody. Everyone BLOWS into their instruments creating a rich, full sound that is remarkably balanced.

### **THE AUDIENCE**

No smiles. Well-dressed. Pretentious just by the look of it.

### **ON STAGE**

Symphony members are completely concentrated, occasionally looking up at Ms. Files... They are sharp. Never missing a note, or a cue. Faces red and glazed from strain. For high schoolers, they are phenomenal. Lots of LOUD whole sections, underlined with COMPLEX RHYTHYMS...

Ms. Files fiercely CONDUCTS. She is the emotional engine driving the wind symphony.

Eventually, the pace of the symphony SLOWS DOWN... To a quiet, ebullient rhythm section. Their playing FLOWS to a silent pause. Suddenly-

**LOUD GUITAR FEEDBACK** over an amplifier ROARS THROUGHOUT THE AUDITORIUM. Everyone COVERS their ears in pain.

Ms. Files -- ears covered -- looks over at the other end of the stage where she sees-

### **SAMMIE - ON STAGE**

With a fender guitar in hand, hooked into the amplifier, BLASTING out a SCREECHING CHORD!

Wind symphony CRINGES from the ear-splitting noise.

Then, Sammie MUTES her guitar.

Now, with everyone's attention-

She proceeds to SHRED out a sick GUITAR SOLO for the whole auditorium to hear: full of SCALES, BENDS, SQUEALIES...

### **THE AUDIENCE**

Is rattled. Watching. Listening in utter stupor-

**ON STAGE**

Ms. Files is stunned by Sammie's improvised performance.

**ON SAMMIE**

Playing frantically, incoherently, completely self-indulgent. Eyes closed. She JERKS with her guitar... SWAYS with it... JAMMING like a real drug-fueled rocker! She looks utterly ridiculous, but she doesn't care! She's completely detached from everything else...

UP CLOSE, her guitar pick STRIKES the strings so fast it's a blur. Her hand moves swiftly, violently over the neck.

Sweat DRIPS from her face. Head WHIPS left to right. Hair TWIRLS like laundry. She DROPS to her knees... Running out of breath... But she KEEPS GOING...

And going...

Until she's ON HER BACK. Still somehow sustaining the momentum... SHREDDING the guitar like Swiss cheese... She ROLLS over... SQUIRMS like she's possessed...

She starts to digress...

**THE AUDIENCE**

Some are beginning to see the genius happening on stage.

**SAMMIE**

Running on fumes. Finally, to tie it all up with a neat bow: She she plays one final musical scale up the fretboard...

... Until she hits a HIGH NOTE. She holds it... Letting it reverberate throughout the auditorium, into everyone's ears.

Silence.

On her back, she OPENS her eyes.

For a moment, she's catatonic. Unmoving. Then—

She BOUNCES onto her feet,

LIFTS the guitar strap over her head, and—

Viciously BASHES the guitar ONTO THE FLOOR... SMASHING it into a million pieces...



**THE AUDIENCE**

GASPS! -- Pulled back into their seats.

**SAMMIE**

THROWS what's left of the guitar into the amplifier...

Cutting all sound with a deafening CRASH!

**SPARKS FLY! SMOKE ERUPTS...!**

She KICKS the amp over --

Causing it to FALL flat and SKID across the stage...

Show's over.

Sammie SCAMPERS offstage, flashing the PEACE-SIGN to the audience as she goes.

**THE AUDIENCE**

Total silence.

Then someone pops up from the array of shocked faces--

SOMEONE

Wooh!!!

A few CHEERS echo out... Followed by some CLAPPING... Then some WHISTLING... Next, a smattering of HOOTS! One by one, people in the audience STAND UP in applause. Before anyone can notice it, elation has swept the auditorium...

Mostly other teenagers applauding. Including Barrett -- up from his seat, BLOWN AWAY by the performance! Much to the chagrin of Jennette (with a bruised eye), seated next to him.

Parents look around. Shaking their heads. Disapproving. Trying to pull their young ones back into their seats.

**ON STAGE**

Ms. Files looks rocked, still reeling from it all. Meanwhile, Amy -- initially surprised -- starts laughing and applauding with everyone else...

**EXT. SCHOTLZ ACADEMY - DAY**

Back door. Sammie moves down the steps, backpack in hand. At the bottom, she DROPS her backpack onto the concrete—

She digs around in it -- pulls out the spray can -- gives it a good SHAKE. Then she uses it to mark up the wall...

Once she's done, she THROWS the can back into the backpack, which she then wears over her shoulder and proceeds onward.

Vandalism on the wall:

*"SAMMIE SAMMANTHA IS A SAVAGE"*

**INT. CORVETTE - CONTINUOUS**

In the driver's seat is Tom, with his earbuds in. Humming along to some tune off his phone. He's texting.

Sammie enters the passenger's side. She shuts the door, leans back into the seat. Tom notices her. He removes his earbuds—

TOM

Where's your guitar?

Sammie sighs.

SAMMIE

I think I've just been expelled.  
(pause)

She reaches over and touches the knob on the car stereo.

TOM

(the knob)  
It doesn't work. I tried it.

Sammie presses in the knob. The radio COMES TO LIFE!

RADIO DJ (STEREO)

*This is KJ 102, the Eddgggeeee...*

HEAVY METAL music airs throughout the car...

SAMMIE

Not everything's Bluetooth, Tom.

Tom gives her a look as he buckles in his seatbelt. He starts the ignition. Hands on steering wheel. Ready to drive. He freezes and looks at Sammie—

TOM  
Where to now?

Sammie rolls down the window. She leans out the side of the car, her head snuggled into her arms. She closes her eyes.

SAMMIE  
(deep breath)  
Take me anywhere.

Tom doesn't question her: "*Just let her be at peace*". He presses on the gas. The car starts MOVING, away from the auditorium...

ON Sammie. She looks peaceful. Wind picks up with the car, it blows into her face. Heavy metal BLARING out the window.

She grins.

**END**