

Two of Hearts  
by  
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INT. ALEC'S OFFICE - DUSK

The office is cool and pricey. Stylish without actually taking a risk.

ALEC MYERS, 32, slightly balding, handsome and affluent in Brioni double-breasted, works his phone headset.

ALEC  
(on phone)  
Signed contracts are on their way.  
Congratulations.

His computer CHIMES.

ALEC (CONT'D)  
(on phone)  
Hold on a second, George.

An instant message pops up on his screen: "Your concert ticket(s) are on hold at the Will Call window," a shot of the venerable old Carnegie Hall, and

A PHOTO OF CLAIRE HAMPTON,

a cool, delicate woman in her 30's.

The caption reads: "Featured soloist Claire Hampton. Third Violin Concerto, Mozart."

Alec gazes at the photo for a long beat.

ALEC (CONT'D)  
(yells out the door)  
Grace, gotta go!

His secretary GRACE rushes in wearing a wireless headset, carrying Alec's jacket.

GRACE  
Cab's waiting. Your wife's on three.

Helps him into his jacket.

ALEC  
Ex-wife.

GRACE  
(to herself)  
Not if you don't sign the divorce papers.

ALEC

I better walk. It's faster. How do I look?

GRACE

Is that a question or a statement?

Alec flashes her a smug smile.

ALEC

Did you send the flowers?

Grace nods.

ALEC (CONT'D)

(embarrassed)

I'm actually nervous.

GRACE

I would think so after all these years.

ALEC

(re: Claire's photo)

God she looks great! And talented! Grace, this woman plays like no one you have ever heard.

Starts to disconnect his headset.

GRACE

George on hold?

Clicks to the other line.

ALEC

(on phone)

George, I'm late for a concert--

(laughs)

Mozart, actually. Inside this hard-ass corporate tycoon lurks the soul of an artist.

Grace helps him with his tie.

ALEC (CONT'D)

(on phone)

By the way, you paid six and a half mil above market. Gotta split.

Clicks off.

GRACE  
Your ex-wife!

ALEC  
Forward her to my cell.

And he's out the door.

INTERCUT:

EXT. UPSCALE AUTO DEALERSHIP - DUSK

MARISA, 30's, in Fifth Avenue denim, gazes at a shimmering Aston Martin through the showroom window.

She's chewing gum, a mile a minute, in great smacking cracks.

ALEC  
(on phone)  
I'm late.

MARISA  
They're sending over the papers tomorrow. Sign them and get them right back.

ALEC  
Why don't I just rip out my heart and send it back with the courier!

MARISA  
You haven't got a heart, you bastard!

EXT. - AERIAL, NEW YORK CITY - DUSK

The sun crowds the horizon. Squashes into the Hudson in a dying flash of fire.

IN PUFFY CLOUDS HIGH ABOVE

the face of an Angel glows in the glorious sunset.

Not an angel exactly. A statue of an angel. Solid Italian marble. Ten feet tall and four feet thick.

All three tons of her

DANGLE

from thick cables beneath a huge Chinook CH5B Sky Crane helicopter.

BELOW

Alec studies the operation. SCREAMS into his cell phone above the RACKET.

ALEC  
(on phone)  
My attorney's so ready, Marisa!  
We're going to hang you out to dry.

EXT. - 57TH STREET NEAR SEVENTH AVENUE - DUSK

The chopper lowers its precious cargo onto the floodlit roof of a nearby building. POLICE and SECURITY GUARDS ring the area. CONSTRUCTION WORKERS scramble into place. Grab tether lines.

INTERCUT:

MARISA  
(on phone)  
Oooh, I'm so scared. When I'm done with you, all you'll have left is your stupid boat --

ALEC  
It's not a boat, Marisa. It's a vessel, or a ship.

MARISA  
-- with that mangy parrot on your shoulder and your dumb captain's hat, you look like Long John Silver. Get it?

ALEC  
Got it.

On the roof of the building next door, the Sky Crane eases the Statue onto its concrete base. Alec looks up, strains to see the Angel statue in the fading light.

The sound of the Mozart Third Violin Concerto SWEEPS through the noise of traffic. Alec's right across the street from

EXT. CARNEGIE HALL - DUSK

MARISA  
(on phone)  
What's that noise?

ALEC  
(on phone)  
Noise to you, Marisa. Mozart to  
anyone with a soul!

Alec glances across the street at a kiosk near the main entrance where he sees

A LARGE POSTER OF CLAIRE.

ALEC (CONT'D)  
(on phone)  
See you in court.

He clicks off, steps into the street. A flurry of BRAKES and HORNS.

He struggles through oncoming traffic, heads to the box office "Will Call" window.

Above, the chopper SWAYS in a downdraft. An aching HOWL as one of the cables SNAPS.

ALEC (CONT'D)  
(to the BOX OFFICE  
ATTENDANT)  
One for Myers.

BOX OFFICE ATTENDANT  
(through the window  
speaker)  
No late seating, sir. You'll have  
to wait until after the first  
movement.

IN THE CHOPPER

the PILOT fights for control.

ALEC LOOKS UP.

The life drains from his face.

The statue quivers. Stumbles like a drunk, air dancing.

Cables UNRAVEL. Workers scatter. Everyone looks to the sky.  
An eerie SILENCE, before

IT ALL COMES DOWN.

The Statue glances off the edge of the roof.

DIVE-BOMBS 18 stories.

Alec runs. On the sluggish legs of bad dreams.

Directly into the path of a speeding bus.

The statue crashes onto the sidewalk, but well behind Alec.

A HUGE CLOUD OF DUST

fills the frame.

Alec glances back.

ALEC

Claire!

THE POSTER OF CLAIRE

is the last thing he sees before

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. CARNEGIE HALL - DAY (THE PAST)

YOUNG CLAIRE, a delicate 16, and YOUNG ALEC, also 16 hold hands as they gape at a poster of Itzhak Perlman. Young Alec pulls out a pair of tickets.

YOUNG ALEC

Happy birthday, Itz.

Young Claire examines them.

YOUNG CLAIRE

Orchestra! I thought we were saving up for Juilliard.

YOUNG ALEC

My dad's been helping me with my portfolio. I made a couple of great trades.

YOUNG CLAIRE

You are so sweet.

Gives him a little kiss on the cheek.

YOUNG ALEC

(re: the poster)

Our picture's going to be up here one day.

YOUNG CLAIRE

How do we get to Carnegie Hall?

YOUNG ALEC

Practice, practice, practice.

YOUNG CLAIRE

Wrong. Seventh Avenue, turn right on fifty-seventh.

Heads down the street. Young Alec follows like a lost puppy.

YOUNG CLAIRE (CONT'D)

The competition's in four days.

YOUNG ALEC

We're going to win. I know it.

YOUNG CLAIRE

It's not that easy, Alec. We have to work at it.

FLASH CUT TO:

EXT. CARNEGIE HALL - DUSK

In the cloud of dust,

an air horn WAILS

followed by an ugly SCREECH of brakes.

CUT TO:

INT. 'SOUND STAGE' - (THE PRESENT?)

Alec. Alone. In a vast space. Under a bone white blaze like a hundred suns.

VOICE OFF

She's right, Alec. You do have to work at it.

ALEC

Claire!

VOICE OFF

And -- cut! Save the lights.

A CRACKLE

as electrical circuits close. The main stage lights snap off.

A flood of fluorescence as the work lights come on. The entire area is encircled in a vast green-screen cyclorama.

THE DRAG QUEEN (DQ) sits behind a film camera mounted high on a crane above. She's an angel, a carbon copy of the statue of the angel, actually: superb, elegant, a husky liquid voice like molten glass.

The crane swoops down to the stage. The Drag Queen sweeps off in a cloud of chiffon. She adjusts her hair, revealing a wireless Bluetooth on her ear.

ALEC

I have to see Claire! Wait a second. You're that statue -- a minute ago!

DQ

Or a thousand years. Could have been a lifetime. Time doesn't mean diddley around here.

ALEC

I was late to her concert. I sent flowers. We were going to have a drink --

DQ

And space? Einstein got it right. It's all relative.

ALEC

You don't understand. We were going to see each other again. For the first time in years. Maybe get back together. Well, that was my plan. I didn't get to tell her.

DQ snaps her fingers.

THE GREEN SCREEN DISSOLVES

into a freeze frame of Alec's final moment outside Carnegie Hall.

DQ

Wasn't the Mozart lovely, Alec?

ALEC

The accident! I have to get back!

DQ

There are no accidents.

Her fingers snap again. The falling statue and Alec's encounter with the bus REPLAYS around them like a gigantic thrill ride.

ALEC

You almost fell on me!

DQ

Missed you by a mile.

ALEC

Where am I?

DQ

Right where you need to be.

ALEC

What happened?

On the green screen as she describes it:

DQ

Crosstown express. The bus driver was trying to get out of the way of the statue. Saved the lives of forty New Yorkers. They're giving him a medal.

A long pause.

ALEC  
So, that's it?

DQ  
You know who I am Alec?

ALEC  
The Ghost of Christmas Present?

DQ  
(alarmed)  
I look fat in this dress?

ALEC  
OK, I get it. This is like the way  
station in that movie, right?  
Where's the airplane?

It's sinking in.

ALEC (CONT'D)  
I really have to get back now.  
She'll wonder why I didn't show up.

Studies the camera. Now he's really lost.

ALEC (CONT'D)  
You making a movie or something?

DQ  
That's what we do here.

ALEC  
What's it about?

DQ  
You.

Alec stares into the void.

HIS FACE

appears in huge CLOSE UP on the green screen.

ALEC  
(re: the screen)  
How do you do that?

DQ  
Beyond me. High tech broadband  
ultra def digital surround  
something.  
(MORE)

DQ (CONT'D)

All I know is I can't wear green in front of it. Not that green works for me anyway.

ANOTHER CLOSE SHOT: an old violin in a battered blue satin-lined case.

ALEC

My violin!

DQ

What happened to it?

ALEC

Lost it.

DQ

That's a lie, Alec, and you know it.

ALEC

I don't know what you're talking about.

DQ

Lies are no good here. They won't get you paid and they won't get you laid.

On the screen, the hand of a CHILD reaches for the violin. Turns it over to reveal initials carved on the back.

THE REAL VIOLIN NOW RESTS IN ALEC'S HAND.

ALEC

(a bit facetiously)  
It's a miracle!

DQ

Special effects. Kind of an Einstein thing.

ALEC

OK, I threw it away. But I tried to get it back. They already picked up the trash.

DQ

But you did try.

ALEC

I was a dumb kid.

DQ  
Not dumb. Never dumb. Innocent. But  
you changed.

Clicks a remote at the screen. A time code number appears on the frame below:

EXT. ALLEY - DAY - THE PAST

DQ (OVER)  
Right near the end of reel one.  
That's when it all started to go  
wrong.

Young Alec runs into the alley. Stops. His face warped with rage. He rips open the case, tears out the violin and swings it savagely against the building. The instrument explodes in a blaze of splinters. He hurls the wreckage into a garbage can and storms off down the alley.

BACK TO SCENE:

Alec plucks the strings. Tunes the violin.

DQ (CONT'D)  
You should've stuck with it. You  
could've been pretty good.

ALEC  
Pretty good isn't good enough.  
I want -- wanted to be great.

DQ clicks the remote. A photo of Young Claire fills the screen.

DQ  
Like Claire?

Alec glares straight ahead.

DQ (CONT'D)  
You never really tried. Maybe you  
could have.

ALEC  
Shoulda, woulda, coulda. "If  
'shoulds' and 'buts' were candy and  
nuts --

DQ  
-- what a wonderful Christmas this  
would be!"

ALEC  
My dad always used to say that.

DQ  
Mine too!

Alec takes a crumpled PHOTO out of his wallet --

ALEC AND HIS DAD AT A BASEBALL GAME.

ALEC  
He was a practical man. Not much imagination. Except for baseball. Even when the Yankees were in their worst slump ever, he believed they'd make it to the Series.

DQ  
And did they?

ALEC  
Nah, not even close.

Continues to tune the violin. There's a fascination here. Something that draws him deep for a long moment. Then:

DQ  
Play something.

ALEC  
I can't.

DQ  
Sure you can.

Alec doodles for a moment. Plays a few of the flashier bars of the Mozart Third. He's much better than he expects.

DQ (CONT'D)  
Here you play as brilliantly as you'd always imagined.

ALEC  
Not bad.

DQ  
But not as good as Claire.

CLAIRE'S PHOTO

from the kiosk surrounds them on the green screen.

DQ (CONT'D)

So, you were on the way to her concert.

ALEC

We were going to get together after. Not a date. Just drinks. Just see how it goes. I was picking up my ticket. Just before -- before the --

DQ

Say it, Alec.

ALEC

I was late. I wasn't paying attention.

DQ

Sooner or later you have to say it.

ALEC

Just before I died.

DQ

See? Not so hard.

A long beat.

ALEC

(slowly, as in a dream)

This means I won't be with Claire?

He looks at DQ for confirmation. None is forthcoming.

ALEC (CONT'D)

I used to call her "Itz." She was a huge fan of Itzhak Perlman. When she played, I got lost in the music. In her hands. Her fingers, mostly. They were like ripples. On a lake.

DQ

The last scene in your film takes place on a lake.

ALEC

And how does it end? Like in the movies?

DQ

You mean, do you get the girl?

ALEC

I didn't get to tell her --

DQ

I never reveal a climatic ending. Until the end. When you saw her picture, just before the bus hit you, what were you thinking?

ALEC

I don't know. "Good for you!" I guess.

#### ALEC'S FINAL MOMENTS

replay on the green screen, accompanied by time code numbers on the bottom:

He glances back. The photo of Claire is the last thing he sees before the WAIL of the air horn and the SCREECH of brakes.

ALEC (OVER) (CONT'D)

I'm happy for you, Claire. Glad you made it.

DQ

See? At the moment of your own death you were thinking about her. We can work with that.

Alec seems sad and startled. A long beat.

ALEC

I don't know what happened.

DQ

Life. Life happened. You just got a little lost. Everybody does.

Claire appears on the green screen. She turns, seems to be looking directly at Alec.

DQ (CONT'D)

So, let's see if we can find you.

ALEC

How do we do that?

DQ

You get another chance, Alec.

ALEC

What?

DQ

You can go back.

Alec encloses DQ in a big hug.

ALEC

Thank you!!

DQ

You sure you want to?

ALEC

You kidding?

DQ

Some people don't, you know. They only see the world through the dark lens of their own limitations. They're angry or they're sick or they get tired. So very tired. Of the pain. And the struggle --  
(sobs)  
Makes me so sad!

ALEC

You OK?

Touches her arm.

DQ

You'd be surprised how few bother to ask. You're really racking up the old points, aren't you?

ALEC

You keeping score?

DQ

You bet your ass, sugar. Somebody, somewhere, is always keeping score.

A BEEP. The Drag Queen clicks on her Bluetooth and answers.

DQ (CONT'D)

(on phone)

Yes? Oh, yes! No, he's here. Yes sir. He's decided he wants to go back.

(testy)

Yes sir, I am aware of budget.

(MORE)

DQ (CONT'D)

I will try to keep it under control. Yes, sir. Observe and Record. Do Not Intervene. I'll keep you posted.

Disconnects.

DQ (CONT'D)

The boss.

ALEC

The boss?

The Drag Queen smiles.

DQ

I wish! The supervisor. There are a few dozen suits between me and The Big Boss.

Alec gets his cell phone out of his jacket.

ALEC

You get service here?

DQ

You won't.

Alec turns on his phone. Listens.

ALEC

(big grin)

So, my free minutes have expired?

DQ

Hold on to your sense of humor. You're going to need it.

Gets out her PDA, starts punching in data.

DQ (CONT'D)

What are you going to do when you get back?

ALEC

Be where I should have been all along. With Claire.

(beat)

This place has a way getting me to what's really important.

DQ

What about your wife?

ALEC

Ex-wife.

DQ

Actually your widow. You didn't sign the divorce papers.

ALEC

First thing I do when I get back. She's going to take me to the cleaners.

DQ

From what I can tell, you have it coming.

ALEC

Marisa and I were never a good fit.

DQ

What about your earlier marriage?

ALEC

Didn't work out either.

A long beat.

ALEC (CONT'D)

You think Claire and I can get back together?

DQ

Whoa, hold your horses. We don't know what will happen. Anything's possible. Same odds as in your first life.

Alec doesn't really understand. But he nods.

DQ (CONT'D)

One rule. And it's as incontrovertible as geometry. You can only go back once. Never again.

ALEC

I hope I remember all this.

DQ

Unfortunately, not much. Bits and pieces maybe, little deja vu moments I call them.

ALEC

If I don't remember, how can I change things?

DQ

Depends on where your heart's at. You were free to screw up your life the first time and you're free to screw it up again. A clever little conceit we call "freedom of choice."

The Drag Queen pours him a glass of wine. Alec takes a sip. Raises his glass.

ALEC

To freedom of choice. You coming with me?

DQ

I'll be around.

ALEC

Give me a kick in the ass if I screw up?

DQ

Sorry. Observe and Record. Do Not Intervene.

Gets back on the crane. Starts the camera.

DQ (CONT'D)

And we are rolling!

ALEC

I'm not sure I'm ready for this.

DQ

Sugar, you are so not ready.

ALEC

Can I ask you something?

DQ

We're burning film here.

ALEC

Is this the 'other side'?

DQ

It's easier if you just think of it as a movie. Ready?

Alec nods.

DQ (CONT'D)  
"There but a touch of my hand."

ALEC  
"And you shall be upheld in more  
than this." -- A Christmas Carol!

DQ  
Charles Dickens -- he hit on me  
once, but he's a lovely man.

Alec touches her hand. The crane rises into darkness above  
the set.

DQ (CONT'D)  
(calling out)  
Slate!

An electronic slate appears on the green screen and a loud  
BEEP.

DQ (CONT'D)  
Drink up.

Alec gulps down the wine.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CARNEGIE HALL AUDITORIUM - DAY (THE PAST)

TIME CODE NUMBERS churn in reverse at the bottom of the  
frame.

DQ (OVER)  
Charming little Pinot Gris. Ninety-  
three. The year you walked out on  
love.

A banner over the stage heralds the "Juilliard/Carnegie Hall  
Music Scholarship Recital."

Young Claire solos in front of a STUDENT ORCHESTRA as they  
stumble through the final moments of the Mozart Third.

She's poised, confident. Each note cuts through the mediocre  
performances of her colleagues like cold steel.

ON STAGE

in third chair, Young Alec flounders hopelessly on his battered old violin as he and the others try to keep up with Claire's brilliance.

A CRACK of applause. The AUDIENCE, even the JUDGES, leap to their feet. Young Claire takes her bows. She's nailed the contest and everybody knows it.

DQ (OVER) (CONT'D)

Alec and Claire. Could just as well be Ralph and Moisha, Yohji and Choi, Julio and Lance. Last names, not important. Gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, irrelevant. It could be anybody. The human race is an equal opportunity destroyer.

Claire turns, smiles and waves at

YOUNG ALEC

He smiles back at her sadly. Looks away.

Slides his violin carefully into its blue satin-lined case, slips through a dark backstage exit and into the white BLAZE of a New York summer.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY (REPRISE THE PAST)

DQ (OVER)

At the tender age of sixteen, Alec makes the worst decision of his young life.

As before, Alec stops, rips open the case, tears out the violin and swings it savagely against the building. The violin explodes in a blaze of splinters. He hurls the wreckage into a garbage can and storms off down the alley.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. - OUTSIDE CARNEGIE HALL - DUSK (REPRISE - THE PRESENT)

The TIME CODE NUMBERS at the bottom of the frame now run FORWARD.

Alec moves down the avenue, cell phone to his ear.

DQ (OVER)

Right back where we started -- or ended. Einstein describes it as a loop in the space-time continuum.

INTERCUT:

ALEC

(on phone)

Why don't I just rip out my heart and send it back with the courier!

MARISA

(on phone)

You haven't got a heart, you bastard!

Alec stands gazing at the poster of Claire. The sound of the Mozart Third Violin Concerto SWEEPS through the noise of traffic.

MARISA (CONT'D)

(on phone)

What's that noise?

ALEC

(on phone)

Noise to you, Marisa. Mozart to anyone with a soul!

He heads to the box office "Will Call" window.

Above, the chopper SWAYS in a downdraft. An aching HOWL as one of the cables on the statue SNAPS.

IN THE CHOPPER

the PILOT fights for control.

ALEC LOOKS UP.

ALEC (CONT'D)

(to the BOX OFFICE  
ATTENDANT)

One for Myers.

BOX OFFICE ATTENDANT

(through the window  
speaker)

No late seating, sir.

As before, the statue CRASHES into the pavement in a huge cloud of dust.

Alec steps into the street for a better look.

This time, we see the

OUT-OF-CONTROL BUS

speeding toward him.

COLD HORROR

on the BUS DRIVER'S face as he spots Alec dead ahead. He wrenches the steering wheel. The bus lurches, skids, missing Alec by inches!