

YESTERDAY'S BOY

Written by

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EXT. NORWICH COUNCIL ESTATE - DAY

A hush clings to the narrow lanes of brick terrace houses, their chimneys puffing gentle trails into the rose-tinted sky. Frost rims the rooftops, catching the first light like a held breath.

Milk bottles wait quietly on stoops. A curtain stirs. Somewhere, a kettle whistles behind frosted glass.

Commuters move like shadows – scraping windshields, muttering into collars – as the estate stirs to life.

This is working-class Norfolk: humble, proud, and quietly enduring. A place of tea kettles and radio static. A place where ghosts might hum softly between the bricks.

INT. BRENNAN HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

A modest kitchen, but lived-in with love. Faded birthday cards still cling to the fridge. Crayon drawings curl at the corners.

On the mantel, photographs cluster like a chorus – holidays, scraped knees, sunlit smiles caught mid-laugh.

Steam curls from a chipped mug in TOM BRENNAN's hand – early 40s, sturdy, soft around the eyes, dressed in a high-vis vest. He gulps his tea, checks his watch.

Across from him, RACHEL BRENNAN (40s) wears the tired dignity of an NHS nurse. Her uniform is creased from the night shift. She spreads jam on toast with quiet, practiced grace, as if she's done this in her sleep a hundred times.

At the table, ELI BRENNAN (10) taps his fingers against the wood – not idly, but with uncanny intent.

Not a beat. A rhythm.

It builds, layers. Syncopated. Intuitive. Almost too sophisticated.

It's *Come Together*, but filtered – translated into fingertips and table grain.

Tom pauses mid-sip. Rachel stills the knife.

They exchange a look.

RACHEL

Eli, love... where'd you learn that?

Eli glances up, blinking as if waking.

ELI
Learn what?

RACHEL
That rhythm. What you're playing.

He looks down at his fingers, like they've acted on their own.

ELI
I don't know. It just... sounds right.

Tom kisses Rachel's cheek, ruffles Eli's hair on the way out.

TOM
See you tonight. Try not to save too many lives.

RACHEL
Can't promise anything.

The front door clicks shut.

Rachel watches her son, head tilted. Eli's back at it – drumming, lost again. A different pattern now. Stranger. Just as precise.

She sets the toast down and listens, unsure if she's hearing rhythm... or memory.

INT. MEADOWVIEW PRIMARY SCHOOL – CLASSROOM – DAY

Sunlight slants through dusty blinds, catching flecks of chalk dust in the air.

The room is cheerful, cluttered, alive with colour – posters about tooth-brushing routines and the carbon cycle cling to the walls like bright paper memories.

Twenty-nine children hunch over notebooks, pencils scratching softly. A symphony of quiet.

Eli sits near the back, unusually still. His brow furrowed, pencil moving in swift, confident strokes – not words, but shapes. Curves. Shadows. Gates.

MRS WHITFIELD (50s), kind and always slightly behind on marking, moves down the rows with a smile that tries to hide her fatigue.

MRS WHITFIELD
 Remember, Year 5 - creative writing
 should come from your imagination.
 Write about something that
 interests you.

She passes behind Eli, then pauses.

The smile fades into something more uncertain.

INSERT: ON THE PAGE

A detailed sketch fills the paper - iron gates, curved and elaborate, beneath a cloudy sky. Figures stand just beyond them, more shadow than person. In the margins: childlike handwriting, carefully looped.

"Shadows gather where strawberries dream,
 Echoes call from the in-between."

MRS WHITFIELD (CONT'D)
 That's... very imaginative, Eli.

ELI
 (without looking up)
 It's from a dream, I think.
 Sometimes I dream about places I've
 never been.

She crouches beside him, genuinely intrigued now. Her eyes scan the gates again - too detailed for a ten-year-old. Not fantasy gates. Real ones.

MRS WHITFIELD
 And the gates? Do you know what
 they're called?

ELI
 Strawberry Field. In Liverpool. But
 I've never been to Liverpool.

Mrs Whitfield lingers a moment longer, her expression unreadable. Then she stands.

MRS WHITFIELD
 Well. Keep going. There's
 something... special in the way you
 see things.

She walks on.

Eli taps the pencil once, softly, against the page - three steady beats - and begins shading the sky.

INT. BRENNAN HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The kitchen has been tidied with unusual care. A vase of corner-shop flowers. A cardigan draped neatly over a chair.

Rachel, changed out of her uniform, checks her watch. Tom, freshly shaven, adjusts his collar in the reflection of the kettle.

Footsteps on the stairs.

Eli enters in a clean button-up, slightly too big at the shoulders. His hair's been combed with water, unevenly. In his hand: a slim folder of papers, edges curled from handling.

TOM

There he is. You look smart, mate.

Rachel smiles, proud but trying not to make it a big deal.

RACHEL

Is that your music?

Eli holds up the folder.

ELI

I wrote it down. Just in case.

He hands it to her.

Rachel opens the folder. Sheet music. Handwritten. Precise. Melodic notation, rests, chord markings. Not guesswork. Not scribbles.

Tom leans in behind her. They both stare. A few measures are titled:

"Echoes - verse 1"

"Bridge - 'A boy with a song in the light'"

RACHEL

This is beautiful work, Eli. Did you copy it?

Eli shakes his head.

TOM

Whose song is it?

Eli frowns, confused.

ELI

Mine. I made it up.

RACHEL

This is pretty sophisticated to be learning at school.

ELI

I didn't learn it at school. It just... comes to me.

He says it like someone who's tied a shoe or drawn a bird – simple, unremarkable.

Rachel blinks, trying to smile. She closes the folder gently, like it's fragile.

RACHEL

Right. Let's get going then.

Eli nods and grabs his coat. Tom opens the door. They step into the quiet dark.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NORWICH COMMUNITY CENTRE – NIGHT

The building stands like a memory softened by time – faded red brick, crooked windows, and a hand-painted sign that reads: "Open Mic – All Welcome."

A warm haze glows from within, flickering against the cold. Condensation steams the windows.

Locals drift toward the entrance in padded coats and bobble hats, clutching takeaway coffee and folded leaflets.

Faint voices rise and fall – a community coming together not out of excitement, but habit.

The Brennans approach. Tom carries a small basket over one arm. Rachel walks just behind Eli, glancing down at the sheet music he holds like a prayer. Eli's gaze stays fixed on the door.

The glow from inside spills out as the door opens. A single guitar note rings out, then dies.

INT. NORWICH COMMUNITY CENTRE – CONTINUOUS

The room smells of old wool and memories. Yellowed walls sigh under the weight of damp seasons and decades of well-meaning gatherings. Mismatched chairs line up like tired soldiers, legs uneven, backs squeaking when leaned upon.

The smell of instant coffee mingles with heating pipes gone cold. A battered upright piano anchors the far wall – its keys the colour of old teeth, its wood scarred and proud.

MRS PEMBERTON (60s) knits in the front row, her needles keeping a steady, percussive rhythm.

MR MILLER thumbs his phone with glazed indifference while his grandson, OLLIE (15), slouches beside him, earbuds around his neck like a necklace he resents wearing.

In the back row, CLAIRE ASHWORTH (40s) clutches a chipped mug of tea. She's a woman who once believed music could change everything – and now isn't so sure.

On stage, DAVE STEVENS (50s), the kind-hearted MC with a voice like gravel and optimism, taps the mic.

DAVE

Let's get started, shall we? I'll
kick us off with a bit of light
comedy. Warm us up.

He grins, aware his jokes are older than most of the audience.

DAVE (CONT'D)

So I went to buy some camouflage
trousers the other day... but
couldn't find any!

A few chuckles. Claire manages half a smile. Mrs Pemberton doesn't look up.

At the back, Eli sits between Tom and Rachel, knees bouncing slightly. His hands twitch in his lap – fingerpads drumming silent chords, moving without thought.

ELI

(quietly, to himself)
Wow, how did I get here?

Rachel hears him, leans in.

RACHEL

What, love?

Eli looks up, startled.

ELI

I don't know. It just... popped
into my head.

LATER

A teenage guitarist strums the last chord of a well-meant, slightly out-of-tune Oasis cover. A smattering of applause.

Dave returns to the mic.

DAVE

And last but certainly not least,
young Mr Eli Brennan.

Tom shifts in his seat. Rachel's hand finds his. Eli rises slowly, the folder still tucked under one arm.

He walks toward the piano like someone entering an old cathedral. Small. Quiet. A little breath mists from his lips in the cold air.

TOM

(whispered, to Rachel)
Still think this is a mistake.

RACHEL

(whispered back)
He asked, Tom. When did he ever ask
for anything?

Eli reaches the piano. The bench wobbles slightly as he sits. His feet dangle, not quite touching the floor.

He opens the folder. His sheet music lies crisp and marked, his own careful hand across each line. He places it gently on the stand.

His fingers hover above the keys – not trembling, but reverent. Like he's greeting something ancient.

The room is still half-occupied – voices still murmuring, someone unwrapping a sweet, a phone lighting up quietly.

Then –

The first note.

Soft. Fragile. Almost too gentle to register. But the chord that follows lands with precision – melancholy and warm.

Conversations falter. Heads turn.

Mrs Pemberton's needles stop mid-row. Ollie blinks. Mr Miller forgets to check his screen.

Eli sings.

ELI
 (singing)
 There are places I remember
 All my life, though some have
 changed...

Claire's tea mug stops halfway to her lips. She knows these words – has sung them herself countless times. But these aren't quite the same words.

ELI (CONT'D)
 (singing)
 Some forever, not for better
 In the fields where I used to
 play...

CLAIRE
 (whispers)
 That's not the lyric...

And yet it fits. Feels older, somehow. Deeper.

Eli's left hand finds the bass – low, resonant, rhythmic. The way Lennon used to play in Hamburg, anchoring the chaos. His right hand weaves melody lines with uncanny grace.

ELI
 (singing)
 I see the crowds that call my name
 In places I have never been
 And lights that shine like summer
 rain
 On stages I have never seen

Rachel grips Tom's hand. Hard.

ELI (CONT'D)
 (singing)
 There's a woman with dark hair
 Whose laugh echoes in my dreams
 She makes me feel both safe and
 scared
 Nothing is quite what it seems...

By now, the room has fallen silent. Something between awe and unease hangs in the air.

Claire leans forward, heart pounding.

The final chord lingers – just long enough to feel like a question.

Then –

Applause. Sharp. Sudden. Too loud.

Eli jerks as if struck. His hands fly off the keys. His eyes widen. He clutches at his collarbone.

Dave hurries across the stage, concerned.

DAVE
You okay, son?

Eli nods quickly, forcing a smile that doesn't quite reach his eyes.

ELI
I'm fine. Just... the clapping startled me.

DAVE
Well, you've earned it.

Eli nods mutely and slips from the piano bench, his small frame seeming to fold in on itself. He walks past the scattered chairs toward his parents.

MRS PEMBERTON
(calling out)
Lovely, dear. Very... original.

Ollie leans toward him.

OLLIE
(to Eli)
That was... actually cool.

Eli glances at him, surprised. Then nods, grateful.

Tom wraps an arm around his son. Rachel places a hand on his back. The three of them exit together, a quiet bubble of warmth in the aftershock of something no one quite understands.

Claire remains frozen. Her tea has gone cold. Her breath fogs faintly in the still air. She stares at the empty bench. The silent piano.

CLAIRE
(whispered)
How is that possible?

No one answers.

But somewhere – in memory, in echo, in magic – she hears a voice. Just a whisper.

JOHN LENNON

We all shine on... like the moon
and the stars and the sun... we all
shine on...

INT. BRENNAN HOME - ELI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A boy's room by all appearances - model planes hang frozen in flight from the ceiling, football posters curl slightly at the corners, well-thumbed adventure books sprawl across the floor like sleeping animals.

But on the small desk beside the bed lies something else - Eli's school notebook, pages aglow in the soft amber of a bedside lamp.

It's open.

Musical notation fills the page, drawn in a child's hand but impossibly complex. Chord progressions that ripple with nuance. A melody line that climbs, hesitates, then falls in a minor key. Not copied. Composed.

Eli lies awake. Hands tucked behind his head. Eyes open. Listening to something only he can hear.

He hums softly - just the ghost of a tune.

"Look at Me" - fragmented, half-remembered, not quite his.

The ceiling above him flickers with moonlight filtered through his curtains. It casts the shadows of the planes like they're moving.

In the doorway, Rachel appears, wrapped in her nightgown. Her face is tired, but soft with wonder she doesn't yet know how to name.

RACHEL

(gently)

Time for sleep, love.

ELI

Can't sleep. My brain's too noisy.

RACHEL

Still thinking about tonight?

Eli nods.

ELI

I wasn't scared... I'm used to an audience but I don't always like it.

Rachel crosses the room and sits on the edge of the bed. She sees the open notebook, the looping staff lines, the precise accidentals.

She doesn't comment. She closes it carefully, like a sacred text.

RACHEL

Why not?

Eli shrugs, the moment gone.

Rachel leans down, brushing a hand through Eli's hair. Kisses his forehead.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

You were wonderful.

She switches off the lamp. Darkness settles gently around them.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Sweet dreams, my love.

She leaves, pulling the door mostly shut behind her.

Eli is left in the hush.

He hums the tune again, just one line.

ELI (V.O.)

Look at me...

Who am I supposed to be?

His voice trails into silence.

Outside, the wind stirs the night. Inside, the music waits.

INT. BRENNAN HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is dimly lit, warm in the way only lived-in spaces can be. A lamp pools soft light across the floral duvet. Laundry waits in a basket. A book lies open, spine-up on the bedside table.

Rachel enters, her nightgown whispering at her ankles. Tom sits on the edge of the bed, unlacing his boots. His body is tired. His mind isn't.

TOM
How is he?

RACHEL
Awake. Hyped. Still humming. "Look
at Me," I think. Do you remember
the first time? The neighbor's
guitar?

Tom smiles faintly – nostalgia etched in the lines around his
eyes.

TOM
Yeah. He was seven. Picked it up
like he'd just put it down.

Rachel sits beside him. Their knees touch.

RACHEL
Not from us, is it?

TOM
No, I can't even whistle in tune.

A pause, soft.

TOM (CONT'D)
And the things he says... talking
about Strawberry Fields like he
knows the place. Sure. Kids get
obsessed but sometimes...

Rachel finds his hand. Her thumb brushes the back of his
knuckles.

RACHEL
His gift is part of him. We can't
stop that.

TOM
No. But how do we protect him from
it?

Another pause. The air thickens slightly with something
unsaid.

TOM (CONT'D)
It's like we opened a door... and I
don't think it closes.

Rachel leans against his shoulder. They sit like that for a
while.

RACHEL
He's still our Eli.

TOM
And all we need is love.

Rachel rolls her eyes but smiles – then grabs a pillow and swats him with it.

Tom catches it midair, wraps his arms around her, trapping the pillow between them.

They collapse sideways in a heap of laughter and low light, two people trying their best to hold joy and worry at once.

INT. CLAIRE'S FLAT - NIGHT

The flat hums with the weight of abandoned dreams.

Stacks of vinyl records teeter on every surface – Bowie, The Kinks, Carole King, Lennon – each sleeve worn soft by years of handling.

Faded concert posters cling to the walls like ghosts of another life. A Stratocaster leans in the corner, its strings loose with dust. Another guitar lies open on the table, innards exposed, half-fixed, half-forgotten.

Claire sits at her old electric keyboard, eyes narrowed, brow furrowed in focus.

She plays.

Bass line. Clumsy. Hesitant. Fingers stumbling over the rhythm she heard so clearly in that boy's hands. She frowns. Tries again. It doesn't sing. Not the way he made it sing.

She exhales sharply. Lifts the stylus from its cradle.

"In My Life" plays on vinyl – needle crackling softly, that familiar melancholy guitar walking gently beneath Lennon's voice.

Claire closes her eyes a moment, letting the melody wrap around her.

She opens them again – grabs a pencil, starts scribbling notes. Crosses them out. Starts over. Writes, rewrites, scratches holes in the paper.

The music continues.

JOHN LENNON (V.O.)
(faint)
Some have gone... and some
remain...

Claire pushes the sheet music aside and pulls her laptop across the cluttered table.

A photo slips from a Bowie biography: Claire (20), opening for a Lennon tribute band. She stares, then types: "Child musical prodigies"

Pause. Delete.

Types again: "Impossible memories in children"

Hesitates. Deletes.

Her fingers linger above the keys.

Then: "Reincarnation cases documented."

She hits Enter.

The screen fills with search results:
"Mozart at 5 - A Genius Emerges"
"Child Savant Syndrome and Memory"
"The Strange Case of James Leininger"
"Children Who Remember Past Lives"

Claire scrolls. And scrolls. Frown deepening. Nothing fits. Not what she saw. Not what she heard.

Not Eli.

The vinyl crackles as the song ends. The silence feels heavier than the music.

Claire sits back in her chair, lost in the space between reason and wonder. Between what is and what might be.

Her eyes drift to the piano, then to the stack of records beside it. Her hand hovers over one - Double Fantasy - but she doesn't pick it up.

Not yet.

FADE TO:

TITLE CARD: "TWO WEEKS LATER"

MONTAGE - LIFE CONTINUES

EXT. BYPASS CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Steel teeth bite into wet Norfolk earth.

Tom operates the excavator with steady hands, the machine groaning like a beast at work.

He pauses, sweat on his brow despite the cold. Taped to the dash: A photo of Eli and Rachel. Eli grins, gap-toothed, pure light.

Tom stares at it - at who his son was. Then shifts the lever and digs deeper.

INT. HOSPITAL - CARDIAC WARD - DAY

Monitors beep softly, like a mechanical lullaby.

Rachel moves from bed to bed, checking pulses, adjusting tubes. Her body tired, her movements automatic.

At the nurses' station, she checks her phone.

TOM (TEXT)

How's your night? Eli wants to wear glasses.

Rachel types, smiling faintly.

RACHEL

He doesn't need glasses.

She stares at the screen a moment too long, smile fading.

INT. BRENNAN HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Spaghetti steams. A warm light pools over the table.

Eli sits still, fork untouched, staring down at the mince.

RACHEL

(to Eli)

Eat up, love.

ELI

I don't eat meat.

Rachel freezes. Tom doesn't.

TOM
Eli, eat your dinner.

Eli doesn't answer. Just crosses his arms.

The plate cools in front of him. The orange squash glows like stained glass.

INT. MEADOWVIEW PRIMARY SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Mrs Whitfield holds up a history book - black-and-white photos of warplanes, soldiers, fire.

Most children lean forward. Eli leans away.

MRS WHITFIELD
Eli, please open your book.

He doesn't.

She steps closer. Firm but kind.

MRS WHITFIELD (CONT'D)
Eli?

But he's already looking out the window - face distant, expression far too old for ten.

EXT. NORWICH HIGH STREET - DAY

Cold sunlight. Busy footpath.

Rachel and Eli walk side by side. She carries a cloth shopping bag. He walks barefoot inside his shoes - too quiet for a boy his age.

They pass a man wearing a Liverpool FC jersey.

ELI
(to the man)
I was born in Liverpool.

The man chuckles, nods, walks on.

Rachel stops. Blinks.

RACHEL
Eli, you were born in Norwich. At the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital.

Eli frowns. He looks back at her, lost.

ELI

Was I?

They continue walking. Rachel watches him now – not just as a mother, but as someone looking at a puzzle she thought she knew how to solve.

END MONTAGE

INT. BRENNAN HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The hum of evening settles over the house.

Rachel stirs a pot on the stove – steam curling into the low lamplight. Tom sets the table with the practiced rhythm of routine. Outside the room, a guitar drifts – slow, gentle chords winding through the doorway like a lullaby.

RACHEL

Today he told someone he was born
in Liverpool.

She plates the dinner – bangers and mash on two plates, baked beans and mash on a third.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

And he won't touch meat now. He
never used to be fussy.

TOM

Ten-year-olds go through phases.

RACHEL

But this one feels... different.
Should we be worried?

TOM

About having an imaginative son?

Rachel pauses, listening to the melody from the sitting room. Her worry doesn't go away.

RACHEL

Eli! Dinner's ready!

The guitar stops. A moment later, Eli enters, holding a colourful flyer like it's something fragile. He places it on the table, carefully.

ELI

I got this at school.

Tom picks it up: "NORFOLK COUNTY YOUTH TALENT SHOW - St. Margaret's Secondary School."

ELI (CONT'D)
Can I enter?

Tom picks up the flyer, frowning.

TOM
More performing? In front of
strangers?

Eli shrugs, not defensive - just hopeful.

ELI
I want to play music.

Tom studies his son. The guitar in the other room still vibrates faintly in the air.

TOM
What do you want to be when you
grow up?

ELI
(without hesitation)
Happy.

The answer lands like a soft chord in a quiet room. Both parents go still for a beat. They exchange a glance.

RACHEL
It's just local kids. I suppose
there's no harm.

TOM
What's the prize?

ELI
(reading)
£50 gift voucher... and a trophy.

TOM
Guess we'll need to clear a shelf.

Eli beams - pure, surprised joy. He throws his arms around each of them in turn, unselfconscious.

Rachel starts clearing plates. Tom moves to help her. Eli is halfway to the hallway when -

TOM (CONT'D)
Hey, Eli... who's your favourite
band?

Eli turns, already smiling.

ELI
The Beatles.

TOM
Who's in The Beatles?

ELI
John, Paul, Ringo and George.

Tom nods, amused. But Eli isn't done.

ELI (CONT'D)
John was the smart one. He knew how
to make people think. But he was
scared of getting old.

Tom stills, dish towel in hand.

RACHEL
How do you know that?

But Eli is already gone, slipping down the hallway, the
moment vanished with him.

Rachel stares after him, the question still hanging.

TOM
(practical)
He must surf the internet. How else
can he know this stuff?

Rachel nods. Slowly. But the doubt doesn't leave her face.

She turns back to the dishes. Her hands move. Her thoughts
don't.

INT. BRENNAN HOME - ELI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eli sits cross-legged on his bed. His guitar rests in his lap
like a secret. The house is quiet – just the soft murmur of
his parents downstairs, distant as memory.

He strums gently – not a full song, just the bones of one.

A new version of "Echoes." Softer. Sadder. More his.

He hums the opening line under his breath.

ELI (QUIETLY)
In the fields where I used to
play...

He closes his eyes.

INT. CLAIRE'S FLAT - NIGHT

Claire scrolls her phone. Stops.

A poster: "Norfolk County Youth Talent Show - St. Margaret's Secondary School."

She sets the phone down. Reaches for her notebook. Scrawls three words on the top of a blank page: "Echoes. Eli. Lennon?"

EXT. ST. MARGARET'S SECONDARY SCHOOL - NIGHT

A red-brick building slouches under cold halogen light. Its windows glow dimly, reflecting the night like tired eyes. The architecture is utilitarian – uninspired, unloved – but tonight, its corridors carry the low hum of anticipation.

Cars pull up one by one. Doors creak open. Nervous children step out in costumes and coats, carrying violins, guitars, a plastic magician's hat. Their parents murmur reassurances and tug scarves into place.

The Brennan family's silver hatchback pulls up near the entrance – clean, compact, with a faint hum like it's trying not to wake the world.

Rachel parks smoothly. The engine cuts out with a whisper.

Tom steps out first, brushing a crease from his jumper.

Rachel follows, checking Eli's collar. Eli, small and solemn, climbs out last – his guitar case held tight against his side like a second heart.

They walk together toward the gymnasium doors.

The night air is cold. Their breath curls like smoke.

A few steps behind them, Claire's car pulls in. She sits for a moment before opening the door. She sees them instantly.

The boy. The parents. The case. Recognition flickers across her face – not surprise, but confirmation. She follows. Not too close.

A breeze stirs litter on the pavement – paper programs, crushed leaves, a torn balloon ribbon – all tumbling toward the entrance, where something impossible is about to unfold.