“Pilot”

Written by
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Kingmakers

"Pilot"

CAST

JACOB DARLOW (ELI HENNESSY)    Gus Halper
DEAN VANDERMEER               Colm Feore
SENATOR WALDEN                 Adrian Pasdar
MAEVE VANDERMEER               Kristen Bauer van Straten
ANNA VANDERMEER                Megan West
PHOEBE CROSS                   Tracey Fairaway
TOMMY WALDEN                   Michael Trevino
JULIA HENNESSY                 Amy Forsyth
TAYLOR COLLINS                 Colin Woodell
BEN WHEELER                    Khary Payton
PETE GREER                     Kendrick Sampson
RADHA PATEL                    Parminder Nagra
YOUNG JULIA                    Elizabeth Hunter
ALEX LEANDROS                  Paul Ben Victor
RUBY LEANDROS                  Ainsley Bailey
Sylvia WALDEN                  Mayte Garcia
WOMAN (SOCIAL WORKER)          Selena Anduze
GEENA                          Sasha Ramos
LORRAINE BRADLEY               Jeryl Prescott
GUARD 1                        Zero Kazama
* (PRISON GUARD - OMITTED)      Charmin Lee
INTERVIEWER                   Michael Hill
ANCHOR
Kingmakers

"Pilot"

SETS

INTERIORS
BUCK ISLAND
- STONE LODGE
BLACKSMITH BARN
JACOB’S SUITE
- LIVING ROOM
- BEDROOM
DEAN’S HOUSE
- DEAN’S STUDY
- BEDROOM
- LIVING ROOM
WALDEN CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS
- BULLPEN
- CONFERENCE ROOM
- WALDEN’S OFFICE
BRADDOCK CLASSROOM HALLWAY
GREEK CIVILIZATIONS CLASSROOM
SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT
- DEAN’S OFFICE
BRADDOCK STUDENT CENTER
ART STUDIO
MASS. CORRECTIONAL FACILITY
MOTEL ROOM
STONEBRIDGE TAVERN
SKULL & KEY TOMB
- HALLWAY

EXTERIORS
LAKE
BUCK ISLAND
- TOMB
- STONE LODGE
BRADDOCK BOATHOUSE
- HOOSIC RIVER
BLACKSMITH BARN
BRADDOCK COLLEGE
- MAIN QUAD
- SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT
WALDEN CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS
DEAN’S HOUSE
- BACKYARD
- LIVING ROOM
BUS STATION
WINDING COUNTRY ROAD
ROAD
WOODS
MASS. CORRECTIONAL FACILITY
ACT ONE

OVER BLACK:

"Whether poor or rich, all’s the same in death." - Anonymous

EXT. LAKE - NIGHT

As we fly low over the water, its stillness proves this is not the Atlantic. We’re not in the Hamptons anymore...

A paddle’s blade SLICES the surface, splintering the reflection of a crescent MOON. It belongs to a small ROWBOAT, stealthily and urgently propelled by an unidentified ROWER (in an identifiable CREW JACKET) heading to a private island.

YOUNG MAN (V.O.)
It always begins the same way. With a choice: do we forgive and forget the people who’ve wronged us? Or do we strike them down in vengeance?

The Rower pulls his boat ashore, then grabs an AXE out of the boat... A couple hundred feet away, there’s an upscale PARTY (glasses CLINKING, lights twinkling) but the Rower runs in the opposite direction, into the woods.

OMITTED

EXT. BUCK ISLAND - TOMB - MOMENTS LATER

Out of breath, the Rower arrives at his destination: a 5 by 8 foot stone crypt protected by a series of intricate locks...

YOUNG MAN (V.O.)
I’ve been told by those who’ve tasted it, revenge is not only sweet, but it ruins the palate for anything else...

He clears some moss, revealing a skull and crossbones engraved upon the arch -- but upon closer look, the skull is that of a DEER and the bones are actually KEYS. As the Rower holds up the AXE, readying to SMASH the LOCKS --

YOUNG MAN (V.O.)
So before I made my choice, I knew: there is no going back. Because this is not a story of forgiveness.
...when somewhere behind him, the crisp SNAP of a twig causes the Rower to spin around as an eerie, crescendoing SWISH RIPS TOWARDS HIM THROUGH THE SILENCE, SMASHING US TO:

**EXT./INT. BUCK ISLAND - STONE LODGE - NIGHT**

That inviting party we glimpsed down-shore. LEGEND: **NEW YEARS EVE, THE BERKSHIRES, MASSACHUSETTS.** We float past GUESTS in black and white attire, spilling out of the rustic lodge into a courtyard where a YOUNG MAN is just arriving...

This is JACOB DARLOW (26, British, the confidence of a royal, completely in his element). A nearby SIGN reads: “Happy New Year 2016.”

**MAN’S VOICE (O.C.)**

Jacob?

Jacob turns to find SENATOR ADAM WALDEN (50's, strikingly handsome, fit, salt of the earth). He shakes Jacob’s hand.

**JACOB**

Senator Walden. Sorry I’m late.

**SENATOR WALDEN**

At least you made it. Can’t say the same for my son. You seen Tommy?

**JACOB**

Afraid I haven’t, no.

**SENATOR WALDEN**

(disappointed, moving on)
Wish you’d reconsider my offer, Jacob. Take a semester off, join my campaign. Eighteen days until the Iowa Caucus...

**JACOB**

Very tempting. When do you need to know by?

**SENATOR WALDEN**

How ’bout I give you ‘til next year.
(they trade a smile)
In the meantime, let’s introduce you around, shall we?

As Walden leads him into the house, move off of them to find: ANNA VANDERMEER (20's, a girl who’s recently discovered the power of seduction, and isn’t afraid to use it). She watches Jacob across the room with a coy smile. She tries to cross to him but is intercepted by MAEVE VANDERMEER (40's, headstrong, and as stunning as her daughter, if not more so).
MAEVE
Why is it while your pledge-mates
are landing their dream jobs,
you’re lining up your next screw?

ANNA
Monkey see, monkey do, Mother.

MAEVE
Don’t. Any one of these people can
help salvage your future.

Maeve exchanges a look with the Senator, who excuses himself
from his conversation with Jacob and GUESTS...

ANNA
But you’ve worked so hard to
destroy it...

MAEVE
Anna, please. Prove to me something
good can come out of all this.

ANNA
Whatever helps you sleep at night.
Or whoever...

Anna walks off, shooting a look at the approaching Senator to
prove her point. As he lands, Senator Walden subtly strokes
the small of Maeve’s back:

SENATOR WALDEN
Thank God I only had boys.

MAEVE
Do all girls turn into their mothers?

SENATOR WALDEN
She should be so lucky.

Maeve smiles at him, charmed.

MAEVE
Where’s your wife?

SENATOR WALDEN
Gone, soon as you say the word.

Maeve follows his gaze to SYLVIA WALDEN (late 40’s, tipsy).
He strokes her arm, but she plays coy, indicating the party:

MAEVE
These people have eyes, Adam.
SENATOR WALDEN
If they couldn’t keep a secret,
I’d’ve been ruined a long time ago.
(then)
C’mon, what do you say? I know an
empty cabin just through the woods...

Off her smile, PAN OVER TO FIND: Anna finally reaches Jacob
and pulls a small silver brooch out of her pocket: it’s of
the same Skull & Key symbol that was engraved on the tomb. As
she pins it to his lapel:

ANNA
You left it at my place. Don’t tell
Tommy.

Before he can object, she kisses his lips to seal them. As
she does, we hear the CLINKING of a knife on glass... It’s
DEAN SIMON VANDERMEER (55, whip-smart, king of this world)
who eyes Jacob as he prepares to make his toast...

DEAN VANDERMEER
Before we fall victim to our
revelry, I wanted to say a few
words. And I’ll keep it short, much
to my wife’s relief...

He raises a glass to Maeve, who was seconds away from leaving
with Senator Walden. She forces a smile. The Dean resumes:

DEAN VANDERMEER (CONT’D)
As the clock approaches midnight,
we bid adieu to this year, its
successes, as well as adversities.
Just as we must say farewell to
Jacob Darlow...

All eyes land on Jacob, who wasn’t expecting this. He watches
cautiously as the Dean continues, relishing every word:

DEAN VANDERMEER (CONT’D)
It’s come to my attention this
evening that Jacob will be returning
home to London. Just as he so
suddenly dropped into our lives --
(locking eyes with Jacob)
It’s time for him to move on. So
let us raise a glass to his future.

JACOB
And may we never forget our past.
(raising his glass)
Auld Lang Syne, Dean Vandermeer.

Anna turns to Jacob, bewildered:
ANNA
What was that about?

JACOB
Ask your father.

As she crosses off towards the Dean, Jacob puts down his
glass, casually making his way outside -- where his pace then
accelerates... As he walks, PHOEBE CROSS (20’s, cute,
slightly disheveled) appears next to him.

PHOEBE
Something’s wrong.

JACOB
Tell me about it... Don’t let them
see you.

PHOEBE
Trust me, in a few moments, I’m the
last thing they’ll notice...
(off his look)
Let me just lead with, you were right.

A GUARD in a tux, with a Secret Service style headset,
approaches Phoebe:

GUARD
How did you get here, Miss?

PHOEBE
How did I get here, let’s see...
One night 19 years ago my mother
and father were feeling amorous,
one thing led to another...

Jacob looks back towards the party, sees Anna arguing with
the Dean, who now looks up to see this situation... As a
second GUARD approaches:

JACOB
Don’t mind her, she’s drunk. I’ll
escort her home.

GUARD
I don’t think so.

The Guard GRABS Phoebe’s arm. The second Guard grabs the
other arm, and they start to pull her away. Clearly, whoever
these people are, they don’t abide crashers.

JACOB
Let go of her!
Phoebe tries to wrestle away, but the Guards become more forceful. It’s about to get ugly. Inside, the COUNTDOWN to the New Year begins (TEN! NINE! EIGHT!)...
Jacob looks back to the door to see Anna coming outside, Anna locks eyes with him, looking hurt, before her gaze shifts past him (towards Phoebe) -- as it does, her expression turns to fear, and she SCREAMS. The countdown STOPS. Jacob follows her gaze to see --

A newly arrived guest emerging from the woods, the mystery Rower: THOMAS WALDEN (20's), the Senator’s missing son, a beautiful boy who could’ve taken over the world...

Concerned Guests spill out, straining to see what’s going on. We finally REVEAL: Thomas has been shot with an ARROW in the chest. Blood BLOOMS from the wound...

As Tommy crumples to the ground, the SOUND DROPS OUT, SCORE RISING. The crowd CIRCLES around him, as the Senator and Sylvia break through, crying out their son’s name, taking his lifeless body in their arms... As the Dean LOCKS EYES with Jacob, PUSH IN as Jacob holds the gaze, unwavering...

**EXT. BRADDOCK BOATHOUSE - HOOSIC RIVER - DAY**

The sun rises. Across the water, a deer walks the bank. A chyron reads **FOUR MONTHS EARLIER**. The serenity is dissected by a rowboat (a single scull), powered by Tommy, alive and well. His strokes are steady, in control.

But then, out of the corner of his eye, he clocks another boat: a SECOND SET OF OARS cutting into the water with equal force. Better, actually. Stronger. Puzzled, Tommy slows as the boat approaches. It’s Jacob Darlow (who Tommy doesn’t yet know).

    JACOB
    Morning!

As Jacob passes, Tommy quickens his pace to catch up with Jacob, yelling between strokes:

    TOMMY
    What are you doing?

    JACOB
    At the moment, trying to keep up.

    TOMMY
    What year are you?

    JACOB
    Junior.

    TOMMY
    Then you should know better.
Tommy suddenly pulls ahead. Jacob digs into his strokes, pursuing him like a shark, and the two sculls are suddenly racing side-by-side towards the Boathouse - the finish line.

Jacob quickens his pace and closes the gap, despite Tommy’s herculean efforts. As they near the dock, Jacob kicks it up a notch, WINNING the race with a 10-foot lead. Tommy seems impressed. As they lean back, catching their breath:

**TOMMY (CONT’D)**
If you’re a junior, why haven’t I seen you before?

**JACOB**
I just transferred a week ago. From Oxford.

**TOMMY**
So you probably didn’t realize these boats are for team only.

**JACOB**
(noting his tone)
My mistake... I was simply warming up before meeting with the coach.

That lands on Tommy, as he docks his boat. In the b.g., a few CREW KIDS are heading into the Boathouse.

**TOMMY**
What position are you?

**JACOB**
Seventh, generally. However --

**TOMMY**
Too bad. We’re good on powerhouses.

**JACOB**
Are you?
(off Tommy’s look)
It’s just -- I heard you had a rough season last year, lost your reign as national champions.

**TOMMY**
So you thought you’d jump aboard and help us out? What a nice bloke.

**JACOB**
I think we’re getting off on the wrong foot... My name’s Jacob.

Tommy extends his oar. Jacob looks at him, wary, then takes it, allowing Tommy to pull him towards the dock.
TOMMY
No matter what your position at
Oxford, Jacob, I'm afraid you won't
make the team once the coach hears
you stole a boat. And dented it.

JACOB
But I didn't --

Tommy suddenly SMASHES his oar into Jacob's stern, the force
of the blow sending Jacob OVERBOARD. As he plunges beneath
the surface, TIME SLOWS, and INTERCUT JARRING ECU IMAGES (a
LITTLE GIRL's face, blades of grass, a welding mask...) FILL
THE FRAME at a quickening pace until we finally SMASH TO:

INT./EXT. BLACKSMITH BARN - DAY - 2008 - FLASHBACK

CLOSE ON A BOY'S FACE, staring through a window. This is ELI
(18, same actor as Jacob). Behind him, a MAN loads suitcases
in the trunk of a car, parked in front of the modest main
house. A SOCIAL WORKER holding an umbrella walks up behind
Jacob, gently nudging:

WOMAN
Should I get her?

Eli shakes his head. Reverse to see he's watching JULIA (12,
wild curly hair), inside the barn by a coal forge, holding a
welding mask. Eli moves away from the window and enters (a
sign over the door reads HENNESSY & SON BLACKSMITH).

The blacksmith shop juxtaposes old and new: antique anvils
and hammers set beside modern stamping machines. Past
projects hang on the walls. Eli walks over to his sister.

ELI
Julia... It's time.

JULIA
What about all of Dad's stuff?

ELI
They're gonna put it in storage.

Julia throws a look at the Woman and Man waiting outside...

JULIA
I'm not going with them.

ELI
We don't have a choice.

JULIA
How is that fair?

She stares up at him, as he struggles with the weight of this.
ELI
It's not.
(then)
But once I prove I can support us,
I'm gonna get custody of you. Dad
and I planned for all of this, when
he first went into the hospital...
(then)
I swore to him I'd do everything I
can to make your life good, and
happy --

JULIA
And fair?

ELI
And fair.

She concedes, putting down her father's welding mask. But she
then picks up an ORNATE KEY, one that he made, and pockets it
-- a souvenir. As they leave the shop...
EXT. BRADDOCK BOATHOUSE - HOOSIC RIVER - DAY (PRESENT)

Jacob breaks through the surface, shaking off the memory, pulling himself up onto the dock. Tommy is already walking away. On a hill, in the distance, we can see BRADDOCK COLLEGE. Tommy turns back, shouting over his shoulder:

TOMMY
Oh, and Jacob? Welcome to Braddock.

As Tommy walks off to the Boathouse, glimpse around his neck, hanging from a leather cord, that same ORNATE KEY...

Off Jacob, his expression changing completely, calming, then darkening into a look we recognize as the desire for revenge.

END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

EXT. BRADDOCK COLLEGE - MAIN QUAD - DAY

The campus is starting to wake up as STUDENTS trickle out of their dorms, heading to class. The camera GLIDES alongside them, past two centuries of Gothic-Revival architecture, immaculately manicured gardens, all indicative of the college’s 28 billion dollar endowment.

Join Jacob, still damp, walking back from the boathouse.

GIRL’S VOICE (O.C.)
Heads up!

Jacob turns, then ducks, just avoiding a FRISBEE -- which lands on the stone steps of a white marble TOMB: a pharaonic, windowless building, Greek Doric pillars protect 50 by 50 by 80 feet of pure marble, the only entrance a bronze door marked with the Skull and Key emblem. Jacob looks up at it, curious, then starts towards the frisbee when:

GIRL’S VOICE (O.C) (CONT’D)
I got it.

The frisbee thrower jogs up to retrieve her disc. It’s Phoebe Cross, who we recognize from the opening.

PHOEBE
It’s bad luck to touch the tomb if you’re not a member...

Phoebe proceeds to march up the tomb’s stairs, undeterred.

JACOB
So... you’re a member then?

PHOEBE
God no. I just don’t give a rat’s ass.

Jacob likes her honest, un-stuffy vibe. A rarity at Braddock.

JACOB
You’re in my Greek Civ class.

PHOEBE
(coy)
Am I?

JACOB
My name’s Jacob.

PHOEBE
Phoebe. You’re new here, right? Still wet behind the ears. And everywhere else it seems.
JACOB
I just went for a row, and...

PHOEBE
Maybe you should stick to land sports.

JACOB
Like frisbee?

PHOEBE
Like frisbee.

Phoebe salutes him with the disc, then trots off. Jacob takes her in for a beat, then continues to his dormitory...

INT. JACOB’S SUITE – LIVING ROOM – MOMENTS LATER

Not your average dorm: crown molding, mahogany desks, stained-glass windows, all relics of a finer era. Two ample bedrooms, one belonging to Jacob, the other to TAYLOR COLLINS (20's, well-bred over-achiever), connect to a living room where Taylor now sits by the window, sketching with charcoal.

TAYLOR
(taking in wet Jacob)
Do they not use boats at Oxford?

JACOB
I ran into Thomas Walden. Who wasn’t in the mood for a race, evidently...

TAYLOR
So you won.
(explaining)
No doubt Tommy saw you as competition.
(off Jacob’s look)
Pretentious jock. All rowers are.

Jacob smiles, appreciating the joke. As he hangs his wet clothes near the radiator, casually:

JACOB
If that’s your opinion, I take it you won’t be at the alumni regatta.

TAYLOR
Oh I will. But not to watch the race.

JACOB
Girls?

TAYLOR
Politics.
(then)
(MORE)
Tomorrow’s one of those days we’ll look back on, 20 years from now, and be able to say we saw President Walden row at our alma mater.

JACOB
By President Walden, you mean--

TAYLOR
Tommy’s father. The Senator. He’s running in 2016...? You don’t vote here, so I’ll give you a pass.

JACOB
The current President is alumni as well, isn’t he?

TAYLOR
It’s true. Braddock produces the kings of this country. (puts away his sketchbook) Someday you’ll be able to say your old roommate is one of them.

JACOB
And you say rowers are pretentious...

Taylor smiles slyly, then exits with his satchel for class. Off a slyer Jacob, taking all of this in...

INT. DEAN’S HOUSE - DEAN’S STUDY - DAY

A spare, well-appointed room. Dean Vandermeer is ON HIS CELL, as he gathers his things, preparing for the day...

DEAN VANDERMEER (ON PHONE)
This could only happen to you...

(then)
Not 24 hours before a vote on the largest appropriations bill in US history, and you’re suddenly best friends with your Senate nemesis --

SENATOR WALDEN (PRELAP)
What can I say?

EXT. WALDEN CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS - DAY - INTERCUT

The quaint storefronts of downtown Stonebridge (Main St. USA). Find Senator Walden stepping out of his car (assisted by his DRIVER), talking ON HIS CELL:
SENATOR WALDEN (ON PHONE)
I was at Union Station, getting my shoes shined, and he just sat right down. Most productive 15 minutes Congress has had all year.

The Senator greets a few TOWN FOLK, walking past them into:

INT. WALDEN CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS - BULLPEN - DAY - INTERCUT

In every direction there’s WALDEN 2016 paraphernalia. It’s even painted across the ping-pong table in the corner, but the VOLUNTEERS are too busy to play.

DEAN VANDERMEER (ON PHONE)
You’re the luckiest bastard I know.

SENATOR WALDEN (ON PHONE)
You know what Lincoln said about luck: “The harder I work, the more I have of it.”

DEAN VANDERMEER (ON PHONE)
That was Jefferson. You should know your Presidential quotes; they’ll nail you for that on the campaign trail.

Walden chuckles, unfazed, unflappable -- you can see why he succeeds in politics. Stuff just rolls off his back.

SENATOR WALDEN (ON PHONE)
Let’s just hope my good fortune holds out for the regatta. My PR team’s counting on a victory.

DEAN VANDERMEER (ON PHONE)
Then you shouldn’t tell them it’s tradition to let the alumni win.

SENATOR WALDEN (ON PHONE)
Does my son realize that? You know how he is.

Maeve leans against the door of the study, peering in...

DEAN VANDERMEER (ON PHONE)
I do. In fact, I used to have a roommate just like him.
(smiles, as he hangs up)
See you tomorrow.

MAEVE
Was that Adam?

DEAN VANDERMEER
It was.
MAEVE
Did you ask him?

As Maeve grabs her bag and keys from the den, the Dean joins her, walking and talking on the way to the front door.

DEAN VANDERMEER
I told you. It’s delicate.

MAEVE
Why? He needs a running mate, and you’re a solid choice...

DEAN VANDERMEER
A single term in the House hardly qualifies me for the Vice-Presidency--

MAEVE
It’s not about qualifications, it’s about connections. You know that. (then)
You have to take what you want, Simon.

DEAN VANDERMEER
Does that include you?

He caresses her shoulder, catching her off-guard. With a smile, she avoids his advances:

MAEVE
Save it for the inauguration.

Maeve gives him a sterile peck, then opens the door...

EXT. DEAN’S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

As Maeve walks out, the Dean behind her, reveal the stately mansion on its sprawling estate. Anna is jogging up the driveway, taking out her earbuds. Maeve smiles to see her:

MAEVE
I thought you were still in bed.

ANNA
I was tossing since five, so I ran the trails.

DEAN VANDERMEER
Wake me next time. I’ll join you.

MAEVE
Anna, sweetheart, if you’re not sleeping, you should see your therapist --
ANNA
You promised if I moved back in, you wouldn’t nag.

DEAN VANDERMEER
It’s true, you did.

MAEVE
I know. But if you’re this stressed so early in the year, maybe you should drop an extracurricular... Or step down from the society --

DEAN VANDERMEER
That’s unnecessary. Not to mention unprecedented. She’s a senior. She can handle it.

ANNA
And I promise to speak up this time if I can’t.

As Anna escapes inside, Maeve shoots a look at the Dean, pulling out her keys. As they go to their separate cars...

OMITTED

INT. BRADDOCK CLASSROOM HALLWAY - DAY

Jacob walks to class, passing a few STUDENTS and TAs, milling about. He stops when he notices a wall of PAINTINGS. One in particular catches his eye: a still life of various objects... Jacob sees a typed card under the painting: Julia Hennessy. The name lands on him, triggering:

EXT. BUS STATION - MORNING - FLASHBACK

Late summer. A few COMMUTERS, as well as KIDS heading to college, a couple FAMILIES linger saying goodbyes. Entering the station, find JULIA (18, that same wild, curly hair), a Braddock sweatshirt underneath her coat, the ORNATE KEY around her neck. She smiles at ELI (25, the actor who plays Jacob, hard to recognize underneath scruffy hair and beard).

ELI
Julia, wait, do you have your ticket?

JULIA
Right here.

Eli checks his pockets, he seems anxious.

ELI
And what about the baggage ticket. Did they give that to me, or --?
JULIA
I have it. I have everything, Eli.
I'm all set.

ELI
Alright, well I'm not...

Eli smiles sadly, then glances at a nearby family. A normal one with parents and siblings. A reminder of what's missing.

ELI (CONT'D)
Dad would've been better at this...
He'd probably want me to remind you you're the first Hennessy to go to college.

JULIA
Ha. No pressure.
(Eli laughs; emotions are welling)
None of this happens without you.

ELI
You're the one who earned a full ride to Braddock. Hell, I barely saved enough for you to do two years at State.

JULIA
Maybe now you can enroll.
(off Eli, skeptical)
You're twice the artist I am, and you have time now that you don't have me to worry about anymore.

ELI
You kidding? Until you graduate, get married, and your paintings are hanging in the Met, I'm not taking my eyes off you.

JULIA
I love you, Eli.

She hugs Eli tight, and long. Trying to keep it together:

ELI
Love you, too.
(then)
Stay outta trouble, alright? Go.

Julia climbs up onto the bus, giving Eli a last wave before disappearing inside. Off Eli, filled with pride --

INT. BRADDOCK CLASSROOM HALLWAY - DAY (PRESENT)

Jacob stares at the painting, lost in the memory, when:
WOMAN’S VOICE (O.C.)
I couldn’t bring myself to take it down.

He turns to see Maeve, just arriving for work...

MAEVE
Did you know her?

It’s so difficult for him to deny a connection to his own sister... He manages to cover enough to shake his head “no.”

JACOB
No...but I read about her murder.

MAEVE
It affected all of us. Deeply...
And how unexpectedly profound that this was her last work.

Jacob looks at the painting again: a Mark Ryden-esque STILL LIFE littered with various objects in realistic detail: a toy skull, a dollar bill, a few soap bubbles flying about, and that familiar IRON KEY hanging in the background.

MAEVE (CONT’D)
Her modern take on a vanitas.

JACOB
I see that. Allegories for the fleeting nature of time, the triviality of earthly pursuits.
(he subtly fishes)
But the key seems anachronistic, no?

Upon mention of the key, worry flashes across her face, but Maeve manages to cover with a smile:

MAEVE
I didn’t catch your name.

JACOB
Jacob Darlow. Pleased to meet you.

MAEVE
Well, Jacob, if you’re trying to impress me, you’ve succeeded.
(off his look)
But unfortunately, my class is full. Try the waitlist.

Off that, she retreats into her studio. Jacob watches after her for a beat, then goes into:
INT. GREEK CIVILIZATIONS CLASSROOM - DAY

A small seminar taught by PROFESSOR BEN WHEELER (30's, his appearance is decidedly more casual than most at Braddock). A PROJECTION of the PARTHENON illuminates the wall. As he flips through images of other temples, Jacob slips in, taking a seat near Phoebe (frisbee girl). She ignores him. Sort of.

BEN
The Doric columns of these temples communicated strength, their massive size commanded attention, making the outsider desperate to know: What happens in there?

PHOEBE
(a dry joke)
Human sacrifice?

Ben smiles. That’s the kind of class this is -- free flowing, lots of back and forth.

BEN
Not on the inside. Don’t slay where you pray, Ms. Cross.

After Ben Wheeler switches the slide --

JACOB
That one looks quite similar to the tomb by Eckert Hall, doesn’t it?

Ben looks at Jacob, curious. Jacob explains:

JACOB (CONT’D)
It was one of the first things I noticed when I arrived on campus.

BEN
And I’ll bet it made you wonder. (off Jacob’s nod)

Exactly. The architects of collegiate “secret” societies followed the Ancient Greek playbook. By placing their “temples” in plain sight, they draw attention to the elite few allowed to enter. Isn’t that right, Mr. Greer?

He levels his gaze at a student, PETE GREER (20’s), who smirks at being singled out. Takes a kind of pride in it.

BEN (CONT’D)
Because exclusivity breeds curiosity. And curiosity is the mightiest tool of any cult.

That word lands on Greer, who plays it off with a smile:
GREER
There are a lot of attorneys in that “cult,” Mr. Wheeler. I’d be careful with your categorizations.

Ben smiles, knowing he’s gotten under the kid’s skin.

BEN
Withdrawn... I just tend to distrust any group which conceals their proceedings so vigorously.

Before Greer can retort, Jacob steps up in his defense:

JACOB
But you can’t deny the importance of secrecy. Georg Simmel defined it as the basis for all relationships. Without secrets there is no trust.

This lands on Pete Greer, who seems impressed. Ben isn’t.

BEN
Welcome to the conversation, Oxford. Sounds like you’re perfect material for Tap Night. For the rest of you, at least the juniors who find yourselves caught up in the bacchanalia, just remember: fools rush in.

As Ben flips to the next slide, RACK FOCUS from Jacob to Phoebe, who’s taking in this new boy with great curiosity...

EXT. BRADDOCK COLLEGE - MAIN QUAD - DAY

Tommy walks across the quad with Anna.

TOMMY
I thought you’d be living on campus this year.

ANNA
You know my mother... She just wants to make sure I’m okay.

TOMMY
Are you?

Just then, Greer approaches, already talking to Anna:

GREER
Before you say no, just hear me out. I’ve been watching this guy in Wheeler’s class... He’s a transfer. From Oxford.
Greer presents his iPhone, pulling up a PHOTO of Jacob: he’s flashing his winning smile, in front of Christ Church, wearing an Oxford crew sweater.

ANNA
He’s cute...

TOMMY
Yeah, I met him. Not impressed.

Tommy’s phone RINGS. The caller ID reads: Dean Vandermeer. Tommy holds it up so she can see.

TOMMY (CONT’D)
Why’s your dad calling me?

Anna shrugs. Tommy steps away to answer it. Greer continues, swiping through his phone, past other students’ bios, photos.

GREER
Anna, I need you to second this guy. He could replace one of our subpar nominations -- like Collins.

Greer pulls up Taylor’s PHOTO (Jacob’s roommate).

ANNA
Wait -- Why Collins?

GREER
There’s just something about him, I dunno... He’s too eager.
(then)
But this guy Darlow? I looked into him. His transcript’s immaculate, and his pedigree -- the guy’s actually descended from British royalty.

ANNA
So is Prince Harry. Look, we already voted. And we had a hard enough time finding people that met all the requirements --

GREER
But this guy does, I just need someone to second him...

As Anna walks off towards the Skull & Key tomb, Pete on her tail, reveal an OMINOUS POV watching...

ANNA
Well, it won’t be me.
As Anna and Greer disappear inside the tomb, reveal the POV belongs to Jacob, who’s eavesdropping with the help of a small directional mic from the open window of his suite...

INT. JACOB’S SUITE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jacob’s cell buzzes next to him with the mysterious CALLER ID: “DOC-585.” He turns away from the window, putting away the mic, as he answers the phone in his American accent.

JACOB
Just got some news you might be interested in.

BRITISH WOMAN (THROUGH PHONE)
Really. Made some friends, I take it?

Jacob takes out a small black book... Embossed in gold are the words: SKULL AND KEY CLASS OF 2017. Inside are black and white portraits, the first is of Tommy (“Actaeon”). Then Greer (“Achilles”), Anna (“Echo”)...

JACOB
One, at least...

He looks at Greer’s photo in the book, then:

JACOB (CONT’D)
One more, I’m good to go.

BRITISH WOMAN (THROUGH PHONE)
Thomas Walden?

Jacob taps Tommy Walden’s photo in the book with his pen.

JACOB
...That’s the idea.

BRITISH WOMAN (THROUGH PHONE)
You sound uncertain.

JACOB
Just haven’t figured out how to land him.

BRITISH WOMAN (THROUGH PHONE)
Once you do, you’re in. If not, if you miss your shot at this, Eli, everything you’ve worked for --

JACOB
I know. But first things first...
Jacob hears the door open to the suite. He peeks through his cracked door and sees Taylor entering and searching the room.

JACOB (CONT’D)
I need to eliminate the competition.

Jacob hangs up the phone, as Taylor approaches.

TAYLOR
Hey -- you haven’t seen my sketchbook, have you?

JACOB
No... Want me to help look?

TAYLOR
That’s alright. I swear I threw it in my bag this morning...

After Taylor moves on, Jacob tosses the book into his duffle, where it lands next to Taylor’s sketchpad. Off Jacob, zipping up the duffle...

END OF ACT TWO
ACT THREE

EXT. BRADDOCK COLLEGE - SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT - DAY

One of the older buildings on campus that houses the Political Science department, as well as the Dean’s office...

INT. SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT - DEAN’S OFFICE - DAY

The Dean sits at his desk, flipping through an APPLICATION and transcripts. Across from him sits RUBY LEANDROS (17) and her dad, ALEX LEANDROS (45). Ruby is overly made-up. Alex is tan and shares his daughter’s affinity for hair product. They wear expensive, albeit tasteless, clothes.

DEAN VANDERMEER
It’s certainly clear from Ruby’s application that she’s a very well-rounded young lady. Poetry, horseback riding, your own fashion line --

RUBY
And I create my own make-up.

DEAN VANDERMEER
I see that.
(smiles, closing the file)
Mr. Leandros, I know you’re an old friend of my wife’s --

ALEX
We grew up two blocks away from each other. In Medford.

DEAN VANDERMEER
And I do respect the ties that bind. Unfortunately, this is about numbers, and while Ruby’s extracurriculars are... impressive, 98% of our freshmen were in the top 10% of their high school class.

Alex takes this in, impassive.

ALEX
Sweetheart, give us a minute.

Ruby smiles politely at the Dean, then leaves.

ALEX (CONT’D)
Something you should know about me...

He takes a pen from his coat and grabs a buckslip from the Dean’s desk. He writes on it as he talks.
ALEX (CONT'D)
I’m an optimist. I believe where there’s a will, there’s a way...
(slides the buckslip across)
...and I have a lot of will.

The Dean looks down at the buckslip. Considers it.

DEAN VANDERMEER
Actually, I do know that about you.
(picking up the note)
I also know how you’ve earned it...
Your list of “extracurriculars” is as long as your daughter’s.

Alex’s smile fades; Dean just stepped onto dangerous terrain.

ALEX
* Maeve seemed to think we could work something out...

DEAN VANDERMEER
*takes that in, then*
Like you, she’s inclined to optimism. But the fact is I have to protect the reputation of this college, and you present a risk we can’t afford to take... no matter what the price.

ALEX
That’s unfortunate.

A KNOCK on the door as Tommy enters. The Dean stands, to Alex:

DEAN VANDERMEER
I’ll tell my wife you said hello.

Alex leaves, indignant. The Dean waves Tommy in.

DEAN VANDERMEER (CONT'D)
Come in, Tommy. Are you ready for the regatta?

TOMMY
Been shaving off minutes all summer.

DEAN VANDERMEER
But you know tomorrow isn’t about winning...
(off his look)
It’s about the alumni.

TOMMY
And you want me to throw the race.
DEAN VANDERMEER
It’s tradition.

TOMMY
Well, my team and I think we should start a new one.
DEAN VANDERMEER
Thomas. Maybe you don’t realize
this, or perhaps it’s your intent,
but if you break a one-hundred-and-
twenty-year-old tradition, in a
race that happens to be against
your father, people will see it as
you trying to humiliate him.
(off Tommy’s look)
Is that what you really want?

Off a brooding Tommy, considering how to best answer that...

INT. JACOB’S SUITE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jacob throws his duffle over his shoulder as he walks towards
the door, but right when he gets there, it opens. He’s
startled to see Anna, letting herself in with a key. She’s
equally surprised to see him, recognizing him from his photo.

ANNA
Oh. I’m sorry, I was looking for --

JACOB
Sorry, who are you, and why do you
have a key to this room?

Taylor rushes out of his bedroom, introducing Jacob:

TAYLOR
Jacob, Anna. I gave her the key.
She lives off campus, so she needs
a place to hang --

JACOB
I’m not really comfortable with that.
(clocking her look to Taylor)
You understand, I’m sure.

Anna eyes Taylor. Okay... Annoyed, she hands over her key.

ANNA
It’s all yours.

JACOB
Thanks. Cheers.

And off that, Jacob goes. Taylor closes the door behind him.

TAYLOR
So that’s my roommate.

ANNA
I thought you were rooming with Dave?
TAYLOR
Housing claimed they never got my request. Dave didn’t mind, he got a single. And I got Harry Potter.

ANNA
I have news at least. We chose the new members...
(off Taylor’s look)
You’re in.

TAYLOR
And you’re absolutely amazing...

He pulls her close, KISSING her. Evidently they’re a thing. A hot, messy thing. As clothes are shed, heading to his room:

ANNA
What about Jacob? Think he bought your lie? Because if the other members knew we were dating --

TAYLOR
That’s not the only reason you nominated me, is it? Not that I mind being objectified...

ANNA
You just have to do one thing for me when they tap you tomorrow night.
(off his look)
Act surprised.

Off Taylor’s smile, as he closes them inside his room...

INT. WALDEN CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

An INTERVIEWER (30’s) records Walden as she asks questions, his Personal Aide, GEENA (20’s), seated nearby.

INTERVIEWER
And for your headquarters, you chose The Berkshires...

SENATOR WALDEN
It’s peaceful here, allows us to focus on the task at hand. Plus, it’s where my son attends school. Nothing’s more important to me than family. How’s Samantha getting on at Vassar?

The Interviewer nods, impressed by his recall.
INTERVIEWER
Well. Thank you... Rumor has it you
gave the appropriations bill a little
spit and polish with Senator Goring
yesterday. Strange bedfellows.

SENATOR WALDEN
You know me, I detest these
partisan stalemates. So I crossed
the aisle and shook hands.

INTERVIEWER
Word is a $34 million pet project,
the building of an asphalt
reclamation plant, snuck its way
into the bill after that handshake.

Senator Walden blanches slightly, but recovers well --

SENATOR WALDEN
My state needs that plant. With it,
we’ll build better, safer roads for
decades to come. That’s taxpayer
money well spent.

INTERVIEWER
I wonder if the President will
agree with you.

Outside the hall window, Tommy arrives. Walden takes the out:

SENATOR WALDEN
I’ll give you his number. You can ask
him. If you’ll excuse me, my son’s
here. Like I said, family first.

The Senator blasts out of the conference room, his Aide
struggling to keep up pace.

SENATOR WALDEN (CONT’D)
I need you to find a replacement.

GEENA
For who?

SENATOR WALDEN
You. Preferably someone who can
keep their mouth shut.
   (off the Aide’s surprise)
You were the only staffer within
spitting distance of that deal.

GEENA
Sir --
SENATOR WALDEN
If the President vetoes that project, 20,000 jobs go with it. Lives are at stake, including yours if you don’t get out of my sight.
(walking past Tommy)
What do you want?

The Senator continues into his office without stopping...

INT. WALDEN CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS - WALDEN’S OFFICE - DAY

Tommy follows his father inside, closing the door.

TOMMY
Bad time?

SENATOR WALDEN
Glorious. What brings you here?

It’s not like Tommy expected a warm welcome, but still.

TOMMY
Thought I’d cut out the middleman. Vandermeer said I’m supposed to lose the race tomorrow.

SENATOR WALDEN
I didn’t ask him to do that...

TOMMY
Of course not. You like to keep your hands clean.

SENATOR WALDEN
Listen. I don’t know what Vandy said, but if you want to win, go ahead. I couldn’t care less.

Sadly, that answer’s worse than the one Tommy expected.

TOMMY
Would you care if we wagered on it? Keysmen are gamblers, right?
(off his look)
If you win, I’ll donate half of my trust to your campaign. No strings.

That lands on the Senator, who we think will say no way, but:

SENATOR WALDEN
And if I lose?

TOMMY
You’ll hire me onto your staff. Seems you need some help.
SENATOR WALDEN

Do you know how much my staffers make?

TOMMY

I wouldn’t be doing it for the money. I want to go into politics.

SENATOR WALDEN

Follow in the old man’s footsteps?

Tommy nods, thinks he’s getting traction. With mild disdain:

SENATOR WALDEN (CONT’D)

You remind me of your grandfather. He preferred the path of least resistance. When I was your age he insisted I take a job at his bank. I quit after a month.

TOMMY

Why?

SENATOR WALDEN

Because everyone treated me like the boss’s son. Including the boss. I chose the hard road, Tommy. Now I’m taking it straight to the White House. I’m telling you, there’s nothing more satisfying than carving out your own path.

TOMMY

This is my path. You just happen to be standing on it. (then) See you at the races.

Tommy exits. Off the Senator as he takes a moment to steel himself before heading out to the bullpen...

OMITTED

25

A26

INT. BRADDOCK STUDENT CENTER - NIGHT

A grand room with exposed wooden beams. STUDENTS are grouped together, some studying, some hooking up, but one sits alone by a window: Jacob, books splayed out in front of him, a guise for what he’s really studying -- outside, across the quad, Maeve stands by the library, waiting for someone...

BEN

Hey, Oxford. If you’re trying to avail yourself for tap night, you realize it’s tomorrow.
JACOB
Thanks for that, Professor Wheeler...
BEN
It’s Ben... Not every day someone drops a Georg Simmel reference. I take it you studied sociology across the pond?

JACOB

BEN
Well, I have a soft spot for Simmel. One of my colleagues published extensively on his work; in fact, there’s an article you might enjoy --

JACOB
Who was your colleague?

BEN
(tentative, then)
Radha Nayar.

JACOB
Ah. I’ve certainly heard of her...

BEN
(a bit defensive)
Too bad you didn’t get to take her class. She’s brilliant.

JACOB
Psychopaths usually are.

Jacob gauges how this lands on Ben, whose hackles rise.

BEN
Don’t believe everything you hear. I’ll send you that article.

Ben turns to go. Jacob stops him:

JACOB
Professor Wheeler... Ben.
(as Ben turns back)
You don’t think she killed Julia Hennessy?

BEN
That’s not a popular opinion around here. So I keep it to myself.

JACOB
I thought you didn’t believe in secrecy?
They exchange a small smile. A thaw. After Ben clears, Jacob looks back to Maeve looking at her phone, headed to the art studio. Jacob packs up his books, follows at a distance. As she disappears, Jacob quickens his pace. A figure in a BLACK HOODIE comes SPRINTING around the corner, running into Jacob, the collision sending Hoodie to the ground.

JACOB (CONT’D)
Are you okay?

He extends his hand, realizing it’s Phoebe, her curls falling out of her hoodie.

JACOB (CONT’D)
Phoebe, isn’t it?

She rejects his hand, scurrying to stand.

PHOEBE
Watch where you’re going.

She takes off. He looks down to see she dropped A CAN OF SPRAYPAINT. He picks it up, wondering what it means, until he sees the TOMB, GRAFFITIED with vaguely Satanic images and the words: SKULL & KRIMINALS. Off Jacob, realizing he’s not the only one with a bone to pick, as he slides the spraypaint can into his bag...

INT. ART STUDIO - NIGHT

The normally light-filled space is cast in shadow, a single lamp near the door the only glow. Find Taylor digging around in drawers, through shelves, looking for something, when:

WOMAN’S VOICE (O.C.)
Can I help you?

He turns to see Maeve, surprised he’s not alone.

TAYLOR
Did you get my text? I can’t find my sketchbook...

MAEVE
I thought I gave it back after class.

TAYLOR
Me too...

Taylor stops at a shelf where a newly fired Grecian Amphora (handled vase) sits. He runs his finger over the glaze...

TAYLOR (CONT’D)
These are new...
MAEVE
Not my best.

TAYLOR
No one sees how talented you are.
Including you.

His sincerity melts her... but she tries to hide it.

MAEVE
Why did you really call me here, Taylor?

He looks at her, wary, but compelled to admit:

TAYLOR
I think I’m getting selected for Skull and Key.

MAEVE
(a beat, concerned)
What makes you think that?

TAYLOR
A friend let it slip...

MAEVE
You know once you’re in, they’ll pressure you to divulge everything.
No secrets between you and your pledge mates...

TAYLOR
I get it. You’re worried. Your daughter’s a member, isn’t she? I know your husband is. I can promise you: I’ll never tell them.

He reaches out, caressing her shoulder. And we realize Anna isn’t the only Vandermeer he’s sleeping with...

TAYLOR (CONT’D)
Or if it makes you uneasy, we can finally end this...

She looks at him sadly, pulling away, then goes to the door. But instead of leaving, she locks it. She turns out the lamp, plunging the room into shadow, returning to Taylor:

MAEVE
Not tonight.
She unzips her dress. As it falls to the ground, he leans her against the table -- and the CAMERA PULLS BACK, into the hallway, to REVEAL Jacob, capturing this torrid affair on his iPHONE, through a slit in the blinds...

END OF ACT THREE
ACT FOUR

EXT. BRADDOCK BOATHOUSE - HOOSIC RIVER - DAY

The first regatta of the year. A banner reads: Welcome Alumni Crew! The camera glides along the banks, through the crowd of STUDENTS, FACULTY, and ALUMS reuniting. Find Jacob kneeling by the water, washing off his hand to remove what looks like black soot... After a beat, he hears Taylor:

TAYLOR
Considering another swim?

JACOB
(stands, drying his hands)
I’m good, Mate. Where are you standing?

TAYLOR
We’re just over there. C’mon.

Taylor leads Jacob through the crowd to a group of his buddies, Anna among them.

TAYLOR (CONT’D)
You remember my friend Anna...

JACOB
Yes, sorry if I came off a bit uptight. About the room key.

ANNA
I get it. It’s your space, and you don’t know me from a psycho-killer.

JACOB
Not yet, anyway.

He flashes his smile. She returns it, missing the innuendo.

TAYLOR
Some turnout, huh?

JACOB
Did I just see Blake Wells walk by?

TAYLOR
Two-time Olympian and today’s powerhouse in the alumni boat.

Just then, the crowd starts to CHEER and APPLAUD. Jacob turns to see Senator Walden, followed by SECURITY, arriving at the boathouse in crew uniform, waving to the crowd, ever the politician. Through Jacob’s POV, we watch as the Dean approaches Walden, clasping his hand to welcome him home. Jacob points to the Dean:
Adam Walden, I take it. And who’s that with him? Is he important?

I wouldn’t go that far...

That’s her dad. Dean of the college. You haven’t met him yet?

Off Jacob eyeing the Dean, ANGLE ON: Adam waving to REPORTERS and CAMERAS, Simon beside him, relishing the spotlight.

All this just for a scrimmage. Hats off to your PR team.

Feels like yesterday, doesn’t it? We thought we were kings, irreverent, yet secretly terrified we’d never make anything of ourselves, that we’d never get out of this place...

And look at you now.

Dad, can I introduce you to someone?

The Dean turns to see Anna with Jacob in tow.

This is Jacob Darlow. New junior, by way of Oxford.

Dean Vandermeer.

Jacob extends his hand and the Dean takes it, dismissing Jacob’s overly firm grip as ambitious...

Jacob, I remember your transfer request. Top of your class, member of the Oxford Union -- yet you left it all behind to come here. I’m curious why you chose us?

Short answer?

I wasn’t satisfied.
Before the Dean can follow up, an irate Tommy comes barreling out of the Boathouse straight over to the Dean...

ANNA
Tommy? What’s wrong?
TOMMY
(to the Dean)
Did you put our powerhouse on
probation?
(off his look)
Mike Cianfrani. He said you accused
him of vandalizing school property.

DEAN VANDERMEER
He defaced the tomb last night.

TOMMY
He says he didn’t --

DEAN VANDERMEER
His RA found the paint-can in his room.

On Jacob, whose very small smile indicates he’s responsible.

TOMMY
You set him up to sabotage my team,
didn’t you?

SENATOR WALDEN
That’s ridiculous, Tommy --

DEAN VANDERMEER
Take solace in the fact that today
isn’t about winning. As we discussed.
Good thing too since you’ll be hard
pressed to find an alt.

Tommy’s eyes land on Jacob. Reluctantly:

TOMMY
You said you rowed 7th at Oxford?

Jacob nods, feigning surprise: what are the odds?

TOMMY (CONT’D)
Consider this your tryout then.

Tommy turns to the Dean: It’s on. Then to his father:

TOMMY (CONT’D)
May the best man win.

The Senator shakes his head at his son’s irreverence. As
Tommy heads to the boathouse, off Jacob, following a step
behind...

SMASH TO:
EXT. BRADDOCK BOATHOUSE - HOOSIC RIVER - DAY

A BIRD’S EYE VIEW floats down the river to find the two 8-men boats in position, ready to race. The Senator (8th) is in the alumni boat, while Tommy is 8th in the student’s boat, Jacob in front of him (7th). We clock Taylor, Anna, and the Dean watching on from their spots. Jacob steels himself as:

The GUN FIRES, and the two boats shoot off from the dock, accelerating quickly. As the COXSWAINS YELL commands and the rowers row, Jacob focuses, determined to win the race and win over Tommy. As the din of the CHEERING CROWD crescendos, Jacob closes his eyes, concentrating, remembering, as we INTERCUT the first few moments of this race with --

EXT. WINDING COUNTRY ROAD - DAY - FLASHBACK - INTERCUT

Eli (his beard more unkempt now) races down the road in his beat up truck, concentrating, disturbed. It's clear something is very wrong... He jumps when his cell rings, answering:

ELI
Hello?

BRITISH WOMAN (THROUGH PHONE)
Is this Eli?

ELI
Yeah, who’s this?

BRITISH WOMAN (THROUGH PHONE)
My name is Radha Nayar. Your sister was my student. Are you at the river?

ELI
(confused)
Not yet... they just called me -- What’s going on? Did they find her?

BRITISH WOMAN (THROUGH PHONE)
I need you to trust me... I didn’t do it --

ELI
Didn’t do what --

BRITISH WOMAN (THROUGH PHONE)
And I know who was with her the night she disappeared --

ELI
Who? What do you know?
BRITISH WOMAN (THROUGH PHONE)
More than I have time to tell you.
I’m sending you something. Keep it
safe. No one can know we spoke --

ELI
I don’t understand --

BRITISH WOMAN (THROUGH PHONE)
I know. And I’m sorry.
(then)
I’m so sorry, Eli.
Just then, Eli arrives at his destination --

EXT. BRADDOCK BOATHOUSE - CONTINUOUS - FLASHBACK

The same familiar stretch of river by Braddock. Police cars are gathered, LIGHTS flashing, yellow tape sectioning off an area by the bank, holding back curious STUDENTS and FACULTY. Eli jumps out of his car, pushing through the crowd to see the OFFICERS inspecting a BODY at the river's edge...

Eli's world crashes down as he sees it's Julia; as he breaks through the tape, several COPS rush to hold him back.

ELI

Let me go! Let me go, that's my sister!!

Eli's WORLD GOES INTO SLOW MOTION as he looks around the crowd, paranoid, wondering if what the mysterious caller said was true -- did one of these people do this? He clocks the Dean, walking towards him; Anna in the crowd of students, on the verge of her own breakdown; Tommy by her side, consoling her; a steely-eyed Maeve watching her husband's every move. Eli clocks an FBI AGENT leaning over his sister, subtly inspecting something around her neck... Just then, the Dean steps in front of Eli, offering a brief condolence:

DEAN VANDERMEER

I'm sorry for your loss. Let us know if there's anything we can do.

Over the Dean's shoulder, Eli sees the FBI Agent signal the CORONER to inspect the body. As the Dean rejoins them, the Agent furtively hands him the pilfered object. From a distance, it looks like a necklace: Julia's key. As a devastated, reeling Eli eyes the Dean...

EXT. BRADDOCK BOATHOUSE - HOOSIC RIVER - DAY (PRESENT)

As the memory fades, tears of anger roll down Jacob's cheeks, or maybe it's sweat from the struggle of the race... As they reach the finish line, he looks across to see they've beaten the alumni boat by a good six feet.

Tommy tries to catch his father's eye, but the Senator doesn't look over. The other ALUM ROWERS, however, cast a few scornful glances, wondering why the students broke tradition. Tommy claps Jacob on the back, relishing the moment. Off Jacob, trying to reconcile his past with his present, as he closes his eyes... The sound of APPLAUSE transitions us to:
Jacob opens his eyes, and we reverse to see a private reception for the rowers (cleaned up and in their crew blazers). The student rowers walk down a receiving line, shaking hands with the Alumni.
As Jacob and Tommy make their way down the line:

TOMMY
Thanks for helping me buck tradition.

JACOB
Of course. “Customs curtsy to great kings.”

Tommy smiles. As they continue down the line, we go to Maeve, as Sylvia (the Senator’s wife) sidles up to her:

SYLVIA
Thanks for hosting, Maeve. I don’t know how you pull it off every year. I’ve already gone through three different planners for New Year’s at Buck Island. You’ll be there, won’t you?

MAEVE
It’s on my calendar.

Sylvia continues down the steps as Tommy reaches his dad. She kisses his cheek, then moves on. The Senator extends his hand to Tommy, who warily takes it.

SENATOR WALDEN
Congratulations.

TOMMY
Thanks... Guess I won our bet.

SENATOR WALDEN
(sincerely)
You did. We’ll talk about it.
(Tommy grins, satisfied)
And -- Jacob, was it? Jumping in last minute and keeping that pace -- I bet Oxford misses you.

JACOB
I doubt they’ll even notice I’m gone.

Jacob flashes a smile. The Senator shakes his hand, then moves on to greet the Dean.
DEAN VANDERMEER
Well, if you were going to lose a race, I’d rather it be that one.

SENATOR WALDEN
(smiles, then)
You don’t happen to know anyone available to be my Personal Aide?

DEAN VANDERMEER
What happened to Geena?

SENATOR WALDEN
I think she was a tracker. Probably working for Campbell.

LORRAINE BRADLEY (50’s, Alum) crosses through, greeting Adam.

LORRAINE
Adam. I was just telling my husband I might vote Democratic next year. Just so I can say I knew you when.

SENATOR WALDEN
You don’t already?

LORRAINE
Good luck. To both of you.

The Senator looks over at Vandermeer, the cat who ate the canary. Lorraine clocks this, explaining:

LORRAINE (CONT’D)
Maeve said Simon may join your ticket.

SENATOR WALDEN
(smiles politely, then)
Thanks for your support, Lorraine.

As she goes, the Senator turns to Vandermeer, baffled:

SENATOR WALDEN (CONT’D)
Is that what you two are telling people?

DEAN VANDERMEER
I’m not. But it isn’t the most outlandish idea...

SENATOR WALDEN
Isn’t it? You’re... unseasoned.
(before Dean can retort)
Not to mention, we’re from the same state --
DEAN VANDERMEER
Well, I still have a house in Virginia.
I could relocate. Cheney did.

SENATOR WALDEN
So you have thought this through...

DEAN VANDERMEER
You need someone to watch your back,
Adam. And no one does that better than
me. We used to make quite a team...

Adam assesses the situation and diplomatically addresses it:

SENATOR WALDEN
There’s six months before I have to
make a decision. So let’s not dress
the deer before we shoot it.
(starts to walk away, then
turns back)
And thank Maeve for inviting her
friend... Alex Leandros?

The Dean follows the Senator’s gaze to see Leandros and Ruby,
mingling. Leandros shoots a small smile at the Dean.

SENATOR WALDEN (CONT’D)
He just promised me a contribution
that’ll cover my entire ad budget.

Adam walks away. Off an irked Simon, afraid he knows what
that’s about... Pan to find Jacob, meandering towards:

JACOB
Anna. So, funny thing. I think I
locked myself out of my room...
(off her look)
Ironic, isn’t it?

ANNA
Because if you hadn’t taken my --

JACOB
Key. I know.

ANNA
Good thing Taylor has his.

JACOB
I think he left...

Jacob shoots a look down the hall, towards the mudroom --
leading Anna to follow his gaze, spotting Taylor’s satchel.

ANNA
No, his bag’s still here.
Anna crosses to it, digging around inside for the keys.

ANNA (CONT’D)
Just don’t lose them.

As she hands the keys to Jacob, something in the bag catches her eye. Taylor's SKETCHBOOK...
It’s partially opened to a drawing. A NUDE. Anna smiles, thinking it’s her, but as she pulls it out, her smile fades. Just then, a cheerful Taylor appears, seeing this:

**TAYLOR**
Hey. Where the hell d’ya find that?

Anna looks up at him, disgusted, unable to speak. She takes the book, blowing past him to the backyard...

**EXT. DEAN’S HOUSE - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS**

Anna rushes to Maeve who, seeing her distress, excuses herself from her conversation. Anna thrusts the sketchbook into Maeve’s hands. As the Dean joins them...

**MAEVE**
What’s wrong? What is this?

**ANNA**
You tell me. Independent study?

Maeve opens it. REVEAL the sketches are clearly of her...

**DEAN VANDERMEER**
Who drew these?

Maeve pales, closing the book quickly, revealing the name on the cover: Taylor Collins.

**ANNA**
My boyfriend.

This is news to Maeve who looks ashen...

**MAEVE**
You’re dating Taylor Collins? Since when?

**ANNA**
This summer.

**DEAN VANDERMEER**
Tell me this isn’t happening...

**ANNA**
Did he ask you to pose for these? Or was it your idea?

**MAEVE**
Anna, I had no idea...

**ANNA**
Oh my god. You slept with him.
Maeve looks down, unable to lie, her face burning in shame as curious onlookers begin to notice the drama, whispering...

DEAN VANDERMEER
Let’s take this inside, shall we?

Just then, Taylor enters, searching for Anna. He stops in his tracks when he sees Maeve’s sorrowful expression.

As Maeve flees into the house, followed by the Dean, a livid Anna rushes over to Taylor, grabbing a FORK off a nearby table, and before anyone can react --

ANNA
You son-of-a-bitch!

She plunges it towards Taylor’s chest -- when a lightning-quick hand SHOOTS OUT and grabs her wrist, stopping the fork an inch from its target... She looks up to see Jacob, protecting his roommate, and Anna from doing something she might regret. Jacob defuses with James Bondian humor --

JACOB
I don’t think he’s quite done.

With a final, furious glance at Taylor, Anna drops the fork and exits, as Taylor mutters to Jacob:

TAYLOR
Thanks.

As Taylor walks away, off Jacob, wearing a small, satisfied smile as he picks up the fork, replacing it on the table...

INT. DEAN’S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The Dean closes the door, but the party is still seen in the deep b.g. through a window. He turns to a spiraling Maeve:

DEAN VANDERMEER
You swore to me you ended it.

MAEVE
She never told me she had a boyfriend...

DEAN VANDERMEER
Would it have mattered?

MAEVE
Of course.

DEAN VANDERMEER
Why? I didn’t.
In a flash of rage the Dean picks up one of Maeve’s Grecian amphorae (vase) and throws it across the room, SHATTERING it. Clock Jacob outside seeing this, just before Maeve closes the curtain, blocking out the party completely...

DEAN VANDERMEER
I don’t know what’s more ridiculous, seducing a kid half your age or having Alex Leandros write a check to Adam’s presidential campaign!

Maeve takes a beat, happy to have changed subjects.

MAEVE
I didn’t want his money to go to waste. And Ruby’s a lovely girl, she deserves a chance --

DEAN VANDERMEER
That’s not your decision to make. You know how Leandros makes his money. If the press finds out Adam took a contribution from him --

MAEVE
They won’t. Unless we want them to.

Dean looks at her: what are you up to?...

MAEVE (CONT’D)
You’ll never become his running mate without leverage.

DEAN VANDERMEER
That isn’t the way to play this --

MAEVE
You can act like the ethical Dean all you want, but I know you. I know what you and your Keysmen do at night --

DEAN VANDERMEER
Just stop --

MAEVE
I may have slept with a student. But you buried one.

After a beat, Simon looks up, a murderous glint in his eye.
DEAN VANDERMEER
Too bad it wasn’t Taylor Collins.

Off Maeve, eying her husband, worrying what he might do...

EXT/INT. DEAN’S HOUSE – LIVING ROOM – CONTINUOUS

Jacob heads inside, but pauses when he sees Tom arguing with Senator Walden down the hall, heated but quiet. After a beat, the Senator exits, and Jacob crosses to a distraught Tommy:

JACOB
Everything okay?

TOMMY
Yeah... All good.
(then)
You know... Vandermeer told me the only reason I wanted to win today was to humiliate my father.
(then)
He wasn’t wrong.

Tommy eyes Jacob, deciding to trust him.

TOMMY (CONT’D)
You’ve heard of Skull and Key, right?

JACOB
Sure. Who hasn’t.

TOMMY
Last year, something happened, I broke a rule, and then --

JACOB
What did you do?

TOMMY
 Doesn’t matter, the point is my Dad made it his agenda to get me kicked out. Just another way of making sure I can’t step out of his shadow.
(then)
Of course, he said it was for my own protection, but...

Jacob takes this in, reeling, then finally:

JACOB
They kicked you out. But what about...

He gestures to Tommy’s neck, where only the chain is visible, the key hidden beneath his shirt. Tommy touches it, wary.

TOMMY
I kept it. For...sentimental reasons.
JACOB
(trying not to act crestfallen)
So you’re not a member anymore.

TOMMY
You wanted in, didn’t you... That
why you were playing up to me?
(off Jacob’s wary look)
I’m used to it. But it’s too bad.
You would’ve had my vote tonight.

Tommy claps Jacob’s shoulder then goes. Off Jacob, coming to
realize this entire journey has been for naught...

END OF ACT FOUR
EXT. ROAD - DUSK

Taylor sits in his car, parked off the road at the edge of the woods. He checks the clock, waiting for something... In the distance behind him, another car approaches, parking behind him. Taylor checks himself in the rearview as the driver exits the second car... But when he sees it’s the Dean, his face falls. This was not who he was expecting.

TAYLOR
Crap...

Taylor watches the reflection in his side view mirror, as the Dean reaches back inside his car and pulls out a RIFLE.

TAYLOR (CONT’D)
What the hell...

Taylor panics, quickly fishes his keys out of his pocket, but fumbles as he tries to get them to the ignition. They fall to the floor. He goes to retrieve them, then --

DEAN VANDERMEER (O.S.)
Hello, Mr. Collins.

Taylor looks up. The Dean is standing outside his window, the rifle slung over his shoulder.

TAYLOR
Dean Vandermeer, hi, I was just --

DEAN VANDERMEER
Waiting for Maeve?

Taylor looks confused; what is happening?

DEAN VANDERMEER (CONT’D)
I figured you’d be reluctant to meet if I made the request myself, so she made the call.

TAYLOR
I swear I didn’t draw those sketches.

DEAN VANDERMEER
This isn’t about your artistry, Mr. Collins. You screwed my wife.

TAYLOR
It’s not like that, Maeve and I --

DEAN VANDERMEER
Are what? In love? Get out of the car, you idiot.
As Taylor does...

DEAN VANDERMEER (CONT’D)
Do you hunt?

TAYLOR
Um... Ducks...? Once.
DEAN VANDERMEER
Well, I prefer more substantial prey.

The Dean takes the rifle in his hands now, not aiming, just holding. But it’s enough...

EXT. WOODS - MOMENTS LATER - DUSK

Taylor walks in front of the Dean, who holds the rifle, scanning the woods as he walks. Taylor pleads --

TAYLOR
I’ll never see her again. Or your daughter. And I’ll drop out of art.

DEAN VANDERMEER
You’ll be dropping all your classes.

TAYLOR
Please, Dean Vandermeer --

The Dean raises a finger to his lips, whispering:

DEAN VANDERMEER
Shhhh.

Dean raises his rifle and aims it at Taylor.

TAYLOR
Don’t do this --

DEAN VANDERMEER
On your knees.

TAYLOR
(as he does, quivering)
Please, I’ll do anything...
(quickly melting, babbling)
I’m begging you, Dean Vandermeer --

BANG. The shot RINGS out. Taylor opens his eyes, miraculously unharmed. He looks up to see the Dean was aiming over him. Without glancing at Taylor, the Dean walks through some trees towards a felled DEER. Quite conversationally:

DEAN VANDERMEER
So, Mr. Collins. You’re a poli-sci major? You have political aspirations?

TAYLOR
Uh...yeah...?
The Dean inspects the deer. It’s been shot in the stomach. Its breathing is labored. It is suffering.

DEAN VANDERMEER
You’re going to take a semester off, and in that time, you’ll work on Adam Walden’s campaign as his personal aide.

Taylor slowly gets off his knees, wiping tears from his eyes.

TAYLOR
I don’t understand.

DEAN VANDERMEER
When you return to Braddock in the spring, I’ll see to it you have full credits. You’ll reap all the rewards without paying the dues. Sounds right up your alley.

TAYLOR
But...why?

DEAN VANDERMEER
So you can keep me apprised of what Walden’s up to. Quietly.

TAYLOR
...And he’ll give me the job, just like that?

DEAN VANDERMEER
I’ll tell him you’re a close... “friend” of the family.
(off Taylor’s look)
Do we have a deal?

Taylor slowly nods. The Dean smiles, returning his gaze to the writhing deer.

DEAN VANDERMEER (CONT’D)
Good.

TAYLOR
...Aren’t you going to put it out of its misery?

DEAN VANDERMEER
Now where’s the fun in that?

As Taylor wonders what the hell he has gotten himself into, we go off the Dean, watching the deer slowing dying...
The sun hangs low in the sky, casting long shadows over the medium-security prison, 22 miles outside Boston.

INT. MASSACHUSETTS CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - DUSK

The visitation room is full of PARTNERS and FAMILIES reuniting with CONVICTS. Jacob (incognito, dark-rimmed glasses, baseball hat, etc.) is patted down by an OFFICER before taking a seat to wait... After a beat, he hears:

PRISON GUARD (O.S.)
Radha Nayar...

Jacob looks up to see RADHA (40’s, British accent, still beautiful despite the harsh lights and conditions) enter. She sits across from Jacob, taking him in... After a beat:

RADHA
Rough first week, huh?

JACOB
(dropping his accent)
Better than yours, I bet.
(them)
I’m getting my own suite. My roommate decided to take a semester off.

RADHA
Did he. Well done.

She smiles at the good news. He glances around. We realize it’s a carefully crafted conversation to avoid exposure...

JACOB
He’s going to work for the Senator. But he wants to keep in touch.

RADHA
You should.

JACOB
Classes are fine. I don’t care for the faculty much.

RADHA
Didn’t think you would.

JACOB
One seems decent. Wheeler?

That name land on Radha, putting her on edge... Quietly:
RADHA
No. You can’t trust him.
(looks around, resuming;)
Or anyone. That’s doubly important
once they select you tonight --

JACOB
I don’t think that’s going to
happen...
(off her look)
I was wrong about Tommy.

RADHA
How could that be?

JACOB
(shrugs, then)
The whole thing was a long shot. I
wasn’t ready.

Radha looks down, a glint of disappointment, before smiling:

RADHA
You’re learning. That’s what
college is for, right?

JACOB
But what if I already failed?

RADHA
She’ll forgive you.

As Radha takes his hand, Jacob looks down, remembering...

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Light peaks in through shabby curtains. A broken Eli sits at
the end of the made-up bed, as an ANCHOR reports:

ANCHOR (ON TV)
Braddock Professor Radha Nayar has been
arrested for the murder of Julia
Hennessy, whose body was found
yesterday in The Hoosic River...

A loud POUNDING on the door startles Jacob. Wary, he goes to
open it... No one’s there. Just a small cardboard box. He
picks it up, closes the door, and starts to open it...

ANCHOR (ON TV) (CONT’D)
Sources allege Nayar disposed of the
student’s body after Hennessy overdosed
in Nayar’s home. Nayar is facing
charges of reckless homicide, drug
trafficking, and obstruction of
justice...
Inside the box, Eli finds the Skull and Key yearbook; books filled with scrawlings; surveillance photos of our various players: the Waldens, the Vandermeers... Eli looks up to the TV to see Dean Vandermeer, flanked by Maeve and Anna...
DEAN VANDERMEER (ON TV)

Julia touched many people’s lives
during her short time here. Our
hearts go out to her family...

Jacob looks back at the box, finding a buckslip that reads:
“Start Here -- Jacob Darlow +44 7351121278”. Curious, Eli
dials on his cell. After a beat, a MAN’S VOICE answers,
speaking in that now familiar British dialect:

MAN’S VOICE (THROUGH PHONE)

Hello?

ELI (ON PHONE)

Hi... Sorry... This may sound
strange, but I just got a note from
Radha Nayar that said I should --

MAN’S VOICE (THROUGH PHONE)

Eli. I’ve been expecting your call.
How soon can you be in London?

Off Eli, as he wonders who Jacob Darlow is... PRELAP MUSIC:

INT. STONEBRIDGE TAVERN – NIGHT

A local college-town haunt. The JUKEBOX blares, Red Sox
paraphernalia decks the walls. It’s happy hour, but not for
Anna, who sits with Tommy at the bar, nursing a beer.

ANNA

I’m an idiot.

TOMMY

How could you have known?

ANNA

Well, the first clue was that he
liked me...

TOMMY

A lot of guys like you.

ANNA

Evidently they like my mom, too.
TOMMY
You know why this happened... You both want the same thing.

ANNA
Gross.

TOMMY
That’s not what -- I meant love. The difference is, you deserve it.

ANNA
(smiles sadly, then)
You know, I never told you, but -- when you used to visit me, after my mother had me declared “mentally incompetent,” the nurses all thought you were my boyfriend. I went along with it.

She kisses his cheek, then stands to go.

TOMMY
Hey Anna... What are you gonna do about tap tonight?

ANNA
I guess I have to find a replacement.

TOMMY
Can I make a suggestion?

Off Anna, wondering whose name he’s going to propose...

INT. DEAN’S HOUSE - DEAN’S STUDY - NIGHT

The Dean sits at his desk looking at Taylor’s SKETCHBOOK, at the nudes of his wife... After a beat, Maeve enters.

DEAN VANDERMEER
He certainly captured you.
(off her look)
I took care of it.

Maeve nods, looks at the drawing.

MAEVE
It’s better than his usual work... The shadowing, the contours --

DEAN VANDERMEER
How do I respond to that? “I guess he was inspired.”

The Dean shuts the book. After a beat.
MAEVE
Anna won’t speak to me.

DEAN VANDERMEER
Good for her.

She looks at him, hurt, but knowing she deserves it...

MAEVE
I’m going to bed... But I meant to tell you, before all this happened: there was a painting outside my classroom. By Julia Hennessy. I’d passed by it so many times I stopped seeing it. I didn’t realize... She painted the key.

DEAN VANDERMEER
Take it down.

MAEVE
I already did. As soon as that boy from Oxford pointed it out.

Maeve exits as we stay with the Dean, those words resonating...

EXT. BRADDOCK COLLEGE - MAIN QUAD - NIGHT

Find Jacob walking past blazing BONFIRES, students drinking, partying; a full-on bacchanalia otherwise known as Tap Night. Various costumed characters run around, a girl dressed as a DEER, a guy dressed as MOSES... ANGLE ON a WHITE-ROBED FIGURE in a WHITE MASK as he taps a GIRL thrilled to be chosen.

Jacob clocks Phoebe on the outskirts. He approaches her.

JACOB
Back to the scene of the crime?

PHOEBE
I don’t know what you’re talking about.

She walks away. He follows by her side.

JACOB
No? But you heard some kid was suspended for defacing the tomb.

PHOEBE
You think I framed him? Not my style.
JACOB
(as he stops)
Phoebe. What did they do to you?

His sincere tone halts her... but she’s still wary.

PHOEBE
Only what they’ve done to a dozen other girls.
(diffusing)
I’m not that special.

He looks at Phoebe, feeling for her, wondering if his sister was one of those girls...

PHOEBE (CONT’D)
So now what. You going to turn me in for what I did?

JACOB
Me? No. What was it --?
(recalling)
“I don’t give a rat’s ass.”

PHOEBE
(a small smile, then)
Then why all the questions?

JACOB
How else would I get to know you?

He smiles warmly, then walks away. Off Phoebe, watching after him, a little bit taken...

JACOB (V.O.)
A renowned sociologist once said if humanity’s greatest trait is speech, its greatest power is silence...

INT. JACOB’S SUITE - BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Behind closed doors, Jacob sketches the nudes of Maeve, referencing the photos he snapped outside the art studio...

JACOB (V.O.)
I’ve discovered a world that thrives in that silence. A place where secrets breed like rabbits...

EXT. BRADDOCK BOATHOUSE - HOOSIC RIVER - DAY - FLASHBACK

Pre-regatta, Jacob slyly slips the sketchbook into Taylor's bag. He clocks charcoal on his hand, then washes it off...
EXT. BRADDOCK COLLEGE - MAIN QUAD - NIGHT (PRESENT)

As Jacob nears his dorm, he sees a BLACK-CLOAKED, DEATH-LIKE FIGURE lurking in the shadows. Jacob stops...

JACOB (V.O.)
Others are much more shrouded...

The Figure approaches, handing him a black velvet box before disappearing towards the tomb of Skull and Key. Reveal a crestfallen Phoebe across the quad having witnessed this...

INT. SKULL AND KEY TOMB - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The Cloaked Figure walks through the marble hall, descending down a shadowy staircase. After a beat, another figure enters and descends. And then another...

JACOB (V.O.)
For the greater the secret, the larger the army needed to protect it.

The CAMERA pans up to the club’s motto, carved into the wall in Ancient Attic Greek. Above it hangs an antique BOW AND ARROW, reminding us of Thomas’ imminent death...

JACOB (V.O.)
One I look forward to fighting...

INT. JACOB’S SUITE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alone in his room, Jacob opens the velvet box to reveal a note marked with a wax seal — the Skull and Keys emblem. The note reads simply: “Be ready.”

JACOB (V.O.)
...in the name of revenge.

Off a resolute Jacob, looking out his window to the secret tomb, wondering what awaits him inside...

END OF PILOT