

THE HALLS
EPISODE 3 - FINN
By KATENE TE MAIPI

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BLACK SCREEN

SUPER:

"CONTENT ADVISORY:

This episode contains depictions of trauma, panic, and emotional distress.

Viewer discretion is advised."

(hold for 6 seconds)

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

1. INT. COMMON ROOM - MORNING (REVISED)

Cloudy light. Half-finished coffees. Notebooks sprawled between them.

Background chatter about the flickering hall lights fades under:

NOAH taps a pen, bored but alert.

MAIA scrolls her phone – unread messages.

NOAH

When's your boy due back from the funeral?

MAIA

No idea.

NOAH

You don't know? Where is it again?

MAIA

I... don't know. He just said it was at home.

NOAH

You've been dating five or six weeks and you don't know where his hometown is?

MAIA

I've asked but he clams up, so I just leave it.

NOAH

North, south... Mars?

MAIA

I don't know!

(beat)

Things have been tense lately anyway. Maybe space is good.

A faint smile she doesn't mean.

NOAH studies her – curious, careful.

NOAH

Okay.

He pulls his assignment notes closer.

MAIA

What's this?

NOAH

It's a composition. I just need encouragement.

MAIA

Ethan oozes encouragement.

NOAH

Was he able to help you find your tanga?

MAIA

Taonga. And no.

NOAH

Then he's no help to me.

MAIA

I'm no help to you either.

(beat)

Not at the moment.

(another beat)

I feel lost without my-

Her phone vibrates – hope flickers – nothing.

She sets it down.

The faint tick-tick-tick of a metronome rises, blending with ambient hum-

SMASH CUT TO:

2. INT. CAREER ADVISOR'S OFFICE - MIDDAY (A YEAR EARLIER)

SUPER

"Two days after the event."

We focus on the ticking metronome. The background blurred, it gives the metronome prominence despite its positioning in the right third of the screen.

Slowly fading into existence beside it: "ACT 1: ALLEGRO" and below that in parentheses: "(Moderately fast)".

The hum of a radiator joins the soundscape, followed by the harsh shrills of what sounds like a kettle.

DOM (O.S.)
I'm partial to two, myself.

We focus on a mug on a cluttered desk beside half-marked forms labelled Careers Guidance - Year 13.

We slowly pull out to see

DOM, mid-40s, weary but kind, behind the desk.

He's spooning Milo into the mug.

DOM
One is never enough.

Another scoop.

DOM
It's looking better.

He studies something off-screen - concern in his eyes.

DOM
I think I know what you need. I
gotta make some room for the water
though.

He scoops two more large spoonfuls of Milo into the cup.

DOM
(grinning)
There's that smile.

We hold on him for a beat, long enough for the audience to wonder who he's talking to.

DOM
Sorry buddy. I don't have any sugar
in my office.

REVEAL: Finn (17) sits opposite him, silent, withdrawn.

He's framed in the middle third, lower section of the screen. He's tiny, sat in front of the panelled wall behind him.

He pours hot water and milk into the mug and stirs it around.

DOM
(noticing the scarf)
I like your scarf. It's a bit hot
for it though, don't you think?

Finn's scarf - never worn before, tight around his neck - breaks the stillness of his school uniform.

DOM
 (handing Finn the mug)
 I'm happy for you to spend your
 lunchtimes here.
 But shouldn't you be out with your
 mates?

DOM
 (handing uni booklets)
 I found that information on
 veterinary science that you were
 after.

Pulls out some more booklets from his drawer.

DOM
 I know you said you aren't going to
 study music next year, but I
 grabbed you these in case you
 change your mind.

Dom looks down to Finn's bandage-covered hands.

Finn quickly hides his hands under his armpits.

DOM
 Don't worry. You'll be playing the
 piano again in no time.

Finn's eyes lower. He stares at the steam from his mug.

DOM
 You're very talented, Finn. Don't
 let whatever this is -
 (nodding toward finn's
 hands)
 end your career before it even
 starts. I believe in you.

Dom opens a drawer, pulls out a packet of snack-sized
 chocolates, sets it between them.

DOM
 Here. Don't tell the principal -
 she's on another health kick.

Finn picks one up, turns it in his bandaged hands without
 opening it.

Dom takes one too.

DOM
 What's your favourite?

FINN (RASPY)
 Mars.

Dom grins, pulls a second packet from the drawer.

DOM

Snap.

A flicker of surprise – the tiniest smile on Finn's face.

DOM (HANDING THE MARS BAR)

I'll let the counsellor know you came by, all right? She's good. You don't have to talk if you don't want to.

Dom's phone buzzes. He checks the message, sighs.

DOM

Oh, field duty.

DOM

(deep breath)

Okay. You stay here.

Eat. Practice your breathing.

(deep inhale)

Breathe first, then see how you feel after it.

He grabs his sun hat and leaves.

The room settles into quiet again – just the hum of the radiator and the calm, slow, rhythmic ticking of the metronome. Finn eats the Mars bar.

He turns toward the window, eyes distant.

Through it – we CUT to his POV: sunlight outside, blurred by dust.

It's present day now.

Older Finn stands outside looking in.

He turns to walk away.

MATCH CUT TO:

3. EXT. SCHOOL FIELD - DAY (PRESENT)

He's already in motion, walking out of the frame.

4. EXT. SCHOOL FIELD - DAY (FLASHBACK)

SUPER

"Eight weeks before the event"

The same field – but brighter, harsher. The light almost too clean.

Wind rushes through dry grass.

YOUNGER FINN (17) bolts across the open space, school bag bouncing against his back. His breath comes in ragged bursts.

Behind him – distant at first – the echo of running feet.

Then laughter. Warped, overlapping.

KAI (17) and TAMA (17) chase him down, voices sharp and mocking – distorted as if heard through water. Their faces are out of view.

KAI

Run, piano boy! Go on!

TAMA

He's gonna cry again!

Their words twist and bend, looping back on themselves – a cruel chorus that barely sounds human.

Finn glances over his shoulder – no clear faces, just silhouettes framed by the sun.

He stumbles, catches himself, keeps running.

His bag strap tears. One shoe loosens.

Still, he runs.

The laughter doesn't fade; it follows – stretching beyond the field, beyond the scene.

As Finn reaches the edge of the field –
the sound bleeds forward into present day.

5. EXT. SCHOOL BIKE RACKS - LATE AFTERNOON

The sun has dropped low.

Finn, sweaty and bruised, approaches the empty bike racks.

His bike waits, chained.

He fumbles his keys – hands shaking.

The school is silent now.

Even the laughter's gone.

He unlocks the bike... the spoke clacker begins its steady tick.

At first it's random – then, subtly, it matches the metronome's 90 BPM from before.

CUT TO:

6. EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - LATE AFTERNOON

We focus on the back wheel. It stays centred in the middle of the screen. Overlaid to the right of the wheel nut:

"ACT 2: ANDANTE"

Fading into view beneath the act title: "(At ease)"

Focus shifts to Finn pedalling along the rural road.

The landscape stretches wide – fields, fences, long shadows.

It's quiet except for the whir of the wheels.

He turns down a gravel driveway lined with overgrown grass.

7. EXT. FINN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A small farmhouse. Weathered. Alone.

Chickens cluck near a run-down coop.

Pigs grunt from a pen.

Finn leans his bike against the fence, shoulders heavy.

He steps inside.

8. INT. FINN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DUSK

Dim light from a single bulb.

No voices. Just the hum of the fridge.

A note on the fridge door:

"Dinner in the fridge. Heat for 3 mins. Proud of you. - Mum
xx"

Below it, an unopened envelope – a university scholarship acceptance letter with a drawn smiley face.

He keeps walking.

9. INT. FINN'S ROOM - DUSK

Small, simple room.

A cat lies curled on the bed.

Finn changes out of his uniform, moves quietly to a covered piano in the corner.

He pulls off the sheet.

Dust flies – except where his fingers have repeatedly touched certain keys.

He sits.

Plays a slow, familiar melody – the same worn notes over and over.

It's clumsy, aching, beautiful.

The sound fills the empty house.

The cat stirs, then settles.

FADE TO BLACK

10. INT. SCHOOL MUSIC ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON (FLASHBACK)

SUPER
"The day of the event"

INTERCUT / CROSS-CUT – FINN / MAIA / NOAH (SIMULTANEOUS).

NOTE: The only sound we hear throughout comes from FINN'S world – his piano, the lid slam, the silence, and the distorted aftermath.

MAIA and NOAH'S scenes play within his soundscape – visually simultaneous, audibly silent except for Finn's experience.

A panicked tapping sound makes its presence known.

11. (FINN - SCHOOL MUSIC ROOM)

We focus on a piece of sticky paper stuck to an upright piano.

We zoom out enough to see a fidgety hand tapping a pencil against the paper.

"ACT 3: PRESTO" is written on it. The hand writes the words "(Panic Pace)" on it.

It's Finn's hand.

Warm sunlight filters through the tall windows.

Then silence.

Breath.

YOUNGER FINN (17) plays at the upright – calm, rhythmic, lost in the melody.

This is peace. His world is finally in tune.

12. (MAIA - HER ROOM)

MAIA (18) hums while sorting her study notes, the movement syncing perfectly with Finn's piano rhythm.

13. (NOAH - HIS ROOM)

LP covers hang off the walls: Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's Shahen-Shah, Junoon - Azadi, two of his prized Pakistani albums hang alongside L.A.B's II, III, and IV covers alongside a Billy Joel poster.

NOAH (18) practises on his small keyboard. His chords complement Finn's melody – three separate lives moving in harmony.

14. (FINN)

He smiles faintly, feeling the rhythm flow.

A shadow crosses the door window.

His playing falters – one wrong note.

15. (MAIA)

Her humming stops.

She glances into her open bag – a pause of unease.

16. (NOAH)

He misses a key, startled by nothing.

Shrugs it off, tries again – a little too loud this time.

17. (FINN)

The DOOR SLAMS OPEN.

KAI and TAMA (17) burst in – laughter sharp and echoing.
Their faces still out of view.

KAI

Still pretending you're something,
are you?

TAMA

Play us something we can actually
dance to.

(Maia)

At the same moment – her expression breaks.

She grabs her bag and throws it across the room, sending
papers flying.

(Noah)

He jolts, instinctive frustration.

His keyboard scrapes off the desk and falls to the floor.

(Finn)

Frozen.

KAI taps the piano lid – teasing, deliberate.

Then TAMA SLAMS IT DOWN – over Finn's fingers.

*CRACK – SILENCE.

(Maia)

Now standing at the end of her bed – frozen, facing away from
it.

Breathing shallow.

Stillness.

(Noah)

Sits on the floor beside the fallen keyboard.

Defeated. Silent.

(Finn)

He jerks, pulls his hands free, stumbling back –

SIDE SHOT: Finn falls backward from the piano stool.

(Maia / Noah)

In perfect synchrony –

MAIA falls backward onto her bed.

NOAH falls onto his back on the floor.

Three bodies – three impacts – one silent, shared collapse.

Noah rolls over to his right side.

(Finn)

MID-ROLL RIGHT, mirroring Noah.

His breath shakes as sound slowly bleeds back in – muffled boots, distorted laughter. He holds his damaged hands over his face for protection.

We stay close; we never see clean strikes.

KAI grabs Finn's phone from his pocket, holds it to his face – unlock.

KAI

Take a photo! Take a photo!

TAMA raises his phone. CLICK.

TAMA

Got it.

KAI (TO FINN)

Your phone's about to die, you egg!

TAMA yanks off Finn's shoes.

KAI throws the phone to the floor.

They run.

DOOR SLAMS.

Silence.

Finn lies trembling on the floor, hands cradled to his chest. His whimpers the only sound heard.

..We look at the metronome on its side – silent.

For a beat, only his breathing – uneven, almost rhythmic.
Each inhale replaces a tick.

Beside it appear the words:

"ACT 4: REST"

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. SCHOOL BIKE RACKS - DUSK

The silence is broken with the sounds of cicadas – not loud, just steady, their rhythm syncing with Finn's ragged breathing.

The golden light of late afternoon fades into blue-grey.

FINN (17) stumbles into frame, barefoot.

His shirt is rumpled, his hands swollen and trembling.

The piano lid slam still reverberates faintly beneath the ambience – a phantom echo.

He reaches the bike racks.

Every bike is gone except his.

He crouches, fumbling for his key with shaking fingers.

The key slips.

He tries again. Misses the lock. Tries again.

The metal clinks out of rhythm with the cicadas.

A beat of silence.

He stares at his hands – the swelling, the red skin, the uselessness.

The first tear falls before he notices it.

The cicadas fade to a thin hiss, like air leaving lungs.

Finn's breath hitches.

He tries again – slower this time.

This time, he gets the key into the lock. But his hands are too tender. He can't turn the key.

He tries to pull the key back out.

It won't budge.

He leaves it there.

Finn turns and begins to limp – barefoot down the path, away from school.

The cicadas grow louder, filling the space where footsteps used to be.

WIDE SHOT:

The field stretches behind him – empty, cold, endless.

The faint hum of the insects becomes the only music.

18. EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Finn limps down the long road, clutching his hands to his chest.

The porch light from home glows faintly in the distance.

It's the only thing in the dark that feels alive.

19. INT. FINN'S HOUSE - HALLWAY / BATHROOM - NIGHT

Steam drifts from the open bathroom door – the mirror fogged, untouched.

The faint hiss of cicadas dissolves into the hum of the house.

The fridge hums softly in the stillness.

Dinner sits untouched.

The silence feels too alive.

20. INT. FINN'S ROOM - NIGHT

FINN sits on the edge of his bed, hands freshly bandaged.

The same swollen fingers rest in his lap – motionless.

He exhales – not a sob, not a sigh, just a long, empty breath.

He lowers himself onto the bed, lying on his side.

The world feels smaller here – one lamp, one shadow, one survivor.

After a few beats, the cat jumps up beside him.

It circles once, then curls at his chest.

Finn doesn't move.

He just lets it breathe for him.

The purring begins – faint, rhythmic, close to his heartbeat.

It swells, soft but steady – the first safe sound since the music stopped.

CLOSE ON: his face.

Eyes open, unfocused.

The purring finds the same rhythm as the earlier metronome – slower, softer.

FADE OUT.

21. INT. CLASSROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

SUPER

Three weeks after the event

Finn sits slumped in his chair at his desk, his non-regulation shoes – plain black sneakers – plain to see.

The teacher frowns.

Finn silently hands over a note from Mum excusing the footwear.

Teacher returns to his desk.

The room is noisy – chatter, laughter – but Finn's world is quiet.

He stares at his hands – healed, but stiff.

TAMA

(leaning in from behind)

Poor baby got a mamae?

He pokes FINN on the back, shoulder, and then back of the head.

22. EXT. FRONT OF FINN'S HOUSE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

SUPER

Two months after the event

The entire landscape is eerily quiet all except for a sound that shouldn't be there:

Drip

Drip

Drip

CUT TO.

23. INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The dripping tap begins – a heartbeat slowed to 60 BPM.

The words appear: "ACT 5: ADAGIO"

Beneath fade in the word: "(SLOW)"

A birthday cake sits on the table, a few slices gone.

Plastic "18" candles droop slightly.

Next to the cake: car keys.

A gift.

Through the window, Finn walks outside carrying a bucket of pig feed.

He looks older.

Tired.

24. EXT. FINN'S PROPERTY - CONTINUOUS

Finn empties the bucket into the trough, absently watching the pigs eat.

His new phone buzzes in his pocket.

He wipes his hands, checks it –

MESSAGES: cruel taunts, threats, laughter.

His face falls.

He looks toward the shed.

25. EXT. SHED - MOMENTS LATER

Finn sits in his parked car outside the open shed, engine off.

He stares through the windshield.

Long silence.

He gets out, moves toward the back door.

Inside, he picks up a set of jumper leads from the back seat – wound tight, long enough to reach a beam.

He approaches the shed.

Our view is fixed on the shed door.

In the doorway, Finn looks up at the rafters. He unwinds the jumper cables and then enters the shed.

Lots of sounds are heard.

Metal against metal.

A drag.

Then the crack –

Silence.

CUT TO:

26. EXT. SHED - PRESENT DAY - DAY

Finn stares at the shed. Both the position of he and his mum's car almost mirror the scene from twelve months prior.

There's a lot of memories here. Dark memories.

He pulls Maia's pounamu from his pocket and looks it over before pocketing it again.

He takes a deep breath and enters the shed.

Beneath the noises of metal and items being pushed about, the air is tense. Why is he in there again? What's he doing?

Then moments later, he steps out of the shed with a golf club in hand. He walks back to the car – faster now, purpose in every step.

The sounds of clicking fade in, replacing the soundscape. 90bpm, slowly escalating.

27. EXT. COASTAL EMBANKMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

An extreme wide left to right dolly shot reveals Finn's car parked up on the embankment. We see the ocean beyond the tall grass.

The clicking rises, merges with the sound of the tide.

Each wave hits in time with the earlier pulse – breath returning to life.

The words "ACT 6: CODA" appear,
followed by the words "Breathe first"

28. EXT. COASTAL BEACH - CONTINUOUS

Waves roll in under a pale sky over the clicking.

Finn stands near the water's edge, Maia's pounamu in his hand. He's tapping it against a skipping stone. He throws the stone away.

He turns it over – the green stone flashing cold light.

His breathing is laboured, erratic.

He draws his arm back, ready to throw.

Stops.

Deep breath.

Then another.

The wind catches his scarf.

He lowers his arm. He feels defeated.

He clutches the pounamu to his chest – a weight and a promise.

The tide pulls in again, washing around his shoes.

He looks toward the horizon – somewhere between escape and return.

He walks back to the car.

29. EXT. PARK - LATER

There's a guy in the distance playing shooting hoops on his own. We can't quite see his face as he's too far.

FINN pulls up in his mum's vehicle.

We discover the guy is KAI.

Finn keeps the engine running, revving it to get Tai's attention.

We only see Tai from behind. Once again, his face is hidden from view.

KAI
(turning around to look)
Piano Boy?

Finn revs the engine again.

KAI
Piano boy! You're back!

KAI casually walks over to Finn's car.

Calmly, Finn gets out of the car, grabs the golf club from the back seat, and then starts walking toward KAI.

On seeing the golf club, KAI stops and steps backward.

KAI
Oh bro, 'the hell, we were kids.
You know how messed up kids are.

Finn keeps walking, his lips not interested in moving for any utterance.

KAI
(getting desperate)
Bro, please, nah.

POV: EXTREME WIDE SHOT: THEY BOTH LOOK TINY WITHIN THE ENVIRONMENT.

KAI drops to his knees and holds his hands up. He closes his eyes.

POV: AS BEFORE, ON FINN.

Finn raises the club. Stops.

Maia flashes through his mind.

His grip loosens; breath steadies.

It's at this moment that he understands how much she's changed him.

KAI flinches.

Finn finally builds up the courage to contain his rage.

FINN
Stay the fuck out of my way! You
and your brother!

KAI
Yeah, nah, course!

FINN paces up and down swinging the golf club while KAI remains in place, terrified.

He gets in his car and drives off.

KAI can only watch on in shock.

30. INT. FINN'S CAR - DUSK

Finn's parked by the roadside.

His breathing uneven, hands trembling around his phone.

A faint electrical hum underscores the silence – same low frequency once heard in the laundry dryers.

It swells and fades with each breath, steadying like a heartbeat.

He scrolls to MAIA's name.

Calls.

INTERCUT WITH:

31. INT. COMMON ROOM - EVENING

Students are enjoying their snacks in front of the TV.

MAIA, startled, answers immediately.

MAIA
(concerned)
Finn? Where are you?

FINN (V.O.)
Home.

MAIA
Are you okay? You sound shaky. How was the tangi?

FINN
There wasn't any funeral.

MAIA
Well then, what's going on?

FINN (V.O.)
I saw the photo, Maia!

Silence.

She picks up her bag quickly leaves the room.

32. INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

MAIA
 ..Yeah, I know you saw the photo.
 What's this a-

FINN (V.O.)
 Of you with Kai and Tama!

MAIA pulls the photo out of her bag.

INSERT: Maia between Kai and Tama, arms around each other, teenage smiles.

FLASHBACK TO SCENE 4

We finally see Kai the faces of the two boys chasing and tormenting younger Finn across the field. The same smug faces in the photo.

We return to the scene in the school music room. Again, those same two faces, evil in their eyes, the same two boys who share a photo with Maia.

BACK TO MAIA:

MAIA
 How do you know their names?

FINN
 Don't act all innocent, Maia. I bet you had a good laugh eh, all those times they bullied me. Bet you heard some good stories.

MAIA
 (horrified realisation)
 That was you? You're the guy?

CUT TO:

33. INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

FINN
 You should take up drama. You're very good.

MAIA (V.O.)
 I didn't know.

FINN
 (trying to sound casual)
 I took your pendant by the way.

There's a long pause. Maia's trying to process this new information.

MAIA

Finn -

FINN

I wanted you to feel as much hurt
and hate as I do.
(holding back tears)

SO

MUCH

HURT

AND HATE!

He bangs his hands on the top of the dashboard.

FINN

I was gonna throw it away, you
know; your pendant. I was so close
to doing it.

MAIA (V.O.)

Come home, Finn.

FINN

I *am* home.

MAIA (V.O.)

This is home. With us.
(beat)
Just come home.

FINN

You'll see me tomorrow.

He hangs up the phone and throws it onto the passenger seat.

CUT TO:

34. INT. MAIA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The call ends, her phone screen goes black.

Maia holds the photo, staring at her brothers' faces - horror
and heartbreak rising together.

She sends a message on her phone and then throws the phone on
the bed.

35. INT. KAI'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

KAI is on his bed watching TV when his phone lights up.

INSERT: Message from Maia - YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF EXPLAINING TO
DO! FACETIME ME NOW OR I'M TELLING DAD!

36. EXT. QUAD - AFTERNOON

Maia waits patiently alone. There's hustle and bustle of students all around.

FINN approaches. His face is emotionless. There's still tension.

He returns her pounamu, to which she carelessly slips in her pocket.

FINN
You don't want to wear it?

MAIA
It's contaminated.

Finn walks off but she calls him back.

There's a noticeable physical distance between them.

MAIA
I talked my brothers last night
after you and I spoke.

Finn winces at the fact that Maia's the sister to his school bullies.

MAIA
I heard you gave Kai a good scare.

Finn stays silent.

MAIA
They've got a lot of making up to
do.

Their cadences are becoming stiffer, almost stranger-like. The fake smiles add to the tension.

MAIA
Just because we grew up in
different towns, I'm still their
older sister. They still have to do
what I tell them.

FINN
(abruptly)
Just let it go. I'm not wasting
anymore time on them.

Another awkward pause.

FINN
I'm heading up.

MAIA
(quietly)
I'll go with you.

She playfully, yet shyly, holds out her hand to him.

Finn hesitates – eyes on her hand; his breathing shallow

He almost walks past her, then stops. Slowly, he takes her hand.

Finn's facial expression becomes stone. He's holding back a lot of tears and emotions at the moment. All he can muster is a nod.

He accepts her hand and follows her into the building.

We watch them through the windows, ascend the stairwell together.

She rests her head against his arm.

FADE OUT

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