

THE JANITOR

Written by

Jessica Traxler

July 14, 2020

FADE IN:

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - JULIAN'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

A master bedroom of dated furniture, aging wallpaper, and creaky wood floors.

In the center of the room, against the wall, is a old, four-post bed. In said bed is JULIAN ARMSTRONG, 42; solitary, cautious, and obviously lonely.

The pre-paid cellphone on his nightstand chimes a tune-- his ALARM. It's 5:30am.

Julian shuts it off then rolls back over.

(3 beats)

His eyes open and he pushes the covers off his body. He swings his long legs to the floor, rubs at his eyes, YAWNS, then stands for a stretch in his boxers.

He's tall, attractive, with a great smile that isn't seen that often.

He grabs the T-shirt on the floor and slips it on over his head.

His big feet thud on the hardwood floors as he EXITS his room.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - GAIL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is just as old and frilly as Julian's room, but with faded yellow wallpaper and heavy yellow curtains. And the bed is lower to the carpet floor; easier to climb in and out of.

BED

Wide awake, looking out the window at the rising sun, is an old woman-- GAIL ARMSTRONG, 70, Julian's mother.

She's wrapped up warmly in blankets, but it's still apparent that she's tiny and frail. The left side of her face is paralyzed. And her left hand is twisted and curved toward her chest. A stroke survivor.

**NOTE:** Gail's speech is impaired, so she communicates through pointing gestures and unintelligible noises.

Julian quietly ENTERS with a sleepy 'good morning' to her.

She smiles at him. He asks if she's ready for her bath.

She nods.

Julian takes the covers off her and carefully lifts her in his arms. He bridal carries her from the room.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

TUB

Julian gives his mother a bath. He's gentle, but clinical and routine about it.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - GAIL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gail sits on the bed as Julian finishes dressing her.

He bends down to slip comfortable shoes on her feet.

With her good hand, right hand, she softly pats his head. He's a good boy that takes care of his mother.

He looks up and smiles at her. Then pecks her cheek.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The kitchen is large, but stuck in the past like the rest of the house. The stove and fridge are from the 80s, and the lime green walls don't do much to add any appeal.

STOVE

Julian plates the scrambled eggs he's cooking, then butters two slices of wheat toast.

He sets it down in front of Gail, who's sitting in a wheelchair at a small breakfast table by the window.

He grabs a fork from a drawer and a paper napkin and sets them by her right hand.

He tells her he's going to take a quick shower and he'll be right back.

She nods, picking up her fork.

Julian double checks if he turned the stove off and EXITS.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - MASTER BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS  
SHOWER

Julian washes his body in a quick, perfunctory manner.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - JULIAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Julian tucks his gray button-down into his gray slacks and slips on a belt, not bothering with a mirror.

The shirt has his first name embordered on it, along with a **William B. Ogden Academy** emblem.

Julian grabs a pair of black socks from his dresser drawer and slips them on his feet.

EXT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

It's an attractive house-- Victorian, second empire-- but has seen a bit of weathered neglect over the long years: crumbling, red brick steps, faded and chipped paint, buckling roof shingles, and unmowed grass.

An ADA charter bus pulls to the curb in front of the house.

A beat.

Julian pushes Gail down the makeshift ramp on the front steps toward the bus.

The BUS DRIVER slides the side door open and unrolls the electronic ramp. She exchanges pleasantries with Julian then helps Julian adjust Gail into the wheelchair accessible part of the small bus.

EXT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Julian waves to Gail as the bus takes off. She smiles at him and waves back.

EXT. WILLIAM B. OGDEN ACADEMY - CONTINUOUS

Julian pulls into the parking lot in a 2000 Subaru Forester. Despite it being an older model, it looks pretty well-kept.

He climbs out and heads toward the school: 200 acres of green lawn with contemporary buildings resting atop it, including an ice rink, boathouse, indoor swimming pool, and 5 dorms.

He spots two Hispanic men, a older black man, and a middle-aged white woman at the entrance doors of the MAIN HALL, smoking: CARLOS, 45, FREDO, 35, HORACE, 60, and IRIS, 50.

They're all wearing the same uniform as him; the custodial staff.

He approaches. Iris bums him a cigarette from her pack and he joins them.

Iris asks him if he's ready for the shitstorm that awaits them and he says no, making the rest of them laugh.

INT. WILLIAM B. OGDEN ACADEMY - DINING HALL - CONTINUOUS

The inside is just as slick and modern as the outside of the buildings.

TABLE

A teenage boy sits at the table. He's good-looking but with a babyface; tall, athletic-- as so noted by the letterman jacket draped over the back of his chair-- AXEL KILBOURNE, 18, a romantic and sincere young man, more mature than most.

He's picking at his food absently as he stares at something...

AXEL'S POV - TRASHCANS

He's staring at Julian as he changes the bags in the garbage cans.

The unblinking gaze and wistful pout on Axel's face exposes his interest in the man.

Axel makes to stand, ready to approach Julian, when 3 of his friends join him at the table: RYDER, 17, a skinny blonde boy; DASH, 18, a handsome black boy pushing 6'5; and LEILANI, 17, an East Asian girl with awesome green hair.

Through their conversation we learn that today is the last day of school before summer break and that all four of them are graduating seniors.

Leilani is teased a bit about her neglectful, wealthy parents heading to the south of France immediately after her graduation on Saturday. However, Leilani is staying in Illinois over the summer to work as a camp counselor with Dash in Benton before attending UCLA in the fall.

This is Dash's third summer as a camp counselor and his final one before going to Cornell in September.

Ryder's summer plans are to return to his usual summer job at Six Flags before going to Notre Dame.

Axel doesn't have any summer plans since he's taking a gap year.

Suddenly, they hear someone shout: **FOOD FIGHT!** And quickly turn to a STUDENT standing atop the table a few feet away from them. He picks up his plate and launches it across the room!

And that's it, that's all it takes for the entire dining hall to start throwing food at one another!

Dash and Ryder immediately join in on the food fight, but Axel (grabbing his letterman jacket) and Leilani duck under the table, watching the chaos with big smiles on their faces.

Axel's eyes wander around the cafeteria, watching the craziness unfold.

AXEL - ENTRANCE DOORS

Axel spots Julian, with Horace and Carlos, at the dining hall entrance doors.

The three custodians hang back, avoiding getting hit with food, and shaking their heads at the massive mess being created.

Axel frowns, no longer finding all of this as amusing as he did a second ago.

His attention turns to the LUNCH LADIES behind the tray lines. They, too, don't appear happy. Especially when STUDENTS grab full serving dishes of food to toss around.

They spent all day prepping, cooking, and serving. Now, a bunch of rich kids, on the last day of school, are throwing their hard work around the room for them to clean up later.

Shit.

INT. WILLIAM B. OGDEN ACADEMY - MAIN HALL - CONTINUOUS

SERIES OF SHOTS

Locker clean out.

DAY STUDENTS empty their lockers of everything from food, pictures, old notebooks, etc. to dump in the trashcans placed all along the center of each hallway.

But they're overeager, and therefore sloppy; making a bigger mess than they should be.

CUT TO:

Dorm room clean out.

BOARDING STUDENTS pack up their things and strip their beds, dumping out anything they don't want/need into large garbage cans outside their rooms in the hallways.

They, too, are making a unnecessary mess as they chuck out perfectly intact belongings only rich people would see now as trash.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. WILLIAM B. OGDEN ACADEMY - MAIN HALL, HALLWAY - LATER

The hallways have emptied of people but there's still overflowing garbage cans down the center with additional waste piled around them.

Axel hurries down the corridor, watching his step, as he makes his way to his locker.

He turns it to the combination and opens it. He sifts through his things: a homecoming king sash he forgot to take home, paper footballs, past homework assignments with As and Bs, a cellphone case, notebooks, earbuds, pens, loose change, broken sunglasses, a playbook for the varsity basketball team, a cheap, plastic water bottle, melted Chapstick, stale gum, and his yearbook.

He wraps the sash around him, puts the earbuds and loose change in his pockets, and tucks his yearbook under his arm.

Everything else he tries his best to stuff into a nearby by garbage can.

He looks fondly at the pictures on the inside of his locker door of him with his friends and teammates on the basketball team, swim team, and track team.

He gently takes them down and puts them inside his yearbook.

He gives one last look to the halls of his adolescent years... a small smile grows on his face; he's going to miss this place.

Axel closes his locker and turns on his heel down the hallway.

He stops, however, when he sees Julian ENTER an adjacent corridor. The other man is picking up all the excess garbage on the floor and tossing it into the heavy duty bag in his grip.

Axel squares his shoulders, takes a breath. Two steps toward Julian and--

Dash calls out to him at the end of the hall.

Axel's attention draws to his friends waiting for him by the EXIT doors. Ryder and Dash are no longer covered in food, but their clothes boast the colorful remnants of the ordeal.

He hesitates, watching Julian for a beat.

Ryder beckons him.

Axel SIGHS then trots down the corridor, EXITING the Main Hall with his friends.

INT. WILLIAM B. OGDEN ACADEMY - MAIN HALL, TEACHER'S LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

Julian ENTERS. It's empty of people, just like the rest of the school.

But it seems the teacher's are no better than their shiftless students.

There's a half-eaten sheet cake on the center table. Along with homemade dishes, plastic cups of wine, and paper plates of food all over the place.

Beside the cake is a note:

***To Our Custodial Staff-- Please help yourselves. We love & appreciate you. See you next year!***

Julian rolls his eyes at the note.

He opens the fridge.

There's containers of old lunches and leftovers that need to be tossed out inside of it. And clearly the teachers at William B. Ogden Academy couldn't be bothered.

Julian grabs a trashcan and starts opening Tubberware, dumping it's moldy contents into the wastebasket.



EXT. WILLIAM B. OGDEN ACADEMY - PARKING LOT - SUNSET

Julian hurries to his car, ready to go. But Horace spots him and calls him over.

Julian rushes to Horace, Carlos, Fredo, and Iris smoking by Horace's 1973 Buick Riviera. They're going out for a drink but Julian can't join them, he's got to go and pick up his mother from the senior living center.

He hugs each of them and pecks Iris' cheek. Promising to stop by Horace's 4th of July cookout next month.

Julian runs back to his car.

INT. HOSPITAL - GERIATRIC CARE UNIT, WAITING ROOM -  
CONTINUOUS

Gail sits with a HOSPITAL SOCIAL WORKER watching TV in the waiting room.

Julian ENTERS, making a b-line for his mother.

He thanks the social worker, grabs the handles of Gail's wheelchair, and pushes her toward the elevators.

The social worker follows him.

Julian explains that he got out of work later than usual because of the food fight and that he called the senior center and told them he was going to be late picking up his mother, but instead of generously waiting for him to finish work, they instead dumped her at the hospital.

The social worker assures him that she's not going to report him to authorities; she doesn't believe him neglectful.

Julian then assumes she's attempting to slap him with a hospital bill, but she's not. Gail wasn't admitted and isn't sick, so there's no need to charge him for anything.

Instead, the hospital social worker tries handing him a brochure for a nursing home. Julian looks at it in disgust and tells her 'no'.

The elevator doors open. He wheels Gail into the lift with him. The doors threaten to close, but the social worker sticks her foot in the door, preventing them from closing.

She thinks Julian should at least consider a home care worker instead of dropping Gail off at senior centers until he's done work.

Julian has considered it. And most home care workers are either abusive or apathetic. No, thanks.

Julian will not be moved on the topic and isn't being polite about it, so the hospital social worker steps out of the way, allowing the elevator doors to close.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Julian bathes Gail.

He apologizes for having to pick her up from the hospital.

She kisses his head. There was nothing to apologize for.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - GAIL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Julian dresses Gail in cotton pajamas. Then puts a pair of novelty bedroom slippers on her feet. They're brightly colored and silly. And very comfortable-looking.

He slides her back against the headboard and fits a pillow between her and the wood so she's comfortable. He drapes a big Afghan blanket over her.

He grabs a water bottle with flexible straw off the nightstand and sits it beside her on the bed. Then opens a Hostess Ding Dong and hands it to her.

Julian opens the armoire in front of the bed. There's an old TV inside. He turns it on to TLC.

Julian tells her he's going to shower before work (his night job).

Gail nods. Julian EXITS.

INT. AXEL'S HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT, CONTINUOUS

Axel opens the front door. On the other side is Julian with his takeout order in a Postmates bag.

Julian rattles off the order for Axel to confirm. Stunned and stuttering, Axel confirms the order.

Julian hands over the food to Axel. He turns to leave, but Axel tries offering him a tip. However, Julian reminds him that tip is included in the total.

A little embarrassed, Axel thanks him for reminding him of that.

Julian tries to leave again, but Axel remarks that he knows him. Julian turns back around, curious as to how this teenage boy knows him...

Axel confesses that he attends, or attended, the academy Julian works at. He's a senior that graduates on Saturday.

He also awkwardly tells the older man that he's eighteen as well.

Julian doesn't know exactly what to do with that odd information, but congratulates him on graduating and tells him not to get into too much trouble at college.

Before Axel can formulate a response, Julian wishes him a 'goodnight' and rushes to the curb in front of his big, beautiful house.

Axel watches Julian climb into his car and head down the street.

He GROANS, feeling as though he blew his chance.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Gail sits on an old sectional wrapped in plastic slipcovers.

A refurbished flatscreen TV sits atop a broken, floor model TV, playing *90 Day Fiancé*.

Gail watches intently as loud BANGING sounds from upstairs.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

JULIAN'S CELLPHONE

A YouTube video entitled "BATHROOM REMODEL UNDER \$500" plays absently on his phone.

As is on the video, Julian removes the shower tile with a crowbar and hammer.

INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

TABLE

Axel is sitting across the table from a middle-aged man and woman: his well-meaning, but "involved" parents, MR. KILBOURNE, 49, and MRS. KILBOURNE, 45.

He's wearing a graduation gown and Honor's sash. There's also a gold medal of the school seal around his neck, tied with a ribbon of the school's colors.

Their SERVER sets down a T-bone steak with a perfect mound of smooth mashed potatoes and cooked asparagus in front of Axel. Then sets a steak knife down beside his plate, along with a bottle of steak sauce. He asks if he can get anything else for Axel, and Axel politely declines. The server EXITS.

His parents, on the other hand, commiserate on not being "properly checked upon" by their server, in which Axel lightly chastises them by calling them "boomers."

Axel's father is offended by the generalization until Axel interrupts him with a random factoid about polar bears (something he does during awkward or heated moments).

So Axel's father changes subjects and remarks on Dash's salutatorian speech at the ceremony; he liked it, and thinks it was a much better speech than the one the valedictorian gave.

Axel agrees, stating he thinks the valedictorian's speech was superficial and disappointing. Especially given she was a scholarship student at the academy. Axel expected a more realist point of view from her. He thought her speech was classist and elitist.

Though they felt Dash's speech was more passionate, Axel's parents think he's being too hard on his former classmate.

Axel stands by his opinion, believing the valedictorian's speech lacked depth.

To avoid going around in circles, Axel's mother changes the subject to praise her son and remind him of just how proud they are of him.

Axel is flattered.

His mother tears up and Axel playfully teases her about crying in the middle of a restaurant. She dabs her eyes with her cloth napkin, composing her self.

His father relishes in his son's achievements, too: graduating #7 in his class, With Honors, and a medal naming him Athlete of the Year.

Axel steals a piece of chicken from his dad's plate, not knowing how else to handle his father's embarrassing praise.

They smile at him, happy and proud of their boy. Their only child.

However, the mood is shifted when Mr. Kilbourne asks Axel if he's chosen 3 schools to apply to.

Axel reminds his father that he and his mother promised him that he could take a gap year, which he plans to do.

They're fine with him spending the year, figuring himself out, but want him to at least have an idea of 3 schools he'd like to attend when said year is up.

Axel has *just* graduated high school and hasn't had the time, or wanted to give any time, to thinking about college right now.

Annoyed by their insistence, Axel jokes that he's thinking of going to art school and majoring in ceramics. Or Arizona State, a known party school. Or possibly attending Liberty University.

Mr. Kilbourne knows there's no way in hell Axel would go to Liberty University as an openly gay teen. He becomes irritated when Axel states he'll take online classes at Liberty instead.

Axel, not wanting to piss his parents off, but wanting them to back off, promises to give them a list of 3 schools he's thinking about by the end of summer if they promise to leave him alone about it until then.

They agree that that's a fair compromise, and would like a list of schools from Axel by Labor Day.

Mr. Kilbourne asks Axel if he plans on going to a graduation party tonight.

He does.

His father tells him to call if he's been drinking and needs a ride home.

He doesn't plan on drinking, given he doesn't exactly trust the rich snobs he went to school with. His plans are to show his face for a bit, say 'goodbye' to a few acquaintance, then leave. He'll take a Lyft home.

His parents are fine with that so long as he's safe and doesn't stumble home the next morning.

It's apparent Axel's parents have a lot of trust in him, and give him a lot of freedom as a result.

His dad reaches over with his fork and stabs a piece of steak from Axel's plate. Tasting it, he remarks on how he should have gotten the steak instead of the chicken.

EXT. MANSION - BACKYARD - NIGHT, CONTINUOUS

Axel steps out onto the patio of the massive house with Dash, Ryder, and Leilani. The place is packed with TEENAGERS having a wild time partying.

Dash spots a GIRL making eyes at him and heads toward her ditching his friends.

Ryder and Leilani debate which drinking crowd they should infiltrate: the drama club is playing Sip, Sip, Shot, but the Model UN kids and Mock Trial kids are playing The Great American Challenge. They decide to head back inside and watch the two club geeks playing The Great American Challenge.

Axel turns to follow them but is stopped by someone calling his name. It's the student that started the food fight-- SARRIS, 18, a blonde-haired jock.

Sarris jumps out of the pool and makes his way toward Axel.

It's Sarris' house, and Axel worries his parents will be pissed he's thrown such a rager here.

Sarris' parents could care less, it's their least favorite house out of the 5 they own, and they bought all the liquor for the party. They're also already on their way to Greece where Sarris will meet them tomorrow.

Sarris offers Axel a drink but Axel refuses; he's not drinking tonight.

But Sarris insists. They graduated today and Axel worked his ass off for 4 years, he deserves to let loose tonight.

Axel refuses again.

Sarris persists that he have just one drink with him. He drags Axel into the house to get him some alcohol.

INT. MANSION - KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Axel chokes on whatever's in the red Solo cup in his hand.

It's Jungle Juice. Sarris apologizes for it being so strong. The last time he threw a party, his now ex-girlfriend made the Jungle Juice, not him.

Axel asks why he dumped her on the last day of school. Sarris answers he had no desire to continue dating her long-distance through college. He wasn't going to marry her, so why bother?

Sarris pulls him into the DINING ROOM to watch the Model UN and Mock Trial kids get wasted.

Sure enough, four teams of four (16) CLASSMATES are between Phase 2 & 3 (smoking weed and eating a pizza) of the relay challenge.

Axel and Sarris join Leilani and Ryder off to the side as they cheerfully watch them attempt the drinking game.

SARRIS POV - AXEL

Sarris' eyes wander over Axel. He looks taken, fond... He's attracted to Axel.

A beat.

Sarris leans into Axel's ear and WHISPERS.

Axel turns wide-eye to his friend; stunned by his bold suggestion. He thinks Sarris is joking but he's not.

Sarris smiles. He takes Axel by the hand and they EXIT.

INT. MANSION - SARRIS' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

BED

Axel and Sarris makeout fiercely on the bed with the door closed.

A beat.

Sarris breaks their kiss just to assure Axel that he's not gay, but has always been curious about hooking up with him. He also tells him that another student, Axel's ex, Mark, said he gave really good blowjobs.

Axel didn't know his ex was at the party, but Sarris tells him that he is, and he's in his sister's old room hooking up with another student, a known homophobic bully.

Axel is thrown by the piece of gossip, given he had asked said bully to Junior Prom and was rejected cruelly.

Sarris shrugs. He doesn't currently care about Axel's ex-boyfriend and the school bully having sex. Right now he wants to have sex with Axel.

He reaches for the fly of Axel's jeans but Axel stops him. Axel doesn't really want to have sex.

Sarris asks if it's because of his ex and the bully.

It's not. Truly.

Axel's not a virgin, but he is stingy with who he does sleep with, and he doesn't want to do it at a crowded house party with a boy who's half drunk and leaving for Greece in the morning. Hookups aren't really his thing.

Axel apologizes, feeling like he's lead Sarris on.

Sarris is surprisingly cool about it and says he's fine with just kissing.

They continue kissing, slow and intimate.

A beat.

However, Sarris breaks their kiss again to awkwardly asks if Axel would be okay with giving him a handjob instead.

INT. MANSION - GAME ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Axel finds Leilani and Ryder playing beer pong with TWO other CLASSMATES. He tells them both that he's leaving.

They ask why and he states he was just talked into giving Sarris a handjob and feels gross about it. He didn't want to come in the first place, and now he definitely doesn't want to be here any longer.

He insists they stay and have a good time.

Leilani and Ryder hug him.

Axel promises to meet them at Dash's house in the morning to see he and Leilani off on their way to camp.

We FOLLOW Axel as he makes his way through the crowded party and out the FRONT DOOR.

TEENS are scattered more piecemeal on the front lawn.

Axel wanders to the curb on his cellphone opening the Lyft app.

INT. JULIAN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Julian drops a BUSINESS MAN off in front of the Hyatt Regency.

His phone CHIMES with an ALERT. He checks it--

JULIAN'S CELLPHONE



His Lyft app notifies him that 'Axel' has requested a ride at a home address in Lake Forest.

He accepts.

INT. JULIAN'S CAR - LATER

Julian pulls up to Sarris' house. He SIGHS, noting all the drunk teens around. He puts the car in park and waits.

(3 beats)

The backdoor opens and Axel climbs in.

Axel takes notice that it's Julian in the driver's seat, but Julian doesn't seem to recognize him.

Instead, he asks him if he's drunk and if so, please don't puke in his car.

Axel tells him he's not drunk.

Julian eyes him suspiciously through the REARVIEW MIRROR.

Axel promises Julian he isn't intoxicated.

A beat.

Julian, taking a chance on him, puts the car in drive and heads down the street.

Axel asks how Julian's night is going. He rolls his eyes at himself for being an awkward conversationalist.

But Julian says it's fine and that he's spent most of it in downtown Chicago.

Julian finally recognizes Axel and asks him if he lives on a particular street. He does, and Julian remembers delivering food to his house.

Axel smiles at having been remembered by Julian. Though their conversation finds a lull again...

Until Axel tells Julian he's hungry and asks if he could stop somewhere he could pick up food. He promises to pay him extra for the ride if need be.

Julian says it's fine and Axel's happy he's found a way to facilitate a few more minutes with the man.

INT. SUPERDAWG DRIVE-IN - CONTINUOUS

Julian sits in the driver's seat, parked in the lot.

(3 beats)

Axel climbs into the passenger seat with two bags of food and two drinks.

Axel bought him food, too. For waiting.

Julian doesn't exactly know what to say to that. It's a little unorthodox, but the look on Axel's face is just a little too hopeful to say 'no' to... So he just says thanks.

Julian puts the car in gear and Axel is a little disappointed they're leaving.

Julian's a little confused for a moment. Then it dawns on him. He puts the car back into 'Park' and asks Axel if he's attempting to hang out with him.

Fuck it. His subtlety was getting him nowhere and making him come across as a nervous dork, so Axel admits it: yes, he'd like to hang out with Julian.

Julian doesn't understand why; Axel doesn't know him.

Axel is trying to fix that by hanging out with him.

Julian realizes that Axel is hitting on him. Julian can't help but be flattered and taken by the honest admission when he asks.

Axel tells Julian he's allowed to turn him down, just so long as he doesn't call him 'kid' when he does it. He admits to having a curiosity about Julian since his sophomore year at the academy.

Julian makes a smart-ass joke about Axel checking him out while he cleans toilets that Axel takes offense to. Julian apologizes.

Axel admits to finding Julian attractive and enjoying that he gets to tell him that, finally being of age to do so.

Julian asks if Axel's always this earnest, making the young man blush.

They flirt back and forth, sharing a moment.

Julian relents. It's fine if they stay. He doesn't like eating alone anyway...

INT. JULIAN'S CAR - MINUTES LATER

Julian is disappointed that Axel proclaims to be a White Sox fan. He thinks if anything, he should be a Cubs fan, like him.

Axel tells him that the main reason he's a White Sox fan is because his dad is, and he became one through osmosis.

They good-naturedly debate Sox and Cubs stats and players.

INT. JULIAN'S CAR - LATER

Axel tries to downplay the medal he got at graduation when Julian asks him about it.

But Julian is having none of it. He thinks it's cool Axel got a medal rewarding all his hard work; he played on the basketball team, the swim team, and was on the track team. That deserves recognition in his book.

Axel asks him if he's ever played sports in high school.

Julian played on the JV football team for a short while before dropping out of school halfway through his Junior year. He got his GED when he was 24 years old.

Julian tries hard not to look too embarrassed about it. But Axel smiles, looking very interested. He asks the older man what did he decide to do instead.

Julian says he took every penny he earned working at Blockbuster video, bought a plane ticket, and moved to Las Vegas to live with his wild older sister. Which unfortunately angered his mother.

Axel asks why he left Vegas.

Julian flirtatiously tells him he moved back to Chicago so he could sit in a Superdewg parking lot and talk to him.

EXT. ICE CREAM STAND - CONTINUOUS

Julian leans against the driver's side door as Axel approaches with two ice cream cones. He tells Julian to pick which one he wants.

Axel pouts that Julian chose the one he wanted and is teased about it.

Axel asks him to finish what he was saying earlier about fixing up his mother's house.

Julian casually downplays how he's attempting to remodel his childhood home, room by room. Axel, however, is impressed and thinks it sweet that he's taking on such a big project and found creative, money-saving ways to do it.

Julian mainly wants to do it for his mother. She's old and sickly; he wants her to enjoy whatever time she has left in her dream home.

Axel can't think of the last time he did something so thoughtless and kind for someone else...

He's 18 years old. How much could he do or have done for someone, Julian asks.

Axel shrugs. He doesn't know. But a little goes a long way, doesn't it?

Julian agrees.

But Axel also reminds the other man of what he's doing for his mother; grand gestures are good, too, he supposes.

INT. JULIAN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Julian and Axel share a pair of headphones, listening to something on Axel's phone.

Suddenly, Julian rips the headphone from his ear, not wanting to hear anymore.

Axel laughs.

Julian can't believe Axel listens to ghost stories before he goes to bed. That's horrifying.

But Axel finds them entertaining. They're just ghost stories, and he doesn't believe in ghosts so why should it scare him?

Julian, on the other hand, does believe in ghost. He's encountered one before.

Axel narrows his eyes, skeptical. Julian could either be yanking his chain, or actually serious. He asks about it.

Julian tells him the story of him seeing a ghost at a hotel in New Orleans he was staying at years ago:

It was a woman in an 19th century dress. She was sitting in the chair adjacent to his bed and crying her eyes out.

She said something to him that he couldn't make out, but looked as though she were wailing. She reached for him and he ran from the room all the way down to the lobby.

When he told the hotel's concierge he'd seen a ghost in his room, the concierge casually informed him the ghost's name was Rowena.

The hotel apparently used to be her ancestral home before being remodeled into a hotel.

As the story goes, Rowena was madly in love with her sister's husband, and he in love with her. They planned to run away together, but Rowena's sister found out and decided to kill her husband by poisoning him, so Rowena couldn't have him. Rowena was so upset her lover was dead, she killed herself, and now walks the corridors of the hotel, looking for him. She typically haunts single men staying at the hotel.

Seems Julian was prime for a visit then, Axel figures.

Julian admits how terrified he was. So terrified that he checked out of the hotel and into a Marriot that very night.

Axel laughs; Julian's serious, despite the humorous way in which he tells the story.

They share a moment...then tentatively lean in closer to each other for a kiss...

But Axel's cellphone RINGS, interrupting them. It's his dad. He answers, telling his dad that he's outside at the curb in his Lyft.

Axel rolls down his window and waves at his father who's watching from the window.

Axel apologizes, he has to go.

They sit awkwardly for a beat before Axel suggests Julian asks him out on a real date.

Julian obviously likes Axel, but he's a fucking teenager, and legal or not, he doesn't think they'd have much in common.

But Axel merely rolls his eyes at Julian's attempt at rejecting him. Is Julian too old for him? Maybe. But he clearly doesn't much care that he is.

Axel grabs Julian's phone, an old Nokia Go-phone, and programs his number in it. Then calls his own phone so he has Julian's number.

Julian is taken by him, but still doesn't think them dating would be a good idea. He tries to politely object again, but he's cut off by the chaste kiss Axel plants on his lips.

Axel says 'goodnight' then slips out of the car and toward his house.

Julian watches him until he's safely inside.

Fuck.

Julian turns the engine over and takes off down the quiet street.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - OFFICE - EARLY MORNING

MONTAGE

Julian empties the wastebaskets at each desk of the shared office space and in each closed office.

He cleans the windows in each office.

Julian restocks paper towels and toilet paper in the restrooms.

Julian dusts the framed artwork on the walls and waters the potted plant life.

END OF MONTAGE

He's replacing a florescent light bulb in a closed office when his cellphone RINGS.

It's Axel.

Julian can't help the smile on his face at seeing his name across the screen. He answers, teasing Axel.

INTERCUT-- PHONE CONVERSATION:

INT. AXEL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Alex is driving his brand new graduation gift. He's just come from having breakfast with his friends; two of which left for the summer to be camp counselors.

He called to ask where Julian is taking him on their first date.

Julian is hesitant about them actually going on a date.

Axel suggests something lowkey. But not a coffee date. They're past that. Besides, coffee dates are for guys you think might be creeps.

Julian wants to turn him down outright, but Axel's a bit too charming for his own good.

Julian hears the elevator doors DING. Employees are on their way to filing into the office floor.

Axel is still waiting for an answer as to when and where their date is going to be...

Julian suggests a diner, The Grill, in Long Grove, he goes to sometimes. For lunch.

Perfect. Nothing says lowkey like a lunch date at a quaint diner.

They hang up with plans for Saturday afternoon.

Axel SOUNDLESSLY SCREAMS with joy.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - GAIL'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Gail, dressed, sits comfortably in bed with a food tray over her lap and playing cards by her side.

Julian asks if she wants him to open the window or turn on the fan.

Gail points to the windows with her good hand.

Julian ties back the heavy curtains and opens both windows. But decides to turn on the floor fan in the corner anyway. He brings it as close to the bed as the cord will allow.

He mumbles to himself about what else Gail could need while he's out; mental checklist.

He then grabs the remote and sits it by her as well.

She gives him a curious look; he's nervous and erratic. She makes a sweeping motion with her hand, up and down his body, indicating something with him.

Julian insists he's fine.

She gives him as skeptical a look as she can.

He admits he has a date.

She smiles at him, her smile turns into a laugh at his visible nervousness.

Great. His mother is giving him grief. He kisses her cheek and EXITS.

Gail is still laughing.

EXT. THE GRILL, DINER - CONTINUOUS

Long Grove is one of those quaint, little Mayberry-like towns that's never changed. And seemingly very busy on a Saturday afternoon in June.

There's a line at every little restaurant and café on the main street. The longest line being at The Grill.

Julian spots Axel standing in line idly playing on his cellphone.

He hesitates-- if he turns around now, Axel will be none the wiser he was there...but he can't; that's mean and he kind of likes him already. So, he approaches him, playfully bumping his shoulder.

The grin of Axel's face is wide and adorable.

Julian passes everyone in line, ENTERING the diner. Axel follows.

The pass by the HOST who Julian says 'hello' to and take a seat at an open booth.

Axel jokes about Julian having clout at the greasy spoon seeing how they just past everyone in line to an empty table.

Their server, ODELLA, 50, a heavy-set black woman approaches their table.

Julian gets up to give her a hug.

Their booth is traditionally where Julian comes and has breakfast with his mother on Sunday mornings, but Odella held the table for him when he mentioned he'd be coming by today.

Odella takes notice that Axel is not Gail.

Julian tries to introduce them but Odella knows who Axel is already. She prays Axel is at least eighteen.

Axel promises her he is.



Odella gives Axel a cursory look before remarking that at least he's one of the nicer boys. She sets down some menus and EXITS.

Julian takes notice of Axel eyeing Odella curiously; he has no idea how Odella knows him.

Axel shakes his head. He doesn't.

Julian tells him that she's a lunch lady at the academy. She's been there for 20-odd years and works here, at the diner, during the summer when school's out. The hostess is her niece who's a housekeeper in the dorms.

Axel is genuinely embarrassed he didn't know/recognize her.

Julian tells him it's okay, he didn't expect him to.

Which also makes Axel itch, feeling like a passive-aggressive remark. But Axel lets it go, deciding to change the subject. He asks Julian what jobs he works during the summer since the school is closed until fall.

Julian's currently working as a custodian at the offices for the Chicago Tribune during the week, and Postmates and Lyft on the weekends. Food delivery and ride share gives him a more flexible schedule to spend time with his mom and work on the house since he pretty much makes his own hours.

Axel thanks Julian for blowing off work to spending time with him instead.

Julian says it isn't a hardship given he finds Axel "pleasantly delightful."

Axel tells him that's a terrible compliment and that it sounds like something you'd say about a Yorkshire Terrier.

Julian laughs. What's a more appropriate compliment then?

And Axel tells him a good compliment would be like telling Julian he has a very sexy smile.

Compliments from cute, young, rich boys apparently make the fortysomething janitor blush. So he picks up his menu and tells Axel all the things that are good and those that should never be ordered.

The corner of Axel's mouth turns up in a crooked, knowing grin.

He'll get whatever Julian is having.

INT. THE GRILL, DINER - LATER

Axel picks at the last remaining fries on his plate as Julian tells him about his time in Vegas:

He lived there for 20 years. He started out as a dishwasher at a fine-dining restaurant at the MGM Grand and worked his way up to Sous-chef. He loved being a Sous-chef but had to quit.

Working in a kitchen is stressful. Especially fine-dining in Vegas. It's not uncommon for people to develop tempers and lose their shit, acting stupidly.

What's even more common is staff gravitating toward unsavory habits and vices. Julian loved to cook but it turned him into an asshole, into someone he didn't like. So he decided to just leave food service all together.

Axel admits to not knowing anything about working in the service industry but he's got to believe with all jobs there are exceptions to the rule. Not all restaurants are hot beds of sex and drug use and power trips, right?

Julian agrees he might be right, but he willfully admits that his one rocky experience might be tainting the whole of the industry for him. But regardless, the hours at restaurants are long and often. His mother would be alone too much which he doesn't want. Custodian jobs are 7am to 3am, Monday through Friday. During those hours he can drop her off at a senior center and pick her up when his shift is over. And his gig jobs on the weekends he can do for a couple hours and then go home. It works out better for his mom this way.

Axel points out how busy a schedule that is.

Julian picks up on what's not said and mentions he can obviously make time for things he wants...

Axel picks at the fries left on Julian's plate now. He asks about his sister he mentioned.

Julian has no idea where she is. He hasn't seen her in 6 years, when their mother had a stroke. She stayed in Chicago for two days then left, leaving Julian to take care of Gail.

He thought she went back to Vegas but there was no trace of her. Last he saw her she mentioned Houston, but police weren't able to track her down there either.

Axel apologizes that that happened. It sounds scary to worry about someone like that.

Julian brushes it off; it's typical behavior for her as far as he's concerned. He stopped being angry or surprised by his sister's actions years ago.

Axel still feels bad he's had to go through that.

Julian lets a small smile grow on his face at Axel's empathy. He thinks he's far too nice for an only child.

Axel reveals he's a "miracle baby." Technically, his mom can't have kids, but somehow got lucky with him. But only with him. Every attempt afterward didn't end well.

Julian assumes his parents are overprotective and treat him like a prince.

Axel admits some of that may be true.

Julian asks if Axel's parents know he's gay.

Axel snorts. They threw him a 'Coming Out' party when he was ten and his whole class came.

Julian's father left when he was three years old, so he's grateful he's never had to tell him. According to his sister, he was a violent asshole, therefore, Julian dodged a bullet.

He did, however, tell Gail while living in Vegas. She cried over the phone and every time after that when he called, for months. It took a while, but she came around and was more accepting about his sexuality. It's been almost 8 years since he came out to her.

Axel likes that he takes such good care of his mom.

Julian shrugs; it's what he's supposed to do. It's his mother.

Axel finds Julian's humility very endearing.

INT. THE GRILL, DINER - LATER

Odella refills Julian's coffee as Axel tries to explain why he's taking a gap year.

He simply doesn't know what he wants to do for the rest of his life and thinks at eighteen it's an unfair question to ask someone to figure out.

Julian agrees. He asks what happens when his year is up and he still doesn't know if he wants to go to college.

Axel jokes that he'll run away to Wyoming and live off the grid.

Julian tells him if he's going to live off the grid he should do it in Montana instead. He recalls he couldn't afford a plane ticket to Vegas when he decided to move there, so he took a Greyhound bus. He fell asleep at the terminal and got on the wrong bus headed west. He ended up on the one taking a long, scenic route that went north before swooping down south. When they drove through Montana he was stunned at how beautiful it was.

Julian then waxes poetic about the nature there and the charming small towns.

Axel's never been but the way Julian describes it sounds worth a trip. He asks Julian if he decided to go would he come with him.

Julian laughs. Sure. Why not?

But Axel is serious.

Julian finds it odd how certain Axel is of him. How confident he is that they'll be an item.

Axel admits his attraction to Julian is mainly because he comes across as balanced.

Julian thinks that's a weird thing to say given most of the time he feels as though his head is barely above water.

Axel feels the same.

EXT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Julian and Axel climb the steps to the front porch. Julian has a Styrofoam to-go container in his hand.

Axel thanks him again for taking him out on a date.

They meander in awkward silence for a few beats...

Axel moves first, leaning into Julian. Their lips touch and their kissing.

Julian deepens the kiss while trying his best not to drop the tuna melt in his hand.

Axel gently breaks their kiss, telling Julian to ask him out on a second date.

Julian smiles; the boldness of this kid... He asks Axel out on a second date.

Axel tells Julian to call him. Julian promises he will.

He watches Axel descends the steps, get into his car, and drive off.

He's too old for a crush. Especially on a 18 year old rich boy, but he has one. Bad.

Julian EXITS, into the house.

MONTAGE

Axel Googles "free and/or cheap dates in Chicago."

Julian and Axel walk along The 606, talking.

Axel says 'goodnight' to Julian on his doorstep with a kiss.

They go to the movies. Julian has only enough money for one popcorn and one soda. He buys them and insists to Axel that he's fine when the younger man attempts to share.

They go bowling.

They say 'goodnight' on Julian's porch with an enthusiastic kiss.

Julian and Axel play basketball on a court at Union Park.

Julian talks to Axel over the phone on his lunch break.

They eat at The Grill.

Julian picks up Gail's meds at the pharmacy which cost him his last fifty bucks.

They try to play tennis at Union Park but their both terrible at it and can't stop laughing.

Axel talks to Julian on the phone at his house. His mother walks into the room; he leaves, trotting upstairs for privacy.

They wander around the wndr Museum.

Julian makes his mother breakfast then helps her onto the ADA charter bus.

Axel buys tickets to a Cubs game. He and Julian go to Wrigley Field and watch The Cubs play.

Julian and Axel make out vigorously on his front porch, hot and heavy.

Julian is nearly done with remodeling the upstairs bathroom.

They play Skee-ball at an arcade.

END OF MONTAGE

EXT. SIX FLAGS GREAT AMERICA - DAY

SUPERMAN: ULTIMATE FLIGHT RIDE

Ryder operates the ride with a CO-WORKER. Axel hangs with him, eating a popsicle shaped like a Looney Tunes character.

Ryder is stunned that Axel is dating not only a guy in his 40s, but the janitor from their school. He asks if their relationship is just a "summer thing."

Axel doesn't know. Too early to tell. He likes Julian a lot though. Maybe it could be more...

Ryder doubts it. He's being a little snobby about the whole thing which Axel doesn't appreciate.

Ryder apologizes. Guess the 4 years he spent surrounded by rich brats at the academy has unfortunately rubbed off on him in unsuspecting ways.

Axel accepts his apology.

Ryder doesn't remember the custodial staff. He asks Axel to show him a pic of Julian.

Axel shows him one.

He gives Axel a thumbs up that makes him smile.

He playfully shoves his friend and asks when is his break coming up.

INT. AXEL'S HOUSE - AXEL'S BEDROOM - MORNING

A mature bedroom for a teenage boy. Despite the Spiderman memorabilia all over the place.

Axel lies in his bed, scrolling through his phone. We see that he's looking at photos of him and Julian on their various dates.

He stops on a candid picture he took of Julian smiling happily at the arcade.

Axel's hand casually slips beneath the covers, masturbating, as he stares at the picture of Julian.

(3 beats)

Axel's door opens abruptly-- it's his mother, rambling about something regarding a repairman coming to look at their dishwasher.

Axel nearly jumps out of his skin, screaming at her to knock please.

Mrs. Kilbourne laughs, easily figuring out what she had interrupted. She teases him for a moment, then EXITS.

Axel, humiliated, is no longer in the mood to jerk off.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Julian slowly pushes a cart alongside his mother who's riding one of those mobility scooters the supermarket loans out while shopping.

Julian asks Gail if they got everything. She looks over their list; it is.

They make their way toward the check out lines...

They pass by the liquor section. Julian stops, fixated on a bottle of tequila.

Gail tugs on his pant leg. He snaps to and they get in a check-out line.

INT. SUPERMARKET - MINUTES LATER

The CASHIER rings up Julian and Gail's items.

Julian suddenly excuses himself in a hurry, promising to be back in a moment.

Gail is a little nervous, not knowing why/where he ran off to...

(5 beats)

Julian returns, out of breath, with the bottle of tequila he was contemplating earlier. He tells the cashier he's going to pay cash for the bottle, and rest will go on his debit card.

INT. AXEL'S HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Axel lies lazily on the sofa watching daytime TV.

His cellphone CHIMES. A text. From Julian. Who asks him over for dinner tonight.

Axel smiles, happily accepting the invitation.

Julian suggest he possibly stay for a "nightcap" as well.

Axel is confused. He doesn't know what a nightcap is... He Googles it, finding it's a euphemism for sex.

Yes. Yes, Axel would like to possibly stay for a nightcap after dinner, he text back...in all caps...with six exclamation points.

INT. CVS - CONTINUOUS

Axel hurries down the aisles until he reaches an aisle close to the pharmacy. He grabs a box of Fleet and a bottle of lube and heads up front to the registers.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Julian clears out the dining room of excessive junk, taking it back and forth to the 3rd floor attic.

SMASH CUT TO:

When the room is empty, he dons a pair of rubber gloves and cleans the walls, the chairs, the table, dusts the hutch and buffet, Windexes the windows, and then mops the floors.

CUT TO:

Gail approaches (she can walk, but when she does she drags her left leg). She makes a noise at him and points with her right hand all around the room.

Julian tells her he finally took all that "junk" to the attic where it belonged.

Her eyes narrow at him, curious...

He cracks under her glare: the guy he's been seeing, Axel, is coming over for dinner...and possibly to stay the night.

He promises they'll be quiet.

Gail laughs.



INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - MASTER BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Julian showers vigorously. Making sure he gets good and clean in...particular areas.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Julian checks on pots and pans simmering and cooking tonight's dinner. All of it delicious-looking.

The doorbell RINGS and Julian wipes his sweaty hands on his pants.

We FOLLOW him as he makes his way to the front door. He passes his mother, grinning at him, as he goes.

He opens the door to Axel on the other side, nicely dressed in a cool, casual outfit. There's a bottle of wine in his hands that he managed to swipe from his mother's wine cabinet.

Julian steps aside to let him in.

It's a little awkward for a moment with the both of them anticipating tonight, and Axel finally meeting Julian's mother. But they quickly get over it when Axel tells Julian an interesting factoid about hippos to break the ice.

Julian takes him to the LIVING ROOM to meet his mother.

Axel waits patiently as Gail gets up from the couch to say 'hello'.

She shoots Julian a nervous look regarding Axel. He's young. Really young.

Julian tells Axel to reassure his mother of his age.

He does, but that doesn't make it any better to her, as so evident by the smack upside the head she gives her son.

Axel laughs at it.

Gail shakes her head at Julian. She points to her mouth.

He tells her dinner will be ready soon.

Speaking of which, he has to go and check on it. He leaves Axel and his mother in the living room.

Gail returns to the couch. She motions for Axel to join her.

He does.

She looks at him, and shakes her head again.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gail laughs at a good-natured argument Julian and Axel have over Axel hustling the other man at a billiards hall downtown.

Gail taps Julian's hand and tries to say something.

Axel watches as they go back and forth with, Julian patiently trying to figure out what she's trying to communicate.

Eventually, Julian understands Gail is trying to ask Axel what his parents do for a living. Gail is relieved to finally be understood. Julian kisses the back of her hand; it may take a while but he'll get there with her. He always does.

Axel answers that his father is a literary agent and his mother is an orthodontist. Axel jokes that his parents work hard so he doesn't have to.

Gail seems impressed, but wary.

Julian mentions Axel was a day student at the academy and on scholarship, attempting to quell his mother's prudent glare regarding Axel's family having money. Or at least a lot more money than they have.

Their good time is staggering toward an awkward lull...until Axel makes a rich boy joke at his own expense.

It gets a relaxed laugh from Gail, which is what he was aiming for.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Axel is busy flipping through the records inside the vintage floor model stereo, still in pristine condition.

Julian trots down the stairs and ENTERS the room apologizing for it taking so long to help his mother get ready for bed.

Gail's sleeping but they can play a record softly.

Axel chooses one while Julian heads into the kitchen.

We FOLLOW him as he grabs two plastic tumblers and drops a giant ice cube in each glass. He pours two fingers of tequila from the bottle he bought from the store into each glass.

He RETURNS to the living room. Axel is playing Al Green's "Let's Stay Together" at a respectable volume.

Julian hands him one of the tumblers. They cheers and sip their respective drinks.

Axel takes his drink and meanders to the far wall, staring at old pictures of Julian, Gail, and Julian's sister. Julian joins him, pointing out a few and telling where and when they were taken.

The record plays the next track, "How Can You Mend a Broken Heart."

Axel sways to the music, moving closer to Julian. Julian admits to being a terrible dancer. Axel tells him to just kiss him then.

Julian kisses Axel, slow and meaningful.

Axel downs the rest of his drink.

Julian takes the empty glass from him and sets both their tumblers down on the coffee table. He brings Axel close and kisses him again.

Axel wraps his arms around Julian, falling into the sexy embrace. Julian's lips move to Axel's neck and bites.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - JULIAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Julian and Axel undress one another hurriedly.

They land in bed, kissing and touching each other everywhere.

Axel goes down on Julian. Julian is dangerously close to ending this for the both of them, so he stops Axel and pulls him close.

Axel settles comfortably underneath Julian as the older man grabs lube and a condom from his nightstand.

Julian puts the condom on as Axel squeezes lube into his palm. He takes Julian in his slick hand, stroking him, as they kiss wildly.

They make love, patient and sweet, until they climax together.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - JULIAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Julian wakes up abruptly in bed alone.

He checks the time-- he's close to being late for work and has definitely missed the ADA charter bus for Gail.

He scrambles out of bed.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Julian, half-dressed in his uniform, rushes down the stairs and into the living room.

He finds his mother and Axel on the sofa, each with a mug of tea, watching *Good Morning America* together.

Julian thought Axel left, went home. He's a little surprised to see him still there. Axel doesn't know why; he had no reason to leave. Unless Julian wanted him to go...

He didn't. Doesn't.

Julian's running late but he has enough time to drop Gail off at the senior center on his way to work.

She waves him off, not wanting to go.

Julian's certainly not going to leave her home alone for almost 9 hours. She's not a invalid, but she does need assistance with a few things, like bathing and eating. Therefore, leaving her by herself is not something he intends to do.

Axel offers to stay with Gail until Julian is done work.

Julian's not really a fan of that idea. Though they've been dating for the last month, entrusting his 18 year old lover (???) with the care of his frail mother doesn't sound smart.

Axel gets that but he'd love to help and Julian clearly needs some right now. He has no plans for the day and he's sure Gail would care for company.

Gail makes a shooing motion with her good hand at her son. She wants Axel to stay.

The longer Julian hesitates on the idea, the more he's making himself late for work...

He reminds them leftovers are in the fridge and that he wants Axel to text him every hour.

Gail GROANS; she's not baby.

Axel promises to look after Gail as he would.

Julian checks his watch... Axel insists he leave before he's late.

Julian backs out of the room, demanding he get a call about anything, anything at all. He finally EXITS.

Axel turns to Gail and asks if she gambles.

INT. THE GRILL, DINER - CONTINUOUS

Odella approaches the table to find Axel and Gail there.

Well...that's something... But it's not her business, so she says hello to Gail and takes their order.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - MEN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Julian hides in the handicap stall and checks his phone. He has a message from Axel.

It's a picture of him and Gail at The Grill eating lunch. Axel's making a goofy face in the picture.

Though the picture is sweet, Julian appears annoyed by it.

EXT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

Julian pulls into the driveway and climbs out of the car.

Axel and Gail are sunbathing in pool chairs on the front lawn, listening to music on a bluetooth speaker and drinking margaritas.

Axel jumps up to greet him. He's got an impossible grin on his face, while wearing really short bathing shorts, with a frozen margarita in his hand.

But Julian looks past the good time he and Gail are having to complain: his mother isn't allowed to drink, given the meds and the strict diet she's on.

Axel knows. Which is why her margarita is non-alcoholic.

Julian notices there's paint on Axel's hand.

Axel explains he noticed Julian ran out of paint for the bathroom he was redoing and bought some more. He finished it for him.

Julian snaps at Axel; he doesn't like that he took Gail out of the house, even if it was just to The Grill and the hardware store.

Axel didn't expect Julian would want them to stay cooped up in the house all day. Especially given it's hot and the house has no air conditioning.

Julian also doesn't like the shorts Axel is unabashedly wearing in public, on his front lawn no less.

Axel can't believe he's being chastised like this over nothing.

And thirdly, Julian doesn't like that Axel bought the paint and completed his project for him. Which leads into a rant of him revealing he knows Axel purposefully chooses inexpensive dates for them to go on, knowing Julian can't afford the places he assumes Axel is accustomed to going.

Axel has no idea where this is all coming from, especially after they spent the night together for the first time last night.

He calls Julian an asshole and storms inside the house.

Gail scowls at her son and YELLS at him. He tells her to stay out of it.

Axel rushes from the house, half-dressed and pissed. He throws a receipt for the paint and pool chairs at Julian, telling him to feel free and pay him back. He says goodbye to Gail then jumps into his car.

Julian watches as Axel turns the engine over and takes off down the street.

INT. AXEL'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

FRONT DOOR

Axel burst into the house, angry.

His mother is there, reprimanding him about being out for almost 2 days without her knowing where he is, or calling to tell her he's safe. They give him so much freedom because they trust him. She warns him not to break that trust.

He apologizes and promises to check-in next time. Every time.

Mrs. Kilbourne accepts his apology. She takes notice of the solemn look on his face. She asks if he's okay.

He tells her he was with a friend, but they got into a fight so he left.

He's not going to elaborate, and she's not going to pry, so Axel excuses himself and heads upstairs.

Mrs. Kilbourne calls her husband to tell him Axel is home, safe and sound.

INT. AXEL'S HOUSE - AXEL'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT, CONTINUOUS

Axel lies awake in bed, the room dark and quiet.

(3 beats)

Axel's phone VIBRATES on his nightstand. He grabs it and sees it's Julian calling him.

He immediately tells Julian to apologize to him.

The other man does, without hesitation. He thanks Axel for taking care of his mother for him, and loves that they get along so well. He also thanks him for finishing the bathroom for him.

Axel asks him if he makes it a habit to lash out, lose his temper, with the men he dates.

No. Never. He doesn't know why he acted like that with Axel.

Julian admits he hasn't properly dated someone in years, since Gail had her stroke and he moved back to Illinois. And everyone he's been with before then he wasn't with long enough to consider more than just a fling.

Axel might be his first, real relationship...which he finds pathetic.

Axel doesn't. He likes that they're both new to this, and wants it to work out between them.

He makes a joke about them officially being boyfriends, so now he can scribble Julian's name all over his notebooks with crooked hearts.

Julian laughs.

He apologizes once more.

Axel tells him he's forgiven.

EXT. BROADWAY AVE - DAY

Julian, Axel, and Gail are in their silliest PRIDE-wear, watching the lively, rainbow parade make its way down Michigan Ave. downtown.

A DRAG QUEEN walking along side one of the many floats, spots Julian. She gives him a big kiss then drapes a ton of beads around his neck.

Axel laughs, asking if he knows her. He doesn't, which makes Julian laugh again.

He helps Julian wipe the giant, red lip print off his mouth, then kisses him.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - GAIL'S ROOM - NIGHT, CONTINUOUS

Gail is sound asleep, still in her clothes/costume from PRIDE.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - JULIAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Axel lies atop the bed, on his stomach, in the dark. The rainbow colored beads Julian was wearing are now around his neck, shimmering in the moonlight with the glitter and perspiration covering his naked body.

He MOANS SOFTLY, biting his lip, burying his face into the bedding as Julian rims him until he comes.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Axel is sitting on the couch beside Gail. He's reading a book while she watches her favorite show *Say Yes To the Dress*.

Gail makes a noise and motions at the TV.

Axel lifts his head and looks at the TV. He comments on the wedding dress someone is wearing, then rolls his eyes back down to his book.

Gail smacks his foot and makes unintelligible noises again, pointing to the TV.

Axel tries to guess what she's attempting to tell him about the show, but his failure to understand is making them both frustrated.

Gail gives up, annoyed.



Axel's afraid he's hurt her feelings. This isn't the first time he's failed to understand her...

Axel puts his book down and EXITS.

(3 beats)

He returns, wearing flip-flops and pushing Gail's wheelchair. He tells her they're going to the mall.

INT. MALL - APPLE STORE - CONTINUOUS

Axel purchases an iPad.

When the CLERK hands the bag to Axel he turns to Gail with his finger at his lips.

It's a secret. Their secret.

Gail smirks.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Axel and Gail laugh as he does a miserable job of painting her toe nails.

Julian returns home from work and ENTERS. He pecks his mother's cheek then kisses Axel.

A ROBOTIC FEMALE VOICE (Siri) says "**Hello, son**" to Julian.

He looks down and sees the iPad in his mother's lap. He asks about it.

Axel lies and says it's his and that his parents gave it to him two Christmases ago but he never uses it. So now it's for Gail so he can communicate with her.

Gail nods, going along with the lie.

Julian is suspicious but neither Axel nor Gail give anything away.

With no choice but to believe them, he thanks Axel for the gift and calls it "cool." He heads upstairs to take a shower.

Gail types something on the iPad. Siri says "**sneaky boy.**"

Axel grins but tells her to hush.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - DAY

Axel helps Julian remove the hideous wallpaper from the walls. The vinegar smell is a lot, so Axel opens the windows.

He looks down and calls to Gail, sunbathing on the front lawn, with her non-alcoholic margarita and Axel's bluetooth speaker playing classic rock.

She looks up and he waves to her. She waves back with a smile.

Axel asks what are they to do now that they've removed all the wallpaper. Julian tells him they have to spray the walls with hot water to get the adhesive layer off.

They each grab a plastic spray bottle and soak the walls with the hot water solution.

Axel asks Julian what his plans are for Halloween.

Feels like a random question, but Julian answers anyway: nothing. Which is the same thing he does every year. He doesn't live in the type of neighborhood in which kids go Trick-or-Treating, he doesn't like working because asshole teenagers are out looking for trouble, and he's outgrown the wild costume parties of his twenties.

Perfect. Then Julian and Gail can spend Axel's 19th birthday with him.

Julian finds it amusing that Halloween is Axel's birthday. And also that he doesn't have plans.

Axel never has plans. Any time he tries to make them with friends they either find better things to do that day, or try to turn his birthday into a Halloween-themed party, which he hates.

And his parents, for the last 4 years, have spent his birthday attending the extravagant Halloween party thrown by the CEO of Mr. Kilbourne's publishing house.

Julian's a little heartbroken Axel's only eighteen and hates his birthday. He pulls him close and promises to bake him a cake and watch every Spiderman movie with him on his birthday.

Axel kisses him. He'd love that.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - LOBBY - DAY

LADDER

Julian is atop a very tall ladder changing a light bulb near the reception desk.

His cellphone PINGS. It's a text from Horace, asking if Julian still plans to swing by his house tomorrow.

Julian text back yes, then asks if he can bring someone.

EXT. MICHIGAN AVE - DAY

A Fourth of July parade in downtown Chicago!

It's a huge affair coated in red, white, and blue.

The sun is out and everyone is having a good time...except for Axel, who keeps nervously checking the time on his phone.

His dad takes notice and asks if he's got somewhere to be.

He does. He told a friend he'd meet him later and doesn't want to be late, but this parade seems endless.

His dad's a little bothered by Axel wanting to leave; they go to the parade every year as a family. Axel loves it. Or he used to...

Axel feels guilty and decides to stay a little longer to please his parents. But will leave before the fireworks.

His dad asks if he could meet up with his friend after fireworks at Navy Pier, but Axel says no.

Mrs. Kilbourne intervenes before it gets ugly, telling Axel it's okay if he wants to watch the fireworks with friends.

Axel thanks his mother. He turns back to the parade but he's not paying attention, too busy texting Julian.

Mr. Kilbourne tries to argue but she shuts him down. She whispers in his ear and Mr. Kilbourne quiets, eyes on his son with a grin.

They figure out he's seeing someone...

EXT. STREET - NIGHT, CONTINUOUS

A block party. It's a busy event, filled mostly with black and brown people, in a poor neighborhood, but don't tell them that; they're having the time of their lives grilling, dancing, and socializing.

Axel hurries down the street, looking for Julian.

He finds him, hanging out with Horace and the rest of the custodian, kitchen, and housekeeping staff from the academy.

Julian's happy he made it, but Axel's too focused on everyone else knowing who he is and giving each other side glances.

Nervous, he asks if anyone's interested in knowing how fast an ostrich can run...

Odella chuckles at his awkwardness.

Axel is saved by the sudden display of fireworks in the air.

Julian pulls him close as they watch with the whole neighborhood.

INT. SPORTS BAR - DAY

A smoky sports bar of BLUE COLLAR PATRONS and a tattooed BARMAID, with dyed hair and ample cleavage, occupy the local space.

BAR TOP

Horace thinks Julian seeing Axel is a bad idea. He's a rich kid that's barely legal. Not to mention, Julian works at the school he went to.

Horace knows Julian just started dating Axel and he's of age, but the whole thing has bad optics with bad consequences on the way.

Julian knows it might not look great, but nothing inappropriate happened between them when Axel was a student at the academy.

They're both consenting adults and Axel is the one that made the first move. Julian tried to turn him down but Axel was persistent with his consent.

Besides, he likes him. They're having fun together.

Horace feels it's his duty to warn his friend. He believes the whole situation isn't going to end well for Julian and that he might just end up with no job and a broken heart.

Julian highly doubts he's going to get his heart broken. Like he said, he and Axel are only having fun. It's not serious between them.

Horace is skeptical, but drinks his beer in silence, watching the White Sox lose on the TV.

EXT. HOUSE - EVENING

FRONT DOOR

Julian approaches with a take-out order. He RINGS the doorbell and waits.

(long beat)

The door opens and a MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN holding a glass of white wine stands on the other side.

They greet each other politely before Julian rattles off her order for confirmation.

Another woman appears behind her-- Mrs. Kilbourne, Axel's mom. She, too, is drinking a hefty glass of wine and is laughing hysterically about the book in her other hand.

She and Julian smile politely at one another as the other woman checks the containers of her order, claiming last time someone forgot the mozzarella sticks and garlic bread she asked for.

The order is correct. The woman and Mrs. Kilbourne thank Julian and slide back into the house.

Julian can hear the LAUGHING GAGGLE of several women further into the house as they close the door.

Julian heads back to his car at the curb.

EXT. OAK STREET BEACH - DAY

Julian walks along the hot sand carrying three snowcones and a giant pretzel.

He heads to where he left his mother and Axel; Axel's putting sunscreen on Gail's arms and legs.

A BLACK MAN walks past him, stops, then calls out to him.

He turns and smiles, recognizing the man-- DION, 40.

They're old friends. Haven't seen each other since Vegas.

Julian asks how he's doing and the man says great. He's been clean and sober for 4 years now.

Julian mentions he hasn't been in the same vicinity as an illegal substance since moving back to Illinois to take care of his mom.

His friend asks him what he's doing for a living now. Julian gives an evasive answer.

His friend tells him he's now the head chef at an upscale jazz supper club here in Chicago. He would love to have Julian come work in his kitchen. They were always great together and he could really use Julian's help in straightening out his novice staff.

It's tempting, but Julian remembers the chaos of working in a kitchen and the actions it lead him to. He doesn't know if going back to that is a good idea. Plus, the long hours are no good for caring for his mother.

His friend is a little disappointed but tells Julian to call him if he ever changes his mind. He still has the same number.

They hug and his friend EXITS.

It feels like a missed opportunity, but Julian's made his decision.

The snowcones begin to drip over his hand. He heads back toward Axel and his mother.

He watches as Axel carefully leads her into the water. A big wave crashes into them, but Axel's got her, and they laugh.

Julian smiles. He's officially in love with this kid.

EXT. O'HARE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DEPARTURES - DAWN

DROP-OFF ZONE

Axel helps his parents get their bags from the trunk of his car.

Mrs. Kilbourne runs down a laundry list of things to do in case of an emergency and where to reach them at the resort.

Axel knows the drill. This isn't the first time they've gone out of town without him.

His father tells him to limit the number of people he has over while he's gone. No parties.

Axel's not the type so the stern warning has no affect on him.

An OFFICER tells Axel to hurry up and move his car.

His parents quickly hug and kiss him 'goodbye' then rush into the airport, spouting 'I love yous'.

Axel jumps back into his car and maneuvers from the drop-off zone and into traffic.

EXT. AXEL'S HOUSE - PATIO - CONTINUOUS

POOL

Axel holds Gail afloat, gently swirling her around in the water, much to her joy.

Julian sits on a pool chair, enjoying the summer sun and picking at the charcuterie board beside him.

INT. AXEL'S HOUSE - AXEL'S BEDROOM - SUNSET, CONTINUOUS

Axel is passed out, naked, in bed. Julian lies beside him, staring at the ceiling.

His eyes wander to everything around the room: pictures, awards, trophies, a desktop and laptop, walk-in closet, and his own bathroom...

He sits up, grabs his clothes off the floor, and dresses. He quietly EXITS the room.

We FOLLOW him as he checks on his mother, asleep in a guest room.

INT. AXEL'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Julian wanders around every room in the house: the master bedroom, Mr. Kilbourne's office, the guest rooms, the living room, laundry room, basement game room, kitchen, and garage.

He's just looking, taking in how everything is neat, clean, and more than he could ever afford.

It's admirable and nice, but intimidating as well...

INT. AXEL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Axel watches in fascination as Julian moves about the kitchen cooking expertly.

He announces to Julian that he thinks he finally knows what he wants to do for living, what he wants to major in when he goes to college-- geriatric care.

Julian's happy he's figured it out, and seems excited about it, but he doesn't know if it'll be a good idea as his career choice.

Axel's taken aback and wants to know why Julian is trying to talk him out of it.

Julian explains that geriatric care is stressful and depressing; patients die more than most. They're full of ailments that just progressively get worse because of their age, there's a lack of money and attention to the field by financial institutions, and patients can be erratic and unpredictable as they lose cognitive functions.

Julian's tone unfortunately gives the impression he doesn't believe Axel is mature enough to handle it all.

Axel understands all that, and he knows he's the type of person to become attached to his patients, but that's better than neglecting them or abusing them. Which is something that runs rampant in that field.

He's disappointed Julian isn't as supportive as he thought he'd be.

Julian tries to apologize but Axel doesn't want to hear it. He storms off to get Gail washed and dressed for dinner.

INT. AXEL'S HOUSE - AXEL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Julian and Axel lie in bed. Neither of them are asleep; backs to each other with their fight on their minds...

(3 beats)

Julian grabs Axel's arm and turns him over. He apologizes and tells Axel he thinks he'll make a great home health aide.

Axel explains he doesn't want to be a home health aide necessarily. He wants to start off there but eventually move into geriatric speech/language pathology, or physical therapy.

Julian likes knowing Axel spending time with his mother is what spurred this on. His boyfriend wants to be a doctor that helps elderly people like his mom.

Julian thinks Axel will make an amazing doctor.

Axel understood Julian's concern. He just wishes he presented it better. He made Axel feel stupid and thoughtless. Which is inaccurate given the level of great thought Axel put into his decision.



Julian apologizes again and kisses Axel.

There kissing leads to touching and their touching leads to love making...

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - COURTYARD - DAY

Julian unpacks the meal prep lunch Axel made him. There's a cute, little note inside that makes him smile.

It looks good. Really good. Julian takes a bite-- and immediately spits it out.

He apparently needs to do a better job teaching his boyfriend how to cook. Especially chicken. Because it's raw in the center.

INT. AXEL'S HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Julian is lounging on the sofa, nursing a beer. He's supposed to be watching TV, but he's distracted.

JULIAN'S POV - AXEL

He watches his boyfriend and mother play a hand of Gin Rummy at the kitchen table. They're laughing and having a good time.

He smiles, making moon-eyes at Axel. The two most important people in his life love each other, and it makes him happy.

EXT. AXEL'S HOUSE - PATIO - NIGHT

POOL

Julian and Axel are having sex. There's an empty bottle of tequila and two plastic cups on the pool deck beside them.

Axel tells Julian he loves him.

Julian says it back.

EXT. O'HARE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - ARRIVALS - DAY

Axel picks his parents up from the airport.

They're tan and happy but a little exhausted. Like everyone when they come back from a vacation.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

FRONT DOOR

Julian opens the door and wheels Gail inside.

Home sweet home...

They love their home, but it was nice being at Axel's luxury house with it's contemporary style and latest tech and pool...

Julian asks his mother where she wants to be while he gets started on lunch.

She points to the living room.

Julian puts the breaks on her wheelchair and helps her into the living room.

INT. AXEL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Axel asks his parents how they liked the Caribbean.

They enjoyed themselves and had a great time celebrating their anniversary.

Axel attempts to ask them more about the Virgin Islands, but they seem more focused on asking Axel questions about what he's been up to the last week...

Axel tries to be vague but they're not letting him.

Finally, Mr. Kilbourne tells his son they know he's seeing someone.

Axel reluctantly admits he's dating someone. Someone he likes a lot, but is not ready for them to meet. He does tell them Julian's name and that he did spend the week with him at their house while they were away. He promises they cleaned up after themselves.

His dad tries to ask questions about Julian but Axel says he's not ready to go into detail about his boyfriend with them.

They seem to accept this answer, but Axel can feel them squirming.

Axel decides to answer his parent's unspoken question: yes, they have sex, no, he was not pressured, and yes, they wear condoms when they do.

They're relieved.

INT. JULIAN'S CAR - NIGHT

Axel rides shotgun with Julian as he drops off a Lyft ride of TWO DRUNK GIRLS who can't stop commenting on how "cute" they are as a couple.

Julian gets a text for another ride.

He catches Axel YAWNING. He's going to turn it down to take Axel home, but Axel insists he accept the ride.

Julian promises to take this last ride then they'll go home.

INT. JULIAN'S CAR - MINUTES LATER

Julian pulls up to a frat house near Loyola campus.

There's TWO DRUNK GUYS at the curb goofing around.

Julian HONKS at them.

They quit dicking around and approach the car. Julian rolls down the window. He asks if one of the boys is MARK.

The taller boy says he's Mark and climbs in the backseat.

Axel is taken by surprise that his ex-boyfriend and his best friend have just climbed into Julian's Lyft.

Mark tries to drunkenly make conversation with Axel but he's not in the mood for it; it's almost two in the morning, he's tired, and his arrogant ex breathing whiskey-soaked breath into his face is not how he'd like to cap off his late night.

Julian picks up on Axel's annoyance and tells Mark to sit back in his seat and leave his "other passenger" alone.

Mark then recognizes Julian-- the janitor from school. He embarrasses Axel by crudely mentioning the crush Axel had on Julian while at school. He teasingly asks if they're a couple.

Their silence answers for them. Much to Mark's amusement.

Julian pulls the car over and tells Mark and his friend to get out.

Mark scoffs and refuses.

Julian tells him to get out now before he drags him out of his car.

Mark gets rich boy snooty and insults Julian--

Axel punches Mark in the face, causing a bloody nose. He screams at him to get out of the car.

Mark insults Julian and Axel, but gets out of the Lyft nonetheless. His friend follows, apologizing as he goes.

Julian pulls back into the street and speeds toward home.

(3 beats)

Julian can't help but to laugh.

Axel doesn't find it funny. He might've cost Julian his ride-sharing gig, he hated running into his shitty ex, and his hand hurts.

Julian takes Axel's hand and kisses his sore knuckles.

There are other gig jobs he can get. Watching him punch Mark was worth it.

EXT. DASH'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

DRIVEWAY

Axel's parents are upper middle class Gen-Xers with some money. But Dash's family is *wealthy*.

As so noted by the mansion behind them.

Axel and Dash hug tightly. They're going to miss each other. A lot. But Dash'll be back for Thanksgiving and winter break.

Axel and Ryder do a secret, complicated handshake before hugging. He, too, will be back during the holidays from Notre Dame, which isn't that far from Chicago. So if Axel wanted, he could come visit.

Axel promises to take the train to Indiana for a visit right before Thanksgiving so they can come home together for the holiday.

Leilani (her hair now a light blue color) is all tears as she and Axel hug 'goodbye'.

Axel's a little misty-eyed himself. Because she's going to UCLA in California, and there's no telling when he'll ever see her again.

She tells Axel she's angry he's not going with her. He should be going to UCLA with her. Or at least Stanford.

He pecks her cheek and tells her to text and email him, no matter the time of day or how often. She promises she will.

The four of them group hug.

Their PARENTS quickly snap pictures with their camera phones.

DASH'S FATHER politely interrupts; they have to get going so they can get Dash on his flight to New York.

They reluctantly break up their group hug.

Dash climbs into his parents' car. Ryder climbs into his parents' car, too.

Axel and Leilani wave to them as they drive away...

A Lyft is waiting for Leilani. To take her to the airport. Her parents are going to meet her in SoCal, she explains to Mr. and Mrs. Kilbourne.

Axel and Leilani give each other one last hug.

He WHISPERS something in her ear that makes her laugh.

They part.

She waves tearfully to him before getting into her ride.

Axel watches a little mournfully as the car takes off down the street...

Mr. Kilbourne pats Axel on his shoulder. He tells him it's a shame he's not off to college like his friends.

Axel rolls his eyes and heads to his car.

Mrs. Kilbourne smacks her husband's arm; his comment wasn't necessary.

She asks Axel if he'll be home for dinner.

He won't.

They watch as he drives off.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - JULIAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT, CONTINUOUS

Julian sits on the bed, shedding his uniform.

Axel ENTERS the room. His T-shirt has a giant wet stain on the front. Apparently, Gail thought it'd be funny to splash him with water while he tried bathing her.

Julian laughs at him.

He asks Axel what he did today with his mother.

Axel smiles. They're like an old married couple with their "How was your day?" questions.

Julian shrugs. He doesn't mind that.

Neither does Axel.

Axel takes his wet clothes off and climbs into Julian's lap. He's missed him. He bites his neck and asks him to take a shower with him.

Now how could Julian ever turn down such an invitation...?

INT. AXEL'S HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Mr. And Mrs. Kilbourne are watching a movie on TV. Or at least Mrs. Kilbourne is. Mr. Kilbourne is on his laptop paying bills.

He takes notice of an expensive charge on Axel's credit card bill...from the Apple store.

He asks Mrs. Kilbourne about it and she has no clue.

There's also several charges to Lowe's hardware superstore that has them curious.

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

TABLE

Axel sits at a table with his laptop, surrounded by library books.

He takes notes between the information on his computer and the open books in front of him. All on geriatric medicine and care.

INT. AXEL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mr. and Mrs. Kilbourne sit in the living room, waiting...

They hear the front door OPEN, then CLOSE. Axel shouts into the house that he's home.

His dad ask him to come into the living room.

Axel ENTERS. He takes a seat in the armchair adjacent to them.

His father gets right to it: he wants to know about the charges on Axel's credit card.

Axel admits they're things he bought for his boyfriend. The hardware store purchases are because Julian is remodeling his mother's house. And the iPad was for Gail; there's an app on it that speaks whatever she types, so he can communicate with her.

They find his generosity sweet, but he should have asked them first before making such big and frequent purchases. They also want to know how old his boyfriend is considering he has a house and sick mother to take care of.

Axel vaguely tells them Julian is older than him by a few years.

They also don't appreciate Axel coming and going as he pleases for days on end.

Mrs. Kilbourne thinks it's time they meet Axel's boyfriend. They let him have his privacy for three months, but it seems Axel's serious about Julian, therefore, they should meet him.

Axel's not ready for that, but he knows they're right, and they'll never let up until he does introduce them to Julian... So he agrees for them to meet his boyfriend.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - JULIAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Axel waits on the bed, nervously biting at his nails.

Julian ENTERS from the adjoining bathroom, drying himself off with a big, fluffy towel.

Julian rips the Band-Aid off and tells Julian he needs him to do something for him.

Julian asks what it is, and Axel tells him he needs to have dinner with his parents. Soon.

Julian is more than a little hesitant in agreeing.

Axel gets hesitation but his parents are demanding to meet him. They can't stop them from seeing one another but they could make it difficult.

Besides, he's starting to warm up to the idea of Julian meeting his family...

Julian thinks Axel is wearing rose-colored glasses about all this. He has no faith a meeting/dinner with Axel's parents will go well.

As nerve-wracking as it is, Axel loves his parents and knows them. They're good people and they'll like Julian. He's talked to them about him, but now they want to meet.

Axel suggests Gail come, too, but Julian immediately dismisses that idea.

Julian is still on the fence...

But the anticipatory, hopeful look on Axel's face melts Julian's resolve. He reluctantly agrees to have dinner with Axel's parents.

Axel is all smiles. And gratitude... He falls to his knees, removing the towel around Julian's waist to show him just how grateful he is...

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - JULIAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

CLOSET

Julian peels off two hundred dollar bills from his secret stash from a coffee can under the floorboards.

INT. MACY'S DEPARTMENT STORE - CONTINUOUS

MEN'S WARDROBE

There are Labor Day signs, posters, and banners hanging everywhere.

Julian is trying to decide between the last of an expensive button-down his size not on sale, and a button-down just below his size that is on sale.

Fuck it. He goes with the shirt just his size.



INT. AXEL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mrs. Kilbourne busies about the kitchen cooking dinner while Mr. Kilbourne pours them both a glass of wine.

Axel sits at the island, nervously biting his nails and shaking his leg, as he stares toward the front door.

(5 beats)

The doorbell RINGS. Axel bolts from his chair to the foyer.

Mr. And Mrs. Kilbourne find it amusingly cute just how nervous their son is about them meeting his boyfriend.

...That is until Axel returns to the kitchen with a well-dressed Julian.

Their mouths hang open, stunned at the older man being introduced to them.

Mrs. Kilbourne is so distracted she doesn't notice the dishtowel catching fire on the stove.

Mr. Kilbourne manages to grab it and toss it into the sink, running water over the charred fabric.

Perfect. This is a great way to kick off dinner...

INT. AXEL'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Julian, Axel, and Axel's parents are eating in uncomfortable silence. The sound of clicking utensils scraping against plates sounds so loud...

Axel tries to relieve some of the awkwardness by telling his parents Julian used to live in Vegas and was a chef when living there.

Mrs. Kilbourne assumes Julian is still a chef and politely asks what restaurant he works at now.

Julian corrects her. He's a custodian.

Mr. And Mrs. Kilbourne exchange worried glances.

Julian also divulges he works for Postmates and Lyft on the weekends just to needle at their elitetist attitudes.

Mrs. Kilbourne remembers Julian delivering food to her book club. She wants to know how he and Axel's paths crossed...

Axel innocently explains that Julian is a custodian at the academy and they started dating after graduation.

That's it. That's enough. It's all Mr. Kilbourne needs to fly into a rage about the nature of Julian and Axel's relationship. Julian's too old for his son and too financially unstable to take care of him. And he finds it somewhat predatory how their relationship came to be.

Axel insists he's the one that pursued Julian and there was nothing inappropriate going on between them when Axel was a student.

Julian thinks Axel is adult enough to make up his mind about whoever he wants to date.

Mr. Kilbourne accuses Axel of being shiftless and aloof and tells Julian that continuing a relationship with Axel is pointless; he's just going to change his mind in a week, or worse when it's too late and Julian's already invested.

Axel is hurt and angry his father would not only say that, but believe it. That isn't true and his parents only feel that way because he doesn't always go in the direction they want him to go.

Julian knows that. He knows Axel's not a flake. A flake doesn't spend 4 years getting high marks and playing 3 different sports. A flake, or indecisive person, doesn't figure out their career path in 3 months when their parents have given them a full year to do so.

Axel's parents had no idea he'd chosen a profession to go after.

Axel explains to them that he wants to specialize in geriatric medicine, but he's first going to get certified as a home care worker.

His father wants to know how he came to this decision.

Spending so much time with Gail and helping Julian care for her, he realized older people don't get the attention to care they need. They're neglected by doctors and family.

Mr. Kilbourne is happy Axel's found a direction but he doesn't like how Julian "used" his son to babysit his mother for free under the guise of a relationship.

Julian is pissed. He's been taking care of his mother for years, just fine without Axel. Axel volunteered to help care for his mother because he wanted to and he and Gail have developed a friendship that's mutual and sweet and respectful.

First, Axel's a flighty twink and now Julian is a con man. Axel can't believe his parents are being such snobs, turning their nose up at his relationship with Julian.

Mrs. Kilbourne tries to explain why she and her husband are so upset and stunned by their son dating a janitor in his 40s he met at school.

Mr. Kilbourne thinks Julian is grifting his "young and impressionable" son, referring to the purchases from the hardware store and the iPad.

Axel hates the false picture his father has been painting of him all night.

Julian curses at Mr. Kilbourne, breaks from the table, and drags Axel outside to the patio. He closes the door behind them.

Mr. Kilbourne attempts to go after them but his wife holds him back, insisting he stay at the table.

He sits back down, staring out the doors at his son.

PATIO

Julian is boiling with anger. Mr. Kilbourne's accused him of being a pedophile, user, and thief. He's been called worse, but not by a boyfriend's father.

He's also angry Axel lied to him about the iPad, and nor did he prepare his parents for how old Julian is and how they met.

Axel apologizes.

Julian asks him if all of this is just some childish attempt at rebelling against his parents' expectations, or being provocative, wanting a reaction from them.

Axel can't believe Julian would even ask that. Which is why he tearfully slaps him across the face!

Julian takes his hit silently. He knows he deserved it.

They stand in hurtful silence for a while... crickets and katydids CHIRPING loudly in the grass...

This dinner was a disaster. Julian figured it wouldn't go great but not this bad.

Axel explains why he lied about the iPad: he knew Julian would be angry that he bought Gail such an expensive gift.

He can tell, in the small things-- a comment here, a comment there-- how much it bothers Julian that he can't afford certain things or to go to certain places. How sometimes their relationship, as limited as it is, is a financial burden on him.

Julian doesn't believe any of the things Mr. Kilbourne accused Axel of being are true...but eventually they will be. One day, Axel isn't going to want him anymore. And it'll devastate him because he always wants Axel. He wants to keep him, but knows Axel's too young to be kept. And not in any way Julian can afford. Horace warned him he'd get hurt...

As much as he wants to punch Axel's father in the face right now, he thinks it's cool how hard his dad is trying to show his gay son he can do better.

All his dad did was highlight the problems of their relationship they naively thought they could ignore. Hence, Axel lying about the iPad.

Axel sees where this is going. He refuses to let Julian break up with him. Especially like this.

Axel loves his parents but they don't own him. He's 18 and can move forward with Julian without their so-called blessing/permission.

It's not just about their approval. If it was, Julian could ignore their scowls and take Axel home with him.

Axel wants to leave with Julian.

Julian tells Axel this is the best summer he's ever had...

Axel doesn't believe any of the things his dad said about Julian either, which is why he's heartbroken that Julian's acting like they're true.

Axel slams open the patio doors and runs inside.

KITCHEN

Axel rushes off to his bedroom.

Julian steps inside the house and closes the patio doors behind him.

Axel's parents stand anxiously not knowing what to do next.

OS, Axel's bedroom door SLAMS shut!

Julian tells Mrs. Kilbourne her chicken was dry and asparagus wilted, but other than that, they should definitely have dinner again sometime, he quips.

Julian EXITS.

OS, the front door OPENS then CLOSES.

Mrs. Kilbourne hurries upstairs to her son.

Mr. Kilbourne pours himself the biggest glass of wine.

Fuck.

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - GAIL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Julian tells Gail the dinner was a disaster and that he and Axel broke up.

She's upset, but more so for her sorrowful son that's fighting back tears.

He lets her pull him into her arms for a moment. She kisses the top of his head.

He manages a smile and thanks her. He's going to shower then go to bed.

Julian EXITS.

EXT. WILLIAM B. OGDEN ACADEMY - MAIN HALL - EARLY MORNING

The CUSTODIAL STAFF smoke cigarettes, bracing themselves for the first day of school that will descend upon them soon. Julian is among them.

INT. AXEL'S HOUSE - AXEL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The shades are drawn, room dark, but we can make out Axel lying in bed.

He looks awful, distraught, as he stares at nothing. Julian breaking up with him hurt like hell.

There's a SOFT KNOCK on the other side of the closed door.

The handle JIGGLES a little; one of his parents trying to get in, but the door is locked.

Axel pulls his blankets over his head, ignoring them.

## MONTAGE

Julian waves to Gail as the ADA bus heads down the street to the senior center.

Mrs. Kilbourne sees the food tray she left outside Axel's door has been untouched.

Julian quietly eats lunch with Horace and Carlos.

Axel miserably thumbs through pictures of he and Julian on his phone.

Julian scowls in the rearview mirror at his Lyft clients making out in his backseat.

Again, Mrs. Kilbourne takes notice of the untouched food tray she left outside Axel's bedroom door.

Julian is making Gail breakfast. He takes notice of her playing a game on the iPad Axel bought her. He rolls his eyes.

Axel receives a What's App message from Gail, simply asking "are you okay?" He closes the app.

Julian and Gail play Gin Rummy. Julian tallies the score in a small note pad. He pauses at all the entries left by Axel.

Mr. Kilbourne tries to barge his way into Axel's room, but the door won't give. Axel's desk chair is propped up against the door handle. Mr. Kilbourne receives a text message. It's Axel telling them to please leave him alone.

Julian and Gail watch TV together. Or at least Gail is watching TV. Julian is staring off solemnly into the middle distance.

Axel, still lying in bed, receives an email from Johns Hopkins University thanking him for his interest in their pre-med program. He deletes the email.

Julian cleans up puke in the girls' locker room at the school.

Axel wakes up to his cellphone VIBRATING. It's Leilani. He picks up.

Julian is replacing the flooring in a guest room. He accidentally hammers his thumb. He swears and throws the hammer against the wall, creating a dent in the drywall.

Axel paces back and forth, with tears in his eyes, as he talks to Leilani on the phone, telling her about the break up.

Julian opens a 30 Day Notice bill that's past due.

Mr. And Mrs. Kilbourne ENTER the kitchen to find Axel sitting at the counter eating oatmeal. They try to talk to him but he merely rolls his eyes and heads back upstairs to his room. They're not happy about his miserable state but at least he came out of his room...

Julian is being yelled at by a "KAREN" for messing up her Postmates order.

Axel lazes on the couch in the family room in filthy pajamas watching TV. His mother hands him a sandwich she made him. He takes without a thank you or bothering to look at her.

Julian thinks he sees Axel in the cafeteria as he changes out the trash, but it's not him. Just a kid that looks a lot like him.

Axel finally takes a shower and brushes his teeth.

Julian wakes up on the couch. It's morning and there's a half-empty tequila bottle on the coffee table. He checks the time. He's late for work.

Mr. Kilbourne watches Axel out the window of his home office. He still looks miserable as he sits his feet in the pool and stares off into nothing with dark shades on his face. But at least he's outside...

INT. WALMART - DAY

BAKING AISELE

Julian and Gail turn down the aisle. She walks slowly alongside him, clutching his arm.

Julian stops halfway down the aisle, all the new baking stuff catching his eye; it's Halloween-themed.

His mind wanders for a moment...

Gail eyes him, curious as to where his mind has wandered off to.

INT. AXEL'S HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - EARLY EVENING, SUNSET

The whole house is elaborately decorated in Halloween regalia.

SOFA

Axel scrolls through his social media while a horror movie plays on TV. There's a bowl of popcorn in his lap that he occasionally picks from.

His mother and father ENTER the room GIGGLING and dressed like Mary Poppins and Bert. They asks Axel if he likes their costumes.

He flatly tells them they look nice, face still glued to his phone.

His father approaches. He gently tells his son that break ups are hard and one day he'll--

Axel cuts him off, not wanting this conversation to continue a second longer. He hopes they have fun at the party and win the costume contest this year.

Axel clearly doesn't want to talk and they don't have the right words for anything he'd want to hear...

They tell him to call in case of an emergency and that the bowl of candy for the Trick-or-Treaters is by the door. Extra bags in the pantry if he runs out.

They say 'goodbye' to each other. Mr. And Mrs. Kilbourne EXIT.

INT. AXEL'S HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT, CONTINUOUS

Axel is half-asleep on the couch.

(3 beats)

The doorbell RINGS.

Axel GROANS. He checks his cellphone-- it's nearly 10PM. He grabs a sign he made off the coffee table reading: OUT OF CANDY.

We FOLLOW Axel as he rolls off the sofa and heads toward the front door.

There's two full-sized candy bars left in the bowl. Axel grabs them and opens the door-- Julian.



They stare stupidly at each other a moment before Julian says 'Hi'.

Axel asks him what he's doing at his house. He's too *old* to be trick-or-treating.

Julian wanted to stop by and wish Axel a happy birthday. And give Axel the cake he baked for him.

Axel finally takes notice of the cake box Julian is holding. It's red with a blue ribbon around it.

He can't believe Julian baked him a cake.

Axel steps aside to let him in.

Julian hands the cake box to Axel. Axel thanks him and takes it into the KITCHEN. Julian follows.

Axel pulls on the ribbon and the sides fall away revealing a gorgeous cake; a naked cake with blue icing and fruit.

Axel can't help but to smile at it...

Julian apologizes nervously for it; it's been a long time since he baked and it took him 3 tries to get the icing right.

Axel thanks him again for the cake, for remembering his birthday, but he's still hurt and angry over Julian breaking up with him. For dumping all his insecurities onto him and not giving him, or their relationship, a chance to subvert the low expectations he had. For Axel to surprise him and rise to the occasion.

What they had was more than some summer affair Julian tried to reduce it to. Axel looked forward to having a future with Julian and feels robbed of that now. And he feels robbed of the friendship he built with Gail.

He hates that the whole time they were together Julian was waiting for the bottom to fall out. Axel felt like he was finding himself by being with him.

Axel asks Julian why he told him he loves him if it was just so easy to break up with him.

He told Axel he loves him because he does. That was never a lie he told Axel or himself.

Julian apologizes.

Axel points out how many times Julian's had to apologize to them in their short-lived relationship.

Julian promises it's the last one.

He was stupid for breaking up with Axel. He promised himself he wouldn't get too comfortable with their relationship, but he did, and Axel's dad let him know why he shouldn't. Mr. Kilbourne unleashed all of Julian's insecurities and reminded him of all the reasons he thought he and Axel wouldn't work.

But he was wrong. Everyone but Axel was wrong. And Julian is sorry because he wants Axel back.

Julian pulls him close... His lips graze Axel's mouth... Axel's eyes slip close. Julian's hand cards through Axel's dark hair and their mouths meet in a sincere kiss...that turns hungry and desperate when Julian backs them into the fridge.

INT. AXEL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING, CONTINUOUS

Mr. And Mrs. Kilbourne, hungover, sip their coffee and pop aspirin tablets and commiserate about their migraines.

Mr. Kilbourne takes notice of the half-eaten cake on the island. Mrs. Kilbourne has no idea where it came from either; neither of them having noticed it until now.

(long beat)

Axel ENTERS the kitchen. With two suitcases, a duffel bag, and a messenger bag.

He tries to distract them with small talk about the Halloween party they went to but they're too focused on what looks like their son moving out.

He is.

Julian ENTERS the kitchen from upstairs. In the same clothes he had on the night before.

Axel's parents are speechless.

Julian takes Axel's suitcases and the duffel bag from him. He EXITS.

Axel explains that Julien came over last night and they're getting back together. And the best way for them to do that, happily, is out from under the watchful eye of Axel's well-meaning but judgmental parents.

Mr. And Mrs. Kilbourne are livid. Forbidding Axel to leave.

He's 19 years old. He can move out if he wants to.

They're shouting at him, threatening Julian and his job.

But Axel calmly gives them his credit card promising to pay back the leftover balance on it, along with his cellphone; he'll get his own that he'll pay for. He took the money from his savings and plans on selling all his Spiderman art and collectables. He left his TV and all other electronics, except his laptop which he's taking.

He puts his car keys on the island. He's not taking it.

He loves them, but he's doing this.

Axel EXITS.

EXT. AXEL'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

DRIVEWAY

Axel EXITS from the house, approaching Julian's car. Just as his parents barrel out of the house after him.

They try a different approach: a soft coaxing to get him to stay and think about changing his entire life. Especially his financial security with them.

Julian rolls his eyes.

Axel knows that uprooting his life like this will be hard for a sheltered suburban kid like him, but he's smart and knows how to work hard. And he's growing *with* someone. He's not alone.

Mr. Kilbourne attacks Julian, spouting mean and malicious things at him.

Julian insults and name-calls as well.

Axel snaps at them to stop.

His dad asked him to figure out what he wants to do, and he did. This is what he wants. It's not the end of the world, and he's not moving across the globe. Just to Skokie.

He acknowledges his parents being angry, but him having a boyfriend seems like a pretty stupid thing to be mad about.

This isn't what they pictured for him. This isn't what they wanted for him, what they worked so hard to give him.

He knows that. But those were their plans not his.

They're going to be angry for a while. Axel knows that. But he also lets them know whenever they stop being angry, they're free to call him.

Mr. Kilbourne storms back into the house; angry with nothing left to say.

Axel kisses his mother's cheek. She tells him she doesn't think this is a good idea. He knows. But he's doing it anyway.

She watches him climb into Julian's car and the two of them take off down the street.

INT. SENIOR CENTER - GAME ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gail plays cards with THREE other ELDERY LADIES. One of them gets up to go to the bathroom.

When Gail isn't paying attention, Axel slides smoothly into the empty seat.

When she turns her attention back around she's shocked and overcome with joy at seeing him.

They hug. Axel tells her he missed her.

Gail breaks their hug to slap his face. She angrily points to the iPad.

Axel apologizes for not replying to her messages. And he promises to make it up to her with a margarita and a *Say Yes to the Dress* marathon.

Gail types something onto the iPad. Siri says: **"Just so long as you don't cook for me."**

Axel rolls his eyes but vows to get better at it.

She types something again: **"You're good for him."**

She gently touches his face. She loves him and means it.

Axel feels himself getting soppy and breaks the sentimental moment with a factoid about sea turtles.

She smiles at him, happy he's back in her life.

INT. SUPPER CLUB - KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

SUPER: 2 YEARS LATER...

Julian busies about the kitchen, cooking up a storm, and assisting the chef, his friend, Dion, with the lunch time decline.

Dion tells Julian to quit stalling and leave already.

Julian GROANS. Wherever he's supposed to be going, he's not eager to get there.

Dion shoos Julian out of the kitchen, telling him to go before Axel gets pissed.

Julian tries to tell him something trivial about a wine sauce, still stalling, but Dion kicks him out.

Yeah, yeah. He's going. He's going...

INT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - JULIAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Julian ties the black dress shoes on his feet, then whines to Axel if he really has to go tonight.

Axel tells him yes, he has to, and to stop crying about it.

Julian SIGHS. Then wants to know how long they have to stay.

Axel throws a pillow at him.

INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - NIGHT, CONTINUOUS

Julian and Axel are having dinner with Mr. and Mrs. Kilbourne. The table is quiet, and a little awkward.

Mrs. Kilbourne tries her hand at initiating conversation by asking Julian where he works now, given Axel told her he quit his job at the academy.

Julian politely tells her he's a *sous-chef* at the jazz supper club uptown. He's been there for a year and a half now.

Axel's father asks his son if he's "still taking care of old people." He's not being passive-aggressive just misinformed of Axel's job title.

Axel tells his dad he is indeed still employed as a home care worker. His latest patient is a rich, elderly man who's mean and shows early signs of dementia, but his grown children pay him very well to look after him so he tries his best to ignore his homophobic remarks and attempts at biting Axel when he's mad.

Julian jokes that Axel's patient might be nastier than the one he had before: a sassy old woman who used to be a ballet dancer, that kept touching Axel inappropriately.

Julian's mention of the old woman lightens the table with laughter for a moment.

Mr. Kilbourne remembers to sympathetically apologize for Julian's loss. Axel told him about Gail's passing.

Julian thanks him.

Mrs. Kilbourne asks if Gail ever got the chance to see the completed remodel of the house before she was hospitalized.

Not in person, but Julian and Axel showed her pictures.

Axel suggests they come and see the house before the new owners move in.

His parents are noticeably surprised by Axel mentioning they sold the house, especially after all the time and hard work they put into it.

That's why Axel wanted to have dinner tonight. He wanted to talk to them about he and Julian's plans... Axel has spent the last two years working in elderly care, making sure it's something he really wants to do, and it is. So he applied to three schools and got into all three. He and Julian talked about it and Axel's decided to attend Boston University in the spring, pre-med.

So he and Julian are moving to Boston after the holidays.

His parents are a little overwhelmed by the news. They're torn between being happy he's going to college, to a really good school, but...he's leaving. Their child, their baby, is moving halfway across the country.

They could rant and rave like they had 2 years ago when Axel moved in with Julian, creating more cracks in their relationship with their son, or they could be supportive...

Mr. Kilbourne hugs Axel and tells him he's proud of him. Mrs. Kilbourne does the same, with tears in her eyes.

Mr. Kilbourne starts rambling about student loans, but Axel interrupts him-- Julian is paying for his schooling and their move with the money he sold the house for. And Gail's life insurance is enough for Julian to open his own restaurant if he pleases.

Well...fuck.

## EXT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Julian, Axel, and Axel's parents EXIT the restaurant, wrapping themselves up in their wool coats against the autumn chill.

Mr. And Mrs. Kilbourne watch fondly as Julian wraps Axel's scarf around him... They really are in love, and take care of each other. They're making it work.

Mr. Kilbourne asks if it'd be alright if they stopped by tomorrow to see the house. They've never been over and would love to see it.

Axel is surprised they'd want to given tomorrow is Halloween. He would have thought they'd want to go to his boss' party.

No. It's their son's birthday, they should spend it with him. At his home. With his boyfriend.

Julian was going to make a special dinner for Axel anyway, why not add two extra place settings?

Axel fights back a happy smile at Julian being welcoming to his parents, and them finally wanting to spend his birthday with them.

The Kilbournes except the invite and make plans to be there by five.

## EXT. JULIAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Mr. and Mrs. Kilbourne pull into the driveway behind Julian's car, avoiding NEIGHBORS who seem to be setting up what looks like a block party.

They get out of their own car with open mouths, stunned at how beautiful Julian's house is.

It certainly stands out amongst the other not-so-nice homes on the block, but isn't gaudy or garish. It's painted white with black shutters, new windows and roof, the porch sturdy with red brick steps, and rose bushes around the façade.

They approach the house and RING the doorbell.

Axel answers and invites them in. They hand him the bottle of white wine they brought with them.

The interior of the house has a modern farmhouse style.

Axel takes them to the KITCHEN where Julian is busy getting dinner started.

Axel opens the bottle of wine and pours 4 glasses. He hands one each to Julian and his parents. They CLINK glasses.

Mrs. Kilbourne asks about the block party.

Julian mentions it's something Axel started last year with two other moms in their area.

Axel explains that given the rough area in which they live, kids don't go trick-or-treating around here. So he and two other moms came up with the idea to block off the street and have fun games and activities for the kids that live nearby. Along with passing out candy and treats.

His parents are impressed and love the idea.

Julian takes notice of Mr. And Mrs. Kilbourne looking around but rooted in their spots. He tells Axel to give them a tour.

At the suggestion, Axel excitedly wants to show them the rest of the house. He grabs his mother's hand who's just as eager to see the rest of it.

Mr. Kilbourne lags behind...

He tells Julian that Axel seems happy. The best version of himself. And the truth is that's all he's ever wanted. Even if it didn't seem like it at times.

He offers his hand.

Julian takes it. They shake.

Peace and civility between them. And not just for Axel.

Mr. Kilbourne thanks him. For making his son happy.

Not a problem. It's pretty easy given Axel makes him happy, too.

Axel ENTERS, curious as to why his father didn't follow. He asks if everything's okay.

He and Julian assure him they're fine.

Mr. Kilbourne EXITS, he's going to nose around the house with Mrs. Kilbourne.

Axel tells Julian his mother suggested they stay for the block party. He likes them working their way into his life again. Showing interest.

Julian wasn't lying; Axel happy makes him happy. He likes the brokered peace their building, too.



Axel kisses him. Tells him he loves him.

Julian pulls him into his arms and deepens the kiss.

He loves this unexpected boy, too.

FADE OUT.

THE END