

"CAN I KEEP YOU?"

Written By

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FADE IN:

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DIRT PATCH - DAY

A FAIR SKINNED BOY (6) wearing glasses gleefully digs in the dirt, hoping to find a moving treasure beneath. His eyes widen, feeling something within the soil.

FAIR SKINNED BOY

I found one, I found one!

An ENTHNICALLY AMBIGIOUS BOY (6) with a tanned complexion wearing a baseball cap comes into frame. He sits down next to his friend, one hand behind his back.

FAIR SKINNED BOY

What's behind your back? Did you find
a worm too?!

The Tanned Skinned Boy sighs slightly, mustering up some courage.

TANNED SKINNED BOY

Ummmm...

He reveals the hand he's been hiding and what it possesses.

A small purple flower he's found to present to his FIRST CHILDHOOD CRUSH.

TANNED SKINNED BOY

It's a flower. I got it for you! Cause
purple's your favorite color.

The Fair Skinned Boy takes the flower, grateful for the gift his friend has given him.

FAIR SKINNED BOY

Thanks! I'm gonna show my mom, she
loves flowers.

The Tanned Skinned Boy smiles and without thinking, he plants an innocent peck on his friend's cheek. The Fair Skinned Boy smiles shyly at the gesture.

TANNED SKINNED BOY

I hope we're friends forever.
(sighs)
Can...can I...

FEMALE TEACHER (O.S.)
Smile for the camera, boys!

The boys turn toward the voice, seeing their teacher with a camera. She snaps a photo of them.

FEMALE TEACHER
That's a really nice picture. Come on.
Recess is over. Let's line up.

The teacher walks over to the other students.

FAIR SKINNED BOY
Come on, let's go.

The Fair Skinned Boy puts the flower in his pocket and gets up, running toward their teacher.

The Tanned Skinned Boy sits in the dirt for a moment, sadly. Then he gets up and runs behind the Fair Skinned Boy, getting into line next to him.

**CLOSE UP ON THE TANNED SKINNED BOY AND THE FAIR SKINNED BOY
HOLDING HANDS**

DISSOLVE TO:

**The title card appears in cursive letters, written by a
paintbrush...**

"CAN I KEEP YOU?"

INT. XZANDER & TRISHA'S LOFT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

DECEMBER 31st, 2024 (NEW YEAR'S EVE)

CLOSE UP on the face of XZANDER SKYE (28), a handsome ethnically mixed man sporting a stylish haircut. His baggy cropped sweatshirt and fitted sweatpants show he hits the gym just enough to be "straight skinny but gay fat".

Xzander looks out the window at the countless New Yorkers littering the streets of the East Village, preparing to ring in the New Year.

CLOSE UP ON A PAIR OF ARMS SLIDING AROUND XZANDER'S WAIST

The camera pans up slowly, revealing who these arms belong to, Xzander's best friend, TRISHA MCCRAY (26). Her blonde bob haircut is impeccable and compliments her brown eyes. The Chanel earrings she wears screams money and well off.

XZANDER

They suck, don't they? With their "Oh, look at us! We're *freezing* but we're still happy because we have each other" act. Is it wrong to wish frostbite on people?

TRISHA

Not if you let them keep their fingers. Most people have ugly feet so amputating their toes? Might get you into Heaven. Or at least VIP in the waiting room.

The two laugh. Trisha walks to the living room, standing near the coffee table, pointing at a tray full of shots.

TRISHA

Come on, the ball's gonna drop soon and I *will* take your pre-twelve o'clock shots if I have to. Let's partyyyy!

Trisha goes over to her phone and turns the volume up.

"ALIVE" by Krewella begins to play over the speakers

Xzander sighs, turning around to take one last look at the happy couples below before pulling the curtains closed.

When he looks back at Trisha, she's in the middle of downing one shot and has another shot glass in her hand.

TRISHA

What? They've already had New Years in Australia! I'm just trying to catch up!

PRE-LAP

DING DONG!

INT. CATALINA FELIZ'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CLOSE UP on DOOR FRAME. A Latina woman in her late 50's, CATALINA FELIZ, comes to the door and opens it.

CATALINA

Teo, where the hell have you been?! I've been waiting for these grapes forever! And where is your jacket? I

swear if you weren't my son...

MATEO FELIZ (28) an attractive Latino man stands at the door. His paint splattered white t-shirt hugs his muscular body.

MATEO

(mimicking her)

"I swear if you weren't my son, I would disown you." Mami, how many times I gotta tell you? That doesn't make *any* sense. And yes, I love you too.

Teo kisses his mother on the cheek and hands her a plastic bag. Catalina hands him a glass filled with coquito, a Latin holiday beverage.

INT. CATALINA FELIZ'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mateo walks into the empty living room and sees his best friend downing a glass of coquito.

ANDREW PACE (27), Caucasian, handsome enough, dressed business casual with stylish hair that says, "business in the front, party in the back".

MATEO

Drew! Please tell me we're going into twenty-twenty five with good news. Did that couple like the piece?

Mateo crosses his fingers.

ANDREW

No go, bro. They said they went with something more "new age Van Gogh", whatever that means. You ever think about cutting something off? Cause I could sell the *hell* out of that.

MATEO

You know what? I think this year my resolution is gonna be to get a new manager *and* a new best friend.

CATALINA

Aye, no! I *cannot* do resolutions. Being a bad bitch? Is hard *enough*.

Mateo makes a face...obviously his mother is drunk.

MATEO

Too much rum in the coquito, Mami.

Mateo sips his beverage.

INT. XZANDER & TRISHA'S LOFT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - CONT'D

Xzander and Trisha sit on separate couches. Trisha picks at the charcuterie board on the table. The excitement of Times Square can be heard coming from the television.

Suddenly, a sly grin comes across Trisha's face.

XZANDER

Why are you looking at me like The Grinch?

TRISHA

Because I just got a brilliant idea. *Resolutions*. Let's make em'.

XZANDER

Aw come on, Trish, you know people never keep those things.

TRISHA

And that's why we're gonna prove the people wrong.

(thinks)

Oh! I...am gonna go viral! *And...*sleep with your boss. But not at the same time...unless *that* makes me go viral.

XZANDER

(disgusted)

More shots please.

Trisha playfully throws a piece of cheese at Xzander who catches it in his mouth.

INT. CATALINA FELIZ'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - CONT'D

Mateo, Andrew, and Catalina sit in the living room. They each have a bowl of purple grapes they're eating as part of a Latin New Year's Eve tradition.

MATEO

Oh please, Drew! You could not go twelve months without eating meat. You'd *never* be able to keep that

resolution, you can't even turn down Mami's oxtails.

ANDREW

What?! I have *amazing* willpower.

CATALINA

Well, I think *Teo's* resolution should be finding a novia.

ANDREW

Mateo? No way. Won't happen. That is not a one-woman kinda guy.

MATEO

Hey, I can't help it if women find my struggling artist aesthetic irresistible and attractive! Take that up with The Man Upstairs.

CATALINA

More like the man *downstairs* who lives in your pants.

(sips her coquito)

At this point, I wouldn't care if you settled down with Andrew.

Mateo and Andrew's eyes go wide.

CATALINA

What? I'd be able to skip the screening process!

(shrugs)

He's already like a son to me.

MATEO/ANDREW

(pause)

Too much rum in the coquito, Mami.

INT. XZANDER & TRISHA'S LOFT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - CONT'D

CLOSE UP on Xzander holding his drink as he continues to listen to Trisha talk about her "bright idea".

TRISHA

You know what I think your resolution should be? To hoe it up for the first time in your life! Drop it like a thotty, boo!

XZANDER

No, no, *absolutely* not. I can...learn how to crochet or...learn how to speak another language.

TRISHA

Nope! No more "I want a relationship" Zan, it's time for "I want multiple orgasms from multiple men" Zan.

Xzander makes a face, grossed out by the thought.

XZANDER

Once again? More shots, please.

Xzander and Trisha raise their glasses and then down their shots.

INT. CATALINA FELIZ'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT -
CONT'D

CATALINA

Teo seriously, you are two years away from being *thirty*. Don't you wanna have somebody to kiss at twelve o'clock next New Year's Eve?

MATEO

Eh, Mami, I don't know...

CATALINA

It's not like you'd be doing it alone. Drew is *also* gonna stick to his resolution. Right, Andrew?

ANDREW

(sighs)

I *hate* being the supportive best friend.

(pause)

Alright. I gotta put myself into a meat coma before twenty-twenty five hits, so pardon the caveman behavior you are about to witness.

Andrew begins to eat the food on his plate rapidly. The countdown to the New Year can be heard on the television.

The clock reads 11:59pm.

CATALINA

Oh, oh, oh the ball's about to drop!
Get your glasses!

Mateo and Andrew grab their champagne glasses. Andrew puts his empty plate down on the table.

ANDREW

Twelve months without meat. I can do
this. I can do this.

(thinks)

I can't do this. I wanna back out.

CATALINA

If you can actually keep this
resolution Andrew, I will make you a
pot of oxtails every week in twenty-
twenty five.

ANDREW

(pause)

I'm sold.

CATALINA

That's the spirit. Teo? What do you
say?

Mateo sighs, looking at the expectant faces of his mother and best friend as the countdown on the television begins to finalize.

SEVEN...SIX...

INT. XZANDER & TRISHA'S LOFT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - CONT'D

Xzander and Trisha stand up in front of the television holding champagne glasses, watching the ball drop slowly in Times Square.

FIVE...FOUR...

TRISHA

(smiling)

So...are we gonna see a new Zan in
twenty-twenty five?

THREE...TWO...

Xzander looks at Trisha, thinking over her suggestion. After a few moments, he nervously nods "yes".

ONE!

The crowd on the television erupts in cheer as the ball reaches its destination.

The New Year has arrived!

INT. OUT MAGAZINE - WYATT DAWSON'S OFFICE - DAY

JANUARY 22nd, 2025

WYATT DAWSON (40), Xzander's boss, sits at his desk. Chiseled jaw and smoldering good looks. Salt and pepper hair but also nicer than his intimidating physical appearance makes him out to be.

He moves his laptop to the side, having just read Xzander's latest article.

WYATT

You're *better* than this, Skye.

XZANDER

Mr. Dawson, I...

WYATT

Hey, hey now how many times do I have to tell you? Call me Wyatt. When I hired you, I said I like for my employees to call me by my first name like we're friends. Because we are. And I'm *also* your boss. So, I'm like a *friend* who can fire you.

XZANDER

Mr. Daw...Wyatt. You told me to write about places around the city that would be good for "gay dating" and *that's* what I've been doing.

WYATT

There are more interesting places for two people to go on dates than the newest restaurant or rooftop cafe.

XZANDER

But we're talking about gay men, here! They really don't care where they go on a date as long as it *doesn't* lead to commitment or a long-term relationship.

WYATT

And that is where you're supposed to come in. You're supposed to be making people want to fall in love with each other while they fall in love with all the Big Apple has to offer.

XZANDER

Well, is it my fault if this city doesn't have anything to offer?

Wyatt tilts his head. He realizes Xzander's problem.

WYATT

You suck at dating.

XZANDER

Have you been talking to Trisha?

WYATT

Xzander, look. All I'm asking is that you write stuff that gives these men something to dream about! Give *yourself* something to dream about!

Xzander sighs, absorbing his boss's words.

XZANDER

Well...I do have a date Thursday night. It's actually my first one since I agreed to see men without the "expectation of something more".

WYATT

(excited)

You got a dick date?!

XZANDER

A new year's resolution.

WYATT

(smiling big)

Youuuuuu got a dick date!

XZANDER

That is...very inappropriate.

WYATT

You guys gonna do some flip flopping or are you strictly one way? Top? Bottom?

XZANDER

That is even *more* inappropriate.

WYATT

Well, listen, that's great. And You can work while you play. There is a winter art exhibit Thursday night at this gallery, I want it to be the next venue for your column. You can take your dic...I mean, your *penis* appointment.

(smiles)

Didn't say dick date.

XZANDER

(mortified)

Dear God.

EXT. ART GALLERY - PATIO - NIGHT

TWO DAYS LATER. Xzander is on the phone with Trisha, standing on the patio of the art gallery. There are caterers walking around handing out h'orderves to other visitors of the gallery.

XZANDER

(sighs)

Why am I here again? It's not like I can actually even get to know this guy.

TRISHA (ON PHONE)

The same reason I'm talking to you in what I *think* is the downward facing dog position while getting made fun of on TikTok...

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

INT. XZANDER & TRISHA'S LOFT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Trisha has Xzander on speakerphone while practicing her yoga techniques in front of her laptop.

TRISHA

(straining)

Because new year's resolutions are *stupid*...

(grunting)

And...*painful*. So, have you relapsed and started picking out floor plans

yet?

XZANDER

No, I've just been trying to keep our conversations very "cas"...

(pouts)

I feel like a pod person.

TRISHA

Well, keep up the good work, babe. Remember? This year is about fun, *not* finding the one.

(thinks)

Unless Wyatt's lips find me.

XZANDER

Perv. I'll see you later.

INT. ART GALLERY - SHOW ROOM FLOOR - NIGHT

Xzander walks back inside the venue, passing by others who are attending the gallery showing.

WE PAN to Andrew, talking to a caterer holding a plate; they're trying to maintain their composure but look very annoyed.

ANDREW

So, what's in this again?

CATERER

Me repeating the ingredients *isn't* gonna change them.

ANDREW

I'm sorry, it's just that um...well, I can't eat meat for the next eleven months...new year's "res" and all.

CATERER

Then you can't eat these.

ANDREW

And...what are those...again?

CATERER

(sighs)

A crostini topped with ribeye, crab, and asparagus...

ANDREW

Can you...go back?

CATERER

Right now, I would love to go back to the kitchen. Or the *womb*.

ANDREW

I meant can you just...say the name of the h'orderve again?

CATERER

Sir, we do have vegetarian options. And we have sushi, seitan...

ANDREW

Hey, hey just because I don't go to church does not mean I play with The Devil.

The caterer rolls their eyes and begins to walk away from Andrew, who follows the caterer.

ANDREW

I'm just gonna follow behind you and...get the smells.

INT. ART GALLERY - SHOW ROOM FLOOR - NIGHT - CONT'D

Mateo stares intently at the painting in front of him, examining it as he talks to his date, LAYLA.

MATEO

There's so much to see in this. I mean...the way the artist used the colors and the line strokes...it's got *really* deep dimension.

The woman looks at the painting but appears to be uninterested.

LAYLA

Ummmm yeah, totally! Totally get that. So...how are your strokes?

MATEO

It depends on what I'm painting honestly, or the subject...

The woman's hand goes to Mateo's crotch, grabbing it! Mateo jumps in shock.

MATEO

Oh, oh! You mean...*those*...strokes.
Uh, yeah. Yeah, we can um, we
can...where is the nearest bathroom?

Mateo looks around the room trying to spot somewhere the two
can go for a quickie. Suddenly...he remembers his resolution.

MATEO

Uh, ya know what? My manager's here.

LAYLA

Oh, he can watch, I don't mind. My
profile says I'm "adventurous".

MATEO

I just thought that meant you liked
sky diving.

LAYLA

Well, I did do it with my sky diving
instructor once.

Layla gets very close to Mateo, going to reach for his crotch
again but he stops her, trying not to make a scene while
resisting temptation.

MATEO

(nervous)

Consent goes...both ways, ya know.

LAYLA

(whispers into his ear)

And so, do I.

Layla seductively bites Mateo's ear.

MATEO

(biting his lip)

Aye dios mio.

EXT. ART GALLERY - NIGHT

Xzander and his handsome date, BRIAN, stand outside the
gallery while Brian vapes.

BRIAN

I've never been to an art gallery
before, this is a pretty cool event.
Exclusive.

XZANDER

Well, thank you for coming. Again, I'm sorry for changing our plans last minute, my boss just kinda...sprung this on me.

BRIAN

If I remember correctly, you said you work for Out magazine, right? That's a pretty reputable publication. How long you been writing?

Xzander is drawn in by the interest Brian has seemed to take in him.

XZANDER

You know what? It's still pretty early...why don't I answer that question over some hot chocolate?

BRIAN

(smiles)

Prolonging the date? I'm game.

Xzander smiles happily. Then his smile fades, remembering his resolution.

XZANDER

Actually, ya know what...this was fun, Brian. *Really*. But um, I need to head back inside and interview some people, ask them some questions for my article. I hate to cut this short but...

Brian is caught off guard by Xzander's change in attitude.

BRIAN

Work comes before play. I get it. I gotta get home anyway, walk my dog. I'll call you?

XZANDER

Sure! Or...I'll call you. No pressure.

BRIAN

Okay. Well...have a goodnight, Xzander. I hope we can do this again sometime.

XZANDER

Never know what the future holds,
right?

BRIAN

Right.

Brian walks off, heading to the train station. Xzander watches him walk away, mentally kicking himself.

XZANDER

(looking up to the sky)

Really? The *first* date I have in a
while where the guy seems to *actually*
be interested in me and I can't pursue
him because I'm supposed to be "having
fun"? You are a *vengeful* and *mocking*
God, lady.

The door to the gallery opens. Mateo walks out, looking back quickly to see if Layla is following him. He puts his hands over his face.

MATEO

(looks up; laughs a little)

You are a *funny*, funny man, you know
that? Or funny...woman. Or...funny
they.

XZANDER

You're talking to God too? Get in
line, buddy.

MATEO

Just lamenting on my luck. You...look
like a buyer.

XZANDER

You would be mistaken. I'm just here
for the show. Work assignment.

MATEO

Oh, me too.

Mateo extends his hand.

MATEO

Mateo.

Xzander shakes Mateo's hand.

XZANDER

Xzander. Are you an art buyer?

MATEO

I am an art *maker*. Bar manager by day,
Picasso by night. Or...the other way
around, actually.

XZANDER

A painter. Do you know the person
whose show this is?

MATEO

Not personally. I'm just here for
"inspiration". Been having some
trouble selling my stuff lately.

XZANDER

I'm sorry to hear that. I haven't been
too much of a success story at my job
either these days.

Mateo gets an idea.

MATEO

Seems like we could use a drink. My
treat.

Xzander mulls over Mateo's suggestion.

XZANDER

Just...hold the roofies and...we've
got a deal.

MATEO

Funny. I was gonna tell you the same
thing. I mean, I *am* the *hotter*...of
the two of us.

Mateo walks past Xzander, heading to the bar.

XZANDER

(breaks the 4th wall; looks into
the camera)

Did he just come for me?

INT. FOXXXY'S - BAR - NIGHT

"PHYSICAL" by Dua Lipa plays over the speakers

A FEW HOURS LATER. People are dancing and drinking.

Bartenders are taking orders, smiling and having a good time.

Xzander and Mateo sit at the bar, talking and having a drink.

XZANDER

I *still* can't get over the fact that a
straight man runs *this* bar. It's
so...so...

MATEO

Gay?

XZANDER

Well, I am *all* about progression
but...yes. Gay. And...
(looks up)
Naked.

Xzander reaches up and tips one of the go-go boys dancing on
the bar.

MATEO

Well, surprisingly gay bars pay more.
And also, a gay bar? *Great* place to
pick up women.

XZANDER

Ugh, you mean the women who come in
and invade *our* space with their
bachelorette parties parading their
wedding rings in *our* faces?

MATEO

Sounds like someone's a little bit
bitter.

XZANDER

I'm not bitter. I'm chronically single
and sick of it.

MATEO

What?! Being single is the best thing
since...since slip-on Vans and vagina.

XZANDER

I can only relate to one of those. And
if the "vadge" is so good than why did
you literally run from your date at
the gallery?

MATEO

Oh, believe me, if it wasn't for this stupid New Year's resolution I made? She *definitely* would've been introduced to my "paintbrush".

Xzander looks intrigued.

XZANDER

What...resolution?

MATEO

(sighs)

I am supposed to be "dating to *find* someone" but I am mostly doing it to get my mother off my back.

XZANDER

Well, I do always say it's easier for the straights to settle down than it is for my people so...maybe it'll work out in your favor.

MATEO

I just don't see *why* I need to change what works for me. I mean, if it ain't broke, don't fix it, right?

XZANDER

Tell me about it. My best friend made me "resolve" to "date just for fun" because apparently, my way of dating? Isn't working either.

Mateo looks at Xzander with a sense of intrigue, realizing something. Suddenly, Mateo gets a very "great" idea.

MATEO

Xzander...

XZANDER

You've been supplying me with free alcohol for the past two hours, we're passed formalities. Call me Zan.

MATEO

Okay then. Call me Teo.

(pause)

I *think* we might've met for a reason, Zan.

XZANDER
(clueless)
And what reason would that be?

EXT. STREET - SUBWAY STATION - DAY

FEBUARY 4th, 2025

A WEEK LATER. Trisha walks up the stairs, her stiletto heels click clacking as she speaks into the phone.

TRISHA (ON PHONE)
Wow, so I leave to go visit my parents
for a few days and you what? Score a
straight guy? What's his name?

Trisha stops at the top of the stairs, seeing Xzander standing there holding his gym bag. Trisha hangs up the phone and they begin walking.

XZANDER
Mateo...but...I'm supposed to call him
Teo now.

TRISHA
Oooo, Teo, sounds sexy. Like one of
the guys on the Spanish soap operas
who gets slapped all the time. But
what exactly are you guys doing again?
I didn't really pay too much attention
when you were explaining it, there was
this woman in my subway car reading
bible scriptures wearing a clown
costume and I had to get it for my Tik
Tok.

XZANDER
You and that damn Tik Tok.

TRISHA
You're not the only one "resolut-ing",
this viral thing? *Is* happening. I know
I could get so many followers if I
just caught the right thing on a live
stream. Followers equal money.

XZANDER
You don't need money; your parents are
loaded.

TRISHA

Just because my parents are wealthy
doesn't mean I don't wanna make my own
money.

XZANDER

Then get a job.

TRISHA

I have one. Being the number one
subscriber to the catastrophe you call
your life. Now...what's going on with
you and "Teo"?

XZANDER

Well basically, we're gonna...be each
other's...gurus. He's hoping to find a
suitable girlfriend through the art of
"actual dating" so I'm gonna help him
smooth out his rough edges when it
comes to that.

TRISHA

Okayyyy. And he's going to...

XZANDER

Teach me how to...seize life by the
balls and date without expectation so
I can enjoy the pleasures the gay
world has to offer.

TRISHA

So, the *straight* man is going to teach
the *gay* man how to be a...gay whore?

XZANDER

In nicer words...yes. I mean, the more
I think about it the more I realize
I've never really had that..."single,
sexy, and free" phase, ya know?

They arrive at a building and Xzander opens the door for
Trisha.

TRISHA

You know, Zan, gay whores don't open
doors for women. They open their *legs*.
You're already failing.

Xzander gives Trisha a look.

XZANDER

Please tell me they're teaching the
"Find A New Bestie" position in this
yoga class today.

Trisha laughs as the two walk inside.

INT. MATEO & ANDREW'S LOFT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mateo stands in front of a mirror trying on a tie. He's wearing black slacks and a button-down shirt. The front door opens and Andrew walks in holding a bag.

ANDREW

Honey, I'm home!

Andrew sees Mateo and is thrown by his new look.

ANDREW

Okay. I've seen "Invasion of the Body Snatchers", both versions, so I know my next move should be to get on the first plane outta town because *who* are you and...are those my *clothes*?

MATEO

How do you...
(struggling with tie)
How do you even do this *stupid* thing?

ANDREW

Well, if you're trying to tie a noose?
You are *right* on point but...

Andrew puts his bag down and goes over to Mateo, helping him with the tie.

ANDREW

If you wanna tie a tie...be thankful
you're able to phone a friend.

Andrew finishes the tie and sits down on the couch, digging into his bag of food.

ANDREW

(takes a bite of his food)
God! Who *eats* this?!

MATEO

What is it?

ANDREW

Tofu. And it tastes like..."toes-fu".

Mateo sits down next to Andrew while his friend continues to try and eat his "food".

ANDREW

But no, really, what's going on? Why are we playing dress up?

MATEO

Well, if I'm gonna do this whole "stand up dater" thing I figured I should uh...change it up a bit.

ANDREW

Meaning we're gonna have to start sharing a closet. I *knew* going to the gym with you would bite me in the ass cause now we wear the same size.

MATEO

(laughs)

And hopefully with Zan's help I'll be able to meet a nice girl and get all lovey dovey and find some "inspo" to paint something that'll make us some money. If I had a muse, I know I could just...blow the top off this city.

ANDREW

Can we backtrack for a sec? Who's Zan?

MATEO

Oh, Xzander. I met him the night we went to that gallery opening.

ANDREW

Another artist?

MATEO

Writer, actually. And...gay.

ANDREW

Gay? Like *really* happy dude or Boy Butter buyer?

MATEO

What's...Boy Butter?

ANDREW

Lubrication. You know...for the butt sex.

MATEO

How do you know that?

ANDREW

You know my little brother's gay! And in order to be a good *big* brother, I had to do my research so we could relate. And let me tell ya, the reviews say use Gun Oil instead.

MATEO

(confused)

Way above my paygrade.

Andrew and Mateo laugh.

ANDREW

So...Zan. He's gonna do what? Turn you into some kind of "serious dating...savant"?

MATEO

Correctamundo. And I'm gonna turn him into a...fun, single loving, casual dating expert.

ANDREW

Whatever works, man.

(thinks)

Hey, do you think he knows any vegetarian places with meat options?

MATEO

That would kinda kill the purpose of the place being...vegetarian.

ANDREW

Hey, the gays know how to find loopholes! I mean, they're all getting into Heaven somehow.

Mateo laughs and Andrew continues eating.

SLAM CUT TO BLACK:

WORDS IN WHITE LETTERS SLIDE ACROSS THE SCREEN:

Mateo's 1st lesson: MEET-CUTE

Xzander's 1st lesson: SINGLE & SEXY

MATEO/XZANDER (V.O.)

So...here we go.

"RADAR" by Britney Spears plays in the background

INT. COFFEE SHOP - CHELSEA - DAY

MARCH 2nd, 2025

Xzander and Mateo sit down at a table. There's a Frappuccino in front of Xzander and a cup of coffee in front of Mateo.

XZANDER.

So, coffee places...equal "meet-cute".

MATEO

Meet-cute?

XZANDER

Quintessential to finding your special someone. It can't look planned or...stalker-ish but also has to be...random and serendipitous.

MATEO

That's a lotta components for one step.

XZANDER

Hm. I don't work with complainers. They're not sexy.

MATEO

(clicks tongue)

Speaking of sexy...

INT. GYM - DAY

FLASH FORWARD

MATEO (V.O.)

A lot of people in relationships don't have the privilege of being as hot as they wanna be cause sometimes the person you're with? Can't handle all the attention you might be getting.

Xzander is on a treadmill, running and sweating, practically dying.

MATEO (V.O.)

*Single people don't have that problem.
The point is to look as good as you
want without the baggage of someone
else's insecurities holding you down.*

Xzander looks over, seeing Mateo running effortlessly. Mateo smiles at him brightly, distracting Xzander who ends up falling off the treadmill while Mateo laughs.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GYM - DAY

Some days have passed. Xzander and Mateo are running on the treadmill again, however this time, Xzander is keeping up.

Mateo notices, giving him a small smile and nod of approval.

MATEO (V.O.)

*And do not be afraid to hit on someone
in the gym.*

XZANDER (V.O.)

What?! I am not a creep.

MATEO (V.O.)

*People wanna be looked at in the gym!
Why the hell do you think we're there
in the first place? Just don't make it
too obvious.*

As Mateo is focused on his stride, Xzander looks over at him, noticing Mateo's physique which is very ATTENTION GRABBING THANKS TO THE PERSPERATION DRIPPING OFF HIS BODY.

Staring for a moment too long, Xzander loses his momentum and once again...hilariously falls off the treadmill.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

FLASH FORWARD CONTINUES

XZANDER (V.O.)

*Meet-cutes need to be...happenstance.
You both get into the same Uber pool.
You...get stuck in an elevator
together. But however, you meet, that*

first glance? Is pivotal.

Mateo stands outside the coffee shop, checking his watch. Feeling something on his leg, he looks down and notices a dog peeing on him!

MATEO
Jesus Christ!

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Lily, no! Bad! Bad Lily! Oh God, I am
so sorry.

Mateo tries to shake the dog off his leg. When he looks up, he sees SASHA (26), a beautiful red head wearing a puffy coat with a furry hood that envelopes her face.

SASHA
Ugh, are those expensive? They're
probably expensive.

MATEO
Ummm...my jeans? Uhhh, no. No, they're
not. That jacket though, that looks
pretty...

SASHA
Thrifty? It looks thrifty, doesn't it?
Ugh, I *knew* I should've gone with
something different.

MATEO
No! It looks...you look good.
(pause)
Hey...would you and...

Mateo looks down at the dog.

MATEO
Lily...like to get some coffee?

SASHA
Um, yeah. Yeah, that'd be nice.

FLASH FORWARD ENDS

INT. COFFEE SHOP - TABLE - DAY - CONT'D

Xzander and Mateo are still talking.

MATEO

Got it. Anything else I should know?

XZANDER

Yeah. Switch to fraps. You're already kinda short and I'd hate for that whole "coffee stunts your growth" thing to hinder you any further in life.

Mateo laughs and sips his drink.

XZANDER

So, Teo...what got you into painting?

MATEO

Well, I...used to draw a lot as a kid. Kinda the way I used to express myself. I always thought pictures could say a lot more than I could.

XZANDER

I get that. As a teenager, I would write these letters to my parents, telling them that I was gay. And I'd put them in these envelopes to slip under their bedroom door after they went to sleep but...I would always chicken out. The letters though? Very well written.

MATEO

And *that's* how you got into writing. Did they ever read one?

XZANDER

No. I *actually* came out during my high school graduation speech. My best friend told me I needed to "let the world know who Xzander Skye *really* was because they would love him"...the same way she did.

MATEO

Did they?

XZANDER

It was touch and go with my dad for a little bit but eventually he came around. But being that I am twenty-eight and single? The other men in the

world apparently *don't* love me as much as he does.

MATEO

Enter Teo!

(thinks)

After I'm done with you, maybe I can help the rest of the gays turn their dating lives around, start a *whole* business. Wanna be my mascot?

XZANDER

And sweat out *this* hair in one of those hot ass costumes? *Please*.

MATEO

You're such a diva.

XZANDER

Just like Mariah, darling.

Mateo and Xzander laugh, continuing to talk, enjoying their evening together.

INT. OUT MAGAZINE - WYATT DAWSON'S OFFICE - DAY

A WEEK LATER. Wyatt is doing pushups with his laptop in front of him as he reads Xzander's latest column.

Someone walks into the doorframe, it's Trisha. She stops, admiring "the view" of Wyatt working out.

TRISHA

Am I...interrupting?

Wyatt looks up from the laptop, seeing Trisha. He stops mid pushup.

WYATT

Trisha! Hi.

Wyatt closes the laptop and stands from the floor, putting the laptop on his desk.

WYATT

What can I do for you?

TRISHA

Oh, you could do *a lot*.

(catches herself)

In...regards to...telling me if you

knew where Zan was. I went to his cubicle but he's not there. I thought we could've had lunch together.

WYATT

To my understanding, he said he was going to do research for his next article.

TRISHA

Oh...well, that sucks. Who am I gonna have lunch with now?

WYATT

Well, I was just about to order some food, it's "Feed The Staff Friday".

Trisha's heart melts.

TRISHA

You feed your staff?

WYATT

Since I don't have kids, don't have a wife, I like to think of my staff as my "extended family". Kinda like the "Old Lady In The Shoe". But with veneers and better...shoes.

TRISHA

Just...outta curiosity...what size shoe do you wear?

WYATT

Fourteen wide.

Trisha holds her stomach.

TRISHA

(swallows hard)

Dear God.

INT. SANDWICH SHOP - DAY

Andrew is bent down, staring at the deli meats in the case. Just...staring. PRACTICALLY SALIVATING.

EMPLOYEE

Sir, I don't wanna rush you, but you've been here for a quite a while and you haven't chosen anything. Are

you...*sure* you want a sandwich?

ANDREW

You know what my favorite movie was as a kid? "Charlotte's Web". I loved Wilber, the pig. And I just...I couldn't *believe* people were eating them. The pigs. And then you know what happened?

EMPLOYEE

(nervous)

I...really just...wanna make a sandwich.

ANDREW

Pork...belly. Pork belly happened. God's little slab of happiness.

EMPLOYEE

Oh, I love pork belly! We *actually* have a bahn mi...

ANDREW

(disdain)

And then *youuuu* happened.

Andrew's eyes focus on the lettuce, tomatoes, and onions in the display case.

ANDREW

Lettuce. Do you know lettuce is mainly just water? If I wanted water on my sandwich? I would just *dunk* it...in a cup of *Fiji*!

EMPLOYEE

Well, you don't *need* to have lettuce. There's always spinach, endive, arugula...

ANDREW

Ohhhh, the *fancy* lettuce. You're on their side, aren't you?

EMPLOYEE

(confused)

Whose...side?

ANDREW

The *lettuce*! You just want me to be a

big ol' koala bear, don'tcha? Stuffing
my *carnivorous face*, with NON-FOODS!

EMPLOYEE

Ummmm...we also have an eggplant,
portobella mushroom, and sundried
tomato wrap with hummus?

Andrew doesn't like the sound of all the vegetables. His head
turns and he sees a stray cat sitting on the sidewalk, in
front of the front door.

ANDREW

(pause)

Is he on the menu?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Students mill around at their desks, talking and joking,
while they wait for their teacher to arrive.

The Fair Skinned Boy (11) sits at his desk as he finishes
writing something down on a piece of paper. Once done, he
begins to CRAFT SOMETHING OUT OF THE PAPER.

The Tanned Skinned Boy (11) sits a few rows behind him at his
desk, alone. He scribbles on a piece of paper, bored.

The Fair Skinned Boy holds up his design and looks at it,
making sure the PAPER AIRPLANE IS PERFECT. He turns around,
seeing The Tanned Skinned Boy in his line of sight.
And...LIFT OFF. The paper airplane soars through the air,
gliding on the wind and over the other students.

It comes to a rest on The Tanned Skinned Boy's desk,
surprising him. He sees something written on the wing.

"OPEN ME"

The Tanned Skinned Boy opens the paper airplane, bringing it
back to its original form. There's a drawing.

A PURPLE FLOWER.

The Tanned Skinned Boy looks up and toward his friend, The
Fair Skinned Boy.

They share big smiles.

EXT. OPEN HOUSE - DAY

Mateo and Xzander stand outside of a beautiful house.

XZANDER

This is very beautiful. Which means that colonial children are probably buried underneath it.

MATEO

Or an Indian burial *ground*. It *does* look like a pretty good catch though. Much like me.

XZANDER

Hey, you did *not* snag Sasha on your own. I'd like my credit.

MATEO

Tiny bit. *Lil* bit of credit.

Xzander laughs slightly.

XZANDER

Thanks for doing this, by the way. I know it's a little unorthodox, but your opinion is really gonna help me with my article.

MATEO

Rescuing damsels in distress tis' what I do. And open houses as a first date is *actually* a pretty cool idea.

Suddenly, a car parks behind them, jerking to a stop. An African American woman in business attire, HAYLEY DOWER (33), gets out of the car, breathing hard.

HAYLEY

Whew, baby, lemme tell you, the way I just sped through that highway you woulda' thought my ass was driving Miss Christine!

Mateo and Xzander both look very confused.

HAYLEY

Stephen King? The demon car? Was just killing up *everybody* and they mama? Ya know what, that's not important...

(to Xzander)

Let's go make sure your fiancé buys
you this house, honey!

Hayley hastily walks past them. Mateo looks like a deer
caught in headlights.

MATEO
Say what, now?

INT. OPEN HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Xzander and Mateo, walk slowly, speaking in low voices.

XZANDER
In order for me to make this
"emergency" appointment, I *had* to tell
her you were walking me down the
aisle. *Single* people don't get first
dibs on houses because single people
are *broke*.

MATEO
(pause)
Okay. Can't argue with that. But you
could've at least *told* me, I would've
worn something more "future husband-
like". I look like you pay the bills.

INT. OPEN HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Mateo and Xzander, walk into a spacious bedroom where Hayley
is waiting for them.

HAYLEY
Sooooo, this is the master suite. The
previous owners actually re-modeled
this *entire* room themselves. Even
knocked out this wall to put in that
lovely terrace to overlook the
backyard.

XZANDER
Oh, and summer's right around the
corner. That would be so nice when I
wanna go out and...have tea...and take
in the air or...spy on the neighbors.

Hayley laughs slightly.

HAYLEY
Just don't do it at night. You *might*

catch your neighbor dancing with the dead wife he's been keeping in *his* bedroom for the past two years.

MATEO

Excuse me?

HAYLEY

Oh! I don't mean for *real*! I made a new year's "res" to watch horror films by myself cause they freak me out so I'm trying to get over my fear, *that* was just something I saw in this old movie...but I *have* met your potential neighbor, and that scenario *does* seem very plausible because he's a little...

Hayley makes the sound effect from the shower scene in "Psycho" while making stabbing gestures.

INT. OPEN HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Hayley walks Mateo and Xzander around the spacious kitchen. Mateo and Xzander look genuinely amazed.

MATEO

Oh, this is *hot*! There's enough room in here for an indoor grill.

XZANDER

That would *definitely* work. I *think* I would want to change the color of these cabinets though.

HAYLEY

Are you...sure...you wanna do that? I mean *sometimes* houses can get a *little* bit pissed off when you just come in and change the place like you own it. Don't be like them Lutzes.

XZANDER

The Lutzes?

HAYLEY

That family from Amityville! Came in all bold with decorative ideas and ended up running out of the house in the middle of the night screaming bloody murder! Just left *all* their shit, boo.

MATEO

(scared)

Oh my God, we were right, people
really died here.

HAYLEY

Nooooo! This house has no comparisons
to *that* house.

(thinks)

Just...a lotta physical similarities.

(listens)

Y'all heard that?

INT. OPEN HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

Mateo and Xzander are now with Hayley in the basement.

MATEO

A *fully* renovated basement? I see a
man-cave. I see...a wall of Mateo
originals.

XZANDER

Man-cave? No, this is *definitely* an
in-house club. Disco ball, homemade
bar...

MATEO

Of course, you'd want a disco.

XZANDER

And what's that supposed to mean?

MATEO

Nothing, babe. Oh, check this out!

Mateo walks towards something else in the basement that's
caught his eye. Xzander has a quizzical expression on his
face, hearing the word "babe".

HAYLEY

You can never go wrong with a fully
renovated basement. It can be a man
cave, your disco, a space for a second
income, a deranged stranger could be
living in a secret room behind the
walls waiting to kill you and your man
in your sleep, serves *all* kinds of
purposes.

MATEO/XZANDER

WHAT?!

HAYLEY

As a *realtor*, I am *contracted* to give you *all* of the options a room in your home can offer.

(whispers)

Don't buy a house, y'all. They are *evil*. As a matter fact? I'm getting the *hell* up outta here.

(starts walking out)

Y'all don't feel that? Oh baby, *no*!

Hayley walks up the steps, leaving the basement. Mateo walks back over to Xzander.

XZANDER

That was an...experience.

MATEO

That lady has watched one too many scary movies.

Suddenly, they hear a knocking coming from the walls.

XZANDER

But ya know, *just* to be safe...

MATEO

You are *not* moving fast enough for me.

Mateo and Xzander scurry out of the freaky ass basement.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - TABLE - DAY

A WEEK LATER. Xzander and Trisha sit down eating salads. Xzander looks at his phone and laughs.

TRISHA

Did you get a funny looking dick pic?

XZANDER

No! It's just Teo, he...he sent me this picture of him painting in his studio.

Xzander shows Trisha the photo.

CLOSE UP ON PHONE SCREEN; A SHIRTLESS MATEO WITH PAINT ON HIS FACE, STICKING HIS TONGUE OUT AT THE CAMERA

Trisha snatches the phone from Xzander, looking at the photo more closely.

TRISHA

I haven't met the man, but this seems kinda...flirty. Are you sure you're just "working" together and not tryna' "work it"? Cause I would be.

XZANDER

First of all, Teo? Not my type. Second of all? I am *actually* having fun on these dating apps. Getting funny dick pics, blocking weirdos, talking to faceless men with torso profile pictures, it's all been very entertaining. And third of all, Teo? Is *straight*.

TRISHA

So, you're telling me...you've *never* looked at *that* man with *that* body in *any* other way than platonic?

XZANDER

Oh, I'm not just telling you. I am *screaming* it from the rafters in a Mariah high-C.

TRISHA

What is with you and Mariah Carey?

XZANDER

Don't do Mariah, she is *perfect*. Except for that whole Nick Cannon lapse but every Christmas, the gays and Billboard? Forgive her for that.

Trisha and Xzander laugh, continuing to talk and eat their salads.

SLAM CUT TO BLACK:

WORDS IN WHITE LETTERS SLIDE ACROSS THE SCREEN:

Mateo's 2nd lesson: LOVE LANGUAGES

Xzander's 2nd lesson: THE MORE, THE MERRIER

INT. MATEO & ANDREW'S LOFT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

APRIL 10th, 2025

Xzander sits on the couch. Mateo comes out of the kitchen holding two beers, he sits down and hands one to Xzander.

XZANDER'S PHONE PINGS

MATEO

Is that the infamous Grindr chime I hear?

XZANDER

That is...
(checks phone)
Peter. From Grindr.

XZANDER'S PHONE CHIMES AGAIN WITH A DIFFERENT TONE

XZANDER

And...Alex. From Tinder.

MATEO

Look at you. Four months in and you're dominating the dating apps. Seems like you've already mastered the second lesson I had for you, "*the more the merrier*".

XZANDER

Well, I was always a step ahead of the class. And that's great because that means we can move on to *your* second lesson.

(pause)

Love languages.

MATEO

(oblivious)

You mean, like...French?

XZANDER

(sighs)

Love languages are how you show love and how you receive love. There are *five* and everyone has a certain, one or two, they lean toward.

MATEO

Okay. What are the five?

XZANDER
(thinks)
You...look *really* good in that tank
top.

Mateo looks down at himself, caught off guard by the
compliment.

MATEO
I knew you were checking me out when I
opened the door.

XZANDER
(rolls eyes)
That? Was an *example*. "Words of
affirmation". Building your partner up
with re-affirming statements.

MATEO
Ohhhh! Nice one.

Mateo rubs the back of his neck, feeling a cramp.

XZANDER
Neck problems?

MATEO
Yeah. I've been working on this piece
and it's hanging on my wall, so I've
been having to constantly look up to
finish it...guess it's just...

XZANDER
May I? I was voted "Most Likely To
Become A Masseuse" in the yearbook.

MATEO
Am I gonna get a happy ending?

XZANDER
If you read a *children's* book. Turn
around, please.

Mateo laughs and then turns around. Xzander begins massaging
his neck, slowly.

Mateo moans slightly, feeling some relief.

Xzander's hands move to Mateo's shoulders...feeling the
muscles in Mateo's body tighten slightly at the feel of his
touch.

MATEO

Wow. You are really good at this.

XZANDER

Yeah well, I used to give my friend Trisha massages after her volleyball games in college.

MATEO

Lucky Trisha.

Xzander continues to massage Mateo's neck and shoulders for a few more moments, taking in the smoothness of his skin...feeling his muscles loosen...taking in each of Mateo's deep breaths with each pressure point he hits.

Suddenly, Xzander feels himself getting physically aroused! He quickly stops, disappointing Mateo slightly.

XZANDER

Okay! So that was number two. "Acts of service". You see that your partner is in need of something that can lighten their load or ease them, and...you...you just do it.

MATEO

Alright so, "words of affirmation" and "acts of service". What are the other three?

XZANDER

We have "receiving gifts" and "quality time", both pretty much self-explanatory. And lastly..."physical touch".

(thinks)

Are you okay with a little...platonic physical demonstration?

MATEO

Aw, look at you being all Gen-Z and asking for my consent before you fondle me. If it's part of my "training" then I guess...fondle away.

XZANDER

Actually...

Xzander turns around and leans his back onto Mateo's chest. Mateo looks surprised, Xzander's cavalier approach at

bridging the distance between them putting him on edge slightly. Xzander looks over his shoulder at Mateo.

XZANDER

You're gonna do the fondling.

MATEO

(pause)

I need more drinks.

Mateo reaches over and grabs his beer, taking a big swig.

XZANDER

Calm your hetero nerves, this is strictly for learning purposes. Now...pretend I'm Sasha. What would you do?

MATEO

Usually? We'd be kissing already.

XZANDER

That's not happening. You're an artist, be creative. Show me you want me without...making me feel like I have to get naked.

MATEO

(sighs)

Okay. I guess...

(thinks)

I would um...put my arm...here.

Mateo's right arm WRAPS AROUND XZANDER'S WAIST.

XZANDER

(unimpressed)

Basic.

MATEO

Look, this is really...

(laughs)

Weird, alright, just...gimme a minute.

XZANDER

It'll be over before you know it.
Continue.

Mateo takes his left hand and starts to RUN IT DOWN XZANDER'S ARM, SLOWLY. Up and down. Up and down. Xzander's body tingles.

XZANDER

Not...bad. Soothing gesture. Gentle.
(pause)
Comforting.

MATEO

Thanks. Then...I would um...lean back
so that she could...

Mateo inches himself back, lying back onto the arm of the couch. Xzander follows, LAYING ON MATEO'S CHEST SLIGHTLY, his arms crossed around his own chest.

MATEO

Lay on my chest and...get
comfortable...so that she could
feel...how fast...my heart is beating.

XZANDER

That's a...a good way to...let someone
know that...

MATEO

That they...make you feel a little
nervous.
(takes deep breath)
Um...then...because I know she likes
music...to relax...and even though I
don't have the best voice, I would
um...sing. One of my favorite songs...

Mateo takes a moment, preparing himself. He clears his throat. His hand continues to stroke Xzander's arm slowly.

MATEO

(begins singing "Nervous" by
William Lipton)
*"You caught my eye, and you're not,
letting go. You pulled me in so fast,
now we're dancing real slow...I don't
know the last time that I felt this
way...let this moment last forever,
hope this feeling...stays...so are you
nervous..."*

Mateo notices Xzander hasn't said anything for a few moments. He looks down, seeing that his eyes are closed...Xzander appears to have dozed off.

MATEO
(softly)
Until she fell asleep.

Mateo stares at Xzander. Watching his steady breaths. His right arm still wrapped around his new friend.

There's an easiness to this. AN EASINESS MATEO DIDN'T EXPECT.

INT. OUT MAGAZINE - WYATT DAWSON'S OFFICE - DAY

A WEEK LATER. Wyatt sits on his desk, his hands folded in front of him. Trisha and Xzander sit in front of him in silence.

WYATT
Now Xzander, I don't know what's been going on with you...but your articles HAVE BEEN BOOMING!

Wyatt grabs his laptop and shows it to Trisha and Xzander excitedly.

WYATT
Eleven hundred likes and five hundred comments and counting on your "Open Your Heart At An Open House" article. Tell me...what's changed?

TRISHA
(playfully)
Yeah Zan, tell us...what's changed?

XZANDER
I've just been...enjoying life lately and I guess it's...showing in my work.

WYATT
Awww come on now! *Somebody's* been getting poked like an acupuncture dummy.

XZANDER
That is total H.R. material.

TRISHA
Do you like acupuncture, Wyatt?

WYATT
Oh yeah, it's a great stress reliever.

TRISHA

So is yoga. You should join me one day. I'm sure you could use the...stress relief.

XZANDER

Okay! If that's all then we are going to head out. But thank you for the accolades, Wyatt. I'm glad you like my turn around.

WYATT

Just make sure you keep "turning around" for whomever is behind this beautiful one eighty you've done, if you, ya know...get my drift.

XZANDER

(mortified)

Dear God.

EXT. NYC STREET - DAY

Xzander and Trisha, walk out of the building and onto the busy NYC street.

TRISHA

So, if you didn't get my drift, I'm in agreement with your very hot as shit boss, something has shifted in you, and I think it has to do with the hot painter you've befriended.

XZANDER

Teo? Please.

TRISHA

Come on Zan, you're talking to me here. You told me you fell asleep on his chest. You guys talk almost like, every day...I'm just saying, it sounds like you and Teo might just--I don't know, I mean...crazier things have happened.

Xzander sighs deeply.

XZANDER

Okay, okay! He has...become *slightly* more appealing and if he was gay then...*maybe*. But he's not. Because

that would be too perfect and my life?
Not a rom-com.

TRISHA
Well, could it at least be a nice
softcore porn?

Xzander stares at her for a moment and then walks away.

TRISHA
What?! I need cheap thrills! Like Sia!

PRE-LAP

"DANCE AGAIN" by Jennifer Lopez and Pitbull plays over the speakers

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - SCHOOL DANCE - NIGHT

The Tanned Skinned Boy (15) and The Fair Skinned Boy (15) sit at a table together, surrounded by their classmates dancing and socializing. They're both dressed in black suits and they each have a PURPLE FLOWER PINNED TO THEIR SUIT JACKETS.

FAIR SKINNED BOY
Do you uh...do you like this song?

TANNED SKINNED BOY
J. Lo? Yeah! Who doesn't like Jenny
From The Block?

FAIR SKINNED BOY
Right, right. She's *really*...hot.

TANNED SKINNED BOY
(pause)
Yeah. Definitely.

The song ends and changes to...

"LITTLE THINGS" by One Direction plays over the speakers

The two friends watch as their classmates begin slow dancing with each other. Two pretty girls, come up to their table.

FEMALE STUDENT #1
Oh my God, we *have* to dance!

FEMALE STUDENT #2
We love this song!

The two girls pull their respective dates to their feet and pull them to the dance floor. The two couples begin slow dancing.

DAYDREAM BEGINS

Suddenly, The Fair Skinned Boy lets go of his date's hand. She looks confused. He walks over to The Tanned Skinned Boy, nervous. The Tanned Skinned Boy's date looks at him for a moment...and then steps away. The two young men smile at each other and then begin to slow dance together.

DAYDREAM ENDS

Over the shoulders of their dates, The Tanned Skinned Boy and The Fair Skinned Boy look at each other, sadly.

INT. MUSEUM OF SEX - SEX TOY EXHIBIT - NIGHT

Mateo, Sasha, Xzander, and Brian, walk together through the exhibit.

SASHA
I cannot believe there is so much to learn about sex. I've always wanted to come here, thanks for bringing me.

MATEO
You should thank, Zan. I read one of his articles and he made it seem like an interesting place to come and see.

XZANDER
Well, thanks for inviting me. I haven't double dated in a long time.

MATEO
You guys are...qualifying this as a...a date?

XZANDER
Well, I'm allowed to date as long as...

BRIAN
As long as we don't get serious. Per the "rules", Xzander is strictly all about the fun these days.

SASHA

Rules? I am completely out of the loop.

XZANDER

I...made a resolution this year that I would *only* date to...enjoy being single. No commitments, nothing serious just...pure unadulterated fun.

MATEO

(surprised)

Unadulterated? You...didn't tell me you and Brian...did the deed.

XZANDER

(embarrassed)

Because we haven't! Geez.

BRIAN

The closest we've gotten to unadulterated is this sex museum.

SASHA

Well, you guys seem really cute together, I think you should make an exception to your rule. You don't want some...resolution to be the reason you miss your happiness.

XZANDER

That is true, Sasha. But, thanks to this resolution, I've gotten to spend time with people I probably wouldn't have if I...didn't make this change...in my life.

Mateo and Xzander share a quick glance with one another.

BRIAN

Zan, you wanna go look at some souvenirs? You said you could use one of those penis pops, right?

Xzander slaps Brian on the arm playfully.

BRIAN

You guys wanna come?

MATEO

Yeah, sure! We...

SASHA

Actually, we'll catch up to you. I wanna finish seeing this exhibit.

XZANDER.

Alrighty. We'll see you in a bit.

Xzander and Brian, walk off, leaving Sasha and Mateo alone.

SASHA

I'm sorry. I just...wanted us to have a little bit of alone time.

MATEO

It's cool. I'm sure those guys wanted some...alone time too.

SASHA

(pause)

You know...I'm really happy Lily peed on your leg that day.

Mateo laughs, remembering the day they met.

MATEO

That was a...pretty cool "meet-cute".

SASHA

You know about "meet cutes" too? You just keep climbing that "me liking you more" meter, huh?

MATEO

Xzander kinda gave me a tutorial.

SASHA

You and Xzander...you...seem pretty close. Did you guys grow up together?

MATEO

Nah. I um, I met him a little before I met you, actually. We've sorta been helping each other out with our..."dating issues".

SASHA

Well, remind me to send Xzander a "thank you" card because you're not bad at it. The dating.

MATEO

He'd probably prefer a caramel ribbon
frap with mocha drizzle and cookie
crumbs. Those two have a very tight
relationship.

Sasha sighs. There's something that's been on her mind.

SASHA

You know...we've been seeing each
other for almost...three-months now.
And I...really hate to be *that* girl
but...is...that what...we're in? A
relationship?

Mateo opens his mouth to speak, trying to find an answer.

PRE-LAP

XZANDER

And what was your response?

SLAM CUT TO BLACK:

WORDS IN WHITE LETTERS SLIDE ACROSS THE SCREEN:

Mateo's 3rd lesson: EXCLUSIVITY

Xzander's 3rd lesson: TAKE UP A HOBBY

INT. MATEO & ANDREW'S LOFT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A WEEK LATER. Xzander and Mateo sit on the couch. Chinese
food litters the table.

MATEO

I...I froze. Then I saw the look on
her face when I didn't answer so I
told her...

INTERCUT ON MATEO'S FACE AT THE MUSEUM OF SEX WITH SASHA

MATEO

(pause)

I think it's...heading that way.

INT. MATEO AND ANDREW'S LOFT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - CONT'D

XZANDER

So...you panicked.

MATEO

It felt like I needed an epi-pen.

XZANDER

Well, that was a week ago and you're still together so yay, you survived. That dreaded "What are we?" question *always* sends you men into a frenzy.

MATEO

Just because your skin is a tad bit softer than mine doesn't take you out of the "men" category.

XZANDER

Awww, thank you for noticing my moisturizing routine.

MATEO

Well, I mean it's kinda hard not to since your face practically emits a radioactive glow. It's so shiny.

XZANDER

Do you wanna keep being shady or do you wanna learn?

MATEO

My bad, my bad. Teach me oh, Great One.

XZANDER

Okay. So, establishing exclusivity has three components. First? Social media declaration.

BEGIN FLASH FORWARD & MONTAGE

XZANDER (V.O.)

Now when it comes to us gays, we're notorious for immediately displaying "couple visuals", basically just letting everyone know you're "taken", which means a new couple photo? Every damn day.

QUICK CUTS

-Mateo and Sasha in various places while Sasha snaps selfies of them between the months of April and May.

XZANDER (V.O.)

"Oh, look at us on the couch, we're so cute!", "Look at us on the beach, we're so cute!", "Look at us reminding you that you are single and we? Are cute!".

-Sasha's Instagram page, filled with pictures of her and Mateo.

-Mateo's Instagram page with only a few photos of him and Sasha together.

XZANDER (V.O.)

Next? Deleting the dating apps. Say goodbye to your paramours.

-Mateo going through his phone, deleting his dating apps.

XZANDER (V.O.)

The last thing you want is to tell someone, "Hey, we're exclusive!" and then let them hear a Tinder notification while you're in the middle of dessert. And finally...

-Mateo walking into his mother's apartment with Sasha in tow.

XZANDER (V.O.)

Meeting the family. This tells your person that you've crossed a threshold where you feel comfortable enough to let them into your inner circle.

-Mateo and Sasha having dinner with Catalina and Andrew, laughing and talking.

XZANDER (V.O.)

It's the definitive "We are in a relationship" gesture.

END MONTAGE & FLASH FORWARD

INT. MATEO & ANDREW'S LOFT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - CONT'D

MATEO

Maybe I shoulda got a pad to write all that down.

XZANDER

It's not hard to remember! And I'm

only a phone call away if you need a refresher.

MATEO

I'll be taking you up on that, I'm sure.

(pause)

So...how are things with you and Brian?

XZANDER

There are no "things" because that would imply Brian and I are more than just friends when he is in fact, just a cute little cog in my rotation clock.

MATEO

I've created a monster.

Xzander laughs.

XZANDER

You've just made me see a lot of new things, that's all. I always thought I *had* to find someone because I've...never really had someone. And that *that's* who I was. Xzander, "the long-haul guy" that no one wanted for the *actual* long haul. But...letting all that go, those...anchors of needing to be in a relationship, it's...led me to a new place.

MATEO

I know what you mean.

(pause)

It's like my paintings. I've...I've been all canvas for a long time. Just...blank. And I've let women draw the picture they want because it's easier than...drawing my own because sometimes you don't know what the end piece will look like. You have...an idea of what you *want* it to be but when your hand is moving, and the colors are coming together...what you end up with? Could be a masterpiece. Or...it could be a disaster. But, thanks to you...

(smiles)

I think I'm a little closer to finishing my masterpiece.

Xzander is lost in Mateo's words, stunned into silence.

XZANDER'S PHONE CHIMES

XZANDER

(checks phone)

Oh, he's gotta be kidding me.

MATEO

What's up?

XZANDER

It's Brian. He wants to take me to a...bachata class. He thinks I can use it for my next article in "Out n' About".

MATEO

I think that's...a pretty good idea.

XZANDER

The closest thing I have knowledge on when it comes to Latin America is salsa. And that's *only* because I know it goes on nachos.

Mateo shakes his head.

MATEO

Alexa!

Mateo stands up and holds out his hand toward Xzander.

MATEO

Play "Rechazame" by Prince Royce.

"RECHAZEME" by Prince Royce plays over the speakers

XZANDER

What? You want me to...no. No. I'm not doing that.

MATEO

No, no, this is part of your syllabus. Lesson number three, being single gives you the time to learn a new hobby. Besides. You're dainty. It'll be easy for someone to throw you

around.

Xzander sighs, looking at Mateo and thinking over his proposition...and he relents.

Xzander reaches out and takes Mateo's hand, getting up from the couch.

MATEO

Alright, see. Half the battle's over.
Now bachata? It's all about
sensuality, the hips...and instinct.
Just do what feels natural.

Mateo places a HAND ON XZANDER'S WAIST. Xzander puts a HAND ON MATEO'S SHOULDER. Their FREE HANDS INTERLOCK as Mateo starts to move slowly to the music. Xzander follows his movements. THEIR BODIES CLOSE TOGETHER.

THEIR EYES NEVER LEAVING EACH OTHER.

XZANDER

This isn't...*that* hard.

MATEO

Oddly...things with you seem to be...
really easy.

They continue to move to the music, their bodies in sync. Mateo spins Xzander around then brings him back in close.

XZANDER

Getting fancy on me?

MATEO

Just seeing if you can keep up.

Xzander breathes in deeply.

XZANDER

So, do...guys normally...dance bachata
with each other? I don't want me and
Brian to look outta place.

MATEO

Same sex partners have some of the
best routines I've ever seen.

(sighs)

It's all about the chemistry.

XZANDER

Yeah. I'm getting that.

The two continue their dance, moving fluidly. Mateo spins Zan around again but this time he pulls him into his body, XZANDER'S BACK AGAINST MATEO'S CHEST. As they continue to move to the beat, they stay in this position.

MATEO

(pause)

You know, Zan...whenever it happens for you...whenever you find your person...they're gonna be pretty lucky. You're not as "extra" as you think. Just haven't found someone to appreciate everything you are.

Xzander is touched deeply by Mateo's words. Mateo turns Xzander around so they're facing each other, as they continue to dance.

XZANDER

Sasha is...pretty lucky too. You have a lot more to offer than what you believe, Mateo. I hope you realized that.

MATEO

I'll keep that in mind.

Mateo and Xzander continue dancing, STARING INTO EACH OTHER'S EYES, taken in by the unexpected intimacy of this moment.

MATEO'S PHONE RINGS

The song stops, interrupted by Mateo's incoming call.

However, Xzander and Mateo still hold onto each other in their dancing position.

STARING INTO EACH OTHER'S EYES.

XZANDER

Thanks...for the lesson. You're not a bad teacher.

MATEO

(smiles)

Neither are you.

INT. FOXXXY'S - BAR - NIGHT

MAY 15th, 2025

People dance on the dance floor, some are sitting at the bar having drinks, others sit in sections smoking hookah.

Mateo pours a drink for Andrew. Andrew takes a sip. Mateo looks at him, waiting for a response.

MATEO

So?

ANDREW

Now *that* is the best pineapple mojito I've ever had. But...it's different than before.

MATEO

I added tajin. And soaked the pineapples in a mango flavored rum. Zan gave me some tips he learned on a trip to Mexico.

ANDREW

Well, it's pretty damn good. And it goes nicely with this bruschetta. By the way, I appreciate the vegetarian adds to the menu, this is the first time in *months* I haven't wanted to kill myself doing this no meat thing.

MATEO

Once again? Thank Zan. His suggestions.

ANDREW

You know, I keep *hearing* about Zan, but I don't ever see Zan. What is he like, the gay Tooth Fairy? Only comes around when you put a jockstrap under your pillow?

MATEO

(laughs)

Leave him alone.

ANDREW

Hey, I am not complaining about your new buddy. He's got you on the straight and narrow with Sasha, my

free food is edible, your *paintings*
have been selling...maybe he is
magical.

Mateo smirks slightly, wiping down the bar. He looks over towards the front of the bar and the sunny expression on his face slowly changes as he sees something through the window of the bar.

EXT. FOXXXY'S - NIGHT

Xzander, Brian, and Trisha are standing outside laughing and talking.

INT. FOXXXY'S - BAR - NIGHT

MATEO
Hey um...I'll be right back.

ANDREW
Gotcha.

Mateo puts the rag in a bucket and leaves the bar.

ANDREW'S PHONE RINGS

EXT. FOXXXY'S - NIGHT

Xzander, Brian, and Trisha are in the middle a of conversation. The door opens and Mateo comes outside.

MATEO
Hey! Uh, this is a surprise.

Xzander turns around, surprised.

XZANDER
Teo! Hi! I didn't...think you were
working tonight.

MATEO
Well, after you turned down my movie
invitation I decided to come in for a
little bit. I thought you said you
were gonna be um...writing tonight.

XZANDER
That was the plan. And then Brian
called me and invited us to go see
"Little Shop of Horrors" off-Broadway.

BRIAN

And I wasn't taking no for an answer.

MATEO

Oh! Nice. Another date.

Something bubbles inside of Mateo. Something he's never really felt before. JEALOUSY.

Trisha clears her throat, catching Xzander's attention.

XZANDER

Oh! Teo...*this* is my best friend,
Trisha.

TEO

Trisha. I've heard a lot about you.

TRISHA

Oh, the feeling is way mutual. Zan
here can't stop talking about cha'.

Xzander tries to hide his embarrassment. The door to the bar burst open and out comes Andrew, his energy excited and frantic.

ANDREW

Mateo, Mateo! You are not gonna
believe this, you're not gonna believe
this!

MATEO

What the hell's going on, Drew?

ANDREW

I just got a call, the *biggest*
opportunity of your art career.
Potential buyer. Saw your stuff
online. They're considering some of
your work.

MATEO

Okay. I mean, any buyer is a good
buyer but just cause they're
considering a piece...

ANDREW

Not a piece. *Four*. They just moved
into this new house, and they have a
whole room dedicated to art and you
could *possibly* be supplying them with

an entire wall of Mateo Feliz originals.

MATEO
(shocked)
WHAT?!

ANDREW
It's between you and another artist but I am going to "manager" my ass off. They're gonna make a decision in the next couple of weeks.

XZANDER
Oh my God Mateo, this is amazing!

Xzander wraps his arms around Mateo. They hug while Andrew, Trisha, and Brian look on.

XZANDER
I'm so happy for you.

MATEO
Thanks, Zan.

Mateo and Xzander break the hug.

ANDREW
Zan? As in Xzand-er? The gay Fairy Godfather to my best friend's "Himerella"?

XZANDER
That would be me.

TEO
And this is his best friend, Trisha.

Trisha waves slightly.

TEO
And...this is Brian.

ANDREW
The Fairy Godfather's boyfriend?

BRIAN
Friend. That's a boy. Rules and whatnot.

ANDREW

Hey, I'm all for the casual. Zan, great job on those veggie suggestions to the bar menu. Really helps with this whole herbivore kick that I'm on.

TRISHA

You're a vegetarian?

ANDREW

Just until the clock strikes twelve on December 31st, 2025.

TRISHA

Oh, we should exchange numbers! I know a ton of no meat spots that I found through Tik Tok. Spicy Moon is amazing.

XZANDER

Is there anything you *haven't* found on TikTok?

TRISHA

(thinks)

No. TikTok is like Walmart. It has everything.

ANDREW

I will take all the help I can get.

Andrew and Trisha begin putting their numbers into each other's phones.

XZANDER

(To Mateo)

So, Andrew liked the food...what about the new pineapple mojitos?

ANDREW

Oh, Mateo needs to be giving you some of the profits from that. They are killer.

BRIAN

Pineapple mojito? I haven't tried that yet. You wanna...?

Brian gives Xzander a look, hinting he wants to go inside the bar.

MATEO

I didn't mean to hold you guys up. Why don't you go inside, tell the bartender your first round is on me.

XZANDER

You don't have to do that, Teo.

MATEO

It's the least I can do for my Fairy Godfather.

BRIAN

Thanks man. And I hope everything works out for you with that buyer.

Brian walks by Andrew and Mateo, he opens the door and holds it, waiting for Xzander and Trisha.

XZANDER

It was nice to meet you, Andrew. And Teo, I will call you for our last lesson session.

Xzander walks into the bar. Brian still holds the door open, waiting for Trisha.

TRISHA

Very nice to meet you guys. Andrew, we will be in touch. Much like Teo and Zan will be.

Trisha walks into the bar and Brian follows.

ANDREW

Nice people. They make a cute couple.

Mateo's stare lingers through the front window of Foxxxy's, watching Xzander, Brian, and Trisha sitting at the bar.

MATEO

I don't...think they're a couple.

ANDREW

They went to a play. That's like, married gay stuff. Now, come on.

Andrew puts his arm around Mateo's shoulder as the two walk off.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
We gotta go. You've got shit to paint.

SLAM CUT TO BLACK:

WORDS IN WHITE LETTERS SLIDE ACROSS THE SCREEN:

Mateo's final lesson: MAKING LOVE

Xzander's final lesson: SEX WITH NO ATTACHMENTS

XZANDER/MATEO (V.O.)
Final exam.

XZANDER (V.O.)
*You may be a sex-ma-naut when it comes
to "doing it" but...making love? There
is more to it than just...making
someone's toes curl like curly fries.*

FLASH FORWARD BEGINS

INT. SASHA'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Mateo and Sasha sit across from each other, eating a romantic dinner. There are candles on the table, the lights are dim; a SPECIAL EVENING IS OCCURING.

XZANDER (V.O.)
*You want to do a dinner. Nothing
Doordashed or UberEats. Make whatever
you're capable of cooking that won't
have the fire department at your door.*

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NYC STREET - NIGHT

Xzander walks down the street with his handsome date, conversing. Their night is coming to an end.

MATEO (V.O.)
*You're gonna...know...when a guy wants
to end the night with you in his
bedroom...*

They walk a few more feet, passing a convenience store, and then stop in front of the door to an apartment building.

MATEO (V.O.)
There's gonna be something in his eyes

*when he looks at you and...you'll
just...know.*

A CLOSE UP on Xzander's date's face as he looks at Xzander. A small smile comes across his lips. He gestures towards the door, inviting Xzander upstairs.

Xzander looks at the apartment door, thinking for a brief moment.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SASHA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mateo and Sasha lie in the bed, kissing passionately. Sasha takes Mateo's shirt off and straddles him, taking her shirt off as well.

XZANDER (V.O.)
*Your instincts are going to tell you
to do one thing but...you need to do
another. You need to...think about the
person you're with. Who they are...and
what they mean to you.*

CLOSE UP on Mateo's face, looking at Sasha. Sasha bends down and begins kissing him again. Mateo responds to the kiss for a few moments but then stops.

He looks Sasha in her eyes, searching for something. Something he wants to feel. A CONNECTION.

Mateo maneuvers their bodies so that he ends up on top of Sasha, hovering slightly over her body, continuing to stare at her.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. XZANDER'S DATE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Xzander and his date are on the bed, engaged in sensual touching and kissing.

MATEO (V.O.)
*Have...fun. Sex doesn't always have to
be about...feelings and...connecting
on a deeper level. It can just be two
people who find each other
attractive...enjoying the pleasure of
one another.*

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SASHA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sasha lies beside Mateo, her head resting on his chest, asleep. Mateo stares up at the ceiling, his mind elsewhere.

XZANDER (V.O.)
*And when it's over...that
 person...should be the only thing on
 your mind.*

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. XZANDER'S DATE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

CLOSE UP on Xzander's face sleeping, his back facing the man he's just slept with.

MATEO (V.O.)
*The morning after can go one of two
 ways. You can get up, get dressed, and
 leave without them knowing or if the
 sex was good? You're gonna want to go
 for round two. Hell...you might have
 even dreamt about round one.*

An arm falls over Xzander's torso, pulling him a little closer. Xzander smiles slightly, letting out a small breath of relief. He turns around...seeing MATEO'S SMILING FACE looking back at him.

MATEO
Definitely wasn't...expecting that.

XZANDER
 Me either. But...I'd be lying if I
 said I...hadn't thought about it
 before. I mean, what it would...be
 like. With you.

MATEO
 (scrunches nose)
 Guilty.
 (pauses)

I guess it's a good thing we don't
have to think anymore. We can just...

XZANDER

Do it again?

Mateo laughs at Xzander's playful eagerness. Mateo moves in to kiss Xzander...

INT. XZANDER'S DATE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

CLOSE UP on Xzander's face as his eyes snap open. His face full of shock and awe at the dream he's just had.

Xzander turns over, seeing his date sleeping peacefully and snoring. Loudly. He carefully slides out of the bed and starts to gather his things.

FLASH FORWARD ENDS

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE TANNED SKINNED BOY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The Tanned Skinned Boy (17) and The Fair Skinned Boy (17) sit on a bed. The Fair Skinned Boy holds a paper in his hand that he's just finished reading.

FAIR SKINNED BOY

Wow. This was...really good. It's
a...love poem?

TANNED SKINNED BOY

I...guess. It's...about
um...well...friends. Or...someone
who's been more than a friend. They've
been...a piece of yourself you don't
want to let go of but...can't hold
onto.

FAIR SKINNED BOY

Why?

TANNED SKINNED BOY

Because...you're not supposed to.
Because in a field of
dandelions...they're the purple
flowers. They don't...belong.

(pause)

Sometimes I feel like...I don't
belong.

The Fair Skinned Boy takes in his friend's words, sensing his sadness.

FAIR SKINNED BOY
Well...that's not true. I think...
(pause)
I think...you belong to me.

There are no words. Just feelings. The two young men looking into each other's eyes. And then THEY KISS. They pull back from one another, enveloped by emotion.

TANNED SKINNED BOY
Can I keep you?

The Fair Skinned Boy smiles shyly. This is a moment ELEVEN YEARS IN THE MAKING.

The two friends kiss each other again, longer this time.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
What the hell are you doing?!

The two break the kiss, shocked at the unexpected visitor's arrival.

PRE-LAP

MATEO
So, you chose option number one.
Fleeing.

EXT. RESTAURANT - TABLE - DAY

JUNE 1st, 2025

Mateo and Xzander are having lunch, seated in the outside dining area of the restaurant.

XZANDER
(nervous laugh)
Hightailed it out of there.

MATEO
Well...at least you went through with it. And I'm sure the guy had no complaints. How did...you feel...after?

XZANDER

(pause)

Confused. But, um...we can forget about him. You said you wanted to have lunch because you had something you wanted to tell me?

MATEO

Yeah, uh...I do.

(sighs)

I haven't even told my mother yet because I know she's probably gonna freak but...I wanted you to...be the first one to know. And now I...I really don't know why it's so hard for me to even say.

Xzander can't believe it. He breathes a sigh of relief.

XZANDER

Oh my God, thank you Teo. I...I've been going out of my mind thinking I was the *only* one feeling this way! And it's *totally* unexpected, *nothing* that I was looking for and I'm *positive* you weren't looking for it either but...I get it. And it's okay. I think I'm...

(pause)

I think I'm falling for you too.

The huge weight on Xzander's shoulders has been lifted. After a few moments of silence, Mateo speaks.

MATEO

Xzander, I'm...I'm going to California for five months.

Xzander's face drops.

XZANDER

What?

MATEO

Last night, Andrew told me the buyer who was interested in my work chose me to do their art room and they want me to work on site ASAP. Zan, I'm...I'm flying out tomorrow.

XZANDER
(shocked)
Oh my God.
(realizes; even more shocked)
Oh my God.

The level of embarrassment Xzander feels is unimaginable.

MATEO
Why would you...why would you tell me
that?

XZANDER
(confused)
What? I'm sorry, Teo, I thought...

MATEO
You thought that I was...that I was
what? That I was...gay?

XZANDER
(pause)
Well...this woman wrote an article in
my magazine about the fluidity of
sexual orientation these days...

MATEO
I'm not gay, Zan.

XZANDER
(pause)
Who says you have to be?

Xzander leans in, his voice softening.

XZANDER
Listen, Teo...I don't know what's
happening between us, but I know that
it's not just...friendship. I know it
because I *am* gay and the way you look
at me, the way...the way you talk to
me, it's...it's *okay* to feel something
for another guy even if you...never
have before.

MATEO
Wow. *This* is what you do, isn't it?
This is why you're single.

XZANDER
What are you talking about?

MATEO

Your whole resolution, this is where it comes from. You just...*throw* things onto guys without knowing what they really want. And now you're doing it to me.

XZANDER

That is *not* what I'm doing, Mateo...

MATEO

It is! Xzander...I'm sorry. I'm *sorry* you feel something that I...that I just...*don't*. And I don't know, maybe...maybe this distance? Is exactly what we would need right now.

Mateo puts some money on the table, grabs his bag, and leaves the table.

Xzander is stunned in disbelief as he watches Mateo, walk away. Suddenly, Mateo stops walking and turns back around. Xzander's eyes meet Mateo's, SILENTLY PLEADING FOR HIM TO COME BACK.

After a few seconds of eye contact, Mateo leaves.

Xzander takes some breaths, gathering himself as he wipes the few tears which have found their way to his cheek.

"CAN I BE HIM" by James Arthur plays over the montage

MONTAGE BEGINS

INT. XZANDER & TRISHA'S LOFT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

JULY 2025

Xzander and Brian sit next to each other on the couch, watching a movie. Brian laughs, totally into the film. However, Xzander looks completely detached. His thoughts are somewhere else.

INT. MATEO'S CLIENT'S HOUSE - ART ROOM - DAY

Mateo paints, focused on his new art piece. He hears his phone ring. Mateo puts down his painting supplies, running to the phone and picks it up to see who's calling.

CALLER ID SAYS "SASHA"

Mateo looks disappointed.

INT. XZANDER'S CUBICLE - DAY

AUGUST 2025

Xzander looks at his phone, scrolling through Grindr, very bored. He looks at his inbox.

12 UNREAD MESSAGES

Xzander looks uninterested and puts the phone down.

INT. MATEO'S CLIENT'S HOUSE - ART ROOM - NIGHT

Mateo painting, focused. Mateo puts down his paintbrush and steps back, examining his creation.

Something still isn't right about this piece.

INT. FOXXXY'S - BAR - NIGHT

SEPTEMBER 2025

Xzander, Trisha, Brian, and Wyatt dance together. Xzander looks over at the bar.

He sees MATEO HANDING OUT DRINKS.

Trisha says something to Xzander, grabbing his attention away from the bar. When he looks back at the bar, he sees an entirely different bartender.

Mateo was only in his mind.

INT. MATEO'S CLIENT'S HOUSE - ART ROOM - NIGHT

Mateo is on a video call with Sasha, talking excitedly as he shows Sasha a copy of Out magazine as he displays one of Xzander's articles.

Sasha looks as though she's trying to be interested however, she's really not.

INT. XZANDER & TRISHA'S LOFT - XZANDER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

OCTOBER 2025

Xzander lies on his bed, looking at his phone. Staring at Mateo's name in his contact list.

It's been four months since he's heard from him.

INT. MATEO'S CLIENT'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mateo lies in bed on his back, looking at his phone. Staring at Xzander's name in his contact list.

It's been four months since he's heard Xzander's voice or seen his face.

SPLIT SCREEN

Xzander clicks on Mateo's name in his contact list.

Mateo clicks on Xzander's name in his contact list.

Their fingers hover over the "call" button.

But at the last second, they both pull back out and set their phones down on the bed.

Mateo and Xzander reach over to the lights near their beds, turning them off.

MONTAGE ENDS

INT. CATALINA FELIZ'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

NOVEMBER 24th, 2025

Andrew, Catalina, and Mateo are setting the dishes on the table in preparation for Thanksgiving dinner. The table is decorated beautifully with centerpieces and fall leaves as well as delicious looking food.

CATALINA

Ugh, Teo I've missed you so much!

Catalina plants a big kiss on Teo's cheek.

MATEO

I missed you too, mami. But if you kiss me one more time, I think you're gonna burn a hole in my cheek.

CATALINA

Five months you were off becoming some "big-time" artist and all I had was the occasional video call, that? Is my cheek. I *made* that cheek. So, I'll kiss it as much as I want.

ANDREW

She's got you there, man.

MATEO

I'm not a "big time" artist, I'm just...a little bit more known than before.

ANDREW

Teo, that influencer changed the trajectory of your entire career after they posted your pieces on socials. Your TikTok, your Insta, the buyers who have been blowing up my phone for a "Teo original"? You're hot stuff, bro.

CATALINA

But of course, as with everything in life, the good comes with the bad. I was so sad to hear about you and Sasha.

ANDREW

Me too. You broke up with her before she could hook me up with her hot friends. Very selfish. Tis' the season for giving my friend.

MATEO

It was for the best. There was a... distance...between us.

ANDREW

Well, you were across the country for five months. Some people can't really deal with that in a relationship.

MATEO

Right. And also, she um...she thought that there was...someone else.

ANDREW

Was there? I mean five months is a long time. Especially for you, not to have sex.

CATALINA

Aye Teo, you were doing so good with your resolution! *Don't* tell me you and your "little Teo" went *estupido* in

California and cheated on that poor girl.

MATEO

Mami, of course not! I wouldn't do that.

OVEN TIMER GOES OFF

MATEO

The pernil is ready. I'll get it.

Mateo leaves and goes to the kitchen.

ANDREW

Don't touch the pan with the crispy skin! That is my skin! It's all I have!

(confused)

Why would Sasha think there was someone else? I would know if there was someone else. Mateo tells me everything.

CATALINA

I don't know. Does he?

Suddenly, a lightbulb going off in Andrew's head.

ANDREW

Excuse me.

Andrew scurries off.

INT. XZANDER & TRISHA'S LOFT - DINING ROOM - TABLE - NIGHT

Xzander is also having Thanksgiving dinner with Trisha, Brian, and Wyatt.

TRISHA

I swear I will never have anything as good in my mouth as these garlic mashed potatoes.

WYATT

(clears throat)

I beg to differ.

Trisha and Wyatt share a suggestive look.

TRISHA'S PHONE PINGS

Trisha picks up her phone from the table and sees a notification. She opens it.

ANDREW (TEXT)

CALL ME! 911!

XZANDER

You two dating is still very weird.

WYATT

Why is that? It's not like I'm dating you. And not because being gay is bad, it's just *that* would be a sexual harassment suit waiting to happen.

TRISHA

Well, you can harass *me* all you want.

Trisha feeds Wyatt a forkful of mashed potatoes. Xzander looks at the new couple, happy but there is a sadness to his expression.

TRISHA

I'll be right back.

Trisha gets up from the table and walks into the hallway.

BRIAN

You okay?

XZANDER

Uh, yeah. Yeah, I'm fine. It's just the...holidays. I'm always in my feels around this time of year.

WYATT

Speaking of holidays, how are the Christmas party plans coming along? The staff is counting on you to bring the "merry". And by "merry", I don't mean butt plugs.

XZANDER

Dear God.

INT. XZANDER & TRISHA'S LOFT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Trisha holds the phone to her ear.

TRISHA

No, Spicy Moon does *not* deliver on

Thanksgiving.

INT. CATALINA FELIZ'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

ANDREW

I don't *need* Spicy Moon; I have crispy pork skin.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

TRISHA

That's meat.

ANDREW

No, it's not I checked, it's *fat*.

TRISHA

It's pork flesh.

ANDREW

We're getting off topic!

(whispers)

I think...*my* best friend...likes *your* best friend.

TRISHA

Uhhhh...why would you think that?

ANDREW

Because *my* best friend broke up with a really hot girl because she thought he had feelings for someone else and the only other person he's been around? Is *your* best friend.

TRISHA

Then *maybe* you should ask *your* best friend if he likes *my* best friend. I mean, he is *your* best friend.

ANDREW

Because this isn't just something you come out and ask your best friend!

TRISHA

Best friends share everything, you can totally ask your best friend if he's into my best friend.

ANDREW

I am asking! I'm asking you!

(pause)

Does your best friend like my best friend? I *know* you *know*.

TRISHA

Of course, I would know, he's *my* best friend. Why don't you know?

ANDREW

That's all I need to know.

Andrew hangs up.

ANDREW

(shocked)

My best friend *does* like her best friend.

INT. XZANDER & TRISHA'S LOFT - DINING ROOM - TABLE

XZANDER

So, I have the caterer, the gift bags, the decorations, everything is pretty much set. I just need to find a venue.

TRISHA (O.S.)

Why don't you have it at Foxxxy's? Teo's bar.

Xzander looks toward the doorway, seeing Trisha standing there.

XZANDER

I...forgot that the pies are in the oven. Trisha, could you...help me. With the pies.

Xzander gestures towards the kitchen with his head.

INT. XZANDER & TRISHA'S LOFT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

XZANDER

(whispering)

Why would you do that? You know me and Mateo haven't spoken since...

TRISHA

Since you scared him away by telling him something that was true but that he also wasn't ready to hear? Yeah. I know.

XZANDER

I can't believe you're still taking his side.

TRISHA

The *only* side I'm ever on? Is yours. Or *mine* when Wyatt has me positioned that way.

XZANDER

Nope. Not engaging.

TRISHA

All I'm saying is that I think you and Teo really did have something. And Brian is a nice guy...but I *know* you, Zan.

(pause)

I know where your heart is. And just because Teo didn't respond the way you wanted him to, it does not mean he isn't feeling for you too.

Xzander sighs, lowering his head.

XZANDER

(deep sigh)

Well, it doesn't matter. Because Teo made it perfectly clear how he "feels" about me. Which is probably for the best because per *your* suggestion, I'm supposed to be "having fun", right? Not falling in love.

Trisha's eyes go wide.

TRISHA

Did you...did you just say that you're in love with Mateo?

Xzander is also stunned at his own admission.

DING DONG!

XZANDER

(confused)

All the people we know and like are
already here.

Trisha walks to the front door and opens it. It's a delivery
man holding a square item that's wrapped in brown paper.

DELIVERY MAN

Got a package for...Xzander Skye?

TRISHA

Oh. I'll take that. Thank you.

The delivery man gives Trisha the item, she closes the door
and walks back into the kitchen.

TRISHA

It's for you, apparently.

XZANDER

Me? Oh. It's probably my father
sending his obligatory "I Know I Was
An Ass About You Being Gay When You
Were Younger But I Love You Now" gift.
However...

(begins unwrapping the item)

Christmas isn't for a couple of weeks,
so this is early.

Xzander finishes opening the gift and he can't believe what
he sees.

XZANDER

Oh my God.

It's a painting of a Frappuccino, XZANDER'S FAVORITE DRINK.
On the white sticker attached to the cup where it says
"name", the words "I'M SORRY" are painted instead.

This is the painting Mateo had been painting over the summer
during their time apart.

Trisha smiles, seeing the gift, knowing who it came from.

TRISHA

Well...you were right about one
thing...that does seem pretty clear to
me.

"PHOTOGRAPH" by Ed Sheeran begins to play in the background

INT. CATALINA FELIZ'S APARTMENT - MATEO'S OLD BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mateo walks into his old childhood bedroom that hasn't changed from when he was little. He looks around, seeing all the mementos his mother kept of his.

There's a photo of Mateo as a young boy and his father on the dresser. He picks it up and looks at it fondly.

Mateo goes to the closet, opening it. Bending down, he sees a box and picks it up, taking it out of the closet. He sits on the bed, setting the box next to him, and pulls out a comic book. A small smirk crosses his face as he puts it down.

There's something else in the box and it causes Mateo to pause. After a moment, Mateo reaches into the box slowly and when he pulls his hand out, he's holding...a picture frame with a photo...

And a DRIED PURPLE FLOWER inside.

CLOSE UP ON PHOTO OF THE TANNED SKINNED BOY AND THE FAIR SKINNED BOY AT SIX-YEARS-OLD IN THE PLAYGROUND, SMILING HAPPILY

Mateo closes his eyes. Going back in time.

FLASHBACK BEGINS

INT. THE TANNED SKINNED BOY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

TANNED SKINNED BOY
Can I keep you?

The Fair Skinned Boy smiles shyly. This is a moment ELEVEN YEARS IN THE MAKING.

The two friends kiss each other again, longer this time.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
What the hell are you doing?!

The two break the kiss, shocked at the unexpected visitor's arrival.

It's The Tanned Skinned Boy's father.

TANNED SKINNED BOY
 (shocked; nervous)
 Dad! We were, we were just...

TANNED SKINNED BOY'S FATHER
 (angry)
 Kayden, I don't wanna hear it. Any of
 it.
 (to Fair Skinned Boy)
 And you...get out of my house.

Mateo is unable to say anything, full of fear, shame, and embarrassment. He gets up from the bed and tries to walk out of the room, but his wrist is grabbed by his friend's father.

TANNED SKINNED BOY'S FATHER
 (pause)
 Stay the hell away from my son, Mateo.

FLASHBACK ENDS

INT. CATALINA FELIZ'S APARTMENT - MATEO'S OLD BEDROOM - NIGHT
 - CONT'D

Mateo feels horrible. Losing Xzander has been like losing HIS FIRST CRUSH ALL OVER AGAIN.

CATALINA (O.S.)
 I was wondering why you never took
 that with you when you moved out.

Mateo's head snaps up, looking in the direction of his mother who's standing in the doorway.

MATEO
 Mami. I...

CATALINA
 You know...

Catalina walks into the room, sitting on the bed next to Mateo.

CATALINA
 I remember that night you came home.
 Crying your eyes out. And you wouldn't
 tell me why.
 (pause)
 But Kayden's mother did.

Mateo is shocked.

MATEO

You...you knew? About me and Kayden?

CATALINA

I knew. We all did. But Kayden's father wanted to forget.

(pause)

I never could.

Mateo lets out a breath, releasing the heaviness the photo has resurrected in him.

MATEO

He...he was my best friend.

CATALINA

He was more than that. Kayden was the first person you ever really cared for. And when his parents moved away...I saw how much that affected you. *That's* why I kept this photo.

MATEO

His...dad...was so angry. And we weren't even doing anything. We just...kissed. It was...it was innocent. We didn't know what it meant...

CATALINA

Oh Teo, you did. *Both* of you knew what it meant. And Kayden's father thought that by separating the two of you it would...change his son in some way.

MATEO

Do you...think it did?

CATALINA

I think...that Kayden? Grew up to be exactly who he was meant to be. Authentic. And *happy*. At least, I hope he did. Because no amount of parental shame or...*girls*...

Mateo laughs slightly.

CATALINA

Can change...

(touches Mateo's heart)

What's in here. It shouldn't.

Mateo wipes some tears from his face.

MATEO

So...you've always...known?

CATALINA

That there was a part of my hijo that I knew he was so afraid of he couldn't even confide in me about it? Yes. I've had my theories.

MATEO

I just thought that if I...did what I was supposed to...that I would be...who I'm supposed to be. And I didn't wanna disappoint you and Papi...

CATALINA

You could *never*, mijo. And you are. You are *exactly* who you're supposed to be. But I want you to know, even though you have *never* needed it...you have my *blessing*...to be even *more* than who you already are.

MATEO

(pause)

Even if...I told you there's...a guy...now?

CATALINA

(smiles)

Ven aqui.

Catalina gently pulls Mateo head towards her and places it on her lap. He lays comfortably on her lap, feeling safer and more at ease than he ever has in his life.

CATALINA

So...what's his name?

MATEO

(pause)

It's Xzander. And...

(sighs)

He's pretty amazing.

THE CAMERA PANS back as Mateo and Catalina continue to talk about Xzander, the MAN WHO HAS CHANGED HIS LIFE.

PRE-LAP

"SANTA, CAN'T YOU HEAR ME" by Ariana Grande and Kelly Clarkson plays over the speakers

INT. FOXXXY'S - BAR - NIGHT

DECEMBER 25th, 2025 (CHRISTMAS DAY)

The bar is decorated with lights on the walls, garland hangs from the ceiling, and a Christmas tree is on the stage. The bartenders and go-go boys are dressed in Christmas attire.

Staff members from Out magazine sit and stand around the bar, drinking, ordering food, talking and laughing; Trisha and Wyatt are amongst them.

Mateo works behind the bar, periodically stealing glances at Xzander who is sitting in a VIP area with Brian. Mateo pulls out his phone, looking at his text messages.

XZANDER (TEXT)
**THANK YOU FOR THE "MATEO FELIZ"
ORIGINAL. HAPPY THANKSGIVING.**

MATEO (TEXT)
**THANK YOU FOR THE INSPIRATION. HAPPY
THANKSGIVING.**

Mateo sighs, looking back over at Xzander with Brian.

ANDREW (O.S.)
Soooo...when are you gonna tell him?

Mateo breaks his gaze, turning his head, and seeing Andrew sitting in front of him.

MATEO
Um...tell who what?

ANDREW
Zan. When are you gonna tell *him* how
you feel about him?

Mateo is shocked by Andrew's straightforward question. Though, there's no sense in hiding it anymore.

MATEO
(pause)
I...sent him a painting.

ANDREW

A *painting*?! Mateo, this is not sixth grade, man. You gotta do a *little* better than that.

Mateo is relieved by Andrew's casual reaction to his news.

MATEO

How did you know?

ANDREW

(laughs slightly)

Because for the past few months? I've never seen you happier. *Except* for when we got through hazing when we pledged that frat in college.

MATEO

(pause)

And...you're okay?

ANDREW

You're like a brother to me. Of course, I am. But it's not about *me* being okay, or anybody else for that matter...are you okay?

MATEO

(sighs)

I made a mistake, Drew. I think, I...I think I might've pushed him away.

(pause)

Too far away for him to come back.

ANDREW

Teo...mistakes happen. But all that *really* matters? Is that you got here. You made it. That's something a lot of people can't do. And if you've *truly* found someone you love, but you choose to love them in the dark? To hide it? That is *probably* the biggest mistake you are ever going to make.

Andrew's words hit Mateo right in the gut. His friend is utterly and completely right.

ANDREW

Bring it in.

Andrew stands from the bar stool. The two hug tightly.

INT. FOXXXY'S - VIP SEATING AREA - NIGHT

Xzander is looking off into space, swirling his straw around in his drink. Brian sits in a chair across from him.

BRIAN

You can't stop thinking about him, can you?

Xzander snaps out of his daze.

XZANDER

Huh?...Who?

BRIAN

Mateo. I think we both know that's where you...really are right now.

XZANDER

(pause)

No. No, I'm just...

BRIAN

Thinking about Mateo?

(sighs)

It's...it's okay, Zan. You don't have to lie to me. Listen...I didn't wanna tell you because I didn't want you to think I was a creep but...I heard you and Trisha talking on Thanksgiving.

XZANDER

(shocked)

You did? How?

BRIAN

I was going to check and see if you needed help with the pies and...I heard you. I heard you say that...you love him.

Xzander feels terrible...but Brian's words are true.

XZANDER

I really do like spending time with you, Brian.

BRIAN

But I'm not the person you really wanna spend time with. And ya know what? That's alright.

(pause)

I don't know what The Universe has in store for you, Xzander, but what I do know? You deserve someone who isn't afraid to love you out loud. You're worth that. And I really hope you find him.

Brian stands up and bends down, kissing Xzander on the cheek and then walks away. Trisha comes over to the area, holding a drink.

TRISHA

Hey, come on! Wyatt's about to do his drunk Christmas party speech, I'm gonna go live on TikTok! Oh God, this is gonna be better than when I accidentally went live while we were doing it in the twisted pretzel yoga position.

XZANDER

And you *still* have a TikTok?

TRISHA

Ugh! Come onnnnn.

WYATT (O.S.)

Excuse me, excuse me...

INT. FOXXXY'S - STAGE - NIGHT

Trisha leads Xzander by the hand, making their way to the front of the crowd of patrons that has formed. Wyatt stands on the stage holding a microphone.

WYATT

Now, this is gonna be short and sweet. You beautiful people...you make the world go round. *Everything* you write. *Every* story you share...is important. And hopefully you open the hearts and minds of the individuals who read what you create. I am very thankful to have you all as my staff. Which is *why* I'm using your Christmas bonuses to pay for this open bar.

The crowd laughs.

WYATT

Now, let's give the man who's made
this party possible a big hand! Mateo
Feliz, get your ass up here! Come
here!

Mateo's been watching Wyatt's speech, amused. Though, his smile fades when he hears his name. The crowd cheers and claps, rooting for him to go on the stage.

Xzander turns around, his eyes lock with Mateo's as he claps for him. In that moment, Mateo MAKES A DECISION. He moves from the bar and walks onto the stage. Wyatt hands him the microphone.

MATEO

Thank you, Mr. Dawson. For the intro
and...and well, for the business
because you have given us a lot of
money tonight. Sorry bout you guys'
bonuses.

The crowd laughs.

MATEO

Um...this time last year...I was...a
struggling artist. You see, I'm a
painter. But I was having a hard time.
Finding...inspiration. But...then I
met someone.

**"YOU ARE THE REASON (INSTRUMENTAL)" by Laura Sullivan plays
over the montage**

MONTAGE BEGINS

QUICK CUTS

-Mateo and Xzander first meeting outside the gallery,
introducing themselves to each other.

MATEO (V.O.)

*And this person...they showed me
pieces of myself that I had literally
put in a box...because I thought those
pieces...were wrong.*

-Mateo in his childhood bedroom looking at the photo of
himself when he was younger with his childhood best friend,
Kayden.

MATEO (V.O.)
*And this person...thought they were
wrong.*

-Xzander talking to Mateo at the coffee shop during their
first "tutoring" session with each other.

MATEO (V.O.)
*That they were the reason they were
alone.*

MONTAGE ENDS

INT. FOXXXY'S - DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT

Xzander has been listening intently. Trisha looks at him,
seeing his eyes gloss over, a well of tears bubbling.

MATEO (O.S.)
But I wanna let...

INT. FOXXXY'S - STAGE - NIGHT - CONT'D

Mateo takes a deep breath.

MATEO
I wanna let you know...Xzander. You're
not wrong. I was. I always thought I
was wrong. But you...

MONTAGE BEGINS

QUICK CUTS

-Xzander asleep on Mateo's chest as Mateo looks at him...the
first time he's ever felt something for a man as an adult.

MATEO (V.O.)
You make me feel right.

-Ten-year-old Mateo throwing the paper airplane and it
landing on Kayden's desk.

MATEO (V.O.)
*When I was a kid...I lost my best
friend because of who we were. Just
two boys with...innocent crushes.*

-Fifteen-year-old Mateo and fifteen-year-old Kayden dancing
with their dates at the school dance as they look longingly
at each other.

MATEO (V.O.)
*In the words of Katy Perry...I kissed
 a boy. And I liked it.*

-Seventeen-year-old Mateo and Kayden sharing their first kiss
 in Kayden's bedroom.

MATEO (V.O.)
*And then, I lost him. But I don't
 wanna lose again.*

-Kayden's father telling Mateo to stay away from Kayden.

MATEO (V.O.)
*I don't wanna lose you because I
 understand now that...no type of love
 is wrong. And that it's okay.*

-Mateo and Xzander sharing a glance on their double date at
 the sex museum with Brian and Sasha.

MATEO (V.O.)
It's okay...for me to love you.
 (pause)
I love you.

-Mateo and Xzander looking into each other's eyes the night
 Mateo taught Xzander bachata.

The moment Mateo knew he had fallen for a man.

INT. FOXXXY'S - STAGE - NIGHT - CONT'D

MATEO
*And if you let me...Xzander, I wanna
 show you just how much you deserve to
 be loved in this life. But only...if
 you let me. So...*
 (pause; wipes tears from his face)
Will you let me?

The crowd murmurs, turning and talking to each other;
 everyone is enthralled by Mateo's declaration.

INT. FOXXXY'S - DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT - CONT'D

TRISHA
 (mumbling)
*That is definitely your cue, get your
 ass up there!*

XZANDER
(pause; eyes wide)
I can't move.

TRISHA
Oh God!
(yelling)
HE SAID HE CAN'T MOVE, TEO!

INT. FOXXXY'S - STAGE - NIGHT - CONT'D

MATEO
(smiles)
Then I guess...I'll just have to come
to you.

Mateo drops the mic and jumps off the stage, walking through the crowd.

INT. FOXXXY'S - DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT

Everyone stands back, circling around the two. Xzander is stunned in silence.

Mateo meets Xzander, staring back at him, unsure of what's to come after he's bared his soul.

MATEO
So...Zan...
(pause)
Will you let me?

Xzander is silent. All he can do is look into Mateo's eyes, focus on them to keep his legs from buckling.

WYATT
Well, come on, *answer* the man!

Xzander can't find the words. Though, as he looks in Mateo's eyes...HE KNOWS HIS WORDS ARE TRUE. THIS MOMENT IS REAL.

Suddenly, Xzander lets out something between a cry and a laugh.

XZANDER
(pause)
Hell yeah.

A huge smile comes over Mateo's face...and HE PASSIONATELY KISSES XZANDER.

The crowd goes wild, ripping and roaring, clapping and cheering. Trisha stands next to Wyatt and Andrew, all three of them clapping.

ANDREW/TRISHA
That's *my* best friend!

Andrew and Wyatt continue watching Mateo and Xzander, smiling proudly. Trisha looks down at her phone, seeing her livestream on TikTok. Her eyes go wide.

TRISHA
Two *hundred* thousand views? Oh my God...
(excited)
I went viral!
(sighs)
God, I love love.

INT. FOXXXY'S - DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT - CONT'D

Mateo and Xzander break their kiss and hug tightly as the crowd continues to celebrate the beginning of something beautiful.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. XZANDER & TRISHA'S LOFT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

DECEMBER 31st, 2025 (New Year's Eve)

CLOSE UP on Xzander's face, staring out the window of his loft just as he did last New Year's Eve. However, this year, there's a small smile on his face.

CLOSE UP ON A PAIR OF ARMS SLIDING AROUND XZANDER'S WAIST

The camera pans up slowly...revealing that THESE ARMS BELONG TO MATEO. Xzander leans his head back onto Mateo's chest.

MATEO
Soooo...question.

XZANDER
As long as it's not, "What's your New Year's resolution, Xzander?"...because I will punch you.

Mateo and Xzander share a laugh.

TRISHA (O.S.)

Ummmm, it's almost twelve o' clock you two.

Mateo and Xzander turn around, seeing Catalina, Trisha, Wyatt, and Andrew standing there, watching their intimate moment.

TRISHA

We are sooooo happy for you guys, really, but we have shots to take and you're holding us up.

CATALINA

We also have grapes to eat and wishes to make.

ANDREW

And oxtails to kill.

TRISHA/WYATT

So, let's goooooo!

XZANDER

(laughs)

Okay, okay we're coming!

The group goes back into the living room. Xzander and Mateo both look amused.

XZANDER

So...what were you gonna ask me?

Mateo turns towards Xzander, looking at him lovingly. He places his hands on Xzander's waist, pulling him closer to his body.

MATEO

(smiles; pause)

Can I keep you?

Xzander smiles brightly. He wraps his arms around Mateo's neck and just looks at him. After a few moments, he answers.

XZANDER

As long as you don't drop me. Someone once told me that I'm kinda dainty and easy to throw around.

Mateo laughs, recalling the moment he called Xzander "dainty" during their bachata dance. They lean into each other for a

kiss...and then Xzander pulls back.

XZANDER
Shouldn't we...wait...until midnight
gets here?

MATEO
(pause)
I've waited long enough to get here.

**"KISS ME at MIDNIGHT" by *NSYNC begins to play in the
background**

Xzander smiles at Mateo fondly. They lean into each other again, their lips meet, and they never part. The camera pulls back slowly and out the window, into the snowy New Year's Eve night, lingering on Mateo and Xzander in their loving embrace.

**The title card appears in cursive letters, written by a
paintbrush...**

"CAN I KEEP YOU?"

FADE OUT: