

Lying

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Cast of Characters

Ryan: 17 years old; Jason's boyfriend

Jason: 18 years old; Ryan's boyfriend

Darrell: 43 years old; Ryan's dad

Scene

Ryan's small bedroom in his father's house.

Time

A little after midnight.

At stage left there is a window. A single bed is at center stage, with a desk, chair, and dresser to its right. A closet door is at the back wall of the stage, slightly ajar. Some generic band posters adorn the walls and a few clothes are scattered here and there. At the far right there is a door. As lights fade up, we see Ryan, apparently asleep in the bed. A tap sounds at the window. After a couple more taps, Ryan, a young man in some worn pajamas, wakes and rises. He crosses to the window and opens it.

JASON (OFFSTAGE)

But soft! What light in yonder window breaks? 'Tis the east, and Juliet is the sun.

JASON, wearing torn jeans and a beaten up jacket, climbs in through the window, grinning. He and Ryan embrace, almost desperately.

RYAN

You shouldn't be here, Jason.

JASON

(teasing)

I thought you found these nighttime trysts romantic.

RYAN

(trying to stay serious)

I did, I mean, I do, but I just—

JASON

Shhh.

Jason puts a finger to Ryan's lips.

Let's just enjoy ourselves.

He removes his jacket and moves to sit on the bed. Ryan is silent.

Ryan? What's wrong?

RYAN

You know my dad is home right now.

JASON

Yeah, but he's sleeping, isn't he?

RYAN

Who knows? Last time—

JASON

How many times do I have to apologize? I said I was sorry!

RYAN
Keep your voice down!

JASON
I wasn't trying to get you in trouble.

RYAN
(sighing)
I know you weren't. I'm just a little on edge right now.

JASON
It's not like this is any easier for me than it is for you. I just...I had to see you.

RYAN
Jason, we can't go on like this. I know we've been dating for a year now, but we've been hiding it for that long too.

(beat)
Why'd you have to go and tick off my dad?

JASON
I told you I was sorry! I just wanted to see you.

RYAN
But I told you he was getting home late that night.

JASON
What you said was "he's out bowling". I don't think that's the same thing.

RYAN
Well, gee, somehow I figured you'd be smart enough to figure it out.

JASON
Don't be sarcastic with me. You act like it was all my fault.
Ryan says nothing.
Oh, so you're just ignoring your father's part in this? Is that it?

RYAN
Of course I'm not! I just fail to see how sneaking into my house and trying to massage my father is in any way NOT your fault.

JASON

It was an accident! It was dark! You know how much you and your father look alike.
Haven't people been saying that to you your whole life?

RYAN

That's not an excuse for groping my dad!

Jason stands and crosses to Ryan by the window. He hugs him.

JASON

I'm sorry.

RYAN

I know. You're always sorry.

JASON

Well I mean it! I don't know what else you want me to do! I'm crazy about you, Ryan. I
have been for a long time. Is it my fault that everyone in this town thinks that's so wrong?

RYAN

I've told you to be careful. I'm always careful, but you had to go and blow it.

JASON

I hate all the sneaking around!

RYAN

Sneaking around is the only way to be together! You knew what it would mean if we got
caught. What people would think.

JASON

I don't care what anyone thinks but you. You shouldn't care about those bigots. They want
what we have. They're just angry we've found a loophole to love.

RYAN

(quietly)

My dad is one of those 'bigots'.

(beat)

He was always there for me, Jason. When I was seven, I fell out of a tree and hid the
bruises from him for a week, terrified that he'd be angry. He was always saying 'Don't you
go climbing trees now, son.' But when he found out, he just said 'Why didn't you tell me
sooner?' And he kissed my bruise and made me feel better.

JASON
Ryan...

RYAN

And then I grew up and met you. I got swept up in our forbidden romance without a care for what he would say. Do you know how hard it was to come home at night and smile over the dinner table at him like I wasn't betraying his trust? Pretending I was interested in girls like a 'normal' son would be? I spent every day knowing that I was a disappointment, but still. Somehow...somehow I thought he would tell me 'It's okay, son, why didn't you tell me sooner?'.
Ryan begins to cry. Jason crosses to him and puts an arm around him.

JASON

It's okay. It'll be alright. We'll run away and start over somewhere else.

RYAN
What?

JASON

You were right. We can't be together if we stay here. So we'll go.

RYAN

No, that's not what I want!
Jason recoils visibly as if slapped.

JASON

But I thought you wanted this. I thought...I thought the whole star-crossed lovers thing was exciting for you.

RYAN

That illusion has been shattered for me.
(beat)
I can't go with you, Jason.

JASON

You don't mean that. You can't!
Jason crosses to Ryan and hugs him tight. Ryan does not return the hug.

DARRELL (OFFSTAGE)

Ryan, is everything okay? I thought I heard voices.
Both boys freeze.

RYAN

I'm fine, Dad, sorry for waking you.

DARRELL (OFFSTAGE)

Well, you should get some sleep before tomorrow.

JASON

(whispering)

Ryan, come with me now. All we have to do is crawl out that window.

RYAN

Jason, look. It was fun while it lasted, really, it was—

JASON

No, don't talk like that! You'll just say things you'll regret!

Ryan turns away.

RYAN

Jason, you have to leave. My dad's awake and I don't want you to get in trouble for being here.

JASON

No, not until you tell me what's going on!

(his voice cracks and grows fevered)

What's tomorrow, Ryan? Why won't you leave with me? Why are you throwing all our dreams away?

RYAN

I'm not throwing anything away! You don't understand! Your parents wouldn't care if they found out!

JASON

So it's your dad's fault, then?

The bedroom door swings open and Darrell enters. He is a well-built man in his early forties.

DARRELL

Ryan, what's-

(he sees JASON)

What are you doing here?

Jason rushes to back away across the room from Darrell.

JASON
I'm sorry, sir.

DARRELL
I told you to never come back here.

JASON
With all due respect sir, I don't care what you said. I love your son.
Darrell crosses to Jason and grabs the front of his shirt, his hand raised.

RYAN
Dad, no!
DARRELL stops, keeping his hand raised.

DARRELL
And you think I don't love my son? Is that it, boy?

JASON
I think if you cared about him so much you would be glad that he'd found someone instead of getting hung up on whether that someone was a he or a she.

DARRELL
Don't you ever question that I care for my son. I take care of my boy.

JASON
Making him choose between his father and his boyfriend? Yeah, that really sounds like good parenting. He loves me!

DARRELL
But he'll choose me. I raised him alone after his mother died. I took care of him when he was sick. I was there for him when he needed me.

JASON
He doesn't need you anymore! He's an adult!

DARRELL
I will not be disrespected in my own house.

JASON
Or what? You'll hit me? Because believe me, I have no problem calling the cops.
Darrell pauses for a moment, then turns his back on Jason. He stares at Ryan before crossing to the door.

DARRELL

Make sure you have everything for tomorrow, son. We leave at seven.

(turns to look at JASON)

I suggest you leave.

Darrell exits. Ryan begins putting clothes in a duffel bag.

JASON

What is he talking about?

(beat)

Ryan, what did he mean? Where are you going?

RYAN

Boot camp.

JASON

If your dad thinks he can drill the gay out of you—

RYAN

It wasn't my dad's idea.

JASON

W-what? You always told me a military lifestyle was your dad's dream. What happened to wanting to be a music teacher? What happened to wanting to get a little house together?

RYAN

Dreams change. I'm leaving tomorrow, and nothing you can say will change that.

JASON

I thought you loved me. Is that not true anymore?

Ryan turns to face him.

RYAN

It is, Jason. I'm sorry.

He starts to turn around but Jason grabs his shoulders.

JASON

Don't leave! You can't just give in to your father!

RYAN

It's not 'giving in'! I'm doing what I have to. Dad's been through a lot, what with Mom dying and now this. I don't want to lose him. We take care of each other.

JASON

Do I mean nothing? You're going to leave me here in this stupid town with all its gossip and judgment!

RYAN

So leave! You were dead set on skipping town before. You don't need me here to do that.

JASON

If I leave, how will you find me when you come back?

Ryan says nothing.

You're not going to come back, are you?

RYAN

Not for a while, at least. It'll be years, Jason. We'll be different people.

JASON

You're making excuses. I would wait, you know I would.

RYAN

I don't want you to!

JASON

You need me to conveniently disappear from your life, don't you? You're just going to give up everything because of your father!

(beat)

Well, fine then! Go and get yourself shot! How will your dad feel then?

RYAN

He'd rather see his son dead than a fag.

(beat)

I have to go now. You should leave.

JASON

(attempting to be angry)

I never thought there'd be a day when I would be glad to see you leave.

RYAN

You're a bad liar.

He crosses to Jason and kisses him.

Goodbye, Jason.

Ryan exits, leaving Jason to slump and sit on the bed.

Lights fade.