

Even The Color Blue

by

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Cast of Characters

<u>JOHAN</u> :	26
<u>MOTHER</u> :	53
<u>FATHER</u> :	56

Place

Great Neck, Long Island

Time

5:30PM

2.

Setting: A fairly large kitchen inside a suburban home that needs an update in terms of its décor.

At Rise: Mother cooks hyper-focused while Johan sits at the kitchen table observing her.

(MOTHER stirs the pot)

JOHAN: Mom, why don't you stop cooking, sit down and talk with me for a moment.

MOTHER: I have to get all the ingredients just right.

JOHAN: But you haven't stopped moving around since I got here.

MOTHER: I'm cooking, what do you expect me to do?

JOHAN: As soon as I try talking to you, you distract yourself with your cooking. I've never seen someone so busy in the kitchen. (beat) Are you trying to push me aside?

MOTHER: I am making dinner for your father and you know it's meditative for me, you aren't allowing me to relax.

JOHAN: Can't you hold a conversation at the same time?

MOTHER: Obviously, I can't.

JOHAN: Shut off the flame.

MOTHER: How dare you?

JOHAN: Mom, please, talk to me.

MOTHER: Why are you acting so strange and taking such an odd tone with me, Johan?

JOHAN: Because you're always doing things to steer yourself away from reality.

MOTHER: What reality?

JOHAN: My reality.

MOTHER: ...Your father will be walking through the front door any minute and I am surprising him with a nice hot curry...he's been congested and I don't want him to get any worse because you know what that would be like, like taking care of a cranky toddler with a runny nose, prone to outbursts and high-pitched profanities and that I simply cannot bare. (beat) Make yourself useful and set the table.

(JOHAN sluggishly takes plates out from the cabinet)

JOHAN: I'll talk to Dad when he comes home then.

MOTHER: Talk...what talk?

JOHAN: You know what.

MOTHER: No...don't do that...Johan, please don't do that.

JOHAN: He needs to know.

MOTHER: Don't!

JOHAN: You know the real me, Mom, don't you? (beat) Do you know who I really am?

MOTHER: ...You are my son, that's who you are.

JOHAN: I didn't set out to be this way. I tried for so long to run away from myself. I've run all my life. Every damn day I'm haunted with the fact that I'm living a lie and I don't want to hide anymore, I don't want to hide from you, from dad...I don't want to be this way but I *have* to be this way...there is no other way for me. I've tried everything else. This is me, Mom. I never wanted to hurt you or let you down or be less than the son you've always wanted. I know I'm probably not the son you've wanted and I'm sorry for that. I just want to be accepted for who I truly am, not for who everyone thinks I am. I just want you to know how I feel inside about this and how hard it's been for me all these years...I'm not trying to hurt you and dad...I only want your acceptance.

MOTHER: I've never had a problem with you being what you say you are.

JOHAN: Gay, homosexual, just say it---

MOTHER: Gay! I never had any issues with it.

JOHAN: So why am I always made to feel that I don't have a voice?

MOTHER: We have a family.

JOHAN: What the fuck does that mean?

MOTHER (exploding): Get out of my house!

JOHAN (exploding back): No!

MOTHER: What did you come here for? To destroy my home?

JOHAN: I need to come out and if I don't come out I'm going to burst into flames!

MOTHER: What drug are you on right now as you speak to me? (beat) What drug? You must have lost fifteen, twenty pounds since the last time I've seen you. You look dirty. You're not YOU! You're not the human being I raised. I don't recognize you anymore!

JOHAN: You don't recognize me because you refuse to accept me for who I truly am.

MOTHER: No. I won't accept that. I won't. Do you think I give a damn that you're homosexual? I've never given a damn. In my mind it's no big deal, but it will kill your father.

JOHAN: He needs to know.

MOTHER: I told you to leave.

JOHAN: Mom, I'm not leaving until I see my father and tell him the truth once and for all.

MOTHER: You will shatter his heart.

JOHAN: What about mine?!

MOTHER: Why can't you just live your life?

JOHAN: Stop pushing me away!

MOTHER: You push yourself away with your own behavior!

JOHAN: ...Partly...

MOTHER: My support isn't enough?

JOHAN: If you really want to show support, let me tell dad.

MOTHER: You planned on saying this to him tonight?

JOHAN: I can't keep it in anymore.

MOTHER: Your father isn't well.

JOHAN: I know, you----

MOTHER: He isn't well...

JOHAN: ...What do you mean?

MOTHER: His breathing, he's sick.

JOHAN: Hasn't he stopped smoking cigarettes.

MOTHER: He has. But he's getting worse. It's progressive.

JOHAN: We told him to quit smoking years and years ago.

MOTHER: We did.

JOHAN: Is it something he can overcome?

(MOTHER nods head NO)

MOTHER: And now we're in a recession...couldn't have happened at a worse time...he's older now, so they are most likely to lay him off, keep on the younger men...on it goes. He's gonna try to get placed in the office, maybe they'll allow him to do administrative work, but your father isn't the pen and paper type...he'll end up leaving.

JOHAN: Are things okay financially?

MOTHER: We'll get by. Won't be our first rodeo.

JOHAN: How much do you need?

MOTHER: I said, we'll get through.

JOHAN: I have money. I can get dad better medical care and make sure the both of you are stable.

MOTHER: You're a pharmacist now? What kind of medicine are we talking? What DRUGS are we talking about? Those pills you take? You wanna make your father a pill popper like you?

JOHAN: Why do you talk to me like that?

MOTHER: It's true, isn't it?

JOHAN: Mom, I only want to help.

MOTHER: Your money's no good here!

JOHAN: I'm your son!

(pause)

MOTHER: I'm very angry. I'm angry that your father isn't well. I'm angry about this recession. I'm angry for you. You don't think I hurt for you? You think it's easy for me, knowing the way you are and how we've kept it from your father all these years...do you think I don't love you? Do you think I want you to feel the way you do? I can't imagine it...up late at night thinking about you, about your father...I don't know what it is to sleep a full night. You criticize me for moving around so much...I have to keep moving because I feel as though the moment I stop, my life will come crashing down on me. I keep everything in, I don't have anyone to talk to...what do you think my life is like day to day?

JOHAN: You can always talk to me.

MOTHER: You?! When have I ever been able to talk to you? Always out with your friends, going on binges, don't hear from you months at a time and then you pop up out of nowhere expecting hugs and kisses, when I don't know whether you've been dead or alive.

JOHAN: I'm sorry.

MOTHER: I lie to your father. I lie to him. I tell him we speak all the time and even go as far as to say you came over and we went out for lunch. Imagine? Imagine the lies I live with because I don't want your father worried sick over you.

JOHAN: I know.

MOTHER: Then you want to come here and drop this bomb on us, when we are already under enough pressure and I'm not saying what you feel isn't relevant, it is, it is relevant and important and what am I supposed to do? Caught between protecting your father and helping my son...trapped. Johan, you deserve the freedom to tell your father what hangs heavy on your heart. You deserve to have your truth but sometimes truth needs to stay secret because truth can ruin lives.

JOHAN: I'm going to---

(FATHER enters)

FATHER: Wow, that smells delicious!

MOTHER: Oh, I made it special for you.

FATHER: Could smell it down the block.

MOTHER: Could you?!

FATHER: Surprised there's not a food line outside.

MOTHER (laughing): You're silly.

FATHER: Curry?

MOTHER: You got it.

FATHER: Wow. And LOOK who's here! This must be my lucky day!

JOHAN: Hey Dad.

FATHER: Staying for dinner?

JOHAN: I was, um, just picking up a few things and---

FATHER: No, stay, haven't see my son in how long has it been---

JOHAN: Three weeks.

FATHER: Three weeks? Feels like three months, I've missed you.

JOHAN: How've you been feeling, Pop?

FATHER: I'm breathing, I'm good. How are things with you?

JOHAN: Doing well, just dropped my latest single and it's gotten a great response online, so I'm gonna be going upstate to record. One of my buddies has a recording studio and he's letting me use the place for the summer for my album.

FATHER: Which friend is this?

JOHAN: Todd.

FATHER: Don't believe I've met Todd just yet.

JOHAN: You haven't met him, he's in the music industry, good guy.

FATHER: I want to hear all about it. I just need to freshen up, get out of these work clothes, give me a few minutes and I'll be right back. My son is recording an album!

(FATHER walks off coughing badly)

JOHAN: You okay, Dad?

(FATHER continues coughing and slowly regains himself)

FATHER: FF...Fine...I'm fine.

MOTHER: Here, drink some water, darling.

(FATHER drinks from glass of water)

FATHER: ...I'm fine...just a cough, that curry will clean me right out.

(FATHER hands glass back to MOTHER)

Thank you. I'll be back in a jiffy.

(MOTHER glares at JOHAN)

JOHAN: That was pretty intense.

MOTHER: His face gets so red, he looks like he's about to faint or pop a blood vessel.

JOHAN: I can get him a specialist. I'll cover the costs.

MOTHER (crying): ...Maybe...

JOHAN: Mom, I'm here for you.

MOTHER: It's inevitable.

JOHAN: It's inevitable for all of us, isn't it?

MOTHER: He's leaving me too soon.

JOHAN: I'll get him a specialist and he'll have the best care. I'm sure we can make things better.

(MOTHER finishes setting up the table
with knives and forks)

(JOHAN helps by grabbing napkins
and drinking glasses)

MOTHER: I'm sorry for the way I've spoken to you. I'm a terrible mother.

JOHAN: No, you're not. I haven't been the best of sons. I've made things difficult for you and dad.

MOTHER: I don't resent you or regret you or wish you were different. And don't ever apologize for who you are, not to me, not to anybody.

JOHAN: Really, Mom?

MOTHER: I love you for who you are and always will. I'd love you even if you were the color blue.

(THEY both laugh)

JOHAN: Color blue? Like a smurf? Ha ha. Never heard that one before.

MOTHER: Neither have I. Ha ha.

(pause.)

JOHAN: I won't say nothing to dad. Not right now.

MOTHER: I'll tell you what...let's get him better support and when the time is right, I think it's best you tell him.

JOHAN: Really?

MOTHER: Yes. But you have to promise me something.

JOHAN: What?

MOTHER: I want you to get your act together. Get yourself cleaned up. You understand? I want you healthy. Promise me.

JOHAN: I promise.

(pause.)

(MOTHER and JOHAN finish setting
the table together)

(They stare at one another, leading them
into a warm embrace)

END OF PLAY