



Excerpt from...
***a truly marvelous proof**
by Kitt Lavoie

Scene 9

One year later. The livingroom/diningroom of Jonathan and Elyssa's New York apartment. Christmas decorations. Elyssa is setting the table, watching the snow out the window. Jonathan calls from another room.

JONATHAN
(calling from offstage)

I'm excited!

ELYSSA
(calling back)

I know.

Jonathan paces in from another room, holding a small wrapped gift.

JONATHAN

Will she like it?

ELYSSA

It's beautiful.

JONATHAN

It's not too much?

ELYSSA

No.

JONATHAN

Or too little?

ELYSSA

It's perfect.

Jonathan places the gift under the tree with a pile of other gifts.

JONATHAN

How long 'til dinner?



An hour.

ELYSSA

I've just got two more to wrap.

JONATHAN

Jonathan leaves back to the room he came from.

ELYSSA
(calling)

You got too much!

JONATHAN
(offstage, calling back)

It'll be fine.

The doorbell rings. Elyssa heads for the front door. Jonathan bounces out of the bedroom and beats her to it. He opens the door, revealing Jackson, with Jessica hovering behind him, both toting bags.

JONATHAN

Merry Christmas, Jack!

He hugs Jackson. Jackson hugs him back.

JACKSON

Merry Christmas, Dad.

Jonathan releases Jackson. He offers his hand out to Jessica.

JONATHAN

Jonathan Cameron. I'm Jack's dad.

JESSICA

Jessica.

JONATHAN

It's good to meet you, finally.

JACKSON

You met her before.

Jackson moves into the room past Jonathan to Elyssa.



JONATHAN

Well, she wasn't your girlfriend at the time.

JACKSON

She was.

(embraces Elyssa)

Hey, Mom.

ELYSSA

Welcome home.

JONATHAN

Well, you hadn't told us.

Jackson eyes Jonathan.

ELYSSA

(to Jessica)

Merry Christmas!

JESSICA

Thank you.

JONATHAN

Can I get you something to drink?

JESSICA

Coke would be great.

JACKSON

Me, too.

Jonathan heads off to the kitchen.

JESSICA

You have a beautiful home.

ELYSSA

Thank you.

JACKSON

(to Jessica)

Can I have your stuff? I'll put it in my room.

Jackson takes her bag and exits. Elyssa watches him go.
She turns back to Jessica



ELYSSA
Would you like to sit?

JESSICA
Please.

Elyssa and Jessica sit in the living room.

ELYSSA
We're glad you could join us for Christmas Eve.

JESSICA
Me, too.

ELYSSA
Your parents won't miss you? First Christmas away?

JESSICA
It's not really. I was at Horton for six years, so...

ELYSSA
I suppose.

JESSICA
Christmas Eve was never a big thing for my family, anyway. They'll be glad to have us tomorrow.

Jackson re-enters, kisses Jessica, and sits next to her.

ELYSSA
You're going to Jessica's tomorrow?

JACKSON
Yeah. We're catching the 11:20 to West Haven.

ELYSSA
The Schaefers are coming for dinner tomorrow night.

JACKSON
They're Dad's friends. I'll be back this weekend.

Jonathan enters and hands Jackson and Jessica their drinks.

JESSICA
Thank you.



JACKSON

Thanks.

JONATHAN

How was the trip?

JACKSON

Alright. The bus sucked, but the train part was okay.

ELYSSA

How are you enjoying Drexel?

JESSICA

It's great. I'm learning a lot. I miss Jackson, but...

JONATHAN

I'm sure he misses you. His grades are up.

JESSICA

Well, maybe they just started getting him. He's pretty brilliant, you know.

JONATHAN

I know.

JESSICA

No. Really.

JONATHAN

I know.

JESSICA

I know you don't know things like that.

JONATHAN

I know.

JESSICA

I just... you should know.

JONATHAN

I do.

ELYSSA

We're very proud of him.



JESSICA

Me, too.

(a beat)

And if I don't say it later, I think you are very good, too. I don't know about art like Jackson, but I really like what you do.

JONATHAN

Thank you.

JACKSON

How long 'til dinner?

ELYSSA

About a half hour.

JACKSON

(to Jessica)

Come on, I'll show you those pictures.

Jackson gets up and heads for the hallway, Jessica in tow.

ELYSSA

Jackson? You can do that after dinner.

JACKSON

We just want to catch up.

ELYSSA

So do we.

JONATHAN

We have all weekend.

ELYSSA

He's going to Jessica's family's tomorrow.

JONATHAN

The Shaefers are coming to dinner tomorrow night.

JACKSON

Who cares?

JONATHAN

Sit down.



JACKSON

Dad!

JONATHAN

Jackson! We haven't seen you in four months. You saw Jessica last weekend.

JACKSON

Horton has rules about us being alone when she visits.

ELYSSA

So does your mother.

A beat.

JESSICA

Let's just sit. I'd really like to get to know your parents a little.

A beat.

JACKSON

Fine.

They all sit.

JONATHAN

When did you decide to go upstate?

JACKSON

Connecticut. Last week.

JONATHAN

You didn't tell us. The Schaefers are coming for Christmas dinner.

JACKSON

Drexel doesn't have those rules.

JONATHAN

I'm sorry?

JACKSON

Drexel doesn't have those rules, when I go visit her. It's not like you're protecting me.

JONATHAN

Jack!



JACKSON

I'm just saying, I don't think you guys get to hand me off to someone else to raise for four years, then decide to be mom and dad when it's convenient. I'm just saying.

JONATHAN

I wish you would stay until Friday.

JACKSON

Fuck this.

Jackson gets up and storms off to his room.

JONATHAN

Jackson!

The doorbell rings.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

What the hell is wrong with him?

The doorbell rings again.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Coming!

Jonathan heads for the door. Jessica bounds up.

JESSICA

Jackson!

ELYSSA

Just leave him be.

The doorbell rings again.

JESSICA

JACKSON!

Jonathan arrives at the front door. He opens it revealing John, Sr.

A beat.

JOHN

Merry Christmas, Jon.



What are you doing here? JONATHAN

Jackson invited me. JOHN

I'm afraid he was mistaken. JONATHAN

Jonathan shuts the door. He turns back into the room.

It was a surprise. JESSICA

You're going to have to leave, Jessica. I'm sorry. We'll give you cab fare. You'll make the last train. JONATHAN

Jonathan marches off down the hall.

He took the train with us. From Philadelphia. JESSICA
(to Elyssa)

Elyssa goes to the front door. Opens it. John is still standing there.

John? ELYSSA

Elyssa? JOHN

Come in. Have a seat. ELYSSA

John does.

Hi, Mr. Cameron. JESSICA

Hi, Jess. JOHN

He thought it would be better if it was a surprise. JESSICA



JOHN
He was mistaken.

ELYSSA
Jessica?

JESSICA
I really have to?

ELYSSA
I think it's best.

JESSICA
Okay. Thank you. I'm sorry. I'm going to go say goodbye.

Jessica heads down the hall towards Jackson's room.

JOHN
She's a nice girl.

ELYSSA
Yeah.

JOHN
I thought I was invited.

ELYSSA
I'm sorry, John. No.

Jackson storms in clutching his bag and Jessica's, Jessica behind him.

JACKSON
You're throwing her out.

ELYSSA
Not throwing her out, Jack. You can see her after the holiday, but things are a little complicated right now.

JOHN
This wasn't the way to do this, Jackson.

JACKSON
I'm sorry, Grandpa. I thought he'd be happy when he saw you.



He's not.

JOHN

Jonathan enters with a handful of singles. He sees John.

JONATHAN

Elyssa, what is he doing in here?

JACKSON

Don't worry about it. We're leaving.

JONATHAN

You're not going anywhere.

JACKSON
(heading for the door)

Come on, Grandpa.

JONATHAN

You are not going anywhere! It is Christmas and you are spending it with your family. Jessica, you should go spend it with yours. You are welcome back this weekend, if you would like.

JACKSON

What about Grandpa?

JONATHAN
(to John)

Dad, you need to go. This isn't your family anymore.

JACKSON

He's my family. Let's go, Grandpa.

JOHN

No, Jackson. You should stay here.
(to Jonathan)

Jon, I'm sorry for disrupting your holiday.

JONATHAN

Don't play a martyr for my son. You should have known better than to come here.

JOHN

You're right.

JONATHAN

You should never have contacted him.



I didn't.

JOHN

Let's get out of here.

JACKSON

Jackson heads for the door.

Jackson!

JONATHAN

Merry Christmas, Mom.

JACKSON

Come back here!

JONATHAN

Jess?

JACKSON

JONATHAN

Why can't we just have Christmas? Why can't we? You cancel coming home Columbus Day? You don't come home for Thanksgiving? You don't make it for my birthday? My fiftieth birthday, Jack, you don't make it? Why can't we just have Christmas?

JACKSON

Because Christmas is something you spend with people who care about you! So I'm going to spend it with Granddad and I'm going to spend it with Jess and I would spend it with Mom, but she's made her choice. And I'm sorry about that, but there it is. So you enjoy your Christmas. You won't have me, but you'll have the Schaefers. They may not be family. They may not even celebrate Christmas, Dad. But they've got plenty of money and they've got plenty of influence. Like I said - spend Christmas with the things you care about. 'Cause there it is: Money, Influence, Me. You go fuck yourself.

Jackson heads for the door.

JONATHAN

They aren't coming here for me! They're coming here for you. They're your Christmas present, you little shit.

ELYSSA

Jonathan.

JACKSON

How are your crusty old friends my Christmas present?



JONATHAN

They're crusty old family friends, Jack. They love you. And I don't know if you know this, but Dr. Schaefer is on the Board of Trustees at Cal Berkley. We put in an application for you - with the help of Dr. Fleishman. Dr. Schaefer put in a word. But even if he hadn't, they were impressed. Jack - you are going to be their Presidential Scholar next year. Early admission, full scholarship to the top mathematics program in the country.

Silence for a moment...

JOHN

Congratulations, Jack.

JONATHAN

Merry Christmas. We're very proud of you.

A beat.

JACKSON

M.I.T. is the top math program in the country. You don't have any friends there?

JONATHAN

Berkley is one of the best. The top on the west coast.

JACKSON

You mean other than Stanford?

JONATHAN

It's a good school, Jack. Can't you just say "thank you?"

JACKSON

Warehouse me for four years. Is this the grand gesture that makes it all better?

JONATHAN

Horton is hardly a warehouse.

JACKSON

And if you didn't have strings to pull, would that mean I shouldn't love you?

JONATHAN

I'm not going to apologize for trying to give you a good life.

JACKSON

That's fine when it's so easy.

JONATHAN

You'd be surprised.



I'm going to Drexel.

JACKSON

A beat.

I'm sorry?

JONATHAN

I'm going to Drexel next year.

JACKSON

No offense to Drexel, but Berkley-

JONATHAN

I want to be a teacher. Drexel has an outstanding-

JACKSON

It isn't Berkley.

JONATHAN

Which isn't M.I.T. What's your point?

JACKSON

A beat.

Is this because of her?

JONATHAN
(re: Jessica)

She went to Drexel to stay near me.

JACKSON

She went to Drexel because that's where she got in.

JONATHAN

You're talking out of your ass.

JACKSON

Did you apply to Berkley?

JONATHAN
(to Jessica)

Yes.

JESSICA



Did you get in?
JONATHAN

No, I didn't.
JESSICA

M.I.T.? Stanford?
JONATHAN

No.
JESSICA

But Drexel?
JONATHAN

Jonathan! It's a very good school.
ELYSSA

It is, Jack. But it isn't Berkley.
JONATHAN

No. Berkley is the school my daddy got me into.
JACKSON

Jack, they were impressed with you. They would have let you in even if I hadn't-
JONATHAN

Now I'll never know, though, huh? I'm going to Drexel, Dad. On my own.
JACKSON

What if you don't get in? On your own.
JONATHAN

A beat.

I'll get in. But thanks for the vote of confidence.
JACKSON

Jackson turns and leaves. A beat.

I'm sorry.
JESSICA

Jessica follows Jackson out. A beat.



ELYSSA

Jonathan...

JONATHAN

(offering John the handful of ones)

Do you need cab fare back to your hotel?

JOHN

No. I'll be fine, thank you.

John goes to the door.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Merry Christmas.

John leaves.

ELYSSA

Jonathan...

Jonathan paces away, out onto the balcony. Elyssa sits at the meticulously set table, watching Jonathan watch the snow fall.