

Yes, Queen! Slay!

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TW: Mentions of relationship violence/abuse.

National Domestic Violence Hotline: <https://www.thehotline.org>

NOTES:

- A “-“ means a character is cut off.

Characters:

Ben

Jeremy

Inside Jeremy's apartment at 11:30 PM. It's cheap but well-decorated. There's a front door, a door leading to a closet, a door leading to Jeremy's bedroom, and a tattered couch. Jeremy anxiously scrubs at a red stain on the floor. He's wearing cozy pajamas. A knock at the front door. Jeremy goes to open the door. It's Ben with a big plastic Whataburger bag with food.

BEN

Hi!

JEREMY

Well if it isn't Bennifer himself. What took you so long?

BEN

I-uh- stopped by Whataburger to get you a cinnamon roll because I know how much you-

JEREMY

Come inside.

Ben walks inside. Jeremy checks outside and quickly slams the door

BEN

Okay, so, I was actually doing some thinking and I figured tha-

JEREMY

I have something to tell you.

BEN

Okay... should I put the Whataburger down for this bombshell?

JEREMY

It's serious.

BEN

Okay...

Jeremy takes a deep breath.

JEREMY

I can tell you anything, right?

BEN

Sure.

JEREMY

And it won't make you think any less of me?

BEN

Of course.

JEREMY

Even if it may permanently change how you think of me? It might even make you hate me.

BEN

Nothing could make me hate you.

JEREMY

Good, because this will bond us for life. Before I say anything, I just want you to know that I'm still the same person that I was before I told you this and I need you to support me as I figure this out.

BEN

Jeremy. You can tell me anything. No matter what, I will always love... supporting you. I know that you're still the same person. So just say what you wanna say, and let the words fall out.

JEREMY

Thank you for the support and the Sara Bareilles reference. I knew I could count on you.

BEN

Of course. Can I give you a hug?

Jeremy nods. Ben hugs Jeremy. Jeremy hugs him back. Jeremy goes to the closet door. Ben follows. Jeremy opens the closet. A DEAD BODY falls out of the closet and flops down between the two men. Several moments pass.

JEREMY

I really need some help here.

Beat

JEREMY

Ben...?

BEN

What the fuck?

JEREMY

You said you'd always support me!

BEN

Yeah, emotionally, not when you murder somebody!

JEREMY

I didn't murder anyone! It was self-defense I swear!

BEN

Is this why you called me over?

JEREMY

I didn't know who else to call! Please Ben you have to help me out here. You're the smartest person I know and I have no idea what to do in this scenario. Please I don't even know how long it's been since it happened and I don't know if my neighbors heard anything and called the cops or- shit, they probably called the police and I'm gonna go to jail for the rest of my life ohmygod please help me Ben pleasepleasepleasePLEASE.

BEN

Jeremy!

Ben goes over to Jeremy and tries to hold his head, Jeremy pulls away. Ben holds up his hands.

BEN

Alright, no touching. We're just going to take a few nice deep breaths, alright?

Ben and Jeremy do a few deep inhales and exhales, with Ben guiding Jeremy throughout. It's a long and sweet moment.

JEREMY

Thank you, I feel a lot better now.

Jeremy sees the dead body on the floor

JEREMY

Oh no oh no holyshitholyshitholyshitholyshit

Ben goes to the Whataburger bag and takes out the cinnamon roll. He hands it to Jeremy.

BEN

Here, eat the roll and look away while I put the uh... cadaver back in the closet.

Jeremy takes the cinnamon roll, looks away, and slowly eats, still panicking. Ben goes to the body and reaches down to move it. He stops. He doesn't want to touch it with his bare hands. Ben looks around for an alternative solution. He grabs the plastic Whataburger bag, wraps it around his hands, and tries his best to get the body back in the closet. The body is heavy, and Ben is weak. It's a long and darkly comical struggle. It's like the scene from *Tangled* where Rapunzel tries to hide Flynn in her closet. Finally, Ben succeeds and turns back to Jeremy, panting.

BEN

You owe me big time.

JEREMY

Thank you for helping me.

BEN

I'm not helping you yet.

JEREMY

What?!

BEN

I'm not fully committing to helping you tonight until you tell me what's going on, starting with whose body I just shoved into a closet.

JEREMY

I don't want to talk about it.

BEN

You can't expect someone to help you with something like this without asking any questions.

JEREMY

Isn't that what best friends are for? They're always helping-

BEN

Yeah, well, maybe I'm done being your little helper.

JEREMY

What's that supposed to mean?

BEN

I'm sick of being at your beck and call! Do you even know what I was doing tonight before you texted?

JEREMY

No, but-

BEN

I was on a DATE. The first date I've ever been on. With a really cute guy. And I left him. To help you. And now I'm putting my life on hold once again to serve your needs. But you don't care, because it's always about you.

Beat

JEREMY

I'm... sorry. I had no idea.

BEN

Yeah, well, it's over now.

Beat

JEREMY

He was one of my exes.

BEN

What?

JEREMY

The dead body in the closet. His name was Max. We were dating for about three months until I broke up with him last week. He was... he wasn't good to me.

BEN

Did he hurt you?

JEREMY

Emotionally? Constantly. He always thought I was going to cheat on him. Every time I so much as looked at another person he'd yell at me and accuse me and then deny that he ever did anything. He'd threaten to hurt me if I did anything wrong. But that's all it was, threats. Until a week ago, when he punched me in the face. Then I ended things and never looked back. I thought it was over. That is, until tonight, when he came back. He tried to apologize and swore up and down that he'd do better. Once he realized that I was never going to take him back, he tried to pick up where he left off. He pushed me into the wall. He walked over to me with clenched fists. Then the next thing I knew he was...

Jeremy gestures to the closet door.

BEN

Jesus.

JEREMY

Yeah.

BEN

Why didn't you tell me what was going on?

JEREMY

I guess I didn't want you to drag you into my mess. I didn't want you to see how weak and pathetic I was.

BEN

Well, for what it's worth, you're the strongest person I know.

JEREMY

Thanks.

Beat

BEN

Lucky for you, I watch a lot of true crime documentaries. So here's what we're gonna do-

JEREMY

Wait, why aren't you turning me in?

BEN

What?

JEREMY

You could call the police and rat me out right now. Why are you still helping me?

BEN

I guess it's my turn to tell a secret now.

JEREMY

You have secrets?

BEN

I didn't leave my date tonight because you texted me. Well, I did but- whatever. I left the date because he wasn't you.

Beat

BEN

I'm in love with you. I've been in love with you since we first met in Biology 101. You're beautiful, talented, hilarious, and absolutely stunning. I desperately wanted to tell you how I felt, but I was too chicken shit. Then we became friends, so I thought my window had closed. And I tried to move on but, every time I saw you, all of my feelings for you would just come rushing back and hit me like a ton of bricks. After every hang-out, I would lie awake at night and get butterflies while thinking about your smile. And I have to tell you all of this right now because I can't go another minute without telling you that you are the best thing in my life. I know that this is probably the absolute worst time to say all of this but it's all true. I love you, Jeremy.

Beat

JEREMY

Wow... I... had no idea.

BEN

Yeah.

JEREMY

And to think I was worried that I'd missed my chance to be with you.

BEN

What?

JEREMY

Why do you think I called you specifically to help me out tonight? You're the best person I know. You're intelligent, witty, and you have a valid driver's license. I thought you were too good for *me*. You're my best friend, Ben, but I've also loved you for years, and I want to be with you.

BEN

I've wanted you to say those words for longer than you could possibly know.

Ben walks over to Jeremy, stands on his tippy toes, and kisses him. Jeremy kisses Ben back, pulling him up so that they're equal. Jeremy breaks the kiss.

JEREMY

Let's run away together.

BEN

What?

JEREMY

We should go on the run. Leave the country. Go somewhere nice, like Newfoundland.

BEN

Oh yeah, we'll be like the gay *Bonnie & Clyde* except we won't rob any banks.

JEREMY

I'm serious.

BEN

There's no way in Hell we're doing that, let's just go to the police and explain everything to-

JEREMY

Max's dad is the chief of police. I don't think he'll react too well to this news.

BEN

You gotta be shitting me.

JEREMY

I wish I was.

BEN

Well I can't run away with you.

JEREMY

Why not?

BEN

Why not? Why not?!?! We're not criminal masterminds, Jeremy, we're going to get caught and arrested and put in jail for the rest of our lives. I have a life, Jeremy. I can't just up and leave it behind.

JEREMY

But we can go anywhere, Ben. We can do anything we want to. It'll be you and me against the world. We can make it to the Canadian border. We can start a new life, together. I doubt that anything good will happen if we stay here, so I have to leave. And I'd love it if you came with me. Not as a follower, but as a partner. And I for one think that you would be an amazing maple syrup producer.

BEN

God you're a nutjob.

JEREMY

A "stunning" nutjob. I believe that was the word you used to describe me.

Jeremy walks up to Ben until there's no space between them.

JEREMY

"Why else live, if not for love?"

Jeremy kisses Ben passionately.

BEN

I hate that you just used a *Moulin Rouge* quote on me.

JEREMY

Mmmhmm

BEN

And I hate that it worked.

JEREMY

So you'll come with me?

Beat

BEN

Fuck it, fine, let's do it.

JEREMY

Fuck yeah.

BEN

But we're doing it as partners.

JEREMY

I wouldn't have it any other way.

Ben and Jeremy kiss again. Suddenly, we hear sirens in the distance. Ben breaks the kiss.

BEN

We have to go, now.

JEREMY

Okay but we'll be doing more of that later yeah?

BEN

Obviously. Now come on!

Ben and Jeremy run to the door. Jeremy stops.

JEREMY

Wait.

Jeremy goes to the plastic Whataburger bag, wraps his hands in it, and pulls Max's body from the closet. Jeremy grabs a blanket and gently covers the body.

JEREMY

Nobody deserves to be buried in a closet.

Jeremy and Ben run out the door and slam it. The sirens get louder and louder and louder. Suddenly, all lights and sound cut out.

Be gay. Do crime.

END PLAY