

Brothers (Part 1)

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INT MAYOR'S MANSION IN RICHMOND HILL - EVENING (RAINING) - ESTABLISHING

In the center of town, there stands a house withered with age, passed down to several generations of mayors in the BRISBY family.

High Angle Shot from the kitchen into a beige dining room with a crystal chandelier hanging from the ceiling. A stocky, but short brown haired husband (SCOTT BRISBY), who sits at the head of a dark wooden table and his humble red-haired wife (SARAH BRISBY), who is sitting beside him to the right, are eating dinner with their four sons and one daughter.

The room is silent, with the occasional clanking of forks against ceramic plates. The rain comes pouring down against the high windows on the left-hand side of the table, just behind the eldest son (SAM BRISBY) who occasionally looks down the table to each of his adopted siblings. SAM BRISBY resembles his father in shape, but a mixture of his mother and fathers hair colour with pale skin. He is 17 years of age.

One of his brothers (NICKOLAS BRISBY) is just a year younger sits across from him, pouring hot sauce on his spaghetti. DUSTIN BRISBY, who is the same age as NICKOLAS, is eating contently beside him, looking at nothing else but his pasta. NICKOLAS BRISBY has hair dyed in blue streaks at the tips and the rest naturally blonde and shaggy with lightly tanned skin. DUSTIN BRISBY is African-American, with long dreads pulled back into a ponytail, swept over his broad left shoulder.

The youngest boy (BERNARD BRISBY) sits beside SAM BRISBY, poking his food with his fork. BERNARD BRISBY is Native American, a bit heavier around the middle with black hair and darker tanned skin. He is 15 years of age.

ALEXANDRA (ZANDRA) BRISBY is the mayor's only daughter at 13 years of age. She sits at the opposite end of the table to SCOTT BRISBY. She has long, almost black hair with tight curls. Pulled back in a ponytail, she twirls each curl with her fingers. She looks nervous and hasn't begun to eat. She takes a deep breath through her nose.

CU (Close-Up Shot) of ALEXANDRA (ZANDRA) as she opens her mouth to speak. Then, the doorbell rings. She sighs out of relief and annoyance.

BERNARD

I'll get it.

SARAH

Thank you, sweetheart.

BERNARD EXITS. The sound of his footsteps echoes in the hall. The front door creaks open and muffled voices can be heard. ALEXANDRA (ZANDRA) takes another breath. BERNARD RE-ENTERS.

BERNARD

Dad? There's someone here for you.

SCOTT

Oh for goodness sake. Sorry dear, I'll be but a moment.

SARAH

(sighing)

Take your time.

SCOTT EXITS.

BERNARD sits down at the table. He looks over at ALEXANDRA (ZANDRA).

BERNARD

You okay Zandra?

DUSTIN, NICKOLAS and SAM look at ALEXANDRA (ZANDRA) with slight concern. ALEXANDRA (ZANDRA) is pale. She looks around the table. Then, she stares back at her food.

SARAH

(putting down her fork)

Alexandra? Are you alright?

ALEXANDRA

(smiling fakely)

Never better.

BERNARD continues to look at ALEXANDRA with concern as everyone slowly continues to eat. SCOTT RE-ENTERS with a small package, shaking his head. He puts it down gently beside ALEXANDRA (ZANDRA), as her brothers look curiously.

DUSTIN

What's in the package Dad?

SCOTT

I'm not sure, but it's for your sister. It required my signature.

SAM

(chuckles)

Zandra, what did we tell you about buying things on the dark web?

SARAH

What?! Alexandra!

Noddy Shot of ALEXANDRA (ZANDRA) as she carefully tears off the tape and opens the box.

NICKOLAS

It's okay Mom...at least we think it is.

CU (Close-Up Shot) of ALEXANDRA (ZANDRA) holding the contents of the box in her small hands. Tears are forming in her eyes. It is a white fabric that will bind her chest.

BERNARD

Zandra?

ALEXANDRA (ZANDRA) stands and looks across the table as every set of eyes is now on her. She takes one final deep breath as lightning cracks across the sky.

ALEXANDRA (ZANDRA)

Mom? Dad? I've realized that I'm not happy being a girl.

So, I'm transitioning to be a boy.

CUT TO BLACK

INT ALEXANDRA'S ROOM ON SECOND FLOOR - DAY - ESTABLISHING

ALEXANDRA rolls over to sit up on the edge of her bed. She can hear dishes clanking and water running from downstairs. She looks over at her binder and smiles. She grabs it while taking off her nightshirt. She tightens the binder around her chest. Then she looks in the mirror while pulling over a clean light blue t-shirt and some jeans with a dab of white paint around the thigh. She wanders into her joint bathroom on the right-hand side of the room and washes her face. She ties her hair back and nods confidently to herself before exiting her room.

INT MAIN HALL TO KITCHEN - ESTABLISHING

ALEXANDRA pushes slightly against the swinging door open where she sees SARAH and SCOTT are talking in whispers.

CU (Close-Up) of ALEXANDRA as she listens from the other side of the door.

SARAH
(sniffling)

How could we not have known? I just wish we could have made her happy. I am so worried about her. But I want her to do it. Whatever it takes, I want to be there. I'm just...I'm so scared.

SCOTT
She is scared too, Sarah. But she feels like this is the next step in her life and...

SARAH
I know. I just wish she knew...how much we love her. We weren't very anxious to get down to this transitioning business last night. I just want her to be happy. But what if something goes wrong?

MS (Medium Shot) of ALEXANDRA backing away from the door. She walks back towards the dining room where NICKOLAS, BERNARD and SAM sit in their respected seats. DUSTIN is coming down the stairs as ALEXANDRA walks into the room. DUSTIN walks past ALEXANDRA looking at her sideways before sitting down. BERNARD looks up at ALEXANDRA.

BERNARD
Aren't you going to sit?

NICKOLAS
Or do you have some other life-changing announcement you would like to reveal to make Mom and Dad cry themselves to sleep tonight?

SAM and DUSTIN look over at NICKOLAS in anger. ALEXANDRA looks to BERNARD. He shakes his head.

SAM
Nick, don't be a jerk.

NICHOLAS
(sarcastically)
Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't realize that we weren't all on the same page.

DUSTIN
(while blowing on his food)
Not now Nick.

ALEXANDRA (ZANDRA) looks down at her feet.

ALEXANDRA
Do you all feel that way?

BERNARD looks desperately across the table. DUSTIN and NICKOLAS look to each other. DUSTIN looks ashamed as he turns back to ALEXANDRA.

DUSTIN
Let's not do this now Zandra. Just sit and eat.

ALEXANDRA
No.

SAM puts down his fork and looks at ALEXANDRA.

SAM
Zandra...we're all tired. Can we do this another time? Please? No one is against you, we just...

NICKOLAS
(looking down at his food)
We want you to stop being so self-absorbed. That's what we really want.

NICKOLAS looks to SAM and DUSTIN. Both look away.

BERNARD
(voice slightly raised)
Seriously? That's all you guys have to say? Zandra came out to us last night! You guys make it seem like she committed murder!

SARAH and SCOTT ENTER behind ALEXANDRA. ALEXANDRA looks at the floor, tears forming in her eyes. SARAH and SCOTT look around curiously.

SCOTT
(confused)
What's going on in here?

ALEXANDRA (ZANDRA) EXITS. She opens the front door as BERNARD calls after her.

CUT TO BLACK

EXT PARK DOWN THE STREET - DAY (CLOUDY/WINDY) - ESTABLISHING

ALEXANDRA sits on the swing set, her eyes puffy. She wipes her nose on her sleeve. She looks up at the sky as the clouds darken. She lets her head fall into her hands.

BERNARD ENTERS.

BERNARD sits on the swing beside her, grabbing onto the chains of the swing with both hands. He looks to the ground.

BERNARD
I'm so sorry Zandra.

ALEXANDRA
(sobbing)
They hate me!

BERNARD and ALEXANDRA sit knee to knee on the swings with the chains twisted. BERNARD rests his elbow on his legs, his hand on ALEXANDRA's knee.

BERNARD
No one hates you. Everyone is just a bit confused.

ALEXANDRA
(between sobs)
I'm not...confused! I am not this person, do you understand? I am not what I was born as I know that now. Why is that so hard to understand? Mom and Dad always told us to be ourselves...and I thought I would be happy after I told all of you...but I only seem to be ruining your lives...

BERNARD
Maybe we don't understand Zandra, but I want you to know that I will be right beside you through this whole process, okay? Nothing will ever change my mind.

ALEXANDRA looks up at her brother and wraps her arms around his neck, continuing to sob.

BERNARD
(rubbing ALEXANDRA's back)
We're going to make you happy again, okay? I promise.

OSS (Over the Shoulder Shot) of BERNARD, as ALEXANDRA, breathes in deeply to calm down. She pulls away from her brother, looking down and sniffing.

BERNARD

Hey, let's do something fun today. Something crazy...want to eat a whole tub of ice cream?

ALEXANDRA

(laughing slightly)

Actually, I was going to get my haircut today.

BERNARD

Oh! Well, that's great then! I will come with you...if you want.

ALEXANDRA

(looking at her brother's face)

I do. But I'm not going to our usual place. This place is a bit farther.

BERNARD

Okay. Can we walk there still or did you want me to drive?

ALEXANDRA

No, we can walk if you're okay with it. Just don't be too shocked when you see the place.

BERNARD

Now I'm a bit scared.

ALEXANDRA laughs and grabs her brothers hand, pulling him up.

ALEXANDRA

Don't be. Just trust me, okay?

BERNARD

I do.

BERNARD and ALEXANDRA smile as they back towards MAIN STREET.

FADE OUT

EXT TOWN HALL - DAY (CLOUDY) - ESTABLISHING

Now turning off MAIN STREET, SAM walks towards TOWN HALL. It is an old brown brick building with growing vines up one side and a massive clock protruding out the top. NICKOLAS sits up on the railing to the main doors of TOWN HALL while DUSTIN sits on the steps below. DUSTIN is staring off into space, looking desperately worried. NICKOLAS is leaning back against the concrete, staring up at the sky.

SAM reaches them and stands in front of DUSTIN. DUSTIN looks up.

SAM
(sighing)
I'm assuming no one found her.

They've been looking for ALEXANDRA (ZANDRA).

DUSTIN
(rubbing his face)
I didn't see her anywhere.

NICKOLAS
She's probably fine.

SAM looks at his brother in anger.

NICKOLAS
(sitting up)
Hey, don't be pinning this on me. You both thought the same thing, admit it! She's trying to get attention. Didn't you guys hear Mom this morning? Zandra is upsetting everyone just because she feels like her life needs a little something more. I...

DUSTIN
(standing up)
Oh for the love of god, would you shut up?

SAM
Knock it off. This isn't helping. Look, guys, whether we agree with what she is feeling or not, she is hurting. The goal here is to find her and apologize. She needs to know that we support her.

NICKOLAS
(jumping off the railing onto the pavement)
Even if we don't?

DUSTIN balls up his fist and grabs NICKOLAS by his shirt, shoving him up against the railing.

DUSTIN
(angry)
It's going to do *you* a lot of good to keep your big mouth shut before I do it for you.

SAM comes in between them, pushing them apart.

SAM
Enough!

NICKOLAS adjusts his shirt and starts walking back to the truck parked ahead, his hands in his jean pockets. SAM looks at DUSTIN with displeasure, motioning with his head for DUSTIN to follow. DUSTIN sighs, rolling his eyes before jogging forward. SAM starts down the same route just as his phone starts to ring. He pulls it out of his pocket to read who it is. It's BERNARD.

JUMP CUT

EXT CATS DRAG HOUSE - 1 HOUR EARLIER - ESTABLISHING

BERNARD stands in front of the show house with his mouth open. He looks over at his sister and thinks about asking but decides against it. ALEXANDRA (ZANDRA) hasn't taken her eyes off the place since they arrived.

ALEXANDRA
So? You ready to go in and meet my friend?

BERNARD still looks skeptical, but nods and smiles. She smiles boldly and takes his hand, pulling him through the front doors. A woman sits at the counter as they walk in, but once she looks up and beams at ALEXANDRA, BERNARD can see that it's a man.

ALEXANDRA
Paul!

PAUL
Oh, Alexandra darling! You look fabulous, I must say!

PAUL stretches out his arms for ALEXANDRA (ZANDRA). PAUL has short, light green hair with thick red lipstick and mascara. As an outfit, he is wearing a beige open sweater over a white t-shirt and skinny jeans, with black four-inch heels. He also has a ruby red necklace and a diamond ring. PAUL hugs ALEXANDRA (ZANDRA) then kisses both her cheeks, adjusting her hair before smiling and turning to BERNARD.

PAUL looks over at ALEXANDRA (ZANDRA) with a sideways smile. He lifts up his hand before speaking to block BERNARD's view.

PAUL
So before I start, is that one a newcomer or the boyfriend?

ALEXANDRA

(giggling)

Oh, Paul, this is neither! This is Bernard, my brother.

BERNARD bites down on his lower lips as PAUL screams for joy and runs over. ALEXANDRA (ZANDRA) tries to contain her laughter as PAUL kisses both of BERNARD's cheeks. BERNARD's face lights up like a Christmas tree as PAUL turns back to ALEXANDRA (ZANDRA) with a finger outstretched, accusingly.

PAUL

So you did it then? You came out to your family! How did they take it? Obviously one of them was brave enough to come into my house but the others?

ALEXANDRA (ZANDRA) looks down at the floor, suddenly upset.

PAUL

Oh, darling, I am so sorry. Come here, come to Paul. That's it.

ALEXANDRA (ZANDRA) walks over and holds PAUL close, her head against his chest. ALEXANDRA closes her eyes as PAUL stretches out his arm BERNARD's way, motioning for him to join in. BERNARD rolls his eyes but wraps his arms around both ALEXANDRA (ZANDRA) and PAUL.

PAUL

Alright, now then. We're past it, alright? No more of this nonsense. Now we are going to mould you. When did you say your treatments start?

BERNARD

(confused)

Treatments?

PAUL

Well not 'treatments' sorry darling. More like um...transformation! Yes, that's it. So Alex when does it start?

BERNARD

Alex?

PAUL

For goodness sake, have you told him anything?

ALEXANDRA (ZANDRA) looks down at the floor and shuffles her feet against the floorboards.

PAUL

Oh, of course, darling that's why he's here! Perfect darling, absolutely perfect!

ALEXANDRA

I was also supposed to get my haircut today Paul, is it okay if I do?

PAUL

Of course! Go see Johnny in the back, she's all set up for you!

BERNARD

She?

PAUL

Oh hush darling, your questions will be answered. But for now, wish your sister luck! When she comes back out. She is going to be a new man.

BERNARD looks over at ALEXANDRA (ZANDRA) and smiles, nodding his head in approval. She smiles back and turns to go, but then turns right back around and hugs her brother.

ALEXANDRA

(whispering)

Thank you for doing this.

BERNARD leans his head on hers as PAUL pulls out a tissue from a nearby box and starts blowing rather loud, sobbing. BERNARD and ALEXANDRA laugh as she releases and walks into the next room. BERNARD watches her go. PAUL comes up behind him and links their arms.

PAUL

Alrighty! Now it's just you and me darling. Time for you to learn about your little brother.

CUT TO BLACK

INT PAUL'S DRESSING ROOM - ESTABLISHING

PAUL pulls BERNARD into a dimly lit room with lava lamps on every inch of furniture. It was a multi-coloured paradise with makeup scattered all over tables. Everything else either had fur or mirrors. There were even mirrors on the sides of the chairs. BERNARD sinks into a chair.

PAUL

Now then, let's get down to business. How much do you know about Alex? I mean, Alexandra?

BERNARD

Only that she knows now that she is, well, not a she.

PAUL

Oh goody, he's left me the fun part then!

PAUL reaches down beside him and pulls up a leather-bound book. Once PAUL opens it, BERNARD can see it's a photo album. Several drag queens danced across the pages, every once in a while PAUL would laugh to himself about one of them and then try to explain what was going on to BERNARD but each time he shook his head in dismay and continued to flip.

Then they came across a page that was titled *1 year ago today!!!* in bright pink, with blue lipstick kisses on each photo.

PAUL

(sighing)

Those are mine. God how I miss that shade of blue on me.

BERNARD

I'm sure it looked lovely on you.

PAUL

(beaming and blushing)

Well, that's because it did look lovely on me darling. But I appreciate the compliment just the same! But anyway, back to business. Ah, here we are. This is the one.

PAUL pulled out a single photo from behind the plastic and handed it to BERNARD. PAUL was standing up on a stage with a young man beside him. The man had a faded blue t-shirt over black jeans and black biker boots with a wedge. His hair was short, shaggy and ruffled.

BERNARD

Is that...

PAUL

That is Alex. That, my friend, is your little sister. Or well, your little brother I suppose now. I am so proud of him.

BERNARD

But this was taken a year ago? How long has Alex been coming here?

PAUL looked at him without a drop of emotion for a moment, his eyes a bit wide, eyebrows raised. Then he smiled and put his hand over BERNARD's.

PAUL

Firstly, whether you have noticed or not, you have just called your sister by her drag name. And secondly, Alex has been coming here to talk to me for almost 2 years. He was so lost and confused. I saw him one day, sitting in a cafe crying. Of course, at this time, he was a she. But they seemed so lost. So I told her to come with me here. And he has almost every day since. Mind you, we usually only provide him with the clothes and make-up. That was the first night Alex came out dressed like a man.

BERNARD stared at the smiling photo the whole time PAUL spoke. BERNARD suddenly looked like a weight was lifted off his shoulders.

BERNARD

But wait, you said something about a transformation?

PAUL

Well, Alex and I talked about setting up an appointment for him last week to see a doctor about hormone injections but the doctor never got back. Plus, you need your parent's permission when you are his age.

BERNARD

So he wanted to tell Mom and Dad in order to get a signature for the dosages? When are they suppose to start?

PAUL

I have no idea. He called me last night and told me his parents signed it, but I don't think he's called the doctors yet.

BERNARD

They did sign it? Thank god. I need to go with him, Paul.

ALEX

It's three weeks from today. That's when I start my first injection.

BERNARD turned around as PAUL stood up to see ALEX standing in the doorway. His hair was just as it was in the picture, but this time it wasn't a wig. It was his. BERNARD beamed as he entered the room. PAUL walked around BERNARD and hugged ALEX tightly.

PAUL

You look, marvellous darling, absolutely marvellous.

ALEX nodded then looked over at his brother, who stood still just staring.

ALEX

Mom and Dad talked to me last night and I told them everything that you now know. I'm sorry that I didn't...

BERNARD tackled ALEX in a big bear hug. PAUL started sniffing again just as they pulled apart. BERNARD held onto ALEX's shoulders as he spoke.

BERNARD

Don't you ever be sorry again, okay? I'm sorry. I wished I had known all of this before but it doesn't matter now. We are going to get through this. Okay...Alex?

ALEX pulls BERNARD back in for another hug. PAUL walks over to a chest nearby and pulls out the same outfit that ALEX had on in the picture. PAUL hands them over to ALEX.

PAUL

Alright now. Put these on in here and come out to show us when you are ready. Okay? We will be right outside.

ALEX nods and takes the clothes, watching BERNARD leave with PAUL. PAUL closes the door behind them.

PAUL

Well. That was the best reaction to a coming out event that I have seen in years. If only your other brothers felt the same way.

Suddenly BERNARD remembered that SAM, DUSTIN and NICKOLAS were all still out looking for ALEX.

BERNARD

(frazzled)

Dammit. I'm sorry Paul but I need to call one of my brothers, really quick. Tell Alex I'll be outside, okay? It was lovely to meet you!

PAUL

You too darling! And don't be a stranger now!

Once BERNARD is outside, he dials SAM.

JUMP CUT

EXT TOWN HALL - PRESENT TIME - ESTABLISHING

SAM talks to BERNARD by phone in an irritated voice as DUSTIN and NICKOLAS walk ahead of him. DUSTIN turns around and stops when he hears BERNARD's name.

SAM

Bernard, slow down. Do you have Zandra? Thank god. Where are you? We'll come and get you both of you.

DUSTIN waits still on the sidewalk for SAM to catch up. NICKOLAS turns his head to see what was going on and stops as well, several feet in front of DUSTIN.

SAM

What? You...okay. Yeah, that's fine. Well, you should be sorry we've been worried about her and then after not hearing from you...fine, okay, yes we will talk about it when we get there.
Okay. Bye.

SAM hangs up the phone.

DUSTIN

Get where?

SAM

Bernard has Zandra. They are meeting us at a cafe by the lake.

NICKOLAS walks towards SAM and DUSTIN.

NICKOLAS

Why can't they meet us at home?

DUSTIN

(scowling)

After this morning? I bet that's the last place Zandra wants to be.

MCU shot (Medium Close Up) of SAM.

SAM

(sighing)

Let's go and get the truck.

JUMP CUT

EXT LYSANDRE CAFE - AFTERNOON - ESTABLISHING

SAM parks across the street. DUSTIN sits in the passenger seat while NICKOLAS sits in the small back-middle seat. NICKOLAS stares over at the cafe, irritation and sadness in his eyes. SAM turns off the truck and opens his door, jumping out his side. DUSTIN opens his door and pulls his seat forward for NICKOLAS to exit on his side. Once DUSTIN's door is closed, NICKOLAS tries to cross the road, but SAM puts an arm out in front of him.

NICKOLAS
What?

SAM
Promise to keep your cool, okay? Zandra has had a hard enough day without your help.

DUSTIN folds his arms as he waits for NICKOLAS to answer. NICKOLAS shakes his head, pushes SAM's arm away and crosses the street towards the cafe. SAM looks to DUSTIN before they both follow after him.

BERNARD and ALEX are sitting in a round booth at the far end of the cafe. ALEX has his back turned to the door, BERNARD is talking in hushed tones as NICKOLAS walks up to them. SAM and DUSTIN are right behind.

NICKOLAS turns and sees ALEX. He opens his mouth wide but doesn't say a word. Instead, he flops down next to BERNARD across the booth and continues to stare. SAM and DUSTIN walk up a few seconds later. DUSTIN's eyes widen. SAM looks at ALEX emotionless, as ALEX shuffles around the booth for SAM and DUSTIN to sit. SAM sits, but DUSTIN leans both hands flat on the table, continuing to stand. ALEX sighs.

ALEX
Well? Is anyone going to say anything?

DUSTIN
I'm not sure what to say.

NICKOLAS
How about what the hell happened to your hair?

ALEX looks down at his hands and bites his lip. BERNARD looks over at NICKOLAS and nudges him with his elbow. NICKOLAS looks at him, BERNARD motions with his head towards ALEX. NICKOLAS puts up his hands up, looking to DUSTIN and SAM. SAM points to ALEX while DUSTIN runs a finger along the front of his neck and makes a fist with his other hand.

NICKOLAS
(sighing)
So...about this morning...

ALEX
(still looking down)
Forget about it. I get it.

SAM
No, he means it Zan...

BERNARD
Alex.

DUSTIN
Who?

BERNARD rubs his face with his hands, then points to ALEX. SAM looks to ALEX, then back to BERNARD. SAM nods.

SAM
Alex, of course. I'm sorry...

ALEX
You guys don't have to pretend, okay? I'm sorry that you guys think I am being selfish but that was never my intention. Whether you like it or not though, this is my decision. I am a boy. This is who I am. Who I was meant to be. And I think I can finally be happy going through with this. Please? If nothing else can you try and understand my happiness?

DUSTIN looks to BERNARD, who nods in agreement and smiles to ALEX. ALEX smiles slightly back. SAM sits back in the seat and rubs his brow. NICKOLAS stares at ALEX. For the first time, NICKOLAS looks a bit ashamed. He rubs his hands together but keeps his focus on the table.

SAM
Well, if this is what you want...I don't see any reason why we shouldn't support you. We are going to make it through this. You can count on it...Alex.

ALEX looks up for the first time and smiles. ALEX reaches over and wraps his arms around SAM's neck. DUSTIN smiles. BERNARD sits back, relaxed. NICKOLAS continues to look down before standing up and straightening his shirt.

NICKOLAS
(clears throat)

Yeah, well, Mom and Dad are probably worried so...we should head back, you know?

NICKOLAS stares at the door, then scratches his head as SAM and BERNARD slip out from the booth. DUSTIN looks at ALEX and nods as ALEX slides out of the booth behind SAM.

NICKOLAS walks ahead in an irritated fashion and pushes open the cafe door, walking towards the truck.

As NICKOLAS crosses the street, he wipes the tears forming in his eyes.

CUT TO BLACK
END OF PART 1

