

Arden, Ep. 11 - "Julie and Ralph Did It"
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NOTE:

NARRATION

FLASHBACK

PRESENT DAY

ARDEN

JULIE: Arden is brought to you by Wheyface Industries, who are just the worst people in the world, honestly.

NARRATOR: Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows
Do with their death bury their parents' strife.
The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love,
And the continuance of their parents' rage,
Which, but their children's end, nought could remove,
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;
The which if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

Act 1, Scene 1: The Ocean where they met.

[the sound of the ocean waves on the beach]

NATALIE [13]: You can't *come*?! But the whole class--

JULIE [13]: No! And it sucks!

NATALIE: Is your mom being a b again?

JULIE: You can say bitch you know.

NATALIE: Hmmm. I like b more.

JULIE: Maybe for your mom. My mom, though?

[she laughs]

JULIE: Anyway, she's doing another movie. Wants me to come along and observe.

NATALIE: When are you gonna tell her you're not gonna be an actress?

JULIE: Tomorrow. [a pause] Never. Probably.

NATALIE: You're good at it. At least.

JULIE: For what that's worth. [a pause] Hey, hold on. Who's that?

NATALIE: Who? Oh that guy? He came with Tyrell. I don't know him. I think they're in some sport together.

JULIE: Did he seem cool? He's just staring into the water and writing in a notebook. He's probably creepy.

NATALIE: So go find out!

JULIE: No! I--

NATALIE: Hey! HEY! Yeah, you!

RALPH: [far away, also 13] Me?

NATALIE: My friend thinks you're cute!

JULIE: Natalie! I do not! I just--

RALPH: Well, I'm not. Cute, I mean. Nobody thinks so at least.

JULIE: We just wanted to know what you were writing in your notebook.

RALPH: Oh this? It's uh... I'm supposed to write a sonnet for English class. And I thought maybe the ocean would inspire me.

JULIE: Is it working?

RALPH: Here's what I have. "The ocean is blue/ and so is my heart" And then I've written down a bunch of words that rhyme with blue.

JULIE: That's it?

RALPH: That's it.

JULIE: How about... "The ocean is blue/ and so is my heart./ Because I'm missing you/ and your terrible fart."

[they laugh]

RALPH: Just one fart, and I already miss it? Must have been memorable.

[they laugh again]

NATALIE: Oh God.

JULIE: I'm Julie Capsom. And you are?

RALPH I'm Ralph, Ralph Montgomery.

[theme song plays]

JULIE: My name is Julie Capsom, and when I was 13, I met a boy. And plenty of people find their first love at that age but this was different. It took both of us a while to realize how much we counted on each other, and eventually, all we had was each other. And then everything started to fall apart, and I've spent the last 10 years of my life trying to find a way to put it back together. What happened that Christmas night? How could someone that well-known -- by which I mean me -- vanish, in the United States in the 2000s? And why won't any of you let this case go? You want answers? You want the mystery to be solved? Well, I'm about to do that. Join me, won't you, as we unravel the mystery... on Arden. [beat] And then maybe you'll leave me alone.

[theme song ends]

NARRATOR: Act 1, Scene 2. A year later. After a screening of Jane Austen Fight Club.

RALPH: So you did that, you did all of that? You, like, kicked that guy in the head?

JULIE: Yeah! You scared of me yet?

RALPH: I mean, you said, "Let's go to the movies," then took me to a movie you were starring in, so I *am* wondering if you're obsessed with yourself.

JULIE: Oh, you don't have to worry about that. I'm *definitely* obsessed with myself.

[they laugh]

RALPH: So was this a date?

JULIE: [heavy sigh] Ralph...

RALPH: I just--

JULIE: I told you. I like spending time with you. You're cool, and you're funny, and you don't complain when I want to go see my own movie for the 100th time, unlike Natalie, but--

RALPH: I'm asking because if it is, I should probably tell my girlfriend about it.

JULIE: Oh. Oh! Your--

RALPH: Yeah, I kinda started dating someone. While you were gone.

JULIE: Oh. Good. Cool. Good for you.

RALPH: Her name's Rosie. From my algebra class. We've just gone out for ramen, but--

JULIE: You take all the girls for ramen?

RALPH: I didn't know it was our... thing. Anyway, she's fun. You should meet her sometime.

JULIE: Okay! Yeah. Definitely. I--

[she sighs]

JULIE: I thought it was a date.

RALPH: Oh.

JULIE: I thought... I don't know what I thought.

RALPH: I guess I thought if you were interested you would've...

JULIE: I probably should have said something by now, huh?

RALPH: Julie, girls like you... they don't date... uhh....

JULIE: [slightly mocking him] "Guys like you"? Of course "girls like me" do. And anyway. You don't get to make that decision for me.

RALPH: Okay.

[a pause]

JULIE: Ralph, let's just--

RALPH: Thanks for the movie. It was fun.

[the sound of a bike rolling away if that is a sound we can do]

JULIE: You're an idiot, Julie. Idiot!

NARRATOR: Act 2, Scene 1. A villain appears.

KATHLEEN: My goodness, Julie. Sit up.

JULIE: Mom. I'm not gonna get it. Evan Rachel Wood exists. She'd be perfect for--

[a door opens]

ASSISTANT: Mr. McPherson would love to see you now, Julie.

KATHLEEN: Good luck, Jewel.

JULIE: You're not coming?

KATHLEEN: You've got this, darling. I know you do.

[Julie moves into another room]

KAIL: Julie Capsom. My God, I just watched My Fiend Flicka last night, and I said, "Who *is* that girl?" Didn't I say that, Gary?

GARY [on the phone]: You sure did, sir.

KAIL: Gary's my agent. He's here to make sure this is all above board.

GARY: It's important you feel comfortable.

JULIE: It's really okay.

KAIL: You hear that, Gary? She said it's OK.

GARY: Wonderful. You kids have a great time!

[hang up]

KAIL: So My Fiend Flicka. The horse is evil?

JULIE: If you watch the full movie, you'll realize it was the old real estate developer who disguised himself as a horse, and--

KAIL: I only got about 20 minutes in.

JULIE: I made it 10.

KAIL: Enough to see that you were truly magnificent, though. Did you read the script?

JULIE: Guinevera? Yeah. It was--

KAIL: It's a mess, I know.

JULIE: No. I thought--

KAIL: You can say it's a mess.

JULIE: Okay. It's a mess. But it's about 9/11, right?

KAIL: My, my. Perceptive. I love that in a woman.

JULIE: It's just a way bigger part than I've ever done, and--

KAIL: If you could make me believe in the fiendish Flicka, Julie Capsom, you can make me believe in anything.

JULIE: [laughs, flattered] Thanks. But the horse was the real MVP, and--

[the sound of someone settling down]

KAIL: No, the horse was trash. Absolute--

JULIE: Could you not sit by me?

KAIL: Sorry. The couch is better for my back, and--

JULIE: I can stand. Or sit over there. It's just--

KAIL: I want you to be a star, Julie. We can do great things together.

JULIE: I appreciate that. And it would be a super honor to be in your movie, but--

KAIL: Julie, can you just sit down? Your pacing is making me nuts!

JULIE: I'm sorry but no.

KAIL: The part is yours if you can just sit down. Look. I'm folding my hands in my lap. I'm making myself a tiny little nubbin of a man. You can sit as far away from me as you want.

JULIE: How is this necessary?

KAIL: This is a movie about a girl who excites everyone she meets. I need to be near you. To feel your energy. I need to feel what it's like to be in your presence.

[the sound of someone settling down on the couch]

KAIL: You *do* have an energy, Julie. A good one. Yes. I can see that--

[cut to]

NARRATOR: Act two, scene two. The fight.

RALPH: Because it's your entire summer! You really want to spend your entire summer making this stupid movie that you seem weirdly non-psyched about?

JULIE: What do you care?

RALPH: Well, you go to school in France. Hanging out with you involves an elaborate system of smoke signals and carrier pigeons!

JULIE: I come home as often as I can. And if my parents found out about you--

RALPH: Found out that you have a "good friend" that you like to spend time with?

JULIE: You're not the... type of person they would--

RALPH: Are you embarrassed by me?

JULIE: No! Of course not! They're just... snobs. And control freaks. And kind of terrible people.
[hard pivot] How's your girlfriend anyway? Roxanne?

RALPH: Rosie. And we broke up.

JULIE: Nuts. That's too bad.

RALPH: How's the one guy? The rock band guy?

JULIE: You fell for that? I expected more from you.

RALPH: I read about it in my sister's Teen Vogue. They said you're a "hot"!

JULIE: Good for me. It was a stunt. Most of these things are.

RALPH: So are there any of these guys like... real?

JULIE: There's one.

RALPH: Good for him.

JULIE: I'm talking about you.

RALPH: I know.

JULIE: If you're ever interested--

RALPH: Yeah. Got it. I can be your secret lover.

JULIE: I prefer sugar baby.

RALPH: Julie-- [he sighs] Look, did I ever tell you how my parents met?

JULIE: Considering I've never even met your parents--

RALPH: My dad goes up to my mom first day of junior year, and he's, like, "Did you know I have a pencil that never breaks?" "Wow!" she says. And he hands her the pencil. Invites her to break it. And, of course, it's just a pencil, so she snaps it, right in half, and he turns right back, smooth as can be. "Oh. Wow. You must be really strong."

JULIE: Not bad. I see where you get your charm.

RALPH: Well, that's not my point. My point is what my mom told me *later*. That every relationship, even the best relationship you can think of, is that pencil. You hand somebody something of yours -- could be small, could be big, could be precious, could be worthless -- and you ask them to break it. And after that happens, you know where you stand.

JULIE: Dark. But okay.

RALPH: If you're gonna break my pencil, I at least want to know your heart was in it.

JULIE (artificial): My heart is in it, so in it!

RALPH: We're in a Von's parking lot in Santa Clarita. Not exactly public.

JULIE: I won't break your pencil.

RALPH: That's not a promise you can make. Or keep.

JULIE: Look at me! Look at my face. I won't break your pencil.

RALPH: You're stronger than you look.

JULIE: We are. Stronger than we look.

[he laughs; the sound of a car door opening]

RALPH: You know where to find me, Julie Capsom.

JULIE: Wherefore art thou, Ralph Montgomery.

RALPH: Right here.

JULIE: Trick question. Wherefore means "why."

RALPH: Oh.

JULIE: So they tell me. [beat] Look, you wanna hang out? I could probably get you a part in the movie. I'd... like it if you were around.

RALPH: I tried out for the school musical and was laughed out of the room.

JULIE: Can you stand in the background of things? Because I might be able to swing that.

RALPH: You call, and I come running.

JULIE: I'll take that as a yes.

[cut to]

NARRATOR: Act two, scene three. A late night phone call.

NATALIE [on phone]: The R girl? Roxie, Rachel, Rosie-

JULIE: Rosie. And she's long gone so it's not that.

NATALIE: Then he really does have enough pride not to let you bulldoze him.

JULIE: I know. It's a real pain.

NATALIE (sigh): Ok. Ask yourself this: If he was anybody else in the world, would you even care about him meeting your parents?

JULIE: If he was anybody else in the world, he wouldn't be Ralph.

NATALIE: All right, your parents suck, of course, but since when do you care what they think about anything?

JULIE: I'm not worried what they'll think about Ralph, I'm worried about what he'll think about *them*.

NATALIE: [Big yawn] Oh my god. Julie just get it together! Just hook up with the guy already so you can stop calling me at 3 in the morning.

JULIE: I'm *trying*.

NATALIE: It's really not like you.

JULIE: I *know*. If I knew what was wrong with me, I'd--

[her phone buzzes]

JULIE: Hold on.

NATALIE: Oh no no! If you hang up, I am going to slee--

[Julie hangs up]

JULIE: A picture of a pencil?

NARRATOR: You can't see this now, listener, so let me set the--

JULIE: Fuck no, dude. My episode.

NARRATOR: As you like it.

JULIE: It was from Ralph. A picture of a pencil. It took me just a couple of seconds to realize what it meant, and in those seconds--

JULIE: How he got past the security system, I don't know.

[the sound of a pebble hitting a window]

JULIE: Where he found a pebble in our perfectly manicured lawn, I don't know. What made up his mind so much that he was standing there, on a cool May evening, getting drenched by sprinklers, I don't know. But he was there, a full story below, cell phone lighting up his face, and he was smiling. God, I hope I never forget that smile. I hope if my brain turns to Swiss cheese, it's the last thing to go. And he smiled, then, at *me*, and--

[phone buzzes again]

JULIE: His text -- Okay. I'm ready.

[phone buzzes]

RALPH: And hers -- Okay. I'll be right down.

[the sound of a door opening and shutting]

[cut to]

JULIE: Act three, scene one. The disaster.

[the sound of Julie's breath, ragged, clearly outside somewhere]

JULIE: C'mon, c'mon, c'mon. Pick up.

[her speech is a little slurred -- like she's just slightly drunk]

NATALIE: [on phone] Hey, it's Natalie!

JULIE: Goddammit.

[hangs up; a car whizzes by]

JULIE: Hey! HEY! Come back here! I need--

[she laughs slightly]

JULIE: Keep it together, Jewel. Keep it--

[the sound of a vintage mid-00s ringtone]

JULIE: Ralph?

RALPH: [on phone] Julie? Why'd you call so many--

JULIE: Where *are* you?!

RALPH: I was at a movie with Vince. I--

JULIE: I need you to come get me.

RALPH: Is everything okay?

JULIE: No.

[cut to the sounds of a late-night diner]

RALPH: That's it. Drink.

JULIE: This coffee tastes gross.

[her speech is still a little off, but better]

RALPH: You need to stay awake, so we can get to the police.

JULIE: Police?

RALPH: You were drugged. How you stayed awake and made it to the Beverly Hilton on foot I don't know, but--

JULIE: I'm the greatest fucking person you know.

RALPH: So you are. How many times has he called?

JULIE: Kail? Five now.

RALPH: That's good. That's evidence.

JULIE: Should I answer? Tell that piece of shit--

RALPH: He wants to figure out where you are. Try to convince you nothing happened.

JULIE: Yeah, well, something happened.

RALPH: Do you need more coffee? Or are you ready?

JULIE: For what?

RALPH: To go to the police.

JULIE: Oh, you think we're actually doing that.

RALPH: Why wouldn't we?

JULIE: Number one, it was a party. Lots of people there. I can prove I was drugged, but I can't prove Kail did anything to me, can't even prove he handed me the drink. Number two, once we get to the bedroom and he has his gross hands on me, it's his word against mine. And do you think they'll believe me?

RALPH: I'll tell them how he's been to you on set.

JULIE: What? That he tells me I'm beautiful? How damning.

RALPH: You're 17, and he's--

JULIE: What? A pervert? A jerk? A gross old man? No matter what you say about him, there's so much worse out there about me. No way is he worried about his reputation being tanked by someone whose top google result is counting down to my eighteenth birthday! Half those cops won't blame him in the slightest.

RALPH: So what are you gonna do?

JULIE: Show up for work on Monday.

RALPH: Show up for work--?

JULIE: Give the best performance of my life, make sure I'm never alone with him, and avoid all of his fucking parties.

RALPH: This isn't right.

JULIE: All I have are bad choices, Ralph. Even if I had all the evidence in the world and could go to the police, this would go to the tabloids, and do you think they'll take my side, or the side of a beloved American auteur?

RALPH: People will believe you.

JULIE: No they won't.

RALPH: You can't say--

JULIE: Because I *knew* about Kail. In my gut, and then some of the women on set were, like, "Oh, don't go to that party." And I didn't believe them. *Or me*. It's just how it is.

RALPH: Then I'll say something.

JULIE: My secret Van Nuys boyfriend? Who lives in a tiny apartment with his whole family? And deals drugs?

RALPH: I don't--

JULIE: Ralph. I know.

RALPH: It's supposed to-- [a beat] Just a little pot. Nothing bad.

JULIE: I'm just saying. That's how they'll spin it. And they will. [a beat] Thank you for coming. I mean that.

RALPH: For you, anything.

JULIE: Are you crying?

RALPH: No. [but he sniffles]

JULIE: I'm fine. It's fine.

RALPH: Julie, you were--

JULIE: But I'm fine.

RALPH: You don't think that's a little fucked up?

JULIE: It's how it is. I was in a bad situation, and I got out, and you saved me.

RALPH: You jumped out that window. You saved yourself.

JULIE: But you drove the car.

RALPH: You call--

JULIE: I come running.

[cut]

JULIE: Act three, scene two. Aftermath.

I know what you're thinking. I should have made a bigger deal of it. I should have called the police. I should have done *something*.

But I did do something! I compartmentalized. First, I thought, just to get through the shoot. And then to get through the rest of the summer. And then to get through the school year. And, yes, I cracked sometimes. I fucked up here and there, but fucking up when you're 17 and 18 is indistinguishable from just being a normal 17 or 18-year-old. So if I got a little too drunk, or partied a little too hard, or drove my car into an Abercrombie and Fitch, well...

And then the eternal question--

NATALIE: Julie, are you okay?

JULIE: Like... what do you say? Because most of the time, I was. Most of the time, I was just fine. I was almost done with high school. I was in love. I was starting to realize what I wanted to do with my life. I don't like to talk about Kail, because to talk about Kail is to reduce my life to one incident, to one night when I should have stabbed somebody in the dick. For want of a knife, right?

But then the problem was this: I had seen enough of Hollywood to know I wasn't interested in it. Acting had never been a thing I deeply cared about. I liked it. I was good at it. But I wasn't passionate about it. It was just the path of least resistance.

KATHLEEN: Julie, we need to pick your next project.

JULIE: [still as an aside] Para ejemplar--

KATHLEEN: I know you're having fun with your friends, but--

JULIE: I was thinking about taking a few years off. To go to school.

KATHLEEN: What? Why?

JULIE: Don't you want me to get a college degree?

KATHLEEN: Of course, but with your grades--

JULIE: With your money, I could get into any school.

KATHLEEN: Our money won't buy you whatever you want.

JULIE: Won't it?

KATHLEEN: The point is--

JULIE: Whatever. I applied to UCLA. I was accepted at UCLA. I'm going in the fall.

[a pause]

KATHLEEN: Well, you could work some smaller parts in around--

JULIE: Nope. Maybe after a couple years of--

KATHLEEN: Do you honestly think your father and I will allow you to throw away everything--

JULIE: It's not your call, mom. I didn't want this. You wanted it for me.

KATHLEEN: Honey, did something happen? Did--

[Julie scoffs, almost in warning]

KATHLEEN: Because we can talk about it.

JULIE: I don't think we can.

KATHLEEN: You're my shining Jewel, sweetheart. Anything you want talk abo--

JULIE: Kail McPherson drugged me. He was going to rape me, but I escaped. A friend picked me up. I'm safe. I'm fine. It kind of soured me on acting. That's all.

[a long pause]

KATHLEEN: Oh, sweetie.

JULIE: So you see, right?

KATHLEEN: I do. That was... that wasn't a very nice thing to happen to you.

JULIE: Wasn't a very nice thing?

KATHLEEN: This is a thing you need to learn about this business, all right? Women don't change the current. They float atop it.

JULIE: So I should just go along with--

KATHLEEN: I didn't say that, did I?

JULIE: It was implied.

KATHLEEN: This is a complicated business for a woman. For any woman. You were smart. You got out of there. I'm proud of you. And I'm proud that you didn't make yourself a nuisance afterward either.

JULIE: Mom--

KATHLEEN: This is a fact of the business sometimes. It just is, and I'm sorry I didn't tell you sooner. I hoped... I hoped your father's reputation would protect you. Like it did me.

JULIE: You married dad because people were scared of him.

[an uncomfortably long pause]

KATHLEEN: I married your father because I loved him.

JULIE: Mom, this is fucked up. You know it's fucked up. You know it's--

KATHLEEN: Take the summer off, dear. Guinevera will be out soon, you'll get that Oscar nomination, and--

JULIE: Fuck you, mom!

KATHLEEN: You're so hostile lately.

JULIE: Guess I'm a nuisance after all.

KATHLEEN: Just... take the summer off. Don't throw your gift away because of one bad night.

JULIE: Jesus.

KATHLEEN: And this friend who helped you... who is she?

JULIE: Act three, scene three. A long-awaited dinner party.

[the sound of a doorbell]

KATHLEEN: Ralph. So good to meet you. And flowers? My goodness, what a gentleman!

RALPH : So let me set the scene for you, listeners. The Capsom house was one of those old Hollywood palaces, tucked up in the hills somewhere. Julie always said Gloria Grahame had owned it at one time, but I didn't know who that was, so I just nodded.

ROBERT: Ralph! Julie's told us a lot about you! You want something to drink?

RALPH: Water would be--

ROBERT: Scotch it is!

RALPH: She wasn't there when I showed up, at least not at first. So it was just me and her parents, watching me intently. But it felt like the whole *house* was watching me, like it could sense I didn't have the money. Like I should have paid a \$10,000 entrance fee just to be there.

[talking to Kathleen and Robert]

RALPH: Julie's... here, right?

KATHLEEN: She's just in one of her moods. Locks herself in her room.

ROBERT: Raids the liquor cabinet.

KATHLEEN: Teenagers!

[they share a fond, parental chuckle]

JULIE: Talking about me?

RALPH: So the thing Julie said earlier about when her brain turns to Swiss cheese, this is the moment for me -- her on that staircase, dressed in pajamas, looking like dog shit, like she'd forgotten I was coming over to meet them, even if I'd been talking with her about it just a few hours earlier. If it were the only thing I remembered about her, I'd take it. The gathering moved, as these things do, to the dining room

ROBERT: I think we just need to *commit* to the effort. We're too careful. Too worried about what the Iraqis will think of us, when they should be in *terror* of us. You agree, Ralph?

RALPH: Well, my brother's over there, so I guess I'd just rather have him back. And he *will* be back. His stint's almost over, and then law school. God willing.

KATHLEEN: Oh my goodness! Well, thank him for his service. What a brave boy.

JULIE: What do you know about it, mom?

KATHLEEN: I know Ralph's brother is very brave, and--

JULIE: Fighting in a war your cronies all support because they'll lose nothing because of it?

ROBERT: Julie!

RALPH: Julie, it's fine. I'll let my brother know the mom from Him and Her and--

KATHLEEN: Oh, that would be wonderful.

ROBERT: Following your brother into the army then, Ralph?

RALPH: The Marines. And no, I have a scholarship to UCLA.

KATHLEEN: Oh. That's where Julie's--

JULIE: Surprise.

[a silence]

RALPH: So this is awfully quiet, and you can't see what's happening, so maybe I'll just tell you that Robert and Kathleen got these *looks* in their eyes, like they were communicating entirely through Blue Blood telepathy. I knew something bad was happening, but I didn't know what.

Now, when I see Julie give our daughter that look, I know hell is coming.

ROBERT: Absolutely not.

KATHLEEN: Out of the question.

JULIE: What?

ROBERT: This... this cannot happen.

RALPH: Sir. Mr. Capsom. I love your daughter very much, and I promise--

ROBERT: You think this... this *joke* is going to be funny to anybody else, Julie?

JULIE: It's not a joke.

RALPH: And she reached over, and she took my hand, and hers was so cold and sweaty, and she was shaking, and I realized how *scared* she was. Of them. And I didn't know how to tell her not to be, because I was too.

JULIE: Ralph is the love of my life.

KATHLEEN: Dear, you're 18. You can't possibly know--

JULIE: Ralph is the *love* of my *life*. He saved me the night of Kail's party, and--

KATHLEEN: Not this again.

ROBERT: You had too much to drink.

RALPH: She was squeezing tighter and tighter and tighter, and I felt like my fingers might pop off. I knew I needed to say something, but also, not what to say. Because I was 18, and I had just stumbled into the middle of a very old argument nobody wanted me to be a part of.

ROBERT: Your own lack of responsibility--

JULIE: It wasn't *my fault*. None of it was--

KATHLEEN: These things happen, Julia. They *happen*.

JULIE: Oh, they happened to you?

KATHLEEN: Of course! Some men have no sense of decency, and you find a good one, and you let it go.

JULIE: Okay, well, I've found a good one.

ROBERT: You've found an opportunist. A vagrant. A bum.

KATHLEEN: A drug dealer! Really, Julie?

RALPH: I'm not a--

ROBERT: We've done quite enough digging into your record, Mr. Montgomery. You seem like a nice enough fellow, but you're not right for our daughter.

RALPH: This was it! The moment when I could have, or should have, or would have said something. But the way they were looking at me felt like a dog barking before an earthquake. The shit was rolling downhill fast. So she saved me. Again.

JULIE: You don't have a say.

ROBERT: We very much--

JULIE: No, dad. You don't. It's my life, and my choice, and I choose Ralph.

ROBERT: Not while you live under our roof, you don't.

JULIE: Then I'll move into the dorms.

ROBERT: With what money?

JULIE: The money from acting.

ROBERT: That is in a trust, and--

JULIE: Then I'll sell a spread to Playboy. I hear they pay well.

KATHLEEN: *Julie.*

JULIE: I'm done with all of it. I'm done with the hypocrites and the fuckwads and the way everybody smiles at me but then spreads rumors behind my back. I want to be *normal*. I want to be normal with *Ralph*.

RALPH: And I... would like that too.

ROBERT: All right. Throw your life away.

JULIE: You want me to stand up for myself, dad? Well! Here I am.

ROBERT: Fine. You can have your little... tourist trip.

KATHLEEN: That's all this is, honey. Tourism. And you should know that, Ralph. Julie will lose interest. She always does.

RALPH: I'll take that chance.

ROBERT: You might have some good times, but you are different. Very different. Do you think you know the first thing about how Julie lives, Ralph? Or how Ralph lives, Julie? This is all very well and good as some secret fling, but what happens the second the spotlight is on you, Ralph? When the question is: "Who's this strange boy Julie Capsom is with? This poor... commoner." And then they'll dig. And they'll dig and dig and dig, until they find out everything they can about you, and you're all used up. And then, only then, will Julie see who you are.

This is doomed.

RALPH: I love your daughter.

ROBERT: I loved a girl at your age. She had no money either. Or only a little money. I really did think I loved her, but I realized I didn't. She drove her car off a bridge.

JULIE: Dad, Jesus.

ROBERT: I'm not surprised by any of this, Julie. I am a little... disappointed.

[the sound of a bell ringing]

ROBERT: Marcus, we're done here.

[cut]

RALPH: Act three, scene three. The threat.

[the sound of a phone ringing]

RALPH: This is Ralph.

ROBERT: Mr. Montgomery. Robert Capsom. Is this a bad time?

RALPH: No, sir. I'm just on my way to class.

ROBERT: Good. Good. Walking to your car?

RALPH: I am. I--

ROBERT: A 1995 Toyota Corolla? Red?

RALPH: How do you --

ROBERT: There's a man standing by the car, rather tall. That's my personal lawyer Aaron Poins, and he's going to hand you some documents.

RALPH: I think I see--

AARON: Mr. Montgomery. Good morning.

ROBERT: Take a look at the documents, if you don't mind.

[the sounds of rustling papers]

RALPH: What... are these...

ROBERT: Son, my wife and I appreciate what you've done for our daughter. Really. We do. And we understand that this feels, to the two of you, like love. And that's powerful. But you are young, and this is a fling, and it *must be* a fling. Do you understand me, Mr. Montgomery?

RALPH: Mr. Capsom, all due respect, but--

ROBERT: I have copies of these documents, too, Ralph. I will not hesitate to point you out to the police as a drug dealer. I'm sympathetic to what young people must do to raise money for school. Really, I am. But not around my daughter.

RALPH: You need to leave my mother out of this.

ROBERT: She's in this country illegally. When she married your father, she didn't think to get a green card? Or was that whole process too expensive? Well, it's no mind, I suppose. My friends in Washington--

RALPH: She didn't do anything.

ROBERT: She had you, Mr. Montgomery. I'd advise you to stay away from my daughter. Thank you very much for hearing me out.

[hang up]

JULIE: Act four, scene one. Tramps like us, baby we were born to run.

The thing about a decision like the one we made is that there's no single cause. I suppose I could find a way to make the whole story about Kail, to say that I wanted to get away from him. And while, yes, I never wanted to see him again, I didn't need to put a whole continent between

me and him to accomplish that. I just had to find a way out of the industry that kept forcing me into social situations with him.

But I also can't make the whole story about my parents, as much as I probably should. The older I got, and the more I knew what I wanted, the harder they clamped down. But what teenager hasn't felt that way about their parents? My daughter will certainly feel that way about me someday. Except she, too, won't put a whole continent between her and me. I hope.

The last domino to fall, though, was my father threatening Ralph. It wasn't that I was surprised. It was that I expected something like it to come, that the shoe had been hanging over me from the moment I met Ralph on that beach. And when it fell--

[the sound of ocean waves]

JULIE: So this is it?

RALPH: It's my mom, Julie. If it was just me--

JULIE: You can't go to jail. You can't ruin your life for something stupid like this.

RALPH: This is something stupid?

JULIE: No. It's not. You know it's not.

[the ocean rolls along]

JULIE: It's who I am. It's who I'll always have to be.

RALPH: What?

JULIE: It's that I'm Julie Capsom. That my name is Julie Capsom.

RALPH: What are you talking about.

JULIE: So I'm 5, right? And my parents and I go to Hawaii for vacation. We land in Honolulu super late at night, and I'm sure I'm cranky, because what kid wouldn't be. This is the height of Mom and Dad and Me and You and Also That Guy so my mom is everywhere. She's the mother they always wanted. Except she's actually *my* mom.

And we're in the baggage claim area, and I don't know why I remember this so clearly, but my mom gets swarmed by people from the plane, and she doesn't want to sign the autographs, but she has to. And I'm there, at her feet, and I'm tired. I'm tugging at her shirt, trying to get her to pick me up. Because I needed my mom. I don't even know why.

RALPH: Because you were 5.

JULIE: Yeah probably something stupid like that.

RALPH: It's not stupid.

JULIE: She leaned down to me, and she said, "Mommy can't be with you right now, Julie. Just give the people a big ol' smile." And I thought, okay. I guess that's who I am. I'm mom's kid.

My mom loves me, I think. But she loves me as a prop. And my dad likes the idea of having an heir. Even if the reality of it is more complicated than he'd like.

I'm not me. I'm not anyone. I'm Julie Capsom.

RALPH: So is the name the problem?

JULIE: It's that I can't outrun it. The name puts me in the room with Kail McPherson. It puts me alongside my parents on red carpets. It puts me on the cover of every tabloid when I so much as smoke a cigarette. It opens every door but the one to you.

RALPH: There will be another guy.

JULIE: No.

[the waves]

JULIE: My life is a mess of decisions other people made for me before I was even born. You're the first choice I've gotten to make for myself. Ever. And I'm fucking tired of having to listen to *anybody* else about who I'm "supposed" to be. Because if being me means I can't keep you, then... what if--

RALPH: This is what you say when you get a stupid idea.

JULIE: What if I wasn't me.

[cut]

RALPH: Act four, scene three. The Last Supper.

The night before I left, Vince called me up, wanted to go out with me and Mark. Have a good time. I tried to say no, but Vince... he has a way.

VINCE: [pleasantly but extremely drunk] Should I wake Mark up?

RALPH: [sober but tired] Let him sleep. I like looking at him. Like looking at a TV that's not plugged in.

VINCE: You know what you're doing for the holidays?

[a pause]

VINCE: A hearty shrug. Great. Going to see your parents?

RALPH: My parents are flying to New York to see my brother. One night in a hotel, 36 hours. Flying all three of us there was too expensive, so.

VINCE: You got money from dealing, man. You could just—

RALPH: No. My parents can't know about that. [changing subject] You're, what? Visiting Santa? Santa's village?

VINCE: Santa Claus, Indiana. Mom's lifelong dream.

RALPH: What do they have there? Like, a 10-story tall Rudolph?

VINCE: Worse. A theme park.

RALPH: Please tell me there's a tasteful, Nativity-themed Tilt-a-Whirl.

[They laugh.]

RALPH: [possibly too casually] Oh, hey, did you ever do a Valentine, Nebraska?

VINCE: A what?

RALPH: There's a town in Nebraska. Valentine. And every year, you can send them a Valentine's cards, and they'll forward them on, big red heart in the postmark. So in second grade -- you guys seriously didn't do this? -- so my teacher had all us kids make them for our parents or grandparents or whatever, and she sent them along. So on Valentine's Day, what does my mom get, but my handwriting, and that big, red heart postmark.

VINCE: Elaborate.

RALPH: She thought it was cute. It is, to be fair, basically designed for moms to think it's cute.

VINCE: Look, if I go to a town called Valentine, it won't be with my mom. Love her to death, but--

RALPH: Not Valentine. Santa Claus, Indiana. Where you're going.

VINCE: I don't follow.

RALPH: I've got my parents' Christmas present in my trunk. Overnight postage and everything. You take it to Santa Claus, drop it at the post office, they postmark it, and my parents get a happy surprise in their New York hotel Christmas morning.

VINCE: You think they'll have the heart postmark?

RALPH: Nah, just a big ol' Christmas tree. I checked.

VINCE: Okay, yeah. Cool. You're a really great guy, Ralph. Your parents are gonna be so excited.

RALPH: [queasy] Yeah. They will.

VINCE: Especially when they see you've gotten them... wait... what's the gift?

RALPH: All the money I made dealing. So they can get out of Van Nuys. Get somewhere sensible.

[a long pause and then... they both laugh]

RALPH: It's socks. Mom's gotta have her socks.

[Mark snorts, nearly waking up]

VINCE: We should get him home.

RALPH: Probably.

[a pause. The sound of a spoon stirring in a coffee mug]

RALPH: This is the first Christmas I won't spend with my parents. My mom's burnt-to-hell bacon wasn't good, but it was ours, you know? Or my dad getting drenched with sweat the second he steps outside, no matter how cold it is. Or his shirt immediately coming off.

VINCE: I'm just gonna miss not having to open presents underneath a roller coaster.

RALPH: Or like this, right? This will be done someday. I won't be here. You won't be here. Things end. It's... sad. And inevitable, I guess.

VINCE: [not getting it] I guess.

RALPH: You'll remember this moment Vince, right? The two of us—

[Mark snorts again]

RALPH: The three of us. Here, and it's warm, and we're happy, and maybe a little sleepy, and—

[he trails off, voice thick with emotion]

VINCE: Is this about Julie again?

[Ralph laughs, a little too much]

RALPH: Maybe a little.

VINCE: You've gotta stop thinking about Julie, man! Tell you what. When I get back from Santa Claus, we'll have a whole week of break left. Take a trip up the coast. Get rid of that movie star hangover. Yeah?

[Ralph is silent]

VINCE: C'mon, man. You. Me. The car.

RALPH: Sure. Yeah, of course. Of course. Can't wait.

VINCE: Boom. We'll make those bad memories disappear.

RALPH: And that was the last time I saw Vince.

RALPH: Act four, scene four. The answers you came for.

JULIE: So if you're listening to this damn thing, all you want to know is how we did it, so I guess we'll tell you.

RALPH: After that day on the beach, the plan came together quickly. We'd stage a relationship for the cameras, one that had Julie's parents' approval, because it would fall apart publicly, and

disastrously, thus satisfying their need for a scapegoat in the “Why has Julie Capsom lost her mind?” tabloid drama. The drug dealer boyfriend who got her hooked on his product and gave her a taste of the wild life.

JULIE: I’ll give it to my mom. Her storyline would have worked. I got calls from great directors the week after the story broke. A-list. People you wouldn’t believe.

RALPH: You should have taken the one from Sofia Coppola.

JULIE: She would have known how to use me, I agree.

[she laughs]

RALPH: So this is the part where you’re going to think we’re monsters.

JULIE: And... we are.

RALPH: All the while, Julie is getting little bits of money out of her trust, staying on her parents’ good side as much as she can to collect it.

JULIE: And you’re--

RALPH: Right. I’m tanking my reputation as much as possible. And setting up the world’s greatest tabloid mystery. The Hollywood starlet who fled, her ex-boyfriend’s torso in her trunk, the car set on fire in northern California.

JULIE: We had the spot picked out from the first.

RALPH: I’d been to the area before for an environmental science class, and on one of my hikes, I found that cabin. And where the owner kept the spare key.

JULIE: So Natalie could wait for my car to come in range and call me.

RALPH: And run your car into a tree. How was that part?

JULIE: Not great.

RALPH: I imagine.

JULIE: The part I wish I could take back is the torso.

RALPH: Yeah. What the hell were we thinking?

JULIE: We thought everybody needed to think we both were dead. And if I set the car on fire with a bunch of my blood in the nearby snow, and a body that was just close enough to yours a charred husk in the trunk--

RALPH: We probably could have just disappeared.

JULIE: Except my father would have come. Relentlessly.

RALPH: Here's a thing you've probably realized by now that we realized almost too late: You can't tattoo a corpse.

JULIE: We knew planting Ralph's DNA on the dead body of a random homeless teenager found for us by Dr. Padilla--

RALPH: The rather stern Capsom family mortician you met several episodes ago--

JULIE: And an *old* family friend. I maybe told him I needed the body to escape a for real psycho stalker and he'd be saving my life. Whoops. Very sorry about those water works, Francis. Anyway, we knew planting the DNA was a risk, because it relied on the police just being, like, "Oh, here's this very obvious pool of blood. Let's just take that," instead of trying to draw a sample directly from the corpse. So instead, we made *Ralph's* DNA look like the corpse's by planting some of the hair in Ralph's hairbrush.

RALPH: You realize if they ever catch up to us--

JULIE: Yeah. I know. I do.

RALPH: I always tell myself we were dumb kids. That the kid was already dead. That nobody could identify him. That we were just... borrowing him.

JULIE: And we had waited so long at that point.

RALPH: 18 months.

JULIE: It felt like a Christmas miracle.

RALPH: Except now... I still think about Mark tattooing me, and then the body- which he was weirdly nonchalant about, but Mark was... into some stuff with some people. At the time I just thought no one could possibly have bigger or weirder secrets than me. Anyways. We did it like that so the fact that the tattoo wasn't "right" on his skin would seem the same as me, because I would still be bleeding from it. And how much I tried not to look at this... other person. This stand-in for me. And I think we are very bad people.

JULIE: Maybe.

RALPH: But we did it.

JULIE: And the wigs from Guinevera - we didn't want to make the crime look too obvious, we wanted it to be big and dramatic because I was a dumb kid and PISSED and everything I did had to be big and dramatic. So we needed an alternative fall guy, and well, if anyone deserved to be hounded by cops and paparazzi for a few months, Kail was a perfect plan B. And his legacy would've been ruined, and maybe they'd even have found out his real crimes. Bye bye, Mr. Great American Director.

I think if I had actually set the car on fire--

RALPH: Hence all the cans of gas.

JULIE: There would have been no question about our fates. But Gerald stopped to help, and he saw me, and instead of setting everything up like I was supposed to, to suggest some sort of horrible murder-suicide, that I had finally just *snapped*, I ran out of time and had to run into the woods. To catch the helicopter.

RALPH: Which took you to Verona.

JULIE: And you--

RALPH: Mark got me passage on a container ship. I took the long way to you, but I got there.

JULIE: So look. You know the hows and the whats and the whos and the whens. Are you happy? Do you have the closure you sought?

RALPH: And, look, we get it. Some of you are never going to think this was a good idea, because it wasn't. But we just wanted to be together.

JULIE: And we thought there was only one way to make that happen.

RALPH: So that's what we did.

JULIE: And a month later, I'm there, at the bus station, when he gets off the bus, and that's it. We're free.

At least we were.

[cut]

NARRATOR: Act five, scene one. Fair Verona, where we set our scene.

[on speakers, from episode 1]

BRENDA: *Everything I do is spectacular. And your pitch was boring.*

BEA: *Boring?*

BRENDA: *"A thoughtful, serious program on the legacy of this case"? Pfft.*

BEA: *It's an important, multi-faceted--*

[door opening]

JULIE: Babe?

RALPH: Did you know about this?

JULIE: What?

RALPH: Arden. It's a podcast. About us.

[Julie begins putting things away]

JULIE: I did.

RALPH: It's four episodes in. It's very popular. It's--

JULIE: Relax. It's going to be fine.

RALPH: They're talking to Natalie. They're talking to a lot of people who know too much. These women are good, hon.

JULIE: It's been 10 years. 10 years! If they can track us down to--

DAUGHTER: [calling out] Mommy!

JULIE: Everything okay, sweetie?

DAUGHTER: Come look at my picture!

JULIE: Mommy and daddy are talking, okay? In a little bit.

RALPH: Those women could be right on top of us, before we even knew it.

JULIE: You need to stop being paranoid.

RALPH: We'd lose everything. You realize that, right?

JULIE: I do.

RALPH: Maybe we should move.

JULIE: If they find us here, they'll find us in Bangkok or Montreal or Capetown.

RALPH: Then we call somebody. We confess.

JULIE: We confess?

RALPH: It doesn't eat away at you. The guilt? The missing everyone? The years?

JULIE: You know it does. You also know--

DAUGHTER: Mom, it's a lady!

JULIE: I'm sure it's a beautiful drawing, honey.

[beat, low voice]

JULIE: You want to lose her? To my father? You know that's what would happen.

RALPH: Sweetheart--

JULIE: We can get through this. We got through everything else.

RALPH: There's something about this one. It just pings me.

JULIE: You and me together, right? Stronger than we look.

RALPH: Sooner or later. Eventually. The pencil always breaks.

[a long moment]

JULIE: It won't. We won't.

DAUGHTER: [in the room with them] Mom, the lady's at the door!

RALPH: Ah, hell, the cleaning lady. I forgot it was her day.

JULIE: Let her in, kiddo. It's just the cleaning lady!

[beat]

JULIE: If we go down, at least we go down together. On our terms. Nobody else's.

[Ralph laughs, and he steals a kiss... off the sound of the kiss, music rises, and...]

DAUGHTER: I'm coming!

[a knocking sound]

BEA: Hello? Is anybody--

[a door opens]

DAUGHTER: Hi!

BEA: Hi there, sweetheart. My name is Bea. Is your mommy here?

[the music rises into a full song "Last Christmas" by Love Axe]

[end of episode]