

Mix Up in the Mediterranean

Executive Producer

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1 EXT. YAKUTAT, ALASKA - DAY 1

Sweeping vistas show the Alaskan wilderness with tall pines, clear waters, and abundant wildlife. Nestled at the base of the mountains is the charming, quaint town of Yakutat.

2 EXT. YAKUTAT CAFE - DAY 2

Establishing a simple diner/cafe in Yakutat, a place you expect hearty food in friendly but not fancy surroundings.

3 INT. YAKUTAT CAFE - KITCHEN - DAY 3

A pack of mints is opened. Two strong hands crush the mints, then toss them onto a home-made Baked Alaska.

JOSH NORTHRUP (30ish, jeans/t-shirt, casual demeanor, boyish good looks) is multi-tasking with efficiency in the dated but functional restaurant kitchen. He pops the baked Alaska in the glass fronted freezer, grills bacon and a burger, and mixes a sauce with a flair that shows he is enjoying himself.

TIM KINSELLA (50s, exasperated but a decent guy), enters. As soon as he does, Josh's cheerfulness fades a bit.

KINSELLA

Mrs. Richmond says she's going to start eating the place mat if her lunch isn't ready in the next two minutes.

JOSH

I know. I just... I kind of got inspired and I wanted to try something.

KINSELLA

She doesn't want inspiration, Josh, she wants her bacon cheeseburger.

JOSH

Black pepper, maple BBQ sauce for the bacon. A little sweet, a little spicy, a little tangy. I think she'll like it.

KINSELLA

Then you go tell her that.

JOSH

I'd rather stay here with the food. It rarely talks back.

KINSELLA

(sees the baked Alaska)

Is... what is that?!

JOSH

Baked Alaska. My mother's recipe with a couple of twists I thought of.

KINSELLA

Pie! Josh. You are a cook in a diner in Yakutat, Alaska. The customers want pie! Cherry, apple, maybe pumpkin in the fall but that's as adventurous as they get.

JOSH

You should give them more credit.

KINSELLA

When your dad owned this place, did he let you experiment?

JOSH

(beat)

Not really, no.

KINSELLA

Look, Josh, I know you wanted to take over after he passed, but that was six months ago and you work for me now.

JOSH

You're still open to me making an offer to buy it back at some point, right?

KINSELLA

Sure. But until then stick to the menu.

Kinsella exits leaving an unhappy Josh behind. He tastes the sauce on the stove and appears to be very disappointed that he's the only person who will know how good it is.

Josh takes his phone out of his pocket and looks at it for a moment. We see that he is looking at a contact that says "J. Northrup." He considers dialing it but then shakes his head, puts away his phone, and goes back to cooking.

4 EXT. MANHATTAN - NIGHT 4

Establishing Manhattan in all its bustling, glittering glory.

5 EXT. J. NORTHRUP RESTAURANT - NIGHT 5

Establishing the tony J. Northrup restaurant.

6 INT. J. NORTHRUP RESTAURANT -RECEPTION - NIGHT 6

Just inside the front door, the reception area of the upscale restaurant has a podium where a MAITRE' D is reviewing reservations. No one is waiting to be seated.

MEG WESCOTT (30ish, confident but an overthinker, simple beauty) enters from outside looking casually stylish. She approaches the podium.

MEG

Hi. I'm supposed to be meeting my father here. Preston Wescott?

MAITRE' D

Right this way.

The maitre'd leads Meg through a doorway.

7 INT. J. NORTHRUP RESTAURANT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

7

The dining room of the restaurant is a vibrant and energetic, brightly lit bistro, abuzz with conversation even though not all the tables are full. The maitre'd leads Meg to a table where her father, PRESTON WESCOTT (60s, used to getting his way), is seated, talking on his cell phone.

PRESTON

Julia, I want this hotel. And you know what happens when I want something, so let's just skip to the part where I get it and save ourselves some time, okay?
(disconnects call)
Sorry. Acquiring a hotel in a castle in Europe is harder than I expected.

MEG

Well, sure. Who can't relate to that?
(sees him look at his watch)
I know, I'm a few minutes late, but I had to pack. I'm going to Malta tomorrow.

PRESTON

Ah, yes. The cooking show is this week.

MEG

(forced smile)
Dad, the 87th Annual International Escoffier Culinary Competition is not a "cooking show." It's like the Olympics for rising chefs.

PRESTON

I know what it is, Meg. I helped you get the job, remember?

MEG

(bristles)
As often as you bring it up, it would be hard not to.

PRESTON

I shouldn't have needed to. You ran food and beverage at our hotels for years. They're lucky to have you.

MEG

There's a big difference between making sure our restaurants had enough swizzle sticks and planning and running a major culinary event. You know that the closest I get to cooking is making dinner reservations.

PRESTON

If it's too much pressure, you could always come back and work for me again.

MEG

Planning events is what I want to do and I want to do it without any more help from my father and his company.

PRESTON

Wescott Enterprises is the most prestigious hotelier in the world.

Meg rolls her eyes - she has heard this a million times.

PRESTON (cont'd)

We have properties in more than two dozen countries...

MEG

We have properties in more than two dozen countries...

PRESTON (cont'd)

...including Hotel Valletta in Malta where you're doing your cooking...

(off her look)

Culinary competition.

MEG

And I appreciate you agreeing to let us host it there. It helped get me the job, but now that I have it, I intend to prove that I'm good at it.

PRESTON

What's the point of building an empire when your only child doesn't want to run it?

MEG

I want to build my own empire. Have my own event planning company, someday.

PRESTON

Meg, if money is an issue...

MEG

Dad, you created Wescott Enterprises from the ground up without any help from anyone, doing something you love. I want to do that, too.

PRESTON

All right. But if it doesn't work out, you have a job waiting here.

MEG

It's going to work out. In fact, it's going to be amazing.

A waiter walks by the table and we follow them toward the door into the kitchen.

8 INT. J. NORTHRUP RESTAURANT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

8

Unlike the one-man operation that we saw in Yakutat, this is a serious kitchen with high-end equipment and several workers busy at different stations. At the center of it is HENRI VAN AUDENHOVE (30s, Belgian, generous in nature, a bit high strung), who is wearing a Bluetooth earpiece.

HENRI

I need the mushrooms. Without them the risotto with mushrooms and scallions is simply rice and onions with better PR. And where is Jack? Please find Jack!

People scramble. We hear a phone ring and Henri taps the Bluetooth earpiece.

HENRI (cont'd)

Tell me this is someone offering me a free trip to a tropical island.

9 INT. YAKUTAT CAFE - KITCHEN - DAY

9

Josh is cleaning up the kitchen as he talks on the phone.

JOSH

You're going to Malta next week, Henri. It is an island. What else do you want?

We begin INTERCUTTING between the two of them.

HENRI

The list is very long, Josh, my friend.

JOSH

Sorry to interrupt the dinner rush.

HENRI

It is not so much a rush, tonight. More of a hurried walk. But I have been left to my own devices in the kitchen and you know how that usually ends.

JOSH

In tears. Where's Jack?

HENRI

Where do you think he is? Shaking hands. Kissing babies.

JOSH

He and I so different...

10 INT. J. NORTHRUP RESTAURANT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

10

Back in the dining room, a door opens and Josh's identical twin, JACK NORTHRUP (30s, stylish, grandiloquent, a bit cocky) enters. While they look the same, they are very different - Josh is quiet and casual where Jack is outgoing, dapper, and has swagger. Jack buzzes from table to table.

JACK

(to diners at a table)

Bonjour! Is that the best *cog au vin* you've ever tasted? It is, right?

(goes to Meg & Preston's table)

Mr. Wescott. I saw your name on the reservation list and wanted to introduce myself. I'm Jack Northrup, *bienvenue*.

PRESTON

Thank you. This is my daughter, Meg.

JACK

(pleasant but dismissive)

Hello.

MEG

Hello. We're actually...

Jack turns back to Preston, which peeves Meg a bit.

JACK

Mr. Wescott, I'd love to talk to you about working together. Maybe partnering my restaurant with your hotels?

PRESTON

We have a food and beverage program.

(pointedly for Meg)

Although we need someone to run it.

MEG

(even more peeved)

Dad, he probably has bigger things to worry about. He's one of our chefs.

JACK

Your chefs?

MEG

Yes, I'm running the Escoffier competition in Malta.

JACK

I thought Juergen Mueller was in charge.

MEG

Oh, well, yes, he runs the academy and the contest - the challenges and rules. I'm in charge of planning the event and making sure it all runs smoothly.

JACK

But you're not involved in the actual picking of the winner.

MEG

No. That's up to the judges.

JACK

(a little patronizing)

Well, that's okay. Organizing things is important, too. Someone has to make sure the trophy is there to hand to me when I win.

MEG

You're very... confident.

JACK

That's a good thing, isn't it?

(back to Preston)

Mr. Wescott, let's talk. I'll reach out to set a meeting. But tonight, I'm going to whip up a special meal just for you. *Bon Appetit.*

Jack heads for the kitchen. Meg shakes her head.

MEG

I knew chefs could be arrogant, but that was... I hope they're not all like that.

PRESTON

It's not too late to change your mind.

Meg forces a smile and looks at the menu.

11 INT. J. NORTHRUP RESTAURANT - KITCHEN - NIGHT 11

Jack comes into the kitchen and goes to Henri and kisses him.

JACK

He agreed to a meeting. This could be big for us. See? Everything is going to be fine.

HENRI

Your brother is on the phone.
(holds out earpiece, covers mic)
Invite him to Malta.

JACK

He's not going to want to go.

HENRI

Invite him anyway.

Jack hesitates for a moment, then takes the Bluetooth and steps into an adjacent office.

12 INT. J. NORTHRUP RESTAURANT - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 12

Jack enters the office, which has a window into the kitchen, and shuts the door. We begin INTERCUTTING between him and Josh. Jack acts as if he is being bothered.

JACK

What's up little brother?

JOSH

You're five minutes older than me.

JACK

Still counts. How's AK?

JOSH

Cold. NYC?

JACK

Same, but with fewer moose.

JOSH

And the restaurant? I heard you tell Henri everything is going to be fine? Is something not fine now?

JACK

(evasive)
Oh, he's just being Henri. I love him, but he's a little high strung.

JOSH

Maybe it's because he's doing all the cooking instead of the actual chef?

JACK

I was networking. Running a restaurant is about more than just great food. It's about impressing the right people.

JOSH

In Yakutat it's about not burning the French fries.

There is a beat of awkward silence.

JACK

Josh, I really need to get back, so...

JOSH

Yeah... okay. I was just calling to wish you luck at the Escoffier.

JACK

I don't need luck. I've got skill.

JOSH

Nice to hear your ego is still intact.

The two of them go silent. Jack sees Henri looking at him and mouthing the words "ask him." Jack rolls his eyes.

JACK

Listen... I'm allowed to bring a guest to the competition and I was thinking maybe you'd want to come?

JOSH

To Malta? I can't do that.

JACK

I'll buy you the plane ticket if that's what you're worried about.

JOSH

I can afford my own plane ticket, Jack.

JACK

I didn't mean...

JOSH

That you're the big fancy chef at your own bistro in New York and I'm just a cook in a diner in Yakutat?

JACK

Josh, why are you still there? It's not even our family's restaurant anymore.

JOSH

But it will be again.

JACK

(under his breath)
L'histoire se répète.

JOSH

I hate it when you pretend you're French. You grew up in Alaska! What does that even mean?

JACK

It means history repeating. You're passing up a trip to Malta. You passed up my offer to get out of that greasy kitchen and work here when Dad passed. You passed up a scholarship to one of the best culinary schools in Paris!

JOSH

We were twenty years old. Someone had to stay. Mom had just died.

JACK

Dad wanted both of us to go.

JOSH

But I wanted to stay. And I want to stay now. It's... this place is important.

JACK

Josh... I know we're not exactly... come to Malta. Some of the world's best chefs are going to be there. You can see what cooking is like outside of Yakutat.

(beat)

Besides, Henri would like to meet you in person, finally. He says talking on the phone every few months isn't good enough.

Josh realizes that Jack is probably talking about the two of them and it has an impact on him. He looks around the admittedly greasy kitchen.

JOSH

(beat)

I do have some vacation days...

Josh considers his options.

- 13 EXT. MALTA - DAY 13
Establishing shots of the historic island of Malta; medieval meets modern with stunning views of the surrounding waters.
- 14 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - DAY 14
Establishing a majestic hotel in the heart of the city.
- 15 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - LOBBY - DAY 15
QUEENIE LEROUX (30s, French, charismatic, calm) is leading Meg, who is carrying a leather-bound planning folio, through the beautiful lobby, toward a pair of grand doors.
- MEG
Queenie, I can't get over how beautiful this place is.
- QUEENIE
Thank you. I am so excited you are hosting the Escoffier at Hotel Valletta.
- MEG
The only reason I recommended it is because you're managing it now. You've come a long way from front desk agent at my dad's hotel in Paris.
- QUEENIE
And you have come a long way from the shy coed I met when you came to study French. I'm sure your father must be proud.
- MEG
We'll see about that...
(looks around)
This is going to look great on camera.
- QUEENIE
You will be streaming the event online?
- MEG
Yes. One of the many technology upgrades I put in this year. Instead of a live audience we're going virtual so everyone around the globe can watch. We'll have a camera running all the time for the events, behind-the-scenes footage...
- QUEENIE
I love it. Bringing the art of cooking to the entire world. Here we are...
- Queenie opens the big doors and they go outside.

16 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - TENT - CONTINUOUS

16

A luxurious tent outside the hotel is mostly empty right now, ready to be transformed into the competition area. A group of uniformed staff is waiting for them.

QUEENIE

This is the space and this is your staff.
Everyone, this is Meg Wescott with the
Escoffier Academy.

MEG

Hi. Thank you so much for being here.
We only have a few days before the chefs
arrive, and we have a lot to do. Is
everyone ready?
(off their nods of agreement)
Great. Let's get to work.

Meg opens her planning folio.

MONTAGE - SETTING UP FOR THE EVENT

A brief montage of day and night scenes shows the space being transformed into the competition arena with Meg directing.

- Kitchen equipment is brought in and set up while Meg watches carefully and checks everything.

- Meg refers to the plans in her folio and directs a worker to adjust the lighting.

- A judging platform is set up and Meg double checks it.

- Decorations and banners are hung as Meg makes sure it is all perfect.

17 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - TENT - NIGHT

17

The transformation is now complete, with a judges table facing ten fully stocked, professional grade kitchen workstations. There are banners advertising the Escoffier, decorations, and flowers everywhere. It's impressive.

Meg and Queenie take a moment to appreciate it.

QUEENIE

What do you think?

MEG

(smiles)
It's perfect.

Meg is very pleased with what she has accomplished.

18 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - LOBBY - NIGHT

18

A clearly exhausted Josh, wearing jeans, a flannel shirt, a baseball cap, and a scruff of a beard, walks into the lobby of the hotel with his suitcase. As he looks around at the grandiosity of it all, he doesn't see Meg who is walking through with her head down in her planning folio.

The two of them *almost* collide but stop just before they do. Meg is a bit taken aback when she realizes who he is. She is expecting the arrogant Jack.

MEG

Oh, hi. Sorry, my bad. I wasn't looking where I was going.

JOSH

It's okay. We almost had a cliché rom-com meeting.

Meg smiles, a bit surprised that he isn't a jerk about it.

MEG

That's funny. I wasn't expecting funny. So, welcome to Malta.

JOSH

Thank you. It's beautiful here.

MEG

Is it? I haven't been able get out and explore too much yet.

(sees his suitcase)

You know I have that exact same suitcase.

JOSH

I promise this one's mine. It has my lucky hat in it and everything.

Josh unzips the front pocket and shows her.

MEG

That's where I keep my extra chocolate.

JOSH

Extra?

MEG

I always travel with an emergency back up just in case I can't find the good stuff. Don't tell anyone.

JOSH

Your secret is safe with me. Do you know where the front desk is?

MEG
It's that way.

JOSH
Thanks. Have a good night.

Josh heads off as Queenie approaches Meg.

QUEENIE
Who was that?

MEG
Jack Northrup - one of the chefs in the competition. That was interesting.

QUEENIE
Interesting how?

MEG
When I first met him last week he was so... but he seemed nice just now. And he looks different - more casual.

QUEENIE
(with a sly smile)
And handsome?

MEG
Stop. I would never pursue anything with one of our chefs. It would be a conflict of interest.

QUEENIE
You're running the event. You're not involved in the judging.

MEG
It would still be inappropriate. But more importantly, I'm not his type.

QUEENIE
What is his type?

MEG
His husband, Henri. It was in his bio. They run J. Northrup in New York.

QUEENIE
(laughs)
Ah, yes, I can see how that would put a crimp in your dating plans.

The two of them laugh and as they walk off, Meg gives a curious glance back toward Josh at the front desk.

19 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - JACK'S SUITE - SITTING AREA - NIGHT 19

Jack and Henri are getting settled into their suite when there is a knock on the door. Henri gives Jack a supportive nod and Jack goes to the door and opens it to reveal Josh.

JACK

You can take the boy out of Alaska, but you can't take the Alaska out of the boy.

JOSH

What does that mean?

JACK

You're in Malta. Playground for Europe's rich and famous. You need to up your game, a bit. Ratty jeans and work boots could get you arrested here.

JOSH

It's good to see you, too, Jack.

Josh comes in and Jack shuts the door. The two of them hug, albeit awkwardly. Josh turns to Henri.

JOSH (cont'd)

Henri...

HENRI

Josh. It is so good to finally meet you!

Henri hugs Josh and it is notably less awkward.

JOSH

You, too! We've talked so many times over the last, what? Seven years? I feel like I know you better than...

Josh looks at Jack and lets that train of thought drop.

HENRI

I'm so sorry I could not come to your father's funeral. The restaurant was...

JOSH

It's okay. The flowers were beautiful.

Henri takes a step back to look at the two of them.

HENRI

It is remarkable. It's like someone left Jack in the wilderness for a few weeks.

JOSH

After a few weeks in the wilderness, he'd look a lot worse than this.

HENRI

Yes, this is undeniably true.

JACK

Hey! No ganging up on the chef. I have to concentrate on the competition.

JOSH

Too bad I got all the real culinary talent in the family.

JACK

Please. I can cook circles around you.

JOSH

I'm a better chef and I'm taller.

JACK

You are not!

The two brothers smile at each other, the old affection they had showing through for a moment. But then it fades and it grows awkward again.

JOSH

I need to go crash. See you tomorrow?

JACK

Yes, of course. Good night.

Josh pats Henri on the back and exits. Henri goes to Jack and puts his arm around him, knowing that was not easy.

20 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - HALLWAY - NIGHT 20

Josh comes out of the room and stops, taking a breath. It was obviously not easy for him either.

21 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - DAY 21

Establishing the hotel.

22 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - TENT - DAY 22

The final touches are being applied to the competition area as Meg and Queenie are looking at her folio. JUERGEN MUELLER (60s, German, charming when he needs to be but not when he doesn't) enters and approaches Meg and Queenie.

MEG

Mr. Mueller! Welcome to Hotel Valletta.

JUERGEN

Why are there so many flowers?

MEG

Well, it's springtime and I wanted to add some color for the...

JUERGEN

The food should be the star, here, Meg.

MEG

Mr. Mueller, this is Queenie Leroux, the general manager of the hotel. Queenie, this is Juergen Mueller, the head of the Escoffier Academy.

QUEENIE

It's very nice to meet you. You must be excited to be getting a worldwide audience for the competition this year.

JUERGEN

I'm still not convinced. The Escoffier has always been an exclusive event and that gave it a prestige that cannot be grasped by someone watching on their phone in the back of a taxi.

MEG

We're connecting to people and inspiring the next generation of chefs.

JUERGEN

Ms. Leroux, do you know who Auguste Escoffier was?

QUEENIE

He was a chef who invented Peach Melba.

JUERGEN

He was the king of chefs and the chef of kings. And we must do him proud for everything he did for the culinary world.
(to Meg)

The board approved your plan, Ms. Wescott, but I will be watching closely.

Juergen pivots and walks off. Meg turns to Queenie.

QUEENIE

He seems nice.

Meg and Queenie share a laugh.

23 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - LOBBY - DAY

23

Meg comes through the lobby just as Jack, dressed to the nines and carrying a small shopping bag, enters from outside. Meg crosses to him with a smile and refers to the bag.

MEG

Good morning. Is that a new lucky hat?

JACK

(confused)

Oh, hello. Is it... what?

MEG

I thought... never mind. Are you ready to register?

JACK

Not yet. I'll let you know.

Jack blows her off and goes to the elevator, leaving Meg a bit discombobulated by yet another change in personality. She ponders then shrugs it off as they walk away.

24 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - JACK'S SUITE - SITTING AREA - DAY

24

Jack is getting himself ready to make an entrance while Henri unpacks in the adjacent bedroom.

JACK

Blue tie or green tie?

HENRI

Green.

JACK

You didn't even look.

HENRI

I didn't need to. It's perfect for spring. And it brings out your eyes.

JACK

(smiles)

I love that you know that.

(hears a knock on the door)

It's open.

Josh enters in his version of "dressed up," which involves nicer jeans, a button down shirt, and a clean shaven face. He holds out his arms and turns around as if for inspection. Henri comes out of the bedroom.

JOSH

Is this better?

Jack and Henri exchange a look that says, "no."

JOSH (cont'd)
What's wrong with it?

JACK
You are going to be in a room with the culinary elite. The *crème de la crème* of the cooking world. You need to dress as if you are going to a fancy restaurant.

JOSH
This is how I'd dress to go to a fancy restaurant.

JACK
We are not related. There is no way we share the same DNA. Come on!

Jack goes into the bedroom. Josh and Henri follow.

25 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - JACK'S SUITE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS 25

Jack comes into the room followed by Henri and Josh. Jack bends down to pick up a suitcase.

HENRI
Jack, be careful with your...

Jack hefts the suitcase and gasps. He falls to the floor, howling in obvious pain. Josh and Henri rush to him.

JOSH
Jack! What happened?

HENRI
He injured his back when we redid the kitchen and he tried to move a stove.

JACK
It was crooked! Ow!!

HENRI
Can you stand?

Josh and Henri try to help Jack stand but the best they can do is get him to the bed while he howls in pain.

HENRI (cont'd)
Jack, you need to register. If you don't, you can't compete.

JOSH
Can't you register for him?

JACK
(tries to stand)
No. I have to sign in. I can do this.

JOSH
Jack, don't... You're going to hurt
yourself even worse.

JACK
What am I going to do?

JOSH
(beat)
Give me your ID.

HENRI
What?

JOSH
I'll go register in his place. Jack, it
wouldn't be the first time I pretended to
be you. We used to do it all the time.

JACK
When we were kids! What if someone finds
out?

JOSH
All I have to do is sign a form, right?

HENRI
(to Jack)
I don't know what choice we have. Give
him your ID.

JACK
(beat - hands him the ID)
Be friendly. And smile.

HENRI
And say something in French occasionally.

JOSH
I don't know French.

JACK
Bonjour, merci, s'il vous plait. Just
stick to the basics.

JOSH
Okay, okay. Don't worry. I can be you
for five minutes.

Josh heads for the door.

JACK

Not looking like that you can't!

Josh turns back - he looks wary about what's coming next.

26 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - LOBBY - ELEVATORS - DAY

26

The elevator "dings" and the doors open to reveal Josh after a Jack makeover. He is wearing a stylish suit, a fine watch, designer glasses, and his hair has had an enormous amount of product put into it. He looks great - until he starts moving and it's obvious that he is uncomfortable, self-conscious, and ready to crawl out of his skin.

He takes a deep breath, puts his head down, and starts walking but before he can go three steps...

ETIENNE

Jack?! Jack Northrup, is that you?

Josh looks to see ETIENNE LEDUC (30s, French, ego the size of France, always stylish) walk over to him. Josh appears trapped, looking for an escape - there isn't one. When Josh talks as Jack, he puffs himself up a bit physically and enunciates with clipped tones like Jack does. When he speaks as Josh, he relaxes everything.

JOSH

(an exaggerated Jack)

Oui! It is I... Jack Northrup. And you are?

ETIENNE

Etienne LeDuc! Yes, I have put on a few pounds. You probably remember from culinary school, I have a weakness for the cream sauce.

JOSH

(still exaggerated)

Yes, yes. Culinary school. In Paris.

ETIENNE

Classmates, now competitors. How fun.

JOSH

(trying to be Jack; failing)

Uh... *oui*. Fun. That's exactly how I'd describe it. I need to...

Josh tries to maneuver away but Etienne blocks him.

ETIENNE

You know, I think it's... very generous that they invited you to participate.

JOSH
 (hackles up)
 Generous? In what way?

ETIENNE
 Well, it is no secret that your
 restaurant is struggling.

JOSH
 It... no, it's not.

ETIENNE
 It is nothing to be ashamed of. Not
 everyone can have the kind of success I
 have had with my bistros. But I'm sure
 simply being here will help, so do not
 worry if you are cut in one of the early
 rounds.

JOSH
 (puffs up, as Jack)
Excusez-moi, but I don't intend to get
 cut at all.

ETIENNE
 Oh... that is the spirit. Lovely to see
 you again, Jack.

Etienne walks off as Josh seethes for a moment. He takes a
 breath and then heads toward the registration table.

27 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - LOBBY - FRONT DESK - CONTINUOUS 27

Josh passes the front desk and Meg who is there with a
 clipboard, wearing an Escoffier badge. Meg sees Josh and,
 thinking he's Jack, girds herself for another unpleasant
 interaction.

MEG
 Chef Northrup. Are you ready now?

JOSH
 (surprised, as Josh)
 Oh, hi.
 (as Jack)
 Uh... *bonjour*. Ready for what?

MEG
 To register. I've got everything waiting
 for you.

JOSH
 (sees her badge)
 You... Yes, because you work for the
 Escoffier, of course. *Tres bon*.

MEG

Oh, right! You trained in France. *J'ai étudié à Paris. Je parle Français.*

JOSH

(panicked)

Oui.

MEG

Where's your husband, Henri?

JOSH

He's unpacking...

(beat - more to himself)

He's my *husband*.

MEG

I look forward to meeting him. The two of you make a very handsome couple.

(checks clipboard)

I see that he's going to be your sous chef and I see you have one guest... your brother Josh? Is he a chef, too?

JOSH

More of a cook, but yes.

MEG

Maybe he'll be in the competition one day.

JOSH

Maybe sooner than you think.

MEG

Well, if you'll follow me I just need you to sign the contract.

Meg walks off and Josh is a little taken aback.

JOSH

Contract?

Josh, worried, follows her.

28 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - REGISTRATION TABLE - CONTINUOUS

28

Meg has arrive at the table and Josh is right behind her. She holds out a contract and a pen to him.

MEG

It says you know the rules, you agree to be photographed, you are who you say you are. You can just sign right there.

JOSH

Do you need to see my ID?

MEG

No, I know who you are. Unless you have an evil twin, or something.

More laughter; the uncomfortable kind from Josh. He takes the pen and contract and looks at it.

INSERT: tight on the place where he has to sign - it simply reads Chef Signature and a place for the date.

JOSH

It doesn't have my name. It says chef.

MEG

Yes, it's boilerplate. Same for all the competitors.

Josh hesitates and then signs J. Northrup. She looks at it.

MEG (cont'd)

J. Northrup. Sticking with your brand?

JOSH

Something like that.

Through the following she hands him various items.

MEG

Great. You're all set. I'll put a copy of this in your welcome packet. It has your schedule and all of the important contact information. These are the passes for Henri and your brother. They need to wear these at all times. And if I could just have your right wrist...

Josh, without really thinking about it, holds out his wrist. Meg puts a bracelet on his wrist and secures it - it's a fabric strip like you'd get at a festival to allow multi-day entry, that reads Escoffier.

JOSH

What is this?

MEG

It's your chef bracelet. It has an RFID chip inside that you'll need to scan at your workstation before you can use it. It's also how you'll get into the events, the parties... you can even use it to get free coffee in the morning.

JOSH

(as Josh)

How do I take it off? Like, to shower,
or... I mean...

(as Jack)

It doesn't really go with my outfit.

MEG

Oh, it's waterproof. You keep it on
until the event is over. If you take it
off before that, you won't be able to
compete so you'll need to make it work
with your outfits. I'm sure you won't
have any problem with that.

JOSH

Wait... what if it... breaks?

MEG

These things are indestructible. If they
can survive two weekends at Coachella,
they can survive the Escoffier. Good
luck, Chef Northrup.

Meg turns her attention to someone else who has come up to
the table.

MEG (cont'd)

Hi. Welcome!

Josh steps away from the table and his smile fades as he
looks at the bracelet.

29 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - JACK'S SUITE - BEDROOM - DAY

29

Henri is attending to Jack who is lying in bed when Josh
enters. They look at him expectantly. He holds up his wrist
to show the bracelet.

JOSH

I think we have a problem.

The three of them look at the bracelet, worried.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

30 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - DAY 30

Establishing the hotel.

31 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - JACK'S SUITE - BEDROOM - DAY 31

Henri is pacing, Josh is sitting in a chair looking worried, and Jack is in bed, in obvious pain.

JACK

I have to drop out of the competition.

JOSH

What about your restaurant? I met Etienne Le...something... downstairs...

JACK

Oh, no. This just keeps getting better.

JOSH

He said J. Northrup was in trouble.

There is a beat of silence while Jack and Henri exchange a silent look. Jack deflates a little and Henri turns to Josh.

HENRI

The bank is about to foreclose. We overextended with the remodeling and we need the prize money... and the notoriety that winning the competition brings. Without it we are sunk.

JACK

(beat - emotional)

I'm going to lose the restaurant.

JOSH

(beat - that's the final straw)

No, you won't.

JACK

I can't compete without that wristband.

JOSH

Then I'll compete. As you.

JACK

That's crazy. Why would you do that?

JOSH

Because you're my brother and I... I couldn't save dad's restaurant but I can help you save yours.

(MORE)

JOSH (CONT'D)

The Northrup family needs a win.

(off their skepticism)

All I have to do is follow your recipes.
Henri is the sous chef and probably knows
how to make them as well as you do.

JACK

Josh, these are professionals. They'll
be watching every move, from how you mix
to your knife skills. They're going to
take one look at you and...

JOSH

And know that I'm just a diner cook in
Alaska? I know my way around a kitchen.

JACK

(frustrated)

It's not the same! *Tu ne m'écoutes pas!*

JOSH

Stop saying French things!

HENRI

Okay, okay. Listen... tomorrow is a
practice day. Let us just try and see
how it goes. What have we got to lose?

There is a beat of silence as the brothers regard each other.

JACK

Josh, you wouldn't just have to cook like
me, you'd have to be me. You'd have to
dress like me, be a people person like
me... and then there's Henri...

JOSH

Oh, right... your husband.

(off their silence)

I can't believe you got married and
didn't bother to tell me.

JACK

(beat)

It was a small ceremony. I didn't think
you'd want to come.

HENRI

I am sorry, Josh.

Josh is obviously hurt by this but Jack shakes it off.

JACK

My point is, if you're me... people are
going to think you're gay.

JOSH

So what?
 (off their skepticism)
 I can do this. Let me try.

JACK

(beat - deep breath)
 Okay. But we can't practice in the
 competition area with everyone watching
 so we'll need to find someplace else.
 And you will need to do exactly as I say.
 Follow the recipe. Deal?

JOSH

Deal.

They shake on it.

32 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - FOUNTAIN - NIGHT

32

A cocktail reception is underway by a beautifully lit fountain surrounded by blooming gardens. Josh, dressed as Jack in a dapper ensemble, and Henri enter, both looking nervous. They each take a drink from a tray passing by.

HENRI

All right, we can mingle for five minutes
 and then slip out. Good?

JOSH

Good. Oh, and I looked up some French
 phrases, just in case.

HENRI

Don't overdo it. Just remember this is
 an elegant cocktail party, not a bar with
 peanut shells on the floor. Stand up
 straight. Confidence. Swagger.

Josh stands up a little straighter, trying to be more Jack-like. Meg walks over, looking stunning in a cocktail dress.

MEG

Chef Northrup, good evening.

JOSH

(as Jack)
 Ms. Wescott. *Bonjour*.

MEG

Call me Meg. You look very dapper.

JOSH

(as Josh)
 Thanks. You look... wow.

(MORE)

JOSH (CONT'D)
(Henri nudges him; as Jack)
I mean... *tres* fabulous.

Josh immediately knows that was wrong. Henri shakes his head and intervenes by putting his arm around Josh. That takes Josh by surprise for a moment but he settles into it.

HENRI
I'm Jack's husband, Henri Van Audenhove.

MEG
It's so nice to meet you. I'm Meg Wescott, Event Director with the Escoffier Academy.

HENRI
So, you two have already met?

MEG
Yes, we go way back. I suppose he's told you about my chocolate addiction.

HENRI
No... he didn't mention that.

MEG
(to Josh)
Thank you for keeping my secret.

HENRI
Jack, sweetheart, we should mingle and let Meg get back to being the person in charge of the competition who could, you know, kick them out if they found out they were doing something wrong.

MEG
Oh, stop. Why don't I introduce you to some of the other chefs?

Josh and Henri exchange worried looks but follow as Meg leads them off to a different part of the fountain area.

33 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - FOUNTAIN - NIGHT

33

Meg, Josh, and Henri approach Etienne, PATRICK O'SHEA (Irish, looks like a brute) and DEIRDRE ZIDANE (German, precise).

MEG
Good evening. I wanted to introduce Chef Jack Northrup from the United States and his husband Henri. This is Chef Patrick O'Shea from Ireland. When he's not in the kitchen, he's in a boxing ring, believe it or not.

PATRICK

And I don't pull punches in either place.

Patrick feigns a punch toward Josh who tries to roll with it.

MEG

This is Chef Deirdre Zidane from Germany. She recently beat over 100 candidates to be named the best chef in Berlin.

DEIRDRE

124 candidates to be precise.

JOSH

(as Jack)
Congratulations. *Tres bon.*

MEG

And of course you know Etienne Le Duc, representing France. You went to culinary school together, right? What was that like?

JOSH

(as Jack)
Oh, the stories I could tell.

Henri puts his hand to his head.

PATRICK

Please do. I'd love to hear some gossip about good old Etienne.

ETIENNE

Yes, Jack. I would also love to hear a few tales of the good old days.

Josh fumbles for a moment and then Henri takes his hand and intervenes once again.

HENRI

Jack, what about that story you told me about how in your final year at *L'Élite*, Etienne locked himself in a kitchen for three days making the same soufflé over and over again until he perfected it...

JOSH

(as Josh)
Really?
(as Jack)
That's Etienne for you.

ETIENNE

Yes, and it was worth it. I haven't made a bad soufflé since.

DEIRDRE

Soufflés are easy. A German strudel. Now that is a complicated dessert.

As the chefs talk about food, Meg pulls Josh aside.

MEG

Can I steal you for a minute? I want to get your opinion on something.

She pulls him away from the group and he looks worried.

34 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - TENT - NIGHT

34

Meg leads Josh into the competition area.

MEG

All of the chefs can start practicing at their workstations tomorrow morning, and I wanted to make sure I haven't missed anything. Do you mind taking a look?

JOSH

(as Jack)

Of course, I know my way around high-end kitchens, so I would be the right person to ask... but why me?

MEG

You didn't tell Henri about the secret stash of chocolate in my suitcase. You seem trustworthy. Besides, I got the impression when we first met that you are fairly brutal with your honesty. I need that right now.

Josh hesitantly goes into a workstation and looks around. He is duly impressed by the world-class equipment.

JOSH

(more Josh than Jack)

This is... I've dreamed about working in a kitchen like this.

(as Jack)

Uh... my kitchen at J. Northrup is *fantastique*, of course, but this is...

(more Josh than Jack)

I could really be creative here.

MEG

You don't like to follow recipes?

Lost in the moment, Josh is more Josh than Jack at first.

JOSH

I prefer to go with my gut. It doesn't always work, but when it does... it can be really amazing.

(realizes - as Jack)

The kitchen is perfect. I wouldn't change a thing. You really know cooking.

MEG

Me? No. I can't boil water.

JOSH

Yet you work for one the most prestigious culinary schools in the world?

MEG

Ironic, huh? My passion is doing events. I like creating this. Coming up with the ideas, making it happen, seeing people get lost in the excitement of it all.

JOSH

How long have you been doing it?

MEG

I did a few small parties at my father's hotels when I ran food and beverage, but this is my first big event. A first step toward having my own company one day.

JOSH

Your father's hotels... Your father is Preston Wescott.

MEG

Yes. You met him at your restaurant last week, remember?

JOSH

Yes, of course I do. It was... I'm just a bit jet-lagged is all. Doesn't he own this hotel?

MEG

He does, but I don't like to advertise that. I need to build a resume on my own merits... and save up my own money instead of using my father's... before I can launch my own company. Not quite ready for that yet.

JOSH
(more Josh than Jack)
From what I can see, you're ready.

MEG
Thank you. And thank you for calming my nerves. I know it was probably the last thing you were interested in doing.

JOSH
No... it's... happy to help.

MEG
(smiles; shakes her head)
I'm having a hard time keeping up with you. It's like you're two different people.

JOSH
(change of subject)
A question... We're not required to use the workstations for practice, are we?

MEG
Don't you want to get used to the space?

JOSH
Yes. It's just... prying eyes and all. I wouldn't want anyone to steal any of my trademark secrets.

MEG
Oh... I guess, I get that. But, no, you can practice anywhere you want.
(glances at watch)
We should get back. Thank you again.

JOSH
(more Josh than Jack)
Anytime.

Meg and Josh leave the tent.

35 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - FOUNTAIN - NIGHT

35

Josh and Meg come back into the cocktail party area to find CHESTER PEELE (60s, British, jovial) laughing with Henri and the other chefs. As they approach...

MEG
Who is that?

JOSH
I have no idea.

CHESTER

(sees Josh)

Jack? Jack Northrup?

(hugs Josh)

It is so good to see you!

HENRI

(rushes over)

Jack, you remember Chester Peele?

JOSH

Sure. Yes. Of course, Chester.

MEG

I thought you didn't know who he was.

JACK

It's dark out here.

HENRI

(to Meg)

Jack and I were visiting Malta several years ago and met Chester at his restaurant L'Auberge and became fast friends. He gave us a lot of fantastic advice before we opened J. Northrup.

CHESTER

I hope you didn't listen to me.
L'Auberge is no more. *C'est la vie.*

Juergen walks up to join them.

JUERGEN

Chef Peele. What are you doing here?
This is an invitation only event.

CHESTER

Juergen, old friend! I thought you'd appreciate having a former winner of the Escoffier drop by to encourage your new crop of competitors.

JUERGEN

You're only here because you knew it would annoy me.

CHESTER

Well, yes that, too.

(to the chefs)

You see, I was the youngest winner in Escoffier history at the tender age of 25. Juergen has never gotten over the fact that I beat him in the very contest that he now runs.

(MORE)

CHESTER (CONT'D)

Ever since he took over the Escoffier my invitations to events seem to have gotten lost in the mail.

JUERGEN

(to Meg)

Can you see that this gentlemen is escorted from the party? Overseeing security is a part of your job, isn't it?

MEG

Yes, sir. I'll take care of it.

CHESTER

Oh dear. I've run afoul of the law. I'm going, but only because you are a vision in that dress. Isn't she, Jack?

JOSH

She... uh... yes. I mean, sure...

CHESTER

(furrowed brow)

You're being very peculiar tonight. Please don't let this stuffy little contest change you. It isn't worth it. Henri, Jack. Let's have a drink while you are here. Until next time!

Chester heads off. Meg follows but Juergen stops her.

JUERGEN

When an party isn't exclusive, you get party crashers. This is not what the Escoffier is all about.

Juergen stalks off, Meg looks at Josh and gives him a shrug, and then follows to make sure that Chester is gone. Josh and Henri exchange a relieved glance - that was close.

36 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - JACK'S SUITE - SITTING AREA - NIGHT 36

Jack is lying on the couch in the sitting area while Henri sits on the arm of the couch, stroking his hair. Josh is sitting in a chair nearby.

JACK

Chester Peele is the last thing we need if we're going to pull this off.

JOSH

What about Etienne?

JACK

Okay, second to last.

HENRI

Third. I would put Meg Wescott ahead of both of them. What is going on there?

JOSH

Nothing, she just wanted my opinion about the kitchen setups. She wanted Jack's "brutal honesty."

JACK

Just be careful. If she finds out we're in big trouble.

There is a knock on the door.

HENRI

That must be room service. I asked them to bring ice for your back.

JACK

It's feeling better.

Jack sits up, slowly and in pain, but sits up.

HENRI

Yes, you are the very picture of health.

Henri opens the door and is surprised when Chester pushes it open. Josh jumps up and Jack's eyes go wide.

CHESTER

There's two of you! I knew something was up.

Henri pulls Chester into the room and shuts the door.

37 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - JACK'S SUITE - SITTING AREA - LATER 37

Chester is sitting in a chair while Josh stands nearby and Jack and Henri are on the couch.

CHESTER

So, let me get this straight... if you'll pardon the pun...

(points at Josh)

You...

(points at Jack)

Are pretending to be you, in order to compete in one of the most elite culinary contests in the world?

(laughs)

I love it.

JACK

Chester, you've been a good friend to us. J. Northrup wouldn't exist without the guidance you gave us. And I hate to ask more of you but...

JOSH

Please don't tell anyone.

CHESTER

Tell anyone? Why on earth would I do that? The Escoffier used to be about food. The art of cuisine. Now it's all about the fame and the glory and Juergen Mueller's ego. If there is a chance of pulling something over on him, I'm not going to tell anyone. I want to know how I can help.

Josh, Jack, and Henri all exchange glances.

38 INT. L'AUBERGE - DINING ROOM - DAY

38

This was a fine restaurant at one point but now is a dusty relic with sheets on the furniture and lots of cobwebs. Chester enters, followed by Josh, dressed as Jack, and Henri. Chester turns to face them and holds out his hands.

CHESTER

Gentlemen... welcome to what's left of L'Auberge!

Josh and Henri look around - this may not exactly have been what they were thinking of.

HENRI

Jack is not going to like this.

JOSH

It won't matter what he likes until we can think of a way to sneak him out of the hotel without people seeing two Jack Northrups.

The door behind them opens and Jack, moving slowly but with determination, walks in dressed like Josh in jeans, a baseball cap, and a flannel shirt.

JACK

I thought of a way.

Josh, Henri, and Chester are shocked, to say the least.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

39 EXT. L'AUBERGE - DAY 39

Establishing the closed restaurant.

40 INT. L'AUBERGE - KITCHEN - DAY 40

Jack comes into the kitchen followed closely by Josh, Henri, and Chester. Jack immediately starts looking around.

JACK

Does the stove work?

JOSH

Jack, what are you wearing?!

JACK

If you're me, then I have to be you.
Elementaire!

JOSH

I don't say things like *elementaire*.
What if somebody saw you?

JACK

I'd just say I'm you.
(exaggerated Josh)
Hey? I'm Josh. What's up, dude?

JOSH

I don't say "dude!"

HENRI

What about your back?

JOSH

I told you I felt better. If it wasn't
for that wristband I'd compete myself.
(looks around)
Chester, this place is a disaster. What
happened?

CHESTER

The usual. New restaurants came along
that became the flavor of the moment and
I, filled with hubris and believing my
own reviews, thought that L'Auberge would
continue to succeed on it's reputation.
Apparently I was wrong.

JACK

I'm sorry.

CHESTER

I did quite well for a very long time. I really don't miss it at all.

They can all tell that he doesn't really mean that.

JACK

Well, we're going to need supplies if we're going to make this work. Henri, you go get ingredients. Josh, I'll make a list of things we need from the competition kitchen.

JOSH

You want me to go back to the hotel? As me or as you?

JACK

As me. I think. Wait... yeah, no that's right. You're me, I'm you. Dude.

JOSH

Stop it. *S'il vous plaît.*

The two of them face off warily.

41 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - DAY 41

Establishing the hotel.

42 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - TENT - CONTINUOUS 42

The chefs we have seen including Etienne, Dierdre, and Patrick are in their workstations getting acclimated. Meg leads Josh to his workstation and points at a scanner.

MEG

Let me show you how to use the RFID. Just wave your wristband there and it logs you in and will turn on the power.

Josh does so and lights come on in the station.

JOSH

You're sure it's okay that I take some things?

MEG

It's all here for you to use as you see fit. Where are you practicing?

JOSH

It's a... friend's place.
(change of subject)
So, I presume things are going well?

Josh punctuates this with a flick of a kitchen utensil but he fumbles it, almost drops it, and gets it back at the last second. He tries to cover with a confident smile.

MEG

I think so. No major complaints from the chefs yet, although Etienne is just dying to find something wrong.

JOSH

I'd imagine you run into more than your share of difficult people in your job.

MEG

Well, like I said, this is my first really big event... unless you count my grandparents' 25th wedding anniversary when I was sixteen.

JOSH

(disarmed; smiles - more Josh)
You planned their party at sixteen?

MEG

(laughs)
Yes. I even managed to hunt down the band that played at their reception.
(grows wistful)
I'll never forget the look on my grandma's face. I knew I wanted that...

JOSH

(moved; more Josh than Jack)
You became her hero. Who doesn't want to feel like that more often?

MEG

(smiles - beat)
What made you become a chef?

JOSH

(Jack again)
My family owned a restaurant. Our parents taught me and my brother to cook.

MEG

Your brother! Right! I haven't met him yet. You said he's a cook?

JOSH

Yes. At the place that our family used to own in Alaska. I... he, wants to take it over again someday.

MEG

He didn't want to go to culinary school like you did?

JOSH

Oh, he actually had a scholarship just like I did. But, he chose to stay.

MEG

That's nice. Continuing the family legacy. As long as he's happy, that's all that matters. He's happy, isn't he?

JOSH

(beat - as Jack, but softer)
I think so. Sometimes I think he wonders where he'd be if he had taken the scholarship after all.

MEG

I get that. My dad wants me to come back and work for him again and I sometimes think it would be a lot easier if I did.

JOSH

But would it be better?

The two of them have brief moment of connection.

MEG

You know, I have to admit, the first time we met at your restaurant I kind of thought you were... well, a bit of an arrogant jerk. Sorry.

JOSH

(beat - smiles)
No. That's totally fair.

MEG

But I think under that bravado, you're actually a pretty decent guy. I'm glad to be getting to know the real you.

JOSH

(smiles - more Josh than Jack)
So am I.

Meg smiles and walks off as Josh watches her go, his smile slipping a bit. This might be a problem.

Establishing Chester's restaurant.

44 INT. L'AUBERGE - KITCHEN - DAY

44

Josh and Henri have set up the kitchen as best they can. Jack is sitting on a counter nearby and Chester is lounging in a chair watching the proceedings.

HENRI

The competition consists of three rounds. Tomorrow is all ten chefs preparing a bouillabaisse with fish and vegetables.

JACK

Each chef provides their own ingredients, but we need to follow their recipe.

JOSH

If everyone is doing the same thing, how is it judged?

CHESTER

Different sources for the ingredients means different flavors. And preparation and presentation are very important.

HENRI

Five contestants move on to round two, which is a chef's choice but must feature the black diamond truffles they provide.

JOSH

We supply everything else but they supply the truffles?

CHESTER

They cost nine hundred dollars a pound.

JOSH

Whoa. Food should not cost that much.

JACK

Good food does. Now, if we make it to that round, we're doing a handmade pasta with wine braised short ribs and a truffle burgundy sauce.

JOSH

Sounds good. And the finals?

HENRI

The top three chefs make their version of the classic Peach Melba. Anything goes as long as you include the ingredients that Escoffier used when he invented the dish in 1892 - peaches, raspberries, vanilla ice cream.

JOSH

That could be fun. I can think of a lot of things we could do with that.

JACK

No, we're going traditional. Mueller doesn't like things outside the box.

JOSH

Okay... if you say so.

JACK

I say so. Are we ready to get started?

JOSH

Yes. This is going to be great.

The four of them look optimistic.

45 EXT. L'AUBERGE - NIGHT

45

Josh walks out of the restaurant, looking disheveled as if he has been at war with food. Jack and Henri follow him out.

HENRI

Josh, wait...

JOSH

No. I can't take it anymore. He was criticizing everything I did. Nothing was good enough.

JACK

Because it wasn't good enough! You can't take it personally.

JOSH

You said that the only seafood I knew how to cook were fish sticks.

JACK

That may have been giving you too much credit.

Josh walks away down the street and Jack turns and stalks back into the restaurant. Henri is left in the middle, not knowing what to do next.

46 EXT. VALLETTA STREET #1 - NIGHT

46

Josh is walking down a quaint street in the historic part of Valletta when he hears a pounding noise. He follows the noise to find Meg banging on a vending machine outside a store with her fist. He straightens his appearance up as much as he can, then approaches. She sees him.

MEG

It won't give me my chocolate.

JOSH

(as Jack)

What happened to the emergency stash?

MEG

It's been a long week. I haven't even had dinner. I didn't have time to eat and everything is closed.

JOSH

There must be food in the hotel kitchen.

MEG

That's closed, too.

JOSH

Yes, but your father owns the hotel, remember? I mean, I know you want to do things on your own, but this is just sad.

MEG

Good point. Let's go.

They walk down the street.

47 EXT. VALLETTA SEASIDE - NIGHT

47

Meg and Josh amble down the romantically lit walkway alongside a marina and a beautiful view of the sea.

MEG

What was it like growing up in Alaska?

JOSH

Cold. The people are warm. Not many of them there, but...

MEG

Doesn't your brother get lonely?

The question surprises Josh into a moment of honesty as Josh.

JOSH

Sometimes.

(as Jack again)

I keep telling him he should try a place where people outnumber the bears.

MEG

Every now and then, I think I'd prefer the bears. You're lucky you found Henri. He seems like a good guy.

JOSH

He is. I don't think I deserve him.

(beat)

What about you. Do you have... someone?

MEG

A guy? No. I was dating someone for a couple of years but then I found out he had been lying to me.

Josh looks up at the mention of lying.

MEG (cont'd)

He quit his job to become a street musician. He told me he was going to work but he was really going out to play guitar on a street corner.

JOSH

Maybe he was doing it for a good reason?

MEG

Listen, it would've been fine if he hadn't lied to me about it. And if I hadn't believed him. I hated that I bought it. After that I tried to make it work, but he failed the two month test.

JOSH

What's that?

MEG

I read that if you can't let go of anger or hurt or whatever in two months, you never will. It'll always be there. So, we worked at it for two months, but... Since then, I really haven't dated much. It's not easy for me to trust someone.

JOSH

(distracts with a joke)

I'm sure you'll find the right guy eventually. I mean, look at me. I'm an arrogant jerk and I found the right guy.

Meg laughs and the two of them continue walking.

48 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - NIGHT 48

Establishing the hotel.

49 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - JACK'S SUITE - BEDROOM - NIGHT 49

Jack, freshly showered and dressed as himself, checks his look in a mirror as Henri comes in.

HENRI

He's not in his room. Wait, you changed?

JACK

I couldn't take another minute in that flannel. It's so scratchy.

HENRI

We need to go out and look for Josh. You can't do it looking like yourself.

JACK

I'll be careful.

Jack heads for the door. Henri follows, worried.

50 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - FOUNTAIN - NIGHT

50

Meg and Josh sit next to the fountain with a spread of food.

JOSH

So, what kind of qualities do you look for in a guy?

MEG

Other than "not a liar?" Why? Are you going to fix me up with someone?

JOSH

I know some straight guys.

MEG

Well... The usual stuff first. He has to have a job, his own place, his own teeth.

JOSH

Employment, housing, dental. Go on.

MEG

I want someone ambitious. I mean, a job, a passion, playing music on the street, whatever is fine but just have ambition. I never wanted to be a spoiled daddy's girl who had everything handed to me.

JOSH

Nobody would think that about you if they saw you attacking that vending machine.

They laugh and Meg casually puts her hand on Josh's arm. He notices and looks at her, a bloom of an attraction growing. Awkward, she pulls her hand away. At that moment, Jack and Henri come into the garden. They are behind Meg so she doesn't see them but Josh does. His eyes go wide and he pulls Meg into a hug.

JOSH (cont'd)
Meg, I'm just so glad I met you.

MEG
Oh, I'm glad I met you, too, Jack.

She tries to get out of the hug but he holds her tight as Henri hustles Jack out of the garden.

MEG (cont'd)
You know, you're like the perfect guy.

With Jack now gone, Josh finally releases her and they are face to face. There is a moment between them.

MEG (cont'd)
I mean, except for the part where you have a husband.

JOSH
Right. If it wasn't for that we'd be great for each other.

They smile at each other and then Meg turns back to the food.

MEG
Did you taste the cheese? It's so good.

She digs in as Josh looks at her, his affection obvious.

51 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - DAY 51

Establishing the hotel.

52 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - TENT - DAY 52

It's the morning of the first cooking event and the tent is abuzz with activity. Josh and Henri enter and are suitably intimidated by the whole thing.

JOSH
Whose dumb idea was this?

HENRI
I think it was yours.

JOSH
I was afraid of that.

The two of them exchange a glance and head into the fray.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

53 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - DAY 53

Establishing the hotel.

54 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - TENT - DAY 54

The chefs (including Deirdre, Patrick, and Etienne) are at their workstations, a camera crew is buzzing about, a handful of spectators are watching, and a judging platform with Juergen and two others commands over it all.

55 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - TENT - JOSH'S WORKSTATION - CONTINUOUS 55

Jack "swipes" into his workstation and it powers up as he and Henri enter and start setting things up.

HENRI

We will want to be methodical but we do have a time limit. Do not forget about measuring. We must be precise, so...

Before he can go any further, Etienne pops his head in.

ETIENNE

Taking instructions from Henri, Jack?

JOSH

(startled; then as Jack)
Oh, Etienne. Henri and I are a team. We listen to each other.

ETIENNE

And yet it is only your name that will go on the trophy should you win. Although, I suppose that is not something you will need to worry about.

HENRI

Shouldn't you be reviewing your recipe or hanging upside down in a corner or whatever it is you do to prepare?

ETIENNE

(laughs)
Henri, such a delight. I simply wanted to wish my dear old friend Jack luck.

JOSH

(summons Jack's confidence)
I don't need luck when I've got skills.

Etienne wasn't expecting that kind of confidence. He smiles, nods, and slinks away. Henri pats Josh on the back.

HENRI

You're becoming more and more like Jack every moment.

Henri gets back to work and we see Josh's confidence might be a bit more bravado than he is letting on. He glances up and sees Meg over by the judges table - she sees him, smiles, and gives him a thumbs up, which he returns.

56 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - TENT - JUDGING PLATFORM - DAY 56

Over by the platform, Meg is reviewing her plans when her phone rings. She looks at it then answers.

MEG

Hi, Dad.

57 INT. WESCOTT ENTERPRISES - PRESTON'S OFFICE - DAY 57

Preston is at his desk in his office. We begin INTERCUTTING between the two of them.

PRESTON

Meg. Good news. We got the castle.

MEG

Oh... that's... uh, that's great. Congratulations.

PRESTON

Since you're nearby, how about popping up to meet me there? You know German so you can translate.

MEG

Dad... I'm a little busy. The first round of competition is starting soon.

PRESTON

Oh, right. Well, maybe when you're done then. You'll love Germany in the spring. It's beautiful.

MEG

Dad, I have a job to do here. Are you even going to watch the broadcast?

PRESTON

Meg, I have to catch a plane but I'll try to watch it later, I promise.

MEG

(disappointed)
Right. Okay. Well, thanks, Dad. Bye.

Meg disconnects the call and has to take a moment. She walks away from the judging platform.

58 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - TENT - JOSH'S WORKSTATION - DAY 58

Josh and Henri are busy setting things up when Meg walks by, looking less than happy. Josh sees her and is concerned.

JOSH

Uh, Henri... I'll be right back.

Josh goes after Meg and Henri is shocked but all he can do is watch Josh leave.

59 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - GARDEN - DAY 59

Meg is in a sunny garden full of flowers and plants trying to collect herself when Josh approaches.

JOSH

(more Josh than Jack)

Meg? Are you okay?

MEG

I'm fine. Jack, you should be getting your workstation ready...

JOSH

(as Jack)

I've got it all under control. What happened?

MEG

(beat)

My dad happened. I know he loves me and I love him, but sometimes he...

JOSH

Makes you want to take two months?

MEG

I'm not sure it works with family. No matter how hard I try, I always feel like I'm still that same little girl bouncing around his office in pigtails.

JOSH

(smiles; as Jack)

Pigtails? Tell me you're joking.

MEG

(laughs - shuts it off)

Don't make me laugh. I want to be mad some more.

JOSH

Okay. I can do that, too.

Josh shakes his fists in the air and scrunches his face angrily. Meg laughs again. Josh is disarmed by her and their connection and talks more like Josh for a moment.

JOSH (cont'd)

(grows serious)

Look... family stuff is complicated. My dad was a great guy and I respected him, but I don't know if he ever believed in me as much as he did my brother.

MEG

Because you're gay?

Josh is taken aback by that - he was talking about himself, but had never thought of what it was like for Jack.

JOSH

No. I... I don't know.

(as Jack)

What I'm saying is that in the end you have to believe in yourself and what you're doing. Find your confidence and your swagger.

MEG

(considers, then smiles)

Thanks, Jack.

They hug and we can see in both of their eyes that affections are growing.

60 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - JACK'S SUITE - SITTING AREA - DAY 60

Chester is sitting in a chair in front of the TV as it begins to broadcast the competition with splashy graphics and a sweeping view of the action inside the tent.

COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

Welcome to the 87th Escoffier Culinary Competition!

CHESTER

Jack, hurry up. It's starting.

Jack, dressed as himself, comes in from the bedroom.

COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

And now, the president of the Escoffier Academy, Juergen Mueller.

Jack settles into the couch just as Juergen is shown on TV.

61 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - TENT - DAY

61

Juergen stands beside two other judges on the platform. During this we see reaction shots from Meg and Queenie, Josh and Henri, and Etienne and the other chefs.

JUERGEN

Welcome, I'm Juergen Mueller, President of the Escoffier Academy. Today, ten of the brightest, most promising chefs have been chosen to converge on this stage for the most coveted title in the culinary world. I, along with my esteemed fellow judges, will be determining which of these talented culinary stars will earn 250,000 Euros and the lifelong prestige of joining the Escoffier family.

More reaction shots, including ones from Jack and Chester watching in the hotel room.

JUERGEN (cont'd)

In today's round, chefs have two hours to make a classic seafood bouillabaisse. Only five of them will advance to the semi-finals. Start times are staggered to ensure fairness at tasting. Ladies and gentlemen... may the best chef win!

MONTAGE OF SHOTS - COOKING COMPETITION ROUND 1

A series of shots show the competition in action:

- Josh is doing his best but is obviously a bit nervous, which we see when he drops a filet of fish but then manages to catch it before it hits the floor
- Henri tries to subtly guide Josh without being too obvious
- Meg is directing the camera crew, talking on her headset, reviewing her clipboard, and keeping an eye on Josh
- Etienne is cooking with confidence but he keeps glancing over at Josh's workstation, obviously worried about the competition
- The judges, including Juergen, mill about the workstations and watch carefully, taking notes
- Jack and Chester watch nervously in the hotel suite
- As things progress, Josh and Henri start to find a rhythm, working well together with Henri anticipating Josh's needs

62 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - TENT - JOSH'S WORKSTATION - LATER 62

Josh and Henri are rushing to get the bouillabaisse plated.

HENRI
Thirty seconds.

JOSH
I know.

HENRI
We need the...

JOSH
I know!

Josh manages to get the dish onto the plate just as the bell sounds. He puts his hands up to indicate he is done. The judges approach and review the presentation, then each samples the dish. They are all stone faced and aren't giving away anything. Notes are taken and they walk away.

JOSH (cont'd)
That's it?

HENRI
That's it. Now, we wait. The semi-finalists will be announced tonight at the reception.

Josh takes a moment to let his adrenaline ebb and then grabs a spoon so he can taste the dish. Henri does the same.

HENRI (cont'd)
It's very good.

JOSH
(smiles)
Yeah. It is.

Josh looks up and sees Meg smiling and he smiles back.

63 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - JACK'S SUITE - SITTING AREA - DAY 63

Chester and Jack are on the couch as Josh and Henri enter.

CHESTER
All hail the conquering heroes!

JACK
Let's not count our chickens. We don't know if we've conquered anything yet.

HENRI
The bouillabaisse was fantastic, Jack.

JACK

I'm sure it was good, but what were you doing with the vegetables?

JOSH

Uh... cooking them?

JACK

But not the way I told you to. You were supposed to be chopping, but you were dicing. The chunks were too small.

JOSH

They were not! And how would you know, anyway?

JACK

They had a close up on your cutting board. I saw definite dicing. In high def, no less.

JOSH

Shouldn't you be thanking me instead of criticizing me?

HENRI

Guys, come on. Let's just celebrate what we accomplished.

JACK

(to Josh)

When we were kids, we used to be so in sync on everything. We practically knew each other's thoughts. You changed.

JOSH

I changed? I'm not the one who ran off to Paris and tried to impress everyone with your swanky restaurant and fancy clothes.

JACK

I was trying to make my family proud of me. Dad always pushed me to do more, go further, make more of myself.

JOSH

And he pushed me to be there for our family when they needed it the most.

JACK

Here we go again. Josh is the poor, put-upon brother who makes all the sacrifices.

HENRI

Jack, stop...

JOSH

And once again, Jack is the brother who only thinks of himself.

HENRI

Josh, please...

Jack tries to get up off the couch, but his back flares up and he sinks back down in pain.

JOSH

What are you doing?

JACK

I'm trying to get up so I can storm out of here and slam the door.

JOSH

I'll save you the trouble.

Josh storms out and slams the door.

64 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - FOUNTAIN - NIGHT

64

A small crowd has gathered in anticipation of the announcement of the semi-finalists. All of the chefs we've seen are there as is Juergen and the other judges and Queenie. Meg is talking to one of the judges when she sees Josh, looking good in Jack's clothes but not quite as well-put together, enter the fountain area by himself. She excuses herself and goes to meet Josh.

MEG

Hi. You look... is everything okay?

JOSH

(as Jack)

Yes. Do I not look okay?

MEG

No, you're fine. You're just not as buttoned down as you usually are.

She straightens his collar and tie.

JOSH

(more Josh than Jack)

That's what happens when I try to dress myself.

MEG

What?

JOSH
(as Jack)
C'est bon. You, though, look amazing.

MEG
Thank you. Where's Henri? And this mysterious brother of yours?

JOSH
They're up in the suite watching on TV.
(off her raised eyebrow)
It's a long story.

MEG
Like the one I told you about my dad?

JOSH
Yes. Like I said... family is complicated.

MEG
Do you want to talk about it?

JOSH
Maybe I just need to take two months.
But thank you.

Josh and Meg exchange a smile, both of them starting to feel things that make this very complicated.

MEG
By the way, when Juergen does announce your name, I'm not going to hug you because I don't want people to think I'm biased, so instead, I'm going to applaud politely and wink... that's my hug, okay?

JOSH
(smiles)
Got it.

Juergen steps up to the fountain with the other judges and clinks on his glass to get everyone's attention.

JUERGEN
Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for a remarkable first day of competition. You have made our jobs as judges, very difficult, but we only have room for five of you in the semi-final, black diamond truffle round the day after tomorrow. And now, without further ado...

Juergen opens an envelope for maximum drama and as he announces the semi-finalists, we see reactions from the chefs and others in the crowd.

JUERGEN (cont'd)

The five chefs advancing to the next round are... Etienne LeDuc from France... Deirdre Zidane from Germany... Patrick O'Shea from Ireland... Akari Himoto from Japan... and Jack Northrup from the United States of America.
Congratulations.

Meg applauds politely and looks at Josh, then winks. He smiles and winks back, but it's obvious he wishes he could give her a real hug instead.

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

65 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - DAY 65

Establishing the hotel.

66 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - LOBBY - DAY 66

Josh, looking dapper as Jack, and Henri walk to elevators carrying cups of coffee (Henri has two). As they arrive the doors open and Meg is inside. She steps out.

MEG

Oh, hey. Good morning, you two! You're up early - and looking snazzy. I figured you would've slept in after your victory.

JOSH

(as Jack, a side eye to Henri)
Someone told me that looking good is more important than sleep.

HENRI

He said, you can sleep after the competition.

(re: coffee)

I'm going to go up and give this to... your brother. You know how he hates lukewarm coffee.

MEG

(indicates elevator)

I still want to meet him. Can we...

JOSH

No! No... he's not a morning person.

(to Henri)

I'll be up in a minute.

Henri nods and gets on the elevator leaving Josh and Meg.

MEG

What are you doing for the rest of your day off?

JOSH

We're going to be practicing for the black diamond truffle round.

MEG

I just don't get the truffle thing. Food shouldn't be that expensive.

JOSH

(as Josh; then Jack)

That's what I said... Although you can't put a price tag on quality, can you?

MEG

I don't know. I figure if you are going to spend that much money on food, shouldn't it be on something that isn't quite so ugly and smells bad?

JOSH

(more Josh than Jack)

Do they really? I've never seen one.

MEG

(confused)

But... aren't you cooking something with them tomorrow? How did you come up with the dish if you've never...

JOSH

(as Jack)

Oh, I mean I've never seen one that hadn't already been processed. The ones we get from our vendor are cleaned and...

MEG

(looks around; conspiratorially)

Do you want to see them?

Meg smiles and leads Josh toward a hallway.

67 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - KITCHEN - WALK-IN-REFRIGERATOR - DAY 67

Josh and Meg come into an industrial grade walk-in-refrigerator. Meg goes to a shelf.

MEG

Be ready, because they smell like...

She looks on the shelf, then on the shelf above and below.

MEG (cont'd)

Where are they? They were on this shelf. They were right here!

Meg and Josh look frantically.

68 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - KITCHEN - DAY 68

Meg and Josh are near the walk-in while Queenie confers with the kitchen staff. Queenie comes over to join Meg and Josh.

QUEENIE

They were cleaning out the refrigerator and threw away anything that smelled bad.

MEG

The truffles smell awful...

QUEENIE

It was an honest mistake. They didn't know the Escoffier was storing anything for the competition in here. They thought the chefs provide their own food.

MEG

They do, except this round. We supply the special ingredient to level the playing field. What am I going to do? The semi-finals are tomorrow!

JOSH

Where did you get the truffles?

MEG

From Juergen Mueller. He'll fire me if I have to go back and ask for more.

JOSH

Don't panic. Let me see what I can do.

Josh rushes out of the kitchen.

69 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - JACK'S SUITE - SITTING AREA - DAY

69

Josh is in the sitting room with Jack and Henri.

JOSH

You've been to Malta before. You must know someone.

JACK

Not that I can think of. Why are you getting involved in this?

JOSH

Because Meg needs my help.

JACK

Henri says you're very friendly with her. Is there something going on?

JOSH

No! She's... she's just nice, I don't know. But she thinks I'm you.

(points at Henri)

Who is married to you!

HENRI

I think it is dangerous to be getting this close to her.

JOSH

I'm not! But if she doesn't find the truffles no one is going to be cooking at the Escoffier tomorrow.

JACK

Okay. All right. We need someone local. Someone who has worked in the restaurant community before. Someone that people like and can call in some favors...

They all realize at once who they need to talk to.

70 EXT. FARMER'S MARKET - DAY

70

A sunny farmer's market has vendor tents with food, flowers, and more. Josh, Meg, and Chester step into view.

CHESTER

I am delighted that you thought of me. Perhaps this will score me an invitation to the Escoffier events? I know Juergen wouldn't like that, but...

MEG

Chester, you help me with this and you can come to every party, every competition round, every everything. I'll let you move into the hotel.

CHESTER

Deal. Now, that's our man...
(points at a guy at a tent)
If he has any black diamond truffles, he'll have them hidden and he's very particular about who he sells them to. If he doesn't deem you worthy, he'll send you away empty handed.

JOSH

Whatever you can do, Chester. We really appreciate it.

CHESTER

Anything for my old friend Jack.

Josh straightens up a little, realizing he might have been letting things get too casual.

CHESTER (cont'd)

Go amuse yourselves at the market. If he sees you watching it'll spook him.

Chester goes off to talk to the guy at the vendor tent. Meg and Josh start walking.

71 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - DAY 71

Establishing the hotel.

72 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - JACK'S SUITE - BEDROOM - DAY 72

Jack comes out of the bathroom, freshly shaven, as Henri prepares to go out.

JACK

Where are you going?

HENRI

To do a little shopping in the village while we wait for your brother to return.

JACK

Great. Let me get my Josh costume.

HENRI

No! It's too risky, especially now that we're in the semi-finals. All eyes are on us and we can't be taking chances.

JACK

But I'm bored.

HENRI

I'm sorry, my love. But this is all for the best. Eyes on the prize.

Henri gives Jack a quick kiss and then leaves. Jack stands there for a moment, annoyed, and then goes to the closet and pulls out the flannel shirt anyway.

73 EXT. FARMER'S MARKET - TENT AREA - DAY 73

Meg and Josh walk along the row of vendor tents, stopping to sample and savor occasionally. Josh starts heavily in "Jack" mode but as the scene progresses and the two of them start to connect more, it fades to where he is much more Josh.

MEG

This reminds me, I skipped breakfast.

JOSH

You need to stop doing that. Good food should not be skipped.

(MORE)

JOSH (CONT'D)

But luckily we're at a farmer's market
and they have samples. Oh, try this...

He takes two strawberries off a sample plate and hands one to
her. She eats it and is obviously pleased.

MEG

Oh, that's delicious.

JOSH

There is nothing like farm fresh produce.

MEG

They don't have this in vending machines.

JOSH

No, they do not. So, what's your
favorite meal? Besides chocolate.

MEG

Take-out.

JOSH

That doesn't count.

MEG

I don't know, to me food is just food.
It's fuel. And yes I get the irony
considering my job, but...

JOSH

There must be something that you like.

MEG

You're going to sneer at me. I doubt
it's up to Jack Northrup standards.

JOSH

I won't sneer at you.

MEG

(beat - considers; relents)
There is nothing that makes me happier
than a really good cheeseburger. Not
very fancy, I know.

JOSH

Hey, I love them, too. I just made one
last week that had three different kinds
of cheese and bacon that had been cooked
in a black pepper, maple BBQ sauce.

MEG

(stops - serious)
I want one now.

JOSH

(laughs)

Sneak me into the kitchen later and I'll see what I can do. But I'm curious. Why is a cheeseburger your favorite?

MEG

(shrugs)

It's comfort food. My mom passed away when I was young and my dad was not exactly well-equipped to raise a little girl on his own, so anytime he thought I was upset or unhappy or had a bad day at school, he'd take me for cheeseburgers.

JOSH

(smiles)

See? Food is about more than just fuel. It's the way families come together. It's the way they say I love you.

Meg considers this as they continue walking.

74 EXT. VALETTA SEASIDE - DAY

74

Jack, dressed down as Josh, is making his way along the marina. A couple passes by and he greets them.

JACK

Bonjour...

(tries to be Josh)

I mean, hey. How ya doing?

The couple nods and smiles and keeps walking. His back twinges and he grimaces, sitting on a bench and sighing in relief. Moments later, Etienne sits next to him.

ETIENNE

You must be the brother.

JACK

(as Jack)

Etienne? What are you doing here?

ETIENNE

How do you know who I am?

JACK

(as Josh)

I... uh... saw you on the competition on TV. I'm Josh. Jack's brother, Josh.

ETIENNE

Right. I figured. Jack would never be caught dead in that hat.

JACK
(more Jack than Josh)
You don't know that.

ETIENNE
Jack and I are old friends. I know him
very well.

JACK
(as Jack; then Josh)
No, you most certainly do... uh... dude,
no you don't.

ETIENNE
How would you know?

JACK
Jack is my brother. We're very close.

ETIENNE
He once told me the two of you rarely
speak and have nothing in common.

JACK
We have a lot in common!

ETIENNE
Such as?

JACK
(struggles a moment)
We both love food.

ETIENNE
(with disdain)
Don't you work in a diner? In Alaska?

JACK
Yes. What's wrong with that?

ETIENNE
The Jack Northrup I know would find a lot
wrong with that.

JACK
Well, then you don't know him. Jack is
very supportive of me. Does he think
that I could be doing more with my
talent? Sure. Does he want me to
experience the culinary arts in ways that
I can't in a diner in Alaska? Of course.

ETIENNE
So, he supports you but wants you to
change everything and be more like him?

That makes Jack think for a moment - he hadn't really looked at it from Josh's point of view before.

JACK

I... you didn't say anything about any of this to Jo... Jack, did you?

ETIENNE

No. He has been avoiding me.

JACK

Smart man.

Jack stands up as quickly and carefully as he can, then walks away. Etienne watches him go, his suspicion piqued.

75 EXT. FARMER'S MARKET - TENT AREA - DAY

75

Meg and Josh continue their amble through the market. By now, Josh is totally relaxed with Meg and acting more like himself than ever.

MEG

Your turn? What's your favorite meal?

JOSH

Not a meal, but my favorite dish is Baked Alaska. Our mom made it for special occasions - birthdays, holidays... if one of us got an A in school. Baked Alaska always meant that something good had happened.

(beat - a bit nostalgic)

It used to be my brother's favorite, too.

MEG

That's nice. Maybe that's why you both like to cook.

JOSH

(surprised by that realization)

I think you might be right.

MEG

It's like you said to me, you're doing something that makes people happy. What could be better than that?

Meg and Josh share a moment but it is interrupted by Chester who approaches with a burlap sack.

MEG (cont'd)

Are those...?

CHESTER

They are!

Meg laughs and hugs Chester, kissing him on the cheek.

MEG

Thank you! Thank you so much.

CHESTER

You're very welcome, my dear.

MEG

(to Josh)

And thank you! You saved me!

She also hugs Josh and kisses him on the cheek, lingering for just a moment longer than she did with Chester. Chester notices this and gives Josh a raised eyebrow and a smile as the hug continues. Josh tries to avoid Chester's gaze.

END ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

76 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - DUSK 76

Establishing the hotel at dusk.

77 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - LOBBY - DUSK 77

Queenie is sprucing up floral bouquets in the lobby while Meg follows her and puts her own adjustments on them.

QUEENIE

That was very kind of Jack to help you find the truffles. It seems as if you are growing close.

MEG

I'm not doing anything that would cross a professional ethical line...

QUEENIE

I was not suggesting you were. A personal one, on the other hand...

(off Meg's quizzical look)

He is gay and married, Meg, so he is decidedly unavailable.

MEG

I know! I'm not falling for him.

(off her skepticism)

Okay, yes, he's... amazing. He's funny and charming and ambitious and we have a lot in common and...

(beat)

Where was I going with this?

QUEENIE

You're not falling for him.

MEG

Exactly. I'm not.

(beat - shakes her head)

I just need to focus. I'm here to prove that I can do a big event like this. If it goes well, I can use it to start my own company someday. I can finally start building my own business... something I can be proud of.

QUEENIE

Then you need to not let the personal get in the way of the professional. All you and Jack can ever be is friends, but you won't even have that if you let your heart too far in front of your head.

Meg, distractedly, rearranges flowers Queenie just arranged.

QUEENIE (cont'd)

And Meg, one more thing... if you touch my flowers again I'm calling security.

Queenie smiles and walks away. Meg pulls her hands away from the flowers and walks off in the other direction.

78 EXT. VALETTA STREET - DUSK

78

Josh and Henri are walking down a quaint street in Valletta.

HENRI

Practice went well today.

JOSH

I don't know if Jack thought so.

HENRI

You two need to talk to each other. All he did was bark orders across the kitchen and you slammed pots on the stove.

JOSH

Our family owned a restaurant. That's our idea of talking. He just gets so...

HENRI

Believe me, I know how he gets. But in this instance, can you blame him? He wanted to show that he could compete on this level. He wanted to save the restaurant. He wanted to impress you.

JOSH

Me? No...

HENRI

Josh, he may be the slightly older brother, but he looks up to you.

JOSH

I don't know if that's true, but if it is, then why doesn't he trust me?

HENRI

It is not that... he is just concerned that things are out of his control.

JOSH

He's controlling everything! He told me I was grinding the peppercorns too hard.

HENRI

Only because there are other things he can't tell you how to do. Like manage your feelings for Meg.

JOSH

Not this again...

HENRI

Are you denying you've grown fond of her?

JOSH

I... well... no. But I'm not going to do anything about it. I'm not stupid.

HENRI

When affection is involved, it is difficult to not be stupid. You know you can never tell her, right? Not even after the competition. Whether we win or not, it would destroy Jack's reputation.

Josh knew this but hearing it like that makes it very real.

79 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - NIGHT 79

Establishing the hotel.

80 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - TENT - NIGHT 80

The competition area is deserted except for Meg who is checking to make sure everything is in order. Josh enters and is surprised to see her. Considering the conversations each of them just had, there is a bit of awkwardness.

JOSH

Oh, hi. I didn't know anyone was here.

MEG

I'm just going over everything for tomorrow. Crossing t's, dotting i's.

JOSH

I understand. I was just going to do the same with my workstation.

(awkward pause)

You know, this can wait until morning. I should probably go get some sleep.

MEG

Right. Me, too. Good night.

The two of them head in opposite directions but both stop and turn back toward each other at the same moment.

JOSH
Are you hungry?

MEG
I thought you'd never ask.

They smile and head off together.

81 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - JACK'S SUITE - SITTING AREA - NIGHT 81

Henri is sitting on the couch while Jack paces.

JACK
I should take over for the semi-finals.

HENRI
You do not have the wristband.

JACK
There must be a way around that.

HENRI
There is not. It acts as your ID and if it is lost or broken or damaged, we are out of the competition and we lose everything. You need to trust Josh.

JACK
I do.

HENRI
He does not think so.

JACK
He said that?

HENRI
I am afraid so.

JACK
(beat)
Etienne said something similar.

HENRI
You talked to Etienne?

JACK
As Josh. It's a long story.
(beat - upset)
I need air. Let's go for a walk.

Jack heads toward the door but Henri stops him with an "uhh" as he tosses him the flannel shirt. Jack catches it and sighs before heading to the bedroom.

82 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - KITCHEN - NIGHT

82

Meg and Josh are both wearing aprons as they work together to cook up a meal in the hotel's kitchen. She is gingerly mixing something in a bowl with her hands. During this, Josh is acting like Jack but it fades in the more tender moments.

MEG

I thought you were going to cook *for* me.

JOSH

Teach a man to fish...

MEG

Am I doing this right?

Josh looks and goes over to her, reaching around from behind her to guide her hands.

JOSH

Don't be afraid of it. The secret to good cooking is getting your hands dirty.

As they mix together, the moment becomes more intimate than either of them are comfortable with. Josh pulls away and goes back to the stove.

MEG

So... what was it like growing up gay in a small town in Alaska?

JOSH

(taken aback)

Oh... uh...

MEG

Sorry, is that too personal?

JOSH

No, it's... well, he... I... didn't come out to my family until I was nineteen.

MEG

Yeah, but you must have known before then. I'd imagine that must have been lonely, not being able to tell people who you really are.

JOSH

(hadn't considered that)

I suppose you're right.

MEG

And your family didn't have any idea?

JOSH

No. Well, my brother didn't. But Josh never cared that I was gay.

MEG

He was supportive when you came out?

JOSH

(makes realizations in this)

Yes. I mean... I guess we never really talked about it much. The scholarship in Paris happened right after that and we sort of started to drift apart. But... I think I knew that it never mattered to Josh.

MEG

You think?

JOSH

I guess I just hadn't really thought about it too much from... my brother's perspective.

MEG

But it all worked out, right? You've got your restaurant and the handsome husband. What was your wedding like? Was Josh your best man?

JOSH

Uh... no.

(beat - tries to cover)

It was a small wedding so we kept it to just some friends.

MEG

You didn't invite him? Why not?

JOSH

He was all the way in Alaska...

MEG

Jack... there must have been some reason why you didn't invite your own brother to your wedding.

Josh doesn't know how to respond to that. Meg puts her hand on his shoulder.

MEG (cont'd)

You said you never really talked about you being gay. Maybe that made you think it did matter to him?

That's a pretty big realization for Josh and it obviously moves him in ways that he hadn't been expecting.

83 EXT. VALETTA STREET - NIGHT

83

Josh, dressed as Jack, is walking with Henri on a picturesque Valetta street lined with shops. Lost in thought, they don't notice Patrick until he is right in front of them.

PATRICK
(confused by Josh)
Oh... hello.

HENRI
Patrick. Look, Josh, it's Patrick.

JACK
I see him. Hello. I'm Josh, Jack's brother.

PATRICK
Ah. Yes, now the clothes make sense.
You came to see your brother compete?

JACK
Yes. All the way from Alaska.

JUERGEN
That's very supportive. My brother wouldn't cross a street to watch me cook.

JACK
I'm... I'm sorry. You're not close?

PATRICK
We used to be when we were young, but he lives on the other side of the country and we don't see each other much anymore. I hope your brother appreciates you.

JACK
(beat)
I hope so, too.

PATRICK
He'll need your support when I make it to the semi-finals and he doesn't.

Patrick claps Jack on the back and walks away with a cocky smile. Jack turns to Henri.

JACK
We need to find Josh.

The two of them walk off.

84 EXT. VALETTA SEASIDE - NIGHT

84

Meg and Josh are sitting on a bench alongside the beautifully lit marina enjoying the meal they cooked. Meg takes a bite.

MEG

This turned out so good. I may have to enter the Escoffier myself next year.

JOSH

I will be here cheering you on.

MEG

Thank you. You know, I do want to stay in touch after this. At some point, if I build up enough of a reputation... and nest egg... to start my own event company, I'd like to work with restaurants to create spaces where we can do unique parties and special occasions.

JOSH

(not thinking)

You should do that with J. Northrup.

MEG

Really? You'd be interested in that? I mean, working together?

JOSH

(beat - oops; as Jack)

Uh... it's something we can think about. I'd have to talk to Henri. He makes most of the business decisions...

Meg gets that he is backtracking and pulls back.

MEG

Of course. I get it. Let's not get ahead of ourselves, right?

JOSH

Right. We should both be focusing on the competition.

MEG

Yes. You're absolutely right.

The awkwardness has returned.

85 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - DAY

85

Establishing the hotel.

86 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - JACK'S SUITE - SITTING AREA - DAY 86

There is a knock on the door and Jack, who is dressed nattily as himself, opens it and is surprised to find Meg there.

MEG

Good morning.

JACK

Uh... hi. Hello. Good morning.

MEG

I'm sorry to bother you. I could've waited for you to come downstairs but I can't stop thinking about last night.

JACK

Last night? What happened last night?

MEG

The thing you said about doing events at J. Northrup after the competition. And then me being all eager to do it.

Jack is surprised by this and not happy.

MEG (cont'd)

We've only known each other for a few days and I work for the Escoffier and I just didn't want you to think I was taking advantage of that.

JACK

Yes, well... I think if I suggested that we should work together at *my* restaurant, it was probably premature at best.

MEG

You're right. Let's forget it. We don't need to take two months do we?

(off his confused look)

I want to make sure we're okay.

JACK

We are. We're fine.

MEG

Great. Good luck today.

Meg walks away and Jack closes the door, more than a little unhappy with what he has just heard.

87 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - TENT - JOSH'S WORKSTATION - DAY

87

The chefs are starting to arrive and things are gearing up for the semi-final round. Josh and Henri arrive at the workstation just as Meg walks up carrying a cup of coffee.

MEG

How did you get here so fast?

(off his confusion)

I just saw you in your room. I stopped for, like, two minutes to get a cup of coffee and you're here already?

HENRI

(intercedes)

You know, we really need to get our workstation set up. Jack...

Josh goes to the RFID reader and "swipes in" but nothing happens - no lights go on.

JOSH

It's not working.

MEG

Let me see. That's weird. It's like there's no power...

Josh and Henri look at each other and rush into the workstation. They open the refrigerator and check the food.

JOSH

It's warm.

HENRI

Everything is ruined.

MEG

I don't understand. How did this happen?

At that moment, Etienne walks by with just enough of a smile on his face for everyone to know exactly what happened. Henri wants to go after him but Josh holds him back.

JOSH

We'll deal with that later. The semi-finals start in an hour. What are we going to do?

Josh, Henri, and Meg stand there, trying to come up with a good answer to that question.

END ACT SIX

ACT SEVEN

88 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - DAY 88

Establishing the hotel.

89 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - KITCHEN - WALK-IN-REFRIGERATOR - DAY 89

Josh and Meg come into the walk-in-refrigerator and start looking around.

JOSH

Are you sure you should be helping me?
We're supposed to be supplying our own
food, so I should go the market...

MEG

The competition starts in...
(checks watch)
...forty-two minutes. There isn't enough
time for you to get there and back.
Besides, you helped me with the truffles
so I owe you. The question is can you
find anything here that you can use?

JOSH

What do you see?

MEG

There's a rack of lamb.

JOSH

It would take too long to cook. This
looks like swordfish.

MEG

Would it go with the truffles?

JOSH

Maybe. I don't know. This is... I don't
know what to do.

Meg goes to him and takes him by the shoulders.

MEG

Jack, confidence and swagger, remember?
You've got this. In fact, this is
exactly the kind of thing you said you
love... being creative, experimenting,
coming up with new dishes.

JOSH

(deep breath)
You're right. Thank you.

They turn back to the shelves.

MEG

Okay, I've got a bunch of different kinds of juice. How about a truffle smoothie?

JOSH

(laughs a little)

That might be pushing creativity a bit.

MEG

(laughs)

Oh come on. You could do a whole breakfast thing. Truffle smoothie with truffle pancakes and truffle syrup.

The two of them laugh throughout until noted.

JOSH

Truffle cream of wheat.

MEG

Truffle donuts!!

JOSH

No, stop.

MEG

Oh, I've got pancetta. Isn't that just fancy bacon?

JOSH

That would go with the pancakes.

MEG

I'd just eat the this straight out of the bag. Everything is better with bacon.

Josh's laughter fades as he takes the bacon, an idea forming.

JOSH

Wait...

(looks around; finds a package)

Wagyu tenderloin. This is some of the best beef in the world. Is there cheese?

MEG

(points)

Yes, lots of it.

JOSH

(smiles)

I have an idea.

Josh starts grabbing stuff from the shelves.

90 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - TENT - LATER 90

The judges, including Juergen, are walking down a table behind which the five remaining chefs, including Josh and Etienne, are standing with their creations on display. Meg, Henri, and Queenie are standing nearby watching nervously.

The judges are inspecting and sampling Deirdre's entry.

91 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - JACK'S SUITE - SITTING AREA - DAY 91

Jack and Chester are back watching the action on the TV.

92 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - TENT - CONTINUOUS 92

The judges move on to Etienne.

JUERGEN

And what have we here?

ETIENNE

Milk-braised pork shoulder with Black Diamond truffle shavings, haricot vert sautéed in a burgundy truffle reduction, and grilled Portobello mushroom caps that were brined in truffled sea salt.

The judges are all very impressed. They start to sample.

The judges finish up with Etienne and move on to the last person in line, Josh. Juergen's eyebrows go up when he sees what is on the plate in front of him.

JUERGEN

Interesting... Chef Northrup. Explain.

JOSH

(as Jack)

I wanted to show that the right ingredients can elevate even the simplest, most basic of meals.

On the plate: a gorgeous bacon cheeseburger and fries.

JOSH (cont'd)

A patty of ground Wagyu beef and truffles, four different cheeses, pancetta cooked in a black pepper truffle sauce, and French fries with garlic and truffle oil. Judges, may I present the Black Diamond Truffle Bacon Cheeseburger.

The judge smile and nod appreciatively.

Josh looks over at Meg and smiles. She smiles back.

93 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - FOUNTAIN - NIGHT

93

A group has gathered to hear the announcement of the finalists that includes Josh, Meg, Henri, Queenie, Etienne and the other chefs. All eyes are on Juergen and the judges.

JUERGEN

And so, the three chefs that will advance to the finals day after tomorrow and compete with their interpretation of Escoffier's classic Peach Melba are... Etienne LeDuc from France... Deirdre Zidane from Germany... and Jack Northrup from the United States of America.

There is celebration amongst the chefs that are advancing and disappointment from the others. Josh hugs Henri.

HENRI

I must go see Jack. Well done!!

Henri rushes off as Meg walks up to join Josh.

MEG

Congratulations.

JOSH

Thank you. I couldn't have done it without a little help from my friends.

The two of them share a smile but are interrupted when Meg's father, Preston, walks up to them.

MEG

Dad?! What are you doing here?

PRESTON

Well, I needed to come over to sign some papers for the castle deal in Germany so I thought I'd take a little detour first and see how you're doing.

MEG

You... you came to see my event?

PRESTON

Like I said, I was in the neighborhood.

Meg is happily surprised. She remembers Josh.

MEG

Oh, Dad... you remember Jack Northrup. He's one of our finalists.

PRESTON

Yes, of course. We met the other night at your restaurant in New York.

JOSH

Yes, we did. It's nice to see you again, Mr. Wescott.

PRESTON

That meal was fantastic. Meg, this guy knows what he's doing in the kitchen.

MEG

Yes, he does.

PRESTON

I'm going to go get checked in. Hopefully they'll have a room for me.

MEG

You own the place, Dad. I think they'll probably find something.

Preston walks off and Meg turns to Josh, smiling.

JOSH

The little girl in pigtails is happy?

MEG

(smiles)
Yes, she is.

The two of them have another one of those moments of connection but it is interrupted when Josh sees Jack (dressed down as Josh) behind a bush nearby, waving at him and trying to not be noticed by anyone else.

JOSH

Uh... can I catch up with you later?

MEG

Sure. I should go make sure my dad isn't telling the front desk clerk embarrassing stories from my childhood.

Meg walks off and Josh goes toward Jack.

94 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - GARDEN - NIGHT

94

Josh joins Jack - who is dressed as Josh - in the garden.

JOSH

What are you doing down here?

JACK

I've been trying to get you alone to talk to you all day.

JOSH

I've been a little busy getting you into the finals.

JACK

Yes, about that. I think I should do the last round.

JOSH

How? I have the wristband.

JACK

Tell your girlfriend you lost it or set it on fire or something.

JOSH

She's not my girlfriend.

JACK

Oh, really? Because I figured since you offered up my restaurant for her to do events, you were more than just pals.

JOSH

It just slipped out. I walked it back.

JACK

I guess you figured since you've taken the spotlight here you can take my restaurant, too?

JOSH

And that's the problem, isn't it? You love the spotlight. Ever since you went off to Paris, all you care about is the prestige and the acclaim. You can't stand that I'm getting all the attention.

JACK

But you're not! Josh Northrup is not getting anyone's attention. As far as the rest of the world is concerned, he's nothing but a short-order cook at a greasy spoon in Alaska.

That wounds Josh. The two go silent for a moment.

95 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - FOUNTAIN - NIGHT

95

Etienne is accepting congratulations from people when the Irish chef, Patrick, walks up to him.

ETIENNE

You're not coming to punch me, are you?

PATRICK

No. I'm coming to say congratulations, Etienne. As much as I hate to admit it, you deserve a spot in the finals.

ETIENNE

Thank you. I agree. Are you sticking around to see the victor crowned?

PATRICK

No. I'm heading back to Ireland. Besides, I already know who will win.

ETIENNE

I think everyone does.

PATRICK

Yes. Jack Northrup will wear that crown well, don't you think?

That wipes the smirk off Etienne's face. He looks around.

ETIENNE

Where is Jack, by the way?

PATRICK

I saw him heading toward the garden.

Etienne thinks for a moment, scheming, and then walks off.

96 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - GARDEN - NIGHT

96

Josh and Jack are still standing in silence, angry. Josh softens a bit and tries to make a reconciliation.

JOSH

Jack, I'm trying to help you.

JACK

I don't need your help.

Jack starts to walk away but his back twinges and he wobbles. Josh reaches out and helps him to a bench and they sit down together. They are silent for a few moments.

JACK (cont'd)

Well, that was unfortunate timing.

On the other side of the garden, Etienne walks in but then stops when he sees the brothers together. He steps back so he can't be seen.

JOSH

(beat)

I think I can win this thing.

JACK

Okay... but you have to remember that it'll say Jack Northrup on the trophy, not Josh.

This statement confuses Etienne.

JOSH

I'm painfully aware of that.

JACK

You'll do the Peach Melba the way we agreed? Traditional. No wild experimentation.

JOSH

(beat)

Yes.

JACK

And you'll stay away from Meg?

That intrigues Etienne. Josh doesn't reply.

JACK (cont'd)

You have to promise me you'll stay away from her, Josh.

JOSH

I promise, Jack.

They exit the garden and Etienne steps out, the smile on his face showing that he has figured out what is going on.

END ACT SEVEN

ACT EIGHT

97 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - DAY 97

Establishing the hotel.

98 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - LOBBY - DAY 98

Meg is crossing the lobby when Etienne sidles up next to her.

ETIENNE

Have you noticed anything "off" about
Chef Northrup?

MEG

Off? What do you mean?

ETIENNE

You and he seem... close. Perhaps you
already know what I mean.

MEG

I promise, I don't.

ETIENNE

I have important information to share.
Jack Northrup is not who he says he is.

MEG

Chef LeDuc, I understand that you want to
win, but trying to sabotage one of your
main competitors is beneath you.

ETIENNE

Sabotage? No, I am talking about the
integrity of the Escoffier.

MEG

Etienne... I can't prove it, but I
suspect you were behind the power failure
at Jack's workstation. So, perhaps
integrity is not the card you want to be
playing right now.

Etienne stands there, sputtering with outrage.

MEG (cont'd)

Have a good day, Chef LeDuc.

Meg smiles and walks away, leaving Etienne to fume.

99 EXT. L'AUBERGE - DAY 99

Establishing Chester's restaurant.

100 INT. L'AUBERGE - KITCHEN - DAY

100

Josh is putting the final touches on the Peach Melba as Jack, Henri, and Chester watch.

JOSH

Done.

JACK

Okay. It looks good. Let's do it again.

JOSH

It's peaches, ice cream, and raspberry sauce, Jack. It's not rocket science.

JACK

It's traditional.

JOSH

It's unoriginal. Etienne and Deirdre will be pulling out all the stops with their interpretations. They'll be bold and take risks. We should, too.

JACK

Josh, I practically had to pry you out of Alaska because you have all this respect for tradition. You don't do bold.

JOSH

I do in the kitchen.

JACK

Since when? Dad would never have let you experiment with his diner.

JOSH

Yeah, well, he's not around anymore. And when I'm finally able to buy the place back from Kinsella, I'm going to do whatever I want with the food I cook.

JACK

Great. Do that. But here, you're going to cook what I want.

Josh takes off his apron and storms out of the kitchen. Henri and Chester exchange a worried glance.

JACK (cont'd)

Not a word out of either one of you, *comprende?*

Jack walks away.

101 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - TENT - DAY

101

Meg is checking things in the competition tent when her father enters looking for her.

PRESTON

Meg, I been looking for you. They're having a banquet tonight at the castle in Germany for local officials. I need to go shake hands and calm nerves.

MEG

But the final round of the competition is tomorrow. I was hoping you'd be here to see it.

PRESTON

I can't. This is important business.

MEG

And this is important to me. This is what I want to do with my life. And after this past week, I really think I can. Look around, Dad. I did this. I planned it, I organized it, I'm running it! Me! I'm proud of myself. And other people are proud of me, too. Jack was saying...

PRESTON

Jack... the chef from New York?

MEG

Yes. He appreciates what I've done here.

PRESTON

I don't know if you should get too wrapped up in his opinion. You know his restaurant is going under, right?

MEG

What? How do you know that?

PRESTON

The reason I suggested dinner there last week is because I'm looking at buying the building. I think I can get a really good deal once J. Northrup closes.

MEG

Jack never said anything about that.

PRESTON

Maybe he doesn't appreciate you as much as you thought he did.

MEG

Dad, why did you even come here?

PRESTON

Because, this obviously means something to you and I wanted to see it for myself. I wanted to see what's keeping you from being a part of the family empire.

MEG

I told you when we were at dinner, I want to create my own empire.

PRESTON

Then do it! Go start your own company. I'll give you whatever you need. Office space, startup capital. I can invest...

MEG

No! I want to do this on my own!

PRESTON

Meg, I want you to be a success. The Wescott name means something, even if it is just planning parties.

MEG

(beat - nods)

Dad... have a safe flight to Germany. Enjoy your castle.

Meg walks out of the tent area leaving Preston to think about what just happened. He seems to know that he messed up as he shakes his head a bit sadly.

102 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - LOBBY - DAY

102

Juergen is in the lobby looking at email on his phone when Etienne enters. Etienne sees him and makes a beeline.

ETIENNE

Mr. Mueller. I must speak with you immediately about the competition. There is a serious problem.

JUERGEN

Chef LeDuc, I am a judge. It would be inappropriate for me to talk to you. If you have a concern, you should speak with Meg Wescott. She's in charge of the event.

ETIENNE

I tried. She dismissed me. Trust me, Juergen... you are going to want to hear what I have to say.

Juergen is intrigued despite himself.

103 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - GARDEN - DAY

103

Josh is walking through the garden toward the hotel when he sees Meg sitting on a bench, obviously upset. He stops and considers going to her but then shakes his head - no, this is not what he and Jack agreed to.

JOSH

(to himself)

Stay away from her, Josh.

Josh continues on toward the hotel but then stops again. He can't just leave her like that. He takes a deep breath, turns, and goes to sit next to her.

JOSH (cont'd)

Are you okay?

MEG

Mostly. You?

JOSH

(as Jack)

Me? I'm fine. *C'est magnifique.*

(off her look)

Mostly *magnifique.* You first.

MEG

Turns out my father showing up here was not quite the supportive gesture I had hoped it would be.

JOSH

I'm sorry.

MEG

Your turn.

JOSH

(beat - more Josh than Jack)

I'm not sure about what I'm doing for the finals. Or maybe about what I'm doing in general.

MEG

In other words we're both having a crisis of swagger.

JOSH

Sounds like it.

(carefully)

I had big plans... I was going to make my kitchen something special. My own little world where I could take as many risks as I want, but it didn't work out that way.

MEG

If J. Northrup isn't what you want it to be, why don't you change it?

JOSH

It's not that easy.

MEG

Sure it is. I mean, I know what I'd do with the place... add some color and some warm lighting. Maybe some candles and flowers. Make it more romantic.

(beat)

Sorry, there I go taking over your restaurant again. It's the event planner in me.

JOSH

(smiles)

It's okay. It sounds nice. And you know, coming here... getting the encouragement I've gotten from...

(he almost says "you")

...everyone... it really made me start to believe I could do anything.

MEG

I know what you mean. I could've already started my own event company if I really wanted to, but I don't think I was ready. After meeting...

(almost says "you")

...everyone here and knowing that they think I'm doing a good job...

JOSH

A great job.

MEG

It's because I have people like you in my corner.

JOSH

(beat)

Yes, you do.

MEG

It's nice to have someone to trust.

That hits Josh hard.

104 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - JACK'S SUITE - SITTING AREA - DAY 104

There is a knock on the door of Jack's suite. Moving better than we've seen him Jack goes to answer it, but Henri beats him to the punch and opens the door to find Juergen, Etienne, and a security guard. Juergen looks past Henri to see Jack.

JUERGEN

Chef Northrup I presume.

Jack and Henri are wide-eyed with surprise. Etienne looks very satisfied with himself.

105 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - GARDEN - DAY 105

Back in the garden, Josh is still considering what Meg just said. He thinks about it for a moment, then looks away, unable to face her when he says what he is about to say.

JOSH

Meg... I need to tell you something.

MEG

Oh, wait, sorry to interrupt, but you have to hear the latest about Etienne. He was babbling something about you not being who you say you are.

JOSH

(hangs his head)

Meg... he's right.

Meg looks at him questioningly but before she can ask him anything, her phone rings. She looks at it.

MEG

It's Juergen. Hold on.

(answers phone)

Yes, Mr. Mueller. Yes... okay, I'll be right there. Is there a problem? Chef Northrup? I'm with him now. All right... we're on our way.

(disconnects call)

He wants to see us both in the competition area. Come on.

JOSH

Meg, wait...

But she hurries off. Josh follows quickly.

106 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - TENT - DAY

106

Jack, Henri, Etienne, Juergen, Queenie, and the security guard are all waiting in the competition area when Meg and Josh enter. Meg doesn't see Jack immediately because she is distracted by the stern faces.

MEG

Mr. Mueller, what's wrong?

JUERGEN

I've been made aware of a problem with Chef Northrup.

MEG

(points at Josh)
He's right here.

JUERGEN

(points at Jack)
No... he's right here.

MEG

Wait...
(to Josh)
You're twins? You're... not Jack.

JOSH

Meg, I can explain.

MEG

You pretended to be your brother? You lied to me!

Meg is obviously devastated by this and Josh knows how much of a sort spot that is with Meg considering her previous relationship.

JOSH

Meg, please...

JACK

This wasn't Josh's idea. He was only helping me.

MEG

It doesn't matter whose idea it was...
Mr. Mueller, I'm so sorry about this.

JUERGEN

It's a little late for sorry, Meg.

JOSH

Please don't blame her. I'm the one...

JUERGEN

I think there's plenty of blame to go around. This could have been a terrible embarrassment for the Escoffier. Now, Chef LeDuc has agreed to keep this quiet, provided Chef Northrup... both of them... are banished from the competition.

JOSH

Please, Mr. Mueller, this is very important to my brother... and to me.

JUERGEN

Perhaps you should have thought of that before you pulled this little scam. I want you both gone by nightfall.

(to Meg)

And as for you, Ms. Wescott, the only reason I'm not firing you is because we're less than 24 hours from the final round and you're the only one who knows how everything needs to run to make that happen. But after the competition is over, we will be having a very serious conversation about your future with the Escoffier.

MEG

(beat)

I understand. I'm very sorry.

Meg turns to go. Josh reaches out to her.

JOSH

Meg... wait...

Meg rushes off and Josh is left standing there, heartbroken.

END ACT EIGHT

ACT NINE

107 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - DAY 107

Establishing the hotel.

108 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - LOBBY - DAY 108

Meg comes through the lobby with her clipboard, but stops when she sees Josh boarding the elevator. Queenie joins her.

QUEENIE

Have you talked to him?

MEG

He lied to me, Queenie. Repeatedly. And I fell for it! I don't know what was real and what wasn't.

QUEENIE

Meg, I am not forgiving what he did, but you obviously felt something for him and I think what you felt was real.

Queenie holds out a sheaf of papers to Meg.

MEG

What's this?

QUEENIE

Mr. Mueller left this behind. It's Chef Northrup's contract. I thought you might find this part interesting.

Queenie points at the contract. Meg looks at it and understands what Queenie is saying but looks torn about it.

109 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - JACK'S SUITE - BEDROOM - DAY 109

Jack is packing as Josh enters.

JOSH

(beat - sits)

I'm sorry I let you down. I think I've been doing that for awhile now.

JACK

(sits on bed)

What do you mean?

JOSH

Why didn't you invite me to your wedding?

JACK

I didn't think you'd want to come.

JOSH

Because you thought I had a problem with you being gay? I didn't, for the record, but I guess I never really told you that before you went to Paris.

JACK

All I could ever think about was getting away before anyone found out... even my best friend. I didn't want to lose you.

JOSH

You wouldn't have.

JACK

But I did. Something changed, Josh.

JOSH

But not because you were gay. It changed because you left and went off to be... J. Northrup.

JACK

I wasn't leaving you. I was leaving the small town in Alaska... although I've come to understand that there are good people everywhere, I didn't know that then. And as for J. Northrup... if I ever made you feel badly for staying, I am so sorry.

JOSH

Just because I stayed doesn't mean that I didn't miss you.

JACK

Josh, I don't want to be like Patrick O'Shea and his brother who never talk to each other. I don't want to be like Chester, who let his own ego destroy everything he had worked for.

JOSH

And I don't want to be the guy who doesn't have the ambition to get out of a greasy kitchen in Alaska anymore.

Josh gets up and goes to Jack, his arms out. Jack tries to stand but has trouble.

JOSH (cont'd)

Do you need help?

JACK

No, I can... Yes. I do.

Josh helps Jack up and then hug fiercely for a moment.

JACK (cont'd)
Have you talked to Meg?

JOSH
I don't think she wants to talk to me.

JACK
If you don't find out for sure, you'll regret it for the rest of your life.

Josh considers it for a moment then rushes out.

110 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - FOUNTAIN - DAY

110

Josh finds Meg sitting by the fountain looking at Josh's contract. He sits beside her. They are silent for a moment.

JOSH
For what it's worth, I'm sorry.

MEG
I don't know if I can forgive you.

JOSH
Meg, what would you have done if I had told you the truth?

MEG
I don't know. But it should've been my decision.

They are silent for a moment and then Meg gives him the Escoffier contract. He looks at it, questioningly.

MEG (cont'd)
You can still compete.

JOSH
What are you talking about?

MEG
The contract says that whoever signs it can't make any false representations about their identity.

JOSH
But I did. I was pretending to be Jack.

MEG
But the contract doesn't have Jack Northrup's name on it and you signed it as J. Northrup. You're the official registrant.

INSERT: on the contract signature we saw before.

JOSH

But my brother was invited, not me.

MEG

It doesn't matter. It's a loophole that nobody noticed. I'm sure they'll close it by next year's event, but for now...

JOSH

(hands her the contract)

Even I know when to call it quits.

MEG

Compete or don't, that's up to you.

(stands)

But it seems to me that if you want to take risks, you won't do it by giving up.

Meg puts the contract down and turns to go. Josh stands.

JOSH

What about us?

MEG

(beat)

There is no us. I don't even know who you are.

Meg leaves and Josh doesn't know what else to do. He looks at the contract and he takes a deep breath.

111 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - TENT - DAY

111

Josh, Jack, and Henri are standing in front of Juergen, the other judges, and the chefs left in the competition including Etienne and Deirdre. Meg is standing near the back, trying to be unobtrusive as Juergen is looking at the contract.

ETIENNE

This is ridiculous. The rest of us studied for years. Is it fair to let someone into this esteemed competition on a technicality?

JACK

A technicality that could result in a lawsuit if you don't abide by it.

JUERGEN

(beat - clenches his jaw)

Mr. Northrup, you are hereby reinstated.

JOSH

Wonderful. Oh, and the rules also state that if my sous-chef drops out, I can get someone else to take his place.

HENRI

(fakes a sneeze)

I feel a cold coming. I need to drop out.

JACK

I can take his place.

JOSH

May the best chefs win. *C'est la guerre.*

Jack and Henri walk away, smiling. Josh follows but takes a second to subtly mouth the words "thank you" to Meg. She nods and waits until he is gone to smile a little.

112 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - TENT - JOSH'S WORKSTATION - DAY 112

Josh and Jack are strategizing.

JOSH

We have an hour to come up with something incredible to win the competition with.

JACK

You don't think the traditional Peach Melba is it?

JOSH

I think we need to be more creative. Juergen is the traditionalist and he's going to want to vote against us, so we have to impress the other two judges

JACK

Okay. Then what do we do?

JOSH

We need something that makes a statement about who we are. We need to put the Northrup family stamp on it.

Josh and Jack have the idea at the same time. They smile.

113 EXT. CASTLE HOTEL - NIGHT 113

Establishing shot of a German castle that acts as a hotel.

114 INT. CASTLE HALLWAY - NIGHT 114

Preston steps out from a doorway into a ballroom, through which we can hear a banquet happening. Preston makes a call.

PRESTON

(into phone)

Julia, this banquet is a disaster. The room is dreary, the food is terrible... How hard could it be to find someone who can throw a good party?

Preston realizes what he has just said and he sort of smiles and shakes his head.

115 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - DAY 115

Establishing the hotel.

116 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - TENT - DAY 116

The final day of competition underway. Josh and Jack are at their workstation as are Etienne and Deirdre. The judges including Juergen are watching carefully. Henri and Chester are watching from the sidelines. Meg is wearing a headset and running things with Queenie's assistance.

MONTAGE OF SHOTS - COOKING COMPETITION ROUND 3

A series of shots show the competition in action:

- Josh and Jack are working together on their creation and although Jack is moving slowly, they are in perfect harmony with one another as if they are reading each other's minds
- Etienne is hard at work as well, but he keeps glances up at Josh and Jack, obviously nervous about the competition
- Juergen and the judges observe, take notes, and confer
- Henri and Chester watch anxiously from the sidelines
- Meg is watching throughout, running the action of the competition by directing the camera people, making sure equipment is working, and more. She occasionally trading glances with Josh.

117 INT. HOTEL VALLETTA - TENT - LATER 117

Josh, with Jack behind him, Etienne, and Deirdre are at the judging table with their creations. Juergen and the judges start with Josh and Jack's entry. Meg and Queenie are nearby watching with interest.

JOSH

We wanted to honor tradition with Chef Escoffier's original ingredients and with a family recipe that has been handed down through generations. May I present... the J. Northrup Peach Melba Baked Alaska.

They reveal a dish that is a hybrid of the two and it's gorgeous. Juergen keeps his scowl on but the other two judges look intrigued. Josh and Jack share a smile.

118 EXT. HOTEL VALLETTA - FOUNTAIN - NIGHT

118

The crowd has assembled to hear who won. In it we see Josh, Jack, Henri, Chester, Queenie, Etienne, Deirdre, Meg, and the judges. Juergen steps up to address the crowd.

JUERGEN

Now, the moment we've been waiting for.

Juergen picks up a trophy. Etienne takes a step forward. The crowd holds its breath. Josh drapes his arm around his brother. Meg looks on eagerly. Juergen opens the envelope.

JUERGEN (cont'd)

... The winner of the 87th annual
Escoffier Culinary Cup is...
(gritted teeth)
Josh Northrup of the United States.

The assembled crowd cheers while Josh and Jack embrace, then take hugs from Henri and Chester. Josh looks over at Etienne who obviously isn't happy but is a big enough man to nod and tip his imaginary hat. Josh smiles and nods back. Josh turns and finds Meg standing there.

MEG

Congratulations.

JOSH

Thank you. You know I couldn't have done it without you.

MEG

I just pointed out a loophole...

JOSH

You gave me a reason to want to win.

MEG

I thought Jack was the reason.

JOSH

It may have started that way, but it became about something else. It became about you. Who do you think I cooked that burger for?

MEG

How can I believe that's true?
(beat)

(MORE)

MEG (CONT'D)

I need some time, Josh. I'm not ready to forgive you, yet.

JOSH

Okay... give me two months. A very smart person told me that if you can't get over something by then, you never will. I want my two months.

MEG

(beat - small smile)

Okay. Two months.

Josh smiles, nods, and walks back to join Jack and Henri. Meg stands there for a moment and then her phone rings. She looks at the caller ID, sighs, and then reluctantly answers.

MEG (cont'd)

(into phone)

Hi Dad. No, he hasn't fired me yet, but I'm guessing it's just a matter of time. Yes, I know you want me to come work for you. Food and beverage, right?

(beat)

You want me to do what?

Meg is surprised by what she's hearing.

119 EXT. NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT 119

Establishing with a title that says TWO MONTHS LATER.

120 EXT. J & J NORTHRUP - NIGHT 120

Establishing the newly rebranded restaurant where a crowd of people has gathered for the grand reopening celebration.

121 INT. J & J NORTHRUP - RECEPTION - NIGHT 121

Henri is at the host stand in the reception area of the restaurant on the phone.

HENRI

(into telephone)

No, we are all booked up for tonight. The earliest we have is in four weeks... Party of eight? Your name?

Josh and Jack enter from different directions.

JOSH

You look dapper.

JACK

And you look... okay.

JOSH
I'm still taller.

They smile and hug. There is knock at the door. Josh looks and sees that Meg has worked her way to the front of the crowd. He is happily surprised to see her but Jack smiles and goes to let her - and only her - in and shuts the door.

JACK
Henri, we should go check on that thing
in the kitchen.

HENRI
(all smiles)
Yes, we should.

They exit quickly leaving Meg and Josh alone. She holds up an invitation.

MEG
I got your invitation. Interesting
timing. Almost exactly two months.

JOSH
Day after tomorrow.

MEG
Yes. So, you left Alaska. What about
continuing the family legacy?

JOSH
I realized that I didn't need to be in
Alaska to do that. My family is here in
New York. And there are fewer bears.

MEG
Always a plus. I'm also here in New
York, working for my dad's company.

JOSH
How is that going?

MEG
Amazing. He put me in charge of global
event planning. I manage venues in our
hotels all over the world.

JOSH
That's incredible! Congratulations!

MEG
And I've started some really interesting
pilot programs.

(MORE)

MEG (CONT'D)

For instance, I'm partnering with local restaurants to provide more catering options for people who want to do events at our properties.

JOSH

Really? Well... I've heard the new chef here is interested in trying new things. In fact, he has made some really contributions to the new menu. Here... let me show you...

He motions toward the dining room. She goes through the doorway and he follows.

122 INT. J. NORTHRUP RESTAURANT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

122

The room has been transformed from the brightly lit bistro we saw at the beginning into a gorgeous, romantic space with warm colors, candles, flowers, and soft lighting.

MEG

Oh... it's beautiful.

Josh hands her a menu. She looks at it, smiles, and reads.

MEG (cont'd)

"Meg's Black Diamond Truffle Burger."

JOSH

With a piece of chocolate as dessert. I have a feeling people are going to love it. I think I will.

MEG

I think I will, too. I'd like to meet this new chef.

Josh extends his hand.

JOSH

I'm Josh Northrup.

MEG

(shakes his hand)
Meg Wescott.

JOSH

I know it hasn't quite been two months...

MEG

Close enough.

She smiles. He pulls her in and they kiss. A moment later, Jack and Henri come out of the kitchen, all smiles as they watch for a second. Jack hesitantly steps forward.

JACK

Uh, Josh... we need to open the doors...
Josh? Meg?

They keep kissing so Jack and Henri go to open the doors anyway. People start coming into the restaurant, politely and happily going around Josh and Meg who are oblivious to the crowd.

END