Change of Heart

by clato27

Summary

Six times Adam ignored Jude and Connor’s relationship and the time he accepted it.

Notes

Hello! So this is by far the longest thing I have ever written. Like, ever. I've had this idea since the Father's Day episode and Adam was so mean to Connor. I took it way farther and made put in way more angst then I intended. I hope you like it.

See the end of the work for more notes

1.

It was late. The streets were dark and the streetlights on and the few people out were heading
It was just under Connor’s curfew, a solid nine o’clock on weekends, and he was almost home.

His hand was in Jude’s as they walked up the stone pathway to his front door, the curtains were drawn, but the porch light still on. Connor doesn’t doubt his dad is sitting on the couch in the living room, the Padres game on the TV but his eyes on the door.

Jude’s walking slow, bumping their shoulders together and smiling that smile that makes Connor never want to leave his side. Jude’s drawing out their goodbye, waiting until the last possible second until Connor’s has to be inside, and Connor’s glad he is. He doesn’t want to say goodbye to Jude either.

People always say that you can’t truly fall in love at thirteen, but Connor is pretty sure he has.

And only Jude Adams Foster can make him feel like that.

Then they reach the steps and climb them. One, two, three. Then they’re on Connor’s ugly brown doormat that says ‘welcome’ even though it’s the place he feels least welcome in the whole world.

Jude sways on his feet, side to side like he’s on a boat. He never lets go of Connor’s hand, but moves so their facing each other. “Do you think I have time for a goodbye kiss?” Jude asks, head tilting to the side as if he’s unsure. He’s not, Connor knows. Jude hasn’t been unsure about anything Connor related for a few months, he’s not going to start up again now.

Connor looks at his watch, but doesn’t bother actually looking and figuring out the time. Stuff like that doesn’t matter when he’s with Jude. “We always got time,” Connor answers and grins. Jude leans in and Connor leans in, but their lips barely touch before the door swings open.

They both break away to see Adam, standing on the other side of the door. He doesn’t look mad, but he doesn’t look happy either. He looks indifferent, he always looks indifferent. “Connor, inside. Now,” he says, staring at them expectantly.

Connor sighs and gives Jude’s hand one last squeeze before he lets go, immediately missing the warmth it gave him. “I’ll text you later, ok?” Connor asks.

Jude nods. “Yeah, night. Night, Mr. Stevens,” Jude says. Adam grunts.

“Night, Jude,” Connor says and steps inside the house, the door shutting behind him. Adam makes his way back to the living room, back to the Padres game lighting up the big screen. Connor stands in the hallway, just feet away from the door. “You couldn’t even let me say goodbye to my boyfriend?” he asked his father, even though he doesn’t expect a response.

The one he gets is worse than silence, though.

Because Adam doesn’t even look at him. doesn’t spare a single glance over his shoulder when he says, “don’t call him your boyfriend in this house.”

2.

Connor hasn’t seen his mom in almost a year, not since he started seeing Jude anyway. She came out when he got shot, but all he was spared was a single hospital visit. She had a connecting flight up to San Francisco within the hour for her book tour. Her book always came first. Always.
But now he’s going to see her, flying out to Florida for spring break. He’s excited, sure, but not as excited as he should be. He has no idea how much time he mom would actually spend with him and Jude keeps reminding him that Florida is the ‘murder state’.

“Whatever you do, don’t go near the Everglades,” he kept saying, but, Connor had to admit, he didn’t pay much attention. He was more caught up in how his boyfriend’s hair shined in the sun and how kissable he looked.

But Jude slips his mind when they pull up in front of the airport, Adam stopping the car in the loading zone. He’s not going to lie, he’s nervous. He’s only fourteen and he’s going to be flying on a plane by himself.

But anxiety changes to anger the minute Adam opens his mouth.

“You’re not going to tell your mom about you and that boy, are you? I don’t need her to hold another thing I screwed up over my head.”

And Connor got out of the car, grabbing his bag and not even bothering to say goodbye.

(He tells his mom about Jude. Partly to spite his dad, partly because he wants to. His mom smiles, hugs him, and tell him she’ll meet “this Jude you’re so smitten on” when she comes out next year.)

3.

Connor’s used to having his dad’s coworkers and their families over for dinner. It’s not that bad: the food’s always good, there’s actually chatter and conversation at the table instead of silence, and the kids are usually nice.

Tonight is different though.

The guests tonight, a coworker and his daughter, seem nice enough. The girl is cute: small with blond hair and brown eyes and a shy smile. Her name is Kara and she’s pretty nice. She makes faces whenever one of their fathers says something phony. Which is a lot.

“So, Connor, what grade are you going into?” Mr. Davis asks, shooting him a glance over his steak.

Connor swallows his food after almost choking in surprise. No one usually talks to him since these dinners are a kind of a “children are seen not heard” type events. “Um, I’ll be a junior this year. At Anchor Beach High.”

Mr. Davis nods, smiling. “Ah, so you’re sixteen? Or going to be soon?”

“Yeah. I got my drivers license last week, actually,” Connor responds.

“Oh, so you’re the same age as my daughter. Did you know Kara plays softball? She dabbles in lacrosse too, but that’s only a sport back east,” Mr. Davis said and Kara rolls her eyes. “You play baseball don’t you?”

Connor nods. “Yeah.”

Then Adam cuts in because baseball is the only thing he can be proud of Connor for. “He’s been on the varsity team at his school since freshman year, actually. A starter since sophomore. Where do you go to school, Kara?”
Kara looks up from her plate at Adam. “St. Jude’s,” she answers shortly and Connor can’t help the smile that comes over his face at his boyfriend’s name. He’s so fucking far gone he can’t even hear Jude’s name without practically melting.

Adam shoots him a look, Mr. Davis laughs. “Looks like you were right, Adam. Our kids are prefect for each other.”

That wipes the smile right off Connor’s face. “What?” he asks, trying to keep his voice calm and not even daring a glance at his father.

“Your father thought you and my Kara would be a perfect couple. After tonight, I have to say, I agree with him,” Mr. Davis said. When he spares a glance at Kara, he sees she looks just as he feels and he knows that Mr. Davis is just like his father.

So, Connor takes a deep breath, counts to ten, and then responds. “I’m sorry, Mr. Davis, I’m sure Kara is a great girl, but I’m already in a relationship and I don’t think is going to end anytime soon. Dad, can I please be excused.” The word ‘dad’ tastes like venom in his mouth and he doesn’t wait for permission before leaving the room.

4.

Connor doesn’t have a key to the Adams Foster house, but he knows where the spare is.

In his mind it’s basically the same thing (especially seeing as Jesus and Callie don’t even know where the key is). He’s always welcome there, he knows. He has never been turned away, even when Jude’s not there. It’s his favorite place in the world.

It’s the middle of the night and he left his house with only his school backpack. He doesn’t even know why he grabbed it, but he’s glad he did. Now he doesn’t have to go back ‘home’ in the morning. He’s just walking, his mind thinking of where to go, but his feet are already taking him to the place he thinks of home.

He doesn’t even realize it until he sees Brandon’s stupid mini cooper that Jude hates to drive. He smiles when he sees it and shakes his head because, yeah, this is the only place he wants to be right now.

So he sneaks around back and gets the spare key from under the the pillows on the swing and unlocks the front door. He slides off his shoes and leaves them between Stef’s black police shoes and Leana’s favorite pair of wedges before sliding on his sock covered feet to the stairs.

There is a single light on in the kitchen and Connor sees Stef sitting at the kitchen island with a glass of water. “Did I wake you up?” he asks, voice quiet but not quite a whisper.

Stef shakes her head and pats the seat next to her. “Come sit, love,” she ordered softly and Connor does, dropping his backpack at the foot of the stool as he pulls himself onto the stool. Her hand rubs the space between Connor’s shoulders and she sighs when she sees the tears on his cheeks. He’s glad she can’t see the hand shaped welt on his arm. “What happened, honey?”

“He found the condoms I have in my room and he got mad. Really mad. I told him Jude and I haven’t done anything and we haven’t, but he just kept screaming. He broke some stuff, called me a faggot, then I left,” Connor said.

Stef sighed again. “I’m sorry, honey. You can stay as long as you want,” she said, pressing a kiss into his hair as she stood. “In Jesus’s bed, of coarse,” she adds even though they both know he
won’t be staying in Jesus’s bed, not tonight anyway.

“Thank you, Stef,” Connor said and she walked him up the stairs, leaving him in front of Jude’s door.

“Don’t mention it, bud,” Stef whispered. Her hand squeezes the back of his neck and the smile she gives him makes him feel lighter, even if it’s just a little bit. “Goodnight.”

And then Connor sneaks into the room. He ditches his sweatshirt and his jeans and his shirt. He crawls into Jude’s bed in just his boxers and socks. Jude grunts when he feels Connor’s presence but doesn’t waste a beat before wrapping his arms around Connor’s neck, burying his face in the crook of his boyfriend’s neck all without lifting his head off the pillow. He’s had a lot of practice in the past three years.

Jude kisses Connor’s skin and his lips brush against his neck when he talks, “I love you. I’m proud of you. And I’m super gay for you.” He says it because he knows Connor needs to hear it. To remind him there’s someone in his corner, will always be in his corner.

Connor pulls away and kisses Jude’s lips, not caring that Jude’s half asleep and has morning breath that can kill. Then he places his head back where it belongs, his cheek against Jude’s temple and his jaw against Jude’s cheekbone. One of Jude’s arms slide down to Connor’s waist and Connor’s got both arms around Jude’s back, holding them so close together there isn’t any room in between them. Jude’s asleep in seconds and Connor feels safe for the first time that night.

5.

It’s late.

Like, really, really late.

And Connor’s trying to be quiet.

He really, really is.

But he’s tired and not willing to move from the couch up the stairs to his bedroom and he’s on the phone with Jude so he’s as relaxed as he possible could be.

“Con, I can hear you falling asleep. Go to bed,” Jude says over the phone and Connor groans. He’s got a pillow on his chest and is wearing Jude’s hoodie. If he closes his eyes while Jude’s talking he can pretend Jude’s there with him.

“No,” Connor whines, eyes falling closed once again. “I like your voice. It’s soothing, like… sunshine.”

Jude’s laugh crackles over the phone. “How does my voice sound like sunshine?”

Connor sighs and burried his nose in the fabric of Jude’s hoodie. It smells like him. “I don’t know but it does.”

“Yeah, yeah, that takes the cake. You’re tired, babe. Go to sleep and I’ll call you in the morning, ok? I’m super gay for you, Con. I love you.” Jude says and Connor knows he’s right.

“Ok, ok,” he yawns. “I love you, Jude.”
He doesn’t know his dad is there, standing behind the couch in the hallway between the living room and the stairs.

“You don’t love him,” Adam says. And it hurts Connor more than it startles him. “You can’t love him.”

Connor knows Jude heard it and Connor’s glad he didn’t hang up because now he needs him. “Jude,” is all Connor chokes out before his throat tightens up and he can’t speak any longer.

“I love you, Connor, more than anything or anyone. No one loves you more than me, ok? Except for maybe Mariana. Sometimes I think she wishes Moms adopted you instead of me. Moms probably would adopt you, actually, if they weren’t such die hard Jonner fans. I’m telling you. The only person who ships us more then them is AJ. If that boy was anything but straight he’d be all over you. I think Brandon is the only one in this family who actually likes me more than you. Not even Callie, man. When, in the last five years, did you steal my family from me? Babe, if I didn’t love you so much, I’d be pissed.”

Connor’s smiling again and Jude knows it. “Thanks, Jude,” he says and he can hear Jude’s smile when he says.

“You have a family, Connor, and they love you and they’re proud of you.”

“I love you so much, Jude.”

“I love you too, Connor. I’ll see you in the morning.”

6.

“You’re not going to live go live with that boy. I won’t allow it,” Adam said. It was the first words he had said to Connor in a week. The first words he said since Connor told him he’d gotten a baseball scholarship to UC Berkeley (where the response was ‘See where all that hard work got you? I’m so proud’). The first words he said since Connor told him he’s moving in with Jude (where the response was ‘like hell you are’). Connor wishes this wasn’t always the case, but words exchanged between father and son became less and less as the years went on. Now, they were just coexisting in the same house.

Connor was already in his cap and gown, waiting for Jude, Maddie, and Taylor to pick him up for graduation. “Hate to break it to you, Dad, but I’m eighteen. I don’t need your permission to do anything.”

Adam’s hands clench into fists. “Yes, you do, Connor. You would be nowhere without me-” And that’s when Connor interrupted him. Because he’s done hearing his father talk about how good of a parent he is when he can’t even acknowledge that Connor is gay. Because Adam is always making his ass look better when his only son hates him more than anyone in the world.

“Yeah I would, Dad! In case you haven’t noticed I have done great for myself while you were ignoring me for the past five years. I was the one who studied my ass off all of high school to get a 4.1 grade point average. I was the one who got myself a full ride to Berkeley. Not you. You have done nothing for me in the past five years, but here you are, patting yourself on the back for being a good father when all you have done is bully me. I can’t wait until I leave next week and never have to see you again,” Connor said, face red and fists clenched. He’s as angry as he’s ever been in his entire life, but he’s relieved he finally told Adam the truth.

“Ok, then, Connor, leave. You won’t have a family. You’re mom doesn’t give a shit about you.
Without me, you’re alone,” Adam said, voice rough and accusing. “You’ll be crawling back to me when you finally realise you’re not like him.”

“No, I won’t,” Connor contradicted. “I have Jude and his family. Even if our relationship doesn’t work out, I’ll still have the Fosters. I’m you’re only family, Dad. The Fosters have been my family for the last five years because they could accept who I am when you couldn’t. Because I’m super fucking gay for Jude Adams Foster!”

And Adam doesn’t respond. He just stands there motionless because he just realized that he’s actually going to lose him. He’s going to lose Connor.

There’s a car honk from outside and Connor makes his way to the door, but before he steps out the door he turns around. “Y’know what? Don’t even bother coming. I’m sure it’s just a waste of your time to hear your gay son make his valedictorian speech. Don’t expect me home tonight.”

And then he shuts the door and sprints to the car, sliding into the space next to Jude in the back seat.

Jude looks him up and down in appreciation and hums, “hmm, you should graduate more often.”

Connor just laughs and kisses the goofy grin off Jude’s face. “I love you so much, Judicorn.”

And Jude laughs breathlessly, fingers intertwining with Connor’s. “I love you too, you big sap,” Jude smiles and they kiss again.

They only pull away when Taylor screeches, “no PDA in the car! I can’t get stains the stains you to make out of the upholstery!”

+1.

Connor can’t believe it: it’s his wedding day.

It’s been chaotic and insane since the moment he was woken up (“Wake up, boys. You can’t see the bride before the wedding!” “She’s so talking about you. You’re so the bride.” “As if, you’re the bride.”). Then he was separated from Jude all day and locked in Brandon’s old bedroom with Jesus and Mariana.

Mariana is doing her own makeup when she’s supposed to be doing Connor’s hair. Instead, Jesus is attempting to do it, but the only hair style he knows is the 1950s swoop, the same hair style he’s been wearing since he was 15.

“Do you think Spencer will propose?” Mariana asks, her mascara wand only stopping for a second before continuing.

Jesus had his tongue stuck out in concentration, like Connor’s hair was a puzzle or something. “Never,” he replies shortly. “That kid couldn’t take the hint if you tattooed it on your forehead.”

Mariana sighs and Connor suggests, “why don’t you just propose. For, y’know, feminism and equality and all that. It’s a very Mariana thing to do.” Mariana puts her mascara away and swivels on Brandon’s old piano chair, considering it. “Do it tonight if you want, buy me some time to get your brother up here and—”

He gets cut off by Jesus smacking his hair gel covered hand over his mouth. “Don’t even finish that sentence.”
“I was going to say hold his hand. Jesus, Jesus, get your head out of the gutter,” Connor said innocently when Jesus removed his hand.

Jesus narrows his eyes, giving him the most unamused look Connor’s ever seen him give. He hate it when people use the Lord’s name and his own in the same sentence. “Hold his hand so hard he can’t walk right tomorrow, right?”

“Exactly,” Connor exclaims and swats at Jesus’s hands. “Now get your hands out of my hair. I don’t want to look like I fought in world War II when I walk down the aisle.”

Jesus raises his hands and backs away. “Last time I try and do something nice for you,” he warned. Connor grabs a towel and tries to remove as much of the goop Jesus calls hair gel as possible. He does his hair like he usually does, swept off to the side, and he’s ready.

But he’s still got over an hour until he gets to walk down the aisle. He can’t believe he’s finally going to be Connor Adams Foster in less than two hours.

Then there’s a knock on the door and Mike pops his head in. He looks nervous and shoots Mariana a look before he says, “uh, Connor, you’re dad is here.”

The way Mariana grabs Jesus and drags him out of the room tells Connor that she sent Adam the invitation. It really doesn’t surprise Connor, not since she was in charge of the guest lists and seating arrangements, she could have easily slipped him in. Plus, she has the need to put families back together.

It’s not Mariana’s need to fix everyone’s family that surprises him, it’s the fact that Adam actually came.

Mike lets the twins out, but still stands in the doorway, waiting for Connor to give him the ok to let Adam in. Connor’s not sure he can. “You don’t have to see him, y’know. I can kick him out for you,” Mike says, but Connor surprises himself and shakes his head.

“No, let him in. I want to hear what he has to say,” the words come out of Connor’s mouth before he even knows it and Mike’s gone before he can change his mind.

He doesn’t know what to expect, but he prepares himself for battle anyway. The last time he saw Adam was a week after his high school graduation, the last time he spoke to him was right before high school graduation and he had said all he wanted to say. It was the first time he stood up to his father and he thought it was going to be the last. But that was ten years ago.

Then there’s another knock on the door and Connor stands. Adam looks the same except for a few more wrinkles and grey hairs and his eyes are soft, softer than Connor has ever seen them.

Adam doesn’t speak for a few seconds, and he looks Connor up and down. He’s not in his suit yet, just in his shirt and trousers (plus untied dress shoes), but he knows that’s not what Adam’s looking at. He’s buffed out a little in the last ten years since he’s joined the majors, Jude loves it. Adam was always on Connor’s case about working out back when he lived with him.

“You’ve really grown up,” Adam said to which Connor responded,

“Why did you come?”

Adam’s eyes cast downward, and he kicked at Brandon’s worn shag carpet. “Jude came by a couple weeks ago, asked for my blessing, and I didn’t give it to him.”

Connor crossed his arms across his chest and leans back against the desk, biting the inside of his
cheek. “So you came to rub it in? Try and talk me out of it? Convince me that the last fifteen years of my life had been a lie and I’ve been attracted to women this whole time?”

Adam shakes his head and looks down at the ground. “I came to give it to him.”

Connor literally stops breathing. He doesn’t know what this is, whether his dad is trying to fix the bridges he burned burned down all those years ago or he just wants to see his son again. What Connor knows is that Adam’s saying something he should have said over a decade before.

“So I did,” Adam continues when it’s clear Connor isn’t going to respond. “And I thought that I should apologize to you too. I’m sorry I hurt you, Connor. And I’m sorry I wasn’t a good dad. I’ve been sorry for a long time, Connor. I wish I could have told you this sooner.”

It’s more than Connor thought he’d ever hear, but it’s not enough at the same time. “Then why didn’t you?” he asked. “I’m not that hard to find, you could have done this years ago.”

“I didn’t think you’d want me showing up in the middle of your life,” is his excuse and Connor scoffs.

“And my wedding day is a day I want you interrupting?” The words are harsh and accompanied by a cold laugh. But Adam doesn’t jerk when he says wedding, not like he did whenever he talked about Jude in the past.

Adam looks back at the carpet. “I’m sorry, Connor. Maybe I should just-”

“No,” Connor interrupts him and pushes off the desk, striding so he’s less than a foot away from his father. “I want to hear you say it.”

And Adam looks up. He can see the tears in Connor’s eyes, not yet spilled over. Their eyes meet and all Adam can see are his own eyes staring back at him, he can’t look away. “What do you want me to say?” he whispers.

“That I’m gay.”

And Connor’s eyes don’t waver, he doesn’t stutter when he says it. He’s never been so sure of himself in his entire life (ok, yeah he has, but kissing Jude Adams Foster isn’t something he has to be sure of anymore. It’s something he just does).

A minute passes and Connor’s not sure if he’s going to say it. When Adam opens his mouth he think’s going to hear him deny it, ignore it, tell him it’s not true because that’s all he ever heard from his father.

But those words never came.

Instead, Adam put his hands on his shoulders and said, “You are gay. You are my son and you are gay.”

And it’s a step, a step in the right direction. Maybe now his and Jude’s kids would have a grandfather. Maybe now Adam can be in Connor’s life again. But it’s just a step and there are so many more they need to take.

End Notes
So, I don't actually think Adam is a homophobe because he is really chill with Stef and Lena and even Jude (even though he was an assuming asshole because Jude didn't even know if he was gay yet). I think it's just the possibility of his son being different that he has a problem with. I just picture Adam as this big bully that's always pushed Connor around and being gay is just the easiest thing to bully him for. He just doesn't want to accept it, but at the same time can't let Connor forget it. I don't really know, but that's what I think. And I think that Connor wouldn't be torn up about removing his toxic ass father from his life because he seems like a take no shit kind of guy and has Jude+ behind him.

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