

Gabriel Rivera

Working Title: I Want You to Love Me

Alexandra Lipner and Ismael Antonio Manuelle are freshmen enrolled in NYU's Stern School of Business. They come from different worlds, Alexandra from affluent Chappaqua located in Westchester County, and Ismael from NYC, specifically, the South Bronx. Alexandra's parents are lawyers, while Ismael's parents are working class people. They are strangers with two things in common. They are Puerto Rican and dream of one day becoming "salseros" (Latin Salsa Music performers). Their lives become intertwined on move in day at NYU. Ismael's family is helping him settle into his dorm room. Alexandra's father is helping her that day. Her mother could not take the day off. This is the day fate has chosen for Alexandra and Ismael to cross paths. After setting up his dorm room, Ismael strolls through the dorm halls to connect with other students. He's excited and as he turns the corner he bumps into Alexandra, causing her to drop a box filled with personal items. The box falls and all the items spill out, hitting the floor with an echoing sound. Their eyes meet, then quickly turn to the items on the floor. Alexandra's face contorts in anger as she eyes the jagged pieces of her most sacred vinyl record of bolero music by La Lupe. Tears fill her eyes as she recalls the day her now deceased grandmother gave her the vinyl record. Ismael apologizes profusely and bends down to help her pick up the items. Alexandra unleashes her anger at him in the form of profanity. His face turns a deep shade of red, gets up quickly and shamefully hurries off. They do not meet again until the first day of classes. As Ismael enters the classroom, he sees Alexandra sitting in the front row and decides it best to sit in the back, away from her. He tries to avoid looking at her but he can't help notice how beautiful she is. The professor asks students to give a brief introduction about themselves. As the students

in the front row begin he finds himself anxious for Alexandra's turn to arrive. He can't stop staring at her and commits her introduction to memory. As his turn nears, he becomes nervous. His voice cracks a bit as he begins talking. Alexandra recognizes his voice and turns around to look at him. Her piercing glare makes him even more nervous and he momentarily stops speaking. As he resumes his introduction, Ismael mentally resolves to speak to Alexandra after class. At the end of the class, Ismael attempts to engage her in conversation. She is initially resistant, until he offers her his copy of the broken vinyl record as a peace offering. Her interest now peaked, Alexandra takes a good look at Ismael's face. She sees sincerity in his eyes and her cold, defensive demeanor softens. To her surprise, Alexandra notices something else. Ismael is handsome and she feels an attraction she can't explain. She accepts his apology. Ismael can't keep his eyes off her as she makes her way down the hall. As the semester progresses, they develop a friendship. One evening Alexandra's roommate, Rachael convinces her to go to a Latin club in Spanish Harlem. Alexandra is excited but it turns into disappointment when they are denied entry into the club. As they stand in front of the club watching other people walk in, they hear some commotion and turn toward it. A huge, bright smile appears on Alexandra's face as she realizes Ismael is part of a group of guys unloading instruments. As she approaches she calls out Ismael's name. A huge, bright smile appears on his face as he realizes it is Alexandra. The ladies tell the guys they can't get into the club and Ismael's smile widens. Not a problem he tells them, "my friends and I are performing here tonight and we can get you in." As the band sets up, Alexandra and Ismael are enthralled in conversation. Alexandra watches Ismael in disbelief, as he undergoes an electrifying transformation on stage. His passion comes alive with every note he sings. The audience yells for more as he dances on stage. Alexandra feels the passion and the

love Ismael's performance radiates. At the end of the night, Ismael offers to return to campus with Alexandra. They talk late into the night and share stories about their childhood, families and their dreams of becoming salsa singers. They discover that both their parents disapprove of their dreams and they also learn that neither wants to disappoint their parents. Alexandra is able to cajole him into helping her practice her singing and dance moves in exchange for help with business course work. They decide to perform at a student talent showcase scheduled for the end of the semester. As they spend more time together practicing, Alexandra meets many of his friends, all of whom like her. Rumors begin to circulate that talent scouts will be present at the student showcase so, they commit to work longer hours to perfect their performance. The more time they spend together the more they realize they have a special connection they have never felt with anyone else. They decide they need a break from everything and head to Ismael's home for a visit. Alexandra is finally exposed to Ismael's environment. She feels a bit scared walking through such a rough neighborhood but all the fear dissipates once she steps into his parents' apartment. Spanish music is blaring, his mother and grandmother are by the stove cooking, while his father is carving "pernil"(Spanish roasted pork). Alexandra feels the warmth and love, and instantly feels at home. During dinner the family shares stories about Ismael as a child and his parents lovingly recount the story of how they met and fell in love. Ismael and Alexandra look at each other and at this precise moment realize they feel more for each other than just friendship. Their relationship blossoms and as their love deepens Alexandra comes up with a song title to the lyrics they created together "Quiero Que Me Ames"(I Want You to Love Me). Now the time has come for Ismael to meet Alexandra's parents. They decide to travel via Metro North to Alexandra's home in Chappaqua. Ismael's nervousness increases as he takes in the beautiful

scenery from the train window. He knows he is in a different economic status than Alexandra and worries her parents will not like him. As soon as Ismael enters Alexandra's elegant home he feels uncomfortable and out of place. During dinner he is peppered with questions. Alexandra tries to lighten the mood with jokes. Her father laughs, but her mother remains stoic and it is apparent she disapproves of Ismael. After dinner, they decide to go walking through town where they bump into a few of Alexandra's childhood friends. They are not as warm and accepting as Ismael's friends. They decide to disregard what other people feel about their relationship, but a strain has been planted in their relationship. They both know that if they take their relationship to a deeper level, the disapproval of family and friends can cause problems. As a result of the strain they make excuses to avoid practicing and consider backing out of the student showcase. They know their parents already disapprove of their dreams, so they believe they should sacrifice their dreams and their love. While practicing one afternoon they are unable to coordinate their moves. They become frustrated which, results in a nasty argument. They realize they have been suppressing anger and fear about their situation. At that exact moment they understood what they had to do. They look at each other, reach for their respective phones, and call their parents. As they detail their dreams to their parents much arguing could be heard going back and forth, until finally silence and almost simultaneously, they both say, "I love you too." It turns out both sets of parents only want the best for them and agree to have an open mind, and encourage them to pursue their dreams and their love. Alexandra and Ismael perform their duet "Quiero Que Me Ames." Ismael's parents cheer alongside Alexandra's parents. An executive from Sony Music is present at the showcase but leaves without approaching them. The film ends with them in a studio making music together with love in their eyes for each other.