

THE GULCH

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SETTING

An Airbnb in the Gulch neighborhood of Nashville, Tennessee. Now-ish.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

DAN	The groom, around 30, lives in Manhattan
HARRISON	College friend, lives in San Francisco
ZACK	College friend, lives in Philadelphia
VIK	College friend, lives in Brooklyn with his partner
CHRIS	Brother-in-law, married with a kid in Dallas
XANDER	Cousin, a few years younger, lives in Brooklyn
CANDI	A stripper, around their age, local

(The door opens. In come XANDER and ZACK with an excessive amount of plastic grocery bags on their arms.)

ZACK

A little help!

(Dan and Vik jump up and grab bags, bringing them into the kitchen. Chris looks at his phone.)

XANDER

Yo, yo, yo!

DAN

How was the supermarket?

XANDER

Redneck city.

ZACK

That's not completely fair.

XANDER

Zack made eyes with some Nashville thot in the cereal aisle, so he liked it.

ZACK

You've gotta get to know the locals....

Oh! There's still a watermelon and drinks in the car.

(ZACK and DAN head back outside.)

XANDER

What did y'all get up to here?

VIK

Just hanging out.

CHRIS

Whole lotta nothing.

XANDER

Well, we'll get the party started soon. We got some dope beer. Got rum. I think Zack got some wine, if that's your jam.

(ZACK and DAN reenter, hands full. Most move in and out of the kitchen unloading it for the next few minutes.)

ZACK

Xander got Amaro, for some reason.

XANDER

It's good! Isn't that enough reason?

VIK (*Dismissive*)

Sounds it to me.

(He turns away from Xander and gives the rest of the guys a look like, This fucking guy.)

XANDER

I have this Fernet sour recipe that will knock your fucking socks off. Every single one of you.

DAN

You're just gonna make us black out again, man.

XANDER

Dude! It is not my fault my cocktails were so good you literally could not stop drinking them!

CHRIS

Did anyone get whiskey?

XANDER

Uh...I think we got rum but no whiskey.

CHRIS

Oh. I asked for whiskey.

ZACK

Oh shit. Sorry, man.

Once we got there we realized we had a shopping list for the grocery store but not for the liquor store.

CHRIS

And what, no phone to text us?

(Half a beat.)

ZACK

We can go back if you want.

CHRIS (*Picking up a bottle*)

Whatever, man. At least we have...whatever this shit is.

XANDER

It's amaro. It's actually not / that different-

CHRIS

I know what it is.

(A beat.)

CHRIS *(Continued)*

They probably wouldn't have anything good up here anyway.

XANDER

I mean, it was huge in there. Nasty as hell, but they had a lot of shit.

The liquor stores in Brooklyn are all little mom and pops. But they tend to have good curation, generally speaking.

(No one is really listening. Chris has gone back to his phone. Zack and Dan are unpacking the groceries. Vik is working on connecting something to the TV. After a few beats, Xander joins him.)

XANDER

Hey, man. What you got going over here?

VIK

Um. Trying to hook up the N64.

I just didn't think through that the TV might be less than, like, 20 years old.

XANDER

They're always changing that shit, man. *(Looking closer)* So what, you need an HDMI?

VIK

No, this is super primitive.

XANDER

I mean on the TV. It's an HDMI port?

VIK

Oh. Yeah, I think so. I just know some of them still have the old jacks too, so I'm trying to / see if-

XANDER

They make analog to HDMI adapters. I can run out and grab one if we need. Actually, I can order one for delivery here. Straight up, these apps take like under an hour usually.

VIK

Um. Yeah, it's cool. Let's maybe see if we can figure this out and go from there.

XANDER

Word.

(Vik continues on the TV. Xander pops up, unsure where to go for a minute. He heads to the kitchen, where Zack and Dan are still unpacking silently.)

XANDER

What up, bros?

ZACK

Hey, Xander.

(More silence as Xander starts putting stuff away.)

ZACK *(Continued)*

Oh. We're actually putting snacks and stuff in that cabinet.

XANDER *(Moving the stuff)*

Oh. Nice.

(A few beats. Xander gives a slap on the back to Zack, who looks less than enthused by it.)

XANDER

It was a good haul. We did good.

ACT 1

SCENE 3

(Much later that Friday. Stillness and darkness in the house for a few beats. Then laughing and stumbling outside the door. Fumbling with the keypad, and then VIK, CHRIS, DAN, XANDER, and ZACK enter - everyone pleasantly drunk, at a minimum.)

VIK

I have never had an Uber driver that fucked up!

XANDER

Welcome to the South, man.

ZACK

(In an awful Southern accent) "Well they're comin' in here, and tearing apart our damn city." *(Back to normal)* Um, I guarantee Black people have been here longer than he has.

CHRIS

Well, he's like 30.

ZACK

His family, I mean.

XANDER

Unless they were the slave traders. And then....

ZACK

Case in point!

DAN

I was sure he was going to drop the n-word.

VIK

Dude. The whole time, I was just like, please don't, please don't. Seven minutes, six minutes....

CHRIS *(Plopping down on the couch)*

Ahh. So what's our plan? Nightcap?

XANDER *(Pouring himself some amaro)*

One step ahead of you. Who wants?

(A beat. Then all but Xander crack up.)

XANDER (*Continued*)

What!? This shit is fire!

ZACK

You're just funny, / man.

DAN

I'll take a nip.

XANDER

There we go.

(A quiet beat as he pours some and hands it to Dan.)

CHRIS

So where's Harry? I wanna meet this guy.

VIK

He had to / work-

CHRIS

All weekend?

VIK

No, no. He's still coming.

DAN (*Checking his texts*)

Yeah. He thought he might be able to tonight, but now he says tomorrow around noon.

VIK

Fucking law firms. And I thought consulting was bad.

ZACK

I mean....

(They look at him.)

ZACK (*Continued*)

Like, do you think it's real? Like he really has to work?

(They look at him some more.)

ZACK (*Continued*)

Like, it might be hard for him to spend time at a bachelor party right now. Maybe he needs an excuse.

VIK

I mean, / maybe, man-

DAN

No, I think he has to work. Anyway tomorrow daytime. We have the choice / of Topgolf or-

CHRIS

So wait, how did it happen? Did she get stabbed, or / jump off of a bridge, or-

ZACK

Dude, dude, dude!

VIK

What the hell, man? Does it / even matter?

DAN

Yeah, / let's maybe...

CHRIS

I mean, I'm just curious. We all know what happened. / If no one wants to tell me I can get the details out of the guy once he's here anyway.

ZACK

You don't know shit.

VIK

Yeah, don't do that, Chris.

CHRIS

I'm not / saying-

ZACK

Just don't bring it up! Like, let the guy live in peace. His life has been hard enough for the past two months. Let him have a fun weekend....

CHRIS

Alright! Okay.

(A beat.)

CHRIS *(Continued)*

They were supposed to get married like / right around now, right?

VIK

CHRIS!

ZACK

CHRIS!!

DAN

Let's move on.

ZACK (*To Vik, quietly*)

How does he even know about any of this?

VIK (*In response*)

From Melissa, I guess?

XANDER

Does anyone know if Harrison likes Amaro? Because I'm gonna need help finishing this by Sunday.

ACT 1

SCENE 4

(Daylight blasts in, and permeates the house. Stuff is strewn about - sweatshirts, beer cans, N64 controllers. A few silent moments, then, outside - the rolling of a suitcase and fumbling with the lock. The door opens, and in walks HARRISON, tall and clean-cut, maybe in a bomber jacket, or a puffy vest with his law firm's logo. A pristine rolling suitcase trails him.)

(He looks around and smiles at the disarray, putting his bag down and plopping on the couch, where he uses his phone for a few moments. Then, he rises and starts to look around the house - first downstairs, then upstairs. At one point, he checks his phone again, and then moves his suitcase into an upstairs room.)

(He notices the letter board and smiles. He approaches it, thinking, and tries a few combinations, ultimately rearranging the letters into: "JOSH FUCK ME SO WEL" with a jumble of extras at the bottom. He's laughing to himself when he suddenly loses his breath and his face goes pallid. He collapses onto the couch and starts breathing heavily, looking up at the ceiling for a few long beats. As he breathes, frozen in place, his phone pings a few times.)

HARRISON *(Slow, breathy)*

Fuck.... Fuck.

(Over a few long moments, he slowly regains energy and color, very gradually picking his head up and returning to normal breathing. He looks at his phone and gets up.)

HARRISON *(Continued)*

Okay, okay. We're good, Harry. We're good.

(He splashes water on his face in the kitchen sink, and heads out the door. He's nearly out when he comes back in, heads for the fridge, and grabs a can of craft beer. Then he leaves.)

HARRISON *(OFF, faintly)*

Hi! For Harrison?

Great, thanks.

(We faintly hear a car's door open and close, and then it driving off.)