

THE VODKA CEREMONY

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FADE IN:

EXT. SMALL ALASKA TOWN (NIGHT)

A montage of shots of a small Alaska town. It is summer, but still looks cold. Docks sit empty. Houses have shuttered windows to keep out the dull twilight. Pick up trucks litter the landscape. A tavern with a gravel parking lot appears to be closed. We see the outside of the home of Roy Overbeck. A gray house that is neat looking, but unremarkable.

SUPER: PART ONE: THE FIRST TO GO

INT. ROY OVERBECK'S HOME (NIGHT)

It is clean and kempt. ROY OVERBECK sleeps on a big leather chair with his feet on an ottoman. He is in his early 50's. Thinning hair. Three-day old beard. Not fat but not in shape. Roy wakes up hearing a KNOCK on his door. CHARLEY JONES walks in. Charley is in his late 40's but looks older. He is an Alaskan with black curly hair, overweight and dresses in wrinkled clothes.

CHARLEY

What is going on?

ROY

Very little.

(Looks at phone.)

Is it midnight already?

CHARLEY

Not even. The bar emptied out early. I closed at eleven. Tuesdays suck.

ROY

My favorite people stayed to the end?

CHARLEY

They left about ten thirty-ish. You should have showed up so I could have just handed this to you.

Charley flips a large manilla envelope on Roy's lap.

ROY

I would prefer not to see my ex and the biggest douche-nozzle in town spooning in the back booth. But thanks for the offer.

Roy opens the envelope. He takes out a large wad of money and makes a half-hearted count before putting it back in the envelope.

ROY (CONT'D)

Did this charter give me a stellar review or no?

CHARLEY

No comments made to me. They were alright. Easy job. A little under our price range, but you took the job to avoid Lory, so who am I to judge?

ROY

Being here all week trying to avoid seeing Larry fucking Soresen dripping pheromones on to Lory makes me lower my charter prices.

CHARLEY

Our charter prices. Why not take your plane down to Washington? That 40-year-old with the wine bar in Tacoma, what is up with her?

ROY

Dead end.

(Beat.)

I think it is. I was dating Lory for a year, so I pretty much shut out Tacoma.

(Yawning)

Her name is Louise. I did text her yesterday. No reply.

CHARLEY

Look man, I live down the street. I did not mind dropping off the payoff for the job. I do wish you would deal in wire transfers instead of cash.

(Charley stares at Roy.
Roy seems disinterested
in the conversation.)

(MORE)

CHARLEY (CONT'D)

Regardless, we have been partners for a long time. We never argue about money and I do not want to start now. But this town is too small for you to avoid Lory and Larry. There are no more than a dozen men that live here who are not in the air or on the water for work. Larry is the richest of them. Lory has a great ass. They were going to happen if she wanted it to happen. You have to accept this and pretend it aint a thing.

ROY

(Angry)

I will come into the bar and get my pay. But if that cuntty jerkoff says one word to me, I will fuck him up right in the middle of the dance floor. I never liked him. And now I have an excuse to do something about it.

CHARLEY

There are three bars in this town and Mr. Moneybags frequents mine. Do not fuck up how I pay my bills.

Charley and Roy stare at each other. Roy raises his hand in a way that suggests he will comply.

ROY

I will catch him coming out of his real estate office. Any work before that Chinese guy and his wife have me fly them up to Fairbanks?

CHARLEY

Nope. Dead week.

ROY

Lovely.

CHARLEY

Call up Tacoma. Tell her you are flying down for some bullshit reason, and you are stopping into her place. If she is not there or she just stiff arms you, eat some avocado toast with a glass of cabernet and move on.

Charley gets up to leave. Roy puts the manila envelope in the drawer of the end table next to his chair.

ROY

Lock the door on your way out.

CHARLEY

Will do. You have time off this week. Take the plane down to the forty-eight. Do something. Do anything. If Lory and Larry dry humping each other all over town will piss you off just be somewhere else.

Charley leaves.

EXT. SMALL ALASKA TOWN (DAY)

The town comes to life. The sky is cloudy and barely lit with sunlight. It looks like five AM, but it is nearly eleven. Trucks drive pass each other. A freighter comes into the docks, met by workers waiting to unload cargo. Fishing boats come in and out of the harbor. A local diner is packed with people. Charley is seen exiting his truck in the gravel parking lot of his bar. He walks towards the front door fumbling the keys in his hand. We see the front of Roy's house. An older woman is pulled by a large dog on a leash passed the house.

INT. ROY'S HOUSE. (CONT.)

Roy sleeps on his bed. He lays on his back, on top of the quilt, still dressed in his clothes, his hands folded on his stomach. He looks like a corpse in a casket. The landline phone rings in the kitchen. He jumps up and hurries to answer it. It is an old 8-line phone often seen on a secretary's desk. Three appointment books lay next to the phone. MARY D'ANTONIO HEARN is the caller.

ROY

(answers phone)

Northern Passage Charter. This is Roy.

MARY (V.O.)

Hello, Roy. It, uh...it is Mary.

Long pause as we see Roy close his eyes. He knows Mary. Her voice time warps him into a past he worked hard to forget.

ROY

Mary D'Antonio. I never thought I would hear your voice again.

MARY

I thought of calling you a few times. I never had the courage.

Mary's voice suggests she had been crying.

ROY

You found me. How?

MARY

The Internet. One night, three years back, I looked up your name on a website my neighbor told me about. Find old friends kinda thing. I was curious. You run an airplane charter with someone named Charles Jones III. It looks like he runs all the social networking pages. I never saw a pic of you. I wish I could. But I have the phone number.

ROY

And you decided to call today.

Mary's voice starts to crack from crying.

MARY

Yes. I, I have news. It is bad. Victor is...I cannot believe it. Victor is dead.

ROY

Victor Cahill?

MARY

(crying)

Yes. Who else? You were best friends back then.

ROY

I have not seen him, or you, in thirty years.

MARY

Twenty-nine.

ROY

Either way. It was a long time past. I am sorry he is dead. What happened to him?

Mary collects herself.

MARY

We had a really bad storm last week. It blew the tiles off of Victor's parents' house. Two days ago, he was on the roof fixing the tiles and somehow...I do not believe this, somehow, he falls off headfirst. Snapped his neck. No one saw him fall. No one knows how it happened. The freakiest accident in history and no one had a damn doorbell camera or eyeballs or anything on him.

(Roy is uncomfortable. He starts to fidget in his seat.)

MARY (CONT'D)

Victor was still in shape. I still don't believe this. He has a son. Twenty. Good kid. He is in the Coast Guard. I, I, I don't know. Still in shock. I need you to come back for the funeral.

ROY

What? No. Mary, this is all weird to me. Life moved on for me. I really am sorry Victor is dead. My aunt is dead. Twelve years now. She raised me and I did not come back for that. My cousins and me were never close. I do not have any of those Facebook pages to keep in touch. I have not stepped foot in New Jersey since I left. It is not a place I want to return...

MARY

Roy, please. I need you to come back. I know you will think this is silly. But we have to do The Vodka Ceremony. (Roy pulls the receiver away from his ear to stare at it in bewilderment. He mouths the word "huh".)

ROY
Did you say a vodka ceremony?

MARY
Yes.

ROY
I have no idea what that is.

MARY
That party we had. Easter weekend.
Your aunt worked the double shift
and we all got drunk at your house.
There was eight of us. We had so
much fun and two bottles of vodka
were left unopened. So, we drew up
a pact to drink the bottles in the
future. The first when one of us
died...

Mary's voice starts to crack with sobbing again. Roy's mouth is open. This is too surreal to believe.

MARY (CONT'D)
...and when there are only two of
us left. We swore we would do this.
We wrote up a ceremony. We signed
it. Me, you, Victor, EZ, that Kelly
girl, Janet, Felix and Steve.

ROY
(Sarcastically)
Ah, yes, Steve. You saved the best
for last.

Another pause. Roy lurches forward waiting to hear Mary's reaction.

MARY
We married. Twin girls. They turn
twenty-four next week.

Roy closes his eyes and shakes his head in disbelief. He did not want to hear that.

ROY
I barely remember this party. I do
not think this ceremony is a
legally binding thing three decades
later if I did remember it better.
The little bit I do recall of this,
it was you and Felix being goofy.
(MORE)

ROY (CONT'D)

And I really do not want to be in a room with Stephen Hearn, whether he is your husband, ex-husband or a hobo in Atlantic City.

MARY

Roy, please. This is important. It is important to me. Come home. Make peace. Do this ceremony.

ROY

What if I had died sometime in the past? I am a pilot in Alaska. I had a couple of scary landings. This vodka ceremony would not have happened...

MARY

(voice raised)

Yes! Yes, it would! I would have found out and forced the others to come!

ROY

Bullshit! Now I am getting angry.

Roy stands up from the chair. He grips the receiver tight and points at the phone with his other hand to add emphasis.

ROY (CONT'D)

Twenty-nine years ago, I left there. I gave my aunt a phone number and nothing else. We talked about once a month and, as best as I can tell, she told no one where I was. And that is what I wanted!

(Beat.)

My life turned out fine and no one would have some dumb vodka ceremony to celebrate my life had I died.

MARY

Please. Come home. Everyone else said yes. We made a promise to drink the bottle when one of us died. It finally happened.

(Openly sobbing)

Victor. Of all us, I never thought Victor would be the first to go.

SUPER: PART TWO: SECOND WORST

EXT. LITTLE EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP, NJ (DAY)

The town has a series of small waterways called lagoons. Roy is in a rented Honda in the driveway of a small house with a lagoon in the back. Another car is parked there. He is clean shaven. He sees a woman smoking a cigarette on the dock in the back yard. Her name is MAGGIE. She is in late forties. Obese. Multiple tattoos are visible. She is dressed in a way that is more for comfort on a summer day than for humility. Roy exits the car and walks towards her.

ROY
You are Maggie?

MAGGIE
Roy Overbeck. You've aged well.
Time has been good to you.

Maggie flicks the cigarette into the lagoon and walks towards him.

ROY
We know each other?

MAGGIE
We did. You and my sister had a thing back in high school. Alyssa Richmond.

Roy thinks a second and nods in acknowledgement.

ROY
You went by Migs back then.

MAGGIE
My sister called me Migs. I hated it. And she loved that I hated it. Everyone else called me Maggie.

ROY
Layton is your married name. I might have recognized Richmond on the rental listing.

MAGGIE
Ex-husband number one. Married and divorced twice now. Men can't handle me it seems.

ROY
So it seems.

Maggie looks Roy up and down.

MAGGIE

You look good, Roy. You were my first crush. Did you know that? I was twelve when you and my sister messed around. I thought you were a big teddy bear. My sister should have treated you nicer. You turned out way better than her two shit bag husbands.

ROY

Long dead subject.

INT/EXT. Maggie leads Roy to the back of the house. They enter through the sliding patio door. The interior is small and bland. It resembles a suite in a budget motel.

MAGGIE

The A/C is noisy but it works great. The main bedroom has a ceiling fan that should be more than enough to sleep comfortably.

ROY

This will due for tonight.

MAGGIE

You can stay a second night if you tell me tomorrow before noon.

ROY

No. One night back here is plenty.

MAGGIE

You listed a funeral on the app for your reason to visit. Victor?

ROY

Yes.

MAGGIE

You stayed in touch all these years?

ROY

No. I spoke to no one from here for thirty years. Mary D'Antonio called me to tell me he passed.

MAGGIE

Mary. I see her all the time. She never talks to me.

(beat))

(MORE)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Vic's son and my daughter dated briefly in high school. Did not last long. The son takes after the father, not able to commit to any girl.

Roy goes in the bedroom and looks it over. Small, but a big bed. He nods in approval. He comes out and gives a glance to the bathroom before coming back to the kitchen.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

You lived up the road from here when we were kids. Gonna do the nostalgia thing before going to Vic's viewing tonight?

ROY

(Tearsely)

I might just sit here and have some quiet time.

Maggie takes that rudely. She drops the keys on the kitchen table and turns to leave.

MAGGIE

My sister moved down to Kentucky about a year ago to help her daughter with her kids. Loves it down there. She did not come up for any holidays, so Victor Cahill taking a header off his roof is not enough to get her to grace us with her presence. I thought I would tell you in case you were scared she would say hello. Anyway, gotta go. Enjoy your quiet time.

Maggie slams the door as she leaves. Roy can see her through the kitchen window as she walks to her car. He watches her light a cigarette. As she struggles to get into her small car, she yells out an expletive.

ROY

You were so beautiful back then.

EXT. A SIDE ROAD. LITTLE EGG HARBOR. (DAY)

Roy stands outside his childhood home down the road. It has an addition being built on the back near the dock that looks newly built. A purple mailbox has cartoon ponies on it. He is unemotional staring at the house where he grew up.

Across the street, a car with a shamrock sticker draws Roy's attention. We next see him walking down the road. A silver Lexus passes him. The Lexus pulls over on the shoulder of an intersection one hundred feet ahead of him. Roy notices this and cranes his head to see if he recognizes the driver.

ROY

And what ghost may this be?

The front door of the Lexus opens, and we see the fashionable sandal heels of JANET NORTHWAY. She is the same age of Roy. Half-white, half-Filipino, Janet has a light brown complexion. Her hair is wavy brown with blonde streaks. She is wearing white pants and a metallic blue blouse. Her wardrobe shows off her curves. On her left hand is a huge diamond wedding ring. She is a woman very comfortable with her wealth.

ROY (CONT'D)

Janet.

(They both smile as they walk towards each other.)

Nice money entrance. Is Mr. Janet an accountant or a lawyer?

JANET

He is a lawyer that works for accountants. Your gift of discernment is as sharp as ever.

ROY

Yeah. To be blunt, we all knew you were always going to marry into money. You had the ambition and the apleness.

JANET

Apleness sounds like a vulgar reference to my tits.

ROY

And they are still amazing!

Janet leans in to kiss Roy on the cheek. They hug. He seems genuinely delighted by the act of affection. Roy notices the expensive jewelry. Janet noticed Roy's strongly built forearms.

JANET

I did not think you would come back for Victor. You seemed happy to have disappeared.

(MORE)

JANET (CONT'D)

(Beat)

I assume Mary called and begged you to come back from wherever you have been hiding to do this vodka ritual she insists is important.

ROY

Alaska. I am a pilot.

JANET

Oooh, sexy pilot! Do you hire yourself out for bachelorette parties?

ROY

(Sighs)

Not a sexy pilot. Just a charter pilot. And I only rent out my plane. Screwing the pilot will cost you extra.

JANET

I can meet your price.

ROY

I charge the rich ones extra.

JANET

Ike might not like that, but he rarely checks the monthly statements.

ROY

Ike. As in Isaac? So, you married a Jew or a Mormon. I do not think a Mormon can handle you.

JANET

Isaac is a Jew. And he worships me. You will meet him tonight. I brought him here kicking and screaming. Victor liked him. Steve and Mary, well, politics came up and Steve and Ike are not like-minded.

ROY

Ike prefers the stately manor he bought you in Montauk instead of the greenhead feeding grounds that is Little Egg?

JANET

Long Beach Island, thank you. I married a Jersey Jew. Long Island is too far away. Do you like stereotypes? We live in Red Bank. The summer house is in Harvey Cedars. He takes the train into Manhattan on Tuesdays and Thursdays. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays he buries himself in the basement office in our home and I do not see him from eight to four.

ROY

And you take the kiddos to soccer practice. The domestic dominatrix!

JANET

Pre-made family. His son was twelve and the bratty princess was ten when we met. And now they are grown and living out west. But I must confess I do do the grandma thing pretty well.

Roy snickers.

JANET (CONT'D)

What?

ROY

Back in high school you said you would rather be eaten alive by red ants than have a child ripped from your body. You compared childbirth to the Alien movies. Constancy, thy name is Janet Northway!

JANET

Yes! And I kept my last name. Ike's last name is Fischbein. The guys will tell you that later to bust balls. Truth is, I really did fall for Ike. If he wanted another child, I would have gave him one. He was in his forties when we met. He did not want a second family. He wanted a sexy, fun wife. All jokes aside, I got lucky we he asked me out. He has given me a great life.

ROY

I do not doubt that. And I am genuinely happy for you.

A car drives by the two of them blowing its horn.

JANET

That was loud! Because no one ever has a conversation on the shoulder of this road. Rude!

ROY

What were you doing coming down this way? This was not your part of town in the old days.

JANET

My cousin Pearl and her husband just bought a house down here. Back to my mom's place now. Ike commandeered the guest bedroom for work calls. He should be done by now. Have you seen Mary yet?

ROY

No. Delaying that.

JANET

Steve is still an asshole, if that helps any.

ROY

Neither helps nor hurts. I had no idea what anyone here did for three decades, and, really, I was OK with that.

JANET

Well, whatever this vodka ceremony is, Mary is acting like her life depends on it. I barely remember it.

ROY

Me too.

JANET

Hmm. Well, back home. I will see you tonight. Byes!

Janet gets in her car and closes the door. Roy pauses a second, walks to the car and subtly taps on the window glass. As Janet rolls down the window, Roy places his forearms on the door and gets in close.

ROY

There is a question I need to ask.

JANET

Go for it.

ROY

Does Ike know what a dirty little cum slut you are?

Janet stares deep into Roy's eyes. Her hands grab the wheel.

ROY (CONT'D)

I do not think you would have told him how wet you get being talked to like a gangbanged meth hooker. How I used to call you late at night and command you to finger yourself on the phone. Oh, how you moaned!

Janet's breath is labored. She spreads her legs wide in the car.

ROY (CONT'D)

He never heard how I used to slip dollar bills into your locker with instructions written on them, telling you where to leave your panties, your bra, or anything else. Maybe it would be in the gym, or the chem lab. Whatever I commanded, really. And all so you could walk around the school ready for fucking. He loves you, and you him, but you were never courageous enough to tell him that his hot trophy wife was nothing more than a wannabe cheap fucktoy that could cum on command. White pants, no panties? Yeah, I looked when you got out of the car. You wanted me to look. You are still nothing more than free porn and cheap goods wrapped in nice packaging, aren't you, whore?

Janet closes her eyes and exhales. She had an orgasm.

ROY (CONT'D)

Good girl! All these years later
and you still get off on dirty
talk. I thought you would.

JANET

Thank you.

ROY

Yep!

Janet starts her car and peels out on the road as Roy stands there smiling. As her car gets farther away, he turns to see that in the yard of the house across the street, a ten-year-old boy is standing there staring at him. Roy smiles at the kid and starts walking down the road.

INT. MART AND STEVE'S BEDROOM (DAY)

We see Mary staring in the mirror on the vanity. It is a huge bedroom with tons of closet space. A large four poster oak bed with a canopy dominates the room. Mary has thick brown hair pulled up nicely. She is in a one-piece girdle. She puts her hands over her stomach to make sure it is smoothed out. She adjusts the girdle. Frustrated, she flinches her hands. She takes the black dress off of the bed and puts it on. Buttoning the front, she is staring intensely at her reflection in the mirror. She then stares at three belts on the bed and picks up a white one. Wrapping it around her waist, she inhales. After buckling the belt, she stands in profile in front of the mirror. She places her hands over her breast and slightly lifts them up. She then puts her hands on her buttocks. She seems satisfied with how the dress fits. She leans forward staring into the mirror to talk to herself.

MARY

You are stronger than you think.
Those that love you are there for
you during bad times. You will get
through today with grace and
courage. The only thing that can
hurt you is your own fear. And you
fear nothing!

A car door slams O.S. Mary closes her eyes for a second, exhales and stares back at the mirror.

MARY (CONT'D)

You are the rock.

Mary grabs her black high heel shoes off the chair and walks out of the bedroom.

EXT. EPHRAIM ZAMORA'S HOUSE (DAY)

Outside of a bi-level house. Roy is in his car parked on the curb staring at the front door. We can see a text he is reading inviting him over for a drink before the viewing. He exits the car and stares at the front lawn. A placard stating that Leandra Zamora is on the local high school soccer team is on the lawn. Three nice cars are in the driveway. EPHRAIM ZAMORA comes out of the front door. He is called EZ by everyone. They approach each other. EZ is Puerto Rican. He has a chestnut brown complexion. Tall. Short, balding black hair. He has a goatee with white hairs on the chin. He is in good physical shape.

EZ

Roy Fucking Overbeck. Still ugly as ever.

EZ bear hugs Roy. Roy returns the hug. Breaking the hug, EZ puts his hands on Roy's cheeks.

EZ (CONT'D)

Damn, boy, you aged well.

ROY

Me? You look like you can run a marathon.

EZ

Not with my bad knee. Remember that line drive I took off my knee the last game of senior year? It never healed right.

ROY

Your curve balls always forgot to curve. A better hitter would have hit that cookie five hundred feet.

EZ

I wasn't gonna go pro anyway.

EZ takes his hands off of Roy's cheeks and turns to face the house.

EZ (CONT'D)

So, big surprise, I took over the house when my father retired.

ROY

I hope your parents are alive and well.

EZ

Alive and kicking and living down
in Clearwater, Florida.

ROY

Swanky.

EZ

Papi did OK with the restaurants.
My sisters both married and moved
away and I learned the family
business good enough to run things
when the old man slowed down. You
know he still runs a small cantina
down there? Eighty-two and he
refuses to take it easy.

ROY

He always was a workaholic.

EZ

Yes. And still can squeeze a gallon
of milk out of a bull. He charged
me a mortgage to take over the
house.

ROY

That sounds about right. He never
gave anyone a free meal at his
places.

(beat)

By the looks of things, you are
married with kids.

EZ

Twenty-three years. Boy, girl, boy,
girl. Thankfully, they all look
like their mama.

Roy nods in agreement. They both laugh.

ROY

Mary gave you my number I assume.

EZ

Yes. I think she wanted me to text
you to make sure you actually did
come home. Her and Steve got here
an hour ago. She still thinks you
are lying about being in town.

Roy looks at EZ with trepidation.

ROY

Mary and Steve are here?

EZ

Mary, Steve, Felix and my wife are out back on the patio having a cocktail. Tommy Cattrell was here earlier. Him and Steve are still in their forty-year blood feud, so he left soon after they showed up.

ROY

Tommy avoided prison? How?

EZ

(Laughing)

Barely! He married up. His wife straightened his ass out pretty tight.

ROY

Ironic given that chasing skirt was always the thing that got him in trouble.

EZ

Tom Cat changed. His daughter is in the Air Force Academy. His son is sixteen and just got early acceptance into Penn. A good wife can turn any bum into Mr. Perfect.

ROY

Astonishing.

EZ

So, are you coming in and facing the old crew or you gonna act high and mighty and make them come out here?

Roy is nervous. He was not ready to face Mary and Steve yet. He takes in a deep breath, exhales and nods towards EZ to lead the way.

EXT. EZ'S BACK PATIO

Sitting on the patio deck in the backyard is Mary, STEVE HEARN, FLEIX QUATTRONE and ELLIE ZAMORA. Steve has blondish-brown hair combed back to patch over the balding part. He has steely blue eye and a beer gut. Felix has dark Italian features.

His thick black hair is lightly peppered with whites. He is short, 5' 6". He tends to speak in a whisper and pulls in close to people when talking one-on-one. Ellie has long, straight brown hair that she wears down. She is Black, forty-eight years old, tall and constantly smiles. She has a thick Texas accent. They are all dressed in somber dress clothes for the upcoming viewing. All of them have a beer or cocktail. EZ slides open the screen door and comes on to the patio with Roy.

EZ

Look who is back from the dead!

FELIX, STEVE
Roy!

ROY

Never died, just in Alaska.

STEVE

(standing up)

Well, I guess that is living.

Roy and Steve shake hands. Neither of them is smiling. Felix gets up and walks over to shake hands with Roy, he pulls in close to him.

FELIX

It is good to see you. How are things?

ROY

Everything is fine. Not too many complaints.

FELIX

Alaska, huh? I cannot see myself there. Rough place to live?

ROY

No.

FELIX

Is it hard to find women up there?

ROY

Hookers, Felix? Are you asking about hookers?

Steve and EZ laugh.

FELIX

Just a girlfriend or a wife or something. I don't know if guys get lonely up that way.

ROY

You know, Felix, I had a low bar coming back here. Your question somehow crawled under it. To answer you seriously, women run wild and fancy free in Alaska.

Ellie gets up from her seat and goes over to shake Roy's hand. She places her other hand on EZ's shoulder.

ELLIE

Howdy, Roy. I am Ellie. Ephraim was happy when Mary told him you were coming back. It is just awful that the reunion was caused by such a horrible tragedy. Victor was such a good man.

ROY

I was asked to come back to partake in some bizarre vodka ceremony that I barely remember agreeing to. It was weird enough to pique my interest.

EZ

We could have it now.

MARY (O.S.)

Janet and Kelly aren't here.

STEVE

Has anyone spoken with them today?

ROY

I saw Janet up on Twin Lakes Boulevard about an hour ago.

FELIX

You met up?

ROY

The fates took hold of us.

STEVE

Her husband is like ninety years old.

ELLIE

He is seventy. Be nice, Steve.
 (Turning to Roy.)
 He worships Janet. They are such a
 great couple.

ROY

That sounds like a Texas accent.

ELLIE

It is.

ROY

Whereabouts?

ELLIE

Fort Worth.

ROY

(Turning to EZ)
 You married a Cowboys fan? You?

ELLIE

Darned right he did.

EZ

Love is love, bro.

ROY

This is a good time to change the
 subject.

EZ

How about a rum and coke? Let's sit
 down.

ROY

You remember my favorite drink.
 Pour it.

EZ goes into the house to pour the drink and everyone takes a
 seat on the patio. Roy sits down in the chair directly
 opposite of Mary. They lock eyes on each other. The others
 notice. Everyone sits.

ELLIE

Roy, Mary said you are a pilot in
 Alaska. How did that happen?

ROY

(Still staring at Mary)
 When I left here, I went to Tacoma,
 Washington.

(MORE)

ROY (CONT'D)

My next-door neighbor here went out there for work and told me to join him if I wanted to make money.

STEVE

Bogus Bill? You left here to hang out with Bogus Bill?

EZ comes out to the patio and puts a rum and coke next to Roy. He sits next to Ellie, kissing her on the forehead.

ROY

Bill Rugnetta. Yes. His uncle was a union dock worker at the Port of Tacoma. So I took him up on the offer. After a year, I was lucky enough to get some longshoreman work. I did that for about six years. On my trips up to Alaska I started drinking at this one bar where the owner told me I would make for a good pilot. The lessons were cheaper than I thought they would be. I enjoyed it. I was good at it. It pays very well. Roll end credits.

Mary shakes her head in disapproval. Roy ends his gaze.

FELIX

Bogus Bill. He was older than us. Little off that guy.

MARY

His father used to come into the Acme on Sunday mornings when I worked there. He would always come to my register and stare at me. Super creepy.

FELIX

That pulled back dyed jet black hair in a ponytail with the goatee he had. He looked like a Satanist.

EZ

Giacomo was his real name. But we called him Black Jack because he dressed in all black clothes. We used to make up stories about him. Mob hitman. Cult leader.

(MORE)

EZ (CONT'D)

I used to hate going over to Roy's house because I was afraid Black Jack was gonna kidnap me for some blood ritual.

ROY

I never understood why anyone had a problem with the Rugnettas. They were quiet, left me and my aunt alone, said hi and bye when we saw them. Everything said about them was total bullshit.

STEVE

Bogus Bill was a little weird. He was two years ahead of us in high school but acted like a sixth grader begging us to like him.

ELLIE

Roy seems to like him.

ROY

We were not close friends back then, but we got along. He came home to see his father on holidays. We talked. When I got tired of this place, I called him up and he said the job offer was still good.

ELLIE

Roll end credits.

STEVE

Does Bogus Bill get a happy ending to this story?

ROY

He did very well. Bill became a union rep. Met a woman whose father worked for Microsoft. He lives in a beautiful house in Bellevue, Washington. Three kids. An obnoxiously cute granddaughter. Goes to Miami Beach for Christmas every year. I had lunch with him in April for his birthday and he was in a great mood. So, yeah, happy ending.

STEVE

Oh, man! Hard to believe any of us that stayed in New Jersey avoided suicide.

(MORE)

STEVE (CONT'D)

I mean, I might own the most successful auto dealership in Ocean County, but if I had gone to Tacoma...

ROY

(Tersely)

I did not compare myself to you. Or Bill. I was asked questions and gave answers. I did not ask how well you did and I most likely wasn't going...

ELLIE

OK, boys, play nice. I have four kids that fight, I do not need six.

There is a moment of silence as Roy scowls at Steve. Steve smirks back at him. The sliding patio door opens and EZ and Ellie's daughter JASMINE comes out.

JASMINE

Mom. You told me to let you know when the oven beeped. It beeped.

EZ

Hey! Come over here a second, Jazz.

Jasmine walks over to her dad, who gives her a shoulder hug.

EZ (CONT'D)

Roy, this will be the fourth generation of Zamora chefs. Jasmine. Jazz, this is Roy Overbeck. His ugly French toast is the best thing you will ever eat.

Mary and Felix laugh.

ROY

I would have went pro if I ever figured out how to flip bread on a grill.

More laughing.

EZ

Your grandfather hired on Roy for the summer when we were sixteen. Good baker. Fast server. Nearly burned down the restaurant because he could not flip French toast properly.

Everyone laughs.

ROY

(To Jasmine)

Your grandfather did not pay me
enough to worry about fires.

EZ

Still though, the French toast was
delicious.

ROY

The secret ingredient was crack.

EZ

You steal it from Carl Snyder's
stash?

MARY

Oh, dear God! Do not mention that
slimeball's name in my presence!

Everyone laughs. Ellie gets up from her chair.

ELLIE

Speaking of fires, time to get
those pigs in a blanket out of the
oven. Jasmine, with me please.
Mary, did you still want to help me
with the salads?

MARY

Yes. The men can sit here getting
drunk and carve the world out
between them.

EZ

Do you want me to help out?

ELLIE

(Kissing EZ on the cheek)

No. No. No. I do not need you
micromanaging how I butter bread.
You stay out here looking pretty
and leave the hard work to the
gals.

Mary joins Ellie and Jasmine into the house. Roy looks down
to the ground as Mary passes him. Steve and Felix both notice
this. The men wait for the sliding door to close behind the
women.

ROY

Seriously, EZ. A Cowboys fan? You threatened to beat up the McNeese brothers if they bragged about their Super Bowl wins.

FELIX (O.S.)

They have not won one since then.

EZ

Why do you care? You hated football.

ROY

Still do. But you were such a rah-rah Eagles fan back then. You could barely stomach hanging out with Steve when his Giants were good.

STEVE

It is a fact that you get pissy when the Birds lose.

EZ

I met Ellie down in Cape May during Fourth of July weekend. I was too busy checking out her bikini to worry about football loyalties.

ROY

They had a Texas hootnanny down in Cape May?

EZ

Her best friend Shaina went to Princeton. Shaina's sorority sisters had a big rental house down on the Point. I was day tripping down there with my cousin Edwin. Love at first sight.

ROY

(Singing)

On the way to Cape May, I fell in love with you.

FELIX

I bet Crazy Eddie was trippin'.

Steve and Roy laugh.

EZ

Yeah. He did everything he could to ruin it for me that day. Thankfully, Ellie saw I was embarrassed by Edwin's total lack of social graces and fell in love with my anyway.

FELIX

(Leaning into Roy)

Didn't you and Crazy Eddie drop shrooms together down at Batsto Village?

ROY

Yes or no, you made sure to tell everyone we did.

FELIX

What?

ROY

At Victor's nineteenth birthday party three people asked me if I dropped shrooms with Edwin at Batsto the previous weekend. The story was he stripped naked and tried to climb a tree in front of a group of Dutch tourists. And me? I was lying in a stream crying for an hour. All three people told me they got the story from you.

FELIX

I don't know anything about that.

ROY

Janet was one of them. We will see her shortly. Is Kevin Dellaponte still alive? If he is there tonight, he will confirm. The third was Victor's cousin. The redhead you had a hot nut for. Betty? Bonnie?

EZ

Betty. Felix, you used to find excuses to go over to Victor's house whenever she was there for family functions.

STEVE

Gotta sell you out on this one, Feels.

(MORE)

STEVE (CONT'D)

You borderline stalked that girl. I tried to tell you it was a dead end, but...

FELIX

No! Wrong! And this is not funny.

ROY

Telling everyone in town I was crying in a fucking creek while Crazy Eddie was traumatizing Dutch tourists wasn't funny. And it did not happen. But you got a thrill out of telling that bullshit story. That was your M.O., Felix. Someone tells you a story, you repeat it with added details that simply never happened, and then you deny everything when called out. You are the one single worst person on the planet at keeping secrets.

STEVE

Second worst.

There is a pause as Roy realizes that Steve is talking about him. Roy finishes his rum and coke and taps the glass on the table as he places the glass down.

ROY

Elaborate.

STEVE

If my wife was not in the kitchen I would, gladly.

ROY

Oh, she can't hear anything. Nut up and say what's on your mind.

STEVE

That night at your house. When me and Mary had broken up and I showed up with that girl Natalie. Mary knew about it the next day. There were four people in the room. I did not say anything. Natalie did not. Victor was with us. He swore to me he said nothing, and I believed him. So it was you that ratted me out to Mary.

ROY

I said nothing to Mary. And since you were not together, why would you have cared? You were allowed to date anyone you wanted. So was she.

STEVE

It was you.

ROY

No. It was not. And I really do not care at all if you believe...

STEVE

Four people in the room. Victor was the liar. Is that your story?

ROY

No.

STEVE

I knew Natalie from Seton Hall. She was from Cranford. She knew no one down here. She did not even know Mary existed. Victor had no reason to lie. And I would take his word over yours every single time. Admit what is obvious.

ROY

I would happily look you in the eye and say it was me if it was me. It was not me. And it is fucking hilarious you use the word obvious. Your failure of imagination makes it impossible for you to see more than four possible answers.

EZ

I am not happy with you two re-living this here. You both need to let this go, at least at my house.

ROY

He's been stewing on this for thirty years.

EZ

Maybe. But the only stew allowed in my house, or in my restaurants, is sancocho. For now, end it.

ROY

Ended.

STEVE
To be continued.

ROY
Up your ass.

SUPER: PART THREE, TRIANGLUATION

EXT. FUNERAL HOME (DAY)

The building is ornately designed with a large side patio for people to congregate outside. There are benches and small tables. Food and drinks are on tables. A canopy leads people to large French doors which go inside. Different people line up near the front door, which has a big statue of the Virgin Mary holding the Baby Jesus next to it. On the outside patio, Roy stands against a fence at the back and stares at people coming in and out. Janet and her husband ISAAC FISCHBEIN approach. Isaac is seventy. He has white hair, a pot belly and is dressed in a black suit that fits badly.

JANET
Roy, have you been inside yet? I was looking for you in there.

ROY
Delaying it for as long as I can.

JANET
I understand. The crying in there is a bit much. Roy, this is my husband, Isaac.

Roy and Isaac shake hands.

IKE
Most people call me Ike. Hello.

ROY
Hello, Ike. It is good to meet you.

IKE
I did not know you existed until a few hours ago. Janet kept you a secret.

ROY
Not a secret. Just not important. We had not seen each other for three decades.

JANET

When I caught Roy walking down the road earlier, I was surprised how little he has changed in all this time. Maybe a little thinner.

ROY

My hair is thinner than my stomach. Still not as skinny as I would hope.

IKE

I used to be skinny. My wife might leave me if I do not lose weight.

JANET

(Rubbing Ike's stomach)
Oh, stop! You know I'm only concerned about you not dropping dead of a heart attack. Your father is ninety-five and still active, but that does not mean you can eat as bad as you do.

ROY

Ninety-five! What is his secret?

IKE

He thinks if he dies no one will ever get a single day's work done. Only he can finish a task. In his mind, his death would cause world anarchy.

ROY

What does he do?

IKE

Like me, a lawyer. But he mostly just reads what paralegals write for his firm and corrects the mistakes. He only shows up to the office once or twice a month to remind everyone he is still alive and runs things.

ROY

And you won't retire either?

IKE

When compelled to do so.

JANET

That is code for "when my wife tells me it is time to do that summer in Europe thing she has been asking for for ten years".

IKE

We honeymooned in Italy. We went to Spain for our twentieth. The rest of Europe is not that impressive.

ROY

Question. I have never been married. Is this how one ends?

All three laugh.

IKE

No. But it is how my wife reminds me that there are things I have promised her that have not yet come to pass.

EZ, Ellie and BOBBY DUSTER approach. Bobby is 50, black, with a small gut. He is muscular. Unlike the others there, Bobby is not wearing black. He is wearing a dressy gold shirt with charcoal pants.

EZ

Bobby stared at you when he showed up and could not believe it was you. Tell him it is you so he can come to grips with reality.

ROY

Hello, Bobby. I am Tim Blaylock.

EZ and Bobby laugh at this. It is an inside joke.

BOBBY

The last time I saw Tim Blaylock, his face was in the dirt after I stepped over him for an eighty-yard touchdown run.

ROY

You earned your last name that night. You dusted that defense. And that was first time we ever beat Absegami High School in football.

BOBBY

Still! We are like one and forty-seven against them all time. And we barely won that game!

EZ

That might have been the only football game Roy ever went to.

ROY

(Pointing to Bobby)
I only went to see this kid dominate.

Roy and Bobby shake hands and then share a hug.

ROY (CONT'D)

Whatever happened to Blaylock?

BOBBY

Dude went out west to play. UCLA. Got hurt junior year. Hung up his cleats. He added me on Facebook a few years back. Looks like he stayed out there. Blonde wife. Blonde kids. Big blonde house. Golfs a lot. So he did OK.

ROY

I walked by the old street earlier. I was going to knock on your door but there was a shamrock on the fender of the car in your old driveway. I figured that wasn't you.

BOBBY

You never heard of Black Irish?

JANET

Oh, no! Here we go!

ROY

I just wanted a good meal.

BOBBY

You did love crossing the street to have dinner with us when Mama made her gumbo.

ROY

Every time I have creole cooking, I compare it to your mother.

BOBBY

And they don't stack up.

EZ

Millie Duster was one of the few people Papi went to for cooking advice.

BOBBY

(To EZ)

Mama and your pops debating food was like listening to Moses and God talking things out.

Everyone laughs.

IKE

It is about time someone brought up a subject I know about.

More laughter. As the light-hearted banter continues, Roy looks to the door leading into the funeral home. Steve, Mary and two young women are exiting. The young women are their twin daughters. They have similar faces but are dressed different. One is conservatively dressed with her hair up nicely. The other is wearing a black tank top dress. She has short, bleached hair, piercings and multiple tattoos are visible. Mary is talking to all three with noticeable hand motions. She seems frustrated. Steve heads to the parking lot and the twins follow him. Janet, standing next to Roy, also sees this.

JANET

Will you excuse me? I am going to see if Mary is OK.

IKE

That might take a while.

Janet runs her hand over Ike's neck and heads toward Mary.

IKE (CONT'D)

(After Janet is out of range)

I have avoided asking questions about my wife to others. But since the men here grew up with her, I need to know, why is Janet so endeared to Mary? From what I understand, they barely spoke back in high school.

EZ

Janet and Mary were friendly to each other when we hung out back then. I would not call them friends or enemies. Mary was a year behind most of our crew in high school.

BOBBY

I was a year behind Mary's class. She was the student council president both her junior and senior year. When all them..
 (pointing at EZ and Roy)
 ...graduated, Mary ran the school by herself. All she had was that greasy Felix dude following her around.

ROY

Someone had to spy on Mary for Steve when he went off to Seton Hall.

BOBBY

Secret Agent Douchebag. Felix is lucky I do not go over there and knock him the fuck out.

IKE

Bad blood?

BOBBY

When I was twelve, he got in an argument with my big brother Wayne. My bro loved to start shit, but this one time it was not his doin'. Felix had that asshole Steve and some other Klan cocksucker standing behind him. Wayne only had me. He called us niggers right to our faces.

Roy, Ike and EZ stare at Bobby with blank faces. Ellie looks across the patio and sees Felix leaning in talking with someone. She sneers at him.

EXT. THE PARKING LOT OF THE FUNERAL HOME. (CONT.)

KELLY WILSON is standing next to her rented white Acura. She is fifty-one, with neck length brown hair, a few whites on the side. She wears a black pants suit with a dark gray blouse. She is not thin but looks healthy.

She stares into the patio area to see Steve and his twin daughters leaving and walking towards a car away from her. Kelly then sees Janet walking up to Mary. She stares at the entrance to the building. It is crowded. She exhales and walks towards Janet and Mary on the patio.

KELLY

Hey. Janet. How are you?

JANET

Oh my God! Kelly! You made it.

They hug.

KELLY

Yeah. Got into town just now. I stayed last night outside of Philly. One of my Ohio friends lives there now and let me shack up with her. Hello, Mary.

Mary and Kelly share a brief, awkward hug.

MARY

Thank you for coming. I know you and Victor were close.

KELLY

It was a long time ago. Thanks to the Facebook and Insta posts, I am able to keep up with all of you.

JANET

Victor went to your mother's funeral a few years back. That was nice of him.

KELLY

It was nice of you and your mother to show up for that.

JANET

Oh! Kelly! Our mothers worked together. My mom has such a high opinion of your family. She is too sick to make it here, but if you can stop by the house, she would love to see you.

KELLY

When we moved here, your mom was the first friend my mom made. She brought my mom into that Monday night canasta game her friends had.

Kelly laughs. Mary rolls her eyes.

JANET

The only time my mother ever dopped F bombs in her life was when she played canasta.

MARY

My Aunt Connie used to play with them. She quit after a month. She said it was too hardcore for her.

JANET

It was how they let off steam from dealing with their husbands. When it was my mom's turn to host, I found excuses not to be there. My dad intentionally worked late to avoid the house.

KELLY

That is so weird. My mother never said anything about that. She really loved that group. And my mother was not a curser.

(beat)

Mary, I really appreciate you and Steve sending the flowers when both my parents passed. It was very sweet of both of you.

MARY

Oh, Kelly! We were vacationing when your father passed. And my daughter Kristi had a medical issue the day of your mother's viewing. I was going to show...

KELLY

Mary, the flowers were more than enough. It was such an amazing gesture. Thank you.

Mary and Kelly touch hands in gratitude. An older couple sitting at a table near the three women gets up to leave. Mary motions for Janet and Kelly to join her in sitting down. As they sit down, Kelly peers across the patio and sees the previous group standing together and talking. Ike, EZ and Ellie walk away, leaving Bobby and Roy in full view.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Is that Roy Overbeck?

The scene shifts back to Roy and Bobby as they watch EZ, Ellie and Ike walking towards the entrance of the funeral home. Bobby comes in close to Roy to say something personal.

BOBBY

I know you want to ask about my brother. Wayne is alive. He had a few hard times. Prison. But he has a woman and a steady job up in Trenton. He still needs help to walk the line, but for the most part, he is doing good.

ROY

I wanted to ask. Your brother could rub people wrong, but me and him always got along.

BOBBY

That one day, outside my house...

ROY

Bob, you do not have to...

BOBBY

I do. He was schized out that day. The cops would have shot him dead. You calmed him down. I know Wayne pissed you off about some things, but you were a good friend to him when everyone else wanted him to drop dead. Thank you for that.

ROY

I always like Wayne. We were not much different personality wise. I just held in my temper better than he did.

BOBBY

He got that from our old man. My father came out of the old South. They'd have lynched him down there if he did not meet my mother and come up this way. Too uppity for them good old boys. Wayne knew Pops better than I did. He idolized him. The temper was his birthright.

ROY

When I went out west, I followed your progress a bit. Syracuse. A few national TV games.

(MORE)

ROY (CONT'D)

The last I kept up, you went up to Canada to play.

BOBBY

Ottawa. Five years. My wife is French-Canadian. Her family is stupid rich. That made it easy to retire young and do the TV thing.

ROY

Only the handsome ones get in front of the camera.

BOBBY

(Laughing)

No shit! I love living up there. We own a house off of a quiet lake. My sons are in college now, but they still find time to go fishing with me. It has been a good life.

ROY

Did the family come down with you?

BOBBY

Not this time. I am in and out of here as fast as I can.

ROY

Likewise.

BOBBY

EZ said you live up in Alaska. You got more north than me! Good life or bad?

ROY

Pretty good. I am a pilot. Easy money. I fly to cool places all the time. I never had a hankering to fly, but when the chance to learn came up, I was shocked how much I loved it.

As the conversation between Roy and Bobby continues, Mary, Janet and Kelly watch on from the table they are sitting at.

JANET

I saw Roy today walking down the road near where he used to live. I really thought I was staring at a ghost.

MARY

I wouldn't think he would be sentimental about his old house.

JANET

It has been thirty years, Mar. Everyone is curious about where they grew up.

KELLY

He never came back to visit?

MARY

No.

JANET

Not that I remember. Whatever set him on his path, he certainly did not want to look back.

KELLY

We were not close friends, but we talked enough that I thought he was fine being here. Something changed.

MARY

Are you attached to anyone, Kelly?

KELLY

No. I was for a long time. No more.

MARY

Something bad happen? I pry too much, don't I?

KELLY

A conversation for another day, if that is OK.

MARY

Another day. You have not been inside yet, have you?

KELLY

No. I guess I should.

MARY

Can we walk in with you?

KELLY

Thank you. I would like that.

EXT. THE PARKING LOT (CONT.)

Felix stands in the parking lot of the funeral home as Steve parks and exits his car. Coming up to Felix, Steve is visibly agitated.

STEVE

Feels, as much as I love my wife, I can get real tired of her micromanaging me real fast.

FELIX

What now?

STEVE

This stupid vodka ceremony. We are having it at that cafe by the seaport. But she forgot to tell the owner what time we would be there. And Mary forgot to get the key, and the passcode for the alarm, and the chairs and table need to be...

FELIX

Mary wanted you to do what she did not do.

STEVE

Long story short, yes.

FELIX

I thought it had something to do with the girls.

STEVE

I took them home. Cassidy is going out with her boyfriend to some concert and Kristi, well, I am afraid to ask what she is doing.

They stare into the patio area. They see Roy shake hands good-bye with Bobby. Roy is then standing alone near the back.

STEVE (CONT'D)

I really do not believe that fucker came back. Whatever happened between him and Mary all those years ago, I want to know about it.

FELIX

Do you want me to talk to him again? I can try a different angle.

STEVE

He hates you more than me, Feels. You won't get the time of day out of him. I will go up to him and bust his balls before we leave to do this thing.

FELIX

What time are we doing that?

STEVE

Nine. Sharp. And if anyone is late, I am sure my lovely wife will send me out to cat herd them. Because I babysit fifty-year-old adults.

FELIX

This ends at eight. What should we do for an hour?

STEVE

I wanted to go to the bar. Any chance my wife has me running errands up to eight fifty-nine?

FELIX

Maybe getting drunk before you deal with Roy is not smart. It is bad enough we are having booze there. Thirty years is a long time. Bury the dead, give the last rites and let it rot in the ground.

STEVE

You were at some family thing with your parents the night I took Natalie over to Roy's house. If you were there you would have seen how strange Roy was acting. Victor mentioned it when we left. That dude was in heat for Mary and thought ratting me would get him in with her.

FELIX

Massive violation of the Bro Code to rat you out.

STEVE

Fuck him! He aint my bro. Never was. We only hung out together because of Victor. I never got what Vicky saw in that mopey fuck.

(MORE)

STEVE (CONT'D)

Drinking vinegar was more fun than hanging out with that morbid jerk off. And that is another thing that is pissing me off. I loved Victor like a brother and my wife has not asked me once how I am doing since my lifelong friend died falling off a fucking roof!

FELIX

Steve, you need to hear me out on this. The one thing you cannot do tonight is push the Roy thing in front of Mary. Your marriage has not been one hundred percent for a few years now. Mary is high strung, but she centers you.

Felix puts his hand on Steve's shoulder.

FELIX (CONT'D)

This guy is going back to Bumblefuck, Alaska tomorrow, never to be seen again. Do not let anything he says or does tonight linger past him leaving. Do this stupid ceremony, let everyone leave and let this go.

STEVE

Tough pill to swallow, Felix. And you might be right. But that does not mean I cannot fuck with him here.

Felix and Steve walk on to the patio and see Kelly walk up to Roy. The scene switches there.

KELLY

Hello, Roy. I think you remember me.

ROY

I remember you, Kelly. We are forever linked by two bottles of unopened cheap vodka.

Kelly holds back a giggle.

ROY (CONT'D)

You look good.

KELLY

So do you. I saw you talking to Bobby. Did he leave?

ROY

I believe so. He wants to kick Felix's ass, so he left before he gave in to his primal instincts.

KELLY

Is that why you are standing back here? Avoiding the gang?

Roy points to Felix grabbing a plate of food and to Steve talking with an older couple near the parking lot entrance.

ROY

Staying away from two negative influences.

KELLY

Triangulation.

Roy snickers.

ROY

Both definitions of the word.

KELLY

I would like to know what you do in your life, if you are not tired of repeating it to everyone you talk with.

ROY

The short version. Alaska. Pilot. Never married. Recently unattached. No kids. No jail time. More happy than not.

Kelly smiles at this. She decides to play along.

KELLY

Athens, Ohio. Mortgage broker. Never married. Recently unattached. No kids. Three parking tickets. One successfully contested. Not sad, but I could be happier.

ROY

Parking tickets? You rebel! I was wrong about you.

KELLY

"Blissfully boring" I believe was the term you used to describe me in the old days.

ROY

You remember that?

KELLY

It was funny, and more true than not.

ROY

I liked you back then, Kelly. I was not being mean.

KELLY

I know you liked me. You had enough on me to make me look bad if you didn't.

ROY

Oh! I did not think you would bring that up.

KELLY

Guilt and shame never dies.

ROY

Nothing to be ashamed about. You accidentally put a dirty letter meant for Victor into my coat pocket.

KELLY

I actually threw up when I figured out what I did.

ROY

I forwarded the letter to the intended recipient.

KELLY

Yes, Roy. I know.

ROY

Most of us assumed you two were a secret item. And, if it matters, the language in your letter did not make me think anything bad about you. Women have hormones, too.

KELLY

Victor had such a big personality. I was crippling shy.

(MORE)

KELLY (CONT'D)

Having him like the quiet, new girl like me was overwhelming. Looking back, I should have not let him keep the relationship a secret. That was weak.

ROY

I have no idea what he was like after I left, but for as much as we all put him on a pedestal back then, he could be very selfish. One on one, I used to get on him for being self-indulged...

KELLY

But you put him in a room filled with people and he was the center of everything.

ROY

Yes.

KELLY

I did not stay here much longer after you left. It was about eight months. Me and him were not going anywhere, and my uncle out in Ohio made me a great job offer. I got over Victor pretty quickly. But then he did something super-weird a few years ago.

Roy turns to Kelly with a "go on" look on his face.

KELLY (CONT'D)

When my father died, I took two weeks off of work to get my mother settled with everything. I had seen Victor once or twice on visits, but nothing heavy. Hello and goodbye mostly. The day after the funeral, he asked to come over and talk to me. He had just separated with the woman he had his kid with. They were together on and off for, I can't remember, seventeen years? They never married it seems. Anyway, he started to make a move on me and I was very uncomfortable. I was in a relationship, so the answer was going to be no regardless. But even if I was available, I think I would have passed. Victor seemed different.

(MORE)

KELLY (CONT'D)

Not larger than life. Almost like some slimy dude trying to pick me up in a bar. It felt like one of those Star Trek episodes where an alien takes over one of the main characters' bodies and acts strange.

ROY

Did he accept your rejection, or did he push?

KELLY

Not pushy. Just, ugh, sad.

ROY

Maybe when his ex broke up with him he needed to prove he can still seduce you to feel potent.

KELLY

You think?

ROY

A wild guess. When I knew him, Victor rarely lost at anything or heard no from anyone. Whatever the details, he decided to go on the nostalgia tour with you and it was closed for business. Did you see him after that?

KELLY

He showed up to my mother's funeral. Janet made a comment earlier about how nice it was that he showed up there. That felt forced. It felt like she was telling me something. I decided to not pursue it.

ROY

Are you and Janet on bad terms?

KELLY

No. She is the one person I texted when I would fly back here to visit my parents. Twice she drove down from her home up north just to have lunch with me.

ROY

It was probably just something awkward people say at functions like this. Janet has no filter. Was Victor rude when he showed up for your mother's viewing?

KELLY

Terse, courteous and gone in under twenty minutes.

Roy looks over and sees Steve walking towards them.

ROY

Fucking Hell!

Kelly sees what Roy is looking at.

KELLY

I never liked him.

ROY

Mr. Happy is coming over here to share sunshine with the rain people.

Steve approaches and looks Kelly up and down.

STEVE

Kelly Wilson. Long time, no see. My wife is happy you showed up.

KELLY

The reason for the reunion is tragic.

ROY

What else could have brought the band back together?

STEVE

(To Kelly)

You and Victor were close back then.

There is an awkward silence as Kelly does not know how to respond to that.

ROY

This vodka ceremony is at nine, right?

STEVE

Yes. Do you know where?

ROY

A cafe at the seaport. Do you remember what that building was back in the eighties?

STEVE

An illegal porn studio. The owner used to go into the Stardust Diner with the

(coughs sarcastically)

actresses on Saturday mornings. My brother and his friends would go get pancakes there to ogle them. That guy was mob connected, so no one dared rat him out.

KELLY

This subject does nothing for me. I am going to say my good-byes. See you at the former porn studio.

Kelly walks away. Steve gives her backside a quick look before turning to Roy to get his opinion of the view. Roy stares blankly at Steve.

ROY

Nothing, Steve. I got nothing for you.

STEVE

I love my wife, Roy. These last few days have been tough for everyone here. I lost a friend I met in first grade. Mary has never been good with sudden changes. High strung. But you remember that from the old days. This whole event has been a nightmare. You have not even went inside, have you?

Roy continues to stare blankly at Steve.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Victor's mother is whimpering like a puppy. His father is seventy-seven and the dementia is bad. The sister, Erin, she is garbage. It is always all about her.

(Beat)

Vicky's son Reed, have you seen him? You should introduce yourself.

(MORE)

STEVE (CONT'D)

He is the spitting image of his father. Tall, teathy and the biggest personality in every room.

Roy glances to see that Felix is joining them. He is holding a plate of hors d'oeuvres.

STEVE (CONT'D)

My point is that you returned from the dead after thirty years...you came all this way to pay your respects to Victor...and you have not went into the funeral home to offer your condolences to Victor's family. That looks odd.

FELIX

What's going on? Did you guys try Ellie's pigs in a blanket? These are really good. I need to compliment her.

ROY

Tread lightly.

FELIX

What?

STEVE

Is my wife inside?

FELIX

I believe so.

STEVE

Roy has not been inside.

FELIX

(To Roy)

You came to a viewing and you did not go inside?

ROY

I might go in. I might not. I thought I would go in, but we are coming up on the end here, and yes, I can confirm I have not been inside.

STEVE

Not exactly a funny subject, is it?

ROY

Not exactly something I answer to you two about, is it?

FELIX

Do you want us to walk in with you? It really is not a terrible thing to admit you do not like viewings. They are very uncomfortable.

ROY

I am two-point-three seconds away from heading to AC airport and flying anywhere but here.

FELIX

You flew here? I mean, wait, hold you, you flew flew here?

ROY

Yes. Why be a charter pilot if you cannot fly to New Jersey on a whim?

FELIX

The plane can make it this far?

ROY

I flew my company's jet. So, yes. But a Mini Cooper can go from New Jersey to Alaska if you have the time, the fuel, the proper weather and the gumption to see it through.

FELIX

In one shot?

ROY

No. I map out a flight plan with a refueling spot. I fly my plane into Sea-Tac and then switch to the jet. Felix, how often do you leave Jersey? You sound like a three-year-old asking Santa how he does it all in one night.

STEVE

It does sound like more work to fly here on your own than to book a flight and let someone else do the work for you.

ROY

It's not. Getting through airports is much easier as a pilot than a passenger flying coach. Once I am in the air, the plane does most of the work if I have clear skies. I enjoy the view. I like the independence. No cramped seats with a screaming baby or a comfort honey badger sitting next to me. No delays caused by anything other than my own need to piss. And when I am annoyed by dumb questions at a viewing, I can fire up the engines and get away from it ASAP.

STEVE

Is the fuel free?

ROY

No. But if you own a Ford Expedition, you are handing over your money just as readily. And you do not get nearly as far.

FELIX

You fly to the supermarket out there?

Steve snickers.

ROY

Sometimes. Yeah. When I am taking food and supplies to villages above the Arctic Circle, I stop at wholesale warehouses that have landing strips. For myself, I just drive my van to the Wal-Mart ten minutes away.

STEVE

You got a Starbucks, too?

ROY

No. This hippie couple from Portland moved into town three years ago and opened a cafe. Good coffee. I make quite a few of their supply runs down to Seattle.

STEVE

Did they film porn in the building before the hippies bought it?

FELIX

What?

ROY

No. It was a storage unit.

FELIX

I do not get the porn reference.

ROY

When did you move here? Eight-six?
You just missed the action.

STEVE

The cafe that we are having the vodka ceremony in was used to film porn flicks back in the early eighties. You got here the summer after they closed up shop. The seaport was not built up back then, so it was quiet enough to go unnoticed. Some of your "EYE-talian" friends backed the guy running the place, so no one said anything. The local cops most likely got a monthly envelope.

FELIX

The Feds never got wind of it?

STEVE

Unknown. But whatever caused the producer to move on, he did it pretty quickly.

ROY

Steve or Victor or anyone never shared this story with you for nearly forty years? Seriously? I find that implausible.

STEVE

I thought you knew about this, Feels.

FELIX

I never heard about this from anyone until right now.

STEVE

That's weird.

ROY

Tammy Moran's mother was the real estate agent that sold that building. It took a few years to unload. The 'For Sale' sign with her gigantic head on it was out there forever. The county ended up buying it.

FELIX

From what I am hearing about it now, someone had to tip the owner off. The Feds or the state was gonna shut him down. No one dropped out of porn back then unless they were ten seconds away from getting busted. Way too much money in that business in the old days to find Jesus and retire on a whim.

ROY

The big question is: Who was the rat?

STEVE

That was my question today earlier about you.

There is a pause as Roy digests what Steve said. Felix subtly turns his head away. He disagrees with Steve bringing up the subject. Steve and Roy lock eyes.

ROY

Do you really want to go back to that?

STEVE

I said it was to be continued.

ROY

And I said to shove it up your ass. We are only halfway there.

STEVE

You tried to get in good with Mary off the rebound by mentioning I stopped by with Natalie. It was a shit move.

ROY

Bringing a date to my house, even though I was friends with Mary, without telling me was a shit move.

(MORE)

ROY (CONT'D)

Was it not possible that someone else in town would see you in a car with another woman and blab? Did you stuff Natalie in the trunk?

STEVE

Victor was with me. It could have been his date for all anyone would know. Only in your house was it obvious she was with me.

ROY

I told Mary nothing. Is this what has been tattooed on your soul for thirty years?

FELIX

Let's remember where we are. Both of you.

STEVE

Victor's viewing. And Roy Boy here has not went inside.

ROY

Where I am is tired of this teenage drama. You just want to repeat the same thing over and over again.

STEVE

Four people in the room. Natalie said nothing. I said nothing. Victor said nothing. But you imply he did. Maybe you cannot go inside out of guilt of calling a dead man a liar.

ROY

I implied nothing. And there is no motivation to lie about a boring Saturday afternoon thirty years ago. By the way, Victor asked me if I wanted to grab something to eat with you two about six. The three of you came over at two.

STEVE

What's your point?

ROY

I don't have one. Other than you are a pompous, delusional fucktard that sucks at psychoanalysis. I am not swamped with guilt.

STEVE

Four people in the room, and...

ROY

Your IQ is four.

FELIX

Maybe we should all walk away from this.

ROY

(To Felix)

Until tomorrow, when I am flying home, and you tell everyone how I was shitting my pants begging Steve for forgiveness. Pope Felix, the patron saint of peacemaking. Not buying it.

FELIX

You always were rude.

ROY

Not always. But with you, yeah, I am.

(beat)

I am done here. I am driving over to this ceremony because Mary called me on the phone and begged me to come. Tomorrow morning, seven sharp, I am heading home. If that is not good enough for either of you than pull out a gun and shoot me.

(Walking away)

Bury me next to Victor. Do two shots of vodka. Otherwise, this is a monumentally unnecessary waste of my fucking time.

SUPER: FINAL CHAPTER, FOUR PEOPLE IN THE ROOM

EXT. A CAFE PARKING LOT (NIGHT)

It is coming up on nine PM. The parking lot is big, it is faced by a courtyard with tables for cafe patrons. A large tree stands next to a fence that leads into a dock area where a lagoon sits. As twilight gives way to night, we see a parking lot with four cars parked outside. In a sliver Lexus is Ike and Janet. Janet is in the passenger seat, staring at the cafe.

JANET
(exhales)
Why am I nervous?

IKE
You were friends with Victor. He died tragically. Mary is high strung and wants you all to deal with this in her way, not your own. This is called trepidation.

JANET
As best as I can remember, we all just say a few words, do a shot and that ends the ceremony. But Mary had Steve and EZ bring some booze.

IKE
You can sleep in the car on the ride home if you get a little drunk.

JANET
Why do you insist on driving home tonight?

IKE
Even if the bed in your mother's guest room was no better than a potato sack full of rocks, I prefer to sleep in my own home whenever possible.

JANET
That bed does suck. I never forgave her for selling my old bed when she moved into that place after Dad died.

IKE
When we bought the summer house, I hated that bed. If you remember, that first day when you were sunbathing, I went out and found a better one. Those TV commercials are true. You can't put a price on a good night's sleep.

JANET
Ike, you need to retire. I want us to do things together. More than we do now. And I am not talking about trips to Cali and Arizona to see the grandkids.

(MORE)

JANET (CONT'D)

We will do that always. I want to go places. And I want to go there with you.

IKE

April.

JANET

Which April? Your new law clerk or the calendar month?

IKE

The month. The last day of April. Next year. I will retire.

JANET

Since when did you start thinking about a date?

IKE

Since the moment you agreed to marry me. But I finally picked the date this morning. That was the big phone call I had to make while you went out today. I called my partners and told them. Everything I am working on now should be done by February. And that means it will be done by April.

Janet smiles at Ike. This is what she wanted to hear. She grabs Ike's hand with both of hers and kisses it.

JANET

My psych degree from Rowan was not for nothing. I know you did not want to retire before your father died. The ridicule. His wire-rimmed glasses on the tip of his nose, staring down at you. God bless him that he does what he does at ninety-five. But you can enjoy life with me outside of the summer house on LBI with or without his approval.

Ike smiles at this and kisses Janet on her cheek.

IKE

I need to ask you something. Roy. There was something between you all those years ago, wasn't there?

Janet is slightly taken back. "How did he figure it out?", is what she is thinking.

JANET

We never went out. We never, ummm, we never did it! I liked dirty talk when I was younger. Roy knew this and indulged me. Like every other girl, I was too busy throwing myself at Victor.

IKE

I know Victor was your first.

JANET

Yes! And I wanted him to be my last. But he never committed to any girl back then. Roy, I do not how to say this, Roy did not check all the boxes I needed, but he did check a few I wanted. Back then at least.

There is a pause as Ike and Janet see a white Acura pull up in the parking lot and takes a spot.

JANET (CONT'D)

Roy was not motivated to be bigger than he was. That was a deal breaker for me.

IKE

Back then.

JANET

Back then and now.

Both look to see Kelly get out of the Acura and head into the cafe.

IKE

I will put the bags in the car and wait for you to call. Hopefully your cousin Pearl is not there. Her incessant prattling about her various illnesses is torture.

JANET

My mother is sick of it, too.

(exhales)

Wow! Nervous. OK. I am going in.

Janet grabs Ike's cheeks and kisses him.

JANET (CONT'D)

Thank you, my dear husband.

The scene cuts to the front of the parking lot as an SUV driven by Ellie comes up on the cafe. EZ is in the passenger seat. They see Janet exit her car and walk into the cafe. Ellie pulls up to the curb. Ike drives by them and they wave to each other.

EZ

This might take an hour. It might be two. That Mary asked me to bring booze tells me she wants us all to group hug after this vodka ceremony ends.

Ellie says nothing. She barely acknowledges what EZ just said.

EZ (CONT'D)

The quiet storm. You do not stop talking without a reason. I thought maybe you were upset about the events of the day. But it seems...

ELLIE

You know very well what upsets me. Felix. Steve. That story Bobby told. I believe him.

EZ

I am not happy about it. It makes things awkward.

ELLIE

I have no tolerance for it, Ephraim. None. You tell Felix and Steve that we are talking tomorrow after the cemetery. I do not care where, but not at the house. They have to look me in the face and explain themselves.

EZ

I have known these men most of my life.

ELLIE

They have been my friends for over twenty years. Which is why I will hear their side...

EZ

They are your friends. And you should allow that they may have just been stupid kids back then.

ELLIE

Men admit they screwed up and apologize. Men own their childhood mistakes.

EZ

On that we agree.

There is a pause as the two of them stare at the cafe. Movement can be seen inside.

ELLIE

I was gifted an upper middle-class upbringing. Red brick four-bedroom home. Swimming pool. Cheerleader. Equestrian. Nearly every friend I have in Texas and here is white. This town is at least eighty percent white.

(beat)

I know when I walk into any building...here, there or anywhere, that all strangers see is my skin color. I will not have it in my own home, Ephraim. Out in the world, I cannot control that, but I will not have it in my home!

INT. THE CAFE (NIGHT)

The cafe can fit about fifty people. A high ceiling with fans hanging down gives it a homey feel. Local art adorns the high walls. On the front counter, a bus tub is filled with ice and bottled beer. Large windows face out to the courtyard. In the middle of the floor, tables are set up in a rectangle. Eight chairs, two on each side, are neatly placed. Two bottles of vodka, an envelope and a white rose are near a chair on one of the short ends. Mary is standing with Felix near that chair, they both have an open beer. Janet grabs a beer from the tub and starts drinking. Steve comes out of the bathroom as EZ walks in with two bottles of whiskey.

STEVE

Who had Roy as the last to show in the pool?

JANET

I still do not believe he came home.

STEVE

I thought if he ever came home, he would be one of those ax murderers seeking revenge on all those that wronged him.

FELIX

Or horny teenagers.

KELLY

Mary, did you text him?

MARY

Twice.

JANET

Who talked to him last?

FELIX

He was talking to me and Steve about seven-thirty. Did any of you see him go into the home? I do not think he paid his respects to Victor's family.

EZ puts the whiskey down on the counter hard. He grabs a plastic cup off the counter and pours a drink. Steve notices this.

KELLY

It might have been difficult for him. I had to pause before I went in.

FELIX

But you did go in.

KELLY

Yes. That does not mean Roy should have.

Steve nods to EZ away from the group. EZ walks over. They both talk in hushed voices as the others continue their banter.

STEVE

You look pissed. What's up?

EZ

Bobby Duster told a story about you and Felix from high school. Felix used some harsh language with Bobby and his brother, and you were there. She is pissed. Me? I am just trying to put out this fire.

STEVE

Bobby Duster talks shit. His brother Wayne started more trouble with me than I can remember.

EZ

Say that to Ellie tomorrow. She wants to talk with both of you. After the burial. Somewhere away from the house.

STEVE

Are you fucking with me?

EZ

She's deadly serious.

STEVE

Do I get to cross-examine Bobby, or does that fucknut get to run back to Canada without answering to me?

EZ

I have no idea if he left.

STEVE

I am not dealing with this now. The three of us will talk after we get done this thing and figure out how to settle her down.

EZ

Steve, I will not go against my wife on this. You and Felix better work this out, or this may last a while.

EZ walks away to the main group, who are still chatting.

JANET

...my point is, I think Roy meant to walk in and changed his mind. I do not think it was a part of some grand scheme. It is inappropriate and a little weird, but weird things happen at funerals.

FELIX

You man up and go in.

KELLY

The burial is at what time? Maybe
he will be there.

At this point, Roy walks into the front door.

ROY

I won't.

Everyone turns to look at Roy as he sees the whiskey on the
bar and walks over to pour some.

FELIX

Cut it a little thin, didn't you?

ROY

It starts at nine. It is not yet
nine.

MARY

Where were you?

ROY

That Irish pub down on the corner.
I decided to have a drink or two
before having a shot of vodka. I
had no idea you were going to have
more booze here. Fancy.

FELIX

Why aren't you going to the burial?

ROY

I told you why an hour ago. That
means you asking again is a
rhetorical question. I really can't
wait until I am back in the world
where I do not answer to you once,
no less twice.

STEVE

He just asked a question. I think a
rugged Alaska guy can handle it.

Roy gulps his whiskey and pours another.

ROY

I am flying home tomorrow. I told
Mary I would do this ceremony. Here
I am.

Roy starts walking towards the set-up table.

ROY (CONT'D)

And since I am currently answering to everyone here, I will tell you all why I came. Last weekend, I flew up two billionaires to the North Slope. I mention their wealth because they haggled with me over the price. My partner wanted me to say no. I said yes. I usually would refuse rich people that argue with me over my price, but something happened the day before. I had found out that my girlfriend of fourteen months had been faithful to me...

Roy swallows down hard on the whiskey. His speech is slower.

ROY (CONT'D)

...for ten months. For the last four months she was banging...wait for it...the richest guy in town! I took the charter to avoid the situation for a few days and then I went home. I had not seen them together, but others had! Sloppy teenagers indulging in awkward PDA. What to do? Where to go? How do I avoid seeing this? Then Mary called.

MARY

Are you telling me if your girlfriend had not dumped you that you would not be here?

ROY

That is what I am telling you. I say no and hang up the phone on you. I am using this weird reunion to hide from my ex and her douche-y new squeeze. Tomorrow, I fly home and get over it.

KELLY

What airline are you flying?

ROY

Air Overbeck.

Kelly gives Roy a quizzical look.

FELIX

Roy flew here. Like flew flew.
Himself.

STEVE

Roy owns a fighter jet. Is it an F-
16?

JANET

This is going downhill fast.

ROY

If I owned an F-16, I would have
visited you, Steve, way before
today.

KELLY

You flew all night?

ROY

No. I got here yesterday. Stayed
last night in Atlantic City.

EZ

The Borgata?

ROY

The Ocean.

FELIX

Did you gamble?

ROY

Craps.

FELIX

Did you win?

ROY

Yes.

FELIX

How much?

ROY

A lot.

MARY

You were here last night and did
not say anything? I texted you
three times to make sure you were
coming.

ROY

I said I would be here today. I am here today.

STEVE

Roy, since we were kids, you have sucked the joy out of every room you are in, you know that?

EZ

I gotta tell you all something. I did not come here to celebrate Festivus. It is nine right now. Mary, we should start.

MARY

Thank you, EZ. Everyone. Please.

Quietly, all take a seat. Steve grabs a beer. EZ grabs two beers and when taking his seat puts one in front of Roy. Mary is at the head of the table with the two bottles of vodka, the letters and a white rose on the table next to the seat to her right. On her left, where the table goes long, is Steve. To his left is EZ. To EZ's left, on the other short end is Roy, which puts him directly opposite of Mary. Kelly is to Roy's left. To Kelly's left, on the other long end is Janet. Felix is to Janet's left.

MARY (CONT'D)

OK. I want to thank you all for coming here this evening. You know this was a big deal for me, and I badgered you all to make this happen. I can be a little high strung.

The group bellows out a chorus of sarcastic denials.

MARY (CONT'D)

Yes. Yes. I am pushy. But we often forget things from our past because we hate to get old. The night the eight of us hung out was one of those moments that was only special because it happened naturally. We were eight kids, none of us were twenty-one yet. We were just enjoying life. I wanted to savor the moment and come back to it one day. So, I drew up this ceremony during the party. Felix and Victor, may he rest in peace, were a big part of this.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

Stupid or not, we all have to remember the good times during the bad times.

Mary holds up the two envelopes. They have a date from thirty years ago written on both of them. One has "When the first of us dies" written on it. The other has "When there are two left." written on it. She opens the first envelope and puts the other one on the table.

MARY (CONT'D)

(Reading)

We, the below signed do hereby affirm, that to remember our glorious days of youth, that we have come together to honor the first of us to pass. To commemorate this sad, solemn occasion, we shall remember the first to go by opening one of these two bottles of vodka and drink a toast to the dearly departed, saying kind words of his or her life. To start this ceremony, a roll call of the signees, in the order that they affixed their signature, shall be called. (beat) Mary Agnes D'Antonio. Here. Felix Quattrone?

FELIX

Here.

MARY

Stephen Hearn?

STEVE

Present.

MARY

Victor Timothy Cahill, Jr.?

The group looks on awkwardly. Roy audibly exhales.

MARY (CONT'D)

Absent.

Mary takes a second to collect herself.

MARY (CONT'D)

Kelly Lucille Wilson?

KELLY

I am here.

MARY
Ephraim Zamora?

EZ
I am here.

MARY
Roy Overbeck?

ROY
Aye.

MARY
Janet Northway?

FELIX, STEVE
Janet Northway Fischbein.

JANET
You waited all day to spring that,
didn't you? I am here, Mary.

ROY
(To Janet)
How the hell did I sign this before
you did?

JANET
I was in the bathroom.

ROY
With who?

MARY
Not done yet.

Roy and Janet give an "I'm sorry" look to Mary. EZ holds up a scolding finger in jest to Roy.

MARY (CONT'D)
The seven survivors are all present
and accounted for.
(reading)
Having established a quorum, it is
now the responsibility of the
reader of this ceremony to choose
the person that knew the dearly
departed longest and ask them to
pour a shot for each attendee.

Mary looks at the group.

MARY (CONT'D)

Steve and Victor were both in first grade together. They were lifelong friends. I would kindly ask you, Steve, to pour the shots from one of these bottles.

STEVE

Gladly.

Steve stands from his chair and walks over to the counter where the beer is in a tub. He grabs seven hard plastic cups and brings them to the table where Mary is standing. He opens a bottle and pours seven shots. Felix, sitting next to this, grabs his shot. He grabs a second shot and hands it to Janet.

JANET

(Tearing up)

Thank you, Felix.

Steve hands Mary a shot and then walks three shots over to Kelly, Roy and EZ. They all give a silent thank you. Mary grabs the last shot and puts it in front of Steve's chair. Steve sits.

MARY

(Reading)

It is asked of the person that poured the shots to say a few kind words of our lost friend. Then the rest of us will follow. After this, the toast will be offered.

Mary's voice cracks in sadness.

MARY (CONT'D)

Steve, will you please stand and say a few words. We can go clockwise after that.

As Steve stands, Mary sits, grabs a tissue from her purse and dries tears from her eyes. Steve places a hand on Mary's shoulder for a moment.

STEVE

Thank you, Mary, for bringing us together. This is a very difficult thing for all of us. We all made fun of this ceremony. I admit I did. But to say a few kind words about Victor is such an easy thing to do, and appropriate. I met him on the first day of first grade. He ran the room within an hour.

All laugh at this.

STEVE (CONT'D)

We were day one friends. I spoke to him the morning he died. We were going to go down to AC to play some poker. Today. We were going to go today. Three hours later, he is gone. I, uhm,

Steve chokes up.

STEVE (CONT'D)

I, well, this is why I rarely am on the floor of the dealership. I am not a great talker. I will miss him.

Steve sits down. The group is slightly shocked that Steve was so abrupt. Mary grabs Steve's hand. EZ slowly stands up.

EZ

The only person worse than Steve at this stuff is me. My Papi always said three things were the secret to happiness. Family, food and baseball. It took him years to convince Mama to let me play. She babied me. Twelve years old. Little league. I played left field. Roy played right field. The centerfielder was Victor. After we won the Regionals, we thought we had a shot at the Little League World Series. We got killed in the first playoff game.

ROY

Not my fault. I had three hits.

Laughter.

EZ

They had fourteen. Wow! We got our butts kicked that day! Anyway, on the team bus, riding home, Victor was cracking jokes left and right. He was him. "When we play them next year, we will only lose by three runs!", he said. He just turned thirteen and was talking like he had been doing this for fifty years. I will never forget that bus ride.

(MORE)

EZ (CONT'D)

If you were there with me and Roy, you would have thought we won by twenty runs. Victor always did that. He took bad things and made them funny. He is most likely looking down on us right now laughing at me for how bad I am at this. I hope he is. I would like to think he will be the same Victor in Heaven that he was down here. That gives me hope. I cry for him. I miss him. I hope he looks out after me and my family from the great beyond.

EZ sits down. Mary stares at Roy cueing him in that it is his turn. Roy reluctantly stands.

ROY

Victor showed up at my house the day before I left to go out west. I was in the driveway cleaning out the back of my van so I could put my things in there. I had only told my aunt that morning of my plans. As usual, she seemed unaffected. He asked if there was a reason I was cleaning up my ride. I did not want to lie, and I did not want to tell the truth. So, I shrugged and said nothing. He gave me the side eye. It was a Friday. He wanted to know if I wanted to get together with most of you the next night and have dinner and see a movie. I mumbled a maybe at him. He then did something he never had done before, with me at least. He stood in front of me, put his hands on my shoulders and asked me if I needed to talk. Usually, it was me asking Victor if he needed to unload. I said I was fine. He then told me that he knew what was bothering me. He said he understood if I needed to disappear for a while. After a weird quiet pause, Victor told me he had to head to work. He said to call him the next morning if I wanted in on the gathering. I was on the road heading west at five AM. He knew I was going somewhere. He knew why.

(MORE)

ROY (CONT'D)

Unless one of you knows something you are not telling me, Victor said nothing to anyone. I did not know this until today. For that, I regret not calling him now and again to let him know I turned out alright. That was a mistake.

After a brief pause, Roy walks over to the counter and pours whiskey in a cup, as he returns to his chair, Kelly stands up. She waits for Roy to sit before talking.

KELLY

My father was a Marine. When he left the Corps, he took a security job out here. I loved San Diego. I was sad to leave there. I was going to be a senior in a new place and at a new high school. Most of you know that. I do not know if you are aware how I met Victor. My third day here, I rode my bike to the Cumberland Farms store to pick up a few snacks. Some gorgeous guy with the biggest smile I ever saw was parked outside and started flirting with me. Thirty minutes later, we are walking on Mystic Beach talking about everything and anything. I was always shy. I still am. I earned the "blissfully boring" nickname Roy gave me. With Victor, I was still shy. But it felt OK with him. I could be myself. He made moving here easier. I will always love him for that.

Kelly is tearing up as she takes her seat. Janet, who has been teared up the whole ceremony, wipes her eyes as she stands.

JANET

I won't last long. Victor was my first boyfriend all the way back in seventh grade. He was my date for both junior and senior proms. After high school, he was my occasional midnight diner date, because we both worked nights.

(openly crying)

I thought he would outlive all of us just because he would refuse to die. I miss him. I miss him so much.

Janet is overcome and sits down with her head in her hands crying. Kelly gets up and hugs her. Felix stands up. He waits a moment while Janet tries to calm herself.

FELIX

When my father had cancer, Victor drove me to the hospice that last night. It was a bad ride to Woodbury. Snow. When we got there, Victor pulled out one of those Stephen King books he loved. The scary clown one. He told me he would wait in the lobby. Three hours later, after my father passed, Victor was still there. My brother, Gaetano, died when I was three years old. I do not remember him. I lost a second brother this week. I will never forget him.

As Felix sits, Mary stands up. She is not crying but is obviously moved by all that has happened. She touches the white rose she placed on the table.

MARY

What can I say about Victor that you all did not say perfectly. He was amazing. It was hard not to love him. I certainly did. My crush on Victor was so strong in high school that when he wanted to set me up with his friend, I said yes just to get him to like me. That friend was Steve. And here we are, as strong as ever. I owe Victor for that.

The group smiles except for Roy, who is viably agitated. Mary picks up the paper that the first ceremony is written on and starts to read again.

MARY (CONT'D)

Now that kind words have been said, and we have solemnly honored the dead, please stand and raise you glass, as we toast the first to pass.

The group rises from their seats with their shots of vodka.

MARY (CONT'D)

To Victor!

ALL
To Victor!

Everyone does their shot of vodka. Mary is tearing up. Everyone hugs and cheek-kisses the person next to them. EZ turns to Roy to shake his hand, but he has already moved over to the counter to pour a refill.

MARY
Thank you. All of you. That is it. The ceremony is over. Hopefully, the two of us left alive will come together for the second ceremony.

JANET
Who wrote that poem?

MARY
I did. I remember when I was sealing the envelope back then that I was going to cross it out, but Felix and Steve convinced me to keep it. Did it read bad? Three decades ago, it felt syrupy.

JANET
It was beautiful.

Everyone gets up to stretch, get a drink at the counter or just to stand next to each other.

STEVE
You OK over there, Roy Boy? You are hitting the booze kind of hard.

ROY
No need to worry about me. I am doing just fine.

FELIX
You have drank quite a bit in only an hour.

ROY
First dad, now mom. I should have had this much parental love as a child. I would have turned out better.

JANET
Not now, Roy. Please.

ROY

It has been thirty years. If not now, when?

STEVE

On that we agree.

KELLY

Roy, how long does it take to fly from here to there?

Roy looks shocked at this question.

ROY

It takes a whole day. I stop to refuel and eat somewhere in mid-America. And when I get to Seattle, I will most likely stay overnight. The last leg back home is something I prefer to do rested.

EZ

You just go to the airport and start up the plane? Like going out for bread and milk?

ROY

I enter a flight plan with the FAA. They approve it. I say where I am stopping to refuel and how long I will be there.

FELIX

A jet, right? I assume not a jumbo. That still seems like a huge pain in the ass.

ROY

I used the small jet that my company owns. Slow week, so it was just sitting in the hangar. Flew my plane down to Sea-Tac and switched over. My plane would never make it this far...not in a timely manner. That is the second repeat question you have asked me.

EZ

C'mon, man! The fuel costs, the landing and taking off, the hassle. You really did all of that instead of booking commercial?

ROY

Yes.

EZ

Why?

ROY

Why do people spend tons of money and time to walk on the Great Wall of China? Why did some VP from Amazon....this was three weeks ago...pay me enough money to feed and house a family of five for a year to fly him up to Prudhoe Bay so his six-year-old son could see caribou? When uber-rich people burn through money to do extravagant things, I am one of the eager capitalists that profit from their selfish endeavors. Me? I never flew across America. I wanted to. Now I have. That was my selfish endeavor.

FELIX

How much did the fuel cost?

ROY

A lot.

Janet and Kelly snicker at this. Felix is visibly agitated.

FELIX

I would think with the financial and professional success you have achieved in your life that you would be more civil. Maybe even outwardly happy.

ROY

I'll smile tomorrow.

MARY

Not if you were at the funeral. Are you really going to tell me you will not be there?

ROY

I will not be there. I am flying home.

STEVE

Selfish.

FELIX

Disrespectful to a man that was your friend.

JANET

Roy, I have nothing against you leaving. But I have to agree that it looks really bad that you won't pay your respects to the family in some way. You could have done it tonight at the viewing.

ROY

They may be old and frail now, but Victor's parents were always mean to me back then. I owe them nothing. Some of you remember how vulgar his father was. He used to make fun of me for being chubby and having acne. A grown fucking man! And the mother? She barely looked in my direction except to make snide comments about my aunt, who she had a really weird beef with. I asked my aunt about it one day and she said she had no idea where the problem started. Oh! I almost forgot about the sister! She said I creeped her out with trying to peek into the bathroom every time she was in there. Because ugly goth chicks peeing got me stiff back in high school.

MARY

Victor has a son. You could have introduced yourself to him.

ROY

I was thinking about it. But then Dickhead and Robin...

Roy points to Steve and Felix

ROY (CONT'D)

...started busting my balls and I left to go to the bar. Maybe I should have found his kid and said a few kind words. I didn't.

There is a pause as the group figured Roy would continue on with his thought.

EZ

So, awkward silence is a great time to change the subject.

MARY

Is anyone else not making it tomorrow?

JANET

Me. Ike wants to head home. We were here today.

EZ

I will be there. Ellie is a maybe.

MARY

Kelly?

KELLY

I am driving back to my friend's house. It is a ninety minute drive from here, so no.

JANET

When is your flight back to Ohio?

KELLY

Monday. But I can move it if want to partake in some retail therapy. Ironically, I scheduled this upcoming week off from work. A staycation was my plan, but then Mary called and...

STEVE

You can cancel your flight and get Roy to drop you off.

Some light laughter at this. Roy pours another drink and sits in Felix's original seat. Steve, standing behind his original seat puts his drink on the table and sits. The two are directly across from each other in a stare down.

JANET

My father was fascinated with World War II fighter planes. His brother put together models of them. When my uncle died, my father sold the lot of them for good money.

FELIX

Flew once in my life. Never again.

MARY

Your Italy trip?

FELIX

Yes. Humans were not meant to be stuffed in a metal tube thirty thousand feet above the ground. I loved my two weeks in the homeland, but I will never fly there again. Cruise ship or nothing next time.

EZ

Those boats are insanely big. How do they stay afloat?

JANET

If you had showed up to our AP Calculus class once in a while, you would know.

Some "oooohs!" from the group.

EZ

Whoa! Janet is scoring points on me for cutting class. You thought Fridays were optional. Maybe if I looked as good as you did in a V-neck shirt, I could have had Mr. Salerno excuse my absences like he did yours.

MARY

Mr. Salerno! Oh! Not that name! Please!

EZ

Dude always gave the hot girls passes for skipping class. Yeah, he had a hard on for the burnouts, but us jocks did not get many breaks from that guy.

MARY

He hit on my mother once. They were at the same wedding and Salerno got super drunk. My father was going to grab his .45 out of the car and blow him away.

FELIX

He used to get drunk and hit on women all over town. Bars, supermarkets.

(MORE)

FELIX (CONT'D)

The one story was he hit on the old Police Chief Ogden's sixteen-year-old daughter at the Fourth of July parade. The school disciplinarian could not discipline his own behavior. Funny.

KELLY

He commented on my wardrobe. He wanted to know why I wore ankle length skirts. Wasn't his nickname Hallway Hitler?

FELIX, JANET, MARY

Yes!

EZ

Hell yes! My sister Lupe's junior year boyfriend gave him that nickname. Todd Kroger. He got a month's detention for calling Salerno that nickname to his face.

MARY

After your class graduated, I spent senior year avoiding him. He kept asking how Steve was doing at Seton Hall. If I was lonely. Real creepoid stuff.

EZ

(Sarcastically)

Good thing Mr. Salerno was there during your long separation. That ought to have comforted you on lonely nights.

FELIX

And even with that creepy jerk there for you, you and Steve's love somehow endured.

MARY

Oh, God! No more, please!

With that some of the group laugh. Roy leans forward in his chair, stares straight at Steve and silently mouths the word "bullshit".

STEVE

(To Roy)

Before we break up this ceremony, I think we should go outside and finish our conversation.

MARY

What?

JANET

Here we go!

ROY

Is that what we should do? So it shall be written, so it shall be done! We can finish...

EZ

Whoa! Guys! All day with you two. Put it to rest.

ROY

It was resting for three decades. I was fine with it being dead forever. Steve Hearn does not accept that. Do you, Steve Hearn?

MARY

I don't like this. What is...

STEVE

You and me! Out there! Now!

ROY

Or what? Are you gonna physically drag me out there? Will I wither under the sheer magnitude of your wrath? I spoke to you twice outside about this subject today. I prefer we finish this conversation indoors. Here works.

MARY

Stop it!

STEVE

You would love that. You have nothing that grounds you here. You can set fire to this whole town and not feel any of the heat in that frozen shithole you exiled yourself in.

ROY

I am not setting fire to anything. I am just goading you to an ends you want to achieve.

(Tapping table)

Here works.

(MORE)

ROY (CONT'D)

I think you can muster the testicular fortitude to say what is on your mind.

STEVE

Keep pushing me.

ROY

Deal!

FELIX

Steve, this is what I talked to you about earlier. He has nothing to lose. He wants you to blow your cool. Come with me. Let's leave here and leave this asshole alone with his misery.

ROY

Fuck you, Felix! Misery? I enjoy my life. Yeah, having my girlfriend fuck me over this week sucks. But that is temporary. You, however, have always been a negative, shit talking rat. Nothing I have seen today says you have changed. You feed off of bad news. And if you don't have any, you manufacture some.

JANET

Roy, this is a bad way to end things. Maybe we all just walk away from this.

ROY

I walked away from it three decades ago. Mary brought me back in.

FELIX

The door aint locked. You can fly back to Alaska right now.

ROY

Steve hasn't given me clearance to leave.

At this, Steve pounds his fist on the table. The women are all startled by this. Glasses on the table fall over. He jumps out of his seat.

STEVE

(voice raised)

When me and Mary broke up, you told her I came over your house with that girl. Yeah, it was a huge fucking mistake, but I did it and you ran to tell her! Fucking admit it!

ROY

So ignorant. All these years later and you never figured it out.

MARY

I want you both to stop this...

STEVE

Four people in the room! Who was the rat?

EZ

Roy, c'mon! Walk away from this. Be the bigger man.

ROY

No! This has to happen right now.

STEVE

Four people in the room...

ROY

(Standing up)

You said that! Multiple times. Four people in the room. Four people in the room.

MARY

(To Roy) Don't you fucking do it!

ROY

You are right, Steve. There were four people in the room. But there was...

(screaming)

...five people in the house!

An awkward silence consumes the room. Steve turns his head to stare at Mary. Mary is giving Roy a death stare. EZ, Felix and Janet all have their mouths open in shock. Kelly is blank faced. Steve sits in his chair. Roy leans forward, putting his hands on the table. His voice is lowered to a hush.

ROY (CONT'D)

You showed up four hours early. You showed up with a girl I did not know about. And for the short time the three of you were there, none of you went into my bedroom.

Steve is hurt. He closes his eyes and shakes his head in denial.

MARY

(To Roy)

You are a heartless son of a bitch.

ROY

If I am heartless, it is because I gave my heart to you, and you threw it away. I loved you. I doted on you. When Steve dumped you, you came to me and I gave you all I had. Nine days. I remember every minute of them. And when he beckoned you to come back, you ran to him. You could not even dump me in person. You left a note on my windshield in the middle of the night.

EZ

Let it go, man.

ROY

I did, Ephraim. I really did. I moved on and made a good life. But I could never come back here.

JANET

I know a man with a grudge when I see one.

ROY

No grudges here. So long as this place was a distant memory, I was solid. I never sought any info about anything or anyone here. I could have said something to Mary on the phone the other day. I didn't cry or yell or ask her why she dumped me half a lifetime ago. I told her I would come back for the vodka ceremony, I gave her my cell number and I hung up the phone. I was not going to say a word about this.

(MORE)

ROY (CONT'D)

But then Steve acted like I am somehow obliged to answer to him. Whether it is vanity or pride on my part, I do not know, but I refuse to give into it. Now, you know.

EZ

Excuses for a dick move.

ROY

EZ, I have never said a bad word about you since we met at baseball try-outs. We were just two spry, wide-eyed twelve-year-old kids. I would like to continue that here onward.

JANET

It was a dick move. You should have left quietly.

ROY

I am leaving now, but not quietly. The good news is you can all tell your grandkids about how you stood up to the Great Satan one night and lived to tell the tale. But first, a toast.

Roy grabs three cups from the table and fills them with the vodka used during the ceremony. He lifts the first cup.

ROY (CONT'D)

To Victor. A good friend.

Roy does the shot, puts down the cup and then lifts the second.

ROY (CONT'D)

To all of you. May you and yours all live long, happy, healthy lives.

Roy does the shot. He puts that cup down slowly. He rubs his thumb on the rim of the third. He appears to become slightly emotional. He turns to stare at Mary.

ROY (CONT'D)

Christmas Eve, 2010. I flew some parcels up to a native village. Did it for free, because, you know, Christmas. The problem was I hated that Cessna I flew up there. Always felt sticky.

(MORE)

ROY (CONT'D)

After I made my drop, I had a smooth takeoff. Ten minutes up, total engine failure. I did not have enough time to head back to the village, and the terrain on the coast was too rocky for an emergency landing. I was forced to ditch the plane into the Bristol Bay. In daylight, a water landing is dangerous. In bitch black darkness, like that night, it is a hundred times harder. Right before I made contact with the water...a nanosecond before landing...I screamed out your name.

Roy picks up the cup. His hand is shaking. He does the shot. He turns the cup upside down and gently places it on the table.

ROY (CONT'D)

You will be one of the last two alive, Mary. If only to ensure that that second bottle is opened. If I am the other one still breathing, call me. I will come back and do the other vodka ceremony. You have my word on that.

Roy heads towards the front door.

EZ

Safe travels, bro.

ROY

You are a fortunate man, EZ. Take care of that family.

JANET

You are too drunk to drive.

ROY

Correct. That is why I am walking.

JANET

To Twin Lakes Boulevard?

ROY

This is my hometown. I can walk it blindfolded.

Roy exits.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CAFE. (CONT.)

Roy slowly walks into the parking lot area. He is labored from being drunk. He hears footsteps behind him.

KELLY (O.C.)

Roy.

Roy turns around. Kelly walks up to him.

KELLY (CONT'D)

I would like to talk with you about something.

ROY

I do not want to discuss what just happened.

KELLY

That makes two of us. Let me drive you back to your place. We can talk there.

ROY

I am walking back. Or, more precisely, staggering.

KELLY

That is stupid drunk talk. Get in the car, let me drive you back and you can entertain me for a bit while I discuss something with you. I was the one person that did not bad mouth you in there.

ROY

You drank, too.

KELLY

One shot of vodka. None of my parking tickets was for a DUI. I am fine to drive.

Roy thinks for a moment and then gives a cue that he agrees. Kelly holds up her car keys and we hear the peep of the car door unlocking.

INT. ROY'S RENTAL HOME (NIGHT)

As they enter the home, Roy flips the keys on to the kitchen table. He moves towards the couch slowly.

He removes his coat and tie, unbuttons the top bottom of his shirt and sinks into the couch. He looks like he may pass out asleep. Kelly stares around the house and then sits in the chair across from Roy.

ROY

This must be a big deal. You did not start the conversation in the car.

KELLY

You were likewise silent.

ROY

I was napping.

KELLY

It is good to know you don't snore.

ROY

Are you a banker or do you sell mattresses?

Kelly snickers at this. She stares around again.

KELLY

Did you know Grace Nibley?

ROY

No.

KELLY

She lived in this house with her mother. She was a year behind me. We became friends. I used to come over here and we would watch music videos and movies. She was obsessed with Patrick Swayze. She watched his movies non-stop. We were quite a bit alike.

ROY

Where is she now?

KELLY

Logan, Utah. Her husband teaches theatre at the college out there.

ROY

Let me guess. Facebook friends.

KELLY

And Instagram.

Kelly takes in a breath and claps her hands together and sits down.

KELLY (CONT'D)

OK. This is something that is completely out of my character, so I would appreciate it if you did not make me feel bad when I stumble through this.

ROY

No pithy quips allowed?

KELLY

Like that one? No.

Kelly rolls her eyes. She leans forward in her chair.

KELLY (CONT'D)

I told you about the offer my uncle made. But there was more to it. I had a cousin. She was older than me. She was born with a rare blood disorder. It did not flow through her veins properly. Lived in a wheelchair most of her life. She was my aunt and uncle's only child. She died at twenty-two. We went out for the funeral and that is when my uncle made me the job offer. I was kind of a surrogate daughter for them. They were in their late fifties. My uncle taught me everything about banking, mortgages and the stock market. After eight years, he retired, and the trustees made me vice-president. Six years later, I am running things.

ROY

Boss lady.

KELLY

Yes. It was a great deal. I lived rent free. The house was mine when they moved into a condo in Fort Myers, Florida. I had a lifelong career. My one problem was that I was terrible at relationships. Shy. Boring. Only losers and married men looking for a side piece hit on me. And the rare available nice guy I met usually left me within a few weeks.

Roy pushes himself up in his seat on the couch.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Now the hard part. There is a supermarket across the street from my office. The GM was this wonderful man that worked the floor. Said hello to everyone. Talked to me every time I went in. I found out the story on him. He had a wife and three daughters. All grown. The wife had suffered an awful stroke. Alive, but a full invalid. He was caring for her like that for years. He was lonely. He liked me. It was a great thing for both of us. He could be with a woman, and I had a man that was happy with what I gave him. I was upset he never could stay over at nights, but that was the only complaint I had. This went on for five years. Three months ago, he died. Heart attack. His wife outlived him.

Kelly pauses to stop herself from crying.

KELLY (CONT'D)

So, yeah, he is dead. I cannot go to the funeral. I have to mourn by myself. I am alone.

Kelly stares at Roy to see his reaction. Roy now sits upright on the couch. His arms lean forward so that his forearms are on his legs.

ROY

You have my full attention.

KELLY

Thank you, Roy. This is undoubtedly the boldest thing I have done in my life. I need courage beyond my understanding. Here it is. I want to come to Alaska with you. I want to try out being with you for a bit. A couple. I do not need a man to take care of me. I have invested my money wisely. I own the Athens home. I can rent it out. I want a partner. Dinner at home. Go places. Sex.

ROY

Sex? Ewww!

KELLY

Sex does suck.

ROY

I surely hope so!

They both giggle.

KELLY

What is the name of the town you live in?

ROY

Orem.

KELLY

Spell that.

ROY

O-r-e-m. Named for Rupert Orem, a Scotsman who founded the town on March 8th, 1888. There is a plaque extolling his virtues in the city services building. If you know of any towns in Alaska, it is thirty miles west of Seward.

KELLY

I heard of Steward. I assume they have Wifi, streaming services and cable TV up there.

ROY

All of those things and indoor plumbing, too. It really is like any other small town. The daylight and nighttime thing is real. Your body will feel weird adjusting to the long days and nights. But everything else is the same as anywhere you could live. And when I am in the mood to do big city stuff I fly down to Seattle or Vancouver for a night.

KELLY

Getaway trips. Fun.

ROY

They can be.

They both smile at each other.

KELLY

The big sell. I will never cheat on you. I will never lie to you. I do not want other men. One man. You. I cook. I keep a clean house. I have my own money. Maybe I start a business up there. I know how. In return, you do not cheat on me. You do not lie to me. One woman. Me. You are kind and loving, as I am. You are attentive to me, as I am to you. If it does not work out, I go back to Ohio and no one is the worse off. I do not want to be alone, Roy. I want a partner as I enter into old age.

ROY

I have to ask this question. How do you know I am the one? Why me?

KELLY

I have no idea if you are the one. But you are handsome. You have your own career. I assume you have your own home.

ROY

I do. Not a mansion, but clean and I have a huge yard. You should find it more than adequate for your needs.

KELLY

There you go. I know you from the old days. I do not think you've changed much from back then. One of my few talents is my own confidence in how I size people up. I think you want what I want. I think you like me. I think you will be happy to have a loyal partner that you are attracted to. It works.

ROY

How do I know you are not some psycho chick?

KELLY

I'm not.

ROY

Ahh! That is just what you want me to think!

KELLY

Please, Roy. This is tough enough. Shut me up and throw me out of here if this is nuts. But do not mock me.

ROY

(exhales)

Yes. This is serious. I will stop being a smartass.

KELLY

Thank you.

ROY

I accept your offer.

KELLY

What?

ROY

I accept your offer. It is just crazy enough to work.

KELLY

It is!

ROY

What do you do about your job?

KELLY

I call the trustees and tell them I am retiring. I have a full pension. My VP is primed and ready to take over. If you and I do not work out, I do something else. Another business. I have talked of leaving quite a bit since John...my lover...died. It has been a long three months. Something has to move with me. Can you make a flight plan that stops in Athens?

ROY

Easily.

KELLY

We can stop off and I can pick up some clothes and a few creature comforts.

ROY

No cats.

KELLY

Is that a question or an ultimatum?

ROY

Both.

KELLY

I am not a cat lady. I had a dog for fifteen years. Muffin. Her kidneys gave out three years ago. I do not have the heart to put another pet down.

ROY

My business does not allow me to own animals. I would like a dog. I am gone too long. Sometimes I will be away for three days straight. I really do not want to worry that you are banging half the town while I am up in the Circle.

KELLY

I never understood why a woman would want multiple guys at once. Handling one of you is time consuming enough.

ROY

I have to ask this. You only saw me today. I got drunk and yelled at Steve. In the middle of that is when you decided to hitch your wagon to me, right? How does that happen?

KELLY

Yelling at a jerk like Steve is a gold star. And I understand why you got drunk today. If you were a bad person, you would not be here. You would be back in Orem plotting your revenge against your ex.

ROY

And what if I only want you to come back with me because you are revenge on my ex?

KELLY

It will be revenge in a way. But it is more than that. I am not sure how much more I can define this. I was staring at you during the vodka ceremony, and I thought this was a good move. I trust my gut. It has never been wrong, not that I can remember. I had a choice, Roy. Right there and then. Tell you this zany idea or keep quiet, let you go back to Alaska and that ends that.

Roy stands up and walks over to Kelly extending his hand. She takes it and stands. He places his hand on her cheek. They kiss. They then place their hands on each other's hips.

ROY

About that sex thing.

KELLY

What of it?

ROY

Sex is considered by many to be an important component of any healthy relationship.

KELLY

I answer yes to that.

ROY

It, uh, it would be a little awkward for us to delay the sex thing until we get to Alaska. I mean, if this is an audition, if either of us can back out if this just does not work, we should, you know, sample everything.

KELLY

Bad sex is a killer. We should make sure everything works right.

ROY

A smooth transition.

KELLY

Exactly! And no worries. I am not blissfully boring in bed.

ROY

Given the things you offered to do with Victor...or more to the point...to Victor, in that sexy letter, I am not worried at all.

KELLY

Oh, that damn letter! Stupid, stupid girl!

ROY

The words you wrote him are seared on my brain.

Kelly leans in to kiss Roy. They break their embrace and head to the bedroom.

ROY (CONT'D)

You set a high bar. I hope you do not disappoint.

KELLY

The pressure is in on you, rugged Alaska guy. Put me to sleep and I am staying in Ohio.

Roy closes the bedroom door behind them.

FADE OUT