

## Dirty Dirty, a new play

By Jake Alexander

### CHARACTERS

SAMUEL, the birthday boy, turning 30, absolutely at peace

SCARLETT, his girlfriend since college, did the most to plan this trip, sexy and self-sufficient

TODD, his best friend, has often relied on SAMUEL, perhaps too much

DENISE, a pity invite, works with SCARLETT

HENRY, friends with SCARLETT and SAMUEL, although can get along with anyone

ALBERTO, younger, has nothing to lose, HENRY's boyfriend

The HOST, the owner and maintenance worker of the AirBNB

SETTING: a cozy but not inexpensive AirBNB in northern Vermont, the end of winter.

*(Lights up. The living room and dining room of an AirBNB in northern Vermont. End of winter, night. The living room has a small fireplace, which \*can\* be lit, a small couch off to one side and two arm chairs that are mis-matched. A rustic, repurposed tree stump sits in the middle of the room as a sort of coffee table. A set of stairs leads up to the second story of the house, where the bedrooms are. The dining room is off the living room, through a small archway, with a massive table and several chairs around it. There's an ornate, totally useless, very tacky and gaudy bowl of faux oranges in the center of the table, which makes it almost impossible to sit down and enjoy a meal at the table, or play any sort of game. There's another doorway of the back of the dining room which leads to a bathroom and the kitchen. A large set of bay windows looks out to the backyard. We see snow falling outside. SAMUEL and DENISE sit around chatting. Well, DENISE is mostly quiet.)*

### SAMUEL

I thought it was actually really good. *(A pause.)* The movie, I mean. You hardly ever see him do that kind of story, you know? Like an action, sure. An adventure, buddy comedy, right. But this sort of serious, avant garde thing? It really shocked me. *(A beat.)* I'm not normally up for that type of thing. You can ask Scarlett, I'm always against that. She can't drag me to that sort of thing. Not that she's like, clamoring to go either. *(A pause.)* I don't mean to say that she's not artistic, obviously she is, but that's just not our thing. We don't think it's pretentious or anything. We just don't like it. You know how there's this thick layer of irony on everything now? Like everyone needs to be in "the know"? Like a joke can't just be a joke nowadays, it needs to be like, coated in twelve layers of irony, all these references and innuendos and all that. Comedy isn't comedy anymore, it's just like, people needing to top each other, land the next joke, bring us all to our knees, you know? That's the type of art I hate. I hate it when I don't know what's going on and a whole aspect of the joke is that some people don't know what's going on. *(A beat.)* What was I saying? Oh, right. I really liked him in the movie. Seriously, he did a great job. I don't know like, anything from anything, but I wouldn't be surprised if he got awards buzz for it. *(A beat.)* Do you follow the awards season? Any predictions?

### DENISE

Not really.

SAMUEL  
Not really what?

DENISE  
I don't really follow the awards season.

SAMUEL  
Ah. Okay.

DENISE  
So no predictions.

SAMUEL  
Sure.

*(They sit in silence for awhile. SAMUEL drums his thigh.)*

SAMUEL  
Crazy storm, huh?

DENISE  
I've seen worse.

*(More silence.)*

SAMUEL  
How's work going for you?

DENISE  
It's fine.

SAMUEL  
Scar tells me you got promoted.

DENISE  
I did.

SAMUEL  
That's nice. What's your new title?

DENISE  
Promoter.

*(A beat.)*

SAMUEL

You got promoted to promoter?

DENISE

Well, it's as high as you can go with a venue like ours.

SAMUEL

I think it's great, it's just funny, that's all.

DENISE

What is?

SAMUEL

The wordplay, it's funny don't you think?

DENISE

I don't necessarily care for puns.

SAMUEL

Well it's not really a pun-

DENISE

What's Scarlett doing?

SAMUEL

Oh, I think she's just. Putting away groceries.

*(More silence.)*

SAMUEL

Well Scar says you absolutely deserve it.

DENISE

Deserve what?

SAMUEL

The promotion.

DENISE

Oh. Thank you.

SAMUEL

Sure thing.

(A beat. The doorbell rings, SAMUEL almost leaps to answer it. He opens the front door to reveal: TODD, carrying a few bags and a suitcase. He has travelled far. He's put together, but just barely.)

SAMUEL  
Hey! You made it.

TODD  
Of course I *\*made\** it, I'm not going to miss this.

SAMUEL  
If it was too much trouble, I know the cost was-

TODD  
I can deal! Seriously, don't make it into this big thing

SAMUEL  
The drive was okay?

TODD  
Always easy.

SAMUEL  
Seems like you got here just in time.

TODD (*hugging him*)  
Happy birthday, fucker.

SAMUEL  
Thanks buddy. Crazy storm, huh?

TODD  
Almost swerved off the road a few times. No streetlights in this part of the state, huh?

SAMUEL  
We are about five minutes into a horror film up here.

TODD  
Winter birthdays suck. (*seeing DENISE*) Oh, hey, I'm sorry, I'm Todd.

SAMUEL  
Denise, this is Todd. My buddy from college.

TODD  
His *\*best\** friend, he always forgets that part.

DENISE  
Nice to meet you-

TODD (*interrupting*)  
You guys been up here long? Am I last the one?

SAMUEL  
Henry and Berto, they're on their way.

TODD  
Are they walking?

SAMUEL  
No, driving. But you know, the roads.

TODD  
I thought you were all travelling together?

SAMUEL  
Well that was the plan, but..

TODD  
But what?

SAMUEL  
Nothing. It's not a big deal.

TODD  
It's not hard to plan for winter birthdays, you know? It's not like there's much going on in the city.

SAMUEL  
Well, the storm and all that.

TODD  
You gotta stop justifying their tardiness.

SAMUEL  
It's not a big deal! I don't want to get into it this weekend!

TODD  
Fine. Birthday boy. When is yours, Danielle?

DENISE  
What?

TODD  
Your birthday?

DENISE  
September. And it's Denise.

TODD  
Oh, shit! I'm sorry, Denise. Of course.

DENISE  
That's all right.

TODD  
Brain fart. Long drive, you know?

SAMUEL  
You just said!-

TODD  
I came! Would you let it go?

SAMUEL  
Do you want to put your stuff upstairs? You're in the room with the bunks.

DENISE  
I thought I was...

SAMUEL  
Oh. Right! Well, you know we've got that or this couch here. If you all don't mind sharing though?

TODD  
/I'm good with it./

DENISE  
/I'll take the couch./

*(A beat. Awkwardness.)*

TODD  
No, no! You got here first!/

DENISE  
/It's really okay-/

TODD

/No, you don't have to do that-/

DENISE

/You drove all this way./

TODD

/Still, you deserve to have a mattress at least-/

DENISE (*final*)

Just gimme the couch.

(*A beat.*)

TODD

You don't mind?

DENISE

I really don't.

TODD

Suit yourself.

(*SCARLETT enters from the kitchen, holding a bag of chips and a few bottles of wine.*)

SCARLETT

I thought I heard voices. Hey, you!

TODD (*reaching to hug her*)

Hey, kiddo, how're you doing?

SCARLETT

You made it up all right?

TODD

Easy breezy.

SCARLETT (*putting down the chips and bottles, kissing SAMUEL on head*)

Well, I know this guy appreciates it.

SAMUEL (*annoyed*)

Ugh, when you call me that.

SCARLETT

What about it?

SAMUEL

“This guy”. Sounds like you forgot my name.

SCARLETT (*teasing*)

I could never forget your name, Mark.

*(DENISE glares at TODD. He immediately stands and grabs his bags.)*

TODD

The rooms are upstairs, you said?

SCARLETT

At the top to the right. Can I pour you a glass?

TODD

Yes please. Make it a double.

*(TODD exits up the stairs. SCARLETT pours everyone a glass of wine. SAMUEL wraps his arms around SCARLETT.)*

SAMUEL

Have I thanked you yet?

SCARLETT

About a thousand times.

SAMUEL

Well, you’ll hear it about thousand more times.

SCARLETT

You can really stop! It wasn’t that much.

SAMUEL

Scar, look at this place!

SCARLETT

Everyone chipped in!

SAMUEL

Is everyone chipping in on that amazing meal you’re making tonight?

SCARLETT

Everyone is bringing something. This is what you wanted!

SAMUEL



I know, and you made it possible.

SCARLETT

Well. I was happy to.

*(A beat. DENISE coughs.)*

DENISE

Sorry. I've been holding that in for awhile but it felt like that was a nice moment.

SCARLETT

I really appreciate that you made the trip, Denise.

SAMUEL

Yeah. Me too.

SCARLETT

Are you having fun?

DENISE

I have to go to the bathroom.

SCARLETT

Oh. Okay. It's back there by the kitchen.

*(DENISE quickly stands and exits through the kitchen. They stare after her.)*

SAMUEL

She's gonna be a bumner this weekend.

SCARLETT

She's not.

SAMUEL

She is! She's bringing nothing to the table.

SCARLETT

She needed time away from the city, I told you.

SAMUEL

But my birthday, Scar?

SCARLETT

Listen to you! Being a little birthday-brat.

SAMUEL

Hey, I am not. I just want to have \*fun\*.

SCARLETT

And you will. You don't even have to interact with her.

SAMUEL

Except when you leave me alone in a room with her.

SCARLETT

I had to put away groceries for \*your\* "amazing" birthday dinner, birthday-brat.

SAMUEL

I just, you know, had an idea of what this weekend would be.

SCARLETT

What do you mean?

SAMUEL

Just you know, you build something up in your head. You want it to be that way in real life.

SCARLETT

What did you build it up to be?

SAMUEL (*deflecting*)

Nothing. It doesn't matter. I just didn't expect this person to be mixed into the group, is all.

SCARLETT

If your sister hadn't bailed then we wouldn't have to worry about filling the spot.

SAMUEL

I know. I'm actually glad she couldn't come.

SCARLETT

So, what did you have in mind? What was the image you had?

SAMUEL

Let's just forget it. I'm being a birthday-brat.

SCARLETT

Hey, I was kidding (*A beat, tenderly*) Do you really think she's going to ruin it? She's perfectly nice.

SAMUEL

I know, I just don't, like, know her. You know?

SCARLETT

She's so timid, babe, you won't even notice she's here.

SAMUEL

Where are Henry and Alberto?

SCARLETT

They'll be here soon.

SAMUEL

Todd was asking why we travelled separately.

SCARLETT

They asked.

SAMUEL

And that's all they said? "We should go up separately?"

SCARLETT

I've got too much to do to worry about them and whether or not they drive up with us. If they want to pay for gas and deal with driving in the storm, so be it.

SAMUEL

We really are in a horror movie.

SCARLETT

What?

SAMUEL

I joked about it to Todd, that the storm, the group, everything, it's like a horror movie.

SCARLETT (*spooky*)

A young couple, a loner, the best friend, and two people who may or may not be in a fight go away to a cabin...

SAMUEL

Exactly!

SCARLETT (*going to him, kissing him*)

I don't want you to worry about any of it. You just relax.

SAMUEL

Oh yeah?

SCARLETT (*sexy*)

I'll take care of everything. You just enjoy your birthday.

SAMUEL (*playing along*)

How much should I plan to enjoy it? You know, just so I have a sense...

SCARLETT

You should expect...a moderate amount of enjoyment.

SAMUEL

Moderate! Lucky me. On my thirtieth birthday I get a moderate amount of enjoyment.

SCARLETT

Is that not enough for you?

SAMUEL

It's you know, adequate.

SCARLETT (*straddling him*)

And what would be more appropriate?

*(They start kissing, very much not aware of their surroundings. TODD enters from upstairs. He watches them for a moment.)*

TODD

I'd say get a room but really, you paid for the whole place.

SCARLETT (*embarrassed*)

Sorry.

SAMUEL

Well, we all chipped in-

TODD (*ignoring him, to SCARLETT*)

/No, hey, go for it. The birthday boy deserves it.

SAMUEL

Eww. Don't comment on our sex life.

TODD

It's healthy, yeah? You guys keeping it fresh?

SCARLETT

We missed you, Toddy.

TODD

How is the city? Everything still good at work, Scar?

SCARLETT

It's fine! It's what it is. You met Denise? We work together.

TODD

You mean Danielle?

SCARLETT

Hmm?

TODD

Nothing. So, they still aren't here yet, huh?

SAMUEL

They're on their way.

TODD

What's the real story, Scar? Why didn't you all travel together?

SCARLETT

I swear I don't know.

TODD (*throwing up his hands*)

All right, sorry I asked.

SCARLETT

I just want to have fun, I don't want to get annoyed at every little thing.

SAMUEL

Good plan, babe.

TODD

This is an amazing house, Scar. Great find.

SAMUEL

You've seen it before, haven't you?

TODD

When?

SAMUEL

Didn't you get the link to the Airbnb that Scarlett sent out?

TODD

Oh, I'm sure I did.

SAMUEL (*slightly annoyed*)  
You didn't look at it? When you sent her your portion?

TODD (*covering badly*)  
No, I'm sure I did. I skimmed it, I'm sure.

SAMUEL  
You're sure?

TODD (*moving on, awkwardly*)  
Is this a real working woodstove?

SCARLETT  
Yeah, I can't figure out how to-

SAMUEL/TODD  
Oh, let me/here I got it-

*(Both guys lunge for the woodstove in an attempt to light it. TODD wins out. SCARLETT shakes her head. The doorbell rings. SCARLETT opens it, revealing HENRY and ALBERTO. They are both well-dressed, effortlessly, lovely. They both carry a backpack and a half-open bottle of wine and half-drunk bottle of liquor. They are mid-conversation.)*

HENRY  
You're supposed to steer \*into\* the skid.

ALBERTO  
In what crazy world does a person steer "into" the skid? You die that way.

HENRY  
No, it's what resets your tires. You have to reset the tires.

ALBERTO  
You have to steer \*away\* from the ice, not with the ice.

HENRY  
I'm literally afraid you don't know how to drive.

ALBERTO  
I got us up here!

HENRY  
And we almost died!

ALBERTO  
Next time you drive!

SCARLETT  
Hello?

HENRY (*giving her a hug*)  
Hi, hi, hi, sorry sorry sorry.

ALBERTO  
Sorry about being late, we needed more time.

SCARLETT  
That's fine! We only beat you by like an hour.

HENRY (*going to SAMUEL*)  
The Birthday Boy!

SAMUEL  
Hey! How was the drive?

HENRY  
/It was awful./

ALBERTO  
/It was fine!/

HENRY  
Who picked Vermont?

SCARLETT  
Vermont is beautiful!

HENRY  
It's far!

SCARLETT  
Oh you're so picky.

ALBERTO  
He doesn't like to travel further than Brooklyn.

TODD  
I hear that.

HENRY (*seeing TODD*)  
When did you get here? I thought for sure we'd beat you.

TODD  
Well if you left \*on time\*.

HENRY  
Oh fuck you.

SCARLETT  
Henry, Alberto, this is my friend Denise.

HENRY (*going to hug her*)  
Hi! So nice to meet you!

DENISE (*folding her arms*)  
Oh-

*(They do this sort of awkward hug thing where HENRY is present but DENISE is definitely not.)*

ALBERTO  
Henry, you can't just hug people!

HENRY  
Sorry! I'm a hugger!

SAMUEL  
Do you guys need drinks, or do you want to bring your bags upstairs?

HENRY  
Did you bring the bags?

ALBERTO  
Yeah, with no help from you.

HENRY  
Are you going to be this way the entire trip?

SAMUEL  
Hey, no fighting! It's my birthday!

HENRY  
Sorry. (*Remembering*) Hey! I brought a game!

SCARLETT



Oh, really? We completely forgot.

SAMUEL

I found a deck of cards in a closet downstairs.

SCARLETT

There's a closet downstairs?

SAMUEL

Not so much a closet as a loose shelf not entirely screwed into the wall in the back.

ALBERTO

Is there a bedroom downstairs?

SCARLETT

No, it's so fucking scary down there. It's all concrete and there's, like, this single drain in the floor.

TODD

Wow. We really are gonna die out here, aren't we?

HENRY

Hey, Sammy, how're you feeling?

*(A beat. Everyone gets tense.)*

SAMUEL

I'm fine. No residual pain. The last treatment was, you know, what it was.

SCARLETT *(kissing him on the cheek)*

He's a trooper.

SAMUEL *(pulling away a little too soon)*

So! Bags?

ALBERTO

I'll help you.

*(ALBERTO hands SAMUEL a bag, and they exit up the stairs. HENRY sits on the couch. TODD finishes building the fire.)*

HENRY *(checking to make sure they're out of earshot, to SCARLETT)*

He's okay?

SCARLETT

He's happy to be up here with you guys (*correcting herself, glancing at DENISE*) will you \*all\*.

HENRY  
Dodging the question.

SCARLETT  
I'm not!

HENRY  
Girl, I know you. What is it?

SCARLETT  
He wouldn't tell me.

TODD  
Wouldn't tell you?

SCARLETT  
He usually tells me after his appointments. I mean, actually, usually I go with him. But he got the call in the morning that they wanted him to come in for tests, and he said he'd go alone. It really didn't take long, he was home within the hour. But he didn't say anything.

HENRY  
Are you worried?

SCARLETT  
I...haven't had time to think about it.

HENRY  
Yes, you have.

TODD  
Henry, stop poking her.

HENRY  
I'm not! She won't be able to have fun this weekend if she's worried about it.

SCARLETT  
I'm not worried about it, honestly. I keep thinking about it, trying to work myself up to worry. I've been worried before. But this time. I can't get there. (*A beat.*) You know when you first realized your parents were protecting you from worry? Like when they wouldn't tell you what was wrong but you were first aware that something was wrong? I remember it so vividly. We were in the car, I'm not coming home from where, but we were coming home, and my father was speeding, speeding too fast, to get home. And I didn't know. I didn't know why we were rushing, but I remember my mother kept saying "I'm sure it's nothing, honey, we don't need to race."

And I thought that was funny. Who were we racing? Would we win? Would we lose? If we won, what was the prize? Races have prizes, I remember being excited to find out what the prize was.

I won a medal in elementary school, because I was fastest. I was the fastest girl at Cambridge Elementary school. I'm getting off topic, but I was fastest and it's important to me that you know that. (*A beat.*) So we were racing home and we get home, and my father quickly puts the car in park, we haven't even really \*stopped\* going forward, and he's slamming on the brakes and putting it park, and he jumps out of the car, and he leaves his door open. And that's when I knew it was bad news. That's when I got worried. Because no one leaves a door open unless they \*need\* to get to the next place fast. And he tells my mom and I to stay put, not to move, that he'll check, and it's not clear what he's checking. But my mom turns around, and I can tell she's worried now too. She's concerned about what's going to happen. She wasn't worried but now that my dad is leaving his driver's side door open, now that he's running to the house, telling us to stay here, not to go inside, she's worried. She's admitting she may have been wrong to be so cavalier before. And my dad is running through the house, we can see him through the windows, just tearing open doors to bedrooms, shouting, panting. I can see him breathing, panting. And my mom turns to me and says "we can go in soon. Your dad is just checking." (*A beat.*) They didn't take much, just some of my mom's jewelry. And that's when I learned when to start worrying. But Sam won't let me. And I can't figure out how to get myself there. I can't figure out how to work up to worry about this. He's been in remission for so long. I can't get there. I just can't.

(*A beat.*)

HENRY

So...what should we do?

SCARLETT

If it's something to worry about, he'll tell me.

TODD

So?

SCARLETT

So we don't worry until we have to.

TODD

So just fun.

SCARLETT (*reassured*)

Yes. Just fun. (*To HENRY*) You want a drink?

HENRY

Yes. Grab one for Berto, too. Bitch needs it.

SCARLETT (*lifting the bag of groceries they brought in*)

Is there tequila in here?

HENRY  
What else?

SCARLETT  
Two margaritas, coming right up.

*(She exits, wiping her eyes. TODD and HENRY watch her go.)*

DENISE  
That...felt personal.

TODD  
Yeah. *(seeing an opportunity)* This is Denise, by the way!

DENISE *(bluntly)*  
I was introduced before.

TODD  
Right! Shit!

HENRY  
Nice to meet you. Do you know Scar well?

DENISE  
We work together.

HENRY  
Cool. *(A beat.)* So. Do you know her well?

DENISE  
I just said we work together.

HENRY  
Yeah. That's not an answer to the question.

TODD  
Whoa.

HENRY  
No, no! I don't mean to be weird or rude or anything, I just mean that just because you work together doesn't mean that you guys know each other well.

TODD *(covering)*  
This guy. He's so good at reading people. I love the way your, like, brain works.

HENRY  
Stop that.

TODD  
Stop what?

HENRY (*not antagonistic*)  
You don't need to cover for me.

TODD  
Hey, I'm not-

HENRY  
So do you two know each other well?

DENISE  
I...I don't know?

HENRY  
That's also okay!/  
/

TODD  
/Totally fine./

HENRY (*ignoring him*)  
I think it's great to have different levels of friends, you know? And what better time to get to that next level than a trip like this, you know?

DENISE  
I'm filler. His sister dropped out.

TODD  
I'm sure that's not true.

DENISE  
No, it is. I heard them talking about it earlier.

HENRY  
That's amazing.

DENISE  
What is?

HENRY  
That you're so okay with it.

DENISE

Well. It is what it is, you know?

HENRY

That's a super high level of thinking. I don't know a lot of folks who would be okay with that.

DENISE

Is there another option?

HENRY

And that's what I mean! You don't have another option, but rather than be upset about that, you choose to accept it and move on. Growth can't happen if you sit in the darkness.

DENISE

Are you Buddhist?

HENRY

No.

DENISE

Well. That's just the way I move through the world.

HENRY

You're fucking cool.

DENISE

Thank you.

*(A beat.)*

TODD

Really fucking cool.

*(ALBERTO and SAMUEL re-enter, mid-conversation.)*

ALBERTO

It doesn't make sense to steer \*into\* the skid. That's crazy.

SAMUEL

I don't have a dog in this fight.

ALBERTO

Just say you agree with me.

SAMUEL  
Okay. I agree with you.

SCARLETT (*re-entering with drinks*)  
Tequila!

ALBERTO  
Is this for me?

SCARLETT  
And Henry, yes. (*handing them their drinks*) Here. And I want to make a toast.

TODD (*having already finished his drink*)  
Fuck. Isn't it bad luck to toast without a drink?

SAMUEL  
Then get another one.

TODD  
You going in? Can you grab me one?

SAMUEL (*annoyed*)  
It's a toast for me, Todd.

TODD  
Fine, but if bad luck befalls me I'm blaming you.

SCARLETT  
I want to raise a glass to Sam. (*A beat.*) Thirty is fucking old. And I know age is just a number or whatever, but you wear it oh-so-well. And I'm so happy to find out what happens in your thirtieth-first year of living. So cheers: to what's next!

All  
Cheers/ hear-hear/ woo!/ Happy birthday, Sammy!

(*They all drink.*)

SAMUEL  
Okay, now I will get a drink. (*turning to HENRY*) You guys brought a game?

HENRY  
It's a little early to play, don't you think?

SAMUEL  
No, it's great. What is it?

HENRY  
It's Hygge.

TODD  
It's what?

ALBERTO  
Hygge. It's a collective question-answer game.

SCARLETT  
Like trivia?

ALBERTO  
Honey, no, nothing like trivia.

SCARLETT  
Okay. Say the name again?

HENRY  
Hygge. (*spelling*) H-Y-G-G-E. It's a Danish word.

SAMUEL  
The Danish language is just so sexy, you know?

HENRY  
There is no English equivalent. It's a state of mind-

TODD  
How is this a game?

HENRY  
-with the most literal translation meaning "cozy" or "wellness and contentment".

SAMUEL  
Sorry, so explain the game? How do we Hygge?

HENRY (*finding the box, pulling out the cards*)  
Basically you pull a card, and then pick a person you want to answer the question. It can be anyone. And then they have to answer it, honestly. No joke answers or dodging the questions. And you *\*have\** to answer the questions. (*A beat no one responds*) It's a way for us to get to know each other better!

TODD  
We already know each other pretty well.



DENISE

Uhm....

TODD

I mean \*most\* of us know each other well.

SCARLETT

It sounds fun! We can play a few rounds and then I'll start dinner.

SAMUEL

I need a drink before I start hygge-ing. Todd, I'm guessing you want one?

TODD

Yes! What I'd like is a little bit of whiskey, with one, no! Maybe two ice cubes. And if there is a choice between Rye and Bourbon, then I'd prefer Rye UNLESS the Rye is Bulleit because I do not like Bulleit Rye, only Bulleit Bourbon.

SAMUEL (*blunt*)

So. What?

TODD

Okay, if there is Rye, then Rye UNLESS it's Bulleit. And two ice cubes-

SAMUEL

I'm getting a beer, so I'm getting you a beer.

TODD

Okay.

SCARLETT (*To DENISE*)

Can I get you another glass, Dee?

DENISE

Sure. Should I come with you?

SCARLETT

No, no, you stay! Relax.

DENISE (*not at all relaxed*)

Okay.

*(SCARLETT and SAMUEL head into the dining room. SAMUEL stops her on the way into the kitchen.)*

SAMUEL

Hey, thank you for the toast.

SCARLETT  
Sure thing, babe.

SAMUEL  
I want you to be honest with me.

SCARLETT  
I will be so Hygge with you.

SAMUEL  
No, seriously-

SCARLETT  
What's wrong?

SAMUEL  
Nothing. About Todd-

SCARLETT  
Can we just have fun?

SAMUEL  
We are having fun!

SCARLETT  
I don't want to get into a thing.

SAMUEL  
Then tell me if you paid for him to come.

*(A beat.)*

SAMUEL  
I fucking knew it.

SCARLETT  
It's not that big of a deal, he's going to pay me back.

SAMUEL  
He always says that.

SCARLETT  
This is your birthday, he's your best friend.

SAMUEL

He didn't have to make the trip.

SCARLETT

It was important that he was here.

SAMUEL

He doesn't care about it! He didn't even take the time to see where he was going. Does he even know how much he owes you?

SCARLETT

Yes. And he has promised that he will get it back to me when he can.

SAMUEL

That will be never.

SCARLETT

You have to have a little faith. Are you being a birthday brat again?

SAMUEL

I asked you not to call me that!

SCARLETT

Then let it go, Sam. He wanted to come and this was the only way he could.

*(He pulls her in close.)*

SAMUEL

You're too good to people.

SCARLETT

I like it when people like me.

SAMUEL

You don't have buy anyone's affection, Scar.

SCARLETT

I'm not doing that.

SAMUEL

I would've been okay if he weren't here.

SCARLETT

Well he is and he's happy to be celebrating you, so stop it.

SAMUEL  
Fine. Okay, fine.

*(They exit into the kitchen to get drinks.)*

ALBERTO  
Don't you think this décor is a little, you know?-

HENRY  
Exactly-

DENISE  
A little, I don't know-

HENRY  
With just a touch of like rustic sensibility?-

DENISE  
That's what I thought-

ALBERTO  
It's be interesting if it were in the American Southwest, so to speak-

HENRY  
But here-

DENISE  
Just feels "put on"-

ALBERTO  
No thought, no background-

HENRY  
Mmmmm.

*(A beat. TODD stares.)*

TODD  
Are you guys...saying actual things?

HENRY  
You don't feel it?

ALBERTO  
What kind of person decorates this way?

TODD

I don't know, I like it. The pictures and the books. Very cabin-y.

DENISE

A little \*too\* cabin-y, don't you think?

TODD

This is a joke, right?

HENRY

Who's joking?

TODD

This is just like, a normally decorated room. Some nice art on the walls.

ALBERTO

There's no cohesive design. It's like they started decorating a bed and breakfast and got bored halfway through?

DENISE

Yes! Like they said "woody" then lost their train of thought and said "a library" then got high and said "neon"?

TODD

Where is there neon??

HENRY

I wonder what this guy is like.

ALBERTO

There's a picture over here (*pointing*) of a family, but I can't tell if it's taken here or not.

HENRY (*looking*)

He's a fucking \*zaddy\* if it's him.

ALBERTO

No way! Eww.

DENISE

Let me see.

HENRY

Really?

DENISE

I like looking at hot guys just the same as anyone else.

*(She moves over to the wall and looks with HENRY and ALBERTO.)*

TODD

Well. I mean if everyone else is gonna look.

*(TODD moves over to the wall and looks with the rest of the group.)*

HENRY

Do we think he decorated or his wife did?

DENISE

There's no wife in the photo.

ALBERTO

He's got kids in the photo.

DENISE

They could be adopted.

HENRY

Do you have a crush on the host?

DENISE

We don't even know it's him.

HENRY

I don't think he's got the style to decorate an AirBnB.

ALBERTO

All the more reason to assume it was him- this place doesn't have style.

*(SCARLETT and SAMUEL re-enter with drinks for the group.)*

SAMUEL

What're you all looking at?

HENRY

Scar, who's the host of this spot?

SCARLETT

They don't have a picture on their account. And they don't give a name.

ALBERTO

That's pretty sketchy.

DENISE (*a little too loud*)  
Hey! He looks really nice!

(*They all stare at her.*)

SCARLETT

That actually reminds me, no one open the sliding glass door in the back. They said the alarm is on the fritz back there and if we open it the cops will show up. They've had them out here with the last three guests they rented to. So just keep that closed. It should be locked.

ALBERTO

Where's the hot tub?

SCARLETT

On the back deck. We just have to go around from the front door.

HENRY (*annoyed*)

In the snow?

SCARLETT

It'll take you two seconda to run before you're in a steaming hot tub.

SAMUEL

So. Should we hygge?

SCARLETT

That can't be the right verb-usage.

TODD

"Get to Hygge-ing"? "Hygge this bitch"?

SAMUEL (*handing him a beer*)

Yes. Let's hygge all up in this bitch.

HENRY (*unboxing the cards*)

Okay so I'll explain. Actually, there's very little explanation, someone just pulls a card and asks someone else the question. I'll go first.

(*He pulls a card, reads it, twinges with excitement.*)

HENRY

Okay: Scarlett. Who here would you most like to see succeed?

SCARLETT

Succeed in what?

ALBERTO

That's the fun of it! It's absolutely up to your interpretation.

SCARLETT

Okay. Well. Obviously I would say Sam, but that feels like a cop-out, because his success is somewhere intrinsically linked to my success so, I'd say....Denise.

DENISE

Me?

ALBERTO

Okay now why?

SCARLETT (*checking with HENRY*)

Is that part of it? I have to explain it?

HENRY

You don't have to. That's the fun of it.

SCARLETT

Well. I'd say Denise because we work together and she just got this big promotion and I want her to succeed in it.

HENRY

Good! Now you pick a card and ask someone a question.

SCARLETT (*choosing a card*)

Okay. (*reading*) Huh. Okay. Kind of weird.

ALBERTO

No judgments on the cards! They tell the truth!

SCARLETT

Okay, okay. And I can't pick another one?

HENRY

No, the deck has spoken.

SCARLETT

Okay. Todd: what's the hardest thing you've ever had to say to someone?

TODD

Jesus Christ.



SAMUEL

To Jesus? You had something difficult to say to Jesus?

HENRY (*ignoring him*)

Just answer as honestly as you can!

TODD

Okay. Okay I guess...I had to tell my parents I was moving farther away from them than they'd like. And it wasn't like, a fun conversation. (*A beat. No one responds.*)

Now I go?

ALBERTO

Pick any card.

TODD

Okay (*choosing a card, reading it*) Okay, Denise. What's your greatest fear and why can't you get over it?

SAMUEL

That's what the card says? It really says "why can't you get over it?"

TODD

Yeah.

SCARLETT

They are really going for it.

HENRY

It's Hygge! Go ahead, Denise.

DENISE

Uhm. It's sort of weird. This question, I mean.

HENRY

Well it doesn't have to be a like, massive, secret thing you disclose. But if it is, that's okay too! Safe space!

ALBERTO

Everyone here can be trusted!

DENISE

How am I supposed to pick just one fear?

TODD

Everyone is full of fear.

DENISE  
Kind of, yeah.

HENRY  
Well maybe just the first one that popped into your head. Whatever you first thought of, go with that one.

DENISE  
Okay. Okay, I've got one. (*A beat.*) I'm afraid something, anything, will happen to me that will set me off the course I've established for myself.

HENRY  
Can you explain that more? If you want to, that is.

DENISE  
Sure. I guess I just mean, like, I have this stability that I built for myself, and I'm always afraid that one thing, one tiny thing, or one big thing, I guess, will knock me off that stability. Like I'll lose it just because of thing.

SAMUEL  
One thing like what?

DENISE  
Like a death or injury or like financial ruin, I guess.

TODD (*absent-mindedly*)  
Or love.

DENISE  
What? No. Not love.

TODD  
Love can upend stability! You move with someone, you compromise, you give up some things. Say you get married? Have kids? There goes that stability. All that money you saved up? Those nights where you could stay to yourself? All gone.

DENISE  
Well, I won't let love do that.

TODD  
So just death or serious injury?

DENISE

Yes. Those I would accept.

TODD (*to SAMUEL and SCARLETT*)

What do you guys think?

DENISE

That's not part of the game!

TODD

I'm just asking!

HENRY

No that's okay, that's the idea! The organic conversation that comes out of it. Go ahead, ask.

TODD

Well, I'm just wondering if you guys feel you gave up some stability you had built to come together?

SAMUEL/SCARLETT

Well-

SAMUEL

/Sorry, you go-/

SCARLETT

/No, no! You go!/

SAMUEL

Okay? Okay. Well. I won't speak for Scar, but I didn't *\*have\** stability before we met.

SCARLETT

Yeah, same. I was just floating. Without him, before. But now, I have way more stability than I ever had to give up.

TODD

But you think you may have given some up?

SCARLETT

Well. I mean. There was some comfort, certainly, some routine. I guess if we are like, stretching the definition of "stability" to mean "set in our ways", then yeah. I was certainly used to being single, and I had a routine and something to do every night and no one else to take care of, and....I just mean, yes. There was stability. (a beat.) But I look at it now and I didn't have nearly as much as I have now. Like, this is way better.

SAMUEL  
“Way better”. Yes.

TODD  
Anyways. I was just curious.

DENISE  
Okay. *(Pulling a card)* Okay, Sam: Do you think people ever really change?

SAMUEL  
Huh. That’s a good one. *(thinking)* I sure hope so. I mean, similar to the last question, stability you know? That changes. And we have to change with it. Like Scar did. Like I did. So yes. We change. For good. Sometimes for bad.

HENRY  
Good answer.

ALBERTO  
Very poetic.

HENRY  
You know who’d love that answer? The \*Zaddy-host\*.

SAMUEL  
Okay so now me.

*(SAMUEL pulls a card and reads it. His face sort of falls, then he smiles. He looks around. Suddenly, he slides the card under the couch.)*

HENRY  
Hey! You have to do the card you chose!

SAMUEL  
I don’t want to.

HENRY  
Why?

SAMUEL  
Because. Just because.

HENRY  
That’s not fair, that’s not the way the game goes.

ALBERTO  
What did it say?

SAMUEL  
I'm not going to say.

ALBERTO  
Well, come on, you gotta follow the rules.

TODD (*reaching under the couch*)  
Just get the card back-

SAMUEL (*shouting, angry*)  
No! Don't! (*A beat. They all stare at him.*) I just didn't want to do that card. Okay? Can that be okay? I just. I don't want to. One birthday pass, okay? Okay?

(*A beat.*)

SCARLETT  
We should get dinner going anyways.

SAMUEL  
Now?

SCARLETT  
Yeah, this feels like a good pausing time. More drinks? Then dinner?

SAMUEL  
Okay, well before that, I have a little gift for everyone.

HENRY  
A gift! You're the one who is supposed to be getting gifts!

SAMUEL  
This is to thank everyone for coming. And sort of leads to something else I wanna do this weekend.

ALBERTO  
Is it ecstasy?!

SAMUEL  
Ah, no. But that would've been good too. Sorry.

TODD  
Man, this all too much. The house and the drinks and the good food.

SAMUEL  
It's just something small. Wait here.

*(SAMUEL goes upstairs and quickly reemerges with a small box. He places the box on the coffee table and kneels down next to it. SCARLETT, TODD, and HENRY all stand, watching. SAMUEL unlatches the box, and flings the top off. The group stares down at what's inside. TODD sort of cocks his head. SCARLETT covers her mouth. HENRY puts his hands on his hips. ALBERTO joins him, looks down at the contents. They stand in silence for awhile, almost too long, like an abnormal amount of time, like someone forgot their lines and story literally can't be told until they get back on track.)*

TODD *(clearing his throat)*  
This is a strange joke.

SAMUEL  
It's for you all.

SCARLETT  
Sam-

SAMUEL  
I know, but you have to let me explain.

*(ALBERTO bends down and picks up the item, which is revealed to be a gun, small, black, sturdy. Definitely real.)*

ALBERTO *(aiming it around the room)*  
Is it real?

TODD  
Don't point it at everyone!

SCARLETT  
Can you put it back?!-

HENRY  
Berto!

ALBERTO  
It's fake right? It's got to be fake.

SAMUEL  
No it's real.

*(They all stare at him.)*

TODD  
Seriously, what is the joke?

SAMUEL

Well, like I said, I can explain-

ALBERTO (*leveling it at DENISE*)

I've never held a gun before.

DENISE

Then, by all means, aim it at me!

HENRY

Berto, give it to me.

(*ALBERTO hands the gun to HENRY, who places it back in the box.*)

TODD

Did you at least bring one for everyone? For whatever game this is? I mean we're going hunting-

SCARLETT

Samuel. What the fuck is going on?

SAMUEL

Okay. I can explain. I have three things to tell you. And all three are equally important, and all three need to be heard without any interruption. One...no, okay, two of them are scary. One is just kind of a nice thing.

SCARLETT

Babe just fucking tell us.

SAMUEL

Okay. Okay here goes. Number one: I love you all very, very much. All of you. It matters so much to me that you're here to celebrate me and be with me during this time. I mean that. Okay? (*A pause.*) Number two: I'm sick. Some of you knew, some of you didn't. Those that knew, it's, well it's. Okay. It's. God, there is just no easy way to say this. It's bad. And it's only going to get worse. And there's nothing that can be done about it.

SCARLETT

Sam-

SAMUEL

No. Please. You gotta let me finish. (*A pause. He clears his throat.*) And Number three: I don't want to live. Like this. I don't want to suffer, and there will only be suffering, and there's nothing else to be done, so. That's all three. You may each ask me one question apiece.

(*They all launch into overlapping thoughts and yells.*)

TODD  
/I'd like to appeal-/

SCARLETT  
/You can't just say all that and expect us not to react!-/

HENRY  
/This isn't fair!/

DENISE  
/It is not appropriate for me to be here./

ALBERTO  
/Sam!-/

SAMUEL  
One question! Nothing else.

*(A beat while they all think.)*

HENRY  
Are you in any pain?

SAMUEL  
No. But I could be, and I don't want that.

*(A beat.)*

DENISE  
Is it...sorry it's weird for me to be here during this, this is so personal-

SAMUEL  
No, go ahead.

DENISE  
I mean is it an any-day-now situation?

SAMUEL  
They can't really tell me. But the outlook is, you know, bad. I have about a year.

ALBERTO  
How long have you known?

SAMUEL  
A few weeks.

SCARLETT



When you came home and didn't say anything to me?

SAMUEL

Scar, I didn't want you to worry-

SCARLETT (*sarcastic, devastated*)  
Oh, thanks for sparing me the worry.

SAMUEL

Scar-

TODD

So why the gun?

(*A beat.*)

SAMUEL

Well. That's the fun of it.

TODD

Fun? Did you just say fun?

SAMUEL

Yes.

TODD

Because there's a gun on the table here.

SAMUEL

One of you will get to do it.

(*A long, long beat.*)

ALBERTO

Do it?

SAMUEL (*cheery*)

Yes!

TODD

Okay. So this *\*is\** a joke.

SAMUEL

It's not. You all get to decide who kills me.

SCARLETT

What're you saying?!

SAMUEL *(to her)*

Listen to me. Listen. I should've told you. I should've. But I didn't want my last month to be horrible between us. The way you're looking at me now. I didn't want that for more than five minutes. You can feel this way for five minutes. And then we have to move on, to have fun, to spend this time together-

SCARLETT

I get five minutes?

SAMUEL

Yes.

SCARLETT

Fuck you.

SAMUEL

Scar-

SCARLETT

Five minutes for five years of love, huh? That's it.

SAMUEL

We talked about this, about what would happen if-

SCARLETT

Suicide? We talked about suicide?

SAMUEL

It's not suicide if someone else is pulling the trigger.

*(A beat.)*

SAMUEL

Seriously. You get five minutes.

*(SCARLETT stares at SAMUEL. Suddenly she slaps him. He takes it. She begins to beat the living shit out of him: kicking, punching, slapping. She does this silently. Everyone else just watches. He takes it and takes it. She grabs a book from a bookshelf and hits him with that: in the face, on the arms, the crotch. After about three to four minutes, she stops, panting. The rest watch on. SAMUEL stands up straight, checks his watch.)*

SAMUEL

You used about three minutes and forty-five seconds. Would you like to continue?

SCARLETT

I'd like to bank the remainder of my time.

SAMUEL

Deal.

HENRY

Wait-

SAMUEL

Yes?

HENRY

So. Going back to the whole. We pick?

SAMUEL

Yes.

HENRY

How?

SAMUEL

That's up to you.

TODD

So. Do we just start debating, or?

DENISE

Are you all fucking serious?

SAMUEL

What?

DENISE

Are you all fucking sick in the head?

HENRY

What's wrong?

DENISE

He just told you he's dying! That he's sick and dying! And that does nothing for you? No grief, no follow up questions?

SCARLETT

I got a good three minutes of grief in.

DENISE

What is fucking wrong with you all?! He wants to make one of you a murderer! That's what he's asking! He wants one of you to kill him with this gun, which who knows if this was even purchased legally, and then the rest of you are accomplices. You get that right? Acc-om-pli-ces. You'd all go to prison. And there's no thought about that?

TODD

That...hadn't occurred to me.

DENISE

I can't believe I'm in a house with a group of idiots right now.

HENRY

She's right, Sam, we aren't going to do this.

ALBERTO

And it's fucked up that you asked us to do it. On your birthday of all times.

SAMUEL

I just thought-

HENRY

Well it's fucked up. We love you.

TODD

And more than that, we have lives, careers, things to get back to. We're all just supposed to what? Move through the world knowing what you asked of us and what we would've done?

SAMUEL

Listen, guys, I don't think I'm being clear here-

SCARLETT

You're being clear. But you're also being an asshole.

SAMUEL

Listen. I know this is a shock. It's horrible. But it's happening to me.

*(A beat. Sympathy sets in.)*

ALBERTO

You have options.

SAMUEL

Ha! Okay.

HENRY  
You do!

SAMUEL

I don't. You don't get that. I don't have options. (*A beat.*) This is it for me. I've seen the tests, I've heard the prognosis. I get a year, maybe, tops. It'll be horrible and painful and it'll be worse for all of you. It's happening to me but it's shared, you know? It'll become me, it'll define me. But right now, it's not. Right now, this exact moment, I have the choice to not let it become me. I won't be the "guy with cancer" or bald or the pitiful fucker who can't go out because chemo "really took it out of him today." I'll be me, and I don't want to be anything else! (*A beat.*) And if it's not this, then it'll be some other way. It'll be pills or driving my car off a cliff or a noose. I don't want people to find me like that. That's not how I want to go. It's this way. Quick. Painless. And I don't want it to be suicide, to be viewed that way. There's so much stigma. (*A beat.*) I've put so much thought into this. And I've come to terms with it. It's sad, yeah, but it's also just a part of this all. I can't be mad just because the outcome that was always going to happen got here sooner. I can't. So I have to make due. (*A beat.*) You're worried I didn't think this through, but maybe I have too much. That's why I want to do it here. Like this. I know exactly what you can all do, and it will go the way I want it to.

SCARLETT

How could you have planned this? You didn't even know I picked this house.

SAMUEL

I did though. I actually, this is funny, I kind of lead you here.

TODD

You're really playing it fast-and-loose with the word "funny".

SCARLETT

Lead me here?

SAMUEL

Yeah. Remember when you asked me for a state? For my "requests" for the house? I picked all those things because I wanted to go here. The hot tub, the fire pit, the-

ALBERTO

The basement.

SAMUEL

Exactly! There's a drain! It's concrete! So easy to clean. No one would ever know.

TODD

This is fucking sick.

ALBERTO

I mean. He did pick well.

HENRY  
Berto!

ALBERTO  
He did! I'm not, like, condoning any of this, but he did!

SAMUEL  
I checked out this host, Chad, he's never here. He's got a million properties; he lives in Albany!  
He never comes to this one! Which, babe, if you think about it, that's probably why the sliding  
glass door is still broken.

SCARLETT  
You can't have \*lead\* me here.

SAMUEL  
I knew you'd pick this spot. I did.

SCARLETT  
How?

SAMUEL  
It's isolated and the bedrooms are nice and it has a big kitchen. Plus the hot tub, and you  
loooooove a good hot tub.

SCARLETT  
I can't believe you \*used\* a hot tub to get me here.

SAMUEL  
I know you. And that's why I also knew wouldn't be worried about me after my last  
appointment. That you wouldn't catch on. So you wouldn't try to stop me.

*(A beat.)*

HENRY  
You've made up your mind?

SAMUEL  
I have.

HENRY  
And there's nothing we can say to stop you?

SAMUEL

Look this is a lot, I get that. So I'm just going to take this and (*he closes the box and places it next to the woodstove*). And we don't have to talk about it right now. But. You know. It's happening. So. We can talk about it whenever you're ready.

*(A beat. They all stare at the box, then at SCARLETT.)*

SAMUEL (*to SCARLETT*)  
Do you want to use up the remainder of your time?

SCARLETT (*nonchalantly*)  
I need to make dinner.

*(She exits into the dining room then into the kitchen. SAMUEL turns to the group.)*

SAMUEL  
Can I get some more drinks for everyone?

*(The lights fade. They come back up. Later on: snow still falls outside, the windows are covered in drifts. Everyone sits at the long dining room table, eating in silence. The wood stove crackles. No one speaks for several, several minutes. Finally, ALBERTO breaks the silence.)*

ALBERTO  
Very good tacos.

TODD  
Mmm. And the margaritas. Are these spicy?

HENRY  
There's definitely some jalapeno in this. Love it.

DENISE  
And the black beans. Very well seasoned.

TODD  
Taco Bell who???

*(A beat. They go back to eating. SCARLETT doesn't look up from her plate.)*

SAMUEL  
The meat is-

HENRY  
I was going to say!

SAMUEL  
The secret- can I tell them this? I'm just gonna- the secret is lime juice.

TODD  
Really?

SAMUEL  
I know, you'd think that would be tart or sour or whatever but it really is very smooth.

TODD  
Mmm.

*(Another beat.)*

SAMUEL  
Well. A toast. To my girlfriend, Scar. Thank you for this amazing meal and this amazing weekend. You've made an old man feel very, very loved.

SCARLETT  
You're not old.

TODD  
Yes he is, 30 is old.

SCARLETT *(defensive)*  
He's not. He's got some much more life ahead of him.

SAMUEL  
Sure.

*(A beat.)*

HENRY  
Cheers?

*(They all clink their glasses, very timidly. More silence.)*

ALBERTO  
And is there peppers in the rice, too?

SCARLETT  
All right, this is- come on everyone.

SAMUEL  
What?

SCARLETT



You know what!

SAMUEL

If you have something on your mind, you should just say it.

SCARLETT

What makes you think one of us could kill you?

*(A beat.)*

SAMUEL

Okay. That's a fair question.

TODD

I shot a deer once.

HENRY

Todd, shut up.

SCARLETT *(moving on)*

In what world would one of us be capable of that?

SAMUEL

I think, and hey, this is just an opinion, so don't like crucify me for this-/

ALBERTO

/Ugh, white men./

SAMUEL

/-I think everyone is capable of killing others.

HENRY

Are you kidding?

SAMUEL

No.

HENRY

Explain that to me.

SAMUEL

It's survival. We can assume we have evolved to live in a civilized society, but when you're in that position, when your, you know "back's against the wall", everyone can fight their way out. *(A beat.)* My mom has these cats, way too many of them, frankly. And they sit on the back of the couch, which faces the window with a bird feeder on it, and they just growl at the birds. It's not like they have ever been outside, they are fully indoor cats, but they \*know\* they wanna kill

those birds. It's instinct. They don't understand it, but they also don't question it. They want to fucking just murder those birds, tear their little wings off. And we all just let them growl. We don't try to explain to them that they are domesticated and a part of our civilized society. We let them be psychopaths.

HENRY

And you think that means that people could kill?

SAMUEL

Yes. You eat meat, don't you?

HENRY

Yes?

SAMUEL

Well, that's killing.

HENRY

It's already dead, Sam.

SAMUEL

But you're contributing to the process! If everyone stopped eating meat, for one whole month, if the groceries literally did not sell a single package of meat- any kind!- then production would stop, the killing would stop.

HENRY

So I'm a killer because I eat meat?

SAMUEL

No, that's not what I'm saying-

TODD

We're getting off topic here. Sam: you think everyone, when forced to, could kill?

SAMUEL

Yes. That's my point. I think everyone at this table is capable of killing.

DENISE

I'm not.

SAMUEL

How so?

DENISE

I cry when I see roadkill. When I have to kill a bug.

SAMUEL

Well that doesn't mean you couldn't do it. It just means you have a stronger emotional reaction to it.

DENISE

Everyone would have a "stronger emotional reaction" to it!

SCARLETT

We are missing the initial question: what makes you think anyone, at this table, could kill \*you\*?

SAMUEL

Oh. Well you all love me.

ALBERTO

What does that have to do with anything?

SAMUEL

You don't want me to suffer.

SCARLETT

Of course not, but-

SAMUEL

And because of that, you'd do whatever you could to stop my suffering.

DENISE (*raising her hand*)

I don't know you well-enough to not want you to suffer.

TODD

Oh, shit.

SAMUEL

Okay. Fair enough. \*Most\* of you don't want me to suffer. Look, I get that what I'm asking it kind of crazy-

SCARLETT

Crazy. It's just crazy. Not "Kind of".

SAMUEL

But. You all love me. And that love transcends any need for me to be alive.

HENRY

Say that again.

SAMUEL

It transcends- am I using that word right?- it transcends, goes beyond, is worth more-

ALBERTO

We get it, finish your thought.

SAMUEL

-Is worth a hell of a lot more than my need to be alive. So that's my answer.

SCARLETT

But it's not an answer!

SAMUEL

Scar-

SCARLETT

No, because it is precisely because of that love that we can't kill you. Our love would prevent us from doing that to you.

TODD

And, if I can just jump in here, it's not just that our love would make it so we don't \*want\* to kill you, but it literally would DISABLE us from doing so.

SAMUEL

Really? It would make it so you can't pull a trigger?

HENRY

We wouldn't be able to.

SAMUEL

I think that's just talk.

ALBERTO

What is with this devil's advocate thing you've got going on?

SAMUEL

I'm not playing "devil's advocate"! Can't a guy just try to convince his best friends to kill him anymore??

HENRY

Why is it just "talk"?

SAMUEL

Because love doesn't disable you from doing anything.

HENRY

You said earlier, when we were hygge-ing, that you agreed that love disrupts stability.

SAMUEL

And it does, but it doesn't make it so that you don't have control over your body.

SCARLETT

I think it does.

SAMUEL

Really?

SCARLETT

Yes. Sometimes I find it hard to breathe because of how much I love you. I literally forget to breathe.

*(A beat. Everyone shifts uncomfortably.)*

SAMUEL

I didn't know that.

SCARLETT

Does that change your mind? About wanting to die?

SAMUEL

Are you just saying that so I won't have one of you kill me?

SCARLETT

No, it's how I feel. I love you so fucking much. Do you love me enough to not ask us to do this?

SAMUEL

You really want to watch a brain tumor kill me from the inside out? For me to start forgetting who you are?

ALBERTO

We're going around in circles.

SCARLETT

You don't love me as much as I love you.

SAMUEL

That's bullshit!

SCARLETT

You don't! If you're asking me to condone this, or worse: to *\*do\** this to you, then you don't love me at all.

SAMUEL



Henry! That's it, I think we need to end this conversation right now.

DENISE

Well, it's a little late for that.

ALBERTO

Why's that?

DENISE

He's already shown us the gun. You ever seen Chekhov?

ALBERTO (*annoyed*)

Who are you again?

DENISE

And he's already asked you all. Is everyone comfortable just letting this go and pretending to forget it ever happened?

HENRY

She's right, we can't.

DENISE

This is gonna be a thing for, like, awhile. I mean. We could all go to prison just for talking about this.

SCARLETT

But we didn't do anything.

DENISE

Just talking about who gets to pull the trigger of the gun is plotting a murder. Remember Tanya Harding? She went to jail with those two other guys.

ALBERTO

I don't think she went to jail in the end...

DENISE

Either way. We're all accomplices now.

TODD

So. You think we should debate it?

DENISE

I don't care. I'm not involved in this.

HENRY

Yes you are!

DENISE

I just said that I don't know him well-enough, I'm not going to be the one who kills him. I'm the sub in this situation.

ALBERTO

Like...subordinate.

DENISE

What? No. Like, I'm the substitute. His sister was supposed to be here.

SCARLETT

You heard us earlier?

DENISE

I feel like you guys don't know how small this house is.

SCARLETT (*to SAMUEL*)

What about your parents? Your sister? What do we tell them?

SAMUEL

I wrote them notes. It explains everything.

TODD

You wrote them notes? Like...texts?

SAMUEL

No, hand-written notes. Like really personal.

SCARLETT

You told them everything?

SAMUEL

Well not everything-everything. It just says I didn't want to be around anymore.

SCARLETT

So the story there is suicide? Because that would be important for us to know to keep our stories straight.

SAMUEL

It never *\*explicitly\** says suicide. It just says I "went away".

HENRY

"Went away"?

SAMUEL



Yeah.

HENRY

Well. That's just lazy writing.

SAMUEL

They won't have any follow-up questions. I promise.

ALBERTO

Did it ever occur to you that we could all just leave? Not talk to you again? Not deal with this?

SAMUEL

You can't leave!

ALBERTO

Why not?

SAMUEL

Well first of all, that's pretty fucking mean. To leave me on my birthday. And second of all, luckily enough for me, nobody is driving away in this snow. I'm surprised you all got here.

TODD (*not at all happy about it*)

Wouldn't have missed it.

SAMUEL

Look, let's just enjoy our meal, our drinks. We don't have to make any decisions right now. Let's play another round of Hygge!

SCARLETT

We're not playing another round of Hygge! There's nothing "cozy" about this!

HENRY

Okay, theoretically-

ALBERTO

What're you about to say??!

HENRY

No, I mean, Sam: you couldn't have put that much thought into this. You can't just \*get away\* with murder.

DENISE

Viola Davis has done it for like, six seasons.

HENRY

I'm serious. Sam: how did you see this going down?

SCARLETT

We are not actually talking about this.

TODD

Yeah, Henry, let's not indulge-

HENRY

If we discover a hole in his plan he can't do it, right? (*A beat.*) That would stop you?

SAMUEL

I guess technically...

HENRY

So then, tell us. What would we do with your blood? The mess of it all?

SAMUEL

You kill me right over the drain, all my blood comes out of me, you wash off the concrete.

HENRY

They have ways of detecting blood.

SAMUEL

They'll never be a murder investigation, and this place would never be thought to be the crime scene. We take pictures of me, of us, having a good time, none of you are suspects. Plus, I have emails scheduled to go out for the next week. I don't go "missing" until next Saturday.

DENISE

You can schedule emails?

SAMUEL

On google.

DENISE

Wow. That's a real time saver.

TODD

Pictures of us having a good time?

SAMUEL

Yeah, I mean, it's a party.

TODD (*sarcastic*)

Oh. Is it? Okay then. (*he takes out his phone and snaps a selfie with the group, looks at it*) Oh, yeah, that's a good one. I can't wait to remember this moment forever.

HENRY

What about the murder weapon?

SAMUEL

The gun was bought at a pawn shop. With cash. No trace of it.

SCARLETT

You bought a gun at a pawn shop? I fucking hate this country.

HENRY

And we burn your body? What about your bones? Your teeth?

SAMUEL

Ah. Thought of that. You take the ashes and put them in my suitcase upstairs, then scatter them on your way back to the city. There's a shovel in the basement that you can use to dig them up, the pit is frozen solid so it won't seep into the ground or anything.

ALBERTO

A little pit-stop!

SAMUEL

What else? No holes so far.

HENRY

Hold on. Your bank accounts. Your wallet and personal affects.

SAMUEL

Would've come home with me after the trip, and my will is drawn up which leaves everything to Scar.

SCARLETT (*shocked*)

What?

SAMUEL

What? I left everything to you.

SCARLETT

Why would you do that?

SAMUEL

You're my, you know, my partner.

SCARLETT

We aren't married.

SAMUEL  
So? We live together.

SCARLETT  
Why not leave everything to your sister? Your parents?

SAMUEL  
Because you rely on my financial income to live, and I don't want you to suffer just because I'm gone. And also I love you.

SCARLETT  
Well when you say it like that.

HENRY  
And our stories? What do we say when people ask where you might have gone?

SAMUEL  
You tell them the truth. That I was very sick and didn't want to suffer.

ALBERTO  
And that we murdered you.

SAMUEL  
No, obviously you leave that part out.

*(A beat.)*

TODD  
Are we really talking about this?

HENRY  
No. I mean. No.

SAMUEL  
You can't poke any holes in my plan.

SCARLETT  
Sure he did.

SAMUEL  
No! He didn't!

SCARLETT

You didn't take into account that we don't want to murder you. None of us have ever had a violent thought towards you.

*(A beat.)*

TODD  
Well.

SCARLETT  
Well what?

TODD  
I mean, if we're being honest, and at this point, what else is there?

SCARLETT  
Todd-

TODD  
I'm just saying. I have had, you know, anger towards you. Towards Sam.

SAMUEL  
Yeah?

TODD  
Yes.

SCARLETT  
About what?

TODD  
Well, I don't need to get into that, I mean it's his birthday.

SAMUEL  
No, tell me.

TODD  
You. Okay, I'm not saying you do this all the time, but. You make me feel guilty.

SAMUEL  
Guilty?

TODD  
Yes.

SAMUEL

When do I make you feel guilty?

TODD

When I have to rely on you. Or like, borrow money.

SAMUEL

Man, I had no idea-

TODD

Yeah but you do. And that's almost worst.

SAMUEL

Hey!

TODD

No, let's put our cards out on the table here. You are aware that you can be very condescending. That you talk down on people who you feel are...

SAMUEL

Are what?

TODD

Are less responsible than you are.

ALBERTO

Oh yeah, he does do that.

SAMUEL

What're you talking about?

TODD

You do this thing, this like (*mimicking*) face-thing. Where you kind of make yourself look stoically, like a mobster.

HENRY

Yes I've seen that before!

TODD

And you just sort use one-word answers.

SAMUEL

When are you referring to specifically?

TODD

The last time you lent me money you kept saying "sure." "Sure." "Sure." Just like that! Like I didn't feel bad enough. Every time I apologized you just kept saying "sure." Not "no worries

buddy” or “no problem at all, I’m here for you.” Just “sure.” That’s a little fucked up. And it’s incredibly guilt-ridden.

SAMUEL (*exploding*)

Well what else am I supposed to say to someone who’s borrowed over seven-grand from me and not paid me back at all!

ALBERTO

What?!

HENRY

You’ve borrowed seven thousand dollars from him?

TODD

It has not been seven thousand dollars!-

SAMUEL

It has! The car payments, the rent for those three months, all those times out at bars-

TODD

Those don’t count, you were picking up the tab!

SAMUEL

I’m picking up a two-hundred-dollar tab by myself when we’re on a double date? Why else would I venmo-request you afterwards?

TODD

I thought that was just for show!

SAMUEL

For show?!

SCARLETT

Okay, that’s enough. We aren’t here to talk about that, the point was-/

TODD

/I want to see receipts. Where is this seven-thousand-dollars I supposedly owe you?/

SAMUEL

/You tell me! Because it’s not in your bank account!/

SCARLETT (*screaming above the chaos*)

/The point **\*WAS\*** that none of us have ever harbored **\*enough\*** malice towards to cause violence.

TODD

Well. Never say never.

SCARLETT

You're just saying that because he aired your shit in front of everybody.

ALBERTO

No, he's got a point. Like what we just saw, this whole like toxic masculinity battle thing they got going on?

TODD/SAMUEL

Hey!/Well I don't know about that/etc.

ALBERTO

I'm saying it's all about degrees. Push someone far enough and they could get there, surely.

SCARLETT

No one is that emotional.

ALBERTO

Todd, weren't you just really angry at Sam?

TODD

Well, yes.

ALBERTO

And when he makes you feel guilty, doesn't that make you angry?

TODD

Yes.

ALBERTO

Sit in that emotion long enough, like really stew in it, and you can get there. People have been violent for a lot less.

SCARLETT

Todd wouldn't do that.

*(A beat.)*

TODD

Well...

HENRY

Jesus Christ.

TODD



I'm not saying I ever want to! But sometimes, yeah, I could punch you right in the fucking face. I just feel so guilty and you're what's making me feel guilty and I just want it to stop. And it's fucked up. I mean on both accounts, you shouldn't make me feel that way and I shouldn't want to hit you, but we both do.

SAMUEL

Wow man. I had no idea. (*A beat.*) So, see? People here could kill me.

SCARLETT

Fuck. This isn't some joke, Sam.

SAMUEL

I know that. Don't you think I know that?

DENISE (*raising her hand*)

I wanted to say something about the fire pit.

TODD

You don't need to raise your hand.

DENISE

Right. I don't think it's big enough to burn your body.

SAMUEL

What're you saying?

DENISE

The firepit outside. I saw it when we came in. And it's pretty small. I don't think your body would fit all at once.

SAMUEL

No, it's plenty big.

DENISE

It's really not. I think we'd have to chop you up into smaller pieces.

ALBERTO (*pushing his plate away*)

And that's it for my appetite.

SAMUEL

No, I saw the measurements of the pit online. It'll work fine.

DENISE

I really don't think so.

SAMUEL

Why're you bringing this up?

DENISE

He said if we could poke holes in your plan. Which I think I just did.

SAMUEL (*getting up, annoyed*)

Fine. I'll prove it to you.

SCARLETT

Sam-

SAMUEL

No, if she wants to make it a thing, I'll prove that I can fit. Come on, Denise.

DENISE

It's really snowing out there.

SAMUEL

Well put on a fucking jacket, let's go.

*(He exits into the kitchen, and an apprehensive DENISE follows.)*

SAMUEL (*in kitchen*)

I know I may not look it, but I have a very svelte frame and can squeeze into lots of tight places-

SCARLETT

Sam, make sure you walk around-

*(We hear the sliding glass door open, followed by an alarm, blaring.)*

SCARLETT (*over the alarm*)

FUCK! SAM!

SAM (*running back into the room, over the alarm*)

Why is it doing that?

HENRY (*over the alarm*)

She told us about the alarm before!

TODD (*over the alarm*)

You have to walk around the house to get the back yard!

HENRY (*over the alarm*)

She was very clear in the instructions she laid out!

SAMUEL (*over the alarm*)  
Well what do we do?

SCARLETT (*scrolling on her phone, looking for answers, over the alarm*)  
Hang on!-

ALBERTO (*over the alarm*)  
This is fucking horrible!

HENRY (*over the alarm*)  
We know, Berto!

ALBERTO (*over the alarm*)  
You don't have to be an asshole!

HENRY (*over the alarm*)  
I'm not being an asshole!

ALBERTO (*over the alarm*)  
You used a tone that I didn't like.

HENRY (*over the alarm*)  
I'm shouting because a fucking alarm is going off!

TODD (*taking out his phone, snapping a photo of the chaos, over the alarm*)  
Oh yeah! This one is definitely going to be framed!

SCARLETT (*over the alarm*)  
Stop it! All of you!

TODD (*over the alarm*)  
Maybe we can-

*(Suddenly the power goes out. The house is plunged into darkness. There's silence.)*

TODD (*in silence*)  
Oh. So this is when we \*all\* die.

SAMUEL  
What the fuck is going on?

*(The lights flick back. The alarm has stopped. DENISE walks back into the room.)*

DENISE  
There was a circuit box right next to the stove, so I just killed the power.

HENRY  
What if it goes off again?

SCARLETT  
Why did you go outside the fucking sliding door, Sam?

SAMUEL  
I forgot, I'm sorry!

SCARLETT  
Now the fucking AirBnB host is going to come here and there's a fucking gun in the house!

TODD  
Well we can hide the gun.

SAMUEL  
Wait, why would he come here?

SCARLETT  
Because he told us *\*not\** to using the sliding glass door because it sets off the alarm! I'd come to my property if an alarm went off! Which it just fucking did!

HENRY  
So just call him and tell him not to come, that it was a mistake but it's all set now.

SCARLETT  
I can't call him.

TODD  
You don't have his number?

SCARLETT  
No I can only message him on the app.

SAMUEL  
Well do that! Do that right now!

SCARLETT  
Don't fucking scream at me. (*while typing a message on her phone*) He's gonna fucking come here and find a gun and think we're all fucking insane.

HENRY  
Todd! Hide the fucking gun!

TODD

Where??

HENRY

It doesn't fucking matter, just hide the gun.

DENISE

I feel like I have the face of a person who has definitely seen a gun in the last few hours.

HENRY (*picking up the box with gun, running around*)

Well I'll hide it really good!

DENISE

No, he's gonna fucking know that I saw a gun. And then he's going to hate me.

ALBERTO

Let him come, I'm really dying to know if it's the guy in the picture.

HENRY

Fucking put it upstairs, Todd! In our room!

TODD

Is yours the one at the end of the hall or-?

SAMUEL

No that's ours-

HENRY

It doesn't MATTER. Just put it under a fucking bed upstairs!

TODD (*running upstairs*)

Okay!

SCARLETT

Okay I messaged him. Shit!

SAMUEL

What?

SCARLETT

He's writing back. He's writing back. He's writing back.

(*A beat.*)

ALBERTO

What did he say?

SCARLETT

He didn't say anything. The text bubble went away.

DENISE

So maybe he's not coming.

SAMUEL

Yeah, maybe the alarm needs to go off for like, a longer period of time to trigger anything.

SCARLETT

I feel like I should call the cops.

SAMUEL

Why on *\*earth\** would you call the cops right now?

SCARLETT

Maybe they get, like, notified, when the alarm goes off!

SAMUEL

Look, they can't come out in this storm anyways! We don't want to like, invite them here.

SCARLETT

But if I just called and told them not to worry!-

HENRY

You don't tell the cops "there's no problem here" unless you want them to think your suss as fuck.

SAMUEL

Let's just all relax. I'm sure it's fine. If the host isn't calling or messaging back, then I think we're okay. No one else go out the sliding glass door!

ALBERTO

You're the only person who went out the door!

SAMUEL

I know! I'm sorry!

*(A beat. TODD reenters from upstairs.)*

TODD

Okay. I hid the gun. It's in-

HENRY

Don't tell us! If the cops do show up, all of us have plausible deniability!

TODD

Why are the cops coming here?!?

SAMUEL

They're not!

*(A beat. They all sit in silence for awhile.)*

SAMUEL

So. Where were we? Right. The firepit. My body would absolutely fit in there.

TODD

Are we still talking about this? It's clearly not happening.

SAMUEL

It is! It needs to!

*(A beat.)*

HENRY

You know, I think we all need to take a breather. Let's do something fun, get off this topic.

ALBERTO

Henry do you really think any of us is going to be able to play a game right now?

HENRY

Well, fine. I'm going to in the hottub. You fuckers can join me if you want.

TODD

That's a really great idea. We're all hyped up and we gotta relax. I'll bring a joint out, we can forget this whole stupid night.

SAMUEL

Guys-

HENRY

No, Sam, I know it's your birthday weekend and everything but we're all here to relax, so we're going in the hottub.

SCARLETT

Just don't go out the back door!

HENRY

We won't.

ALBERTO

I didn't bring a bathing suit.

HENRY

Fuck it, I'm going on buck-ass naked.

SAMUEL

Guys, really we have to decide who's-

HENRY

No! Sorry, Sam, but it's not happening tonight.

SAMUEL

But-

HENRY

No one is dying tonight.

SAMUEL

Fine. We'll all sleep on it.

TODD

Sure. Fine. Sleep on it.

HENRY

Come on.

*(HENRY, TODD, and ALBERTO exit through the front door. Snow blows in from behind them. DENISE stands awkwardly with SCARLETT and SAMUEL.)*

SCARLETT

You're not going?

DENISE

Are you?

SCARLETT

No.

DENISE

Well I don't want to be the only girl...

SCARLETT

Fucking get over it Denise, strip or go to bed.

*(DENISE slowly turns and exits out the front door behind everyone else.)*



SAMUEL  
That was harsh, Babe.

SCARLETT  
I know. I just wanted to get rid of her.

SAMUEL  
You're not going in the hot tub?

SCARLETT  
No. And neither are you.

SAMUEL  
I'm not?

*(SCARLETT grabs SAMUEL kisses him, hard. It's passionate. Her hand goes to his crotch, unzips his pants. She reaches inside. He responds. She let's go, her tongue lingering. Finally. She unbuttons her shirt, lets it drop around her shoulders. SAMUEL is shocked.)*

SAMUEL  
You just said-

SCARLETT  
Don't you want your moderate-amount of fun?

*(She leads him upstairs. The stage is empty. We hear the sounds of people getting into the hot tub, water splashing. A door closes upstairs. Snow falls outside in heavy sheets. Finally, the lights go down.)*

*(End of Act One.)*

*(Act Two.)*

*(Lights up. The next morning. There's a blanket on the couch, from where someone has slept. Empty cups and bottles sit on the dining room table. We hear someone in the kitchen, dishes clanking. SCARLETT enters from the top of the stairs. TODD enters from the kitchen wearing an apron and holding a cup of coffee.)*

SCARLETT

Hey. You been up long?

TODD

About an hour. Breakfast will be ready soon.

SCARLETT

You didn't have to do that.

TODD

Just. Felt like I should.

SCARLETT

Well thanks. Wait. You didn't do this because of what Sam said, did you?

TODD

Well, look-

SCARLETT

You don't have to worry, I'm not going to make you feel guilty or anything.

TODD

Thank you. He okay?

SCARLETT

I don't know what's going on with him.

TODD

What he said last night- he's not on like, some crazy amount of medication or anything? Is he?

SCARLETT

I really don't know. He hasn't said anything this morning about it. So maybe it was all some big joke.

TODD  
Very funny.

*(DENISE enters, her hair wet.)*

SCARLETT  
Hey. You sleep alright out here?

DENISE  
Uh, sure.

SCARLETT  
Sure?

TODD  
I didn't wake you, did I?

DENISE  
No. It was the smell of the bacon.

TODD  
Yeah?

DENISE  
I'm a vegetarian. The smell of bacon makes me feel ill.

TODD  
Oh. Sorry.

*(HENRY and ALBERTO enter from the top of the stairs, bickering.)*

HENRY  
You fundamentally don't know how to share a bed.

ALBERTO  
This isn't a problem at home. Stop complaining so much.

HENRY  
We sleep in a full-sized bed at home, this bed here is a king. It's like you think you need to spread out more just to get comfortable.

TODD  
The happy couple!

HENRY  
Is there coffee? I already have a headache.

ALBERTO  
Fuck you too, Henry.

SCARLETT  
Sounds like you slept...fine?

HENRY  
Scar, how's Sam this morning?

SCARLETT  
He seems fine. He was whistling while getting into the shower.

HENRY  
What he said last night. I meant what he asked us to do. That's a joke right? He's gotta be kidding.

ALBERTO  
He didn't seem like he was joking.

SCARLETT  
I have no idea. Maybe he's freaking out about the tumor being back or about turning thirty, but whatever it is, he's not making any sense. So listen: today, let's just keep it light, keep it friendly. It's a party, right? Let's just not mention it.

TODD  
You think he won't say anything about it again?

SCARLETT  
He hasn't said anything yet this morning.

HENRY  
That's a really big risk to take. What if he does bring it up again? I think we should all go.

TODD  
Like leave?

HENRY  
Yes. I don't want to be an accomplice to this psycho-ageism fear.

SCARLETT  
It's still snowing outside. Nobody is going anywhere. I really think if we forget about it, he will too. And when we get back home we can deal with it again.

HENRY  
The gun is still hidden?

TODD

Oh yeah. I checked it last night before we went to bed. It's in-

HENRY

Don't fucking tell us!

ALBERTO

Is that bacon I smell?

*(DENISE gags. SAMUEL enters at the top of the stairs. He's whistling.)*

SAMUEL

Good morning all!

HENRY

Morning buddy!

TODD

Hey there's the big birthday boy! Last day of twenty-nine, how we feeling?!

SAMUEL

Feeling great.

ALBERTO

That's great.

SAMUEL

How was the hot tub? Gotta try that today.

HENRY

Very relaxing. We were just watching stars and stewing in hot water.

SAMUEL

Scar, was there any word from the host person?

SCARLETT

No. And the cops never came, so I guess we're in the clear.

SAMUEL

That's good.

SCARLETT

Yeah, except I think the power in our room is out. I couldn't get my cell to charge all night and now it's dead.

HENRY  
Maybe when Denise tripped the circuits last night?

DENISE  
I was just trying to help.

SAMUEL  
So did you guys get a chance to decide who will be killing me?

*(A beat. They all stare at him.)*

TODD  
Is that a joke?

SAMUEL  
Did you all think I'd forget about it?

HENRY  
Sam-

SAMUEL  
Is their bacon?

TODD  
Yeah. Let's all- let's all make plates. You guys take a seat, I'll bring some out to you.

*(They all hurriedly exit into the kitchen. SAMUEL and SCARLETT stand. He wraps his arms around her waist, kisses her neck.)*

SCARLETT *(scared)*  
What has gotten into you?

SAMUEL  
Last night was incredible. Seriously the best sex I've ever had.

SCARLETT  
How are you still thinking we are going to use that gun on you?

SAMUEL  
Scar, seriously, you were amazing.

SCARLETT  
Sam.

*(A beat.)*

SAMUEL

Scar, it's my choice to make.

SCARLETT

It's actually not. I checked out the laws last night when you fell asleep. It's illegal.

SAMUEL

Which is why I've gone to all this trouble!

SCARLETT

It won't be your trouble, Sam! It'll be ours!

*(A beat.)*

SCARLETT

Am I not enough for you? Enough for you to stay? Last night, you just said, the "best sex of your life", that's not enough to stick it out. To fight this thing. You fought it once, why not fight it again! Why not do that for me? Why not do that for the person you love!

SAMUEL

You're being incredibly selfish.

SCARLETT

\*I'm\* being selfish?!

SAMUEL

I have this disease, Scar. I have this thing in my brain that's a ticking fucking timebomb, and I'm the one living with it. I'm the one who will be killed when it goes off. It's mine, no one else's. It's not about who's enough and who isn't. It's about that "enough" doesn't convince this thing to let me live. So I'm making the choice to do what I can before it takes that choice away from me. You get that, I know you do. You get that after awhile I get that choice taken away from me. I don't deserve that. I don't deserve to not have a say.

*(A beat.)*

SCARLETT

Maybe you don't deserve a say. I'm getting coffee.

*(She exits into the kitchen. SAMUEL stands there, looks after her. Lights down. Lights back up, several hours later. They all sit around the living room and dining room, lounging, doing their own thing. TODD reads a guest book from the shelf.)*

TODD

"Thanks for the best wedding anniversary ever! We especially loved the shower. Winky face." Yikes. Hope that was in someone else's room. *(He reads another.)* Thanks for the lil' weekend

retreat, my friends and I so needed it!” Signed, Veronica. Does anyone else not like the name  
Veronica?

DENISE  
Veronica is my middle name.

*(An awkward beat.)*

TODD  
Pretty.

SCARLETT  
Should we play a game?

HENRY  
Like what?

SCARLETT  
I saw “Password” in the closet.

ALBERTO  
Oooh fun.

SCARLETT *(exiting toward the kitchen)*  
I’ll get it.

TODD  
Let’s split up into pairs. Henry and Berto, yeah?

ALBERTO  
I don’t want to be on his team.

HENRY  
Why not?

ALBERTO  
Just because. You be with Scar. I’ll take Sam.

TODD  
Which leaves... Denise and I. You good with that?

DENISE  
I guess I have to play, otherwise it’ll be an odd number of players.

TODD *(sarcastically)*  
That’s the spirit.



*(SCARLETT reenters with the "Password" board game, everyone moves to the dining room table.)*

HENRY

Remind me how this goes?

TODD

One team has a word in front of them, and they can give a one-word clue to try to get their partner to guess the word on the card. If their partner guesses wrong, it goes to the next team, but for less points. If anyone says any part of the word on the card you buzz with this *(he takes out the buzzer and hits it. The noise is obnoxious.)* Got it?

*(They all get situated around the table, sitting opposite each other.)*

HENRY

We'll go first. Scar, you're with me. *(He pulls out a card, TODD readies the buzzer.)* Okay. Here we go. *(Thinks.)* "Complicated".

SCARLETT *(thinking it over)*  
Complicated? Okay: "Difficult".

HENRY

Nope.

TODD

So us next? *(Turning to DENISE)* Okay. So keep that in mind. Here goes: "Pieces".

DENISE

"Pieces"? *(thinks)* "Complicated" and "Pieces". Is it "Puzzle"?

TODD

Yes! Nice! Nine points!

*(He goes for a high-five but DENISE doesn't see. She pulls the cards towards her.)*

DENISE

Now we go again. *(She pulls a new card. SCARLETT readies the buzzer.)* Here it is: "sexy".

TODD

Sexy? Is it "Dangerous".

DENISE

How do you get "dangerous" from that?!

TODD

Sorry!

ALBERTO

So us next? (*turning to SAMUEL*) Remember “Sexy”. Ready? “Form”.

SAMUEL

“Form”? Is it...I don’t know, is it “Consent”?

ALBERTO

No, but I’m really glad you thought of that.

SCARLETT

I think I’ve got it. Go Henry.

HENRY

Okay: “Corpse”.

SCARLETT

“Body”!

HENRY

Yes! So what’s that? Eight points?

TODD

Yup. Go again.

SCARLETT

Okay (*Taking out a new card, putting it in the holder*) Focus on me here. Just me and you, Henry. Okay. Oof, this is hard. God I don’t know...

HENRY

Just say it!

SCARLETT

Don’t rush me! Gah! Okay “Love”.

(*DENISE hits the buzzer.*)

SCARLETT

Fuck!

TODD

What happened?

DENISE

It's "lovebird", you can't say part of the word. Our turn. Go ahead Todd.

TODD

Okay. New card. *(he pulls a new card, gets ready)* Okay: "Essential".

DENISE

"Important"?

TODD

Nope. We had a thing going!

DENISE

We didn't. *(pushing the card to ALBERTO)* You go.

ALBERTO

Alrighty. Here goes: "Bright".

SAMUEL

"Essential" and "Bright"? Is it "Electricity"?

ALBERTO

Yes! Nine points, please.

SAMUEL

My turn. *(He pulls a new card. He stares at it. Finally, he goes.)* Ready? "Suicide".

*(The group is silent. They all stare at him.)*

TODD

You're kidding. That can't be the word you're going with.

SAMUEL

It is.

HENRY

You're just trying to-

SAMUEL

Guys, I swear. That's the best word I can come up with.

*(They all sit awkwardly. SCARLETT stews.)*

ALBERTO

Okay. Should I go?

HENRY

I guess so.

ALBERTO  
Is it...”death”?

SAMUEL  
Nope. *(pushing the card to TODD)* Your turn.

TODD *(seeing it, perplexed)*  
All right. Oh. Okay. “Consequence”.

DENISE  
Is it “Addiction”?

TODD *(pushing the card to HENRY)*  
Your turn.

HENRY *(receiving the card, shifting awkwardly)*  
Maybe we should do another one.

SCARLETT  
Just fucking do it.

HENRY  
Okay. Just remember the words before. Here’s your clue: “bleed”.

SCARLETT  
It’s “Suffer”.

HENRY *(awkwardly, solemnly)*  
Yes.

*(SCARLETT sits there and stewes some more. She looks over at SAMUEL. Suddenly, she picks up the buzzer to the game and tosses it with all of her might across the room. It crashes against a wall. She exits into the kitchen. The rest of the group sits in silence.)*

DENISE  
Should we...should we keep playing?

TODD  
I’m pretty sure that buzzer is broken.

HENRY  
I’m sure she’s okay. Let’s just take a break.

ALBERTO

Good game. Fun game.

SAMUEL

I thought “suicide” was a good clue.

TODD

Sam, please.

SAMUEL

What? It was!

*(A beat.)*

DENISE

So. It’s a brain tumor?

SAMUEL

Huh?

DENISE

You have brain cancer.

SAMUEL

Yes.

DENISE

They think it’s back?

SAMUEL

The latest scan showed- Yes. It’s back.

*(A beat. SCARLETT reenters into the living room, not seen by the group.)*

DENISE

An argument could be made that you’re crazy.

SAMUEL

Excuse me?

DENISE

You’re asking your closest friends to kill you after you’ve just disclosed that you have a brain tumor, which could be affecting your cerebral cortex, your amygdala which affects your emotions and perceiving of emotions, and your frontal lobe which affects executive functioning and reasoning.

SAMUEL

I'm not crazy.

DENISE  
If we did call the cops-

SCARLETT  
No one is calling the cops.

*(A beat.)*

SAMUEL  
Thank you.

DENISE  
We could tell them what you want us to do. And they could take you to a facility and have you admitted. And you'd *\*have\** to get the medical treatment you need to survive.

*(A beat. He stares at her.)*

SAMUEL  
Nobody here, with the exception of you, would do that to me.

DENISE  
How can you be so sure?

SAMUEL  
Because they know what I went through the last time. And they wouldn't make me do that again.

DENISE *(to SCARLETT)*  
It was really bad last time?

SCARLETT *(reluctantly)*  
It's a miracle- frankly, it's a miracle he's still here.

DENISE  
So what he's asking isn't-

TODD  
Isn't as crazy as we wish it was.

*(A beat.)*

HENRY  
I need a drink. Can I get anyone else anything?

SCARLETT

Just bring the bottles in here. Let's play some more "Password".

SAMUEL

You're sure?

SCARLETT

Yes. We can't let you win.

*(No one moves. The lights go down. Lights back, sometime later. They have all been drinking very heavily. Dinner has been had and cleaned up. Seemingly, everything is back to normal. There's a sense of jovialness that has returned, probably because of the alcohol consumption. Snow still falls outside. SAMUEL is not around.)*

TODD

No, I think it was when I was eight.

ALBERTO *(smoking a blunt)*

What're we talking about?

TODD

Yeah, because that was the year I went to the lake with my friends.

HENRY

Ugh, summer birthdays, I'm so jealous.

TODD

We went tubing.

DENISE

Why was that a bad birthday?

TODD

Well, I broke my arm.

SCARLETT

No! Really?

TODD

Yeah, but the worst part was that it wasn't when I was on the tube- it was way later.

ALBERTO

How did you break your arm?

TODD

My friends and I, we all were spending the night at the lake house, and we decided to go out to the dock late at night and, I don't know, look at the stars or something, and the dock was still wet from the afternoon and I slipped and tried to catch myself from falling and put all my weight on my forearm.

ALBERTO  
And it broke?

TODD  
Yeah. Just one of those freak things. How about you, Denise?

DENISE  
You don't have always include me.

TODD  
Well I just did, so tell us.

DENISE  
My worst birthday? I guess my sweet sixteen was pretty bad.

SCARLETT  
Why?

DENISE  
My parents had just gotten divorced and they, I dunno, kind of forgot.

TODD  
Forgot what?

DENISE  
The day. They forgot what day it was.

HENRY  
They \*forgot\* it was your birthday?

DENISE  
So there wasn't a party or anything, I just kind of sat around and waited for someone to remember.

TODD  
You just sat there? Why didn't you say anything?

DENISE  
Because I wanted them to remember and they just never did. Until like a week later. My dad turned to me and said "when was your birthday? Last week?". And I said "yeah", and he just kind of said "huh". And that was that. (*A long beat.*) But they've remembered every one since!



ALBERTO  
My god that's so sad. (*turning to ALBERTO*) Now you go.

HENRY  
You don't want me to.

ALBERTO  
Yes, I do.

HENRY  
You of all people don't want me to.

ALBERTO  
Why?

HENRY  
Because mine was much more recent.

ALBERTO  
It was?

HENRY  
Yeah, two years ago.

SCARLETT  
Wait, we were all there, at that birthday. Why was it bad?

HENRY  
Oh, I don't want to get into it-

DENISE  
Then why say it?

HENRY  
It's not important, I was just saying.

ALBERTO  
It was because I kissed someone else.

(*A beat.*)

ALBERTO (*to HENRY*)  
That's what it was? Right? At the club downtown?

HENRY  
Yes. Yeah.

ALBERTO  
So I was the reason you had a bad birthday.

HENRY  
I guess so.

SCARLETT (*to ALBERTO*)  
Why did you kiss someone else?

ALBERTO  
I thought he wanted me to.

HENRY  
Why would I *\*want\** you to kiss someone else?

ALBERTO  
You kept saying how hot they were, how well they danced. You kept saying it. And I thought you wanted me to, you know, like, initiate something.

HENRY  
You thought I wanted a three-way on my birthday?

ALBERTO  
What better day to experience that?

SCARLETT  
This entire night I've been sitting here and thinking that I haven't done anything interesting in my life.

DENISE  
That's not true.

SCARLETT  
I think it is. I've been sitting here thinking about when my worst birthday was and I can't think of a time because I've been so fucking privileged for a lot of my birthdays.

HENRY  
Even growing up?

SCARLETT  
I've been very fortunate.

*(SAMUEL enters from the front door, wet and holding a towel. He's hopping from running in the snow. He's been in the hottub.)*

SAMUEL

Guys let's hit the hottub, it's amazing right now. Like a full-on blizzard.

SCARLETT *(sarcastic, angry with him)*  
Surprised you didn't drown yourself out there.

TODD  
Scar-

SAMUEL *(joking back)*  
Well that's a lot of work. Pulling my lifeless body out of water. No one should have to do that amount of work.

*(A beat.)*

HENRY  
Is this your worst birthday, Sam?

*(A beat.)*

SAMUEL  
Well, it's my last one, certainly. So it kind of doesn't compare to the others ones. *(A beat.)* If no one is gonna get in with me, I'm gonna get changed.

*(He exits upstairs.)*

HENRY  
You kind of have to admire it.

SCARLETT  
What?

HENRY  
How cavalier he's being about it all. He's certainly at peace.

TODD  
Cancer sort of forces that, doesn't it?

ALBERTO  
I think Denise wins for worst birthday.

DENISE  
What's my prize?

ALBERTO

You get to tell us your best birthday.

DENISE

My best birthday?

ALBERTO

Yeah. You must've had a great birthday.

DENISE

I guess so.

ALBERTO

When was it?

DENISE

Uhm. I don't remember which age I was. But I remember what happened. My grandfather took my sledding. There was some freak snowstorm in that late-March and my parents had to go into work but my school got cancelled that day. So my grandfather watched me. And I remember being bummed out because my school would always make a big deal of people's birthdays, they'd like, announce them over the loud speaker and everything and the cafeteria workers would give you a special dessert, and I'd miss it. But my grandfather took me sledding. It was amazing. I didn't break my arm or anything. I just got to sled all day. My cheeks were frozen and all red from smiling and racing down the hill. We did it until the sun went down, then we went and got ice cream. Which seems a little counter intuitive given how cold we were, how cold he must've been from just watching me sled my heart out. I got mint chocolate chip. That was my best birthday. *(A beat.)* The snow has always been so calming to me. You know, it's funny, because it's just frozen rain, but rain is aggressive. It's loud and thunderous and obnoxious. But snow is peaceful. It's sweet. You can lay in it. I've always loved the snow. I always secretly pray for snow on my birthday. I don't think it's happened since that year.

*(SAMUEL reenters from the stairs.)*

SAMUEL *(exiting into the kitchen)*

I'm gonna grab a beer. Does anyone want anything?

TODD

What do we want to do tonight? We could watch a movie.

SCARLETT

That's a great idea.

TODD

I saw "Big" and "500 Days of Summer" upstairs.

SAMUEL (*reentering*)

I'm trying to figure out what the last movie I'd ever want to watch would be.

(*A beat.*)

HENRY

Sam: Are you religious?

SAMUEL

In my way. Why do you ask?

HENRY

Do you believe in heaven and hell?

SAMUEL

I don't think I've lived long enough to feel strongly either way.

HENRY

And you feel comfortable enough leaving this earth, dying, not being certain?

SAMUEL

Who is ever really certain?

(*A beat.*)

HENRY

I've always really admired you.

SAMUEL

You have?

HENRY

Yeah, because you question everything. You're not certain of anything. I think it makes you more open, more accepting. You're not tied to any beliefs, and as a result, you feel okay with everything.

SAMUEL

You think, for that reason, I'm a better person? Not having any strong opinions?

HENRY

I don't know. But I've never questioned any decision you've ever made. (*A beat.*) That's why I deserve to kill you.

(*A beat.*)

SAMUEL

You're serious?

SCARLETT

Henry-

TODD

So. No to the movie, then.

HENRY (*ignoring him*)

No, hear me out. I admire the fuck out of Sam, guys. He's smart. He's certain. He's right. And if he feels strongly enough to want to die right now. Then who am I to deny him that?

TODD

That makes zero sense.

HENRY

Sure it does.

SCARLETT

You sound like a Manson-follower. You think that just because he's made this wild plan, it's on you to fulfill it?

HENRY

It's on us. Our friend has made a choice, a choice that is within his rights, and we should be willing to help out. We shouldn't question it.

SCARLETT

It's actually not within his rights-

ALBERTO

You're fucking insane.

HENRY

Don't say that.

ALBERTO

The fact of the matter is none of you are able to kill him.

HENRY

What are you talking about?

ALBERTO

Sam went to all the trouble to plan this thing, but he forgot one aspect of it: they will discover he was murdered. They'll use every trick to find him. I'm listening to ton of true-crime podcasts, and no one stops looking. His family loves him, they will keep pushing to find him. And they won't stop. Love is all it really takes to find someone, I guess. So they won't stop using every

resource they have, every tool at their disposal to discover what happened to him. And Sam missed one thing.

SAMUEL  
Which is what?

ALBERTO  
Everyone has a motive here.

TODD  
Who says?

ALBERTO  
You all did! Scar's financial future is tied to Sam. She's left everything in his will. That's a motive. Todd resents the fuck out of Sam, he's made him feel guilty, so he's angry. They fought. Motive. And Henry here doesn't want him to suffer. His belief that no one deserves to suffer. Doesn't matter if Sam asked him to kill him or not, murder's murder.

DENISE  
What about me?

ALBERTO  
He made fun of you before. Said he wished you weren't here. You just expressed emotional distress. Cops will sniff that out of you in a minute. Motive.

HENRY  
So what's your point?

ALBERTO  
The point is I should be the one to kill him.

TODD  
Now everyone wants to do it.

HENRY  
Why you?

ALBERTO  
Because I don't have a motive. And I can just blame one of you if they suspect me.

HENRY  
That's so fucked up!

SAMUEL  
Yeah, no offense Berto, but you're not really in the running.

ALBERTO

Why not?

SAMUEL

We don't really have that relationship.

ALBERTO

You don't have *\*this\** relationship with anybody here.

SAMUEL

I don't know...

ALBERTO

What is it? Why can't I be the one to kill you?

SAMUEL

Because we aren't really friends.

*(A beat.)*

HENRY

Sam-

ALBERTO *(to HENRY)*

I fucking told you so.

SAMUEL

No, it's not like that, obviously I like you, and I like that you're dating Henry, we just aren't like, individually close.

ALBERTO

All the more reason why I should. You ever see Strangers on a Train?

SAMUEL

I just didn't have you in mind. When I pictured how it would go.

ALBERTO

That's fucked up. Then why am I here?

HENRY

Berto, don't-

ALBERTO

No, I want him to answer the question.

SAMUEL



Because you're dating Henry.

SCARLETT

Sam-

SAMUEL

He asked! I'm just being honest. That's all we can fucking do now.

ALBERTO

So we aren't really friends.

SAMUEL

I just don't know you well enough to have you kill me.

ALBERTO

I've been dating one of your best friends for five fucking years. How long do you need before you'll consider me a friend?

SAMUEL

It's not about that. It's not like you make an effort either.

ALBERTO

Because I knew that was true! You don't hide it. You don't invite me to things individually. You don't text me on my own. If there's something you want to do, I'm a plus one. Henry \*and\* Berto. Never just Berto.

SCARLETT

Alberto, we love you.

ALBERTO

I think you just love that I make Henry happy.

TODD

Do you make him happy?

ALBERTO

Excuse me?

TODD

Hey, cards on the table here: you guys have been fighting. A lot.

HENRY

Not \*a lot\*.

SAMUEL

No I agree with Todd, you have. You fought before you came here. That's why you didn't drive up with us, right? You were fighting.

ALBERTO

We were fighting because I didn't want to come. And I was fucking right.

HENRY

That's not why we were fighting.

ALBERTO

Henry!

HENRY

It's not!

ALBERTO

It's what the fight started as!

HENRY

But it became that you don't really like my friends either.

*(A beat.)*

SCARLETT

You don't like us?

HENRY

He said that I should choose.

SAMUEL *(to ALBERTO)*

Between us and you?

ALBERTO

I didn't say it like that.

TODD

But that's what you meant?

ALBERTO

Fucking yes.

SCARLETT *(to HENRY)*

What did you say to that?

HENRY

I didn't know what to say. I said we'd talk about it later.

ALBERTO

Which means we broke up.

SAMUEL

What?

HENRY

That's not what it means!

ALBERTO

Well we came. You made your choice. (*A beat.*) I'm a fucking outsider here. I'm not one of you all. I came in last and I think most of you expect me to leave first. Well you got what you wanted. We aren't together anymore. (*to HENRY*) We aren't together any more. Happy?

HENRY

We shouldn't do this in front of everyone.

SAMUEL

When I said what I said, Berto, I didn't want this. Or even expect this.

ALBERTO

It's not your fault. You just confirmed what I already knew. (*A beat.*) So do I get to kill you now?

SAMUEL

Look-

ALBERTO

We aren't friends, so no one will suspect me.

HENRY

Berto-

ALBERTO

I'm done sacrificing the most happiness I could have just to be happy with you.

*(HENRY gets up and exits upstairs. They all shift uncomfortably. ALBERTO gets up and exits into the kitchen. The rest sit uncomfortably for awhile.)*

TODD

It's kind of ironic that those are the guys who suggested we play Hygge.

SAMUEL

Was that my fault?

SCARLETT

No, babe. It wasn't.

SAMUEL

I didn't mean to stir the pot, I just wanted to be honest.

TODD

You didn't mean to stir the pot?

SAMUEL

You're still pissed that I outed your financial issues?

TODD

Yes!

SAMUEL

Well get the fuck over it.

DENISE

You guys have messy friendships.

SAMUEL (*raising his beer*)

Cheers to that.

SCARLETT (*getting up*)

I'm going to check on Berto.

SAMUEL

Why not Henry?

SCARLETT

Sam!

SAMUEL

Right. Good point.

TODD

At least you're bringing us all together.

SAMUEL

The point is I was right, people here could kill me.

TODD

I can't believe you're serious when you say that.

SAMUEL

I am.

TODD

I've known you over ten years. I never thought we'd have this conversation.

SAMUEL

You could do it still, you know? You could just go find the gun and do it while no one is around.

DENISE

Uhm, I'm still here.

SAMUEL (*not looking at her*)

I know.

TODD

Dude-

SAMUEL

I'm serious. That way the debate is over. No one has to choose. You help everyone out.

TODD

Sam, stop it.

SAMUEL

I know you resent me. I know you don't want to owe me money. Well this is how you get out of it. End it all for me, buddy, end it all.

DENISE

I'm really uncomfortable being here for this.

TODD

So the fuck am I. Stop it, I'm not going to kill you.

SAMUEL

This may be your only chance. Todd.

*(ALBERTO and SCARLETT reenter. HENRY re-enters at the top of the stairs, unseen by the others.)*

ALBERTO

Did Henry come down?

DENISE

Not yet.

ALBERTO

It's stopped snowing. I'm going to take off.

SAMUEL

Berto, about what I said.

ALBERTO

It's not about that, Sam. It's all of this. It's everything. I can't be here. I need to go home.

TODD

We're really sorry we ever made you feel that way.

ALBERTO

I appreciate that, but it's a little too late. *(A beat, he makes his way to the stairs)* I'm going to get my stuff.

HENRY *(making himself known)*

You can't leave!

ALBERTO

Henry. We can talk about this when you get back from the weekend.

HENRY

No, you need to stay.

ALBERTO

Why should I? No one wants me here.

HENRY

I want you here.

ALBERTO

Not enough.

HENRY

What's enough?

ALBERTO

It'll never be enough. Not as long as I'll never be your first choice.

HENRY

You're my first choice right now.



HENRY  
Do you really?

ALBERTO  
What is it going to take for you to not do this?

HENRY  
If you don't know then you don't mean it.

ALBERTO (*blurting out*)  
I'd miss you! That's what would happen. If you went away, if we broke up or if you did this fucking stupid thing, I'd miss you so much. I love you, Henry. You're my life, and this is so stupid. I don't want to miss you. I never ever want to miss you. I just want us to be okay, and the only way that can happen is if you don't do this stupid thing. So please give me the gun. I'd be so full of grief, so full of fear, if I lost you. I can't lose you.

(A beat.)

HENRY  
You won't leave? Tonight?

ALBERTO  
I'll stay. We will go home together.

HENRY (*handing him the gun*)  
Okay.

(ALBERTO takes the gun. He checks to see if it's loaded. He cocks it, aims it at SAMUEL.)

ALBERTO  
Are we doing this or what?

SCARLETT/TODD/DENISE  
Berto!/Stop that/Put that down!/Don't aim that at him!/Etc.

ALBERTO  
You wanted this? This is what you're doing to everyone. Who would even want to be your friend?

(SAMUEL breaks into a laughing fit. He's doubled over in laughter. They all watch him in shock.)

ALBERTO  
You think this is fucking funny?



SAMUEL

It's not right? It's horrible? I don't know.

SCARLETT

Then why are you laughing?

SAMUEL

Because what Alberto just said was right. The grief he'd feel if he ever lost Henry. It's his love.

Grief is love. It's everything we didn't get to say, everything you wanted to tell them but you couldn't. You miss them, and that's because there's unsaid stuff. (*A beat.*) I'm laughing because none of you will miss me. I'm laughing because none of you will *\*have\** to miss me. You get to

live out your grief now. And you don't have to worry about anything being left unsaid. There won't be a single thing that won't be said to me. You've all told me just how much you love me. Just how much you'd miss me. So no one has to worry about being sad. And that's just. The best thing in the world.

(*A beat. ALBERTO lowers the gun. Seeing an opportunity, DENISE grabs the gun out of ALBERTO hand.*)

ALBERTO

Hey!

DENISE

Fuck this shit. He's fucking sick. And we should all be put out of our misery.

SCARLETT

Denise! Don't!

DENISE

Fuck you Scarlett. I'm doing you a favor. Your boyfriend is a fucking sociopath.

TODD

I think, technically, he'd be considered a psychopath.

DENISE (*turning the gun on him, the group*)

I swear if you say one more thing, I'm going to kill you next. You made me sleep on a fucking couch last night.

TODD

You offered!-

DENISE (*going off*)

YOU'RE ALL FUCKING SICK. YOU ALL HAVE SUCH PROBLEMS. You don't deserve any of what you have! You don't deserve each other. (*A beat.*) Actually, scratch that, you all *\*perfectly deserve\** each other. You're all monsters. Dirty, dirty, fucking monsters. You all deserve to die for the way you treat each other. (*A beat. To SAMUEL*) This asshole comes here

with a loaded gun and asks you all to kill him. There's very little attention paid to why he's asking and what else might be wrong. Instead you all launch into why you deserve to pull the trigger. The truth is NONE OF YOU deserve to pull this trigger. I am the only one who has been wronged, and who has done \*nothing\* wrong. (*A beat.*) This was a birthday party? Did you all forget that? We were supposed to drink and play games and have cake! And it's turned into this! (*A beat.*) I didn't want any of this. I don't want any of this. But you've pushed me so fucking far.

Just being in your fucking presence has made me fucking crazy. Just breathing your oxygen, smelling your fucking stinks, has made me nuts. (*A beat.*) So I'm gonna kill this fucker. Right in front of you all. And whatever happens after that will be entirely your faults. (*to SAMUEL*) Get your fucking ass into the basement. Now.

*(DENISE lets out a gut-wrenching scream, the gun trembling in her hands. SAMUEL has backed up into the dining room table, fear flashing across his face for the first time. There's a commotion. Several people lunging for DENISE. TODD attempts to wrestle the gun out of her hands. It becomes absolute chaos, and we are entirely able to discern who is holding the gun and what's happening.)*

SCARLETT/TODD/ALBERTO/HENRY

Denise!/Don't!/Stop!/ Let it go!

*(In the ensuing struggle, the front door swings open, and the HOST, the owner of the AirBnB enters the front hallway. They are not what anyone expected. They watch the chaos, and speak.)*

HOST

Hello?

*(The group is suddenly silent. The gun is hidden from view. Everyone turns to face them.)*

SCARLETT

Sorry. We were just- can we. Can we help you?

HOST

Are you Scarlett?

SCARLETT

I am.

HOST

I'm the host.

DENISE (*disappointed*)

You're the host?

HOST

Yeah. I tried calling but I think your cell died.

SCARLETT

I haven't been able to charge it.

HOST

Well. I came about the back door. I got a call that the alarm went off. The cops couldn't get out here.

SAMUEL

That was- sorry. That was my fault. Scar had told us all not to use it and I wasn't thinking.

HOST

So. Everything's good then?

TODD

Yup.

*(There's a beat of silence. No one moves.)*

HOST

You sure?

HENRY

Yes!

HOST

I'm just going to- you know, I'm just gonna check on some stuff, okay?

SCARLETT

Yes. Of course. Do what you gotta do. Can we get you a drink?

HOST

You know I'd love a beer. You got any?

TODD

Yeah! We brought a lot!

HENRY

Not like, a lot-a lot, we're not like, alcoholics.

HOST *(exiting into the kitchen)*

Right. Well. I'll be right back.

*(The host exits, everyone scrambles.)*

SCARLETT

Quick. Give me the gun.

DENISE

No!

SCARLETT

We're not doing this, Denise! Be sensible. We aren't alone anymore!

TODD

I can hide it again.

HENRY

No he can't!

SCARLETT (*snatching the gun*)

Give it!

(*SCARLETT runs up the stairs. They all try to collect themselves. HENRY exits into the kitchen.*)

HENRY

I'll get that beer for them.

(*SCARLETT comes running back down the stairs.*)

SCARLETT

Did they leave?

SAMUEL

No they're still checking. What do you think they're checking?

TODD

Let's all just relax. I'm sure everything will be fine.

DENISE

Easy for you to say, you weren't holding a gun and losing your mind!-/Hey!/  
(*The HOST reenters, jingling keys.*)

(*The HOST reenters, jingling keys.*)

HOST

All set. I put a bar to block the track for the sliding glass door. So you shouldn't run into the problem again. How'd you get it to turn off?

TODD

What?

HOST

The alarm.

DENISE

Oh. I tripped the circuit breaker for the house. It reset after that.

HOST

You're a smart little cookie, ain't ya?

*(DENISE smiles, blushes. HENRY reenters with the beer.)*

HENRY

Here you go.

HOST

Thank you very kindly. *(They open the beer, take a long sip. Everyone watches.)* By the way, the basement door was unlocked. I relocked it, there's not much to do down there, and it's off-limits, so.

SAMUEL *(face falling)*

You locked it?

HOST

Yeah. So don't worry about that. Plus, it's a little creepy. Nothing getting in now!

*(They all sit in silence. The HOST drinks more.)*

HOST

It's uh, it's one of y'all's birthdays, isn't it? That's why you're all up here?

SCARLETT

Yes. My boyfriend, Sam.

SAMUEL

Mine.

HOST

What you turning?

SAMUEL

I turn thirty tomorrow.

HOST

That's great. Happy birthday. *(A beat. Awkward.)* A good trip so far?

TODD

Oh it's been. You know. The best.

ALBERTO (*lying*)  
You have a lovely house by the way. Really, really well decorated.

HOST  
Oh. Thanks. I had someone come in.

DENISE (*pointing to the frame*)  
Can I ask about the guy. In that picture?

HOST  
Ha! That's a stock image. I think the decorator picked it out. Little AirBnB tip: make it seem a family lives here.

HENRY  
Ah. That makes sense.

*(More silence. The HOST finishes their beer.)*

HOST  
Well. I'm gonna head down the road to the motel for the night.

SCARLETT  
You don't want to just stay here?

SAMUEL  
Scar-

SCARLETT  
There are plenty of beds!

HOST  
No, no, you kids enjoy your, uh, party. Check out's at 11am tomorrow.

*(They get up to head to the door.)*

SCARLETT  
Yes. We will be out by then.

HOST  
Don't worry about stripping the beds or anything like that.

SCARLETT  
Duly noted.

HOST (*at door, handing SCARLETT their can of beer*)

I gotta ask. What I walked in on, before-?

HENRY

Yeah?

HOST

Was that a sex thing?

ALBERTO

Excuse me?

HOST

Hey, to each their own. I just gotta ask.

TODD

No. It was definitely \*not\* anything sexual. At all.

HOST (*winking*)

I've seen worse. You kids have fun.

*(The HOST exits. SCARLETT locks the door behind them. They all sit in silence.)*

ALBERTO

They seemed. Nice.

HENRY

I'm not entirely sure they know what sex is.

DENISE

So what now?

*(Suddenly, SAMUEL bursts into tears. They all stop and watch.)*

SCARLETT

Hey. Hey. Honey. What's wrong?

SAMUEL (*through sobs*)

They locked the door.

SCARLETT

Which door?

SAMUEL

The basement. They locked the basement door.

SCARLETT

So?

SAMUEL

So now. Now. We can't.

SCARLETT

Honey. Shh. Take some deep breaths.

*(SAMUEL continues to sob. They all watch for a few moments.)*

SAMUEL *(still sobbing)*

I'm gonna die like this. It's not going to go how I want it to go. I'm going to die like this.

*(SCARLETT holds SAMUEL. They stay like that awhile. The others watch. SAMUEL continues to sob. The lights go down. The lights comes back up: The next morning. The aftermath of the night before has been cleaned up. TODD folds a blanket in the living room, puts the couch back together from where he's slept. DENISE enters from the top of the stairs. He looks at her, smiles.)*

TODD

Morning. Sleep okay?

DENISE

Yes. Thank you for swapping.

TODD

Least I could do.

DENISE

Anyone else up yet?

TODD

They're coming.

*(SCARLETT enters from the kitchen with a few bags of groceries.)*

SCARLETT

Kitchen's all cleaned up. I left the rest of the beer, since the host seemed to like it. I imagine they're coming back here.

*(HENRY and ALBERTO enter from the top of the stairs, mid-argument.)*

ALBERTO

It still doesn't make any sense! My dad told me you don't steer into the skid.

HENRY



Who are you going to believe, your father or google?

ALBERTO  
My father knows a lot!

HENRY  
He told you that broccoli would make you taller!

ALBERTO  
Technically, technically broccoli has iron so he's not wrong.

TODD  
Did you guys get your games?

ALBERTO  
Yeah it's all in the bag.

*(SAMUEL enters from the top of the stairs. They all turn to watch him.)*

HENRY  
Hey.

ALBERTO  
Sleep okay?

SAMUEL  
Fine thanks.

TODD  
Happy birthday. How does Thirty feel so far?

DENISE  
Any different?

SAMUEL  
I feel. You know. Fine.

*(A beat.)*

SAMUEL  
Listen, I wanted to say I'm sorry.

HENRY  
No, hey, stop it.

ALBERTO

Yeah let's just forget it.

TODD

We love you, buddy. We're here from whatever you need.

SAMUEL

Thank you.

HENRY *(to the rest)*

Let's take the stuff out.

SCARLETT *(handing her keys to DENISE)*

I'm gonna do one more sweep. Denise, will you start the car?

DENISE

Sure thing.

*(They all exit, with the exception of TODD, SAMUEL and SCARLETT. SCARLETT has her purse on her shoulder.)*

TODD *(hanging behind)*

Hey, you two?

SCARLETT

Yeah?

TODD *(handing her a check)*

Here's a check for my portion. Sorry it took so long to get to you. I'll get the rest to you when I can.

SAMUEL

Thanks. Buddy, really, thank you.

TODD

No. Thanks for, you know everything. And Scar, thanks for planning this. What a trip to remember. *(He takes out his phone)* Quick photo?

*(They all pose as TODD snaps a selfie. He smiles, hugs SAMUEL. He exits.)*

SCARLETT *(to SAMUEL)*

You okay?

SAMUEL

I'm fine.

SCARLETT

You can rest more on the drive back.

SAMUEL

Sure. (*remembering*) Oh, shit.

SCARLETT

What?

(*SAMUEL goes to the couch and reaches underneath. He pulls out the Hygge card from two nights before.*)

SCARLETT

What's that?

SAMUEL

My card from Hygge. I meant to grab it last night and add it to the deck, but then, I was all...

SCARLETT

Right.

SAMUEL

I should give it to Henry.

SCARLETT

Wait. What does it say?

SAMUEL

I really don't wanna-

SCARLETT

Babe. Come on.

SAMUEL (*sighing, reading*)

"If I was on my death bed, what would you want your last words to me to be?"

(*A beat.*)

SCARLETT

Who were you going to ask?

SAMUEL

You.

(*A beat. She moves to him.*)

SCARLETT (*holding him*)  
I love you so fucking much.

SAMUEL (*getting choked up*)  
I know.

SCARLETT  
And I'm going to be with you for all of this.

SAMUEL  
I know that too.

SCARLETT  
What're you thinking?

SAMUEL  
I'm thinking. (*stifling sobs*) I'm thinking I'm so fucking scared.

SCARLETT  
I know baby. I know baby. It's all going to be okay.

*(They hold each other for a while. Finally, SAMUEL takes his bag and the card and exits out the front door. SCARLETT stands alone for a moment.)*

SCARLETT  
Sam?

SAMUEL (*offstage, in doorway*)  
Yeah?

*(SCARLETT reaches into her purse and produces the gun. She aims it at him, although we don't see him. She pulls the trigger. The shot rings through the house. She lowers the gun. She smiles. The lights go down.)*

*(End of play.)*

