

# Lineage

by

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The Gill Agency

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**Cast:**

**Roger:** mid 40's, medium height and build, brown hair and beard and casual clothes.

**Jess:** mid 30's, short and energetic, glasses, dark hair with purple tint and big hoop ear rings.

**Greta:** 40's, blond and polished, with everything styled.

**Lila:** Greta's Aunt, regal bearing in a blouse and skirt, lots of pearls.

**Floyd:** Bartender, mid-sixties

**Wallace:** Greta's first husband. Tall, blond hair slicked back.

**Umberto:** Greta's third husband. Tall and dark, swagger.

**SCENE 1**

Interior of a coffee shop. A variety of tables and couches and single chairs are set up. The long ordering and serving counter is SL and the entrance to the coffee shop is SR. There are several large plants placed strategically in the room for some privacy between customers. Only a few of the tables are occupied and a handful of people are lounging on the couches. The door opens SR and Jess enters enthusiastically and comes to a slow stop. She brushes snow from her coat. Roger follows her in slowly with a reluctant expression on his face. Jess scans the room.

JESS:

Something in a corner would be best.

Jess moves through the room and sizes up a table in the front SR. She looks around and then pulls a large potted fern closer to the table. Roger has stayed behind and she motions him over.

Does this work for you?

ROGER:

To be clear, I don't think anywhere will work. I feel a big suck coming.

JESS:

Lighten up. I am here to help you and be entertained. Put your coat on the chair.

Roger places his coat on the chair and then turns to go to the counter. Jess places her coat on the other chair.

Where are you going?

ROGER:

(puzzled)

I'm going to get coffee.

Jess shakes her head.

JESS:

You can't order coffee before she gets here. That's rude. I'm getting coffee. Why don't you study her profile.

Jess heads to the counter and Roger half heartedly glances at his phone. Jess returns to the table after ordering.

ROGER:

Which one am I meeting today?

JESS:

Hopefully, some one who gets you out of your house. Greta is first.

ROGER:

I wonder if Hansel is coming.

JESS:

(giggling)

That's Gretel, jerk. **Greta** looks very pretty and interesting. You need to be on your game. Ten minutes to showtime.

ROGER:

Well, it's not going to be a long game, I need to get back home and walk Walter.

JESS:

Can you not focus on that dog for one afternoon? Your new goal is to have people friends and join the human race.

ROGER:

There's nothing wrong with my lifestyle. I get zero negative feedback and Walter and I come and go as we please.

(pause)

Why are we doing this again?

JESS:

You mean why are **you** doing this? I believe you told me you were bored and needed to shake things up. It sounded like a plea.

ROGER:

I vaguely remember that.

JESS:

As your amazing friend, I wrote your dating profile, found pictures and made you seem interesting. I left out your general dislike of people and chronic grouchiness.

ROGER:

Maybe you should be the one dating.

JESS:

Not yet. They recommend not dating in your first year of recovery.

ROGER:

You'll get there. It's good to have you back.

Jess shrugs and smiles.

JESS:

Thanks. For now I'll date through you.

ROGER:

(detached)

Did I tell you my church just opened a memorial courtyard with granite walls? They have twelve by twelve boxes where you put ashes in the wall.

JESS:

Don't use that as an opener with Greta.

ROGER:

Anyway, I got a twelve by twelve cardboard box to see if all of my pet urns fit. They do and there's room for Walter.

JESS:

(surprised)

You have a collection of dead dog urns?

ROGER:

One cat.

Jess looks at Roger.

JESS:

Why are we talking about this now?

ROGER:

I saw decorative tins on the counter and it reminded me of my pet urns.

Jess cringes.

JESS:

Oh god. When Greta is here, try not to look at the counter. You'll sit in my seat facing the door.

ROGER:

The only issue I see with the burial box is whether I will fit with my pets. But I think I have a good option.

JESS:

I'm excited to hear your option and then this conversation ends.

ROGER:

(upbeat)

It's simple. I will split myself up. Some of my ash will be spread in a few spots around the world and the leftovers will go into a tin that fits in the wall with my pets.

JESS:

Pure genius and end of topic.

She takes her coat off the chair and places it at on an adjacent chair obscured by the plant.

ROGER:

Why did you do that?

JESS:

I'm staying to watch. It might be a crime against humanity for me to leave her alone with you.

ROGER:

Thanks.

JESS:

Please remember that she may have lots of things to do.  
Don't waste her time.

ROGER:

She liked **me** first.

JESS:

It may have been a carpet bombing of outreach to see what  
stuck. You are new blood.

ROGER:

So we may not get married?

JESS:

You may not last ten minutes. What's her name?

ROGER:

Gretel.

Jess ignores his response.

JESS:

Where is she from?

ROGER:

Greenwich, and I think she really is from Greenwich.

JESS:

I think you're right. I dated a guy briefly who said he was  
from Greenwich. I don't even think he knew how to get there.  
Greta looks Greenwich.

ROGER:

It says she has three kids. Should I say I have kids?

JESS:

You don't have kids.



ROGER:

Maybe I just mention it today and if we go out again, I'll just say she must have misunderstood me.

JESS:

What are their names? Ages? Are they smart or stupid? I'm not sure lying is a good start.

ROGER:

I at least want her to know I have fruit in my loins.

JESS:

She doesn't want fruit. She has three kids. What are her hobbies?

Roger looks at his phone.

Don't look at your phone.

ROGER:

I'm guessing the usual. Hiking, yoga, helping others. One woman put hot yoga sex as a hobby. It was funny, but a little scary. Didn't seem clean.

JESS:

Time to set up. You take my chair and I'm going to move to the lounge chair behind the plant.

Jess walks over to the chair. She pushes it further behind the plant in back of where Greta will sit.

Can you see me?

ROGER:

No. And I like that.

A hand appears from behind the plant.

JESS:

Can you see this?

ROGER:

Unfortunately, yes.

JESS:

Great. This is perfect. I'm sure she won't be able to see me.

ROGER:

There is absolutely nothing else you could be doing right now?

JESS:

No. This is my destiny. Here are the hand signals.

Jess demonstrates by giving a thumb up.

This means good and keep rolling.

She does a thumb down.

This means your date is going nowhere and begin to exit.

The palm of her hand goes into a methodical pushing down movement.

Slow down and relax a little.

The hand moves rapidly side to side.

This means you are heading over a cliff and need to pump the brakes hard.

ROGER:

What if I don't look at your hand?

JESS:

You will. Everyone likes feedback.

Roger's attention shifts towards the door where a blond woman has entered.

ROGER:

Time for the hand to go back in the plant. I think that's her. Goodbye.

JESS:

Stand up and greet her.

ROGER:

Goodbye.

Roger stands and motions to get Greta's attention. She sees him and walks over and extends her hand.

GRETA:

Roger?

ROGER:

Roger that.

Greta looks puzzled.

GRETA:

You're Roger?

ROGER:

Roger.

(pause)

Roger.

Roger laughs uncomfortably and Greta shakes her head slightly. Jess' hand emerges with the calming motion and disappears.

GRETA:

I'm Greta.

ROGER:

Yes, you are.

They sit and Roger averts his eyes from the plant.

GRETA:

This is a cute place. Can't remember the last time I came to Port Chester. Probably a few years. Do you come here often?

ROGER:

Only to meet my parole officer.

(pause)

I'm obviously kidding.

GRETA:

I'm not sure it's that obvious. Do we go to the counter to order?

ROGER:

I think so. I waited to order until you arrived.

They get up and walk to the counter.

GRETA:

Thank you. Where are you from again?

ROGER:

Stamford, the Shippan Point area.

GRETA:

Shippan Point or the area?

ROGER:

More like the area, but it all goes together.

GRETA:

(dismissive)

I'm sure it does.

She turns to the counterperson.

Double espresso, please. Roger?

ROGER:

I'll have some mango juice.

GRETA:

No caffeine?

ROGER:

Try to avoid it. My dad died at 56.

GRETA:

From caffeine?

ROGER:

No.

(pause)

Blood pressure, heart issues.

They receive their drinks and head back to the table. After they sit, the hand appears with a thumbs up and then disappears. They drink and sit for a moment.

GRETA:

I noticed that you don't have kids. Is that why?

ROGER:

No. I was only married for a few years and we never got to that.

GRETA:

I get it. I was married for a few years.

(pause)

Three times.

She discreetly glances at Roger as he sips his juice.

Had a kid with each husband.

There is a brief spitting sound from behind the plant. Greta turns with a puzzled look on her face and touches the back of her neck. She turns back to a fidgeting Roger.

ROGER:

(laughs)

Well, if you're going for a record, I can definitely have kids.

The hand shoots out and moves rapidly from side to side as Greta looks at Roger.

GRETA:

I don't view it as a contest.

ROGER:

I'm sorry.

They sit quietly for a few moments and the hand retreats.

GRETA:

Where are you in the dating process?

Roger shakes his head.

ROGER:

I'm really not in the process. This is my first face to face date in a few years.

GRETA:

I kind of guessed. Why don't I tell a little about myself and then you can go. I was born in Greenwich, went to Choate and Bucknell, lived in the city for two years and moved back to Greenwich. First husband was a college boyfriend, second husband was an investor and third husband was a polo player. I have three boys.

Roger begins to rise.

ROGER:

Thank you. It was nice to meet you.

GRETA:

Where are you going?

ROGER:

You told me about yourself and now I am going like you suggested.

Greta shakes her head and laughs.

GRETA:

Am I that intimidating? I meant, it would be your **turn** to go and tell me about yourself.

Roger sits down.

ROGER:

Well, I was born in a farm town in Ohio and went to a small college for a few years and then decided to come to New York to try and do something creative. I wound up at a publishing house, got married and moved to Stamford. I have a dog Walter that is really cool. I have pictures.

The hand appears quickly and freezes as Roger scrolls through his phone and hands it to Greta who swipes through the pictures.

GRETA:

He's really cute. I love animals.

(smiles)

That's a nice connection.

ROGER:

Thanks. Sorry about the start. I'm nervous and can be a little quirky.

GRETA:

It's all good. A little quirky is fine, a lot of quirky can be weird.

She looks past Roger towards the counter.

By the way, do you think they sell those beautiful tins up there on the counter? I collect exotic shells. They would be perfect containers.

As Roger turns around to look, he can't see the hand moving frantically from side to side as the plant shakes.

FADE TO BLACK.

**END OF SCENE 1**

SCENE 2

A small courtyard with a fountain in the middle. There is an entryway SR and a black granite wall US. The wall SL has windowless openings to the outside with vines growing around them. The warm spring afternoon sun casts shadows on the courtyard floor.



After a moment, Roger comes through the entry SR with Greta following him slowly as she studies the surroundings. Roger sweeps his arm as he turns to Greta.

ROGER:

This is what I've been telling you about.

Greta touches the wall.

GRETA:

When did you say this church was built? I feel like I should be wearing wooden shoes and a bonnet.

ROGER:

First one was built in 1720, but the British burned it down in the Revolutionary War.

GRETA:

Bastards.

Greta walks around, going from opening to opening and looking out.

ROGER:

In fairness, the colonists were attacking them.

Greta turns to Roger.

GRETA:

Are you a Tory?

ROGER:

Just accurate history. This version of the church was built in 1794. Same structure stands today, untouched.

GRETA:

They had great foresight to put in air-conditioning and the alarm system.

ROGER:

That was added.

GRETA:

Are you sure?

ROGER:

Positive.

GRETA:

You are an interesting man, Roger.

ROGER:

Do you not want to be here?

GRETA:

I'm not sure. My dates often consist of dinner or a movie. I feel like we're skipping the fun and heading to a final destination.

Greta walks slowly over and sits on the window ledge SL. She wipes her forehead. Roger studies her with concern.

ROGER:

Are you ok?

GRETA:

Of course. Why wouldn't I be?

ROGER:

Don't worry. You're not getting married again.

Greta turns and looks wearily at Roger.

I'm sorry. That wasn't funny.

GRETA:

Whatever. It's fair.

ROGER:

I suppose it's fair for me, too. I mean I've been married before.

(pause)

Just once, though.

GRETA:

I'm picking up on your point that I've had multiple marriages.

ROGER:

It's actually kind of a compliment.

Greta looks at Roger sideways.

I mean you got picked three times.

GRETA:

That's an odd compliment.

ROGER:

Some people are still waiting to be picked.

GRETA:

Sure. Like the last kid at kickball.

ROGER:

Exactly. It's better to be picked.

GRETA:

You make it sound so transactional.

ROGER:

Were you in love?

Greta wipes her face.

GRETA:

I think so. I mean I don't know exactly what the threshold is. Were you?

ROGER:

Was I what?

GRETA:

Were you in love?

ROGER:

She was nice and smart and funny.

GRETA:

So you were buddies.

ROGER:

She kept asking me if I really loved her and I didn't know what she meant. I thought things were fine, but she didn't think I loved her enough.

GRETA:

Sounds like my marriage to Phipps.

ROGER:

Your college boyfriend?

GRETA:

Number two. The investment guy.

Greta smiles at Roger.

I thought you were an expert on my marriages.

ROGER:

(smiles)

I'll try harder.

GRETA:

Anyway, I was kind of freaked out after my divorce from Wallace, my college boyfriend. I met Phipps, he was nice looking, successful, great squash player. It fit. I remember dancing at my wedding thinking I could make it work.

ROGER:

I guess not.

GRETA:

That is correct.

ROGER:

I really think God just wants us to love something more than ourselves. I chose dogs. And one cat.

GRETA:

So, not people? Do you have family?

ROGER:

Just my mother in Ohio.

GRETA:

Brothers or sisters?

ROGER:

Nope. Not even sure my parents meant to have me. They didn't seem all in for the experience.

GRETA:

Do you speak with your mother often? I have strong radar for avoiding people with bad family dynamics.

ROGER:

I speak with my mother. I really like her. She knows that we are dating.

Greta looks at Roger with a bemused expression.

GRETA:

Dating? I think we are just having conversations. Our last one ended with cremation as the topic and today we are starting at the morgue.

ROGER:

We had coffee.

GRETA:

True. We drank briefly before the darkness descended.

ROGER:

I don't think any of this is dark, just revealing.

GRETA:

I really need us to start trending towards life.

ROGER:

Well. This isn't a morgue. It's a memorial.

GRETA:

They're still dead.

ROGER:

I think it's beautiful.

Greta turns and studies the courtyard.

GRETA:

It is rather beautiful and peaceful. Is this why you wanted me to come to the church?

ROGER:

I wanted you to know a little more about me. I love this church and this is where I will be buried.

GRETA:

So coffee and cremation last week and burial this week.

(pause)

With no coffee.

ROGER:

I just thought it would be helpful to get to know each other.

GRETA:

Look, you are very different and interesting, but I feel like you are about to exit quirky and go into weird.

ROGER:

I just don't want to waste time with surprises.

Greta ponders for a moment.

GRETA:

I guess it would be bad if we dated for a few years and then I came into the kitchen and found you dividing up ashes.

Greta stands slowly and studies the names on the granite wall.

ROGER:

We'll be up in the top corner.

Greta turns quickly to Roger.

GRETA:

You and me?

ROGER:

No. Of course not. Me and my dogs. And cat.

GRETA:

Part of me thinks you want me to buy a box.

They stare silently at the wall. Greta turns to Roger and appears to be considering something.

Are you doing anything on Friday night?

ROGER:

I'm not sure if Walter has anything planned.

GRETA:

Assuming Walter doesn't have anything planned, do you have a sport coat?

ROGER:

Pretty sure I do. Where do you want to go?

GRETA:

Cocktail party with lots of obnoxious people.

ROGER:

Thank you for thinking of me. So you want to see me again?

GRETA:

I don't know. You are a **long** way from the polo fields of Greenwich.

(pause)

Maybe that's good.

ROGER:

But you **are** asking me on a date. To meet your friends.

GRETA:

Not really. I just don't like any man at the club thinking door number four is open. You will be the perfect buffer.

ROGER:

But you like me a little.

GRETA:

Maybe I'm afraid if **I** don't set up our next encounter we'll wind up at a funeral. What kind of car do you drive?

ROGER:

Buick. 2013.



Greta nods and turns to go.

GRETA:

Meet me at the Greenwich Library. I'll drive us to the club.  
Thank you for whatever this was.

FADE TO BLACK

**END OF SCENE 2**

SCENE 3

A large, dark room with tables and people mingling. There is a wooden bar SL and a large open entrance SR. Oil paintings of older white men are on the walls. Just outside the entrance to the right is a vestibule with a coat rack. Roger and Greta enter the vestibule area shaking out umbrellas.

ROGER:

I'm a little worried about parking at the library.

GRETA:

The street gangs in Greenwich are very well mannered.

ROGER:

Funny. The parking is only for two hours.

GRETA:

They want you to visit the library, not live there. It will be a bad look if you leave to feed the meter.

ROGER:

I could have just parked here at your club.

Greta looks at Roger with amusement.

Right. **That** would have been a bad look. My Buick wouldn't have any friends here.

GRETA:

Showtime. Wait a few minutes before you talk about cremation. Read the room.

Greta straightens Roger's blazer.

You look nice.

ROGER:

Are you flirting?

GRETA:

No.

(pause)

Let's go in.

Greta and Roger walk through the doorway into the bar area.

They move through the crowd with Greta nodding and saying hello to various people. Roger follows suit until they arrive at the bar.

ROGER:

Thank you for introducing me.

GRETA:

I'm saving you for big intros. Those were just people I know from golf or paddle. I'm not very social. I don't like talking with many people.

ROGER:

Do you have a sheet for the hierarchy? Something I could study? Wouldn't want to unnecessarily speak with someone.

GRETA:

You'll figure it out. If I nod and don't break stride, that is a negative. If I say hello and don't break stride, that is friendly, but not interested. If I stop to talk, bingo. You speak.

ROGER:

Would you prefer to just hypnotize me?

GRETA:

Yes. I would. Would you like a drink? All of the alcohol here is caffeine free.

ROGER:

That is my favorite kind.

Roger holds up his hand.

Let me get this. What would you like?

Greta laughs.

GRETA:

Floyd wouldn't know what to do if you gave him money.

ROGER:

I can give him a card.

GRETA:

There is no currency here. Floyd just keeps a general track of the drinking activity and assigns charges to our accounts. He's been here forever and can predict what and how much everyone will drink.

ROGER:

What if someone contests the charges?

GRETA:

That's considered vulgar. If you can't pay it, you probably don't belong.

ROGER:

Interesting definition of vulgar.

Greta looks over Roger's shoulder and motions.

GRETA:

I need to go to the ladies room. I'll have a vodka. Just tell Floyd account seven if he asks.

ROGER:

Does that mean you're lucky?

Greta laughs as she walks away.

GRETA:

Ha. It just means we've belonged here forever.

Roger stands pondering for a few moments as an older woman carrying a martini walks toward him from behind. As you reaches him, she peers around to look at him. The stage around the two of them dims.

LILA:

Are you with Greta?

Roger turns to face her.

ROGER:

I'm sorry. I was lost in thought.

Lila motions towards the bathroom.

LILA:

Greta. Are you with Greta?

ROGER:

Yes. I am.

(pause)

I think.

LILA:

I came in and saw you talking with her, but I didn't know the duration or meaning. What is your name?

ROGER:

Roger.

LILA:

Roger?

ROGER:

Yes. Roger.

LILA:

Delighted to meet you Roger. I am Greta's Aunt Lila. May I ask how you know her?

ROGER:

To tell you the truth, we met on a dating site.

Lila shivers.

LILA:

Dear god. Why would she do that?

ROGER:

It's pretty common.

LILA:

But she's not common. I don't understand.

ROGER:

I've met some nice people.

LILA:

I'm sure **you** have. Why doesn't she just find someone here at the club? She did meet three husbands here.

ROGER:

Yes she did.

LILA:

Umberto didn't actually belong, but he was associated with members through the polo. And what about you? Where are you from?

ROGER:

I live just over in the Shippan Point area.

LILA:

I see. Do you live on Shippan Point or just in the area?

ROGER:

More the area.

LILA:

I see. I actually meant where are you from in the broader sense of the question.

ROGER:

Ohio.

LILA:

How long have you been **here**?

ROGER:

About 25 years. Came out when I was 20.

LILA:

(frustrated)

**America.** How long have you been in **America**?

Roger looks at Lila with a baffled expression.

ROGER:

I don't know. Why?

Lila points into the shadows.

LILA:

Do you see that woman over there? The tall blond with the beret?

ROGER:

Yes.

LILA:

That's Kellen Standish. Her family goes all the way back to the Mayflower.

Roger stares blankly.

ROGER:

That's great. Good for her.

LILA:

Did you ever hear of a ship called the Fortune?

ROGER:

Is it at the marina? Sometimes when I walk by, I study the names on the sides.

Lila shakes her head.

LILA:

Those are boats. I was asking about ships.

ROGER:

It's funny. One is called the Elise, which was my ex-wife's name.

LILA:

Is she your only ex-wife?

ROGER:

So far. I spend most of my time with Walter.

Lila pauses and looks at Roger.

LILA:

What is your relation to Walter?

ROGER:

My dog.

Lila looks relieved.

LILA:

I see. So you haven't heard of The Fortune?

ROGER:

I don't think so.

LILA:

It was the second boat to Plymouth, a month after the Mayflower. My family was on it.

Roger looks at her with amusement.



ROGER:

It's crazy to think that was four hundred years ago.

LILA:

But it's still important to know. I can even be traced to Mary Queen of Scots in 1322.

ROGER:

You can really trace back that far?

Lila nods slowly.

LILA:

I mean some of it is just inference, but I think for certain people their lineage is projectable.

Lila studies Roger.

I've been told I look like someone with lineage.

ROGER:

Have you always lived in Greenwich?

LILA:

We actually stayed in Plymouth and Boston for several generations. Thomas Carter was the first minister ordained in the colonies, my mother was a direct descendant. In the mid 1700's, we-

Roger raises his hand and Lila stops.

ROGER:

You, Aunt Lila. I meant have **you** always lived in Greenwich?

Lila looks puzzled by the question.

LILA:

Of course. Of course I have. I went to Barnard for four years, but otherwise always here. I wouldn't know how to live anywhere else.

The lights go up on the remaining stage and Greta is US talking in a small group.

ROGER:

Looks like Greta found some people.

Lila turns to look and nods. Greta disappears OSL.

LILA:

They are family of Wallace, husband number one. I think it is his father's birthday. Wallace must be here.

ROGER:

Greta's ex-husband is here?

Lila looks at Roger and smiles.

LILA:

You dear boy. He is two husbands removed and engaged to be married to a secretary in his office.

(pause)

His family is embarrassed.

ROGER:

I'm sure she's very nice.

LILA:

Phipps, husband two, mostly just golfs and isn't very social here. Umberto is seasonal with the polo, he may be back now.

Roger studies Lila.

ROGER:

They all hang out here?

LILA:

Where else would they go?

Lila reaches out and touches Roger's arm.

You may want to get a drink. My number is seven.

As Lila walks away, Roger scans the room and then strolls over and sits at the bar as the remaining stage darkens. Floyd, the bartender, approaches. Roger looks up.

ROGER:

Hi. Can I get a beer?

FLOYD:

(softly)

Not really a beer place, but I have Amstel and Heineken.

ROGER:

Heineken is fine. Number seven is the account.

FLOYD:

(smiling)

Already had you. I saw you talking to Ms. Cummings and Greta.

Floyd walks down the bar and retrieves a beer from the fridge. He returns and places it in front of Roger.

ROGER:

She's quite interesting. Ms. Cummings.

FLOYD:

I suppose.

ROGER:

You don't think she's interesting?

FLOYD:

I've been here for forty years and a big part of my job is to not be too interested. Does that make sense?

ROGER:

Sure. I get it. No problem.

FLOYD:

The Cummings are a fine family. Known Greta since she was a little girl.

ROGER:

What was she like as a little girl?

FLOYD:

She was a little quiet, but fun. Would come running through here wet from the pool. Water all over the floor.

ROGER:

Did she get in trouble a lot?

FLOYD:

No. She was a good kid. I think I'll get her vodka ready.

Floyd turns around and reaches for a bottle.

ROGER:

Are her kids like her?

Floyd straightens up and turns to Roger.

FLOYD:

I don't believe she has kids.

Floyd sees the stunned look on Roger's face and approaches the bar.

Maybe you just misunderstood her.

As Floyd finishes speaking, a man enters the light and plops forcefully down next to Roger and puts his hand on his shoulder. Roger looks surprised. Floyd smiles.

Good evening, Mr. Wilkins. Happy Birthday to your father.

WALLACE:

Thank you, Floyd. Party is about to start. Is that vodka for me?

FLOYD:

It certainly can be. I had prepared it for Greta.

WALLACE:

Perfect. I'll take it to her. She's joining us for dinner.

Roger turns toward Wallace.

ROGER:

Greta?

Wallace turns to Roger and extends his other hand as Floyd turns back to the bar and moves away into the shadows.

WALLACE:

I'm Wallace. Husband one. You're the cremator, right?

ROGER:

Not by profession.

(pause)

Greta is having dinner with you?

WALLACE:

Yes, and she sent me over to see if you want to join the party. She did say that you like to cremate things or something like that.

ROGER:

I don't like to cremate things in general. Just my dogs. And one cat.

WALLACE:

Do you think that hurts?

ROGER:

Do I think what hurts?

WALLACE:

Cremation.

ROGER:

They're already dead.

(pause)

Do you have kids?

Wallace appears puzzled at the question.

WALLACE:

I'm not sure what you mean.

ROGER:

Do you have younger descendants?

WALLACE:

Oh. My fiance has a little girl.

Wallace laughs.

I mean she isn't really a descendant.

ROGER:

So, none that you made?

Wallace shakes his head.

WALLACE:

None that I made. Why do you ask?

ROGER:

Just curious.

Wallace studies Roger.

WALLACE:

Do you have children?

ROGER:

No. I was hoping to always be immature on my own. My ex wanted them but didn't think there was enough joy in our house.

Wallace nods.

WALLACE:

For me, I just saw how hard it was for my friends to get to the club when they had children. Always a birthday party or some game they had to go to.

ROGER:

When are you getting married?

WALLACE:

Probably next year. Really not that excited about having people in my house.

ROGER:

You mean like your fiancee?

Wallace reflects for a moment.

WALLACE:

Are you thinking of joining the club?

ROGER:

Here? No. Don't want to spread myself too thin.

WALLACE:

So you belong to other clubs?

ROGER:

No.

(pause)

Just not a believer.

Wallace considers the information.

WALLACE:

Greta said you were here to look around.

Roger shrugs.

ROGER:

I was starting to wonder why I'm here.

WALLACE:

You sound upset.

(pause)

I never knew what Greta was thinking. Still don't.

ROGER:

Guess I don't know either.

Wallace grabs the glass of vodka and gets up.

WALLACE:

If you decide to join us for dinner, we are gathering down the hall in the St. Andrews room. My dad is a sweetheart of a guy.

ROGER:

Thank you, I should get home to walk Walter.

WALLACE:

It was nice meeting you.

Wallace walks out of the light, into the shadows.



Floyd returns and stands by Roger and nods in the direction of Wallace.

FLOYD:

He is a nice man.

ROGER:

He seemed fine.

FLOYD:

I meant his **father** is a nice man.

ROGER:

How would I get a ride from here to the library? Rather not walk in the rain.

FLOYD:

I heard Mr. Wilkins invite you to his father's party. Perhaps you should go.

Floyd studies Roger, who is expressionless.

I understand. This is a tough place to be if you don't belong.

ROGER:

I'm not trying to belong, Floyd.

FLOYD:

I understand sir. Would you like to tell Greta you're leaving?

ROGER:

Not really. I'll catch up with her later.

Floyd and Roger look at each other.

FLOYD:

Just go to the front lobby and someone will set you up with a car.

ROGER:

Thank you for your help tonight.

FLOYD:

You are welcome. I enjoyed our conversation.

Roger turns to walk away with the light on him and Floyd calls after him from the darkened area.

She means well. This is a tough time for her.

Roger turns back to Floyd.

Greta.

(pause)

She means well.

Roger nods. He heads out of the room to the vestibule SR. He pauses, and a handsome man, Umberto, with dark hair and a deep tan, approaches US. He stands a few feet away, waiting to be noticed. Roger turns towards him. Umberto speaks with a soft accent.

UMBERTO:

Are you here with Greta?

ROGER:

Sorry?

Umberto motions toward the main room.

UMBERTO:

Are you here tonight with Greta? I saw you come earlier.

ROGER:

I did arrive with her, however, I am no longer in her orbit. Who are you?

UMBERTO:

I am Umberto.

ROGER:

Polo player. Husband three.

Umberto smiles.

UMBERTO:

You are hearing of me. I am hoping only the good things.

ROGER:

I just know your name and number.

UMBERTO:

Are you serious with Greta? Do you wish to marry with her?

ROGER:

I wish to marry with no one. I just met Greta a few weeks ago.

UMBERTO:

You will see her again?

ROGER:

Do I need to decide right now?

UMBERTO:

If you have a minute, may I ask for a favor?

ROGER:

Walk with me. I need to get a ride.

UMBERTO:

Where are you going?

ROGER:

Just to the library. I left my car there.

UMBERTO:

I will drive you. I have a car tonight.

Roger stops walking and looks at Umberto.

ROGER:

Just for tonight?

UMBERTO:

It is not mine. I borrowed it from someone.

ROGER:

I assume my ride is in exchange for the favor?

UMBERTO:

(smiling)

The ride is because I am a nice guy.

ROGER:

Thank you for being nice.

UMBERTO:

I also wish for you to remind Greta I am a nice guy.

ROGER:

I'm not sure if my opinion is that important to her.

UMBERTO:

I also need for you to help me get a polo horse from her.

Roger looks at Umberto with amusement.

ROGER:

That's two favors. I might be able to do the first one.

UMBERTO:

I must have Manor Lord.

ROGER:

I'm not stealing a horse for you. If I'd known you for more than five minutes, perhaps.

UMBERTO:

But Manor Lord is my favorite. I was a horrible player in matches this year without him.

ROGER:

Why don't you just ask her for the horse?

UMBERTO:

What do you mean?

ROGER:

I mean just ask her for the horse. You said it's your horse.

Umberto throws up his hands.

UMBERTO:

Nothing is truly mine. That is the problem.

ROGER:

Got it.

Umberto glances at Roger.

UMBERTO:

There is one other little problem.

ROGER:

And that is?

UMBERTO:

Greta's cousin.

ROGER:

She owns the horse?

UMBERTO:

No. I made love to her when I was married with Greta.

(agitated)

But it was not my fault. I did not know she was Greta's cousin.

ROGER:

So Greta is holding the horse out of vengeance.

UMBERTO:

Yes. That is not good for anyone.

ROGER:

Particularly not you. Do you mind if we get going? I need to get back to Walter.

Umberto looks at Roger with a puzzled expression.

UMBERTO:

Who is this Walter?

ROGER:

My dog.

Umberto looks relieved.

UMBERTO:

Oooh. Yes. We will speak more in the car.

Roger grabs his umbrella and they walk to the door.

ROGER:

I actually have a few questions for **you**.

FADE TO BLACK.

**END OF SCENE 3**

**SCENE 4**

Interior of the original coffee shop. Greta is seated at a table. The door opens SR and Roger enters slowly, scans the room and sees Greta who raises her hand slightly. He walks over, pulls back the chair and sits.

GRETA:

Thank you for coming on short notice. I'm sorry we didn't get to spend more time together the other night.

ROGER:

At least we drove to the party together. Will you be leaving for another table shortly?

GRETA:

Why are you being so fresh? Wallace invited you to join us for dinner.

ROGER:

I rarely dine with the ex-husband of my date.

GRETA:

I hadn't declared it a date.

Greta stops and studies Roger.

Do you like me? I mean really like me?

ROGER:

How are your children?

GRETA:

I'm not sure what you mean.

ROGER:

Are they eating well? Are they healthy? School going ok?

GRETA:

Why do you ask?

ROGER:

I have it on reliable sources that they haven't been born yet.

Greta looks around Roger.

GRETA:

Did you bring the plant woman?

ROGER:

What plant woman?

GRETA:

The little one with the purple hair and busy hands.

Roger is silent and Greta stands.

We should probably order coffee and something caffeine free for you.



Greta walks over to the counter and orders. She touches the decorative tins on the counter and looks back at Roger who is facing away deep in thought. Greta slides a bright blue one over to the register and motions for it to be added. When the drinks are ready she returns to the table, hands Roger his drink and sits.

ROGER:

Thank you.

They sip their drinks and then Greta looks up.

GRETA:

(calmly)

Because I feel like an aimless human being when I say I've been married three times and don't have a child.

ROGER:

What?

GRETA:

I answered your next question. You wanted to ask why I told you I had children.

ROGER:

You could just say you don't have children.

Greta shrugs.

Why three?

GRETA:

Three?

ROGER:

Yes. You told me you had three kids.

Greta sits quietly and looks at the table.

GRETA:

I've had three miscarriages, Roger. Feels so much happier when I say I have three children.

ROGER:

I'm very sorry.

GRETA:

Thank you.

(pause)

They were all with Wallace.

ROGER:

Did you try again?

Greta shakes her head.

GRETA:

Phipps can't have kids and Umberto **is** a kid.

ROGER:

So, you did have three husbands?

Greta smiles.

GRETA:

That is confirmed.

(pause)

Did you try and have kids?

ROGER:

I don't think so.

GRETA:

Can you be more vague?

ROGER:

We didn't have a plan.

(pause)

I suppose we would have kept it if she got pregnant.

GRETA;

I'm not sure 'it' is the proper reference.

ROGER:

I guess I was always trying to get used to being married and she was married for a reason.

(pause)

She has a few little kids now.

Greta shrugs.

GRETA:

Maybe it worked out. Wallace really wanted an heir.

ROGER:

He's going to have one now.

GRETA:

That's an heiress. Step-heiress.

ROGER:

Did you guys think of adoption? You could **get** an heir.

GRETA:

The club frowns on adoption. I'm not sure Lila would have fully invested.

ROGER:

Invested?

GRETA:

Supported.

ROGER:

Why did you need her support? You could work.

GRETA:

I work on being nice to Lila. She controls my trust.

Roger considers the information.

ROGER:

I hadn't seen you having any restrictions to your life.

GRETA:

It's really just one big one. When my parents died, I was young and Lila replaced my father as head of the family trusts.

ROGER:

I didn't realize your parents were dead.

GRETA:

Plane crash coming into Boston from Paris. A week before my 6th birthday.

ROGER:

I'm sorry.

(pause)

I'm sure that was rough for you.

GRETA:

I persevered. Long time ago. So what's the deal with your little purple friend?

ROGER:

The deal?

GRETA:

What kind of friend is she? A special friend?

ROGER:

We worked together for a few years and stayed in touch.

GRETA:

Were you CIA? She's quite an undercover agent.

ROGER:

Jess just reappeared in my life a few months ago. She had been in rehab for quite awhile.

GRETA:

Good for her. They could start a rehab at the club.

ROGER:

She's much better. I guess they encourage them to be of service to others and she decided that I needed to date.

GRETA:

That does sound like service.

ROGER:

She also did a lot of therapy and thinks she's bisexual and really wants to have a baby.

GRETA:

I think she can do both. I actually fooled around with a girl at Bucknell.

Greta laughs and looks closely at Roger.

I can't believe I'm telling you that. I've saved it for my therapists.

ROGER:

You didn't tell your husbands? Didn't they ask?

GRETA:

No. Why?

ROGER:

I always asked my girlfriends. One of my first questions when we slept together.

Greta giggles.

GRETA:

You are very different, Roger. Not in a bad way.

ROGER:

I think that's a compliment.

GRETA:

It is. I don't usually say real things to anyone.

(pause)

I got you a present.

Greta reaches into her purse and pulls out the blue decorative tin and hands it to Roger who holds it and studies it.

ROGER:

Thank you.

GRETA:

I know you like to keep them handy.

ROGER:

Haha.

GRETA:

Why don't you bring Jess the next time we come here? She sounds kind of interesting, not like someone I would meet at the club.

Roger stops studying the tin and looks at Greta.

ROGER:

Ok.

(pause)

I guess.

GRETA:

I'm curious about her new life and the baby thing.

Roger looks pensive.

We don't have to, just thought it might be fun.

ROGER:

I'll see.

Greta stands and then Roger stands.

GRETA:

I have to run. Thank you again for coming. I love talking to you.

Greta gives Roger a hug and turns and walks quickly to the door while Roger stands expressionless.

,

FADE TO BLACK.

**END OF SCENE 4**

**SCENE 5**

A few weeks later. Large living room of an older home. Several worn sofas and chairs are somewhat arranged. Small lamps sit on end tables and provide light. The front door is SR and a staircase goes up centerstage rear. SL is a door into a kitchen that is visible further SL. The living room is unoccupied. The voices of Roger and Greta are heard from OSR.

GRETA:

(dismissively)

Of course I'm not going to ask personal questions.

She continues to speak as the sounds of them climbing steps is heard.

It's a getting to know each other talk.

ROGER:

Just keep in mind this is a recovery house. She's been through a lot.

GRETA:

The house doesn't look awful.

The footsteps cease and the sound of a hand clap is heard.

ROGER:

Damn. I don't think I changed Walter's water.



GRETA:

Speaking of which, did Umberto ask you about getting a horse from me?

ROGER:

He might have. Looks like the door is open.

Roger slowly pushes the door open and he and Greta enter from SR and survey the room.

GRETA:

What did you say?

ROGER:

I told her we would be here around 10:30. She feels a little weird that you want to meet her. I'll text her that we're here.

Roger takes out his phone and taps away.

GRETA:

About the horse. What did you say?

ROGER:

I told him I would check.

GRETA:

Really?

ROGER:

Not really. Can he have the horse?

GRETA:

No. Please don't negotiate my animals. Maybe you can give him Walter.

ROGER:

He said it was his favorite polo horse.

GRETA:

Did he mention he has a favorite cousin of mine?

ROGER:

He said he didn't know it was your cousin. So no on the horse?

As Roger speaks, Jess appears at the top of the stairs. Her orange tinted dark hair is tousled and she is wearing slippers with her t-shirt and sweatpants. She nods to Roger and Greta and slowly starts down the stairs.

ROGER:

Hey Jess.

JESS:

Hi. I took a nap.

GRETA:

Hi Jess. I'm Greta.

Jess smiles.

JESS:

Roger said you know me from the plants.

Greta smiles.

GRETA:

I do. I like your hair. How do you pick the colors?

JESS:

No plan, it was time for orange. I could use coffee. You guys want some?

ROGER:

Sure. Greta?

GRETA:

Something with caffeine. Thanks.

JESS:

We have that. Go ahead and sit on the couch in the corner.  
Can you help me, Roger?

Roger heads into the kitchen with Jess.

ROGER:

The place looks good. Better, actually.

JESS:

I'm getting used to it.

In the living room, Greta strolls  
around and glances at books on the  
shelves.

ROGER:

You still sharing a room?

JESS:

No. Thank god. Tracy left last week, but I do think she'll  
be back some day.

ROGER:

That stinks.

JESS:

I can do a few more months here and then I want out. Will  
you be a reference when I start my job search?

ROGER:

Sure.

JESS:

I'm assuming you can't get my job back at AFG, right?

ROGER:

Not this time, maybe down the road.

Jess stretches and grabs three cups from the cupboard.

JESS:

Probably a good idea. Bad memories.

(pause)

The best thing about the place was working with you.

Jess puts the cups on the counter and pours coffee. Roger smiles and picks up two of the cups.

ROGER:

Thanks. You'll get going again.

Roger and Jess exit the kitchen and head over to the sofa where Greta is sitting. Roger hands her a cup of coffee. Jess sits next to Greta and Roger sits on the arm of an adjacent chair.

GRETA:

Thank you. Jess, I really love this room. Very grand.

JESS:

I don't really think too much about the house. They keep us active.

GRETA:

(excitedly)

The moldings are exquisite.

Jess nods.

JESS:

When I first arrived we had group therapy in here and this woman was sharing for a long time and she was very sad and crying and the person next to me nudged me and whispered that the moldings were awesome.

(pause)

And they are.

GRETA:

The house just feels warm.

JESS:

I pictured myself living in a house like this, just not with ten recovering addicts.

GRETA:

What do you do here?

JESS:

Meetings, counseling, house jobs...plus I also have to run Roger's dating site.

Jess catches herself.

I mean, I used to run his site.

Greta smiles.

GRETA:

We're just having conversations.

Jess glances at Roger who shrugs slightly and stands to stretch.

JESS:

So what do you do, Greta?

GRETA:

What do I do?

JESS:

Exactly. What do you do?

GRETA:

This. I guess.

Roger looks towards the bookshelves next to the couch and wanders over, picking up a small, ornate box and examining it.

JESS:

Real estate?

GRETA:

I socialize.

JESS:

I think your profile said self-employed, so I guess that does mean socialize. I know socializing is a painful job for me.

GRETA:

Roger said you are thinking of becoming bisexual.

Jess looks at Greta as Roger spits coffee and quickly covers his mouth.

JESS:

He said what?

Roger stares at the moldings as Jess glares at him.

GRETA:

Maybe I misunderstood...

JESS:

(snidely)

Yea. It's on my project list. I have a spreadsheet and I'm looking at my best options.

ROGER:

I'm sorry Jess. I shouldn't have said anything,

JESS:

No problem. Does Greta know about your eczema and IBS?

Roger looks embarrassed as Greta covers her laugh.

GRETA:

Roger did say you are feisty. Full disclosure, I fooled around with a girl at Bucknell after a party.

JESS:

Look at you. I think that's called being drunk and horny.

They sit and sip coffee while Roger examines another small box on the shelves.

GRETA:

What are your plans after you leave here?

JESS:

That's a more appropriate starter question.

GRETA:

Do you know where you'll live?

JESS:

Not where I used to live. I'm a tiny bit in arrears at the old place.

Roger turns to them.

ROGER:

We're going to start a job search first.

GRETA:

Roger said you are an artist.

JESS:

He's being kind. I am professionally a graphic artist. I sculpt as a side gig.

ROGER:

She's amazing. Exhibited in the city.

JESS:

I got it from my parents and my aunt. My parents were artists and traveled the country on the art show circuit. I lived with my aunt and she was an accomplished sculptor.

GRETA:

Oh wow! I lived with my aunt, too. She was accomplished at socializing, so I guess that's where I got it.

JESS:

Your three marriages should also count as socializing.

Greta laughed.

GRETA:

You guys really like to wear that out.

JESS:

Roger also told me the real story about the miscarriages. I'm sorry.

Roger fumbles the box.

ROGER:

(flatly)

Sorry, Greta.

GRETA:

You're right. I shouldn't have claimed children in my profile. It just seemed more appealing.

Jess touches Greta lightly on the shoulder.



JESS:

I meant that I'm sorry about what happened.

Greta looks at Jess with surprise.

GRETA:

Thank you. That's very kind.

(quietly)

I'm pretty sure I like children.

JESS:

I never played well with others, only child. Did you have brothers and sisters?

GRETA:

No. My parents died in a plane crash when I was young and my Aunt Lila didn't have kids. Her husband died in the crash with my parents.

Jess studies Greta.

JESS:

Roger said you lost your parents. I'm sorry.

Roger looks at Jess.

ROGER:

I told Greta that you were thinking of having a baby.

Jess shakes her head.

JESS:

What else did you tell her that might be personal?

Roger looks chagrined as Greta perks up.

GRETA:

I think that is really great.

JESS:

Thanks. It's on my list after housing, job and sexuality.

GRETA:

Do you know how you would do it?

JESS:

I suppose just egg and sperm unless Roger heard my plans differently. I'm still just thinking about it.

GRETA:

Aunt Lila says I can make babies, I just can't bake babies.

JESS:

That seems a little mean.

GRETA:

She's not mean, just direct. She and I talked about it a lot when I miscarried.

JESS:

I was thinking that I would want to give birth. It's funny, the thing I feel the most is that I want to be pregnant.

Roger finishes the bookshelves and pulls out his phone.

ROGER:

I'm going to call and see if the neighbor will change Walter's water.

Roger walks to the door and Greta waits until he is outside then turns to Jess.

GRETA:

I still want to have a baby.

Jess' eyes grow wide.

JESS:

Did you tell Roger? My experience is that guys don't like to hear that.

Greta smiles.

GRETA:

No. I don't mean like an organized baby. I can't deliver a baby and I don't want to get married. Again.

JESS:

So you'll adopt.

GRETA:

No. I want the baby to be me. And my parents. And my aunt.

Jess looks puzzled.

JESS:

Ok.

GRETA:

(intensely)

Right now, everything ends with me. I know that sounds odd.

JESS:

Mixed with some ego.

GRETA:

I know, but lineage is very important to my family.

JESS:

Probably after sexuality on my list.

Greta glances at Jess.

GRETA:

And you want to carry a baby.

Jess considers the statement.

I could arrange financing.

JESS:

Huh?

GRETA:

(excitedly)

We could all help with the baby. Take turns.

JESS:

You mean like a baby time share?

Greta looks hurt.

GRETA:

Never mind. It **is** a bad idea.

JESS:

I didn't say no.

Greta looks hopefully at Jess.

Are you really asking me to carry //

GRETA:

(anxiously)

// we're just having conversations.

Lights fade to black.

**END OF SCENE FIVE**

**SCENE 6**

One month later. Private room at the country club. The room is elegant with dark paneling and subdued lighting. Large windows line the wall US and formal portraits of white men are hung on the remaining walls. Chairs and couches are arranged throughout the room and a bar is set SL. A large door is SR. In the middle is a cluster of chairs and couches surrounding a table. On the table is a teapot and several teacups. Greta is sitting stretched out on a couch. Her demeanor is quiet and she appears thin and drawn. Lila is seated adjacent to her on a chair that almost touches the couch. She is gently stroking Greta's hair.

GRETA:

They didn't think it would happen like this.

LILA:

(swallows)

I'm sorry.

GRETA:

I feel like everything is going so fast.

LILA:

Do your guests know?

GRETA:

Not yet. I keep hoping I won't have to tell them.

LILA:

Do you really want to do this? It might be a lot right now.

Greta turns and looks up at Lila.

GRETA:

I do. It helps me focus on the positive. Jess and Roger want to do it.

Lila pauses stroking Greta's hair.

LILA:

Are you sure about them?

GRETA:

What do you mean?

Lila shrugs and looks past Greta.

LILA:

Just that one is a little odd and the other is a struggler.

GRETA:

Struggler?

LILA:

She struggles.

GRETA:

Jess had a stumble.

Lila looks at Greta with an eyebrow raised.

LILA:

Into rehab.

GRETA:

So did Whitney Percival, Aunt Lila. You still like her.

LILA:

Yes, but Whitney was able to start drinking again.

Greta rolls her eyes.

GRETA:

Not sure about able. They found her passed out in a sand trap last week.

LILA:

(dismissively)

Whatever. I won't judge Jessica until I meet her, however, I do believe Roger is odd.

GRETA:

Roger is a kind and generous person.

LILA:

How well do you really know him?

GRETA:

Quite well. It's hard to believe I've only known him for a few months. He talks to me and he actually listens to me.

LILA:

Really?

GRETA:

Yes. I don't think I've had a closer friend.

Lila looks hurt and Greta touches her hand.

Of course, you are the exception.

LILA:

One would hope.

Greta sits up.

GRETA:

I even know where Roger will be buried.

LILA:

(defensively)

You know where I'll be buried.

GRETA:

It's not a contest, Aunt Lila.

Greta stands slowly and brushes herself off.

I want to freshen up a little before they come.

Greta grabs her pocket book from the side table and begins to walk slowly SL.

LILA:

I asked Umberto to join us.

Greta stops and quickly turns around.

GRETA:

(agitated)

Umberto? This has nothing to do with Umberto.

Lila looks out the windows.

LILA:

It's just that he keeps bothering me about Manor Lord and I thought it might be a nice time to discuss.



GRETA:

This meeting has **nothing** to do with Umberto or the horse.

Lila stands quietly and Greta studies her with growing awareness. She stiffens and points at Lila.

There is no way that Umberto is going to be the father.

LILA:

(firmly)

He is very handsome and has a solid pedigree.

GRETA:

No!

Greta turns and walks SL.

I'm not swapping a horse for a baby.

As Greta disappears through a door SL, Lila runs her hand over the back of the couch and then turns towards the portraits and approaches one in the middle. She brushes the bottom of the frame and then stands quietly studying the picture. After a few moments, she holds her fingers to her mouth and then touches the picture. She smiles and turns back to the seating area. There is a soft knock on the large door SR. Lila turns and walks towards the door. She opens the door and Roger and Jess are standing in the hall. There is awkward silence until Roger extends his hand, but Lila seems fixated on Jess.

ROGER:

I'm Roger. We met at the party.

Lila looks at Jess as she speaks to Roger.

LILA:

That was hardly a party.

(pause)

You must be Jessica.

Jess thrusts her hand forward.

JESS:

Yes. You can call me Jess.

Lila offers a small smile and ignores Jess' hand.

LILA:

Perhaps some day. I prefer Jessica for now. Come in. Greta is freshening up.

Lila turns and leads them over to the sitting area and points to a couch. As they walk, Jess looks in awe at the surroundings.

LILA:

Why don't you two sit over there. Umberto can sit in the chair.

Roger looks confused.

ROGER:

You mean Umberto from the party?

LILA:

(impatient)

It wasn't a party, but yes. That Umberto.

ROGER:

Why is he coming? Is he still after Lord Manor?

Lila rolls her eyes.

LILA:

Manor Lord. And yes.

Roger picks up a small decorative container on the side table as Jess engages with Lila.

JESS:

Who's Umberto?

LILA:

Greta's ex-husband number three.

JESS:

Oh. I haven't heard much about him.

LILA:

He was more of a rental.

JESS:

I heard about ex-one and ex-two.

(pause)

By the way, this place is beautiful. Great moldings.

Lila looks at the ceiling.

LILA:

Thank you. I should spend more time considering the moldings.

JESS:

How long have you been a member here?

Lila studies Jess.

LILA:

A long time, dear.

JESS:

Can anyone join?

Lila smiles.

LILA:

Certainly. Anyone who is qualified.

As she speaks Greta enters from SL and walks slowly over to the group. Roger and Jess stand and hug her and she sits on the couch opposite them. Roger puts the container down.

ROGER:

Umberto's coming to the meeting.

GRETA:

I just heard.

ROGER:

Is he getting the horse?

Greta looks at Lila.

GRETA:

Not that I'm aware of.

(pause)

He's not getting the egg, either.

ROGER:

What does that mean?

GRETA:

It means Aunt Lila thinks he should be the fertilizer.

Roger looks puzzled.

ROGER:

Oh. I thought--

LILA:

--I just think it makes sense given his background.

ROGER:

Because he plays polo?

Lila sighs.

LILA:

Among other things. What do you do for a living, Roger?  
Greta said she wasn't sure exactly.

Roger fidgets.

ROGER:

I'm a consultant.

LILA:

I see. Do you consult on anything in particular?

ROGER:

Marketing stuff.

LILA:

I see.

Lila turns to Jess.

And how are you, dear?

JESS:

I'm a little tired. Was up too late.

LILA:

It was a broader question. In the bigger picture, how are  
you doing?

Greta leans forward and glares at Lila.

GRETA:

That's enough, Aunt Lila.

As she speaks, the door SR bursts open and Umberto walks quickly over to the seating area, twirling his polo mallet. As he approaches, he sees Jess and stands in front of her, smiling.

UMBERTO:

This must be the mother, yes?

He extends his hand.

LILA:

Oh, wonderful of you to come, Umberto. Yes, this is Jessica.

Jess appears mesmerized by Umberto.

JESS:

(slowly)

You can call me Jess.

As she extends her hand, Umberto takes it and kisses it dramatically. Jess giggles and Greta stands abruptly.

GRETA:

Aunt Lila! May I speak to you in the hall?

Lila pretends to be surprised, but nods, stands and walks toward the door SR with Greta. Umberto calls after them.

UMBERTO:

I must be on the field in one hour and my bad horse is not warmed up.

He turns to Roger.

I am still not having Manor Lord.

ROGER:

I'm sorry. I asked Greta about it.

UMBERTO:

Not to worry. It is appearing that we have a solution.

Umberto smiles at Jess.

You want to have a baby.

ROGER:

It's a little more complicated than that.

Jess looks back and forth with an amused expression.

UMBERTO:

I am only to know that I will make a baby.

Roger tenses.

ROGER:

Actually, I think I am going to be the donor.

UMBERTO:

(surprised)

You?

ROGER:

Yes. Me.

UMBERTO:

I am not thinking so. Aunt Lila asked if I would do the baby and then get Manor Lord.

He smiles at Jess.

You are very pretty.

Jess smiles and squirms as Roger stands and faces Umberto.

ROGER:

It's not like that. You don't understand.

UMBERTO:

I am sorry Greta has not chosen you, but I am sure **you** are understanding.

JESS:

I'm sure Greta has plenty of eggs for everyone.

Roger ignores her and glares at Umberto.

ROGER:

You're not getting the horse.

Umberto looks stunned.

UMBERTO:

Then Greta will not be getting little Umbertos.

ROGER:

(firmly)

She doesn't want little Umbertos.

Umberto considers the information and turns to Jess and bows slightly.

UMBERTO:

I must return to the polo field, but perhaps we will meet again.

Jess nods as Umberto turns and exits quickly SL. Roger returns to the couch and they sit quietly. After a few moments, Greta and Lila return from SR. Greta appears tired. Lila pauses and looks around the room.

LILA:

Where's Umberto?



ROGER:

He had to get back to the polo field.

Lila nods.

LILA:

I understand it is an important chukker today.

Jess giggles.

JESS:

Did you say **chukker**?

GRETA:

It's a fancy name for polo match.

Greta looks at Lila and nods slightly.  
Lila turns to Jess and Roger.

LILA:

(softly)

I would like to apologize for the interruption. It was unkind of me to involve Umberto.

(pause)

I'm sure you understand that Greta means everything to me and I have always protected her. This is very hard. And sad.

Jess stands and takes her hand.

JESS:

Why is this sad? We're just talking about having a baby. People do this all the time.

Lila touches Jess' face. Greta stands quietly and looks away toward the window. Jess looks concerned and turns towards Greta. She steps toward her and gently touches her shoulder from behind.

Lights fade to black.

END OF SCENE 6

## SCENE 7

A few weeks later. Jess' new apartment. A handful of partially opened boxes are on the floor. The room is modest, with a green sectional couch facing SR towards a television sitting on a cabinet that appears too small. Each wall has one small picture. There is a low round table in front of the couch with a stack of vinyl placemats. There are two windows on the wall US and the afternoon light is coming in. There is a doorway SL that leads to a small kitchen with a table and two chairs. As the lights come up, Jess is organizing the placemats on the table. There is a knock on the door that is SR rear.

Jess walks over to open it and Greta is standing there. She is holding a large bag and is dressed in shorts and a sweatshirt that is loose fitting. She appears tired and thin.

JESS:

Welcome to the first apartment of the rest of my life.

Greta smiles, peers in and enters.

GRETA:

Oh my. This is really cozy. I like it.

JESS:

Cozy is a good word. Better than saying small as hell. I would take you on a tour, but this is pretty much it.

GRETA:

Well, I hope there is a kitchen if we are going to cook dinner.

Jess turns and motions towards the kitchen door.

JESS:

There is. Follow me.

They enter the kitchen. Unpacking is in progress and glasses, plates and pots and pans fill the counter space.

Just put the bag on the table.

GRETA:

Do you want me to help you unpack?

JESS:

No. I'm pretty much done.

Greta laughs as she pushes things around on the cluttered table and makes room for her bag.

GRETA:

Yep. You are pretty much done. Are the cabinets clean to put stuff in?

JESS:

Seriously, I don't want you doing anything.

GRETA:

I just thought it might be easier to cook if we had counters.

JESS:

It actually might be easier. If you don't mind grabbing the cleaner and wiping out the lower cabinets, I can put pots down there.

GRETA:

I don't mind at all.

Greta grabs the cleaner and a rag and slowly kneels down on the floor. Jess looks at her and laughs.

JESS:

What if someone at the club hears that you did this? Will you be kicked out?

GRETA:

I might have to sit by myself. But that might not be a bad thing.

JESS:

Do you really like that club?

GRETA:

What do you mean?

JESS:

I mean, do you enjoy it? It felt like a weird place.

GRETA:

It's my home. My family has always been there. I met my ex-husbands there.

JESS:

But you can't wear sweatpants or clean cupboards.

GRETA:

And you can only wear white on the tennis courts.

They giggle and Greta pulls back from the cupboard and looks at Jess.

That's really weird, isn't it?

Jess shrugs.

JESS:

Maybe they just do it to match the people.

GRETA:

(defensively)

It's not all white.

Jess looks down at Greta with a raised eyebrow.

JESS:

Whatever.

GRETA:

Hey, I brought you a little gift.

Greta rises and goes to the table, reaches into her bag and pulls out a wrapped gift. She walks over to Jess and holds it out. Jess takes it and unwraps the gift, revealing a small picture in an antique frame.

JESS:

(laughing)

Oh. Wow. This is really cool. Little Bo Peep. Perfect for a thirty-five year old single woman.

Greta looks disappointed.

GRETA:

I know we're not doing the baby right now, but I still wanted to give it to you.

Jess notices Greta's reaction.

JESS:

I'm sorry. It is really neat. Thank you.

Jess hugs Greta.

GRETA:

It was mine as a little girl. It was my mother's before me.

JESS:

Why are you giving it to me?

GRETA:

You may have a baby someday.

JESS:

You mean **we** may have a baby someday.

GRETA:

No.

(pause)

I do mean **you**.

Jess studies Greta.

JESS:

Did you get bad news at your appointment?

Greta is silent and returns to the floor. She sprays into a cupboard and begins wiping. Jess watches her.

GRETA:

Did you meet any neighbors yet?

JESS:

Just an older woman down the hall. She asked me if I had a boyfriend, because she knows some nice single men.

GRETA:

That's very sweet.

JESS:

I didn't tell her that I was an unemployed recovering addict.

(pause)

It was nice to have someone see potential in me.

GRETA:

It's not just potential. You're pretty good now. Are you having any luck on the other stuff?

JESS:

Other stuff?

GRETA:

You know what I mean. The other stuff. With women.

JESS:

Oh. The bisexual stuff.

GRETA:

You had it as a priority.

JESS:

I'm not sure it's still on the list. They discourage trying new things in your first year of recovery.

GRETA:

But a baby was ok?

(pause)

It's pretty crazy that we were going to have a baby. I don't know what I was thinking.

JESS:

Why did you want to have a baby?

Greta stops scrubbing and sits up.

GRETA:

I think when I found out I was sick, I kind of freaked out. I realized if I died, I was invisible. No legacy.

JESS:

What legacy did you want?

GRETA:

I don't know, just something for people to remember me if I died.

JESS:

I saw your name on a trophy at the club.

GRETA:

That was for a junior tennis doubles championship. Not sure that is the most important memory I want to leave.

JESS:

You have friends and family. They have memories.



GRETA:

I think every description of me includes 'married three times.' I thought a baby could get in front of that.

JESS:

Do you like children?

GRETA:

I think so.

She laughs.

I did create three children for my dating profile. Why did you want to have a baby?

JESS:

I made a vision list in rehab and 'have a baby' was on it.

GRETA:

Vision list?

JESS:

It's a list of dream things that help you focus on believing life can get better. A baby seemed like a positive thing.

GRETA:

Did you have get married on the list? Were you going to adopt?

Jess shrugs.

JESS:

I don't detail my dreams. When I envision a real path, it means there are things I can actually do to achieve them. It's more comfortable if I leave them vague.

Greta pauses and turns to Jess.

GRETA:

Kind of keeps you away from your dreams.

JESS:

Or protects me from them. What else is in the bag?

Jess goes over to the table and looks in the bag. She retrieves a bag of coffee and studies it.

This coffee is whole bean.

GRETA:

I couldn't find the ground coffee.

Jess shakes her head.

JESS:

I can't use whole bean coffee in my coffee maker.

Greta gets up, walks to the table and reaches into the bag. She pulls out a box.

GRETA:

Now you can. I bought you a coffee grinder.

JESS:

Why didn't you just try another store for ground coffee?

GRETA:

I don't know. Seemed easier to get a grinder.

Jess shakes her head and starts laughing and gives Greta a hug. She pulls back and looks closely at Greta.

JESS:

You never answered my question about your appointment.

Greta looks past Jess.

GRETA:

There are always new things to try. My doctor said we still have lots of options.

JESS:

I'm sure you do.

They stand awkwardly.

Greta?

GRETA:

Yes?

Jess looks at Greta.

JESS:

I really like you.

Greta smiles.

GRETA:

Thanks. I really like you, too.

Lights fade to black.

**END OF SCENE 7**

**SCENE 8**

Inside of an elegant horse stable. Greta is sitting on a bale of hay. The large door SR is open and the lighting is natural sun. She is holding a horse's bridle and seems to be adjusting it. There is a knock from SR as Roger enters and looks around, studying the barn. He wipes his forehead. Greta looks tired and remains seated.

ROGER:

Very impressive.

GRETA:

Thank you.

ROGER:

All of this is yours?

GRETA:

It's my family estate.

ROGER:

But isn't that just Lila and you?

GRETA:

There are other relatives that share a little.

Roger walks over to Greta and touches her shoulder.

ROGER:

How are you doing?

GRETA:

I'm ok.

ROGER:

Jess said you have more treatment options.

GRETA:

Sure.

Roger fidgets and looks around.

ROGER:

Where's the big guy?

Greta points over to a stall SL.

GRETA:

The one with the ML logo.

Roger walks a few steps and turns back to Greta.

ROGER:

Can I look in?

GRETA:

(smiling)

You'll have to ask him.

Roger turns around and cautiously approaches the stall SL. He leans and looks in from several feet away.

ROGER:

He's just standing there.

GRETA:

You thought he'd be practicing polo?

ROGER:

He's huge. He must knock the other horses around on the field.

Greta puts the bridle down and brushes her forearm across the side of her face.

GRETA:

He has generations of polo instincts. His entire breeding line has been in our family for over one hundred years.

ROGER:

Oh. You breed horses?

GRETA:

Not here. There are breeding farms where they couple.

ROGER:

They meet other horses online and then go to the farm?

Greta laughs and then coughs, holding still until it passes.

Are you ok?

Greta nods, but doesn't speak. Roger waits for her to respond.

GRETA:

Aunt Lila used to tease me that I should try a breeding farm.

ROGER:

That is kind of mean.

Greta shakes her head.

GRETA:

It was before we understood that I wouldn't be able to carry a baby. It was a little strange sometimes to see the mares go away and then come back with their colts or fillies. It looked so easy.

Roger stands quietly.

ROGER:

Are his parents here?

GRETA:

You mean his sire and dam?

ROGER:

I prefer parents.

Greta nods towards the stalls.

GRETA:

His mother is Lady of the Manor and she is three stalls down.

ROGER:

What about his dad?

GRETA:

His father is Lord Downsby and he is stabled in another part of the estate.

ROGER:

I think it's wonderful that he still spends time with his parents. They must be very proud of him.

GRETA:

I'm not sure it's truly quality time.

ROGER:

I've always thought it was sad that none of my pets met their parents.

Greta looks at Roger.

GRETA:

I think it's highly likely they met their mother.

ROGER:

Do you think Manor Lord misses playing polo?

GRETA:

He still plays in practice matches, he just doesn't play with Umberto.

(pause)

But it's time he got back in the real game.

Greta catches her breath.

ROGER:

What do you mean?

GRETA:

I'm granting Umberto permission to always have access to Manor Lord for matches.

Roger looks surprised.



ROGER:

He'll be thrilled.

GRETA:

It's best for everyone, including Manor Lord.

Roger walks a few steps closer to Greta.

ROGER:

And you feel better about it?

GRETA:

I do. It's weird that the biggest thing I have to decide is what to do with Manor Lord.

ROGER:

Do you really need to decide everything right now?

GRETA:

It's actually kind of a relief.

ROGER:

You should do whatever is best for you.

GRETA:

I think I've made another decision that I'll need your help with.

ROGER:

I'll help in any way I can.

(pause)

May I ask you a question?

GRETA:

You can ask and then I'll decide whether I'll answer.

ROGER:

Why did you marry Umberto?

Greta takes a slow deep breath.

GRETA:

I was bored and thought I would try again.

ROGER:

I guess those are reasons.

GRETA:

I wasn't looking for mister right, as always I was just looking for something.

ROGER:

He is definitely something.

Greta smiles slightly.

GRETA:

Your marriage wasn't exactly a love story.

ROGER:

I won't challenge that. But I stopped at one.

Greta sits quietly.

GRETA:

Roger?

ROGER:

Roger.

GRETA:

I want to tell you something.

ROGER:

Sure.

GRETA:

Please come over here and sit.

Roger walks over and sits next to Greta on the hay bale. He touches the hay.

ROGER:

This is actually quite nice to sit on. What do you want to tell me?

GRETA:

I'm sorry about the whole baby thing.

ROGER:

Don't apologize. It was nice to see you and Jess excited.

(pause)

I was just the sire.

GRETA:

I never would have suggested it if I had known.

ROGER:

I understand.

Greta slowly shakes her head.

GRETA:

It was supposedly contained and then they found it had spread quickly.

Greta leans on Roger's shoulder and they sit quietly.

GRETA:

You know who might be good for you?

ROGER:

I believe at one point I thought you might be good for me, but with this latest information it appears you were just bored.

GRETA:

That's not true. You seemed interesting and quirky...

ROGER:

...in a good way.

GRETA:

Jess.

ROGER:

What about Jess?

GRETA:

She might be good for you.

ROGER:

Jess? I don't think so. She is just getting her life back together.

GRETA:

I don't mean today, I just mean you should keep your feelings open. You guys have unique chemistry.

Roger shakes his head.

ROGER:

She worked for me. Actually, that would be another complication since we had a reporting relationship.

Greta shakes her head and rolls her eyes.

GRETA:

Right, you should definitely run it by HR.

ROGER:

So, you and I aren't getting married?

Greta puts her arm around Roger.

GRETA:

Would you help me up? I'm feeling tired.

Roger moves to her side and holds her arm, with his other hand behind her back. Greta pushes herself up.

Thank you.

Roger continues to have his arm around her as they walk slowly towards the open door SR. Greta looks up at him.

I hope you'll think about the Jess thing.

Lights fade to black.

**END OF SCENE 8**

## SCENE 9

The original church courtyard. The morning sun creates shadows. There is an arched entryway SR and a black granite wall with squared facings is US. A handyman in a winter jacket and gloves is working on one of the square facings. After a few moments, he removes the plate to reveal a metal housing with a key slot. He gently carries the plate off SR as the stage goes dark.

After a few minutes the lights come up. Dead leaves are rustling in a light breeze and the afternoon sky is cloudy with snow flurries. The single box remains uncovered. Roger comes slowly through the door SR with Jess. They are wearing coats and gloves. Roger is carrying a large cardboard box. They stop and turn towards the wall.

JESS:

I really wish we had a nicer day to do this.

Roger steps closer to the wall.

ROGER:

Looks like they have the slot opened.

JESS:

Did you ask the minister to come?

ROGER:

I just let her know we would be around in the afternoon. She has a busy schedule today.

Jess leans back to stretch and winces, touching her stomach. Roger puts down his box on a bench and reaches over to her.

You should really sit.

JESS:

Might be better if I stand. I'm never sure what will be more comfortable.

ROGER:

Well, hopefully Aunt Lila will be here soon.

Jess pulls her coat closed.

JESS:

I don't think this cold is going to be good for her.

ROGER:

It was important to her that she came today.

JESS:

I guess I should sit.

Jess studies a bench. Roger removes his coat and brushes it clean. He lays his coat down.

ROGER:

Here. I'm sure the bench is freezing.

JESS:

But you're going to freeze.

Roger shrugs as Jess sits.

ROGER:

I'll be moving around.

He reaches into his pants and removes a single key on a chain. He turns and approaches the open square, placing the key in the lock. He opens the door, peering inside as Jess watches.

JESS:

The tomb is empty, I hope.

ROGER:

Very empty.

JESS:

I guess Jesus boogied off.

ROGER:

Funny.

JESS:

Should we wait for Lila to come?

ROGER:

I can get started. She's not coming for this.

Roger returns to the cardboard box and pulls it open, staring in at the contents.

JESS:

Do you want to see if the minister is around?

(pause)

For a blessing.

Roger is silent as he reaches into the box and moves things around. Eventually he pulls out a small pink tin with a flowery design.

ROGER:

It's ok. I took each one of them to the annual blessing of the animals.

As he speaks, there is the sound of a door creaking open. Irregular steps and slow scraping on the floor can be heard coming closer until Lila appears at the arch, holding onto a walker. There is a man in a suit at her side.



Roger approaches with his right hand extended and the tin in his left. Jess stands. Lila smiles and shuffles forward. The man in the suit stands by the arch.

LILA:

Hello, Roger.

Lila extends her hand and looks towards Jess.

You look lovely Jess.

JESS:

Thank you. It is nice to see you.

Lila studies the surroundings and slowly comes back to the wall.

LILA:

Why is that one open?

ROGER:

My dog Walter died this week.

Lila looks at Roger.

LILA:

I'm not following.

ROGER;

I'm placing him in the wall, along with my other pets.

LILA:

I see. Is that proper?

ROGER:

I would have preferred to have the minister here, but she is busy.

Lila nods slightly.

LILA:

You remain interesting Roger.

She points to the tin.

And Walker liked pink?

ROGER:

Walter. No, this is Tallulah. She died twenty years ago.

Lila shakes her head and faces towards Jess.

LILA:

How are you feeling dear?

JESS:

Ok, I guess. I'll get there.

LILA:

How much longer?

JESS:

Four months. Hopefully less.

LILA:

I obviously don't have experience myself, but I am confident you will be a great mother.

Roger places the Tallulah tin in the open facing and returns to the box.

JESS:

Thank you.

Lila shifts back to Roger.

LILA:

Roger, will you direct me again to Greta?

Roger looks up with a bright blue tin in his hand and turns and walks to a plaque several feet to the left of his.

ROGER:

Here.

Lila slowly shuffles over and pauses in front of the wall.

LILA:

Greta Cabot Von Waggoner. Such a pretty name for a pretty girl.

Lila appears to tremble slightly.

Roger?

ROGER:

Yes?

LILA:

Thank you for doing this for Greta. After she met you here that afternoon, she remarked about how peaceful she felt at this place. It is beautiful.

ROGER:

She was a beautiful person.

Lila nods.

LILA:

I had just assumed that she would be buried with our family at St. Marks. With her parents. The reality for her though was that she had only known them for a few years a long time ago.

(pause)

I had even hoped perhaps that she would want to be buried with me. Most of the club is also buried at St. Marks. In the last weeks we talked, though, I truly understood that she had always felt alone and it didn't bother her to be by herself.

Jess stands and walks over to Lila and gives her a hug.

JESS:

She won't be alone here.

Lila pats her arm and smiles. She takes a final look and touches Greta's name. She turns toward the arch, takes a few steps and pauses near Roger.

LILA:

Roger?

ROGER:

Yes, Lila.

LILA:

May I trouble you?

Roger walks over to her and Lila motions to the blue tin in his hand.

Do you have more?

ROGER:

More?

LILA:

Yes. More of the tins.

ROGER:

I have four more. Three dogs and one cat.

Lila appears to be thinking.

LILA:

Greta preferred dogs.

(pause)

Would you do that?

Roger nods.

Thank you.

Lila motions to the man by the arch and he reaches into his coat and approaches with a small envelope that he gives to Lila. She turns and faces Roger and Jess and hands Jess the envelope.

I wish you both the greatest of happiness with your baby.

JESS:

Wow. Thank you so much.

ROGER:

Yes. Thank you.

Lila turns back to the man and he hands her a larger envelope. She turns and gives it to Roger.

LILA:

Greta and I talked a great deal toward the end and we both wanted you to have something else.

Roger opens the envelope and studies a paper. He looks at Lila with surprise.

ROGER:

Are you sure?

Shakes his head as he reads.

This is the estate.

Lila smiles at him.

LILA:

We are quite sure. After I'm gone of course.

(pause)

Take a look. You may want to have your estate person review them. My people will be in touch.

Roger smiles at her.

ROGER:

Ok. I'm not sure how to thank you.

LILA:

Perhaps send me a notice and some pictures when the baby is born.

Jess touches Lila's arm.

JESS:

Absolutely. Where should we send them?

Lila touches her face.

LILA:

Just send them to the club.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

**THE END**



