

LINCOLN.

There we are at that house. Remember when we moved in?

BOOTH.

No.

LINCOLN.

You were 2 or 3.

BOOTH.

I was 4.

LINCOLN.

I was 9. We all thought it was the best fucking house in the world.

BOOTH.

Cement backyard and a frontyard full of trash, yeah, dont be going down memory lane man, yll jinx thuh vibe I got going in here. Gracell be walking in here and wrinkling up her nose cause you done jinxed up thuh joint with yr raggedy recollections.

LINCOLN.

We had some great times in that house, bro. Selling lemonade on thuh corner, thuh treehouse out back, summers spent lying in thuh grass and looking at thuh stars.

BOOTH.

We never did none of that shit.

LINCOLN.

But we had us some good times. That row of nails I got you to line up behind Dads car so when he backed out the driveway to work —

BOOTH.

He came back that night, only time I ever seen his face go red, 4 flat tires and yelling bout how thuh white man done sabotaged him again.

LINCOLN.

And neither of us flinched. Neither of us let on that itd been us.

BOOTH.

It was at dinner, right? What were we eating?

LINCOLN.

Food.

BOOTH.

We was eating pork chops, mashed potatoes and peas. I remember cause I had to look at them peas real hard to keep from letting on. And I would glance over at you, not really glancing not actually turning my head, but I was looking at you out thuh corner of my eye. I was sure he was gonna find us out and then he woulda whipped us good. But I kept glancing at you and you was cool, man. Like nothing was going on. You was coooooool.

(Rest)

What time is it?

LINCOLN.

After 3.

(Rest)

You should call her. Something mighta happened.

BOOTH.

No man, Im cool. She'll be here in a minute. Patience is a virtue. She'll be here.

LINCOLN.

You look sad.

BOOTH.

Nope. Im just, you know, Im just —

LINCOLN.

Cool.

BOOTH.
Yeah. Cool.

(Booth comes over, takes the bottle of whiskey and pours himself a big glassful. He returns to the window looking out and drinking.)

BOOTH.
They give you a severance package, at thuh job?

LINCOLN.
A weeks pay.

BOOTH.
Great.

LINCOLN.
I blew it. Spent it all.

BOOTH.
On what?

LINCOLN.
— Just spent it.

(Rest)

It felt good, spending it. Felt really good. Like back in thuh day when I was really making money. Throwing thuh cards all day and strutting and rutting all night. Didnt have to take no shit from no fool, didnt have to worry about getting fired in favor of some damn wax dummy. I was thuh shit and they was my fools.

(Rest)

Back in thuh day.

(Rest)

(Rest)

Why you think they left us, man?

BOOTH.
Mom and Pops? I dont think about it too much.

LINCOLN.

I dont think they liked us.

BOOTH.

Naw. That aint it.

LINCOLN.

I think there was something out there that they liked more than they liked us and for years they was struggling against moving towards that more liked something. Each of them had a special something that they was struggling against. Moms had hers. Pops had his. And they was struggling. We moved out of that nasty apartment into a house. A whole house. It wernt perfect but it was a house and theyd bought it and they brought us there and everything we owned, figuring we could be a family in that house and them things, them two separate things each of them was struggling against, would just leave them be. Them things would see thuh house and be impressed and just leave them be. Would see thuh job Pops had and how he shined his shoes every night before he went to bed, shining them shoes whether they needed it or not, and thuh thing he was struggling against would see all that and just let him be, and thuh thing Moms was struggling against, it would see the food on the table every night and listen to her voice when she'd read to us sometimes, the clean clothes, the buttons sewed on all right and it would just let her be. Just let us all be, just regular people living in a house. That wernt too much to ask.

BOOTH.

Least we was grown when they split.

LINCOLN.

16 and 11 aint grown.

BOOTH.

16s grown. Almost. And I was ok cause you was there.

(Rest)

Shit man, it aint like they both one day both, together packed all they shit up and left us so they could have fun in thuh sun on

some tropical island and you and me would have to grub in thuh dirt forever. They didnt leave together. That makes it different. She left. 2 years go by. Then he left. Like neither of them couldnt handle it no more. She split then he split. Like thuh whole family mortgage bills going to work thing was just too much. And I dont blame them. You dont see me holding down a steady job. Cause its bullshit and I know it. I seen how it cracked them up and I aint going there.

(Rest)

It aint right me trying to make myself into a one woman man just cause Grace wants me like that. One woman rubber-wearing motherfucker. Shit. Not me. She gonna walk in here looking all hot and shit trying to see how much she can get me to sweat, how much she can get me to give her before she gives me mines. Shit.

LINCOLN.

BOOTH.

LINCOLN.

Moms told me I shouldnt never get married.

BOOTH.

She told me thuh same thing.

LINCOLN.

They gave us each 500 bucks then they cut out.

BOOTH.

Thats what Im gonna do. Give my kids 500 bucks then cut out. Thats thuh way to do it.

LINCOLN.

You dont got no kids.

BOOTH.

Im gonna have kids then Im gonna cut out.

LINCOLN.

Leaving each of yr offspring 500 bucks as yr splitting.

BOOTH.

Yeah.

(*Rest*)

Just goes to show Mom and Pops had some agreement between them.

LINCOLN.

How so.

BOOTH.

Theyd stopped talking to eachother. Theyd stopped *screwing* eachother. But they had an agreement. Somewhere in there when it looked like all they had was hate they sat down and did thuh "split" budget.

(*Rest*)

When Moms splits she gives me 5 hundred-dollar bills rolled up and tied up tight in one of her nylon stockings. She tells me to put it in a safe place, to spend it only in case of an emergency, and not to tell nobody I got it, not even you. 2 years later Pops splits and before he goes —

LINCOLN.

He slips me 10 fifties in a clean handkerchief: "Hide this somewheres good, dont go blowing it, dont tell no one you got it, especially that Booth."

BOOTH.

Theyd been scheming together all along. They left separately but they was in agreement. Maybe they arrived at the same place at the same time, maybe they renewed they wedding vows, maybe they got another family.

LINCOLN.

Maybe they got 2 new kids. 2 boys. Different than us, though. Better.

BOOTH.
Maybe.

(Their glasses are empty. The whiskey bottle is empty too. Booth takes the champagne bottle from the ice tub. He pops the cork and pours drinks for his brother and himself.)

BOOTH.
I didnt mind them leaving cause you was there. Thats why Im hooked on us working together. If we could work together it would be like old times. They split and we got that room downtown. You was done with school and I stopped going. And we had to run around doing odd jobs just to keep the lights on and the heat going and thuh child protection bitch off our backs. It was you and me against thuh world, Link. It could be like that again.

LINCOLN.
BOOTH.
LINCOLN.
BOOTH.

LINCOLN.
Throwing thuh cards aint as easy as it looks.

BOOTH.
I aint stupid.

LINCOLN.
When you hung with us back then, you was just on thuh sidelines. Thuh perspective from thuh sidelines is thuh perspective of a customer. There was all kinds of things you didnt know nothing about.

BOOTH.
Lonny would entice folks into thuh game as they walked by. Thuh 2 folks on either side of ya looked like they was playing but they was only pretending tuh play. Just tuh generate excitement. You was moving thuh cards as fast as you could hoping that yr hands would be faster than yr customers eyes. Sometimes you won some-