The Filthy People

(A half-finished basement somewhere in Los Angeles. An absolute mess. Centerstage is an old black leather couch. Upstage there’s an electrical box, a washer and dryer, a clothes rack, and the staircase. In the corner there’s a mini-fridge. Behind the fridge is a shelf filled with old awards Off to stage right is a guest bedroom. QUINN, 25, is sitting on the couch, drinking a beer, browsing her phone. VALERIE, 25, walks in from the guest bedroom wearing, quite simply, the ugliest bridesmaid’s dress you’ve ever seen. QUINN stares, not knowing what to say.)

VALERIE
It’s terrible.

QUINN
It’s not--

VALERIE
It’s terrible.

QUINN
It’s not terrible.

VALERIE
(Looking herself over in the reflection on the TV) Yellow. Fuck her. Yellow?

QUINN
You have to style it right.

VALERIE
Yeah. Pair this bullshit with a fetching cheetah print scarf and the bouncer at the knights of columbus will let me into the church banquet.

QUINN
(Looking at the box) It was made with fair-trade polyester, does that make you feel better?
VALERIE
Ugh, it makes me feel worse.

(VALERIE goes back into the bedroom.)

QUINN
(Looking around.) The basement’s coming along nicely.

VALERIE
(From offstage.) He finally fixed up the guest bedroom. Last time I was home I slept on the couch. (She re-enters, putting in earrings.) You know, most people keep their kid’s bedrooms as is for about four years after they move out.

QUINN
What?

VALERIE
I read that…. Somewhere.

QUINN
And you’ve already graduated to guest bedroom status. (She holds the bottle up.) Mazel.

VALERIE
He said the bed was too distracting for an office space, can you believe that?

QUINN
For your Dad, yes I can.

VALERIE
(Looking at herself in the TV reflection) Do the earrings help? (She takes the earrings out.) Ugh… no… no, stupid.

QUINN
What about a cool necklace? Oh! A belt!

VALERIE
A belt? *(She picks a beer out of the fridge.)* Great idea. Then... *(She takes a drink. All smiles)* when the wedding is over I can tie it around my neck and hang myself from the ceiling rafters. Then they can shine a light at me and spin my lifeless corpse like a disco ball.

**QUINN**

*(Beat)* So neckwear or no?

**VALERIE**

Do you like it? Like, do you actually like it?

**QUINN**

*(She thinks)*. Its terrible.

**VALERIE**

You hate it!

**QUINN**

Its awful.

**VALERIE**

There’s not even gonna be an open bar. I’m gonna have to hand over cash to some rent-a-bartender in a tuxedo vest if I want to drink. I mean, how cheap is that? You rent out a fucking ballroom in Santa Monica, buy your wife-to-be new tits and a porsche, and then force your guests to pay upfront to get drunk?

**QUINN**

He bought her new tits? What size?

**VALERIE**

How the hell should I know? Guesstimate, at least a cantaloupe. Which sucks because I like cantaloupe. You know, how am I ever supposed to look at a cantaloupe ever again?

**QUINN**

You’ll see some at the wedding.

**VALERIE**

*(Not laughing.)* That’s funny. That’s really funny. *(She sits on the couch.)*

**QUINN**

Is your Dad going?
VALERIE
She invited him, can you believe that? Who the hell invites their ex-husband to their second marriage?

QUINN
But, is he going?

VALERIE
Of course he’s going. It’s material to him, it’s all material. She might as well be giving him another award to put in his refrigerator.

QUINN
(Almost to herself) He keeps awards in the refrigerator?

VALERIE
You know, I have to go.

QUINN
Well, you kind of don’t.

VALERIE
I kind of do.

QUINN
It’s not like you’re the maid of honor or something.

VALERIE
She’s my Mother, I can’t just not go to the my Mother’s wedding.

QUINN
You said it yourself she’s kind of a bitch.

VALERIE
Well it’s not her fault she’s a bitch. I mean she must have no idea how she’s acting. Like being a bitch is just so ingrained into her personality that, at this point, she’s just coloring by the numbers. Like… like the Nazis.

QUINN
Oh my God, do not compare your Mother to a Nazi.
VALERIE
Oh my God, she’s a Nazi.

QUINN
No, she’s mean and you don’t like her.

VALERIE
Nazis are mean and I don’t like them.

QUINN
You have a lot of rage for someone who does yoga in the morning.

VALERIE
Yellow. *Fuck her.*

QUINN
See, if she really was a Nazi she probably would have picked a... nazi-er color.

VALERIE
Example?

QUINN
(*Almost to herself*) You think there were Jewish Nazis?

VALERIE
I watched this movie about this Jewish kid who was trying to escape the Nazis and he was about to be captured, so he lied and said he was German. Which, if we’re being technical, isn’t really a lie since he was from Germany. But he meant like *German* German. Like Nazi German. And he got recruited to the Hitler Youth and joined the German military. And then at the end of the war he was at a concentration camp about to be arrested for war crimes and he and his long lost brother made eye contact across the way and they hugged and it was beautiful and they hugged and he didn’t get arrested for war crimes.

QUINN
Is that real?

VALERIE
(*Mid-drinking, she nods.*) Mhmm. They showed the real guy at the end and everything.
QUINN
Fuck, that’s insane. (She thinks.) So does that make your Mother the lying Jewish kid?

VALERIE
I mean she already renounced the fate for Herr Porsche-Purchaser. (She thinks.) Look, I know you répondez, s’il vous plaît that you weren’t going to the wedding but… dude I could really use you there.

QUINN
Oh come on, your Mom never liked me. She only invited me because she was being polite.

VALERIE
It’s the most polite thing she’s ever done.

QUINN
And the most polite thing I’ve ever done is picking up on the cue that I’m not really welcome. (She finishes her beer and goes to the mini-fridge to a second.) And I only went to the rehearsal dinner because my Mother wanted to go. And the only reason my Mother wanted to go was because she curious about your Mother’s cantaloupe sized tits. I flew here from fucking New York City to accompany my Mother while she looked at another woman’s breasts at a country club.

VALERIE
You got on the plane though.

QUINN
I did get on the plane. (She looks up at the broken floodlight) Do you think your Dad’s ever going to fix that floodlight?

VALERIE
How long has it been broken now? Like 400 years.

QUINN
I mean, at least ten.

(BRAM, 40s, Valerie’s Father, comes down the stairs, a box in his hands.)

BRAM
Hey girls.
VALERIE
Hey, Dad.

BRAM
Quinn, nice to see you.

QUINN
Good to see you too, Mr. Belkin.

BRAM
Val, you didn’t tell me Quinn was back in town.

VALERIE
Mom invited her to the rehearsal dinner.

BRAM
She did?

QUINN
It’s a long story involving tits, it wouldn’t interest you.

BRAM
I write for television, I’m always interested in tits.

VALERIE
Dad, that’s gross.

BRAM
(Noticing the beer. Checking his wrist, which has no watch.) What time is it?

QUINN
(Checking her phone) 3 o’clock.

BRAM
(Re: The dress) That’s a dress.

QUINN
Yes, it is.

VALERIE
It’s for Mom’s wedding.

BRAM
(Re: the dress) Is she allowed to do that?

VALERIE
She can do whatever the hell she wants.

BRAM
Language.

VALERIE
Dad, I’m not twelve, for God’s sake.

(BRAM rolls his eyes and starts picking up trophies and putting them in his box. A closer look would reveal they are EMMY’s).

QUINN
What are you up to, Mr. Belkin?

VALERIE
(Whispered) Please don’t ask him that.

BRAM
I’m glad you asked Quinn. (He holds up one of the EMMY’s on the shelf) Do you know what this is?

VALERIE
Realistically, Pyrite.

BRAM
I won this Emmy for an episode of Glad To Be Home, you’re familiar.

QUINN
I am.

BRAM
The episode was called “Glad To Be Wed” and it featured Tom, the main character, finally getting married to his high school sweetheart. (He examines the award.) And today the producers
told me that there’s no possibility of an arc where Tom’s high school sweetheart cuts open his chest, rips out his heart, and stomps on it in the marketplace. *(He tosses the award in the box.)* So, I won’t be needing it anymore.

**QUINN**
Why don’t you sell it?

**VALERIE**
Do not give him--

**BRAM**
Why don’t I sell it?

*(BRAM starts going through the rest of the awards in the box. VALERIE gets up and looks at the box with him.)*

**VALERIE**
These can’t all possibly remind you of Mom.

**BRAM**
Not all of them. *(He picks one out.)* This one reminds me of your grandmother. *(He picks another one.)* Oh, this one. This one reminds me of her fucking titty purchaser boyfriend.

**VALERIE**
Dad, language.

**QUINN**
How much do you think those awards are worth?

**VALERIE**
Quinn, stop it.

**BRAM**
Why? I don’t need them anymore. They’re probably just pyrite.

**VALERIE**
I already made that joke.
BRAM
They’re my awards and I’ll fucking melt them in the backyard if I want to.

QUINN
You are really better off selling them.

BRAM
(Picking up the box.) If you need me. (He thinks.) I’ll be browsing the internet. (He goes back up the stairs, the box in tow.)

VALERIE
Thanks a lot.

QUINN
What? He’ll net a couple thousand for each of those statues.

VALERIE
Who’s gonna buy one they have his name on them?

QUINN
His adoring fans.

VALERIE
He writes sitcoms, he doesn’t have fans. (She thinks.) Come on, I’m sure it would have been fine if you did come.

QUINN
And spend two hours sitting next to Suzy Crabsticks? No way.

VALERIE
Her name isn’t even Suzy.

QUINN
She’s still a fucking crabstick.

VALERIE
What even is a crabstick?
Suzy.

VALERIE
Shannon.

QUINN
Because you like her so much.

VALERIE
She’s gonna be my fucking step-sister. And that fucking titty purchaser is gonna be my step-father.

QUINN
You are such a tragedy.

VALERIE
(She looks at her watch.) T-minus four hours. (Holding up her can.) To crabsticks.

QUINN
(Clinking.) To crabsticks.

(They drink. End of scène.)