

OUR HOUSE

Scene One

SETTING: the kitchen. TIME: the dead of night.

(The lights rise on an empty kitchen. It is dark, and silent. LAVINIA enters, trying to be quiet. She opens the refrigerator, and pulls out a cherry pie. She finds a knife. TITUS has entered, unnoticed by her.)

TITUS

I wouldn't.

(LAVINIA drops the knife, startled.)

LAVINIA

Dad! Breathe harder, or something.

TITUS

And ruin the surprise?

(He picks up the dropped knife, and hands her an appropriate one.)

Try this.

LAVINIA

Does it really matter?

(She gets plates.)

Do you want one?

TITUS

All you need is the right knife.

(He cuts into the pie with the knife, and eats it with his hands.)

Couldn't sleep, again, huh?

LAVINIA

They should've been here days ago.

TITUS

They'll be here.

LAVINIA

They haven't even called!

TITUS

They'll be here!

(He grabs whipped cream. Offers it to her.)

Mmm?

LAVINIA

Obviously, I'm an animal.

TITUS

A deer, maybe

LAVINIA

But ferocious.

TITUS

My ferocious hart.

LAVINIA

(Noticing cherry on his face)
You got a little something.

TITUS

It was intentional.

LAVINIA

Oh, yeah?

TITUS

Yeah, like this.

(He dabs whipped cream onto her nose.)

LAVINIA

(Laughing)
Stop! You couldn't sleep, either?

TITUS

Like you said, they haven't called.

TITUS & LAVINIA

They always call.

TITUS

I'll get the light.

LAVINIA

No, I'll go to bed in a bit. Leave it.

(They sit together for a time. Something can be heard coming from outside, like twigs snapping, or footsteps passing by. TITUS and LAVINIA are put off by this. TITUS urges LAVINIA away from the door. TITUS picks up a knife, and readies himself. The door opens, and he lunges. He pins the knife to TAMORA's throat.)

TAMORA

If you're going to do it, do it quickly. Nobody in this family deserves to die slowly.

TITUS

You made it!

TAMORA

Nothing could keep me away.

(They kiss. DEMETRIUS and CHIRON enter, with bags.)

CHIRON

I didn't miss that.

DEMETRIUS

Could you use a little less tongue?

(LAVINIA turns the lights on.)

LAVINIA

Demetri! Kai!

DEMETRIUS

I would've thought you'd have snuck out by now, all cooped up with him.

LAVINIA

Who says I haven't?

TITUS

Who says I didn't know?

ERIN

Did you know marshes, bogs, and swamps are all different things? I do now.

(ERIN enters with more bags.)

TITUS

You look like shit.

ERIN

And you are as charming as syphilis.

Really, you two? Already? TAMORA

I don't like to waste time. TITUS

Waste not, want not. ERIN

(ERIN tries to kiss TAMORA, but TAMORA pulls away.)

Try wanting a little. TAMORA

Where can we put these? ERIN

Your rooms are ready. TITUS

You finally got rid of that treadmill? ERIN

I get enough exercise running from you. TITUS

Keep running, baby; I can still see the whites of your eyes. ERIN

Enough! Boys, give Erin a hand. TAMORA

I'll help! LAVINIA

Careful, Vinnie, you might break a nail. CHIRON

Stop! LAVINIA

Still don't like it, Vinnie? DEMETRIUS

Demetrius! Chiron!

TAMORA

They're just teasing.

ERIN

Where are the others?
(Beat.)
What? Tamora. Where is Marcus?

TITUS

Give us the room.

TAMORA

But—

ERIN

The room.

TAMORA

(Beat.)

C'mon. Let's put this stuff away.

ERIN

(ERIN, DEMETRIUS, CHIRON, and LAVINIA exit with the bags.)

Well?

TITUS

They won't be coming.

TAMORA

Why not? We've had this planned for months.

TITUS

I know, but they—

TAMORA

It was their idea! They were the ones that wanted to bring the family back together. Hell, even Erin was on board.

TITUS

Yes, and—

TAMORA

TITUS

This is just like Marcus: demanding the world, and then not doing the slightest thing to—

TAMORA

Marcus is dead.

(Beat.)

TITUS

How?

TAMORA

The plane went down.

TITUS

Down?

TAMORA

Soon after takeoff. A bomb.

TITUS

Impossible; you're here.

TAMORA

We took a different flight.

TITUS

You were supposed to be on theirs.

TAMORA

I know, but we—

TITUS

I told you to be on theirs.

TAMORA

Erin said—

TITUS

I don't give a fuck about Erin!

(Beat.)

April?

TAMORA

They're still combing the coast, but nothing yet.

TITUS
So she could still be alive.

TAMORA
Maybe.

TITUS
Marcus could still—

TAMORA
No.

(They share a moment.)

TITUS
Well, maybe April, then.

TAMORA
Probably not.

TITUS
Probably not. What of their boys? Do they know?
(She doesn't answer.)
What of our nephews, Tamora?

TAMORA
They aren't answering. They're in the wind.

TITUS
“In the wind.” Someone's after them. After the family!

TAMORA
The boys wouldn't be alive if there were.

TITUS
If it's not someone outside the family, then...
(Beat.)
We need to leave.

TAMORA
We need to make a plan.

TITUS
The plan is to leave.

TAMORA

We need to get ahead of this.

TITUS

This is a hydra; there is no getting a-head of this.

TAMORA

Titus, be rational, we—

TITUS

They killed their own parents! And we're all the more the fools if we stay here.

TAMORA

We need to unite the family.

TITUS

The family is undone!

TAMORA

Not ours. Not us.

(They share a moment.)

TITUS

Have you slept?

TAMORA

With what time? Have you?

TITUS

You didn't call.

TAMORA

We lost our phones when that plane went down. Everything was a little crazy, and... Well, now we're here.

TITUS

Yes.

TAMORA

Let's go to bed; nothing good comes from being tired.

TITUS

What do we do?

ERIN

What we planned.

(ERIN has entered, having heard the end of the conversation.)

TITUS

This is between us.

ERIN

Then it's between us.

TITUS

Tamora.

TAMORA

She's not wrong.

TITUS

You lead the West, Marcus the East. With the latest developments, I'm the East. Erin means nothing.

ERIN

I'd hate to hear how you talk about me when I'm not in the room.

TITUS

I don't talk about you at all.

TAMORA

Please. We need to act quickly.

TITUS

And do what? You were supposed hand the West to Marcus, and he would lead the family under one banner. Now the East is basically demolished.

TAMORA

What would you have us do? Watch the West crumble, too?

TITUS

Give me a moment.

TAMORA

We cannot stay here as we are.

ERIN

Take up the East.

It's not that simple. TITUS

It's as simple as you make it. ERIN

I'll handle it. TAMORA

You can't rebuild the East while watching the West. TITUS

Give it to the boys. ERIN

They're too young. Reactionary. TITUS

Lavinia, then. ERIN

This life is not meant for her. TITUS

Then give it to me. ERIN

This is not your house! Careful, Icarus; mind your wings. TITUS

Sounds like you've left yourself no other choice. Welcome back, Gracious Conqueror. ERIN

I need to clear my head. TITUS

Titus, please, she's trying to help. TAMORA

Oh... you two have spoken about this. Haven't you? TITUS

It's not a bad idea. TAMORA

TITUS

It's a terrible idea.

TAMORA

I can watch her. She can be a proxy for me, even.

TITUS

You spent days getting here, and this is what you came up with?

ERIN

We were a little preoccupied. Who builds a cabin in the Adirondacks?

TITUS

It's for safety.

ERIN

There's a difference between "safety" and "insanity."

TITUS

Poor harmless fly. Maybe we should leave you here to handle the East. Lock you in until our nephews come to call. They have quite the aptitude for torture. Perhaps they'll teach you a trick or two. There's nothing but privacy here. No one will hear you.

LAVINIA

Dad?

(LAVINIA has entered, unseen.)

TAMORA

Lavinia! Darling, why aren't you getting ready for bed? Let me get you some tea. A little Valerian root, maybe?

(LAVINIA brushes her off.)

TITUS

Don't worry, love; I've got her.

(Aside to TAMORA)

Leash your hound, or I'll take the bitch out to pasture myself.

(To LAVINIA)

Come on. Let's get you in bed, sweet hart.

(They exit.)

ERIN

Would it have killed you to back me up a little?

Knowing him? Probably. TAMORA

You said you'd help convince him. ERIN

The conversation isn't over. TAMORA

It sounded pretty definite to me. ERIN

It's late, and he needs sleep. We all do. TAMORA

Don't condescend. ERIN

Erin... TAMORA

I'm your partner, not one of your children! ERIN

No, he is! Is that what this is about for you? To become him? The head? Then act like it! Being rash. Running your mouth. Threats! TAMORA

He made them, not me! ERIN

Your subtext does not earn allowance! TAMORA

What do you think he'll do? ERIN

He's not coming back. TAMORA

He won't let anyone else in! ERIN

He wants to be free of it. All of it. TAMORA

ERIN

You can't escape the family. There is no getting out!

TAMORA

He's the head of the family, and that can never truly change, sure, but... If he had his way, the boys would be older, more level-headed, and he and I would be away. Smiling from a safe distance.

ERIN

And me?

(Silence.)

Am I too old, then, that I can't watch over things until the boys are ready?

TAMORA

He'd sooner give it to Lavinia.

ERIN

So he wants her to run it?

TAMORA

Never. He wants her away from all this.

ERIN

The boys fancy her. They always have.

TAMORA

They wouldn't dare. She's like their sister.

ERIN

But she isn't.

TAMORA

It's not happening. None of this is.

ERIN

I deserve—

TAMORA

You deserve—come here.

(TAMORA opens her arms, a warm gesture to ERIN. ERIN goes to her, and they embrace.)

Everything will work out. It'll sort itself out. I promise. Until then... remember where you are.

ERIN

You never meant to convince him.

TAMORA

You were never meant for the mantle.

ERIN

You are fettered in amorous chains. He's a monster. You're blind to it!

TAMORA

And I can be barbarous. Watch yourself.

ERIN

You know what will happen, if he takes control. He will raze this family. Your nephews? When he gets ahold of those boys, he'll do what he did to—

TAMORA

Enough! They'll get what they deserve. As will you if you press. I'm going to bed.

ERIN

So, that's it, then? All my time spent for nothing?

TAMORA

This is not your family!

(Beat.)

I'm sorry. It's been a long few days. Let the house air a little. The tension will break.

ERIN

I want what is owed to me.

TAMORA

You are owed nothing. If you can't handle it, then get some sleep... and leave. If you can handle it, I'll see you in the morning. Give it time, Erin. Please.

(TAMORA exits.)

ERIN

This needs a speedier course, and I will pursue it.

(She exits. The lights fade to black.)