

*Darkness.*

*A long moment.*

*Gentle violin music begins to make its way into our consciousness. It is eerie. Ethereal. Something like Beethoven's Sonata No. 32, but for violin and not piano. Or something.*

*Gently, a light begins to shine down illuminating two figures in shadow.*

*The music swells, and we hear another sound.*

*A great, rushing wind grows louder and louder until it drowns out the music altogether. The deafening noise surrounds us until it becomes almost unbearable.*

*The two figures look up.*

*All at once, it stops. Simultaneously, the light goes out, plunging us back into darkness.*

*Full lights up. A clinically white room. There are now three figures. They wear dark jumpsuits of varying brown shades. Filbert and Graham are about five feet from each other on the right side of the stage. Graham is stage right of Filbert. Bartlett, the new figure, is a bit more removed. He stands farther stage left. He is asleep, standing up.*

*Graham and Filbert look down at themselves. They take stock that everything is as it should be. It is. Phew. Next, they turn to each other and do a nonverbal check in. Everything is okay. Phew. Finally, they take a look at the new figure in their space. A shared acknowledgement of something that we don't yet understand. But we will.*

*Throughout, they never move from their spots.*

*A beat.*

Filbert: He up yet?

Graham: Nope.

Filbert: How long has it been?

Graham: No idea.

Filbert:

Graham:

Filbert:

Graham:

Filbert: Anything?

Graham: Don't you think I would have told you?

Filbert: Sorry.

Graham: It's fine.

Filbert:

Graham:

Filbert:

Graham:

Filbert:

Graham:

Filbert: Is—

Graham: Nope.

Filbert: Sorry.

Graham:

Filbert:

Graham:

Filbert:

Graham:

Filbert:

Graham:

Filbert:

Graham:

Filbert:

Graham:

Filbert: Is—

Graham: I swear to god.

Filbert: I'm just wondering. Jesus.

Graham: Have I said anything?

Filbert: No.

Graham: Have you seen him wake up?

Filbert: No.

Graham: Any change, whatsoever?

Filbert: No.

Graham: Then shut the fuck up.

Filbert: Okay.

*Bartlett makes a noise. A groan, or something.*

Filbert: HOORAY!

*Bartlett startles. He jerks awake and covers his ears. He screams, and then immediately shuts his eyes.*

Graham: I'm so sorry. He should know better.

*Graham glares at Filbert.*

Filbert: *(whisper)* Sorry.

Graham: It's going to take you a minute to adjust. Go easy.

*Bartlett keeps his eyes closed. His movements are slow. He seems hungover. Maybe still a little tipsy.*

Bartlett: Wha—Oh, god.

*Bartlett crouches down, trying to hold back nausea.*

Graham: Okay, listen to me. Don't try to move. Don't try to speak.

Filbert: And—

Graham: Actually, that goes for both of you.

Filbert: But—

*Graham glares at Filbert.*

Graham: Welcome. Like I said, just listen to me. It's going to take you some time to get acclimated. I've been here a while, so let me give you the lay of the land. The nausea will go away in a bit. Just try to be as stationary as you can until then. Don't try to speak until the nausea is gone, that will make it worse. Do you understand what I'm saying?

*Bartlett nods. He keeps his eyes closed.*

Graham: It's been a long time since you've seen light. Your eyes will start to get used to it. Keep your eyes closed until the nausea is gone, and then you'll be able to open them a little easier. Squint first. Don't try to take on too much all at once. You following?

*Bartlett nods.*

Graham: We're going to go quiet for a minute so you can get your bearings. We're not going anywhere, and we'll be here when you're able to open your eyes. Okay?

*Bartlett nods.*

*A beat. Bartlett tries to take some deep breaths. After a few, he seems to calm a bit.*

Filbert: I—

Graham: Sh.

*Bartlett slowly starts to stand from his crouched position.*

Graham: Easy.

*Bartlett takes a few more breaths. He opens his eyes the tiniest bit. He groans.*

Graham: It'll hurt less after a while. Squint first.

*Bartlett does.*

Graham: There ya go. How are you feeling?

Bartlett: Like literal shit.

Graham: Sounds about right.

Bartlett: What happened?

Graham: We don't know.

Bartlett: What?

Graham: We don't know.

Bartlett: But you knew all that other stuff.

Graham: Yeah, but that's all. We ended up here the same way as you. Just sort of woke up. The other stuff we learned the hard way.

Bartlett: We?

*He fully opens his eyes for the first time. He sees Filbert.*

Bartlett: Oh. I forgot there was another one of you.

*Bartlett rubs his eyes.*

Filbert: Can I talk now?

Graham: Yes.

Filbert: Hi.

Bartlett: Hi.

Filbert: I'm Filbert.

Bartlett: Bartlett. And you?

Graham: Graham.

Bartlett: Thanks for the advice.

Graham: Don't mention it.

Bartlett: So what's going on?

Graham: I told you. We don't know.

Bartlett: Well, where are we?

Filbert: The Loopy-Loo.

Graham: Shut up.

Filbert: He asked!

Bartlett: The Loopy-Loo?

Graham: We're not entirely sure where are. It seems to be some sort of halfway place?

Filbert: Well, I call it the Loopy-Loo.

Graham: He is the only one who has ever called it that.

Filbert: I think it's better to have a name, though.

Graham: Whatever.

Bartlett: What do you mean by halfway place?

Graham: As far as we can tell, people come from somewhere, and they go somewhere. But nothing really seems to happen here.

Filbert: That's not true! We talk!

Graham: I meant nothing *of substance* happens here.

Filbert: I will try not to take offense of that.

Graham: Why not? I meant to offend you.

*Filbert turns petulantly away from Graham.*

Bartlett: How long have you been here?

Graham: Hard to say. Time passes a little differently here.

Bartlett: Than what?

Graham: Than wherever we were before, I guess.

Bartlett: Huh.

Graham: Yeah. But I can say I've been here the longest.

Filbert: And I've been here the shortest.

Bartlett: I guess you can't really say that anymore, huh?

*This hits Filbert in a surprisingly piercing way.*

Filbert: I guess you're right...

*Filbert starts to cry.*

Graham: Oh, what the hell?

Filbert: Sorry.

Bartlett: What did I say?

Filbert: It's nothing.

Graham: Apparently not. What is the problem?

Filbert: I don't know.

Graham: Great. Then may we continue?

*Filbert nods.*

Graham: Thank you.

Filbert: *(Still sniffing.)* It's just that—

Graham: Oh, Christ, here we go.

Filbert: I'm not an est anymore.

Bartlett: A what?

Graham: Don't look at me. I have no fucking idea what he's talking about.

Filbert: An est. I'm not an est. Graham's been here the longest. As long as I've known him, he's been here the longest. And I used to have been here the shortest. And now...no.

Bartlett: So?

Filbert: I don't know. It just felt important.

Graham: Filbert.

Filbert: What?

Graham: We've met other people before Bartlett.

Filbert: Yeah.

Bartlett: Wait—

Graham: One second. So...?

Filbert: So, what?

Graham: *SO.* (He takes a breath to collect himself. He spells it out.) When it was just you and me who was here the longest?

Filbert: You.

Graham: And who was here the shortest?

Filbert: Me.

Graham: Right. And what about when Chuck came along? Who was here the shortest?

Filbert: Oh. I see your point.

Bartlett: Hold on.

*Graham and Filbert look at him.*

Bartlett: You're saying there have been others?

Graham: Yes.

Filbert: Three.

Bartlett: Where are they?

Graham: The next place.

Bartlett: And we don't know where that is?

Graham: You catch on quick.

Bartlett: So we don't know how we got here. Or where we came from. Or where we're headed.

Graham: Correct.

Bartlett: Then what do we do while we're here?

Graham: Guess.

Bartlett: You don't know?



Graham: Bingo.

Bartlett: I don't get it. What—

Filbert: Don't think about it too hard. You'll only get frustrated.

Graham: That's actually decent advice.

Bartlett: But—

Graham: Look. It's not great news. But you get used to it. We've been here for a while, as far we can tell. And we've seen others come and go. Just try to enjoy it as much as you can, and let everything else go.

Bartlett: But what are we supposed to do?

Graham: We'll talk. And you'll find ways to pass the time.

Filbert: Sometimes I do this.

*Filbert waves his arms like he's making a snow angel.*

Bartlett: Why?

Filbert: What else is there?

Graham: I paint sometimes.

*He pulls out a few crude drawings from his back pocket. They're more like cave paintings – just a few smears of brown paint.*

Bartlett: Those are...nice.

Graham: We don't have to lie to each other. The truth is pretty much the only thing we have here. They're shit. I can't paint.

Bartlett: Why do you draw, then?

Graham: Like Filbert said. What else is there? Besides, I'm determined to leave something. If all goes as planned, these will be here after me.

Bartlett: After you?

Graham: Yeah. When I'm gone.

Bartlett: You don't live here?

Graham: No one lives here. It's a halfway place.

Bartlett: Then why have you been here so long?

Graham: Not sure.

Bartlett: But you've seen people come and go. Why haven't they been here? What made you stay longer than them?

Graham: It seems to be pretty random. People come and go. No clue why or when.

Bartlett: What about the others?

Graham: What about them?

Bartlett: You're saying people have come and gone since you've been here?

Graham: Yes. Five.

Bartlett: I thought Filbert said three?

Filbert: Three since I've been here. But Graham met two before me.

Bartlett: And what did they do while they were here?

Filbert: Well...Chuck didn't do much. But Alfredo showed up one day. And they were really close. They didn't talk to us much. They would just whisper and giggle and hang out by themselves.

Graham: It was very annoying.

Bartlett: So, those two were closer than you two?

Graham: We're not close.

Filbert: Yeah. Look.

*He reaches out his hand to try to touch Graham. He can't reach.*

Bartlett: Oh, you meant physically close? I thought you meant like...emotionally close.

Graham: They were both. Chuck and Alfredo were constantly all over each other.

Filbert: I thought it was sweet. I always wanted that.

Graham: Why?

Filbert: It seems like a better way to spend this time. With someone.

Graham: I mean...I'm here.

Filbert: Yeah, but it's not the same.

Bartlett: Well, what happened to them?

Graham: The Rush came one day, and Alfredo was gone.

Bartlett: The Rush?

Graham: That's what I've been calling it.

Filbert: See? Names help.

*Graham rolls his eyes.*

Bartlett: Wait, wait. What is The Rush?

Graham: It's the only thing that ever happens here. That's how you showed up. It gets dark, and there's this really loud noise, and then we see what happens.

Bartlett: What happens??

Filbert: Sometimes people come. Sometimes people go. Sometimes nothing happens.

Bartlett: So it's not always the same?

Filbert and Graham: No.

Bartlett: But what is it, though?

Graham: You'll just have to wait and experience it. We can't really explain it until it happens.

Bartlett: If you can't explain it, how will I know when it's happening?

Graham: You'll know. Trust me.

Filbert: And we'll tell you.

Bartlett: When is—

Graham: Let's take a break from questions about The Rush. It's better not to know. Chip spent his whole time here trying to understand it. He went insane. Started muttering to himself, and never made any sense. It's a bad way to go.

Bartlett: But—

Filbert: Really. Don't.

*Filbert's serious tone is out of character for him. Bartlett takes the hint.*

Bartlett: Okay. Well then, what happened after Alfredo left? After...The Rush?

Graham: Chuck never spoke again. He started to slip. And then finally The Rush took him too.

Bartlett: Oh.

Filbert: Yeah.

Bartlett: I don't understand what The Rush—

Graham: STOP. DO NOT.

Filbert: Graham.

Bartlett:

Filbert:

Graham:

Bartlett: Sorry.

Graham: No. I'm sorry. I just... I can't watch someone else go like Chip. So please. The Rush happens. That's all you need to know. Don't ask anything else. Okay?

Bartlett: Okay.

Graham: Okay.

Filbert:

Graham:

Bartlett:

Filbert:

Graham:

Bartlett:

Filbert:

Graham:

Bartlett: So... What about the others?

Graham: The other what?

Bartlett: The other people. You two met Alfredo, Chuck, and Chip—

Filbert: No, Chip was before me. I only met Alfredo and Chuck.

Bartlett: Oh, I just assumed...

Graham: Yeah. Chip was pre-Filbert.

Bartlett: Got it. Well then, who was the third you both knew?

Filbert: Frank. He was weird.

Graham: You're one to talk.

Bartlett: Weird how?

Filbert: He just sort of kept to himself. We told him how it all works here, but that wasn't enough. He was obsessed with finding something to do.

Bartlett: Did he?

Graham: Yes. But it didn't change anything. He's gone too.

Bartlett: Well, what was it?

Graham: What was what?

Bartlett: The thing he found to do?

Graham: Think.

Bartlett: We don't think?

Graham: Not really. I already told you – we do our best not to.

Bartlett: What did Frank think about?

Filbert: He never told us. But it seemed to be enough for him.

Bartlett: This is...

Filbert: Loopy?

Graham: Dull?

Bartlett: Awful. This is awful.

Graham: Like I said. You'll get used to it. You'll find something to do.

*Filbert waves his arms like a snow angel.*

Filbert: Try it. It's fun.

Bartlett: I think I'm good.

Filbert: Aw, come on.

Graham: Enough. He said no.

Filbert: Fine.

*Filbert stops waving his arms.*

Bartlett: So now what?

Graham: What do you mean?

Bartlett: What happens next?

Graham: This is it. This is all we have. Here.

*Graham folds a paper airplane from one of his shitty paintings and sends it to Bartlett.*

Bartlett: What am I supposed to do with this?

Graham: Anything you want.

Bartlett: Right.

Filbert: Have fun!

*Bartlett puts the paper in his back pocket. Graham takes out a piece of paper. He starts to paint. Filbert resumes waving his arms. This ensues for a bit. Bartlett looks around and tries to decide what he's going to do.*

Graham:

Filbert:

Bartlett:

Graham:

Filbert:

Bartlett:

Graham:

Filbert:

Bartlett:

Graham:

Filbert:

Bartlett:

*Bartlett pulls out the piece of paper.*

Bartlett: Hey, Graham, do you have another paintbrush?

Graham: No.

Bartlett: Great.

Graham: I think I have a marker, though.

*He searches his jumpsuit for the marker. Finally, he finds one in a side pocket. He tosses the brown marker to Bartlett. Filbert is still happily waving his arms.*

*[Note: If the actor does not catch the marker, skip the next two lines. Instead of writing, Bartlett will watch as the other two continue their activities and his frustration will mount from not having anything to do.]*

Bartlett: Thanks.

Graham: Don't mention it.

*Graham and Filbert continue with their actions. Bartlett ponders for a minute, and finally starts to write. They live their lives for a bit.*

Graham:

Filbert:

Bartlett:

Graham:

Filbert:

Bartlett:

Graham:

Filbert:

Bartlett:

Graham:

Filbert:

Bartlett:

*Bartlett grunts in frustration. He crumples up his paper and throws it into the audience.*

*[Note: If the actor has not been writing, cut this bit of action, but continue with the dialogue.]*

Bartlett: THIS SUCKS.

Graham: Yeah.

Filbert: But it'll start to suck less.

Bartlett: When?

Graham: When you stop asking.

*Graham paints. Filbert waves. Bartlett stands and looks around in frustration. Then anger. Then boredom. Finally, he looks over at Filbert. He starts to wave his arms.*

Filbert: Oh my god.

*Filbert might cry tears of joy. He and Bartlett wave their arms.*

Bartlett: You know, this is kind of fun.

Filbert: I told you!

*They laugh.*

Bartlett: Graham, come on.

Graham: No fucking way.

*He tries to focus on his painting.*



Filbert: He won't do it. I've been trying to convince him.

Bartlett: Maybe both of us can.

*Bartlett and Filbert's random arm-waving becomes a silent, synchronized dance over time. Graham tries to ignore them. After a long while, he stores his paintings in his back pocket. He looks at his two idiotic companions. He finally lifts his arms.*

Filbert: OH MY GOD.

*Graham starts to wave his arms. First slowly, and then more vigorously. He laughs. He laughs until he starts to cry. Then he just cries. He slows.*

Bartlett: Come on. Together?

Bartlett and Graham: Together.

*They start an arm-waving, manic, synchronized dance. Music up and under. Anything is fine, as long as it is joyful. Joy bubbles over and fills the entire space. It's exciting, and crazy, and beautiful, and scary. Maybe the lights change. Maybe not. This is everything. After the music subsides, the three of them drop their arms and start to pant. They have thrown everything they had into this.*

Filbert: That was...

Graham: Yeah. It was.

Filbert: Thank you.

*He reaches out to Graham. He still can't reach. But this time, Graham reaches back, and they touch fingers. They smile. They drop their arms.*

Graham: Huh.

Bartlett: What?

Graham: Nothing.

*An eclipse. The room is plunged into a dim, partial-light.*

*An enormous, cavernous-sounding fart. It explodes our eardrums. The three of them cover their ears.*

*All three of them look up.*

Bartlett: Was that The Rush?

Filbert: No. But that's a warning siren. The Rush can't be far behind.

*Another. This one is long. Definitely moist. Potentially wet. It echoes through the space under the next few lines.*

Bartlett: Jesus.

Graham: It's coming.

Bartlett: What will it be like?

Filbert: It'll be how it's going to be.

Bartlett: I'm scared.

Graham: It will be okay.

*The fart subsides.*

Bartlett: How do you know?

Graham: Do you trust me?

Bartlett: Yes.

Graham: I promise. Whatever happens, it will be okay.

*All at once, we're in darkness again.*

*It's followed by the same, loud wind from before. The Rush. Only this time, we identify it. We're like 'Oh duh. It's a flush.'*

*When it subsides, the lights come back on. Graham is gone. Filbert and Bartlett remain, and to their left is a New Guy, who is, of course, asleep standing up.*

*Filbert and Bartlett look down at themselves – are we the same as before? Yes. Phew. They then look at each other. Everything is okay. Phew. They turn and seem that Graham is no longer there.*

Filbert: Huh.

Bartlett: Oh.

Filbert:

Bartlett:

Filbert:

Bartlett:

Filbert:

Bartlett:

Filbert:

Bartlett:

Filbert: Hah.

Bartlett: What?

Filbert: It's just...

Bartlett: What?

Filbert: I've been here the longest.

Bartlett:

Filbert:

Bartlett:

Filbert:

Bartlett: Yeah, that's true, I guess. How does it feel?

Filbert: I dunno. Better, I guess.

Bartlett: Do you think he's alright?

Filbert: Yes.

Bartlett: How do you know?

Filbert: I don't. But he said it would be okay.

Bartlett: Look.

*He points. They both turn and see that one of Graham's paintings is on the floor where he used to stand.*

Filbert: A painting.

Bartlett: Can you reach it?

*Filbert tries.*

Filbert: No.

Bartlett: I guess we just leave it there?

Filbert: What other choice do we have?

Bartlett:

Filbert:

Bartlett:

Filbert:

Bartlett:

Filbert: Wow.

Bartlett: What?

Filbert: He really did it.

Bartlett: What?

Filbert: What he said he was going to do.

Bartlett: Yeah.

Filbert: That's kinda nice.

Bartlett: Yeah. It is.

Filbert: Thanks, Graham.

Bartlett: Do you think we'll ever see him again?

Filbert: I don't know. But we have this.

New Guy: What is it?

*Bartlett startles.*

Bartlett: Jesus! You're up early.

Filbert: Holy Shit. I haven't ever seen someone recover so quickly. Graham used to talk about Sloppy Joe bouncing back, but I always thought he was a myth.

New Guy: What—

*He's cut off by a change in the lighting. Another eclipse. Everything is cast into the same dim shadow.*

*They look up.*

Bartlett: Another already?

Filbert: There's no reasoning.

Bartlett: I wasn't expecting it to happen again so fast.

Filbert: You can't expect anything.

New Guy: What's—

*Without warning, a huge dead goldfish falls from the sky and lands in front of them.*

Filbert: Well, that's new...

*Fin.*