

TIME SHARE  
By Laurel Haines  
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(A sitting room in a time share in the wilderness. It's raining outside. JERRY (82) looks out the window. GLORIA (16), his granddaughter, looks at her phone.)

JERRY

Why'd we have to come here? We coulda had a nice time sitting around your mother's table. Why'd we have to go to the wilderness - Ow!

(He smacks a mosquito on his body.)

- to have a family reun - are you listening?

GLORIA

Yeah.

JERRY

You're not. You're hypnotized.

GLORIA

I'm not hypnotized.

JERRY

You are, Gloria. You can't look away from it.

GLORIA

(not looking away)

Yes I can. And my name's not Gloria.

JERRY

Ash. Why'ya wanna be called "Ash"?

GLORIA

How many times you gonna ask me that?

JERRY

It's not a name. You have a beautiful name. Why you wanna be associated with ashes. With death. It was your great grandmother's name. My mother's name.

GLORIA

Uh huh.

JERRY

Hypnotized. I read books when I was your age. Volumes. Moby Dick. Shakespeare! For fun! God, the poetry.

GLORIA

I read books.

JERRY

What books?

GLORIA

Books you don't know.

JERRY

You're telling me you haven't read a single book I know. Not one. What about school?

GLORIA

We read The Tempest.

JERRY

(enthusiastic)

The Tempest!

(quoting what he can remember)

Full fathom five, thy father lies, die die die die dee dee dee dee, those were pearls that were his eyes..."

GLORIA

It was pretty good.

JERRY

Pretty good? Pretty good! "Nothing of him that doth fade,  
But doth suffer a sea-change, Into something rich and strange!  
Da da dee dee ring his knell, Ding dong die die ding dong  
bell!"

(Gloria looks at him blankly. Jerry makes a guttural, disgusted sound, one he will make a lot.)

Achhhh.

(He looks at his watch.)

What a stupid idea, coming here. All because your uncle wanted to use his timeshare. A car to a plane to a train to another car then up a 26-mile mountain road. Stupid. And your uncle couldn't even get here on time. He's gonna be two days late!

GLORIA

So's my mom.

JERRY

What?!!

GLORIA

She's stuck at work. She'll be here on Tuesday.

JERRY

I thought she was coming tonight! What's she doing?

GLORIA

I dunno. Some emergency.

JERRY

Same as your uncle! They're workaholics! Why didn't you tell me this earlier?

GLORIA

Uh, she just texted me?

JERRY

So it's me, you, and your dad in a rainstorm for 2 days? And your good for nothing cousins, if they ever get back from their beer run? Stuck up here in the hills. What a dumb idea. A dumb dumb idea.

GLORIA

It wasn't my idea.

JERRY

Your grandmother would've had something to say about this. I saw that supermarket, if you can call it that. The one we passed on the way in. Bet you can't find a pack of kosher beef franks in the place.

GLORIA

What do you care? You're not kosher.

JERRY

Achhh. The other stuff's dog meat. What's going on with your parents? They're not living together?

GLORIA

They live together. We all live together.

JERRY

They come here separately. Your dad and you, then your mom two days later. There's trouble, right?

GLORIA

My dad's between jobs. My mom's really busy. So, it made sense to come separately.

JERRY

Your mom and her brother. Never knew when to quit working. Overachievers, the two of them. Valedictorians, both of them. That's probably threatening to your dad.

GLORIA

My dad isn't threatened.

JERRY

You don't know what your dad thinks or feels. He's not a person to you. He's a provider. A chauffer. A fixer. You'll never know the mysteries he keeps.

GLORIA

Could you please stop talking about my dad in this weird way? He's right in the next room.

JERRY

Sleeping off the brandy he found in the cupboard. I'm telling you, the man has problems.

(Gloria gazes at her phone for a while. Jerry watches her.)

Hypnotized. What is there to do in this place? When it isn't raining?

GLORIA

There's a brochure over there.

(Jerry picks up the brochure and reads it.)

JERRY

"Nestled in the heart of the Shenandoah mountains, enjoy full service skiing and snowboarding." Skiing? It's summer! Who's skiing?

GLORIA

I don't know.

JERRY

This is your cheap bastard of an uncle's doing. Making a big show of treating us all to a vacation and then taking us to a ski resort in the off season. If I'd known, I never would have come here. And it's dirty.

GLORIA

It's not dirty.

JERRY

There's dust in the corners. Young people like you don't see. You've got the eyes of an old man from looking at that thing. Look at that dust! Ridiculous!

(Jerry makes a big production of opening all the cabinets to find a brush and dustpan and starts sweeping the dust, sweeping a cloud of it into Gloria's face.)

GLORIA

Ahh! Grandpa!

JERRY

Well get up and help me!

GLORIA

I'm not dusting! I'm on vacation!

JERRY

Vacation? Vacation from what? Your life's a vacation.

GLORIA

Would you stop picking on me? Would you just, maybe, shut up for a while?

(Jerry gets quiet.)

JERRY

"Shut up, maybe, for a while"....

(getting agitated)

Why won't somebody tell me what's going on?!

GLORIA

What do you mean?

JERRY

I mean there's something fishy going on, and I know, because it stinks!

GLORIA

There's nothing going on.

JERRY

There's nothing going on? Your mother and her brother are both gonna be two days late and there's nothing going on?

GLORIA

You said - they're overachievers.

JERRY

I don't like the look of it, I don't like the sound of it, I don't like the smell of it!

GLORIA

Grandpa, maybe you need rest.

JERRY

I'll rest when I'm dead!

GLORIA

You wanna play a game?

JERRY

What game?

GLORIA

There's games in the corner. Board games. Cards?

(They sit together and play cards silently for a while. A kind of montage to show time passing. The rain ends, the late-afternoon sun comes out, the sun begins to set. Jerry looks out the window in disbelief.)

JERRY

My god, look at that incarnadine sky!

GLORIA

(focused on her cards)

Can't you just say "red"?

JERRY

But these words are your legacy. Your birthright as an inheritor of the English language.

GLORIA

So is "red."

JERRY

Don't be a smart aleck. Look, I said. Look!

(Gloria looks at the light streaming through the window.)

It's incandescent. The last beams of a dying day. Glorious. Gloria. Like you. Your namesake.

GLORIA

I'm not glorious.

JERRY

Stupid kid. You're goddamn beautiful. And you don't even know it.

(A beat.)

GLORIA

They're gonna put you in a home. Some place called Shadybrook. Mom and Uncle Lou are at your apartment right now, packing up your clothes to take over there. They're gonna get here and pretend to have a vacation, but when it's all over they're gonna take you to a nursing home and sell your house. You told them you wouldn't go, but they think you should and this is the only way they know how to do it.

JERRY

I knew there was something fishy going on!

GLORIA

They made me promise not to tell.

JERRY

And your dad is in on it too. Of course he is.

GLORIA

Actually he and mom had a big fight about it.

JERRY

I knew there's trouble!

GLORIA

Dad thinks you should just live in your house if that's what you want and one day you'll fall and hit your head and drop down dead or leave the burner on like you did last month but this time you'll burn the whole house down and who's to say that's any worse than wasting away safely in a nursing home being fed through a tube. But mom can't stand the thought of waiting for the other shoe to drop. She wants it settled. Now.

JERRY

I'll settle it. And you've been sitting here all afternoon, pretending like nothing's going on.

GLORIA

I didn't want to lie to you. They made me do it.

JERRY

It's all right. You're not a person to them either. Oh, they love you. But they'll never know your mysteries.

GLORIA

Grandpa I don't have mysteries.

JERRY

You do. You just don't know them yet. One day, if you ever get your nose out of that thing, you will.

GLORIA

I'm sorry I told you. I've upset you.

JERRY

On the contrary, you've done exactly the right thing.

(Jerry opens the door.)

GLORIA

Where are you going?

JERRY

I'm going to walk into that incarnadine sky.

(Gloria watches him go. TOM, the father, comes out of his room, sleepy.)

TOM

You hungry, kid?



GLORIA

Look.

(Tom looks out the open door. The light intensifies.)

[The End.]