

The Cherry

Setting:

A TEENAGE GIRL'S BEDROOM.

TIME

THE PRESENT.

Lights up.

Ellie, Molly, and Gabby are sprawled out on the floor, examining Gabby's phone with great interest

Ellie: Like, Anna's not ugly, but she's not *not* ugly.

Gabby: No, then these photos are too good, because she's definitely ugly.

Molly: Her boyfriend's kinda cute, though.

Ellie: Nick? He's not her boyfriend, they're just hooking up.

Gabby: She's such a slut.

Molly (Warning): Hey.

Gabby: Sorry, she's so *provocative*.

(Gabby makes air quotes around the word "provocative")

Ellie: What does provocative mean?

Gabby: It's a nice way of saying she's a whore.

(Molly opens her mouth to say something but decides against it. She tightens her ponytail.)

Ellie: Oh.

(Beat. It's weird. They're weird.)

(Molly checks her phone.)

Molly: Natasha should have called by now.

Gabby: You know why she hasn't.

Ellie: They're *doing it*.

Gabby: Just say 'fucking.'

Ellie: They're fucking.

(Beat.)

Molly: Should I call?

Gabby: Give it a minute.

Molly: It's 9:30. She said she'd be here at 9.

Ellie (stiffly, nervously): There's no way that Jason's lasted this long.

(She stumbles slightly on the word "lasted")

Molly: No, seriously.

Gabby (sharply): It's fine. She's probably *busy*.

Molly: Uh, sure. I texted her. I'll call in like 10?

Gabby: She's fine. Chill.

Molly: I am chill.

(Beat.)

Molly: Do you think she really went through with it?

Gabby: I'd say yes.

Ellie: Didn't she go into it thinking she would?

Gabby: Like, he asked but she said she'd think about it.

Molly: I talked to her before she left, she said she didn't think she was ready. Like, losing her virginity, like *matters* to her. She wants it to *special*.

Gabby: She gave me this whole rant at lunch about how much she hates the phrase *popping your cherry* because it sounds too *crude* and *casual* for such a *life changing* event.

Ellie: She so would. You *know* she wants, like, fireworks in the background or some shit like that.

(The girls laugh briefly.)

Gabby: Like, I get that it's important, but hasn't she already blown him, like, six times?

Molly: I think it's seven.

Ellie: But he's never...um...reciprocated.

Gabby: I don't know, I feel like sex is kinda overhyped.

Molly: I think it's a big deal. Like, she could get pregnant.

Gabby: She won't.

Molly: But she *could*.

Ellie: And it feels more mutual, I think. Than her blowing him.

Molly: Yeah.

(Beat.)

Ellie: What time did you talk to her?

Molly: Like 6?

Ellie: I talked to her during APUSH and she said she was definitely going to.

Gabby: She's been on birth control since what, eighth grade?

Molly: Yeah, but that was 'cause of cramps.

(Beat.)

Molly: I don't like him.

Ellie: Why?

Molly: He just gives me a weird vibe.

(Beat.)

Ellie (trying, and failing, to sound casual): Why don't you try again now?

(Molly calls Natasha, holding her phone to her ear. Four rings. The other girls watch.)

Natasha (over recorded voicemail): Hey, you've reached Natasha. I can't get to the phone right now but leave me a message and I'll hit you up ASAP. Bye!

Molly (trying to sound cool. Casual. Calm. Collected. Chill): Hey, babe. We're just wondering where you are. Text or snap me when you get a sec. Love you.

(She motions for the other girls to join in.)

Ellie and **Gabby** (overlapping): Love you!

(Beat. The girls stare at the dark cellphone screen for a moment.)

Gabby: She's been in a bad mood this week.

Ellie: Yeah, we're synched up.

Gabby: Not bitchy, just, like, a bit off. Maybe this was good for her. To spend some time with him.

Ellie: Yeah, maybe.

Molly: Nothing like spending time with fucking Jason to put you in a good mood.

Gabby: What's your shit with him?

Molly (defensively): I don't have shit with him.

Ellie: Like, you clearly do, or else you wouldn't have said something.

Molly: I was joking. God.

(Beat. It's awkward. Ellie cracks her knuckles and Molly clears her throat.)

Molly: You don't, uh, think he's, like, hurting her or anything, right?

Ellie: if you mean rape, just say it.

Gabby: Don't toss that word around.

Molly: I'm not. I'm asking. What if he...is?

(As she says this, Gabby and Ellie whip their heads around. Molly adjusts her ponytail again.)

Gabby: He's not.

Molly: How do you know?

Gabby: Because....because he wouldn't. He's a nice guy.

Molly: Yeah, but he's *dumb*. What if he misunderstood a signal and Natasha just went with it?

Gabby: We don't all have 4.0's, *Molly*, that doesn't mean he's gonna rape someone.

(Beat. Gabby's not sure if she's crossed a line. Molly isn't, either.)

Ellie: Uh, last year, Aidan wanted a handjob but, like, I didn't want to hurt his feelings even though I wasn't really into it. And he, like, really wanted it. He had just gotten a bad grade on a test, I think. So I went with it. But I didn't really want to.

Gabby: But that's not *rape*. Rape is, like, just with sex.

Ellie (tense): I didn't say it was r-that.

Gabby: Okay. I'm...sorry. I didn't know about that.

Ellie: I mean, I wouldn't, like, want him arrested or anything. But it's shitty. It feels shitty. It felt shitty.

Gabby: Yeah.

(Beat.)

Gabby: What if they're, like, fifty shades'ing it?

Molly: Gabby!

Gabby: Dude, I'm joking. She's fine. Chill.

(Beat.)

Ellie: How's your common app going?

Molly: Fine.

Gabby: It's not.

(Little chuckle. It's not funny but laughing is better than worrying.)

Ellie: We visited Duke again last weekend. It's so pretty.

Molly: It's so white.

Ellie: ...Yeah.

(Beat.)

Molly: I'm gonna call her again.

(As she moves to pick up her phone, it rings. Molly picks up quickly and places the call on speaker.)

Molly: Hello?

Natasha (slightly slurred): Hey! What's up?

Molly (worried with distinct twinges of annoyance): Where the fuck are you?

Natasha: What? I'm at Jason's. Do you want me to leave now?

Gabby: Are you okay?

Natasha: Um, yeah? Why wouldn't I be?

(Gabby, Molly, and Ellie look at each other, incredulous.)

Ellie: Um, yeah, if you could come that'd be cool. My mom blew up an extra air mattress so...

Natasha: Oh. Um, yeah, of course. We'll leave now. Jason? Can we go now?

(The line goes dead on Natasha's side. The girls look at each other once more.)

Ellie: Was she on speaker the whole time?

Gabby: She sounded like she was being held hostage or something.

Molly: Gabby.

Gabby: What? She did!

(Beat.)

Ellie: Do you think they did it?

Molly: She didn't sound, like, post-orgasm or anything.

Gabby: How would you know what that sounds like?

(Awkward pause. Gabby intends for it to be funny but it sounds accusatory, or maybe even condescending.)

Ellie: I saw this statistic that said most women rarely, um, climax, so...

(She looks at Molly who looks away. Beat.)

Molly (bitterness center stage): Whatever. Did we expect her to come? This is fucking Jason. He doesn't give a shit about anyone but himself.

(Beat.)

Gabby: They've been together for, like, three months, right?

Molly: Four.

Gabby: Do you think that she's, like, doing it just to say that she did it?

Ellie: Would it be a bad thing if she were?

Gabby: No! No, like, I didn't say that. I was just wondering.

Molly: Does it matter?

Gabby: No. Jesus. I was just fucking wondering.

(Beat.)

Ellie: Are people going to call her a slut?

Gabby: No.

(At the same time)

Molly: Yes.

Gabby: She's not even Jason's first. Also, people don't really care what she does.

Molly: People care what *he* does.

(Beat. Doorbell rings.)

Ellie: I'll get it.

(Ellie exits to retrieve Natasha. Molly and Gabby scroll on their respective phones.)

Molly (quietly): Do you think she's okay?

(Gabby nods, weakly?)

(Ellie enters with Natasha at her side. The latter is wearing a sports bra and sweatpants. Her mascara is slightly smudged - from sweating? From crying?)

Natasha: Hey.

Molly: Hey.

Gabby (excited): So, what happened?

(Natasha sits down on the floor.)

Natasha: Well, we, um, did it.

(Molly squeals. Ellie hugs Natasha. Gabby claps her hands excitedly.)

(The following dialogue should overlap slightly.)

Gabby: Get it, bitch!

Molly: Did you come?

Ellie: Molly! You can't ask her that!

Gabby: How was it? Was it quick? Did you bleed?

Ellie: Oh my god, was his brother home?

Molly: Were there, like, roses?

Gabby: Ooh, and candles!

(Natasha bursts into tears. The girls watch in horror for a moment before jumping into disordered action.)

Gabby: Oh my god, are you okay?

Molly: What's wrong?

Ellie: Natasha?

Molly: Did he...hurt you?

(Gabby gives Molly A Look.)

Ellie: Natasha? Natasha, babe, talk to us.

Gabby: Do you...do you want me to call your mom?

(Natasha shakes her head frantically.)

Gabby: Okay. No problem. Okay. It's okay. We won't call your mom.

(Molly wraps an arm around Natasha.)

Molly: Nat?

Natasha: He...I...he didn't...you know. It's fine. I'm fine. I'm just overwhelmed.

Molly: Uh, okay. You sure?

(Natasha nods.)

Natasha: I was drinking a bit.

Gabby: A bit?

Ellie: What?

(Molly reaches out and tilts Natasha's head upwards so they are making eye contact.)

Molly: Natasha.

Natasha: What? Look, it happened and it wasn't my favorite experience but it happened and it's fine. I'm fine. I just don't want him to be upset with me.

Ellie: We don't doubt that you're fine, but, like, are you okay?

Molly: Why would he be mad at you?

(Natasha stands up abruptly.)

Natasha: Jesus, can you guys fucking chill for a second? I'm fine. He just misunderstood. It's fine. I'm fine. I just want to watch a movie.

Molly: Nat, how can we help?

(Natasha's phone buzzes. It's a Snapchat from Jason.)

Natasha (practically salivating with relief): Oh, it's Jason. Thank fuck he's not pissed at me. Wait, guys, get in the picture.

(The girls gather around Natasha to pose for a selfie. Natasha purses her lips, Gabby smiles with her mouth closed. Ellie glances at Molly, unsure of what to do. Molly's face remains stoic. Ellie turns to the camera and smiles. The camera clicks.)

Lights out.