

Madonna's Stash

Characters

- Nicki A 30-something hard-nosed South Philly bartender with black short-cropped hair and lots of piercings and tats. Her uniform is tight jeans, black boots and sleeveless tees to show off the body art. She is a first cousin of Carla and Jo.
- Carla A 30-something aesthete now living in Manhattan. She's a walking representation of "brand" and "influence."
- Jo A 20-something good-natured, but reticent, librarian, still trying to find her way.
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SCENE 3

JO is on her knees scrubbing the kitchen carpeting. NICKI enters holding two large Manila folders and packages of thumb tacks.)

NICKI

Jo, what are you doing? You're supposed to be looking for, you know, important stuff - not cleaning the house, for Christ's sake.

JO

I had to. This is where Aunt Filly was on the floor. It's gross and I can't do anything else until I get rid of all these disgusting stains.

NICKI

All you have to do is go through the draws and cabinets and shit and that's it. Just ignore everything else.

JO

Even though Aunt Filly really didn't give a damn about any of us, it still makes me sad. You know, sometimes I felt like she didn't even want to be around us.

NICKI

Well the feeling was mutual as far as I was concerned.

(NICKI goes to the kitchen window sill
and picks up a saint statue.)

NICKI

Is there any inch of this this place that doesn't have some kind
of saint statue? I mean, now, who's this guy?

JO

Oh, that's St. Roch.

NICKI

How do you know that?

JO

You keep forgetting I'm a librarian. We know *everything*. Even if
we don't wanna know it.

NICKI

So, what's The Roch's claim to fame?

JO

Hmm ... I'm pretty sure he's the patron saint of plagues ... and
dogs, I think.

NICKI

Plagues, huh. Well, it looks like he hasn't been working very
hard. How many years does he need to get rid of these Covid
variants?

JO

I know. It's like we just can't escape this disease, no matter
what we do.

NICKI

Yeah, God's really been fucking with us, hasn't he?

JO

And now Aunt Filly.

NICKI

She was 94, you know.

JO

Still, I just can't imagine what it must have been like -- being
half-alive and not able to help yourself. It's a terrible way to
die.

NICKI

Are you kidding? She didn't know what hit her. That's the way I wanna go. Nobody around to stick tubes into every friggin' hole you've got, even though you're a goner.

JO

Don't you have any compassion?

NICKI

I have compassion. I listen to nothing but sob stories all night long at the bar. Real pitiful stories, not like the made-up ones in those books you check out at the library ... Look, I even have empathy for Aunt Filly. I know I rag on her, but I just looked through the entire living room and dining room and, other than those liqueur bottles, I didn't find any evidence of happiness or pleasure in there.

JO

What's in the folders?

NICKI

Not much. I got the deed to the house. So that's good. Otherwise, it's just a bunch of useless papers. And packs of thumb tacks. Ha! Who uses thumb tacks anymore? ... Oh, and there's this.

(She pulls out a tiny knitted baby cap from one of the Manila envelopes.)

Bizarre, huh?

JO

(JO gently takes the cap from NICKI)

Looks like a knit cap for a newborn. Maybe it's one of ours?

NICKI

What would Aunt Filly be doing with one of our baby hats? And even if it is, why would she keep it? I mean, she wasn't exactly the sentimental type.