

“HOMEMAKING” by Alexander Lee-Rekers (StageMilk, 2024)

Cliff, Sando, Callie and Lil are renovating a fixer-upper home they bought by pooling their savings. They stand around in a completely gutted kitchen, sipping champagne to celebrate the milestone.

ALL: Cheers!

They clink glasses, sip and take in the room.

CLIFF: It looks like absolute shit, doesn't it?

SANDO: Yeah, well, it's supposed to right now.

CLIFF: Think about it this way: this is as bad as it's ever going to look.

CALLIE: Knock on wood.

LIL: Nope. Done enough knocking on wood to last me a lifetime.

SANDO: You've got to picture it three months from now. *(Gesturing along, painting the picture.)* This wall: gone. That means light, space, the kitchen opening out into the living area. Fresh coat of paint, new ceiling fans, those amazing fixtures Callie found at the dump-

CALLIE: I have my moments.

CLIFF: *(Holding up glass.)* I'd just like to say: I'd given up the idea of ever owning a home. Fantasy in this day and age, y'know? So it means a lot to have done this, even if I'm sharing it with friends and the roof is falling in.

SANDO: It's on the list, we'll get to it.

They “cheers” again, drink again.

SANDO: Hey, so I spoke to my uncle, showed him some photos. Reckons we'll crack two, maybe two-point-five. Market's strong for sellers, he says.

CLIFF clinks their glass against SANDO's. CALLIE and LIL look at each other, and shift towards each other in the space.

CALLIE: So listen.

LIL: We think ... we might have found a buyer already.

SANDO: Seriously?

CALLIE: They know it's early days, they know what it looks like now, but they'd be willing to put in an offer already.

CLIFF: Who is it?

LIL smiles, cheerful but also nervous.

LIL: It's us. *(Gesturing to Callie.)* Callie and me. We'd like to buy you guys out.

Silence.

CLIFF: I don't know what to say.

CALLIE: I understand it might be a bit of a shock. But it makes sense, right? We're at that age where we want to start looking for our own place, for the kind of home we could maybe raise a family in-

CLIFF: We're the same age.

CALLIE: But Lil and me, we're at that next stage. You know?

SANDO: What kind of price?

CLIFF: Sando-

SANDO: I mean, what are you looking to pay? Like I said, my uncle reckons two-point-five-

LIL: We want to buy it now. Like it is.

SANDO: Right.

CALLIE: Save us all the trouble of knocking out the wall.

LIL: We would guarantee your money back, plus ten percent. Each. We spoke to our bank and we're pre-approved.

CALLIE: They said "Congratulations! Go tell your friends..."

CLIFF shifts his posture. He puts his champagne glass down on the floor.

CLIFF: Was this always your plan? To swoop in early and buy it cheap? *(Pause.)* I'm going to be honest with you guys. I'm a little shocked by this.

CALLIE: That's not fair.

LIL: Nobody's swooping.

CALLIE: Nothing's changed. We're still equal partners in this: we're fixing it up, flipping it-

SANDO: Except we're not. Not if you buy the place all gutted.

LIL: Over the last few months, we fell in love with this place.

Silence.

SANDO: What are your kitchen plans?

LIL: What do you mean?

SANDO: Are you keeping the wall?

LIL: We haven't really talked about it.

SANDO: We all agreed the wall had to go. We've been talking about it for weeks. Cliff borrowed us all sledgehammers from Dave to knock it through.

CALLIE: We're prepared to buy it as it is right now, so you wouldn't need to knock the wall through. We'd be saving you the work.

CLIFF: What if we say no?

LIL: We'd be really hurt, Cliff.

CLIFF: Have you planned for that?

CALLIE: Mate-

CLIFF: If you don't want to do this anymore, you don't have to. We'll honour our initial agreement and buy your shares. Otherwise, you can put in a bid with the rest of the people at auction next year.

LIL: And if it doesn't sell? If the buyer falls through, or you fuck up the plumbing again, or some other unseen tragedy?

SANDO: I'm sure you'll figure something out. *(Long pause.)* Finish your drinks. We have painting to do.