"You have no idea. No fuckin idea. Do you hear me? I mean, do you fuckin hear me, you clean-cut Gucci wearing piece of shit?" Music pumping inside the building rattled the windows with base. Each window was covered with purple paint so that only a faint glow shown from inside.

"Yes, Philip. I hear you. I am listening to you." Piers rolled his eyes and opened and closed his hands over and over. His breath made white clouds. Philip's breath was mixed with cigarette smoke.

"I mean, have you heard? I know you have. Don't lie to me, and you need to smoke. Here. Have a smoke. You need to start if you don't." Philip held what looked like a joint out to Piers.

"What the hell is that?"

Julie didn't bother looking up. "It's a cigarette, dummie. Philip rolls them himself. They're better that way." She took a drag off of her own hand-rolled cigarette and made her own enlarged cloud of breath.

"That's fuckin'right. None of those poisons that Microsoft puts in the water. Fresh as a summer day. Fuckin' great. I even grow the tobacco myself. You know it's legal to grow weed as long as you don't sell it, but tobacco is against the law if it's home grown. Have a fugitive smoke, my friend." With a jerk of his hand Philip forced the cigarette to Piers.

Piers slowly took it from Philip's hand, looked at it for a moment, and put it in his mouth. Julie offered him the tip of hers to light it.

"What do you mean Gucci? I don't wear any..."

"It's just an expression. Just an expression. You need to relax. Re-fuckin-lax, man. Look at everyone here. Look at em." Philip made wild hand gestures at the rest of the crowd on the sidewalk. "They are relaxed, my hombre. You need to ree-lax. You are never going to get in if you're all discombobulated."

Piers stood on his toes to get a look down the line. He thought he could see the door. He wasn't sure, though. Even if he could, the line wasn't moving at all. It hadn't moved in nearly ten minutes. It would be another half hour if they were lucky.

"Can't they... why aren't they going faster?" Julie shifted from one long leg to the other. She played with her long dark hair wrapping it around her finger, slowly wasting away the hour she had spent fixing her hair in the first place. She held the cigarette in her other hand letting it burn of its own accord. "I've never seen a line for a club take nearly this long? I mean, I know it's Gadot's..."

"Don't finish that sentence, because you'll be wrong." Philip pointed his middle finger at Julie. A silver ring glittered on it with the initials P.M. "If you woulda finished that fuckin' sentence, I would not have been responsible for my fuckin' actions."

"Dammit, it's cold. It's really damned cold." Piers breathed onto his hands trying to warm them.

"Hardens the blood. And the nipples. It's great for everything in you. Wakes you up and reminds your balls to keep on watch. Hot damn, it's good. You complain about it and I'll make you eat your jacket, my son. Make some use of the damned thing, anyway."

"This place don't look like a funeral home."

"Doesn't', my dear. The word is 'doesn't'. Proper English is a must." Philip flipped open his cigarette case and pulled out another hand-rolled cigarette.

"What... what do you mean? Why should it look like a funeral home?" Piers' brow furrowed in confusion.
"Don't you know shit? I guess not, otherwise you wouldn't be wearing those pants. This place, or at least part of this place was a mortuary back in the day. That's why it's called Gadot's Wake. Gadot bought the place and hardy hardy hardy, we got us a party. I think another part of it used to be apartments or something. The place is as big as God and twice as fun."

"We've been here for twenty minutes already. Why don't we just go..."

"Now, Piers, my boy, you really must shut the fuck up. I have only met you three hours before now and I enjoyed not hating you. So be a peach and don't go fucking with that? Si?"

"Yeah," Julie chimed in, "going anywhere else now would be like admitting defeat. And anywhere else we go'll just be full of people coming from here or getting ready to come here."

"Most probably just claim one of the two honors, however, my dear. Only a select few make it, only a select few." Philip tried to make smoke rings and found that he didn't really know how.

"And you've made it?" Piers took a quick drag from his cigarette and tried to hold in a cough.

"I will be the first to admit that I have not. I have not. One time did I try and one time did I fail. That was three years ago when I was a naïve sprite not yet wise in the ways of the world. I am a better man today, oh yes."

Piers looked at Julie. "What about you?"

"What about me what?"

"Have you ever been here?"

"Yeah. I mean, no. I've never been inside. I've waited in line twice before. I almost got in last time, but some of the people I was with were...well..." Julie trailed off.

"So...neither of you have even been here before?"

"And tonight we go into the breech never to be the same fools again. Our penetration through yonder door ends our virginity, or my name isn't Nathan Arizona! Goddamn, it's cold as a witch's teat out here. Makes a man wish for more hair, yes sir."

Philip danced to music in his own head.

"You know," Piers said after a moment, "a guy I work with, Clark, he said that they have a fountain at one end of the club. He said that water runs in little canals that are up above you head and..."

"I never heard that," Julie cut Piers off. "I heard that the main room has, like aquariums, but with fire blowing through them. But they're heat proof, so they're not hot. My sister's friend, Amy, told me that the aquarium things are even cold. She said that there's this big bon-fire..."

"You're both right, you crazy sons of bitches." Philip took a long drag before continuing. He looked at Julie. "Well, I suppose you're a daughter. But what my many sources have informed me is that there are multiple rooms. Rooms of fire and water and earth and air and lightning and ice and bourbon and little umbrellas and tall oriental car salesmen that juggle women and screaming three nippled ducks covering heavy metal versions of Scot Joplin tunes and flying acrobatic bartenders that can make any drink with both eyes tied behind their backs."

Julie and Piers looked at Philip for a moment. Philip continued to dance to music in his own head. After an extended pause, Piers said, "Are you ever not full of shit?"

Philip stopped and turned to Piers. He poked him in the chest hard. "My fine feathered friend, do not fuck with the likes of me. I am a soothsayer that speaks only hard-boiled truth. You remember that and you'll live a long and well insured life." Philip went back to bouncing to no music.
"Don't poke me like that, you fruit," Piers said after a lengthy pause. Philip stopped and turned to Piers again. He poked him in the chest again. "Like this?"

Julie rubbed the bridge of her nose. "Fucking guys," she muttered to herself. Piers shoved Philip's arm away. "Stop that."

"What kind of fruit am I, eh? I hope I'm a citrus." He put his finger back on Piers' chest. Piers shoved it away again.

"You're an asshole fruit, asshole."

Poke.

"Asshole fruit, eh? Am I at least seedless?"

Poke, poke.

Julie shifted her weight. "Would you two idiots stop it?"

Poke.

"I want to find out if I'm seedless. Huh? Am I? What say you, sticky britches?"

"Fuck you, Philip."

Poke.

Piers grabbed Philip's hand and squeezed it tightly trying to crush his fingers. "I said, 'stop that.' "

"Better let go of that, son. Might go off."

"Yeah, and I might pull it off." Piers tried to look intimidating.

"I've studied high karate, so I'm only gonna give you this one warning. Just this one. One warning, Pharaoh. Let my fingers go."

"You gonna make me?"

"Just this one warning. Just one. Just this one fuckin' warning, and then look out, Jack!"

Julie was sick of this already. "Will one of you just hit the other and get this over with?"

Philip looked at her. "Sounds like a plan." He belted Piers, but not very well.

Piers stumbled back and let go of Philip's hand.

"Love it when a plan comes together."

"You shit!" Piers charged at Philip and struck him in the chest with all his might.

Philip took a step back from the blow and shook his head.

"Won't do, my boy. Will not..."

Piers rammed his fist into Philip's eye knocking his sunglasses off and leaving them with a large crack in one lens. Philip fell backwards into Julie. She caught him and shoved him back up.

"That was a good one. Let's tussle!"

Philip lowered his head and rammed into Piers' stomach. Both men slammed into the window and there was a crunching sound. Piers hit Philip on the back with his hands clenched, just like he'd seen in the movies. Surprisingly, it kind of worked and Philip fell the ground with an, "Oof." He then grabbed Piers' legs and pulled him down on the ground. Both men rolled on the ground hitting each other in the legs, as they were facing opposite directions. The rest of the line was happy to get some entertainment while they waited. After about a minute of this, they broke apart. Philip stood up and beat his chest.

"Ah-ha! Men with men. Good for the sinuses. Need a hand, my brother?" He held his hand out to Piers. Piers looked at him for a moment, and then took it.

Philip put his finger on Piers' chest. "You did good. I think it's an omen of goodness to come. Julie, what are you doing? Come revel with us!"

Julie was crouched by the window. She spoke slowly and quietly.

"You...you guys broke the...the window."
Philip and Piers quickly joined Julie at the window. The surrounding crowd pushed in to get a look.

Inside, crystal tubes reached to the ceiling containing flowing fire or small manmade tornadoes. Rivers of crimson gold waters flowed beneath the dance-floor. Light somehow drifted in a pale cloud around the ceiling. Smoke melted down from above covering the walls, but didn't fog the room. Waterfalls were scattered about with live vines draping down from them. Without looking like a jungle, leaves and vines jutted out all over. Live parrots made their homes in them. Tropical fish swam in the floor. Black leather chairs, the type that mold to your body, surrounded the tables at the edge of the dance floor and by the bar. But there was no bartender. And the chairs were empty. And so was the dance-floor.

-Grant Gooding