

GIRLS, “Beach House” Episode Recap
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By Nicholas DeLorenzo

It’s not very often that all four of the *Girls* girls get together in one place for an entire episode. Aside from Hannah’s birthday earlier this season, the last time I can remember the show executing this was back in Season 1’s “[Welcome to Bushwick a.k.a. the Crackcident](#),” which was, not coincidentally, one of the best episodes the in the series’ run. With the girls growing more and more distant from one another over the past two years, it’s no surprise that it has been such a struggle to get them in the same room together, but when they finally do in “Beach House,” the results are as eventful as you’d hope.

Marnie has felt the group disconnect for some time now and so desperately wants to be able to fix it (too desperately, of course, as only Marnie can do), so she invites the girls out to her mom’s friend’s beach house and meticulously planned out a weekend filled with activities and meals and time for each other to heal. While Marnie’s heart is in the right place, her execution is predictably rigid, making the whole experience feel more like homework for Hannah than a vacation. Luckily for Hannah, she found a way to salvage the weekend when she bumps into Elijah, quickly reconciles with him, and invites him and his friends over to the house.

Marnie tries her best to roll with it, and at first she does a pretty good job. Everyone starts loosening up with drinks, they have a lot of fun choreographing a dance, she also reconciles with Elijah and opens up about her breakup with Charlie, and there’s even a pool party (scored by [The Weeknd’s “House of Balloons/Glass Table Girls”](#)). But as we know, Marnie can only “go with the flow” so much (in this way, I’m saddened by how much I can relate to her), and when Hannah denies her request to ask the guys to leave so the girls can have their healing dinner, things start to go south in a hurry.

For all of Marnie’s flaws, she’s still trying her best here, and it’s hard not to feel bad for her when she’s completely undermined by Hannah. The dinner, which went from a potential healing process between distant friends to a half-drunk critique of Marnie’s hosting skills, kind of broke my heart. Marnie at least recognizes there’s a problem, and while it didn’t get addressed in the way she envisioned, it certainly rose to the surface in short order and in glorious fashion.

The post-dinner fight between the girls, one that’s been years in the making, was a masterclass in writing by Lena Dunham, Jenni Konner, and Judd Apatow, the episode’s credited scribes. It’s a scene that so perfectly highlights everyone’s flaws. We have Shosh, the cruel drunk, who’s sick and tired of being treated like she’s not even there (kind of like how the show treats her). She takes Marnie’s honesty advice to the next level, calling Hannah the biggest narcissist she’s ever seen, comparing Marnie’s duck to a used condom and refusing to believe Jessa’s brief stint in rehab has done anything to cure her problems. Hannah backs up Shosh’s claim by pretentiously referring to Shosh as an unstimulating non-intellectual. Marnie, wanting things to be as close to perfect as possible, still doesn’t realize that even her foresight and preparedness won’t allow her to be the fixer that she strives to be. Jessa, meanwhile, is a surprisingly neutral player in this game, amusingly siding with points made by all parties.

The complex, interweaving dialogue was incredible to watch unfold, especially when the conversation would unexpectedly shift, like when Marnie and Hannah, who were fighting just seconds before, come to each others' defense against an attacking Shosh in a weird, funny, and realistic progression. The scene is a reminder that the show has never forgotten why these girls are the way they are, and no matter what seemingly positive steps are taken, they are ultimately unable to change. Marnie is constantly disappointed in Hannah, so much so that her expectations of her cannot get any lower. Hannah never expects anything from anyone, which is why all of her attention is focused on herself. And Shosh is just sick of everyone's bullshit and wishes she can break free from this unhealthy group dynamic and be her own individual.

The entire scene was a punch in the gut and therapeutic for both the audience and the characters. The final few minutes of the episode go by without any words, but it was just as captivating as the dialogue-heavy fight scene, as the girls wake up hungover and, to a certain extent at least, realize that maybe things are never going to be "as they were," but that's okay. They've been through the gauntlet together and know that, even though they sometimes hate each other, that there'll always be just as much love too. That final shot, where no words are exchanged but they start recreating the dance moves from the night before, was a wonderful showcase of raw and oftentimes unexplainable friendship, and a reminder of just how good *Girls* can be.

Other Thoughts

- This was also one of the funniest episodes of the season thanks in large part to Andrew Rannells' return as Elijah. Hannah's struggles with the beach and her oversized church-lady hat were good for a laugh too.
- Hannah: "It's a good thing I'm not as susceptible to criticism as I used to be."
- Elijah was only friends with Charlie in college because he thought he was a closet case as well. They watched *Wild Things* once and he thought they were going to start jerking each other off.
- A nice moment between Hannah and Marnie pre-fight discussing issues with their parents, with Marnie's being too distant and Hannah's not distant enough.
- "I spent \$80,000 on a theater BFA. Of course I am talented!"

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