

Roses Bloom Under the Sea

By Gabriella Quigley

Characters

HAZEL/ESOR
RAGVENIA (A SIREN)
OSMOND (AN OCTOPUS)
IDHARA (A VIPERFISH)
SVAD (SPIDER)
SOLEX (A LION)
TREBOV (GUARD 1)
PAEV (GUARD 2)
KELTAM (GUARD 3)
VIZ (A WHITE ELEPHANT)
HAWK
JEFF
LEAH

ACT I

INTERIOR: HAZEL AND JEFF SIT IN A DARK LIVING ROOM. THE ONLY SOURCE OF LIGHT IS FROM A TV. THE TV IS PLAYING NEWS COVERAGE OF COVID IN ITS EARLY DAYS. THEY SIT IN SILENCE. AFTER ABOUT A MINUTE A TIME WARP SEQUENCE STARTS, BUT HAZEL DOES NOT MOVE FROM HER POSITION ON THE COUCH. RAGVENIA, A DARK AND MYSTERIOUS SIREN, ENTERS AND EXTENDS THEIR HAND TO HAZEL. HAZEL, CONFUSED YET INTRIGUED, TAKES RAGVENIA'S HAND. THE FURNITURE FROM THE LIVING ROOM IS REMOVED AND THE LIGHTS CHANGE TO MAKE IT APPEAR THEY'RE UNDERWATER.

HAZEL
Where are we?

RAGVENIA
We're home.

HAZEL
(LOOKS AROUND) This doesn't feel like home.

RAGVENIA
In time I'm sure it will.

HAZEL
In... time?

RAGVENIA
The memories will flood back to you, I'm sure. You'll need to rest first.

HAZEL
(REALLY UNSURE) I don't know.

RAGVENIA
What can I do to make you feel more at home?

HAZEL
Well—I actually don't know what home is supposed to feel like anymore.

RAGVENIA
Well then surely this can feel like home in no time.

HAZEL
What makes you think that this place... whatever this—where even are we?

RAGVENIA

Darling... we're in the Great Ocean Kingdom of Valston. This is your home. (BEAT) Come, the king awaits your presence. You'll have some time with your father and then I'll take you to your chambers to rest.

HAZEL

(BEAT) Oh I'm not going anywhere with you.

RAGVENIA

Princess I insi—

HAZEL

Princess!? Oh now I know you're crazy.

RAGVENIA

You think I'm crazy?

HAZEL

Yea I do. I'm beginning to think I'm a little crazy too, but one thing I know is that I'm no princess of some ocean kingdom. You've got the wrong girl.

RAGVENIA

Child, do you not have any recollections of who you are and where you come from?

HAZEL

Oh I know who I am. I'm Hazel, and I'm from California—not Valston. Just a minute ago I was hanging out with my stepdad in the living room watching the news and now I'm here. Just a little concerned and confused to how we got here, but I know this isn't home.

RAGVENIA

(SIGHS) I knew sending you to the human world would do this to you. Listen, the life you speak of isn't your true reality.

HAZEL

(LAUGHS) This has got to be a dream. What are you talking about my true reality?

RAGVENIA

You are the Grand Princess Esor Trebor of the Ocean Kingdom Valston. Your father is King Nhoj Trebor and has ruled over Valston for 6 centuries. When you were only a tadpole, your mother thought it would be a good idea to send you to the human world. She thought it might help you build character when you came back to start your training.

HAZEL

My training?

RAGVENIA

For your magic.

HAZEL
(BEAT. LAUGHS HYSTERICALLY)

RAGVENIA
I'm not sure what's so funny.

HAZEL
(BETWEEN LAUGHS) It's just.. no. No.. absolutely not.. no. No. No!

RAGVENIA
I assure you princess--

HAZEL
(UPSET) No, I'm—I'm not a princess, and my name is Hazel, not Esor, and there's no way my dad is a king! He's dead to me, and the only throne my stepdad sits on, is his La-Z-Boy in the great Inland Empire. Hardly regal in my opinion.

RAGVENIA
(STARTING TO GET IRRATED) Maybe it is best you get some rest before seeing the king.

HAZEL
Frankly I just want to wake up from this dream.

RAGVENIA
This isn't a dream.

HAZEL
It has to be. That's the only explanation. None of this is logical.

RAGVENIA
Princess, I understand that this might be overwhelming, but I implore you to listen to reason. I have been your family's courtier since your great grandfather was on the throne and would never lead you astray. You just need time to adjust. Change can be difficult.

HAZEL
Wait... if this is a dream, if this is *my* dream, I could just zap you out of the story. (BEAT.)

RAGVENIA
What are you doing?

HAZEL

I'm trying to get rid of you.

RAGVENIA
I don't think it's working.

HAZEL
It will... just needs a second.

RAGVENIA
Why won't you believe me that this is reality?

HAZEL
Because it isn't. I know it isn't.

(RAGVENIA SIGHS. EXTENDS HER ARM OUT À LA STAR WARS FORCE ARM. HAZEL LOSES HER BREATH AND STARTS GASPING FOR AIR. SHE IS TERRIFIED. RAGVENIA DOES THIS FOR AN EXTEND MOMENT AND THEN RELEASES.)

HAZEL
(SCREAMING) WHAT THE FUCK WAS THAT!?

RAGVENIA
Do you believe me now?

HAZEL
(TERRIFIED SHOCK) What the fuck is going on?

RAGVENIA
My name is Ragvenia, I'm your family's courtier. You are Princess Esor—

HAZEL
Yea yea yea, of the fucking ocean kingdom. I mean what the fuck is going on in general. One minute I'm with Jeff and the next minute I'm hanging out with... what even are you?

RAGVENIA
I'm a siren.

HAZEL
(SARCASTICALLY) Oh... yea, of course. A siren, sure. And this isn't a dream. (BEAT. STARTS TO HYPERVENIALTE.)

RAGVENIA
Princess, please come rest.

HAZEL

No. Something still feels off. I don't think I should trust you.

RAGVENIA
You can trust me.

HAZEL
No, no I can't. I'm not going anywhere with you. I don't know how I'm going to get back, but I know this is it for the two of us. There's something off about you.

RAGVENIA
Princess—

(OSMOND, AN OCTOPUS, ENTERS)

OSMOND
Ragvenia, she said she's not going anywhere with you.

RAGVENIA
(SPITEFUL) This is none of your business inking!

(OSMOND GETS IN FRONT OF HAZEL)

OSMOND
I do believe it is.

RAGVENIA
Why do you do this?

OSMOND
Do what?

RAGVENIA
Don't play stupid with me.

OSMOND
I don't know what you're talking about.

RAGVENIA
You always butt in on things that have no concern to you.

(RAGVENIA AND OSMOND CONTINUE TO BICKER BACK AND FORTH LIKE AN OLD MARRIED COUPLE. THEY'RE SO INTO IT, TALKING OVER EACH OTHER, CUTTING EACH OTHER OFF. AS THEY DO HAZEL SLOWLY STARTS TO BACK AWAY. WHEN SHE FINALLY REALIZES THAT THEY AREN'T PAYING ATTENTION SHE DASHES AWAY. THEY CONTINUE TO BICKER.)

OSMOND

All I'm saying is that it doesn't fair that Justin Timberlake got off with a slap on the wrist and Janet Jackson was shamed.

RAGVENIA

(BEAT) This is what I'm talking about! Like how did we even get on this topic? I can't keep track of all the conversations happening at once.

OSMOND

Fine, you're right. *Die Hard* is a Christmas movie.

RAGVENIA

(GRUNTS) Get out of my way inkling.

(RAGVENIA PUSHES OSMOND ASIDE ONLY TO REALIZE HAZEL IS GONE.)

RAGVENIA

(INHALES SHARPLY) She's gone.

OSMOND

Oh, did I do that?

(RAGVENIA STARES AT OSMOND, THEN STORMS OUT. OSMOND SHRUGS AND FLOATS OFF STAGE. HAZEL ENTERS.)

HAZEL

(WHISPERS) I just want to go home, I just want to go home, I just want to go home.

(SHE REPEATS HERSELF OVER AND OVER AGAIN. IDHARA, A VIPERFISH, SLOWLY ENTERS. NOT VISIBLE TO HAZEL AT FIRST.)

IDHARA

Well if you want to go home, why don't you?

HAZEL

Who said that?

IDHARA

If you want to go home why don't you?

HAZEL

Who are you?

IDHARA
(FINALLY VISIBLE TO HAZEL) Why don't you go home?

HAZEL
You didn't answer my question.

IDHARA
You haven't answered mine, and I've asked three times.

HAZEL
(LONG PAUSE) I—I don't know.

IDHARA
What don't you know?

HAZEL
I don't know... well I don't know where I am.

IDHARA
That's not true. Don't you trust yourself?

HAZEL
Well—I... I don't know.

IDHARA
It seems like there's much you don't know.

HAZEL
Well things... changed... and it happened all so fast, but then it felt slow at the same time... I mean the whole thing has been... weird. Like what is going on? Who even are you?

IDHARA
I am Idhara.

HAZEL
Idhara. Well Idhara you look like you could kill me.

IDHARA
I won't.

HAZEL
That's nice to hear.

IDHARA
I can help you find your way home if you'd like.

HAZEL

(BEAT) How do I know I can trust you?

IDHARA

Do you trust yourself?

HAZEL

How is that related?

IDHARA

Everything is related Princess Esor.

HAZEL

(SPOOKED BUT CONFIDENT) That's not my name.

IDHARA

For someone who doesn't know anything, sure seems like you know that you aren't who we say you are.

HAZEL

I—well...

IDHARA

Yes?

HAZEL

Well... I may not know much, but I know what my name is.

IDHARA

And what is your name?

HAZEL

Hazel!

IDHARA

(DOUBTFUL) Hmm..

HAZEL

What? That's my name!

IDHARA

Is it?

HAZEL

(UPSET) Of course! My name is Hazel. It's Hazel. That's my name, my name is Hazel.

IDHARA

If you say so Hazel.

HAZEL

You don't believe me.

IDHARA

Because you don't believe yourself Hazel.

HAZEL

How can you say that? You don't even know me!

IDHARA

I don't?

HAZEL

No, you don't! We just met so how can you say that?

IDHARA

Did we? Or have we always known each other Hazel?

HAZEL

How is that even possible?

IDHARA

Everything is possible Hazel.

HAZEL

Can you stop saying my name! Jesus... You know, fuck this! I don't need you! I don't need anyone here. I can find my own way home!

IDHARA

Well that'll be interesting since you don't even know where you are Hazel.

HAZEL

Seriously fuck off!

IDHARA

Why are you getting angry Hazel?

HAZEL

I'm angry because I just want to go home and you and that siren freak keep saying things that aren't true and I think y'all are just trying to fuck with me which is working because nothing makes sense here and I might not know a lot, but God dammit I think I know my own name and I know for sure I don't belong here and I'm tired and cold and I just really want to go home— this is all just a bad dream! One of those dreams where everything feels real. That's why it felt so real earlier with Ragvenia. That's it! This is all just a hyper realistic dream and I'll wake up in a minute and things will be normal. I just need to wake myself up.

(HAZEL STARTS SLAPPING HER FACE TO WAKE UP)

IDHARA

Hazel slow down.

HAZEL

No! I won't do that! Stop telling me what to do! Just stop talking to me!

IDHARA

Hazel—

HAZEL

I don't feel safe here and I WANT TO GO HOME!!!! Why is no one listening to me?!

IDHARA

Because you're not listening to yourself Hazel.

HAZEL

What the fuck does that even mean?!

IDHARA

Slow down Hazel.

HAZEL

STOP CALLING ME THAT, THAT'S NOT MY NAME!!! I AM THE GRAND PRINCESS ESOR OF THE OCEAN KINGDOM VALSTON!!!

(SILENCE FALLS BETWEEN THE TWO. IDHARA PULLS OUT A POMEGRANTE SEED AND OFFERS IT TO ESOR. SHE TAKES IT AND EATS IT. THEY FALL INTO A SLOW OCEAN BREATH TOGETHER.)

IDHARA

What is your name?

ESOR

My name is Esor Trebor.

IDHARA

Do you feel safe?

ESOR

(BEAT) I do. (DEFEATED) What's happening?

IDHARA

Esor, you're in a lot of pain.

ESOR

I... I feel that. It's all over.

IDHARA

You've been through a lot. It's your time to let it all go.

ESOR

How?

IDHARA

You have to surrender yourself.

ESOR

What if I don't want to?

IDHARA

(BEAT) If you don't surrender yourself now, you will lose yourself forever.

ESOR

I don't understand.

IDHARA

If you continue to hold onto bricks you've built walls with, then you will only isolate yourself and therefore will never be able to grow into the person you're meant to be. Now is the time.

Will you waste it?

ESOR

I won't. At least I don't want to.

IDHARA

You don't feel worthy of change?

ESOR

I suppose that all depends.

IDHARA
On what?

ESOR
Is it a lot of change? Too much change all at once can be daunting.

IDHARA
You've been through a drastic change before though.

ESOR
Yea... felt like the whole ground evaporated beneath me. That's scary.

IDHARA
You're too far in the clouds. You need to ground yourself.

ESOR
Is there even a ground to ground myself in?

IDHARA
Of course there is. It's been waiting for you, you know.

ESOR
(BASHFUL) Can you take me there?

IDHARA
(CHUCKLES) You're standing on it.

(ESOR LOOKS DOWN AND EXAMINES THE GROUND. SLOWLY SHE TAKES HER SHOES OFF AND RUBS HER FEET INTO THE DIRT.)

ESOR
(SMIRKS) It feels good.

IDHARA
You have to heal your roots Esor.

ESOR
(SIGHS) I know. (BEAT) I've been ignoring it. It's just hard. When you come from where I've grown up, things are just hard. When you go through that much abuse. You start to question your existence. Then people diminish it because it's not physical. Still hurts. I've thought maybe I am just better off alone. But then what kind of life is that? I still want to connect with someone. I still desire that. It's just so hard reopening those wounds.

IDHARA
You need to do it for yourself.

(HAZEL LOOKS DOWN AT THE DIRT IN CONTEMPLATION.)

HAZEL
There's no easy way out of here is there?

IDHARA
No. It will be challenging.

HAZEL
(NODS) Ok.

IDHARA
I know it's difficult. I know right now you're feeling lost and confused and like you have no control over what is happening. You need to anchor yourself with your environment. What feels safe here for you? It'll be difficult, but soon you'll see that most everything here is working to protect and guide you. You don't have any reason to guard your own self. All you have to do is trust in yourself. (BEAT) I have to go now.

ESOR
I have so many other questions, and we just met—

IDHARA
No no no. We didn't just meet. Trust in yourself Esor. Trust your body. Trust its wisdom. There's no need to be fearful. You belong here. Here, take these. Helps to keep you grounded.

(HANDS ESOR POMEGRANATE SEEDS, ESOR LOOKS DOWN AT THE SEEDS. IDHARA EXITS)

ESOR
How can you have pomegranate seeds at the bottom of the oce—Idhara? IDHARA?!

(ESOR HEAVY SIGHS. SHE NOTICES THAT HER PATCH OF DIRT IS A PATH. SHE WALKS DOWN THE PATH A LITTLE. SPIDERS START TO CRAWL OUT. SHE DOESN'T NOTICE AT FIRST BUT WHEN SHE DOES, SHE FREAKS OUT. ENTER SVAD.)

SVAD
No need to panic child, they're friendly.

ESOR
I've never been a fan of spiders.

SVAD

That's a shame. We're really loads of fun.

ESOR

(DOUBTFUL) I'm sure. (BEAT) How are you even here?

SVAD

What's that supposed to mean?

ESOR

I just mean I don't recall spiders being an ocean animal.

SVAD

You're resisting reality sweetie.

ESOR

But this can't be reality.

SVAD

Says who? You? Who even are you to decide what's reality and what's not? Anything can be reality. That's the really fun part of it all. A whole life created by you for you. The possibilities are endless.

ESOR

Well if anything can be reality, why can't I go back to my own?

SVAD

Seems like something only you can figure out.

ESOR

Of course it is.

SVAD

(BEAT) Come dancing with me tonight.

ESOR

Seems sort of frivolous in the current situation I'm in.

SVAD

Is fun frivolous?

HAZEL

Currently? Yea I'd say it is. I'm trying to get home. I should be focusing on that honestly.

SVAD

You lost your sense of adventure.

HAZEL

You say that as if you've known me my entire life.

SVAD

Haven't I Esor?

HAZEL

Do I have Esor tattooed on my forehead or something? I don't understand how everyone already knows my name.

SVAD

We're connected through the divine energy.

HAZEL

Divine energy? If we're so connected why don't I know your name?

SVAD

Name's Svad. You would know that if you were more open to receiving the divine energy. Divine energy can gift you anything you want, but you have to be open to it. You're not connected. But maybe you could be if you come dancing with me tonight.

HAZEL

Are you're telling me that if I go dancing with you, I can be connected to divine energy and find my way home?

SVAD

What I'm telling you is that it doesn't hurt to try.

HAZEL

Just seems like a waste of time.

SVAD

You're a real Debbie downer huh? Must be great at parties. Come on, seriously come out tonight. It'll be fun.

HAZEL

There's just so much work that needs be done.

SVAD

How can you work your life away and not spend anytime time having fun?

ESOR

I don't seem to have much of a choice in the matter.

SVAD

You always have a choice. One of your main responsibilities should be to always remember to have fun. Listen, I know things are tough right now. You're reopening old shit. Shit you completely forgot about and as counterproductive as you think it might be, you need this night. Fuck what everyone else says. Fuck whatever you think they're saying. You need to find what brings you joy and no one else. Seems like you've got a choice right now. Are you going to continue going on like this, or do you want to cause a little chaos for the hell of it? Your call.

(ESOR STARES BLANKLY AT SVAD. STILL UNSURE OF HER CHOICE. SVAD SHRUGS AND EXITS OFF STAGE. ESOR TAKES A MOMENT TO HERSELF.)

ESOR

Hey, Svad wait up!

(ESOR EXITS. LIGHTS FADE. TRANSITION MUSIC. SET CHANGES TO A VANITY AND A CLOTHING RACK. ENTER ESOR AND SVAD. SVAD HELPS ESOR GET READY FOR A NIGHT OUT. WE SEE THEM PLAYING AROUND WITH DIFFERENT OUTFITS, MAKEUP AND HAIR STYLES. THEY'RE JUST MESSING AROUND AND WE CAN SEE ESOR START TO COME OUT OF HER SHELL LITTLE BY LITTLE. WHEN THEY ARE READY THE VANITY AND CLOTHING RACK IS REMOVED, THE MUSIC SHIFTS INTO CLUB MUSIC AND A BAR IS MOVED ONSTAGE.)

SVAD

(TO BARTENDER) Two shots for my friend here and I'll have my usual.

ESOR

Two shots?

SVAD

There'll be more where that came from kid. (SVAD GRABS THE DRINKS) To finding the joy in life!

ESOR

Cheers!

SVAD

Alright, let's hit the dance floor!

ESOR

Svad.

SVAD

What is it honey?

ESOR
(BEAT) Thank you.

SVAD
Anytime princess. Now come on let's go!

(SVAD AND ESOR EXIT TO DANCEFLOOR. BAR IS REMOVED. AT SOME POINT A CHORUS MEMBER STEALS SVAD AWAY FOR A DANCE. ESOR IS A LITTLE UNCOMFORTABLE AT FIRST TO BE ON HER OWN. SOLEX, A LION, ENTERS.)

SOLEX
You're new.

ESOR
Uh... yea, I—

SOLEX
No need to be alarmed.

ESOR
It's not every day you meet a Lion... at a disco... in the ocean. (LAUGHS) What is this place?

SOLEX
Eh trust me, crazier things have happened. Name's Solex.

ESOR
Esor.

SOLEX
I know who you are. You're the talk of the town.

ESOR
Not surprising at this point.

SOLEX
Princess Esor returning to Valston... pretty big news.

ESOR
I guess that would be.

SOLEX
You don't seem as excited as everyone else.

ESOR

I don't really remember this life. Kind of hard to be excited about something you don't remember. It's weird because part of me does feel connected to this Esor everyone says I am, but I feel guilty for not knowing who she really is. Who I really am. Whoever I am.

SOLEX

Don't be too hard on yourself. Confidence is key, even if you have no clue what's happening. Especially in times of uncertainty.

ESOR

I've struggled with that.

SOLEX

That's because you let people take your power.

ESOR

(DEFENSIVELY) I don't let people take my power.

(SOLEX GIVES ESOR A LOOK AS TO SAY "REALLY?")

ESOR

Ok... sometimes... I guess I can be a people pleaser.

SOLEX

More like a rug, I think.

ESOR

Hey!

SOLEX

Am I wrong?

ESOR

(BEAT) No.

SOLEX

You're bothered by me, aren't you?

ESOR

Just a tad.

SOLEX

How about I make it up to you?

ESOR

And how would you do that?

SOLEX

I hear you've been wanting to go back to your home.

ESOR

News sure does travel fast around here.

SOLEX

Sure does. Listen, no one else is going to tell you this, but you have it within you to get back to your home.

ESOR

Exactly how?

SOLEX

It's all about being open. The more open you are, the more you get your power back. Your power gives you the ability to manifest whatever it is you want. Your problem is you keep giving your power and energy to people who don't appreciate it. You've gotta get it back from them. There's this warehouse on the other side of town. It's the entrance to Anahata; a labyrinth of lost love. They call them the guards. There are four of them. If you want to reclaim your power that's where you need to go. You go in and face each one head on. No hiding behind walls. You need to release them from being trapped in the labyrinth forever.

ESOR

What if they're not released?

SOLEX

If you cling to the past, you'll never be able to find room for the love you deserve in your future. You have to clear them in order to get what you want.

ESOR

They're holding me back.

SOLEX

You were looking for their validation when you needed your own.

ESOR

How do we get there?

SOLEX

It's more of a matter of when we get there. The labyrinth is only open for another hour before it's closed till the next new moon.

ESOR

Why didn't you lead with that? I can't wait another for another new moon to get back home. If I have to go clear some lost love from a labyrinth then let's go.

SOLEX

There's one more thing. I can't be there with you. You have to do this alone.

ESOR

(BEAT) Well then... I suppose it's now or never.

SOLEX

Right. Follow me.

(TRANSITION MUSIC CUTS IN. SOLEX AND ESOR ARE MIMICING HAVING A CONVERSATION WHILE THE SET PIECES MOVE OUT. THEY EMBRACE IN A COMFORTABLE AND SOOTHING HUG. SOLEX EXITS. ESOR STARES AT THE DIRECTION SHE NEEDS TO WALK. SHE DIGS IN HER POCKET FOR THE POMERGRANETTE SEEDS, LOOKS AT THEM, AND POPS THEM IN HER MOUTH. SHE EXITS. LIGHTS FADE OUT. THE SOUND OF A HEARTBEAT STARTS TO FADE IN. AS THE HEARTBEAT BECOMES LOUDER, A GREEN LIGHT STARTS TO BEAT WITH THE SOUND. THERE ARE MIRRORS SPRORATICALLY PLACED. IN BETWEEN THE LIGHTS COMING ON AND OFF THEY ARE MOVED TO NEW POSITIONS. ESOR ENTERS BETWEEN BEATS. AFTER 4 BEAT CYCLES TREBOV ENTERS.)

TREBOV

Esor.

ESOR

Trebov.

TREBOV

Listen—

ESOR

No.

TREBOV

Esor—

ESOR

Don't Esor me! Telling me to listen, when you didn't listen to me.

TREBOV

(DEFENSIVELY) What are you talking about I listened!

ESOR
Did you?

TREBOV
Of course!

ESOR
Really now? Because every time it seemed like you did whatever *you* wanted; you really didn't seem to even consider how *I* felt.

TREBOV
Oh, so you don't care about my happiness and wellbeing?

ESOR
Of course I care, but when it also comes at the expense of my wellbeing? I just wanted a middle ground we could come to, which isn't too crazy to ask in a relationship.

TREBOV
Well you've got your own things that bug me!

ESOR
I'm not saying that I don't! I'm sure there's plenty of things I do that you don't like, but the difference is that I tried to take accountability for them but you're not doing the same for your shit. You want to live in this delusion that you're perfect and have done nothing wrong ever, and this, the "issues" in our relationship, yea well that's all on me, but in reality, you're just projecting your own insecurities on me and the relationship. You're just as fucked up and destructive. We're human! All we do is fuck up. All of us. Every single human has their own concoction of shit that they have to deal with, even you! Sometimes things get messy, but I'm not your mom! I'm not here to clean up your mess, that's your responsibility. (BEAT) It's disrespectful! How could you say you love me when all you do is disrespect me and our relationship?

TREBOV
I'm sorry.

ESOR
Are you?

(LONG BEAT.)

ESOR
I really did love you. I don't think I've truly loved someone as much as I did you in such a long time. Through all of it, I would have done anything to keep our relationship alive. (BEAT) You never loved me.

TREBOV
That's not true!

ESOR
Then why didn't you step up to the plate?

TREBOV
I—I—

ESOR
If you loved me, *really* loved me, we wouldn't be having this conversation. We talked about forever Trebov! Forever doesn't just mean all the good moments that make us feel good about ourselves. Forever means doing the work, seeing all the dark parts of our beings, supporting each other through all the ugly moments of life. Being there for the other person. (BEAT)
Where were you when I needed you the most?

TREBOV
You're a strong woman.

ESOR
Even the strongest need support.

TREBOV
Well... you...

ESOR
Honestly, I don't want to hear it anymore. You're selfish and egotistical and I just can't be in that kind of relationship anymore. I'm starting to remember who I am, what I like, my wants, my needs, my goals and aspirations. I love you, and will always love you, but you just don't fit into the picture anymore.

(LIGHTS IMMEDIATELY GO DARK. TREBOV EXITS. MIRRORS SHIFT. LIGHTS COME BACK UP.)

ESOR
Trebov? Trebov?

PAEV
(OFF STAGE) He's gone.

ESOR
Whose there?

PAEV
(ENTERS) Please don't be alarm Princess Esor.

ESOR
Paev.

PAEV
Esor I'm not going to hurt you.

ESOR
You already did.

PAEV
Listen, I—I really didn't mean to—

ESOR
But you did! You did! You crossed a line and then blamed it on me!

PAEV
I was drunk.

ESOR
That doesn't make what you did any less damaging. (BEAT) Where did Trebov go? If I'm going to be stuck here, I'd rather be stuck with the narcissist.

PAEV
Oh come on Esor. That's not fair.

ESOR
Ohhhhh you wanna have a conversation about what's *fair*?

PAEV
Esor—

ESOR
I don't think you're ready for that conversation there buddy!

PAEV
Esor really come on.

ESOR
Don't come near me!

PAEV

I'm not going to hurt you.

ESOR

(BEAT) Where did Trebov go?

PAEV

I cannot say.

ESOR

Why not?

PAEV

Because I'm unsure myself.

(ESOR LOOKS AT PAEV FOR A LONG TIME, AND THEN MOVES AWAY FROM HIM. THEY SIT IN SILENCE FOR A LONG TIME. ESOR IS CLEARLY UNCOMFORTABLE.)

PAEV

I really didn't mean to hurt you. And I know I didn't handle it in a great way. I was in denial. I never thought I would be one of those guys. I always thought of myself as a decent guy. Nothing special, just your average guy. But I'm someone you could depend on. Someone to go to when you need comfort. I always kinda thought of myself as a golden retriever. Hurting someone was just an impossible idea in my head. (BEAT) And then I hurt you, of all people. It shattered this perfect self-image I had in my head. I didn't want to own up to it because then I would know I'm flawed. Avoiding it didn't help though. Just made things worse. (BEAT) This is sounding self-serving. (ATTEMPTING TO LIGHTEN THE MOOD) Classic toxic masculinity am I right? (ESOR DOESN'T REACT) I really didn't mean to cross that boundary with you. I know that might not even help but I truly do mean it. Esor from the bottom of my heart I'm so incredibly sorry.

ESOR

(BEAT) Though it was flawed for a bit there, I appreciate the apology.

PAEV

Yea I'm sorry, I didn't mean to make it about me.

ESOR

It's ok. (BEAT) I'm glad you've recognized what happened. (LONG PAUSE) I can't forgive you today... but I think maybe one day.

PAEV

(BEAT) I think that's fair.

ESOR
You motherfucker.

(THEY BOTH SHARE A BRIEF LAUGH. SILENCE.)

ESOR
It's not going to get easier is it? The next two?

PAEV
That all depends. Are you ready?

ESOR
I don't know. My chest feels heavy.

PAEV
Think that might be a good sign actually.

ESOR
How?

PAEV
It's getting ready to let a big one go.

(LIGHTS GO OUT. PAEV EXITS. MIRRORS SHIFT. LIGHTS UP. ESOR LOOKS AROUND, TAKES A DEEP BREATH, AND THEN CLOSES HER EYES. LIGHTS GO OUT AGAIN. SHIFT. KELTAM ENTERS BEHIND ESOR. LIGHTS UP. ESOR OPENS HER EYES. BOTH BREATHE IN. LIGHTS GO OUT. SHIFT. KELTAM IS NOW STANDING IN FRONT OF ESOR. LIGHTS UP. THEY LOOK INTO EACH OTHER'S EYES FOR A WHILE.)

KELTAM
Why do you want to be with someone who doesn't want to be with you?

(BEAT. ESOR RELEASES HER BREATH AND STARTS SOBBING. KELTAM PULLS HER INTO HIS CHEST. LIGHTS SLOWLY FADE TO A GRAYISH COLOR.)

KELTAM
You have to let me go.

ESOR
I know.

KELTAM

Then why am I still here?

ESOR

(HOLDING BACK TEARS) I guess... deep down... I just want to believe that after all of this, after everything, we'd end up together.

KELTAM

Esor... we hooked up a few times, sure, but too much time has passed.

ESOR

I know.

KELTAM

You're inherit worth isn't diminished just because one person can't reciprocate.

ESOR

I know.

KELTAM

You have a lot of love to give and someone is going to appreciate it more than I could.

ESOR

I know.

KELTAM

Think of the amazing guy—

ESOR

KELTAM!! I know!! I know all of these things; I know the time I've wasted pining over a guy who clearly doesn't know if he wants me or not; I know that I'm still worthy of a great love where they'll appreciate me; I know you're just trying to be nice to me right now and make me feel better about myself, which isn't really helping; I know I need to let go of you! I know all of these things and more!! I don't want to be here all these years later. You think I want to be that girl? (BEAT) I just don't know why we couldn't have tried at least. Clearly you were a bit interested, and I was interested too! I just don't understand why we couldn't have tried. Why couldn't you have tried?

KELTAM

(BEAT) I'm sorry.

ESOR

(SIGHS. STEPS AWAY FROM KELTAM. LONG PAUSE.) You're really not half the man I have envisioned in my head. Really, you're still just a boy. A boy too scared to take his chances. I

would have given my all for you, and you know that. You're right. Too much time has passed. It's different now, we're different. We want different things in life, and that's ok. (BEAT) I don't know if I can ever fully get over you, but maybe we were always supposed to be on the side lines. I wish you all the best my friend.

KELTAM

(BEAT) I hope you know... I really did love you.

ESOR

I know. (BEAT) Just not in the way I needed to be loved.

(LIGHTS GO OUT. KELTAM EXITS. MIRRORS SHIFT TO A HALF CIRCLE UPSTAGE. LIGHTS COME UP. ESOR IS ON HER OWN. SHE LOOKS AROUND, SEEMINGLY WAITING FOR THE NEXT GUARD TO COME. SHE TURNS TO SEE HER REFLECTION IN ALL THE MIRRORS. SHE STARES AT HERSELF FOR A MOMENT. WALKS UP TO THE MIRRORS AND EXAMINES HERSELF.)

ESOR

Today... I choose me.

(LIGHTS OUT. HEARTBEAT SLOW FADES AWAY INTO THE DARK. SILENCE. LIGHTS SLOWLY FADE IN. VIZ, A WHITE ELEPHANT, IS CENTER STAGE. ESOR ENTERS.)

VIZ

I've been waiting for you.

ESOR

Sorry to keep you waiting.

VIZ

You have no need to apologize. Everything is happening with divine timing.

ESOR

Who are you? Are you a guard? Am I still in Anahata?

VIZ

My name is Viz, and you have made it through Anahata. I'm not a guard.

ESOR

I thought there were 4 guards. Solex said there would be 4 guards. What happened to the fourth?

VIZ

Don't you see?

ESOR
See what?

VIZ
Reflect on what you saw.

ESOR
Trebov... Paev... Keltam... I was the fourth.

VIZ
Precisely.

ESOR
Things sure are interesting around here.

VIZ
You're learning so much.

ESOR
I suppose I'm to learn something from you.

VIZ
What have you learned from the others?

ESOR
I was scared and confused... Idhara helped me to ground myself so I could think clearly. Things weren't always easy; I didn't grow up in a secure environment. There was a lot of fighting and I hid. I hid parts of myself to keep the peace. I've carried so much guilt and shame from that point in my life. It's hindered my creative expression... Svad taught me it's ok to let loose; she taught me that even in the midst of all the crap, that it's ok to take a moment for myself to feel joy and freedom. That it's necessary to play even as an adult. I shut that part of my life out for so long and I overworked myself. I was depleted. I gave what little I had left to those I loved, but none to myself. Solex reminded me to stand up for myself, to take my power back from them. It's not theirs to keep. He led me to Anahata. (BEAT) The labyrinth! It wasn't so much the guards that were the lesson, the labyrinth itself was the lesson. It only showed me what was within. It was a reflection of what was held in my heart. I held so much grief over failed relationships that I forgot the most important relationship is with myself. (BEAT) I haven't been honest with myself.

VIZ
No, you haven't.

ESOR
It would free me from so much.

VIZ
You wouldn't have to hide.

ESOR
(BEAT) I can't keep going like this.

VIZ
Then speak your truth.

(ESOR THINKS FOR A MOMENT, THEN SCREAMS. BEAT.)

VIZ
Interesting way of speaking your truth.

ESOR
Honestly... It felt right.

VIZ
Sometimes we just need a good scream.

ESOR
I needed it.

VIZ
Do you want to do it again?

ESOR
(BEAT) Maybe.

VIZ
Let it out.

(ESOR SCREAMS)

VIZ
Feeling better?

ESOR
Yes.

VIZ
Why did you feel the need to scream?

ESOR

I guess... it's everything I've suppressed. Everything that I've felt over the years that I never let out. All the pain, and anger, the disappointments, the little frustrations I felt when I felt like someone talked down to me, or when someone gaslighted me and made me question my own sanity. But also, even the love, the joy, whenever I felt passionate about something and someone just dismissed it, I could feel myself stuffing the words down. I don't feel like anyone cared to listen to me. Like *really* listen to me.

VIZ

Esor... You have a powerful voice. Not only do you deserve to be seen, but you also deserved to be heard. It starts with how you talk to and about yourself. Self-love is the first step in clearing out these blocks you have in your system. You need to be kinder to yourself and the experiences you've had. Truth be told, those experiences, as ugly as some of them have been, are something to talk about. You can't keep holding them in.

ESOR

I'm scared.

VIZ

The truth can be scary sometimes. But as long as we're secure in ourselves, our being, our truth, then nothing can get in our way. You're not meant to please everyone, so stop silencing yourself to make everyone else content.

ESOR

(SIGHS) Ok...

VIZ

You're still unsure.

ESOR

You can see right through me.

VIZ

I sometimes find it helpful to meditate.

ESOR

I don't know. I've never felt that great at meditation.

VIZ

Would you like to try it with me?

ESOR

Umm... I guess it doesn't hurt to try it again.

(ESOR WALKS DOWNSTAGE AND TAKES A SEAT ON THE GROUND. EXPRESS YOURSELF BY LONDRELLE PLAYS. AFTER ABOUT A MINUTE VIZ EXITS. ESOR SITS IN MEDITATION FOR A BIT LONGER. THE SONG SLOWLY FADES OUT. ESOR SITS IN SILENCE. FROM OFF STAGE WE START TO HEAR WHISPERS.)

CHROUS
(WHISPERS)

Trust in your intuition.
Your life is not over.
You are divine energy.
Rise from the ashes.
Everything is connected.
He is here to protect you.
You are the master.
She is evil.
Trust your inner wisdom.

(A HAWK FLYS IN AND LANDS ON ESOR'S KNEE. SHE OPENS HER EYES AND STARES AT THE HAWK. THE HAWK SLOWLY TOUCHES HIS BEAK TO HER BROW. THEY BREATH IN TOGETHER. RELEASE.)

ESOR
I see. I understand.

(HAWK EXITS. BEAT. RAGVENIA ENTERS.)

RAGVENIA

Princess! I've been looking all over the kingdom for you. I do apologize about how things unfolded earlier, that's not the way I expected your return home to go. I know things must have been confusing for you but assure you, you are safe now that I'm here. It's best that we get you to your chambers so that you can rest. I already talked with your father and we both think its best that you settle in before meeting him. Come let me show you to your chamber.

ESOR
I will not be going anywhere with you.

RAGVENIA
Princess, I really do implore you to listen to reason.

ESOR
I've already listened.

RAGVENIA

(BEAT) And who have you already listened to if not myself? That inkling? Child it is imperative you don't take council from the likes of him.

ESOR

It wasn't the octopus I listened to.

RAGVENIA

Then who was it?

ESOR

Myself.

RAGVENIA

(LAUGHS) Oh princess... that's very sweet but you are still so young. You should really listen to those older and wiser.

ESOR

All I ever need is already within myself.

RAGVENIA

Princess, I'm not sure what you've experienced in my absence but I'm not sure it was what was right for you. You'll come to see that in time I'm sure.

ESOR

Time is relative.

RAGVENIA

(ANNOYED) Princess, I really do think it's time for you to rest. Please, come with me now.
(BEAT) Quite the day you've had I'm sure. I can't imagine what must be running through your head right now with all this conflicting information. But that's where I can help you sort through it. This is what I've done for your family for generations. Your father and mother, and their father and mother before them and so on and so forth. You can either continue to listen to madness or you can listen to reason. Please come.

ESOR

I will not be going anywhere with you.

RAGVENIA

(ANGRY) Princess!

ESOR

This world you've brought me to... I don't actually belong here, do I?

RAGVENIA

Prince—

ESOR

Don't speak. I can see it clearly now. You're not who you say you are, and I don't trust you.

RAGVENIA

Princess Esor—(SIGHS). I really wish you would listen to me.

HAZEL

You know you had one thing right.

RAGVENIA

And what is that?

HAZEL

This is what you've done for my family for generations. (BEAT) You weave your way through our minds, creating delusions, telling us lies, feeding on our insecurities. You're the intrusive thoughts we have laying in our bed late at night when we can't sleep. You tell us we're not good enough, and that we'll never amount to anything. You tell us we're not worthy. Worthy of security, of pleasure, of power, of love, of truth, of our own wisdom, and you tell us we're not worthy of being connected to the universe. You tell us lies like a broken record. You enslave our minds and slowly break us down one piece at a time, till we're a shell of ourselves. You do that so you can easily manipulate us to do your will. I know I'm not a princess, my name isn't Esor, and I don't belong here to this world. But becoming Princess Esor made me really remember who I am. I am strong and resilient. I am love and light. I am worthy of everything I want and need. And you... you are just the anxiety that never ceases in my head. The depression that keeps me reliving all the terrible things from my past instead of being grateful for all the amazing things. (BEAT) Just another one of your broken records.

(SILENCE. RAGVENIA STARTS TO SLOWLY CLAP.)

RAGVENIA

That was quite the little speech you had there. Did you practice it all day while you hid away from me? You think that a few "poetic" words will just magically do the trick and get rid of me? You're smarter than some of your family members, I'll give you that, but don't be so naïve. I've embedded myself into the very fabric of your existence. You can't get rid of me even if you tried. I can already feel the doubt fill your mind that you're not as strong and resilient as you say you are. You think you can outsmart me? That's so very cute. (BEAT) Now like I was saying, princess, come with me now.

OSMOND

I believe she said she wouldn't be going anywhere with you.

RAGVENIA
(GROANS) Go away inkling!

OSMOND
Are you alright princess?

ESOR
I'm fine, he hasn't hurt me.

OSMOND
But then again, hasn't he already?

RAGVENIA
You speak nonsense!

OSMOND
Think Esor.

ESOR
Well it was a concern of mine for a second, but he hasn't touched me since—since I got here...

OSMOND
And how did you get here Esor?

RAGVENIA
Really Esor, you're going to listen to this pathetic creature?

ESOR
The last thing I remember before all this is watching the news with my stepdad.

OSMOND
Right, then what? Connect yourself with the divine.

RAGVENIA
"Connect yourself with the divine" Really this all just propaganda.

OSMOND
Focus Esor. Trust your instincts.

RAGVENIA
I've had just about enough of this garbage. Esor it is time to go now.

OSMOND
You know the truth. You see the truth. You feel the truth.

RAGVENIA
Princess Esor, now!

OCTOPUS
Speak the truth!

RAGVENIA
Princess Esor!

ESOR
I overdosed. (BEAT) I remember... I really remember now... Everything had changed so quickly. It was all... so much... all at once... graduation, the move, the breakup, the pandemic, losing my job... I was alone... I didn't have anyone... the only one I had was you... you... you told me to take all those pills, you told me to kill myself, you've been in my head since I was *little girl*, telling me that no one cares about me, no one loves me, that I'm just a burden to everyone and that I shouldn't even exist! You're the intrusive voice in my head weaving your way in and out of my life! YOU!

(LONG PAUSE)

RAGVENIA
You, you, you... don't *you* remember? Don't tell me your memory is so fickle you forgot already... I am you and you are me. Everything is connected... remember? You only had yourself, you told yourself to take all those pills, you told yourself to kill yourself. But if you want to blame someone else for it, I'd gladly take that role on for you.

OSMOND
You are not welcome here any longer.

RAGVENIA
Honestly inkling you should just go back from which you came! (RAGVENIA PUSHES OCTOPUS OUT OF THE WAY AND WALKS DOMINANTLY TOWARDS ESOR.) As for you, you little brat, you're coming with me.

ESOR
NO!

RAGVENIA
Aww... what are you going to do about it?

SVAD

(FROM OFF STAGE) Listen she can be pretty stubborn, (ENTERS) but the octopus is right. You're not welcome here anymore ya crusty, dusty piece of shit!

SOLEX

(ENTERS FROM BEHIND ESOR) Now you don't want to cause any more trouble than you already have, so maybe you should leave before things get really ugly. (THE HAWK FLYS IN AND LANDS ON SOLEX'S HEAD)

VIZ

(ENTERS) So what'll it be?

RAGVENIA

(BEAT) This is ridiculous. What you all going to attack me?

ESOR

(BEAT) Yes.

(SVAD, SOLEX, THE HAWK AND VIZ ALL RUN RAGVENIA OFF STAGE. ESOR RUNS UP TO THE OCTOPUS.)

ESOR

Are you ok?

OSMOND

I'll be fine princess.

ESOR

What is your name?

OSMOND

Osmond.

ESOR

Osmond, thank you for everything.

OSMOND

No need to thank me. We need to get you home.

ESOR

Home...

OSMOND

(BEAT) I know you've been through a lot, but it is time.

ESOR

Idhara said he could help me find my way home. I feel like he sent me on the right path but I'm not sure I know how to get home.

OSMOND

The pomegranate seeds.

ESOR

(REACHES IN POCKET) I don't have anymore.

OSMOND

You need to find Idhara then.

ESOR

That could take forever!

OSMOND

You can call on him at any point Esor. Remember, everything is connected. Just breath and focus.

ESOR

Breath and focus.

(ESOR STARTS TO MEDITATE. IDHARA ENTERS)

IDHARA

You've come a far way since our first encounter.

ESOR

Idhara!

IDHARA

What is it that you need Esor?

ESOR

I need to go home, but I need a pomegranate seed.

IDHARA

Oh... you need to go home... I thought this was your home.

ESOR

(BEAT) It is, but... It's not my time yet.

IDHARA

(LOOKS AT ESOR) Well... look at you. You've figured it all out, haven't you?

ESOR

Far from it. Don't get me wrong, I've learned a lot in my time here, but there's still so many questions I have. Everything here seems to make sense and not make sense at the same time. It's a strange world you live in, but oddly comforting. Like I was always meant to be here. Well I guess I was, seeing as I'm the princess. (LAUGHS) I realized that there was so much I was holding onto, affecting every part of me, and while there's still so much work to do, I feel like I've made a step in the right direction. I know I'll be back one day, but for now I need to get back to my real home.

IDHARA

(BEAT) Check your pocket.

ESOR

(DIGS IN POCKET) A golden pomegranate seed?

IDHARA

It'll ground you where ever you want to be. A gift from the divine for being open.

ESOR

Of course.

IDHARA

I guess this is farewell.

ESOR

Yea I guess it is.

(ESOR LOOKS BACK AT OSMOND. HE NODS HIS HEAD. SHE LOOKS BACK AT IDHARA.)

IDHARA

Don't worry. We'll always be here, and you even said yourself... you'll be back.

(ESOR NODS. LOOKS DOWN AT THE SEED, AND POPS IT IN HER MOUTH. LIGHTS FLICKER AND THEN LIGHTS OUT. SILENCE. IN THE DARK)

JEFF

Hazel! Hazel where are you? Hazel sweetheart... Hazel!

(LIGHTS UP. JEFF PULLS HAZEL OUT OF A POOL AND IMMEDIATELY STARTS PERFORMING CPR)

JEFF

Come on Hazel, stay with me! Stay with me! Leah! Leah, call 911! Hazel sweetheart talk to me, come on! Come on! Fuck! Leah, I found her in the pool! Fuck, fuck, fuck! Why!? Hazel come on stay with me now! Can you hear me?

(LEAH ENTERS HYSTERICALLY)

LEAH
My baby!

JEFF
Leah, I need you to call 911! (LEAH DIALS 911) Come on Hazel! Why would you do this? You're a smart girl! Come on! Stay with me Hazel, stay with me! Make sure you tell them we're at the community pool! (HAZEL COUGHS UP WATER) There we go girl, you've got it! Keep going. Come on now!

LEAH
(DIALS 911) My daughter needs an ambulance! My husband found her in the pool and she's unconscious! He's doing CPR on her right now! Mountain Glen! Right the gated community! We're at the community pool! (HAZEL COUGHS UP SOME WATER) She just coughed up some water! Ok. Please hurry!

(HAZEL SLOWLY STARTS TO COME BACK TO CONSCIOUSNESS.)

HAZEL
(STRAINED) Dad? Mom?

JEFF/LEAH
Hazel! Baby what happened? Are you ok?

HAZEL
(BEAT) Did you know lions can live in the ocean?

(JEFF AND LEAH LOOK AT EACH OTHER IN BEWILDERMENT. THE FAINT SOUND OF AN AMBULANCE CAN BE HEARD BECOMING LOUDER IN THE BACKGROUND. LIGHTS OUT.)

END OF PLAY