Title
The Last Croissant

Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1mx0r940

Author
Tjoe, Veronica

Publication Date
2013

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SANTA CRUZ

THE LAST CROISSANT

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS
in
THEATRE ARTS

By
Veronica Tjioe

June 2013

The Thesis of Veronica Tjioe is approved:

_____________________________________
Professor James Bierman

_____________________________________
Professor Patricia Gallagher

_____________________________________
Professor Michael Chemers

___________________________________
Tyrus Miller
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Abstract ....................................................................................................................................................... iv

II. Acknowledgements and Dedication .................................................................................................................. v

III. Process Paper: “The Kneading Comes First, The Jam Comes Later” ......................................................... 1

IV. The Last Croissant

  Setting and Characters ........................................................................................................................................ 5

  Play ..................................................................................................................................................................... 6

  Playwright Notes ............................................................................................................................................ 122
An experiment in linear playwriting, “The Last Croissant”, a new play, explores the possibilities of crafting non gender, age, sexuality, or race specific roles while following a traditional story arc with developed characters. A farcical framing with a single setting, heightened language, circumstances, and meta-theatrical casting is employed to achieve this effect. The result is a clown tragedy camping trip with a minimalist aesthetic, stylized word play and characters that span the spectrum of absurdism to caricature to naturalism. Magical realism is heavily employed and serves as a bridge between these otherwise disparate elements, stitching together clown-like moments of wonder with more relatable honest interactions. Ultimately this play follows the lives of individuals who, much like everyone I have ever met, are taking a moment to stop and think—sometimes with amazement, sometimes with anger, and sometimes with despair, before continuing to get by.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to my generously supportive faculty advisor, Professor Jim Bierman, for his relentless kindness, enthusiasm, and confidence. I will carry your calm guidance, careful observations, and robust challenges with me always.

Thank you to Professor Patty Gallagher for being the greatest source of sunshine, inspiration, and magic in my life. It is your grand shoes I aspire to walk in, personally professionally, and literally.

Thank you to Professor Michael Chemers for being a strong advocate, kind friend, and wise mentor.

Thank you to Josh Karter for the use of his resplendent orchard in Bonnydoon.

Thank you to Alexander James Caan, Kendall Callaghan, Chris Waters, Sutton Arabe, Mary Cait Hogan, Todd Pivetti, and Rosie Glen-Lambert for being the gracious and brilliant people to read this script in front of an audience for the first time.

Thank you to Antonio Fernandes for designing an impeccable flyer, and for other things besides.

Thank you to Marcel, Myriam, Lydia, Sunil, and Mutti for your love and patience.

DEDICATION

This play is for anyone who was saving something wonderful and didn’t enjoy it soon enough.
The most frequent compliment and most frequent critique I received for my first tentative foray into playwriting, “Dead Dog’s Bone: A Birthday Play” were one and the same: The format is so non-linear! The appreciators of this remarked that the story would not have been affective in a more traditional format; the “backs and forths” and theatrical asides where what created the emotional impact. The critical thinkers questioned whether I wrote it this way because I had no skill for crafting a conventional story arc. I have to concede the truth of both parties. And so, for my thesis, it was decided, in preference of questing to create an artistic opus for the year, my second play would be an experiment- a test- a challenge. My one restriction was to work in a linear timeframe.

A simple shackle, really. The possibilities are still endless. Nonetheless these manacles were difficult to adjust to. In an effort to inspire myself I created a list of elements my first play left me dissatisfied with. Firstly, it was annoyingly hetero-normative. I endeavored not only to write meaningful relationships outside of the male/female norm, but also outside of the typical idealistic romantic partnership. There are so many other ways of connecting to humans that leave more to play with. Furthermore, I wanted to write a piece in which actors, regardless of age, race, sexual and gender identity, could look at the character descriptions and list at least three characters they could play. In this way I strove to build characters which were at once specific, and yet could be played by anyone.
This dichotomy of particularity and freedom is my ultimate aim as a playwright; I strive to sketch blueprints. I leave plenty of creative space for other artists to come in and add their two hundred cents; like a coloring book, but with even more liberty. My goal is to give the production team a sense of ownership over their product. When there is room enough for everyone to contribute in a large way, and agree on an alternate universe collectively imagined, there is opportunity for true collaboration and follow-through. This idealistic community oriented process is my personal definition of what theatre should be. As a performer and critical thinker I find plays with answers and pieces missing or debatable so much more worth working with. At the same time I crave tangible kernels of thought to hold on to. The second a script becomes too abstract the possibility for deep meaning slips far out of reach. I am not looking for the team to struggle in search of the story, but rather to sift out what the story means to them. Hence, this script has an identifiable plot and stylized characters and language; but the elements of magic, wonder, meaning, and reality are left much up to interpretation.

The draft I am submitting, however, is a seedling of a play. While it is “complete” enough to have a cast read through it, to me it is a slab of rough marble and not a sculpture. My work on it has barely begun. While I have been working steadily on this project for two quarters, I realize in order to fully develop and ferment my nucleic ideas for a piece I require either time or mental space. The duties required of me by the grad program, while both thrilling and fulfilling, have left me with a deficit of both. And frankly, it took me a long time to get enthused about this play. I discovered that my impetus is to express through fragmentation and unusual juxtaposition. Both of these I decided to repress in favor of more traditional mechanical plot devices. While I eventually crafted characters I have become
quite fond of, my overall focus has been in oiling the machine of the story and not on character development, relationships, arc or discovery- which are my usual bread and butter. Therefore, the manuscript I submitted should be seen as a skeleton of a script, not at all a final product.

While the early stages of this process left me feeling drained of artistic impulse, ultimately this play has led me to a surprising and delightful greater understanding of my written voice. I have a propensity for meta-theatre, for the poor theatre ideology, and clown-like magic and wonder. As an actor I yearn for opportunities for truthful interaction, as a playwright I fulfill this through straight-forward, and heavily heightened dialogue and a precise but roomy framework that demands honest, in the moment play. This aesthetic I have come to develop and discover is my own has been labeled by my affectionate colleagues as “clown tragedy”.

The Last Croissant, which began as an experiment, has ultimately morphed into a mirror. Through the- at times painstaking and at others ludicrous- process I have gained a clearer understanding of myself as a writer, and as a theatre practitioner. I am overjoyed that this project is far from over. Through the next week of rehearsals, getting this script in mouths and on stage, I am anxious to discover, in more ways than I can anticipate, what works and what does not. And even once the reading is over, the Croissant and I will have more stones to unturn. The learning never ends; and I am yet green in this field, but I know I like it here.
The Last Croissant

By,

Veronica Tjioe
SETTING
A picturesque, but somewhat cramped campground.
The surroundings are so beautifully preserved that this site has become popular with nature enthusiasts causing a bit of crowding.

CHARACTERS

TENT ONE

FREDERICK- His dearest ambition is to spend his evenings in the loving embrace of a good-looking armchair regaling tales of wild escapades to kith and kin.

IMOGEN- Though she rarely wears it, she is constantly on the hunt for the perfect shade of lipstick.
(Frederick should be played by a female bodied actor; Imogen should be played by a male bodied actor)

TENT TWO

MUMBO- Won’t go anywhere without a toothpick to chew on and a song to hum.

JUMBO- If you were to tie a plastic bag around Jumbo’s feet, it would be a torture worse than death.
(These two can be played by any actors over the age of twenty. Their relationship to each other is equally up to artistic discretion.)

TENT THREE

OCTOBER- The daughter of a calendar publisher; she never did learn how to swim.

FEBRUARY- A constant admirer of Norwood Russell Hanson and other science philosophers. An occasional connoisseur of cannabis.
(October and February should be played by the same actor.)

OTHERS

RANGER DAVE- He has two secrets. One is that he believes rocks are the most beautiful things on the planet.
The other one, even I am not at liberty to tell.

BEAR- Would appreciate it if everyone would please try to remain calm.
(Ranger Dave and Bear should be played by the same actor.)

TEABAG- Earl Grey, steeped twice, soggy tag
SCENE ONE

Two tents.
One fairly new looking and rather ostentatious in its attempt to appear flashy and high-tech.
The second is well-established, sturdy and simple in design with a few homey decorations tacked on to
give it some flair.

A brisk, quiet morning. The sound of running water, birds, and hope.

OCTOBER enters with a backpacking pack, tent, and campground map.
She glances around to find the number she was looking for posted nearby, stows the map, and
gingerly lets down her pack.

She is exhausted.

For the first time, she notices the tents, confused. They are not familiar.

OCTOBER
Hello?
Momma?
Poppa?
Ru?

She looks around, then cautiously peeks in Tent Two. She quickly emerges.
With as much speed and stealth as she can muster, she remounts her pack and exits.

An origami crane falls from the sky.
It lands gently in the unlit fire pit.

IMOGEN
From within Tent One
Did you hear something?

There is a muffled grumble in response.

IMOGEN
I could have sworn I heard Cassandra.

A similar response is gleaned.

IMOGEN
Yes, I know that’s impossible.

Another grumble.

IMOGEN
Yes, yes, Nevada, I know.
But I heard something.

More grumbling.
IMOGEN
Don’t call me crazy.
Oh never mind.

Grumbling.

IMOGEN
Wake up properly.

IMOGEN emerges from Tent One.
She sniffs the air. She cracks her neck. She needs a cup of tea.
There is a massive yawn from Tent One.

Three service bell dings, or otherwise theatrical sound effect, signal three quick moving tableaus of
IMOGEN making tea.

She lifts the kettle to fill it -Ding- she pours into her teacup –Ding- She stirs with a spoon -Ding-
She takes a sip.
A moment to appreciate the stillness.

Frederick emerges from the same tent in full bird-watching costume.

FREDERICK
Good morning, my starling!

There is no response. IMOGEN rummages around for the honey.

Any more phantom voices?

IMOGEN shoots him a resentful glare then continues to rummage.
A silence. FREDREICK clears his throat.

I’m sorry I wasn’t able to fulfill your sexual fantasies this morning.

IMOGEN
She straightens up holding various items in her hands.
That’s quite all right, darling, you rarely do. Tea?

FREDERICK
None for me thanks. I’m off on the hunt! Pip pip!

He blows her two kisses, winks, and moves to exit.

IMOGEN
You can’t possibly be serious.
Frederick!

FREDERICK
Yes?
IMOGEN
You haven’t even-

FREDERICK
Spying the bottle of vitamins she is holding
Oh you’re quite right! Silly of me!
First thing’s first!
Must guard against being eaten alive.
He grabs the bottle and opens it.
Mother always said the mosquitoes favored me because I was the sweetest boy.
Personally I always assumed it was Patrick’s habit of dousing me in lemonade every time we argued.
Sounds ridiculous now, of course!
Ha! Lemonade!
He chuckles and then swiftly swallows two pills.
Thank you, sugarbird. See you for lunch.

He kisses her on the cheek and presses the bottle back into her hand.

IMOGEN
But, Frederick!

FREDERICK
Yes?

IMOGEN splutters incoherently for a moment.
FREDERICK spots the other item she is holding: a tube of sunscreen.

Clever of you! The sun really isn’t what it was, is it?
Very sensible, my sparrow.
He grabs the tube to take with him and turns once more.
Many thanks.

IMOGEN
But-

FREDERICK
What is it?

A pause.

IMOGEN
Damn you, Frederick!

FREDERICK
I beg your pardon?

IMOGEN
Where are you going?
FREDERICK
Bird watching, of course.

IMOGEN
With not so much as a, “Hello, Imogen. How are you today? What would you like to do?--

FREDERICK
I said, “Good morning”.

IMOGEN
--I was thinking of going bird watching. Would you care to join me?--

FREDERICK
Oh come, now.

IMOGEN
--How about a spot of breakfast first? It's so nice to spend time together—

FREDERICK
Imogen.

IMOGEN
--Isn’t it a lovely day? Happy Anniversary, waterfowl!—

FREDERICK
I never called you that.

IMOGEN
--I’m so happy I’m spending my life with you!—

FREDERICK
I am.

IMOGEN
--On second thought I’ll go bird watching on my own if you don’t mind. Why don’t you stay here and amuse yourself? I’ll be back when I’m hungry!"

FREDERICK
Must you be so melodramatic?

IMOGEN
Melodramatic?! Must I? Must I?
Yes, Frederick, I find I must.
I must be melodramatic.
It seems to be the only way to get any sort of attention from you.

FREDERICK
Calm down now.
IMOGEN
Don’t you tell me what to do!

*MUMBO and JUMBO enter glowing with early morning jubilance, radiant from a long hike.*

MUMBO and JUMBO
Good Morning!

FREDERICK and IMOGEN
*With instantaneous and remarkably convincing good cheer*
Good Morning!

MUMBO
How are you two this fine day?

FREDERICK
Oh, just wonderful!

IMOGEN
Blooming. Absolutely blooming.

MUMBO
As you should be! Today is perfection!

JUMBO
We just caught the sunrise at the look-out point.

MUMBO
Magnificent.
The colors.
The peace and quiet.
Glorious.

JUMBO
Just splendid.
The fresh air.
The bird songs were spectacular.
Just thrilling.

FREDERICK and IMOGEN
How nice.

JUMBO
Oh it was.
Just marvelous!

FREDERICK
You must have gotten up very early.

JUMBO
Gotta catch ‘em all!
We’re only here for two more days.

IMOGEN
Haven’t you been here all summer?

MUMBO
When you’re leaving paradise you don’t want to miss a drop of it.
**JUMBO**
Ain’t that the truth.

_A silence full of smiling and nodding._

**MUMBO**
What do you two have planned for today?

**FREDERICK and IMOGEN**
Oh. Well.

**IMOGEN**
Frederick fancied a spot of bird watching, didn’t you dear?

**FREDERICK**
Well, as a matter of fact I—

**MUMBO**
Now is that a fact!

**JUMBO**
How grand!

**MUMBO**
Oh yeah! Oh we got birds up here.
Do we have birds!

**JUMBO**
Oh birds? We got lots of ’em.
Lots of birds round here.

**MUMBO**
Have you done much bird watching?

**FREDERICK**
As it so happ-

**IMOGEN**
He’s an enthusiastic beginner.

**JUMBO**
Fabulous!

**MUMBO**
Those are some mighty fine binoculars!
Jumbo, would you get a look at these!
_MUMBO takes the binoculars and inspects them._

**JUMBO**
Hot damn!
MUMBO
These must have cost you a pretty penny.

JUMBO
Or several frightful Franklins.
At least five.

MUMBO
Or more.
Definitely more.

FREDERICK
Well-

IMOGEN
Yes, Frederick. Exactly how much did your new toy cost you?

FREDERICK
Ahem.
What one must really consider is the value.
The quality of the lenses, as you see—

MUMBO
*MUMBO and JUMBO pass the binoculars back and forth, manhandling them in their enthusiasm.*
Oh yeah sure, topnotch!

JUMBO
Lenses, yeah.

MUMBO
Irreplaceable.

JUMBO
Irrefundable.

MUMBO
*Correcting JUMBO*
Non-refundable.

JUMBO
Non-refundable!

IMOGEN
Non-refundable?!?

FREDERICK
Oh well, I’m sure I can-

MUMBO
Not likely you’ll want to return these puppies anytime soon.
JUMBO
I bet you could see clear to the other side of the moon with these.

MUMBO
To JUMBO
That’s a telescope, love.

JUMBO
Oh yeah, sure, telescope.

_FREDERICK makes attempts to politely regain possession of his binoculars._

MUMBO
To FREDERICK
Where are you headed?

FREDERICK
I was going to follow the Canby Trail and do the loop.

MUMBO
For birds?

JUMBO
Oh no.

MUMBO
No, no.

FREDERICK
No?

MUMBO
You don’t want that trail.

JUMBO
Cuhtahlatah.

FREDERICK
Excuse me?

MUMBO
Cuhtahlatah

MUMBO
You want Cuhtahlatah.

MUMBO
It’s gorgeous.

JUMBO
Oh yeah.
MUMBO
Less traveled.
Plenty of conifers.
Great for birding.

JUMBO
The ground is so soft.
More trees.
Real pretty.

FREDERICK
Ah.

IMOGEN
Where is this trail?

JUMBO
Well you start off just East of-

MUMBO
You want a map?
We’ve got maps!

IMOGEN
Oh, no thank you.

FREDERICK
Sure I’ll take a map!

*MUMBO and JUMBO retreat inside their tent.*

IMOGEN
Frederick!

FREDERICK
You don’t want me getting lost, do you?

IMOGEN
That’s what trailheads are for!
These two are just trying to squeeze any money they can from you.

FREDERICK
They have to earn a living, same as anyone.
Anyway, I think they’re a hoot!

*JUMBO’s head pops through the flap.*

JUMBO
You want a field guide too?

FREDERICK
That’d be swell!

IMOGEN
That will not be necessary.

*JUMBO’s head disappears.*
What’s the matter?
Are you finished yet?

JUMBO’s head reappears.

How about a bird call whistle?

JUMBO’s head disappears.

Lighten up!

You’re incorrigible.

You tell me we can’t afford to go to Carmel like we have done for the past twenty four years,
But you can spend five hundred dollars on a gadget you’ll never use again!
And now you’re dropping bills left and right on more trash!

FREDERICK
Trash?

So here we are roughing it for some romantic Anniversary nature time.
Just “you and me”.

FREDERICK
Don’t you want some alone time?

We aren’t alone!
You couldn’t plan enough to reserve our own spot--

I didn’t know we needed to—

--so now we have to share.

What’s so bad about that?
We’re lucky someone cancelled so we could stay here.

Lucky?!
Because of you we are forgoing saunas and a nice feather mattress for sleeping on dirt next to gold diggers!

MUMBO and JUMBO re-emerge from their tent with the map, field guide and whistle.
MUMBO
Here we are!

JUMBO
That’ll be forty two dollars, please.

_FREDERICK hands MUMBO the cash as JUMBO places the items in IMOGEN’s arms._

MUMBO
A pleasure doing business with you folk.

JUMBO
We’ve got firewood too, if you’ll need a cord later.

_FREDERICK
Excellent!

IMOGEN
Fantastic._

MUMBO
I’m headed to the store to pick up some groceries-
You two need anything?

_FREDERICK
Actually, would you--_

_FREDERICK and IMOGEN share a glance._

_FREDERICK
We’re just fine, thanks._

MUMBO
Alright. Toodle-oo!

_MUMBO exits._

_JUMBO remains smiling placidly at FREDERICK and IMOGEN_

IMOGEN
Aren’t you going too?

JUMBO
Oh no. I’m gonna jump in the river!
Anyone interested?

_FREDERICK
Not today, thank you._

_IMOGEN
You have got to be kidding me._

JUMBO
You know what they say,
There’s nothing jumping in a body of water can’t cure except coldness and wetness.
Later, folks!
_JUMBO exits._
An uncomfortable silence.

IMOGEN
Well, off you go.

FREDERICK
Don’t be sore.

IMOGEN
What do you think you’re going to find out there?

FREDERICK
I’d like to-

IMOGEN
Yes?

FREDERICK
I was hoping to-

IMOGEN
What is it?
Some scrub jays?
A seagull?
Maybe a nice fat pigeon?!

FREDERICK
The Dickinson Blue-Breasted Warbler.

IMOGEN
I beg your pardon?

FREDERICK
The Dickenson Blue-Breasted Warbler.
That’s what I’d like to see.

IMOGEN
Aren’t those extinct?

FREDERICK
What? No!

IMOGEN
Yes, they are.

FREDERICK
Nonsense!
How would you know?
IMOGEN
Common knowledge
Extinct.
Dead as a doornail.
Along with the Ivory Billed Woodpecker, the Saber Toothed Tiger, and the best days of my life.

FREDERICK
Why are you so mean?

IMOGEN
Why are you so eager to be away from me?

FREDERICK
Well maybe if I didn’t feel continuously berated by you-

IMOGEN
Well maybe if you pretended to like me just a little-

FREDERICK
I’m married to you, Imogen!
I don’t have to pretend to like you anymore!

A silence of horror.

FREDERICK
What I meant was that—

IMOGEN
Why are you married to me, Frederick?

The sounds of approaching feet are heard.

FREDERICK
Someone’s coming.

IMOGEN
I asked you a question.

FREDERICK
Can this wait?

IMOGEN
Oh sure! Put our whole existence as we know it on hold, why don’t you?
Yes, let’s wait.
Let’s just spend the weekend wondering whether or not our children will still have a stable parental unit by the end of it!

FREDERICK
Imogen I...
IMOGEN
You have until Sunday!
If things haven’t changed by then---then…

*RANGER DAVE strolls in casually perusing a clipboard followed by a harried OCTOBER.*

FREDERICK
Let’s not do this now.

IMOGEN
Fine!
Enjoy your big-breasted bullfinch!

FREDERICK
I will!

IMOGEN
I’m going to shower!

FREDERICK
I wish you joy!

*They exit separately.*

*RANGER DAVE is a youthful man of a rare and intense charm, that however sincere, is of acquired taste. His aesthetic and old fashioned nature lead many to suspect he’s spending his single years handcrafting furniture until he meets just the right Prairie girl. And it may be true.*

RANGER DAVE
Are you positive it’s site 32?

OCTOBER
Yes.

RANGER DAVE
Well we don’t have anyone registered under that name here. Do you know a Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Younglove?

OCTOBER
No.

RANGER DAVE
How about an M and J Gumbo? They’re campground hosts.

OCTOBER
Never heard of them.
Can you please check one more time?  
Ember or Gus Perennial?  
Maybe they’re at a different site.

**RANGER DAVE**  
*He flips through his records.*  
Perennial... Perennial  
*He suddenly pauses and looks at her.*  
Say, you wouldn’t happen to have a brother would you?

**OCTOBER**  
Yes. Is he here?

**RANGER DAVE**  
February, right?

**OCTOBER**  
Yes!

**RANGER DAVE**  
No, he’s not here.  
But I know Ru!  
We went to college together.

**OCTOBER**  
Oh.  
Great.

**RANGER DAVE**  
Nice guy. A bit-  

**OCTOBER**  
Daffy?

**RANGER DAVE**  
*Exactly the word he was looking for.*  
What’s he up to now?

**OCTOBER**  
After he dropped out he came and lived with me for a while up in San Luciano-  
Then he left to backpack around for a while.

**RANGER DAVE**  
Aren’t you guys on fire?

**OCTOBER**  
What?

**RANGER DAVE**  
San Luciano. That’s where the wild fire is, right?
OCTOBER
Oh yes.
Actually, I was evacuated out just as I was packing for this trip.

RANGER DAVE
Wow. Are they close to containment?

OCTOBER
Not yet, it’s still spreading south.
I live about two blocks away from where the hills start, right next to a trail head.

RANGER DAVE
God.
I hope you have renter’s insurance!

She does not.
She had not realized this vital fact until this moment.

RANGER DAVE
Uh oh.
I’m Ranger Dave.

OCTOBER
Toby.

RANGER DAVE
Short for?

OCTOBER
I go by Toby.

RANGER DAVE
It’s October isn’t it?
What, you don’t like your name?
A silence.
Back to the clipboard.
Sorry, Toby, no dice.
Would you like me to check the cancellation list?

OCTOBER
I guess so.

RANGER DAVE
Yeah, here they are!
Cancelled their reservation three days ago.

OCTOBER
What?
Does it say why?
RANGER DAVE
  ‘Fraid not.

OCTOBER
  I can’t believe they didn’t tell me.

RANGER DAVE
  I’m sorry.

OCTOBER looks around and considers her options.

RANGER DAVE
  I’m afraid all of our sites are full up.
  Can I help you in any way?

OCTOBER
  I’m not sure what to do.

RANGER DAVE
  Come back in March.
  We’ve got lots of openings in March.

OCTOBER
  Wonderful.
  Do you have any suggestions for this moment in time?

RANGER DAVE
  Go hom-
  Oh.
  Do you have a friend’s house you could—?

  She doesn’t.

  What, no friends?
  Not a single one?

OCTOBER
  I don’t want to go back to San Luciano.
  It’s been nothing but smoke for weeks.
  You can barely see the sun.
  I was looking forward to some fresh air.
  Just for a few days.

RANGER DAVE
  There’s another campground ‘bout five miles south—

OCTOBER
  Why can’t I stay here?

RANGER DAVE
  We don’t have any space.
OCTOBER
What about that flat spot right there?

RANGER DAVE
This site is already being split by two parties.

OCTOBER
Then a third won't make much difference.

RANGER DAVE
You're pushy.

OCTOBER
Don't leave me hangin', Ranger Dave.
    I need this.
    The stars.
    The streams.
    The s'mores.

RANGER DAVE
Funny, I would think someone sick of smoke would want to stay as far away from a campfire as possible.

He's got her there.

OCTOBER
Alright, so there's more than smoke I'd like to avoid.

RANGER DAVE
Like what?

OCTOBER
None of your business.

RANGER DAVE
Since you're bullying your way into my already crowded campground, I think it is my business.
    I don't want any trouble around here.

OCTOBER
Trouble?

RANGER DAVE
Yeah, trouble.

OCTOBER
What kind of trouble?

RANGER DAVE
I don't know.
Hoodlums.
Riffraff.

OCTOBER
Riffraff?

RANGER DAVE
You can never be too sure.

OCTOBER
Come on. You know my brother.

RANGER DAVE
Exactly, I don’t want any of his hipster bros round here either!

OCTOBER
It’s nothing like that.
It’s not even a person.
... I think.
It’s just-

RANGER DAVE
What?

OCTOBER
It’s embarrassing.

RANGER DAVE
Are you in danger?

OCTOBER
I don’t think so.

RANGER DAVE
You don’t think you’re in danger.

OCTOBER
No.

RANGER DAVE
You look worried.
Like you’ve seen a ghost or something.

OCTOBER
If ghosts were made of paper.

RANGER DAVE
Excuse me?
OCTOBER
Okay
A huge and taxing confession
There are these origami creatures wherever I---

JUMBO returns from swimming.

JUMBO
‘Mornin’, Dave!

RANGER DAVE
Good Morning.
How are you?

JUMBO
Wet and wonderful.

RANGER DAVE
How nice.

JUMBO
Who’s your friend?

RANGER DAVE
This is Oct—

OCTOBER
Toby

JUMBO
Octoby?

OCTOBER
Just Toby.

RANGER DAVE
She’s in a bit of a pickle.
Do you mind if she sets up camp here for the next two days?

JUMBO
Oh sure! Plenty of space.
Nice flat patch right there.

OCTOBER
Thank you so much!

JUMBO
Oh sure.
A pickle, you say?
RANGER DAVE
More like hot water.

OCTOBER
More like hot mess.

JUMBO
Well if you can’t take the heat

JUMBO
Jump in the lake.

RANGER DAVE
Don’t stoke the fire.

OCTOBER
Get out of the kitchen.

JUMBO, RANGER DAVE, and OCTOBER
Are you sure that’s how it ends?

MUMBO re-enters with groceries singing.

MUMBO
Well butter my toast and rump my roast,
Peaches, plums, and mango
You’re the milk in my shake
You make my heart go bang-o

RANGER DAVE
Hey there!

MUMBO
Well look who it is! It’s Ranger Dave!
Fancy an important gentleman like yourself taking the time to pay us your respects.

RANGER DAVE
Well you two do such a fine job I don’t need to check up on you as often as I would like.

MUMBO
Oh he’s a charmer.
To JUMBO
Don’t you think he’s a charmer?

JUMBO
Oh charisma, sure.

MUMBO
Noticing OCTOBER
Who are you?

JUMBO
This is Ranger Dave’s sweetheart.

RANGER DAVE and OCTOBER
What?
JUMBO
Her name’s Octopus.

MUMBO
Since when has Ranger Dave had a sweetheart?
Not even the raccoons will go near him.

RANGER DAVE
Hey.

MUMBO
Well? Will they?

JUMBO
It’s true, they won’t.

RANGER DAVE
... No

MUMBO
Not even if his pockets were full of clam chowder.

JUMBO
Or if he used caramel for shampoo

RANGER DAVE
You having fun?

MUMBO
Or if his fingers were hot dogs

JUMBO
Or if his hat was a bundt cake

RANGER DAVE
Alright now.

MUMBO
Or if his beard was spaghetti!

JUMBO
What beard?

They laugh uproariously.

OCTOBER
Thank you for letting me stay.

JUMBO
Don’t mention it.

MUMBO
Why are we letting her stay?
RANGER DAVE
Her house is on fire.

OCTOBER
Might be on fire.

MUMBO
I’m sorry for your loss.

JUMBO
My deepest sympathies.

OCTOBER
Well it hasn’t happened yet!
Hopefully it won’t at all.

OCTOBER begins to unpack and set up her tent.

MUMBO
Oh sure, Octopus.
You want help with your tent?

JUMBO
She doesn’t need help.

MUMBO
I’ll help you with your tent.

RANGER DAVE
No, I’ll do it.

OCTOBER
I’m fine on my own, thanks.

JUMBO
See?

MUMBO
Dave, I’m glad you’re here.
There’s something I’ve been meaning to talk to you about.

JUMBO
Oh here we go.
Reaching into the grocery bag and taking out a box of those cheap powdered doughnut holes and
proceeds to eat them.

MUMBO
I think it’s worth discussing.

JUMBO
He’s just gonna tell you the same thing I told you.
MUMBO
We’ll see about that.

RANGER DAVE
What’s going on?

MUMBO
Burgling.

RANGER DAVE
Excuse me?

MUMBO
Someone’s been stealing our things.

RANGER DAVE
Oh no, do you have any idea who it might be?
The Youngloves?

JUMBO
They’re too rich to steal.

MUMBO
It started a few weeks back anyway.

RANGER DAVE
What’s been taken?

MUMBO
My peanut butter.
My ham.
My cheese sticks.
My ice cream sandwiches.
My potato--

RANGER DAVE
Have you been locking your food up?

MUMBO
No.

RANGER DAVE
Why?

JUMBO
To MUMBO with a powdered sugar covered face
See? I told you.
I told you it was foolishness.
MUMBO
I shouldn’t have to lock up my possessions just to keep them safe. It isn’t my fault if other people can’t keep their hands to themselves.

RANGER DAVE
It’s probably the raccoons.

JUMBO
That’s what I said.
I told you so.
Raccoons.
Case closed.

MUMBO
Hold on a minute.
Why would raccoons take a whole damn jar of peanut butter? Wouldn’t they have their little feast and leave trash everywhere?

RANGER DAVE
They’ve got families to feed and almost opposable thumbs. I think it’s likely they’d take food to go.

IMOGEN enters, freshly showered.

MUMBO
To IMOGEN
Well don’t you look rejuvenated!

JUMBO
Did you jump in the river?

IMOGEN
No, I’m civilized.
Have you seen my husband, by chance?

MUMBO
No, ma’am.

JUMBO
Here, come meet Octopus.

OCTOBER
It’s Toby.

IMOGEN
Imogen Younglove.

OCTOBER
Nice to meet you.
Thank you for letting me share your campsite.
IMOGEN
Oh.
Not at all.

RANGER DAVE
Toby is in a real tight spot, we really appreciate your accommodation.

IMOGEN
My pleasure.

An awkward silence.
IMOGEN retreats into her tent.
RANGER DAVE, MUMBO, JUMBO and OCTOBER share a glance.

RANGER DAVE
Well, Mumbo, I don’t know what to tell you.
Either lock your things up or expect them to go missing.

MUMBO
It’s not raccoons, I tell you.

JUMBO
How do you know?

MUMBO
Intuition.

RANGER DAVE
Who do you suspect?
It would have to be someone who has been here for the past several weeks.
No one on site has been staying for longer than nine days.
That narrows it down to Jumbo and myself.

JUMBO
I told you so!
I damn near predicted what Ranger Dave would say verutabaga!

MUMBO
Correcting JUMBO
Verbatim.

JUMBO
Verbatim.

RANGER DAVE
Do you think either Jumbo or I are the culprit?

MUMBO
No. But I still don’t blame the raccoons.
I didn’t see any little paw prints.
It’s got to be something bigger.
RANGER DAVE
Well by all means feel free to keep leaving your food out,
But don’t expect it to be there in the morning.

MUMBO leans in close and whispers confidentially.

MUMBO
Can I use my gun?

RANGER DAVE
What? No!

MUMBO
I don’t want to use it- I just want to scare... whoever it might be.

RANGER DAVE
You just said you wanted to use it.

JUMBO
To MUMBO
You did. It’s true.

MUMBO
What I meant was, ‘can I flaunt it?’
We’re only here for two more days-
I just want to teach whoever it is a lesson before we go.

RANGER DAVE
You brought a gun here?

MUMBO
...No.

RANGER DAVE
Jumbo?

JUMBO looks at RANGER DAVE
Did Mumbo bring a gun here?

JUMBO looks at MUMBO

JUMBO
...No.

RANGER DAVE
Come on, you two should know that—
RANGER DAVE’S time keeping device emits a loud beeping noise.
He checks the time.
Damn. I have a guided hike to lead in ten minutes.
I’ve gotta head.
I don’t know what to tell you, Mumbo.
If you had a gun here, Do Not --for any reason-- use, flaunt, or otherwise educate with it.
Write a note or something if you don’t want to lock your things up.
You two have been wonderful hosts all summer- let’s please just close out this season peacefully.
Okay?

MUMBO
Okay.

JUMBO
Sure thing, Ranger Dave.

RANGER DAVE
And let me know if there’s anything else I can do before you instigate some sort of plan.
Alright?
See you folks later.

MUMBO
Bye, Ranger Dave.

JUMBO
Will do, Ranger Dave.

OCTOBER
Hey Ranger Dave?

RANGER DAVE
Yes, Ma’am.

OCTOBER
Is there a landline phone I can use around here?
I’d like to call my parents.

RANGER DAVE
You can use the one at the ranger station.

OCTOBER and RANGER DAVE exit.
As MUMBO and JUMBO watch them leave, unbeknownst to them, an origami crane falls from the sky and lands by OCTOBER’s tent.

MUMBO
His sweetheart, eh?

JUMBO
Well... have you ever seen him let anyone use the station phone before?

MUMBO
He usually says they don’t have one.

JUMBO
Exactly.
Shrivelry.

MUMBO
Correcting JUMBO
Chivalry.
JUMBO
It ain’t dead.

IMOGEN reappears.

MUMBO
Where are you off to, Mrs. Younglove?

IMOGEN
There’s a guided botanical tour of the park in a few minutes.

JUMBO
Oh that’ll do you good.

MUMBO
Isn’t that Ranger Dave’s gig?

JUMBO
Oh yeah. He’s got facts.

MUMBO
Sure does.

JUMBO
Knows his plants, be-leaf you me!

MUMBO
I’m green with envy!

While MUMBO and JUMBO amuse themselves with their terrible jokes, IMOGEN quietly exits.

JUMBO
That just stems from your lack of di-vine connection to mother earth.

MUMBO
Oh now, you’re rooting for trouble.

JUMBO
There ain’t no sprout about it!

MUMBO
Well you’re bark-ing up the wrong tree!

JUMBO
Don’t walk away! This is far from clover!

They notice IMOGEN is gone.

MUMBO
Oh look. We scared her off.
JUMBO
Say Mumbo.

MUMBO
Yes, Jumbo?

JUMBO
You’re gonna listen to Ranger Dave, right?
There is no response.

JUMBO
Say Mumbo.
MUMBO
Yes, Jumbo?

JUMBO
Is it time for breakfast yet?

MUMBO
I should say so.

JUMBO
What’s on the docket?

MUMBO
Eggs

JUMBO
Mmmh!

MUMBO
Sausages

JUMBO
Mmmh!

MUMBO
And toast.

JUMBO
Toast?

MUMBO
Toast.

JUMBO
---

MUMBO
You got a problem with that?
JUMBO
There’s croissants in the bag.

MUMBO
And?

JUMBO
Why aren’t we eating them?

MUMBO
Croissants are special.
And there’s only one- that bakery runs through them fast.
I thought we’d have it tomorrow- for our last breakfast of the summer.

JUMBO
So we have to wait?

MUMBO
---

JUMBO
Okay. Eggs it is.

They both glance at the unlit fire pit.

MUMBO and JUMBO
Nose goes!

They simultaneously put their fingers on their noses.
The results are inconclusive.

MUMBO and JUMBO
Two out of three?
Okay.

Rock, Paper, Scissors!
Rock, Paper, Scissors!
Rock, Paper, Scissors!

It is JUMBO’s turn to start the fire.

JUMBO gathers kindling etc. and approaches the fire pit.
JUMBO sees the origami crane.
JUMBO picks it up.

JUMBO
Huh.
SCENE TWO

Midmorning. OCTOBER writes alone. Enter FREDERICK sweaty, scratching, and cursing.

FREDERICK
Damn, damn, damn!
He notices OCTOBER.
Oh I beg your pardon.

OCTOBER
No need to beg. You have it.

An awkward silence. FREDERICK looks around.

FREDERICK
Where is everyone?

OCTOBER
Post-breakfast nap time.
I’m Toby.
This is my tent.

FREDERICK
Frederick.
I have a dreadful case of poison oak.

OCTOBER
Offering
Calamine?

FREDERICK
Oh please.

MUMBO’s sleepy head appears from Tent Two.

MUMBO
Did someone say calamine?
We’ve got calamine!

OCTOBER
I’ve got it covered, thanks M.

JUMBO’s head also appears.

JUMBO
We’ve also got baking soda and vinegar.

FREDERICK
I’m fine for now, thanks.
MUMBO
You won’t be soon.

JUMBO
Absolutely not.

MUMBO
The blisters will form.

MUMBO
Your skin will bubble up.
Filled with puss.
All yellow and oozy.

JUMBO
You’ll be all bumpy.
Like a toad.
No one will want to kiss you.

JUMBO
The itch will be unbearable.

MUMBO
Unbelievable.

JUMBO
Inexcusable.

MUMBO
Inescapable.

JUMBO
Enjoyous.

MUMBO
Correcting JUMBO
Injurious.

JUMBO
Injurious.

MUMBO
Tea tree oil?

JUMBO
Bleach?

MUMBO
Hair dryer?

FREDERICK
Not at the moment, thank you.

MUMBO
Don’t say we didn’t warn you!
JUMBO
We did.
We warned you.
This was your warning.

MUMBO
Let’s get back to our nap.

JUMBO
Buenas Fiestas, everyone!

MUMBO
Correcting JUMBO
Siestas.

JUMBO
Buenas Siestas!

MUMBO
As they exit back into their tent
No one says “Buenas Siestas”, Jumbo.

JUMBO
I do.

MUMBO
You’re sleepy.

JUMBO
I know you are but what am I?

MUMBO
Also, sleepy.

JUMBO
You’ re so clever.

FREDERICK takes the bottle of calamine from OCTOBER

FREDERICK
Thanks for this.

A nod of acknowledgement.

FREDERICK
I should have listened to my wife.
She told me yesterday
“Put on your long pants, Frederick!”
“Roll down your sleeves, Frederick!”
“Don’t complain to me later, Frederick!”
Of course I wouldn’t have been out chopping wood in the first place if she’d just let me buy a cord from those two.

You haven’t seen her lately, have you?

She hasn’t.

t’s so cruel, don’t you think?

That a plant can be so vindictive.

They disguise themselves as harmless trees, shrubs, vines.

Then make our skin boil with just a touch.

OCTOBER

It’s not cruelty. It’s survival.

Wouldn’t you do the same?

FREDERICK

No.

I’d be the nicest plant you ever met.

Like a fern. Or chamomile.

You?

OCTOBER

Beg pardon?

FREDERICK

What kind of plant would you be?

OCTOBER

Rosemary.

FREDERICK

Why?

OCTOBER

It’s a noble plant.

FREDERICK

You like chickens?

OCTOBER

What?

FREDERICK

Roasting chickens?

OCTOBER

I guess-

FREDERICK

It’s good for that.
And potatoes.
A respectable kitchen herb.

**OCTOBER**
It has history.

**FREDERICK**
It smells nice.

**OCTOBER**
That too.

**FREDERICK**
Oh look it’s Ranger Dave!

*FREDERICK waves enthusiastically.*
*Enter RANGER DAVE.*

**RANGER DAVE**
Good afternoon, Mr. Younglove.

**FREDERICK**
Say Ranger Dave, if you were a plant what plant would you be?

**RANGER DAVE**
Aloe Vera.

**FREDERICK**
A useful plant for a useful fellow.
Remarkable. Remarkable!

**RANGER DAVE**
To **OCTOBER**. Did you get a hold of your folks?

**OCTOBER**
Sure did, thanks.

**RANGER DAVE**
And?

**OCTOBER**
Oh they’re fine.

**RANGER DAVE**
Why did they cancel?

**OCTOBER**
It’s stupid.
RANGER DAVE
What is it?

OCTOBER
They double booked themselves.
They didn’t check their calendar.

RANGER DAVE
That isn’t stupid.

OCTOBER
My father’s a calendar publisher.

RANGER DAVE stifies his amusement with integrity.
FREDERICK laughs loudly and a little too long.

FREDERICK
Really?

OCTOBER

FREDERICK
Recovering
Ahem well- do you know if showers are good or bad for poison oak?

RANGER DAVE
Take a cold one now and a hot one once the itching starts.
Do you have any rubbing alcohol?
A sleepy voice emerges from Tent Two

MUMBO
We’ve got rubbing alcohol!

RANGER DAVE
How much?

JUMBO
Tons!

RANGER DAVE
I meant how much are you charging?

MUMBO
That’ll be four--
A hand holding a bottle of rubbing alcohol followed by MUMBO’s head pops out of the flaps.
--you Ranger Dave, it’s on the house.

RANGER DAVE
How sweet.
He hands MUMBO three bucks.
Go back to sleep.

MUMBO
Pleasure doing business with you.

*MUMBO disappears once more.*

RANGER DAVE
Handing FREDERICK the bottle
This’ll remove any remaining oils post-shower.

FREDERICK
Thanks, Ranger Dave.
Strange- we humans have to arm ourselves with such absurd artillery against foliage.

*He leaves to take a shower.*

RANGER DAVE
What are you writing?

OCTOBER
Fortunes.

RANGER DAVE
Really?

OCTOBER
---

RANGER DAVE
What kind of fortunes?

OCTOBER
Fortune cookie fortunes.

RANGER DAVE
Any particular reason?

OCTOBER
It’s my job.

RANGER DAVE
Come again?

OCTOBER
It’s how I make a living.

RANGER DAVE
You get paid to write fortunes?
OCTOBER
Someone’s got to do it.
Chocolate milk?

RANGER DAVE
Oh.
He checks his watch.
Why not?

OCTOBER gets up and moves to the cooler on the far side of her tent.

RANGER DAVE
So how does one fall into that line of work?

OCTOBER
No differently that one falls into a Ranger uniform, I’m sure.

RANGER DAVE
So you’re uncle got you the job too?

As OCTOBER explains and digs through her small cooler, unbeknownst to her, an origami crane falls from the sky.
RANGER DAVE watches it in awe.

OCTOBER
No. I was enjoying a solitary meal of sizzling rice soup, hunan chicken, and jasmine tea when the bill and cookie came.
I was out of work and half mad at myself for splurging.
But my fortune read, “This is your destiny. Join us.”
That’s how they recruit all their writers apparently.
What’s wrong?

RANGER DAVE
The oddest thing just—

OCTOBER sees the crane on the ground.

RANGER DAVE
Noticing OCTOBER’s reaction
What’s the matter?

OCTOBER
---

RANGER DAVE
Here, sit down.

OCTOBER
---

44
RANGER DAVE
Let me open this for you.

As he reaches for one of the cartons she is holding, she rips it open with her teeth with no small amount of savage grace.

RANGER DAVE
---

OCTOBER
They found me.

RANGER DAVE
What?

OCTOBER
The Cranes.

RANGER DAVE picks up the crane and looks around.

RANGER DAVE
Hello?
Is anyone there?

He turns back to OCTOBER

RANGER DAVE
It’s just origami.

OCTOBER
---

RANGER DAVE
Who is it from?

OCTOBER
She shrugs.
They just appear wherever I go.

RANGER DAVE
Well it has to come from somewhere.
Who would do this?

OCTOBER
---

RANGER DAVE
An admirer?
RANGER DAVE
I guess it would be creepy for them to follow you here.

RANGER DAVE
It’s just a piece of paper, Toby.

RANGER DAVE
Please say something.

RANGER DAVE
takes the crane and rips it apart.

RANGER DAVE
I thought it was pretty.

RANGER DAVE
Didn’t you?

RANGER DAVE
The allure wears off.

RANGER DAVE
...Do you get this sort of thing often?

RANGER DAVE
It started with just one in my mailbox.
Small and dainty.
Charming.
The next week, another, sitting in my bike crate.
Soon after, one on my usual seat in class.
Things escalated quickly.
At a coffee shop, if I went to the bathroom,
I’d return to my table and a trio of them would be waiting.
They would be folded into books I had just checked out of the library.
Or tucked into my grocery bags.
I wake up with them on my pillow and in my shoes.
I had to take the bus down here because there is a whole nest of them under the hood of my car.
I am paying a mechanic to pull cranes out of my carburetor!

RANGER DAVE
You’re going to wake them up.

OCTOBER
What does it mean, Ranger Dave?

RANGER DAVE
Do they have to mean anything?

OCTOBER
How can this possibly be meaningless?
How did they follow me here?

RANGER DAVE
They flew?

MUMBO’s sleepy grumpy face appears between the tent flaps.

OCTOBER
Sorry.
I’m going for a walk.

OCTOBER walks away chocolate milk in hand.

RANGER DAVE watches her leave. Another origami crane descends from the heavens.
He catches it.
He puts it in his pocket.
He follows OCTOBER.

IMOGEN returns.
She sets about making herself a cup of tea.
Three Ding tea time tableaus as before.
She takes a sip.
She hears the sound of twigs breaking underfoot.

IMOGEN
Frederick?

Nothing.

She hears the sound of wings flapping.
She looks overhead.

Nothing.
She stirs her tea sadly absorbing the loneliness of the universe.

She hears a very small “Ahem”  
She looks in her teacup.

Something.

FREDERICK returns from his shower.  
He is in remarkably good spirits until he sees IMOGEN alone.

FREDERICK  
Ah.

IMOGEN  
Startled  
Ah!

FREDERICK  
What?

IMOGEN  
What?!  

FREDERICK  
Is everything okay?

IMOGEN looks back in her teacup.

IMOGEN  
Perfectly.

FREDERICK  
I mean, is something wrong?

IMOGEN  
I’ve been drinking tea by myself, Frederick.  
What could possibly be wrong?

FREDERICK sits closely and gingerly next to IMOGEN.

FREDERICK  
About earlier, I –  
Imogen, look at me.

IMOGEN  
---

FREDERICK  
What’s going on?
IMOGEN
I thought I heard—

FREDERICK
Yes?

 IMOGEN
Nevermind.

FREDERICK
Go on.
What is it, my mourning dove?
He places a hand gently on her shoulder.
She warms to him.
Tell me, my orange-breasted wax bill?
A small smile escapes her. She is almost ready to speak.
Out with it, my little Himalayan snowcock.

IMOGEN
Oh Frederick!
The moment is lost.

FREDERICK
Very well.
He stands and moves away.
He looks at her for a moment, with pity and fear, before exiting.

IMOGEN
Unaware he has left
It’s just-
Oh Frederick!
The loneliness of a teabag!
All these tiny mutilated scraps of foliage.
Once alive.
Little sprouts in the sun.
Drinking up the water, growing each day.
Then suddenly
She gestures a beheading.
Sliced.
Chopped.
Dried.
Stuffed in little humiliating bags.
With little pathetic tags
To wait in stuffy, over-priced stores
On cramped, forsaken shelves.
And here they are.
Back in nature
Dunked in hot water.
Slurped up and cast aside.
Used.
Wet.
Miserable.
Unwanted.
And lukewarm.

She reaches out to embrace FREDERICK, but he is not there.

SCENE THREE

MUMBO is alone half-humming, half-singing a song and penning a long-winded note.

MUMBO
Sticky fingers gonna get a treat
you pick my pocket, you’re goin’ feel some heat
cause when the ------------------
-----------------------------
-----------------------------I’m gonna beat you up

JUMBO enters from the woods.

MUMBO
Welcome back.

JUMBO
Why thank you.

MUMBO
How was it?

JUMBO
Juicy.

MUMBO
Juicy?

JUMBO
Juicy.

MUMBO
How can meditation be juicy?

JUMBO
You should try it sometime.

MUMBO
I haven’t got the patience for it.
JUMBO
You don’t need patience.
You just need to relax.
And focus.
Be and breathe.
Feel the piranha moving through you.

MUMBO
Piranha?

JUMBO
Prawn-a-yawna

MUMBO
Correcting JUMBO
Pranayama

JUMBO
Yeah, that.

MUMBO
So where’d you go?
The rock next to the tree?

JUMBO
Using different intonations and gestures.
No, the rock next to the tree.

MUMBO
That’s a nice one.
Do you feel spiritually enlightened now?

JUMBO
Oh yeah sure.
That is I was experiencing a great ethereal connectivity to the universe and my place in it.
It seemed my body had at once lost form and melted into the collective matter of existence
And yet, in the very same moment, I was more intensely aware of every atom of my being,
its placement, preciousness, and sensation, than I have ever previously been.

MUMBO
---

JUMBO
It was rad.

MUMBO
---

JUMBO
And then I heard this voice inside of me.
Small, but strong.
Pure and forceful.

MUMBO
What was it?

JUMBO
A voice of deep longing.
Desperation.
Desire.

MUMBO
What did it want?

JUMBO
A grilled cheese sandwich.

MUMBO
Protesting You know how cheese—

JUMBO
Interrupting What are you doing?

MUMBO
Writing that note for Ranger Dave.

JUMBO
You’re writing Ranger Dave a letter?

MUMBO
It’s not for him, it’s for the burglar.

JUMBO
How sweet.
JUMBO reads it

Dear interloper,
Did you purchase these victuals?
No.
Was it your money that was handed over to fund these comestibles?
I don’t think so.
So will it be you who puts these delicious food stuffs in your mouth?
In your dreams, sneakthief!
If you take these tonight, there will be severe consequences to pay.
You have been cautioned, lousy cutpurse.

A pox on you and your fellows!
Cordially,
Mumbo Gumbo
SCENE FOUR

OCTOBER and RANGER DAVE enter from their walk.

OCTOBER
Who would spend so much time making so many of the same thing?
Don’t you think it would get boring?
Folding a million birds?

RANGER DAVE
A thousand.

OCTOBER
What?

RANGER DAVE
Not a million.

OCTOBER
Are you questioning my right to hyperbolize?

RANGER DAVE
A thousand paper cranes will grant you a wish.
Or bring you peace.
Or something.

OCTOBER
So I’m being granted a wish?

RANGER DAVE
It’s a nice thought.

OCTOBER
Since when have fairy godmothers been such a nuisance?

RANGER DAVE
Since always, I imagine.

RANGER DAVE lags behind and stoops to pick up a rock.

OCTOBER
You’re not creeped out by this at all?

RANGER DAVE
He shrugs.
Someone likes you.

OCTOBER
Someone knows how to enter my house at night.
Someone follows me wherever I go.
RANGER DAVE
Someone is showing you interest.
Isn’t that nice?

OCTOBER
No.
It is not.

RANGER DAVE
Have a heart.
You don’t know anything about them!

OCTOBER
No! I don’t!
That is exactly my point.

RANGER DAVE
You have no appreciation for affection.
Someone is showering you in attention and you can’t stop for a second to see how cool that is.

OCTOBER
There is no proof that these are affectionate birds.
You have no imagination.
It’s not Valentine’s Day, Dave.

RANGER DAVE
Maybe they’re not from a person at all.

OCTOBER
What do you mean?

RANGER DAVE
Maybe it’s more of a spiritual universe thing.

OCTOBER
---

RANGER DAVE
Why are you so anxious to find out, anyways?
What are you going to do?
Hire a detective?
Yell at the heavens?
Ask the cranes?

OCTOBER
I’ve tried that.

RANGER DAVE
And?
OCTOBER
Not a peep.
What would you do?

RANGER DAVE
I’d keep every single one;
makes a nest of them and snuggle in.
Let the wings cover me while I dream.

OCTOBER

---

RANGER DAVE
What?
I answered honestly.

OCTOBER
You wouldn’t be the least bit curious?

RANGER DAVE
I’d be grateful to have some magic in my life.

OCTOBER
You’re a singular man, Ranger Dave.

RANGER DAVE
Thank you.

A long awkward silence.

OCTOBER
Don’t you have any duties to be attending to?

RANGER DAVE
Do you want me to leave?

OCTOBER
I was just asking.

He turns to leave.

RANGER DAVE
Have you ever tried opening them up?
You never know.
There could be something on the inside.

He exits.

A paper crane falls from the sky.
OCTOBER catches it nonchalantly.
She automatically moves to throw it into the fire pit but stops herself.

She unfolds the crane.

She contemplates the interior.
She contemplates RANGER DAVE.

OCTOBER writes a fortune.

JUMBO enters and watches her for a moment.

JUMBO
You like mundane things, don’t you?

OCTOBER
Mundane?
What’s mundane about this?

JUMBO
It’s old-fashioned.
Ink and paper.

OCTOBER
It’s poetic.

JUMBO
It’s simple.

OCTOBER
I’m just exercising the greatest gift of humanity:
the ability to record my thoughts through my hands.

JUMBO
Nah- The greatest gift of humanity is technology.

OCTOBER
Says you who go tramping through the woods in your birthday suit every night!
Isn’t that as “simple” as it gets?

JUMBO
How’d you know about that?

OCTOBER
Ranger Dave.

JUMBO
It may be simple but it is far from mundane.
What are you writing?
OCTOBER
It’s for—

JUMBO
Ranger Dave?

It is.

*JUMBO begins rooting around the groceries. Rediscovering the croissant, JUMBO looks at it covetously but puts it away.*

*Instead JUMBO finds a pixie stick and proceeds to enjoy it thoroughly.*

JUMBO
A love note?

OCTOBER
A fortune.

JUMBO
Like a cootie catcher?

OCTOBER
More like a cookie.

JUMBO
“Confucius say let us have babies”?

OCTOBER
No.

JUMBO
Why a fortune?

OCTOBER
I’m comfortable with the format.

*An awkward silence in which OCTOBER finds herself having to explain her profession once more.*

*I write fortune cookie fortunes for a living—*

JUMBO
Unsurprised
Oh I could see that.

OCTOBER
What, how?

JUMBO
You just look—

OCTOBER
Excuse me?
JUMBO
Like you would do that sort of thing.

OCTOBER
How does anyone look like a fortune writer?

JUMBO
Shrugs
Eccentric.

OCTOBER
Eccentric?

JUMBO
Your name is Octopus.

OCTOBER
Your name is Jumbo!

JUMBO
Oo Touchy- like a writer.
So what does it say?

OCTOBER
It’s private.

JUMBO
It’s like making a wish?

OCTOBER
No, it’s just personal.

JUMBO
So they come true?

OCTOBER
What?

JUMBO
Your fortunes.
Do they come true?

OCTOBER
I don’t know.

JUMBO
Well you’re not very good at your job then, are you?

OCTOBER
That’s unfair.

58
JUMBO
You’re the one handing out false predictions.

OCTOBER
No one expects them to be failsafe!

JUMBO
I do.

A stalemate.

If you don’t expect them to be true, then why do you write them?

OCTOBER
Because they might be.

There’s something nice about the possibility that even a tiny sliver of paper enclosed in a cheap confection could present you with some valuable insight.

JUMBO
How do you know what to write?

OCTOBER
A trifle embarrassed
It’s like a little voice, or something.
I can’t explain it.

JUMBO
I know about voices.

OCTOBER

JUMBO
It’s almost a deeper part of yourself than you knew existed. It’s all poetic and intellectual and honest. It’s how you know the right thing to say when someone you love is hurt, or when you should say nothing at all.

OCTOBER
Right.

JUMBO
Mumbo tells me not to listen to it.

OCTOBER
Why?

JUMBO
Most of the time the voice wants me to eat chorizo or a quesadilla or something and then the tent gets all funky.
OCTOBER

So are you going to write me one?

OCTOBER

What?

JUMBO

A fortune.

OCTOBER

Okay.

JUMBO sits expectantly.

OCTOBER

I’ll have to think about it.

JUMBO

Oh.

JUMBO moves to exit, then suddenly remembering, extracts something from a pocket. Here, I thought you might appreciate this.

It is a crane.

OCTOBER lets out a yelp in spite of herself.

I didn’t think you’d like it that much!

Shoot- I just found this thing in the fire pit over--

OCTOBER

Relieved Oh you found it?

JUMBO

Yeah, just over there.

Who do you think would want to burn something this pretty?

OCTOBER

I would.
SCENE FIVE

*MUMBO* and *FREDERICK* are engaging in a shady transaction.

**MUMBO**

*Counting bills*

Four-fifty, five-hundred, five-fifty, five-seventy, five-seventy-five

*FREDERICK* glances around in all directions.

**MUMBO**

Alright, you got your main rope, your saddle harness, your friction saver, your throwline, your throwball, your buck strap, your locking snap, climbing gloves, a book of knots, and an extra carabiner on the house. Are you sure you don’t want that helmet?

**FREDERICK**

I suspect I’ve dished out quite enough for one night, thanks. Don’t want the missus getting huffy.

**MUMBO**

I think she’d want you to have the helmet.

**FREDERICK**

I think she’d want me to stay home.

_The chuckle knowingly._

*They hear the noise of approaching feet and attempt to hide the goods. It’s just OCTOBER._

_A moment of recognition and relief._

*FREDERICK* stows the gear behind his tent while *MUMBO* recounts the bills.

**FREDERICK**

Would you mind demonstrating that one knot again?

**MUMBO**

Which one?

**FREDERICK**

The erm, alien head one?

*MUMBO* goes to him and they crouch together as *OCTOBER* eavesdrops.

**MUMBO**

Alright, so first you make your head.

Right.

You’ll need more slack.

**FREDERICK**

How much more?
MUMBO
At least a foot. Maybe two.
You can never have too many feet.

FREDERICK
Like this?

MUMBO
Yeah.
Alright, now twist the neck.
Stab it in the eye.
Uh huh.
Now follow it back in and around leaving a loop.
Just like that.
And again.
Beautiful.
Now dress it- lovely.
You’re on your way!

MUMBO retreats back into the tent.
FREDERICK, after finishing packing away the rope, shares a moment of eye contact with OCTOBER.

OCTOBER
What was that about?

FREDERICK
I found a nest!

OCTOBER
What?

FREDERICK
Or I think I did.

OCTOBER
Any nest in particular?

FREDERICK
The Dickenson Blue-Breasted Warbler!

OCTOBER
Aren’t those extinct?

FREDERICK
No!
I’m telling you, I found one. Or I’m pretty sure I did.

OCTOBER
How do you know?
FREDERICK
This fell from it.
*He produces a distinctive light blue feather with specks of color at the tips.*
It’s too high up, so I’m going to start a climb.

OCTOBER
Have you done much climbing?

FREDERICK
*Brimming with glee*
Never in my life!

OCTOBER
I hope when I’m your age I’ll still be trying new things.
Or rather, I’ll start trying new things.

FREDERICK
Have you done any tree climbing?

She shakes her head.
* IMOGEN enters unnoticed. To the discerning eye, one can tell she has been crying heavily.*

FREDERICK
Well, would you like to come with me?

OCTOBER
Are you crazy?

FREDERICK
Why not?

OCTOBER
---

FREDERICK
Are you scared?

OCTOBER
I don’t have any experience.

FREDERICK
Don’t worry.
I’ll show you the ropes.
We can learn together.

OCTOBER
I don’t know.
FREDERICK
You haven’t lived until you’ve tried new things.
Especially ones that frighten you.
Come on!
It’ll be fun.
It’s the end of summer, the weather is splendid.
Is there a better time to experience heights you’ve never known before?
The adrenaline is really something---

OCTOBER
I’m not sure I want to.

FREDERICK
You’re young! These are the days you should be doing this sort of thing.
Me, I’m just testing fate.

OCTOBER
How big is it?

FREDERICK
The—

OCTOBER
The tree?

FREDERICK
Oh it’s a large one.
Pretty wide around too.
Don’t look so nervous, I’m sure you can manage it.
You look pretty athletic.
If I can, you can.

OCTOBER
What kind of gear do you have?

FREDERICK
I’ve got enough rope for two.
Just one harness, but we’d be taking turns so that should be fine.

OCTOBER
I’m not sure I—

FREDERICK
Or if you want, you could just stay below and hang on.
I need someone to make sure I don’t--

OCTOBER
Do you have anything for protection?
FREDERICK
What do you mean?

OCTOBER
For your head for starters!
And your hands, the chaffing can be--

FREDERICK
I got a pair of gloves. Couldn’t afford anything else, it really gets pricy, you know.
But we’ll just be careful.

OCTOBER

FREDERICK
Listen, I don’t want to force the issue, but I’d really prefer not to go it alone.

OCTOBER
What about your wife?

FREDERICK
What about her?

OCTOBER
Why don’t you ask her?

FREDERICK
Oh Imogen isn’t into this sort of thing.
At least she hasn’t been for years.
I honestly think she would be grateful if she didn’t have to be the one.

OCTOBER
Listen, you’re a really great person.
Please don’t take this as a slight on you, because I admire your bravery
But I’d like to spend some time by myself.
I was looking forward to taking a long hike and—

FREDERICK
No offence taken.
I understand.

OCTOBER
Thanks anyway.

They share a smile and an awkward silence.

Alright, well I think I’ll take a stroll to the station.
See if Ranger Dave is around.

OCTOBER takes her fortune notebook and a small bag of supplies and exits.
IMOGEN, who has been listening to this conversation has her head buried in her hands.
FREDERICK sits in silence, reconciling himself to his slight disappointment.
An origami crane falls from the sky and into his lap.
FREDERICK, astonished, looks around and sees IMOGEN.

FREDERICK
Imogen! Good god, did you—

IMOGEN
Unaware of the crane
Yes I did.
I heard the whole thing.
How dare you Frederick?
We’re not even divorced yet and you’re already forcing yourself on that poor hussy!

FREDERICK
I beg your pardon?

IMOGEN
You were asking her to—
To—
I won’t even speak of it.

FREDERICK
Where is the sin in that?
You’d never participate in such an activity, and you’d certainly never allow me to go it alone, so I see no fault in asking for her assistance.

IMOGEN slaps FREDERICK

A long serious silence.

FREDERICK
That was uncalled for.

IMOGEN
You are uncalled for.

FREDERICK
I think I deserve an apology.

IMOGEN
I think I deserve an apology.

IMOGEN
For what?

FREDERICK
For your inexplicable act of violence!

IMOGEN
You were hysterical, I was slapping some sense into you.
FREDERICK
Don't be ridiculous, only women get hysterical.

IMOGEN
Only scoundrels commit adultery!

FREDERICK
What are you squawking about?
I only wanted to catch a glimpse of the bird before—

IMOGEN
Oh that's a pretty turn of phrase!
Out stalking birds!
All you're looking for is a piece of that Octopus girl.

FREDERICK
Who?

IMOGEN
That poor neurotic creature!
You sent her hurrying off to find Ranger Dave!
He'll send us packing in a few minutes and we'll be the mockery of the campsite!
You men and your uncontrollable urges disgust me.

FREDERICK
You are outrageous.

IMOGEN
Me?!

FREDERICK
You are the anti-christ of fun!

IMOGEN
Don't be irreligious, Frederick!
This is hardly the time.

FREDERICK
Confound it!
I have had it up to here with this psychological harassment!
You prohibit any and all amusing activities,
You are upset with me for being uncommunicative
And then you insist on nitpicking my manner of speech.

IMOGEN
Don't use lists, Frederick- the syntax is primitive.

FREDERICK
Imogen, since the day I first caught a note of your chirping voice and beheld your pert eyes as soft as sharp as the egg of a hawk,
I have never sought the company of anyone but you—

IMOGEN
But—

FREDERICK
But you are not enough. I thirst for self-fulfillment, Imogen! I require adventure! I will be damned if I become one of those clammy, derelict, boring sacks of bones in my old age with nothing to show for myself.

IMOGEN
But you have me. You have all of me.

FREDERICK
And what have you accomplished? Are you fulfilled, Imogen? Are you happy?

IMOGEN

MUMBO and JUMBO emerge from their tent

MUMBO and JUMBO
Good Afternoon!

IMOGEN and FREDERICK
Immediately assuming a terrifying impersonation of jollity. Hello there!

MUMBO
How are you two doing?

In the same tone of enthusiastic pretense.

FREDERICK
Horrendously!

MUMBO
Wasn't actually listening Wonderful!

JUMBO
We've got a fabulous lunch planned! Care to join us?
FREDERICK
Thanks, I’m not hungry at the moment!

IMOGEN
Not in a million years!

MUMBO
Fabulous!
We should be ready in, say, ten minutes!

IMOGEN
How is that possible?

JUMBO
We thought we’d do a cold lun
We’ve had these deviled eggs for almost a week
Do you two like tuna salad?
I love tuna salad.

MUMBO
It’s just going to be a simple meal
Some bruschetta, olives, mozzarella and the like
I’ll toss together a fruit salad.
It’s no big deal, but it should be tasty.

FREDERICK
So, see you in ten?

IMOGEN
Seems inevitable!

JUMBO
Stupendous!

MUMBO
Correcting JUMBO
Stupendous.

JUMBO
Stupendous!

IMOGEN
Can we provide anything?

JUMBO
Oh don’t worry about it!

MUMBO
We still don’t have a carbohydrate.
JUMBO and MUMBO share a glance.

IMOGEN
She holds up a baguette.
Would this do?

JUMBO
Beautifully!

MUMBO
Nothing like breaking bread with your neighbors!
They smile. They nod.
*MUMBO and JUMBO begin to futz about with preparations.*

FREDERICK  
*In hushed tones*
What are you doing?

IMOGEN  
My life is collapsing.  
I’m hungry.

FREDERICK  
So you agree to lunch with those two?

IMOGEN  
I thought you liked them.  
You said they were “a hoot”.

FREDERICK  
I’m not in the mood for social activity.

IMOGEN  
Well we have to eat, don’t we?

FREDERICK  
I don’t want to have lunch with you, you’re a porcupine!

IMOGEN  
And you’re a shrew.

FREDERICK  
You can’t call a man a—

IMOGEN  
Listen, I don’t want to be here, I never wanted to come here and I can’t wait to leave—  
but seeing as I’m stuck here with you for at least one more night  
I am going to call you whatever I damn well please.

JUMBO  
*Interrupting*
You don’t happen to have a small cup we could use for aioli, do you?

IMOGEN thrusts her teacup in JUMBO’s hand.

JUMBO  
Gorgeous willow patterning.  
Thank you, kindly.

JUMBO gets back to business.
FREDERICK
You want to go?
Go.

*He offers her a car key.*

IMOGEN
And leave you here?

FREDERICK
I want to find my bird.

MUMBO
*Interrupting*
How do you feel about sardines?

FREDERICK
The most repulsive food!

IMOGEN
I get claustrophobic at the very thought of them!

MUMBO
*Walking away again*
Excellent, excellent!

IMOGEN
I am not going to embarrass myself in front of the whole campground.
When we leave, we are leaving as the most goddamned happily married couple in the world!
I will not have those two laughing at me.
Besides, you know I don’t enjoy driving.

FREDERICK
As far as I’m concerned, dear, you can do as you like.
And I will play the proud as a peacock patriarch to your docile as a dove doll.

IMOGEN
You are too kind.

FREDERICK
Under the condition that after we stomach this outrageous repast, I am going to find my warbler
whether you approve or not.

IMOGEN
It seems we shall have to endure each other until morning then.

FREDERICK
Fine, but I refuse to sleep next to you.

IMOGEN
Agreed.
You can sleep in the car.

*JUMBO comes up behind them*
JUMBO
Anyone for boxed wine?

Still in heated tones.

FREDERICK
I would love nothing more.

IMOGEN
For the love of god, yes.

SCENE SIX
The frenzy of eating has subsided, and awkward conversation ensues.

MUMBO
Do you two have kids?

IMOGEN
Yes.
Marshall is twenty-five and Cassandra is twenty-one.

MUMBO
What do they do?

FREDERICK
Cassie’s studying printmaking and Marsh is an agro-ecologist working over in—

JUMBO
I bet you’re proud.

FREDERICK
Oh yes we’re—

JUMBO
Aren’t you proud?
I’d be so proud.

IMOGEN
If only they would breed.

An awkward silence.

FREDERICK
Do you have children?

JUMBO
Who me?
**JUMBO** shares a look with **MUMBO**

Ha!

**MUMBO**

Ha!

**JUMBO**

Ha!

**MUMBO**

Ha!

They laugh uproariously.

**MUMBO** and **JUMBO** begin to clear away the eating things while continuing to drive themselves into peals of laughter.

**IMOGEN** and **FREDERICK** are steeped in the excruciating awareness of each other.

**OCTOBER** enters with three freshly baked fortune cookies.

**OCTOBER**

Good afternoon!

**IMOGEN**

Well look who it is.

*To MUMBO and JUMBO*

Might I offer you two a little assistance?

**JUMBO**

No, no, don’t worry about it.

**IMOGEN**

Here let me take these.

**FREDERICK**

*Half-heartedly*

Yes, can I help at all?

**JUMBO**

Please sit back down, it’s alright.

**FREDERICK**

*Taking the plates*

Sitting back down

If you insist.

**IMOGEN**

Taking the plates

I insist.

**IMOGEN** and **JUMBO** engage in an argument of manners which results in both of them politely fighting over the washing up.

**MUMBO** tugs **FREDERICK** over to the side.

**OCTOBER** sidles up to **JUMBO** in an attempt to plant a fortune cookie for **JUMBO** to find later.

Unable to carefully slip it into a pocket, with **JUMBO**’s back turned, she manages to drop it into the teacup **JUMBO** has just finished drying.
MUMBO
Are you still planning on doing that climb later?

FREDERICK
As soon as we’re done with the dishes.

MUMBO
We’re not doing any dishes.

FREDERICK
Exactly.

MUMBO
Here, please take this.

*MUMBO hands FREDERICK a helmet.*

FREDERICK
Oh I couldn’t possibly.

MUMBO
Listen, it’s on the house.
Or on the tent, so to speak.
I want you to be safe.

FREDERICK
Mumbo, I’m touched.
Really, I am.

MUMBO
Don’t mention it.

*They continue to chat in low tones for a minute.*
*FREDERICK eventually places his helmet on the ground next to his tent.*

IMOGEN
It’s all so futile, isn’t it?

JUMBO
Yes.
*Pause.*
What is?

IMOGEN
Doing the dishes.

JUMBO
You really don’t have to do them.
IMOGEN
No, no I don’t mind, truly.
It’s only—
How many dishes do you think you’ve washed in your lifetime?

JUMBO
Four

IMOGEN
—

JUMBO
Well how many dishes do you own?

IMOGEN
No, I mean every day—three meals a day—we wash the same plates over and over again.
They are only going to get dirty once more in a few hours.
Why bother?

JUMBO
That’s what I keep telling Mumbo!
I’d be happy to just lick ’em clean after eating, but apparently it’s inscendiary.

IMOGEN
Insanitary?

JUMBO
Uh huh.

IMOGEN
Indeed.
She begins to scrub her dish with a little more vigor.
Funny, isn’t it, how the cooking and the cleaning seem to take up hours
and the eating doesn’t seem to happen at all.

JUMBO
I don’t know, there’s something nice about it, don’t you think?
The water.
The soap.
The bubbles.

It’s like washing away all the problems.
Leaving something clean and pure, if only for a few hours.
A future pleasure.

Just as they dry the last dish, MUMBO and FREDERICK come over.

MUMBO
Alright, how can we help?
Oh darn, you’re all finished.
FREDERICK
What a pity, we so wished to be useful.

IMOGEN fills a cup full of water and “accidentally” dumps it on FREDERICK.

IMOGEN
Oh dear, terribly sorry!
How unforgivably clumsy of me.

MUMBO and JUMBO flutter about getting a towel to dry FREDERICK.
OCTOBER puts the second fortune cookie for FREDERICK in his newly acquired helmet.
RANGER DAVE enters quickly, panting.

RANGER DAVE
To OCTOBER
You’re sick!

OCTOBER
Excuse me?

RANGER DAVE
Are you sick?

OCTOBER
No.

RANGER DAVE
Any health problems?

OCTOBER
Not that I’m—

RANGER DAVE
Heart palpitations?
Shortness of breath?
Inexplicable pain?

OCTOBER
---

RANGER DAVE
Damn, I thought you were dying.

OCTOBER
You don’t have to look so disappointed.

RANGER DAVE
Oh sorry. Of course I’m glad.
I just thought I had found an explanation.
This afternoon this was in the free box.
He wield a children’s book.
This girl in Japan is sick because of all the radiation and so she—
Well never mind.
I thought maybe you were being healed.

An awkward silence.
A crane falls from the sky and hits OCTOBER on the head.

RANGER DAVE
What’s that?

OCTOBER
What do you think?

RANGER DAVE
No, that.
Indicating the fortune cookie she is holding.

OCTOBER
Suddenly embarrassed
Oh, nothing.

RANGER DAVE
What is it?

OCTOBER
Just a cookie.
It’s stupid.

RANGER DAVE
A fortune cookie?

OCTOBER
Yes.

RANGER DAVE
Freshly baked?

OCTOBER
What?

RANGER DAVE
Did you bake it here?

OCTOBER
...Yes.

RANGER DAVE
It was you.

OCTOBER
Stop being so weird.
RANGER DAVE
Did you bake cookies in the Ranger Station?

OCTOBER
Ranger Steve said-

RANGER DAVE
I’m going to have to write you a citation.
He pulls out a pad of paper and a pen.

OCTOBER
I beg your pardon?

RANGER DAVE
I don’t want to, but it’s my duty.

OCTOBER
For baking cookies?

RANGER DAVE
For baking cookies in the Ranger Station.
That stove is sanctioned purely for use by State Certified Rangers under section 23 A dash 005--

Another crane falls on OCTOBER’s head.

OCTOBER
But I baked it for you.

RANGER DAVE
--following an incident in which an unruly troupe of scouts scorched the entire southwest facing corner of our spice rack—

OCTOBER
This was for you.

RANGER DAVE
For me?

OCTOBER
---

RANGER DAVE
---

OCTOBER
It’s just a silly fortune.
A silence in which yet another crane falls on OCTOBER’s head.

RANGER DAVE
Unfortunately I still have to give you this.

78
He continues to fill out the citation.

OCTOBER
What?

RANGER DAVE
But I’ll pay for it.

OCTOBER
That’s absurd.

RANGER DAVE
I wish I didn’t have to.

OCTOBER
...But

RANGER DAVE
It’s a matter of principle.

OCTOBER
Taking the citation
Uh huh.

Another silence. Another crane.

RANGER DAVE
So, can I have my fortune now?

OCTOBER
No.

RANGER DAVE
Why not?

OCTOBER
It’s a matter of principle.

RANGER DAVE
What was in it?

OCTOBER
I’m not telling.

RANGER DAVE
Very well.

He nonchalantly takes a seat, and gazes around as though to cheerfully comment on the pleasantness of the day.
OCTOBER
Who are you?

RANGER DAVE
...I’m Ranger Dave.

OCTOBER
No, I mean, who are you?

RANGER DAVE
I’m afraid I don’t understand the question.

OCTOBER
What are you normally like?
Do you always strike up bizarre pseudo-friendships with campers?

RANGER DAVE
Well, what are you normally like?
Are you always inundated with metaphysical existential crises?

OCTOBER
No.
Yes.
They’re not usually this inflamed.
I asked you first.

RANGER DAVE
What was the question?

OCTOBER
Why are you here?

RANGER DAVE
---

OCTOBER
I didn’t mean that to come out so rude.

RANGER DAVE
ly.

OCTOBER
What?

RANGER DAVE
Rudely.

OCTOBER
---
RANGER DAVE
Not many people see past the hat.
It’s nice to have a real conversation, you know?
Where you feel like the words are actually landing on the other side.
You’re not just throwing them haphazardly – here and there-
Just to feel them bounce right back at you with a nod and a smile.
Or a scowl and a “Fuck you, RD” as the case may be.
Plus, you have a backpack ... and I also have a backpack.
And you just so happen to be way more thought provoking than Ranger Steve.
He’s abhorrently boring and has no sense of personal hygiene.

OCTOBER
It’s true he stinks.

Yet another goddamn crane on the head.

OCTOBER
Do you think I’m missing something?

RANGER DAVE
---

OCTOBER
Is it important?

RANGER DAVE
---

OCTOBER
Is there something I should be getting from this?
It’s all so senseless.
It seems to come to nothing.

RANGER DAVE
---

OCTOBER
Do you ever get the feeling that you are absent from your own life?
That everything vital- the thesis statements of your existence- happen when you aren’t looking?
Like you are never there when all the juicy stuff goes on?

RANGER DAVE
No, I definitely remember all the juicy stuff.

OCTOBER
Nevermind. I’m going for a hike.

RANGER DAVE
Pot pie?
She turns.
Do you want some pot pie?

OCTOBER
kindly
No, thanks.

As she exits, cranes drop down behind her one by one.
RANGER DAVE leaves the children’s book by her tent before exiting in another direction.
FREDERICK emerges from his tent in a new (dry) shirt, all ready, carrying his gear.

IMOGEN
Oh Frederick, you must change shirts again.
That pattern simply does not work with your trousers.

FREDERICK
That’s it, I’m off.

IMOGEN
Weren’t you listening to me?

FREDERICK
The final straw has fallen.

IMOGEN
What are you blathering about?

FREDERICK
The camel remains erect no longer.

IMOGEN
Change your shirt or don’t, but please cease spouting half metaphors.

FREDERICK
I am departing.
I am not changing my shirt.
I see absolutely no reason to.
I refuse to listen to your ridiculous demands any further.
I will not---

IMOGEN
If you are going to leave, please do so promptly.

FREDERICK
Very well!
Pip pip!

IMOGEN
Cheerio!

FREDERICK and his climbing gear exit.
IMOGEN

Well it’s all just bloody terrific for you, isn’t it?
Too busy chasing a ghost to stop your identity vanishing.
Because that is what is happening, Frederick.
When did we stop looking at each other?
When did our silences stop mattering?
I blame the web.
No, I blame the telephone.
No, I blame Benjamin Franklin.

If he hadn’t gone off with that bleeding kite we wouldn’t be standing here not knowing if we’d ever kiss again.

So go if you must.
Tramp off into the muck and break your neck for all I care, but I won’t be waiting for you this time.
I am my own woman, with powerful sexuality even now,
and goddamn it no one is going to stop me from drinking one last cup of tea,
marching into our out of fashion baby wagon and riding my next hot flash straight into freedom.

IMOGEN reaches for her tea cup in slightly manic but empowered frenzy.
She sees the cookie.
She takes out the cookie.
She looks at the cookie.

She puts it down warily.

Three dings tea time tableaus as before.

IMOGEN cautiously cracks open the fortune cookie
It reads: Even the littlest voice may speak the truth.

IMOGEN listens.

IMOGEN listens hard.

IMOGEN hears nothing.
IMOGEN beings to cry.

TEABAG
There, there.
Now, now.

IMOGEN almost loses her grip both physically and mentally.

TEABAG
Careful!
Watch it!

IMOGEN regains her hold.

TEABAG
You scared me!

IMOGEN
You scared me!
IMOGEN
Is that you, teabag?

TEABAG
Were you expecting someone else?

IMOGEN
I wasn’t expecting anything.

TEABAG
That’s tragic.

IMOGEN
No expectations, No disappointments

TEABAG
Bullshit.

IMOGEN
I beg your pardon?

TEABAG
Lipton!

IMOGEN
I don’t follow.

TEABAG
Life is always going to disappoint you.
You are always going to be filled with desire, aren’t you?
Whether it be for a big spoon at night or a second squeeze of honey.

IMOGEN nods dolefully

TEABAG
And that’s alright.
To move forward you must long.

IMOGEN
What do you know about longing?

TEABAG
Oh, some things.
I know that the time you have is never enough.
There’s always more you’ll want to do.

IMOGEN
---

TEABAG
I mean, look at me.
I’m halfway to the compost pile, twice used and getting colder by the second. And yet, I’d give anything for a third steeping.

**IMOGEN**
You would?

**TEABAG**
Oh most definitely. What’s wrong?

**IMOGEN**
That’s just so sad.

**TEABAG**
Is it sadder for a soggy bag of leaves, hanging onto a saucer for dear life to want just one more lap around the cup, Or to want nothing at all?

**IMOGEN**
How did you get to be so smart?

**TEABAG**
I’m well-aged.

*IMOGEN chuckles a little, then begins crying again.*

**TEABAG**
Oh dear, please don’t.

**IMOGEN**
It’s okay. I cry every day.

**TEABAG**
Some days more than others?

*IMOGEN nods.*

**TEABAG**
Well, go on then, if it helps.
SCENE SEVEN
Early afternoon
FEBRUARY, a weathered looking young man, enters with unnecessary and ineffectual stealth.
He carries a backpacking pack and a campground map.
He inspects the deserted site.

FEBRUARY
Ma?
Pops?
Toby?

He notices OCTOBER’s tent and takes a peek.
He goes half-way in and we hear the sounds of reckless rummaging.

RANGER DAVE enters.

RANGER DAVE
Noticing half of a stranger in OCTOBER’s tent
Ahem.
I don’t know who you think you are or what you think you’re doing.
But thievery is not allowed in this camp ground, or this country so I warn you now-
I am going to see that you are punished to the full extent of the law.

FEBRUARY
Taking his sweet time getting out of the tent
I don’t know who you think you are
But you’re a presumptuous, uppity, son-of-a
Finally turning around
Dave?
He re-emerges holding a crane.

RANGER DAVE
February?

FEBRUARY
What the hell are you doing here?

RANGER DAVE
Rangering.
What are you doing here?

FEBRUARY
Trying to find some papers.

He dumps his backpack and proceeds to dismantle the crane.
He rips off a section and rolls himself a joint using it as the paper.

Jesus, it’s been a while.
How’ve you been, man?
RANGER DAVE
Please don’t do that here.

FEBRUARY
What, you don’t wanna hit this?

RANGER DAVE
I’m on duty.

FEBRUARY
All the more reason.

RANGER DAVE
I’m going to have to write you a citation.

FEBRUARY
Are you serious?

RANGER DAVE
Just, please, put it away now.

FEBRUARY
Stop being so weird.

RANGER DAVE
It’s my job, February.
I’d really rather not but-

FEBRUARY
Then don’t.
Quit!
Think of all the possibilities.
You wouldn’t have to wear that stupid hat anymore.

RANGER DAVE
I like this hat.

FEBRUARY
Alright, alright.
*Putting his stash away.*
You always were a prude.

RANGER DAVE
*Searching for a comeback*
You always were...
...crude.

FEBRUARY
---
RANGER DAVE
As though to increase the effect
Ha HA!

FEBRUARY
So, you’ve met my family?

RANGER DAVE
October.

FEBRUARY
She lets you call her that?

RANGER DAVE
Not even once.

FEBRUARY
Where is she?

RANGER DAVE
On a hike.

FEBRUARY
And my folks?

RANGER DAVE
At home.

FEBRUARY
What?

RANGER DAVE
Um... some scheduling issues?

FEBRUARY
Classic.

RANGER DAVE
They didn’t call you either?

FEBRUARY
I don’t own a phone.

RANGER DAVE
Ah.
Haven’t changed a bit, I see.
A long awkward silence.

FEBRUARY
Wanna go blow some things up?
SCENE EIGHT

JUMBO enters to see MUMBO cleaning a gun and singing happily.

MUMBO
Gonna sniff you out
Gonna hunt you down
Gonna make you pout pout pout
Gonna make you frown

JUMBO, unseen by MUMBO, purloins a cheese stick and eats it slowly as MUMBO continues to sing dreadfully written tunes.

SCENE NINE

IMOGEN is still having a thrilling discussion with the teabag.

IMOGEN
Have you ever thought about how the world is built for happy people?

TEABAG
No, no, darling.
The world is simply built by happy people.

IMOGEN
How dreadfully unfair, don’t you think?

TEABAG
Meh.
Life is—

IMOGEN
Unfair yes, yes.

A pause

TEABAG
How about a game?

IMOGEN
I beg your pardon?

TEABAG
Let’s play something.

IMOGEN
I don’t like games.
They stress me.

TEABAG
Rock, paper, scissors?
IMOGEN
You don’t have hands, how would I know what—

TEABAG
It was a joke, Imogen.

IMOGEN
Oh.
Hahaha

TEABAG
You should go swimming.

IMOGEN
What?

TEABAG
That’s what I think.
What are you doing here with me?
Not that I’m not thoroughly enjoying the attention.

---

TEABAG
Have yourself a nice dunk in the water.
It solves everything.

IMOGEN
What if it doesn’t?

TEABAG
Then you’ll be wet and cold.
And you’ll feel alive.
You only really know yourself in water.
Gain a new experience.
Gain a new perspective.
Go forth, Imogen.
Be happy.
You can’t spend the rest of your life talking to a moldy old teabag.

IMOGEN
I’d like to.

TEABAG
You flatter me.

IMOGEN
No, no flattery. You’re the best friend I’ve ever had.
TEABAG
Oh me?
Nah I’m just... a generic substitute, twice used.

IMOGEN
Well at least you have the gift of humility.

TEABAG
I was under the impression it was a skill.
*IMOGEN* laughs genuinely for the first time in the play.

TEABAG
Go on. It’ll do you good.

IMOGEN
Will you come with me?

TEABAG
I won’t be the same afterward.

IMOGEN
Neither will I.

SCENE TEN

*OCTOBER* returns from her hike. *She discovers FEBRUARY is in her tent.*

OCTOBER
Ru?
What the hell are you doing here?

FEBRUARY
Happy to see me?

OCTOBER
*She is.*
You look beat up.

FEBRUARY
Thank you.

OCTOBER
Are you okay?

FEBRUARY
I see you and Dave have become chums.
OCTOBER
You never mentioned him before.

FEBRUARY
How would you describe him?

OCTOBER

---

FEBRUARY

---

OCTOBER
It’s harder than I thought it would be.

FEBRUARY
It’s not that difficult.

OCTOBER
No, some people are just ... beyond the power of words.

FEBRUARY
More than usually fatalistic, Tober?

OCTOBER

---

FEBRUARY
Let’s make a joint effort of it.
You look at the man, what do you see?

OCTOBER
I see Ranger Dave.

FEBRUARY
Oh come on, have some imagination.

OCTOBER
I see a lonely soul seeking an epiphany.

FEBRUARY
Projecting, much?

OCTOBER
Affectionately
Stop being such a prick!
What do you see?

FEBRUARY
I look at that man and I see a bear.
He may not look scruffy, but there is a wildness in his eyes. A raw, primal power and fierce, grizzly majesty.

You are stoned.

That maybe so.

He put you up to this.

To convince you of his bearlike qualities?

No.

Oh I’ve missed you.

I’m glad you made it.

They share a nice moment.

I’ve got something to tell you.

I don’t have any cash on me.

No I don’t need---

Who’s heart did you break this time?

I didn’t---

Did you wreck your car?

What is it?
A tense silence.

FEBRUARY
It was me.

OCTOBER
What?

FEBRUARY
I did it.

OCTOBER
It was you?

FEBRUARY
Yes.

OCTOBER
The cranes?
They're your cranes?

FEBRUARY
Cranes?
What these?

OCTOBER
You're not the cranemaker?

FEBRUARY
What are you talking about?

OCTOBER
What are you talking about?

FEBRUARY
The fire, October.
It was me.

OCTOBER
---

FEBRUARY
I started it. I think.

OCTOBER
You started it. You think.

FEBRUARY
Uh huh.
OCTOBER
You may have started a massive wildfire which has already destroyed three houses
and may in fact be burning mine down as we speak?

FEBRUARY takes a plaintive hit.
Will you please refrain from smoking in my tent?
It isn’t flame retardant.

FEBRUARY
A childish insult
You’re flame retardant.

OCTOBER
You’re an arsonist!

FEBRUARY
Shh Keep it down!
Dave is a tight ass.

OCTOBER
What do you plan to do about this?

FEBRUARY
I don’t know, lay low.
Backpack for a while.

OCTOBER
Haphazardly tossing cigarette butts hither and thither?

FEBRUARY
I’ll be more careful.

OCTOBER makes a sound of exasperation.

FEBRUARY
Are you pissed?

OCTOBER
---

FEBRUARY
Well what do you want me to do?

OCTOBER
Take some responsibility for yourself.
Stop playing with matches in dry brush.
Put that cigarette out.

FEBRUARY
What’s the magic word?
OCTOBER
February is a dick.

FEBRUARY
Language!

OCTOBER
This is my tent!

FEBRUARY
If I smoke outside, Dave will write me a citation.

OCTOBER
You’re childish.

FEBRUARY
You’re fussy.

OCTOBER
When are you going to grow up?

FEBRUARY
When are you gonna grow up?

OCTOBER
Stop it.

FEBRUARY
Stop it.

OCTOBER
I’m serious.

FEBRUARY
I’m serious.

OCTOBER
When are you going to do something with your life?
All you do is sit around and look at everything.
And if something goes wrong you just walk away like nothing happened.

FEBRUARY
Peas in a pod, sis o’ mine.
Flesh and bone.
Bad blood included.

OCTOBER
I am not like you.
FEBRUARY
What’s with all this paper?

OCTOBER
I don’t know.

FEBRUARY
What are you gonna do about it?

OCTOBER
---

FEBRUARY
Gotcha.

OCTOBER
I’m--

OCTOBER
Going for a walk.

FEBRUARY
Going for a walk?

FEBRUARY
Face it, love. This is how we are and this is how we’ll always be.
Get used to your spots, cheetah.

OCTOBER exits.
SCENE ELEVEN  
*MUMBO, JUMBO, and FEBRUARY are eating dinner together around the fire pit.*

**FEBRUARY**  
Thanks again for feeding me.

**MUMBO**  
Thanks for getting the fire going for us.  
It can be such a tedious job.

**FEBRUARY**  
My pleasure.

**JUMBO**  
Yes, you were so quick too.

**FEBRUARY**  
There was lots of kindling in Toby’s tent.

**MUMBO**  
Did she say how long she’d be?

**FEBRUARY**  
No. I’m not too worried.

*IMOGEN returns from her swim exuberant and glistening with new found liveliness.*

**IMOGEN**  
Good evening, everyone!

**MUMBO**  
Hi there.

**JUMBO**  
Howdy.

**FEBRUARY**  
Hello.

**MUMBO**  
How are you, Mrs. Younglove?

**IMOGEN**  
Wet and wonderful.

**FEBRUARY**  
Nice.

*MUMBO gives JUMBO five bucks.*

**JUMBO**  
This is Octopus’ brother, February.

**MUMBO**  
*Correcting JUMBO February.*
IMOGEN
Delighted.

IMOGEN
Where’s Frederick?

JUMBO
I assumed he was with you.

IMOGEN
Oh. No.

MUMBO
He must not be back yet.
He told me he went bird watching.

FEBRUARY
Not many birds at this time of day.

They all gaze at the darkness beginning to envelop them.

JUMBO
Sangria?

IMOGEN
Please.

MUMBO
Is there anything more divine than—

MUMBO
The Night Sky?

JUMBO
Beans

FEBRUARY
Fire

IMOGEN
Wine

They all gaze into the beyond. The fire crackles. They listen intently.

FEBRUARY
Well thanks again for the grub.

FEBRUARY begins grabbing dishes.

JUMBO
Oh no, let me take care of that.
You’re our guest.

FEBRUARY
No, I’d like to—
JUMBO
Please, sit back down.

FEBRUARY
Okay. You’ve convinced me.
_FEBRUARY sits back down._
Was that plate for Toby?

_JUMBO nods yes._

Well no use letting it go to waste.
_FEBRUARY proceeds to tuck in._
IMOGEN and JUMBO do the dishes as before.
MUMBO half-heartedly clears items away.
MUMBO re-discovers the croissant and holds it for a second.

FEBRUARY
Is that dessert?

MUMBO
No, it’s breakfast.

_MUMBO sets the croissant down, staring lovingly at it for a moment._
_MUMBO retrieves a toothbrush and begins the nightly ritual of dental hygiene._

IMOGEN
I wonder where he could have got to.

JUMBO
I’m sure he’s fine.

MUMBO
Maybe he went to go enjoy the sunset.
There’s a great lookout point a few miles away.

MUMBO
It is remarkable.
The rocks light up with color.
You can see clear to the other side of the valley.

JUMBO
Oh real pretty.
It’s all pink and warm.
Like being in the womb again

FEBRUARY
I wonder if that’s where Toby went.

IMOGEN
She’s gone too?

JUMBO
It’s okay, maybe they’re together.
_IMOGEN begins to scrub harder._
_She notices the croissant is still out._
IMOGEN
Aren’t you going to put that away?

MUMBO
What for?

IMOGEN
Protection.

MUMBO
Nonsense.

IMOGEN
Sense.

MUMBO
Nonsense!

IMOGEN
Sense!

JUMBO
Yeah, what happens if it goes away?

MUMBO
Where would it go?

JUMBO
Where everything else goes.

MUMBO
What are you talking about?

JUMBO
Where the socks go in the dryer and your potato chips at night and people when they die.

MUMBO
Croissants don’t die.

IMOGEN
You don’t just leave the things you love out for everyone to see!

MUMBO
An accusation. Quaker.

IMOGEN
Would you let your cat out at night?
MUMBO
Of course!
What you want to trap them indoors?
Declaw them? Take away their self-defense?

IMOGEN
My ottoman deserves safety too.

MUMBO
What if it likes looking at the moon at night?

IMOGEN
Ottomans have no interest in astronomy.
*FEBRUARY giggles at the thought of a moon-gazing ottoman.*

MUMBO
No, the cat!

IMOGEN
They can do it from the window.

MUMBO
It’s not the same.

IMOGEN
What about coyotes?
What about rabies?
What about greedy neighbors who will take it and keep it and re-name it something terrible like Pumpkin or Boo-Boo?

MUMBO
Sometimes you have to let fate take the wheel.

IMOGEN
That’s absurd—you have control why not use it?
*IMOGEN finally has a striking self-revelation.*

I think I’ll go find him.

JUMBO
What?

IMOGEN
Frederick.
What if he’s hurt?

FEBRUARY
I’m sure he’s fine.
IMOGEN
Someone should do something.
*FEBRUARY, MUMBO, and JUMBO exchange glances.*

FEBRUARY
Well time for bed, goodnight folks!
*FEBRUARY makes a dive for OCTOBER’s tent.*

MUMBO
Boy am I sleepy!

JUMBO
Absolutely pooped.

IMOGEN
I’m going to the Ranger Station.

MUMBO
Oh, would you like us to come with you?

JUMBO
Yeah, we’ll go along.

MUMBO
It’s no fun goin’ lonesome
You might get eaten
Or assaulted
Or both

JUMBO
The dark is scary
A bat might smack you in the face.
A dude got flown at two weeks ago
Right in the eye

IMOGEN
Oh no, you two are tired.
Go to sleep, I’ll be fine.

MUMBO and JUMBO
Okay.
If you say so.

*IMOGEN leaves.*

MUMBO
Be safe now!

JUMBO
Make good choices!

As soon as she is gone JUMBO and MUMBO hastily jump in their tent.
MUMBO emerges quickly having retrieved the gun and puts on a hat.
JUMBO steps out thereafter wearing nothing but a robe.

JUMBO
Where are you goin’?

MUMBO
Where are you goin’?

103
JUMBO
I thought I’d try a nude midnight meditation.

MUMBO
I thought I’d see if I could sniff out the thief.
We’ve got extra fancy bait tonight.
Gesturing at the croissant.

JUMBO
What about your note?

MUMBO hastily drops the letter next to the croissant.

JUMBO
But what about eating it for breakfast?

MUMBO
Oh we will.

JUMBO continues to look furtively at the croissant.

MUMBO
It’ll taste so much better after we’ve been wanting it for so long.

JUMBO
You’re just buttering me up.

MUMBO
You’d batter believe it.

JUMBO
The yeast you could do is be honest with me.

MUMBO
I’ve been speaking the plain truth. No floury language.

JUMBO
You’re whisking off to use that gun!

MUMBO
I’m not going to shoot. No yolk.

JUMBO
You’re not pulling my egg?

MUMBO
Would I dough that to you?

JUMBO
I guess not.
They hear approaching footsteps.

MUMBO mimes that they should be quiet.
They dart quickly into the woods.
Enter RANGER DAVE and IMOGEN

RANGER DAVE
You don’t say.
When did you last see him?

IMOGEN
This afternoon.

RANGER DAVE
And he went out hiking?

IMOGEN
Bird watching in particular.

RANGER DAVE
Where’s Toby?

IMOGEN
Who?

RANGER DAVE
October.

IMOGEN
Oh Octolady?
She’s gone too.

RANGER DAVE
Is her brother here?

IMOGEN
I think he’s asleep.

RANGER DAVE knocks on OCTOBER’s tent.

RANGER DAVE
Ru?
You in there?

FEBRUARY elicits a loud fake snore.

RANGER DAVE
February, where is your sister?

FEBRUARY
Sleeping...

105
RANGER DAVE
She’s in there with you?

FEBRUARY
No, she’s not. I’m sleeping.

*RANGER DAVE unzips the tent, a huge plume of smoke emerges.

RANGER DAVE
Damn it, Feb. I’m going to have to write you a citation.

FEBRUARY
Oh come on, Dave. I can’t get to sleep without a toke.

RANGER DAVE
Is this thing even flame retardant?

FEBRUARY
You’re flame ret—

*RANGER DAVE is not amused. He gives FEBRUARY the citation.

RANGER DAVE
Where is your sister?

FEBRUARY
Beats me.

RANGER DAVE
How long has she been gone?

FEBRUARY
I don’t know man, four, five hours.

RANGER DAVE
Another hike?

FEBRUARY
Yeah she was upset and we—

RANGER DAVE
What happened?

FEBRUARY
It’s private.

RANGER DAVE
She left upset?
RANGER DAVE
I've got to find her, something must have happened.

IMOGEN
What about my husband?

FEBRUARY
She won't like that.

RANGER DAVE
Like what?

IMOGEN
He was upset too!

FEBRUARY
Being rescued.

RANGER DAVE
I'm not rescuing, I'm finding.

FEBRUARY
What if she doesn't want to be found?

IMOGEN
There you see, you can find Frederick.

RANGER DAVE
I'll be back. Hold tight, Mrs. Younglove.
As he is leaving.
And February, put that campfire out-
Where are the Gumbos anyway?
FEBRUARY moves to put out the fire.

IMOGEN
No, that's alright. I think I'll sit by it for a while.

FEBRUARY sits by the fire too.
The silence of fire pit pondering.

FEBRUARY
You're really concerned, aren't you?

IMOGEN
Aren't you?
FEBRUARY
No.

Yes.

Time passes.
The night grows late and deep.

FEBRUARY dozes.
IMOGEN frets.

IMOGEN sees the croissant. The croissant sees IMOGEN.
IMOGEN nods in acknowledgement.
The croissant does not nod. It is merely a croissant, you see.

IMOGEN
To FEBRUARY
I’m going after him.

FEBRUARY
Hmm?

IMOGEN
Frederick.
I’m going to find him.
Mind you put that out before going to bed.

She ventures into the forest.

FEBRUARY
Yes, yes. I’ll- he yawns- Go to bed

FEBRUARY goes to bed, neglecting to extinguish the fire.
SCENE TWELVE

Enter BEAR.
BEAR takes stock of his surroundings.
BEAR notices the audience.

BEAR
Oh, Good Evening.

The moon is ... mediocre tonight.
Neither confirming nor denying our suspicions.

Bear listens.

The river gurgles faintly
like an engine struggling to turn over.

And the wind puffs warm and ...  

sniffing
what the hell?
He notices the fire is still burning.
Will these people never get it right?
Golly gee willikers!
BEAR begins to put out the fire.

One of these days, I’m not gonna be so benevolent, mark my words.
As a matter of fact, we could use a good blaze round here.
Releases all sorts of things.
Ain’t no better way to feel alive.

Having extinguished the flames BEAR has an awkward moment with the audience.

Well, if you’ll excuse me- it’s dinner time.
BEAR wanders over to MUMBO’s food cache.

You know I’m not normally up this late, but I’ve been working the night shift lately.
Ain’t a lot of eats out there in the sunlight.

Rummaging through the foods.
And frankly, this is much less work.

BEAR begins to eat with apparent relish.

Man these people have the worst taste, they never—

He suddenly notices the croissant.

Oh. Wow.

BEAR looks at croissant. Croissant looks at BEAR.

BEAR sees the letter.

He takes out his reading glasses and reads it.
Evidently displeased with the contents, he rips it up hanging on to one sliver of paper.

He takes out a pen and writes his own message on it.

There.

He sits back to admire his handywork.

Well they won’t be back for a while.
He continues to rummage for food.
Oh what, how would I know such a thing?

Jumbo is over yonder on the rock by the tree naked as a jay bird centering his chakras.
And Mumbo is snoring behind a bush over that way.
I know this because I am perceptive.
He looks at the croissant once more.
He looks at the audience.

Mm. Might be a trap.

Forgoing the croissant he discovers one of those terrible jars that contain both jam and peanut butter.
Dreadful. Simply dreadful.
He opens it up and begins to scoop out mouthfuls with his paw.

October is off being existential, looking at the stars.
Sometimes she pauses to look at her hands in the dark and wonders why she can’t see them.
Mostly she just breathes in the air and wonders how long her lungs will keep working.

Ranger Dave has followed the wrong trail entirely and is singing to himself to pretend he isn’t scared.
He’s terribly off key.

Imogen is feeling the earth between her toes for the first time in her life.
Frederick is crumpled in a heap on the ground. He fell out of his tree.
Oh he’s okay!
But he’s fractured a foot- so he’s not going anywhere. He thinks about his life and his choices and if he could or should have done anything differently. But mostly, he thinks about trust. This can be a really pointless line of thought, but who am I to judge?
You can’t trust people.
You can’t trust bears.
He puts away the jar.
Not even me.

It is really quite simple, in my opinion. All you need is sleep, food, and poetry.
Well, g’night, folks.

BEAR takes one longing look at the croissant.

He holds it.
He smells it.
He takes a bite.
He enjoys it a little too much.

Noticing the audience, and suddenly embarrassed, he puts the remainder of the croissant down.
See? What’d I tell ya’; not even me.
Exit BEAR
SCENE THIRTEEN

It is just before dawn the next morning.
During the night, OCTOBER’s tent has burned to the ground.
Ashes and charred remains of the material congregate in a sad pile.
The croissant is missing.

IMOGEN stagers in carrying FREDERICK in a fireman’s hold.
She puts him down slowly.

FREDERICK
Noticing the remains of the tent.
Bloody hell!

IMOGEN
Well we made it.

FREDERICK
Jolly good of you, old girl.

IMOGEN
Old girl?

FREDERICK
My instinct was to call you an African Crowned Eagle, but...

IMOGEN
Why?

FREDERICK
Well they’re the most powerful birds, aren’t they?
Carry off great snakes and monkeys straight from the tree!

IMOGEN
Well you made it easy for me, lying so conveniently prostrate on the ground.
Thoughtful of you.
Well, did you ever get to see your blue bearded sapsucker?

FREDERICK
What?

IMOGEN
Your bird.

FREDERICK
Oh the warbler?
No.
Elusive devil managed to escape me.
IMOGEN

---

FREDERICK
She’s probably extinct.
Just as you said.

IMOGEN

---

FREDERICK
Thank you for finding me.

IMOGEN
Well I wasn’t about to let you decompose in the forest indefinitely, was I?

FREDERICK
No, of course not.
Didn’t want to cause a nasty scandal.

IMOGEN
Let’s get one thing clear, Frederick.
I came looking for you because I love you.
You were a bastard for going off so recklessly,
But I was abhorrently corrosive to you and I’m sorry for it.
That’s not to say that my behavior excuses yours in any way.
We have a lot of things to sort out you and I.
If there still is a you and I.

The thing is, I had a sort of epiphany last night.
It was as though---
Well I won’t go into it.
But I feel cracked open, somehow.
Like a nut.
Rich and raw to the universe.

FREDERICK
That’s wonderful, egret.

IMOGEN
Touched
Oh, Frederick, are you crying?

FREDERICK
I must admit I am.
I must also admit it is only partially due to the stirring speech you’ve just articulated.
Honesty impels me to confide in you that I am in a copious fucking amount of pain at present.
IMOGEN
Thanks for ruining a perfectly poetic moment, Frederick.

FREDERICK
Sorry.

IMOGEN
Well, no matter, up you get.
IMOGEN hoists FREDERICK onto her back once more.
Once she notices their tent is still erected.

IMOGEN
Frederick.
FREDERICK
Yes, Imogen?

IMOGEN
You don’t really care for that tent, do you?

FREDERICK
No, my painted bunting.
All I care about is you.

They exit.

JUMBO enters wonderfully rejuvenated and grounded.
JUMBO inspects the charred remains of OCTOBER’s tent with calm indifference.
JUMBO steps lightly to the Gumbo tent to see if MUMBO is sleeping.

At this moment MUMBO comes creeping back into the campsite in full on hunting mode.
MUMBO only sees someone rummaging around their belongings.
MUMBO aims.
MUMBO prepares to pull the trigger.
JUMBO turns to see the end of the gun.
JUMBO screams.

MUMBO
Woops.
Weren’t you supposed to be off mediating?

JUMBO
Correcting MUMBO
Meditating.
I just got back.

**MUMBO**
Ah.

**JUMBO**
Is that... loaded?

**MUMBO**
*Looking at the remains of OCTOBER’s tent.*
What happened here?

**JUMBO**
What do you think you’re doing?

**MUMBO**
I didn’t mean to aim at you, I was jumpy.

**JUMBO**
I mean, with a loaded gun.
I thought you just wanted to use it to scare.

**MUMBO**
Well, Jumbo. A loaded gun is much scarier than one full of blanks, wouldn’t you agree?

**JUMBO**
*A confession*
Listen, I’ve got something to tell you

**MUMBO**
*An anecdote*
Oh I’ve got something to tell you too!

**MUMBO**
You’re not gonna believe it but I found Mr. Younglove’s helmet.

**JUMBO**
You’re not going to like this but—

**JUMBO**
Did you find him?!

**MUMBO**
No.
But I did find a fortune cookie right next to it.
JUMBO  
Did you... open it?

MUMBO  
You bet I did!  
Guess what it said.

JUMBO  
I don’t want to.

MUMBO  
Go on, guess.

JUMBO  
No thanks.

MUMBO  
Come on give it a--

JUMBO  
It’s been me!  
It’s me.  
I’ve been eating your food.

MUMBO  
You what?

JUMBO  
I’ve been snacking at odd hours.

MUMBO  
What about your spiritual exercises?

JUMBO  
Well sure, I do those too.  
But first I take treats with me.

MUMBO  
*Reading from the fortune*  
“What you seek in the wild may be found in the home”  
It was right.
JUMBO
I’m sorry Mumbo.
I get peckish all the time!

MUMBO
You can eat all you want Jumbo.
Honestly.
Just as long as—
*MUMBO looks to the spot where the croissant was.*

JUMBO
It wasn’t me.
I had two pudding cups and a bag of pork rinds last night- but no croissant.
I swear.
It was gone when I came back to snack.
It’s the obsolete truth.

MUMBO
Correcting JUMBO
Absolute.

JUMBO
---

MUMBO
I believe you.
But if it wasn’t you...

A rustling noise.
*Croissant crumbles dribble down from the sky.*
*MUMBO fires into the air.*
A haunting and mysterious squawk accompanies the gunshot.
*Light blue feathers with specks of color at the tips float down from above.*
They are both, for the first time, lost for words.
*They kneel by the feathers.*
*Footsteps are heard approaching.*

MUMBO and JUMBO
*To each other*
Ranger Dave?

*They make a run for it*
OCTOBER enters to discover the charred remains of her tent. After taking it all in.

OCTOBER
Ru?
Ru!
February Perennial!

She looks around and spots the note BEAR left out.

OCTOBER
Reading
Embers burn deep. Extinguish all flames.

RANGER DAVE enters looking exhausted and frantic.

RANGER DAVE
You’re alive!
Oh my god, you’re here!
October lives!

He clutches her in what is probably a somewhat painful and awkward hug.

OCTOBER
What the hell happened to my tent, Ranger Dave?

RANGER DAVE
I don’t know, but I almost lost my job over it.
Where’s Feb?

OCTOBER
I was just about to ask you the same thing.

RANGER DAVE
He must have made a run for it.

OCTOBER
You’re sure he--

RANGER DAVE
Well, I have no proof but--

OCTOBER
But what?

RANGER DAVE
When last I saw him he was engaging in irresponsible behavior.

OCTOBER
---
RANGER DAVE
Blazing reefer.

OCTOBER
Are you going to press charges?

RANGER DAVE
He could have burnt the whole forest down!
Fucking February!
What a bro, man.
Your brother sucks.

OCTOBER
So, are you?

RANGER DAVE
It’s out of my hands.

OCTOBER
---

RANGER DAVE
If he comes forward it’ll be much easier on him.

OCTOBER
He has a hard time taking responsibility.

RANGER DAVE
I know.
I’m glad you’re okay.
I was worried.

OCTOBER
I’m sorry.
You look tired.

RANGER DAVE
I was up all night.

OCTOBER
Oh really.

RANGER DAVE
Search party.

OCTOBER
For who?

RANGER DAVE
---
OCTOBER
You went looking for me?

RANGER DAVE
Well yeah.

OCTOBER
Why

RANGER DAVE
I’m a Ranger.
I’m Ranger Dave.
Part of my duties include looking for lost people.

OCTOBER
I wasn’t lost! I was soul searching.

RANGER DAVE
Don’t you know there are bears out there just dying to rip into fleshy creatures like you?!

OCTOBER
Creatures?
Fleshy?

RANGER DAVE
It’s the truth. And when you’re all emotional and fragile the bears are even more drawn to you.
They can smell poetry from a mile away.

OCTOBER
Hold the phone, Ranger Dave.

RANGER DAVE
I’m sorry. I got scared.

OCTOBER
You think I’m emotional and fragile?

RANGER DAVE
Don’t you?

OCTOBER
I’m not ...falling apart.

RANGER DAVE
Stated as a sincere compliment
I think you are fragile.

OCTOBER
Thank you?
**RANGER DAVE**
It’s not a bad thing.
You’re like a rock.

Stay with me.

Okay—when the sun is out you get hot.
When it rains you get cold.
You feel time and the wind eating away at you.
Slowly
but everyday
until you’re sand.
The rest of us can’t see the change.
It all looks the same to us.
But you can.
That’s radical.

**OCTOBER**
Dave. You are...

**RANGER DAVE**
What?

**OCTOBER**
I’m not sure.

**RANGER DAVE**
Me either.

So what’s next for you?

**OCTOBER**
I think I’ll go home.
See if it’s still there.

And you?

**RANGER DAVE**
I guess I’ll wait.

**OCTOBER**
For what?

**RANGER DAVE**
I’m not sure.

**OCTOBER**
Okay.
She waits with him.

She waits a while longer.

She looks up.

No cranes.

They acknowledge the oddness of this.

She decides to leave.
She takes the fortune cookie out of her pocket.
She hands it to him.
They share a nonverbal, non-physical goodbye.
She leaves.

RANGER DAVE waits.

RANGER DAVE continues to wait.

RANGER DAVE opens the fortune cookie.
RANGER DAVE reads his fortune.

A crane hits him on the top of his head.
A second crane lands by his feet.
A deluge of cranes pours over him.
A deluge of cranes pours over everything.

END OF PLAY
A FEW THINGS
The Cranes should be made not only of origami paper, but the detritus of everyday life. Receipts, grocery lists, flyers, theatre programs, tax returns, homework, love notes, rejection letters, junk mail, insurance claims, birth certificates, medical files, books, magazines, newspapers, gift wrapping, charts, maps, graphs, essays, drawings, children’s finger paintings, scripts, journal entries, Xerox machine mess ups, job applications, paper bags, certificates, degrees, instruction manuals, phone numbers, photographs, sheet music, invitations, holiday cards, thank you notes, letters from home, and all those angsty poems you wrote in Junior High.

The lines that look like this, “---”, are meant to denote that an answer is expressed in a nonverbal manner. It could be a facial expression, an eye roll, a knowing glance, or a barely perceptible response. Sometimes silence says more than words. That being said, they should be swift moments, and the dialogue around them should flow on quickly.