SCORPIO.

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“Do not fall in love with people like me.

I will take you to museums,

and parks,

and monuments,

and kiss you in every beautiful place,

so that you can never go back to them without tasting me

like blood in your mouth.

I will destroy you in the most beautiful way possible.

and when I leave you will finally understand,

why storms are named after people.”

caitlyn siehl

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who are these astrological fuckers?

*all characters are black and are fluent in african american vernacular english. i *encourage* gender manipulation. lines may be changed to reflect that. play away.

JUDA
the cancer. sensitive, tender, intense, a little moody. communicates with feeling. means what they say. reflective. lover, but doesn't like to admit it. perceptive and discerning. lucid. don't call them boy. loves ADESTE with all their heart. can love for the both of them. gets confused sometimes.

ADESTE
the scorpio. very sensitive. guarded. queen of the damned. can see through bullshit, so don't even try. a lot of people try. very practiced. very powerful. very lonely. will destroy a debate. passionate. intriguing and intimidating. and intense. not to JUDA. will die for love, will kill for love. only if you're worthy. will verbally cut you.

HONORIS
Juda's personified moon/mind/memory & caution. the lunar aquarius. observant. willful. independent. hot-headed. believes messy emotions are very unappealing. the thinker. leans away from pleasure. leans into masculine qualities.

ESTOTE
Juda's personified rising/heart/passion. the scorpio ascendent. always genuine. yielding and soft. the feeler. leans into *pleasure* and the feminine qualities within themselves.

KARTER
the gemini. feels lost if not in a relationship. intimacy is as essential as water. everything sounds better in their head, but has an easy-going charm. faithful *in love.* serial monogamist. when irritated or prompted, will border on verbal diarrhea. sensitive to guilt.

AUVEEN
the capricorn. practical and down to earth. sarcastic as fuck. has deep rooted insecurities and a lineage of lovelessness in their family. they are determined to change their destiny.
The actor who plays ESTOTE plays AUVEEN as well.

RUMANCIK
the aries. bold and forward like a gunshot. maybe the only honest character.
The actor who plays HONORIS plays RUMANCIK as well.

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Retrograde Phases

4. i: Pre Shadow

21. ii: The Descent

40. iii: The Underworld

57. iv: The Ascent

81. v: Post Shadow

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i: Pre Shadow

ADESTE's home. Slightly tinted BLOOD RED in lighting. The doorbell rings. Adeste goes to answer it and looks through the keyhole. She opens the door.

ADESTE
You're late.

KARTER
Can I smoke in here?

ADESTE
Fucking pothead. Out the window.

KARTER
Cannabis connoisseur. Thanks.

ADESTE
We can pick up from scene 5.

KARTER
I forgot the play.

ADESTE
Sigh We can share scripts.

KARTER
Can I borrow your lighter?

ADESTE
Let's rehearse first.

KARTER
Never mind. I found mine.

ADESTE
Out the window, Karter. My neighbors trip.

KARTER
Yeah, yeah. Your grinder?

ADESTE
Use your hands.

KARTER
I’m not a caveman.

ADESTE
Sure you aren’t.

KARTER
I’m not.

ADESTE
Smoke later then.

KARTER
I’ll smoke you out.

pause

ADESTE
Pass me your stuff.

KARTER
Really?

ADESTE
I’ll roll up.

KARTER
Yeah, baby.

ADESTE
Never call me baby.

KARTER
Why?

ADESTE
Because I’ll rip your tongue out.

Your shit smells.

KARTER
Dank?

ADESTE
Funny.

KARTER
Bubble Kush. I've been buying off of Mary lately.

ADESTE
I hate Mary. What happened to Freddy from 23rd?

KARTER
Freddy's on probation. He won't sell. Not to me anyway.

ADESTE
Huh.

KARTER
Yeah.

ADESTE
I picked up from him the other day.

KARTER
Get the fuck outta here. He told me he was outta business.

ADESTE
For Geminis maybe.

KARTER
Dealers don't care about horoscopes.

ADESTE
Sounds like something a Gemini would say.

KARTER
What does that even mean?

ADESTE
Y'all talk too much. Try shutting up and see how that goes.

KARTER
Sorry, I ain't sky savvy like you.

ADESTE
How unfortunate.

KARTER
Nah, tell me something starry. Teach me oh wise sage.

ADESTE
I could make you see stars, how ‘bout that?

KARTER
Come on.

ADESTE
Fine.

Venus, the planet of pleasure, luxury, and love is currently in retrograde. This is when a planet appears to be spinning backwards, but is actually the earth completing its cycle around the sun faster than other planets outside of the earth’s orbit. A planet going into retrograde, in terms of us, and our spiritual development, is a time where we reflect and learn important lessons that are supposed to bring us to our higher frequency dynamic.

Also. Venus is in Scorpio.

KARTER
Okay. What does that mean?

ADESTE
That we’re fucked.

KARTER
Oh shit.

ADESTE
For about 6 to 8 weeks.

KARTER
The planets are teachers?

ADESTE
And Earth is the classroom.

KARTER.
What’s the lesson plan?

ADESTE
Lesson plan?

KARTER
What does Venus have to teach?

ADESTE
What do you have to learn? Your lighter is jinky.

KARTER
Can I use yours? Look at my thumb.

KARTER proudly displays their blackened, burnt thumb.

ADESTE
I don’t wanna see all that.

KARTER
It’s from the lighter.

ADESTE
I’m serious, get that from my face.

KARTER
It’s like the movie we saw.

ADESTE
You can take the first hit. Blow all of it out the window.

The window, Karter. Don’t be hard headed.

They pass the cigarillo back and forth, taking hits.

ADESTE
Does it hurt?

KARTER
Not anymore. It’s from last week.

ADESTE
Hmm.

KARTER
Sunday.

ADESTE
That movie was shit anyway. Not really Oscar material.

KARTER
Yeah, cause the Academy is really good at deciding merit right?

ADESTE
You know what I mean.

KARTER
And you know what I mean. Of course it wasn't "Oscar" material. The two protags were black as fuck.

ADESTE
I was thinking more story wise. Sure, the cinematography was great, but I'm sorry, two hours of that is such bull, man. "Oh! Look at this flower! Now look at this glass of wine! Soooo artsy".

This was basically Instagram: The Movie.

KARTER
It's called symbolism.

ADESTE
It's called *horse shit*

KARTER
Okay, what about the dude's thumb? I thought that it was crazy smart. Cause, you know. Symbols. Film stuff.

ADESTE
Yeah, sure. Very "Oh woe is me". The dude mutilates his thumb because he feels guilty about cheating on his girl. Reminded me of Da Vinci Code a little.

KARTER
Why's that?

ADESTE
Cause I *hated* that movie too. Like bruh, it's not that hard to not cheat. Just, I dunno, just don't stick your dick in other places.

But, hey, he's a guy. For 'em, it's like their brains turn off when their dicks turn on.

KARTER
Maybe he was lonely.

ADESTE
Maybe he was *stupid*. Ol' dude was being selfish. Just like a caveman.

KARTER
Well, I dunno. Maybe it’s hard being committed to someone, and not being with ‘em too? You know, like physically. Like me and Auveen.

I only see her in the Summer now.

ADESTE
You’re holding again.

KARTER
Sorry, here.

ADESTE
What helps?

KARTER
Smoking, obviously. It’s something to do. I guess, company too? This is alright.

ADESTE
Do you ever feel alone?

KARTER
Not as much now. I like hanging with you. Do you?

ADESTE
How’s Auveen?

KARTER
She’s fine.

ADESTE
That’s good.

KARTER
She’s always fine.

ADESTE
Ignorance is bliss.

KARTER
How’s Junebus?

ADESTE
Juda.

KARTER
Whatever.

ADESTE
It’s Juda.

KARTER
What are you doing?

ADESTE
Most people don’t get mad when you bring up their partner.

KARTER
Then don’t bring up my partner, and I won’t bring up yours.

ADESTE
This was a mistake.

KARTER
Are you testing me?

ADESTE
Are you mad?

KARTER
Not yet.

ADESTE
Then you haven’t failed yet.

KARTER
Yet?

ADESTE
Let’s keep going.

KARTER
Adeste.

ADESTE
You only come around me when you're lonely.

KARTER
You only call me when you're horny.

ADESTE
That's not true.

KARTER
Not a lie either.

ADESTE
I exist outside your loneliness.

KARTER
I wasn't lonely on Sunday.

ADESTE
But you were drunk.

KARTER
So were you.

ADESTE
That's what happens when you drink. You get drunk.

KARTER
No, lonely.

ADESTE
Where's your script?

KARTER
I forgot it.

ADESTE
We can share.

KARTER
A kiss?

ADESTE
The script.

KARTER
Should we get that close again?

ADESTE
What do you want?

KARTER
A kiss.

ADESTE
And then?

KARTER
Another one.

ADESTE
I'd rather rewatch Instagram: The Movie.

KARTER
I don't only come around when I'm lonely.

ADESTE
I don't believe you.

KARTER
Do you want me around more often?

ADESTE
No.

KARTER
I could do that.

ADESTE
I don't want that.

KARTER
What do you want then?

ADESTE
Are all actors this dramatic?

KARTER
Depends on the show.

ADESTE
You're putting on a good one.

KARTER
I can say the same about you. When was the last time *you* saw Juda?

ADESTE
I was looking for a good distraction.

KARTER
I was pretty distracted.

ADESTE
So I'm your diversion?

KARTER
I'm yours?

What are you trying to avoid?

She takes a hit, and tries to pass it to KARTER. KARTER doesn't take it.

KARTER
You're confusing me.

ADESTE
Yeah. Okay.

KARTER
Is that all you're gonna say?

ADESTE
I'm not sure what you expected to happen.

KARTER
Not this.

ADESTE
No, seriously. What did you expect? I wanna know.
Actually, let's walk through it together, so you see what I see.

KARTER
Okay, let's start from the…

ADESTE
Aht.

KARTER
What?

ADESTE
AHT. Don't interrupt.

You come in here, stand on your *soapbox*, woo me, I drop my pants, give you the goods, forget about Juda, and your Auveen, somehow, just vanishes from existence? Am I missing something?
You want all these things, but what is your *offering?*

KARTER
Were you expecting flowers?

ADESTE
I was expecting *more*. What do I get in exchange for you depositing all your lonely in me?
Your half formed *afterthoughts*?

KARTER
You're an afterimage, not an afterthought.

ADESTE
Shut up.

KARTER
I couldn't stop thinking about you after Sunday.

ADESTE
Did you try?

KARTER
The more I wanted to forget, the more I started to remember. But the wrong things.

A different set of hands.
Eyes with another color.
Lips with a familiar taste.

I think about her too.

ADESTE
Then why are you here, Gemini? To bore me? Or waste my time? Why do I get the double feature?

KARTER
Because that’s the problem.

ADESTE
And I'm the solution?

KARTER
Is that a problem?

ADESTE
It’s not a solution.

KARTER
What’s your ideal scenario?

ADESTE
When did you break up with Auveen?

KARTER
I didn’t.

ADESTE
But you did let her know how you were feeling at least?

KARTER
Can you pass?

ADESTE
Can you answer?

KARTER
Let me gather my thoughts.

ADESTE
I’ll give you a minute.

She smokes herself, takes a long deep hit, and finishes it off

Alright. What were you saying? Oh Right. So how does Auveen feel about your decline of passion?

KARTER
She doesn’t know.

ADESTE
Roll up again.

He obeys.

“She doesn’t know”.

Interesting, interesting, interesting.

KARTER
I’m sorry.

ADESTE
If I said no today, what would you do tomorrow?

KARTER
I’ll try again.

ADESTE
But what would you do?

KARTER
Anything it takes.

ADESTE
It takes honesty.

KARTER
I am being honest.

ADESTE
Then you don’t know what honesty is.

You know what I think?

I think you would go back to Auveen.

You know why?

KARTER
Is that rhetorical?

ADESTE
Ding, ding, ding.

I think you love her. In your own fucked up, *spineless* way. I honestly do think you love her.

That's not a bad thing though. Not to me.

KARTER
Love isn’t the issue here.

ADESTE
I never said it was.

KARTER
It’s not enough! It’s never enough.

ADESTE
What do you mean?

KARTER
I mean, what’s the point? I wasn’t kidding when I said I do nothing but think of Auveen. We used to do this shit all the time too. We would just hang out and chill and smoke together nearly everyday. And you know what really sucks? The person who you want to see the most lives a fuckton of miles away from you. Sure, you can zoom, facetime, or whatever, but I’m tired of living my relationship through a computer screen. And sometimes I feel ashamed because I do still really love her, but my mind starts to wander and I dunno. I dunno. I mean, really, what’s the point? What’s the point of love when you still wake up feeling like crap? Like why am I putting all this effort in and I still feel this way? That’s not how it’s supposed to go. It fucking blows.

(*BEAT.)*
Everywhere I go, I see these couples, right? And they’re always so fucking happy. Sometimes they’re holding hands, sometimes the dude is grabbing his girl from behind, and other times they’re just going at it and sucking each other's faces off. Real cutsie, right? I see these couples and I just freak. I just wanna tear ‘em apart and just fight them and yell in their stupid cutsie faces, “You don’t deserve this!” And this isn’t just a “high” thought, I know it because I think about this sober too. But then I surprised myself because I’m not sure when I got so bitter, but then Sunday happened and I’m smiling again. I’m smiling. I got the heat back in my chest, and, and… You remind me so much of her.

ADESTE
But I’m not her.

KARTER
No.

ADESTE.
I’m me. I ain’t your stand-in. Or *temp.* I couldn’t be if I wanted to.

KARTER
Would you ever want to?

ADESTE
If you were *worthy.* But that's not the case here.

KARTER
The pink line is gonna stop running soon.

ADESTE
I was wondering when you were gonna leave.

KARTER
We never rehearsed.

ADESTE
Acting is easy as hell. I act like I like you all the time.

KARTER
Why do you have to cut so deep?

ADESTE
Because I sharpen my knives everyday.

What?

You're staring.

KARTER
What are they like?

ADESTE
Who?

KARTER
The *worthy* one.

ADESTE
You think Juda is worthy of me? Ha.

KARTER
I can't imagine who else could be.

ADESTE
We actually broke up last Sunday.
Monogamy wasn't my thing.
Polyamory wasn't his.

KARTER
Huh. Okay, then.

ADESTE
Before you go, I have a first aid kit in my bathroom. I could bandage your thumb.

KARTER
I'm good. It doesn't hurt as much as before.

ADESTE
If you say so. I'll see you later then.

KARTER
See ya.

ADESTE
Karter.

She kisses him. They hold for a moment, and break away from each other.

ADESTE
No more Sundays.

KARTER nods and kisses her forehead.

KARTER
No more Sundays.

He exits. ADESTE goes to her window and dumps out the ash.

ADESTE
Another day, another goofy.

As she does this, the lights come down. Another day. Another day. ADESTE's back, washed in a BLOOD light, is the last thing we see.

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ii: The Descent

JUDA's close quarters room. Everything is within proximity / an arm's length away. The bed takes up most of the space. Everything is intimate. Three west side folks and a blunt. The complete world. Hip-hop plays in the background. Everything is slightly tinted in GOLD lighting wise. JUDA is completely focused on rolling a blunt. This is rocket science. HONORIS and ESTOTE crowd around JUDA.

HONORIS
This isn't rocket science, bro.

JUDA
This is definitely rocket science. We makin' it to Pluto!

HONORIS
Oh you tryin' to take off for real, huh?

JUDA
'Xactly!

ESTOTE
Don't be putting that nature shit in though. I don't want no witchy ass blunt.

JUDA
It's gas!

ESTOTE
And?

JUDA
And rose petals for texture, mullein for your lungs, mugwort for your dreams…

HONORIS
Nigga wanna be Chef-R-Keef so bad.

ESTOTE
What the fuck is you doing!

JUDA
It's just lavender!

HONORIS
Just seal it.

ESTOTE
All these extra ass ingredients. I could've been rolled up!

JUDA
Why don't you then?

ESTOTE
AIGHT. Move over.

JUDA
Boy if you don't back the fuck up.

ESTOTE
Did you just assume my gender, negro?

JUDA
I'd rather be a *he/they* than a *heathen* like you.

HONORIS
Chill, Judith Butler. Can y'all assume that blunt pretty please.

JUDA
Can you assume ya breath from my face. Damn!

ESTOTE
Got ya ass!

HONORIS
Got these nuts in your mouth.

ESTOTE
Why does it always gotta come to your nuts?

HONORIS
Cause these nuts always come. Whatchu mean?

ESTOTE
Seek Jesus and get clarity.

HONORIS
But I hate any clarity that isn't post nut.

JUDA
This ain't helping.

ESTOTE
Cause you ain't rolling! Move!

JUDA
Let an artist art bro.

HONORIS
I thought this was a science?

JUDA
It IS a science. And an art form. Either way, it's a process.

HONORIS
So what's the process of me getting high soon?

JUDA
You and you both shutting the FUCK up. Can't work under these conditions.

ESTOTE
You hate us now?

JUDA
To the mothafuckin' core.

HONORIS
Ah, they do love us.

ESTOTE
They really, really do.

JUDA
I really, really don't. But I do love this.

JUDA holds up their Magnum Opus. A complete blunt. Why have the Gods blessed us like this?

HONORIS
Damn.

ESTOTE
Damn, daddy.

JUDA
Who wants to break bread first?

ESTOTE
Without saying grace?!

JUDA
Don't put words in my mouth. Honoris?

HONORIS
Though I walk in the valley of sobriety, I shall fear no cannabis.
Y'all better hold my hands, what y'all think this is?

JUDA and ESTOTE both huddle in a prayer circle with HONORIS and hold hands. They bow their heads / close their eyes. This is not a joke.

Our gender non-conforming **Parent,** who art in **heaven**, hallowed be ya name. Ya kingdom come, ya blunt be smoked, on earth as it is, hopefully, in **heaven**. Give us this keef, our daily bread, if the homies got it like that, and forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors, except white people cause they owe us a big fucking debt, not gon' lie. And lead us not into fucking white women, but deliver us from evil. Like white women.

JUDA
So it's a little different today I see.

ESTOTE
It was one time.

HONORIS
Amen, amen, amen.

ESTOTE
Cut them some slack.

HONORIS
One time too many.

JUDA
Don't start.

ESTOTE
Nah, nah, nah, nah they starting mess. I'm cleaning up. I got chu.

JUDA
I mean both y'all.

HONORIS
I ain't the one sinning.

JUDA
God don't like ugly.

HONORIS
Good thing I'ma handsome mothafucka.

HONORIS takes a hit of the blunt and places it in the window seal.
It falls out the cracked window but HONORIS doesn't notice.

ESTOTE
Fucking ain't sinning.

HONORIS
What Denomination you from?

JUDA
What you even saying?

ESTOTE
I dunno! I just wanna smoke! Y'all wanna politic! C'mon mane. It ain't that deep. Where's the blunt?

HONORIS
On the contrary. Everything's political. Especially your bedroom.

ESTOTE
This about Juda fucking some Beckys now? But seriously, that blunt??

HONORIS
Ew.

JUDA
Who. Do. You. Think. You. Are? And one white girl. One. Not plural.

ESTOTE
Don't shame them! Really folks, I can't find it.

JUDA
Yeah, don't shame me. I'm sensitive.

ESTOTE
(Still searching) They sensitive as HELL.

JUDA
I got needs!

ESTOTE
(looking under the bed) They needy as FUCK.

HONORIS
It's like Dumb and Dumber when y'all get together, I swear.

JUDA
Ah, don't be like that. I love talkin' to Scorpios!
Conversing with 'em feels like taking turns stabbing each other.

HONORIS
Say it then.

JUDA
Don't be dramatic.

HONORIS
Ooo, look at you. Sounding like Adeste. "Don't be dramatic". Say *it.*

JUDA
I am my own person. But "I love and appreciate you and everything you do."

HONORIS
And?

JUDA
"You are the best Rising sign a black person like me could ask for."

ESTOTE
(Stops looking) AYO????

HONORIS
Did you just call me your *rising* sign?

ESTOTE
Do my ears fucking deceive me?

JUDA
No, I didn't?

ESTOTE
Ya you did.

JUDA
I know who's who! You got me all riled and confused and shit.

HONORIS
Okay then. Who am I?

JUDA
You're my Moon. Obviously. My lovely, lovely, *opinionated*, Aquarius Moon.
You the one that keeps me up at night being all existential and crisis-y and stuff.

HONORIS
Society is deteriorating right before our very eyes, my niggas!

ESTOTE
Me?

JUDA
You're my Rising. Duh. My Scorpio Rising!
You be attracting and scaring the hoes!

ESTOTE
No one will ever understand the depths of my soul.

ESTOTE and JUDA high five.

HONORIS
Alright, here's the game winning question. We're here for…?

JUDA
Why we playing 21 questions?

HONORIS
Cause you a goofy, and I'm Jiminy fucking Cricket.

JUDA
Damn, H. You trippin.

HONORIS
I ain't the one trippin. You just being dumb. Hanging out with Adeste? What we doing, fam?

JUDA
Okay, man.

HONORIS
I hate dumb, you masochistic freakozoid.

JUDA
I get it.

ESTOTE
CHILL.

HONORIS
No, honestly.

JUDA
I'm actually pretty fucking smart.

HONORIS
I couldn't tell.

JUDA
Excuse me?

HONORIS
Einstein invented the atom bomb.

JUDA
What that gotta do with me?

HONORIS
Smart people do dumb things.

ESTOTE
First of all, that was fucking Oppenheimer. Read a book without pictures for once!

HONORIS
IT'S MANGA.

ESTOTE
Second! You're being too hard!

HONORIS
Why we pretending Adeste is good for this boy?

JUDA
Call me boy one more time.

HONORIS
We know how they get when *she* comes around.

JUDA
Did you hear me?

HONORIS
I'm just saying.

JUDA
I don't care what you're saying.

HONORIS
You never do.

JUDA
That's not true.

ESTOTE
You're being an asshole.

HONORIS
And you're being complacent.

JUDA
They ain't my mama.

HONORIS
But they is your Rising.

JUDA
That's just personality stuff.

HONORIS
It's *you*.

JUDA
It's *whatever.*

ESTOTE
Adeste makes him happy.

JUDA
Well…

ESTOTE
She makes you unhappy?

JUDA
It's… complicated. I don't think I know what I want.

HONORIS
Or what you need. Why you doing all this?

JUDA
I'm not doing ALL anything. Who do you think you are?

HONORIS
Nigga what? I'm YOU.

JUDA
No you're —

HONORIS
The you that cries when you THINK no one's watching!

JUDA
Hey!

HONORIS
The you that REFUSES to remember!

JUDA
Shut up!

ESTOTE
Folks!

HONORIS
I just wanna know why!

JUDA
I don't know why! Don't ask for a reason that isn't there!

ESTOTE
FOR THE LOVE OF GOD WHERE'S THE FUCKING BLUNT???!!

JUDA & HONORIS
Huh?

Stillness. Where's the fucking blunt?

ESTOTE
Ah, now nobody knows nothing. Okay. Okay! Juda's talking to themselves but I'm the crazy one!
How do you lose a WHOLE BLUNT?.

JUDA begins to grab their jacket from the closet. ESTOTE begins looking for the blunt around the room.

JUDA
I'm going to the corner store. I'm outta swishers.

HONORIS
Grow up and get the dutches.

JUDA
They don't come in Natural Silver.

HONORIS
Get the Games then. They have Diamond.

ESTOTE
It's late.

JUDE
You wanna smoke papers?

HONORIS
The gas station is closer.

JUDA
Y'all hear something?

HONORIS
This nigga.

JUDA makes their way to leave.

JUDA
H?

HONORIS
What?

JUDA
I know what I’m doing.

JUDA exits.

HONORIS
And I know where you’re going.

ESTOTE
Why are you so incendiary tonight?

HONORIS
Where’s the fucking blunt?

ESTOTE
Honoris.

HONORIS
You’re a Scorpio, I don’t trust you.

ESTOTE
That’s my line, Aquarius.

HONORIS
Can you feel it?

ESTOTE
You’re talking to a water sign.

HONORIS
Your point is?

ESTOTE
There's not a thing I can’t feel.

HONORIS
Venus is in Retrograde again.

ESTOTE
And in Scorpio too.

HONORIS
Juda’s angry.

ESTOTE
And in love.

HONORIS
Whatever.

ESTOTE
Oh. You don’t like that.

HONORIS
I’m sure you do.

ESTOTE
Don’t assume you know me.

HONORIS
You’re the great unknowable, we get it. But you’re also a hypocrite. You choose what to remember.

ESTOTE
You choose what to forget.

HONORIS
I wish I could. I would rip every memory outta my head. Then I could forget forever.
Damnit. Where’s the blunt?

ESTOTE
You had it last.

HONORIS
I know. I fucked up. I need to smoke. Like now.

ESTOTE
You need to soothe.

HONORIS
I can't think this sober! Starting to hear my own thoughts.

ESTOTE
Check the window seal. Like in the actual crevice thing.

HONORIS does

HONORIS
Nothing.

ESTOTE
The floor?

HONORIS
I ain't smoking a dust blunt! Not AGAIN. Lungs fucked up 'nuff already.

ESTOTE
H.

HONORIS
Don't stop looking.

ESTOTE
I remember too.

HONORIS
But you wanna pretend nothing happened.

ESTOTE
I'm not pretending. I'm just looking at the now. Not the before.

HONORIS
And how is now different from before?

ESTOTE
Now he knows better.

HONORIS
But will they do better?

…

ESTOTE
Don’t you remember?

HONORIS
More than I want to.

ESTOTE
Her skin?

HONORIS
Yeah.

ESTOTE
Her lips?

HONORIS
Of course.

ESTOTE
The palms we kissed like saints?

HONORIS
Hey. Used to kiss.

ESTOTE
What about the way she velvet’d our name?

HONORIS
“Baby.”

ESTOTE
Her love?

HONORIS doesn’t answer

ESTOTE
You don’t miss that?

HONORIS
Love isn’t a feeling. And desire isn’t connection. Don’t *you* remember the fights?

ESTOTE
Yes.

HONORIS
The screaming?

ESTOTE
Yes.

HONORIS
The *demeaning?*

ESTOTE
Yes.

HONORIS
“Don’t be dramatic”, “You’re being too sensitive”, “You’re in your feelings”.

ESTOTE
But we miss her. *You* miss her.

HONORIS
You miss fucking her.

ESTOTE
Two things can be true at the same time.

HONORIS
Like you being a goofy and a fool? I’m sick of feeling this way, E.

ESTOTE
What way?

HONORIS
Like an insect in love with a fly trap. Love vs Lust. How dumb.

ESTOTE
But it’s always been like this in this body.

HONORIS
Ever since we were kids. We knew what sex was before we knew what love was.

ESTOTE
We would sneak to watch HBO After Dark.

HONORIS
It's hard growing up Christian.

ESTOTE
Tell me about it.

HONORIS
I am. You're shamed for your desires. You're supposed to be holy and light.

ESTOTE
And bland.

HONORIS
But what's a Christian that likes to fuck?

ESTOTE
A sinner.

HONORIS
Or a sinner-in-waiting. You're always one step away from Hell, no matter how Heaven you are.
"The skin is unholy and the flesh is wicked". "The physical is a distraction from God".
It feels like there is no forgiveness. We're Christians on Sundays, but Heathens on Mondays.

You're a reflection of the divine, but you can never look in the mirror too closely.
Can never explore your body even though you bear it everyday like a cross.
But if I had it *my* way, I'd abandon my skin in half a heartbeat.
Fuck it, jump ship. Just leave the part of me that *craves* behind.
Demolish the section that *still* seeks intimacy. It could be so easy not to feel.
But I gotta share this body like an Ark with you, bozos. Even when you flood me.
You Scorpios who love and lust.

I will never understand how you folks can do that.

ESTOTE
Do what?

HONORIS
Be free from your shame.

ESTOTE
We live in the same body, H.

HONORIS
But we have different desires. And, unlike you, I can detach from the destructive ones.

ESTOTE
Love isn't destruction.

HONORIS
But loving her is. Why don't you understand that? I'm the moon! The emotions! The… memory.

Sometimes I feel like I'm the outsider in this body.

You ever feel like that?

Like an outsider in your own body? I can't take the repetition like y'all can.

We reset.

And then off we go.

Another fight,

another memory.

Another cycle.

ESTOTE
But repeating isn't the worst thing in the world, H. It might be the best thing actually.
Because, in love, repetition is the act of returning *and* leaving.
So repetition is really the act of making meaning and, simultaneously, making meaning *meaningless*.

Love is all about pursuing *and* escaping reason, Honoris. And somewhere in between all that is…
the Truth.

I don't know what else to tell you except the only way out is through.

We Scorpios seek evolution through death. And I feel it.
Something good *is* coming outta all of this.
A rebirth maybe. True death is anything that doesn't transform after a crisis.

HONORIS
What? How can a crisis be a catalyst?

ESTOTE
I'm not sure honestly. It's not something that can be explained. Only felt.
But they *need* to go through it. Die, and come back. And die again. As many times as needed.

HONORIS
You're up to something.

ESTOTE
Nice try. You really expect a Scorpio to reveal their secrets?

HONORIS
It was worth a shot.

ESTOTE
I'll give you a hint. I'll tell you what all Scorpios fear the most.

HONORIS
Lemme guess. Vulnerability?

ESTOTE
Worse.

HONORIS
Worst?

ESTOTE
Vulnerability is voluntary.

What Scorpios fear the most / above all else,

is *not* being Known.

Being discovered.

Being uncovered.

Being Exposed.

Shit. There's only so long you can live in the dark / before the dark begins to live in you.

iii: The Underworld

auveen's kitchen. KARTER and AUVEEN are making ramen noodles.

KARTER
Listen! Don't start with me.

AUVEEN
Eat your veggies.

KARTER
I ain't putting no damn vegetables in the ramen.

AUVEEN
It's good for you.

KARTER
But bad for the ramen!

AUVEEN
It's veggies. You ain't gonna die.

KARTER
I ain't gon live either! Ramen needs passion

AUVEEN
And niggas need FIBER. You know what FIBER is nigga?

KARTER
I don't! But you know what SODIUM is? A green leaf ain't gon make a difference.

AUVEEN
I'm gonna cut up some cabbage.

KARTER
You think I bought CABBAGE for this? Ha! Good luck!

AUVEEN
You celebrating *not* eating veggies? Craaaaaaazy.

KARTER
Lock me in the asylum, baby. You know what else is crazy?

AUVEEN
Your bowel movements?

KARTER
I was thinking about renaming Hickory.

AUVEEN
You hate me?

KARTER
No, just Hickory. That's an old man's name.

AUVEEN
So, you're saying you hate me.

KARTER
Not in the slightest.

AUVEEN
It sounds like you're saying you hate me.

KARTER
I don't hate you.

AUVEEN
Just Hickory.

KARTER
Just Hickory's *name.* There's a difference.

AUVEEN
You're hurting my feelings. It was your idea for that name in the first place.

KARTER
Somehow, I just know that you'll be alright, homie.

AUVEEN
Weird how you wanna change it now.

KARTER
Just say you love me.

AUVEEN
I don't though.

KARTER
Now you're breaking my heart.

AUVEEN
Wait. I didn't finish. I don't love you, I love Hickory.

KARTER
Well, me and Hickory are one and the same so…

AUVEEN
I disagree.

KARTER
Pass me the seasoning salt.

AUVEEN
Don't put too much in there. The packets already have a bunch of salt.

KARTER
I just need a lil bit.

AUVEEN
Why? You look pretty salty to me.

KARTER
You want these noodles or not?

AUVEEN
I want Hickory, to stay Hickory.

KARTER
If you prep the chashu, I'll think about it.

AUVEEN passes the salt, and preps the chashu from the refrigerator.

AUVEEN
Roach of my life.

KARTER
You talking shit?

AUVEEN
I said "Love of my Life".

KARTER
Nah, it sounds like you want these hands.

AUVEEN
Ain't nobody studying you.

KARTER
Say you love me.

AUVEEN
I love Hickory.

KARTER
I’m not naming my genitalia, Hickory.

AUVEEN
I knew you hated me.

KARTER
No! I was just, you know, set on this other name.

AUVEEN
What name?

KARTER
Willy Wonka!

AUVEEN
This is why you don’t choose the names.

KARTER
Says who?

AUVEEN
There are rules to these kinds of things. My rules.

KARTER
But think about it! Hickory is Wonka, and the cheeks can be “oompa” and “loompa”.

AUVEEN
Hickory is dignified, unlike you. Are you gonna boil the eggs?

KARTER
Soon as you finish chopping up what you want.

AUVEEN
The pot is gonna boil soon.

KARTER
I’m watching it.

…

AUVEEN
Kart?

KARTER
Hm?

AUVEEN
Did you ever do this kinda stuff with anybody else?

KARTER
What?

AUVEEN
You always say ‘What’ when it’s unnecessary.

KARTER
No, I mean, do stuff like what?

AUVEEN
Like this. Cooking and joking and stuff.

KARTER
Hm, not really. It was never that deep. Just like smoking.

AUVEEN
We smoke.

KARTER
Right.

AUVEEN
Right.

…

AUVEEN
You’re dissociating.

…

Hey.

KARTER
Huh?

ADESTE
You’re dissociating

KARTER
I’m thinking.

AUVEEN
About?

KARTER
Nothing.

AUVEEN
Okay.

…

AUVEEN
So?

KARTER
So…?

AUVEEN
So. What do you want to say?

KARTER
I don’t wanna say anything.

AUVEEN
I thought we promised to be open with each other?

KARTER
I thought so too.

AUVEEN
Then don’t say anything. Like…

KARTER
What?

AUVEEN
Usual.

…

KARTER
Look.

AUVEEN
He speaks.

KARTER
C’mon.

AUVEEN
I’m listening.

KARTER
I —

AUVEEN
Don’t.

KARTER
Don’t?

AUVEEN
You got your ghost face on.

KARTER
What?

AUVEEN
You look scared to death.

KARTER
I might die.

AUVEEN
Such a theater kid.

KARTER
It’s not easy to say.

AUVEEN
What’s going on?

KARTER
I’ve been distant.

AUVEEN
Tell me something I don’t know.

KARTER
Because I slept with somebody else.

the pot boils over

KARTER
Shit.

turns off the stove

AUVEEN
What?

KARTER
I slept with somebody else while we were separated.

AUVEEN
I don't believe you.

KARTER
It's true.

AUVEEN
I went through your phone.

KARTER
I deleted the messages.

AUVEEN
I knew your schedule.

KARTER
I knew yours too.

AUVEEN
You cheated.

KARTER
I didn't mean to.

AUVEEN
You're joking?

KARTER
No.

AUVEEN
You cheated.

KARTER
I had… an affair.

AUVEEN
No.

KARTER
No?

AUVEEN
No. Affairs sound exciting. You cheated. You —

KARTER
I didn't —

AUVEEN
Was it exciting?

KARTER
No.

AUVEEN
Then why did you do it?

KARTER
Cause I'm a fucking idiot.

AUVEEN
How many times?

KARTER
What?

AUVEEN
There's that 'what' again.

KARTER
It was a mistake.

AUVEEN
And I’m asking how many mistakes you made.

KARTER
Just this one.

AUVEEN
How many times?

KARTER
Don’t do —-

AUVEEN
How many?

KARTER
Five.

AUVEEN.
When?

KARTER
Sundays.

AUVEEN
During your rehearsals.

KARTER
I wasn’t rehearsing.

AUVEEN
You were lying.

KARTER
I’m being honest.

AUVEEN
Now you’re being honest.

KARTER
What was I supposed to say?

AUVEEN
The truth!

KARTER
I didn’t want to hurt you.

AUVEEN
Is that a lie?

KARTER
That’s the truth.

AUVEEN
Then why does it sound like a lie?

KARTER
All my Truths do.

AUVEEN
Y’know what? I lied too. You don’t have a ghost face.
You look like a coward.
You look like my father.
How dare you wear that face.
You actually look like you’re sorry.

KARTER
I am sorry.

AUVEEN
You know he cheated on my mom.

KARTER
I know.

AUVEEN
I told you.

KARTER
I know.

AUVEEN
You’re pathetic.

KARTER
I know.

AUVEEN
Who was it?

KARTER
You don’t know them.

AUVEEN
Then describe them.

KARTER
They’re nobody.

AUVEEN
You fucked Nobody five times.

KARTER
Don’t put me on trial.

AUVEEN
Baby, you’re already convicted.

KARTER
I used protection.

AUVEEN
You’re so kind.

KARTER
I got tested too.

AUVEEN
Do you smoke with them?

KARTER
I smoke with everybody.

AUVEEN
But do you roll up for them?

KARTER
I did.

AUVEEN
Like you roll up for me?

KARTER
I just roll up. I'm not tryin' to make excuses.

AUVEEN
Then stop.

KARTER
I do then.

AUVEEN
Call a car.

KARTER
Wait.

AUVEEN
Oh, wait I forgot. You and Hickory are different entities. Should I be mad at Hickory and not you?

KARTER
Baby, it was /

AUVEEN
If you say "It was so long ago", I swear.

KARTER
Auveen.

AUVEEN
Don't come any closer.

KARTER
I never meant /

AUVEEN
Don't even try.

KARTER
I'm sorry.

AUVEEN
You will be.

KARTER
I love you.

AUVEEN
Lie again.

KARTER
I love you!

AUVEEN
Don't cheat on me and say you fucking love me.
How do you think I felt?
You said you missed me *every* morning on facetime
But would fuck a different bitch every night apparently.
And if you think an apology absolves that
You're delusional.
But unlike you, I don't regret cheating on you *at all.*
That's why I don't love you.
I can't.

KARTER
I don't believe you.

AUVEEN
It's true.

KARTER
I went through your phone.

AUVEEN
I deleted the messages.

KARTER
Shut the fuck up. Shut the literal fuck up.

AUVEEN
I meant every word I said to you.

KARTER
This can't be real. This can't be FUCKING REAL.
knocks over the pot
KARTER
Say you're lying! Say you're lying right now!

AUVEEN
I knew your schedule too.

KARTER
Stop!

AUVEEN
Was it better to cheat while you were waiting for me, or was it better to wait while you were in class?

KARTER
So when I facetimed you, and thought I saw a hickey…

AUVEEN
Yes.

KARTER
You let random niggas kiss your neck?

AUVEEN
He wasn't random.

KARTER
Who was it?

AUVEEN
Which one?

KARTER
Oh my God, you're a fucking slut.

AUVEEN slaps the dog shit outta KARTER
He howls like one too
Falls on all four

AUVEEN
If I'm a slut, then you're a *mongrel*.
Trying to balance two bitches like a *mutt with no master*
Let's see how you Bark when *you're* in the pound.

KARTER
I'm willing to do whatever it takes.

AUVEEN
I don't need a canine pissing on every tree he sees. You are *delusional.*

KARTER
Do you want me to lie?

AUVEEN
I want you to be put down. Spread your fleas somewhere else.

KARTER
Can I still call?

AUVEEN
You can go fuck yourself.

KARTER
You can't do this to me.

AUVEEN
Actually, I can't undo it. Do you see how it works now?

KARTER
I still want to work things out!
Tell me we can work things out!
I still want to fall asleep next to you.

AUVEEN
Why?

KARTER
That's the only time I feel peace.

AUVEEN
Fascinating! That's the only time when I don't. Now I know why.

KARTER
Tell me what I have to do.

AUVEEN
I don't feel safe with you. And you shouldn't with me either.

KARTER
I want to be *worthy* too.

AUVEEN
And I want a partner I can trust.

KARTER
Tell me what I have to do.

AUVEEN
Do you hear what I'm saying?
I will never feel safe around you.
I will never be at peace with you.
I will never sleep next to you without thinking about who was under you
And what face they made when…

You say it's forgiveness / I say it's selfishness.

It's me looking at my phone and wondering:

Where you at?
Who you with?
Is it her?
Is it him?
Why isn't it me?

It's me staring at your face and wondering: *Will you do it again?*

KARTER
I won't.

AUVEEN
I know. I won't let you.

KARTER
It's not delusional to say I love you. I always will.

AUVEEN
Karter. You obviously don't know what Love is.
You cannot cheat on your partner and say you love them.
Go.
And stop pretending you haven't left already.

alfonzo solomon kahlil
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iv: The Ascent

JUDA is positioned on ADESTE's living room floor in between her legs. everything is tinted in variation of RED and GOLD lighting wise. ADESTE is sitting on her couch. All around them lies an assortment of hair products for black people and kinky hair. Also around them are paraphernalia and tools for smoking. Grinders, Papers, One hitters, the works. ADESTE retightens JUDA's locks as she talks. She is in medias res of a story…

ADESTE
And I'm just doing this fat

FAT

line of coke off their porch right,

and *my* cop comes straight up to me and says:

"That's so hot".

JUDA
Don't say he's *your* cop.

ADESTE
But they are *my* cop.

JUDA
Say he's your boy or something else, man.

ADESTE
It doesn't matter. The sex will still go the same way.

JUDA
And what way is that?

ADESTE
I dunno.

Probably them cumming quick or something.

You know.

the usual.

JUDA
Nah, he's just 12.

ADESTE
Yeah, 12 that'll let me do blow off their porch.

JUDA
You can blow my porch anytime.

ADESTE
Nah. It's not the same.

JUDA
How so?

ADESTE
Because you know **we** can't have sex.

JUDA
Figures. I'm too hot to handle.

ADESTE
You too sensitive to manage.

JUDA
Hey! Fuck you, buddy.

ADESTE
Fuck you!

JUDA
But don't fuck cops though.

ADESTE
I can fuck who I want.

JUDA
What color is this brother anyway?

ADESTE
How do you know he's a he?

JUDA
Nigga-tuition.

ADESTE
My nigga in Christ?

JUDA
Yes, my manic pixie dream nigga?

ADESTE
You know how dumb you sound right now?

JUDA
I sound right as hell!

I bet he white as hell too.

As white as that blow you be doing on the daily.

ADESTE tugs on JUDA's locks again which causes JUDA to cry out in sudden, irritated pain.

JUDA
WHAT THE FUCK.

ADESTE
I can make your ends tighter if you don't shut the fuck up.

JUDA
You literally got me by the balls.

ADESTE
Well, technically it's your hair.

JUDA mocks her

JUDA
Well, technically it's your hair.

ADESTE
Oh, yes. I just love it when you do that.

ADESTE tugs and JUDA winces again

JUDA
Oh, yes. I just love it when you fuck oppressors!

ADESTE
Didn't you fuck a white girl the other day?

pause

JUDA
That's different.

ADESTE
Boy, HOW?

JUDA
She's biracial.

ADESTE
What's she mixed with? White with black?

JUDA
Italian… with Irish.

ADESTE
WHITE WITH WHITE?

JUDA
At least she don't kill black folks at alarming rates.

ADESTE
Looks like somebody failed history. Emmett Till ain't ringing a bell??

Othello????

KANYE???!!!

JUDA
Ass is ass!

ADESTE
OH!

Now ass is ass when it's ***your*** *ass* hanging out?

So it don't matter who you stick your dick inside of ***now****?*

JUDA
I got standards!

ADESTE
And I don't?

I should just leave you like this, boy.

JUDA
Ah, don't be like that.

…

C'mon, Adeste.

…

I still got all this new growth on my head.

ADESTE
For someone so sensitive you can be such an asshole sometimes.

JUDA
I'm sensitive? Look at you! This the **real** reason we can't fuck.

ADESTE
Nah, the **real** reason is your judgemental ass **and** your dry ass lips.
See how much coochie you get before you realize Carmex is a priority and **not** an option.

…

What I need you for anyway? I already got several you's to keep me company.

JUDA
You fucking with me?

ADESTE
On the contrary.

Stop squirming.

JUDA
It fucking HURTS. What happened to using the spray bottle?

ADESTE
How'd you get so tender headed? You weren't like this before.

JUDA
I'm just feeling a lot today for some reason!

ADESTE
More like everyday.

JUDA
Damn, you sound like my mama.

ADESTE
But, alas, I am indeed not your mama.

JUDA
Can we take a break soon then?

ADESTE
I really don't have all day to be fucking with you.

JUDA
What you got after this?

ADESTE
Let me rephrase: I don't wanna be fucking with you all day.

JUDA
Damn, just for like five? My head is throbbing and I gotta take a piss.

ADESTE
Alright, Mr. Standards. Get up.

JUDA remains seated in between her legs.

ADESTE
What?

JUDA
You still on that?

ADESTE
You still fuck white girls?

JUDA
You still fuck pigs?

ADESTE
And if he wasn't you'd still find some other reason to be upset.
But Becky in your bedroom and you don't mind.

JUDA
Just say you like to fuck cops and go. I got so many judgmental friends, I swear man.

ADESTE
Good thing I ain't your friend either.

JUDA
Oh.

Then what are we?

ADESTE
Two horny young adults.

JUDA
But to each other?

ADESTE
Two superbly horny young adults.

Don't start.

JUDA
I ain’t doing shit.

ADESTE
Your Cancer is showing.

JUDA
I’m not in my feelings.

ADESTE
You feel like being in me?

…

JUDA
When?

ADESTE
Soon.

…

JUDA
I thought you didn’t have all day?

ADESTE
I don’t.

JUDA
I don’t fuck cop fuckers.

ADESTE
I knew you were in your feelings.

And yes you do.

JUDA
What?

ADESTE
You’ve been fucking cop fuckers.

JUDA
AH HELL NAH. You already fucked this dude?

ADESTE
A little.

JUDA
What do you mean by ‘a little’?

ADESTE
A lot.

JUDA
What?

ADESTE
I fucked him, Juda.

JUDA
What did you *do?*

ADESTE
Don’t get jealous.

JUDA
Tell me.

ADESTE
Why should I, negro?

JUDA
I’ll eat you out for fifteen minutes.

ADESTE
Thirty.

JUDA
Fifteen.

ADESTE tugs on JUDA’s locks again, but this time in a more intimate, familiar way. She leans down and kisses on JUDA’s ears gently.

ADESTE
Twenty-five. And you can’t cum first.

JUDA
Then don’t be taking all day to cum. You like to take your time.

Wait.

Who said I was going to fuck you?

ADESTE
You did. Don’t act like you can’t do your own hair.

JUDA
Come here.

ADESTE
So you are gonna fuck me?

JUDA
Nope.

ADESTE
He laid me down.

JUDA
Details.

ADESTE
I had my legs wrapped around him

JUDA
Details.

ADESTE
We were making out on his couch.

JUDA is turned on.

JUDA
And then what?

ADESTE
He started kissing my neck

ADESTE is turned on

JUDA
Details.

ADESTE
I undid his belt.

JUDA
Where were his hands? Paint me a picture.

ADESTE
How ‘bout I show you instead?

They were gripping my waist.

JUDA imitates the cops actions with ADESTE on the couch

But gently.

They traveled like a ship.

JUDA
What does that mean?

ADESTE
It means when he entered me like a hurricane

I came like a tempest

Juda.

I don't mind if you're calm at first.

Just remember to be the storm I'm looking for.

JUDA's hands explore her skin. This is indeed an exploration, but not an uncharted one. JUDA still jumps the gun though.

Gently.

Like this.

I like your hands the best.

JUDA kisses ADESTE's palms.

JUDA
You were always a church to me.

ADESTE
A Church? You being blasphemous again?

JUDA
I just wouldn't mind worshiping you after church hours.

ADESTE
Wouldn't that make me a God?

JUDA
A God of Shame maybe.

ADESTE
They never kiss my palms.

pause.

JUDA
Your Scorpio is showing.

ADESTE
Well look at that. So is your dick imprint.

JUDA
Don’t look at Hickory.

ADESTE
You can’t use that name anymore.

JUDA
Why not?!

ADESTE
I gave it to someone else.

JUDA
What the fuck? *I* came up with Hickory! You can’t just *give* it away!

ADESTE
But I missed you.

JUDA
You definitely can’t look at me now.

ADESTE
Then what can I do?

JUDA
Depends.

ADESTE
On what?

JUDA
You like me now?

ADESTE
I’ve never liked you.

JUDA
Don’t be mean.

ADESTE
Don’t be a tease. Come. Here.

Oh. I see.

You hate me.

JUDA
Why do you say that?

ADESTE
I can tell.

JUDA
That's not a reason.

ADESTE
I never worked this hard for a nut, not from a boy.

JUDA
Cause I ain't a boy.

ADESTE
Don't be dramatic.

JUDA
You almost had me. You really, really did.

ADESTE
Why do you think I'm always trying to trick you?

When did you start hating me?

JUDA
I don't hate you.

ADESTE
When'd you stop loving me?

JUDA
Don't pull that on me.

ADESTE
Why don't you wanna fuck me?

JUDA
I do wanna fuck you!

ADESTE
Then fuck me.

JUDA
But I don't wanna fuck you.

ADESTE
Then why are you here?

JUDA
To fuck you?

ADESTE
You're not making any sense.

JUDA
I know.

ADESTE
You never make any sense.

JUDA
I get confused sometimes.

ADESTE
I know.

JUDA
Sometimes I forget.

ADESTE
You're getting in your feelings.

JUDA
You're detaching.

ADESTE
Is this about my cop?

JUDA
No.

ADESTE
Are you jealous of my cop?

JUDA
Stop saying he's your cop.

ADESTE
You're jealous.

JUDA
I'm not jelly.

ADESTE
You don't have to be.

JUDA
I'm not.

ADESTE
You're my *favorite,* Juda. Why don't you get that?

JUDA
Don't say that.

ADESTE
You don't believe me.

JUDA
I feel kinda off. You're making me feel off.

ADESTE
You okay?

JUDA
No.

ADESTE
Do you need water?

JUDA
I need to go.

ADESTE
Wait, hold on.

JUDA
I can't.

ADESTE
Can you try?

JUDA
I can't.

ADESTE
Please?

JUDA
Sorry.

ADESTE
Your hair isn't finished.

JUDA
I got a crochet hook at home.

ADESTE
You said you'd try.

JUDA
I know.

ADESTE
And we were doing good.

JUDA
Yeah.

ADESTE
I thought we were doing good.

JUDA
We were.

ADESTE
So what's wrong?

JUDA
Nothing.

ADESTE
Then why are you leaving?

JUDA
It's a lot to think about sometimes.

ADESTE
Don't think.

JUDA
I wish my mind was quiet sometimes. I still want you.

ADESTE
You have me.

JUDA
No. All of you.

ADESTE
You have enough.

JUDA
Enough?

ADESTE
Yes.

JUDA
Enough?

ADESTE
Yeah.

JUDA
What does that mean?

ADESTE
It means enough.

JUDA
Now you're not making any sense.

ADESTE
I am making sense.

JUDA
Then why can't it just be me?

ADESTE
Just stop.

JUDA
Aren't I enough?

ADESTE
It's not like that.

JUDA
Am I just ass?

ADESTE
No.

JUDA
Then what am I?

ADESTE
Juda.

JUDA
Adeste.

ADESTE
Don't.

pause

JUDA
Do *you* still love me*?*

ADESTE
JUDA.

JUDA
And him?

ADESTE
Who's the fuck here right now?

JUDA
Then why?

ADESTE
I want to.

JUDA
Why?!

ADESTE
He's just there.

JUDA
I'm here too.

ADESTE
You're here right now.

JUDA
I'm always here!

ADESTE
Until you hear something that you don't like.

And what you don't like is me. All of me at least.

But why are we always talking about my bedroom? You're fucking someone else too.

JUDA
Your idea.

ADESTE
Who told you to listen to me? White girls too!

The caucasity of it all!

Sometimes I think you did that on purpose just to fuck with me.

JUDA
You're fucking WHITE BOYS. That's your fault!

ADESTE
Stop asking for the stuff you don't wanna hear!

JUDA
You really don't care.

ADESTE
Y'know what? At this point? I couldn't care less.

Dangerous Territory

JUDA
You fucking with me?

ADESTE
Not this time.

JUDA
You're doing it again.

ADESTE
And you're doing nothing at all.

JUDA
You're detaching! Look. I'm sorry.

ADESTE
Sure.

JUDA
I am.

ADESTE
You're always sorry.

JUDA
I'm trying, Adeste.

ADESTE
You don’t have to.

JUDA
I want to.

ADESTE
I don’t want you to anymore.

JUDA
What?

ADESTE
Weren’t you leaving, *boy*?

JUDA
No.

ADESTE
You hurt me too, sometimes.

JUDA
I’m sorry.

ADESTE
I know.

JUDA
I am.

ADESTE
I know.

pause

JUDA
Let’s try again.

ADESTE
I said I don’t want to.

JUDA
I’m doing better.

ADESTE
I’m tired.

JUDA
I can do better.

ADESTE
Do you have a light?

JUDA
Don’t ignore me.

ADESTE
Do you have a light?

JUDA
Here.

ADESTE and JUDA sit in silence.
ADESTE grinds, packs, and finally, smokes in silence.
Silence sits in silence.

ADESTE
I want a break.

JUDA
So we were together?

ADESTE
No.

JUDA
But you’re leaving me.

ADESTE
If that’s how you wanna see it.

JUDA.
Wow.

ADESTE
I know. I’m hurting your feelings.

JUDA
I wasn’t going to say that.

ADESTE
But I’m hurting your feelings?

JUDA
You think I’m a child?

ADESTE
Childlike maybe.

JUDA
You are trying to hurt me.

ADESTE
Is it working?

JUDA
Not in the way you think.

ADESTE
But you are hurt?

JUDA
Yeah. Yes. Yeah.

Yeah.

ADESTE
Look.

ADESTE climbs on top of JUDA and straddles him on the couch.

I know you want me to feel bad. I know you want me to feel gross.

I know I wanted to too.

She takes JUDA's hands and places them on her hips.

Because that's what you're supposed to feel I think

Y'know?

Shame and shame.

You said you wanted

All of me.

And sometimes I--

Believe you.

I only felt shame, when I realized

I felt no shame.

Stay with me, Juda, I'm almost done

In its place was an intense Desire to be myself.

But not just the parts you want though.

All parts of me.

I need you to understand

That the parts that loved you -–

That love you

Are endless.

But I don’t think love is a solitary act?

I dunno.

You learn a lot about yourself when you’re with other people.

And you learn a lot about other people too.

Intimacy should allow space for you to be all parts of yourself.

You CAN have all of me. You really can. Y’know I never lied to you.

But I'm not holding anything back from you.

You’re holding you from me.

I want to give you so much

So you can--

If you realize that

All of me

Is all of this?

You get what I’m saying?

Man, I don't even know what I’m saying anymore.

Juda?

Juda?

Baby?

JUDA
Sorry. I'm in my feelings a little bit to be honest.

ADESTE
I KNEW IT

JUDA
Oh, I'm always in my feelings.
And my feelings are always in me.
And no matter how hard I try,
No matter how hard I try to alter them
Or separate them
Or mask them
Or ignore them
Or destroy them

I still feel, what I feel

And sometimes I get this feeling. Feelings? Feeling? Feelings.
I get this feeling. This weird feeling.
And I say weird because it's two feelings.
Two feelings going on at the same time.

Baby pass me that stuff you were rolling

ADESTE does while still straddling JUDA

Nice. This sativa?

ADESTE
Indica.

JUDA
Damn this sho do feel like some sativa. Satiiiiiva. Ha.

ADESTE
Juda.

JUDA
Right. Two feelings, one boy. Sorry. One *man.*
I am a man that feels like a boy
I am a boy that feels like a man
I don't think my feelings make me a boy though
I think my feelings make me a man

JUDA kisses ADESTE's palms again. Pure ecstasy.

Feelings often feel like they're built in sand
These grand Structures molded by Water

You were my Cathedral / You were my Sandcastle
Queen of the Damned
And I know
Both Man
And Boy
Loves you without end too.
Because I truly believe
Love has no end

But relationships do

I can't be who you want me to be / I can only be who I *feel* i am.

And I'm not entirely sure who that is yet.

But I know it ain't all of this.

Because, whatever this in-between state is

it don't *feel* right to me.

ADESTE
Is this after Church hours?

JUDA
This is after Church hours.

ADESTE
No second service?

JUDA
All the saints have gone home.

ADESTE
What about the Pastor?

JUDA
The suture is the sermon.

pause

ADESTE
I'm going to miss you, Juda. My sensitive Cancer.

JUDA
Hold on, Scorpio. Let me show you how soft communion can be.

JUDA kisses ADESTE and embraces her. Their kisses turn into a sad passion, in turn, their passion transitions into them removing each other's clothes. Slowly and sensually though. There's Lust, and then there is departure. The Cancer & The Scorpio. Lights slowly fade…

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v: Post Shadow

lights up suddenly on RUMANCIK and AUVEEN
They walk up to a door.

RUMANCIK
Is this it?

AUVEEN
Ummm. Yeah.

This me.

Thanks for taking me out, Rumancik.

RUMANCIK
Thank you for saying yes. I know you needed to get your mind offa things.

AUVEEN
Alotta things.

RUMANCIK
It's cool to see you outta work. Did you have fun?

AUVEEN
Of course. I love skating.

RUMANCIK
You a natural.

AUVEEN
A natural huh?

RUMANCIK
All naturaaal. Imma start calling you nick cannon or roll bounce or something.

AUVEEN
You funny. Daddy took me all the time when he had me on his days.

RUMANCIK
Oh you a daddy’s girl?

AUVEEN
Maybe.

RUMANCIK
Maybe huh?

AUVEEN
What you looking at? I got some on my face?

RUMANCIK
What? I can't look now?

AUVEEN
You should take a picture.

RUMANCIK
Cause it'll last longer?

AUVEEN
That's the saying.

RUMANCIK
How can I make the night last longer?

AUVEEN
Watch it.

RUMANCIK
Hard not to.

AUVEEN
Watch. It.

Pictures only develop in the dark.

RUMANCIK
Maybe I like the dark

AUVEEN
Hmm.

You're not ready to go home huh?

RUMANCIK
I'm not ready for *you* to go home.

AUVEEN
But I am home.

RUMANCIK
Welcome home.

AUVEEN
Thank you.

RUMANCIK
See you Monday?

RUMANCIK tries to leave

AUVEEN
I dunno.

RUMANCIK stops

RUMANCIK
You dunno?

AUVEEN
I dunno. I might call off

RUMANCIK
I don't blame you. Make it a three day.

AUVEEN
I just might.

RUMANCIK
That’s what's up.

AUVEEN
You should call off too.

RUMANCIK
No PTO.

AUVEEN
And?

RUMANCIK
I have to use sick time.

AUVEEN
Use it.

…

RUMANCIK
You serious?

AUVEEN
You not?

RUMANCIK
Is there a reason I shouldn't show?

AUVEEN
I dunno.

Is there?

Why you look constipated?

What?

…

RUMANCIK
Can I ask you a question?

AUVEEN
Shoot.

RUMANCIK
Can I kiss you real quick?

AUVEEN
Huh?

RUMANCIK
Can I kiss you?

AUVEEN
Why?

RUMANCIK
I'm sorry it’s weird but.. I have this… I dunno. *Desire* to know you better.

AUVEEN
So get to know me?

RUMANCIK
Right.

AUVEEN
Right.

RUMANCIK
Right.

…

But I *want* to kiss you. I keep thinking about… how it would feel. And mind you it could fucking suck, I could fucking suck. And it's **weird**, I just met you, you just met me but… have you ever wanted something so bad that…

AUVEEN
You'll do anything for it?

RUMANCIK
Yeah.

And sometimes... I just think your desires also want you?

Like if I didn't ask,

even though I really *wanted to,*

Am I really being honest with myself?

And who am I

If I'm not honest?

Wait what?

"Desires want you" What the fuck am I saying? Something's weird going on today.

Feelings don't have feelings.

Right?

…

Actually never mind, I'll see you Monday.

AUVEEN
Why not?

RUMANCIK
What did you say?

AUVEEN
I said why not.

RUMANCIK
Okay. Okay!

AUVEEN
Okay.

RUMANCIK
Okay.

AUVEEN
Are you gonna do it?

RUMANCIK
Yeah I'm just… Yeah.

AUVEEN
Yeah?

RUMANCIK
Is this close enough?

AUVEEN
I think so.

RUMANCIK
Cool.

RUMANCIK tries to kiss AUVEEN

AUVEEN
Wait. What's your sign?

RUMANCIK
I was born in April

AUVEEN
Oooo.

RUMANCIK
What?

AUVEEN
You an Aries.

RUMANCIK
Yessir.

AUVEEN
The only Aries I fuck with are bound**aries.**

RUMANCIK
What’s your sign?

AUVEEN
Capricorn.

RUMANCIK
Fuck outta here!

AUVEEN
What you know about Caps?

RUMANCIK
I know they ain’t good for me!

AUVEEN
Sugar ain't good for you.

RUMANCIK
See?

AUVEEN
But sometimes we need a little something sweet.

RUMANCIK
You sweet?

AUVEEN
I’m savory.

RUMANCIK
Mouth watering?

AUVEEN
Depends on the mouth.

RUMANCIK
I can make an exception.

AUVEEN
As long as I can make a rule.

RUMANCIK
What rule?

AUVEEN
Tell me a secret.

RUMANCIK
What kinda secret?

AUVEEN
A good one.

RUMANCIK
I don't have any secrets though.

AUVEEN
Why you lying?

RUMANCIK
I’m not?

AUVEEN
Trust me. Everybody has secrets.

RUMANCIK
What’s yours?

AUVEEN
Nah you first.

RUMANCIK
I’m not lying.

AUVEEN
Then tell the truth. Half truths are Full lies.

RUMANCIK
I’m telling the truth and nothing but the truth.

AUVEEN
You’re the most honest man I’ve met then.

RUMANCIK
Wait. How many men you know?

AUVEEN
How many men know themselves?

RUMANCIK
Who hurt you, baby?

AUVEEN
What do you have to hide?

RUMANCIK
What do you have to reveal?

AUVEEN
A magician never reveals.

RUMANCIK
Except when telling the truth is a spell. Shit changes like magic when you're honest.

AUVEEN
More like chaos magic.

RUMANCIK
My chaos is magic.

RUMANCIK goes to kiss Auveen again

AUVEEN
Woah there, Cowboy.

RUMANCIK
What's up?

AUVEEN
I just wanna make it clear we're not dating. Okay?

RUMANCIK
A magician and an illusionist?

AUVEEN
That's a big word for Elmo.

RUMANCIK
That's not the only thing big.

AUVEEN
Is that your secret?

RUMANCIK
I dunno. What did you say before about never revealing secrets?

AUVEEN
Closed zippers don't get pussy. Ever heard of show and tell?

RUMANCIK
Ah, but you can't tell me what to show.

AUVEEN
Such an Aries.

So stubborn.

You like to take charge huh?

AUVEEN touches RUMANIK's chest

RUMANCIK
That's what the horns are for.

RUMANCIK touches AUVEEN's hand back.

AUVEEN
I'm doing *you* a favor y'know?

RUMANCIK
Yeah?

AUVEEN
Yeah. Think about it.

RUMANCIK
It's kinda hard to think right now.

AUVEEN
Do it for me, *Big Fella.*

If you tell me your secrets *now*
you won't have any to hide *later.*

RUMANCIK
Show me how it's done.

AUVEEN
How's what's done?

RUMANCIK
Vulnerability. I just wanna make sure I'm doing it right for you.

AUVEEN
Don't be a Hoe.

…

I just think I spend too much time in relationships, alright?

I mean I got cheated on.

I cheated too I guess.

RUMANCIK
You guess???

AUVEEN
And here I am.

Realization

Trying to cheat my nervous system with another unfamiliar, familiar. Honestly…

RUMANCIK
You weren't being honest before???

AUVEEN
I just got tired.

RUMANCIK
With what?

AUVEEN
With making choices.

and Taking the lead.

And Being the good partner.

And Being the good person.

It just
felt
good.

God.

It feels good to lose control.

Or pretend to at least.

But it was all me.

huh.

Pulls away from RUMANCIK

RUMANCIK
Uhhhh. Wait! Just one secret?

AUVEEN
A secret worth keeping.

RUMANCIK
As long as you’re my keeper.

AUVEEN
Keep playing and I'll be your reaper.

RUMANCIK
You’re not God.

AUVEEN
Not your God.

RUMANCIK
Excuse me?

AUVEEN
I might know *your* secret already.

RUMANCIK
How?

AUVEEN
It’s simple.

RUMANCIK
Then why are you making it complicated?

AUVEEN
Because when you’re honest to everybody but yourself
You're really honest to nobody.
And I learned people who are dishonest with themselves
Will always be dishonest with other people too.

RUMANCIK
What is? A confessional?

AUVEEN
Would you prefer a Brothel instead?
A place where *your* prayers actually get answered?

RUMANCIK
Shiiit maybe! But you could answer mine right now.

AUVEEN
Will it kill you to say you want more, Karter?!

RUMANCIK
Karter?

AUVEEN
Don’t just *act* like you want me.

RUMANCIK
Who's Karter?

AUVEEN
I need you to *show* me.

RUMANCIK
But I'm not…

AUVEEN
Now tell me a secret you Aries fuck.

…

RUMANCIK
Damn that was hot.

Okay! But you can't tell anybody. It just sounds stupid when I say it out loud.

Actually it sounds stupid when I don't either.

But believe it or not

My person cheated on me too

…

cheated on me more times than a test, g.

And I still carried lilies on a greyhound from New York to Chicago for 18 hours to give to them.

AUVEEN
Idiot.

Why'd you do that?

RUMANCIK
Why? 'Cause they were her favorite flowers.
They were also wrinkled and dead
And somehow more beautiful than ever.

AUVEEN and RUMANCIK share a genuine kiss

RUMANCIK
Wow.

AUVEEN
Was that what you expected?

RUMANCIK
No.

But I'm pretty sure that's what I wanted.

Another one

…

RUMANCIK
You taste like every sin I wanted to commit.

…

AUVEEN
The only thing I can commit to right now is Suicide. Sorry.

…

RUMANCIK
Word?

AUVEEN
Word. But thank you.

RUMANCIK
For what?

AUVEEN shrugs

AUVEEN
Being honest. It's refreshing.

RUMANCIK
Thank you for being you. I'll see you later?

AUVEEN
Yeah.

RUMANCIK
And just to be clear… no pussy?

AUVEEN
All out.

RUMANCIK
Can you check in the back by any chance?

AUVEEN
Goodnight, Rumancik.

RUMANCIK
Let me know if a shipment comes in.

AUVEEN
Get home safe.

RUMANCIK
Fuck. Aight.

RUMANCIK exits
AUVEEN composes themselves
checks their hair
then their phone.
Makes a call

AUVEEN
Hey, I'm here. Can you let me in?

Hangs up.
Waits.
KARTER answers the door

KARTER
Hey.

AUVEEN
Hey.

…

AUVEEN
Can I come in?

KARTER
Of course.

Auveen enters

…

KARTER
Had fun?

AUVEEN
It was alright.

…

AUVEEN
Can I shower real quick?

KARTER
Worked up a sweat?

AUVEEN
I guess.

KARTER
Are you hungry?

AUVEEN
Yes.

KARTER
Noodles?

AUVEEN
Only if you make them.

KARTER
Usual?

AUVEEN
Less salt.

KARTER
I'll try.

AUVEEN
Bet.

KARTER
Before you go.

AUVEEN
Yeah?

KARTER
Why were you in the front seat of an Uber?

AUVEEN
Karter.

KARTER
It's just a question

AUVEEN
Or an interrogation I'm too tired for.

KARTER
One question doesn’t make an interrogation.

AUVEEN
But you have other questions. You always do.

KARTER
Don’t tell me you feel guilty?

AUVEEN
Guilty? About an Uber? How you sound right now?

KARTER
So that was your Uber?

AUVEEN
Here we go.

KARTER
That’s your Uber.

AUVEEN
Yes.

KARTER
Why were you in the front seat then?

AUVEEN
What?

KARTER
What did you say about saying what unnecessarily?

AUVEEN
Karter. You have no…

KARTER
I said why were you in the front seat of an Uber?

AUVEEN
Who knows?

KARTER
I saw you get out.

AUVEEN
I dunno.

KARTER
You don’t know?

AUVEEN
I just got in.

KARTER
You got in the **front** seat.

AUVEEN
Yeah.

KARTER
Of an Uber.

AUVEEN
Are you deaf?

KARTER
Are you dumb?

AUVEEN
Hell no.

KARTER
Do you think *I’m* dumb?

AUVEEN
I’m not doing this.

KARTER
I'm not doing anything.

AUVEEN
You’re obviously doing the most.

KARTER
And you’re doing fucking Brent Faiyez over there.

Was it in the front seat this time?

AUVEEN
Good night.

KARTER
Was it good?

AUVEEN
Good. Night.

KARTER
Better than me?

AUVEEN
Sure.

KARTER
Doubt it.

AUVEEN
Okaaaaaay.

Tries to go to KARTER's room

KARTER
You're the problem by the way.

AUVEEN
Your jealousy is your problem.

KARTER
It's not jealousy if it's true.

AUVEEN
We're not together. Did you forget that?

KARTER
Is that what you want?

AUVEEN
That's what it is.

KARTER
THEN WHY DO YOU STILL SLEEP IN MY BED?

AUVEEN
BECAUSE YOU LET ME.

…

…

…

KARTER
Where were you today?

AUVEEN
Out.

KARTER
Where?

AUVEEN
You are so insecure.

KARTER
You knew that.

AUVEEN
I was skating.

KARTER
With who?

AUVEEN
I told you.

KARTER
Tell me again.

AUVEEN
The girls.

KARTER
The girls.

AUVEEN
The girls.

KARTER
The girls.

AUVEEN
That’s what I said.

KARTER
That’s not what I believe.

AUVEEN
You thought I was with him?

KARTER
You call me a ghost.

AUVEEN
You are.

KARTER
But you're the only one disappearing.

AUVEEN
You're overwhelming me.

KARTER
Good.

AUVEEN
Good?

KARTER
Now you know what being with you feels like.

AUVEEN
Move.

KARTER
Where are you going?

Hey!

AUVEEN
Home!

KARTER
Hold on.

AUVEEN
MOVE.

KARTER
Don't you fucking dare.

AUVEEN
Then get outta the way.

KARTER
OKAY DO IT / put your hands on me / I dare you.

AUVEEN
Don't tempt me.

KARTER
Pussy.

AUVEEN
What do you want me to say?! What the fuck do you want from me Karter????

KARTER
THE TRUTH.

AUVEEN
I DON'T REGRET CHEATING ON YOU. ARE YOU HAPPY NOW?

…

…

…

KARTER
But I do.

AUVEEN
Good for you.

…

KARTER
I see why your father left.

AUVEEN
Bitch, at least I had one.

…

Jesus are you about to cry?

I hate it when you have that defeated look on your face.

KARTER
Sorry.

AUVEEN
You look stupid.

KARTER
There's nothing I can do about that.

AUVEEN
Probably because you're stupid.

KARTER
Why are you doing this to me?

AUVEEN
Karter.

KARTER
I mean I said I was sorry, I'm so fucking sorry. I don't text anybody, I don't talk to nobody! Have you ever heard of a Gemini NOT TALKING? Not doing? I'm doing right by you! I swear to God I'm doing right. What else can I do though? How can I fix this? How can I come back from this?

How can **we** go back?

AUVEEN
Karter. There is no going back.

KARTER
Tell me how!

AUVEEN
You cheated!

KARTER
You cheated too! We should be even now!

AUVEEN
I don't *trust* you.

…

We don't even smoke anymore.

KARTER
Just say the word. Just say you don't want this anymore. Just say you don't want me. Just...

AUVEEN
What?

KARTER
Release me.

…

AUVEEN
Can I get those noodles first?

KARTER
Why don’t you let me touch you?

AUVEEN
Would you?

KARTER
I know I'm better than him.

AUVEEN
It’s not about him.

KARTER
I know I’m worthy.

AUVEEN
But am *I* worthy?

Worthy enough to be honest with?

You’re talking about I don’t touch you

But I don’t even *look* at myself the same anymore

You wanna feel worthy?

How selfish

I wanna feel *loved*

I never even knew

I never knew I didn't love myself

Until I met *you*

And I feel like it’s —

It’s the same for you.

Karter.

Please tell me a secret.

The one you never told me.

Please be honest.

Why did you cheat on me?

…

KARTER
I desire other people

but I’m committed to you

you feel like my baby

you are my baby

I knew I knew

but I didn't know

until I knew other people

my whole life I’ve been searching for you

I crave

you

I desire

you

But I need you to need me too

AUVEEN
Why did you cheat on me?

…

KARTER
‘Because I'm pathetic. I’m a piece of shit. I’m deplorable. I don’t deserve love. I don’t deserve kindness. I don’t deserve friendship. I don’t deserve joy. I don’t deserve sex. I don’t deserve intimacy. I don’t deserve the truth. I don’t deserve lies. I’m wretched. I’m ugly. I’m not good enough. I talk too much. I talk too little. I’m nothing. nothing with you. nothing without you. And I always felt like this. Before you. Probably after you. I’m insecure… I'm a bad person. I’m a bad partner. *I’m whatever you need me to be!*

AUVEEN
Karter.

Why did you cheat on me?

…

…

…

KARTER
I didn’t know how to be honest.

the world doesn’t end

end of play.