



theatriQ
performing arts group
presents...

**DREAMS
OF
HOPE**
QUEER YOUTH ARTS

For the Lost Voices

Pre-Show AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: Name someone whose voice you miss

Scene 1: House Party (improvisation)

Scene 2: PROLOGUE FOR THE LOST VOICES Door-ography

LEE

You are a blessing,

ACID

You are too sensitive,

BREY

Your personality is really glittery,

MELANIE

I freaking love you,

SEBASTIAN

You taught me things just by being yourself.

ACID

Go live your glamorous life,

LEE

You should play the Cow in Into The Woods

BREY

Your personality is really glittery

MELANIE

OMG you ate! No crumbs left behind,

SEBASTIAN

You taught me things just by being yourself,

LEE

I could never see you being in love,

BREY

Your personality is really glittery

MELANIE

I'm going to dead name you since we aren't friends anymore,

ACID

You look in between genders, that's why you're single,

SEBASTIAN

You taught me things just by being yourself,

LEE

You're so difficult

MELANIE

If you don't stop hurting yourself then I'm going to hurt myself.

BREY

If you don't stop hurting yourself,

ACID

If you don't stop hurting yourself,

SEBASTIAN

If you don't stop hurting yourself,

ALL

If you don't stop hurting yourself,

SOMEONE

HEY! Not today, Satan.

ALL

Your personality is really glittery.

LEE

I went into first grade not speaking. I was in class and they took me out of class and put me in a separate room from everyone else. And I'm feeling really sad. I'm separated from everybody else and I wanted to keep doing the thing everyone else was doing. I then found out I had to use my voice to get what I want.

MELANIE

2021 I did a yoga teacher training. And a continuous form of feedback I've gotten since then is "what a calming voice you have". But I never connected with that sense of calmness. My entire childhood I was told I spoke way too fast and I have a lot of unchannelled energy. I've calmed down in many ways but I'm still silly a-f.

ACID

I'm pretty quiet, I don't really yell. I remember one time I was behind an erratic car that stopped and the woman got out of her car and the other guy driving tried to hit her. I put my car in park and yelled GET YOUR HANDS OFF OF HER. I got in his face and said DON'T YOU PUT YOUR HANDS ON HER OR I'LL SEE YOU IN THESE STREETS. Traffic was backed all the way up Centre ave. Then I got in my car and drove away.

BREY

My silence is a pretty loud voice for people. And my silence makes them upset.

ACID

When I mask my voice, or my neurodivergence, I just move through the motions of pretending. Sometimes I have a voice but it's not my voice. Disassociating is a way I lose my voice as well

MELANIE

When I joined Dreams of Hope a few years ago I learned that I was not cis, I was non- binary. At the end of that year, the Pulse nightclub shooting happened. But I was connected to my community now. Going to a vigil downtown, I saw a couple people from my neighborhood attending, who I didn't know were queer. So I started a Gender Sexuality Alliance at my local library for us.

BREY

I found my voice in a room I was never supposed to be in.

It came rushing out of me and landing on my target, burning like a cold Sprite on the back of your throat.

I had hand motions to illustrate the shade,

Receipts longer than CVS

And when I was done I ascended into the air like Beyonce in Dubai. Without the homophobia.

Yes, that was the day I found it, loved it, shook its hand.

And we've been tight ever since.

Yeah, we get into some trouble from time to time

But that's the risk.

Scene 2: JAMIE'S 2ND POEM

LEE

How am i supposed to find my voice

They yell at the wind yet it still blows

All i can do is live by rules

One rule at a time

Two ideas will only be on my mind

Three is the amount of goodbyes

To lose something

is to have it

in the first place

Then i never lost me

I never lost him

For he never existed

What am i supposed to do

Yell at rain for failing

Look for rocks to be harder

Get a fish to climb a tree

I should just follow the rules
That's what they want after all
To lose something
is to have it
in the first place
Then i never lost me
I never lost him
For he never existed
Am i supposed to deny
who i am
Yet that requires voice
And voice requires strength
And strength requires pain
But i am too fragile
To lose something
is to have it
in the first place
Then i never lost me
I never lost him
For he never existed

Scene 3: ACID POEM – LIFE OF A POMEGRANATE

ACID
crack me open
tear me apart
rip out my fruits
just as a thousand before
touched by a thousand jagged hands
seen by a thousand gnawing eyes
all too much
all too soon
don't be surprised
when my skin is bumpy
and your nails break trying to peel me open
don't cry over my juice on the carpet
from my delicate insides
for your kind palms
have made my heart bleed again
have made my tears stream again
have made me sleep again
have made me feel again
have made mine love again

Scene 4: RUE'S 1ST JOURNAL ENTRY (typing)

(VOICEOVERS, MELANNIE)

September 13 2022

You know I'd like to say that it's "just one of those days" like I have been. Unfortunately when it's been "one of those days" for weeks now it's hard to ignore. Things are going back to

how they were when I had just gotten out of college. My mind is constantly foggy and I don't feel myself. Really I don't know who "myself" is anymore. The thoughts have gotten worse and I don't know how to stop them. I'm just hoping I'll make it out this time.

September 16 2022

Getting out of bed has been increasingly harder, but I have to because if I don't go to work I won't have a bed or a place to sleep at all. The worst part is that I have no one to get up for. No friends to see after work or a roommate to come back to. Then family is a whole different story I don't wanna get into. Other than that my job is exhausting. You wouldn't think that standing behind the counter and handing out cupcakes wouldn't be the worst thing ever. So look at it more like this. Imagine you have hundred pound weights on your legs and arms at all times.

To go with that talking is like getting your vocal chords getting ripped out and replaced over and over again. Now add the worst type of customer you can imagine showing up every day in and out. Now wouldn't you be complaining.

September 20 2022

Work today was just as tedious as usual until this girl came in. I have always been someone who can understand my feelings and experiences in detail, but this was different. Looking at her I could barely breathe. Really I think it was just the way she spoke with such confidence that made her so interesting.

"Wow," suddenly leaning over the counter closer to my face, "I've never seen someone with such alluring eyes."

"Oh..." I replied, everything pausing for what felt like a whole year but was only seconds "Uh thank you!" Abruptly my thoughts came back and I could function. As I hand her a box of cupcakes she gives me the brightest smile I've seen on anyone. And with a wink she seems to Vanish

Scene 5: Letter - I'm Angry

BREY

I'm Angry

The strong sisters told the brothers that there were two important things to remember about the coming revolutions. The first is that we will get our asses kicked. The second is that we will win.

I'm angry. I'm angry for being condemned to death by strangers saying, "You deserve to die" and "AIDS is the cure." Fury erupts when a Republican woman wearing thousands of dollars of garments and jewelry minces by the police lines shaking her head, chuckling and wagging her finger at us like we are recalcitrant children making absurd demands and throwing a temper tantrum when they aren't met. Angry while Joseph agonizes over \$8,000 a year for AZT which might keep him alive a little longer and which does make him sicker than the disease he is diagnosed with. Angry as I listen to a man tell me that after changing his will five times he's running out of people to leave things to. All of his best friends are dead. Angry when I stand in a sea of quilt panels, or go to a candlelight march or attend yet another memorial service. I will not march silently with a fing candle and I want to take that goddamned quilt and wrap myself in it and furiously rent it and my hair and curse every god religion ever created. I refuse to accept a creation that cuts people down in the third decade of their life. It is cruel and vile and meaningless and everything I have in me rails against the absurdity and I raise my face to the clouds and a ragged laugh that sounds more demonic than joyous erupts from my throat and tears stream down my face and if this disease doesn't kill me, I may just die of frustration. My feet pound the streets and Peter's hands are chained to a pharmaceutical company's reception desk while the receptionist looks on in horror and Eric's body lies rotting in a Brooklyn cemetery and I'll never hear his flute resounding off the walls of the meeting house

again. And I see the old people in Tompkins Square Park huddled in their long wool coats in June to keep out the cold they perceive is there and to cling to whatever little life has left to offer them, and I think, ah, they understand. And I'm reminded of the people who strip and stand before a mirror each night before they go to bed and search their bodies for any mark that might not have been there yesterday. A mark that this scourge has visited them. And I'm angry when the newspapers call us "victims" and sound alarms that "it" might soon spread to the "general population." And I want to scream "Who the f am I?" And I want to scream at New York Hospital with its yellow plastic bags marked "isolation linen," "ropa infecciosa" and its orderlies in latex gloves and surgical masks skirt the bed as if its occupant will suddenly leap out and douse them with blood and semen giving them too the plague. And I'm angry at straight people who sit smugly wrapped in their self-protective coat of monogamy and heterosexuality, confident that this disease has nothing to do with them because it only happens to "them." And the teenage boys who upon spotting my "Silence = Death" button begin chanting "Faggots gonna die" and I wonder, who taught them this? Enveloped in fury and fear, I remain silent while my button mocks me every step of the way. And the anger I feel when a television program on the quilt gives profiles of the dead and the list begins with a baby, a teenage girl who got a blood transfusion, an elderly Baptist minister and his wife and when they finally show a gay man, he's described as someone who knowingly infected teenage male prostitutes with the virus. What else can you expect from a faggot? I'm angry.

Scene 6: RUE'S JOURNAL #2

(VOICEOVERS, MELANNIE)

September 24

I can't stop thinking of her. For once there is something else in my head than sleep. There is nothing I want more than to see her again. To be embraced by her smile would make my life worth it.

October 4 2022

Today I finally pushed myself to ask her name.

"It's ." She told me.

"Oh..wow." Was all I could say.

I think that's the most beautiful name I've ever heard. One you'd read in a book and ask yourself where the author had found it. But on the down side I'm a little concerned, because every time she comes in she seems more tired than the last, yet her personality never fades. Therese is always smiling and I can't understand how. I mean I've never seen someone who is so genuinely happy at all times. It makes me wonder if it's genuine at all.

October 6 2022

There is no doubt in my mind that I want to know this girl. Not just to know "this girl", but to know Take her places, learn her favorite color and what she dreams to be one day. Take her picture and save it in my wallet. Hear her voice every day knowing it sees me.

October 11 2022

We agreed on going out after Therese's normal appearance today. Despite it just being a simple park date I couldn't have been happier! She told me how she has a passion for writing. She showed me some of the stories she wrote, and let me tell you this stuff was good! I think she is destined to be a children's author. When she is talking about her stories, and how she has always wanted to teach elementary school. I couldn't help but notice how her eyes just lit up the whole world. After that I wanted to walk her back home, but she was very hesitant to let me. This was the first time I've seen her doubt anything. After some convincing I came to find why she seemed so nervous. Her home isn't a house at all, but rather a hospital.

October 28 2022

Therese has the warmest heart and soul you could ever know. She came every week for cupcakes for everyone in her section. Of course that was when she could leave. Therese is now on bed rest which what they don't tell you means that she doesn't have much time left. I know this is the truth but I don't want to think about it. I don't think anyone would in my situation. I don't want to let her go. She is the last person to deserve this fate. Her life is worth so much. She deserves a future full of people who love and appreciate her. For her books to be published and appreciated.

Scene 7: ARACHNOLOGY

ACID

Are you all ready to hear a story that really happened to me?

(LEE AND BREY NOD)

ACID

It's been a few days since I walked out of my bathroom to see something so grotesque repelling down my hallway wall. It was like Satan had finally caught up to me, eight legs of pure evil just staring at me. I couldn't do anything but freeze in terror for a brief moment before running into my room. Peering from behind my bedroom door, I noticed its devious legs wriggling. Beacons me into its dirty fangs. I wanted to pick up a shoe and smash it against the wall, which was common for me to do. The instinctual need to destroy that thing, how it made me uncomfortable that it was around. So, I picked up my shoe and stalked my way toward it. I expected it to jump on me, attack me, and pain my body like they all did before...

And it wasn't until I got close...and I looked at this brown speck on my wall. It moved its leg again, and I felt this odd sensation. I wanted so bad to...to squish it, but I dropped the shoe, and let the spider go about its business.

I felt like a prisoner in my own room for eternity, I couldn't step out for fear that the little demon would beckon me again with its disgusting little legs. I would peer from behind my bedroom door and scurry away when I realized my decision to let it live might actually kill me.

It wouldn't, but I already know what a spider does. I've been bitten more times than I can count and just thinking about how my different parts of my body would swell with spider venom; my arms, my legs, my face, even in-between my toes. I hated those little bastards, feared them.

The first time I forgave them, maybe I was the one who invaded their territory when I was rolling over on my deflated mattress when staying over my father's house. I forgave them again when I was bitten on the same wrist twice, and I grew huge puss bubbles that turned to scars. I FORGAVE THEM WHEN I woke up and my body was covered in bites head to toe and I still went to school. I ignored the pain as my foot was swelling and turning purple and black, the nurse was horrified to even look at it and called my mother. I still forgave the little demons, I run from them. I even look up their names when I see one I've never seen before and it appears in front of me. Black Widows, Brown Recluses, the common house spider, Huntsman spiders. There's even those big-ass spiders that live in Australia, they haunt my dreams til I get so paranoid that many of them are crawling up my skin. And I would want to burn down my living space when I see one repelling down my wall, with the quickness...

But this one...I don't know why, but this one spider can live. For some reason, it crawled as fast as it did and hid in the corner of a door frame at the end of the hall, and shyly greeted me as I cautiously walked to my kitchen. My heart was in my throat the entire time, it would jump at any Moment.

But it didn't, even when I was leaving for work. It stayed in that spot, and when I came home it was still there. Like it was watching, maybe plotting, or maybe just sitting, I never know their intentions. When I Googled "what does a house spider look like?" it showed me a picture of my unwanted guest, and then

when I followed-up with “is a house spider harmless?” I was both relieved and slightly terrified when the results said Yes, they are, they won’t harm humans unless they feel threatened or cornered. I don’t know why, but I thought this one was going to be like the others. Just as dangerous, and I was still going to have to be afraid. I knew the benefits of having a spider, it can rid your home of other pests, but I like those other pests. They don’t terrify me as much. They. Don’t. Bite.

But anyway, it’s been a few days, and it’s traveled around my apartment: the kitchen, the bathroom, and the living room. I’ve seen it everywhere, kept my eye on it, and watched it crawl back and forth across my walls. I must admit at some point, I started to chuckle; I thought it was adorable. I stared and watched it try to find solace in the corners, in the seams, and when it wasn’t satisfied it moved again. I liked watching it, it could move pretty fast. And it stayed out of my way, but I do admit I was curious to see it up close.

When I left the apartment in the afternoon, it was close to the window. When I returned, I couldn’t see the spider anywhere. Not in the living room, not in the bathroom, not even by the window. I don’t know why, but I felt a little off. I was expecting to be greeted by grotesque limbs but was met by empty walls. I still find myself looking up at the corners expecting to see it crawl as fast as its limbs can. It’s sad to say, but I kinda miss it. It’s been a few days, but I hope it comes around again, I’ll be able to say hello.

Scene 8: RUE’S JOURNAL #3

(VOICEOVERS, MELANNIE)

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I don’t want to let her go. She is the last person to deserve this fate. Her life is worth so much. She deserves a future full of people who love and appreciate her. For her books to be published and appreciated.

BREY

Rue,
I hold that when you think of me you think of what it looks like to choose yourself every time. When the love is wrong, choose your. When the song is wrong, pick another. Unless it’s the Blue’s. Don’t be afraid of the Blues, it’s the ugly inside of us singing to feel beautiful again. Let it play, let it wrap your sadness i in its melody and when it’s time, and only when, pick up the tempo.
I’ll remember you. The lovely Rue. Beautiful and wise beyond her years, always smelling as sweet as roses. Know that I am always with you.

Scene 10: RUE'S NOTE

MELANNIE

january 14

to whom it may concern. i'm sorry

this is the last time anyone will hear from me. i can hear the sirens coming in which i can only assume my aunt sent. i've called and said my goodbyes but there are some things i still need to say. i can still hear her voice though it is long gone. six feet deep. they say that time heals all wounds but it was her that healed mine. now i realize i couldn't do the same, and my scars have been ripped right back open. i've been trying to ignore it and go back to sleep but here i am writing this at 2am. i miss her more than anyone can miss anything. not only that but i have no one left. any friends i had have left me behind and moved on while i stayed in the past. Waiting to smell the flowers once again. in fact most i called wont listen to the voicemail i left. i guess i cant be heard in life or in death. i must leave it off here because i am losing feeling in my hands and my sight is decreasing by the second.

to whom it may concern, i'm not sorry

Scene 11: EPILOGUE

LEE

a voice, lost.

misplaced

adrift

elsewhere

departed

unavailable

absent

wanting

but

muffled

silenced

Drowned.

cast aside, disposed of, diminished, disregarded, ignored, destroyed, forgotten –
NO.

gone, but not forgotten

lost, but able to be found

this is for the lost voices.

for the words still stuck in our throats,

for the ones that are not yet free,

for those taken from this realm too soon,

for the speech that has not yet seen the light of day,

for the ones hiding their true selves,

for those silenced by our oppressors,

we hear you, we see you.

this is for you.

(ACID AND BREY COME ON STAGE, READING OUT NAMES OF VOICES THE AUDIENCE MISS)