

algorithm pyjamas

HOST:

Hello everyone, my name is Cara Eastcott, and I'll be your host coming up here on programsound.fm. Not sure if anyone told you but I will be broadcasting live from my dreams, and I just thought as I'm being hooked up to this, let's see here what it's called. It's called the split mind consciousness radio converter in a plant pot. I just call it a dream machine, really, being connected to my brain right now. But before they turn on this machine, and we get into it just thought I'd let you know where I'm broadcasting from. Just west of the Don River in Toronto, Ontario. This is treaty 13 territory held by the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. And along with the Mississaugas, there have been many, many other indigenous nations who have inhabited and occupied these lands and waters, including several other Anishnaabe nations, the Wendat, the Seneca, the Haudenosaunee, just to name a few, and today in Toronto live and work and inhabit many indigenous nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. As well, I wanted to acknowledge those who were displaced from their indigenous territories of Africa and those who were brought forcibly as a result of the transatlantic slave trade. Let us also remember those enslaved people and that the profits from the slave trade didn't end with slavery abolition in 1834. In Canada, that compensation and liberty for black people in North America is an ongoing fight. These treaties and policies are living documents to be interpreted and used to act on better ways of living and sharing in this place together with the leadership from indigenous and black stewards. I call us all to collectively dream together for the future. Oh, and, speaking of dreams, right on time, the dream machine's about to be turned on so I am going to go sign off and I'll be signing back on from inside my dreams right now on programsound.fm.

Hello, Welcome. Welcome. You are listening to programsound.fm. And this is the algorithm pyjamas show. Wait, it is? I'm Cara Eastcott. I am? Hold on, hold on. I'm in my PJs. And I am in my bed. My eyes are closed. Oh, am I sleeping right now? Oh, I just figured it out, I'm in a dream. Yeah. And you're here with me in a dream. Folks, this is the first time that I'm broadcasting live from my dreams. Which means this most definitely is programsound.fm. And you are sure as hell listening to algorithm pyjamas. This is awesome. Look, folks. Of course, I couldn't be doing this without the unbelievable technology of the split mind consciousness radio converter in a plant pot. More on that later. But first, some of you know the story others of you don't. I've been off the sauce and I stopped smoking reefer recently, and the dreams, the dreams have just come back. And they're back in full force and I couldn't be happier. I can't wait to go to bed at night and see what will be revealed. You know, one night it could be the yellow brick road and the other night it could be conveyor belts leading off a cliff into nothingness. Or worse, a Taylor Swift concert. But you know, I just love exploring the mind, or minds, I mean, how many of you are in there? Hello? Hello? Really, it reminds me of my Uncle Blob, Uncle Bob, excuse me, used to have these wooden babushka dolls. Remember those? Where you'd open it and then there'd be a smaller one placed inside and then you'd open it and there'd be another one placed inside and then you'd open it and another one placed inside and then you open it and another one placed inside and then you open it and another one's placed inside. Deep sleep now. What were you doing before bed? I was brushing my teeth. And before that. I ate dinner. And before that? I went for a walk. And before that? I was in yesterday. And before that? I was a teenager, a baby, I was born. And what about before that? I was in my mother's belly. And before that? I was in my grandmother's belly. And what about before that? Oh, uhhh. I was in blob land. It's hazy in here. There's these curvy sine wave line, shapes. They're forming into some kind of gelatinous hilly blobs. They're yellowish. There's no ground or walls or ceiling. Just blob field forever. I can't feel myself but I feel heavy and light at the same time. I don't know where this is, but I feel very connected to something much bigger than me that I don't understand. Alright, and what about before blob land? Oh, *The Araya and Ataya* show on programsound.fm.

The Arawa and Ataya Show

Do you like jokes, memes, music, sketches or all of the above? Then join us on The Arawa and Ataya Show. I'm Ataya, and I'm 11 years old. I'm Arawa, and I'm six years old. We live on the unceded and traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh nations. And we host this extravaganza of a variety show. Come join us on The Arawa and Ataya Show.

The Arawa and Ataya Show. Story Time! With Ataya.

Here's a story I wrote when I was about eight years old when I was in homeschooling. Mr. M and his coworkers were on break in the office when ghosts flooded the room. When the staff hid, they disintegrated on the spot. The ghost did that too. Mr. M did not disintegrate. He was still in the room. He crept out and saw a devious dragon outside. It breathed blazing fire in an abandoned warehouse. It crumbled with deadly force. But where was Mr. M? He was at a lab talking to smart gay men, and together, they defeated the vile dragon and saved Mr. M's coworkers. They made a calm potion and gave it to the dragon. So the dragon never came back. The next day, Mr. M was working in his new job in a pizza store. He had to find toppings. It was an extremely easy job. Except for the fact that he didn't get paid a lot. Good thing his wife had a job too. So he made pizza for his boss. But it came to life and went crazy and ran outside to a tank of liquid Krypton, but Mr. M caught it. Mr. M put it on fire and then put it out. Everyone was safe. The end.

The Arawa and Ataya Show.

- Why did the astronaut leave the party?

- He needed some space.

- Three, two, one..

Crabbing season. Every spring, red and black and yellow crabs swarm Cuba's Bay of Pigs for weeks at a time. The pincer-ed creatures take over the town. They travel from the forests to sea. This happens after the mating, after mating season. The migration causes chaos to local traffic, but its not a walk in the park for the crabs who face obstacles including swimming pools and cars.

- Hey Ataya.

- Yeah Arawa?

- What time did the dentist pick up his date?

- I don't know, Arawa. What time?

- Tooth hurty.

- Hey Ataya.

- Yeah?

- What kind of flowers make great friends?

- Rosebuds?

- Why did the boy wear the lampshade for a hat?

- Why?

- He felt lightheaded.

Here's some cool facts about the Haley 6 Research Station. At Haley, you need to keep a radio on you at all times so that people always know where you are. Whenever someone leaves the station, they must fill in a logbook. Eight models make up the research facility. Everybody at the base keeps backup

batteries for their headlamps in an inside pocket to keep them warm. Researchers eat a lot of chocolate bars for energy. They have to keep them to be stuck in a pocket to keep them from turning rock hard in the cold. Temperatures around the base drop as low as minus 44 degrees to minus 67 degrees Fahrenheit in the winter. Everybody has a P personal bag with a sleeping system that includes a thick wooden board to, to insulate a foam roll mat, a thick sheepskin rug and a down sleeping bag and liners for the sleeping bag.

The Arawa and Ataya Show.

- Hey Ataya, have you seen the new Super Mario Brothers movie?
- Yeah Arawa, as as matter of fact I actually have.
- What's your favourite song from it?
- I think my favourite song from the movie was the DK rap.
- Well how about we play that?
- That's a great idea. Let's play it.

Here, here, here we go,

So they're finally here, performing for you,

If you know the words you can join in too,

Put your hands together, if you want to clap, as we take you through, this monkey rap!

Huh!!

DK, Donkey Kong!!

He's the leader of the bunch, you know him well, he's finally back to kick some tail.

His Coconut Gun can fire in spurts, if he shoots ya, it's gonna hurt!

He's bigger, faster, and stronger too, he's the first member of the DK crew!

Huh!

DK, Donkey Kong!

DK, Donkey Kong is here!

This Kong's got style, so listen up dudes, she can shrink in size, to suit her mood,

She's quick and nimble when she needs to be, she can float through the air and climb up trees!

If you choose her, you'll not choose wrong, with a skip and a hop, she's one cool Kong!

Huh!

DK, Donkey Kong!

He has no style, he has no grace, this Kong has a funny face,

He can handstand when he needs to, and stretch his arms out, just for you,

inflate himself just like a balloon, this crazy Kong just digs this tune!

Huh!

DK, Donkey Kong!

DK, Donkey Kong is here!

He's back again and about time too, and this time he's in the mood,

He can fly real high with his jetpack on, with his pistols out, he's one tough Kong!

He'll make you smile when he plays his tune, but Kremlings beware 'cause he's after you!

Huh!

DK, Donkey Kong!

Huh!

Finally, he's here for you, it's the last member of the DK crew!

This Kong's so strong, it isn't funny, ban make a Kremling cry out for mummy,

can pick up a boulder with relative ease, makes crushing rocks seem such a breeze,

He may move slow, he can't jump high, but this Kong's one hell of a guy!

Huh!

C'mon Cranky, take it to the fridge!

W-w-w-walnuts, peanuts, pineapple smells, grapes, melons, oranges and coconut shells!

Ahh yeah!!

Walnuts, peanuts, pineapple smells, grapes, melons, oranges and coconut shells!

Ahh yeah!!

The Arawa and Ataya Show. Story Time! With Ataya.

The Arawa and Ataya Show. Story Time! With Ataya. This story is titled "Happy Birthday." I made it for my dad when I was about six years old. Let's read it, shall we? Once upon a time, there was a fox and an ant and a bear. They were best friends. They lived in Iraq. And the bees lived right beside their home. They ate all the jello and then felt very healthy. And then they ate the grapefruit and felt very healthy. And then they skied up to the mountains, and then they went to the bee's home in the mountains and swung from branches and flipped to a different house in the mountains. Crystal people brought them a crystal that did magic stuff in their brains. They went to the beach, and then they went to the beach again. Some people made a rocket ship for them. Then they flew the rocket ship to the mountain. The ant, the bear, and the fox talk at the beach about them trying to fight, but they're Jedis, and they don't fight, because they know fighting is hurting people. They went with the bees to another place, the forest, and they planted corn there. Their house is very shiny. They like to eat scissors and crayons. They go to Star Wars and then sneak up to the Stormtroopers and then run away when the Stormtroopers turn around to see if anyone was behind them. Then they ran to their bedroom, and then they woke up when the ship landed and ran into a change room and turned into Chewbacca. That's the end of the book. The end.

We interrupt this programme for a firebeat from Ataya, aka Lil Slamma.

[Music]

Now we're gonna listen to "Zombie," by Fela Kuti. I liked the song cuz but because the artist Fela Kuti is a nice guy.

[Music]

Zombie o, zombie (zombie o, zombie)

Zombie o, zombie (zombie o, zombie)

Zombie no go go, unless you tell 'em to go (zombie)

Zombie no go stop, unless you tell 'em to stop (zombie)

Zombie no go turn, unless you tell 'em to turn (zombie)

Zombie no go think, unless you tell 'em to think (zombie)

Zombie o, zombie (zombie o, zombie)

Zombie o, zombie (zombie o, zombie)

Zombie no go go, unless you tell 'em to go (zombie)

Zombie no go stop, unless you tell 'em to stop (zombie)

Zombie no go turn, unless you tell 'em to turn (zombie)

Zombie no go think, unless you tell 'em to think (zombie)

Zombie o, zombie (zombie o, zombie)

Zombie o, zombie (zombie o, zombie)

Tell them to go straight

A joro, jara, joro

No break, no job, no sense

A joro, jara, joro

Tell 'em to go kill

A joro, jara, joro

No break, no job, no sense

A joro, jara, joro

Tell them to go quench

A joro, jara, joro

No break, no job, no sense

A joro, jara, joro

Go and kill (joro, jaro, joro)

Go and die (joro, jaro, joro)

Go and quench (joro, jaro, joro)

Put 'em for reverse (joro, jaro, joro)

Go and quench (joro, jaro, joro)

Go and kill (joro, jaro, joro)

Go and die (joro, jaro, joro)

Put 'em for reverse (joro, jaro, joro)

Go and die (joro, jaro, joro)

Go and quench (joro, jaro, joro)

Go and kill (joro, jaro, joro)

Put 'em for reverse (joro, jaro, joro)

Uh-huh

Joro, jara, joro

Zombie wey na one way

Joro, jara, joro

Zombie wey na one way

Joro, jara, joro

Zombie wey na one way

Joro, jara, joro

Attention (zombie), quick march

Slow march (zombie), left turn

Right turn (zombie), about turn

Double up (zombie), salute

Open your hat (zombie), stand at ease

Fall in (zombie), fall out

Fall down (zombie), get ready

Attention (zombie), quick march

Slow march (zombie), left turn

Right turn (zombie), about turn

Double up (zombie), salute

Open your hat (zombie), stand at ease

Fall in (zombie), fall out

Halt (zombie)

Order

Whoa

Attention (zombie), quick march

Slow march (zombie), left turn

Right turn (zombie), about turn

Double up (zombie), salute

Open your hat (zombie), stand at ease

Fall in (zombie), fall out

Fall down (zombie), get ready

Attention (zombie), quick march

Slow march (zombie), left turn

Right turn (zombie), about turn

Double up (zombie), salute

Open your hat (zombie), stand at ease

Fall in (zombie), fall out

Fall down (zombie), get ready

Halt

Order

One more time, everybody

Attention (zombie), quick march

Slow march (zombie), left turn

Right turn (zombie), about turn

Double up (zombie), salute

Open your hat (zombie), stand at ease

Fall in (zombie), fall out

Fall down (zombie), get ready

Attention (zombie), quick march

Slow march (zombie), left turn

Right turn (zombie), about turn

Double up (zombie), salute

Open your hat (zombie), stand at ease

Fall in (zombie), fall out

Fall down (zombie), get ready

Halt

Order

Dismiss

Zombie, zombie

Zombie, zombie

Zombie, zombie

Zombie, zombie

Zombie, zombie

Zombie, zombie

Zombie, zombie

Zombie, zombie

Zombie, zombie

The Arawa and Ataya Show.

Who will lead us? Who will makeshift our mistakes into goodwill? Who will turn tombstones into spirits and souls with only pure hearts? The answer is in the collision between light and dark, and the mixture of life and death. No one is able to choose, not the best and not the worst. Not anyone. But maybe you can. The flame of the sky, fiery and immortal. It's a bird, not a plane. Phoenix is its name. So hot and bright, only the wisest and gifted children can see this mythical phenomenon, the amazing Phoenix, burning so bright. This song is called "Deep Forward" by Jr. T. I like this song because the artist who made it is from the place that I was born Toronto.

[Music]

The Arawa and Ataya Show.

Here's two facts about the moth. The moth can hear extremely high pitches, up to 300 kilohertz, higher than the frequency bats use to hunt. Bats use high-pitch squeaks to hunt moths and moths have evolved to hear those squeaks. So the escape of a moth is clear.

Now Arawa is going to sing "Godzilla" by Blue Oyster Cult. It's a song he likes very, very much because he loves Godzilla and King Kong.

Godzilla, Godzilla, history shows again and again when nature points out the folly of men. Godzilla
Godzilla Godzilla. Oh no. They say he's got to go. Go go Godzilla. Oh no, there goes Tokyo, go go
Godzilla. History shows again and again how nature points out the folly of men. Godzilla. History shows
again and again when nature points out the folly of men. Godzilla. History shows again and again when
nature points out the folly of men. Godzilla.

The Arawa and Ataya Show.

Now Ataya will showcase two extremely hard beats that will smack your ears awake.

The Arawa and Ataya Show.

- Hey Arawa.

- Yeah?

- What does a duck were to a wedding?

- I don't know.

- A duck-xedo.

- Hey Ataya.

- What?

- How did the zookeeper calm down the wild elephant?

- I don't know. How did he calm down the wild elephant?

- With a trunk-quilizer.

- Hey, Arawa.
- What?
- What does a Tyrannosaurus Rex eat while it's camping?
- I don't know.
- Dino s'mores.

- Hey Ataya.
- Yeah?
- Why were there lizards all over the bathroom wall?
- Why were lizards all over in the bathroom wall? I don't know.
- Because it had been reptiled.

Now, we're going to listen to T-Rex theme from *Supermario Odyssey*. I like this video game because it's packed with dinosaurs.

The Arawa and Ataya Show. Story Time! With Arawa. "Attack of the Beats", by Arawa. One night on Car Planet the blind scientist was studying Kylo's blood cells in his science lab. He wanted to help Kylo because his blood cells were getting weak. The blind scientist wanted the whole world to hear his beats. He helped Kylo get better but the scientist turned evil. He then made an army of boombox droids. The giant army defeated Kylo Ren. Then Darth Maul jailed the scientist. He defeated the army except for one boombox droid who was not evil. The scientist got defeated too. Darth Maul and all the humans on Earth celebrated, and Kylo came back to life. And they all lived happily ever after. The End.

[Music]

- Thanks for listening to The Arawa and Ataya Show.
- Hope you had a good time.
- Thanks to programsound for having us on.
- Thanks again, and I hope you had a great time listening to The Arawa and Ataya Show, with me and Arawa.

The Arawa and Ataya Show.

HOST:

Hello. Welcome back. I gotta get right into this. I'm sound asleep still on programsound.fm. This is algorithm pyjamas. Guys. I am not sure how this happened to me, but I've found myself. I'm on the very top of the largest cedar tree that I've ever seen. I don't know how I got up here. But more importantly, I don't know how I'm gonna get down. And I'm starting to panic. I can feel it in the pit of my stomach and I'm just scared that I'm gonna fall and never wake up again. I just, I don't know if I can fly. I don't want to try.

- You know what you should do?

- No, no, what, please, please tell me.

- Okay, if you connect the green parts with the brown part, and then just kind of like, just triangle it and then put like an H in between so that there's like the left direction west, and then there's like the bridge, right? Do you know what I mean? And then that way **

- Uh, I think no, I actually don't think you mean.

- ** you can just like, almost like, you know how like deodorant goes on? Like that. But then it's more of like, it's more of like a particle board wrapping motion. You know? So like **

- What? No, I don't.

- ** try that. And then I'm sure that will work.

- I'm sorry. I'm not following what you're saying.

- Um, oh, okay. Well, it's like, it's really easy. It's like, okay, you know how, you see how it's like, there's a frame, if you just coil that in like a Z formation, right?

- Frame?

- Just like step by step. Just like really slowly.

- No, I don't, I don't know, I can't. I don't...

- Exactly, yeah, that's what I'm trying to illuminate for you.

- No, I don't know what you're saying.

- Okay, I'll be, this is as clear as I can make it. Hopefully this works. Um, geez. So, okay, an apple, right? You have an apple?

- Yes. Yes.

- You have an orange.

- Yeah, orange. Okay. Yep.

- And then you have a mother and sixteen candles. Okay?

- No, see I've lost you.

- So what you want to do is if you take like a host, like a host or a hostess, doesn't matter which one, and then you combine them together so that there's like a circular, it's more like a circular shape, but more like as if you were just kind of like in a garage, so it's kind of different. It's more like, more like a diamond like, a suction cup kind of a feel.

- Please I just want to get down, I don't like this anymore.

- Yeah, but you could also, if that doesn't work, you could just zip zap zoopadoop dap.. [scattng]

- What? No, please...

- The static won't stop me. The static won't stop me.

- Wait, wait. Did you hear that?

- The static won't stop me.

- [scattng continues]

- Wait, shut up. Wait, I just heard it again, shut up!

- The static won't stop me. The static won't stop me. The static won't stop me. The static won't stop me.
The static won't stop me. The static won't stop me. The static won't stop me. The static won't stop me.
The static won't stop me. The static won't stop me.

- The... static... won't... stop... me. The static won't stop me! Still stuck up here. But I understood that.
I'm going to keep following what I understand. Just like the reveller in "Bacchamania" by Abigail Crispo
on [programsound.fm](https://www.programsound.fm).

- No, no, the static won't stop me.

Abigail Crispo - Bacchamania

- Hi, Abigail Crispo here. And before you listen to my piece, "Bacchamania," I'd like to take this time to acknowledge that this piece was created on and inspired by the beautiful landscapes that make up the stolen territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh nations, colloquially known as Vancouver. To learn more about which stolen lands you may be listening from, a helpful resource to get started is native-land.ca. A content warning to listeners that "Bacchamania" does contain some harsh language, as well as mentions of death, alcohol consumption, and cannibalism. So please listen at your own discretion. Thank you so much for tuning in, and I hope you enjoy.

- This is a reading of the play "Bacchamania," written by Abigail Crispo, with the voice talents of, in order of appearance, Kevin McCallum as narrator, Abigail Crispo as Reveller, Mackenzie Paige as Satyr, Kate Berg as Nymph, Jessica Wong as Broker, Victoria Kallergis as Baby, and Owen Pratt as Scholar. Musical elements by me, Sarah Sharon, recorded and edited by Abigail Crispo. Now sit back, relax, grab a glass of wine, and sit back even further, and enjoy the show.

- A forest. Dark, primordial. However, at the same time, there's a bright energy, like an old god is waking and ready to party. A bubbling atmosphere mingled with an eerie environment. Revellers slowly

start to appear as if summoned, awoken, pulled straight from the tree bark, from the mossy alcove, from a bird's nest, from their high-rise city apartment, from their desk job, from their bunk bed, from their senior care home.

- How long have you been called?

- Three times.

- A year.

- This is my second.

- When?

- Since my third birthday party.

- I've only just arrived.

- I was wondering when you'd show up.

- I was hoping I would be the only one.

- My call was very, very small, and scratchy.

- Is that so?

- Is that bad?

- It's simply so.

- You're wise.

- I'm five.

- I'm thirsty.

- You're tiring.

- I'm a bit...

- Yes?

- Trepidatious.

- So that is?

- That is so, so, so—

- R-r-r-ratifying?

- Pinecones and acorns and chestnuts and vines.
- How?
- Don't fret.
- It calls.
- Fairly politely, it seems, if I do say.
- You did.
- The wine will still be poured.
- I prefer gin.
- I'll drink yours.
- That isn't proper.
- It must be drunk.
- By all.
- What were your callings like?
- It nestled its way into my ears while I pitted plums for my plum cake and soon it—
- Was melodious and melancholic and stole the air from my lungs while I dove from—
- My ankles were more rooted than they had ever been, my temples caving—
- Inward, I felt a tremor that jostled my spleen, I felt like I was spilling over my—
- Shoulders slept for the first time in years. Tears pooled up my nostrils before—
- I cut my beetle cake into quarters when the candles burned blue and my socks felt like cinnamon.
- Oh, that was—
- Yes?
- Very much so.
- And it will be.
- Again?
- Of course!
- Never like that.

- No, never again.
- I see.
- It's okay if you don't.
- You will.
- You mostly already do.
- That's good then.
- Good now.
- Good later.
- Goodbye.
- Must you?
- Yes.
- Of course he must.
- Take care.
- Of course he must.
- To moss, to moss, to sun-soaked grapes. To rock, to lake we go.
- A farewell. The branches move. And kid baby is gone.
- When will he return?
- He won't.
- Not now.
- The call must be listened.
- But—
- But nothing.
- But everything.
- Butt! Hahahaha.
- Are you faint?
- It's quiet.

- You don't like it?
- It's like a blanket.
- Quilted.
- Scratchy.
- Like you're calling.
- It, yes, exactly. But—
- Growing, it's growing, it's growing and I taste its fruit.
- The fruit is ripe.
- Grapes.
- Soon.
- When are we drinking?
- Soon.
- We must wait.
- Despite my thirst.
- Despite my need to pee.
- Despite my distaste for wine.
- Fermentation is a beautiful process.
- Ah.
- Yes?
- Who will feed?
- Drink?
- Feed the grapes.
- Birth the wine.
- To flesh, to flesh, to earth-born grapes. To hill, to grave you go.
- You see?
- Indeed.

- It's me.
- So much for peeing.
- Wait.
- I hope you feel our toast.
- We'll see you in our cups.
- Another?
- It calls.
- It must be heeded.
- It can't be stopped.
- Farewell, farewell, farewell.
- A goodbye. The broker is absorbed by the soil and grape vines emerge. Wine seeps and drips and collects. Hands become prayerful in their collecting of wine drops, of ripened fruit, of leaves off the vine. They drink, slurp, suckle, sip, chug with reverence, hesitance, familiarity, longing, reckless abandon, gorging.
- Good for the throat.
- Honey.
- A wonderful vintage.
- They had funny little glasses.
- My mouth is dry.
- We should dance.
- My stomach sloshes.
- I can't see my vision.
- Visions are important.
- Prophetic.
- Purpley.
- Please stop moving.

- My eyes are wet.
- I wish to kiss you all.
- Fuck a grape.
- Suck the drink from the dirt.
- Suck the red from your lips.
- Suck the scent from your breath.
- Suck, I suck, I'm sucking.
- Scholar vomits.
- Sick, sick, sick, sick, suck, suck, suck, suck, suck, sick, sucks, so suck, sick. Fuck!
- Scholar keeps puking as chanting continues. Inhuman revelries. Scholar empties themselves until they lie in their own sick, motionless. The others dance over and around the corpse, leaping, laughing, screeching.
- Someone can't handle their liquor.
- Or handle the call.
- I love the call.
- It's fucking sick.
- I need a partner.
- I've just the one.
- The body is now a puppet, a prompt, something to be consumed.
- May I have this dance?
- How can I refuse?
- It's fucking sick.
- I'm joining too.
- Oh, the grace.
- How betrothed.
- My, the boys.

- Fucking sick.
- I'd like a nipple.
- Tear a chunk.
- You're vegetarian.
- Yes, but drunk.
- Our feast is here, our feast is here, our feast will soon be bones to burn.
- I'll eat the ears.
- I'll taste the toes.
- I'll lick the lips.
- Fucking sick.
- Our call to sup.
- Our call to snack.
- Our call to answer with forks and spoons.
- And what of you?
- Yes, what of you?
- Won't you partake?
- I may.
- You may.
- Enjoy it much too much. The taste, the power.
- Fucking sick.
- Shadowy, syrupy movements. Light emerges, enveloping the revellers. The body of the scholar is feasted on. Think Thanksgiving dinner. The table is set, bibs are put on, side dishes encircle the main dish. Cartoonish sharpening of the knife. Rubbing palms together and inhaling the aroma of a delicious spread. The light builds until everything is noisy with it. Growing and glowing until all disappear. The revellers revealed. Alone as light fades. They're a mess, and their bib is askew.

- My call was like an old television set. It crackled and pulled at my hair. My skin abuzz, my eyesight speckled with a million stars. Everything became, everything was static, including my family. They blurred and danced as I tried to hug them, to caress my sister's hair, to scratch my dog behind his ears. They fizzled and cracked, popping in and out of time until I blinked and they were replaced by the millions of stars in my eyes. The stars consumed all, everything, until I was them, and they were me. And my entire being was static and feedback and frizz and a droning electrical hum. And it was the hum that led me here. The hum pulled me and clawed my dress and guided my toes towards damp moss and aged bark and craggy cliffs. The call led me here, and here I danced. And here I drank. And here I feasted until I was sick, so sick, so fucking, sicking sick. It was delicious. I am delicious. Or at least I know I will be. That day will come, and my soul will descend. My sexy, juicy, succulent soul.

- Nymph, satyr, and harpy begin repeating motions from previous scenes while the reveller watches on, singing. Satyr's gorging on wine, nymph is decomposing, harpy is picking bones clean. They're in their most animalistic, rawest form. The forest seems to grow around them as energy builds. All are eventually swallowed up, until only the forest remains. Kid baby's silhouette is then seen, and their voice is heard.

- The call was answered when it called. And now the call is over. Over it will be, until again the call will call again. Over, and over, and over, and over, and over, again and again. Goodbye.

HOST:

- Welcome back. You're listening to programsound.fm. This is the algorithm pyjamas show, and I'm still Cara Eastcott, and I'm still cruising in my snoozin. Yup. Still asleep and still dreaming, still hooked up to the dream machine in a plant pot. Getting a lot of questions about how does this machine work. So let me take a stab at describing the technology. Full disclaimer, I am not a tech whiz at all, it's not my forte, but I know this much. So check it out. I'm in my bed sleeping, of course. And on my nightstand is a plant pot. And inside of this, buried in the bottom, beneath the soil of this pot is a machine. And attached to that are two connected but separate pothos vines. And so these two vine cables of pothos

plant are what is connected to either side of of my head. And each of these tentacles accesses a different part of my brain. So the first one is accessing my dreams. And the second one is accessing the commentary on the dreams. And so these two meet and mingle, I think is the technical term, in the bottom of the pot in the machine. And that converts it into a format that programsound.fm uses to output to all of you. So there you go, that's the best I can do to describe it. But it's just, I can't stop thinking and talking about it, because it's just remarkable. And I love this coming together of the plant world and the advancements in technology that we've made, and I think that's a really unique combination that you don't really see too much these days. So without further ado, why don't we put this baby into action and see what's going on in Z-Z land. Here we go. Z-Z-Zeeeeeee.

Oh, summer day in farm country nice. Ah, the corn fields and a tractor moving along a wheat field. Just fields for days. And a barn. Let's go into this massive barn and, oh, no way, folks. This is awesome. I stepped into this barn, and you know what, you know what it is? It's a basketball court. Well that's a first, basketball court in a barn yard? This is what dreams are made of. And the barn wall is lined with doors, closed doors, except one of them seems to be slightly open. Let's go over there and check it out. It's dark, looks like it's dark through there. It's just open very slightly. I want to go through but it seems like I'm stuck to the floor all the sudden. Like I'm frozen. Oh I do not like this feeling at all. What the. This is a daily task that I do every day, I walk through dozens of doors a day. [humming sound begins] Oh this is, this is infuriating. I can hear a little bit of a buzzing. I just want to go through the door.

[humming continues]

- There is no hack that will get you out of this. Things aren't really what they seem.

- [sung in overlapping harmony] It takes eighty years to open this door. It takes eighty years to open this door. It takes eighty years to open this door.

- Okay, eighty years to open this door I. Eighty years, that's a long time. I mean I don't really have the...

[humming begins again] Okay, we're looping. Well, it appears we're just in a loop. This is my least

favorite thing to be dreaming about. Not exactly a nightmare but it's close. How about we check out "Shut the Front Door," a horror comedy radio play by Alicia Plummer. It's about a group of Jamaican-Canadian Scarborough girls who do a girls' night in one night when there's a blackout. I'll catch you on the other side of this loop, hopefully. On programsound.fm.

Alicia Plummer - Shut the Front Door

- Welcome to the play reading of *Shut the Front Door*. My name is Alicia Plummer, and I am the playwright, and I'll be reading the stage directions.

- Hi, I'm Emerjade Simms, and I'll be reading for Jackie.

- Hi, my name is JD Leslie, and I'll be reading for Frankie.

- Hi, my name is Kaleisha Daly, and I'm reading for Melissa.

- Hi, my name is Rayes Clark Mendez, and I'll be reading for Janice.

- Before we start, here's a content warning. This play deals with mature subject matter, such as sexual content, the supernatural, substance use, gun violence, and mature language. Listener discretion is advised. Now without further ado, let's begin the play.

Friends Jackie, Janice, and Frankie are at Melissa's house during a blackout. The girls planned to get together for a girls' night a while back, so the power outage will not stop them. This short play deals with confronting secrets, jealousy, friendship, and the fear of the unknown. These women are in their early 20s, and they all grew up in Scarborough, and consider themselves Jamaican-Canadian and/or Caribbean-Canadian. The friends have moments of breaking into their Caribbean dialect and Toronto slang.

Shut the Front Door. Scene one.

The girls are gathered in the living room.

- This power outage sucks. It's so dark outside. Good thing Melissa keeps flashlights under her kitchen sink. Where's Melissa, anyway?

- She's upstairs getting ready.

- She's taking a while. I'm never here before her.

- Yeah, you are usually the last one to arrive to anything.

- Yes, but I always make an entrance. So here we are again. Just us girls.

- You really don't have to make an announcement every year.

- Wait a minute. Here's an announcement. Frankie has a boyfriend now. And it's Gus. Let's talk about him. We haven't had the chance to as a group. How long have you two been dating again?

- Well, we were pretty quiet for a while. But we have officially been dating for...

- Has anyone ever seen that episode of Beverly Hills 90210, when they play that game skeletons in the closet?

- Hush, gyal. Frankie was in the middle of a story.

- Oh, I know. Just because you have a boyfriend now Frankie doesn't mean we have to hear about him 24/7.

- Actually, I was interested in hearing more about—

- We're not asked to share stories just yet. The night just started, it's too soon for that. Frankie knows what's up.

- Not really.

- So, I know 90210 seems like just a bunch of white teens complaining, but their sleepover episode was wild. I remember the main characters played this game, where they asked each other specific questions. And all they had to do was reply to the questions as truthfully as possible. Since the environment is already kind of spooky, my question for each and every one of you is, what scares you?

- The fact that you watch 90210 scares me.
- I'm being serious.
- This all kind of sounds lame to me.
- Oh Francesca, the downer. It will be fun.
- Maybe we can just take this time to chill and catch up with each other.
- We can do that any time. Tell me your deepest fears.

Jackie throws popcorn at Janice.

- Hey!
- Talk the foolishness.
- Just for that you're going first. What's your deepest fear?
- Fine. Let's get this over with. I am scared of being stuck.
- Like in elevators, closets, a coffin? Care to elaborate?
- Like, stuck in this city. I was supposed to get away and go on vacation with my friend from college, but she decided to go with her ex-boyfriend, which was an entire mess on its own. Then I tried to escape with my sister, but of course I had a last minute scheduling conflict. And my sister and I didn't go anywhere. Well, that's not entirely true. She still went to New York with her uni friends, and I stayed here. As usual.
- That does sound suckish. But like what are you afraid of?
- I am afraid of being taped down to this city.
- That's it?
- What else can I say? I feel like I'm telling my life story here.
- Okay, well, thanks for sharing. I was just hoping I could get more dirt out of you, like real tea.
- You asked me what my fear is and I told you. It's not fireworks and gut wrenching. It's just life.
- Real talk, I get what you mean. I just thought there would be more interesting things to say. I mean, you could have asked us to travel with you, your real friends.
- With everyone's busy schedule? Yeah, right. Planning to sleepover was an entire mission.

- You mentioned your college friend ditched you for her ex-boyfriend? What happened?
- Uh uh, nope. I have said enough. I'm holding my tongue on this one. Frankie. Want to go next?
- Wait. Are you talking about Joanne?
- See an blind hear an deaf.
- Alright, miss Jackie. I guess I'll go next.
- Do you ever just think about horrible things? Like really, really horrible things? I do. I shouldn't. But I do all the time. Like, screaming at the top of my lungs in the audience of a theatre performance during a show. Or pushing someone down an escalator. Or pineapple on pizza. Okay, okay. I guess my fear is, I don't know, being forgotten? Or something happening to my family. The usual boring stuff.
- I see.
- But wait. I have to get into full detail about my fear, and this hoe says two sentences?
- No one asked for a novel, Jackie.
- You said elaborate.
- Fine. Care to elaborate, Frankie?
- Nope.
- Cool.
- Y'all annoy me.
- So it's Melissa's turn. Melissa?
- Maybe she fell asleep?
- Don't rush her. We can wait. But what scares you, Janice?
- I'd rather just wait for Mel to come downstairs before we continue the game. She's probably dying to join us. Melissa! It's so quiet up there.
- Are you stalling?
- No.
- Then tell us your deepest fear.
- Do I have to? There's no rush.

- Talk di tings, nah.
 - But what I have to say is kind of embarrassing.
 - Oh, just tell us.
 - Fine. Me and my boyfriend. We've never. He's never.
 - Wait. Janice. You're not a virgin, are you? That wouldn't make any sense because—
 - No, no. God no. Lou and I we, we get it on. But um, he's never, you know. He's never given me...
 - Flowers? Chocolates? I'm pretty sure I've seen you with chocolates. Those little Lindor ones.
 - No! He hasn't made me...
 - Come again?
 - Ooooooooooh.
 - He's popped your cherry. But he hasn't taken the stem off with his tongue.
 - I still feel like you have no idea what's going on.
 - An orgasm, Frankie.
 - Ah, oh! Of course. Right. Wait, I'm still confused. That's your fear, Janice?
 - The fear of him never giving me one.
 - How come everything always relates back to your pum pum?
 - Because I have needs, okay?
 - Give it some time. Have you two tried toys? And if that doesn't work, you can take a pillow and put it right under your lower back just like this.
- She demonstrates by gyrating her hips and almost elbows Janice.
- Geez. Thank you for this demonstration. Now chill out before you hurt someone.
 - Sorry. But try something new. Switch up the routine. You two can make it work.
 - You think?
 - Yeah. I have hopes for you and little Lou.
 - More like big Lou.
 - He's big, and can't even...

- Frankie!

- Okay, okay, sorry. Oh, but this reminds me of a story about Gus and I. This one time we—

- Oh no, the last thing I want to hear about is your sex life with Gus. Yikes. I mean, you can update us later. We're still in the middle of a game here.

- We haven't had sex yet.

- What are you like waiting until marriage? Because I have a feeling Gus moves fast with his women.

That's what Greg told me.

- Greg said that?

- Let's get back to the game now.

- When did Greg tell you this?

- Okay, he never said that. I just wanted to see your reaction. You're so easy to fool.

- Did I do something to annoy you? Why you acting some type of way?

- Whoa, we're all having fun here. I'm just making conversation. Let's get back to the game. And it looks like it's Melissa's turn.

The lights pop on for a couple seconds and then the house goes dark again. The lights in the house light up and Melissa is seen standing by the front door staring out the window away from the girls. And the house goes dark once again. The girls do not notice her.

- I'm going to go upstairs and see if Melissa has any more flashlights laying around.

- No need.

- Melissa! Welcome back to the party.

- You scared me half to death.

Melissa is still staring out the window.

- Come join us in the living room. We're sharing our deepest fears and it looks like you're up.

Melissa joins the girls and stares at the ground.

- You good?

- I saw something last week. Still don't really know if it was what it was. I was walking home from work. I got up at the bus stop. It was a little after midnight, and my phone was on 5 or 6%. I really wanted to go home as fast as possible. But the second I got off the bus, I heard a noise. Like something rustle in the bushes. I told myself it was probably an animal but I couldn't help but think, what if it's not? So I looked back over my shoulder as I walked straight down the path to my house. I looked back, over and over again, hoping nothing would pop out of the bushes. I started to feel anxious. I just wanted to go home. I finally turned the corner that led to my house at the end of the street. And as I turned the corner, I noticed the figure of a man, a tall man. He had an oversized t-shirt and baggy basketball shorts on, and he looked bald in the distance. I couldn't put a face to him. All I could see was a dark outline. I couldn't tell if he was walking towards me or away from me. So I kept my eyes fixated on him. As I got closer, I realized he was doing neither. He was swaying back and forth, right across from my house, from foot to foot, in the same spot. I found that odd. I mean, why just stay there? Why not move? Though he was just a dark figure to me, I could still get a sense that he was smiling at me. What were his intentions? So as I got closer, I focused my eyes on my house, but I could still see him in my peripheral vision, swaying. And then suddenly—

- Sorry. I just put my phone on silent. Continue.

- Suddenly, I found myself on the ground. I tripped over a rock. I immediately got up and looked back to see if the man was still there. He was gone. I didn't hear his footsteps. I did not see him go. It was deathly quiet that night. Why didn't I hear him go? He was right there. Then he disappeared. I think he took my sanity with him.

- Lord have mercy.

- Well, that's frickin terrifying.

- Yep, it is.

- When you tripped, did you fall on your knees?

- Yeah, I scraped them a bit down.

- Damn. Well, did this happen recently? Because your knees look extremely ashy today.

- Janice, come on now.
- The girl needs some lotion. I'm genuinely concerned.
- Anyway. What happened after you got home that night?
- I ran home and told my mom what I saw. And she told me I should have spun around three times before entering the house. You know how Caribbean parents can be very superstitious.
- Your mom kills me.
- Were you near a fence or a gate or something when you saw this creepy man?
- No. Well, yes. You all know my area. He was by some trees by a fence. He was pretty tall. There's no way he could have just. I think I saw ghost. At least that's what I told my family.

- A ghost? Like, a duppy? Um, I don't think so. It was late, your mind plays tricks on you in the dark. I'm just glad you're safe.
- Yeah. Sounds like a eediat bwoy. He might have hopped the fence or even just hid behind a bush right after you saw him.
- Yeah, I'm with Jackie on this. Think about it. It was probably some waste yute tryna act big.
- He was like six feet tall. Does that sound like a yute to you?
- Maybe it wasn't a yute, but there's a good chance it was some stupid drunk guy bored out of his mind trying to kidnap you. That's not much of a shock considering where you live. There was someone getting gunned down there last week, um. What's his name?
- Forget it.
- What?
- Janice, that's not funny. Just because you moved to the nicer parts of the city doesn't mean you're better than any of us.
- Relax, my gyal, that has nothing to do with this.
- Thanks for your insight.
- So I'm being honest, and now you're mad?

- It's done. We're not talking about this anymore.

- Hey, Melissa. Come on.

Melissa heads into the kitchen, and Janice follows.

Scene two.

- Sorry. That was stupid of me to say. Sometimes I just say things. They spill out, and. That creep can't hurt you. He's gone now, okay? It's over.

- Okay.

- Fear can only ruin your life if you let it.

- I'm sorry. I'm not trying to bring the party down.

- You're fine. But you look like you could use a hug right about now. Come here.

- No, thanks. I'm not much of a hugger.

- Since when? Nevermind. None of my business.

- I'm going to change out of this skirt and throw on some jeans.

Jackie and Frankie enter the kitchen just as she leaves.

- Where are you going?

- I'll be right back.

Melissa exits.

- What did we miss?

- I calmed her down. She's just heading upstairs to change into something that won't put her ashy knees to shame.

- Janice.

- She'll be good. She just needs a minute. We had a heart to heart.

- Whatever you said to her, I hope it worked. I think Mel is really freaked out.

- I mean, of course she is. She almost got attacked.

- She'll be okay. She just needs to relax a bit.
- But the idea of a duppy talking her? That's kind of funny.
- It's so bizarre, it's laughable.
- Didn't you just give her a pep talk? And now you're turning on her?
- Come on, Jackie. Janice is right. The gyal thinks she seen a duppy!
- You two are unbelievable. I'm going to go check on her.

Jackie heads upstairs to check on Mel.

Scene three.

Frankie and Janice are left alone in the kitchen.

- This night is not going how I expected it to go.
- Maybe we should go to your place next time.
- Nah, I don't want you guys to come out of your way to subway down to the west end.
- Well, you and Bianca must love your new apartment.
- It's a bit on the pricey side, but it is pretty great.
- That's good. How is Bianca anyway? I'm surprised you didn't invite her.
- To girls night? No. This is just for the OGs.
- Yeah. The OGs. So let me tell you about my new relationship with Gus. I want to tell you details. Jackie and Melissa already know the basics of how it happened. But I hadn't had the time to update you. It's almost like you've been avoiding the conversation.
- I don't want to hear details.
- Oh come on. When was the last time we actually talked?
- No. I actually don't want to hear any details at all. You have to understand. I've known you for ten years, and I've known him for eight. I'll just need time to process this.

- Are you happy for me though?
- I need time.
- I'm not following? What do you need time for?
- It's weird, okay?
- Why? Why is this weird? You're one of my closest friends. I thought you'd be happy for me.
- You two are like a sister and a brother to me. It's incest.
- What is wrong with you? What are you afraid of?
- Incest.
- Janice. Gus and I are. Gus and I. Gus and I are dating. Do you have a crush on Gus or something?
Janice?
- We hooked up in high school. It wasn't a big deal.
- When?
- After his prom. And then a couple more times after that. Don't be mad.
- I can't believe you never told me this.
- It never came up. But you know, it's wrong that you're with him now. That completely goes against girl code.
- Yuh chat too damn much, eh? You hooked up with him five years ago, and you decide to tell me now, after we're already together? I'm not going to break up with him a month into a relationship because you have some weird attachment issues. I'm going to take a walk.
- Can you at least wait until the power comes back on before you storm off?
- No.
- Yuh bright. What do I tell the others?
- Tell them whatever you want. I don't care. Mi cyaan tek di baddaration.
- Frankie, Janice!
- I was just leaving.
- Then leave.

- Come get your friend, eh?
- Can the both of you chill out? Y'all act like pickney!
- She started it.
- Why are you still here?
- Top yuh nize! Melissa is gone.
- I thought you went upstairs to go check on her.
- I did. I couldn't find her anywhere.
- What do you mean she's gone?
- I checked each room upstairs, and she just disappeared.
- That doesn't make any sense.
- Maybe she snuck out her bedroom window?
- I guess she was really upset.
- I told you!
- Calm down. We'll find her. I'll check the washrooms. Jackie, check the kitchen. Janice, stay in the living room in case she shows up.
- Okay.
- Wait, why don't I just call her?
- I tried. No answer.
- Maybe she just through the backyard.
- I'll check there too.
- No, I should go. Jackie, you've already checked all of upstairs. It's the least I can do. You just stick to the kitchen only.
- What if she's hurt? She seemed so down tonight.
- Maybe she just wanted some fresh air. She's probably fine. Don't get yourself worked up.
- Or maybe she fell asleep, upstairs?

- I would have seen her. I know it's dark, but my phone light would have picked up on her sleeping somewhere.

- Well, if she left, she couldn't have gone far in a blackout. I'll start checking the washrooms now.

- And I'll stay here.

- Teamwork makes the dream work.

- Don't be cheesy.

- I'm just happy you two aren't at each other's throats anymore. What was that all about, anyway?

- I'm not getting into it.

- Neither am I.

- Forget I asked.

- Hello?

- Melissa?

- Melissa?

- Where were you?

- Oh, thank goodness you're all here. I forgot to message the group chat that I'd be a little late. Got stuck at work sorting things out during the power outage. Glad you found my key under the mat.

- Melissa, I know you might be still mad at me, but you've proved your point. You don't have to lie about where you've been.

- I'm sorry. I was a jerk earlier. I should have taken your story more seriously.

- Huh?

- Cute shorts you got there. Hey! You moisturized your knees. They look a lot better.

- Thanks?

- So where were you, on the roof?

- Is this some sort of inside joke that I'm not gonna get?

- Melissa, stop playing around. You were just upstairs, you told us about a duppy you saw late at night that was right across from your house.

- Yeah, Melissa, you terrified the hell out of us with that story, too.
- You were laughing about it.
- So were you.
- We're just happy you're okay. We're fine if you don't want to talk about it ever again.
- Are you all high or something? Because you're not making any sense.
- You have no idea what we're talking about?
- No. I just got home from work, Jacks. I was never here. Now, are we still doing the sleepover or what?
- You swear that you weren't here earlier?
- I just walked in the door. I was worried about tonight. I didn't think you'd all still want to hang out in this blackout. But now I'm starting to think that someone else is in this house besides us.
- If there's a robber in here, I'm calling 911.
- I think we're the only people here.
- Hey, buddy! We'll get real Scarborough on you real quick eh?
- Yeah, you're right. No one else is here. There's no need to be so spooked.
- But, we could have sworn you were here.
- Nope. But it's late. Maybe you imagined it, but.
- What?
- This is starting to remind me of something. My dad and my brother. Nevermind, it's stupid.
- Go on.
- The guys in my family said they saw a young girl who looked identical to me a couple years back. I think it was when I was 10. They saw her in the backyard, late at night. They were convinced it was me and told me to go back to bed. They said her knees were all scraped up, and she kept her distance. When my brother went to check my bedroom, I was already fast asleep. He ran downstairs to tell my dad and the girl in the backyard was gone.
- That, that's really creepy.

- Mhmm. It happened so long ago. We never brought it up again. But I'm sure it was just a little girl who temporarily ran away from home or something.

- Or, what if it was a—

- A duppy?

- Oh. What's the problem? You girls look like you've just seen a ghost.

The End.

Your mind plays tricks on you. Your mind plays tricks on you. I said your mind plays tricks on us. Your mind plays tricks on you. Look with those eyes are you surprised with what you see. Look with those eyes, do you still believe what you believe? Your mind plays tricks on you. Your mind plays tricks on you. I said your mind plays tricks on you. Your mind plays tricks on you. Can you hear me out? Can you hear me now? Can you hear me loud when I roll? Are you listening? Or are you visiting another source? You better ask for remorse because your mind plays tricks on you. Your mind plays tricks on you. I said your mind plays tricks on you. Your mind plays tricks on you.

HOST:

- Welcome you're listening to algorithm pyjamas on programsound.fm. If you don't know the deal, we'll be streamin in my dreamin. Yes, that's right, I'm currently hooked up to this fabulous technology which allows you to access my split mind. So while I'm dreaming, I'm able to broadcast to you all, live, what's happening inside my dream scape. They thought it couldn't be done, but here we are. I've been sleeping for about an hour forty-five and I'm feeling like I'm succumbing deeper into my pillow. And I just want to say something to all of you out there. Dream on.

And here we are, I'm on a bench in a park. It's a cloudy day. It just rained, and I'm admiring the vibrant green leaves on the trees, and the green of the grass. It's like the leaves and grass are showing off,

showing out, and I'm here for it. I admire it. You go, green leaves. I want to be like you. I want to do that. An old man is approaching me. He's got white grey hair, moustache, and a big beard, bags under his eyes, and a face that's been through a lot of stuff. Rings are covered over all his fingers. He's got this light black bubble coat and dark blue jeans. And a red scarf tied wrapped around his waist. I like his style. He could be the last vagabond alive. He's coming toward me and wants to sit down beside me. Even though there's one, two, there's twelve other benches he could be sitting on. But I don't mind, I motion for him to sit.

- [laughter] Filled up my card. Three free rides. I wonder if it will get me to halfway across the city.

- Big City.

- I used to live in City Hall.

- Oh yeah?

- Someone stole my cart.

- Oh no.

- Yeah, I'm gonna sue them.

- Okay. Yeah.

- Yeah, I'm gonna sue them.

- Yeah, you should sue them.

- My jacket's waterproof. I mean, that's gotta count for something.

- You know, I noticed your jacket earlier. It's pretty cool. I like it.

- Empire. Is this empire?

- Uh, like the street or...

- Empire!

- ... in a poetic sense?

- Don't try to make it perfect.

- Yes, you got me.

- Don't try to make it perfect.

- Totally. I do try to do that.

- [laughter, turns into coughing]

- This guy, he's on his own time. I just study him. I can't make out exactly what he's talking about, but I know he does. I want to be him. I want to achieve his pace, and his autonomy.

- You're just a little baby, some day you'll pop off like the leaves, and they'll call me bone daddy. But first "Wisdom of the Day" by Jacqui du Toit.

Jacqui Du Toit - Social Weaver Podcast EP1, Artur

Hello, everyone, and welcome to the Social Weaver podcast. My name is Jacqui Du Toit, and I am your host, your storyteller of the day. For today I'm going to share with you the magical tale of the Social Weaver and what its purpose was. And then we're going to meet some wise young souls who are going to share with us their wisdom of the day. Are you ready? Are you ready for a beautiful story? Yes. Then let's begin with our magic words. Once upon a time...

The Social Weaver is a beautiful, tiny little bird found in the Northern Cape, a province in the southern regions of Africa. The bird is tiny with a sharp beak. And the bird is known for building the largest nests in the world. These nests are built in acacia trees or on telephone poles that can sometimes house over 100 different species of birds, as well as some predators. These birds are known for bringing community and weaving together a safe space for other birds to come in and find a home and a community. It was through this bird that I was inspired to also have the tattoo of the bird on my back. Being someone who loves to travel and spread her wings and fly, I saw myself as this little Social Weaver bird. And through the arts, and what I do in the art of storytelling, I found ways to build community with other little birds who have also been traveling around the world seeking community.

And it was through the art of storytelling that helped me weave these beautiful stories together. I do hope that you enjoy the next few minutes in listening to these wonderful stories as much as what I did. Now, it's time for our first story. I hope you enjoy.

- Yeah, so, my name is Artur, I'm 12 years old. I'm about to thirteen. I'm from Ukraine. I moved here like six month ago, because me and my mom were running from war. It's hard to think about philosophy of life when things like that are going on. But I'm trying my best to stay calm and like, practice my mental health, because that's really what matters to me.

- And how you practicing your mental health?

- So like, each morning, I start with saying like, saying to myself what things I'm proud of, like, and what do I enjoy my life, what I'm like, grateful for. Usually, I say like, I'm healthy, I have family, I have friends. I have place to live, I have enough money to buy food. I'm like not a person in need.

- And what brings you joy?

- Well, most of it is being with my family and doing what I love.

- What is that?

- Well, playing games with my friends, going out for walks. Just doing basic stuff that makes me happy.

- I love your philosophy of life. And how do you find living in Canada in the past six months? How has it been for you?

- It was really good. Initially I feel like I want to go back to Ukraine.

- You want to go back?

- No, not really.

- Oh okay. Oh, you said you don't want to go back. Nice. And I see you sitting here by the river enjoying the river. How are you feeling right now?

- I feeling really happy because I can say stuff like that.

- Nice. Nice. And if you have any words of wisdom you'd like to pass on to someone, what would it be?

- I'm basically grateful for every person, like persons who are good to me, and ones who are bad to me. Because when someone is good to me, it's, they make me feel really nice. But if someone is bad to me, they're example to me like, what I don't have to be, and what people can be.

- That is so beautiful, and so wise. Thank you. Thank you for sharing. That was lovely.

- Thank you so much.

- Thank you for being on the podcast.

HOST:

- Welcome back. I'm in a deep slumber here on algorithm pyjamas on programsound.fm. I'm Cara Eastcott. Look, I'm in front of the same old cedar tree from a few dream sequences ago. You may have remembered I was stuck on top of it with no way down. Well I'm back here, but this time I'm not stuck on top of it, I'm at the base. But I'm feeling kind of stuck in a different kind of [sneeze] excuse me, feeling stuck in a different kind of way. [sneeze] Just feeling very low energy, tired, unmotivated.

- Eh. What's wrong with you? You allergic to me or something?

- Yes, I think I am.

- Why? Are you allergic to male trees?

- What? You're a male.

- Yeah, I am.

- Okay, that's fine. More like alpha male.

- What'd you call me?

- Nothing, sorry. I just didn't know trees had genders.

- Well, we do but not in the same stupid way you humans have it. You guys like to project your way of life onto everything.

- Hey, look, man, I agree with you. I wasn't trying to.

- What do I look like to you, huh?

- You look like a tree, sir.

- Yeah, I'm a tree. I'm a tree. What are you? Huh? Just a fucking person? Eh, you people. You think you know so much stuff but you don't know anything. I'm a fuckin tree, okay? You're not a tree. I'm a tree. Look at me. I'm only 80 years old, but I'm strong. See that stump over there? That was an 800-year-old friend of mine in the prime of her life, and you people come around you chop her down, just to make your stupid cedar shakes for your stupid houses. Think you know everything but you don't.

- I'm so sorry. That's terrible. [sneeze] And no, I don't actually think that I know everything. That's my problem, I feel like I've just been bombing for my whole...

- Yeah? Well, you know what? Boohoo, okay? Boo-frickin-hoo, I don't want to hear your stupid sob story. Besides, the bombs are the seeds, all right? Don't ever forget it. Stop feeling sorry for yourself and go do something. Go take care of someone else other than yourself for once. Look. I'm gonna help you out because I'm sick and tired of hearing about your crap.

- [sneeze] Okay, thanks. How are you gonna help me?

- What I want you to do is wrap your arms around me, and an opening will appear at the base of my trunk. Just go in there and follow it down. As deep as you can go. You'll see. You'll see how things really work under there.

- Hey, thanks. Thank you. I actually feel like that's exactly what I need right now. You're like a low key sensitive dad.

- No, fuck that. I'm not a sensitive dad.

- Well, I've got my arms wrapped around you. And I can feel you hugging me back.

- Yeah, whatever. You ready?

- Yeah, I'm ready. If you have time, you should listen to the *Sensitive Dadz* podcast with Colin Doyle and Benj Tabah. I think you'd like it.

- Yeah? And where can I check that out?

- On programmedsound.fm.

Colin Doyle & Benj Tabah - Sensitive Dadz

- Sensitive dad, sensitive dad, feeling kind of rad, he's a sensitive dad.

- Yeah, see.

- Yeah, we can't afford a jingle. But you know, should this go on further, which we hope that it does, maybe we can find someone. So, listener, if you're out there and you want to do a jingle.

- Do we hope that it does?

- Yes, of course we do.

- Oh, okay.

- This is our first of hopefully many. My name is Colin Doyle, and with me as always for the first time, is...

- Hi, I'm Benj.

- And this is our podcast *Sensitive Dadz*.

- That was a good jingle, Colin. I'm proud of you. I know that took many and many weeks of writing and, you know, dreaming that jingle up. So nicely done.

- Yeah, thanks.

- Yeah.

- So I, I've known you now, Benj, for... 20 plus years? We met at York University's Theatre Acting Program.

- It was not love at first sight.

- Uh, says you, but don't speak for me, please. Since then you've gone on to father many children, or at least three that we know of for sure. Coming out the gate hot with twins at 25. And a little bit later, one more. But yeah, man, I've been watching you as a dad for a while and kind of marvelling at it. And I was hoping to talk to you about it and a few things else as we move forward on this.

- All right, yeah. And I've known Colin for the same amount of time as he's known me, pretty much. And Colin's a lovely guy. We're both in our, kind of, you know, early to mid 40s. Closer to mid, I won't lie.

- But I play younger, for those casting directors that are listening.

- Colin plays younger, yeah, so you can cast him in his like, late 30s. If you're casting that kind of character. Dorky, late 30s.

- Thank you.

- And yeah, so we've, we're both dads. Colin's, Colin just had a child. So we're at very different places in our journeys of being dads, and it's been really fun to watch, and fun to watch Colin get to this place in his life. We're super close, we talk very regularly. It's a little weird sometimes how much we talk, but it's a gift to have that kind of friendship. So we thought this would be a fun thing to try and explore fatherhood and what being a sensitive dad is really all about. So.

- Okay, Benj. So we called this podcast *Sensitive Dadz*. Um, I'm not, yeah, what is, so what is, what does that, when you hear that what does that, what is being a sensitive dad mean to you? What does hearing sensitive dad mean to you?

- What does sensitive dad mean to me. It is, I'd say it's mostly about being present for your kid. It's mostly about being, having empathy. Listening. Yeah, I think those are the big things for me. And, of course, it's been a long road for me. And that changes. That changes depending on where your kid's at in their life. But for me, I think if I try and boil it down to one or two key kind of ideas, it's about being present and being empathetic. Understanding where your kid's at and trying to just be there for them in that moment. Yeah.

- So when you hear that, when you hear the word sensitive, there's no negative connotations for you. What you've described sounds like a pretty, pretty nice thing and a nice, bother to be. I mean, is it, yeah. Is it possible that some people hear sensitive dad, and I was like, oh, that's, there's no way I want to be that. Sensitive is weak, sensitive is crying.

- I mean, yeah, absolutely. There's I think, I think lots of people who probably add some negative connotation to that word. And I, you know, if I think about, that, my dad, and who I grew up with as a

model as a father figure, sensitive bro's probably not the first word that comes to mind. So I think, you know, we'll dive into that a bit more. That kind of generational look. But yeah, there's no doubt not everyone's going to agree. And I'm not saying that that's the right way to be a father either. It's just the way I have tried, and I think I'm still trying. It certainly doesn't change. It doesn't go away. It just evolves. The way I've tried to be a dad, but. But what about you? I mean, I know for you, fatherhood is a very new thing. Five months in you're, I mean, I think I was just trying to survive. I had twins at the time, but. You know, it's a cakewalk for you guys. Two 45 year olds and a baby.

- Okay, let's, first of all, my wife is not 45, so we're gonna scrap that from the podcast. And sexually...

- No, no, she's 30. Of course.

- ... I'm not 25 either. So we'll scrap that from the podcast part too. So we'll just, we'll just edit that out as they do in the biz.

- Let's cut that part. So it's not about age or ease of parenting, but what do you think, you know, for you going into being a parent and leaning into it now, are you, do you feel like you are a sensitive dad yet? Is that something that you want to be? And also, are you expected to be that like, is that, you know, yeah.

- A lot of big things there for sure. I mean, I think part of the hope, from this podcast, and with you with me on this is to kind of answer that for myself, but also asking what, what does that mean. I think I want to be, and I'm curious if other people have wanted to be and tried and not, or what influences someone in doing that. But certainly, that's the goal. And there's so much, so many influences, so much content, being social media, or the media, or books, or things like that, that are kind of telling you what the best way to be is. But I also find with the internet, whatever idea you might have, that you want to put forward as a parent, you can go out and find that and be validated from that. Whether it's right or wrong.

- Yeah. Yeah. Truth's social, baby.

- Hashtag truth's social.

- That's where I go for my info.

- That's, that's what I'm striving for, and hopefully wanting to be, but I'm very curious what that means and how to get there. I hope that answers your question. It was a good one.

- Well, yeah, I mean, of course. But for you right now, are you finding that you're able to even think about that? Or are you just in survival mode? And kind of finding your feet on being a dad?

- Well, you're right, I didn't have two kids out of the gate. And my partner and I definitely have been thinking a lot about you guys and those people that do have two, three, four, or five more. But yeah, yeah, as you're saying, I'm just trying to be present. Okay, Benj, before, I'm thinking before we can, you know, look forward into the future, or even in the present, as we're trying to stay present, I want to look back. And by that, I mean, I'm going to have a chat with my dad in this about his influences, and what, if and what he's ever considered a sensitive dad to be, and what he took from his dad, and then passed on, either to me or didn't want to pass on to me, things like that.

- Yeah. I think it's critical, you know, these are the dads that influenced us, that shaped us that we, they were our models. And yeah, I hear all kinds of, you know, people who either reject that model and want to do something totally different, and want to be a different kind of parent. And some people who, that's, that, they love the dad figure they had and that's who they want to be. So yeah, I think we have to look back for sure.

- And what about you, like, when you think about your dad's influence, you're a brother, to four other brothers?

- Yeah.

- So all dudes.

- Yeah, we had, well really interesting, right? Like, yeah, I mean, same parents, but we kind of had, a bit of a split family. There was three, three of us were close in age, and then 10 years later, my brother, my parents had two more, two more kids. And so yeah, we're five boys, four of whom are now parents. So yeah, hoping to chat with one of my brothers as well. About his, him as a dad in a younger generation that's coming up. But yeah, also my dad passed away a few years ago. So we'll be talking about him as

well, and his influence on all of us. Because, yeah, it looms large, you know, a dad's presence, I think. Especially for a son. So yeah.

- Okay, so hi.

- We'll use your alias, "Dad."

- Okay.

- We won't say whose dad you are, maybe it's mine, but yeah. I wanted to ask you a few questions for this podcast that we're calling *Sensitive Dadz*. In terms of, what does that mean? So I guess my first question would be, when you hear the term sensitive dad, what does that mean to you, if anything at all?

- Well, it's, it kind of has multiple meanings when I hear the term sensitive dad. Both positive and negative. I think the current term sensitive dad would land with me as a dad who is not constricted by the, what's the term, the sort of, the notion of what a man is supposed to be. A man who happens to be a dad. So, sensitive dad, somebody who listens, somebody who's empathetic, somebody who can shed a tear and not be embarrassed to let their child see that. I think that's the best kind of notion of what a sensitive dad is when I hear that term. Unfortunately, the term sensitive dad was, or sensitive male, even, but certainly dad, was kind of a pejorative, strangely enough, used by my mother, not my father, that you could be accused of being too sensitive, as a male. And that was not a good thing. There was no specifics around that other than just a general sense that your life would be more difficult, as a male, if you were sensitive. So I was certainly raised in that environment. And certainly, in choosing the background that I did, of entering the theatre, and being an actor, and all those kind of things, there was great fear for me, by my mother, in terms of being too sensitive in the world in which we were living. So those are the two things that come to mind. One is kind of the pejorative about, that's not a good thing. And raised in, in an environment where that was, not stressed, but came up enough times for me to remember.

- Okay.

- And the notion of what it is to be a sensitive dad in 2023 is a positive. It was less wanting to be a sensitive dad than not wanting to repeat the way in which I was raised. Although, many years later, I came to understand why my parents were the way that they were. And they were children of the Depression. And so, which was not a fun time.

- Hence the name.

- Hence the name. And so, to be weak in any way, shape, or form, was not a good thing. There was not much empathy in the Depression. That was still a time where if you were unemployed, it's because you know, you weren't really up to any good as a, as a human being, and certainly as a worker. So it was more, not a rejection of my parents, but just saying, what are all the things that I was missing? Or I felt that I missed as a child? And just saying, I don't want to duplicate.

- Off of your description of sensitive dad at the very beginning, would you say that you achieved that? That you, that you felt you were that? That, in fact where we are with that terminology and that idea is, may be catching up to you? Were you a trailblazer sensitive dad? Or do you think you came around to it? Still an influence from the past, and?

- Not a trailblazer, but certainly in the minority. And certainly not without defects that I didn't, that I didn't recognize until way into being a dad and after finishing being a dad, from a standpoint of having children living in the house and being subject to them.

- Because you're still a dad now. You've repaired three things at my house, because I'm too sensitive to touch tools, but that's for a later podcast.

- No, no, that's about what gets passed along.

- Oh.

- That's not about people's abilities or inabilities. That's again, necessity, you know, for people of the Depression. You know, if you could do for yourself, you certainly weren't going to call a plumber, you know, and have that expense if you could do something for yourself. So consequently, that was also kind of passed along. Don't pay anybody to do anything that you could learn how to do for yourself.

- Listener, one of my favorite things that my dad did to me recently when I asked about a repair was, my dad referred me to a YouTube video. You haven't lived until you've achieved that, listener. When your dad goes, why don't you just look it up on YouTube? I didn't even think my dad knew what YouTube was. If you could have done things differently for, in terms of your own dad-dom, your own fatherhood...

- Yeah.

- ...is there stuff that you would have liked to have done differently? Or is there things that you wish you could have, um, yeah, maybe not specifics, but was there anything that you felt like, oh, I wish I could have done that again, or done that differently?

- The major thing I've learned over over time is, you know, I talk too much and listen too little. I didn't listen enough. Talked past the point where you or your brother in any given situation, where what I was saying was helpful. As opposed to, I just have to, as opposed to you or your brother just having to wait till I was finished talking. Because it was obviously, when I reflect on it, it was about me trying to be a better dad than I'd experienced. But I wasn't, I was doing it for me, and I wasn't listening enough or looking to see I've said enough, they've had enough information, or they're overwhelmed, stop talking Martin. And, and ask for feedback from you guys.

- That's what makes you such a great interview.

- You pose a question and let it roll for an hour, yeah.

- That was super cool. Really nice to hear your dad. I love Martin. So what was really interesting, though, is that, you know, we introduced this concept of generations and generational parenting. And so your dad talked about how he reacted as a father, based on what he got from his dad, who was a dad during the Depression, or grew up in the Depression. So I'm going to ask you the same thing. Are you now reacting to the parenting you got, and trying to be a different dad, or trying to be a similar dad?

- Yeah, man, I mean, I think that's where the genesis of this podcast and this question is. It's interesting my dad saying at the end about one of the things that he wanted to do, if he would, if he could do it differently, would be the kind of, ask questions and listen more, as opposed to talk more. And I'm a

talker, hence the podcast. So that's definitely a thing that I'm thinking about. Because I want to come from a place of curiosity, as opposed to trying to do everything to make my kid's life easier, or answer everything, or just, because there's a bit of control in that, there's a bit of overhelping, there's a bit of, it's yeah. My hope would be that, to support her voice and listen to her voice, more so than my own.

- Yeah, it makes a lot of sense. You know, you mentioned control. And I think that comes into it a lot when you get a little too involved, or you want to really guide the experience a little bit too much. Is it really for the kid? Or is it really for the parent, you know? So it's an interesting point. Well, I think next we'll chat with my my brother, who's kind of a generation after us. And so he's coming up at a bit of a different time, and we'll see what he has to say. All right, so I'm here with my little bro. Theo Taba, who's 10 years younger than me. So hi, Theo, welcome to the show.

- What's up, Benj? How's it going, man?

- Good, good. Really, pleasure to have you here. We wanted to get, you know, dads who had, were at a different place in their lives, not only with the age of the kids they've got, but also you're a different generation. You know, I'm pushing 44, 45 or whatever. And you're, you know, you're a solid 10 years younger. So really, I think that is generational. You came up at a different time. And you've got a beautiful young daughter. Why don't you tell us a bit about her?

- Sure. I've been with my wife for almost 18 years now. As a wife, closing in on seven. And we had Stevie in 2019. She's named after our dad. And yeah, she's world class, man. I love her more than anything and, the goods, the bads, the uglies, everything is just fantastic.

- That's awesome. Yeah, she's a special kid. I love being around you guys. I love her. I love seeing her and where she's at. It's such a great age too, that, it's just so much play. And they're, there, the next couple of years, I think, and it's fun to watch you being a dad, too. You know, I think it's surprising, a little bit. I see you really engaged with her, I see playing, and I guess I maybe didn't see that coming in some ways. So it's been, yeah, you're doing a good job man. It's nice to watch. Yeah, first question has to be, you know, what is a sensitive dad? When you hear that, what's the connotation, what does that mean to you?

- Yeah, to me sensitive is, thanks for that, by the way, I learned from the best, shout out. To me sensitive means in touch with, in some way, shape or form. And I think so sensitive dad is in touch with my own feelings and what's going on, and especially with Stevie's, and my kids, essentially. So, what's going on with her? What does she need right now? What is she feeling? What's her ability to express herself? And then how can I be in touch with that, be empathetic, and then show up how I need to show up?

- Yeah, I think my flinch, my initial definition was very similar. Empathy was front and centre for sure. And do you feel like that's an expectation of dads in your generation and today? Do you have to be that kind of dad?

- Yeah, I don't know. I, to be honest, I've never thought about it from a societal perspective of like, what's expected of me. It's definitely not the 50s Dad who, you know, wakes up early, goes to work, comes back, expects a hot supper, leaves the kids with the, you know, that, it's not that, that's not the expectation. But I don't know if it's to be a sensitive dad. I think it's to be a present dad. I think it's to be one that shows up. And I think, for me the most, expectations that matter most are, one, my own, but really, more importantly, Andrea, my wife's, and even Stevie's expectations, and what she might expect of me.

- That's interesting. So, you feel like Stevie, at her age, has expectations of you as a father figure? Or, as a father, you know, in that role?

- I think based on the behaviours, and based on the experiences that we've shared over the last now, almost four years, she's so sharp, that I think she has developed a set of expectations of what will happen in certain situations, and when I am meant to be present, how I'm meant to show up, where I'm supposed to draw lines, etc, etc.. So yeah, I do think she does have those.

- But you're, you've conditioned her to know where those lines are. Like, it's an interesting concept, this idea that maybe, you know, when kids come into this world that they, their expectation is just full on.

Love all the time, presents all the time. I'm here, you take care of me. And that they're slowly kind of trained out of that. I wonder if that's the case.

- It probably is. And I think, as long as like, again, I'm a proponent of explaining things to her as best I can in as simple terms as I can, even though she's smarter than me in so many ways already.

- Nice.

- That she knows that I'm still those things, but I need her to be those things as well. So she can grow up to be the strong, resilient, kind of awesome woman that she will be become.

- Yeah, she sure will be. So if I hear you, I mean, you, do want to be a sensitive dad?

- Absolutely. If sensitive means empathetic, and it means I'm showing up in the ways I need to show up, then that's almost the most important type of dad, I'd say I want to be.

- Yeah, I'm with you. All right. Well, listen, short and sweet, I know. There's so much more we could get into. And hopefully, you know, one day down the line, we'll keep ruminating on this idea and fatherhood and our dad, and, you know, our four brothers who all have, we're five brothers, but four of us have kids now. I feel like we've definitely got some similarities as dads. And that's a really interesting thing to think of and then look at our dad and say, okay, so what did we get from there? So, anyway, to be continued, but thanks for your time today. It's been a pleasure as always.

- Right on, broski. Thanks, man.

- All right.

- Thank you for that. I mean, I had no idea that your brother named his daughter after your dad. Like, what? What a beautiful gesture. What an influence.

- Yeah, yeah, it's pretty cute for sure. I think my dad, well one, was dying, basically. Was diagnosed with cancer and was around until just after she was born. So I think there's that. But he was also, he also achieved like icon status with my younger brothers and their friends. You know, he built them a halfpipe in our yard and a basketball court. And like, I think I remember it, at one of my little bro's weddings, like all his friends started chanting his name when he gave a speech or something. I mean, it was like, icon status, right? And he was that kind of guy. Big Stevie, you know, he had a big personality.

He was really fun. He was really dry. He didn't give a shit. He came off as not giving a shit about much, right. He kind of just rolled his own way. And yeah, I mean. And so as a father, I mean, that was challenging at times. There's no doubt he, you know, sometimes felt out of reach, or sometimes, that kind of path he was on didn't really include us. Didn't even necessarily include my mom sometimes, it felt like. But I say that, but I also know again, he was full of love for us. He loved his family, he had so much, he gave so much to us. We had such a happy home when I was a kid. He was present, he was very present. Was he present in other ways? Was he really connected to what we were going through? Did he really care what we're going through? I'm not sure. But that's a, that's a real, that's a really interesting thing that I want to come back to.

- Hi, my name is Cassandra, and I'm five years old. And when I was little, when I was like only five, now I'm five and a half, I had first time fears. And when I went to camp, it was pretty scary. But I faced my fears. The hardest thing about being a kid is first time fears. So your baby might be a little worried about stuff, like daycare. So, but here's a good daycare trick. When the baby's not looking just sneak out of the daycare when the baby's not looking.

- My name is Elliott, I'm three years old. Uh, the hardest part being kid is, it's the go to sleep.

- My name is Ali. Four years old. Climbing a tree and falling asleep.

- Hi, my name is Kaya, I'm four years old. And the hardest thing about being a kid is I don't know how to tie my shoelaces.

- Hi, my name is Holly and I'm eight years old. Two of the hardest things about being a kid is that you don't always get what you want. And you don't always get dessert after dinner.

- Also pooping in the toilet.

- Thank you, Elliot. We've all been there. It is hard to poop. And that's empathy, I think, right? We have that understanding of what someone else is going through?

- Yes. I, too, have had trouble pooping in the toilet. But empathy is an interesting one. And I think I want to, you know, keep digging into that one, because we covered a, we talked through a couple of

concepts that, you know. I think present, being present versus being empathetic came up today. And, you know, empathetic is an interesting one, because I like to think I'm empathetic, and I'm that kind of a dad, and that's a sensitive dad. When I think about what empathy can look like, it's a broad scope. Like, the way I can be present with my kids, and I can try and understand them, and I can really listen and I can help them through it. But I can walk away. And I can leave that behind. Pretty quick. You know, but when I think about my wonderful wife Annabel, those feelings, when she's empathetic, she cannot leave, she can't just drop how my kids are feeling. She carries that with her much longer. And it's, I think much deeper. So empathy is a really interesting one. So I think when we're talking about sensitive dads and being empathetic, we got to be real about what does that really mean?

- Yeah, I hear that. That's definitely something that I'm constantly thinking about. Taking away from, and taking away that from what we've had some light chats about throughout our half hour. I also kind of was really appreciative of the generations that we've had, the different generations including Cassandra offering great advice about daycare. I just signed my daughter up for daycare, and she's only five months old, and.

- Wow.

- I know.

- Sneak out, Colin. Sneak out.

- That sounds like the best plan. But I'm, but on that note, like thinking about learning and growing and always wanting to build off of what we, what we've received. That sounds like what my grandfather got, he wanted to do better. What my dad got from his dad, and definitely what my dad gave me, pretty great. And I just want to keep growing to keep make it better.

- Yeah.

- And speaking of growing and make it better, we're hoping that this thing will grow and continue to get better. We have lots of episode ideas for the future. We want to hear from more kids, we want to talk to child psychologists and of course, we want to talk to more dads from all kinds of different situations,

from different parts of the lands, to hear how they how they want to be a sensitive dad. And on that note, Benj, the jingle!

- Sensitive dads.

- There you go, right in harmony.

HOST:

And welcome back. I am deep in R.E.M. right now, you're listening to algorithm pyjamas by the way on programsound.fm, and we are still swimming through my dream world. I found myself in, god one of my favourite places in the whole wide world, in grandma's house. Yup, nothing brings me the peace and calm and comfort the grandma's home does. I open the back sliding doors leading into the backyard and I step out for some fresh air. It's a fenced in backyard, garden beds around. I walk straight toward the backyard gate and I open it to step out. All of a sudden the sun feels very hot. It's beating down on me, and all I can see are rows and rows of some kind of plant, flower, I don't know what it is. But it goes on for what looks like miles. What kind of plant are you? I wonder.

- *Nicotiana. Nicotiana.*

- Oceania?

- *Nicotiana.*

- Nicotiana. Huh.

- *We're very thirsty.*

- What? Sorry. Speak up. I can't hear you well.

- *We're very thirsty. You have to give us some water.*

- No, I wouldn't know how to do that, sorry. Why don't you ask your caretaker? Where are they?

- *You are our caretaker.*

- Oh, no, no, no. You must have me mistaken. I, I don't know how to do that. I've never done that before. And I wouldn't know how much to give you, and I wouldn't know where it, no.

- *We'll help you. Doesn't your grandmother have a hose?*

- Yes, she does.
- *Okay, great. Go get it.*
- Yeah, but. Okay, okay.
- *Please. We're very thirsty.*
- I'll get it. I'll get the hose, and then hopefully your caretaker comes back by then.
- *Yeah, yeah, go, go, hurry up.*
- And then they can do it themselves.
- *Yeah, alright, go, go, hurry, hurry, go on, come on.*
- Oh okay, I'll be right back.

My grandmother has a hose, and I turn the tap on, and I pull the hose out, and I'm walking and walking through fields and fields of this stuff. And it just seems like the hose is unlimited, it just keeps uncoiling.

It used only go as far as the backyard, but I can just keep pulling and more of the hose comes.

Alright, is your caretaker back? I got the hose and I turned on the water.

- *Great, great, good job, thank you, thank you, now all you have to do is spray us.*
- Uhhh, I'm not comfortable with that, um. You know, what if I give you too much...
- *No, no, it's okay...*
- ... or I don't give you enough?
- *No, it's fine, we'll tell you.*
- That won't be good. You'll still be thirsty.
- *We'll tell you when we've had enough, come on, hurry up, we gotta eat.*
- I, I don't know. I think I'm just gonna go back.
- *No, no, no! No way! No, no, no, no, no.*
- Okay, all right.
- *Come on, you can do it, come on...*
- There you go.

- *just spray us- ahhhhhhhhhhh, yeah, that's the stuff, keep it coming, that's good. Yum, yum, yum, water, water water.*

- It's good. You like this eh?

- *Water never tasted so good.*

- Feels good, doesn't it?

- *Yeah, it's the best, the best stuff.*

- I can see that.

- *Yum yum yum.*

- I drank water before.

- *Okay, that's enough, thank you, that's good, thank you. Come on. Stop.*

- All right. Okay.

- *Thank you, thank you so much.*

- No, you're, you're welcome.

- *No really, we really appreciate it, yeah we really appreciate it, thank you, thanks a lot.*

- Thank you.

- *No thank you, thank you, thank you.*

- Thank you guys.

- *Thank you so much.*

Gabbi Greco - MINDFUL MOMENT 3

GRATTITUDE

It's time to slow things down. For a mindful moment. With programsound. This mindful moment is dedicated to gratitude. Let's get ourselves into a comfortable position, sitting on the ground, on a chair, lying on the floor on a bed, couch, whatever feels good. Allow your eyes to close. Relax your jaw,

shoulders, and any other tension you might feel in your body. Take a big breath in and out. Gratitude by definition is the quality of being thankful. It is a positive emotion and a skill. Gratitude improves our mental and physical health and strengthens our relationships. The more gratitude we have in our lives, the more grounded we will be. We can practice gratitude by pausing to notice and appreciate the good things in our life, like having shelter and access to food and water. But we can also learn to be grateful for things, like the bike shop who always tunes my bike for free, the barista who poured my coffee today, and for you connecting with us during the programsound broadcast. Now it's your turn. I'm going to give you some time to think of or write down five things you're grateful for. Feeling grateful? Great. Thanks for joining the mindful moment. With programsound.

HOST:

- Ah, thank you, Gabbi Greco for that mindful reminder. And thank you to everyone who's listening to programsound.fm. This is the algorithm pyjamas show, where we flip and flutter through the clutter of my dreams. And we're more than halfway through the broadcast. I'm halfway between nowhere and everywhere. And here we are. I'm outside. It's a beautiful June day in my backyard. I'm taking a shower. The water is warm and calming. Look to my right and notice a very large black and white dog. Uh, no, that's not a dog. Way too big to be a dog. Oh my gosh. It's a horse. It's trying to get its way into my backyard. Ugh, I'm scared it's gonna come through and trample me, but I just kind of try to ignore it. Pretend that I don't see it and maybe it will go away. Of course that just makes her go harder. She squeezes and squeezes and pushes and bends through this metal frame and enters my backyard. She's towering over me, but she's really gentle, and cut badly.

- [sung] I had to break away from these yards, they're too small for me.

- But what will you do?

- [sung] I don't know but I have to try. I live to be alive.

- Where will you go, you're so big?

- [sung] I'm not sure, but I will find my own space for me. Just like Ahlam Hassan could teach us libraries on programsound.fm.

Ahlam Hassan - The Library

- What are you doing in here?

- Hi. I'm just doing some computer work.

- This is a private building.

- I work here.

- I've never seen you before.

- I've never seen you before, either. Do you work here?

- I'm the librarian.

- Well, hello. How are you doing?

- Hi. Is there something wrong with your office?

- I just wanted to change of scenery.

- I never go over there by the offices. I came in here this morning, because I saw all of you go into the studio downstairs for the new play reading. I thought it would be the perfect time for me to come in here and get organized. These are my work hours too.

- That wasn't my department. It has nothing to do with me.

- Well, yes, that's fine. That makes sense. Here we are. So.

- I'll just stay out of your hair and get back to work. If you're okay with me being here?

- Of course, of course. It's a library. It's meant to have people in it. Yes, it is. That's what it's for. Books are meant to be read. I will say I'm not used to company. Most of the theatre staff don't bother with this

place. This is my one room library. Ten feet by five feet. Small to have a librarian, but I take care of it all the same.

- I didn't even know we had a librarian on staff.

- I don't know if senior management knows it either. I think they forgot if I'm still on payroll. But it is important. I care for all the plays that pass through these doors. I learn them intimately and I maintain their existence. Most Canadian plays never see the light of day after their first production. What I do is vital.

- I'm sorry, I'm in a bad mood. I can't appreciate this right now.

- Oh, no. Plays are perfect for when you're in a bad mood.

- Or they can put you in one.

- Fair point. What's your favourite play?

- I don't have one.

- *Shh*. Don't insult the books.

- I'm sure they're great. It's nice to meet you. I'm just not that into theatre.

- Surely there's a play for everyone. What about *The Seagull*? Over here in the European Classics, under Chekov. Have you read *The Seagull*? It's about this exact predicament. It's about the value of traditional theatre - of art, really - compared to new forms.

- I misspoke. It's not like I like other forms better than theatre. I do like theatre. Just not a lot of plays.

- Ah, I understand exactly what you mean. We've been thinking a lot about that since - recently. I do have a contemporary shelf right over there at the front. I've ordered in plays from South Africa, India, Ukraine, the whole world round. And there's some experimental stuff here, too.

- Well, now I'm kind of embarrassed. I haven't taken the time to look at any of it.

- Try reading *Death and the King's Horseman*. It's based on a true story. Right here on my World Theater shelf. And they just did it at Stratford. Amaka Umeh was in it. And she also played Hamlet at the same time. There is a bridge.

- I saw it. To be honest, the language was a little hard to understand in the beginning.

- Mm, all the proverbs.
- But I liked it. They created location really well. I felt transported to that open air market in Nigeria. I wish it could have been a part of it. So many black people together in one room.
- But you're too busy inside all day at the office. We all do that, don't we? Too busy to smell the roses.
- I've got plenty of time. I make the time.
- Well, great. You've got time to read then, to get to know the plays like I do. What about *Acha Bacha*? Contemporary shelf, just by your head over there. It's by a local playwright. Also queer.
- Bilal Baig. I know them. They were an usher at the Theatre Centre. Ripped my tickets a couple of times.
- Should have gotten an autograph then. One day you're quietly doing your job, and the next moment you're winning awards.
- Do you know any of the ushers here?
- That's not my department. I take care of the plays.
- They're all actors. You could get them to host play readings. They could bring your books to life.
- That sounds like what the producers do? Or maybe education? What do they do in education anyway?
- Here, you either do art, or you don't do art. You don't cross paths. That's how it has to be, apparently.
- The business side has to stay organized. That's how the artists get to make such exceptional theatre.
- They can call it a theatre all they want, but this is a company.
- Yes, a theatre company. We're lucky to work alongside such brilliant artists.
- Everyone is an artist. The IT guy is a fucking concert pianist.
- Does he do it for a living?
- I literally hate theatre, okay? It's the one thing I hate more the more that I talk about it.
- That's a very strong statement. Maybe I was wrong. Maybe you truly are a person who's just not made for theatre.
- What am I made for then?

- I'm sorry, I don't know you very well at all.
- Okay.
- This might not be your forever spot.
- You take care of all these precious books by people who have already had their work published and produced. Most of them are dead. Nobody gets their flowers while they're still alive. It's fucking gross.
- I'm telling you, miss, you need to read *The Seagull*.
- I don't want to sit by myself all day and read in the dark.
- Well, then. Sun is out. Would you prefer to be there?
- I'm actually happy just being in here, if that's okay. Sorry, I guess you have work to do in here. I can step out.
- No, no. I'll leave and you get down to business.
- Please. You don't have to go. Forget about it. I'm out. This is your library. That's their studio, too. Nothing belongs to me. I can't even sit in a room in silence. Why am I even here? I should quit immediately. This is a nightmare. I need a new job.
- This sounds like the start of a great monologue. Are you an actor?
- I don't know. I'm not allowed to find out.
- Everyone's allowed.
- You want to know my favourite play? This theatre is in the middle of producing it.
- That's great. That's great for you.
- They're reading it downstairs right now.
- Well, if you want to be involved, you could show some initiative.
- I was there. I was asked to leave.
- For privacy?
- For space. Apparently there weren't enough seats, so someone had to go. It was between me and my boss so he said, let's do rock, paper, scissors. This whole fucking place is a joke.
- I'm sure I have a play that can help with this.

- Please find it. Bring it to the artists let them stage it. Clap for them. I won't be invited to that reading either.

- You're a very dour person. Just like Constantine.

- Right now. I feel more like Nina. So you have read *The Seagull*.

- Of course I've read *The fucking Seagull*.

- You didn't like it?

- I loved it. That was the problem.

HOST:

- Oh, hello. Yeah, that's a big yawn for you. Currently deep in R.E.M., here. You're live with algorithm pyjamas on programsound.fm. I'm Cara Eastcott, your sleepy dreamer. And I'm gonna hop straight into it folks, because I'm in my childhood home right now, having a blast in this fort that I've made, and I just, the feeling of warmth and this misty light that is surrounding me feels really good. So let's hop back in there and feel what's happening. Cozy, cozy time. I'm in my own world, Happy. And um, oh. Uh oh. My mother's, I can hear my mother's voice asking me to come down for, time to go to school. Uh oh, this is not gonna go well. Ughhhh, no, mom, but it sucks, oh my god, no, please, I don't want to go, no don't make me go to school, I hate my school, I hate everybody. I'm fighting it, but I feel very hurt that I was just in a nice kid fort and now I'm being hauled off to school, kicking and screaming and crying. Feeling weighed down by the mediocrity of the nuclear family, just feeling doomed. We get to the school and I'm thinking, oh, if I could just get on top of the school and get away from this I would be way better off, I don't want to be here. I'm gonna try, I'm gonna try, I just gotta fly, just gotta go, I just want to go, I just want to fly, I just want to go, I just want to fly, I just want to hop, I just want to jump and hop and run and get away from here and get on the top of the schoooooool. I can't believe it. I am actually floating up the wall of the school and on top of the roof of school. Wow. What an exhilarating feeling to think of something and then it happened. Oh. Yes, I'm on top of the building. Oh my god, that was really scary. I thought I was gonna fall down. But I didn't, I made it on top of the building. Oh my

god. This is awesome. This frickin rocks and rules. Rock and rule, man, rock and rule! Yeah! Whoa! I wish my friends were up here though. Damn. Oh well, I'm just gonna play up here. This is awesome. How am I gonna get down though. How am I gonna get off this building? Oh nooo, how am I gonna get off this building? Okay I'm gonna try to jump but it's so far what if I, what if I jump off and I break my leg? I don't want to do that. I really don't want to do that. But I jumped up. So if I could jump up, then I should be able to jump down, right?

- [flying whooshing sound]

- Ow!

- Ow!

- Oh my gosh, I'm so sorry. I was, I was waiting for you to get, uh, bigger? You, you're really small, do you know that?

- Hey! No, I'm not.

- Sorry. Sorry. I didn't mean to be rude. It's just, I'm used to being the small one, and you are still small. And the building's small. Oh my gosh. Am I big? Am I big to you?

- I guess, yes.

- Ooh. It's my turn to be the big one! All right, that's very cool. Sorry. Just adjusting to that. Wow. Wow. Why are you, why are you up here?

- Well, I was really cool because I ran away from stupid school and now I'm on top of the roof, but I don't know how to get down.

- Hm. Uh, would you, would you like a ride?

- Mmm, maybe, yeah.

- Okay, cool. Cool. We could, we could do that. I've never done it before, but um, hop on, I guess.

- Okay, like a ride?

- Yeah, sure. Just hop on back there where there's the most surface area.

- Okay. Whoa, whoa.

- Okay, don't pinch. Yeah, that's good. You're on there? Great. Okay. Okay. Here we go.

- Whooooa, whoa, this is so cool! I can't believe we're flying.
- And here we are.
- Wow. Thank you so much.
- You're welcome. Bye. [whooshing sounds]
- Oh, wait, wait! Okay, but what I wanted to tell that cicada was that I appreciate their help a lot. And I feel more like a grown up now. In this next play, the main character Wolf dives into growing up and appreciating his friends. Get ready. This is a wild ride. Here is "Ennui" by Zachary Barmania and his friends on programsound.fm.

Zachary Barmania - Ennui

Hi, is this the confidential therapy hotline? Great. I'm Wolf. Oh, confidential. That's right. Well, I've just been through so much recently, I wanted to just lay it all out and talk about it. Well, I guess a good place to start is when I hit rock bottom. I compose, you see, and I was in my basement working on my symphony and, I just snapped. Thank god for my friends. They were all upstairs. Went up and joined their party for the first time in months.

- Tinder guys have the best reasoning, eh?
- Toke, anyone?
- Bless you, Matt.
- Sadie.
- Yeah, anyway.
- What's up guys?
- Sit here, it's been such a long time since you came up for one of these. Do you want a beer?
- I'll take anything. Stronger, the better.
- Hey, I'll whip you up a mojito. Or whatever you want.

- You're the bartender. I leave it to you.
- Mojito, coming up.
- You want a little bud, my bud?
- All right. What the hell?
- It's good to see you. Wolfy, sit with us.
- Okay quick recap. Stevie's on a date with Spider-Man. Hot, in a suit, expensive Uber. He tries to get freaky immediately and they go back to his Chinatown sex pad. He drops trou, and his dick is.
- You're up to speed now.
- Mojito for my bro. Now, Stevie's out with the guy whose dick is like, curly in a way that you don't expect, kind of corn chip like in texture and taste?
- I start gathering my things to leave when he says, it's okay, I know how to use it. And I just feel so much. Just I don't know, definitely not horniness, which should be at least a secondary motivator. But I stayed. So we're hooking up some more, then he says, whose ass is dis?
- Oh, no.
- I say mine?
- And he says, get this, wrong answer.
- Ran then, please, please tell me you ran then.
- Yes. Then I left.
- Thank fucking god, dude.
- What's with guys like that? I swear, it's like there's so many of them.
- Oh, you mean, uh, men who leave their room every now and then?
- Be nice, Ed.
- No, he's got a point.
- Thank you. So what is it you're doing down there anyway?
- Composing.
- Yes.

- Oh, composing. What's that supposed to mean, huh?
- No! Well. No. I'm trying to write this goddamn symphony but it's so hard, it's pissing me off.
- Well, that's probably why you can't write it, right? You're trying too hard.
- What kind of advice is that?
- I don't know. I'm just saying, with my songwriting, it comes best when I'm not thinking about songwriting. I get my best hooks in tests, or when people are telling me things for a long time. I don't know.
- Pass that back. You can't know what I think?
- I have a feeling I know.
- Go outside and smoke weed. You know, marijuana.
- Yeah, I know what weed is.
- Man, to a hammer, everything looks like a nail.
- What's that supposed to mean?
- To a drug dealer, everything looks like a chance to sell drugs.
- He's got a point, Matthew. Your capitalist is showing.
- Well, let's hear him out.
- I am a human, same as all of you.
- Fuck's sake.
- I am moreover a libertarian in the word's true sense. Why should he not be free to simply be a person on this planet, enjoying a beautiful day? It's summer, my boy, lighten up a bit.
- I was kind of hoping you come out of left field with some good advice.
- You know what, I came out of left field with weed for your party. And now here I am being insulted.
- Sorry. No, you're totally right. With, whatever you said. I gotta relax a little bit. The drink and the lettuce was very nice. Thank you guys. Oh, it's made me quite sleepy though. So I think I'll just...
- No, are you kidding?
- Come on, stick around.

- We've barely had a chance to talk to you. We never see you.

- Hey, whoa, listen, okay. I just got a part in a TV show. You're looking at Bandit One in the new Murdoch Mysteries spin off being shot in Toronto, Murdoch Mysteries Special Victims Unit.

- Wow. Congratulations. I didn't even know we had bandits in Canada. How exciting.

- I know. We even need to do a sword fight. The show's gonna rock.

- Oh yeah, dude, well done.

- Thank you. So are you up to writing a few songs? Maybe a change of pace is all you need, and the director likes me. He calls my acting Stanislavskian. I don't know if that's a real word.

- Okay. But what if I do a bad job and the director tells everyone he knows that I'm bad at making music and...

- You're catastrophizing. Stop. You'll do great. You've just got to get out there. I'm not a doctor yet. Not by a longshot. But I know that when all you do is sit in your basement and beat yourself up. Not like that, Matthew. You might start to get an altered worldview.

- When's the job?

- Opening night's in three weeks? Think you're up to that?

- How much music do I need to write?

- Just come to rehearsal tomorrow and I'll tell you there okay? What do you say?

- Can't, I've got work.

- Oh, you're still up at Danny's? That's rad. They make some great hashbrowns, I can tell you that much. It's a lucky day when I meet a patient at Danny's.

- Patient? You call your weed customers patients? Talk about altered worldviews.

- When you're gonna quit that job and focus on what you love?

- Hmm. I guess when rent is free, and hell freezes over.

- Oh, well, if you don't want to do that we could get you a piano, form a band like we always talked about. Come on, Bonnie and the Wolfpack! We'd be legends.

- Hey, not so fast. Garfunkel will come with me. We're meeting the director after you're done work tomorrow, right?

- Uhh. Yeah. Yeah. Sounds great. Don't worry, Bonn. The world just isn't ready for us yet. Soon. Promise. Thanks you guys, for all your advice. I just, you guys are all so, I don't know. Doing something important or beautiful. I mean, pre-med, Stevie, a doctor? And you Bonn, your music's so great and moving. Ed basically runs the bar, he's about to be the most famous actor in Toronto.

- And?

- And, and people need drugs, and you sure deliver them.

- Yeah, I do, don't I?

- Anyway, sorry. I guess I'm more wasted than I thought. I'm gonna sleep it off.

- Poor guy.

- A good job would help, but it's gonna take a little bit more than that.

- You know you don't have to fix all his problems for him, right Ed?

- He's my best friend.

- Yeah, he needs our help. For it says all you need is work and love to lead a happy life.

- Oh, yeah. That's the guy who had a dick or something. He saw dicks everywhere, maybe.

- Knock knock. Bonnie, is that you?

- Umm, it's Ed?

- Oh, well, in that case.

- Hey! What are you doing?

- I'm coming in. Oh, piping hot!

- Stevie, are you serious? You can just pretend we're together every time you get denied on Tinder. It makes me feel like, like, I don't know, some, a prostitute man!

- Prostitute is a gender neutral term. What we have, Ed, is forever. Like it or not. So I'm just gonna be washing my hair. Don't talk to me if you don't want to.

- That's fine. I won't.

- Wolf. Are you asleep?

- I just want to say good night, it was really good to see you at the fire tonight.

- Thanks. I miss you guys.

- We miss you too! So why don't you? I'm sorry. I'm just frustrated is all, it's not with you. Well. With the circumstances.

- What circumstances?

- Just, I don't know, you were so full of life, and now. I'm sorry. Honestly, I'm just trying to help, but...

- You help, Bonnie. Without doing anything, you help.

- You don't need to protect your sickness like this. Anyway, I hope we can talk about music sometime, Wolfy, because we haven't in a long time. And I miss every moment that I don't see you. Okay, bye.

The next day I went to work at Danny's, breakfast place. Oh, yeah. Yeah, that's a very popular item on the menu. Well, it was a normal day, Danny was in the back watching soccer, I was out front, then he walked in.

- So, I go over to the trainer and I ask, what machine should I use to impress that blonde over there, and this guy looks at me, and then he looks over the blonde and he says, Oh, Mr. Cook, that one there works best for men your age. And you know where he points? The ATM machine.

- The trainer knows you?

- No, no, it's just a joke, Xu. I don't like blondes, okay. Now okay listen, table for two eh? You there, gorgeous, give me an old fashioned, and one for my friend. Humour aside for now, Xu, we have much business to discuss, much business.

- All right, two old fashioned.

- Hey, what the hell is this?

- Uh, your order, sir?

- Hold up, Xu, don't drink that, hey. Where are the bitters?
- Bitters?
- That's right, now go back and make them again.
- Now the name of the game here is territory, am I correct? You feel I have overstepped our agreed upon borders when I presented your vendors with a business opportunity, am I correct?
- You poached my workers.
- Hey hey hey, the open market poached them, all right? Not me. I offered them a better wage than you, hey, that's, that's just capitalism.
- You threatened them with clubs.
- It's baseball bats. Okay, that's, that's not the point. The point is, how can we avoid further conflict?
- Two more old fashioned.
- Hey you, uh, Wolf? Really? Like the animal? Alright, listen here now, Wolf. You just cut off my good friend. He was about to speak, and you barrel right over him. What's the matter with you? Get Danny out here.
- Maurice, Mr. Cook, it's so great to see you again.
- Danny, I'd like you to meet my friend Mr. Xu. He is a fellow entrepreneur just like you and I.
- Welcome to Danny's. Now is there some kind of problem?
- Well, I'm afraid so. Your bartender can't even make a halfway decent old fashioned. No bitters, no nothing. What is the meaning of this?
- Well, he's just a, he shouldn't be behind the bar, I'll make sure he's...
- Hey hey, hold up. So you had nobody manning the bar. So Buster brown here tries to oblige the paying customer, and he's at fault?
- I'm not...
- What's the score?
- Huh?
- The football game, that's on right now. Tell me the score.

- Uh, one all, at the end of the first half.
- I fucking knew it. You weren't even in the restaurant. So you think because you launder my money?
- Whoa, let's not, let's not.
- Did you just interrupt me? You think that because you launder my money, you can sit around and eat shit all day? Answer my fucking question, Danny, for God's sake.
- I don't eat shit all day. -Good to hear. Now, give us some space. We're discussing business.
- Sure. You take care of him. Good care.

So naturally, I took my break and when I came back, shit had hit the fan.

- I'm not threatening you. You're overreacting.
- You try to offer me ultimatum, you...
- Oh yeah, go on call me a name. I mean, me, who's done so much for your family. You were selling porn on laser desk when I found you, now look at you.
- You didn't do shit for me. Waiter, waiter.
- Oh no.
- Leave my business alone, unless you want a war
- And that's when another guy entered. This guy had a sword.
- Holy shit.
- Jesus fucking, is that a fucking katana? Get away from me.

He was going straight for Maurice. I couldn't tell you why, but I jumped in front of it. Caught the sword tip first. With my face. Next thing I know I'm in the hospital, and my friends are all around me.

- Ugh, wipe out.
- Whoa, whoa. Oh my god, guys, guys, he's awake.
- Bonnie?
- I was so worried you were gonna die. I don't know what I'd do if you died, really.

- Yeah, me neither. Are there any more of these pain meds, because... nice.
- What happened? I mean, who got you?
- Yeah, man, did it hurt or anything?
- I don't know. I was at Danny's, two customers got in a fight, and uh, I don't know... [snoring]

Next thing I know again, Maurice is at my door.

- May I, uh, come in?
- You, you.
- Yeah, yeah. I always hated hospitals, you know? I spent a long time in places like this as a kid getting poked by men in white and looked down on by nurses. It was the sympathy. Couldn't abide it. The pity of it all. I guess times don't change though, eh? The dance is still the same, the tempo is just slower.
- Are you the devil?
- I like you more and more, kid. Listen. We got off on the wrong foot before. Let me introduce myself. Maurice Cook. Businessman. Can you see yourself working outside the service industry?
- Of course.
- Excellent. I'm in need of a personal assistant, as it so happens and, pay is good. Plus you get a little bit of a taste of the highlife. What do you say?
- This is all so sudden.
- I can offer you that on a weekly basis.
- Holy dick.
- You took a sword for me. And all I did was act like an ass. That is the kind of instinct I like in my employees.
- Oh, hold on. I'm still not so clear on what the job actually is, Mr. Cook.
- Hey bud, please. Maurice. Mr. Cook was cute the first time, but you call me Maurice. When it's just you and me. Otherwise it's Cookem.
- Sure, but I'm still not sure I want this job. I was hoping for a little clarity.

- Listen, where are you from? Your family. Don't give me that Toronto crap.
- Well, mom's American, my dad's Jewish.
- Yeah, what does dad do then?
- He passed away, four years ago.
- I'm sorry to hear that, kid. What got him?
- Cancer. Prostate. Didn't want a finger up the ass. Diagnosed too late. Now if you could just...
- You know, it's funny. Death takes away your parents. Like takes away your children. And that, that is if you're lucky.
- What?
- You like movies, Wolf? Me, I love em. What I don't love however, is paying for them.
- DVDs? Marvel, Star Wars. Wow, Magic Mike 4.
- Is that the one with those wizard English kids?
- Harry Potter?
- Yeah, that's what I'm thinking of.
- This has got to be illegal. What does that mean, personal assistant?
- Eh, you'll learn on the job. Business has shrunk since the internet came around. But it's still a nice little operation. Enough to ensure my grandkids are going to be spoiled rotten after I'm taken in the night, as I no doubt will be. We, what's the word. Appropriate the films. We burn the films, and then we sell the films. Now what do you do, Wolf? What are you good at?
- Well, I compose music.
- What, like rock and roll? Christ, kid, what was the plan there? Leave school and make music for a living? Ha. Well, it's a good thing school's for suckers, right kid? Trust me, out of everything you'll ever know, 90% of it will be learned outside of school. The other 20%'s from real life. Ain't no night class for this line of work either. So can you think on your feet? Can you learn quickly?
- I can think on my feet, improvise.
- What about the law? That be a problem?

- You tell me.

- Hey, we watch our steps, we fly under the radar. Keep your head down, your mouth shut, you stand to make a lot of money in this country. Cops don't tend to give us much trouble. And uh, as for violence.

Well. I suppose you wouldn't believe me if I told you that that was a freak occurrence, right?

- As long as I don't have to die again. As for the law, I'm a libertarian in the word's true sense. Why should we not be free to simply be people on this planet enjoying a pirated movie?

- Well, kid? What do you say? Can I count on your assistance?

- I, uh. Yeah.

- Yeah.

- You go to this address tomorrow. Good first day. Tomorrow, uh, you'll meet with Ian here at this address. I'll write it down for you. Oh, and uh. Here. Never got to tip you.

I arrived the next day outside of Danny's to meet Ian, Maurice's son.

- Good, you showed.

- You? Where's Maurice?

- He's got better things to do than babysit you all day. Unfortunately, I don't. That's close enough.

- Hey, get off. What are you doing?

- I can't let you in armed.

- Armed? I'm not armed. What's the matter with you? I'm the guy who blocked the assassin with his eyeball. I think you can trust me. I don't need a babysitter to do my job.

- Oh, he doesn't need a babysitter. Tell me then, Wolf. Why are we here? It's basic economics, kid, supply and demand.

- You can't just say that like it has any meaning on its own.

- Well, Wolf, you're about to learn that meaning in a very hands on fashion. Meet supply. Enjoy the film, boys?

- Big time, Mr. Cook. I got some Twizzlers. Do you want some?

- Who's your friend Mr. C?
- I'm Wolf. What's going on right now?
- Supply, like I said. Now, did you get everything?
- Tyler? Tyler?
- Right here, mister.
- You remember, Tyler, when...
- The new camera's a bit stupid, but the quality of the camera should be fine.
- Do you remember when the guy in front of us had to go to the bathroom like five times? He was a small bladder guy. Oh my god.
- Tut tut. I told you to find empty theatres if you could. Whatever, you guys did well, here's your payment.
- Whoa, cigarettes? You're joking.
- You new here or something?
- Oh geez, you're new here or something?
- This little camera here, this is what we need. What we demand. This little pack of Belmonts is what we have, a supply. The reverse is true for the boys. They have movies, but want smokes. It's mutually beneficial.
- I cannot believe you just said that. They don't know any better. You can't...
- Exactly. They don't know any better. They could be charging us outrageous fees, saying the work is dangerous. That's what the last guy said until I had this great idea. This cuts our overheads way down, let's us stay competitive with Xu. Thanks a lot, kids. You can go now.
- Thanks boss.
- This so wrong,
- Please. We're well past that. Just relax, kid. This is one of those lucky situations where the less you do, the more money you make. Try and enjoy it.

What can I say? I was more confident than ever, I was making more money than ever. It was a hard feeling to stop. I would have traded anything to keep it, and I did.

- Ed? Are you decent in there?

- It's Bonnie, and since when do you ask? I could be shitting and that wouldn't stop you.

- I barge because I care. Oh, what kind of goop are you putting on this morning?

- Anti-aging cream, I just want to stay ahead of the curve.

- I smell a midlife crisis.

- Ugh, I figured everyone would have just forgotten.

- Happy birthday to you, Happy birthday—ahh!

- Hey, can you guys keep it down? What the fuck, Matthew?

- The very same, happy b-day, Bonbon.

- Did you sleep here in the bathtub?

- Well, I remembered Ed mentioned how nice his bubble baths are, so I figured I'd give it a shot. I must have fallen asleep before I could draw the bath. Sorry about that.

- Yeah, but I peed in here like five minutes ago.

- Oh, that explains my sexy dreams.

- Knock knock. Just brushing my teeth. Happy twentieth, Bonn.

- Hey. Up in the AM I see. Join us. We found a stowaway. What should we do with him?

- You probably want to harvest my organs, you doctor creep.

- Matt. You've slept here all night? Even through my midnight doos?

- I wish I'd slept through that.

- You're fucking nasty, Jesus.

- Uh, okay, bad time for a pee.

- Wolf, get in here. Come on guys, scotch.

- Can't stay long. Gotta go to work.

- Damn. First we lose you to masturbation, now it's money. The two Ms.
- Are you coming to the bar tonight?
- Maybe, I don't know. If Maurice gives me enough time, maybe?
- Wow, your sugar daddy keeps you on a tight leash.
- He's not my sugar daddy, he's my boss. If that makes him my sugar daddy then most people have one.
- Yeah, late capitalism is really kinky.
- Hey, bring him along, old guys go ham.
- Somehow I doubt you're his crowd. Can I please go pee now?
- Well, I'm leaving. See you guys later.
- Yeah, that's me too. Bye.
- Uh, Matt?
- Damn, you really just forgot, eh?
- Forgot what, where I live? That's your problem not mine.
- Okay, bro. Enjoy your pee. Come to the bar tonight, will ya?
- I'll try.
- That's Wolf for no. Ciao, stoner.
- Arrivederci.

Maurice trusted me enough to make me his voice in the negotiations with Xu. And I wasn't about to let him down.

- What you need to remember kid is that people love being told what to do. It saves time and precious effort. It's convenient.
- And what if they don't do what you ask?
- Now that is a failure on your part. If you want to get anywhere in this country, you must find a way to align yourself with people of use. Why do they do what you ask? Because you want the same thing.

There are many ways of doing this, and a few ways of greasing the wheels. Tell me, Wolf, show your knowledge. What is the most reliable method of persuasion?

- Um, I feel like you want me to say torture.

- Torture, yikes, geez, okay, mister. Let's assume that that's not an option. You know, like normal people.

- Well, then I guess an appeal to reason? Or perhaps common decency?

- Oh, you are just the cutest little thing sometimes. Makes me fucking sick. What about a bribe?

- What about one?

- What about one?

- What about one? I'm using the Socratic method, you dumbass. Think out loud. We still got a couple of blocks, okay, I'm making conversation.

- Fine, fine. I guess a bribe would be better, happy? Will you pay me now, daddy? Oh, sorry. Just something my friends said earlier got to me. Don't call me a dumbass.

- Well, kid. Your friends might have a point. It's possible we've been projecting slightly onto each other, to fill certain gaps in our lives. You for your last father, me for my son.

- What are you talking about? Ian's still alive.

- I just, let me finish, okay? I'm not your father, son. I can't replace such a loss. But, perhaps I can help you to help yourself, help you to make you into a real man. I don't ask much, just your time. And your respect. And of course the loyalty to take a sword meant for me. All right. Yeah.

- Wow, fancy place.

- I know. Xu launders his money in style, eh? You got the folder? Alright, you go in, kid. Go to the bar. You'll find a familiar face. Prevent a war, kid. Hey, and, don't promise him anything I wouldn't promise. And be careful eh? These guys ordered that hit, remember? You already gave them one death. No need to break the bank on these fucks, huh?

- Right.

- Welcome, sir. May I get you something?

- An old fashioned. Don't forget the bitters.

- I know you. I was hoping I'd find you again. So I can give you this. My humblest sincerest gratitude.

- Oh, I see.

- How can I repay the one who saved my life from Cook's assassins. Surely you'll want more than old fashioned.

- Actually, Mr. Xu. I came here because Maurice asked me to.

- You? You're his negotiator? I have met many men in my life, but few is false is Maurice Cook. I fear for you, boy. No doubt he beguiled you into his employ. I urge you to reconsider. He sent the assassin. The one who.

- No, I can assure you that this is a misunderstanding. What happened at Danny's was no more than an accident.

- An accident?

- Well, no, it seemed pretty on purpose. The point is, I'm here to deescalate this conflict.

- Old fashioned.

- Thanks.

- Well, what is Maurice offering?

- He made some concessions I wouldn't have expected. The Dixie flea market, and Doug Ford's trunk. Those are two of the most high traffic areas for pirated DVDs in southern Ontario. Not to mention a signed agreement never to poach your workers again.

- Hmm.

- So?

- No.

- No?

- That's right. As it stands, this deal is not enough. I believe these terms are fair and would accept them, with one more condition.

- What's that?

- Maurice must apologize to me personally, for the attempt on my life and the dishonest business strategies he employed in months previous.

- Maurice? Apologize?

- That's it. Simple, isn't it?

- I can guarantee a personal apology if it means peace between you two entrepreneurs. You want a restoration of peace and dignity. We want the same thing.

- And if I refuse?

- Please don't refuse?

- Fine. You've persuaded me. We shall reconvene here to receive Maurice's apology.

- Done and done.

- He bought it? Is that a, no more swords in my friend Wolf's eye?

- You know, he thinks you sent the assassin.

- You bought that? You crack me up, kid.

- There's just one more thing.

- More? What? What more?

- He wants you to apologize to him. In person. No big deal. Just seems really petty.

- Apology? Ah hell. Yeah, that, that'll be the day.

- Yes, actually, you'll do it right?

- Boy. When I was around eight, I found my father's rifle while he was away on business. I took it, and me and my brother used it on an old outhouse. Armand was terrible, but I managed to hit it a couple times. Bam. Ding. Bam bam. It was so much fun. Until Armand's dad came out from inside the damn thing. It's a good thing he was in there too, else we would have shit somewhere he wasn't meant to.

- That's funny and all, but what's the point of that story?

- Oh, what's the point of that story, kid? If I didn't apologize for that, why would I apologize to Xu? Hey, my ex-wife didn't apologize to me when she walked out with my half. My son didn't apologize me for calling fucking CPS on me. Why would I apologize to that immigrant huckster?

- Because it would prevent a war. It would allow you to stay in business without interruption.

- Yeah, yeah, yeah, enough kid, enough.

- No, I told Xu.

- Relax, relax, kid, okay? You did good work and it's out of your hands now. Let's celebrate. Hey, come on, I know a great little steakhouse at Avenue and Bloor in Yorkville, I'll take you out.

- Thanks. It's my friend's birthday though, I said I'd go to her party.

- That's great. It's a plan. What's the bar?

We arrived at Bonnie's party, and I saw someone who I did not want to see.

- Bonnie, my dear, you look radiant. Not a day under 33. Stevie, you look drunk as shit.

- Wolf. I don't know if you've met my little brother Tyler before? He's in fourth grade. Just a little squirt. Don't go under these tables. It's disgusting.

- Hey, I know.

- I know we've never met before, that's what I know. Hey, kid, I'm Wolf. You're a kid, Stevie's a little brother Tyrone.

- Tyler.

- Sure.

- Oh, I guess my drinks ready, bye?

- Hey, can you make a negroni, kid? I like an old fashioned in the afternoon and a negroni after sunset.

- Yeah, but um, I'm not sure.

- Good, good, good. Can you make several negronis?

- Well, yes.

- Good. We shall be needing several negronis.

- Hey, you're Wolf's new boss, right?

- Maurice Cook, businessman. You know what? Let me go with the other hand, there you go, there you go. You know that this is the men's room, right?

- Mhm. Don't worry, though. I'm only here to talk.

- Well, that's good. That means that you are in the wrong spot, not me. I'm not only here to talk. You can either wait outside, or you can talk while I pee.

- Okay, pee away, sir.

- So what's on your mind?

- Oh, well, you know, as you know, it's my birthday tonight. And I'm having a great time and everything. But I can't seem to get a beat on Wolf these days. You see him more than I do, than anyone now. So.

- What? You want me to tell him to date ya?

- No. Would that work?

- Probably. I'm uh, super convincing. Tell me now, Bunny. What's the mos, uh, oh, okay, there we go. Oh, yeah. And he goes burling down, down the white water, that's where the log driver to da da da da...

- Ew, okay, okay, focus Maurice.

- I am focusing.

- I never used to be scared of talking to him. But now he's so different. When I try my heart just stops, and pounds in my throat, and I get all dizzy.

- Okay, okay. You know, I've got a great little helper for such a situation. Here, this little baby's called nitroglycerin. Helps with my heart, it'll help you with this. You pop that in your mouth before you take a swing at Wolf, and I personally guarantee you won't be worried about your heart.

- Gee, thanks, Mr. Cook. Could you wash your hands and then give me another pill? Like, I'll just put this one in your pocket, if that's okay?

- Yeah. No, you do that. We'll figure that out.

- Okay. Yeah.

- Honestly that makes sense.

- I don't want that one.

So Bonnie and I went for a walk. Just the two of us.

- Toronto is really beautiful in the summertime.

- So are you.

- Hey, cheers.

- Wolf?

- Hm? Bonn?

- You've changed in the last few weeks since your accident.

- I don't think it was an accident.

- Yeah. Anyway, the point is, you've changed. You're much more driven and...

- Mature? Thanks.

- Yeah. And I think I've changed a lot too. I used to be shy.

- Shy? You never used to be shy. You were the coolest kid at school by grade nine.

- I was not. I had no friends besides Stevie.

- I said cool, not popular.

- Anyway, I just think.

- Bonn, you're like totally flushed. Are you okay?

- Be quiet, Wolf, stop interrupting me. Holy fuck. My heart is going off. Channel it, Bonnie. Use it. So much is changing. I'm changing. You're changing. Wolf. We go together really well, I think we should date. Like, as a couple. And since your dad passed, I've seen you at your worst. And now I think I'm seeing you at your best. I want in, I want to be with you. I've been holding this back and only putting it in my music until now. God, this feels good. Whew! Okay, I feel lightheaded.

- Wow, wipe out. Come here. I want to take this slow. Get it right. You know?

- Oh, yeah, sure. Oh my god, wait. What's going on outside the bar?

When we got back to the bar, Stevie was holding a pack of cigarettes.

- I'll ask you one more time, Tyler, where did you get these?

- He gave them to me?

How was I supposed to know the kid was Stevie's brother?

- Bonnie? Ugh, she's asleep. Okay, sober. Sobriety. Bonnie. Hey.

- Wolf. Hey, sorry. What are you doing here?

- For you, beautiful. What is that? They're diamonds. Take them.

- Oh, cool. Put them on the thing.

- Oh, Stevie, glad you're awake. I tried talking to Bonnie but she's out like a log. I heard Matthew was over earlier, wish I had been here, we could have teamed up on him, right? How's everything with you, seen Ed lately?

- You're using her as a meat shield.

- What?

- You know, I would destroy anyone who did this to my brother, my 10 year old brother. Cigarettes?

You more than anyone should appreciate cancer, Wolf.

- Oh, don't bring him into this.

- Oh, is there a family member you didn't want involved in the situation? You're a coward, Wolf. I don't fear you. You're not a real man. You wear a suit and act like a bully because of that disgusting old man you worship. But I know the truth, Wolf. Doesn't that just scare the fuck out of you? I know you're just a boy looking for purpose, direction, validation from your daddy. Any Daddy will do. You'd be nothing to him. Just another foolish young man who wastes his youth because that's what he was told to do.

Except that I know what you're wasting. You traded all the things I loved about you. Your identity. You

made me laugh, Wolf. You used to do it all the time. When was the last time you played a piano, or composed? Look at you now. Get out of my sight.

- He needed to hear that, he needed it.

I found Ed in the backyard. And I wanted to make an offer he couldn't refuse.

- Oh, hello. You see, Murdoch, you handsome devil you, it was I all along! I'll cut you to ribbons.

Brandishes sword! That is a stage direction. I'll cut you to ribbons, and give you a Saskatchewanian pedicure, you pusillanime. No. You don't want to know what that is. Come on, Murdoch. Let's begin.

Man, I am just so excited to sword fight someone.

- Ed, hey, what's going on?

- Oh hey Wolf, you're home early. I heard you come home last night around one, I think?

- What can I say? Busy busy. Listen, I was wondering if you could help me with something.

- Uh, depends.

- You think you can patch things over between Stevie and me? She's pretty pissed.

- Ah, yeah. No, shit. Listen, Wolf. Look, I love you. And we've been friends since eighth grade, so hear me out. You've kind of been acting like a fucking asshole. No, I'm pretty serious, man. You, you shouldn't have given those smokes to Tyler. What the fuck were you thinking?

- It was for work.

- Work? Maurice made you do that?

- No, it was his son, Ian. He's been doing this for a while. I just didn't know it was her brother, okay?

- Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, sure. No, then that's okay. Then, they're just some other kid, you know? You didn't know there would be consequences.

- Exactly.

- It's not much better, dude.

- You know Stevie better than anyone.

- Okay well that's not true. You just know that Bonnie and Stevie aren't talking so I'm your only option. I mean, apart from going yourself.

- She'll listen to you. Come on, Eddie. We want the same thing here. Your house has been like a pressure cooker these past few days. You're the negotiator, man. You could restore the peace. Since my dad...

- Wolf, man, that was years ago. You can't use him to justify your shitty actions anymore. Leave me alone. I'm working.

- Well, I'll pay you, \$300, \$400, \$500.

- Come.

- Hey, Stevie?

- Hey, haven't seen you around.

- Haven't really been around, really.

- Sorry. My house would get like this when my parents were still together. I guess I'm used to it.

- I want to try and make things better.

- It's up to Wolf to do that.

- Well, he wants to.

- Well, he's free to apologize, at the very least.

- You guys were really close in high school.

- And now we're different people. Can you still be my friend and his friend? I'm not trying to give you an ultimatum. But can you really still be friends with Wolf after what he's done?

- He's my best friend.

- Huh. Okay. Well then hold him accountable for his actions, Ed. He'll listen to you. Friends don't let each other turn into monsters. Imagine what you're doing in the long run, the kind of behaviour he'll try next. And Bonnie. Bonnie. I won't let him lie and keep his friends.

- Is that a suitcase? You leaving?

- No.

- Stevie, you just lied right to my face. You're moving out? God, Stevie. You can't move back in with your mom. We just, you and I, we were about to.

- What? Get back together? Still?

- What Wolf did has nothing to do with us. Things between us, they've been good, right? Well, there have been things between us anyway. This is just, just like last time. I start falling for you, and I fucking hit the ground on my face. I love you. Of course you know that.

- I'm moving out. In two weeks. I'm sorry, Eddie. I love you too. But I think it makes it worse. Ed, wait, we can't leave it like this. Ed. Ed. Ed. Ed.

- How'd it go, tiger?

- Fuck off.

- Okay.

Later that night, I found Bonnie waiting for me. She had that look in her eye.

- Hey, Bonnie. What's going on?

- We need to have a fight.

- I don't have anything to prove to you.

- Yeah? Where'd you get the money for the bracelet?

- My job?

- So you bought it.

- Of course.

- So the engraved RC is what, you think I'm really cool, perhaps? Or RC wouldn't perchance stand for Reagan, formerly Cook, Maurice's ex? You sold those cigarettes to Tyler, too.

- Yes, I did.

- Who are you?

- I'm the best version of me. Bonnie, where are you going? I need you, wait. Don't leave me. I need you.

After getting dumped, the only thing I could do was find Maurice and quit.

- Who's there? Oh, it's you Wolf. Come on, boy. Let's head inside. Today's the big day. We're making good with Xu. It should be very satisfying. Hey, uh, you don't smell great kid. I'll lend you some deodorant. A shave would do you good as well. Jesus. Hey, uh, how are things going with that skirt of yours, Bucky? Buffy.

- Bonnie.

- Bonnie, that's right. And how is that little smart one too? Wasn't that, she had a, she had a man's name. Or was it an infantile one.

- Stevie.

- Yeah, that's the one. And the bartender. He was my favourite. What was his name?

- Ed.

- Oh, yeah, Ed. Wolf, it's very important to remember someone's name. You know, seeing you with all your young friends. It reminds me everything I had before I got. Well, everything. Everything I wanted. I grew up poor, it's true. But my family was around me. So I didn't feel poor. Now. Well, now I just have back pain.

- After you apologize today, I'm quitting.

- What?

- You heard me.

- Listen here.

- No, you listen. Listen. You made me trade everything about myself that I like, you made me lose my friends. All my friends. It's not worth it.

- So, what? Are they going to take you back? Who would have ya? You have no goddamn experience, Wolf. For Christ's sake, you were a waiter when I found you. And what are you going to be after? Now, if you stick with me, accept my forgiveness, you'll have all the money you could ever want.

- I can't believe how foolish I am.

- I know. All's forgiven. Now.

- I lost everything, and you? You're nothing but a husk. I'm not mad, I just, I can't believe how foolish I am. One more day.

- You think? Get out of here. Loser. Maybe you'll crawl back when you grow up. I don't need you. You need me. Hey, hey, you need me. You, you are fired.

I followed him to Xu's restaurant to return his nitro pills. And I found Ian waiting outside.

- I thought you'd quit. Guess I overestimated your intelligence. Is it brain damage, you think?

- I am done. Give these your father when he's done making an ass of himself.

- Oh, he's gonna say sorry and make good. Look.

- Huh. There he is.

- I think that fight sorted him out a little. He sees himself in you. Or at least, he sees ya.

- Well, doesn't change anything. Wish I could say something positive to end this, whatever this was, with some closure, but I don't think I can. You were always an asshole, Ian. Truly. We never had a good interaction. You're your father with less charm, which is really saying something. Goodbye.

- Just wait, Wolf. You'll want to see this.

- Did, did you call the cops on your dad?

- Wouldn't be the first time. I've tried to kill him a few times, too. I lost my nerve though, I was young. I also tried to kill the other man at that table. If Xu was killed, right in Maurice's front restaurant, right in front of Maurice, he'd be sent to prison and lose everything. You interfered the first time I tried to at Danny's, but not this time. And I just send all my life's worth of damning evidence to the police, and

gave him to the law. Inelegant, I must say, but it's proven effective. Why? Oh, would you look at that, he's having a heart attack.

- Jesus Christ, his nitro.

- That's far enough. Step into the car, easy now. We're going on a little drive.

- Hey, you've reached Dr. Matt's voicemail. I'm probably balls deep in a kief bowl right now. so leave a message and I'll get you back on the ASAP. Ciao, stoner.

- I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry, please help me. Where are you taking me, Ian?

- Keep your mouth shut or I'll put a bag over your head. It was bad enough when I thought I'd killed ya. But when Maurice took you in and started calling your son in front of me, well, things sort of spiralled from there. I wanted to take over the business from my father. I mean, if my plan had worked and Xu had died. Now I want you ruined, worse than dead. You shouldn't have crossed me, Wolf. Even if you didn't know you had.

- You shouldn't have kidnapped someone in the middle of downtown Toronto, in a car at rush hour. Not good planning.

- Why are you doing so much exposition? Show me your hands.

- No, I—

- An outgoing call, huh?

- Whoever I called, help! Help!

- Dude.

- Oh, hey man, sorry, what's up. Um, I think some guy's back out there crying or something?

- Listen to this.

- Is he doing a bit? It's not very funny. Guess neither was Wolf when all said and done.

- What do you mean, you think it's fake?

- You haven't been dealing with the fallout of this asshole for the past couple of weeks.

- Heh. Fall out of this asshole.

- He's wily, Matt. I'm telling you. Thanks to Wolf, Stevie's gonna. She said she loves me. Right when we broke up, she said it for the first time. Now I'll never see her again.

- You guys were together?

- Ha ha.

- Well, what if you lose Wolf too? You'll wind up blaming Stevie for it because she made you mad in the first place. And then you'll have really lost both of them. Losing someone is when you don't care, really don't care what happens to him. You know, when you get hit by the realization, before you fall asleep or while you're in a daze at work, that you didn't think about that person once that day or that week? It's not a painful feeling. It's more, I don't know. Then fuck it, roll the dice anyway, you can get hurt again, but fuck it.

- Huh, but fuck it.

- Attaboy. Come on, let's find the others.

- Not the police?

- Naw, I'm kind of excited, you know? I'm getting the third act jitters here.

- Okay, here we are. Come on. We'll gear up and grab Bonnie. It's a long story. But I think this is going to be a bit of a hard sell.

- The Wolf who used and betrayed all of us? Would he risk his life to save one of ours? I think I fell out of love you guys.

- Maybe love isn't a positive or a negative thing, it's both. And in such an extreme way that you can either go numb, or start owning up to both ups and downs. Our friend's in trouble, Bonnie. Our friend who is a manipulative shit, but also creative. Melancholy, but also funny.

- Well.

- He tries really, really hard to be funny. He really does. My point is that I need to try, you know, I need to see this friendship through to the bitter end.

- I got something to say. It's better to burn out than to fade away. Highlander.
- We'll need Stevie too.
- So you're in?
- I'm in, I'll help. But we need Stevie too. She's inside. She's packing. Come on.

- You're going looking for him, after he took an axe to our friend group? Bonnie, you've been pining and pining, courting and courting, and for what? You got stabbed in the back. Same as me. And same as Ed. Yeah, I know he put you up to it. My window opens onto the backyard you dingus. \$500, really Ed? I'm not mad. It's just, I'm moving on. And I'm trying to make it a clean break. I want to stay in touch with all of you, but I can't care about Wolf anymore. I can't be in this relationship any longer. We're so involved. Codependent. Ed, you don't need me. Bonnie, you don't need me. You certainly don't need Wolf. Have grace. Let him go.
- If Wolf gets hurt, you'll never be able to let it go. Think about your hypocritical oath.
- Dude. If he's doing this for attention, I swear to God.
- She's in! The gang's all here.

- Okay, we've got my first aid kit and a phone, Bonnie's guitar, and Matt brought weed. Ed brought his, wow, a sword.
- It's only a prop. It's for an MMS video.
- Right, plus your car. Is that every McGuffin we could cobble together?
- Well there's still Wolf's basement, we could look for clues down there.
- I've never been down there. It's given off big crypt vibes.
- He hasn't been down there much since he got his new job. It'll be like a time capsule.
- That's a generous way of putting it. I bet his crusty jizz socks have fossilized under the layers of dust and detritus.
- Let's see.

- Oh my god, his piano. He smashed it. Damn it. He worked so hard for so long on the symphony. Look how many pages long it is. And for what? Only he understood it. Really? It's just dots and lines for me. Bonnie, can you read music?

- Ah, let me see. No, I can't read music.

- I never really understood what he did. I mean, he must have loved it. But whenever he talked about it, it was like describing pain. Why not yoga? Why not, anything besides yoga?

- We'll find him. Spread out. Look for clues, bitches.

- You might have been read about the whole fossil jizz sock thing. Check it out, dude. I thought it was a rice cake at first.

- Oh my god. Don't touch that.

- Yeah, yeah. Maybe he just blew his nose with it or something.

- Business card, check it. Maurice Cook, business owner, philanthropist, Philanthropist?

- Wait a minute. Ian is Maurice's son. Guys, that's, that's a lead. I have a lead. Look at this. Meet Ian outside of Danny's. Come on!

- I'm going to remove the bag. Don't try anything. Drink it all, quickly. You can piss on the bottle when you're done. That'll be fun with a bag over your head in a moving car. Oh, well. Shit.

- Get him. Get him!

- Hey, did you hear that? He's in the trunk. Wolf, Wolf!

- Hey, you let him out of there, asshole.

- What's he got in the backseat?

- This is on Snapchat.

- How do I turn this filter off? We found him! Ian Cook!

- Ed? Back up.

- He's got a sword, look out!

- You motherfucker.

- Ahhhh!

- Holy shit, Ed, are you okay? Are you okay?

- He'll be going into shock. Bonnie, call an ambulance. Matt, could you put down your phone and help me here?

- Oh, fuck.

- It's okay, baby. I'm sorry. Jesus Christ. Okay, Matt, get my first aid kit from my bag. Eddie, keep pressure on it. That's it. We've got to slow down the bleeding. Does it hurt?

- Hello. We need an ambulance, um. We're at Danny's. There's been a stabbing. Yeah, another one.

- No, it's not. Oh fuck it is. I just looked at it. Oh my god I'm getting dizzy.

- Here you go, Stevie. Do we have to amputate?

- No, we're gonna clean it and stitch him up. Wish we had something for the pain though.

- Well.

- You were right, Ed, that thing you said about hammers and nails.

- I've got an indica sativa blend hybrid called Bobless Bong Water? I know you don't smoke so this will probably lay you out in one puff.

- I'm just going to intervene real quick on behalf of my...

- I'm going to take some. Mhm.

- Well, if it distracts you. You can take your hand off, Eddie. Bonn, could you help me out?

- That hurt.

- Well, I'm feelin. Maurice gone, and two sword attacks, I'm finished.

- What do we do now?

- Oh, Ed. If we lose both of them.

- Come on, Stevie, don't think like that. We have to find Wolf.

- Oh, please Bonnie. Even if we could find him, what would we do? He's clearly willing to go farther than we are. So let's just go home and.

- And, and what? Twiddle our thumbs, wait for Eddie and Wolf to just turn up fine? I'm not going to sit around doing nothing. They could die if we don't do anything.

- Okay, where would I go in Toronto if I needed to ditch a car?

- Uh oh, Stevie look, he's driving into High Park.

- You motherfucker, you attacked my friends, if Ed's, if you hurt him I'll destroy you.

- Easy, there. You might break those popsicle stick wrists if you keep wiggling like that. Come on, move.

- What's your plan? How could you possibly expect to get away?

- Get away? I was born in this city, and think Maurice always resented that about me. Now I didn't have the uncomfortable hazing that every good immigrant gets. It always lowered his respect for me, I think. And maybe he was right, too. I didn't fight my own battle. I called the cops, like a good Canadian. He wouldn't have respected that. Doesn't matter now. He's ruined, maybe dead, if that heart attack was real. And me, I'll never have to leave the place I was born. Keep moving, and be quiet.

My friends had come so close to finding me, but Ian was going to escape. And that's when I remembered the pills. I started spilling them, leaving a trail for them to follow. Hopefully.

- Now what's the best way to destroy Maurice's legacy and your future in one fell swing? Oh, that's simple. This tail ends with murder, the way it should have started.

- Huh?

- No!

- Ahhhhhhh!

- Don't you point that thing at her!

- Guys, where's Ed, is he okay?

- Shut up. Who are these people, your friends?

- Wolf, come here.

- Don't move.
- It's two on one, asshole, back off.
- But you haven't got a sword. Back off, or I get to put Wolf's life to the test one more time. Don't be like your idiot friend, the one I sliced earlier.
- Ahhhhhhhh!
- Stop fighting!
- Come on! Don't start what you can't finish, you sneaky bitch.
- Drop the sword, and I'll kick your ass.
- I think not. I think I'll keep it and kick your ass, how's that sound?
- Bad, very bad. This wasn't the plan, but it could work.
- En garde! Drop your sword.
- Ed, are you sure about this?
- I'm about 30%.
- Ha ha! En garde!
- En garde!
- Repost!
- Ah yes, a little back and forth, shall we?
- Hi ya! And that! And one of those! And a third! And a forth! And a fifth! Oh, you got one on me there.
- Stoooooop.

In that moment, Ed had lan defeated. I saw lan close his eyes and accept his fate. I knew then what his plan was. He didn't want to escape. He wanted to die. And I understood that feeling. I understood better than anyone there. So I did the only thing I knew I could do. And I jumped in front of the sword again.

- Wolf. Are you serious? I am like one inch from your nose with this fucking sword again. Do you have a death wish?

- I am serious and no, I don't have a death wish. I think I did for a while though. Not anymore. Ian, I don't want you to die. I want you to live.

And then it was done. Ian went off to jail. Same as Maurice. Apparently he had an extra nitro pill in his pocket, so he was able to survive the heart attack.

So that's my story. Just wanted to hear it out loud. Make sure I was not insane. If you'll excuse me, I have to go join my friends. There's a party going on.

- Wolf, hey, come sit down.

- Hey guys. Stevie, you look great. How's the new place?

- Yeah, do they have weed there?

- Hey, Wolf. It's great. Med school is hell on earth. What a nightmare.

- Eddie told me about Murdoch Mysteries SVU getting canceled. What a shame.

- Oh, hey, you know, it's fine. Gives me time to focus on the plan and. Hey Wolf, down to make some music?

- Better believe it dude.

- That reminds me, wait here.

- Bonnie, wow! A new piano. Thanks.

- I thought you'd want to show everybody, you know.

- I don't know, it could use more work.

- Really, what's he, what's he talking about?

- Wait, what could use more work?

- I finished it, the symphony.

- Whew!

- Holy shit.

- Oh my god.
- Wow, bloody hell, man. Oh my god, look at the length of that!
- Concert, concert!
- Now presenting... Wolf!
- Thank you. Thank you. This is my symphony. I made it in imitation of the people I love. And a crude imitation it is. How can I capture the loyalty and laughter and rising swell that fills my heart at your company? These marks on the page are nothing. When you see past the symbols, hear the meaning within I, well, I hope it brings you back. Like those I admire, the music drifts from layer to layer, moment to moment, without really giving a reason. It's flawed, and plods on and on, but know that every rise and fall, and every lull is for you, and made of your love.
- What's it about?
- It's about us.
- What's it called?

Ennui was written by Zachary Barmania, starring Ethan Rickman as Ed and Maurice, Sass Mueller as Bonnie and Tyler, David Carhartt as Xu, Ian, and Matt, Melissa De Vvere as Stevie, Dylan Alsop as Danny, and Zachary Barmania as Wolf and Kid Number Two. This is a Burgundy Dragon production published by programsound.fm, all rights reserved.

HOST:

- Where are you right now? You're in a kitchen.
- I'm in a kitchen.
- How are you feeling? You feel fine.
- I feel fine.
- You feel hungry.

- I'm hungry.
- You're wondering what you should eat.
- Figuring out what I should eat.
- You could have an avocado?
- I'm gonna have an avocado.
- Just get that knife.
- Just gonna get this knife.
- Cut the avocado down the centre. And the seed is going to start growing.
- The seed is going to start growing.
- And growing and growing and growing.
- And growing and growing and growing.
- [both voices] And growing!
- Whoa! This avocado seed is bigger than my head. Looks like a dinosaur egg. It's cracked! Hello, is anybody in there? Awww, it's a little dino baby. In a tux!
- [clears throat] [sung] The bombs are the seeds.
- Damn, that baby dino can sing.
- [sung] One day you'll pop off like the leaves.
- Yes!
- [sung] If you just believe.
- Okay.
- [sung] The static won't stop you.
- You're going to have to say that again.
- [sung together] No, no, the static won't stop you.
- [sung] Sometimes it feels like it takes eighty years to open this door.
- Ugh, tell me about it.
- [sung] But wait, no more. Cause you can fly.

- Whew, whew whew whew!

- Here's the thing. It's not gonna make sense right away. And that's okay. Let's listen to a story. By Natercia Napoleo called "The Butterfly" on programsound.fm.

Natercia Napoleo - The Butterfly

You're about to hear a story of a woman who is - I mean was - *is?* - was - yes, was - so very afraid. You've heard of phobias before, right? Like people who lose it around clowns or large birds. A friend of mine gags every time she sees loose hair on a brush, bunched up, and - but I'm not talking about a mere distaste for something. Oh no, I'm referring to a true phobia. Uncontrollable, irrational. A lasting fear of a certain object, situation, or activity. Here's a good one. How about the fear of flying? Or we can go the classic route: being afraid of something that can arguably kill you, like venomous spiders, snakes, or frogs. I hear the little ones can really pack a punch.

I have a confession to make. I have - had? - *have?* - had a phobia. This is really embarrassing. I can't believe I'm about to admit this, so I'm just gonna say it very quickly, and - guess what? - you are going to do it with me. That's right. On the count of three - uh, let's make it five. On the count of five, so - 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 - we'll blurt out what we're afraid of at the same time. Boil it down to one word. Ready? 5, 4, 3, 2, 1: I'm afraid of - blah. Okay, here we go. You can close your eyes if you want to. I mean, if that helps. Deep breath. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1: I'm afraid of butterflies. Yep. You can open your eyes now. Okay, I can tell you want to laugh so go ahead. Laugh. Yeah, I know it's fucked up. But I'm not making this shit up. I mean, it's pretty ridiculous. I must look pretty ridiculous.

So here's the thing. I got knocked up. And I've never felt so alone. I was left with the impossible decision to have a child or have an abortion. My whole life flashed before my eyes. My dreams. Where would they go? Everything I thought I was here to do, where would it go? Practical things, everyday things, money. Where would it come from? Oh my god. I wake up in the middle of the night in a sweat. How much does a kid's toothbrush cost? How many toothbrushes does a kid need in a year? What about 18 years? What does that add up to? Where would that kind of money come? Where would I go? How do I get there? This can't be it. How can I possibly do this?

I chose to keep the child, my child, and here's the thing. At that very moment, my phobia - you know, of a butterfly? It disappeared. That very same irrational fear that would send me into the fetal position. I, shut and jaw clenched, crying and hyperventilating, well it just disappeared. And not only did it disappear, I started to be drawn to them. These butterflies. I see them every day now, everywhere. And they really stick out to me. They're quite beautiful, aren't they. I guess I'm not afraid anymore.

HOST:

Well, what a wild ride it has been so far. On the inaugural broadcast of algorithm pyjamas, exclusively on programsound.fm where we've been galavanting and sometimes crying through the depths of the collective consciousness, really. My dreams are not just my own. And I'm wondering if anyone out there can relate to this, or if anything is resonating. Love to hear from you. You can let me know on programsound's Instagram page, @programsound.fm. That's programsound.fm. And I'm wondering if it's resonating. I'm wondering if it rings true, I'm wondering if you notice anything familiar, I wonder if you see what I see. I wonder.

- Alright, class. Alright, everybody. I need your full and complete attention. I've had a revelation last night. Epiphany, aha moment, okay? And I need you to listen up now. I'm going to pass this along to you. So the song we're going to learn today in choir, it's an original composition and arrangement. I've

been up for days working on it, so there may be a few kinks, but it's pretty much there. It's pretty, pretty close.

- Alright, lay it on us.

- Okay, everyone, listen up. Is everyone listening up?

- Yeah!

- Yes.

- So song goes like this. [sung] The bombs are the seeds. One day you'll pop off like the leaves.

- Pop off like the leaves?

- I don't get it.

- No, just hang on, hang on. Hang on. [sung] If you just believe.

- Believe. Cheesy.

- [sung] The static won't stop you.

That part's very important. That part specifically, so that's why we repeat it again. This next line, like this, slightly different.

[sung] No, no, the static won't stop you.

Okay, and then it goes.

[sung] Sometimes it feels like it takes eighty years to open this door.

- What? That makes no sense at all.

- That's gonna be really great for the tenors, for all you in the back.

- Do you know what they're talking about?

- I have no idea.

- [sung] But wait no more, cause you can fly.

I've been imagining a lot of fireworks and explosions, a couple cartwheels at this point. And then we go to a little bit of a breakdown. We're gonna have some drummers come in. It's gonna be cool. 1, 2, 3. [

sung] Avocado, whoa! Avocado. Hey!

- Are you saying avocado?

- Yes, I am. I'm saying avocado. Because it's the avocado seed. You see. That's brought forth.
- Brought forth where?
- A total, lot of special knowings, and stop the static.
- What's static?
- So it makes perfect total sense.
- Like when I rub my socks on a carpet? Like what are you talking about?
- No, no, the static comes from...
- Or like electricity?
- It's more of a metaphor, it's not actual static.
- A metaphor for what?
- I mean, sometimes there could be static but no, you're making me lose my train of socks.
- [laughter]
- My train of thought! No, no, the bombs are the seed is a different seed than the avocado seed, that's a different seed. Dammit.

Ah to me, gosh, it's so crystal clear. For them, it's just a dumpster fire on a train wreck. I'm so close, just on the outskirts of wholeness. Am I speaking a secret language? "The Secret Society of Solitary Socks," by Brendon Allen on programsound.fm.

Brendon Allen - The Secret Society of Solitary Socks

- The Secret Society of Singular Socks.
- The Secret Society of Solitary Socks.

- Oh, sorry. The Secret Society of Solitary Socks.

- Shhhh.

- Wait what?

- Shh. Slippery Sam. Slippery slam.

- Wait what?

- Slippery Sam. So silent. Senior citizen's sonic susceptibility is sensitive to the sounds of said syllables. Ess. Slimy snakes. Snotty sunglasses. Spaghetti sauce swim suits. Slugs. Sludge. Salami sandwiches. Surely this is sufficient essing to scatter supervisors and seasoned spies. Splashing soundlessness upon this summons for solidarity. Shut yourself away somewhere silent, and listen to this spark.

- What are you doing?

- Shhhh.

- Seriously, what are you up to in the closet?

- Siblings shall sway and sashay to stop such a switch.

- What is that thing? Is that dad's old iPod? I thought it was broken.

- I simply sequestered the suitable source for stirring its screen.

- Is that the charging cord for an iPod? That is huge, so wide.

- A sizeable sourced sequesterous surge.

- Enough with the ess talk. This was worse than you tried to convince me that you had an English accent. Where did you find that anyway? Were you brave enough to go through the junk drawer? Ugh, scary.

- The sack of shunned strings and straps.

- The huge bag of wires in the storage closet.

- Mhm!

- Wow, brave.

- Success.

- What is with all the esses?
- Standard secret strategy.
- Uhh, thanks for clearing that up.
- Secret sorority succeeds solely. Submersed and sophisticated systems of speech.
- Did you get a new app? Last time it was tongue twisters. Now this?
- I submit.
- You are so weird. But it kinda like it.
- Strange? Singular.
- Sure. It's like when you got Minecraft and you only ate square food. Or when you played Mario Kart and only spoke Luigi's line for two weeks.
- Here we go!
- I prefer Toad anyways. Are you going to tell me what this is all about?
- Sleuthing seems to sharpen your sensibilities.
- Okay, um, it's a spy-world comic thing? You seem to think the adults can't understand you. But even I don't get what you're saying. And then the esses. I'm not sure what that's all about.
- Systemic subversions.
- Thanks for clearing that up.
- Selective sonorous sensitivity in seniors.
- Seniors. Like dad?
- Sharp sensibilities!
- So you're speaking in esses because you think adults cannot hear it?
- Spot on!
- Are you okay? I know dad raised his voice a bit about the socks.
- Shhhhh. Some silly steps succinctly to stop senior snooping.
- Did you hear me?
- Security and safety.

- Did something happen? Something more than the sock stuff with dad?
- Something?
- Why do you have to get the ancient iPod and the weird microphone thing?
- Subversion supplies.
- Okay, can you translate?
- Stimulating a storm for supply of supporters.
- A storm? What do you mean? Are you trying to get followers? Are you trying to be YouTube famous?
- A schism, a stir.
- A stunt.
- Synergy is starting!
- Huh?
- Slowly but surely.
- Okay, if you're trying to become famous on the internet, let me translate. To our listeners at home, you found an old iPod. You charged the old iPod with the long cord. A cord looks like it could power a spaceship. You figure out how the weird round button works. You find this microphone extension. Correction. You figure out that the thing is even a microphone in the first place. Then you get it working. And now dear listeners, you start to assemble a secret crew to overthrow the adult world.
- Society.
- Oh, to overthrow society.
- The secret society.
- Oh, thank you for clarifying. So society is safe? But parents are in for a surprise.
- Superb surprise.
- Aren't you supposed to be cleaning your room?
- Silence.
- Sounds like you're avoiding your task. Dad did ask you to do a mission.
- The secret society of solitary socks strives for standards superior to spring sprucing up.

- Sorry, what was that?
- Sprucing up is squat in the scope of the strategies of the secret society of solitary socks.
- The secret society of singular socks? That sounds cool.
- Solitary.
- Oh, sorry. The secret society of singular. The secret society of singular socks. The secret society of solitary socks. What?
- Some spaces still seem securable for some siblings.
- How do you come up with the words so quickly like that?
- The synonyms spark.
- Is that another app? You're nodding. You're crazy for words.
- Synonyms sing in my soul.
- Well, cinnamon sings in my soul. What's a cyminum? What? Now that is a sentence I bet you never hear your friends say. Cymimum sings in my soul.
- Silence is the standard statement from scores of sidekicks.
- Am I your sidekick? Your friends are not into the same kind of stuff as you.
- Silly, it's simply that sidekicks are a safety net. Squads are a sham. Simulated support spurious. Pseudo, even.
- I think there was some non-esses in there.
- Say synonym.
- Ugh, I can't! Are you telling me that you don't have any friends?
- The secret society of solitary socks will shift my status towards super secret stardom.
- Super secret stardom? So could you tell me a little bit about the society?
- Sorority into the secret society is shown subtly. The single sock is my symbol, such as the ess on Superman. Singular socks show symmetry through the unsimilarity of socks.
- So let me get this straight there. The mismatched socks is your group's bat signal?
- Shhh. Silence is key. And saboteurs are starting to swell.

- What does the secret society do?
- Sadly, such secrets are shown subversively in our sessions.
- So I have to join to find out right? And this recording is to promote a secret meeting, right?
- Spot on!
- Are you worried about running out of ess words by then?
- Seriously?
- Can you tell me about the word patterns? Why do you like it so much?
- Sometimes the patterns make me feel safe. Sometimes I don't know what to say and patterns help me.
- Is it hard to know the right thing to say at school?
- At school, at home, on the bus. Everywhere.
- I don't want to scare you, but you've been speaking without esses for a few minutes now.
- You know, making friends is not as easy as people like saying.
- Try to chat with people in whatever way you want. No matter what socks they're wearing. I think dad was trying to get you to tidy up. The whole where'd all your socks go thing was just him trying to make sense of the universe. I actually think he believes that there's an alternate universe inside the dryer that warps away single socks to feed an alien population. That's why he gets so excited when it's clothesline season. So we can stop feeding the aliens. He isn't mad at you. He's just baffled by interstellar activity. And why his socks don't seem to be invited to the party. How about you bring your broadcast to an end and I can help you tidy up. I don't think your listeners would mind. I bet you're gonna have tons of people join the secret society of single socks. Is that a smile I see? How about one final message to your listeners. Hey, you pay attention.
- So start off by sporting your support for the striving society, one sock at a time. Solo socks stretched on the slats of your fence. Secure a singular sock to your cycle, saluting the sky. Show a sock skirmish with stripes on one side and spots on the other. Single socks shape-shifted into special supplements for

stylish statements. Splashes of sass, statements of solidarity. So sport your surety by stretching singular socks. And as the society spreads, our staunchness will grow.

- So anyone with mishmashed socks - mishmash. So anyone with mismatched socks is in your squad? You know what? The other day I actually saw Dad using a single sock like a Swiffer on his hand to dust the lamps and clean the shelf. You know that means? I think dad is an honorary member.

- With the word Swiffer it looks like your status and dad's in the secret society of singular socks has been secured.

- Dad did actually send me up here. He wanted to see if you found any single socks as you were cleaning. I did my best to cover for you. Um, you're hugging me.

- You can tell dad I did find some socks.

- Oh, it looks like you're still recording.

- I'm not sure how to turn this thing off.

- Why don't you try?

- The Secret Society of Solitary Socks.

- The Secret Society of Solitary Socks.

The wee kid was played by August van Benschop-Allen.

The not-so-wee kid was played by Clover Clementine van Benschop-Allen.

The script was written by Brendon Allen.

HOST:

- No, no, no, Cara. You cannot wear that to school.

- Yes I can.

- Oh, you know what? I already laid the clothes out on the bed for you this morning.
- I don't care.
- Oh my god. Cara. Oh, you know what?
- What?
- What is this outfit anyways? I don't even know how to deconstruct it.
- Then don't.
- So you've got your brown plaid flair pants on?
- Yeaah.
- You've got this red collared t-shirt, and the collar, I might say, is quite high.
- It's poppin.
- You've got those green wings on. Where did you even get those from?
- The Halloween box.
- That yellow hat. Uggs. And you're wearing all of my rings, I noticed that by the way. And, are those my sunglasses? Like, dude, what do you think this is?
- Uhh, yeah, I was gonna ask you about the sunglasses. Can I wear your sunglasses? And these rings? There's just ten. Yeah. I like this outfit. I didn't like the outfit you put on the bed, it was ugly.
- No Cara. That wasn't ugly This is ugly. People are going to say this is ugly at school. Have you even looked in the mirror yet?
- Yes, of course I did. And I liked what I saw. And you looking at me is looking in a mirror because you made this.
- Oh, Lord, child. Why are you like this?
- I'm like this because I'm like this. Okay? And guess what? Even if what you're saying is true and everyone thinks this is the ugliest outfit ever, maybe this is like the ugliest outfit on the whole wide world planet. Even if that's true, and this is the ugly outfit. I chose it.
- Oh my God. You're so dramatic.
- Yeah, I wonder who I get that from?

- Oh.

- And if I may, mother, make another suggestion to you, my favorite writer and poet Afrakaren has made this sound diary. No. Love Letter. No. An evocation dissertation sensation celebration for the nation. Yeah. For her child. "Black Boy Joy."

- Geez, Cara. Okay. I'm listening.

- Thank you. Here it is. Afrakaren's "Black Boy Joy" on programsound.fm.

aFRaKaRen - Black Boy Joy

- Presenting Harlow Mingus Joy on cymbals and drums, performing "Rain Drop Hop."

- One. One and a two and three four, hit it!

- "Your children are not your children. They are sons and daughters of life's longing for itself. They come through you, but not from you. And though they are with you, yet they belong not to you. You may give them your love but not your thoughts, for they have their own thoughts. You may house their bodies but not their souls, for their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams. You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you. For life goes not backward, nor tarries from yesterday. You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forward." Lebanese writer and poet, Khalil Gibran.

We are halves of a once whole, polarized away from each other. A thundering Titan hurling lightning against the earth who birthed him. Black female-bodied mother, black male-bodied son. Charged particles around an atom. We hurtle toward, repel the other, whirl in an orbital spin. All weapons formed, unable to prosper without damage done to the wielder. We are a madness at each other, an often tumultuous cataclysmic convergence of storms. Katrina in proportion. Brewing, blowing, barely

ebbing, levees broken, we become a raging flood. Wild in our direction, flow down a current forced over uneven erosions. We churn still water into furies of foaming rapids that push us over the edge of ourselves, plummet us dark and deep into tempest, turbulent and beneath the surface, until buoyancy pulls us up away from drowning, waterlogged and exhausted. We will pull into rest. Rinsed, tight, and tense. We will evaporate, then begin our rains of terror again.

There was once upon a time a king, who had near his castle an enormous forest, in which wild animals of all sorts lived. One day, he dispatched a hunter into those woods to take a deer, but the hunter did not return. Something went wrong out there, said the king. And the next day, he sent two more hunters out to search for the first, but they did not return either. On the third day, he called all of his huntsman in and said, Scour that entire forest and stay at it until you've found all three of them. Not a one of those hunters ever returned, and moreover, the pack of dogs that went with them never came back either. No one after that dared to enter the forest, and let it be in its deep stillness and solitude. Only now and then an eagle or hawk flew over it. This situation went on for years. And then one day, a stranger appeared who wanted some work to do, and he offered to set foot in the dangerous woods. The king, however, refused to consent, saying, It is not safe in there, I have the feeling that you will end up like the others, and this is the last we'll see of you. The hunter replied, Sire, I'm well aware of the risk, and fear is something I pay no attention to. The hunter took his dog with him and walked into the forest. It wasn't long before the dog picked up the scent of game and went in pursuit. But he had hardly run three steps before he stood at the edge of a deep pool and could not go further. A naked arm reached out of the water, grabbed ahold of him, and pulled him down. When the hunter saw that he went back to the castle, got three men who came with pails, and they bucketed out the water. When they got down to the ground, they saw a wild man lying there, whose body was as brown and rusty as iron. His hair hung down from his head over his face, and all the way down to his knees. They tied him with cords and led him back to the castle. At the castle, there was great astonishment over this wild man. And the king had him locked up in an iron cage that he had placed in the courtyard, and he forbade anyone, on pain of

death, to open the locked door. He gave the key into the keeping of the Queen. Once that had been done, people could go safely into the forest once more. The king had an eight-year-old son, who one day was playing in the courtyard, and during that play, his golden ball fell down into the cage. The boy ran to the cage and said, Give me my golden ball. Not until you've opened the door for me, the man answered. Oh no, said the boy, I can't do it. The king won't let me, and he ran away. The next day, the boy returned and asked for his ball again. The wild man said, If you open the door, but the boy would not. On the third day, while the king was out hunting, the boy came once again and said, Even if I wanted to I couldn't open the lock, because I don't have the key. The wild man said, The key is under your mother's pillow, you can retrieve it. The boy, who really did want his ball back, threw caution to the wind, went into the castle, and got the key. The cage door was not easy to open, and the boy pinched his finger. When the door stood open, the wild man walked through it, gave the boy the golden ball, and hurried away. The boy suddenly felt great fear. He shouted and cried after him. Wild man, if you go away, they will beat me. The wild man wheeled around, lifted the boy onto his shoulders, and walked with brisk steps into the forest. When the king returned, he noticed the empty cage and inquired of the Queen how the wild man had got loose. She knew nothing about it. Went to check the key, and found it gone. She called the boy, but got no answer. The King sent a search party out into the fields, but they did not find the boy. It wasn't difficult to guess what had happened. And great grief and mourning settled on the Royal House.

In *Iron John: Men and Masculinity*, Robert Bly distills the fairy tale of Iron John into a parable to argue that a young boy's development into a whole and healthy functioning man is possible only when they embrace the wildness inside of themselves, which often means becoming the antithesis of what their mothers tried to parent them toward. Bly deconstructs the key under the mother's pillow saying, "Michael Meade, the myth teller, once remarked to me that the pillow is also the place where the mother stores all her expectations for you. She dreams, my son the doctor, my son the Jungian analyst, my son the Wall Street genius. But very few mother's dream, my son the wild man."

I can't stand him. And he can't stand me. Puberty has created a divide, canyon wide, that has become impossible to bridge between us. The western part of my parenting is heartbroken that my child has not chosen me to continue by their side at this juncture of their life. I worry, Did I do right by him? I spiral down into the what-ifs of what I didn't know how to do at the time, and how different it could have all been if I'd been a mother equipped with the current techniques of parenthood. I think of how fortunate mothers are now to have access to social media content that teaches and supports patient and gentle parenting, helping new parents to relinquish parenting paradigms that dismantle their children, rather than encourage and empower them. "Did I do enough?" plays on an obsessive loop in my head. Mom guilt, writing epic sagas of all the ways my parenting failed him.

Social Justice conversations in the current political climate have brought to light the precarious nature of parenting black children. For centuries, keeping them safe has meant teaching them to be appropriate, compliant, well-mannered beings in the face of authorities that see them as beasts. Naively believe that those we raise well-behaved will not be chalk-outlined in the streets. The intergenerational traumas of the black family, as a result of withstanding white supremacist terrorisms, have produced, en masse, generation after generation, an oppressive, often soul-crushing kind of parenting that narrows the lives of our children into survivors. We must be the ones to bring them to heel before the world does. And in the process, we too see our children as unruly animals we fight to tame the beast out of. There is a fine line between the parenting and policing of black children. We work to subdue the wildness of them through fostering emotional intelligence, as if the two aren't symbiotic within them, necessary halves of a whole. In doing so, parents, unaware, amputate their children from the core of themselves, in attempts to tame them into good children, seen and not heard. But it is dangerous to numb instinct and to deregulate intuition, to force compliance and obedience to arbitrary authority over their personal agency and autonomy. Romans 12:21 says, Do not be overcome by evil, overcome evil with all good. All the world's religions and thousands of male-oriented stories

from every continent provide admonishments similar to this one. If you look at stories about pubertal boys with an eye for this, you'll notice that in the stories, inspirational aphorisms are integrated into a call for young men to put forth their best, most mature selves by setting out on a journey of maturation, in which they will seek a path to truth, strength, and purpose. This is the case for Jesus, Moses, Arjuna, Buddha, Batman, Spiderman, Superman. The list is long. You'll also notice that in these stories, the evil that the adolescent and later man conquers is not just an enemy army, but generally, it is also his own urges, appetites, and issues. What his mentor tells him is the raw or primitive inside of him, he must not give into it. You must direct its energies, even transcend it. The wounding that the young man goes through, the struggle, the search for truth, the battle with dark forces, and the time in the wilderness are as much about discovering identity and purpose through and beyond the primitive forces in him as coming in contact with the divine. Author Michael Gurion, from the book *The Purpose of Boys*.

In the past eight years, it has been primarily me and him. And in this past almost decade, he has watched me, as the constant and consistent parent, struggle to navigate the ups and downs of co-parenting within relationships still in need of repair, while also challenged by the adversities of living in a black female body that has its decades of trauma. Recovering from my own insufficient parenting, while trying to break the cycle from reoccurring, is exhausting in a body that suffers from chronic fatigue and inflammation. Did I fail him? Imagine what it does to the psyches of children, to watch their mothers struggle with seemingly invisible forces that wedge them in between the rocks and hard places of a society that barely allows a black body to breathe, or the resources to feel the multitude of tiny fractures that makes a mosaic of black women's sanities. Did I fail him? It is far too common for black mothers to parent through their debilitations and disabilities, undiagnosed and unseen. To raise the children they risk it all for while simultaneously trying to address their own inner child's needs triggered from their mothering into functioning like a sibling, regressing into the unreasonable and reactionary forces within them. How, then, do we teach young black boys evolving into men to see the humanity and strength in

the woman raising them, when the medias that influenced them writes her narrative as sad and broken? Did I fail him?

“In the village, mentors play some of the roles that in the West are assumed by parents. I need to spend some time clarifying the different roles as we villagers see them. If mentors are spiritual parents, biological parents are stepping stones, the points of departure for children. At their best, biological mothers and fathers are friends of their children. But their limitation is to be almost helpless in the business of bringing out the child's true spirit. This is where the mentor enters in, since his or her spirit becomes for the child a mirror of what the child is feeling inside. Consequently, their relationship has some content that is based on spirit. In contrast to the parental relationship, which is based on biology, the latter relationship is fixed and cannot be changed, which sometimes makes it a source of irritation, especially on the subject of discipline, because the child is prone to see discipline as punishment. In contrast, the relationship with a mentor can be changed, which makes choice more apparent.” From the book, *The Healing Wisdom of Africa*, by Malidoma Patrice Somé.

- Oh, I am, okay.

- Yeah, of course you are.

- And so that's going to be the premise, is like meet me introducing you? But then you have to find like new stuff and you have to...

- Well, no, not necessarily. I mean, like, you introducing me to things, and then me being able to speak on it. And then us disagreeing or agreeing on it and having a conversation about it. I think maybe the podcast, you're gonna have sections, and one of the sections could be you introducing me to an artist, and then, you've listened to it for your second, take a break, and then we talk about it.

- Okay. But then couldn't you introduce me to stuff too?

- But how am I going to introduce you to something I don't know?

- Well, you have to know. You would have to find out.

- Okay, but the only way...

- Because you're you're interested in it right?

- Yah.

- I remember everything that he is choosing to be is because I parented him radically from the time he was gifted me. I parented a free child with his own mind from early by listening to the wisdom spirit embedded within me, for the child they permitted me to carry. The midwife said in the first days of overwhelm, when I worried if I'd read enough books to care for him, the baby is the book. He will teach you him. And immediately, he made clear to me that he would not bend to my will. I could not twist him compliant. He focused me on the parent I wanted to be for the child in front of me, versus the fantasy I had conceived in my imagination. So no, I have not failed him. I see him. I built him a community of loving beings, who craft space for the textures of his maleness and embrace the role to parent, guide, mentor into place, the aspects of him that I, as a mother, I am unable to participate in nurturing. I did not fail him. I see him. The child I have is a result of being aware and mindful of their journey as an autonomous spirit being, who chose me to parent and portal him into this world. I must trust the choices of the person I raised, even if it means they must distance. I did not fail him. I see him. I have a Master's degree in the observation and independent study of this black boy's joy, and these challenges of adolescent puberty has me working diligently towards a PhD in ensuring that he is black and as free as he chooses to be, even if he must be free from me in order to find himself. I raised a dope child, because I see him.

So I've got a beautiful little person in my home who came from my body. And he literally is joy, because that's his last name. But he has been such an instrumental part in how I feel like I've developed my voice as a writer, and how I've come into myself as an artist. So this is in dedication to my amazing little person whose name is Harlow Mingus Joy.

I love you Harlow Mingus Joy, I love you Harlow Mingus Joy. I love you Harlow Mingus, love you Harlow Mingus, love you Harlow Mingus Joy. I love you Harlow Mingus Joy, I love you Harlow Mingus Joy. I love you Harlow Mingus, love you Harlow Mingus, love you Harlow Mingus Joy.

Son of mine, you changed this life when you came forth within it that winter's night. A long awaited odd inspiring surprise. A voice of nature come to intertwine these lives. Limbs articulated, features defined, lungs bellowing forth a warrior's cry. Perfectly alien, fragile, human. Awestruck, in my wonderment of you, in my reverence of you. So deeply and truly in love with you in only a second or two. Deeper than cartilage and tissue, deeper than blood through sinew and muscle. Thief of my heart, now the constant of my mind. And motivation to change the ways I couldn't have if you hadn't come in time. And the beautiful thing is, it is not only I who sing your praises. We are the many who love you, a community that lovingly devotes to you. Those of us who love you, we are a fortress around you. We wear your hopes as halos on our hearts, and the wings we use to protect you, we surround you. Oceans deep and star-sky high, committed to ensuring your life will shine into the world. You have humbled me, brought into being all that faith has been whispering. Constantly I find myself questioning how such a little person bears so much wisdom. And then come into remembering that if that is the infinite value of you, to force the arrogant me to rethink how I perceive everything. How you bring me down to earth when I must bend myself to lift you into my arms, to discover that in lifting you, you lift me. Within a hug, inside a kiss. And I'm reminded that tenderness can exist in this world. You have been a gift of wondering since you arrived, a beautiful gift of an endless surprise.

Oh you are my one and only, you are my one and only, you are my one and only, you are my one and only. I love you Harlow Mingus Joy, I love you Harlow Mingus Joy. I love you Harlow Mingus, love you Harlow Mingus, love you Harlow Mingus Joy.

HOST:

- I'm on a long hike up a large mountainside. I'm watching myself hike up a mountain. I reach the top and the view is miraculous. All I can see is the blue of the sky, and valleys, and green, and streams as far as the eye can see. I see myself take in the breathtaking surroundings. There's a flag on top of the mountain, and as I approach it, I realize...

- Blanky? My childhood blanket? Oh, I missed you so much.

- I take the blanket flag and wrap it around my head. The rest of my hair blows in the wind. What is most peculiar is that I'm experiencing all of this firsthand. And at the same time, I'm watching myself from a distance, experienced the same. I'm on the mountain, yes. But I can also see my body on the mountain. I see myself close my eyes and smile deep inside my heart.

- Wait a minute. I haven't seen my baby blanket for years now. How the hell is my baby blanket all the way up this mountain? Where is this mountain even? This is impossible. This is like like a dream. Oh my god. Oh my god. Oh my god. This is a dream. I'm dreaming, but I know I'm dreaming. Oh my god. Okay, stay calm. Stay calm. Well, what do you, what do you want to do? You can do literally anything you want right now. This is amazing. I'm dreaming! I'm dreaming! I'm dreaming! Ahhhhhh! Wow.

- As I'm dancing around, I fail to notice that it's becoming very dark and cloudy. I get a cold shiver up my spine. I turn around to see if someone might be there.

- Hello? Ugh. I don't like this feeling. Look, this is a dream. I know I'm dreaming, so go away whatever it is, whoever you are. I turn around, and far off in the distance is a group, a mass of hundreds of thousands of people. But not just people, more like entities. They have no faces, it's very hard to see them because they're so far, but I have a very bad feeling. Slowly they are approaching toward the mountains. They feel like hate. Like the destruction of our planet. Feels like doo doo.

- Ugh, I was having such a good time. Go away. Go away. This is my dream. And I'm know I'm dreaming. So, go away! You're ruining this. And you're scaring me now. Go! Shoo! Get out of here. Go go go go go! Oh gosh, they're coming closer. Oh my god, no. It just feels like there's nothing I can do. Please just leave, or just let me get out of here. You could come, but let me go. No, no, what am I saying? There's so many other people and trees and animals here I don't want you to mess with. Go

