

The Kingdom by The Sea

By Marco Antonio Rodriguez

CHARACTERS

SARA

HENRI

REYNOLD

TIME: Tomorrow and tomorrow...

PLACE: The edges of New York's Bronx River

Synopsis: At the edges of New York's Bronx river, three strangers are confronted with an inevitable choice

LIGHTS

A blank space.

SARA, HENRI and REYNOLD stare out.

Rustle of river waves.

Beat.

Sara steps forward.

SARA

What was its original name?

HENRI

Rananchqua. Others called it Keskeskeck.

REYNOLD

I'll stick with BRONX.

SARA

Who were its natives?

HENRI
The Lenape.

SARA
When was it born?

HENRI
When God took a deep breath in and was too afraid to let it out.

SARA
Until she did.

HENRI
Until HE did.

REYNOLD
So... God farted it into existence?

SARA
How long before the river finishes its meal?

HENRI
Just about done.

SARA
It's pretty hungry.

HENRI
Long slumber.

SARA
I can smell it.

HENRI
I feel its drops.

REYNOLD
You just pissed yourself.

HENRI
Oh. Right.

SARA
Let's do something while we wait.

REYNOLD

We are. We're waitin'.

SARA

I like nicknames.

REYNOLD

I like silence.

SARA

Let's see... you're Sugar-booger.

HENRI

Cool.

SARA

I'm... Nettie-pot.

HENRI

Okay.

SARA

You're-

REYNOLD

Mm mm. NO.

SARA

I'll touch a drop.

HENRI

Can you?

SARA

I'll touch.

HENRI

How does it feel?

SARA

Not cold.

HENRI

It's supposed to be.

SARA
There's a breeze in it.

HENRI
What does it whisper?

SARA
If I say you won't believe me.

HENRI
I won't.

SARA
What were you? Before...

HENRI
A teacher. What were you?

SARA
I don't remember. What were-?

REYNOLD
Mm mm. NO.

HENRI
It's getting closer.

SARA
I can go in.

HENRI
Will you?

Pause.

SARA
No more shells.

HENRI
No more sand.

SARA
I feel sand.

REYNOLD
That's bird shit.

SARA
Oh. Right.

HENRI
The only ones left are the ones with wings.

SARA
And us.

HENRI
We don't fly anymore.

SARA
We did.

HENRI
When?

SARA
I don't remember.

REYNOLD
Will you two shut up? Damn. Gettin' on my last apocalyptic nerve.

HENRI
Nothing behind us.

SARA
Memory.

HENRI
Which one's your favorite?

SARA
When I fell in love.

HENRI
Nice.

SARA
I was six.

HENRI
Oh.

SARA

His body was in a casket.

REYNOLD

You killed him?

SARA

I didn't know him. A friend of my mother's? My father's lover? Perfect hair. Perfect three-piece suit. Alabaster skin. Bullet holes filled in with Russian piping ruffles. A shell. I leaned over his mouth and listened to the ocean.

REYNOLD

It just got closer.

HENRI

I can go in.

REYNOLD

Will you?

Pause.

SARA

Which one's your favorite?

HENRI

When I moved back home after being fired from teaching.

SARA

Nice.

HENRI

Four blocks from my mami. Not too much. Just enough.

SARA (TO REYNOLD)

Which one's your-?

HENRI

And my piano.

SARA

Which one's-?

HENRI

And the Challah bread.

SARA
Which one's-?

HENRI
And the cuchifrito.

SARA
Oh. You're Jewish and Puerto Rican?

HENRI
I'm not circumcised, so I'm confused.

SARA
It just got closer.

REYNOLD
I can go in.

HENRI
Will you?

Pause.

SARA
Which one's your favorite?

REYNOLD
NO.

SARA
You have to.

REYNOLD
Why?

HENRI
We're waiting.

REYNOLD
My daughter smiled every morning in her dreams.

HENRI
Nice.

REYNOLD
It hurt.

SARA
I pee in my dreams.

HENRI
I claw at my arms.

REYNOLD
There.

HENRI
Here.

REYNOLD
But it wasn't.

HENRI
We don't have to wait.

SARA
We can jump in.

REYNOLD
With the rest of the kingdom.

Beat.

SARA
You know I CANNOT get this hair wet, right?

HENRI
It will make a beautiful coral reef.

SARA
Sugar-booger.

HENRI
Nettie-pot.

REYNOLD
What was mine?

SARA
I don't remember.

REYNOLD
The birds will.

SARA
My feet are wet!

HENRI
Hold on.

SARA
To what?

REYNOLD
My baby.

HENRI
My mami.

SARA
My heart.

REYNOLD
I can't swim.

HENRI
It's ok. When you swim you hope.

REYNOLD
What will happen after?

HENRI
Not us.

Henri and Reynold run into the abyss.

Beat.

SARA
Wait! I REMEMBER!

Beat.

Blackout.

End of play.

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