

ESCAPEGOAT

May Treuhaft-Ali

where to find me:

89-10 35th Avenue #A5L
Jackson Heights, NY 11372

may.treuhaft.ali@gmail.com
917-553-0146

Characters:

MOTHER and ISABELA, two tortoises

POSTDOC and EXPERT, two humans

JUDAS67 and JUDAS29, two goats

There are three actors in this play. All three must be femme or female-identifying.

MOTHER, POSTDOC and JUDAS67 are played by the same actor.

EXPERT and JUDAS29 are played by the same actor. The oldest of the three.

ISABELA is played by the third actor. The youngest of the three.

Actors of any race or ethnicity may play these characters. Please do not ascribe a single racial identity to goats, or tortoises, or scientists.

Setting:

The island of Isabela, in the Galápagos.

The island is covered in forest.

Notes:

Interludes are indefinite passages of time compressed into a single moment.

Blank space on the page translates into non-verbal thought and action.

Lines without punctuation are invitations for actors to make their own rhythmic choices.

The forest in this play should not feel “natural.” Rather, the forest should feel as explicitly human-made as possible, and should be constructed out of found objects and arts & crafts materials.

ISABELA WITH ONE L

Twilight. The forest is lush and thriving.

In the forest are a cave and a drip pool, which is probably a kiddie pool in actuality. MOTHER carries ISABELA out of the cave. ISABELA is 72 hours old. MOTHER sets her down at the edge of the drip pool.

MOTHER.

Here we are. Your very own drip pool.

ISABELA.

What'll we do with it, Mama?

MOTHER.

This is where we'll eat and sleep and play together every day.

When you were just a tiny little egg, I searched the whole island for a drip pool. When I found this one, I guarded it for a hundred days so no one else could drink it up.

ISABELA.

A hundred days sounds very long.

ISABELA steps into the drip pool. She drinks through her mouth and her tail.

ISABELA.

Come play with me in the drippy pool!

MOTHER.

I want you to have it all to yourself.

ISABELA.

Why?

MOTHER.

Because you're my baby.

ISABELA.

But aren't you thirsty?

MOTHER.

I'll be fine.

ISABELA notices one of her toys. She points to a rainstick.

ISABELA.

What's that Mama?

MOTHER.

If you turn her upside down, you can hear the mist creepy-crawling from the sky, through the trees, all the way down to your drip pool.

She places her hands over ISABELA's. Together, they turn the rainstick upside down.

ISABELA.

She's talking to me!

MOTHER.

She's saying: "Welcome!"

ISABELA.

Very nice to meet you!

MOTHER turns the rainstick right side up.

MOTHER.

Now she's saying: "What's your name, little girl?"

ISABELA.

My name is – Za – Za –

MOTHER.

Isabela with one L.

ISABELA.

I-sa-be-la. That's a funny name, Mama. Why'd you pick it?

MOTHER.

I named you after our island.

ISABELA.

What's so special about the island? It's just a big rock.

MOTHER.

This island is magical.

ISABELA.

Am I magical?

MOTHER.

We'll find out.

Now it's time to get out of the drip pool.

ISABELA.
Already?

MOTHER.
We can't soak this one up too fast. Who knows when we'll find another.

ISABELA.
There are no more drippy pools?

MOTHER.
That's not for you to worry about.
I can build a fire. We'll be nice and cozy.

She makes a small fire.

Come warm up.

ISABELA emerges from the drip pool and curls up by the fire.

There. Isn't that nice?
This will keep your lips from turning blue. I wove it out of moss.

MOTHER wraps ISABELA in a beautiful, intricately patterned blanket.

ISABELA.
How did you make it so beautiful?

MOTHER.
I've been working on it for a very long time.

ISABELA.
Since I was an egg?

MOTHER.
Long before then.

ISABELA.
How many days is long before then?

MOTHER.
I laid my first clutch of eggs many years ago.

ISABELA.

Does that mean I have brothers and sisters? Where are they? When do I get to meet them? Are they pretty like you?

MOTHER.

Isabela. Please. No more questions.
You're here now. And that's enough.

MOTHER momentarily faints, then comes to.

ISABELA.

Mama?

MOTHER.

I'm fine. It comes and then it passes.

ISABELA.

That's happened before?

You need water.

MOTHER.

No.

ISABELA.

You didn't drink any today.

MOTHER.

Please. My Isabela. The water's for you.

MOTHER retrieves a stick of orange and purple marshmallows and toasts it over the fire.

Take a bite of this.

ISABELA.

Yesterday you said never eat anything that isn't green.

MOTHER.

This is a sesuvium. They start out green, but change color when they're thirsty.

ISABELA takes a bite.

ISABELA.

Mmmm. Sweet and gooey.

She finishes it.

Can I have more?

MOTHER.

That was the only one I could find.

ISABELA.

They're all gone?

MOTHER.

Someone else ate them.

Not everyone is as kind as a tortoise.

ISABELA.

Not everyone is a tortoise?

MOTHER.

We'll discuss it when you're older.

ISABELA.

What else is on this island?

MOTHER.

It's nothing to worry about.

ISABELA.

Mothers don't lie to their children.

MOTHER.

We call them goats. Pirates brought them to Isabela a long time ago.

ISABELA.

What are pirates?

MOTHER.

They're big primates with no teeth and funny hats who lumber around and growl.

ISABELA.

Do goats wear funny hats too?

MOTHER.

Goats are not funny. They devour everything in their path.

ISABELA.
Like my snack?

MOTHER.
Yes. Like sesuvium.

ISABELA.
Are goats evil?

MOTHER.
Not evil, just stupid.

ISABELA.
There must be some goats who are smart.

MOTHER.
Even if they are smart they never think.

ISABELA.
Does that make them stupid?

MOTHER.
I guess not.

ISABELA.
Does that make them evil?

MOTHER.
Maybe.

ISABELA.
Will I ever meet a goat?

MOTHER.
No.

ISABELA.
But I want to know what they look like.

MOTHER.
I will keep them far away from you.

ISABELA.
Mama?

MOTHER.
Yes?

ISABELA.
Do tortoises change color when they're thirsty?

MOTHER.
You were just in the drip pool.

ISABELA.
I can't help it, Mama. Can I go back in?

MOTHER.
Not tonight, my love. We have to make this one last.
I have a tiny trickle of rainwater. It was supposed to be for emergencies.

ISABELA.
Can we find more?

MOTHER.
I don't know.

She digs up a music box that she's hidden in the forest. She holds it to ISABELA's lips.

ISABELA.
You should drink some too.

MOTHER.
I can wait.

She opens the music box. Water trickles into ISABELA's mouth in the form of music. ISABELA is very nearly lulled to sleep. And then:

A loud popping noise.

JUDAS29 has punctured the kiddie pool. Water spreads across the stage.

Oblivious to the tortoises, JUDAS29 takes ISABELA's blanket in her mouth. She eats it.

The forest begins to die.

MOTHER shrivels up, dehydrated. She rolls onto her shell.

JUDAS29 finishes her little munch. ISABELA stares at the ruin.

ISABELA.
You ate my blanket.

JUDAS29.
Bahhhh.

ISABELA.
And destroyed my drip pool. We needed that water and now it's in the ground.
My mother wove that blanket out of moss and guarded the drip pool for a hundred days and they weren't yours to take. Right Mama?
Mama.
MAMA?!?!?!?

No answer comes from MOTHER's lifeless body. ISABELA turns back to the goat.

WHAT DID YOU DO TO HER?

JUDAS29.
BAAAAHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!

JUDAS29 trots off to find her next snack.

ISABELA tries to roll her mother back onto her feet.

ISABELA.
Mama. Mama. You're upside down.
Don't do that. It's unnatural.
Your shell should be face to face with the moon.
Your beautiful shell so smooth
With freckles blue and red and green and orange.
Mama. The moon wants to kiss your freckles.
The moon wants to kiss your freckles but your freckles are cold as ice.

Not knowing what else to do, she collects whatever water she can from the ground and bathes her mother in it.

She realizes that she is performing a funeral rite.

THE PROJECT

A research station. ISABELA sits in an artificial drip pool. EXPERT attempts to feed her a sesuvium.

EXPERT.

Come on, Isabela. You need to eat.

ISABELA glares at her.

Here Comes the Airplane!

EXPERT's hand grazes ISABELA's snout and she bites it.

Ow!

POSTDOC rushes in.

POSTDOC.

Everything okay?

EXPERT.

She bit me again.

POSTDOC.

You need ice?

EXPERT.

I'll be fine.

She turns back to ISABELA.

You need time. I get that.

I hope you'll learn to trust me. I hope one day you and I will be friends.

But until then, you still need to eat.

She sets the sesuvium down on the edge of the pool and backs away.

ISABELA warily approaches it and takes it in her mouth. She swims as far away from the humans as possible, then begins to nibble the sesuvium.

She doesn't like me.

POSTDOC.

She tolerates you. That's more than the rest of us can say.

Like, doesn't she know we saved her life?
She was half-dead when we found her. Now she has everything she could ever want.
Dogs, cats, once they figure out you're on their side, they love you.

EXPERT.
Yeah, well, Isabela isn't our pet.

POSTDOC.
Real creative name you picked there.

EXPERT.
I didn't pick it. She told me her name and I listened.
That probably sounds crazy.

POSTDOC.
If anyone could speak tortoise, it'd be you.

EXPERT.
I've met more tortoises than humans since I moved here.

POSTDOC.
Lucky. She's my first.

EXPERT.
Really?

POSTDOC.
Yeah. I've been here six months, and this is my first tortoise. Isn't that sad?
I remember reading about these guys in grad school. First Darwin. Then your book. I've been waiting
years to meet the famous Galápagos tortoise. And she won't even let me near her.

EXPERT.
For what it's worth, Isabela is an anomaly. Tortoises are usually very sociable.

POSTDOC.
I wouldn't know.

EXPERT.
I suppose we can't blame her. She's traumatized.

POSTDOC.
My very first Galápagos tortoise, and she'll also be my last.

EXPERT.
She might not be the last. We could find more.

POSTDOC.

We won't.

I've been working on an idea.

I mean, take it or leave it. You're the boss.

EXPERT.

At this point I'd try anything.

POSTDOC.

Okay, so, the problem is this drought, right?

It never rains here, but there's all this mist.

And usually that mist trickles down from the trees to make drip pools.

But the trees have no leaves to catch the mist.

So what happened to the leaves?

EXPERT.

That's what we've all been trying to figure out.

POSTDOC.

A few weeks ago I saw goats climbing trees.

EXPERT.

Oh.

That's amazing. I didn't know they could do that.

POSTDOC.

The goats are eating everything. The leaves, the plants, even the tree bark. The whole island is dying because of them.

So if we get rid of the goats, the drip pools will come back, and the tortoises will be safe.

EXPERT.

There are hundreds of thousands of goats on Isabela. Where would we even put them all?

POSTDOC gives her a look.

Oh.

You want to ...

That doesn't seem right.

POSTDOC.

It's the only way.
Besides, they shouldn't even be here.

EXPERT.

They've been on Isabela for five hundred years. They have more of a right to be here than we do.

POSTDOC.

They're still an invasive species.

EXPERT.

Where are you from again?

POSTDOC.

Long Island.

EXPERT.

Tell me, is *homo sapiens* indigenous to Long Island?

Surely they've pushed out some local species since settling there. Do you think we should exterminate them?

POSTDOC.

It's different.

EXPERT.

But you see my point.

I am a conservationist. My job is to conserve, not destroy.

POSTDOC.

I hate that we have to do it this way. I mean, I'm a vegetarian.

But if we get this right, we can save a whole species from extinction.

And not just any species. The *Galápagos tortoise*.

It's the right thing to do.

EXPERT.

How can murdering innocent creatures be the right thing to do?

POSTDOC.

It's them or the tortoises.

And honestly? There are millions of goats all over the world.

There's only one Isabela.

They look at her. She is watching and listening.

She's looking at us!

EXPERT.
That's a first.

If —
If we were to do this —
How do you propose we should go about it?

POSTDOC.
Okay, so, I've been researching goats. We can't just round them up and drop bullets on them. They'll learn that helicopters mean danger. When they hear that chop-chop sound, they'll hide beneath a tree and hold their breath.
We need to do it in a way they won't expect.
So we select a few goats, the smartest goat in each herd —

EXPERT.
Goats aren't smart.

POSTDOC.
They figured out how to climb trees.

EXPERT.
Maybe there are some exceptions.

POSTDOC.
So we find those exceptions
and we equip them with a tracking device
that sends signals to our pilots
and we wait for them to lead us to their herd
then we —

You know.

EXPERT.
Yeah.

POSTDOC.
Once we kill that herd, we wait for our goat to lead us to a new herd. We kill the entire herd except for our goat. The traitor goat. The Judasgoat.

EXPERT.
Judasgoat? Really?

POSTDOC.
Sure, Judasgoat, why not?

EXPERT.

But if these are smart goats, won't they eventually figure out that we're following them?

If I was a goat —

A Judasgoat as you say —

If I knew I was being watched I'd stop looking for herds.

POSTDOC.

Goats can't stand to be alone. When the Judasgoat's herd dies, it will search for another, and another, and another. It's their driving instinct.

EXPERT.

Unless they're pregnant. I've seen pregnant goats self-isolate.

POSTDOC.

So we sterilize them.

EXPERT.

If we do that, we have to give them hormone implants so they're always in heat.

POSTDOC is suddenly hesitant.

POSTDOC.

Wait, really?

EXPERT.

Sterilization could mess with their social instincts. We'd have to make up for that risk.

POSTDOC.

Have you ever seen an animal in heat?

I know we're gonna kill them, but we don't have to torture them.

EXPERT.

Fine, we make it so they're only in heat half the year.

POSTDOC.

That still seems excessive.

EXPERT.

If we're gonna do this, we have to do it right.

We can't just rely on their desire for companionship. Desire is an uncontrolled variable.

So, hormone implants.

POSTDOC.
You're the boss.

EXPERT.
Hey. Great job.

POSTDOC.
Really?

EXPERT.
This is the first plan in a long time that I actually think might work.

POSTDOC.
Wow. That means a lot.

One day, there will be no more goats on this island. No humans either.
It'll just be Isabela.
And her children. And their drip pools. And the plants.
The way it was always supposed to be.

They look at ISABELA, beaming. She stares back.

BUTT NUZZLES

A holding pen in the research station. JUDAS29 is there. The door of the pen opens and JUDAS67 is pushed inside. The two goats begin nuzzling each other's anuses.

JUDAS67.

You're a seaside goat. You've got that kelpy-fishy smell.

JUDAS29.

I can't tell where you're from.

JUDAS67.

My herd lives on the big volcano.

JUDAS29.

Wait, the pointy volcano or the fat one with the crater top?

JUDAS67.

The *big* big volcano. The one that pokes the clouds.

JUDAS29.

You *live* on the pointy volcano?! Is that even safe? I heard they spew fire.

JUDAS67.

My volcano is not going to spew anything. It's about as active as my nanny-goat after lunch.

JUDAS29 takes a long whiff of JUDAS67's anus.

JUDAS29.

I've never smelled volcano before.

JUDAS67.

Am I too smokey for you? We're an acquired taste.

JUDAS29 sniffs again.

JUDAS29.

I like it, I think.

I'm so happy to see you. I've been all alone in here.

More nuzzling.

JUDAS67.

I'm happy to see you too. I miss my herd.

JUDAS29.
I miss my daughter.

JUDAS67.
You have a kid? How big?

JUDAS29.
She was fifty-two days old when I left. Now, I don't even know.

JUDAS67.
Wow. She's a baby! You left your baby alone? To come *here*?

JUDAS29.
She's fine, she's with my herd.

JUDAS67.
Did you tell your herd you were leaving?

JUDAS29.
Did you?

JUDAS67.
It's different when you have kids. When I have kids, I'll never take my eyes off them for a single second.

JUDAS29.
You're basically a kid yourself.

JUDAS67.
I'll be ready in the spring. My mother says she never knew real joy until she had me. I can't wait to find out what real joy feels like.

JUDAS29.
Doesn't your herd give you real joy?

JUDAS67.
Well, you know.

JUDAS29.
What?

JUDAS67.
Sometimes you get that gnawing feeling.

JUDAS29.
Hunger?

JUDAS67.
Sort of like hunger, but you don't feel it in your belly.

JUDAS29.
I know what you mean.

JUDAS67.
You get that feeling too?
Of course you do. You're here.

The door opens.

JUDAS29.
It's finally my turn.

JUDAS67.
Are you excited?

JUDAS29.
I thought I would be. But now that it's time, I want to run away.

JUDAS67.
It's too late for that now.

JUDAS29 makes her way toward the door.

JUDAS29.
When this is all over, I'll come visit the big volcano.

JUDAS67 smiles. Are they flirting?

JUDAS67.
I'd like that.

JUDAS29.
See you soon, then.

JUDAS29 exits through the door. It slams shut.

HERD MENTALITY

The research station. The scientists identify the smartest goats on Isabela. POSTDOC interviews JUDAS29 and EXPERT interviews JUDAS67. Every time a gunshot is heard in the distance, the actors switch characters.

POSTDOC.

Thanks for coming in this afternoon.

JUDAS29.

Thank you for interviewing me.

POSTDOC.

Let's not think of this as an interview.

Gunshot.

JUDAS67.

What was that?

EXPERT.

You'll have to excuse the racket.

JUDAS67.

I've never heard a noise like that in my life. What do you call it?

EXPERT.

That? Oh, uh. It's a, a signal of sorts. It means that a candidate was not a good fit for us and had to be eliminated.

Gunshot.

JUDAS29.

So if I fail this test, I could get ... *eliminated*?

POSTDOC.

Let's not think of this as a test.

So tell me why you're here.

JUDAS29.

I thought *you* were supposed to tell me why I'm here.

I still don't know anything about this project.

Gunshot.

EXPERT.

Our notes indicate that you didn't resist being brought here. On the contrary, you followed our crew to the van. Why?

JUDAS67.

I guess I was curious.

EXPERT.

Curiosity is highly abnormal for goats.

JUDAS67.

Is it?

EXPERT.

When was the last time you asked one of your herdmates a question?

JUDAS67.

I don't remember.

EXPERT.

That's very telling, isn't it?

Gunshot.

POSTDOC.

How do you feel about your herd?

JUDAS29.

I love them. If there's only one patch of candelabra cactus left, we all share it. No one tries to take it for themselves. Even if it's really tender, juicy cactus, which is hard to find these days. That's the kind of herd we are.

POSTDOC.

So, if your herd is so great, why are you here?

JUDAS29.

You captured me.

POSTDOC.

Are you saying you didn't want to come? Because our notes suggest otherwise.

JUDAS29.

What notes? Have you been watching me?

POSTDOC.

We were watching your whole herd at first. But you immediately stood out.

Gunshot.

JUDAS67.

I mean, I used to ask questions when I was a kid. What's that bird, where does lightning come from, what's on the other islands. Stuff like that.

But nobody ever answered them. They just told me to go play.

EXPERT.

I was like you when I was little. I asked questions all day long. And if my parents didn't know the answer, we'd all go on a trip to find it.

JUDAS67.

Your parents let you take trips?

EXPERT.

All the time. To the zoo, to the aquarium, to museums. It's what made me want to be a scientist.

JUDAS67.

Wow. Once I tried to go on a trip. I just wanted to see what was beyond the big volcano. My nanny-goat caught me and I got twelve headbutts.

Gunshot.

JUDAS29.

I stood out?

POSTDOC.

Of course. You're much smarter than the rest of them.

JUDAS29.

Don't insult my herd!

POSTDOC.

Oh come on, you must know you are.

JUDAS29.

My herd doesn't acknowledge individual achievements.

POSTDOC.

I can see why. If they did, you'd have left them long ago.

Gunshot.

EXPERT.

What would you be like now if your intelligence had been encouraged from a young age?

JUDAS67.

You think I'm smart?

EXPERT.

I think you're the smartest goat on Isabela.

Gunshot.

JUDAS29.

I would never leave my herd.

POSTDOC.

Maybe you should. They're holding you back.

JUDAS29.

You're not going to make me leave my herd, are you?

POSTDOC.

No, we'll send you home tonight.

But it's clear that you're bored with them.

JUDAS29.

Well, maybe a little bit.

POSTDOC.

And you have every reason to be. They're not like you. Somewhere deep down, you know that.

JUDAS29.

If you feel superior to someone, you don't fully respect them. And if you don't respect them, you can't fully love them.

POSTDOC.

Wise words for a goat.

JUDAS29.

I'll assume you don't mean to be condescending.

Gunshot.

EXPERT.

Your herd doesn't recognize how special you are.

JUDAS67.

That can't be true. They love me.

EXPERT.

Do they? It sounds like they don't even know you.

You have this whole other side of you that they will never understand.

JUDAS67.

Is it possible to love what you don't understand?

EXPERT.

Once again, an excellent question.

Gunshot.

POSTDOC.

Is it really love, do you think? What if you tell yourself you love them to justify their refusal to acknowledge that you're special?

JUDAS29.

Why would anyone pretend to love?

POSTDOC.

Resistance to change. Fear of loneliness.

JUDAS29.

How do I know if my love is real or pretend?

POSTDOC.

No one ever does, really.

JUDAS29.

What about my daughter? Am I just pretending to love her?

POSTDOC.

I mean, if you have to ask ...

A terrible realization sinks in for JUDAS29.

JUDAS29.

I'm a bad mother.

Gunshot.

JUDAS67.

I have another question. If I sign up for your project, whatever it is, can I still have kids?

EXPERT.

You want kids?

JUDAS67.

I always have. I can't see my life without them.

EXPERT.

Interesting. In my line of work, we call that herd mentality.

JUDAS67.

I've never heard of that.

EXPERT.

Do many of your herdmates aspire to motherhood?

JUDAS67.

Yes.

EXPERT.

How many of them forego childrearing for the sake of pursuing their own endeavors?

JUDAS67.

None.

EXPERT.

You say you can't see your life without kids. Can you prove that that's coming from you and not your peers' influence?

JUDAS67.

No. No, I can't.

EXPERT.

I have children. My children have children.

JUDAS67.

You're a nanny-goat?

EXPERT.

I suppose I am. But I left them all behind to come here.

JUDAS67.

How can you stand it?

EXPERT.

I miss them terribly. But I don't regret it.

You're like me. You have a calling. And if you throw it away, you'll spend your whole life feeling empty.

JUDAS67.

That gnawing feeling that never goes away.

EXPERT.

How would you like to be a Judasgoat?

Gunshot.

POSTDOC.

You weren't meant to be another face in the herd. If you join us, you will make history.

JUDAS29.

You would do that just for me?

POSTDOC.

How would you like to be a Judasgoat?

JUDAS29.

I don't know what to say. Should I feel honored?

POSTDOC.

If you could sign our contract, just to seal the deal.

She pushes a piece of paper and an inkpad toward JUDAS29. JUDAS29 sniffs it and, before she can think, devours it.

JUDAS29.

I don't know what came over me.

POSTDOC.

We keep spare copies on hand. Just in case.

She pushes another piece of paper toward JUDAS29. JUDAS29 presses her hoof into the inkpad, then stamps the contract with her hoof.

You are officially our Twenty-Ninth Judasgoat. Your work is going to save lives.

Gunshot.

EXPERT.

Now, if you could sign our contract, we'll be ready to get started.

She pushes a contract and an inkpad toward JUDAS67. JUDAS67 sniffs it and devours it.

JUDAS67.

I'm so embarrassed.

EXPERT.

No worries.

She pushes another piece of paper toward JUDAS67. JUDAS67 presses her hoof into the inkpad, then stamps the contract.

Thank you.

Our crew will equip you with the necessary abilities. The lab is down the hall, to your left.

JUDAS67.

What's a lab?

EXPERT offers a handshake.

EXPERT.

Nice to meet you, Judasgoat Sixty-Seven.

JUDAS67 puts her hoof in EXPERT's hand.

ESCAPE INTERLUDE

*The same forest as before.
 The cave is still there. The drip pool is not.
 Time passes.
 Every plant and tree in the forest begins to droop.
 We hear helicopters. Gunshots. Goats bleating. Goats trying, in vain, to run away.
 The plants and trees continue to wilt.
 We hear the deaths of a hundred thousand goats.
 JUDASGOAT29 sprints across the stage, searching for an escape.
 ISABELA lumbers across the stage, searching for an escape.
 The plants and trees turn yellow.
 JUDASGOAT67 wanders on, searching for someone she lost.
 POSTDOC wanders on, searching for someone she lost.
 The plants and trees turn brown.
 ISABELA appears, searching for her drip pool.
 EXPERT appears, searching for someone she lost.
 ISABELA hides beneath a tree and holds her breath.
 POSTDOC appears, searching for EXPERT.*

POSTDOC.

I looked everywhere. No sign of her.

EXPERT.

Why?

Why would she do that?

We fed her. We kept her safe.

What more could she possibly want?

POSTDOC.

She's lived in captivity since she was a newborn. She'll die out there.

The gravity of this sinks in.

EXPERT.

I'm going home.

POSTDOC.

Now? We're in the middle of a crisis!

EXPERT.

I've overstayed my welcome on this island.

POSTDOC.

We need you here.

EXPERT.
But does she?

The captures, the tricks, the slaughters, we always said they were for her.
But she doesn't even want us here. She's made that very clear.

All those gunshots, and for what?

EXPERT is gone.

POSTDOC.
Isabela?
Isabela.
ISABELAAAAAAAAAAAAA

Unseen by POSTDOC, ISABELA slinks away.

You'll come back. You have to, because you need us.

POSTDOC exits.

The forest grows barren and dry.

ISABELA reappears. She finds one edible shrub, and begins to chew its leaves.

Until ...

CURIOSITY KILLS

JUDAS67 enters from the cave and begins to chew the opposite side of the shrub.

They do not see each other. It's a big shrub.

They munch

Until they hear someone else munching.

They freeze.

JUDAS67 pushes the shrub away. They are face to face.

JUDAS67.

DON'T SHOOT

ISABELA.

DON'T EAT ME

JUDAS67.

DON'T SHOOT

ISABELA.

PLEASE DON'T EAT ME

JUDAS67.

BACK OFF

ISABELA.

OR WHAT

JUDAS67.

BACK OFF OR I'LL FIGHT YOU

ISABELA.

I'M FIVE TIMES YOUR SIZE

JUDAS67.

WELL I'M FASTER THAN YOU

ISABELA.

COME AT ME BITCH

The animals fight. JUDAS67 is too small to win, and ISABELA is too slow to win. Eventually both collapse to the ground, panting.

They breathe

They breathe

They breathe

They look at each other

JUDAS67.
What are you?

ISABELA.
You don't know?

JUDAS67.
You're not a goat, that's for sure.

ISABELA.
You should know. I'm famous.

JUDAS67.
According to who

ISABELA.
According to science

JUDAS67.
What's a science? Is that a type of amphibian?
No
Oh no
You're with them

ISABELA.
I'm not *with* anybody

JUDAS67.
You're with the bald primates who say they're here to make things better

JUDAS67 begins to strangle ISABELA.

Where is your chop-chop-bam-bam?
Or are you some new trick
Some new contraption to lure us out of our hiding spots

ISABELA.
Please

JUDAS67.
Well it won't work

I am smarter than all of your primates and I am going to live
I am going to live even if you have to die

ISABELA.
YOU CAN'T KILL ME I'M THE LAST OF MY SPECIES

JUDAS67 releases her grip and backs away.

ISABELA gasps.

She splutters.

She gasps.

She splutters.

JUDAS67.
You okay

ISABELA.
Why do you keep trying to kill me

JUDAS67.
Because I don't know what you are

ISABELA.
Well if you do, the whole world will hate you

JUDAS67.
Is that what your bald friends tell you

ISABELA.
They're not my friends

JUDAS67.
Oh
Oh
Did they chop-chop-bam-bam your family too?

ISABELA.
What?

JUDAS67.
You know —

JUDAS67 imitates the chop-chop sound of a helicopter and the bam-bam sound of a goat massacre.

ISABELA.

Oh. No. They didn't kill us.
They trapped me in their lab and they wouldn't let me leave.

JUDAS67.
Lab. Why does that word sound familiar?

ISABELA.
I hate it there. Fake sunlight. Fake drip pools. No sky. Primates constantly bossing you around. Why do they think they know what's best for me?

JUDAS67.
Wait. If they didn't kill off your species, who did?

ISABELA.
A variety of factors.

JUDAS67.
Like what? This island was super chill before the baldies got here

ISABELA.
I was trying to be polite, but if you really must know, it was you.

JUDAS67.
Me? I've never killed anyone

ISABELA.
Maybe not you personally.

JUDAS67.
Was it someone in my herd?
No, my friends would never do that.

ISABELA.
You all did it, okay?

JUDAS67.
How is that possible?

ISABELA.
All I know is that we were here for thousands of years. Then you showed up and my family died.

JUDAS67.
Correlation not causation. How do you know it wasn't something else?

ISABELA.

I just *know*. My mother told me and her mother told her.

JUDAS67.

I think you and your mother and your nanny-tortoise are all full of shit.

For your information, goats are really social creatures. And, as a general rule, you can't go around killing people if you want to have friends. Also we're vegetarian so why would we even bother.

ISABELA.

Whatever. You're too stupid to understand.

JUDAS67.

Goats aren't stupid.

ISABELA.

Even if they are smart they never think.

JUDAS67.

All I do is think

And think and think and think

And search for food then think some more

ISABELA.

Where's your herd?

JUDAS67.

My herd? They

There was a chop-chop-bam-bam.

ISABELA.

I know what that feels like.

You're lucky you survived.

JUDAS67.

I'm not lucky. I'm smart.

ISABELA.

Goats aren't smart, but maybe you're an exception.

Can't you just join another herd?

JUDAS67.

What, just move on as if my family never existed?

ISABELA.

Don't you have to?
Isn't that what *social creatures* have to do to survive

JUDAS67.
I just need some time by myself. To think.
I've never lived alone before.

ISABELA.
And?

JUDAS67.
I hate it.
But, my friends keep dying and I think it might be my fault.

ISABELA.
Your herd was killed by some massive foreign beast and you were the only one to get away. There's no reason to feel guilty.

JUDAS67.
But it happened to the herd before this one. And the herd before that.

ISABELA.
Like you said, you're smart.

JUDAS67.
I can't shake the feeling of being watched.

JUDAS67 and ISABELA look around to see if anyone is watching them. They scour the forest with their eyes.

ISABELA.
I love being alone.

JUDAS67.
Good for you.

ISABELA.
It's very unusual for a tortoise. Most tortoises like making friends. My mother's mother heard a voice one day and went trotting up to welcome the newcomers.
Next thing she knew she was belly up on a pirate ship.

Yeah.
Okay.
See,
this is why I just can't with other species.

She starts to lumber away.

JUDAS67.
Wait.

ISABELA stops.

ISABELA.
What do you want.

JUDAS67.
You could stay here for a bit. In this cave. If you wanted.

ISABELA.
I don't.

JUDAS67.
Please. I am so lonely.

ISABELA.
Not my problem.

JUDAS67.
The primates won't find you here.

ISABELA considers.

As caves go, this is a nice one. Not too damp. Decent sunlight. Plenty of room for us both.
And I could —
Well, I always wanted a daughter.

ISABELA.
I'm three times your age. If not more.

JUDAS67.
But you're young for a tortoise. I can tell. Adolescents are the same in every species.
How long has it been since your mother —

ISABELA.

A long time.

JUDAS67.
Did pirates take her too?

ISABELA.
I don't want to talk about it.

JUDAS67.
Understood.
Well,
I would really love the chance to be a mother. If that's okay with you.
I'm gonna go inside my cave and let you think it over.
Nice meeting you, —
Sorry, what was your name?

ISABELA.
Isabela with one L. Like this island.

JUDAS67 snorts.

JUDAS67.
Basic.

JUDAS67 disappears into the cave. ISABELA is left alone to make a decision.

SEEDS

*On another part of the island, JUDAS29 sticks her hoof in a dirt patch.
She pinches some soil and inspects it.*

JUDAS29.
Not too dry.

*With her nose, she draws a rectangle in the ground. She uses her hooves to “rake” the soil within.
She digs five holes in the soil.
Around her neck is a small makeshift pouch. She opens it. Inside, there are seeds.
She drops each seed in a hole. She covers each hole and pats it smooth.*

You guys comfy in there?

No answer.

Good.

She inspects the seed-plot she has made. She smiles to herself.

I'll be right here when you come out.

*She waits.
And waits.
She gets bored.*

You guys ready to come out yet?

No answer.

No rush. I'll be here. Mine'll be the first face you ever see.
Should be any minute now.

Nothing happens. She fidgets.

Anybody thirsty?

No answer.

I'll go find you some water. But don't worry! It'll only take a sec.
I'll be back before you know it.

DINNER

JUDAS67 and ISABELA have dinner.

JUDAS67.

Scalesia.

In her cupped hands is a bunch of green M&Ms. She lays them out in front of ISABELA.

Aaaaand tiquilia.

She presents a lump of green Jell-O.

ISABELA.

That's it?

JUDAS67.

What do you mean "that's it"?

ISABELA.

I don't really eat tiquilia.

JUDAS67.

You don't eat tiquilia.

ISABELA.

Too slimy.

JUDAS67.

Well, it's what for dinner.

ISABELA.

Why?

JUDAS67.

Because it's what I could find.

ISABELA.

Where did you look?

JUDAS67.

All the usual spots.

ISABELA.

And that was all you found?

JUDAS67.

Yes.

ISABELA.

You found more but you ate it.

JUDAS67.

I get hungry.

ISABELA.

So do I.

JUDAS67.

I'm out all day finding food for the both of us. You just sit in puddles.

ISABELA.

They're called drip pools and I'm in hiding.

JUDAS67.

I'm the one who's in hiding. If they find me, they'll kill me. If they find you, they'll — what? Scratch between your ears? Rub your belly?

ISABELA.

How much did you eat?

JUDAS67.

You know, I thought I was being considerate. I don't remember the last time I saw tiquilia. I saved it all for you. I thought: "This'll be a nice surprise." Now I wish I'd eaten it all myself.

ISABELA.

How much did you eat?

JUDAS67.

I had lunch.

ISABELA.

How many times did you have lunch?

JUDAS67.

Once.

ISABELA.

Did you have a six-course lunch?

JUDAS67.

You'd understand if you were a goat.

ISABELA.

Mothers don't take food from their children. At least, my mother didn't. Did yours?

They stare each other down.

JUDAS67.

If you're hungry let's eat.

ISABELA.

Fine. Let's eat.

*JUDAS67 eats ravenously. ISABELA chews slowly and methodically.
The food is all gone.*

JUDAS67.

Did you get enough?

ISABELA.

(No.) Yeah.

JUDAS67.

You sure?

ISABELA.

I'm stuffed.

JUDAS67.

Good.

JUDAS67 belches.

That scalesia tastes like childhood. My nanny-goat used to give it to us kids when we were good. And then one day they all disappeared.

ISABELA.

What happened to them?

JUDAS67.

Died in the drought, I guess. Like everything good on this island.

ISABELA.

Who do you think caused it?

JUDAS67.

I don't know. Primates?

ISABELA.

Huh.

JUDAS67.

Seems to me like all our problems started when they showed up.

ISABELA throws her head back and laughs.

What's so funny?

ISABELA.

Nothing, it's just

You know it's 'cause of them you're here, right?

JUDAS67.

That's not true. Goats have always been on Isabela.

ISABELA.

Wrong. Pirates brought you over.

JUDAS67.

What are pirates?

ISABELA.

They're big primates with no teeth and funny hats who lumber around and growl. And they brought you here from a far-away land.

JUDAS67.

How do you know that?

ISABELA.

My mother told me. And she lived to be a hundred and eighty-two years old, so she saw a lot.

JUDAS67.

A hundred and eighty-two. Shit. I'll be lucky if I make it to eighteen.

ISABELA.

Right. So, I think she knew what she was talking about.

JUDAS67.

And my mother didn't?

ISABELA.

All I'm saying is, how old was your mother when she died?

JUDAS67 abruptly freezes. ISABELA realizes something.

Oh my god. You killed your mother.

JUDAS67 runs toward the cave, trying to hold back tears.

Wait! I didn't mean to —

But Judas67 is gone.

ISABELA sighs, then goes after her.

SPROUTS

Meanwhile in the seed-plot, a green leaf shoots out of the soil.

The newborn plant stretches and looks around.

She beckons to her friends to join her above ground.

One by one, four more seedlings pop up. They vary in size, shape, and color.

They take in their surroundings. They take in the sun. They greet each other.

JUDAS29 enters, munching on some leaves, with no water.

The seedlings all turn toward her.

She sees them.

She realizes that all five of her plants have sprouted. And she missed it.

JUDAS29.

Aw, shit.

IN HEAT

JUDAS67 bleats wildly and humps the ground. ISABELA watches.

ISABELA.
How long do you usually do this for

JUDAS67.
It should stop any day now

ISABELA.
You say that every day

JUDAS67.
How many days is every day

ISABELA.
It's been twenty-five days

JUDAS67.
Shit

ISABELA.
What?

JUDAS67.
It's never longer than eight

ISABELA.
Huh
Maybe you're just extra horny this year

JUDAS67.
I'm too sad to be horny

ISABELA.
Clearly not

JUDAS67.
No really I am
Every time I fantasize about a hot buck I remember he's dead
And then I cry myself to sleep

ISABELA.
Okay so

Can't you do that right now

JUDAS67 stops humping and glares sharply at ISABELA.

Sorry. Jeez.

JUDAS67.

BAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH

I WANT DICK

I WANT A BIG BILLY BUCK DICK INSIDE ME RIGHT NOW

BAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH

She goes back to humping.

ISABELA.

Not to be rude or anything but

This is getting old

And also I'm hungry

JUDAS67.

I'll get us more food as soon as this is over

Hump hump hump.

Could you tell me a story?

To distract me.

ISABELA.

An unsexy story. I can do that.

Okay

So

When I was living in the lab

The baldies brought me these two male tortoises from Floreana.

JUDAS67.

Just for you?

ISABELA.

They wanted me to have children.

JUDAS67.

Aren't you a child?

ISABELA.

I'm old enough.

JUDAS67.
What's the rush?

ISABELA.
Last of my species, remember?

JUDAS67.
How could I forget. You only bring it up every five minutes.
Wait, were these males a different species from you?

ISABELA.
They were genetically similar.

JUDAS67.
That's some freaky shit.

ISABELA.
I know right. So the primates put these males in my pen and just stand there. Waiting for me to make a move. Big stupid grins on their faces, the perverts.

JUDAS67.
And you had a big fat interspecies threesome, right?
Can you get your primate friends to hook me up with some genetically similar bucks?

Hump hump hump hump.

ISABELA.
The thing is, I didn't touch them.

JUDAS67 stops bumping.

JUDAS67,
You didn't?

ISABELA.
I didn't speak to them. I didn't even look at them.

JUDAS67.
You're crazy. How long did you hold out?

ISABELA.
Three years.

JUDAS67.

WHAT

How is that even possible

ISABELA.

It's not that I wasn't interested. I just
I don't know how anyone could bring a child into this world.

JUDAS67.

Wait
You don't want kids?

Her brain just broke.

ISABELA.

I mean, look at us. No food. No water. All alone. Constant fear.
I wouldn't wish this life on anyone, much less someone I loved.

JUDAS67.

My mother always said she never knew real joy till she had me. Don't you want that? Real joy?

ISABELA.

I suppose I do. But that's a terribly selfish reason to have a baby.

JUDAS67.

You think having kids is selfish.

ISABELA.

It is on Isabela.

I mean, haven't you ever noticed that everyone uses their children to justify the most awful behavior?

JUDAS67.

There's nothing wrong with wanting to provide for your children.

ISABELA.

My mother found a drip pool and she said: "This drip pool belongs to my daughter. No one else is allowed to drink from it." There were very few left and everyone was thirsty. She wouldn't share. You don't think that's wrong?

JUDAS67.

Did *she* drink from the drip pool?

ISABELA.

No, she wanted me to have it all to myself.

JUDAS67.

She went thirsty for you and you're calling her selfish?

ISABELA.

What about your mother? How many plants did she uproot so her baby would have enough to eat? All mothers are the same. They take and take and take and they don't care what they destroy because they're *providing* for their *children* until one day there are too many children and not enough provisions.

And the world they made in our names will be the very thing that kills us.

JUDAS67.

Fuck.

JUDAS67 is a little bit devastated.

ISABELA.

Sorry. I didn't mean to —

You should have kids if you want them.

I'm gonna go find some leaves. What do you want for dinner?

JUDAS67.

I'm actually

Not hungry.

ISABELA.

Huh

That's a first

She ambles off.

JUDAS67 is very still. She looks like she might cry. But instead, she crumples into a ball and tries to fall asleep.

THE GARDEN

POSTDOC stands over JUDAS29's plants. In her hand is a plastic water bottle. JUDAS29 stares at her from a distance.

POSTDOC.

Oh

Hello

JUDAS29 flares her nostrils.

Aren't you cute

JUDAS29 charges her and headbutts her repeatedly.

JUDAS29.

BACK OFF PRIMATE

YOU CAN'T HAVE THEM

More out of fear than anything else, POSTDOC tackles JUDAS29 and pulls out a pocket knife.

Don't hurt me

POSTDOC.

I'm gonna stand up now. And when I do, you better not move.

POSTDOC slowly gets up. JUDAS29 remains frozen.

POSTDOC.

So uh

This your garden?

JUDAS29.

My what?

POSTDOC.

A garden is a manmade assortment of plants. You can unfreeze now by the way.

JUDAS29.

This isn't manmade and they're not just plants.

POSTDOC.

Oh?

JUDAS29.

These are my friends.

POSTDOC.
They're plants.

JUDAS29.
So?

POSTDOC.
They aren't known to be lively conversationalists.

JUDAS29.
They talk to me in their way.

POSTDOC.
Really.

JUDAS29.
Of course. This is Floreana, that one's Marchena, then there's Baltra, Fernandina, and Wolf.

POSTDOC.
You named your plants.

JUDAS29.
They told me their names and I listened.

POSTDOC.
You named them after neighboring islands.

JUDAS29.
On the other islands things are better.

POSTDOC.
How do you know?

JUDAS29.
They have to be.

POSTDOC laughs.

JUDAS29.
Are you laughing at me?

POSTDOC.
No, no, I just

You should see my island
Overgrown with weeds
We could use some goats there to clear the place

JUDAS29.
What are weeds?

POSTDOC.
They're bad plants

JUDAS29.
What makes a plant bad?

POSTDOC.
They're invasive. They destroy everything around them.

JUDAS29.
But to me, they might be delicious. Just because you don't like them, doesn't mean they don't have a right to live.

POSTDOC.
It's more complicated than that.

JUDAS29.
Is your herd still on your island?

POSTDOC.
What? Oh. Yeah, they are.

JUDAS29.
Do you miss them?

POSTDOC.
Every second of every day.

JUDAS29.
Me too.
What's the name of your island?

POSTDOC.
Uh, Long Island.

JUDAS29.
Long Island. Is it anything like Isabela?

POSTDOC.

No.

JUDAS29.

Good.

She plucks a seed from one of her plants. She nudges the seed into the soil and covers it.

I'll name her Long. For the island where goats live in peace.

POSTDOC.

Oh. That's nice.

Does she need some water?

POSTDOC splashes water onto the soil.

That's what I was doing in your, uh, your garden. Your plants looked thirsty.

JUDAS29.

(Re: water bottle.) What is that? I've never seen water in that shape.

POSTDOC.

You've never seen a plastic bottle before?

JUDAS29.

Does plastic grow on Long Island?

POSTDOC.

Not exclusively. We have loads of these at the camp.

JUDAS29.

What camp?

POSTDOC.

Where I sleep.

JUDAS29.

You mean to tell me

I've been going thirsty for months

Surviving on little puddles

And all this time

The primates had a whole stash of water just for them?

POSTDOC.

Uh, yeah.

JUDAS29.
What the fuck! You should share with the rest of us!

POSTDOC.
It's ours! We ship it over from the mainland!

JUDAS29.
You came to my home and you ruined everything. You owe me water at least.

POSTDOC.
(*Re: seedling.*) Well, I'm sharing it with you now.

JUDAS29.
You're sharing it with my friend, not me.

POSTDOC.
She needs it more than you.

JUDAS29.
Who are you to decide that?

POSTDOC.
I'm a scientist!

JUDAS29.
..... a what

POSTDOC.
Never mind

JUDAS29.
Why are you here?

POSTDOC.
To exterminate your species.

JUDAS29.
I know that, but why?

POSTDOC.
Because you're weeds.

JUDAS29.
Says who?

POSTDOC.

Says science.

JUDAS29.

Science is a story you primates tell yourselves. Your science has nothing to do with my nature.

POSTDOC.

Would you like some water?

JUDAS29 eyes the water bottle suspiciously, then caves and sucks it down in one gulp.

JUDAS29.

So why don't you just kill me?

You're here to exterminate my species. Here I am, standing right in front of you.

You have a knife. Go ahead.

POSTDOC.

Oh, I couldn't bear to do it myself. We pay other people for that part.

JUDAS29.

So, let me get this straight. You're happy to kill us as long as you don't have to watch?

POSTDOC.

I'm a vegetarian.

JUDAS29.

You primates are fucked up, you know that?

POSTDOC.

I do know that.

JUDAS29.

You know it's fucked up and you do it anyway?

POSTDOC.

That could be said of most human behavior.

A little sprout shoots out of the ground.

JUDAS29.

Already!

Hello, Long. You're very pretty.

The sproutling seems to cock its head in JUDAS29's direction.

You couldn't wait to get out of the ground and into the world, could you?

The sproutling droops a little.

You're thirsty?

Long nods.

But we just watered you.

Long shrugs. JUDAS29 looks around desperately.

Can you go get me another water plastic?

POSTDOC.

No. It's ours and we need it.

JUDAS29.

Really?!

POSTDOC.

What am I supposed to do, use up our whole supply watering every plant on this island?

JUDAS29.

Um, yes. That's exactly what you should do.

POSTDOC.

Then *we* would be thirsty.

JUDAS29.

So you go back to where you came from and drink the water there. Everyone's happy.

POSTDOC.

We can't go home. Our project isn't done.

JUDAS29.

Oh right, your little science project. The one where you exterminate my species?

POSTDOC.

Yeah, that one.

JUDAS29.

Okay, so stab me and fuck off.

No wait.

Water my plants, then stab me, then fuck off.

POSTDOC.

You know, for a creature that's supposed to be compulsively social, you're pretty mean.

JUDAS29.

You ever seen someone die? A parent, or a sibling, or a lover, or all three at the same time?

It makes you bitter. Which makes you mean. You wouldn't know.

POSTDOC.

I know what loneliness feels like.

I know what it's like to miss your family.

JUDAS29.

You didn't watch them drop one by one. You didn't see their organs spill out. You don't know what that's like.

POSTDOC.

No, I don't.

JUDAS29.

The plants in this forest have drunk more blood than water.

POSTDOC.

It's for the greater good. You can't tell yet, but Isabela is changing as we speak.

In fifty years, this will be the paradise Darwin wrote about.

JUDAS29.

What's a Darwin? Sounds like a type of dung beetle.

POSTDOC.

Darwin told the rest of us how magical this place was.

JUDAS29.

So this is all his fault then.

POSTDOC.

We read his books and we wanted to come see for ourselves. He made us want to leave our families and live without electricity and sleep in tents just to save Isabela.

JUDAS29.
Oh really? And what does your dung beetle say about us?

POSTDOC.
About you? Oh, he uh
Doesn't really mention any goats.

JUDAS29.
Nothing?
This Darwin takes it upon himself to tell the story of our island and he just
Leaves us out?
In fifty years' time,
Isabela will be a magical paradise,
And no one will ever know we existed?

A long bleat of despair.

BAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH
HHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH

JUDAS29 breaks down into sobs.

POSTDOC.
I'm sorry.

JUDAS29.
You're not sorry.

POSTDOC.
I don't like violence. I can't even kill bugs.

JUDAS29.
Right, you're a vegetarian.

POSTDOC.
And I have a cat at home.

JUDAS29.
That means nothing to me.

POSTDOC.
Cats are small felines with pointy ears and long tails, descended from lions and tigers and —

JUDAS29.
I truly could not give less of a shit.

Fifty years?

POSTDOC.
According to our projections, that's how long it will take.

JUDAS29.
Do you expect to be alive in fifty years?

POSTDOC.
Probably not.

JUDAS29.
Then who is this all for?

POSTDOC.
Other species.
Like
Like Long.

Long hears her name and turns her little body toward the sound.

JUDAS29.
But I'm taking care of Long, not you.
Who's going to keep Long alive when your big metal bird shoots me down?

POSTDOC.
I will.

JUDAS29.
You won't even bring her water from your camp.

POSTDOC.
You shouldn't have drunk all the water I gave you. If you wanted to water your plants, you should have saved some for them.

JUDAS29.
I was parched. I haven't found a puddle in weeks.
You won't kill me but you don't care if I die of thirst?

POSTDOC.

Even if I watered every sprout and blade and tree on this island, they'd all dry up. And it's your fault.

JUDAS29.

Me?

POSTDOC.

All of you. Isabela is dying because of goats.

JUDAS29.

That has to be wrong. Why would we kill our home?

POSTDOC.

You will never understand what you did to this place.

JUDAS29.

Help me understand. I have so many questions.

POSTDOC.

You do?

JUDAS29.

How do they keep finding me? The metal birds.

POSTDOC.

You have a tracking device inside you.

JUDAS29.

Inside me?!

POSTDOC.

In your neck. There's a chip beneath your skin.

JUDAS29.

A chip. Like a wood chip?

POSTDOC.

Same size and shape, but it's metal and plastic.

JUDAS29.

Plastic. You love your plastic, don't you?

When did you put plastic inside me? How did I not notice?

POSTDOC.

We asked you to sign a contract. We knew you'd eat the paper, so we soaked it in anesthetic.

JUDAS29.

Wait, was this when I came in for that interview?

That was for this?

POSTDOC.

I mean, what did you think it was?

JUDAS29.

I thought you wanted a fucking *pet* or something.

POSTDOC.

I wish. I'd give anything to have my cat here.

JUDAS29.

Who's taking care of your cat while you're away?

POSTDOC.

My wife.

JUDAS29.

I had a wife once.

Well, not officially, we don't really do the whole monogamy thing. But I thought of her as my wife. We were together for years.

POSTDOC's eyeballs pop out of their sockets.

What?

Oh come on. Really?

What, did you actually think your species invented it?

God, primates are such bigots.

POSTDOC.

There are no recorded examples of homosexual goats.

This is amazing. People should know about this.

JUDAS29.

Why don't you publish a study? Oh wait, by the time you do, we'll all be dead.

POSTDOC.

I'm so sorry. Really, I am. I miss my wife so much.

JUDAS29.

I have another question. Have you ever seen your cat in heat?

POSTDOC.

That's none of your business.

JUDAS29.

Oh, it is.

Because I used to be in heat eight days a year.

And then, one spring, it was the strangest thing. I was in heat for what felt like forever.

So I'm asking you, have you ever seen an animal in heat?

POSTDOC.

Once. My cat. It was terrible.

JUDAS29.

However bad it looks, it feels a thousand times worse.

POSTDOC.

For the record, I was against it from the beginning.

JUDAS29.

You knew it was fucked up and you did it anyway.

When you saw your cat in heat, did you put her out of her misery?

POSTDOC.

I don't like this.

JUDAS29.

Did you?

POSTDOC.

Yes.

JUDAS29.

How?

POSTDOC.

There's an operation.

JUDAS29.

An operation. Fascinating.

POSTDOC.
Absolutely not.

JUDAS29.
I'm not even asking you to take the plastic chip out. I know you'd never do that.
Just put me out of my misery. You owe me that much.
You're a scientist, aren't you?

POSTDOC.
I'm not a vet. And I can't stand blood.

JUDAS29.
Will there be blood?

POSTDOC.
Yes. Lots and lots of it.

JUDAS29.
I don't care if it hurts. You have to do this.
Come on. You have a knife.

POSTDOC.
We need you to seek out male goats so we can —

JUDAS29.
There are no goats left. Male or female. I am the last of my species. Aren't I?

POSTDOC.
We don't know that for sure.

JUDAS29.
But I am.

I'm not that different from your cat, am I?

POSTDOC.

I don't have any anesthetic on me so, um, yeah. Try to sit still.

She kneels between JUDAS29's hind legs. She takes out her knife.

I want you to know that I love animals. More than I love my wife. More than I love myself. That's why I came here.

So

Close your eyes and breathe deep

TREE BARK SANDWICH

ISABELA places a sandwich in front of JUDAS67. She places another one in front of herself.

ISABELA.

I made you a tree bark sandwich.

JUDAS67.

I'm leaving.

ISABELA.

Where is there to go?

JUDAS67.

I'll find another herd.

ISABELA.

Why would you do that?

JUDAS67.

Because I'm a goat. And goats need other goats to survive.

ISABELA.

We're surviving.

JUDAS67.

What's the point of surviving if you're miserable?

I tried, I really did. I fought the hunger and the loneliness and the heat between my legs. I did that for you.

This lasted longer than I ever thought it would. But at the end of the day, I am a goat.

I am a goat and you are a tortoise.

I don't expect you to understand.

ISABELA.

I understand perfectly. I'm not enough for you.

JUDAS67.

Maybe you were right. Maybe the problem with goats is we want too much.

But you have a hundred and fifty years to get all you want out of life. We only have eighteen.

I want to live with a hundred of my closest friends and lovers.

I want to go everywhere with them.

I want to protect them from the primates and their machines.

I want to eat scalesia and sesuvium and tiquilia all day long.

I want to sleep with a different buck every night.
 I want to fall deeply in love with all of them.
 I want to make sure my kids never know hunger
 I want —

ISABELA.
 Oh for god's sake do *not* make this about kids *you're never having kids okay???*
 You're not.

JUDAS67.
 That's a terrible thing to wish for me.

ISABELA.
 It's not a wish, it's a fact. You're sterile.

I listen when they talk.

JUDAS67.
 Who?

ISABELA.
 You know who.

JUDAS67.
 The primates?
 The primates sterilized me and *you weren't going to tell me that?!*

ISABELA.
 You would have figured it out eventually.

JUDAS67.
 WHAT THE FUCK ISABELA
 WHAT THE FUCK

ISABELA.
 Also?
 You shouldn't go looking for a new herd.

JUDAS67.
 Why not.

ISABELA.
 You're being watched.

JUDAS67 feels the gaze of human eyes on her body.

JUDAS67.
So it is my fault.

ISABELA.
You always knew it was. Maybe you didn't know the details, but you knew enough. And still, you joined a new herd, and then another, and another after that, knowing full well what would happen. All goats are evil, but you're the worst of them all. You're a Judasgoat.

JUDAS67.
What did you call me?

ISABELA.
And knowing how selfish a Judasgoat is, I still let myself believe you cared about me.

JUDAS67.
Why are they doing this to me?

ISABELA.
It doesn't matter why. What matters now is that you can escape. Stay here with me. They won't come looking for you. A goat without a herd is useless to them. You won't have any more blood on your hands. We'll be the last of our species, together. They think a goat and a tortoise can't share this island. Let's prove them wrong.

Something clicks for JUDAS67.

JUDAS67.
That word you called me. Judasgoat. I've heard that word before.
The primates used that word when I visited their —
I visited their *lab*

She begins to put it all together.

This was all for you, wasn't it?
The labs, the interviews, the procedures, the chop-chops, the bam-bams, the tricks, the lies, the death of everyone I've ever loved, they were all so that you,
Isabela, Last Of Your Species,
Could live on this island.

ISABELA.
You're smart.

JUDAS67.

Too smart for my own good.

She inhales the tree bark sandwich in front of her.

Good-bye.

ISABELA.

Mothers don't leave their children.

JUDAS67.

Yeah, well, I'm not your mother.

She devours the tree bark sandwich in front of ISABELA.

ISABELA.

There are very few herds left. And they won't be around for long. You'll spend your life alone.

JUDAS67.

I'd rather be alone than with a tortoise.

She exits. But the actor who plays her doesn't. She transforms from JUDAS67 to POSTDOC.

POSTDOC.

Isabela? Is that

Is that you?

POSTDOC reaches out toward ISABELA. ISABELA bolts.

Don't you remember me, Isabela? I used to clean your pen.

I can't believe you're here. I thought I'd never —

You've gotten bigger. You're not a baby anymore.

POSTDOC tries to touch ISABELA again. ISABELA lumbers away as quickly as she can.

I get it, you need time. That's okay. You'll trust me one day.

One day this island will be what it was always supposed to be for you. A home.

I won't be alive to see it, but you will. This whole chapter of your life will feel like a bad dream. You will have food, and water, and twelve baby tortoises swimming beside you in the drip pool you choose for them.

She tries to catch ISABELA. ISABELA dodges.

Come on. Let's go home.

She tries once more. ISABELA bites her hand.

Ow!

ISABELA makes a desperate run for it. POSTDOC flips ISABELA onto her shell.

Oh, no you don't. This is for your own good.

POSTDOC drags ISABELA offstage.

LONG'S INTERLUDE

JUDAS29 sleeps fitfully next to her plant friends. Long has grown since the last time we saw her. JUDAS29 is having a nightmare. She mutters in her sleep.

JUDAS29.

No no no no NO don't shoot please don't
Mama! Run! Don't —

*JUDAS29 bolts awake.
Her stomach growls. Fuck, she's starving.
She looks around for something to eat. Everything is dried up and rotting.*

She knows what she must do.

She reaches for Floreana. She uproots her. She takes a bite, chews, and swallows.

*Then she eats Marchena
And Baltra
And Fernandina
And Wolf.*

Long is the only one left.

JUDAS29 approaches Long. Long recoils.

If only you weren't so young. I would have liked to see you grow tall.

Long seems to shake her head no.

Goodbye, Long.

JUDAS29 reaches for Long. Long leans her little body against JUDAS29 and tenderly wraps her shoots around her leg. It's almost like a hug.

JUDAS29 can't do it.

Never let me do that again. Goats don't kill what they love.
I want you to outlive me. To grow and grow until you're face to face with the sun.
Sleep well, little friend.

JUDAS29 snuggles up next to Long. Long gives her an affectionate pat on the head.

*Night becomes day.
Long grows taller.*

AN UNCONTROLLED VARIABLE

JUDAS67 wanders into JUDAS29's space, searching for a snack, searching for a herd. She spots Long, and begins to sniff her. JUDAS29's eyes fly open.

JUDAS29.
Don't touch her!

JUDAS67.
You're a —

JUDAS29.
She's mine and you can't have her.

JUDAS67.
I'm not gonna steal your snack, I just
I'm so happy to see you.

JUDAS67 barrels toward JUDAS29 and tries to nuzzle her anus. JUDAS29 pushes her away.

What?

JUDAS29.
I don't like to be touched.

JUDAS67.
Your herd doesn't nuzzle?

JUDAS29.
I don't *have* a herd.

JUDAS67.
What happened to them?

JUDAS29.
They —

She can't bring herself to say it.

JUDAS67.
Judasgoat.

JUDAS29.
That word.

JUDAS67.

You've heard it before. You went to their lab. They said you were the smartest goat on Isabela. And then they asked you to be a Judasgoat.

JUDAS29.

How do you know about that?

JUDAS67.

I'm like you.

JUDAS29.

Oh god.

I thought I was the last goat left.

JUDAS67.

There might be more of us.

JUDAS29.

There aren't.

A cage is wheeled across the stage with ISABELA inside.

ISABELA.

Judasgoat?

JUDAS67.

Isabela?

JUDAS29.

You know each other?

ISABELA.

Oh thank god. You have to help me.

Their project is over. They're taking me to a zoo.

JUDAS67.

What's a zoo?

ISABELA.

I don't know but I'm scared.

This is my home. I can't leave my island.

JUDAS29.

Does that mean they're leaving?

JUDAS67.
What about us?

ISABELA.
Get me out of here.

JUDAS67.
Why should I?

ISABELA.
Because you're my only friend.
Help me escape.

JUDAS67.
It's too late for that now.

ISABELA.
Well then,
Could you at least forgive me?

JUDAS67.
I don't know.

ISABELA.
No. No no no no no. You have to forgive me before I go.

JUDAS67.
Goodbye, Isabela.

ISABELA.
Do you forgive me?
Judasgoat?
Please?

ISABELA disappears offstage. The chop-chop sound of a helicopter starts up.

JUDAS29.
That sound.

JUDAS67.
I'd know it anywhere.

JUDAS29.
They're leaving for good.

JUDAS67.
They wouldn't just abandon us, would they?

JUDAS29.
Would you put it past them?

JUDAS67.
They have to know we're still here.

JUDAS29.
What, so they can take care of us?

JUDAS67 tries to get the attention of the humans in the helicopters.

JUDAS67.
BAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHH
Come on, help me

JUDAS29.
Why should I?

JUDAS67.
Because I'm all you have now.
BAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH

JUDAS29 joins in.

JUDAS29 and JUDAS67.
BAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH

JUDAS67.
My name is Judasgoat
I have a favor to ask.
Take me with you.
You were the only ones who saw how smart I was.

JUDAS29.
You picked me from the herd.

JUDAS67.
You made me feel special for the first time in my life.

JUDAS29.
And being special may be lonely, but it's still delicious.

JUDAS67.

Goats are adaptable. I can live anywhere. But not here. This island is hell.

JUDAS29.

Take me to another island. One where goats live in peace.

The helicopter hovers above them. Chop chop chop.

JUDAS67.

They're really gonna leave us here after all we did for them?!

JUDAS29.

I know what we have to do.

She turns back to the helicopter.

If you won't take us with you, I have another favor to ask.

An act of mercy.

Shoot me down.

JUDAS67.

(Unsure, but going with it:) Yeah, shoot us down.

JUDAS29.

I hate myself. I can't live with this guilt anymore.

Being special is lonely, and loneliness is worse than death.

Haven't you primates ever heard of compassion?

The chop-chop sound grows faint and disappears.

JUDAS67.

They're gone.

JUDAS29.

For good.

JUDAS67.

They didn't hear us.

JUDAS29.

Or maybe they just don't care.

JUDAS67.

What now?

JUDAS29.
We wait to die.

JUDAS67.
We could start our own herd. You and me.

JUDAS29.
Or we could just take each other's lives.

JUDAS67.
At the same time? How would that work?

JUDAS29.
We'd just have to plan it well.

JUDAS67.
Keep talking.

JUDAS29.
Let's brainstorm.

JUDAS29 thinks. JUDAS67 produces a string of orange and purple marshmallows and starts to eat. JUDAS29 eyes it hungrily.

JUDAS67.
What?

JUDAS29.
Is that a sesuvium?

JUDAS67.
... yes.

JUDAS29.
Where did you find a sesuvium? I haven't seen one since my kid days.

JUDAS67.
I've been saving it.

JUDAS29.
You must have extraordinary self-restraint.

JUDAS67 continues to eat, but is acutely aware of JUDAS29's gaze.

JUDAS67.

Would you like some of my sesuvium?

JUDAS29.

You don't want to give me any.

JUDAS67.

Well, yeah. It's mine.

But we only have each other for company.

JUDAS29.

You don't have to pretend to be nice. You're a Judasgoat. I know you're not nice.

JUDAS67.

I'm not pretending, I don't think.

JUDAS29 really wants the sesuvium.

Go on. You can't think if you're hungry.

JUDAS29 caves.

JUDAS29.

Mmmm. Sweet and gooey.

They pass the sesuvium back and forth.

We could always bury ourselves alive.

JUDAS67.

Too easy to dig ourselves out. If we lose courage. Or get bored.

JUDAS29.

We could starve ourselves.

JUDAS67.

Don't make me laugh.

JUDAS29.

We could do it if we tried really hard.

JUDAS67.

I don't know about you, but I'm only ever happy when I'm eating. So no, I will not starve myself.

JUDAS29.

Who am I kidding, I couldn't do it either.

JUDAS67 holds out the last marshmallow to JUDAS29.

JUDAS67.
You can have the last blossom if you want.

JUDAS29.
It's yours.

JUDAS67.
I'm giving it to you.

JUDAS29.
Why would you do that?

JUDAS67.
I don't know. Maybe
I like you?

JUDAS29.
Oh.
(*Re: sesuvium*) You sure?

JUDAS67.
Yeah.

JUDAS29.
Thanks.

*JUDAS29 savors the last few drops.
JUDAS67 throws herself at JUDAS29 and erupts into feverish humping.*

Get away from me!

JUDAS67.
Sorry, I thought —
We were having a nice moment and —
I've been in heat for a very long time. When I saw you I got hopeful.

JUDAS29.
You didn't show it before.

JUDAS67.
You didn't want to be nuzzled. I thought I should play it cool.

JUDAS29.
I don't like to be touched.

JUDAS67.
Oh.
Are you not in —

JUDAS29.
I'm not.

JUDAS67.
Oh. That's cool. You will be soon though, right?

JUDAS29.
No.

JUDAS67.
Of course you will. You're like me. And you're beautiful.
We're stuck on this island together, but maybe that doesn't have to be bad. Maybe we were meant to find each other. What if the labs, the interviews, the procedures, the chop-chops, the bam-bams, the tricks, the lies, the deaths of everyone I've ever loved, they were all leading up to this moment?

JUDAS29.
I had an operation.

JUDAS67.
An operation?

JUDAS29.
I had an operation and now all I ever feel is the opposite of heat. So, even if I wanted what you want, I could never give you what you need.

JUDAS67.
Oh.

JUDAS29.
I would have wanted to, you know.

JUDAS67.
Really?

JUDAS29.

If I'd known you were out there, I wouldn't have done it.

JUDAS67.

That makes me feel better but it also makes me feel worse.

JUDAS29.

I had a wife once.

JUDAS67.

Let me guess. You killed her?

JUDAS29.

I would have liked a second chance. At being someone's wife.

JUDAS67.

It's too late for that now.

JUDAS29.

It's dark. Let's make a fire.

She searches the forest for something that lights up. A beat-up or broken flashlight is the best she can find. She makes a fire. The light flickers, then dies down. She tries again. And again. Eventually, she manages to get a very feeble fire going.

It's not much.

JUDAS67.

If we get cold we can sleep in the moss.

JUDAS29.

All the moss around here is dry and scratchy.

JUDAS67.

Huh. I wonder why everything keeps drying up.

To both be in the fire's range, they must huddle very close. Still, they don't touch.

JUDAS29.

By the way, did you know that tortoise?

JUDAS67.
What? No.

JUDAS29.
She seemed to recognize you.

JUDAS67.
I hate tortoises. I hope she dies alone in her zoo, whatever that is.

JUDAS29.
Sorry I brought it up.

JUDAS67.
So you know how I shared my sesuvium with you?

JUDAS29.
What do you want.

JUDAS67 casts a yearning look toward Long.

No.

JUDAS67.
Really? You're not even going to share your food with me?

JUDAS29.
She's my friend.

JUDAS67.
I'm sorry, but I'm a goat and that's a plant.

JUDAS29.
I grew her.

JUDAS67.
What do you mean, you grew her? Everybody knows that plants grow themselves.

JUDAS29.
If you watch a plant really closely, if you study everything she does, you can learn what she needs to survive. You can give her the right amount of water, you can turn her toward the sun, you can tell when she wants to have babies and you can bring those babies to life.

JUDAS67.

That's amazing. If I leave this one alone, will you grow more for us to eat?

JUDAS29.

I just can't kill something I grew.

JUDAS67.

But we'll starve.

JUDAS29.

You ever have a kid?

JUDAS67.

No. I always wanted one.

JUDAS29.

I used to have a daughter.

JUDAS67.

Oh.

JUDAS29.

After they killed her, I started watching plants. They always know how to care for their young.

JUDAS67.

Yeah, but the difference between me and that plant is, it's never gonna know who took care of it, but I'm always gonna know who let me starve.

JUDAS29.

You don't know what she knows or how she feels.

JUDAS67.

Neither do you. But you know how I feel and you don't care.
You're like them.

JUDAS29.

No I'm not.

JUDAS67.

I saw you and I thought: Finally.
I thought we could be friends
Or lovers
Or at least companions
I haven't had a family in so long
And I've never heard of a two-goat herd but I wanted us to be the first.
But you only care about yourself.

You aren't a goat and you're nothing like me.

JUDAS67 headbutts JUDAS29.

Let me eat it.

JUDAS29.

No.

JUDAS67 headbutts JUDAS29 more forcefully. JUDAS29 falls to the ground.

JUDAS67.

GIVE IT TO ME.

JUDAS29.

I can't.

JUDAS67.

You will not be the reason I die.

JUDAS67 attacks JUDAS29.

JUDAS29 does not resist or fight back.

Eventually, JUDAS67 realizes that JUDAS29 is unconscious.

She stops.

Oh no.

She tries to shake JUDAS29 awake. She listens for a heartbeat.

No no no no no no no no no no. Wake up.

She tries to resuscitate JUDAS29.

After a few desperate attempts, she turns to Long.

Long tries to run away, but her roots are too deep.

JUDAS67 uproots Long. Long lets out a silent scream.

JUDAS67 rips leaves off of Long's body and gently places them in JUDAS29's mouth.

You're gonna wake up. Chew. Swallow.

You will not die because of me.

JUDAS29's eyes flutter open.

Oh thank god.

JUDAS29.
Am I dead?

JUDAS67.
No, I saved you.

JUDAS29.
Aw, shit. I really thought that would work.

JUDAS67.
You wanted to die?

JUDAS29.
That's what we've been doing this whole time.

JUDAS67.
You were serious about that?

JUDAS29.
Were you not?

JUDAS67.
I mean, maybe a little, but I mostly thought it was just something to do.
You would have let me kill you?

JUDAS29.
Clearly I don't have the guts to do it to myself. I saw my chance.

JUDAS67.
You would have left me alone?

JUDAS29.
I've had a very difficult life.

JUDAS67.
I can't believe you!
We both know what it's like to be tricked into killing your kind.

JUDAS29.
Look on the bright side. If you'd let me die, you'd be free to eat —

She turns to the spot where Long once stood.

Long.

Oh, Long.

JUDAS67.
I had no choice.

JUDAS29.
She was so young. You could have at least waited.

JUDAS67.
I didn't eat her.
I fed her to you.

JUDAS29.
You
You
I ate her?

JUDAS67.
You would have died. I saved you.

JUDAS29.
She was my only friend.

JUDAS29 crumples to the ground.

JUDAS67.
Please forgive me.
Can you forgive me?

JUDAS29.
No.

JUDAS67.
Are you going to leave me?

JUDAS29.
No.

*JUDAS29 lies down next to Long's mangled roots.
JUDAS67 spots a half-buried music box.*

JUDAS67.
Hey. Look at this. I found a puddle.

JUDAS29.
Haven't seen one of those in a long time.

JUDAS67.
Let me refresh your memory.

*JUDAS67 holds the music box to JUDAS29's lips. She opens it.
Music trickles out. It is as pure as when we first heard it.*

Did you know they're the ones who brought us to Isabela?

JUDAS29.
No. I never knew that.

JUDAS67.
It was a long time ago.
Sometimes I wonder about those very first goats.
Did they ever feel at home here?

JUDAS29.
Did we?

JUDAS67.
I don't know.

JUDAS29.
This place is only magical from far away.

*They lie down. Night falls.
Each is too lonely to fall asleep.
The music box plays. The forest breathes.*

END OF PLAY