

CAPITULATE(!)
By Catherine Alam-Nist
Fall 2022

Who?

Producer(s): Kara O'Rourke and William An
Directors(s): Catherine Alam-Nist
Stage Manager(s): Aaron Mesa
Preferred Contact Email: william.an@yale.edu

What?

Enby is dating Girlboss. Enby meets Heterosexual Softboi. Enby breaks up with Girlboss and causes the world to explode. Also it's in the future. (Real synopsis below)

When?

Date of First Rehearsal: Some time in the week of September 8
Current Tech Week Dates: Sunday October 27 — Thursday November 3
Performance Dates: November 3 — November 5
Overall Dates (First Rehearsal to Last Performance): September 8 — November 5

Time Commitment

Weekly Estimated Time Commitments (in Hours): 6 to 8 until tech

Content Warnings

Terrorism, war, the Ivy League (or something similar), politicians, onstage kissing, offstage sex, a well-deserved punch

Audition Expectations

Bring a song to lip-sync to in the first round (find details below), look over sides prior to callbacks, wear clothes you can move in to both rounds ideally

Audition Location(s)

Please also provide directions! Note: If auditions are in a different location depending on the day, please specify! If your dance call and monologue readings are in different locations, please state that as well!

Hello from the CAPITULATE(!) team!

Kara O'Rourke — Co-Producer



Kara O'Rourke (she/her) is a senior English major in Branford! Being a playwright herself who originally joined the theater world quite late, she loves welcoming and encouraging new-comers, original student writing, and the magic that is large scale collaborative art. In her free time she does even more theater (shocker, I know! Mostly stage makeup), co-leads *Ace/Aro Space*, and listens to queer horror audiodramas (don't get her started but also pls ask her about them).

Aaron Mesa — Stage Manager



Aaron Mesa (they/them) is a sophomore in Hopper majoring in math. This is their first theater production, so if you have any suggestions, or advice, or ways you think they can do better, please let them know. They are also involved in Debate, Ballet Folklorico, Klezmer, Slifka, and maybe other things, and they love to read.

William An — Co-Producer



William (BR '24) is an English and MCDB double major from Florida. Within theatre, he has experience as a producer, director, stage manager, and dramaturg. Outside of theatre, he is involved with Dwight Hall, virus research, and the *Yale Lit Mag* (don't get him started on poetry :').

Catherine Alam-Nist — Playwright/Director



(<----- I am the one on the left btw — on the right is the wonderful Rose Bae, who will be in the cast playing Stephen! :D) Catherine (they/she/???) is a seniorish in Hopper College (🧠🧠👑✨✨) majoring in Humanities (whatever that means) and Theatre Studies (unfortunately my parents know what that means). *CAPITULATE(!)* is the eighth (?? somehow) production they've directed, and their fifth at Yale. They are deeply committed to expanding what stories we tell and how we tell them, and firmly believe in the symbiotic relationship between innovative/unconventional creative processes and the promotion of genuine diversity/inclusion. Apart from theatre, Catherine is involved in Yale Hillel, teaches Hebrew school to fourth graders, plays guitar, draws, and is hoping to record some original music for the first time this semester :)

A little background:

Hello! Catherine here (they/she, but in like a way where I *really* prefer they/them from most people, but am testing out integrating she/her pronouns back in a little to acknowledge my lived experience of being perceived as a woman in society and all the shit that goes with that?? Idk gender is complicated, which is kind of what this play is about!)

CAPITULATE(!) is a play I started writing in summer 2021 while I was helping take care of my dad's twin sister who was in treatment for lymphatic cancer. She was a very cool human and we talked a lot about gender stuffs; it was very cool to get to hear from someone who grew up in a very different world to my one (she was a teenager in the 60s, my parents are old), but had a lot of the same comments and questions and conundrums about — well, a lot of things, but most relevantly the interaction between perceived gender, the self's perception of it's own gender (or lack thereof), and how the conflict between these can dictate our relationships with individuals and wider systems we live in; but, more excitingly, how this can potentially be reconfigured and resisted :)

Fun Fact! I wrote almost all of the original play in a notebook with fun little rainbows on it while I was staying with said aunt in Florida. I then typed it up into a Google Doc and made many little changes during that process, and it has continued to evolve since then, both in response to questions from my own brain and those of some very wonderful collaborators. Shoutout to Nadel Henville, Dan Foster, Abigail Devine, Justin Kuhn, Andrew Martinez and Ferdi Moscat for being the original amazing actors in a Zoom reading we had of the play in August 2021, and a special extraordinary amount of gratitude to Madison Goldberg for being a wonderful director for the reading, and for giving me so much love, advice and support when the play was really beginning to take shape.

Another Fun Fact! I did not ever initially intend to direct this play myself, even though I do first and foremost identity theatrically as a director; however, due to much chaos, ups and downs, twists and turns, distortions and devolutions, etc., that ended up seeming like the logical option given that it's important to me that this play specifically goes up at Yale (if you end up reading the play you may deduce why) before I move into the Great Beyond of Graduation, and the only other director I super want to give it over to at this point does not go to this school (Looking at you, Madison Goldberg. You will probably never read this, but I love you). And although I think there are many cool possibilities when the directing and writing are not coming from the same brain, I have experience from having done this writer-director thing before that having the writer be the same person running rehearsals can be very fruitful and special in its own way. An actor doesn't like a line in rehearsal? Change it there and then. Actor comes up with a funny line off the cuff? Add it in. No copyright or playwright out there brooding in a coffee shop we need permission from!

Some people are not going to like this play at all. And I'm okay with that. It is a strange concept and it explores how both being perceived as non-binary and/or being perceived as a woman can really suck in a lot of circumstances (experiencing misogyny when you don't identify as a woman is a special kind of hell), which is

not subject matter everyone finds important or comfortable. I personally am of the inclination that it is very important, and some might even say ‘fascinating’ or ‘necessary’, so I’m okay with that.

What does any of this actually mean though (Or, A Practical Outline Of Process™)

Everything in this production will be done through the lens of informed consent. If you do not want to do something ever, it is your right to not do so, no questions asked, and no future ramification/talk behind your back for this.* (*Not wanting to do something in rehearsal is not the same as not showing up to rehearsal. Please show up to rehearsal. Just — do it. Aaron does not deserve to have to bug you by asking where you are all the time.)

I as a director and writer will do everything I can to give you as much information as I can about what we’re doing, where we’re going, what to expect, etc., especially regarding sensitive subject matter, the possibility of physical contact onstage, etc. This intention will be held simultaneously with the acknowledgment and appreciation of the fact that Good Art is in its nature mysterious; we do not totally know where our minds, spirits and bodies will take us creatively. And that is okay. In fact, it is very cool. Preserving this mystery alongside mental and physical safety is the name of the game. None of us are perfect. Let us simultaneously aim to do our best and also practice forgiveness regarding ourselves and others as much as is humanly possible.

This is a weird play. And it will have a weird rehearsal process. I’m saying that upfront so that hopefully no one is upset later. If I had to encapsulate where this show will lie genre-wise, I would say somewhere between the land of Conventional Theatre (people sitting on couches bitching at each other) and performance art.* *Here’s a lil definition from the Encyclopedia Britannica about what performance art is, if you’re wondering:

performance art: a time-based art form that typically features a live presentation to an audience or to onlookers (as on a street) and draws on such arts as [acting](#), [poetry](#), [music](#), [dance](#), and [painting](#). It is generally an event rather than an [artifact](#), by nature [ephemeral](#), though it is often recorded on video and by means of still [photography](#).

What does this mean practically? You will have an assigned character, an initial set of lines/plot arc, etc. from the start. However, especially during the first month of rehearsal, actors will be asked to utilise their minds, bodies, creative skills and spiritual existences to explode (no pun intended) the text from something that my little brain put into a Google Doc to a living, breathing, shifting, evolving theatrical/artistic entity. Expect theatre games, music, visual art, free writing, stylised movement (within the physical comfort zones of all involved), experimentation, improvisation, and more. If this sounds like your vibe, we’d love to have you involved. If it doesn’t, that’s okay! You will find many production processes at Yale that will not involve any of these things; in fact, almost all of them :)

Theatre is a fundamentally time-based medium. With time we can invariably expect change. I want the script to change, I want these characters to change, I want my expectations of what the visual world of the play will look like to change, what music we’ll use, what props each character will use. I want to be changed as a maker and as a

person and offer the possibility of such change to my collaborators. If being part of a process like this sounds appealing to you, then I look forward to meeting you <3

With thanks,

Catherine

Plot synopsis:

CAPITULATE(!) is an original queer romantic tragedy set in a futuristic dystopia that is strangely reminiscent of a lot of shittiness of the past. On paper, Yuri's life looks ideal: adopted by a wealthy and powerful couple after the death of their parents, attending a prestigious - if draining - academy called the Institute of Highest Learning, and dating the daughter of a (in)famous politician. Only, they continue to have the unsettling feeling that there is a disconnect between something inside of them and how they live their life — or rather, how they feel they must live their life. And this is not in the least because they are the only person they know who openly pushes back against binary gender. CAPITULATE(!) follows them as they try to find some sort of self-actualisation in a world that would have them confined to dichotomies, archetypes, and norms, and the chaos that ensues for those around them when one person tries to fight the mindset of thousands.

Characters:

Yuri (they/them, 23): An enby who struggles to hold simultaneously the contradictory truths that they feel a desire for intimacy with some people who only seem capable of loving them if they view them as a woman, and the concurrent truth that being viewed in the way that society constructs 'woman' can leave them feeling powerless, constrained, and pained. Attempts to transcend this duality in whatever way possible, with complicated results. Third-year at the Institute of Highest Learning. ***Please note: this role has been precast.** This role, with the consent of the actor involved, may involve stage intimacy.

Astrid (she/her, 24): A Girlboss who Gaslights and Gatekeeps. Yuri's girlfriend at the start of the play. Very wealthy/high-status and not ashamed to show it. Is drawn to Yuri's creativity, passion, and freedom of imagination, but is also scared of these aspects of Yuri when they seem to become too powerful for Astrid to control. Needs to have control over herself and those around her at all times. Fourth-year at the Institute of Highest Learning. **This role, with the consent of the actor involved, may involve stage intimacy.**

Peter (he/him, 23): Heterosexual Softboi. Has generally good intentions, but at times struggles to differentiate these from his own self-interest. Has Chronic Nice Guy Syndrome. (In that he thinks anything he does must be nice, because he's a nice guy, right? right?????) Third-year at the Institute. Has been a member of the Society for Spiritual and Physical Freedom for around two years.

Vaughan (he/him, 27): Leader of the Society for Spiritual and Physical Freedom. Kind of toxically masculine/generally a dick but in a way that he justifies by virtue of his strongman shtick being for a ‘more important cause’. Got his position in the Society by virtue of some heavy in-group nepotism, but gets pretty pissed off if anyone mentions this. Went to the Institute at?? Some point??? But now just kind of hangs around?????? Nobody really knows if he’s a grad student or what, he’s just been around for a really long time. A few years older than all the other characters.

Stephen (he/they/??????, 22): Non-Heterosexual Softboi. Been in the Society for about a year. A sweetheart who really just wants people to like him but also respect his right to self-definition and self-expression. Is caught in a similar bind to Yuri in several ways (i.e. the tension between wanting to be loved, but realizing that this love can come at the cost of limited your ability for self-determination) Serves as a mirror to Yuri’s situation, and a vision of a different path that could have been taken. Second-year at the Institute. ***Please note: this role has been precast.** This role, with the consent of the actor involved, may involve stage violence.

Alexander (he/him, 22): Second-year at the Institute who is down pretty bad for Stephen, but is quite allergic to admitting it. Been in the Society for about a year and a half; part of him wants to be just like Vaughan, but he finds himself at the same time unable to totally dismiss Stephen’s softness and gentler view of the world. Essentially wants to have his cake and eat it. Chemist who specialises in making weaponry for the Society. **This role, with the consent of the actor involved, may involve stage violence.**

*I acknowledge that pre-casting does not exist within my Platonic Ideal of how theatre should be made. However, we do not live in said Platonic Ideal, and due to the nature of this play, what it means to me, the rocky psychological terrain to navigate that is Yale Theatre, and just where I am in my life right now, it was important to me to have a couple people I already know well and really trust in the cast; Rose and Aderonke are said people. That said, we made sure to leave the majority of roles open to auditionees, because good theatre (in a moral and artistic sense) should not be gatekeepy! It just!! Should not!! So we’ve kept our gates as open as we can whilst preserving my sanity. Also I know people often see prod roles as a consolation prize, but I’ve had sO much more fun doing prod than performing at Yale. So consider giving it a go with us! It’ll be fun and good vibes and there will be food and perhaps, at intervals, a cat.

Numbers (not to be confused with Deuteronomy or Leviticus):

6-8 hours of rehearsal per week for each actor until the week before tech

Tech dates: Sunday October 30 — Thursday November 3

- On these days we will need all actors to be available between 6 and 11ish. You will not necessarily be called for all this time, but we will need you to be free in case we need you in the theatre.

Performances: Thursday, November 3, 8pm

Friday, November 4, 8pm

Saturday, November 5, 2pm and 8pm

- Your call time (i.e. when we ask you to be in the theatre by) will probably be 6pm, unless we need to do some more complicated hair/makeup stuff that would require you to come earlier. We will make sure you have time to get food and/or will provide you some if needed.

Auditions

Timeline:

Monday, August 29th — Audition workshop

Wednesday August 31st, Thursday September 1st, Friday September 2nd — Group auditions

Sunday September 4th by 8pm — We will email you letting you know whether or not we'd like to see you for a callback, as well as which sides we'd like you to read.

Monday September 5th, Tuesday September 6th, Wednesday September 7th — Callbacks

12pm, Sunday 11 September — Casting cycle

Audition workshop:

A chance to come meet the team, hear more about the audition and rehearsal processes, and ask us any and all questions you may have! It will be very chill and there will possibly be food :)

First round:

The first round of auditions will be one-hour long group auditions led by me (Catherine), with Aaron (our stage manager) and William and Kara (our producers) also present. Depending on how many people are signed up for each slot, we will probably spend 30-40 minutes on various theatre games/improv activities/exercises for workshopping text, none of which are anything you need to prepare for. Just come with an open mind and open heart, and ideally also clothes that you are comfortable moving around a bit in.*

*The exercises we will be doing in auditions and rehearsal will likely ask you to move around to the extent that is comfortable for you — however, we are committed to not adhering to the ableist tendencies of a lot of conventional theatre. Any and all exercises can be modified to make them feasible and comfortable for you. If you have any concerns at all about your ability to partake in exercises in the rehearsal room, please feel free to

either email me at catherine.alam-nist@yale.edu, or pull me aside in the audition room, and I will be more than happy to help find a good solution.

The last 20-30 mins of the audition (depending on how many people we have), all auditionees will be asked to perform **the following exercise, which you do have to prepare for in advance:**

Did you ever dance around in your room as a kid to *insert beloved childhood artist here - mine was, unsurprisingly given that I grew up in the UK, the Beatles*? Simultaneously enjoying the music and feeling it in your body and allowing yourself to relish in the sounds and the movement without thinking about it at all or trying to intellectualise what you were doing or why?

Being Yalies, you may have been told many times in the past — as I was — to “get out of your head”. But what does that actually mean? It’s much more easily said than done to just shut off your brain. What’s going to be there to take up the space that is normally occupied by the intellectual/analytical?

In my opinion, ceasing (at least to some degree) to feel the need to constantly intellectualise everything — again! Difficult for us as Yale students! Because this is what most of us have been validated for doing for as long as we can remember — requires not only the cessation of relying solely on this part of our being, but also tapping into other equally important aspects of being that we may have often neglected in the past. I would term this the emotional/intuitive/spiritual, and tbh it’s no wonder that a lot of us have difficulty in accessing this, because capitalism generally does not reward us for doing so. (It’s difficult to commodify and therefore difficult to buy or sell and therefore is not ascribed value in our fun little late-stage-capitalist consumerist hellscape.) However what if we..... Did it anyway?

Importantly, I believe that the spiritual/intuitive/emotional side of our being does not live in merely our brains, but in our entire bodies. Crucial to accessing it, therefore, is learning to exist in the fullness of our bodies as creative tools, rather than viewing our bodies as mere support systems for our brains/intellects.

To get us into the practice of using our bodies and intuitions as the marvellous creative entities that they are, our first round of auditions for CAPITULATE(!) are going to be as follows:

- 1) Read the above character descriptions and — ideally without thinking about it too much — pick a song that you feel connects to one of these characters (it’s fine if it’s one of the roles already cast!)

This can be literally any genre — however, it should ideally be a song that you either know the words to already or are comfortable learning them for the audition, and it should also be a song that feels suitable for moving to.

Key point: Moving, not dancing. This is not a dance audition by any stretch of the imagination. This is about gauging your ability/interest in connecting to character through the bodily and intuitive rather than the strictly analytical, and about your ability to commit to embodying that character. You can do a TikTok dance for three

minutes for all I care, as long as you are connecting to the character and the music in a way that feels genuine and committed to you.

Another key point: this is a lip-synching exercise, not singing. You can sing along to the song if you'd prefer, but there won't be any additional points for this (this isn't a musical, but rather a straight play that might potentially utilise a little bit of music for storytelling purposes).

If you want suggestion for song/character pairings rather than picking your own, here are some that I've put together below:

Yuri: *Drunk Walk Home* by Mitski

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTPuHVlGXY>

Astrid: *Femme Fatale* by the Velvet Underground and Nico

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ggHPtzVSEeE>

Peter: *There Is A Light That Never Goes Out* by the Smiths

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3r-qDvD3F3c>

Stephen: *Just Like Heaven* by the Cure

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ASpBpT8bRQ>

Vaughan: *Life During Wartime* by Talking Heads

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jLwZvg46jms>

Alexander: *Boys Don't Cry* by the Cure

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YSAqXEcgOZ4>

Tip: Watching live performances of the songs by the artist on YouTube can be a helpful way to get some inspiration for how to embody the song. (Especially in the case of Mitski, whose utterly shameless and innovative choreo I am personally obsessed with). However, the word *inspiration* is etymology linked to the idea of 'to be breathed into'; rather than intentionally copying an artist's exact moves, I instead recommend letting it affect you by osmosis. Watch the artist, enjoy their work, then do your own thing that riffs off of it, rather than copying it.

I'd also recommend preparing the whole song, even though I may have to cut you off due to timing restraints depending on how many other people are at the audition.

Please come with a link to a song that you can easily share with us and we'll play it for you on our speaker (Spotify or Youtube works!)

Second round:

The second round (i.e. callbacks) will look more similar to what you might be used to seeing in auditions: we will ask you to read scenes in pairs, and will likely give you notes/potential exercises to try in order to experiment with the scene and the characters. You do not need to memorise the scenes; however, if you are notified that you've been called back for a particular character, it might be good to read over that character's callback sides and do a little bit of thinking about them.

Callback sides start on next page

Callback sides:

Alexander + Stephen

Alexander: I've been looking for you. You were out for a long time.

Stephen: I guess.

Alexander: What were you doing?

Stephen: Just walking.

Alexander: Come here.

Stephen: Is there something I can help you with?

Alexander: Oh, come on. You are such a tease.

I'm desperate for you. Please. It's my last night here. Maybe my last night ever.

Stephen: You don't know that.

Alexander: Well, it's pretty fucking likely. Looking at their track record. People have gotten death sentences for stealing a TV, let alone assassinating a minister.

Stephen: Yeah. But with who your father is, I don't think you have that much to be afraid of.

Alexander: Excuse me?

Stephen: What?

Alexander: 'Don't have that much to be afraid of?' I'm literally about to blow up one of the most important people in the country tomorrow, Stephen.

Stephen: I know.

Alexander: But you're saying I shouldn't be worried.

Stephen: I'm just saying, I think you can be a lot less worried than the average nobody murderer, who has no one important to stick up for them. You'll get 15-20. Maybe. A life sentence at worst. But they won't kill you. That's not how things work here.

Alexander: I'm not.

Stephen: What?

Alexander: Not a murderer. I'm an assassin. There's an important difference.

Stephen: Oh, this again.

Alexander: (*vehement*) Yes, this again. It's a vital distinction.

Stephen: If you say so.

Alexander: A murderer is someone who kills for a petty reason — out of jealousy, or hatred, or greed. To take something, rather than to give something.

Stephen: (*dryly*) To steal a TV.

Alexander: Yes — no. I see what you're doing, and it's not going to work. You're not going to make me feel guilty, or stupid. Not tonight. That's not what I deserve from you tonight.

Stephen: And... what do you think you deserve from me tonight, Alex?

(*Alexander takes a deep breath.*)

Alexander: Come here.

Touch me.

Please.

Stephen: "Come here. Touch me. Please." Wow, you really know how to win a guy over, don't you? An order, another order, and then begging.

Alexander: You're being unfair.

Stephen: Maybe. I need some way to get my own back.

I don't want it any more. Any of your orders, your lies, your promises, your threats. I reject every word that comes off of your tongue from here on out.

Alexander: I only say those things because I love you so much.

Stephen: Oh —

Oh G-d. Oh no.

You didn't mean that, did you?

Alexander: Um — maybe. If you want me to, I did.

Stephen: You don't love me. You couldn't possibly. You don't treat me with love.

You've just convinced yourself that you do because you need something like that to justify what you're doing.

Alexander: What we're doing. It's not just me.

Stephen: No, but you're the only one who lets yourself feel good about it. Other than Peter, but he's gone and done the same thing. Brought in someone that he's convinced himself he loves, so he can tell himself that this is all some grand romantic adventure, that what we're doing is somehow an act of love rather than.....

Alexander: Rather than?

Stephen: Hatred, Alex. Violent, and painful, and hateful, what it does to them, what it's doing to us..... you can't go along with plans like this for so long without sacrificing a good deal of what makes you human.

Alexander: That's what you view me as? Less human?

Stephen: It's not just you. It's all of us. That's the sad thing. We've all let ourselves fall into this awful way of seeing the world not because any of us believed at the start that it was right, but because as we fell, we braced the fall by making the lies come true. We started telling ourselves and each other that we were actually doing something brave and noble.

Alexander: I don't know why you're bringing this all up now. We've been over this many, many times. Nobody likes the bloodshed. (*Stephen scoffs*) Nobody thinks this is the ideal way to go about things, but — in a world that leaves us so few choices, that creates so much violence towards us, a world that we didn't choose to enter into — sometimes a little bit of violence in return can be a form of service, you know?

(*Beat.*)

Stephen?

Stephen: I don't think I have the heart for this anymore. It was exciting when we started, but now — it's just painful.

Alexander: You know what? No. No, I won't take this from you. Not now. Do you understand what I have committed myself to doing? Have you any sense of the importance —

Stephen: Shut UP. I'm sick of hearing this.

Alexander: And I'm sick of all this talking. I am to become a martyr tomorrow, and I damn well deserve to be treated with the respect owed to one tonight.

Peter + Yuri

Peter: What are you looking at?

Yuri: Nothing. Everything. I dunno.

The sky's eyes.

Peter: What?

Yuri: When I was little, my mother used to say to me that the sky had eyes. Big, blue eyes that will hunt you down, crush you under the weight of their gaze, unless you're strong enough to match their glare. Stare them down right back.

Peter: Your real mother, or...

(Yuri gives him a look.)

Sorry.

Yuri: It's fine. It's... nothing. I guess.

Nothing for you to worry about.

(Pause.)

Peter: Can I give you something?

Yuri: *(looking — he's not carrying anything)* Um — yeah? You mean, like, now?

Peter: Yeah.

Yuri: I don't see anything on you. Must be a real small gift.

Peter: Gimme your hand.

Yuri: What?

Peter: Your hand.

Yuri: What — why? I thought you were giving/ me something.

Peter: *(jokingly)* /Don't worry, I'll give it back — Look, it's nothing sus, I promise.

It's from my mother. Something she taught us when we were kids. I thought you might like it. Or at least find it entertaining.

Yuri: If this involves any kind of pinching or slapping, please know that I will hit you right back. I had little brothers back at the Dagenharts'. I know how this goes.

Peter: Just trust me, okay?

(Beat. Yuri tentatively reaches out their hand, and Peter takes it in his. Peter starts to run his finger across Yuri palm — they snatch their hand back.)

Yuri: What are you doing?

Peter: I'm reading your palm.

Yuri: You're what?

Peter: Your palm. I'm reading it. My mom used to say that you could read a person's fortune from the lines on their palm. Apparently they used to do that in the Old World. People would even pay money for it sometimes.

Yuri: Sounds like bullshit to me. I don't know about you, but I prefer to get my information from books rather than body parts.

Peter: Okay. Sure. Suit yourself.

(Silence. They go back to both staring out at the skyline in silence. Until Yuri suddenly turns to him:)

Yuri: Did you see anything?

Peter: Hm?

Yuri: On my palm. Did you see anything?

Peter: I thought you preferred to get your information from books.

Yuri: Shut up.

Fine. I'm not saying I believe in any of this spiritual stuff necessarily, but... I'd like to know what you see there. If you'll share it with me.

Peter: *(smiling)* Gladly.

(Yuri extends their palm again. Peter takes it in his, careful, tender, focussed. Yuri watches him as he reads their palm, trying to read his face.)

Yuri: Well?

Peter: So, let's see... on top, we've got the love line..... It's long..... It's round and curved..... And it stops just below your index finger.

Yuri: Meaning?

Peter: You're satisfied in your love life.

(Yuri laughs)

Yuri: So this is bullshit.

Peter: Give it a moment. *(He keeps looking)* Head line right below..... It's long, meaning you're smart.....

Yuri: *(deadpan)* Thanks.

Peter: But there's a gap in it. Like, the line stops, and then picks up again. Which means being conflicted in your thoughts, even in your beliefs sometimes, if I'm remembering correctly.

(Pause.)

Yuri: Keep going.

Peter: Life line.... Hm. That one's hard to read for you. It's very faint.

Yuri: And that's..... A bad thing.

Peter: Not necessarily.

Yuri: It's not bad to have the line symbolising your life barely visible?

Peter: No. It just means we don't know yet. That part's yet to be written.

You could have a long life, full of vitality, many years, many experiences.

Yuri: Or not.

(Pause. Peter keeps reading.)

Peter: What really is remarkable is your fate line.

Yuri: Fate line?

Peter: Yeah. You see? That deep one running vertically, from your middle finger to your wrist. Yours is extraordinarily deep, and long. Some people don't have it at all, you know.

Yuri: Having no fate sounds better than having no life.

Peter: I told you, that's not what —

What this means is that you have an incredibly strong sense of purpose within you, even if you haven't discovered exactly what it is yet. You have something pushing you, driving you, propelling you, even if that force is unnameable to you right now. So you may get lost, you may try to run, but you'll never lose it. That purpose. It will also find its way back to you, and you to it. And you will live to see it fulfilled, whenever that may be.

Astrid monologue

Astrid: Hi, Yuri? It's Astrid. Well, I mean, you know that, unless you've deleted my contact info or something, which I guess is pretty likely... Anyway. I just wanted to check in on you, and, I dunno, maybe apologise or something? Though frankly I don't feel like I did much of anything wrong. All I did was tell your parents the truth — it's not my fault that they decided to kick you out.

Look, Yuri, I... I'm worried about you. Nobody's seen or heard from you in months, and next thing I know, it seems you've effectively dropped out of school.

I'm frightened, Yuri. That night we split up, I thought nothing could infuriate me more than your presence — but that was before I encountered your absence. Which is so, so much worse. It beats at my skull, day in and day out. I haven't had a good night's sleep since you left. It feels like there's a hole being drilled through my head — or maybe the hole was already there, and you were the only person able to stop it up.

None of this would have happened if you'd just fucking listened to me. I told you, I only did the things I did because I thought they would be best for you. No — no, I *knew* they would be best. For you. For us.

And clearly, I was right. Just look at what's happened now that you've gone out on your own.

I love you, Yuri. And I'm afraid for you... almost afraid *of* you, I don't know what strange, awful places your mind has gone to. Who might have slipped some poison into your ear and destroyed the girl — er, the person I loved. Still love. Still, for some goddamn reason.

I'm going to find you, my darling. That I promise. One way or another, Yuri, I will bring you home. I will make you safe again. Make you *sane* again.

Just, for once in your life, can you STAY FUCKING STILL.

I'll get to you. And soon.

Astrid + Yuri

Yuri: Why do you care so much? About who I speak to, or what I smoke, or what I wear? I'm here with you now, aren't I? I don't give this much of myself to anyone but you. But it still isn't enough for you.

Astrid: (*beginning to tear up*) You don't know... you don't know what you've been doing to me.

Yuri: I think I —

Astrid: You don't. You can't possibly.

All I've ever wanted is to protect you, to keep you safe, because — because —

I can't imagine a future without you, Yuri.

Yuri: Er... what?

Astrid: I don't want to. Imagine one without you. You're the love of my life.

Yuri: (*genuinely stunned*) It's been only a few months, Astrid.

Astrid: You don't understand. I know what I want quickly. I always have. And I'm always right.

When I was a little girl, my mom took me to a toy store. Within minutes of walking in, I spotted a red tricycle in the corner. I knew immediately that that was what I wanted, and I told my mom that. She said that I should look at all the other toys, because how could I possibly know that this was the exact one I want if I hadn't seen the rest of them?

So I went with her from aisle to aisle, pretending to look at all the other toys that were on display... and at the end of it, I told her that we were going back to Aisle 1 because that's where the red tricycle was and that's what I wanted.

Yuri: And so you're saying I'm... like a tricycle?

Astrid: It's a metaphor, Yuri.

Yuri: Yeah, I got that.

Astrid: Can you try to not be snide for just one moment? I just said something really important to you.

Yuri: That I'm like a tricycle?

Astrid: No. That I can't imagine my life without you.

Yuri: Yeah, I heard you, and I chose to ignore it. Because that's just —

Astrid: I... I want this to last forever. I feel like it really could.

Yuri: Please stop, you're freaking me out —

Astrid: All my life, I thought that I'd never meet anyone...

Yuri: We're not even twenty-five, Astrid...

Astrid: And now that I have you, I never want to let you go.....

Yuri: Astrid WILL YOU STOP.

(Astrid stops)

You're freaking me out.

What you're saying, it doesn't sound like love, it sounds like.....

Astrid: Well? Say it.

Yuri: Ownership.

Astrid: Isn't that kind of what love is?

Yuri: What do you mean?

Astrid: When you say to someone that you want them to be yours, isn't that suggesting a kind of possession?

Yuri: Yes.

Astrid: And isn't that kind of... hot?

(Pause. Yuri stares at Astrid with some combination of bemusement and horror. Astrid doesn't like this look, so she goes up to Yuri, and kisses them, hard.)

Astrid: Isn't it?

(Beat, as Astrid holds Yuri in her arms rigidly.)

Yuri: *(carefully disentangling themselves)* You — you should go, Astrid.

Astrid: What do you —

Yuri: Please. I'm sorry, I know you were planning to spend the night here, but you just — I just — I need to be alone now.

Astrid: Are you trying to punish me?

Yuri: No I'm just trying to — all I want to be able to do is fucking *breathe*, but the things you're saying — they just — stop, Astrid. You're strangling me.

Astrid: Okay, well someone's being hyperbolic.

Yuri: That — there — you're doing it again.

Astrid: I'm not doing anything. Except trying to look out for you.

Yuri: You're not looking out for me. You're just... looking at me. Like an acquisition. A car or a painting you want in your possession to show off to all your friends and I just... can't. take it. anymore.

If you're not leaving, then... then I will.

Astrid: What are you talking about? We're in your room.

Where will you go?

Yuri: (*rapidly collecting their things, and heading towards the door*) Ugh — I dunno. School, or something. Maybe back to the party. Doesn't matter.

Astrid: Yuri.

Yuri: (*turning back around*) Yeah?

Astrid: If you walk away from me now... don't expect to be able to come back.

Yuri: What do you mean? This is my home. Or — my house.

Astrid: You know what I mean.

Do you hear me? If you leave, I'm... I'm leaving you.

There are consequences to things, Yuri. It's about time you learned that.

(*Pause. Yuri inhales deeply, makes their choice.*)

Yuri: I — I've got to go.

Vaughan + Stephen

Vaughan: Tough cookie to crack, that one.

Stephen: You're telling me.

Hey, wait, were you —

Vaughan: Listening in? Only a little bit, towards the end. I enjoy a good folk song as much as the next man.

Stephen: He clearly doesn't feel the same way.

Vaughan: Perhaps not.

Stephen: I shouldn't care. You know what? I don't care. Alex can be as weird and moody and annoying as he wants. It's not my problem. I'm not responsible for how he feels.

Vaughan: If you say so.

(Pause.)

Stephen: What would you do? If you were me? You've known Alex longer than I have. What was he like in those six months before I got here?

Vaughan: I'm not doing this.

Stephen: Please?

Vaughan: Look, I've always turned a blind eye towards you two, even though I don't know a single other unit leader in the Society who would permit such a relationship among his ranks. It seemed to keep you happy, and keep Alex entertained —

Stephen: Entertained?

Vaughan: You know what I mean. I haven't gotten involved up until now because that seemed like the best way to keep things stable, and I don't intend to change that now.

Stephen: Come on, Vaughan, you can knock off the fake military officer act.

Vaughan: Excuse me?

Stephen: You know as well as anyone that before we were (*waving his hands to gesture around the room*) all this, we were just schoolboys with our head in the clouds trying to figure out what we were and how we were going to fit into the world. And in many ways, we still are. Especially Alex. He's... I think he's suffering, Vaughan. And I'm trying to figure out how to help him. That's all. That's all I want. So I'm asking you, man to man. Not lieutenant to commander. Is there anything you can tell me?

Vaughan: I'm not. Doing this. This is a deeply inappropriate conversation for us to be having —

Stephen: Didn't you ever feel this way about anyone? Where you're so out-of-your-mind desperate to help them, that you'd do anything? Ask anything? Try anything at all?

(*Vaughan pauses for a moment, contemplating.*)

Vaughan: Yes.

(*Stephen is taken aback.*)

Stephen: Really?

Vaughan: My little sister. Before the Bad Times.

I loved that little one more than life itself, to be honest. I was twelve and she was five when our father was drafted and then our mother ran off with the Institute Officer down the road. We were left alone, her and me. And for the first time in my life, I felt... some kind of responsibility to something beyond myself. Some sort of bond, some sort of invisible thread that connected me to this *person*, this beautiful, confusing, crying mass of bone and flesh and spirit who just made me feel... *desperate* to help her in any way I could.

I couldn't, as it turned out. Help her. We may want to think that the fates are leading us towards some kind of completion, some sort of resolution; that they only ever hand us problems not too large for us to solve somehow. But that's not true, I discovered. Sometimes the problems that get thrown at you are so large that rather than you taming them, they swallow you whole, and fundamentally alter the fabric of your very being. And worse, of those you love, as well.

Stephen: What happened to her?

Vaughan: I'd rather not get into it.