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Naomi Krizner

naomi.krizner@pop.belmont.edu

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RAINED IN: AN ORIGINAL MUSICAL

Naomi Krizner

A Senior Honors Thesis project submitted to the Honors Program in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

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Shawn M. Knight Date 4/5/2020

Shawn Knight, Thesis Director

[Signature] Date 4/7/2020

Cindy Morgan, Committee Member

Wayne Barnard Date 4/7/2020

Wayne Barnard, Committee Member

Accepted for the Honors Council and Honors Program:

_____ Date _____

Dr. Bonnie Smith Whitehouse, Director
The Honors Program

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RAINED IN
A One Act Musical
By: Naomi Krizner

Cast of Characters

<u>TATE</u>	32 years old, a narrow-minded and untrusting man
<u>EMSLEY (also EMILY)</u>	10 years old, a sassy and curious girl daughter
<u>NEBBY</u>	Unknown age, a cave demon
<u>ABADDON</u>	Unknown age, a cave demon

ACT 1, SCENE 1

Curtains open to show a young child walking by the entrance of a cave. She isn't paying much attention to her surroundings. Instead, she is looking fearfully at the sky. There is a large thunderclap; she gasps and cowers, looking for shelter. Another loud thunderclap is heard, and she runs into the cave. Lightning flashes, and she gasps again, this time hearing her own echo. She turns around to see where she ran to.

A voice is heard coming from deeper in the cave.

TATE

[voice creaky]

Who's there?

EMSLEY

[unsure]

Uhhh...who's asking?

EMSLEY begins walking towards the voice and finds TATE sitting down against a rock, staring at the wall in front of him. TATE doesn't turn to acknowledge her.

TATE

[not particularly inviting]

You can sit if you want.

EMSLEY sits. There is a moment of silence.

EMSLEY

What are you looking at?

TATE

The world.

EMSLEY

[points at the wall]

That? That's not the world.

TATE

It's mine.

Another moment of silence.

EMSLEY

That's a sad world.

TATE

Don't act like yours is any different.

EMSLEY

[shrugs]

I like my world.

TATE

Ha. Then you don't know enough.

EMSLEY

[turns her head to study Tate curiously]

You're really negative, mister.

TATE finally turns to look at EMSLEY. He examines her critically for a moment or two, then suddenly throws his head back laughing. His laughter sounds forced and empty.

TATE

You're a child, of course. You don't get it.

EMSLEY

Get what?

TATE

What the world's about.

EMSLEY

What's it about?

TATE

Nothing. Just like that wall. It's cold, and ugly, and stands in the way.

EMSLEY

[staring curiously at him]

Stands in the way of what?

TATE

[snorting]

Anything worthwhile.

EMSLEY

What's worthwhile?

TATE

You ask a lot of questions; do you know that?

EMSLEY

You don't give good answers.

EMSLEY (cont'd)

TATE doesn't respond.

My name's Emsley, by the way.

TATE still doesn't respond.

What's yours?

TATE
[irritated]

So many questions.

EMSLEY
[quietly]

You don't have to be mean...I was just wondering.

TATE
[voice softens]

I wasn't trying to be mean. I'm sorry, sometimes I forget how to talk to people. Not a lot come around here.

EMSLEY

Well, why don't you go out there? Nobody likes going into a cave.

TATE

That's a little complicated—

Sinister laughter is heard from even deeper in the cave. The source is unseen. EMSLEY is frozen and cannot hear the other voices.

ABADDON
[chuckling, not seen]

Oh, is that so? Apparently, it's complicated, Nebby.

NEBBY
[nervously, also not seen]

It's about to be complicated if he doesn't shut up now, Abaddon.

TATE

But I'm not saying anything!

ABADDON

You're saying more than you need to.

NEBBY

Just stop talking, because you're going to get reeled into having to tell her something! And then how are you going to explain the pathetic situation you're in?

ABADDON

Maybe you just make her leave.

NEBBY

Yeah! Then you don't have to explain at all! That's way safer!

TATE

[echoing Nebby]

That way is safer...

A large thunder clap is heard. EMSLEY unfreezes.

EMSLEY

What's complicated?

TATE

[quick to silence her, standing up]

Nothing is. But you need to leave.

EMSLEY

Leave? Didn't you just hear the thund—

TATE

[interrupting coldly]

I don't hear anything, so it's time you get out of here.

EMSLEY

But I'm hiding here from the storm—

TATE

[towering over her]

I don't care. Get out. Get out!

EMSLEY, confused, hurt, and slightly scared runs out of the cave. TATE collapses onto the ground.

NEBBY

That was a close one. You almost blew your cover, Tate.

TATE

[protesting]

I did exactly what you told me to do!

ABADDON

And one day, that won't be enough.

TATE

[muttering]

Nothing I do is ever enough for you.

ABADDON

Better to learn that now than later.

NEBBY

[menacing]

Don't get snappy. Do you really want people finding out about this?

TATE

[going to argue but decides to resign]

I-no! No. No, I don't.

(#1) SECRETS

Music begins. ABADDON and NEBBY remain unseen, yet their voices are heard on either side of TATE.

ABADDON

DON'T TALK,
JUST SIT.
QUIETLY KNIT
TOGETHER,
NO ONE BETTER
FIGURE OUT
YOU'RE STITCHED.
WORDS PULL AT IT
UNCENSORED.
DON'T SURRENDER.

NEBBY

STAY HIDDEN.
PLAY PRETEND.

ABADDON and NEBBY

SECRETS,
THEY KEEP YOU SAFE FROM YOUR
WEAKNESS.
DON'T EAT AT YOUR BRAIN LIKE YOUR
REGRETS.
IF YOU NEVER SAY, YOU'RE A FREE MAN;
DON'T SPEAK THEM.

NEBBY

SHE TEMPTS
 YOUR TRUTH.
 DON'T GIVE THE ROOT
 KEEPS YOU DOWN,
 SPEAK YOU LOSE GROUND.
 YOUNG AND
 SENSELESS,
 HEARTS ARE RESTLESS.
 FOLLOW YOUR DOUBT,
 SEE SHE'S GONE NOW.

ABADDON

STAY HIDDEN.
 JUST PLAY DEAD.

ABADDON and NEBBY

SECRETS,
 THEY KEEP YOU SAFE FROM YOUR
 WEAKNESS.
 DON'T EAT AT YOUR BRAIN LIKE YOUR
 REGRETS.
 IF YOU NEVER SAY, YOU'RE A FREE MAN;
 DON'T SPEAK THEM.

SECRETS,
 THEY KEEP YOU SAFE FROM YOUR
 WEAKNESS.
 DON'T TEAR AT YOUR BRAIN LIKE YOUR
 REGRETS.
 IF YOU NEVER SAY, YOU'RE A FREE MAN;
 DON'T SPEAK THEM.

ABADDON

NO ONE CAN HURT YOU, IF
 NOBODY KNOWS.

NEBBY

STAY IN THE CAVE WHERE
 THE DARK KNOWS THE MOST.

TATE

[stands up slowly]

IF MY HEART REMAINS UNSPOKEN
 AND MY WALLS REMAIN UNBROKEN,
 THEN NONE HAVE EVER NOTICED;

TATE (cont'd)

NO ONE WILL EVER KNOW ME.

ABADDON and NEBBY

NO ONE CAN HURT YOU, IF
NOBODY KNOWS.
STAY IN THE CAVE WHERE
THE DARK KNOWS THE MOST.

DON'T WHISPER SECRETS
YOU DON'T WANT TO OWN.
THE MORE THAT YOU GIVE THEM,
THE MORE THAT THEY HOLD.

TATE

SECRETS,
THEY KEEP ME SAFE FROM MY
WEAKNESS.
DON'T EAT AT MY BRAIN LIKE MY
REGRETS.
IF I NEVER SAY, I'M A FREE MAN...

SECRETS,
THEY KEEP ME SAFE FROM MY
WEAKNESS.
DON'T TEAR AT MY BRAIN LIKE MY
REGRETS.
IF I NEVER SAY, I'M A FREE MAN;
I WON'T SPEAK THEM.

ABADDON and NEBBY

NO ONE CAN HURT YOU, IF
NOBODY KNOWS.

DON'T WHISPER SECRETS YOU
DON'T WANT TO OWN.

TATE

MY HEART REMAINS UNSPOKEN;
MY WALLS REMAIN UNBROKEN.

TATE is left standing in the middle of the stage defeated, with a single light on him. He slowly sits down and puts his head in his hands. The light fades to dark.

ACT 1, SCENE 2

The lights remain off. Nothing is seen. Suddenly a voice breaks the silence.

EMSLEY

Hello? Mister? Are you in there?

TATE

Huh?

A light comes on TATE as he scrambles to sit up.

You came back?

EMSLEY

It's still raining.

More lights come up to reveal EMSLEY walking into the cave to meet TATE.

TATE

Oh.

EMSLEY sits down next to TATE.

EMSLEY

I have a question.

TATE

[rolls his eyes]

You have too many.

EMSLEY

[ignores the comment]

Why did you get scared when I asked why you don't leave?

TATE

[slightly offended]

Scared? What do you mean I got scared? I didn't get scared.

EMSLEY

Yeah you did. You started freaking out and told me to go away.

TATE

[looks away slightly embarrassed]

Sure, but that doesn't mean I was scared.

EMSLEY

Yes, it does. I don't think you know a lot about feelings.

TATE

What's that supposed to mean?

EMSLEY

[giggling]

Now you're asking all the questions.

TATE

[rolling his eyes again]

Oh, you want to be funny, huh?

EMSLEY

You're the funny one. Sitting here in this big dark cave all by yourself.

Rumbling laughter is heard from the back of the cave. EMSLEY freezes again and cannot hear ABADDON or NEBBY.

ABADDON

[chuckling]

Did you hear that, Tate? You're a joke to her.

NEBBY

I knew she would do this! Come into your safe haven just to tear you apart!

ABADDON

It's the story of your life.

TATE

I don't think that's what she meant...

ABADDON

Oh, don't fool yourself. You heard the kid. She's laughing at you.

NEBBY

You have to think about what's really in her head.

TATE

I can't read minds!

NEBBY

You need to! What if she's planning on exposing you? Bringing a bunch of people here to look and laugh at you? What if she's trying to take something from you?

ABADDON

People never actually care enough to help someone. Especially if that person is broken and pitiful.

NEBBY

Like you.

NEBBY and ABADDON howl with laughter.

TATE

Are you saying she hates me? Then why would she come back?

ABADDON

Same reason you wouldn't be able to look away from a lazy eye. People are fascinated by brokenness.

NEBBY

But then once she gets bored....

ABADDON

She'll move on.

NEBBY

And you'll be all alone, once again!

NEBBY and ABADDON laugh again and their laughter fades out. EMSLEY unfreezes, and TATE looks hard at her.

TATE

So you came all the way back to make fun of me?

EMSLEY
[defensively]

What? No, I didn't! It's raining, and I need shelter!

EMSLEY brightens up.

I can keep you company, too.

TATE

Why?

EMSLEY

Because you're lonely!

TATE

Maybe you're just assuming things!

EMSLEY

You're here all by yourself. That's being lonely.

TATE shrugs and doesn't answer.

Are you hiding?

TATE

What? No, I'm not hiding anything!

EMSLEY

No, I mean are *you* hiding?

TATE

[defensively]

What kind of question is that? What would I even be hiding from?

EMSLEY

[shrugs innocently]

I don't know. I'm hiding from the rain.

EMSLEY pauses for a moment.

It'd be more fun if you were hiding, too.

TATE

[sulkily]

Sorry, but things can't always be fun.

EMSLEY

So, do you just like the dark? Is that why you stay here?

TATE

[dryly]

More like the dark likes me.

ABADDON is heard from the back.

ABADDON

Careful. Are you really going to go there?

EMSLEY

[obviously didn't hear the voice]

I didn't know the dark could like people. I think it's scary.

TATE

Maybe I'm scary, too.

NEBBY

If you let this out, you're putting your heart in the hands of somebody else. And you have no idea how big of a knife she's carrying.

ABADDON

But hey, if you want to admit how messed up you really are, be my guest.

EMSLEY

I don't think that's true. But I don't think you told me your name either.

TATE

[very distracted]

It's...Tate.

EMSLEY

[thoughtfully]

Tate. That's not a scary name!

NEBBY

[panicking]

Now you've done it. Names have power.

ABADDON

She's about to see that a shadow is all that's left of you.

NEBBY

You should have stayed in the dark. It's the only place where we'll ever be safe.

EMSLEY takes a moment to study Tate. She points at his wrist.

EMSLEY

I like your watch.

TATE

It doesn't work.

EMSLEY

It doesn't? Why do you wear it then?

TATE

I keep hoping one day it'll start back up again.

TATE pauses. EMSLEY is listening quietly.

So I can tell how long I've been here and when I get to leave.

ABADDON is heard.

ABADDON

If you could leave, you would have been gone a long time ago.

NEBBY

[sneering]

But it's a little too late for that now!

TATE is trying not to panic.

EMSLEY

That doesn't make sense.

TATE

[pulling himself together]

What? What doesn't?

EMSLEY

Why would a watch just starting working again if you don't change the batteries?

ABADDON

[chuckling]

He doesn't have the capacity to change anything.

TATE

Uhhh...

EMSLEY

And also, watches don't tell you when to do something. Alarm clocks do. They wake you up from any dream. Even if it's a good one.

ABADDON

Too bad this isn't a dream, huh, Tate?

NEBBY

This *could* be a nightmare.

ABADDON

[snorts]

But it's one he'll never wake up from.

NEBBY

[giggling]

Ever!

EMSLEY

[triumphantly]

That's why it doesn't make sense.

NEBBY

[mimicking her]

And that's why you'll never make sense.

TATE shakes his head from all the voices coming at him at once. He stands up.

TATE

Stop! I need everyone to stop, please, just stop!

There's silence.

EMSLEY

[looks up at him]

Tate, it's just me.

TATE

[looks at her wild-eyed]

No, it's not. It's not just you. There's voices. There are all these voices

EMSLEY

Voices? What are you talking about? I don't hear anything.

As TATE begins to respond, NEBBY and ABADDON slowly creep out of the shadows.

TATE

Well, but there are! They talk to me all the time. I don't think they ever stop, because they have something to say about everything. It's—

TATE sees them and freezes.

EMSLEY

It's what? Tate? Tate!

TATE stands frozen in fear, having lost the ability to blink or look away.

TATE

[very very quietly]

Real.

EMSLEY

What's real? What are you looking at?

TATE doesn't respond or look away. EMSLEY stares for a minute trying to figure it out, shrugs, and continues talking.

This reminds me of one time, I was trying to go to sleep, and I saw this big scary thing in the corner by my closet. And I thought it was a monster. It was really big. And it had these scary things that stuck out like claws, and I swear they were reaching out to get me. So I screamed for my mom at the top of my lungs, and she came and turned the lights on, but it was just a coat.

EMSLEY giggles. Then she becomes serious.

But then that made me think of all the movies with the monsters that come out of the closet, but then just pretend to look like a coat to trick you, but they're actually monsters, and then I really got scared.

EMSLEY stares off into space as if to ponder what she has said. TATE makes no sign that he's heard her. His gaze remains fixed on NEBBY and ABADDON who are slinking around the cave.

TATE

[in a whisper]

You're real.

NEBBY

[sneering]

We told you this wasn't a dream.

ABADDON

Look what you made us do, Tate. Come out to take care of things ourselves.

EMSLEY

[to herself]

I wonder if monsters really are real.

Turns to look at TATE.

What do you think?

Sees that TATE is still very much focused on NEBBY and ABADDON.

Wow, you're really good at staring.

TATE
[still softly in disbelief]

It's all real.

EMSLEY
[eyes wide]

Monsters are real?

Thinks about it for a second with a frown.

I don't know if I believe you. I've never seen one. Have you?

TATE opens his mouth and goes to point at NEBBY and ABADDON.

NEBBY

Are you sure that's a good idea, Tate?

ABADDON

What did we say about secrets?

TATE quickly puts down his hand. Music begins to play. EMSLEY keeps talking.

EMSLEY

Also, I don't know if I believe you because every time I'm scared about it, my mom says it's all in my head.

NEBBY and ABADDON
[moving slowly towards the two]

NO ONE CAN HURT YOU, IF
 NOBODY KNOWS.
 STAY IN THE CAVE WHERE
 THE DARK KNOWS THE MOST.

EMSLEY
[still thinking out loud]

But sometimes, I can't really tell what's in my head.

Looks over at TATE again.

When are you gonna talk again?

Walks over to TATE and waves her hand in his face.

Hello?

TATE

[slightly coming out of his trance]

Uh, what? Oh...hello.

EMSLEY

[with a giggle]

There you are. I thought you forgot how to talk for a second.

NEBBY and ABADDON

[still singing while getting closer]

NO ONE CAN HURT YOU, IF
NOBODY KNOWS.
IF YOU WHISPER SECRETS, THEN
YOU LOSE YOUR HOPE.

TATE is trying to avoid both but seems much more intent on staying away from ABADDON, who appears more threatening than NEBBY.

TATE

It's kind of hard to with everything happening right now.

EMSLEY

What do you mean? What's happening?

TATE gets lost staring fearfully at NEBBY and ABADDON, as EMSLEY stares at him expecting an answer.

NEBBY and ABADDON

[circling the two]

NO ONE CAN HURT YOU, IF
NOBODY KNOWS.
BUT NOW THAT SHE'S HERE
SHE'S GETTING TOO CLOSE.

TATE

We're surrounded.

EMSLEY

[very confused]

You're scaring me. I'm just going to stay over there.

EMSLEY backs away from TATE.

I hope it stops raining soon.

A loud thunder clap is heard. EMSLEY sits down and starts drawing in the dirt.

ABADDON

Ironic that you're the only monster scaring the poor child here.

NEBBY

You need to tell her to leave, Tate.

TATE

Why?

NEBBY

You're only going to hurt her! And she isn't helping much of anything.

TATE

[voice shaky]

Who says she has to help anything? She's just hiding from the storm, that's all!

NEBBY wanders over to EMSLEY to examine her.

NEBBY

[with a sniff]

A nuisance.

TATE

Stay away from her!

EMSLEY jumps.

EMSLEY

[scared]

Why are you shouting?

TATE

To help you!

EMSLEY

I don't need help with anything!

ABADDON

Don't pretend like you have anything to offer.

TATE

[to Emsley]

I'm just trying to protect you!

EMSLEY

I don't need protection! The rain's outside!

TATE

[goes to point at Nebby and Abaddon]

Yeah, but—

ABADDON

But what, Tate? What can you say to make this any better?

NEBBY

Do you really think she's as crazy as you are?

TATE

[understanding]

She can't see you.

NEBBY

[darkly]

You're all alone in this one.

TATE looks back and forth between the demons and EMSLEY.

TATE

[hesitantly]

So...you're not scared right now, Emsley?

EMSLEY

If you stop freaking out, I won't be.

TATE

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to yell.

TATE pauses for a minute.

Can I...come sit by you?

EMSLEY

[eyes him wearily]

Are you going to keep being weird?

TATE

Uhh...I can try not to be.

EMSLEY

[shrugs]

Then okay.

TATE sits carefully down next to EMSLEY, keeping his eye on NEBBY and ABADDON the whole time. They choose a place on either side of him and begin to lounge around.

TATE

What are you drawing?

EMSLEY

What do you think?

TATE

Uh, I don't know. I just see lines.

EMSLEY

[frowns]

It can't be that bad of a drawing.

TATE

[quickly]

No, no! I'm sure it's not bad at all. I just can't really see...anything.

EMSLEY

[thinking hard]

Maybe blink really hard and look again.

TATE

[going along with it]

Okay.

TATE closes his eyes tightly for a second and then looks again.

EMSLEY

Now do you see it?

TATE

[sheepishly]

Uhh...no.

EMSLEY

[exasperated]

It's a sunny day! Look; that's the grass, those are two flowers, those are two clouds, and that's the sun in the middle.

TATE

If it's a sunny day, why are there clouds?

EMSLEY

Have you ever been outside? Clouds are allowed to be there! As long as they're not covering up the sun.

ABADDON

Seems like you're a little out of touch with reality, Tate.

NEBBY gets up and looks at the drawing.

NEBBY

Wow that's a terrible drawing. That doesn't look like anything.

ABADDON snorts.

EMSLEY

[curiously]

When is the last time you went outside?

TATE

[points to his watch]

It's broken. I couldn't tell you.

EMSLEY

How did you get here in the first place?

ABADDON

Here comes the sob story.

NEBBY

He's going to sound weak, and she probably won't get any of it.

ABADDON

She's only a child.

TATE

Maybe that's a story for later.

EMSLEY

Why?

TATE

Because you wouldn't understand it.

EMSLEY

[slightly offended]

Why?

TATE

Because you're just a kid.

EMSLEY

[points at her drawing]

So? You're the one who only sees lines!

TATE

Maybe that means I have my head on straight!

EMSLEY

Or maybe it means you can only see what's right in front of your face!

TATE

[getting up]

You don't know what you're talking about! I'm leaving!

EMSLEY

Ha! And where are you going to go?

TATE glares at EMSLEY and sits down at the other corner of the cave. EMSLEY points at the entrance.

You went the wrong way.

TATE

Whatever.

ABADDON

You're never going to learn, are you?

(#2) PERCEPTION

Music begins. The lights dim so that EMSLEY is in the dark and the spotlight remains on TATE and the demons.

TATE

TAKE MY EYES,
COVER THEM UP.
PAINT ME A SIGHT,
'CAUSE MINE'S NOT ENOUGH.

I DON'T SEE RIGHT,
I'M LOSING TOUCH.
WHAT YOU DESCRIBE
IS ALL THAT IT WAS.

TATE (cont'd)

TATE looks up at NEBBY and ABADDON who stand there smirking.

YOU THIEF,
YOU TAKE WHAT I SEE.
YOU THINK
UP WHAT I BELIEVE.

TATE drops his head down again.

BREATHE DOWN MY NECK,
WITH YOUR LESSONS.
IF I REPENT,
IT'S FOR YOUR BLESSING.

STEAL MY SENSE,
THE COST IS LESS THAN
WHAT I WOULD SPEND,
SECOND GUESSING.

TATE stands up shakily and looks again at NEBBY and ABADDON.

YOU THIEF,
YOU TAKE WHAT I SEE.
YOU THINK
UP WHAT I BELIEVE.

NOW ALL I KNOW,
IS ALL YOU'VE TOLD ME.
ALL I HOLD,
IS WHAT YOU'VE SHOWN ME.

NOW ALL I KNOW,
IS ALL YOU'VE TOLD ME.
ALL I HOLD,
IS WHAT YOU'VE SHOWN ME.

NEBBY steps forward and gets in TATE's face

NEBBY

DON'T ACT LIKE YOU
DIDN'T ASK FOR THIS.
YOU BROKE THE TRUTH,
AND WE SALVAGED IT.
YOU WANT OUR VIEWS,

NEBBY (cont'd)

SO WE GAVE YOU THEM.

ABADDON

DON'T PLAY VICTIM,
THROW YOUR GUILT.
YOU WISHED YOU FIXED IT,
SO WE HELPED.

NEBBY and ABADDON

YOU USED OUR WISDOM
FOR YOURSELF.

At the word "yourself," NEBBY jabs her finger so hard into TATE that he falls backward.

TATE begins getting back up as he sings.

TATE

I'VE BEEN LOSING
MY PERCEPTION.
TRIED TO USE IT
WITH YOUR DECEPTION.

I'VE BEEN LOSING
MY PERCEPTION.
COULDN'T USE IT,
SO I LEFT IT.

NEBBY and ABADDON begin circling TATE as he sings.

TATE

I'VE BEEN LOSING
MY PERCEPTION.
TRIED TO USE IT
WITH YOUR DECEPTION.

I'VE BEEN LOSING
MY PERCEPTION.
COULDN'T USE IT,
SO I LEFT IT.

NEBBY and ABADDON

DON'T ACT LIKE YOU
DIDN'T ASK FOR THIS.
YOU BROKE THE TRUTH,
AND WE SALVAGED IT.
YOU WANT OUR VIEWS,
SO WE GAVE YOU THEM.

DON'T PLAY THE VICTIM
THROW YOUR GUILT.
YOU TRIED TO FIX IT,
AND WE HELPED.
YOU USED OUR WISDOM
FOR YOURSELF.

TATE

NOW ALL I KNOW,
IS ALL YOU'VE SHOWN ME.
SO I DON'T HOPE,
'CAUSE YOU WON'T LET ME.

I'VE BEEN LOSING
MY PERCEPTION.
COULDN'T USE IT,
SO I LEFT IT.

TATE grows quieter and quieter as he finishes singing. Music fades. Lights fade out.

ACT 1, SCENE 3

Lights come back up to show TATE and EMSLEY sitting awkwardly across the cave from each other, occasionally sneaking each other glances. TATE is sitting close to NEBBY and ABADDON. It's still raining.

EMSLEY

Are you going to sit over there the whole time?

TATE

I don't know. Why?

EMSLEY

Because it's boring.

ABADDON and NEBBY start laughing.

TATE

[to Emsley, snappy]

I'm not just going to be your entertainment, okay?

EMSLEY

I didn't say that! You're not even that funny anyway.

ABADDON snorts

TATE

[sulky]

I'm sorry I can't please you.

EMSLEY

Why are you so grumpy? I don't need you to make me happy.

TATE doesn't respond.

You always make everything so negative. Didn't anyone tell you to look on the sunny side?

TATE

[sarcastically]

That's kinda hard to do when it's raining.

EMSLEY

Noooo, I didn't mean that sun. I meant the kind you can make!

EMSLEY thinks hard.

I have an idea! Why don't you draw a sun? It'll make you feel better!

TATE

[still sarcastic]

Like the one you scrawled out in the dirt?

EMSLEY

Yeah! My dad used to say if you can't see the sun outside, draw one inside and then all its sunshine will come with it!

ABADDON

[also sarcastic]

That's not corny.

TATE

Used to say?

EMSLEY

Yeah...he hasn't said it in a while. But you should try it!

TATE

But I can't draw all the flowers and stuff.

EMSLEY

[rolls her eyes]

I didn't say to draw that, Silly; I just said the sun part! That's easy. Anyone can draw that.

TATE

Okay...

TATE hesitantly bends over and uses his finger to draw a sun. NEBBY leans over.

NEBBY

That's a sun?

ABADDON

It looks like a black hole.

NEBBY

Or a raincloud!

TATE goes to wipe it away.

TATE

It's terrible.

EMSLEY

Wait! Can I see?

EMSLEY (cont'd)

TATE nods. EMSLEY stands up, walks over, and examines the artwork.

Okay! It's not bad!

TATE

You're just saying that.

EMSLEY
[confidently]

No, I'm not! I can tell it's a sun. And that's what matters.

ABADDON

Are all ten-year-olds this cliché?

NEBBY

It makes me want to cringe.

TATE

That's only because you told me to draw it. So you knew what it was going to be before you saw it.

EMSLEY
[trying not to grow exasperated again]

Yeah, but you drew it! So you know what it is, too! You're the one in charge of it. So you can pick. If you say it's a sun, it's a sun. Right?

EMSLEY looks at TATE with an eyebrow raised.

And they say I need glasses to see better.

TATE

Sometimes glasses don't always fix that problem.

EMSLEY
[sitting down next to Tate]

What do you mean? They don't help your eyes?

TATE

Well, sometimes it's not about what your eyes can see, but more about what your brain tells you you can.

TATE takes a breath and looking cautiously at NEBBY and ABADDON before turning back to EMSLEY. NEBBY and ABADDON are watching him carefully.

EMSLEY

So your brain tells you you can't see?

TATE

Or it shows you something different. That's why I couldn't figure out what you drew. You could tell me it's a sun but I got all these...things telling me that it's not one.

EMSLEY

So just listen to me! I wouldn't lie to you.

TATE

Right, but when you hear everything saying it's not, you can't see it anymore either. Your eyes start to believe your ears. I could blink one thousand and three times and still not find the sun.

ABADDON

That won't change. There's no sun in a cave.

NEBBY

It might be better that way, too. You don't have the light to see all the things you're hiding from.

There's a moment of silence. EMSLEY looks at TATE.

EMSLEY

Can you see other things?

TATE

Not a whole lot.

ABADDON

He's pretty blind.

NEBBY

And slowly losing all of his other senses.

TATE

But at least I can see everything in here.

ABADDON

That's what you think.

NEBBY

You haven't even looked in the corners yet!

EMSLEY

[points to the entrance of the cave]

There's a whole lot more to see out there!

TATE

That doesn't mean I'll be able to.

EMSLEY

But if you never try, you'll never know!

ABADDON

No, he knows. It's too late to try.

NEBBY

He can't get back what's already lost!

TATE

That's a nice sentiment, but it doesn't apply to me.

EMSLEY

Why?

TATE

Because it just doesn't.

EMSLEY

Why?

TATE

Because I know it doesn't! I've lived with myself long enough to know the truth. You're just coming in here now. You can't really think you're just going to make everything better, because you're not!

EMSLEY

[quietly]

I just thought because it helps me feel better, it might help you.

TATE

Well, sometimes things don't help!

EMSLEY

I hope one day they do.

EMSLEY straightens up.

But until then, I'll just keep drawing suns for you!

ABADDON snorts.

TATE

Do whatever you want, it doesn't matter to me.

EMSLEY

Not even if I do it for you?

TATE

Your actions won't change my situation.

NEBBY

[complaining]

When is she going to get it through her thick skull?

EMSLEY

I'm gonna say a mean word. That's stupid.

ABADDON

[nodding solemnly]

Very mean.

EMSLEY

People make me feel better all the time.

A thunder clap is heard.

Even when it's raining.

TATE

[a bit harsh]

Well? Why don't you go be with them then?

EMSLEY

Because I don't want to go out there!

Pauses hesitantly.

And you're my friend.

ABADDON

How touching. She's pretending to care.

TATE

[to Emsley]

That's a strong statement.

EMSLEY

It's true!

Stands up and walks to the entrance to look outside.

But I can't wait for the storm to stop, so I can go outside again.

Music begins to play.

What are you going to do when it does, Tate?

TATE

[surprised by her question]

What am I going to do?

(#3) WHEN THE RAIN STOPS

The music gets louder. The lights dim so that Nebby and Abaddon are in the dark while Emsley and Tate remain in the light. Although they're singing to each other, they are both looking away.

EMSLEY

WHEN THE RAIN STOPS,
WILL YOU COME WALK WITH ME?
AWAY FROM THE ROCKS,
AND PLACES WHERE YOU CAN'T SEE?
I WANT TO MAKE IT HOME,
AND I DON'T WANT YOU ALL ALONE.
SO WHEN THE RAIN STOPS,
WILL YOU COME WALK WITH ME?

WHEN THE STORMS BREAKS,
COULD YOU NOT STAY WITH ME?
I LIVE FAR AWAY,
AND SOMETIMES THE WALK'S LONELY.
I HAVE PEOPLE I NEED TO GET TO,
THEY MIGHT BE HAPPY TO MEET SOMEONE NEW.
SO WHEN THE STORM BREAKS,
COULD YOU NOT STAY WITH ME?

TATE

WHEN THE RAIN STOPS,
WILL YOU GET UP AND LEAVE?
SO MY MEMORY FADES,
WITH ALL THAT YOU SAID TO ME?
YOU SEEM LIKE YOU KIND OF CARE,
BUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN I'M NOT THERE?
WHEN THE RAIN STOPS,

TATE (cont'd)

WILL YOU GET UP AND LEAVE?

EMSLEY and TATE

[still not looking at each other]

THE RAIN
KEPT US HERE.
CLOSED IN
BY WHAT WE FEAR.
BUT WHEN
THE SKIES CLEAR,
DOES THE PAST
DISAPPEAR?

TATE and EMSLEY look at each other.

PLEASE DON'T FORGET ME
PLEASE DON'T FORGET ME (x4)

TATE and EMSLEY look away again.

EMSLEY

WHEN THE RAIN STOPS,
WILL YOU COME WALK WITH ME?

TATE

WHEN THE RAIN STOPS,
WILL YOU GET UP AND LEAVE

EMSLEY and TATE

THERE'S TOO MANY ROCKS
AND PLACES WHERE I CAN'T SEE.

The lights slowly fade out with the music. EMSLEY and TATE are still on the other ends of the cave.

ACT 1, SCENE 4

The lights remain off. A voice is heard.

ABADDON

Did you get all of that out of your system now?

NEBBY

That was a little dramatic.

Lights come up to show NEBBY and ABADDON still lounging around near TATE. EMSLEY is drawing in the dirt again.

ABADDON

Wistful thinking never does anyone good.

NEBBY

[helpfully]

But it does take you away from the horrible reality you're in.

ABADDON

[looks outside]

Would you look at that.

EMSLEY

[looks outside]

The rain stopped!

NEBBY

Now she's gonna leave.

ABADDON

Time to say goodbye.

NEBBY

[nervously]

Probably forever.

TATE

[standing up]

So you're going to leave now?

EMSLEY

[confused]

I can't stay!

TATE

Well, I know that...

EMSLEY

I miss my family. What about yours?

ABADDON

Tate doesn't have any.

NEBBY

At least no one that loves him!

TATE

[trying not to be downcast]

Yeah, that makes sense. You need to go back to them.

EMSLEY

[with more emphasis]

Yeah, but what about yours?

TATE

My family?

EMSLEY

Yeah! Don't you miss them?

TATE

They've probably forgotten about me by now.

NEBBY

Oh, they've definitely forgotten about you. You've shut them out for so long. They probably don't even want to see you at this point.

EMSLEY

Families don't do that! They're probably waiting for you to come home right now.

TATE

You don't know that's true.

EMSLEY

But do you know it isn't?

TATE

I don't know...

ABADDON

[impatiently]

Get real, Tate. Stop fooling yourself. You left them. It wasn't the other way around. That's your fault. Why would they forgive you for falling off the map and shutting them out?

NEBBY

You probably hurt them so bad that they want to forget you.

ABADDON

That's how you would react, and you know it.

EMSLEY

So, are you gonna come with me?

TATE

Emsley...

EMSLEY

You don't have to...

EMSLEY gets a little sad.

I just thought that you would.

TATE

[quickly trying to make her feel better]

It's not that I wouldn't, it's just...

EMSLEY

Just what?

TATE

[looking at Nebby and Abaddon]

It's just...that there are some voices telling me to stay.

NEBBY

[gleefully to Abaddon]

Ha! We didn't even have to say anything that time.

ABADDON

[triumphantly]

He's getting better.

EMSLEY

Well, what're the other voices telling you to do? My mom always told me to listen to the small voice. What's that one saying?

TATE

[trying to wrap his head around the question]

The small voice—

ABADDON

He doesn't have any other voices.

NEBBY

[with a shout]

He's got no one but us, baby!

NEBBY thumps on her chest.

EMSLEY

[nodding empathetically]

I hate when she says that because the small voice is always the hardest to hear.

ABADDON

[nodding in agreement]

Especially when it's nonexistent.

NEBBY

He'll never hear anyone but us.

ABADDON

Ever.

TATE

[shaking his head]

I don't think I have one, Emsley.

EMSLEY

[frustrated]

You're making things up again. Just like when you said you couldn't draw a sun.

TATE

I never *said* that.

EMSLEY

But you meant it.

TATE's silent.

I'm gonna go now.

EMSLEY (cont'd)

EMSLEY turns towards the entrance of the cave. She takes a couple steps, stops, and looks back at TATE.

Are you gonna come?

TATE

I—

ABADDON

No.

NEBBY

[dramatically]

Absolutely not.

TATE

Goodbye, Emsley.

EMSLEY

[holding back her sadness]

Goodbye, Tate.

EMSLEY turns and walks out of the cave. TATE stares off at her as she leaves. NEBBY and ABADDON are standing behind TATE with their arms crossed.

TATE

[quietly, almost singing]

Don't forget me.

ABADDON

It's too bad, really. You're all alone. In this cave.

NEBBY

There's no way she's coming back.

ABADDON

No one ever does.

NEBBY

You blew the only chance you had!

TATE goes to find a place to sit down. NEBBY and ABADDON follow him.

NEBBY

Now what are you gonna do? Wait?

ABADDON

There's really nothing to wait for. It's over.

NEBBY

Everything is over.

ABADDON

You have nothing left, Tate.

NEBBY

Yeah! Did you hear that, Tate? Nothing!

ABADDON

Kind of like this cave. Nothing in it, nothing out of it.

TATE is not paying attention to either of them. He is sitting on a rock, deep in thought.

TATE

[to himself]

The small voice...

ABADDON

[huffs]

Don't waste your time with that.

NEBBY

It's not even there.

ABADDON

If it was, don't you think you would have heard something by now?

NEBBY

Your ears are probably as bad as your eyes!

ABADDON

You don't honestly think you could trust yourself to perceive things correctly, do you?

NEBBY

You can't! Did you hear that, Tate? Tate?

Tate hasn't even glanced their way.

ABADDON
[impatiently]

Tate.

NEBBY

Tate!

ABADDON

Tate!

ABADDON and NEBBY continue shouting TATE's name until eventually their voices blend together.

TATE
[suddenly looking up]

Huh? Oh, sorry I didn't hear you.

ABADDON
[quickly]

Don't play games with us. Of course you heard us.

NEBBY
[nervously]

Yeah, you always do!

TATE

No, honestly I didn't...I honestly didn't...

TATE slowly begins to realize that for once he didn't hear either of them say anything.

ABADDON
[quickly trying to stop Tate from this realization]

Now you're really fooling yourself.

NEBBY

Yeah, you can't help but hear us!

ABADDON

And lying to yourself about it isn't going to make anything better.

TATE slowly gets up and begins to pace around, his head still very much in his own thoughts.

TATE
[processing to himself]

I was trying to think about the small voice she was talking about...

NEBBY

[quickly interjecting]

Which isn't there!

TATE

And I was trying to listen if it was saying anything...

ABADDON

And it's not.

NEBBY

[emphatically]

Because it's not there.

TATE

And when I do that, I don't hear the other two...

ABADDON

[offended]

The other two? That's rude.

NEBBY

Yeah, you know our names!

TATE

Maybe there's a small voice...maybe there's not...but when I'm trying to figure it out for myself, I don't have to listen to anything else.

Stands up a little straighter after realizing what he just said.

Maybe I'm just trying to hear me.

ABADDON

What part of you is even left to listen to?

NEBBY

You're as empty as this cave.

TATE

[more confidently]

So, I don't have to hear them.

ABADDON

[with a warning tone]

You're deceiving yourself.

NEBBY

We already told you that's not true.

TATE

[turning to face Nebby and Abaddon]

I don't have to hear you!

ABADDON gets up and menacingly gets in TATE's face.

ABADDON

[snarling]

Congratulations. And what are you going to do about that?

(#4) STRING

The music begins. ABADDON and NEBBY move threateningly around TATE.

ABADDON

THROW OUT YOUR COMPASS,
THROW OUT YOUR KEY.
THROW OUT THE MIRROR
THAT SHOWS WHAT YOU SEE.
YOU HAVE A SHADOW,
BUT IT'S ALL YOU'LL BE.

IMAGINE BLUE SKIES
AND SUNNY DAYS.
I'LL JUST WAIT TIL
YOU SEE THE RAIN.
WITHOUT THIS COVER,
YOU'LL BE WASHED AWAY.

ABADDON towers over TATE.

SO FINE.
JUST LEAVE.
YOU'LL FIND
YOUR NEED.
AND NO ONE WILL GIVE YOU
ANYTHING.
YOU'RE MINE.
BELIEVE.
THESE LINES
YOU HEED.
'CAUSE WHEN YOU'RE OUTSIDE,
YOU'LL UNWIND LIKE A STRING.

TATE shrugs ABADDON away.

TATE

YOU OFFER WISDOM,
BUT MIX IN THE PAIN.
POUR OUT SOME TRUTH
SO I STAY IN PLACE.
GET ME DRUNK
SO I CAN'T WALK STRAIGHT.

TATE turns to face NEBBY and ABADDON

YOU'VE STRUNG
ALONG
THESE LIES
TOO LONG,
AND I COULDN'T FIND WHERE
THE THOUGHTS WERE MY OWN.
YOU PLEAD,
DON'T GO.
IF I LEAVE,
YOU KNOW.
THAT I'LL HAVE UNDONE
ALL THE KNOTS THAT YOU WOVE.

NEBBY and ABADDON

[circling Tate]

YOU'RE NOTHING
WITHOUT US.
YOU'LL NEVER BE
ENOUGH.

NEBBY and ABADDON

YOU'RE NOTHING
WITHOUT US.
YOU'LL NEVER BE
ENOUGH.

YOU'RE NOTHING
WITHOUT US.
YOU'LL NEVER BE
ENOUGH.

YOU'RE NOTHING
WITHOUT US.
YOU'LL NEVER BE

TATE

YOU'VE STRUNG
ALONG
THESE LIES
TOO LONG.

[frantic speaking]

I don't have to listen.
They don't have permission.
I don't have to listen.

I don't have to listen.
Don't need your permission.
I don't have to listen.

NEBBY and ABADDON (cont'd)
ENOUGH.

TATE

[louder than Nebby and Abaddon]

YOU'VE STRUNG
ALONG
THESE LIES
TOO LONG,
AND I COULDN'T FIND WHERE
THE THOUGHTS WERE MY OWN.
YOU PLEAD,
DON'T GO.
IF I LEAVE,
YOU KNOW.
THAT I'LL HAVE UNDONE
ALL THE KNOTS THAT YOU WOVE.

At the last word, the music ends abruptly and the lights go out.

ACT 1, SCENE 5

The lights are still off, and an iPhone alarm is heard. TATE grunts and the lights come up to show him rolling over in bed to hit snooze. A small girl's voice is heard from outside the room.

EMILY

Daddy, daddy!

TATE

[still groggy from waking up]

Yes?

A small girl comes excitedly into the room looking exactly like EMSLEY. She didn't seem to hear that TATE had spoken.

EMILY

Daddy! Your alarm went off! Does that mean you're going to get out of bed today?

EMILY tugs on TATE's arm.

Please! You've been in here for three days! I want to show you my art I made at school.

EMILY pulls on TATE again.

Will you get up now, Daddy?

TATE

[still attempting to take in his surroundings]

Uh, yeah Emily, just give me a minute or so—

EMILY

I don't want to give you a minute! I want to show you right now!

TATE

[chuckling slightly]

Okay, okay, what is this grand masterpiece you want so badly to show me?

TATE is getting out of bed half on his own and half because EMILY is pulling so hard on his arm. He reaches to grab the watch on his side table and put it on. They begin walking to the door.

EMILY

It's a giant sun! We had to draw a beautiful day for class, but I thought the best part of a beautiful day was the sun, so I made it so big it almost covers the whole paper! I can't wait for you to see it. You won't even need your glasses! You'll be so proud, it's just like the one you taught me to make...

Their voices fade out as they continue walking off the stage.

The end.

Thesis Reflection

Writing *Rained In* has been one of the most challenging and, simultaneously, fulfilling endeavors I have ever embarked on. I will admit, I did not have a good sense of the work involved in both creating and producing a musical at the beginning of this process. I promised both myself and the Honors Committee a full production of an original work, and with the story I originally had in mind, that entailed a fourteen character cast, fourteen songs, and eighty pages of script. It was written. It was jumbled. There were a lot of moving parts. And quite frankly, I didn't want anything to do with it.

The story began with Tate, an arrogant man with great fortune, who experienced profound luck so often that he was unable to understand or sympathize with those around him who were hurting. Then, on a journey away from his town, he fell into a cave where he encountered Nebby and Abaddon, two demons who sought to latch onto him and shatter his identity. As they followed him around, their presence disrupted his perspective, relationships, and conversations, and it disturbed Tate so much that he ran away. Wandering through a large forest, he encountered Emsley, a small girl who pestered him with an array of questions, yet refused to leave him alone. So they proceeded to journey together, and along the way, they met a band of addicts, danced with a man stuck in denial, and ran away from a pack of wolves. If this sounds more fantastical than feasible and more confusing than clear, that's because it was. I had more than a few bones to pick with what I had created. For one, the dialogue felt corny and the songs felt forced. One of my roommates read through the script and remarked that all the characters sounded like me; they didn't exhibit their own unique personalities, nor did they stand out from each other. While I covered a variety of topics, including alcoholism, dependency, trauma, and depression, I didn't really feel like I had said anything about any of them. I chased down many different rabbit holes in the script, but none of them led into each other.

This struggle was further reinforced in my Demo Production class, a course that I took in the spring of 2019. I chose to record and produce “Dig Your Own Grave,” a song I had written into the initial draft, for the third project of the semester. I went above and beyond the requirements of the project to try and encapsulate all I had envisioned for the song. There were many different arranged parts playing at once in the recording, and while it sounded okay, it didn’t measure up to the projects created by my classmates, many of whom stuck to the requirements, composed fewer parts, and consequently, created better quality with a smaller number of components. Listening to their projects, I began to realize that sometimes more can be done with less, and that this principle might serve me well as I wrote my musical.

I sat down with my trusted friend, Madison, this summer to hash out a few of my frustrations. She studies English at Belmont and offered her services in regard to insight and editing. The conversation led to her asking two questions: what was I trying to say and how did this reflect my own story? Caught off-guard, I realized that I didn’t have an answer to either. This revelation begot more angst. Then she asked, “What if when Emsley leaves the cave...” And I don’t remember the rest of the question because Emsley never stepped foot in the cave. Perhaps that wasn’t clear in the script, or perhaps the story was so cluttered that the details clouded together in her memory, yet what if Emsley was in the cave? How would that change the story? Is that a change worth pursuing? It was then, under a little Belmont gazebo, that I decided to scrap the massive story I had begun and start over, this time centering myself on a concept I spent a lot of time running away from: simplicity. Maybe I could increase the quality of the musical by limiting its complexity. I cut down on the number of characters, settings, and songs, so that with less to juggle, I had more time to refine each piece of the story. With some arbitrary decision-making, I concluded that the story would take place in one setting: a cave, with four characters

and four songs. I didn't know anything else. But maybe if I nailed the message, the metaphor would take shape around it. I was going for an allegory anyway.

Much of my life has been framed by mental illness. I have battled suicidal ideation starting at a very young age, and that inward struggle launched me onto a path of self-destructive behaviors, disordered thinking, and constant despair. I was diagnosed with major depressive disorder, borderline personality disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and generalized anxiety disorder. I was prescribed a multitude of pills. I had been in and out of mental hospitals since ninth grade, and I had to withdraw from Belmont my freshman year to go to a residential treatment facility for forty days. There were many moments I felt wronged, misunderstood, neglected, and taken advantage of by healthcare providers, although I recognize that this perspective is clouded with emotional bias. After witnessing the inner workings of the American mental health system, however, I came to the conclusion that a lot of things were both misguided and ineffective attempts to help individuals recover, one of these manifesting as a psychiatric diagnosis.

Again and again, I watched diagnoses become people's identity. They were what doctors used to distinguish patients. They were what the patients themselves used to explain who they were. I personally used mine to justify my own behavior and explain why things would never change for me. In psychiatric hospitals, we used our diagnoses like they were our name tags. I recognize the benefit of categorizing illnesses so that doctors can find a clear path to treatment, prescribe specific medicines to treat any relevant chemical imbalances, and address certain thought patterns that the illness might have caused. But by the time I began this project, I had grown very passionate about my soapbox speech regarding the dangers of psychiatric diagnoses. I believed that the constrictions of a diagnosis, which caused both patients and doctors to view

people as their diagnosis before acknowledging them as a complete person, outweighed the necessity of its existence. I wanted to create something that declared people are greater than their diagnoses. That was where the idea for this musical came from. Nebby and Abaddon were supposed to represent anxiety and depression, and the actions they took to convince Tate that they were a part of him were supposed to symbolize the process of a diagnosis overtaking someone's identity.

To be transparent, however, I was walking through a lot of personal healing this summer, and as my mindsets grew healthier, I started to accept that I don't really know how things work and why things resolve in the manner that they do. I stepped away from wanting to push people toward an answer, instead simply desiring to ask questions. And ask people to ask their own questions, too. I didn't want to underwrite the implications of mental illness or cause anything to appear easier to handle than it was. And I definitely didn't want to suggest a one-size-fits-all solution. So the musical became more about perception.

In the new story, Tate feels trapped in a cave. Nebby and Abaddon are there with him. Maybe they don't represent mental illness, but the cave does. Maybe Nebby and Abaddon are just the voices and thoughts that try to dictate what things are. Emsley accidentally wanders into the cave, but I didn't want her to play the role of the rescuer, implying that one person can fix everything. Maybe she just stands as an outside perspective, presenting questions that challenge the previous mindset Tate bound himself to. Continuing with the idea that Tate is binding himself, I wanted to be intentional about giving Tate the opportunity to decide his future; I didn't want Nebby and Abaddon to have the power to keep him in the cave. And I didn't want the cave to be closed either. Maybe it was more appropriate to designate the cave as the perception of mental illness. That way I'm not saying people can simply walk out of their illness, as they

would a cave, but does an illness have to act as a force that isolates and encloses us, keeping us in the dark and away from others? Do we allow it to do this because it's under the guise of potential protection? I didn't want to beg an answer, I simply wanted to land on that question. Maybe the ultimate message of this musical wasn't a statement. Maybe it was a question. Or maybe the message was entirely left up to the audience and what they walked away with.

Cool enough, that conversation under the gazebo happened on a Sunday. That night, I went to church at The Belonging. The message happened to revolve around David and Saul, particularly the passage where David is hiding from Saul...in a cave. The sermon ended with what felt like two minutes of my pastor repeating over and over, "The breakthrough is in the cave. The breakthrough is in the cave." The breakthrough of the musical's conception was in the cave. The breakthrough of the musical's plot was in the cave. The breakthrough for Tate in the musical was in the cave. The breakthrough was in the cave. I never felt more certain of direction in my life. I still didn't know the storyline, but at least I knew it was all going to happen in a cave.

Coming to terms with the fact I was going to rewrite this musical meant coming to terms with the fact that I didn't have the time to pull off a full production of the show. I struggled with that for some time. Paul Gatrell, Chair of Belmont's Department of Theatre and Dance, was the first to suggest a staged reading. He manages all of Belmont's performing spaces, so I met with him in August of 2018 to discuss the logistics of producing a musical show. He wasn't sure what space would be available in the spring of 2020, and walked me through the process of a script transforming into a full production; unbeknownst to me, steps included a read-through, a staged reading, a smaller production, and then a full production. I brushed this off until the suggestion emerged again meeting Shawn, my thesis director, for the first time, and later on again in the

meeting with the Honors Committee to get my thesis approved. There, the Honors Council stated it might be wise to work with a project of a smaller scope, for instance, a 45-minute show instead of a full-length musical, as a way to assure a better quality product. Working through the rewrite of the script, I allowed myself to understand that slowing down the production process would permit me longer time to craft the story and better form the intention behind my words. What would a full-scale production serve if it simply held a rushed, half-hearted piece up to the spotlight?

That is how I landed on a one-act musical, with four characters and four songs, showcased in a staged reading. My focus narrowed. My language became more direct, poignant, and specific. The characters expanded into multiple dimensions. The lyrics layered meaning under meaning. And I mustered up greater courage to interject more of my story, more of my heart, and more vulnerability into the work I was creating. I became more excited. I liked what I was reading, and I liked what I was hearing. It was as if I was uncovering a story instead of writing one, which challenged me to seek it out, instead of assuming the story had to find me. Tangibly, this meant sitting down with my script every day, without waiting for inspiration to strike first. It meant that I had to become friendly with the backspace button, follow ideas even if they led to a dead end, and swallow my pride enough to back up and start over if things didn't pan out like I had hoped. But it also meant that sometimes I had to waive my initial intention if the story began to lead me toward a different direction. I had to let the piece speak on its own. There is life in art, often in ways we don't understand life to be. It wasn't that the piece was physically alive, but there were moments where it felt like that. I believe the story spoke to me as much as I spoke to the story. It challenged me to live into a greater abundance, just as I worked

to coax it to come to life. What did I want myself to question? How did I view humanity and brokenness? Where did I draw my hope, the very hope I desired to write into the piece?

Writing a script was exponentially more difficult for me than writing a song. As I said before, the first draft that my roommate, who studies Motions Pictures and thus has taken classes about writing screenplays, read left her with the impression that every character sounded like me. She explained that writing dialogue involved not only creating unique catchphrases and perspectives for each character, but also simultaneously crafting a unique dialect and set of mannerisms for all the characters as well. Not only must they say different things, they need to speak differently as well. Emsley is ten. What things does a ten-year-old say, and how would she phrase them? In an attempt to establish an age gap and differentiate between characters, I often read the dialogue out loud in different accents. Nebby represented an anxious mind, whereas Abaddon stood for one in despair. How does that come across in the angles they were taking to stir up pandemonium within Tate? Were they taking him down different routes to destruction or simply echoing each other? Heeding the counsel of my thesis director, I took the time to outline every conversation in the script and establish the objective of each character's perspective. What were they saying and what direction were they traveling toward? I realized the need for momentum in the story. Things couldn't settle on a consensus, because then the story wouldn't move forward. There were many factors to juggle, and often, time working on the script required me to toil and labor over one sentence at a time.

If I wanted Nebby to cause anxiety, she needed to bring up the what ifs and suggest the worst possible scenario every chance she had. Abaddon didn't need to offer forth any possibilities, because in her mind, things were done for anyway. This also needed to be clear in the way Nebby and Abaddon presented things. Nebby needed to take the time to explain things,

as a way to display her overthinking. Abaddon's dialogue should then be shorter, since there was no point in explaining something that was pointless to begin with. Emsley was young, so her questions needed to be simple and reflect her innocence. She had to draw conclusions within the realm of her own understanding and rely on the obvious when she makes her observations. For instance, why would Tate's watch work if he doesn't change the batteries? Why wouldn't Tate be lonely if he was sitting in a cave by himself?

God certainly directed the formation of this piece; I can't tell you how or why some things came to be within the story the way that they did. I didn't know the ending until I wrote it, and a lot of lines that people praised in the talkback after the staged reading, such as the line about humanity's fascination with brokenness, landed on the page without much preconceived thought. The songs flowed out in a similar manner. Many double meanings occurred unintentionally on my end, but I can confidently say that the Lord was writing His own meaning under my own.

The toughest thing to come up with was the title. But once my thoughts were directed toward *Rained In*, things fell into place. Emsley was rained in. But Tate was reined in. Which then led me to realize that maybe Tate is in a cave because he caved. God's writing, which underlies this whole piece, is probably more than I can truly understand at this time.

The actual process of putting on a staged reading revealed a lot more about the work as well. Each musical theater student who was involved fit their role perfectly, in ways I didn't necessarily foresee while casting them initially. Watching how Maddi and Erika interpreted and stepped into the roles of Nebby and Abaddon was the most informing. Maddi's interpretation of Nebby was more sassy than I had imagined, which made her less of an anxious mess, but also made the points where she panicked hit harder. Erika's interpretation of Abaddon was more

subtly menacing than the Abaddon in my head, who was a much more obvious threat. But her portrayal compelled me to consider Abaddon as a seductress instead of as a brutal character with a big stick. This guided me to an interesting realization: if the bad guys are obvious, wouldn't they be easier to defeat? Or, at least, wouldn't it be easier to want to defeat them? Wasn't one of the struggles I faced in navigating mental illness the lack of a desire to reach the other side? During the talkback, Erika commented that she and Maddi didn't want to make either demon sound too mean because then it wouldn't make sense for Tate to constantly listen to them. They wanted to be friendly at points, so that Tate would believe they were on his side. Maddi mentioned part of the process for her was learning the relationship between Nebby and Abaddon. It wasn't just about Tate; Nebby and Abaddon were friends as well. It was cool to watch them bring another facet to life within the characters I wrote. My thesis director challenged me to hand complete control of the rehearsals and character interpretations over to the cast and student director, which was difficult at certain points, but very insightful. Because I could not correct anything verbally, my script was the only thing that could speak for me. Consequently, if I had a problem with an interpretation, the fault may be lying within what I wrote, not within what they thought. Simply observing the rehearsals allowed me to collect ideas for revisions and changes within the script if I wanted to take another swing at it.

I have identified two specific things I might consider changing in the script, based on how the performers presented their roles during the reading. At certain points, Nebby came off with having a similar personality to Abaddon, both in her attitude and the ways her lines were delivered. My intention was to paint Nebby as a nervous wreck, while Abaddon was more collected, sinister, and sarcastic. That contrast was not very evident in the performance. I intend to re-examine the script and modify some of the character's directions and lines I have Nebby

saying. For example, it may be more effective if Nebby's speech was more rushed and repetitive, so that in her revisiting the same what if scenarios again and again, Tate is more inclined to believe her after hearing it repeatedly. Maybe Nebby should also ask a lot more questions and jump to conclusions too often and too quickly. Maybe physically on stage she paces, waves her hands around, and showcases some nervous ticks, like pulling on her hair or biting her nails. The second potential revision regards the end. Part of me wants Emily to enter Tate's room hopeful and excited, like a little kid would be, but slightly more reserved, as if she isn't exactly confident that her dad will get out of bed. I'm not entirely sure how to relay that more effectively; part of it might be in the performer's countenance and tone, but I plan to dive in regardless and find if there is any way I can create a better sense of that in the script. I would like to find a way to slow the ending, so that it doesn't feel as rushed. The answer may lie in the stage directions I create for the scene and the punctuation I write into Emily's lines. If I can create more pause and hesitation, both in Emily's words and actions, it may better portray the hurt and disappointment she has felt in the past.

Other than that, I'm not sure how much I would change. Some of the audience during the talkback hinted that they wanted more; someone wanted a funny song, someone wanted to hear a song with more pain, and one audience member suggested that there are thirty more pages of script to this story. Personally, I like its brevity. I like that it leaves things as questions and open for interpretation. I think I've said all that I want to say because I don't want to offer a solution. I want to start a dialogue. I want to walk humbly away from the story with just as many questions as any other audience member who watched the musical. And I feel that is my current sentiment about this project. I have questions, but at the same time, I have a better sense of who I am and the hope that I carry in this world. I hope that this musical creates a similar feeling within others.

That maybe who they are and who they can become isn't found in an answer, but rather within the questions they allow themselves to ask. I hope they feel encouraged to move forward through the uncertainty in their own lives, knowing that they can be seen and loved without having to have it all together. I hope they hear that their purpose can be found in the process, not in the places they end up.

Moving forward, I aim to revise the script, working through the ideas I stated previously. I'd like to record demos of the songs and send it to some local theaters who are accepting submissions of one act shows. Other than that, it's up to God where this goes. I'm just thankful I was able to pursue this in the first place.