

[SHEEP]

~~YOU SIT ON THE CHAIR. THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE. YOU CARESS THE CHAIR'S FAKE LEATHER. IT IS A PROP COURTESY OF THE LOCAL ACADEMIC INSTITUTION IN THIS CURRENT SETTING, ALL SEATING APPARATUSES HAVE BEEN REMOVED. YOU ARE ALL LEFT STANDING ABOUT INSTEAD.~~

YOU PICK UP THIS SCRIPT AND EITHER READ IT PRIVATELY OR ALOUD. IF YOU ARE FEELING FRISKY, FIND A PARTNER/FRIEND/STRANGER TO REHEARSE WITH. CONSTANTLY SHIFT ROLES, IMPROVISE LINES, GESTICULATE AND MOVE AROUND THE SPACE AS DESIRED.

YOU MIGHT PERHAPS START OFF BY HAVING A FEEL OF THE LANOLIN.
(NB: MAY IRRITATE SKIN)

YOU PONDER BRIEFLY, THEN SAY TO THE OTHER

: there is a profound change happening in me

: (barely registering) What?

: there is something profoundly changing in me and they are asking me questions I don't have the answers to

: what are you on about? Ughhhhhh.

: these questions stick to the back of my teeth, my mouth heavier by the minute.

: I remember the exact moment they entered. They came through our front door without even knocking. You were washing the dishes. The air shifted.

~~YOU STAND UP, IN FRONT OF THE OTHER YOU STAND IN FRONT OF THE OTHER CONVERSING BODY~~

: ~~sit down~~, Let's get out of here, you're wiggling me out. Your problem is your fixation with questions and the need to answer

: what a dumb thing to point out

: Baby. It's true.

: How can you live with an unanswered question?
: Quite happily
: You're in the medical profession
: yes and I know patients live much happier and longer if they stopped answering to every bodily symptom
: that's a very dangerous thing to say
: it's my day off

ONE OF YOU STARTS BLEATING. THIS CAN EITHER BE A HIGH-PITCHED DISTRESS BLEAT WHICH MOTHERS DO AFTER THE EVACUATION OF THEIR NEWBORNS. OR A LOW-PITCHED RUMBLE, GIVEN OUT FOR THE PURPOSES OF AFFECTION AND BONDING

: So what if you have the answers?
: What do you mean, so what?
: You think they won't see you then? Keeps your body down like fleece close to soil? But they still see you like they see the law
: I had a dream last night
: I cannot go through this again
: it was a different dream
: are you still doing your dream journals? I really think they were helping
: I was riding a bike down a country road. The place feels like, smells like where I grew up. It is dry and dust everywhere. There were two sheeps wandering about in a paddock. I'm zooming past but a farmer in the middle of the road stops me.
: He tells me the sheep got out
: Will this be a long dream? I want to get out of here and have dinner
: They are lovers and spend all their time together away from the flock. This is not good for business, the farmer says. Or reputation. Or team morale. The farmer had many reasons but the overall feeling I got was that he is angry with the situation and is left with no other choice. He says he will kill one of them.
: please stop talking

YOU LOOK FRUSTRATEDLY AT YOUR PARTNER

: I am standing on that road with the headlights of my bike lashing across my back. It is very hot. The farmer is aggressively swaying that hammer back and forth, like a bad question. My skin is still burning this morning but I can't see any marks
: I don't understand why he thinks they're lovers. Did the sheeps go up to the farmer and profess? Are sheeps not allowed to be platonic?
: ...the farmer said he smelt or felt lanolin on their skin

: lanolin?

: lanolin. That thick, oily substance. It's secreted by the sheep's sebaceous glands

: wouldn't all sheep produce them?

: that's why I said. He said theirs smelt funny. Different from the others. He wasn't going to let it contaminate the rest of the flock

: that is absolute rubbish

: the farmer walks slowly to the paddock. He reaches the two sheep, who were either unaware or expectant

ONE OF YOU ATTEMPTS TO LEAVE THE CONVERSATION, OR LOOK AWAY

: I watched as he drags one of the sheep by its leg. It fumbles onto the ground. The farmer lifts the hammer

: please stop

: ...the farmer raises the hammer, aims it at the sheep's joint, and swings hard. He does it for a second time. The sheep is bleating furiously. Then he does it again to the other leg. The other sheep looks on but does not do or say anything.

: fucking stop!

: The farmer turns around and looks straight at me. He's about 15 or so metres down the paddock but I hear him yell 'WHAT GOOD IS REASON TO AN ANIMAL?'

ONE OF YOU IS GEARING UP TO LEAVE THE CONVERSATION. STANDS-UP ABRUPTLY YOU JUST WALK OFF AFTER THE NEXT DELIVERY. YOU DON'T EVEN SAY GOODBYE TO YOUR READING PARTNER OR THE PEOPLE YOU KNOW. YOU KNOW YOU WILL SEE THEM AGAIN AT THE NEXT THING

: i am leaving this conversation

: please don't leave

: give me a reason to

: we're in this together

: are we?