

Rest Assured

By Brigid Martin

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Brigid Martin is a fourth-year English and Creative Writing major at the University of Iowa, with minors in Theatre Arts and Latin. Her previous playwriting credits include *Romeo and Juliet: Abridged*, *Hunger Pangs*, *Welcome to the Jungle*, *Ellis Wright Goes to Hell*, *Semifera*, *Shakespeare in Flux*, and *The Slayer of Alien Gods*, which will be premiering in the Theatre Cedar Rapids 2020 Underground New Play Festival in May. She was also the winner of the 2020 Iowa Chapbook Prize for her piece *To Edward*.

I am comfortable with you publishing my play at the end of the week.

Thank you!

CHARACTERS

SIMON

Male. A worrier.

RHYS

Male. A warrior.

TIME

The present.

PLACE

A home in the woods. There is no ocean nearby.

Scene 1

Lights up. RHYS sits alone in front of an unmade bed. He is arranging turkey feathers in a circle around him. The sound of waves crashing against rocks. This room seems to be the only one that exists.

RHYS

Electric.

SIMON enters, sporting pajama pants and bare feet. He looks ruffled and sleepy.

SIMON

Hey.

RHYS

Hmm.

SIMON

What are you doing?

RHYS

I don't know. Making... something.

SIMON

Why?

RHYS

It's a... it's just something. To do.
I couldn't sleep.

SIMON

Yeah. Me neither.

SIMON lies on RHYS' unmade bed.

RHYS

...

Do you... do you ever want to go outside?

SIMON

Um. It's not forbidden.

RHYS

No, I mean go outside like, after dark.

SIMON

It's not. Forbidden.

RHYS

No, I know that. But like. We don't do it.

SIMON

Cause we're supposed to be asleep.

RHYS

I'm not asleep.

SIMON

Yeah. Me neither.

RHYS

So... let's go outside.

SIMON

...

No. We're not doing that.

RHYS

It might help.

Plus, I want to see if the wild turkeys drop more feathers at night.

SIMON

Is that where you got all of these?

RHYS

Yeah, I gathered them from the woods earlier.

Waves crash against rocks.

SIMON

Are you going to do anything with them?

RHYS

Just this.

RHYS looks at his feathers. SIMON looks at RHYS.

Lights out.

Scene 2

Lights up. It is sunset. RHYS' bed is still unmade. The turkey feathers are still arranged in a circle, but RHYS is not sitting with them. SIMON enters, still without shoes. He looks around for RHYS, but does not find him. He sighs and walks around the room. Lightning flashes outside the window, lighting up the silhouettes of trees, but there is no thunder. Waves crash against rocks. SIMON looks out the window for a moment, then sits cross-legged on the bed, holding his ankles. He waits. Eventually, his feet get cold, so he stuffs them underneath the comforter. After a few moments, RHYS rushes in. He is wearing galoshes over his sleep clothes. His hair is slightly damp.

Is it raining? SIMON

What are you doing in here? RHYS

I hadn't seen you in hours. SIMON

We ate dinner together. RHYS

I hadn't seen you in *hours*. SIMON

Mmm. Move over. RHYS

RHYS kicks off his galoshes and bustles himself underneath the covers.

Jesus, your feet are freezing. SIMON

So are yours, but I'm not kicking you out. RHYS

What are you—is that dirt in your pockets?! SIMON

Oh, right. RHYS

RHYS clambers out of the bed. He reaches into his pockets and dumps out two handfuls of dirt.

SIMON

Is that why you went outside?

RHYS

Yeah, I had to get soil for the moon mint.

SIMON

What?

RHYS dives underneath the bed and comes up with a mint plant cupped gently in his palms. He shuffles on his knees to the dirt he dumped out, and brushes it into a pile near the end corner of the bed. He tucks the mint into the dirt, and sits back to examine his handiwork.

RHYS

If you plant it in moonlight, it'll grow better.

SIMON

Who told you that?

RHYS

No one. I just figured that if stuff grows well in sunlight, it'll do extra well in moonlight. Cause of moon magic.

SIMON

You're stupid.

RHYS

I am not!

SIMON

Moon magic? You do know that plants grow in sunlight because they eat it, right? It's like their food source. It's not magic.

RHYS

Magic is just science we haven't figured out yet.

SIMON

We've already figured this out!

RHYS

Can I come back in the bed now?

SIMON

No. You brought dirt in last time. I'm not getting dirt in here again.

RHYS

It's my bed.

SIMON

And I'm the one in the bed. I'm outlawing dirt.

RHYS

Not fair! Lemme in!

SIMON

My bed now!

RHYS lunges for the bed, but SIMON tucks the blanket around himself to keep him out. RHYS grabs at the blanket half-heartedly before settling back on the floor, leaning back against the bedframe. SIMON lies on his back, tipping his head backwards so that his face is in line with RHYS'.

SIMON (continued)

So. Was it raining? Your hair is wet.

RHYS

It wasn't raining. Just misty.

SIMON

...

Why did you go outside.

RHYS

Moon dirt.

SIMON

It's too close to sundown to be out.

RHYS

I'm fine.

SIMON

That's not my point.

RHYS

... can I get back in the bed now?

SIMON

... sure. Fine. Second chance.

SIMON loosens the blanket enough for RHYS to climb in. RHYS lies next to SIMON, on his stomach. They watch each other.

SIMON

You want eggs?

RHYS

No. I'm good.

SIMON

Okay.

SIMON gets out of the bed, carefully dodging the ring of turkey feathers, and exits. RHYS stays underneath the comforter for a few moments. He sits up, letting the blanket pool around his hips. He looks out the window. He brushes dirt off the mattress. He gazes around the room. Softly, RHYS slides out of bed next to his newly planted mint. He breaks a sprig off of the mint and places it on his tongue. He sucks on it for a moment.

RHYS

... earthy.

Footsteps. RHYS looks toward the door, then scrambles back up onto the mattress. SIMON enters, carrying a plate with two fried eggs on it, and a fork. He perches on the edge of the bed, cutting into his egg. He eats while he talks, probably so that he doesn't have to look at RHYS.

SIMON

You need to be careful.

RHYS

What do you mean?

SIMON

I mean... it's important to be cautious, you know. There's... things. Outside.

RHYS

I know.

SIMON

Do you?

RHYS

... yes?

SIMON

Because you keep pushing the limits of things that I don't think you understand. And it's not like I don't trust you to make good decisions, but... sometimes I come in here, and you're not here.

And it's like. What if you stopped thinking for a minute, or something, and now you're in trouble? And even if you aren't in trouble, even if you were fine, I would still be worried, because I worry about you a lot, actually. Probably a lot more than I should, but I do. And if you're suddenly not here, then that's a lot more to worry about than I already had. And it was a lot in the first place.

RHYS

... Stop worrying so much.

SIMON

Stop going outside so close to dark.

RHYS

Nothing's going to happen to me.

SIMON

See, you say that, but I don't think you really know.

RHYS

I don't.
I have to be ready.

SIMON

For what?

RHYS

Someday, I'll need to go out into the dark. And when that time comes, I want to be ready for it.

SIMON

... Just. Can you stop worrying me? Please.

RHYS

I'm not good at keeping promises.

SIMON

I know.

RHYS

But I can try.

SIMON

I know that too.

SIMON finishes his eggs. He scrapes the fork against the plate.

RHYS

I don't worry as much as you do.

SIMON

Do you worry at all?

RHYS

Sometimes.

SIMON

About what?

RHYS

Sometimes I worry that I'll go outside and there won't be any more turkey feathers to find.
Sometimes I worry that I'll tear a hole in the leg of my jeans and I won't know how to sew it up.
Sometimes I worry that my teeth will shatter and fall out and I'll cut my tongue on the shards.
Sometimes I worry that I'll forget how to read.
Sometimes I worry that I'll read too much and forget how the world really is.
Sometimes I worry that someday there won't be a Dark to worry about, and you'll have to find something else, and that something else will be a lot worse because that's just how the world seems to go. You get to stop worrying about one thing, but life just gives you something new.

SIMON

Why would it be worse?

RHYS

If it's not, you wouldn't worry about it.

SIMON

I would.

RHYS

Maybe.

SIMON

It's a special talent of mine.

RHYS

Mmm.

RHYS pulls the comforter up for SIMON to sit with him.

SIMON

Okay. For a little while.

SIMON puts his plate on the floor and moves over to sit under the comforter next to RHYS. They wear it over their shoulders like a cloak. Waves crash against rocks. Moonlight illuminates the mint plant. Lights out.

Scene Three

Lights up, barely. It's nighttime. The bed is unmade. RHYS is asleep on the floor. Waves crash against rocks. There is wind outside. SIMON is nowhere. Suddenly, RHYS sits up.

RHYS

Simon!
... Simon?

RHYS gets up and goes to the door. He looks out. SIMON is nowhere.

Where did he...

RHYS looks at his mint plant.

He couldn't. He didn't.

RHYS leaves the room. A few beats, and he reenters, slightly more frantic than he was when he left. He comes to the center of the room and stands for a moment, grounding himself. He breathes. He goes to the closet, and takes out his galoshes and a rain cape. He slides the boots and cape on. He breathes.

Then, he goes to the circle of turkey feathers. Gently, he pries them from the floor. The circle has become a shield, lined with feathers and decorated to match their patterns. He holds it on his left arm. He breathes. Then, he walks to the mint plant. Slowly, he pulls it up. It is now a sword, edged in moonlight. He holds it up in his right hand. He breathes. He is a warrior. His courage rings circles around the room.

He exhales. He nods, once. He exits.

The lights do not go out.

Scene Four

Immediately, RHYS enters, dragging SIMON with him. RHYS has lost his sword. The arm bearing the shield is wrapped around SIMON's shoulders. They are both soaked.

SIMON

I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I'm so... I'm so sorry. I didn't mean... I'm sorry.

RHYS

Shh. It's alright. I don't blame you. It's fine.

SIMON

I'm sorry.

RHYS

Come here.

RHYS sets the shield on the pillow of the bed. SIMON sinks to the floor. RHYS gathers the comforter from the bed and bundles SIMON into it, crouching next to him to rub the warmth back into his arms. SIMON gazes at him, hollowly.

SIMON

Your sword.

RHYS

It's fine. I planted it in the yard.
You were right.

SIMON shudders.

RHYS (continued)

Why did you go out there? If you knew?

SIMON

...

I didn't want to be scared anymore.

SIMON finally meets RHYS' eyes. They watch each other for a moment before RHYS slowly leans into rest his forehead against SIMON's. Moonlight lays on their hair. Waves crash against rocks.

Lights out, slowly.

END OF PLAY