

Belonging Without Strings

By
Elijah
Vazquez

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

Copyright © 2023 by Elijah Vazquez

CAUTION: Professionals and Amateurs are hereby warned that performance of **BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS** is subject to payment of a royalty. It is fully protected under the copyright laws of The United States of America, and of all countries covered by the International Copyright Union (including the Dominion of Canada and the rest of the British Commonwealth) and of all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, the Berne Convention, and of all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations. All rights, including without limitation professional/amateur stage rights, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all other forms of mechanical, electronic and digital reproduction, transmission and distribution, such as CD, DVD, the Internet, private and file-sharing networks, information storage and retrieval systems, photocopying, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved. Particular emphasis is placed upon the matter of readings, permission of which must be obtained from the Author in writing.

The

English language stock and amateur stage performance rights in the United States, its territories, possessions and Canada for **BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS** are controlled exclusively by Next Stage Press. No professional or nonprofessional performance of the Play may be given without obtaining in advance written permission and paying the requisite fee. Inquiries concerning production rights should be addressed to genekato@nextstagepress.com

SPECIAL NOTE

Anyone receiving permission to produce **BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS** is required to give credit to the Author as sole and exclusive Author of the Play on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play and in all instances in which the title of the Play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. The name of the Author must appear on a separate line, in which no other name appears, immediately beneath the title and in size of type equal to 50% of the size of the largest, most prominent letter used for the title of the Play. No person, firm, or entity may receive credit larger or more prominent than that accorded the Author.

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

Cast: 2 Women

BOREALIS 20s-40s A hurting enigma
POLY 20s-30s A hurting awkward soul

Time: Present

Place: A park

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

ACT 1

BOREALIS sits on a park bench with a bundle of multicolored balloons tied to her wrist. These balloons are semi-plump and floatable, but still show subtle signs of gradual drooping throughout the show. She is wearing a beautiful outfit. Preferably with a long sleeved blouse of some sort. She sits with a blank expression while staring at a fountain. A fancy purse is lying by her side. Beat. POLY enters offstage wearing a vibrant summer dress combined with a lightweight cardigan, a wrist watch, a purse, and red lipstick. She looks around anxiously.

POLY. *(Finally noticing Borealis.)* Oh, hey, there you are.

BOREALIS. *(Silent.)*

POLY. *(Looks at wrist watch.)* I'm sorry. I'm usually never late to things. Traffic is just brutal, especially around these parts. Then parking is just as bad. You see, I never really come around here. I mean, I rarely ever go out as it is. I'm usually cooped up at home or at work. But I made it, a couple minutes late, but that's okay, right? Again, I'm so sorry. *(Fixing her hair.)*

BOREALIS. *(Silent.)*

POLY. Uh, you look nice. *(Pause.)* Very nice.

BOREALIS. *(Silent.)*

POLY. Oh, balloons...who are those for?

BOREALIS. *(Silent.)*

POLY. Were we supposed to bring gifts? *(She hastily digs into her purse and takes out a piece of paper. She offers it to Borealis.)* It's...it's a poem. It's not much, but I think you might like it. *(Borealis looks at her offer, and silently declines, continuing her stare towards the fountain.)* Oh, okay then. Sorry about that. *(Beat.)* That's okay, poems are not for everyone. *(Beat.)* Uh...do you mind if I take a seat?

BOREALIS. *(Silent.)*

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

POLY. *(She pensively sits next to her anyways but at the very edge of the bench.)*

POLY. So...how's it going? You okay? You're...uh...not talking much.

BOREALIS. *(Silent.)*

POLY. I understand. It can be a lot to take in. I'm really excited that this is happening though. I don't normally do this, but I'm glad things worked out. I just want to have a good time with someone else for once, you know? The park is a good touch too. I never knew how beautiful this one was. There's barely any parks on my side of town. *(Beat.)* Wow, then take a look at this fountain, it's so mesmerizing. Do you like fountains?-

BOREALIS. *(Sharp and deliberately.)* No.

POLY. Oh...um...why not?

BOREALIS. *(Silent.)*

POLY. Hello...?-

BOREALIS. Thieves.

POLY. Thieves?

BOREALIS. Yes, fountains are thieves.

POLY. How?

BOREALIS. Well, what do thieves do?

POLY. Steal?

BOREALIS. There you go.

POLY. I don't understand.

BOREALIS. Yeah, me neither.

POLY. They can't be that bad. Do you ever toss a coin in and make a wish?

BOREALIS. Why would I do that?

POLY. I don't know, it's just a thing we humans do. Whether it's for good fortune, wealth, or even love.

BOREALIS. Love huh? You don't say.

POLY. Yeah. I haven't done it since I was a kid, but I remember loving it. Have you ever thrown one before?

BOREALIS. *(Silent.)*

POLY. We could throw one together if you like?

BOREALIS. *(Abrupt.)* I can't do that.

POLY. No coins?

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

BOREALIS. No, just-

POLY. *(Starting to dig into her purse.)* Well, we can share some of mine. No worries I have butt loads of-

BOREALIS. No, it's fine...

POLY. Are you sure? I really-

BOREALIS. Yes! I'm positive.

POLY: Okay...

BOREALIS. *(Pause.)* Who are you anyways?

POLY. Oh me? Oh, yes, I never *really* introduced myself to you. *(Stands up and gestures for a handshake.)* Hello, my name is Poly, in case you didn't know already. I wouldn't see why not, but just for formality purposes.

BOREALIS. *(Gives her a questioning look. Doesn't shake her hand.)*

POLY. *(Trying to read her. Getting a little flustered.)* Would you prefer a hug, maybe? Or...just prefer...nothing? *(Borealis is not budging.)* That's perfectly acceptable as well. No one should be expected to hug or shake hands if they don't want to. Especially when they are handling a ton of balloons. I just wasn't sure what *you* were most comfortable with. *(Sits back down right at the very edge of the bench. Feeling defeated. She fidgets with her fingers. She then looks in her purse for something, but quickly realizes it's not there. Whispering to herself, she's reciting a poem as if she's creating it for the first time.)*...even in scorching contemplation...I am cooled by-

BOREALIS. What are you doing?

POLY. Huh? Oh sorry, when I get a little, well, uneasy, I babble to myself. It's nothing really.

BOREALIS. Sounds about right.

POLY. So, what do you want to talk about?

BOREALIS. Nothing.

POLY. *(Trying to gain composure.)* Isn't that the point?

BOREALIS. The point of what?

POLY. Of this.

BOREALIS. You tell me.

POLY. I mean...I thought that's what you do. You talk and get to know each other, right?

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

BOREALIS. With strangers?

POLY. No...to...to the counterpart for the evening.

BOREALIS. What? No no, I am not your counterpart in any way, shape, or form.

POLY. Excuse me?

BOREALIS. You heard me. Now you can leave or I can simply make you. I wish to be alone. I am attending to some important matters. *(She fixes her posture on the bench and looks around.)*

POLY. I don't understand, you are usually so...

BOREALIS. What is there not to understand? You have legs. Use them to walk away. Easy as that.

POLY. *(Shocked. Not moving.)*

BOREALIS. You're not leaving? People are meant to leave, you know. They do it all the time. If you stay, it's at your own cost.

POLY. *(Still shocked. A soft and hurt voice.)* This was so quick though...

BOREALIS. Yeah well things happen quickly in life. You get used to it.

POLY. *(Tearing up.)* Was it something I did? I promise, I'm not always this way.

BOREALIS. Why are you crying?

POLY. Cause...

BOREALIS. Can you stop?

POLY. I don't know if I can...

BOREALIS. I'm going to need you to stop.

POLY. My head is just spinning around and-

BOREALIS. Well I can't deal with any more crying right now!

POLY. *(Pause. She sniffles her nose and wipes her tears away. Beat.)* Why? Were...were you crying?

BOREALIS. *(Silence.)*

POLY. Well...?

BOREALIS. No.

POLY. Are you sure-

BOREALIS. Yes. *(Small pause.)* Okay seriously, what do you want? Why are you all dolled up? Are you a buyer in disguise or what? *(Looking closer at her.)* You actually look familiar. Do I know you from somewhere?

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

POLY. (*Fixing herself up.*) Uh...is that a trick question?

BOREALIS. Why would it be?

POLY. I assumed you'd know.

BOREALIS. I obviously don't.

POLY. The post office.

BOREALIS. I don't recall.

POLY. You don't?

BOREALIS. Nope.

POLY. The one off of California Avenue?

BOREALIS. Yeah no. Did we bump into each other or something?

POLY. I mean...occasionally. A brief encounter here and there.

BOREALIS. Was I usually with a man? A very handsome man who would hold my hand lovingly?

POLY. (*Slightly frazzled.*) Umm...no, never.

BOREALIS. Correct. So yes, we might have bumped into each other.

POLY. It's not a might, we have.

BOREALIS. I think you're delusional.

POLY. It's the whole reason why we are here.

BOREALIS. (*Indicating the balloons.*) I'm here celebrating.

POLY. And I'm here-

BOREALIS. Are you one of his other ones that actually managed to hide from me? Are you finally apologizing and coming to your senses, trying to woo me instead? If so, good, you have wonderful taste, and two, you're quite naughty, considering what I'm celebrating. But sadly, as you know, I'm still taken.

POLY. Taken?! You're seeing someone else?

BOREALIS. Deary, what do you mean? I see people all the time, but my eyes are set on one person.

POLY. Okay? Um, you know, this would all be very awkward if you were actually in...in a relationship with someone.

BOREALIS. Well let's explode your precious little mind, because I am in a relationship with someone. He's madly in love with me.

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

POLY. *(Confused.)* Wow...um...okay then.

BOREALIS. Why do you care, huh? Are you trying to steal me away from him? Because you are not doing a very good job at it. I don't care how pretty you are, we are inseparable.

POLY. No no no, not at all...I...I just didn't know...you were into open relationships.

BOREALIS. *(Standing up abruptly.)* Open relationships?!

POLY. *(Reeling back, triggered by such a sudden movement.)* Ah!

BOREALIS. Sorry honey, that phrase "open relationship" can make me a bit jumpy. *(Inching closer to her. Comforting tone yet with a dab of hostility.)* But that's not me. No no no. I am a devoted wife and a firm believer in *one* true love, not division. Do you hear me? Division of love serves no purpose in this world and I would *never* do such a disgusting thing.

POLY. You're getting a little close...

BOREALIS. What, can't handle it?

POLY. I, uh, well...

BOREALIS. It's okay. I understand. *(Breaking away from her pursuit. She retreats back to the other side of the bench. Out loud, yet to herself.)* Nearness and touch can be like a game of chess.

POLY. Yeah...

BOREALIS. Yet, it can also be so rewarding. *(Day dreamy.)* Especially with the person you love the most.

POLY. So...you're married?

BOREALIS. Of course I am married! I am the happiest wife in the whole town!

POLY. I think I'm going to be sick...

BOREALIS. Well if you are going to be sick, can you do it somewhere else? I don't want you to ruin my husband's and I's anniversary. Granted, it was yesterday, but I've been here through the night, because it's still

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

going on. *(Beat.)* I know when you first saw me I was a little quiet, but trust me, I was only preparing myself. It's a new day of celebration, which means he deserves the best again. So I have to give him the best. The best of myself. Because that's what wives do. *(She fixes her posture, unwrinkles her outfit, checks her lip stick, and adjusts her bra.)*

POLY. Did you say anniversary?!

BOREALIS. Mhm. This is our anniversary spot. Right next to this fountain. *Every. Single. Year.* No matter what. He sometimes even picks me flowers and gets me ice-cream here.

POLY. *(Still in awe.)* Anniversary...*(Fidgeting her fingers. Reciting a poem to herself again.)* No matter...no matter what thorns...-

BOREALIS. *(She only hears and responds to "Anniversary".)* Mhm, and the best part, the very best part is when he gives me *my* balloons. *(Soft and sincere.)* He gave me a bouquet of balloons on our first date here, *and* when he proposed to me here. And as you see, we kept the tradition going. *(With a faintly warm smile.)* He says I make his heart float just like a balloon. Isn't he the sweetest thing? Words fit for a flower like myself. *(She looks up at them.)* But aren't they so beautiful? Don't they make you feel so happy? Like your insides are weightless and airy. *(Beat.)* Trust me though, they are a load to carry at times, but that's why they have strings, right? My husband usually ties them onto my wrist. He does it very very tightly so they don't fly away. But that's how I like it.

POLY. Where...where is he at?

BOREALIS. *(Mordacious.)* Not here. He had to tend to something else.

POLY. *(Reluctantly.)* It seems you and your husband have a very loving relationship...tell me...why me then? I thought we had a small connection, possibly, I don't know. I mean, if you are here, you obviously expressed interest in me, right? I'm not crazy, right? Please tell me this isn't a trick? That's what he told me. He told me you liked me. I thought I felt it. I thought this was different. I even let you borrow my-

BOREALIS. Poly, sweetheart, what are you talking about?

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

POLY. Borealis, please-

BOREALIS. (*Abrasive.*) Hey, how do you know my name?!

POLY. You're packages.

BOREALIS. My packages?

POLY. Yes, at the post office. I'm the one who gives and ships your packages mostly.

BOREALIS. (*Looking closely at her.*) No you're not.

POLY. Yes I am. Wain even confirmed your name with me.

BOREALIS. Wait, did you say Wain?

POLY. Yes, don't you remember? He was the one to set this all up.

BOREALIS. Set this up? What are you talking about? And how do you know Wain?

POLY. My boss. My boss at the post office. Don't you know this?

BOREALIS. The one off of California Ave?

POLY. Yes.

BOREALIS. (*Pause.*) That's my husband.

POLY. (*Taken aback.*) Wait, wait, wait I thought you two knew each other or something?

BOREALIS. (*Growing aggression.*) Wain is my friend, my husband, my lover, my soulmate, my forever...

POLY. Whoa...

BOREALIS. What?

POLY. He never told me this. I mean I knew what he was like. What he was capable of. But not this. I thought you, us, was something new, fresh. I actually thought you were into me. You actually talked to me. You were so nice. (*Hyperventilating.*) I...I...I...

BOREALIS. Poly, you need to slow down, and tell me what is going on here?

POLY. I...I can't even think straight right now.

BOREALIS. Okay, but that shouldn't stop you from breathing. You can't tell me if you're dead.

POLY. (*Trying to take deep breaths.*)

BOREALIS. Good, now, you said he "set" this up and he sent you over

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

here for this "setup", am I correct?

POLY. Yes, he claimed that he was a good friend of yours and that he'd talk to you for me, but I honestly didn't know he was married to you.

BOREALIS. *(Small pause.)* A good friend?

POLY. Mhm...

BOREALIS. *(Getting up. Closing in on Poly.)* So you're telling me my Wain said we were just "good" friends?

POLY. Yeah...

BOREALIS. And you, who I don't even recognize, spewing nonsense about working at the post office that happens to be the one Wain works at, is here all gussied up, trying to ease into my feelings, making me believe he doesn't love me.

POLY. Wait, what? No no no-

BOREALIS. I know you're one of them.

POLY. One of who?

BOREALIS. Stop playing dumb with me! *(Takes out a box cutter knife and threatens her.)* I know you're one of them, I just know it. There's hundreds of you, and I'll gladly take out another. *(Incredulously.)* That man has balls to send one my way. He has fucking colossal balls to do this to me, but I bet that isn't breaking news to you. *(Beat. Puts her arm around Poly. Softly traces the knife along her skin. Very consulting.)* Okay you little doxy, you have one chance to really tell me what's going on. If I don't like what I hear, then my balloons here are going to get a makeover with red splashes.

POLY. *(Stunned. On the verge of tears. Hesitantly said.)* Borealis just put the knife down. It's going to be okay-

BOREALIS. Stop saying my name!

POLY. Do you not recognize me?

BOREALIS. *(Places knife near her neck.)* Yes I do, you are clearly a whore.

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

POLY. *(Shaking. Completely breaking down.)* You...you have to be mistaking me for someone else.

BOREALIS. And who would that be?

POLY. Do you not see who I am?!

BOREALIS. I see that you are wasting your one chance.

POLY. Is it what I'm wearing? The makeup? The hair? *(Rapidly puts her hair in a ponytail and grabs her glasses from her purse.)* Look! It's me.

The girl from the post office that usually takes your packages. It's me. You see? It really is me.

BOREALIS. *(Pause. Taking it all in. Lowering the knife.)* Oh my god...it is you. But...why?

POLY. Because Wain told me that you were interested in me.

BOREALIS. Interested?

POLY. Yes, he told me that you liked me.

BOREALIS. *My* Wain?

POLY. Yes.

BOREALIS. *(Sitting down. Trying to really figure this out.)* This is new. He's never done this before...

POLY. I'm guessing that's not true.

BOREALIS. I mean...-

POLY. So you don't? I mean of course you don't, why would you?

BOREALIS. *(Trying to find some words.)*

POLY. Ugh, Poly you idiot. Why would you believe him? Why did you let your feelings get the best of you? Even if she wasn't married, nothing would have happened.

BOREALIS. *(To herself.)* Darling Wain, what did you do? *(Beat.)* Poly I need details. I need you to tell me everything.

POLY. It's hard.

BOREALIS. Yes it's hard, but you have to tell me.

POLY. You're going to yell at me again...

BOREALIS. No, I'm not.

POLY. You promise?

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

BOREALIS. Yes, I promise. I'll even put the knife away. *(She retracts the blade and puts it away in her pocket.)*

POLY. Thank you. *(Beat.)* Alright, okay...um...well...it was the day you came into the post office and complimented my smile, and made that joke about exporting drugs in your packages.

BOREALIS. I remember that day. You had tons of notes at your station. More than usual. *(Smiling.)* It was a nice day.

POLY. It was. It was a nice day.

BOREALIS. Okay go on.

POLY. Well when you left, Wain apparently noticed, well, my noticing of you, and called me back into his office. He usually always calls me back into his office for things. Which at the time, didn't think anything of it.

BOREALIS. Uh huh.

POLY. And, well, he said he knew you, and that you actually took notice of me as well.

BOREALIS. Okay...

POLY. It was an odd thing to tell me. I thought he was just looking out for me. Because at work I'm usually not the most, uh, upbeat soul. But, he said that he could most likely...arrange...a date between us.

BOREALIS. A date?

POLY. Yes.

BOREALIS. And that's what he did?

POLY. *(Nods her head. Pause. A quiver of pain in her voice.)* He came up to me about five days ago and confirmed everything. He gave me the date, location and time. I asked for your number but he said he didn't know it. But I was just so blinded with excitement that someone potentially wanted to spend time with me, I didn't really care. *(Beat.)* He said that you would be expecting me.

BOREALIS: So you like me?

POLY. I wouldn't go that far.

BOREALIS. And you didn't know that I was his wife, correct?

POLY. I hadn't a clue. He never told me, or even spoke about you around me. I knew your last name was Winter, but I didn't think you two were married.

BOREALIS. Right right. So let me get this straight. You "like me". My husband schemed together a date for us the day after our anniversary at

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

this very park. You come to this date. You expect to do date things and I'm left fucking oblivious. *(Beat.)* Oh Wain baby, you just knew I'll be waiting all night and all day for you.

POLY. What do you mean?

BOREALIS. He just got a tad bit outlandish. That is all. I'll have a talk with him when he returns. It's only a matter of time. *(She takes out a cellphone and looks at it. She puts it away swiftly. She then goes into her purse searching for something. To herself.)* Gone gone gone. All gone. But, it can't be. There has to be more...

POLY. What's gone?

BOREALIS. *(Abruptly stops searching.)* Nothing. Nothing is gone.

POLY. Okay...*(Beat. Tense.)* So, he's coming back?

BOREALIS: I expect it, because that's what he's supposed to do. *(Beat.)* So...he *never* mentioned he was married?

POLY. No, I never even saw a ring on him.

BOREALIS. Of course. Of course. A reliable move of his.

POLY. Do you mind if I ask where your ring is? Every time you came into the post office I never noticed one so I figured you were-

BOREALIS. My ring?

POLY. Yeah.

BOREALIS. *(Pause. Caressing her ring finger.)* Wain takes it a lot to...to get it polished. *(Beat.)* This must be the worst date you've ever been on.

POLY. Uh, if you can really call it a date.

BOREALIS. A rendezvous of sorts.

POLY. I wouldn't know the difference. *(Beat.)* Were you serious about Wain coming back?

BOREALIS. Wain is a boomerang. He always does.

POLY. *(Slight pause.)* Okay, Borealis listen to me, I don't know your life, or your history with Wain, but I do know Wain is dangerous. And we shouldn't be near him. So our best bet is for us to stay as far away as possible from him.

BOREALIS. Baloney. Your delusions are showing again. Wain is rough, but never dangerous. You should know the difference.

POLY. Borealis, there is no difference! Rough is not always good.

BOREALIS. *(Teasing.)* And what does a delicate adorable thing like you

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

know about rough?

POLY. *(Pause. She turns away from Borealis, fidgeting her fingers. She recites another poem to herself.)* A flower...a flower is a flower...

BOREALIS. Oh Poly, my rambling little fairy, you have much to learn about love. I am not moving from this bench until I get answers from Wain himself. I encourage you to stay, because I adore your presence. There's a softness, I, well, rarely ever encounter.

POLY. Fine. If you're staying, then I'm not leaving. I'm not going to leave you alone. But if you want me to stay, then give me your knife.

BOREALIS. My knife?

POLY. Yes. If Wain does come, I want something for protection.

BOREALIS. *(Pause.)* You honestly think my husband, Wain, is dangerous?

POLY. *(Poly doesn't reply. She extends her palm out, with her eyes full of seriousness and intensity.)*

BOREALIS: Okay, as you wish. *(She hands her the knife.)*

POLY. Thank you. *(She looks at the knife closely.)* Wait a minute, this is my box cutter. This is the one I let you borrow to cut open your boxed packages. Why didn't you give it back?

BOREALIS. I must have forgotten. I guess I was too distracted by your kindness at the moment.

POLY. *(Nervously smiling.)* I was only trying to help. If you really need it, you can have it. I have more for carving, I, I, mean cutting, yeah cutting. Sorry. *(Pause. Borealis gives her a questioning glare.)* It's really no big deal.

BOREALIS. So, like a gift?

POLY. Sure, like a gift.

BOREALIS. *(Small pause.)* Thanks.

POLY. No problem. *(Beat.)* So why do you carry it around?

BOREALIS. I usually have pocket knives, but Wain is not really a fan of

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

those. He usually takes them away from me. But, I always get more. And this one was a nice replacement. *(Beat.)* It's a physically daunting world out there Poly. A girl must always be equipped to face those challenges sometimes.

POLY: *(She fidgets her fingers and rubs her forearm.)* Yeah, I know. *(Pause.)* Wow.

BOREALIS. What?

POLY. I would have never known. This side of you is quite different from our talks at the post office.

BOREALIS. Is that a bad thing?

POLY. I mean, the knife thing was a little much, and the name calling, but other than that, no, not at all.

BOREALIS. Sorry, sometimes I just...you know...get carried away by things.

POLY. I understand emotions don't always make sense. I've been in dark places in my life where I have considered doing questionable things. But, just know you don't have to battle it alone. Whatever you are going through with Wain, whatever you are feeling, I'll be right here to help.

BOREALIS. *(Really considering her words.)* Thank you Poly. *(Beat.)* I would've never guessed.

POLY. About?

BOREALIS. You and me thing.

POLY. *(Blushes a bit.)* Yeah...

BOREALIS. It's flattering. At the post office you're not much of a talker. You fumble your words here and there, not a true socializer, but that smile. That smile did all the talking.

POLY. Really? I'm not the biggest fan of my smile...

BOREALIS. It's cute.

POLY. I suppose.

BOREALIS. Why do you suppose?

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

POLY. I should have been less smiley and more talkative. I shouldn't be this reserved.

BOREALIS. Reserved?

POLY. Yeah, like so to myself.

BOREALIS. Do you consider yourself shy?

POLY. Depends I guess.

BOREALIS. On?

POLY. The person.

BOREALIS. Really?

POLY. Yeah, people like you get me nervous.

BOREALIS. Why?

POLY. I don't know, just do.

BOREALIS: I'm guessing that's why you didn't ask me yourself, yeah?

POLY. *(She nods her head in slight embarrassment.)*

BOREALIS. Okay we are getting somewhere. So I doubt Wain just saw us talking and thought you were all gaga for me. How did he exactly know you liked me?

POLY. *(Pause. In a whisper barely heard.)* Uh...poems.

BOREALIS. Mmm? Did you say poems?

POLY. Yes...poems. I...I write poems.

BOREALIS. *(Intrigued.)* And you-

POLY. Yes...

BOREALIS. *(Surprised)* Oh, is that why you have all those notes on your station?

POLY. Yeah, whenever I'm anxious, or feeling happy, I write poems. I usually take them home at the end of my work shift, but I guess I forgot one night and he snooped around and saw them.

BOREALIS. So you've written a few about-

POLY. Yes, writing helps crystallize my thoughts and feelings.

BOREALIS: Crystallize? That's a fancy little word.

POLY. *(A little laugh.)* It is.

BOREALIS. Was that why you were rambling those other fancy words earlier?

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

POLY. Yeah, when I don't have paper or pen I usually write them in my head, and it sometimes slips out of my mouth.

BOREALIS. Do you have any poems about me in your purse? Wait, didn't you try to give me one earlier?

POLY. Yeah but I didn't specifically write it for this occasion. It's probably some random old one that's probably not even that good.

BOREALIS. You're delusional, I bet it's great. *(Tapping Poly's thigh and getting close to her face.)* Please please, just take it out. I want to read it.

POLY. Do you really want to read it? No one has ever read any of my poems.

BOREALIS. Of course I do. If it's about me it must be good, right?

POLY. I say good things yes, but if it's actually good is an entirely different thing.

BOREALIS. I know it will be good. I just know it.

POLY. *(Pause. Sets the knife aside, and digs into her purse. She gets the piece of paper that she had earlier.)* You won't laugh, right?

BOREALIS. Pinky swear. I never break pinky swears. *(She offers her pinky.)*

POLY. *(Poly accepts. As they pinky swear, Borealis kisses her own hand. She offers Poly to do the same with her own hand. Poly hesitantly does so as well.)*

BOREALIS. It makes the pinky swear more meaningful. Kisses in general make things more meaningful.

POLY. Definitely...*(She hands over the poem.)* Well, here you go.

BOREALIS. *(She quickly snatches from her hands.)* Lovely! Ooo, I'm so excited! Do you mind if I read it out loud? I really want to hear and feel all your nice, beautiful words.

POLY. Uh...sure.

BOREALIS. *(Smiles.)* Okay. *(She clears her throat.)* And the title is..."*Aftermath*". *(Beat.)* Sounds deep. *Thick lines cross on my arm-*

POLY. *(Trying to snatch the poem.)* Wait no, not that one.

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

BOREALIS. (*Dodging her advance. Scurrying around the bench. Poly trips.*) Come on Poly, you didn't even give me a chance.

POLY. (*Poly rolls up into a ball on the bench and starts hyperventilating.*)

BOREALIS. *Thick marks cross on my arm,*

Intersecting with reds and pinks,

Streaking around with no destination,

But, when I see her,

The marks halt,

With healing becoming my only sensation.

All done. (*She gives it back. Poly grabs it and rips it up.*) Hey now, you didn't have to do that. I thought the ending was sweet, but what was with that beginning? "Thick marks cross my arm,"?

POLY. Nothing. Nothing at all. Don't worry about it. (*Still in a ball position, rubbing her arm.*)

BOREALIS. Maybe you can write another poem. Will that make you happy?

POLY. Yes...yes. I'll do that. I'll make you a better one.

BOREALIS. There you go. That's what I like to hear.

POLY. The thing is I don't have any more paper.

BOREALIS. Here just use my palm. Saves a tree.

POLY. I also need a pen.

BOREALIS. (*Gets a pen from her pocket and hands it to her.*) You know how it is, those post offices never have pens. So one must always be prepared.

POLY. (*Small pause.*) Are you sure you want me to do this? Pens can be, well, pointy. And it's going on your skin.

BOREALIS: Yeah, it's not like it's permanent.

POLY.: Yeah...permanent...

BOREALIS. Come on Poly, relax. It will be fun. And isn't that what you want to do? Just have some fun with someone.

POLY. True...

BOREALIS. Well here's my hand. Have at it. (*She pulls up her sleeve to give Poly some writing space.*)

POLY. Okay. I've had this one baking in my head for a while. (*Unsure on how to approach Borealis.*) Are you sure you don't mind if-

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

BOREALIS. Do what you need to do. I don't bite.

POLY. Okay. *(She hesitantly grabs Borealis wrist for stability.)*

BOREALIS. *(She flinches, and breaks out of her grasp very quickly, grabbing Poly's wrist forcefully.)*

POLY. What?! What happened?

BOREALIS. *(Letting go immediately.)* Sorry your hands were very cold. I...I wasn't prepared for that. *(Beat.)* Carry on. I won't flinch anymore.

POLY. Okay...*(She continues from before. She accidentally hits a balloon string.)*

BOREALIS. Poly poly poly, please watch out for the strings, okay? I don't want you accidentally tearing it. Wain would have a fit, and he's already got some explaining to do. Remember, these balloons are much more than helium in rubber, they are who Wain and I are. *(Beat.)* So just be extra careful.

POLY. Okay...*(She exhales then starts up again. Focused, yet a slight rattle in her hand as she writes.)*

BOREALIS. *(Pause. Waiting. Enjoying this feeling.)* Has anyone told you that you have a nice touch?

POLY. Uh...no.

BOREALIS. Okay. *(Pause. Whistling.)* Are you almost done?

POLY. Almost...

BOREALIS. Sorry, if you didn't know I can be a bit impatient. *(Beat.)* You know Wain doesn't have the nicest touch. It does the job of course, but it's not like yours.

POLY. *(Silence.)*

BOREALIS. Yeah he has clammy hands. He doesn't moisturize much. He says it's better for gripping. *(Beat.)* You seem like you do. Your hands are soft and gentle.

POLY. *(Apprehensive. Not looking at her.)* On occasion. Thanks.

BOREALIS. No, problem.

POLY. *(Still writing. Pause.)*

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

BOREALIS. Still going?

POLY. Mhm.

BOREALIS. Okay. (*Giving Poly an enamoring look. Pause.*)

POLY. Okay...I think I am done.

BOREALIS. Lovely! You write fast. It's that precious little mind of yours. (*She looks at her hand.*) Wow, you wrote a bunch on my hand. You must really like-

POLY. Writing poems.

BOREALIS. (*Disappointedly.*) Yeah...that. (*Beat.*) Can I read this one out loud?

POLY. (*She nods her head "yes".*)

BOREALIS. Are you going to freak out this time?

POLY. (*She shakes her head "no".*)

BOREALIS. Alrighty, well let's get our tushies comfy. I'm excited to read this one.

POLY. (*She cups her hands together in her lap. Listening.*)

BOREALIS. The title is..."The Northern Flower"...huh...interesting. Let's see what we have.

She loves me, or she loves me not?

That is the question that burns me,

Yet even in scorching contemplation,

I am cooled by the presence of her beauty,

The crisp essence of luminance,

With light that sheds darkness,

Swiveling under the stars,

Radiating to the heartfelt and the heartless,

Though known for this skyward admiration,

Frolicking in the tundra of silence,

She is Earth's gardens,

Soil of gold, and petals of brilliance,

With stems reaching into my soul, unveiling a bud in this heart,

A flower blooms, showcasing God's finest art,

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

Borealis.

BOREALIS. Oh my god...

POLY. You don't like it...

BOREALIS. No, no...it's magnificent. *(Still in awe. Quiet.)*

POLY. You are quiet...are you sure you don't-

BOREALIS. I love it.

POLY. Really?

BOREALIS. Yes. *(To herself.)* God, if only this was permanent. *(Beat.)* I am the flower, yes?

POLY. *(Nods her head.)*

BOREALIS. Wow.

POLY. What?

BOREALIS. It's just that everyone assumes that Borealis automatically means the Aurora Borealis. But, I was actually named after the flower. Wain didn't even know I was named after the flower. He would give me flowers, but I never actually felt like a flower. *(Beat.)* How did you know?

POLY. I didn't, I just knew you were a flower to me. You are pretty, radiant, and make me feel fuzzy inside.

BOREALIS. I don't get it...

POLY. What don't you get?

BOREALIS. *(In a painful trance.)* I'm nowhere near the resemblance of a flower. Flowers are usually taken care of and loved. I'm more of a weed. I get ripped and torn to pieces. *(Realizing her state. Breaks out quickly.)* Not always though! Wain always tries to make me feel special.

POLY. Are you serious? He just sabotaged us Borealis.

BOREALIS. *(Defensively.)* That's up for debate.

POLY. *(A little frustrated.)* What? Are you serious? Listen to yourself Borealis. You're defending a man who is not here for your anniversary.

BOREALIS. That's also up for debate.

POLY. Okay okay, well, debate or not, I believe you excel at being a flower. Maybe even surpass.

BOREALIS. *(Pause.)* Do...do you really mean that? Even after everything I said and did to you?

POLY. Of course. It was a rough start. Even good people can have them.

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

BOREALIS. *(Borealis slides towards Poly for a hug. She buries her face on her clavicle.)*

POLY. *(Drifting in indecisiveness.)* What...what is this for?

BOREALIS. Just hug me back.

POLY. Did you say hug?

BOREALIS. Yes.

POLY. Okay. *(She hesitates, then completes the warm embrace. Silent. She settles in.)* Um...how long does this usually take?

BOREALIS. However long you want it to.

POLY. Got it. I'll just continue then.

BOREALIS. Do you want it to end?

POLY. No of course not! This is just...new to me.

BOREALIS. What, hug?

POLY. Yeah...

BOREALIS. *(Looks back to her face. Playful and loving smile. Inches away from each other's lips.)* Are you getting nervous again?

POLY. You see...

BOREALIS. It's okay. Be nervous. Nerves eventually flee after you let go a bit. Like I said, just two people having fun.

POLY. It's a good nervous though.

BOREALIS. Even better.

POLY. Is it?

BOREALIS. Why not.

POLY: I don't know.

BOREALIS. That's okay. Sometimes not knowing is the best knowing. *(Eyes interlock. There is a wavering sense of retreat and advance from both of their faces. A balloon plops down between them. They both laugh. Pause. She offers to hold hands. She uses the opposite hand that doesn't have the poem. Poly timidly accepts. Poly then notices a bruise on Borealis' wrist.)*

POLY. *(Very worried.)* Hey, you have a dark bruise on your wrist. How did that happen?

BOREALIS. *(Hiding it back up quickly.)* Oh, that thing? I had that for a

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

while now, it's nothing really. I'm very clumsy and I run into things all the time. I probably banged it against a wall or something.

POLY. *(Skeptically investigating.)* Are you sure? That looks really tender...

BOREALIS. *(With intensity.)* Yes I am sure! Why wouldn't I be?

POLY. Borealis, I want to make sure you are-

BOREALIS. I'm fine. It's just a nick. I bruise easily, and they stay for a long time.

POLY. *(Pause. She lets go of Borealis' hand, lifts up her cardigan and unveils a similarly positioned bruise on her wrist. Slightly above her wrist are cut marks.)*

BOREALIS. What is that? Why are you showing me that?

POLY. *(Growing terror.)* It's on the same spot. *(Beat.)* Borealis, you have to tell me how you got-

BOREALIS. I told you already! I am a ditz and I probably ran into a wall. That is it.

POLY. Borealis please. This is serious.

BOREALIS. I told you what I needed to tell you! Let it die! *(Takes out her phone again and looks at it. Beat. She tosses it aside. She then digs into her purse savagely. She doesn't find what she needs, and tosses it onto the floor.)* Gone. Nothing. Not a single one. Not even one piece of fucking copper. *(Beat.)* Wain needs to come now. I need him right now. He needs to clear things up, and continue with our anniversary.

POLY. No you don't.

BOREALIS. Yes I do Poly!

POLY. No you don't!

BOREALIS. Who the hell are you to tell me otherwise miss I-never-had-a-hug-in-my-life!?

POLY. Borealis, please believe me, Wain is dangerous. And if he did this to you, then he doesn't really love you. I don't know much, but I do know

BELONGING WITHOUT STRINGS

people who love each other don't do this. This is wrong. You deserve better.

BOREALIS. *(Getting teary and flustered.)* I deserve better?! With a love as strong as his, how do I deserve better? *(Looks into the distance. Waves.)* Wait, is that him? Wain! Wainy pooh!

POLY. *(Poly jumps up and grabs the knife, then realizes.)* That's a tree Borealis...

BOREALIS. No, no, you're delusional! *(Still waving. Eventually realizes it is a tree.)* Oh, it is a tree. *(Beat.)* Wain and I used to kiss under trees...

POLY. *(Yields the knife a bit.)* Borealis, please steady your mind. Did he do that to you? If so, that's not good. I can get you help.

BOREALIS. *(Trying to keep it together. Her voice quivering.)* What?...no no...Wain...Wain would never hurt me. Wain loves me. He would never hurt me. Husbands don't hurt their wives. They are gentlemen, full of massive irreplaceable love. He loves me. He truly does. *(Beat.)* Why do you want to know so bad, huh? Why do you care so much about me?

POLY. *(Silence.)*

BOREALIS. How did you get yours, Poly?

POLY. *(Silence. Hyperventilating. Looking for words. Looking for courage.)*

***THE PLAY IS NOT OVER!! TO FIND OUT HOW IT ENDS—
ORDER A COPY AT WWW.NEXTSTAGEPRESS.COM***