

ODIA

by K. Brian Neel

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Commissioned by Infinity Box Theater. First run at the Pacific Science Center.
Based on the computer language processing research of Matthew E Peters.

CHARACTERS:

Melva - near sighted (she/they)
Hyrie - far sighted (he/they)

*Lights up on Melva and Hyrie sitting on a park bench.
They are dressed as if going out for a fancy night on the town.*

Both have incredibly thick eye glasses.

Long pause as they stare forward into the distance.

There is an excitement in the air. A palpable tension between them. Information needs to get out. Like a bomb about to blow. Finally, Hyrie gives a prompt:

HYRIE: You are my Queen.

MELVA: An adult, mated female that lives in a bee hive?

Hyrie doesn't compute.

The mother of bees?

Hyrie still processing.

Developed from larvae selected by worker bees, and specifically fed in order to become sexually mature.

HYRIE: Queens are raised in specially constructed cup-shaped cells, floating in viscous royal jelly.

MELVA: The virgin queen will chew a circular cut around the cap of her cell. Emerging during a swarm. She will quickly find and kill (by stinging) any other emerged virgin queen. A fight to the death until only one remains.

HYRIE: Unlike the worker bees, the queen's stinger is not barbed and she is able to sting repeatedly without dying.

MELVA: The surviving queen will fly out on a sunny, warm day to a "drone congregation area" ... where she will mate with 12 to 15 drones!

HYRIE: What?

MELVA: If the weather holds, she may return for several days until she is fully mated.

HYRIE: I don't think...

MELVA: The young queen stores up to 6 million sperm from multiple drones in her spermatheca.

HYRIE: You're not a queen bee!

MELVA: Oh. Okay.

Pause.

In the game of chess?

HYRIE: You would be the most powerful piece.

MELVA: Able to move any number of squares vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. Placed in the middle of the chess board, first rank next to, and sworn to protect, (*indicating Hyrie*) the king.

HYRIE: Protect the king from checkmate.

MELVA: Even a pawn can become queen if she reaches the end of the board.

HYRIE: So if a game was played...

They move on the board.

Melva becomes the black team:

MELVA: And hours later, at the end of the game, only two black pawns and a black king remained.

Hyrie becomes the white team:

HYRIE: And two white pawns, a white king, and a white bishop remained.

MELVA: The black king moves between the pawns. (*moves back and forth*)

HYRIE: Keeping the white bishop chasing back and forth frustratingly across the board. (*moves back and forth*)

They both keep moving back and forth.

MELVA: The Gruenfeld Defense.

HYRIE: The single greatest chess move of all time, played by Veselin Topalov and Alexey Shirov in 1998.

MELVA: Until a single black pawn reaches C1... becoming queen.

HYRIE: The board is conceded.

MELVA: The queen is returned to the box.

HYRIE: Along with the other chess pieces.

MELVA: And put back on the shelf.

HYRIE: Until the next game is played.

Beat.

MELVA: A drag queen?

HYRIE: Drag queen?

MELVA: A performance artist who dresses in women's clothing and acts with exaggerated feminine gender roles.

HYRIE: Drag queens can be of any sexual orientation or gender identity, but are closely associated with gay men.

MELVA: For dramatic, comedic, or satirical effect, they often wear audacious make-up.

HYRIE: Which should be applied after a moisturizing layer.

Melva proceeds to make up Hyrie's face.

MELVA: "Creme Radiance" by Lancome.

HYRIE: Sideburns and eyebrows.

MELVA: Pasted with Elmers purple washable glue stick.

HYRIE: Which dries tacky.

MELVA: Dust with BareMinerals "La Mer The Powder"

HYRIE: Then foundation?

MELVA: Rihanna's "Fenty Beauty Pro Filt'r Soft."

HYRIE: Eyebrows drawn in a new shape.

MELVA: Vunderbrow "Total Temptation" pencil with micro fork tip.

HYRIE: And highlights.

MELVA: "Krylon TV Paint Stick" in white.

HYRIE: Darken in.

MELVA: "Make Up For Ever Ultra HD"

HYRIE: Eye shadow and blush.

MELVA: The "Oh Honey!" color pallet from the Trixie Mattel and Sugarpill collaboration. "Congratulations, y'all."

HYRIE: Eyes.

MELVA: L'Oreal Paris "Flash Cat Eye" by Infallible.
~~More shades from "Oh, Honey": "Side Saddle" and "Pony Boy" ...~~

HYRIE: The beard...

MELVA: Neutralize with LA Girl Cover FX
"Click Color Corrector: Orange"
~~Shiseido Synchro Skin Self-Refreshing Foundation.~~
~~"Goddess of Love" Killawatt Freestyle Highlighter.~~
~~theBalm Bahama Mama Contour powder.~~
Eyelashes: 301 by Coco Lashe.

HYRIE: Huge eyelashes!

MELVA: Made with human hair.
And... Trixy Matel... "D. For. Danger." ... Lipstick.

HYRIE: Now I am the queen. My name is...?

MELVA: Barbara Seville.

HYRIE: Hedda Lettuce.

MELVA: Tasha Salad.

HYRIE: Dora Jar.

MELVA: Crystal Decanter.

HYRIE: Sham Payne.

MELVA: Esther Gin.

HYRIE: Anne Fetamine.

MELVA: Ivy Profen.

HYRIE: Megan Whoopi.

MELVA: Heidi Haux. Spelled H A U X.

HYRIE: Shelby Late.

MELVA: Liza Lott.

HYRIE: Amanda Reconwith.

MELVA: Miranda Wrights.

HYRIE: Penny Tentiary.

MELVA: Zika. D. Stroy.

HYRIE: Zika D. Stroy!

MELVA: Zika D. Stroy. Yes.

HYRIE: (*matter of fact*) It works because it's an incurable virus. However, my intended meaning of the word queen was: A monarch who reigns over an empire.

Beat.

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