

FLOWERS IN THE SHADE

CHARACTERS:

GOLD - Transgender Teen, isolated, desperate of love and acceptance.

INNER GOLD 1&2&3 - Gold's inner demons, represents Gold's internal thoughts, ideas, insecurities, strength, and understandings of the world.

CAMELLIA - Gold's Best Friend who's struggling to support and reach out to Gold.

Music:

Live Piano & Vocals

ACT I SCENE I: INTRODUCTION

(Opens in Blackout)

[Intro Music begins before the lights come on and continues as the lights come on]

GOLD: Our minds are complex. Our lives are simple. And then reality becomes some great puzzle for us to sort out, when it isn't. Ourselves, to define, to explore, to navigate. When will choosing stop? When can we forget ourselves and just be happy? I know I can't. I will always be fighting, I will always be tired. Here is where the blossom of eternity lies. I know life is simple, but I can't make myself simple. And so, I try to bend the will of my reality, and force it to comply to my image of beauty and perfection. We control what we see in the world to make it prettier, less messy. Thoughts are but experiences with labels, are just text of forces beyond ourselves. They are us trying to make life complicated. So I guess I am going to make it complicated, here are my thoughts. Here is my experience.

[Intro Music Ends]

INNER GOLD 1: Flowers blooming, they lift and then soar. They grow in mounds of shit. Or in between the miniscule cracks in concrete. And yet, they still comply to our standards of beauty. We see a crushed flower, or a flower that has shrivelled, or a flower that is wilting, do we think it isn't beautiful anymore? Or do we mourn its beauty?

GOLD: Am I beautiful?

ACT I SCENE II: INNER REFLECTIONS

INNER GOLD 1: How can you pretend to be so confident? You're nothing. You walk down those halls, receiving compliments, but-

INNER GOLD 2: You don't deserve them.

INNER GOLD 3: You're too ugly to deserve them.

INNER GOLD 2: Too fat.

INNER GOLD 3: Those compliments mean nothing. They're all faking it. You're basically forcing them to compliment you. You're such an attention whore.

INNER GOLD 2: You're so selfish. You always think about yourself. Like right now. All you can think of is yourself. It's disgusting. How can anyone love someone like you? Your friends are probably faking it, I mean, how can you even prove that what they say and do is genuine? That's right, you can't. You're-

GOLD: And halt.
Breathe.
Start again.

INNER GOLD 1: I feel like I pretend to be confident. I don't deserve this, I don't feel worthy. Maybe that's because I don't see the beauty within me. Does a flower know its own beauty? Is it aware of its power? The power it naturally has without even trying.

INNER GOLD 2: But I keep trying, I'm always trying.

INNER GOLD 3: The power of loveliness? Of fragrance? Of fragility? A pale colour, unobtrusive, unobstructive. It doesn't make a statement beyond itself. Is that what I want? Do I want that stationary beauty? That weakness? I am lost. How can I find it in myself when I have been blindfolded by my insecurity? Why must I rely on everyone else to make me feel better? I can't trust others. I can't trust myself. There is too much pain from the past, I guess.

INNER GOLD 2: But here is another soul.

INNER GOLD 1: There she is. And she has made me feel loved. How? I'm not really sure.
But I can trust her.

INNER GOLD 3: I envy her.

INNER GOLD 2: I love her.

INNER GOLD 1: It sometimes feels as though we are the opposite faces of a single coin.
Where she is talented,

INNER GOLD 1&2&3: I am not.

INNER GOLD 1: Where she is beautiful,

INNER GOLD 1&2&3: I am not.

INNER GOLD 1: Where she is worthy, I am not. And yet, our fates are bound in that
friendship that precedes what any of us can truly understand. And she has
helped me through so much. If only I could show her. If only I could begin
again and give her all the support she needs. If only I could be that perfect,
gentle flower.

GOLD: Stop.
Breathe.
Rest.

INNER GOLD 1: It was in the past. And we grew. And I found it in a bathtub. A small,
cramped, uncomfortable bathtub.

(Blackout)

(Spotlight for Dance, Silhouettes for Bathtub Scene)

ACT I SCENE III: INNER REFLECTIONS

(Camellia is taking a bath behind a screen so we can only see their silhouettes.)

CAMELLIA: Relax, you don't have to take it with me.

GOLD: No, I want to. It's just...

INNER GOLD 1: Here I am. Taking my first step.

CAMELLIA: Come in! You don't have to take off your clothes if you really don't want to.

INNER GOLD 2: It's always hard.

CAMELLIA: There see, not so bad.

[Bathtub Scene Music begins]

GOLD: Is it okay if I take off my shirt?

CAMELLIA: Yeah, I don't care..

GOLD: You won't care?

CAMELLIA: Nope.

GOLD: You won't think I'm too fat or anything ?

INNER GOLD 3: Always wobbly. And maybe you'll fall down a few times.

GOLD: You're so beautiful.

CAMELLIA: Thank You.

CAMELLIA: You're beautiful too, you have nothing to hide.

GOLD: You're just saying that-

CAMELLIA: Shhh. Isn't this nice?

INNER GOLD 1: But then, after that initial struggle, all you have is pride. A weight of insecurity was lifted off of me that night. And I could finally be awkward and happy and flawed.

GOLD: I'm sorry if I like...bump into you or something (gold stutters awkwardly)

CAMELLIA: I think we established pretty early on it isn't girls you want to be touching (Gold laughs, they lock eyes for a moment and Camellia smiles)

INNER GOLD 1: She gave that to me. And the stars smiled at us that night. And I was happy. I was happy. I was happy. I unlocked a gate within me.

[Dance No. 1 - Inner Gold 1&2&3]

[Vocal begins. At end of Dance, Music ends.]

(Black out)

ACT I SCENE IV: FIRE AND SOUL

INNER GOLD 1: I looked in the mirror and I saw something not pleasing. But I was pleased. Wearing it. I wore it.

CAMELLIA: Hey, Happy Birthday! Buy yourself something. A dress. Buy a dress for yourself.

INNER GOLD 1: I rejected myself. I didn't need this. I could live without it. Who I thought I was and who I really am are completely different. I don't need this. I am fine. I am happy.

CAMELLIA: You aren't happy like this. I can tell. Please, for yourself.

INNER GOLD 1: This isn't right. I shouldn't have to wear a dress to be happy. I should be happy with what I wear.

INNER GOLD 2: It's enough.

INNER GOLD 3: I shouldn't complain.

[Dress Music begins]

GOLD: But there it was. That money to buy it. And I felt joy. I felt classic. I felt like I was lifted above all my worries, even if only for a second. Here I am, I thought. This is me. In this tight black dress. Here I am. Me. And it felt right. What did this mean? What can I do? No one will like me. And I will be alone.

[Vocal begins]

INNER GOLD 2: I am fluid. Just fluid. Just fluid. I felt my insides burn like fire. A fire of cleansing? Destruction? Was I trying to burn out the femininity? Was I trying to cleanse myself of this...impurity? Unnatural. Unhealthy. Or was I trying to destroy this new part of me. Was I trying to obliterate the future pain and suffering. I have already been through so much, and here I am creating even more problems. Is this happiness? Is this worth it.

CAMELLIA: Stop doubting what you feel. I think you know what you are. You know what feels right. This isn't wrong. It's you. And you are beautiful.

GOLD: Beautiful?

CAMELLIA: The most beautiful girl I've ever seen (smiles).

[Dance No.2 - Gold, Inner Gold 1&2&3]

[Dialogue doesn't resume until the song ends,
and music returns to main theme of Dress]

INNER GOLD 3: I felt the emotions on my face before I registered them as signs of my acceptance. One day, I would learn to be free. One day, I would find my own brand of beauty that was not confined to that society-driven flower. One day I would be more. And I knew this was a bend in the road that

showed me the path ahead. I would have to keep being strong. I would have to keep being me for as long as I could.

[Music ends]

CAMELLIA: I love you. You're someone I can never replace. My friend. My sister. I'll talk for hours and hours about my own problems, even though I know you already have so many. I know I keep talking, I mean I can't shut up-because-I also need you. And you might not think that's true, because you idolize me in some weird, self-deprecating way, but it is. I wouldn't be such good friends with you, and keep talking and talking like this if I didn't need you. Through the anxiety, the teenage angsty shit, that shit everyone seems to be going through-I have you. You and your rationality. You bring my emotions in and tell me what is the truth when I keep trying to fill my brain with lies. Life could be so much simpler than it is, but I know that no matter how much shit we get into- we'll figure it out because that's what we do. I'm always here, and you're always there, and that's just the way it's gonna be.

INNER GOLD 1: The words she said would always remind me of a sleepy tide, pulled up by the loving moon. And the ocean would rock me as I dreamed, and the stars would paint the water. And I would embrace her words, even with the doubt stirring within me. I would believe what she said. And I would be floating and glimmering and free.

(Black Out)

ACT I SCENE V: OF WEAKNESS

(Lights on - Wash)

CAMELLIA: What's up? What's your deal?

GOLD: Some people are so sure of who they are...

INNER GOLD 1: It seems like it'll always be a battle that-

GOLD: I'll always be fighting

INNER GOLD 2: that I'll never be able to rest

GOLD: I know that I present myself as confident

INNER GOLD 3: But that's never been the case at all

GOLD: I act that way because...

INNER GOLD 2: I'm scared,

GOLD: Because...

INNER GOLD 1: I'm insecure.

GOLD: I have people around me who support me to the best of their ability...

INNER GOLD 1: like you

GOLD: I just don't know what to do...

INNER GOLD 1: I just don't know what I'd do without you honestly but-

GOLD: But I don't know if it'll ever be enough, but even with the amount of time they and you spend on me, it already feels too much. I am just...

INNER GOLD 3: Lost. Who am I? What is my identity?

GOLD: Some people are so sure of who they are but I am an exception. I am the person who will never be sure of who they are, or at least, that's how it feels.

CAMELLIA: Stop thinking.

GOLD: That's impossible-

CAMELLIA: Stop thinking. When I call you a she, when I call you a lady, what is your first, gut reaction?

GOLD: I feel... flattered, and happy...

CAMELLIA: Then that is what I'll call you.

GOLD: But what if I'm not actually like that? What if I'm just lying to get attention and I'm not-

CAMELLIA: It doesn't matter. What matters is that you're happy. That's all there is to it.

INNER GOLD 1: To make yourself a priority, it is important. I tell people that all the time, but I myself don't actually practice it. What's good for me? What do I want? There's so much, and I doubt all of it. But doubting makes you a better person, right? Questioning yourself helps you find the flaws in your

decisions, and it helps you lessen the influence on others. It helps you make sure you are a good person. That's what I want, to be a good person. Should I cast aside all of that? Merely for my own happiness? You seem to think so, but I am not so sure. I am torn. I want to be happy, but what will give me happiness? Acceptance, or awareness? Self doubt or selfishness? Those who go by gut feeling usually end up hurting more than healing. We need to think through our actions before we say or do them, because we could end up hurting others. And that's never good, is it.

CAMELLIA: I don't know. I don't think I've ever had a problem with being selfish. It's not like I want to be mean, but I just honestly don't care a lot of the time. People will be people, and I will feel how I feel. I shouldn't have to give up myself and how I feel just because it might hurt them. I'd never do anything to make them feel horrible, but I won't hold back. I'll either navigate the situation or just bail, but overall I don't care.

GOLD: But that isn't right. We need to care.

CAMELLIA: It's a waste of energy, and it's making you way too tired.

INNER GOLD 1: Concerned for my safety. Thinking I will break so easily. It's insulting. I have been through a lot. I am not weak. I may feel weak, but I am strong. Do people underestimate me? After they know what I've been through. Do they feel bad for me? Do they seek me out out of pity? Then i just become another side show. Look at the poor, sad transgirl, I feel so bad for her, she's had to go through so much, I would never want to be her. Think about what you people say before you say it, Jesus. I care, but I am tired. Like she said, I am tired. Fighting and fighting and fighting. I fight myself every day, when I look in the mirror. I must pass. I fight everyone I interact with. I must pass. I fight with society and how they treat us. I must pass. I fight my family and how they don't want me to be like this. I must pass. I must. It's so hard. Can't I just be normal? Can't I just be who I want to? Why are there so many rules? Why do I need everyone's approval to feel like I am valid? I just feel so helpless. These feelings, they aren't mine to control. They live within me and speak on their own. A lot of the time I wish I could just forget it. But it is part of who I am. It is me. I can't repress who I am, now that I've discovered it. I am floating again, but this time I am floating away. I just want to be alone. I just want to burden no one but myself. I just want to go home and stay there. I don't want to talk. I don't want to hug. I don't want to see people.

GOLD: It's hard.

CAMELLIA: I know.

GOLD: You don't.

CAMELLIA: How don't I?

GOLD: You don't get it, don't you see that? You'll never get it.

CAMELLIA: Well then make me get it.

GOLD: I can't.

CAMELLIA: Let me help.

GOLD: I can't. It makes me weak.

ACT I SCENE VI: COLOUR

[Dance No. 3 - Inner Gold 1]

GOLD: What do I need right now? What am I?

[Conflict Music begins]

INNER GOLD 1: I see the colours, and they shimmer and swirl and mix in a kaleidoscope of dreams. I see a veil of who I am. It is the mirror others see within me, revealing a hue. A vibrant, dancing hue. Am I a brightness that fills the room? Am I an accent that pops and draws in people? Am I a mellow neutral that blends and calms? Am I a rush of comfort? A mystery? Energy? A birth of an idea? Or just... silence? What do people see?

[Dance Solo begins, continues over dialogue]

GOLD: I know I can't just ask people how they see me. They will lie and manipulate and bend the truth. But in a colour, they won't lie. The complexity they see in the richness of all hues will reveal to me how they see me. And I will be fixated in a safe place, that blending, complex pigment.

CAMELLIA: You've been different recently... I can see you're changing, and that isn't bad! It's just, you seem more sad and I'm worried. We all are.

GOLD: They can't see that I'm more happy than I've been in a long time. The absence of inner turmoil creates room for self-reflection, and I am more free than I've been in a while-

CAMELLIA: Please, I've been really anxious recently-

GOLD: Everything is good now. I know who I am-

CAMELLIA: And I need you here-

GOLD: I am a darkening blue, deep-

CAMELLIA: I don't feel that support anymore-

GOLD: And voluminous like the ocean depths-

CAMELLIA: Where did it go? What we had before?

GOLD: I am happier now. I no longer need to be clingy. It's a good thing.

CAMELLIA: Don't leave me...

[Music cuts out suddenly, and dance ends]

CAMELLIA: Please.

GOLD: They don't need me, they never did. I'm good. I've been doing the right thing. Some people see me in hot pink, blistering and fun and impossibly bright. Some people see me in turquoise, a calming, ever-changing current of bright waves. But I see myself as the darker, deeper blue. I am changing, and acceptance will come. I am good.

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GOLD: In all honesty, we rely on each other. For love, for support. Is one truly powerful when they don't need anyone else? Or is it when they accept that love given to them? What is the truth? I don't know. I'm not sure.

[Bird Song Music begins]

INNER GOLD 1: The birds will sing in the morning like they are decorating the rising sun with the world they see around them, all blooming in life and awakening. And the wind will capture the memories of time long ago, and the wind will keep going. Time, and place. Is what I'm doing right? Will

everything I've worked on just pass me by? Is it just a pattern I've forgotten? Where is the line drawn?

[Music Ends]

GOLD: Be logical. Think. Just think.

INNER GOLD 2: I must help others. And I must be there for them. But I can't sacrifice my own happiness, I am a priority. I have to be a priority...and here we are. We want more and more. I don't think I'll ever feel satisfied with any certain amount of change within me. I will keep asking for more. But she has been there.

GOLD: I'm sorry.

CAMELLIA: Hey don't worry about it. Everything's good now, right?

INNER GOLD 1&2&3: We dance with our eyes. The stars in them direct us to what message we are saying to the other. It's magical, this wordless communication. She thinks it's silly. It's been a while, a lot of struggles, and we are still here.

GOLD: Our friendship's been a good one? It will continue to be. We discover ourselves during this time, it's when we grow and discover the world. It's us preparing for the world ahead. We become, we create, we mistake, we learn, we fly, we crumble, and we figure out what we need. Some of us may find our work ethic is enhanced, some of may find ourselves not caring. But is there a dream that can be obtained? I think so.

CAMELLIA: Just the two of us here. What makes a friendship persevere? What makes it last where a relationship cannot? Is it the context? Is it the part of us that can sacrifice and learn and keep going? We forget our pride, and we keep going. We put ourselves as them, we imagine ourselves as them. Their pain becomes our pain, and we know when they need help. It's more than just a bond we want to keep, so we don't care how much pain we go through. It's an understanding that we need to accomplish more within us, it's knowing that through conflict we can still bend, buckle, break...and move on...together. It's hard to explain, I guess.

...

[Outro Music begins]

INNER GOLD 1: Sometimes, life is a rhythm that you can't grasp very well. It tosses and turns, and comes back again. Beauty and strength and appearance and being kind, they are all subjective really. We can twist and mould ourselves

to fit the definition that we most agree with, but in the end, we can only be who we are. We can only function as ourselves, and usually we don't fit the mould. And that's okay. I've learned that that's okay. It is always just acceptance. That's all there really is. I've learned that that is the purest form of beauty. And maybe people see that in a flower.

[Outro Music fades out with the lights fading]