

SPIT IT OUT, MARGOT!

Written by

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EXT. HOLAVER HIGH SCHOOL QUAD - DAY

Teachers and students eat lunch in groups. We land on one circle of students talking. On the outskirts is MARGOT (16), a fragile junior with a stutter. The odd one out.

LINCOLN

I got into Mrs. Rich's Drawing 2 class.

PENELOPE

I'm gonna focus on sculpture this year. Piss off, Lincoln.

JANICE

Margot, what elective are you in?

Margot freezes. Her friends fall silent, watching, waiting. She looks down at her schedule. The dreaded "Speech Therapy."

MARGOT

I have to take s-s-s--

As she stutters, her face convulses and eyes squint. The bell rings. The students look around. Some dart off.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

Speech.

But no one is paying attention. A musical overture begins.

SUPERIMPOSE: Spit It Out, Margot!

INT. SPEECH THERAPY CLASS - DAY

Margot peaks in. In a circle of desks sit three nervous students: GRACE, HAMPUS, and JACLYN. A teacher hands out two WORKSHEETS to each kid, their back toward Margot.

The teacher *turns around*. They are a majestic creature, RAZ (late 30s, tall), wearing a green blazer, plaid pants, and square glasses. A RING OF KEYS is hooked to their belt loop.

Behind them on the whiteboard it reads, "Just call me Raz. Pronouns: They/Them," surrounded by drawings of planets. Margot stares at them, maybe for a bit too long.

RAZ

Take a seat. You're right on time.

On her way to her desk, Margot steps on a green tile, producing a TUBA note. Grace blows a bubble.

Hampus taps his pen. Jaclyn takes out her folder. The fan whirs. Hampus introduces himself. His "s's" sound like "th's."

HAMPUS

I'm Hampusth Horne. "There wasth a sthtar danthed, and under that wath I born." Much Ado About Nothing.

POP! TAP! ZIP! SCUFFLE! WHIR! Jaclyn's speech is too fast.

JACLYN

My name is Jaclyn I don't really have a speech *issue* just here because my mum said I talktoomuch so "no boy will ever want you."

Grace is stoic, dressed in all black. She has a unique voice.

GRACE

People call me The Horse Girl.

It's Margot's turn. She opens her mouth. No words come out.

RAZ

What is your name?

Margot tries to form a sound. Nothing. Raz watches, patient. Looking into Raz's eyes, Margot gets the courage to speak.

MARGOT

I'm Mmmmmargot.

RAZ

Very nice to meet you, Margot.

Margot blushes.

RAZ (CONT'D)

Now, on your desk is a worksheet with some speech techniques. And...drum roll please!

They give Raz a drum roll. Raz holds up a talent show flyer.

RAZ (CONT'D)

I'm starting an end-of-the-year talent show! I encourage y'all to PERFORM!

The only person even remotely excited about this is Hampus. Margot looks at the flyer like it carries a disease.

RAZ (CONT'D)
 Speech class isn't just about fluency. Whether you speak any differently by the end of the year than you do on this first day, in here we are going to learn how to *own our voices*.

In Margot's eyes, Raz is glowing.

INT. MARGOT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Margot's room is spotless except for a journal and paints on her desk, and some of her artwork on the walls. Margot is at her mirror with the techniques worksheet.

The worksheet reads: "Try this sentence: 'There is something at the tip of my tongue' *using C) pantomime speech*." Margot mouths the first words.

MARGOT
 (mouthing)
 There's something at the tip of my tongue.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
 (speaking)
 There's something at the t-t-tip...

Ugh. The next suggestion: "Try D) *singing*." Margot laughs. But she tries it, and Song #1 begins.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
There's something, something at the tip of my tongue. I am singing, singing, and I think my stutter is gone.

INT. DREAM STATE - NIGHT

Margot's bed has turned into a rocket ship. Raz is inside, wearing a space suit. Beyond them is a dusty moon surface.

MARGOT
No more false starts, no sounds caught in a web of tongue tie. I have spent my life quiet, living on stand-by!

Astronaut Margot follows Raz as they dance around the moon.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

And there's something, something
like a ghost in my chest-it-it-
It is floating, floating, maybe I'm
just congested. But really it's
something, a word I am trying to
reach. Like looking--no--WANTING!

The rocket ship blasts off and Margot falls down.

INT. MARGOT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

She lands back on her bed and looks up at the ceiling.

MARGOT

D'you believe I can sing?!

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Humming, Margot struggles to open her locker. She bangs the lock against the locker, frustrated. SYLVESTER and his posse but in. He puts his hand on top of Margot's, on the lock.

SYLVESTER

It's D-D-D-DUCK LIPS! Let me open
it for you. Just tell me the c-c-c-
combination!

Margot tries to speak, but she is frozen in place.

The posse laughs, echoing Sylvester with fake, exaggerated stuttering. Students gather around. Margot might sink right into the floor, when a loud voice interrupts. It's Raz.

RAZ

Let's keep the theater games to
drama class, shall we?

Everyone falls quiet. Seeing a teacher, the bullies turn away. Margot looks up at Raz. A fucking superhero.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

A) INT. SPEECH CLASS - DAY - Raz is leading the class in a speech exercise. The whiteboard is covered with silly drawings of different characters.

RAZ

The saltiest sailor this side of
the seaport stirs swiftly her
spiderfish stew.

Margot imagines the tongue twisters in song. Raz points to another character on the board. Song #2 begins.

RAZ (CONT'D)

**The assassin assesses his personal
issues and lists out his recent
transgressions. He sits in a
basement outside Mississippi just
after the '08 recession.**

GRACE

His sash is too sissy-ish.

JACLYN

His hat is just hideous!

RAZ

**It's senseless, ridiculous, and
wrong. Take it slow! Ssshhssshh...**

STUDENTS EXCEPT MARGOT

Ss, shh, ss, shh...

Margot's eyes dart around, watching. She can't keep up.

B) INT. MARGOT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - Margot struggles through tongue twisters in her room, dressed up as Raz. She twirls her KEYS on her finger, practicing easy onset in the mirror.

MARGOT

**Ss-shh-ss-shh...sitting...out-side-
M-m-m-miss-i-ssi-ppi...sss...shhhh.**

C) EXT. HALLWAY - DAY - The class is putting up talent show flyers. They pass materials down in an assembly line.

RAZ

**It's just a sound that you make
with your mouth!**

JACLYN

**Like doing your makeup and shopping
it out!**

HAMPUS

Like eating or reading...

RAZ

It's daunting, no doubt.

Margot looks at Raz, a talent show flyer in her hands. She joins in for the first time.

MARGOT
Like wanting...

RAZ
Wanting! Margot, very good!

D) INT. MARGOT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - Margot pins the talent show poster to her wall.

MARGOT
Wanting...

E) INT. SPEECH CLASS - DAY - Halloween. The floor is covered with candy bars and word & letter cards. The students' facial expressions match the Jack O' Lanterns they are carving. Margot stares at her blank, faceless pumpkin, then at Raz.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Wanting to... wanting t-t-to---

Raz steps in to help her.

RAZ
See just what you're thinking
spelled out on the floor.

RAZ, HAMPUS, JACLYN, GRACE
Ease into the sound you're
searching for!

MARGOT
Trust the phrase will arrive, trust
my tongue. Can you guess my
costume?

RAZ
Are you a bug?

MARGOT
No-- I'm a pppplanet.

F) INT. MARGOT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - She paints in her journal.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
D'ya see me seeing you, I have to
let you know.

We see that she has been painting Raz. She looks up, notices the talent show poster by her mirror. She gets an idea.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
I will tell you at the talent show!

G) INT. MARGOT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - Margot slides fresh gingerbread cookies off a tray into a gift-wrapped box.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
There's something, it's this
feeling I can't shake. It makes me--

Cookies plop in the box. Powdered sugar PUFFS into her face.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
PROCRASTI-BAKE!

H) INT. SPEECH CLASS - DAY - It's the holidays. Margot gives Raz her gift-wrapped gingerbread cookies. As they do the tongue twisters, Raz hands out the cookies to the class.

STUDENTS AND RAZ
Cosmic kaleidoscopes carrying
quality colors in crystal
containers can communicate ecstasy,
capsize commotion and even for
expert complainers!

MARGOT
C-c-communicate questions!

RAZ
Like what's the connection?

Hampus takes a cookie. Margot watches, dejected.

HAMPUS
'Tween comets and clouds and the
stars.

Hampus is proud of himself. His lisp is less noticeable. Raz sits down next to Margot and works with her.

RAZ
Now try the word communicate, but
stay with the block.

MARGOT
C-c-c-c-

RAZ
Where do you feel it in your body?

Margot puts her hand over her heart, breathing deeply.

MARGOT
C-c-c-c-

I) INT. SPEECH CLASS - DAY - They paint talent show banners.

RAZ

It's just a sensation like anything else.

JACLYN

Such as goosebumps!

GRACE

Or sorrow.

HAMPUS

Or knowing thyself.

RAZ

Is it lead weight, or cartwheels?
How does it feel?

MARGOT

Like cartwheels!

RAZ

Just like cartwheels?

J) INT. SPEECH CLASS - DAY - Valentine's Day. The class is unwrapping chocolates. Grace plays a broom guitar. Margot walks to Raz at the board, holding something behind her back.

MARGOT

I really like your drawings, d'you
know I draw too? In my journal,
I've been painting--

Raz turns to the rest of the class, cutting Margot off.

RAZ

Who sees she sounds lovely? Take
your time. Your voice is beautiful.

Margot gives Raz a giant heart valentine, but Raz interrupts.

MARGOT

Will you be m-m-m--

RAZ (CONT'D)

Be mindful of the breath!

Jaclyn deep-throats a candy bar.

STUDENTS

Long and deep!

K) INT. SPEECH CLASS - DAY - Hampus prom-poses to Margot by pulling a stuffed bunny out of a top hat. The bunny holds a "Prom?" sign. Margot appears to be looking at Hampus.

MARGOT

Since we met...

But she is really gazing at Raz across the room, encouraging and warm.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
There's no shame.

L) EXT. HALLWAY - DAY - Grace and Jaclyn tack the talent show sign-up sheet to the wall, harmonizing.

GRACE & JACLYN
The sign-up sheet!

The sheet fills with names. Margot signs up in the last slot.

MARGOT
It's today!

END OF MONTAGE.

EXT. HOLAUVER HIGH SCHOOL QUAD - BACKSTAGE WINGS - DAY

It is the day of the talent show. The audience is packed with students, teachers, and families. Raz is on stage at the microphone. Margot waits in the wings, watching them.

MARGOT
You will hear me speak.

End of Song #2.

RAZ
 Ladies, gentlemen, friends beyond
 the binary...our last act! Give it
 up for *Margot*!

The crowd roars. Margot moves to go on stage, but she abruptly stops and turns back. Nope! Jk. Hah. Hah.

Raz notices and exits into the wing to talk to her.

RAZ (CONT'D)
 Are you alright?

Margot is panicked, talking fast, stumbling through...

MARGOT
 I can't do it. I only s-s-s-signed
 up because I wanted to t-t-tell you
 how I feel. You and I, we're the s-
 s-same--

Raz puts their hands on Margot's shoulders.

RAZ

Margot. Put it all on the stage.
I'll be right here, watching.

This is her chance. *Raz will be watching!* Margot takes a moment, then walks out onto the stage.

EXT. HOLAVER HIGH SCHOOL QUAD - STAGE - DAY

A hushed crowd. Margot moves to the mic, glancing at Raz out of the corner of her eye.

MARGOT

There's s-s-something I've been
wwwanting to s-s-s-

SYLVESTER

Spit it out, Margot!

Margot hardens, takes a breath, and tries...singing! Song #3.

MARGOT

There's something, something I've
been wanting to say. I feel frozen,
mistaken, need to get this out the
way. I thought it was nothing, I
thought it would come and go. But
now I'm out in the open, the words
tangled up in my throat!

Margot takes the mic off of the stand.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

You are more than just a teacher to
me. You're the violin playing the
melody.

The audience is floored. They crane their necks to see who she is singing to. Hampus, Jaclyn, and Grace (SPEECH STUDENTS) back Margot up, emerging from the audience.

MARGOT, SPEECH STUDENTS

Your musical notes are an alphabet,
and the words can spell anything.

MARGOT

When I'm alone, I'm holding my
breath. But with you, I want to
sing!

Hampus, Jaclyn, and Grace rally the talent show performers. They all dance and sing along with Margot.

MARGOT, SPEECH STUDENTS, PERFORMERS
 With you, I want to sing! Is my
 heart the only one that's doing
 cartwheels?

A group of skater boys do some backflips and cartwheels.

MARGOT, SPEECH STUDENTS, PERFORMERS
 (CONT'D)
 I need an answer now, am I upside
 down?

MARGOT
 Raz, how do you feel?

MARGOT, SPEECH STUDENTS, PERFORMERS
 Raz, how do you feel?

Raz emerges from the wings and walks onto the stage. Cheers.

RAZ
 Margot. God, no. I don't see you
 that way. This is not appropriate.
 Also-- I have a fiancé.

In the audience, Raz's FIANCÉ pops up and waves awkwardly.
 She's not who you would expect. Margot is devastated. She
 moves to run off the stage, when the bully yells.

SYLVESTER
 D-D-D-DUCK LIPS! Epic fail!

Margot stops. Slowly, she turns back to the microphone.

MARGOT
 That's not my name! I'm not s-s-
special or *shy* or *stupid* or s-slow.
 I'm j-j-j-just me. I'm Margot.

Claps and shouts from the audience. The bullies are in shock.

RAZ
 And you are thoughtful, articulate.
 I'm proud of you. Do you know that
 it's your voice? You've owned it,
 too!

MARGOT
 I found the words.

Raz walks toward Margot as they sing together. The rest of
 the students join, their voices harmonizing as they dance.

STUDENTS AND RAZ
You found the words.

MARGOT
I couldn't have seen...

STUDENTS AND RAZ
You couldn't have seen.

MARGOT
You don't love me?

RAZ
I don't love you.

Margot and Raz end up center stage. Students and teachers from the audience join them on stage, backing them up.

MARGOT
But I'll keep loving anyway!

STUDENTS, MARGOT, AND RAZ
To fly, to soar with the wings of
the birds. To speak up, to be
heard, to spit out the words! To
want out, to stay in.

MARGOT
To lean into what I believe in!

STUDENTS AND RAZ
To lean into what you believe in.

MARGOT
To communicate what I believe in.

STUDENTS AND RAZ
To communicate what you believe in.

STUDENTS, MARGOT, AND RAZ
So I'll keep loving anyway.

MARGOT
And I'll say what I
want.....t-t-t-to say.

Everybody cheers. Hampus, Jaclyn, and Grace are beaming. Margot glances at Raz. They are so proud.