

Yellow Flesh / Alabaster Rose

Part One of:

An American Family Trilogy

written

by

Erik Patterson

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

ELLIOT, a man in his early thirties. Sometimes known as Tom.

LITTLE B, his sister, fifteen. She thinks she's Bjork, the pop singer.

BECKY, a woman in her early thirties. Sometimes known as Hunter.

ROSE, her daughter, fifteen

MOM, a mother in her fifties. Named Rose Silverstein.

JUSTIN, a hustler in his late twenties to thirties

BROOKE/KRISTEN, a phone-sex operator in her twenties to thirties

MIKE, a hustler in his forties? fifties?

JESS STEARN, a doctor in his fifties

FATHER, a voice, a memory (played by the same actor who plays Mike)

ACT ONE

SCENE ON

JUSTIN is giving ELLIOT head.

JESS STEARN stands away from the action, speaking to the audience. (Referring to Elliot and Justin as if they were slides in a presentation.)

JESS STEARN

“The outward and visible signs of homosexuality, as these are worn by a small and to many a somewhat offensive segment of those so conditioned, have caused the public to view the homosexual as an effeminate individual whose every gesture and mannerism clamors for attention.”

JUSTIN

Your cum tastes like candy.

ELLIOT

Thanks.

(LIGHTS OUT on Elliot and Justin.)

JESS STEARN

“It is by this stereotype of the homosexual—the effusive, preening, smirking exhibitionist—that the man in the street mistakenly judges all homosexuals.”

(LIGHTS UP on Elliot and Justin.)

JUSTIN

Did anyone ever tell you that?

ELLIOT

No.

JUSTIN

I’m gonna fuck you now.

ELLIOT

Okay.

JUSTIN

You want a popper?

(LIGHTS OUT on Elliot and Justin.)

JESS STEARN

“These are the logical consequences of society’s harsh dealing with those whose behavior fails to conform to the standards that society has unsuccessfully attempted to enforce.”

(In darkness, Elliot moans.)

JESS STEARN

“It has become abundantly clear that society’s notion of the homosexual’s position is in need of a great deal of revision.”

(Quick flash of LIGHTS UP on Elliot—bent over at a right angle—Justin fucking him.)

(LIGHTS OUT on them.)

JESS STEARN

“But it’s always easy to single out those whose conduct is troublesome.”

(LIGHTS UP on Elliot and Justin kissing. Elliot pushes Justin away from him.)

ELLIOT

Stop.

JUSTIN

What?

ELLIOT

I can’t buy you any more.

JUSTIN

Why not?

ELLIOT

Because I’m beginning to *buy you*.

(LIGHTS OUT on Elliot and Justin.)

JESS STEARN

“It’s easy for us to pass laws against what they do. What’s difficult is to try to understand them and their peculiar habits.”

(LIGHTS UP on Elliot and Justin, in bed.)

(There is a KNOCK at the door—which Justin does not hear.)

ELLIOT

Who is it?

FATHER’S VOICE

It’s your father.

ELLIOT

What do you want?

FATHER’S VOICE

Your mother kicked me out of bed, and someone needs a spanking.

(BLACKOUT on Elliot.)

JESS STEARN

“It is necessary to point out that there are all kinds of homosexuals.”

(LIGHTS UP on Elliot and Justin. Justin and Elliot are making out throughout the rest of this section—undressing, nipple-play, etc—.)

ELLIOT

I want—

JUSTIN

You want me again?

ELLIOT

Yeah, just—

JUSTIN

What is it?

JESS STEARN

“Therefore, if society is to solve what is called the problem of homosexuality,”

ELLIOT

This is difficult for me to say...

JESS STEARN

“then it is first necessary to become accurately informed as to the causes and conditions thereof.”

ELLIOT

I’m afraid that you’ll—*[a moan] ooooh*—judge me.

JESS STEARN

“I will give you an objective presentation of the behavior of a little-understood and much-abused group.”

ELLIOT

Do you have any—?

JESS STEARN

“It is not necessary—“

ELLIOT

No, let me—

JESS STEARN

“It is not necessary for you—”

ELLIOT

Fantasies—

JESS STEARN

“—for you to agree”

ELLIOT

Do you have any?

JESS STEARN

“with what I have to say.”

JUSTIN

Like what?

ELLIOT

I want you to—

JESS STEARN

“To expect an early solution tomorrow morning”

ELLIOT
Will you pretend?

JESS STEARN
“tomorrow morning at nine o’clock”

ELLIOT
I want you to—

JESS STEARN
“Is a form of optimism best left to those who prefer to deceive themselves.”

ELLIOT
Will you pretend to be my father?

(Lights out on Elliot and Justin, their eyes locked.)

JESS STEARN
“Now let’s get to the heart of the matter.”

(LIGHTS OUT on Jess Stearn. Lights shift back to Elliot and Justin.)

SCENE TWO

We’re in Elliot’s bedroom. Elliot and Justin have just fucked. Elliot is sitting on the edge of his bed, putting his clothes on. Justin lies on the bed, not rushed.

ELLIOT
That was really, really good.

JUSTIN
Good.

ELLIOT
Yeah, thanks.

(An awkward moment. Is this it? Are we done? Why isn’t Justin getting dressed?)

ELLIOT
What’s your name?

JUSTIN

Justin.

ELLIOT

Do you want anything to drink? Anything to eat?

JUSTIN

I'm fine.

ELLIOT

I could make cookies.

JUSTIN

Chocolate chip?

ELLIOT

Sure.

JUSTIN

I like chocolate chip.

(Elliot exits. Justin lays there, looks up at the ceiling. A couple of beats, then Elliot comes back on with a glass of water and some paper-towels. He hands Justin the water.)

JUSTIN

Thanks.

ELLIOT

You've got some—

(motioning to Justin's stomach)

JUSTIN

Oh.

(Elliot wipes the cum off Justin's stomach and out of his belly button.)

JUSTIN:

Thanks.

(Beat.)

ELLIOT

Is your name really Justin?

No. JUSTIN

What is it? ELLIOT

Is your name really Tom? JUSTIN

It's Elliot. ELLIOT

Elliot. JUSTIN

What's your real name? ELLIOT

I don't use it. JUSTIN

But what is it? ELLIOT

(No response. They stare at each other for a moment. Elliot looks for a reply. Justin obviously isn't gonna give him one.)

You won't tell me? ELLIOT

No. JUSTIN

I told you mine. ELLIOT
(annoyed)

The world is filled with freaks. JUSTIN

Fine. ELLIOT

It's a rule I follow not to use my real name. JUSTIN

I get it. ELLIOT

Sorry if that bothers you. JUSTIN

You get a lot of freaks? ELLIOT

Yeah. JUSTIN

What does that mean, exactly? ELLIOT

Freak? JUSTIN

How do you define it? ELLIOT

I don't know. JUSTIN

Like, do you mean, emotional basket case? Or, like, circus carnny? ELLIOT

Emotional basket case. JUSTIN

Do you think I'm a freak? Is that why you— ELLIOT

Won't tell you my name? JUSTIN

Yeah. ELLIOT

I don't tell any of my clients my name. JUSTIN

So that's just a— ELLIOT

JUSTIN

(over-lapping)

That's just a rule I follow.

ELLIOT

—a rule you follow. Like you said.

JUSTIN

Right.

ELLIOT

Right. Okay, right, anyway, so, are you saying you do or you don't think I'm a freak?
You're saying you don't?

JUSTIN

I didn't say that.

ELLIOT

Then you do?

JUSTIN

The jury's still out.

ELLIOT

But which way is the jury leaning?

JUSTIN

Your need to know what I think of you puts you more on the freak side.

ELLIOT

Really? You think curiosity is freakish?

JUSTIN

A certain kind of curiosity.

ELLIOT

I *am* a freak.

JUSTIN

I thought so.

ELLIOT

So you can close the case.

JUSTIN

Emotional or circus?

ELLIOT

I should check on the cookies.

JUSTIN

Okay.

(Elliot exits. Justin picks up a book off the bed stand) (some lurid-sounding title)(maybe something new every night). (He leafs through it for a moment. Elliot re-enters.)

ELLIOT

Another minute or two.

JUSTIN

Nice book.

ELLIOT

Oh.

JUSTIN

Light reading? Or inspiration?

ELLIOT

It's just a book.

JUSTIN

You mean, mind my own business?

ELLIOT

Do you wanna play a game?

JUSTIN

What kind of game?

ELLIOT

A book game.

JUSTIN

Sure.

ELLIOT

Okay. I'm thinking something in my head. It's a rule. Do you agree to abide by the rule that I have in my head?

JUSTIN
What is it?

ELLIOT
I can't tell you. You have to agree.

JUSTIN
Sure.

ELLIOT
Good. Okay, now. Tell me when to stop.

(Elliot begins flipping through pages in the book.)

JUSTIN
Stop.

(Elliot stops. He holds the book open to the pages he's stopped on.)

ELLIOT
Tell me when to stop.

(Elliot alternates between the left page and right page.)

JUSTIN
Stop.

(Elliot stops. He moves his finger up and down that page.)

ELLIOT
One more time.

JUSTIN
Stop.

(Elliot stops.)

ELLIOT
Okay. So. The rule I had in my head was that whatever sentence you landed on would be our sexual fortune for the rest of the evening.

JUSTIN
Okay.

ELLIOT
Sometimes it works better than others.

JUSTIN
Read it.

ELLIOT
We might have to interpret.

JUSTIN
Just read it.

ELLIOT
(Reads whatever sentence his finger has landed on. He should read the entire sentence. If it's a long one, he might first say "It's a long one." The sentence he reads should not be planned. His finger will, presumably, land on a new sentence every night. Feel free to improvise a response. If the sentence Elliot reads doesn't make any sense, the following dialogue could be said: "JUSTIN: That doesn't make sense. ELLIOT: Sometimes it works better than others. JUSTIN: You warned me. ELLIOT: This is one of those times that didn't work as well I guess." If the sentence Elliot reads is very sexual, the following dialogue could be said: "JUSTIN: Well. ELLIOT: So that's our fortune. JUSTIN: I guess. ELLIOT: For tonight. JUSTIN: If you say so. ELLIOT: Yeah." Have a moment. Say what you want. In any case, the dialogue about the sentence should end with an awkward pause. After a moment:)

JUSTIN
Okay, so. Let's get to it.

ELLIOT
Do you smell that?

JUSTIN
What?

ELLIOT
The cookies are burning.

JUSTIN
Forget the cookies. Take your clothes off.

ELLIOT
I have more dough.

JUSTIN
I thought I'd give you the rest of the night for free.

Cookie dough. ELLIOT

I know what you meant. JUSTIN

You're off the clock? ELLIOT

Yeah. JUSTIN

You shouldn't do that. ELLIOT

Why not? JUSTIN

Because you'll get me. ELLIOT

I already got you. JUSTIN

Hooked. ELLIOT

You'd rather pay? JUSTIN

I just think it's clever. ELLIOT

Clever. JUSTIN

Yeah. ELLIOT

So. JUSTIN

Do you— ELLIOT

Huh? JUSTIN

Always? ELLIOT

What? JUSTIN

Do that? ELLIOT

If I like them. JUSTIN

I see. ELLIOT

Do you? JUSTIN

I understand. ELLIOT

And? JUSTIN

I want it. ELLIOT

Free? JUSTIN

Yeah. Just— ELLIOT

What? JUSTIN

ELLIOT
Make me forget I paid for it the first time.

(As Elliot goes in for a kiss, LIGHTS OUT.)

SCENE THREE

Elliot is kneeling over a toilet, throwing up.

LITTLE B enters.

LITTLE B

Why are you throwing up?

ELLIOT

None of your business.

LITTLE B

“I identify with polar bears.”

ELLIOT

Will you shut up?

LITTLE B

“They’re very cuddly and cute and quite calm—“

ELLIOT

I’m not in the mood.

LITTLE B

“but if they meet you they can be very strong. They come to Iceland very rarely, once every ten years, floating on icebergs.”

(She looks at Elliot, expectantly.)

ELLIOT

Why can’t you be normal for once?

LITTLE B

Why are you throwing up?

ELLIOT

I asked you first.

(LITTLE B doesn’t respond.)

ELLIOT

Hand me my toothbrush.

(She does. He starts brushing. She takes her brush out and starts brushing too. Mimicking him out of the corner of her eyes. They both spit into the sink.)

Who was he? LITTLE B

Who was who? ELLIOT

That man. LITTLE B

I thought you were asleep. ELLIOT

No. LITTLE B

Sorry. ELLIOT

Can I have a cookie? LITTLE B

Sure. ELLIOT

The ones you made are burnt. LITTLE B

When mom comes by tomorrow, don't tell her there was a man here. ELLIOT

Will you make some cookies that aren't burnt? LITTLE B

And don't tell her I threw up. ELLIOT

Will you? LITTLE B

What are you telling mom? ELLIOT

LITTLE B

There was no man, you didn't throw up.

ELLIOT

Okay, I'll make you cookies.

LITTLE B

Chocolate chip?

ELLIOT

You know you're gonna have to brush your teeth again?

(Little B nods.)

ELLIOT

Chocolate chip.

(Lights shift.)

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