

Gil and Ki in Couples Therapy

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The office is tidy and uncluttered; tasteful and well lighted. The decor is mid-century modern with an occasional treasure from antiquity featured here and there: tiny bronze and terra cotta Nabatean oil lamps, Sumerian fetishes, facsimiles of baked clay tablets bearing cuneiform script. Other objects de vertu rest on rosewood bases or under glass on the desk and in bookcases. Except for a glorious Persian rug, ruby, topaz, lapis and carnelian in hue, the color scheme is muted and neutral. Dr. Esther Aalyah sits at her desk. She has a manila folder in front of her. There are colored tags earmarking documents: points of reference, and points of interest. She flips through the pages; makes notes; the occasional "um" or "hmm" escapes her lips. She glances at her watch, a clock chimes three times. She looks up towards the door. There's a discrete knock.

"Come."

A young man sticks his head into the room.

"Your three o'clock is here."

"Thank-you, Jerold. Send them in, please."

Jerold softly closes the door, then returns after a moment. Esther stands and walks across the room. Two strikingly handsome, very brawny, very well-dressed men are shown in. Their tawny complexions make their green eyes flash: striking beacons of jade in the one reflects crystalline aquamarine in the other. Glistening black hair and perfectly clipped Van Goughs, frame angular faces. Each man has a dark and lustrous queue tied back at the nape. One man's hair has been braided into narrow plaits, the other's is straight and smooth. Esther unconsciously touches a stray lock of her own glowing auburn hair. She wishes she'd freshened her lipstick. She extends her hand.

"Gil and Ki, so good to see you again."

The men could be brothers, twins, almost.

"Prompt as always! Thank-you."

She warmly clasps each man's hand in turn: their grips are firm, but gentle. She gestures for them to enter. The larger of the two sweeps his gaze around the room. He sees something in a bookcase and crosses to pick up a small clay tablet. Gil hefts the object, fumbles it, but deftly catches the tablet before it can hit the floor. Esther takes the tablet and places it back on the shelf.

"Please, have a seat. Get comfortable."

Gil moves towards a small, fragile looking French settee. His companion, Ki, moves to intercept his friend before he can sit on the delicate antique.

"Not there."

"Why not?"

Ky's response is a bit hesitant, cautious, even.

"Well, it's a bit fragile, Gil."

"Is that a crack?"

"Gil..."

"Some kinda joke?"

"Gil!"

"I got big bones, awright?!"

"OK, OK!"

"I'm a big guy."

"Relax, Gil."

"S'all."

Esther comes close and pats the man on his right bicep: his big, hard-as-a-rock bicep. In her mind, she wants to blurt out "WOW!" She wants to ask if he's smuggling geodes in there.

What she says is:

"It's OK, Mr. Gamesh."

"I'm just sayin'"

Gil points to the desk chair.

"That OK? Enough steel in that one?"

"That's fine, Gil."

Gil glances down to where Dr. Aalya's hand has not yet released his arm and has, in fact, begun caressing, apparently of its own accord, Gil's impressive guns. He looks at the doctor. She looks down at her suddenly autonomous hand.

"Sorry," she mumbles.

With a force of will, she releases Gil's arm. Gil smirks as he moves towards the desk. He sits and slouches in the high-backed, office chair. He starts to swivel, left then right, then left, then right. The chair squeaks with each swivel. Squeak, SQUEAK... S..Q...U...E...A...K... Ki glares at his friend. Gil stops swiveling and starts riffling a pad of post-it notes like a deck of cards. "Stop fidgeting!"

Gull tosses the post-its and bumps a lamp with his elbow; as he reaches to catch the lamp he tips a jar of pens.

"I swear to the gods, Gil! Sorry doctor. He's like a bull in a china shop."

"No harm done, Mr..... uh...."

"Ki. Short for 'Enkidu.'"

"Ki, yes."

Esther pauses and distractedly touches a topaz pendant nestled at the base of her throat. She then retrieves a pad of paper and the folder from the desk and takes a seat opposite Gil. "So,

what we're going to do in this session is get acquainted, share a little background. From that we'll move on to what's called Cognitive Behavior Therapy."

"Ki, do you want to start?"

"Sure."

Ki sits and waits expectantly.

"Now what?"

"Now we're going to talk, Ki."

"What about?"

"I'd like to start with your childhood. Is that OK?"

S...Q...U...E...A...K... They turn to Gil, who just shrugs. Ki resumes. "I didn't have a childhood."

"Oh?"

"Nope."

"Tell me about your father."

"No father."

"Mother?"

"Nope"

S...Q...U...E...A...K.

"You were an orphan?"

"No. Not exactly."

"Family?"

"Nope."

"Brothers? Sisters?"

"Nope."

"So, who took care of you?"

"Gazelles."

From the desk, Gil lets out a snort. Ki glares at him.

"Pardon me?"

"I was raised by gazelles. (pause) On gazelle milk. (pause) From gazelles."

"...and you lived..."

"...on the veldt. Or savanna."

"I see."

...Savanna."

Esther makes a note.

"What did you do all day?"

"Ran."

"Just ran?"

"Yup. Away from lions, mostly."

“Uh huh.”

Another note.

“And you ate...?”

“Grass.”

“Oh! AH! So you’re a vegetarian?”

“Nope.”

“Vegan?”

“Nope.”

“I’m sorry... uh...?”

“Herbivore.”

“Herbivore?”

“Herbivore. Herbivores eat grass. I ate grass. Herbivore.”

“OK. Uh... Mr. Gamesh. Let’s...”

“Present!”

“Let’s...”

“Is all this talking really supposed to help?”

“Yes, Mr. Gamesh. It can allow the participants to gain new insights into...”

“Where I come from, my city, I’d just consult a seer...”

Esther makes a note.

“...or maybe visit a prostitute. Usually it's a prostitute.”

Kyi interjects.

“That's his answer for everything, 'send in a whore.'”

“I said 'prostitute.' There’s a difference!”

Esther makes a long note. It’s an intricate note. This one appears to have diagrams.

“Or run to mama. If you have a bad dream. Tell her about that!”

“Hey! My mom’s good with dreams!”

“Mommeee. Whaaaaaa!”

“You leave my moms out of this!”

“That ancient heifer?”

“My mother is a goddess!”

“She's a cow!”

Gil leaps up from the desk and stomps to where Ki is sitting. Ki stands, the two men are toe to toe, nose to nose. Gil shoves Ki.

“You take that back!”

Ki shoves Gil.

“Make me!”

“I’ll make you, awright!”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah!”

“YEAH?!”

“YEAH!”

Gil grabs Ki and unsuccessfully tries for a head-lock. The two men begin to grapple, each taking, then losing the advantage. Expensive shirts rip, the two men, now bare to the waist, fall and thrash on the floor. Esther sighs and drops her pad. She stands on her desk in an effort to get out of harm’s way. Through clenched teeth, the men grunt out taunts:

“Take it back!”

“Never!”

“Grass Eater!”

“Despot!”

“Wild man!”

“Not. (ungh) Quite. (ungh) Divine!”

“Gazelle. (uh!) Sucker!”

At first, Gil is in control, then in a deft move, Ki is in charge and drops Gil to the floor. First Ki is on top, then Gil, then Ki. At last Gil flips Ki to his stomach and pins his right arm behind his back. With his other hand, Gil presses Ki’s face into the nap of the wool carpet. “You give?”

“Mooooooooo!”

“Knock it off!”

Gil pulls up on Ki’s arm.

“Ouch! Damn!”

“Say it!”

Gil tugs again.

“Ngaaaah! OK, I give!”

“What?”

“GIVE! I GIVE!”

“And?”

“Come on, man! Not in front of the shrink!”

“Say it!”

“Man!”

Ky mumbles something into the carpet.

“I can’t heeere you!”

“I love you!”

“Louder!”

“I LOVE YOU!”

Gil releases Ki. He stands dusts himself off and offers his hand. Ki takes Gil’s hand and allows Gil to help him to his feet. They stand facing each other, Gil still gripping Ki’s hand pulls his friend closer. Their eyes meet, sky-blue and sea-green. Ki reaches up and lightly touches Gil’s cheek.

They embrace, quickly. When Gil speaks, his voice is low, husky. There's a glint in his eye. "You thinking what I'm thinking."

Ki grins a half smile. A Harrison Ford smile.

"I think I'm thinking what you're thinking."

In unison, the men "high five" and shout out:

"ROAD TRIP!"

Gilgamesh reaches into his wallet and grabs a wad of hundred dollar bills, drops them on the desk at Esther's feet.

"For the damage. And the session. See you in two weeks?"

Esther slowly nods. The Gilgamesh and Enkidu exit the office. From her perch on top of the desk Dr. Aalyah surveys the wreck of her office. She sighs...

"Well that went well."

After a moment she calls out:

"Jerold? A little help!"