

TRUTH EATER

Written by

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Script for animation.

EXT. FOREST

The woods are dark and treacherous. Strange, animal cries rise through the silence. Eyes blink open in the shadows and narrow as their gazes turn upward towards SAHRIA MARRON, who's crouched in a tree. She's dressed simply in brown, and she has a very unassuming sword at the ready. On second glance, the blade is very sharp. She's staring down towards a GIANT FROG.

The frog is sitting, seemingly unaware of Sahria. It's vocal sac expands into a huge bubble. Sahria is a little grossed out. With the frog's rumbling croak, we are taken into...

INT. FROG'S STOMACH

MOURNER CROONEY sits in the large, hollow chamber of the frog's stomach. He's got glorious hair and dramatic clothes that are currently getting slightly singed by stomach acid. Through the holes in his clothes, barely visible but still there, is some strange red writing on the visible skin beneath the holes in his clothes.

He notices the viewer and gestures at his hole-y sleeve.

MOURNER

Don't worry, it's fine. Watch.

Mourner dips his finger in the acid. It sizzles on his finger, eroding it to the bone. Mourner shakes off the acid and his flesh re-forms.

MOURNER (CONT'D)

(not yay)

Yaaaay.

Mourner stares at his intact fingers.

MOURNER (CONT'D)

All according to plan.

The muscles of the frog's stomach pulse and contract. Behind Mourner's head, they spell out the word LIE. He turns around and reads it off the wall.

MOURNER (CONT'D)

She's out there right? Doing a sneak attack? I'd really hate it if I got eaten by a frog for nothing.

Beat.

MOURNER (CONT'D)
Don't worry about it. I'll figure
it out eventually. The truth shall
out, or whatever.

Mourner leans back against the stomach walls. The world
around him changes.

INT. THE WORLD OFFICE - BOSS'S OFFICE

TODD is wearing a 60's-style plaid suit. His hair is slicked
back, corporate chic. He seems younger and much happier.
Beside him sits a very nervous woman, her hair in 40s victory
rolls. This is JULIE CLEARY Across from them is THE BOSS.
She's sharp and severe in a pinstripe suit. Behind them, huge
glass windows show off a grey city skyline.

Words sprawl out in front of Todd. Six thousand years ago.

THE BOSS
I understand you've applied to the
utopia project.

TODD
Yes.

THE BOSS
Mr. Crooney, you've shown
exceptional talent in creature
development, terraforming, and
geological composition. You make
good worlds, real ones. That's a
hard skill to come by.

TODD
Thank you.

THE BOSS
The issue is, of course, you've
never built any people.

TODD
Yeah. I don't plan to build any.

THE BOSS
Oh I see. You're one of those.

TODD
What?

THE BOSS

Every year, I get one of you "the only utopia is a world untainted by humanity," idiots. It's less work when you don't have to worry about the things people do to your creation. The problem that you numbskulls can't seem to wrap your heads around, is that as beautifully constructed as your world is, without people to walk around it going "wow, this is a utopia!" Then it's not a utopia. It's just a mess of beautiful construction. The purpose of the utopia project is to find somewhere we can exist without the problems that exist on this world.

TODD

We know.

THE BOSS

You just said you wouldn't be making any people.

JULIE

Because *I* would be making the people.

THE BOSS

Really?

JULIE

Yes?

THE BOSS

A world-making team, eh? It's a bit unorthodox. Not unheard of, but... unorthodox.

TODD

Is that a no?

THE BOSS

Of course not. Let's see what the two of you can do.

Todd rests back in his seat. A set of whorls on his wooden chair becomes the frog, and suddenly we're back in.

EXT. FOREST

The leaves on the ground blow and rearrange to form the words: Present Day. The frog turns around as Sahria lets out a battle cry, she's jumping at him, sword poised to strike.

MOURNER (IN FROG STOMACH)
Oh, come on!

Sahria stops short.

SAHRIA
Mourner?

The frog flicks Sahria into a tree, hard.

MOURNER (IN FROG STOMACH)
Why would you announce your attack?
Just sneak attack him!

SAHRIA
I don't sneak.

She brandishes her sword and moves to attack the frog again

MOURNER (IN FROG STOMACH)
Clearly!

SAHRIA
You're alive?

MOURNER (IN FROG STOMACH)
I don't know why we have to keep
going over things that we're both
aware of.

SAHRIA
I just assumed you'd be a lot
more... digested right now.

MOURNER (IN FROG STOMACH)
I'm dense.

The wind blows by Sahria's head. It swirls into the word:

LIE.

SAHRIA
Don't worry Mourner, I'll get you
out of there.

Sahria fights quickly and without much flourish. The frog's main asset is that it's big.

It's not very fast, and Sahria is. She cuts it right in half, sword passing just above Mourner's head.

MOURNER

Am I glad to see you!

The frog's lower body spills out, acid disintegrating the patchy grass and dried leaves. Mourner takes in his ruined clothes. Mourner dusts off the fabric, and his clothes stitch themselves up again.

SAHRIA

You shouldn't waste magic.

MOURNER

Oh, trust me, I've got plenty stored up.

Beat.

Sahria surges forward to give Mourner a big hug. Mourner sends a helpless, panicked look at the viewer before giving Sahria's back a few tentative pats.

SAHRIA

I thought you were dead.

MOURNER

You know me, I'm not planning to die any time soon.

The bark of a tree darkens and cracks into the word: Lie. Mourner glares at the letters and they return to normal.

MOURNER (CONT'D)

Unlike you. What were you doing? Screaming, getting distracted.

Sahria pulls away.

SAHRIA

You can lecture me about being sneaky when we make camp. I can't lie, you knew that when you met me.

MOURNER

Stealth isn't lying.

SAHRIA

It is! And even if it wasn't, you're plenty stealthy, and you still got eaten by a giant frog.

MOURNER
 Hey, it's not like I wanted to get
 eaten by a frog.

The wind kicks up a cloud of dust in the shape of the word:
 Lie. It hangs in the air between the two of them for a
 moment.

SAHRIA
 What?

MOURNER
 Okay, that looks a lot worse than
 it is.

SAHRIA
 WHAT?

MOURNER
 Look, let's not get too caught up
 in things here.

SAHRIA
 You wanted to get eaten by that
 frog?

MOURNER
 Of course not!

Twigs fall from the trees and land on the ground: Lie.

SAHRIA
 Okay. Forget training, we're going
 to talk about this.

MOURNER
 That's not a good idea.

SAHRIA
 You're lying to me.

MOURNER
 Sahria, I can't stop you from
 knowing when I'm lying, but I don't
 have to tell you the truth. You
 can't make me.

Sahria's eyes narrow. When she speaks, her voice is not her
 own.

SAHRIA
LIE.

Beat.

MOURNER

What?

SAHRIA

I've got a sword and you don't. If I wanted to, I could make you tell me.

Beat.

MOURNER

You would do that?

Beat.

SAHRIA

No. I don't know. A minute ago, I was just happy that you're alive and now I'm just confused and it's all gone wrong.

MOURNER

We'll figure it out.

SAHRIA

I'm so tired.

MOURNER

Come on. Let's make camp.

Sahria starts clearing a path through the woods. Mourner lags behind so he can talk to us for a little bit.

MOURNER (CONT'D)

The mission. Do you know what the mission is? It's to kill me. The worldmaker. The people don't like their situation, so they're sending my death in the form of the world's most boring kid. Now, god knows I don't have a problem with dying. It's been three thousand miserable years on this stupid planet, and all I want to do is die here so I can go back to the World Office and try again. My problem is getting killed by that block of nothing.

SAHRIA

Hurry up!

Mourner begins to follow along.

MOURNER

She thinks sundown is bedtime. Her idea of a good time is organizing and reorganizing her knives by size, sharpness, and metal. I worked so hard to get eaten by that frog so that she could harden herself through battle. Maybe pick up some scars. A cool story. I hate her. I can't let myself go out like this. I want to die like a legend, not because I was bored to death.

As he speaks, the trees behind him rustle. They shape the words: LIE LIE LIE LIE LIE

MOURNER (CONT'D)

Still, there's something there. The way she threatened me? Maybe there's more promise there than I thought.

SAHRIA (O.S.)

We should be good to make camp for the night!

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Sahria and Mourner sit in silence around a fire. Sahria is organizing her knives by sharpness.

SAHRIA

So. What did you do before you were an adventure assistant?

MOURNER

I don't want to talk about that.

The smoke wreaths up in the air between them: LIE. Mourner shakes it away with his hand. Sahria raises an eyebrow.

SAHRIA

I won't pry.

MOURNER

I was... a sculptor.

He waits for the fire to contradict him. It doesn't. He sneaks a wry glance at the viewer.

SAHRIA

That's a drastic change.

MOURNER
You clearly needed help.

SAHRIA
From... a sculptor?

MOURNER
Sculptors are very helpful.

SAHRIA
Right.

MOURNER
What about you? Who were you before
you were prophesied to kill the
worldmaker?

SAHRIA
I've always just been myself. Even
at school, we knew about the
prophecy. And don't say that. We
don't know if we're going to kill
them.

MOURNER
What?

SAHRIA
There's no reason we can't talk
this through. They made the world,
they can fix it. Change magic,
change people!

MOURNER
No! You have to kill him!

SAHRIA
Why?

MOURNER
Because that's what the prophecy
said.

SAHRIA
The prophecy said I would make the
worldmaker kneel before me and end
the great deception. None of that
has to be killing them.

MOURNER
What if he doesn't let you talk?

SAHRIA

Then we come to blows. I'll kill them if I have to.

MOURNER

I see.

SAHRIA

Did you have anybody, before you decided to leave sculpture and come help me?

MOURNER

How about we stop asking questions, hm? It's past sundown, right? Long since time we hit the hay.

Sahria fixes Mourner with a searching look and he avoids looking back at her by poking at the fire.

INT. THE WORLD OFFICE - WORLD CREATION CENTER.

6000 years earlier, Todd puts the finishing touches on a little sculpture of the giant frog.

TODD

There, what do you think?

Julie looks up, surrounded by little wooden dolls.

JULIE

So cute! What are you calling it?

TODD

I don't know. It's just a big frog, isn't it? Giant frog? This is the giant frog.

JULIE

There's got to be more style to it than that, baby. This is our big shot at a world together! We should love every detail of it!

TODD

I don't know, I thought giant frog was pretty good.

Julie's face pinches a little. She's not un-pleased, but this rankles her a little.

JULIE
Yeah, okay. Giant frog!

TODD
What's going on in that mess?

JULIE
I'm working on these guys.

She holds up two figures. They look like Sahria and Mourner.

JULIE (CONT'D)
I'm calling her the truth eater.
She's like, this adventurer, and
she's on this quest to kill the
evil king. And he's like, her
mentor, except he's cool and sassy,
but wait, what's this? He *is* the
evil king-

TODD
Are you sure we want to live in a
world under an evil king?

JULIE
It wouldn't be for long! You need
an evil king so that they can be
defeated and give the nation
millennia of peace. In the grand
scheme of things, we'd be thousands
of years old at that point. Look, I
made us already.

Julie holds up two wooden dolls that look like her and Todd.

TODD
Oh would you look at that? You even
got my little hair swirl.

He looks over at the discarded Sahria and Mourner dolls.

TODD (CONT'D)
Why's she called the truth eater?

JULIE
You know how we were saying this
world should have magic? So she's
got- okay look at this.

Julie places the Sahria doll on a large map on the wall. The
map seems to stretch and absorb it.

JULIE (CONT'D)
Now say something that's not true.

TODD
Um... The sky is green.

The room shakes and Todd's tool holder falls onto the ground.
The tool within have fallen out to spell the word: Lie.

TODD (CONT'D)
Woah.

JULIE
Right? So, I'm having it be that
whenever anyone lies, it gives off
magic energy. Lies kind of bounce
off of her. Her body can't take in
lie energy, just the truth.

TODD
Truth eater.

JULIE
Truth eater.

Julie's phone beeps.

JULIE (CONT'D)
Oh, that's lunch. I'll be right
back.

TODD
Okay. Love you.

JULIE
Love you too.

Julie gives Todd a quick kiss on the cheek and then leaves.

Todd starts to walk back to his table and trips. In front of
him, the dolls have fallen in a particular pattern. LIE.

Todd stares at the door through which Julie just left. Very
slowly, he stands up, and he gently removes the Sahria doll
from the wall.

EXT. FOREST

6000 years later, Mourner wakes up by the remains of last
night's fire.

MOURNER
Mmh, Sahria are you up?

No response.

MOURNER (CONT'D)

Sahria?

Nothing

MOURNER (CONT'D)

If I'd known how much a late night
made you sleep in, I'd have let you
get out your bedroll at sundown.

Mourner realizes that Sahria's pack, knives, and in fact any
trace of her at all is gone.

MOURNER (CONT'D)

No. No, no, no!

Mourner springs to his feet, and with a wave of his hand, his
bedroll and the fire site disappear. He runs off into the
woods.

MOURNER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Sahria? Sahria!

Mourner looks into the shadows of the woods, and sees the
many eyes in them open up. He holds his hand to the shadows
and beckons the creatures forward.

Swarms of birds and insects fly out of the shadows. A huge,
grotesque purple reindeer stumbles out of the shadows,
wilting flowers growing out of its horns. Many of the eyes
are revealed to belong to the same creature, a shifting
tangle of fur and feathers and dozens of eyes.

It's lost in the commotion, but a single pair of eyes remains
in the shadows and recedes into the background instead of
joining the animals. It's hardly noticeable. If the audience
is only paying attention to the frenzy of animals like
Mourner, they might even miss it.

MOURNER (CONT'D)

Go, find her.

The animals begin to scatter off in different directions
before all converging near Mourner again. Sahria not in tow.

MOURNER (CONT'D)

Go.

The animals stand there, unsure, waiting for Mourner to make
his instruction more clear.

MOURNER (CONT'D)

GO!

The animals scatter off. Mourner turns his gaze at the viewer.

MOURNER (CONT'D)

Where did she go, did you see her?

No response.

MOURNER (CONT'D)

Answer me!

No one does.

Mourner lets out a frustrated, wordless cry.

MOURNER (CONT'D)

I was so close. I was so close.

(beat)

There were signs, why did I ignore the signs?

Mourner indulges in the world's most self deprecating laugh.

MOURNER (CONT'D)

Story of my life. God, would it have killed me to give in once? She was asking all those questions, I couldn't have given her one more clever answer? Oh Sahria, I used to be a *sculptor*. I had people. I had people I loved more than anyone in the *world*, and then I threw it all away to come *here* and help you *vanguish* the *great evil* that is the worldmaker. Ooh. Mega spooky.

Mourner falls to his knees.

MOURNER (CONT'D)

It's all gone wrong.

Mourner looks up at the viewer one more time.

MOURNER (CONT'D)

Julie? Julie, get me out of here. I promise, we can fix this. All of this.

No response.

MOURNER (CONT'D)
Julie, please, I know you're
listening.

In front of Mourner, a twig stands up and begins to scratch a
message into the ground. It reads: LIE.

MOURNER (CONT'D)
Sahria?

Sahria steps out of the shadows. She was the last pair of
eyes in the shadows.

SAHRIA
Who's Julie?

MOURNER
It doesn't matter.

SAHRIA
You could let me decide that.

MOURNER
Sahria-

SAHRIA
What, you want to tell me the truth
when I'm not around but when I'm
standing in front of you asking for
it, it doesn't matter anymore?

MOURNER
It never mattered. I would just
have told you what you wanted to
hear.

SAHRIA
I still want to hear it! I could go
back to hiding in the shadows,
would that help? Since you can only
talk to Julie, whoever that is.

MOURNER
Don't talk about things you don't
understand.

SAHRIA
Tell me or I leave. For real this
time.

Beat.

Mourner pulls two dolls out of his pack. They're the Todd and Julie dolls. He drops them on the ground and they stand up on their own.

MOURNER

Once upon a time there were two
worldmakers who were-

(beat)

- who were very much in love.

The dolls come together and embrace. They begin to dance with one another.

Mourner waits for the world to tell him he's lying. It almost hurts him more that he isn't.

The dolls separate and then pick up some of the dirt, and pretend to shape it like clay.

MOURNER (CONT'D)

The two worldmakers were very happy
because they'd just been given a
world of their very own to make
perfect. One worldmaker fashioned
trees, and animals, and air.

The Todd doll does.

MOURNER (CONT'D)

The other filled the world with
people and stories.

The Julie doll does.

MOURNER (CONT'D)

And for a time they worked in
perfect harmony. Then the first
world maker realized.

The Todd doll stands up away from his work and attempts to dance with the Julia doll. She is too caught up in her work to realize.

MOURNER (CONT'D)

The second worldmaker only had room
in her heart for one great love.
Once she could shape the lives and
stories of a whole universe, how
could the first worldmaker hope to
compare?

Mourner looks up from the puppet show and sighs up at the viewer.

MOURNER (CONT'D)

And maybe the first worldmaker was a little inattentive. Maybe he made light of serious situations and didn't think everything through as well as he should have. In any case, he wasn't really equipped to deal with that six thousand years ago.

Mourner returns his attention to the dolls.

MOURNER (CONT'D)

The first worldmaker, scared to live his life alone, hatched a plan. He would enter the world as one of the stories. That way, he could receive the second worldmaker's love, and maybe he'd make her realize that he was still worthwhile.

The Todd doll begins to shift, his clothes get longer and darker, his hair grows out, ruining its previously perfect swirl. The Todd doll becomes the Mourner doll.

SAHRIA

And how did it all end?

MOURNER

I don't know. I don't know if she even knows I'm in here.

SAHRIA

I figured it out last night. Not all of it, but... you know, the worldmaker part.

MOURNER

Yeah?

SAHRIA

A *sculptor* was pushing it.

They both smile.

MOURNER

I need you to kill me, Sahria. I need to get back up there. You've brought me to my knees. Hooray. Now it's time to end the great deception.

SAHRIA
And you can fix things from the
outside?

MOURNER
Yes. I promise.

SAHRIA
And can you come back and visit
when it's all over?

Beat.

MOURNER
Would you want me to?

SAHRIA
Yes. Of course!

The two share one last hug.

MOURNER
I'm sorry I lied to you.

SAHRIA
You'll make it up to me.

The two separate and Sahria clears her throat.

SAHRIA (CONT'D)
I'll still need stealth lessons.

MOURNER
You got by better than you think.

Sahria takes a deep breath.

SAHRIA
Okay.

Beat.

SAHRIA (CONT'D)
Mourner?

MOURNER
Yeah?

SAHRIA
Thank you.

Cut to black. We hear the shing of a sword being unsheathed.

END