

ELABORATE LAPSE

by Izaoul Sifuentes

CHARACTERS

OUR NARRATOR Drawn to the italicized and omniscient. Reads stage directions.

LADY ORNATE *Once a wanderer of the lands, now resides in a quiet home at the edge of an even quieter town. Regal, eloquent, generous. Lately, stressed and irritable.*

TONE *Talented in the lyrical, typically traveling the lands to share this skill, now spending much time with her dear lady. Clever, dedicated, selfless. Lately, tired and sacrificing.*

OSCURO OSCURA *Spends the days roaming the lands in search of the fascinating and lighthearted, occasionally honing his shadow-based abilities. Enthusiastic, kind, trusting. Lately, credulous and foolish.*

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Undeniably daytime. Here is the room in Lady Ornate's house with the least amount of windows (one), her bedroom. The window closest to her is curtained, yet still scathingly bright.

Enter Lady Ornate. In an opulent but light gown, she leans against a pile of fabrics and pillows that was once merely a vanity. There is something small and golden in her hands that she examines.

LADY ORNATE:

If I am statue...then you are chisel.

She glares at the object, as if it could dissolve in her sights.

LADY ORNATE:

Yes, you, luckless fugitive—spared by mere slight of your kin. Why hold onto them when you could wreak wretchedness? You lead the incision of every seam, while I've naught a needle. Still then you would scorn me?

The object in her hands replies in silence. Lady Ornate scoffs.

LADY ORNATE:

I am not to be spared, but my dear surely is. If I had...well, no, if *you* had kept metal from being made figment, then she would claim no calamity. Why should we be weary with this, your blame? You, flameless spark, only send stars into standstill. Is it this, then, why I must hold expression so distinct?

Enter Tone. She stumbles, gradually making her way to Lady Ornate's side. Tone sits upon the floor and turns her head toward the ceiling, covering her face.

TONE:

My dear lady, I have done what I can.

Lady Ornate is still staring intently at the object in her hands.

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TONE:

The patterns of my garments—garb you call them—give me a dizzying frame in which I've found myself even more incoherent when wandering under this sun-claimed sky.

TONE:

Even through the curtains this sun still speaks too loudly for one to rest, to think.

TONE:

Worse is how these faces, these tiles, cling to its light.

The Lady turns to Tone, having just caught the end of her words.

LADY ORNATE:

Thoughtful.

TONE:

It is all I can offer today, my lady.

There is a knock on the window. A face peeks up from behind it, casting a deep shadow over the room.

??? (muffled):

This is unbearable...

LADY ORNATE (to TONE):

There is little doubt as to who that is.

???:

Un...becoming...

TONE:

Who else could stand to wither in the
grasp of noon?

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???:

Un...good...

LADY ORNATE:

Would you please help our...*friend*, my
dear?

Tone moves from her spot over to the window with a series of clumsy hops. She lands, stands, and gives an exasperated sigh. The window is opened and, immediately, a voice speaks. Enter Oscuro Oscura.

OSCURO OSCURA:

Heed me!

LADY ORNATE:

We have.

OSCURO OSCURA:

Yes! Then here is my solution.

Oscuro Oscura strains to reach his many arms over his wide turtleneck and the brim of his sunhat. His hands are closed until they are well within the room. Through the window and onto the floor he drops many handfuls of cinders.

LADY ORNATE:

What for!

OSCURO OSCURA:

Why, what else could silence this sun?

LADY ORNATE:

Which is not on my floor.

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Oscuro Oscura replies with a short hum. Tone backs away from the window as Lady Ornate, with one hand, raises up a pillow. Tone receives it and throws it half-heartedly at Oscuro Oscura. It lands on the cinders.

TONE:

Oh.

LADY ORNATE (to OSCURO OSCURA):

Do you really expect to reach so far?

OSCURO OSCURA:

I must! If not, then how can we expect to rest?

TONE:

Curtains?

OSCURO OSCURA:

What of the temperature?

Lady Ornate rolls her eyes.

LADY ORNATE:

You ask, ignoring the breeze.

OSCURO OSCURA:

Fleeting! Fleeting, as we should if we could.

LADY ORNATE:

No use, for where is spared the solar gaze?

Oscuro's hands slowly retreat from over the window sill.

OSCURO OSCURA:

What then?

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LADY ORNATE:

Savor the shade, remain interior.

OSCURO OSCURA:

I do! I have! But it is not enough to hide for the rest of this endless day.

The Lady shrugs. There is a beat of silence.

TONE:

My lady, I'll go out to search again.

LADY ORNATE:

You will rest first.

TONE:

Too much time will be spent waiting for me. I am spurned by sleep as it is.

Oscuro jumps up, trying to get their attention.

OSCURO OSCURA:

What is it you look for? Has an item gone astray?

Tone makes a face that is entirely uncertain.

TONE (to LADY ORNATE):

Should he be told?

LADY ORNATE:

He is here, so why not.

Tone raises her brows, gently skeptical.

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LADY ORNATE:

It does help that we—well, you—know him to guard words like ores.

Unbeknownst to them, Oscuro beams.

OSCURO OSCURA:

May I?

LADY ORNATE (to OSCURO OSCURA):

Enter, but leave the rest of your cinders behind.

Oscuro nods. He once more raises his many hands, using them to climb up and through the window. His hat lands before he does, both onto the dropped pillow.

OSCURO OSCURA:

Oh, it's a bit more bearable in here. A temporary balm, yes, but rather this than remain out there!

LADY ORNATE:

If you would, please.

Oscuro quickly puts his hat back on and gives his attention to the Lady.

Tone closes the window and its curtains, and then goes to sit by Lady Ornate's side.

Lady Ornate holds out to Tone her closed hands. Surprised, Tone receives a small, gold clasp. She raises a brow to the Lady, who nods. Tone then holds it up for Oscuro to see.

OSCURO OSCURA:

Oh! A trinket?

TONE (shaking her head):

Remnant of the Lady's necklace.

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OSCURO OSCURA:

How was it lost?

Lady Ornate looks away from the two.

TONE:

Mm, it would help you more to know what it was for. You are familiar with the equilibrium?

OSCURO OSCURA:

Hm, it is what guides the elemental?

TONE:

Everything earthly and so forth.

OSCURO OSCURA:

So *that* would keep our world intact.

The rain would fall, the ocean would stir...the sun would set...

Oscuro furrows his brow in thought, then gasps wholeheartedly.

OSCURO OSCURA:

That is what we lack currently!

TONE:

Our balance is fragmented, yes.

OSCURO OSCURA:

Does the necklace control this then?

TONE:

It is more like how the clouds can hold the rain, a conduit. On her neck the lady once wore a sliver of—

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Lady Ornate lightly nudges Tone.

TONE:

Um, well know that it is adjacent to the happenings outdoors. Most vital is that we recover this necklace.

OSCURO OSCURA:

Will it help to do so?

TONE:

Eventually, yes.

OSCURO OSCURA:

Why do we not rush then?

TONE:

We've scoured the grounds clean of uncertainty. It could be nowhere else, yet we have only found ourselves defeatedly sun-worn.

OSCURO OSCURA:

Luckily I can lend my energy. Let us go then!

Oscuro prepares to stand, but the Lady stops him with a pillow to the face.

OSCURO OSCURA:

What for!

LADY ORNATE:

Why, what else could halt your haste?

OSCURO OSCURA:

A word would do.

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LADY ORNATE:

Not as quickly.

Oscuro returns the Lady's annoyance with a confused look. Lady is enraged by this, for she reads this reaction as needless naivety.

LADY ORNATE:

Futility extends itself over you too, why behave otherwise? You were invited in to know of this, not to delve into this unending quest with faith misplaced. If you refuse to see how faulty hope cannot repair what is hollow, why, go then and try to mend void with thread!

OSCURO OSCURA:

(sincerely surprised)

I did not see that you were so stonelike!

Lady Ornate inhales sharply, Tone winces.

OSCURO OSCURA:

Sorry...if I misunderstand, do dispel...but it seems your resolve has calcified, that you are sinking into a listless solution.

I understand this, having too been outside in this world that, with each day, disintegrates more into disarray.

But, before this visit...

Oscuro grabs a pinch of cinders from the floor.

OSCURO OSCURA:

...I had only shadows of solution. So please tell me we are to keep trying.

The Lady is frowning, but no longer near seething. She looks to Tone, who carefully meets her gaze.

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LADY ORNATE:

What say you, Tone?

TONE:

I will close my eyes for a second, as you suggested, then I will go with Oscuro to search
anew.

LADY ORNATE (shaking her head):

No...

TONE:

More than a second, by goodness, I'll attempt it.

LADY ORNATE:

Yes, you should rest, but I mean that I am to go as well. The necklace is fragmented by
my fault, and Oscuro...

*The Lady turns to Oscuro, who only slightly expects another pillow to be tossed his
way.*

LADY ORNATE:

...eyes and mind quartz in quality—you have named my reluctance.

If I stay stagnant in stubbornness, I know I will regret it.

Oscuro nods hesitantly. The Lady gives him a smile that is only distantly wry.

LADY ORNATE:

Stay here if you'd like to. Tone has yet to rest—to try, even—so be patient. Then we will
go.

OSCURO OSCURA:

I can wait, to be sure.

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Oscuro rises, more hands becoming visible as he goes to stand in front of the window. The room darkens considerably and he gives several thumbs up.

LADY ORNATE:

You can withstand?

OSCURO OSCURA:

For a nap or more, I could certainly endure.

Tone rubs her eyes and blinks tiredly in the room whose light, or rather, lack of light better reflects the time it would be. The Lady gathers up fabrics from the pile on her vanity and lays them on the floor. She sets a pillow near Tone, who immediately goes to rest her head on it.

TONE:

For the obscuring, for the convincing. Thank you, sincerely.

Tone slowly closes her eyes. Lady Ornate reaches for her hand, the one of which still holds the gold clasp. Tone starts to give it to her. The Lady simply holds Tone's hand in turn. Both then eventually close their eyes.

Oscuro gives a quiet hum and closes his eyes as well. He remains standing, his hands having formed a cradle to keep him in place.

For now, they will rest.

END SCENE