

GARDEN OF FEAR
by Robert R. Rhodes

The Science Advisor's Review for "SKY BLUES"

A Play by Coni Koepfinger

This one act play by Coni Koepfinger is a tale of a man and a woman with no names, only labels, who seem to have no past and live in an invisible garden of fear. Even the guards of this garden are unnamed. When the man, "TALKER" engages the woman, "TAG", he is surprised that she CAN talk (it's a known "fact" that TAGs can't talk, right?). From the start, their dialogue as they walk the fence between them is a journey of discovery – about how the things they were told weren't true – which turns out to be just about everything in their world.

While reading the play, I had the uncanny feeling that Koepfinger is not writing about some dystopian nightmare of the future – but of our society today. In their journey of discovery, on which they find an "unknown" gate in that fence, it becomes clear that their biggest issue is not how they were deceived or had their past stolen from them, but that they have such trouble trusting each other. When we encounter the "stranger" who challenges everything we've been told, do we not react doubtfully? Is the present human condition one in which we have taught to fear everything we've been told about?

Out of the need to survive, he enlists her (at first unwilling) help to secure some food...and she has to confront several fears. In doing so, they suddenly discover themselves in a dream – very recent neuroscience has revealed to us that the primary function of the dream function in the brain is to re-make our "inner world" into a simpler one where experience can truly guide us. The neural vines in our mental models to beliefs that don't work are pruned away and allowed to die off. Most often, it is the ways of thinking based on fear that cause us to make mistakes in dealing with the real world – and what our dreams free us from. Like TAG and TALKER in this new Genesis tale, it turns that all we have to lose is fear itself.