who?

*hope* — philodendron hope selloum (*philodendron bipinnatifidum*)  
abundant, active, reliable. always spitting out new ideas.

*fig* — fiddle leaf fig (*ficus lyrata*)  
cool as a cuke, under the right conditions. otherwise, a total drama queen.

*cassie* — green velvet alocasia (*alocasia micholitziana 'frydek'*)  
easy-going enough, but certainly has some opinions. new to the scene.

*rhaphi* — mini monstera (*rhaphidophora tetrasperma*)  
a total powerhouse. generally beloved, yet quite humble.

*aura* — purple passion (*gynura aurantiaca*)  
the spunky cousin. likes to stand out. very affectionate.

*the pothos chorus* — golden pothos, marble queen pothos, neon pothos (*epipremnum aureum*)  
[any number of voices] these are our resilient narrators.

where?

USDA plant hardiness zone 7B,  
indoors,  
two south-facing windows, one west-facing window.

or maybe, wherever *you* are.

when?

pretty much right around… now.
sunrise

THE POTHOS CHORUS:
some days when the light arrives, it feels like slowly floating upwards out of the still depths of a lake, until you break the crisp cerulean surface & fall in love with the sun all over again.

other days it’s like feeling sweat trickle down the small of your back, the long of your spine. ticklish.

see, where we live, it creeps up on you. it glides over from the eastern sky, that mysterious patch of wild yonder we never get to see. & when it’s ready — the light, we mean — it spills over here where we are, comes in like dandelion dust. slow streaks, broad strokes. red & far red. coming in soft.

& it’s a very quiet moment. that’s part of the magic.

HOPE:
psssst.

THE POTHOS CHORUS:
well, usually.

HOPE:
cassie! cassie!
are you up?

CASSIE:
if i say yes, are you going to keep talking?

HOPE:
oh great, you’re up!
cassie, i have an idea.

CASSIE:
that’s cool. can it wait ‘til 1:1 at least?
HOPE:
actually, before the idea—
i have a question

RHAPHI:
oh good! you’re both up too!
i was getting kinda lonely.

AURA:
y’all do know we’re all up, right?
like, hello
sun’s out, guns out, baby!

HOPE:
not all of us.
fig over there always gets some extra snoozin’

CASSIE:
talk about the luck of the draw

RHAPHI:
hey! i’d say we’re the lucky ones.
i like where we are. look at all this sky!
you don’t wish you were on the bookshelf, do you?

CASSIE:
well, no…
but sometimes, a little more rest wouldn’t be so bad.

AURA:
honey, have you heard of ‘winter’?

HOPE:
 alright, ya buncha shrubs!
enough chitter chatter!
i
have
a
question
THE POTHOS CHORUS:
we don't have eyes, per se. but we can still roll them,
y’know, metaphorically. we’re quite good at metaphor.

so just keep that in mind when i say that, at this point,
neearly every waking plant in the house gives a nice little eye
roll.

HOPE (in a conspiratorial whisper):
have you noticed?

AURA:
… are you planning on finishing that sentence?

RHAPHI:
c’mon, hope, get to it will ya
some of us have some photosynthesizing to do

HOPE:
ugh okay okay i mean
have you noticed…?
how sad the human is?

THE POTHOS CHORUS:
a sweet hush washes over us all. the waking & the asleep,
the seedlings & the trees. for you see, we have noticed. each
& every one of us.

HOPE:
okay c’mon i can’t be the only / one that has—

AURA:
/ no, hope! you’re not the only one, okay?

RHAPHI:
the human is… unbearably sad.
CASSIE:  
oh… wait.  
is this not always how they are?

FIG:  
naw.  
this is different.

THE POTHOS CHORUS:  
a conversation between keepers of chlorophyll moves slowly & absurdly fast all at once. so you see, all this time, the sun has continued its ritual across the sky, its cloud dance, & by now, its light is splashing into nearly every corner of our sala.

now we, the pothos, so resilient, are still in the little shade that remains.

but the sun has reached the bookshelf.

fig is awake.

AURA:  
welcome to the party, fiddly pie!

THE POTHOS CHORUS:  
by the way: we’ve learned to sometimes not give too much mind when aura says things.

CASSIE:  
different how?

FIG:  
cass, i don’t want you to think  
that the week or so that you’ve been here  
has painted for you a pure picture of life within these walls.  
you… well,  
you’re one of the Afters.
RHAPHI:
oh fig, why’s everything of yours gotta sound like
one of those strange things the humans watch
on that rectangular black hole?

HOPE:
for the last time, rhaph
it’s called a “tv”

FIG:
you know i’m right!
you can feel it too, just like hope is saying.
that there’s a Before,
& there’s an After.
& even though most’a’y’all ain’t been around
nearly as long as me / or hope—

AURA:
/ oh not this again…

FIG:
you’ve still been growin’ here long enough to see it.
but cassie… let me tell you.
it wasn’t always this way.

HOPE:
i will say, the human has always housed somewhat of a… heavy spirit.
but i do think something else must be going on.

RHAPHI:
it’s true. i do feel it too.
i push out leaf after leaf &… gosh,
it used to be that i could bring such light to their eyes!

AURA:
aw rhaphi don’t be so hard on yourself
i think you still do that!
i think we all do
HOPE:
no, i know, but don’t you get it?
we’re all sayin’ the same thing here.
something’s… awry

CASSIE:
well then,
we should do something about it.

FIG:
oh yeah, hotshot?
you got any ideas?

AURA:
yeah c’mon,
some of us have been sproutin’
like the sun’s about to go out of style.
& if that’s not working…
what else can we even do?

CASSIE:
you’re not telling me that’s all you’ve got?
sheesh, i knew you could take a trop out the jungle,
but guess you can take the jungle out the trop too,
huh?

AURA:
oh as if you’re not a nursery neonate just like
the rest of us, velvet veins!

HOPE:
alright, _alright_! enough of that!
aura, fig, watch your tone. have you already forgotten
that you were once new to the four-walled forest, too?
besides, it’s not about you! we’re talking about the human.
cassie, you get it. you’re picking up on my signals!
we should _do_ something.
which brings me back to…
MY IDEA.
CASSIE:
oh, right
that thing

HOPE:
WE
SHOULD START
A BAND.

THE POTHOS CHORUS:
now please understand, we’ve been doing our due diligence
as your narrators to translate this story across time, space,
& species—

but some things, some things just can’t make the jump.

it’s not that they get lost, as many humans like to say. no,
it’s more like: they take one long look at the jump they’re
being asked to make, that giant chasm, & they pack up &
turn around right there, heading straight back home.
language is fickle in that way.

what we mean is, there really is no way to capture the
reaction in the room in this moment. so instead we will
offer you a few words that did make the jump, & ask your
imagination to do the rest:

elation
cosmos
intracellular
shimmery
simultaneous
wow

AURA:
oh my gosh hope you are so brilliant
finally, a creative home for my dulcet tones!
FIG:
this goes without saying,
but obviously i’m the bass.

RHAPHI:
i’m so delighted!
i mean i’m a big fan of everyone’s solo work,
don’t get me wrong
but going on a musical journey together,
oh it’s going to be so special

CASSIE:
hmm.

HOPE:
wha—cassie! whaddyamean, ‘hmm’?

CASSIE:
i just. i don’t know it’s not that i don’t think it’s sweet but—
our music, it’s very…
it’s something quite intimate, no?
something unequivocally ours.
& i say this with lots of love, you know,
because i do like the human very much, so far.
but… you really think they’ll be able to hear?

THE POTHOS CHORUS:
we have to be honest, we’re thinking it too. pothos, well,
we come across our fair share of humans. you all tend to
appreciate how good we are—at surviving, we mean. with
or without you. & truthfully, we don’t think much of it, the
neglect. but it does make us wonder… with that level of
disconnect, how could any of you possibly hear us? how
could you listen to the music that runs through our veins,
that sparks at every node?

just seems unlikely, is all.
CASSIE:
look, i know i’m new here.
i don’t say it to be rude.
i just think maybe it’s my duty to offer…
a different perspective.
you’ve all gotten pretty comfortable here.
you’ve got plenty of roots that have only known this kind of sun.

HOPE:
with all due respect—

AURA:
ooooo chile you done brought out the tree in this one

HOPE:
aura, please!
look cassie. i get it, i do.
& i’m not denying my bias, when so much of who i am
has grown into being right here in this room.
but… it’s like fig said.
something’s different.
& the human—they’ll never be one of us, not really.
but lately i’ve been feeling like—
like there’s a part of them that wishes they could be.
& i think maybe… maybe that’s the part.
maybe that part can hear us.

RHAPHI:
c’mon cass, what’s the worst that could happen?

FIG:
yeah so, maybe it turns out hope is wrong.
maybe we make a killer debut record,
& the human won’t be able to hear any of it after all.
but guess what? in that scenario,
we still make a killer debut record!
you don’t have to do it for them, cassie.
you can do it for you.
AURA:
wow, fig. who knew you had it in you?
somebody get this shrub a soapbox!

THE POTHOS CHORUS:
& right here, because we flow through time like molasses
rapids, is when the light reaches us—the pothos.

& right now, with the sunstream rushing in golden hot, is
when the human opens the door.

their eyes tired, but resolute. feet swathed in socks fuzzier
than aura’s newest leaves. & cradled gently in both their
hands, the steaming, aromatic fruit of our dear comrade,
coffea arabica.

mug in hand, the human does what they often do at the
start of each new cycle. they shuffle across the creaking
floor, from one corner of the room to the next—the path in
between a meandering one & spent (we say this humbly)
admiring every facet of all our beings. every leaf, every
bloom, every miraculous root. the visible & invisible.

they breathe in slow, deep.
when they exhale, it’s our turn to do the same.

& for all our qualms, our justified hesitation—we sink into
this ebb & flow. this give & take. & we remember this for
what it is: our ritual.

CASSIE:
oh, screw it.
let’s start a band.

FIN