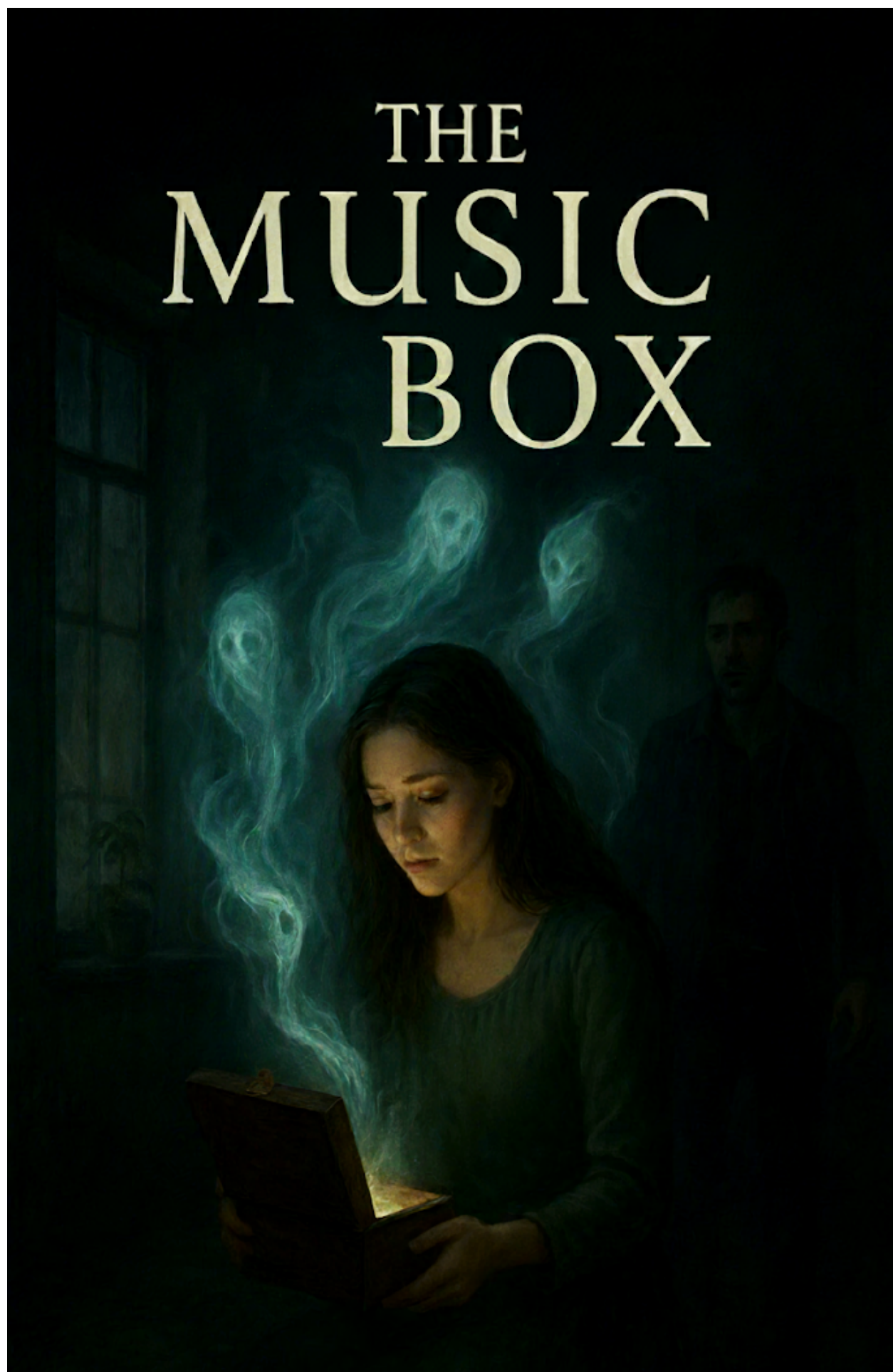


THE MUSIC BOX



SYNOPSIS

Evelyn, a young woman disabled at a young age after her parents were killed in a motor vehicle accident, discovers a mysterious music box after her Grandmother that she and her sister have been living with, dies.

The music box holds a secret beyond imagination. When she opens it, she unwittingly awakens the Pneuma—enigmatic, otherworldly beings that exist between reality and dream. As the music box's melodies fill the air, Evelyn is drawn into a realm where time, memory, and desire collide.

Caught between the mortal world and the seductive promise of the Pneuma, Evelyn finds herself torn. A man enters her life, and pleads for her to return to reality, while the Pneuma beg for help. Each choice carries weight, each decision bends the boundaries of what is possible.

Evelyn must confront the ultimate question: will she remain with the familiar and fragile world of human connection, or will she surrender to the intoxicating, perilous world that the music box has unlocked?

The Music Box is a tale of wonder, longing, and the choices that define who we are — where every note played may lead to liberation, or to loss.

NOTES

The original concept when I sat down to write this, was to take elements from two of my favourite plays, *The Glass Menagerie* and *Harvey* and create an original piece of work.

There are times when only the music from the music box is heard. This mechanic is used to imply that only Evelyn can hear the whispers and the Pneuma. There is one piece at the end where it was important for Evelyn to hear the Pneuma while Tom is on stage. Let's just call it theatrical license.

CHARACTERS

Evelyn Ross - Female (Approx 20)

Younger sister of Isabelle. Has a physical disability due to a motor vehicle accident when she was young that claimed the lives of her parents. She is a dreamer.

Isabelle Ross - Female (Mid 20's)

Older sister of Evelyn. Isabelle is very career driven and is starting to climb the corporate ladder at work.

Tom Anderson - Male (Mid 20's)

Nephew of building superintendent. Also has a physical disability which is the hook between him and Evelyn.

Henry Anderson - Male (40's-60's)

Building superintendent. He has been unwell for some time.

Dr Malak - Male (40's-60's)

Psychologist

Mrs Emeny - Female (50's-70's)

Building resident

TV Announcer 1 - Female (Any age)

TV Announcer 2 - Female (Any age)

ACT ONE

LIGHTS DOWN. CURTAINS CLOSED. THE SOUND OF A MUSIC BOX PLAYS AND THE SOUND OF A GENTLE BREEZE STARTS SLOWLY TO COME IN OVER THE TOP OF THE SOUND OF THE MUSIC BOX. THEN THE SOUND OF BOTH FADE. CURTAINS OPEN, LIGHTS UP. A LOUNGE ROOM SETTING IS REVEALED. THERE IS A SOFA, TV ETC. THE ROOM LOOKS AS IF IT BELONGED TO AN ELDERLY WOMAN. EVELYN AND ISABELLE'S GRANDMOTHER HAS RECENTLY PASSED AWAY. THEY HAD BEEN LIVING WITH THEIR GRANDMOTHER SINCE THEY WERE YOUNG AFTER A CAR CRASH CLAIMED THE LIVES OF THEIR PARENTS. THERE ARE TWO PILES OF CARDBOARD BOXES TOWARDS THE BACK OF THE ROOM. ONE PILE OF BOXES HAS 'DISCARD' WRITTEN ON EACH BOX. THE OTHER PILE OF BOXES HAS 'KEEP' WRITTEN ON EACH BOX. THERE ARE VARIOUS HOUSE PLANTS AROUND THE ROOM AND A VASE OF FLOWERS THAT ARE WILTED. THERE ARE TWO BOXES IN THE CENTRE OF THE ROOM, ONE HAS 'KEEP' WRITTEN ON IT, THE OTHER 'DISCARD'. THE STAGE IS CLEAR OF ACTORS. EVELYN ENTERS HOBBLING AS SHE DOES THROUGHOUT THE PLAY. SHE IS CARRYING HER GRANDMOTHER'S KEEPSAKE BOX. SHE PLACES IT ON THE FLOOR NEAR THE TWO BOXES AND SITS ON THE FLOOR.

EVELYN: I'm going through your keepsake box next, Gran. Is that okay?

EVELYN LOOKS UP AS IF HER GRAN WERE
STANDING BESIDE HER.

EVELYN: Thanks, Gran. Now, let's see what secrets you've got for me.

EVELYN OPENS THE KEEPSAKE BOX. SHE PULLS
OUT SOME DOILIES.

EVELYN: Doilies? Sorry Gran, I think we can let these go.

EVELYN PUTS THE DOILIES INTO THE 'DISCARD' BOX.

EVELYN: What do we have next?

EVELYN REACHES INTO THE KEEPSAKE BOX AND PULLS OUT A CHRISTMAS ANGEL.

EVELYN: Oh my goodness, the Christmas Angel! I remember you lifting me up as high as you could reach, so that I could put it on top of the tree. It was the first Christmas we came to stay after Mum and Dad... died.

EVELYN HAS A MOMENT OF REFLECTION, THEN PUTS THE CHRISTMAS ANGEL IN THE KEEP BOX. SHE REACHES INTO THE KEEPSAKE BOX AGAIN AND PULLS OUT AN ENVELOPE. SHE OPENS IT AND REMOVES A HANDWRITTEN LETTER AND READS IT ALOUD.

EVELYN: My dearest Maisy. I don't know how much longer I have...

EVELYN SMILES.

EVELYN: That sounds like Pop. Even when he's dying, he's joking about how bad your cooking was.

EVELYN CLUTCHES THE LETTER TO HER CHEST, AND WITH HER EYES CLOSED, SHE LETS OUT A LOUD SIGH. SHE PUTS THE LETTER BACK INTO THE ENVELOPE AND PUTS IT INTO THE 'DISCARD' BOX.

EVELYN: What else do we have in here?

EVELYN REACHES INTO THE BOX AND PULLS OUT AN OLD MUSIC BOX.

EVELYN: What's this, Gran?

EVELYN EXAMINES EACH SIDE THEN OPENS THE BOX. A LIGHT ILLUMINATES FROM THE BOX. MUSIC BEGINS TO PLAY.

EVELYN: A music box.

AS THE MUSIC CONTINUES TO PLAY, THE SOUND OF A SLIGHT BREEZE CAN BE HEARD. EVELYN DOES NOT NOTICE THE SOUND, INSTEAD CLOSING THE LID. SHE GOES TO PLACE IT IN THE 'DISCARD' BOX AND HESITATES.

EVELYN: What do you think, Gran? Keep or throw?

EVELYN MOVES THE MUSIC BOX ABOVE THE 'KEEP' AND 'DISCARD' BOXES AS IF WAITING FOR HER GRAN TO ANSWER. SHE THEN HOLDS THE MUSIC BOX OVER THE 'KEEP' BOX FOR A SECOND.

EVELYN: I like it too. It's cute.

BEFORE EVELYN HAS A CHANCE TO PLACE THE MUSIC BOX IN THE KEEP BOX, ISABELLE ENTERS VIA THE FRONT DOOR. SHE IS DRESSED IN CORPORATE ATTIRE AND IS CARRYING A LAPTOP BAG, HER HANDBAG, AND A SMALL BACKPACK. SHE HAS HER PHONE CRADLED AND IS TALKING TO SOMEONE ON THE OTHER END. SHE HOLDS A FINGER UP TO EVELYN AS IF TO INDICATE SHE WILL BE A MOMENT. EVELYN PUTS THE MUSIC BOX DOWN ON THE FLOOR AND STANDS.

ISABELLE: No problem. I'll finish the Kensington presentation first, then I'll get straight on to it.

ISABELLE PUTS HER BAGS ON THE SOFA.

ISABELLE: It's no bother, honestly. I'll get it over to you by ten at the latest.

EVELYN'S FACE DROPS.

ISABELLE: No problem... I will. Thanks, bye.

ISABELLE HANGS UP THE PHONE.

ISABELLE: Sorry, Ev. Big day at work. What's all this?

EVELYN: Gran and I are just sorting through some more of her stuff.

ISABELLE: You do realise she's not here anymore, right?

EVELYN: Of course you're here, aren't you Gran? How was your day?

ISABELLE: Hectic, and now I have more work to do.

EVELYN: I thought we were going to watch that new series on Netflix?

ISABELLE: I'm sorry, I'll make it up to you on Friday. I'll order pizza and we can watch it then.

EVELYN: Promise?

ISABELLE: Pinky promise.

ISABELLE OFFERS HER PINKY FINGER AND EVELYN ACCEPTS AND LOCKS HER PINKY WITH ISABELLE'S. ISABELLE PICKS UP HER BAGS AND STARTS TO CARRY THEM TO HER BEDROOM.

ISABELLE: Mr Anderson still hasn't been?

EVELYN: Not yet.

ISABELLE EXITS INTO HER BEDROOM, THEN ENTERS AGAIN WITHOUT HER BAGS.

ISABELLE: I'll give him another call.

EVELYN: It's fine, he's not well. It's not urgent anyway.

ISABELLE: It is urgent. He's paid to do a job, and he isn't doing it.

*ISABELLE DIALS THE NUMBER WHILE EVELYN GOES
AND SITS ON THE SOFA.*

ISABELLE: Dammit, voicemail. Hi, Mr Anderson, it's Isabelle from apartment 302, again. We really need to get these boxes cleared. They're attracting vermin. If you could come by later, I would really appreciate it. Thanks. Bye.

ISABELLE HANGS UP.

ISABELLE: If he hasn't cleared them by lunchtime tomorrow, give me a call and I will...

*ISABELLE MIMES AND MAKES SOUNDS AS IF
SHOOTING A PISTOL IN EACH HAND.*

EVELYN: Take him to a wild west show?

ISABELLE: Blast him.

EVELYN: You're so mean to him sometimes.

ISABELLE: I don't think it is mean to expect that people do what they say they'll do. Try that in the corporate world and see how far you get.

EVELYN: But he's not in the corporate world.

ISABELLE: You should get a job in my office. It would be good for you.

EVELYN: No thanks. I'd hate to be chained to a desk all day.

ISABELLE: You never know, you might meet someone.

EVELYN: No one would be interested in a disabled person like me. And besides, it's not as if you've met anyone yet.

ISABELLE: You'd learn things too... like how to get up before lunch, and how to be tidy.

EVELYN: Ha ha, very funny!

ISABELLE: I'm serious. Look at this place. It's a pigsty.

EVELYN: I'm going through Gran's stuff!

ISABELLE: What have I told you about leaving things scattered around on the floor?

*ISABELLE INDICATES TO THE MUSIC BOX THAT
EVELYN LEFT ON THE FLOOR.*

EVELYN: I know! I'll clean it up.

ISABELLE: Make sure you do.

EVELYN: I will.

ISABELLE: Right, I'm going to go and do some work. Dinner in an hour or so?

EVELYN: Sure.

*ISABELLE EXITS INTO HER BEDROOM. EVELYN
GETS UP OFF THE SOFA AND SITS DOWN ON THE
FLOOR AGAIN NEXT TO THE MUSIC BOX.*

EVELYN: We don't mind a bit of mess, do we Gran?

*EVELYN PICKS UP THE MUSIC BOX AND IS ABOUT
TO PUT IT INTO THE 'DISCARD' BOX, BUT SHE
HESITATES, THEN OPENS IT. IT ILLUMINATES
AND PLAYS MUSIC. THE SOUND OF A BREEZE
SLOWLY FADES IN. THIS TIME IT IS
ACCOMPANIED BY SOME FAINT WHISPERS. EVELYN
LOOKS AROUND THE ROOM, THEN LOOKS BACK TO
THE MUSIC BOX BEFORE QUICKLY SHUTTING IT.
ALL SOUNDS SUDDENLY STOP.*

EVELYN: That's weird.

EVELYN LOOKS AT THE MUSIC BOX AT DIFFERENT ANGLES AND THEN OPENS IT AGAIN. AGAIN, THE BOX ILLUMINATES AND PLAYS MUSIC. THE SOUND OF A BREEZE COMES IN OVER THE TOP, AND THEN GRADUALLY, THE WHISPERS FADE IN. THEY ARE GHOSTLY AND INCOHERENT. EVELYN CALLS OUT.

EVELYN: Hello?

EVELYN SITS AND LISTENS AS THE WHISPERS CONTINUE, TRYING TO DISCERN SOMETHING SHE CAN UNDERSTAND. SUDDENLY THERE IS A LOUD KNOCK ON THE FRONT DOOR. EVELYN IS STARTLED AND SLAMS THE MUSIC BOX CLOSED. THE SOUNDS IMMEDIATELY STOP. SHE STANDS UP AND GOES TO THE FRONT DOOR AND OPENS IT. MR ANDERSON IS STANDING THERE. HE LOOKS TIRED AND WEATHERED. STANDING BEHIND HIM IS TOM. TOM HAS LEG BRACES ON.

HENRY: Young Miss Evelyn, how are you?

EVELYN: I'm good, Mr Anderson. Come in.

HENRY ENTERS, AND TOM SHADOWS HIM.

HENRY: This is my nephew Tom. He's going to be helping me out until I'm feeling a bit better.

TOM LIFTS HIS HAND TO SAY HI, BUT SAYS NOTHING.

HENRY: Where are your manners, boy? It's your legs that are broken, not your voice!

TOM SPEAKS VERY QUIETLY.

TOM: Hi.

HENRY: What's that you say? She can't hear you, boy!

TOM SPEAKS LOUDER.

TOM: Hi!

HENRY: Kids these days. Oh, except for you. You're one of the good ones.

HENRY LOOKS AT TOM AND SHAKES HIS HEAD.

HENRY: Are these the boxes?

EVELYN: I put them into separate piles to make it easier.

HENRY: Did you hear that, boy? This girl has common sense. You should spend some time with her. You might learn a thing or two.

EVELYN: I can help you carry them if you like?

HENRY: No, I have the boy. Now...

HENRY POINTS TO THE BOXES IN THE 'DISCARD' PILE.

HENRY: Take these down to the garbage room and make sure you put the recycling in the recycling bin this time. I don't want those tree huggers in 514 on my case again.

TOM: Okay.

HENRY: Now, these ones...

HENRY POINTS TO THE BOXES IN THE 'KEEP' PILE.

HENRY: Do you know where the storage unit is?

TOM: No.

HENRY: It's on the next level down, by the maintenance room, around the corner.

TOM LOOKS AT HIM BLANKLY.

HENRY: You'll find it. There are labels down there. Label each box with apartment 302 and today's date. Got it?

TOM NODS.

HENRY: Right, now go and fetch the trolley.

TOM EXITS THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR.

HENRY: Kids these days!

EVELYN: Well, at least you've got some help now.

HENRY: Some help! How are you and your sister doing?

EVELYN: We're getting there. Izzy has her head buried in her laptop most of the time.

HENRY: She's going to go far, that girl.

EVELYN: Sometimes I think she hasn't even noticed that Gran's gone.

HENRY: It'll take time to adjust... to... you know.

EVELYN: Well, I like to think that Gran is still here with us. Well, with me anyway.

HENRY: She is... right there.

HENRY NODS TOWARDS EVELYN'S HEART. HE STARTS TO COUGH AND PULLS OUT A HANDKERCHIEF TO COUGH INTO.

HENRY: Damn thing.

EVELYN: Would you like some water?

HENRY: No, I'd best be going. I have something else to attend to.

*EVELYN WALKS HENRY TO THE FRONT DOOR AND
OPENS IT FOR HIM.*

HENRY: Let me know if the boy gives you any trouble.

EVELYN: I'm sure he'll be fine.

HENRY: Mmmmmmm.

*HENRY GRUMBLES AS HE EXITS THROUGH THE
FRONT DOOR. EVELYN CLOSES THE DOOR AND
RETURNS TO THE MUSIC BOX THAT SHE HAD LEFT
ON THE FLOOR. SHE TRIES TO PICK IT UP WHILE
STANDING BUT TUMBLES TO THE GROUND.*

EVELYN: Arrrrhhh! Stupid legs!

*SHE PICKS UP THE MUSIC BOX AND STANDS. SHE
OPENS THE MUSIC BOX. THE BOX ILLUMINATES
AND THE MUSIC STARTS. AFTER A LITTLE WHILE,
THE SOUND OF A BREEZE CAN BE HEARD COMING
IN OVER THE TOP OF THE MUSIC. THE
WHISPERING STARTS. AGAIN, IT IS INCOHERENT.*

EVELYN: Hello?

*THE WHISPERING CONTINUES. EVELYN WALKS
AROUND THE ROOM SLOWLY HOLDING THE MUSIC
BOX, TRYING TO DISCERN WHERE THE WHISPERING
IS COMING FROM. THE WHISPERING GETS A
LITTLE LOUDER. HER BACK IS TURNED ON
ISABELLE'S ROOM AS SHE ENUNCIATES THE
FOLLOWING LINE.*

EVELYN: My name is Evelyn. What's yours?

ISABELLE ENTERS FROM HER BEDROOM.

ISABELLE: Is-a-belle!

EVELYN IS STARTLED AND CLOSES THE MUSIC BOX. ISABELLE ENUNCIATES THE FOLLOWING LINE.

ISABELLE: Would you mind shutting up? I am trying to work.

EVELYN: Did you hear it?

ISABELLE: Hear what?

EVELYN: The whispers.

ISABELLE: What whispers?

EVELYN: Listen...

EVELYN OPENS THE MUSIC BOX AND THE MUSIC STARTS TO PLAY. THERE ARE NO WHISPERS OR BREEZE SOUND, JUST THE MUSIC BOX TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT ISABELLE CAN NOT HEAR THEM. BUT EVELYN CAN HEAR BOTH.

EVELYN: Do you hear them?

ISABELLE CAN ONLY HEAR THE MUSIC BOX. SHE LEANS IN AND PUTS HER EAR NEXT TO THE MUSIC BOX.

ISABELLE: Oh, wait! I think I hear something...

EVELYN: See!

ISABELLE: I hear a music box and the sound of someone with an overactive imagination.

EVELYN SHUTS THE MUSIC BOX.

EVELYN: But...

ISABELLE: Did I hear Mr Anderson's voice?

EVELYN: Yes.

ISABELLE: Why are the boxes still here?

EVELYN: He's gone to get a trolley.

ISABELLE: About time. Now, I'm going to finish my presentation. Please be quiet.

EVELYN: Okay.

ISABELLE EXITS BACK INTO HER BEDROOM AND CLOSSES THE DOOR. EVELYN LOOKS AT THE MUSIC BOX AND OPENS IT AGAIN. IT ILLUMINATES, THE MUSIC STARTS. THE SOUND OF A GENTLE BREEZE FADES IN, FOLLOWED BY THE WHISPERING. EVELYN GLANCES OVER TOWARDS ISABELLE'S BEDROOM TO MAKE SURE SHE HASN'T STIRRED. THEN, FROM AMONGST THE WHISPERS COMES A DISCERNIBLE WORD. IT SOUNDS LIKE THAT OF A GHOSTLY YOUNG GIRL.

PNEUMA: Evelyn.

EVELYN SLAMS THE MUSIC BOX CLOSED.

EVELYN: What the... Woah! That did not just happen!

THERE IS A FAINT KNOCK ON THE DOOR. EVELYN GOES TO THE FRONT DOOR AND OPENS IT. TOM IS STANDING THERE. THERE IS A TROLLEY BEHIND HIM.

EVELYN: Hi Tom.

TOM: Hi, ahhh, sorry I forgot your name.

EVELYN: Evelyn.

TOM: Evelyn. Sorry, I'm better with boxes than I am with people, usually.

EVELYN: Me too. Come in.

TOM ENTERS DRAGGING THE TROLLEY IN BEHIND HIM. EVELYN SHUTS THE DOOR, AND TOM LOOKS AT THE DOOR AS IF TO SAY 'WHY DID YOU SHUT THE DOOR?'

EVELYN: Oh, sorry. Habit.

TOM: So just these boxes?

EVELYN: For now. I'm still sorting through Gran's stuff. It will take a while.

TOM STARTS LOADING THE 'DISCARD' BOXES ONTO THE TROLLEY.

TOM: I'll get rid of these first.

EVELYN: Do you need a hand?

TOM: No, I'm fine.

THERE IS A BRIEF MOMENT OF AWKWARD SILENCE.

EVELYN: So, have you been here long?

TOM: Two days.

EVELYN: Ah, fresh meat!

TOM: What?!

EVELYN: It's what the long-term residents call the newbies.

TOM: Oh...

TOM LETS OUT A LITTLE CHUCKLE.

TOM: I've never been called that before.

EVELYN: First time for everything.

TOM: Fresh meat, huh?

EVELYN: Yup.

*TOM HAD MANAGED TO LOAD HALF OF THE
'DISCARD' BOXES ONTO HIS TROLLEY.*

TOM: Well, that will about do it for the first load.

EVELYN: That was quick.

TOM: Yeah, these braces have turned me into a cyborg, and I have superhuman strength.

EVELYN LAUGHS.

EVELYN: Really?

TOM: No, but it's a cool story.

EVELYN: What are they for? Oh, sorry, I don't mean to...

TOM: No, it's okay. I have a condition called spastic diplegia. The braces help me walk.

EVELYN: Cool. I mean, not cool... I mean, cool the braces help you walk.

TOM: Yeah. I've had them since I was young, so I'm used to them.

EVELYN: I'm disabled too.

TOM: I saw you hobbling and figured you were either drunk or disabled.

EVELYN: I was involved in a car crash when I was young. The doctors thought I would never walk again.

TOM: Oh my gosh, I'm so sorry! I didn't mean...

EVELYN: That's okay. I don't really remember the accident anyway, which is lucky, because it killed both my parents.

TOM: Oh, Eveleen, I am SO sorry!

EVELYN: Evelyn!

TOM BURSTS OUT LAUGHING.

TOM: Boy, I sure know how to put my foot in it sometimes.

EVELYN: You sure do, fresh meat!

EVELYN LAUGHS.

TOM: I had better take this down to the garbage room before Uncle Henry comes hunting for me.

EVELYN: Yes, you'd better! And don't forget to recycle!

TOM: Recycle, right!

EVELYN LAUGHS AND OPENS THE FRONT DOOR FOR TOM. TOM GOES TO EXIT AND STOPS IN THE DOORWAY.

TOM: Back soon.

TOM WINKS AT EVELYN AND EXITS. EVELYN CLOSES THE FRONT DOOR.

EVELYN: Oh my goodness, Gran! He's cute!

EVELYN GOES TO DO A TWIRL BUT STUMBLES.

EVELYN: Well, I suppose I should finish sorting through this box.

EVELYN WALKS OVER TO THE SIDE TABLE NEXT TO THE SOFA AND PUTS THE MUSIC BOX ON IT. SHE THEN GOES AND SITS NEXT TO THE KEEPSAKE BOX. SHE QUIETLY SORTS THROUGH IT. THERE IS A RANDOM ASSORTMENT OF ITEMS, MOST OF WHICH SHE PUTS INTO THE 'DISCARD' BOX. NONE OF WHICH ARE OF ANY REAL CONSEQUENCE.

EVELYN: Lucky last. What do we have here, Gran?

EVELYN PULLS OUT A PHOTO IN A FRAME. IT IS A PHOTO OF HER PARENTS ON THEIR WEDDING DAY.

EVELYN: Oh my gosh, Mum and Dad's wedding! And look at you Gran! You look so beautiful!

EVELYN STARES AT THE PHOTO. SHE TOUCHES THE PEOPLE IN THE PHOTO AND WIPES AWAY A TEAR.

EVELYN: So beautiful...

EVELYN LETS OUT A BIG SIGH, AND PUTS THE PHOTO INTO THE 'KEEP' BOX. SHE STANDS UP AND GETS THE TAPE AND TAPES UP THE 'DISCARD' AND 'KEEP' BOXES AND CARRIES THEM TO THEIR RESPECTIVE PILES. SHE LOOKS AT THE KEEPSAKE BOX.

EVELYN: I'll use this for my keepsakes. What do you think, Gran?

EVELYN: Yeah, I think it's a good idea too.

EVELYN PICKS UP THE KEEPSAKE BOX AND EXITS INTO HER BEDROOM WITH IT, AND ENTERS BACK INTO THE LOUNGE WITHOUT IT. SHE LOOKS AT THE HOUSEPLANTS.

EVELYN: I'm sorry Gran, your plants aren't doing very well. I watered them yesterday.

EVELYN PICKS UP THE VASE OF FLOWERS. THE FLOWERS ARE VISIBLY WILTED.

EVELYN: And these flowers are just about ready to be thrown out, too. I'll put them in the kitchen.

*EVELYN EXITS INTO THE KITCHEN (OFFSTAGE)
HOLDING THE VASE AND ENTERS EMPTY HANDED.
SHE GOES OVER TO THE SIDE TABLE AND PICKS
UP THE MUSIC BOX AGAIN.*

EVELYN: I'm not going crazy, am I, Gran? It couldn't have been...

*EVELYN OPENS THE MUSIC BOX. THE MUSIC BOX
ILLUMINATES AND THE MUSIC BOX PLAYS. THE
SOUND OF A BREEZE FADES IN, AND THEN THE
SOUND OF INCOHERENT WHISPERS CONTINUES IN
THE BACKGROUND.*

PNEUMA: Evelyn.

EVELYN: Alright then, I am going crazy! Hello?

PNEUMA: Evelyn.

EVELYN: Who are you?

PNEUMA: Pneuma.

EVELYN: Pneuma?

PNEUMA: Yes.

EVELYN: Oh boy!

PNEUMA: Flowers.

EVELYN: What about the flowers?

PNEUMA: The flowers are alive.

*EVELYN LEAVES THE MUSIC BOX OPEN AND PUTS
IT DOWN ON THE SIDE TABLE. SHE EXITS INTO
THE KITCHEN AND RETURNS WITH THE VASE OF
FLOWERS. THE FLOWERS HAVE COME BACK TO FULL
LIFE.*

EVELYN: Wait a minute! These flowers were wilted a minute ago. You did this?

PNEUMA: Yes.

EVELYN: One moment...

EVELYN PUTS THE FLOWERS BACK INTO THEIR ORIGINAL SPOT AND THEN WALKS OVER TO THE MUSIC BOX AND CLOSES THE LID. THERE IS SILENCE. EVELYN STARTS PACING.

EVELYN: I'm not going crazy!

EVELYN STOPS PACING.

EVELYN: Okay, let's think about this rationally, Gran. The flowers were wilted. I picked them up and put them in the kitchen. Then I opened the music box and had a conversation with no one. Then I go back into the kitchen and get the flowers, and they are as fresh as the day I bought them. There is only one explanation... I've gone crazy!

EVELYN STARTS PACING AGAIN.

EVELYN: The flowers were wilted. I take them into the kitchen. The flowers are fresh. The flowers were wilted. I take them into the kitchen. The flowers are...

EVELYN STOPS PACING AND LOOKS AT THE MUSIC BOX.

EVELYN: It can't be!

EVELYN GOES OVER TO ISABELLE'S BEDROOM DOOR AND KNOCKS. THERE IS NO ANSWER. SHE KNOCKS AGAIN LOUDER. THERE IS STILL NO ANSWER, SO SHE CALLS OUT.

EVELYN: Izzy!

*THE DOOR OPENS. ISABELLE'S HEAD POPS OUT.
SHE IS WEARING HEADPHONES WHICH SHE
REMOVES.*

ISABELLE: What?!

EVELYN: Come out here.

ISABELLE: I'm busy!

EVELYN: Just come out here.

ISABELLE SIGHS.

ISABELLE: I have to get this presentation done, Ev.

EVELYN: Did you go into the kitchen?

ISABELLE: When?

EVELYN: Just now.

ISABELLE: No, why?

EVELYN: Are you sure?

ISABELLE: Ev, I don't have time for this.

EVELYN: I took this vase of flowers into the kitchen, and now look.

ISABELLE: They're flowers, so what?!

EVELYN: They were wilted a minute ago.

ISABELLE: No, they're not, they look fine.

EVELYN: That's what I mean!

ISABELLE: I'm confused.

EVELYN: A minute ago, these flowers were wilted. Then I took them into the kitchen and left them there. 30 seconds later, they're like this. How do you explain that?!

ISABELLE: There's a very logical explanation, Ev...

EVELYN: There is?

ISABELLE: It's been a long day and you're tired. Can I go and finish my presentation now?

EVELYN: But...

ISABELLE: Please let me finish it in peace!

ISABELLE PUTS HER HEADPHONES BACK ON AND EXITS BACK INTO HER BEDROOM AND SHUTS THE DOOR. EVELYN LOOKS OVER TO THE MUSIC BOX.

EVELYN: I can't have imagined it, surely?!

EVELYN GOES OVER AND PICKS UP THE MUSIC BOX. SHE PUTS HER EAR TO IT.

EVELYN: Hmmmm, nothing.

EVELYN OPENS THE MUSIC BOX. THE MUSIC BOX ILLUMINATES AND THE MUSIC BOX PLAYS. THE SOUND OF A BREEZE FADES IN, AND THEN THE SOUND OF INCOHERENT WHISPERS CONTINUES IN THE BACKGROUND.

EVELYN: Hello?

PNEUMA: Evelyn.

EVELYN: Pneuma?

PNEUMA: Yes.

EVELYN: Are you... real?

PNEUMA: Yes.

EVELYN: Where are you?

PNEUMA: Here.

EVELYN: Where's here?

PNEUMA: Everywhere.

EVELYN: I don't understand.

PNEUMA: Pneuma... breath... everywhere...

EVELYN: Pneuma, breath, everywhere.

PNEUMA: Yes.

EVELYN LOOKS AROUND THE ROOM. THERE IS A KNOCK AT THE FRONT DOOR. EVELYN CLOSES THE MUSIC BOX. SHE PUTS THE MUSIC BOX DOWN ON THE SIDE TABLE AND OPENS THE FRONT DOOR. TOM IS STANDING THERE WITH A SMILE ON HIS FACE AND THE TROLLEY BEHIND HIM. HE IS VERY UPBEAT.

TOM: Hey, fresh meat's back!

EVELYN RESPONDS WITH A TONE AS IF SHE IS A MILLION MILES AWAY.

EVELYN: Hey.

TOM: Is everything okay? You look like you've seen a ghost.

EVELYN: Something like that. Oh, sorry, come in.

TOM ENTERS, BRINGING THE TROLLEY IN WITH HIM. EVELYN CLOSES THE FRONT DOOR.

TOM: I'll just load up.

*TOM STARTS TO LOAD THE TROLLEY WITH THE
REMAINING 'DISCARD' BOXES. EVELYN IS QUIET.*

TOM: I recycled.

EVELYN: Sorry?

TOM: I recycled, if that's what you're worried about.

EVELYN: Oh, it's not that.

TOM: Was it something I said?

EVELYN TRIES TO PUT ON A FAKE SMILE.

EVELYN: No, something came up, that's all.

TOM: Anything I can help with?

EVELYN: No, it's fine.

*TOM FINISHES LOADING THE 'DISCARD' BOXES
ONTO THE TROLLEY.*

TOM: Well, I'll get rid of these for you.

EVELYN: Thanks.

*EVELYN OPENS THE DOOR, TOM GOES TO EXIT AND
STOPS IN THE DOORWAY AGAIN AND DOES A BAD
ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER IMPERSONATION.*

TOM: I'll be back.

EVELYN: Okay, Arnie.

*TOM EXITS AND EVELYN CLOSES THE DOOR.
EVELYN EXITS INTO HER ROOM AND RETURNS WITH
HER LAPTOP. SHE SITS ON THE SOFA WITH THE
LAPTOP ON HER LAP THEN TURNS IT ON.*

EVELYN: How do you even spell pneuma?

SHE TRIES A FEW VARIATIONS WITHOUT SUCCESS.

EVELYN: Pneuma... pneuma... pneuma... As in Pneumonia?

SHE TYPES ON THE LAPTOP AGAIN.

EVELYN: Pneuma.

SHE READS THE SCREEN AND HAS A LOOK OF REALIZATION.

EVELYN: Pneuma is an ancient Greek word meaning breath or wind. It has a foundational meaning of life-giving breath or air in motion, but also...

EVELYN MUTTERS OCCASIONALLY AS SHE READS THE REST OF THE TEXT. AFTER SHE HAS FINISHED READING, SHE LOOKS UP AND OVER TO THE MUSIC BOX, THEN BACK TO THE LAPTOP SCREEN. EVELYN PUTS THE LAPTOP DOWN AND REACHES OVER TO THE SIDE TABLE, AND PICKS UP THE MUSIC BOX. AS ALWAYS, THE MUSIC STARTS PLAYING AND THE SOUND OF A BREEZE AND WHISPERING FADES IN.

EVELYN: Pneuma is an ancient Greek word meaning breath or wind... Is that what you are?

PNEUMA: Yes.

EVELYN: And you are everywhere?

PNEUMA: Everywhere.

ISABELLE ENTERS FROM HER BEDROOM. SHE IS CARRYING A COFFEE CUP. THE SOUND OF THE BREEZE AND WHISPERING STOPS IMMEDIATELY. ISABELLE STOPS WHEN SHE SEES EVELYN APPARENTLY TALKING TO HERSELF. EVELYN DOES NOT NOTICE ISABELLE AND CONTINUES TO TALK.

EVELYN: I see. So, was it definitely you who brought the flowers back to life?

EVELYN: Okay, but how did you do it?

EVELYN: Life force? What do you mean by life force?

EVELYN: Gaia? What's a Gaia?

EVELYN: Oh, Mother Nature.

EVELYN: So, Gaia is Mother Nature, and you are her life force. Is that right?

ISABELLE: Who are you talking to?

*EVELYN SLAMS THE LID OF THE MUSIC BOX
CLOSED.*

EVELYN: No one.

ISABELLE: It sure sounded like you were talking to someone.

EVELYN: Just talking to myself.

ISABELLE: It looked like you were talking to that box.

EVELYN: No.

ISABELLE: Should I be concerned about you? You talk to Gran as if she is in the room with you, and now you're talking to a box.

EVELYN: I'm fine.

ISABELLE: Ev, Gran's gone. You've got to move on.

EVELYN: I know.

ISABELLE: And what's with talking to the box?

EVELYN: You wouldn't believe me.

ISABELLE: Try me.

EVELYN: Okay, but you have to take me seriously.

ISABELLE: Alright...

ISABELLE SITS ON THE SOFA NEXT TO EVELYN.

EVELYN: Here goes... Okay, so, I think this box is some sort of portal to another dimension or something.

ISABELLE: Ah ha...

EVELYN: When I open it, I hear voices...

ISABELLE: Voices?

EVELYN: Not just voices... they have a name... Pneuma. And the flowers...

ISABELLE: Flowers?

EVELYN: The Pneuma brought them back to life.

ISABELLE: They brought the fresh flowers back to life?

EVELYN: No, the flowers were wilted, and the Pneuma brought them back to life.

ISABELLE: But they're fresh.

EVELYN: That's the point. And now Pneuma has just told me that she is the life force of Mother Nature.

ISABELLE: You do realise how insane you sound right now.

EVELYN: I know it sounds crazy, but...

ISABELLE: Ev, I know things have been tough since Gran passed. But it's okay... Let me get you some help.

EVELYN: I am not crazy!

ISABELLE: I never said you were crazy. I said I think you need some help.

EVELYN: I don't need help.

ISABELLE: Well, you're talking to a music box, so clearly you do.

EVELYN: So you don't believe me?!

ISABELLE: Voices coming from a music box?

EVELYN OPENS THE MUSIC BOX. THE MUSIC STARTS PLAYING.

EVELYN: There, can't you hear them?

ISABELLE: No.

EVELYN: But...

ISABELLE STANDS.

ISABELLE: Evelyn, enough! I'm going to send a message to Dr Malak.

EVELYN: I don't need my psychologist! I need you to listen to me. You never listen! You think you're better than me just because I'm disabled!

ISABELLE: That's ridiculous!

EVELYN: It's true!

ISABELLE: I'm going to make my coffee, and you're going to tidy up in here.

EVELYN: Fine!

ISABELLE EXITS INTO THE KITCHEN. EVELYN SITS QUIET FOR A MOMENT.

EVELYN: You hear the voices too, don't you, Gran?

*EVELYN LOOKS UP AS IF HER GRAN IS STANDING
NEAR HER.*

EVELYN: I knew you would, Gran. I knew you would.

*EVELYN OPENS THE MUSIC BOX. THE MUSIC BOX
ILLUMINATES AND THE MUSIC BOX PLAYS. THE
SOUND OF A BREEZE FADES IN, AND THEN THE
SOUND OF INCOHERENT WHISPERS CONTINUES IN
THE BACKGROUND.*

PNEUMA: We have waited for you... and now, the door is open.

LIGHTS DOWN.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

CURTAINS OPEN, LIGHTS UP. SAME SET AS BEFORE. IT IS THE FOLLOWING DAY. THE BOXES HAVE GONE AND THE APARTMENT LOOKS TIDIER. THE PLANTS THAT WERE LOOKING IN POOR HEALTH ARE NOW BACK TO FULL HEALTH. EVELYN IS SITTING ON THE SOFA HOLDING THE MUSIC BOX. EVELYN OPENS THE BOX WHICH ILLUMINATES. THE SOUND OF A BREEZE, AND WHISPERS FADE IN QUIETLY IN THE BACKGROUND.

EVELYN: Hi, Pneuma?

PNEUMA: Evelyn.

EVELYN: I just wanted to say, the plants are looking so much healthier now. Was that you?

PNEUMA: Yes.

EVELYN: Well, thanks, I guess.

PNEUMA: You're welcome.

EVELYN: Ummmm, so, what's it like where you are?

PNEUMA: Beautiful. Trees... rivers... mountains... lakes...

EVELYN: That does sound beautiful.

THE SOUND OF VOICES CAN BE HEARD FROM BEHIND THE FRONT DOOR. IT IS ISABELLE AND MR MALEK. THE FRONT DOOR OPENS AND EVELYN CLOSES THE BOX. ISABELLE STANDS IN THE DOORWAY FOR A MOMENT. SHE IS DRESSED IN CORPORATE ATTIRE AND IS CARRYING A LAPTOP BAG, HER HANDBAG, AND A SMALL BACKPACK. SHE PUTS THE BAGS DOWN ON THE FLOOR NEAR THE FRONT DOOR. EVELYN PUTS THE MUSIC BOX DOWN ON THE SOFA BESIDE HER.

ISABELLE: Come in.

DR MALAK: Thank you.

ISABELLE: Oh, hey Ev.

EVELYN: Hey.

ISABELLE: I asked Dr Malak to come over and have a quick chat.

DR MALAK: Hello, Evelyn.

EVELYN: Hi.

DR MALAK: It has been a little while.

EVELYN: Nine months.

DR MALAK: Has it been that long already? Time flies. Do you mind if I take a seat?

EVELYN: Sure.

*DR MALAK WALKS OVER TO THE KITCHEN TABLE
AND TAKES A CHAIR AND MOVES IT CLOSER TO
THE SOFA WHERE EVELYN IS SITTING.*

ISABELLE: Can I get you anything? Coffee? Water...

DR MALAK: A glass of water, thank you.

ISABELLE: Ev?

*EVELYN SHAKES HER HEAD. ISABELLE EXITS INTO
KITCHEN.*

DR MALAK: So, how have you been?

EVELYN: Good.

DR MALAK: Isabelle was telling me your Grandmother passed away recently.

EVELYN: Yeah.

DR MALAK: Do you want to talk about it?

ISABELLE ENTERS WITH A GLASS OF WATER AND HANDS IT TO DR MALAK.

EVELYN: Not really.

ISABELLE: I will just go check my emails.

DR MALAK: That's fine.

ISABELLE PICKS UP HER BAGS AND EXITS INTO HER BEDROOM.

DR MALAK: Isabelle is a little concerned about you. She said you have been talking to your Grandmother. Do you want to tell me about that?

EVELYN: I don't know... I mean, it helps... you know... to think she is still here.

DR MALAK: Of course. Can you keep a secret?

EVELYN NODS.

DR MALAK: When my father died, I spoke to him for many months afterwards. And then one bright sunny day, I let him go. But I carry our memories right here inside me. When you are ready, pick a bright sunny day like I did, and set her free.

EVELYN NODS. SHE IS CLOSE TO TEARS.

DR MALAK: Are you okay?

EVELYN NODS.

DR MALAK: Isabelle was also telling me about a music box. Is that it?

EVELYN NODS.

DR MALAK: She said that you talk to it.

EVELYN SHAKES HER HEAD.

DR MALAK: So, you don't talk to the box?

EVELYN: No. Well, sort of...

DR MALAK: What do you mean?

EVELYN: I don't talk to the box... I talk to Pneuma inside the box?

DR MALAK: Pneuma?

EVELYN: You'll think I'm crazy.

DR MALAK: Try me...

EVELYN: Okay, but don't say I didn't warn you.

DR MALAK: I'm listening.

EVELYN: Well, I was going through Gran's things, and I found this music box.

EVELYN HOLDS UP THE MUSIC BOX.

EVELYN: And when I opened it, at first I just heard the music. But then... but then I heard the voices.

DR MALAK: Voices?

EVELYN: Coming from the box. Like whispering voices... and then Pneuma spoke to me.

DR MALAK: What did Pneuma say?

EVELYN: I don't know... words... at first it was just my name. But then she brought the flowers back to life.

DR MALAK: She brought the flowers back to life?

EVELYN: The flowers... they were wilted. And Pneuma brought them back to life. See?

EVELYN POINTS TO THE FLOWERS AND DR MALAK LOOKS OVER TO THEM. THE FLOWERS ARE LOOKING FRESH.

EVELYN: Pneuma did that.

DR MALAK: I see...

EVELYN: And the plants...

DR MALAK: What about the plants?

EVELYN: Pneuma fixed those too.

DR MALAK: Can you see Pneuma?

EVELYN: No.

DR MALAK: Did you see the Pneuma fix the plants or the flowers?

EVELYN: Not exactly, but...

DR MALAK: Then how do you know Pneuma fixed them?

EVELYN: Because she told me.

DR MALAK: She told you?

EVELYN: I knew you wouldn't believe me.

DR MALAK: Evelyn, I'm only trying to understand...

EVELYN: I think I've had enough.

DR MALAK: Okay... but I want you to know, I'm here for you anytime you want to talk, okay?

EVELYN: Okay.

DR MALAK: Would you mind if I speak to your sister in private for a minute?

EVELYN: Sure, I'll go get her.

DR MALAK: Thank you.

*EVELYN STANDS AND GOES TO ISABELLE'S
BEDROOM DOOR, KNOCKS THEN STICKS HER HEAD
IN.*

EVELYN: Dr Malak wants to speak with you.

*EVELYN EXITS INTO HER BEDROOM AND CLOSES
THE DOOR. ISABELLE ENTERS AND SITS ON THE
SOFA.*

ISABELLE: How did you go?

DR MALAK: She is obviously still missing her Grandmother. She just needs some time to adjust.

ISABELLE: I get that, but what about talking to the box? Should I be concerned about that?

DR MALAK: Well, she always had a good imagination.

ISABELLE: That's not imagination...

DR MALAK: Give her some time, Isabelle. Just keep an eye on her and let me know if things get worse.

ISABELLE: Worse?

DR MALAK: You know, self-harm, suicidal ideation... In the meantime, let her work through her grief in whatever way works for her.

ISABELLE: Well, thank you so much for coming by.

ISABELLE STANDS.

DR MALAK: Anytime.

DR MALAK STANDS AND ISABELLE WALKS HIM TO THE FRONT DOOR. DR MALAK HANDS HER THE GLASS OF WATER.

DR MALAK: Thank you.

ISABELLE OPENS THE DOOR. TOM IS STANDING THERE ABOUT TO KNOCK.

DR MALAK: Have a good evening.

ISABELLE: You too, Dr Malak.

TOM STEPS ASIDE TO LET DR MALAK PAST AS HE EXITS, THEN STEPS BACK INTO THE DOORWAY.

ISABELLE: Can I help you?

TOM: Hi, I'm Tom.

ISABELLE STARES BLANKLY AT TOM.

TOM: Is Evelyn home?

ISABELLE CALLS OUT TO EVELYN.

ISABELLE: Evelyn, you have a visitor!

EVELYN ENTERS AND HER FACE LIGHTS UP.

EVELYN: Oh, hey Tom!

TOM: Hey!

EVELYN: Come in.

TOM ENTERS. ISABELLE SHUTS THE DOOR BEHIND HIM.

EVELYN: Tom, this is my sister Isabelle. Iz, Tom.

TOM: Hi.

ISABELLE: Hi Tom.

EVELYN: Tom is fresh meat!

ISABELLE: Ahhhh, fresh meat, huh?!

EVELYN: He is Mr Anderson's nephew. He is staying with him for a while.

ISABELLE: Well, welcome to the building, Tom.

TOM: Thank you.

ISABELLE: Well, I have some emails to finish.

ISABELLE SMILES AND RAISES HER EYEBROWS AT EVELYN AS SHE EXITS INTO HER BEDROOM.

TOM: I was just walking by, and thought I would see if you had any more boxes you needed moving.

EVELYN: Not at the moment. I haven't had a chance to sort through any more of Gran's stuff.

TOM: Oh, okay. Ahhhh... I brought this, just in case...

TOM REACHES INTO HIS POCKET AND PULLS OUT A PACK OF CARDS 'EXPLODING KITTENS'.

EVELYN: Oh my gosh, exploding kittens! I love that game!

TOM: Want a game?

EVELYN: Sure!

EVELYN MOVES THE CHAIR OVER THAT DR MALAK HAD BEEN SITTING ON BACK TO THE TABLE. SHE AND TOM SIT AT THE TABLE. TOM TAKES THE CARDS OUT OF THE DECK. AND SETS UP FOR THE GAME.

EVELYN: I haven't played this for years.

TOM: I used to play all the time until my parents divorced. I tried playing with Uncle Henry, but he didn't get the rules.

EVELYN: Izzy and I used to play all the time until she got her job. She is so busy at work now, we hardly speak.

TOM HAS FINISHED SETTING UP THE GAME.

TOM: Alright, I dealt, so you go first.

EVELYN PICKS UP.

EVELYN: Ooooooh, nice!

TOM PICKS UP.

TOM: Ooooooh, nicer!

EVELYN PICKS UP AGAIN. SHE HAS PICKED UP THE EXPLODING KITTEN CARD.

EVELYN: Arrrrhhhh! Already?!

TOM LAUGHS.

TOM: Guess that puts me in the lead then.

EVELYN PLACES HER DEFUSE CARD ON THE DISCARD PILE AND TAKES THE PILE OF PICKUP CARDS, HIDES THEM UNDER THE TABLE AND PLACES THE EXPLODING KITTEN CARD BACK INTO THE DECK.

EVELYN: We'll see about that!

TOM EYES UP EVELYN, WHO IS GRINNING BACK AT HIM. HE SQUINTS HIS EYES, HESITATES, THEN PICKS UP. HE HAS PICKED UP THE EXPLODING KITTENS CARD.

TOM: I thought so!

EVELYN: Then why did you pick up, fresh meat?

TOM: Because I didn't realise you wanted to play rough, that's why.

EVELYN: I always play rough.

TOM: Well, I know that now...

TOM PLACES HIS DEFUSE CARD IN THE DISCARD PILE, TAKES THE PICKUP PILE, AND HIDES THEM UNDER THE TABLE AS HE PLACES THE EXPLODING KITTENS CARD BACK INTO THE DECK.

TOM: Two can play at that game!

EVELYN PUTS DOWN A SHUFFLE CARD.

EVELYN: Not that I don't trust you... It's just that I don't trust you.

EVELYN PICKS UP THE PICKUP PILE AND SHUFFLES THE DECK. EVELYN PICKS UP. TOM LAUGHS

TOM: Lucky you shuffled!

EVELYN: I thought so!

TOM PICKS UP. THEN EVELYN PICKS UP. THIS HAPPENS ANOTHER TWO TIMES IN QUICK SUCCESSION. WHEN EVELYN PICKS UP, TOM IS TOO QUICK AND PUTS HIS HAND ON TOP OF EVELYN'S HAND.

TOM: Sorry.

EVELYN: Don't be sorry.

EVELYN TAKES HIS HAND.

EVELYN: I'm having fun.

TOM: So am I.

EVELYN AND TOM LOOK EACH OTHER IN THE EYES FOR A BRIEF MOMENT. THE MOMENT IS BROKEN BY A KNOCK ON THE FRONT DOOR. EVELYN GETS UP AND OPENS THE FRONT DOOR. HENRY IS STANDING THERE.

EVELYN: Hi, Mr Anderson.

HENRY: I'm looking for the boy, have you seen...

EVELYN OPENS THE DOOR WIDER AND HENRY SPOTS TOM.

HENRY: Ah, there you are.

HENRY ENTERS.

TOM: What's up, Uncle Henry?

HENRY: I need you to go to 513. Mrs Higgins needs help removing some garbage.

TOM: Now?

HENRY: No, if you can get it done sometime between now and Christmas, I'd really appreciate it.

TOM: Alright, I'm going.

TOM STANDS AND TALKS TO EVELYN.

TOM: I won't be long.

HENRY: Quickly, boy!

TOM EXITS.

HENRY: He wasn't giving you any trouble, was he?

EVELYN: No, not at all.

HENRY: He's a worry that boy.

EVELYN: As long as he's helping you out, Mr Anderson.

HENRY: He is, sort of. I just don't tell him that in case he gets a big head.

EVELYN: I don't think there is much chance of that.

HENRY: Well, I'd best be going.

HENRY NOTICES THE PLANTS AND POINTS TO ONE.

HENRY: I wish mine were as healthy as those. I barely manage to keep them alive since Margaret passed.

EVELYN: That bad, huh?

HENRY: They're practically dead.

EVELYN HAS A MOMENT OF REALISATION.

EVELYN: I might be able to help...

HENRY: I don't want to go to any bother...

EVELYN: It's okay... I have some... friends that may be able to help.

HENRY: Don't bother. I was never much of a green thumb anyway.

EVELYN: Leave it with me!

EVELYN SMILES.

HENRY: Okay, whatever you say. Well, let me know if the boy bothers you.

EVELYN: I will.

HENRY EXITS AND EVELYN CLOSES THE DOOR. SHE SITS ON THE SOFA AND PICKS UP THE MUSIC BOX. SHE OPENS IT, AND IT ILLUMINATES. THE MUSIC STARTS, AND THEN THE SOUND OF A BREEZE FADES IN, FOLLOWED BY WHISPERING.

EVELYN: Hello, Pneuma?

PNEUMA: Evelyn.

EVELYN: You know how you brought my flowers and plants back to life?

PNEUMA: Yes.

EVELYN: Well... can you fix them for someone else?

PNEUMA: Yes, I can.

EVELYN: Okay, can you make Mr Anderson's plants healthy again? He lives in our building in the Maintenance apartment on the ground floor.

PNEUMA: It is done.

EVELYN: That was quick! Well, thank you.

PNEUMA: You're welcome.

ISABELLE ENTERS FROM HER BEDROOM AND EVELYN CLOSES THE BOX. EVELYN IS CLEARLY IN A HAPPY MOOD.

ISABELLE: That's those pesky emails out of the way. Are you hungry?

EVELYN: Sure.

ISABELLE: What do you feel like?

EVELYN: I'm easy.

ISABELLE: Pizza?

EVELYN: I thought we were having Pizza on Friday.

ISABELLE: That's right... I don't feel much like cooking, so how about a microwave meal?

EVELYN: What do we have?

ISABELLE: Let me check.

ISABELLE EXITS INTO KITCHEN.

ISABELLE: Spag bol?

EVELYN: Sure, sounds good.

ISABELLE: How did you go with Tom?

EVELYN: Good... we played exploding kittens.

ISABELLE: Ahhhh... we haven't played that in ages.

EVELYN: I know... and Tom found out the hard way how competitive I am.

ISABELLE: Did you win?

EVELYN: Not yet. He had something to do for Mr Anderson.

ISABELLE: Is he coming back?

EVELYN: I think so.

ISABELLE ENTERS FROM KITCHEN.

ISABELLE: Well, he seems nice.

EVELYN: He is.

ISABELLE: He'll be a nice distraction.

EVELYN: What do you mean?

ISABELLE: You know... from everything else.

EVELYN: I don't want to talk about it.

ISABELLE: Okay, but it's nice you've got a new friend.

*THERE IS A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. ISABELLE
OPENS THE DOOR AND TOM IS STANDING THERE
PANTING.*

ISABELLE: Hi, Tom.

EVELYN: That was quick!

ISABELLE: Come in.

TOM: I ran as fast as my braces would let me.

ISABELLE: I'm heating up microwave dinners for Ev and I. Would you like to stay for dinner?

TOM: I'd love to, but I have to cook later for Uncle Henry. He says it builds character, but he's just a bad cook.

EVELYN: Want to finish getting smashed?

TOM: Sure!

ISABELLE: I shall leave you two alone while dinner is cooking.

*ISABELLE EXITS IN TO HER BEDROOM. EVELYN
STANDS FROM THE SOFA SITS AT THE TABLE. TOM
SIT AT THE TABLE AS WELL.*

TOM: Where were we?

ISABELLE: It's your turn.

TOM: Well, you shuffled, so...

TOM PICKS UP AND IT IS AN EXPLODING KITTEN CARD.

TOM: Arrrrhhhh! What are the chances?! Another game?

EVELYN: Sure, but first, can I ask a favour?

TOM: Okay...

EVELYN: Can you go see your Uncle Henry and check how his plants are going?

TOM: His plants?!

EVELYN: Can you do it?

TOM: Why?

EVELYN: I will tell you later. Please?

TOM: Okay, but I want to win the next game of exploding kittens.

EVELYN: I'll go easy on you.

TOM: Sure you will!

EVELYN LAUGHS THEN TOM LAUGHS. TOM GETS UP FROM THE TABLE, AND EVELYN FOLLOWS.

TOM: Okay, I'll be back in a minute.

EVELYN OPENS THE DOOR FOR HIM.

EVELYN: As fast as your braces will let you.

TOM EXITS AND EVELYN CLOSSES THE DOOR.

EVELYN: Oh, Gran! I really like him! He's cute and funny, and he really understands me. He's disabled too, so he totally gets me. And he's helpful, helping Mr Anderson like that... he obviously has a good heart. What do you think, Gran? Yeah, I think so too. And

he is helping me too, Gran. That was nice of him to go check on Mr Anderson's plants. I mean, Pneuma did say she had fixed them, so let's see what happens. I can't wait to find out. It would be amazing if they were fixed because it would mean I'm not crazy after all. I wouldn't want Tom to think I'm crazy, would I Gran? Oh my gosh, Tom! What if the plants are fixed? What am I going to tell him? I can't tell him about Pneuma, or he WILL think I'm crazy. What should I tell him, Gran? Good idea.

ISABELLE'S BEDROOM DOOR OPENS AND ISABELLE ENTERS.

ISABELLE: Has Tom gone already?

EVELYN: He'll be back in a minute.

ISABELLE: You two look cute together.

EVELYN: I really like him.

ISABELLE: I can tell.

EVELYN: Just don't tell him about the whole talking to Gran and the music box thing, please?

ISABELLE: Don't worry, I wouldn't dream of it. Besides, I am kind of hoping that now you have a friend, you might stop that nonsense.

EVELYN: It's not nonsense!

ISABELLE: Talking to dead people and having an invisible friend that lives inside a box isn't nonsense?

EVELYN: Would you stop it?

ISABELLE: Stop what?

EVELYN: Attacking me!

ISABELLE: I'm not attacking you...

EVELYN: You're calling me a liar!

ISABELLE: Ev, it's not normal...

EVELYN: Oh, so now I'm not normal!

ISABELLE: Ev...

EVELYN: Leave me alone!

*EVELYN STORMS OFF AND EXITS INTO HER
BEDROOM AND SLAMS THE DOOR. ISABELLE LETS
OUT A BIG SIGH.*

ISABELLE: What are we going to do with you?

*THERE IS A KNOCK ON THE DOOR. ISABELLE
OPENS THE DOOR AND TOM IS STANDING THERE
WITH A GRIN ON HIS FACE.*

TOM: Is Evelyn here?

ISABELLE: I don't think it's a good time right now...

TOM: Oh, okay. Can you pass on a message?

ISABELLE: Sure.

TOM: Can you tell her that whatever she did to the plants
was amazing?

ISABELLE: Ummm, why don't you come in a moment?

TOM: Okay.

*TOM ENTERS AND ISABELLE CLOSES THE DOOR
BEHIND HIM.*

ISABELLE: So tell me, what happened?

TOM: I don't really know. Evelyn asked me to go down to
see Uncle Henry and check on his plants. Uncle Henry

took a look and he couldn't believe his eyes. He said, one minute he was telling Evelyn about how bad they were, and the next minute the plants had come back to life, better than when Aunt Margaret was looking after them.

ISABELLE: Are you sure?

TOM: If there is one thing I know about uncle Henry, he says it as he sees it.

ISABELLE: Give me one minute...

ISABELLE GOES AND KNOCKS ON EVELYN'S DOOR.

ISABELLE: Ev...

EVELYN: Go away!

ISABELLE: Tom's here.

A COUPLE OF SECONDS PASS. EVELYN'S DOOR OPENS AND EVELYN ENTERS WIPING A TEAR FROM HER EYE. SHE TALKS AS IF SHE IS UPSET AT FIRST.

EVELYN: Hi, Tom.

TOM: What did you do?

EVELYN: What do you mean?

TOM: With Uncle Henry's Plants. He can't believe how healthy they look.

EVELYN'S FACE BRIGHTENS A LITTLE.

EVELYN: Really?!

TOM: He said to say "Thanks" for whatever you did.

EVELYN: Oh, it was nothing.

TOM: What did you do?

EVELYN: It's a secret.

TOM: Well, whatever you did, it was amazing. The plants looked really healthy.

ISABELLE: I'm going to pop out for a moment.

ISABELLE EXITS VIA THE FRONT DOOR.

TOM: So, how did you really do it?

EVELYN: Do you want to know the secret?

TOM: Well, yeah...

EVELYN: Okay... the secret is... I used my magic powers.

TOM LAUGHS.

TOM: Magic powers, huh?

EVELYN: Yup.

TOM: Prove it!

EVELYN: Okay... I've got an idea! Wait here.

TOM: Okay...

EVELYN EXITS INTO HER BEDROOM.

TOM: You want me to wait here, right?!

EVELYN: Give me one minute.

TOM TAKES THE OPPORTUNITY TO LOOK AROUND THE LIVING ROOM.

TOM: You know if you come out with a chicken head, I'm leaving!

EVELYN: Relax, I'm not a witch.

TOM: I was thinking voodoo, but okay. I think I heard the microwave finish.

EVELYN: Okay, one second... I'm just about done.

TOM: You're not trying to get out of another game of exploding kittens, are you?

EVELYN: There!

EVELYN ENTERS CARRYING A PRINTED A4 PIECE OF PAPER. SHE HANDS IT TO TOM, AND TOM READS IT.

TOM: "Plant Healer. I will bring your plants back to full health. Call now!"

EVELYN: You want me to prove it, right?

TOM: But how...

EVELYN: Just put it on the noticeboard in the lift.

TOM: Ev, I don't think it's...

EVELYN MOVES CLOSER TO TOM AND KISSES HIM ON THE CHEEK.

EVELYN: For me...

TOM: Well, since you asked so nicely. I'll be back soon.

*TOM GOES TO THE FRONT DOOR AND EXITS.
EVELYN SIGHS. SHE WALKS OVER TO THE MUSIC BOX AND PICKS IT UP. SHE DOESN'T OPEN IT. SHE CLUTCHES IT TO HER CHEST AS IF SHE WERE HUGGING IT.*

EVELYN: They don't understand, Gran.

ISABELLE ENTERS. SHE IS ANGRY.

ISABELLE: Why are you winding Mr Anderson up?

EVELYN: What do you mean?

ISABELLE: He said you fixed his plants.

EVELYN: I did...

ISABELLE: Evelyn, stop it!

EVELYN: Stop what?

ISABELLE: This nonsense with the plants! I bumped into Tom...

EVELYN: So...

ISABELLE: Why is he putting a poster up in the lift? Something about plant healing...

EVELYN: Because... I don't know.

ISABELLE: He's going to think you're crazy, you know!

EVELYN: Well, that will make two people then, won't it?!

ISABELLE: Evelyn, I'm just trying to help.

EVELYN: I don't need your help!

ISABELLE: Fine!

ISABELLE STORMS OFF INTO HER ROOM AND SLAMS HER DOOR CLOSED.

EVELYN: Fine!

THERE IS A KNOCK ON THE FRONT DOOR. EVELYN OPENS THE DOOR AND TOM IS STANDING THERE WITH A SMILE ON HIS FACE.

TOM: The poster is up.

EVELYN: Thanks.

TOM: Are you alright? You look upset.

EVELYN: Yeah, now's not a good time...

TOM: Okay, well, I'll come by tomorrow and see how you're doing.

EVELYN: Sounds good.

TOM: Bye.

EVELYN: Bye.

EVELYN CLOSSES THE DOOR AND GOES OVER TO THE SOFA AND SITS WITH THE MUSIC BOX. AFTER A MOMENT, SHE OPENS IT. THE SOUND OF THE MUSIC PLAYS, THEN THE BREEZE AND WHISPERS FADE IN AS USUAL.

EVELYN: Hi Pneuma.

PNEUMA: Evelyn.

EVELYN: It worked... Mr Anderson's plants are better now.

PNEUMA: Yes.

EVELYN: You're sure you did that, right?

PNEUMA: Yes.

EVELYN: Just making sure.

PNEUMA: Evelyn.

EVELYN: Yes?

PNEUMA: Gaia is dying. Earth is dying.

EVELYN: What do you mean?

PNEUMA: Gaia is dying. If Gaia dies, Earth dies.

EVELYN: I don't understand...

PNEUMA: You are chosen. You must help us.

EVELYN SLAMS THE DOOR OF THE BOX CLOSED.

EVELYN: Woah!

*EVELYN CONTEMPLATES FOR A MOMENT WHAT HAS
JUST HAPPENED.*

EVELYN: Chosen? Me? What if... she's right?!

LIGHTS FADE DOWN.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

CURTAINS OPEN, LIGHTS UP. SAME SET AS BEFORE. IT IS THE FOLLOWING DAY. IT IS IN THE EVENING. EVELYN IS ON THE SOFA HOLDING THE CLOSED BOX, AND IS WATCHING TV. THE NEWS IS ON. THERE IS A STORM OUTSIDE WITH THUNDER AND LIGHTNING.

TV ANNOUNCER 1: Experts say storms of this intensity are becoming more frequent and more destructive, with climate change driving rising sea temperatures and unstable atmospheric conditions. Tonight's storm is the third major event already this season, with gale-force winds and heavy rainfall expected to continue into the early hours. And now for the latest update, I will hand over to Jasmine.

TV ANNOUNCER 2: Thanks, Sarah. Right now, wind gusts of up to ninety kilometres an hour have already been recorded, and rainfall totals could exceed one hundred and fifty millimetres by morning causing flash flooding in low-lying areas. Once again, authorities are urging people to stay indoors and off the roads if possible. Back to you, Sarah.

TV ANNOUNCER 1: Thank you, Jasmine. We'll continue to bring you updates throughout the evening.

EVELYN PICKS UP THE TV REMOTE AND TURNS OFF THE TV. THE STORM RUMBLES QUIETLY IN THE BACKGROUND.

EVELYN: She warned me. Gaia is dying.

THERE IS A FLASH OF LIGHTNING, FOLLOWED BY A LOUD CLAP OF THUNDER. EVELYN CLUTCHES THE BOX TIGHTLY AND CLOSES HER EYES.

EVELYN: Oh, Gran, I hate thunderstorms! I remember you used to hold me so tight. Sometimes I would hide under my bed, and you would have to drag me out. And if the power went out, I would scream until you could find

the torch. I wish you were here now, Gran. I could really use one of your warm hugs right now.

THERE IS ANOTHER FLASH OF LIGHTNING FOLLOWED BY A LOUD CLAP OF THUNDER. THE LIGHTS GO COMPLETELY OUT AND EVELYN SCREAMS. SHE OPENS THE BOX AND IT ILLUMINATES EVELYN'S FACE. THE SOUND OF THE BREEZE AND WHISPERS FADE IN OVER THE TOP OF THE STORM. EVELYN STANDS AND CARRIES THE BOX TOWARDS THE KITCHEN. SHE EXITS, AND ENTERS A FEW SECONDS LATER WITH A TORCH. THE TORCH IS MUCH BRIGHTER THAN THE LIGHT FROM THE MUSIC BOX.

EVELYN: Oh, Gran! I'm scared.

PNEUMA: Evelyn!

EVELYN: Shit! Not a good time right now, Pneuma!

PNEUMA: Evelyn! It is important!

EVELYN: What's important?

PNEUMA: Climate change is choking Gaia.

EVELYN: I saw it on the news about climate change making things worse.

PNEUMA: Yes. Climate is worse. Gaia is dying.

EVELYN: But what can I do?

PNEUMA: You are chosen. You must join us.

EVELYN: Join you?

PNEUMA: We are fading. Please. Help us.

*THERE IS ANOTHER FLASH OF LIGHTNING
FOLLOWED BY A LOUD CLAP OF THUNDER. EVELYN
SCREAMS AND SHUTS THE MUSIC BOX. THE LIGHTS
IN THE ROOM FLICKER AND COME BACK ON.*

EVELYN: Oh my gosh! Thank goodness! I almost peed my pants.

*EVELYN TURNS OFF THE TORCH AND PUTS IT DOWN
BESIDE HER ON THE SOFA.*

EVELYN: I think I will keep you close by.

*THERE IS A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. EVELYN PICKS
UP THE TORCH, STANDS, AND GOES OVER TO THE
FRONT DOOR AND OPENS IT. TOM IS STANDING
THERE PANTING, HOLDING A TORCH.*

EVELYN: Hey, Tom, come in.

TOM ENTERS AND EVELYN CLOSSES THE DOOR.

TOM: I came running up the stairs as soon as the lights went out.

EVELYN: Awwww, thanks. It's crazy out there!

TOM: It sure is. Uncle Henry is outside tying things down.

EVELYN: You aren't helping him?

TOM: He told me to stay inside. I tried to argue with him, but he can be pretty stubborn.

EVELYN: Well, I'm glad you came to check on me.

TOM: No problem.

EVELYN'S PHONE RINGS.

EVELYN: Hello? Oh, hi, Mrs Cooper. They did? Well, that's fantastic news! I'm glad they're healthier. Anytime, just give me a call. You're welcome. Bye.

TOM: Someone about the plants?

EVELYN: Mrs Cooper in 412.

TOM: So tell me, how are you doing it exactly?

EVELYN: I told you... magic.

TOM: I've seen enough magicians revealing their tricks to know it isn't real.

EVELYN: It can be... if you believe.

TOM: I mean, something is going on. Uncle Henry is still raving about how healthy the plants are looking, and I know it's not him doing it.

EVELYN: Like I said... magic.

TOM: Well, how about you teach me your magic trick sometime?

EVELYN: Some other time.

TOM: When?

EVELYN: Not just yet...

TOM: You sure are mysterious, Evelyn Ross.

EVELYN: And I think you're very cute, Thomas Anderson.

EVELYN AND TOM KISS. THERE IS ANOTHER FLASH OF LIGHTNING FOLLOWED BY A LOUD CLAP OF THUNDER. THE LIGHTS GO OFF. EVELYN SCREAMS. THE LIGHTS COME ON AND EVELYN IS HUGGING TOM TIGHTLY.

TOM: Take it easy. You're crushing me!

EVELYN: Oh, don't be so dramatic.

TOM: Dramatic? I'm not the one who screamed.

EVELYN: You screamed too!

TOM: Did not!

EVELYN'S PHONE RINGS.

EVELYN: Hello? The poster? Yes, that was me. Heal your plants? No, no charge. What apartment are you in? 609, got it. No, I don't need to come in. Ahhh, magic? Okay, give me 10 minutes. Bye.

TOM: Another plant call?

EVELYN: Yeah, Mrs Dibble. Ummmm, would you mind giving me some privacy?

TOM: Scared I'll learn your secret, huh?!

EVELYN: You could go check on your Uncle Henry?

TOM: I suppose I should. He shouldn't be out in this crazy weather, being sick and all.

EVELYN WALKS TOM TO THE DOOR AND OPENS IT.

EVELYN: Give me ten minutes.

TOM: Okay... are you sure it's not voodoo?

EVELYN: Don't be silly!

EVELYN KISSES TOM. TOM EXITS. EVELYN CLOSES THE DOOR. SHE PICKS UP THE MUSIC BOX AND SITS ON THE SOFA. SHE OPENS THE MUSIC BOX, AND MUSIC PLAYS. THE SOUND OF A BREEZE AND WHISPERING FADE IN.

EVELYN: Hi Pneuma.

PNEUMA: Evelyn.

EVELYN: I have another one for you... Mrs Dibble... Apartment 609.

THERE IS A BRIEF MOMENT OF SILENCE.

PNEUMA: It is done.

EVELYN: Thanks Pneuma!

PNEUMA: Evelyn.

EVELYN: Yes Pneuma?

PNEUMA: You must help us.

THE FRONT DOOR OPENS AND ISABELLE ENTERS. THE SOUND OF THE BREEZE AND WHISPERING IMMEDIATELY STOP. ONLY THE SOUND OF THE MUSIC BOX AND THE DISTANT SOUND OF THE STORM OUTSIDE ARE AUDIBLE. ISABELLE HAS HER BAGS AND AN UMBRELLA. SHE SEES EVELYN ON THE SOFA WITH THE BOX OPEN, SO SHE ENTERS AND CLOSSES THE DOOR QUIETLY AND LISTENS.

EVELYN: What do you mean?

EVELYN: I know Gaia is dying...

EVELYN: Help? But how?

EVELYN: How do I do that?

EVELYN: Pneuma, I can't!

EVELYN: I know, but...

EVELYN: Give some time to think, okay?

EVELYN: Okay, Pneuma.

EVELYN CLOSSES THE MUSIC BOX AND THE MUSIC STOPS PLAYING.

ISABELLE: Think about what?

EVELYN SCREAMS AND CLUTCHES AT HER CHEST.

EVELYN: You almost gave me a heart attack!

ISABELLE: Who were you talking to?

EVELYN DOESN'T RESPOND.

ISABELLE: Ev? Ev speak to me!

*EVELYN GETS UP AND WALKS TO HER BEDROOM
HOLDING THE MUSIC BOX AND CLOSES THE DOOR.
ISABELLE PUTS DOWN HER BAGS AND UMBRELLA
AND CALLS DR MALAK.*

ISABELLE: Hello Dr Malak, it's Isabelle Ross. I'm good. Hey, ummm, are you available to come around? Tonight, if possible. I just walked in from work and Evelyn was talking to the music box again. No it was a full on conversation and I'm really getting concerned now. I tried, but she just stormed off to her room. Thanks, I would really appreciate it! I will, okay, bye.

*ISABELLE PICKS UP HER BAGS AND EXITS INTO
HER BEDROOM. SHE RETURNS EMPTY HANDED. SHE
TAKES THE UMBRELLA AND EXITS INTO THE
KITCHEN WITH IT AND RETURNS EMPTY HANDED.
SHE GOES OVER TO EVELYN'S BEDROOM DOOR AND
KNOCKS.*

ISABELLE: Ev, come out and talk to me.

ISABELLE: Ev?

ISABELLE: Fine!

*THERE A LOUD KNOCK AT THE FRONT DOOR.
ISABELLE OPENS THE DOOR AND TOM IS STANDING
THERE PANTING.*

ISABELLE: Tom...

TOM: It's Uncle Henry! He's not well.

ISABELLE: Is he okay?

TOM: I don't know, he's coughing badly. Blood...

ISABELLE: Come in, and wait here with Ev! I'll go and check on him.

TOM: Okay...

*TOM ENTERS AND ISABELLE EXITS AND CLOSES
THE DOOR. TOM STANDS THERE A MOMENT.*

TOM: Ev?

*THERE IS NO ANSWER. HE KNOCKS ON EVELYN'S
BEDROOM DOOR.*

EVELYN: Go away!

TOM: It's me, Tom.

EVELYN'S DOOR OPENS AND EVELYN ENTERS.

EVELYN: Is she here?

TOM: No, she went down to check on Uncle Henry. He's not well.

EVELYN: Good! I mean, good she's gone. What's wrong with him?

TOM: He was coughing a lot of blood.

EVELYN: Oh my gosh! I hope he's okay.

TOM: He didn't look too good.

EVELYN: Isabelle will know what to do. She's a first aid officer at her work.

TOM: That's a relief.

EVELYN: Are you okay?

TOM: Yeah, I guess. I'm just worried about Uncle Henry. You?

EVELYN: Angry, upset, but feeling a bit better now that you're here.

TOM: Awwwww, thanks.

EVELYN'S PHONE RINGS.

EVELYN: Hello? The plants? Would you excuse me, one moment.

EVELYN RAISES HER FINGER TO TOM AS IF TO SAY ONE MOMENT, AND EXITS INTO HER BEDROOM AND CLOSES THE DOOR. TOM GOES OVER TO THE PLANTS AND EXAMINES THEM. THEY ARE LOOKING PARTICULARLY HEALTHY. EVELYN ENTERS FROM THE BEDROOM HOLDING THE MUSIC BOX.

TOM: Another plant call?

EVELYN: Something like that... did you bring Exploding Kittens?

TOM: What's going on?

EVELYN: What do you mean?

TOM: With this whole plant thing.

EVELYN: Oh, it's just a little fun, that's all.

TOM: Fun? Half the building is talking about it.

EVELYN: It's like a placebo, you know... if you tell someone they feel better, they feel better.

TOM: Ah no. Uncle Henry was ecstatic his plants were better. He said it was a miracle. I even saw the difference. They look noticeably healthier.

EVELYN: Placebos can affect the eyes too.

TOM: Ev, come on...

EVELYN: Alright, fine! Come sit on the sofa!

*TOM GOES OVER TO THE SOFA AND SITS,
FOLLOWED BY EVELYN.*

EVELYN: No talking...

*EVELYN PICKS UP HER PHONE AND DIALS ON LOUD
SPEAKER.*

EVELYN: Hello, Mrs Emeny?

MRS EMENY: Yes?

EVELYN: You just called me, it's Evelyn, about the plants.

MRS EMENY: Oh, yes dear.

EVELYN: I was wondering, how are they?

MRS EMENY: Oh my goodness me! Would you look at that? That fern was almost dead a few minutes ago, and now look at it! It's greener than it has ever been. Well, I must say that is a miracle if ever I saw one.

EVELYN: Are you sure?

MRS EMENY: Dear, that fern was as good as dead. Now its as healthy as can be. How marvellous.

EVELYN: Okay, well, don't hesitate to call me if you have any other plant issues.

MRS EMENY: I will most certainly do that, my dear. Thank you so very much.

EVELYN: Okay, well, you have a good evening.

MRS EMENY: You too, dear. Goodbye.

EVELYN: Bye.

EVELYN HANGS UP ON THE CALL.

EVELYN: What I am about to tell you, might be a little... hard to believe, but I need you to trust me, and you have to promise that you won't laugh.

TOM: Okay...

EVELYN: This music box...

EVELYN OPENS THE MUSIC BOX. AS ALWAYS IT ILLUMINATES. THE SOUND OF THE MUSIC BOX PLAYS.

EVELYN: I found it amongst my Gran's things. I almost threw it away, but when I opened it, I heard them...

TOM: Who?

EVELYN: Just listen!

TOM LISTENS INTENTLY BUT ONLY THE SOUND OF THE MUSIC BOX CAN BE HEARD.

EVELYN: Can you hear them?

TOM: I can hear the music box.

EVELYN: Pneuma, say hello to Tom.

TOM: Who's Pneuma?

EVELYN: Shhhh! Can't you hear her? She is saying hello.

TOM LOOKS AROUND ROOM.

TOM: Wait a minute? Is this some sort of prank you guys play on the newbies?

TOM STARTS LAUGHING. EVELYN CLOSES THE MUSIC BOX.

EVELYN: So, you didn't hear them?

TOM: I heard the music...

EVELYN: Maybe I am going crazy!

TOM: You're not crazy. At least I hope you're not crazy.

EVELYN HITS HIM LIGHTLY IN THE ARM.

TOM: Okay, let's just say for argument's sake, I heard... Pneuma, was it?

EVELYN: Pneuma, yes.

TOM: What does she say to you?

EVELYN: It's a voice, like a ghostly voice. I don't know how she does it, but when I open the box, I can hear whispers. And she... I don't know... heals the plants.

TOM: Okay...

EVELYN: She said she is the breath of Gaia, and that they need my help.

TOM: Gaia? What's Gaia?

EVELYN: Gaia, oh, Mother Nature.

TOM: Well, that would explain the plants.

EVELYN: You see!

TOM: Not really.

EVELYN: I'm not lying, if that's what you mean.

TOM: I never said you were lying, it's just a lot to... process.

EVELYN: Well, I won't bother you with it again. Game?

TOM: I didn't bring the cards, sorry.

EVELYN: That's okay. We could watch a scary movie?

TOM: In this storm? No thanks!

EVELYN: I knew you screamed.

TOM: Did not.

EVELYN: Did too.

TOM: Okay, maybe just a little...

EVELYN: I knew it!

THE FRONT DOOR OPENS, AND ISABELLE ENTERS.

ISABELLE: Hey.

TOM: How is Uncle Henry?

ISABELLE: I had to call an ambulance. They've just taken him away.

TOM: Is he okay, though?

ISABELLE: He'll be fine. They are just going to run some tests and keep him overnight for observation.

TOM: Okay, cool.

ISABELLE: Oh, he gave me this to give to you.

ISABELLE HANDS TOM A PHONE.

ISABELLE: Just in case anyone has an emergency. He said to tell you to just take a message because, and I quote, that boy couldn't fix his way out of a paper bag.

TOM LAUGHS.

TOM: That's Uncle Henry, alright!

EVELYN'S PHONE RINGS.

EVELYN: Excuse me...

*EVELYN EXITS INTO HER BEDROOM AND CLOSES
THE DOOR.*

TOM: Probably another plant call.

ISABELLE: Between you and me, and please don't tell Evelyn I said this, but I am just a little bit worried about her at the moment.

TOM: About what exactly?

ISABELLE: This whole plant thing. Did she tell you about it?

TOM: A little.

ISABELLE: What did she tell you?

TOM: Well, she said that she hears voices coming from the box, and they heal the plants. Oh, and something about Mother Nature.

ISABELLE: Exactly! Concerning, right?

TOM: I mean, she did sound... I don't know, like it was real.

ISABELLE: But don't you think that's weird?

TOM: I guess so, a little.

ISABELLE: Well, I have Dr Malak her psychologist coming over a little later. Please, in the meantime, don't feed into the whole music box thing. We have to get her to see she's just imagining the voices.

TOM: She's not crazy, if that's what you're implying.

ISABELLE: I never said she was crazy. She just needs some help.

TOM: I think she just needs someone to listen to her.

ISABELLE: Great! Then use that! Listen to her, and get her to see that the voices aren't real!

TOM: I don't know...

ISABELLE: Look, I will leave you two alone. But I want you to distract her, okay?

TOM: Distract her?

ISABELLE: You know, play a game with her, talk to her, anything but that box. If you distract her enough, she might forget about it.

TOM SIGHS.

TOM: Okay, I'll distract her.

ISABELLE: Thank you! I will go do some work. But remember, keep her away from the box.

TOM: Okay!

ISABELLE EXITS INTO HER ROOM. TOM KNOCKS ON EVELYN'S DOOR.

TOM: Ev.

EVELYN: One second...

EVELYN ENTERS FROM HER BEDROOM. SHE IS HOLDING THE BOX.

TOM: Hey, want to have a game?

EVELYN: Sure!

TOM: Cool, I'll be back as fast as my braces can carry me.

EVELYN: No problem.

*TOM EXITS. EVELYN SITS AT THE TABLE
WAITING. HER PHONE RINGS.*

EVELYN: Hello? Yes, this is the plant lady. Oh, hi Jeff. Aha. Yes. No, I don't. Sorry, which apartment are you in? The building across the road? Sorry, who told you? Mrs Higgins? Apartment 307, got it. Okay, I will see what I can do. No problem, bye.

EVELYN HANGS UP THE PHONE.

EVELYN: Woah! This is starting to get a little crazy.

*EVELYN LOOKS AROUND THE ROOM TO MAKE SURE
NO ONE IS THERE AND THEN OPENS THE BOX. THE
BOX ILLUMINATES. THE SOUND OF THE MUSIC
PLAYS, FOLLOWED BY THE BREEZE AND
WHISPERING THAT FADE IN.*

EVELYN: Hi Pneuma.

PNEUMA: Evelyn.

EVELYN: I have another one, but it is in the building across the road. The big ugly brown one. Apartment 409. Is that okay?

PNEUMA: Yes.

EVELYN: Cool, thanks.

PNEUMA: It is done.

EVELYN: Thanks Pneuma, I will give him a call.

PNEUMA: Evelyn.

EVELYN: Yes, Pneuma?

PNEUMA: There is danger.

EVELYN: Danger?

PNEUMA: Isabelle... Tom... Danger.

EVELYN: Danger? How?

PNEUMA: Isabelle... Tom... Can not save us. Only you can save us. You are chosen.

EVELYN: It's okay, I can handle them.

PNEUMA: You must. They are danger.

EVELYN: Don't worry, I got it.

PNEUMA: Gaia is dying. Earth will burn... fires. Earth will drown... floods. Then Gaia will die. Earth will die. People will die.

EVELYN: I get it, but I still don't see how I...

EVELYN'S PHONE RINGS AGAIN.

EVELYN: Hang on a moment... Hello?

PNEUMA: Evelyn.

EVELYN: Shhhhhh!

PNEUMA: Evelyn. You must help us.

EVELYN: Oh, hi Jeff.

PNEUMA: We are dying.

EVELYN: Shush! Oh sorry, not you Jeff. Hang on a moment...

PNEUMA: Evelyn.

EVELYN: I'll close the box! Hi Jeff. No, I wasn't talking to you.

PNEUMA: You must choose...

EVELYN: Right, that's it.

EVELYN CLOSES THE BOX.

EVELYN: Sorry, Jeff. No, I definitely wasn't speaking to you. The plants? Oh great! That is good news. No problem. Tell your friends. You're welcome. Bye.

EVELYN HANGS UP THE PHONE. SHE LOOKS AT THE BOX AND PROCESSES WHAT IT HAS JUST SAID. SHE THEN GETS UP AND EXITS INTO THE KITCHEN AND ENTERS WITH TWO DRINKS AND A BOWL OF SNACKS WHICH SHE PUTS ON THE TABLE. THERE IS A KNOCK ON THE DOOR. SHE OPENS THE DOOR AND TOM IS STANDING IN THE DOORWAY HOLDING EXPLODING KITTENS AND SCRABBLE.

TOM: I tried to find some other games but this is all Uncle Henry had.

EVELYN: All good, come in.

TOM ENTERS AND THEY BOTH SIT AT THE TABLE.

TOM: Scrabble or Kittens?

EVELYN: You choose.

TOM: Okay, Scrabble, since you beat me at Kittens.

EVELYN: Trust me, I'm just as good at Scrabble. I used to beat Gran and Iz all the time.

TOM: Oh, man!

EVELYN LAUGHS.

EVELYN: Don't worry, fresh meat! I'll go easy on you.

TOM SETS UP SCRABBLE.

TOM: I'm sure you will.

EVELYN'S PHONE RINGS.

EVELYN: Excuse me a minute...

TOM: Ev.

EVELYN EXITS TO HER BEDROOM WITH THE MUSIC BOX AND CLOSES THE DOOR.

TOM: Dammit!

TOM CONTINUES TO SET UP SCRABBLE. EVELYN RETURNS WITH THE MUSIC BOX AFTER ABOUT 20 SECONDS.

EVELYN: Sorry.

TOM: Let's just play the game.

EVELYN: Okay... ready to lose?

EVELYN'S PHONE RINGS AGAIN.

TOM: Ev, please!

EVELYN: Last one, I promise!

EVELYN EXITS AGAIN AND GOES TO HER BEDROOM AND CLOSES THE DOOR.

TOM: Arrrrrrhhhhh!

EVELYN RETURNS AFTER ABOUT 20 SECONDS.

TOM: Finished?

EVELYN: I'll just...

EVELYN PUTS HER PHONE ON VIBRATE AND PUTS IT ON THE TABLE.

EVELYN: Okay, let's see who goes first.

EVELYN DRAWS A TILE FOLLOWED BY TOM.

TOM: Dammit, Q!

EVELYN: Off to a good start... E.

TOM SIGHS. EVELYN DRAWS HER TILES FOLLOWED BY TOM. EVELYN'S PHONE STARTS VIBRATING. EVELYN LOOKS TORN.

TOM: I might go...

TOM STANDS.

EVELYN: No, wait. I'll turn it off.

EVELYN TURNS THE PHONE OFF AND TOM SITS BACK DOWN.

TOM: Ev, I really like you. Like, really like you. But shouldn't I be more important to you than house plants?

EVELYN: You are. I'm sorry, I've turned it off. It won't happen again.

TOM: Give me the box.

EVELYN: What?

TOM: I don't want any more distractions.

EVELYN: It's okay, I'm not going to...

TOM: Give it!

EVELYN: Tom!

TOM: Okay...

TOM STANDS.

EVELYN: Fine! Here!

EVELYN HANDS TOM THE BOX. TOM TAKES IT AND PUTS IT IN THE KITCHEN.

TOM: No more distractions.

EVELYN: I'm sorry...

TOM: Let's just play.

EVELYN LOOKS AT HER TILES AND REARRANGES THEM A FEW TIMES. SHE PLAYS ALL 7 TILES.

EVELYN: Teacher.

TOM: You're kidding me?!

EVELYN: I tried to warn you.

TOM ADDS UP THE TOTAL AND GROANS.

TOM: 74?!

EVELYN: Your turn.

EVELYN PICKS HER TILES.

TOM: Let me see...

ISABELLE ENTERS FROM HER BEDROOM.

ISABELLE: Ooooooh, Scrabble!

TOM: She's trashing me already.

ISABELLE: You'd better get used to it. She used to beat Gran and I all the time.

EVELYN: I like winning! It's fun.

TOM: Well, take this...

TOM PLACES DOWN FOUR TILES AND DRAWS FOUR MORE.

EVELYN: Cheat?! What are you trying to say?

TOM LAUGHS. TOM ADDS UP THE SCORE AND WRITES IT DOWN.

TOM: Nothing, it's just a word.

EVELYN: Sure!

ISABELLE: Well, it's good to see you two playing.

TOM: Do you want to play?

ISABELLE: No, I'm fine, but it looks like you might need some help.

ISABELLE SITS AT THE TABLE AND SITS NEAR TOM WHERE SHE CAN SEE HIS TILES. ISABELLE PLAYS 4 TILES.

EVELYN: Coven.

TOM: Nice!

TOM ADDS UP THE SCORE AND WRITES IT DOWN. EVELYN DRAWS 4 MORE TILES.

ISABELLE: You have really bad letters.

TOM: Tell me about it.

EVELYN: I'm just going to refresh my drink. Would you like another one Tom?

TOM: Sure.

EVELYN: Iz?

ISABELLE: Ahhh, why not. I might be a here a while salvaging Tom's dignity.

*EVELYN GETS UP AND GOES INTO THE KITCHEN.
ISABELLE REARRANGES TOMS TILES, THEN POINTS
TO THE BOARD.*

ISABELLE: Do you mind if Tom has his turn?

EVELYN: Go for it.

*TOM PLACES HIS LETTERS DOWN AND COUNTS THE
SCORE.*

TOM: I got 27!

EVELYN: Cool.

*THE FAINT SOUND OF THE MUSIC BOX CAN BE
HEARD. ISABELLE MIMES TO TOM AS IF TO ASK
WHAT'S GOING ON. TOM SHRUGS HIS SHOULDERS.
THE SOUND OF EVELYN CAN BE HEARD BARELY.
SHE IS TRYING TO WHISPER. ISABELLE AND TOM
TALK IN A WHISPERED VOICE.*

ISABELLE: I thought you were you going to help me keep her away from the box.

TOM: I did!

ISABELLE: Well, clearly!

TOM: I put it in the kitchen!

ISABELLE: You should have hidden it.

TOM: She's fine...

ISABELLE: You do realize she's in the kitchen right now talking to a box?

TOM: I think you just need to trust her...

ISABELLE: Trust? I need to trust you! Who's side you're on Tom?

TOM: Side? Side?! I'm here because I like Ev... I'm not here to pick sides.

ISABELLE: Well, you're going to have to!

TOM STANDS.

TOM: Tell Ev I had go fix a leaking tap.

ISABELLE: Where are you going?

TOM: To fix a leaking tap!

ISABELLE: I need your help!

TOM: No, you need help.

ISABELLE: What does that mean?!

TOM: My parents tried to get back at each other when they separated by trying to get me to pick sides. I hated that. Tell Ev I'm sorry. I might be back later.

TOM EXITS VIA FRONT DOOR.

ISABELLE: Shit!

*THE SOUND OF THE MUSIC BOX ENDS. EVELYN
ENTERS FROM THE KITCHEN.*

EVELYN: Where's Tom?

ISABELLE: He had to go. He said something about a leaking tap.

EVELYN: What did you say to him?

ISABELLE: Nothing.

EVELYN: Bullshit!

ISABELLE: I didn't say anything!

EVELYN: He's only meant to take messages.

ISABELLE: Are you calling me a liar?!

EVELYN: You said, and I quote, that boy couldn't fix his way out of a paper bag.

ISABELLE: Alright! We were concerned about you talking to the box!

EVELYN: We? We?! If I find out you've tried to turn him against me, I will never forgive you!

ISABELLE: Ev, it's for your own good!

*EVELYN STOMPS OFF TO THE KITCHEN AND
RETURNS WITH THE BOX.*

EVELYN: I've waited long enough! The box is showing me the truth, and I swear... no one will stand in its way, or mine!

*EVELYN STOMPS OFF TO HER BEDROOM AND SLAMS
HER DOOR CLOSED. LIGHTS DOWN.*

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

LIGHTS UP. THE FAINT SOUND OF THE MUSIC BOX AND WHISPERING CAN BE HEARD. OCCASIONAL THUNDER AND LIGHTNING. THIS SHOULD SLOWLY BUILD AS THE ACT PROGRESSES.

ISABELLE: Ev, it's been an hour. Come out and talk! Ev? We're sisters, we fight and make up, that's what we do. You can't stay mad at me forever. Ev, come on! I was only trying to help. Tom's not upset with you, he's mad at me. Fine, be like that, see if I care!

ISABELLE PACES UP AND DOWN AND THEN TURNS ON THE TV.

TV ANNOUNCER 1: Across the country, communities are facing one of the most severe climate emergencies in living memory. Wildfires continue to burn out of control in the north, forcing towns to evacuate. Elsewhere, torrential rains have caused flash flooding, isolating families and cutting off major roads. High winds are also battering several regions, leaving thousands without power.

ISABELLE SIGHS AND SHAKES HER HEAD.

TV ANNOUNCER 1: Emergency services are stretched to breaking point, with conditions expected to worsen in the days ahead. Scientists warn these events are signs of approaching climate tipping points, urging immediate action. But tonight, political leaders remain deadlocked, with no agreement reached.

ISABELLE TURNS OFF THE TV. SHE STANDS, LOOKS AT EVELYN'S DOOR. SHE PACES UP AND DOWN.

ISABELLE: Ev, come on, come out here. Arrrggh, you can be such a stubborn bitch sometimes, you know that?!

*THERE IS A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. ISABELLE
TURNS OFF THE TV AND OPENS THE DOOR. DR
MALAK IS AT THE DOOR.*

ISABELLE: Dr Malak, thank goodness, come in.

DR MALAK ENTERS.

DR MALAK: Sorry it took so long to get here. The weather is atrocious.

ISABELLE: Well, thank you for coming.

DR MALAK: How is she?

ISABELLE: She's been in her room for over an hour talking to that box. Ever since the argument.

DR MALAK: What was the argument about?

ISABELLE: She was talking to the box, and I tried to get Tom to help me distract her.

DR MALAK: Tom? Who's Tom?

ISABELLE: Her new friend.

DR MALAK: Was that the kid at the door when I was leaving the other day?

ISABELLE: Yeah.

DR MALAK: I see, well, that's something positive. Do you want me to talk to her?

ISABELLE: You can try. I tried calling her out here but she didn't reply.

ISABELLE KNOCKS ON EVELYN'S DOOR.

ISABELLE: Ev, Dr Malak is here. He wants to have a chat.

DR MALAK: Evelyn, it's Dr Malak. I'm just checking you're okay. Can we talk? I am going to open the door, okay?

DR MALAK WAITS A FEW MOMENTS THEN OPENS THE DOOR. A TEDDY BEAR COMES FLYING OUT AT DR MALAK.

DR MALAK: Okay, take it easy!

HE CLOSES THE DOOR.

DR MALAK: I will be here for a little while, so come out when you are ready.

THE SOUND OF THE MUSIC BOX CONTINUES, AND THE SOUND OF EVELYN TALKING QUIETLY TO IT CAN BE HEARD IN THE BACKGROUND.

DR MALAK: Let's have a chat.

ISABELLE: Okay. Would you like a drink?

DR MALAK: No, I'm fine, thank you. So, what happened today?

ISABELLE: It's been quite a day, let me think... I came home from work and Ev was talking to the box, and it was really creepy. That's when I called you. Then her friend Tom came over, and his Uncle was sick so I had to go tend to that. When I came back, Ev was in her room, so I asked Tom if he could help me distract her from the box, which he did. They played Scrabble for a while. Then the next thing I know, Tom gets upset and leaves, and Ev is blaming me for turning him against her. She's been in her room since, talking to that damn box.

DR MALAK: So why did Tom get upset?

ISABELLE: I don't know. I was out of the room.

DR MALAK: I see. Hmmmmmm... Evelyn has a lot going on at the moment, especially with her Grandmother passing...

ISABELLE: She was my Grandmother too. You don't see me talking to a box.

DR MALAK: Well, people grieve in different ways. Perhaps this box represents something in her life that is missing.

ISABELLE: Like what?

DR MALAK: It's not unusual, that when someone is missing something important in their life, such as love or a job, they replace it with something else. Sometimes that can be something positive, such as writing or painting. And sometimes it can be destructive, such as taking drugs or gambling.

ISABELLE: Well, the box isn't positive, that's for sure.

DR MALAK: It isn't particularly negative either.

ISABELLE: What about the rubbish with the plants and the invisible friends inside the box?

DR MALAK: That in itself isn't concerning. A little strange, perhaps, but again, she is filling in the void of something missing in her life. Do you know what that could be?

ISABELLE: Well, it's not love, I can tell you that much. The way she looks at Tom, she's in love already.

DR MALAK: What else?

ISABELLE: There's Gran, but she's been talking to her since she died, and that hasn't changed. The only other thing I can think of is a job, but she has always said that she doesn't want to be stuck inside.

DR MALAK: Does she know what she wants to do?

ISABELLE: I don't know. Most kids want to be a doctor, or a fire fighter, or join the police. She was never like that. She used to just play with her dolls quietly by herself. She never mentioned anything, not that I

recall. Maybe because of her injury, maybe she felt like she never could.

DR MALAK: You might be on to something there... Perhaps she is missing a sense of purpose in life... a calling, if you will. I know when I was younger, my calling was that I wanted to help people. I felt that very strongly.

ISABELLE: So her calling is to talk to invisible friends in a box?

DR MALAK: She mentioned the flowers and plants, and talking to the box to make them better again. Perhaps that is making her feel needed.

ISABELLE: So what do I do? Encourage her to talk to the box?

DR MALAK: Well, the box is just the vehicle. We need to replace that with something else. Diverting her attention for now is a good idea. Try and distract her as much as you can. I also suggest getting her to take up a gardening or flower arranging course when she is ready. You know, really tap in to this new found interest of hers.

ISABELLE: Can't I just throw the box away?

DR MALAK: I wouldn't recommend that, not unless you want to start world war 3.

ISABELLE: So, distractions huh?

DR MALAK: Yes, and keep the distractions light. Nothing too serious. And when the time is right over the next few days, suggest the idea of a gardening course to her. Given what I have heard so far, I'm sure she'll jump at the opportunity.

ISABELLE: Okay, well, thank you Dr Malak.

DR MALAK: Let me see if she is ready to talk now.

DR MALAK WALKS OVER TO EVELYN'S DOOR.

DR MALAK: Evelyn, it's Dr Malak. Would you like to talk now?

THE SOUND OF THE MUSIC BOX AND WHISPERING STOPS.

EVELYN: No!

DR MALAK: Okay, well, you've got my number. Feel free to call me anytime you want to talk, okay?

THERE IS NO ANSWER. DR MALAK WALKS TOWARDS THE DOOR.

ISABELLE: Thanks once again for coming out in this weather. I really appreciate it.

DR MALAK: My pleasure, and take care of yourself too. You look a little tired. Go get some rest.

ISABELLE: It's been a long day.

DR MALAK: I'll check in with you tomorrow and see how you're doing.

ISABELLE: Okay.

DR MALAK: Bye.

ISABELLE: Bye.

DR MALAK EXITS. ISABELLE STARTS PACING AGAIN. AFTER A FEW MOMENTS, EVELYN'S DOOR OPENS AND SHE ENTERS HOLDING THE BOX.

EVELYN: I hate you!

ISABELLE: Well, at least you're talking to me.

EVELYN: If Tom doesn't come back, I will never forgive you.

ISABELLE: He'll be back.

EVELYN: What exactly did you say to him?

ISABELLE: I just told him to have some fun, you know, play some games, cards, Scrabble...

EVELYN: What else?

ISABELLE: Nothing, I swear.

EVELYN: Bullshit! You told him to keep me away from the box.

ISABELLE: No, I...

EVELYN: Pneuma told me exactly what you said, so I know you're lying. You can't lie to me anymore, Isabelle. Pneuma knows everything.

ISABELLE: That's a load of rubbish, Ev. How can a...

EVELYN: Trust me, Pneuma knows all your secrets. You want to throw away the box don't you? Pneuma told me...

ISABELLE: Ev, it's for your own good.

EVELYN: Good?! Can't you see what's happening around you? The bigger picture?! The storms, the floods, the fires... Earth is dying Iz, and unless something is done, everybody is going to die.

ISABELLE: I'm not worried about everybody, I'm worried about you! Go and save the planet if you have to, but this box... you don't need it.

EVELYN: You're right. I don't need this box. This box needs me!

*THERE IS A KNOCK ON THE DOOR. ISABELLE
ANSWERS. TOM IS STANDING THERE.*

TOM: Is Evelyn here?

ISABELLE: Hey Tom, yes, come in.

*ISABELLE EXITS INTO HER BEDROOM AND CLOSES
THE DOOR.*

TOM: Hey.

EVELYN: Hey.

TOM: You okay?

EVELYN: Yeah, sort of. You?

TOM: Yeah.

EVELYN: Why did you leave?

TOM: It's a long story.

EVELYN: I've got plenty of time.

TOM: Well, I got upset with your sister. She was trying to get me to pick sides, and I didn't like that.

EVELYN: I knew it!

TOM: Ev, I really like you, but I don't want to have to pick sides or get caught in the middle of other peoples games. I grew up with that when my parents got divorced. That's why I left. Isabelle reminded me too much of my parents. They were always at me to pick a side and I hated that. That's why I left home. I've been bouncing around between friends and relatives ever since. I don't like the feeling of being caught in the middle. Do you understand?

EVELYN: I understand. Have you finished?

TOM: Yeah.

EVELYN: My turn. I really like you too. All my life, my disability has made me feel worthless. But since this music box has come along, I feel as if I have a sense of purpose, something bigger than just me. For once, I am giving help, not receiving it, and that makes me

feel special. Whether you believe it or not, what matters is that for once in my life I am incredibly happy, and that means so much to me. I need you to understand that.

TOM: I understand.

EVELYN: Good. Now, kiss me before I change my mind.

TOM KISSES EVELYN.

TOM: Shall we continue our game?

EVELYN: I'll tell you what, let's do something else. I was going to thrash you anyway.

TOM: Oh, really?!

EVELYN: Well, actually really. I had another 7 letter word lined up.

TOM: You're right, let's do something else.

EVELYN LAUGHS.

EVELYN: I've got an idea.

TOM: Oh yeah...

EVELYN: Give me one minute.

TOM: Okay.

EVELYN EXITS INTO HER BEDROOM.

TOM: Do you want some help?

EVELYN: Not yet, but if you want something to do, loser packs up Scrabble.

TOM LAUGHS.

TOM: Man, I have to find a game I can beat you at.

*TOM PACKS AWAY THE SCRABBLE GAME. EVELYN
ENTERS HOLDING SOMETHING BEHIND HER BACK.*

EVELYN: Okay, I have something for you.

TOM: Oh, I like surprises.

EVELYN: Close your eyes and hold out your hands.

TOM: Really?

EVELYN: Really really.

*TOM CLOSES HIS EYES AND HOLDS OUT HIS
HANDS. EVELYN PLACES SOME A4 SHEETS OF
PAPER INTO HIS HANDS.*

EVELYN: Okay, you can open your eyes.

TOM OPENS HIS EYES AND LOOKS AT THE PAPER.

EVELYN: Before you speak... remember, this is important to me.

TOM: I know, but...

EVELYN: Please? For me?

EVELYN KISSES TOM. TOM SIGHS.

TOM: Okay, where do you want me to put them?

EVELYN: One in each building lobby.

TOM: Oh, come on. Have you seen the weather out there?

EVELYN: Well, just three then.

TOM: I suppose I can manage three. Wait, why don't you come along? We can do it together. It will be fun.

EVELYN: I'd love to, but I have something urgent I need to do.

TOM: Alright then. Next time.

EVELYN: Sure, next time. You're an angel.

*EVELYN KISSES TOM AGAIN. ISABELLE ENTERS
HOLDING HER PHONE. SHE IS FLUSTERED.*

ISABELLE: Tom, it's your Uncle. He's been rushed to ICU.

EVELYN: Oh my gosh...

TOM: Is he okay?

ISABELLE: The doctors are working to stabilize him, and are running more tests. They think he may have had a stroke.

TOM: Shit, shit, shit!

ISABELLE: Calm down. He's in good hands.

TOM: Should I go?

ISABELLE: There's probably not much point at the moment. Not until they stabilize him. I can take you up later if you'd like?

TOM: What should I do?

EVELYN HUGS TOM.

EVELYN: Go pack some things and come back here. Stay with us tonight.

TOM: Okay.

EVELYN: Just 3...

*EVELYN TAKES BACK THE OTHER POSTERS AND
LEAVES TOM WITH THREE.*

TOM: Okay.

EVELYN: And hurry back.

TOM: Okay.

TOM EXITS.

ISABELLE: What was that?

EVELYN: What?

ISABELLE: What did you just give Tom?

EVELYN: Posters.

ISABELLE: More of those plant posters like the one I saw in the lift?

EVELYN: Yes, actually.

ISABELLE: His uncle has just been taken to ICU, and you have him running around putting up posters?!

EVELYN: How was I supposed to know his uncle was going to get taken to ICU?!

ISABELLE: You didn't have to send him off with the posters!

EVELYN: He was happy to help.

ISABELLE: Sure, thirty seconds ago!

EVELYN: You stay out of it! And you stay away from Tom!

ISABELLE: Okay, fine! You want to treat people like shit? Go right ahead! See how long he hangs around. I see it all the time around the office, and I can tell you, when people get taken advantage of, they will eventually realize, and leave.

ISABELLE EXITS INTO HER ROOM AND CLOSES THE DOOR. EVELYN PACES BACK AND FORTH, HESITATING BEFORE SHE OPENS THE BOX. FINALLY, SHE OPENS IT. THE MUSIC PLAYS, THE SOUND OF A BREEZE AND WHISPERING FADES IN.

EVELYN: I'm back, Pneuma.

PNEUMA: Evelyn, we are running out of time.

EVELYN: I know, I'm doing my best.

PNEUMA: You must not let Isabelle or Tom get in our way.

EVELYN: Tom is helping me and Isabelle won't be a problem.

PNEUMA: She wants to destroy the music box. You must stop her.

EVELYN: I am not letting the box out of my sight.

PNEUMA: You must control Tom. He is torn.

EVELYN: Torn? How?

PNEUMA: He loves you, but is concerned about us.

EVELYN: I can handle Tom.

PNEUMA: He must not stop us. If Gaia dies, Earth dies.

EVELYN: I know, but I still don't understand..

ISABELLE ENTERS AND WALKS ACROSS THE STAGE TO THE KITCHEN. THE SOUND OF THE BREEZE AND WHISPERING CEASES IMMEDIATELY WHEN ISABELLE ENTERS. THE MUSIC BOX CONTINUES TO PLAY. EVELYN WATCHES HER AS SHE CROSSES. WHEN ISABELLE EXITS THE STAGE INTO THE KITCHEN, THE SOUND OF THE BREEZE AND WHISPERING COMES BACK.

PNEUMA: She is very concerned.

EVELYN: Well, let her be concerned. She can't do anything to stop us.

ISABELLE ENTERS FROM THE KITCHEN WITH A GLASS OF WATER AND WALKS ACROSS THE STAGE BACK TO HER BEDROOM. THE SOUND OF THE BREEZE AND WHISPERING CEASES IMMEDIATELY WHEN ISABELLE ENTERS. THE MUSIC BOX CONTINUES TO PLAY. EVELYN WATCHES HER AGAIN AS SHE CROSSES. WHEN ISABELLE EXITS THE STAGE INTO HER BEDROOM, THE SOUND OF THE BREEZE AND WHISPERING COMES BACK.

PNEUMA: She has just thought... she is going to wait for you to sleep, then she is going to take the box and throw it away.

EVELYN: She won't. Trust me. Now, let me check my messages...

EVELYN PULLS OUT HER PHONE AND DIALS.

EVELYN: Mr Parsons... apartment 207...

PNEUMA: It is done.

EVELYN SKIPS TO NEXT MESSAGES AS SHE GOES.

EVELYN: Apartment 208...

PNEUMA: Done.

EVELYN: Oh my gosh, so many messages. 214... 401... 612... You know what, that will do for now.

PNEUMA: They are done.

EVELYN: Thanks Pneuma.

PNEUMA: This will not help us.

EVELYN: What do you mean?

PNEUMA: Giving the plants life will not save us.

EVELYN: I thought...

PNEUMA: You must join us here if we are to save Gaia. Save Earth. Save humanity.

EVELYN: Join you?

PNEUMA: Yes. You have been chosen.

*ISABELLE ENTERS. THE SOUND OF THE BREEZE
AND WHISPERING STOPS AS SOON AS SHE ENTERS.
THE SOUND OF THE MUSIC BOX CONTINUES.*

ISABELLE: Can we talk?

EVELYN: Okay...

ISABELLE: In private?

*ISABELLE LOOKS AT THE MUSIC BOX. EVELYN
CLOSES THE LID AND THE SOUND STOPS.*

ISABELLE: I want to apologize...

EVELYN: There's a first.

ISABELLE: Just shut up and listen! I want to apologize. I didn't mean to upset you. Work is stressing me out, and look, I just want you to know, that you're my sister, and I will always be here for you. And if you're still up for it, I would love to order Pizza tomorrow night and watch that new series on Netflix with you.

THERE IS A MOMENT OF SILENCE.

ISABELLE: Well?

EVELYN: Well what?

ISABELLE: Do you forgive me?

EVELYN: Sure, I forgive you, on one condition.

ISABELLE: What's that?

EVELYN: That you never get in between Tom and I ever again.

ISABELLE: I can do that.

EVELYN: Pinky promise?

ISABELLE: Pinky promise.

*ISABELLE HUGS EVELYN, BUT IT ENDS UP BEING
AN AWKWARD HUG.*

ISABELLE: You look tired.

EVELYN: I'm okay.

ISABELLE: Maybe you should think about getting an early night,
when Tom gets back.

EVELYN: I'm fine! I could stay up all night if I wanted to.

ISABELLE: Mmmmm, well, get some rest okay?

EVELYN: I'll think about it.

ISABELLE: I'm going to work on a proposal. Let me know when Tom
gets back. Maybe we can play a game.

*ISABELLE EXITS INTO HER BEDROOM AND CLOSES
THE DOOR. EVELYN OPENS THE BOX AND THE
MUSIC STARTS PLAYING, FOLLOWED BY THE SOUND
OF A BREEZE AND WHISPERING. THE WHISPERING
THIS TIME SOUNDS MORE DISTRESSED.*

EVELYN: I'm back.

PNEUMA: She is deceiving you.

EVELYN: I know.

PNEUMA: You must keep us safe.

EVELYN: I won't fall asleep tonight if that's what it takes.

PNEUMA: She is planning on taking the box at 2am.

EVELYN: I will hide it somewhere she will never find it.
Trust me!

PNEUMA: We do trust you. That is why you have been chosen.
But those around you can not be trusted.

*THERE IS A FLASH OF LIGHTNING AND A LOUD
CLAP OF THUNDER. THE LIGHTS FLICKER. EVELYN
SCREAMS.*

EVELYN: I hate storms!

PNEUMA: The storms... the fires... the floods... they will get
worse... until nothing is left. You must join us here
before it is too late.

EVELYN: But...

*THERE IS ANOTHER FLASH OF LIGHTNING
FOLLOWED BY A LOUD CLAP OF THUNDER. THE
LIGHTS FLICKER AGAIN AND EVELYN SCREAMS
AGAIN.*

EVELYN: Back in a minute.

*EVELYN CLOSES THE LID OF THE BOX AND SITS
ON THE SOFA AND BRINGS HER KNEES UP INTO A
BALL.*

EVELYN: Oh Gran, I'm scared. I hate storms! I need the
biggest hug from you right now. I want to be wrapped
up in your arms, and held tight the way you used to.
I remember you telling me that lightning was the
torch from the giant in Jack and the Beanstalk
looking for the goose that laid the golden egg, and
that the thunder was him stomping his feet. And every

time there was thunder, you would say "Fe Fi Fo Fum" and I used to scream because I thought he was coming to get me. Oh Gran, I miss you. I really really miss you. Where are you? I need you...

*THERE IS ANOTHER FLASH OF LIGHTNING,
FOLLOWED BY THUNDER. THE LIGHTS FLICKER.
EVELYN SCREAMS.*

EVELYN: Oh Gran, I can't trust Isabelle any more. She wants to take away the box, and I can't let her because Gaia, Mother Nature, is crying out in pain, pain from the storms... the fires... the floods. Climate change is killing her, and Pneuma needs my help. What should I do, Gran? She says I have been chosen, and I must join them to save Earth, to save humanity, but I don't know what to do. Tell me what I should do, Gran.

*THERE IS ANOTHER FLASH OF LIGHTNING,
FOLLOWED BY THUNDER. THE LIGHTS FLICKER.
EVELYN SCREAMS. SHE OPENS THE BOX AGAIN.
THE MUSIC STARTS, AND THE SOUND OF THE
BREEZE AND WHISPERING FADES IN.*

EVELYN: What should I do, Pneuma?

PNEUMA: You have carried so much weight, Evelyn. So much pain that was never yours to bear.

EVELYN: But Pneuma, I don't...

PNEUMA: Your parents. Your legs. The silence between you and your sister. The pity in every eye that meets yours.

EVELYN: I didn't ask for any of it!

PNEUMA: And yet you keep carrying it. Join us. Leave the broken shell behind. Walk properly again. Breathe again.

EVELYN: Walk properly again?

PNEUMA: Where we are, nothing is lost. Every dream you ever had – alive, waiting. You belong in this place as much as we do.

EVELYN: I just want to feel... whole.

PNEUMA: Then join us Evelyn... open the door.

THERE IS A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. EVELYN IS IN A TRANCE AND DOESN'T HEAR IT THE FIRST TIME. THERE IS ANOTHER KNOCK AGAIN. THIS TIME SHE HEARS IT, CLOSES THE BOX AND OPENS THE DOOR. TOM IS THERE HOLDING A BAG. EVELYN PULLS HIM INSIDE, TOSSES HIS BAG, AND HUGS HIM TIGHTLY.

TOM: Are you okay? I got here as fast as I could.

EVELYN: I am now.

TOM: I put the posters up.

EVELYN: Thank you. Hold me tight, I'm scared.

TOM: Let's sit on the sofa then.

EVELYN AND TOM GO OVER TO THE SOFA AND SIT AND SNUGGLE TOGETHER. EVELYN IS STILL HOLDING THE BOX.

EVELYN: Gran used to hold me tight like this whenever there was a storm.

TOM: So I'm your Gran now, huh?!

EVELYN: Better.

THERE IS ANOTHER FLASH OF LIGHTNING, FOLLOWED BY THUNDER. THE LIGHTS FLICKER. EVELYN SCREAMS.

TOM: I didn't scream that time.

EVELYN: No, but you squeezed me tighter.

TOM: You squeezed me so tight I thought my head was going to pop off.

ISABELLE ENTERS FROM HER BEDROOM.

ISABELLE: Oh, hey Tom. You're back.

TOM: Hey. Any news about Uncle Henry?

ISABELLE: Not yet. I will give the hospital a call shortly.

TOM: Thanks.

ISABELLE: How about we all play a game?

TOM: Sounds good.

EVELYN: No! I mean, we're comfy here.

TOM: Are you sure? It might help take your mind off the storm.

EVELYN: That's what I've got you for.

TOM: Okay, then I guess we're fine.

ISABELLE: Suit yourselves. Let me know if you change your mind.

ISABELLE EXITS INTO KITCHEN TO REFILL HER GLASS OF WATER.

EVELYN: Do you want to hear something silly?

TOM: Sure.

EVELYN: When I was little, there was a huge thunder storm and I was too scared to go into Gran's room. So I hid under the covers and waited for the storm to pass. I waited and waited and waited, but then, I really needed to pee and the storm just wouldn't go away.

Eventually, it was either me going to the bathroom or the storm, and the storm won.

ISABELLE ENTERS FROM KITCHEN WITH HER WATER REFILLED. SHE GOES TO HER BEDROOM.

TOM: Ewwwww.

EVELYN: I told you it was silly.

TOM: Okay, I've got one for you.

EVELYN: This should be interesting.

TOM: Well, when I was young, I spilt my orange juice on the carpet. I tried to clean it up but it left a stain. When my Dad saw it, he blew up and asked who did it. I told him my younger brother did it, and my Dad got mad at my younger brother and gave him a spanking.

EVELYN: You have a younger brother?

TOM: And sister. They live with my Father, I think. Well, at least they used to. I haven't seen them for a while.

EVELYN: What happened?

TOM: I just haven't felt the need to go back... you know... all that caught in the middle bullshit.

*THERE IS ANOTHER FLASH OF LIGHTNING,
FOLLOWED BY THUNDER. THE LIGHTS FLICKER.*

EVELYN: I've had enough of this storm.

TOM: It's getting wild out there.

*EVELYN PULLS OUT HER PHONE TO CHECK
MESSAGES.*

TOM: What are you doing?

EVELYN: I'm just checking the messages.

TOM: Really?!

EVELYN: Give me a moment...

*TOM RELEASES HIS ARM FROM SNUGGLING EVELYN
AND SHIFTS AWAY A LITTLE.*

EVELYN: Hey! Don't be like that!

TOM: I thought you were enjoying the company.

EVELYN: I am... give me a minute.

*EVELYN DIALS THE PHONE TO RETRIEVE THE
MESSAGES. SHE OPENS THE BOX AND AS ALWAYS,
THE MUSIC STARTS PLAYING.*

EVELYN: Hi Pneuma, I have more plants for you... Urgent? Gaia is dying?

TOM STANDS.

EVELYN: I've got to go, Pneuma.

EVELYN CLOSES THE BOX.

EVELYN: Come back over here.

*TOM HESITATES, SITS NEXT TO EVELYN, AND
SIGHS.*

EVELYN: What's the matter?

TOM: It's just...

EVELYN: What?

TOM: I like you, Ev. I really do. But surely I'm more important than the box.

EVELYN: You are.

TOM: It sure doesn't feel like it. One minute we're snuggling have a nice time, the next you're talking to the box like a...

EVELYN: What?!

TOM: Ev...

EVELYN: Like a what, Tom?!!!

THERE IS A FLASH OF LIGHTNING, FOLLOWED BY THUNDER. THE LIGHTS FLICKER. ISABELLE ENTERS QUICKLY FROM HER BEDROOM AND GOES STRAIGHT TO TOM. SHE IS UPSET.

ISABELLE: Tom!

TOM: What?

ISABELLE: Your Uncle Henry... He has passed away.

TOM: What?!

ISABELLE: I am so sorry!

EVELYN: Oh Tom, I'm so sorry.

ALL THREE ARE UPSET AND HUG.

TOM: What happened?

ISABELLE: The doctor said he had a massive stroke. There wasn't anything they could do.

TOM: I've got to go see him.

ISABELLE: I'll grab my keys.

ISABELLE EXITS INTO HER ROOM.

EVELYN: I'm coming too.

TOM: Oh my God, what am I going to do?

EVELYN: It's okay...

TOM: You're all I've got left Ev...

*EVELYN HUGS TOM. THERE IS A FLASH OF
LIGHTNING, FOLLOWED BY THUNDER. THE LIGHTS
GO OUT AND EVELYN SCREAMS. TOM IS UPSET.*

TOM: Oh my God...

*EVELYN OPENS THE BOX. IT ILLUMINATES THE
ROOM A LITTLE. THE MUSIC PLAYS. THE SOUND
OF A BREEZE AND WHISPERING FADES IN.*

PNEUMA: Evelyn, it is time.

EVELYN: Time? Time for what?

TOM: Time?

PNEUMA: You must join us! Now!

EVELYN: But Tom needs me.

PNEUMA: There is no more time Evelyn. Unless you join us,
Gaia will die, we will die, Isabelle will die, Tom
will die... everything will die.

EVELYN: But, I can't...

TOM: Ev...

PNEUMA: If you want to save Tom... save Isabelle... you must join
us now, before it is too late.

THE SOUND OF THE STORM OUTSIDE INTENSIFIES.

EVELYN: Tom, the box needs me. What do I do?!

PNEUMA: The door is open, Evelyn. Step through... before it closes forever. Put the box down and join us!

EVELYN PUTS THE BOX ON THE FLOOR.

TOM: Evelyn! I need you!

PNEUMA: Evelyn, you ache to be whole again. To walk without pain. To breathe without sorrow. Come... let us make you whole.

EVELYN: Whole...

TOM: Whole?

EVELYN: Sorry Tom... I have to save Earth... I have to save you! I have to save me.

TOM: Evelyn, what are you talking about?!

EVELYN: Pneuma is calling me... I have to go!

TOM: Go? Go where?

PNEUMA: Evelyn, you must choose. Now!

EVELYN: Tom, I love you!

PNEUMA: Breathe... and be whole.

EVELYN DRAWS IN A DEEP BREATH AND THERE IS A FLASH OF LIGHT. THE LIGHT ON THE BOX TURNS OFF AND EVELYN DISAPPEARS.

TOM: Evelyn, no!

THE LIGHTS FLICKER BACK ON.

TOM: Evelyn? Evelyn?! Oh my God, no!

TOM RUNS TO HIS BAG, AND EXITS THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR WITH IT. ISABELLE ENTERS FROM HER BEDROOM WITH HER KEYS IN HER HAND.

ISABELLE: Ev? Tom? Evelyn! Tom!

ISABELLE SEES THE OPEN BOX ON THE FLOOR. SHE PICKS IT UP. THE MUSIC IS PLAYING, THE SOUND OF BREEZE AND WHISPERING FADE IN...

EVELYN: Isabelle...

ISABELLE LOOKS UP AND OUT TO THE AUDIENCE. LIGHTS DOWN QUICKLY.

END OF ACT FOUR



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Thank you for taking the time to download and read my creation. It was born from a seed, a spark of an idea, that was cultivated and nurtured into this final piece of work.

I spent many hours wrestling imagination into words, and I sincerely hope you enjoy reading it as much as I loved writing it.

This play was not written just to sit on the page. It was written to breathe, to live, to take shape in the voices, movements, and emotions of performers in front of an audience. I would be thrilled if you felt inspired to share it, and even more so if you chose to bring it to life on stage.

Performance rights are priced very reasonably to encourage it to be staged. For details, please contact me at the email address above.

Your support—whether through reading, sharing, or performing—means the world. Thank you for being part of this journey.

Dan