NSW Department of Education

Drama Stage 6 (Year 11) – scripted works

Listen to the silences: a collection of scenes for young people

NSW GOVERNMENT

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Resource overview

These scripted works are not a standalone resource. They have been designed for use by department teachers in connection to Year 11 resources designed by the Creative Arts Secondary Curriculum team for the Drama 11–12 Syllabus (2025). These include the Year 11 Scope and sequence, Year 11 Assessment schedule and Year 11 'Intent – staging scripts' unit and sample assessment task. All documents associated with this resource can be found on the Drama 11–12 (2025) webpage.

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Foreword

These scenes were commissioned by the NSW Department of Education's Creative Arts Secondary Curriculum team in 2026. They are designed to support students to access some of the Year 11 course content and requirements for the study of dramatic works in the Drama 11–12 Syllabus (2025). Teachers should read scripted works prior to sharing them with students. Teachers are best placed to review the works, refer to the department's Controversial issues in schools policy, and make choices appropriate to the community expectations and context of their own school.

To develop this collection, the Creative Arts Secondary Curriculum team worked with 6 Australian playwrights, all with diverse points of view and creative voices. Each playwright wrote 2 scripts for this collection. For both scripts they were challenged to work within certain parameters, including that each must:

- be 4 to 6 minutes long
- be for young theatre makers
- feature 2 teenage or young adult characters
- have one character who speaks
- have one character who does not speak.

The 6 playwrights wrote their first scenes for 2 actors without any other restrictions. They all interpreted the challenge of these parameters in different ways and used a variety of conventions to indicate the 'silent' character's presence.

For their second scene for 2 actors, they were given an extra challenge to respond to. They were each given the first work of one of the other playwrights as stimulus and were asked to write a new scene in which the unspeaking character from that scene now speaks to a new character.

So, in each of these scripts, one character speaks and one character is unspeaking, but they are certainly not silent. It is in the 'silences' between characters that young drama practitioners can find opportunities to explore, interpret and enact scripted work conventions, subtext and characterisation, as they manipulate dramatic elements, shape dramatic journeys and engage their audiences.

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The scenes in this collection present diverse dramatic styles and conventions, perspectives, identities and ideas. Some of the playwrights have included notes regarding staging, casting and adaptation. These notes provide guidance about the playwrights' creative intent and offer clear protocols and permissions for exploring their works. The 6 playwrights have been clear, generous and inclusive in their offers and their intentions should be respected. Playwright notes are an opportunity for young practitioners to engage with safe processes, including cultural safety, and to 'assess the influences of dramatic practitioners and how these shape forms and styles'.

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Like the Moon by Challito Browne

A note from the playwright

Firstly, I hand this to you as a gift. If you choose it, it belongs to you. Do with it as you will.

Language changes with time and place. I'm writing this on Gadigal land in Sydney in 2025. If there are lines you would say differently, that could reflect your experience more accurately, change them.

Part of this monologue deals with Robin's attraction to who they are talking to – Charlie. Neither character's gender, nor their sexuality is ever mentioned. Do with that as you will.

I encourage the performer to play with the staging. I've played with heightened/naturalistic language because that was fun for me. How much fun can you have with your physicality? Does it reflect the language? Can you go somewhere totally different with it?

If you do choose this piece, thank you. I'm really grateful to collaborate with you in this funny, disjointed kind of way. Now go out there and break some hearts and blow some minds.

Robin:

I once knew a soul who shone like the moon.

We revolved around their lunar orbit.

It was compulsion. Impulse. Desire…

A need inspired so totally that,

One might mistake them for the fierce sun.

Yet, the very next breath, that soul could wane;

An imperceptible turn from the light.

And like lonely nights between crescent moons,

The soul embraced darkness.

Ran into its arms like a loyal, black dog,

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starved of its master, desperate for love.

They Swallowed vile, bitterest poison with,

glee and revelled in the light they consumed.

Just like those brilliant moments in which they,

Might be mistaken for the sun, there were

breaths where one might see them, for an instant,

As a dying star.

A great force, hungry and terrifying,

Razing every wave, burst, and shard of light.

If that soul let you into their orbit,

You'd see yourself as a dying star too.

Devouring brightness until the hunger,

the darkness extinguished all of your light.

A perfect, absolute, true consumption,

That leaves other souls howling at the moon;

Waiting for the darkness

How sick is that?

I thought you'd like it.

Grim vibe, you know?

I found it online. I don't usually read stuff like that. Like that long. Like that's pretty long. But I dunno, I just started reading it and I couldn't stop. And when I finished, I thought…I thought you would like that.

Kinda reminds me of you, you know?

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Grim vibe.

Like no offence, but it's kinda emo, but it's not. It's too powerful. It's just this…force into itself.

It sounds like they're describing a superhero, but with a dark past. You know? Someone who's had a rough go but used it to make themselves stronger.

Not that I think you're a superhero. I mean you're alright, don't get me wrong. I'm just not gassing you up. Like plenty to gas you up about. Nah, there's not. Nah, there is. Like…you're alright. I just don't want you to get a big head.

Wouldn't look good on you.

Nah! Jokes.

I'm just saying…The writing thing was cool…you're…cool.

It's cool.

Forget it.

Like you know what I was thinking? I mean…I know social media sucks, blah, blah, blah. Romanticize the destruction of my flailing mental health. Boring, boring, boring. Reshape my frontal lobe and make me a slave to my lord and saviour Zuck. But like…I also find awesome stuff like this, and I wonder if it's all bad?

Like mum won't shut up about how cooked it is, honestly the way she goes on about it, I reckon she's the one who's cooked. I just reckon, like I wouldn't find this in a library book, you know? I dunno. Maybe I am cooked.

I get where she's coming from. My mum. I'm buried in this thing *[indicating their phone].* It's cringe to say it, but sometimes I go full zombie. Mind off. Finger on. Doomscroll like I'm trying to reach the end of the feed. And then sometimes I just land in this place. It's like a dark place. And it scares me. And sometimes I'm in that place when I see my mates, my good mates, and I get like…stressed about saying hi for no reason. So, I just like dive in here *[indicateing their phone again].* Like a chicken burying its head in the sand. Or whatever that bird is. Have you ever done that? I hate it. Like I even do it with you sometimes.

I'm over it. Like…so over it. I just wanted to do something that would freak me out. So, I went online, and I started reading, and then I wrote this for you.

[A Beat]

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Read it! I mean I read it for you.

[A moment while Robin realizes they have just given up their secret.]

Are you recording this? Please don't…Can you not tell anyone? I honestly can't deal with that right now. Please just pretend I didn't…

Oh god.

[Robin starts breathing heavy.]

Like I wanted to freak myself out, but not like this. This is too real. I just. I just. I just…

I dunno! I just started writing one day. Mum banned me from my phone, but whatever, I kinda liked the writing thing, and I wanted to write better so I started reading, like everything, like everything I could get my hands on, I read it and then I started writing, and I wrote so, so much, and I realized that whenever I started writing, I was like, I was thinking of you, and then I was writing to you, and then I was writing about you.

You're like the sun. You're this light that invades my brain, and it's blinding. You're blinding. And I can't think of anything else until I can turn that light off. Writing is the only thing that turns you off. Like gets you out of my head. So that's what I did. I just wrote you out of my head.

Don't get me wrong, I kinda like you in there. In my head. I just can't function. I can barely hear anyone else.

Please don't tell anyone this.

No one can know.

I'll get made fun of so bad if anyone found out.

I just…I can't…

I can't have anyone think I'm smart.

I'm not. I'm not that smart you know? I just read some dumb stuff online and copied it. But I made it my own. But like that's what A.I. does, I just did it worse.

Like that vile, bitterest poison line? That's ripped straight from Romeo and Juliette. I just twisted it a bit.

See I'm not smart. My intelligence is artificial.

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Worse than artificial.

It's simulated.

[Robin realises that this is one of the smarter things they've said.]

I need to shut up.

[Robin waits for Charlie to leave. They don't.]

Go on. Laugh. I know you want to.

Just…please don't spread it around.

I seriously can't have everyone thinking I'm…

I hate it when you look at me like that…like I'm just another star for you to consume.

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Not the Moon by James Elazzi

SETTING

A suburban bus stop at dusk.

Someone's left a half-empty slushie on the ground, the ice melted into a sad, blue puddle.

The world hums in the distance — the kind of hum you only notice when you stop talking.

CHARLIE and SANI are waiting for a bus that probably won't come.

SANI sits cross-legged on the bench, listening. They don't speak.

CHARLIE— restless, hiding their nerves behind humour — paces, then sits, then kicks at the gravel, as if trying to make the silence less heavy.

CHARLIE:

Sani, listen to this…actually, better yet, read this.

CHARLIE hands SANI a note. SANI reads it in silence.

Look…I don't wanna be mean, but…I don't know, it's way too much, right?

…what do you think? Read it till the end yeah.

You ever read something that's meant to make you feel deep —

but instead it just makes you hungry?

Like all that talk about dying stars and lunar orbits —

and I'm just sitting there thinking about toast.

With Vegemite.

Thick layer. Real dark.

Maybe that's the darkness they were talking about.

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Nah but seriously,

that thing they wrote — it was beautiful.

But it was... too much.

Like they swallowed the dictionary

and then spat it out all sparkly and sad.

All that talk about devouring light —

I mean, chill.

If someone calls you the moon,

you don’t have to eat the sun to prove a point? Ok… am I being mean?

I don’t feel like that.

Not about anyone.

I don’t orbit people.

I barely orbit school.

Like, you ever seen me in science? I’m the asteroid that misses.

Everyone else is revolving around their crushes,

and I’m just... floating.

Not cold. Not lonely.

Just... fine.

They said writing was the only thing that turned it off —

that big blinding feeling —

but I don’t need turning off.

Half the time I need a switch on.

Where’s the “feel deeply” button?

Mine’s faulty.

I like people, yeah —

I just don’t need to explode into cosmic dust about it.

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And that part —

“you’re like the sun.”

Cute. But too much, like those drama’s mum watches on the TV when I get home; overdramatic.

I guess what I mean, Sani,

is I think some people need that chaos.

That heavy, poetic, tragic thing.

Like it makes them feel alive.

Me? I’d rather go for a walk,

get a slushie,

Listen to something dumb and happy.

Let the world spin on its own,

without me trying to control gravity.

Maybe that’s boring.

Maybe I’m the dull star.

But at least I’m not exploding every five minutes.

And anyway —

not everyone’s meant to burn bright.

Some of us are just meant to keep warm.

Pauses, glances at SANI.

What? Don’t give me that face.

I’m not heartless.

I just don’t wanna drown in someone else’s metaphors, y’know?

If I’m gonna write,

it’ll be about something real —

like the smell of wet grass after rain,

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or how your laugh sounds like it tripped over itself — like it started running too fast and forgot where it was going.

SANI isn't impressed. CHARLIE laughs out loud, but then their laugh completely dissipates.

That's enough orbit for me.

They pause. SANI shifts, opens their mouth to speak.

Wait—are you gonna say something?

You? Speaking?

Hold on, I need to record this moment.

Sani makes an unintelligible sound.

Quick, do it again—

No? Come on—

Beat. The sound of a bus far away, maybe turning a corner

Never mind.

Keep it to yourself.

I'll just keep guessing what you were gonna say.

Maybe it was something cosmic.

Maybe something stupid.

Or maybe—

maybe it was the kind of thing

that could change the orbit of this whole conversation.

They both look out, watching headlights approach — uncertain if it's the bus or something else.

Anyway...I've done enough talking to orbit the sun twice —

Seriously though, were you gonna say something?

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A long pause.

Well...now this conversation is making me hungry.

His gaze rests on the blue slushy as the lights fade.

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Pally in the Lebanese Australian Bush by James Elazzi

Wait. Just stop for a sec.
Close your eyes.

Picture this – You're standing on a bit of land, out bush. There are gumtrees all around, an old cubby house to the left, kinda falling apart. And a house, wrapped up in olive trees and lemon trees, like it's being hugged.
Can you smell it? The dry earth, the eucalyptus?
Can you feel it? That warm stillness you only get out here?

Now open your eyes.
But don't leave – stay there. Right in that spot.

I want to tell you something. A story, I guess.
Well... not just mine. It's mine and Dad's.
And maybe it's about our dog, Pally, too.
Actually – you decide.

Homemade hummus? Tick.
Zaatar slapped onto Lebanese bread? Tick.
A whole bowl of fresh lemons, ready to be squeezed over everything for the next month? Tick.
Dad crying?

Yeah – tick.

And no matter what else happens, I keep seeing it. Playing on repeat. His face. His eyes all red and puffy, his forehead all tight, his mouth trying to keep it in – but it doesn't work. Tears. Proper, gut-wrenching tears. From the bloke who spent my whole life saying,

"Head up. Don't embarrass yourself. Don't embarrass me"

That's his thing. Be strong. Be hard. Don't flinch.
Lebanese-Aussie men don't crack, don't cry, don't buckle.
Except now, when I see him in my head, he's bent over. Crushed. Crying.
And you know what wrecks me?
I'm the reason it happened.

We live just outside Sydney, in this little patch where Lebanon and Australia kind of crash together and become one messy, beautiful life. You wouldn't have seen anything like it before. You've got

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rows of Lebanese cucumbers growing like we're in the Beqaa Valley, gumtrees lining the fence, chickens in the back like nosy aunties. And Pally, our German Shepherd – she runs the joint.

Mum and Dad? Farmers back in Lebanon. Still farmers here.
Same dirt under the nails, different soil. Arabic lullabies, gumtree shadows.
It's just us – Mum, Dad, my sister, me – and Pally. That's the world. That's home.

You know our front gate? That's not just a gate.
It's the rule. The *law*.
You *never* leave it open.

Yeah, it's for Pally – to keep her safe.
But it's more than that. It's a warning.
Anyone coming in has to stop. Open it.
Gives us time to prepare.
In those few minutes, we go from messy family to perfect hosts.

Mum runs off to change into her "good" clothes. I'm brushing crumbs off the lounge, hiding mugs. My sister's grabbing Lebanese coffee from the freezer like it's gold. Dad squares his shoulders and pulls out the smile that says, "Everything's fine, we're fine."
By the time the car pulls up, it looks like we've been sitting in silence drinking coffee and being impressive for hours.
It's a performance.
It's tradition.

So when it's my turn to shut the gate... it matters. Like, *really* matters.

That night, though, it was cold. That sort of cold that seeps into your bones. I was wrapped in a blanket watching one of those dramatic Lebanese soaps – completely hooked. Mum was in the kitchen making Muhallabia. You know that rice-and-milk pudding, warm with cinnamon? The whole house smelled like a hug.
I looked outside. Still a bit of light.
Then later, just before dark. Still alright.
Then... pitch black.

And I thought – Surely she won't run out tonight. Not Pally. Not in this cold. Not when the pudding's *this good.*

Around half six, Dad calls out – "Sarkaret el bowebeh? *(Did you shut the gate?)*
I didn't even blink. "Yeah!"

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Quick. Confident.
A lie.

And we all sat there. Eating pudding. Laughing at the TV.
For a second, everything felt whole. Like a slice of Lebanon, dropped right into the Aussie bush.

Later, kissed Mum and Dad goodnight. Dad had his tea, telly still going. Everything felt calm. Safe. Predictable.

In bed, I had this thought – maybe I should go check the gate.
But the doona was too warm. And I told myself, “It’ll be fine."

Next morning, sun pouring in. I was half smiling. Then –

“Oum” (*Get up)*
Dad’s voice through the door. Not angry. Just... wrong.

“Lash el bouweebie feethah?” (*Why’s the gate open?)*
Stomach drops. I act confused.
“What? No... I shut it.” I say in English.
Another lie.

Dad doesn’t even snap. He just looks so... tired.
“Pally mesh bel farm” (*Pally’s not on the farm.)*

I froze.

“She’s a dog,” I muttered. “She’ll come back.”
But even as I said it, I knew I didn’t believe it.

We searched. All of us.
Mum was humming Fairouz’s *‘Bektoub Esmak’*, her voice echoing through the gumtrees like it could pull Pally back.
My sister had this look – “*Dad’s going to blame you.”*
And I cracked. I snapped at her.
But I knew she was right.

I walked up the road calling out, “Pally!”
Voice echoing off the trees. Tar sticking to my shoes. Kookaburras laughing like they knew something I didn’t.

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And then I saw Dad. At the gate. His back to me. Shoulders shaking. For a second, I thought – maybe he's laughing?

But as I got closer...
He was crying.
Crying.

This man – who taught me that emotion is weakness. That crying is shame.
There he was, sobbing. Like a child.

Wayn ebneh? (*Where's my son?)* he cried.
And I wanted to shout, *I'm right here. I'm your son.*
But I didn't. I just stood there. Frozen. Watching.

Mum and my sister rushed to him.
I couldn't move.
Because I knew. This was my fault.

That gate...
That lie...
That doona I couldn't leave...

We kept searching.
I kept calling her name like it would undo everything.
But the back of the farm was silent.
No bark. No tail. No Pally.

Then –
I saw her.

Just there. Tail wagging, tongue out, bouncing around Dad like nothing had happened.
Neighbours had found her near the road and brought her back.

You'd think I'd be relieved.
Instead – I froze.

Because in that moment, I saw something shift.
Dad went from broken to blank in a second.
Wiped his face. Stood up tall.
And boom – mask back on.

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"Owah etkahleh el bouweebi feethah" *(Don't ever leave the gate open)*
That's all he said.

And I nodded. What else could I do?

But something in me changed that day.
I saw the truth.
He isn't stone. He's just learned how to wear it.
That crack? I won't forget it.

So now, every time he tells me to toughen up...
Every time he gives me that look like feelings are failure...
I'll just say one word –
"Pally."

Not to make him feel bad.
But to remind him, and me, that the way he sees the world?
That idea of shutting everything down?
That ends with me.

You may care about this. Or not? But I'm glad I learnt this today. Glad that I'm able to tell you my story.

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LET'S GO SAVE THE WORLD THIS WEEKEND by Bjorn Stewart

Train Station Platform. Afternoon.

TRAIN ANNOUNCEMENT SFX: *"Do-Do-Doo. If you see unattended baggage, please do not touch it, but notify staff immediately."*

GUY (17yrs old) *paces with a handwritten note while* ***EL (16yrs old)*** *sits on the bench cross-legged. Both are in uniform. Their bags slouch on the ground.*

GUY refers to the note one more time.

GUY: Ok, ok, let me get this straight. Your voice is trapped in ancient scrolls. Twelve of them, to be precise. Located in a top-secret lab facility under Parliament House.

EL nods slowly.

GUY: And these scrolls keep imprisoned an interdimensional elder god called Zaarthawhei the Unnameable. Hell-bent on destroying the world.

EL nods along – yeah, more or less.

GUY: And you need my help to get to these twelve scrolls before Zaarthawhei's bigoted cult worshippers release him from his prison dimension.

EL gives a tight-lipped flat smile - Unfortunately.

GUY: And once you get back your voice from these ancient scrolls, they will unlock Gaia, the Earth goddess's energy in you. Giving you superpowers.

EL shrugs – What can I tell you?

GUY: … And you got told this from a time-travelling space wizard named Bing Bing, saying you're The Chosen One who'll vanquish Zaarthawhei and his followers?

EL throws two thumbs up and a cheesy smile – Yup, it's ya girl.

GUY: Ok, cool, cool, cool… Hang on, why is Zaarthawhei called "The Unnameable" when he clearly has a name?

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EL puts her face in her hands. Then, exasperatedly mouths, "I don't know."

GUY: Just when I thought this day couldn't get any weirder – This morning, had some random dude trauma dump on me about their family dog.

EL twirls her finger around the side of her head – Cuckoo.

GUY: (*Holds up note*) Yeah, but this takes the cake, El.
You know, I would love to help you, and Bing Bing sneak into the Australian government to stop an ancient evil and his brainwashed cult, but… We have an assignment due on Monday.

EL sits up – What?

GUY: Yeah, remember. We gotta write a duologue for Drama – So much for a bludge subject. So, can we save the world next weekend?

EL is wide-eyed. She gestures – Kaboom!

GUY: (*Sigh*) It's just… I have a lot on. And you're asking me to go on this crazy fantasy quest with you. We're better off leaving it to the government to figure out.

EL gives an unimpressed look – Those guys?

GUY: Ok, good point. But did you think about this, oh Chosen One, we have no money, we can't drive, and you can't talk. How are we supposed to get around?

EL opens her bag to reveal an A3 spiral-bound sketchbook and a big marker – Ta da!

GUY: We need someone who knows what they're doing.

EL jots in the sketchbook and flips it over, "Bing Bing!"

GUY: The time-travelling space wizard? What happens when the feds ask him for ID? "Here you go, officer." Then he pulls a rabbit out of his hat?

EL writes a big "No".

Then she flips the page and scribbles something.

GUY tries to take a peek, but EL doesn't let him.

EL flips the sketchbook over with the words…

"He's a talking cat". With a drawing of a cat in a wizard hat.

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GUY throws his arms up – Seriously?

GUY: We need an adult. Oh, I know, what about Ms Backhouse?

EL shakes her head and writes "Too Risky".

GUY: No teachers, no parents. Got it.

GUY sits, racking his brain for ideas – Uh-oh! A thought crosses his mind, but he's not sure if he should say it.

GUY: I mean… Do we *need* to go to Canberra? Yeah, some kind of unfathomable evil is coming to destroy the world with morally questionable chuds, but… It might not affect us if we just don't do anything.

EL is gobsmacked – For real!!??

GUY: Ok, sure, you'll never speak for the rest of your life, but is that so bad?

EL is deeply upset; she paces up and down the platform.

GUY: El, think about it, we're safer not doing anything. You're talking about going up against secret government agents and evil cults. And who knows what else we'll find under Parliament House: Aliens? Lizard people disguised as politicians? The Backrooms!? El, The Backrooms! We could get hurt, locked up or be unalived, because you don't want to be silent. Being quiet keeps you safe, El.

EL jots something down and shows it to GUY. "When will <u>you</u> speak?"

EL drops the sketchbook and curls up by the bench. Her cries make no sound.

GUY picks up the sketchbook, taking in the words, "When will <u>you</u> speak?"

He hands the sketchbook back to EL.

Beat.

GUY: This very platform. 8:34 AM, when that dude stopped me to talk about his lost dog. Said, close my eyes. And I did. I dunno why. Probably for the plot…

EL scribbles in her sketchbook, "Was he hot?"

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GUY: I dunno. He was normal. Anyway, he tells me about the country home he grew up in. A house wrapped in olive trees and lemon trees, like it's being hugged. And you know what was strange? I could smell it.

GUY walks towards the house, he imagines.

TRAIN ANNOUNCEMENT SFX: *"Do-Do-Doo. For your safety, please remain behind the yellow line at all times, and allow others to get off before boarding."*

GUY sees that he's close to the yellow line and shuffles back.

GUY: He tells me that one time he left the gate open and his dog escaped. When his family went searching for the dog, he caught his dad crying, fearing their dog was gone forever. He'd never seen his dad vulnerable.

EL draws a sad face. ☹

GUY: The point is, you're like that dog – Wait, that came out wrong. What I'm trying to say is, El…I can't afford to lose you. Because you're family.

GUY sits beside EL. She *leans her head on him.*

GUY: But I don't know how to help. And that scares me. I don't have powers, I'm not rich… I don't know how to hack or pick locks. I don't know how to get us out of trouble. I'm just a guy… named Guy.

Beat.

EL points to GUY's heart. She holds it there, looking at him directly in his eyes.

GUY gives an understanding smile.

GUY: What about you? If we do this, what superpowers do you get?

EL springs into action with excitement!

She mines fighting off bad guys with kung-fu! Blasting them with power beams! Lifting objects with her psychic abilities, with a finger pressed against her temple! Then pretends to have a nosebleed and dramatically faints from exhaustion.

Finally, she jumps up to give a bow.

GUY: (*Slowly claps*) I don't know what any of that means.

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EL face palms.

GUY: But I'm so down for kicking bigot butts and stopping a big bad with a dumb name with your space wizard cat… Let's go save the world this weekend!

EL gives GUY a playful punch in the shoulder, then a big hug.

***TRAIN ANNOUNCEMENT SFX**: "Do-Do-Doo. The next train to arrive on platform 4 goes to Specific City. First stop, Blah, then all stations to, Blah Blah Blah."*

They grab their bags, waiting for the train to pull in.

GUY: Don't get me wrong, I can't wait for you to get your voice back and have crazy powers, just please don't say any cheesy MCU lines like, "Thaaaat sounded better in my head."

EL gives a smug look – Maybe I will, maybe I won't.

GUY: El, I beg you, I will get cringe goosebumps. Please!

SFX: Low hums and hisses of the train slowing down into the station. Followed by the beeping of the train doors opening.

End.

LET'S GO SAVE THE WORLD THIS WEEKEND © Bjorn Stewart, 2026,
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The Becoming by Eloise Snape

Teenager, Hattie, speaks to her older sister. It is the day after her first experience with an app that is all the current rage, called 'The Becoming.'

HATTIE:

You were right. I, ah. Yeah. You were right.

Beat.

I just thought, well ten years doesn't seem that… scary. Or extreme.

And Audrey went forward in time as Charli XCX at Coachella. I mean, Coachella! But I guess that's all indoors now, in the air con. And Alice also went forward to um, actually no that's not a good example. Alice is weird. She ended up at an outdoor wedding of some sad MAFS contestant and, well, let's just say it didn't go well. Like at least pick a queen on Drag Race or something if you're gonna waste your turn on reality TV.

And they say it's safe. It's super safe tech. Or like it's safe, until it's not. But that's on us. When we sign the waiver. I know you told me what was in it, the stuff about the time travel part, environmental circumstances if you travel forward, so it's always safer to go back. I know you said go back. Only go back. But I figured it's just thirty minutes? Unless you pay for premium then it's a week, but no one ever does that. Except Ellie. Did you know Ellie used her folks' credit card and chose Taylor Swift and it ended up being the week before her wedding? She was living as Taylor at her hens! That guest list… out of control. Anyway. I just thought. To live in her boots for even five minutes is worth every little terrifying word in that waiver that I didn't really read.

So. I. Yeah.

When Audrey got back from her Coachella performance and nothing went wrong and she had an almost religious experience I thought, ok, let's do this. Because… um. Because maybe this will be the only time I ever get to feel like this? To think like her, on the field. In those moments. For my body to move like hers. I can train and train and train and train but at the end of the day what she has is the *mind* of a champion. She thinks differently, thinks in a way that means in a split second she makes the right choice. Or, I don't even know how to explain it. But there's something about her that makes her, her.

And I am me.

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And I don't have what she has.

So I needed to know what that was. What that felt like.

I told Audrey the night before. I couldn't tell you. I knew what you… yeah. So I told Audrey I was going to activate it. And that I wouldn't be at school the next day. That I would be 'sick.' But also I just needed someone to know where I was gonna be, just in case… you know. Just in case.

So I went to bed, barely slept from excitement. I sat up and scrolled and read interviews and just watched that moment. That World Cup final goal from last year, over and over and over again until I could literally talk through each move that led to that goal off by heart. I played 'Breathless' by The Corrs, her song, over and over. I closed my eyes, hoping I would drift off. But every time I would start to fall asleep my body would jolt me awake, from the adrenaline. The adrenaline was wild. Did you…? My whole body chaotically thumping. It's funny because I didn't think I was scared? Like in my head I wasn't but my body felt fear. Or maybe it just was excited nerves? It's amazing how those two things can feel exactly the same. I nearly called out to you, but I knew you would, you know. Talk me out of it.

I must have drifted off eventually, because suddenly Mum was opening my blinds. It was pissing down outside.

'Time to get up. Traffic will be a nightmare this morning.'

I, um. Oh. Oooh. I really don't feel well.

'Mmmm?'

It's my tummy. I couldn't sleep… it kept me up all night.

'Don't want a code brown.'

A what?

'Just stay close to the loo. Let me know if I can get you anything sweetheart.'

And she left.

I heard the radio in the kitchen turn on, the smoothie maker whirring. The smell of burnt toast. The hums of your voices through the floor.

Ok. Ok. Let's do it. Let's do it now.

I send Audrey a text: *logging on*.

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I scroll through the rubbish on my home screen, until I find the app: THE BECOMING.

I load it up. There's that homepage, where they suggest a bunch of celebs of the day. Let's be honest it's just Z grade celebrities paying extra dollars for front page advertising. No one anyone wants to be. A few ex-crims. Donald Trump spruiking a trip back to when he was host of The Apprentice. No thanks. I have to watch a lot of ads to get to the main page. Until finally.

Who would you like to become today?

I type:

Sam Kerr.

When would you like to become Sam Kerr?

I type:

Ten years in the future. World Cup final.

I scroll through the waiver, take a gulp of air and use breath recognition to sign and activate the trial thirty minutes. My heart wants to propel itself out of my chest and fly across the room. But I stay focused.

If you want to be the best, you literally have to *become* the best.

The app instructs me to insert my ear pods and close my eyes.

The Corrs blasts into my eardrums: *'Go on, go on, leave me breathless.*'

It's only thirty minutes. Thirty short minutes. You'll wish you paid for more.

And then, the app: You are now becoming Sam Kerr.

I hear distant yelling. And laughing. A crowd chant gets louder and louder and morphs into the violins of The Corrs which start fading into the back of my mind. And then: a whistle.

Eyes open, I'm staring down at my opponent. She's smiling… it's a cheeky smile. I notice her colours. She's a Lioness. It's England vs Australia. Perfect.

I'm overwhelmed with a feeling of confidence. I really am inside her mind, inside her skin. My body feels powerful. As I move, it's like a… like a lightness. I am flying.

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Dribble pass dribble pass. It's two all. There's thirty minutes left on the clock. Dribble pass dribble pass.

I do a fake pull back and take a shot at goal. I miss and it hits the side of the net. But the crowd loves it. They love me. I can do no wrong.

I look over at one of my teammates. She winks. But something… something isn't right. She's sweating. Like really sweating. Which shouldn't be that weird. It's just… something isn't right.

Dribble pass dribble pass single cut explode past a lioness. The crowd are insane. I feel their chants to my core. I, I, I…

Beat.

One of my teammates is calling out to me, I. Um. I can't hear her?

I can't hear you?!

I can't. I can't hear her.

She's mouthing something. She's bright red. Burning. She's on fire. And then, in front of me, she collapses. I try to, to, to help but I can't. I'm too… I'm red. I'm on fire. My whole body is burning. I realise I can't breathe. I start to panic. It's so hot. Why is it so hot? I've never felt a heat like it. It hurts. My whole body hurts. I drop to the ground.

Mum?!

I don't know if I'm calling as Sam or me.

Mum!

I want *my* Mum. And suddenly, I don't want to be anyone else right now.

Someone is placing cold towels up my arms.

'Another fifty-seven degree day out here', they say.

'If it's too hot for you, it's too hot for anyone,' they say.

I want to go home.

Can I go back? Ten years ago? Please.

'Ha don't we all,' they say.

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Please. I want to be me.

I just want to be me!

Beat.

I open my eyes and Mum is wiping my forehead with a cool cloth.

‘Gosh, you poor thing,’ she says. ‘I thought you were having me on.’

Beat.

When she leaves, I look at my phone. There is a notification from the app asking if I want to subscribe to premium.

I delete it, open up the weather app and look at the forecast for the week. Thunderstorms but temps increasing by the end of the week.

So, yeah, you were right.

Beat.

But… do you think…? Um.

Do you reckon if we used it to go back, we could change some things?

Do things better.

And then go forward again?

Beat.

I’ll read the waiver.

BLACKOUT.

The Becoming © Eloise Snape, 2026, karen@yellowcreativemanagement.com

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Existential Ideations of Catastrophic Circumstances

by Challito Browne

A note from the playwright

If you choose to work on this duologue, as I hope you do, then it belongs to you. I hand it to you gladly. Take ownership of it. Make it yours. Enjoy it.

The gender of SAM, the speaking character, and the person they are speaking to (JO) is never mentioned. Do with that as you will.

As part of this duologue, SAM has created a grand gesture of sibling love. That could be a climate-change protest placard, it could be a cake, it could be anything else you imagine would work within the confines of the world.

This text wrestles with big feelings and big issues. I've chosen to juxtapose that by adding a lot of humour throughout the script. Play with that. Where can you be grounded in reality? Where can you lean into the funny? What moments are big, or chaotic, or wild? What moments are small?

SAM:

[SAM looks at the time. They explode.]

11:05! I told you she does this on purpose. I told you: It's not all in my head.

[They indicate their grand gesture of love.]

After everything I've done for her!

When I was two, Mum asked me:

"Do you want a little brother or sister?"

I know. So hetero-normative. But that's what she said, and I said…

"NO!"

I screamed because I'd just watched these siblings pulling each other's hair at day care all day. All day. Literally all day! Pulling each other's hair and when the day care teachers tried to tear them

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apart, they closed their little fists even harder and screamed even louder. So, the teachers just had to let them do their thing. And when I asked the teacher in my little two-year-old, babble-di-bab…

“Why duh they wan’ ah hurt each udder?”

The teacher said: “Well the thing you have to understand about siblings is that…they’re complicated.”

That’s my first memory. Saying no to the idea of Hattie being born. But no one listens to me and 5 months later I had a little sister, and everything has been terrible ever since.

It’s not fair. I study hard, clean my room, walk Bosco…I read the terms and conditions of every single app I install! I’m careful. I analyze every situation for possible disastrous outcomes. I care about how my actions affect other people, maybe I care too much. And what does Hattie do?

The opposite. She just skates through life, with her perfect flippy hair, and big, dumb eyelashes which she bats, and bats, and bats, until she gets everything she wants.

And when things inevitably go wrong, as they always do, somehow, I always end up shouldering the mountains of anxiety, while she just moves on with her carefree, world-revolves-around-her, perfect, life.

Perfect example: Yesterday she shares her climate-change existential crisis with me. I shoulder that crippling weight for her...

[SAM indicates their grand gesture of sibling love.]

…and she doesn’t even bother to wake up on time!

I deserve better.

But instead, I’m stuck here. On a planet that’s slowly heating up like it’s got a fever, and humans are the bacteria that it’s trying to purge. Not that I blame her. The planet, I mean. If I had a bunch of big, dumb, idiots drilling into me and taking all my minerals, I’d want to scorch them off the face of my…

…

…face…too.

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I just wanted to be normal. Go to uni, meet someone special, buy a house…or an apartment…or a tiny home…or a camper, or just a car with a boot big enough for me to throw a sleeping bag in, when I get relegated to the Gen-Z parking lot.

[JO goes to respond, SAM cuts them off.]

Don't you dare tell me that I have to take responsibility for myself and my own actions.

My therapist tells me that once a month.

Well at least that's what she started doing after we spent five months trying to "break through" my first memory. Then, I think she realised we weren't "getting anywhere" and now we're at the "let it go" portion of therapy.

Don't sing the Frozen song.

I know you were going to.

Like seriously. Why do I have to take responsibility for my own actions when the world is run by a bunch of Hatties? Narcissists who skate through life without a single thought toward the possible catastrophic consequences of their own actions. Can we not all admit that the world is broken, and it was broken way before I got here, and there's nothing I can do about it?

It's like, if my room was a mess, which it never is, but if it was, it would be like if my room was a mess and Hattie came in and was like…

"Can you clean your room."

And I was like. "It's my room. I'll do what I want with it."

And she was like. "Well can you at least not make so much mess from now on? Some of it is spilling out into the rest of the house."

And I was like. "You're a con artist! You're entitled! You just want everything to be handed to you on a silver platter."

And she was like. "No, I just…don't want to live in a house with a messy room."

And I was like. "Aw! Boo-hoo. What are you gonna do, baby? Go cry to your mummy? If you don't like it, then why don't you roll up your sleeves and do something about it?"

And she was like. "Okay that's pretty immature. I just think we could reassess some of your actions, cause you've already hoarded like 99% of the stuff in this house, so you have like…all the

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resources and I just think it would be reasonable for you to use some of that stuff to make the rest of the house a little bit more livable for everyone else. Cause you're going to die, and then we'll be left with all this broken stuff and that's really…lame."

And then I'd be like…

[SAM realises JO isn't listening.]

Are you even listening?

Hello! I'm still talking to you.

Is my thinly veiled metaphor boring you?

Oh my gosh. I'm sooooo sorry.

It's just our future. I didn't mean to be boring.

I'm so…

[SAM really means it this time.]

I'm sorry.

"Existential ideations of catastrophic circumstances."

My therapist says…

Never mind.

I just feel like I started a game on hard mode, and I didn't know how hard it was actually going to be. And I just want to go into the settings and make it a bit easier cause…well, I don't really want to play this game anymore. It's too hard.

Like intellectually I know that Hattie's not out to get me. The world's not out to get me. But…

I should probably go and check on her. She had a rough day yesterday. I just…I just know we're going to get into another screaming match, and I won't even know what started it. I guess that daycare worker was right: Siblings are complicated.

Maybe if more people like Hattie and me could just put our arguments aside for a second and say: "Yeah, this room is a mess, and if we clean it up together this whole house will be better because of it." Then maybe this world would be a better place.

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[SAM picks up their grand gesture of love.]

It's just hard to keep that level of optimism about Hattie…about anything, when it feels like the rest of the world is burning down around you.

I don't know.

Maybe it is all in my head.

[SAM makes a choice to either cherish, or destroy their grand gesture of love. They might share that choice with the audience.]

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jonah.klein@cameronsmanagement.com.au

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JORDAN by Bjorn Stewart

Important notes from the playwright

Casting: Jordan should be played by an Aboriginal person. Ripley should be played by a White-Australian person. The genders of the characters can be changed to best suit the actors.

Safety: There are a few physical moments. Teachers and students, please spend a good amount of time in rehearsal by going over the movements slowly, clearly and correctly. Do not change what you've rehearsed on the day. At any point or time, if a student feels uncomfortable, then they should stop and end the scene.

Respect: The characters are good friends who hug and pat each other. Make sure to check with your acting partner if they are ok with this. Please be respectful and appropriate at all times.

Easter Eggs: There are some Easter eggs and references to films, media and historical events throughout this scene. If you find them, they may help give a deeper understanding.

Barbecue Area. Park. Night.

JORDAN. 17. Aboriginal. Heavy Breathing. Sweat beading. Moves clockwise around large metal box – the Outdoor Barbecue. Stops. Calls phone. No answer.

JORDAN: Good. That's actually a good thing.

Moves anticlockwise.

Enter RIPLEY. 17. White-Australian.

JORDAN: Finally! You see any black cars?

Ripley shakes her head

Jordan passes her. Scans area. Clear.

Turns back to hug her. Like he hasn't seen her in years.

A comforting pat on her back.

Then a warm squeeze of her upper arms.

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A pat on the arms. Pat on the hips. Pat on the legs. Is she wearing a wire?

WTH!? Ripley freaks, accidentally knocking Jordan back.

Bewildered, Ripley is about to unleash a million questions when –

JORDAN: Ok, before you start ranting at me, I was checkin' if you were bugged.

He gingerly gets up.

JORDAN: Sorry. 'Preciate you comin' – Nah, like really. I couldn't say over the phone, but – *Phone!* Wait, can I see your phone?

Ripley flashes up her phone.

Jordan snatches it. Throws both phones on the ground. Stomp. Crack. Gently brushes aside.

She's mortified. Double WTH!?

JORDAN: There, they can't track us now…

He looks at the busted phones. Then back up to Ripley. Then back at the phones.

JORDAN: Just realised I could've turned them off… Sorry.

Jordan moves clockwise around the Outdoor Barbecue.

Ripley crumples on the park bench. *She is about to let him have it –*

JORDAN: No, dude! Whatever you're about to say, it can wait.

Ripley's jaw drops. Lost for words. The nerve.

JORDAN: What I'm gonna tell you, I – I haven't spoken to anyone since *it* happened. I'm not entirely sure *if* it happened. Like maybe it was a dream. Or a psychotic break. Maybe I'm havin' vivid hallucinations from all the brainrot and microplastics clogging our brains. I dunno… But it *felt* real. My *soul* felt somethin' happened.

Stop. *Turns*.

Ripley gives a look of someone who's over it.

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JORDAN: Don't look at me like that. Dude, black cars have been stalkin' me. Tinted windows. No number plates. Sometimes parked out the front of my place for days. It's like I'm goin' crazy, but I'm not. I'm not crazy.

B-but I'm scared you're not gonna believe me…

Ripley… Promise me you'll believe me, Ok. Please?

Ripley nods slowly.

JORDAN: And I don't want you to ask any questions. I don't want you to come up with solutions or come up with explanations like you always do. I want to be heard. I want you to listen.

Ripley nods again and zips her lips. Giving a 'Let's get on with it' look.

Jordan takes a deep breath. He leans on the Outdoor Barbecue.

JORDAN: Alright. I was… I was… Abducted. By aliens.

Ripley's eyes roll. She is about to talk, but stops herself. Instead, she shakes her head and begins to walk away.

JORDAN: Ok, sure, go! I made the whole thing up… You know, just cause I'm into UAPs doesn't mean I'm livin' in La-La Land. Hand on heart, I saw actual, real-life, living, breathing aliens. As real as you and me. Do you know how insane that is?

He starts tearing up.

JORDAN: Dude, I wet myself. Ripley, please. I was there when you were going through your hectic stuff. Can't you hear me on this?

Ripley sighs. She walks back and sits. All ears.

JORDAN: Thank you. So anyway, I peed my pants – Ok, ha ha. Laugh it up. But that's what happened. I was screaming. Not in pain or nothin'. Just yelling for like 20 minutes. Couldn't stop. My body's going…

With a blank, emotionless face, Jordan screams in quick bursts: "Ahh! Ahh! Ahh!"

He sits up on the edge of the Outdoor Barbecue.

JORDAN: Happened last Thursday. I'm on the couch watchin' '*Nope*' on TV – Before you say anything, *that* movie had nothin' to do with my abduction.

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Anyway, headlights appear in the driveway. I'm thinkin' Mum's back from the shops. But the headlights don't turn off. Which means I get a few more seconds of peace before she bursts in, going [*Impersonating Mum]:*

"*Bring in the shopping! Take out the bins! Open the windows! Place smells like hole! Hang up your uniform! Defrost the meat! There's so much mess! What am I, a slave to you kids? A Slave? I get no help from you lot! No help!"*

But the headlights not only stay on, they also get brighter. Blindingly bright. So bright, it's daylight outside. I hear this high-pitched hum. Like a vacuum. Outside. Sucking up dirt in the front yard. I get up and look out the window, when suddenly…

Jordan lies on top of the outdoor barbecue. Re-enacting this moment.

JORDAN: I'm on a metal slab. The light is dim, but I see these beings hobble in. Their skin was pale. Almost translucent. Like ghosts. Faces, blank. Eyes, glass. Like moving dolls. Not dead, but not alive either.

[Are you listening, Ripley?]

JORDAN: They worked like they were telepathic. Assembling this device. [*He makes a drill sound*] Once the final piece snapped into place, they looked at me – all in sync. I swing at them, but my arms won't move. They creep closer. I can't talk. Closer. I grunt and heave. Closer. With all my strength, I unclench my jaw to say…
to finally say. Nothing.
They shove the device into my neck [*He makes the drill sound again*].

[Are you watching, Ripley?]

JORDAN: It cuts my throat. Chopping up my insides. Burning me. I'm angry. Why are they doing this? What did I do wrong? Stop! My tears are searing hot, stinging my eyes as they run down my face. I want my mum. I'm screaming, but I can't hear my Voice. Nobody hears my Voice. Where's my mum?

Jordan screams with rage, but nothing is heard.

JORDAN: I'm home. But I'm not at the window. I'm in the kitchen. I could have sworn I was looking out the window. Cold. Wet. Screaming. No cuts or blood. No pain, but I'm hurt.

[Do you believe him, Ripley?]

Jordan moves anticlockwise around the Barbecue Area. Stops. Chuckles.

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JORDAN: It's funny. How can I ask you to believe me if I don't believe me? Maybe I'm questioning my sanity because I'm begging for my humanity.

Ripley gets up and moves towards him.

He turns to face her.

JORDAN: Ripley… Please believe me.

Ripley throws her arms around Jordan.

The two friends sob quietly.

Headlights slowly beam up at them. The lights get brighter. Brighter. Brighter.

The friends squint towards the blinding light. So bright that it could be day.

End.

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A BETTER RIPLEY by Sarah Wilson

Conventions and considerations

This scene is a conversation between two characters, Ripley and Better Ripley. The latter name is stylised as 'B. Ripley' during dialogue to save space.

Better Ripley's non-verbal responses are represented by punctuation (including emoticons). A forward slash (/) is used to indicate an interruption or overlap.

Better Ripley is exactly what the name suggests: a better version of Ripley. The idea that Better Ripley is 'better' could reflect how Ripley feels about Better Ripley (that is Better Ripley is what Ripley wishes to be), how Ripley thinks other people would feel about Better Ripley (that is Ripley thinks other people would prefer Better Ripley over Ripley), or both. This is not an idle insecurity of Ripley's. Better Ripley is truly, actually and effortlessly better in the way that you decide.

Consideration 1: What makes Better Ripley better? Is Better Ripley smarter? Funnier? Cleaner? Calmer? Happier? More athletic? More creative? More outgoing? More cautious? More expressive? More studious? More flexible? Better dressed? Gets sick less often? Crush really fancies them back? Can eat liquorice without grimacing? Something else?

Consideration 2: What *is* Better Ripley? A real person? A shapeshifter? A ghost? A robot? A time-traveller from an alternate universe? A long lost twin sibling? An alien? An imaginary friend that got out of hand?

Consideration 3: What does Ripley think Better Ripley is? Does it match Better Ripley's true identity? If not, is Ripley's explanation more or less plausible than the truth? (Remember: It doesn't have to be plausible in our world! Maybe in Ripley's world it's very normal to have a robot who is just a slightly better version of yourself!)

SCENE

Ripley is pacing.

B. RIPLEY ?

RIPLEY Shut up. I'm thinking.

Ripley presses forehead against a wall.

B. RIPLEY :)

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RIPLEY *[without moving]* Don't do that.

B. RIPLEY …

…

…

:)

RIPLEY I said, don't do that.

B. RIPLEY :(

Ripley resumes pacing.

RIPLEY Can't take Jordan. Stays at home now, mostly, after that aliens business. And fair enough! But Jordan's my go-to mate for this sort of thing.

B. RIPLEY … / ?

RIPLEY No, I'm not inviting you. Can you imagine?

B. RIPLEY :(

RIPLEY Not that you're not… *[gestures at Better Ripley].* Because you are. And I'm not just saying that. The fact that you're so… *[gestures at Better Ripley]* … y'know? That's sort of the problem.

B. RIPLEY :-/

RIPLEY Problem for me, not problem for you. It's a good thing. A compliment.

I wish I was like that.

Like you.

Forehead against wall again.

What if I just don't go?

B. RIPLEY :-/

RIPLEY Not because of you. Although you're not exactly contributing productively to the "friends I can bring on the beach trip" brainstorm right now either.

B. RIPLEY :(

RIPLEY Stop that.

B. RIPLEY :)

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RIPLEY And stop that! We've already talked about that! I don't like it when you do that! It freaks me out!

B. RIPLEY …

RIPLEY You know what? Fine. You can come on the beach trip.

B. RIPLEY :)

Ripley finally looks back at Better Ripley.

RIPLEY That way I can push you off the jetty and then I wouldn't have to deal with you anymore.

Ripley resumes pacing.

B. RIPLEY :(

RIPLEY And before you say anything, yes, this is actually a big deal, because people feel sorry enough for me already without me showing up friendless to the annual beach trip. It's not that I don't have friends. You know that, you know that I have friends. I just don't have friends that can come on a beach trip.

And I wouldn't mind people feeling sorry for me if it didn't, like, actively inconvenience me. Last year Jordan had a family thing and couldn't get there until the third day of the trip, and for those first two days everyone was trying so aggressively to include me in their activities that I couldn't do any of the stuff I wanted to do. And it's nice of them, obviously. They're being nice. But they're being too nice? If that makes sense? Y'know, they're acting like I'm *bereaved* or something. The years before that, my brother's girlfriend broke up with him the night before we left, and I swear he got less sympathy. It was as if my friend coming down two days late was spitting on our friendship and ruining the trip, if not my life, and they had to distract me from it before I… I dunno. Pushed someone off the jetty, I guess.

B. RIPLEY :-/

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RIPLEY I wouldn't actually push you off the jetty. You or anyone else. And they know that, I'm probably being paranoid. They never liked my brother's girlfriend, that's probably why they didn't act like it was the end of the world when she wasn't there.

B. RIPLEY ?

RIPLEY Yes, and obviously they would like you. Everyone loves you. But even if I *was* one friendless beach trip away from snapping, bringing you wouldn't improve things.

B. RIPLEY ?

RIPLEY I mean, look at yourself!

Better Ripley does as instructed.

B. RIPLEY …

:)

RIPLEY Yeah. Exactly.

I lied. I do mind people feeling sorry for me. Jordan's the only friend I've had who didn't feel sorry for me. We're mates because we watch the same shows and movies, because we like hanging out together, because we trust each other. And Jordan's mum is the only friend's parent who will say no to me. She's not harsh or anything. She's nice. But normal nice. She acts like Jordan's a bit of a ratbag, so she acts like I'm a bit of a ratbag too. And it's nice. Yeah. It's like she and Jordan don't care. I mean they *care*, but also they don't care, but in a good way?

B. RIPLEY ?

RIPLEY I knew you wouldn't understand. Of course not. But that's why I can't take you, even if I wanted to.

B. RIPLEY ...

RIPLEY Because everyone on the beach trip would look at you and me side by side and they'd know what I could be. What I should be, maybe. If things were different. Regardless, you'd always be the better version of me in people's heads, and no one would ever be able to look at me like I was anything other than the inferior copy.

B. RIPLEY …

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…

…

:)

RIPLEY I said, don’t do that.

B. RIPLEY :D

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Fixing the Object by Sarah Wilson

Sasha is speaking to a friend, Alex. ***Alex's non-verbal responses are represented by punctuation. A forward slash (/) is used to indicate an interruption or overlap****.*

Sasha begins onstage with ***The Object****. The Object can be either a single object or a cohesive collection of multiple objects. Sasha must be able to transform The Object between three states:* ***assembled****,* ***disassembled****, and* ***incorrectly assembled****. Sasha's state is reflected in The Object and so can be interpreted fairly loosely, but the states should be easy to tell apart and it should take at least a little effort to move The Object between these states. Viable examples of Objects include (but are certainly not limited to):*

- *An electronic device that can be taken apart with a screwdriver*
- *A jigsaw puzzle*
- *A basket of laundry (where "assembled" means folded)*
- *A make-up look/donning of a costume (where "assembled" means finished application/donning)*
- *A whiteboard of mathematics questions (where "assembled" means solved)*

The Object begins in its assembled state*.*

SASHA Have I told you about Kaycee before?

ALEX ?

SASHA Right, so Kaycee, my mum's little sister — she's heaps younger than Mum. Ten years, maybe? Kaycee works at a computer repair shop, so she's really good with computers. Obviously.

Sasha begins to disassemble The Object.

Mum loves to joke, *[Mum voice]* "Your aunt is better with computers than with people." Which I think is just Mum's polite way of saying that Kaycee annoys her. I know that she only compares me to Kaycee when I'm annoying her, or when she thinks I'm *[Mum voice]* "too obsessed with what's happening on your screen to see what's happening in the real / world."

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ALEX / !?

SASHA Because, to Mum, those things are mutually exclusive.

I know it's a cliché for teenagers to say their parent doesn't get it, even if they literally don't. Kaycee tells me all the time that she's sure she doesn't get it, but weirdly by saying that she doesn't get it she kind of demonstrates that she does get it, if that makes sense?

ALEX ?

SASHA "It" being… I dunno. Phones? The internet? As in, Kaycee will say, *[Kaycee voice]* "Sure, I was constantly on my fan forums, fighting tooth and nail about how Spock and Kirk should definitely kiss[1], but at least that was all separate from, like, *the newspaper* and *my boss asking me to cover a shift*. Is it overwhelming to have everything all in one place?"

That's the other nice thing with Kaycee. When she phrases it as a question, it is actually a question. If Mum says, *[Mum voice],* "Is it overwhelming to have everything all in one place?" she doesn't actually want my opinion, she's just telling me what she thinks but putting a question mark at the end. Whereas when I told Kaycee no, having everything in one place doesn't overwhelm me, she said, *[Kaycee voice]* "Oh, okay. Just thinking about it overwhelms me, but you're allowed to feel differently."

ALEX !

SASHA Anyway, the point is: so you know how my old laptop just randomly died during English / the other week?

ALEX / .

1 Feel free to substitute any era-appropriate fandom reference.

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SASHA And I was so stressed because I need my notes. Not to borrow yours, or to have another copy of the handout. I have a system and it works. School doesn't work for me, and my note system is the only thing … *[I know that makes up for it.]*

ALEX …

SASHA …

So anyway, I needed a working laptop, so Mum asked Kaycee to come over and look at it, to see if we could avoid buying me a new one.

Sasha finishes laying The Object out, showing that it is now disassembled.

And Kaycee had the laptop dissected on the dining room table, and she said, *[Kaycee voice]* "Jenna, respectfully, even if I could fix this I wouldn't, because it's not worth it. Look at this plastic hinge." And then she just… bent the hinge wrong on purpose and it cracked.

ALEX / !!!

SASHA Mum started yelling that she asked Kaycee to fix my laptop, not to break it more.

Sasha begins reassembling, starting at a reasonable/careful pace.

Kaycee tried to explain, *[Kaycee voice]* "I have about a hundred of these as broken trade-ins that I use for donor parts, so if you want me to get a new hinge and a new motherboard — the problem is a fried motherboard, by the way — then I can get those parts for you. But I've got about a hundred of them because they're not good computers. This is planned obsolescence, Jenna. I don't want Sasha to get in trouble for breaking it when that's what it's designed to do."

Sasha pauses assembly to signal who is talking using nonverbal cues in combination with established impressions of Jenna and Kaycee.

[Mum voice] "Oh, so you think I'm too hard on Sasha?"

ALEX / ?!?

SASHA *[Kaycee voice]* "I didn't say that."

[Mum voice] "Didn't have to."

[Kaycee voice] "I literally didn't say that!"

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ALEX / !! ???

SASHA *[Mum voice]* “You think I’m too hard on Sasha, and you think because you’re so smart you’d be a better parent than me. / You think you know everything!”

ALEX ????? / ...

SASHA *[Kaycee voice]* “No. I don’t think I know everything. But I do know about computers.”

ALEX ! / ...

Sasha resumes reassembly, now growing increasingly frantic.

SASHA Whenever we disagree on something important, Mum loves to say, *[sarcastic Mum voice]* “Quick! Leave home now, while you still know everything!” I don’t know why “you think you know everything” is Mum’s go-to. Number one, I don’t think I know everything, either literally or hyperbolically, and if she cared enough to look at my marks she’d realise I know basically nothing.

ALEX / ...

SASHA Number two, sometimes I wish I knew less, y’know? It’s not an actual wish. I threaten to throw my phone into the river once a week but we both know I’ll never actually do it. It’s not an actual wish because if I think it through, I know it’s better to know about wars and famines and climate change and unfair laws and poverty and scammers and predators everything everything everything because the alternative is that I throw my phone into the river, and then I can’t listen or learn or help and also — bonus! — I can’t talk to my friends or pick up that extra shift or watch video after video until my brain finally shuts up.

ALEX ...

SASHA …

Sasha puts down The Object, now incorrectly assembled.

Kaycee said she can train me to work at her shop if I wanted.

ALEX !

/ ?

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SASHA I said I wasn't any good with computers and she said that I was good with people, and that the shop needs someone who's good with people, and that it's a lot easier to teach someone who understands people to understand computers than the other way around. She said she knows that because she isn't good with people, and I said that I didn't think that was true.

Sasha does something to demonstrate The Object is incorrectly assembled (e.g. holds up a missing screw).

I told Kaycee I'd think about it.

ALEX … ?

SASHA It would be nice to know how to fix things, y'know?

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The Cut by Eloise Snape

Alex sits in a hairdresser's chair, in front of the mirror, talking to her hairdresser, who is a young apprentice. Alex is getting her head shaved. We hear the buzz of the clippers.

ALEX:

I just thought. Well. You know. Maybe this could fix things?

Beat.

I don't mean that… ah, how do I say this. Like I'm not changing the world? But it's all I can think of to do.

It's. Yeah. It's all I can do.

Now? Oh. Ah I feel sick.

Ok. Ok-

Wait!

Ahhhhh. Hold on. Hold on. Let me just. Can we just. Give me a couple of minutes?

Beat. She looks at herself in the mirror.

It's just that I haven't cut my hair. Ever.

Hang on, not true. Apparently, I stole the scissors when I was 3 and cut a mullet so intense I looked like Joe Exotic. You know that Tiger King guy? Mum said I told her 'I didn't want my hair to touch my ears anymore.'

And of course I'm sure at some point Mum cut it. Actually, I know Mum cut it there's a pic on our fridge of 8-year-old me with a bowl cut and fringe. And I mean a literal bowl cut. She took a salad bowl, plonked it on my head and cut around it. The fringe would make Wednesday Addams jealous.

But other than that. This hair feels like. It's like this hair has been with me through everything. This hair has stood by me through my core developmental years! It's had nits, seen my terrible first kiss, it's been styled for formal and witnessed everything there was to witness at afters. It stuck by me at

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my first job at the Woolies checkout, it conveniently covered up pustules when pimple patches failed me. It's been there when I've been a complete nightmare to my parents.

It's the hair I was born with. The way it looks determines the way I feel. And who I am. Or who I think I am. Or who I want to be.

Beat.

Did you always want to do this? Be a hairdresser?

Beat.

We had our session with the careers counsellor person yesterday.

She was…

Nice?

Actually no. She was pretending to be nice.

She clearly didn't want to be there. And I think that's hilarious that a careers counsellor doesn't actually like their career, and I'm supposed to be taking advice from her.

She had a real bouncy bob, and she spoke in that falsetto voice that means everything is a lie.

Beat.

You're supposed to know so much more than you actually know. About yourself. What are your hobbies, what subjects do you like. All that stuff.

But what if you don't know? And especially when you're School Captain it's like I'm supposed to lead or something. Or have direction. Or purpose.

Beat.

Mum left school at 15, worked for 2 years as a receptionist and then at 17 left for London met my Dad and didn't come home for 10 years.

Actually, before she met my Dad she had an affair with a proper British Lord. Like, country manor, fancy dogs. The whole thing. Which I thought was pretty cool. And then I was like, why didn't you marry him I would have been a Lady! Like a real Lady and then I wouldn't have to care or know about what I'm going to do when I finish school. But then she reminded me I wouldn't have actually been *me* if she married him. So.

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Beat.

My older sister wanted to be an actor but she just ended up working for this guy who does kids parties? She would dress up as a different character each week. Sometimes a fairy, sometimes Elsa. Various Disney princesses. Her boyfriend did it too and I remember spotting him at our local park wearing a Spiderman outfit that was way too tight, and he was being mauled by 4-year-olds who were all taking advantage of his wedgie. My sister was really bad at the balloon animals and it was like a war zone. Each time a balloon would pop a small child would drop to the ground in tears.

Beat.

My friend, Sasha, their Mum is a nurse. A midwife actually. She delivers babies. Which I think is cool. But, I dunno. I don't think I could, you know. Look at. You know. Right when the baby is nearly out, I'd be passed out on the floor next to them. Plus, you can't like, organise your calendar or anything. The baby is gonna arrive when the baby is gonna arrive. I can't ask the birthing Mum mid-labour to like hold on. While I finish up watching an ep of Vanderpump Rules.

Beat.

But I guess if I. Like. When Mum was diagnosed, I thought. I have to fix this.

Maybe if I was a midwife or nurse or had any kind of medical background, I could help her.

Beat.

So, I told the lady with the bob I don't know what I want to be.

I said I just wanted to fix things.

She said: 'what things?'

I said: 'I'm scared.'

She said: 'what are you scared of?'

I said: 'War.

The planet being too hot to live on.

My phone.

Robots.

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Being completely homeless.

Beat.

This cancer killing my Mum.'

Beat.

The bob lady just got awkward and kinda muttered she was sorry and ushered me out the door.

Beat.

Do you think her hairdresser hated her and gave her that cut on purpose? Have you ever…?

I would. That's such a powerful feeling right? Being able to cut someone's hair in a way that changes their entire identity. Like I would just give someone a full mullet, like my Joe Exotic one. If I didn't like them.

Beat.

So. When Mum lost her hair. And all sense of. Who she was. Like she felt like she lost a part of herself.

I thought: I can fix this.

And this is why. Well, here I am.

Beat. She looks at herself in the mirror.

I'm ready. Chop it. Chop it all off.

Hairdresser lifts the clippers and:

BLACKOUT.

The Cut © Eloise Snape, 2026, karen@yellowcreativemanagement.com

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Jay's Reflection by Chenoa Deemal

A note from the writer

I wrote this from my perspective and lived experience as an Aboriginal woman, therefore the references to culture exist. However, anything that is underlined in that section could be either taken out or recontextualised to fit the cultural background of the Actor performing this piece.

JAY has been deliberately described as a gender-neutral character to make it more accessible to *any* Actor that feels called to this piece.

Take it and make it your own, it's yours now. Happy dreaming and creating!

- Chenoa

JAY stands in front of a mirror. THE MIRROR REFLECTION is another actor playing JAY's reflection which acts as a mirror, until it doesn't.

JAY looks at their body judgmentally and turns to the side, pushes out their stomach and sucks it back in checking hairs on the face and neck maybe squeezing a pimple or two. These movements become repetitive and build into a dance. It is not sensual but an exploration of body, a contemplation on what the body looks like as it moves. JAY speaks while moving.

JAY: They say that we were never meant to see ourselves this much. In mirrors, on our phones, on zooms, all day at my job, staring at the reflection of others as they stare back at me. We were only ever meant to see our reflection in still pools of water. Our ancient ancestors would go their whole lives without ever knowing what their own face and bodies looked like. According to Ian Mortimer in his article, The Mirror Effect, they didn't have individual identities like we do now.

Beat. The movements slow to a stillness.

JAY: My Ancestors for instance went even longer than anyone else without seeing themselves. Colonisation happened only a few hundred years ago for my people. That's three or four grandparents back. That's probably why community is so important to us as Aboriginal people, we still have some of that sense of family even when we're not... Family.

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Beat. Change of thought and rhythm.

JAY: But nowadays, individualism *is* taking over which is why we are growing more and more disconnected from each other. Our own self-image becomes our main priority, and we tear ourselves down by picking apart, Every. Little. Piece. Of ourselves.

Beat, JAY becomes hyper aware of their own body.

JAY: When I think of how it would feel, to never know what I looked like or how my body fits into clothing – I feel a deep sense of fear and loss because I don't know who I am with- No.

JAY pauses, the last thought feels too vulnerable and pushes it down.

THE MIRROR REFLECTION looks at JAY confused.
We see THE MIRROR REFLECTION moving separately from Jay.

JAY doesn't notice but feels that something weird has shifted within themselves.

JAY: I feel a sense of strength. The thought of not ever seeing my face or body feels empowering. I feel like it heals me of all my insecurities, and I feel free to let myself live for who I am no matter what my body looks like.

THE MIRROR REFLECTION looks at JAY and knows JAY is lying.

JAY suddenly feels watched, turns to the mirror and THE MIRROR REFLECTION goes back to being a reflection. Shaking it off JAY returns to their thoughts.

JAY: There is a lot of online forums and talk amongst people who are going against the grain of diet culture now and I feel even more seen and confident than ever.

THE MIRROR REFLECTION knows this is a blatant lie; it finally stops acting like a reflection and turns to Jay confused. JAY feels this and turns to see the reflection confronting them. THE MIRROR REFLECTION then crosses their arms impatiently, as if challenging JAY to tell the actual truth.

JAY: What? It's true.

THE MIRROR REFLECTION shakes their head.

JAY: It is.

THE MIRROR REFLECTION shakes their head again.

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JAY: Ugh, I don't have time for this.

THE MIRROR REFLECTION rolls their eyes.

JAY: What do you want from me?

JAY reaches forward and lunges at THE MIRROR REFLECTION. They have a back-and-forth battle through the mirror; it's aggressive choreographed dance movements that show JAY's internal battle. JAY wins. Exasperated, THE MIRROR REFLECTION sits on the ground defeated.

JAY: Ha! Look at you… Aww are you sad that you lost? So what? Get over it. Omg don't be so bloody pathetic. Wow, this is so embarrassing. You're a joke. Get up you loser… Ugh, look. At. Me.

THE MIRROR REFLECTION looks up and JAY suddenly realises they are speaking to themselves this way.

JAY: Aww, I was only kidding. It's all good. I didn't mean it like that.

THE MIRROR REFLECTION is still on the ground, heartbroken. JAY stares for a beat, actual concern passing over.

JAY: Are you ok?

THE MIRROR REFLECTION shakes their head and starts to cry.

JAY: Oh no. I'm sorry.

THE MIRROR REFLECTION suddenly shakes it off and stands up forcing a smile, but you can see that they're still sad behind the eyes.

JAY: I really didn't mean…

THE MIRROR REFLECTION tries to reassure JAY that it's all ok.

JAY: No, I do this all the time don't I? Speak to you like this, call you names, say nasty things about you. You're used to it, but it still hurts, doesn't it?

THE MIRROR REFLECTION slowly nods.

JAY: I'm sorry. I really am. I don't mean to be so terrible; it just comes out. I do it without even thinking. It didn't even occur to me that hurting you is also hurting *me*. I'm sorry that every time I see you there, I hate what I see, that I want you to change. I'm sorry that I want you to be skinnier,

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prettier, smarter, taller, funnier, more loveable, more popular, more, more, more. I'm sorry that I put so much pressure on you, I'm sorry that I put you down every, single, day… I want to change, I want to be better to you, nicer to you…

THE MIRROR REFLECTION smiles and nods encouraging JAY to keep going.

JAY: Ahhh, ok… *(JAY struggles to find good things to say)* Umm, be nicer, nicer... You have great eyebrows.

THE MIRROR REFLECTION giggles silently.

JAY: *(Laughing)* Ok. Umm. You have a great laugh. Ah, you have lovely hair, you're good at puzzles, you're

_____

_____

_____

_____

The blank lines are for the Actor playing JAY to list the things they like about themselves, let it go on for a while, make it awkward, say it until it feels natural to be kind to yourself.

THE MIRROR REFLECTION smiles, steps through the mirror and hugs JAY.

END

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CHARADE/S by Chenoa Deemal

Writer's note

There are many ways this scene could be played out. For instance, you could have two 'spaces' onstage with the Actor playing Kayla slightly upstage of the Actor playing Cleo and have the scene play out from there. You could break form this way by having the Actors hug at the end ... Or not. This is a chance to play with multimedia conventions by using projection or previously filmed scenes in specific places. Kayla communicates mainly with punctuation and emojis in the chat. Kayla and Cleo have been friends for so long that they understand these emojis. They are like a secret language. I have left the decisions about how to interpret this open to you. I have also created space for you, the Actor, to make up any TV show or films you want to put into the script; this way you have more creative control and input in the scene.

The way it's written, the characters are meant to be very awkward, so it helps to play close attention to the ellipses. This will help create that awkwardness and tension between the characters.

As an Actor myself, I wanted to give you space to create and play. The heart of this piece is about friendship, about how sometimes there isn't a bad guy – it's just a breakdown of communication, which could all be fixed with one good open-hearted conversation. Or can it?

Characters:

Cleo – 16. Has been an Actor since she was 6 on one of the biggest TV sitcoms in the world.

Kayla – 16. Has been an Actor since she was a toddler and is fast becoming one of the most critically acclaimed and most hired actresses of her age.

> *Cleo enters, waving to the camera. She sits and speaks into it as if she's reading from a teleprompter.*

C: Hi I'm Cleo Davis. Welcome to a very special live episode of Variety's, 'Actors on Actors'. Why is this particular episode so special you ask? Well, the producers had the brilliant idea of bringing two Actors together without either of them knowing who they will be meeting – no preparation, just unfiltered discussion about the industry, our careers and what we'll be up to next. Right now, the mystery Actor *I'll* be meeting is waiting to be connected online. So, without further ado. Let me introduce them…

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Cleo waits for the teleprompter to scroll up.

C: Coming to chat with me today is a phenomenal young actress, ooh first clue, who started out doing laundry detergent commercials at just one and a half years old.

The live audience members are sending in guesses as to who it could be (Zendaya, Florence Pugh etc.).

C: *(responding to live streaming audience)* Ooh, it could be... She learnt ballet, hip hop and jazz from the age of 3, she grew up in Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

More guesses.

C: *(responding to audience)* Maybe... She went on to play Shelly…

Cleo clicks onto who it may be. Her stomach drops.

C: The cheeky little sister in the iconic – I think I know who it is – *(Cleo puts on her best 'excited' act)* Australian TV show _____ (Insert appropriate show here).

Cleo tries with all her might to not let her dread get to her.

C: Yep *(confirming to herself) …* She got her first major screen role as Janet in Guillermo Del Toro's _____, spent six seasons on the Prime-Time TV show _____ and is the star of Christopher Nolan's latest epic _____. Ladies and Gentlemen, and everyone else, you know who it is… It's Kayla Strange.

We see a short montage introduction of Cleo and Kayla – smiling for the paparazzi and red-carpet footage, photos leaving restaurants together or going to an amusement park. Then it spirals into headlines about their friendship, one headline reads "Kayla and Cleo – What happened to the besties and are the rumours true?".

Kayla suddenly appears in a projected live feed. Cleo immediately puts on a show, she screams and waves to her. Kayla is shocked but we can also see her pull herself together to say "Hi" and wave.

C: Oh, we can't hear you, I think you're on mute.

Kayla speaks to someone off camera. She doesn't look happy; she rolls her eyes and begins typing.

C: *(to online audience)* Can you guys hear her?

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Kayla begins typing in the chat on screen. Three dots appear and disappear.

C: Oh. Ok. Maybe her mic isn't working. So, should we continue? How?

Kayla does not look like she wants to continue. She types again. Three dots appear and disappear, then she send a thumbs up emoji.

C: Ok... Cool... *(to the camera)* Gosh…. As everyone would know, we've known each other for most of our lives… So... I wanna start by saying I loved you in 'Anchor' … I think you tapped into a side of yourself that no one's ever seen, how did you *find* that depth?

K: ?

C: Um I mean, did you have a process?... What kind of research did you do? That kind of thing… Did you draw on your own experiences? Or... *(changes tactic)*. Well, you have to tell us what it's like to work with Chris Nolan though, that's incredible. I was so excited for you when I heard you were working with him.

K: ?

C: *(confused)* Because, you know, _____. *(to the camera)* It was one of our favourite movies growing up, we went through a phase of watching it every time we hung out remember?

Kayla remembers that fondly but doesn't want to show it… Cleo's stomach drops again. How is she going to keep up this charade if Kayla won't participate, Cleo looks around at the Offstage Crew. Kayla types.

K: *(sends an emoji)*

Cleo's stomach drops. She was not ready for this, she did NOT want to do this here, live. Thinking on her feet she tries to laugh it off.

C: *(nervous Laugh)* What, what do you mean?...

K: *(sends another emoji)*

Another awkward moment of Cleo trying desperately to think on her feet and decipher what Kayla means. People are commentating throughout the exchange – "This is weird", "Just answer properly", "Guys, is it just me or this is awkwarrrd??"

C: Um… Are we really going to do this here? Um... You didn't reach out to me either…

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Three dots appear and disappear.

C: I left you on 'read' because there was nothing left to say. It was just the end of a conversation.

Three dots appear and disappear.

C: And I'm not trying to gaslight you; I'm just telling you my point of view.

Three dots appear and disappear.

C: You think I stopped talking to you?... Maybe I did but only because I knew that you were busy filming a CHRIS NOLAN movie. Why didn't you reach out to me?

K: *(sends another emoji)*

C: Because obviously you figured something was up, why didn't you reach out to me and ask me if I was ok? Friendships can go both ways you know…

K: I just didn't...

Kayla types and then deletes.

C: Didn't what? ... Remember all those fights we had when we were little? You would get offended or not like something that I had said or done and then you would ignore me. So, when we got older and you were busy and focussing on yourself, I thought you were ignoring me. If I hadn't heard from you in a couple of weeks I would think, "What did I do wrong? What did I say? Did I say something cringey?". It was like some sort of PTSD.

Cleo is on a roll, the words just falling out of her. Kayla takes this in, listening and letting the words hit her.

C: I was tired of feeling like that... I wanted to discover who I really am without you, because we've been in each other's lives since we were 7 and you were always the cool one with your cool style and fashion sense. Everybody loves you and wants to be your friend and I'm just this weird one that tags along and so I thought that… *(Cleo gets emotional close to crying)* I thought that I just needed to, to grow a little bit on my own, without you.

Kayla listens, not knowing what to do.

C: And then all that online bull just made it worse and pitted us against each other. And I'm sorry for not talking it through with you. And I didn't mean to hurt you, but I stopped talking to you because I felt hurt – when you didn't reach out to *me* and ask *me* if anything was wrong, that was

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my confirmation that you didn't care about me or love me anymore … and so… Ugh, why can't your microphone just work. *(long pause – Cleo realises) …* It does work doesn't it.

Kayla stiffens. She turns on her microphone, takes a deep breath to speak…or not.

END

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