

THE MUSIC INSIDE

BY DVORA LIBERMAN

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CHARACTERS

EVE MYERS (*married name*): late 70s. Former Foundling Hospital School pupil

CHILD EVE SLOANE: 7 yrs old

TEENAGE AND YOUNG WOMAN EVE SLOANE: 13-25yrs old.

IMOGEN: Eve's granddaughter, 16 years old

SARAH: Eve's daughter, mid 40s

EDWARD: Eve's former husband/ a doctor. He died in his 50s, nearly 20 years earlier.

RICHARD: Sarah's husband/Imogen's father

JONATHAN HARRIS: Eve's foster brother when they were children

VIOLET BELL: Eve's birth mother

MRS WILDE: Eve's foster mother when she was a child

ANNA HUGHES: Eve's half sister/Violet's second daughter

JOYCE MORRISON: Coram senior social worker

All other characters are played by members of the ensemble/CHORUS. The CHORUS is the expression of EVE'S inner being/psyche; her rich internal world, filled with memories, fantasies, images, music, song, and her own true inner voice, that yearns for healing and resolution of past trauma and particularly the secrecy and shame she carries about being a foundling child.

Music is her expression and salvation.

The CHORUS stand with boys on the right and girls on the left in two distinct groups, and also represents the Foundling Hospital School CHOIR. Throughout the play, different characters from EVE'S past step out of the CHORUS and then return to the chorus formation.

MUSIC IN THE PLAY

1. Scene 1: a piece of classical music ADULT EVE plays on a stereo system
2. Scene 2: underscoring to Voices of EVE'S psyche
3. Scene 2: CHOIR sing *School Hymn*
4. Scene 4: CHOIR (girls only) sing *Grace*
5. Scene 4: CHILD EVE'S original music – orchestral piece
6. Scene 4: CHILD EVE'S dream sequence musical underscoring
7. Scene 4: CHOIR sing Handel's *Messiah For Unto Us a Child Is Born*
8. Scene 4: CHOIR sing Christmas carol, DING DONG MERRILY ON HIGH
9. Scene 4: piano duet TEENAGE EVE and STEPHEN play, and THOMAS plays violin
10. Scene 4: TEENAGE EVE'S original piano composition
11. Scene 8: CHOIR sing lullaby (no words) to VIOLET'S letters
12. Scene 11: underscoring to Voices of EVE'S psyche (building to crescendo)
13. Scene 12: CHOIR sing Christmas carol, *O Holy Night*

Scene 1

ADULT EVE’S house. There is a knock on the door.

EVE goes to the door.

Hello?
EVE

Hi Grandma.
IMOGEN

EVE opens the door.

Imogen, darling! What a surprise!
EVE

IMOGEN enters EVE’S house.

Grandma, I’ve just been to the concert in honour of Arvo Part. I couldn’t wait to tell you about it.
IMOGEN

Was it wonderful?
EVE

Yes. You would have loved it. I brought you the programme.
IMOGEN

IMOGEN shows EVE the programme.

Ooo, let’s have a look...I need my glasses.
EVE

EVE gets her glasses and puts them on. Then she reads the programme.

Alina is one of my favourites.
EVE

Every note of the piano sounds so pure.
IMOGEN

I heard an interview recently with Arvo Part and he was saying that in this music, it’s like there are two individual voices that are neutral, but together they make such a heart-rending union that the soul yearns to sing it endlessly.
EVE

IMOGEN

That's exactly it! In that union everything is made...whole. Look, he says...
(*reading the programme*) 'I could compare my music to white light which contains all colours'.

EVE

It's something very special to be able to move people like that with your music.

IMOGEN

I want my music to move people like that – to open their hearts and make them feel – whatever is inside them – great joy, sorrow, love, terror, fury – to feel it deeply – and to know they are alive.

EVE

I can hear how inspired you are!

IMOGEN

And the music will make them feel – and help them to bear the intensity of it. The music will hold them and comfort them, and they will know they are not alone.

EVE

That's a high aspiration...Does Sarah know you're here? It's nearly half past ten.

IMOGEN

Yes. I called her on my way. I said I wouldn't be long, but I had to see you.

EVE

Good.

Pause.

EVE

Would you like a drink darling?

IMOGEN

No. I'm fine.

EVE

Something to eat?

IMOGEN

No thanks.

Pause.

EVE

How are your lessons at the Royal College of Music going?

IMOGEN

I'm praying Mr Silver won't throw me out.

EVE

Throw you out? Why would he do that?

IMOGEN

I'm not practising as much as we agreed.

EVE

Why not?

IMOGEN

I can't keep up. I said I would play three hours a day but I have too much homework.

EVE

Play your music first, and then do your homework.

IMOGEN

I can't. I have a pile of books to read and essays to hand in, and exams in three weeks.

EVE

Imogen, music is what you love.

IMOGEN

I know, Grandma, but I/

EVE

(interrupting her) Then give your time and attention to it.

IMOGEN

I was lucky enough to get a scholarship to St Paul's. I have to show them I deserve it and they didn't waste it on me.

EVE

Of course you deserve it. And there's nothing lucky about it...They can see how talented you are. You musn't waste your talent, Imogen. It is a gift.

Pause.

IMOGEN

There's a girl in my class...and she has to leave. She's pregnant. What a waste of her talent. This baby has ruined her life. It's a terrible mistake... She thought the baby's father loved her, but he left her as soon as she told him... How could she have been so stupid?...It's a nightmare, isn't it?

Pause.

EVE realises IMOGEN is pregnant. She stares at IMOGEN. She is speechless

and doesn't know how to respond.

IMOGEN starts to cry.

IMOGEN

Don't look like that, Grandma.

Pause.

EVE

Have you told Sarah and Richard?

IMOGEN

I can't.

Pause.

IMOGEN

What am I going to do?

EVE

You have to tell them.

Pause.

IMOGEN

I'm sorry, Grandma. I'm so sorry. I should go.

IMOGEN leaves.

EVE is in shock and motionless.

Pause.

Suddenly, as if awoken from a trance, EVE rushes to put on a piece of classical music. She turns the volume up, closes her eyes and drinks in the music that envelops her.

Blackout.

Scene 2

Darkness. A pool of light on ADULT EVE in bed. She tosses and turns. She is restless and uncomfortable. She is in a state between half wake and sleep. Fractured and painful childhood memories begin to assault her psyche. The following are a medley of brief enactments and voices. As one memory ends, another invades EVE'S consciousness.

(To be able to read the script more easily, the following line ie. _____

indicates the end of a memory)

VOICES OF EVE'S PSYCHE

Baby...Terrible mistake...Baby...Nightmare.

(These words are jumbled and overlap and repeat: They are spoken in a loud whisper and have a haunting, foreboding quality, with musical underscoring.)

EVE'S foster mother, MRS WILDE, gives CHILD EVE a doll. CHILD EVE cuddles it happily.

A school NURSE from the Foundling Hospital School wrenches the doll away from CHILD EVE.

NURSE

There are no toys allowed here...Say good-bye to your foster mother.

School CHAPLAIN speaks to all the PUPILS (the CHORUS) at a Sunday chapel service.

CHAPLAIN

This charitable institution, the Foundling Hospital School, its Governors and generous benefactors, the 'great and good' of society have mercifully saved you. Your real mothers gave you to our care, and we have ensured that you have all been looked after by foster mothers in the countryside for the first five years of your life. Now you will live within the walls of this institution for the next ten years. We will train you to be of service and when you are fourteen years of age, we will send you out into society, boys into the armed forces or military bands and girls into domestic service. We will train you to be humble, honest and good, and to know your station in life. We will now sing the School hymn.

CHORUS

ALL sing.

*Put thou thy trust in God;
In duty's path go on;
Walk in His strength with faith and hope;
So shall thy work be done.*

*Commit thy ways to Him;
Thy works into His hands;
And rest on His unchanging Word,
Who heaven and earth commands.*

*Though years on years roll on,
His cov'nant shall endure;
Though clouds and darkness hide His path,
The promis'd grace is sure.*

*Through waves, and clouds, and storms
His power will clear thy way:
Wait thou His time-the darkest night
Shall end in brightest day.
Amen.*

While the CHORUS are singing (after the second verse) ADULT EVE gets out of bed. She goes to get a key out of a drawer.

She takes out a small chest from under her bed. She unlocks it. She opens the chest and takes out a bible. She opens the front cover and takes out a photograph of herself and JONATHAN as five year old children, when they live in the country with MRS WILDE. CHILD EVE is holding a basket filled with blackberries.

ADULT EVE looks at the photo and remembers...

EVE

Stop eating all the blackberries, Jonathan!

JONATHAN pinches a handful of blackberries from the basket and eats them with relish.

EVE swipes the basket away so it is out of his reach.

JONATHAN runs and grabs the basket, takes another blackberry and eats it with delight.

EVE grabs the basket off him again.

EVE

Stop it! Ma said she needs the basket full to make blackberry jam.

JONATHAN

We can pick some more.

EVE

We've picked them all. There are none left.

JONATHAN

There are more on those bushes over there. *(he points)*

EVE looks in the direction he is pointing to.

EVE

Where?

Across the field. JONATHAN

I'll race you. EVE

I'll win. JONATHAN

No you won't. EVE

Yes I will. JONATHAN

Ready...Set... EVE

(in unison) Go! EVE and JONATHAN

EVE and JONATHAN race across the field, giggling, happy and free.

MRS WILDE holds EVE and JONATHAN'S hands. They enter the enormous gates of the Foundling Hospital School. FOSTER MOTHERS are handing their CHILDREN over to the school NURSES. CHILDREN are screaming and crying, and those who have already been deserted stand confused, frightened and bereft.

MRS WILDE
(to NURSE) I love them as though they're my own. I've fostered twelve children now and I can't do it anymore. I can't keep loving them and letting them go, and aching to know what happens to them after they leave this place.

The NURSE grabs hold of JONATHAN and EVE'S hands. MRS WILDE tries to hide her tears. She leaves abruptly and doesn't look back.

EVE
(screaming) Ma! Ma! Come back!

NURSES bathe EVE and JONATHAN and other newly arrived CHILDREN, in large metal bathtubs, two in each tub. They scrub them roughly with brushes. The CHILDREN cry out in pain.

NURSE
(to EVE): Don't cry.

EVE

(crying) Ma. Ma.

NURSE

Be quiet! She is not your mother.

The NURSES cut the CHILDREN'S hair very short. They weigh them, measure them and check them for diseases. The CHILDREN get dressed in their new Foundling Hospital School uniforms.

EVE and JONATHAN are in shock, bewildered and terrified.

EVE

(whispering to Jonathan) Why did Ma leave us here?

JONATHAN

I don't know.

Foster mothers day. Infants playroom. BOYS and GIRLS play together. A school NURSE enters with a list of CHILDREN'S names. The CHILDREN gather around the NURSE as she reads aloud the names of the CHILDREN whose foster mothers have come to see them.

As soon as they hear their name read out, that CHILD immediately rushes out of the room to their FOSTER MOTHER.

NURSE

Martin Baker, Sally Braithwaite, Eleanor Crimp, Walter Gardner, Jonathan Harris...

JONATHAN

She's here!

MRS WILDE enters. JONATHAN rushes into her arms.

NURSE

(continues reading names) ...Grace Lambert, Madeline Little, Timothy Page, Abigail Parkins, Peter Rawls, Paul Richardson, Eve Sloane ...(continues reading) Jane Toynbee, Sebastian Unwin.

EVE rushes to MRS WILDE.

EVE

Ma!

MRS WILDE cries and laughs, overcome with emotion. She nestles into EVE and JONATHAN and holds them both tightly.

A school NURSE approaches and watches their happy reunion.

MRS WILDE

(to EVE) This is for you.

MRS WILDE gives EVE a doll. (The same doll and image of EVE cuddling it happily that we saw in the previous memory.)

MRS WILDE

(to Jonathan) And this is for you, Jonathan.

MRS WILDE gives JONATHAN a toy aeroplane. He makes it fly and swoop in circles in the air.

MRS WILDE

(to both of them) And I brought your favourite...

MRS WILDE takes a round tin out of her bag. She takes the lid off and shows them what's inside.

EVE and JONATHAN

(in unison) Blackberry pie!

MRS WILDE gives EVE and JONATHAN a slice of the pie and they devour it greedily and happily.

MRS WILDE

Are you hungry, sweet angels? Would you like some more?

EVE and JONATHAN

(nodding vigorously, simultaneously) Yes, please!

MRS WILDE gives them more pie and they scoff it down. MRS WILDE'S food, and their manner of eating symbolises the deeper hunger and nourishment they are deprived of.

NURSE

(to MRS WILDE) For some time now the Governors have been very concerned at the lavish presents of toys, food and money that the foster mothers bring for the children. The Governors fully appreciate this kindness and generosity, but feel that in these times where everyone is asked to be frugal and economise and curtail expenditure, the presents should be discontinued...(to MRS WILDE, EVE and JONATHAN) Now it is time to say your good-byes.

EVE becomes distraught.

EVE

No! No! I want to go home with you.

MRS WILDE

I'll come back again soon.

EVE

Take me home. I promise I will be good.

MRS WILDE tries to leave but EVE won't let her go.

EVE

No! No! Ma. Don't go.

NURSE

If you keep making such a fuss Mrs Wilde won't be able to come and visit you anymore.

The NURSE physically struggles with EVE and pries her away from MRS WILDE, and holds onto her tightly.

NURSE

(to MRS WILDE) It would be best if you don't come back again. The child can't settle.

MRS WILDE

(to EVE) Be a good girl.

NURSE

(to MRS WILDE) Please leave.

MRS WILDE leaves extremely distressed.

EVE is inconsolable.

CHILD EVE clings to her foster brother JONATHAN. A school NURSE drags her away from him.

NURSE

Jonathan is a big boy now and he has to go to the boy's school. And you are a big girl, so stop crying.

ADULT EVE is overwhelmed by the pain of her memories. She holds her head in her hands.

ADULT EVE

For goodness sake, stop it!

Scene 3

The next morning. ADULT EVE picks up the phone. She is holding a piece of paper with the phone number of Coram. She puts the phone back down.

Pause.

It is enormously difficult for EVE to make this phone call and demands all her courage. She picks up the phone again and dials the number.

CORAM RECEPTIONIST

Good morning, Coram.

Pause.

EVE is trying to bring herself to speak.

CORAM RECEPTIONIST

Hello?

Pause.

CORAM RECEPTIONIST

Hello?

EVE

Hello...Um...I...I grew up at the Foundling Hospital School...It was a long time ago. A very long time. More than 60 years...I've not had any contact with the School or with Coram since then...

CORAM RECEPTIONIST

You'll need to speak to Joyce Morrison...She deals with all former pupils. I'll see if she's in. What's your name, please?

EVE

Eve.

CORAM RECEPTIONIST

One moment please.

Pause.

CORAM RECEPTIONIST

Hello Eve?

EVE

Yes.

CORAM RECEPTIONIST

I'm putting you through to Joyce now.

EVE

Thank you.

ADULT EVE and JOYCE MORRISON sit on opposite sides of the stage.

JOYCE

Hello?

EVE

Hello...My name is Eve Myers...That's my married name...I was Eve Sloane at school...at the Foundling Hospital.

JOYCE

Hello, Eve. I'm Joyce Morrison. I'm a senior social worker with the Coram Foundation and I work with many former pupils of the Foundling Hospital School. How can I help you?

EVE

I want to know why...I...I want to know who my mother was, and why she gave me to the School.

JOYCE

I understand. Eve, were you at the London School or Redhill or Berkhamsted?

EVE

I'm not sure.

JOYCE

Do you know the years you were at school?

EVE

I left soon after the War ended. I have a bible the School gave me for my leaving and it's inscribed 1946.

JOYCE

Then you would have been at Birkhamsted.

Pause.

EVE

Would you have any information about my mother? About who she was?

JOYCE

I'm sure we would have. Every mother had to submit an application to the Governors of the School which included the details of her circumstances and character references from people who knew her. And the School kept meticulous records of all the documents.

EVE

Could I see my mother's application?

JOYCE

I'm sorry we're not able to do that. But what I can do is prepare a summary report for you which will include all the information we have – about your

mother and the difficult circumstances she would have been in, and the enquiries the Governors made when your mother applied, as well as any information we might have about your father...We can arrange a time for you to come in and we can go through it together.

EVE

Thank you.

JOYCE

Would you like to come in early next week some time?

EVE

Yes.

JOYCE

Monday or Tuesday morning?

EVE

Monday.

JOYCE

Ten o' clock?

EVE

Yes, ten is good.

JOYCE

Is there someone you would want to bring with you, for support? It can be very emotional.

EVE

No. I'd rather come on my own.

JOYCE

That's fine...I look forward to meeting you, Eve.

EVE

Thank you very much for all your help.

JOYCE

My pleasure. Bye for now.

EVE

Good bye.

They hang up.

EVE puts the bible back in the chest. She is sitting, holding the chest and she remembers more.

Scene 4

GIRL'S ward. All GIRLS kneel by their beds and pray 'The Lords Prayer' in unison.

GIRLS

I pray thee Lord
If I should die before I wake
I pray thee
My soul to take

CHILD EVE

Please Lord, take my soul tonight. Don't make me wake up in the morning.

The following section is enacted by the GIRLS in the chorus, in silence. Their movement is synchronised. A NURSE barks orders at them and they immediately obey.

NURSE

Get up!

The GIRLS get up and get dressed. Their clothes hang on a chair next to each of their beds. Their shoes are under their chairs.

Each GIRL makes her bed perfectly with hospital corners.

NURSE

Priestly, make your bed properly.

PRIESTLY

What's wrong with it?

NURSE

Quiet!

PRIESTLY

But what?...

NURSE

That's one black mark for speaking when you are not supposed to.

PRIESTLY

But...

NURSE

That's another black mark. There are plenty of bathtubs and walls that need scrubbing, socks and handkerchiefs that need darning, corridor floors and shoes that need polishing. And that's exactly what you'll be doing for Saturday

detention if you don't make your bed this instant.

The NURSE glares at PRIESTLY.

PRIESTLY makes her bed grudgingly.

Pause.

The NURSE looks at all the GIRLS en masse and calls out.

NURSE

Left. Right. Left. Right. Left. Right. Left. Right. Left. Right.....

GIRLS march in crocodile (in twos) to the washroom.

NURSE

Taps on...

Palms down...Scrub, scrub

Palms up...Scrub, scrub

Thumbs together...Scrub, scrub

Taps off.

Pause.

Taps on...

Brushes under...

Toothpaste...Brush

Rinse...Brush...

Taps off.

Left. Right. Left. Right. Left. Right. Left. Right. Left. Right.....

GIRLS march in crocodile to the dining hall. There is a long wooden table with two wooden benches, one on each side of the table. The table is perfectly set with rows of bowls and spoons. Each GIRL stands in front of her own place at the table. A TEACHER is now in charge of the GIRLS and replaces the NURSE.

TEACHER bangs the hammer.

GIRLS bring their hands together in supplication.

TEACHER bangs the hammer again.

GIRLS (and CHOIR) sing Grace. (The tune by Thomas Tallis)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise him all creatures here below,
Praise him among angelic hosts,
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

TEACHER bangs the hammer.

GIRLS sit down at the table (two rows of GIRLS face each other).

TEACHER bangs the hammer again.

GIRLS eat in silence, except for the clatter of spoons and bowls. EVE does not eat.

Eat! TEACHER

EVE doesn't eat.

Stand up! TEACHER

EVE stands up.

Eat! TEACHER

I feel sick. EVE

TEACHER bangs the hammer.

GIRLS instantly stop eating and stand.

TEACHER bangs the hammer.

GIRLS march out in crocodile.

EVE remains standing. The TEACHER stands over her.

You will stay here until you eat what is in your bowl. TEACHER

EVE gingerly eats a spoonful of porridge. She begins to retch.

CHILD EVE is in bed in the infirmary. She is sitting up, having a coughing fit. She cannot breathe. A NURSE is with her, trying to calm her. Eventually EVE is able to breathe easier and quietens. The NURSE tucks her in and leaves.

Time passes slowly in the infirmary, in silence. EVE is left alone.

The NURSE returns with a DOCTOR. The DOCTOR greets EVE warmly.

DOCTOR

Hello again. We can't seem to keep you away from the infirmary, can we?

The NURSE takes EVE'S temperature.

NURSE

(to DOCTOR) 106.

DOCTOR

Let's get you sitting up.

The DOCTOR helps EVE sit up and props a couple of pillows behind her. He puts his stethoscope in his ears.

DOCTOR

Breathe for me...Big, deep breaths.

The DOCTOR listens to EVE'S chest. Her breathing sounds shallow and laboured.

DOCTOR

That's it...What a brave girl you are.

The DOCTOR continues to listen carefully to EVE'S breathing, and places his stethoscope in different places on her chest and back, while he speaks with her.

DOCTOR

So tell me, what are you looking forward to doing when you get better?

EVE

To sing in the choir.

DOCTOR

What do you like to sing?

EVE

Everything.

DOCTOR

What's your favourite song?

EVE

Handel's *Messiah* The *Hallelujah* Chorus.

DOCTOR

A marvellous work.

EVE

Mr Handel played it himself on the organ in the Concert Hall many times.

DOCTOR

The School is very fortunate to have had such a fine benefactor as Mr Handel and his legacy of music.

EVE

I want to write music like Mr Handel.

DOCTOR

What a charming idea.

EVE

Sometimes when I'm lying here and it's very quiet, the music comes...At first it's very faint and far away and I can hardly hear it at all. Then it comes closer and closer and gets louder and louder, and then the sound picks me up and lifts me and carries me way up high – and I'm flying – flying above the School, flying so fast I can't stop. I'm soaring over the rooftops and the fields, and the river Jonathan and I went swimming in, and over the apple tree with the swing in Ma's garden...and I'm flying...

DOCTOR

(concentrating on her physical condition and not listening to her and interrupting her) Tell me if this hurts.

The DOCTOR presses the tips of his fingers down on her chest area.

EVE

(flinching from the pain) Owwww.

DOCTOR

And here?

The DOCTOR presses his fingers into a different area on her chest.

EVE recoils from the pain.

DOCTOR

(to NURSE) The acute bronchitis is worse. It's likely to be pleurisy...We need to watch her carefully...*(to Eve)* You need to take all your medicine, and you need lots of rest.

DOCTOR helps EVE lie down.

EVE

Could you please bring me a book and a pencil?

DOCTOR

What for?

EVE

To write the music down the next time it comes.

DOCTOR

You'll be able to write and sing all the music you want when you're better...
Now, you need to rest and get that fever down, and to get well and strong.

The DOCTOR and NURSE leave.

EVE lies in bed. All is silent. She begins to hear the music. (The music is coming from inside her and is her own creation.) At first it is very faint and gradually gets louder and louder. The music is an inspired orchestral piece. EVE is transported by the music. Her spirit soars. In her imagination she is dancing. We see her get out of bed and dance with joy and abandon. Delirious with fever, she hallucinates and fantasises her parents have come to claim her. The NURSE and DOCTOR transform into a KING and QUEEN. They watch EVE dance with great love for her. When she finishes her dance, they go to her.

KING

Our beautiful daughter.

QUEEN

Our precious princess.

KING

We're your real mother and father.

QUEEN

We've come to take you home.

KING

Home with us, where you belong.

The KING and QUEEN embrace Eve.

The KING and QUEEN return to the chorus formation.

EVE returns to her bed. There is now a boy, FRANCIS, in the bed next to her. His leg is in plaster.

EVE starts to have a coughing fit.

FRANCIS

Do you want me to call the nurse?

EVE shakes her head 'No'.

FRANCIS

That doesn't sound too good.

EVE hides her face and coughs self-consciously. Her coughing subsides.

FRANCIS

What's the matter with you?

EVE

I have problems with my breathing.

FRANCIS

Have you been in here long?

EVE

I'm here more than I'm at School.

FRANCIS

Don't you get bored?

EVE

Sometimes. But it's peaceful here and I like that.

Pause.

EVE

What happened to your leg?

FRANCIS

It's my foot actually. Three broken toes.

EVE

How did you do that?

FRANCIS

Mr Rees, our bandmaster got fed up with me. I couldn't get the rhythm so he stomped it out on my foot with his boot, and he broke three of my toes.

EVE

Ouch. That must hurt...What instrument do you play?

FRANCIS

Clarinet. Mr Rees said, 'Show me your fingers. Show me your teeth. Right. You're a reed player'. But I think he made a mistake.

Pause.

EVE

Do you know Jonathan?

FRANCIS

Jonathan who? What's his surname?

EVE

His what name?

FRANCIS

You know, his last name? Jonathan who?

EVE

Oh...Jonathan Harris. He's my brother.

FRANCIS

You mean your foster brother.

EVE

No. My brother.

FRANCIS

He can't be your brother.

EVE

He is.

FRANCIS

None of us in here are real brothers or sisters... 'Course I know Harris. Everyone knows Harris!

EVE

Why?

FRANCIS

He's always up to mischief.

EVE

What mischief?

FRANCIS

Last week he climbed the old oak tree and pinched the apples, and then he jumped off one of the top branches into the vegetable garden next door, and he scrumpted all the carrots. He stuffed them into his pants and the big boys saw the bulges and made him pay up and hand them over.

EVE

What else does he do?

FRANCIS

He nicked the cords from the curtains in the ward, and we used them as skipping ropes.

EVE

(laughing) Really?

FRANCIS nods 'Yes'.

FRANCIS

And he stole the headmaster's cane and used it to make a bow and arrow.

EVE

Jonathan is cheeky but I can't believe he did *that*.

FRANCIS

You won't believe this...One night he grabbed all our pillows and threw them down into a big pile and set them on fire with a match.

EVE

(alarmed) That doesn't sound like my Jonathan...*(worried)* Did he get into trouble?

FRANCIS

Harris is always in trouble.

EVE

Does he get hurt?

FRANCIS

'Course he does. All the boys get hurt. We *all* cop it from the Masters. And the older boys beat the younger boys. That's the way it goes.

EVE

How do you know he's not my brother? What makes you think he isn't?

NURSE enters.

NURSE

All right, you two. Enough chatter. Come on, lying down. Time for sleep.

The NURSE tucks them both in. Lights out. Spotlight on EVE.

EVE falls asleep and starts to dream. We see her dream enacted, a montage of images. In her dream, EVE is trying to process the information she has heard from FRANCIS, specifically that JONATHAN is not her real brother. The dream sequence is mostly enacted physically, with musical underscoring.

IMAGE 1

A group of BOYS, including JONATHAN, stand in a semi-circle around a large mound of white pillows. They raucously jump onto the pillows and throw themselves on the pillows. They pull off the pillowcases and put them on their feet. They jump around in them, like in a sack race, and try to knock each other over.

IMAGE 2

The Boys Army Band march across the stage, playing their different instruments. The Bandmaster, MR REES, is at the front, calling out and

stomping the rhythm in his big boots, 'Bom, bom-bom-bom, Bom, bom-bom-bom. JONATHAN is holding a bow and arrow. He aims it at MR REES' chest. The arrow hits its mark and MR REES falls down dead.

IMAGE 3

The BOYS skip with a long rope. Each BOY jumps over the rope, in turn, and then runs on to join the line. The BOYS cheer and jeer at each other. The skipping game turns into tug-of-war. One side wins and cheers and raise their fists in triumph.

IMAGE 4

JONATHAN is holding a pillowcase filled with apples. He hurriedly takes the apples out of the pillowcase and throws them to different BOYS. The BOYS catch and throw apples to each other. EVE gets out of bed in her nightdress and tries to join in the game of catch. She calls out, 'Jonathan. Jonathan.' The BOYS are all laughing and playing. She tries to get JONATHAN'S attention but he can't see or hear her. She calls out, 'It's me. It's me. Here. Here.'

IMAGE 5

The mood changes and becomes more sinister. The BOYS are standing individually, with space between each of them. They have their eyes closed and hands on their heads. Two BIG BOYS walk threateningly amongst them, as if stalking their prey. EVE is in their midst, wondering what is happening.

BOY 1

Whose turn will it be to bash up tonight?

BOY 2

Will it be Parkins?

One of the BIG BOYS punch PARKINS in the stomach as he passes by. PARKINS doubles over and groans.

BOY 1

Or Upton?

The other BIG BOY punches UPTON. UPTON physically reacts to the blow.

EVE is running amongst the BOYS, frantically searching for JONATHAN and calling out his name. 'Jonathan. Jonathan.'

The BIG BOYS approach JONATHAN. EVE finds JONATHAN, but still he cannot see or hear her. None of the BOYS see or hear her. She realises the BIG BOYS are about to hurt JONATHAN.

EVE

(screaming) Don't touch him! Don't you dare touch him. He's my brother.

EVE is enraged and lunges at one of the BIG BOYS. She is like a wild animal, a mother lion, who will put herself at any risk and danger to protect her baby cub. She claws at the BOY'S eyes, pulls his hair and bites him. But the BOYS are totally oblivious to her, like she isn't there and has no impact at all.

The BIG BOYS start punching and kicking Jonathan.

JONATHAN frees himself from them and emerges holding a lit flame (a very large match).

JONATHAN

(to the BOYS) I'll burn this place down to the ground.

Musical underscoring ends.

Suddenly EVE awakes from her nightmare, breathless. She sits up in fright.

EVE

(screaming) Jonathan! Jonathan!

The NURSE comes running and calms EVE down and comforts her.

NURSE

It's all right. It's all right. It was just a nightmare. It's all over now.

EVE sobs. She is heartbroken.

EVE

I thought he was mine.

ADULT EVE

Enough! No more.

ADULT EVE quickly locks the chest and shoves it under her bed as if trying to get rid of it and all her memories.

EVE is tormented by the pain of her memories. Whatever she does now, she cannot escape her memories. Her memories continue to surface, unbidden.

GIRLS ward at night.

PRIESTLY

(calling out) Change!

All the GIRLS get out of their beds and quickly run into another bed, trying to stifle their laughter.

PRIESTLY

Change!

Again, they all jump out of bed and find another empty bed to jump into.

EVE jumps into the bed that PRIESTLY is in. They have the following conversation under the covers.

EVE

Where were you today? I couldn't find you anywhere.

PRIESTLY

I can't tell you.

EVE

Why not?

PRIESTLY

Nurse Powell said if I breathed one single word about it, to anyone, there'd be trouble.

EVE

About what?

PRIESTLY

That's what I can't tell you.

EVE

Please, tell me. I won't tell anyone.

PRIESTLY

Do you promise you won't?

EVE

I promise.

PRIESTLY

When I woke up this morning there was blood all over my nightdress and bedsheet...Nurse Savage said I wasn't dying and to stop getting hysterical. Then she marched me upstairs and now I have to go back there twice a day to change my nappies until the bleeding stops.

EVE

Nappies?

PRIESTLY

For the blood.

EVE

When will you stop bleeding?

PRIESTLY

She said it would stop in a few days.

EVE

But why are you bleeding? What's wrong with you?

PRIESTLY

I don't know.

Pause.

PRIESTLY

I'm going to run away. You can't ask after me.

EVE

Where are you going?

PRIESTLY

To my foster parents.

EVE

Do they know you're coming?

PRIESTLY

No.

EVE

Haven't you written to tell them?

PRIESTLY

No. It's going to be a surprise.

EVE

How do you know they'll want to see you?

PRIESTLY

They will be over the moon to see me.

EVE

But they never come to visit you.

PRIESTLY

Because they can't. They're old and they don't have enough money.

EVE

Do you know where they live?

PRIESTLY

Saffron Walden.

EVE

How will you get there?

PRIESTLY

By train. And once I'm there, I'll ask around and I'm sure I'll find them.

EVE

But you don't have any money for the train.

PRIESTLY

I'll tell the guard I've lost my ticket, and my mother will pay for me at the other end when she comes to pick me up.

EVE

But that would be a lie.

PRIESTLY

So what?

Pause.

EVE

(trying not to burst into tears) I don't want you to go.

PRIESTLY

I have to.

EVE

I'll miss you.

PRIESTLY

You'll be all right.

EVE bursts into tears and she curls up in a ball.

PRIESTLY

Please don't cry. Please don't...I'll send you that book you're always asking for, to write your own music.

EVE

Really?

PRIESTLY

Yes.

EVE

Do you promise you will?

PRIESTLY

I promise.

PRIESTLY sticks her head out of the covers to continue the game of Change.

PRIESTLY

(calling out) Change!

All the GIRLS jump out of bed. This time the NURSE hears their scuffles and giggles. The GIRLS hear her footsteps coming and in the nick of time, they run back into their own beds. EVE has stayed in PRIESTLY'S bed. She wants to stay close to her.

The NURSE bursts into the ward. She walks the length of the ward and checks each bed as she goes. She sees that EVE'S bed is empty.

NURSE

Where's Sloane?

PRIESTLY

She went to the toilet.

The NURSE storms out (to check that EVE is in the toilet).

PRIESTLY

(whispering to EVE) Quick! Get back into your own bed.

EVE

I want to stay with you.

PRIESTLY

Hurry! She'll be back in a minute.

EVE doesn't move. She doesn't want to leave PRIESTLY. PRIESTLY gets out of bed and pulls EVE out of the bed. Just then, the NURSE enters and sees the two of them.

NURSE

(to EVE) There you are! Go and stand by the window.

The NURSE opens the window.

It is freezing outside and the cold night air blasts in. The other GIRLS all tuck themselves in tighter shielding themselves from the cold.

NURSE

(to EVE) Turn around.

EVE turns around so that her back faces the window.

NURSE

Lift up your nightdress.

EVE lifts up her nightdress and her bare back is exposed to the freezing air.

NURSE

Over your head.

EVE lifts her nightdress up over her head. She shivers and shudders.

NURSE

Don't move.

PRIESTLY

She can't stay there. She's just come out of the infirmary again. She'll catch pneumonia.

The NURSE marches over to PRIESTLY'S bed.

NURSE

As for you, Priestly.

The NURSE takes a ball of string and scissors out of her apron pocket. She unwinds a piece of string and cuts it.

NURSE

Stick out your tongue.

PRIESTLY pokes out her tongue at the NURSE.

The NURSE ties PRIESTLY'S tongue tightly with the piece of string.

NURSE

This should keep you quiet for a bit.

NURSE

(to EVE) Are you ready to go to sleep now?

EVE nods 'Yes'.

NURSE

Get into bed.

EVE rushes into her bed to get out of the cold.

The NURSE slams the window shut and leaves.

PRIESTLY

(speaking with her tongue tied) One day I'll be bigger than she is, and she better watch out.

Blackout.

ADULT EVE is desperate to distract herself and find some relief. She turns on the radio, a BBC programme, and tries to listen. But she becomes more

agitated and restless. The noise clamours in her head. She covers her ears with her hands. She turns the radio off. She remembers...

VOICE OF BBC RADIO BROADCASTER

On this snowy Christmas Eve, to warm our hearts, the children of the famous Foundling Hospital School choir will sing...*For Unto Us A Child is Born* from Handel's *Messiah*.

Spotlight on the CHOIR. The rest of the stage is in darkness.

The CHOIR sing For Unto Us a Child is Born. As she sings, EVE sings wholeheartedly. The music makes her feel protected and powerful. She is elated.

For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given,
And the government shall be upon His shoulder;
And his name shall be called Wonderful,
Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father,
The Prince of Peace.

Pause.

Lights up on the school dining hall. It is decorated beautifully for Christmas. There are colourful Chinese lanterns and paper chains and a Christmas tree adorned with fairy lights and presents.

The CHOIR begin to sing the Christmas carol Ding Dong Merrily on High and the following is enacted with the singing and music underscoring.

As the CHOIR sings, GIRLS gather around the tree. The atmosphere is bright and festive and joyous. Two NURSES stand at the tree and help each GIRL take her present off the tree. The GIRLS are excited and happy as they receive their presents. Presents include a box of coloured pencils, bag of marbles, doll, skipping rope, yo-yo, jigsaw puzzle, cross stitch, flower press, drawing pad, spinning top, an embroidered handkerchief. They show each other what they have been given and play with their presents. EVE is ecstatic to receive an exercise book to write her own music.

EVE

A book to write my own music!

Monday morning school assembly. PRIESTLY is brought in by a TEACHER and is standing at the front, before all the other GIRLS.

EVE is startled to see her.

TEACHER

As you all know, Miranda Priestly ran away two days ago. She made her way to her foster parents and lied and cheated her way to get there. Her foster parents contacted us immediately. Let this be a lesson to all of you if you should consider doing anything so foolish. Priestly has been sent to Coventry and anyone who is caught speaking to her will be severely punished...*(to PRIESTLY)* Come here.

PRIESTLY walks to the TEACHER.

TEACHER

Let's see how brave she is now.

The TEACHER holds up a cane.

TEACHER

Or will she be a coward and pull her hand away?

TEENAGE EVE, 13 years old, is speaking to a NURSE.

NURSE

You are being given an enormous treat. You are going to leave the School and spend the summer holidays with a new foster family.

EVE

Can I go to my foster mother, Mrs Wilde?

NURSE

I'm afraid that's not possible. Mrs Wilde passed away.

EVE is devastated to hear this news.

EVE

(quietly to herself) Ma...

The NURSE continues speaking but Eve doesn't hear her. She is in shock and reeling from the news of MRS WILDE'S death.

NURSE

Be on your best behaviour. And do the School proud. If you have any problems with your breathing, contact the School straight away. Is that understood?

EVE hasn't heard her.

NURSE

(loudly) Is that understood?

EVE comes to, and realises the NURSE is demanding a response. She nods 'Yes'.

NURSE

Very well. Have a good time. We will see you at the end of the summer.

EVE is holding a suitcase. She is standing in the new foster family's living room.

ANGELA, the teenage daughter welcomes EVE with great warmth and enthusiasm and introduces EVE to her brothers.

ANGELA

I'm so happy you're here... I'm Angela... This is Stephen...and Thomas.

STEPHEN and THOMAS shake EVE'S hand, in turn, and also greet her with interest and excitement.

ANGELA

We've been waiting for you to arrive all week.

EVE notices the piano.

EVE

Oh, you have a piano!

EVE goes to the piano and fingers the keys.

STEPHEN

Do you play?

EVE

I have lessons at school.

STEPHEN

Me too.

STEPHEN sits at the piano and starts to play.

He gestures to EVE to come and sit next to him.

STEPHEN

Come and play with me.

EVE is shy and hesitant.

ANGELA

(to EVE) Go on.

EVE self-consciously sits down next to STEPHEN.

EVE and STEPHEN play the piano together.

THOMAS picks up his violin and starts to play along with the melody of the piano. The tune is upbeat and lively and makes you feel like dancing.

ANGELA reaches out her hand to EVE. EVE gets up from the piano. ANGELA twirls EVE around. At first, EVE is very awkward and stiff. The music gets more and more lively. EVE feels encouraged by ANGELA'S ease and the spirit of the music. EVE lets herself go and dances expressively and joyfully. She is blossoming and coming alive in their presence.

EVE is spinning around and around. She is laughing. She feels free. She looks up and sees stars painted on the ceiling.

EVE

You have stars painted on your ceiling.

They both look up at the ceiling.

Music ends.

ANGELA

Daddy painted them for us. We'd planned to go camping but there were lashing rains and storms. Daddy said, "if we can't go out to sleep under the stars, we'll bring the stars to us."

EVE

They're beautiful.

Pause.

EVE

I didn't know people did things like this.

ANGELA

Like what?

EVE

Painted ceilings with stars and danced in living rooms...like life doesn't have to be...drab.

Pause.

One morning, a few weeks later during the summer holidays. EVE and STEPHEN are sitting at the piano.

STEPHEN

What shall we play today? Let's play something different.

STEPHEN leafs through many sheets of music scores.

STEPHEN

Bach...Debussy...Beethoven...Chopin...Mozart...Haydn...Schubert...
Brahms...Satie...

EVE

I have something we could try.

STEPHEN

What is it?

EVE takes a deep breath and plucks up her courage. She prepares herself and places her hands on the keys.

EVE

This.

EVE plays her own composition. She is totally engrossed in the playing and the emotion of the music. ANGELA and THOMAS are drawn in by the beauty of the music and they creep up behind EVE and STEPHEN and listen, entranced.

EVE finishes playing. A stunned silence.

STEPHEN

Who wrote that?

EVE

It's one of mine.

STEPHEN

(incredulous) Really?

EVE nods 'Yes' tentatively.

EVE

Do you like it?

STEPHEN

It's amazing!...Really amazing!

EVE laughs with delight

STEPHEN

Really. I mean it...You should be a composer.

EVE

No. I'm going to be a housemaid.

STEPHEN

No. No. You can't be a housemaid...You have an extraordinary gift. You must use it. I would give my eye teeth to be half as talented as you are.

ANGELA

Play it again, Eve! I want to hear all of it, from the beginning!

THOMAS

So do I. Will you play it for us, Eve?

EVE

I would love to.

Blackout.

Scene 5

SARAH knocks on EVE'S door.

EVE

Hello?

SARAH

It's me, Mum.

EVE opens the door. SARAH enters. She slumps down and buries her face in her hands.

EVE

What's the matter Sarah?

SARAH

Imogen...She was distraught when she came home last night. I thought she'd been attacked. Richard and I finally calmed her down enough to find out what was going on...She said she told you.

EVE

She tried to tell me...I didn't know what to say to her...I told her to tell you.

SARAH

She's known for a month already and she couldn't tell us...I noticed she'd been more anxious and irritable than usual, but I assumed it was because of all the pressure she feels under with her school work and not wanting her music to suffer.

Pause.

EVE

Do you know who the father is?

SARAH

(big sigh) His name's Dan. They met at music camp last summer.

EVE

She never mentioned him to me.

SARAH

I'm not surprised. She never knew whether she was coming or going. He messed her about. One day it was on, the next day it was off. He made me so angry...She told him she was pregnant more than two weeks ago, and she hasn't heard a peep from him since...At least this has got rid of him.

Pause.

EVE

How did Richard react?

SARAH

He keeps raving about (*as if in Richard's tone of voice*) all the time and energy he's spent taking her to and from piano lessons, and all the concerts, and watching over her while she practised, and all his pep talks before every recital when she was sick with nerves and biting her nails till they bled...And he won't allow her to waste her talent and throw it all away and ruin her life...She needs to be playing music, not changing nappies.

Pause.

SARAH

He wants her to have an abortion.

EVE

What do you think?

SARAH

I think she would be eaten up with guilt. I'm scared it would haunt her, that she'd killed her own baby...I don't want her to look back and blame me... Perhaps she should adopt the baby, but it can be so complicated, when the child gets older and wants to know their birth mother...Oh, Mum...What should we do?

Pause.

EVE

Could she keep the baby?

SARAH

How can she be a mother? She's still a child.

Pause.

EVE emotionally withdraws and doesn't respond.

SARAH

Mum?... Is that what you think she should do? Should she keep the baby?

Pause. EVE doesn't respond.

SARAH

Mum?

Pause. EVE doesn't respond.

SARAH

Mum?

Pause. EVE doesn't respond.

SARAH

Mum?...What's wrong?

EVE

Nothing.

SARAH

Why have you suddenly shut down?

Pause.

EVE

I'm not the right person to help you with this.

Pause.

SARAH

(with great hesitation and sensitivity) Mum...I'm not sure how to say this...I've felt I could never ask you, but I've wondered...did you have a baby, before me, before I was born, who died?

EVE

Where's this come from, all of a sudden?

SARAH

It's not all of a sudden...I've thought about it so much...about why there is this deep sadness in you...and I've often wondered if that's what happened, and if it did, I wish you could talk to me about it.

EVE

No, honestly darling. That didn't happen...I'm fine and I don't want you to worry about me at all.

Pause.

SARAH senses not to push or question EVE any further.

SARAH

I wish Dad was here.

EVE

He would know what to do.

SARAH doesn't want to feel how much she misses her father/EDWARD. She gathers herself together.

SARAH

But he's not. And we have to sort this mess out ourselves.

Blackout.

Scene 6

EVE'S conversation with SARAH provokes more memories, about EDWARD. EVE remembers when she was 21 years old, in hospital with TB. EDWARD was her doctor.

YOUNG WOMAN EVE is in a hospital bed, scribbling in her notebook, writing music. She is completely absorbed. DOCTOR EDWARD MYERS enters.

EDWARD

Well look at you, Miss Sloane.

EVE

Good morning, Doctor Myers.

EDWARD

It's so good to see you looking well after all these weeks.

EVE

I need to leave here as soon as possible or I'll lose my job.

EDWARD

What do you do?

EVE

I'm a maid.

EDWARD

No wonder you were exhausted...You're making a steady recovery, but I don't think that scrubbing steps and scouring pots and pans will do you any good.

EVE

If that were all I had to do, that would be no problem at all.

EDWARD

What else do you have to do?

EVE

Well, there's cooking three meals a day, and the laundry, and lighting the fires, and polishing the furniture and/

EDWARD

(interrupting her) What about time off?

EVE

I have half a day every two weeks.

The tone changes between them as EDWARD draws EVE out. They become playful with each other.

EDWARD

So you fancied a holiday, didn't you?

EVE

This is the best thing that's ever happened to me.

EDWARD

I've never heard that before. TB – a treat!

EVE

Now I can listen to music all day and write my own music.

EDWARD

You write music?

EVE nods 'Yes'.

EDWARD

That's impressive. I know nothing about music. I don't even really listen to music. I'm a Philistine.

EVE

Yes, you are a Philistine...*(softly to herself)* I couldn't live without music.

Pause.

EDWARD

Miss Sloane, why doesn't a lovely young woman like you have any visitors? Where's your family?

EVE doesn't answer him. She looks down at her book and starts writing again.

EDWARD

I'm sorry. I've gone too far. It's none of my business.

Pause.

EDWARD

Is that music you're writing? Would you show me?

EVE

I thought you weren't interested in music.

EDWARD

I'm not...But I'm interested...in...you.

Pause.

They look at each other and smile.

A brief image of EVE and EDWARD'S wedding. They are standing together. EVE is wearing a veil and holding a bouquet of flowers. They both look very happy. EVE throws the bouquet into the CHOIR (who represent wedding guests). They kiss.

Another memory.

EVE

I'm pregnant.

EDWARD

That's wonderful!...That is wonderful isn't it?

EVE

No, it isn't. It's a disaster. I can't be a mother.

EDWARD

Why not?

EVE

I don't know how to be a mother.

EDWARD

Of course you feel that – every woman feels like that. But it's not something you know in advance. It happens.

EVE

It happens with other women. I'm not like them.

EDWARD

What do you mean?

EVE

I'm not...maternal. I don't know how to look after anyone ...You look after me.

EDWARD steps towards her and holds her close to him. He kisses her on top of her head, his arms wrapped around her.

EDWARD

(softening) We look after each other.

Pause.

EVE

Something terrible will happen with this baby.

EDWARD

Don't say that.

EVE

But it will...It will be deformed, or die a cot death...or hate me.

EDWARD

Why are you saying this?

EVE

Because it's mine.

EDWARD is visibly disturbed by the way EVE is speaking and the state she is in.

EDWARD

What? This is crazy...Do you really believe what you're saying?

Eve nods 'Yes'.

EVE

Do you think I'm mad?

EDWARD

I don't think you're mad. But help me. Help me understand you.

EVE

I...I...I don't know...I just don't know how to be a mother.

EDWARD

It's the most natural thing in the world. We've all had mothers/

EVE

(interrupting him) I never did.

EDWARD

I'm sorry.

EVE doesn't respond.

EDWARD

I'm so sorry. Forgive me. It was a stupid, insensitive thing to say.

Pause.

EDWARD

You've never wanted to talk about your mother before. Will you tell me what happened to her?

EVE

I've told you – my mother is dead.

EDWARD

When did she die?

EVE

I don't know.

EDWARD

How did she die?

EVE

I don't know.

EDWARD

You must know something.

EVE

I don't.

EDWARD

What was her name?

EVE

I don't know.

EDWARD

It would be on your birth certificate.

EVE

I don't have a birth certificate.

EDWARD

What do you mean you don't have a birth certificate? Everyone has a birth certificate...What are you hiding?

EVE doesn't answer.

EDWARD

You can tell me. I am your husband.

Pause.

EDWARD

You don't trust me.

EVE

I do.

EDWARD

No. You don't. If you trusted me you would tell me the truth.

EVE

I never knew my mother, or my father. I don't have a family. I grew up in an orphanage. That's the truth.

Pause.

EVE

Do you want to leave me?

EDWARD

What?

EVE

You should leave me.

EDWARD

What?

EVE

I didn't mean it. I don't want you to leave me. Please, please, don't leave me.

EDWARD

I'm not leaving...But why did you say that?

Eve doesn't respond.

EDWARD

Answer me, Eve. Why? Why?

EVE

(almost inaudibly) Because I don't have a family.

EDWARD

Why would I leave you because you don't have a family?...If anything, it makes me want to be here for you even more...And God knows, I have enough family for the both of us.

Pause.

EVE

I love you.

EDWARD

I love you...And we're going to have a baby and we're in this together and we will help each other as much as we possibly can...We'll make our own family.

Scene 7

EVE and JOYCE are sitting in JOYCE'S office at the Coram Foundation.

JOYCE

So what made you get in touch with Coram now? After all this time?

EVE

I've been thinking about the past a lot. And about my mother.

JOYCE

I imagine you have many questions.

EVE

Yes, many. Who was she? Why didn't she want me? How could she have given her baby away? What was her life like?

JOYCE

I understand.

EVE

So many memories of being at school keep flooding back...Things I've not thought about for sixty years.

JOYCE

Would you like to talk about the memories?

EVE

It's very painful.

JOYCE

I can see that.

Pause.

EVE

It's like I'm back there. Little details are so vivid...the red silky lining of our winter capes...the musty, damp air under the concert hall stage where we had midnight feasts...the biting sting of the cane...

JOYCE

I know this is very hard.

Pause.

EVE

Why were we never allowed any contact with our birth mothers or even allowed to know who she was?

JOYCE

In those days, there was such a stigma about a child born out of wedlock. The mindset of society was so different. Today we would say, a child of a single parent, but then, they called a child illegitimate/

EVE

(interrupting) As if the child had no right to be.

JOYCE

...and the Governors promised they would protect the mother's anonymity so that she could have a second chance, to make a new life for herself/

EVE

(interrupting) and not be burdened by the shame of an illegitimate child...What about the child's chance? To make a life? Did the Governors think of that? That the child would have to carry the burden, the shame?...What made the Governors, a league of men, think that they knew about what a child needs? How could they take a child away from their foster mother, who the child thinks is their real mother, when they are five years old, and suddenly, one day put them in an institution and leave them there?

JOYCE

In those days, nobody understood the effects on a child of that kind of separation. Nobody understood what a child needs, and that that kind of separation could have a lifetime impact. Now we know how vital the mother-child bond is to the child's development and well-being. Now we know that every child needs love and affection and praise.

This information does not console the aching and deprived child within ADULT EVE. We hear a child crying from the CHORUS and others try to physically cover her mouth and stifle CHILD EVE'S cries.

JOYCE

The Foundling Hospital concentrated on the physical well-being of the child, making sure they were clothed and fed, and educating them and preparing them for the future.

EVE

But still, why did they have to be so strict and punishing? We were children. They treated us like we were in the army. We weren't even allowed to speak most of the time.

JOYCE

I am sorry you have such sad memories. I know that life at school must have felt very harsh at times.

Pause.

JOYCE

Would you like me to tell you about your birth?

EVE

Yes.

JOYCE glances at the report and then looks up and speaks to EVE.

JOYCE

You were born on the 16th of May 1931 at the Weir Maternity Hospital in London and your mother called you Catherine Bell.

Your mother was/

EVE can't bear to hear any more and cuts JOYCE off.

EVE

(interrupting) I'm sorry. Please stop. I can't...It's too much right now.

JOYCE

That's fine. It's all written down for you, and you can take it away and read it in your own time.

EVE

Thank you. I want to know but I...

JOYCE

It's really fine. We don't have to do this now...There are a couple of other things I'd like to mention before you go, if that's all right?

EVE

Yes.

JOYCE hands EVE a few letters.

JOYCE

These are a few letters your mother wrote to the School enquiring about how you were.

EVE

Oh my God!

EVE picks up the letters. Her hand is trembling. She is incredibly moved to see her mother's handwriting. She fights back tears.

JOYCE

They were written over a period of two years and the last time we heard from your mother she was married, she signed the last letter using her married name. And sadly, there's no more information since that time.

EVE

Do you have any idea why she would have stopped writing then?

JOYCE

I can only speculate, but it may have been difficult for her to continue writing after she was married, especially if she hadn't told her husband about you, and if she wanted to start a family.

Pause.

EVE

If she did have a family, any other children, is there a way I could find that out?

JOYCE

Yes, it's possible. Quite a few former pupils search for half brothers and sisters.

EVE

How would I do that?

JOYCE

You can look at the Births, Deaths and Marriages Index and find your mother's marriage certificate, and then look for children of that marriage...If you do decide to do that and you have some success with tracing half-siblings, I can help you to make contact with them, if that's what you want to do.

EVE

Thank you.

EVE picks up the report and letters, and moves to leave.

JOYCE

I know this is an enormous amount to take in, but would you mind if I brought up one more thing?

EVE

Please, go ahead.

JOYCE

I know that Jonathan Harris, your foster brother, would love to hear from you.

EVE is shocked to hear JONATHAN'S name.

JOYCE

He's talked about you often, and he mentioned that he contacted you many years ago.

JOYCE

(defensively) No. He didn't.

EVE remembers what did happen with JONATHAN, and her memory is enacted while ADULT EVE sits with JOYCE.

The phone rings. YOUNG WOMAN EVE picks it up.

EVE

Hello?

JONATHAN

Hello. Could I please speak to Eve Sloane?

EVE

I'm Eve. Who's this?

JONATHAN

Eve! It's Jonathan.

EVE gasps.

JONATHAN

Jonathan Harris.

EVE

I know which Jonathan.

JONATHAN

I've finally found you. It hasn't been easy tracking you down.

EVE

Where are you calling from?

JONATHAN

St Pancras Station. I'm on leave from the army for a few days. I've been posted to India next Wednesday. Can we meet before I go?

Pause.

EVE is ambivalent about meeting JONATHAN. She wants to meet him but it is extremely difficult for her to face him and all the loss and grief he is associated

with.

EVE

I'm very busy right now. I'm about to get married and there's so much to prepare.

JONATHAN

Congratulations! Let's have a drink to celebrate.

EVE

I don't think I can...I...It isn't a good time for me to meet you/

JONATHAN

(interrupting) Please. I don't know when I'll be back again. It would mean a lot to me to see you.

EVE

All right.

Splice to JONATHAN sitting in a cafe, waiting for EVE to arrive. JONATHAN is wearing his army uniform. EVE sees him through the window of the cafe. She wants to go in and meet him but it feels too hard and she can't bring herself to go inside. She battles with herself. Then she leaves.

Back to present day. ADULT EVE in JOYCE'S office.

EVE is filled with remorse and guilt for not meeting JONATHAN that day. She struggles to remain outwardly calm and controlled.

JOYCE

Jonathan's a remarkable man. He has the most incredible stories of surviving in the army. He never married or had a family of his own. The OCA, the Old Coram Association, for former pupils, is like his family. He never misses a Coram Day or Charter Day or the Christmas Carols Service at the Foundling Museum.

EVE

My head is spinning...I can't take any more in. I must go...

EVE stands up. She is clutching the report and letters tightly.

JOYCE

If you think of any other questions, or if you want to speak at any time, please be in touch.

EVE

Thank you for your help. Good bye.

EVE leaves abruptly.

Scene 8

EVE is sitting in her living room at home. She begins to read the report aloud.

EVE

You were born on the 16th of May, 1931 at the Weir Maternity Hospital in London and your mother called you Catherine Bell.

Your mother was Violet Bell and she was seventeen years old when you were born. She was born in Balham, London on the 23rd of July 1914. Your mother was one of four children, having one sister and two brothers. Sadly your mother's father died in 1923 and it was therefore a struggle for your mother's mother, your grandmother, to bring up the children alone. When your mother left school at fourteen years of age, she worked as a domestic maid for Mr and Mrs Boucher in Hampstead in London.

EVE continues to read, silently now, and what she is reading is enacted.

The BOUCHER'S home. VIOLET has a basket and is folding bed linen. CHARLES BOUCHER (VIOLET'S employer's son) creeps up behind her to surprise her. He grabs her by the waist from behind and turns her around and presses her against him.

CHARLES

(his finger is on her lips) Shsh!

CHARLES looks to check there is no one around who can see them and then he kisses her passionately.

VIOLET pulls away.

VIOLET

Don't Charles.

CHARLES

This isn't like you. Not in the mood for some fun.

He tries to kiss her again. She pushes him away from her.

VIOLET

Stop it!

CHARLES

(playfully) I can't keep my hands off you.

VIOLET

It's not funny...I have to tell you something.

CHARLES

We can talk later.

CHARLES kisses her. VIOLET breaks away from him.

VIOLET

Listen to me!

Pause.

She stares at him.

VIOLET

I'm going to have a baby.

CHARLES is taken aback by this news.

CHARLES

Are you sure?

VIOLET nods 'Yes'.

VIOLET

What am I going to do?

Pause.

CHARLES

We'll get married.

VIOLET

Don't be ridiculous Charles! Mr and Mrs Boucher would never allow it. They intend for you to marry the daughter of a Lord or a Duke or an Earl, not someone like me.

CHARLES

But I'm not in love with the daughter of a Lord or Duke or Earl. I love you, Violet. And I will look after you.

VIOLET

Are you serious?...Do you honestly mean that?

CHARLES

Yes. I do. I will speak to my parents this evening.

VIOLET throws her arms around him in gratitude and kisses him passionately.

Scene ends with VIOLET and CHARLES.

EVE continues to read the report aloud.

EVE

Your mother was dismissed by her employer Mr Boucher when he found out she was pregnant and he forbade her to have any further contact with his son, Charles.

Soon after you were born your mother realised that in her circumstances, and without the support of her family, she would be unable to care for you and bring you up herself.

Again, EVE continues to read the letter, silently, and what she is reading is enacted.

VIOLET is holding BABY EVE in her arms. She knocks on MR and MRS BOUCHER'S door. The HOUSEKEEPER, MISS BENNETT, a middle-aged woman in a maid's uniform, answers the door.

MISS BENNETT

(gasps) Violet, my love.

MISS BENNETT hugs VIOLET and then puts her face close to BABY EVE and smiles and enjoys looking at the baby.

MISS BENNETT

How old is he or she?

VIOLET

She. Her name is Eve...Eight weeks.

MISS BENNETT

(to BABY) Aren't you beautiful? Yes, you are...*(to VIOLET)* How are you keeping, love?

VIOLET

I have to see Charles.

MISS BENNETT

He's not here.

VIOLET

I'll wait till he comes back.

MISS BENNETT

(lowering her voice so as not to be heard) He won't be coming back. They sent him abroad to avoid any scandal about you and the baby.

VIOLET

Can you tell Mrs Boucher I'm here?

MISS BENNETT

She won't see you...I've been told never to let you in, under any circumstances. I'm sorry, love. You have to go...God bless you both.

MISS BENNETT moves to start to close the door on VIOLET.

VIOLET

Wait. Please listen to me, Miss Bennett. I wouldn't have come if I wasn't desperate. I found another job, thirty-five shillings a week. My lodgings are twenty-five shillings, and eight shillings for the girl to mind her when I'm at work and there's three shillings for food. I can't afford to keep my baby...She'll be safe here. Will you take her? Just for a while, until I find a better job and save some money, and I'll come back for her as soon as I can.

MISS BENNETT

I can't do that.

VIOLET

Please. Just for a little while.

MISS BENNETT

No. I can't take her. But I'll help you.

Scene ends with VIOLET and MISS BENNETT.

EVE continues to read the report aloud.

EVE

Miss Bennett helped your mother make an application to the Foundling Hospital.

EVE puts the report down. Then she picks up the letters. She reads the first part of a letter aloud.

EVE

Dear Sir, In reference to my baby girl, whose letter is M, who was admitted to the care of the Foundling Hospital School on August 16, 1931, would you be so kind as to let me know...

At this point, EVE cannot continue. Her heart cracks open with sorrow and compassion for herself and for her mother. She lets out a howling cry, and her cry brings her down to the ground.

Pause.

As EVE weeps, VIOLET'S spirit comes and holds her and rocks her in her arms. VIOLET speaks the rest of the letter, with great tenderness and care. As VIOLET speaks, the CHOIR sing a gentle and soft musical underscore that sounds like a lullaby. (They do not sing words, but the sounds 'ooo...ooo'.)

How much does the baby weigh?
Is the baby's hair dark or fair?
How many teeth does the baby have?

The CHOIR continue to sing and VIOLET speaks the letters. CHILD EVE and YOUNG WOMAN EVE also join ADULT EVE and VIOLET. All four of them hold and rock each other, symbolising that EVE is bringing the fragmented and split parts of herself together, and she is becoming whole.

Can I send presents – a baby's rattle, a little lamb, a knitted blanket?
Does the baby walk?
Does the baby talk?
Does the baby smile?
I am yours truly.

These letters and VIOLET'S words are like a healing balm for ADULT EVE. She has hungered to hear these words all her life. EVE realises her mother did care about her and she was not forgotten. For the first time in her life, reading her mother's letters, EVE feels the warmth and nurture of a mother's embrace.

Scene 9

EVE and JOYCE are speaking on the phone. EVE has called JOYCE to tell her she has traced VIOLET'S second daughter, ANNA.

EVE

I've found out that Violet had one other child, a daughter, almost three years after I was born. Her name is Anna. I think you were probably right that Violet stopped writing to the Foundling Hospital when she was starting a family...

JOYCE

It's quite a common pattern.

EVE

And I found that Anna married a man called Hughes, Christopher Hughes... and they had five children. And I've traced which Anna Hughes she is, there a quite a few, and I have her number.

JOYCE

Goodness, you've become quite a detective, Eve.

EVE

(laughing) Who would have thought?

Pause.

JOYCE

What would you like to do now?

EVE

I'd like to meet Anna...But I don't dare call her...What if Violet never told her about me, and she doesn't believe who I say I am? Or Violet did tell her about me and she doesn't want anything to do with me?

JOYCE

Would you like me to make the first call?

Blackout.

Scene 10

ANNA'S living room. EVE is surrounded by ANNA'S large family.

ANNA

This is my husband, Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER shakes EVE'S hand.

CHRISTOPHER

Hello Eve. It's a pleasure to meet you.

ANNA

And this is...

EVE is introduced to all of ANNA'S family, spanning three generations. ANNA starts with her own children (who are middle-aged. ANNA'S grandchildren are in their late teens and early twenties). Some of them give EVE a kiss and/or hug. Others shake her hand. They are friendly and jovial and very welcoming. They appear to EVE as a sea of faces and she does her best to acknowledge each one.

ANNA

This is our oldest, Nathan.

NATHAN greets EVE.

ANNA

And this is Stephanie, Steph. My only girl.

STEPHANIE greets EVE.

STEPHANIE

And these are my children, Harry, Amy and Jack.

Then the others begin to introduce themselves, and their spouses and partners and their children. For example, 'I'm JULIAN and this is my wife, CAROLINE, and our three kids, CHARLOTTE, PETER and HANNAH.'

(The following information is useful for the way each family member is introduced.)

ANNA'S children are STEPHANIE, PAUL, JULIAN, NATHAN, and COLIN.

PAUL is married to ROSALIND. CLAIRE and ROBERT are their children.

JULIAN is married to CAROLINE. Their children are HANNAH, CHARLOTTE and PETER.

STEPHANIE is a single parent. Her children are HARRY, AMY and JACK.

COLIN'S girlfriend is THERESA. EMILY is her daughter.

NATHAN doesn't have a partner or children.

The introductions end.

EVE

Please forgive me if I don't remember all your names.

They ALL laugh.

ANNA links arms with EVE.

ANNA

I'd like to have Eve all to myself for a bit. Steph, could you pass around the tea and cakes and keep everyone happy?

STEPHANIE

Sure Mum.

ANNA

(to EVE) Let's go into the other room.

EVE and ANNA go into another room.

STEPHANIE offers tea and cakes around, and the family chatter and banter amongst themselves. They quieten when EVE and ANNA begin to speak.

ANNA shows EVE a photo of VIOLET.

ANNA

I thought you would like to see what she looked like.

EVE holds the photo of VIOLET. She is overwhelmed. She breaks down and sobs.

EVE

Maybe I should go.

ANNA

No. No. Absolutely not. *(softly and tenderly)* Don't stop the tears. Cry as much as you need to.

EVE continues to cry. ANNA is also extremely moved and becomes tearful.

Pause.

ANNA

I wish she'd told me about you. I would have loved a big sister.

ANNA'S acceptance and kindness ANNA releases another wave of tears in EVE.

ANNA puts her arm around EVE.

Pause.

EVE stares at VIOLET'S photo.

EVE

She has the same shaped face as my granddaughter, and the same large eyes. What colour were her eyes?

ANNA

Brown.

EVE

Imogen's are blue.

Pause.

EVE

What was she like...as a mother?

We see ANNA thinking and wondering about how she can respond to EVE'S question with sensitivity and truthfulness.

ANNA

Oh...um...uh...Well...She encouraged me to speak up for myself, and to say what I thought, honestly...and never make promises I couldn't keep – that was important to her...and uh...She taught me to be independent, not to rely on other people too much (*speaking in VIOLET'S voice*) 'they'll let you down, and the only one you can totally trust is yourself'.

Pause.

EVE

It's not surprising she felt like that.

ANNA nods 'Yes' and they share a moment of acknowledging the significance of this in terms of VIOLET'S life.

ANNA

I'm sorry you didn't have the chance to know her.

Pause.

EVE

Did she like music?

ANNA

She used to joke that she was tone deaf and couldn't sing a note.

Pause.

ANNA

(looking at the photo) Would you like to keep it?

EVE

Yes. I would. Thank you.

Pause.

EVE has many thoughts, questions and emotions coursing through her. She is struggling to articulate what she is feeling. She feels confused and overwhelmed.

EVE

I need to go.

ANNA

Can I call you soon?

EVE

I would like that, very much.

ANNA

And perhaps we could get both our families together. I'd love to meet your daughter and son-in-law, and your granddaughter.

EVE

Yes, perhaps.

Scene 11

EVE stands alone holding VIOLET'S photo. EVE's psyche begins to encourage her to tell her family the truth about her past, and counter the old voices that keep her isolated and fearful. EVE is coming to the realisation that she doesn't have to carry the burden of shame and secrecy anymore.

VOICES OF EVE'S PSYCHE

Tell them...Scared...It's time now...It's a different time now... Scared...Don't tell them...Hide...Hide...Don't hide...No need to be ashamed anymore...Don't

hate me...Don't leave me...Scared...Love me...Love me.
(These words are jumbled and overlap and repeat: There is musical underscoring that builds to a crescendo, urging her on, to speak up.)

EVE looks at VIOLET'S photo.

She calls SARAH on the phone.

EVE

Hello Sarah. Could you all come over and see me?

Scene 12

Splice to EVE, SARAH, RICHARD and IMOGEN in EVE'S living room. EVE has told them she was given up by her mother and grew up at the Foundling Hospital. They are in shock.

SARAH

Mum, why didn't you ever tell me?

EVE

I couldn't speak about it. Or bear to think about it. The shame of it. Given away and rejected by my own mother. The terror of being rejected again if people knew the truth about me.

RICHARD

But it wasn't your fault.

EVE

I felt like it was. That something was wrong with me. That was why she didn't want me. Because I was bad. And could never be loved.

RICHARD

You were an innocent baby...And every baby deserves to be loved.

Pause.

EVE

It's as if my whole life, I've been living in a trance, and couldn't see how frightened I was...to feel...to feel this huge grief and sorrow inside.

RICHARD

You're very brave.

Pause.

EVE

I think she would have been a good mother to me if she'd had the chance.

IMOGEN

She didn't have a choice, did she?

EVE

No. She didn't have a choice.

Pause.

EVE

(to Imogen) What are you going to do?

IMOGEN

I haven't decided yet...*(looking at SARAH and RICHARD)* We're talking about it.

Pause.

SARAH

I can't believe you've got a half sister.

EVE

It was wonderful to meet Anna and her family. But after I left I was overcome with an enormous sense of loss...For all the life we've lived and never known each other. I felt so cheated for all those years feeling so alone and not having a family.

IMOGEN

We're your family.

EVE

I know. Thank god I have you.

EVE hugs IMOGEN.

Pause.

EVE

There's a place called the Foundling Museum that tells my story. They're having a Christmas Carol Service for former pupils and their families. Will you come with me?

SARAH

Of course we will.

RICHARD and IMOGEN

(simultaneously) Yes.

Scene 13

Foundling Museum picture gallery. Christmas Carol Service. There is a beautifully decorated Christmas tree. FORMER PUPILS and their FAMILIES are at the service. EVE, SARAH, RICHARD, IMOGEN, JOYCE and JONATHAN are all there.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Please join me as we all sing the final carol, *O Holy Night*.

CHOIR and ALL at the service sing O Holy Night.

O Holy night, the stars are brightly shining
It is the night of our dear Savior's birth
Long lay the world in sin and error pining
Til He appeared and the soul felt it's worth
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn
Fall on your knees

O hear the angel voices
O night divine!
O night when Christ was born
O night divine!
O night, O night divine!

And in His Name, all oppression shall cease
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we
Let all within us praise his holy name
Christ is the Lord!
Their name forever praise we

Noel, Noel
O night, O night Divine
Noel, Noel
O night, O night Divine
Noel, Noel
O night, O holy Divine

Pause.

The Service concludes. People are shaking hands and wishing each other a Happy Christmas and blessings and wishes for the new year. JONATHAN is standing with JOYCE. JOYCE nods in EVE'S direction. JONATHAN walks over to her.

JONATHAN

Eve.

Pause.

EVE

Jonathan?

Silence as EVE and JONATHAN stare at each other and take each other in.

Pause.

They embrace.

End.