



CONTENTS

CONNOR Monologue. Pages 1,2,3

KELLY Monologue. Pages 4,5,6,7

FLORA & NICK Duologue. Pages 8,9,10,11

Videos from the Writer, Actors, Composer and Set and Costumes Designer can be found on the Stages of Half Moon website:

<https://www.stagesofhalfmoon.org.uk/productions/off-the-grid2018/>

Chapter 1: *The Promise* (2016)

Object: *An Overflowing Bin-Bag*

CONNOR *is in the space alone.*

CONNOR When we first realise that they've disappeared
They leave no trace

No smell of aftershave or knock-off perfume

No tired laughter echoin' round the flat

Not even promises unkept to me and her

'Cos

None was ever made

Normally I'd drop Kelly round the pre-school

Play I-spy with colours on the way

Do the dogshit dance around the mounds of canine filth

And swing her up

In Stepney's smog-filled sunshine

But today

She stays in bed

We eat Fangtastics for our breakfast

Stops her askin' after Mum and Dad

Five sticky fingers clench in mine

Until a sugar-crash waves Kelly softly off to sleep

I watch her little belly rise and fall

Stroke her cheek

And wait until the midday arrows match

To mark a thick black line into the day

Been quiet too long

All them sounds

Them signals

That we took for granted as the constant music of our lives

Fall deathly still

We ain't heard Dad flop down and wheeze after the night shift

Not clocked Mum clatterin' the saucepans on her wobbly leg

Their sofa-bed's still out

And like –

Their clothes have *concertinaed* down onto their shoes

His Adidas tracksuit

Her pair of jeans

It's like their bodies have just disappeared

Dissolved

Mum?

Dad?

And I don't wanna leave Kel sleepin' here alone

But I'm gettin' proper panicked

I tuck her in real tight

Then sneak off down the Nisa on the corner double-quick

Try to use their credit cards for milk and cashback

Call some numbers from their mobiles

But I'm told each time

This card is now invalid

Chapter 2: *Why Eagles Never Leave Their Eggs (2017)*

Object: *A Child's Model of a Birthday Cake with Five Candles*

KELLY wears a cape and sits at a making table at pre-school. *CONNOR* watches but is not actually in the scene.

Indented italics are spoken by *CONNOR*. ***Bold italics*** are spoken by *KELLY* and by *CONNOR*.

KELLY I'm Kelly
 (Phonetically) K – E – L – L – Y
 You're new so you can sit here
 And you can use the makin' table
 But not the things I'm usin' til I've stopped usin' them
 I'm makin' this
 It's a cake

She beams.

My bruvver Connor
Is my Mum
Yeah
My Dad and my Mum and my bruvver
It's not silly that's why we're special
 What-makes-us-different-makes-us-special
When's your birthday?

'Cause I'm five today
Me and Connor we're special because we have the same birthday
June the sixteenth that's today
Exactly a decade apart
A decade is ten years
How old are you?
And last year for my fourth birthday –

- He put loads of stuff in a bin-bag and threw it away

Which was a weird present

Don't touch the gloopy glue I need that

Making.

That's Mrs Parrett

She always asks me loads of questions

Tries to brush my hair out of my eyes when it's in knots

I tell her when she asks about the things that me and Connor do on weekends

About goin' to the moon and ridin' shootin' stars to Earth

Bein' lions takin' baths in waterfalls

Or um

At home

Like

When somebody knocks the door

Me and Connor pretend that it's a giant with super-hearin'-ears

And we climb into a cupboard in the kitchen where the saucepans are meant to be

But it's really a disappearin' box

Or

When it's rainin' outside and we play jungle and our arms are big trees with leaves which are actually saucepans again and fill them up because the taps don't always work so we do that

Making.

I'm actually a superhero

And also I was born in a golden egg like for real in an *actual* golden egg

Because –

It's a secret story don't tell and then we can be bestests

- Um

Once upon a time

Once upon a time

This is a story ready

There was a Mummy eagle and a Daddy eagle who had golden eggs

Who knew that if a Mummy went to hunt for food

The Daddy should stay in the nest

And if a Daddy went to hunt for food

The Mummy should stay in the nest

They should never leave golden eggs on their own

'Cos two bad things would happen if they did

First the Mummy and Daddy would vanish

Into two piles of fluffy feathers

And second

The chicks in the golden eggs

They'd be born as people

Tiny human-people-eaglet-thingies in a nest

Who wouldn't be able to fly or catch mice or see tiny things from far away

Because they had no-one to teach them

But the *big* problem in the story

Was that *all* the food in birdland was bein' eaten by bigger birds like...

Condors

And even though the Mummy and Daddy knew about the two bad things

They knew their eaglets would be really really hungry when they hatched

So they left the nest together to get food

And *poof* they disappeared

Don't use that felt tip I need a yellow one

Making.

But Connor says that in the story

The weird eaglet-human-babies just get *cleverer-rer*
They grow into human-eagle-people who can fly
And are able to eat the condors

I like your paintin' it's like a big eagle

She puts the five model candles she has made into the pretend cake.

When my Bromumdad and me have adventures in our capes
Findin' sandwiches in giant yellow box-on-wheels
He says

Superheroes not scavengers

But it's a secret ssshhhhhh don't tell Mrs Parrett
Like when I eat from my empty lunchbox
And I do big pretend eatin' 'cos there's nothin' there
But we can play imaginary lunches if you like
It's reeeeeally fun
After that let's be eagles you be the Daddy and I'll be the Mummy
We can do that
Though I'll start Year 1 after the summer so it's only until then okay
Do you like this it's a present

Happy Birthday to Us

Happy Birthday to Us

Happy Five and Fifteen Birthday Connor and Kelly

Happy Birthday to Us

Chapter 7: *The Redemption (2024)*

Object: A Box of Drawings

*As a loose rule, indented dialogue indicates conversation between **NICK** and **FLORA**. Other lines can be **NICK** and **FLORA** addressing the audience.*

FLORA He tells me it's none of our business. I don't agree, of course, but he says down the line, if we invade like that, invade Kelly's privacy, how's she ever going to trust us? All I'm talking about is this teensy intervention and suddenly he throws the book at me, this ruddy / encyclopaedia of –

NICK We were told, in Skills to Foster, and in the supporting literature, very clearly –

FLORA But I feel there comes a time – a child – where the rule-book needs –

NICK You can't wade in, it'll be Justine all over again –

FLORA That wasn't my fault

NICK Bolted like a rabbit

FLORA Kelly's not Justine this is different

NICK Doing your Gestapo act and she runs halfway down Woodside Avenue in the middle of night

FLORA It wasn't – that's a huge overstatement –

NICK Prying

FLORA I asked Justine if she'd kept pets before, because flushing a school hamster down a toilet isn't exactly standard toddler –

NICK She was Year 1

FLORA Oh for God's sake

NICK I was the one who had to get in there with the plunger

FLORA Anyway.

NICK ...

FLORA We know there'd've been others. We're not the only foster parents who'd've visited Kelly in care, and maybe saw the file – saw *that* photograph, and just decided – no.

NICK *(Intervening)* But the box is none of our business

FLORA Nick –

NICK We know Kelly's different

FLORA Well they all are, that's –

NICK You have to be sensitive. She's not away with the fairies but she's a bit...

FLORA A daydreamer

NICK Not that there should be a way, a way that all twelve year-olds should be –

FLORA Like half of her's missing

NICK So she's been here a whole year –

FLORA Almost

NICK And she's fine

FLORA You think

NICK She's at school, everything's – as far as I'm concerned, it's peachy but Flora just –

FLORA What?

NICK ...

FLORA I was worried

NICK There I am, twelve hours at work then hoiking cushions and rugs and God knows what else from IKEA out the boot of the car, two days before Christmas –

FLORA Because it turns out your new extension is bloody freezing

NICK - tracking me back and forth

FLORA It's not right
This
Detritus of hers up there
Haunting us

NICK Is it haunting Kelly?

FLORA I don't know maybe we could ask her –

NICK No

FLORA ...

NICK It's the *only* thing she brought from before. This cardboard box up in the attic

FLORA One of us should bring it down –

NICK We wait for Kelly to be ready

FLORA I'm worried –

NICK She's fine!

FLORA We weren't told a great deal about the brother. They'd slipped off the records for years. By the time Kelly joined us last Christmas, he was eighteen months into a sentence.

NICK Four and a half years in HMP Wandsworth. Severe child neglect.

When I finally slam the boot shut Flora's there wide-eyed.