

PLAYS FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

A PARTNERSHIP OF SEATTLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY-MINNEAPOLIS

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To Dream Again

By
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Inspired by *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by
William Shakespeare

To Dream Again was first presented by the Theatre Clwyd, UK, in 2016

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

SOPHIE, A NINE YEAR OLD GIRL

DEMETRIUS, HER FATHER, who also plays YOUNG DEMETRIUS

HELENA, HER MOTHER, who also plays YOUNG HELENA

ROBIN GOODFELLOW, A PLUMBER who also plays PUCK, A FAIRY

Prologue

Music.

***SOPHIE's** bedroom at night. The bedroom of a girl right on the cusp of growing up – cuddly toys nestle alongside boy band posters, Sylvanian Families figures are displayed next to souvenirs and mementoes from school friends.*

***SOPHIE** in bed.*

We see her wake up – she has heard something that has upset her.

*We hear the voices of two adults arguing, her parents, **DEMETRIUS** and **HELENA**, but see them only as shadowy silhouettes either side of the bed.*

*The arguing grows in volume, and, as it grows, so does the size of the silhouettes, until the volume of the arguing is such that **SOPHIE** is forced to cover her ears with her hands, and the silhouettes tower monstrously over her.*

Suddenly, with an enormous crack, the walls of her bedroom split, and the room begins to fall into two pieces. The shelves begin to spill their contents all over the floor. As the room divided we realise that the silhouettes are now in separate halves.

*Water sprays through the cracks and splits, flooding the room, and **SOPHIE's** bed begins to float off the floor.*

***SOPHIE** tries desperately to hold the two walls together, to pile the things back on the shelves, to stop the water spraying into the room.*

SOPHIE Mum! Dad! Stop it! Stop it! I'm trying to fix it! Don't worry! I can fix it! I can keep it all together!

Nothing seems to be any different.

Just let me try! Please just let me try!

End of Prologue.

Scene One

We see **SOPHIE** alone. At first we think she is talking to us.

*However, as she speaks we realise that she is addressing her parents. At first we hear only their voices, but in time we can see them too. The father and mother are in two separate places, possibly two separate times. They certainly don't talk to or look at each other. Perhaps they don't see **SOPHIE** either.*

As the scene develops we also see more of where she is: the living room of her house, rendered with some degree of realism. There is an air of neglect about the room, although it was clearly at one time rather a nice place to be – family photographs, shelves with books, souvenirs of holidays in Greece, Persian style rugs on the stripped wooden floor.

We also see images of the place and events she is conjuring up, flashing across the walls and floor, ghostly visions of happier days, a time long past, something half-remembered and easily lost.

*By the end of the scene we have entered fully into **SOPHIE**'s living room, and her parents are definitely in the room with her, although they still do not look at each other until indicated.*

SOPHIE

It's simple. We need to begin at the beginning. The very start of it all. That's what we need to do. Because, perhaps, if we go back to the beginning, then it can start all over again.

Beat.

So...

Beat.

How does it start?

Beat.

How did it start?

Beat.

A long time ago... no. Once upon a time... no. One midsummer's night... no. These are just stories. 'A long time ago' is just a story. 'Once upon a time' is just

a story. 'One midsummer's night' is just a story. All just stories. And this isn't a story. It's real. I know it's real.

Beat.

So...

A pause for thought.

Okay, what does Miss M say?

SOPHIE *smiles to herself, and adjusts imaginary glasses as she impersonates her teacher.*

'Try starting with the setting.' That's how she talks, isn't it? Just like that. 'Try starting with the setting. First set the scene. Get the beginning right, and the rest will surely follow.'

A pause for thought.

Okay, okay, I've got it. How about this?

There's a wood. And we are in the wood. It's night. A night in the middle of the summer. The air is warm. A silver thin sliver of new moon hangs in the purple sky. The smell of wild thyme and sweet musk roses is in the breeze. This is a wood filled with magic. This is a night when magic can happen. You see, I remember.

DEMETRIUS No, you don't remember.

SOPHIE I do.

DEMETRIUS But you weren't there.

SOPHIE It doesn't matter. You've told me. And you were there. And Mum was there, and she's told me.

DEMETRIUS And so why are you telling me this? If I already know it?

SOPHIE Because I want you to remember too.

DEMETRIUS But I haven't forgotten.

SOPHIE Yes you have.

DEMETRIUS No I haven't. I will never forget that night.

SOPHIE Then I want you to remember it properly. Remember the night that you fell in love with Mum...

DEMETRIUS Sophie...

SOPHIE And go right back to the beginning again.

DEMETRIUS I...

SOPHIE Go on. Just try.

DEMETRIUS But, Sophie, we're not at the beginning, are we? Not anymore. We're right in the middle. Actually not even in the middle anymore. We're at the end.

SOPHIE The trees in the wood are silver birches, all over-canopied with woodbine and eglantine. And the floor of the wood is a carpet of oxlips and violets.

HELENA 'Over-canopied'? What sort of rubbish is that? 'Over-canopied'? What does that even mean?

SOPHIE Well, imagine, on the branches of the trees, hanging from them, there's a sort of canopy –

HELENA That's just the sort of pretentious phrase your father would use. Probably stole it from some play.

SOPHIE There are flowers hanging from all the trees. Woodbine and eglantine

HELENA I mean, can flowers even grow on trees?

SOPHIE These ones are growing on the trees. I'm sure of it. I remember.

HELENA And you've seen them, have you? Flowers growing on trees?

SOPHIE No. But you told me about them. Remember? You told me about the beautiful archways made by the trees, archways dripping with flowers. Now do you remember?

A pause.

HELENA Yes, I remember.

HELENA is allowing herself to be seduced by the memory.

HELENA Beautiful archways made by the trees, archways dripping with flowers. Woodbine and eglantine.

SOPHIE And then, through one of the archways, comes the most handsome man in the world. He's like an ancient Greek god. Do you remember?

HELENA Yes, I remember.

SOPHIE You've been in love with him for years.

HELENA Yes, I have.

SOPHIE And now he's in the same wood as you.

HELENA The most handsome man in the world.

SOPHIE You remember. The beginning.

HELENA Yes, I remember. That's where it all started.

DEMETRIUS It was a long time ago...

SOPHIE So?

DEMETRIUS ... and people change.

HELENA Jet black hair, styled just so, with a little touch of oil to make it shine.

DEMETRIUS I mean, I'm grey now.

SOPHIE No, you're not.

DEMETRIUS Going grey then.

SOPHIE A little bit.

HELENA Gorgeous. Muscly. Not too muscly. Just muscly enough.

DEMETRIUS And I've put on a bit of weight.

SOPHIE You're not fat.

DEMETRIUS No, but I've put on a bit of weight. Middle age spread.

SOPHIE I like your tummy.

HELENA And the most amazing eyes. They light up the instant he sees me. Just like that. Magic. As if it is the first time he's ever seen me. As if I am the first woman he's ever seen.

DEMETRIUS Yes, people change. And not just the way they look.

SOPHIE Not everything about them changes.

DEMETRIUS No, not everything, but things can begin to feel different as you get older.

SOPHIE Only if you let them.

HELENA As if I am the most beautiful woman in the whole world. As if we are both in a spell.

Beat.

Only it didn't stay like that.

SOPHIE You still are the most beautiful woman in the whole world.

HELENA Thank you. But that was a long time ago. Once upon a time. One midsummer's night. It's all in the past. You can't go back. Not to how it really was in the beginning. Especially now.

SOPHIE What if you remembered really hard?

HELENA No, you can't go back.

DEMETRIUS I don't think you can go back to the beginning.

SOPHIE You could try.

HELENA I'm not sure I can.

DEMETRIUS I'm not sure I want to.

SOPHIE Magic then? What about if you could be magicked back to –

DEMETRIUS There's no such thing as magic, Sophie.

HELENA There's no magic, not anymore.

SOPHIE Really?

DEMETRIUS Really.

HELENA Really.

SOPHIE If only I could take you back to those woods...

Silence.

This isn't going to work, is it?

HELENA *[Turning to look at **DEMETRIUS**.]* This isn't going to work.

DEMETRIUS *[Turning to look at **HELENA**.]* This isn't going to work.

End of Scene One

Scene Two

Music.

SOPHIE's living room at night.

A cold wind blows through it, chasing dead leaves across the floor.

End of Scene Two

Scene Three

In contrast to the previous scenes, this is frighteningly realistic and familiar.

HELENA is stretched out on the sofa. **SOPHIE** is sitting at a table writing in miniscule letters on a small square of paper.

We watch them for a while.

HELENA What are you doing, love?

SOPHIE Nothing.

HELENA Writing again?

SOPHIE Yes.

HELENA Okay.

***SOPHIE** goes back to her writing.*

I love watching you all busy with your stuff.

SOPHIE I love you watching me.

DEMETRIUS *[Offstage.]* There's no hot water!

No response.

There's no hot water!

***SOPHIE** looks at her mother. She does not look up.*

SOPHIE Dad's calling.

No response.

HELENA I heard him.

***DEMETRIUS** enters. He is wearing washing up gloves.*

DEMETRIUS Helena? There's no hot water.

No response.

SOPHIE Maybe it's all used up?

DEMETRIUS No, we've got a combi-boiler. We should get hot water any time we turn the tap on.

SOPHIE Is there something wrong with that then?

DEMETRIUS I don't know.

HELENA Of course there is. It hasn't been working properly for months. Your father said that he'd got it fixed.

DEMETRIUS I did get it fixed, Sophie.

HELENA No, he didn't.

DEMETRIUS Yes I did. Mike came round and replaced the pump.

HELENA Well, you can't have got it fixed, because it isn't working now. Is it?

DEMETRIUS I did get it fixed. I just told you.

HELENA But it isn't working now, is it?

DEMETRIUS I'll call Mike again.

HELENA Why?

DEMETRIUS To come and see what's wrong with the boiler.

HELENA Why are you calling Mike?

DEMETRIUS To fix the boiler. I just said.

HELENA But why Mike?

DEMETRIUS He fixed the boiler last time.

HELENA But he didn't, did he?

DEMETRIUS He replaced the pump.

HELENA And there still isn't any hot water.

DEMETRIUS Something else must have broken. I'm sure he'll work out what.

HELENA God, you're useless. Get a different plumber.

DEMETRIUS We've always used Mike.

HELENA And he's every bit as useless as you are.

No answer.

Look online. Ask around for recommendations.

DEMETRIUS Okay.

A brief respite from the bickering.

*Apparently unnoticed by her parents, **SOPHIE** folds up the piece of paper that she has been writing on and tucks it into a crack underneath the skirting board.*

HELENA Actually don't. I'll do it.

DEMETRIUS I can do it.

HELENA No, I'll have to do it. Like I have to do everything. Like I've always had to do everything. Your father's useless, Sophie, do you know that? Useless.

***HELENA** picks up her iPhone and starts tapping at the screen.*

***SOPHIE** goes back to her place at the table and starts writing again.*

DEMETRIUS I can look online.

HELENA Yes, I know you can look online. It was my idea.

DEMETRIUS I'll look online and ask around for recommendations.

HELENA I'm already doing it.

DEMETRIUS You don't have to. I can do it.

HELENA It's too late. Just like everything to do with you. It's too late. Useless.

A long awkward silence.

DEMETRIUS I'll boil a kettle to do the washing up.

HELENA Jesus!

***DEMETRIUS** leaves.*

***HELENA** taps the screen to dial a number. She waits for the phone to be answered.*

[Into the phone.] Hello... Robin Goodfellow?... Great... We've got a problem...
Yes. With the boiler...

End of Scene Three

Scene Four

Music.

SOPHIE *at the table, pencil in hand, an open notebook in front of her. As she stares ahead of her we see the woods in full summer bloom, flowers, a handsome man and a beautiful woman walking hand-in-hand.*

There is a third figure in the woods, indistinct. The third figure is smaller, moves more lightly, half-hidden behind the trees and bushes. The figure seems to be following the handsome man and the beautiful woman. This smaller figure could be a child, or maybe it is something else, something from the fairy world.

SOPHIE *begins to write.*

End of Scene Four

Scene Five

Early evening.

SOPHIE and **HELENA** *on the sofa together. SOPHIE has her notebook.*

SOPHIE Can I read you my story?

HELENA Is it homework?

SOPHIE Not really. I just wanted to write a story.

HELENA Really you should do your homework first.

SOPHIE Can I read it anyway?

HELENA Okay, but then your homework. Promise?

SOPHIE Promise.

SOPHIE opens her notebook and reads.

'Once upon a time, a long time ago, there was a princess, the most beautiful princess in the whole world. She was in love –'

HELENA Is this a fairy story?

SOPHIE No, not really.

HELENA It starts like a fairy story.

SOPHIE Yes, a bit. But that doesn't mean it isn't true.

HELENA Aren't you a bit old for fairy stories now?

SOPHIE Dad says that you're never too old for fairy stories.

HELENA Well, he would, wouldn't he? It's all stories with him.

Silence.

SOPHIE Shall I carry on?

HELENA Yes, okay. I'd love to hear your story.

SOPHIE continues reading.

SOPHIE 'She was in love with the most handsome prince in the whole world, always had been, and always will be –'

HELENA This is definitely a fairy story.

SOPHIE 'The prince, however, had never even noticed her before. One midsummer's night the princess found herself in the woods outside the city. It was a gorgeous evening. The air was warm. A silver thin sliver of new moon hung in the purple sky. The smell of wild thyme and sweet musk roses was in the breeze. This was a wood filled with magic. This was a night when magic can happen. As the princess walked alone through the woods she saw her handsome prince. He had jet black hair, styled just so, with a little touch of oil to make it shine. He was muscly, not too muscly, just muscly enough. And he had the most amazing eyes, that lit up the instant he saw her –'

HELENA Sophie.

SOPHIE 'They lit up like magic, as if it was the first time he'd ever seen her –'

HELENA Sophie. Don't. Please.

SOPHIE What?

HELENA I know what you're trying to do. And it won't work.

A pause.

SOPHIE Okay. Sorry. I thought that maybe if you remembered –

HELENA And you've started that sentence with 'and', which isn't proper English.

SOPHIE Okay. Sorry.

***SOPHIE** closes her notebook.*

I'll do my homework.

HELENA Come here first. I want to give you a cuddle. Come here.

***SOPHIE** and **HELENA** cuddle on the sofa.*

Tighter. Cuddle me tighter.

They cuddle tighter.

I'm sorry I was mean about your story. I loved what I heard. I love the way you write. It's just it's hard, you know? It's hard sometimes. And I let that get in the way. Sorry.

End of Scene Five

Scene Six

Music.

***SOPHIE** is alone.*

She traces the skirting board with her hands. She is feeling carefully for something which she doesn't appear to be able to find.

She lifts the rugs and looks down between the cracks in the skirting boards. Whatever she expects to be able to see isn't there.

She checks the skirting board again and disturbs the small piece of paper that she placed there earlier. She takes it out, unfolds it and reads it. With a sigh she folds it back up again and replaces it under the skirting board.

End of Scene Six

Scene Seven

***SOPHIE** in bed at night, **DEMETRIUS** at her bedside. **SOPHIE** has just woken from a dream.*

SOPHIE I was in the wood alone at night. The trees, the flowers, the silver thin sliver of moon. It felt so real.

DEMETRIUS It was just a dream.

SOPHIE Maybe it was real.

DEMETRIUS Sometimes dreams can feel like they're actually happening. But they're still just dreams.

SOPHIE I could even smell the flowers.

DEMETRIUS Were you scared?

SOPHIE No, because this was a magical wood. I was excited, nervous. My heart was beating, like it does just before your birthday, or on Christmas Eve, when you know something is about to happen at any moment. But I wasn't scared. And then I saw him. Her. It.

Beat.

It was definitely a him. But it might have been a girl.

Beat.

No, it was definitely a him.

Beat.

I think. Moving in the trees, through the bushes, through the briars. Tiny. He was decorating the cowslips with dewdrops, and the dewdrops shone like pearls in the moonlight.

Beat.

I think he was a fairy. But fairies are girls, aren't they?

DEMETRIUS Not always. I believe some fairies are boys. Well, they must be. Otherwise how would you get baby fairies? When a boy fairy and a girl fairy love each other very much –

SOPHIE Dad!

DEMETRIUS Sorry.

SOPHIE Yes, this one was a boy. I'm sure of it.

DEMETRIUS Did you see his face?

SOPHIE I didn't mean to but I trod on a prickly branch, and the prickle went into my foot because I didn't have my shoes on. I shouted out and he turned around to look at me.

DEMETRIUS What did he look like?

SOPHIE I don't really know, because when he looked at me his face started to change into something else.

DEMETRIUS What?

SOPHIE I don't know. And then I woke up.

DEMETRIUS So you weren't scared?

SOPHIE No, but I wanted to go back to sleep to dream again and I couldn't and that made me cry.

DEMETRIUS It sounds like a beautiful dream.

SOPHIE The most beautiful in the whole world.

DEMETRIUS *kisses SOPHIE.*

DEMETRIUS Good night. Perhaps it will come back.

SOPHIE stops him leaving.

SOPHIE Do you think we still have fairies in the house?

DEMETRIUS House fairies? Of course.

SOPHIE And do you think they still come through a secret door in the skirting board?

DEMETRIUS They must do. But they can make themselves so small that they can also creep through the cracks in the floorboards, and underneath the front door.

SOPHIE Why do you think they come into the house?

DEMETRIUS They have lots of jobs. But their main job is to make sure that everyone in the house sleeps safely. They dance and sing to bless each bedroom and fill it with sweet peace, so that not even a mouse can disturb you. And they fix things that are broken around the house. And they help with the cleaning.

SOPHIE Really?

DEMETRIUS Sweeping the floor, that kind of thing. But I've told you about this before.

SOPHIE I like to hear things again. To check that they're still the same. That they haven't changed.

DEMETRIUS Okay.

Beat.

Why are you asking?

SOPHIE They've stopped writing back to my letters.

DEMETRIUS Ah, well, you see, maybe –

*We hear a text alert from the phone in **DEMETRIUS's** pocket. He gets the phone out. His face darkens.*

SOPHIE Is that from Mum?

DEMETRIUS ... yes.

SOPHIE Why doesn't she just come through?

DEMETRIUS It's easier not to talk sometimes.

Beat.

Come on. Time to sleep. I'll come and check on you later.

End of Scene Seven

Scene Eight

Music.

The house at night.

Silver light from a watery moon across the furniture.

We hear tapping, knocking, gurgles that sound like chuckles, what might even be tiny footsteps.

It is probably just the plumbing.

End of Scene Eight

Scene Nine

The next morning.

HELENA with **ROBIN**.

SOPHIE watches.

HELENA To start with, there's a problem with the hot water. And it's not the pump, apparently, because we've had that replaced.

ROBIN Well, I can have a look at the boiler.

HELENA Good. Could that affect the heating too?

ROBIN It might.

HELENA I've checked the thermostat, and it's set correctly, but sometimes the heating comes on all by itself even though it's baking outside. And then, when it's freezing, nothing.

ROBIN *[With a smile.]* Perhaps the thermostat's got its seasons all mixed up and back-to-front.

HELENA *[Ignoring the smile.]* Yes. And the water in the kitchen sink and in the downstairs bathroom runs out really slowly. I'm sure you can smell it.

ROBIN *[With another smile.]* I'll have a nose around.

HELENA *[Still ignoring it.]* It's definitely the drains. Have you any idea what might be causing this?

ROBIN Well, you've got a whole heap of different problems here, not related to each other, so it's not going to be a single cause.

HELENA Okay.

ROBIN I'll need to have a proper look.

HELENA Fine. I'll leave you to it. I'm going to be upstairs working. I've just boiled the kettle. Sophie, make Mr Goodfellow a cup of tea.

***HELENA** leaves to go upstairs.*

A pause.

***SOPHIE** looks at **ROBIN**.*

***ROBIN** smiles at **SOPHIE**.*

***SOPHIE** gives him a small smile back.*

***ROBIN** does nothing remotely approaching starting his work, but keeps smiling at **SOPHIE**.*

***SOPHIE** is bemused, but in no way frightened. She keeps looking at **ROBIN**.*

As she watches him, his face slowly, almost imperceptibly, changes, as he pulls a ridiculously comic gurn.

***SOPHIE** laughs.*

ROBIN That's better. Now, what about this cup of tea?

SOPHIE Yes, sorry, Mr Goodfellow –

ROBIN – Robin –

SOPHIE – yes, er, Robin, yes. How do you like your tea?

ROBIN Hot. In a mug. White. Five sugars.

SOPHIE Five sugars?

ROBIN I'm on a diet.

SOPHIE Yes. I'll just...

ROBIN I'll get on with my work.

***SOPHIE** leaves for the kitchen.*

***ROBIN** goes to his tool box, but, instead of opening it, sits on it.*

From his tool box seat he looks around the room. Unusually perhaps, he is looking at the height of the skirting boards. Every so often he seems to see something or someone and smiles in recognition, perhaps even winks.

***ROBIN** spots something he didn't expect to see. It is the small piece of paper that **SOPHIE** placed under the skirting board earlier. **ROBIN** clicks his fingers, taps his nose three times and suddenly the piece of paper is in his hand. Perhaps we hear a twinkle of magic. He unfolds it, takes glasses from his forehead and reads. A frown crosses his face. He refolds the piece of paper and places it in his shirt pocket.*

***SOPHIE** returns with the cup of tea. She hands it to **ROBIN**.*

SOPHIE Here you are.

ROBIN Thank you.

***ROBIN** sips the cup of tea, but does not move from the tool box.*

SOPHIE What are you doing?

ROBIN Working out what's wrong.

SOPHIE With the plumbing?

ROBIN Of course.

Beat.

What else? I'm a plumber.

SOPHIE The boiler's just through the kitchen.

ROBIN Yes. Thank you.

SOPHIE I can show you the way if you want.

ROBIN No, you're alright.

SOPHIE Don't you need to examine it?

ROBIN Why?

SOPHIE To work out what's wrong.

ROBIN No, not really.

SOPHIE ?

ROBIN If you're prepared to spend enough time looking at something and thinking about it, you can always work out what's wrong in the end.

SOPHIE ?

ROBIN Imagine your clock has broken. What would you do?

SOPHIE Get a new one?

ROBIN Or take it apart, piece by piece, very, very carefully. Look and think. Work out what each piece does and why. And then put it back together again, just as carefully. And, if you're lucky, and you put it back together properly, your clock will work again.

SOPHIE Wow.

ROBIN Only sometimes you have to spend a very, very, very long time looking and thinking. And most people aren't prepared to spend that amount of time, so they buy a new clock. Luckily I've got a delicious cup of tea to drink whilst I'm looking and thinking. Thank you.

SOPHIE That's alright.

A pause.

Can you always work out what's wrong?

ROBIN Yes. In the end.

SOPHIE And then can you fix it?

ROBIN That's my job.

SOPHIE Always?

ROBIN Always.

SOPHIE As good as new?

ROBIN Sometimes better.

SOPHIE Better?

ROBIN Yes.

SOPHIE Better than it was when it broke?

ROBIN Yes, although it may not seem so at first. In fact, it may seem worse. It might seem even more broken. However, in time, you'll get to see that it's better. But then, of course, it's different. Better, but different.

SOPHIE What?

ROBIN Different to how it was to start with. And sometimes to fix things you have to change them quite a bit.

SOPHIE ?

ROBIN You know, new parts and that. Even a completely new system.

SOPHIE Oh.

Beat.

Can you ever fix it so it's exactly the same? The same as it was in the beginning?

ROBIN Now, that is a good question. I'd best get back to work.

SOPHIE Okay.

SOPHIE starts to leave, a touch unwillingly.

ROBIN You can stay if you want.

SOPHIE Will I be in the way?

ROBIN You couldn't be in the way if you tried.

SOPHIE I'll just sit over here.

SOPHIE goes to the table and sits down. She opens her notebook.

ROBIN stays sitting on his tool box, smiling.

SOPHIE Are you going to do your work?

ROBIN I am. I'm looking and thinking.

SOPHIE Okay.

SOPHIE starts to write in her notebook.

ROBIN What are you writing?

SOPHIE A story.

ROBIN I love stories.

SOPHIE Me too.

A pause.

Would you like to read my story?

ROBIN I would love to read your story.

***SOPHIE** hands him the book. He reads it.*

Ooh, a fairy story!

SOPHIE Why do you think it's a fairy story?

ROBIN *[Reading.]* '... the prince and the princess fell in love at that first sight, as if they were in a spell. They had been brought together by the magic of the woods, and they got married and lived happily ever after. The End.' That's got to be a fairy story.

SOPHIE Do you like it?

ROBIN It's very good. Magic. I like the way that some of the sentences start with 'And'. I love fairy stories.

SOPHIE It's actually a true story. At least, it used to be true.

***ROBIN** suddenly stands and calls up the stairs.*

ROBIN Hello? Hello?

***HELENA** enters.*

HELENA Have you worked out what's wrong?

ROBIN Yes.

HELENA Well?

ROBIN What's wrong is your boiler's broke, your central heating's bust and your drains are blocked.

HELENA But I told you that.

ROBIN Yes, you did. And you were right. Absolutely right.

HELENA So what's happened?

ROBIN It's a bit hard to explain without getting technical.

HELENA Give it a try.

ROBIN It's all connected, you see.

HELENA That isn't what you said a few minutes ago.

ROBIN Yes, it was.

HELENA I'm sure it wasn't. I'm sure you said there wasn't a single cause.

ROBIN No. Everything's connected. If one thing goes wrong, the rest follows. It's like that original thing that goes wrong is the parent to all the other problems.

HELENA So what's happened?

ROBIN Well, basically, without going into too much detail... *[Very quickly, possibly with actions, but definitely with complete conviction.]* ... the wind has sucked up a contagious fog from the sea which has fallen on the land. The fog falling on the land has made the pelting rivers proud so they have overborne their continents. Therefore the ox has stretched his yoke in vain, the ploughman has lost his sweat, the green corn has rotted, the fold stands empty, and the crows are fatted with the murrion flock.

HELENA What?

ROBIN Oh, and your nine-men's-morris is filled up with mud. That's why your drains are slow.

HELENA Are those all proper technical terms?

ROBIN Oh yes.

HELENA Are you sure you're a proper plumber?

ROBIN Yes. Absolutely. I've got a certificate. It's got my name on it and everything.

HELENA looks at ROBIN, long and hard.

ROBIN gives her a big grin.

SOPHIE He says he can fix it. And it will be even better than it was to start with.

ROBIN I'll be round at seven thirty tomorrow.

HELENA That's a bit early for us.

ROBIN

That's okay. I don't mind. *[To SOPHIE, putting the mug in her hands.]* Thanks for the tea. Sleep well tonight. I'll be looking out for you.

ROBIN picks up his tool box and walks out, leaving HELENA and SOPHIE standing together, somewhat shell-shocked.

End of Scene Nine

Scene Ten

Music.

The house at night.

SOPHIE creeps downstairs in her pyjamas and dressing gown. She goes to the skirting board to look for the piece of paper. It is gone. With renewed vigour she searches the skirting board but finds nothing.

Suddenly, from upstairs, we hear the sound of shouting and arguing. We can't make out the words, but the voices are definitely those of DEMETRIUS and HELENA.

SOPHIE sits on the sofa with her hands over her ears.

A big bang from upstairs, as of a door slamming. The shouting has stopped.

SOPHIE wraps her dressing gown around her and creeps out of the room.

Creaking noises from under the floorboards, as if something is pushing against them.

A wash of silvery light across the room making everything shine like pearls in the moonlight.

End of Scene Ten