

# DEGREES OF CHANGE

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A play

by

Martin O'Brien

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## **Characters**

Claire Hayes, 17

Francis Hayes, 17

Christina O'Keefe, 18

JJ (Jason Jackson), 18

Shelley Milton, 17

Geraldine Kennedy MP, 48

SCENE ONE - THE EVENT

THE STAGE IS BARE EXCEPT FOR FOUR  
PLINTHS OF VARIOUS HEIGHTS. THE  
HIGHEST PLINTH IS UPSTAGE CENTRE.

LIGHTS COME UP ON **CLAIRE HAYES**,  
STANDING ON THE HIGHEST PLINTH.

CLAIRE: It started with a drop. Just one drop of rain.  
Then another. Then another. Then another.

SOUND FX: RAINFALL

WE HEAR THE VOICES OF VARIOUS RADIO AND  
TELEVISION NEWSCASTERS. (VO=VOICEOVER)

NEWSCASTER #1: (VO) International news. The Kenyan district of  
Garrissa is experiencing a wave of flash flooding,  
breaking the banks of the River Tana. It is the  
third time that the district has been hit by severe  
weather conditions in the past two years. A  
humanitarian support operation is now underway...  
(FADES OUT)

CLAIRE: We were told to prepare for the worst. This was  
worse than we ever could have imagined.

LIGHTS UP ON **FRANCIS HAYES, CHRISTINA  
O'KEEFE, AND JJ (JASON JACKSON)**, ALSO  
STANDING ON PLINTHS.

SOUND FX: THE RAINFALL INCREASES IN  
VOLUME.

FRANCIS: We have to go!

CHRISTINA: Where are you!?

JJ: Come on!

CHRISTINA: I don't know where I'm going!

FRANCIS: Stick together!

CHRISTINA: There's water. Water everywhere.

JJ: Come on!

NEWSCASTER #2: (VO) It is feared that dozens may have lost their  
lives and thousands more displaced from their homes  
following the Kenyan floods over the weekend.

SOUND FX: RAIN INCREASES IN VOLUME.

CHRISTINA: Which way do we go?! Which way do we go?!

JJ: Over here!

FRANCIS: Claire!? Claire!?

JJ: Come on, Francis!

FRANCIS: Where's Claire!?

NEWSCASTER #3: (VO) A group of Sixth Form students from Manchester are among the hundreds still reported missing. The students from St John's High School, Manchester, were on a volunteer trip in the region.

FRANCIS: Claire, where are you!?

JJ: Claire!

CHRISTINA: Claire!

FRANCIS: Claire!!!

NEWSCASTER #4: (VO) One member of the group, Claire Hayes aged seventeen, is still missing from the group, feared dead.

CHRISTINA: Have you seen her?

FRANCIS: No.

JJ: She must have gone with the others. We have to go.

CHRISTINA: She'll be alright.

JJ: Francis, come on!

NEWSCASTER #5: (VO) The body of missing school-girl, Claire Hayes, was today discovered following the devastating flooding in Kenya.

JJ: Francis. Are you alright, mate?

CHRISTINA: Your Mum's on the phone, Francis. She wants to speak to you.

FRANCIS: Thanks.

CHRISTINA: (QUIETLY TO JJ:) Why wasn't Claire with us? Where did she go? Why wasn't she there?

NEWSCASTER #6: (VO) Claire Hayes, a bright and popular student, was part of a group of Sixth Form students on a volunteer trip to Kenya to help build a new school. The funeral takes place today at twelve noon.

CLAIRE: And then the rain stopped. Everything stopped. And nothing was the same again.

SOUND FX: RAINFALL FADES OUT.

ALL EXIT.

SCENE TWO - THE FUNERAL

THE RECEPTION AFTER THE FUNERAL.

THERE ARE VARIOUS PEOPLE MILLING  
AROUND, DRINKING, EATING, CHATTING.  
MANY OF THEM ARE STUDENTS.

FRANCIS IS DOWNSTAGE LOOKING OUT OF THE  
LARGE WINDOW IN FRONT OF HIM (IE  
LOOKING OUT TO THE AUDIENCE).  
CHRISTINA APPROACHES.

CHRISTINA: Francis.

FRANCIS: Alright.

CHRISTINA: How are you?

FRANCIS: Okay, I suppose.

CHRISTINA: It was a lovely service, wasn't it?

FRANCIS: Suppose so.

CHRISTINA: Really fitting. I've never known anyone with  
Claire's faith. She was more than religious. She  
was *spiritual*. A really beautiful person. (A  
MOMENT) We all think you're being really brave,  
Francis. It must be the worst feeling in the  
world, losing your twin sister. Everyone is behind  
you, you know that?

FRANCIS: Thanks.

CHRISTINA: Come over and join us when you're ready.

HE POINTS OUT OF THE WINDOW.

FRANCIS: You see those woods there? That's where me and  
Claire used to play when we were little. Hide and  
seek. We used to have a right laugh.

CHRISTINA: Oh, I almost forgot. The school secretary asked me  
to pass this on to you.

OUT OF HER BAG, SHE PULLS OUT A  
BEAUTIFUL WOODEN SCULPTURE OF A FAMILY  
WORKING TOGETHER.

FRANCIS: What is it?

CHRISTINA: It's a gift. From Garai... you know, the head of the Imenti tribe in Garrissa? It's a memorial to Claire.

SHE HANDS IT TO HIM.

FRANCIS: It's beautiful.

CHRISTINA: I reckon a master craftsman did that.

FRANCIS: You reckon?

CHRISTINA: There's an inscription on it in Swahili. I looked up the translation. It says, "God is in the land, the sea and the air we breathe. He is with us. Always."

FRANCIS: (UNDERLYING BITTERNESS) Yeh, well, he wasn't with Claire when she died, was he?

A PAUSE.

CHRISTINA: I'll leave you alone, Francis. Come and join us when you're ready.

CHRISTINA LEAVES HIM.

THE FOCUS SHIFTS TO ANOTHER PART OF THE RECEPTION. ONE OF THE WAITRESSES, **SHELLEY MILTON**, IS CARRYING A TRAY OF FOOD AROUND. SHE PASSES JJ.

SHELLEY: Vol au vont?

JJ: Sorry, what?

SHELLEY: Vol au vont?

JJ: Nice one, cheers.

SHELLEY: Oh my God, is it Jason?

JJ: (THINKS HE HAS BEEN RECOGNISED) That's right, yeh.

SHELLEY: Jason Jackson?

JJ: Call me JJ.

SHELLEY: I can't believe it's you! Jason Jackson!

JJ: (DELIGHTED) DJ JJ. Getting down. Do you want a picture?

SHELLEY: Sorry?

JJ: On your mobile?

SHELLEY: (CONFUSED) Why?

JJ: I thought you recognised me.

SHELLEY: I do. From Fratton Street. We used to live next door to each other.

JJ: (EMBARRASSED) That's right, yeh, I remember. Shirley isn't it?

SHELLEY: Shelley.

JJ: Shelley, yeh. I thought you recognised me.

SHELLEY: Are you famous?

JJ: Well, you know, not dead famous but... (BIGGING IT UP) ...DJ JJ is known on the circuit.

SHELLEY: (NOT CONVINCED) Right. What are you doing here?

JJ: Claire Hayes. The one who died. She was my girlfriend.

SHELLEY: I'm so sorry.

JJ: I'm gutted. Can't believe it.

SHELLEY: It's terrible what happened in Kenya.

JJ: I was there. Saw it with my own eyes.

SHELLEY: You must be devastated.

JJ: I am.

SHELLEY: (RUBS HIS ARM) You poor thing.

JJ: Yeah.

CHRISTINA COMES OVER LIKE A SHOT.

CHRISTINA: JJ!

HE QUICKLY STEPS AWAY FROM SHELLEY.

JJ: Alright, Christina. This is Shirley.

SHELLEY: Shelley.

JJ: Shelley. We used to be neighbours. She was just comforting me.

CHRISTINA: (SUSPECT) So I see.

JJ: (TO SHELLEY) This is Christina, Claire's bezzy mate.

SHELLEY: Vol au vont?

CHRISTINA: (CATTY) No thanks.

SHELLEY: But it's low-fat pastry.

CHRISTINA: What are you implying?!

SHELLEY: Sorry. (TO JJ) Best get back to the kitchen.

SHELLEY STARTS TO LEAVE.

JJ: Here... (HE GIVES HER HIS CARD) ...in case you need DJ JJ to do a party for you or summat.

SHELLEY: Thanks.

SHE GOES.

CHRISTINA: (DISGUSTED) JJ! Your girlfriend's funeral was only an hour ago!

JJ: I wasn't doing anything!

CHRISTINA: Hmm. I'll be the judge of that.

JJ: (CHANGING THE SUBJECT) How's Francis?

CHRISTINA: He's a bit quiet. I don't think he can quite believe that this is happening.

JJ: None of us can.

CHRISTINA: It's weird isn't it? The hardest thing is knowing that we'll never know the truth of what happened. Why wasn't she in the camp when the storms hit?

JJ: Erm... dunno.

CHRISTINA: That was a rhetorical question.

JJ: (DEFENSIVE) I know.

CHRISTINA: I just wish I could have done something.

JJ: What could you have done?

CHRISTINA: I was her best friend.

JJ: I was her *boyfriend*.

CHRISTINA: Then we *both* should have done something more.

JJ: Like what?

CHRISTINA: I dunno. Something. Anything. It shouldn't have happened, JJ.

JJ: But there's nothing we could have done about it, Christina. *Nothing*.

PAUSE. CHRISTINA IS NOT CONVINCED.

FRANCIS COMES OVER.

FRANCIS: Hiya.

CHRISTINA: Hiya, Francis.

JJ: Alright, mate.

FRANCIS: Having a good party?

JJ: (ENTHUSIASTIC) Yeh, brilliant, thanks!

CHRISTINA DIGS HIM.

JJ: I mean, NO. I mean... erm... (CHANGING THE SUBJECT) We were just talking, weren't we, Christina? About why Claire wasn't with us when the storms hit. It's a mystery that, innit Francis?

FRANCIS: (DEFENSIVE) Well, I don't know why, do I?

CHRISTINA: I don't think now is the best time to talk about this, Jason.

JJ: Sorry.

CHRISTINA: Have you seen Francis' statue? It's from the Imenti tribe.

JJ: (IMPRESSED) Wow, it's top.

CHRISTINA: The inscription says "*God is in the land, the sea and the air we breathe. He is with us. Always.*" Claire would have loved it.

FRANCIS: (GIVING IT TO HER) Here.

CHRISTINA: What?

FRANCIS: You have it. I don't want it.

CHRISTINA: But they gave it to you.

FRANCIS: And I'm giving it to you. It doesn't mean anything to me.

CHRISTINA: Francis, I-

FRANCIS: (CUTS HER OFF) I've got other people to see. I'll catch you later.

FRANCIS GOES OFF. CHRISTINA IS GOB-SMACKED. SHE TURNS TO JJ.

CHRISTINA: What do you think?

JJ: I think... (HE THINKS) ...I think you could make a ton with that on Ebay.

CHRISTINA: (SCOLDING) Jason!!!

MUSIC.

SCENE THREE - FRANCIS' LETTER #1

FRANCIS SPEAKS HIS LETTER.

FRANCIS: Dear Garai. Thank you for the gift you sent us as a memorial to my sister, Claire. My friends and family were very touched by the gesture. I heard that you also lost your father in this disaster, as well as your home and your crops. It means so much to us that you have thought of us in this way. I hope we will keep in touch.

Yours sincerely. Francis Hayes.

P.S. I noticed that your return address is in Garrissa. I don't understand why you are still living there. Surely there are safer places to live. By all accounts, you will experience this kind of devastation again. Why don't you just leave?

Best wishes, Francis.

MUSIC.

SCENE FOUR - 6<sup>TH</sup> FORM BLOCK

**CAPTION ON SCREEN:**

**"TWO MONTHS LATER"**

JJ IS LISTENING TO HIS IPOD IN A WORLD OF HIS OWN. FRANCIS BOUNCES IN, IN A GOOD MOOD.

JJ:                    Alright, Francis.

FRANCIS:            What is DJ JJ doing three weeks on Friday?

JJ:                    Who wants to know?

FRANCIS:            Yours truly.

JJ:                    (EXCITED) You having a party?

FRANCIS:            Dad's just told me.

JJ:                    Nice one.

FRANCIS:            Eighteenth birthday prezzie. I want you to DJ.

JJ:                    Nice one!

FRANCIS:            Will you do it?

JJ:                    (NERVOUS) Three weeks on Friday?

PAUSE.

FRANCIS:            What is it?

JJ:                    (QUIETLY) Listen, Fra. You know I've got, like, business cards, and equipment, and everything? Well... promise you won't tell anyone this but... I've never actually gigged before.

FRANCIS:            You have.

JJ:                    I haven't.

FRANCIS:            You have.

JJ:                    I haven't. I've almost gigged. Once.

FRANCIS:            What happened?

JJ:                    Turns out it was a practical joke. I don't want to mess up your eighteenth, mate.

FRANCIS: You won't mess it up. I want to DJ.

JJ: Really?

FRANCIS: Really.

JJ: Ah mate. Nice one. Yes!

THEY DO A RITUAL SHAKING OF HANDS.

CHRISTINA ENTERS AND STARTS PUTTING OUT  
POSTERS/FLYERS AROUND THE SIXTH FORM  
SOCIAL AREA.

CHRISTINA: Morning you two.

FRANCIS: Morning. What are you up to?

CHRISTINA: A new campaign.

SHE HANDS FLYERS TO FRANCIS AND JJ.

JJ: (SUSPICIOUS) What kind of campaign?

CHRISTINA: Climate change.

JJ: Climate change?

CHRISTINA: You said that there was nothing we could have done to change what happened to Claire. Well, nah-nah, you were wrong.

JJ: Alright then, smarty-pants, what could we have done?

CHRISTINA: Come to the meeting and you'll find out.

JJ: I don't want to join in a campaign.

CHRISTINA: But this is for Claire.

JJ: Last year, the whole school spent months and months raising money so we could go over there and build a school and what happened to it? It ended up floating down a river.

CHRISTINA: Exactly! That's why we need to do more. Isn't that right, Francis?

FRANCIS: Climate change had nothing to do with what happened to Claire. It was an accident. An act of God.

JJ: (TO CLAIRE) So, nah-nah, you're wrong.

CHRISTINA: Events like this are happening all over the world.

FRANCIS: They always have and they always will.

CHRISTINA: That's not the point. It's getting worse. And its our lifestyles that are causing it.

JJ: What do you mean, 'our lifestyles'? I didn't cause the flood. I was there up to my neck in crap trying to help out!

CHRISTINA: And what good did that do? What good did any us do? We went to Kenya thinking we could 'help'. In the end it was us that needed the help to get out of there. We would have made more of a difference staying home and doing other stuff like Claire used to do.

FRANCIS: Christina, what on earth are you talking about?

CHRISTINA: Don't you remember when your Dad took the three of us up to Edinburgh for the Make Poverty History rally? It was huge. *And* it made a difference. The government took notice of us. Claire understood that to make *real* change, you've got to be political.

FRANCIS: She wasn't political, she was religious. She just wanted the world to be a better place.

CHRISTINA: Er, hello? Isn't that being political?

FRANCIS: No, it's religious.

CHRISTINA: Well, Claire always used to say that Jesus was political.

FRANCIS: (SARCASTIC) What? Floating around in his shiny white gown saying "be nice to everyone..."? Yeah, right.

CHRISTINA: Look at this. (SHE PULLS OUT A POSTCARD AND GIVES IT TO JJ) Claire gave me this postcard a few weeks before she died. (TO JJ) Read what it says.

JJ: "Whatever you do to the least of my sisters and brothers, you do to me, Mathew Chapter 25".

CHRISTINA: That's what Jesus said. It's a call to action. We have a duty to help the poorest people out of their poverty.

FRANCIS: I don't have a duty to anyone.

CHRISTINA: Come on, Francis, how can you say that after what we saw in Kenya? Their crops are ruined. The land can't be planted on until next year. Homes are destroyed, the roads are washed away.

FRANCIS: There's only so much money we can raise, Christina.

CHRISTINA: (EXASPERATED) I wasn't talking about raising money! I was talking about making change through political action!

FRANCIS: Since when did you get so active?

CHRISTINA: I'm doing it for Claire.

FRANCIS: (UNDER HIS BREATH) You're doing it for yourself.

CHRISTINA: What do you mean by that?

FRANCIS: You're not the only one who lost Claire. She was his girlfriend. She was *my sister*. You've not got a monopoly on grief.

CHRISTINA: That's not what this is about.

FRANCIS: Isn't it?

CHRISTINA: It's what Claire would have done.

FRANCIS: How do you know?

CHRISTINA: She saw it as her duty to God.

FRANCIS: (SHOUTING) Will you stop going on about God all of the time!

PAUSE. TENSION IN THE AIR. AFTER A FEW MOMENTS, JJ SPEAKS:

JJ: (PROFOUND) You know... I've just realised... God is dog spelt backwards.

PAUSE. THEY LOOK AT JJ, LOST FOR WORDS.

CHRISTINA PULLS AN ENVELOPE OUT OF HER BAG.

CHRISTINA: I forgot to give you this.

SHE HANDS IT TO FRANCIS.

JJ: What is it?

CHRISTINA: It's a letter from-

FRANCIS: (CUTTING HER OFF) It's none of your business.

JJ: Sorr-ee.

CHRISTINA PUTS THE REST OF THE FLYERS  
OUT. THERE IS STILL TENSION IN THE  
AIR.

CHRISTINA: I'm hoping to get a team of eight or ten people  
together to lobby our MP. This December, the  
United Nations meet in Copenhagen to decide what  
they're going to do about climate change. Some  
people say it is 'the most important meeting in  
history'. If we lobby our MP's, they can lobby the  
Prime Minister and he can lobby the United Nations.  
Simple as that. I hope you can both make it.

FRANCIS: Sorry. Can't.

CHRISTINA: JJ?

JJ: (AWKWARD) Actually, I can't either.

CHRISTINA: Why not?

JJ: I'm ... I'm meeting someone.

CHRISTINA: Meeting who?

JJ: A mate.

CHRISTINA: You haven't got any mates.

JJ: Well... actually, it's not a mate. It's a date.

CHRISTINA: (APPALLED) A date!? Who with!?

AT THAT MOMENT, SHELLEY BOUNCES THROUGH  
THE DOOR.

SHELLEY: Hiya JJ!

JJ: (AWKWARD) Do you remember Shirley?

SHELLEY: Shelley.

JJ: Sorry. Shelley.

CHRISTINA STANDS THERE OPEN-MOUTHED.  
FRANCIS IS AMUSED. JJ FEELS AWKWARD.  
SHELLEY BEAMS AT THEM.

SHELLEY:       Hiya!

MUSIC.

SCENE FIVE - GARAI'S LETTER #1

FRANCIS OPENS AND READS THE LETTER HE HAS RECEIVED. WE HEAR GARAI'S VOICE IN VOICE-OVER (VO).

GARAI: (VO) Dear Francis. Thank you for writing. I appreciate your concern for us.

I once thought like you, Francis. That there were safer, better places to live Francis. Perhaps there are, but not for me.

When I was a young man, I left Garrissa. I was angry at many people for the poverty I was enduring. So like many others, I took my young family to Nairobi with the promise of wealth and a bright future. It didn't happen. At night I would silently cry myself to sleep for what I had done to my children. It was not home. We had lost our sense of home.

I tell you what I did then Francis, I came back to the place that was important to me, to my family. To the place that I wanted to pass onto my children. Yes, Francis, its not easy here, but this land was passed down to me from my ancestors. It's a gift, a gift from God. In the rocks, in the plants, in the soil and in the river is the gift of the Spirit, the Spirit of the Creator. It is our absolute duty to live with and protect that Creation.

In any case, where would we go? England? We could never move there for one very simple reason. The Kenyan football team is much better than yours these days. We are now ranked one-hundred-and-ten in the world!

Yours,

Garai.

FRANCIS FOLDS THE LETTER AND PUTS IT IN HIS POCKET. HE IS DEEP IN THOUGHT.

MUSIC.

SCENE SIX - JJ'S CAR

JJ AND SHELLEY ARE ON THEIR DATE. THEY ARE SAT IN JJ'S CAR PARKED ON TOP OF A HILL OVERLOOKING THE TOWN. THIS IS ALL PART OF JJ'S PLAN TO SNOG SHELLEY. SHELLEY IS OBLIVIOUS AND JUST KEEP CHATTING.

SHELLEY: Now, I have Venus *and* Mars in Capricorn. Mars means I like to be in charge, and Venus means I'm witty. Quite a potent mix, eh?

JJ: (NOT LISTENING) Oh yeh.

SHELLEY: What have you got rising?

JJ: Sorry, what?

SHELLEY: Star sign?

JJ: Oh. No idea.

SHELLEY: That's a shame. I'd like to know if we're compatible before getting involved.

JJ: (TRYING IT ON) Oh, I think we're compatible.

SHELLEY: You might think so but if the stars don't match there's no point going forward, babe.

JJ: Speaking of stars... (HE STRETCHES HIS ARM AROUND THE BACK OF SHELLEY'S CHAIR, TRYING IT ON) ... if you look dead closely up there, you can see Pegasus.

SHELLEY: (FASCINATED) Really?

JJ: Really.

SHELLEY: Wow.

THEY ARE NOW CLOSE.

JJ: You smell nice.

SHELLEY: Thanks. So do you.

JJ: Thanks. You've got nice eyes.

SHELLEY: Thanks. So have you.

JJ GOES IN FOR THE KISS. SHELLEY SUDDENLY PULLS AWAY.

SHELLEY: How big's your carbon footprint?

JJ: (HE THINKS IT'S A COME ON) Very big.

SHELLEY: I will only ever get involved with boys who know how big their carbon footprint is.

JJ: (EXASPERATED) Are you serious?

SHELLEY: Deadly.

JJ: I'm getting it from all sides today. Christina was banging on before about climate change.

SHELLEY: (INTERESTED) Really?

JJ: She's starting up some global warming campaign.

SHELLEY: (REALLY INTERESTED) Really?! I would love to be a part of that.

JJ: Can we stop talking about this?

SHELLEY: No! What size engine is your car?

JJ: (BOASTING) Two point nought litre, S.R.I., turbo petrol engine.

SHELLEY: That is huge.

JJ: (PROUD) I know.

SHELLEY: Do you know what you're doing to the environment?

JJ: Why is everyone going on about the environment these days?

SHELLEY: When I was twelve, I saw this documentary on the telly, and it said that in a thousand years time, London would be *gone*. Completely underwater.

JJ: Sounds brilliant.

SHELLEY HITS HIM.

JJ: Ow.

SHELLEY: What we do now has a massive impact on the future of the world. Did you know that if you turned down the thermostat in your home by one degree you'd cut all of your heating bills by ten percent?

JJ: I don't know where the thermostat is. In fact, I don't even know *what* a thermostat is.

SHELLEY: What temperature do you wash your clothes at?

JJ: My mum does the washing.

SHELLEY: Well if you tell her to turn it down to thirty degrees she'll use forty percent less energy.

JJ: Why are you so interested in all of this environmental stuff?

SHELLEY: I'm a humanist. It's important.

JJ: Well, I'm a Catholic. I don't give a stuff.

SHELLEY: You should be ashamed of yourself.

JJ: (DESPERATE) Ah, give us a snog.

SHELLEY: No! I've told you. I only get involved with boys who care about the environment.

JJ: I'll change.

SHELLEY: Will you?

JJ: Yeah.

SHELLEY: Promise?

JJ: I promise.

SHELLEY: How?

JJ: (THINKING OFF THE TOP OF HIS HEAD) I'll... I'll... I'll sell my car!

SHELLEY: Will you!?

JJ: Yeah!

SHELLEY: That's amazing.

JJ: So can I have a kiss?

SHELLEY: No! When you sell it, let me know.

THERE'S NO WAY HE'S GOING TO GET ANY ACTION TONIGHT. JJ GIVES UP.

MUSIC.

SCENE SEVEN - FRANCIS' LETTER #2

FRANCIS SPEAKS HIS LETTER. HE IS  
UNSETTLED, AGITATED.

FRANCIS: Garai. I don't see the world like you do. I wish I did. But what I saw out there in Kenya was mother nature at her angriest. I don't see the gift in that. And here in Manchester, all I see is roads and motorways, houses and office blocks. Where is God in all of this?!

My friend says that disasters like this are only going to happen more often with climate change. She says we have a responsibility to do something about it. But what can I do to make a difference? What can any of us do?

MUSIC.

SCENE EIGHT - FRANCIS' 18<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY

**CAPTION ON SCREEN:**

**"ONE MONTH LATER"**

SOUND FX: PARTY MUSIC

EVERYONE IS AT FRANCIS' 18<sup>TH</sup> PARTY. JJ IS DJ-ING. SHELLEY IS NEARBY LOOKING ON, CHRISTINA IS MILLING AROUND AND FRANCIS IS SURROUNDED BY OTHER MATES, ENJOYING THE ATTENTION.

JJ TURNS THE MUSIC DOWN AND SPEAKS ON THE MICROPHONE.

JJ: Okay, house, can I have a bit of quiet please? It's time for the birthday boy himself to say a few words. So please show your immense, unbridled, deep-seated appreciation for the one... the only... Francis "I-can-buy-booze-cos-I'm-over-eighteen-so-the-next-round-is-on-me" Haaaaaayes!!!

BIG CHEERS FOR FRANCIS AS HE TAKES TO THE STAGE. HE TAKES THE MIC.

FRANCIS: (A BIT SHY) Thanks, everyone. I'm dead pleased that you were all able to make it tonight. There's so many people to thank. As you know... (HE FALTERS) ...the last three months have been pretty awful and I wouldn't have got through them without all of you. Me and Claire had been planning our eighteenth for years. Well, I know for a fact that she would have loved being here tonight. You've done her proud. Thanks and have a good night.

BIG CHEERS FOR FRANCIS AS HE STEPS OFF THE STAGE.

JJ IS ABOUT TO CONTINUE DJ-ING BUT THEN CHRISTINA JUMPS ON STAGE AND GRABS THE MIC.

CHRISTINA: Can I just make a quick announcement? Today, I got a call from the office of our MP, Geraldine Kennedy. And she has agreed to meet with us. The best birthday present we could give Claire would be to stand united in our fight against climate change. So can I please ask all of you to join me at the meeting next week, and give Claire the best eighteenth birthday present ever! Thank you!

THE RESPONSE FROM THE CROWD IS NOT EXACTLY ENTHUSIASTIC. JJ TAKES THE MIC BACK.

JJ: Okay, announcements over, lets play some tooooons.

MUSIC STARTS AGAIN.

SHELLEY TRIES TO GRAB JJ'S ATTENTION.

SHELLEY: JJ! JJ!

HE COMES OVER.

JJ: Alright babe.

SHELLEY: (EXCITED) Can we go? Can we go?

JJ: Go where?

SHELLEY: To meet the MP.

JJ: You must be joking.

SHELLEY: Aw, please, please, please, it will be so cool.

JJ: I don't care about stuff like that.

SHELLEY: I thought you said you were going to change?

JJ: I know but... it's difficult to change. And anyway, there's nothing we can that will make any difference.

SHELLEY: That's not true. If we all act together, then change can happen. It's called solidarity.

JJ: I just want to be in solidarity with you, babe.

SHELLEY: Then show you care.

JJ: I do care-

SHELLEY: About other people. I mean it, JJ. That's what makes someone really, really attractive. Trust me. I'm a girl.

JJ THINKS ABOUT IT.

FOCUS SHIFTS TO FRANCIS AND CHRISTINA. IT'S A BIT AWKWARD BETWEEN THEM.

CHRISTINA: Happy birthday, Francis.

SHE KISSES HIM ON THE CHEEK.

FRANCIS: Thanks for my present.

CHRISTINA: Thanks for what you said.

HE SHRUGS.

FRANCIS: Has anyone volunteered to join you next week?

CHRISTINA: (SHAKES HER HEAD) I don't understand. Why won't they support Claire?

FRANCIS: They just want to party, Christina... not have this stuff rammed down their throats.

CHRISTINA: I wasn't ramming it down their throats!

FRANCIS: Well, maybe you should have thought about that before jumping up on stage.

CHRISTINA: Francis, I-

SHE IS LOST FOR WORDS.

FRANCIS: Excuse me.

FRANCIS CHATS TO OTHERS. CHRISTINA STORMS OUT IN A HUFF. SHE PASSES SHELLEY AND JJ.

SHELLEY: Christina! Can I come to the meeting?

CHRISTINA: (STOPPED IN HER TRACKS) What?!

SHELLEY: I think about global warming all of the time, don't I Jase?

JJ: (DEADPAN) All of the time.

CHRISTINA: Sorry, the group is just for Claire's friends.

SHELLEY: Well, JJ's told me so much about Claire.

CHRISTINA: Has he now?

SHELLEY: She sounds very special.

CHRISTINA: She was.

SHELLEY: You must all miss her.

CHRISTINA: (TO JJ, POINTEDLY) Well, some of us do.

JJ: What do you mean by that?

CHRISTINA: Others moved on very quickly, didn't they?

JJ: (TO SHELLEY) Come on, Shelley, we don't have to listen to this.

SHELLEY: I didn't mean to cause trouble. I just really believe in what you're doing.

CHRISTINA: Really believe in what we're doing? What are you trying to do? Take Claire's place?

SHELLEY: No, I-

CHRISTINA: Claire Hayes was the most passionate, articulate, kind-hearted person I have ever known. You're not a patch on her.

JJ: That's enough!

PAUSE.

JJ: Come on, Shelley, let's get out of here.

JJ LEADS SHELLEY AWAY. CHRISTINA IS LEFT ON HER OWN.

MUSIC.

SCENE NINE - A ROAD IN MANCHESTER

THE RAIN IS POURING DOWN.

FRANCIS IS HUDDLED UNDER A SHOP AWNING.  
HE IS WRAPPED UP LOOKING AT THE RAINY  
STREET, INTROVERTED.

SHELLEY IS WALKING ALONG THE STREET  
UNDER AN UMBRELLA. SHE SPOTS FRANCIS  
AND GOES TO HIM.

SHELLEY: Francis! Hiya, Francis. What are you doing here?

FRANCIS: Ah, you know.

SHELLEY: Did you forget your brolly?

FRANCIS SHRUGS.

SHELLEY: (SHE TUTS) We're in Manchester, Francis. You should know that it *always* rains in Manchester. Rule number one... always carry a brolly.

FRANCIS: I'll just wait here 'til it stops.

SHELLEY: You might be here all night. Apparently there is going to be a bit of a downfall. Where are you going?

FRANCIS: Nowhere really.

SHELLEY: Well, why don't you come with me and I'll take you there.

FRANCIS: Thanks, Shelley, but I'm fine, honest.

SHELLEY: Don't be silly. (SHE LINKS HIM) Get under. Let's make a run for it.

FRANCIS: (PULLING AWAY, SNAPPY) I don't like being out in the rain.

SHELLEY: Sorry, Francis.

FRANCIS: (APOLOGETIC) No. I'm sorry.

PAUSE.

SHELLEY: Look. There's a coffee shop just over the road. If we make a run for it, at least we can sit in there and keep warm. What do you think?

FRANCIS THINKS ABOUT IT.

FRANCIS: How fast can you run?

SHELLEY: Dead fast.

PAUSE.

FRANCIS: Come on, then.

FRANCIS LINKS SHELLEY AND THEY RUN FOR  
IT, UNDERNEATH THE UMBRELLA.

MUSIC.

SCENE TEN - 6<sup>TH</sup> FORM BLOCK

CHRISTINA IS IN THE SIXTH FORM BLOCK  
RIFLING THROUGH PAPERS PREPARING FOR  
THE MEETING.

JJ COMES IN, SHEEPISH.

JJ: Christina? Can I have a quick word? In private.

CHRISTINA: Erm... yeah, of course. Everything okay, JJ?

JJ: Yeah. Kind of. Well, no. I've got a bit of a dilemma.

CHRISTINA: That's fine, JJ. You can talk to me. Take your time.

JJ: Right, well, erm, the thing is, erm... I've got a question for you. Christina. Are women attracted to men who care about other people?

CHRISTINA: I'm sorry?

JJ: Women. Are they attracted to men who look after puppies? Or men who help old fogies cross the road? Or... men who care about the environment?

CHRISTINA: Erm... I would say... yes.

JJ: (GETTING UP) Thanks, Christina, you've been a great help.

JJ STARTS TO LEAVE.

CHRISTINA: JJ, are you coming?

JJ: Where?

CHRISTINA: To meet the MP?

JJ: Oh, erm, I would, Christina, but I can't, I've got to do something important.

CHRISTINA: But there's nothing more important than this.

JJ: Trust me. There is.

JJ GOES.

SCENE ELEVEN - A COFFEE SHOP

SHELLEY IS SAT IN THE COFFEE SHOP.  
FRANCIS COMES OVER WITH TWO MUGS OF  
COFFEE.

FRANCIS: So, how's it going with JJ?

SHELLEY: It's not.

FRANCIS: I thought you two were getting on.

SHELLEY: We're just too different.

FRANCIS: Why do you say that?

SHELLEY: Well, I'm passionate about saving the world. And JJ's passionate about... well... himself. And there doesn't seem to be any middle ground between us.

FRANCIS: I wouldn't be so sure. The other day he turned up wearing red socks.

SHELLEY: Red socks?

FRANCIS: Apparently you told him to be environmentally friendly with his washing. So instead of his Mum doing it, he did his washing himself for the first time in his life. Except he didn't know that you're not meant to mix whites and colours.

SHELLEY: Did he really do the washing himself?

FRANCIS: Yeah.

SHELLEY IS CHUFFED

SHELLEY: Anyway, I think it's too soon after... you know... your sister and everything.

FRANCIS: We all have to move on.

SHELLEY: Christina doesn't think so.

FRANCIS: Christina's just trying to come to terms with it in her own way. That's what this campaign thing is all about.

SHELLEY: Meeting the MP! Are you going?

FRANCIS: Nah.

SHELLEY: Oh.

FRANCIS: Are you?

SHELLEY: No. I'd love to. I really would. I've been doing loads of research and everything. But I don't think Christina would really appreciate my presence.

FRANCIS: She doesn't know what she's missing.

THEY SMILE. PAUSE. THEY DRINK COFFEE.

FRANCIS: I hate living here.

SHELLEY: Why?

FRANCIS: It's just so... miserable... and ugly.

SHELLEY: I sometimes feel like that.

FRANCIS: You do?

SHELLEY: Yeah, 'course. But when I do, I have this little thing, like an exercise, that I do. I close my eyes and I try to think positive thoughts. For example, if there's someone I don't like, I close my eyes and I try to think of the good things about that person - everyone has good bits - so, like, I think about that person on Christmas morning and how happy and excited they are and loved by their families, and suddenly I start to think of them in a new light.

FRANCIS: And you can do stuff like that on a rainy day in Manchester?

SHELLEY: Yeah, look.

SHELLEY CLOSES HER EYES. SHE KEEPS THEM SHUT FOR A LONG TIME. FRANCIS FEELS A BIT SELF-CONSCIOUS. SLOWLY THE EXPRESSION ON SHELLEY'S FACE SOFTENS, THEN SHE OPENS HER EYES AND LOOKS AROUND THE COFFEE SHOP.

FRANCIS: What can you see?

SHELLEY: I can see... I can see busy people... people trying their best to do everything and please everyone... I can see a bird... see, out of the window, on top of that building?

FRANCIS: Oh yeah. I'd never have noticed that.

SHELLEY: I can see a baby, in a pram! There's another one!  
And I can see rain. Lots of rain. But it's not  
horrible rain. It's nice rain.

A MOMENT.

SHELLEY: You try it.

FRANCIS: Me!?

SHELLEY: Yeah.

FRANCIS: Nah.

PAUSE.

FRANCIS: You and Claire. You're not that different, you  
know.

SHELLEY: Why?

FRANCIS: They way you see things. It's nice. (A MOMENT)  
The day she died. I was the last person who spoke  
to her, you know. She said... (PAUSE) Ah, I don't  
wanna talk about this.

SHELLEY: That's okay.

PAUSE.

FRANCIS: You won't tell anyone, will you? About me being  
scared of the rain?

SHELLEY: Cross my heart and hope to die.

FRANCIS: Thanks.

PAUSE.

FRANCIS: I think you should go.

SHELLEY: Where?

FRANCIS: To the meeting. With Christina and the MP.

SHELLEY: She doesn't want me there.

FRANCIS: Well, she might not want you. But she needs you.

SHELLEY: Do you think?

FRANCIS: Yeah, Shelley. I do.

SCENE TWELVE - GARAI'S LETTER #2

FRANCIS IS ALONE READING THE LETTER.

GARAI: (VO) Francis, here in Kenya, we know that the weather is changing. We have seen many more droughts and floods in recent years, and sometimes this doesn't seem fair. But this is our home. And my children's lives depend on me protecting it.

The earth was not given to me by my parents. It was loaned to me by my children. It saddens me to think that people destroy the world, and steal its riches for personal gain. Do they not realise that they are stealing from their children?

I will let you into a secret. When I need to be reminded of the beauty of Creation, I go to a quiet spot near the river where I used to play as a child. It is surrounded by trees and hidden away. There, I can be alone, except I am not alone. I am in the presence of greatness.

Surely, even in the way that you describe Manchester, you can find a place of greatness like that. And I'm not talking about Old Trafford.

Francis, find such a place. Look deep within yourself. You might understand that it was a gift from the Creator God.

SCENE THIRTEEN - CONSTITUENCY OFFICE  
RECEPTION

CHRISTINA IS WAITING IN THE RECEPTION  
AREA ALONE. NO ONE ELSE HAS TURNED UP  
TO MEET THE MP WITH HER. SHE FEELS  
AWFUL. SUDDENLY SHELLEY BURSTS IN.

CHRISTINA: What are you doing here?

SHELLEY: Giving you my support.

CHRISTINA: I'll be fine on my own.

SHELLEY: (SAD) You want me to go?

CHRISTINA DOESN'T SAY YES, SHE DOESN'T  
SAY NO, SHE JUST LOOKS AWAY.

SHELLEY: I get the message.

SHELLEY TURNS AROUND AND STARTS TO  
LEAVE. THE SHE STOPS AND TURNS BACK.

SHELLEY: You do know, don't you, not to bring religion in to  
it?

CHRISTINA: What?

SHELLEY: Geraldine Kennedy firmly believes that religion and  
politics should never mix. If you mention God  
she'll wipe the floor with you.

CHRISTINA: (TIGHT-LIPPED) No. I didn't know that.

SHELLEY: And did you know that she was absent from the  
Climate Change Act vote last year?

CHRISTINA: How do you know all of this?

SHELLEY PULLS OUT A FILE FROM HER BAG.

SHELLEY: I did some research. Internet.

CHRISTINA: Why?

SHELLEY: Just in case you said yes.

CHRISTINA: Where's JJ?

SHELLEY: He doesn't care about the environment.

CHRISTINA:       And you do?

SHELLEY:         Passionately.

MUSIC.

SCENE FOURTEEN

JJ IS ON HIS MOBILE, THE COPY OF 'LOOT'  
IN HAND.

JJ: Hello. Yes, I'd like to place an advert please.  
For a car.

A MOMENT.

(THIS IS DIFFICULT FOR HIM) It's a Red. Peugeot.  
Three O Six. Two point nought litre. S.R.I.  
Turbo. Petrol. Engine. One two nine five or  
nearest offer.

A MOMENT.

No, there's nothing wrong with it, mate.

A MOMENT.

Why am I selling it? 'Cos... 'cos... 'cos I've seen  
things, mate. I've seen the effect it can have.

A MOMENT.

No, not pulling birds, the effect on the  
environment! You see, mate, me and you, we don't  
normally see the effect that our decisions have on  
others, or when we do we ignore it. Well, I've  
seen death mate, and it's not nice.

A MOMENT.

How big's your carbon footprint?

A MOMENT.

No, I'm not being funny, mate.

A MOMENT.

I don't know mine either. But I tell you what, I  
reckon it's dead important to find out.

A MOMENT.

Yeh, mate, yeh. I reckon we can have a massive  
impact on the world, you know. Enormous.

A MOMENT.

Jason. Jason Jackson. What's your name?

A MOMENT.

Hello Bob. It's good to talk, Bob.

MUSIC.

SCENE FIFTEEN - THE CONSTITUENCY OFFICE

CHRISTINA AND SHELLEY ARE SAT AT A DESK WAITING. **GERALDINE KENNEDY MP** BURSTS INTO THE OFFICE. SHE HAS AN EFFICIENT, BUSINESS-LIKE PRESENCE.

GERALDINE: Ladies, please accept my sincere apologies. Did my secretary explain...? I've been called to London.

CHRISTINA: Yeah, yes she did.

GERALDINE: We only have five minutes. So, let's get to business. Your letters, Miss O'Keefe... all seventeen of them... were somewhat persuasive. I was sorry to hear the news about your friend. Claire Hayes?

CHRISTINA: That's right.

GERALDINE: Well here you are and here I am. So what can I do for you?

CHRISTINA: It's about Claire. Well... it's about the circumstances surrounding her death.

GERALDINE: In Kenya?

CHRISTINA: Yeah. Disasters like this are happening more and more frequently. But we can do something to prevent them.

GERALDINE: I see.

CHRISTINA: The climate is changing. And it's affected by the decisions we make right here, right now. So we need to act. We need to make dramatic changes to the way we live our lives and the way we run our world. If we don't, more and more people will continue to die.

SHELLEY: And she's been there! She's seen what it's like!  
(A BEAT) I'm Shelley by the way.

GERALDINE SMILES FAINTLY. HER PHONE BUZZES. SHE ANSWERS IT.

GERALDINE: (ON THE PHONE) Hi Jill. I'll be there shortly.

SHE PUTS THE PHONE DOWN.

GERALDINE: Please... continue.

CHRISTINA: (DEEP BREATH) The effects of climate change hit the poor first and hit them hardest. In Kenya, we saw people living in very poor housing. They were malnourished and had very little income. If they survived the floods, how are they going to survive losing their homes, their crops, their water supply? If our consumption levels caused the Co2 which resulted in these disasters, then surely we've got a duty to help them out when they happen.

SHELLEY: I mean it's not like we don't have the money.

CHRISTINA: This is happening now. The World Health Organisation says that... says...

CHRISTINA CAN'T REMEMBER THE FIGURE.  
SHELLEY WHISPERS IT TO HER.

SHELLEY: (QUIETLY) 150,000...

CHRISTINA: ... 150,000 people already die every year as a direct result of climate change. If we don't take action *now* the damage will be irreversible.

GERALDINE: (IMPRESSED) You've obviously researched your subject, ladies. And as you will know, the Climate Change Act that was passed last year is one of the most progressive in the world. Surely you must see that we've done everything we can, there is nothing more that we can do.

CHRISTINA & SHELLEY: (TOGETHER) But there is!

PAUSE.

CHRISTINA: Copenhagen. December.

SHELLEY: The most important meeting in history!

CHRISTINA: The United Nations will decide on global action on climate change and someone has to step up to the plate.

GERALDINE: Our Department of Energy and Climate Change are taking the lead on this. Ed Milliband and the Prime Minister will do their utmost to enable international movement.

SHELLEY: So is that it?!

GERALDINE: I'm sorry?

SHELLEY: Well, it seems to me that you're saying, "don't worry, girls, the adults will sort out this climate change rubbish, chill out". That's what happened last year in that place with a funny name...

CHRISTINA: Poznan.

SHELLEY: Poznan, yeah. No one took it by the scruff of the neck. No one led the leaders.

CHRISTINA: But it's not too late.

SHELLEY: We Brits. We can stand up and be counted. We can lead the EU and the EU can lead the world. Come on, Britain! (A BEAT) Sorry.

GERALDINE'S PHONE BUZZES. SHE ANSWERS.

GERALDINE: (ON THE PHONE) Okay, Jill, I'm on my way.

SHE PUTS THE PHONE DOWN.

GERALDINE: Christina. You've been through a lot. In Kenya. You have my sympathy. But you have to recognise that we did our bit last year with the Climate Change Act.

SHELLEY: Is that right, *Miss Kennedy*? Well, as it happens, I have proof right here in my hand that you didn't even bother to turn up to vote.

A MOMENT.

GERALDINE: You're right. I didn't vote.

SHELLEY: On holiday, were you?

GERALDINE: I take my voting right very seriously. But I have to prioritise. On that day, at the time of the vote, I was meeting a mother whose son had just been the victim of a horrific knife crime. You see, I need to balance different concerns. There are big businesses in my constituency and they say that the kind of reductions you're talking about will mean job losses. I must serve the interests of my constituents and the people of the UK.

CHRISTINA: But we are your constituents.

SHELLEY: And I'll be able to vote next year.

GERALDINE: Okay. So what do you think I can do to help?

CHRISTINA: It's simple. Me and Shelley put pressure on you. And you put pressure on Ed Milliband.

SHELLEY: Milly puts pressure on the Prime Minister...

CHRISTINA: ...And the Prime Minister heads up the EU. Then the EU takes the lead in the negotiations.

SHELLEY: So me. Christina. You. We're all sat around one huge table saving the planet.

GERALDINE'S PHONE BUZZES AGAIN. SHE DOESN'T ANSWER.

GERALDINE: I'm afraid that's all we have time for.

CHRISTINA: Does that mean you're not going to take this any further?

GERALDINE SMILES SYMPATHETICALLY.

GERALDINE: I really must go.

THEY START TO LEAVE.

GERALDINE: I don't see many young people coming through the door with your passion. It's encouraging.

AS THEY ARE ABOUT TO EXIT, CHRISTINA STOPS AND TURNS BACK TO GERALDINE.

CHRISTINA: Do you like art, Ms Kennedy?

GERALDINE: Art? Well, yes.

CHRISTINA: What do you think of this?

SHE PULLS OUT OF HER BAG THE WOODEN STATUE THAT FRANCIS GAVE HER AND PLACES IT ON GERALDINE'S DESK.

GERALDINE: What is it?

CHRISTINA: It's a statue. From Kenya.

GERALDINE IS IMPRESSED BY THE STATUE.

GERALDINE: (TO HERSELF) Impressive.

CHRISTINA: It has been sculpted by a master carver. It was a gift to a friend of mine. He gave it to me.

GERALDINE: It's... it's beautiful.

CHRISTINA TAKES THE STATUE AND HANDS IT  
TO SHELLEY.

CHRISTINA: Shelley. Smash it.

SHELLEY: What?

GERALDINE: What?

CHRISTINA: I want you to break it.

SHELLEY: Are you serious?

CHRISTINA: Yes.

SHELLEY: No.

CHRISTINA: Yes.

SHELLEY: No.

CHRISTINA: Yes! Here... if you whack it on the edge of the desk  
right there, that should do the job.

SHELLEY: No!

CHRISTINA: Okay, I'll do it,

CHRISTINA RAISES THE STATUE HIGH ABOVE  
HER HEAD. SHE IS GOING TO DO IT.

GERALDINE: Stop!

CHRISTINA: What?

GERALDINE: Don't break it!

CHRISTINA: Why not?

GERALDINE: It's... well, it's so beautiful.

CHRISTINA: (FLIPPANT) Oh, we can get another. (COUNTS AGAIN)  
One... two-

GERALDINE: No! No, you can't get another. It's been hand  
carved. It's unique. I won't allow it to happen,  
once it's broken you can't put it back together.

GERALDINE TAKES THE STATUE FROM  
SHELLEY'S HANDS AND CAREFULLY PLACES IT  
ON HER DESK.

CHRISTINA: Fair enough. Let's go, Shelley.

CHRISTINA, AND A VERY RELIEVED SHELLEY,  
START TO LEAVE.

GERALDINE: Excuse me, haven't you forgotten something?

SHE INDICATES THE STATUE.

CHRISTINA: You have it.

GERALDINE: (DUMBFOUNDED) What?

CHRISTINA: It was a gift. A gift from the craftsman to my friend. He gave it to me. Now I'm giving it to you.

GERALDINE: What am I supposed to do with it?

CHRISTINA: Well, it's yours now. You decide.

CHRISTINA AND SHELLEY LEAVE. AS THEY  
GO, SHELLEY STOPS AND SAYS TO  
CHRISTINA:

SHELLEY: I thought I told you not to talk about God.

CHRISTINA: Do you think she noticed?

SHELLEY: (SMILING) Nah.

THEY LAUGH AND GO.

LIGHTS CHANGE.

SCENE SIXTEEN - THE WOODLAND

FRANCIS IS IN THE WOODLAND, ALONE.  
THERE IS SO MUCH GOING ON IN HIS HEAD  
AND IN HIS HEART. HE LOOKS AROUND,  
TAKING IN THE SPACE.

FRANCIS TAKES A DEEP BREATH AND CLOSES  
HIS EYES. WE HEAR ECHOES OF GARAI'S  
LETTER:

GARAI: *(VO) Francis, find such a place. Look deep within  
yourself. You might understand that it was a gift  
from the Creator God.*

MEMORIES START FLOODING BACK TO  
FRANCIS.

MUSIC (CONTINUES THROUGHOUT THE SCENE)

CLAIRE EMERGES ON THE HIGHEST PLINTH.  
SHE CLOSES HER EYES AND COVERS HER  
FACE. SHE IS SEVEN-YEARS-OLD. SHE  
STARTS SPEAKING:

CLAIRE: Ten... nine... eight...

FRANCIS ALSO BECOMES SEVEN-YEARS-OLD.  
THIS IS HIS MEMORY.

HE RUNS AROUND THE WOODLAND, GIGGLING,  
FRANTICALLY LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO  
HIDE.

CLAIRE: ...seven... six... five... four... three... two... one! Come  
out, come out, wherever you are!

CLAIRE OPENS HER EYES. FRANCIS IS  
HIDING, DEADLY STILL. CLAIRE REMAINS  
ON THE PLINTH BUT SHE SPEAKS HER LINES  
AS IF SHE IS WITH FRANCIS IN THE WOODS.

CLAIRE: Fraaancis? Oh Fraaancis? Come out, come out  
wherever you are! (SHE RUNS TO ONE AREA OF THE  
WOODS) Are you HERE? (HE ISN'T) Or HERE? (HE  
ISN'T. BUT THEN...) Got you!

FRANCIS: Aw, that's not fair!

CLAIRE: I win, I win, I win!

FRANCIS: My turn. (HE CLOSES HIS EYES) One, two, three,  
four-

CLAIRE SCREAMS. FRANCIS RUNS OVER.

FRANCIS: What is it?

CLAIRE: A rat!

FRANCIS: Where?

CLAIRE: There. On the tree. Look!

FRANCIS: That's not a rat. It's a squiggle.

CLAIRE: What's a squiggle?

FRANCIS: A rat with a bushy tail. They live inside trees.

CLAIRE: Really?

FRANCIS: They live with the birds and the badgers and the Ewoks.

CLAIRE: Really!?

FRANCIS: Yeah.

CLAIRE: How do you know?

FRANCIS: Cos I'm older than you.

CLAIRE: We're the same age.

FRANCIS: Mum said I came out of her belly first. That means I'm older than you.

CLAIRE: Well, I'm cleverer than you.

FRANCIS: No you're not.

CLAIRE: Yes I am.

FRANCIS: No you're not.

CLAIRE: Yes I am. I'm good at adding up.

FRANCIS: Prove it.

CLAIRE: I can count how many trees are here.

FRANCIS: How many?

CLAIRE: (SHE COUNTS) Three hundred and twenty seven thousand.

FRANCIS: No there's not.

CLAIRE: Yes there is, I counted them.

FRANCIS: Ah, this is boring, I want to carry on playing.  
(CLOSES HIS EYES) Ten, nine-

CLAIRE: Francis?

FRANCIS: What?

CLAIRE: Can we play here every day?

FRANCIS: Why?

CLAIRE: Cos I love it here. It's the most beautiful place  
in the world. Isn't it?

FRANCIS: (LOOKS OUT AT THE WOODLAND) Nah. It's just a bunch  
of trees. (HE CAN'T SEE THAT IT IS BEAUTIFUL)  
Let's play! (HE CLOSES HIS EYES) Ten... nine... eight...  
seven... six... five... four... three... two... one!

Come out, come out, wherever you are!

FRANCIS OPENS HIS EYES.

FRANCIS: Claire! Claire! Where are you?!

HE CAN'T FIND HER. EVENTUALLY, HE  
REALISES SHE IS NOT THERE. THE MEMORY  
HAS GONE. FRANCIS IS NO LONGER SEVEN-  
YEARS OLD.

GARAI: (VO) *I am in the presence of greatness.*

**MUSIC FADES**

FRANCIS LOOKS AROUND THE WOODLAND, THE  
MEMORY AND THE PLACE ARE RESONATING  
DEEP WITHIN HIM. HE STANDS THERE, IN  
THE PRESENCE OF GREATNESS.

SCENE SEVENTEEN - BECK HILL

CHRISTINA IS STOOD ON TOP OF BECK HILL,  
WRAPPED UP, LOOKING OUT. JJ  
APPROACHES, OUT OF BREATH.

JJ: Christina!

CHRISTINA: JJ! What are you up doing here?

JJ: Got a text off Francis.

CHRISTINA: "Meet me on top of Beck Hill. Two o'clock."

JJ: You got it too?

CHRISTINA: It's a bit weird.

JJ: He's been very weird lately.

CHRISTINA: You're out of breath.

JJ: No car.

CHRISTINA: Front page news. "Jason Jackson spotted without  
The Love Wagon."

JJ: I've sold it.

CHRISTINA: Why?

HE SHRUGS.

CHRISTINA: Er hello? Are you feeling okay?

JJ: (AWKWARD) Christina... I know you don't like Shelley  
very much but... but I do. And I want her to like  
me. So I'm changing.

CHRISTINA: (CAN'T BELIEVE IT) You sold your car? Oh. My.  
God.

FRANCIS APPROACHES THEM.

FRANCIS: Hiya.

CHRISTINA: Hiya!

JJ: Francis!

FRANCIS: Thanks for coming.

CHRISTINA: Everything okay?

HE DOESN'T ANSWER.

CHRISTINA: Francis?

THERE IS A LONG PAUSE. THEY ARE  
WONDERING WHY THEY ARE THERE. SO JJ  
ASKS...

JJ: Er... why are we here, Francis?

FRANCIS: I wanted to see you.

CHRISTINA: You see us every day.

FRANCIS: (LOOKING FOR THE RIGHT WORDS TO SAY) I wanted to...  
well, you know... erm... I just wanted to say... erm...  
Can we sit down for a minute?

THEY SIT DOWN ON THE HILL-TOP.

FRANCIS: They say that you only know who your mates are when  
you go through the bad times. Well, I've been  
through a pretty awful time over the last couple of  
months, and you two have been the best. I  
sometimes forget that you both loved Claire as  
well. I've just taken your support and not given  
anything back.

CHRISTINA: Francis, we don't want anything back.

FRANCIS: (A MOMENT) There's something I've not been honest  
about.

JJ: What?

FRANCIS: (DIFFICULT) The night Claire died. I know why she  
wasn't with us. I know where she was.

CHRISTINA: (EDGY) Where?

CLAIRE SPEAKS, ALTHOUGH THE OTHERS  
CAN'T SEE OR HEAR HER.

CLAIRE: *Francis?*

FRANCIS: She spoke to me an hour before the floods hit.

CLAIRE: *Francis, what are you doing this evening?*

FRANCIS: She wanted me to watch the sunset.

CLAIRE: *There's a storm brewing.*

FRANCIS: An unbelievable electrical storm.

CLAIRE: *This place is so beautiful.*

FRANCIS: She always said that. "This place is so beautiful". She could see beauty in anything.

CLAIRE: *But it's really beautiful here, Francis. I think this is the most amazing place in the world.*

FRANCIS: I didn't want to go with her. I wasn't into that kind of stuff.

CLAIRE: *Just open your eyes. You'll love it.*

FRANCIS: (DIFFICULT) I was... I was always jealous of Claire. The way she could see things I couldn't. So I told her I didn't want to go with her.

CLAIRE: *I'll go on my own.*

FRANCIS: I said if that's what she wanted to do then that was her decision.

CLAIRE: *Right. I will. You have no idea what you're missing, Francis!*

FRANCIS: And that was it. The last time I saw her.

SILENCE.

FRANCIS: (DIFFICULT) I never... I never understood before what it was that Claire saw in the earth. Now I do. She saw... beauty and... life and... greatness.

CHRISTINA: She was at her happiest when she died. You know that, don't you.

FRANCIS NODS. HE IS FULL OF EMOTION.

FRANCIS: Christina, what you're doing is brilliant. The campaign and stuff. I want to be a part of it, if you'll have me.

CHRISTINA: Of course I will.

FRANCIS: I'm sorry. I've been an idiot.

CHRISTINA: Come here.

THEY EMBRACE.

FRANCIS: How did it go with the MP? Did many people turn up?

CHRISTINA: Just one.

FRANCIS: One? Who was that?

SHELLEY APPROACHES FROM A DISTANCE.

SHELLEY: Hiya!!!

CHRISTINA: Shelley!

JJ: Shelley? What are you doing here?!

CHRISTINA: I asked her to come up.

JJ: What? Why?

SHELLEY: (TO CHRISTINA) We're going shopping, aren't we babe?

JJ: (DUMBSTRUCK) Babe?!

FRANCIS: I thought you two didn't get on.

CHRISTINA: We've discovered lots in common.

SHELLEY: We're the best of friends!

CHRISTINA: Shelley is member number two of our action group.

FRANCIS: Well, can I be number three?

CHRISTINA: Certainly.

JJ: And can I be in it too?

SILENCE. THEY ALL LOOK AT JJ - THEY CAN'T BELIEVE IT.

JJ: I want to help.

SHELLEY: Do you?

JJ: Yes.

SHELLEY: Do you really?

JJ: Yes!

SHELLEY: Oh JJ!

SHELLEY CAN'T STOP HERSELF. SHE FLINGS  
HER ARMS AROUND JJ AND KISSES HIM.

FRANCIS: So that makes four members, Christina.  
JJ: Five, actually.  
CHRISTINA: Who's number five?  
JJ: A friend.  
CHRISTINA: What friend?  
JJ: Just someone I was talking to about the campaign.  
CHRISTINA: Does your friend have a name?  
JJ: Er... yeah. It's Bob.  
FRANCIS: Bob? Bob who?  
JJ: Just Bob.

SHELLEY SEES THE VIEW FOR THE FIRST  
TIME.

SHELLEY: WOW! Look at that view!

**MUSIC STARTS**

THEY ARE ALL STRUCK BY THE BEAUTY OF  
THE VIEW. THEY MOVE TO DIFFERENT AREAS  
OF THE HILL FOR THE BEST VANTAGE POINT.

JJ: (AWE) How come I've never seen this view before?  
CHRISTINA: (AWE) The sky's amazing.  
SHELLEY: (AWE) You can see for miles.  
FRANCIS: (AWE) It's beautiful.

A MOMENT.

CHRISTINA: We saw some awful things in Kenya, didn't we?  
JJ: I never want to go through that again.  
SHELLEY: But can we do anything about it? Can we really  
make a difference?

A MOMENT.

FRANCIS: I think... I think we have to try.

FRANCIS, CHRISTINA, JJ AND SHELLEY  
STAND ON THE HILL LOOKING OUT. CLAIRE,  
ON THE HIGHEST PLINTH, ALSO STANDS UP  
AND LOOKS OUT.

THEY ARE FACING THE GREATNESS OF THE  
EARTH, IN AWE.

**MUSIC BUILDS**

**THE END**