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# Through Eve's Eyes

A full length play by Caetlyn McLean

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## Synopsis

Avid gardener Eve Hayford's life is turned upside down when she suffers a brain aneurysm and ends up with Locked-In Syndrome. Now, her eyes are her only way of communicating with her sister Dawn and her carer Nicole.

Unable to attend to her garden, her will to live slowly begins to fade. She eventually finds solace in teaching Dawn and Nicole to appreciate the beauty of her beloved garden and restore it to its former glory.

## Cast

**Eve** – late-30s, avid garden who is struck Lock-In Syndrome.

**Dawn** – her sister, early-40s, workaholic.

**Nicole** – Eve's carer. Nurse in her mid-30s

**Sarah** – Nurse in her mid-30s

**June** – Speech therapist at the hospital

**Doctor**

**Phil** – Dawn's boss (voice-over role only)



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## SCENE 1 – GARDEN/PATIO

*The stage is split into two sections. On one side is a garden, full of flowerbeds and vegetable patches. There is a basket by the vegetable patch.*

*On the other side of the stage is the patio with a table and two chairs upstage. On the table sits two bottles of water. There is a cupboard closest to the wing of the stage. There is an apple tree at the centre of the stage.*

*EVE, in her late-30s, is by a flowerbed, planting flowers. There is a punnet of seedlings beside her.*

*She is patting the seedling into the soil when she starts to get dizzy. Stopping briefly, she blinks and tries to maintain her balance. The feeling soon fades and she resuming her planting.*

*DAWN (EVE's sister in her mid-40s) enters and sits at the table, waiting for her. She opens a bottle and takes a drink.*

*EVE soon joins DAWN at the table. She too takes a drink from a bottle.*

EVE                    So, you finally managed to drag yourself away from work?

DAWN                Only for a few minutes. I need a break. It's doing my head in. The computer crashed – again. I think I'm going to need to buy a new one soon. Plus, the printer jammed!

EVE                    Let me guess. You need a new printer too, right?

DAWN                You said it! I just need the money to buy them.

EVE  *(chuckles)* You and technology. You should spend some time in the garden with me. At least, the flowers and veggies don't crash or jam. *(pause)* What do you think of it anyhow?

DAWN                *(impressed)* Not bad. Nice and peaceful too. *(disgruntled)* Unlike the office ...

EVE                    So, apart from the computer and the printer, what else went wrong? Or shouldn't I ask?

*DAWN just chuckles and looks out into the garden.*

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DAWN           The number of times I've had to tell people to restart their computers is just phenomenal! Haven't they heard of the on-off button?

*EVE feels another headache coming on and closes her eyes briefly but DAWN doesn't notice.*

DAWN           And then there are the people who don't know how to clear caches ...

*There is a pause. EVE doesn't answer. Instead, she tries to rub her head clear. DAWN looks at her.*

DAWN           You okay?

EVE             Yeah, just a bit of a headache. I think I'm just a little dehydrated. I'll be okay.

*She takes a drink.*

DAWN           Any thoughts on dinner tonight?

EVE             Well, I'll got a few more vegetables to harvest after this. How about a veggie meal of broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, snow peas, cabbages and ... potatoes?

DAWN           Is that it? How about some steak from the fridge as well?

EVE             *(grins)* You cook the steak for both of us and we have a deal.

DAWN           *(good-naturedly)* Anything to get me in the kitchen, huh?

EVE             Hey, if you want steak, you cook it.

*DAWN laughs and looks at her watch.*

DAWN           Anyway, I'd better back to work. Don't spend too much time out there. It's not good for you.

EVE             *(snorts)* Yeah, right!

*DAWN just gives a cheeky grin and exits. EVE watches her go and finishes off her drink.*

*The headache eases and she takes a few deep breathes before moving to the vegetable patch.*

*She starts picking some fresh snow peas and placing them in the basket. After a moment, she gathers the basket and stands up.*

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*She is about to exit when she starts to get a headache and a stiff neck. She rubs her forehead briefly and gently moves her head from side to side then exits past the patio, thinking nothing more of it.*

*Lights change.*

*EVE and DAWN enter, each with a vegetable meal with produce from the garden, and sit at the table. DAWN takes a bite of a carrot, eats it then closes her eyes in bliss.*

- DAWN This is gorgeous! I'll never eat a shop-bought carrot again.
- EVE *(grins)* You like it then?
- DAWN You, dear sister, are a genius in the garden. Never give it up or I'll starve to death.
- EVE *(laughs)* Well, some of them are only seasonal so you'll have to do without. You could help, you know.
- DAWN No thanks. You know I'm not much of a gardener. I'm all for sitting in the garden but don't expect me to work it.
- EVE I don't know how you can spend the whole day on the computer like you do. From what I hear, it does nothing but crash on you!
- DAWN *(shrugs)* Someone's got to.
- EVE I've seen you in the office. You always seem frustrated about something. You need to get out more.
- DAWN We have to pay the bills somehow.
- EVE Come on, Dawn. You know I do my fair share at the farmers' market.
- DAWN I'm not saying you don't.
- EVE stops eating for a few seconds and rubs her neck.  
DAWN looks at her.*
- DAWN *(in concern)* You okay?
- EVE Yeah, it's nothing. I've just got a bit of a headache and a neck stiff, that's all. Must be from being in the garden all day. I'll be okay.
- DAWN Are you sure? You had the headache before as well.

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EVE                    Yeah, I'm fine. *(smiles)* Stop worrying.

*There is a pause and EVE resumes eating again.*

DAWN                By the way, I need to get more coffee and bread tomorrow. Did you want me to get anything for you?

EVE                    *(cheeky)* More space for the garden maybe?

DAWN                *(smiles)* In your dreams.

*EVE laughs and they both continue eating.*

*Lights change once more. DAWN exits with the plates.*

*It is the next day. EVE moves to the flowerbed and starts deadheading spent flowers. There is a small bucket on the ground next to her.*

*Her vision goes blurry and she manages to blink it clear. She feels fine for a moment then starts to feel another headache come on and rubs her forehead.*

EVE                    *(curious)* Whoa! What just happened?

*A little shaken, she takes a breath and returns to the flowers.*

*DAWN enters with a shopping bag and stops by the table.*

DAWN                Eve! You inside? *(pause)* Eve?

*No response. She looks passed the tree and sees EVE by the flowerbed.*

DAWN                *(chuckles to self)* Of course she's in the garden. If she had it her way, she'd be living there!

*Shaking her head, she puts the bag on the table and starts unpacking the shopping into the cupboard.*

*EVE looks up briefly from the bed and sees DAWN by the table.*

EVE                    *(to self)* Oh, good. Dawn's back.

*She picks up the bucket and turns towards the apple tree.*

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*As she takes a few steps, she stops in her tracks and tries to blink her vision clear again but nothing changes.*

*Blinded, she feels her way towards the apple tree but gets a sharp pain in the neck. Once again, she stops and rubs it to try and ease the pain.*

**EVE** (VO, panics) **What's happening to me? (suddenly gags) I think I'm going to be sick ...**

*She drops everything she's holding and rushes behind the tree, vomiting unexpectedly.*

*Now dizzy, she manages to stand up and tries to walk towards the table.*

**EVE** (VO) **Dawn! Help me! I-**

*She has only take a few steps when, without warning, she is overwhelmed by an intense headache that catches her off-guard. She grabs her head with both hands, screaming in agony.*

*DAWN has finished putting the bread away in the cupboard. She turns and looks up at EVE.*

**DAWN** (concerned) **Eve? You okay?**

*Breathing heavily, EVE continues to stagger unsteadily towards the kitchen, trying to control her balance.*

**EVE** (VO, in desperation) **Dawn! Where are you? I can't-**

*We hear a loud "pop" and, as if a plug has just been pulled on her, she promptly crumbles to the ground.*

**DAWN** (in a panic) **Eve! (She rushes towards EVE in a panic.) Eve! (She tries to rouse her. Desperately) Come on, Eve. Talk to me. (No response. She feels for a pulse.) Shit! (She quickly takes out her phone from her pocket and activates it.) Call triple-0.**

*The phone dials a number.*

**OPERATOR 1** (VO) **Emergency services. Police, fire brigade or ambulance?**

**DAWN** (urgent) **Ambulance please.**

**OPERATOR 1** (VO) **One moment.**

*There is a slight pause as the call is transferred through.*

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DAWN            *(pleading into phone)* Please hurry ...

OPEARATOR 2 (VO) Ambulance service. How may I help you?

DAWN            My sister's just passed out on the ground. She's not breathing ...

*Lights down.*

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SCENE 2 – HOSPITAL

*The table has now been replaced by a hospital bed where EVE is lying with her eyes closed, attached to a heart monitor and ventilator.*

DOCTOR and SARAH (a nurse in her mid-30s) are standing on either side of the bed, talking over EVE.

EVE **(VO, moaning) What happened? Where am I? (desperate) Dawn! Help! I can't move! Where are you? Someone let me out!**

SARAH She's still not responding to external stimuli. It's not looking good for her.

EVE **(VO) I'm in here! I just can't move! Please help!!**

DOCTOR Keep monitoring her. There are still signs of brain activity.

*He starts to walk away.*

EVE **(VO, to self) Come on, Eve, at least open your eyes. You can do it!**

*SARAH looks towards her.*

SARAH Doctor? She's waking up.

*EVE slowly opens her eyes but just stares into space.*

EVE **(VO) Oh, thank god I can move them!**

*DOCTOR turns to look at EVE.*

EVE **(VO) Why is it so bright?**

*DOCTOR leans over EVE's bed and looks into her eyes, searching.*

DOCTOR Eve? Can you hear me?

EVE **(VO) Yes, I can! I'm just trapped in here! I can't move.**

DOCTOR I'm going to shine some light in your eyes again to test their reaction.

*He takes out a torch and shines some light into her eyes.*

EVE **(VO, in a panic) Turn it off!**

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DOCTOR            Much better. And the other eye.

EVE                **(VO, groans) God, the light hurts.**

*DOCTOR puts the torch away.*

DOCTOR           They're a bit slow so I know you can't see me very well but can you try blinking for me?

EVE                **(VO, confused) What? I-I ... can't ...**

DOCTOR           Come on, you can do it.

*With some effort, EVE blinks slowly then continues to stare ahead.*

DOCTOR           *(smiles)* Very good.

*He takes hold of EVE's hand.*

DOCTOR           Now, here's the real test. I want you to try and squeeze my hand.

EVE                **(VO) But my fingers won't move.**

DOCTOR           *(gently)* Concentrate and try again.

EVE                **(VO, getting upset) I am but nothing's happening!**

DOCTOR           Nothing? That's okay.

*He gently puts her hand back on the sheet.*

DOCTOR           You had us worried for a while there.

EVE                **(VO) What's happening to me? Why can't I move?**

DOCTOR           You suffered a brain aneurysm and you've been in a coma for two weeks. You have what we call Locked In Syndrome.

EVE                **(VO) Locked in what?**

DOCTOR           It's where you have no movement below your eye line.

EVE                **(VO) You mean I'm paralysed? No, this can't be happening! I can't be. I need to work on my garden again. Please, no!**

DOCTOR           We just need to assess the damage just to be sure. Can you speak?

EVE                **(VO, suddenly tired) No, please. I don't ... want ... to ... sleep ... Help ... me ...**

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EVE's eyes start closing.

DOCTOR I can see you're getting tired. I'll let you get some rest and we'll see you again when you wake up. Maybe take your breathing tube out ...

*Lights down.*

*Lights up. EVE is now breathing on her own and no longer has the ventilator. However, she has a tracheostomy in her neck, just below the vocal cord.*

*DAWN is sitting in a chair, next to the bed. EVE slowly opens her eyes. DAWN quickly leans towards her.*

DAWN Eve?

EVE **(VO) Dawn? I'm here. I can't move! Help!**

DAWN Can you really hear me?

EVE **(VO, pleads) Yes, I can! Please help me ...**

*EVE closes her eyes briefly. She is tired. When she reopens them, she just stares blankly ahead.*

DAWN *(relieved)* Thank god! I was so worried about you. I thought you were gone. Do you remember anything?

EVE **(VO, sadly) No. Please get me out of here ...**

*DAWN wipes her eyes.*

DAWN *(gently)* Hey, don't cry. I'm here.

EVE **(VO) I can't help it. I just want to be in my garden again.**

DAWN *(smiles)* I have some good news. The nurses say there's a chance they can come up with a way for you to talk to us. They'll be talking to the speech therapist tomorrow.

EVE **(VO) I must be able to move something other than just blinking. Come on, Eve, concentrate. Lift your eyes up!**

DAWN *(surprised)* Wait. Did you just-? *(excited)* Oh my god! You did! You looked up! You know what that means, right? It means you have more movement in your eyes.

SARAH enters.

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**EVE** (VO) **But I can't move anymore than that.**

DAWN Nurse, she looked up. (to EVE) Come on, Eve. Do it again.

*SARAH goes up to the bed.*

**EVE** (VO) **Here we go again. Eyes up.**

*SARAH smiles.*

SARAH Eve, I'm just going to ask you two simple questions and I want you to either blink or look up. This is just so we know which is which so we're sure. Okay?

**EVE** (VO) **Why not? If it lets me talk to you.**

EVE (VO) Yes.

SARAH (*curious*) Is your name Eve?

EVE (VO) Yes.

SARAH Is Dawn your mother?

**EVE** (VO, *ridiculously*) **My mother??**

EVE (VO) No.

SARAH I think that's helped a lot.

DAWN So, she looks up for 'yes' and blinks for 'no'?

**EVE** (VO) **I can still hear you, you know.**

EVE (VO) Yes.

DAWN (*embarrassed smile, to EVE*) I'm sorry. I was just double checking with the nurse. At least you can talk to us now – to a fashion.

SARAH It will definitely make it easier for the speech therapist to come up with a communication system.

*EVE starts to get tired and closes her eyes.*

**EVE** (VO) **Right now, I need to sleep. So ... tired ...**

Dawn (*curious*) Is she okay?

SARAH She's just tired. The first few days will be hard for her and she'll tire easily. She just needs to rest for now.

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*Lights down*

*Lights up. JUNE, a speech therapist, is now standing next to DAWN by the bed when EVE wakes up.*

DAWN (gently) Hey, Sleepyhead. How are you feeling?

EVE **(VO, grumbles) How do you think I feel? I'm stuck in here and can't move.**

DAWN I have the speech therapist here. She's found a way to help you talk.

*With some effort, EVE manages to glance to the side at JUNE.*

JUNE Hi, there. I'm June. I've been assigned to help you talk to us. Is that okay?

EVE **(VO) Well, I don't exactly have a choice, do I?**

EVE (VO) Yes.

*JUNE holds up a communication board with letters and numbers on it.*

JUNE Do you know what this is?

EVE **(VO) I'm guessing it's to help me spell things.**

JUNE Well, this is a communication board.

EVE **(VO) That's what I said.**

JUNE Whoever is talking to you calls out a number and you decide which letter in the row you want to tell us.

EVE **(VO) Sounds complicated.**

JUNE This is how it works. Each row has a number above it and under each number, there are 6 letters. Are you with me, so far?

EVE (VO) Yes.

JUNE Good. For example, number 1 has the letters A, B, C, D, E and F. Number 2 has G, H, I, J, K and L, and so on.

EVE **(VO) Well, that sounds easy enough, I guess. I just have to remember which letter goes with which number.**

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JUNE I've been told you're a fairly smart girl.

EVE **(VO, chuckles) Did Dawn tell you that?**

JUNE So you should pick it up fairly quickly. Are you ready to try it?

EVE **(VO) Ready as I'll ever be.**

EVE (VO) Yes.

JUNE Okay, I'm going to go slowly so you can get use to it. I'll call out a number and you can tell us the letter. It might take a while to spell it out though. Ready?

*EVE takes a deep breath.*

EVE (VO) Yes.

JUNE Here we go. 1 - 2.

EVE (VO) Yes.

JUNE 2? Okay. G.

EVE (VO) Yes.

JUNE G? Good. Okay, we'll start again for the next letter.

EVE **(VO) Really? How long is this going to take?**

JUNE 1.

EVE (VO) Yes.

JUNE A.

EVE (VO) Yes.

JUNE G - A. Okay. 1. *(pause)* 2.

EVE (VO) Yes.

JUNE G - H.

EVE **(VO) Wait. No, that's not right. What row is R in again?**

EVE (VO) No.

JUNE It's okay. It will get some time getting used to. Want to try again?

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EVE (VO) Yes.

JUNE Okay, 1 – 2 - 3.

EVE (VO) Yes.

JUNE (*Slowly*) M – N – O – P – Q - R.

EVE (VO) Yes.

JUNE Good. Gar ...

DAWN Garden?

**EVE (VO, relieved) Oh, thank god for that! I thought I was going to have to spell the whole word out.**

EVE (VO) Yes.

DAWN (to JUNE) She's missing her garden.

JUNE (to EVE) So, you're a bit of a green thumb?

EVE (VO) Yes.

DAWN She even plants her own vegetables.

**EVE (VO) Not that I'm going to be able to do it now ...**

JUNE I wish I could do that! Then I don't have to buy them at the shops. Tell you what, Eve, when you have mastered the board, we'll make arrangements for you to go home if you like. How does that sound?

**EVE (VO) Really, that would be awesome!**

EVE (VO) Yes.

JUNE It's going to take a while so you and Dawn will both need to practice and memorize the board.

**EVE (VO) Sounds fair.**

*Lights down.*

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SCENE 3 – BEDROOM/GARDEN/PATIO

*The stage is split into two sections. On one side is EVE's bedroom (replacing the hospital room). On the other is the garden, although most of the flowers have disappeared as well as the plants in the vegetable patch. There is a small partition with a movable window between the garden and the bedroom.*

*Upstage centre is the patio with a table and a chairs upstage. There is a folder and some boxes of seed packets on the table, next to a tissue box. There are also several seed trays, full of dirt.*

*EVE is still lying in a medical bed. She is propped up with a pillow under her head for support. Her arms are out on the sheet and she has a pillow under each hand.*

*On one side of the bed, there is a humidifier which has a flexible breathing tube attached to her tracheostomy. On the other is a metal stand with an unopened bottle of brown milky fluid hanging from it – EVE's feeding solution. There is an oxygen tank next to the stand.*

*On the side table next to the stand is a radio, a box of tissues, a pen and a pad of paper. There is an armchair between the bed and the partition.*

*Above her bed is the printout of her communication board. EVE looks towards her garden.*

EVE                    **(VO) Well, at least I get to see the garden from here. It's better than being stuck in that hospital room for the last 3 months with no view.**

*DAWN soon enters and EVE watches her as she sits on the bed.*

DAWN                How are you settling in? (EVE looks towards the garden again. DAWN follows her gaze.) You really want to go out into the garden again, don't you?

EVE                    (VO) Yes.

DAWN                (sympathetic) You've only been home for a few days. It's too early.

EVE                    **(VO) It's easy for you. You can just get up and walk out. (getting upset) I'm stuck in here and I can't even ...**

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*Her eyes start welling up with tears. DAWN grabs a tissue from the bedside table and wipes EVE's eyes for her.*

DAWN Hey, come on. I promise that we'll try and get you out there as soon as we can. The physio just needs to find the right chair for you.

EVE **(VO) But it's been 3 months already! I miss my garden.**

DAWN Tell you what. Why don't I open the window for you? That way you can at least smell the garden.

EVE (VO) Yes.

*DAWN gets up and opens the window.*

DAWN How's that?

EVE (VO) Yes.

DAWN Did you want some music on?

EVE (VO) I want to talk.

*DAWN grabs the pen and pad. She starts to write down the letters as EVE tells her.*

EVE (VO) Nature.

*EVE looks straight into DAWN's eyes.*

*There is silence for a moment as they both listen to the sounds of nature outside.*

DAWN *(smiles)* I get it. You'd rather listen to the garden.

EVE **(VO) Yeah, much better than music.**

DAWN Do you want me to take the radio away?

EVE (VO) No.

*Her eyes start drooping close and she struggles to keep them open. DAWN gently strokes her face.*

DAWN You must be getting tired. Why don't you get some sleep?

*She gently kisses EVE on the forehead as EVE slowly falls asleep.*

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DAWN (softly) I'll come and check on you a bit later.

*She quietly heads towards downstage.*

*Before leaving, she turns back to look at EVE, sadly. Taking a deep breath, she closes her eyes and takes a deep breath.*

DAWN (to self) Come on, Dawn, you do can it. You need to stay strong for her. You're no good to her otherwise.

*Lights change.*

*It is the next day. EVE is listening to the sounds of nature. NICOLE, a young nurse in her early-30s, soon enters, causing EVE to look at her.*

NICOLE Hey, Eve. Remember me?

EVE (VO) You're ... Nicole, right? From the rehab center.

EVE (VO) Yes. I want to talk.

*NICOLE looks straight into EVE's eyes.*

NICOLE 1-2-3-4 ...

EVE (VO) Where's Dawn?

NICOLE She's just gone to get some water. She'll be here in a minute. I've been assigned to come and help her look after you. Is that okay?

EVE (VO) Yes.

EVE (VO) At least I trust you more than the other nurses.

NICOLE You'll probably get sick of seeing me eventually.

EVE (VO) No.

*DAWN soon enters with a bowl of water which she places on EVE's bedside table. She has a few towels and flannels draped over her arms which she places too on the table.*

DAWN I hope you're not giving Nicole a hard time there.

*With some effort, EVE manages to stick the tip of her tongue out at her, causing DAWN and NICOLE to laugh.*

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NICOLE I was just telling Eve that you were going to need a hand looking after her.

DAWN Yep. *(to EVE)* There's only so much I can do by myself.

*DAWN starts washing the flannels.*

DAWN We're just going to give you your daily wash.

*NICOLE starts to unbutton EVE's top.*

*Lights dim slightly before coming back on again.*

*NICOLE has now gone. DAWN is drying EVE's hands with a towel.*

DAWN I have to go back to work tomorrow. Nicole will be back to look after you again with another nurse.

EVE *(VO)* No.

DAWN Come on, Eve, be reasonable.

EVE *(VO)* No.

*DAWN hangs the towel at the foot of EVE's bed.*

DAWN This isn't negotiable, Eve. I need to go back to work. Someone has to pay the bills.

EVE *(VO)* No.

DAWN You can't work in the garden anymore.

EVE ***(VO, annoyed)* Stop reminding me! It's not fair! I love the garden but I can't even go there at the moment!**

EVE  *(VO)* I want to talk.

DAWN I'm not talking about it anymore, Eve.

*She turns to leave.*

EVE ***(VO, desperately)* Come back! I have to say this!**

*EVE tries to call out to DAWN but it just sounds like a croak.*

*DAWN turns back to her and sees that EVE has started to cry. DAWN sighs and takes a tissue to wipe her eyes.*

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EVE (VO) I want to talk.

*DAWN just looks at her for a moment then grabs a pen and some paper.*

DAWN I'm not happy about this, you know.

*EVE just looks at her.*

**EVE (VO) Neither am I but I need to say this.**

DAWN Okay. 1-2 ...

EVE (VO) I'm scared.

*DAWN softens.*

DAWN I know. So am I. But I need to do this or we'll lose the house. These things cost money.

EVE (VO) I want you here.

DAWN Even with the nurses here?

EVE (VO) I don't trust anyone but you.

*DAWN stops writing.*

DAWN Not even Nicole?

*They share a look. DAWN sighs and strokes her head.*

DAWN (gently) Hey, I'll tell you what. I'll have a talk to Phil about getting more time off and we'll go from there.

*Lights change as DAWN goes downstage, takes out her phone and puts it to her ear.*

*DAWN starts pacing the floor.*

DAWN Hi, Phil. It's me.

PHIL (VO) Dawn, how are you doing?

DAWN Yeah, I'm okay I guess. (hesitant) Look, I don't quite know how to say this but I'm going to need some extended time off. Eve's scared about me leaving her alone with the nurses. I'm sorry.

PHIL (VO) How is she?



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DAWN Well, she came home a few days ago but she's going to need on-going care. She can't do anything for herself.

PHIL (VO) You take as long as you need off, Dawn. Your sister is more important.

DAWN What about the workload? I'd hate to dump everything on you.

PHIL (VO) I'll get Johnno and Charlie to share the work. Just keep me updated, okay?

DAWN Yeah, I'll do that. Thanks.

*She hangs up the phone and sighs before exiting.*

*EVE is looking at the garden again, longing to go out. We hear the gentle sound of a ticking clock.*

EVE **(VO) How long is it going to take them to find me the right chair? This is getting really boring.**

*She looks up at the ceiling and gives a long sigh.*

*We hear a crow suddenly squawk, causing her body to twitch slightly. Her brow creases and her sense of smell starts to go awry.*

EVE **(VO) What's that horrible smell?**

*She blinks as she starts to feel dizzy.*

EVE **(VO) Burning ... rubber ...**

*She takes a few slow deep breaths and her body starts twitching again.*

EVE **(VO, panics) No ... not again! Dawn! Help!**

*Her breathing becomes more labored and the body twitches become more prominent.*

*Her eyes roll back and her head slowly extends back. Her body then starts jerking violently and her arms flail, pushing the pillows out from under her hands.*

*Her jaw locks up and she lets out a muffled scream.*

DAWN (O/S) Eve?

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DAWN enters, rushing over to EVE's bed and she manages to reposition the pillow under her head. She times the seizure.

DAWN (calmly) It's okay. I'm here. You're not going to fall out of bed. Keep breathing. (She then wipes EVE's mouth clean with a tissue.) Just breathe, Eve. Come on. You can do it. I'm not leaving you.

*The seizure soon dies down, her body and neck still twitching slightly. EVE's breathing is still laboured as she tries to relax.*

DAWN It's alright. It's over now. Just take a few deep breaths. (She hooks up the tube from the oxygen tank to EVE's tracheostomy mask.) That's it. Deep breaths. The oxygen should help you breathe better.

*The twitching soon stops. EVE's breathing eases slightly as DAWN strokes her head to calm her down.*

DAWN It's alright.

EVE (VO, confused) Where am I? What happened?

DAWN I'm here. You're safe now. You just had a seizure.

EVE (VO, drowsy) So tired ... Need sleep ...

*EVE closes her eyes briefly in exhaustion and DAWN repositions the pillows under her hands for her.*

DAWN You okay now? (EVE looks straight at her. smiles) It's okay. You try and get some sleep.

*EVE slowly falls asleep. DAWN watches her for a few moments.*

DAWN (to self, softly) I'm going to have to talk to Phil.

*She leaves as the lights change.*

*EVE is whimpering. She is obviously having a nightmare of sorts. Her eyes snap open.*

EVE (VO) Why me? What did I do to deserve this? This is so unfair! All I ever want is to be in the garden and I can't even do that. (pause) Why couldn't they have just let me go? I don't want to live the rest of my life like this!

*She takes a deep breath and manages to calm down just before DAWN enters. She heads to EVE's feed stand.*

---

DAWN Time for lunch, Eve.

EVE (VO) No.

*DAWN looks at her, curiously.*

DAWN What do you mean, no? You have to eat.

**EVE (VO) You call this eating? I can't taste anything!**

EVE (VO) No.

DAWN Come on, Eve. Don't be silly.

*EVE just looks at her in defiance.*

EVE (VO) No.

DAWN What's the matter? Why are you acting like this?

EVE (VO) I hate it here.

DAWN Come on. You don't mean that.

EVE (VO) I can't do anything. The garden is dying.

DAWN We'll make it better again.

EVE (VO) What's the point?

DAWN It will be alright.

EVE (VO) No, it won't. I can't even eat the food I grow. *(pause)* I dreamt that I was in my garden and I was tied up with duct tape on my mouth. I couldn't move.

DAWN It was just a dream, Eve.

EVE (VO) Was it? *(pause. Pleads)* I want to die. Help me.

DAWN I ... I can't do that.

EVE (VO, *grumbles*) Then leave me alone.

*EVE looks sadly towards the garden.*

DAWN Come on, Eve. Don't be like that. *(pause)* Eve?

*EVE ignores her. DAWN looks at her, mournfully.*

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DAWN Look, I'm going to have to give you your feed anyway. I'd never forgive myself otherwise.

*EVE doesn't move. There is a pause. DAWN hooks up her feed then strokes her head.*

DAWN Let me know if you change your mind. I'll just be out in the lounge.

*She studies her one more time. EVE continues to ignore her. Sighing, DAWN leaves.*

*EVE keeps looking sadly towards the garden. She starts to cry.*

*Lights change as DAWN goes downstage, visibly upset by her conversation with EVE.*

*Taking a deep breath, she takes out her phone and dials a number.*

DAWN *(into phone)* Yeah, hi. My name is Dawn Hayford, carer for Eve Hayford. I'd like to arrange for gardening services for our backyard.

*Lights change.*

*Two days later. EVE is asleep and wakes up to the sound of a lawnmower. She looks towards the garden in mixed surprise and curiosity. There are several people in the garden, tending to it.*

*DAWN soon goes up to her bed.*

DAWN What do you think? *(EVE just looks at her.)* After our conversation the other day, I thought I'd get the ball rolling and try to make the garden look at least half decent.



*EVE looks towards the garden, not quite knowing what to think.*

DAWN *(softly)* Is that okay? *(pause. curious)* What's the matter?

*EVE just looks at her for a moment.*

EVE **(VO) I don't know what I'm feeling. Why did you do this?**

DAWN I know this is hard for you and I do understand. *(pause)* To be honest, I don't want to lose you. I care about your too much.

EVE **(VO)** I'm so scared. There is nothing left for me.

---

DAWN Yes, there is. The garden will look awesome once we've done work to it. It's your baby. I called the gardening services and there's a whole team out there cleaning it up as we speak.

EVE **(VO, sarcastically) Great. A bunch of strangers in my garden. What could go wrong?**

DAWN Look, we're getting your chair tomorrow. Once we have you in it, I'll take you around the garden again. How does that sound?

*DAWN exits briefly as the lights dim.*

*It is night. EVE is asleep, whimpering and clearly having a nightmare of sorts. She wakes up in cold sweat and hyperventilating and begins to cry.*

*After a few moments, DAWN comes in, turns on the lights and rushes up to her bedside.*

DAWN *(softly)* Ssssh! It's okay, Eve. You just had a bad dream. You're safe now. I'm here.

*She strokes EVE's forehead as EVE tries to calm down again, her eyes still teary.*

EVE (VO) It's the same dream – over and over.

DAWN The one where you're tied up?

EVE (VO) It's not just that. I get the horrible headache again and that loud pop.

DAWN *(curious)* What loud pop?

EVE (VO) The one I heard just before I woke up in hospital. *(pause, crying)* I don't want to keep having the same dream!



*DAWN looks at her for a moment then strokes her forehead again.*

DAWN I know but we'll get through this together, I promise. *(pause)* Did you want me to stay here until you fall asleep again?

EVE (VO) Yes.

*Smiling, DAWN gently places her arm around EVE's head and gives her a hug.*

*Lights down.*

---

*Lights up. Eve is now in her new chair with headrest  
DAWN wheels EVE down the garden. EVE has a cloth  
bib over her tracheostomy tube and her torso is securely  
strapped in.*

*EVE is visibly upset. DAWN senses this and kneels  
beside her.*

DAWN Sorry about the flowers and vegetables. Most of them had died off  
in the heat so they had to pull them out.

EVE (VO) It's not my garden anymore.

DAWN Of course, it is.

EVE (VO) But I spent so much time on the beds and the vegetables! Now,  
they're gone!

DAWN We'll replant them again. I'll help you.

EVE (VO) But I thought you didn't like the garden.

DAWN Eve, you love the garden. That's all that matters. Besides, I'll have  
more time on my hands.

EVE (VO) What do you mean?

DAWN I've been approved to get Carer Payment for looking after you. I'll  
be spending my time with you now.

*EVE looks directly at DAWN. With much effort, she  
weakly manages to blow her a kiss, causing DAWN to  
smile.*

DAWN Tell you what, why don't we go and plant some seeds? It will make  
you feel better.

EVE (VO) Yes.

*DAWN gets up and wheels EVE towards the table.*

*She places EVE next to a table and takes a seat. She  
then picks up a handful of seed packets and shows it to  
EVE.*

DAWN Any idea which ones you want to plant first?

EVE (VO) Yes.

DAWN Okay, I'll show you each one in turn and you tell me.

---

*She goes through each packet. EVE picks the flowers.*

EVE (VO) That, that and that. They are the most colourful at the moment.

*DAWN picks up a handful of vegetable seed packets.*

DAWN What about these?

EVE (VO) Depends on what you like to eat.

DAWN *(smiles)* Well, your broccoli were to die for.

EVE (VO) They'll be your bro-

*There is a pause.*

DAWN *(reciting numbers)* 1-2-3-4-5 ...

*DAWN looks curiously at EVE who has stopped communicating. She is just staring into space and is taking deep breaths.*

DAWN Eve?

*EVE's body starts twitching and her eyes roll upwards and start fluttering. She starts to have trouble breathing.*

DAWN It's okay, Eve.

*DAWN recognizes these as signs of an impending seizure and quickly stands up to move EVE's chair away from the table. She then puts both brakes of the chair on and tilts it back to its lock position as EVE goes into convulsions.*

*DAWN glances briefly at her watch and takes note of the time.*

DAWN I'm here, Eve, breathe. You're alright. Just try and relax.

*DAWN gently strokes EVE's forehead and her seizure starts to get more violent. Thankfully, she is restrained in her chair by body straps to stop her falling out.*

DAWN Come on. You can do it, Eve. Deep breaths. I'm not leaving you. I'm right here. You won't fall out. You're strapped down.

*EVE's mouth starts to pool with saliva. With some effort, DAWN manages to tilt EVE's head to the side. She then*



---

*takes out a tissue out of its box and wipes EVE's mouth with it as the saliva dribbles out.*

DAWN           It's alright. I'm here. Just try and breathe, Eve. You can do it. Easy. You're doing great.

*EVE's breathing becomes more labored as the seizure continues. She starts to sweat and groan. DAWN takes out a flannel from EVE's bag and wipes her face with it.*

DAWN           Sssh! It's okay. I'm not leaving. I'm right here.

*DAWN dabs EVE's forehead with the flannel in comfort.*

*Lights slowly change blue as EVE stops breathing as the seizure continues.*

*DAWN starts to become panic but manages to keep calm under the circumstances.*

DAWN           Eve? Come on, breathe ... You can do it.

*The seizure continues. EVE still isn't breathing.*

DAWN           Eve, you got to breathe. Come on, take a breath.

*The seizure slowly dies down.*

*Lights return to normal as EVE starts breathing again, her head still twitching slightly.*

DAWN           *(relieved)* That's it. You just had a bad seizure but you're good now.



*The twitching soon stops and EVE's head lies awkwardly to the side. Her breathing is labored and noisy as she tries to relax. She continues to stare into space.*

*DAWN takes another quick glance of her watch and repositions EVE's head on the headrest. The breathing eases slightly and EVE groans.*

EVE               **(VO, moaning) What happened? My head hurts.**

DAWN           I think we're done sowing seeds for the day, don't you?

*Exhausted, EVE looks around briefly, confused before her eyes slowly droop close.*

---

DAWN *releases the brakes on her chair and starts to wheel her offstage.*

DAWN I'll bring you back to your room to give you some oxygen to help you breathe better so you can sleep it off.

*EVE has already fallen asleep. Light down.*

*Lights up.*

*When EVE wakes up, she is in bed attached to her humidification tube. The seed trays are now on a table near the partition.*

*DAWN is sitting in the armchair and notices her wake. She looks exhausted.*

DAWN How are you feeling?

*EVE looks up then at her, confused. She notices the trays. DAWN follows her glance.*

DAWN I thought you might like to have the seedlings in here to keep you company. I had to close the window though. It's already about 30 degrees out there.

EVE (VO) How long was I asleep for?

DAWN Since yesterday afternoon. You had a pretty bad seizure that lasted about 2 minutes. It's okay though. I've watered the seeds so they won't get dry. Does that mean I have to look after them as well as you?

EVE (VO) Yes. *(pause)* You just need to remember to keep watering them.

DAWN *(smiles)* I'm sure you'll remind me if I forget.

EVE (VO) Did you plant anything else?

DAWN No, I wanted you to be involved in the process. It didn't seem fair to do it without you. *(pause)* By the way, you remember June, the speech therapist?

EVE (VO) Yes.

DAWN She said she'll come around tomorrow to assess your progress. *(pause)* Nicole will be here to help me give you a sponge soon. I'll be back in a tic.

---

*She gives EVE a quick peck on the forehead and exits.  
As she waits, EVE looks back at the seeds.*

*Lights down.*

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