

# Ella and Ob

## Scene 1

*AV: Atmospheric music, sounds. Flashes of images on projection screen (high-contrast b&w): scratch marks, broken statues, clocks whirring, gaps between furniture, shadows. Ominous. Voice Over throughout.*

**VO (BELLA): Have you ever wondered what lies in the spaces between? Behind the fridge? Under the bed? Lurking just out of sight?**

**Well, I've seen it. I've been there! I've slipped between the cracks of our world and moved among the Others.**

**This is the story of how sometimes Something is nothing; how, sometimes, Nothing is something.**

**And sometimes, if you look very closely, the Nothing looks back...**

*AV: Background sound swells then abrupt silence. ECU on eyes closed, painted black on black background. Eyes flash open as crash sounds, "boing", cursing.... Eyes flash side to side through whole scene.*

**OB:** *(mumbling)*

**BELLA:** *(scared)* **Who's there!** *(Fumbles for torch, switches it on, swings it left, then right. Stands up, still sweeping room with torch.)*

**OB:** *(mumbling grumpily)*

**BELLA:** **Mum? Is that you?** *(Walks very slowly around the stage.)* **Dad?**

**OB:** *(mumbling grumpily)*

*AV: Pink feather floats down in front of eyes. Eyes follow.*

**BELLA:** **What's this?** *( Picks up pink feather from floor.)*

*AV: Eyes widen, camera tracks in. Fade to ... pink, then black.*

## Scene 2

*Kitchen. Dad has tool belt on and is fixing a tap. It keeps squirting him in the eye (a bottle dressed as a tap, dad squeezes it as he uses the tool.) Mum walks in carrying a box.*

**MUM:** *(dances in, blowing kisses, twirling around)* **Morning, my little compost worms!**

**DAD:** *(too busy to look around)* **Morning, Pickle-mickles.**

*BELLA sits. gobbling some toast and cereal.*

**MUM:** *(very happy, unstacks crates, begins sorting through the box, looking at the bottom of everything)* **Oh, what a fantastic treasure trove! How exciting!**

**BELLA:** *(munch, munch, munch)* **Going to have some breakfast, Mum?**

**MUM:** **Recycling is the key to our future, Bella. There is nothing that cannot be reused!**

**BELLA:** *Mmmm.* *(munch, munch, munch)* **What about chewing gum?**

**MUM:** *(Stops sorting)* **Of course! Everything!** *(dances over to Bella, pinches both cheeks)* **Glue, Bella. Globulous, grabulous glue! Keep it in a jar, pinch off what you need** *(pinches Bella's nose,).* **Chew it to keep it soft. Perfect!** *(returns to box, keeps sorting rubbish into coloured bins.)*

**BELLA:** **Yuck!** *(Looks over at Dad)* **Winning, Dad?**

**DAD:** *(Keeps working)* **A Dad's work is never done, Bella. Old houses need lots of love. Oh, here we go. Here we go... and...Eureka!** *(Puts away his wrench, grabs a mop)* **Right. Mopping time! Goodie, my favourite!** *(Whistles happily.)*

*(pause, then...)*

**MUM:** **Got one!** *(stands up in triumph, very excited, holding a yoghurt pottle, making Bella jump in surprise, dropping her toast)* **See, Bella. It says "one" but it's from another country, so we can't be sure. It's polypropylene, dear. A number 5!** *(keeps talking but silently)*

**BELLA:** **Sure, whatever, Mum.** *(Sighs)*

*During the following speech by BELLA, MUM continues to talk to herself, Bella and Dad silently. DAD mops and whistles silently. DAD begins mopping up behind Mum, wherever she walks. MUM packs up any mess into her box then leaves. DAD follows Mum, still mopping*

**BELLA:** *(Steps forward, addresses audience)* **Well, that's my family. Crazy, huh? Well, you don't have to live with them. Dad never stops cleaning and fixing stuff and Mum... Mum is just nuts. She's a scientist. "Ecological chemist" or something. She's always in someone's garbage bin or at the dump, rooting around like a pig in the muck. What a pair. Boy, are they embarrassing!**

*BELLA stacks the bins. As DAD enters, looking into the same box that Mum had. He looks puzzled.*

**BELLA:** *(Notices that Dad is just standing there)* **Dad? Everything okay?**

**DAD:** **She's gone, Bella. She's gone!**

**BELLA:** **Who?**

**DAD:** *(still stunned)* **M-m-m-m-m...**

**BELLA:** **Mum? Where?**

**DAD:** **I don't know! The bin's empty and your mother has...disappeared!**

**BELLA:** **She's probably just raiding the neighbourhood. She'll be back. Don't worry, Dad.**

**DAD:** **Hmmm. Maybe you're right.**

*They sit together on the stage. BELLA comforts her Dad silently.*

*AV: Fade in to night-time with moon. "Morepork." Sun rises.*

*BELLA and DAD get up and begin searching all over the stage and audience seating (under seats, etc.) calling out for "Mum!" As they go, DAD begins getting slower and slower and more hunched over until he stops, doubled over, motionless centre stage. BELLA, still searching slowly makes her way over to Dad. BELLA keeps unwinding him, but he only moves a few steps before slumping again.*

**BELLA:** *(Addressing audience)* **I'd like to say this is weird for Mum. But it's not. Dad is really worried, though. That is weird. He's normally so... cheerful. I kind of feel sorry for him.**

*BELLA goes to Dad and pulls him up straight from behind. He slowly begins to flop again. She straightens him up again.*

**BELLA:** **Come on, Dad. Let's go home.**

*BELLA and DAD walk a circle and back to kitchen. DAD shuffles off stage, flopping lower with each step. BELLA turns the bins around to reveal the clock, then lies down on stomach with pen and pencil, begins to write/draw poster.*

*AV: Hand writing message / poster on paper: "Missing. One Mother. Last Seen wearing white lab coat and glasses. Reward offered for return."*

Scene 3

AV: *Moon.*

*Hallway. Enter OB, bumping clock*

AV: *ECU on eyes open painted black on black background. Eyes widen as crash sounds ensue, clock clangs, cursing...*

**OB:** *(In pain)* **Orrrrr! Forgot about that.**

*BELLA fumbles for torch, switches it on. Stands up, walks on tip-toes to Ob.*

**OB:** *(mumbling grumpily)* **Stupid humans! Always moving things around. I'd tell them too, if they could see me.**

**BELLA:** *(creeping up behind Ob)* **I can see you.**

*OB gets a BIG fright*

**OB:** *(grumpy at being frightened)* **Ooo. You gave me a fright!**

**BELLA:** **Sorry.**

**OB:** **I'm the ghost! I'm supposed to scare you.**

**BELLA:** **A ghost? Hah! Well, you're not exactly a scary ghost. You're a fluffy pink boot.**

**OB:** *(scary voice)* **Ooo. Pink can be scary, you know.**

**BELLA:** **Right. So, where's the rest of you?**

**OB:** *(grumpy)* **I'm a ghost. (walking past Bella) You can only see the bits of me that aren't there.**

**BELLA:** **What?**

**OB:** **You, me, we're opposites. If humans have a missing bit, you can't see it, right? Well, if a ghost has a missing bit, that's what you see. Trouble is, humans never see anything!**

**BELLA:** **Oh. Aren't you lonely? Creeping around in the dark. Nobody seeing you.**

**OB: Lonely? Hah! Oh, no. We ghosts are everywhere. (Spooky voice) EVERYWHERE! There are ...ZILLIONS of us. In the empty spaces between things.**

**BELLA: (giggles) Like in the toilet bowl?**

**OB: Maybe! And behind the curtain, under the bed, behind the pictures on the wall. Everywhere. By the way, I wasn't "creeping", I was practising my dancing. For the disco. Through there. (points boot at projection screen)**

*AV: Door in a hallway.*

**BELLA: But that's our back door!**

**OB: No, it's a disco club for ghosts! Look closer. Believe in it.**

**BELLA: (looks at projection screen)**

*AV: Flashing sign appears and gets closer. "Missing Bits Ghost Club". Muffled sounds of disco music.*

**BELLA: Wow!**

**OB: Told you. Come on!**

**BELLA: Wait! What's your name?**

**OB: 'Ob. B-O-B. 'Ob. (goes to leave)**

**BELLA: You mean "Bob?"**

**OB: The "b" is silent. LET'S GO!**

*They "enter" the disco. BELLA and OB stand before the projection screen as the door opens a window to sparkles and music...*

Scene 4

*Disco. Ghosts enter doing unusual dances using their missing body parts. They chat and socialise, dancing around the stage. BELLA looks on in awe as body parts go floating by.*

*AV: Neon flashes, lava lamp, disco lights, dance music.*

*OB begins dancing with the other ghosts. BELLA looks around, nervously.*

**OB: Come and dance with us!**

**BELLA: Uh... I don't think so.**

**OB: Whatever!** *(goes back to dancing)*

*BELLA stands on the sideline trying to look like she belongs, trying not to look at the ghosts too much.*

*AV: Music dies down and the ghosts begin to gather centre stage in a circle, facing inwards.*

**OB: Time to go! Meeting's starting. You don't want to be around for that.**

**BELLA: Ok.**

*MUM GHOST rushes in, glasses on, past Bella and Ob and joins the meeting*

**BELLA:** *(Stares after the Mum Ghost)* **Mum? Mum!** *(To Ob)* **That ghost... it had glasses like Mum's!** *(Starts to go after the Mum Ghost)*

**OB: No! We're not invited!**

**BELLA: I don't care! What if it's Mum? What if she's a ghost! I have to find out!**

**OB: Humans lose glasses every day. Could be anybody's. We have to go. Now! COME ON!**



*AV: Hallway, door. No signs.*

*BELLA and OB walk to the front of stage. BELLA keeps looking back.*

**OB: Well that was five minutes of fun. Must do it again sometimes. Look, love to stay and chat, but, you know, got lurking to do. See you around, human.**

*OB exits*

**BELLA:** *(Addressing audience)* **Ghost discos? Silent B's? And Mum, missing. What a strange week. *(sighs)* I really thought I'd found her. They looked like her glasses. She's just gone! She might even be a ghost. And Dad? Dad's stopped working. He barely talks to me. He just sits around looking at the ground. I pretend that I'm not worried, but I am. I feel empty, like a ghost with bits missing. What am I going to do? I just want things back to normal. I want my nutty mum and loopy dad back. It's up to me to do it. I just don't know how...**

*AV: Bella's adventures are just beginning. (fade out)*

*Has Mum become a ghost? Will Dad ever whistle again? (fade out)*

*You can find out, if you... (fade out)*

*Read the Book! (fade out)*

*Ella and Ob by Sarah Johnson (fade out)*

*Brought to you by The Elemental Theatre Group of Owairaka Primary School (fade out)*

THE END