Characters

KIT
LEE
GUARDIAN

Playwright’s Note

I have attempted to keep certain details about the characters as open as possible so that anyone can perform these roles. Gender, ethnicity, class may all be expressed as the performers see fit. Even age-wise, you can explore how the relationship changes if KIT and LEE are around the ages of 16, 25, 44. Play around with whether KIT or LEE is the older sibling. Feel free to specify the relationship of the GUARDIAN (“Mom” or “Grandpa” or “Auntie”) and to throw in this name from time to time to clarify the role when performed. If the play is being performed as a reading, then stage directions may be read by another performer.

I encourage each performance of this piece to devise the HUM as they see fit – whether it’s a live chorus of one or more people in the same space or virtually, a digitally engineered moment of sound design, a combination of the two, or any other expression that can be imagined. Find the musicality of your version of this play.

Similarly, I encourage each performance to have fun deciding how the GLOW manifests itself. Smart light bulbs, flashlights with colored gels, a colorful photo on your television, performers waving different colors of fabrics – try different things out! Get even the non-performers in your circle involved!
A room with a bed and a wardrobe with a lock keeping the doors shut. KIT enters with a bag, turns the lights on. KIT ponders.

KIT
Have you ever been told not to do something, and then all you can think about is doing that one thing? For example, I was told never to look inside this wardrobe. And of course, I promised not to. But the sibling who asked me never to look inside this wardrobe obviously doesn’t trust me, or there wouldn’t be a lock on the wardrobe. And I have to say, I’m a little hurt by this overt display of distrust.

KIT pulls out a giant bolt cutter from the bag.

KIT breaks the lock on the wardrobe, and the doors swing open. Nothing spectacular happens.

KIT
Clothes and shoe boxes. Boring...

GUARDIAN enters, holding something behind their back.

GUARDIAN
Kit?

KIT fails at not looking guilty.

GUARDIAN
What’re you doing in Lee’s bedroom?

KIT
The wardrobe was just open! I swear!

GUARDIAN
Okay, okay… but honey, I don’t think you should be in here.

KIT
I know. But I just… Lee’s been acting so weird lately…

GUARDIAN
But you’re violating Lee’s privacy.

KIT can’t deny it. KIT sighs.

GUARDIAN
I’m sorry, honey… Why don’t you head out, and we’ll talk this through over some tea, huh?
KIT walks slumpily toward the door.

KIT

Aren’t you leaving too?

GUARDIAN

After I close up the wardrobe again. Go on. Get the kettle going.

KIT

Wait a second… what’re you hiding behind you?

GUARDIAN

What do you mean? I –

KIT grabs at the object behind GUARDIAN’S back and pulls it out. It’s another bolt cutter!

KIT

You were going to break the lock too!

GUARDIAN

Maybe I was!

KIT

And you were trying to guilt-trip me?

GUARDIAN

Not guilt-trip, just…

A pause. Neither knows what to do.

GUARDIAN

So… you really didn’t find anything?

KIT

Just clothes and shoe boxes…

GUARDIAN

Did you look inside the boxes?

KIT

No…

They dart toward the wardrobe voraciously! They each pull out a shoebox and see that inside are…
GUARDIAN, KIT

Eggs!?

KIT looks through more shoeboxes.

KIT
They’re all eggs. Just a whole bunch of eggs! What the…

GUARDIAN
Language in my house!

KIT
…farm?

GUARDIAN
What does this mean?

Action freezes as KIT ponders again.

KIT
Do you ever consider how you actually don’t know what it’s like to be someone else? Like, I can guess because someone’s facial expressions and body tell me something, assuming I can see. Or their voice and words, assuming they can speak and I can hear. But what makes me think that what I’m experiencing on the inside is anything like what they’re experiencing on the inside? For all I know, I might be the only one who has my own experience. Or they might be the only one who has theirs. Or both. I guess this thought is coming to mind because I can’t think of any reason why my sibling would have twenty frickin’ shoeboxes of eggs inside their wardrobe!

Sounds outside the room.

GUARDIAN
Lee’s home! Hurry!

A flurry of activity as GUARDIAN and KIT desperately try to make things look normal. They hide the bolt cutters under the bed.

KIT
The lock! What about the lock!?

GUARDIAN
Why did you break it in the first place? You never think things through!

KIT
You were gonna do the same thing!
GUARDIAN

Here.

*GUARDIAN puts out their hand. KIT gives them the lock. GUARDIAN gingerly places it back on the wardrobe, just in time for LEE to enter.*

LEE

What… are you two doing…?

*GUARDIAN*

(to KIT, covering)
I told you it gets warmer on this side of the house at night!

KIT

Ah… point proven. This is indeed the west side of the house. Shall we?

*GUARDIAN and KIT attempt to get away. LEE stops them.*

LEE

Did you get into my wardrobe?

*GUARDIAN*

Wardrobe?

*KIT*

What wardrobe?

*LEE glares. The lock falls off the wardrobe with a THUD! LEE is suddenly fearful.*

LEE

Did you break any of them!?

*LEE opens the wardrobe, pulls out one shoebox at a time onto the bed, scanning all of the eggs for breakage.*

*GUARDIAN*  
(with careful concern)  
Lee… what is all this?

*LEE doesn’t respond. Keeps scanning the eggs.*

LEE…?

*GUARDIAN*

KIT

Hey… Lee-lee… what’s going on?
Lee
Just let me finish checking them…

Guardian
Kit… let’s head out… give Lee some space…

Kit walks slumped. Once Guardian and Kit exit, Lee closes the door, pulls out a phone and begins sending voice texts.

Lee
“Are you there, question mark.”

Lee hits send. No reply.

Lee
“Look, comma, it’s not safe for them here, period. I thought I could hide them, comma, but there are just too many of them, period. They’re going to get broken, period.”

Lee hits send.

“Hello, question mark.”

Lee hits send. No reply.

Lee
(really distressed)
“Please, period. Can you come pick them up, question mark. It’s too much responsibility, period. I’m out, period.”

Lee hits send. Kit re-enters.

Kit
We’re making some tea, did you want – what’s wrong, Lee?

Lee
Kit… help me…

Action freezes as Kit ponders again.

Kit
Have you ever wanted someone to need you again? Because you felt like you had become just kind of an extra person in their world? And you think, “If only this someone needed me again, I might feel more a part of their life?” But then… has that someone ever actually expressed that they needed you… and it just scared the living crap out of you? And you kind of wish you could go back to being an extra person again?
Action resumes.

KIT
What do you need, Lee-lee? What’s going on?

LEE
I screwed up…

KIT
What do you mean?

LEE pulls out one of the eggs. It begins to GLOW.

KIT
Whoa… did you make this?

LEE
No… There’s this app where you sign up to help people for some cash. And you just take care of random things they need to get done. And I’ve been hurting for some extra money… so I’ve been doing odd jobs here and there. Delivering groceries, fixing a squeaky door, you know, boring stuff that rich people have neither the time nor will to do themselves…

KIT
Uh-huh…?

LEE
One of the requests was that I help watch some children. And I think “I love kids… why not?” Only when I get to the address, it’s the public library. And sitting out on the front bench is a shoebox with my name on it. And in the box was… eggs. I thought it was a prank at first, and I was about to just throw the box on the ground, but then I thought “What if it’s little chicks inside? And for this person, these chicks are like their kids?” I dunno. You know how some people can get with dogs? So I brought the box home. And then every week after that, the same person direct messages me, asking me to pick up another box at the library.

KIT
And did you get paid?

LEE
You’re missing the point!

KIT
I’m sorry… I’m confused… I’m listening…

LEE
Yes, I got paid. Every week, on time for like three months. And then all of a sudden, no more boxes, no more requests, no more eggs. And I think, I just need to wait until this person tells me what to do with all these chicks. But they stop responding to my messages…
Lee shakes their head, holds up the glowing egg.

They glow on their own.

So, someone gave you egg-lamps… I bet there’s some LED lights involved…

Kit reaches for the egg, but Lee pulls it away.

No… they don’t just glow. They sing too.

Uh… what?

Or hum or buzz or something. But… they are alive… and I don’t think they’re chicks…

What do you think they are…?

(exasperated)

You’re missing the point again!

Okay, okay, please… I want to help… but help me understand…

If these all hatch… that’s, what? Seventy-eight newborns? And I have no way of getting in touch with their family… and don’t you dare tell me I should donate them to science! Who knows what could happen to them? But it’s just… a lot! It’s too much!

(breaking down, crying)

I’m not ready to be a parent!

Kit puts an arm around Lee.

Whoa, hey… I mean… okay… that’s… I see now… yes, taking care of seventy-eight unidentified creatures is a lot of responsibility… Sh… it’s okay… I’m right here…
Suddenly, all of the eggs GLOW and start emitting an other-worldly, but soothing HUM. It is beautiful. The HUM continues under dialogue.

KIT

Whoa…

LEE

Yeah… it’s nice, isn’t it? They’ll do that when I’m not feeling great…

KIT opens one of the shoeboxes to gaze upon the eggs inside. They all give off an array of colors.

KIT

Ohmygod, these poor, beautiful orphans!

LEE

I know, right?!

KIT and LEE laugh together.

KIT

Ok… look… I think we should tell –

LEE

No…

KIT

The more people who know, the more help we’ll have in taking care of them…

LEE

No. The more people we tell, the more news will get out. And that won’t be safe…

KIT

Okay… we won’t tell anyone. But… we might need to re-think that once they hatch, because… well, we have no idea what’s going to hatch, and we might realize this is more than we can handle.

LEE

Okay… but for now?

KIT

For now… we don’t have to tell anyone.

LEE

Thank you, Kit.
They sit in the warmth of the HUM and GLOW.

KIT

Sorry for almost killing your babies.

LEE smiles. The HUM gets louder, but not intimidating.

KIT

Whoa…

LEE

That’s never happened before…

The eggs begin floating out of their boxes. Their GLOW intensifies. They form mesmerizing shapes in the air, their beams creating beautiful mosaics of light on the walls. The HUM continues, pulsating, quickening in intensity.

KIT

Should we be worried?

LEE

I don’t know!

The eggs spin in circles around each other. Faster and brighter and louder and faster and louder and brighter. Until…

The eggs disappear, as if swallowed up by a blackhole.

LEE and KIT stare at the now dull room in silence.

A notification on LEE’S phone. LEE laughs softly. LEE shows KIT the phone.

KIT

“Thanks for taking good care of them.” And… is that a five-thousand dollar tip?!

LEE

Yes!

More laughter. GUARDIAN enters.

GUARDIAN

All OK in here?
LEE
All ok.

KIT
We’re good.

GUARDIAN
Good. Where’d the eggs go?

KIT and LEE look to the other to answer, but both end up laughing.

GUARDIAN
Forget it. I don’t need to know. My kids are entitled to their secrets.

GUARDIAN gives them a big hug each.

GUARDIAN
There’s tea waiting for us at the table.

GUARDIAN exits. KIT and LEE stare at the room. Did that really happen?

LEE
I can still feel the humming…

KIT
Of course you do! You were their surrogate.

LEE
I guess so…

KIT
For what it’s worth, I think you’d make a phenomenal parent.

LEE smiles. Then notices something under the covers of the bed. LEE pulls out the bolt cutters.

LEE
Really?

KIT
We were worried about you!

LEE laughs, hugs KIT, exits with the bolt cutters. KIT ponders.
KIT
Have you ever experienced something so weird, so bizarre, so other-worldly that immediately afterwards you question if it was even real? Because what’s left is just a bedroom and a broken lock and a wardrobe and shoe boxes?

_The HUM can be heard off in the distance._

KIT
But you can still feel it, the _hum_ of it, or the _echo_ of the hum of it, however faint… and whether it was real or not, you choose to lean into it. Because the echo of a hum of something beyond belief is better than no hum at all.

_(beat)_
I gotta write all these thoughts down some time…

_Kit exits. The HUM crescendos euphorically._

_End of play._