

# TRUST

A 20 MINUTE PLAY

BY ELLA DORMAN-GAJIC

CHARACTERS:

SARAH

LOTTY

*ALL THE PROPS AND COSTUMES WILL BE PRE-SET AND REMAIN ON STAGE THROUGHOUT THE PLAY. COSTUME CHANGES WILL HAPPEN ON STAGE TO ILLUSTRATE THE PASSING OF TIME. THE STAGE IS SET WITH A VERTICAL WALL UPSTAGE CENTRE, ON WHICH IS A HEIGHT CHART. EACH SIDE OF THE WALL REPRESENTS THE SISTERS' SEPARATE ROOMS.*

*LIGHTS UP ON DOWN STAGE, WHERE LOTTY IS SITTING. SHE IMPATIENTLY GLANCES AT HER WATCH BEFORE LOOKING THROUGH A PILE OF BOOKS IN THE CORNER OF THE ROOM. SHE FLICKS THROUGH A NOTEBOOK. WHEN SHE HEARS SARAH ENTERING, SHE HURRIEDLY HIDES WHAT SHE HAS BEEN READING.*

SARAH: Lotty?

LOTTY: Hi!

SARAH: I didn't realise you were coming. How did you...

LOTTY: Your flat mates let me in.

SARAH: Is something up?

LOTTY: No, no nothing. I just wanted to see you.

SARAH: Oh. That's nice. Sorry I'll just, erm

*SARAH PUTS DOWN HER BAGS. THEY EMBRACE, BUT THERE IS A TENSION IN THEIR BODIES.*

SARAH: Feels like I haven't seen you in like a year or something...

LOTTY: Well it has been 8 months.

SARAH: Has it? Mad. How is everything?

LOTTY: Yeah... good. Alright. Just finished my exams and stuff. You?



SARAH: Yeah. Do you want a drink or something?

LOTTY: Oh no, I'm good thanks.

*PAUSE.*

LOTTY: Do you remember that notebook Gran and I got you for your birthday one time?

SARAH: Erm... I don't know. What does it look like?

LOTTY: The one with the yellow flowers on? You must have been like...12 or something?

SARAH: Oooh yeah I think I know the one.

LOTTY: Do you still have it?

*THE TWO GIRLS MOVE UPSTAGE TO THEIR SEPARATE ROOMS. THEY CHANGE THEIR OUTFITS ON THE WAY. MUSIC CAN BE PLAYED.*

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*LOTTY RUNS INTO SARAH'S ROOM, HOLDING A CAKE AND A PRESENT. SHE STANDS BEHIND HER. SARAH IS ASLEEP ON THE FLOOR UNDER A DUVET.*

LOTTY: *[Singing]* Haaaaaappy Birthday to you  
Happy Birthday to you /

SARAH: *[waking up.]* What time is it?

LOTTY: Happy Birthday dear Sarah

SARAH: What time is it?

LOTTY: Happy birthday to you!

SARAH: *[To the audience.]*  
Lot always wakes me up early. Extra early on -

Lotty: 6

SARAH: 6!

*SARAH FALLS BACK.*

LOTTY: *[Pulling her up.]* We have to do birthday mornings early on school days!

*SARAH GROANS AND FALLS BACK. LOTTY RUNS TO GET A CAKE, WHICH ENTICES SARAH BACK UP.*

LOTTY: Happy Birthday to you

SARAH: Lot has got me on lock down -

LOTTY: You live in a Zoo

SARAH: *[blowing out the candle.]*  
Every year. Birthday lock down.

LOTTY: You look like a monkey

BOTH: And you smell like one too!

*SARAH BLOWS OUT THE SINGLE CANDLE.*

LOTTY: Open my present!

*SARAH HANDLES THE PRESENT FOR A MOMENT. IT IS OBVIOUSLY A BOOK OF SOME KIND.*

SARAH: Ooh I wonder what it could be.

*SHE JOKINGLY HOLDS IT UP TO HER EAR AND SHAKES BEFORE BEGINNING TO OPEN IT.*

Is Mum making breakfast?

LOTTY: Granny made you this cake! We made it together. She's just coming up, I didn't want to wake her. She wasn't feeling very well last night and -

SARAH: What about Mum?

LOTTY: Mum... er... well, she -

SARAH: She's forgotten.

LOTTY: No! no no she hasn't she...

SARAH: Then where is she?

LOTTY: She's gone to... she went to the shop.

SARAH: At 6 in the morning?

LOTTY: Err... the cleaners?

SARAH: She didn't come home last night, did she?

LOTTY: She got you this!

*LOTTY PULLS OUT A WRINKLED £20 NOTE FROM HER POCKET AND HANDS IT TO SARAH.*

SARAH: Great. 20. Least that's a fiver more than last year.

LOTTY: Yeah but she's got you something else too! I'm just not allowed to say what it is yet.

SARAH: Oh wow really!

LOTTY: Sarah! Come on, you haven't finished opening your present.

*SARAH FINISHES TEARING OPEN THE PAPER.*

SARAH: *[To the audience. Monotone.]* A notebook.  
*[To Lotty]* A notebook! And... a pen!

LOTTY: No no it's not *just* a pen it's one of those fountain ones. Me and Gran thought you could start writing down all those stories you tell us.

SARAH: Thanks Lot, I love it.

*THEY HUG. LOTTOMY RUNS THROUGH TO HER ROOM. SARAH GETS UP AND CHANGED FOR SCHOOL.*

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LOTTY: I told my sister Sarah that Mum would take us to the cinema for her birthday to see Avatar but she didn't come home in time so Gran took us instead

SARAH: We walked home, hopping between each pavement slab; making sure our feet didn't touch the cracks. Lotty made us go the long way so she could buy

LOTTY: Blue popping candy!

SARAH: She stuck out her tongue  
The whole. Way. Home.

LOTTY: And THEN, I painted my face bright blue  
and put fairy lights around the house,  
just like in the film,  
but Sarah tore them down, said I was being

Sarah: So annoying. My friends think she's really cute and say how lucky I am  
to have a sister like her.  
But all she does is scream and shout and whinge.

Lotty: *[Shouting.]* Gran!! Sarah won't play with me! And she broke my fairy lights!

Sarah: I didn't break them!

*MIMICKING THEIR GRAN.*

Lotty: "Don't be so silly!"

Sarah: "Why can't you two get along!"

BOTH: *[Shouting]* Can we do a crossword before bed?

*SARAH GRABS HER DUVET AND A FLASH LIGHT AND SITS DOWN STAGE CENTRE, READING FROM A NEWSPAPER ON THE FLOOR. LOTTY FOLLOWS AFTER HER.*

LOTTY: One word, 7 letters. A Col - l - umbane female dancer.

SARAH: Columbian.

LOTTY: Eer... sexy?

SARAH: Oooh I know!

LOTTY: What is it?

*SARAH STEALS AWAY THE PAPER.*

LOTTY: Sarah! What?

SARAH: *[singing.]* Ooh I'm on tonight my hips don't lie  
and I'm starting to feel you boy

LOTTY: Shakira shakira!

*LOTTY GETS UP TO DANCE. SARAH SHINES THE TORCH ON HER.*

SARAH: When we were younger, Lot did this jig  
It was kind of an Irish dance, just not as good.  
But at the time, I thought it was wicked.  
I dressed her up in matching clothes:  
Purple skirt, green shoes  
Purple ribbon, green top  
Even purple knickers.  
Then pink, pink, pink all over her face.  
I put her up on the bandstand in the park  
and everyone crowded round to watch.  
So I told them she was a famous dancer,  
from Russia. And I was her manager.  
But I didn't let her speak to them after  
I didn't want them to find out I was lying.  
Turned out they were only there to watch the band.

*LOTTY AND SARAH RETURN TO THE DUVET.*

SARAH: One word, 5 letters:  
when you fall, knowing someone will catch you.

LOTTY: err... ee... ff... flo - no... ll-lazy?

SARAH: That's 4.

*BOTH THE GIRLS THINK WHILST COUNTING THEIR FINGERS.*

Lotty: Ooh I know! I know! Mattress!

SARAH: *[laughing]* Mattress? Are you joking?

LOTTY: It could be!

SARAH: No it couldn't. Ah can't be bothered anymore.

*SARAH PUSHES THE PAPER TO ONE SIDE. LOTTY LIES DOWN, RESTING HER HEAD ON SARAH'S LAP. SHE STARTS UNTANGLING LOTTY'S HAIR.*

LOTTY: Ow! *[Pulling away.]*

SARAH: Just let me untangle this knot it looks like a bird's nest!

LOTTY: Fine...  
*[Singing.]* When the world leaves feeling blue  
you can count on me I will be there for you -





INTO THEIR RESPECTIVE ROOMS.

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MUSIC CONTINUES.

SARAH: Eugh what is this shit.

SARAH GOES OVER TO THE LAPTOP TO TURN OFF THE MUSIC AND CONTINUES HURRIEDLY GETTING CHANGED WHILST SEARCHING THE ROOM FOR SOMETHING.

LOTTY: Sarah stole my favourite trousers.  
fitted, turquoise, golden flowers.  
I bought them from TopShop for 40 quid  
that's 2 weeks of paper round money!  
Gran payed for half because she doesn't like me spending so much  
but I never wear them 'cos Sar's always got them on  
says they look better on her, says I'm too skinny.  
So now, I put all my favourite clothes in a box  
and lock the lid.

SARAH: *[Shouting from her]* Lotty! Have you seen my jumper? Lotty!! *[Bursting into Lotty's room.]* Have you taken my jumper again?

LOTTY: Which one?

SARAH: That burgundy one with the like... the like indian-y sort of patterns on? Aah what are those patterns / called? Like -

LOTTY: No sorry.

SARAH: Paisley! With the paisley patterns! You know which one I mean though right? That one you always take?

LOTTY: I haven't seen it.

SARAH: You sure?

LOTTY: I swear! Can't you just wear something else and look for it when we get back?

SARAH: When we get back? Aaah. Shit. I completely forgot we were going to Grans today, I thought you said Thursday?

LOTTY: Today is Thursday.

PAUSE. SARAH MAKES AN AWKWARDLY APOLOGETIC FACE.

SARAH: I -

LOTTY: Sarah! you said you would come today.

SARAH: It slipped my mind.

LOTTY: Where are you going then?

SARAH: Err... Harry's.

LOTTY: Sarah, Gran is ill.

SARAH: Yes. I know that. Do you think I don't know that?

LOTTY: Look, the nurse said we need to go today. We can't let her down.

SARAH: I just don't really know what to say to her anymore. She just forgets everything I tell her.

LOTTY: She's dying.

SARAH: We don't *know* that, we can't possibly know -

LOTTY: They told us.

SARAH: I know but they didn't say for sure. No one can say for sure. And besides sometimes these things take years.

LOTTY: Yes but she's weak, she needs help.

SARAH: But she *does* have help. You should be out living your life, Lot. / It's not our place to -

LOTTY: I don't mind doing it! I really don't. And Mum's not going to do these things and you know it. She needs us.

SARAH: I know she does but I see her at least once a week. Which is quite a lot of time to see one person, if you ask me.

LOTTY: Why are you even going to see Harry? I thought he broke up with you?

SARAH: That's a bit harsh.

LOTTY: Well, it's true.

SARAH: Why are you saying this? You know it's far more complicated than that.

LOTTY: Okay. Whatever.

*PAUSE. SARAH MAKES TO LEAVE THE ROOM BEFORE SUDDENLY TURNING.*

SARAH: Sorry, just to clarify, you definitely don't have my jumper do you?

LOTTY: No.

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*SARAH AND LOTTOMY SIMULTANEOUSLY MOVE TO THE WALL TO DRAW ON EACH OTHER'S HEIGHTS.*

SARAH: Gran. I saw you cry last week. I've never seen your tears...  
"I'm getting old" you'd say,  
for the third time that day.  
And so I hold your hand,  
The veins, a vibrant blue beneath your translucent skin;  
my smooth, taught against your thin, crinkled pastry.  
Lotty says you cry all the time now.

They've put you on more pills which go in this box for all the days and times  
you're meant to take them. Lotty says we have to check it, incase you forget.  
Freaks the fuck out of me.

On a Monday, I steal Mum's baccy, get to the gates, find Lizzie, turn back  
and we smoke rollies under the railway bridge.

I do that on Tuesday too...

And now on a Wednesday because Classics is dumb, so I may as well.

Last night I had a fight with Lotty because she told Gran I'd been bunking  
off. Fat lot of help that's done. Gran is ill. Being ill gives you more time to  
worry.

And worry

LOTTY: "Is like a rocking chair  
It gives you something to do,  
but doesn't get you anywhere."

SARAH: We are worriers  
A family of worries

LOTTY: An army of worriers.

SARAH: The three musketeers.  
Fret fret fret.  
Least they haven't put me on red report yet...

LOTTY: Time for school Sarah!

SARAH: Ugh.

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*THE GIRLS MOVE DOWN STAGE TO SIT IN CHAIRS ON OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE STAGE. SARAH GETS OUT HER BACCY AND STARTS ROLLING.*

LOTTY: I like maths; I like the certainty of it.  
I usually enjoy my maths classes

SARAH: Lot's the clever one.

LOTTY: The concentration, the calculation  
I feel like a computer, a human number machine.

SARAH: She would never bunk.

LOTTY: But today, I stick to the basics. I simply count,  
count the seconds restraining me from where I need to be.  
One more clock tick, one more sip.  
But no amount of water can erode  
this rock wedged in my throat.  
Dots, lines, subtractions, multiplications, squares  
pivoting, stumbling, bleeding nonsense in my head.  
Get the text, scrunch up the work sheet,  
"She's going going under; she won't have long"  
nothing to be done,  
1 and a half miles; no choice but to run.  
48, 49, 50.  
Rhythmical steps, I count each one.  
Then I count the number of times she plaited my hair  
and then how many times she would whisper jokes into my ear  
or pick ripe fruit for us to share.  
120 steps.  
I add it all up: a montage,  
a life of jigsaw puzzles,  
classic novels and puff pastry.  
A life that could have filled the scheme of my years  
condensed into a single chapter.  
280 steps.

Round a second corner,  
nearly trip over  
a crack in the  
pavement  
inhale, exhale,  
500 steps.  
Slip through the gaps between the confetti of people  
calculate, again: subtract them.  
If they were not there perhaps I would be with her already  
perhaps if it had not been so hot, so sweltering  
this journey would have been more steady.  
900 steps.  
Subtract the people, the sun, the school,  
all the things I had to do that day.  
I would have been there,  
where she lay  
I would have been there.

I reach for the door, go into her room  
I watch her inhale, exhale;  
watch her rise and fall, witness each part  
subtracting from me, there is nothing  
more certain, more final than  
this.

But you weren't there.

SARAH: I was there.

LOTTY: Why are you saying it like that?

SARAH: Like what?

LOTTY: Like you're taking the piss. Like it doesn't matter.

SARAH: That's not what I meant. What I mean is that I was there. You keep going on about it as if I wasn't.

LOTTY: Well you weren't.

SARAH: I got there eventually.

LOTTY: After 4 hours.

SARAH: She was still with us.

LOTTY: But she couldn't speak, you couldn't speak to her.

SARAH: She didn't need to speak to me, she had you, all she wanted was for you / to be there

LOTTY: That isn't true.

SARAH: Yes it is. You know it is.

LOTTY: Well you weren't there, you're never there. And now she's gone.

SARAH: I know. I -

LOTTY: It just seems like... like you don't care.

SARAH: What, because I'm not crying? Because I'm not having a break down or wearing her tooth on a chain around my neck or something? Look, I'm obviously well aware I wasn't there when I should have been. But there's nothing I can do about it now.

*THEY EXCHANGE A GLANCE BEFORE BOLTING INTO THEIR RESPECTIVE ROOMS. THE LIGHTS DIM SO THAT WE ONLY SEE SARAH. SHE PICKS UP HER NOTEPAD AND STARTS READING FROM IT.*

SARAH: What happens to the sum of you  
When such a vital part  
Has been subtracted?

*SHE GETS A POT OF PAINT AND A BRUSH AND SMEARS IT ONTO THE GIRLS DIVIDING ROOMS.*

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*BOTH GIRLS LIE DOWN STAGE, SAME AS BEGINNING.*

LOTTY: Do you still have it?

SARAH: Not really sure, to be honest. Probably, somewhere. Why?

LOTTY: Oh no reason. Just curious. You used to write in it all the time.

Like I remember this one time we went to the beach with Gran and you spent the whole time writing this story about a pink Dolphin named Penny who came to the shore and spoke to you in dolphin language that only you could understand and, and... well I don't really know what happened -

SARAH: *[laughing.]* Oh yeah I think I remember that... sounds like Free Willy.

LOTTY: That's what I said! But you / got -

SARAH: I got mad. Banging film, to be fair.

*BOTH LAUGH.*

SARAH: Mum's gone again, hasn't she?

LOTTY: Yep.

SARAH: You can stay here as long as you like.

LOTTY: I'm leaving in the morning.

SARAH: Where are you going?

Lotty: Dad got in contact -

SARAH: Dad? We haven't spoken to him in like 10 years! Where does he even live?

LOTTY: Ireland.

SARAH: Ireland?

LOTTY: Yeah. I'm going to stay there for a while. Flight leaves tomorrow morning.

SARAH: Christ. Okay.

LOTTY: He's a twat I know, but... I just need to spend some time... away.

SARAH: It's fine. I understand. *[Pause.]* I'm sorry.

LOTTY: What for?

SARAH: For not being there. For acting like I don't care when I *do*, for being a shit sister, for not listening, for... leaving you, for... feel free to stop me at any point, by the way. For -

LOTTY: *[laughing.]* Stop stop. It's fine. I forgive you.

*PAUSE. LOTTY LEANS HER HEAD ON SARAH'S SHOULDER.*

SARAH: *[Jovial.]* You better learn to Irish jig. But properly. I mean your dancing is good, don't get me wrong but...

LOTTY: I'll give it a go. Just for you.

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*LOTTY GOES TO PICK UP SARAH'S NOTEBOOK DOWNSTAGE, WHILST SARAH GOES TO HER ROOM TO PICK UP THE ONE UPSTAGE. THEY READ FROM THEM.*

SARAH: I was moulded by the faded paving stones  
which ran up and down my grandmother's street;  
I would jump over cracks in the concrete  
like my life depended on it,  
thinking I might slip between the fine lines  
and be consumed by the creatures lurking beneath  
the safety of my family;  
my sister's laugh, opening doors  
to suburban homes, each identical,  
each containing a widow or a wife or a life  
so often forgotten about.

I was moulded, not only by each chromosome  
passed down from your dimpled smile,  
your eyelashes and fingernails, but by your home:  
blocked drains, religious relics  
crossword puzzles spread over brown carpets,  
and that dusty liquor cabinet, each bottle still full  
with the weight of your tears,  
because he could never return to drink them away.

LOTTY: We grew up on my grandmother's sofa, her thick bolognese and milky tea.  
We were moulded by the rough bark on her frail, contorted apple tree,  
which left my elbows, my feet, my knees covered in splinters.

SARAH: Until I left her.  
Left her in a place where she had no one left to nurture.

LOTTY: And soon, all of these things will also grow alien to me;  
The neighbour's house,  
the three legged black cat,  
the apple tree, it's roots stabbing through the pavement

SARAH: Each piece of concrete crumbling beneath my feet;  
blocks coming loose like baby teeth,  
they fly into the windows, the walls, the doors.  
Glass cutting flesh, bricks crashing into my chest.



LOTTY: Then, the cracks will be plastered over  
with gum and blood and rain and tears and cement;  
the monsters will still live underneath,  
but you won't be there to protect us.

THE END.