



The Girl of Ink and Stars

A play by Satinder Chohan
Based on the book by Kiran Millwood Hargrave

Latitude N53°23' 07.9" Longitude W 1°27' 58.8"

PLAY SCRIPT



THE ISLE OF JOYA





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based on the book by
Kiran Millwood Hargrave

The play *The Girl of Ink and Stars* was commissioned by Inspire: Culture, Learning and Libraries, a community benefit society delivering cultural and learning services across Nottinghamshire. It was produced and created by The Spark Arts for Children, a charity offering children the opportunity to discover and enjoy the arts as audiences, as learners and as creators of their own art.

Supported using public funding by Arts Council England.

The Girl of Ink and Stars is based on an original novel by Kiran Millward Hargrave.



The Girl of Ink and Stars

A play by Satinder Chohan

Based on the book by Kiran Millwood Hargrave

Audio Drama first published 19 October 2020

Audio Drama - Creative Team and Cast List

Director - Adel Al-Salloum

Writer - Satinder Chohan

Composer - Craig Vear

Isabella - Sally Ann Staunton

Pablo - Reece Carter

Da - Dave 'Stickman' Higgins

Company Stage Manager - Kate Bosomworth

Produced by: The Spark Arts for Children in association with
Inspire: Culture, Learning and Libraries.

Original production

First performed by The Spark Arts for Children, Leicester UK
on 26 July 2019 at Beeston Library, Nottinghamshire.

Toured East Midlands Libraries 26 July to 22 August 2019

The Girl of Ink and Stars is based on an original novel by
Kiran Millward Hargrave. With thanks to Kiran and her agent
The Artist Partnership, 21 - 22 Warwick Street, London, W1B 5NE

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Design and Typography by Mooli

INTRODUCTION

Based on the award-winning book by Kiran Millwood Hargrave, *The Girl of Ink and Stars* tells the story of Isabella and, her lifelong friend Pablo's journey into the forbidden and unknown territories of their island, in a search for their missing friend.

The play, written by Satinder Chohan, was created in 2019 specially to be performed in library spaces. That summer it toured 47 libraries with family audiences gripped by the tale of myths, maps and monsters.

In summer 2020, when the disruption caused by Covid-19 meant our libraries could not host theatre productions, we explored new ways of bringing exciting and imaginative stories to children and families. Inspire, working with The Spark Arts for Children, wanted to bring writer Satinder's words to life again. The Spark reunited the team who had so brilliantly created the original theatre production and set about transforming the play into an audio drama.

From homes or classrooms, the audio drama, allowed children to be transported to the mythical Isle of Joya and immerse themselves in Isabella and Pablo's treacherous journey.

With the play script we hope children will be inspired to relive and recreate the adventure.

The Girl of Ink and Stars audio drama is available to listen to, until October 2021 at www.inspireculture.org.uk/inkandstars

Inspire: Culture, Learning and Libraries is a National Portfolio Organisation, working hard to create an exciting programme of arts and cultural events for children and families. Together with The Spark Arts for Children we provide access to fun and imaginative theatrical experiences for children and families.

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ACT 1: THE ISLE OF JOYA

PROLOGUE

Gromera, Isle of Joya

ISABELLA and PABLO, taller and broader, sit on black sand around a small crackling fire by the sea, waves gently pushing against the shore.

ISABELLA: I could stay here under the stars forever.

PABLO: We can't.

ISABELLA: I know Horse Boy.

PABLO: You're back to school tomorrow and I've got work.

ISABELLA: Yes, summer holidays are over now.

PABLO: Like this fire. *[Getting up.]* Come on, time to go –

ISABELLA: But I saved my best story til last...

PABLO: Isa, your Da will be waiting.

ISABELLA: Please Pablo, just one more.

PABLO: Only if you draw me my own special map of Gromera.

ISABELLA: Deal!

They shake hands.

PABLO: First, more fire.

PABLO puts down another log.

ISABELLA: Ready?

PABLO *[sitting down]*: Ready.

ISABELLA: One thousand years ago, this Isle of Joya was a floating island, free from the earth, sailing the ocean like a living ship.

PABLO: Oh not this one again.

ISABELLA: An island with no forested border. No Forgotten Territories. Songbirds in every tree. At the heart of this beautiful island, lived a very brave girl.

PABLO: Don't tell me – you?

ISABELLA: Her name was Arinta.

PABLO sighs and rolls his eyes, prodding at the fire with a stick.

ISABELLA: One day, a fierce fire demon called Yote saw the floating Isle of Joya and wanted it all to himself. Yote was as long as a river. Hot as the sun. From his underground lair, he built a tall column of rocks to climb through and caught Joya. He hooked Joya to the seabed. The people of Joya were terrified. They knew Yote wanted the island for the Fire Realm –

ISABELLA/PABLO: - and their lives were in danger.

ISABELLA: Arinta was sad. She loved Joya. Loved its forests, its sea, its songbirds. So, that same night, she stole her father's sword and crept out of the house. She headed straight for Yote. Arinta journeyed deep beneath the earth, drenching herself in a magic waterfall on the way to protect herself against Yote's flames. She walked and walked til she arrived at Yote's lair. She called out:

ISABELLA/PABLO: 'Yote?'

ISABELLA: Yote ignored her. He was clearing away the earth to the island, ready to swallow up Joya. Arinta didn't give up. She stabbed the rock walls to set the sea on Yote. Yote got scared. He knew the sea would swallow him up. If she stopped, Yote agreed not to take the island. Arinta left her sword in the rock so Yote knew she was keeping her word.

PABLO: Very brave but...

ISABELLA: Yote didn't want the islanders to know a little girl outwitted him. But he couldn't destroy the island because –

ISABELLA/PABLO: - oaths bind demons for a thousand years.

ISABELLA: So he sent his fire dogs after Arinta. They chased her through the tunnels until she got lost. Arinta was never found again.

PABLO *[getting up]*: The End.

ISABELLA: What do you think happened to her?

PABLO: Nothing. Because it's just a story.

ISABELLA: Some say she became the river. Others, her spirit is still down there –

PABLO makes scary ghost sounds.

ISABELLA: - making sure Yote keeps his promise. Arinta is still looking after Joya.

PABLO: It's a story.

ISABELLA: A thousand years must be over and if a thousand years is over, Yote is no longer bound by the thousand-year oath.

PABLO *[pulling up ISABELLA]*: It's late.

ISABELLA: Ok. I'll put the fire out.

ISABELLA stamps out the fire.

ACT 1 SCENE 1

Gromera Market Square

In a dusty sunrise haze in the deserted Market Square, ISABELLA is drawing a map, marking Gromera. As the wind howls, ISABELLA pulls her school blazer around her. A strangeness fills the air. Huge chattering ravens circle, manically flapping their wings. ISABELLA sketches more firmly. PABLO runs on.

PABLO: Isabella!

ISABELLA [*jumping*]: Oh! You scared me!.. [*Quickly rolling up the map, stuffing it into her satchel.*] Why aren't you at work?

PABLO: Come with me.

ISABELLA: I can't. It's our first day back to school and I'm waiting for Cata - she's late.

PABLO: Isa, there's a village curfew -

ISABELLA: Is that why no-one's around?

PABLO: - and there's no school.

ISABELLA: Why?

PABLO: Cata's missing.

ISABELLA: What? How?

PABLO: She's been working in the Governor's kitchen all summer -

ISABELLA: Earning money to help her Mum, like you.

PABLO: Yesterday, she went into the orchard -

ISABELLA: But it's at the edge of the forest..

PABLO: - to pick some dragon fruit.

ISABELLA: No-one's allowed.

PABLO: She's been missing since then.

ISABELLA: Is anyone looking for her?

PABLO: What do you think?

ISABELLA: When Lupe went missing for an hour at my house, the Governor sent out a huge search party for his daughter.

PABLO: Cata's family isn't rich enough or important enough –

ISABELLA: Someone needs to find her!

PABLO: Something very odd is going on.

ISABELLA: What do you mean?

PABLO *[points towards the sea]*: Listen carefully.

Beyond the howling wind in the distance, ISABELLA hears agitated animal sounds.

ISABELLA: What's that sound?

PABLO: I was just at the water's edge. The animals are running into the sea. Birds are flying backwards into it.

ISABELLA: Backwards...?

PABLO: Dead animals are filling the harbour. The Governor's horses, cattle, chickens, goats – all drowned. Look - the ravens are already circling, swooping.

ISABELLA: What's going on?

PABLO: The Governor's horses were in a strange mood this morning – one kicked me, bruised my arm *[shows the bruise]*, before they all bolted and ran. I couldn't stop them. The goats were bunched up against the gate, before they crashed through too.

ISABELLA: Miss La was flapping like crazy in her chicken coop this morning. Pep was hissing, tail up, trying to claw her way out of the house.

PABLO: Something is scaring those animals.

ISABELLA: Something bad.

PABLO: Not just bad. A bad omen. Like, something else has arrived to make the animals run into the sea like that. We need to go -

ISABELLA: - and find Cata.

PABLO: No.

ISABELLA: Then I'll go alone.

PABLO: You can't.

ISABELLA: The Governor might forbid us to leave the island but he can't forbid us from going further into the island.

PABLO: You can't go into the forest -

ISABELLA: Cata's missing -

PABLO: - and the Forgotten Territories alone.

ISABELLA: She's out there - alone!

PABLO: It's too dangerous.

ISABELLA: What if it was me? Would you leave me out there?

PABLO: Course not.

ISABELLA: She's my friend and if the grown ups won't look for her, I'm going to find her - with or without you.

ISABELLA *runs off, leaving PABLO standing alone.*

PABLO *(shouting after):* Don't Isa, it's not safe!

ACT 1 SCENE 2

Isabella's House

Miss La squawks and flaps her wings manically against her chicken coop. Pep hisses. ISABELLA is packing.

ISABELLA: Miss La, stop flapping! And Pep, stop clawing!... *[Pep miaows.]* No Pep, I can't rub your tummy, I have to pack...Ok, I've got Da's map tools - ink, quills, paper, leather pad, compass...his dagger... -

A knock on the door. ISABELLA walks to open it. Pep miaows.

ISABELLA: Someone's breaking the curfew...*[Through the door.]* Who is it?

PABLO: Me.

ISABELLA opens the door to PABLO and hastily closes the door.

ISABELLA: You shouldn't be outside.

PABLO: But you can be?

ISABELLA: Cata could be in serious trouble somewhere.

PABLO: Then I can't let you go alone.

ISABELLA *[walking back to her room]*: We need to hurry before my Da gets home.

PABLO *[following]*: We need to plan -

ISABELLA: No time.

PABLO: - and prepare - carefully.

ISABELLA hands two flasks to PABLO.

ISABELLA: Fill these two flasks please.

PABLO pauses.

ISABELLA: Quickly.

PABLO sighs and goes off to fill the flasks. Miss La squawks and Pep hisses.

ISABELLA: Not now you two...*[Packing.]* Right, we'll need this...and...this...

PABLO *[returning]*: Miss La and Pep are really scared.

ISABELLA: Because something isn't right...

PABLO *[handing over the flasks]*: Two full flasks.

ISABELLA *[packing]*: Thank you.

PABLO: Shouldn't you pack lightly?

ISABELLA: We'll need all Da's map tools. If we head into the Forgotten Territories, it's unmapped. We'll need to map our way through - and get back.

PABLO: Lucky you inherited your Da's skills then.

ISABELLA *[moving around]*: I'm not as good as him yet.

PABLO: You will be one day.

ISABELLA: For now, I know just enough to get us there and back.
[Packing.] Right, dragon-tree sap for ripped maps -

PABLO: - and repairing broken shoes.

ISABELLA: Exactly.

ISABELLA picks up the woodlight.

PABLO: Woah, what's that?

ISABELLA: Great-Great-Grandfather Riosse's woodlight -

PABLO: Glows so brightly!

ISABELLA: To help us light the way.

PABLO: You've never shown me that before.

ISABELLA: I haven't?

PABLO: Or told me the story.

ISABELLA: I'll tell you later. *[Packing.]* Da's star chart, so we'll know the position of the stars, as we walk.

PABLO: Shouldn't you ask him before you take that – and all his other things?

ISABELLA: Because then he'll give me permission and let me go?

PABLO: Isa –

ISABELLA: And the final, most important object of all – *[holding up Ma's map]* my Ma's ancient map.

PABLO: It's fraying, round the edges.

ISABELLA: We have to be careful with it.

PABLO: Will it even last the journey?

ISABELLA: It has to. *[Rolls up and packs the map.]* In it goes – and we're packed.

PABLO: We really should make a plan.

ISABELLA: We'll figure it all out as we go.

PABLO: We're not just going down to the beach in Gromera.

ISABELLA *[lifting the satchel]*: No, we're going into the unmapped Forgotten Territories, no idea what lies ahead or what we should plan for.

PABLO: Here, I'll carry the satchel.

ISABELLA: Because you're stronger?

PABLO: No...so you can – you can – map make.

ISABELLA: I can do both. You carry your satchel. I'll carry mine.
[Swinging the satchel across her torso.] What's in yours anyway?

PABLO: Don't we need to eat?

ISABELLA: Food! I almost forgot.

PABLO: Lucky I'm going with you.

ISABELLA: Aren't I?

Miss La continues to squawk and flap as Pep hisses.

ISABELLA: Miss La, I've filled up your chicken feed, so you won't run out. Pep, I've left the back door open and plenty of water bowls for you. I have to leave you both alone for a while, so best behaviour for Da please. I'll be back soon as I can.

PABLO: We should tell someone.

ISABELLA: No. If we do, they won't let us go.

PABLO: I'm a man. I can go.

ISABELLA: You're a boy.

PABLO: And you're a girl, so people need to know.

ISABELLA: You're a boy and so what?

PABLO: Your Da needs to know.

ISABELLA: Girls can go on adventures too.

PABLO: You ever heard of a girl going on an adventure?

ISABELLA: Arinta.

PABLO: She wasn't a very good heroine though was she?

ISABELLA: Why not?

PABLO: The fire dogs eat her at the end.

ISABELLA: No, her spirit is still alive and she stays down there to protect us.

PABLO: That's working out well. Anyway, it's a story. In a story, you can decide what happens at the end.

ISABELLA: It's not a story.

PABLO: It's a story.

ISABELLA: It's not a – *[Stops herself.]* Look, if you're coming with me, I'm leaving right now.

ISABELLA walks out as PABLO follows, slamming the front door as they go.

ACT 1 SCENE 3

Beyond Gromera

Dusk on a muggy evening. PABLO leads, scanning the trees. ISABELLA follows, scratching map lines on a pad.

PABLO: I've never been so far from home.

ISABELLA: Nor me.

PABLO: What do you think we'll find, on the island?

ISABELLA: More forest? The River Arintara? The Forgotten Territories?...I never thought I'd get to see those.

PABLO: They always seemed made-up.

ISABELLA: Like a different country.

A snapping sound. PABLO yelps, striking out at the darkness with a flask.

ISABELLA: Sorry! I snapped a twig.

PABLO breathes a sigh of relief.

PABLO: It's getting really dark.

ISABELLA: I can't even see the lines I'm marking for the new map.

PABLO: Forest ahead looks like it's getting taller and darker too.

Unpacking her satchel, ISABELLA takes out Ma's map, handing it to PABLO.

ISABELLA: We need this.

PABLO: Your Ma's map?

ISABELLA: Ma's map of Joya, including the Forgotten Territories, before they were Forgotten.

PABLO: It's so old...

ISABELLA: So old, it was made before the Banishment, before the Governor arrived, even before Da's family settled here from Afrik before all that. Made when Joya was still a floating island. Da used to say that if Arinta were real –

PABLO: She wasn't.

ISABELLA *[ignoring PABLO]*: That Arinta would have lived in a Joya that looked exactly like this one on Ma's map. *[Pointing on the map.]* There's our village – Gromera - in the East, the Marisma swamp in the middle and the forest and Arintan waterfall, West of Gromera.

PABLO: Don't tell me, the waterfall Arinta went through to confront Yote?

ISABELLA: The very one.

PABLO: The map's blank in the centre.

ISABELLA: Because it's unmapped. I can map it. I can't wait to see what the centre holds. I'll make a map Da will be proud of. And look - if you hold this map up to the light you can see the faintest lines -

PABLO: It's too dark.

ISABELLA takes out the glowing woodlight from the satchel.

ISABELLA: Will this help?

PABLO: The woodlight...

ISABELLA: See the faint lines now?

PABLO: Like the veins of a leaf.

ISABELLA: I'll hold Ma's map, you take the woodlight.

PABLO: Gladly...How are you drawing your map?

ISABELLA: Every hundred yards or so, I mark a line. When the compass changes direction, I make an arrow under the line to show the new bearings, checking the way with the stars - easier now they're getting brighter.

PABLO: Mum says stars are for reading fate and the future.

ISABELLA: Da says stars are for direction:

DA [v/o]: Stars are the earliest maps. The most precise. They can tell you where you are better than a compass. If you learn to read the stars, you'll never be lost.

ISABELLA: I'm mapping the same way I did for our treasure hunts in Gromera.

PABLO: Before you found new friends?

ISABELLA: After you became a Horse Boy.

PABLO: Only because Mum got sick and couldn't work with the horses anymore.

ISABELLA *[gently]*: I know...

PABLO *[offering the flask]*: Sip of water?

ISABELLA: Map making hands are full.

PABLO *[tenderly]*: Here, let me...

PABLO holds the flask to ISABELLA'S lips so she can drink.

ISABELLA: You need fuel too.

PABLO takes a swig and puts the flask away.

PABLO: Wait - isn't that the River Arintara just ahead?

ISABELLA: We need to cross it to get to the border forest.

Boots crushing the undergrowth along a narrow path, PABLO lights the way, as ISABELLA map-makes. They ford the River Arintara and approach the forest.

ISABELLA: This must be the border forest.

PABLO: Shouldn't there be tall thorn bushes here?

ISABELLA: With huge warning bells.

PABLO *[shining the woodlight]*: Right here.

ISABELLA: Pulled down.

PABLO: Trampled.

ISABELLA: The ropes connecting the bells have been cut –

PABLO picks up a bell and rings it.

ISABELLA: Don't make a noise!

PABLO *[putting down the bell]*: Sorry.

ISABELLA: Bushes have been trampled in this direction - ahead.

PABLO: They did this didn't they?

ISABELLA: The Banished?

PABLO: Look -

ISABELLA: - animal tracks.

PABLO: Like a herd of animals has rushed through.

ISABELLA: Something to do with Cata?

PABLO: I don't know.

ISABELLA: If we take this path, we cross into a part of Joya forgotten by everyone on Joya.

PABLO: Isa, we can still turn back -

ISABELLA *[whips out Da's dagger a little too hastily]*: With this, we won't have to.

PABLO: Careful!

ISABELLA: Sorry.

PABLO: Where did you get that?

ISABELLA: I stole Da's dagger from Afrik.

PABLO: That too?

ISABELLA: We might need it.

PABLO: Sharp teeth.

ISABELLA: Sharp blade.

PABLO: You're ready to use that?

ISABELLA: If I have to.

PABLO: You can't even throw stones at ravens.

ISABELLA: We'll see... *[Pause.]* Ready?

PABLO *[deep breath]*: Ready.

ISABELLA and PABLO look at each other. Pause. ISABELLA takes a deep breath and steps forward into the forest, crunching the undergrowth.

ISABELLA: Cata, we're coming.

PABLO follows.



ACT 2: THE FORGOTTEN TERRITORIES

ACT 2 SCENE 1

PABLO lights the way, ISABELLA lags behind, map-making.

DA [v/o]: Each of us carries the map of our lives on our skin, in the way we walk, even in the way we grow. See here, how my blood runs not blue at my wrist, but black? Your Ma always said it was ink. I am a cartographer through to my heart.

PABLO *[sipping from his flask]*: Hurry! No time to mark every step.

ISABELLA *[hurries forward]*: Sorry!

PABLO *[stops]*: Can you smell that?

ISABELLA: Sharp, like Lupe's birthday fireworks.

PABLO: Sulphur...The trees are all dead...

ISABELLA: No, don't touch those bushes!

PABLO: They're oozing black sap.

ISABELLA: Feeding off darkness, not water. *[Consulting Ma's map.]* Ma's map says pine and dragon trees should be here. *[Scratching the pad.]* I'll mark these black trees for the new map...

PABLO: It can't be the drought - the wheat in Gromera is still gold.

ISABELLA: What do you think it is?

PABLO: Strange?

ISABELLA: Cata must have been so frightened...

PABLO: The trees are thinning out...

ISABELLA: Path is running out too. Let's get to the Arintan waterfall. Quickly.

ISABELLA leads and PABLO follows. Dawn breaks. Water trickles close by. They step out of a copse of trees.

PABLO: This is the mighty waterfall of your Arinta myth?

ISABELLA: A weak trickle...

PABLO: River is dry and cracked too.

ISABELLA *[looking up]*: Is that a cave up there? Behind where the waterfall should be?

ISABELLA and PABLO scramble up into the cave.

ISABELLA/PABLO: Cata? *[Echoes.]* Cata? *[Echoes.]*...

ISABELLA *[exploring]*: There's another cave down here.

ISABELLA/PABLO *[entering the cave]*: Cata? *[Echoes.]* Cata? *[Echoes.]* Cata!

ISABELLA: Nothing...

PABLO: Don't worry, we'll find her...First, some water? Food? A fire?

ISABELLA and PABLO leave the cave and scoop river water to drink.

PABLO: The river water is delicious. I'll refill the empty flask with it too.

ISABELLA: Da always said use the staler water first on a journey, no matter how tempting to drink the freshest. So let's use the flask from home first.

PABLO gives ISABELLA the refilled flask. She takes out the flask from home and puts the refilled one in her satchel. She leaves the satchel on a rock by the riverbank.

PABLO *[taking food from his satchel]*: I packed bread – and pine honey for you!

ISABELLA: Pine honey! My favourite.

They make a fire, prepare and eat food together.

PABLO: Isa, tell me about the woodlight.

ISABELLA: This woodlight is all that's left of Great-Great-Grandfather Riosse's boat. He named his boat 'Luna Flotante' - 'Floating Moon'. The boat was made from a special tree, out of glowing wood, light as a songbird's bone. Glazed with dragon-tree sap, 'Floating Moon' blazed like a beacon of fire at night. The fish loved its light, so Great-Great-Grandfather Riosse was never short of food. But one night, there was a terrible storm. A strong wind blew the boat through the air like a flying bird. Great-Great-Grandfather Riosse tied himself to the mast but it broke in the storm. Flung from the boat, tossed far out on the sea, he almost died. The mast saved him, kept him afloat til the storm faded. A passing boat rescued him and when Great-Great-Grandfather Riosse told them what had happened, the crew insisted there had been no storm. His only proof was the broken mast still tied to his body - from which this woodlight comes.

PABLO: Was there really a storm?

ISABELLA: Da and I think so. Da says the boat was not of this earth. Says the island gave it to Great-Great-Grandfather Riosse - and then took it back. Because all things have a cycle. Return the way they came. Seasons, water, lives, even trees. You don't always need a map to find your path back. But often, it helps.

PABLO: That's my new favourite story.

ISABELLA: But it's not a story.

They laugh. Pause.

PABLO: So, where to now?

ISABELLA: Let me check the – *[panicking]* Where - ? Where's the satchel?

They run around looking frantically.

PABLO: There! In the river! *[Grabs the satchel.]* It's soaked!

ISABELLA opens the satchel, tips out its contents, including river water.

ISABELLA: Da's star chart! An inky mess! How can I make my map without knowing the position of the stars?

PABLO: And your Ma's map?

ISABELLA *[picks up Ma's map, despondent]:* Damp, stuck... *[Gently pulls it apart. Gasps.]* No, it's opening! The blank part, it's full of thick lines – and there's a red circle in the centre! I'll dry it, near the fire. *[Hurries to the fire.]* Oh no, the lines have dissolved! Pablo, I swear the map changed. I saw the faint lines so clearly, looping like a maze! Like a hidden layer –

PABLO: 'A hidden layer'?

ISABELLA: Was it the ancient layout of Joya? No villages marked, just lines and a big red circle in the centre.

PABLO: You didn't imagine it?

ISABELLA: No! The map was wet when I saw the hidden layer and when I held it close to the fire, it changed back. It's dry again...give me the flask - ! *[Pours water over the map.]* Nothing. *[Tries again.]* No, nothing. *[Tries again.]* Nothing.

PABLO: Too much pine honey?

ISABELLA: I didn't imagine it!

PABLO: Ok, my back and feet hurt. Sure yours do too -

ISABELLA: It was real.

PABLO *[lying down]*: Let's get some rest, then work out where we go next.

ISABELLA: You rest. I have to keep working on my new map of the island.

Under looming tree shadows, ISABELLA places the satchel on a rock, takes out the new map and consults the markings on the pad to continue working on it.

ISABELLA: Because this time, the island will not stay forgotten.

DA [v/o]: Leave space for what you don't know. Anyone can draw where they've been - only a cartographer knows how to draw it to fit with where he's about to be.

ACT 2 SCENE 2

In an ashen haze, ISABELLA and PABLO walk out of a claustrophobic landscape, towering trees on the left, grey rock wall on the right. A storm rumbles and the sea murmurs close by.

PABLO: Ahhh, space to breathe.

ISABELLA: Glad we've left all those towering trees and endless rock walls behind.

PABLO *[pointing]*: Look, a village arch.

ISABELLA: Must be the village of Gris. Shall we?

They stop under the arch, look at each other, then crunch the ground as they walk through. ISABELLA grips her knife tightly. The wind howls. The village creaks.

PABLO: The village square?

ISABELLA: No-one here.

PABLO: Walls are broken.

ISABELLA: Houses and streets are crumbling.

Bones crunch under their feet.

ISABELLA [*looking down*]: Rubble –

PABLO: - and bones?...

ISABELLA: It's a ghost village –

Shadows fall. PABLO and ISABELLA scream.

ISABELLA: A skeleton!

ISABELLA and PABLO catch their breath.

ISABELLA: Could Cata be here?

ISABELLA/PABLO [*looking around, calling*]: Cata? Cata?

PABLO [*points downwards*]: What's that? On the ground?

ISABELLA: A cross?

PABLO: Marked by dried blood.

ISABELLA: Teeth scattered on top.

PABLO [*picking up a tooth to examine*]: This isn't a human tooth.

ISABELLA [*taking the tooth*]: Heavy –

PABLO: - like a dog's rotten tooth.

ISABELLA [*looking around*]: What happened in this village?

PABLO: It was destroyed a long time ago.

ISABELLA: Cata can't be here...

PABLO: There's nothing here. Not even ravens.

A shadow moves. ISABELLA stops.

ISABELLA [*panicked*]: What was that?

PABLO: What?

ISABELLA [*scared*]: Behind you.

PABLO turns.

ISABELLA: Something moved.

PABLO: You spooked?

ISABELLA: You're not?

PABLO: No.

ISABELLA: Pablo, watch out!

ISABELLA drops the satchel. A shadowy blur wrestles with ISABELLA and PABLO, trying to strangle them with a vine. ISABELLA slashes at her attacker. PABLO breaks free and wrestles the attacker away from ISABELLA, who has fallen to the ground. The attacker runs, leaving PABLO and ISABELLA shocked and panting.

PABLO [*crouching*]: You ok?

ISABELLA [*swallowing, nodding*]: An animal?

PABLO: Or people?

ISABELLA: Came so fast.

PABLO [*concerned*]: Isa, you're bleeding.

ISABELLA [*wiping away blood*]: It's...it's...not...my blood.

PABLO: You used your dagger.

ISABELLA: I... I cut the attacker?

PABLO: I'll help you up.

As PABLO pulls up ISABELLA, something drops from her hand.

PABLO: You dropped something -

PABLO picks up a string bracelet from on top of the cross.

ISABELLA: That's - Cata's bracelet...

PABLO: You sure?

ISABELLA: I made it for her last birthday. Tied it on her wrist.

PABLO: How did you get it?

ISABELLA: Must have grabbed it, when I was being attacked.

PABLO: The Banished?

ISABELLA: We have to follow them.

PABLO: No. We need to stay away from them.

ISABELLA: They have Cata.

PABLO: If she's with them, no guarantee she's even ali -

ISABELLA: Don't say it.

ISABELLA takes out her map materials and scratches the leather pad.

ISABELLA: I'll mark where we are on the map. Then we head north to Carment.

PABLO: Why Carment?

ISABELLA: I've heard that's where the Banished live.

ACT 2 SCENE 3

A setting sun beats down. The wind howls and waves crash against nearby cliffs. ISABELLA and PABLO walk and wipe sea drops from their face.

PABLO: I can feel cold drops of surf hitting the cliffs up here.

ISABELLA: Da said these fierce winds that blow around Carment are from the Frozen Circle. Bears are white there and your breath falls in icicles from your nose. *[Pulls her jacket tightly around her]*. I'd like to go there one day.

PABLO *[pointing]*: There, another arch.

ISABELLA: Village of Carment.

Taking deep breaths. ISABELLA and PABLO step into Carment.

PABLO *[looking around]*: No-one but us again.

ISABELLA/PABLO: Cata? Cata? Cata, are you here? Cata?

ISABELLA: Do you think we'll find her?

PABLO: We just have to keep looking.

ISABELLA *[looking around]*: It's like Gromera in reverse here - sloping up, not down, to the coast.

PABLO: Big houses.

ISABELLA: Paint flaking, all over.

PABLO walks ahead, up the slope against the wind.

PABLO: Market square? It's curved...

ISABELLA: Is that the cliff edge there?

PABLO and ISABELLA walks towards the edge, the sea smashing rocks below.

PABLO: Harbour below.

ISABELLA: Boats long gone.

ISABELLA starts walking down stone steps to the bay.

PABLO: Where you going?

PABLO quickly follows. ISABELLA jumps from the steps onto the sand. She pulls off her boots, rolls up her trousers and runs towards the sea. PABLO does the same.

ISABELLA [*joyfully*]: The sand's as white as Gromera's is black!

PABLO: You're not allowed in the sea! Governor says so!

ISABELLA [*splashing her feet*]: He's not here now is he?

Joining her and laughing, PABLO scoops up ISABELLA as she tries to wriggle free.

PABLO: Take a breath!

ISABELLA [*laughing*]: Don't throw me in!

PABLO pretends to hurl ISABELLA into the sea. He sets her down gently.

PABLO: As if I would.

They drop to the sand, laughing.

PABLO: I got laughed at by other boys my age - for playing with you.

ISABELLA: Why?

PABLO: You were younger. A girl.

ISABELLA: I always wondered what I'd done.

PABLO: And I did have to take Mum's job when she got ill.

ISABELLA: You had to grow up faster than me.

PABLO: I'm sorry I stopped being around.

ISABELLA: Don't be. You're here now.

PABLO lies back on the sand. ISABELLA lies back alongside him. Pause.

PABLO: What's that pale star right there?

ISABELLA: Where?

PABLO *[moving closer]*: Right...there...

ISABELLA: That's...the North Star. Not the brightest star but the stillest. Da always calls it an anchor.

PABLO: An anchor around which the sky turns?

ISABELLA: Exactly... *[Pause. Getting up.]* I should check my map before it gets dark. *[Takes out the new map.]* I was so excited when I started it but it's not like Da's. It's dead, just ink on paper. Da's maps always feel so alive.

PABLO: Give it time, yours will too.

DA *[v/o]*: A cartographer makes maps come alive. Here, on Joya, I could make you a map of Afrik that would have you breathing the incense of the markets until you were dizzy with it. My map of the Frozen Circle could have you reaching for fur socks and running from a white bear! Well, almost...That's a way off for you little one. But this is a start! You have drawn your first map. Write your name across the top. Here, you can use my peacock quill. I-S-A-B-E-L-L-A. Perfect.

Waves crash. A low whistle, audible above the wind.

ISABELLA: What's that sound?

PABLO *[getting up]*: I don't know...Stay here, I'll have a look...will you be ok?

ISABELLA: Wasn't Arinta?

ISABELLA grips her knife tightly. PABLO makes a startled sound offstage.

ISABELLA [scrambling up, holding out the knife]: Pablo? Pablo?

A tussle. A shadowy blur grabs the knife and wrenches ISABELLA'S hands behind her. She kicks out and opens her mouth to scream. The shadowy blur pushes a substance into her mouth. ISABELLA falls forward into blackness.

ACT 2 SCENE 4

Loud clicking and clacking. Insects chirrup more loudly. ISABELLA wakes up groggy and aching in a wooden cage, circled by towering black trees. She pulls out the satchel from under her, squinting, until she can focus. BANISHED BOY, his face and body smeared with mud, except for fresh cloth bound round his arm, enters through a hole. His speech is full of flicks and clicks, his tongue clacking.

BANISHED BOY [holding out a clay pot]: Drink.

ISABELLA gulps down water.

ISABELLA: Where am I?

BANISHED BOY: The Marisma.

ISABELLA: The swamp?

BANISHED BOY: Swamp in the centre of the island.

ISABELLA: That's why the ground is so soft. Air smells of stale water.

BANISHED BOY: What's your name?

ISABELLA: Isabella. *[Pause.]* Are you the Banished?

BANISHED BOY: Banished here by the Governor.

ISABELLA: We never knew if you were real.

BANISHED BOY: Keep to ourselves.

ISABELLA: Do you have Pablo too? A boy. About your height.

BANISHED BOY: No boy.

ISABELLA: No Pablo... Do you have my friend Cata, a girl?

BANISHED BOY: No girl. No boy. Only you. Isabella. Before Carment, you were in Gris, village of bones?

ISABELLA: Yes but there was no-one else there.

BANISHED BOY: Poisoned air floated from the ground, killed everyone

-

ISABELLA: - and left all their bones scattered there?

BANISHED BOY: Not safe anywhere on Joya. See.

BANISHED BOY turns to reveal criss-crossed scars on his back.

ISABELLA: How did you get all those scars on your back?

BANISHED BOY: The Tibicenas.

ISABELLA: Tibicenas?

BANISHED BOY: Demon dogs.

ISABELLA: Like in the myth of Arinta...

BANISHED BOY: At first, we thought they were huge wolves.

ISABELLA: Wolves did live on the island once. In the forests, then the caves -

BANISHED BOY: Not those wolves. Bigger than wolves. Biggest creatures we've ever seen. Black as soot. Eyes red as fire. They're Yote's.

ISABELLA: Yote? He's real?

BANISHED BOY: They're his fire dogs, his Tibicenas. Came from hellfires below, ten days ago. Almost killed a girl in Gris.

ISABELLA: Cata?

BANISHED BOY: One Tibicena cornered her. We killed it to free the girl. She ran.

ISABELLA: To where?

BANISHED BOY: We don't know.

ISABELLA: Must have been Cata.

BANISHED BOY: Then more Tibicenas chased her. She's in a feeding pit. Or dead.

ISABELLA: No, she can't be - there's no body - yet. *[Holds out her wrist.]* Just her bracelet...

BANISHED BOY: She dropped it, running from the Tibicenas. I picked it up.

ISABELLA: I made it for her.

BANISHED BOY: In Gris, we made a cross out of Tibicena teeth to warn others.

ISABELLA: We saw.

BANISHED BOY: Those beasts don't get scared - and don't have souls. Just look like they've sucked all the light out of the world.

ISABELLA: Why are they here, now?

BANISHED BOY: They've been sent to clear the island - before Yote takes it.

ISABELLA *[gasps]*: So the thousand-year-old oath is real. And now, a thousand years must be over...

BANISHED BOY: That's why all the animals have fled to the sea.

ISABELLA: You know about the animals?

BANISHED BOY: The animals feel Yote first. Well, first after the island. You saw the black trees feeding off ash, the water drying up - ?

ISABELLA: We did.

BANISHED BOY: Yote.

ISABELLA: What will the Banished do?

BANISHED BOY: Escape to the sea, like the animals. Before greedy Yote swallows up this whole island and all the people and animals in it. The last of us leave here today. Most have left.

ISABELLA: For where?

BANISHED BOY: Gromera first. We'll take a ship from there.

ISABELLA: There's only the Governor's ship...

BANISHED BOY: Before he does.

A strange clicking begins, coming from everywhere at once, like distant rain. BANISHED BOY clicks his tongue. The clicking grows louder.

ISABELLA: What's going on?

BANISHED BOY: My people are ready to leave. We must leave now too. Because a deep darkness is descending - a darkness we cannot defeat. One that will swallow the ground from under our feet. Yote is coming.

ACT 2 SCENE 5

A starry, moonlit, muggy night. BANISHED BOY leads. ISABELLA follows.

BANISHED BOY: Hurry, we must catch the others.

ISABELLA *[wiping sweat, stumbles into BANISHED BOY]*: Oops, sorry.

BANISHED BOY: Dandelion root *[gives ISABELLA a handful of herbs]* to wake you up... We're almost at the end of the swamp.

ISABELLA *[swallowing the herbs]*: Then we follow the River Arintara to Gromera? Oh *[stumbles into BANISHED BOY again]* sorry -

BANISHED BOY: Shhhhh!

ISABELLA: What is it?

BANISHED BOY *[scanning the trees]*: You hear that?

ISABELLA: Only black trees rustling.

BANISHED BOY *[taking out a weapon]*: This time, I'm ready. Be still...

Silence. Suddenly a loud, rumbling, metallic roar flies towards them through the trees. ISABELLA clutches her stomach.

BANISHED BOY: You feel the Tibicenas?

ISABELLA: Churning my insides!

BANISHED BOY: They drive you out of yourself!...Isabella, you must run. Cross this way through the swamp, it's quicker. Then follow the river, and run!

Another thunderclap roar.

ISABELLA: And you?

BANISHED BOY: I have to join the rest and fight!

ISABELLA *[groaning, clutching her stomach]*: I'll help.

BANISHED BOY: No, go, run fast! Get home safe Isabella!

BANISHED BOY runs forward, waving his weapon. Another roar. A collective clicking. Claws crash through the trees, scraping the ground, followed by more howling in the trees behind.

As a giant paw falls, ISABELLA screams and runs.

ACT 2 SCENE 6

Pale morning light. ISABELLA swims through the black water and looping vines of the swamp. She pulls herself up and out. But the ground drops away and she skids screaming into a bowl-like dip.

ISABELLA *[holding her nose and breath]*: Ugh!.. Rotting flesh... bones... Ow!.. Ugh! Tibicena feeding pit?... Don't panic... just go...

ISABELLA crawls through the pit, til relieved, she stands on damp ground.

ISABELLA *[cleaning off vines and water]*: Ugh, out, finally!

In the distance, a slow, rippling silver thread shines.

ISABELLA *[overjoyed]*: A silver thread – the River Arintara!...Right, get clean.

She runs towards the trickle of water, cleaning the dried blood from her feet. A sloshing sound upstream.

ISABELLA *[scared]*: Someone's here...

ISABELLA scrambles behind the treeline, breathing hard. She runs out, when she sees PABLO sloshing about.

ISABELLA: Pablo! Pablo! *[Embracing PABLO.]* I'm so happy to see you!

PABLO: Isa!

ISABELLA *[blushing]*: How – how are you here?

PABLO: I saw you taken by the Banished. I tried to follow but lost you in the dark. I'm so sorry. I didn't want to leave you.

ISABELLA: I was so scared something had happened to you.

PABLO: I thought I'd never see you again.

They embrace.

PABLO: Did they hurt you?

ISABELLA: No, a Banished boy really looked after me.

PABLO: Where is he now?

ISABELLA: He told me to run home, while he went to fight the Tibicenas.

PABLO: The demon dogs? Like in the myth?

ISABELLA: They were chasing after us.

PABLO: O... k...

ISABELLA: We have to get back to Gromera, soon as we can.

PABLO: What about Cata?

ISABELLA: I don't want to leave her but if she hasn't been killed already -

PABLO: By the Banished?

ISABELLA: By the Tibicenas. We won't find her in time -

PABLO: In time for what?

ISABELLA: We need to leave now or the Tibicenas will hunt us down too. Yote is coming - to swallow up this whole island.

PABLO laughs.

ISABELLA: What's so funny?

PABLO: You saying Tibicenas and Yote with a straight face –

ISABELLA: The Tibicenas are real. Yote is real.

PABLO: What did the Tibicenas look like?

ISABELLA: The one I saw? Taller than twenty horses, covered in black, matted fur, moving on paws thick as tree trunks, flicking evil red eyes left and right –

PABLO: Sounds like a wolf to me.

ISABELLA: They drive you outside yourself. Your insides go funny, like a storm in your stomach.

PABLO *[jesting]*: Sounds like what happens after eating your Da's cooking.

ISABELLA: You wouldn't laugh if you'd been there.

PABLO: Ok, let's head back to Gromera. If you're tired, I'll carry you for a bit.

ISABELLA: Will you?

ISABELLA wraps her arms round PABLO'S neck, sinking her head to his. They walk.

PABLO *[pointing]*: Look, the Arintan waterfall.

ISABELLA *[relieved]*: Home is within reach.

PABLO sets down ISABELLA. They walk to the edge of the waterfall.

ISABELLA *[clutches her stomach]*: Oh no. No, no... my stomach...!

PABLO *[groaning, clutching his stomach]*: Mine too...What's that rumbling?

A Tibicena roars, like a thousand rocks smashing down a cliff and jumps at them.

ISABELLA: Tibicena's right behind us!

PABLO: Here, jump down to the riverbed!

PABLO helps ISABELLA jump down and splashes down after.

PABLO: Path's over there. Run!

The Tibicena jumps to face them.

PABLO: Go! You have to warn Gromera!

ISABELLA: I'm not leaving you!

The Tibicena snarls and slobbers, saliva stringing to the ground.

ISABELLA: A stick, next to you! Jab him!

PABLO grabs the stick and jabs it into the Tibicena's leg. The Tibicena roars, scratching PABLO across the face. PABLO falls back onto the riverbed, bleeding.

ISABELLA: Pablo! *[Hurling rocks.]* You monster, stay away from him! Stay away!

PABLO regains his senses, groaning. ISABELLA runs to help up PABLO.

ISABELLA: Grab my hand – we'll get to the cave, behind the waterfall, quick!

They scramble into the cave, ISABELLA pulling down PABLO with her.

ISABELLA *[whispering]*: Drop down here...You'll be ok.

PABLO *[breathless]*: Yes.

ISABELLA: It's wrenching my insides! Yours too?

PABLO *[breathless]*: Yes.

ISABELLA *[looking up]*: It's going to spring us! Stay low!

The Tibicena jumps at them. But with an ear-splitting crack, leaps straight through a hollow wall of rocks. A crunch. ISABELLA and PABLO freeze. Pause.

ISABELLA: The Tibicena just crashed through a wall of rocks! You alright?

PABLO *[sarcastically]*: Never better.

ISABELLA *[groaning]*: Stomach's still churning –

PABLO *[breathless]*: Mine too.

ISABELLA: Come on, I'll help you up –

ISABELLA takes PABLO'S hand and pushes against the wall to stand up.

ISABELLA: No! The wall's giving way...!

The wall gives way with a loud grind. Both plunge screaming into darkness.



ACT 3: THE LABYRINTH

ACT 3 SCENE 1

Darkness. Heavy breathing echoes around the cave. PABLO lies in front of ISABELLA, unconscious, chest rising and falling. Rock dust still raining down.

ISABELLA: Pablo?...Pablo?...

PABLO begins to stir, as ISABELLA feels around her.

ISABELLA *[sees PABLO]*: You're hurt!

PABLO opens his mouth, tries to speak.

ISABELLA: Don't – blood's trickling from your mouth.

PABLO: I fine. Just bith my tongue *[sticks out his tongue]*.

ISABELLA: Here, swill with water.

ISABELLA gives PABLO water, which he swills and spits out.

PABLO: What happened?

ISABELLA: We fell all the way down from that hole up there –

PABLO: – and nothing's broken?

ISABELLA: Our friend the Tibicena might be *[points]*. We landed on him.

PABLO *[moves off quickly]*: Ugh! Is it - is it dead?

ISABELLA: If it wasn't before, it is now. It's dead - and it's real.

PABLO: Stinky flesh and blood real.

ISABELLA *[looking up at the hole]*: Think we can climb back through the hole?

PABLO: We can try.

ISABELLA: I'll empty the satchel, climb onto your shoulders, throw the strap up, try to hook it to the ledge.

PABLO: Good plan.

ISABELLA empties the satchel, climbs onto PABLO'S shoulders, throwing up the strap, trying to hook the ledge.

ISABELLA *[climbing down]*: It's too far...I can't reach.

PABLO: What now?

ISABELLA: Do what Arinta did? 'She entered through a tunnel behind a waterfall'. We're behind a waterfall and if we can find a tunnel, like she did when she went to fight Yote -

PABLO *[exasperated]*: Arinta is make-believe.

ISABELLA *[poking]*: Like this Tibicena? Ugh. *[Wipes her finger]*. The Tibicenas came from somewhere. Banished Boy said they came from below. If there's no way up, there must be a way out...

PABLO *[pointing ahead]*: Into that darkness ahead?

ISABELLA: Ma's map! *[Lays down the map, stares hard at it]*. Hold the woodlight.

PABLO: What are you doing?

ISABELLA: Look - the map's changing! The trees, villages are disappearing - !

PABLO: Why now?

ISABELLA: It's the water! First time the map changed, it had been drenched by the River Arintara. When I tried to change the map again, I used water from the flask filled at home. Now the ground is damp from the waterfall. To change, the map has to be wet with water from –

ISABELLA/PABLO: – the River Arintara!

ISABELLA: To reveal the hidden layer!

PABLO: Clever Isabella!

ISABELLA *[pointing]*: These lines are tunnels –

PABLO: All over the island of Joya?

ISABELLA *[pointing]*: – and these circles, exits. There's a circle right above the waterfall image. Our way out.

PABLO: What's the red circle in the centre?

ISABELLA: Not sure...For now, let's empty out the stale water, refill the flasks with Arintara water.

They refill the flasks.

ISABELLA: I'll soak the map and then we'll follow it to an exit.

ISABELLA soaks the map. Setting off, their steps echo through the narrow tunnels. ISABELLA leads, tracing the route on Ma's map. PABLO holds the woodlight.

ISABELLA: Left...Right...Straight...Left...

PABLO: These tunnels stink.

ISABELLA: Map keeps steaming. Dampen please.

PABLO keeps wetting the map with flask water, as ISABELLA reads.

ISABELLA *[stopping]*: A crossroads. Four tunnels. Which way? *[Squints at the map.]* The map is drying out too quickly.

PABLO: We can't keep using water like this. We need to drink some too.

ISABELLA: Ok, I'll sketch the route. *[Pulling objects from the satchel.]* The dagger... my map - oh no, I left everything else back there, paper, ink - ! I'm sorry!

PABLO: Shhhh!

ISABELLA: I said I'm sorry!

PABLO *[whispers, puts his finger to her lips]*: Quiet...

ISABELLA *[whispers]*: Your stomach's churning too?

PABLO *[whispers]*: Yes...quick, let's hide, wedge into that crevice!

ISABELLA *[whispers]*: Hide the woodlight!

PABLO hides the woodlight. Both clutch their churning stomachs. A shuffle echoes down the tunnel, followed by loud growling. Suddenly, the tunnel shakes, dust falls. Tibicenas blur past from all directions, panting, growling, sniffing, returning each other's calls, rousing clouds of stinging dirt and an acrid smell in the air. Two Tibicenas sniff around the crevice but the pack sweeps them along. The shaking stops, leaving only falling dust and echoes. PABLO squeezes out. ISABELLA follows.

PABLO *[pulling out the woodlight]*: You ok?

ISABELLA: Churning like a storm. You?

PABLO: Same...How long til the Tibicenas reach the waterfall?

ISABELLA: They're following the scent back to where we came from, upwards. We need to make it to the waterfall first.

PABLO: Which way?

ISABELLA: I'll check on the -

ISABELLA opens her fist but the map is not there. Only a tiny fragment flutters out.

ISABELLA: No! *[Searching around.]* Ma's map must have ripped as we wedged in.

PABLO *[shining the woodlight on the ground]:* Over here...Torn pieces...

ISABELLA *[picking up fragments]:* The Tibicenas trampled all over it.

PABLO: Can we fix it?

ISABELLA *[shaking her head]:* No. We're lost.

PABLO *[gathers up the remaining fragments]:* Here, the rest of the map.

PABLO holds out the fragments for ISABELLA. She takes them, tries not to cry.

ISABELLA *[teary]:* Ma's map. All I had left of her...

PABLO *[holding her]:* I'm sorry.

Pause. ISABELLA gathers herself, takes a deep breath.

ISABELLA: Ok...we're close to where the map indicated an exit. When the Tibicenas came, we were... *[Thinking.]* That's it! South-east! Beneath the Arintara! The tunnel follows the curve of the river. We need to take the right hand passage. That's the way out!

PABLO: Let's go.

They walk and stumble, holding each other up. As the tunnels constrict, they bow heads, double up, til they crawl on their bellies, clothes catching on rough rocks.

PABLO: It's getting tighter.

ISABELLA: Tougher to stand. Easier to crawl.

PABLO: Getting hotter.

ISABELLA: No air, just that stench -

PABLO: Getting sharper.

ISABELLA: Stronger.

PABLO: How much longer?

ISABELLA: I think we're going the right way.

PABLO disappears around a corner. A thump from the darkness ahead.

ISABELLA: Pablo?...Pablo?...

PABLO: Isa, you've got to see this!...Just follow my voice and lower yourself down. It's safe.

ISABELLA lowers herself. They stand, looking around in awe.

ISABELLA: Wow!...A cave of a million crystals...

PABLO: Light bouncing -

ISABELLA: - shooting -

PABLO: - firing all over...

ISABELLA: Da once met a man who found a crystal cave under a river. He said some crystals are formed by water, others by fire.

PABLO: No water here, so fire must have formed these crystals.

ISABELLA: Because...the fire is from a fire pit. Just like in the Myth of Arinta.

PABLO: Not now.

ISABELLA: The fire pit is the strange red circle at the centre of the map!

PABLO: Isa, stop!

ISABELLA: The drought? Animals fleeing to the sea? People in Gris, poisoned by the air?...The knot on the map was close to the red circle. *[Points to a tunnel on the left.]* I think the exit is to the left. *[Points to a tunnel ahead.]* But that lower tunnel ahead, leads to the red circle...Yote is in that red circle.

PABLO: It's a story!

ISABELLA: It's a myth. A myth is something that happened so long ago people pretend it's not real - when it is.

PABLO: Yote is no more real than Arinta.

ISABELLA: Arinta was real! *[Voice echoes.]* And anyway, the Tibicenas? Even you said they were real when they were chasing us.

PABLO: Maybe they were wolves...

ISABELLA: Wolves as big as horses? Fur stinking of smoke?

PABLO: Because the wolves live underground, near a fire pit!

ISABELLA: The Tibicenas are driven by more than just hunger. They've been sent to clear the island - by Yote.

PABLO: Stop believing these things!

ISABELLA: But Arinta -

PABLO: It's a story. And you're not her!

ISABELLA *[wounded!]*: I don't think I'm...

PABLO: If this is the way out, I'm going - and you're coming with me.

ISABELLA: Don't tell me what to do.

PABLO: I'm older than you.

ISABELLA: I don't care. I'm going down that tunnel without you.

ISABELLA walks towards the tunnel of shimmering heat.

PABLO: Isabella!

Loud tremors as the ground shakes. A single crystal falls from the cave ceiling above, shattering between them. They fall to the ground. The world caves in.

ACT 3 SCENE 2

Head thumping, curled up in a ball, ISABELLA opens her eyes, squinting through the falling rock dust. Smashed boulders and crystals divide the cave.

ISABELLA: Pablo!...Pablo! *[Echoes.]*...

She cowers against a hot wall, her weeping echoing around the cave.

PABLO *[muffled sound]*: Isabella?...

ISABELLA gets up, runs her hands over the wall, finds a crack, talks into it.

ISABELLA: Find the crack, speak into it. I think this is a voice line.
[Listens to the crack.]

PABLO:...a voice what?

ISABELLA: Voice lines carry your voice. Something to do with the curve of the cave.

PABLO: What happened?

ISABELLA: I think...the crystal cave, caved in.

PABLO: What now? I've tried climbing over the rockfall.

ISABELLA: I'll try climbing over the boulders to get to you.

ISABELLA breathes heavily, arms shaking, as she tries climbing the boulders.

ISABELLA *(weepy)*: I can't...What about the tunnel to the exit?

PABLO: Blocked.

ISABELLA: The way we came into the cave, is it clear?

PABLO goes to check. He returns.

PABLO: Blocked. There's a gap near the top. I'll shift some rocks... get you across.

ISABELLA: It won't -

PABLO: Then we can get out, go home. I'll start now -

ISABELLA: - it won't work. I - I think you should go.

PABLO: I'm not going anywhere.

ISABELLA: It's alright.

PABLO: I'm not leaving you here.

ISABELLA: Please -

PABLO: And you - promise not to do anything silly.

ISABELLA: I won't.

PABLO: We should rest before we try again.

ISABELLA: Ok.

PABLO: Then we'll figure out what to do.

ISABELLA curls up. Soon, PABLO snores lightly. ISABELLA gets up, restless, dizzy, shaking out pins and needles.

ISABELLA: I can't sleep...Pablo?...Pablo?...

PABLO snores lightly.

ISABELLA: Forgive me.

ISABELLA holds out her hands, heat pressing against her palms and walks towards the low tunnel mouth.

ISABELLA: Yote, I'm coming.

ACT 3 SCENE 3

ISABELLA walks through a dark, claustrophobic tunnel. As it narrows, twists and turns, its ceiling lowers until she is crawling on hands and knees.

ISABELLA: Isa, tunnel's too low...Crawl...Ground is so hot...

The ground blazes with heat, the air fizzes and tingles, sparks flying at ISABELLA through widening cracks. A small flame catches on her sleeve.

ISABELLA *[panics]*: Sleeve's burning! Flask – where's the – ?

ISABELLA uses the flask to douse the flame. She breathes a sigh of relief.

ISABELLA: 'Arinta entered through a tunnel behind a waterfall, drenching herself in the water to protect herself against the flames'... If I hold my wet arm to the flames, it doesn't burn. Isa, douse yourself in magic water, wear a shield of ice!

ISABELLA rubs more water on her skin and clothes.

ISABELLA: Now keep moving.

As the space tightens, ISABELLA cannot move around. Soon, the tunnel falls away.

ISABELLA: Tunnel's too tight... *[Gasps.]* A drop...! *[Coughs constantly.]* Too much smoke, heat... Ok, knees to chest, slip skid to the opening... *[She goes.]*

Gasping, ISABELLA peers over the opening, flickering with heat. Smoke and a fierce rumbling noise billow up, filling the tunnel. A huge, fiery

mouth opens and closes, spitting molten rock that burns and blisters her skin, burning her up inside.

ISABELLA: The firepit. Yote's lair. Arinta, I'm here just like you were a thousand years ago, trying to save Joya.

ISABELLA *[dizzy, coughing and shaking]*: Burning...blistering...keep going. Legs onto the ledge below...

The cave shakes.

ISABELLA: No Isa, pull back. Pull - !

ISABELLA tries to pull herself back but the shaking is too strong. Her hands slip and she drops screaming feet-first into the abyss...

ISABELLA: I don't want to die! Arinta, I don't want to die!

ISABELLA lands on a ledge on the edge of the firepit, winded, her body searing with pain, unable to move, blacking out. Silence. The rumbling tremors roll around her like waves, rousing her. ISABELLA tries to stand but cannot. She floats.

ISABELLA: I'm peeling away, coming free, my body dropping behind me like a cloak. I see it there, slack on the ledge. I'm leaving it there. 'Me' now crawls to the edge, kneeling, peering over into a pit of fire and smoke. A fire demon. Six limbs. Smoke clinging to his torso. Stepping out of a column of fire. Yote.

YOTE *[raspy, rattling]*: What do you want?

ISABELLA: To stop you, as Arinta did.

YOTE: You're too late.

ACT 3 SCENE 4

Echoes of 'You're too late'..Covered in cuts and scrapes, PABLO tends to ISABELLA.

PABLO: Isa, can you hear me?

ISABELLA *[stirring, dazed]*: How - how - did you get to me?

PABLO: Shifted the rocks... I thought you were dead... Come on, I'll carry you.

PABLO carries ISABELLA through the fiery, cracking tunnel. Suddenly, the ground wrenches open.

PABLO: The ground's giving way!

ISABELLA: We're going to fall through!

PABLO: Hold onto me!

They curl together and fall, screaming, as the labyrinthine tunnel roars, a mix of water, fire and wind. They land with a clattering roll, groaning, breathing heavily.

ISABELLA: Oh - head's spinning.

PABLO: Body's pounding.

ISABELLA: Mine too.

PABLO *[looking around]*: Another cave?

ISABELLA: Somewhere layers deep below.

A firefall swirls in all directions, roaring like the sea.

PABLO: Look - !

ISABELLA: - black fire!

PABLO: Like a firefall.

ISABELLA: Swirling all around us...

ISABELLA reaches forward.

PABLO: Don't touch it!

ISABELLA: It won't touch us yet. It's glass. An invisible barrier. Watch. If I prod the black fire with the woodlight [*presses the black fire*], the woodlight pushes back, like skin on hot milk.

PABLO: Incredible...

ISABELLA: Lie on your belly. Like we used to in Gromera – so close to the sea but not able to reach out and touch it.

PABLO crawls forward. Lying on their bellies, they watch.

PABLO: How is it glass?

ISABELLA: Because it's molten sand. We must be under a beach. When you melt sand, it forms glass. Not sure how.

In silence, they watch the roaring fire churn, the glass beginning to grind.

PABLO: Glass melts doesn't it?

ISABELLA: Soon, there won't be anything between Yote's flames and us.

PABLO: Not long now...Isa, what happened back there? Did you fall, faint or...?

ISABELLA: I don't know. I don't want to talk about it.

PABLO [*taking ISABELLA'S hand*]: Your hand is all blistered, burned...

ISABELLA leans on PABLO'S shoulder and they watch as the glass creaks and cracks. Flames lick the cracks and the glass bubbles. Suddenly, the whole glass structure slides down, bubbling into a threatening pool.

ISABELLA: The glass is cracking - !

PABLO: - sliding into a bubbling pool!

ISABELLA: Flames are coming through!

PABLO: Let's back up against that wall.

They break away from each other and throw themselves backwards.

ISABELLA *[against the wall]*: Ow!

PABLO: What is it?

ISABELLA: I hit my head *[feels her head]*. Blood *[shows her fingers]*...

PABLO *[shining the woodlight]*: From what?

ISABELLA: Metal... It can't be... It's Arinta's sword.

PABLO: It's just a rusty old sword.

ISABELLA: 'Only the sea can defeat a fire demon'...That glass is molten sand - we're beneath a beach, beneath the sea! *[Touching the sword.]* This sword is a gift! Passed down through a thousand years!

PABLO: Don't touch it!

ISABELLA *[trying to grasp the hilt]*: The hilt is too hot... *[Bunches her top, tries again repeatedly.]*

PABLO: Isa, stop!

ISABELLA: The sword is stuck! I can't - I can't - I can't wrench it free!... *[Teary.]* You're right. I'm not Arinta.

PABLO *[holds her]*: But the sword is here. It's real. It's not a story.

More glass cracks. Intense heat floods the cave. The glass cracks into a widening hole, filling with flames, threading through molten rock.

ISABELLA *[pushing away PABLO]:* Yote isn't a myth. *[Grips the sword again.]*

PABLO: Please don't! It's burning, blistering your skin!

ISABELLA *[turning the sword]:* It's working! It's working! The sword is turning!

ISABELLA turns the sword. First a hiss, then a stream, then a gushing torrent of water, unleashing the sea.

ISABELLA: The sword is unleashing the sea!

PABLO: Surging towards the fire -

ISABELLA: Surging through the maze -

PABLO: The world is turning upside down -

ISABELLA: Turning inside out, rocking side to side -

PABLO: We're going to drown!

ISABELLA: The woodlight will keep us afloat! Hold my hand, grab the woodlight!

They use the woodlight to ride the steaming sea through the labyrinthine tunnels. Coughing, spluttering, swept and swirled around, the current soon releases them.

ISABELLA *[coughing up water]:* Look, an opening there!

PABLO: Water's still rising too quickly!

ISABELLA: Stay in the air pocket, kick towards the light!

They kick towards the light. Bodies convulsing, they rise and fall in whirling water. One moment they gulp for air above it, the next, bubbles spiral below.

PABLO: Isa, I'm not going to make it.

ISABELLA: Yes you are!

PABLO: I'm not –

ISABELLA: Don't let go! Pablo, stay with me, stay with me...

ISABELLA pulls PABLO up. The water spits them out through an escape hole, light flooding over them like a wave. They land in the open, vomiting seawater.

ISABELLA: Waves of light – and air! We're out in the open!

As a storm strikes and torrential rain falls, the ground wrenches, churns and crunches. The River Arintara bursts its banks. The world shakes.

ISABELLA: And look – the sea! It's pulling Joya free!

As the sea gives one final tug, the ground rocks from side to side, huge waves surge and the island breaks from the seabed. The wind whips back the rain clouds, the tremors slow and the ground stops shaking. The sun appears. Songbirds sing. The natural world hums. ISABELLA and PABLO catch their breath.

ISABELLA: It's floating! Joya's floating! The island is floating free!

PABLO *[hugging ISABELLA]*: You did it! You saved the island from Yote! Saved me! Saved us all! Saved Joya – like Arinta did over a thousand years ago.

ISABELLA *[weeping with joy]*: We did it Pablo. We did it.

EPILOGUE

Gromera Market Square

The sun shines, songbirds sing and the River Arintara and Arintan waterfall flow. The village buzzes. ISABELLA waits for Cata in the square. PABLO approaches.

PABLO: First day of school?

ISABELLA: You're late for work.

PABLO: I wanted to wish you good luck.

ISABELLA: Thank you Pablo...Cata's late, of course!

PABLO: After the sea washed Cata and the others from Yote's feeding pit, she has every right to be.

ISABELLA: Cata's back and Joya is alive again! *[Taking a gift from her satchel.]* I wanted to give you this, after school. *[Hands PABLO a gift-wrapped scroll].*

PABLO *[unwrapping the gift]*: A new map of Joya!

ISABELLA: Mapped exactly as it is now.

PABLO: Green forests, blue rivers, even the faint stitch of star lines...

ISABELLA: So you never lose your way on the Isle of Joya again.

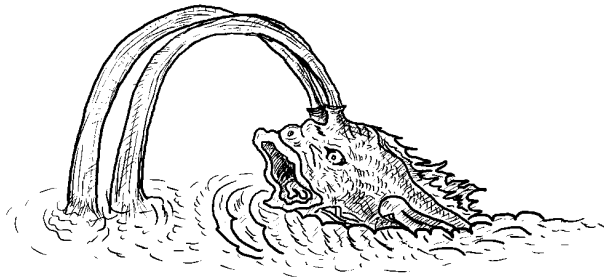
PABLO: This isn't just ink and thread on paper. Your map is alive.

ISABELLA: See - Arinta was real!

PABLO: If Arinta is your real-life heroine - Isa, you're mine.

PABLO kisses ISABELLA'S cheek. She playfully slaps PABLO. They laugh and hug.

the end



Audio Drama - Creative Team and Cast List

Director - Adel Al-Salloum

As director Adel brings the production together. It is her job to bring out the best performance from the actors and tell the story of the play in the most compelling way. Theatre is a collaborative process and it is the director's job to put together a great team of people; the actors, writer, sound designer, stage manager... and work with all of the different elements such as the text and sound to make the magic of theatre happen. The creative team involved in *The Girl of Ink and Stars* were amazing - they have worked imaginatively to make the story come alive.

Writer - Satinder Chohan

Satinder is a writer, who loves playing with words, creating stories and escaping on epic adventures to far-away places, spaces and even, other planets in her imagination - and the real world when she can. She mostly writes for the stage but has also begun writing for radio, film and especially novels that might one day be found in the libraries in which she has always loved losing herself to read and write.

Composer - Craig Vear

Craig Vear is a composer, music maker and sound designer. He is fascinated with creating with sound. He has had lots of adventures including spending three months in Antarctica as a Composer in Residence. He has created the sound and music for many theatre and performance shows including creating the immersive sound design for *The Railway Children*, which won an Olivier Award.

ISABELLA - Sally Ann Staunton

Just like Arinta's journey, Sally Ann's biggest adventure has been leaving her small town of Barrow-in-Furness Cumbria to find acting work all over the country and the world. Having trained in Lancashire, Sally journeyed down to London through tunnels and pathways to find acting jobs that excited her. She found herself travelling with wonderful productions and performing in many children's touring shows.

PABLO & THE BANISHED BOY - Reece Carter

Reece is a Leeds Lad born and bred. His biggest adventures have included, slaying Vikings and hunting witches at The Dungeons in York. He also studied in Liverpool where he got to shake hands with legends such as Davy Jones (Bill Nye) and a real life Beatle (Paul McCartney). Now he journeys as Pablo with his trusted friend Isabella to save the whole island of Joya from the evil demon, Yote.

DA - Dave 'Stickman' Higgins

Dave is a world class, drummer and percussionist. He is also a poet, actor, educator, artist and father. Dave has been involved in creating and delivering a wide range of innovative arts projects since the mid 1980's.

Stage Manager - Kate Bosomworth

Kate is the Stage Manager for the show. She looks after the actors and the show, organising rehearsals, making props, setting up technical equipment, making sure the show runs smoothly and speaking to all the different departments which make the show work.

Producer

The Spark Arts for Children

The Spark work to ignite the potential of children as audiences, learners and makers of art. thesparkarts.co.uk

Inspire: Culture, Learning and Libraries

Inspire is a charitable community benefit society delivering cultural, learning and library services on behalf of Nottinghamshire County Council. inspireculture.org.uk

About the Writer - Satinder Chohan

Satinder Chohan is a journalist and documentary researcher/assistant producer turned playwright from Southall, West London. Her plays include *Zameen* (Kali Theatre UK tour), *KabaddiKabaddiKabaddi* (Pursued By A Bear) and *1984* (Vibrant Festival, Finborough Theatre).

As Writer-in-Residence at the Centre for Family Research (Cambridge University), she wrote youth play *Half of Me*, first performed by Generation Arts (Lyric Hammersmith). She received OffWestEnd.com's 2013 Adopt A Playwright Award to develop *Made in India* (Tamasha Theatre), which toured the UK in 2017 and received the 2017 ACTA Award for Best Production.

Satinder recently completed audio drama *Steam Rises* for Tamasha Theatre/The National Archives, wrote *Garlands* for BBC Radio 3 and is currently developing *Lotus Beauty* for Hampstead Theatre, *Empire of the Mind* for Kali Theatre, short film *Bussing and Pind*, a novel about the Punjabi diaspora, alongside other theatre and film projects.

About the Author - Kiran Millwood Hargrave

Kiran Millwood Hargrave is an award-winning poet, playwright, and bestselling author. Her debut, *The Girl of Ink and Stars* won the overall Waterstones Children's Book Prize 2017 and the British Book Award's Children's Book of the Year. It was shortlisted for numerous awards including the Jhalak Prize, the Branford Boase Award and the Little Rebels Prize.

Her second novel *The Island at the End of Everything* was shortlisted for the Blue Peter Award, the Costa Children's Book Award, and longlisted for the CILIP Carnegie Medal 2018. *The Way Past Winter* won the Blackwell's Children's Book of the Year. Her debut novel for adults, *The Mercies*, 'unquestionably the book of the 2018 London Book Fair' (The Bookseller), was won at auction by Picador.

Kiran lives by the river in Oxford with her husband, Tom, and their cat, Luna.

A story of myth, magic and the power of friendship.

Forbidden to leave her island, Isabella dreams
of the faraway lands her father once mapped.
When a girl from the village disappears into
the island's Forgotten Territories, Isabella and
her lifelong friend Pablo go in search of her.

Following her map and an ancient myth,
Isabella discovers that deep beneath the dry
rivers and smoky mountains, a fiery legend is
stirring from its sleep...

