**Starlight!**

**THE STORY**

*This is a story about hope, cosiness and warm neighbourhoods. Hard and painfully topical about loneliness. Hopeful and cosy, about being connected and meeting each other in warm neighbourhoods and open institutions. Starlight is a warm theatre performance with a touch of music and a good portion of humour.*

*At the centre ... A garden bench next to an apple tree. Firmly rooted, widely branched and a familiar sight in a beautiful garden. A place to meet, a symbol of connection and growth.*

*We step into the lives of a number of characters who have a connection with the care home: a nurse, an entertainer, a resident, a volunteer who is always ready and ... regular visitor Rosa. Each of them with his or her own character, life and problems. We also follow a number of people in the neighbourhood. Young, old, poor, rich... they feel lonely, each in their own way. Behind the four walls.*

*Luckily, there is Sterre, Rosa's granddaughter. She has a big plan. She wants to realise something in the neighbourhood to bring people closer together. To break through the loneliness. She wants to open up the care home, where she is doing her internship, to the neighbourhood. But between dream and deed, law stands in the way, as do practical objections. And, unfortunately, an unforeseen twist.  Sterre watches, it is strange, no one sees her. But you can feel her connective power, which prevents people from giving up and helps them to meet and strengthen each other. Sterre, invisible but inspiring. Just like the roots of the apple tree. They give life, ensure clean apples. And with a bit of luck... apple pie!*

**CAST**

*Celine Deloof = Sterre (in English: Star)*

*Ivan Pecnik = volunteer Jan (in English: John)*

*Brent Pannier = nurse Flavio (in English: Flinn)*

*Nicky Langley = Rosa (in English: Rosie)*

*Marc Lenaerts = Eddy (in English: Ed)*

**CREW**

***Production, concept, dialogues, direction of the play:***

*Luc Stevens*

***Music, concept, song lyrics:***

*Stef Vanderbeken*

***Packages:***

*Thomas Vanhauwaert*

***Extra possibility***

*Jos: invisible, but may also appear in real life*

# INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE WITH THIS SCRIPT

# *This script also includes sound fragments. All sound fragments have been numbered and are indicated here in green.*

* *The instructions (belonging to a certain role or describing a situation) are shown in the script in italics. The text of the different characters is straight.*
* *The script speaks of the sides 'JARDIN' and 'COUR':*
	+ *JARDIN side: this is the left side if you look from the hall to the stage*
	+ *COUR side: this is the right side if you look from the hall to the stage*

# Scene 1: Sterre’s plan

## Number 1: underscore "in warm neighbourhoods"

*Rosa is sitting on a garden bench. We hear Jos whistling behind the scene. You never see Jos. Jos can be played, if an actor is available. He has no text, but his presence can be reinforcing. But it is not necessary.*

**ROSA**

*(After 20 seconds)* Jos! ... Jos, come and sit beside me. (silence) Would you like a grape?

*Sterre arrives at grandpa’s place (= invisible).*

**STERRE**

Hey, Grandpa... What do you see there? That is a beautiful ...

A whistler

**STERRE**

Hey grandma …

**ROSA**

Hi Sterre (*gives a kiss*)

**STERRE**

I just ran into grandpa. I thought you surely would be sitting on your usual spot under the tree then.

**ROSA**

Our Jos cannot miss his birds. There are a lot of them in the apple tree next door.

**STERRE**

*She looks at the cour side outside the stage and pretends there is a tree there.*

Yes and they look gorgeous this year!

**ROSA**

And they are delicious!

*Sterre sits next to grandma on the garden bench. Warm conversation between grandma and granddaughter.*

And, are you on duty at the nursing home today?

**STERRE**

No, I have the day off, but I couldn't resist stopping by.

Grandpa seems to be in a good mood?

**ROSA** *(cheerful)*

As long as Jos sees birds, he is in seventh heaven.

**STERRE**

Really impressive. He can recognise every bird by its song.

**ROSA** *(with pain in her heart)*

I wish he would recognise my voice too. .... But yes... it is what it is.

**STERRE** *(tries to cheer Rosa up)*

He looks very happy after all.

**ROSA**

That's a comfort.

**STERRE**

You mustn't worry, Grandma. They take good care of him overhere.

**ROSA** *(very enthusiastic)*

Especially with such a fantastic animator.

**STERRE**

I'm just an intern, grandma.

**ROSA**

Just! Ordinary! Nothing ordinary! You are a descendant of a great race. Say Sterre! How is your boyfriend, by the way?

**STERRE**

Next week we will be together for two years. I've planned a weekend away, but don't tell Flavio.

*(Flavio comes up the cour side, Rosa sits on the garden bench on the right and does not see him, Sterre sees him)*

**ROSA**

You are so lucky with Flavio. Our Sterre with such a handsome nurse! If I were 40 years younger, you'd have some serious competition.

**FLAVIO**

And then I know who I would choose... *(takes hold of Rosa)* Hey Rosa!

**ROSA** *(totally surprised, goes back on her words shyly...)*

Flavio. That was just a joke. I don't mean that of course...

**FLAVIO** *(funny, enthusiastic)*

But I did mean it.

**STERRE** *(plays indignant and stands up from garden bench and goes to jardin side)*

Well, what are you talking about?/Are you kidding?

*Flavio steps behind the garden bench to Sterre and gives her a hug and a kiss. Jan comes up from the back of Jardin side and sees this. He has a rubbish picker and a bag around his neck to put the rubbish in.*

**JAN**

Well, look at that… look at that ... Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden! Watch out Eve ... Don't touch the apple.

**STERRE** *(continues to hold Flavio)*

I'm not on duty today, Jan. So I can eat the forbidden fruit. Can't I, my dear Flavio?

**JAN**

But our nurse is still on duty. He can come and do the dishes in my cafeteria tomorrow, if director Paul sees him fluttering about like that.

**FLAVIO**

It's all right. How did you get on with your thesis at school?

**STERRE** *(moves away from Flavio and speaks enthusiastically)*

Ha... finally... I thought you would never ask. My teacher thinks my plan is fantastic and he approved it very enthusiastically.

**FLAVIO**

Really? Great! Waw, I didn't expect that.

**JAN**

Never underestimate your sweetheart, sweetheart!

**FLAVIO** *(speaking to Jan)*

Sterre has submitted a very good thesis. But if you ask me, just a little too ambitious.

**STERRE** *(indignant)*

Too ambitious?

**FLAVIO**

I'm a realist.

**STERRE**

And I am an optimist

**JAN**

Give me a Trappist ... yummy, really yummy.

**STERRE**

It's going to be fantastic! And granny! You'll play the leading part in my grand plan!

**ROSA**

Me? Now I'm curious!

**STERRE**

Hey, Jan, is your cafeteria still open? I'm in the mood for a nice port. I want to celebrate!

**JAN**

Sorry, Sterre. It's closed today. I can't open every day, Sterre. I'm only a volunteer.

And I only have two! (Jan shows his two hands and then leaves).

**STERRE**

Ok, so I'm going to ask my father for help with my plan. *(She leaves from behind)*

**FLAVIO** *(calling after her)*

Would you do that?

**STERRE** *(she disappears)*

I know what I am doing!

**FLAVIO**

Madame! *(gives Rosa an arm and starts dancing with her to the music)*

**ROSA**

Silly boy!

*Lots of ambiance! Dance!* ***3'31"- 3'36"***

*Suddenly Rosa and Flavio go into freeze. Sterre and Jan are off stage..*

## Number 2 : sound AAAAH … we here a car skidding…. Sound car crash

*If you work with lights, you can turn the spotlights off completely = black out or flicker with lights if you have the possibilities. If no light is used, they get out of the freeze after 10 seconds (music no. 4) and take turns on the garden bench, with a lot of sadness. The atmosphere has now changed completely.*

## Number 3: underscore ‘apart from each other”

*Rosa and Flavio sit on the bench. They say nothing and stare in front of them. Jan comes up and looks at Jos (if there is a Jos). Jos sits at the back left = jardin side on a chair and fiddles with a handkerchief. Jan passes him and goes to the garden bench where Rosa and Flavio are staring ahead. He sits down behind the garden bench.*

**Scene 2: Grief for Sterre**

**JAN** *(with great pity)*

Rosa, I can't motivate Jos to go outside . He just sits there. He stares in front of him and doesn't want to go on.

**FLAVIO** *(sad)*

Yes, Jos... He has been in his own world since Sterre.... 2 months ago...

**JAN**

You can see that he is sad.

**ROSA**

He is not alone!

**JAN** *(apologises)*

Yes, of course. That's right. Sorry about that!

**ROSA** *(downcast)*

I'm losing everyone ... everyone I love ... I've lost Sterre, our Jos is here, but he's completely gone and our Eddy ... he's been playing the prodigal son for years.

**FLAVIO** *(angry)*

I've said it. Sterre should never have gone to her father. Then we would still have her with us.

**JAN** *(contradicts the anger, goes against Flavio)*

I understand you, Flavio, but anger only makes you sadder. *(leaves towards the jardin side)*

And you must be honest, one has nothing to do with the other.

**FLAVIO** *(stands up indignantly)*

I don't agree. I don't agree at all. Eddy has brought her nothing but bad luck...

*Flavio watches Jan going off, then he sees Rosa and realises that they'd better not have had this argument in the presence of Rosa, Sterre's grandmother. He apologises.*

Sorry, Rosa.

**ROSA** *(bitter)*

You don't have to apologise, Flavio. You really don't have to. Greed has made him a different person... *(silence)*

*We suddenly see Sterre appearing behind the tree. Sterre is now wearing a nice fresh dress. She is actually standing here as a deceased person who is coming back.*

**ROSA**

Good! I eh...I'm going home.

**FLAVIO**

Rosa. Stay! Stay! You're only alone at home. And we were going to have a picnic...

**ROSA***(She shows that she really wants to be alone, you can see that she is sad. She leaves. She goes off Jardin side. Sterre looks at her sympathetically).*

# Scene 3: Loneliness behind four walls

## Number 4: underscore ‘four walls INTRO” + conversation Francine + underscore under picture Eddy

*Sterre follows Rosa from a distance. Silent play with underscore music.*

***House 1 : Rosa***

*We see Rosa coming up, she hangs her coat on a rack. From the side, Sterre sees how her grandmother sits sadly in the sofa. (Seat, coat rack, ... can also be a chair).*

***House 2: near a children's (dog) car.***

*Sterre is putting up a children's carriage (there is supposed to be a dog in it). She looks at it. Suddenly, you hear Francine's voice:* “

That is unbelievable. She calls me to say she has no time. No time! She has loads of time. She's not interested in me at all. No one is. Whether I'm here or not, it doesn't matter. *(silence... Sterre looks at Jip)* Why can't you talk, Jipke. Why can't dogs talk? It would be nice if you could say: "How are you, Francine? How was your day, here alone between the four walls? Was it fun?"

*Sterre now turns to Eddy, her father.*

***House 3 (simultaneous) : Eddy, father of Sterre and son of Rosa***

*Silent game. Eddy is sitting in a large armchair. In front of jardin side. A picture frame, a box of pills (= medication), a glass and a bottle of liquor are standing on a small table. Sterre observes and stands next to him. She looks at him ... coldly, but also with compassion.*

*Eddy and grandma stay on their chairs while Flavio and Jan go and sit on the garden bench under the tree. Sterre also sits under the tree and follows the conversation. Sterre is actually dead, so nobody sees her.*

**Scene 4: Flavio and Jan muse on Sterre and the plan**

**FLAVIO**

Ok, I am going to say something, but you mustn’t laugh.

**JAN**

Ok!

**FLAVIO**

I have a feeling that Sterre is still here.

**JAN**

Yes, Flavio. If dreams come true... life would be completely different.

**FLAVIO**

No, no, but really, I can't describe it, I don't know...but I feel that... *(Sterre laughs)*

**JAN**

That you are hungry. That's because it's dinner time. That's for sure. *(opens his lunchbox and takes out a round meatball)* Here, look at this! That looks delicious.

**FLAVIO**

*(opens his lunchbox too and it's full of vegetables - he takes out a cucumber)*

I have an opinion about that.

**JAN** *(looks into Flavio's lunch box)*

Man, only vegetables? How can you eat that! There's nothing like a good meatball and a sandwich with filet américain. *(bites into his meatball)*

**FLAVIO**

*... muses ... stares ahead while biting into his cucumber.*

We started it together.

**JAN**

What?

**FLAVIO** *(recalls a pleasant memory)*

Our little vegetable garden. Sterre and me... we had a great time there. She also used to eat meatballs and steak tartare. But since she came to live with me, she has learned to appreciate the simplest, the most beautiful things ... the purest things. In the end, she has even become a freak. Nothing sprayed. No meat!

**STERRE**

And no fish.

**JAN**

I know it only too well. She was the only one in the whole cafeteria who refused to eat my world-famous 'meat croquette de Jean'. Man, man! You made a rabbit of her.

**STERRE**

Very funny, Jan! Very funny!

**FLAVIO**

We actually had almost nothing in our farm: no car, no TV, no decent shower, ...

**STERRE**

But a lot of love.

**FLAVIO**

And fluttering from morning to evening. When the weather was good, we walked naked through the meadow or jumped into the stream. Once we bumped into Walter, the forester. Literally. *(laughter)*

**STERRE**

Does Jan have to know all this?

**FLAVIO**

*(starts eating again and the atmosphere changes...you see the atmosphere changes to sadness and anger)* Damn ...! *(silence)*

**JAN** *(notices it and tries to cheer up Flavio)*

Hey Flavio! (silence) ...it's not over yet boy! She left a legacy ... for you.

**FLAVIO**

What legacy?

**JAN**

Her project, if you understand that better. Her final project.

**FLAVIO**

That was hers. That was not mine.

**JAN**

So what? She would have loved it if you took it over from her.

**FLAVIO** *(doesn't believe in it)*

I can't do that anyway.

**JAN**

Do you know how much energy you would get from that? Do you realise how many people you could help with that?

**FLAVIO**

*(unconvinced)*So, the lonely help the lonely.

**JAN** *(very convincing)*

Yes, yes ...yes, indeed. Something like that. You visit a lot of people's homes, as a volunteer. Do you realise how much misery there is in the world? And beware, in places where you least expect it. And that's what Sterre saw and she wanted to do something about it. Do you know what? Just think about that!*(Jan leaves behind cour side, Flavio stays on the garden bench).*

## Number 5: underscore “behind four walls”

# Scene 5: Loneliness in the neighbourhood

*House 1: We see Rosa.*

*Sterre feels lost, feels incredibly unhappy, feels abandoned. Rosa takes a photo book and turns over the pages. Sterre looks at her from a distance and speaks to her.*

**STERRE**

Here she is now! My dear grandmother!

She is grieving for all the beauty that has been taken away from her.

We have experienced so many beautiful moments together.

And now she muses about the past and everything is broken for her.

She is now behind four walls. Long hours of loneliness slowly pass by.

*She stands around the pram and looks at both Grandma and the pram.*

**STERRE**

*Behind the four walls you can hear the empty silence.*

*TIP: It is not a must but it can be an added value to suddenly show photos on a screen of lonely people behind four walls .*

**STERRE**

You can hear broken hearts of sorrow behind the four walls.

And nobody .... nobody sees it!

The silence ...

sounds deafeningly loud behind the four walls....

and so people vanish away

*She now steps towards Eddy who is still on the far left at front Jardin side. He sits in a chair. He is drinking, taking pills (= medication) and looking at a picture frame that is on the cabinet. Sterre moves between these two figures: mother = grandmother and son = Eddy. Eddy is Sterre's father, but the audience doesn't know that yet.*

*Focuses now completely on her father.*

**STERRE** *now speaks to Eddy*

There he is now.

He has plenty of money and is as rich as the sea is deep/as rich as a king.

He is regarded as a great businessman.

But at home, behind the four walls

it is quiet and there is no one... no one at all.

**Scene 6: Rosa and Jan on the tree**

*Rosa comes on, calls for Jos. We hear him whistling again. She then sits down on the garden bench. Jan comes up with his wheelbarrow from jardin side. He puts his wheelbarrow down, takes the axe and wants to walk with it to the apple tree (which is in fact not there).*

**ROSA**What are you going to do with that axe?

**JAN**I want to chop off a branch of the apple tree over there. *(He wants to continue, Rosa calls out to him).*

**ROSA**Don't do it! Leave that branch alone!

**JAN**Rosa, that branch has had its day.

**ROSA**Just because something is wrong with it it doesn't mean you have to cut it. Let nature take its course and it will be fine!

**JAN**It's just an old branch, Rosa.

**ROSA**That's why you have to take good care of it. It has produced many apples.

**JAN**Ok *(Jan now takes blocks of wood from behind the tree and puts them in his wheelbarrow).*Whoppa! *(full of energy)*

**ROSA** *(sighing)*I don't know where you get all that energy from.

**JAN**Oh, Rosa, I need it. Here in my cafeteria. To be among people every day. A joke here, a joke there. That's my long life. I would be up against the walls, If I would sit at home all the time.

**ROSA**I know all about that.

**JAN** *(different tone of voice, a little tense, he is going to say something nice)*
Say, let me tell you something.

**ROSA** *(joins in his enthusiasm)*Ok, shoot!

**JAN**Yes, you will like it. *(Jan sits down next to Rosa)* I've won the lottery. No, listen! Flavio, he's going to execute the plan of Sterre's thesis. Great, then it seems like she is still part of us. Listen! Today the representatives of the families are meeting at the family council. The care staff will also meet. If those two councils approve our plan, ... bam... Then we're off. The director already likes it, we already have him in out team.

**ROSA**I don't know what you are doing, but if it makes you happy, so much the better. We won't get Sterre back with it.

**JAN**Maybe we will! Okay, in a different way, but a little bit anyway...yes! *(worried)* Are you cold? Should I get you a blanket?

**ROSA**That's sweet, but never mind. It's always a little warmer under my tree.

**JAN**Later on... when my cafeteria opens, I'll bring you a hot chocolate and a piece of pie. Don't tell the sugar mafia though, or everyone will want one! This stays between us!

**ROSA**Apple pie?

**JAN**No, cherries.

**ROSA**Cherry pie. Oh, that's nice too. Apple pie... that's even better on my birthday! We used to celebrate it under this tree. Sterre would ride her bike over here with an apple pie and we would eat it over here. Sterre, my only grandchild ... *(we hear whistling in the background again)*

Hé, Jos calls… Hello Flavio. *(goes down the cour side)*

*For your information: Jos remains an invisible mysterious figure when he is not playing. I think this can be made clear to the audience. If Jos plays along, it is easier of course. He does not have to say anything, but he can give a lot of emotion.*

**FLAVIO**

Hi Rosa.

# Scene 7: Jan and Flavio about the plan

*Flavio comes up. He seems nervous. Jan walks towards him.*

**JAN**

Hey Flavio, what's up? You're shaking all over the place.

**FLAVIO**

It feels like my nerves are going to break down any minute now.

**JAN**

They are not going to eat you!

**FLAVIO**

I know, but what if the family council or the care staff reject the proposal?

**JAN**

They are not going to reject you! You have a very good plan! *(emphasis added)* STARLIGHT! It is full of positive things and you will help lots of people with it. You sure don't have to convince me.

**FLAVIO**

Not you, no..

***Number 6: underscore “A beautiful day!”***

**JAN**

Look on the bright side. You’ve got a no, you can have a yes.

**FLAVIO**

You know what? You are right! You are right again. Starlight will be a hit! Today will be one big ode to Sterre.

**JAN**

For Sterre!

Jeez, Flavio, I love to see you so cheerful again. I can see the twinkle in your eyes again.

**FLAVIO**

Whoever says it!

**JAN**

And know this Flavio ... the most beautiful day in life begins anew every day.

**FLAVIO**

But that's very beautiful.

**JAN**

You can count on me. I am your ally. At your service, young man.

**FLAVIO**

Thank you Jan! I will go for it. I will bring people closer together as a tribute to my Sterre. Do you know what I will do? I will take a few days off to relax and to concentrate and prepare myself very well.

**JAN**

You're doing good, man *(knocks on his back and leaves).*

**Scene 8: Eddy looks for Flavio**

*Eddy, Sterre's father, comes up. Sterre is watching.*

**EDDY**

Flavio!

**FLAVIO**

Eddy? What are you doing here?

**EDDY**

Can I speak to you?

**FLAVIO**

I have nothing to say to you.

**EDDY**

May I explain Flavio. Please!

**FLAVIO**

Now sir wants to speak to me. You never wanted to speak to me. I wasn't good enough for your daughter. Even at her funeral you didn't give me a glance. Don't come to speak to me now, three months later! You are too late.

**EDDY**

I felt I wasn't welcome.

**FLAVIO**

Ah... is it my fault too?

**EDDY**

Please Flavio, five minutes. For three months I've been living with guilty feeling. I loved her to death, too. Really....

**FLAVIO**

Yes, yes... Sterre had the best intentions for you, but you wouldn't listen. You never listened to her. Not even to her last words. You drove her to death.

**EDDY**

That is not true.

**FLAVIO**

And what is this? (Flavio takes his mobile phone out of his pocket, taps it and then shows a message) Here! Her last message! Read it! Read! Read! "You were right! Didn't do anything. Fight again!" Just then she died, Eddy! Just at that moment. Do you realise what you did to your mother? What you have been doing to your mother for years ... and then this with Sterre ... she will never forgive you!

**EDDY**

I know, but...! (sobs) I can't turn back time. Sorry!

## Number 7 : Underscore ‘‘apart from each other’’

*Eddy makes another attempt to move forward but Flavio turns away.*

*Sorry! (Eddy looks at Flavio but he doesn't turn around. Eddy turns round sadly and leaves at cour side)*

*Sterre joins him.*

**STERRE**

He suffers, Flavio. Please. I know. He has made many mistakes, but he is my father.

*Flavio and Sterre leave at jardin side.*

**Scene 9: In cafetaria Jan**

*Jan comes up with a bag containing bingo numbers. He addresses the audience. He pretends to speak to certain well-known people, but they are just people from the audience.*

*He is leading a bingo afternoon. He takes the number 12 out of the bag and calls out:*

**JAN**

Number 12! How how how , it is getting exciting over here. Who only needs to put down one more number to get a full card? Mariette, Dre, and Gerarda... you too. That's already the third time today. *(Quietly to Gerarda - he pretends there's a Gerarda in the room.)* What have you got left, Gerarda? Number 27! Good luck...!

*(takes another number, but starts cheating).*

Number 27! How is that possible? Yes, Gerarda has won! Full card!

*Flavio enters.*

**FLAVIO**

Is Rosa here? I haven't seen her since I left.

**JAN**

But Flavio, don't you know? Rosa fell down the stairs at home and broke her foot, last week.

**FLAVIO**

Really! You can't be serious. That's why I haven't seen her since.

**JAN**

Hey, have no fear! The Jan is here! In a few moments I'll go and pick up Rosa at home.

**FLAVIO**

Jan, you're a tough guy. A buddy, a buddy for everyone.

**JAN**

I only do it for the money, you know, Flavio. *(goes off laughing)*

**Scene 10: Rosa at home talking to Jan about Eddy**

*Rosa is in a wheelchair. Her foot is in a plaster cast. She is talking to an invisible nurse who has just looked after her.*

**ROSA**

Hello Ilske! Thanks for the good care. See you tomorrow!

*Jan enters.*

**JAN**

Hi Rosa!

**ROSA**

Hi, Jan. I'm glad to see you. The nurse has just come by to give me a little injection. Next time she will stay a bit longer, she said. But she says that every day.

**JAN**

Yes, Rosa, they have many shifts! Sometimes they don't know where to start.

**ROSA**

I know, but it's so nice when a young girl like that chats with an old woman like me. You can't believe how much pleasure it gives me. Even if it's only a quarter of an hour, because Jan... when you're alone here between those four walls, a day lasts a very long time.

**JAN**

We are going to change that.

And how is your foot?

**ROSA**

Much better. So stupid that I fell.

**JAN**

That's all right! I'll take care of you. (Jan slams on the brakes of the wheelchair, or at least pretends to, during the following sentences)

I'm your buddy, your buddy and I'll take you to your Jos in the Garden of Eden in this Cadillac care home convertible. Hey hello. At your service, miss!

**ROSA**

Oh, you are a clown aren't you!

**JAN**

Come on! We'll put him in a 4 wheel drive! Hup! Ha, by the way.

*(Jan tackles it carefully. Jan knows that there is a quarrel with Eddy, but actually wants that quarrel to be settled).*

I've heard it's not going very well with Eddy.

**ROSA**

*(This is very sensitive. The audience doesn't know yet that Rosa blames her son for Sterre's death. They quarrel and don't see each other anymore. When Jan starts talking about Eddy, you can clearly feel the hatred and disappointment. The atmosphere becomes somewhat grim).*

Don't talk about our Eddy.

**JAN**

You should ...

**ROSA**

He's let us down, yes ...

**JAN**

But Rosa, he's still your son...

**ROSA**

Who never visits his demented father ...*(Rosa turns around and tries to drive off by herself through the cour side)*

**JAN**

*(Takes over the wheelchair anyway and realises that Rosa is not yet ready).*

I'll help you, Rosa! *(somewhat embarrassed)*

*When the wheelchair leaves, Flavio comes up under a very short piece of music (10 sec.)*

## Number 8 underscore “Beautiful day’’

# Scène 11: “The plan is rejected!

*On one side you hear nurses talking and on the other side the family council.*

*We only see Flavio. Everything else is on the audio tape. He pretends the audience are the people. At jardin side is the care staff, on cour side is the family. Next to Flavio sits, so to speak, the director. Everything is recorded except Flavio's voice.*

***1 With the caregivers***

**FLAVIO**

It will bring people together.

## Number 9 = Recording

**NURSE**

And when are we going to do that, Flavio? We are already rushing from one room to another.

**FLAVIO**

There can be extra staff.

##  Number 10 = Recording

**OTHER NURSE**

There is already a shortage of staff. We've been begging so long for extra people.

**DIRECTOR**

Yes, there are three vacancies, but we can't find anyone. I must say that I like the plan. Of course, it needs to be supported by the residents and approved by the staff and the family council.

**2 At family council**

**PETER** (another family member)

And who is going to pay for it? It's unacceptable that we as a family have to contribute even more. It's already so expensive.

**DIRECTOR**

I understand that. But that's not the intention. It has to be supported though by the familycouncil.

**FLAVIO**

We are sure we will find extra volunteers. Believe me... a win-win for everyone.

**3 With the caregivers**

**FLAVIO**

But if we really want it, it will work. Everyone makes a little commitment. Our residents will enjoy it immensely and so will you (to the caregivers). It will be more fun to work overhere, if the place is more lively. We are sure that we will find extra volunteers and it will relieve our work. Our team will be even stronger. Believe me... a win-win for everyone..

## Number 11 = recording

**NURSE**

It is all noble, Flavio, but let us do the essential care first.

***4 At the family council*** *(Flavio turns from one side to the other)*

***FLAVIO***

And they are going to be able to choose between an incredible number of activities.

## Number 12 = recording

**CHANTALLE**

We are in a nursing home. A NURSING HOME.

# My mother comes here to have a good old age, to rest, not to sit in noise. Please!

# *Flavio disappears to jardin side heavily frustrated.*

# Scene 12: Rosa musing at the tree with flashback "Eddy in conflict with Sterre"

## Number 13 : 4 hours intro

*Rosa drives her wheelchair at cour side . Eddy walks towards his chair in the corner at jardin side and takes place. This seat stands there all the time. He looks miserably in front of him. Silent game.*

*Both Rosa and Eddy look straight ahead.*

*Rosa looks straight at the audience*

***ROSA***

Son! What happened to you? Many years ago! Such a beautiful time! Do you remember... when it was still your adorable Sterre...and you...you were still...! *(sigh)* She was a ray of light. A vessel full of energy, like an effervescent tablet constantly bubbling with energy... and when you looked at her... blissful...! *(her emotion changes to anger)*

It's not fair. He should have come for me, not her.

I don't get it. Eddy! To you Eddy. With you, then! Eddy! How can it be? What has happened?

*Throughout the coming conversation you see Rosa looking straight at the audience. We get a flashback here in which they play next to Rosa and we can see how Sterre died. Eddy had gone off to put on a suit jacket and then comes in like a gentleman with a mobile phone to his ear.*

***EDDY***

... Yeah...your order will be delivered within three days... Bye Yes.

Sterre enters. Actually she comes to ask her father for some financial help for her plan. See end of scene 1 . *Eddy sees her when he turns off his phone and apologises for letting her in during a phone call.*

Sorry, it's work.

***STERRE***

Yes, work.

***EDDY***

Something to drink?

***STERRE***

No, I'm fine. I heard you were back from Dubai and I wanted to ask you something about my work.

***EDDY***

The old people's home?

**STERRE**

The nursing home dad.

**EDDY**

Sterre!!!! *(sighs)* You know what I think about that!

**STERRE**

Yes, but I'm going to do something really incredible there. But I need your help, daddy.

**EDDY** *(Eddy takes out his phone to call again)*

Sorry, but if it's about that again, ...!

**STERRE**

But listen anyway.

**EDDY** *(puts the phone away again and now turns to Sterre with conviction)*

If you would just listen to me, Sterre. I've been offering you the job of a lifetime for so long now.

**STERRE** *(irritated)*

Not again!

**EDDY**

For 30 years, I have toiled to build my computer company and bring it to what it is today. I don't want to hand that over to some idiot. You are my only child and I believe in you. Then it is normal that you will take over the business eventually, isn't it?

**STERRE**

I can't comment on that, Dad. Not now! Not ever! Get that out of your head.

**EDDY** ( he gets angrier, is full of incomprehension, he really doesn't get it)

But how is that possible, Sterre *(sits down on the sofa)?*

You've always been the top of the class and now, for a pittance, you're going to sit among all those demented old people, waiting for them to die.

**STERRE**

Excuse me! Demented old people? Those demented old people still have expectations and dreams about life, just like you. And by the way! Your father is there too, or have you forgotten?

**EDDY**

I go regularly anyway.

**STERRE**

Oh come on dad. "If you have time", but you never do.

**EDDY**

What do you want Sterre, for me to go there every day? He doesn't even recognize me anymore.

**STARRY**

Oh, Daddy, you don't understand. Grandpa is lucky that Flavio still takes such good care of him.

**EDDY:**

Flavio, you will! Man, man, what did you see in that little hippie guy, anyway?

**STERRE:**

Flavio is great and I love him... and besides, I decide who I want a relationship with.

**EDDY:**

Unbelievable*. (between his teeth)* Your mother would turn around in her grave if she knew what youwere doing with your life.

**STERRE** *(Sterre gets very angry now and takes full control of the conversation)*

Mum knew ten times more about me than you did.

**EDDY**

What do you mean by that?

**STERRE**

You have always been more interested in your computers than in your own family. If there was a championship for sitting at home alone, Mum would have won it with her fingers in her nose.

**EDDY** *(Eddy too gets very angry, seriously raises his voice)*

How dare you! I worked my damned arse off to give you a good, luxurious life! You should be grateful to me instead of blaming me. I did it for you, don't you understand?

**STERRE**

No, I don't. And mama didn't understand that either. Always being alone, never having time for her, never the slightest affection, never a kind word, never a hug. It devasted her and destroyed her... literally. And where were you? You missed almost all her birthdays because you were always at some important meeting or abroad... for your business, yes, not for us.

No, I don't want to become like you, so thank you for the offer but I'm afraid you'll have to sell your business to some nitwit anyway. I will ask for help elsewhere.

*Sterre takes her mobile phone and leaves in the direction of Jardin side. She stops to type something on it and then continues.*

**EDDY** *(Eddy feels that he has gone too far and wants to keep her in the house to talk it over)*

Sterre, wait, I'm sorry, come back.

**STERRE**

Bye dad!

**EDDY**

Sterre! Sterre!

## Number 14 = number 2 We hear a scream + carcrash (sea end of scene 1)

*Light off if there is light, or flickering= see end of scene 1*

*No light, then everyone just goes off.*

*Rosa is still sitting in her wheelchair next to the garden bench. She sighs. Flavio also comes up and sits next to her on the bench. An awkward moment of silence. Flavio also looks sadly ahead.*

**Scène 13: “Jan counterattacks”**

**FLAVIO**

Hey Rosa! *(another silence)*

The sun is shining! *(sadly said)*

**ROSA** *(quietly, somewhat sadly looking ahead)*

Yes…!

*Jan comes up with his wheelbarrow. Flavio stands up. They are having a conversation at jardin side, so that Rosa doesn't hear them. She is sitting in her wheelchair at cour side, staring ahead.*

**JAN**

Aaah? *(very enthusiastically, a little quieter so that Rosa doesn't hear it)*

And, did you succeed or did you succeed?

*Flavio shakes his head.*

**JAN** *(unintelligible)*

What? No. How come? That was a very good plan.

**FLAVIO**

Everyone thought it was a very good plan too.

**JAN**

Then why wasn’t it accepted?

**FLAVIO**

Budget shortage! Shortage of staff, etc.! I told Sterre that it was too ambitious, but she laughed it off.

**JAN**

And now?

**FLAVIO**

Back to square one.

**JAN**

Come on! You can’t give up now, can you?

**FLAVIO**

I am afraid we cannot stand up to the arguments of the family council. Maybe one day!

**JAN**

Come on! Come! No, no, no, no. You can’t do this. Come on! Sterre deserves that we fight for her plan.

**FLAVIO**

Are you going to threaten them with an axe to make it happen?

**JAN**

No, but there must be a way to make the plan work.

**FLAVIO**

Be my guest.

**JAN**

Ok, challenge accepted, I won't leave it at that! Jan counterattacks.

**FLAVIO**

What are you going to do?

**JAN**

You will see. *(he departs jardin side)*

**FLAVIO**

But my goodness! What is he going to do now?

# Scene 14: “confrontatie Rosa en Eddy aan boom

*Rosa is still sitting on the tree. Eddy comes to Rosa. Sterre is watching.*

**EDDY**

Hello mother!

**ROSA**

Eddy!

**EDDY** *(very kindly, wants to make amends)*

How is it...?

*Rosa is startled, she doesn't answer and keeps looking at the audience with a wry face. Flavio also appears. He hears the conversation from the back of jardin side, but they don't see him.*

I've just been to see Dad. He is... yes... you know that too. I have something for you. A picture of when Sterre was born, with the three of us...I've always kept it...for you. *(silence)* Mother, I'm so sorry... I...

*Rosa looks at the photo, shakes her head, gets tears in her eyes, turns around and pushes her wheelchair and she disappears. Eddy stands there defeated. He sits weeping on the garden bench. Sterre and Flavio both look at Eddy. Sterre goes to Flavio. She wants him to make up for it.*

## Number 15: underscore ’’ live by the colours of your heart!’’

**STERRE** *(speaks to the music to the audience)*

# There is so much pain that is carried in silence, pain that nobody knows about. I have a dream, a dream of a world where no one is lonely any more,where people are ready for each other with open hearts, where anger and hatred are replaced by forgiveness and love.

# *Sterre walks towards Flavio who is clearly upset by the incident between Eddy and Rosa.*

# Flavio, it is time. No matter how high the mountain, venture over it. And you're not alone, Flavio. I'm at your side.

# *Flavio goes to Eddy, they look at each other.*

# Come on! Give what you can from your own strength. It will relieve you. You will feel much better.

# *Flavio sits down in front of the garden bench and hugs Eddy.*

# Scene 15: ‘’ Jan talks to the residents ‘’

*Jan pretends to speak to the residents in the dining hall of the care home.*

**JAN**

Good evening everyone. Dear residents of the care home. I must say. You look much younger than I had expected. That's promising. I am happy to see that so many of you have turned up for this fantastic singing session. I am incredibly proud to be leading it for the first time. We have given the care staff a break. They are now having a break and they are all sitting down together drinking coffee and enjoying a delicious piece of cake. In the meantime, ladies and gentlemen, we are going to sing. We will start with a song that has been written especially for tonight by our very best composer Stef. You can follow the lyrics on the sheet of paper you were given earlier.

*(All spectators have received half a sheet of paper with the lyrics on it).*

I will sing for you. First we sing it sentence by sentence and then we sing it together. Are you ready? Wow, you guys are excited. What did they put in the vaccine for you? What's going on here? Have they put sleeping pills in it? *(audience response)*

Hey, are you guys excited? Haaa! That's much better! It is quite easy. First we sing and then we dance. Would you like that? *(louder)* Would you like that? All right! I'm going to sing it! *He does this line by line and the spectators sing the sentence after each line.*

"Open the doors to those around you, let no one be lost. In warm neighbourhoods no one is left alone, young and old meet and the feeling of being counted, it feels so good, so good.

"Open the doors for the people around you? **+ AUDIENCE**

 Let no one be lost any more. **+ AUDIENCE**

no one remains alone in warm neighbourhoods. **+ AUDIENCE**

 Young and old come together **+ AUDIENCE**

 it feels so good to be counted in. "**+ AUDIENCE**

Blessed. If you can sing it all in one go, I will get a bonus. Come on!

*Sing the whole song again!*

Ladies and gentlemen, dear residents, I have a confession to make! Actually, we're not really here for the singing session. We have sung a bit now, but we have led the care staff astray. I am here for something completely different. You know that I, together with Fons and Marcel, visited every resident to explain the "Sterreplan". Thanks again to Fons and Marcel. (He points to two people in the audience and applauds)

But now there is one small problem, the plan must not go ahead. And my mind is really too small for that. Now that would bring some life into the brewery. But we will not give up. And that is why we are here gathered today. After all, it is extremely important that they listen to you, the residents. We have a lot of ideas. Listen...First of all, the most important thing...for Sterre ..... we're going....! *Jan now mimically continues at jardin side. You see him speak with conviction, but you do not hear him.*

*We see Sterre at cour side side taking over.*

**STERRE**

Jan, our volunteer, our buddy, ...! Respect for so much energy and enthusiasm. To cherish! To cherish! So important for so many people behind those four walls! *(In the meantime, Jan disappears)*

And Francine is one of them. Sterre takes the dog cart that was standing by.

She has only one friend and that is her dog. Is there anyone in her neighbourhood who really understands that?

**Scene 16 “Eddy with Francine!”**

*We hear Francine's voice. Eddy comes up and pretends to be at the door.*

**number 16 = recording Francine**

**FRANCINE**

Hello sir.

**EDDY**

May I come in, please?

**FRANCINE**

What is it for?

**EDDY**

Hmm… well Francine,

**FRANCINE**

Ah sir knows my name?

**EDDY**

I don't know if you know this, but we have been neighbours for years in the same street.

**FRANCINE**

Well, I always had the impression that you did not see me ... you always walked past me as if I was invisible

**EDDY**

Yes, sorry, I know...I was blind for a number of years.

**FRANCINE**

Yes, I have noticed that.

**EDDY**

I see that you often walk around alone.

**FRANCINE**

...I am not alone at all. Have you seen my Jip yet?

**EDDY**
Yes, beautiful! May I see? *(enters the house and walks around the dog cart)* Beautiful, such a dog. But wouldn't you like to be among people?

**FRANCINE**I have tried that all my life, sir, but there is something wrong with me. All my life I have adapted myself to the expectations of others in the hope that I would get some friendship. But not a thing. It doesn't work. As a result, whether I am here or not, no one cares, sir.

**EDDY**

Call me Eddy!

Say Francine, I've heard that your father was a baker and that you can bake and cook very well. Is that true?

**FRANCINE**

It used to be, but not any more. So what is it for?

**EDDY**

Do you still like to bake?

**FRANCINE**

The fun of it quickly passes if you only have to cook for yourself.

**EDDY**

But do you like doing that? Do you still like to do that?

**FRANCINE**

You are the first one in years to ask me what I like to do.

*Sterre appears and during her reply Francine and Eddy disappear.*

**STERRE**

My father who has an eye for someone in his street. My father, Eddy, the career man par excellence, after 55 years of focusing only on himself...! It is possible! Who would have thought it?

*Sterre now sees grandma driving up.*

# Scene 17 “The big day!”

*Rosa drives up in her wheelchair. She is sad and thinks of her former birthday party. She doesn't know anything about the residents' council.*

*Jan comes up and sits next to her on the garden bench. He goes a bit into overacting now. He plays a shy person with a dose of humour.*

**JAN**

Hi Rosa!

**ROSA**

Jan

**JAN**

Are you still angry?

**ROSA**

No, no, I'm not angry.

**JAN**

Are you angry?

**ROSA**

No, I'm not angry. Will you stop that?

**JAN**

Watch out! Don't run over my foot with your wheelchair.

*(silence for a moment, Jan changes his tone, a bit worried)*

I think it's a strange day, Rosa, a very strange day.

**ROSA**

A strange day! Why?

**JAN**

Just! I often have that .... *(silence for a moment and then loud and enthusiastic)* with birthdays. Happy birthday, Rosa!

**ROSA** *(surprised and very happy)*

You're a darling!

**JAN**

I've arranged 2 billion stars for you! Shining on you! Here you are! Thank you!

**ROSA**

They don't make them like you anymore.

*(Flavio rises)*

***FLAVIO*** *(Flavio joins)*

I do not know yet!

Happy birthday, Rosa! *(sits down on the other side of Rosa)*

Jan, you didn't bring a present either?

**JAN** *(exaggerated)*

Oh no, I thought you were going to buy that!?

**ROSA** *(laughing)*

Stop it! *( sighs )* It's not like this anymore. Gifts...!

**FLAVIO** *(quickly takes out a bouquet of roses).*

Happy birthday, Rosa!

**ROSA**

You rascal. Thank you very much!

***Singing a capella***

**JAN**

Happy birthday to you!

**JAN + FLAVIO**

Happy birthday to you!

Happy birthday to Rosa!

*(Jan makes a sign to the audience to join in)*

**JAN + FLAVIO + AUDIENCE**

Happy birthday to you!

**JAN**

And Rosa, look who else is here*. (points to the audience)*

The residents and staff of the nursing home, family and half the neighbourhood is here. It really is true!

**FLAVIO**

All together one more time and a bit faster !

**JAN + FLAVIO + AUDIENCE**

Happy birthday to you!

Happy birthday to you!

Happy birthday to Grandma!

Happy birthday to you!

*Suddenly everyone is in freeze and Sterre comes to grandma.*

***Singing a capella – very slow – in atmosphere gentle Marilyn Monroe for president Kennedy***

***STERRE***

Happy birthday to you!

Happy birthday to you!

Happy birthday to Grandma !

Happy birthday to you!

*Grandma (gives her kiss)*

*Everyone out of freeze.*

*Flavio is now pretending to speak to a very large crowd.*

**FLAVIO**

Dear Rosa, dear people! Today is a special day. The beginning of a dream comes true, the dream of Sterre, my star. I have the feeling that she is watching me now from somewhere, from above...

**STERRE**

Or from below!

**FLAVIO**

Especially in honour of Sterre, we have named her project the Sterrelicht! project.

**STERRE**

A dream to bring people from their own neighbourhood together.

**JAN**

It won't be easy, but we're going to try to bring everyone together here. From toddlers to seniors. From teenagers to forty-somethings. Because believe me... everyone needs to come together, to connect, to be warm. There will always be lonely people, but not as many as now, since many volunteers have already signed up.

And my cafeteria will be open now every day and Marcel will be in charge of the billiards and the darts club.

**JAN**

And Mariette from the Kroonlaan and Georgette from the care home have agreed to give sewing lessons every week.

**STERRE**

Everyone is welcome.

**JAN**

And a miniature version of Jos' apple tree has been made. And the children from the school next door made apples. *(Shows that kind of apple)* Each apple has a photo of a resident on one side and a child from the school on the other. The tree is full of such apples. Each child is linked to a resident and they will visit each other regularly*.*

**FLAVIO**

And Marcel organises stories around the apple tree for primary school children and adults alike. I assure you: you will be hanging at his lips!

**JAN**

And our director organises, thanks to a fantastic and unexpected sponsor. Yes, a sponsor... a village restaurant. Let's go for the world record for the longest table around our own apple tree! And the largest family at the table will eat for free.

**STERRE**

Well done, Jan!

**FLAVIO**

And we found buddies!

**JAN**

Call them friends. That sounds better.

**FLAVIO**

OK, friends then, but they are volunteers who bring people from the neighbourhood to the nursing home.

**JAN**

And Flavio, why don't you start a vegetable garden?

**FLAVIO**

Yes, that's a very good idea!

**STERRE**

Healthy vegetables for everyone.

**ROSA**

And I want animals in the meadow: goats, sheep, …

**STERRE**

And a donkey

**FLAVIO**

And the pupils of 'Animal Care' will look after the animals together with some of the residents. And there will be a bicycle workshop. Marcel is not only a good storyteller, he is also a very good bicycle mechanic. Or he used to be anyway.

**JAN**

If your bike is broken, only one address: Marcel's!

**FLAVIO**

I have another surprise ... especially for Rosa's birthday

## Number 17 Underscore ‘Warm neighbourhoods’’

*She hears Jos whistling.*

**ROSA**

Jos?

*Suddenly her son Eddy appears besides her.*

**EDDY**

Happy birthday, mother! *(Rosa flinches...)*

And ...mother ...ma ... I brought you something, especially for you.

Baked by Francine, someone local! Fresh apple pie! *(gives her the pie)*

**ROSA**

Thanks a lot!

*Very nice moment between the two. Jos joins in if he plays along and otherwise Jos whistles in the background.*

*Rosa accepts the pie. She doesn't know how to act/behave at the moment Tears run down her cheeks.*

**JAN** *(whispering to Rosa)*

That's our new sponsor.

*Everyone freezes. During Sterre's text, we get a nice rapprochement between Eddy and Rosa..*

## Underscore continues

**STERRE**

So many beautiful people. Young and old together, who support each other! That is such a joy. Loneliness is not solved yet. We still have a long way to go. A little stone has been moved. We have looked to the left, to the right and to the back... we have extended a hand! And that's all it is, really.

## Number 18 : ‘’In warm neighbourhoods’’

***Only the chorus.***

***STERRE*** *(says out loud)*So much loneliness, the cost of this era.Enough paid, the limits are reached.

(and continues singing)

Open the doors for those around you

Let no one be lost anymore

No one remains alone, in warm neighbourhoods,

Young and old meet again

It feels so good, to be counted in

**JAN, FLAVIO, STERRE, EDDY, ROSA** *(sing together and urge the audience to sing along)*

Open the doors to those around you

Let no one be lost anymore

No one remains alone, in warm neighbourhoods

Young and old meet again

It feels so good, te be counted in

## Applause song Number 19 : ‘’In warm neighbourhoods’’

*Instrumental + greeting*

*Then back again...*

**JAN, FLAVIO, STERRE, EDDY, ROSA + AUDIENCE**

Open the doors for those around you

Let no one be lost anymore

No one remains alone, in warm neighbourhoods

Young and old meet again

No one remains alone, in warm neighbourhoods