SCENE ONE: CLASS 7A, JOSEPH BLUNDELL SECONDARY SCHOOL

The following pupils are sat behind desks in the following pairs: JAIME and CHARLEY, BERNADETTE and TAYLOR, DARYL and FRANKIE. OPHELIA is sitting by herself. They are all facing the audience as if listening to a teacher at the front of the class. JAIME steps out of the scene and addresses the audience directly.

JAIME: I hate school! It's so boring! Whoever invented school ought to have spent their time inventing something that really mattered. Like a chocolate bar that never ended, or jet-propelled trainers, or a time travelling armchair! I'm Jaime Emerson by the way, and this is where this story began. It's a story that you won't believe, but it's true! Honest! Every single word! It was the morning our new form teacher, Mr Burden, started and he wanted us all to introduce ourselves to him. In front of the whole class. We had to tell him some interesting facts about who we were.

JAIME sits back down next to CHARLEY

CHARLEY: (*Standing*) Er . . . I'm Charley. (*Indicating*) This is my best friend, Jaime. We live down the same road and we've been friends since primary school. We sit next to each other in lessons, and see each other most weekends. (*To JAIME*) You're quite cool, aren't you? But not as cool as me.

CHARLEY sits as BERNADETTE stands.

BERNADETTE: My name is Bernadette Coote. My favourite lesson at school is English because I love reading. My favourite author is Jacqueline Wilson. I also love dancing and performing. I've got the lead role in the next school play and I already know all of my lines.

BERNADETTE sits. TAYLOR stands.

TAYLOR: My name is Taylor Noakes. I like all lessons at school except PE. I love cooking. I do a lot of cooking at home with my Nan. We're going to make pastry next time – Nan thinks I'll be a natural because I've got cold hands – which is good for pastry apparently.

TAYLOR SITS and DARYL stands.

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DARYL: Er . . . Dunno what to say really. My name's Daryl. I like loads of stuff like . . . er . . . watching TV . . . er . . . hanging out in the park. (*Indicating*) This is my mate Frankie. That's it really.

DARYL sits, FRANKIE stands.

FRANKIE: Ditto.

FRANKIE sits as OPHELIA reluctantly stands up.

OPHELIA: My name is Ophelia Flinders. I like animals and nature. I love watching the night sky, clouds drifting across a waxing crescent. Listening to the sounds in the darkness, a gentle breeze, an owl hooting, a cat screeching. But I also love silence.

OPHELIA sits. The bell rings. The children stand up and start to pack away, apart from OPHELIA

CHARLEY: So, can you come over to mine on Saturday? I've got a new game for my Nintendo Wii.

JAIME: Yeah, I should be allowed. Gran's coming over in the morning, but I'll be able to come over after lunch.

BERNADETTE: (*Overhearing*) I don't know how you can spend a whole afternoon on your playstation, I get bored after a few minutes.

CHARLEY: Who asked you? Stop listening to our conversation. Anyway, it's not a playstation, it's a Wii.

BERNADETTE: Big deal. My parents are taking me to Alton Towers this weekend, that's much better than a stupid Nintendo!

CHARLEY: We've been there loads of times, haven't we, Jaime?

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JAIME: Yeah, Bernie!

CHARLEY and JAIME laugh

BERNADETTE: That isn't my name.

TAYLOR: Just ignore them. Come on, we've got to tidy up the library books.

CHARLEY: You two never come out at break time.

TAYLOR: The teachers usually ask us to help with jobs.

JAIME: You mean, you ask them for things to do!

BERNADETTE: We do not!

CHARLEY: Yes, you do, Bernie!

Exit CHARLEY and JAIME, running and laughing

BERNADETTE: *(Calling after them*) It's Bernadette! (*Shaking her head*) They are so immature!

Exit BERNADETTE and TAYLOR. DARYL and FRANKIE stand either side of OPHELIA to intimidate her

DARYL: What was that all about Ophelia? Going on about darkness and owls and stuff. If people didn't think you were a freak before, they sure do now.

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OPHELIA tries to ignore them

DARYL: What's the matter? Aren't you talking today?

OPHELIA continues to ignore them

DARYL: (*To FRANKIE*) Well, that's not very friendly, is it Frankie?

FRANKIE: No, in fact I think it's very rude.

DARYL: Yes, so do I.

FRANKIE: Perhaps you ought to teach her some manners, Daryl.

DARYL: I was just thinking the same thing. (*Picking up OPHELIA's pencil case)* Right, you're not getting this back 'til you speak nicely to us.

Enter JAIME

DARYL: What do you want, Jaime?

JAIME: Just getting something out my bag.

DARYL: Be quick – this is private.

JAIME: What are you doing to her?

FRANKIE: It's none of your business.

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JAIME: Leave her alone, Daryl.

DARYL: Who's going to make me?

JAIME: (*Firmly*) Me if I have to.

JAIME and DARYL stare at each other. Eventually, DARYL lets go of OPHELIA's pencil case.

DARYL: Come on, Frankie. She's not worth it.

DARYL and FRANKIE walk past JAIME, trying to be intimidating.

DARYL: (*To JAIME*) Loser!

Exit DARYL and FRANKIE

JAIME: Are you ok?

OPHELIA silently collects her belongings, and then goes to exit.

OPHELIA: (*Turning, sincerely*) Thank you.

Exit OPHELIA. JAIME turns to address the audience.

JAIME: And that was that. I didn't give it another thought, and then two days later something strange happened in the lunch hall.

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SCENE TWO: THE LUNCH HALL

JAIME, CHARLEY, BERNADETTE and TAYLOR are sitting around the same table eating their packed lunches, and gossiping

BERNADETTE: Well, my dance teacher says I'm the best in my class.

CHARLEY: So?

BERNADETTE: So, I'm going to be an actress in the West End when I'm older.

CHARLEY: You've got to be able to sing and act as well as dance.

BERNADETTE: I can.

TAYLOR: She's a very good singer.

CHARLEY: Prove it.

TAYLOR: Go on, Bernadette. Show them.

BERNADETTE: I'm not going to sing in the middle of the lunch hall.

CHARLEY: Chicken!

BERNADETTE: No, I've got smoked salmon and cream cheese in my sandwiches actually.

Enter OPHELIA, she stands by the table. The others stop talking and look at her. After an uncomfortable pause, OPHELIA speaks.

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OPHELIA: Do you want to come over to my house at the weekend, Jaime?

JAIME: (*Shocked*) What?

OPHELIA: My Dad said it's ok.

JAIME: (*Uncomfortable*) Er . . . I dunno . . . er . . . when?

OPHELIA: Saturday afternoon.

Another pause

JAIME: Yeah, go on then. I'll have to check with my Mum and Dad, but it should be alright.

OPHELIA: Ok. See you later.

Exit OPHELIA

BERNADETTE: What was that all about?

TAYLOR: (*Nervous*) Are you really going to go 'round?

JAIME: Yeah, why not?

BERNADETTE: Because their house is really creepy! Taylor lives in the house nearly opposite them.

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TAYLOR: Yes. The paint on the window frames is peeling, and the curtains are always shut.

BERNADETTE: There's loads of weeds in the garden, and there's always lots of cats hanging around the front door.

TAYLOR: And big, black crows perched on the roof.

JAIME: I'm not bothered.

BERNADETTE: What are you going to do there?

JAIME: I dunno.

BERNADETTE: Well, why did you agree then?

JAIME: Because I felt sorry for her.

CHARLEY: You're supposed to be coming over to mine on Saturday.

JAIME: I know. I'm sorry, I'll try and come over on Sunday instead.

CHARLEY: (*Disappointed*) Ok.

JAIME: There's just something inside me telling me to go. (*Pause*) I think she needs a friend.

CHARLEY: I understand.

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SCENE THREE: OPHELIA'S BEDROOM

OPHELIA leads JAIME into her room. JAIME cautiously looks around the room.

OPHELIA: This is my room.

JAIME: It's so . . .

OPHELIA: What?

JAIME: Well . . . normal.

OPHELIA: What were you expecting? Cobwebs, and skeletons, and rats running around the floor.

JAIME: (*Defensively*) No!

OPHELIA gives a knowing look

JAIME: Ok, maybe! You've got to admit you are a little strange, and the front of your house isn't that well-kept. I've got a very active imagination.

OPHELIA: I know it looks like there's loads of weeds in our garden, but my Dad uses them for his work.

JAIME: What work?

OPHELIA: His special work. (*Pause*) His spells.

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JAIME: Er . . . sorry?

OPHELIA: Listen, there's something I need to tell you, but you've got to promise not to tell anyone else.

JAIME: Did you say spells?

OPHELIA: Yes. (*Pause*) You see my Dad is a wizard. (*Pause*) And so am I.

JAIME: (*Confused*) A wizard?

OPHELIA: You know – a sorcerer, an enchanter, someone who can do magic.

JAIME: Yes, I know what a wizard is! What are you talking about?

OPHELIA: I'm the daughter of a wizard. I can do magic!

JAIME: Look, I may have got an active imagination, but I'm not stupid!

OPHELIA: It's true!

JAIME: Yeah, whatever! I think I ought to be going now.

JAIME turns to leave. The action freezes, and JAIME steps forward to address the audience.

JAIME: And then without warning Ophelia shouted out these weird words and pointed her hand at her bedside lamp, and it turned into a sausage. (*Pause*) Honestly. Then she turned herself into a newt. That's when I passed out. When I came 'round, she was a girl again.

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JAIME: (*To OPHELIA*) How can you be a wizard? You're a girl. You must be a witch.

OPHELIA: No, there are subtle differences. Girls can be wizards too, you know. Have you never heard of a sorceress before? Only we're all called sorcerers now – equal rights and all that.

JAIME: (*Turning to the audience*) Suddenly I had a wonderful idea.

JAIME turns back to OPHELIA and the action continues

JAIME Let me be your apprentice!

OPHELIA: I don't know what you mean.

JAIME: I mean I want you to teach me how to do spells.

OPHELIA: I can't.

JAIME: Course you can! You're a wizard!

OPHELIA: My Dad would kill me. Besides I'm only training at the moment.

JAIME: All the more reason to teach me – it'll help you remember everything you've learnt.

OPHELIA: (*Worried*) I'm not sure.

JAIME: We'll get to hang out with each other all the time. It'll be fun! We'll have such a laugh. (*Pause*) Don't you want to be my friend?

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OPHELIA contemplates what JAIME has just said

OPHELIA: Ok, you can be my apprentice.

JAIME: The sorcerer's apprentice! Cool!

JAIME and OPHELIA shake hands

OPHELIA: Right, let's talk about tomorrow.

JAIME: What's happening tomorrow?

OPHELIA: You're coming over to meet the others.

JAIME: (*Surprised*) Others?

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SCENE FOUR: THE MISFITS' CLUB HOUSE

As JAIME enters and talks to the audience, the following enter and take their places: OPHELIA, NATHAN, FREYA, MATTHEW, JENNY and HARRIET who is wearing sunglasses.

JAIME: So, the next day I went back to Ophelia's house. When I got there, she led me down to the bottom of her garden to this big, tatty, wooden shed. Mrs Spooner, her next-door neighbour, was out pruning her roses. She peered over the fence, shook her head and started tutting. As we walked into the shed, I noticed a hand painted sign on the door which read, *The Misfits Club House – Keep Out!*

JAIME walks towards the group of characters and stands feeling uncomfortable as they all stare at him.

OPHELIA: This is Jaime Emerson. The one I've been telling you about.

NATHAN: Hello Jaime. Pleased to meet you.

JAIME: (*Nervously*) Hi.

NATHAN: I'm Nathan Swift. I'm a werewolf.

JAIME: (*Turns to the audience*) I didn't see that one coming.

OPHELIA: (*To NATHAN*) You could have broken the news more gently. (*To JAIME*) Yes, Nathan is a werewolf. But you don't have worry, he's perfectly harmless. My father has enchanted him.

JAIME: You mean he doesn't turn into a wolf when there's a full moon anymore.

NATHAN: Oh, I still do that. I just don't attack people.

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JAIME: (*Sarcastically*) That's alright then. (*Bemused*) So, you actually grow fur and fangs and claws on a regular basis?

NATHAN: Yep.

JAIME: (*Realising*) I can't believe I'm actually having this conversation. You can't be a werewolf – they don't exist! They're imaginary!

OPHELIA: Jaime, he is a werewolf. I promise.

NATHAN: Everyone here is special.

MATTHEW: Different.

HARRIET: We don't quite fit in. Didn't you see the sign on the door?

NATHAN: The Misfits.

JAIME: (*Looking around the room*) Hold on, you're Jenny Wilson. You go to my old primary school. What are you doing here?

JENNY: I'm a dryad.

JAIME: What's a dryad?

JENNY: Everyone always says that. A dryad is a forest nymph. A magical being that enhances the beauty of nature.

JAIME: Then why aren't you living in a wood somewhere?

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NATHAN: Her family were made homeless when their woodland was destroyed to build a new housing estate.

JENNY: We've managed to adapt to live like humans now, it was safer that way. Ophelia's father helped and supported us.

MATTHEW: He helped my family too.

NATHAN: This is Matthew Fairbrother, he's a troll.

JAIME: You don't look like a troll. I thought trolls were big and ugly and lived under bridges to scare little goats when they crossed.

MATTHEW: I'm only half troll. My mum is a human, she married a troll.

FREYA: I'm Freya Young. My Dad is best friends with Ophelia's dad. I'm training to be a witch.

OPHELIA: We sometimes have lessons together.

FREYA: I'm better than Ophelia though – I pick up things much quicker. I have a witch's intuition.

NATHAN: This is Harriet Forbes.

HARRIET: I'm a vampire.

JAIME: (*To OPHELIA*) You'll be telling me she's not dangerous in a minute.

HARRIET: I'm not!

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JAIME: How do you work that one out?

HARRIET: I'm hemaphobic.

NATHAN: He's scared of blood.

JAIME: Are you vegetarian?

HARRIET: Don't be daft – that would be ridiculous.

JAIME: And being a vampire who's scared of blood isn't?

HARRIET: I have to eat some meat – I need the iron, and protein. I wouldn't survive otherwise.

NATHAN: So, we're the Misfits.

OPHELIA: Are you still sure you want to be one of us?

JAIME looks around the room, and smiles

JAIME: More than ever.

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