

## Triptych II

### Heart and Soul

Sophie, a teenager  
Janet, Sophie's best friend.  
Kate, Sophie's mother  
Eliza, Sophie's grandmother  
Betty, Red, and Lupe – the sewists

#### Scene 1

Setting: a contemporary teenager's bedroom. SOPHIE is on her bed with a tablet face-timing with her friend JANET.

SOPHIE: Mom says I have to stay home this weekend. My grandmother is gonna be here with her sewist friends. It's their monthly quilting and cackling session. I swear if half those old ladies aren't witches...

JANET: (v/o) Sewist friends? What's a sewist? Is that like being Taoist?

SOPHIE: No, it's... apparently they don't like calling themselves a 'quilting group' because they don't *only* quilt; they sew lots of stuff, but 'seamstress' makes them feel like sweatshop workers and 'sewer' looks like it has to do with sewer rats, and sounds like something to do with pigs... or seeds.

JANET: (v/o laughing) Wow. Who knew needles and thread came with so many *issues*.

SOPHIE: You have *no* idea.

JANET: (v/o) Well, text me later... maybe you can sneak out.

SOPHIE: Sure.

#### Scene 2

Setting: around the kitchen table, early evening. KATE, SOPHIE, and ELIZA are sharing a meal.

KATE: So, Sophie, are you ready to sew with us tonight?

SOPHIE: Sew with you? Um... why would I want to do that? Pass the salt, please?

KATE: (passing the salt) Maybe because we have a family tradition of gathering to make a quilt every year, and you're old enough to join us?

ELIZA: It's more than tradition.

KATE: Mom, you don't need to put any magical nonsense into Sophie's head.

SOPHIE: No, I want to hear what Gran has to say. (to Eliza) What magical nonsense does she mean?

KATE: Mother...

ELIZA: Hush, you. (to Sophie) Child, any handicraft has an element of magic, because you're not just making it with your hands and your head, you're also putting your heart in it.

SOPHIE: Aww, man. I thought you meant, like, *real* magic. Spells and stuff. Or maybe hidden objects. I'm watching this show on Netflix where these kids find whispering keys all over their house, and -

KATE: Sophie, you know that's just fiction.

SOPHIE: Well, yeah *that* is, but that doesn't mean...

ELIZA: We put a piece of ourselves in every quilt you know. The essence of the maker, to seal with work with love.

SOPHIE: Um, a piece of yourself? Like...what? A fingernail?

ELIZA: A drop of blood. Barely a pinprick's worth, but enough. It binds the thread, binds the intent - to bring warmth and comfort to the recipient.

SOPHIE: Blood? Eww. Gross.

KATE: Actually – finish your spinach – it's not gross. It's barely noticeable.

SOPHIE: But... but hygiene... and disease prevention.

KATE: A dot of blood soaked into fabric won't make anyone sick. Besides, it all comes out in the cleaning.

ELIZA: No, it doesn't.

KATE: Mother...

ELIZA: It doesn't come out, child. The stain might not be seen, but the essence remains. The drop, that's just the carrier for the essence. For the intent.

SOPHIE: For the love?

ELIZA: Precisely child.

SOPHIE: Cool.

KATE: I assume that means you're joining us?

SOPHIE: I might.

KATE: Finish your carrots.

SOPHIE: Moooom!

### Scene 3

Setting: Kate and Sophie's living room. A circle of chairs around a large table, upon which a partly-finished quilt is spread KATE and SOPHIE are present, as is ELIZA. Also, there are the sewists: BETTY, RED (who's hair is bright white though her lipstick is not) and LUPE.

LUPE: Red, could you move over? You're in my light.

RED: I'm not in your light, you're hogging mine.

LUPE: You know I've got cataracts in my right eye...

RED: Oh, I know. We all know.

LUPE: I am not that bad.

BETTY: You are that bad, sweetie. We just don't like to point it out much.

RED: Yes, we do.

ELIZA: Enough. Sophie, dear, will you get the extra torch light from my room.

SOPHIE: Mom? Is that okay?

KATE: Of course. Just be careful not to hit the staircase wall.

SOPHIE: I won't.

She goes to fetch the lamp, returning with it, and plugging it in.

SOPHIE: Is that better for everyone?

LUPE: Yes, thank you kiddo.

RED: (sotto voce) Now she'll complain that her thimble's too small.

LUPE: Hush. I am not the one with fat fingers.

BETTY: Can you two just focus on the quilt?

SOPHIE: (sotto voce) Quilting and cackling...

ELIZA: Did you say something, dear?

SOPHIE: Nothing important. I thought there was some kind of blood ritual when you made these. You said there was a pinprick of blood. And... when do you do the spell and invite me to the group?

KATE: Sweetie, you said you just wanted to watch.

SOPHIE: Watching is boring.

KATE: Well, the ritual is top secret...

ELIZA: Katie, don't tease your child. Sophie, the only 'ritual' is that you add a square of your own.

SOPHIE: How do I know what square to add?

ELIZA: Well, it depends on the quilt, child. Some quilts use geometric designs that are all related, so adding a square just means following the pattern.

BETTY: And some are story quilts, where each block represents something specific, an event in the story.

SOPHIE: What kind is this one?

RED: Should we tell her, Katie?

KATE: She's ready.

ELIZA: This is a memorial quilt. Our friend Nora is very sick, and is in hospice. We want her daughter to have something special to remember her by, so we've created a quilt with blocks that represent things Nora loved. See, that one is a watering can, because she loved her flower garden, and this one has knitting needles...

SOPHIE: (examining the blocks, and then pointing) Oh, I remember Nora! She had two big black dogs... and there they are.

ELIZA: Exactly. On the last block, we've each stitched our names, so Cheryl – that's Nora's daughter – will always know that we loved her mother, and that our love wraps around her, as well.

SOPHIE: Oh, Gran... that's really lovely.

ELIZA: (to Kate) You're right. She's ready.

SOPHIE: Ready for what?

KATE: Well, this quilt has enough blocks... that's why we're piecing it together. Next step is to layer this top over batting and then a bottom layer, and stitch it all together, and then we quilt the top.

SOPHIE: I thought this *was* quilting.

KATE: It is... but quilting is also the final step, the patterned stitching that ties everything together.

SOPHIE: (totally not understanding) Oh. I get it.

KATE: Good. So, if you go look on my bed, there's a box for you.

SOPHIE: I'll go check.

#### Scene 4

Sophie's bedroom. She's got facetime running on her iPad, but she's also got a cutting board laid out on her bed, and she's using a rotary blade to cut pieces of fabric.

JANET: (v/o) Are you done with that yet?

SOPHIE: No... I'm barely started. Once you pick a design, you have to cut enough squares or triangles or whatever to make it, and then you have to stitch them all together and then...

JANET: (v/o) So, we're not going to the mall for mochachos?

SOPHIE: I told you, it's quilting and cackling weekend.

JANET: (v/o) You're not a cackling.

SOPHIE: No... but one day, I will be.

**Curtain**