

## The screen

### By Nick Bilbrough

*A play to be performed with two groups of three actors in two different remote locations through ZOOM, each with an active webcam. Each line and action is repeated by the second group, giving the effect that the actors are speaking to each other as well as to the audience.*

*Darkness.*

*Music fades in (Pink Floyd's 'Is there anybody out there?')*

A: Hello..

B: Hello?

C: Hello!

*A candle is lit...Three people can be seen facing the screen. They slowly walk towards it in a line. They stop when their faces are right up close to it.*

A: It's so dark.

B: It's cold. So cold.

C: Where are we?

*The lights come on.They turn to the left and walk off stage. Each reappears alone, walking diagonally across the field of view of the webcam, turning to face it as they speak.*

A: I don't know which way to go.

B: There's no way out.

C: I'm lost.

*Now A appears from under the view of the webcam, close up as she says her lines. B appears from the left and C from the right.*

A: But wait. There's something here. I can see something in front of us.

B: We can't go any further. We're stuck. There's a screen right in front of us.

C: But why? Why?

A: Wait! I can see through the screen. I can see people on the other side.

B: Me too. I can hear voices...men, women, children...

C: Who is it? Who are they?

*The three people look slowly around the screen in all directions. Then when they say their lines they look straight at the webcam.*

A: There's somebody there. They're watching us. Listening to everything that we say. I don't like it here. We can't trust them.

B: But wait. Maybe they can help us. Hello? Can you hear us? Can you see us?

C: Hello! Are you there?

A: We won't let you hurt us. We won't let you take away our home. It's ours! We will never let you do that.

B: We have something for you. Look! *(She holds something up to the webcam)*

This was made here. It's for you.

C: So take it, please...

*C takes the object and holds it out right up to the webcam. There is a long pause and finally she puts it away.*

A: It's no good. They can't see us. They're not looking. They can't hear us. They're not listening. They don't care!

B: We're imagining it. There's nobody there. No one at all. It's all in our minds.

C: We're alone. It's just us.

*Music fades in (It could be Lina Sleibi's version of 'Helwa ya baladee'). The lights go out. B picks up the candle. They walk slowly backwards away from the screen carrying the candle. C blows it out.*

*Darkness.*