

PANDORA'S GIFT

by

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CHARACTERS

A

B

A room. There's a box on the floor. It could be a shoebox, an old tin, a box meant for teabags - it doesn't matter. It's closed. A and B sit near to it. Don't worry about their ages or genders or anything like that.

A
Do you really think it might be?

B
No, of course not! It was a throwaway comment!

A
So you're ruling it out?

B
Yes!

A
One hundred per cent?

B
Well, not a hundred per cent. I can't, can I? Not without looking.

A leaps up, quickly moves as far from the box, within the same room, as possible.

B
That's just maths! It doesn't mean it's a bomb!

A
Would you please move away from the box?

B does, slowly, in the opposite direction to A.

A
Hurry!

B finally stops. The box is between them.

B
It's not Covid, is it? If that's genuinely a bomb, a couple of metres isn't a safe distance.

They both stare at the box.

B
This is ridiculous.

B moves closer to it.

A

No!

B

Be sensible. Can you hear any
ticking?

A listens.

A

No.

A continues to listen.

A

Yes!

B

That's my watch.

B slowly approaches the box, puts their ear to it.

B

Nothing.

A approaches the box too, stands over it.

A

Let's open it.

B

Finally!

B goes to do just that.

A

Wait!

B stops.

A

I had gloves on when I brought it
in. Shouldn't we disinfect it
first, before we touch it?

B

No! We cannot Dettol everything!
And I used all the wipes up this
morning, cleaning.

A

Before I got up? I thought I heard
noises.

B
I couldn't sleep.

BEAT

A
It's the way it was left, that's what's worrying me. When I opened the door to go for my walk, that box was smack bang in the middle of the outside doormat. As if someone had taken out a tape measure and lined it up perfectly.

B
You've become such a conspiracy theorist since this lockdown started.

A
Explain it to me then. Why didn't the person delivering it ring the bell?

B
Because they don't anymore do they? Delivery drivers just drop things and run!

A
They still ring! I've seen them ring Iris' bell at number three when I've been looking out the window!

B
Maybe they did ring and we missed it.

A
How? Neither of us had taken our daily exercise when I found it. We were in!

B
If you don't open that box soon, I'm chucking it.

A
Fine!

A crouches down and opens the lid, looks inside.

B

Well?

A

It's paper. Lots and lots of
coloured paper, cut into small
squares.

B

That's it? We've been fussing over
a child's craft project?

A

The colours are beautiful! I feel
all... Is there a window open?

B

No, why?

A

I can feel something, like a breeze
flying around inside. Can you feel
it?

B

No. Yes. Maybe.

A throws some of the coloured paper at B.

B

What was that for?

A

Come on! Someone's boxed us up a
rainbow. We've a rainbow inside!

A throws the box's contents into the air. B smiles as A
dances. The colours flutter down.

END OF PLAY.