

Clenching Fog

Overall Story Notes

Half the story occurs in a fantasy world while the other half is in the real world. To over emphasize this split, Pages 1-4 are right side up and Pages 5-7 are upside down. This will force the reader to physically turn the book between Page 4 & 5. To hint at this flip, there's dialogue boxes from the Voice from Another Place with upside down words on Pages 1-4. As envisioned, the page turns on Page 1, 3, & 5. With this structure, Page 4 & 5 where the flip occurs are side by side.

Page 1

Page 1, Panel 1

Establishing shot. Long panel stretching the full width of the page's top tier. Outside on the flat, grassy plains of an unknown land. The night sky is illuminated by distant stars and tiny visible spiral galaxies. On the panel's left side stretches a gnarled tree with a wide trunk. Bright green leaves dapple the tree's many twisting branches. At the tree's base is a plump woman in her late 60's. Her hair is curly and gray, cut short so that it hangs a little passed her chin. From her age and physique, she does not appear to be the ideal adventurer. This is Chloe, our main character. Near her feet is a tangled circle of vines called the Aag vines. These are shown in Panel 3 and will be the focus of a sequence at the top of Page 2. The Aag vines will be more apparent in Panels 6 & 7, but perhaps add it here for continuity.

Resting next to Chloe is a jellyfish the size of a bear. This land jellyfish is named Macha and changes color based on emotion like a mood ring. Currently, Macha is illuminating an orange glow. On the ground beside Chloe is a tattered satchel holding supplies and the items mentioned in Panels 3-5. Beside this satchel is a worn wooden box absent of engravings or markings. The box is fastened shut by a metal clasp in front. It is plain and unappealing, yet it is her most prized possession as explained in the following panel. This wooden box will be in close-up in Panels 6 & 7 on this page.

On the panel's right side is a giant hole in the ground. The hole's edges are uneven and do not form a perfect circle, as if erosion has peeled away bits of the hole's sides and edges over time. In the next page, our main characters will explore the hole's true depth.

As mentioned below, the dialogue is from the "Voice from Another Place." The font and style of the text box for these dialogues should be different than our main character's Voice Overs (V.O.'s) or speech bubbles. The owner of the "Voice from Another Place" will be revealed on Page 5. Perhaps have the colors be the same as the cloaked figure's attire on Page 4.

Voice from Another Place (Upside-down Text Box): Mom.

Notes on Page 1, Panels 2 – 5

These 4 panels are flashback and should be in a 2x2 grid, each panel the same size. The below text will form the outer border of these 4 panels, like a picture frame around a portrait. This is to make these panels appear more distinct. Please keep in mind, to emphasize the progression in time, Chloe's hair will change from long, dark, and healthy in Panel 2 to short and gray as in Panel 1 and the remainder of this story.

Chloe (V.O. text around Panels 2-5): 5 years. 5 long years since your aid returned alone, clasping a tired box, your sweet voice captured within. That sealed message still strengthens me. With colorful Macha as my guide, I count the breaths until we're together again. I miss you so much.

CONTINUED ON NEXT 2 PAGES, 6 MORE PANELS

Page 1, Panel 2

As mentioned, this is a flash back from 5 years ago when the journey began. Day time. We are outside their house in the hills. Chloe was hanging up the washed linen on a clothesline to dry when Macha interrupted. Compared to the previous panel, Chloe's hair is long and dark with healthy curls. No signs of gray. She's holding the linen basket against one hip. Chloe is on the left side of the panel while Macha glows purple on the right, the jellyfish's color resembling its worry and sadness. The large land jellyfish holds up the wooden box shown briefly in the previous panel. The box is open and a message escapes from inside. The message is split into two dialogues to designate a pause between them.

Message Inside Box (originating from wooden box): Follow Macha. Find me.

Message Inside Box (originating from wooden box): I love you, my Little Sparrow.

Page 1, Panel 3

Chloe and Macha are standing on the side of an active volcano. Orange and red lava seeps down the black sooted mountain. In a safe spot between where the lava diverges and splits, Chloe is bent back, pulling with all her strength to uproot the Aag vine. A tug of war between her and the world. A frightened white Macha is behind Chloe, trying to ensure she doesn't fall back into the pressing lava once she finally pulls out the Aag vine. Slung across her is the satchel shown in Panel 1. Since this is near the beginning of her journey, the satchel is in good condition. Chloe's hair is still long, yet some gray strands peek through.

Chloe (V.O.): It's been a long, strange journey. Traveling. Collecting tools. From gathering sturdy vines from the Aag shrubs along the Fire Hills.

Page 1, Panel 4

Night. Chloe and Macha are in area similar to a marsh or wetlands. Tall, thick blades of grass surround them. In the center of the panel is a beetle pausing idly on a blade of tall grass. On one side of the beetle is a glass bottle with the bottle's mouth pointed toward the beetle. On the other side is the bottle's cork. Chloe holds both items on either side of the beetle, prepared to capture the insect. At this point in the journey, Chloe's curly hair is shortened to hanging just below her chin. It is about 1/2 gray hair, 1/2's natural dark. In the background, Macha is glowing yellow, providing light. Like panel 1, the moonless sky is filled with stars and vibrant spiral galaxies.

Chloe (V.O.): To the itchy high grasses of Najil Fen. Took 4 sleepless nights to bottle a Crescent King Beetle, seer of grand illusions.

Page 1, Panel 5

Day. Dangling from the edge of a mountain cliff, a red Macha hangs by with all its might. The large land jellyfish grips the cliff's edge with a few tentacles for support. With the other tentacles, Macha grasps Chloe as she reaches for a small flower growing from a crack on the mountain's side. Macha is the only thing protecting Chloe as she suspends in the air. One slight mistake and they both plummet toward the ground, far, far below. Both of them are stretched to near their breaking point, both physically and mentally. Chloe's hair remains the same shortness except her hair color is about 2/3 gray, 1/3 dark.

Chloe (V.O.): After that, the Dancing Droplets Daisy was easy.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE, 2 MORE PANELS

Page 1, Panel 6

We return to the present timeline from Panel 1. This panel will be match cut with the following panel. It's still night time and the stars and galaxies are alive with wonder. Medium shot of Chloe beneath the gnarled roots of the giant tree. She has one hand on the wooden box, holding it open. There's nothing physical inside, only the ethereal message. Near Chloe's feet is the Aag vine wrapped in a circle. As mentioned, the vine will be important on the next page. Beside Chloe, orange Macha remains slumbering.

The Message Inside Box dialogue bubble will connect with the second half of the Message Inside Box's dialogue bubble in Panel 7. This will link both panels/dialogues together.

Chloe: Countless kilometers. Countless more. Anything until I hold you once more.

Message Inside Box (originating from wooden box): Follow Macha. Find me.

Page 1, Panel 7

Match-cut with the previous panel. Chloe is turned toward Macha. She closes the wooden box with the hand resting upon it in Panel 6. With the other hand, she is waking up Macha. Some blushes of blue sprout within the giant orange land jellyfish to show that Macha is waking up.

Message Inside Box (tail continuation from previous panel): I love you, my Little Sparrow.

SFX (wooden box closing): KLASP

Chloe: Let's go, old friend. She's waiting.

Page 2

Notes on Page 2 Layout

Panels 1-4 will be small close-ups at the top of the page, aligned in the same row. The remainder of the page will be a splash page showing Chloe's journey as she descends into the earth with Macha.

Voice from Another Place (Upside-down Text Box): Mom. This is it. Prepare yourself.

Page 2, Panel 1

Close-up of the Aag vine wrapped and tied tight around the large tree, like a lasso. Chloe is pulling the bit of protruding vine to test the vine and knot's durability. She will use the tree as a post as she descends down the hole. Spelunking.

Chloe (off panel): Good.

Page 2, Panel 2

Close-up similar to the previous panel. Chloe is testing the Aag vine's durability and knot with the strand wrapped around her waist.

Chloe (off panel): Good.

Page 2, Panel 3

Close-up of Chloe's feet near the edge of the large hole in the earth. A portion of Macha's blue floating tentacles are in panel as well.

Chloe (off panel): OK.

Page 2, Panel 4

Close-up of Chloe's mouth as she exhales a breath. Mentally and physically trying to release her nervousness.

NO DIALOGUE

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE, 1 SPLASH PAGE DESCRIPTION

Page 2, Splash

This Splash Page follows Chloe and Macha's journey down the hole in the ground. In order to show our two characters progressing on their underground journey, multiple instances of them will be on the page/splash panel. The multiple instances will be broken down by bullet points below. Also, by making the hole/tunnel dip and wind and backtrack and dead end like an underground maze it'll keep the reader longer on the page and make them a more "active reader."

- Outside the hole. Near the top right of the page, Chloe enters down into the hole. The Aag vine is tied around her waist at one end and the other tied along the trees base as seen in Panels 1 & 2. She is climbing down slowly, cautiously. In order to keep continuity, there is a string of Aag vine connecting this instance of Chloe with the next instance. Macha is still blue.
- Chloe descends like a spelunker, feet against the wall, hands gripped to the Aag vine. Below her on both side of the hole are giant citrine crystals protruding from the walls. Some light is illuminating from the citrine crystals. Macha floats down, not needing to be tied by the Aag vine or any visible support. The giant jelly fish is turning into a bright green. This should help identify it with the surrounding yellow crystals in the next sequence. As mentioned before, in order to keep continuity, there is a string of Aag vine connecting this instance of Chloe with the next instance.
- Chloe lands on a large citrine crystal sticking out of the left side of the wall that points downward. She is casually walking down the crystal's descending slope. Macha is still bright green.
- Near the giant crystal's tip, the tunnel transitions from vertical to horizontal. Chloe's feet is on the dirt floor as she stands underneath the giant citrine. She is looking down, untying the Aag vine from her waist now that she is on firm ground. From the previous instance of Chloe walking downward on the citrine, the Aag vine droops over the citrine's edge and trails to her current position under the crystal. Macha is still bright green. For orientation, Chloe and Macha are located near the center right of the page/panel by this instance.
- Chloe walks westward along the dirt tunnel. There is no illuminated citrine crystals in the remaining portion of the underground maze. Macha detects that it is getting dimmer and begins to change to yellow like a lightbulb. For orientation, they are near the direct center of the page/panel.
- Chloe and Macha are at a section where the tunnel winds upward instead of forward. This portion of the tunnel is dark due to the distance from the glowing citrines. A yellow illuminating Macha hoists Chloe up so she can continue climbing upward.
- Another instance of a glowing Macha lifting Chloe. For orientation, they are near the top left of the page/panel.
- Chloe and Macha are walking westward in peace. Nothing eventful.
- Chloe falls forward not realizing the floor ends. An illuminated Macha is reaching out, attempting to stop her forward tumble.
- Chloe is plummeting in free fall. Macha is rushing to save her.
- Both gently descend. Chloe holds an incandescent yellow Macha like a parachute.
- Chloe hugs Macha. Grateful for the giant jellyfish's friendship. For orientation, the characters are near the bottom left corner of the page/panel.
- Chloe and a glowing Macha are walking eastward. Chloe holds one of Macha's tentacles, as if they are holding hands. There is a faint light at the eastern end of the tunnel. For orientation, they are near the center bottom of the page/panel.
- Chloe and Macha arrive at a large opening in the tunnel at the bottom right page/panel. Stone steps lead into the opening. The source of light is from a large pink Rose Quartz crystal. More of these crystals will be inside. If possible, have Chloe's reflection in the Rose Quartz. This will link to the events on the following page.
- They enter the opening and transition to the next page.

Page 3

Page 3, Panel 1

Establishing shot. Perhaps a Bird's Eye View perspective from the top corner of the room. This panel is taken a couple seconds after the Chloe and a green Macha enter from the left of the page, from the opening leading to the underground maze on the previous page. The room is not large and has a low ceiling. Four giant Rose Quartz crystals crowd the tight space and give a soft pink glow on the room. Chloe is walking toward the rightmost Rose Quartz, intrigued by something the reader can't see yet. This is the crystal she interacts with throughout this page. Macha floats near the other three giant crystals.

Voice from Another Place (Upside-down Text Box): This is the last time you'll see her, you know, before...before...

Chloe: How peculiar.

Page 3, Panel 2

This panel will be match-cut with the following panel. In the foreground, profile shot of Chloe standing in front of a giant Rose Quartz, her arm extended, palm flat on the crystals surface. Chloe's reflection is mirrored within the Rose Quartz's gleam except a different version of Chloe stares back. Within the crystal, this Chloe is in the same pose except she is younger, about 35 years old, and wearing a vibrant green dress. Her hair is longer and darker. A small pendant droops along her neckline. In the background, Macha floats close to the other three giant Rose Quartzes. Each of these three Rose Quartzes contains a different version of Chloe. However, they are all in the same position as the original Chloe, arm extended and palm flat against their crystal home. The left crystal Chloe is 20 years old with long dark hair and wearing a sun dress and straw sun hat. The middle crystal Chloe is 12 years old with pig tails, jeans, and a simple shirt. The right crystal Chloe is in her mid 40s wearing fitted jeans and an open jacket with a flowy top underneath. For orientation, the real Chloe is standing in front of the right most of the four giant crystals. This way, Macha is near the other three giant Rose Quartzes.

Chloe: Wait. That dress. This is me. 30 years ago.

Page 3, Panel 3

Match-cut. In the foreground, the 35 year old crystal Chloe reaches forward through her crystal shell and grasps with both her hands the real Chloe's arm. The real Chloe still has her palm pressed against the crystals surface, allowing the crystal Chloe to surprise attack her. The real Chloe looks shocked while the crystal Chloe wears a devious smile. In the background, the other three versions of Chloe break from their Rose Quartz barriers and grab onto Macha. The left crystal Chloe grabs a tentacle. On the other side, the right crystal Chloe grabs a different tentacle. All the while, the young child version of Chloe in the center has leaped atop Macha and is now holding on for dear life.

Chloe: Ahhh!

Crystal Chloe: You do not exist.

CONTINUED ON NEXT 2 PAGES, 6 MORE PANELS

Notes on Page 3, Panels 4 – 6

The following 3 panels should occupy their own row. They are similar snap-shots of each of the three Rose Quartz crystals in front of Macha and their versions of Chloe's past selves trapped within.

Page 3, Panel 4

The 20 years old crystal Chloe clings onto one of Macha's outstretched tentacles, struggling to hold on as Macha flails to break free. As described in Panels 3 & 4, this is the left most Rose Quartz. This crystal Chloe has long dark hair and wearing a sun dress and straw sun hat.

Crystal Chloe (20 years old): You make others feel weaker because you won't admit how lonely you are.

Page 3, Panel 5

The 12 years old crystal Chloe rides atop Macha with both short arms and legs outstretched like a starfish, overwhelmed by the force of Macha acting like a bucking bronco. As described in Panels 3 & 4, this is the middle Rose Quartz in front of Macha. This crystal Chloe has pig tails, jeans, and a simple shirt.

Crystal Chloe (12 years old): You blame others for your smallest faults.

Page 3, Panel 6

The crystal Chloe in her mid 40s presses tight around another of Macha's thrashing outstretched tentacles. Since this version is older, she is barely hanging on causing her feet to be lifted off the ground. As described in Panels 3 & 4, this is the right Rose Quartz in front of Macha. This crystal Chloe wears fitted jeans and an open jacket with a flowy top underneath.

Crystal Chloe (mid 40's): You fear failing so you don't risk anything.

Page 3, Panel 7

The 35 years old crystal Chloe grasps firm with both hands the real Chloe's forearm, trying to pull the real Chloe into the Rose Quartz. As described in Panels 3 & 4, this crystal Chloe has long dark hair and is wearing a vibrant green dress. A small pendant droops along her neckline.

Crystal Chloe (35 years old): You hate yourself.

Chloe: Let. Me. Go.

Page 3, Panel 8

Quick close-up of the real Chloe hand and forearm within the Rose Quartz. The real Chloe is losing this tug of war and is being yanked into the giant pink crystal by the younger version of herself that's trapped within.

NO DIALOGUE

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE, 1 MORE PANEL

Page 3, Panel 9

Quick close-up of the real Chloe's face wincing as it plunges into the surface of the Rose Quartz, eyes closed, head turned away from the crystal trying to delay the inevitable, knowing that she is struggling against a losing battle. A portion of her head and body are already within the Rose Quartz. The crystal Chloe is the opposite reflection. This version is smiling at her near success in capturing the real Chloe within her crystal realm. The below dialogue from the Crystal Chloes all originate off panel. These horrendous labels should surround and crowd the real Chloe's dialogue, giving a claustrophobic feel.

Chloe: I'm real. I'm real. I'm real. I'm –

Crystal Chloe (originating off panel): Liar

Crystal Chloe (originating off panel): Fraud

Crystal Chloe (originating off panel): Addict

Crystal Chloe (originating off panel): Vile

Crystal Chloe (originating off panel): Imposter

Crystal Chloe (originating off panel): Sham

Page 4

Page 4, Panel 1

Abrupt scene change. Chloe is lying down with her eyes open. She is wearing the same clothes and the satchel remains draped across her front. The setting has changed. It is bright instead of the darkness smeared with faint crystal pink. Instead of hard rock, the floor is a tarnished golden metal.

Voice from Another Place (Upside-down Text Box): Hey! I don't believe this. Are you even listening to me?

Chloe (whispering): real. I'm real. I'm real. I'm -

Page 4, Panel 2

Zoom far out. We see that she is in the desert, trapped in a giant bird cage. From our far vantage, we notice that she is now standing. Chloe is pressed up against the bars of the birdcage, both hands clasped firm on her prison. She is looking out into an expanding nothingness of sand and heat.

Chloe (from within the bird cage) Alone.

Page 4, Panel 3

Close-up of Chloe screaming for Macha to the empty desert. Her hands are gripped tight around the bird cage's vertical bars.

Chloe: MACHAAAAAA

Page 4, Panel 4

Extreme close-up of Chloe's hand reaching into the satchel and pulling out her beloved wooden box with the message inside.

Chloe (off panel, originating from above): It's no use. My guide is gone.

Chloe (off panel, originating from above): At least you're always here with me.

Page 4, Panel 5

Chloe sits on the bird cage's floor, feeling the weight of the journey thus far crash upon her soul. She is at a loss and is lost. She hugs the wooden box for comfort, talking to the only keepsake she has of her love. Outside the bird cage prison, a small Fennec Fox hisses at her. From this low perspective, we can see the lower portion of a cloaked figure beside the Fennec Fox.

Chloe: I miss you, Helen.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE, 4 MORE PANELS

Page 4, Panel 6

Chloe looks up at the cloaked figure with the Fennec Fox, demanding information. She still sits on the bird cage's floor, grasping tight the wooden box memento.

Chloe: Who are you?

Chloe: Did you bring me here?

Chloe: Where's my jellyfish?

Page 4, Panel 7

Silent close-up of the cloaked figure's hood covering his face.

NO DIALOGUE

Page 4, Panel 8

Chloe is standing and screaming into to "face" of the cloaked figure. With the hand that she is not holding the wooden box, she pokes a finger at the cloaked man's chest.

Chloe: Say Something.

Chloe: Tell me who you are.

Page 4, Panel 9

This panel is upside down to transition to the following upside down pages. The reader needs to physically turn the book in order to read Pages 5-7. This will help make apparent the source of the Voice from Another Place excerpts. The cloaked man has lifted his hood and reveals himself to be a plain looking man in his mid 30's. He has both of his hands up as if pleading his defense. The Fennec Fox cowers behind the cloaked man's legs, whimpering in fear. This panel, will be match-cut with the first panel on the next page (Page 5, Panel 1).

Cloaked Figure: Mom, are you ok? You're scaring Jason.

Page 5 - 7 Notes

As mentioned in the beginning of the script, Pages 5 - 7 will be printed upside down to physically demonstrate the shift into reality. To give these pages a more structured, grounded feel perhaps have them in a 9 panel, 3 by 3 grid pattern.

Page 5

Notes on Page 5 Layout

As mentioned above, perhaps a clean/plain/structured three by three 9 panel grid would work best. A visual conformity and normalcy that reflects the mundane real world existence.

Page 5, Panel 1

Real world. In a hallway inside a hospital. As mentioned, this panel is match-cut with Page 4, Panel 9. The mid 30 year old cloaked figure is Chloe's son. Instead of a cloak, he's wearing a hoody of a similar style and color. The Fennec Fox hiding behind the man is now a little boy, about 4-6 years old. This is Chloe's grandson, Jason. To over emphasize the switch into reality, the dialogue is repeated.

Man in hoody/Chloe's son: Mom, are you ok? You're scaring Jason.

Page 5, Panel 2

Chloe looks down at the object she is holding for affirmation. In the fantasy existence, the object was an unadorned wooden box. In this reality, she clings to an old, worn shoebox. As we'll see on the next page, inside the shoebox is Chloe's wife's voice.

Chloe: I'm here. Here. Free.

Chloe: From the Bird Cage in the Desert.

Chloe: With her voice.

Chloe: With her voice.

Chloe: With -

Page 5, Panel 3

Medium shot of Chloe's grandson, Jason. The young boy has braved the awkward tension and stands in front of his father. The timid Jason looks down, ashamed to look at his grandmother. The father's reassuring hands resting on the boy's shoulder can be seen in frame. Perhaps have each dialogue balloon on either side of Jason.

Man in hoody/Chloe's son (off panel, originating from above): Mom. Please. I'm worried.

Man in hoody/Chloe's son (off panel, originating from above): I keep talking to you and it's like, like, you're somewhere else. Vanished.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE, 6 MORE PANELS

Page 5, Panel 4

Chloe keeps looking down at the shoebox in her hand for comfort while her son is getting upset at her lack of concern and emotion. Jason frees himself from his father's hands and walks toward Chloe standing a few feet away.

Chloe: She's near. My love.

Chloe: I feel it. Bursting. Yearning.

Man in hoody/Chloe's son: Listen to yourself. Mom is dying down the hallway and you're just...just...I don't know anymore.

Page 5, Panel 5

Jason hugs his Grandma Chloe.

Chloe: Hello there, tiny fox.

Jason: Hey, Grandma. Don't worry about dad. He's been upset lately about Grandma being sick. He's still a good dad.

Page 5, Panel 6

Chloe's son wearing the hoodie joins in the hug, crying on his mother's shoulders.

Man in hoody/Chloe's son: Mom. Sorry that I screamed. It's hard enough losing one of my mothers. I don't want to lose you as well.

Jason: She'll be alright, dad. She just wants to see Grandma.

Page 5, Panel 7

Walking toward the door to Helen's room. Hand in hand. Perhaps shot from behind so they are walking away from the reader.

Jason: Here. I'll take you to her. Come on.

Chloe: Well, that would be wonderful. My jellyfish is gone and I don't recognize this place.

Page 5, Panel 8

Chloe and Jason pause outside Helen's hospital room door.

Jason: Grandma, tell Grandma I hope she gets better. I miss her banana bread.

Chloe: I will. Thank you for being my guide.

Page 5, Panel 9

Chloe opens the door to the hospital room.

Chloe: Hello? Are you awake? It's me.

Page 6

Notes on Page 6 Layout

Similar to the previous page perhaps a three by three, 9 panel grid would work best. A visual conformity and normalcy that reflects the mundane real world existence.

Page 6, Panel 1

Close-up of a Helen's face in the hospital bed. Her eyes are closed, relaxed in sleep. She has a Tracheotomy tube attached to a ventilator that restricts her ability to speak.

Chloe (off panel, originating from left): Oh, Helen. My love. My sweet, sweet love. I'm here.

SFX (sound of air sucking through Tracheotomy tube): HHHUFH

Page 6, Panel 2

Chloe stands beside Helen's hospital bed. One of Chloe's hands holds the shoe box's lid while the other is extended offering the open shoe box to a slumbering Helen as a gift. Helen is the only patient in the room.

Chloe: How do you do it? Even after all this time, you're still the most gorgeous living thing I've ever seen.

Chloe: Sorry. I'm getting ahead of myself. Here. This is yours.

Page 6, Panel 3

Chloe looks down inside the silent shoe box, worried she lost one of the few remaining good things in her life.

Chloe: Oh, no. No, no, no, no, no. Your courageous voice. It's gone.

Page 6, Panel 4

Chloe turns the shoe box upside down, shaking out all its contents. An eclectic mix of 20 to 30 paper items tumble atop Helen tucked underneath her hospital bed sheets. These are notes, letters, envelopes, and scraps of paper. Some of these will be explored in upcoming panels.

Chloe: Please. Please. Please. It must still be in here.

Chloe: I've already lost Macha. I can't lose something so precious.

Page 6, Panel 5

Chloe leans over the bed, digging one of her hands into the pile of paper, like slipping your fingers in sand at the beach. With the other hand she holds up a note and reads it aloud.

Chloe: What's all these? "Dear Little Sparrow, you looked lovely today in the green dress. Thought you should know. Love, your adorable wife Helen."

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE, 4 MORE PANELS

Page 6, Panel 6

Chloe holds a letter open with both hands and reads aloud Helen's words. From the size and folded creases, we can tell this letter was once stored in an envelope.

Chloe: "Hello, beautiful. How is Portugal? I miss you terribly. I can't wait to hold you and kiss you and shout to the stars how much I love you. Return soon and safe. Love, Helen."

Page 6, Panel 7

Chloe holds two scraps of paper, one in each hand. Tears shimmer in her eyes as she reads both of them aloud.

Chloe: "Hey. I love you. That is all. Kisses."

Chloe: And this one. "I'm sorry we fought. It's my fault. I just wish you would talk more about your emotions. I'm here for you. Always."

Page 6, Panel 8

Close-up of both of Chloe's hands holding and squeezing Helen's closest limp hand. Chloe's fallen tear drops wet their clasped hands.

Chloe (off panel): All these notes. So many years filled with tragedies and delights and the elegantly mundane. I've been so lucky to spend them with you.

Chloe (off panel): Perhaps I did return your voice after all.

Page 6, Panel 9

Chloe leans in and kisses Helen sleeping in her bed. Chloe's eyes are gently streaming tears.

Chloe: I love you, Helen, but your handwriting is atrocious.

Page 7

Silent Splash Page conformed into 9 paneled, 3 by 3 grid. The reason for a splash page to be divided into 9 panels is that every other panel is in reality or fantasy, a merging of the two narratives. So Panel 1 is reality. Panel 2 fantasy. Panel 3 reality. And so forth. With this pattern, we begin and end in reality.

Reality (Panels 1, 3, 5, 7, 9)

Chloe hugs wide with both her arms Helen slumbering in her hospital bed. Love letters are scattered atop the thin hospital bedsheets.

Fantasy (Panel 2, 4, 6, 8)

Chloe hugs wide with both her arms Helen as she sleeps in peace. Helen is a princess wearing an elegant dress and tiara while Chloe is in her adventurer's attire from Pages 1-4. The scene is outdoors in a sunny meadow. Instead of a hospital bed, Helen lays on a bed of flowers.