

SCHRÖDINGER'S CRAFT

VOICE

Listen to me.

This is my voice, yet it is not my voice.
Inside the box you will find my book, yet it is not my
book, or maybe it is not yet my book.
I will read it to you, and you will help me write it.

(Pause)

Page 1: This is the title page. I'll give you a moment
to pick up the book.

This first page is for the words I do not yet have.
You are probably saying to yourself, "Here's the
glitch," or maybe I am just imagining it, but for the
sake of argument, just go ahead and say it. I'll give
you a moment.

I don't think it's a glitch. It's part of the process.
Or maybe it's both. For now, just turn the page.

Page 2 and page 3: This spread is for my grandmother.
It is a photograph of her, yet it is not. I'll
describe the photograph so that you can draw it. Maybe
you will capture her likeness, but probably not. I'll
give you a moment to pick-up the pencil.

It is snowing or maybe it looks like it could snow.

(Pause)

My Grandmother is in her twenties, and she is standing
in front of bollards in Central Park that keep her on
course.

(Pause)

Leafless trees stretch into the distance.

(Pause)

Her hands are tucked into a muff or maybe she is
holding her overcoat.

(Pause)

She wears a black beret, but it is hard to tell color
in a black and white photo.

(Pause)

Her black hair, in curls, comes just to her shoulders.

(Pause)

Or it could be summer, and she could be in front of
the Blockhouse in Central Park, sitting on the ground
with long legs stretched out in front of her.

(Pause)

She could be surrounded by green foliage with pink flowers and wearing an off-the-shoulder, blue and white striped dress.

(Pause)

Of course, the dress could be green and white and the flowers purple. It is hard to tell color in a photo where color has been added artificially.

(Pause)

Or maybe she is not in Central Park at all. Maybe she is posed in front of the display windows at Macys,

(Pause)

or against a lamp post on Bleeker,

(Pause)

or under the running-lights of Radio City. If you put your ear close to the page . . . Go ahead, put your ear close to the page. I'll give you a moment.

You can almost hear her whisper, but probably not, about the time she saw Sinatra and how his eyes are blue, but not nearly as blue as they appear in photos.

Page 4.

Draw a line down the center of the page.

Label the top of the line "New York Botanical Garden."
Label the bottom of the line "Bronx Zoo."

Imagine that there are 4,456 feet between the top and bottom of the line even though there aren't. This is where my Grandmother was raised, even though it isn't, in more apartments than she was ever able to remember.

(Pause)

Page 5.

Page 5 is for the last story she told me about her childhood, or at least the last I remember her telling me before she lost the ability to talk about her memories. Here's what I know: My great-grandfather took my grandmother shopping. She was very young, and this happened regularly enough on special occasions to follow a pattern. "Find something you like, and try it on," he would say, but in Hungarian, not English, "and we will see how you look in it." "Find something you like and try it on" was part of the pattern. On this particular occasion, the pattern ended in a new pair of shoes.

(Pause)

I like to think the shoes were red. Probably they weren't. Perhaps color this page red. It's up to you, but leave space for holes in the story.

Later that same afternoon, my grandmother was wearing her new pair of . . . You say the color.

. . . shoes while riding her bike. She lost either the left or right heel of her new . . . Say the color again.

. . . shoes when it got stuck in the spoke. She tried to find the broken heel but failed. A stranger who witnessed the accident gave her enough money to fix the heel, and so she took it to a cobbler, who replaced it.

(Pause)

She returned home later that same night with fixed shoes and was punished, maybe because she broke a heel on her new pair of . . . Say the color one last time.

. . . shoes, maybe because she didn't immediately tell her parents about the broken heel, or maybe because she stayed out too late. The reason was lost on her, or she had lost the ability to reason it.

(Pause)

Page 6 and page 7.

Use the pencil to draw a line diagonally from the bottom of page 6 to the top of page 7. I'll give you a moment.

Trace the line from bottom to top and back down again, twice.

Label the top of the line "New York City." Label the bottom of the line "Austin."

I am here, and I am not yet here.

(Pause)

Imagine that there are 1,747 miles between the bottom and top of the line, even though there aren't.

(Pause)

My grandfather, from Austin, met my grandmother, from New York, while he was in the military. After finishing his tour, he drove from Austin to New York and back down again, twice, once to propose and once to get married. Following a large Hungarian wedding,

he packed my grandmother and her belongings into his car and drove her to Texas, where she lived, begrudgingly but then happily, for the rest of her life.

(Pause)

Page 8: the last page.

Draw 2 tally marks for my parents.

Draw 4 tally marks for my grandparents.

Draw 8 tally marks for my great grandparents.

Draw 16 tally marks for my great-great grandparents.

Draw 32 tally marks for my great-great-great grandparents, 64 for my great-great-great-great grandparents, 128 for my great-great-great-great-great grandparents, 256 for my great-great-great-great-great-great grandparents, 512 for my great-great-great-great-great-great-great grandparents, 1,024 for my great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great grandparents, 2,048 for my great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great grandparents, and 4,096 for my for my great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great grandparents.

(Pause)

This is my family, and it is not yet all of my family. They are here, yet they are not all here.

(Pause)

Turn to the title page.

Write, "This is my story, yet it is not my story."

Put your ear close to the book.

(Pause)

Listen to me.

(CURTAIN)

APPENDIX

Sample printable document that can be folded into an 8-page mini-book.