

# PLAQUES & TANGLES

A 30-minute podcast drama by Lisa Parry

## LOGLINE

Harri, an 18-year-old from Cardiff, wrestles over whether to take a genetic test for early-onset familial Alzheimer's disease as he processes his mother's diagnosis and degeneration.

## CHARACTERS

HARRI, 18, A-level student, a keen cyclist, on the cusp of starting a relationship with Seren  
GWENLLIAN, 15, his sister, keen harpist

SARA, 43, their mother, has eFAD, has recently quit her job as a teacher

RHYS, 45, their father, an architect now assuming greater familial and financial responsibility

Other characters alluded to include a genetic counsellor and a medic.

## PLOT SUMMARY

We open on the day of Harri's final A-level exam. When it's over, he flirts badly with Seren at the pub and returns home to discover his mother has been diagnosed with Early Onset Familial Alzheimer's Disease (eFAD). He's in shock as he and his sister learn that they each have a 50 per cent chance of having the condition. In the days that follow, he cycles a lot and his sister compulsively practises the harp. Unlike the younger Gwen, Harri has the option of beginning the testing process but a guilt-ridden Sara advises it's not that easy. He books a GP appointment for a genetic counselling referral, panics when he can't see his mother in the waiting room afterwards and confides in Seren. His life is in turmoil. A financially-challenged Rhys however insists he should still go to university.

The family begins to adjust to Sara's degeneration and condition. But when the letter for Harri arrives confirming his first counselling appointment, Sara goes missing. Harri takes his bike and finds her – she wanted to experience what wandering was like while she still had the cognitive powers to process it. She's worried what eFAD will do to her kids. She feels she's to blame. Harri asks her, if she'd known, whether she'd have had children. She answers yes – he and Gwenllian are her world. We see their closeness. He takes her home where Gwen is distraught.

On the day of Gwen's school concert, Sara doesn't show and Gwen messes up her harp solo. Sara asks her children to no longer call her 'Mam' as she'll remember her own name for longer. Gwen cuts the strings of her harp. Harri decides to definitely begin the testing process and leaves home for university. He returns for the tests and the result. At the end, he describes a paper which will decide his future – there are two boxes - gene absent or present – and one is ticked. Unlike Harri, we do not find out which.

## OTHER INFORMATION

The writing of the drama will be greatly enhanced thanks to Wales Gene Park arranging meetings with geneticists, genetic counsellors, ethicists and scientists with expertise in this area.

The story will be underscored with harp music and the ending is designed to stimulate debate: what will be the consequences of either result? Would you choose to be tested?