

The Box

By Paul Jorge

CHARACTERS

NARRATOR

BOY

ALICIA Boy's friend

ARIEL Boy's Aunt

MR. GARCIA Boy's teacher

NARRATOR

There is a boy in a room. He is standing in front of a door. There is a room behind that door that he wants to enter. He would do it if only a large box, bigger than he, were not in his way. The boy looks at the box. The boy sighs. The boy touches the box. The boy pulls the box. The box is too heavy. He goes to one of the sides of the box and pushes. The box is still too heavy. The boy is very perplexed. He starts to cry. Oh wait, a girl named Alicia arrives, a friend of his.

ALICIA

Why are you crying?

BOY

I can't move that stupid box.

ALICIA

Why do you have to push that box?

BOY

I want to go the next room.

ALICIA

Why? What's wrong with this room?

BOY

I can't explain it. It's this feeling that I can't even explain. It's this feeling that pushes you. This feeling that makes you work so hard. It's intense. It's this feeling that wakes you up. A feeling that gets you all excited and scared. It's purpose. It's passion. I have to move that box!

ALICIA

Do you know what's on the other side of this door?

BOY

No.

ALICIA

Then why try? You don't know if there's something in there that can kill you, like an assassin. There could be an alien ready to abduct you. Is it really worth it? What if there is nothing on the other side of that door? What would you do then?

BOY

I don't know what's behind that door. I don't know what I'll do when I confront what's on the other side of the door. But I have to get there. I just have to Alicia. I have to!

ALICIA

All right. I'll help you because you look so pathetic right now.

Thanks! Awesome! *(Silence)*

BOY

What do we do?

ALICIA

I don't know. What if we both push the box?

BOY

That's a lot of work!

ALICIA

Come on!

BOY

This is your thing. If I help, I might ask for compensation!

ALICIA

Compensation for what!?

BOY

My time. *(Pause)*

ALICIA

All right. Let's push.

BOY

(Rolls her eyes.) Fine.

ALICIA

NARRATOR

They both push. The boy is pushing. The girl gets a bright idea. She gets a rope. She wraps the rope around the box. She ties the knot. She gives the end of the rope to the boy and she helps him pull. They pull until both their faces are red. The box does not bulge. They let go of the rope. The boy's upset. The girl's just as upset.

What the hell.

BOY

What can we do?

ALICIA

The boy's teacher walks in.

NARRATOR

MR. GARCIA

What's wrong?

ALICIA

He wants to open that door, but the box is too heavy.

MR. GARCIA

I see.

BOY

What can we do?

MR. GARCIA

Have you tried pushing it?

ALICIA

It's too heavy.

MR. GARCIA

I think that the effort that you are putting into moving this big box is phenomenal. You are a great kid. Hopefully, there will be great things for you on the other side of that door. I'll help you.

BOY

Thank you. What do we do?

MR. GARCIA

We need something that is beyond our human strength.

ALICIA

God?

MR. GARCIA

No... A bulldozer.

ALICIA

What?

MR. GARCIA

Yeah, I have one in my garage.

ALICIA

Why?

MR. GARCIA

Sometimes you need extra strength. Strength that you are not born with and strength that you will never obtain. How do you think we have been able to build giant buildings and have paved roads? It's because we have extra strength. Humans are too weak to build all of that stuff. I'll lend you my strength.

BOY

Awesome!

NARRATOR

The man brings out his bulldozer. He gives his seat to the young boy. The boy moves the bulldozer towards the box and pushes. Nothing happens. The boy is upset. The girl and man are stumped. The boy's aunt walks in.

BOY

Hi Ariel.

ARIEL

What's wrong?

BOY

I'm trying to move that box.

ARIEL

Why?

BOY

To get to the other side of that door.

ARIEL

Why?

BOY

I don't know why. All I know is that I have to.

ARIEL

What have you used to push it?

BOY

Pure strength.

ALICIA

Physics.

MR. GARCIA

A bulldozer.

ARIEL

What!?! Wow it seems impossible to move. *(Pause)* Do you know why that box is there?

BOY

(Breaks a sweat.) No.

ALICIA

Yeah, why is that box there?

BOY

(Starts acting nervous.) I honestly have no clue.

ARIEL

Why would there be a box in front of a door? How does that happen? Is it possible that there is something inside that box? Honey do you know what's inside the box? Why don't we try to see what's in the box?

BOY

No.

ALICIA

Let us see the box.

NARRATOR

Alicia goes towards the box. The boy stands in front of the box.

BOY

There is nothing inside of that box.

ARIEL

What are you hiding?

BOY

Nothing.

ALICIA

You're hiding something.

ARIEL

Is something inside that box? Did you do something wrong? Do you have something that we don't know about?

BOY

No.

ARIEL

Are you hiding something? It's okay if there is something in there.

BOY

There's nothing in there.

ALICIA

(Pushes him aside.)

Move aside.

NARRATOR

She brings a ladder and leans it on the box so that she is able to climb over on it.

ALICIA

The box has handles. There's something inside.

NARRATOR

They all look at him. He sinks into the background. Alicia tries to open the door. The door won't open.

ALICIA

It won't open. He's hiding something in there.

ARIEL

Honey. Let us see what's inside. It could help us get you to the next room.

BOY

I can't.

ARIEL

Why? Are you going to stubbornly keep pushing that box for the rest of your life until oblivion? Until you are nothing but dust and then regret why you didn't pursue other things in life other than pushing that box! You don't want to do that. Trust me, it's not a great feeling.

BOY

No. I don't know!

ARIEL

You've tried everything on this box. You even used brute force on it. That didn't work and I see this door as the only option. Then, I think you need to open this box.

BOY

Fine, but can you open it for me?

ARIEL

No. It has to be you.

ALICIA

Let's go.

NARRATOR

The girl grabs the boy's arms. The boy refuses to go. She pinches him and he follows her. She pinches him again and he is climbing the ladder. He finally is on top of the ladder where there are handles with which he can open the box.

ALICIA

Do it.

BOY

I don't want to. I'm scared.

ALICIA

You should be more afraid of me. Either you're afraid of that box or you're afraid of me. You don't want to be afraid of me. *(With a commanding voice)* Open the box.

BOY

All right. All right. Here I go.

(Voices from off stage are heard.)

You can't do it. You can't do it.

It's best if you don't try

What makes you any different than the rest of us?

I'm better than you

It's a competitive world. You won't survive son.

Why don't you just stay here with the family?

No.

Stop.

Just don't do it.

Stop, don't even try.

ALICIA

Is that all? Why would you listen to those voices? I don't understand it. You don't have to listen to those voices.

BOY

I know, but it's so hard.

MR. GARCIA

It's very stressful when those voices come from loved ones.

ARIEL

They don't love you then, sweetie.

BOY

But, they have always been there for me. They are people who've helped me stand back up when I have fallen down. They have given me advice. They are my mother, my father, my sister, my friends, my neighbors. I respect them and what they say. I really want to push away that box and open the door, but it's so hard knowing that my family does not approve of this. It feels like I'm betraying them. And then of course there are my rivals, who also don't believe in me.

ALICIA

That sucks that your family doesn't believe in you. *(Pause.)* You were trying to push this box by yourself. We tried to help you, but we were no help. I'm sorry, but only you can push this box.

BOY

Okay.

ARIEL

It doesn't mean that we completely abandoned you. Push it aside. *Pause.* Also realize that although there are people who say you can't do it, there are people who are pushing you to do it. Turn those voices into our voices.

BOY

Okay. Thank you.

(He starts to push.)

MR. GARCIA

You can do it.

(He pushes harder.)

ARIEL

Push harder.

NARRATOR

The box moves a little. Alicia goes behind the boy and pushes him. The force of his weight on the box pushes it aside, away from the door in front of it.

ARIEL

Look at that. The door is finally open.

BOY

Wow. I'm finally here.

NARRATOR

He's standing still. Paralyzed.

ALICIA

What's holding you back. Go.

BOY

I don't know what's on the other side of this door.

ALICIA

So?

BOY

What if there's something in there that can kill me. Like an assassin. There could be an alien ready to abduct me. Is it really worth it? What if there is nothing on the other side of that door? What would I do then?

ALICIA

Just go, because if you don't and that door disappears for all of eternity, you will regret not going inside and seeing what you are capable of.

NARRATOR

She opens the door. The door is positioned at an angle where nobody is able to see what's on the other side except for the person in front of it.

ARIEL

This is the easy part.

ALL

They all chant. Go. Go. Go. GO. GO. GO. GOOO!!

(They all push him inside. He stumbles in and they close the door.)