



CITY
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
EST 1894

City Script

Anthology 2020

MA Playwriting & Screenwriting
City, University of London

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Introduction

Welcome to this anthology of creative work written by students on the MA Playwriting & Screenwriting at City, University of London: the class of 2020. In it you will find short scripts and script extracts across a range of genres, from fantasy and horror to realism, from a dystopian far future and ancient Greece to the here and now of arguments among friends, family and acting colleagues.

The creativity and imagination on display are the result of these students' hard work on a stimulating and challenging degree that, for this cohort, saw them battle not only with narrative approaches and character arcs, but the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic and the first lockdown. I hope that their writing gave them something to focus on in what was a deeply uncertain time, and I hope it offers a sense of exploration and release to you.

Happy reading...

Jonathan Gibbs
June 2021

Anders Brendstrup



Anders Brendstrup is a screenwriter from Denmark who crafts tightly structured horror scripts to process the nightmares caused by the anti-consumerist, public service, “let’s dress an old hippie up as a child and have him sing softly to a man-sized puppet”-children’s TV he grew up with.

His first feature screenplay, DEAD METAL, is a horror comedy about metal music, ghost story cliches and deep family trauma. He is currently developing a series pilot focusing on modern witches and reality TV. He lives in North London with Anne Sofie who is a service designer and a boiler that sounds like an angry ghost. Or maybe it’s the other way around...

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A teenager deals with the trauma of a mentally ill mother by singing heavy metal but when ghostly voices invade her recordings she must exorcise both real and imagined demons.

Screenplay extract

Dead Metal

FADE IN

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

'Early 2000s'

Perfect suburbia. Quiet and peaceful. Not even songbirds dare to disturb the peace. Or the quiet.

Well kept hedges, unlocked bikes, nice cars.

LILY (V.O.)

The movies always get it wrong. They make it way too easy to spot the haunted house.

The front of NR 67. A regular, inviting house like all its neighbors. Only difference is the large MOVING VAN outside

LILY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

They are too big or dark or isolated. Usually all three. But hey there's a collection of creepy dolls in the attic and our 5 year old has made

an imaginary friend he calls Mr. Murderson.
People in movies are basically asking for it.

The van comes to life with a ROAR that sends birds flying from their trees.
It speeds off.

LILY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Real ghosts don't sit around waiting in creepy
old houses. Because real people stay away
from them.

The engine sound dies out in the distance. Peace restored.

Then, the light in NR 67 starts to flicker.

And go out.

LILY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

If ghosts want to haunt us they have to come
and find us. So that's what they do...

A SCREAM from inside the house ---

INT. NR.67/BECKER HOUSE NR 1. - NIGHT

— revealed to be a 60's ROCK SONG on a spinning LP.

The RECORD PLAYER sits on top of a few cardboard boxes next to a pair of
homemade SPEAKERS.

It's the first and only piece of 'furniture' in a new home.

ANNA MARIE BECKER (25) dances around in the dark, tip-toeing in and out
between rows of boxes. She sings too. Good voice.

Meanwhile Morgan BECKER (28) backs out from behind the makeshift
speaker set, screwdriver in hand.

He goes to inspect the dark, naked light bulb hanging from the ceiling.

MORGAN

Looks like we can't both hear music and see
what we're doing.

ANNA MARIE

Minor detail.

MORGAN

-- or get the fridge going, cook some dinner --

ANNA MARIE

The moment called for music. You know I
can't deny the moment.

Anna Marie stops to light a cigarette. She takes a long drag in her best
impression of a French new wave icon.

ANNA MARIE (CONT'D)

(french accent)

We have whole life to get old and die.

MORGAN

Is that what you're expecting of our marriage.

ANNA MARIE

(Nods towards speakers)

I'm just in it for those. Obviously.

(Hands to her heart)

And he built them himself.

Morgan smiles and turns on his flashlight.

MORGAN

I want to have a look at the fuses. See if you
can find where we put the sheets maybe?

ANNA MARIE

Moment didn't call for sheets.

MORGAN

Start opening some boxes wife. Before we get
to the old and dead part.

ANNA MARIE

Did I mention my undying love?

MORGAN

Too late.

He leaves for the hallway and is soon heard TESTING FUSES.

Anna Marie mock-sulks and flips open boxes with her cigarette-less hand,
without really looking. Until -

ANNA MARIE

OW!

The cigarette has burned all the way down to her finger. And she hasn't
packed out an ashtray yet.

She sneaks to the window and scouts for nosy neighbors before she pops
the butt outside.

She stays for a moment in the cool calm breeze.

A gust of wind lifts the curtains over her face. As she moves to wrap herself out, she peeks through the fabric:

A SHADOWY FIGURE next to the record player.

ANNA MARIE (CONT'D)

Gave up?

With a flash the light bulb comes back to life and lights up the room

The figure is gone.

Anna Marie removes the curtain and stares at the empty spot.

MORGAN

Never.

Morgan appears in the doorway.

Andre Goliath



Originally from a Performing Arts background, Andre Goliath found his niche in screenwriting. In 2018 he was accepted at City, University of London studying Creative Writing (Playwriting and Screenwriting). He had an incredible time. Studying under Lisa O' Donnell, John York, Phil O'Shea and final major project mentor Andrew Cartmel. Great people and great writers, he is confident in saying he left a stronger writer.

Contact

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London, 1986. Kieran Davies looks like he has everything going for him. He has the looks, charm, the attitude, but his promiscuous lifestyle pushes him to use alcohol and drugs and he ends up dangerously in debt. Kieran's friend Sonny gets him work for an underground gang known as The Cupid'z' as a Male Prostitute. But the new improved lifestyle this brings comes with a price... his own life! When Kieran's best friend – and DCI – Wesley investigates the gang, Kieran must keep his secret life away from Wesley or risk the wrath of The Cupid'z.

Screenplay extract

Fray

ACT ONE

BLACK.

KIERAN (V.O)

Why do I never listen to good advice and
know when to go home? I always go too far.

FADE IN

INT. BALLROOM – GRAYSTONE MANSION – NIGHT – JUNE 1986,

FLASHFORWARD

Lively, busy party atmosphere. 80's dance music fills the room. Everyone is dancing with enjoyment.

In the middle of the room KIERAN (26, white, James Dean resemblance but also the same reckless) is dancing wildly. He is extremely intoxicated. His pupils are dilated.

WESLEY (27, black, handsome with innocent traits) is dancing with a drink in his hands, he spills it on himself as he tries to sip from the cup.

SAVANNAH (25, rambunctious and quirky) bursts into hysterics.

KIERAN grabs SAVANNAH and WESLEY by the shoulders. They enter a three-way hug. They hold on tight whilst they dance together.

ROBIN (29, has more depth than she lets on) enters and stands in the entrance. She looks aggravated.

KIERAN looks towards the entrance and notices Robin clenching her fists. He stops dancing. He begins to look concerned.

MATHEW (31, black, normally sophisticated but strong-minded) enters with a look of rage on his face. He pulls Robin with force by her arm facing towards him.

Kieran tries to listen but cannot hear over the music.

Mathew and Robin look at each other intensely. Robin pushes Mathew in his shoulders. The rage builds stronger in Mathew as he shouts in her face. Kieran tries to walk towards them as he pushes through the crowded room.

Robin attempts to slap Mathew. Mathew catches Robin's hand and forcefully pushes it away.

Mathew storms towards the buffet table. Robin runs towards the staircase. Kieran follows Robin.

FADE TO

INT. EN-SUITE BATHROOM – MASTER BEDROOM – GRAYSTONE MANSION

—

NIGHT

Half an hour has passed. Kieran stares deeply at his reflection in the mirror. His arms press against the sink. Shivering as he struggles to breathe. He runs to the toilet and vomits.

A loud knock is heard at the door outside. Kieran gets up from the floor and walks back to the sink. He wipes the sweat from his forehead. As he does that a smear of blood appear on his forehead. He looks at his hand and sees the smudge of blood. He begins to wash his hands hastily. There is another knock on the door. Kieran washes his face. He dries it with a towel then opens the door.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM – GRAYSTONE MANSION – NIGHT

Kieran shivers as he paces up and down the room. Robin kneels on the floor clenching her head with her hands as she rocks side to side. She whimpers softly. SONNY (30, Indian descent, striking face) looks in the corner of his eye at the blood on the floor leaking from the dead body. Robin suddenly stands up and walks to the bedside cabinet and picks up the telephone.

KIERAN

What are you doing?

ROBIN

I'm calling the police. I'll tell the truth, we'll be fine.

Kieran snatches the phone out of Robin's hands and slams it on the hook.

KIERAN

Have you officially lost your mind?

ROBIN

Give me the phone back Kieran, I'll tell the police it was an accident. Everything will be fine!

SONNY

(Scoffs)

Stop saying everything is fine when it's not. Do you actually think the police are going to believe it's an accident when the pair of you are so coked off your faces?

ROBIN

Shut up Sonny please! This is not supposed to happen okay! Not today, not here at my engagement party! Why are you even here anyway? You weren't invited.

SONNY

(Surprised)

Yeah thanks for that – you know what, why am I sticking around? This has nothing to do with me... I'm not going to prison for this.

Sonny reaches for the door but is pulled back by KIERAN. Kieran stands in front of the door.

KIERAN

No one leaves until we have come up with a plan!

ROBIN

(Cries)

What plan? Sonny's right we're going to prison.

KIERAN

You do not know that for sure. We need a story we can stick too.

ROBIN

Story! There is a journalist and a fucking DCI downstairs!

SONNY

What is a DCI?

Jess Hatton



Jess Hatton, aged 24.- Born in Scotland and raised in the United States, Jess grew up with a musical theatre background and a passion for creativity. Previously completed a Bachelors (Hons) in Film and TV Production at Edge Hill University in 2017 and has recently started work as a voice actor.

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A sleepy town is exhumed whenever the circus comes to town. For Ash, it's a chance to find her father and perhaps an intimate relationship with the circus's ringmaster. Sinister forces beyond our world work against Ash, and she'll need to read the cards right before disaster strikes.

Screenplay extract

Cirque D'Arcana

EXT. CAMAS COFFE SHOP- NIGHT

Open to a frog choir in the night. An occasional car passes by. ASH (19), walks out followed by another girl SAM (25). Ash wears dark clothes and black hair pulled back in a loose braid while Sam is covered in piercings and tattoos; two ornate daggers crossed on her forearm is newest. Ash's eyes seem to glow an unusual pale blue.

SAM

Fuck me.

ASH

You say that every night, answer's still no.

SAM

Cute. Seriously, what a fucking day.

Ash hums in agreement as she locks the door behind them. A small frog hops onto the glass. Ash coos the amphibian onto her hand, releasing it into a bush.

SAM (CONT'D)

Need a ride home?

ASH

I'm fine.

SAM

Suit yourself. Hey, everything alright on the home front?

ASH

Sam, I'll be fine.

SAM

Yeah well, call me otherwise alright?

Ash nods before Sam walks off to her beat-up car while Ash walks in the opposite direction. She pauses a moment, reaching into her pocket and pulling out what appears to be playing cards. Pulling one from the deck, she looks at it and grimaces.

EXT. ASH'S HOUSE- NIGHT

A bus pulls up and Ash descends. She pulls her coat a bit tighter around herself, shrinking into her collar. She approaches the third house on the street and enters

INT. ASH'S HOUSE- NIGHT

ASH

I'm home!

No answer, but the TV can be heard from the living room. Ash enters to see her mom, JOCELYN (47), laying on the couch bundled in a jumper and piles of blankets.

ASH (CONT'D)

Hey, feeling any better?

Jocelyn GRUNTS in response, not turning to face her.

ASH (CONT'D)

Have you eaten?

JOCELYN

Yeah. We're out of milk again.

ASH

Right.

Ash leaves and heads for the kitchen. Jocelyn picks up the remote to turn up the volume, wrapping herself up tighter.

INT. KITCHEN- NIGHT

Ash opens the fridge and pulls out a plate of leftover spaghetti. She sets the dish in the microwave, pushing a few buttons and starting it.

JOCELYN (O.S.)

Hey, can you make that tea again? For my throat?

ASH

Sure.

Ash moves towards the cupboard, opening it and pulling down small jars of loose leaf tea. She drizzles honey into a cup before mixing in different portions of tea.

INT. ASH'S ROOM- NIGHT

Ash slams the door shut with her foot, carrying her dinner with her sleeves covering her hands.

ASH

Hot hot hot hot-!

She sets it down on her desk, shaking out her hands. Her room is small, square, covered in band and movie posters from all decades (MCR, Misfits, Bowie, Goonies, etc.) Blue Christmas lights gives the room in mystical glow.

Ash walks over to a shiny Harry Potter poster over her unmade bed, lifting it up to reveal an aged flier for a circus. The border is comprised of an alternating pattern of swords, cups, wands, and pentacles.

A photo of a man with the same eyes as Ash is tacked to it. She walks back to her miserable dinner but in the process knocks over her bag onto the wood floor and spews its contents, including a deck of tarot cards, all over.

ASH (CONT'D)

Shit!

Ash quickly sets about gathering the cards, pausing once she spots the Fool laying face up, reversed. She grabs the card tentatively, looking at all the rest of the cards.

ASH (CONT'D)

So, holding back huh?

INT. ASH'S HOUSE- NIGHT

Ash comes back to the living room, carrying the deck; Jocelyn hasn't moved.

ASH

Hey, you busy?

Jocelyn hums and looks up at Ash, then down to the cards.
Her expression sours.

JOCELYN

Why?

ASH

Can I do a quick spread?

Ash starts to shuffle the cards but Jocelyn reaches out, stopping her. Ash freezes violently at the touch.

JOCELYN

Ash, no.

ASH

Dad used to cheer you up with these.

JOCELYN

Take those away before I toss 'em.

Ash holds the deck closer to her chest instinctively.
Jocelyn sighs and gets up from the couch.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)

I'm going to bed.

Ash watches Jocelyn go upstairs.

INT. COFFEE SHOP- DAY

Ash taps on the counter with her fingers, her other hand going white with tension. A line of customers mull angrily behind him

ASH

Sir, I have a line

RUDE CUSTOMER

Just one minute!

Behind her, Sam groans.

CUSTOMER 1

Hurry up dammit, I have to catch a bus!

RUDE CUSTOMER

I'll have a black americano, small.

Sam slides the coffee along the counter, already made.

RUDE CUSTOMER (CONT'D)

Wow, so fast!

He takes the coffee and leaves.

SAM

That's what he gets, every. Fucking. Day. I right
you all, tell me your poison now, I'll get them
out faster!

Each customer down the line shouts out their coffee until

LUCE

Earl Grey, with a swirl of honey if you please.

ASH

Sorry but we're out of

As she leans out to speak with the strangers, LUCE (young looking, genderless, a suave fellow wearing a blue coat lined with silver trim and buttons and a bowler hat to match) makes eye contact and smiles.

ASH (CONT'D)

-honey?

LUCE

Really? What a shame.

By now some of the other customers have turned to look as well. Sam leans in whispering

SAM

Hey, wanna take your break now or are you gonna stand there looking like a fish all day?
Go!

Sam pushes her off the till and takes over serving and making drinks. She is an artist with the mugs, tossing and juggling them with ease. Ash trips, before making eye contact with Luce. She gulps then quickly dashes out back.

SAM (CONT'D)

Alright who wanted the caramel cappuccino with almond milk?

Luce watches Ash leave.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP- DAY

Slam, the back door shuts and Ash sighs, sliding down against the wall and landing on the sidewalk. A car whizzes by before she reaches into her apron and pulls out the deck.

Shuffling the cards idly, some redneck-teens pass by.

TEEN 1

Hey, witch! Lost your broomstick?

Ash flips them off as they laugh, pulling each other away. A card falls out of the deck and lands face up; the Wheel of Fortune.

ASH

Could use some luck right now.

Suddenly, applause from indoors. Ash jumps up and quickly scrambles back inside.

5.INT. COFFEE SHOP- DAY

A crowd has gathered on the center floor, Sam paused in making coffee. The milk starts to boil over and she rushes to stop the steamer.

A shower of sparks shoots up towards the ceiling. Ash pushes through to see Luce in the middle. Luce holds a handkerchief on their hand, pulling it back to reveal a blue toad. The toad croaks and leaps into Ash's hands.

LUCE

Ah, there you are. Come, come here.

Luce motions Ash forward, the toad still croaking in her hands.

LUCE (CONT'D)

I don't think I caught your name earlier?

ASH

Um, Ash.

LUCE

Um, Ash, can you please cover that fella with your hand?

She does so, awkwardly. Luce covers her hands with theirs and looks directly into her eyes.

LUCE (CONT'D)

Such captivating eyes

Sam whistles and smirks.

ASH

Uh, yeah. Who are you?

LUCE

DuBlanc, Luce DuBlanc.

Luce opens Ash's hands to reveal a blue bird; mechanical, doll-like. The bird takes flight.

SAM

Shit man, health and safety?

Luce removes their hat for the bird to alight on their head, replacing the hat where it was.

LUCE

And that is only the beginning folks, tonight only is a special performance of our show Cirque d'Etoiles and I do hope to see each one of you there.

They bow and tip their hat, the bird having disappeared. Out of the hat, fliers flutter up and around the space, while the audience makes a mad grab for them. Luce hands one to Ash.

LUCE (CONT'D)

You especially.

Ash looks down; the flier is identical to the one on her wall, except the name is different.

ASH

Hey wait.

She looks up, Luce is gone. Ash is left dumbfounded.

INT. ASH'S HOUSE- NIGHT

ASH

Mom, mom!

Ash runs through the front door, letting it slam against the wall startling Jocelyn. The flier in her hand rustles as she shoves it in Jocelyn's face. Jocelyn freezes.

ASH (CONT'D)

It's the same as dad's! It's his circus, they're back!

JOCELYN

Ashley. Get that thing out of this house.

ASH

But, this could be our chance! We can find out what happened to dad!

JOCELYN

If you so much as think about setting foot in that circus then...

ASH

Then what?! Why do you hate the circus so much?

JOCELYN

Well go then if you want! But don't think...

She trails off, breaking down into tears. Ash stands there, reaching out but not quite touching.

JOCELYN (CONT'D)

Just, go.

ASH

But, mom

JOCELYN

I said GO!

She claws at Ash, catching her hand with her nails and ripping the flier. Ash reels in shock, bright red welts flaring on her hand as Jocelyn continues to sob.

ASH

Fuck you.

Ash takes a few steps back, before grabbing the ripped pieces from the floor and runs upstairs.

INT. ASH'S ROOM- NIGHT

Ash storms into her room, clutching the crumpled flier as she flings herself to her bed. She fights tears, before sitting up and ripping her long-sleeve shirt off. Her arms and parts of her stomach are covered in scars.

Hands shaking, Ash unfurls the flier. Her fingers lands on the date for the circus performance.

*TONIGHT ONLY; WITNESS THE WONDER OF THE
CIRQUE D'ETOILES!*

MIDNIGHT AT THE PIER

Ash reaches into her pocket, pulling out the tarot deck.

ASH

Right.

She grabs a new shirt and jumper from the floor. The crumpled flier immediately gets shoved into her pocket. The window slides open, Ash swinging a leg out on to the roof. Breathing hard, she slides out and silently closes the window behind her.

Cecilie Godsk Jensen



Starting with a need to escape reality by creating a world of her own, Cecilie took on writing from a young age. After realising that being a writer was her true calling, she ventured off to London to study film production and screenwriting in the grey city of dreams. Now having graduated, it is time she stands on her own two feet and to take the world by storm with her tales of fantastical worlds.

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Zoe, a sombre and insecure teenager, gets in a car accident with her father and is the only one to survive. Ridden with guilt, Zoe seeks out a way to bring her father back to life and suddenly finds herself being sucked into a book on Greek myths. Stranded back in ancient Greece, Zoe joins up with the eccentric and egocentric Lykos on his hero's journey. During their travels, Zoe crosses paths with Hades, the lord of the dead, and ends up in a deadly gamble of life and death.

Screenplay excerpt

Zoe

INT. ZOE'S BEDROOM – DAY

Zoe throws her bag in the corner of the room. She stands in front of her desk, staring at the angry Zeus statue. Statue still in hand, Zoe looks out her window from which she can see her old tree house in the back garden. Zoe puts down the statue, takes her book out of her bag, grabs a flashlight off her shelf and her duvet off her bed.

EXT. ZOE'S HOUSE, GARDEN – DAY

A lonely tree stands in the garden, holding a tree house in between its gnarly branches. The tree house is sturdily built, once colorfully painted at the hand of a child, but now faded with time.

A rope ladder dangles from an opening in the deck, its steps threatening to come loose at any moment.

Zoe throws the duvet over her shoulder and holds the flashlight and book under her arms as she climbs the ladder.

INT. TREE HOUSE – DAY

Inside is kept clean, the space is decorated with memorabilia of Zoe and Jason. Etched into one of the wooden panels is the text 'BUILT BY ZOE AND JASON' with their handprints underneath each of their names.

Zoe walks out to the balcony of the tree house, sitting down on the edge with her legs dangling over the side. From where she is sitting she can see into their living room. Norah is sitting on the couch, a framed photo in her hand. She looks to be crying. Zoe puts her chin on the railing, looking at Norah. In the distance the sun is going down, stars slowly becoming visible in the sky.

EXT. TREE HOUSE – NIGHT

The sun has now gone down. It's dark outside except for the light cast by the moon. Norah gets up from the couch, closing the curtains and turns off the light. The light comes on in the bedroom for a short moment before also being turned off.

Zoe lies down on her duvet out in the open. She looks up at the stars above her, tracing out the constellations with her finger. She turns her head and looks at the book next to her.

When she turns her gaze back to the sky, a shooting star shoots across the sky. Zoe folds her hands together, closes her eyes and mouths a wish.

ZOE

I want my dad back.

Zoe opens her eyes again and laughs at herself, then sighs deeply as she continues to look at the sky.

A shimmering light appears from somewhere close to Zoe. When Zoe sits up, she notices the light is coming from her book. From within the pages is a golden shimmering light. Zoe grabs the book and opens up on the pages where the light is emitting from.

When she opens up the book, the golden light engulfs her, sucking her into the pages. The book snaps shut and falls to the floor.

EXT. MT. PELION, ANCIENT GREECE – DAY

A mountain at the edge of a forest. Golden and green fields with grazing animals. Close to a pond is a herd of pure white PEGASI, their long feathered wings tucked into their sides.

The air starts to shimmer with specks of gold, forming into a portal. Zoe falls through the portal and onto the ground.

Zoe quickly turns her head just to see the portal start to close behind her.

ZOE

No, no wait!

Scrambling to her feet Zoe tries to reach the portal but it snaps shut just in front of her.

Unsteady on her feet, Zoe looks around at the surroundings.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Where the hell am I?

Slowly beginning to panic, Zoe stumbles around the fields and comes across the Pegasi. As soon as they see her they spread their wings and flee into the sky. Zoe screams and falls to the ground where she scrambles to get away.

HERDER (O.S)

Calm down please, you're scaring the animals.

An old HERDER with a flock of sheep, dressed in a short chiton pinned together at the shoulder, walks up to Zoe.

Zoe stares at him, mouth agape. The Herders sour expression softens as he notices Zoe's bewildered face.

HERDER (CONT'D)

Are ye lost?

ZOE

I'm not really sure where I am.

HERDER

In Thessaly, on mount Pelion.

ZOE

Thessaly? In Greece?

HERDER

Where else? Did ye hit yer head by chance?

Zoe staggers, her breathing rapidly becoming faster as her anxiety kicks in.

ZOE

N-no I didn't. I jus

HERDER

Ye don't look too good. Maybe ye should seek
out Chiron?

Zoe's breathing calms. She takes a few deep breaths to compose herself.

ZOE

Chiron? I've heard that name before.

HERDER

A specialist in medicine, he'll get ye back on
yer feet in no time.

ZOE

I'm not sure if

The Herder points to a path going into the forest.

HERDER

Ye'll find his cave on the other side of the
forest, Just follow the path.

Sarah-Jayne Johnson



Sarah-Jayne Johnson has studied creative writing at Anglia Ruskin University and City, University of London. *Who Would Design a Waste Disposal System through a Pleasure Park?* is her first full-length play. She lives in London and is a member of her local writers group, [Enfield Writers Workshop](#). You can read her flash fiction piece, *Life Hole*, in the group's [November 2020 newsletter](#).

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Sophia, a 30-year-old woman is in recovery after life-changing surgery, and keeps her stoma and colostomy bag a secret, but is trying to recapture the confidence of her teenage years with her best friend, Milly.

On a big night out, Milly is back to her hurtful ways. Disillusioned, Sophia gives Milly a choice: build a healthier friendship or it's over. Milly leaves alone. Letting go of the past, Sophia allows new friend Amy to help with her split colostomy bag.

Playscript extract

Who Would Design a Waste Disposal System through a Pleasure Park?

This extract from Act 2 follows on from Sophia and Amy entering the pub toilets to find Milly having sex with a guy, Amos (who Sophia dated and hoped to rekindle a flame with), in one of the cubicles.

AMY: Why did you lie? Milly.

MILLY: You've changed.

AMY: Thankfully.

MILLY: Don't be. It wasn't a compliment.

AMY: Still took it as one.

MILLY: I take it back.

AMY: There are no takesies backsies.

MILLY: Don't be a bitch.

AMY: Looked at yourself lately?

MILLY: I'm looking mighty fine.

SOPHIA: Can we leave it?

MILLY: Stay out of it Sophs. At least I know how to get some.

AMY: It's not a badge of honour – shagging anything that moves.

MILLY: I'm in touch with my body. I know how to use it for pleasure

SOPHIA: Never thought /Amos would be one of them

AMY: /I don't need to fuck everything I meet to love my body.

MILLY: We've all got the same basic needs. Even Sophs.

SOPHIA: (QUIETLY) Hey! I have urges.

MILLY: You really need to sort out your attitude.

AMY: I'm not the problem.

SOPHIA: She's just trying to help you. Like she helps me.

MILLY: Sort yourself out.

AMY: You find this stuff helpful?

SOPHIA: It helps me to grow...

MILLY: That's right. I know how to be a good friend. Unlike you two.

SOPHIA: Bit mean. I try to help you too.

MILLY: I know you try but you miss the mark. Every time.

SOPHIA: At least I stay away from your guys...

AMY: You really are/ as slutty and as... as you have ever been.

MILLY: /Takes one to know one.

AMY: How many guys have you fucked this week?

BEAT

One? Two?

BEAT

Fifteen? Twenty?

MILLY: At least I don't have to fuck myself.

AMY: Better than being a slut, letting anything enter...

MILLY: Fingers worn out?

AMY: Come here, my name is Milly, free to enter...

MILLY: Bet you've practically sanded your clit away

AMY: Multiple visits/ encouraged.

SOPHIA: /Can we stop talking about sex now?

AMY: Ever make it to a bed?

SOPHIA: Please?

AMY: Or is it only ever up against a filthy toilet wall...

MILLY: It's healthy.

SOPHIA: So is masturbation... for... Urges

AMY: As long as she can drop her knickers she's a goer. Mills is all about filth.

SOPHIA: You do love a bit of filth, Mills.

MILLY: You Judas, Sophs.

SOPHIA: Me? Judas? I'm just saying it as it is. Like you do.

MILLY: After all the times I've tried to help you

SOPHIA: I'm being honest about who you are. Come on, Mills. Sex, multiple partners, in public places. It's all you.

MILLY: It's healthy. Sex.

SOPHIA: You are a self-proclaimed slut.

MILLY: I never use that word.

SOPHIA: You have. I'm sure /I've heard

MILLY: /You don't go around telling people they are... That.

AMY: You've called people that.

MILLY: No. I've never used that—

AMY: I've heard you. Dawn...

MILLY: You know nothing

AMY: Kerry...

MILLY: I'm out of—

AMY: and Sophia.

SOPHIA: Seriously?

MILLY: You've got no idea who I am.

AMY: I know /exactly who you are.

SOPHIA: /We've known each other for so long

MILLY: No idea.

Jenna Kamal



After graduating from the University of Exeter, Jenna became the Writer in Residence of all-female theatre group Rumble Theatre. She completed the National Theatre's *How to Begin Playwriting* course with Ryan Craig and has just finished an MA in Creative Writing and Playwriting. Credits include *Fishbowl* (2018, The King's Head Theatre), *Sardines* (2018, The Drayton Arm's Theatre) and *How to Split a Peach* (2016, Roborough Studios).

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Caroline is an anxious 26-year-old actress who has just landed her big break in theatre. She's been cast as a character with the same name, who battles with OCD and tries to fend off her demons, Death and Fire, as they convince her the house is going to burn down. Triggered by the role, Caroline yells cut, yanking the audience and the other actors out of the play within a play. But while this banishes Death and Fire, it gives the actors playing them (Jay and Isaac) a new vendetta. Meanwhile, Chris, the controlling director, keeps putting Caroline in her place, while Amy, the stressed stage manager tries to get the show going again. To put an end to the madness, Caroline becomes her biggest fear: she sets the stage on fire.

Playscript extract

The Play That Burns Down

Shortly after Caroline yells "cut", this scene is one of the first to occur outside of the play within a play. Jay, who is playing the character of Death, confronts her about ending the show prematurely. With pressure mounting from Amy, the stage manager, and Chris, the controlling director, Caroline is tasked with the challenge of carrying on.

JAY: Why are you letting yourself think all this scary shit?!

CAROLINE: I can't control it.

JAY: You've got too much free time.

CAROLINE: No –

JAY: Yes! Too much time to think – the rest of us don't have the time for it.

CAROLINE: Jay! It's not a product of *spare time*.

JAY: Okay then what? Were you abandoned? Dropped as a child? Forgotten at the supermarket?

CAROLINE: Sometimes these things just happen. It's chemical. It's my wiring.

JAY: Caro it's not your wiring, saying it's your wiring is boxing yourself up in 'anxiety' and halving the space you have to grow.

A LONG SILENCE. JAY WATCHES CAROLINE, WHO IS ACTIVELY AVOIDING HIS GAZE.

CAROLINE: Were you bitching about me to Isaac?

AMY: (WALKING IN FROM OFF STAGE) Guys.

CAROLINE: Sorry, Amy – totally my fault.

JAY: Yep.

AMY: I need to call Chris with an update.

CAROLINE: Why?

AMY: Because you yelled cut.

CAROLINE: Why did you tell him?

AMY: It's my job.

CAROLINE: Tell him everything's fine.

AMY: But it's not.

CAROLINE: It's called a lie.

AMY: Caroline.

CAROLINE: Amy.

THEY STARE AT EACH OTHER.

CAROLINE: Just 5 minutes. Please.

AMY: Four.

CAROLINE: Okay. Love you. (TO JAY) Were you bitching about me?

JAY: Maybe.

CAROLINE: Why?

JAY: I just don't like excuses.

CAROLINE: They're not excuses, Jay. Come on.

JAY: But you yelled cut – you're not the only actor here. Some of us were enjoying our roles.

CAROLINE: That's because you got a good role that doesn't trigger you. You get to flounce around playing Death.

JAY: I don't *flounce*, Caroline.

CAROLINE: Isaac, does Jay flounce?

ISAAC: (APPEARING FROM THE KITCHEN) Never.

CAROLINE: Are you angry too?

ISAAC: I'm not angry, I'm disappointed.

CAROLINE: Don't give me that.

ISAAC: Fine I'm annoyed that you ended the show. No matter how messy it gets we have to carry on – that's the deal.

JAY: You took the easy way out.

CAROLINE: Easy?

JAY: You shouldn't have accepted the role.

SILENCE.

CAROLINE: Just give me a minute.

JAY: Think you need more than a minute, honey.

ISAAC: Wanna meditate?

CAROLINE: I'm trying to get *outside* my head.

SILENCE.

CAROLINE: I'm sorry I yelled cut.

JAY: It's fine.

CAROLINE: Jay?

JAY: It's fine.

CAROLINE: And?

JAY: And what?

CAROLINE: I said I'm sorry.

JAY: Yes? And I said it's fine.

CAROLINE: Is that it?

JAY: Yeah?

CAROLINE: Jay.

JAY: *Fine.* I'm sorry.

CAROLINE: For?

JAY: Being a bitch.

CAROLINE: Thanks.

ISAAC: You okay?

CAROLINE: Yeah.

JAY: Wanna shake it off?

ISAAC: We're gonna jam.

CAROLINE: I wanna paint.

JAY: O-kkkrrrrrrr.

JAY GOES OUT TO GET THE GUITAR. CAROLINE GOES BACKSTAGE AND BRINGS BACK A MASSIVE POT OF BLUE PAINT. WHILE JAY AND ISAAC SING 'DUST IN THE WIND' BY KANSAS, CAROLINE PAINTS THE ENTIRE SET BLUE. BEFORE THE THIRD VERSE, SOPHIE COMES ONSTAGE, HOLDING A VIOLIN AND JOINS IN. CAROLINE BEGINS TO SING AS WELL. CHRIS CHARGES ON STAGE, GRUNTING, FOLLOWED BY A FLUSTERED AMY.

CHRIS: What the *fuck* is going on?

Pádraig Lynch



Since graduating as an actor from the Drama Centre in the early nineties Pádraig went on to work at the National Theatres of Britain and Ireland as well as working as a producer and theatre director. As an actor Pádraig developed an insight into text by bringing life to the words of classical playwrights, film and television writers and contemporary dramatists. As a journalist he has written feature articles for *The Guardian*, *National Geographic Traveller* and the *Irish Times*. He has also worked as a writer and adaptor for a number of community theatre companies. Pádraig teaches acting, writing and stage directing for adults with learning difficulties at Citylit. And as a bilingual English/Irish speaker has written and adapted work for the stage in both languages.

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Byor Macbeth imagines the world in 2225 where English has been designated a colonial/racist language and proscribed for over 200 years. In it, a group of academics investigating a resistance movement which attempted to stop the eradication of English present the staging of an ayahuasca-fuelled performance of Macbeth on the occupied site of the Rose theatre in London. As performance gives way to ritual, the lines between the past, present and future blur...

Playscript extract

Byor Macbeth

SCENE 8

THE JUDGE: This court is in session. I have in my hands a document written in the sacred year of 1580 outlining the confession wroth by the holy officers who serve this court for the glory of God and for the protection of his sacred realm on earth and in heaven.

THE COURT RESPONDS WITH AN AMEN THAT ECHOES AROUND THE CHAMBER. THE JUDGE ADDRESS THE TORTURED WOMAN DIRECTLY.

JUDGE: You have confessed of the most bawdy, and sacrilegious crimes. Namely, that you, a heathen, gypsy woman did knowingly partake in the most wanton performance of a wicked and blasphemous play. That against the strictest laws of Queen Elizabeth, you appeared as a witch and called forth the devil in the most shameless evocation that has ever been witnessed in the Christian, Capital of this

realm. The PROSECUTOR will now read for the court the particulars of the charm as quoted by you.

PROSECUTOR: (SLOWLY IN A DULL DRY VOICE) *Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood,
Stop up th' access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visiting's of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it!*

JUDGE: Tell the court if this is the charm you spoke and how and in what form the devil came to you and how you were conjoined with him?

THE WOMAN IS SILENT

PROSECUTOR: Your honour, this gypsy woman cannot speak our Christian, English tongue. She speaks a gibberish bog Latin that her tribe call Sheltu, A language no prettier to the ear that the snarling of curs. It is only through satanic possession that she is able to speak the soft and delicate tongue of our native England, when she partakes of her whorish performances.

JUDGE: Answer, woman, if this be true, speak to me in English now and you can disavow your accusers..

THE WOMAN TRIES TO SPEAK BUT HER TONGUE
HAS BEEN DAMAGED DURING THE TORTURE
SESSION AND SHE CANNOT ARTICULATE.

WOMAN: Ahh, uuss ot gimegge

JUDGE: So you would mock this court with gibberish and doggerel. You cannot speak English unless it be by the agency of the Devil, is that not so?

WOMAN: lease.ese I bug. (BLOOD STARTS TO FLOW FROM HER MOUTH.)

JUDGE: See how the good Lord in his infinite mercy seeks to cleanse the sewer of your treacherous mouth with the sweet red blood of our saviour. What further charges are laid against this vessel of the devil?

PROSECUTOR: Your Honour, We have diverse accounts from witnesses that she did co join in sexual and unholy union with Beelzebub in full view of the public. The devil came to her in the form of a three head hound, the very shape of Cerberus. And that this union has spanned a male demon childe who has been spirited away from the eyes of Christians.

JUDGE: Where is the progeny of this sacrilege?

PROSECUTOR: This Dogboy fiend cannot be located nor will the wanton even under the severest torturing give up of its whereabouts. It is our fear and convictions that when the moment is most opportune for the beast that this hell child will emerge as the anti-christ and wake in deception amongst Christians to destroy our sanctity of our city and lead us all into hell fire and damnation..

JUDGE: What was the occasion of the birth of this thing.

PROSECUTOR: Your Honour, on the black occasion of of the devils birth, the ground itself did quake as if in terror of the thing that was being spewed and spawned by this creature of Hell.

JUDGE: Has the creature a name?

PROSECUTOR: Shakespeare is the name we hear whispered by her brood. It is prophesied that he if he survives he will run through this realm like a rabid dog and will do much to slander the reputation and tranquility of men's minds weaving a literature that will lure them away from the sacred book.

JUDGE: We must set the dogs upon this fox fiend, before he can grow virile and dangerous. Is there no scent at all to be had of it? Will she not divulge its location?

PROSECUTOR: No your honour, she does use her craft so cunningly that we cannot discover the whereabouts of the thing.

JUDGE: Then set her to the rack till she confess.

PROSECUTOR: That would avail us not, your honour. There is one thing only that might make the hell hound reveal itself. We have secured the cord that fed the fiend when its Mother carried it in the womb. Bring it forth.

A WOMAN BRINGS IN A COVERED SILVER PLATTER AND STANDS IN THE CENTRE OF THE ROOM. THE PROSECUTOR WALKS OVER TO IT AND LIFTS UP THE LID. A RED AND LIVID, SNAKE LIKE CORD IS WITHERING ON THE TRAY, BEHOLD THE BLOOD SNAKE OF EVIL, WITH WHICH THE SERPENT NOURISHED THE BEAST. AGAINST NATURE IT STILL HAS A PUTRID LIVE.

PROSECUTOR: Now, Witch, you will divulge the hiding place of your monster or you will be strangled by the very livid snake that did enrich it in with in your foul belly.

THE WOMAN PANICS, BUT REMAINS SILENT.

JUDGE: So be it, let the sentence be carried out. Strangle her with her own filth

THE PROSECUTOR PICKS UP THE STRING OF BLOODY FLESH IN HIS HANDS AND WALKS OVER TO THE HAPLESS WOMAN.

PROSECUTOR: Last chance, hell harlot speak or be quitted forever by this.

HE GOES TO PLACE THE CORD AROUND HER NECK. BEFORE HE CAN DO SO. THE DOGBOY LEAPS FROM HIS PLACE BEHIND THE CHAIR AND SNATCHES THE CORD BETWEEN HIS JAWS AND IN FULL VIEW OF THE ASTONISHED COURT GULPS IT DOWN LIKE A SNAKE IN ONE SWALLOW. THE COURT IS IN DISARRAY AND PANIC.

JUDGE: Beelzebub come amongst. Arroint thee fiend. Livid hell is rampant.

IN THE CONFUSION THE DOGBOY BREAKS FOR THE TUNNEL ON THE LEFT AND VANISHES INTO THE DARKNESS.

JUDGE: Stop it, stop the fiend, follow it.

PROSECUTOR: Your honour, the earth hath bubbles in time that these hellish cyphers can transgress with ease. The dog will already be in another time and place where men mortal Christians cannot follow.it.

JUDGE: What can this mean? That the devil can run at will to another time, another epoch?

PROSECUTOR: Yes, we believe that is so.

JUDGE: Then it cannot be pursued.

PROSECUTOR: No, unless by a sacred licence

JUDGE: What licence?

PROSECUTOR: Sometimes to beat the Devil you must play him at you're his own game. Using his own means and methods.

THE JUDGE: Meaning?

PROSECUTOR: We must avail of the potion and travel after this fiend and destroy it like any rabid animal.

JUDGE: What you are proposing is a grave sin and a damnable sacrilege. No man could be compelled to undertake such a journey. He would imperil his life, but worse he would also forfeit his soul forever.

PROSECUTOR: To stop the mouth of this blasphemous fiend I will sacrifice not only my life but also my immortal soul, which I will willingly give to the Devil.

JUDGE: A terrible thing, that only a fanatic could countenance. Why would you even considerate it?

PROSECUTOR: I have had a vision of the plague that this creature carries in his mind. A world where men go muzzled like dogs, where women are masters over men and where good Christians are forced to pray to the devil. To save the world I will sacrifice my own immortal soul.

JUDGE: So be it. Go, but know the penalty. You will never see the blessed face of our Lord in heaven. But have by your own volition offered your soul for sacrifice.

PROSECUTOR: By your merciful grace your honour, give me leave to take this journey now the hour of the crescent moon is near upon us.

JUDGE: So be it. Take what you need and let it be done.

PROSECUTOR: I have observed and noted the wiles of this witch well. To effect the journey I will take the serpent handled dagger that she uses to cut her flesh. I have remembered the incantations that she uses and I secured the potion that she and her followers imbibe. Called Aya But most importantly, I secured the text of the play Macbeth in which the words and symbols of witchcraft are obscured except to those who understand the secret means of back speaking practised by these Gypsy whores in the language they call Shelta.

JUDGE: Then let the devil's passage be rendered open and the awful ceremony commence.

THE AYA BEINGS AND THE DOG BOY TAKES PART.

THE PROSECUTOR BEGINS TO INTONE THE VERSE, BUT AS HE DOES SO THE WOMAN BACK SLANGS THE INCANTATION INTO SHELTA THUS NEGATING IT AND RENDERING IT IMPOTENT. IT BECOMES A BATTLE BETWEEN THE TWO SPEAKERS THAT TAKES ON THE FORM OF A DIABOLICAL CACOPHONY THAT ECHO'S AROUND THE CHAMBER.

PROSECUTOR Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood,
Stop up th' access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it!

WOMAN: Turry ye shi
A cradgies on beo kens, tog pit ma here
And bog me from the nack to the ladfar
Toddy full in badness. soonie eyniks me lipa
Tus up the karas to agalt
So no grivide anak gub me
Kam me bad nor keep me from the toddy.

THE LISTENERS COVER THEIR EARS AS THE TERRIBLE VERBAL BATTLE ENSUES, IT REACHES A PIERCING CRESCENDO UNTIL THE PROSECUTOR ON THE CUP OF LOSING TAKES UP THE KNIFE AND BRUTALLY STABS AT THE WOMAN.

BLACKOUT

Callan McCarthy



Callan Rose McCarthy earned her Bachelor's degree in English Literature from Fordham University in NYC before moving to London to pursue dramatic writing, where she earned a Distinction in City, University of London's MA programme for Plays and Screenplays. In January 2020 she participated in the ten-week Soho Theatre Comedy Lab for sketch comedy, and in March 2020 her ten-minute script SO I BLED was selected as one of seven for Theatre503's Rapid Write Response night responding to Gill Greer's play MEAT. Callan loves writing about dysfunction in families, horror, redemption, and LGBTQ+ narratives. In particular, she loves 'epics in miniature', where seemingly average characters face extraordinary decisions.

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Twenty-something seamstress Irene needs to grow up and be less self-centred. She feels stuck emotionally and physically, dwelling on her biological mother's abandonment while her gender nonconforming ex-stepmother Robbie depends on her to work at their small clothing shop. In their homophobic small town, the community worship of 'American ideals' threatens their success, but Robbie refuses to give up, turning to the Internet to generate most of their sales. When a local bigshot named Louise enters looking to sabotage Robbie's business for personal reasons, it is her fifteen-year-old daughter Celeste who draws Irene's attention. They are connected through pain and empathy when Celeste reveals an earth-shattering family secret. Irene must choose either to prioritise her own escape from the stagnant town, or to oppose the forces that hold Celeste captive, risking backlash from the community.

Playscript extract

Circus Town

A COLORFUL BASEMENT-LEVEL CLOTHING SHOP. PIECES CROWD EVERY CORNER OF THE ROOM IN A VARIETY OF SHAPES, SIZES, AND STYLES. A DISTINCTLY HANDMADE – THOUGH PROFESSIONAL – QUALITY TO THEM.

ONE CLUTTERED WORKTABLE. A BEATEN-UP SOFA.

IN THE BACK, A SEPARATE ROOM – THE ROOM. SPECIAL AND SECLUDED. INSIDE IT, A RAISED PLATFORM IN FRONT OF A FULL-LENGTH MIRROR. PACKED FULL OF ESPECIALLY UNIQUE PIECES. THE RARE FINDS.

IRENE SITS BY THE ONLY WINDOW ON A TALL CHAIR OR STOOL, PEERING OUTSIDE. A SUN-FADED DRESS HANDS AS A MAKESHIFT CURTAIN, PUSHED TO THE SIDE. SOUNDS OF A PARADE. IRENE WATCHES QUIETLY, SMOKING A JOINT.

SHE SPEAKS IN SLOW MOTION:

IRENE I... know... you... and... your... games... the... sun... is... too... bright... today... nice... try...

SHE LAUGHS.

I will never. I will not. Good effort.

IRENE CONTINUES TO MUTTER TO HERSELF.

ROBBIE ENTERS, DRAGGING A SUITCASE AND COUGHING. IRENE HIDES HER JOINT.

ROBBIE Smells like oregano. Shit, it's dark in here.

IRENE ...

ROBBIE I'll eat your breakfast, then.

IRENE The diner's open?

ROBBIE Just for the morning.

ROBBIE SHAKES A STYROFOAM CONTAINER.

IRENE You don't eat bacon.

ROBBIE I would.

IRENE ...

ROBBIE It's getting cold.

IRENE BEGINS EATING. ROBBIE TURNS THE LIGHTS
ON AND TIDIES THE ROOM.

ROBBIE Can I ask you—

A SPLASH. ROBBIE HAS STEPPED IN A PLASTIC BASIN
OF WATER. ROBBIE SEES A HANDFUL MORE
STREWN ACROSS THE FLOOR.

IRENE I'm washing those.

ROBBIE There's a machine upstairs. The laundromat is around the
corner.

IRENE (MUTTERING) Something in me thinks I'll burn. I'll burn. I'll
burn it all down.

ROBBIE What?

IRENE The laundromat was closed. A man came in with a pack of
gum and chewed it all, and jammed pieces into all the coin
slots. The whole room smelled like mint.

ROBBIE SITS DOWN TO TAKE OFF THEIR WET SHOES
AND SOCKS.

ROBBIE How can I help you?

IRENE ...

ROBBIE How can I make your day easier?

IRENE No, there was no man with gum, of course, it was a complete power short. A bird trapped in the wires – the lines – whatever they are – an explosion.

ROBBIE PICKS UP ONE PLASTIC BASIN, ATTEMPTING TO EMPTY IT.

IRENE No.

ROBBIE We have to move these.

IRENE I put bleach in there.

ROBBIE PUTS THE BASIN BACK WHERE IT WAS AND IRENE RELAXES. SHE CONTINUES EATING.

ROBBIE There's nothing in there.

IRENE I'm washing my clothes. Underwear. Socks. Bleaching out the stains.

ROBBIE Glad you're hungry.

IRENE Yes, yes I am hungry, thank you.

IRENE EATS VERY SLOWLY.

ROBBIE You didn't answer me this morning.

IRENE STARTLES.

IRENE What?

ROBBIE I said... you didn't answer me this morning.

IRENE RELAXES A BIT.

IRENE I don't like when you summon me.

ROBBIE Just let me know you're okay.

IRENE Pisses me off.

ROBBIE You won't get up otherwise.

IRENE I am up.

ROBBIE You are.

ROBBIE MOVES CLOSER TO IRENE AND HOLDS HER HAND AS IF TO SAY 'GREAT JOB.' IRENE SMILES FAINTLY BACK: 'THANKS.'

ROBBIE NOTICES A PACKAGE ON IRENE'S WORKTABLE. UNCLEAR WHAT'S INSIDE.

ROBBIE You didn't hang it?

IRENE SHRUGS. SOUNDS OF CHEERS AND MUSIC FROM THE PARADE.

ROBBIE They're still out there.

IRENE It's only two.

ROBBIE How long have you been up?

IRENE A while.

ROBBIE I didn't hear you.

IRENE I'm not loud.

ROBBIE You ok?

Jennifer Venis



Kelly Jennifer Venis is a freelance journalist and editor, specialising in human rights and gender equality. Her articles have been published in print and online. She holds a first-class Bachelors degree in English with Creative Writing (focus on poetry and prose) from Keele University. This is her first play.

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Amy's estranged father Paul turns up hoping to rebuild their relationship, but Amy is not interested. Paul claims to be ill and manipulates Amy into letting him stay with her. Reluctantly, Amy agrees, but the longer Paul stays, the more Amy loses control and relapses into her old eating disorder. When Paul's illness catches up with him, and Amy is expected to save the day, she realises that she first must save herself.

Playscript

But what if he dies?

PAUL NOTICES THE CAKE. HE LIFTS THE TEA TOWEL TO TAKE A LOOK. HE DIPS HIS FINGER INTO THE ICING BOWL, TASTES IT. GRIMACES.

PAUL: Celebrating something?

AMY: Hm?

PAUL: The cake?

AMY: Oh... just trying a new recipe.

PAUL: I was worried I'd missed your birthday then.

BEAT. AMY LOOKS CONFUSED, HURT.

AMY: It's just a normal cake, but—

PAUL: Can we have some?

AMY: Oh, it's— it's for a friend. My flatmate. And it's not ready anyway. I need to decorate it and—

PAUL: Is that the icing?

HE POINTS TO THE BOWL.

AMY: Yeah, buttercream, but—

PAUL: Doesn't taste quite right to me.

AMY FROWNS.

AMY: Uh... well it's vegan and it's not ready—

PAUL: Ah—

AMY: I did say I was in the middle of something.

PAUL NODS, SIPS HIS TEA. AMY STANDS WITH HER ARMS FOLDED.

PAUL: Louise bakes a lot you know. She does some really interesting designs – intricate little flowers.

AMY: Hm. (A SMALL SMILE.) That's great.

HE COMES BACK TO THE LIVING SPACE. AMY MOVES BACK TOWARDS THE SOFA. PAUL PUTS HIS MUG DOWN ON THE TABLE AND PULLS HIS PHONE OUT OF HIS POCKET. HE FUMBLES WITH IT FOR A MINUTE.

PAUL: She made a great one for my birthday. Very impressive. Ah yeah, here we are. This is the one. Back in March.

AMY: I know it's in March.

PAUL: Here.

HE OFFERS AMY THE PHONE.

PAUL: There are a couple, you can swipe— I can't remember which way.

AMY LOOKS THROUGH A FEW PICTURES, SMILES.
LINGERS ON ONE FOR A WHILE.

AMY: That's great... She looks so different.

AMY GIVES THE PHONE BACK TO PAUL. SHE FOLDS
HER ARMS AGAIN AND GRIPS HER THEM TIGHTLY.
PAUL WATCHES HER. AN AWKWARD SILENCE.

AMY: She did a great job with the cake. Really impressive. I used
to do stuff like that, probably not as well as her. Can't find
the time these days. This one won't be very special
looking. (GESTURING AT THE CAKE ON THE COUNTER.)

PAUL: Ah, well. Louise is very motivated, always busying around
the house. She has so many hobbies I can barely keep
track. But the cakes are always very special. Do you
remember that party she had, in the barn?

AMY TENSES.

AMY: Of course. That was the last time I saw her.

BEAT.

PAUL: Right. Well I think they inspired her with all the decorating
stuff. And you, with those cake balls—

AMY: Cake pops.

PAUL: Mm. Really inspired her.

AMY: That's great.

BEAT.

PAUL: Do you still make those?

AMY: No, not really. Like I said, I don't get the chance. They're a
bit sweet for me anyway.

PAUL: There's no stopping Louise's sweet tooth! She's not made the cake balls—

AMY: Pops.

PAUL: —for a while though. She's really experimenting with new flavours at the moment. Savoury style. She made a cake with courgettes from the garden the other day. You remember I grow my own courgettes, tomatoes, cucumbers...

AMY: It's really... really great that she's so into it. It's nice.

PAUL: Yeah, shame you aren't anymore. You could have swapped tips.

AMY LOOKS AWAY. SHE REMEMBERS HER COFFEE AND REACHES FOR IT, TAKES A SIP. SHE DOESN'T LOOK AT PAUL. SHE TURNS TO FACE THE AUDIENCE. SHE TUGS ON HER NECKLACE AGAIN BRIEFLY WITH HER FREE HAND. PAUL WATCHES HER FOR A MOMENT, LETS HIS GAZE WANDER AROUND THE FLAT. HE SPOTS THE GUITAR. MOVES OVER TO IT.

AMY: So, you said you wanted to talk about—

AMY LOOKS ROUND AND NOTICES WHERE PAUL'S HEADING.

AMY: Oh—

PAUL: Do you still play?

HE POINTS TO THE GUITAR.

AMY: No, I—

PAUL: Ah, shame. I was hoping you'd still be doing something with all those lessons I paid for.

AMY: You always said my teacher was an idiot.

PAUL: Well, if I'd had time to teach you I would have.

AMY: Did you teach Louise?

PAUL: No, I—

AMY: Right. But she plays?

PAUL: All the time. Taylor Swift everyday.

AMY: And she has a piano, too, right? And lessons?

PAUL: Of course.

AMY: Of course.

BEAT.

PAUL: Why don't you play anymore?

AMY: I just... don't.

PAUL: But you were obsessed with it. When you were a kid. It was either a book in your hand, or an instrument. I could never get you to put either down.

AMY: Well... I just... went off it. There wasn't really anyone around to... who was into it, anymore. So. I stopped.

PAUL: Right. Your mum still doesn't—

AMY LOOKS AT HIM SHARPLY. PAUL'S HAND
HOVERS OVER THE NECK OF THE GUITAR.

AMY: No.

PAUL: (SLIGHTLY SMIRKING) Shame.

HE RUNS A THUMB ACROSS ONE STRING.

AMY: That's my flatmate's.

PAUL: Where's yours?

AMY: I sold it a few years ago.

PAUL: You should have said something, I'd have taken it back.

AMY: Well, Louise didn't want it, so—

PAUL: She has plenty of her own.

AMY: I'm sure she does.

BEAT.

PAUL: You know, she sings pretty well too. No lessons needed on that one.

AMY: Naturally.

BEAT. AMY LOOKS AWAY.

PAUL: She sounds a bit like you. It's nice, but... not the same.

AMY: I'm surprised you can remember.

PAUL: Of course I remember. We used to sing together. You'd write us songs, lullabies for Louise when she was a baby. Some of the best memories of my life.

AMY WATCHES HIM, SILENT. HE TAKES A STEP TOWARDS HER.

PAUL: We could have more memories like that. Good memories again.

AMY TAKES A STEP BACK.

AMY: It's a little late for lullabies now.

Yue Wang



Yue Wang is a literary translator and a part-time screen writer. Her script *None Of Your Business* was made into a film in 2014 and got a Best Brand Film Award at the China Golden Osmanthus Film Festival the same year. The next year, the film got nominated as the best original story at The 6th Europe China Image Film Festival hosted in London. If the idea of watching one minute of advertisement is not too daunting, the film can be watched [here](#). In 2018, Yue Wang took a year off to study sociology at City, University of London, which gave her a different perspective on storytelling and character building. After graduation she continued studying creative writing at the same university for another two years. She is currently working on a tragic novel.

Contact

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Thirty years of tension and propaganda between China and Taiwan play out in a three-act, ten-minute play.

Playscript

The Golden Gate Bombing

The following is a 10-min stage play inspired by class discussions.

Main Characters:

VERSATILE: Male, 40, Historian/TV Presenter/Journalist (switching between different roles)

CHINESE PROPAGANDIST: Female, 30 (Act One), 40 (Act Two), 50 (Act Three)

TAIWAN PROPAGANDIST: Female, 30 (Act One), 40 (Act Two), 50 (Act Three)

Side Characters:

CHINESE SOLDIER A, B, and C

TAIWAN SOLDIER A, B, and C

Back Screen:

Back screen is a cartoon map of two parallel curvy coastlines, about 3 meters apart. Left to the left-hand coastline is in red color with black words **FUJIAN PROVINCE, CHINA** and a Hammer&Sickle flag. Right to the right-hand coastline is in cream color with black words **GOLDENGATE TOWN, TAIWAN** and a Chinese Nationalist Party flag. The space between the two coastlines is in blue color representing the sea. The sea stretches down toward the stage

floor, forming a blue strip about three meters wide in the middle of the stage.

Left Stage:

To the very left end of the stage stands a three meters high one meter wide gray cardboard mountain with red words: ***Taiwan Must be Liberated by the Chinese People!*** A big cannon is pointing at the Right Stage with three CHINESE SOLDIERS standing by it. A table with an old style microphone and amplifier. A Chinese Propagandist sits by the table facing the Right Stage. A wooden pole stands next to the table with a loudspeaker on top.

Right Stage:

To the very right end of the stage stands a three meters high one meter wide gray cardboard mountain with white words: ***The Three Principles: Nationalism, Democracy and Better livelihood, are the only things that can save China.*** A big cannon is pointing at the Left Stage with three TAIWAN SOLDIERS standing by it. A table with an old style microphone and amplifier. A Taiwan Propagandist sits by the table facing the Left Stage. A wooden pole stands next to the table with a loudspeaker on top.

Middle Stage:

Middle stage is the sea and VERSATILE stands in the sea.

ACT ONE

STAGE IN DARK. A SINGLE SHAFT OF LIGHT FALLS ON VERSATILE WHO IS NOW DRESSED AS A HISTORIAN WITH A PAIR OF GLASSES AND A BOOK IN HAND.

VERSATILE: (READS THE BOOK WHILE PACING ABOUT SLOWLY) Our story happened in the last century when the Chinese Nationalist Party, who had governed China for 30 years,

was defeated by the rising Communist Party in civil war. They escaped to a small island called Taiwan. (LOOKS UP TO THE RIGHT) Ah, looks like this is their military front.

SPOTLIGHT FALLS ON THE LEFT STAGE, TAIWAN PROPAGANDIST AND THREE SOLDIERS REMAIN STATIONARY, AND SPOTLIGHT FALLS BACK ONTO VERSATILE.

VERSATILE: (CONTINUES READING) The rebel Communist Party established a new republic on the mainland while the old regime continued existing on the Taiwan Island. Since then, China split into two countries, both claiming to be the real legitimate China. (LOOKS UP TO THE LEFT.) So, these must be our commie friends on the mainland.

SPOTLIGHT FALLS ON THE LEFT STAGE, CHINESE PROPAGANDIST AND THREE SOLDIERS REMAIN STATIONARY.

FULL LIGHTS ON, AND THE BACK SCREEN ASSUMES THE CARTOON MAP WITH BIG WORDS **1970S**.

VERSATILE: (CONTINUES READING) There is only a narrow strait between the two countries. At the closest point, the sea is only two miles wide. (HE LOOKS UP TO THE LEFT AND RIGHT AS IF HE'S MEASURING THE DISTANCE) If you shout with a loudspeaker, the other side can hear you. (CONTINUES READING) Since the establishment of the People's Republic, they've been bombing each other for 20 years. (RAISES HIS WRIST TO LOOK AT HIS WATCH) Oh no! It's bombing time now!

VERSATILE HASTILY THROW AWAY THE BOOK, COVERS HIS EARS, AND SQUATS DOWN.

SIX SOLDIERS FROM BOTH SIDE SIMULTANEOUSLY
START MOVING: SOLDIER A DIRECTS; SOLDIER B
TAKES AIM; SOLDIER C LOADS CANNONBALLS.

CHINESE SOLDIER A: Fire!

TAIWAN SOLDIER A: Fire!

CANNONS THUNDER THROUGH THE STAGE. ON THE
BACK SCREEN, DENSELY OVERLAPPED SPOTS OF
BLACK SMOKE AND RED FLAME APPEAR ALONG THE
SEASHORE OF BOTH SIDES.

THE SOUND LASTS FOR A FEW SECONDS,
GRADUALLY LOWERS DOWN, AND THEN
DISAPPEARS.

VERSATILE STANDS UP FROM SQUATTING POSITION,
LOOKS TO THE LEFT AND THEN THE RIGHT. AFTER
MAKING SURE THAT HE'S SAFE NOW, HE RESUMES
COMPOSURE AND STARTS EXPLAINING AGAIN.

VERSATILE: This famous half-century-long battle later on became
known as the GoldenGate Bombing. Famous, for it's not
just a battleground of bombs, it's also a battleground of
ideology. Look!

CHINESE PROPAGANDIST STARTS MOVING. SHE
TAKES HER MICROPHONE AND SHOUTS AT TAIWAN.

CHINESE PROPAGANDIST: Soldiers in Taiwan! Have you got a taste of our
bombs? The determination of the Chinese people to
liberate Taiwan will not change. Come back! Quit fighting
for that old tottering regime. It's still not too late to come
back and embrace our People's Republic!

TAIWAN PROPAGANDIST STARTS MOVING TOO.
SHE SHOUTS BACK TOWARD CHINA.

TAIWAN PROPAGANDIST: Soldiers on the mainland! Your bombs will not scare us. Our front is as strong as iron. It is YOU who should do some serious thinking. Under communist dictatorship, how many families had been broken up? How many innocent people died in red terror? Your People's Republic is a lie!

CHINESE PROPAGANDIST: (SHOUTS BACK) Whoever died in our great proletarian cultural revolution were not innocent people! They were capitalist dogs and oppressors! The People's Republic is for the working people! Our republic is new! The days of your government are numbered!

TAIWAN PROPAGANDIST: Our government has taken drastic measures to reform. The modern day Taiwan is becoming a democracy. Soldiers on the mainland! Don't you want freedom? Come to our side!

CHINESE PROPAGANDIST: So called freedom funded by your American paymasters?

TAIWAN PROPAGANDIST: You Soviet pigs!

CHINESE PROPAGANDIST: You Capitalist bitch!

TAIWAN PROPAGANDIST: Commie Cunt!

SIX SOLDIERS FROM BOTH SIDES HAVE BEEN VISIBLY
WORKING THEMSELVES UP TO INFURIATION.
SOLDIER A FROM BOTH SIDES GIVES ORDER
LOUDLY.

CHINESE SOLDIER A: Fire!

TAIWAN SOLDIER A: Fire!

SOLDIER B AND SOLDIER C FROM BOTH SIDES START
TO LOAD CANNONBALLS.

VERSATILE: Here we go again. I'd better find somewhere safe.

VERSATILE COVERS HIS EARS AND SQUATS DOWN AGAIN.

SOUND OF EXPLOSIONS ROARS OVER THE STAGE, AND DENSE SPOTS OF SMOKE AND FLAME APPEAR ON THE BACK SCREEN AGAIN.

THE BOMBING SOUND LASTS A FEW SECONDS AND DIES DOWN, WHILE THE LIGHTS GROW DIM AND THE STAGE FALLS BACK IN DARK.

ACT TWO

STAGE IN DARK, ONLY A SHINING WORD **1980S** VISIBLE ON THE BACK SCREEN.

INTERMITTENT AND SPARSE BOMBING SOUND CAN BE HEARD, BUT MUCH WEAKER COMPARED TO THAT OF ACT ONE. SOUND GRADUALLY TAPERS OFF AS THE STAGE LIGHT TURNS ON.

SOLDIERS ON BOTH SIDES ARE THE SAME, BUT BOTH PROPAGANDISTS LOOK MUCH OLDER THAN IN ACT ONE.

VERSATILE STANDS UP FROM SQUATTING POSITION, LOOKS LEFT AND RIGHT WITH A CONFUSED FACE.

VERSATILE: What is this? Such loud thunder with only a few drops of rain? Ah I see, they have changed the strategies. The supreme art of war, said the old book, is to attack the mind.

TAIWAN PROPAGANDIST STARTS TO SHOUT TOWARD CHINA.

TAIWAN PROPAGANDIST: Brothers on the Mainland! It's such a long day for you. How about relax a little bit and enjoy some music.

TAIWAN PROPAGANDIST HITS A BUTTON. A VERY SWEET AND SOFT LOVE SONG COMES OUT FROM THE LOUDSPEAKER.

Song: She is only seventeen... Oh... She is only seventeen... Oh, baby...

ACROSS THE SEA, THREE CHINESE SOLDIERS APPEAR TO HAVE FORGOTTEN THEMSELVES IN MUSIC. THEY SLIGHTLY BOB THEIR HEAD AND TAP THEIR FEET TO THE RHYTHM, UTTERLY FORGETTING THAT THEY ARE ON A BATTLEGROUND.

CHINESE PROPAGANDIST GETS ANXIOUS AND ANGRY. SHE GRABS THE TELEPHONE ON THE TABLE AND REPORTS TO HER SUPERIOR.

CHINESE PROPAGANDIST: Chief, They are playing those mushy bourgeois songs, completely sapped our soldiers' morale! What should we do?

CHIEF: (VO) Play our classic song *HOMESICKNESS* at full volume, drown them out!

CHINESE PROPAGANDIST HITS A BUTTON, HOMESICKNESS STARTS TO PLAY, DROWNING OUT THE LOVE SONG.

TAIWAN SOLDIERS GAZE ACROSS THE SEA WITH NOSTALGIC EXPRESSION.

Song: All alone in a foreign town. All alone in a foreign town. Memory tortures me day and night. Whose face I saw in dream last night.....

TAIWAN SOLDIER A BRINGS THREE BOWLS OF RICE
WINE TO SOLDIER B AND C.

TAIWAN SOLDIER A: To our sweet home.

TAIWAN SOLDIER B: I miss my mom.

TAIWAN SOLDIER C: To our home.

TAIWAN SOLDIERS DRINK WINE.

TAIWAN PROPAGANDIST GETS ANXIOUS AND
ANGRY. SHE FUMBLES AT THE BUTTONS IN AN
EFFORT TO GET A PIECE OF NEWS TO BE
BROADCAST, BUT SHE HITS THE WRONG BUTTON,
AND WHAT COMES OUT FROM THE LOUDSPEAKER
IS A POEM WRITTEN BY A TAIWAN POET YU
YOUZEN.

SHE FALLS IN A PANIC AND BLINDLY HITS BUTTONS
TO STOP THE POEM AS IT STARTS:

Poem: When I die, when I die, bury me on top of the mountain
facing my hometown. But hometown is out of sight,
behind this strait of regret. When I die, when I die, bury
me on top of the mountain facing the mainland. But the
mainland is out of sight, never will I forget!

TAIWAN PROPAGANDIST FINALLY HITS THE RIGHT
BUTTON AND MANAGES TO STOP THE POEM, BUT
THE CHINESE SIDE STARTS ATTACKING AGAIN.

CHINESE PROPAGANDIST: Brothers in Taiwan! Do you hear the singing of a
cricket at night? It is that same old cricket which had lived
in the corner of your childhood house. It had jumped
across the Taiwan Strait and landed in your barracks to
sing every night. It is singing a tune of your hometown!

TAIWAN SOLDIERS START WIPING TEARS FROM THEIR FACES, TO DISTRACT THEMSELVES, THEY START TO QUIETLY ATTEND THEIR OWN BUSINESSES.

TAIWAN SOLDIER A IS MAKING RICE WINE BY FERMENTING RICE WITH A CARDBOARD STOVE AND BAMBOO STEAMER.

TAIWAN SOLDIER B IS COLLECTING CARDBOARD CANNONBALL SHELLS SCATTERED ON THE STAGE FLOOR AND GIVES THEM TO SOLDIER C.

TAIWAN SOLDIER C IS FORGING COOKING KNIVES USING THE STEEL FROM THE CANNONBALL SHELLS ON A MINIATURE CARDBOARD FURNACE.

CHINESE PROPAGANDIST: Come back brothers! Come back! Look at how narrow this sea is! It's so easy to swim across all you need is holding a basketball for support! Your home country forever opens her arms for you!

VERSATILE: Wow, this can be the most destructive psychological bombs I ever saw. *(looks to the right)* Let's see how do they deal with such a situation.

TAIWAN PROPAGANDIST, AFTER SOME FUMBLING, FINALLY MANAGES TO FIND A PIECE FROM A PILE OF NEWSPAPERS. SHE STARTS READING THE NEWS LOUDLY.

TAIWAN PROPAGANDIST: (READS) Yesterday, an Air Force plane from the mainland landed at the Taiwan Airport. The pilot, who had been a sergeant before deserting the army, told Taiwan Morning News that he had got disillusioned by the oppressive Communist regime. The yearning for freedom prompted him to make the most important decision in his life. He will be rewarded ten thousand Tai-dollars by the

Taiwan government and he expressed his wish to start a new life in the free world with this money. (PUTS DOWN THE NEWSPAPER) Brothers on the mainland! Don't you want to live in a democracy? The free world forever has its door open for you!

ON THE CHINESE SIDE, THE TELEPHONE ON THE TABLE STARTS TO RING. CHINESE PROPAGANDIST PICKS UP THE PHONE.

Chief: (VOICE OVER, ANGRILY) What are you waiting for? Bomb them right now!

CHINESE PROPAGANDIST PUTS DOWN THE PHONE AND RELUCTANTLY TURNS TO THE CHINESE SOLDIERS .

CHINESE PROPAGANDIST: The order has come again.

THREE CHINESE SOLDIERS , WHO HAD BEEN LISTLESSLY SITING ABOUT, RELUCTANTLY STAND UP TO WORK AROUND THE CANNON.

CHINESE PROPAGANDIST TAKES UP MICROPHONE AND STARTS TO SHOUT TOWARD TAIWAN.

CHINESE PROPAGANDIST: Brothers in Taiwan! There will be a heavy rain in ten minutes. Please remember your umbrella. Repeat! There will be a heavy rain in ten minutes.

TAIWAN SOLDIERS, UPON HEARING THE BROADCAST, RELUCTANTLY PUT DOWN THE JOB IN THEIR HANDS, LISTLESSLY MOVE UP TO THEIR CANNON AND SQUAT BEHIND IT.

CHINESE SOLDIERS START TO FIRE THE CANNON AT A LAZY PACE, WHICH SHOOTS, AS IF IN SLOW MOTION, ONE CANNONBALL AFTER ANOTHER.

ON THE BACK SCREEN, VERY SPARSE AND FEEBLE
EXPLOSIVE SPOTS APPEAR ON THE SEASHORE OF
TAIWAN, LOOKING VERY WEAK AND
NONEFFECTIVE.

VERSATILE HURRIEDLY COVERS HIS EARS AND
SQUATS DOWN AGAIN, BUT AFTER LISTENING A
FEW SECONDS, HE STANDS UP.

VERSATILE: Why do I even try to hide. This is not war. This is children
playing house.

THE LIGHTS GROW DIM AND THE STAGE FALLS BACK
IN DARK.

ACT THREE

FULL LIGHTS ON. BIG WORDS **1990S** ON THE BACK
SCREEN.

SOLDIERS ON BOTH SIDES ARE THE SAME, BUT
BOTH PROPAGANDISTS ARE NOW WITH GRAY HAIR.
THEY LOOK OLD AND TIRED, STILL SITTING AT THEIR
RESPECTIVE TABLES, FACING EACH OTHER.

VERSATILE IS NOW DRESSED AS A TV PRESENTER
IN A SUIT. HE FACES THE AUDIENCE AND SPEAKS TO
THEM THE WAY IN WHICH A TV ANCHOR PRESENTS
NEWS.

VERSATILE: People on both sides of the Taiwan Strait swarm the
streets celebrating the final conclusion of *the 1992
Consensus*. From now on, postal communication is
resumed, the ban to travel across is lifted, families split up
for half a century can now write to each other and
reunite...

HE WAS INTERRUPTED BY A TAIWAN SOLDIER
CALLING AT HIM FROM THE COAST.

TAIWAN SOLDIER A: Hey! Hey!

VERSATILE: (STOPS AND TURNS TO THE RIGHT) Are you calling me?

TAIWAN SOLDIER A: Yes.

VERSATILE: What can I do for you?

TAIWAN SOLDIER A: Ask brothers on the mainland if there's anything they want?

VERSATILE: (TURNS TO THE LEFT) Hey, brothers in Taiwan asked what you want?

CHINESE SOLDIERS: We want to have a taste of that famous GoldenGate rice wine. Maybe also bring us one or two of those GoldenGate cooking knives. Ask them if there's anything they want?

VERSATILE: (TURNS TO THE RIGHT) Brothers on the mainland ask what you want?

TAIWAN SOLDIERS: We want the stinky Tofu from Szechwan, and roasted red chili paste from Shanghai, oh, oh, and the pickled prawn paste from Fujian.

VERSATILE: That's too much stuff for me to carry! How about you both come to the middle to exchange directly?

CHINESE SOLDIERS and TAIWAN SOLDIERS: Alright!

SIX SOLDIERS LEAVE THEIR RESPECTIVE FRONTS,
EACH OF THEM HAS AN ITEM IN HAND. THEY MAKE
THE MOVEMENT OF ROWING AN INVISIBLE BOAT
TOWARD THE CENTRAL STAGE, AND TALK
CORDIALLY TO EACH OTHER.

CHINESE SOLDIER A GIVES A JAR OF STINKY TOFU TO
TAIWAN SOLDIER A.

TAIWAN SOLDIER A: This is the taste of home! I've been dreaming of it for decades.

TAIWAN SOLDIER B GIVES A CARDBOARD COOKING KNIFE TO CHINESE SOLDIER B, WHO LOOKS AT IT CURIOUSLY AND ADMIRINGLY.

CHINESE SOLDIER B: So this is the famous GoldenGate cooking knife?

TAIWAN SOLDIER B: It's famous because it's made from top quality steel taken from those cannonballs you'd shot at us through all those years. Now we finally have a chance to give it back to you.

CHINESE SOLDIER C: Wow, the famous GoldenGate rice wine! I often smelt it when the ocean winds blew our way.

TAIWAN SOLDIER C: We usually took a bowl or two when we got homesick.

DURING THIS CONVERSATION, THE SIX SOLDIERS MOVE GRADUALLY BACKWARD TO THE BACKSTAGE AND DISAPPEAR.

VERSATILE IS LEFT STANDING ALONE IN THE CENTRAL STAGE. HE LOOKS LEFT AND RIGHT AT THE TWO PROPAGANDISTS.

BOTH PROPAGANDISTS STILL SIT UNEASILY ON THEIR SEATS, LOOKING STUBBORN AND UPTIGHT.

VERSATILE: The brothers who had bombed each other for decades just buried their hatchet, but the two women who had shouted at each other for decades are still too proud to break the ice. Well, I can help.

VERSATILE PICKS UP FROM THE FLOOR A CAMERA, A MICROPHONE AND A NOTEBOOK. HE'S TRANSFORMED INTO A JOURNALIST NOW.

VERSATILE WALKS TOWARD THE CHINESE
PROPAGANDIST AND ASSUMES THE POSITION IN
WHICH A JOURNALIST INTERVIEWS PEOPLE.

VERSATILE: Your sacred mission has been accomplished, and the bitter enemies of yesterday are being called the dearest brothers in all the headlines of today. Can you share with us how you feel now?

CHINESE PROPAGANDIST: I just feel how fast the time flies. Having shouted at her my whole life, I still don't know what she looks like.

VERSATILE: Well, after all these years, she should look about the same age as you. Do you want to see her?

CHINESE PROPAGANDIST: (HESITANTLY) Actually I do, but... but...

VERSATILE: Don't worry. I can arrange it.

VERSATILE WALKS TOWARD TAIWAN
PROPAGANDIST.

VERSATILE: The woman you've shouted at for 30 years just told me that she wanted to retire and be a stay-at-home grandma. Do you want to meet her before she goes?

TAIWAN PROPAGANDIST: I've always been wondering what she looks like. If I could meet her, maybe there would be one less regret in my retired years. But I don't know how she feels about me.

VERSATILE TAKES TWO STEPS BACK INTO THE
MIDDLE STAGE, TALKING TO BOTH WOMEN.

VERSATILE: How about this. Both of you take three steps forward and pretend this strait does not exist. Let's see what happens.

TWO WOMEN THINK FOR A MOMENT, BOTH STAND UP, ARRANGE THEIR HAIR AND COLLAR, AND START WALKING TOWARD EACH OTHER.

CHINESE PROPAGANDIST: Dear enemy, finally I get to see your face.

TAIWAN PROPAGANDIST: I will miss the days when I quarreled with you.

THEY BOTH SMILE.

VERSATILE: This can easily be the longest lasting quarrel in history!

CHINESE PROPAGANDIST: You don't say. Her voice as a young woman is still ringing in my ears. Look at how old we have both become.

VERSATILE: Don't want to spoil this friendly atmosphere, but as a journalist I have to ask for my article, which one of you have won?

CHINESE PROPAGANDIST: I won, of course, my broadcasting had persuaded so many TAIWAN SOLDIERS swimming back to the mainland with the help of just a basketball.

TAIWAN PROPAGANDIST: Actually I won. My broadcasting had persuaded even some of your air force pilots to land in our capital.

VERSATILE: Looks like both of you had beat each other in some rounds, which just gives me the inspiration for the title of my article.

BOTH PROPAGANDISTS: Which is?

VERSATILE: After all the disasters, the brotherhood has remained. A smile at meeting, the bitterness is dissolved.

AS HE PRONOUNCES THE LONG TITLE OF HIS ARTICLE, TWO LINES OF BIG CHINESE WORDS THAT ARE THE ORIGINAL POEM OF THE SAME MEANING APPEAR ON THE BACK SCREEN:

度尽劫波兄弟在

相逢一笑泯恩仇

CURTAINS DOWN.

The Department of English City, University of London

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