



Cherwell Theatre Company presents

ENACT

VOLUME TWO

Bringing young people's voices
into the conversation around
sexual violence and consent.

Based on young people's
observations and experiences.

Cherwell Theatre Company presents

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VOLUME TWO

Four original plays developed with young people in response to creative healthy relationships workshops delivered in schools.

Save Point by *Isla Van Tricht*

The Secret by *Ross Tomlinson*

Everyone Does It by *Lynsey Cullen*

Labelled by *Aoife Mannix*

With an introduction from Chloe Purcell, CEO of SAFE!

First performance at The Theatre Chipping Norton
on Tuesday 11th July 2023.

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Disclaimer: These plays are works of fiction based on the observations and opinions of young people. Any resemblances to actual persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the course of the academic year 2022-2023 SAFE! has been thrilled to be involved in the Safer Streets programme in Cherwell district in Oxfordshire, alongside our partners the Cherwell Theatre Company.

We soon discovered that our strands of the project, whilst developed distinctly and independently, had many synergies and ultimately a common aim: to bring young people's voices to the forefront of conversations about addressing violence against women and girls.

As CEO of a charity set-up to support young people following experiences of crime and abuse, I am all too aware of the shocking levels of peer-on-peer sexual harm experienced by young people in Oxfordshire. Young people commonly tell us of their experiences ranging from normalised sexist and misogynistic language through to serious sexual assault, rape and abuse. Sadly, these experiences are commonly compounded by minimisation, victim-blaming and casual degradation.

Following the emergence of the Everyone's Invited movement in the summer of 2020, we have been supporting groups of young people who passionately want to play their part in eradicating and addressing rape culture. The Safer Streets programme, including Cherwell Theatre's ENACT performances, is inspired by this movement.

These plays offer an unparalleled insight into what our young people are experiencing on a daily basis and act as a wake-up call for the rest of us. We need not just to listen, but to act.

Thanks to all the partners, funders and schools who have supported the roll-out of the project, but biggest thanks go to the young people who have so generously shared their experiences and creativity.

Chloe Purcell

CEO

SAFE! Support for Young People Affected by Crime

The logo for SAFE! is written in a bold, black, hand-drawn style font. The letters are thick and slightly irregular, giving it a grassroots or community feel. The exclamation point is also in the same style.

THE PLAYWRIGHTS

ISLA VAN TRICHT

Isla van Tricht is a writer for theatre, film, tv and video games. She did an MA in Text and Performance (Playwriting pathway) at RADA and Birbeck. In 2020-2021 she was invited to be part of the writers' group, INSPIRE, at Hampstead Theatre, and in the same year was on attachment with the Traverse Theatre. Her work has been longlisted for the Bruntwood Prize and Verity Bargate Award. Her plays have been produced in London and across the UK, and off-Broadway in New York.

Her recent work for theatre includes: MONEY, an interactive zoom play commissioned by represent. theatre (Southwark Playhouse, 2021) and a UK tour of BECOMING ELECTRA: A QUEER MITZVAH (venues incl. Kings Head, Nottingham Playhouse, Roundhouse, Edinburgh Festival Theatre). She currently has four TV series and three feature films in development and is under commission by ice&fire theatre to write book and lyrics for a new verbatim musical about young people's experience of sex education, set to tour schools and theatres in autumn 2023. Isla is also a sex educator and schools' speaker.

ROSS TOMLINSON

Ross Tomlinson is an actor, playwright and screenwriter from East Yorkshire. As an actor he has worked extensively in film and television, appearing in the film adaptation of Alan Bennett's *Allelujah* and the BBC adaptation of Adam Kay's *This is Going to Hurt*. Whilst reading French Literature as an undergraduate at University College London, Ross was nominated for the Gapper Prize for his essay on Hervé Guibert's *À l'ami qui ne m'a pas sauvé la vie*. His writing aims to recast LGBTQ+ characters into a historical context, from which they are often omitted.

LYNSEY CULLEN

Lynsey Cullen is a playwright, screenwriter, author and historian from Banbury. She has a PhD in the History of Medicine and currently works as a Research Fellow at the University of York. Lynsey is passionate about telling untold stories, especially those of women and the LGBTQ+

community. Lynsey recently finished the R&D for her Arts Council England funded play KIDS (www.kidstheplay.com), is currently under commission with Izzy Paris Productions to write the play UNCLE, and will have a podcast episode for 'The Scene' (Get Over It Productions: www.thescenepodcast.co.uk) released shortly, all on the theme of queer families. Lynsey is also currently working with director Oz Arshad on her short film BIOLOGY and with Polari Productions on her virtual reality short film SWITCHBOARD. She has also recently published her debut children's Christmas book, 'Marzipan the Clumsy Elf'. Her plays have been produced across the country by companies including Hive North at Hope Mill Theatre in Manchester and Full Disclosure at the Southwark Playhouse in London. Lynsey would like to thank Nicki Stevenson, the entire Cherwell Theatre Company team and the students at Meadowbrook College and The Bicester School for the opportunity to work on a project as important and enriching as ENACT.

AOIFE MANNIX

Aoife Mannix read English and Sociology at Trinity College Dublin and has a PhD in creative writing from Goldsmiths, University of London. She has previously worked as a script editor for the BBC as well as for Channel 4 and the Royal Court Theatre. She has published five collections of poetry, six libretti and a novel which has recently been reissued. She has been poet in residence for the Royal Shakespeare Company and BBC Radio 4's Saturday Live. She has toured internationally as a writer with the British Council. Her pamphlet 'Alice Under The Knife' won the James Tate Poetry Prize in 2020. She has been commissioned by the BBC, the National Archives, the Portsmouth Museum, Youth Music Theatre UK, the National Gallery of Ireland, the Bronte Parsonage, and Half Moon Young People's Theatre. She has taught creative writing at Goldsmiths, University of London, the University of Westminster, Anglia Ruskin University, and Bucks New University. She lives near Banbury in Oxfordshire.

ENACT

VOLUME TWO

CAST

Jordan Noel

Roberta Carraro

Matt Leaman

Joseph Lukehurst

CREATIVES

Director: **Emelia Hutchinson**

Lighting Designer: **Nicola Crawford**

Video Designer: **Matt Powell**

Sound Designer & Composer: **Maisy Beth Crunden**

Movement Director: **Georgina Makhubele**

PRODUCTION TEAM

Stage Management: **George Whitley**

Book Designer: **Rhona Breeze-Lawlor, Breezign**

Technical Support: **Charlie Hopkins**

Printer: **Holywell Press Ltd.**

FOR CHERWELL THEATRE COMPANY

Project Director: **Nicki Stevenson**

Project Co-ordination: **Stacey White**

Creative Practitioner, Project Co-ordination &

Workshop Design: **Kizzy Horgan**

Creative Practitioner & Workshop Design: **Diana Christie**

Creative Practitioners: **Sophie Beckinsale & Emma Bradbury**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cherwell Theatre Company wishes to thank the following supporters for their help in making this project possible: The Home Office, Cherwell District Council, The Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley, North Oxfordshire Academy, Heyford Park School, Meadowbrooke and The Bicester School.

We would like to extend our gratitude to Catherine Marriot and Jacob Nurdan from the partnerships team at The Thames Valley Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner; Richard Webb at Cherwell District Council and our consortium partners: Chloe Purcell and Danni Hull from Safe! and Mark Ashfield and Jo Broughton from Lime.

We would like to thank the following people for their support, dedication and encouragement in helping us develop and deliver this programme: Sian Gibson, Orla Welby, Lee Davies, Wayne Bartlett, Cheryl West, Carl Humphreys, Tanya Davies & Amy Cummings. We are extremely grateful to the following people for their continued support: Deborah Howe, David Adkin, Lynn Mumford, Cat Marin, Anna Frazer, Ingrid Manning, Clinton Osborne and Chris Keeping.

The writers and the team at Cherwell Theatre Company would like to thank our amazing practitioner team Diana Christie, Sophie Beckinsale and Emma Bradbury for designing and delivering our creative workshops; Emelia Hutchinson for her support, vision and bringing together such an exciting creative team; Kizzy Horgan for all of her tremendous efforts in keeping the project on-track and moving forward. We would also like to thank Stacey White for her invaluable contributions in bringing ENACT to life.

Above all we want to thank every young person who has taken part in the project for their generosity and bravery in this process. Without their engagement and invaluable contributions this project wouldn't exist.

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SAVE POINT

by Isla van Tricht

Four teenagers replay events from an evening where one of them sexually harassed a stranger on a train platform. They play the events over with different actions and outcomes, like a video game.

Content Warning: contains strong language, themes of sexual harassment and sexual violence, mention of suicidal thoughts and depictions of misogynistic behaviour and language.

CHARACTERS

HARRY

RUBY

CALLUM

AMY

All characters are about 15/16 years old

NOTE ON THE TEXT

Stage directions in italics.

The majority of dialogue is spoken out to the audience, unless specified.

Digital projection in [square brackets].

Text that is to be displayed on the digital projection is written 'like this' within the brackets.

The action described in the dialogue should not be literally acted out.

If the choice is made to re-create any of these moments it should not be done in a naturalistic or literal way.

This text went to press before the end of rehearsals and so may differ from the play as performed.

RUBY: When I was younger, I used to play Sims a lot. And I remember one day my dad sat me down and was like

‘You know it’s not real, don’t you? You know that’s not how you make friends or have relationships in real life.’

I was maybe, 10?

And I was like, yeah obviously dad, I’m not stupid. Obviously.

But sometimes, I don’t know, don’t you think real life would be a bit easier, if it was a bit more like that? If you had multiple choice options of what to say and do. You could still get it wrong, I guess, but there’s fewer variables.

HARRY: I think what life is missing is a save point. Wouldn’t that be jokes? I saw something like that in a Rick and Morty episode. Imagine that though, you could save just before a specific moment or action and then try out different approaches, and just restart if it goes wrong. You’d get the chance to try something else. No harm done.

AMY: Sometimes things that have happened just replay over and over in your head and you wonder if you could have done anything differently.

CALLUM: I’ve never really been into video games...

Beat. The sound of a train rushing through a station. Perhaps a muffled station announcement or two: platform alteration, no smoking etc.

AMY: I’m waiting for the 18.43 train to Oxford.

HARRY: It’s cold outside.

RUBY: It’s dark early because it’s basically winter.

CALLUM: I’m with my best mate and his girl. She’s fit. Bit stuck up though.

RUBY: Honestly? I’ve always thought Callum was a prick. But he’s Harry’s best mate, so (shrugs).

AMY: I’m on my own, sitting on a bench on the platform.

CALLUM: We’re on our way to a party. Some mate of Harry’s brother or something.

AMY: I’m going to meet my mates to go see a gig at the o2 academy.

HARRY: We’d had some tinnies on the walk to the station. We weren’t drunk. I wasn’t anyway.

RUBY: The boys are showing off. Nah not for me, for each other. All the way to the station they were shouting, shoving each other, laughing, just generally being loud. They’re always like that.

HARRY: We were having a laugh but Ruby, I could tell she was a bit annoyed by it.

CALLUM: It’s not that I mind Harry having a girlfriend, obviously not. And I don’t mind her hanging out with us sometimes, whatever. It’s more that he’s my best mate, and when she’s around it feels like I’m the odd one out. I hate third-wheeling.

AMY: I was alone on the platform. I’m a bit early for the train, so I’ve put one of my air pods in and was listening to some music. It’s Drake. I love him. I’ve only got one air pod in, I always do that, just in case, so I hear them before they reach the platform. I hear the two boys yelling and laughing. I do my coat up all the way to my neck.

HARRY: There’s no-one on the platform when we get there. The platform’s empty. Except for this one girl, probably our age? Maybe a year younger? Hard to tell. She’s sitting on a bench halfway down the platform.

CALLUM: I see her first. RUBY’s hanging off Harry’s neck and they’re all over each other, so I see her first. She’s pretty. She’s not from our school.

RUBY: The boys are still being loud when we get to the platform so she looks up at us. Only for a moment. I think this is probably the right place for a

A videogame sound effect plays.

[On screen we see a video-game-style projection saying 'SAVE POINT']

After a beat, the scene continues.

AMY: One of the boys approaches me saying

CALLUM: *(to AMY)* What you saying, you here on your own?

RUBY: I mean who asks that kind of creepy fucking question?

CALLUM: *(to AMY)* I said, are you here on your own? Want some company?

AMY: I don't really know how to respond. So I don't.

HARRY: In Callum's defence, I think he's a bit embarrassed after the girl doesn't reply. I'm not saying it's an excuse.

CALLUM: *(to AMY)* I'm talking to you. Hello? Where are you off to tonight?

AMY: I think, maybe if I don't look at him, he'll go away.

CALLUM: *(to HARRY)* Do you reckon she's dumb mate?

RUBY: I look at Harry wondering if he'll do something. He doesn't.

HARRY: Callum goes over to her and starts waving his hand right in front of her face.

CALLUM: *(to AMY)* Hello? It's actually rude to ignore people you know.

RUBY: I don't do anything either, but he's not my mate.

AMY: I look away, even when his hand is in my face. I pretend I'm listening to something, but I've turned my music off. I can hear everything he's saying.

CALLUM: *(to AMY)* Is anyone sitting here? Mind if I join you?

HARRY: Probably at first, I thought it was quite funny, if I'm being honest.

CALLUM: I sit down next to her. She's pretty, not like a supermodel or whatever, not the type to make you double take in Tesco's or whatever but she's alright looking. Not pretty enough to be acting like she's better than me though, like she's too good to talk to me. Not pretty enough to be so fucking rude.

AMY: He tells me I'm not pretty enough to be so fucking rude. But he laughs after, like that isn't an aggressive thing to say.

HARRY: It got less funny when he sat next to her, yeah, I'll admit that.

RUBY: When he says that to her, I almost said something, but I didn't. Because Callum was on one at that point, and he might've turned on me. And I don't know if Harry would've done anything.

CALLUM: I put my arm around her.

AMY: I'm trying to do calculations in my head. Trying quickly to work out: if I push him off what will he do.

CALLUM: It's just a laugh.

AMY: If I don't push him off, what will he do.

CALLUM: I give her a squeeze.

AMY: And which one will be worse.

CALLUM: I think she likes it.

AMY: I try and get out from his arm but he's stronger than me.

HARRY: She looks scared.

RUBY: I think she might cry.

AMY: He tries to kiss me. That's when I push him off.

CALLUM: It's funny! Harry's laughing, I think. It was funny.

AMY: (to CALLUM) Fuck. Off.

CALLUM: (to AMY) Oooh, she speaks! What's your name?

HARRY: I can hear the train coming.

RUBY: He gets close to her again.

CALLUM: (to AMY) What're you wearing under there, darling?

HARRY: He tries to unzip her coat.

AMY: The train is almost here. I think for a second about jumping in front of it. No. I think for just a brief moment about pushing him under it. I wonder if he's getting on this train too. I wonder if he'll follow me.

RUBY: When the train arrives and stops, she pushes him away.

HARRY: (to CALLUM) Callum, come on mate.

RUBY: Now he speaks.

HARRY: I didn't want him to get in trouble.

RUBY: The guard steps off the train.

AMY: I see where the guard opened the door, and I run to get on there.

CALLUM: I wonder if she's going to report me.

HARRY: We get on the train.

A videogame sound effect plays. Someone has selected to return to the save point.

*[Options to click:
'back to save point'*

or

'keep playing'

appear on the screen.

HARRY selects 'back to save point']

[HARRY is now faced with a question on the screen:

'Try something else?'

Followed by the options:

'Yes'

or

'No'

He selects 'yes'.

A new title comes up: 'Join in']

HARRY: There's no-one on the platform when we get there. The platform's empty. Except for this one girl, probably our age? Maybe a year younger? Hard to tell. She's sitting on a bench halfway down the platform.

AMY: I see both the boys looking at me. I look away. Pretend to be listening to music.

HARRY: (to CALLUM) Do you think she's fit?

CALLUM: I do, yeah.

HARRY: (to CALLUM) See if she wants to come to the party Callum.

AMY: They're talking about me. I pretend I can't hear them. One of the boys approaches me saying:

CALLUM: (to AMY) What you saying, you here on your own?

HARRY: I laugh. I encourage him. He's having fun. Maybe if he has someone, he'll stop being a pain in the arse about me and Ruby.

CALLUM: (to AMY) I said, are you here on your own? Want some company?

HARRY: I can see he's struggling so I go over to help.

AMY: The second boy comes over too. I can feel my heart really fast and loud at the very top of my chest. I feel sick. There's a girl with them

but she's not saying anything.

HARRY: (to AMY) My mate wants to know if you're single.

RUBY: Oh my days. It's like they're year 7s. Who does that?

AMY: I ignore them. They sit down next to me, one on either side.

RUBY: I think about shouting at Harry, what the fuck is he doing?

HARRY: She looks terrified. Callum starts unzipping her coat. Nah this is worse. This is –

CALLUM: Alright, wait wait wait. Let me try something else –

A videogame sound effect plays. Someone has selected to return to the save point.

[Options to click:

'back to save point'

or

'keep playing'

appear on the screen.

CALLUM selects: 'back to save point']

[CALLUM is now faced with a question on the screen:

'Try something else?'

'Yes'

or

'No'

CALLUM selects 'yes'.

A new title comes up: 'Approach her differently']

[At the same time a question comes up on the screen for RUBY:

'Try something else?'

'Yes'

Or

'No'

RUBY selects 'yes'.

A new title comes up: 'Say something']

CALLUM: I see her first. Ruby's hanging off Harry's neck and they're being all over each other, so I see her first. She's pretty. She's not from our school.

RUBY: The boys are still being loud when we get to the platform so she looks up at us. Only for a moment.

AMY: One of the boys approaches me.

CALLUM: (to AMY) Hey, how are you?

AMY: I ignore him.

CALLUM: (to AMY) I like your jacket.

I said, I like your jacket.

AMY: If I smile at him, won't that encourage him to keep talking to me? I just want him to leave me alone.

CALLUM: (to AMY) Are you going to Oxford tonight? Wanna come to a party with us?

HARRY: She looks at him now.

AMY: (to CALLUM) Nah you're alright. I'm meeting some friends. Thanks though.

CALLUM: (to AMY) You can bring them.

AMY: (to CALLUM) We're seeing a gig. (to herself) Don't tell him that.

CALLUM: (to AMY) Oh yeah, who are you seeing?

AMY: He sits down next to me. This is why I didn't want to talk to him. What if he won't leave me alone now?

CALLUM: (to AMY) Is it at the Academy?

RUBY: (to CALLUM) Callum, she doesn't want to talk to you.

AMY: The girl says something.

CALLUM: (to RUBY) What?

RUBY: (to CALLUM) I said, she clearly doesn't want to talk to you.

AMY: I want to thank her. I want to say thank you, but the boy sitting next to me is clearly pissed off. I don't want to make it worse.

RUBY: Callum stands up. He starts shouting abuse at me. I don't know what to do.

HARRY: (to CALLUM) Alright that's enough. Everyone let's just –

A videogame sound effect plays. Someone has selected to return to the save point.

*[Options to click:
'back to save point'
or
'keep playing'
appear on the screen.]*

CALLUM: (to HARRY) I wanna keep playing.

RUBY/HARRY: (to CALLUM) Shutup Callum.

[HARRY clicks 'back to save point']

*HARRY is now faced with a question on the screen:
'Try something else?'*

'Yes'

or

'No'

He selects 'yes'.

A new title comes up 'intervene']

HARRY takes a deep breath.

HARRY: There's no-one on the platform when we got there. The platform's empty. Except for this one girl, probably our age? Maybe a year younger? Hard to tell. She's sitting on a bench halfway down the platform.

CALLUM: (to AMY) What you saying, you here on your own? I said, are you here on your own? Want some company? I'm talking to you. Hello? Where are you off to tonight?
(to HARRY) Do you reckon she's dumb mate?

RUBY: Callum goes over to her and starts waving his hand right in front of her face.

CALLUM: (to AMY) Hello? It's actually rude to ignore people you know.

RUBY: God this guy's a prick.

HARRY: (to CALLUM) Alright mate, that's enough.

AMY: It's his mate. I don't look up but I'm listening. Anxious, alert, listening.

CALLUM: (to HARRY) What?
(aside) Harry's trying to be all Billy big bollocks hero in front of his girlfriend. Pathetic.

HARRY: (to CALLUM, weary, calm) Leave her alone mate. The train'll be here soon.

CALLUM: (aside) It's really pissing me off.
(to HARRY) Don't fucking tell me what to do.

HARRY: (to CALLUM) Look, she's not interested Callum. If she was, she'd talk to you.

RUBY: I'm worried what Callum's gonna do then. He looks like he might hit Harry. Like he feels humiliated and that's just making him really really angry.

HARRY: (to CALLUM) Come on mate, the train's coming. Don't get yourself in trouble.

RUBY: Callum hesitates for a moment.

AMY: I wonder for a moment if he's gonna do something violent. He looks at me, I can see out of the corner of my eye, he's thinking about saying something. But he doesn't.

HARRY: The train arrives.

AMY: He looks back at me one more time and then walks away, shaking his head and muttering something.

HARRY: I look back at the girl, to see if she's alright. She just runs onto the train.

A videogame sound effect plays. Someone has selected to return to the save point.

[Options to click:

'back to save point'

or

'keep playing'

appear on the screen.

RUBY selects 'back to save point']

[RUBY is now faced with a question on the screen:

'Try something else?'

'Yes'

or

'No'

She selects 'yes'.

A new title comes up 'Check in with her']

RUBY: The boys are still being loud when we get to the platform so she looks up at us. Only for a moment. Callum approaches her, asks a creepy question. She ignores him. I would've done the same probably. He keeps asking her questions then he waves his hand right in her face. I think I would've tried to smash his face in if he'd had his hand

up in my face like that.

Callum is laughing, he looks at Harry, who is also laughing. In that moment, I absolutely hate both of them. Watching Harry laughing at Callum being such a dickhead is seriously giving me the ick.

Then Callum sits down next to her. I elbow Harry in the ribs. Harry isn't saying anything. Callum puts his arm round her. I can see she's struggling to get away from him. I think about saying something. But I don't.

She looks scared. Callum tries to kiss her. He's laughing like it's funny. It's not funny. It's horrible. She pushes him away. She tells him to fuck off. I want to cheer for her like 'yes babe!'. I want to tell Harry to wipe that smile off his face.

CALLUM: *(to AMY)* Oooh, she speaks! What's your name?

RUBY: I want to tell Callum I think he's pathetic.

CALLUM: *(to AMY)* What're you wearing under there, darling?

HARRY: He tries to unzip her coat.

RUBY: When the train arrives, she pushes him away. The guard steps off the train. She runs to where the guard is and gets on the carriage there. I leave the boys and follow her, jumping in the doors just before they close.

(to AMY) Are you alright?

(aside) She looks like she's going to cry. She looks wary of me and I don't blame her.

(to AMY) Are you alright?

AMY: It's the girl who was with them. What is she doing? It's too late now. Why didn't she say anything?

RUBY: *(to AMY)* I'm sorry they're such pricks. Are you alright?

(aside) She starts crying. She's shivering even though she's got a big coat on.

AMY: The guard notices us and comes over. I can't speak.

RUBY: The guard asks us what's wrong. The girl's just crying. I look at her. I feel so guilty I didn't say anything. I hate those boys. I hate Callum with his stupid laughing mouth and his hands in her face and trying to – I'd love to chop off his stupid minging hands and put them in a meat grinder.

AMY: The guard asks us again: 'did something happen?'

RUBY: She's sobbing now. Actually fully shaking. Why didn't I do something? Why didn't I say anything? I hate those boys. I hate myself.

AMY: 'Did something happen?' I don't have the strength to reply.

RUBY: I tell the guard everything.

[Options to click:

'back to save point'

or

'keep playing'

appear on the screen.

CALLUM selects 'back to save point']

[CALLUM is now faced with a question on the screen:

'Try something else?'

'Yes'

or

'No'

He selects 'yes'.

A new title comes up 'Leave her alone']

AMY: I'm alone on the platform. I'm a bit early for the train, so I've put

one of my air pods in and am listening to some music. It's Drake. I love him. I only have one air pod in, I always do that, just in case, so I hear them before they reach the platform. I hear the two boys yelling and laughing. I do my coat up all the way to my neck.

HARRY: There's no-one there on the platform when we get there. The platform's empty. Except for this one girl, probably our age? Maybe a year younger? Hard to tell. She's sitting on a bench halfway down the platform.

CALLUM: I see her first. Ruby's hanging off Harry's neck and they're being all over each other, so I see her first. She's pretty. She's not from our school.

RUBY: The boys are still being loud when we get to the platform so she looks up at us. Only for a moment.

CALLUM: Alright darling, I like your jacket. You here on your own?

AMY: I don't respond. I'm hoping that he'll think I can't hear him.

CALLUM: Maybe she can't hear me.

Or maybe she can but she doesn't want to talk to me. Either way. I'm not gonna keep yelling at her like some fucking creep.

The train's almost here anyway.

[Options to click:

'back to save point'

or

'keep playing'

appear on the screen.]

AMY flicks between the two, neither option is really what she wants.

AMY: I play it over and over again. In my head.

I ask myself the question: What would I have done differently?

I could've got an earlier train – but so could he, if I was unlucky.

I could've made sure my friends went with me – but can I really never even go to a train station on my own?

I could've covered up more – but I was wearing my big puffy coat so it's not...

I could've stayed home. I could never wear makeup. I could shave the hair off my head.

I could stare at men in an aggressive way to warn them to fuck off. I could avoid eye contact with all men. I could smile and laugh and maybe that would de-escalate the situation – or maybe that would make it worse? I could pretend to be on the phone to a boyfriend or my mum or my dad.

I could carry a weapon. An alarm. I could give up my hobbies and go to self-defence classes every night of the week instead. I could always have my keys between my fingers, just in case.

I could move to the middle of nowhere in the countryside or maybe a big city would be better where there's always lots of people around – but this stuff happens there too. I could never take the train again. Or the bus. Or walk anywhere. I'll only take taxis – who can afford that?

I could never go outside again. Never leave the house.

Or he could just not do it. Because if it hadn't happened here, it could have happened somewhere else. Nothing I did do, or didn't do, or could've done or not done would have made any difference. It wasn't my fault. That's what everyone says and I know they're right but.

There's nothing I could have done differently that would have changed it.

[A new, third option that we haven't seen before comes on screen: 'quit game']

*AMY pauses for a moment
and then selects 'quit game']*

THE END.

THE SECRET

by Ross Tomlinson

A young man confronts his friend about a long-held secret, unearthing a disquieting new perception of their collective past behaviours.

Content Warning: contains themes of sexual violence, drug abuse, assault, bullying and strong language.

CHARACTERS

BEN: A 17 year old boy

JACK: A 17 year old boy

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

- indicates an interruption

... indicates a thought trailing off

* indicates a change of scene

This text went to press before the end of rehearsals and so may differ from the play as performed.

BEN, alone, stands under a spotlight.

BEN: I have a secret.

Do you have a secret? Just one little thing that nobody knows about you? It can start small but it can grow into something massive. You tell yourself it's not that deep, but before you know it you're fighting to breathe. That little secret is now a fist, squeezing around one of your lungs.

Your lungs. My mum once told me about a man who had a plant growing in his lungs. He swallowed a seed by accident. It went down the wrong tube. The climate of the lung is warm and moist and this seed, it... germinated. It started spreading its tiny roots, started burrowing into the flesh of this man's lung, started to sprout a tiny stem, tiny leaves, started expanding, pushing, poisoning, until one day bang! The man's lung collapsed. The man collapsed. His life collapsed.

That's what my secret feels like. It's growing. It's killing.

Lights out.

* * * * *

BEN and JACK in the college cafe.

JACK: They've got five types of milk.

BEN: Oh yeah?

JACK: It's mad.

BEN: -

JACK: I got us both oat milk.

BEN: I don't know if I like oat milk.

JACK: It's way better for you.

BEN: Right.

JACK: Everyone's healthy as fuck here.

BEN: Oh yeah?

JACK: Yeah mate it's all wellness and wellbeing. It's a mood. Like, it's cool to be mindful. It's actually sick to take care of yourself.

BEN: Right.

Pause.

BEN: So you're enjoying it then?

JACK: Yeah. I mean, the course is like, fine. Tutors are fine.

BEN: That's good.

JACK: Best bit is student life. There's way more freedom than when we were at school. You get, like, free periods. And there's loads of societies you can join.

BEN: Yeah I saw on your Insta you're part of some like, art group.

JACK: Art Society, yeah.

BEN: So what, you like, draw pictures together?

JACK: Yeah there's group creation sessions where you like, draw or paint together but then there's also classes and talks on, like, how you can use art to do better in the world and... what?

BEN: Nothing.

JACK: What? You're laughing.

BEN: I'm not! I'm just...

JACK: What?

BEN: It's just different, that's all.

JACK: What is?

BEN: You. You're different.

JACK: Different?

BEN: Yeah.

JACK: How?

BEN: I dunno. It's not a bad thing.

JACK: Different how?

BEN: Well it's just... You're Jack. You're you. And you're...

JACK: I'm what?

BEN: You're doing art classes.

JACK: And?

BEN: No it's great. It's great. It's just not-

JACK: Not what?

BEN: Not you. The old you, I mean.

JACK: People change, mate.

BEN: Yeah I know it's just-

JACK: What?

BEN: I just can't imagine the old Jack from school doing art classes. You used to take the piss out of, out of...

JACK: Who?

BEN: Out of people.

JACK: People? You'll have to be a bit more specific.

BEN: People that did anything feminine or like, girly.

JACK: We were all dickheads at school mate.

BEN: Yeah. Yes. But...

JACK: But what?

BEN: It doesn't matter-

JACK: No, come on. What?

BEN: You used to push it a bit. I feel like a lot of us used to go along with things because you used to kind of...

JACK: Kind of what?

BEN: Look, calm down.

JACK: I'm calm. I used to "kind of" what?

BEN: Well it wasn't like you forced us to do anything but there was definitely this pressure to like... show off... about...

JACK: Spit it out.

BEN: About ourselves. Like, how we were men. And how manly we were. That we weren't like, pussies.

JACK: Erm... ok.

BEN: And girls. If you'd, like, grabbed a girl. Or got with her.

JACK: Are you serious.

BEN: Yeah. I'm serious.

JACK: That's just what lads do, Ben. Groups of lads. They talk about girls. And the girls talk about the guys.

BEN: It wasn't just talking. It was, like...

JACK: Like what?

BEN: Well, like I said. This pressure. Like, bigging up sexual experiences with girls or having to like, show off that we'd done things. Like they were a kind of trophy.

JACK: Have you ever met a teenaged guy who doesn't want to show off about getting with a girl?

BEN: No.

JACK: No. Precisely.

BEN: But-

JACK: Look I don't like talking about, before.

BEN: I know.

JACK: So let's not.

BEN: Okay.

JACK: For now.

BEN: Okay.

JACK: I don't know why you took a year out. You should get yourself to college. Leave all that behind. Then you'll get it.

BEN: Okay.

JACK: You'd change as well. People change. You end up just forgetting about... all that shit.

BEN: Do you?

JACK: Yeah. You leave it behind.

Lights out.

* * * * *

BEN, alone, stands under a spotlight.

BEN: I have a secret.

Do you have a secret?

Do you feel like the whole world knows you have a secret? That you've got something to hide?

Picture this. You walk past a police car in the street and suddenly, you're like, conscious of the way you're walking. The way you're moving. The way you're creeping. You think, They Know. They can see it in the way you're slowing your pace. The way you're begging your legs to move more slowly, to not break out into a sprint. They can see that tingling sensation moving down your spine, they can feel the hot, hot skin on the back of your neck, it's like an oven.

That heat. It's your shame. It's your secret. They can smell it on you.

Lights out.

* * * * *

BEN on a park bench. JACK approaches, brandishing a four pack.

JACK: Got them.

BEN: Nice!

JACK: Fucking mad. Four tins for four quid.

BEN: That's great.

JACK: Told you. Best shop in town. Only place they don't ID.

BEN: Mate, they definitely know you're underage.

JACK: Well they're not gonna start refusing me now. I can report them. Looks worse for them. Cheers.

BEN: Cheers.

Pause.

JACK: Thanks for coming.

BEN: That's alright.

Pause.

BEN: So.. How are you doing?

JACK: Yeah fine.

BEN: I mean... Do you wanna talk? You said on your WhatsApp you, like, wanted to talk to-

JACK: Yeah, yeah, I'm just. Give me a minute.

Pause. They drink.

BEN: So is this where you hang out? You and your college mates?

JACK: Pretty much, yeah.

BEN: Nice.

-

Must be exams soon, yeah?

-

Do you have, like, essays or is it just exams at the end of-

JACK: I'm in trouble.

BEN: What?

JACK: I'm in trouble.

BEN: What do you mean, you're in trouble?

JACK: I mean... I think I've got like, a stalker or something.

BEN: You've got a stalker?

JACK: Yeah. So, hear me out. There's this account. On SnapChat.

BEN: Right.

JACK: It's anonymous. The username is like, TheTruth123.

BEN: Okay.

JACK: And whoever this person is... they're like, saying things about me.

BEN: They're saying things about you?

JACK: Yeah. They're sending these messages around college. Saying things.

BEN: Okay well... What kind of things? Bad things?

JACK: Yeah, fucking bad things. They're talking shit about me.

BEN: But what are they saying?

JACK: They're saying that I... That I've like, done things. Horrible things.

BEN: Jack-

JACK: To girls.

BEN: Fuck.

JACK: I know.

BEN: What things, though? What are they saying you did?

JACK: Keep... Keep your voice down. They're saying, like, sexual assault. Rape.

BEN: Oh mate.

JACK: I know.

BEN: What the fuck? Who's made the account?

JACK: I don't know.

BEN: Surely that's like, illegal. People can't just say that kind of thing.

JACK: Yeah, I know.

BEN: They can't just make shit up about people. They can't lie. That's what, like, defamation?

Pause.

It's defamation, right?

Pause.

Jack?

Pause.

Jack, you haven't... You haven't actually done something?

JACK: Ben.

BEN: Did you? Did you do something?

JACK: Mate, I... I-

BEN: What?

JACK: I don't know.

BEN: What?

JACK: I don't know I don't know. It was... It was the end of last year.

BEN: Oh fuck.

JACK: I think...

BEN: You think what?

JACK: I think we were drunk. Or something. Or high. I can't remember.

BEN: Who was drunk?

JACK: Me and Mia.

BEN: Mia Ferrerra?

JACK: Yeah. But, I can't really remember.

BEN: You can't remember?

JACK: Well-

BEN: But you remember you were drunk? You remember when it was?

JACK: It was... It was at a party.

BEN: So you do remember?

JACK: It was at a party.

BEN: What happened at the party Jack?

JACK: The... I...

BEN: So you sexually assaulted Mia at a party?

JACK: It was... I don't remember it like that. We were all having fun and we were all pissed and me and Mia, well, we just...

BEN: Jack.

JACK: You remember what we were saying, about like, girls and how we have to prove something and, like-

BEN stands.

BEN: I can't do this.

JACK: What?

BEN: I'm sorry. I... I have to go.

JACK: What? Ben I-

BEN has left.

Lights out.

* * * * *

BEN, alone, stands under a spotlight.

BEN: I have a secret.

Have you ever, like, not done the right thing? Have you held a secret inside you, held it close to your chest, pushed and rubbed it so hard into your torso that you can feel an imaginary spurt of blood pushing out? Like the secret is cutting a hole in you, taking up space in your heart, in your organs, pushing bits of you out so all that's left is this rotting thing inside, this thing with its own mouth and voice that shouts and screams YOU SHOULD HAVE DONE THE RIGHT THING / WHY DIDN'T YOU DO THE RIGHT THNG / WHY DIDN'T YOU HELP?

I have that.

Lights out.

* * * * *

BEN on a park bench, on his phone. JACK enters.

BEN: Hey.

JACK: Hey.

Pause.

They hug.

BEN: Thanks for coming.

JACK: Yeah sure. No worries. You alright?

BEN: Yeah. Yeah. You?

JACK: I didn't really think you wanted to see me. After last time.

BEN: No I do it's, well, yeah it is what it is.

Pause.

How was your exam?

JACK: Yeah alright. We've actually got, like, an end of exams party tonight.

BEN: Oh. Cool.

JACK: You can come if you want.

BEN: No I'm all good. Thanks.

Pause. BEN takes a deep breath.

JACK: You alright?

BEN: Yeah. Yeah I'm fine. I just...

JACK: What? What's up?

BEN: I've got something to tell you.

JACK: Okay.

BEN: It's...

JACK: What?

BEN: Oh fucking hell.

JACK: Ben, come on. You can tell me. How bad can it be?

BEN: It's rough.

JACK: After what I've done? Come on.

BEN: It was me.

JACK: What? What was you?

BEN: I... I created that SnapChat account.

JACK: What do you mean?

BEN: I made that account and sent those messages around. Saying those things.

JACK: What are you on about? Stop fucking around.

BEN: Jack you're not listening to me. I made that Snapchat account.
With Mia.

JACK: What?

BEN: I reached out to her. Because I had to. I had to speak to her because
I couldn't... I couldn't keep it in any longer and it was... It was killing
me.

JACK: What?

BEN: I was there. I saw you. I saw you doing it to her. And I heard her.

JACK: What the fuck?

BEN: I heard her say no. She said no. And you carried on.

Pause.

JACK: You saw it?

BEN: Yeah.

JACK: But you never said.

BEN: I know. That's what I mean. It's been like... It's been eating me
up. For ages. That I didn't do anything. That I didn't stop you. Or
challenge you. Or help her.

JACK: Right. Fucking hell.

BEN: And I know I've gone about it in the wrong way. I just wanted to,
like, put it right. Because I should've done something. Even though
you're my mate and, and we're here for each other. I just couldn't
keep it a secret anymore and I wanted people to know what you'd
done. What you really are-

JACK: Alright just, just stop. For a minute. Please.

Pause.

JACK: Are you sick in the head?

BEN: What?

JACK: I said are you sick in the fucking head?

BEN: Jack-

JACK: What kind of a person does that? You're supposed to be my mate
and you're creeping around like a, like a little pussy behind my back.

BEN: I didn't want to go behind your back.

JACK: Then why didn't you just confront me?

BEN: I didn't know how to deal with it all.

JACK: Why didn't you just talk to me like a fucking normal-

BEN: Because you did things to me too.

Pause.

JACK: What?

BEN: You did things. You said things. To me.

JACK: What the fuck?

BEN: If I didn't act like you wanted me to. Like one of the boys.

JACK: Ben-

BEN: You called me a little bitch. "Ben is a fruity little bitch".

JACK: That was just-

BEN: You used to smack me.

JACK: That was banter mate!

BEN: No! That's what I mean! How do you still not get it?! It's not banter
if it's... if it's sexual. If you're calling me a little pussy. Touching me,
teasing me. Making everything about dicks and asses and tits and ...

everything-

JACK: That's what kids do!

BEN: And it doesn't fucking have to be! You could've stopped-

JACK: It was ages ago. I've changed. We've all changed-

BEN: That doesn't matter Jack. You're still... You're still accountable. You have to be accountable.

JACK: And you think spreading shit all over social media is going to help? You're a fucking coward.

BEN: I'm taking responsibility for that! I know I went about it in the wrong way. It was a mistake and I'm sorry. But you need to admit what you've done. You need to face it! Face what you've done and what you were and ... You fucking sexually assaulted someone!

Pause.

JACK: You know I didn't mean to. With Mia. I ...

Pause.

I didn't... I wasn't even thinking about it. I just thought that we were both, like, into each other and ... I don't know I just...

I thought it would be good to be able to tell people that we'd gone all the way, even though we were drunk and-

JACK has started to cry.

BEN: You shouldn't do that though. It's not just your choice-

JACK: I know! I know that now-

BEN: Just... Look, I'm here, I'm still your friend, I'm still here for you but you just...

JACK: What? What happens now? What do I do?

BEN: I don't know. It's not ... It's not black and white like that. There aren't any easy answers/

JACK: How do I make up for it? How do I put it right?

BEN: I don't know Jack. I don't know.

Lights out.

THE END.

EVERYONE DOES IT

by Lynsey Cullen

Maya would never send a nude... Or would she? Everyone Does It follows 'best friends' Maya and Ella as they navigate the all too common world of nudes, dick pics, and revenge porn.

Content Warning: contains strong language, scenes of physical harassment and depictions of misogynistic behaviour.

CHARACTERS

ELLA: A 15 year old girl

MAYA: A 15 year old girl

HARRY: A 16 year old boy

LEO: A 16 year old boy

PARENT: A man in his 40s/50s — a voice off-stage.

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

... indicates the trailing off of a thought or comment.

This text went to press before the end of rehearsals and so may differ from the play as performed.

SCENE ONE

Afternoon. MAYA's living room. ELLA and MAYA slouch on the sofa and watch TV. ELLA's phone 'pings'. She checks it, grins, and types back.

MAYA: Want me to pause it?

MAYA pauses the TV. ELLA continues to type.

Hello? ELLA?

ELLA: What? Oh, no. Don't worry about it.

ELLA continues to type.

MAYA: Let me guess. Leo, again?

ELLA: Maybe...

MAYA: Oh my God. You two are like, non-stop.

ELLA: Jealous much?

MAYA: Of Leo?! Urrr, no thanks!

ELLA: Oh yeah... You're into Harry!

MAYA: Piss off!

ELLA swoons.

ELLA: Oh Harry! I love you sooo much, Harry!

MAYA: Oh my God, cringe.

ELLA: Please. You love him.

ELLA returns to typing.

MAYA: Seriously?! You saw him, like, an hour ago.

ELLA: So?

MAYA: So...

MAYA snatches ELLA's phone.

What's sooo important?!

ELLA: MAYA!

MAYA holds the phone away from ELLA and looks at the messages.

MAYA: WOW.

ELLA freezes. MAYA turns to the audience and continues...

Dick pics... A shit tonne of em'.

I don't get it. I mean, I like guys, yeah... But who wants a bunch of ugly dick pics? She can't honestly like these?!

MAYA turns back to ELLA and continues...

Fuck, Ella...

ELLA: Give it back!

MAYA: How many dick pics you need?!

ELLA: Seriously!

MAYA throws the phone back at ELLA.

MAYA: Yuck!

ELLA: Please. Just cuz you don't get sent any.

MAYA: Urrmm... I've seen plenty of dick pics, yeah.

ELLA: Oh yeah, who's?

MAYA: Urrr... Sam's, Alfie's, Charlie's....

ELLA: Yeah – Not the ones going around. I mean, who’s ever sent one just to you?

MAYA: I dunno.

ELLA: See.

MAYA: So? Who wants some grubby dick pic anyway?

ELLA: Whatever.

MAYA: Did you ask Leo for all those?!

ELLA: No. He just sends em’.

MAYA: Why?!

ELLA: I dunno. Cuz it’s sexy.

MAYA: Is it?

ELLA: It’s hot. It’s what you do when you’re in a relationship... Not that you’d know.

MAYA: You think that pubey dick’s hot?!

ELLA: Leo’s hot.

MAYA: Not what I asked.

ELLA’s phone ‘pings’.

Seriously?!

ELLA reads message and her face drops.

What?

ELLA: Nothin’.

MAYA: What?!

ELLA: It’s nothin... He just wants one of me.

MAYA: A photo?

ELLA: Yeah.

MAYA: You ain’t sent him one?

ELLA: Not yet... I don’t like any of me.

MAYA: So, don’t send one.

ELLA: That’s not how it works, Maya. He’s sent me loads.

MAYA: Yeah, that you didn’t ask for...

ELLA: It doesn’t matter. It’s just what people do. Everyone does it.

MAYA: Well then just send him one, who cares?

ELLA: Yeah... Maybe...

MAYA picks up the remote.

ELLA: Would you check it for me?

MAYA: Check what?

ELLA: If I take a picture... Can you, like... Tell me if it’s good enough?

MAYA: Urrr... Yeah. I guess so.

ELLA: Cool... I’ll take some when I get home.

MAYA: Can I hit play now?

ELLA: Yes! I told you not to pause it.

MAYA: Fuck’s sake!

MAYA hits play and the show resumes.

SCENE TWO

Evening. MAYA's bedroom. MAYA sits on her bed. Her phone 'pings' several times.

MAYA: Oh my God!

She speaks aloud as she texts...

This... One... Is... Hilarious!

Her phone 'pings' again.

I... Dunno... Probably... The... Second... One...

Her phone 'pings' again.

Cuz... You... Look... Well... Skinny...

She sniggers as she continues...

Must... be... Good... Lightin'!

Her phone 'pings' again. She laughs out loud.

She lies down on her bed. Her phone continues to 'ping' and she continues to reply...

SCENE THREE.

Daytime. School lunchroom. ELLA's head in her hands. MAYA consoles her...

MAYA: He's such a fucking prick.

ELLA: I wanna die.

MAYA: At least it's a good pic.

ELLA: Everyone's got it, Maya!

ELLA looks around - feeling all the eyes on her.

MAYA: So?! Nudes go round all the time. Tomorrow it'll be someone else's and no one'll care.

ELLA: Can't believe he did this.

MAYA: I told you he was a dickhead. Probably gay too. I mean, who takes that many pictures of their own dick?!

ELLA: That's it!

MAYA: Really? Is he gay?!

ELLA: No...

ELLA takes out her phone...

MAYA: What you doin'?

ELLA: That prick can see how he likes it...

MAYA's phone 'pings'. She checks it.

MAYA: Fuck, Ella!

ELLA: Now everyone can laugh at his grotty little tree stump.

MAYA: That's so gross.

ELLA: I know.

MAYA: I thought you liked it?!

ELLA: Oh, shut up, Maya.

MAYA's pissed off face.

MAYA: *(Mutters to herself.)* 'Oh, shut up Maya?'

SCENE FOUR

Afternoon. School bus stop. MAYA sits on a bench. HARRY approaches and sits beside her.

MAYA shuffles and fidgets for far too long. Desperate to act cool.

MAYA: Hey.

HARRY doesn't look at her.

Beat.

HARRY: Hey.

Beat.

MAYA: You're... Harry? Right?

Off Harry's face – obviously.

HARRY: Yeah.

MAYA: I'm Maya.

HARRY doesn't care. He stares down at his phone.

MAYA glances over to HARRY's phone screen.

Oh my God!

HARRY: What?

MAYA: That's my mate, Ella.

HARRY: You know her?

MAYA: Yeah! How did you get that?

HARRY: Everyone's got it.

MAYA: Oh, yeah... Right.

HARRY: It's decent.

MAYA: What is?

HARRY: This. The picture.

MAYA: Oh, you think?

HARRY: Yeah...

Beat.

MAYA: I picked it, you know.

HARRY: For what?

MAYA: Like, to send...

HARRY's confused face.

ELLA sent a bunch to me first.

HARRY: She sent you more of these?

MAYA: Yeah... To pick the best one to send to Leo. You know, Leo, right?

HARRY: Yeah.

MAYA: Oh my God... Have you seen his dick pic?! Ella sent it round after he posted that.

HARRY: Yeah... Legend.

MAYA: Oh... Yeah... Totally.

HARRY: So, you still got the others?

MAYA: The pictures of Ella?

HARRY: Yeah.

MAYA: Urrrm... Yeah. I think so.

HARRY: Send em' me.

MAYA: Why?!

HARRY: Why'd you think?

MAYA: No, I don't think so.

HARRY: Why not? I've already got this one?

MAYA: Well, yeah... But...

HARRY: It's proper fit... Girls sending each other nudes.

MAYA: Yeah?

HARRY: Yeah...

HARRY checks MAYA out.

Fit as.

MAYA blushes.

What's your number?

MAYA: You want my number?

HARRY: Yeah.

MAYA gets out her phone and pulls up her number.

MAYA: Here.

HARRY types the number into his phone.

HARRY: I'll message you.

MAYA: O.K.

HARRY's phone 'pings'.

HARRY: My lifts here. I'll see you later?

MAYA tries to contain her excitement.

MAYA: Yeah. Yeah. Cool.

HARRY: Cool.

HARRY exits stage. MAYA turns to the audience.

MAYA: HARRY THINKS I'M FIT!!

SCENE FIVE

Afternoon. LEO's bedroom. HARRY and LEO play FIFA on a computer console...

LEO: So what, she just sent you all of em'?

HARRY: Yep.

LEO: She's thick as shit.

HARRY: Which one?

LEO: Well, both of em'... But Maya for actually thinkin' you like her.

HARRY: Mate, what can I say?!

LEO: Ella's gunna go full mental when she finds out.

HARRY: She shouldn't have sent em' if she didn't want em' spread round.

LEO screams at the screen...

LEO: NOOO!

HARRY: GET IN THERE!

LEO: Fuck's sake.

Beat.

Well, you're welcome to em' mate.

HARRY: Thought you fancied her?

LEO: Yeah, that's what I told her.

HARRY: Ha!

LEO: Tit's are too small.

HARRY: What?! Naaa.

LEO: Why don't you ask her out then? I don't give a shit.

HARRY: Fuck that. Seen everything now, ain't I.

LEO: Fair point.

HARRY: Don't need your sloppy seconds.

LEO: Mate. Sloppy's the word.

HARRY: She that shit?

LEO: Reckon my dog's a better kisser.

HARRY: You'd know.

LEO: Fuck off!

HARRY: Probably better than you at FIFA too.

LEO: It's this fucking controller!

HARRY: Sure it is.

LEO: What about Maya, anyway? She sent you any of her?

HARRY: Naaa... But she will.

LEO: You reckon?

HARRY: Hundred percent.

LEO: You sent her any yet?

HARRY: Naaa. Thinking I will tonight...

LEO: Nice.

HARRY: See what I get back.

LEO: Maybe she's got some of the other girls too?

HARRY: Mate. That would be sick.

LEO: Send me what you get, yeah?

HARRY: Yeah.

LEO: Nice.

HARRY leans closer and shouts at the screen...

HARRY: GO ON... GO ON...

LEO: FUCK SAKE!

HARRY: GET THE FUCK IN!!

SCENE SIX

Evening. MAYA's bedroom. MAYA lies on the bed, glued to her phone.

PARENT: *(From off-stage.)* MAYA! ELLA'S HERE!

MAYA: *(Shouts.)* O.K.! SEND HER UP!

ELLA bursts into MAYA's room.

ELLA: YOU SHARED MY PICTURES?!

MAYA: What?!

ELLA: I can't fucking believe you sent them round!

MAYA: Hold on. I never...

ELLA: You're the only person I sent them to, MAYA.

MAYA: I know, but I didn't share them round everyone. I'd never do that...

Beat.

I just... Sent them to Harry.

ELLA: MAYA!

MAYA: I'm sorry, O.K! But to be fair, he already had the one Leo sent round...

ELLA: So?!

MAYA: So, the others are all basically the same.

ELLA: I can't believe you.

MAYA: Don't get pissed with me. You sent Leo that nude in the first place.

ELLA: That's not the point! Now fucking Harry's shared all the other ones!

MAYA: No. No, that wasn't him. One of the guys stole his phone.

ELLA: Seriously?! Are you really that fucking stupid.

MAYA: I'm stupid?! I'm not the one who sent a nude in the first place!

ELLA: Only cuz no one wants to see em'.

MAYA: Fuck you, Ella. You're just jealous Harry likes me.

ELLA: No I'm not.

MAYA: You liked being the one getting all the attention off Leo, and now Harry messages me.

ELLA: Yeah... For pictures of me!

MAYA: Not anymore. We're dating, now.

ELLA: Oh, piss off.

MAYA: We've hung out twice already.

ELLA: So?

MAYA: Don't like it, do ya?

ELLA: You know what... Fuck you, MAYA. I'm done.

ELLA exits stage.

MAYA: Oh yeah, well, fuck you, ELLA!

MAYA turns to the audience.

Fuck her. She was always shit to me, anyway.

Beat.

So I sent Harry her stupid photos. It's not like he hadn't seen it all before.

It's funny, really... When you think about it.

Next week it'll be someone else's pic going round and no one'll care about Ella's. Don't know why she's stressin' about it so much.

Besides, she's the one who sent it to that dickhead, Leo. I told her from the start he was a prick...

Not like Harry...

Beat.

He's really sweet, actually.

Yeah, I know... He wanted the photos of ELLA... But he's a guy. Of course he wants nudes. It's no different to him watching porn.

Beat.

I'm not a bad person, alright? I would never have sent them if that one wasn't already doing the rounds.

It's not like I showed everyone.

MAYA's phone 'pings'. Her face lights up.

Ahhh! It's Harry!

Her face drops.

Shit...
It's a dick pic.

She forces herself to look at it.

I mean... I guess it's sexy... I like him, so it must be.

Her phone 'pings' again.

Oh...

Beat.

He wants one of me.

Beat.

No one's ever asked me for one before.

Beat.

Well... I mean, we are technically dating...

And like Ella said, this is what people in relationships do.

And Harry is nothing like Leo.

I know he'd never share pictures of me.
Never.

Beat.

It's just what people do, I guess...

Beat.

Everyone does it... Right?

Lights out. The continuous sound of phone 'pings' play us out...

THE END.

LABELLED

by Aoife Mannix

A teenage girl objects to sending explicit photographs to her boyfriend as they both struggle to cope with pressure from friends as well as past abuse.

Content Warning: contains strong language and themes of misogyny, sexting, grooming, sexual violence, self-harm, sexual activity with a child, pornography, rape and domestic abuse, with reference to drugs/ alcohol and homophobia.

CHARACTERS

HOLLY: A 15 year old girl

EMILY: A 15 year old girl

ALEX: A 16 year old boy

LEWIS: A 16 year old boy

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

In scenes where SNAPCHAT conversations appear alongside actors on stage, conversations have been described in [brackets: “With corresponding text in quotation marks”], to differentiate between written and spoken text.

This text went to press before the end of rehearsals and so may differ from the play as performed.

SCENE ONE

Local park. HOLLY and EMILY are striking dance poses. They are laughing and taking videos on their phones. ALEX and LEWIS are on their phones on a bench some distance away.

[“Sweet, delicious, thoughtful 😊”]

HOLLY: I want you to pop to the shop and bring me back my favourite chocolate bar.

ALEX: *(texting)* Snickers? KitKat? What the hell do girls eat anyway?

[“Angry, bitter, dark 😡”]

EMILY: I don't want to hear about how much you hate your ex. It makes me suspect one day you'll hate me.

LEWIS: *(texting)* God but she could be such a ball ache, always on my case... I'm glad you're not like that.

[“Space boy, fun, friendly”]

HOLLY: I want you to take me for a spin in your time machine. I want to talk about visiting Gallifrey one day.

ALEX: *(texting)* Is that a planet or an alien? A designer label maybe? One step up from Gucci?

[“Boring, painful, bit of a robot 😞”]

EMILY: I don't want you to be dry. Putting zero effort into your responses, not looking me in the eye, all awkward.

LEWIS: *(texting)* She didn't even understand what offside meant!

[“Slut, virgin, whore, ice princess 🙄”]

ALEX: Wish I knew what she wants from me.

LEWIS: My ex was a total slag. But your girlfriend sounds seriously frigid.

HOLLY: I want you to answer my messages. Don't only text me when it benefits you. Don't tell me you love me and then leave me on open. When there's no response – ouch!!! Or I send you a long message and you reply 'kay. Don't not be online for 17 hours and then at 9:30pm text me 'good night'.

EMILY: I don't want you to message me constantly. Like nonstop texts. Give me a moment, calm down.

HOLLY: I want you to be loyal. Don't chat to other girls on Snap. I want to know I can trust you.

EMILY: I don't want you to kill me, be all creepy, make me wish my Dad was hiding in the bushes ready to save me.

SCENE TWO

Local park. EMILY is looking at her phone.

EMILY: I sent them cos he asked. Why not? It's just a bit of fun, bit of a laugh. Not a biggie. If it made him happy, made him think about me. Made him want to see me again. Everyone does it. Or most do.

He said he'd get down on his knees and howl at the moon if that'd convince me. He said it would make him the happiest man alive.

He said it would prove that I liked him. That I wasn't one of those stuck up cows who think they're better than everyone. That I wasn't some kind of ice queen. Cold and unfeeling with no sense of humour. A lesbian who hates blokes. A Karen who's always moaning and complaining about something or other. A bitch who can't take a joke.

He said he understood if I didn't want to. Like maybe I was clapped or too fat to take my clothes off. Maybe I was hiding something. Maybe I'd three nipples or a tattoo of a teapot. Maybe I was just a bit weird, abnormal, not like other girlfriends he'd had who just loved getting in front of a camera.

Not that he was begging, not that he was putting pressure. Totally

up to me, he could always ask someone else if I didn't want to. My choice. Absolutely my choice.

SCENE THREE

Local park. HOLLY and EMILY are on a bench.

HOLLY: You sent him what?

EMILY: Calm your tits, it's not a big deal.

HOLLY: What if he shows them to his mates?

EMILY: He wouldn't do that.

HOLLY: You've known him for like five minutes.

EMILY: It's not like it's illegal or something.

HOLLY: It totally is.

EMILY: Well maybe it's not completely legit but don't matter when it's consensual.

HOLLY: Sounds like he's a pervy beg to me. Bet you gave in just to shut him up.

EMILY: Don't be so dry. No wonder ALEX thinks you're uptight.

HOLLY: Alex doesn't think that.

EMILY: He does. He says you barely let him touch you.

HOLLY: That's not true.

EMILY: What? Have you slept with him?

HOLLY: No, we're taking it slow.

EMILY: You mean you are. He said snails get more action. Aren't you worried he'll think you're frigid?

HOLLY: At least I'm not a total slag.

EMILY: I'd rather that than some stuck up princess.

HOLLY: Well don't come crying to me when you're plastered all over the dark web.

EMILY: Don't blame me when ALEX ditches you for someone who can crack a smile.

SCENE FOUR

Local park. HOLLY and EMILY are taking videos on their phones.

[“What's important about messaging is...

If you're gonna take your time to answer, at least have a decent thing to say! 😊”]

HOLLY: I want you to flirt with me, ask me questions, make me feel I could talk to you about sunflowers, summer holidays...

EMILY: I don't want you to lie to me, share your location but not actually be where you say you are.

[“What's important about being loyal is...

Playing I-messaged games where you let me win 😂”]

HOLLY: I want you to play Game Pigeon with me, make me smile, understand there are bigger things in this world than your sport...

EMILY: I don't want to hear your trauma on a first date. Don't be negative. Don't go on and on about your past relationships. Don't get drunk.

[“What's important on a date is...

Eating with your mouth shut. Manners. Be polite. No rudeness! 😏”]

HOLLY: *I don't want you to be high. I don't want you to be rushing me.*

EMILY: *I want you to hug me, sleep in the same bed as me, but not sexually.*

SCENE FIVE

Local park. LEWIS is on his phone.

["You're gorgeous. I bet you have the most incredible body. Would love a pic."]

LEWIS: I didn't mean any harm by it. It was just a bit of a laugh to begin with. You know I was half joking. Not really expecting her to go along with it but thinking it'd be cool if she did.

["C'mon, don't be shy. Do you send?"]

But then when she didn't answer, I thought maybe she's not that into me. Maybe she's got like three other blokes I don't even know about. Maybe she's been taking the piss this whole time.

["Obviously you don't have to if you don't want to."]

So I sent a few more messages. Just in case she didn't get that it was important to me. That it was hurtful she wouldn't do this for me when I was asking really nicely.

["Mum's I won't send it. It would totally make my day to see you without your top on."]

I wasn't putting pressure on her. I just wanted that bit of reassurance. Like proof that I mattered, that I was significant in her life. There's nothing worse than being left on open.

["I get that you're busy but it's kind of rude not to even reply."]

But then it started to piss me off. Like who did she think she was giving me the silent treatment? It's not like she's all that. She might think she's special but she's a bit of a slut really. I bet she's sent photos to loads of other blokes. So why not me?

["Fine be like that. If you're not interested, why are you wasting my time?"]

Stupid bitch. Fucking whore. Like anyone would want to see her naked anyhow.

SCENE SIX

Local park. HOLLY and EMILY are taking videos on their phones.

["DON'T JUDGE! "]

HOLLY: I want you to think when you're chatting at a party, would my partner be okay with overhearing this?

["DON'T FAKE YOUR AGE OR BACKGROUND HISTORY. BE HONEST. NO LIES!!!"]

EMILY: I don't want to go for dinner where I have to eat in front of you. Where we just stare at each other wondering what to say. I want to do activities. But not golf just cos you love it, but I don't.

["DON'T ONLY MESSAGE ME WHEN YOU WANT NUDES!!!"]

HOLLY: I want you to look interested, be invested. Confident but don't just talk about yourself.

EMILY: I don't want you to just sit there. If the moment's right just go for it.

HOLLY: I want you to kiss me.

SCENE SEVEN

Local park. ALEX and LEWIS are on a bench.

LEWIS: Check this out, mate. It's hilarious.

LEWIS shows ALEX footage on his phone.

ALEX: What is she? That must really hurt...

LEWIS: She's loving it, mate. She can't get enough of it.

ALEX looks away.

LEWIS: What's up with you? You gay or what?

ALEX: I'm not gay.

LEWIS: Then stop being so bent. Look here's another one. This one's even better. Check out the tits on her.

LEWIS holds out phone to ALEX.

ALEX: They're not bloody real, they look like basketballs.

LEWIS: More of an arse man, are you?

ALEX: Fuck off, you're the arsehole.

LEWIS: No, I mean as in tits and arse. Holly's got a cute bum. That skirt she was wearing last night (whistles)

ALEX: Don't talk about her like that.

LEWIS: I'm just saying it didn't leave much to the imagination. I wasn't the only one looking.

ALEX: Well she's my girlfriend.

LEWIS: You shagged her yet?

ALEX: None of your business.

LEWIS: She still playing hard to get? Mate, you need to assert yourself. Man's got needs.

ALEX: We're waiting till she's ready.

LEWIS: Bollocks! I heard she couldn't get enough of it with her ex. She's making a right mug of you.

ALEX: Where did you hear that?

LEWIS: Everyone knows she's a bit of a sket. There's pictures on line and everything. Here let me show you.

LEWIS starts searching on his phone. ALEX hesitates.

SCENE EIGHT

Local park. HOLLY and EMILY are taking videos on their phones.

EMILY: I want you to take me to Nandos, Mackey D's. Go to the cinema.

HOLLY: I want you to buy me teddy bears, make little things for me. It's not about spending money, it's about showing you're thinking of me.

["Not just about saying you're in a relationship... it's what you do to show it"]

EMILY: I want to see each other outside of school. Maybe sit in the park and talk. Go shopping. I want you to ask me to be your girlfriend.

HOLLY: I don't want you to be on social media. I don't want you to go to parties without me.

["Not just spending time together... It's about quality, not being awkward"]

EMILY: I want you to stop calling me mate. I'm not your friend.

HOLLY: I want you to have eyes only for me. I want you to buy me a promise ring after two years or maybe one. I want you to talk to me.

EMILY: I don't want you to talk too much. Don't chat rubbish.

SCENE NINE

Local park. EMILY is showing HOLLY a picture on her phone. They are laughing. ALEX and LEWIS walk over to them.

HOLLY: Can't believe he sent that to you.

EMILY: I know right. Talk about a dick!

HOLLY: Gross! Who wants to see that?

LEWIS: What's so funny?

EMILY: Nothing.

LEWIS grabs EMILY'S phone and looks at the picture. He shows it to ALEX.

HOLLY: Hey, that's not cool. Give it back. Alex, tell him to give it back.

LEWIS: He's not your servant you know.

EMILY: Give me my phone, wanker.

LEWIS: Well now we know what you two are into. I feel like totally objectified.

LEWIS hands EMILY back her phone.

EMILY: Nobody wants to see your knob, bet it's the size of a needle.

LEWIS: *(to ALEX)* This is what I'm talking about, mate. They act all sweet and innocent but the minute your back is turned they're looking at some other bloke's cock.

HOLLY: I have zero interest in dick pics.

LEWIS: We all know what a little virgin you are.

ALEX: Why don't you ever send me any nudes?

HOLLY: I told you I'm not into that stuff.

LEWIS: Yeah right. You're all over social media. You look about twelve or something.

HOLLY: They were supposed to take those down.

EMILY: Just leave her the fuck alone.

HOLLY rushes off upset.

ALEX: HOLLY, wait...

SCENE TEN

Local park. HOLLY is hurrying as if worried someone is following her.

HOLLY: He took me for walks by the duck pond. He said most girls were all quack this, quack that, but I was different, I was special. He said he knew he could trust me, just between us. He looked into the pools of my eyes, throwing breadcrumbs to see if I would nibble. I said that tickles, then I said stop. But he wasn't listening.

Afterwards he bought me ice cream, any flavour I wanted. I threw up on the bus on the way home. He said it was okay, he wasn't angry with me, but other people might not understand. I pinky promised to keep mute, but my feet were paddling a million miles an hour.

First he wanted pictures, then it was video, then his mates came round. I was muddy and dirty, and it was all my fault. It wasn't them hurting me, I was hurting myself.

At A&E the nurse kept saying she couldn't understand how anyone could do that to themselves. Didn't I understand about blood loss, scars? Didn't I see it was mutilation? But I just wanted to be a duckling again. Soft down, clean pillows, alone in the white peace of my bed.

SCENE ELEVEN

Local park. EMILY catches up with HOLLY.

EMILY: There you are. I've been looking for you everywhere.

HOLLY: I'm fine.

EMILY: It's getting dark. You're always telling me this place isn't safe on your own.

HOLLY shrugs

HOLLY: Nowhere's safe. 'Sides thought you weren't scared of anything.

EMILY: Don't let that dickhead upset you. I'll get on to them again. Make them take everything down.

HOLLY: It won't work, Em. It's just gonna keep coming back, I'm never going to be free of that stupid...

EMILY: Don't talk like that. You've been doing really well. Haven't you?

EMILY grabs HOLLY's arm and looks at it.

HOLLY: They're all old scars. I haven't cut myself in ages.

EMILY hugs HOLLY

EMILY: You're beautiful and I love you. Just remember that.

SCENE TWELVE

Local park. ALEX is trying to ring HOLLY. LEWIS is pacing.

ALEX: She's not answering.

LEWIS: Forget about her, bro. She's not worth it. Girls are just crazy.

ALEX: Why did you have to go saying all that shit? Upsetting her like that.

LEWIS: Me? What the hell did I do? She's the one making out she's this perfect angel when she's just another cheap ho.

ALEX: Don't call her that.

LEWIS: You need to grow some. Women like to know who's boss, who's in charge. Otherwise they just stomp all over you.

ALEX: You've been watching that tosser again, haven't you?

LEWIS: I'm not saying I agree with everything he says but he makes some very valid points. Thanks to him I've been going to the gym a lot more, working out, looking after myself properly.

ALEX: Still haven't got a girlfriend though since Connie ditched you, have you?

LEWIS: What women want is someone with a nice car, plenty of cash to flash around, someone confident and cool...

ALEX: Maybe they just want a little bit of respect...

LEWIS: They don't want someone who's too scared to look them in the eye, who's got no clue what they want to do with their life, or who they're supposed to be.

ALEX's phone rings. He answers it immediately and rushes off to speak to HOLLY leaving LEWIS alone.

ALEX: *(into phone as he leaves)* Holly?

LEWIS: They don't want losers whose mates run off the minute some bitch whistles.

SCENE THIRTEEN

Local park. HOLLY and EMILY are taking videos on their phones.

HOLLY: I'm not sure I'm in the mood for this.

EMILY: It doesn't have to be funny or sexy or anything. Nobody's telling us any more how we have to be.

HOLLY: Yeah, you're right, this is us saying it how it really is.

EMILY: Besties forever. 'Member we used to promise that all the time when we were little.

HOLLY: Before everything got so messed up.

EMILY: It's still true though.

HOLLY: Okay, let's do it. You ready?

EMILY: I was born ready.

EMILY starts to record HOLLY and EMILY's spoken word poem.

HOLLY: I wanted to be diamonds in your mouth,
bullet proof, the kind of girl
who turns the roof upside down.

EMILY: I wanted to be wild, a tiger
with nails so sharp they could tattoo
my name on to your neck.

HOLLY: I wanted to be Gucci, Versace,
Nike, Louis Vuitton.
All those labels that say
I know exactly where I'm going.

EMILY: I wanted to be free and crazy
and party till my eyes turned pink
in the cool light of your dawn.

HOLLY: You said I could be a film star,
glamour model, disco dancing diva
twirling inside my own glitter ball.

EMILY: You told me you'd drive me round the world,
show me the inside of a camera
where all the ladies live in rooms of solid gold.

HOLLY: But your hands were speaking
a language all their own
as you unpeeled my skin,
stripped me down
to a small doll
lost in the snow.

EMILY: Your touch was freezing
my throat so I could never say no,
not this morning,
with the worry of cobwebs catching me naked,
with the broken rain inside my head,
the hailstones biting my arms.

HOLLY: Underneath the armour of my shining knight,
my bones shivered,
knowing I couldn't ask you to stop.

SCENE FOURTEEN

Local park. ALEX is deleting photos on his phone.

ALEX: Is this the man I want to become? Sniggering at jokes I don't think are funny. Not really, not when it's gone midnight and the house is silent and I'm sweating inside this skin that doesn't fit me.

My stepdad's key in the door. His anger just another disguise for all the numbers he's counting. What my Mum's wearing, what she's eating, what she's chatting, what she's doing wrong this time. Every time. Till I'm so sick of being on repeat, crawling inside the walls,

hiding from my own reflection.

When I was little, he was always snapping on his phone. 'Smile,' he'd say. 'Cheese!' Beaches, birthday parties. But not bruises. Not purple-yellow smudges, swollen eyes. None of that time he put her in hospital and I'd to stay with Gran.

They say a picture's worth a thousand words. But sometimes they tell a million lies, replicating like a virus, creating their own reality.

I hate having my photo taken.

SCENE FIFTEEN

Local park. ALEX and HOLLY are sitting on a bench.

ALEX: Do you remember when we went to that Chinese place?

HOLLY: 'Course I do. Our first date. I was trying to show you how to use chopsticks.

ALEX: God that was so awks. I'd noodles dripping all over my face.

HOLLY: You looked really cute. I said I wanted us to be all 'Lady and the Tramp'.

ALEX: I'd never seen it. I thought you meant I was like a homeless person.

HOLLY: Well you had no money.

ALEX: I'm sorry. I really wanted to be able to pay.

HOLLY: I don't care about you paying for stuff. That's not why I'm with you.

ALEX: And I don't give a shit about you sending me nudes. I don't know why I even brought it up. I'm sorry.

HOLLY: It's okay. (She reaches in her pocket) I got you some chocolate.

ALEX: Mint Aero. How d'you know that's my favourite?

HOLLY: Cos you like eat them all the time. It's not rocket science.

ALEX offers her a piece of Mint Aero

HOLLY: You can kiss me if you want.

THE END.

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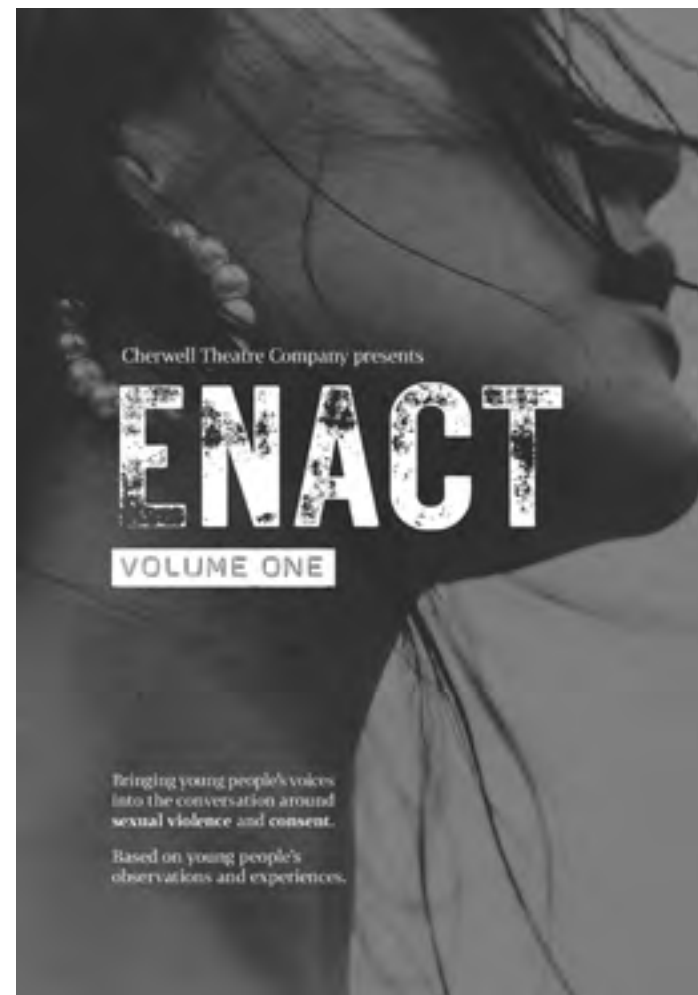
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RECORDINGS & PLAY TEXTS

A free recorded performance of this play, and the previous ENACT Vol 1 performance will be available shortly after this performance. For information about this, and to download a free copy of the play texts please visit our website www.cherwelltheatrecompany.co.uk





Four original plays developed with young people in response to creative healthy relationships workshops delivered in schools.

These plays present themes of coercive control, sexual abuse, rumours, revenge porn and consent.

Written by:
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Lynsey Cullen
Aoife Mannix

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