

WORMS

Content Warning:

Explicit language & stage violence. Includes themes of neglect, drug abuse, loss and grief, suicide, disordered eating.

Worms was first produced by Daramalan Theatre Company at C1 Studio, Daramalan College, Ngunnawal Land, on 28 April 2024, with the following cast:

TISH	Tayla Holt
JASPER	Harrison Labouchardiere
OLI	Archie Edwards
AMBER	Sophie Perrett
BRIE	Alexandria Best
ZANE	Harper Ward

Co-Directors, Kathleen Dunkerley & Aimee Perrett

Playwright, Kathleen Dunkerley

Dramaturgy Team, Hannah Cornelia & Aimee Perrett

Characters

TISH, 17, hothead and tireless, busy bee

JASPER, 16, sardonic and animated, entertainer

OLI, 16, anxious and studious, potential

AMBER, 16, dysfunctional and academic, scrambled

BRIE, 17, organised and reliable, caretaker

ZANE, 17, quiet and introverted, displaced

Notes on Staging

The girls changerooms is the main location, used as a multipurpose space for the characters. There should be a ramp to the 'stage' for the show within the show.

OPENING NIGHT.

A dark stage. Amber rushes through the audience, past the ramp:

She knocks on the changeroom door. It gets pulled open from the other side. Chaos ensues.

AMBER: I'm sorry I'm late I'm sorry I'm sorry.

BRIE: Oli, are you able to keep a track of the time for all of us? You're the only one with a watch.

TISH: All I'm saying is/

OLI: Uh, sure.

JASPER: We've heard what you're saying/

BRIE: Thank you. Okay, so Zane?

TISH: No but I don't think you have/

ZANE: Yeah?

JASPER: I have Tish, I very much have. I have heard it about fourteen million times/

TISH: No but/

BRIE: What're you doing right now?

JASPER: now if you don't mind/

TISH: All I'm saying is -

ZANE: Um... I don't know.

TISH: Jasper, focus

BRIE: You need to get ready too. Your costume's in with Jasper's, yeah?

TISH: I'm saying that if you screw this up for me/

ZANE: I think so.

JASPER: I'm not going to screw this up for you/

BRIE: Great, so you go and get changed/

ZANE: Okay.

Zane exits.

TISH: If you do, that's on you, because I'm warning you now that tonight is very important for me, and the critics might be here so/

JASPER: I think it's important to more people than just you.

JASPER: You know, this show does not actually revolve around you, believe it or not/

TISH: I'm not saying that it does/

JASPER: You are / actually

TISH: Jasper, will you just listen? I'm saying that this is important to me.

TISH: So don't stuff it up,

TISH: don't get in my way, and don't piss me off any more than you already do. Please.

JASPER: Am I free to go now?

TISH: Jasper?

JASPER: Fine. Yes.

Jasper exits.

BRIE: And – Oli?

OLI: I'm changed.

BRIE: Really?

OLI: Yeah.

BRIE: Oh. Do you have your stage makeup on?

OLI: They said I didn't need any.

BRIE: Really?

OLI: Yeah.

BRIE: Oh. Great. Can you... are you able to go make sure the others get sorted?

OLI: I guess.

TISH: Thank you.

Tish exits, outfit in hand.

BRIE: Okay perfect.

OLI: So, I just...

BRIE: Yep, bye.

OLI: Okay.

Oli exits.

BRIE: And- Oh my god, Amber.

AMBER: What happened here?

BRIE: I have no idea. I get off work, I come here, and yeah. Hi.

AMBER: Hi.

They hug. Oli walks in:

OLI: Just checking, my job is to take care of Jasper *and* Zane?

BRIE: Oli, this is the girls change rooms.

OLI: Shit, sorry. As you were, I guess. Or not. I, uh...

He heads back out again.

BRIE: Is everything okay?

AMBER: Yeah, well it's not the best but/

BRIE: Oh god. How did it go? Is everything okay or the same or is it worse?

AMBER: It's not worse.

BRIE: Okay. Well, that's good. Right?

AMBER: Yeah.

BRIE: There's food out if you want it.

AMBER: Where?

BRIE: It should be... [*sees the empty plate*] okay, so you have the boys to thank for that.

AMBER: Right now, I just want someone to run lines with someone.

BRIE: Oli's not doing anything really, I'm sure he can help you/

AMBER: It's just that I always get stage fright before opening nights. That's not weird, is it?

Tish barges in, changed-ish:

TISH: No, I don't think it's weird. I get stage fright too. Or I did. Can you zip me up?

Amber helps her out.

BRIE: I'll get changed.

Exit Brie past the changeroom partition.

TISH: When I was like you, before I had much experience with shows and opening nights, no offence, I used to get stage fright a lot. But now, it's like I'm immune or something.

AMBER: You're zipped.

TISH: Thanks.

Tish heads for the vanity while Amber goes to for the changeroom partition when Brie barges past, partially changed.

BRIE: Shit.

AMBER: What?

BRIE: We synced. You and me. We synced. This is your fault.

AMBER: Do you have stuff on you?

BRIE: No. I didn't expect for it to come early.

AMBER: What about your emergency bag?

BRIE: You took it home.

TISH: What's up?

BRIE: Don't worry about it.

AMBER: It's nothing.

Tish resumes her makeup.

BRIE: This is okay. I'm going to go check the first aid bag from the bar, the audience shouldn't be in yet.

AMBER: Are you sure?

BRIE: Yeah, yeah. You just get ready, okay?

Oli knocks, waits, enters.

OLI: Okay so Zane's almost done and so is Jasper, and we've still got three minutes before the audience is in. How are things in here?

BRIE: Yeah, um...

Brie heads out.

OLI: Is everything okay with her?

AMBER: Um, yeah, look, she'll be fine. I need to go get changed, though.

OLI: Oh, uh, okay.

AMBER: Sorry.

Amber heads behind the partition with her costume bag.

TISH: [*having finished her makeup*] Hey, have you seen my shoes anywhere?

OLI: Oh, uh, they're in the boys changeroom, I think.

TISH: Why?

OLI: Jasper took them.

TISH: Asshole

Zane enters.

ZANE: Hey, uh, can anyone help me do my stage makeup?

TISH: No, I need to go find my heels.

She rushes out.

OLI: Sorry, I don't know how to do other peoples.

ZANE: Nah, that's all good.

OLI: Sorry.

TISH: [*offstage*] You're an asshole. A complete big obnoxious asshole.

JASPER: [*offstage*] Jesus Christ, Tish. Ow, Jesus/

TISH: [*offstage*] Dickhead, dickhead, dickhead.

Jasper enters.

JASPER: What was that even for?

OLI: She's looking for her shoes.

JASPER: Oh. [*He chuckles*] It fine, it's not like she can even punch. She's so unco-

He stubs his toe.

JASPER: FU-

OLI: You good?

Jasper collapses onto a beanbag, groaning in agony, incomprehensible.

Amber rushes in.

AMBER: What? What happened? Is everyone okay?

JASPER: No!

OLI: He'll be fine.

ZANE: Hey, Amber?

AMBER: What's up?

ZANE: Could you help me with my stage makeup?

AMBER: I've got to do my own first, sorry.

ZANE: Nah, it's cool.

AMBER: Is Brie not back yet?

Tish storms in.

TISH: I've got the shoes, don't panic.

JASPER: Good golly gosh, I was starting to stress.

AMBER: How ready are you?

TISH: Just a few things left.

ZANE: Hey, Tish?

TISH: What?

ZANE: Oh, uh, nothing.

Zane slips out for some alone time.

Oli stares out to the audience, seeing something of intrigue.

OLI: Guys.

TISH: I think you're sitting on my necklace.

JASPER: I'm not.

TISH: I've searched everywhere. You have to be.

JASPER: Piss / off.

OLI: Guys.

TISH: Jasper, get up. Please?

Amber gets up to see what Oli's on about.

JASPER: You just want the beanbag.

AMBER: Is that/

OLI: Yeah, / it is.

TISH: Jasper, move your ass or I'm gonna move it for / you.

JASPER: [*to Oli*] What's up?

TISH: I'm not asking you; I'm telling you. Get up.

JASPER: Or what, are you going to make me?

TISH: I might.

JASPER: Don't you dare touch my beanbag.

TISH: /Jasper

AMBER: Guys.

JASPER: Yeah, what's / up?

TISH: Jasper!/
/

JASPER: Tish, shut up! I can't /hear.

OLI: Maybe I shouldn't say.

JASPER: She's in a state/

TISH: Go fist yourself, you fugly fatass

BRIE: Maybe we take a second for ourselves? Find some space? Take a quick lap around the building?

TISH: I can't!

OLI: Less than three minutes now.

AMBER: She can't run in heels/

JASPER: She can't run, full stop. Most unco person I know/

OLI: What if she runs into the critics?/

TISH: I'm not bloody running!

BRIE: Okay, hun / BREATHE.

TISH: Jasper's shitting on my sit.

JASPER: Are you actually dumb?

TISH: Sitting on my shit, you know what I meant.

BRIE: Jasper, not helping.

JASPER: Brie, I promise I'm not sitting on anything. Swear on mums.

TISH: Fuck mum and fuck you.

JASPER: I'm good, thanks. I'm sure mum is too.

AMBER: What are you looking for?

TISH: My thing!

BRIE: What thing?

Tish breaks down, inconsolable. She tries to mime a necklace.

JASPER: Jesus Christ.

BRIE: Shit.

OLI: Two minutes.

BRIE: Oli.

AMBER: It's okay Tish. I'm getting it.

Amber tries to find the necklace.

OLI: *[on the side, to Jasper]* They are sat next to your mum, actually.

BRIE: Breathe, Tish, breathe. In, and out. / And again.

TISH: *[clearly not fine]* I'm fine. I'm fine. I'm fine.

AMBER: Please don't smudge your makeup, we don't have time to fix it.

BRIE: *[to Oli]* Where is Zane?

OLI: He left, I think.

BRIE: Left?

AMBER: People aren't supposed to leave before the show starts.

BRIE: *[to Jasper]* You, find him.

JASPER: I can't walk.

TISH: You and your 'injury'.

BRIE *[to Jasper]*: Try.

Zane enters just in time.

OLI: One minute.

JASPER: I found him.

BRIE: That was not a full minute.

ZANE: Uh, hi.

AMBER: GOT IT!

She puts the necklace on Tish. She's feeling a lot better.

OLI: We should really be in places.

BRIE: We're all good now?

TISH: *[to Jasper]* Thanks for all your help, arsehole.

JASPER: "We should really be in places" Tish. Are you deaf?

OLI: *[to Jasper]* Your mum's gorgeous.

JASPER: That's my mum.

OLI: No, like, really stunning.

ZANE: Which one?

JASPER: Stop talking about Leslie.

TISH: I think my mascara's waterproof.

AMBER: No one ran lines with me.

OLI: Sorry, I didn't know that was/

AMBER: No, it's fine now/

JASPER: Where were you?

BRIE: Okay, out. All of you. Out, out, out. Gogogogogogogo. Now.

They all rush out to places in their own time. Brie takes a second for herself, then exits last.

They are on stage, ready to start the show.

The show begins.

And we are in

PRE-SHOW WEDNESDAY.

AMBER: [*tired*] Oh my god.

BRIE: I'm so tired.

JASPER: Me too.

TISH: Then sleep.

JASPER: You sleep.

TISH: I'm so tired.

AMBER: Oh my god.

BRIE: We should all sleep. Get some rest before the show.

JASPER: I can't do another show.

BRIE: Has anyone seen Zane?

TISH: No.

JASPER: I think he said something about basketball.

TISH: How long until the show starts?

JASPER: Brie, do you have food?

BRIE: He needs to be here soon.

AMBER: [*checking her phone*] Oh my god.

JASPER: [*yawning*] Me too.

AMBER: No, look. Jasper, Oli, grades came out.

OLI: [*checking*] For what?

AMBER: English. Oh my god.

JASPER: I'm too tired to check.

BRIE: How'd you go?

AMBER: Okay.

BRIE: Which means?

AMBER: 92.

BRIE: Oh my god, Amber!

AMBER: How'd you guys go?

JASPER: I don't want to know.

TISH: He failed.

BRIE: We don't know that yet.

AMBER: You should check. You could've done well.

TISH: He didn't.

JASPER: I don't care about English.

TISH: You don't care about anything.

JASPER: I care about sleep.

TISH: I'm just saying...

JASPER: Tish, I couldn't give less of a shit right now.

TISH: I don't give a shit either. Who says I give a shit?

JASPER: Then why are you on my case?

TISH: I'm just tired.

JASPER: Me too, but that doesn't make me a bitch.

AMBER: Oli, how'd you go?

Beat.

BRIE: Oli?

We are invited into Oli's world. He's sitting the English Exam:

OLI: I've got this. I know I do. I have two hours; I won't even need all that time. I've got this. Bit of a dry throat but she'll be right. I should probably start.

Have some water. You've got it.

Okay.

...

I say about thirty, forty-five minutes has gone past. I don't know, I don't check the clock.

...

This is fine. I'm still planning my essay but it's fine.

Okay, so people are turning their papers. That's fine. I'm not behind. I'm not. I know this stuff.

Then why can't I find a quote?

No, stop it. You've got this.

You do.

I should have brought a dictionary.

Oli, stop. Can't change that now. Put your head down and work.

Have some water.

Okay. Come on.

Work.

Who cares if an hour has just passed by, and you've done nothing?

Work.

You need to do that.

Now.

Please.

...

I don't want to say it's too late.

I mean, my pen is still in my hands.

This is still in control.

My eyes are just a bit spacey at the moment.

I'm fine.

Just pulling it together.

I'll have a sip of water,

and then I've got this.

How much time have I wasted?

Does this room have a clock?

It should.

I can't see it.

Oh wait no yes I can.

It has been an hour.

I was right.

Yay.

I stare. The clock doesn't move.

I stare until it should, but it doesn't.

This is so stupid, my legs don't tap during exams. I'm not a leg tapper. I work. I don't tap.

I wish I could draw, but drawing over the paper would mean giving up, which I'm not, of course I'm not, I still have time. I just want something to do because this is boring now and I really should be working.

I stare out the window. I just stare. And I can't seem to put down my pen...

I don't want to stare. I want to get the work done and be smart and not failing would be nice.

I don't want to fail, I don't want to go home and let my parents know that the one thing they value about me is gone, I don't want to do this, I don't want to be here, I don't want to tap my leg, I don't want to look around the room and see everyone doing better, I don't want that window to have streaks, I don't want the clock to keep staring at me, I don't want a headache, I don't want that headache to be from staring, I don't want to stare at all unless it's at my paper.

But I do not want to stare at Amber.

Because I know she's sitting two rows to my left, five seats in front of me. I clocked it from the minute I came in. When things were fine.

I don't want to stare at her.

Because what if she's not looking? What if she's got this? If she's got this and I don't, I look like an idiot because not only am I tanking this, but I'm staring at a girl who I have no right to stare at.

Or what if she's just as lost as I am? What if she's having an awful time and I can't do anything to help?

What if she's just as bad as me?

...

What if she's bad, and I stare, and she sees me?

...

What if she doesn't care?

...

The clock still hasn't moved.

...

I've ran out of water, and it's dry, and my throat is sore, and I can't get up because then I give up, and I have no way of getting better, and I've failed, I'm not trying hard enough, and the words hurt my head but I read them, but then water hits the page, but it's not from my bottle because that's empty because my throat is dry, so it must be my nose,

which is gross, and I hope Amber can't see me and isn't looking, so it shouldn't be my nose running, so that must mean the page being wet is my eyes, which is funny because I don't cry, but I think 'don't' is the wrong word, which is ironic in a way, because all I can think about right now is wrong words, because look at this stupid piece of paper in front of me, it's useless, but it's not that I don't cry, it's that I can't, but I don't cry or can't cry or whatever it is, so why am I crying now?

...

Hello?

...

Why am I crying now?

...

Why isn't the clock moving?

...

Hello?

...

Eventually a teacher sees me. She's nice. She must be nice. I hope so.

I feel so weird because I can't talk because then people might hear it in my voice but that's largely because it's still sore and my bottle's still empty. What I do is I write on my planning paper, which has gone to shit, that I need some help of some kind. She's nice about it, tells me we can get some water. I walk out and I look and I'm just grateful that Amber has her head down and that means she's doing well. At least she's doing better than me.

...

I move, but the clock still doesn't.

The world around him catches up.

BRIE: Oli? The show's starting.

He joins the rest of the actors, taking his place.

He flicks a glance to Amber.

The show begins.

And we are in.

PRE-SHOW THURSDAY.

Everyone's having some quiet time, in costume. Some reading, some on their laptops, some napping, etc. You get the sense they've been this way for a while.

Jasper comes in late, in basketball gear. The air shifts for a split second.

ZANE: Hey.

BRIE: Hey.

Jasper heads back to the change rooms, costume in hand.

TISH: Cutting it kind of close, don't you think?

BRIE: What do you mean?

TISH: The audience will be in soon.

BRIE: I'm sure he'll be fine.

The phone beside Brie starts buzzing. Then stops. Then starts. Then stops.

BRIE: Amber.

Brie passes Amber her phone. She checks it – it's something impactful, but she puts on a poker face.

BRIE: Is everything...

AMBER: Yeah.

Amber puts her phone face down.

Enter Zane, changed. Awkward.

He looks for something to do, he opens up his laptop.

BRIE: What're you up to?

ZANE: I've got RE due soon.

TISH: We're kind of all focusing before the audience gets in, so...

ZANE: Oh. I've only got two days before it's due though.

BRIE: How are you going with it?

ZANE: I'm not.

AMBER: You haven't started?!

ZANE: No?

BRIE: Which one is it?

AMBER: The 'good life' essay.

ZANE: You have to talk about why Christianity makes you a good person and stuff. I hate essays.

AMBER: I don't know, I like this one.

OLI: You guys believe in that?

AMBER: Christianity? Yeah, I do.

TISH: We go to a catholic school. A private catholic school. I don't really think they let in "non-believers".

BRIE: I don't think that's how it works exactly.

OLI: Do you all believe in it?

JASPER: My family are all Christmas and Easter Catholics, not really 'Every Sunday' kind of types. But I don't.

BRIE: I'm more spiritual, I guess.

JASPER: Like fucking star signs?

BRIE: No. There's probably something out there, but I don't know what it is.

OLI: Zane?

ZANE: ...I dunno. People live and people die? I don't really get the point of faith. If I did, I would've written my essay by now, but...

BRIE: Why do you ask?

OLI: I just thought... it's kind of old school, isn't it? We live forever and ever?

JASPER: Amen.

AMBER: What do you believe in?

OLI: Worm food.

TISH: Oh, come on.

OLI: It's the most logical answer. It makes the most sense. More sense than Heaven and Hell. Right, Zane said it. We live and we die. Why should we expect any more?

ZANE: I don't think this is what the essay is really about...

OLI: Come on, it's not that radical. Logically-

AMBER: Faith isn't about just logic though.

TISH: Can we not?

BRIE: Yeah, let's get focused or something. Come on, audience is in soon.

AMBER: Okay, if you don't believe in heaven or love thy neighbour or something, what is there to stop you from being a bad person?

OLI: I'm not trying to start anything here; you're allowed to believe whatever you want to believe. I just think that logically, it makes the most sense that we try to be good while alive based on integrity or whatever, but when we die, we die. We're left for the worms, and I'm fine with that.

AMBER: Well, I'm not!

BRIE: And that's okay.

JASPER: What do you mean integrity?

OLI: What?

JASPER: You said integrity. "That's why people are good". That's a fat lie. People aren't good, and just because someone does something nice, doesn't make them good. One good action doesn't make a good person. Zane's right, end of the day, we all die, and get buried, or get scattered at the yacht club if you're lucky. But when it comes time for those worms to eat your

decomposed remains, they're not going to care if you worked at Maccas or if you won a Nobel prize. It doesn't matter what you do, so why is everyone so concerned about it? The worms don't care who their food is, so why should you?

Beat.

BRIE: Audience is in.

TISH: Please don't start shit.

JASPER: I'm not starting shit, it's just food for thought.

OLI: We should be in places.

TISH: Jasper, no one cares what you have to say.

They all take their places.

Amber looks uneasy. As the show starts, she looks for someone in the crowd.

And we are in

INTERMISSION THURSDAY.

Act 1 of THE PLAY is over. Amber immediately runs to the dressing room before anyone can see.

Brie goes to the changeroom, grabs her things to get changed, stops, and sees Amber sitting down, a hot mess, clutching her phone.

Brie holds her. She wipes the tears.

They talk.

They have a moment.

Brie gives her a forehead kiss, grabs her clothes, and heads out of the room, giving Amber space to cool down.

Oli stumbles in, oblivious, then not so oblivious.

OLI: Shit.

AMBER: Hi.

OLI: I'll go.

AMBER: No, it's fine/

OLI: Sorry/

AMBER: You can stay.

OLI: No really / I can just

AMBER: I shouldn't be hogging the room anyways.

OLI: Amber, no, you're not... I was just, uh... It's just that my water's here, but honestly, I can just borrow Jasper's, it's not a big thing/

AMBER: No, Oli, really. Stay. If you want to.

Beat.

OLI: Are you all good? Sorry, I uh... I don't want to ask if that's not what you/

AMBER: No, it's... I'll be fine.

OLI: It wasn't lines or anything, was it? Because I didn't... well I think I didn't hear anyone stuff up or something, I don't know, it might be a false confidence or something, but I think we're pretty seasoned when it comes / to

AMBER: It wasn't lines.

Beat.

AMBER: We don't really talk a lot, do we?

OLI: Listen, I'm sorry if I upset you earlier, I really hope this isn't/

AMBER: No, no, this isn't your fault. That's not what I meant, it's just... it's weird, we don't really talk one on one.

OLI: Sorry. Oh. Well, I just... we don't... I think it's coz of our scenes, maybe. It's probably just the thing with our characters. I guess we don't... well they don't really do a lot of talking. It could be that.

AMBER: Yeah, it must be.

OLI: Yeah no, it's really because I find you repulsive.

AMBER: Oh, right. Cool.

Beat.

OLI: That was a joke... I'm sorry, uh, that / was dumb

AMBER: No, I know it's a joke. Don't be sorry.

OLI: Sorry.

AMBER: You're weird.

OLI: Right. Sorry about that.

AMBER: Do you always say sorry this much?

OLI: Not really. Well, kind of. Yeah. I guess.

AMBER: You should work on that.

OLI: I know.

Beat.

OLI: Was that your mum in the front row / to the left a little

AMBER: Yeah, that's her. My little brother's here too/

OLI: Oh cool, I didn't know you / had a brother.

AMBER: How'd you know it was my mum?

OLI: Oh, I saw her from the wing, she uh... she kept smiling at you during Tish's bit/

AMBER: Actually? I mean, I couldn't see... the lights, and the blinding / thing.

OLI: Yeah no, she- she was. For a while, actually. It's / nice that she's proud

AMBER: You looked for a while?

Beat.

AMBER: I'm / sorry that was

OLI: So, is your dad here too or...?

AMBER: No.

Beat.

OLI: Well, I'm sorry... um, that/

AMBER: You've got an apology problem.

OLI: No, really/

AMBER: Stop apologising, it's getting annoying/

OLI: No wait you cut me off I wasn't done/

AMBER: If you say sorry/

OLI: It's important/

AMBER: one more time/

OLI: this time/

AMBER: I swear to God/

OLI: Amber, will you let me speak? *I'm sorry* that even through tears on tears, you've got to stare at piss yellow walls. They're hideous. Lead paint chipping off and everything.

AMBER: That's what was so important?

OLI: Yeah.

AMBER: I wasn't crying that much.

OLI: Hmm.

AMBER: What is that supposed to mean?

OLI: Oh nothing, just that you've got lead poisoning

AMBER: Lead poisoning?

OLI: That's right. I mean, I'm no doctor, yet, but you're starting to hallucinate, so

AMBER: I only cried a little.

OLI: Uhuh. I'm calling triple zero, you need a hospital, now.

AMBER: No thanks.

OLI: I'm not taking no for an answer.

AMBER: Yeah but I hate hospitals.

OLI: Everyone does, but you need one, so don't be a pussy and accept the help you need.

AMBER: It'd be great if hospitals could stay out of my life forever, actually.

Beat.

OLI: What's your favourite colour?

AMBER: Why?

OLI: We've got to pick a good colour for the new paint. For the walls. Piss yellow's not really my style.

AMBER: I don't have one.

OLI: Bullshit.

AMBER: No.

OLI: Everyone has a favourite colour.

AMBER: Apparently not.

OLI: Why? That's such a random thing. I'm sure you've got one deep down.

AMBER: Should I have one? They don't matter.

OLI: Yes, they do.

AMBER: What's yours, then?

OLI: Sky blue.

AMBER: Why?

OLI: Real answer?

AMBER: No, fake.

OLI: It's the colour of the grid lines in a maths book. Okay, no, before you judge, it's... to me, it's the colour of order. Things making sense. Like, you look up at the sky sometimes and you remember that you're just so insignificant. And it's nice.

AMBER: Okay. I still don't have a favourite colour.

OLI: That's not fair.

AMBER: ... Fine then.

OLI: Fine?

AMBER: Green.

OLI: Green. Good. Green walls will be festive. Irish. I like it. What shade of green?

AMBER: This isn't an art class.

OLI: What shade?

AMBER: I don't know. Green.

OLI: Bullshit. Come on, pick a shade. Please. I've seen you in English, you're smart. Green like...

AMBER: Green like green.

OLI: Nope.

AMBER: Green like... like... I don't know! Green is green. Oli, I can't say it another way.

OLI: Try.

AMBER: Piss off. You think of something then, if you're so clever.

OLI: You've got green eyes. Green like them, maybe?

AMBER: Sure.

Beat.

AMBER: It's a genetic thing. My parents both have green eyes too.

OLI: Cool.

AMBER: They kind of look like asparagus piss, I know, they just look like that.

OLI: I wasn't making fun of them.

AMBER: It's fine, I don't care.

OLI: No, really, I wasn't. Might make you cry more.

Intermission is over. He gets up first, then helps her up.

OLI: There we go. Look at you. Better already.

He starts heading out, but stops when:

AMBER: Hey.

OLI: Yeah?

AMBER: You forgot your water.

He grabs his water bottle from nowhere near where they were sitting.

They join the actors on stage, ready to go. The starting music plays.

And we are in

PRE-SHOW FRIDAY.

Brie hands out balloons.

JASPER: I don't understand why we can't just nap.

BRIE: Partner up.

TISH: I need to do my stage makeup though.

JASPER: You aren't wearing it now?

TISH: No.

JASPER: So, you're choosing to look like a clown in day-to-day life.

TISH: Brie, I don't think my being in close proximity with him will do any of us any good.

BRIE: Then don't be partners.

ZANE: I've still got that RE assignment to do.

AMBER: Yeah, if we're not sleeping, I've got an English due in a few weeks and I really want to start it as early as possible, and I know you're trying to do something good but-

BRIE: Yes, I am trying to do something good. Last night was shit. Like, actually abysmal. And we can't blame it on the Thursday night sludge or the maths teachers watching.

JASPER: Why not?

BRIE: We just can't. We have to be good. Aside from the fact that you never know which nights the critics come-

Jasper giggles. Brie shoots him a look. He shuts up.

BRIE: And we don't get a say over who's in the *paying* audience, this play is my last show. Ever.

TISH: Well, not ever.

BRIE: At school. As a high school student. This run is the last time I ever get to perform in this theatre. I like helping you guys out with a hundred different problems at a time. I do. I like hanging out before shows. But I love performing. And I love this stage. And I don't love when we don't act well. We just- can we please just do this. Even if it doesn't help, just do it.

JASPER: It's wanky.

BRIE: I'm aware.

AMBER: Okay.

TISH: How long will this take?

AMBER: Just do it.

BRIE: Not long.

JASPER: Sorry Brie.

Brie puts on some "focus" music. They get into pair formations: Amber & Oli, Tish & Brie, Jasper & Zane. Each pair has a balloon, and they instinctively do the same exercise- keep the balloon touching between these pairs using different parts of your body.

JASPER: [whisper-shouting] This isn't helping me focus.

TISH: [whisper-shouting] Tough. We all have to do it.

Beat. Jasper and Zane keep dropping their balloon. Amber and Oli are good at it. Tish is getting agitated. Brie goes to her happy place.

JASPER: Are you good?

ZANE: Sorry.

Tish and Brie drop their balloon.

TISH: Shit.

BRIE: It's fine.

They try again. They drop it again.

TISH: Shit.

BRIE: Tish, it's fine. Relax.

JASPER: Yeah Tish, relax.

BRIE: Drown him out. Come on.

They try again. Zane and Jasper keep dropping their balloon.

Jasper throws a balloon at Tish.

This breaks Tish & Brie's concentration: they drop their balloon.

TISH: Thanks, Jasper.

JASPER: Brie, I tried, but this really isn't doing anything for me.

TISH: Yeah, sorry Brie, but I'm stopping too. I don't think this is really working for anyone.

BRIE: It's working for them.

Amber and Oli are doing well. Jasper plays with the balloon on his own. Tish does her stage makeup.

AMBER: You guys can't stop when we're winning.

TISH: It's not a competition.

AMBER: But we'll look like wankers.

OLI: More than we already do?

AMBER: Do you want to win or not?

JASPER: I'm out.

BRIE: Zane?

Brie and Zane get in a pair with their partners not participating. Jasper offers Tish the food he's eating, she declines.

JASPER: [*to Tish*] Do you have a pencil?

BRIE: You're not popping the balloons.

TISH: You don't have to ruin this for everyone else. Just nap, that's what you want to do anyways.

JASPER: There's no time now.

TISH: There never was. Just don't ruin this for the rest of them. For Brie.

AMBER: Yeah, it's her favourite pastime.

JASPER: You wanna know what my favourite pastime is?

AMBER: Sure.

TISH: I don't actually.

JASPER: I take the rubber bit off the end of a pencil, right? Get rid of it, you don't need it. Then you stab the metal stuff straight through your eye, you know, really get it in there, just so it can scratch the good stuff, the surface of the nerves you're trying to spangle up. You gotta get a good swirl going; a couple of times clockwise, a couple of times anti-clockwise. You gotta be thorough, you know, coz you don't want to have to get back in there; that is a hassle, let me tell you. Then, at your own rate, slowly take the pencil out of your eye and you're all set. It's efficient, but you may want to enlist a friend for the clean-up, you know, coz you can't really see the full scope of the mess. It's a nuisance, but what can you do?

Beat.

AMBER: [*whispering*] *What the fu-?*

BRIE: Okay/

TISH: Jasper, stop being a shit.

OLI: That's a bit morbid.

Tish gives him a pencil. He pops his balloon. Brie and Jasper lose focus and drop their balloon.

BRIE: Jesus!

TISH: What is wrong with you?

JASPER: You gave me the pencil.

TISH: Yeah, not for that.

BRIE: Can we not pop any more balloons please?

TISH: Congratulations Jasper, you've officially pissed off everyone.

JASPER: [*sarcastically*] Yeah, okay. [*about Oli and Amber*] They seem really pissed off.

Oli and Amber haven't dropped the balloon once.

TISH: Oh, so you expect everyone to pop balloons when their own personal shit hits the fan?

BRIE: Guys-

TISH: Not everyone can be as impressive as you, Jasper. I don't think anyone over the age of seven except for you throws a tantrum when they're tired.

BRIE: Do either of you need some fresh air?

TISH: He needs a fresh personality.

JASPER: I'm fine. Did I say I wasn't fine?

TISH: Oh, because people who are fine ruin everything for everyone else?

AMBER: Hey guys, we are really trying to focus here so-

TISH: Oh. I know what this is about. Ally and Jack are coming tonight, aren't they?

JASPER: Yeah, and?

ZANE: Ally McFadden?

JASPER: Yes.

ZANE: She hates drama.

TISH: How do you know her?

ZANE: We used to be close.

TISH: Same with Jasper and Jack. What do you think about Ally?

ZANE: She's fine.

TISH: And Jack?

ZANE: I don't really know him.

JASPER: Yes, Jack Erikson is bringing Ally McFadden to see the show tonight. Are there any other audience members you want the government names of? How about their school ID's, or their social security numbers?

OLI: Australia doesn't do social security numbers.

JASPER: Shut up.

AMBER: Wait, really?

OLI: I'm pretty sure.

TISH: It really bothers you that much, huh?

JASPER: I'd just prefer it if they didn't show, to be honest.

AMBER: You really can't stand couples that much?

JASPER: No, I really just can't stand *them*.

TISH: And it's not because you're jealous at all, right?

JASPER: No, it's not, actually. See, what I can't stand is them practically fornicating, snookums'-style, thrusting to the psychedelic rhythms of the school bell at a crisp nine-forty-five in the morning, swaying their desks in top-tier unco harmony until "Uh... Miss... I think... we need... the room..." Except they wouldn't actually do that, would they? Ask for space? Wouldn't care to mind their P's and Q's? Course not. They crave an audience. It's constitutionally demanded. It's the P in PDA. They're just itching for a gaggle of eyewitnesses in case the poor fella comes down with the post nut blues and: uh oh, her ovaries are cosmically aligned, they need to whip a bun out of the oven ASAP. So, they heave and ho, and soon enough, out pops a fresh trophy of disgustingness, a prime reminder of why acting on hormonal instincts at every waking moment isn't the solution. All in the name of "true love, you guys", as if there's something Shakespearean about their special kind of horniness; as if their sex lives in particular should be 'show and tell' for the whole class to watch, when, funnily enough, we don't want to; as if they won't toss their absolute cookies at the thought of each other in a month, let alone a year; as if anyone, including them, gives a shit. I don't know, did it ever occur to them to not? To read a book? With words this time? Or educate themselves on anything other than each other? I just don't want to watch that. Thanks for the offer, guys, I'm good, honestly. In class, tonight, anytime really. I'd rather just go about my life in peace, if you don't mind. Me? Nah. Wouldn't catch me dead like that. What can I say, it's not my thing. Call me a romantic.

TISH: Nice, Jasper. Classy.

BRIE: Right.

AMBER: Um.

OLI: Okay.

ZANE: Uh.

BRIE: So that's not for you.

OLI: I think that's been covered pretty decently.

BRIE: Cool.

AMBER: I'm sorry, but don't you think that's a bit harsh?

OLI: Well, it's a little graphic.

JASPER: I don't think it's harsh enough, truthfully. PDA should be abolished nationwide, or punishable by castration, or something. It's cruel to expose growing minds to that. Aren't we impressionable or some shit?

Amber steps away from Oli. He holds the balloon

AMBER: Okay but what if that's someone's way of showing love? Like, I don't think PDA should be completely totally unacceptable?

JASPER: You think *that's* acceptable?

AMBER: Well, obviously, *that's* not acceptable. But, I mean, I don't think love is some evil miscreant we're supposed to shit on profoundly. It's... bigger than us. We shouldn't be painted as the devil reincarnate if we happen to have feelings and also happen to not be adults. I don't know. It's just a bit bleak.

JASPER: I think it's just a bit naive to say they're in love with each other when you don't even know them.

AMBER: They look pretty in love to me.

JASPER: Having sex on school desks isn't love.

AMBER: So, you're just ignorantly turning a blind eye to everything else? Ally sits next to me in homeroom. Jack consistently gives her presents; chocolate, flowers, gum and she doesn't even have to ask. He'll walk her to her classes before he ever goes to his. Before they *might* do any of the perverted things you're accusing them of, he'll ask her questions about her, and he genuinely cares about what she has to say. And they've been going out for almost a year. In high school terms, that is love. In real world terms, that looks like love to me.

JASPER: What would you know about love?

AMBER: I know as much about love as you do, as any of the rest of us do. At least I don't tear down any person who shows a hint of being able to comprehend basic human emotions like you clearly cannot do.

TISH: Guys-

JASPER: Perfect, of course you have something to say right now.

TISH: We need to be in places.

Amber takes her place.

Jasper stares down Tish.

He throws away the food from earlier, then takes his place. Tish takes hers too.

The show begins.

And we are in

INTERMISSION FRIDAY.

Act 1 of the play is over.

Zane is already chilling out in the changerooms.

Brie enters.

BRIE: You okay?

ZANE: Yeah, I'm fine. Didn't want to be around Jasper and Amber. Or Jasper and Tish.

BRIE: So just Jasper?

ZANE: Nah he's fine. Ish.

BRIE: He gives a good performance when he's mad.

ZANE: I didn't know anyone was here.

BRIE: It's just me. I've got that change I have to do.

ZANE: Yeah no, that's cool. I'll leave.

BRIE: I mean, it's fine. I'll be in the back anyways. You've got nowhere else to be?

ZANE: I'm not in your way, am I?

BRIE: No.

Brie heads back to the area where she gets changed, offstage.

Zane fidgets with his basketball.

He goes to say something, then backs out.

BRIE: [offstage] There's snacks around here somewhere. They're yours if you can find them.

ZANE: Thanks.

He doesn't move.

BRIE: [offstage] Make yourself a tea or something if you want one.

ZANE: Okay.

He doesn't move.

BRIE: [offstage] If you're having one, I'll have a chamomile or something thanks.

He gets up, boils the kettle, makes Brie's chamomile. He even stirs in some honey. He takes nothing for himself. Brie enters again, having undergone a drastic transformation.

ZANE: [passing her the mug] Here.

BRIE: Thanks.

Beat.

ZANE: Nice clothes.

BRIE: It's so itchy I hate it. The one time we have semi-competent costumes too.

Beat.

BRIE: So, do you have anyone here tonight?

ZANE: No. You?

BRIE: Oh, just my parents.

ZANE: Nice.

BRIE: I mean, yeah, but they also came on Wednesday, and I don't really see why they're putting themselves through this again, you know?

ZANE: Yeah, yeah.

BRIE: When are yours coming to see it?

ZANE: Uh, I don't really know? They work late so maybe Saturday, but... yeah.

BRIE: Oh, is that why you're so busy? You know, all your extracurriculars. Like this and basketball and stuff. Because they work late?

ZANE: It's a way to kill time, I guess.

BRIE: Are any of your basketball friends coming to see the show?

ZANE: No. Hard pass.

BRIE: Why?

ZANE: I don't really get along with those guys to the point where they would see me like this.

BRIE: Oh well. Their loss. [*pointing toward the exit*] You good if I...

ZANE: Yeah. Yeah.

BRIE: Back out soon, yeah?

ZANE: Okay.

Brie exits.

Something shifts; something that was not there before is now missing.

Intermission finishes.

Everyone back on stage.

And we are in

POST-SHOW FRIDAY.

Amber has stormed off to the change rooms. The girls follow her. Amber slams the door.

AMBER: I want to [grumble] strangle him.

BRIE: They might still be able to hear you.

TISH: Let them.

BRIE: Have something to eat first.

Amber finds a snack, takes a bite.

BRIE: Tish?

TISH: Not hungry.

BRIE: Okay, so at least the performance went well.

AMBER: Yeah, because in the scene where we fight, we weren't pretending.

TISH: Method acting.

AMBER: I'm shit at method acting. Jasper, on the other hand, I could see the blood boiling in his eyes.

BRIE: Maybe that wasn't about you.

AMBER: It *felt* pretty personal. Brie, I just really need to be mad right now. Okay? All I was trying to do before was have a discussion, communicate.

TISH: Communicating with Jasper is appealing to a knobhead. He's far too set in his ways. Even on a good day, he'll pick a fight to test just how much his ego can handle.

AMBER: But I didn't say anything wrong.

BRIE: You did say he was less emotionally mature than everyone else.

TISH: He is.

AMBER: He made it personal before I did. I understand why he picked a fight but why'd he have to have a go at me?

TISH: Don't take it personally. Jasper wouldn't know a philosophical concern if it took him up the ass at Mardi Gras. He doesn't deal well with thinking. That's just who he is.

AMBER: Does he deal well with anything?

BRIE: He can act well when he's pissed off.

TISH: He's been acting for his whole life.

BRIE: Isn't this his first show?

TISH: No, I mean, it's a '*All the world's a stage*' kind of thing. He never really says what he thinks, and when he does, he's a bitch about it.

AMBER: Okay, so what was he thinking then? Why was he a bitch to me? All I did was defend Ally and Jack. That's not criminal behaviour, why is he treating it like it is?

TISH: 'Ally and Jack' is a very sore subject for him.

AMBER: Why?

BRIE: Tish, you don't have to tell us anything.

TISH: Basically, Jack and Jasper used to be close. As soon as Ally and Jack started dating, Jasper stopped talking to him, like fully. I think Jack came tonight as a peace offering or something.

BRIE: Tonight seemed very peaceful, yeah.

AMBER: Wait, so it is a jealousy thing?

TISH: One hundred percent.

AMBER: But Ally and Zane used to date.

BRIE: Wait, really? He told you?

AMBER: No, but everyone knows. Zane's been with, like, half the grade. Wait, so if Jasper likes Ally, does he hate Zane as well? I thought something was up with those two, they're always so tense with each other. And today, with the balloons, did you see?

TISH: Oh, that's not... Jasper never liked Ally. He's jealous of her.

AMBER: What, for stealing his best mate?

TISH: No... I thought you knew.

AMBER: All I know about Jasper is that he's funny but rude and occasionally a good actor.

TISH: And gay.

BRIE: What?

TISH: I thought this was common knowledge.

AMBER: No?

TISH: You didn't notice when he's never had a girlfriend, and you've never heard any stories about him liking a girl? Not once?

AMBER: I've never seen Jasper go out with anyone. He's... Jasper.

TISH: Well, there's a certain way the PE dropkicks treat the glass-closet gays. He doesn't make it his whole personality, but it's there. He just doesn't tell people he's gay. Anyways, since the whole Jack thing, Jasper keeps to himself. Doesn't have friends to trust, only trusts me when shit hits the fan, and no way in hell is he trusting Mum.

AMBER: How come?

TISH: Mum is just... Mum. Okay, she sent us to private school, she came and saw the show, but in reality she's not... what you need in a parent.

AMBER: Which one is she again?

TISH: Leslie, she was here on opening.

AMBER: Oh, the hot one.

BRIE: Which one?

AMBER: Do you have a photo for her?

TISH: Only this really old one.

Tish shows them the photo off her phone

AMBER: Holy shit.

BRIE: That's your mum?

TISH: Twenty years ago.

BRIE: She's so young.

AMBER: I don't even recognise her.

BRIE: Is that a belly button piercing?

AMBER: Who's the guy?

TISH: Don't know.

AMBER: She looks so different.

TISH: She's the same.

AMBER: But her hair...

BRIE: She's so pretty.

AMBER: And her smile...

BRIE: You look kind of the same. Same face. Nose.

TISH: God, I hope not.

AMBER: I mean, without the costume jewellery.

TISH: Still.

AMBER: And she's still got that smile.

BRIE: You saw her through bows the other night?

TISH: No.

BRIE: Same smile as here.

AMBER: She's still so pretty. Like in a prac teacher or cafe mum way. More grown.

BRIE: I want to be her when I grow up.

TISH: Why? You're already a much better person than her.

Beat.

TISH: Oh, come on. Look at her. It looks like she's about to get arrested on MTV for possession.

AMBER: In a good way or a bad way?

TISH: That picture reeks of box-dye scalp cancer and premature liver failure.

BRIE: She was a kid.

TISH: She was old enough to know better. She was our age. It was selfish of her to be that trashy. She's probably got a tramp-stamp plastered with 'Screw the horses. Ride me, cowboy!'. It'd match the complete lack of attention from grandma – she whines about that like a dying cat. And the roster she maintained – you know she's with a different guy in every photo I see of 'the old her'? The only one who bothered to stick around was fat bloody Santa, because I swear, we were always treated like we were on some kind of naughty list while, I bet, she had enough powdered snow in her system to forget to be my mother.

Beat.

BRIE: Oh love.

AMBER: Did that actually happen?

TISH: It may as well have. I don't know, I was little. But I trust my memory more than I trust her. It *could* be true, which means she screwed up. Jasper wouldn't have been such a dropkick. I would be less anal. I just wanted a mum who wasn't so wrong and stubborn and hypocritical all at once.

AMBER: We can't change our parents.

TISH: I wish we could.

AMBER: We can't.

TISH: But what if? She might have picked me up from school a couple of times. She might have held my hand when we crossed the road, might've cared enough to. I was four and scared for her. I don't know. When I went to daycare, they played Disney movies and I wanted to be the princess because their mums were dead. They got to mourn a loss. I hate her. I don't care if she's better. I hate her, and sometimes I still want to her to die so I get five minutes of peace with myself.

AMBER: You don't mean that.

TISH: It's not a crime to think about it.

AMBER: You said it, but you don't mean it.

TISH: I do.

AMBER: No.

TISH: Amber, it's my mum.

AMBER: But you don't say *that*.

TISH: *I* do.

BRIE: Amber.

AMBER: Why? Why?

TISH: Why what? Why do I wish she was dead? I already said why, were you not fucking listening?

AMBER: Tish, what is wrong with you?

TISH: My mother, my mother is what is wrong with me.

BRIE: Tish.

AMBER: You're psychotic.

TISH: What? Just because you've got perfect parents doesn't mean I do. You wouldn't even know what it's like. Fuck you for judging me. You have no idea. Fuck you.

Amber slaps Tish across the face.

BRIE: Amber...

Amber runs away.

Beat.

Brie walks out.

Tish stares at the photo. A lifetime could've passed.

Brie walks back in with chocolate and an ice pack for Tish.

Tish accepts the icepack, but not the chocolate.

And we are in

SATURDAY MATINEE.

The show goes abysmally for Tish. Her head isn't in the game.

When her character dies in THE PLAY, she heads backstage to the changerooms.

She faints and doesn't come back out for bows.

After bows, Jasper rushes off to find her.

JASPER: Tish?

He finds her. He shuts the door behind him.

JASPER: You couldn't have waited until after bows to take a nap? Hey. Wakey wakey. Get up.

He shakes her. No response. He shakes her again, more frantic. She wakes up.

TISH: What?

JASPER: Bloody hell. Tish. You missed bows.

TISH: What time is it?

JASPER: How much have you had to eat today?

TISH: Are we still at the theatre?

JASPER: Don't mess with me Tish, have you eaten or not?

TISH: Jasper.

JASPER: You're selfish, you know that. Really selfish. You can't do this.

The others are banging at the door.

OLI: [*simultaneously*] What's going on?

AMBER: [*simultaneously*] Hey, why'd you rush off?

BRIE: [*simultaneously*] Is everyone okay in there?

ZANE: [*simultaneously*] I left my water in there.

JASPER: Go away!

The banging stops.

TISH: You really want to talk about selfish? Why is it you're here Jasper?

JASPER: You fainted. Would you rather I wasn't here?

TISH: So, you don't like seeing your sibling unconscious? Funny, I could almost say the same thing.

JASPER: Tish.

TISH: *You* were selfish.

JASPER: A year is a long time, you know I'm/

TISH: Okay, you don't just go to the bathroom, say you're constipated, and then slit your wrists with my razor. You don't do that. You don't get to leave me alone with Mum. You don't get to cop out of life and leave me to be the girl whose brother killed himself. I'm older. I should get a say in these things.

JASPER: It wasn't about you.

TISH: It's my responsibility.

JASPER: Tish.

TISH: It is. It's on me because I'm supposed to look after you.

JASPER: I don't need / you to look after me.

TISH: I'm the oldest okay / and with Mum being Mum it is actually up to me

JASPER: Just because you're the oldest doesn't mean you get to control everything.

TISH: I can't control anything apparently. Constipated? You really had to say you were constipated? You couldn't think of anything else? You couldn't have told me? You really can't bear sharing a single thing with me, can you? God, you always have been and always will be selfish. No, you're right. I don't get to control everything.

JASPER: You can control what you eat.

TISH: Jasper.

JASPER: In a year, I've gotten better. Sack of shit or not, I am better. What have you done in a year? Gone hungry? We don't get to tag team being self-destructive.

TISH: It's not an issue.

JASPER: No, Tish, it is actually. You're telling me you fainted just for the hell of it? For shits and gigs? Wouldn't that be nice. My work here is done. How many times do you have to faint to recognise you're not actually fine? Really, pick a number. Not once, apparently. What is it, twice? Ten times? Twenty?

TISH: Jasper.

JASPER: You want to act so high and mighty, playing the victim when my life was in jeopardy, okay, *mine...* and suddenly you're silent – which never happens – when I try and point out an issue,

a real issue, before you end up where I was last year. No, I won't let you do that. Don't be a shithead. Eat.

TISH: Don't.

JASPER: Okay, alright. Fair's fair. You eat real food, and digest it, and shit out something, anything, and I won't steal your razor ever again. Promise.

TISH: Jasper.

JASPER: Tish.

TISH: You never get to be constipated again. Ever.

JASPER: I promise.

He hands her some food.

JASPER: I need to see it happen.

TISH: It's not that simple. I can't. Not here.

Jasper unlocks the door. They all come barging in. Amber heads straight for the kettle, making herself some herbal tea. Zane heads straight for his waterbottle.

AMBER: [*simultaneously*] Is this my fault? Look, Jasper, I'm really, really sorry that I messed up my cue on stage, that was not fair on you, and I'm really sorry.

ZANE: [*simultaneously*] I'm thirsty.

BRIE: [*simultaneously*] Please tell me no one is hurt. Are you bleeding? Please tell me you're not bleeding. Do I need to get the first aid bag? Or a teacher, maybe I should get a teacher.

JASPER: We're fine. We're just going to go home. I'll be back for warm ups later.

TISH: We both will.

AMBER: I thought we were all staying here during the break.

OLI: I am.

JASPER: It's fine, we live close. Just going to rest, get something to eat.

BRIE: Don't be silly, there's plenty of beanbags here to sleep on, and I was going to grab food anyways. Maybe chicken? My treat. I haven't decided yet, but my pays just come through and we all deserve to eat, especially with the dumb budget. You know they used to pay for pizza on two show days? Drive through's open though so I won't be long. Don't move a muscle, I'll be back and then you won't have to catch the bus and we can all chill for a bit before closing. Crap. Closing. Amber?

AMBER: Yeah?

BRIE: Shotgun?

AMBER: Can't. Tea.

BRIE: Zane?

ZANE: Okay.

Brie and Zane leave in a hurry.

JASPER: Look, just tell Brie we're going home. We appreciate it, but...

AMBER: Yeah, no, of course.

TISH: Bye guys.

AMBER: See you soon.

Jasper and Tish leave.

AMBER: Tea?

OLI: Sure. Thanks.

They wait awkwardly for the kettle to boil. It eventually does.

AMBER: What kind?

OLI: Whatever you're having is fine.

AMBER: Well, I'm drinking chamomile with some honey in it, but there's also jasmine, green, peppermint, oh but I'd steer clear of the peach because it smells good but tastes like shit.

OLI: Chamomile's good.

Amber puts in a chamomile teabag. She grabs the kettle to pour.

OLI: [*simultaneously*] Kind of sad we've only got one show left. Oh, sorry I didn't mean to talk over you.

AMBER: [*simultaneously*] I always meant to ask you, how'd you go for the English exam? No, it's okay.

Amber accidentally spills some hot water onto Oli's pants.

AMBER: Shit! I'm sorry I'm sorry I'm sorry. Shit, I'm sorry. Are you hurt?

OLI: [*pained*] No, I'm fine.

AMBER: Shit. Okay, well, uh- okay. Okay okay okay.

OLI: Yes?

AMBER: Okay, you, your pants will dry before next show. You've got something else to wear?

OLI: I think so.

AMBER: Okay, good. And there's a first aid kit out there so, we'll just- shit.

OLI: No, I'm fine.

AMBER: Okay, so we'll go in there and change your pants, sorry, shit. I'll help you with the first aide and that.

OLI: Thanks.

AMBER: Shit, I was just trying to make you a cup of tea!

They walk off to find the first aid bag.

The room is empty, but not alone. It is a space of its own. We can feel the warmth that has and continues to radiate from the walls, hosting many theatre kids in its time. We are filled with this overwhelming sense of home.

Amber walks back in to hang up Oli's wet pants, walking out again afterwards.

The sense continues, and then settles down to its natural state, as we've seen it this whole show.

Enter Brie and Zane, holding a lot of food.

BRIE: Do you think this will be enough to feed everyone?

ZANE: I'd say so.

BRIE: You sure?

ZANE: 'Course, look at the size of it.

BRIE: Okay, good.

She notices the puddle on the floor. She then looks to the wet pants.

BRIE: Zane?

ZANE: What's up?

BRIE: Oli pissed himself.

ZANE: Happens to the best of us.

Brie gives him a grossed out look.

ZANE: I'm kidding, that's gross.

BRIE: Can you pass me the paper towels please?

ZANE: Yeah, yeah. Umm... here.

BRIE: Thanks.

ZANE: Yeah.

BRIE: GUYS, FOOD! IT'S HOT! COME AND GET IT!

Beat. Nothing changes.

BRIE: GUYS! CHICKEN. COME ON.

Beat.

ZANE: I don't think they're here.

BRIE: Shit.

ZANE: Do you need more paper towel or something?

BRIE: No, it's just... shit.

She passes him a box of chicken.

BRIE: Tastes bad cold.

ZANE: Thanks.

Beat.

ZANE: You okay?

BRIE: Am I a good person?

ZANE: I'd say so.

BRIE: Just because I listen to everyone and I try to be there for everyone and I buy chicken for everyone, does that make me a good person?

ZANE: What's going on?

BRIE: What even is a good person? If you really think about it, everyone has something that makes them bad. Tish gossips too much. Jasper is an asshole 90% of the time. Oli cares too much about other people's opinions. And the worse thing is that they let themselves be defined by these things. They all think they're the worst people on earth when they're really not. They're all trying to do what they perceive as good, right? They're trying? And that's what matters? No one's here. We've got a smorgasbord of soggy chicken that I bought for them with my own money, and no one's here. Money, by the way, I earned from making overpriced coffee for silver spoon bedwetters who don't hesitate to rip me a new asshole if their black card isn't compatible with the eftpos machine on the very first try. Everywhere I go, I want to leave, but there are people that need me so I can't. I use my customer service voice if I have to, but I sit there and listen to my friend's rants, because I do care what they have to say, but sometimes it's hard, and I feel like there's something inherently wrong with me. Like, Amber. She's my best friend, right? I love her. It kills me that her dad's in hospital. It kills me that at any given point, his state can change. He could be fine at breakfast and die before dinner. It kills me to see her working herself to the bone when she has all this shit on her plate that half the time she doesn't even acknowledge. And I know she needs someone to talk to about this. I will gladly volunteer every time. Because sometimes it feels like I'm only good for one thing in this world, and it's caring for others. If I can't do anything right, I can at least try to do that. But I can't even do that properly. I'm literally here, waiting for people to need me, and where are they? But... what the hell am I complaining for? I'm not impoverished. I have two fairly decent parents who tolerate each other. I have a roof over my head. I go to private school, for fucks sakes. None of it even matters. If I work, if I listen, if I buy chicken or if I don't buy chicken, or, better yet, if I'm a good person; none of it matters. In six months, I'll be graduated, and I won't have high school or theatre to fall back on, and I'm not smart enough for uni, not that I could afford it anyways, so I'll be praying for an early death by the time I can even afford to rent a place, but we all die anyways so what's the point?

Beat.

BRIE: What am I supposed to do?

ZANE: We could reheat the chicken.

Beat.

BRIE: I don't want to just be worm food.

Amber comes back in with Oli, who is wearing girls' shorts.

AMBER: Sorry, we heard you, it's just Oli had a... yeah.

BRIE: I wanna be paid for cleaning up your piss please.

OLI: I did not piss myself.

AMBER: Did you even smell it? That was not pee.

BRIE: Funnily enough, I wasn't too interested in sniffing the piss puddle.

ZANE: Foods on the table.

AMBER: Good, I'm starving.

BRIE: [to Oli] Nice shorts.

Amber and Oli grabs some food.

OLI: Hey, I'm really sorry again, I could've sworn I had other pants.

AMBER: Don't worry about it. Tea?

OLI: I'm good, thanks.

They eat.

OLI: This is really good.

AMBER: Thanks, Brie. How much can we have?

BRIE: All of it.

AMBER: You don't want some more?

BRIE: I just want to sleep.

She lays down. In their own time, they all follow her lead.

The room is dark. We don't know how long it's been. It's peaceful. Until...

Amber wakes up. Checks her phone. She's umming and ahing, but eventually she sends a text.

Oli's phone goes off with a notification. He wakes up, check it out.

They text for a bit, back and forth.

Amber takes a bad photo of Brie, sleeping.

Oli sends a text, a question. Amber turns her flash on, searching for something. She has to turn it off, it's waking up Brie.

She finds her shoes, picks them up.

They both head out of the room.

AMBER: Okay, fine. If I had to, gun to my head, and I couldn't commit suicide no matter how much I wanted to, AND we were ignoring all their crimes against humanity, I would have to say... kill Hitler, screw Mussolini, marry Stalin, but only young Stalin, not when he looks decrepit.

OLI: You don't go for older men?

AMBER: My type usually excludes dictators, war criminals and fascists too. Your turn.

OLI: I'm not the one who does elective history.

AMBER: Well, it's not like you can play smash or pass between Pythagoras and an octagon. Math boy.

OLI: Did you hear Miss Franklin and Mr DeAngelo got it on at the staff Christmas party last year?

AMBER: That's why they were so touchy at Formal? Oh my god, ew.

OLI: The two biggest nerds on the payroll too.

AMBER: I didn't know he had it in him.

OLI: Whatever makes them happy, I guess.

AMBER: You think it was a work crush thing or they'll genuinely last?

OLI: I think they were drunk and that's all there is to it.

AMBER: Bullshit. Either of them could've gotten with anyone at that party if it was just that.

OLI: So you're saying they weren't shitfaced?

AMBER: No, of course they were. I'm just saying, do you think they genuinely like each other, or it was just a boozey work crush?

OLI: What even is that?

AMBER: You know, where you spend a lot of time in close proximity to someone that you don't necessarily have a say over, and an attraction builds and you think you get a real crush, but in the real world, you wouldn't look twice at that same person. You only really find them attractive because they're there.

OLI: I don't think it was that. DeAngelo and Franklin were made for each other. It makes too much sense for it to just be a 'work crush' if that's what you want to call it. They're both nerdy, but in different ways, so they won't bore each other with the same knowledge. They're both in the same league looks wise.

AMBER: That's not saying much.

OLI: They already spend time together that they seem to enjoy, Formal proved that. Plus, it'd be weird to explain to every student that they broke up and started some R and J bullshit between the Maths and History departments.

AMBER: Oh, because a great reason not to break up is having to explain it to minors.

OLI: Still, I'll bet that before we graduate it'll be Mrs Franklin hyphen DeAngelo with maternity leave around the corner.

AMBER: You've got them all figured out.

OLI: Well, when you finish the classwork before everyone else, there's not much to do except observe the teachers. Especially when you already know you're getting an A.

AMBER: You're so humble, Oli.

OLI: I try my best, but what can you do? Can't change perfect.

AMBER: Is there anything you're not good at?

OLI: Not really, no.

AMBER: You're really gracious too, you know that?

OLI: I do, actually.

AMBER: Must be hard to fuel your ego, though, when you're wearing those shorts.

OLI: I think they suit me.

AMBER: Keep them, they're all yours. You'd get more use out of them than me.

Amber's phone alarm goes off to start getting ready. Simultaneously, so does Brie's, but she hits snooze.

AMBER: We should/

OLI: Yeah.

They sneak back into the changerooms, still dark, with Brie and Zane still asleep. They grab their costumes.

AMBER; [to Brie] Wakey wakey.

Brie groans. Amber heads into the partition, waving bye to Oli. He heads out.

BRIE: [whispering] Zane.

He doesn't wake up. Brie throws SOMETHING at him.

ZANE: I'm up.

They wake up.

BRIE: Hey, uh, about what I said before...

ZANE: It stays between us, got it.

BRIE: It's not that I don't trust you, because I do. It's just that it was stupid really. I'm not suicidal if that's what you're thinking. Amber wants to keep the whole dad thing quiet, and I really shouldn't have said anything at all, so it would really all be better if she didn't find out I was a bad friend or anything.

ZANE: Brie, you're fine.

BRIE: Am I?

Beat.

ZANE: My parents don't care enough about me to come see the show.

BRIE: What?

ZANE: So you have dirt on me. For insurance. I'm an only child with no attention, I've ghosted every girl I've ever talked to, last month I had a minor ear infection that made me sit in bed watching movies all week until I bored myself to sleep.

BRIE: Zane, you don't have to do this.

ZANE: I know.

Amber enters from behind the changeroom partition.

AMBER: You're awake. Good. For a second, I genuinely thought you were going to sleep through closing night, you were that tired.

ZANE: I think I should get ready.

Zane exits.

AMBER: You okay? Still sort of asleep?

BRIE: You seem chipper.

AMBER: Do I?

BRIE: This wouldn't have anything to do with Oli, would it? You know, about yay high, nerd, has a thing for rangas?

AMBER: You think so?

BRIE: Are you serious?

AMBER: I know, but would that even work?

BRIE: Why wouldn't it?

AMBER: I don't know, it's Oli.

BRIE: Exactly.

AMBER: I know. I don't know.

BRIE: What don't you know?

AMBER: I don't know.

BRIE: Amber.

AMBER: I know. But how? I don't want to force it.

BRIE: By the looks of things, you don't have to.

AMBER: But/

BRIE: Amber, there's always going to be 'but's or 'I don't know's, but what if?

AMBER: Exactly. What if this, or what if that, or what if this *and* that? I don't know.

BRIE: In six months, what ifs won't matter as much as what actually happens, which will be nothing if you keep asking what if. In six months, you could be invited with his family camping or whatever, or you could be the only one who signed up for the summer programme at the dodgy youth theatre. Which sounds better to you?

AMBER: Brie.

BRIE: Exactly, so stop annoying me and start annoying him.

There's a knock at the door.

BRIE: Bye.

She goes behind the changeroom partition.

AMBER: You can come in, Oli, you don't have to knock anymore.

Enter Jasper and Tish.

AMBER: Oh, hi.

TISH: Hey.

Jasper, mad, finds Tish's costume bag, hands it to her, and exits.

TISH: He'll calm down.

Jasper enters again, holding Tish's shoes. He hands them to her and exits again.

TISH: Eventually.

AMBER: Brie, hurry up, I left my shoes in there.

Brie enters through the changeroom partition.

BRIE: Alright, alright.

Amber rushes past her, grabs the shoes, and makes a go for the door.

BRIE: Where are you off to?

AMBER: Annoying people.

Amber leaves for the ramp, where she goes to do up her shoes.

BRIE: Wait, those are mine.

Brie grabs Amber's shoes, goes to the ramp, makes the switch, and sits down while they both do up their shoes. (Once Amber is finished, she goes off to the boys changerooms, Brie goes to the bar to grab bandaids). Jasper walks past them and into the girls changerooms, changed.

TISH: Jasper.

JAPER: No.

TISH: You don't get a choice over this.

JASPER: You're doing this to yourself, I hope you know that.

TISH: I wasn't going to miss closing night. People need me to be here.

JASPER: What people need is for you to be alive.

TISH: I'm not going to die on stage, you can calm down.

Tish heads toward the changeroom partition, costume bag in hand.

JASPER: Tish... I have to tell Mum.

She exits, furious. Brie passes her, then enters the girl change rooms, to put band-aids on for her heels.

BRIE: Is she okay?

JASPER: No, she's fan-tastic.

BRIE: I've got band-aids if she needs them.

Jasper storms out.

A phone starts buzzing. Brie check's it out. She doesn't know for sure, but if what she thinks is happening is happening, she doesn't want it to be.

Enter Zane.

ZANE: How long do we have 'til audience?

BRIE: Oli will know.

ZANE: Great, thanks.

BRIE: Hey, if you see Amber while you're there, tell her to check her phone. It's important.

Brie goes to leave.

ZANE: Where are you off to?

BRIE: You didn't hear it from me, but Jasper's more catastrophic than usual and Tish is less talkative than usual, so shit's probably hit the fan and I need to make sure closing is not a complete disaster.

Exit Brie.

Amber's phone buzzes again. Zane check the message out. He hides the phone under the beanbag.

Enter Amber and Oli.

OLI: [to Amber] Okay, where is it?

ZANE: Where's what?

AMBER: My script.

OLI: Three minutes to run lines, that's all we have.

AMBER: I know, I know, I'm looking.

Brie enters.

ZANE: Any luck?

BRIE: Funny.

AMBER: Oh my god, I can't do this.

BRIE: It's okay Amber, none of us expect you to be strong right now.

AMBER: What do you mean?

Enter Jasper and Tish.

TISH: I can't do this with you following me around the entire time, Jasper.

JASPER: You think I like having to do this?

TISH: You don't have to!

JASPER: And, what, I'm going to trust your judgement on that?

TISH: Just leave me alone!

JASPER: We don't have time for that.

AMBER: How much time do we have?

OLI: Two minutes.

AMBER: Oh my god.

TISH: [*to Jasper*] Don't look at me. Get away.

JASPER: I don't have a choice.

OLI: [*to Amber*] You know your lines backwards, it's closing night. Try to have fun. Relax.

TISH: [*to Jasper*] Sit over there or something, just go away.

BRIE: [*to Oli*] Don't tell her to relax, alright? You have no idea what she's going through.

ZANE: Maybe we should start getting in place or something.

Jasper sits down on the beanbag.

JASPER: Is this a stitch-up or something? Why is this so uncomfortable?

He pulls the phone out from underneath.

AMBER: Hey, that's mine.

BRIE: It's alright Amber, we're all here for you.

AMBER: With what?

Amber's phone buzzes. Brie goes to hug her, Amber pulls away.

AMBER: What's going on?

BRIE: It's okay.

AMBER: I genuinely don't know what's going on, can someone explain why Brie's treating me like a stray right now?

Jasper reads the phone notification, his face drops.

AMBER: [*to Jasper*] What is it?

OLI: [*to Brie*] One minute.

AMBER: Jasper, what is it?

He passes the phone to her.

She reads the notifications.

Beat.

AMBER: [*to Brie*] You didn't tell me.

BRIE: Amber/

AMBER: You didn't tell me. You hid my phone.

BRIE: No/

AMBER: I want nothing to do with you.

BRIE: Amber, you don't have to do this. Amber! Go to the hospital.

But it's too late, Amber's already taken her place on stage, ready for the audience.

Oli follows her out, trying to see what's up and if she's okay, but she's a statue; she's officially lost in the character, blocking the outside world.

BRIE: Tish, Jasper. Go.

They take their place on stage.

BRIE: Why?

ZANE: It wasn't your crisis to deal with. Not right now.

BRIE: Oh god. You know, I hope you're happy.

ZANE: I'm sorry.

BRIE: You're sorry? What are you sorry about? The fact you hid the phone, the fact you lied-

ZANE: I never lied.

BRIE: You did! Or are you sorry about completely making this blow up. This is about Amber. God, you've ruined this! Amber, this show, this FINAL show, you've just-

ZANE: Not everything is about the show. I'm sorry. I am. But you didn't need to deal with this. With everything. You don't always have to be there for everyone else, you don't have to worry for them all the time. They worry enough about themselves as it is.

He leaves and takes his position on stage.

The curtain comes up, the show begins.

Brie leaves the building, leaving her cast behind.

END.