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The Queen Must Die

A comedy

David Farr

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THE QUEEN MUST DIE

First presented at the Cottesloe Theatre as part of the National Theatre's Shell Connections Festival in July 2003.

CHARACTERS

The Girls

Shannon, fifteen

Lisa, fifteen

Sandra (also known as “Ronnie”), fifteen

The Boys

Darren Simpson, sixteen

Billy Simpson, twelve

Mad Mike, fifteen to eighteen

Shaun Digby, fifteen

Woman’s Voice

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

The action of the play takes place in a town in Middle England

SCENE 1 A wall in the rich part of town

SCENE 2 A wall on the poor side of town

SCENE 3 Margaret Chivers’ living-room

SCENE 4 A wall on the poor side of town

SCENE 5 A wall in the rich part of town

SCENE 6 Margaret Chivers’ living-room

Time — the night of 1st June 2002, the eve of the Queen’s Golden Jubilee

THE QUEEN MUST DIE

SCENE 1

A bit of wall somewhere in the rich part of a town in Middle England

The Lights come up. Three girls, all fifteen, are standing in front of the wall. They are Lisa and Sandra and Shannon. Lisa is small, mousy. Sandra is a little overweight, possibly. Shannon is the most glamorous of the three and carries a bag. All three are wearing simply horrendous home-made Union Jack dresses

Shannon We can't wear these.

Sandra I look like a flag.

Shannon I don't care if she's fifty years on the throne, or five hundred, we can't wear these.

Lisa Just think of it. Us dancing ——

Sandra —— with a massive papier mâché statue of the Queen ——

Lisa —— on a motorized float ——

Sandra —— through the middle of town ——

Lisa —— in front of the whole population.

Shannon I'll die.

Sandra You'll die! You're gorgeous and you still look like a dog. What must I look like?

Shannon Look at my tits, Lise.

Lisa What about them?

Shannon Is my point! I've got the best breasts in Year Ten.
(*Searching the folds of the dress*) Where are they?

Lisa I've got tassles. Why did your mum give me tassles?

Shannon She said you were the tassles type.

Lisa I hate your mum.

Sandra Maybe we can blend into the background.

Lisa Ronnie, there is no background. It's us three, a papier mâché queen, and half a ton of bunting.

Sandra This is all your fault, Shannon Dobson.

Shannon Is not!

Sandra It was your idea to do a dance.

Shannon Was not!

Lisa Was.

Shannon Was not!

Sandra And then you roped us in because we weren't as good-looking as you.

Lisa Yeah, that's right, Shannon. If it wasn't for your vanity ...

Shannon I was told we would be dancing in glamorous gear to popular tunes of the five decades. I was told I could choose my costume.

Sandra I don't think your mum reckoned on a halter neck bikini.

Shannon That bikini was gorgeous.

Lisa You just wanted to show your arse off to Adam McEwan.

Shannon Christ, he's going to be there. This is worse than suicide.

Sandra He's going to get a right hard-on with you wearing that.

Shannon That does it. I'm not wearing this. We are not wearing this!

Sandra So what do we do?

Pause

Lisa Burn them!

Shannon Won't work.

Lisa Why not?

Shannon If we burn them, my mum will know it was us, and we'll be grounded for three weeks.

Lisa It's worth it, isn't it?

Shannon Three weeks Lisa.

Lisa So?

Shannon When is Britney at the NEC?

Lisa Two weeks tonight. *(Beat)* Oh.

Shannon Thank you very much.

Lisa We're screwed.

Sandra Hold on a minute. You only got two tickets for Britney and you've promised Lisa the other one. So what's stopping me burning mine?

Shannon One, because you're first reserve for the concert. And two, because if you burn your dress and make us do the Jubilee parade alone, we'll tell your mum about Mitchell Figgis and the bottle of cider.

Sandra You wouldn't do that. (*Knowing Shannon would*) You bitch.

Lisa So what do we do? Because I am not wearing this abomination in front of the whole town!

Shannon That's why I called the meeting. I've got a plan of action.

Lisa Go on.

Shannon First we go back to my mum and tell her how much we love the dresses.

Sandra That will be the biggest lie ever told by woman.

Shannon Second, free from all suspicion, we eliminate the queen.

Pause

Sandra Don't you think that's a bit extreme?

Shannon Not the Queen in Buckingham Palace. The queen that is currently sitting in Mrs Chivers' living-room in Penthall Gardens.

Lisa You mean...?

Shannon I mean if we can get in there without being noticed and destroy the statue, then there will be no queen, no float, no procession, and no ritual humiliation.

Sandra Wow.

Lisa But it's by an artist. He won a prize or something.

Shannon Who says?

Lisa It was in the paper. He's bringing art into the community. He's funded.

Shannon So what?

Lisa And he's staying with the Chivers' because they're great supporters of the liberal arts.

Shannon So what?

Lisa He made the queen in their garage. It's taken him four months.

Shannon I don't care if took him twenty years, I'm not wearing this dress.

Lisa And anyway the Chivers' will be there...

Shannon They're not there. Mr and Mrs Chivers are at a pre-Jubilee hoe-down in a barn four miles outside town. They've taken the artist with them.

Lisa The house is empty?

Shannon Not quite.

Sandra They've got a kid.

Shannon Which is being baby-sat.

Lisa By who?

Sandra By who?

Shannon By Shaun Digby.

Lisa Shaun "the lips" Digby?

Shannon "The lips" is all that stands between us and fashion safety.

Sandra How do we do it?

Shannon Lisa goes in, makes out like she fancies him and gets him upstairs. Then we sneak in and deface her majesty. When we're done, Lisa makes out like she had nothing to do with it, and he can't even say she was there, 'cos it would look like he was having girls in the house on the sly.

Pause

Sandra That is brilliant.

Lisa Excuse me. Why am I the one kissing Shaun Digby?

Shannon Everyone knows he fancies you.

Lisa He only fancies me because he knows he hasn't got a chance of getting you. He's just being realistic.

Sandra Don't be down about it, he's all right, is Shaun.

Lisa He's a minger! I'm not doing it.

Sandra I will.

Shannon He doesn't fancy you.

Sandra Oh.

Lisa I'm not doing it.

Sandra Go on, Lise.

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