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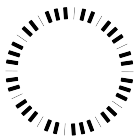
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**CONCORD**  
THEATRICALS

# ESCAPED ALONE

by Caryl Churchill

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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ISBN 978-0-573-03030-7

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## **ESCAPED ALONE**

*ESCAPED ALONE* was first performed at the Royal Court Jerwood Theatre Downstairs, London on 21 January 2016. It was directed by James Macdonald with design by Miriam Buether, lighting by Peter Mumford and sound by Christopher Shutt. The cast was as follows:

**SALLY**

Deborah Findlay

**VI**

June Watson

**LENA**

Kika Markham

**MRS JARRETT**

Linda Bassett

## **CHARACTERS**

SALLY

VI

LENA

MRS JARRETT

They are all at least seventy.

## **SETTING**

Sally's backyard.

Several unmatching chairs. Maybe one's a kitchen chair.

## **TIME**

Summer afternoon.

A number of afternoons but the action is continuous.

*I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

– Book of Job

– *Moby Dick*

## 1.

**MRS JARRETT** I'm walking down the street and there's a door in the fence open and inside are three women I've seen before.

**VI** Don't look now but there's someone watching us.

**LENA** Is it that woman?

**SALLY** Is that you, Mrs Jarrett?

**MRS J** So I go in.

**SALLY** Rosie locked out in the rain

**VI** forgot her key

**SALLY** climbed over

**LENA** lucky to have neighbours who

**SALLY** such a high wall

**VI** this is Rosie her granddaughter

**MRS J** I've a son, Frank

**VI** I've a son

**MRS J** suffers from insomnia

**VI** doesn't come very often. But Thomas

**LENA** that's her nephew

**SALLY** he'd knock up the shelves in no time

**VI** a big table

**SALLY** grain of the wood

**VI** a table like that would last a lifetime

**SALLY** an heirloom

LENA except we all eat off our laps

MRS J nothing like a table

LENA I like a table

VI all have each other's keys because there's no way round and  
anyway I couldn't climb

MRS J unless you lose them

VI no I hang them all on a nail

SALLY in a teapot

VI teapot?

SALLY Elsie puts them in and takes them out

LENA down the floorboards

VI only use bags in mugs

SALLY holds your finger and then takes one step and down she  
goes.

LENA Barney never out of his phone

VI I'd have been the same

LENA looking pale

VI whole worlds in your pocket

LENA little bit worried about Kevin and Mary, never hear an  
endearment

SALLY but nobody ever knows

MRS J you'd be surprised what goes on

LENA twenty years in June

VI we had to wear hats

SALLY a pink one and I didn't

VI so you gave it to Angela

SALLY I'd forgotten Angela

LENA shadows under her eyes

VI ended up with a green one and it didn't suit you

LENA I could never say a word of course.

VI And Maisie, never so happy

LENA that's her niece

SALLY quantum

VI I can't really follow

SALLY I can't even add up

LENA they don't add up any more

VI particles and waves I can manage but after that

SALLY always good at sums as a child, she'd say two big numbers

VI and while we were carrying things in our head

LENA I needed a pencil

SALLY she'd say the answer and it was always right

MRS J I could always make change quick with the shillings and  
pence

VI we'd be the ones got it wrong

LENA easier now it's decimal

SALLY always right.

LENA And Vera

MRS J Four hundred thousand tons of rock paid for by senior executives split off the hillside to smash through the roofs, each fragment onto the designated child's head. Villages were buried and new communities of survivors underground developed skills of feeding off the dead where possible and communicating with taps and groans. Instant celebrities rose on ropes to the light of flashes. Time passed. Rats were eaten by those who still had digestive systems, and mushrooms were traded for urine. Babies were born and quickly became blind.

Some groups lost their sexuality while others developed a new morality of constant fucking with any proximate body. A young woman crawling from one society to the other became wedged, only her head reaching her new companions. Stories of those above ground were told and retold till there were myths of the husband who cooked feasts, the wife who swam the ocean, the gay lover who could fly, the child who read minds, the talking dog. Prayers were said to them and various sects developed with tolerance and bitter hatred. Songs were sung until dry throats caused the end of speech. Torrential rain leaked through cracks and flooded the tunnels enabling screams at last before drownings. Survivors were now solitary and went insane at different rates.

## 2.

SALLY corner shop

LENA don't like the

VI mini Tesco

LENA bit far

MRS J used to be the fish and chip shop

VI that other one's gone

SALLY the old grocer

VI I'd do a shop for seventeen shillings

LENA so what's that in

MRS J fifteen's seventy-five p

VI but we earned nothing too

SALLY so who does the shopping if you can't go out?

LENA I do go

VI is Kevin a help?

SALLY I could always

VI but it's good for you to go yourself

SALLY good to get out

LENA I do get out

SALLY you're here

LENA it's not easy

SALLY antique shop now but in between it was that cafe

VI it was never a cafe

SALLY the Blue something, an animal

MRS J I been there

SALLY Hedgehog, something unlikely

VI I don't think so

SALLY maybe it was when

LENA oh

SALLY that would be it of course

VI I did miss a few things when I was away

MRS J away was you?

LENA just a little while

VI six years

SALLY that's what it was then, Blue Antelope

VI antique shops now but down the other end

SALLY yes three shops boarded up

VI that's the nail parlour and the old dentist

SALLY did you ever go?

VI he was terrible

SALLY he was such a bad

VI "this might just trouble you a little"

SALLY oh my god

VI half an hour to get there but so much better

LENA I should go to the dentist

SALLY a checkup

LENA it must be five years

MRS J you don't want toothache

LENA it's just one more thing you have to do, one thing after  
another, I can't seem to

SALLY I could always go with you

LENA if I go

**SALLY** or do some shopping

**VI** it's good she gets out herself

**LENA** I do get out

**SALLY** and the chicken nugget's closed down

**VI** that was the ironmonger's

**SALLY** no in between it was the health shop

**LENA** a hammer and a spade

**VI** there must be quite a few things I missed

**SALLY** not really, it all goes by, I can't remember those years specially

**VI** remember what was happening where I was of course

**SALLY** yes of course

**VI** though it gets to be a blur because it's all a bit the same

**SALLY** it must have been

**VI** unless there was an excitement like a fight

**MRS J** fights was there?

**VI** or love affairs

**LENA** I do get out it's just difficult

**MRS J** First the baths overflowed as water was deliberately wasted in a campaign to punish the thirsty. Swimming pools engulfed the leisure centres and coffee ran down the table legs. Rivers flowed back towards their tributaries and up the streams to what had been trickles in moss. Ponies climbed to high ground and huddled with the tourists. Yawls, ketches, kayaks, canoes, schooners, planks, dinghies, lifebelts and upturned umbrellas, swimming instructors and lilos, rubber ducks and pumice stone floated on the stock market. Waves engulfed ferris wheels and drowned bodies were piled up to block doors. Then the walls of water came from the sea. Villages vanished and cities relocated to their rooftops. Sometimes children fell

down the sewage chutes but others caught seagulls with kites. Some died of thirst, some of drinking the water. When the flood receded thousands stayed on the roofs fed by helicopter while heroes and bonded workers shoveled the muck into buckets that were stored in the flood museums.

# WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

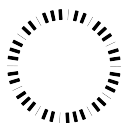
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