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CONCORD
THEATRICALS

BIRDS AND BEES

by Charlie Josephine

SAMUEL FRENCH

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BIRDS AND BEES was commissioned by Theatre Centre and is a co-production between Theatre Centre and Sheffield Theatres. The cast was as follows:

AARRON . . . . . Richard Logun
BILLY . . . . . Milo McCarthy
LEILAH . . . . . Dumile Sibanda
MAISY . . . . . Sandra Belarbi

Creative Team

Director	Rob Watt
Sound Designer	Lee Affen
Movement Director	Yami Löfvenberg
Lighting Designer	Hector Murray
Set & Costume Designer	Bethany Wells
Movement Assistant	Elsabet Yonas

Production Team

Resources	Hannah Austin
Marketing for Theatre Centre	Rachel Bellman
Production Manager	Gareth Edwards
Company Stage Manager	Lizzie Bond
Producers for Theatre Centre	Amy Michaels & Emma Rees
Marketing Consultants	Jane Morgan Associates
PR	Chloe Nelkin Consulting & Jo Allan PR
Schools Tour Booking & Coordination for Theatre Centre	Niamh Parker-Whitehead
Casting Consultant	Becky Paris
Artwork	Guy Sanders

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

Sandra Belarbi (MAISY)

(she/her) Sandra graduated from ALRA/Rose Bruford in 2022. Her stage credits include *Le Morte d'Arthur* (Matthew Evans), *Phaedra* (Sacha Duchamp), *People, Places & Things* (Jane Jeffery), *Rage* (Anastasia Osei-Kuffour), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Liam Begin, Paloma Oakenfold), *Boy* (Simon Pittman), *Beat Poetry* (Gemma Aked-Priestley) and *Dance Nation* (Lucy Curtis). Sandra is a very musical person, she loves to play the piano, guitar and ukulele.

Richard Logun (AARRON)

(he/him) Richard is a Nigerian-born actor based in South-East London. Having discovered a love of acting through playing Marius in a secondary school production of *Les Misérables*, he went on to train at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts, graduating in 2022. His most recent work includes playing the character 'T' in a schools tour of *The Lies You Tell* produced by the New Wolsey Theatre and Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds.

Milo McCarthy (BILLY)

(they/them) Milo is a non-binary actor who trained at Italia Conti. They recently made their professional debut in Rogers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella* at the Hope Mill Theatre, covering the role of Jean-Michel. Credits include *Starry, The Vincent Van Gogh Musical* (Workshop), *Pippin* (Italia Conti), and *Carrie* (Italia Conti).

Dumile Sibanda (LEILAH)

(she/her) Dumile's most recent work was *Rock, Paper, Scissors* by Chris Bush, a triptych of plays as part of the Sheffield Theatres celebrating fifty years of the Crucible. She graduated from Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. Her credits include playing Thea in *Hedda* on the main stage at Bristol Old Vic, directed by Jenny Stephens, and Nina in *The Three Seagulls* directed by Sally Cookson, also at Bristol Old Vic. Her professional work includes playing Gretel in Insane Root Theatre's production of *Hansel and Gretel.*

Charlie Josephine (Writer)

(they/them) Charlie Josephine is an actor and a writer. Their award-winning work includes *I, Joan*, *Bitch Boxer* and *Massive*. Charlie's passionate about honest, sweaty storytelling that centres working-class women and queer people. They're an associate artist at the NSDF and is this year's Resident Writer at Headlong Theatre. Charlie is currently under commission at the RSC, Salon Pictures and NT Connections.

Rob Watt (Director)

(he/him) Rob Watt is a critically acclaimed queer director, dramaturg and facilitator. He collaborates with writers, young people, communities, poets and designers to make sense of the fractured world we inhabit.

He is currently the Artistic Director for Theatre Centre, regularly teaches at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and works with the Institute of the Arts Barcelona. He previously was an Associate for Headlong Theatre, headed up the young people's team at the National Theatre, was a Lead Artist at Lyric Hammersmith, an Artist Mentor at the Barbican and Associate Director at Immediate Theatre.

Selected credits: *Human Nurture* by Ryan Calais Cameron (Theatre Centre & Sheffield Theatres, Theatre Peckham); *C+NTO* by Joelle Taylor (Apples and Snakes); *Acts of Resistance* by Stef Smith (Headlong Theatre & Bristol Old Vic); *Rallying Cry* by Apples and Snakes (Battersea Arts Centre, BBC Contains Strong Words Festival Hull, Brighton Fringe); *The Exorcism* by Ross Sutherland (Battersea Arts Centre); *SEXY* by Vanessa Kisuule (Roundhouse / Bristol Old Vic / UK Tour); *Be Prepared* by Ian Bonar (Underbelly / VAULT Festival); *Party Trap* by Ross Sutherland (Shoreditch Town Hall); *Goosebumps* by Rob Watt (The Vaults); *Standby For Tape Back-Up* by Ross Sutherland (Summerhall / Soho Theatre / Shoreditch Town Hall / UK tour)

Bethany Wells (Set & Costume Designer)

(she/her) Trained in architecture, Bethany is an award-winning performance designer working across dance, theatre and installation, with a particular interest in site-specific and devised performances. She sees all of her work as a form of spatial, social and sensory activism. She is interested in exploring what can be achieved politically and socially by the collective live experience of performance. Her practice is trauma-informed, in terms of both process and audience experience.

Current projects include: *Birds and Bees*, Sheffield Theatres; *All That Lives*, The Grief Series; *The People's Palace of Possibility*, The Bare Project

Recent work includes: *You Heard Me*, Luca Rutherford; *Choreography of Care Symposium*, Claire Cunningham; *Written in the Body*, Charlotte Spencer Projects, Brighton Festival; *This Endless Sea*, Chlöe Smith; *Extreme Unction Vol. 2*, Nwando Ebizie; *War of the Worlds*, Rhum + Clay; *Thank You Very Much*, Claire Cunningham, MIF/National Theatre of Scotland

Hector Murray (Lighting Design)

(he/him) Hector is a lighting designer for plays, dance and musicals working in the UK and internationally.

In 2020 he was nominated for an Offie Award: Best Lighting Designer for his work on *Whistle Down the Wind*. In 2017 he received the ETC Award for excellence in lighting design from the Association of Lighting Designers.

Design credits include: *A Night with Boy Blue* (Barbican Theatre); *Dirty Hearts* (Old Red Lion); *Treasure Island* (Greenwich Theatre); *Kattam Katti* (Sadlers Wells); *1st Luv* (The Big House); *Beige* (The Vaults); *Whistle Down the Wind* (Union Theatre) and *Acts of Resistance* (Headlong Futures)

Lee Affen (Sound Designer)

(he/him) Lee is a composer, music producer, sound designer and theatremaker from Manchester now based in Sheffield. Lee composes for theatre, dance and film, and sonic storytelling and collaboration are at the heart of his practice.

Lee's credits include Cardboard Citizens' *Who Are Yer?*, Imagine If's *Jadek*, Fallen Angels and Birmingham Royal Ballet's *The War Within*, the Theatre Centre and Sheffield Theatre's *Human Nurture*, Roots Mbili's *Fargone*, BBC Radio 3's *New Voices*, the Bare Project's *Outskirts*, Utopia Theatres' *Anna Hibiscus' Song*, the British Library's *Where Two Rivers Meet*, Theatr Clwyd and Paperfinch's *The Fairytale Detectives* and original live scores for *Metropolis*, *Nosferatu* and *The Passion of Joan of Arc*.

Lee is a company member of the Bare Project and an Associate Artist with Imagine If Theatre and Box of Tricks Theatre. 2023 sees Lee working on productions with the Theatre Centre, Box of Tricks, Utopia Theatre and the Bare Project.

Yami Löfvenberg (Movement Director)

(she/her) Yami "Rowdy" Löfvenberg is a multidisciplinary artist, a movement and theatre director, working at the intersection of dance, theatre and cross-arts. Between making her own work, Yami mentors, educates and delivers workshops. She is a lecturer in Hip-Hop and Vernacular Dances at Trinity Laban Dance Conservatoire. A British Council and Arts Council England recipient, Howard Davies Emerging Directors Grant Recipient, One Dance UK DAD Trailblazer Fellow, Marion North Recipient and a Talawa Make Artist. She was on the creative choreographic team for the 2012 Olympics Opening Ceremony and is a member of the internationally acclaimed performance collective Hot Brown Honey.

Movement Director credits include: *The UK Drill Project* (Barbican), *Roundabout 22* (Paines Plough), *The Concrete Jungle Book* (The pleasance), *Kabul Goes Pop* (Brixton House), *Human Nurture* (Theatre Centre / Sheffield Theatre), *Athena* (The Yard Theatre), *Notes on Grief* (Manchester International Festival), *Rare Earth Mettle & Living Newspaper* (Royal Court), *Fuck You Pay Me* (Bunker), *Breakin' Convention* (Sadler's Wells), *Talawa TYPT* (Hackney Showrooms), *Boat* (BAC)

Director credits include: *Fierce Flow* (Hippodrome Birmingham), *Kind of Woman* (Camden People's), *Afroabelhas* (Roundhouse / British Council / Tempo Festival)

Assistant Director/Choreographer credits include: *Hive City Legacy* (Roundhouse, Home, Millennium), *Hive City Legacy; Dublin* (Dublin Fringe)

THEATRE CENTRE

THEATRE CENTRE

Theatre Centre is a new writing, national touring theatre company, making bold, relevant shows with and for young people in schools, theatres, communities and digitally. We run Future Makers, a whole new way of collaborating with young people as artists, creative leaders and active citizens. It is central to all our work and is the key to how we unlock our young people-centred practice.

Future Makers embeds young people at the core of our work, bringing young people together with artists in democratised spaces to explore big, relevant issues. We listen actively and radically, using these insights to create shows, build relationships and deepen reach.

We commission new work from trailblazing writers in response to themes emerging from Future Makers, with the writer and young people collaborating to develop the work, and we take this work into schools and theatres across the UK. In 2021 we reached over 60,000 students in over 500 schools with the film of *Birds and Bees* by Charlie Josephine. In 2022 we toured Human Nurture by award-winning writer Ryan Calais Cameron to over sixty UK schools.

Theatre Centre has pioneered school touring since 1953 and is recognised as a ground-breaking force in young people-centred practice. We have long been a vital catalyst for youth leadership and creativity; nurturing writers at breakthrough points in their careers with commissions, dramaturgical support and access to other theatre makers.

In autumn 2023 we will celebrate seventy years of making work that changes lives.

www.theatre-centre.co.uk

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SHEFFIELD THEATRES

SHEFF!ELD
THEATRES

Sheffield Theatres is home to three theatres: the Crucible, the Sheffield landmark with a world-famous reputation; the Playhouse, an intimate, versatile space for getting closer to the action; and the gleaming Lyceum, the beautiful proscenium that hosts the best of the UK's touring shows. In November 2021, the Crucible and Playhouse theatres celebrated their fiftieth anniversary.

Having held the title 'Regional Theatre of the Year' on four separate occasions, Sheffield Theatres is the ticket to big names and local heroes, timeless treasures and new voices. Committed to investing in the creative leaders of the future, Sheffield Theatres' dedicated talent development hub, the Bank, opened in 2019 to support a new cohort of emerging theatre-makers every year.

Sheffield Theatres has a reputation for bold new work. The acclaimed *Life of Pi* began life at the Crucible, winning four awards at the 2019 UK Theatre Awards, 'Achievement in Technical Theatre' at the Stage Awards and 'Best New Play' at the WhatsOnStage Awards. The show opened in the West End in 2021, winning five Olivier Awards in 2022, and this year returns to Sheffield Theatres as part of a UK and Ireland tour. This success follows the phenomenal Sheffield musical *Everybody's Talking About Jamie* which also originated at the Crucible in 2017, before transferring to the West End, embarking on a UK tour and being turned into a feature film released simultaneously to 244 countries on Amazon Prime in September 2021.

Most recently, *Rock / Paper / Scissors*, three plays performed concurrently across the three theatres by a single cast, was staged as the centrepiece of Sheffield Theatres' fiftieth anniversary celebrations. Robert Hastie, Anthony Lau and Elin Schofield won Best Directors at the UK Theatre Awards 2022 for the ambitious trilogy. Concluding 2022, Sheffield Theatres, in co-production with the National Theatre and Various Productions, revived their multi-award-winning new musical *Standing at the Sky's Edge*. Originally staged in 2019, the hit show returned to the Crucible ahead of transferring to the National Theatre in February 2023.

Crucible Lyceum Playhouse: 55 Norfolk Street, Sheffield, S1 1DA

sheffieldtheatres.co.uk

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Theatre Centre Team

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Touring Producer	Amy Michaels
Strategic Development Partner	Moni Onojeruo
Programme & Admin Coordinator	Niamh Parker-Whitehead
Future Makers Producer	Ben Price
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Creative Associate	Monay Thomas
Artistic Director	Rob Watt

Sheffield Theatres Team

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Deputy Chief Executive	Bookey Oshin
Artistic Director	Robert Hastie

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Associate Artistic Director	Anthony Lau
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Assistant to Chief Executive & Artistic Director	Jackie Pass

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Deputy Front of House Manager	Jake Ross
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Communications Executive	Thomas Adcock
Media Officer	Carrie Askew
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Multimedia Producer	Lucy Smith-Jones
Programmer	Helen Dobson

Producing Team

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Company Manager	Andrew Wilcox
New Work Coordinator	Ruby Clarke
Talent Development Coordinator	Tommi Bryson
New Work Officer	Misha Duncan-Barry
Playright Mentor	Grace Gummer
Assistant Producer	James Ashfield
Trainee Producer	Miranda Debenham
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Stage Manager	Sarah Gentle
Deputy Stage Manager	Sarah Greenwood
Assistant Stage Manager	Rosalind Chappelle
Head of Wardrobe	Debbie Gamble
Deputy Heads of Wardrobe	Abi Nettleship, Sally Wilson
Wardrobe Assistants	Rose Jennings, Merle Richards-Wright, Sophie Sidhu
Wardrobe & Wig Mistress	Valerie Atkinson
Dressers	Gemma Anderson, Jess Atkinson, Lily Broadbent, Sophie Harvey, Abigail Hindley, Martha Lamb, Eleanor McBurnie, Jennifer Moore, Angela Platts, Katy Scott, Anouchka Santella, Amanda Thompson
Cutters	Silivia Devilly, Kate Harrison, Imogen Singer

Company in Residence	Utopia Theatre
Producer / Creative Director	Mojisola Elufowoju
Associate Company	Third Angel

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Lewisham and Sheffield Future Makers, Lewisham Youth Theatre, National Youth Theatre, Justin Kendal-Sadiq, Connie Fiddament, Liliya Filippova, Noor Sobka, Hetty Hodgson, Hackney Empire, Theatre Peckham, Dan Bates and Rob Hastie from Sheffield Theatres.

Zeena Rashid and National Drama, Alexander Perricone and Alliance Berstein, Milk Presents and all the schools and young people from across the UK who helped develop *Birds and Bees*.

Our Chair Titilola Dawudu and Trustees Aleksa Asme, Yamin Choudury, Frazer Flintham, Gareth Hughes, David Luff, Rebecca Major, Tayo Medupin, Vanessa Sauls.

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CHARACTERS

AARRON – 16, Black, male. Working class. Cool, cheeky and charming.

BILLY – 16, any race, AFAB nonbinary. Working class. An outsider who's secretly eager to play.

LEILAH – 16, Black, female. Working class. Razor-sharp wit, with a big, open heart.

MAISY – 16, white, female. Middle class. More childlike than the rest, but not to be underestimated.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

Stage directions are in italics and parentheses. Capital letters are used to suggest an emphasis on specific words.

A slash (/) indicates a fast run-on to the next line, almost an interruption.

A standalone period (.) indicates where someone should have a line but for some reason isn't speaking.

A slash with two periods (/..) indicates where a word can't be found and something physical happens instead. Perhaps it's a small, naturalistic gesture or perhaps a big, abstract movement. Each one is an invitation to express something physically.

AUTHOR'S BIO

Charlie Josephine is an actor and a writer. Charlie Their award-winning work includes *I, Joan*, *Bitch Boxer* and *Massive*. Charlie's passionate about honest, sweaty storytelling that centres working-class women and queer people. They're an associate artist at the NSDF and is this year's Resident Writer at Headlong Theatre. Charlie's currently under commission at the RSC, Salon Pictures, NT Connections and Pentabus Theatre.

To Natalie Wilson for inspiring me to write passionately and politically for Theatre Centre. To Rob Watt for your radical kindness, fierce queer rage and big belly laughs. To Jonathan at the Agency for your persistent energy and enthusiasm. To Emma Rees, Ben Price and Niamh Parker-Whitehead at Theatre Centre, for organising and contracting with such care. To Lee Affen for your sound magic, to Bethany Wells for your wonderful design brain, and to Yami Löfvenberg for your movement brilliance.

To Ida, Regna, Narisha Lawson, Ike Bennett, E M Williams, Steven Atkinson, Xana, Archie Short and Damilola 'DK' Fashola for your brilliant work on the film and digital package version of *Birds And Bees*, all made during a global pandemic no less.

To all the young people who helped during the many various R&Ds – thank you for your courage, honesty and wit.

To my mum for teaching me some bits about the birds and the bees. To all the queer literature and lovers for filling in the gaps. To my LGBTQ+ elders for showing me the way. To everyone who protested against Section 28. To everyone still healing that damage. To Sexplain, Tender, Stonewall, Gendered Intelligence and Mermaids for your tireless love and activism.

(We hear the play before we see it. It sounds sick. We walk in and see four actors making a track live, with loop pedals and microphones. It's exciting to watch. They smile and nod at us as we enter. No fourth wall. Full acknowledgment that this is a live piece of theatre. When everyone's ready, the actors dim the music and speak to us.)

BILLY. So, this is the situation. There's Cherrelle and Jack.

AARRON. He's my best mate.

LEILAH. She's mine.

MAISY. And they're like the school's hottest couple.

LEILAH. They're so cute together, honestly, it's unreal!

BILLY. And they're doing what young people in love do.

MAISY. Constant Instagram!

AARRON. Snapchat and TikTok for days!

LEILAH. Hashtag couple goals!

MAISY. Hashtag so in love!

BILLY. And I guess they must have been sending each other stuff, you know, videos and that. Private stuff, stuff that's *private* /

LEILAH. Until Jack made it public! Showing off to his mates!

AARRON. Hey, let's not speculate! We don't know exactly what happened /

LEILAH. Erm, I think we do!

MAISY. Yeah I think it's pretty obvious!

AARRON. I think that's unfair. Innocent until proven guilty and all that.

LEILAH. Nah cus /

BILLY. Anyway! However it happened, it got shared. Cherrelle's private video got shared.

MAISY. And in *seconds*, everyone's seen it!

EVERYONE. Everyone!

AARRON. And things kick off like, *so fast*!

MAISY. Yeah I was shocked!

LEILAH. Yeah cus like, this happens all the time /

MAISY. All the time!

LEILAH. But I don't think our parents even know, like, the extent of it.

AARRON. Yeah this is nothing new for us. But for some reason they heard about it /

BILLY. Parents, teachers, the school governors, the *police* /

AARRON. And it's all kicked off!

MAISY. Will Jack get arrested?

LEILAH. I dunno if it's even a crime?

BILLY. It is. But it's hard to prove he did it on purpose.

AARRON. He wouldn't have! It'd have been some stupid mistake /

LEILAH. She's not left her room for days!

MAISY. I wouldn't either.

LEILAH. Oh my god I'd die! I'd literally die!

AARRON. He's really upset too!

LEILAH. Good! So he should be!

BILLY. But the thing that's been really upsetting, is how the school's responded.

LEILAH. Yeah!

AARRON. Yeah it's a mess!

LEILAH. And now we're *stuck* here tryna pick up the pieces?!

AARRON. Tryna make sense of it all /

MAISY. And know what to do next.

LEILAH. I'm Leilah, by the way. This is my boyfriend.

AARRON. Aarron. Y'alright? And that's Maisy.

MAISY. Hi.

BILLY. And I'm Billy.

MAISY. We're in year eleven, about to do our GCSEs. I'm top of the year, and a prefect /

LEILAH. Oh my God /

AARRON. No one cares Maisy /

MAISY. I do /

LEILAH. Anyway!

BILLY. Yeah, so that's that. Intro done! You're all caught up with the backstory, so now we can get started. Scene One. Aarron's alone. Leilah enters.

(Music stops, lights shift. **BILLY** *and* **MAISY** *sit down at the side of the stage and watch the scene.* **LEILAH** *and* **AARRON** *see each other.* **LEILAH** *is unimpressed.)*

AARRON. Ah! Don't look at me like that!

LEILAH. Don't speak to me!

AARRON. Babes!

LEILAH. Don't 'babes' me!

AARRON. Ah come on! It's not my fault I /

LEILAH. Whose fault is it then Aarron?! Not yours, no, 'course not! Cus you *never* take responsibility!

AARRON. Hang on, I /

LEILAH. You *avoid* speaking to me /

AARRON. I was try/

LEILAH. About *anything* serious, *anything* even slightly deep, at all /

AARRON. I'm trying to /

LEILAH. We're meant to be in a relationship? And you can't even speak to me /

AARRON. Yeah but, I'm try/

LEILAH. About how you're feeling? That's *basic*! You can't honestly connect with me /

AARRON. *I was trying to!*

LEILAH. In *assembly*?! In the Special Assembly they're holding because our best friends are in trouble, *that's* the time you choose? Oh yeah nice one babes! Perfect timing! Wonderful! *What is wrong with you?!*

AARRON. Look, I didn't /

LEILAH. Now we're stuck in *here* when I should be seeing Cherrelle!

AARRON. I know, I /

LEILAH. And *you* should be seeing Jack, to work out what the hell he's been playing at /

AARRON. I /

LEILAH. Have you spoken to Jack?

AARRON. No I /

LEILAH. Why not?! You're always together.

AARRON. His mum won't let anyone /

LEILAH. Were you there when he did it?

AARRON. What?! No! I /

LEILAH. I swear down Aarron, if you had *anything* to do with /

AARRON. I didn't! I swear! I had no idea that Jack would do that! It's not like him, he's not /

LEILAH. Did you delete the ones I sent you?

AARRON. Yes!

LEILAH. All of them?

AARRON. Yes! I swear! …Even the really hot ones /

LEILAH. Aarron!

AARRON. What?

(He dances his way over to her, cheeky and charming. She pouts, trying not to laugh, but he's actually really funny.)

Ah look, come on. You know I'm not like that. I wouldn't do that to you!

LEILAH. *(Softer.)* No, you just get me in trouble.

AARRON. Nah, nah come now. You know that wasn't my /

LEILAH. Fault? Oh my gosh! My *best friend* needs me, and I'm stuck in here, with you. And you're tryna tell me it's *not* your fault?! Seriously?!

AARRON. It's not! I /

LEILAH. Say that again! I dare you! Try and duck the blame again Aarron, I *dare* you!

AARRON. Babes /

LEILAH. Don't 'babes' me! Don't speak to me!

*(**LEILAH** gets her phone out and scrolls furiously. **MAISY** enters. **LEILAH** and **AARRON** stop dead.)*

AARRON & LEILAH. Maisy?!

AARRON. Wot are *you* doin' *here*?!

LEILAH. You're *never* in trouble!

MAISY. I know.

*(**MAISY** puts her bags down, and they stare at her.)*

AARRON. Nah! Nah never!

MAISY. Apparently so. Sitting next to you Aarron, as you disrupt assembly /

AARRON. Nah that wasn't /

MAISY. Is apparently crime enough! And now I've got to waste precious studying time being here with you?

LEILAH. Oh charming!

MAISY. Sir said we've got to work together to have an *honest* discussion /

AARRON. Yeah we know!

MAISY. And to write a formal apology /

AARRON. For what?!

MAISY. That we present to the year /

LEILAH. Nah /

MAISY. In tomorrow morning's assembly /

LEILAH. Nah. Nah I'm not doing that! No way!

MAISY. Okay. So, Aarron, let's start with /

AARRON. Yeah I ain't apologising for shit!

MAISY. Oh wow, what a fantastic attitude! That's so helpful for us! Thank you Aarron, thank you so much.

LEILAH. Sarcasm ain't clever you know. It's just rude.

MAISY. Well we're in enough trouble as it is! Oh my god. I can't believe *I'm* in trouble, I'm *never* in trouble, I'm a *Prefect*!

LEILAH. And you're late.

MAISY. What?

LEILAH. You're late. So that's more trouble. Double trouble.

*(***MAISY** *clenches her fists and stares at* **LEILAH**, *who backs away, amused.)*

MAISY. I, am, not, *late*! I am *never* late!

LEILAH. Okay!

*(***AARRON** *chuckles and* **MAISY** *glares at him.)*

MAISY. I was in the office actually, stating my case.

AARRON. *(Laughs.)* Case!

MAISY. I've spent *all day* trying to explain to them that I don't deserve to be here. I've *never* been in trouble. I've had a *clean* slate, for *five*, *years*! Until today! Until *you* decided to /

AARRON. It wasn't *my* fault!

LEILAH. Wow!

MAISY. You interrupted the *Headmaster's* speech?! What were you thinking?!

AARRON. They shouldn't have been bangin' on like that! A *'special assembly'*? You jokin'?! Like that's gonna solve anythin'?

MAISY. Well, what is it exactly that *you* would /

AARRON. I should have known it'd be dead. As *soon* as they announced it. As *soon* as they said they were doing a /

AARRON & LEILAH. *'Special Assembly'!*

AARRON. To discuss the /

AARRON & LEILAH. *'Incident'!*

AARRON. Dead! So dead!

MAISY. I don't understand.

LEILAH. There wasn't exactly much *discussion*, was there? More of a one-way conversation. A monologue, if you like.

AARRON. Haha yeah! *'Two of our students have let everyone down!'*

MAISY. Yes, okay yes, but I'm sure that they were just trying to /

LEILAH. And it was soooo long?! He uses like fifty *thousand* words when like, one or two would do?!

AARRON. Proper pointing the finger.

MAISY. That's, that's not *quite*, what was /

LEILAH. Why are you defending them?!

MAISY. I'm not! I'm not, I'm just /

AARRON. Nah! Nah! What happened in there was *madness*!

LEILAH. Lecturing us?

AARRON. Being all like, *patronising* and shit?

LEILAH. So patronising! Talking to us like we're stupid? Like we're literally children?

AARRON. *'You shouldn't be sexting!'*

LEILAH. Urgh! I literally gagged when Mr Thompkins said that!

AARRON. *'Sending nudes is very, very dangerous!'*

LEILAH. Gross!

MAISY. Well, it is.

AARRON. Wot?

MAISY. It is, dangerous.

*(***LEILAH** *and* **AARRON** *laugh at her.)*

LEILAH. Wow! Okay?! This is 2023 babes! We're not like some Victorian old people!

MAISY. Yeah, but /..

LEILAH. What?

MAISY. .

LEILAH. What?!

MAISY. It's just, pretty stupid.

LEILAH. Oh my gosh?! You did *not* just call my best friend stupid?!

MAISY. No! I'm, I just, *sexting*, is stupid? Is, sometimes /

LEILAH. Oh my gosh?!

AARRON. Mais, do yourself a favour and shut up man!

LEILAH. Cherrelle is like *literally* my sister?!

MAISY. I know! I mean /

AARRON. Jack's my best mate!

MAISY. Yeah! I know, I mean, I know that she /

LEILAH. No you don't. You don't know what happened!

MAISY. No, no I don't know, *all* the details /

LEILAH. No! So mind your own business!

MAISY. I'm just saying /

LEILAH. Well don't!

MAISY. The *situation* is stupid. I'm just saying that /

AARRON. For a clever girl you sound like an idiot!

MAISY. I just. I actually think the school is handling it really well /

LEILAH. Wow!

MAISY. I mean it's delicate isn't it?

AARRON. Trust you to take their side!

MAISY. There are no sides! They're trying to protect us!

AARRON. Yeah sure!

MAISY. Look, the ones to blame here are Cherrelle and Jack, not the school.

LEILAH & AARRON. What?!

MAISY. Well, the truth is we wouldn't have even *been* in assembly, if they hadn't done it. We wouldn't be *here* now /

LEILAH. If *Aarron* hadn't kicked off we wouldn't!

AARRON. I didn't 'kick off'! I said *one* word!

MAISY. 'For fuckssake' is at least two.

AARRON. Woteva.

MAISY. Oh my god, we're in so much trouble! I knew I shouldn't have sat near you. I just *knew* it!

LEILAH. And like, I was a bit proud of you babes I'm not gonna lie, but also like, *pick your moment* you know?! Now's *really* not the time to be a hero.

AARRON. I wasn't being a hero.

LEILAH. So what were you doing?

AARRON. Tryna get *your* attention! You kept ignoring me?!

LEILAH. Oh. *(On mic.)* And *why* was I ignoring you Aarron? Wanna talk about that?

AARRON. Not really.

MAISY. It was obvious *I* wasn't being disruptive. I mean, as if I'd *ever* interrupt /

LEILAH. *(On mic.)* No! 'Course not! Cus you *never* wanna talk about /

AARRON. *(On mic.)* You *always* wanna talk about *every*, *little*, *thing*!

LEILAH. *(On mic.)* Oh my gosh /

AARRON. *(On mic.)* Over and *over*! Making *everything* such a big deal?!

LEILAH. *(On mic.)* Wow!

MAISY. This will be on my records! It's just *so unfair*! I've been working *so hard*! Why should I be punished because you couldn't /

AARRON. Alright Mais. Can you just shut up a minute /

MAISY. No it's not alright! We've got *exams* coming up! I should be studying right, *now*! But instead I'm in *here*, with *you*, all because some of your friends couldn't keep their clothes on in front of a camera /

LEILAH. Woah, hang on /

MAISY. Our *final exams*?! I am *not failing* because of *you*!

AARRON. Oh come on Mais, you're not gonna fail!

MAISY. You're right, I'm not! Just need to stay *focused*. Work *hard*, stay *focused*, work hard, stay focused, work hard, stay /

AARRON. Are you crying?!

MAISY. No!

AARRON. You are!

MAISY. I'm not!

LEILAH. Wow!

AARRON. You need to chill out, seriously, meditate or some shit. Like yoga, try yoga yeah? Do that humming thing like, ommmmmmmm!

(He laughs at himself. No one else laughs.)

Okay!

LEILAH. Look, none of us wanna be here Maisy, it's not just you.

AARRON. Yeah I'm meant to be at training right now.

LEILAH. I'm meant to be seeing Cherrelle!

AARRON. We've got tryouts next week.

LEILAH. She really needs me!

AARRON. This could be my Big Chance!

LEILAH. And I'm not there for her! And I can't even message her because her mum's taken her stupid phone!

AARRON. I scored twelve goals last season, so I should be /

LEILAH. Can you shut up about football?!

AARRON. Erm, no. *(Big grin.)* I can't. And I don't want to.

(He does a mic-drop dance, making himself laugh. **MAISY** *and* **LEILAH** *are not impressed.)*

LEILAH. You're a joke!

AARRON. *What* is your problem /

LEILAH. There's more *important things* going on Aarron!

AARRON. Okay!

LEILAH. But you don't wanna talk about them?! You don't wanna talk about anything serious, ever!

AARRON. Serious serious!

LEILAH. *All* you wanna talk about is *football*, and *sex*!

AARRON. Well, yeah.

LEILAH. Oh, get out my face!

AARRON. Babes, come on /

LEILAH. Oh my gosh! You're so stupid! You're actually so stupid!

AARRON. *(Quietly.)* Don't.

LEILAH. What?

AARRON. *(Quietly.)* Don't call me that.

LEILAH. Well then don't act like it Aarron, you're embarrassing yourself.

AARRON. Fine. I'm goin'.

*(***AARRON** *picks up his bag and moves towards the door.)*

MAISY. You can't!

AARRON. Watch me!

LEILAH. Aarron, you actually can't.

AARRON. Nah nah nah I'm done! I'm *done*!

*(***AARRON** *paces, but there's nowhere to go. He eventually returns to his position.)*

LEILAH. Told you. We can't leave until we've all been honest. Dem's da rules.

*(***LEILAH** *flicks her hair, smug.* **AARRON** *glares at her.* **LEILAH** *sticks her tongue out and scrolls on her phone.* **BILLY** *suddenly calls out from the side of the stage.)*

BILLY. Go on then.

LEILAH. Go on what?

BILLY. Be honest. Be real. And no, I don't mean the app.

*(***LEILAH** *shoves her phone aside and glares at* **BILLY**.*)*

LEILAH. What are you on about /

BILLY. You've obviously got somethin' to say, you always do. And if we've all gotta be honest, *all* includes you.

LEILAH. You're not even in the scene yet. Why you getting involved?

MAISY. *(Staring wide-eyed at the audience.)* Er, guys, can we please stick to the script?

AARRON. They're right though. Go on Leilah, get honest. Say something /

LEILAH. Oh, I'm always honest! I say it how it is, always have, always will. I wear my heart on my sleeve and I /

BILLY. Nah nah nah come on! What's really going on? Under all that front.

AARRON. Yeah, take off the armour and be true for a second. Come on! Speak truth!

LEILAH. .

AARRON. Thought so. Not just me that finds it hard eh?

LEILAH. Nah it's just that I don't wanna speak if you're not listening!

AARRON. I'm listening!

LEILAH. No you ain't!

AARRON. Oh my God!

MAISY. Look, sir said /

LEILAH. *(Mimicking.)* Sir said!

MAISY. We've got to have an honest discussion, as a group /

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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