PLAYFIGHT

by Julia Grogan

SAMUEL FRENCH

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PLAYFIGHT was first produced by Grace Dickson Productions and Theatre Uncut at Paines Plough's Roundabout at Summerhall, as part of Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2024. Following this, the production toured to Bristol Old Vic, Belgrade Theatre Coventry and Soho Theatre in Spring 2025. The cast for both runs was as follows:

ZAINAB . . . . . Nina Cassells
KEIRA . . . . . Sophie Cox
LUCY . . . . . Lucy Mangan

Writer – Julia Grogan
Director – Emma Callander
Designer – Hazel Low
Composer & Sound Designer – Roly Botha
Lighting Designer – Kate Bonney
Movement Director & Choreographer – Aline David
Associate Director – Natalie Simone
Production Manager – Liz Barker
Stage Manager – Iona Hicks
Producer – Grace Dickson

Playfight was written by Julia Grogan and is her debut play. *Playfight* won The Experienced Theatre Practitioners Early Playwriting Award in 2020. In 2021, the play went on to be shortlisted for the Papatango Award, the Theatre Uncut Award and The Women's Prize for Playwriting. The play is currently a co-production between Theatre Uncut and Grace Dickson Productions.

CAST

NINA CASSELLS | Zainab
Nina graduated from Guildhall School of Music and Drama in 2024, where she was the recipient of the Laurence Olivier Bursary.
Theatre includes: *Swive* (The Globe, dir. Natalie Abrahami); *The Crucible* (The Yard, dir. Jay Miller).
Radio includes: *Oliver: London to Lagos* (BBC Radio 4, dir. Michael Buffong).
Theatre while training includes: *Yerma* (dir. Sophie Dillon Moniram); *The Trojan Women* (dir. Patsy Rodenburg); *The Seagull* (dir. Lyndsey Turner).

SOPHIE COX | Keira
Sophie trained at Guildhall School of Music and Drama.
Her professional theatre credits include: *Reykjavik* (Hampstead Theatre); *Playfight* (Roundabout @ Summerhall, Edinburgh)
Theatre whilst training includes: *Jane Eyre*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Days of Significance* (Guildhall).

LUCY MANGAN | Lucy
Training: The Royal Central School of Speech & Drama.
Theatre includes: *Macbeth* (Wessex Grove UK/US Tour); *Harry Potter And The Cursed Child* (Palace Theatre); *Living Newspaper* (Royal Court); *Queen Margaret* (The Royal Exchange); *Let The Right One In* (National Theatre of Scotland); *Danger Brigade* (Crybabies Comedy); *Trip* (Stockwell Playhouse); *Before I Was A Bear* (CentrE17); *Alice In The Cuckoo's Nest* (Librarian Theatre); *Moonface* (Guttersnipe Theatre).
Television includes: *The Great*, *Doctors*.
Film includes: *The Magic Finger*, *Disconnected*.
Radio includes: *The Christchurch Murder*, *Vampirella*, *INK 2 minute plays*.

CREATIVE TEAM

JULIA GROGAN | Writer
Julia is a playwright and screenwriter from the Midlands. Julia's debut play, *Playfight*, won the ETPEP Award 2020, and was shortlisted for the Papatango Award, the Theatre Uncut Award and the Women's Prize for Playwriting. It ran at Summerhall's Roundabout through Edinburgh Fringe 2024 and received rave reviews, including five stars in The Guardian and The Times. Julia co-wrote, produced and starred in the play *Gunter*, which ran at Edinburgh Fringe 2023. *Gunter* garnered exceptional reviews, a Fringe First Award, and earned Julia a place on The Stage's list of five break-out theatre makers. Subsequently, the play enjoyed a run at the Royal Court in April 2024. Julia co-wrote and starred in dark historical-comedy *Belly Up* which premiered at VAULT

Festival 2020 and went onto sell-out, five-star run at The Turbine Theatre in 2021. *Belly Up* is now in development with the RSC. Julia is currently developing a comedy pilot, *Players*, with Hat Trick, and has been in the writers' room for a major new Amazon series.

EMMA CALLANDER | Director
Emma is the Artistic Director of Theatre Uncut. She trained at the National Theatre of Scotland on the Regional Theatre Young Directors Scheme. Work for Theatre Uncut includes *The Merthyr Stigmatist* by Lisa Parry and *Bubble* by Kieran Hurley. She has directed Theatre Uncut shorts at the Young Vic, Traverse Theatre, Bristol Old Vic Theatre, Arches Glasgow and Teatr Grob Copenhagen. Work as Associate Director for the Traverse Theatre includes *Cuckooed* by Mark Thomas and *Crash* by Andy Duffy. She has won three Fringe Firsts, the Herald Angel, Spirit of the Fringe and the Amnesty International Freedom of Expression Award.

HAZEL LOW | Designer
Hazel Low is a performance designer and collaborator across theatre, live art and spatial design.
Recent credits include: *The Glorious French Revolution* (New Diorama Theatre); *Blubber* (Summerhall); *Playfight* (Roundabout @ Summerhall); *The Legend of Ned Ludd* (Liverpool Everyman); *succession theme is my ringtone* (Rose Theatre); *Tiger* (Omnibus Theatre); *Bonfire* (Derby Theatre, Sheffield Theatre, Non Such); *As We Face The Sun* and *Pass It On* (Bush Theatre); *Who Killed My Father* (Tron Theatre, Summerhall, and Scottish Tour [co-design with Blythe Brett]); *Splintered* (Soho Theatre); *Brilliant Jerks* (Southwark Playhouse); *Paradise Now* (Bush Theatre [as co-costume designer and design associate]); *I, Joan* (Shakespeare's Globe [as design associate]). *Bogeyman* (Pleasance Queendome); *The Magic Flute* (Royal College of Music [co-designed with Rosie Elnile]). *Trainers* (Gate Theatre [as design assistant]). Spatial design projects include NDT Broadgate (as Design Associate) and the Royal Court's pop up bar Court in the Square in 2020.

ROLY BOTHA | Composer & Sound Designer
Roly (they/them) is a composer and sound designer, and is an Associate Artist of The PappyShow.
Theatre includes: *Playfight* (Soho/Bristol Old Vic/Belgrade/ Roundabout); *The Jungle Book* (Theatre by the Lake); *Rift* (Immediate Theatre); *Gunter* (Royal Court); *Dear Young Monster* (Bristol Old Vic); *Hir* (Park); *Gwyneth Goes Skiing* (Pleasance); *Truth & Tails* (Chichester Festival Theatre); *Tambo & Bones* (Theatre Royal Stratford East); *Shut Up, I'm Dreaming* (National Theatre/School's Tour); *The Ultimate Pickle*, *A Sudden Violent Burst of Rain*, *Half Empty Glasses* (Paines Plough); *Orlando* (Jermyn Street); *BOYS* (Barbican, Southbank Centre, touring); *Coming To England* (Birmingham Rep); *WILD* (Unicorn); *Blowhole* (Soho); *Milk & Gall* (Theatre503); *Brother* (Southwark Playhouse); *Warheads* (Park – Olivier Nominated).

KATE BONNEY | Lighting Designer
Kate designs lighting for a wide variety of live performance and events. Her heart lies in creating work that audiences remember forever alongside telling stories that truly deserve to be told.
Recent credits include *The Testament of Gideon Mack* with Dogstar Theatre on tour; *Hercules the Bear* with Tenterhooks on tour and touring again this autumn; *So Young* with the Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh playing again this autumn in the Traverse and newly refurbished Citizens Theatre in Glasgow; *Shō and the Demons of the Deep* with Independent Art Projects on tour; *Cyprus Avenue* with the Tron Theatre, Glasgow and *Mimi Store* with Jupiter Artland on Perth High Street. Kate also designs lighting for outdoor events including a number of My Christmas Trails with Culture Creative/Sony Music, The Unfolding for SLX/Bristol Light Festival in 2024 and once lit up a real live rocket for a photoshoot with Orbex, and aerospace company based in Kate's home town of Forres, Moray.

ALINE DAVID | Movement Director & Choreographer
Theatre work includes: *Till the Stars Come Down*, *A Taste of Honey*, *Barber Shop Chronicles*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Emil and the Detectives*, *Antigone*, *The Kitchen*, *Greenland and Our Class* (all National Theatre); *Arabian Nights* (Bristol Old Vic) *The Cord*, *The Arrival* (The Bush Theatre); *Sons of the Prophet* (Hampstead Theatre); *The Brothers Size*, *Dutchman*, *Eurydice*, *Elektra*, *Parallel Macbeth*, *The Invisible Woman, Playsize* (all Young Vic); *Wedding Band*, *School Girls Or, The African Mean Girls Play* (Lyric Hammersmith); *Dance Nation, The House of Bernarda Alba* (Almeida); *Macbeth, The Merchant of Venice* (both RSC); *Gunter*, *Gone Too Far!*, *Wanderlust* (Royal Court); *The Iphigenia Quartet*, *How to be Another Woman* (Gate); *First Love is the Revolution*, *FLIP!* (Soho Theatre); *The Crucible*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Taste of Honey*, *Alice* (Sheffield Crucible); *Of Mice and Men* (Birmingham Rep); *Looking for Yogurt* (Birmingham Studio); *Henry VIII*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Women Beware Women*, *Antony & Cleopatra*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Handel and the First Messiah* (all Shakespeare's Globe); *Proof* (Menier Chocolate Factory); *Waiting for Godot* (West Yorkshire Playhouse); *1984*, *Macbeth, The Mighty Waltzer* (all Royal Exchange); *A Christmas Carol* (Sherman Cardiff); *The Owl and the Pussycat* (ROH Olympic Project); *Working* (Royal Academy of Music); *Nothing* (Glyndebourne/Den Jyske Opera) and *Daphne* (La Monnaie; Belgium).
Television work includes: *The Crown S5*, *The Crown S6* (Netflix); *Augustus* (Apple); *The Typist* (Sky Arts).

NATALIE SIMONE | Associate Director
Natalie is an interdisciplinary theatre director. She trained as an actor at East 15 and then as a director at The Bristol Old Vic Theatre School.
Directing credits: *The Day I Got the Horn* (Royal & Derngate); *Metamorphoses* (The Egg, Theatre Royal Bath); *Henry V* (Site-specific,

Temple Church); *The Ugly One* (The Hope Theatre, nominated for Best Director, Off West End Awards); *The Hunger* (Assembly, Edinburgh Fringe Festival & Greenwich Theatre); *STAG* (Bristol Old Vic).
Natalie has worked as an Associate/Assistant alongside Patrick Marber, Sally Cookson and Josh Seymour. Credits include: *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Sheffield Theatres); *Nachtland* (Young Vic); *What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank* (Marylebone Theatre); *Emilia* (Circomedia); *Let The Right One In* (East 15).

LIZ BARKER | Production Manager
Liz Barker is an established and accomplished Production Manager, Lighting Designer and Theatre Maker based in Liverpool. Alongside *Playfight*, Liz's recent Production Management credits include: *WRESTLELADSWRESTLE* by Jenni Jackson; *Stuffed* by Ugly Bucket; *ADHD The Musical* by Dora Colquhoun; *Deep Blue* by Paperwork Theatre. They are the Production Manager for Pleasance Theatre Trust at the Edinburgh Fringe, the Director and Founder of March for the Arts and a Trustee of the disability arts charity, RAWD.
Liz studied Drama at Liverpool John Moores University and Graduated in 2016, 1st Class with the Lynda La Plante Award for Outstanding Contributions to Drama.

IONA HICKS | Stage Manager
Iona graduated Bristol Old Vic Theatre School in July 2024 where she specialised in Stage Management in her final year. Since then, she has worked as Stage Manager On Book for the following productions: *The Long Run* and *Playfight*, both produced by Grace Dickson Productions, showing at Edinburgh Fringe 2024. *The Snowy Day*, produced by Can't Sit Still at Polka Theatre; and Sam Wilde's Touring show, *Boxville*.
While in training she completed a five-week placement at the Donmar Warehouse as the Stage Management Intern on *Macbeth*, Directed by Max Webster. Credits in training include; Stage Manager, *A Very Expensive Poison* (Circomedia); Deputy Stage Manager, *Jekyll & Hyde* (Tobacco Factory Theatres). Assistant Stage Manager, *This House* (Tobacco Factory Theatres).



Grace Dickson Productions is a bold new production company, developing and producing formally innovative & bitingly relevant new writing that champions marginalised voices. GDP works collaboratively with artists on professional development as well as producing work that isn't afraid to make a noise and ruffle some feathers. GDP produces theatre that represents the world we live in and the worlds beyond it; work that is imaginative, playful and boundary-breaking.

Credits include: *Playfight* (Roundabout); *Lady Dealer* (Roundabout, Bush Theatre); *The Long Run* (New Diorama, Edinburgh Fringe, UK Tour); *SPLINTERED* (Soho Theatre); *Project Dictator* (New Diorama); *Move Fast and Break Things* (Summerhall, Edinburgh Fringe); *BOGEYMAN* (Pleasance Edinburgh Fringe); *Whodunnit [Unrehearsed]* (Park Theatre); *Flushed* (Park Theatre); *Belly Up* (Turbine Theatre).

GDP encompasses the work of Grace Dickson, a Newcastle-born producer with a keen eye for powerful, socially relevant new writing. Grace is the co-founder of HD General Management with Ameena Hamid, who provide bespoke wellbeing-focused GM support to productions and workshops (*The Jingleclaw*, *DIVA: Live From Hell*, *The Solve it Squad*), and is Finance Manager at Runaway Entertainment (*2:22 A Ghost Story*, *Newsies*, *101 Dalmatians*, *A Knight's Tale*, *The Hunger Games*). She is also a trustee of theatre charity ZooCo. Grace's producing work has been supported by a Stage One Bursary for New Producers and an Arts Council DYCP.

Grace was previously Associate Producer at Francesca Moody Productions, where she line produced several shows across scales including Tim Crouch's *An Oak Tree* internationally, *Feeling Afraid As If Something Terrible Is Going to Happen* at the Bush Theatre, and the Fringe First winning hits *VL* and *Weather Girl*.

THEATRE UNCUT

Theatre Uncut creates bold, progressive, uncompromising political theatre for live and digital audiences across the world. They galvanise action and fuel debate by supporting the world's leading playwrights and extraordinary new voices to create political writing that raises awareness on issues of social injustice. The company makes their work available for anyone to perform anywhere. Over 200,000 people across 26 countries have performed Theatre Uncut plays so far. Theatre Uncut believe that theatre has the power to make positive social change. Theatre Uncut Political Playwriting Award winning plays have been produced at the Young Vic and Royal Court and been nominated for an Olivier Award.

CHARACTERS

KEIRA – She's explosive and electric in her vulgarity. Her capacity for extreme emotion means she has an animalistic approach to love and loyalty. She would take on a thousand armies for her mates. Loudest in any room, she's like a stand-up set on a stage that could collapse any second.

ZAINAB – Pragmatic, methodical and mature. She's not a prude, she's Earth.

LUCY – She's like a cloud with legs. Receptive, eager to learn and vulnerable in her curiosity. Perhaps Lucy fell out of a rabbit hole, or she's just a product of someone poked about by a church. Either way, she has a brightness. She's Air.

SETTING

The play is set in an unidentified town in the West Midlands. Having said that, this could happen in any town, anywhere. It isn't necessary for the actors to share a particular dialect or accent. All the action happens at the base of an oak tree.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

Punctuation isn't always grammatical.
New thoughts sometimes appear on new lines.
/ indicates overlapping dialogue.

A gentle steer to actors: the play lives and dies on pace. Go quick! These girls are certain, curious and rarely sentimental.

THANKS

The production would like to thank Dianne Roberts, Joanna Kennedy, Rutger Bellaerts, Necessity, Bristol Old Vic, Belgrade Coventry, Soho Theatre, Paines Plough, Shoreditch Town Hall, Bush Theatre, Harry Elletson, Thread Design, Mihaela Bodlovic, Adam Jefferys, Rory Thomas-Howes, Letty Thomas, Mark Cartwright, Runaway Entertainment, Cup of Ambition, SM Publicity, Borkowski PR, Hannah Price and the board members of Theatre Uncut.

This production is proudly supported by the Stage One Bursary for New Producers and public funding from Arts Council England.

FOREWORD

This was my first play and it was an absolute bollock to write. Before acknowledging everyone who made it possible, I thought I'd write a bit about where it came from. The development of *Playfight* took years, but the first ten pages took ten minutes and have remained untouched(ish) since the beginning.

The 'sex game gone wrong defence' was brought to my attention in 2019 at a birthday picnic. My friend's mum had read an article written in response to the death of Grace Millane. Grace had been backpacking around New Zealand and had been strangled to death by her Tinder date on the eve of her birthday. Her date had then sat in their hotel room, photographed her dead body and watched porn. He later put her body in a suitcase and buried it in the woods and was now in court claiming she was into rough sex and had therefore consented.

We sang happy birthday to my friend and I went to my bar shift at the Royal Court. I'd been really rocked by what I'd heard. It brought up lots of thoughts and feelings I guess we're conditioned to suppress as kids in order to be perceived as light-hearted and desirable. When I got home that night I wrote the first ten pages of *Playfight*. Later that year, when offered a place on the Royal Court's introduction to playwriting group, I knew what I wanted to write about.

The play doesn't seek to land on any answers. Or to shame or blame anyone who safely practices breath play and kinks. The play seeks to wrestle with the deep trauma of expectation. How we're tossed about in an education system that favours prime numbers over how to look after ourselves in a terrifying world. How we force our bodies into uncomfortable shapes like they do on the screens. How dangerously we drift from ourselves. I guess it's a cry for change. What that change looks like I haven't got a clue. But this is my attempt at kicking the door open to the conversation.

After all that, I really hope you find moments of joy in the play.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Playfight marks the start of a turbulent relationship with a bastard profession and I really could not have done it without the following people, who gave their thoughts and feedback. And to those that keep me swimming on the surface and happy.

Susan Edwards, Susan is a barrister who sat with me opposite the Central Criminal Court with her heels in her handbag, and went through the current legislation surrounding the sex game gone wrong defence. It was September 2019 and she was pushing for the legislation in England to change. At the time I thought I would be writing a sort of courtroom drama. But my chat with Susan right at the start of the process convinced

me that the social context beyond the courtroom should be the central focus of the play. We talked about our upbringings, about sex, porn and friendships. Thanks to her and others, the fifty shades sex game defence was abolished in England in 2020, while I was on my 50,000th draft. Not so in Scotland though.

Oli Lansley, Oli, thank you so much. Oli is an amazing theatre maker/writer and he read a very early draft of *Playfight* when it was just themes and ideas. He reminded me of the importance of story. Why are we meeting these characters now? What's happened? What is going to happen? It's something I come back to all the time. What is the actual story? The other thing Oli taught me (and it is the BEST advice for any writer) is: if you're feeling stuck, walk away and FILL UP YOUR CUP. See friends, go to the pub, read about the subject you're exploring, listen to music that sounds like the inside of the characters, go to an exhibition, see a film. Dance round the edges of the play's world until your cup is full. Then kick it over and go again.

Royal Court Theatre (Myah Jeffers, Ellie Fulcher, Jane Fallowfield). Thank you for giving me a place on your course. It gave me the confidence and space to make something. Thank you for reading harrowing early drafts. Thank you for teaching me that words can't always say the thing. Sometimes a painting of a lamb giving birth to a planet gives the energy of a mad moment in the play. Till the words come. If they do.

Wildcard Theatre Company: Em Stott and the Jets. Thank you for hosting a readthrough of *Playfight*. Beth Kapila, thank you for directing it. To George and Chris at Papatango, shortlisting me for that award was enough validation for a lifetime. Thank you. Neil McPherson and the Finborough Theatre. Winning the ETPEP Award gave me a huge kick start in the industry and I'm forever grateful for your support and encouragement. Blanche McIntyre, thank you for sitting on Zoom with me for five billion hours helping bring that reading to life. To Charlie Coulthard at Concord Theatricals, for all the checking in and support and for suggesting me to a writing agent. Enter: Alec Drysdale, who took me on after reading *Playfight* all those years ago. You are my biggest support system, I love you and Bryn Chiappe very much. To Concord Theatricals, thank you for publishing this. Full circle moment, eh? To all the actors who over the years read various drafts out loud, your insights and energy have kicked up sparks that helped to shape the play: Hannah Millward, Fanta Barrie, Nadi Kemp-Sayfi, Helen Monks, Robyn Cara, Libby Mai.

Nina Cassells, Sophie Cox and Lucy Mangan - here we go! Thank you for breathing life into these girls. I can't wait to see what you do with them. Thank you for your bravery and beauty.

The biggest thank you to Emma Callander and Grace Dickson. You two stuck with the play for four years. When we didn't get funding, you had to make tough decisions but always protected my heart and kept

faith. Thank you for your generosity, passion, commitment and belly laughs. You are very magical people. Emma, thank you for ringing me from the weirdest nooks of the UK and putting so much passion into the story. You have been the most important shaper and maker of this. I really cannot thank you enough. Grace, thank you for your consistency, curiosity and grounded energy. You are a phenomenal producer, and a dear friend. Thank you for everything over the years.

To Rachel Lemon and Lydia Higman. The Dirty Hare bunnies. Making theatre with you both has changed my life. I love you both so much. You are endlessly supportive and I am always fascinated by what comes out of your brains and hearts. Thank you for all the half pints, petrol tanks and peeling walls in weird rehearsal spaces. And for reading *Playfight* and giving me your thoughts and feelings. Here's to many more years of making!

To my friends I grew up with and who have supported me while making this. Liv, I know living with a mopey out-of-work playwright must have been so fucking annoying. Thank you for filling the flat with laughs and roast chicken. I chose to set *Playfight* around the base of a tree like the one outside our school. Lyd for coming to read throughs and forcing loud laughter. You're my rock. Oscar who gave me lots of hugs when we weren't able to get the play up last year. Anna and Jess, thank you for walking through life with me in your purple uniforms when we all got heckled as 'purple virgins' on our way to school.

Wendy Higman for bringing this subject matter to my attention at the birthday picnic in 2019 and for all your wise words and baking over the years.

To Cheryl Prince and Lauren Dickson. I'm so proud of you both. We were polishing cutlery behind the bar when this was just an idea. You always listened and inspired me. You still do now.

Mum, you're the most supportive bundle of love in the world. Dad, you're the best dad ever and I'm so happy to include your amazing poem about a tree in this play text and to my sister, Philly, you're the most chaotic meteorite of wonder ever to hit the planet.

And lastly, this play is, of course, unwaveringly dedicated to Grace Millane.

This ancient oak,
Over the centuries,
What hasn't it heard – from those under its branches – what hasn't it felt or seen?
Love it has seen a million times no doubt,
Heard hatred too,
And in its heart of oak felt too perhaps a million times
our echoed doubts
and echoed fears
and all our echoed inner pain.

Simon Grogan

(An oak tree. It's centuries old. Seen it all. Even if we can only touch its trunk, we are aware of the oak's roots stretching deep into the soil – as deep as its branches stretch high – into infinity.)

*(***ZAINAB** *appears from behind it.)*

ZAINAB. I've been thinking about time.

Every second.

I think about time.

I think about the time it took.

I think about the time that's passed.

I can't stop thinking about the time in between.

The ugly bits. The fuzzy bits. The bits so shameful you feel your knickers shimmy down your legs and bury themselves underground.

The spaces. Gaps in time –

I can't stop thinking about them.

(She leans against the tree.)

So I'll be here.

When the world's spinning round. Swear down, I'll be here.

(She looks up at the branches above.)

Where time stands still. Just for a second. And that second.

It's bliss. Isn't it?

*

(The base of our tree, spring 2015.)

(Three fifteen-year-old girls in school uniform. **KEIRA**, **ZAINAB,** *and* **LUCY**. *They are staring at a dead squirrel. It's been strangled in the plastic rings of a six-pack of beer.)*

LUCY. Nasty way to go.

ZAINAB. Wonder how long it's been here.

LUCY. Reckon it's got a family?

ZAINAB. Probably.

LUCY. Reckon they'll be waiting for it?

ZAINAB. Probably.

KEIRA. It's a squirrel not a fucking choir boy.

LUCY. So?

KEIRA. So happens all the time.

LUCY. Wonder if its soul is flying above us seeking vengeance on the killer.

KEIRA. Are you taking the piss?

LUCY. What?

KEIRA. It's been choked by a plastic beer pack.

LUCY. So.

KEIRA. It probably fancied a bevvy.

ZAINAB. Even if it did. Didn't ask for this, did it.

LUCY. No something's gone on here.

KEIRA. Probably killed itself 'cause this school's so peak.

LUCY. *(Gasps clutches her throat.)* It couldn't breathe.

(Beat.)

KEIRA. Do you want a tissue mate?

LUCY. Oo, it's got a tiny knob –

KEIRA. Right, stop having a clit rub over a squirrel. It's dead. In heaven. With all its little squirrelly mates having a booze up. Now. Do you want to hear the end of my story or not?

ZAINAB. Go on then.

KEIRA. So the bouncer was like, alright just this once, but if you're not back in ten minutes, you're not allowed back in. So don't take the piss.

LUCY. How come he let you do that?

KEIRA. Told him I needed ciggies and flashed him a nipple.

ZAINAB. You're lying.

KEIRA. Am not. Ask Dan Miller.

ZAINAB. How did you get in in the first place?

KEIRA. ID. Found Miss Preston's in the car park.

ZAINAB. Are you taking the piss? She's forty five.

KEIRA. So? Wore a push-up bra.

ZAINAB. And she's Sri Lankan. So bollocks you got away with that.

KEIRA. Honest. Just handed it over, told him I had a hairless vagina and passed the eleven plus.

ZAINAB. Bollocks did that work.

KEIRA. It did. Got a stamp to prove it, look.

*(***KEIRA** *presents her wrist,* **LUCY** *admires it.)*

LUCY. Ooh yeah. Look at that. What does it say?

KEIRA. Cock magnet. It's a bit smudged.

LUCY. Thought the club was called *Smack*?

KEIRA. Yeah it is.

LUCY. So why does it say that?

KEIRA. Dunno. Sounds cool.

LUCY. *(Thinking…)* Cock magnet. *(Nods.)* Yeah suppose.

KEIRA. Had four vodka red bulls for two quid. Drank so many thought I was gonna have a heart attack. Just like explode. Then right, he came over, rubbed his knob against my leg –

LUCY. Who?

KEIRA. Barack Obama, who'd you think?

LUCY. Oh yeah.

KEIRA. And said, do you wanna bone? And I was like, yeah.

ZAINAB. Woah. Bit forward.

KEIRA. Yeah but Dan's eighteen so it's different isn't it. He's mature. Got proper experience and that.

ZAINAB. Isn't that a bit…

KEIRA. Bit what?

ZAINAB. Bit weird?

KEIRA. Why?

ZAINAB. 'Cause you're fifteen.

KEIRA. Yeah but he doesn't know that, does he.

ZAINAB. Still. Doesn't that make him, like, a kiddy fiddler?

LUCY. Oh that's a thought.

KEIRA. What's a thought?

LUCY. That Dan Miller is a kiddy fiddler.

(Beat.)

KEIRA. Right so we were at the club…

ZAINAB. Yeah…

KEIRA. We left the club…

LUCY. Yeah…

KEIRA. And we had sex on the tennis courts.

ZAINAB. What?

LUCY. You never.

KEIRA. We did. Doggy style.

LUCY. *(Wonderment.)* Doggy style?

KEIRA. Yeah. Do you wanna see?

ZAINAB. What?

KEIRA. I filmed it. Looked great. Apart from the awkward bit.

ZAINAB. The awkward bit?

KEIRA. Well. He asked to smack me in the face.

ZAINAB. That is awkward.

KEIRA. That's not the awkward bit. Was awkward 'cause I had to say no.

LUCY. Why did you have to say no?

KEIRA. Everyone knows I live in a bungalow and you can't say you've fallen down the stairs if you've got none?

LUCY. Fairs.

ZAINAB. Why did he want to hit you? Had you upset him?

KEIRA. Nah. Just a thing isn't it. Both just started laughing. My knees were really cut up. Sandy tennis floor. Savage. Bled all the way back to the club. Was a bit weird. 'Cause Dan went from full on laughing to like full on crying. Proper howling like a wounded animal. So pretended I didn't know him and just started dancing

again. Then right, was in the smoking area, and that twat Lisa Wallis came over and was like mate you've got blood running down your legs. What happened? And I was like fuck it, so I told her. She was like whaaaat? Bollocks! So I sent her the video to prove it.

*(**LUCY** leans forward.)*

LUCY. What did she say?

KEIRA. She said. Welcome to the club. Bought me a tequila and everything.

LUCY. Lisa Wallis bought you a tequila? That's sick.

KEIRA. I'm a proper woman now. Felt all holy and shit.

ZAINAB. Being doggied on a tennis court felt holy?

KEIRA. Yeah symbolic. Now I know why you're in church so much Lucy. To see Jesus and his two incher.

LUCY. What did it feel like?

KEIRA. Climactic. Felt like I was a fantasy. Didn't feel real.

LUCY. Woah.

(Beat.)

Scares me.

KEIRA. What?

LUCY. Penis.

KEIRA. Lesbian.

LUCY. Am not.

KEIRA. It's not that scary. You'd be surprised how much you just know. Animal instincts. Well that and like the videos and stuff. Stick to the classics; Cream Pie Carley, Sasha Grey, Fake Taxi. You just sort of copy them. Like a dance mat.

LUCY. I'm good on a dance mat.

KEIRA. Yeah you are to be fair, so you'll be fine. Zainab you're shit on the mat, so you'll be shit in bed.

ZAINAB. I'm dyspraxic.

KEIRA. So?

ZAINAB. So don't take the piss?

KEIRA. You two should have come out.

LUCY. We were watching *Blue Planet* with Zainab's mum.

(Beat.)

KEIRA. Wait what?

LUCY. What?

KEIRA. Cheers for the invite.

ZAINAB. Didn't think you'd want to come.

KEIRA. Would have been nice to be asked.

LUCY. Oh. Sorry.

ZAINAB. Yeah. Sorry.

(Beat.)

KEIRA. Whatever. Might go and bosh one out in the toilets.

ZAINAB. Nice.

(The three girls look down at the squirrel.)

KEIRA. Shall we lob this off into the field then?

(Beat.)

ALL. Shotgun not.

*

LUCY. Been trying all night. Hardly slept.

ZAINAB. Oh. Right. Well. Wouldn't wind yourself up about it.

LUCY. But I'll never feel it.

ZAINAB. Feel what?

LUCY. The climactic stuff.

ZAINAB. Well. What are you…like doing?

LUCY. Two fingers either side and rubbing it round and round and round and round and round in circles.

ZAINAB. Then what?

LUCY. Then get the fuzzy feeling. Feels like I've drank a coffee or I'm being chased by a goose, like scared but also quite excited, start getting all breathless and that and it's building and building and building and building – and then I think of Jesus and it just stops.

(Beat.)

ZAINAB. Well maybe try and think of someone else –

LUCY. Even tried rubbing it on the clamp in DT.

ZAINAB. And?

LUCY. Nothing.

(Beat.)

ZAINAB. I'm sure you're just overthinking it. Getting trapped in your head.

LUCY. Said a prayer this morning. So that might sort things out.

*(***ZAINAB** *starts tight roping on a tree root.)*

ZAINAB. Got a spare one?

LUCY. What?

ZAINAB. Prayer.

LUCY. What do you need?

ZAINAB. Decent GCSEs. Get mum off my back.

*(***LUCY** *side eyes her.)*

LUCY. What do you actually need?

(Beat.)

ZAINAB. Remember when you used to lick my shoulder in primary school?

LUCY. Uh. A bit.

(A moment passes between them.)

ZAINAB. Weird isn't it. That you believe in something I don't.

LUCY. Suppose. It's all we had when my dad died.

*(***LUCY** *shrugs.)*

I like it. Being commanded. You should try it.

ZAINAB. Nah…

(Beat.)

LUCY. You could talk to tree!

ZAINAB. Eh?

LUCY. Tree. It's just the same. Tree listens.

(She pats the trunk. Whispers –)

Sometimes think it knows all the answers.

*(***ZAINAB** *studies the back of* **LUCY** *like she's a crazy imp.)*

ZAINAB. Cheers. I'll bear that in mind –

LUCY. You spoken to Keira?

ZAINAB. Not today. Why?

LUCY. She's been asked to see the Head. Think it's with Lisa too.

ZAINAB. Oh right.

LUCY. Have you watched it?

ZAINAB. No. That's weird.

LUCY. Yeah. Suppose.

Reckon Dan will get told off?

ZAINAB. Doubt that. Can't really pick on one person when everyone's at it, can you.

LUCY. Reckon they were too harsh on Ted Bundy then?

ZAINAB. Nah Luce. He deserved that one.

(Beat.)

LUCY. Do *you* ever get the fuzzy feeling?

ZAINAB. ...Yeah.

LUCY. You cum before?

ZAINAB. Yeah.

LUCY. What does it feel like?

*(***ZAINAB** *looks at* **LUCY**, *shifts uncomfortably.)*

ZAINAB. Feels good. Feel all the tension squeezing my bones together just melt away. And when it stops, I get these weird shivers. Like a ghost is passing through me.

(Beat.)

*(***LUCY** *gasps in awe.)*

*