SKYE: A THRILLER

by Ellie Keel

SAMUEL FRENCH

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NOTE

This edition reflects a rehearsal draft of the script and may differ from the final production.

SKYE: A THRILLER was first produced in Tech Cube 0 at Summerhall, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, 31st July–25th August 2025. It was a co-production between K Media and Summerhall Arts, in association with Sheffield Theatres and the North Wall Arts Centre. The cast was as follows:

ANNIE ..... Dawn Steele
BRAWN ..... James Robinson

CREATIVE TEAM

Writer ..... Ellie Keel
Director ..... Matthew Iliffe
Producer ..... Natasha Ketel
Set and Costume Designer ..... Rūta Irbīte
Lighting Designer ..... David Doyle
Sound Designer ..... Hattie North
Stage and Production Manager ..... Aime Neeme
Casting Director ..... Matilda James CDG
Video Consultant ..... Dan Light
Publicity ..... Kate Morley PR
Artwork ..... Rebecca Pitt
Publicity photography ..... Felicity McCabe
Production photography ..... Mihaela Bodlovic

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CALLISTO: A QUEER EPIC by Hal Coase, directed by Thomas Bailey
Pleasance, Edinburgh (August 2016) and Arcola Theatre, London (October 2016 and December 2017)
Produced on behalf of Forward Arena Theatre Company

CHILDREN AND ANIMALS by Florence Read
Pleasance, Edinburgh (August 2016)
Produced on behalf of Forward Arena Theatre Company

HERETIC VOICES
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Dean McBride by Sonya Hale, directed by Roy Alexander Weise
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LOOSE LIPS by Katherine Soper, directed by Sammy Glover
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Arcola Theatre, London (September-October 2018)
Produced on behalf of Forward Arena Theatre Company

REDEFINING JULIET by Storme Toolis, directed by Robin Norton-Hale
Barbican Centre, London (November 2018)

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Southbank Centre and tour (autumn 2019)
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REASONS YOU SHOULD(N'T) LOVE ME by Amy Trigg, directed by Charlotte Bennett
Kiln Theatre, London, on tour in the UK, and broadcast with Audible (May 2021 onwards)
Co-produced with Kiln Theatre, Paines Plough, and the Women's Prize for Playwriting

SAP by Rafaella Marcus, directed by Jessica Lazar
Roundabout, Edinburgh (August 2022), Soho Theatre (April 2023) and on tour in the UK (Spring 2023)
Co-produced with Atticist

YOU BURY ME by Ahlam, directed by Katie Posner
Bristol Old Vic, Royal Lyceum Theatre, Orange Tree Theatre (February-April 2023)
Co-produced with Paines Plough, the Women's Prize for Playwriting, Royal Lyceum Theatre, Bristol Old Vic and the Orange Tree Theatre

THE SWELL by Isley Lynn, directed by Hannah Hauer-King
The Orange Tree Theatre (June-July 2023)
Co-produced with Orange Tree Theatre, Damsel Productions and the Women's Prize for Playwriting

THE LAST SHOW BEFORE WE DIE by Mary Higgins and Ell Potter, directed by Sammy J Glover
Roundabout, Edinburgh (August 2023) and onward touring produced by HOTTER Project
Co-produced with HOTTER Project

AN INTERROGATION written and directed by Jamie Armitage
Summerhall, Edinburgh (August 2023) and Hampstead Theatre (January-February 2025)

BULLRING TECHNO MAKEOUT JAMZ by Nathan Queeley-Dennis, directed by Dermot Daly
Roundabout, Edinburgh (August 2023), Royal Court Theatre (December 2023), and on tour in the UK including Chichester Festival Theatre, Bristol Old Vic, Royal Exchange Theatre, Birmingham Hippodrome and Traverse Theatre (autumn 2024)
Co-produced with Paines Plough and Belgrade Theatre

BELLRINGERS by Daisy Hall, directed by Jessica Lazar
Roundabout, Edinburgh (August 2024) and Hampstead Theatre (September-October 2025)
Co-produced with Atticist and Hampstead Theatre

CONSUMED by Karis Kelly, directed by Katie Posner
Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh (August 2025), and national tour including Leeds Playhouse, Sheffield Theatres and Belgrade Theatre (September 2025 onwards)
Co-produced with Paines Plough, Belgrade Theatre, Sheffield Theatres and the Women's Prize for Playwriting, in association with the Lyric Belfast

ORDINARY DECENT CRIMINAL by Ed Edwards, directed by Charlotte Bennett
Summerhall, Edinburgh (August 2025) and national tour (September 2025 onwards)
Co-produced with Paines Plough, Live Theatre and Theatre Royal Plymouth, in association with Synergy Theatre Project

SKYE: A THRILLER by Ellie Keel, directed by Matthew Iliffe
Summerhall, Edinburgh (August 2025)
Co-produced with K Media and Summerhall Arts, in association with Sheffield Theatres and The North Wall Arts Centre

CAST

DAWN STEELE | Annie

Most recently Dawn played Stella Quinn in *Shetland*, for which she was nominated for a Scottish RTS Award, and series regular, DCI Cora MacMillan in *Granite Harbour*.

Dawn is well known for her portrayals of Lexie MacDonald in the hit BBC drama *Monarch of the Glen*, Alice Trevanion in the ITV drama *Wild at Heart*, Dr Annie Jandhu in BBC soap *River City* and series regular Ange Godard in BBC's *Holby City*.

Other notable TV credits include Justine McManus in BBC's drama *Sea of Souls* with Bill Paterson, *True Dare Kiss*, *The Key Snoddy* and *Tinseltown* (BBC), Liar (ITV).

Film credits include *The Marionette*, *Ghosted*, *None of the Above*, *Club Le Monde*, *Tabloid TV*, *Gregory's Two Girls* and *The Debt Collector*.

Theatre credits include the role of Suzi Kettles in *Tutti Frutti* (His Majesty's Theatre, Aberdeen, Bernadette in *Cuttin' A Rug* at the Traverse Theatre, the role of Shazza in Simon Farquhar's Aberdonian drama *Rainbow Kiss* at the Royal Court Theatre, Lisa Koletzky in the Agatha Christie Theatre Company's national tour of the 1958 play *Verdict*, the UK tour of the Noël Coward's *Volcano* as Melissa Littleton and which later transferred to the West End. And the role of Joan in the stage adaptation of Peter James' novel *The Perfect Murder*.

JAMES ROBINSON | Brawn

James Robinson is a Scottish actor/producer born in Glasgow. He trained at Rose Bruford College.

Making his screen debut as the young William Wallace in Mel Gibson's Oscar-winning blockbuster, *Braveheart*, he has gone on to appear in Danny Boyle's highly acclaimed *Babylon* and Neil Jordan's historical epic *The Borgias* with Jeremy Irons and Gina McKee. Robinson has guest-starred on BBC's *Doctors* and *Casualty,* and as Greg Edgars in Sony/Starz's *Outlander*. Along with starring as Alexander Hamilton in *Washington* for the History Channel US and Icon Films, he played the romantic interest with Ashley Newbrough in seasonal romance *Saving Christmas Spirit* for Nicely Entertainment.

Robinson then played a co-leading role in The Hallmark Channel's most successful film of 2023 – *A Merry Scottish Christmas*, which he quickly followed with the critically acclaimed Royal Lyceum production of An Undoing: Zinnie Harris's retelling of Shakespeare's Scottish Play including a run in London and off-Broadway in New York.

He has appeared in numerous other theatre productions such as National Theatre of Scotland's *In Time O' Strife*, York Theatre Royal's *Brassed Off*, Joe Penhall's *Landscape with Weapon* and in The National Theatre's *Macbeth*, directed by Rufus Norris.

For radio, Robinson played the title role in Almost Tangible's *Macbeth* (New York Radio Festival's Grand Prize Winner for which he Won Audio Production Awards Audio Performer of the Year.

James featured in Barry Keoghan's directorial debut short film *Animal* for international fashion brand Gucci and also makes film and TV projects with Danny Szam and their production company Studio 1285.

CREATIVE

ELLIE KEEL | Writer

Ellie Keel is the Sunday Times bestselling author of *The Four* (HarperCollins), an Olivier Award-nominated theatre producer, and the youngest ever winner of The Stage's Producer of the Year Award. She is the Founder Director of the Women's Prize for Playwriting, the leading award for female and non-binary playwrights from the UK and Ireland. With her company EKP, she has produced over twenty-five new plays to critical acclaim in London, at the Edinburgh Festivals, and on tour across the UK, at venues including the Royal Court Theatre, Barbican Centre, Southbank Centre, Chichester Festival Theatre, and Sheffield Theatres. Her journalism and short stories have appeared in The Guardian, The Daily Express, and The Stage. She is a Trustee of the Brontë Society and London Youth Theatre, and in 2017 she collaborated in the founding of leading LGBT+ youth charity, Just Like Us. Her second novel, *A Bad Day To Hide A Body*, will be published by HarperCollins in May 2026. *SKYE: A Thriller* is her first play.

MATTHEW ILIFFE | Director

Matthew's theatre credits include *Foam* (Finborough Theatre); *Breeding* (King's Head Theatre); *Four Play* (Above The Stag); *The Burnt Part Boys* (Park Theatre) and *Bacon* (Finborough Theatre, Summerhall Edinburgh, SoHo Playhouse NYC and Seoul, South Korea). For his work on *Bacon*, Matthew won Best Director at the 2023 Off-West End Awards.

He trained on the StoneCrabs Young Directors Programme and has participated in the National Theatre Directors' Course. As an assistant, Matthew has worked on productions at Theatre Royal Bath, Chichester Festival Theatre and the Royal Court.

RŪTA IRBĪTE | Designer

Rūta is a London-based performance designer. She trained in Performance Design and Practice at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, graduating with a First Class Diploma in 2013. Rūta was a shortlisted finalist for the Linbury Prize for Stage Design 2013.

In response to the Climate Emergency, Rūta continued her education at the MA Material Futures at Central Saint Martins College, graduating in 2021.

Her performance design work focuses on socially and environmentally engaged projects, devised work, and new writing.

Cross-disciplinary collaboration, materiality, and sustainability are at the core of her practice.

Recent design work includes *Testo* (uBAC); *Replay* (A Limitless Recycled Playground at the Southbank Centre); *Rum* (ARC); *Something Old, Something New* (Sheffield Theatres); *We Could All Be Perfect* (Sheffield Theatres); *Mushroom Language* (The Lowry); *Pink Lemonade* (Bush Theatre, *And The Rest of Me Floats* (Bush Theatre).

DAVID DOYLE | Lighting Designer

David is an award-winning lighting designer. His recent theatre credits include *Instructions* (Subject Object); *The Last Show Before We Die* (Hotter Project); *Nation* and *we were promised honey!* (YESYESNONO); *Bullring Techno Makeout Jamz* (Ellie Keel Productions and the Royal Court Theatre); *SAP* (Atticist and Ellie Keel Production); *Bellringers* (Atticist, Ellie Keel Productions and Hampstead Theatre); *Little Deaths* (Theatre503, Nuthatch and Scissor Kick); *Fabulous Creatures* (Collide Theatre and Arcola Theatre); *Boy in Da Korma* (Jermyn Street Theatre); *ADMIN* (Oisín McKenna); *Haemosporidian* (Lyric Theatre Hammersmith); *Tender* (Broccoli Arts, Jessie Anand Productions, and Bush Theatre), and *Outlying Islands* (Atticist and Jermyn Street Theatre).

David is currently the co-Artistic Director and Executive Producer of Jermyn Street Theatre, the West End's Studio Theatre. He is the joint Artistic Director of Atticist.

HATTIE NORTH | Sound Designer

Hattie is a Sound Designer and Composer from Leeds. She studied at LAMDA and graduated with a BA in Production Arts. Recent work includes: *Crying Shame* (Stanley Arts/Pleasance); *Henry V* (Insane Root); *Rebel Voices* (Complicité Engagement Project); *Oh Pain, My Beautiful Pain* (Pleasance); *Bitter Lemons* (Park Theatre) and *The Elmer Adventure* (Tall Stories). Associate work includes: *Bullring Techno Makeout Jams* (Birmingham Hippodrome/Soho Theatre); *Our Cosmic Dust* (Park Theatre); *How I Learned To Swim* (Roundabout/Bristol Old Vic) and *Two of Us* (HOME).

AIME NEEME | Stage Manager

Aime is an Australian stage manager and theatre maker with a passion for new writing. Past credits include *Scenes from a Repatriation* (Royal Court Theatre); *Bellringers* (Atticist/Ellie Keel Productions); *Gunter* (Dirty Hare); *Bullring Techno Makeout Jamz* (Ellie Keel Productions);Hungry, *Black Love*, *May Queen*, *Really Big and Really Loud* (Paines Plough), *How to Save the Planet When You're a Young Carer and Broke*, *Parakeet* (Boundless Theatre).

NATASHA KETEL | Producer

Natasha Ketel is a theatre producer based in London. She is the Marketing Manager at Jermyn Street Theatre, Producer for K Media, and Communications Associate for the Women's Prize for Playwriting. Recent credits include: Ellie Keel's *SKYE: A Thriller*, Karis Kelly's *Consumed* (Women's Prize for Playwriting 2022 Winner), Ed Edward's *Ordinary Decent Criminal*, Jamie Armitage's *An Interrogation*, Nathan Queeley-Dennis' *Bullring Techno Makeout Jamz* (Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting 2022 Winner), and Daisy Hall's *Bellringers*. She also works in Film and TV development. She has produced eight short films – many of which have won awards, been screened at the BFI Southbank, and selected for BIFA-qualifying film festivals.

THOMAS KETEL | Production Assistant

Thomas Ketel is a theatremaker and short film producer from London. He has assisted with work for the Women's Prize for Playwriting, K Media and Ellie Keel Productions. He has recently graduated from Newcastle University where he studied History and English Literature.

MATILDA JAMES CDG CSA | Casting Director

Matilda is from Cornwall and works on projects for theatre, screen and games.

Recent theatre work includes *Hamlet*, *The House Party*, and *The Cat and The Canary* for Chichester Festival Theatre, *Churchill in Moscow*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Guards At The Taj, Testmatch, Northanger Abbey, Twelfth Night* and *Red Speedo* (Orange Tree Theatre); *The History* (Bath Theatre Royal); *Reverberation* and *A Child of Science* (Bristol Old Vic), and Danny Robins' smash-hit *2.22: A Ghost Story*.

She was Head of Casting for Shakespeare's Globe from 2012 to 2017, where she cast over fifty shows for the Globe and Sam Wanamaker Playhouse.

Film work includes Simon Amstell's feature debut *Benjamin* and *Pond Life* directed by Bill Buckhurst.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Staging a new play is always a collaboration, but creating *SKYE: A Thriller* has entailed more teamwork than usual. For their creativity, tenacity, and enormous skill, I must thank our superlatively talented cast, Dawn Steele and James Robinson, whose dedication to this play (and first-time playwright) has been nothing short of remarkable. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

All ships need a captain, and HMS Skye could not have had a better skipper than Matthew Iliffe. Matthew: I will never forget what you have done with, and for, my debut play. Your deftness and skill, your laser focus and indefatigable determination are matched only by the respect and kindness you have unflaggingly shown me. You have my greatest admiration and gratitude.

My colleague John Hoggarth rightly says that 'encouragement is everything'. I want to thank all the people who've encouraged me in the writing and production of this play, starting with Aime Neeme and Natasha Ketel, who are the best colleagues any writer-producer could wish for. Thank you, Aime and Tash, for coming with me right from the start, and for all the fun and laughs we've had along the way.

Thank you to the other friends and colleagues who have guided and encouraged me to this point: Arifa Akbar, Kathleen Bacon, Tim Bano, Suzanne Bell, Charlotte Bennett, Charlie Coulthard, Monica Dolan, David Doyle, Dr Sophie Duncan, Tom Forster, Isabel Marr, Lara McIvor, Gail McManus, Fergus Morgan, Felix Mosse, Elizabeth Newman, Ria Parry, Katie Posner, Indhu Rubasingham, Anya Ryan, and Imogen Sarre.

I'd also like to thank the National Theatre Studio for their support during the development of the play, and The North Wall Arts Centre and Leith Theatre for their hospitality during our rehearsal and preview period.

Last but definitely not least, thank you to my family, including the four-legged members. I love you all so much.

CHARACTERS

ANNIE

BRAWN

INTERVIEWER / **SAMMY** / **PREENY** / **GIRL** / **MOTHER** / **HAMISH**

The actors playing **ANNIE** and **BRAWN** play all the other parts. In the original production, all of **SAMMY**'s lines were spoken by the actor playing **ANNIE**.

The original production used a live video feed of **ANNIE**'s interview, with the audience watching both the actor being interviewed and the interview footage simultaneously. Other directors should feel free to interpret this as they wish.

SETTING & TIME

The action of the play takes place on the Isle of Skye in August 1995 and a recording studio in the present day, whenever that may be.

Dedication:

For Matthew Iliffe

who took the plunge

and kept the faith

*(**ANNIE** is preparing to be interviewed. She's anxious, but determined. She enters the studio, not seeing the **INTERVIEWER**.)*

*(The **INTERVIEWER** emerges and **ANNIE** jumps.)*

ANNIE. I thought you were a ghost.

INTERVIEWER. See what you did there.

ANNIE. I'm a bit jumpy. I watched the episode about the haunted primary school last night. Pretty scary.

INTERVIEWER. That's what we do. You ready?

ANNIE. Yeah. I've got an hour, right?

INTERVIEWER. Fifty-five minutes now.

(Beat.)

I'm going to start by asking you what you saw on the night that /

ANNIE. It wasn't me. It was my brother Brawn who saw the /

INTERVIEWER. Fine. Tell us what he saw.

ANNIE. Wait a moment. I want you to understand, so I'm going to start at the beginning.

It was midday, Tuesday 8th… Hold on. Are you recording?

INTERVIEWER. Yep.

ANNIE. And you will believe me?

INTERVIEWER. Yes. Of course.

ANNIE. It was midday, Tuesday 8th August 1995.

We're on the beach at Glenbrittle on the Isle of Skye. 'We': that's me, my twin sister Preeny, my brother Brawn, and our little brother Sammy. Seventeen, seventeen, sixteen, eight.

First day of the holidays. Three days before it happened.

Tide's out. Hikers cooling off in the water, kids paddling. Strong wind, straight off the Cuillin, which means you don't notice how strong the sun / *(She notices.)* Sammy's already burning.

Brawn's over there, he's pretending to read a rugby magazine but really he's ogling a dark-haired girl in a red bikini. Preeny's built a sort of bunker out of the windbreak and our rucksacks and she's sunbathing in this skimpy – that's my swimsuit. I'm going to kill her.

[As **SAMMY**.] *Vvvvrrrrooooooommmm.*

Sammy's racing Freddie the Ferrari – his most treasured possession – around Preeny's fortress.

[As **PREENY**.] *Give it a rest, Sammy, I've got a splitting headache.*

That's Preeny. My twin sister, remember? Identical: mortifying. She hasn't got a headache, she's just annoying.

[As **BRAWN**.] *Annie. Sammy's bored. Take him over to the rock pools, will you?*

That's my brother Brawn. A year younger than me, acts like he's ten years older.

[As **ANNIE**.] *The rock pools are miles away, and can you not see I'm reading /*

[As **SAMMY**.] *Vvvvrrrrooooooooommmm.*

Come on, Sammy.

All Sammy wants to do is 'drive' Freddie the Ferrari over the rocks, climbing mountains and looping lakes.

I can feel the sun on my scalp. The wind's dropping.

[As **SAMMY**.] *Look, Annie, this bit's like the Cuillin.*

I slather more lotion on his bony shoulders, he's so wriggly.

[As **SAMMY**.] *(Giggling.) Look, Annie, Freddie can drive on water!*

He keeps looking up to make sure I'm watching.

[As **SAMMY**.] *Why can't real cars drive on water?*

You know that thing of being an older sibling… Well, maybe you don't, but… You sort of want to know the answer.

[As **SAMMY**.] *(Neutrally.) Brawn would know.*

Brawn knows less than Sammy thinks he knows, i.e. everything, but /

[As **SAMMY**.] *Look, Annie, it's Daddy.*

[As herself.] What?

[As **SAMMY**.] *It's Daddy. Over there.*

Sammy's Freddie-free hand is pointing at a man in red swimming shorts about a hundred yards away.

*(***ANNIE** *barely looks.)*

[As herself.] *(To* **SAMMY***.) Don't be silly, come on.*

[As **SAMMY**.] *But it is. It's Daddy. Daddy!!!*

I grab Sammy's arm to stop him waving and thank God, the wind's picked up again and the man can't hear him. His arms are folded and he's squinting at the clouds gathering over the Cuillin.

He does look a lot like our dad.

He's tall. Tall like you'd notice, like you'd think to yourself, that man is very tall.

Not lanky. Thickset. You would get out of that man's way, and people did. Not just on the rugby pitch.

A lot of chest hair.

Muscular arms that end in deft hands, a shout fading into a whisper.

Right.

OK.

[As herself.] *(To* **SAMMY***.) Daddy passed away four years ago, remember? Remember Mummy told us that another car hit Daddy's car and he died?*

But then Sammy points again. The man is walking away. He even walks like my dad.

Upright, brisk. More of a stride than a stroll.

The man's waving at a woman and a little boy sitting on a picnic rug. He kneels down on the rug and ruffles the boy's hair, and that's when I notice that the woman is feeding a baby.

I'm watching them and it's a memory.

Watching my father, watching his wife breastfeed a child.

I turn to that child and he's watching me, watching them.

[As **SAMMY**.] *Can we go and tell Brawn?*

That was how it started.

(To the **INTERVIEWER***.)* No. I'm sorry, can we go back? I've got to get this right.

INTERVIEWER. So hold on a minute. You saw him too?

ANNIE. Yes, but it's not what you're thinking. Can I just /

It actually started the day before. The night we arrived, the night Preeny said…

INTERVIEWER. There's nothing about this in the notes.

ANNIE. I know, but look… Can I just pick up from there? OK.

(The **INTERVIEWER** *acquiesces.)*

*(***ANNIE** *gathers herself; deep breath or equivalent.)*

The day before, Monday, we drive from Glasgow to our holiday home, on the Isle of Skye.

Brawn wants to drive us, but Mother's having none of it. He's sixteen, he hasn't had proper lessons but Father taught him as soon as his legs were long enough to reach the pedals.

[As **MOTHER**.] *Don't be ridiculous, Brawn, I'm quite capable of driving. Buckle up!*

You'll know about the drinking. It's nearly always mentioned when people talk about what happened. She got worse after the divorce.

We've made it to our house, thank God, we're piling out of the car and running down to the loch, staring through the mist at the mountains.

[As **PREENY**.] *Oh look, the pub's open. We could get fish and chips.*

[As **BRAWN**.] *A whole year's gone by and you <u>still</u> haven't seen sense about that oaf?*

Brawn knows what Preeny wants. Hamish Campbell. A local guy a fair bit older than us, total bampot, works at The Reaper's Arms. He's got twenty years on Preeny

[As **PREENY**.] *You're such a bully, Brawn.*

[As **BRAWN**.] *Better a bully than a nonce.*

*(***BRAWN** *is not a fan.)*

[As **SAMMY**.] *(Pointing.) Wowwwww! Faster than Schumacher!*

A silver car is racing along the road that hugs the shore of the loch, headlights piercing the mist. Sammy's exaggerating but it is going very quickly. Too quickly.

[As **SAMMY**.] *Where's the driver?*

The silver car flashes past and it's weird because I know what Sammy means. The car was going so fast, I couldn't really tell through the mist, but it looked… empty.

[As **PREENY**.] *(Quickly.) That must be the Phantom Car.*

[As **SAMMY**.] *What's a phantom?*

[As **PREENY**.] *It's another word for ghost. There's a myth about a driverless car that races around Skye. Legend has it that the Phantom Car is looking for its last driver, who died in an accident.*

[As **SAMMY**.] *Like Daddy?*

[As **BRAWN**.] *Shut the fuck up, Preeny.*

He's angry because we don't tend to… Well, Brawn never says that Dad 'died'. He always says he 'was killed', as though Dad would never do anything as feeble as just dying.

[As **SAMMY**.] *(Breaking the news gently.) But Preeny… there can't be a ghost car because ghosts aren't real.*

[As **PREENY**.] *'Real' is what you believe. You believe in the Holy Ghost, don't you, Sammy?*

I've known Preeny all my life – obviously – and I know exactly what she's up to.

[As **BRAWN**.] *I will not have you filling his head with that shite. Get back here!*

She's sprinting towards the pub and Brawn's pelting after her. It worked. She's free.

Sammy leans against me, drives Freddie the Ferrari up my arm.

[As **SAMMY**.] *Do you believe in the Phantom Car, Annie?*

(Deep breath.) Come on, Annie, be sensible.

[As herself.] *I don't believe in ghosts.*

So yeah. That was 'yesterday'. Which was thirty years ago, obviously.

> *(She takes a beat – perhaps adjusts her posture or switches seats.)*

Back to the beach, the next day. Three days before it happened. *(To the* **INTERVIEWER**.*)* I've said that, haven't I?

[As herself.] *(To* **SAMMY**.*) Daddy passed away four years ago, remember? Remember Mummy told us that another car hit Daddy's car and Daddy died?*

Sammy and I track Brawn down to the other end of the beach and a clinch with the dark-haired girl. Sammy bends down and taps Brawn on the shoulder with Freddie.

[As **SAMMY**.] *Brawn, guess what?*

I need to make it absolutely clear at this point that Sammy's life work was to impress Brawn.

[As **SAMMY**.] *Brawn, guess what?!*

Brawn gets to his feet, adjusts his swimming shorts, ruffles the sand out of his hair. Smiles semi-apologetically at the girl, who's looking daggers at me.

[As **BRAWN**.] *What's the craic?*

Unembarrassable, even with / [a hard on]

[As **SAMMY**.] *Daddy's over there.*

[As **BRAWN**.] *What?*

[As **SAMMY**.] *Daddy's over there.*

[As **BRAWN**.] *Come on, pal, what're you talking about?*

[As **SAMMY**.] *We've just seen Daddy.*

Sorry, the girl says, *but /*

Shut up.

To me: *Annie, what the fuck?*

*(***ANNIE** *takes* **BRAWN** *aside.)*

[As herself.] *(To* **BRAWN**.*) Weird coincidence, there's a man over there who looks a bit like Dad. But it's just Sammy being silly.*

(To the **INTERVIEWER**.*)* Sorry. I'm sorry. That's not what I said to Brawn.

I'll have to go back again, can you make sure that bit's not in it?

INTERVIEWER. So you saw the ghost on the beach.

ANNIE. No. I mean yes, but it's not as simple as that.

(She reverts to the past.)

[As **SAMMY**.] *We've just seen Daddy.*

[As **BRAWN**.] *Annie, what the fuck?*

[As **ANNIE**.] *The thing is, we saw a man who looks just like Dad. I know that sounds weird, but even I thought it was him.*

Brawn's eyes slid sideways over my shoulder and widen.

And he's off! Brawn's got the ball, he's running like the wind, he's clear for the try, I think he's going to make it! This is Brawn, ladies and gentlemen, it's Brawn on

the front foot, it's Brawn pelting towards the try line, the very tall man traipsing towards the car park. Fifty metres to go, surely he can do it, ladies and gentle/[men] Ohhh.

Brawn's left foot crashes down on the ornate sandcastle and crushes it into oblivion. He's not for stopping except the brick shithouse dad of the castle builder grabs Brawn and wrestles him down, down onto the sand /

They're brawling like gladiators on the ruins of the castle. The man's got Brawn pinned down, a knee on each shoulder /

[As **SAMMY**.] *Daddy's leaving!*

Something happens to me. I am not on the beach but above it, I can see everyone and everything with perfect clarity.

The tall man opens the boot of a silver car. It's sleek, shiny, low to the ground.

A brick shithouse balls his fist, draws back his arm.

The boot slams.

Blood spatters over the sand.

The silver car drives away.

INTERVIEWER. That's the car. The one your brother said he saw on the night that /

ANNIE. Wait. You're jumping ahead.

(The fight comes to an end. The world evolves.)

A biblical storm breaks as Brawn's driving us back to the house.

INTERVIEWER. Did you feel safe in the car with him?

ANNIE. How else were we going to get around with Mother the way she was?

Brawn's nose is gushing blood. Sammy's in the back, whispering sweet nothings to Freddie the Ferrari. Preeny's had enough.

[As **PREENY**.] *(To* **SAMMY**.*) Stop being a little weirdo.*

I'm sure she knows something's up, but we can't talk to her in front of Sammy.

We get home. Mother's passed out on the kitchen floor, caked in red wine vomit.

[As **SAMMY**.] *Why has Mummy wet herself?*

For fuck's sake.

Brawn checks her airway, wipes her face with his sleeve, carries her up to bed. Preeny distracts Sammy and I clean up the mess. Standard procedure.

[As **PREENY**.] *Annie?*

Preeny's in the kitchen doorway.

[As **PREENY**.] *I'm going out. Don't tell Brawn.*

[As herself.] *I mean, he will know. Because you won't be here.*

[As **PREENY**.] *I know but pleeease don't tell him I've gone.*

(Beat.)

Sorry I stole your swimsuit.

[As herself.] *You're not sorry. You're always taking my stuff. And I won't lie for you.*

[As **BRAWN**.] *Preeny. Sit down, Annie and I need to talk to you.*

Brawn goes to the sink, starts washing his hands. Preeny's eyeballing me. She wants me to get her out of this, but I both can't and won't.