SCENE 1 - INTRO

KATIE MITCHELL INTERVIEW

HAMLET
- To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them. To die—to sleep,
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;
To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there's the rub:
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
-

Good I just wanted to get that bit out the way so no one was waiting for it -

– I went to see a production of the bodyguard recently- I spent the majority of the evening waiting for them to sing 'I will always love you' - I feel like if they'd just sung it at the beginning I could've relaxed a bit. Just give the people what they want!

My name is Hamlet the Dane. First name Hamlet, second name TheDane.

I come from a long line of hamlets - my father was a Hamlet, his father before him, his father before him,– back and back -

I'm here to share my story with you - a universal story that expresses like no other the complexity of what it is to be human.

A story described by the great poet T.S Eliot as the Mona Lisa of literature - The Mona Lisa of literature!

I got a letter from the government the other day - I would like to share it with you

Dear Sir/Madam, we regret to inform you that your recent funding application for another staging of hamlet has been unsuccessful.

As part of our making space strategy we have made the difficult decision to cut funding for all productions of Hamlet to allow us more scope to support work that we feel has more contemporary

relevance. Thank you for your long standing contribution to the cultural ecology and we wish you well in your future endeavours.
kind regards

More contemporary relevance!
cut funding -

cut funding - for the mona lisa of literature - is nothing safe? they're coming for us - you know that don't you - you and I - they are coming for us with their swingeing, relentless, brainless cuts.

we must fight back!
- I did - I wrote to the government immediately - then I phoned the government repeatedly, then I stripped naked and handcuffed myself to the door handle of the government offices - that last one was possibly a step too far.

but as a result of my appeal -or as they put it concern for my mental well being - they agreed that I could stage one final production of hamlet - on two conditions - firstly that I do not use this final production as the beginning of some kind of come back tour - and secondly that I agreed to work with a reduced budget -

- I work in the arts - reduced budget is my middle name

– as a result of that reduced budget I made the difficult decision to replace the other actors in this story with soft toys.
let me introduce you -

Here's my good friend Horatio -
Polonius - Father of my girlfriend -
he's not on until later so we'll put him back.
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern they're both in that one - they can stay there.
(he kicks the box twice)
Here is Gertrude - my Mother
oh and my uncle Claudius - he's not meant to be in there -

I have worked with actors a lot - big fan of actors - but I have to say there are certain advantages to working with soft toys. they don't mind being hoofed over the wall, they have no union representation and they don't demand tea breaks every fifteen minutes.

but - but - they're not great with their lines - in fact they are terrible with their lines - so I'm sorry to say that I'm going to have to ask some of you to help me -
if you absolutely hate audience participation please let me know by holding up a cross or something if you see me approaching -

but if you're willing to help please do and I wont embarrass you nothing complicated -
just a few lines of shakespearean english -

As you know hamlet doesn't begin with to be or not to be - that would make no sense -

It actually begins with a look out Barnado standing on the castle battlements - and then another look out Francisco arrives to take his place -

who would like to read this scene - it is only 4 lines long - and then we never see either of these characters again so you can then relax for the rest of the evening.

BARNARDO
Who's there?

FRANCISCO
Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.

BARNARDO
Long live the King!

FRANCISCO
Barnardo?

BARNARDO
He.

HAMLET
that was great - thank you so much -

Thank you also to Hannah an usher from the theatre for her help with the blocking of that scene.

Hannah, would you mind coming down as I might need your help with the blocking for that scene. Hannah, would you mind coming down, I might need your help with something else in a minute – thanks.
Free labour – budget cuts.

Great- so that is basically scene 1 –
not the most riveting beginning
but don't worry it gets better. —

Scene 2 - Hamlet arrives.

radio starts to play

- I feel like I've been misrepresented -

I'm not a misogynist - I'm not -

some of my best friends are - some of my best friends are misogynists - - but I'm not - and I can prove it -

look I'm going to ask my Mum

Mum –

I need someone to play my Mum
would you mind being my Mum - for a second -
Ideally somebody in the middle
kind of hard to reach, like my mother

—it's very simple - whenever I ask my Mum a question you just say 'no' - is that ok?

er hi Mum would you describe me as a misogynist.

GERTRUDE (audience member)
No

HAMLET
There we are - straight from the horse's mouth -
She's a goose.

Also! - I was in love with this woman once. - I can't hate women if I was in love with one can I? that would be ridiculous -

he thinks about Ophelia

she was really good at swimming -

depressed - ok yes fair enough - I was depressed but my dad had just died - so is that depression or is that grief

SCENE 2 - *LACRIMOSA*

There he is - My Dad

Danish flag – a committed nationalist

Those are his ashes - they really are - my dad's ashes -

It's funny how quickly memories fade - I've been trying to remember his voice - my Dad had this kind of low voice - let me try and find the right pitch for you here -

he works with a loop pedal thing - adjusting the voice -

no not that - wrong way
yes something like that - a bit of reverb so we know it's in the past

He does the voice of hamlet sr and the actions.

Come in Hamlet, Hamlet - my boy - look at you Hamlet - you're so small - Hamlet - like a tiny piece of ham. Hamlet - like a collection of houses that didn't have the gumption to call itself a village, Hamlet - a tiny cigar that has never been anywhere near cuba! HAMLET - your mother wanted to call you something else - but no - I said - no - he has to be Hamlet - hamlet is my name, hamlet is the name of my father before me, and his father before him - back and back - Hamlet's stretching into the distance - why should he escape it!

Walk with me Hamlet - look - look - out there -

Hamlet - the world is on fire -

one day all this will be yours - look at it hamlet - can you see them coming - here they come Hamlet, they all want a piece of Denmark - and what - what will you do about it!

War Soundscape

That was my Dad

My earliest memory of my father is at my christening. We were standing on this massive rock. Below us with this whole host of animals - giraffes, widebeest, zebras, elephants - he held me out like this.

And as he held me up there was this massive cheer - more of a trumpeting actually - and a kind of neighing noise - and a stamping of hooves - And I remember looking down and I felt fucking terrified.

I asked my Mother about this a few months ago and she said it never happened. There were no giraffes at my christening. but I think she's wrong about that. Memory is deeply unreliable. hers especially. She forgets all kinds of things.

really important things -

he returns to his Dad's box

I missed his funeral -
I was on a silent retreat -
When I arrived at the retreat they asked me to hand my phone and as I handed it over they asked me if I had given the emergency contact to anyone and - I said I had. But I hadn't, not a single person knew where I was. I was unreachable.

The retreat was 10 days long - when I came out and retrieved my phone
it lit up like a christmas tree
You have 38 new voice messages
I didn't have time to listen to them - my phone rang immediately-
It was my friend Horatio

Oh I just need someone to be my friend horatio - would you mind being Horatio for me – here re you lines. Would it be OK if you came onstage?
Are you OK speaking English? Have you done any acting before? It's very simple just speak loudly and don't do anything weird with your hands - so you're going to be on the phone - to me - would it be ok if you went behind the wall so I can imagine that you're in Denmark?

OK – go Horatio

HORATIO
Hamlet?

HAMLET
hi yes

HORATIO
where are you - are you ok?

HAMLET
yes yes I'm fine I was on a silent retreat- it was amazing horatio - I started hallucinating on day 4.

HORATIO
Hamlet - I have to tell you something

HAMLET
what?

HORATIO
It’s bad news I’m afraid…there’s been a terrible accident - your Dad..

HAMLET
The reception is terrible horatio - I can’t hear you very well

HORATIO
Your Dad is ——

HAMLET
my Dad is what? can you say that again Horatio - - my Dad’s what?

HORATIO
(shouts) Hamlet your Dad is DEAD!!!

LACRIMOSA

SCENE 3 - CAR HIRE

HAMLET
I’d like to hire a car please

CAR HIRE
sure - what kind

HAMLET
I don’t care

CAR HIRE
automatic or manual

HAMLET
manual

CAR HIRE
luxury or compact?

HAMLET
compact

CAR HIRE
unfortunately we don’t have any compact cars available at this time.

HAMLET
so why did you offer me one?

CAR HIRE
I’m just following the prompts

HAMLET
could you stop following the prompts and actually talk to me

CAR HIRE
I have to follow the prompts

HAMLET
Luxury then

CAR HIRE
We can offer you a discounted upgrade to the luxury plus

HAMLET
I don’t want that -

CAR HIRE
It’s actually cheaper

HAMLET
I still don’t want it

CAR HIRE
Can I interest you in our membership scheme

HAMLET
no

CAR HIRE
Insurance?

HAMLET
No

CAR HIRE
I’m afraid we can’t allow you to rent a car without insurance

HAMLET
Then why did you say it like I had a choice?

CAR HIRE
Just following the prompts.

HAMLET
I’d like insurance

CAR HIRE
and would you like insurance against the excess that you’d have to pay on the normal insurance -

HAMLET
I JUST WANT A FUCKING CAR YOU BITCH

KATIE MITCHELL V/O
It has misogyny built into its DNA
HAMLET
that wasn’t because she was a woman - that was just super annoying!

CAR HIRE
I’m sorry sir but we will not tolerate any aggressive behaviour

HAMLET
I have of late but wherefore I know not lost all my mirth

CAR HIRE
Excuse me

HAMLET

foregone all custom of exercises, indeed…

CAR HIRE
are you on drugs?

HAMLET
No. Why do you ask?

CAR HIRE
You’re talking weird and if I’m honest you look like shit.

HAMLET
excuse me

CAR HIRE
I said you look like shit

HAMLET
Does it say that in the prompts?

CAR HIRE
no. - I went off script for that one.

HAMLET
It’s just grief.

CAR HIRE
oh- if you can wait there for two minutes while I process your application.

SCENE 4 - ANSWERPHONE AND GIRL LIKE YOU

HAMLET
Hi Horatio - umm - it's me - I'm at the airport just trying to hire a car - I should be home in a couple of hours - will you be around- I need to … I'd love to see you. bye

Hi Ophelia - it's me - I know we haven't spoken in a while - but I'm on my way home - I mean sort of - I'm stuck at the airport but I should be back sometime this afternoon - it would be great to see you -if possible - I have so much to tell you. bye

Hi Ophelia - me again - maybe you're still sleeping - it's quite early I guess - or maybe you're busy - are you busy - I can't get hold of Horatio either so I was wondering if maybe you're doing something together - you and horatio - if you are maybe you could ask him to call me? my dad died you knew that - and did you hear that woman on the radio - I mean come on - come on - yeah so I'm struggling a bit right now. I really need to hear your voice.

Hi Ophelia - me again - yup - sorry - just ignore everything you've heard - it's me Hamlet - if you get this will you call me back Please

GIRL LIKE YOU
Video close ups and hitchhiking

SCENE 5 - GHOST 1

HAMLET
Dad?

GHOST
- Who are you?

HAMLET
It’s me, Hamlet.

GHOST
that’s my name!

HAMLET
yes - I know - it’s mine too - you gave it to me - remember?

GHOST
I want it back - I don’t know who I am -

HAMLET
you’re my Father.

GHOST
he remembers something

I am thy father’s spirit,
Doomed for a certain term to walk the night
And for the day confined to fast in fires
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purged away.

Is that the sunrise?

HAMLET
not yet

GHOST
My hour is almost come
When I to sulfrous and tormenting flames must render up myself

HAMLET
alas poor ghost

GHOST
Listen, Listen - If thou didst ever thy dear father love—
Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

HAMLET
What?

GHOST
- If thou didst ever thy dear father love—
Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

HAMLET
I heard you I just didn’t believe you

Ghost
Believe me hamlet -

HAMLET
who murdered you.

GHOST
- (accent) The serpent that did sting thy father’s life
Now wears his crown.
I forget his name. My brother. What’s his name?

HAMLET
Claudius?

GHOST
Fucking Claudius …that incestuous, that adulterate beast,-
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not.

HAMLET
what do you want me to do?

GHOST
Kill him Hamlet.

HAMLET
Kill him…?

GHOST
He murdered me.

HAMLET
I don’t know if I can do that.

GHOST
(accent) Kill him - take a gun point it at his head and bang.

We’re out of grapes.

HAMLET
what?

GHOST

grapes, we've run out, someone keeps eating the fucking things - my wife sent me out to get some more.

HAMLET
Dad.

GHOST
You look familiar.

HAMLET
it's me…

GHOST
Adieu, adieu, adieu - Remember me.

SCENE 6 - HAMLET talks to AUDIENCE

to the audience

- Look I'm not wanting to make excuses for what I did but this this is not normal -
I mean a dead Dad that's normal - lots of us have one of those - but a hitchhiking ghost climbing into my car - that's not normal - in fact I would go so far as to say that's unique -

I know what you're thinking - he's a child of the 90s he probably still takes recreational drugs in a futile attempt to hold onto his youth - and you wouldn't be wrong - I did consume vast quantities of magic mushrooms on my silent retreat - so the logical explanation is it's just a hallucination, no big deal

And that theory would hold sway if that - if that wasn't real -

that's a real gun - there is no rational explanation for that -

There are more things in Heaven and Earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy -

we are in uncharted territory -

And I want you to remember that before you judge me -
I am not a violent man. Every weapon my Father gave me - and believe you me he gave me a lot - I buried in the garden. Told him I'd lost it - including that exact gun there - a Beretta M9 which he gave me on my 18th birthday.

He'd wanted me to join the army.
but I said no -
Instead I went to university - to expand the mind -

- and after university
I took a first aid course and volunteered
for Save the children - the plan was to Save the Children.

I ended up in Sudan helping out in a field hospital.
One morning, about 20 people burst shouting and screaming - all of them either injured themselves or carrying someone injured -

- they put a child on the bed in front of me and told me to help him -

His right arm was missing from the elbow down -

“oh that this too too solid flesh would melt
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew
Or that the everlasting had not fixed
His canon, ‘gainst self slaughter. Oh God, God!
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable
Seems to me all the uses of the world?
Fie on’t, ah fie. Tis an unweeded garden
That grows to seed. Things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this.”

While I was giving that speech the child lost a lot of blood - luckily a colleague saw me talking to myself and stepped in to save the child’s
life.
My supervisor suggested I take some time off.
That’s how I ended up on the silent retreat.

That’s how I ended up missing my own Father’s funeral

that’s how I ended up here - back at Elsinore - too late.

I parked by the chapel at the end of the drive -
I walked up to the house and opened the door.

Mum, Mum -

hello
hello
is anyone there ?

he tunes the radio to a different channel

TRIO

SCENE 7 - BOARDING SCHOOL CONVERSATION

trunk drops

HAMLET
what’s that

HAMLET SR
that’s your trunk

HAMLET
why do I need a trunk?

HAMLET SR
Well now that you’re 7
it’s time for you to go away to school.

HAMLET
away? How far away?

HAMLET SR
not far hamlet-
we’ve found a wonderful school for you in England.

HAMLET
England!
I don’t want to go to england -

HAMLET SR
well Hamlet, your Mother and I
think this is the best decision for you.

And once you’ve settled in
we think you’re going to have a tremendous time.

HAMLET
I’m not

HAMLET SR
excuse me

HAMLET
I’m not going to have a tremendous time.

HAMLET SR
Nonsense - I went to boarding school-
and look at how I turned out.

Best years of my life.

HAMLET
I’m 7 years old
I don’t know how to tie my own shoe laces.

HAMLET SR
Never mind Hamlet -

look your new shoes have buckles.

TRIO

HAMLET SR
Are you packed Hamlet?
The car is waiting.

put your blazer on - come on now

get in the car hamlet -
hamlet get in the car.

TRIO

HAMLET SR
here we are - this is where
your mother and i leave you

What fun you’re going to have.

We’ll see you in 12 weeks hamlet.

We’ll send someone to pick you up.

HAMLET
don’t go

HAMLET SR
come along Hamlet
don’t make a scene - you’re a big boy now.

HAMLET
wait don’t leave me here - mum mum

HAMLET

Mum are you still there?

sometimes my Mum leaves
in the middle of important things

so I just wanted to check
you were still here -

It's just the same as before
you just say no
whenever I ask you a question is that ok?

SCENE 8 - GERTRUDE'S BEDROOM

HAMLET
Mum, I'm back - Did you not hear me calling?

GERTRUDE
No

HAMLET
The house is cold - are you cold?

GERTRUDE
No

HAMLET
Can I get you a tea?

GERTRUDE
No

HAMLET
Coffee?

GERTRUDE
No.

HAMLET
would you say no to a vodka?

GERTRUDE
no

HAMLET
I'm sorry I wasn't here - for the funeral - I was on this silent retreat - it was amazing - until I came out that is and found out what I'd missed - that bit wasn't amazing - but you know it felt really healing - I was trying to get my head straight do you know what I mean?

GERTRUDE
no

HAMLET
was the funeral awful?

GERTRUDE
no

HAMLET

well that’s something - did anyone have anything nice to say about him?

GERTRUDE
no

HAMLET
ah - no - well I guess that was my job.

HAMLET
I was trying to remember Dad - I was thinking about my christening. when Dad held me out over …I know I’ve asked you this before Mum but
were there any giraffes at my christening?

GERTRUDE
No

HAMLET
Are you sure?

GERTRUDE
No

HAMLET
How can you say no with such certainty and then say you’re not sure.
I feel like this is so typical of you mum - you don’t even make the effort to remember.
do you remember anything about that day?

GERTRUDE
No

HAMLET
How about the day I was born - you remember that?

GERTRUDE
No

HAMLET
Wow mum you really know how to make me feel special. Is it just memories of me you’ve erased or is it your entire life.
Your wedding day do you remember that?

GERTRUDE
No

HAMLET
Did you even love dad?

GERTRUDE
No

HAMLET
Wow that was honest. You didn’t love him.

GERTRUDE
No

HAMLET
But he loved you didn’t he?

GERTRUDE
No

HAMLET
He did - he did the way he looked at you could you not feel that?

GERTRUDE
No

HAMLET
Is your heart a stone?

GERTRUDE
No

HAMLET
Do you have any moral integrity or fibre.

GERTRUDE
no

HAMLET
Ok here’s one you must remember - Do you remember the day you left me at school?

GERTRUDE
No

HAMLET
You pretended you were just going to get something from the car - you and Dad and then you never came back - I panicked, I thought something had happened to you, and then I realised you’d gone - the matron had to restrain me to stop me running down the drive after you.
Doesn’t it strike you as odd that you can’t remember that moment?

GERTRUDE
No

HAMLET

It strikes me as really odd -
my therapist says the trauma I experienced in that moment is why I I struggle so much with procrastination -
she said it’s a classic response to childhood trauma

a classic response -

that interesting isn’t it?

GERTRUDE
no

HAMLET
My therapist said I should try and talk to you about it - about that day you left me and about the anger and the grief I feel about it. and I did try - look!
I’ve invented a whole meta theatrical moment to try and talk to you about this - only this isn’t you - this is a stuffed goose and a kind audience member- this isn’t you is it?

GERTRUDE
No

HAMLET
did you miss me mum - no don’t answer that. -
. Were you happy when I left?

GERTRUDE
no

HAMLET
Did you ever regret having me?

GERTRUDE
no

HAMLET
is there anyone in your life you have loved more than me?

GERTRUDE
no

He opens the hatch

SCENE 9 - CLAUDIUS & HAMLET

HAMLET exits and meets Claudius -

CLAUDIUS
Hamlet

HAMLET
Claudius -

CLAUDIUS
Can I give you a hug

HAMLET
I'd rather you didn't

CLAUDIUS
I understand - I'm so sorry

HAMLET
are you?

CLAUDIUS
he was my brother as well as your father, Hamlet
And believe it or not I loved him.

HAMLET
More than his wife?

CLAUDIUS
excuse me?

HAMLET
Do you remember my year 7 school disco?

CLAUDIUS
Hamlet what are you talking about?

HAMLET
You were there - as a chaperone - my Mother was there too - you were over by the refreshment table and that song came on - Only You - my mother started dancing - and then you joined her - at first it was just embarrassing and then it got fucking weird -

CLAUDIUS
I have no memory of that

HAMLET
you're a liar -
And then a few weeks later -

- I was cycling past the diner - not the one we used to go to for ice cream but the one on the outskirts of town -
as i cycled past I looked in the window - and you were sitting there - you and my mother in separate booths with your backs to each other. You were both wearing sunglasses.

-

SCENE 10 - DINER

CLAUDIUS_
what would you like?

GERTRUDE
- A strawberry milkshake

CLAUDIUS
- The dairy industry is a disgrace.

GERTRUDE
- I told you that

CLAUDIUS
Did you ? - then why are you drinking milkshakes?

GERTRUDE
- Because I like them –
and besides we’re in a moral vacuum
right now so my normal principles have no weight.

CLAUDIUS
- How are you?

GERTRUDE
- I’m fine.

CLAUDIUS
How’s my brother?

GERTRUDE
He is losing his grip.

CLAUDIUS
- on what

GERTRUDE
- everything

himself mainly - his memory is going, he drinks
from the moment he gets up.

CLAUDIUS
- Does he touch you –

GERTRUDE
- yes - of course - we share a bed.
But he can’t get it up if
that’s what concerns you.

CLAUDIUS
- I don’t want to know the details.

GERTRUDE
Are you sure?

GERTRUDE
- Some days he says he misses you

CLAUDIUS
- Does he. I find it hard to be around him these days.

GERTRUDE
Can’t think why that is!

CLAUDIUS
no - it’s not just you
Where are you going?

GERTRUDE
- I wanted to put something on the jukebox.

CLAUDIUS
- what?

GERTRUDE
- It’s a surprise –

CLAUDIUS
- we shouldn’t dance Gertrude –
it will draw attention to us.

GERTRUDE
we’ll dance inconspicuously

CLAUDIUS
- I don’t think you know how to do that!

GERTRUDE
Claudius - I need to dance -
and I need you to put your hands on me -
and if neither of those things happen
in the next 60 seconds
I am going to lose my fucking mind!

ONLY YOU (YAZOO)
into face smooshing

SCENE 11 - RECAP

HAMLET

I would like to take this moment for a brief recap -
My Dad was dead, I'd had a very challenging encounter with a car hire salesperson, my best friend and my girlfriend were spending a lot of time together, I had seen a ghost of my Dad who'd told me he was murdered by his brother and had left a gun in my hire car and it was just dawning on me that my Mum and my uncle had been having an affair since I was aged 11.

GHOST floats past

Did anyone else see that?

I have to say I'm feeling quite triggered right now- my therapist says that when I feel like this I should close my eyes and find something to be grateful for. just one thing -

KATIE MITCHELL INTERVIEW V/O
Personally I'm tired of plays
about depressed angry misogynistic men.
so we put this show on
hoping to invite people into the misogyny in the play –
and to encourage them to reconsider their wish
to repeatedly re-stage the play
it's a catastrophe
from a gender politics point of view.
And I genuinely don't think
it should be staged as much as it is.

-Really?

-Genuinely, yes.

-So you would call on the RSC
and the National theatre
to stop staging Hamlet?

-Yes.

HAMLET
she said if the closing eyes doesn't work then perhaps take a walk, connect to nature - and whatever you do don't open this box

SCENE 12 - GRAVEDIGGER

Gravedigger speaks in Spanish

HAMLET
Who’s grave is this sirrah?

GRAVEDIGGER
He points to himself

Mine

HAMLET
Oh yes, but who are you digging it for? Is it a man?

GRAVEDIGGER
For no man sir.

HAMLET
What women then.

GRAVEDIGGER
For none, neither.

HAMLET
who is to be buried in’t?

GRAVEDIGGER
Why - you are sir. You’re going to be buried in here, your body will rot until all that is left of you is this…skull

He presents the pelvis

HAMLET
That’s a pelvis

GRAVEDIGGER
So it is. Skull, pelvis.
This pelvis has lain under the earth three-and-twenty years.

HAMLET
Whose was it?

GRAVEDIGGER
this pelvis was my good friend Peter’s.

HAMLET
Peter’s? you mean Yorrick’s.

GRAVEDIGGER
not yorrick’s no - I can tell it was Peter’s from this hole here where the bullet went in - hit his artery here -

we’d jumped out of a window on the east side and we were running across the sand Peter and I. the west wall was right there in front of us - no taller than that - and I jumped and pulled myself over and then I looked down- Peter had frozen - the guards had seen us from there and from there - they started shooting - bullets flying everywhere and I said - “get down Peter, get down - now - Jump peter - jump! hurry up” - and he jumped and then a sound - … like a stick hitting wet mud - and he slumped down - and sank against the wall - “help, help, help me - someone help me” - everybody was watching - soldiers, journalists, doctors- getting- “help me, help me, help me, help”
- and no one did anything - why didn’t they do anything Hamlet? Why? Why?

50 minutes it took him to die. 50 minutes.

HAMLET
What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable;

Gravedigger cuts him off.

HAMLET goes to the box and takes out the otter.

SCENE 13 – OPHELIA IN THE PRESENT

HAMLET
The walk in nature didn’t work -

so I’m about to open this box -

I’m going to need someone to read
some of Ophelia’s lines -

OPHELIA
I’ll do it

HAMLET
Ophelia!

OPHELIA
Still talking to your teddies, Hamlet?

HAMLET
- you came to see me?

OPHELIA
not really I was looking for my Dad

HAMLET
oh right - he’s in there.

How is he?
Fine, thanks for asking

HAMLET
I always liked your Dad
OPHELIA
- that's funny he fucking hates you

OPHELIA
I was gonna leave these in your room

HAMLET
what are they?

OPHELIA
- your letters. - I don’t want them.

HAMLET
you received them then?

OPHELIA
- Yes, obviously.

HAMLET
- Why didn’t you reply?

OPHELIA
- do you remember –
what I said before you left?

HAMLET
- I do… you said if I wrote to you
you would use those letters to wipe your arse.

OPHELIA
- yes

HAMLET - and did you?
OPHELIA
- I did.

HAMLET
- And you didn’t read them first?

OPHELIA
- God no.

HAMLET
- I wrote poems.
I took time over them –

Why didn’t you read them?

OPHELIA
- I was busy

HAMLET
- for the whole year?

OPHELIA
- Yup - the whole year was busy.

HAMLET
- What with?

OPHELIA
- Dicks mainly.

HAMLET
- Dicks?

OPHELIA

Yes.

Is this a beaver?

HAMLET
an otter, it’s an otter

OPHELIA
Talking of Dicks
I’m sorry about your Dad.

HAMLET
how was the funeral?

OPHELIA
cold.

HAMLET
-I should’ve been there.

OPHELIA
-Yup

HAMLET
-am I like him -?

OPHELIA
-not really

HAMLET
This woman on the radio said
I have violent and depressive tendencies.

you pulled a face - Shit - did I always -

HAMLET
-what was I like before?

OPHELIA
-I can’t remember

HAMLET
-please don’t say that.

OPHELIA
-what do you want Hamlet?

HAMLET
I want to remember what I was like.
My Mother is a pathological forgetter –

I need you to remind me
what I was like –

all I can think about is what's happened
in the last two days.

Did I even
exist before then?

OPHELIA
Fucking Hell- you've been back 5 minutes
and already you're dragging me
into your melodrama.

HAMLET
It's not melodrama
-it's a universal story that expresses the
complexities of the human condition –

OPHELIA
Your Dad died!
It happens to all of us.

HAMLET
It's more complicated
I saw a ghost –

OPHELIA
-Did you! So?

HAMLET
-that's a big deal

OPHELIA
no it's not I saw a ghost once –
my mother's ghost –
she woke me up
and told me to run downstairs
and save my father
from choking on his own vomit –

it's a pretty good story –
I just chose not to wang on about it for 4 hours.

HAMLET
-That's not what this is?-

OPHELIA
-are you sure Hamlet
because from the outside
it looks like that's exactly what this is.

HAMLET
I’m trying Ophelia –
I’m looking for more contemporary relevance.

OPHELIA
do you know what would be really relevant
would be for you to say sorry!

HAMLET
for what?

OPHELIA
- pathological forgetting
seems to run in your family –

OPHELIA
- Let me help you remember

SCENE 14 – FLASHBACK 1

HAMLET
Ophelia, Ophelia...Can we go?
It’s too loud

HAMLET
I don't feel good.
Can we go outside?

OPHELIA
Now what?

HAMLET
It was too loud in there -

HAMLET
where we going?

OPHELIA
to the river… I want to swim.

HAMLET
Ophelia I don’t think that’s such a good idea

OPHELIA
why not?

HAMLET
you look fucked

OPHELIA
that’s just my face

HAMLET
why don’t we go back to your house –

OPHELIA
what’s the rush?

HAMLET
you said your Dad was on a date.

OPHELIA
I did say that - yes -

HAMLET
so we should go back there –

OPHELIA
and do what?

HAMLET
I don’t know –

OPHELIA
you don’t know -
you had no plans in your mind
when you said let’s go to my house?

HAMLET
No.

OPHELIA
You're a terrible liar.

OPHELIA
Remember that I know you, Hamlet!

The 4 year old hamlet
who carried my bucket for me –

the 6 year old Hamlet who sat
next to me for days after my Mum died,

the 9 year old hamlet
who cried for days at the end of every school holiday

I know all of you.
I can see deep into your soul.
I know what it is you want -
I dare to say it -

what do you want Hamlet?

HAMLET
I want you.

OPHELIA
Ha yes, but it's not so simple -
you can’t just say the words -
and expect it to happen

First you must prove your worthiness
by swimming in this ball-numbingly cold water.

HAMLET
Ophelia it’s dangerous - there’s a current -
I don’t think we should do this.

OPHELIA
Come out further.

HAMLET
I'm fine here.

OPHELIA
Then sadly for you
you're going to spend your life alone -

HAMLET
Every man is an island

OPHELIA
- What?

HAMLET
I said - every man is an island
it's what that guy said

OPHELIA
no he didn’t you dipshit –
he said the exact opposite

No man is an island entire of itself;
every man is a piece of the continent,
a part of the main;
any man's death diminishes me,
because I am involved in mankind.

HAMLET
-that’s me told

OPHELIA
-Yup

HAMLET
I like it when you recite poetry

HAMLET
Can we go back to yours now

OPHELIA
Not yet

ELEGIA

SCENE 15 – FLASHBACK 2

HAMLET
How long does it take?

OPHELIA
It?

HAMLET
the…the procedure.

OPHELIA
Can you not say the word abortion Hamlet?

HAMLET
3 hours

OPHELIA
They said there are usually protestors outside.

HAMLET
right, ok - what do we do?

OPHELIA
we explain to them that we're preventing another Hamlet from coming into the world

and that they should be cheering us on.

HAMLET
-that's not funny

OPHELIA
-it is a bit

HAMLET
what's in the bag?

OPHELIA some clothes.
I might need clean clothes.

OPHELIA
just so you know
I'll probably cry at some point.

OPHELIA
It doesn't mean I regret the decision - ok?

HAMLET
ok. - no regrets

OPHELIA
no - I mean I regret
that you can’t keep your condom on.

HAMLET
-it was an accident

OPHELIA
-yup.let’s go

HAMLET
Do you want me to come in with you?

OPHELIA
you can come in for the first bit

HAMLET
what’s the first bit?

OPHELIA
blood tests, ultrasound.

HAMLET
Ultrasound.

To be or not to be…

OPHELIA
Shut the fuck up - seriously - shut up.

SCENE 16 – FLASHBACK 3 - BATHROOM

HAMLET
How are you feeling?
Does it still hurt?

I’m leaving in the morning –
I tried to delay the flight
but I wasn’t able to –

I have to meet the team in Darfur -
for the medical training

and then we drive to
the field hospital –

They really need me to be there
I would change it if I could,
you know that don't you.

I wish I could stay -

I’ll write to you

SCENE 17 – OPHELIA PRESENT 2

HAMLET
Why did you pick that memory?

OPHELIA
because you asked me what you had to be sorry about.

HAMLET
You made me look bad

OPHELIA
that was the idea

HAMLET
Today you made me look bad today-
it was an accident.

OPHELIA
The accident wasn't the problem
it was that you left the next day
and my Dad had to pick up the pieces

HAMLET
I had to go… it was…
OPHELIA
what was it?

HAMLET
it was important - important work –

OPHELIA
no it wasn’t –
it was you trying to prove to your Dad
that you weren’t a waste of space!

HAMLET
I believed in it.

OPHELIA
- you didn’t even know where Sudan was.

HAMLET
I was doing something with my life –
and look I tried - I wrote to you.

OPHELIA
I didn’t want letters –
I needed you to stay here –

HAMLET
but if you'd written back - maybe…

OPHELIA
maybe what hamlet -
what was there to say.

What do you think happens to us all
when you're not here Hamlet –
do you think we all just sit in suspended animation
waiting for you to shine your fucking light on us ?
were you hoping I'd join a nunnery
and sit there fingering my rosary
and composing tear stained letters ?

Dear Hamlet I can't stop taking pain killers,

Dear Hamlet the doctor says
I'll probably never be able to have children,

Dear Hamlet thank you so much
for your wonderful poem about water lilies,

I hope you're having a lovely time.

You weren't here -
I got on with my life!

HAMLET
who with?

OPHELIA
what?

HAMLET
who did you get on with your life with –

OPHELIA
that's none of your business

HAMLET
did you get on with your life with Horatio.

OPHELIA
Fuck off Hamlet.

HAMLET
Did something happen between you and Horatio,
when I was away?

HAMLET

I did love you once

OPHELIA
indeed my lord you did make me believe so

HAMLET
you should not have believed me.

I loved you not.

OPHELIA
I was the more deceived.

SCENE 18 - GHOST 2

GHOST
Did she dump you?

HAMLET
kind of

GHOST
Frailty thy name is woman!

Your mother would’ve dumped me, if she could’ve -
We are unlovable you and I.

HAMLET
What?

GHOST
unlovable Hamlet -

HAMLET
I’m not

GHOST
course you are - look at you - I blame myself - I was too hard and you were too soft -
we should’ve sent you away to school.

HAMLET
you did send me away to school

GHOST
then why the fuck were you so soft.
I bet that’s why she dumped you - Unlovable!

HAMLET
no

GHOST
But remember this - we don’t need it - we don’t need love Hamlet - Every man is an island!

HAMLET
That’s not what he said?

GHOST
what who said?

HAMLET

it’s a misquote.

GHOST
what did he say clever dick?

HAMLET
No man is an island entire of itself; every man
is a piece of the continent, a part of the main;

GHOST
you’re good with your words - always so good with your words -
remember those poems you used to write when you were a boy -
your mother would put them on the fridge
they were ridiculous weren't they.

HAMLET
no

GHOST
you were ridiculous.

HAMLET
I wasn’t!

GHOST
is she sleeping with someone else?

HAMLET
I don’t know

GHOST
is it your brother?

HAMLET
I don’t have a brother.

GHOST
best friend?

HAMLET
maybe

GHOST
watch out hamlet - he’ll have you bumped off before you know it.

HAMLET
I doubt it

GHOST
don’t doubt it hamlet - Men are cunts.
look at me - my body mutilated by my own brother.

do you think about them - together - Ophelia and your best friend.

HAMLET
no

GHOST
are you sure - Hamlet! I did - I thought about them together - My wife and Claudius - dancing to Yazoo -
think about it hamlet - and then after the dancing - they start to kiss, he undoes the buttons of her top, she reaches for the buckle on his belt - think about it hamlet -

ghost hands him a baseball bat and exits - mannish boy starts playing.

MANNISH BOY

SCENE 19 - GHOST 2B

GHOST
Nice

HAMLET
what?

GHOST
That – nice work.
Now ride it hamlet - ride it like a wild horse
that anger - that disappointment - ride it -
– show her what you're really made of, show me what you're really made of - Claudius is sleeping in the garden - place this next to him, pull the pin out, and run like the wind -

HAMLET
I can't kill him without proof.

GHOST
You can't kill him without balls - the proof I can provide - you will need to find the balls.
take this -

HAMLET
what is it

GHOST
VHS - make him watch it –

Hannah moves goose and snake into the space –

invite them both - 'Mother dear - uncle Claudius - I feel like we haven't had much quality time together - I have a film I'd like us to watch - come and watch with me'

play the film - pay attention exactly one hour in - watch him closely—

For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ.

SCENE 20 - LION KING

LION KING VIDEO

CLAUDIUS
Turn the light on. Turn the light on. Stop the video.

GHOST V/O
Kill him Hamlet

HAMLET
I don’t really want to show you this next bit - I’m not proud of any of it - but the ghost had got inside my head - and I just kind of lost it - for a second I just lost it - I thought about how all my life people have accused me of procrastinating, how my Dad would exude disappointment whenever I came into the room, how my Mum never once hugged me like she meant it and how Ophelia was so much better without me - I’m not a violent man - I just lost it - you know - for a moment.

This is our last scene together Mum - are you ready - I want you to know that despite everything I say in this scene - I know that this was not all your fault. and I want you to know that despite everything I love you.

SCENE 21 - HAMLET AND GERTRUDE 2

HAMLET
Where is he? Claudius, where is he?
Is he here?

(Answer me mum)

GERTRUDE (audience member)
No

HAMLET
You killed him -
- you and Claudius you killed my Father didn’t you

GERTRUDE (audience member)
No

HAMLET
Of course you did - Did you see how he reacted - it proves his guilt -

- you chose - that fucking snake over Dad -
You were planning this for years weren’t you?

GERTRUDE
no

HAMLET
that’s why you sent me away to school - get me out of the way so you could carry on with your sordid affair?

GERTRUDE
no

HAMLET
you were supposed to love him,
you were supposed to love me -
you fucking abandoned me - look at me - look at what you did to me - I don’t know how to live, I don’t know how to love - and that’s because of you.

Where is he - where is the man you chose over me - - he’s here isn’t he?

GERTRUDE
No

HAMLET
I should kill you now - I should kill you now for what you did -

POLONIUS
No

HAMLET SHOOTS

HAMLET
the King?

GERTRUDE
no

HAMLET
Fuck - fuck -

HAMLET
Polonius - no –

Is there a doctor in the house?

I LIKE IT LIKE THAT PLAYS

HAMLET
Katie I didn’t mean to kill him - it was an accident -

Katie
hmm

HAMLET
I thought he was a rat.

Katie laughs

KATIE
Personally I’m tired of plays about angry depressed misogynistic men.

Katie exits

SCENE 22 - GHOST 3

Ghost enters

HAMLET
I killed him

GHOST
Excellent!

HAMLET
Not Claudius. I killed the wrong man.

GHOST
Did you? - Ah - never mind -I'm sure he'll be fine.

HAMLET
he's dead

GHOST
oh that's sad.

HAMLET
you told me to do it!

GHOST
Do what?

HAMLET
Kill him.

GHOST
I don't think that was me - we all look quite similar. I think you got me confused with someone else.

HAMLET
no, no, no,
You told me to do it.
You told me to do it.
No, no.

GHOST
What happened to my pubic hair?

HAMLET
What?

GHOST

I’m sure I used to have some - did they shave it off? Who gave them permission to shave it off? Kill them Hamlet!

HAMLET
I…

GHOST
Maybe it fell out! Is that a thing? Ask them.

HAMLET
Ask who?

GHOST
the nurse - there she is - ask her about my pubic hair.

HAMLET
I don’t think she’s a nurse

GHOST
Who is she?

HAMLET
She’s one of the audience.

GHOST
Audience -?

HAMLET
yes

GHOST
friends of yours?

HAMLET
No - most of them I haven’t met.

GHOST
– why are they here?

HAMLET
They bought tickets

GHOST
They bought a ticket - with money?

HAMLET
yes

GHOST
and you get that money?

HAMLET
some of it

GHOST
Huh - there must be easier ways to earn a living

HAMLET
there are

GHOST
so why are you doing this?

HAMLET
I think maybe I’m looking for some kind of approval, some kind of love I missed out on as a child

GHOST
huh - you sound like my son

HAMLET
I am your son

GHOST
We’re out of grapes. Your mother sent me out to get some more. Someone keeps eating the fucking things

HAMLET
It’s me - I ate them - it was always me -

GHOST
huh - was it! I better tell your mother - have you seen your mother?

HAMLET
She’s there.

GHOST
She looks different

HAMLET
I think she had her hair done.

GHOST
Beautiful. She was always so beautiful - How was school?

HAMLET
I left school a long time ago

GHOST

Did you - how was it though?

HAMLET
Awful I hated it- I cried myself to sleep for weeks.

~~GHOST~~
~~Me too, me too Hamlet. I cried myself to sleep for weeks.~~

~~HAMLET~~
~~Why did you send me there?~~

~~GHOST~~
~~I don't know. Why did we do that? Why did we?~~

~~HAMLET~~
~~I wish you hadn't.~~

~~GHOST~~
~~Me too, then everything would have been different.~~

~~HAMLET~~
~~Yeah.~~

~~GHOST~~
~~I'm sorry~~

~~HAMLET~~
~~Can you say it again.~~

~~GHOST~~
~~I'm sorry Hamlet.~~

~~*Silence*~~
GHOST
Is that the sunrise?

HAMLET
Not yet

GHOST
I have to go.

HAMLET
you have to go - that is what you'd say - and then you'd walk towards the car - careful not to look back - and I would watch you go - and I would hold myself together - but inside I'd be shouting - don't go - don't go! because if you go - this is it - - whatever this is - this bond, this cord, this line, between me

and you - this love - if you go it’s broken - like a spade through an earthworm -
and then we’re both alone - you and me - pointlessly alone -
- I don’t need hardening - none of us needed hardening - what we needed Dad was softening -
turn around you fuck - come back and pick me up- tell me I don't have to stay in this awful place …tell me I can come home.

GHOST
Hamlet - my boy - a tiny piece of ham.

SCENE 23 – OPHELIA'S REVENGE

OPHELIA
Hamlet
this is not how it ends -

Remember that ghost story I told you - when my mum woke me up to save my Dad from drowning in his own sick - i don't think I told you the next bit -

see since my mum had died I'd been fucking feral - underfed, unwashed, unkempt -
but that day when he picked me up from school he handed me a new pair of shoes - brown patent leather.
and every morning he cleaned those new shoes- obsessively - I could see my face in them -
then he bought me new tights, washed my school uniform, he even learnt how to plait my hair
he couldn't face the big picture -
so he just dealt with the details -
fussy, fastidious, fucking annoying - but that was what he could manage. And I loved him for it.
I loved him Hamlet.

HAMLET
I'm sorry…

OPHELIA
too late. I'm here to seek my revenge.
an eye for an eye - I will shoot you four times like a big fucking rat -
how old are you Hamlet?

HAMLET
50

OPHELIA
and how many people have you killed

HAMLET
just the one

OPHELIA
oh you liar - 7 deaths per show -
3 directly, 4 indirectly
let's say a conservative estimate is that this story has been staged, including amateur productions about 3 million times in the last 425 years. So that's about 21 million people.

HAMLET

No

OPHELIA
have you got any kids?

HAMLET
no

OPHELIA
are you sure? - if I remember correctly condoms tend to fall off your tiny member,
perhaps you have a collection of bastards dotted around europe, and Sudan! I don't want those little shits coming to hunt me down
So I'll ask you again - do you have any children?

HAMLET
no

OPHELIA
fine - then I can kill you.

HAMLET
any alternatives? -

OPHELIA
well- we could just lose you - and your story - maybe that's worse than death for someone like you- a kind of irrelevance.
- take off your onesie -
get in that box -

HAMLET
Ophelia I can do better

OPHELIA
all the way in.

HAMLET crawls into a box -

I did love you once.

CORNCRAKES