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National
Theatre

Connections 2020



Plays for
Young People

National Theatre Connections 2020

PLAYS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Wind / Rush Generation(s)

Tuesday

A series of public apologies

(in response to an unfortunate incident in the school lavatories)

The IT

The Marxist in Heaven

Look Up

Crusaders

Witches Can't Be Burned

Dungeness

With introductions by

KIRSTEN ADAM and OLA ANIMASHAWUN

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National Theatre Connections

Connections is the National Theatre's annual, nationwide youth theatre festival. It's a celebration of youth theatre, new writing, creativity and partnership, and most importantly it is an opportunity for young people to access the arts.

Every year Connections offers a unique opportunity for youth theatres and school theatre groups to stage new plays written specifically for young people, by some of today's most exciting playwrights, and then to perform them in leading theatres across the UK.

In 2020, nearly 300 companies from across the UK took up the challenge of staging a brand-new Connections play. Over 7,000 young people aged 13–19 took part, supported by thirty-one brilliant and innovative partner theatres from across our nation. By mid-March 2020, 218 companies had rehearsed and presented their productions to audiences in their school halls, youth centres and community hubs.

By mid-March it also became clear, in response to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, that theatres across the UK would have to temporarily close their doors. Sadly, as a result, none of the thirty-one Partner Theatre Connections Festivals or the National Theatre's own Connections Festival, due to take place in June, could happen. This was a difficult and incredibly disappointing situation for the young companies; the results of so much creativity, imagination and hard work would not be seen by a wider audience, and the companies would not yet get the experience of performing in a professional theatre.

However, the resolve, tenacity and inventiveness of the Connections companies in response to not being able to perform has been inspirational to all of us working on the programme. Without a physical stage these young companies have instead celebrated the work they and their peers created through digital festivals and sharing work online. And supported by our wonderful partner theatres they have connected with each other and shared their love of this collection of plays.

These challenging and distinctive plays are for and about young people, and across this year we have seen how deeply young people have connected with them. We hope this anthology serves as a record and a celebration of all their hard work.

We also hope that, for everyone who took part in Connections 2020, despite the unprecedented challenges of living through a pandemic, it remained a positive and confidence-building experience in teamwork and creative self-expression that will enrich the rest of their lives.

We look to the future with hope and excitement and to the return of Connections next year and for many years to come.

Kirsten Adam, Connections Producer
National Theatre 2020

*For more information and to get involved visit:
nationaltheatre.org.uk/learning/connections*

Introduction

As we enter the third decade of the twenty-first century, it begs the question: is this the moment this century comes of age? If it is, then what exactly will that mean for the people who still have most of their lives to live in a world where the pace of change is now so fast the adage ‘blink and you’ll miss it’ has never felt so true?

When commissioning this year’s Connections plays, I asked the writers to apply their vision and though none of them had the foresight to predict a pandemic, these plays all possess a laser-like clarity. Through their scripts the writer’s provide the young people with a vehicle that enables them to interrogate, embrace, explore and even make sense of the coming world; to bring the near future squarely into focus. These new plays don’t pull their punches. They are rich, playful and provocative, as well as hopeful, heartfelt and truthful.

From the direct command to *Look Up* and truly see the world, to the gentle search for identity and meaning in *Tuesday* and *The Changing Room* or the wiliness of *A series of public apologies . . .*, the rallying calls to action in *Crusaders*, *The IT*, *The Marxist in Heaven*, *Wind / Rush Generation(s)* and *Witches Can’t Be Burned* all the way through to the celebratory anthem of *Dungeness*: these are plays for a generation of theatre-makers who want to ask questions, challenge assertions and test the boundaries. But they are also plays for those who love to invent and imagine a world of possibilities.

Ola Animashawun, Connections Dramaturg

The Plays

Wind / Rush Generation(s) by Mojisola Adebayo

This is a play about the British Isles, its past and its present. Set in a senior common room in a prominent university, a group of first-year undergraduates are troubled, not by the weight of their workload, but by a ‘noisy’ ghost. So they do what any group of self-respecting and intelligent university students would do in such a situation – they get out the Ouija board to confront their spiritual irritant and lay them to rest, only to be confronted by the full weight of Britain’s colonial past in all its gory glory.

However, if you think you know about British history, empire, slavery, economics, racism and humanity, then this play might get you to think again. As the planchette on the Ouija board skates from letter to letter at an ever-increasing breakneck speed, the students are catapulted through space and time, witnessing the injustices, incongruities and inhumanity of the past. This is a smorgasbord of genres and styles. Fusing naturalism with physical theatre, spoken word, absurdism, poetry and direct address, this is event theatre that whips along with the grace, pace and hypnotic magnetism of a hurricane.

Tuesday by Alison Carr

Tuesday is light, playful and nuanced in tone. And a little bit sci-fi. The play centres on an ordinary Tuesday that suddenly turns very weird indeed when a tear rips across the sky over the school yard. Not only that, but it starts sucking up pupils and staff while at the same time raining down a whole new set of people. But, then, that's what happens when parallel worlds collide!

Confusion reigns as the 'Us' and 'Them' try to work out what is going on. How are Ash and Magpie identical? Can Billy cope with having his sister back? Who is Franky? Eventually, though, cracks appear between the two groups. As the air here starts to disagree with the 'Them', the race is on to try to get things back to how they were and safely return everyone to the universe they came from.

The play touches on themes of friendship, sibling love, family, identity, grief, bullying, loneliness and responsibility. And in the process we might just learn something about ourselves as well as some astronomical theories of the multiverse!

**A series of public apologies (in response to an unfortunate incident
in the school lavatories) by John Donnelly**

This satirical play is heightened in its naturalism, in its seriousness, in its parody and piercing in its interrogation of how our attempts to define ourselves in public are shaped by the fear of saying the wrong thing. Presented quite literally as a series of public apologies this play is spacious, flexible and welcoming of inventive and imaginative interpretation as each iteration spirals inevitably to its absurdist core. This is a play on words, on convention, on manners, on institutions, on order, online and on point.

The IT by Vivienne Franzmann

The IT is a play about a teenage girl who has something growing inside her. She doesn't know what it is, but she knows it's not a baby. It expands in her body. It starts in her stomach, but quickly outgrows that, until eventually it takes over the entirety of her insides. It has claws. She feels them. Does it have teeth, skin and hair as well, or is that feathers or spikes she can feel, butting up against her organs? What is it? It makes a noise, like a lizard or a snake. No one must know about it. She has to keep its presence, its possession of her, concealed. She pulls away from her friends. She refuses to speak in case the It is heard. Then the It tries to escape from her body. She can't let that happen. She cuts an isolated weird figure at school, trying to live her life normally, but battling to keep the It inside of her. But she can't contain it for ever – sooner or later something's got to give . . .

Presented in the style of a direct-to-camera documentary, this is a darkly comic state-of-the-nation play exploring adolescent mental health and the rage within, written very specifically for today.

The Marxist in Heaven by Hattie Naylor

The Marxist in Heaven is a play that does exactly what its title page says it's going to do. The eponymous protagonist 'wakes up' in paradise and, once they get over the shock of this fundamental contradiction of everything they believe in, they get straight back to work, and continue their lifelong struggle for equality and fairness for all – even in death. Funny, playful, provocative, pertinent and jam-packed with discourse, disputes, deities and disco-dancing by the bucketful, this upbeat buoyant allegory shines its holy light on globalisation and asks the salient questions: who are we and what are we doing to ourselves, and what conditioner do you use on your hair?

Look Up by Andrew Muir

Look Up plunges us into a world free from adult intervention, supervision and protection. It's about seeking the truth for yourself and finding the space to find and be yourself. Nine young people are creating new rules for what they hope will be a new and brighter future full of hope in a world in which they can trust again. Each one of them is unique, original and defiantly individual, break into an abandoned building and set about claiming the space, because that is what they do. They have rituals, they have rules; together they are a tribe, they have faith in themselves – and nothing and no one else. They are the future, unless the real world catches up with them and then all they can hope for is that they don't crash and burn like the adults they ran away from in the first place.

Crusaders by Frances Poet

A group of teens gather to take their French exam but none of them will step into the exam hall. Because Kyle has had a vision and he'll use anything, even miracles, to ensure his classmates accompany him. Together they have just seven days to save themselves, save the world and be the future.

And Kyle is not the only one who has had the dream. All across the globe, from Azerbaijan to Zambia, children are dreaming and urging their peers to follow them to the promised land. Who will follow? Who will lead? Who will make it?

Witches Can't Be Burned by Silva Semerciyan

If you keep on doing the same thing, over and over again, you'll keep on getting the same results, time and time again. St Paul's have won the schools Playfest competition three years in a row, by selecting recognised classics from the canon and producing them at an exceptionally high level; it's a tried and trusted formula. With straight 'A's student and drama freak Anuka cast as Abigail Williams in *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller, the school seem to be well on course for another triumph, which would be a record. What could possibly go wrong?

However, as rehearsals gain momentum, Anuka has an epiphany – an experience resulting in her asking searching questions surrounding the text, the depiction and perception of female characters, the meaning of loyalty, and the values and traditions underpinning the very foundations of the school. Thus, the scene is set for a confrontation

of epic proportions as Anuka seeks to break with tradition, before tradition breaks her and all young women like her, and reality begins to take on the ominous hue of Miller's fictionalised Salem.

Dungeness by Chris Thompson

In a remote part of the UK, where nothing ever happens, a group of teenagers share a safe house for LGBT+ young people.

While their shared home welcomes difference, it can be tricky for self-appointed group leader Birdie to keep the peace. The group must decide how they want to commemorate an attack that happened to LGBT+ people, in a country far away. How do you take to the streets and protest if you're not ready to tell the world who you are? If you're invisible, does your voice still count? A play about love, commemoration and protest.

The Changing Room by Chris Bush

A lyrical piece about existing on the cusp of growing up. Are we teenagers? Are we children? What are we? It's about bodies in flux and perspectives shifting; knowing change is coming but not what that change will look like.

Set in and around a swimming pool, *The Changing Room* follows a group of teens full of excitement, impatience and uncertainty, each with their own secret worries and desires for what comes next.

The Changing Room was previously published by Methuen Drama in the *National Theatre Connections 2019* anthology.



Wind / Rush Generation(s)

by Mojisola Adebayo

This is a play about the British Isles, its past and its present. Set in a senior common room in a prominent university, a group of first-year undergraduates are troubled, not by the weight of their workload, but by a ‘noisy’ ghost. So they do what any group of self-respecting and intelligent university students would do in such a situation – they get out the Ouija board to confront their spiritual irritant and lay them to rest, only to be confronted by the full weight of Britain’s colonial past in all its gory glory.

However, if you think you know about British history, empire, slavery, economics, racism and humanity, then this play might get you to think again. As the planchette on the Ouija board skates from letter to letter at an ever-increasing breakneck speed, the students are catapulted through space and time, witnessing the injustices, incongruities and inhumanity of the past. This is a smorgasbord of genres and styles. Fusing naturalism with physical theatre, spoken word, absurdism, poetry and direct address, this is event theatre that whips along with the grace, pace and hypnotic magnetism of a hurricane.

Cast size

Minimum ensemble of 8 (with a core group of 6) or up to 30,
ideally with a mixture of genders

Most suitable for ages 15+

Mojisola Adebayo BA (Hons), MA, PhD, FRSL has worked in theatre, radio and television over the past two decades, performing in over fifty productions, writing, devising and directing over thirty plays, and leading countless workshops worldwide, from Antarctica to Zimbabwe. Her publications include: *Plays One: Moj of the Antarctic: An African Odyssey, Muhammad Ali and Me* and *Matt Henson: North Star* (Oberon); *Plays Two: STARS, I Stand Corrected, Oranges and Stones* and *The Interrogation of Sandra Bland* (Oberon); the play *48 Minutes for Palestine* in *Theatre in Pieces* (Methuen Drama); *The Theatre for Development Handbook* (with John Martin and Manisha Mehta, available through www.pan-arts.net); and several academic chapters. Mojisola is an Associate Artist with Pan Arts, Black Lives, Black Words and Building the Anti-Racist Classroom, a Visiting Artist at Rose Bruford College and Goldsmiths, and a Lecturer at Queen Mary, University of London. Her next play *STARS* will be staged in 2020/1. See www.mojisolaadebayo.co.uk for more.

With thanks to Ola Animashawun – dramaturg

Author's Note

This is a play about the British Isles, its past and its present. It is written for all young people and youth theatres to perform, regardless of their cultural background, skin colour or gender.

Characters

There is potential for doubling of roles, as necessary. The names of the characters below are in some cases historic, in other cases symbolic, playful and/or deliberately ambiguous in terms of gender and culture. The play is partly an exploration of names, naming and calling things as they are.

David Lammy MP – a living figure, played by the entire cast, at least *ten actors*, preferably more, but not less than seven. The role needs a powerful collective voice.

Students

Six first-year university students doing a History degree. They are close-knit team of outsiders, aged around eighteen, but they can be played by younger actors, of any culture or gender. Names are androgynous. Some character traits are indicated below but don't get too hung up on these. The play is driven by the story and by storytelling.

Ola, *intelligent, very anxious but brave – their name means 'wealth'*

Zhe (*pronounced Zee*), *dynamic, driven by curiosity, extrovert*

Ali, *a playful, loveable, joker*

Xia (*pronounced Shia*), *cool, understated, sharp*

Kit, *rational, focused, caring – closest to Ola*

Jay, *gentle, sensitive, spiritual*

NB: For reasons that will become clear, it makes some sense if Ola is played by a young person of African/Caribbean descent. However, this is not absolutely necessary if there are no black members of your youth group. Equally, if there is only one black member of your youth group they do not necessarily have to play Ola.

Monte Rosa – an elderly German female of around 100 years old. Each time Monte Rosa speaks she is played by a new female actor. She may alternatively be played by one female actor throughout, or any actor playing female. She is a romantic, poetic, vain, egocentric, sweet old lady with an unpleasant streak. Again, as with all acting in this play, let the storytelling drive the performance choices.

Seven Villagers

A group of middle-aged, middle/upper-class residents of a small wealthy rural community, somewhere remote in England. Suggested names:

Theresa
Nigel
Caroline
Sajid
Boris
Diane
Jacob

Zong Characters

Captain of Zong, *Luke Collingwood (English, historical figure)*
First Mate of Zong, *James Kelsall (English, historical figure)*
Judge Mansfield (*historical figure in the Zong case of 1781*)
Sailors on Zong (*working men from all over Britain and Ireland, with fictional names, they can be played by actors of any gender, double roles if you need to*):

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John
Simon
Peter
James
Thomas
Andrew
Nathan
Jude
Paul

British Citizens

The words spoken by British Citizens are all inspired by real lives. However, their names have been made anonymous. They have been re-named in memory of various black British/African-Caribbean heroes. Some died at the hands of racists or in police custody and some were allowed to live great lives:

Nanny (in memory of Nanny of the Maroons)
Bernie (in memory of Bernie Grant)
Joy (in memory of Joy Gardner)
Smiley (in memory of Smiley Culture)
Stuart (in memory of Stuart Hall)
Cherry (in memory of Cherry Croce)
Kelso (in memory of Kelso Cochrane)
Stephen (in memory of Stephen Lawrence)
David (in memory of David Oluwale)
Mary (in memory Mary Seacole)
Marcus (in memory of Marcus Mosiah Garvey)

Olive (in memory of Olive Morris)

In memory of too many to mention. Rest in peace, ancestors.

Sam and **Sim** – *two computer gamers*: teenage friends, they speak in a stilted rhythm, mechanically, without much emotion, like figures from a video game.

Wind – the embodiment of Wind, male, Jamaican, dub poet, inspired by Linton Kwesi Johnson, played by the entire cast in chorus. The role could alternatively be played by one actor who is particularly skilled at/enjoys spoken word/rap/poetry.

Notes on Playing

- Yes poetry
- Yes rhythm
- Yes to pace, pace, pace!
- Super-fast scene changes – oh yes!
- Yes musicality
- Yes theatricality
- Yes ensemble, chorus, team, collectivity, togetherness
- Yes movement
- Yes to creative accessibility for D/deaf, blind and disabled performers and audience members – e.g. BSL interpretation, audio-description, surtitles
- Yes to flexibility, experimentation, inventiveness, playfulness
- Yes to small cuts but the scissors are mine – thanks! Requests to the author
- Yes it's a challenge and yes it's challenging
- Yes to taking pleasure in playing with it and seeing what can be created

Technical Notes

There are a few sound effects but nothing hard to source. Projection of certain words is very important for the storytelling and the audience understanding. If a projector is not available, you could use an old-style overhead projector, placards or sound. Experiment. As long as the meaning is clear, you can do this play simply or high tech, raw or cooked.

Notes on the Text

- A slash like this / indicates that the following person's line crosses over the person speaking at that point, i.e. two people talk over each other.
- These brackets [. . .] indicate the sense of the line but are not heard out loud.
- Please read the stage directions carefully: they will help you as each scene/setting is very different and necessitates its own distinct style.

Scene – House of Commons

*The whole cast stand and play **David Lammy MP**, speaking the verbatim text below, powerfully and passionately together. The actors embody and magnify **Lammy's** physicality on the day he gave the speech/posed the questions in the House of Commons. If you have a large cast, some actors could play opposition MPs nodding their heads and calling 'hear, hear' beside him. With a very large cast you could also show the then Home Secretary Amber Rudd and the government front bench, fidgeting nervously. See this link for guidance on movement and theatricality in staging: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y2q2dQlsyWY>*

Sound recording from the real debate where several MPs stand to speak and then the Speaker of the House selects David Lammy MP:

Speaker of the House (voiceover) Mr David Lammy!

Opposition MP (voiceover) Hear, hear . . .

Lammy, played by multiple actors, speaks exquisitely clearly and is unashamedly bold, building in vocal, emotional and physical intensity and volume.

Lammy Can I say to the Home Secretary, that the relationship between this country and the West Indies and the Caribbean is inextricable. The first British ships arrived in the Caribbean in 1623, and despite slavery, despite colonisation, 25,000 Caribbeans served in the First World War and Second World War alongside British troops.

When my parents and their generation arrived in this country under the Nationality Act of 1948, they arrived here as British citizens. It is inhumane and cruel for so many of that Windrush generation to have suffered so long in this condition and for the Secretary of State only to have made a statement today, on this issue.

Can she explain how many have been deported? She suggested earlier that she would ask the high commissioners – it is *her department* that has deported them! She should know the number! Can she tell the House how many have been detained as prisoners in their own country? Can she tell the House how many have been denied health under the National Health Service, how many have denied pensions, how many have lost their job?

This is a day of national shame, and it has come about because of a 'hostile environment' policy that was begun under her prime minister! Let us call it as it is: if you lay down with dogs you get fleas! (*He continues speaking as some of the cast gradually, and in low volume at first, start growling and then barking and finally howling like dogs/bitches.*) And that is what has happened with this far-right rhetoric in this country.

Can she apologise properly? Can she explain how quickly this team will act to ensure that the thousands of British men and women denied their rights in the country, under her watch, in the Home Office, are satisfied?

The dogs continue in blackout. The sound culminates in wild howling with a few whimpering in pain until the start of the next scene. The effect should be chilling.

Scene – Senior Common Room

Lights dimly up on the old Senior Common Room (like a communal living room) of a prestigious university. Old chairs, coffee table(s), books, a rocking chair downstage right (which remains on stage throughout the play from here on), plus pictures of old – now long dead – white male academics hang on the walls. The set, however, does not need to be naturalistic. The Senior Common Room setting could be suggested with a few well-chosen items or conveyed through projection. However, the one item that needs to be physically present is a rocking chair, downstage right.

*Sound of a big old wooden door creaking open. The **Students** are revealed in the doorway, some wearing pyjamas, dressing gowns, slippers, holding mobile phones as torches. They speak in hushed tones, secretly seeking out a ghost, in a space they are not allowed in . . . They are all scared, but some more so than others.*

Ola This is a bad idea.

Zhe Are we going in or not?

Ola Not!

Ali But we said:

Xia Truth or dare?

All (*except Ola and Kit*) DARE!

Ola But I'm scared.

Kit comforts **Ola** as **Jay** continues.

Jay You've got more to fear from the living than the dead.

Ali It's true. Think of Trump. (*Approaching Ola with a zombie-Trump impression.*)
Aaaaamericafiiiiirst. . . .

Zhe Climate catastrophe, ISIS,

Xia (*continuing Zhe's list*) white supremacists . . .

Zhe Much more scarey.

Ola Why is this not helping me?

Jay Let's just put this thing to bed so we can all sleep at night.

Ali Nice.

Kit (*to Ola*) And there'll be a perfectly rational explanation.

Zhe Let's see shall we? . . .

Jay So, we just go in and calmy *talk* –

Xia to a freaking ghost.

Jay And ask it –

Zhe *politely* –

Ali (*putting on a posh voice*) to go a-way . . .

Ola You lot don't even know what you're messing with – I'm telling you!

Ola *goes to leave. Ali is disappointed. Kit pulls them back.*

Ali Arrhh . . . we said we'd stick together . . .

Zhe You won't be able to sleep anyway!

Kit [Let's just give it] two minutes (*Setting phone timer.*)

Ali Then we order delivery! I'm hungry.

Xia Me too.

Ola Can we *please* just go back down to halls? We're not even allowed in the Senior Common Room. Let's just do a different dare!

Zhe (*to Jay*) You got this, babe.

Kit *starts timer. They all step cautiously into the room. Jay in the lead, others following. Jay begins to talk, louder now, into the space, slowly, gently, addressing the ghostly presence.*

Jay Hello . . .?

Ali (*comic ghost voice*) HELLOOOOOOOOOOOHHHH . . .

Ola Stop it!

Xia Hey there . . . spirit thing . . .

Kit Spirit thing?

Ola (*whispering a line from the Lord's Prayer*) 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive / those who trespass against us . . .'

Jay (*speaking over Ola*) We mean you no harm . . .

Zhe (*to Jay*) That's good, keep going.

Ali We beg you – don't hurt us!

Ola (*snapping out of the prayer*) What you giving them ideas for?

Kit (*to Ola*) Breathe.

Jay Thank you for . . . reaching out . . .

Ola *Please. (Begging to leave, but feeling compelled to stay.)*

Jay But the truth is . . . we are all really . . .

Kit Tired, stressed

Xia – shitting ourselves.

Jay And we are only freshers.

Zhe And we've got history assessments coming up.

Xia And we are paying nine grand a year.

Ali And I just wanna get my two-one and done.

Zhe So . . .

Jay We respectfully ask you, spirit –

Kit – if you even exist –

Jay that you please –

Ali LEAVE US THE FREAK ALONE!

Everyone is startled by Ali's volume. They all shush Ali.

Kit (*reprimanding*) You'll wake security.

Zhe (*reminding*) Politely.

Ola (*praying quietly but even more urgently*) 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil . . .'

Jay (*to the ghost*) We are very sorry if we've offended you in anyway.

Ali Sorryyyyyyyy . . .

Jay You can talk to us anytime . . .

Xia (*not sure if what Jay has just said is a good idea*) Errrrmm . . .

Jay And if there's something you want from us . . . just give us a sign.

Ola What did you say that for?

Kit Rewind.

Zhe (*to the ghost*) What do you want? . . .

They all pause silently, for quite a while, trying to sense the ghost, waiting for an answer; breathing deeply, alert. Ali breaks the silence

Ali Wiiiiings . . . chicken wiiiiings . . .

Xia Fufuuu, nooodles . . .

Ali Baba ganoooooooooush! . . . (*They all laugh except Ola.*)

Ola [We are leaving] NOW!

Ola drags **Kit** away. They all start turning and leave with the lines below, saying goodbye to the ghost: 'job done'.

Ali Salaam.

Xia Shalom.

Zhe Salmon.

Ola What?

Ali Nah, don't fancy that.

Zhe Can't you smell it?

Ali It wasn't me.

Ola Yeah . . . (*Repulsed.*)

Jay Fish? . . .

A sudden cold breeze sweeps in. Kit is startled by feeling something brush past.

Kit Don't touch me!

Ali I didn't do nothing!

Xia It's freezing.

Ola My phone's died!

Jay Everyone keep calm.

Zhe Can you taste salt?

Ola (*in fear*) Please Lord . . .

Xia (*confused by the taste of salt on their lips*) Urgh . . .

Zhe Oh my days – the chair! It's moving!

The rocking chair is moving of its own accord. This could be conveyed by a transparent wire on the base of the rocking chair being pulled by a stage manager in the wings, or wind machine. Sudden backout. They all scream in fear.

All AAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHH!

Scene – Monte Rosa 1

Lights up. The Students. Monte Rosa rocks very gently in her rocking chair in the Senior Common Room. She wears a blue shawl. There is a faint memory of the German language in her speech (e.g. she says 'Ja' – pronounced 'ya' meaning yes) but don't push the accent, just focus on telling the story to the audience.

Monte Rosa

Ja, I don't look bad
Considering
I am one hundred years old!
I still feel so young . . .
I was born in Germany, 1920
They cracked champagne when they got me!
And named me after the second highest mountain in the Alps.
Rosa.
Blanc is the highest so I'm lucky I wasn't the first!
Blanc is no name.

I travelled the whole world
But I've never seen the Alps.
I have always preferred the sea
Or perhaps the sea preferred me.
Not surprising really
I come from Hamburg
Eine schöne Stadt
Such a pretty city
My heart is always in a harbour
Every port an opportunity
And the best playground
To come of age
Every day a new ship
A new face
A new suitcase
Filled with music . . .
Ja, es war ziemlich toll
Quite quite exciting
Hamburg.

Und no need for school
When there was plenty of work
Tourism was new in the 1930s
My job was to take people away
On holidays.
German folk wanted to see the world
We crossed the North Sea and the Mediterranean
Mexico, Madeira, Spain . . .
Ja, sailing wasn't for everybody
Most got sick
But I was born for it!
Rocked by the wind
Kissed by the sun

With moon and stars and tides for guides
 One moment, you feel the ease of a breeze
 Then bluster, gale and gust the next!
 Such a sense of adventure,
 The weather.

Scene – Ouija Board and Pizza 1

Monte Rosa has gone and her rocking chair is perfectly still. The **Students** are back in the Senior Common Room. There is considerable tension amongst The **Students**, except for **Ali** who is focused on enjoying the pizza. A large pizza box with one slice left is on the table, plus a candle, matches, pen, paper and an unopened Ouija board, wrapped in a piece of cloth. Nothing need be naturalistic.

Kit It was just a gust of wind.

Xia And the lights?

Kit Momentary power cut.

Zhe What, *only* in here? Affecting *nowhere* else on campus?

Kit I'm just saying there's probably a scientific explanation.

Zhe (*sarcastic dig*) Sorry, Professor . . .

Jay (*peacemaking*) We need to bring our energies together.

Kit What's all this 'energy' shit?

Ola Stop fighting! Let's just get it over with.

Jay *smiles a 'thank you' at Ola then slowly reveals the Ouija board from the cloth.*

Jay So, a Ouija board is just like a phone, to communicate with . . . the other side. We call and . . . if there is a spirit trying to reach us, they send us little . . . text messages.

Kit This is ridiculous.

Kit *folds their arms. Ola moves back. Deep breaths as they all stare at the box.*

Ali Ommmmmm . . .

Ola Stop it!

Ali (*laughing*) I'm just trying to get everyone relaxed!

Jay That's not a bad idea actually. What if we do some kind of ritual before we start?

Ola Ritual?

Ali What, like, slaughter a chicken?

Xia Yummm . . . (*Laughing with Ali.*)

Ola That's it! (*Gets up to leave.*)

Kit Don't go without me.

Ola *reluctantly sits down beside Kit.*

Jay It's important that we 'act collectively'. (*Recalling the instructions.*)

Zhe How about a song?

Ali (*singing the Liverpool anthem*) 'You'll never walk alone / you'll never walk alone . . .'

Xia (*talks over*) I'm not singing that. I'm Man United.

Ola I shouldn't even be here. I'm Christian.

Jay Then you've got nothing to be afraid of.

Zhe We could do that game from drama society where we close our eyes and say our names, one at a time, randomly. If we talk over each other we go back to the start but we keep going until we get it right.

Ali If I win can I eat the last slice of pizza?

Zhe It's not about winning. It's about collective action. Hold hands. (*They do.*) Close your eyes. (*They all do except Ali who keeps one eye clearly open.*) Both of them.

Ali *closes both eyes. The actors genuinely play the game with their characters' names, until they get it right. We never know what order the game will go in . . .*

Ali Nice.

Zhe That was good guys. Really focused.

Jay Ready?

Various nods, deep breaths, swallowing in anticipation, covering faces. Jay strikes a match and carefully lights the candle, then slowly and silently opens the Ouija board box. They fold out the board. Zhe picks up the instructions and reads.

Zhe OK. 'Two or three people gently place their index and middle fingers on the planchette.'

Kit It's just a stupid bit of plastic.

Zhe *offers the planchette to Kit who shakes their head. Zhe puts the planchette on the board and they wait for someone to place their fingers on it.*

Ola Count me out.

Ali (*making an excuse*) Er, I've got pizza fingers.

Zhe Well my fingers are far too long.

Kit (*sarcastic*) Really?

Jay If no one else wants to . . .

Xia I'll do it too.

Jay and Xia *slowly place their fingers on the planchette, on the board.*

Zhe (*reading the instructions*) 'Choose one person to scribe the messages.'

Kit OK.

Kit *takes the paper and pen. Ready waiting for letters to come through.*

Zhe 'Do not force anything to happen. Simply stay open.'

Long pause. Nothing. Then after some time the planchette starts slowly moving around the board, randomly. It would be great if the audience could see the board.

Ali Shiiiiiiiit . . .

Ola Are you lot pushing it?

Xia and Jay (*really focused*) No.

Kit It can't just –

Xia – I swear.

Jay It's weird.

Xia It's got a life of its own.

Ola (*fearfully*) Ohhhh . . .

Jay (*to the ghost*) Are you here? . . .

The planchette rests on the word 'Yes'. This is projected.

Zhe Yes! It said YES!

Ola Mummy . . .

Ali *hugs Ola.*

Jay Have you got something you want to tell us?

The planchette stays on 'Yes'.

Xia Do you want us to leave you alone?

Ali We really don't mind going.

Kit It's got to be a trick [i.e. it's just getting interesting].

Ali *covers Ola's eyes and their own. The planch moves to 'No'.*

Jay NO! – It wants us to stay!

Zhe (*following the instructions*) Ask their name!

Jay What . . . is . . . your . . . name?

*The planchette slowly moves to the following letters, speeding up gradually. The text here and throughout is projected/shown somehow for the audience. It is important that the audience see the letters as they come through. The **Students** repeat the letters out loud and **Kit** writes them down. **Ali** and **Ola** can't resist looking.*

All

P
R
O
B
L
E
M

All Problem?

Ola I told you! We don't know what we're getting into!

Jay (*to the ghost*) What is the problem?

All (*except Ola*)

N
A
M
E

All Name?

Kit (*reading what they have scribed*) It doesn't make any sense.

Ali We said WHAT IS YOUR NAME?!

Zhe No need to shout.

Xia They are all the way over on the 'other side'.

Ola I feel sick.

Jay It's moving!

All (*except Ola*)

G
U
E
S
S

Ali Funny name. Maybe it's French?

Zhe Guess! They want us to play a game!

Xia This is too weird, even for me.

The planchette moves again.

Jay It's moving again.

Kit Are you pushing it?

Jay I promise [I'm not].

All

N

O

T

I

N

O

T

I

Kit (*writing*) Noti-Noti?

Ali Definitely foreign.

Zhe Not I? *NOT I!*

Jay It's moving again!

All (*except Ola*)

C

L

U

E

Zhe It's giving us a clue.

Jay Keep breathing.

All (*except Ola*)

F

A

R

M

Ola (*confused*) Farm? . . .

Ali Moooooooooooooooo . . . (*Then all the others join in with the moooooooooing sound, while the rest of the cast mix in other farmyard sounds. The final sounds are dogs barking and howling again as the scene transitions. Ola remains on stage, watching the next scene and all of the scenes inspired by the word clues coming from the Ouija board.*)

Scene – Wind Farm

The Ouija setting quickly becomes the setting of a very heated debate at a local parish meeting in the church hall of a small village somewhere in rural England. The characters sit around the table. New actors play the roles below. If need be, roles (except Ola) can be doubled, to accommodate cast size. The characters are posh. A

forward slash (/) indicates that the following line comes in at that juncture, causing an overlap of speech – this is important. The scene is naturalistic but slightly absurd with a quick pace. Be very tight on cues. Ola is visible, observing the scene and all the scenes arising from the words/clues.

Theresa And what about house prices? If we let them take over the land / the value of our houses will inevitably fall.

Nigel Colonise more like.

Caroline No one is talking about the impact on migrating birds.

Sajid They'll put tourists off.

Nigel We don't want tourists either.

Sajid But if we did, one day, want to attract tourism / they would definitely be put off . . .

Caroline What about the birds?

Boris They kill bats!

Nigel They're bloody ugly.

Diane You can't say that.

Nigel I can say what I like, it's a free country.

Jacob And we want to keep it that way!

Diane What I mean is / beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

Nigel I am saying it like it is. They stick out, they don't fit in and we don't want them here!

Diane Oh, I thought you were talking about bats.

Jacob Keep up, love.

Caroline Well, I find them quite beautiful / in their own way.

Boris You should have your eyes tested.

Caroline I'm just saying it's not the way that they look that bothers me. I think there's something quite elegant about them, the way they all move / together.

Jacob That's when they work. Most of the time they don't even work. Waste of space!

Nigel And they're bloody loud!

Diane You're quite loud.

Sajid Well, I've never been up close to one.

Jacob Keep away from them I say, you never know what they might / do to you.

Caroline I'm not saying I want them in my field –

Nigel Well, there you are then!

Boris Apparently each one does barely enough to power a hairdryer.

Diane We could do with a hairdresser around / here.

Boris *Hairdryer* I said!

Diane A hairdryer is quite powerful actually. Mine keeps fusing.

Sajid / Does it?

Nigel They can't even boil a kettle for a decent cup of tea!

Theresa That's decided then. We move to a vote . . .

Boris We vote NO.

Caroline We haven't discussed their benefits.

Jacob What benefits?

Nigel They'll be cutting disability benefits to pay for them / mark my word!

Jacob A lot of them are bogus too.

Diane You just can't say that.

Nigel FREE COUNTRY.

Caroline I mean what the countryside can gain from having them here.

Theresa Whose side are you on?

Caroline I just think we should have a balanced / debate. We are still a *civilised* country.

Nigel Who's going to pay for all this? Taxes will go up, you mark my words.

Sajid Let her have her say.

Caroline Thank you. Well. They are quite . . . natural.

Nigel Primitive!

Caroline They harness a *natural* power. Lest we forget we are an island.

Boris They'll build a bloody bridge to France next.

Caroline How are we going to survive / without their energy to re-build the country?

Boris That's just scaremongering.

Nigel Stick them in the sea! If the council are so in love with them, stick them in the sea!

Sajid Or find another island.

Nigel Just not in my field!

Diane But they are modern.

Theresa They've ruined Denmark. And it was such a pretty little country. You can't get more modern than Denmark.

Jacob The whole landscape is riddled with them. Riddled! / Everywhere you look.

Sajid It's true. My cousin married a Danish man. Such a lovely family. So much style.

Jacob They'll be next to leave the EU I bet. Dexshit.

Diane What?

Jacob Danish Brexit.

Boris (*quoting Hamlet*) 'Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.'

Theresa To leave, or not to leave, that was the question . . . (*They laugh.*)

Boris Long live Shakespeare! (*Singing started by Boris.*) 'Rule Britannia! Britannia rules the waves!' (*Then they all join in . . .*)

All 'Britons never, never, never shall be slaves!'

Theresa All those against having a wind farm erected in our parish say neigh.

Ola (*observing, trying to figure it out*) Wind farm?

All Neighhhhhhhhh! (*They continue with horsey farmyard sounds and dogs again during their exit and transition into the next Monte Rosa monologue. Ola leaves.*)

Scene – Monte Rosa 2

Another actor can play Monte Rosa. We know it is her because she always sits in the rocking chair, swaying gently back and forth in the same light, telling her story to the audience, alone. She wears the same clothing, e.g. a blue shawl. Eerily quiet.

Monte Rosa

And then the Nazis came to power
And we had to fly the Swastika
I'm not going to lie, why should I,
I wore it proudly.
Ja, you're looking at me like that
But you don't understand
It made us feel good about ourselves
We were besser than anyone else
No more hunger, no more shame
Could you blame us after the first war?
Only *pure* Germans were allowed on our holidays
No Roma, or Poles or Slavs, or blacks or Jews
No handicapped, no homos,
No '*unter-mensch*' allowed
We were the captains now!
We ruled the waves!

From Hansa Stadt Hamburg to Windhoek Namibia
 The world was ours
 And it was love!
Ja, that was our only song.

You got given a medal if you had four children for the Reich
 No medal for me.
 I was selected for a more important job
 Because of my experience at sea
 I was ordered to transport passengers
 From Norway
 To Germany.
 Jews.
 All ages.
 From Oslo . . .
 The songs they sang were different from those
 We heard before the war
 Their hums hung in the air
 Like the thick clouds of smoke . . .
 In Auschwitz.
 (*With remorse.*) The children . . .
 I had no choice!
 I was doing my job.

Ach, but you know the history
 And because of the work I had done
 I was captured by the Royal Navy as a 'prize of war'
 The Britishers were not so different from us
 Cousins really: same Royal Family
 And their language is easy
Land, land
Buch, book
Vind, wind . . .

Scene – Ouija Board 2

The next letters from the Ouija board are projected. Ola reads them out loud, slowly.

Ola

F

A

L

L

Faaaaaaaaall . . .

Ola starts falling slowly to the floor. They sit and watch the next scene.

Scene – Windfall

Deck of a slave ship, Zong. Year 1781. The upper-class Captain Luke Collingwood and the working-class First Mate James Kelsall, both looking rough, look out. The ship rocks. Heightened playing. High stakes. Pace!

First Mate We're fearfully low on water, Captain.

Captain How are we doing for rum?

First Mate Just one bottle left, sir.

Captain How far away from drinking our own piss?

First Mate About as far as we are from Jamaica, sir.

Captain How could we miss it?

First Mate These islands all look the same, sir.

Captain 300 miles you say?

First Mate 300 miles out of the way.

Captain How many blacks below deck?

First Mate 379, sir.

Captain And how many did we have in Accra?

First Mate 442, sir.

Captain How many was our legal capacity?

First Mate 193, sir.

Captain And how many look like they'll live?

First Mate Less than half, sir.

Captain I'm a surgeon not a mathematician but that doesn't sound good.

First Mate It don't bode well for profits, sir. And the men, sir –

Captain Our men . . .

First Mate are somewhat disgruntled, sir. We should have arrived two weeks ago and . . . all this thieving, rape and torture is thirsty work.

Captain Hmm . . .

First Mate I have a thought, sir.

Captain Just one?

First Mate Just one, sir.

Captain Go on, man.

First Mate We are, of course, insured.

Captain Indeed, we have to be.

First Mate We can, alas, make no claim for goods damaged during the course of the voyage . . .

Captain Go on.

First Mate But if we throw the blacks overboard, sir, to save on water for us hard-working men, the insurance company will see that we dispensed with the cargo to save our pale skins and our Christian souls.

Captain Dispense with the cargo . . . I have an idea, First Mate.

First Mate You have so many, Captain.

Captain I say we begin with the children, then the women, then the men, sickest first.

First Mate It'll be heavy work, sir.

Captain Well keep them in chains, and throw them in batches. It'll be as if we were to throw cattle into the sea. Not a pleasant sight but a hearty breakfast for sharks!

First Mate And not a scrap of evidence.

Captain Not an eyeball. Get to it, man!

First Mate But, Captain, who shall we say is to blame for all we are about to do . . .

The Sailors creep onto the now more gently swaying deck, one by one. Cast size can be reduced if necessary. They hatch out the murder plot. Feel the rhythm. Pace!

Matthew Let's blame this old Dutch ship – *Zong!*

Mark Her name means 'care'. Ha! She cares for none.

Luke She's a monster made by Nether men.

John Full to bursting, feeding on flesh, so much more than she can digest.

Simon The greedy Dutch bitch swallows dish upon dish of –

Peter Ashantes, Mandinkas, Igbos, Yorubas . . .

James Women, men, boys, girls, babies . . .

Thomas Stuffed to the sin brim with human suffering.

Andrew She stinks of fish, piss, shit and vomit!

Nathan So much that when we dock at Liverpool –

Jude Cardiff, London, Glasgow, Bristol –

Paul – the ladies and gents have to cover their noses, hold their breaths.

Matthew She drags us down to her depths.

Mark She gets so drunk on flesh she makes us forget our Christian selves.

Luke She got so pissed she got lost! 300 miles off the coast of Jamaica.

John Sailed right past the dock at Black River.

*Scene transforms from a ship to a courtroom. The **Sailors** give evidence in court, swearing on the Bible, passing it one-by-one, rapid, testifying, feigning regret.*

Simon And so many of the poor Africans died . . .

Peter But we were running out of water . . .

James And we pleaded with her! ‘Carry us to safer shores!’

Thomas But instead she said –

Andrew You’ll have to lighten my load.

Nathan I am too full I cannot go on.

Jude And *Zong* she spat 131 blacks into the sea.

Paul A shark’s breakfast!

Captain So we have no choice. We *must* make this insurance claim.
To recompense, to compensate.

First Mate And the judge will say . . .

Judge Mansfield (*formal, slower, concluding the case*)

‘These slaves were no more human than horses.’

And it must have been a sorry sight

But the men tried with all their might

First Mate but it was the ship, it was *Zong*, that made us do this wrong . . .

Captain (*back in the present, slower, satisfied with the plan*)

And when we get back to Tilbury Dock,

We’ll open that sweet bottle of Jamaican rum

And count our little . . .

Ola (*figuring it out*) Windfall . . .

*Optional visual or movement sequence here, e.g. pound notes start falling from above. Cast members enter with scissors, snipping the notes, like the mouths of little fish. They cut out little human figures from the notes and hang them up, like bunting on a ship. Or this could be a movement sequence with music. **Ola** watches, pained.*

Scene – Monte Rosa 3

Monte Rosa rocks in her chair. Alone again. A new actor. Same light. Blue shawl.

Monte Rosa

The only thing I really *didn't* like is they made me change my name
 They have a habit of doing that, the British
 And I adore my name,
 Monte Rosa
 But I had no choice again
 So yes I worked for them
 All over their huge empire!

Life on ship could be animated physically here by the cast.

My favourite job was Kingston, Jamaica, to London, Tilbury Dock
 Transporting the great-grandchildren of those slaves
 Now sailing the other way
 The West Indies fought against the Nazis
 And since Elizabeth was their Queen
 They were invited to come for a new life in England
 'Come and re-build the country!'
 Quite a story really . . .

Ja, that was one of my favourite passages
 So much hope and dancing and stories

Singing the Lord Kitchener song 'London Is the Place for Me', the cast involved in the next scene join in, singing the song in full, quietly underneath Monte Rosa's speech. They continue singing gently and acting out playing dominoes, cards, chatting, relaxing on the Windrush ship, approaching England.

What a lot people don't know
 Is that I also carried Poles
 Sixty-six women stranded in Mexico
Ja, Polish refugees
 And when they got to England
 They got passports and set up Polski shops
 A new life made possible.

They said the other day that
 The British were trying to send them away (**Monte Rosa** watches the cast)
 Not the Polish of course
 The *blacks*
 Even though some are as old as me
 And worked all these years for the Mother Country
 Saying 'they had no place in Britain',
 'The Windrush generation'.
 A scandal!
 If they ordered me to transport them back to Kingston today I would have said
Nein! No! I'm too old
 And they were nice folk.

Take the blacks back under your own steam
You're on your own now, Queenie!
I've had enough of governments
Making me move people around like cargo
There were times when I should have said no . . .
(Pause for thought about the Norwegian Jewish children.) I
should have said no . . .

Scene – Ouija Board 3

Ola reads the Ouija board letters projected again. They are still afraid but moved.

Ola

C
H
I
L
L
L
CHILL . . .

Scene – Wind Chill

The people below all speak in one rhythm. Almost like a song. The second line has more space than the first and third line of each stanza. Keep in time. The word 'wind' comes right on cue. Feel it. The feel is influenced by hip hop and also the dub poetry of Linton Kwesi Johnson (LKJ). Watch him performing 'Inglan Is a Bitch' online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zq9OpJYck7Y>

The tempo of the speeches below is faster than this LKJ poem but the idea is the same: telling true stories to the audience, in rhythm. No breaks between voices/characters. Keep pulsing forward. It can be spoken with a beat/music underscored if this helps timing. You can use a little movement/gestures to animate the text. If possible, project the years (below) to punctuate each stanza, locating us in time.

NB: A note on use of the 'N' word. The word is a weapon with a painful and violent 500-year history. It is still used to assault black people today. It is harmful and should only ever be used in the context of the scene, where it is actually a direct factual quotation. Treat the word in rehearsals as you might treat a gun. It is never to be played with casually. Handle with care and caution. Discuss its use with your groups – have a 'health and safety' briefing, as it were. Only ever use the 'N' word where it is in the script. Lock it away, like a gun, when it is not being used directly in a scene. Directors, actors and the creative team are advised to refer to the word simply as 'the N word'. The use of the 'N' word by rappers and writers of African descent (who use a different spelling of the word) is a different subject, and for a different play, entirely.

Projection: 1948.

Nanny Ivor Cummings walks up the gang-plank
Civil servant, gay and black
'Things will not be easy for you here'

All (*punctuating in rhythm, in time*) Wind
Chill
Fact.

Projection: 1948.

Bernie Tilbury dock was a bit of a shock
Dirt, smog and faces flat
'Welcome party? What did you expect?'

All Wind
Chill
Fact.

Projection: 1948.

Joy 'No dogs, no blacks, no Irish'
'I'm not renting your kind this flat'
'But I've got no-where, to sleep tonight'

All Wind
Chill
Fact.

Projection: 1959.

Smiley They murder Kelso Cochrane
And yes we must fight back
They say 'riot', we say 'uprising'

All Wind
Chill
Fact.

Projection: 1964 and 1968.

Stuart 'If-you-want-a-nigger-for-a-neighbour-vote-Labour'
The Tory election tract
Enoch comes with 'Rivers of Blood'

All Wind
Chill
Fact.

Projection: 1981.

Cherry Child-ren of the New Cross fire
They were treated like suspects
'13 dead and nothing said'

All Wind
Chill
Facts.

Projection: 1993.

Kelso They called out ‘what, what, nigger’
It was *us* who was under attack
Cops screwed the names of Stephen’s killers

All Wind
Chill
Fact.

Projection: 2017.

Stephen Served in the British army
Paid every penny of tax
Said I had no right to draw my pension

All Wind
Chill
Fact.

Projection: 2018.

David I’ve been here all my life!
Work still give me the sack
‘No passport? You can sleep on the street!’

All Wind
Chill
Fact.

Projection: 2019.

Mary ‘You got ten days to leave the country
It’s time to go home and pack’
I was an NHS nurse for seventeen years

All Wind
Chill
Fact.

Projection: 2020.

Marcus They keep me in detention
Cos I’m African. Cos I’m black. [Alternatively: ‘Cos she’s African. Cos she’s black.’]
If I was Irish or a dog they wouldn’t lock me up [Or: ‘If she was Irish . . . lock her
up.’]

All Wind
Chill
Fact.

Ola (*joining in*) Wind
Chill
Factor

We go into a call and response section. Divide All cast onstage into Half Calling and Half Responding. Ola joins in everything.

All (*calling*) Spring or winter
(*responding*) Wind-chill factor
(*calling*) Fall or summer
(*responding*) Wind-chill factor
(*calling*) Do you feel it?

Ola (*responding alone*) Yes you feel it!
And you deal with it

All (*calling*) You wrap up
(*responding*) You rise up
(*calling*) You step out
(*responding*) Face the cold
(*calling*) Fire inside
(*responding*) Walking tall
(*calling*) Give a hand from a fall

All (*everyone together*) And carnival
(*calling*) you play on
(*responding*) you pray on
(*calling*) you march on
(*responding*) you work on
(*calling*) you fight on

All (*everyone together*) and never give up
Never give up
Never give up
Never give up
Cos come what may . . .

Pause. All look at Ola

Ola We're here to stay.

Blackout, exit. Monte Rosa gets in position.

Scene – Monte Rosa 4

In her rocking chair. Stage directions as above.

Monte Rosa

My last trip was transporting soldiers and their families from
Korea and Japan back to England

But there was a terrible fire below
And one by one
The sailors who all said they loved me
Even my beloved captain
Abandoned me
Jumping into the sea
Left me to sink into the bed
Alone.
It's pretty cold
Down here
Even in the Med
When you're dead
It's pretty cold . . .

So many
Skulls
Skeletons
Children
Left to drown . . .
I could have carried them back to shore
Yesterday: 500 or more
So many lost souls
Calling for a home
While you sit on food mountains
Refusing to see what lies beneath
Ja, the sea is history,
It repeats . . .

Scene – Ouija Board 4

The students take a break. It's been intense. They are all more at ease now. The pizza box is empty.

Kit I don't get it.

Ali They went to the farm, they had a fall and then: chill.
FarmfallchillFarmfallchill!

Xia Maybe it makes sense if you say it slow. Farrrrrrm. Faaaaall. ChiiiiiiiIIIIII . . .

Kit You lot are bonkers.

Jay What do they *want*?

Zhe Do you think they understood the question?

Kit and Ali take over the *planchette*. **Xia** scribes.

Zhe Who are you?

The planch moves to N-O-T.

All NOT.

Kit Here we go again . . .

Jay Who are you, *not?* . . .

The planchette is still. They wait. They get tired. Xia takes their fingers off the planchette. Pause. Xia breaks the silence.

Xia Have you lot all finished your essays?

All (*not in chorus, just naturally*) No . . .

A beat.

Jay Shall we try again tomorrow? (*They casually respond 'yeah / yep / thank God', etc. by getting up and starting to pack away.*)

Ali Who ate the last piece of pizza?

Ola (*ignoring Ali, packing away*) Maybe we're not supposed to know . . .

Ola goes to pick up the planchette and it suddenly starts moving wildly seemingly on its own, flinging **Ola** around who is trying to hold on. This effect could be created physically by the actor. They all try to help **Ola** who is screaming.

Ola NO!

The planchette whirls around and lands at 'No'.

Ola (*out of breath*) They don't want us to go!

Jay Someone write it down!

Zhe grabs the pen and scribes frantically. Letters are projected.

All (*not in unison – sense of chaos*)

G
O
L
D
S
U
G
A
R
G
U
N

Ola GOLD? SUGAR? GUN?

Sudden loud sound of rapid gunfire.

Xia GET DOWN!

Ola WHAT THE HELL?!

Scene – Gold-Sugar-Gun Gamers

*Sound of gunfire continues. The rest of the cast run on with lolly pops, firing them like weapons, laughing. They sit on the floor downstage and suck lolly pops throughout the scene. The two computer gamers, **Sam** and **Sim** also run on, they don't suck lolly pops, but they sit down on the 'sofa' (or any seating indicating a sofa), also facing the audience. **Sam** and **Sim** speak in a very rhythmical and electronic/mechanical way, with minimal emotion, like the figures in the video game, with an urgent pulsating beat beneath it all. The scene might be animated physically but let the words do most of the work. It must have pace, rapid fire but crystal clear; nothing can be lost in delivery, just like the game. It will need a lot of rehearsal. The scene is a response to the popular video game Resident Evil 5. Here is a trailer (trigger warning – it is violent): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxJbz_3PKQo*

Sim What's this?

Sam Wait.

Sim Is it Hostile Environment 6?

Sam No.

Sim Hostile Environment 9?

Sam No.

Sim Looks like Hostile Environment 3.

Sam Wait.

Sim Or Hostile Environment 4. (*Beat.*) Is this the one with the swamp?

Sam Wait.

Sim The one that starts with the boat? Speedboat through the swamp to the mud huts. And its Sheva and Chris.

Sam Wait.

Sim Chris Redland and Sheva who sounds like a cat but she's not.

Sam Wait.

Sim Sounds like a Hindu Goddess but she's not.

Sam Wait.

Sim Sheva.

Sam Wait.

Sim Spelt like in Hebrew but not a Jew, Hindu or cat.

Sam OK.

Sim She's a girl.

Sam OK.

Sim She's more like some kind of mixed race.

Sam OK.

Sim 'cept her hair's really straight.

Sam OK.

Sim She's got this really small waist.

Sam OK.

Sim Nice tits.

Sam OK!

Sim Walks like this.

Sam OK!

Sim But Chris is the boss. Cos he is. He's the protagonist. Is that what this is?

Sam No.

Sim The one with the African villages? And they've all got some kind of mad virus.

Sam Wait.

Wait.

Wait.

Wait.

Sim OK.

Sam Thanks!

Silence. Sam plays on.

Sim Sure it's not Hostile Environment 3?

Sam No.

Sim More like Hostile Environment 4.

Sam No.

Sim Where you blow off the Africans' heads. They jump out and scream and go ARGH!

Sam Huh?

Sim They don't even know how to speak.

Sam Huh?

Sim They jump out and scream and go ARGH!

Sam OK.

Sim Black men they scream and go ARGH!

Sam OK.

Sim Black men, no t-shirts, just trousers, bare feet and viruses jump out and scream and go ARGH!

Sam OK.

Sim And then you blow off their heads.

Sam Wait.

Sim Destroy as many as poss.

Sam Got it.

Sim And you're Sheva or Chris with big guns but Chris's are bigger cos he's the boss.

Sam Yes.

Sim And he smashes the masks and smashes the pots and takes all the gold so it's his.

Sam Yes.

Sim And Sheva's got really nice tits, small waist, mixed race or something like that but straight hair like a Hindu a cat or a Jew but she's not.

Sam Yes.

Sim Says 'OK, thank you, watch out, help me up, over here Chris!'

Sam OK.

Sim 'Thank you, watch out, help me up, over here, Chris!'

Sam Yes.

Sim She's just like this stupid sidekick but it's Chris who's the man.

Sam Yep.

Sim Blonde hair and American.

Sam Yep.

Sim Chris's got one black friend but he doesn't blow off *his* head. Cos he's an American. Like Kanye West.

Sam OK.

Sim Not like the African blacks in the villages swamps to the mud huts and viruses wearing no t-shirts just trousers, muscles and bare chests and jumping with ARGGGGGHHHH! Not real words but ARRRRGGGGGHHHHH!

Sam WAIT! Wait. Wait. Wait.

Beat

Sim Is that what this is?

Sam No.

Sim OK.

Sam This game is much more advanced.

Sim Slow down.

Sam This game is way more advanced.

Sim Slow down.

Sam Makes Hostile Environment 3 –

Sim OK –

Sam – look like a walk in the park with a pond and ducks that go quack as you feed them white bread from a baker that isn't Greggs. A baker that still exists. This game makes Hostile Environment look like a walk in a park in a town with a clock in a tower still ticking still tocking, somewhere in England or Scotland or Ireland or Wales – but with jobs.

Sim Can I have a go?

Sim *plays the game.*

Sam OK. Just shoot.

Sim OK.

Sam The blacks. Just shoot.

Sim OK.

Sam Muslims just shoot.

Sim Got it. Anything darker than shit just shoot.

Sam Just shoot and collect.

Sim Where? What?

Sam Gold.

Sim Pause. Where?

Pause game but keep the pace, urgency and internal rhythm. However, Sam is more human now the game is on pause.

Sam There's gold in the camel sacks. The camels belonging to Musa the King. One hundred camels and one thousand Africans, Timbuktu, Mali – ready to go. Not a fictional kingdom, not Black Panther Wakanda. No. 500 years ago. King Mansa Musa the richest man ever is going on Hajj: its a pilgrimage. To Mecca, Medina and

maybe Jerusalem. To say ‘thank you’ to God. He gives alms. Not arms. Alms. He gives out his gold on the way and prays five times a day. And he’s really really famous. More than Martin Luther King or Muhammad Ali. The Egyptian economy crashed cos of all the gold he gives away from his camel sacks. And that’s how they hear about Africa. The white people hear about Africa’s gold and then the Portuguese come. Then the French, the Spanish, the Germans, Italians, the Belgians, the Dutch, the Danish, the Brits, they don’t give a shit, take gold from your hand and the land. But it’s not enough. They want more: black gold, black old, black young, black men, black women, black children, take them to America, to the soil of Chris Redland and Sheva. And they’ve killed the first people who lived there. Strike African names and make them cut sugar cane. Sugar to make us fat addicts who sit on sofas like this playing video games to kill blacks.

Sim Rules?

Sam Shoot. Kill Mansa Musa the black Muslim king who makes Bill Gates and the Queen look like Barbie and Ken. He’s way richer than them. But if white people hear of his gold, black people get sold or die trying for Europe in boats. So shoot. Before anyone hears of the gold. Before anyone comes for the land. Before they get carried away. Before we all get carried away.

Sim OK.

Sam It’s not Hostile Environment 3. Or Hostile Environment 4. Or Hostile Environment 6. Or Hostile Environment 9. This is Hostile Environment zero. The Indians invented the zero. Or Arabs invented the zero. Someone invented the zero. Let us go back to the zero.

The game resumes. Sim shoots while Sam continues speaking.

Sam Maybe then they will never be slaves. Maybe then they will never lose names. Maybe then there will never be race. The colour of our skins will be no more significant than the colour of their eyes,* my eyes, your eyes, our eyes watching the killing of blacks from the sofa suck sucking on lolly pops –

Sim (*rapid rhythm*) pop pop pop pop pop pop pop!

Sam Too fat in the head to get up and say STOP!

The gamers freeze in their scene as the next scene immediately starts.

Scene – Last Ouija Word/Voice of the Wind

Ola *immediately comes in: ‘STOP! MAKE IT STOP!’ as the students are blown back into the Common Room. Ola, struggling with the planchette, is held by the group.*

Ola STOP! MAKE IT STOP!

* Paraphrasing a speech by the Ethiopian Emperor Ras Tafari Haile Selassie I to the United Nations, quoted by Bob Marley and the Wailers in the song ‘War’.

The letters are spelt out boldly through projection. They don't have to just be on the Ouija board; this could be in movement in the space, for example.

All

W
I
N
D

*A huge gust of wind and the rest of the cast is scattered on stage. **All** play the voice of the wind. Some can take a solo stanza – whatever is clearest and most powerful. The whole speech could also be taken by one person. Experiment. The style is inspired by Linton Kwesi-Johnson performing the dub poem 'Inglan is a Bitch'. However this speech is much faster in rhythm. See Caliban's speeches in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, for reference. This speech has its own defiant pace, as unpredictable as the wind itself. A kind of hip hop, but not. Make it your own. Some stanzas are a slow breeze but the end is a wild and fast hurricane! You could choreograph it. Whatever you do, hold nothing back. The wind knows no borders.*

Wind English is a bitch

Been no escaping it
English is a bitch
I want a word with it

You named oceans 'oceans'
And earth you gave 'quake'
But what a careless noun
For me
You did make
You called forest 'forest'
'Desert', 'fire' and 'sky'
But if you did not feel me
You'd say what am I
From this name?

Ind
W-ind
A fart of a word
A foul letter word
A trump up word
Hot air
A tight little title
A mean little rival
For *vento, viento, upepo!*
Could have named me something
Arabic, Gaelic, Bantu, Asiatic
You could have had Latin but you chose Germanic: Vind.
Wind.

Only a *liar's* rhyme you can make with it.
Even Shakespeare couldn't much play with it.
Sinned, pinned,
Mind, kind
Kindred spirits
My name has not
Elemental insult
My name is wind up.
English is a bitch
Been no escaping it
English is a bitch
And I want a word with it

Anglo I am angry!
Long neglected by language
What kind of mother tongue
Is so lazy, limp and languid
That she can't even credit her subject
With a password he can be proud of.

My moniker makes a mockery
Of all I've done for this country
My label should be libellous
Would it really have been so onorous
To make me a lickle more sonorous
Add a lickle consonant, a lickle vowel . . .
So yes I'll howl through your doors
In a rush!
In a wind rush!
I DESERVED MORE!

This linguistic disrespect
Needs a diction fixing
Some lexiconisation
Some thesaurisation
A new appellation
For this misrepresentation
Proper noun reparation!
With certification.

I demand new nomenclature
Powerful elegant mature
Sounding
Reflecting the true status
Of my intrinsic Englishness
For an island is not an island

Without the weather you see
 You should show me some respect
 I've been here for centuries.

English is a bitch
 Been no escaping it
 English is a bitch
 And I want a word with it

Didn't I give birth to breeze
 On this land?
 I delivered you the tempest
 Right here where I stand.
 Bluster, gale, gust – I raised a hurricane!
 Yet you classify me with a mere
 One syllable name.

Didn't I turn your mills
 To grind your grain?
 To make your bread
 So you would never feel the pain
 Of hunger like your empire inflicted upon
 Thirty million Indians
 One million in Ireland!

English is a BITCH!
 Been no escaping it
 English is a bitch
 And I want a word with it

Building to a hurricane.

So don't blame me
 When you chop too many trees
 And I race across your fields
 And reap devastation
 Don't blame me
 When you turn up the heat
 And it makes me swell
 And arrive unexpected
 Don't blame me
 If I bring the desert to your door
 The waters to your window
 If I bring war
 If I rise up
 From 'rivers of blood'
 Don't blame me!

For this hostility
For this, Britannia, is your legacy
And this you must know
You reap what you sow
And despite this pitiful one-syllable name
A mere footprint on a missing document that's still a source of shame
The nature of wind
The nature of wind rush
The nature of this generation
Has changed!

Howling dogs/howling wind into the next scene.

Scene – Senior Common Room

Quiet after the storm. Just before sunrise. They look at the rocking chair.

Jay Wind farm.

Zhe Windfall.

Ali Wind chill.

Xia Gold rush.

Kit Sugar rush.

Jay Gun rush.

All 'Windrush'.

Ola The. Empire. *Windrush.*

A beat.

Zhe She's a she.

Xia She's a ship.

Jay Rest in peace.

Kit Why us?

Ola Why *here*?

They look around the room at the pictures of old dead white male professors. Pause for thought. Ola tries to figure out the mystery, through their lines below; it is not all worked out yet, use the lines to process.

Ola An empire's gotta have either an emperor . . . or an *empress*. Right?

All Right.

Ola Our uni's named after the same empress from when the *Windrush* set sail from Jamaica. This queen's grandma. Mary of Teck. Some German countess. Wrote an essay about her. Empress of India, all her colonies . . . The West Indies . . .

Jay . . . Head of the Commonwealth . . .

Ola *Common* wealth? They should call it like it is. Universities, cities, all over, Glasgow to Greenwich, Belfast to Bristol, Cardiff to Carlisle, made *untold money* off of slavery. They even got compensation when they set the slaves free. And a lot of *these people* (referring to the portraits) invested their dirty money in our universities.

Ali It's true. The SU's running a campaign about it, but our uni's staying silent.

Kit Rewind. They paid the slave *owners*?

Ola Yep. And black people are still paying for it.

Zhe Cleaning their offices, doing security, paying the fees . . .

Ali And more time, it's the black and brown students getting two-tvos.

Xia Really?

Jay They call it the 'BME attainment gap'.

Kit They should call it the 'white privilege gap'. Maybe then someone would sit up and take notice.

Ali I better leave here with a two-one or I'm gonna take them to court. 50k debt for a Desmond Tutu – no thank you.

Ali and Ola *punch fists, etc. in agreement.*

Ola And uni managers are all white guys paying themselves, like, half a million a year.

Xia Half a million?!

Ali Minimum. Plus a free car, a flat –

Kit – and a bodyguard!

Zhe Principals with no principles.

Jay But why does Empire *Windrush* want to talk to us?

Ola Cos of the Windrush scandal?

Xia Cos we're all doing History?

Zhe She could have just sent us to the library.

Jay I get the feeling she's still trying to tell us something.

Kit Why?

Ola (*fearfully, though much less so than earlier*) Look . . .

Ali Oh shit . . .

The chair is rocking vigorously as if it is nodding 'yes'. The group brace themselves.

Ola bravely gets the Ouija board and offers it to **Jay**. They are all surprised but go with it, silently. **Jay** sets out the Ouija board and places their fingers on the planchette.

Ali places their fingers on it too. **Xia** picks up the pen and paper. **Kit** watches **Ola**. **Ola** is totally focused on the letters. Deep breaths, they summon all their courage.

Ola Empire *Windrush*. JUST TELL US WHAT YOU WANT!

The planchette starts to move to the letters below. More quickly than at first. The group are well practiced now so they pronounce the letters, making out the words.

All T-R-U-T-H OR D-A-R-E

Silence. They look at each other. They look at the rocking chair.

Ola TRUTH.

All look at **Ola**.

Scene – Monte Rosa 5

In her rocking chair again.

Monte Rosa

Rest in peace?

They won't let me!

In the newspapers, on the TV

They keep calling me, calling me

Windrush Windrush

Empire *Windrush*

Naming streets after me, writing books about me

And now they want to name this room in the university after me

So the 'Windrush' name game got your attention

But now my children, I want you to tell them

THAT IS NOT MY NAME!

Mine is so much more beautiful!

Monte Rosa!

Birthered in Hamburg, 1920

I worked for the Nazis

The British captured me

And painted over my name

It is a bad habit

Not calling things as they are

The English would rather talk about the weather

They didn't have Auschwitz but, *ach*,

They weren't much better

It was the *British* who invented concentration camps – in Africa!

We Germans were just more efficient in murder

And if they cared so much about the Jews

Why did they wave that letter, appeasing Hitler?

And let so many migrants burn and drown

Just like they are doing now

From Grenfell Tower to the bottom of the ocean
 They don't like you saying it
 But they were not so different
 Re-named me after 500 years of crime
 Rape and murder, kidnap and torture
 500 years of empire
 And a dirty little river running away from the Thames:
 'Windrush'
 Best remembered for 800 West Indians
 Most forgotten for sixty-six Poles
 Invited to come and make a home.
 And what names did they call *them* when they arrived?
 Tell the truth! Tell them from me:
 If you want to keep dragging me up from the depths of the sea
 If you want to name this place after me
 Call me by my name!

Scene – Morning in the Common Room

The students lift their fingers off the planchette at the same time. Stillness. Sun rising.

Jay 'Monte Rosa' . . .

Kit It's over.

Zhe Holocaust to Windrush.

Ola Same damn ship. Diff'rent racist shit.

Pause.

Kit So all she *actually* wants is for the university to re-name this stuffy old place the: 'Monte Rosa Room', instead of the 'Windrush Room'. That's it?

Ali She kept us up all night, man.

Zhe She's just vain.

Xia Sea dog.

Jay We musn't speak ill of the dead.

Xia She wasn't even a person. She was a boat!

Ali A Nazi one!

Kit And now she's just a heap of rusty metal at the bottom of the sea.

Zhe We should care more about the people she carried inside her.

Ola The uni are no better. They think calling this the 'Windrush Room' will make us all feel better about how racist it is. Why don't they ask *us* what we wanna call it?