

Ozymandias

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For Wonder Fools as part of Positive Stories for Negative Times



WRITERS' NOTE:

This play is a story. A story to be told by a group. Each line of text is narration, and every new line indicates an opportunity for a new speaker. When a line is hyphenated this indicates a line of dialogue by one of the characters: Joe, Alex, Sharon or Tattie and all the others we meet along the way. Important note for casting: Alex is a female person of colour; Joe is a white male and the rest is up to you. Feel free to change Tattie or any other supporting characters' pronouns.

ONE

We are in a beautiful, oak church over 200 years old
Perhaps
It's changed uses over the years
Changed contexts
From religious building to a community centre to what it is now
Not a church but
A pub
It's one of a number of pubs that exist in a chain.
I won't name the name of that chain because I personally don't want to endorse it in this play.
That's not what this play is about.
This play is about a plan that has just been hatched
During a global pandemic
In a pub that's only just reopened
That will serve anyone.
Literally anyone.
Including 17 year olds Joe and Alex
Who have hatched this plan
On the evening of exam results day
Joe is facing the mirror on the wall in the bogs.
He is a pint sized wildcat in Doc Martens and an army jacket
With a red sharpie in his hand like it's a weapon.
Looking back at his own reflection.
Alex is sitting at a table in the pub.
She's like a deer with an afro in a pair of scuffed Reeboks
And she's watching her favourite episode of Breaking Bad
Again
The one in the desert with the big gun fight
Where one of her favourite characters dies
One of the good guys
Alex sighs
This world isn't fair for good guys
There's a pile of torn up beer mats next to her pint
It's a guest ale and this one is murky
treacly

And a bargain at £1.49 a pop
Last night, Alex watched the film The World's End
Where the characters go on a pub crawl
Called the Golden Mile
But this is the only pub that will serve them
The Steampacket
Because the bouncers
Pete and Vic
Who look like a pair of stoned Highland Cows
Can't count or read so they don't ask for I.D.
So for her version of the Golden Mile
With Joe
They are making their way through the guest ales instead
Three down
And two to go
Tattie is meant to be here too but he is late
As always...
In Scotland, Tattie means potato by the way
Aye it does
In Scotland, Aye means yeah
Aye that might come up a lot during this
Joe is still in the toilets
He presses his red sharpie to the glass of the mirror.
And draws a small diagonal line.
He catches his own eyes in the reflection.
He thinks
- This'll show Alex. "Oooh I'm Alex and I'm going to study filmmaking at uni in Edinburgh.
Oooh Edinburgh."
Joe draws another line.
Joe writes the letter Y.
Joe writes the word "YOU"
He writes "YOU ARE KILLING PEOPLE BY DRINKING HERE"
Joe writes "YOU ARE KILLING PEOPLE BY DRINKING HERE AND YOU HAVE THE BLOOD OF
MIGRANTS ON YOUR HANDS."
He takes a photo to show Alex later
Alex is still at the table
Still watching Breaking Bad on her phone
"You're the smartest guy I've ever met but you're too stupid to see he made up his mind ten
minutes ago. Do what you gotta do..."
BANG
And in that instant, someone who was once great became nothing.
Just left standing there in the middle of the desert.
Gets her every time.
Except this time
Because she's not really focussing on Breaking Bad
She's tearing up another beer mat
Thinking about how Joe always thinks he's right
About how smug he is
"Ooh I'm Joe and I'm going to study politics down the road because I'm so woke"

Alex doesn't care
Doesn't care about anything
Not anymore.
Not after today.