

The Bits That Were You

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Characters:

The three characters on stage are aspects of the same person, one present, two from the past.

Katherine: (16/17) from the past - The “good” child.

Kathy: (16/17) from the past - the adventurous child

Kate: (early 20s) in the present, trying to make sense of it

Synopsis:

Kate is looking back at her life, remembering her rather disappointing first sexual experience and her understanding of death. Different aspects of her personality help her to make sense of this remembered experience, and to put it into perspective.

The Bits That Were You

KATE *on stage alone.*

Enter KATHERINE and KATHY, tormenting KATE.

Katherine Can you remember when you first heard about it?

Kathy Do you remember when it was a totally new idea?

Katherine Once you knew about it, it was like it was waiting to happen. Once you knew, you couldn't stop thinking about all the people who'd - done it.

Kathy You thought – Oh my God! my Grandad, my Nan - *they've* done it.

Katherine We are talking about *DEATH* here, aren't we?

Kathy What else? Any time you're thinking about it, there's someone doing it.

Katherine You start wondering – when's it going to happen to me? It's like - crossing a threshold. And what happens after you've crossed over? – what happens to all the bits that were you?

The three move in close together.

Katherine I'm Katherine. Hello Kate.

Kathy I'm Kathy. Hello Kate.

Kate You came back, then, you two.

Katherine Well, you invited us.

Kate Tell me - what's your biggest fear?

Katherine FLYING!

Kathy Dying.

Kate Mine is *forgetting*.

That's why I asked you here.

Katherine You want to *remember*?

Kathy Oh my God! She wants to remember!

Katherine OK. Let's help her *remember!*

KATE is centre stage, saying little, but reacting to the other two.

Katherine OK . There was *the party*.

Kate There were lots of parties –

Katherine But you remember *the one*.

Kate I remember.

Katherine OK. You know he's going to ask you back to his place, after the party.

Kathy He's told you his parents are away.

Katherine Which is honest, isn't it?

So if you *do* go back to his - you're agreeing to - *everything else*.

Kathy A girl can say no *at any point*.

Katherine Course she can! So they say. But you don't want to be fighting him off, do you? Not when you've *led him on*.

Kathy So – back to his place or not?

Katherine NO? -

Kathy - or YES!

Katherine You can keep *him* guessing – but *you've* got to know -

Kate ?

Kathy Come on - he's *hot!* Miss your chance, and you've lost him.

Katherine You know what Nan would say, though - he's only after one thing.

Kathy How the hell did *Nan* get into this?

Katherine (*as Nan*) Don't let him push you into anything. Have some self-respect.

Kathy Mind your own business, Nan!
It's *your* decision, Kate.

Kate ?

Katherine Come on - is it cos you're not in love?

Kathy What's *love* got to do with it? Look at him! You a *lesbian*?

Katherine Nothing wrong with being a lesbian, Kate. Sometimes -

Kathy Tonight, sweetheart, you are not a lesbian. You're gonna be blown away - by a *man*...

Katherine Well - a boy...

Kathy There'll be music. A few drinks. Bliss...

Katherine Only it's not going to be like that, is it? Not the first time.

Kathy Why ever not? *HE* knows what he's doing!

Katherine That makes one of you.

Kathy *He's* done it millions of times!

Katherine Including with Julie, don't forget. *That* was all round college.

Kathy At least you don't have to worry about your *bum*.

Katherine Julie's got an enormous bum.

Kathy And he slept with *her*.

Kate As everyone knew.

Kathy For god's sake relax, Kate. Being stressed isn't *cool*.

Katherine Oh yeah – like everything's under control! – a condom magically appears – and afterwards he's not going to tell a soul, is he?
Think, girl. Pro's and con's. Don't wait till you're on the edge. There'll be drink, and a man can't just *stop*, Kate. He's like a *runaway train*!

Kathy So decide, yes or no, *before* you go back to his.

Katherine Don't be *too* keen. He'll think you're *easy*.

Kathy Nan again!

Katherine There's still such a thing as a *slag*, Kate –

Kathy Rubbish. Everyone else at College has done it. You gotta start somewhere.

Katherine Mum was nearly 30 before she met Dad and got it on.

Kathy That's *decades* she waited! And then she got it wrong.
You're afraid, aren't you? Afraid you'll end up a dumpy old woman with a moustache and smelly cats and a - tartan shopping trolley on wheels.

Katherine With no babies –

Kathy *Babies* don't need a relationship. You can stay independent.

Katherine Yeah? What about poor Natalie? Instead of Uni, ends up stuck in that boring flat with little Nathan, no-one to help.
Independence! Another word for being bloody lonely!

Kathy (*pushes Kate forward*) You'll be fine. Just remember the condom.

Katherine (*pulling Kate back*) They'll all be talking. Jess and Hannah -

Kathy (*forward*) He's gorgeous. *Lush*.
Get it over with -

Kate OK , that's it! Decision made. Back to his place, after the party.
Now – *piss off!*

Kathy Thank God! a decision!

Katherine For really rubbish reasons.
Pause.
Time has passed. Scene changes to utter dejection. The characters are separate, alienated. They draw gradually closer.

Kathy He's got a green – plastic – hippo. On his bedside table. Coffee rings, half-eaten packet of Extra-strong mints -

Katherine jam-jar crammed with biro –

Kathy and a green, plastic hippo.

Katherine Oh my God! That duvet cover!

Kate Star Wars. I don't believe it.

We're on the bed. Just chatting. Then he kisses me, really *suddenly*. Our teeth bang together. He smells of beer.

He's undoing my top. I start fiddling with his buttons and buckles.

Uncomfortable pause

"Breathe in a bit!" I tell him.

Kathy God - it's going to take all night just getting naked.

Kate We give up and pull our own clothes off. We look at each other. The radiator's clunking away.

Katherine You know what? - he's *lovely*. His skin's all smooth and brown. With pale bits. I just want to lie there, looking.

Kathy *Wow!*

Katherine He's kind of impatient. He says - "Do you want to do this, then?"

Beat.

Kate I think "not a lot." It's sort of embarrassing.

Kathy I don't want to hurt his feelings, though.

Kate I don't want him to think I'm scared.

Katherine It doesn't take long. Then he turns away.

About a thousand miles away. I don't even get a cuddle.

Kathy I put my clothes back on.

Katherine I don't dare ask - "Was that all right?"

Kathy He says - "Well - at least you can say you've done it now."

Kate I've crossed the threshold. I leave soon after. I think I said "thanks."

Katherine I remember - his skin.

A jam-jar crammed with biros -

A green, plastic hippo.

All the bits that were him.

Katherine So. I'm a woman now. Am I?

Kathy Am I different somehow?

Kate Can everyone *tell* –

Kathy That I've – *done it*, at last?

Kate Next morning. The first day of – everything else. It's Sunday. I crawl out of bed and go downstairs in my jimjams. Mum's off to church. She says

Katherine "OK love? You were in a bit late."

Kate She squeezes my shoulder, goes out, comes back in for her glasses.

She's got her red coat on. She wears gloves to church – like Nan used to.

Katherine I feel - invisible.

Kate Like I've disappeared.

Kathy Like I've sort of – *died*.

Kate So I go and talk to Nan. Not *out loud* or anything.

I sit by the rose bush Mum and I planted, and I talk to her in my head.

I think about her rolling pastry in the kitchen.

Kathy Nipping down the road to the bookie's.

Katherine The scent on her hanky. She had this massive handbag with loads of stuff in it – a big fat purse, old envelopes, fruit pastilles.

Kate Her hands went – all thin and papery.

And I wonder where she's gone now – all the bits that were her.

Kathy She used to call me "Katie."

Katherine Yeah. That was really annoying.

Kate So then it's Monday. I walk into College. The first thing Hannah says to me is "The Cappuccino's crap out of that machine!"

Jess says “You’ll never guess what Mark told me about Amy.”

I get my Philip Larkin essay back – that’s all good.

Loads later when we’re having lunch, Hannah says “How was the weekend, then?” Hannah and Jess are looking at me. They *smile*.

And I say “It was all right. Nothing special.”

Except it wasn’t all right. I wanted a beginning – it felt like an ending. It *should* have been special – but it seemed a bit pointless.

- Kathy** It’s a terrible thing – regret. You want to - rewind.
- Katherine** But you can’t. It happened. It’s part of what you are now.
- Kathy** For *ever!*
- Katherine** So why did you get us back here, Kate? All we do is remind you of all the things you did that were *stupid*.
- Kathy** Made you feel BAD.
- Katherine** Rebellion? No! Adventure? Not you! You were just scared of what other people would think and what your friends would say. So you did something pointless.
- Kathy** What were you *thinking* of?
- Kate** I was trying to understand what was *real*. Trying to find all the bits that were me.
- Katherine** Mistakes were made.
- Kate** And lessons learnt. It’s a lot better now.
- Kathy** So can we hang around? See what happens?
- Katherine** Oh go on!
- Kate** You’re welcome.
- They are childishly pleased.*
- Katherine** Right - this guy you just met? Jim, is it?
- Kathy** So when’s it *going to happen?*

Katherine It's looking *very* good. Now – what you need to do –

Kate Hang on a moment, you guys -

Don't push it.

END