Blank Book Theatre

The Unwritten Truth

Written and Directed by Chelsea Jones, Danielle Johnson, and Jennifer Spratt
Pre-show: Projection of the Freedom Riders movement as audience walk in.

SCENE ONE – The First Day

The Freedom Riders projection plays

Movement sequence between the characters, showing arguments, fighting ect.

Anne Frank is on the scaffold behind a white sheet so you can only see a brief silhouette of her.

Projection cuts out

ANNE:

It’s twice as hard for us young people to hold on to our opinions at a time when ideals are being shattered and destroyed when the worst side of human nature predominates, when everyone has come to doubt truth, justice and god.

We’re much too young to deal with these problems, but they keep thrusting themselves on us until, finally, we’re forced to think up a solution, though most of the time our solutions crumble when faced with the facts. It’s difficult in times like these: ideals, dreams and cherished hopes rise within us, only to be crushed by grim reality. It’s a wonder I haven’t abandoned all of my ideals, they seem so absurd and impractical. Yet I cling to them because I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart. It’s utterly impossible for me to build my life on a foundation of chaos, suffering and death. I see the world being slowly transformed into a wilderness, I hear the approaching thunder that, one day, will destroy us too, and I feel the suffering of millions. And yet, when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better that this cruelty too will end, that peace and tranquillity will return once more. In the meantime, I must hold on to my ideals. Perhaps the day will come when I am able to realise them!

Trisha enters the classroom, where the class are already settled in their seats doing their own thing whilst being aware of the live feed of the L.A Riots on the television screen.

TRISHA:

(Reading from the register, over the noise of the riots and being ignored)

Tyson...
Lea...
George...
Sian...
Morgan...
Maria...


MARIAH:

It’s MARIAH!
Trisha composes herself, the class talk between themselves, mentioning the teacher ‘She won’t last a week’ ‘Who is this bitch’ etc. Mariah is looking around the classroom and looks at Sian for a few seconds.

SIAN:

What you looking at!?

MARIAH:

It all comes down to what you look like. If you’re European or Asian or Black, you could get blasted anytime you walk out of your door. We fight each other for territory, we kill each other over race, pride and respect, we fight for what is ours and we protect our own. Now war has been declared.

Confrontation between characters, all shouting, arguing, pushing each other.

TRISHA:

(Trying to talk over the noise)

Hello everyone, my name is Miss Gatiss and I will be your new teacher for this year.

SIAN:

She talks funny, where are you from miss?

TRISHA:

Newcastle in England.

TYSON:

Oh, so they need to bring someone over from England to teach us English?

GEORGE:

Perhaps we could teach you something about American literature?

MORGAN:

(Feeling pleased with himself)

Yeah, like Roald Dahl!!

The class turn to look at Morgan, Morgan turns around, acting as if it was someone else.

TRISHA:

Let’s move on shall we. So I’d like you all to tell me something you would like to be once you leave school. George let’s start with you.

SIAN:

He’s going to be a dad!

Everyone laughs and looks at George. Tyson throws two condoms at George, one falls on the floor, Mariah picks up the other and blows it up into a balloon, and they throw it around.
They didn’t do sex education very well here...

MORGAN:

(Trying to be cool)

So, what are you going to call the baby?

MARIAH:

Billy Boner!

Everyone laughs.

TRISHA:

Let’s all settle down.

Picking up the condom off of the floor with her pen.

SIAN:

You’re not very good at this are you?

TRISHA:

Thank you for that.

What would you like to be Lea?

Lea stares back but doesn’t say anything.

SIAN:

(Very slowly)

She said what would you like to be?

LEA:

(Mimicking Sian)

I know!

Lea mutters whore under her breath, disguised by a cough.

TRISHA:

That is enough!

Confrontation starts between the characters and Mariah flicks her ruler against the table. Whilst a belt is being whipped backstage.

TYSON:

(The sound of the belt brings back a bad memory for Tyson)

In every war, there is an enemy, I watched my mother being half beaten to death and I watched as blood and tears streamed down her face, I felt useless and scared and furious at the same time, I can
still feel the sting of the belt on my back and my legs. That night he stopped us on the street and pointed to the concrete, he said...

TRISHA:
Pick a spot. I want you all to switch places and this will be your new seating plan. Come on, we have to learn about Homer the Odyssey.

MORGAN:
I only know Homer the Simpson!

*Morgan laughs at himself.*

TYSON:
What am I even doing here, this wannabe ghetto class, wouldn’t even know how to handle a gun.

MARIAH:
This ‘wannabe ghetto class’ knows more than your dumb ass nigga!

TYSON:
Come here and say that to my face you gypsy whore!

*They get up, offering a fight. School bell rings and everyone exits.*

*Morgan walks back into the classroom, picks up the condom and runs off.*

SCENE TWO – Life inside
Tyson and Anne are back to back in front of the scaffolding on the floor. Blood is being poured over them from the top of the scaffold. The monologues interject each other.

TYSON:
I stood there, frozen, unable to move any part of my body, like someone had taken over the control of my limbs. I was just a few steps away, how could I not stop this?

ANNE:
Tuesday 1st August 1944. Dearest Kitty,

TYSON:
I was weak, I thought I was invincible, that nobody could harm me, but the truth is, I am no one. I watched it happen just a few metres from my feet, I watched him stamp on his head 3 maybe even 4 times, he spat on him and then he pulled out his gun, now I knew there was nothing I could do.

ANNE:
A voice within me is sobbing, You see that’s what’s become of you. You’re surrounded by negative opinions, dismayed looks and mocking faces, people who dislike you, and all because you don’t listen to advice of your own better half.

TYSON:
Even if I wanted to, my body wouldn’t unfreeze. I winced as the gun shot bounded through his body, I witnessed it all, I watched them kill him. Then they ran, and I threw myself over my friend, praying that he was still alive, but deep down, I knew he was gone.

ANNE:
I just can’t keep it up anymore, because when everyone starts hovering over me, I get cross, then sad, and finally end up turning my heart inside out.

TYSON:
I cried, tears rolled down my cheeks and I cried like a fucking baby. The police came, I already had a bad name in this neighbourhood.

ANNE:
The bad part on the outside and the good part on the inside, I keep trying to find a way to become what I’d like to be and what I could be if...

TYSON:
I’m black remember.

ANNE:
If only there were no other people in the world.

_Sirens are heard in the background, progresses into an air raid siren. Soldier sequence integrated with Tyson and police sequence. Anne is taken away._

SCENE THREE – Lea’s story
LEA:

It is terrifying to feel your breath slip away and no matter how hard you fight no air can reach your lungs. And what’s even worse is the false sense of security you get when you come up, only to be pushed right back under. Every night at 10:30, I sneak out of my house just for half an hour whilst I go to Central State park. It’s no paradise island or Beverly Hills but I kind of see it as my safe haven. I sit there most of the time gazing up at the skyline, which overlooks the cities landscape, it’s peaceful and quiet. I love the stars! It’s my favourite part of the night watching them illuminate the sky. It’s beautiful and transcending taking you on a magical journey where there is no violence, hatred and no expectation to fit society’s status quo, which is just corrupt and cold. The stars sparkle; they make me feel safe and strangely at home, it gives me hope that one day the darkness that foreshadows this city will somehow fade and just disappear into the night. I know that one day; I’m going to be a star shining bright up there and I’ll join the rest of the angels that protect and guide us. It’s scary you know, confessing all of this, and the hardest part is, I fear death the most and yet I know it’s inevitable. I am 15 years old and I’m going to die. I have accepted it, but I’m just 15! I want to live. I pretend sometimes that I’m brave and that I’m a powerful superhero! (Laughs to herself).

I’m envious of George, everyone else teases him about the fact that he is going to be a dad. I would love to feel that connection from one human being to another, intimacy, passion and love. The warmth of a babies cheek upon my breast; they say there is no love like it. But he is going to be a great dad, he has got a future ahead of him. I’m not sure about my future, my dreams and aspirations seem so far out of reach. I don’t say much, I don’t get involved, I don’t have many friends, I guess that makes it easier for when the time comes, as goodbyes are always the hardest.

I have Cystic Fibrosis. I will be lucky if I make it until I’m 18. I am gasping for air, waiting for the tidal wave to push my head under the water again, only to let me up for the next breath of preciousness. Then I found out that if I don’t receive a transplant for new lungs, I will only have a matter of time left to live. I have now been on the transplant list for 6 months, it makes me wonder if I will survive this. CF has always been a part of my life... I’m frequently hospitalised, my breathing is the hardest, I have coughing attacks all the time, I lose my concentration, and the lack of oxygen gives me migraines. I have to take pills to help me digest my food and perform breathing treatments and if I don’t, I get severe stomach aches. (Starts coughing causing her to stop talking).
SCENE FOUR – Death March

ANNE:

On the morning of 4th August 1944, sometime between ten and ten-thirty, a car pulled up at 263. Several figures emerged: an SS sergeant, Karl Josef S, in full uniform and at least three Dutch members of the security police, armed but in civilian clothes. Someone must have tipped them off. They arrested the people hiding in the Annexe. Upon the arrest, eight residents were first taken to a prison in Amsterdam and then transferred to Westerbork, the transit camp for Jews in the north of Holland. They were deported on 3rd September 1944.

Peter was forced to take part in the 16 January 1945 ‘death march’ from Auschwitz to Austria, where he died on 5th May 1945, three days before the camp was liberated.

Edith Frank died in Auschwitz on 6th January 1945, from hunger and exhaustion.

TRISHA:

Margot and Anne Frank were transported from Auschwitz at the end of October and taken to Bergen-Belsen, a concentration camp near Hanover, Germany. The typhus epidemic that broke out in the winter of 1944-5, as result of the horrendous hygiene conditions, killed thousands of prisoners, including both Margot, and a few days later, Anne. The bodies of the girls were probably dumped in Bergen-Belsen’s mass graves. The camp was liberated by British troops on 12th April 1945.

ANNE:

Otto Frank was the only one of the eight to survive the concentration camps.
SCENE FIVE – Poe would be proud!

Classroom scene, stylistic movements that interject their poems.

TRISHA:

After reading poems by Edgar Allen Poe, I now want you to focus on your own poem. I would like you to write a few lines about something you feel strongly about, in relation to yourself, your peers or your family. In fact let’s do it in pairs.

SIAN:

You have to be joking. We have nothing in common, I don’t go around getting people pregnant...

TRISHA:

I am sure that you will find something. Great minds think alike.

MORGAN:

I don’t want to work with him, I might get stabbed or something.

Tyson stares at Morgan

TYSON:

BOO!

Morgan screams and turns around

LEA:

But she smells like smoke, I can barely breathe.

Lea gets out her perfume bottle and sprays Mariah.

TRISHA:

You have 5 minutes, so get your pencils out and begin.

General talking/arguing in the background, Mariah is drawing a picture. Underscore of music.

George you can go first.

GEORGE:

Doubt is what I’m doing,
Regret is what I’ve done
But you know, what’s scary is,
The future is yet to come.

SIAN:

I’m sure she will enjoy reading that when she is older...

SIAN:

The world is cruel and does not care,
When an individual falls into despair.
Alone in this world you’ll always stand
So don’t bother searching for a helping hand.

**MORGAN:**
Awkwardly
A new school again,
Another year as the new kid
This school is crap
And the teacher is even worse.

**LEA:**
You can’t see it by looking at me
But it’s always there growing with me
Living and wonder why it chose me
It’s me it’s only me.
One day I hope the answer will come to me.

**LEA:**
Perhaps you should ask to hear Mariah’s poem?

**TRISHA:**
Yes, Mariah, can we hear yours?

**MARIAH:**
No.

**TRISHA:**
*Walks over to Mariah*
What is that?

*Trisha takes the picture*

Maybe we should talk about art. Mariah’s got real talent, don’t you think? You know something; I saw a picture just like this once in a museum. Only it wasn’t a black man, it was a Jewish man, and instead of the big lips he had a really big nose, like a rats nose, but he wasn’t just one particular Jewish man this was a drawing of all Jews and these drawings were put in the newspapers, by the most famous gang in history, you think you all know about gangs? You’re amateurs, this gang will put you all to shame and they started out poor and angry and everybody looking down on them until one man decided to give them some pride and identity... and somebody to blame. You take over neighbourhoods? That’s nothing compared to them, they took over countries, and you want to know how? They just wiped out everybody else. Yeah, they wiped out everybody they didn’t like and
everybody they blamed for their life being hard and one of the ways they did it was by doing this. See they print pictures like this in the newspapers Jewish people with big long noses, blacks with big fat lips. They also published scientific evidence that proved that Jews and Blacks were the lowest form of human species, Jews and Blacks are more like animals and because they were just like animals it didn’t matter if they lived or died. In fact life would be a whole lot better if they were all dead. That’s how a holocaust happens and that’s what you all think of each other. You know Anne Frank once wrote...

ANNE:

When the invasions came the bombs started falling, it’ll be every man for himself. We’ve been strongly reminded of the fact that we are Jews in chains, chained to one spot, without any rights, but with a thousand obligations. We must put our feelings aside, we must be brave and strong, bare discomfort without complaint, do whatever is in our power and trust in God. One day this terrible war will be over. The time will come when we’ll be people again and not just Jews! Who has inflicted this on us? Who has set us apart from all of the rest? Who has put us through such suffering? In the eyes of the world, we’re doomed, but if, after all this suffering, there are still Jews left, the Jewish people will be held up as an example. Who knows, maybe our religion will teach the world and all the people in it about goodness, and that’s the reason, the only reason, we have to suffer. We cannot just be Dutch, or just English, or whatever.
SCENE SIX – Just a kid

George is alone seated onstage in a centre spotlight.

Two children are playing on the top of the scaffold. Anne is writing in her diary underneath the scaffold. Throughout the monologue there is an underscoring of ‘kid, father, daddy, child’s daddy’ by the children.

GEORGE:

You always think someone’s experience could never happen to you, we live in a blissful ignorance, pitying those who get themselves into situations through sheer stupidity, wondering how we got ourselves into such a mess. You hear stories of young kids getting shot, or shoplifting because they have nothing else better to do. And I hate those kids. And I hate myself. If only I was older or more stupid or just selfish. Yeah if I was selfish, I would have dumped that girl. That troublesome girl, that beautiful troublesome girl, my girl. You always think you know what you’re going to do when faced with a dilemma, you think ‘yes I would say this, I would do this’. But you don’t. Because when it’s real in front of you, you actually can’t find the words to explain how you’re feeling. Saying sorry is the most simple of things but sorry doesn’t change actions. I am one of those selfish kids, kid, father, kid father…daddy, a child’s daddy, a living contradiction of both definitions. Usually I’m good with words; I’m good at hiding everything, no emotion, no feelings, nothing. But I feel as if I have the word ‘daddy’ branded into my forehead and everyone stares with a judgemental point. A situation of sheer stupidity...

Lights fade up to the scaffolding in which we see a small bundle and a faint murmuring of an infant.

Stop! Stop it! I don’t know what you want, I don’t know how to hold you, I don’t know you!

Silence.

She didn’t tell me, she didn’t tell me anything. I’d suspected, but I never knew what it’s supposed to look like or notice if she had formed a tiny bump in a few weeks. Blissfully ignorant, girls are so good and so calm and know all the answers. She didn’t let me have a choice, she didn’t let me in, she didn’t...

He starts to cry.

She made the choice, being calm, she made the choice, but I wanted a choice, I wanted to know. And now I’ll never know.

He directs this at the bundle.

I’ll never know you. I’m sorry, I can’t, I didn’t mean to. Just sorry. Sorry doesn’t change actions...sorry, sorry...
SCENE SEVEN – Life of a Jew

Anne remains under the scaffolding, physical sequence.

ANNE:

My father, the most adorable father I’ve ever seen, didn’t marry my mother until he was 36 and she was 25.

After May 1940 the good times were few and far between: first there was the War and the arrival of the Germans, which is when the trouble started for the Jews. Our freedom was severely restricted by a series of anti-Jewish decrees: Jews were required to wear a yellow star; Jews were forbidden to use trams; Jews were forbidden to ride in cars, even their own; Jews were required to do their shopping between 3.00-5.00pm. Jews were not allowed on the streets between 8.00pm and 6.00am; Jews were forbidden to go to the theatres, cinemas, or any form of entertainment. You couldn’t do this and you couldn’t do that, but life went on. Jacque always said to me, “I don’t dare do anything anymore, because I’m afraid it’s not allowed.”
SCENE EIGHT – Black History Month

TRISHA:

It’s black history month and I think it’s time we started to act together. We’re here, we live in the same world, so, ask yourselves, why are you all fighting against each other?

SIAN:

I don’t think you understand, we fight for our family, our friends and our gangs. We don’t mix with people like you. You think you’re too good to be here, so why are you? Why don’t you go and teach people who want to learn. We’ve never been respected by teachers so why the fuck would we respect a jumped up English girl like you! You don’t know my story and I ain’t about to tell you it!

TRISHA:

Ok, that’s enough. Look I may be a ‘jumped up English girl’ if that is how you view me, but can’t you see, I am here trying to help you, trying to get you to do something with your lives before you end up dead or in prison for killing another! You may not like me, and that is fine, but don’t give up on me, I am trying to make a difference for you, I want you to have a better life than what your ancestors have had, I want you to graduate and get a good job, have a family that you can be proud of.

TYSON:

Shit like that only happens in rich white people’s lives! You just don’t get it do you? We fucking hate each other, we have fought all of our lives to be the best, and your shitty inspirational talks ain’t going to make us friends!

TRISHA:

I am trying to help, just listen to something, look at our history and see those who have fought to stop racial segregation, why can’t we carry on from them! In the 1960’s a civil rights activist group were inspired by Rosa Parks, they decided to challenge segregation, they integrated their bus and they travelled to the south. They were the Freedom Riders; they wanted to stand up for what they believed in.

SIAN:

Whoopie fucking do, well done to them! Let’s give them a medal!

TRISHA:

(Becoming agitated)

If you listened for a moment you might actually learn something. What they did, meant that you could go to the same school, eat from the same cafes and use the same toilets!

When the Freedom Riders reached Alabama, an angry mob awaited them, one person got off the bus; he was beaten almost to death to stand up for what he believed in. He was a white American man, he didn’t have to get off that bus, and he didn’t even have to be there, he was allowed wherever he wanted. He wanted to fight for others who didn’t have the same privileges and rights that he did. After several months they made regulations that prohibited segregation on interstate transit. They fought for their rights and they won!
LEA:
They fought racism by riding the bus?

MORGAN:
They pushed racial limits in the south and made a difference. Man that’s deep.

TRISHA:
Don’t you see? We have the opportunity to change things, to make a difference, you might just think that you are a troubled bunch of kids, but you’re more than that, you are the next generation and you have the power to change. Just like Anne Frank, The Freedom Riders and war victims, you could make a difference. I want you to do something for me now, can you move your chair to the side of the classroom. Stand in a straight line.

*Trisha draws a line on the floor, she asks a series of questions and the students answer in regards to how close they are to the line.*

TRISHA:
Have you ever bought a Snoop Dogg album?
Have you ever hurt anyone else?
Have you ever picked up a gun?
Have you ever seen someone die?
Have you ever killed someone?

I guess this really puts it into perspective, why do we do all of these things? Life is difficult enough, surely we can fight for change?

GEORGE:
Maybe there’s something we could do? Like we could write a speech to present to the president, something that will change everyone’s thoughts!

TYSON:
Yeah, maybe we could ask for a Black president! That really would see a change in society!

TRISHA:
That’s a great idea!

Now I’d like you all to take a diary, it’s yours to keep, you don’t have to write in it, you could draw or throw it away, but think about the significant things that have happened in your life, things that have changed the way you behave and any emotions you feel. You don’t have to share it this is only for you.
SCENE NINE – Revenge isn’t always sweet

Tyson is in his cell, being dressed in prison clothing and handcuffs.

TYSON:

A couple of days ago my closest friend was laid to rest. He was 15 years old. His funeral was like any other, someone said “Not another one”. But I wasn’t going to let this go, I had to get revenge. An eye for an eye. I still remember exactly what happened that night he died, I watched them pull the trigger and I froze, nothing I could do would help him. I stared down at his limp limbs and his blood ridden body soaking into the floor. In that moment I knew this wouldn’t be the end, nobody kills one of my gang and gets away with it. No motherfucker in this stupid fucking town kills someone I love and gets away with it!! He was going to get it and I was going to make him suffer, I would make him wish he was never fucking born!

The next day, I pulled up my shirt, put the gun into my waistband and headed for school, the cold metal against my bare skin resembled a feeling I knew all too well. I was going to kill this motherfucker in front of all of his friends, so they can feel the way I felt that night! In this undeclared war, you either kill or be killed. Risking life, dodging or taking bullets and pulling triggers. It’s all worth it. I saw him, standing there and laughing. How could he stand there and fucking laugh after all the shit he has put us through? I grab the gun, pull it from my waistband and point it into his fucking head. Silence.
SCENE TEN – Shakespeare’s Alive

Trisha is alone in the classroom, dressed in Shakespearian clothing. She is on top of the table confidently delivering her speech. The students walk in and are taken back by what they see.

TRISHA:

Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal lions of those two foes
A fair of star-cross’d lovers take their life;
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows
Do with their death bury their parents’ strife.
The fearful passage of their death – mark’d love,
And the continuance of their parents’ rage,
Which, but their children’s end, nought could remove,
Is now the two hours’ traffic of our stage;
The which if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

TYSON:

What the fuck is she talking about?

MORGAN:

I didn’t know miss could speak French!

SIAN:

What is this English lingo!

GEORGE:

(Bites his thumb, in response to Trisha)

TRISHA:

Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

GEORGE:

I do bite my thumb, sir.

TRISHA:
Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

**GEORGE:**

*(Aside)*

Is the law of our side, if I say ay?

**TRISHA:**

No.

**GEORGE:**

No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir, but I bite my thumb, sir.

**TRISHA:**

Do you quarrel, sir?

**GEORGE:**

Quarrel sir! No, sir.

**TRISHA:**

If you do, sir, I am for you: I serve as good a man as you.

**GEORGE:**

No better.

**TRISHA:**

Well, sir.

**GEORGE:**

Say ‘better:’ here comes one of my master’s kinsmen.

**TRISHA:**

You lie.

**GEORGE:**

Draw, if you be men. Gregory, remember thy swashing blow.

*Pulls out rulers and fight!*

**MORGAN:**

You speak French as well?
SCENE ELEVEN – Reflection

Tyson is alone on the scaffold, talking to himself in a prayer like manner.

TYSON:

I let down the two most important people in my life; my mum and my aunt Gina. My mum made Gina promise to look after me and care for me when she was gone. Gina took me on as one of her own and stood by me through everything. Which believe me, wasn’t easy. When I look back on my life, I realise everything I’ve done wrong and how I wish I could change it.

When my mum died, I felt so many emotions, I was sad and angry, angry at the world for letting this happen, angry at myself for not protecting her and I did everything in my path to make everyone else’s life hell. I don’t know how Gina coped with me for so long, my mum didn’t give her an easy task, but she fought until the end.

Mum the day I was created, I was placed in your womb. When born, I was placed in your arms. When I was homeless, I was on your mind. But when I became a man, I was on your heart. The reason I say this is because all of my life you carried me. And now, since you’re gone, I’m carrying you… right here in my heart, mind and soul. My sadness is in not seeing you die; my sadness is in not seeing you live…

Mariah enters, walking up the scaffold.

MARIAH:

That was beautiful.

TYSON:

What are you doing up here?

MARIAH:

It’s where I hang out when I want some time alone.

TYSON:

Really? I didn’t think anyone knew about this place, I come here to gather my thoughts too!

MARIAH:

Yeah, I like to dance, I feel like I’m in another place when I’m up here, I can be who I want to be, without thinking of all of the bad things that are happening at the moment.

TYSON:

Life is pretty tough, huh.

MARIAH:

Yeah, I guess you could say that.

TYSON:

You know, I’ve been thinking…

MARIAH:
You don’t do that very often...

They share a smile.

TYSON:

No really, about what Miss G is always going on about. That we shouldn’t hate each other because of our backgrounds and our race. You know, I think we could actually get along if we tried!

MARIAH:

Laughing

I think you have gone crazy! Why the sudden change of heart?

TYSON:

My mum died 5 years ago today. When Miss G spoke about the families of the people we were killing, it kind of really hit home. I think I am growing up; I don’t want to wake up in police cells or even hospitals because I feel the need to fight anymore. I wanted to be the big man, prove that I am better than the rest, but actually all that matters is protecting the people close to me. I want to be a role model for my little brother; I want to make him proud.

MARIAH:

You really have gone soft! Anyway, I should probably go, you know what would happen if we got caught up here together...

TYSON:

See this is exactly what I am talking about, this shouldn’t matter! Why can’t we be friends? I think we might actually have a lot in common!

MARIAH:

Laughing

Lights fade on the scaffold

SCENE TWELVE – Confessions
In the classroom, at the end of a lesson. Mariah then moves up onto the scaffold.

TYSON:
Are you ok?

She shakes her head

MARIAH:
Those people they take their powers and they abuse it!

Goes to put his hand on her shoulder

(She pushes him off)

Don’t you dare touch me!

Tyson gives her some space backs Mariah has a flashback to a memory

Prayer in Romanian.

POLICEMAN:
What are you doing up there? It’s not safe, come down.

Mariah ignores him

Whatever you are thinking or feeling, we can talk through it. I won’t hurt you, I’m on your side.

Whatever is bothering you, we can get through it, it shouldn’t end this way.

Fine, if you aren’t going to come down.

Policeman starts walking up the ladder

I’ll have to come up and get you.

MARIAH:
Leave me alone.

POLICEMAN:
C’mon let’s get you home, it’s getting cold and dark.

MARIAH:
I said leave.

POLICEMAN:
Look, I’m not going anywhere without you, so you have a choice, you either come down or we stay here all night!

(Getting frustrated)

I really don’t have to be up here with you, but I’m trying to do the right thing, if you come down, we can talk about it, I’ll try to help, I’m a good listener.

MARIAH:
Fine, if it is the only thing that will shut you up!

(She stands)

MARIAH:

He gave me water, told me to drink it, all of it. He was very insistent. I had already drunk so much alcohol; I was falling in and out of consciousness. Then I blacked out, nothing. I remember feeling something touching me, but I couldn’t open my eyes to see and I couldn’t open my mouth to talk, my body was limp. What is that? Who’s touching me? Whatever it was, I didn’t like it, what was happening to me? Whatever it was, I wanted it to stop. I remember him saying:

POLICEMAN:

You were far too easy.

MARIAH:

I opened my mouth to tell him to stop. It was as if a ton of bricks had fallen on me, knocking the air from my lungs. Making me unable to speak. I felt his body right next to mine. He was touching me in a way I didn’t know could make me feel so dirty. I prayed it would be over soon. So I didn’t move a muscle I made my body as hard as a rock. Every thrust was a punch inside me, tearing away my innocence. That night I was no longer a child. The lingering sweat and saliva on my skin made me want to cry. It felt like a lifetime had passed before he stood up and said:

POLICEMAN:

I wouldn’t bother telling anyone, who would believe a drunk foreign girl anyway!
**SCENE THIRTEEN – First Kiss**

*Anne is very giggly and playful, on top of the scaffolding, sliding down the side and sitting on the pole, portraying her youthfulness.*

**ANNE:**

*Wednesday 1st July 1942*

Dearest kitty,

Mother is always asking me who I am going to marry when I grow up, but I bet she will never guess it's Peter, because I talked her out of that idea myself, without batting an eye lash. I love Peter as I've never loved anyone, and I tell myself he is only going around with all other girls to hide his feelings for me. I'm occasionally sentimental, as you know, but from time to time I have reason to be: when Peter and I are sitting close together on a hard wooden crate among the junk and dust, our arms around each other's shoulders, Peter toying with a lock of my hair; when the birds outside are trilling their songs, when the trees are in bud, when the sun beckons and the sky is so blue- oh, that's when I wish for so much! I remember yesterday’s date, since it was a red letter day for me. Isn't it an important day for every girl when she gets her first kiss? Last night at eight, I was sitting with Peter on his divan and it wasn't long before he put his arm around me - since it was Saturday, he wasn't wearing his overalls. 'Why don't we move over a little' I said, 'so I won't keep bumping my head against the cupboard'? He moved so far over he was practically in the corner; I slipped my arm under his and across his back, he put his arm around my shoulder, so that I was nearly engulfed by him. We've sat like this on other occasions, but never so close as we were last night. He held me firmly against him, my left side against his chest, my heart had already begun to beat faster, but there was more to come. He wasn't satisfied until my head lay on his shoulder, with his on top of mine. Before long he took my head in his hands and put it next to his. Oh, it was so wonderful! I could hardly talk, my pleasure was too intense, and he caressed my cheek and arm, a bit clumsily, and played with my hair. Most of the time our heads was touching. I can't tell you, kitty, the feeling that ran through me. I was far too happy for words, and I think he was too. At 9.30 we stood up, he gave me a kiss on my head. Dearest kitty, I've never forgotten my dream about Peter Schiff. Even now I can still feel his cheek against mine, and that wonderful glow that made up for all the rest. Once In a while I'd had the same feelings with this Peter, but never so intensely ... until last night.
SCENE FOURTEEN - Mercutio and Tybalt

BENVOLIO/MORGAN:
By my head, here comes the Capulets.

MERCUTIO/LEA:
By my heel, I care not.

TYBALT/MARIAH:
Follow me close, for I will speak to them.

Gentlemen, good e’en. A word with one of you.

MERCUTIO/LEA:
And but one word with one of us?

Couple it with something. Make it a word and a blow.

TYBALT/MARIAH:
You shall find me apt enough to that, sir,

An you will give me occasion.

MERCUTIO/LEA:
Could you not take some occasion without giving?

TYBALT/MARIAH:
Mercutio, thou consort’st with Romeo.

MERCUTIO/LEA:
Consort? What, dost thou make us minstrels?

An thou make minstrels of us, look to hear nothing but discords.

Here’s my fiddlestick. Here’s that shall make you dance.

Zounds, “consort”!

BENVOLIO/MORGAN:
We talk here in the public haunt of men.

Either withdraw unto some private place,

And reason coldly of your grievances,

Or else depart. Here all eyes gaze on us.

**MERCUTIO/LEA:**

Men’s eyes were made to look and let them gaze.

I will not budge for no man’s pleasure, l.

*Enter ROMEO*

**TYBALT/MARIAH:**

Well, peace be with you, sir. Here comes my man.

**MERCUTIO/LEA:**

But I’ll be hanged, sir, if he wear your livery.

Marry, go before to field, he’ll be your follower.

Your worship in that sense may call him “man.”

**TYBALT/MARIAH:**

Romeo, the love I bear thee can afford

No better term than this: thou art a villain.

**ROMEO/TYSON:**

Tybalt, the reason that I have to love thee

Doth much excuse the appertaining rage

To such a greeting. Villain am I none.

Therefore, farewell. I see thou know’st me not.

**TYBALT/MARIAH:**

Boy, this shall not excuse the injuries

That thou hast done me. Therefore turn and draw.
TRISHA:
So what’s going to happen?

MARIAH:
The usual, they fight, they die.

TRISHA:
Let’s delve deeper.

LEA:
They fight because they don’t understand each other, and they don’t want to, the audience already know what is going to happen, we hope nothing happens but we know it will and there’s nothing we can do about it.

TRISHA:
Good, any addition’s to Lea’s comment?

TYSON:
Mercutio is in the wrong he is behaving as if he has done nothing wrong, he thinks he can behave the way he does and he will never see the consequences of his actions. You termed it as a dramatic irony situation.

TRISHA:
That is a very insightful analysis.

GEORGE:
Shakespeare didn’t write this for kids like us. It was for everyone, because everyone has been a child everyone has been there, loved lost and loved again, the tragedy of the family learning from the consequences makes it harder because it was at the cost of young lives. Children.

TRISHA:
Some might agree or disagree it seems as if you all sympathise with the situation.

LEA:
I think some of us empathise. Do you think someone would empathise with our diaries and our lives.

TRISHA:
They might.

**MARIAH:**

It’s so sad, they’re younger than us, but they seem to know so much more about being mature but not understand the responsibility that comes with it. I suppose Shakespeare might say don’t hold onto anger or pain because it makes you bitter, the bitterness is like a poison. Potentially the poison Juliet drinks.

**TRISHA:**

You read ahead Mariah?

**MARIAH:**

Once I understood it a little more I really wanted to know what would happen next, I couldn’t put it down.

*Trisha Smiles*

**SIAN:**

What does happen?

**TRISHA:**

Keep reading.
SCENE FIFTEEN – Betrayal

Space is filled with every character in their own homes, repetitive movements. Tyson has been let out of prison and goes home.

TYSON:
Hey Auntie, I’m back, I told you I wouldn’t be gone for long! Hope you’re cooking something nice for dinner, I’m so hungry, prison food wasn’t good!

Wait, where is all of my stuff? Have you been having a clear out?

Gina looks down at the bags by the door.

What’s going on?

GINA:
I’m sorry Tyson, I have tried so hard with you, I feel as though I’ve failed your mother, but I can’t carry on like this. I never know who will be at my door when I hear a knock, I live in fear. Last time you were in a cell, I told you if there was a next time you wouldn’t be coming back here.

TYSON:
You can’t do this? I have nowhere to stay?

GINA:
You should have thought about that before you kill...

Tyson cuts her off

TYSON:
Don’t you dare, I have just been cleared of the crime. They know it wasn’t me! You do believe me don’t you?

Gina looks away

You are the last person I thought would turn their back on me.

GINA:
Tyson that isn’t fair, I have fought and fought for you, but enough is enough. I am constantly worried sick. You have caused my depression, stress and anxiety. I had to quit my job, all for you! You need to stand on your own two feet and take responsibility for your actions.

Tyson picks up his bags and runs off
SCENE SIXTEEN - Romeo and Juliet

Blackout. Scene in the dark.

JULIET/SIAN
Wilt thou be gone? it is not yet near day:

MARIAH:
That’s it just leave her in bed.

TRISHA:
Mariah, we are trying to create ambience, get you into the mode of the scene.

MORGAN:
So you want us to create the ambience of the scene, hey ladies anyone want to cuddle?

Tyson slaps Morgan around the back of the head.

OUCH!

TYSON:
Show some respect!

JULIET/SIAN
It was the nightingale, and not the lark,
That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear;
Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate-tree:
Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

ROMEO/TYSON
It was the lark, the herald of the morn,
No nightingale: look, love, what envious streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east:
Night’s candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.
I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

GEORGE:
Miss G, Do you think they understand the concept of what their saying?

TRISHA:
Ask yourself the question, is anyone here in love or thinks they have been in love?
GEORGE:
I suppose I thought I was...I mean I don’t know

MORGAN:
Snickers.

MARIAH:
RESPECT!

TRISHA:
You love your families and friends, young minds think and feel freely and young love is naive but that is what makes it so wonderful. It’s exciting and different and you have never looked at another person the way you have looked at them. It’s honest feelings regardless of differences.

TYSON:
Reminiscing Miss Gatiss?

TRISHA:
I’m still young!

They laugh

JULIET/SIAN
Yon light is not day-light, I know it, I:
It is some meteor that the sun exhales,
To be to thee this night a torch-bearer,
And light thee on thy way to Mantua:
Therefore stay yet; thou need’st not to be gone.

ROMEO/TYSON
Let me be ta’en, let me be put to death;
I am content, so thou wilt have it so.
I’ll say yon grey is not the morning’s eye,
’Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia’s brow;
Nor that is not the lark, whose notes do beat
The vaulty heaven so high above our heads:
I have more care to stay than will to go:
Come, death, and welcome! Juliet wills it so.
How is’t, my soul? let’s talk; it is not day.
JULIET/SIAN
It is, it is: hie hence, be gone, away!
It is the lark that sings so out of tune,
Straining harsh discords and unpleasing sharps.
Some say the lark makes sweet division;
This doth not so, for she divideth us:
Some say the lark and loathed toad change eyes,
O, now I would they had changed voices too!
Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray,
Hunting thee hence with hunt's-up to the day,
O, now be gone; more light and light it grows.

ROMEO/TYSON
More light and light; more dark and dark our woes!

JULIET/SIAN
Then, window, let day in and let life out.

ROMEO/TYSON
Farewell, farewell. One kiss and I’ll descend.

TYSON:
That’s the last time he kisses her. He’s not telling her he loves her enough! He’s not holding her close, memorising her heartbeat. He will never hear it again; he will never smell her or feel warmth of her touch.

TRISHA:
Yes and we know that and we agonise over that. Because we know what they do not know.

GEORGE:
(In a gentle tone)
It’s alright...
SCENE SEVENTEEN - Homeless

Tyson is asleep on the scaffold with his bag and a blanket, it is clear he has been there all night. Gina walks past on her way back from the shop.

TYSON:

Gina please, I will do anything, anything that you want, just let me come home again.

Gina ignores him.

It so cold, I’m so hungry and I smell really bad.

GINA:

Throws a loaf of bread at him

Don’t just wallow in self-pity, only you can change what you have caused. You need to make a better life for yourself.

TYSON:

I am trying to find cash.

GINA:

I don’t mean steal Tyson, I mean earn real money, graduate, make a life for yourself. Drinking, smoking and fighting isn’t going to pay your wages.

TYSON:

I will, I promise. I’ll change, I’ll do anything for you, I will prove to my mum and to you that I am better than this, just you wait and see!
SCENE EIGHTEEN – Time to Change

Mariah and Tyson meet on the scaffold.

MARIAH:
Hey, I thought I might find you around here, where have you been?

TYSON:
Doesn’t really matter does it?

MARIAH:
Miss G has been asking after you, I think she’s worried, we haven’t seen you in a few weeks.

TYSON:
I know, times are hard, I need to prove to my aunt that I’m not worthless. I’ve got myself a job, I haven’t told her yet, I can’t wait to see the look on her face. I hope that I can come back to school this week, finish my exams and graduate. That would be perfect. She will be so proud of me!

MARIAH:
That’s great, I’ve bought you some homework! Miss G will be impressed if you finish it!

TYSON:
Thanks a lot, just what I always wanted!

.They laugh.

Seriously though, thank you for being there to talk to. The guys I used to hang around with, they don’t bother with me anymore, now I’m not into this gang culture. I guess they were never real friends.

MARIAH:
You’ve got all of us now.

TYSON:
Yeah, anyway, catch you later, I’m going to go and tell my aunt about my new job!

MARIAH:
Good luck!

Tyson runs off.

I never knew that one person could impact my life so much. When I think back to the time when I wanted to end it all, I was so close. Now here I am, so excited to graduate and see what difference I can make. I owe my life to Miss G!

Tyson runs home, he finds Gina dead in the bathtub.

TYSON:
Crying and holding Gina’s hand
No, no, God please no. This can’t have happened, please tell me it isn’t true. I told you I would change, why didn’t you listen to me? If only I had done this sooner, I knew I would ruin everything. You mean the world to me. You can’t leave me now it’s not time. I need you here to support me.

*Lights fade to the sound of Tyson’s cries.*
SCENE NINETEEN - Holocaust Memorial

The cast sit with the audience, projections and voice overs are used to portray the holocaust memorial.

TRISHA:

Okay everyone listen up, from this moment we are going to mark a new chapter in our lives. So this is what I want you to do, I want each one of you to come here and take one of these bags. In each of these bags there are four books, which we are going to read over the next semester. But before you take these books, I want you to take a glass of sparkling cider and make a toast, from this moment all the voices that told you, you couldn’t, disappears. Each of you, are all filled with pure greatness and you can achieve the impossible by your conviction and dedication, you’re all special so let’s toast to change! Who is up first?

MARIAH:

Thank you Miss G, you have given me strength. I trust you, and most of all I respect you! Here’s a toast to everyone, you guys, my friends and my family.

TYSON:

(Teasing)

You’re getting soft!

Everyone laughs.

MORGAN:

Okay so erm... I have always been the new kid, and for the last 5 years it’s been the same thing over and over again. New school. New kid. Same situation. Before I moved here, I was the kid that was always picked on, I sat alone most days, I used to eat my lunch in the toilets, people made fun of me because I didn’t have the latest clothes. Truth is, I don’t have much, my parents don’t have much money, we got evicted from our home, my dad was made redundant and my mom left us. She left me. I was walking home one day from school and I was jumped, I was beaten to a pulp, it was a constant thing, stealing my lunch, punching me till I couldn’t breathe, giving me wedgies. I started skipping school to avoid it, I became a disappointment to my dad, he said to me “no wonder your mom left us” Then I came here, I met you guys, miss G, you changed things, put things into a new perspective, erm I like you guys. I’m going to graduate from here and I’m going to further my studies in Law.

Mariah goes and hugs Luke, Sian is wiping a tear from her eye, Tyson goes up shakes his hand and hugs him.

TYSON:

Respect dude

SIAN:

Can I go next?

I’m adopted. I have never told anyone this, this is the first time I have even spoke about it, but I wanted you guys to know. I’m blessed to have such great loving parents who care and provide for
me, I don’t know why my biological parents didn’t want me, but I hope one day to find answers, to know who I follow after; my mom or my dad, whose nose do I have, or eyes, its silly stuff I really want to know, I have always felt like there is something missing and I hope one day to find answers. I feel I’m ready and brave enough now, I feel stronger. I’m writing a story too, I’m hoping one day to publish it, I would really like to be an author, thanks for inspiring me Miss G. Also if anyone would like to perhaps read it, that would be okay too? George?

GEORGE:

I have never really spoke about this pregnancy to anyone, when she told me, I froze, Paralyzed. I was petrified, afraid and utterly alone. How do you react? How are you meant to feel? I told her to get rid of it! I pushed her away! I didn’t know what to do, I was reckless, stupid, ashamed, I didn’t think of the consequences. It just happened and she blamed me. She was angry, so angry until she broke down crying in my arms with sheer panic over our mistake. I didn’t want to be a dad, how could I be, I’m in school, with no money. But I realised I can do it. I’m going to finish my exams, graduate, get a part time job and I would really like to be a professor in English.

SIAN:

I’m godmother!

Everyone laughs.

LEA:

I’m like you, Morgan, I found it hard fitting in. Being in and out of hospital all the time makes you feel separate from the world. People look at me differently with sympathy, afraid to talk to me, it’s like I’m contagious or something. It’s always made me feel different. But I have come to realise that I am different. I’m special in my own way and I’m okay with that. I always thought I couldn’t dream big, but I was wrong. I’m going to pass my exams, and pursue a career in dancing. I always wanted to be a dancer ever since I was a little girl, I was afraid I wasn’t good enough. But I can, I’m going to work twice as hard, and make it happen. I owe you miss G for giving me hope and making me believe that anything is possible. I have also received my letter from the hospital I’m getting my lung transplant!!!

TYSON:

Miss G, can I read something from my diary?

TRISHA:

Of course.

TYSON:

He was one of my best friends, we met on our first day of secondary school – Kennedy High, Long Beach. We were both 15 when he was murdered. In the evening we were hurrying to get home as soon as possible. We were just looking for as bus near Central State Park. We were attacked by a group of white boys. One of whom shouted ‘What, what nigger’. I can’t bear to go into the details. As we were running from the attack, he fell to the floor. I stopped on the pavement. I went back, I bent down and looked at him. He was lying by a bench. He was still breathing. He could not speak. I saw his blood running away. I ran across to the phone box and dialled 911, I asked for an ambulance. I left the phone hanging to run around the corner to see if the boys were coming back up the road. I saw a white couple. They just ignored me. They looked at me and sort of shimmied away. I was
pacing up and down, up and down. I was desperate for the ambulance. It was taking too long. I was frightened by the amount of blood he was losing. I saw his life fading away. I didn’t know what to do to help him. I was frightened I would do something wrong. The police came, they asked ‘How did it start? Did they chase you for nothing?’ I said, one of them shouted, ‘What, what nigger?’ I was asked if I had any weapons on me, they were treating me like they were suspicious of me, not like they wanted to help, if they had asked me of more details of the boys, descriptions or what they were wearing, I would have told them. They would have been more sensible questions, none of the uniformed officers were doing anything for him. They should have known what to do. They should have done something for him. They just stood there, doing nothing. The ambulance arrived. They carried him on a stretcher. His unopened ginger beer can fell from him onto the floor. I picked it up. I took it home and kept it in my room. Until one day it exploded. I am told I called the police ‘pigs’ and used the word ‘cunt’, but I did not, I did not use those words. I was driven to the police station, I now know that in their statements the police said, I broke a window in the front office. I didn’t. I wasn’t even in the front office. It just shows that they were treating me like a criminal and not like a victim. They kept saying, “are you sure they said ‘what, what nigger’”. I said, I am telling you the truth. A senior officer said ‘you mean you have done nothing wrong to provoke them in any way?’ I said, no we were just waiting for the bus. On the 8th of May, I went to protest against his murder and the way the police were handling it. Then in October, I was arrested and charged with offences rising out of the demonstration. They waited until the prosecution service had decided to drop the prosecution against the killers. It was devastating. It felt like the police and the prosecutors decided to get at me to ruin my reputation – and the chance of any future prosecution for the murderers. In December, the judge stopped the prosecution, claiming that it was an abuse of the process of the court. I think of my friend every day. I’m sad, confused and pissed about this system where racists, attack and go free but innocent victims like my friend and I are treated as criminals and at the outset ignored, when I pointed out where the killers had ran and yet they still refused to believe that it was a racist attack. I never knew my friend to fight no-one. He wasn’t street aware of the dangers of being in a racist area at night time. I shouted to run. He had ample time to run as the boys were on the other side of the road. He didn’t understand that the group of white boys were dangerous. I heard that the boys who stabbed him had a reputation of stabbing people and not getting done for it. I did not believe the extent of the Sergeant’s lies, until I heard on the news that the two men I had identified as his killers had been released as my evidence not good enough. I wanted to put down that the sergeant was a liar, but the officer refused. I recognised the attackers from the attack and not from any outside information.

Anne is on the scaffold, reading her diary.

ANNE:

12th June 1942

I hope I will be able to confide everything to you, as I have never been able to confide in anyone, and I hope you will be a great source of comfort and support. Writing in a diary is a really strange experience for someone like me, not only because I’ve never written anything before but also because it seems to me that later neither I nor anyone else will be interested in the musings of a thirteen year old school girl.
SCENE TWENTY – Change Happens

TYSON:

Aunt Gina, you did a lot for me, and there are many things I wish I could repay for you. I wanted to make them happen, but I guess I did too little too late, just as I always have, I ran out of time. Now I want to work so hard, I want to prove to my mum, my aunt and myself that I am not a waste of time and I will work to prove to you that I can be something.
SCENE TWENTY-ONE – Grief

Movement sequence of Lea being ran over.

Classroom bell rings and everyone slowly starts to enter the classroom taking their seats at the desks. Trisha is already sitting at her desk in silence. Morgan is on top of the scaffold, handcuffed to the bar.

MORGAN:

Leah... was brave, bold, courageous and kind hearted. She had Cystic Fibrosis but the world never stopped beneath her.

SIAN:

So, this is what we’re going to do all lesson, pretend like nothing has happened...just sit in here in silence doing all this textbook shit, what’s the point? Sitting in this fucking classroom... reading all your bullshit literature that’s meaningless and crap? Seriously like it’s going to make a difference.

MORGAN:

Her strength was like lightening, through all her suffering and pain she was strong.

TYSON:

Geez, what’s wrong with you this morning?

GEORGE:

She probably missed her period.

SIAN:

Will you just shut it!! You got us reading all this! Why! You don’t get it! You’re not one of us, you don’t know what it’s like, the stuff we see out there, her face, her body, lifeless... alone.

MORGAN:

She was quiet, timid, and shy, I imagined we would have been good friends one day. She was a daughter, sister, and somebody’s friend.

TRISHA:

Sian...?

TYSON:

You don’t look so good, you okay?

SIAN:

You can’t make someone want an education...I hate it! I HATE IT!

(pause)

Why her?

(Silence)

MORGAN:
I never really knew Leah, I guess now I never will. Did you ever wonder what it would be like if you weren’t you anymore? If you were suddenly gone, how would your world react?

TRISHA:

You all asked what the point was to all this, school, education, literature, life and I said there was no point... but to become and educated human being, better citizens, someone who can make a difference in the world, but I was wrong... it’s not true. What I should have said was, “I don’t know”. Because truth is, not long ago, I sat where you are and thought exactly the same things. When something this devastating, evil and unexplainable happens, like losing someone forever... there are no words. I still wonder just like all of you. Close your text books take out a piece of paper and pen...

GEORGE:

Why?

TRISHA:

When archaeologists discover lost civilizations they unearth worlds that have long been destroyed since then. You know what they discover most often? Secrets, Stories, ancient languages, words, inscriptions from people who have been gone for thousands of years, because chances are, they like you, they wanted to know, “what’s the point?” they wanted us to know that they were here, they told their stories, lives, worlds, and their tragedies...these stories and facts that were told have become part of our history... from Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Misip Giles, Anne Frank... So that’s what we’re going to do for Leah, if you knew her write your favourite memory...if you didn’t know her, write what you think the whole point to all of this it, for yourself, life, and your time here. This is a literature class and this is what writers do, we put pen to paper in times of devastating tragedy and try to make sense of it, maybe we find clarity in some of those words. Maybe we will find peace.

MORGAN:

Whatever you imagined was wrong. There’s nothing romantic about death. Grief is like the ocean; it’s deep and dark and bigger than all of us. And pain is like a thief in the night; Quiet, tenacious, unfair, diminished by time and love.

MARIAH:

Why should we even care, that’s it, she’s dead, she’s gone she isn’t coming back.

TRISHA:

This is bullshit, you know what, life is a bitch! When you first met me you all hated each other and haven’t you realised hating accomplishes nothing! That anger and hate we have to channel so we can move on, even in these devastating times, we don’t give up. Cherish these moments even though our hearts are breaking, we have to be brave, and strong because we never stop loving them. Today we remember the ones we love and we hold them close. You once asked me why I cared. Why I wanted to teach? And why you thought I could make a difference? Well here it is... when you first met me the only thing you guys had in common was the fact that you hated me, I was just some white English teacher who couldn’t understand your situations, the difficulties you faced in life, on the streets or at home. But your wrong, this happens all over the world, not just here. You were all wrong because each and everyone one of you blamed each other for your life be so hard. Now we are to take that pain and use it to make a difference... because hating each other, killing...
each other, fighting, gets you nowhere in life. When you die, that’s it, you’re going to rot in the
ground and no one will care because all they will remember is what you left behind.

MORGAN:
I didn’t know Lea, but I’m jealous of her because I know her absence has affected so many people,
and she will be loved by everyone.

TYSON:
Respect!

GEORGE:
Respect

SIAN:
Respect

MARIAH:
Respect

MORGAN:
But me, no one’s cares, just a poor uncoordinated kid, a new kid, nobody, a lost soul. People say Lea,
was fluid, graceful, inspiring. Fly high Leah.

Trisha walks over to Leah’s desk, places her hand on the desk. Pauses.

TRISHA:
(Muttering under her breath…) For Lea. Anyone got a pen?

Tyson hands Miss G his pen.

Trisha writes on the table ‘He who does not weep does not see.’

GEORGE:
Miss what are you doing?

SIAN and TRISHA:
He who does not weep, does not see.

MARIAH:
Where’s that from?

TYSON:
Les Miserables.

GEORGE:
You used your library card?

TYSON:
Nahh.

TRISHA:

Who’s next...?

*Everyone gets up and goes to Leah’s desk... to write a tribute memory about Leah.*

It’s okay to feel angry, devastated, it’s okay to feel pain. It’s even ok to hate this situation but when that anger, pain and hatred gets too much for you, you come see me. You understand. You are my family, and we are going to get through this together. I want us to take a minute silence- and remember Lea, and all the love ones you have lost in your life.

TYSON:

Miss G, our journals can we publish them...

MARIAH:

We can fight this y’know, like the freedom riders...

GEORGE:

Let’s share our stories, like Anne Frank... *(Pause)* dedicate it to our friend lea.

TRISHA:

That’s a wonderful idea. You know, I didn’t want to be sentimental, but I can’t believe how far class 203 have come! You have all really amazed me and I can’t wait for you all to graduate. The transformations you have made are just brilliant.

GEORGE:

This is all because of you, we wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for you. I finally believe in myself, I believe I can be anything I want too, and nothing will stop me!

TRISHA:

That wasn’t down to me, you guys changed that, I just gave you a little push in the right direction!

SIAN:

*Very obviously nervous and shaking.*

Actually, there is something I feel I should share with you all. Sometimes you have to make a decision, you have two choices and you’re not sure which one is right. So you do what’s best for you, stick to what you know because that seems easier. You’re worried of getting caught otherwise. It doesn’t matter what is actually the truth, it doesn’t matter than I have the ability to ruin someone’s life forever. All that matters is that I am ok, that I look after my own. Well maybe this isn’t the case and maybe it is time for everyone to hear the truth.

TRISHA:

Are you ok? Would you like to take a minute?

SIAN:

*Realising what she is saying*
Urm... no I’m fine, I was just going to say something stupid...

_**Sian runs out of the classroom, Tyson shakes his head disapprovingly.**_

**TYSON:**

_Calling after her_

Sian, don’t run off, you have to do what is right!!

_He shakes his head disapprovingly_

_The school bell rings_

_**Sian walks back into the classroom to see Trisha**_

**TRISHA:**

Are you ok? You know you don’t have to tell me anything, but I am here to help.

**SIAN:**

I just want to do the right thing for once in my life. The truth is, I saw what happened that night Lea was killed. I watched as her body was squashed into the ground. She was killed instantly. I couldn’t move to help her, I just stared in shock. I know who was in that car and I know who was driving.

_Sian is in uncontrollable tears._

**TRISHA:**

I know Sian, it must have been hard for you to witness but it was an accident, Morgan didn’t…

_Sian cuts her off_

**SIAN:**

No, Morgan didn’t do it. I watched him step out of the passenger seat, and swap with Daniel, they exchanged a few stern words before Morgan bowed his head in shame and stood next to the driver’s door. The police came, arrested him and didn’t think twice. Daniel is white, Morgan is black, they didn’t need to even ask him any questions, they just took him away. They just assumed it was him. Now he’s paying the price for a crime he didn’t even commit.

I wish I was stronger, I wish I could have shouted that it wasn’t him. I knew if I did that I would be shunned in my neighbourhood for sticking up for a black man. No-one there cares about what is right, they care about ‘looking right’.

**TRISHA:**

Sian if everything you are saying is true, you have to do the right thing. Your family and friends will forgive you, but you are ruining an innocent boy’s life by keeping him in there. He will have no future, he won’t graduate or ever have a good job. This was his time to change for the better, and now he may never walk free again, if you don’t admit to what you witnessed!

**SIAN:**

Thanks Miss G.

_Sian runs off_
ANNE: The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quite alone with the heavens nature and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be and that God wishes to see people happy, amidst the simple beauty of nature. As long as this exists and it certainly always will, I know that there will always be a comfort for every sorrow, whatever the circumstances may be. And I firmly believe that nature brings solace in all troubles.

SCENE TWENTY-TWO - Graduation

*Photos being taken at their graduation, final image of them throwing their hats in the air.*

*Blackout.*