

BLOW

Written by

Jack Silver & Libby Welsh

## **CHARACTERS**

FoH / Natalie - Someone dressed like Front of House Venue staff.

Jo - A gangster's girlfriend. White.  
Actor Jo (Sofia) - An actor

Rachel - The one with scrappy street smarts. White.  
Actor Rachel (Lizzie) - An actor. Actor Jon's ex.

Hannah - The deaf one. White.  
Actor Hannah (Libby) - A non-deaf actor who has taken on a deaf role.

Note: The actor playing Hannah can be d/Deaf, hard of hearing, or non-deaf. However the character of Actor Hannah should be played as a non-deaf actor taking on a deaf role.

Tina - The offensive racial stereotype. East Asian.  
Actor Tina (Kirsten) - An east Asian actor

Bradley - The journeyman. White.  
Actor Bradley (Charlie) - An actor

Jon - The sleazy boxing promoter. White.  
Actor Jon (Henry) - An actor, writer, and director who is convinced of his own brilliance. Actor Rachel's ex.

Dancer - A dancer. White.  
Eva - an actor playing a dancer.

Director / Sally - A theatre director and writer. White.

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## **Trigger Warning:**

The script deliberately uses ableist language in the first section of the play, as well as sexist, ableist, and racist stereotypes and behaviour. This is deliberate, but the actor should be aware of this before reading the script.

## **Notes:**

The first section of the play deliberately uses various offensive disability tropes in the way that popular fiction does at the time of writing. While the audience should be offended, at the time of writing many, if not most of them, will not be and will hardly notice.

The second - semi-immersive - section of the play (from when Actor Rachel breaks character) should feel entirely real to the audience. They should think that this is an actor breaking character as she's witnessed an unacceptable event on stage. The director, interpreter, tech desk, event organiser etc should react as though these were real and unexpected events, as a subliminal signifier to any audience members who know them and look to them for clues.

The song is intended to clarify that the second section was actually planned, and to unashamedly ram home the issues we are trying to highlight. It should use mid-late 20th Century musical theatre choreography and language, and play on problematic musicals (Kiss me Kate) etc.

It is important there is a subtle but perceptible difference in the acting between scenes the audience thinks are acted and ones they think are real.

The "real" scenes should be hyper-realistic, compared to the "play" scenes which should feel like really high quality acting, but with an air of artifice. The intention is that audience doesn't realize this is acting - they should think the play has stopped and the actors are having a real argument.

<Name> in the dialogue indicates that the actors should use the actor's real name.

**Personal note:**

We hope this play dates badly and that future audiences will be so offended by the first section that they can only stomach it as a historical curiosity of how unprogressive our current view of disability is, and that future generations will look on the references in this play (Me Before You, Shape of Water, Ghost in the Shell etc) with the same disgust that a liberal audience would look at Birth of a Nation today.

## SCENE 0 - SETUP

This dialogue can be improvised, but it's important that the audience believes that one of the actors wrote the play.

FOH

Thanks for coming to Blow, which was actually written by one of the actors, Henry, who's playing Jon. Before we start just letting you know this performance will be interpreted in British Sign Language for deaf people. So, if I could ask everyone who needs to see the interpreter to sit in this area.

(Points to stage left)

Enjoy.

## SCENE 1 - THE FINAL

Lights down.

JUMP by VAN HALEN plays in the dark.

After a moment Jon reads out the announcement over a tannoy, off stage. He's a sleazy, east London boxing promoter with a voice like a chain smoking 70s snooker presenter.

JON

(Stretching out the words)

Laaaadies and Gentlemeen.

Lights up. They are circling spotlights. Pinks, Cyans, Yellows. Moving around the room.

Gooooo evening and welcome to tonight's bout for the inaugural LWF ladies bantomweight world championship.

Jo enters.

The lights SNAP TO PINK.

She's wearing pink glittery make up. 80s hair. Boxing gear. Short shiny shorts. Boxing gloves. She stands, head down, menacing.

JON (CONT'D)

In the pink corner. Jo "Juicy" Johnson!

RAPTUROUS APPLAUSE.

Rachel enters.

The lights SNAP TO CYAN.

She stands opposite. Light Blue accents to her outfit. Blue makeup. 80s hair. Eyeballing Jo. Her head weaves left to right like a snake eying its prey.

JON (CONT'D)  
In the Baby Blue Corner. "Crazy"  
Rachel McFarlane!

LOUDER APPLAUSE.

DING DING.

A CROWD OF PUNTERS rush in and form a ring. CHEERING.

Jo and Rachel circle around each other, ready to box. Rachel makes the first move. A jab. A jab. Right hook - it connects. Jo is on the defensive.

Rachel swings wildly, but Jo steps back. Jo launches a counter attack. Jab. Jab. Right. Left. Right. Uppercut.

SCENE 2 - FIRST MONOLOGUE

LIGHT CHANGE.

The Punters freeze. Jo is standing on stage. Rachel falls to the ground in slow motion.

Jon is standing on stage. They both move in slow motion while Jo speaks in real time, taking her gloves off.

JO  
This was 1981. That song? The Van Halen one? It wasn't actually out till 1984. But this is a memory play and my memory's fucked so we can get away with a few continuity errors. This guy? My man. Jon Dennison. Sleaziest guy in East London. Which is going some. He runs us. This. The Ladies Boxing Federation. But we'll get to that. Let's rewind a bit.

## SCENE 3 - THE GYM

Rachel is on the floor doing press ups with her gloves on.  
She speaks with a strong Essex accent.

Jo is doing pad work with Tina.

RACHEL  
Sixty seven.

JON  
(To Jo)  
So?

RACHEL  
Sixty eight. Sixty-

Rachel and Jon pause.

JO  
This is Rachel McFarlane. Essex  
girl. We call her "Crazy" cause she  
once put a boyfriend in wheelchair  
for six months just for forgetting  
to feed her goldfish. She's fucked  
in the head. In case that wasn't  
obvious. This is Tina. Japanese.  
This. Here.

(Indicating the building)  
This is Dennison's. Our gym. Jon's  
dad was in with the Richardson Gang  
in the 60s. This place was a front  
for. Well all sorts. I'm Jo by the  
way.

RACHEL  
-nine. Seventy.

Rachel gets up and starts taking off her gloves. Jo goes back  
to the pad work with Tina.

JON  
You listening?

JO  
To what?

JON  
Fuck's sake. Are you dumb as well  
as deaf? Six weeks. Can you be  
ready?

Hannah walks in. Trainers. Track suit. Hands in her pockets.  
Looking around tentatively.

JO  
I'm ready now. But aren't the  
British Boxing Board of Control  
going to kick off?

JON  
Leave them to me.

#### SCENE 4 - SECOND MONOLOGUE

JO  
Dennison was going to market  
women's boxing matches as  
wrestling. This was over fifteen  
years before women's boxing was  
legalized but he'd found a  
loophole. He might have been a  
dodgy bastard. But he was also a  
mad fucking genius.

Bradley, a journeyman boxing trainer, comes on carrying  
flyers for BLOW. He hands bunches to Rachel, Jon, and Tina.  
They start handing them out to the front few rows of the  
theatre.

ALL  
Beautiful Ladies of Wrestling! The  
sexiest underground boxing match  
you've ever seen.

They shout different slogans at the crowd and throw out  
brightly-coloured leaflets.

#### SCENE 5 - THE DEAF DESTROYER

JO  
And I was his star.

Jo returns to training. VAN HALEN plays in the background at  
a lower lever, as though being piped in over a tinny boom  
box.

Hannah picks up a pair of gloves and looks at them.  
Intrigued. The rest of the gym continues training.

BRADLEY  
You OK, love?

She doesn't register him.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)

Love?

Again, nothing. Rachel and Tina are getting quite close to her doing pad work.

He goes over and waves his hand in front of her face, concentrating on Rachel and Tina.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)

Might want to stand back a bit.

She looks at him. She pulls out a flyer. She points to it.

Rachel steps backwards and into the back of Hannah.

RACHEL

Watch yourself.

BRADLEY

You deaf, love? I said move!

She cowers slightly and makes an apologetic gesture towards Bradley and Rachel. She looks at him and nods. She signs towards her ears, indicating she is deaf, and nods again.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)

Oh fuck. You are.

She pulls a marker out of her pocket, kneels on the floor, writes **Hannah** in large letters on the back of the flyer, and holds it up to Bradley.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)

Hannah?

She nods.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)

And you're deaf?

She nods.

A beat.

JO

(to Bradley)

Is she safe to be in here?

RACHEL

Yeah, it ain't right.

BRADLEY

What ain't right?



RACHEL

Having.

(Lower)

You know.

(Whispering)

A cripple. Boxing.

JO

Why are you whispering she can't hear you?

BRADLEY

Are you saying you-

Realises his mistake. He mimes boxing. Points to her. Then shrugs.

She nods.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)

(Shaking his head)

Sorry love. You can't.

She looks at him.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)

(Apologetically)

You need to go.

He points to the door.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)

(Slightly raised and slower voice)

You. Go.

She shakes her head.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)

Ok.

Reluctantly, Bradley goes to lead her out. Placing his hand on her shoulder.

She plants her feet and crosses her arms.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)

Fine.

He shakes his head and walks away.

She pushes past him and grabs his hand.

She holds it up, in a pad work position.

She lets go and he drops his hand.

She grabs it again. Points to her eyes. Slaps his elbow.  
Instructing him to stay there.

She grabs some gloves. Punches his hand. It's bad technique,  
flailing.

She tries again. It's all over the place.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)

You can't-

He indicates for her to punch him slowly. She does it. He  
slowly defends himself, then launches a punch into her ear.

He shakes his head.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)

See. You can't do that you've got  
to-

He puts up his arms in a defensive cage.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)

You've got to protect yourself.  
Protect your ears.

RACHEL

Is he for fuckin' real?

He guides her into the position and does a few slow punches.

BRADLEY

See? See?

RACHEL

(Mumbling)

Fuck's sake.

She storms off.

Jon, who has been sitting on the steps watching, calls out.

JON

I see.

He jumps up.

JON (CONT'D)

I fucking see. This girl. This  
girlie right here. She's going to  
make me a lot of money. What's your  
name love?

BRADLEY  
She's called Hannah.

JON  
We'll call her... the Deaf  
Destroyer.

JO  
You sure this is a good idea Jon?

JON  
She might be deaf but I'd have to  
be dumb and fucking retarded to  
miss a business opportunity like  
this.

SCENE 6 - HANNAH TRAINS

JO  
And with that, Dennison had a new  
star. And she was a natural.

Bradley starts training Hannah, who is sparring with Rachel.

As Hannah trains Jo looks over the situation as though  
remembering it.

JO (CONT'D)  
She learned the moves in record  
time and she taught Bradley sign  
language to speed up the coaching.

BRADLEY  
(Signing and shouting)  
One.

She jabs.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)  
(Signing and shouting)  
One two.

A one two.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)  
(Signing and shouting)  
One.

One two. Good.

They reverse.

BRADLEY (CONT'D)  
(Signing and shouting)  
One.

One two.

One.

JON  
(talking to Bradley but  
eying up Hannah)  
How's my girl getting on?

Jo reacts.

BRADLEY  
One. Two.

Gimme twenty mountain climbers.  
She's doing good, boss.

JON  
Reckon she'll be ready next week?

JO  
Thought I was your girl?

BRADLEY  
She'll get there.

JON  
Oh you are babes. You are.

JON (CONT'D)  
(To Bradley)  
Make sure she does.

Hannah has a bout with Rachel.

JO  
It had the added benefit that  
Bradley could throw in advice from  
the sidelines.

Hannah and Rachel spar, with Bradley signing to Hannah. After  
a while Jo and Tina start sparring too.

Both pairs bump fists, and Jo and Rachel turn to fight each  
other.

It turns into a full fight.

Jo punches Rachel and spins round-

JO (CONT'D)

The first card was a sell out hit.  
Business was booming. BLOW was the  
talk of the town. We were having  
was the time of our lives.

A beat.

JO (CONT'D)

But then, disaster struck.

SCENE 7 - THE LETTER

Jon picks up a flyer from the floor.

He opens it, it's an envelope.

Jo and Rachel train.

Inside is a letter.

He throws it at Jo.

JO

Dear Mr. Dennison .. we regret to  
inform you .. decision to field a  
disabled boxer .. subsection 50 ..  
moral and physical danger ..  
henceforth withdraw your licence?!  
Are they for real?!

JON

Fuck!

He punches the side.

JO

Babe.

JON

(Full volume)

Fuck!

JO

Babe it'll be alright.

JON

Where's that little fucking  
cripple?

Jon storms off.

JO

Jon!

BRADLEY

Boss, it's not her fault-

JON

Don't.

He storms offstage.

A scream and a slap from offstage.

Jon pulls Hannah in by her hair.

JO

Babe, calm down we'll-

RACHEL

Bradley do something.

BRADLEY

Boss please you can't-

JON

Don't.

He drops Hannah and turns on Bradley.

JON (CONT'D)

I will cut you.

BRADLEY

Boss please.

JON

Who the fuck are you?

BRADLEY

-

JON

You deaf too? I said who the fuck  
are you?

BRADLEY

Nobody boss.

JON

That's right. Nobody. You ever  
fucking forget that I will cut your  
fucking nostrils off you like that  
fat pig of a cousin of yours.

(MORE)

JON (CONT'D)

You wanna look like Paul? Piggy  
Paul with his piggy little fucking  
nose.

Spits on the floor. Turns back to Hannah.

JON (CONT'D)

That dirty little fucking cripple  
has cost me a lot of money. And now  
she needs to pay. How you going to  
fucking pay me?

JO

Jon please.

JON

Up.

She gets up.

JON (CONT'D)

Take your fucking top off.

She looks to Bradley.

JO

Jon!

JON

He ain't gonna fucking help you.  
Take your fucking top off.

JO

(Quick and quiet, standing  
between them)  
Please. Please, please, please,  
please.

She grabs his face, trying to get him to look into her eyes.  
His eyes remain locked on Hannah.

JON

(To Hannah)

Off.

JO

Look at me. Babes. Look at me. Look  
at all this. Why would you want  
Babycham when you can have  
champagne. Why would you want  
silence when you can have music?

He settles. He starts kissing her neck. He rubs her sides  
pulls her thigh up.

A beat. Actor Rachel (Lizzie) notices the kiss has gone on too long.

RACHEL  
(Nervously)  
Jon. Jon what are you doing?

He ignores her and carries on.

ACTOR RACHEL  
(Quietly and breaking  
character)  
Henry.

He carries on. She goes over to him and pushes Jo away from him.

ACTOR RACHEL (CONT'D)  
(To him, out of character  
and quietly)  
Henry, what the fuck?

JON  
(Over pronouncing)  
Jon.

ACTOR RACHEL  
This isn't in the script.

He sighs. And gives her a "What the fuck are you doing?" look, looking to Jo for help.

JON  
(Losing accent a bit for  
the first word)  
You're-  
(Struggling to think of  
what to say)  
-damn right babes. It wasn't in the  
script for the BBBC to send us this  
letter.

She looks at him, disgusted.

ACTOR RACHEL  
You utter prick.

She goes to leave. He looks towards Jo, lost.

ACTOR RACHEL (CONT'D)  
This. Here. That. Kiss. Touching.  
That wasn't in the script.

Jon stays there for a second. Lost.



ACTOR JON  
(Quietly to her)  
We rehearsed it, sweetie. There's a  
fucking audience.

ACTOR RACHEL  
You didn't rehearse touching her  
arse.

ACTOR JON  
I didn't.  
(To Jo)  
I literally didn't.

Tina looks down to the floor. Mortified.

ACTOR RACHEL  
This is such bullshit. I'm fucking.  
I'm done.

She storms off.

ACTOR JON  
Uhm. Um.

He looks to Jo for help.

She looks back. Lost.

JO  
(In monologue voice -  
rejoining the script  
later)  
They didn't call her "Crazy"  
Rachel McFarlane for nothing. This  
was the lowest point for Jon.  
Rachel was the girl who'd been  
training in his gym the longest and  
now she'd turned Judas. But nobody  
keeps my man down.

Jon and Jo are crouching over a seat, sorting through  
letters.

JO (CONT'D)  
Bradley, pass me the November  
files.

Bradley brings over a cardboard box of paperwork.

JO (CONT'D)  
Ta.  
(To Jon)  
When's this lawyer getting here.

JON

She should be here any minute.

Tina brings over a cup of tea and hands it to Jo. Jo takes it without acknowledging her. Tina sits back down.

JON (CONT'D)

This. Look at this. This proves she's wrong. How can she claim Hannah's the one getting injured.

Rachel storms back in shouting as she goes.

ACTOR RACHEL

Actually you know what? I'm not done. Not by a long shot. This? Here?

(She indicates the theatre)

This is bullshit. What you're doing is fucking offensive.

ACTOR JON

Lizzie, what the hell are you doing-  
(Mouthing to Jo)

I'm so sorry.

(Sheepishly)

Everyone, I'm so sorry.

ACTOR RACHEL

What are you sorry for?

ACTOR JON

The show? You ruining it?

ACTOR RACHEL

Me? Oh not for your fucking offensive two dimensional writing.

ACTOR JON

What?

ACTOR RACHEL

Did you know he wrote this shit?

ACTOR JON

(Snappy with her)

It's not shit.

ACTOR RACHEL

(Attacking)

It's offensive. You're mocking disabled people.

ACTOR JON

What? No you're missing the point,  
the characters are- they're-

ACTOR RACHEL

They're?

ACTOR TINA

Guys, maybe we should-

ACTOR JON

(Flustered)

The play is exposing the brutality  
of the Thatcher government to the  
disabled. It's a metaphor for the  
current Tory government. It's not  
mocking them. It's-

ACTOR TINA

Guys, really-

ACTOR RACHEL

(Fast)

Crazy. Cripple. Deaf. Dumb. Retard.

ACTOR JON

(Mansplaining slowly)

It's the East End. It's for  
authenticity. It's how they talk.

ACTOR RACHEL

How the fuck would you know? You're  
from Kent. You went to private  
school. Authenticity? She's-

(Pointing at Actor Hannah)

-not deaf.

ACTOR JON

And you're not from Essex. It's  
called acting.

ACTOR RACHEL

She can literally talk.

ACTOR JON

Don't pick on her.

ACTOR HANNAH

I'm just. I haven't had a part in  
six months.

ACTOR RACHEL

Would you black up?

ACTOR HANNAH

What?

ACTOR RACHEL

If somebody offered you a part  
playing a black woman would you  
black up?

ACTOR HANNAH

Obviously not.

ACTOR RACHEL

How's this different?

ACTOR HANNAH

It just. I don't know. I don't know  
ok?

ACTOR JON

Look, there's probably not that  
many deaf actors.

ACTOR RACHEL

Maybe because pricks like you keep  
on giving parts to able-bodied  
actors.

ACTOR JON

Look even if we could find the one  
deaf actor are they going to be any  
good? Acting takes skill and it  
takes practice. You know this. And  
there's, other stuff.

ACTOR RACHEL

Like?

ACTOR JON

Like we'd need to make sure they  
were safe in a rehearsal room.  
They're disabled, stuff can go  
wrong.

ACTOR RACHEL

Safe? Safe? Oh my God. You know  
you're LITERALLY quoting lines from  
your own, frankly shit, play now?

ACTOR JON

It's not shit.

ACTOR RACHEL

It is. It's basically a monologue for her with a bunch of clunky exposition and some pretty girls boxing round the edges. Which you obviously wrote cause, what? She's better than me? You fancy her?

ACTOR JON

It's not shit.

Exasperated laugh. Rachel gives a slow clap.

ACTOR RACHEL

My ex-boyfriend ladies and gentlemen. What the fuck was I thinking?

She eyeballs him.

ACTOR RACHEL (CONT'D)

And while we're at it. You've written this play about a deaf girl cause you're soooo "woke" and you've taken away her voice. She's a bit part in her own play. It's not about her. It's about the hot blonde. Oh and nice touch giving the Asian girl a role where she's simultaneously silent and a fighter. Really breaking stereotypes there.

ACTOR TINA

Guys, really is this the place to-

FOH

Yeah, guys, seriously.

ACTOR RACHEL

I'm just surprised you didn't cast Scarlett Johansen. Or is she not your type?

FoH stands up.

FOH

Guys, this is getting-

ACTOR RACHEL

It's getting ridiculous. I know. I know. It's just that.

FOH  
 It's just that-  
 (Breaking into song)  
 -it's time for a song.

ACTOR TINA  
 A what?

JO  
 (Singing)  
 A song about representa-shon.

ACTOR TINA  
 (Spoken)  
 What?

The female cast members join in with Jo from "We're sorry"

JO  
 (Singing)  
 Oh, We're sorry for fucking around  
 with you.

The male cast members join in with Jo.

CHORUS (EXCEPT TINA)  
 (Singing)  
 But we felt it's something we had  
 to do.  
 It's easy to miss,  
 but ableism is serious.

The girls unzip their hoodies, revealing t-shirts saying  
 "Ableism is Serious"

CHORUS (EXCEPT TINA) (CONT'D)  
 The language you use,  
 affects people's views.  
 So if you're not lazy,  
 avoid saying crazy.  
 And maybe retarded,  
 should soon be discarded.

ACTOR TINA  
 (Spoken)  
 Guys?

CHORUS (EXCEPT TINA)  
 (Singing)  
 Try not saying dumb, lame, or  
 crippling poverty.  
 Cause when you do that it says:

ACTOR JON  
 (Singing, bass and back in  
 character)  
 "You're not as good as me".

ACTOR TINA  
 (Spoken)  
 Guys, I'm still being left out.

CHORUS (EXCEPT TINA)  
 (Singing)  
 And though we love Natalie Dormer.  
 And that bloke from the Hunger  
 Games.  
 And him off of Gavin and Stacey.  
 Who's been cast in Rain Man on  
 stage.  
 And we're fans of Scarlett  
 Johansen.

ACTOR TINA  
 (Spoken)  
 She's literally never played a  
 disabled part.

CHORUS (EXCEPT TINA)  
 (Singing)  
 And we don't hate Eddie Redmayne.

ACTOR TINA  
 (Spoken)  
 Ghost in the Shell? Anyone?

CHORUS (EXCEPT TINA)  
 (Singing)  
 They all have this one thing in  
 common.  
 Though we're not trying to a-por-  
 shon blame.

ACTOR TINA  
 (Spoken)  
 You're just embarrassing yourselves  
 now.

CHORUS (EXCEPT TINA)  
 (Quiet)  
 And while we're on the touchy.  
 Subject of blame.  
 Henry's agent has asked.  
 That we make it clear.  
 That he didn't write this.  
 (Pause)  
 So now that is clear.

ACTOR TINA

(Spoken)

Guys, I think we should maybe just head out to the...?

CHORUS (EXCEPT TINA)

(Singing)

So basically our point was about disability.

ACTOR TINA

(Spoken)

Guys, we get it.

CHORUS (EXCEPT TINA)

But we haven't even covered.

Our own industry.

The lack of physical access in theatres.

Is shocking to me.

TINA

(Singing impressively)

I think they get the point, guys.

We didn't need a song.

CHORUS (EXCEPT TINA)

(Rapid, semi-spoken)

But what about disability as a lazy trope to portray the evil nature of the antagonist in dramatic writing, for example in Richard the Third or a lot of comic book movies.

Particularly DC.

TINA

(Singing)

The play's already twenty minutes long.

JO

(Singing)

Twenty minutes long.

CHORUS

(Singing)

Let's end this song.

Let's end this song.

It's already going on and on and on and oooooon.

TINA

(Belting)

Let's end this soooooooooooooong.



ACTOR JON

Do you think they got that ending  
the song is a metaphor?

ACTOR TINA

They got it, Henry.

Lights and music crash down as one.

Beat for applause.

#### SCENE 8 - NOTES

THE DIRECTOR has been sitting in the front row of the audience. She leans over her shoulder to shout at the tech desk.

DIRECTOR

Can I get lights up please?!

Lights up. She pulls out a Moleskine notepad and heads to a chair on the stage.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Great job guys. Right, I'm going to  
fire through the notes and then  
we'll jump straight into the puppet  
scene.

(Shouting to the tech  
desk)

<TECH DESK NAME>! You can take ten-

While she's talking the actors start to pull out chairs,  
drink water, and stretch.

ACTOR BRADLEY

Can I quickly take a piss?

DIRECTOR

-I need to look at the lighting  
cues for scene one in a bit, but we  
can do that once these guys are  
wrapped.

Tech desk gives a thumbs up.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Can it wait five minutes? Lizzie's  
got to go at eight thirty, so we've  
got a lot to get through.

ACTOR BRADLEY

I mean .. sure, I guess.

The Director flicks through her Moleskine, which is marked with scribbled notes reflecting what she's saying.

DIRECTOR

Good job. We got through it, which is, um, good. So, first thing, when Jo starts her monologues you need to freeze. Right now, it's a bit-

She pushes her hand forward, pushing the arm forward and slowing her fingers one by one -- washy.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

It needs to be more-

She pushes her arm and hand forward in a quick movement and snaps them still.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Snappy.

They nod.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Tina, don't react to Sofia's Chinese line.

ACTOR TINA

Japanese?

DIRECTOR

Yeah, it's run of the mill for you. Charlie, don't pre-empt Hannah's collision. That bit's all a bit messy at the moment.

ACTOR BRADLEY

Yeah, sorry I-

DIRECTOR

Don't look at her either. Your focus is on the girls' boxing. She's in the way, she gets hit, then you ask if she's deaf. Don't turn to her until that point.

ACTOR BRADLEY

Right.

DIRECTOR

And don't work out she actually is deaf too quickly. It's the first bit of ableist language, so it's really important that bit lands.

ACTOR JO  
What about "Crazy" Rachel  
McFarlane?

DIRECTOR  
Second bit, then. The point is the  
audience is as mortified as he'd be  
about the faux pas, but they're  
overlooking the cheap joke at the  
deaf girl's expense because it's  
part of a trope and it's funny. Got  
it?

ACTOR BRADLEY  
Okay. If I knew what a trope was.

DIRECTOR  
Libby, can we get a bit more sign  
language in there please?

She flaps her hands, making faux sign language.

ACTOR HANNAH  
Okay. What kind of thing?

DIRECTOR  
Maybe, like, "I'm sorry", when you  
get bumped, or like, maybe  
something when Jon's shouting at  
you. Tell him to fuck off or  
something.

ACTOR HANNAH  
OK. I'll need to look it up on my  
app.

She pulls out her phone and starts looking up BSL and  
practicing it.

DIRECTOR  
We need to signpost the deaf thing  
for the audience more.

She looks through her notes.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)  
Henry, nastier please.

ACTOR JON  
On which bit?

DIRECTOR  
Across the board.

ACTOR JON  
Right. It's just-

DIRECTOR  
Just?

ACTOR JON  
It's just at the moment I'm a  
little worried he is... could be...  
a bit two dimensional.

DIRECTOR  
He's a Guy Ritchie character. He's  
written to be two dimensional.

ACTOR JON  
I'm just- Look I know it's the  
point of him, but I've got to say  
it's just really horrible being  
that.. nasty.. I just think if he  
was more sympathetic, then-

DIRECTOR  
(Cutting him off)  
Sure, but it's important that the  
acting in the first section isn't  
too naturalistic, so that when we  
move on to the immersive section it  
feels real to the audience. It's  
meant to be good acting, but when  
Lizzie storms in they need to think  
that's real.

ACTOR JON  
(Unconvinced)  
Ok.

DIRECTOR  
Lizzie, don't come on quite so  
quickly after you storm off, give  
the audience a chance to settle  
back into the play.

ACTOR RACHEL  
When do you want me on?

DIRECTOR  
Umm .. can we try it so you wait  
until .. let's say just before they  
reveal the contents of the November  
files. Also, it's Yo-hansen. Not  
Joe-hansen.

ACTOR RACHEL  
Sorry, sorry. I know.

DIRECTOR  
Ok well if you know, could you say  
it that way then, please?

FOH  
Maybe think of it like yo-yo.

DIRECTOR  
What next?  
(Looking at her notes,  
mumbling)  
Covered that. Volume. Pace.  
(Back in the room)  
Right, yes, the song. Ok, so the  
dance is looking pretty good.  
Charlie, just make sure you keep  
the back line balanced - I know  
you're tall so maybe take smaller  
steps to keep the shape. But it's  
starting to look nice. Henry, you  
need to stay oblivious until "It's  
easy to miss, but ableism is  
serious."

ACTOR JON  
Right.

DIRECTOR  
You guys are the stand in for the  
audience at that point. You're  
confused about what's going on  
because they're confused.

ACTOR JO  
Okay.

ACTOR JON  
Do you think they will be, though?

DIRECTOR  
Will be what?

ACTOR JON  
Confused.

DIRECTOR  
Yes, I do.

ACTOR JON  
I'm just not convinced the audience  
won't get it.

DIRECTOR  
(Frustrated)  
Get what?

ACTOR JON  
That the play is offensive. If it was Hollyoaks viewers or whatever - I maybe wouldn't expect them to. But it's a London theatre audience. They're Guardian readers, not Trump supporters.

ACTOR TINA  
(Mutters)

DIRECTOR  
You think Guardian readers are going to expect a musical number?

ACTOR JON  
Well not so much that, but I do think they'll realise how bad the first section is.

ACTOR TINA  
You're kidding, right?

ACTOR JON  
No.

ACTOR TINA  
You think the audience will be offended that we've cast an able-bodied actor in a disabled role?

ACTOR JON  
Course they will.

ACTOR TINA  
Like they'll notice Tina doesn't have any lines? Like they always notice white actors getting cast in Asian roles?

ACTOR JON  
Come on, not everything's about race.

ACTOR JO  
Actually Sally, I was going to ask about this. I'm not criticizing the writing, obviously, it's brilliant, but I think the PC term is "non-disabled".

DIRECTOR

Yes, I know that. But I think it's more realistic for Lizzie to say "able-bodied".

ACTOR JON

I'm not talking about the casting, I mean the language. I just think it's a bit patronizing to tell the audience not say "insane" or "crippled."

Actor Tina pulls her phone out and starts Googling something.

DIRECTOR

Well, that's what we're challenging.

ACTOR JON

I mean, I think it's safe to assume they know.

ACTOR TINA

"Britain is crippled by record personal debt." "Hundreds of foreign doctors leaving UK over crippling fees."

ACTOR JON

What?

ACTOR TINA

"Don't assume Trump is dumb. He knows exactly what he's doing."

DIRECTOR

Know what?

ACTOR JON

Know not to say retarded. They're not morons.

ACTOR TINA

Headlines from the Guardian.

ACTOR JO

That's shocking.

ACTOR HANNAH

Oh my God.

DIRECTOR

Guys, can we have one conversation in the room please?!

ACTOR BRADLEY  
(Squirming)  
Are we nearly done on the notes?

DIRECTOR  
If I could get a word in edgeways,  
maybe.

ACTOR BRADLEY  
I just really need to piss.

The Director throws him a look.

DIRECTOR  
In answer to your question, no  
Henry. If they "got it", they'd  
walk out.

ACTOR JON  
Come on, you can still feel  
uncomfortable without walking out.

DIRECTOR  
I think the point the writer's  
trying to make is that- OK, for  
example, so why do they see films  
like The Shape of Water or My Left  
Foot and rave about them, instead  
of being offended?

ACTOR RACHEL  
Come on, Daniel Day Lewis was great  
in My Left Foot.

ACTOR HANNAH  
Yeah, but when I was doing my  
research I read this quote from  
this guy, who's like deformed or  
something, who was in, I think it  
was Under Her Skin, that Scarlett  
Johansen film-

ACTOR JON  
Joe-hansen.

ACTOR HANNAH  
-and he said that back in the  
fifties Lawrence Olivier played  
Othello and he was brilliant, but  
we don't think it's OK to do that  
any more.

ACTOR JON  
Well, he's dead, so he can't.



ACTOR HANNAH

Yeah, but the point is, just cause he was good doesn't make it right. Like Sheldon from the Big Bang Theory's brilliant, but the actor's not actually autistic.

ACTOR FOH

I hate that show. It's just, not funny.

DANCER

Oh, I love Sheldon.

ACTOR JON

So, what, you're saying actors can only play people exactly like themselves? What, I can't play Macbeth unless I'm King of Scotland?

ACTOR RACHEL

No, you can't play Macbeth cause you're shit Henry.

ACTOR JON

Har har.

DIRECTOR

I'm not saying anything. That's the question the play's asking.

ACTOR BRADLEY

Grown man about to piss his pants.

ACTOR HANNAH

It's like that line Lizzie has in the play, "Would you black up?"

DIRECTOR

Exactly. That's the question the play's asking. By the way, Libby, when she says that, don't mumble your response.

ACTOR HANNAH

(Mumbling)

Sorry.

ACTOR TINA

I actually have a real issue with that line.

ACTOR HANNAH

What? But I think that line's really important. It's like the Othello thing, nobody would black up, so why's it OK to-

ACTOR JO

-to crip up.

ACTOR HANNAH

Yeah, to crip up.

ACTOR TINA

(Holding back)

-

ACTOR BRADLEY

Sally, can we get back to notes, I'm dying here.

DIRECTOR

Good idea, Charlie. Ok, so I want to do some work on the rewrites to the puppet scene after we take a comfort break.

ACTOR RACHEL

Can I just say - again - that I think it's really unfair rewriting a whole scene this close to our first preview. I know it's short, but-

DIRECTOR

Lizzie, it's not the whole scene. Look, I know it's not ideal, but- It is what it is.

ACTOR TINA

Nobody would black up?

DIRECTOR

Guys, please-

ACTOR HANNAH

Not any more, no. I know they used to, but like back in the fifties or whatever.

ACTOR TINA

Wow. You really don't have any idea do you?

DIRECTOR  
I'll just talk to myself shall I?

ACTOR TINA  
Literally people do yellow face all the time. They do it in the West End.

ACTOR JON  
Yeah but that's not as-

ACTOR TINA  
Not as?

DIRECTOR  
Apparently I will.

ACTOR JON  
-

Nothing.

ACTOR TINA  
Not as bad?

ACTOR JON  
No... I didn't mean-

ACTOR TINA  
I get the point the writer's trying to make. Ableism's bad, we all agree. But I'm the only person in the cast who's not white and-

ACTOR RACHEL  
Oh fuck off Kirsten. That's not fair.

ACTOR TINA  
-AND I don't think that a bunch of middle class white people without disabilities get to decide whether it's OK to use slavery as a plot device.

ACTOR JON  
Hang on. Who said anything about slavery?

ACTOR TINA  
Where do you think blackface comes from?

ACTOR JON  
(Sarcastically)  
America?

ACTOR TINA  
And yellowface?

ACTOR JON  
(Going to say China, but  
thinking better of it)

-

ACTOR TINA  
Yes, America. And here. And they  
used it to dehumanise people, so  
they could treat them differently,  
have different laws.

ACTOR HANNAH  
But isn't that sort of the point  
about able bodied people - non-  
disabled people - whatever -  
playing disabled people? They're  
being dehumanised?

ACTOR JO  
And taking parts away from deaf and  
disabled actors.

ACTOR HANNAH  
So I don't get it. Why's it not OK  
to compare the two?

ACTOR TINA  
Because disabled people don't get  
told to "fuck off back to where  
they're from," for one.

ACTOR JO  
What about that four year old girl  
who got shouted at by some guy and  
told she was a drain on society  
cause she was in a wheelchair?

ACTOR BRADLEY  
Did that happen?

ACTOR JO  
Yeah, apparently she's had to have  
counseling?

ACTOR BRADLEY  
What the-

ACTOR JO

Really?

ACTOR HANNAH

Yeah.

ACTOR JO

God, that's awful.

ACTOR TINA

It's bad. They're both bad, but they're not the same thing. And as a posh white girl who has perfect hearing, it's not up to you to decide.

ACTOR RACHEL

I don't see you complaining about being Asian when you get cast in things cause they're "going BAME".

ACTOR TINA

Oh lucky me. I get to play a shit stereotype. Again. Am I going to be a sex worker this time? Or a ninja?

ACTOR BRADLEY

I'd do sex worker.

ACTOR TINA

Sex worker? Ninja?

ACTOR JON

So don't take the job.

ACTOR TINA

Sex worker? Ninja?

ACTOR RACHEL

He's got a point. You had two episodes on a Netflix show. It's a bit rich for you to complain.

ACTOR JO

Steady on, Liz.

ACTOR TINA

Fine, I'll just apply for one of the beautifully written, rounded lead roles that nobody ever writes for Asian actors, shall I?

DIRECTOR

GUYS! Seriously if you've got an issue with the writing, take it up with the writer. We're here to rehearse a play. And in case you'd forgotten we've got our first preview in less than twenty four hours.

A beat.

ACTOR BRADLEY

Can I take a piss now?

DIRECTOR

Yes, Charlie, you can take a piss.

He leaves the stage.

Tina goes to leave.

ACTOR JO

You OK?

ACTOR TINA

I'm fine.

DIRECTOR

OK, so if we can just go from the last few lines of the song and straight into "Not OK". We'll just do the rap a cappella.

ACTOR TINA

Where do you want us to go from?

DIRECTOR

Let's go from "But what about disability as a lazy trope".

They get into position for the song.

Bradley comes back on stage.

ACTOR JON

That was quick.

ACTOR RACHEL

Did you even wash your hands?

Bradley realizes his mistake and walks off.

DIRECTOR

OK, so let's just dive right in.  
I'll probably stop and start this  
one. And three two one.

CHORUS (EXCEPT TINA)

(Rapid, semi-spoken)

But what about disability as a lazy  
trope to portray the evil nature of  
the antagonist in dramatic writing,  
for example in Richard the Third or  
a lot of comic book movies.  
Particularly DC.

TINA

(Singing)

This play's already twenty minutes  
long.

JO

(Singing)

Twenty minutes long.

CHORUS

(Singing)

Let's end this song.  
Let's end this song.  
It's already going on and on and on  
and oooooon.

TINA

(Belting)

Let's end this soooooooooooooong.

ACTOR JON

Do you think they got that ending  
the song is a metaphor?

ACTOR TINA

They got it, Henry.

The Director hums the last few beats of the song.

FOH

(Rapping)

So let me get this straight.

DANCER

Let's get it straight, y'all.

FOH

Perhaps it's not OK.

EVA  
It's not ok, y'all.

FOH  
For all the little boys  
And little-  
(Stopping rapping)  
Actually, can we get the backing  
track for this.

DIRECTOR  
Acapella's fine, I'm really  
focussing on the spacing.

FOH  
It's just it's really hard to keen  
in time without the rhythm.

DIRECTOR  
(Frustrated)  
Fine.  
  
<TECH DESK NAME> can I get the AV  
for this bit?!

DANCER  
Are we not using the puppets any  
more?

DIRECTOR  
(Aggressively)  
No.

DANCER  
Really? I liked them.

DIRECTOR  
Can we just get back to the rap?

FOH picks up a grey puppet of a wheelchair user.

DANCER  
But I liked him, he's cute.

She waits for a response.

DIRECTOR  
No. Guys we open tomorrow. So I can  
I get some focus? PLEASE?!

Dancer is playing around with the puppet.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)  
Eva!



DANCER

Sorry.

A beat.

ACTOR JON

Do you think they got that ending  
the song is a metaphor?

ACTOR TINA

They got it, Henry.

The director hums the last few beats of the song, quicker  
this time.

During this section, images and clips from the films  
portrayed are projected onto the back wall, along with the  
backing track for "Not OK".

FOH

So let me get this straight.

DANCER

Let's get it straight, y'all.

FOH

Perhaps it's not OK.

EVA

It's not ok, y'all.

FOH

For all the little boys  
And little girls  
To never see themselves  
Portrayed on screen by people just  
like them

DANCER & BRADLEY

Just like them

FOH

Imagine what that does

BRADLEY

I bet it's bad

FOH

Oh yeah it's really, really bad

JO

But what about that guy?

DANCER  
Tell us who

JO  
The one from Rain Man

DANCER  
Oh yeah him

HANNAH  
Yeah, I remember him

DANCER  
Tell us, tell us what he did he do?

JO  
Uh .. yeah .. I'm about to.

Autistic guy  
Was good at maths  
He counted cards  
But he hated baths  
His brother was a wanker

BRADLEY  
What a prick

BRADLEY / HANNAH / DANCER  
What a prick

JO  
He learned to be a better human  
being  
cause his brother was disabled

RACHEL  
What's it like  
When you're a plot device  
Can tell he's bad  
Hunch drove him mad  
A creepy guy  
An evil stare  
Kills some kids  
So beware

BRADLEY  
Uh uh

TINA  
So let me get this straight.

BRADLEY  
Let's get it straight, y'all.

TINA  
Perhaps it's not OK.

BRADLEY  
It's not ok, y'all.

TINA  
That when a girl  
Falls on her chair  
And breaks her neck  
Her trainer's there  
To kill her

JON  
He's on a motorbike  
Falls off and breaks his spine  
He's in a chair for life  
He says will you be mine  
His career says it's fine  
To take his life  
Coz, it's better to be dead  
Than to live your life disabled

HANNAH  
Wait - what the fuck?

JON  
It's how you know he loves her

HANNAH  
Please shut up

JON  
He woulda been a burden

LIBBY  
Are you for real?

JON  
C'mon you musta thought  
That, it's better to be dead  
Than to live your life disabled

DANCER  
She played a mute  
Her life was sad  
Wanked in a bath  
Her boss was bad  
Her lover was a fish god

BRADLEY  
Fish god

EVERYONE

Fish god

HANNAH

Cause you're win an Oscar/  
if you're acting all disabled

FOH

(Into spoken)

But does it really matter?

BRADLEY

(MT voice)

Yeah, I mean they're just films and  
plays and stuff.

ACTOR JON

Well that's-

DIRECTOR

Ok, let's pause it there quickly.  
Great .. lot of work to do for  
tomorrow, but great. A couple of  
quick notes and then we'll jump  
right into "Quiz Show".

They nod.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Lizzie, hunch more.

She imitates the hunch.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

It's got to be bigger. Grotesque.

Everyone, keep on the beats, some  
of you are coming in just before  
the beat.

Kirsten, a bit more attitude,  
please.

Ok, Lizzie's got to go in about ten  
minutes so let's just dive straight  
into the next section. And three,  
two, one.

ACTOR FOH

Before we do, can I just ask  
something?

DIRECTOR

If you must.

ACTOR FOH

I- I just wondered. Is the rap  
offensive?

ACTOR JON

It's offensively bad.

DIRECTOR

(To FOH)

No, because we're not condoning the  
things that are said.

ACTOR FOH

No, I mean because we're all white  
people.

ACTOR TINA

Are we?

ACTOR FOH

No, I didn't mean-

DIRECTOR

I don't know. At this stage, I  
don't care. Can we just carry on?

ACTOR FOH

Sorry.

DIRECTOR

OK. From the end of the rap.

FOH

(Into spoken)

But does it really matter?

ACTOR BRADLEY

(MT voice)

Yeah, I mean they're just films and  
plays and stuff.

FOH

Yeah, it's not like they have an  
effect in the real world, do they?

ACTOR JON

Well that's a good question. And  
talking of questions,

(Joey from Friends quiz  
show host voice)

It's time to play, Wheelchair of  
Fortune.

Three of the actors hold up a glittery sign saying  
"Wheelchair of Fortune"

DIRECTOR

Ok, so we'll pull a few audience  
volunteers up at this point.  
Lizzie, Kirsten can you fill in for  
now.

ACTOR TINA

Well we've got an actual audience  
here. Why don't we just use them?

ACTOR BRADLEY

Do we honestly have to do this bit?

DIRECTOR

Yes.

ACTOR BRADLEY

It's just. Wheelchair of fortune.  
Really?

DIRECTOR

Look it's in the script, OK?

ACTOR BRADLEY

So.

DIRECTOR

So can we just do it.

ACTOR BRADLEY

It just makes me really  
uncomfortable. Just cause someone  
wrote it, why do we have to do it?

DIRECTOR

Because it's an acting job. And you  
agreed to do it.

ACTOR BRADLEY

Yeah, but.. it just makes me really  
nervous. Is it OK?

DIRECTOR

Is what OK?

ACTOR JO

Isn't it meant to get the point  
across that the stuff we do on  
stage and in films has a wider  
impact?

(MORE)

ACTOR JO (CONT'D)

Like PIP assessments and stuff.  
Disability hate crime. Stuff like  
that.

DIRECTOR

Guys?

ACTOR BRADLEY

Also, I'm not sure about the whole  
phone bit.

ACTOR FOH

I like that bit.

ACTOR BRADLEY

You would front of house.

DIRECTOR

(Exasperated)

Jesus. Effing. Christ.

ACTOR BRADLEY

Don't you think it's like, the  
audience get the point. We don't  
want to lose them.

ACTOR FOH

I kind of like the whole audience  
interaction bit, though.

ACTOR BRADLEY

I'm just, look if you think about  
human psychology, people don't want  
to feel bad about themselves.

ACTOR TINA

So what, we just let them off the  
hook?

ACTOR BRADLEY

No, but they need a positive  
message. If they hate themselves  
they're not going to listen. Also,  
if you keep banging home the same  
point.. you've told me once,  
you've told me twice, three times  
.. now you are losing me, I get  
bored.

ACTOR TINA

Course you fucking do, cause it  
doesn't affect you.

DIRECTOR  
Guys, seriously. Can we just focus  
for the next ten minutes?

ACTOR TINA  
So what would you do instead?

ACTOR BRADLEY  
I don't know.

ACTOR HANNAH  
Actually I had an idea.

DIRECTOR  
Guys, seriously!

ACTOR HANNAH  
Well it was just.. it might not  
work but .. what if we did like a  
bit that was an audition or  
something?

DIRECTOR  
Can we focus?!

ACTOR BRADLEY  
What do you mean?

DIRECTOR  
Am I here?

(Waiving her hand)  
Can you guys see me?

ACTOR HANNAH  
Or a phone call from your agent.

ACTOR JO  
Where they do it the right way?

FOH  
Or maybe like a bit where like  
someone goes to the cinema and  
doesn't watch a film cause they  
cast a non-disabled actor in a  
disabled part.

ACTOR RACHEL  
Or an Oscar speech?

ACTOR HANNAH  
Yeah, something like that.



FOH  
I mean, we could give it a go.

ACTOR TINA  
I don't hate it.

The director sits back down in her chair with the audience.

DIRECTOR  
I'm just going to sit and chat to  
you guys. Are you having a good  
night?  
(Note - can be improvised)

ACTOR JON  
(To Sally)  
Sally, what are you doing?

DIRECTOR  
If you're not going to listen to me-

ACTOR JON  
We're pretending they're not here.

DIRECTOR  
Why?

ACTOR JON  
Just because, OK.

DIRECTOR  
Well either you listen to me and  
rehearse the play, or I'm not  
pretending any more.

ACTOR BRADLEY  
So are we doing this audition bit  
or not?

DIRECTOR  
No!

ACTOR TINA  
(About the audience)  
Why don't we ask the audience if  
they want us to do the audition bit  
or .. the quiz bit?

ACTOR JON  
What audience?

ACTOR RACHEL  
Let's just do the quiz bit OK?

ACTOR BRADLEY  
No, I want to do the audition bit.

DIRECTOR  
Can we please rehearse the play?!

ACTOR BRADLEY  
Shall we take a vote?

DIRECTOR  
No. It's not a fucking democracy.  
I'm the director. You're just  
actors.

ACTOR RACHEL  
*Just* actors?

ACTOR JO  
Wow.

ACTOR TINA  
Just actors?

DIRECTOR  
No, I didn't mean-

ACTOR BRADLEY  
Sally, I can't believe-

DIRECTOR  
Look can we just stick to the  
script, please?

ACTOR HANNAH  
What if it's a bad script?

DIRECTOR  
It's a fringe show. Of *course* it's  
a bad script.

ACTOR HANNAH  
But there's bad and there's *bad*.

DIRECTOR  
So write a better one.

ACTOR HANNAH  
That's what I'm saying. I think the  
audition one's better.

ACTOR JO  
Ok, but how would it go?

ACTOR HANNAH  
I don't know.

FOH  
Shall we just improv it?

DIRECTOR  
I- whatever.

A beat. The director looks visibly upset.

FOH  
Sally, we didn't mean to-

DIRECTOR  
Just do whatever you want. I  
literally don't care any more.

She walks off stage.

ACTOR JON  
Deja vu.

A beat. The actors look around - leaving an uncomfortable  
silence.

ACTOR TINA  
So what are we doing? Shall we do  
the offensive shit version of this,  
or shall we try to do something  
better?

ACTOR HANNAH  
I'm gonna say better.

ACTOR BRADLEY  
OK, so, how's it gonna go?

ACTOR FOH  
I dunno.

DANCER  
Don't look at me.

ACTOR FOH  
We're gonna need a director, I  
guess.

ACTOR JON  
Ship's sailed on that one.

ACTOR TINA

Well, look what if Henry's the writer / director? And Libby's the actor coming in to audition?

ACTOR BRADLEY

Anyone else?

ACTOR RACHEL

I mean, I'd probably be there to read in.

ACTOR HANNAH

OK.

ACTOR TINA

Shall we give it a go?

Libby, Lizzie and Henry pull up chairs.

Henry and Lizzie sit down, ready for an audition, as Libby walks off stage. The others stand to the side, looking on.

ACTOR JON

Do you want to go get the next one?

Lizzie looks at him, unimpressed. She walks off stage.

Lizzie and Libby walk back on stage.

ACTOR RACHEL

This is Henry, the director.

ACTOR HANNAH

Hi. Lovely to meet you.

ACTOR JON

Take a seat.

Libby pulls up a seat.

ACTOR JON (CONT'D)

Thanks for coming in.

ACTOR HANNAH

My pleasure.

ACTOR JON

Sorry we're a bit behind. Just so many people to see, you know how it is.

ACTOR HANNAH

Yeah, of course.

ACTOR JON

So, we'll have a super quick chat,  
just to get to know each other, and  
then we'll do some acting. Make  
sense?

ACTOR HANNAH

Absolutely.

ACTOR JON

Did you get a chance to read the  
script?

ACTOR HANNAH

I did.

ACTOR JON

Any questions?

ACTOR HANNAH

Well, I guess.. I did have *one*.

ACTOR JON

Fire away.

ACTOR HANNAH

OK, so.. and totally tell me if you  
think I'm speaking out of turn..

ACTOR JON

Oh. No, no. It's fine.

ACTOR HANNAH

It's just, I wondered why the actor  
playing Hannah wasn't deaf?

ACTOR JON

That's kind of the point of the  
play. It's about a hearing actor  
taking on a deaf role.

ACTOR HANNAH

Yeah, but- again I don't mean to-  
it's just. Like, I absolutely love  
what you're trying to do and I  
think it's really important.

ACTOR JON

Thanks.

ACTOR HANNAH

But I guess, and when my agent sent  
over the script I loved it.

(MORE)

ACTOR HANNAH (CONT'D)  
But I kind of wondered, why not  
cast a deaf actor?

ACTOR JON  
Right.

ACTOR HANNAH  
Obviously not like a BSL native.  
What if - and I know I'm  
potentially doing myself out of a  
part here - but there are lots of  
really talented actors who are deaf  
or hard of hearing, but hearing  
passing. I dunno, I just, I  
wondered if it was something you'd  
thought about. Like, is there a  
reason the part needs to be played  
by a hearing actor?

Henry takes a moment to consider.

ACTOR JON  
Do you know what? Honestly, I  
hadn't even really considered it.

ACTOR HANNAH  
Like I don't mean to seem  
ungrateful. And I really appreciate  
you considering me.

ACTOR JON  
Umm. Yeah, Umm. Honest answer? I  
don't know. I mean I guess there's  
no good reason, I just. Yeah, give  
me a bit of time me have a think  
about it.

ACTOR HANNAH  
OK, that makes sense.

ACTOR JON  
I think you're probably right .. I  
just need to have a think.

ACTOR TINA  
And scene. What do you think?

ACTOR BRADLEY  
I dunno. Yeah, it's. It's  
different.

ACTOR TINA  
How are we going to end it though?

ACTOR HANNAH

Umm. I actually like that as an ending.

ACTOR TINA

What, just end the whole play there?

ACTOR BRADLEY

Um.. It's a bit anti-climactic.

A beat.

ACTOR DANCER

What if we did bit more of the song?

ACTOR TINA

I mean I guess.

FOH

So, I guess .. it's time for a song.

The lyrics come up on the projector.

ACTOR TINA

A what?

ACTOR JO

A song about representation.

ALL

Oh we're sorry for fucking around with you.  
But we felt it's something we had to do.  
It's easy to miss,  
but ableism is serious.  
The language you use,  
affects people's views.  
So if you're not lazy,  
avoid saying crazy.  
And maybe retarded,  
should soon be discarded.

ACTOR TINA

(Spoken)

Guys?

CHORUS (EXCEPT TINA)  
 (Singing)  
 Try not saying dumb, lame, or  
 crippling poverty.  
 Cause when you do that it says:

ACTOR JON  
 (Singing, bass and back in  
 character)  
 "You're not as good as me".

ACTOR TINA  
 (Spoken)  
 Guys, I'm still being left out.

CHORUS (EXCEPT TINA)  
 (Singing)  
 And though we love Natalie Dormer.  
 And that bloke from the Hunger  
 Games.  
 And him off of Gavin and Stacey.  
 Who's been cast in Rain Man on  
 stage.  
 And we're fans of Scarlett  
 Johansen.

ACTOR TINA  
 (Spoken)  
 She's literally never played a  
 disabled part.

CHORUS (EXCEPT TINA)  
 (Singing)  
 And we don't hate Eddie Redmayne.

ACTOR TINA  
 (Spoken)  
 Ghost in the Shell? Anyone?

CHORUS (EXCEPT TINA)  
 (Singing)  
 They all have this one thing in  
 common.  
 Though we're not trying to a-por-  
 shon blame.

ACTOR TINA  
 (Spoken)  
 You're just embarrassing yourselves  
 now.

CHORUS (EXCEPT TINA)  
 (Quiet)  
 And whilst we're on the touchy.  
 (MORE)



CHORUS (EXCEPT TINA) (CONT'D)

Subject of blame.  
Henry's agent has asked.  
That we make it clear.  
That he didn't write this.

(Pause)

So now that is clear.

ACTOR TINA

(Spoken)

Guys, I think we should maybe just  
head out to the...?

CHORUS (EXCEPT TINA)

(Singing)

So basically our point was about  
disability.

ACTOR TINA

(Spoken)

Guys, we get it.

CHORUS (EXCEPT TINA)

But we haven't even covered.  
Our own industry.  
The lack of physical access in  
theatres.  
Is shocking to me.

TINA

(Singing impressively)

I think they get the point, guys.  
We didn't need a song.

CHORUS (EXCEPT TINA)

(Rapid, semi-spoken)

But what about disability as a lazy  
trope to portray the evil nature of  
the antagonist in dramatic writing,  
for example in Richard the Third or  
a lot of comic book movies.  
Particularly DC.

TINA

(Singing)

The play's already sixty minutes  
long.

JO

(Singing)

Sixty minutes long.

CHORUS

(Singing)

Let's end this song.

(MORE)

## CHORUS (CONT'D)

Let's end this song.  
It's already going on and on and on  
and oooooon.

## TINA

(Belting)

Let's end this soooooooooooooong.

## ACTOR JON

Do you think they got that ending  
the song is a metaphor?

## ACTOR TINA

They got it, Henry.

Lights and music crash down as one.

Beat for applause.

LIGHTS OUT.

## SCENE X - SUCKER PUNCH

When the applause dies down-

Libby steps forward and indicates for everyone to be quiet.

## LIBBY (SPEAKING - NOT INTERPRETED)

Hi everyone. Thanks so much for  
coming to see Blow. Before you all  
head to the bar there are two quick  
things I wanted to say. The first  
is that-

THE SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER steps forward at this point  
slowly to join Libby, speaking the words that Libby signs.

LIBBY (SIGNING - INTERPRETED TO  
ENGLISH) (CONT'D)

My name is Libby. Sign name -  
Libby. What Lizzie said in the show  
isn't real. I'm deaf.

A beat.

LIBBY (SIGNING - INTERPRETED TO  
ENGLISH) (CONT'D)

So I'm a deaf actor, who was  
playing a hearing actor, who had  
taken on a deaf role. Confusing, I  
know. I've been deaf since I was  
four years old. But I was diagnosed  
when I was six.

(MORE)

LIBBY (SIGNING - INTERPRETED TO  
I also want to say sorry for my  
poor signing in the show. Because I  
was mainstreamed I only started  
learning sign a few years ago. But  
I'm better than that.

At this point, Libby starts talking and the interpreter  
returns to signing her words.

LIBBY (CONT'D)  
So that's the first thing. The  
second thing, is I wanted to tell  
you a story from my own life, to  
explain why the story you've just  
seen matters to me. When I was  
eight years old my school went to a  
traveling children's theatre  
company who during their  
performance asked for a volunteer.  
My hand shot up and I was picked. I  
started to walk towards the stage  
but before I could get there my  
teacher grabbed my shoulder, pushed  
me back down into my chair, and in  
front of all the other schools told  
them that I was deaf and couldn't  
do it, so they had to choose  
someone else. I trusted her because  
she was a teacher and an adult. And  
when was I was ten years old it  
made sense to me to make a list of  
careers I'd never be able to have.  
The list included being an actor,  
being a dancer, and being a pilot.

Libby gestures.

LIBBY (CONT'D)  
Clearly, my teacher was wrong. And  
for years I thought I was too for  
making that list. But I'm done  
being held back by other people.

Libby gets out a BOX of matches and places it on the floor,  
kneeling behind it.

LIBBY (CONT'D)  
I am capable. We are capable. I  
don't want to be a pilot, but  
you've just seen me act and dance.  
My name is Libby. I'm an actor. And  
I've got bills to pay.

Libby picks up the match box, stands up opening it and lights the match. She holds it in front of her face. FIGHT SONG by RACHEL PLATTEN plays.

LIBBY (CONT'D)  
I am not your costume. I am not  
your puppet. I am not your  
metaphor. I am a person.

Libby lights the match.

LIGHTS OUT.