



A Change of PACE

Creatively supporting young people during the coronavirus crisis

The Monologue Pod Class

Episode 3

Character: Ellen
Gender: Female
Age: Late teens
Play: *Outlying Islands* by David Greig (2002)
Accent: I think she lived in a house (that included Uncle Kirk) in Stornoway, which (from the perspective of this tiny island 40 miles further out than Stornoway) they refer to as 'the mainland'. She could have a vague Highland / north west accent, but I wouldn't worry too much.

Ellen: He must have a eulogy.
I'll speak it.
Sit – the congregation must sit.

The boys sit.

Now you must look like stones.
Still and in heavy consideration of God.
That's right.
So.
We are gathered here to pay tribute to Iain Kirk.
An island man.
He was a man – look at him – dead there – up in heaven now –
He was man –
Who knew the evils of womanhood.
Who fought all his life against the decoration of nails.
Who kept our house shut against the cinema.
Who saw Stornoway for what it was – a house of sin.
Who was never happier than when amongst fish –
Or at the funeral of an old friend.
Who knew well the value of pennies.
And oatmeal.

And darkness.
And work.
And now he is gone.

[ROBERT: Amen.

JOHN: I don't know if that's appropriate.]

ELLEN: Amen.
A hymn. A hymn now.

[JOHN: I'm afraid I only know episcopalian hymns.]

ELLEN: This is a pagan place.
We'll sing a pagan hymn.
After me.

'In the Blue Ridge mountains of Virginia,
On the trail of the lonesome pine.
In the pale moonshine, our hearts entwined
Where she carved her name
And I carved mine.
Oh June,
Like the mountains I'm blue.
Like the pine,
I am lonesome for you.
In the Blue Ridge mountains of Virginia,
On the trail of the lonesome pine.'

The song ends.

ELLEN: Now put him in the ground and cover him.
He's gone from here.

ALTERNATIVE MONOLOGUE for same character

ELLEN: Do you know how the island came about – truly? Truly.

At the beginning of time there was a giantess, and she was in the business of carrying rocks from Ireland over to Scotland where she was building a home for herself and her daughter. So every morning as the sun rose she filled her basket with stones and hitched up her skirts and walked out from the beach into the sea – which for her was no more than a burn for the crossing. And so it was that from time to time as she delivered her loads she slipped

sometimes on the ocean bottom and spilled her stones – and the stones that fell were made islands and that was how we came to get Lewis and Harris and Skye and Mull and Rum and Muck and Eigg and so it was also that the pebbles she dropped from her basket fell and made islands also and that is how we got the islands outlying – the flannans and the monarchs and the shiant and all the islands outlying the outliers, the black islands and the sheep islands and the goat islands and the small islands and all those of that desert type that lie scattered in the sea. And so it was that one day the giantess was hungry and she saw a bird she wanted the eating of flying far out in the distance so she bent reached her hand into her basket she was carrying and she fetched a stone which she threw at the bird with all her strength to bring it down. But the stone missed its target and sailed on and one to the north far out forty miles or so before it hit the cold sea and settled down on the sea bottom and it was a mile broad and a half-mile long and that was this island, the most outlying of all the islands and the one which has on it the chapel of the priest who was fallen and drive out from the mainland with his woman and who came here to hide himself away and there were his people her who lived for three hundred years until they were cleared by a famine from God and they came to the mainland once more and were saved. And the island was kept for sheep only and shepherds and the houses to fall to ruin.

And that is the true history of this island.

Both extracts taken from *Outlying Islands* published in Greig, David *Selected Plays 1999-2009*, (2010), Faber, London.

Character: Dean
Gender: Transgender (female to male)
Age: 16 or 17 ish
Play: *Pronoun* by Evan Placey
Accent: Not specified. Use your own.

DEAN: You're staring. What?

JOSH: Spent the last few months avoiding eye contact that I've not properly got to really... you've got the same eyes.

DEAN: No shit, Josh.

JOSH: The rest of you, it's you, but not. But you still look... still look –

DEAN: (*defensive*). Look what?

JOSH: Look fit. But as a boy. You're a fit boy.

Beat.

I'm not gay.

DEAN: I know.

JOSH: Just saying, cos don't want you to think

DEAN: I know, Josh. I know.

JOSH: I know you do.

I bloody hate festivals. Buncha smelly muddy pissheads in wellies pretending to have a good time.

DEAN: So why'd you come?

Beat. [Because I knew you'd be here]

Your tent's a bit crap. Sure it's gonna keep you dry?

JOSH: Got nowhere else to sleep. Do I?

He looks to his tent.

Is that you? Inside out? Outside in?

DEAN: Maybe.

JOSH: I'm trying here, Izz – Dean. I'm trying. Cos I don't, you don't wake up one morning and... !

DEAN: I did. I did just wake up one morning and.

JOSH: Well that's that then.

DEAN: I don't have to explain myself to you.

JOSH: No. But you should. You should want to. As your, as your former

DEAN: As the artist formerly known as boyfriend.

JOSH: Do you always have to make a joke of everything? If you were gonna change something, couldn't it at least have been your sarcasm?

Why are you smiling? It's not funny.

DEAN: It is. Us. Here. This. I dunno.

JOSH: Right. Well you have a little laugh. I'm gonna join the others.

He goes to leave, but stops when DEAN starts speaking.

DEAN: I woke up.

I woke up. I showered.

I woke up. I showered. And then the mirror was just there. Suddenly there. Only it had always been there, but I'd, somehow, I'd managed to never look. To never really look. Little tricks to avoid myself. But this day, I was there, reflecting back, naked. And it took a minute, prolly only seconds, but felt like ages before I realised it was me. My body. And without even thinking I crossed my arms, have you ever noticed – how I always do that? For as long as I can remember I've always been doing that. And I tried to make them go away. I tried to look away. Because I'd never really looked. But I couldn't. This was me. And I hated it. Because it wasn't me. Do you understand? My little cousin Adam, you met him at my aunt's wedding, and she's always complaining because Adam won't leave it alone – he's five and he won't stop playing with his willy. Always investigating. I never did. Never investigated my own body. Why? Why is that? I'm standing in front of this mirror, the steam fading away, making the image clearer and clearer, this girl, this woman staring back at me. And it was like everything clicked into place. People say your life flashes before your eyes before you die, well I wasn't dying but suddenly everything in my life was playing back.

And in the mirror it all just suddenly made sense. Why I'd always felt a bit... wrong. And suddenly in my head, everything was... right. I'd never investigated, because I knew I wouldn't like what I found.

Extract taken from *Pronoun* by Evan Placey (2014), published in *Girls Like That and other plays for teengagers* (2016), Nick Hern Books, London.

Character: Alex
Gender: Male
Age: 20s
Play: *Passing Places* by Stephen Greenhorn
Accent: he's meant to be from Motherwell. Any greater-Glasgow kind of accent would work fine.

BRIAN: I'm not going back. I can't.

ALEX: But... Is this because of the car? Is that what it is? Brian, it's a few hours' drive. In a decent car.

I knew this would happen. You always do this. You always turn something completely simple and straightforward into a big production number. Some fucking defining moment. Some glimpse into the true nature of the fucking universe. Always. Even at school. A hair in your piece and beans and it's a sign from God. Extra custard and it's an omen of plenty. Well, it's not. A hair is a hair. Custard is custard. They are not fucking karmic telegrams.

We're only here to flog the surfboard and lie low for a bit. It's not supposed to be a turning point in our lives. Nothing's changed. Nothing.

Extract taken from *Passing Places*, by Stephen Greenhorn. Published in *Scotland Plays* (1998), Nick Hern Books, London.
