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DON'T BREATHE A WORD OF IT

by Rachael Hains-Wesson

EXTRACT

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Don't Breathe A Word Of It was first performed at the St Kilda Playground in Melbourne as part of the Melbourne Fringe Festival on the 14 October 2000 and was the winner of the Youth Performing Arts Award.

“*Don't Breathe A Word Of It* explores important and challenging issues. The performers utilised text, metaphor, movement and various theatrical devices to present content which is notoriously ‘difficult’ in a highly original, engaging way. This is thought provoking, profound theatre, performed with skill and alacrity” (Santha Press, 2000).

In 2000, *Don't Breathe A Word Of It* was performed at the Blue Room Theatre in Perth on the 30 August 2002 with the following cast:

GIRL, Rachael Brown

DR, Damon Lockwood

“A fan of Brecht and post-modern theatre...in a style very much influenced by the great German writer...using two actors, the play tells a universal tale of self-realisation, and takes a surreal peep into the world of secrets that girls must keep” (The West Australian, 2002).

Additionally, *Don't Breathe A Word Of It* has received a University of Tasmania Commission by third-year Bachelor of Contemporary Arts students at the Launceston Academy of the Arts in 2005 & 2010: “I have the upmost respect for the script...this play is both versatile and entertaining” (Amelia Fitch, 2010). A UTAS Playler was also produced By Nicholas Roach and Joshua Freeman < <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVayIOMRcwA>>

Don't Breathe A Word Of It has also appeared as a short story titled *Secrets little girls must keep* in the referred and peer-reviewed journal *Strange* from The Melbourne University edited by Marion Campbell et al., Vol.4, (1), 2008, pp182-189.

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One

Two metronomes are used throughout the scene.

DR: It's all in your imagination.

GIRL: Am I crazy or insanely stupid? Harold how long? It's time to fly like a soaring swallow and be placed in my part of existence; the only place where I belong, solely no one else just me. No one else can take the place of where I need to be. Harold? How long must I stay within the barriers of my own mortality? Will you give me the answers? I knew all I needed, in the womb of my mother, stretching my unborn hands across the silky womb wall, a fish with gills that only sucks, water, film, stillness, no sound, no talking and no drowning. There is only one way in -

DR: - only one way out.

The GIRL goes under a chair where Harold sits. She goes head first, facing the audience and making movements and sounds of being born – red fabric.

DR: [*Tearing paper and whispering*] Stretching and tearing, stretching and tearing, stretching and tearing [*This is said continuously as the GIRL delivers her lines and then, ceases when the GIRL says "uncaring nurses"*].

GIRL: I've imagined giving birth; what it'd be like. It happens in slow motion every time. I'd like to do it in water; so peaceful and relaxing. I'm mentally calm to think about birth on my own. It's when other people speak with distortion and vulgarity that it all becomes clear; stretch marks, tearing, bleeding, uncontrollable pain - uncaring nurses.

DR & GIRL: What's in life?

DR: Being born, growing up, first kiss, first heart attack, meeting someone special, obsessing, jealousy, anger, marriage, giving birth – DEATH.

GIRL: Do I want to go to the grave without experiencing birth, being a parent? Some days I can say out loud “I’d make a great mother” - I’d take my baby everywhere.

DR & Girl: Just make a sling and chuck it in.

GIRL: Can you keep blaming your past experiences for not being ready?

DR: Don’t be laboured down by other people’s obsessions.

GIRL: Why can’t they leave the innocent to learn from their own mistakes?

DR: Why must they be so eager to teach those too young to learn?
Becoming a woman when you’re only a child; having the urge to want to touch, look, be touched and be looked at.

GIRL: Red blemishes, raw insides ingrained in your memory, not knowing the difference between right and wrong.

DR: You can’t choose your memories.

GIRL: Your memories choose you.

DR: Remember...remember...remember. [*This is continually said*].

GIRL: Harold? Harold, are you there? Want to play? Harold it’s me. Are you sleeping? Want to play? You better not tell Harold!

DR: Are you listening?

GIRL: I said, you better not tell; promise or I’ll break it.

DR: There, that wasn’t so hard was it?