

WHAT REMAINS, AN ORIGINAL PLAY

Accompanied with

**SHAPING THE STORY: ESTABLISHING THE
WORLD OF THE PLAY THROUGH DRAMATIC
STRUCTURE**

BY

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A Thesis Submitted To
The University of Birmingham
For The Degree Of
Master of Philosophy

Department of Drama and Theatre Arts
College of Arts and Law
University of Birmingham
September 2012

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BIRMINGHAM

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ABSTRACT

What Remains is an original full length play that looks at the idea of history repeating itself and our need to know or to try to understand what has happened in the past in an attempt to do things better; the play is explored through the prism of a romantic relationship and follows two time periods that mirror and advance with one another.

The thesis essay looks to explore how the world of a play is exposed through the carefully calculated and formed structure of a play, and how the strategic planning can contain the fluidity of the story within the solidity of the structure

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What Remains

The play takes place in Greece, 600BC and England, today.

Chorus Part 1

Chorus Part 2

The chorus can be played by either gender. They are the knowers of everything, they carry stories and scraps from all times and places with them and tell stories when they feel they need to. They remain onstage at all times.

Theo (Around 600BC)

Saraiya (Around 600BC)

Theo and Saraiya are a young married Greek couple, hopelessly in love.

Charlotte (Now)

Noah (Now)

Both young unemployed archaeologists, living together.

*A note on the stage directions: None of the set ups must be realistic; there needn't be actual sofas or tables etc. Most of the props and the set of the scenes should be contained in the satchels that Chorus Part 1 & 2 have.

ACT 1

SCENE 1

Chorus Part 1 and Chorus Part 2 enter. They both look at the audience slowly and in unison, they look as if everything is going to plan. They are both wearing bulging cloth satchels, full of props that will later be used in the play. Chorus Part 1 pulls out a handful of sawdust and scatters it around the stage, together they eventually build the scene of a simple workshop, using the props that are in their satchels. Once the scene is complete they give each other nods of acknowledgment; Chorus Part 1 runs offstage left and Chorus Part 2 runs offstage right. They promptly return with a metal bucket each place them DSC, spotlights on Chorus.

Chorus Part1: Good Evening!

Chorus Part2: Good Evening!

Chorus Part1: Are we ready? Are we comfortable?

The Chorus give each other nods of acknowledgement and sit on the metal buckets.

Chorus Part1: I am not one to lament, take that as you will. I am not one to agonise over the committed, take that as you will and, I am not one to make judgement, take that as you will. But I am one to ask; what were the choices? Really. If only he had never gone. If only she had never gone. If only they had been brave? If only they had listened. If only, If only...

Chorus Part2: ...the woodpecker sighs, bark on the tree was as soft as the skies. The wolf waits below hungry and lonely, and cries to the moon, if only, if only.

Chorus Part1: Beautiful. Who says that again?

Chorus Part2: I don't remember, maybe it was me?

Chorus Part1: It wasn't, dear. She thinks she has a way with words, but she has a way with the words of others!

Chorus Part2: Oh! She says she is not one to do this and, not one to do that... but she is!

Chorus Part1: The cheek of it. No respect, a few minutes in and already she is testing me. Well they can be the judge of that... of me... of you... of what we will... bring forth.

Chorus Part 2: Oh dear. Let's sing shall we? A merry little song? A chirpy, happy, funny little song? A merry, happy, chirpy, funny, giddy little song?!

Chorus Part1: Shhhhhhh! There is no time to sing, you fool. There are forces in orbit, in orbit about the heart.

Chorus Part 2: According to our laws; this path is not an easy one to alter...

Chorus Part 1: ...According to the tales; the heart is not easy to obey...

Chorus Part 2: A man should look for what is and not for what he thinks should be...

Chorus Part 1: ...A man should be brave in his honesty and honourable in his actions...

Chorus Part 2: ...A man should live and not just exist!

Chorus Part 1: A man should sculpt his future, not surrender it...

Chorus Part 2: ...A man should... do the washing up once in a while!

Chorus Part 1 glares at Chorus Part 2

Chorus Part 1: What are you doing?

Chorus Part 2: I thought we were writing a guide for men on how to live their lives.

Chorus Part 1: No. We are sharing wisdom, advising, counselling...

Chorus Part 2: Because...?

Chorus Part 1: Because this thing called love...

Chorus Part 2: Ahhh. This thing called love! *(Pause)*What about it?

Chorus Part 1: Well it is a tricky business.

Chorus Part 2: The trickiest business!

Chorus Part 1: Quite right. The oldest business, a human business.

Chorus Part 2: No no no, with business... it is... sensical! With love... well... it is more like an incurable human condition...

Chorus Part 1: Yes! An incurable, on-going, never changing condition!

Chorus Part 2: An uncontrollable condition!

Chorus Part 1: An unreliable condition.

Chorus Part 2: A foreseeable condition.

Chorus Part 1: One in which we pity

Chorus Part 2: And one in which we fear

Chorus Part1: Enough said now. Enough.

SCENE 2

*A simple workshop in Greece, part of **Theo** and **Saraiya**'s home. There is a workbench with buckets nearby that can be turned upside down and used as seats. The room is dusty with sawdust on the floor. We understand that this is probably the smallest and least comfortable room of the home, but the one most used. **Saraiya** is sat on the table and **Theo** is sanding wood.*

Saraiya: Kiss me.

Theo: Say it again?

Saraiya: Kiss me.

Theo: You want me to kiss you! What a flirt you are!

They kiss.

Theo: These chairs will never be made as long as you are here to distract my wandering eye!

Saraiya: Well you must have more control! Concentrate!

Theo** not listening to **Saraiya

Theo: How sweet you taste. Again?

Saraiya: Again, he says! I am a lady. First, finish the chairs!

Theo: You work me too hard!

***Saraiya** laughs and **Theo** continues sanding, there is a long pause.*

Saraiya: Tell me the story of how we first met.

Theo: But you know it, you were there!

Saraiya: Oh just tell me, again, tell me like you tell other people.

Theo: So I must pretend that you don't know. That you are a stranger?

Saraiya: Yes.

Theo: Such a strange request...

He pauses, trying to find a way to start.

Saraiya: I'll help

She puts on a deep 'man' voice

Saraiya: So how did you and your wife meet?

Theo: *(laughs)* Well I met her dancing.

Saraiya: *(continuing the 'man' voice)* Dancing?

Theo: Yes dancing. Not far from here, there is an old and abandoned palace; a beautiful palace with grand columns and tall doors and handsome gardens...

Saraiya: Theo! How you met your *wife*, not tell me about the *building* you met her in!

Theo: Patience! You asked me to tell the story, and that is what I shall do

Saraiya: Very well

Theo: Very well. ...at this beautiful palace there is a party on the eve of the full moon. This party largely involves merry, unmarried, artists. I had never been before and a fellow stone mason tells me go with him. At first I thought not to, but after some wine I was easily persuaded. I arrive and everyone is wearing beautiful costumes, having feisty conversations, many are dancing. I get swallowed up by this joyful, dancing crowd, seconds later I have a girl in my arms...

Saraiya looks more interested and starts smiling

Theo: this girl, she was most... pleasant.

Saraiya: Pleasant?!

Theo: Who is telling this story?

Saraiya: But 'pleasant'? I am not your grandmother.

Theo: Listen and let me continue. I am lucky enough to have this pleasant girl in my arms, we say nothing to each other but continue dancing. I remember her eyes – wide open the whole time, sparkling, wondering, expecting! Still no words were exchanged but I knew...I knew I had to marry her. I didn't even know her name. Hours must have passed and we are still dancing, still no words between us, then we start singing together to the music, both of us singing! And as a song ended, she broke away and ran outside, of course I followed her but she ran quickly, 'I'm Theo' I call after her, 'Saraiya' she calls back. Saraiya! Saraiya! Oh I am in love with Saraiya! All I knew then was that I must never let that girl go.

Theo holds Saraiya's left hand up and holds his up next to hers, they are both wearing matching rings with a Greek circular design.

Theo: ...And I was lucky enough to put this on her finger so that the world knows we belong together.

Saraiya: *(as if expecting more from the story)* you rushed it!

Theo: I didn't, that is the truth of it!

Saraiya: Mmm. In brief.

Theo: Well if you do insist on reliving the past! We cannot spend our days recounting events!

Saraiya: You find it tiresome?

Theo: Saraiya! No, of course not. I just want to enjoy you... now. Today.

Saraiya: Kiss me

He kisses her.

Theo: I have never kissed lips quite so soft!

Saraiya: And how many lips have you kissed?

Theo: None as soft as yours.

Saraiya: You are troublesome. And I am hopelessly in love. How I hated the girls who proclaimed their love and bowed to their lover... and now look at me!

Theo: With pleasure! I wish to look at your crinkled nose and your sleepy eyes and your pointy chin forever!

Saraiya: Theo!

Theo: Yes

Saraiya: Don't go

(Long pause)

Saraiya: Please

Theo: I must.

Saraiya: But why?

Theo: So we can have a better life

Saraiya: But we have a good life

Theo: So we can have a *better* life

(Long pause)

Saraiya: What if it's not?

Theo: Shhh.

Saraiya: I fear that I will never see you again.

Theo puts his arms around Saraiya

Theo: Shhhh. You will, of course you will. *(Pause)* I promise, I'll be back within the year.

They exchange a tender kiss. They exit.

Chorus Part 2: Sickening. Nauseating! Sloppy. Mushy.

Chorus Part 1: What was that?

Chorus Part 2: (*Gesturing to **Theo** and **Saraiya***) ...That. So... so... icky.

Chorus Part 1: Icky. An obtuse word choice. Romantic, yes. Endearing, yes. Tantalising...?

Chorus Part 2: Yes?

Chorus Part 1: Yes! Fetch me the broom.

Chorus Part 2 walks offstage and returns with a broom, Chorus Part 1 starts sweeping

Chorus Part 1: And the rest

Chorus Part 2 walks offstage and returns with items to create the scene for Noah's flat. They both put together the scene for the flat.

Chorus Part 2: Looks nice

Chorus Part 1: Yeah

Noah enters

Chorus Part 2: This'll be interesting

Chorus Part 1: Enough now, enough.

SCENE 3

The buzzer in the flat rings, someone is at the door. Noah picks up the phone to see who it is.

Noah: Hello?

Charlotte (on intercom): Hello. Is this Noah Stephens? Flat 4b?

Noah: Yes

Charlotte (on intercom): This is Charlotte, sorry I'm a bit early... didn't quite take as long as I thought it would...

Noah: No problem, I'll buzz you up (*pause*) errr... do you need a hand?

Charlotte (on intercom): No, no I've got it thanks.

Noah presses a button on the phone and opens the front door, he looks around the room and decides to quickly tidy up. Charlotte enters with two large suitcases. They look at each other.

Charlotte: Hello.

Noah: Hi...

They continue looking at each other.

Chorus Part 1: Ahhh. But seven days ago they did meet.

Chorus Part 2: Only for moments

Chorus Part 1: Barely remarkable

Chorus Part 2: No introduction

Chorus Part 1: No connection

Chorus Part 2: A spontaneous act

Chorus Part 1: Forgotten almost immediately

Chorus Part 2: Eyes closed

Chorus Part 1: Lips locked

Chorus Part 2: Nothing more

Chorus Part 1: Intimate strangers

Noah and Charlotte look at each other as if they know each other, neither of them says anything.

Noah: Can I get you a drink? Tea, coffee, water...

Charlotte: Tea would be great. Thanks.

Noah puts the kettle on and gets out two mugs

Noah: So your bedroom is that one, and I'm over there. Given you the right hand side of the fridge. Most of the cupboards are empty so you can choose... whatever you want... *(Pause)* Sugar?

Charlotte: Umm. Just the one.

Noah: Make yourself comfortable, please...

Charlotte: Oh yeah, yes. Shall I *(gesturing to her suitcases)*? And freshen up. A bit?

Noah: *(Trying to figure out if they have met before)* Do I..? Have we..?
...Met before?

Charlotte: I... not sure... maybe?

The chorus are nodding their heads

Noah: Oh, probably thinking of someone else!

Charlotte: One of those faces... So I'll...

Noah: Yeah yeah, go ahead

Charlotte picks her cases up and walks towards her room, she goes offstage.

Noah watches her as she leaves and continues to do so until the kettle has boiled. Noah makes the tea and Charlotte soon returns, now with her jacket off, she sits down.

Noah: Jammy dodger?

Charlotte: Definitely.

Pause

Noah: Your mum is quite something

Charlotte: Sorry?

Noah: Your mum, I mean... she's very...

Charlotte: Oh yes. Course. Sorry I couldn't make it. Getting her to do my dirty work! *(Pause)* She's a nutcase, surprised you agreed to the flat share after meeting her!

Noah: No, she didn't seem that bad.

Noah gives Charlotte her tea and a packet of jammy dodgers.

Charlotte: Thank you

Pause

Noah: On holiday, weren't you?

Charlotte: Umm sort of. Volunteering

Noah: Oh yeah? A... volaholiday!?

Long pause

Noah: Cooooool

Charlotte: Yeah. The place was cool, a dig.

Noah: Oh wow

Charlotte: Yeah. The job was pretty boring though.

Noah: Oh. Why did you do it then?

Charlotte: Experience.

Noah: Course. *(Pause)*. For what?

Charlotte: Umm... I'm an archaeologist, well historian really...

Noah: ...An archaeologist? Your mum told me you were a receptionist at the Audi garage?

Charlotte: Well I am... I am. I trained as an archaeologist but am struggling to find a job that will pay, hence the volunteering.

Noah: So you do work at the Audi garage?

Charlotte: Yes.

Noah: But you are also an archaeologist

Charlotte: Correct. Don't worry, I'm not a dodgy tenant.

Noah: Well that's exactly what a dodgy tenant would say

The both laugh

Noah: Did you do much sampling?

Charlotte: No... just documenting really. *(Pause)* I'm impressed. You are down with the lingo! *(Pause)* So what do you do?

Noah: Well funny enough, I am also an archaeologist

Charlotte: Really?

Noah: Yeah really, but I can't find a job either...

Charlotte: How very funny, what are the chances! Cool. Crazy, hey? So where did you study?

Chorus Part 1: Ahhhh. How young they are!

Charlotte and Noah exit

Chorus Part 2: Yes, it must be hard for you to remember what it is like to be that young!

Chorus Part 1: Oh you wicked thing! I do remember quite vividly.

Chorus Part 2: Then I admire your hippocampus

Chorus Part 1: My hippocampus?

Chorus Part 2: Yes.

Chorus Part 1 looks confused.

Chorus Part 2: You only have to ask...

Pause

Chorus Part 1: What is a hippocampus?

Chorus Part 2: Where you store your long term memory

Chorus Part 1: Oh yes. Of course.

Chorus Part 2: And it is Greek for Seahorse.

Chorus Part 1: Alright smarty pants, there is no need to show off... this isn't about us...

Chorus Part 2: Pardon me.

They begin to set up the workshop.

Chorus Part 1: Two archaeologists, what are the odds!?

Chorus Part 2: Sounds to me like the work of the Gods...

Chorus Part 1 narrows her eyes at Chorus Part 2, Chorus Part 2 smirks and begins to help set up the workshop, as in the first scene.

Chorus Part 1: They must unravel this ancient story

Chorus Part 2: Present it in all of its former glory!

Chorus Part 1 is looking annoyed.

Chorus Part 1: Their power lies in their intuition

Chorus Part 2: And not in evidence, by tradition.

Chorus Part 1: For the past can give you a sneaky peek

Chorus Part 2: To help you avoid the ending that's bleak...

Chorus Part 1: Stop rhyming! It is awful!

Chorus Part 2: Think that as you may, but rhyming is lawful!

Chorus Part 1: Oh dear.

Chorus Part 2: *(muttering)* Clear? Rear? Sheer?

Chorus Part 1: Enough now, enough.

SCENE 4

Saraiya, in the simple workshop, with tools and a big block of stone. She is sat on a metal bucket.

Saraiya: *(speaking to her stomach)* Oh child! You do dance so... so... passionately! Do you want me to join you?

She stands and starts dancing and laughing, she soon gets out of breath.

Oh if only your father could see us right now! He does love to dance, and very well too! I hope you inherit your rhythm from him and not from me. I met him dancing you know. I was shaking the entire time he was holding me, I was. I think because I knew he was, well... wonderful and I didn't want to spoil anything, so I didn't even speak a word. *(Pause)* The silence was quite intimate though. Your father is a good man, no, a great man. You should learn a lot from your father. How to treat a lady... you must be gentle and loving when you meet your wife, or the woman you wish to be your wife. First impressions are everything, you want her to always think of you, dream of you, see your face everywhere! I know she will though. I know you will do us proud, become a stone mason and marry a beautiful woman and have me a few kind grandchildren. You can live here with us amongst the orange trees, I know it isn't a palace... just enough for happiness. One big family we will be, amongst the orange trees. Your father can't wait for that, he will soon be home I am sure. You won't be waiting long. He is taller than me, wider than me but probably not for much longer! He has strong legs. I like that about him. His strong legs. And the arms of a stone mason. I miss those strong legs, and those arms.

She walks over to the big block of stone and runs her hands down it. Then picks up a hammer and a chisel.

Well I have seen him do it a hundred times, I'm sure it's not that hard. It's just for us anyway, it doesn't matter if it is not perfection. And it is teaching you, not even in the world yet and my child is already learning skills for life. I believe you begin with the feet, let me see quite average size, manageable, very humble. Always be proud of what you have, my dear child. Let me see... a foot like shape.

She scoops up a lot of sawdust from the floor and shapes it into a foot.

Shame, I don't know how to make the toes hairy; it isn't too true to life!

She giggles and steps back to admire the sawdust foot.

Shall we begin my child? Are you ready? Left foot first.

She struggles at first to get a grip on the hammer and chisel and groans and sighs in frustration until she finally finds some sort of rhythm.

Well we do have some months. We are in no hurry. Little by little. I always wanted your father to do this for me, but sometimes life is less generous with time and more generous with other things.

Chorus Part 2 becomes The Messenger, then enters

Messenger: Saraiya? Who are you talking to?

Saraiya: Ah! Messenger! What news?

Messenger: Much news. But who were you talking to?

Saraiya: Tell me, please! I hate waiting.

Messenger: But who? If someone is here you don't want them to hear your love's private messages. Surely?

Saraiya: Oh, no one is here! I was talking to the child. My, our, beautiful child.

Messenger: Oh! That is very bold! Your child is not born yet. What if he looks like a lizard?

Saraiya: Then I will love him all the more. Now what does Theo say? Is he well? Is he eating? Is he fine?

Messenger: Yes, I believe yes is the answer to all of the above. Get comfortable.

Saraiya sits down and is eager to listen.

Messenger: My dearest Saraiya, I miss you more and more as the days go on, as the sun comes up and as the sun goes down. I have been dreaming of you every night, I often wake to expect you there next to me and the pit in my stomach, when I realise you are not, leaves me breathless each time. I think about you and our child always, I want to hold you again and to touch your bare skin, to caress your bosom, to play with your hair, to feel the weight of your body on my body, for us to embrace and to kiss and to make love. I want our child to be hearing my voice. I mustn't be a stranger. Do you talk to him about me? I hope you do. If not, please do. I said I'd be back within the year, but I must try my

best to be with you for the birth. I can't let you do it alone. Everything is fine here. We are building a temple. I haven't asked who for, I just get on. I think the harder I work the sooner I can return to my family. You mean the world to me. Not many more months to wait now. I am eating well and staying strong, lots of fish. There are many free girls here, but you must know I am not tempted by any of them. One or two are very pretty, but not as pleasant as you. I do miss you so. I hope you are taking care and that you are happy each day. Every morning you wake is one morning closer to me. I look forward to hearing your news. Ever loving, Theo.

He really does miss you, Saraiya.

Saraiya: With me for the birth, I hope that be true. *(Pause)* Why does he mention these 'free girls', I will pay no attention to that.

Messenger: Do you wish me to take your news now?

Saraiya: No, another day. I want to think about my words. But please stay, just a while.

Messenger: I can stay, just a while. What is that you are doing?

Saraiya: Sculpting my man, so our son knows his shape.

Chorus Part 2 stops playing The Messenger and The Chorus begin to set the scene for the flat. Saraiya exits.

Chorus Part 1: Only words they have...

Chorus Part 2: Days, weeks, months apart...

Chorus Part 1: Saraiya unbelieving of how slowly time can pass

Chorus Part 2: Nothing to do but wait...

Chorus Part 1: And wait

Chorus Part 2: And wait...

Chorus Part 1: Enough now, Enough.

SCENE 5

Noah is busy bodying around his flat. There is a bottle of Cava on the side with two plastic wine glasses. He sits down, then gets back up, he sits down, looks at his watch and then gets back up. He has an air of restless excitement about him. He bursts into huge smiles every so often. He is waiting for *Charlotte* to return home. We finally hear *Charlotte* arrive home.

Charlotte: Hey. Eugh what a long long day!

She kicks her shoes off and dumps her bag by the door, flicks through the pile of letters in her hand, puts them on the side and she goes into her room.

Charlotte: *(from her room)* how was your day?

Noah: Yeah you know... good!

Charlotte: Good. Had this right arsehole in today, loaded you could tell but trying to get discounts on everything. That pisses me off. Everyone was busy with customers so I thought I'd be helpful and tell him what I knew... I'm only the receptionist I said but still he was 'You can't knock off anything if I pay in cash today?'... Erm no, this isn't a back alley in Brixton mister. Anyway he was not happy and wanted to talk to my supervisor. Turns out this guy is a friend of a friend's brother who's a neighbour of Michael Dick... who is like the head designer guy or something important. So I got a warning. Total bollocks. Phoning in sick tomorrow.

Charlotte comes back into the living room wearing pyjamas, *Noah* is still sat down grinning.

Charlotte: Oooo cava! What's the occasion!?

Noah: Well...

Charlotte: Well...?

Noah: I only went and landed myself a job today!

Charlotte: What?! Doing what? That's great!!

Noah: On an excavation. Paid.

Charlotte: Wow! Serious?

Noah: Yes! And...

Charlotte: And?!

Noah: It's in The Galapagos Islands!

Charlotte: Wow! Where the hell is that?

Noah: Totally remote... South Pacific Ocean, North Pacific Ocean, west, east, I don't care! Pictures on Google look gorgeous. And it's paid!!

Charlotte: This... amazing... just amazing. I didn't even know you had applied for anything!

Noah: I didn't

Charlotte looks confused

Noah: These guys had been following my blog and liked what I had to say...and liked my area of expertise... had a Skype interview this morning and badabingbadaboom. Only thing, with these sorts of offers there is usually a hugely long and dull application

process but they said I can skip that if I write them a 3000 word report. Hell yeah!

Charlotte: Noah, this is so... I'm so happy for you! ...I didn't know you blogged?

Noah: Yeah... keep my mind in the game...'Ponderings of the unemployed archaeologist'...

Charlotte: You are the unemployed archaeologist!?

Noah: Yes...

Charlotte: I follow your blog! You are really good. I feel like I've just discovered I'm living with a celebrity...

Noah: Hardly! I have 23 followers.

Charlotte: Only 23? And you are living with one and never knew it! I didn't realise you were so smart!

Noah: Thanks

They both laugh. Charlotte gives Noah a hug.

Charlotte: Let's celebrate! Mr hot shot archaeologist, blogger extraordinaire, being headhunted all the way from the Galapagos Islands .

Noah: Yeah! I've been dying to tell you all day!

Charlotte opens and pours the cava.

Charlotte: To... you!

They clink their glasses.

Noah: Thank you!

Chorus Part 2: Galapagos Islands?! Fancy.

Chorus Part 1: Indeed

Chorus Part 2: Job in a faraway land, eh?

Chorus Part 1: Like clockwork.

Chorus Part 2: Like clockwork. Nothing new under this sun.

Chorus Part 1: There, you are right. Nothing. Indeed.

*We return to **Charlotte** and **Noah** celebrating, there are empty beer cans scattered around and they are slouched on the sofa. They are singing.*

Charlotte: I've got a lovely bunch of coconuts

Noah: Diddleydee!

Charlotte: Da da da...standing...in...a...row!

Noah: Big ones, small ones, ones as big as your head!

They both start laughing

Charlotte: As big as *your* head!? You have a massive head.

Noah: You have massive feet. Clloooooowwn.

Charlotte: Shhhh. Don't tell anyone.

Noah: You know, I'm having fun. Lots of fun.

Charlotte: Me too! It'll be quiet when you've gone.

Noah: Not with your massive ginormous humungous feet thudding around!

Noah digs around the back of the sofa, he finds a 2p piece and flicks it into Charlotte's glass.

Noah: Save the queen!

Charlotte: You are sooo super immature.

Noah: God save our gracious queen, long live our noble queen, God save our queen!

Charlotte starts drinking her drink very quickly.

Noah: Blah blah...victorious! And she's notorious! Blah blah blah.

Charlotte: Done!

Noah: You're the best! *(Pause)* And very pretty, too.

Charlotte: Yes, I've got nice hair.

Noah: Yes.

Charlotte: And nice eyebrows to be honest.

Noah: You know what time it is?

Charlotte: No?

Noah: 2am. In the morning! You have work in 2,3,4,5,6,7... five hours!

Charlotte: Calling in sick remember. Those twats can shove their warning in their belly buttons.

Noah: Yeah! Girl power.

Charlotte: I am so proud of you, you know. Can I visit you on whatdyamacallit island?

Noah: Ummm yes. Probably yes.

Charlotte: You've inspired me. I want to keep *my* mind in the game. I'm going to write a creative thesis on something.

Noah: Yeah please. That sounds like the best thing ever.

Charlotte: What's happened to the music?

Noah gets up to put some music on.

Charlotte: Not too loud though. Think of our neighbours.

The Chorus sing and play on their ukuleles 'Come Together' by The Beatles.

Charlotte starts dancing in a strange way.

Noah: Why are you dancing like that?

Charlotte: It's called interpretive dance. Try it.

Noah does so

Noah: I feel so free!

Charlotte: Me too!

Noah: You have work soon

Charlotte: Not going... remember?

Noah: Oh yeah. Twats. Aren't they?

They continue dancing. They dance with each other. They dance closer with each other.

Noah: Feels familiar. Nice.

*They are face to face, the **Chorus** stop playing and **Noah** and **Charlotte** break away. They exit.*

Chorus Part 2: Whoops.

Chorus Part 1: Never mind. What will be, will be.

They start to set the scene for the workshop.

Chorus Part 2: Too much liquor

Chorus Part 1: Too little sleep

Chorus Part 2: A concoction of disarray

Saraiya enters

Chorus Part 1: Well, what will be, will be. Ready?

*Chorus part 2 nods and becomes **The Messenger**.*

*Saraiya is sat next to the large block of stone which now has two feet and a right leg, she is eating an orange. **The Messenger** is there fiddling with the tools and appearing fairly restless. **Saraiya** finishes her orange and there is a long pause before she decides to speak. She clears her throat.*

Saraiya: I think I am ready now.

Messenger: You are?

Saraiya: Yes.

The Messenger gets closer to Saraiya

Messenger: How would you like to begin?

Saraiya: Dearest Theo... No, no, not that! My darling Theo... no! To my love... oh no. To my sweet husband. Yes. To my sweet husband.

The Messenger nods.

Messenger: To my sweet husband...

Saraiya: Yes. To my sweet husband, I am keeping well and our child is growing stronger every day... does that sound strange?

Messenger: Is that a question to me, Saraiya, or part of the message?

Saraiya: A question to you.

Messenger: It does not sound strange...

Saraiya: Forgive me. To my sweet husband, I am keeping well and our child is growing stronger every day. He likes the oranges you know? He kicks when I pick them and stops when I eat them, can you believe? I dream of him being a wise philosopher! ...or a noble stone mason! How are you eating? And drinking? And are you working hard? A temple is grand. Your most magnificent materialisation is it not? Do you remember how we used to dream of building a fountain? Or was it a well? Something with

water, I know you will remember of course. (*To Messenger directly*) Is it getting too long?

Messenger: No Saraiya, you can go on

Saraiya: Would you like me to repeat?

The Messenger shakes his head. Saraiya smiles.

Saraiya: And now I have lost my words!

Messenger: You said; ‘something with water, I know you will remember of course.’

Saraiya: Ahhh yes. Your memory is far sharper than mine! (*To Messenger, directly*) that is for the message, I am talking about Theo, although your memory too, is far sharper than mine! And now I am confusing you?

Messenger: (*laughing*) No, you are not. Shall we finish?

Saraiya: Yes! We will finish, next time will be better! (*She pauses for thought*) I do miss you so very much Theo, and every time I hear the footsteps of a man I pray to the universe that you have returned home early. But for now I take pleasure in using your tools; you have a right leg now. I try to remember what you told me to do but I am sure that if you were here you would curse me! I am using blunt tools and forgetting to measure... you must come back and show me how! I am getting big now; you would not want me if you saw me. I look like a bull. And I get sickness, but I am looking after our child. He is loved. Not long now. Will you soon be home? Not long now. I am dreaming of you more

and more, my dreams, they are so real to me. Last night you were holding me in your arms and we were singing together. Do you remember, like we do? I miss our songs, it is so quiet now. We were singing together and we had a bucket of fruit that we were feasting on, everything that you can think of! Oranges, grapes, figs! You said to me ‘nothing is more perfect than this’, I thought it to be true. *(Long pause)* Please send me news soon, you left it too long last time. Ever loving, Saraiya and child.

Messenger: Complete?

Saraiya: Do you think I should say more?

Messenger: Saraiya, as long as he knows you are well then he will be satisfied.

Saraiya: Then, yes, complete.

ACT 2

SCENE 1

*We hear strumming on a ukulele; **Chorus Part 2** enters with a ukulele, finally picking up a tune which turns into Ricky Martin's 'Livin' da vida loca'*

Chorus Part 2: Been gone ten months and, she's missing his aroma. Don't know where he is, maybe Oklahoma. Dust under her nails, hands the colour mocha. Building up his shape, missing his aroma. Missing his aroma. She's missing his aroma

Chorus Part 1: Enough now, enough.

***Chorus Part 2** becomes **The Messenger**. **Saraiya** and the **Messenger** are sat together in the workshop, **Saraiya** is cradling her newly born baby. The statue is almost complete, although looking like less time and care has been taken as the statue has developed, detail needs to be added to the face and torso.*

Saraiya: Is that all?! *(Looks at baby and realises that she has spoken too loudly)*...Is that all?

Messenger: Yes, he had little news.

Saraiya: Can I please hear it again? Can we hear it again?

Messenger: Certainly. Dearest Saraiya, all is well here. My hands are cut and bleeding because we work all day, and I do not remember what it is like to sleep. I don't mind so much though. The Temple is magnificent, fit for the Gods. Tall, beautiful pillars reaching to the sky with script winding around, I don't know what it says, of course. And these grand baths... I helped to create it. I am very

proud. I wish you could see it! They said they want to use my skills again, I am honoured. I do think of you, and long to hold our child. I'm sorry. Be patient. Ever loving Theo.

Saraiya: Theo! Why so short!?

Messenger: It is not about the length, Saraiya

Saraiya: But I want to treasure his words, how can I, when there are but a dozen!?

Messenger: More than a dozen, Saraiya.

Saraiya: As you say so. I am ready.

Messenger: *(a little surprised)* Yes?

Saraiya: Yes. Dearest Theo, we need you back home. I need you. Your last message was too short, and I cannot live any longer on only your words, days old, weather beaten and from another man's lips. I know the year is almost up, and it cannot come soon enough! Only a few more weeks must I wait. You can hold and kiss your child, your son. I tell him about you every day. He loves you. Sometimes his tiny arms reach up to your statue. He knows it is you. I have not yet completed the statue, it looks *(pauses)* endearing. Maybe we can finish it together? The temple sounds very fine. I am glad for you. I miss you, Theo. Come home to me.

Saraiya stops talking and there is a long pause

Messenger: Complete?

Saraiya nods.

Messenger: Shall I stay a while?

Saraiya shakes her head. The Messenger exits, Chorus Part 2 stops playing The Messenger. Saraiya quietly weeps, lights down. She exits.

Chorus Part 2: Tears are the noble language of the eyes, and when true love of words is destitute. The eye by tears speak, while the tongue is mute

Chorus Part 1: Beautiful. Who says that again?

Chorus Part 2: I don't remember. Maybe it was me.

They start setting the scene for the flat.

Chorus Part 1: No, no, it wasn't you.

Chorus Part 2: No, no. Probably not.

Chorus Part 1: She is so tired

Chorus Part 2: Tired of waiting

Chorus Part 1: She must be patient, he will soon come home

Chorus Part 2: Soon enough?

Chorus Part 1: Enough now, enough.

SCENE 2

Noah is sat at his laptop with pieces of paper surrounding him, Charlotte is making a cup of tea.

Noah: Do we have any biscuits?

Charlotte: Got wagon wheels

Noah: That'll do, I need the energy

Charlotte brings the tea and wagon wheel over, sets it down and sits next to Noah.

Charlotte: So what is your conclusion for there not being a face?

Noah: The weathered marble, face eroded after time, could also be an explanation to the disproportionate limbs.

Charlotte: Yeah I suppose... *(Looking at a picture of a statue of a man)* it doesn't look like erosion though...

Noah: I know! That's where I'm stuck... I don't wanna just say something because it's a viable argument...might not... probably not true.

Charlotte: And this... have you seen this on the hand?

Noah: Yeah, and that totally contradicts the erosion thing...

Charlotte: I've seen this before

Noah: It was a pretty popular design in Ancient Greece, not common on statues though... found in jewellery, mostly.

Charlotte: Where have I seen it before?

Noah: Textbooks, museums... you will have seen it before...

Charlotte: Mmmm I dunno.

Noah: I'm ninety-eight per cent sure that it is Greek, yeah it is a Greek statue.

Charlotte: Justification please!

Noah: Well it is made of marble which was commonly used in Greece around the time that this statue is thought to be dated back to.

Charlotte: Ok...

Noah: It has a similar style, albeit somewhat disproportionate, to Ancient Greek figures, the big thighs and all... and of course the design on the left hand... probably not actually erosion... I think it is simply unfinished

Charlotte: Why though?

Noah: Perhaps this guy had to return to Greece, no time to finish it? His tools broke? He lost an arm? I don't know... I'm not too worried about that, just have to get this report finished by the morning...

Charlotte: But aren't you curious?

Noah: Yeah I guess, but am more worried about getting this done!

Charlotte: Of course... yeah... What if it is unfinished for a reason... like a message or something...

Noah: Maybe... but these guys just want to know how it arrived in Germany and the possible route...

Charlotte: Yeah. I'll let you get on then.

Long Pause

Charlotte: How about I cook you dinner tomorrow night? As a little...hooray!

Noah: You don't have to do that!

Charlotte: No... I want to

Noah: Well if you insist. That'll be really nice.

Charlotte: Good. *(Pause)*. Don't forget your tea

They both reach for the mug and it ends up spilling on Noah's t shirt.

Noah: Arrrgghh!

Charlotte: Oh God sorry!

Noah: Oh no it's ok... it's just quite hot!

Charlotte: Sorry, sorry, sorry! I'll get...

Noah takes his t shirt off and Charlotte doesn't know where to look, she blushes.

Noah: Oh that's better!

Noah is oblivious to **Charlotte's** bashfulness and sits back down beside her and carries on typing on his laptop. **Charlotte** continues to sit there for a while not quite knowing what to do.

Charlotte: Right. I'll let you... going for a shower now... if you need help... you know

She exits to the shower.

Noah: Thanks! You've already been a huge help.

He exits.

Chorus Part 2: We are telling you the story, we are not controlling it...

Chorus Part 1: We do not judge, we just present.

Chorus Part 2: But this part...

Chorus Part 1: We wish we could intercept...

Chorus Part 2: ...Interfere...

Chorus Part 1: But that's not why we are here

Chorus Part 2: No.

Chorus Part 1: It would be irresponsible of us not to show you what happened before

Chorus Part 2: You can judge

Chorus Part 1: Enough now, enough.

SCENE 3

Saraiya has her son harnessed to her chest. She is loading a cart on wheels. In the cart is the statue of Theo, cloths and blankets, a bucket of water and various other amenities. She picks up a basket of oranges and puts it in the cart. She picks up a shawl and wraps it around her head. She gives her son a kiss and reaches for the rope to pull the cart along. She leaves with the cart following behind her.

Chorus Part 1: Saraiya has gone in search of Theo

Chorus Part 2: Her true love.

Chorus Part 1: Why could she not be a moment more patient?

Chorus Part 2: But who waits for love?

Chorus Part 1: Well she has, for twelve months!

Chorus Part 2: Well that was the deal. Twelve months, and he would be home.

Chorus Part 1: Where is she going to go? She doesn't know where the temple is...

Chorus Part 2: She knows it is North West

Chorus Part 1: Mmmmm.

Chorus Part 2: But you are not one to make judgement...

Chorus Part 1: No... But if she leaves, she will not see his return

Chorus Part 2: His return?

- Chorus Part 1:** Yes.
- Chorus Part 2:** You remember the impatient fisherman...
- Chorus Part 1:** ...who went down to the river to catch fish for his wife's supper...
- Chorus Part 2:** ...he was there all morning...
- Chorus Part 1:** ...he did not see any fish...
- Chorus Part 2:** ...he was there all afternoon...
- Chorus Part 1:** ...he still did not see any fish...
- Chorus Part 2:** ...he grew frustrated with his waiting and lack of success...
- Chorus Part 1:** ...he did on occasion see a small fish swim by...
- Chorus Part 2:** ...but he chased it with his net until he tripped...
- Chorus Part 1:** ...later on in the evening, his neighbour and his neighbour's son came to the river to watch the sun set and to catch some fish...
- Chorus Part 2:** ...the fisherman was so angry he did not say a word to his neighbour and simply stormed off...
- Chorus Part 1:** ...the boy said 'he seemed angry'...
- Chorus Part 2:** ...'hungry, I suppose' his father replied, 'he should have waited a moment longer for the air to cool, that is when the fish come up to feed'...

Chorus Part 1: ...and as he spoke they heard the surface of the water breaking...

Chorus Part 2: ...and both father and son easily scooped a dozen fish from the river...

Pause

Chorus Part 1: A dozen fish!

Charlotte runs in.

Charlotte: The fish!

Charlotte is in the kitchen cooking and occasionally tidying up. She is wearing a tight dress and high heels. She is having a video conversation with her friend Skye, Skye is in Athens.

Chorus Part 1: Ohhh dear...

Chorus Part 2: Burnt fish?

Charlotte: It's ok... got there in time!

Chorus Part 2: It's amazing the technology these days... On the phone to Skye, in Greece she is... via this... com-pu-ter.

Chorus Part 1: Come on!

Chorus Part 1 gestures to Chorus Part 2 who becomes Skye.

Skye: Oh good, no one wants burnt fish.

Charlotte: Sorry, anyway... you were saying the funding's been cut?

Skye: Yeah so now we are totally relying on volunteers, always risky. I mean if we had volunteers like you all the time then this project would probably be all wrapped up... but we are not that lucky, they are usually all 18 year old knowitalls. Useless. And I'm tearing my hair out, between me and you, I'm thinking of leaving.

Charlotte: What!? You can't! Nothing will get done.

Skye: Well nothing is getting done, I need more support, but the funds have run dry... I'm not sure. You weren't calling to come back were you? Because that might change my mind!

Charlotte: No no...

Skye: Oh come on! Sunny Greece... me... *not* working in a garage

Charlotte: Unfortunately I enjoy getting my pay check each month! No, I was calling about that statue that I did some work on...

Skye: Oh yeah? We've still got it.

Charlotte: Brilliant! I was wondering whether you could take some pictures and send them over to me?

Skye: Yeah sure, why?

Charlotte: Of all angles! Well I want to write a creative thesis... and that statue has continued to play on my mind...so was thinking of including that along with some other stuff...

Skye: Yeah sure, I'll send it in the morning! Creative thesis hey, that sounds great! Once you have put it together you should send it in

to A D S, they sometimes give out big cash prizes for interesting work!

Charlotte: Yeah, hadn't thought about that... thank you!

Skye: So how are things at the garage?

Charlotte: Eugh. Pass!

Skye: Ok. Love life?

Charlotte: Ohhh... nothing...really...

Skye: Nothing really? Is that why you are cooking dinner in a sexy dress and high heels!? Do you have a date!?

Charlotte: No no! I'm cooking dinner for my housemate!

Skye: Noah?

Charlotte: Yes.

Skye: Is it a dinner date with your housemate?

Charlotte: No! Well... I don't know...

Skye: You don't know?

Charlotte: I don't think it is... but it may turn into it...maybe...probably not... I'm cooking tuna steaks and an oriental salad.

Skye: Oh right? Funky.

Charlotte: Yeah I thought I'd do something...cool.

Skye: What's wrong with bangers and mash?

Charlotte: Nothing... but it's not very... sophisticated, is it?

Skye: I thought it wasn't a date...

Charlotte: You know we've kissed already

Skye: Woahh! What?

Charlotte: Yeah ages ago... before I moved in, before anything, we were both in the same bar, quite late, after a few drinks, hadn't even spoken, we just kissed and that was that. Then I moved in, both recognised each other and I think we knew where from but we haven't spoken about it. As if it never happened. Weird really.

Skye: Really weird! So you like him?

The alarm goes on the cooker

Charlotte: Ohhh, I'd better go! Thanks for your help, speak to you soon.

Skye: Oh, oh ok then. Good luck tonight! Tell me all about it! I'll email you those pictures tomorrow.

Charlotte: Thanks! Bye!

Skye: Bye!

*Charlotte shuts the computer lid and **Chorus Part 2** goes back to being **Chorus Part 2**. Charlotte takes the tray out of the oven, pours herself a glass of wine, lays the table, she then goes to the sink to wash the salad. As she is washing the salad the phone rings, it goes to voicemail.*

Noah (recorded): *Hello this is Noah Stephens, I'm afraid I'm not around to answer your call but if you leave your name and number*

I'll get back to you as soon as I can. (Beep) Charlotte? It's Noah. I was ringing to say, don't bother cooking dinner! I'm just at the pub with some mates, think it might be a late one. Hope you've had a good day and catch you tomorrow. If you have cooked, leave it in the fridge, I'm sure I'll love that later. Alright, Bye!

Charlotte puts the salad down, sits down, takes her heels off and pours herself another glass of wine, drinks it then exits.

The Chorus start putting together the workshop scene.

Chorus Part 2: Disappointments in love serve the soul at the very moment they seem in life to be tragedies. The soul is partly in time and partly in eternity. We might remember the part that resides in eternity when we feel despair over the part that is in life.

Chorus Part 1: Ohhh very, very good. Who said that again?

Chorus Part 2: I don't know... maybe it was me?

Chorus Part 1: It wasn't dear, it wasn't

SCENE 4

The workshop, just as Saraiya left it. Theo enters with a sack, he dumps the sack down, he smiles and rejoices in the happiness of returning home.

Theo: My love! It is me! Where is my son?

He looks around and picks up a few of his tools.

Theo: You weren't fooling me, my chisel is blunt. How did you work with this? Where do you keep this statue, I wonder? If not in the workshop? Saraiya? *(Calling)* Saraiya?

Theo: *(Calling)* Saraiya? Saraiya! Perhaps picking the oranges...

Chorus Part 2 becomes The Messenger, he enters, flustered as if he has just been running.

Messenger: Theo! I heard that your ship came in today; I came as fast as I could!

Theo: What a surprise! What brings you here now, my friend?

Messenger: Saraiya..

Theo: I have not yet seen her, I guess she is picking oranges...

Messenger: No...

Theo: No? Then where?

Messenger: I don't know exactly, she told me to...

Theo: Is she ok? Where is our child?

Messenger: He is safe with Saraiya

Theo: But why did she leave? What has happened? I don't understand

Messenger: She has gone in search of you

Theo: Me? But I am here!

Messenger: Yes but she waited until the year had passed and she said she could not wait another day not seeing you and that she must find you herself. There were no messages to give her that you were on your return, I could not deceive her. Her melancholy, I fear, aided her irrationality. She thought it the wisest action she should take. She asked me to deliver you this; Theo, my darling, we could not wait a single second longer. With no words from you in months, and our boy growing so fast, I had to come. I could not sit idle. You told me you are North West, I will stow on a ship, perhaps do the washing as an exchange, I have your statue with me. I will find you, my darling. In the case that you have returned, please send for me any way you can. I love you dearly and long to be in your arms once again. Ever loving Saraiya. She asked me to deliver this as soon as I saw you, I went to the temple but they said you had already left. I came as soon as I could. I tried to tell her to wait...

Theo: Saraiya! Why? I am not there! I must follow her!

Messenger: But Theo, she may return. You should wait for her. I can hold a message so that she can turn back as soon as she reaches the temple, I can wait for her there.

Theo: Yes, you are right... but, you may be waiting months. She does not know the way! I cannot ask that of you.

Messenger: Theo, for one year I have been witness to the love that you and Saraiya hold for each other, the pain that it has caused you to be apart. I feel compelled to help any way that I can. Truly.

Theo: But I can pay you only very little.

Messenger: *(He shakes his head)* this is not my job anymore, this is my commitment.

Theo: Thank you. You are a God among us. Thank you.

Messenger: Are you ready?

Theo: *(He nods)* Just tell her to come home.

SCENE 5

The Chorus set the scene for the flat. It is late in the evening, Noah is sat down, he is using his laptop. Charlotte comes in.

Noah: You're back late...?

Charlotte doesn't reply, she takes her shoes off and dumps them with her bag by the door, she flicks through the pile of letters in her hand and puts them on the side. She then goes into her bedroom.

Noah: Everything ok?

Charlotte: Mmmmm

Noah: Good day?

Charlotte: Crap

Noah: Ohhh. How come?

Charlotte doesn't reply

Noah: Well I was gunna see if you fancied getting a take away?

Charlotte doesn't reply

Noah: Fancy it?

Charlotte doesn't reply, she comes back into the room wearing pyjamas.

Noah: Indian? Chinese? Fish and Chips? Pizza? I'm easy.

Pause

Noah: You choose...

Charlotte: Not hungry

Noah: Oh right. *(pause)* Eaten already?

Charlotte: Just not hungry

Noah: Everything ok? You seem...

Charlotte: What?

Noah: ...tense

Charlotte: I'm fine. Thanks.

Noah: Oh ok, that's good. I'm gunna order a pizza, sure you don't want one?

He picks up his phone and dials a number.

Noah: Last chance? *(pause)* Oh hi. Yes can I get a large American hot pizza please? With barbeque sauce? And garlic mayo. No that's it. Actually I'll get a small Hawaiian as well please. Yes that's it. No thanks. No. No. Yes that's right. It's Flat 4b, High Street. Yeah above the charity shop. Noah. Cheers.

*He puts the phone down, **Charlotte** is cleaning the cupboards.*

Noah: Got you your favourite. Just in case.

Charlotte: Said I wasn't hungry

Noah: Sure you're ok?

Charlotte: Yep

Noah: Why are you cleaning? Now?

Charlotte: Cupboards are dirty.

Noah: Are they?

Charlotte: If you paid any attention, then you'd notice.

Noah: Woah. What's going on?

Charlotte doesn't reply. Noah sits there in silence. There is a long pause.

Noah: Finished my report. Sent it off yesterday. Think they liked it...they emailed back saying it looked promising. *(pause)* I'll hear next week, but it's pretty likely. I feel confident. Can't wait. *(pause)* So what did you end up doing last night?

Charlotte: Not much.

Noah: Have I pissed you off?

Charlotte: Have you pissed me off?

Noah: Yeah

Charlotte: Yes.

Noah: Ok. What have I done?

Charlotte: Nothing.

Noah: What?

Charlotte: You've done nothing. Ok?

Noah: I have no idea what you are talking about. Why are you pissed off?

Charlotte: I just am. I can be if I want to be.

Noah: What? No you can't. Not for no good reason.

Chorus Part 1: There is a thin line between love and hate...as they say...

Chorus Part 2: That is actually true.

Chorus Part 1: Yes?

Chorus Part 2: Yes. Scientifically proven.

Chorus Part 1: I see.

Chorus Part 2: To do with the proximity of the neural circuits!

Chorus Part 1: Alright, alright. Enough now.

*The buzzer in the flat rings, the pizza has arrived. **Noah** picks up the phone on the intercom.*

Noah: Hello?

Chorus Part 1** nudges **Chorus Part 2

Chorus Part 2: Pizza delivery for Noah?

Noah: Yeah I'll be right down.

He puts the phone down, and puts his shoes on.

Noah: That was quick.

*He leaves. **Charlotte** stops cleaning the cupboards. She gets a bottle of wine out and two glasses, she starts pouring. **Noah** comes back in with two pizzas.*

Noah: *(noticing the wine)* Good idea.

The both sit down and start eating the pizza.

Noah: So...?

Charlotte: Sorry

Noah: You gunna tell me why you were pissed off?

Charlotte: It's stupid and not important

Pause

Charlotte: I made tuna steaks and an oriental salad for us yesterday.

Noah: Did you? You shouldn't have! Where is it? I would've eaten it when I got back!

Charlotte: I chucked it.

Noah: What? Why?

Charlotte: I don't know.

Noah: You don't know?

Charlotte: Well, I guess I thought there was no point in eating a fancy dinner on my own...

Noah: Sorry.

Charlotte: Don't be sorry.

Noah: I didn't realise... it ...was a big deal

Charlotte: It's not.

Noah: Well it is. If we are having this conversation, then it is. How can I make it up to you?

Charlotte: Look I'm just being stupid... hormonal or something...

Noah: How about I take you out for dinner. Somewhere fancy. I'll pay for everything.

Charlotte: You don't have to

Noah: Ok...

Charlotte: But it would be really nice!

Noah: Ok! Sorry for pissing you off...

Charlotte: I'm sorry for being so.... Silly.

They look at each other for a few minutes, smile.

Noah: You have a bit of pizza just...

Charlotte gets embarrassed and quickly wipes it off

Charlotte: Has it gone?

Noah nods and kisses her. They pull back, look at each other and start kissing again.

ACT 3

SCENE 1

Chorus Part 1: Do you believe in things happening for a reason?

Chorus Part 2: Well I guess everything has to happen for some reason, otherwise it wouldn't happen?...if there was no reason... reason is a funny word when you think about it. Reason. Reason, reason reason reason!

Chorus Part 1: It comes from the Latin 'rationare' meaning to calculate. And all words are funny if you *think* about them.

Chorus Part 2: Yes! Someone once said something like... 'life is a comedy if you think and, a tragedy if you feel'!

Chorus Part 1: Ohh that is good. Who said that?

Chorus Part 2: I don't remember now, maybe it was me.

Chorus Part 1: Oh it wasn't! (*pause*) 'life is a comedy if you think and, a tragedy if you feel'!

Chorus Part 2: Indeed, it is true!

Chorus Part 1: Wise words, dear. But let us not stray...

Chorus Part 2: Stray?

Chorus Part 1: Yes. We came to consider Saraiya...

Chorus Part 2: Oh Saraiya!

Lights up DSR on Saraiya her son, (now around 1 years old), they are resting by their cart he is harnessed around her body

Saraiya: *(exhausted, singing and humming half-heartedly under her breath, with an orange in her hand) todaaaay is the daaay... da de dum dee... we'll find our waaay, I have faith in...he. Da da da daaa de do de da... (she pauses and stares at the statue for a long while). I don't remember his face. I can't see it. As if every new day that passes erodes one from the past. Oh, I long for the past, I really do. (pause) But then I would not have you, my darling son, my most precious boy. Look at your face, your perfect face.*

Chorus Part 1: Poor Saraiya. Asking every man she meets where her husband is.

Chorus Part 2: Months upon months have passed.

Chorus Part 1: She does not know the way. North West is such a loose direction. She got on the wrong boat

Chorus Part 2: She should have waited...

Chorus Part 1: ...if only, if only...

Chorus Part 2: But she did not! And now exhausted from pulling the cart...

Chorus Part 1: ...laden with cloth and Theo's statue...and exhausted with the needs of her child...

Saraiya: But what life do you have, eh? Walking endlessly through the days and through the nights, you don't have a warm bed, you never have a clean bath, all we eat are oranges

with the occasional offering of bread from a kind soul. We are hauling a cart carrying a stone man without a face. *(pause)* I promised to be a good mother. He said I would. But then again, he also said that he would finish making chairs for the workshop. *(She laughs)* Some things will never happen. *(her child starts to whimper)* Shhh, shhh my darling. Are you hungry? Yes, I am too. *(pause)* Our last orange. Maybe... no, I think we need it now. Shhh, hush now. Soon someone will come and we can ask them the way. For now, we have this delicious orange. Shhhh, shhhh. *(her child continues to whimper)* Come on, no tears. No no no, no tears. Mother doesn't want to hear you crying. Please! My boy, my boy! Look here, look here *(she starts peeling the orange)* can you smell that? That is the smell of home, I know you are fond of it *(her child quietens down)* yes, I know. Oranges! You used to kick me when I picked them and stop when I ate them, because you are wise! *(pause)* There we go *(she has finished peeling the orange and he starts to cry)* No no, hush now. *(she offers him a segment; he wails and waves his arm knocking the peeled orange into the dirt)* Zach!! NO! Look. Look what you have done! Our last orange. Why can't you STOP crying? *(Saraiya's anger distresses him more and he continues to cry, louder)* STOP! *(pause)* Oh what a monster I am! I am sorry my child, my darling boy. Shhh, shhh, everything is ok, everything will be ok. Mother is just tired, she still loves you, she still loves you very much. You are my world, darling boy, my world. We

will be there soon, shhhh. There there, calm yourself.
Hush child. (*He quietens*) good boy, you are a good boy.

Chorus Part 1: An old Man approaches, Saraiya is happy to have found help

Chorus Part 2 becomes the Old Man

Saraiya: Sir! Please, do you know where I might find the new temple?

Old Man: Junge mädchen, was machen sie?

Her child starts crying again

Saraiya: Can you tell me where I can find the temple? The new temple?

Old Man: Ich verstehe nicht

The cries become more difficult to block out

Saraiya: The temple? Theo. My husband Theo! My husband! We are looking for him! We have his statue, I need to see his face!

Old Man: ...tut mir leid... Sie müssen gehen, es ist kalt hier – nichts für ein Kind

Saraiya: I don't understand you!! Sorry. Please just tell me where my husband is!

Old Man: Das Baby weint, Sie müssen gehen!

Saraiya: Baby! Yes! His father! Baby's father! We must find him, now!

Old Man: Verstehe nichts, Ich muss jetzt gehen. Es tut mir leid...

The Old Man starts to leave

Saraiya: No! No! I need your help! I can't do it alone! Please! I need Theo! Help me find him!

Old Man: Ich Weiss nicht was Sie wollen

Chorus Part 2 stops playing Old Man

Saraiya: Please. Don't leave me! I just need to find the temple. *(Her child is wailing)* Please, hush now. We don't need his help. No, we can do it together. I only need you. We will find him. We have made it this far haven't we? I am sure we are so close. I am sure we will arrive soon. Shhhh, please. No more crying, I can't listen to your tears. Come here, come close to me. Shhhh. Come on, no need to be sad. *(His crying becomes louder and turns into screaming)* No no no no, why so loud? No! No more crying. Please. Let us sleep! Shhhh, darling boy quiet now! HUSH! Come now, let's wipe these tears. *(His crying becomes even louder)* Hush now my boy, hush now. *(Saraiya takes a cloth out of the cart to wipe his tears)* Let's wipe these tears, hush now! Hush now!

Chorus Part 2: ...her child crying so...

Chorus Part 1: She doesn't want to give up. She must find Theo.

Chorus Part 2: ...his cries turn into screams...

Saraiya: Please stop my son, I can't hear your screams a second longer, stop!

Chorus Part 1: ...her child crying so...

Saraiya: Stop! Hush now, my boy, hush now. Let's wipe these tears...

Lights down on Saraiya

Chorus Part 2: ...she stops; she gets a cloth from the cart, gently wipes his tears with the cloth and then holds the cloth there

Chorus Part 1: Until the crying stops.

Chorus Part 2: She pulls back the cloth in horror, falls to her knees and cries.

(pause)

Chorus Part 1: Horror shoots through her heart, she vomits. And then carries on, in silence. *(Pause)*. Enough now, Enough.

SCENE 2

Noah and Charlotte are asleep on the sofa together, as if they had fallen asleep there from the night before. Noah is gently waking up, he sees Charlotte, smiles and kisses her forehead, she wakes up.

Noah: Morning

Charlotte: Good morning. Ohhh we fell asleep!

Noah: Looks that way. *(Looks at his watch)* 7 o'clock...

Charlotte: Ohhhh I don't want to go to work.

Noah: I just need a slash and then the bathroom is all yours

Noah gets up and goes to the bathroom.

Charlotte: *(under her breath)* Stupid. Stupid. Stupid.

She gets up and goes into her bedroom, she then comes out at the same time Noah comes out of the bathroom, they collide, laugh nervously.

Noah: Bathroom's free.

Charlotte: Thanks.

Charlotte goes into the bathroom, Noah hangs around outside, Charlotte comes out unexpectedly and they collide again.

Both: Oh... I...

Charlotte: I forgot my towel...I just...

Noah: Yeah, of course... Ummm...?

Charlotte: Yeah?

Noah kisses Charlotte

Noah: I really had fun last night.

Charlotte: Yeah, yeah... I'll just get my towel. Don't want another warning.

Noah: Oh right... course.

Charlotte heads towards her bedroom

Noah: I wasn't just waiting outside the bathroom door by the way, I wasn't listening... I...

Charlotte: It's ok

Noah: Ok. Cool.

Charlotte goes and comes back with a towel.

Charlotte: Look I did have fun last night too. I really did. But...

Noah: But...?

Charlotte: Don't you think it is silly to start something? What with you leaving soon?

Noah: Oh right. Well...

Charlotte: Right. Well...

Noah: Well... let's do something tonight?

Charlotte: Noah

Noah: Bowling? Bowling. Yes. It'll be fun. Come on! We can make up stupid names... Mrs big feet and Mr big head or whatever... come on!

Charlotte: Fine. Bowling sounds fine.

Noah: It's a date! *(Pause)* Well... you know...

Charlotte: Yeah... right I do need to get in the shower though...

Noah: Yeah, go... I'll make you coffee. And breakfast!

Charlotte: You don't have to...

Noah: I know.

Charlotte smiles and goes in the bathroom. Noah starts to make breakfast.

Chorus Part 2: It's the heart afraid of breaking that never learns to dance.
It is the dream afraid of waking that never takes the
chance. It is the one who won't be taken who cannot seem
to give. And the soul afraid of dying that never learns to
live.

Chorus Part 1: Beautiful. Who says that again?

Chorus Part 2: I don't remember... maybe it was me?

Chorus Part 1: No dear... it wasn't

SCENE 3

Theo is carving on a nearly complete statue of Saraiya and their son; he is working on the child's face. He is talking to Saraiya (the statue).

Theo: I imagine him to have your eyes. And I hope he has my nose. Isn't that right my love? You never did like your nose, thought it was crinkled. I love it though. *(Laughs)* When we used to laugh, these three lines appeared on your nose; it's how I could tell you were really laughing! *(Pause)* Do you remember that time when I left the big pot of water in the way and you stepped in it, oh you were so angry with me, chased me around the room until I knocked it over and got us both drenched! Oh how we laughed that day! *(Pause)* What I would give to go back to that day... *(Pause)* Months it has been Saraiya! Where are you? No news, I've had no news. Still, you did always leave me waiting. Take your time on things. *(Pause)* I miss spoiling you. When I build more temples I can buy you gold embroidered cloth, and gold jewels, I want you to have the finest. *(Pause)* It's very lonely here, I don't know how you coped for the year I was gone. I suppose you had our boy.

SCENE 4

Noah's flat. There are piles of clothes, Noah is packing. Charlotte enters and sits down, watching Noah.

Noah: Why is it always so difficult?

Charlotte: What?

Noah: Packing

Charlotte: Come and have a break...

Noah: No I should carry on

Charlotte: Come and have a break and kiss me...

Noah looks at Charlotte and smiles

Noah: Kiss you? What a flirt you are!

Noah sits beside Charlotte and kisses her. They get comfy. There is a long pause.

Charlotte: You know the first time we met?

Noah: Yeah?

Charlotte: It was weird that we didn't say anything. Don't you think?

Noah: What? We did.

Charlotte: No we didn't

Noah: Yeah we did, you buzzed... I let you in...we chit chatted...jammy dodgers...

Charlotte: No no no... the *first* time we met

Noah: That was the first time

Charlotte: No it wasn't. Do you really not remember?

Noah: I don't know, remind me.

Charlotte: It was in a bar... we were dancing... bit tipsy... then we kissed.
(Pause) Then I moved in.

Noah: That doesn't sound like something I would do!

Charlotte: Well you did.

Noah: I do remember

Charlotte: You do?

Noah: Of course!

Charlotte: Why have you never said anything?

Noah: Why have *you* never said anything?

Charlotte: Well...

Noah: Well...? and I did. The *second* time we met I did say I thought we had met before, but you kicked the comment to the side like a smelly rotten egg.

Charlotte: I didn't... I just... wasn't sure at first and then didn't want to make you feel uncomfortable.

Noah: Well now I'm uncomfortable.

Charlotte: Shut up! *(Pause)* Was strange though. Not speaking.

Noah: Yeah I guess...

Charlotte: Why didn't you say anything? Get my number or...?

Noah: Maybe because I knew I'd see you again

Charlotte: Ahhhh, you big cheese ball!

They kiss.

Charlotte: Noah

Noah: Mmm?

Charlotte: I don't want you to go

Long pause

Noah: Bad timing, hey?

They exit

Saraiya staggers on.

Chorus Part 1: The funny thing about time is... there is never enough of it...

Chorus Part 2: ...yet it is the one thing that is endless...

Chorus Part 1: ...it is so valuable...

Chorus Part 2: ...yet so perishable...

Chorus Part 1: ...and often wasted!

Chorus Part 1: ...people say that time is a healer...

Chorus Part 2: ...that time flies when you are having fun!

Chorus Part 1: That there is no time like the present!

Chorus Part 2: But life is not always generous with time, or timings...

Lights up on Saraiya sat against her cart, she is staring at the statue.

Saraiya: I'm sorry. I am so sorry. I didn't mean for any of this. *(Pause)*
Where are you now? Where are you now? I only wanted to find you. We did. We only wanted to find you. Now just me. Forever. I can't return, not to the oranges, not to the stories *(pause)* not to your arms.

She begins to weep

A better life? I don't think so, my darling. Forever alone. Can never go back.

Lights down on Saraiya

Chorus Part 1: Indeed you are right. As Saraiya reached a river, far north of the temple, she sat against her cart, clutching the statue and it was then, her time was gently taken. *(Pause)*
Enough now, enough

SCENE 5

*Noah's flat. There are boxes around, **Noah** is on his laptop. **Charlotte** comes in, dumps her bag and shoes by the door, flicks through the pile of letters in her hand, picks one out, puts the rest down and opens it.*

Noah: Good day?

Charlotte: Yeah actually

Noah: Tea?

Charlotte: Yes please

***Charlotte** is reading the letter, **Noah** gets up and puts the kettle on, he then goes and gives **Charlotte** a kiss on the forehead.*

Noah: What's that then?

Charlotte: Ummm...

***Noah** walks back over to the kettle and carries on making the tea*

Noah: Umm?

Charlotte: Give me a minute!

Noah: Sorry

*There is a long pause whilst **Charlotte** reads the letter*

Charlotte: It's from A D S

Noah: Archaeology Data Service?

Charlotte: Yeah...

Noah: Oh yeah?

Charlotte: Yeah

Noah: What do they want?

Charlotte: To print my work

Noah: What work?

Charlotte: The creative thesis I wrote...

Noah: Hang on... creative thesis?

Charlotte: Yes. I've been writing it at work...It was you, you inspired me to get my mind back in the game and that statue that you did your report on fascinated me ...my mind was buzzing and I decided to write my own report on it, with a sort of twist.

Noah: Charlotte, that's...amazing. What was the twist?

Charlotte: Well I mean there is no concrete evidence for anything that I've written, but I sort of ...believe it...

Noah: Why didn't you tell me about this? I can't believe I didn't know this... tell me...

Noah brings the two cups of tea over and they both sit down.

Charlotte: Ok, you remember that statue that you had to write the report on for your new job?

Noah: Yeah I do

Charlotte: Remember the pattern on the left hand, and me saying that I had seen it before?

Noah: Yeah, I said it was popular...

Charlotte: Yeah. Well I *had* seen it before. On the statue that I was working with in Athens. The one of the Mother and child.

Noah: Really?

Charlotte: Yes. In the same place. Same design. It got me thinking that maybe they are connected, despite all of the logical and geographical reasons why they are not. I think those designs are the equivalent of what we have as wedding rings today. I think it's a love story.

Chorus Part 1: She thinks right

Chorus Part 2: She explains Theo's departure

Chorus Part 1: She describes Saraiya's long and lonely wait

Chorus Part 2: She concludes that Saraiya's boredom delivers the incomplete and unskilfully carved statue

Chorus Part 1: She figures that Theo's love drives him to sculpt what was missing

Chorus Part 2: In the absence of flesh, they had rock.

Charlotte: I know they could have never been reunited, hence why the statues end up in different countries.

Noah: That is so sad. Why would he leave her?

Charlotte: I guess he did what he thought right.

Noah: I'm so happy for you! Getting published in A D S.

Charlotte: Yeah, funny. *(Pause)* So are you all packed then? Passport? Jabs? Everything?

Noah: Yeah, all done.

Charlotte: Good.

Charlotte folds the letter and puts it in her pocket

Noah: My little beautiful Einstein! You are so smart.

Charlotte: If only. If only...

Lights down. Spotlight DSL, Chorus sat on metal buckets.

Chorus Part 1: They never did know the complete story...

Chorus Part 2: ...But they felt it

Chorus Part 1: If only, if only...

Chorus Part 2: ...the woodpecker sighs, bark on the trees was as soft as the skies. The wolf waits below hungry and lonely, and cries to the moon, if only, if only.

Chorus Part 1: Beautiful. Who says that?

Chorus Part 2: I don't remember. Maybe it was me?

Chorus Part 1: It wasn't dear! *(Pause)* Has this not happened before?

Chorus Part 2: It has, it is and it will. The fools we are, the fools we are.

Chorus Part 1: Enough now, enough.

END.

**SHAPING THE STORY: ESTABLISHING THE WORLD OF THE
PLAY THROUGH DRAMATIC STRUCTURE**

‘...a playwright is a poet disguised as an architect...’
(Hatcher. 1996. P79)

It is no chance or twist of fate that in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Hamlet kills Polonius in thinking it was Claudius, nor was it an accident that Mag forgot to tell Maureen about Ray’s invitation to a party in McDonough’s *Beauty Queen of Leenane*; these were carefully calculated decisions that enabled the plot to embellish the story;

‘The structure of the play and its forward drive are essentially bound up with the lives and actions of the protagonists. A small detail you have inserted into the exposition – a piece of information, a chance remark, a seemingly innocent action – can have huge repercussions later on in the play. What you are doing is laying fuses and planting unexploded bombs.’ (Greig. 2005. P107).

Everything that happens in a play is important to the story. The design and structure of a play does not allow for miscellaneous business, however the less extravagant details or mechanisms that propel the story are often not noticed until the end, if at all.

Steve Waters discusses the similarities of building a play and building a building in his book *The Secret Life of Plays*. He says;

‘Both architects and playwrights produce blueprints for a work they will need others to realise and that will be achieved through a myriad of compromises and acts of persuasion; both rely on powerful social institutions to bring their private visions into existence; both produce a form of public art, even though the architect strives for permanence and the Playwright’s work by definition is ephemeral.’
(2010. p 193)

He then goes on to say that ‘The best work of a playwright as architect is where there is a struggle between the elegance of structure and the raw feeling of what it contains.’ (2010. p196). This thesis will explore how the world of a play is exposed through the carefully calculated and formed structure of a play. Jeffery Hatcher makes an interesting point about plot in relation to the audience, he says; ‘...When an audience recalls a play, what stays in

their minds more than anything else is *what happened...*' (1996. p22). I would like to consider how the playwright makes that happen, already having likened a playwright to an architect, I would now like to parallel the work of a playwright to that of a detective; the beginning starts with the basic story, what it is about and briefly what has happened, the playwright must then work backwards to unfold exactly how it will happen, how they can contain the fluidity of the story within the solidity of the structure. I will use my thesis play, *What Remains* as the central case study and consider how the process of redrafting may change the external and internal movements of the play and the story.

‘Story is one kind of structure, one method of making plot. It’s one way a playwright can organize actions, characters, and thoughts. It’s one of the most effective ways for a writer to structure an action and render a plot.’

(Smiley. 1971. p 122)

Some playwrights claim that their plays are formed from a strong sense of character, single action or theme. The premise for *What Remains* began with the nuts and bolts of a story; many people have their own variations of the definition of a ‘story’, I think George Pierce Baker sums it up quite nicely. Smiley quotes Baker saying; ‘...In treating drama, what should be meant by story is what a play boils down to when you try to tell a friend as briefly as possible what it is about.’ (1971. p 101). *What Remains* is about a couple from six hundred BC, madly in love; the husband, a stone mason, must travel for work but the promise of the couple being reunited is given. Whilst the husband is away, his wife discovers she is pregnant; through boredom and longing she uses her husband’s tools to sculpt a statue of him; he then later commits to sculpting one of her. Thousands of years later archaeologists are given the challenge of identifying these statues, whilst working closely together two archaeologists develop a romantic relationship that mirrors that of the couple from six hundred BC. The stone mason does not return when he says he will so his wife takes their child and goes in search for him; through her despair she ends up

completely alone. This was, and still is, the skeleton of the story and what acted as the foundation for *What Remains*.

Everything that happens in a good play, or that is said in a good play is important and essential to the story and indeed, to the plot. The playwright must decide on the smartest way to let the story unfold. The first draft of *What Remains* was cluttered with unnecessary characters, dialogue and action; the first draft saw a cast of eleven, it now has a cast of six – five redundant characters made their way into the first draft. Tim Fountain, in his book *So you want to be a playwright*, discusses the importance of story and how the scenes make the story happen. After the first draft he explains a technique in breaking down the scenes and labelling them on postcards, stating the main action of each scene. He says;

‘Having encapsulated each of your scenes on postcards and laid them out, you might want to change the order around...it is important to keep all your options open. You must still be willing to ask yourself the big question about whether a character is actually required, if the narrative is going in the right direction, or if you really need the plot strand or sequence of scenes.’ (2007. p 66)

This was a process that was undergone in the revisiting of the first draft; the challenge of two storylines playing alongside each other proved difficult to execute in a succinct way; the present day scenes were especially problematic. In the first draft the present day scenes involved Noah and Charlotte *and* two other archaeologists; William and Skye, as well as two professors. Originally, the archaeologists were on a site in Greece where Theo and Saraiya lived in six hundred BC. On reflection, William and Skye did not add anything to the present day scenes because what it actually boiled down to was Noah and Charlotte’s journey which the other two had no part in. The professors were characters created purely as functional characters; there needed to be a way of delivering the task of identifying the statues;

‘Professor Evans: Ok. This is all very good. Now your project, if you choose to accept (*he chuckles at himself*), you must explain this statue. There have been countless works and arguments and suggestions but I want you to give me a story on it. Be creative. Be accurate. Think outside the box. I adore this statue. It was found around forty years ago, and when I first started out, like you two, I was asked to find out what it was all about... because it is a bit of a mystery really. But I couldn’t, it stumped me. Fascinating piece of work, but I couldn’t get much further than that. Now I know there are resources upon resources of information and guidance, I’ve brought a handful with me today (*gestures to the piles of books*) so I expect nothing less than a feasible reasoning for this woman and child! Everything clear?’ (Extract from the first draft of *What Remains*)

This extract is from the first draft, we see Charlotte and William arrive in Greece and the professor introduces them to their project; the statue of Saraiya and her child. Noah and Skye join them later on, whereby they bring the statue of Theo into the project. After re-reading this version, it seemed apparent that the play was straying from the core of the story and allowing actions and set ups to be obvious, which in turn neglected the dramatic tension that is vital in a play.

‘We have seen how a play is ‘about’ a subject matter (the major arc of a story) and ‘about’ a theme (a universal human concern). These are lined by something that lies at the heart of every story; some major question or proposition about human life and activity. It is never spelled out for the audience, but the writer must be clear what that is, for it is the foundation of the play and the reason for writing it. It can be expressed in a clear, one sentence statement. The outcome of the story and its theme will answer or prove/disprove the major questions or propositions. A major question that the story of Macbeth asks might be; ‘If we reject our better instincts in order to pursue our desire for earthly power, do we forfeit our right to spiritual salvation.?’ (Grieg. 2005. pp. 170 – 171)

The question that is at the centre of *What Remains* is; If we are so fascinated with learning about the past to understand our future, why do we often make the same mistakes? The play looks to tackle the ideas and notion of colliding worlds, history and stories repeating themselves, also observing the patterning of the past onto the present. The play follows two time periods that mirror and advance with one another and is explored through a prism of a romantic relationship. The Chorus act as storytellers and guide us through the different times and places, updating us on the status of the story where necessary. These points were

important to hold against the first draft and ask if they had been achieved. In act two, scene three, Charlotte is Skype video calling Skye, someone she worked with previously (played by the chorus) this is the updated scene in which one of the statues is introduced.

‘Charlotte: No no... unfortunately I enjoy getting my pay check each month!
No, I was calling about that statue that I did some work on...

Skye: Oh yeah? We’ve still got it.

Charlotte: Brilliant! I was wondering whether you could take some pictures and send them over to me?

Skye: Yeah sure, why?

Charlotte: Of all angles! Well I want to write a creative thesis... and that statue has continued to play on my mind...so was thinking of including that along with some other stuff...’

(What Remains. p 45)

Divulging the information this way provides a less instant answer for the audience which heightens the tension and suspends the satisfaction. The inclusion of the four other characters in the present day scenes in the first draft confused and redirected the journey of the play, detracting focus from Noah and Charlotte. Steve Gooch talks about the importance of retaining focus to the central conflict of the whole plot, he says;

‘Even more important, as far as the structure of the play is concerned, is that the specific conflict of the scene, the site of each particular crossroads, is in some way connected to the central conflict of the whole play and carries it forward. Problems of structure frequently arise when new scenes or unexpected developments accrue around, say, the storyline of a particular character, but these take the play further and further away from its original focus. It is the central conflict, the one announced in the first scene, which the audience needs to remain in touch with...’

(1988. p 74)

The first scene is crucial in directing the audience in the way the playwright intends to go; the first attempt at writing the first scene for *What Remains* achieved nothing of the sorts. The decision to have the Chorus opening the play was important because they directed the story throughout and their characters speak directly to the audience, offering something that the other characters do not. By beginning with direct address it seemed that it would

not disturb the fluidity of the more naturalistic scenes, as it may have done if it were introduced later on. The first version of scene one saw the chorus speaking quite poetically:

‘ Chorus Part1: To Dream the face I know so little of
Chorus Part2: Once blind to rhythms and letters above
Chorus Part1: Flooding my body with these woeful aches
Chorus Part2: Pour the tears of joy and those of hate
Chorus Part1: But soon cast away to their rightful place
Chorus Part2: These silenced desires for this unknown face
Chorus Part1: To unwrap and reveal for all to see
Chorus Part2: Lies a gift only for you and for me
Chorus Part1: This gift is knotted to strings of my heart
Chorus Part2: To untie has no one dared played the part
Chorus Part1: Thriving in vague sense of intimacy
Chorus Part2: The unwanted to define what it may be
Chorus Part1: This face so clouded yet clear as the sea
Chorus Part2: In truth I long the reason to why you are here with me’
(An extract from the first draft)

This opening proved to be problematic because it limits the immediate accessibility for the audience and is slightly ambiguous in its meaning, as well as not following a strict form. The wish for the Chorus to speak in a different way to the other characters was essential to distinguish the different spaces, times and expectations. The most recent version of scene one retains a lyrical element to the Chorus’ voice but also implements meaning and direction;

‘.... **Chorus Part 1:** No. We are sharing wisdom, advising, counselling...
Chorus Part 2: Because...?
Chorus Part 1: Because this thing called love...
Chorus Part 2: Ahhh. This thing called love! *(Pause)*What about it?
Chorus Part 1: Well it is a tricky business.
Chorus Part 2: The trickiest business!
Chorus Part 1: Quite right. The oldest business, a human business.
Chorus Part 2: No no no, with business... it is... sensical! With love... well... it is more like an incurable human condition...
Chorus Part 1: Yes! An incurable, on-going, never changing condition!
Chorus Part 2: An uncontrollable condition!
Chorus Part 1: An unreliable condition.
Chorus Part 2: A foreseeable condition.
Chorus Part 1: One in which we pity
Chorus Part 2: And one in which we fear
Chorus Part1: Enough said now. Enough.’

(What Remains. pp5 – 6)

The re-written dialogue remains ambiguous however is easily understandable and offers a direction for the play, the simplest thing the audience can deduce is that it is about love. The Chorus report to the audience what has happened or what is happening in instances where the audience cannot see for themselves. Meisel, in his book, *How Plays work*, talks about the power of indirect seeing. As an example he discusses the beheading of Maria Stuart in Schiller's 1800 tragedy, he argues that the power lays in the choice of having the event reported as it is happening, instead of a re-telling of the event as something that has happened in the past; 'What charges it with as exceptional dramatic intensity is the situation of the reporter and the immediacy of his witness.' (2007. p 49). At the beginning of act three in *What Remains* the chorus report the event of Saraiya muffling her child with interceptions of the live event they are describing; instead of the chorus reporting the event fully, there are moments when it is happening in front of us. This scene has been experimented with a lot during the process of re-writing; the first draft saw the chorus simply reporting the event however the impact of that wasn't strong enough as the chorus themselves couldn't build up enough tension. The question was posed 'If this is the biggest action, the climax, of the play, then why are we not seeing it?' this was taken on board and as a result a monologue was written for Saraiya which built up the tension and had a far more intense impact, however this was still unsatisfactory. The Chorus needed to be there reporting it, by borrowing elements of a Greek tragedy it seemed sensical that the Chorus would report the events. If we look at *Medea* and the part where she kills her children, Euripides has bound the reporting of the event with extracts of the live event. It begins with Medea setting up what she is about to commit: '**Medea:** Friends, now my course is clear: as quickly as possible To kill the children and then fly from Corinth...' she then goes into the house and the chorus continue:

‘ Chorus: ...Why must this rage devour your heart?
To spend itself in slaughter of children?
Where kindred blood pollutes the ground
A curse hangs over human lives;
And murder measures the doom that falls
By heavens law on the guilty house.

A child’s scream is heard from inside the house.

Chorus: Do you hear? The children are calling for help. O cursed, miserable woman!

Children’s Voices: Help, help! Mother, let me go! Mother, don’t kill us!
(1963. pp55 -56)

The splitting of the revelation of action adds layers to the tension and pushes the notion of no going back because all of the characters are involved in executing this event. This is something that was implemented in the scene of Saraiya muffling her baby;

Chorus Part 2: ...his cries turn into screams...
Saraiya: Please stop my son, I can’t hear your screams a second longer, stop!
Chorus Part 1: ...her child crying so...
Saraiya: Stop! Hush now, my boy, hush now. Let’s wipe these tears...
Lights down on Saraiya
Chorus Part 2: ...she stops; she gets a cloth from the cart, gently wipes his tears with the cloth and then holds the cloth there
Chorus Part 1: Until the crying stops.
Chorus Part 2: She pulls back the cloth in horror, falls to her knees and cries.

The difference between *What Remains* and *Medea* in these scenes is that in *Medea* the act is explicitly said numerous times whereas in *What Remains* it is never said, it is just the action that is stated, not the outcome. This was important because I wanted the act to be so unbearable that none of the characters could bring themselves to say ‘the child was killed’ or phrases of a similar stance.

What Remains borrows techniques, forms and style from Greek Tragedy, implementing a three act structure then takes that taste of a Greek Tragedy even further.

Aristotle, in *The Poetics*, presents the notion of the three unities; time, place and action

along with the three act structure. The three unities is less common in new writing,

however the three act structure or the three *part* structure remains a dominant principal in structuring a play. Smiley, among many other writers, supports this, he says;

‘Since drama is a time art, it naturally needs a beginning, middle and an end. These three elements mean more than just starting a play, extending it, and stopping it. A functional beginning and end imply wholeness and completeness; a middle emphasizes full development.’ (1971. p 78)

What Remains adheres to the three act structure. The play quite logically could have been divided into two acts, as the running time of the whole piece is around one hour and forty minutes, and pragmatically it may have made more sense to do so. The first draft saw two acts which did not jeopardise the distinction in beginning, middle and end. However the two acts felt rather heavy and disorganised without giving the audience pause for reflection or thought. The re-assembly of the acts, to include a third provided some complications.

Steve Waters writes;

‘Acts are the largest units of representation within the play, and give form to the great sweeps of thought that underlie the action. There’s an excitement that accompanies the end of an act – the curtailment of the action, the lurch forward into an unknown future. The act break is the opportunity for the playwright to exploit surprise.’ (2010. p 32)

The placing of act one and two has not changed however the stakes had to be altered slightly in order to exploit the element of surprise. The three states that direct the Theo and Saraiya story are; in act one Saraiya is pregnant and Theo must leave, in act two Saraiya has her child and is alone, in act three Saraiya muffles her child. The only surprise and challenge in expectation comes between act two and three, between act one and two we

already know that Theo is going to leave and it is soon after revealed that Saraiya is pregnant. The solution seemed to be to raise the stakes slightly, therefore Theo proposes an early arrival in act one, scene four; ‘...Do you talk to him about me? I hope you do. If not, please do. I said I’d be back within the year, but I must try my best to be with you for the birth. I can’t let you do it alone....’ (pp22 -23) This instigation gives Saraiya hope that he will be home sooner than planned. At the end of act one Saraiya dictates a message to the messenger (we are aware that she could give birth soon) she says; ‘...I am getting big now; you would not want me if you saw me. I look like a bull. And I get sickness, but I am looking after our child. He is loved. Not long now. Will you soon be home? Not long now...’ (pp33 -34). Following this positive and romantic promise of hope, we return in act two to Saraiya and the messenger, Saraiya now with her born child. The messenger has just delivered a message from Theo and Saraiya is displeased;

Saraiya: Is that all?! (*looks at baby and realises that she has spoken too loudly*)...Is that all?
Messenger: Yes, he had little news.
Saraiya: Can I please hear it again? Can *we* hear it again?
(*What Remains. p 35*)

The addition of Theo suggesting an earlier return enabled there to be a change in state, one in which the audience could not totally prepare for, which supports the placing of the act break. Repetition and balance are themes quite central to the story; which should be reflected within the frameworks of the play. *What Remains* uses the number three in many ways to highlight the balance and repetition; using time and space as key structural choices, there are three times and spaces established; 600BC, present and all time coupled with Ancient Greece, England and everywhere/nowhere, of course 3 different couples inhabit these spaces and time. Edgar discusses in his book *How Plays Work*; ‘...In all plays, the plot is expressed through a structure, in which the narrative is organised into

segments of space and time.’ (2009. p 99.). The three act structure contributes to the play as a conveyer of meaning; not only setting the audience up for a tragic climax, by pulling on the craft of Greek tragedy but it also provides another layer to the symmetry of the structure, plot and story. *What Remains*, although committing to three different times and spaces, retains a linear structure of time. The Chorus deliver information and update us in what has happened in between the scenes allowing us to feel that a lot of time has passed, yet still adhering to the linear structure of the play. David Edgar explains how stretched time in a limited space is ‘...expanding the play’s duration beyond real time to a longer but defined and confined period...’ (2009. pp99 -100). The stretched linear time frame adds to the fluidity of the events and text and allows us to understand that more than what we are shown has happened before and throughout the play. The only slight disturbance to the linear time frame is the two separate plot lines, however they are interrelated and run parallel with each other, sometimes seeping into one another.

The fluidity of the events and the sinuous rolling of time helps to create small but satisfying set ups and pay offs; the scenes are established by the one before it and almost fall off of the back of each other. In Act two, scene two, Noah and Charlotte are discussing the statue that Noah must write his report on, they mention that the statue does not have a face and that it was found in Germany but has resemblance of Greek artwork. In the scene following we see Saraiya pack up with the statue and leave, giving us the answer to how it (probably) finds itself in Germany. The worry of giving too much away too soon is ever present especially so early on in the play, however it is also important for the audience to connect the two worlds in some way without it being directly and too obviously presented later in the play, as a result of running out of time to unfold the story. Edgar says; ‘The backstory is not something we need to know before the present tense story can begin; it’s

revelation *is* the drama because it brings about what happens in front of us and what will happen after the curtain falls.’ (2009. p 30) the revelation of the past in *What Remains* is vital to the audience’s understanding, the chorus act as our guide through the two stories and so we should know more than the characters know, however to supply dramatic tension there must also be a conformation with the reversal of fortune; ‘Reversal of the situation is a change by which the action veers round to its opposite, subject always to our rule of probability or necessity.’ (Aristotle. 1997. p 20). Aristotle defines tragedy to have the element of a reversal of fortune, from good to bad. This has been implemented through subtle choices and actions within the play. Again in Act two, scene two, Charlotte says to Noah ‘*How about I cook you dinner tomorrow night? As a little...hooray!*’ (p40) this then leads to Charlotte preparing dinner for Noah, however she is sadly let down when Noah decides to stay out:

‘Charlotte takes the tray out of the oven, pours herself a glass of wine, lays the table, she then goes to the sink to wash the salad. As she is washing the salad the phone rings, it goes to voicemail.

Noah (recorded): *Hello this is Noah Stephens, I’m afraid I’m not around to answer your call but if you leave your name and number I’ll get back to you as soon as I can. (beep)* Charlotte? It’s Noah. I was ringing to say, don’t bother cooking dinner! I’m just at the pub with some mates, think it might be a late one. Hope you’ve had a good day and catch you tomorrow. If you have cooked, leave it in the fridge, I’m sure I’ll love that later. Alright, Bye!

Charlotte puts the salad down, sits down, takes her heels off and pours herself another glass of wine.

The Chorus start putting together the workshop scene.

Chorus Part 2: Disappointments in love serve the soul at the very moment they seem in life to be tragedies. The soul is partly in time and partly in eternity. We might remember the part that resides in eternity when we feel despair over the part that is in life. ’

(*What Remains*. pp. 47 – 48)

The set up followed by a payoff is structurally satisfying and climactically rewarding; the reversal of fortune that we see above brings in another layer of tension by challenging our expectations of what will happen. This disappointing reversal also echoes the disappointment that Saraiya experiences when we witness her waiting for Theo to return for the birth and he does not do so; although the mirroring of this in the present day action is far less monumental, the essence of neglect remains.

Smiley talks about multiple stories within one plot and argues the error in the word ‘sub-plot’; ‘Since plot is the total, inclusive organisation of all materials and activities in a play, there can be no such thing as a sub-plot.’ (1971. p 113). He says:

‘A writer may or may not use the element of sub story in a play. Sub stories usually include all, or most of, the elements of main stories, but being subordinate, they don’t require so much detail. For a sub story to contribute to a main story, it should involve some of the same characters, and its climax should come before or during the major climax in the main story.’ (1971. p 113)

The sub story in *What Remains* is the present day story between Charlotte and Noah; this indirectly involves characters from the past through the placement of the statues. Much like in Stoppard’s *Arcadia*, characters are indirectly involved in the present day scenes from the story from the 1800s through the papers and journals that are being investigated. Both *What Remains* and *Arcadia* have a similar structure; the different stories alternate and progress within a linear time frame. Mirroring and repetition happen within both plays which tie the sub story and main story together and helps create this world of echoes and history repeating itself. An example of this from *Arcadia* is in act one, scene three when Lady Croom comments on the piano being played badly:

‘Lady Croom: ...what is that *noise*?
The noise is the badly played piano in the next room’ (1993. p 35)

In the next scene this happens again but in the present day;

Valentine: Very hard to spot the tune. Like a piano in the next room, it's playing your song but unfortunately it's out of whack, some of the strings are missing, and the pianist is tone deaf and drunk – I mean the *noise!* Impossible.' (1993. p 39)

This is very clever echoing and linking of the stories. *What Remains* instills similar techniques to connect the past and present scenes and to encompass a world of the past patterning on the present. The first scene with Theo and Saraiya is where we discover that Theo is leaving and it is the last time we see them together. The scene is full of love and playfulness:

Saraiya: Kiss me.
Theo: Say it again?
Saraiya: Kiss me.
Theo: You want me to kiss you! What a flirt you are!' (*What Remains*. p7)

This scene then progresses to Saraiya asking Theo to recount the time that they first met. Near the end of the play (act three, scene four) we witness this sequence of actions being played out by Noah and Charlotte, neatly tying the stories together:

Charlotte: Come and have a break and kiss me...
Noah looks at Charlotte and smiles
Noah: Kiss you? What a flirt you are!
Noah sits beside Charlotte and kisses her. They get comfy. There is a long pause.
Charlotte: You know the first time we met? ' (p68)

The placing of the scenes at the beginning and end of the play act as bookends to the cyclical nature of history repeating itself.

A problem that arose during the process of writing the first draft was how to make the two storylines equally engaging. For a while the story from six hundred BC was far more interesting than the present day story. The idea of an audience being half interested in the play is not a comforting one. Paul Castagno discusses the troubles when having more than one protagonist; he says ‘...the playwright who establishes several characters at the core of the play continually faces the problem of focus. Multiple protagonists may blur the central action of the play.’ (2001. p 53) This is something that *What Remains* encountered, the present day scenes were compiled with irrelevant actions and *four* protagonists which only hindered the story. The audience are introduced to the play by the Chorus who remark that they will talk about love, naturally when we arrive at the first scene in the present (it was between Charlotte and William, William now an abandoned character) we assume that William and Charlotte were going to fall in love or there would be some sort of love triangle between them and Noah, which indeed was not the intention. However this expectation was created through the characters being equal in status, all of them being central to the present day scenes. The solution to this was to extract all of the unnecessary action, and in turn this also erased characters, making the story simpler and clearer to follow, giving strength to the protagonists; Saraiya and Charlotte. Although there are still two protagonists, I think it important because of the two separate story lines.

Planning the world of the play isn’t just about the theoretical structure or the foundations laid down on paper, the thought to the frame, the structure that the audience will see is also of great importance; the set, stage directions, the space that the audience sees the characters in. Waters explains that; ‘The inner concerns of a play are revealed by its geography and by its spatial shifts, because behind all such shifts lie journeys with moral implications; going somewhere else, or even just staying put, requires a choice to be made.’ (2010. p 58). Both

stories take place in the character's homes. Exploring the theme through a prism of a romantic relationship meant that there would be moments of intimacy that may not be plausible in a public space, private spaces seemed essential. The concern of two different settings is still somewhat of a hurdle; the decision to have two settings, although simple in set, does disrupt the fluidity of the stories. The initial wish was to have the Chorus building the scene each time to reiterate their stances of the storytellers, crafting everything and quite literally building the story, which is later re-enforced when Chorus Part 2 takes on different personas, i.e. the Messenger. However, practically it may be challenging and distracting to the action. *Arcadia* also has two storylines, one in the past and one in the present, however Stoppard accomplishes the fluidity of both time periods by running them in the same space:

'The action of the play shuttles back and forth between the early nineteenth century and the present day, always in the same room. Both periods must share the state of room, without the additions or subtractions which would normally be expected...during the course of the play the table collects this and that, and where an object from one scene would be an anachronism in another (say a coffee mug) it is simply deemed to have become invisible.' (1993. pp12 -13)

This is a very successful staging choice, both artistically and pragmatically. It combats the chaotic need to move things on and off stage between scenes and it is also sensical to the play; because the space that the characters are living in is the same house, only years apart. It adds to the thoughts and ideas of ghosts and the intertwining of the past and present. Perhaps an option for *What Remains* would be to follow a similar path and to have both spaces present onstage, but only occupying half of the stage.

Finding a solid structure for the play to enable the story to breath and stretch in was the first hurdle to cross when writing *What Remains*. Organizing the sequence of events and the timing of events was important to have firmly put in place; this made making decisions

about small details and characters, which raised the stakes of the story, easier to comprehend. The concreteness of the structure was especially important with *What Remains* due to the two separate storylines. The craft of playwriting is an entirely complex art, and the external and internal structures of a play are especially impressive when executed successfully; ‘Coincidences are most striking when they have an air of design.’ (Aristotle. 1997. p 19).

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