



*From us to you: 19 stories from leading playwrights for
people across the UK to record*

SILENCE

By Zinnie Harris

Cast size: 1

This play is suitable for: One Person

STEP 1: REHEARSE

- Make sure you have enough people for each part or maybe you could play multiple parts.
- Try to learn all your character's lines, if possible.
- If you're looking for some guidance, check out our [How To... videos](#). We've brought together a bunch of the best actors and directors to give you their tips and advice on how to make the best film you can.

STEP 2: RECORD

- Use a phone to film your performance or record directly on your Zoom or video chat platform.
- Record your performance in well-lit spaces so we can see you clearly but avoid standing right in front of a window on sunny day, and remember to keep private items out of view.
- Try to cut out all background noise by closing windows and doors.

STEP 3: UPLOAD

- We would love to see your performance. To upload your recording to us, click [here](#).
- Please **do not share** your recording on YouTube or other similar platforms. This is so we can keep all the recordings in the same place and to respect and honour our writers' copyright and publication permissions.
- We will be creating a film of each script from the videos submitted.
- We want this to be something everyone can take part in so please do get in touch if you have any access requirements or if there is anything else we might be able to help with.
- If you are having difficulty uploading your recording, please get in touch with us via email: admin@theatre-centre.co.uk or phone: 020 7729 3066.

HELP US SPREAD THE WORD

- Recommend to a friend by inviting those you know to rehearse, record and upload their own performance.
- Encourage others by using [#ImagiNation19](#) on your social platforms. State what play you have performed but remember to not share your recording publicly.
- Thank you for being part of ImagiNation.

Silence

by Zinnie Harris

This is a short piece about two women, family and an unlikely friendship. It came out of watching and thinking about the women in my life, how we are all trying to survive lockdown in different ways and how little we know of anyones life behind closed doors

Two meters apart is wide enough for us.

Two streets apart, two cities.

We aren't friends, are we?

We walk past each other, and you cross the road. Good I think. Thank god we can hid behind this.

I know your coat, how fake the leather sounds. I know your fringe like it was my own. I know you get the ten past eight bus on Tuesdays because I make sure I get the later one. I know you smoke. You drink red wine because I can see it sometimes on your teeth. I'm not a creep but somehow I study you.

You hesitate in the street slightly, and I think perhaps you were going to say something after all. You stop. I stop.

You blow at your fringe.

But it wasn't me that had your attention, but the old man behind me. You wave at him in his garden and walk on.

Sometimes I spit after I see you. Sometimes I have to go inside and wash my mouth. Sometimes I look in the mirror.

I never cry.

The kids tell me you go to your allotment every day, you are good with plants; you put things in a pot and they grow, and then you put them on the table. You eat the peas? I ask them, raw? They taste ok when they come from the ground, my eldest tells me. Hooray I say.

I look at my shop-bought vegetables in a pan of salty water, Hooray I think.

I walk past the allotment later, I am going that way anyway, and I wonder which one is yours; the one that has beans and courgettes already up perhaps or the one with a set of chairs and a rainbow flag? Yes that would be right, or maybe the messiest one of all? That somehow just says this is a place you can be. I imagine you and all the kids, dirty hands and faces

and looking at things as you pull them up. I can imagine you kneeling down and showing the youngest a little worm you just found in the earth.

I come home and I buy cut flowers from Tesco's, even though I have to queue, which I put in a jug.

After the clapping I walk round the block. I'm on my own and want a walk. I go your way I don't know why, I could say I have to drop something off for the kids but I don't. I go your way because that's the way my feet take me. My feet take me places and I go, that is the only rule I have these days. You're outside in the street. Smoking. And I know you have given up smoking but this being-too-long-in-the-house is killing us all. I know I am drinking.

I am ready to cross the road and walk the other way but there is something new in the way you are standing. You are holding on to a railing like it's the only thing keeping you up.

And I look at you for a second, and you wipe your eyes on your sleeve and you sniff and then you turn away.

But I remember that look.

I remember that way of holding on, and the way it felt like the whole world would slide if I let go.

Chrissie, I say, but you've gone.

I don't see you the next time I drop the kids off. You are usually in the background, or making the tea. Moving around, being.

And I don't see you at the bus stop.

Is Chrissie ill? I ask the kids. No they say. She hurt her hand. How did she hurt her hand? She dropped something on it.

And I remember the way I told my mother I had shut my foot in the car door by accident.

And the way I told my boss that I had been sick.

I find you at the allotment. Chrissie? I say as I stand by the gate. You don't hear me, you are out of ear shot and busy putting canes in the ground.

I remember once being shut in a room all night while he raged outside the door.

Chrissie?

Sleeping in a hotel bathroom because I was scared to come out.

Chrissie?

Then you see me. You come over

Why are you always watching me? you ask.

It takes me aback. Because you are beautiful I say. Because if I were him, I would have chosen you too.

You scoff. You're cleverer.

I got away, if that is clever then –

You laugh at that. A laugh that is like the morning sun. Then you stop, suddenly; the laugh is hurting you. You put a hand on your side. And I know it wasn't that funny. No joke is that funny. And when you lift your head and look me, there is something else. For who else in the all the world would know like we know?

He has a temper.

Of course he does.

He doesn't mean it, and after he is sorry.

You don't have to tell me Chrissie. I know the sorry.

It's just the lockdown, he is stressed as all hell. He might lose his job -

And I nod.

You blow at your fringe. You hesitate but there is no more to be said.

You go back to your beans then. I go back to my house. I walk the long way home.

Next time I see you in the street you don't cross the road. You don't wave to the man behind me. You hesitate, then you stop. You stand and turn.

And when I catch up we walk - two meters between us - in silence for a while.

ImagiNation is a co-production between Theatre Centre and Theatre503

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