

PILLOWTALK

A collection of plays for two (or fewer) voices.

Hayley Sophie Scott

*a note to the actor(s)

pause. – a pause.

beat. – a pause with feeling. a moment.

... – a pause with feeling. a moment. a sense of searching for something to say, or expressing something that could be said without saying anything.

The original production of this piece took place sometime between sunset and sunrise in a double bed with white linen. One of the pillowcases had a small stain on the bottom right-hand corner, but the director opted to use it regardless, for the sake of authenticity.

CHARACTER LIST

.....

.....

YOU

You ever just look at someone and think, like, yeah. You're the one. I'm gonna be with you forever.

?

Yeah, you.

FALSE HOPE

Do you think false hope is better than no hope?

False hope doesn't stop me sleeping.

PUNCHLINE

I think I'm going deaf man.

WHAT?

That's not how that joke works.

NOTTING HILL

I'm just a girl, standing in front of an empty shop front, asking that it not become another pret.

SOL

((heads on pillows.))

What are you smiling at?

Nothing –

Nah I'm not gonna say it, it's embarrassing.

Tell me!

Nah it's just, it's just funny how stuff works out you know. Cause, like, last year when I was here, I remember lying here and, you know, wishing you were next to me.

And now here you are.

ATTENBOROUGH NEEDS TO HEAR THIS

crosses legs.

You see these animals?

Yeh.

See how, how the rangers have taken them away.

...

Like, drugged them and stuff, and taken them away and then brought them back.

Yeah.

?

Well. You know when people say they've been abducted by aliens. Like, is that what the animals think?

Mate.

Maybe that's what happens to humans. By aliens.

Nah don't.

sinks deeper into sofa.

Maybe we're all being watched and tracked by superior beings.

We're not superior to animals.

Nah, nah I don't think so either. We're pieces of shit. I just mean superior in terms of capabilities. Like, you don't see lions coming in and drugging us so that they can look at our teeth.

Teeth?

That was just a random example.

uncrosses legs. sinks also.

Right.

smiles.

beat.

But, like, when the animal gets back, do you think it thinks it's been abducted by aliens?

Yeah maybe. I mean, it sort of has.

their feet almost touch.

**LIKE STABBING A CAN WITH A KNIFE,
REMOVING EACH CHICKPEA INDIVIDUALLY THROUGH THE HOLE,
UNTIL YOU THINK,
I SHOULDN'T HAVE BOTHERED TRYING TO OPEN IT**

I do this thing sometimes.

What?

Sit and just, sort of, think.

I think everyone does that.

No, no. I know. It's just...

What do you think about?

...

You brought this up.

I know.

...

...

Forget it then.

b r e a t h .

?

I think about conversations.

Right.

Like, conversations between me and you.

Okay. What are we saying?

Lots of stuff.

We're having a conversation right now, you know.

Yeah, yeah I know.

So, why do you think about them, why not just have them?

I don't know. I feel like it's not that simple.

* * *

I'm always so eloquent in my head. In my head I'm always the one talking. I always know what to say and I always say it. I guess cause I have control. They're loaded answers aren't they, that I'm giving, because I'm in charge of the conversation from both ends.

I think I like the version of you in my head more. I understand them. I can make them laugh when they're sad and give them advice that is helpful but never patronising. I can talk to them about anything. I can tell them when I'm nervous or sad. I can tell them that I care about stuff without having to take MDMA. I can kiss them. I can hold their hand as we're walking and know that they'll squeeze it.

Maybe I don't prefer that version of you.

But I definitely prefer that version of me.

lights up.

YOUR GRAN or THAT BABY OVER THERE, SLEEPING

Come on!

No. Get to fuck. No way. I'm not answering that.

Oh come on! It's all hypothetical!

No! It's horrid.

Come on babe. If you had to.

beat.

Bullet to your head.

Don't –

hand up.

Bullet to your head, who would you punch?

b r e a t h.

NOTTING HILL PT. 2

I'm trying to find a way to tell you how much I've missed you without sounding completely pathetic.

It's very, very nice to see you.

~ SPOILER ~ YOUR LIGHTER IS IN YOUR OTHER POCKET

I guess I just got it into my head that -

That what?

That you'd changed your mind. I don't know, like, that maybe you'd stopped caring.

...

...

Are you serious?

b e a t.

I quite literally could not care about you more if I tried.

Jesus I'm honestly almost at the point of obsession. Like, I am so horribly, horribly invested in caring about you. And I truly, truly thought you knew that. Like - It's so embarrassingly obvious.

And I thought, you know-

What?

Well I thought that it was too much, you know, for you, for what we were supposed to sort of be, so I, you know -

Dialed it down a bit.

But I'm telling you, babe -

b r e a t h.

given that we don't actually know each other that well, relatively speaking, and, given that we haven't really spent all that much time together and taking into account the impossible amount of distance between us right now -

all of these things considered -

I'm as close to being in love with you as I possibly can be.

And there is no way in a million fucking years that I would be telling you this if it wasn't for the fact that you're upset because you think that I don't care about you.

Because I would rather be honest for once and get my feelings hurt if it means you're safe in the knowledge of just how unbelievably fucking brilliant you are.

b e a t.

b e a t.

I'm gonna go for a cigarette.

12.36AM

((*head in hands*)) Aww man, I've got the spins.

Oh no.

I think it was all the sharing and talking about my feelings.

I think it was the bottle of £4 Pinot Grigio and the half joint you smoked.

groans.

PILLOWTALK

Okay –

If we were on a plane, right, and the oxygen masks came down from the roof, I would help you with yours before securing my own –

and you're not supposed to do that, but I would do that –

for you –

and probably my mum –

but no one else.

* * *

I dunno –

for ages I thought it was your eyes, you know? You've got proper beautiful eyes. Or your hair.

Or your body or your skin.

But now –

I dunno –

I think it's your voice.

Is that weird?

It's your voice I think about.

The most, anyway.

BONES

((february. cold.))

Did you talk to her?

...

?

Yeh, I did.

Good, nice. How was it? Do you feel better?

Why are you asking me this?

?

stares.

I'm just asking. You said you were worried about it and we had talked about it so I'm asking. I'm being a good friend.

No you're not.

What?

You want to know if I ended things with her.

Well yeah but –

You want me to have ended things with her.

I'm lost.

I can't keep doing this to you.

No. Come on, don't do this again.

I'm leading you on. It's not fair on you.

/

No, actually no, fuck this. This! This is what isn't fair. You always do this. You're the one. You're the fucking one who said you wanted to be friends and that's what I'm trying to do.

I'm hurting you.

This (!) is what's hurting me. Every time I get comfortable, thinking we're in a good place, you switch. You get weird and try and ruin everything.

I'm not trying to ruin everything. I'm trying to do the right thing! And not let you get hurt.

Well you're not doing the right thing! I'm not saying you're purposefully trying to hurt me but I'm telling you that you are. You trying to not let me get hurt is the principal source of pain in my life right now.

And I'm not a child you don't have to stop me from getting hurt.

I don't think you're a child.

It sounds like you do.

I just think that you're gonna end up getting hurt and I don't want that to happen.

Stop saying that.

Because you want something that I can't give you.

Fuck you.

I know this is hard for you I wish it was different -

Fuck you. You don't get to decide that.

Decide what?

...

What !

You don't get to decide if I'm in love with you.

...

...

I didn't –

Yes. Yes you did. You are. You do.

...

Stop it.

I, I didn't know that's that what I was doing. Fuck. I'm sorry.

It's fine.

No. No it's not.

It's fine. Just, just stop it. Okay. Please.

I will. I promise I will.

Cause I don't know how we're ever gonna be able to be friends if you don't trust me.

I do trust you!

You have to trust that I'm not in love with you.

Okay.

That I'm fine with this.

Alright.

Cause it makes me feel shit and weird when you do stuff like this.

I'm sorry.

Yeah, well, it's okay, just, stop it.

I'm sorry. You're right I'm sorry.

Cause it makes me feel like you don't even want to be friends. Like, this is how I am as a friend, this is how I 'be friends' so I feel like you maybe want it to stop.

No. No it's not that.

Do you even still want to be friends?

Yes, yes of course. Of course I do. I, you know, I love you – I love being your friend. I just didn't want to –

Shut up.

Okay.

I love you too.

Yes.

As a friend.

I know.

Right.

Okay.

...

I'm gonna go inside.

Cool.

Are you coming in?

Yeah.

You can have a minute if you like.

I don't need a minute.

Sorry.

No don't be. Sorry, I'm sorry. That was weird, that's all.

I know, I'm sorry.

It was like we broke up.

I don't know why I do that to you.

It was like we broke up and we weren't even together.

It was my fault. Please, please just forget it.

But now I feel weird.

It's my fault.

I don't really know why I feel so weird.

I should go inside.

I'm going to come as well.

Okay. Good.

//

You want to know if I ended things with her. You've wanted to ask ever since we spoke about it.

Well yeah but –

You're desperate to know.

Fuck off no I'm not.

You want me to have ended things with her.

I was really just asking.

You've been waiting on me telling you that I called it off ever since that night we spoke on the phone.

What are you trying to get at here?

Tell me.

I'm lost.

Tell me that you want me to have ended things with her.

Okay(?)

...

I want you to have ended things with her.

Why?

What?

Why do you want me to have ended things with her?

...

?

Well, because you said the situation was getting too serious and freaking you out, and I don't want you to be doing anything that freaks you out or makes you unhappy.

Right.

Is that okay?

Is that really the reason?

I don't understand.

I mean, that's a reason for me. Like, that's why you wanted me to end it, for my own benefit.

Yes?

Okay.

You're being weird.

Okay. Ignore me.

Alright. Crazy tits.

Shut up. Do you want a beer?

Always.

///

I mean, that's a reason for me. Like, that's why you wanted me to end it, for my own benefit.

Yes?

Okay.

You're being weird.

...

?

You're lying to me.

What?

You're not telling me the truth.

That is the truth!

You're not telling me the whole of the truth.

The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth!

Don't –

You can't handle the truth (!)

...

Not even a smile.

...

I thought that was quite funny.

I need you to be serious for a second.

...

I need you to be honest with me.

I am being honest with you.

Please.

Why are you –

Because you never say anything. You never say what's actually in your head. You say that you're fine, even when you're not, and you laugh everything off and just smile and deflect any attempt at serious conversation –

ouch –

- and you always encourage me to open up. And tell you things. You always listen and give me advice and tell me to talk about my feelings because you say it's good for me, which it is! I know it is. But you don't do that. You never talk. You never actually say what you feel. So now I'm forcing you, I'm pulling it out of you. So tell me.

I don't know what you want me to say.

Look at me.

looks. something.

Tell me how you feel. When you look at me.

Stop this.

Tell me.

Why are you doing this.

Please. Baby.

Don't do that.

Say it.

...

It's okay.

I can't.

It's okay.

I don't know why I can't.

I know.

I'm sorry. I'm so so sorry.

Hey, hey it's okay.

I never meant –

I know.

Shit.

Hey, it's okay.

I can't do this I need to go.

It's okay, it's fine.

I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

Wait –

I'm sorry.

////

You want to know if I ended things with her.

Well yeah but –

You want me to have ended things with her.

I'm lost.

I can't keep doing this to you.

No. Don't do this again.

I'm leading you on. It's not fair on you.

Fuck this.

I'm hurting you.

...

I'm trying to do the right thing! And not let you get hurt.

...

I don't think we should see each other anymore.

Fine.

I'm sorry.

Don't be.

I'm gonna go inside.

////

So now I'm forcing you, I'm pulling it out of you. So tell me.

I don't know what you want me to say.

Look at me.

looks. something.

Tell me how you feel. When you look at me.

When I look at you –

closer -

smile -

closer –

I never want to stop.

PILLOW-

((internally))

Before my phone alarm vibrates on the pillow next to my head I am awake because I have not been closing my blinds, recently. I used to never open them, the blinds, in my bedroom at home. Now I don't close them. The blinds. In my bedroom at home, in my bedroom in my flat, in hotel rooms. I leave them open with the hopes that the light that floods into the room in the morning will waken me in a more pleasant fashion than a phone alarm vibrating on the pillow next to my head could. Would.

I relish the time in the morning. The moments that I have of my present self's day before the day that belongs to yesterday's self begins. She has laid out a fairly productive schedule, one that I would rather not be a part of. It's full of filling kettles and scrubbing dishes that she has left out *to soak* with the consideration that I would rather do them after having had a good night's sleep –

((externally))

bitch

((internally))

- it involves cracking eggs and deciding what shoes to wear and mouthwash, which stings. It involves cling film. It constitutes me trying to maneuver my bike out of my hallway, through the door and into the stairwell whilst simultaneously keeping our front door open, in such a way that it's facing the way I need it to go and also making sure the back wheel doesn't bash against 2/1's front door, before squatting down and lifting it over my right shoulder, ensuring that I don't pull my headphones out in the process and making sure I hold it correctly, otherwise the front wheel will spin around and the handle bars will hit me in the face. Yesterday's self has asked me to cycle to the gym and to do twenty laps of the pool – because she knows it will make me feel better - giving myself time to shower, wash my hair and change before the day's errands begin.

Yesterday's self is all about time.

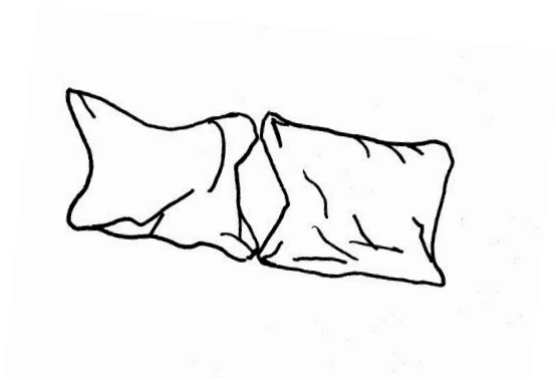
But right now, I have my time, before hers starts.

I want to stay here, on my back, with my head turned to the left, looking at the imagined version of you that I went to bed with. I want to snooze contentedly, calmly, without the silent yet monopolising mechanical seconds encased within the phone on the pillow next to my head ticking by. I want to lace my fingers together, disconnecting five of them from my body and attaching them to yours. I want to propel myself forwards or backwards through the thick, grey fog of time that has encased me to the last or next time that there will be twenty fingers pulling at sheets, twenty toes poking out from the end of the duvet. Four hands grappling around for the phones on the pillows next to the heads.

I want to tell yesterday's self to fuck off and surrender to me. Nothing on the schedule is vital. It can be put off. I need to brush my teeth, but not as much as I need to breathe.

But, this is a Monday attitude, and today is Thursday. Time, once again, is against me. Today my selves must align.

beep b e e p. beep b e e p.



APPROXIMATELY 2.15PM ON A SUNDAY, 14 HOURS IN

I didn't know you had a cat.

...

...

I don't.

cat exits SL.

ANCHOR ME DOWN, HONEY

I'm anxious.

Why?

I don't know.

Are you anxious about anything in particular?

No. I don't think so.

Right.

But I'm anxious. I feel really, really anxious.

Okay well, here.

What?

Take my hand.

Why?

I don't know. I just feel like maybe it will help to hold onto something.

pause.

You could grab that lamppost instead.

No.

It will probably have the same grounding effect that I'm trying to achieve.

takes hand.

The lamppost was a bit dirty. And it was maybe too thick.

You are better than a lamppost.

I think I'd like that as my epitaph.

...

...

Thank you.

Anytime.

hand grips tighter.

THE BALCONY/IS THIS WHAT COUNTS AS ROMANCE NOW?

***LIKE THE BALCONY SCENE BUT WITH MORE ILLICIT SUBSTANCES**

((a frenzy of kissing – optional))

I had a dream about you when I was away.

Oh yeah?

Yeah.

What kind of dream?

...

Was it a sex dream?

...

Yeah.

Was it good?

Yeah. Yeah, really good.

Did I make you cum?

In real life or in the dream?

((kissing pauses))

...

Yes! Fuck yes!

((frenzy of kissing resumes – again, optional))

You're fucking perfect.

You're a really good kisser.

Most beautiful thing I've ever seen.

This is therapeutic.

Addictive.

Don't let go of me.

I can't.

YOU (REPRISE)

You ever just get something in your head and think, like, yeah. This is it. This is the thing. This is what I want. And before you know it, it's completely overtaken your thoughts, you think about it all the time and you're like, yeah, I would give anything for this. I'll never, ever not want this.

?

Yeah, a mayo chicken.

EVERYTHING IS COMPLICATED BUT EVERYTHING IS SIMPLE

I don't really speak to them anymore.

Why?

I'm not sure, really. We had a sort of argument. I don't really know what about. We drifted, you know? And then we just sort of stopped talking.

That sucks.

Yeah I guess. I kind of do that with a lot of people.

What, completely stop speaking to them?

Yeah, sort of.

Good to know.

I'm not very good at maintaining relationships.

I can't do that.

Do what?

Stop talking to people. Cut people out. I hate the idea of people leaving my life.

Really? Sometimes it's healthy though, don't you think?

Yes, yes completely, I just can't do it.

You don't really fall out with people, do you?

No, not really. I tend to be quite relentless in my friendships. I'll always reach out. Like, if I want to talk to someone, I'll text them or whatever. Even if I know I probably shouldn't. I'm not particularly cool with that kind of thing.

There's nothing cool about isolating yourself.

This is true.

I mean, there's a reason why you have so many friends.

Yeah I guess I do have kind of a lot of friends.

People appreciate effort.

...

...

So, if you wanted to, could you just, like, cut me out of your life?

I mean, I guess so.

And you wouldn't find it hard?

No I would find it hard. Of course I would. But this is all hypothetical. I don't want to cut you out of my life so I'm not going to –

Okay right. Like, we haven't argued or anything.

No. Exactly.

But, see, I don't really do arguments. I can probably count the amount of arguments I've had in my life on one hand.

Okay –

So, so what if I were to just stop reaching out. If I stopped texting you or calling you. Would you try and keep this going?

I don't understand.

Would you, I mean, like would you actively try and keep me in your life?

Of course I would. Why are you asking me this?

I just. You say that you drifted. With these other people. And you miss having them in your life, I can tell. I can tell you do by the way you speak about them.

Okay, well, so what?

So. So what's to stop us from drifting?

Babe –

I mean it. What if one day you just stop replying? What if you cut me out?

Do you really think that I would do that to you?

...

?

I don't know. I feel like I don't understand how you work. And usually that's okay but sometimes, I don't know, it freaks me out.

...

Like, the idea that you could disappear, that you could kind of get over whatever this is and go. But I'd still be left, like, missing you.

beat.

That was embarrassing I wish I'd never brought this up.

Hey, hey it's fine. I'm glad you did. Sometimes it's important to voice this stuff, you know?

Yeah. I guess.

You're worrying about something that isn't happening.

I know.

We're very much part of each other's lives.

Yeah.

I don't want you to disappear from my life. And I don't want to disappear from yours.

HEAVY

((on a wall, sitting.))

b r e a t h.

Before you say anything, just, don't.

SONNET 18

Have you ever been in love?

Yeah, once.

How was it?

Fucking awful.

they both laugh.

BED

breath.

There are pages and pages of you stuffed underneath my bed waiting to be pulled out unravelled and spilled onto my bedroom floor you are in every word seeped into the paper like the ink some parts rushed some meticulous all you there are letters some go on and on and on page after page detailing every moment not skipping a single detail they would never fit in an envelope there are goodbyes and explanations there are songs that are not good there are apologies long rambling attempts to account for my behaviour excuses confessions there is an explanation for why I was about to do a thing that I never did it

breathes, deeply
beneath my bed

I used to go to bed with them every night cradle them tightly as I tried to fall asleep and dream about them when I finally did dreams of digging up the words from the earth and holding them out to you and you taking them and smiling and showing me flowers in dreams the pages of you become whispers touches laughter

now

I sleep above them, on top of them
until I can be certain that they are memories of how I felt, and not reminders of how to feel

closes eyes. nighttime.

I'D GIVE IT TILL MARCH

((outside, looking in.))

How long do you think a Christmas tree can be left up in someone's window before you have to start seriously entertaining the possibility that they might be dead?

TISSUE

((on a bed. or the side of a hill. either is fine as long as there is sunlight.))

Have you got any scars?

Yeah, two. Here –

shows.

looks.

And here –

shows.

looks.

Wild. Can I touch it?

Go for it.

How did you get it?

I was swimming in a lake when I was little. There was this old, rickety pier that you could climb up and jump off.

Fun!

Yeah, it was so so fun. Like something out of a film, you know? Anyway, I was climbing up it and cut my leg on a sticky-out nail.

Not fun! Tetanus!

I know! It was fine though. My Dad flung me over his shoulder and ran me up to the car. I had to get stitches. No tetanus though.

Thank god for that. Was your Dad freaking out?

I don't know. Probably. He never shows it if he is though, you know? Typical Dad behaviour. He's good like that.

Yeah. I get you.

beat.

Do you see your Dad much?

Eh, nah. Not really. I see him at Christmas. And birthdays. That's about it though really.

Do you get on?

Sort of yeah. I mean, yeah we do.

...

We just don't talk very much. When we do it's always fine. It's just, you know, yeah, we just don't talk that often. It doesn't bother me though.

That's good then. As long as it doesn't bother you.

Yeah exactly. And I know, you know, if I ever like needed him or needed anything from him he would help me out, like I'm sure he'd be happy to. It's just, you know, I've got other people that I would probably ask first.

Like your brother.

Yeah exactly, my brother, my aunt and uncle, friends etc. And my Mum. My Mum is amazing. Don't really need anyone else with a Mum like that to be honest.

Have you always lived with her? Like, did you ever live with your Dad?

Nah, nah we always just lived with my Mum. We never did shared custody or anything.

beat.

I've actually never been to his house.

Oh wow.

Yeah I know. That sounds weird. But, I don't know, it's what worked for us.

Every family works differently.

And I don't think he ever asked us to go.

There's not really a right or wrong way to do things in that kind of situation.

Exactly.

He never asked you to go?

Not that I remember. And he could still ask me now, and he doesn't. I think he's scared I'll say no.

Do you think you would?

I don't know. I've never really given it any thought.

It could be a good thing to do.

Yeah maybe. Although now, like now that it's been so long, I think it maybe would be weird.

Yeah I get you.

beat.

Do you have any scars?

Nah, none.

their feet touch.

CURTAIN CALL

And suddenly -

everything I read became about you -

every song –

all of it.

...

...

b e a t.

Are these about me?

