

Road

A Short Play by Camille Intson

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CHARACTERS

THE MAN IN THE PASTEL SHIRT	Male.
THE GIRL READING <i>HAMLET</i>	Young female.
THE BOY WHO IS SMILING	Young male.
THE WOMAN IN THE HAT	Female.

BOY and GIRL do not imply that the characters must be a certain playable age, moreso that they are noticeably younger, both physically and in the attitudes in which they present themselves onstage, than the actors cast as MAN and WOMAN.

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SYNOPSIS

Four strangers on a train wander inside and outside of each other's consciousness, all suffering from the same condition: love.

HISTORY

Road is the first place winner of the inaugural Newmarket National Ten-Minute Playwriting Competition. The play was first developed with The Grand Theatre in London Ontario under the directorial support of Jeff Culbert, Megan Watson, and dramaturge Lisa O'Connell. A staged reading, choreographed by Watson, was presented at the Grand's Annual Playwrights Cabaret in the McManus Theatre in January 2017. *Road* was an official national selection for the NewMarket National Play Festival in July 2017, directed by Sean O'Brien. *Road* was also performed in Vancouver, British Columbia for Tomo Suru Players' 'About Love: a Festival of Short Plays,' directed by Davey Calderon.

ON TIME SIGNATURE

Road was written with a very specific rhythm and time signature. Its mechanical pace is integral to the flow of the piece.

ON SET

Be liberal with boundaries of time and space.

Act One

*We are on a train.
A GIRL sits with a pen and a copy of Hamlet.*

GIRL And so
I find myself on a train on a track on a road writing notes in the margins of a book,
Waiting.
Everybody else is doing the same thing
The train is moving forward
Jolting, sometimes
So I just keep waiting
And they wait too

The man to my right wears a pastel shirt
The train smells
The boy right across from me is smiling
He looks out the window
He looks back to me
No one speaks
On steps a woman in a hat carrying luggage
She takes her seat to the left of the boy smiling,
directly across from the man in the pastel shirt

BOY The woman in the hat has nice tits

GIRL The boy smiles again

WOMAN The man in the shirt is breathing too loud

GIRL And we're all going the same way

MAN And the girl to my left reads

WOMAN The girl to the left of the man in the pastel shirt —

BOY The girl reading *Hamlet*.

GIRL The woman in the hat carrying luggage is smiling into her phone

BOY The woman in the hat carrying luggage is in love

GIRL I've always liked Hamlet because

WOMAN The girl reading *Hamlet* is writing in the margins

BOY Like rewriting history

GIRL Well, because I think —

MAN I bought some rollerblades yesterday

WOMAN The girl reading *Hamlet* doesn't say a lot

BOY None of us say much at all

GIRL “Though this be madness, yet there is method in't.”

MAN I was in the mall the other day and I bought this new shirt
 It's a great shirt, I know
 Great shirt
 I went with my daughter
 She needed some things for school and I ended up with this shirt
 But later as we were leaving I saw some rollerblades in the back of Sportcheck
 So I had to stop and buy them too
 One-sixty a pair
 I've never rollerbladed once, but Theresa rollerblades down by the pier in the summer
 That's what Theresa does, rollerblades down by the water
 I used to play hockey
 I can skate
 I can do this too

WOMAN The man in the pastel shirt smells like Axe

GIRL The man in the pastel shirt's phone keeps going off

BOY I'm never going to Toronto again

The WOMAN's phone rings. She looks at it. The others look with her. She puts it down.

MAN So I'm walking down the mall stretch with a bag of brand new rollerblades and a helmet
 and some wrist pads
 I told Kathy I couldn't love her anymore last week
 I'd never thought of getting married after Marion
 Crazy
 We went out four times

I mean, Theresa and me
I said to her
“I feel like a schoolboy!”
And my daughter called me a mush
I still love Kathy, I told my daughter
I cared for Kathy so deeply
But I saw Theresa at the Coach last week and I thought,
Here we go again

WOMAN He flies me first class

BOY I’m never going to Toronto

GIRL And the man in the pastel shirt looks away

MAN I remember happiness, when I was small, like the boy who is smiling next to the girl
reading *Hamlet*

BOY I started smoking pot because
Fuck it
I get depressed, right?

WOMAN First class with a bottle of champagne

GIRL The boy smiling locks eyes with me

BOY My girlfriend, or, *ex*-girlfriend Olive smoked
Actually she was pretty into edibles but
She comes from a family of super cool rocker stoners and I liked being there
I hate my family because we’re pretty small
We go to my Nanas for every holiday and Nana is like
Christ
Everything’s a secret
Grandpa was sick? That was a secret
Chris got into drugs a couple years back? I think he’s clean now
My family doesn’t talk

MAN I can’t let this thing with Theresa go, but Kathy —

BOY I loved her

GIRL Wait! Where are you going?

MAN Theresa

BOY Olive isn't with me anymore

WOMAN I got attacked by a homeless man at the train station

GIRL What? At this station, here?!

WOMAN No, back in Germany
I'm living there temporarily now
I was living with Peter but he was crazy
Seriously, belligerently batshit
Anyways I meet Aaron and I move out
Thank God
But Aaron's family lives in Minnesota
His dad works at the airlines and he can fly me down first class
Mom lives right outside London now
She's retired but she picks up work at the old school
When I come down, we go to Buffalo and shop for days and lie to the border
guards about the goods we're bringing back

MAN So I left Marion when
I couldn't do it right?
I come home from work I see her in the kitchen and
Nothing
That's why I left
Nothing
Kathy? Same deal
Nothing

GIRL Nothing?

BOY Look outside
Look at the track

GIRL What?

WOMAN Peter played hockey, owned a place up in East Germany
We met back when I was a student
I got a job at an International School to be with him
I just you know
Moved out there
But then he went batshit

Seriously
He left to go to Vermont
I mean what the hell's even in Vermont
Called every day at six in the morning
He'd go nuts if when I didn't answer
Then my best friend Alexis came up for the summer and was like
"Hey, you realize this guy's crazy right?"
And I was like oh yeah I guess
And me and Alexis drive around Austria for a couple days
And also Prague but we don't like Prague because there are rats in the streets
We didn't see the Opera or anything like that
And I met Aaron and he sent me flowers when he left
So I you know
Decided to move out

BOY The track

GIRL The track
What about it?

BOY Where do you think the thing ends?

GIRL What do you mean?

BOY Seems like it just keeps going, you know?

GIRL The road?

MAN My daughter comes home on a train
A couple times a year now

WOMAN, (*distracted from her phone*): Road? What road?

MAN She'll be home for the summer

BOY You know, I loved Olive
She was a crazy bitch but I'm pretty sure I loved her

GIRL Well I don't know
It's got to end somewhere.

MAN Unless he's right, unless it keeps going

GIRL But even then —

WOMAN I could see myself having his kids

GIRL Haven't you only met?

MAN My daughter says to me one day, she says
"I don't want children!"
And I say, "what?"
And I start crying because
The most beautiful thing was being with her at the park when she was two
And she wouldn't want to swing, she would just read license plates

BOY I'll die before I have children

MAN And I say, just because your mom
Just because Marion and I
Didn't work
Having a life partner — well that is everything! Right?
I got so worked up I don't know what she said
I couldn't listen
I can't
I don't

GIRL Is it?
Is it everything?

BOY, (*looking out the window again*): So long —

MAN I told my daughter that I didn't want to age alone and that she shouldn't be so proud
And that I want grandchildren

BOY So I get to Toronto and Olive's living in this shitty little apartment
That's a mess by the way
Random shit everywhere
Which is fucked because Olive told me that she had Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and
a lot of anxiety with depression
Kind of like me with my depression except I'm on meds and
Is she on meds?
She might be on meds
So I start going to see a therapist but this girl
She starts calling me when my family's all together for dinner and I have to leave to calm
her down and

She named my Nana's cat, did I tell you that?
She named the fucking cat

MAN My family loved Kathy but
They'll love Theresa like they loved Marion

WOMAN I'm thinking we could have a destination wedding
I'd quit my job, sell my apartment, live down there with him

GIRL And you'd do all that?

MAN Theresa says she wants to buy a new house, but I mean
I told her to hold off because, you know
If things worked out we could get a place together
We're going on a fifth date this Tuesday and I told Kathy about it and she got upset but
she shouldn't because we'd never work out —

BOY So I head up to Toronto early this morning because I've been wanting to end it
And I get to her apartment which as I said is a mess
Shit everywhere
And I sit down to tell her that it's done and she knows it and I know it and it's so fucking
obvious
But we start talking about *talking* and, the second I go to tell her we're done, she —

MAN My daughter won't understand until she's married, until she has a child!

GIRL What if she doesn't? What if she doesn't ever?

MAN She will!

WOMAN I know I will

GIRL: And you! (*to WOMAN*)
You'll quit your job, sell your apartment?!

BOY And she looks at me with these wild eyes and
I'm about to end it with the first girl I've ever loved —

MAN Love, that's the end of the track!

GIRL No!

WOMAN It is, I can see it!

MAN How long have we been on this train?

GIRL Exactly! So long!

WOMAN: I can feel it

GIRL And longer still!

MAN Love

BOY I still can't see the end —

GIRL What if there is none?

WOMAN And now I'm flying first class to him

MAN When I was married
I picked up cheap women all the time

BOY And I fucked her!

Beat.

BOY Fucked her so hard!
Fucked her 'till she *bled*, that's how hard I fucked her!

GIRL "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

MAN Marion and Kathy, they didn't like making love
It made them feel young and they felt so old
When God puts me in the ground, I still won't feel like that

WOMAN Aaron and I, we made love in Prague
I didn't even think of the rats

GIRL "There are more things..."

BOY Then I told her we'd be better friends and she said, yeah, we would

WOMAN So he told me to get on this train

BOY So I dumped her and got on this train

Road

GIRL “There are...”

MAN So I’m heading back home on this train

BOY Home
That’s where it ends

WOMAN: Home is where he is.

GIRL “There —

MAN And we’ll get a home together and I’ll do it up with furniture and expensive frescoes and table chandeliers

WOMAN We’ll be home together

BOY You know, I think I could fuck this other girl in my History class
She seems enough into me

GIRL And is that the end?

BOY I figure I’ll die young

The GIRL reading Hamlet fades back into her seat.

GIRL: The girl reading *Hamlet* hasn’t been in love yet.

Beat.

GIRL: The girl reading *Hamlet* reads *Hamlet* because Hamlet doesn’t hurt anybody off paper

BOY She bled

MAN I’m going home

WOMAN He’s waiting now

MAN I hope Theresa is there

GIRL: “Goodnight... goodnight, sweet ladies... sweet, sweet ladies... goodnight...”

End of Play.