



# Salamander Street

## A Guide to Mark Wheeler:

Choosing the right piece for yourself, your students, or your group

### ACT NORMAL CONTEMPORARY MONOLOGUES

MARK WHEELER

Salamander Street proudly presents two collections of Mark Wheeler's work: a volume of monologues, **Act Normal**, and duologues, **Can't Believe I'm Saying This To My Mum!**

Many of the narratives are issue-led and verbatim, interspersed with Wheeler's imaginative fiction and absurd comedy. Collected with young performers in mind but suitable for people of every age and gender, the pieces are perfect for school performances, auditions, and drama exams. Don't take our word for it – have a look through our Guide and discover the perfect piece for you.

"Surprise your teacher, your friends, your family, your audience and last but not least, yourselves!"  
– Mark Wheeler

### CAN'T BELIEVE I'M SAYING THIS TO MY MUM! CONTEMPORARY DUOLOGUES

MARK WHEELER

### Monologues from Act Normal:

#### I am...

#### ...looking for something comedic

Dip into a rollicking, rhyming monologue from *Sweet (W)FA*, a verbatim play/musical telling the inspiring true story of footballer Sarah Stanbury (aka Sedge). If you're looking for a cartoon baddie, Nut-Job from *Chicken!*, has a shouty, characterful speech that's buckets of fun. *Can You Hear Me Major Tom?*, an exploration of fandom, has a speech from Jasmine about her love for David Bowie which is touching and hilarious in equal measure.

#### ...looking for something serious

*Act Normal* includes fifteen hard-hitting monologues, offering a range of historical and contemporary topics.

Wheeler's real-life interviews led to *Blackout- Operation Pied Piper*, in which 9-year-old Jean talks about being an evacuee, and *Graham – World's Fastest Blind Runner*, which explores neglect and living with sight loss. There are also verbatim and documentary explorations of anorexia, in *Hard to Swallow*, misogyny, in *Sweet (W)FA*, self-harm, in *Scratching the Surface*, human trafficking, in *One Million to Stop The Traffik*, drunk driving, in *Too Much Punch For Judy*, and the stories of teenagers excluded from mainstream education (*Kids Who Look Out of the Window*): each of these monologues offer developed characters and huge emotional impact.

We hear about a prison assault in *Legal Weapon 2*, several reactions to a life-changing car accident in *Chequered Flags to Chequered Futures*, and unpick the ramifications of an unplanned teenage pregnancy in *This Is For You*. As well as a comedic monologue, *Can You Hear Me Major Tom?* offers a mournful meditation on death and idolisation.

Three high-profile real-life cases complete Wheeler's collection of hard-hitting pieces. The testimony from a friend of Daniel Spargo Mabbs, who died after a drug overdose (*I Love You, Mum – I Promise I Won't Die*), a monologue from the mother of Breck Bednar, who was murdered by an online predator (*Game Over*), and several pieces from *Missing Dan Nolan*, which charts the 2002 disappearance of the teenager.

#### ...looking for something serio-comic

*Too Much Punch For Judy* explores a tragic drunk driving accident, and offers two serious monologues. Alongside these, there is an ebullient and witty tale from driver Judy about her school days.

#### ...looking for an educational piece

Wheeler's Theatre In Education play *Chicken!* follows Chris, who causes the death of his cousin in a car accident. His stylised monologue conveys his overwhelming guilt and grief.

#### ...looking for something utterly absurd!

Musical allegory *Wacky Soap* tells the story of King Huff's fantastical mission to invent a soap which will heal all ills. The Storyteller's monologue is a Monty Python-esque, gloriously surreal treat.

# Duologues from *Can't Believe I'm Saying This To My Mum!*:

I am...

## ...looking for something comedic

A passage from *Chicken!* sees two teenage cousins mucking around together – the perfect opportunity to have fun and explore friendship through a duologue. If you're looking for something more melodramatic, an absurd passage from *Kill Jill* sees Jill chatting to her mum about appearing on a slightly dystopian reality TV show. *Sequinned Suits and Platform Boots* includes a confrontation between a superhero and a teenager, complete with an opportunity for a Glam Rock dance sequence.

## ...looking for something serious

*Can't Believe I'm Saying This To My Mum!* includes 19 serious duologues, with a huge range of subject matter to choose from.

From *Blackout- Operation Pied Piper*, there's an emotional exchange between the host parents of an evacuee, and there's a bittersweet conversation between friends from *Graham – World's Fastest Blind Runner*. Also included is a scene between ill-fated sisters from *Too Much Punch For Judy*, impactful conversations about anorexia from *Hard to Swallow*, of gender stereotypes in *Sweet (W)FA*, and an interview-style naturalistic conversation about self harm from *Scratching the Surface*.

If you're looking to explore the darker side of family dynamics, there's lots to get stuck into. Another extract from *Chicken!* charts a tense exchange between a father and daughter, *Missing Dan Nolan* and *I Love You, Mum – I Promise I Won't Die* see parents facing grief and disbelief, and *The Gate Escape* explores the breakdown of parent-child relationships.

An extract from *Legal Weapon* is a stylised, highly emotional conversation between partners, and *Driven To Distraction* sees similarly tense discussions around money and accountability arise within a relationship. *This Is For You* has an emotive extract in which two teenagers discuss an unplanned pregnancy – a great duologue to practise building tension. *Game Over* sees two friends beginning to be suspicious of a fellow online gamer, with fatal consequences. A duologue from *One Million to Stop The Traffik* explores the human trafficking of a ten-year-old child from West Africa, and is an important and impactful piece. Finally, Wheeler's adaptation of *Silas Marner* offers two serious duologues, exploring betrayal and panic in Victorian-era language.

## ...looking for an educational piece

The collection includes an extract from Wheeler's Theatre In Education fire safety piece, *Butcher, Butcher Burning Bright*, in which two young men debate their involvement in a fatal fire.

## ...looking for something serio-comic

A duologue from *Parents Or...Do As I Say* offers opportunity to add movement to a scene of gentle but light-hearted further into black comedy, *Granny and the Wolf* is a re-imagining of the Red Riding Hood tale which is both seriously naturalistic and ridiculous. An extract from *Chequered Flags to Chequered Futures* is a light-hearted conversation between a father and son, interspersed with reflective and serious direct addresses. *This Is For You* offers a chance to explore the loving, bickering relationship between two brothers, and an extract from *Can You Hear Me Major Tom?* explores fandom with wit and warmth.

## ...looking for something utterly absurd!

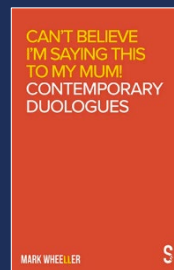
Get stuck into *The Most Absurd (Promenade) Xmas Musical In The World... Ever!*: Bianca has just written a song which will save Christmas in the imperilled fairy tale land, the Bower of Bliss. All she needs is a great disguise, and her Dad has some ideas... perfect for a Christmas show, or one in the middle of summer for more absurdity!

## Additional resources:

[YouTube](#) – insight from playwright Mark Wheeler



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