Off theIsland

An original script

By Tom Fras

**Character List**

**Simon Hunt/Prospero** – A famous middle-aged Shakespearean actor whose stage acting career has slumped and who is making a guest appearance with a relatively well-received theatre company called ‘Billbard”.

**Susan Berch/Miranda** -- A woman in her mid-30’s. A well-established actress and devoted member of the theatre company. Long-time girlfriend of Michael and mother of his children.

**Michael Bell/Ferdinand** – A man in his mid-30’s. An established actor and another devoted member of the company. Long-time boyfriend of Susan and father of her children.

**Nika Dee/Ariel** – A girl in her young 20’s straight out of drama school and acting for the first time in a company production. She has not been in the industry long enough to develop a thick skin.

**Becky McConner** – A 40-year-old stage manager and another devoted member of the company.

**Additional roles:**

Funeral goers x10: addition cast standing in as extras.

**Note for set:** The set should be constructed of consistent specific set pieces and should resemble a working rehearsal space and/or a forensic crime scene with distinctive outlines of props and furniture seen on the ground. Upstage centre, there should be a pulpit on which to stand. Emphasis on complex lighting should create the illusion of different spaces at different times. The floor should be littered with ripped script pages with writing over them. A projection at the cyclorama will show pictures or environments at certain times. These should all monotone in colour and the emphasis on colour will come to the pictures when they start glitching. The cyclorama should be tall and thin to clearly show large amounts of written text.

(Note: Ad-libbing and/or edits are allowed and encouraged - whatever makes the play run as smoothly and naturally as possible :D)

# Act 1

## Scene 1

Pre set – Black out for beginners’ call whilst an overlapping digital soundscape (a technical babble) plays and gets louder. Sound cuts out as lights turn on to reveal Simon on stage. As the lights arrive the title ‘Act 1’ is projected on the cyclorama.

*On stage*

*Simon is onstage dressed as Prospero performing his epilogue whilst the cast (Nika, Michael and Susan) in full costume wait behind him ready for the curtain call. Becky is ‘off stage’ but visible.*

**Simon**: Now my charms are all o'erthrown,

And what strength I have’s mine own,

Which is most faint. Now, ’tis true,

I must be here confined by you,

Or sent to Naples. Let me not,

Since I have my dukedom got

And pardoned the deceiver, dwell

In this bare island by your spell,

But release me from my bands

 With the help of your good hands.

Gentle breath of yours my sails

Must fill, or else my project fails,

Which was to please. Now I want

Spirits to enforce, art to enchant,

And my ending is despair,

Unless I be relieved by prayer,

Which pierces so that it assaults

Mercy itself and frees all faults.

As you from crimes would pardoned be,

Let your indulgence set me free.

*Long silence of stage – no applause. A singular glitching sound plays.*

**Michael**: (Mouths to Susan) they’re not clapping.

**Susan**: (shrugs)

**Michael**: (Mouths to Susan) the *fuck* do we do?

**Susan**: (Looks over at Nika but she returns a blank face, looks back at Becky)

**Becky**: (Looks at audience, then mouths towards Susan) Go! Go!

*Susan takes the lead and takes the hands of the other actors on stage. Susan, Nika, Michael and Simon take an uncomfortable bow in silence. Sudden change of lighting and sound suggests the dropping of a curtain with the actors in the same positions but on the other side of it now. Projection switches with a bright glitch effect (with noise) into a notice board of timetables and roll calls after a brief moment.*

*There’s a constant noise from all the actors as they start de rigging themselves and moaning/ complaining among each other whilst Simon remains quiet as if under shock.*

**Michael**: Well that was fucking/shit…

*Becky runs on stage with clipboard*

**Becky**: Right, let’s get your /radio mics… (She moves over to Michael first)

**Susan**: You’ve got something to say by that? …

**Becky**: …Stop moving…

**Nika**: It wasn’t that bad!

**Michael**: A silent ovation is bad, Nika…

**Susan**: It’s a school audience, what did you expect? (Becky moves over to Susan now)

**Michael**: …some respect, a decent reception, I don’t know. Like, you remember the bloke with the (Describes the shirt colour of an audience member in the front row) shirt …

**Susan**: The man that was only awake for the end of the/ play?

**Michael**: Yeah.

**Susan**: Alright, I’ll give you that he was bad. / Funny though.

**Nika**: Becky? (Gets ignored)

**Michael**: It’s stuff like that that gets me.

**Becky**: Aww, I’m sorry Michael, you want someone to stroke your ego…

**Susan**: Easy there Becky, get your own.

**Nika**: Um…Becky? (Gets ignored again)

**Becky**: Hair up (Susan places her hair up and Becky removes radio mic), thank you.
He’s your man Susan, it’s about time you tell him to grow a pair –

**Susan**: Hey Michael.

**Michael**: mph?

**Susan**: Grow a pair.

**Michael**: (straight face) Very funny.

**Nika**: Becky, Hi, can you get my mic please, I think its stuck in the feathers again…

**Becky**: (under breath) Bloody *Turn*. (Normally) Let me sort that/ out.

**Michael**: Look, what I mean to say is that we’ve got Simon here, he’s an absolute legend. The bloke’s had more screen time than Dame Judi Dench, he’s a patron of The Globe and, right hear this, he’s landed a role in the new season of The Witcher (or whatever current popular TV series is around).

**Nika**: Oh my God, really!

**Susan**: Yet to be confirmed, Michael…

**Michael**: Yeah, as a ‘recurring character’. Isn’t that right, Simon?

*Simon still doesn’t respond to Michael. Projector glitches again and a few dead pixels appear.*

**Michael**: Simon? ...Everything alright mate?

*Simon rushes off stage in a panic, others react in shock.*

## Scene 2

Simon’s Dressing room

*He rushes over to the vanity desk. On it are a pad of paper and pen, a copy of The Tempest and an unnamed script, underneath the vanity desk is a black shoe box. He picks up the copy of The Tempest. He flicks through it and a look of dread comes over him. He sits down and looks over to the mirror. While he’s doing this the projector glitches between a few slides violently showing the texts of The Tempest.*

*Nika knocks on the door. The glitching calms but is still mildly present.*

**Nika**: Simon? …Simon?

*Panic comes over Simon and he looks over to the door to see Nika poking her head in*.

**Nika**: Simon, Hi. It’s Nika. Is this not a good time? Cause if it isn’t that’s also fine. Actually…

*Walking into the room but still staying at the door.*

**Nika**: …If you’re not alright, then that’s good – that’s brilliant – because that’s why I’m here, I suppose. (In a fumble) I ugh… I’m – I’m sorry I planned this all out in my head, it’s not quite…

*She looks at Simon but he stares blankly at her.*

**Nika**: I just wanted to say that I can understand why you stormed out like that. In RADA, they taught us that, when you’re on stage you are at your most vulnerable. You portray an alternate version of yourself in front of complete strangers which is why when an audience has a go at you like they did then, it’s one of the most intimate forms of abuse anyone can ever face. I can imagine you’re feeling that hit right now. Especially after your performance today. I mean, I don’t know what you did but tonight you were incredible, the best I’ve ever seen you. Tonight, I truly saw Prospero up there, not just Simon Hunt, Prospero.

*A look of confirmation comes on Simon’s face and he looks away. The glitching slightly increases.*

**Nika**: So yeah, um, I know you know all this but I hope that helps…

*She moves over to the door again but before closing it she turn to Simon again.*

**Nika**: You’ll be alright Simon. See you at the matinee tomorrow.

*She leaves and closes the door. As she closes the door, Simon looks up in that direction to see a bundle of stage rope on the door. Lighting is used to bring emphasis to the rope. He looks back to the pad of paper and picks up the pen. The glitching gets violent again.*

*Black out. Glitching stops and a single crack is seen across the projection screen.*

## *End of Extract*