

GOOD GRIEF

CAST

Alex

Danny Swanson

Alison

Samantha Day

Ella

Georgina Bennett

Jake

Paul Russell

Ensemble

Julia Riley

CREATIVE TEAM

Director Rob Graham
Prod Manager Brenda Tomlin
Stage Manager Madeleine Evans
Prompt Fiona Carter
Props Barbara Foster

Lighting Rig Tristan Cameron
Lighting/Sound Devi Smart
Production Photos Simon Wallace
Poster Design John Cook

“I expect everyone’s clocks to stop. Not just mine”

Inspired by a true story of love, loss and friendship, Good Grief is a brutally honest, powerful and personal account of one man’s attempts to deal with the reality of loss and the ensuing void which threatens to consume him. It is both visceral and funny, often within the same breath. Drawing from his own personal experiences, Adie has undoubtedly laid himself bare and, as a result, the play packs very real and occasionally uncomfortable punches, all served up in a web of dark humour.

As Adie himself says. *“I hope it might serve as some sort of twisted therapy for anyone else who may be coping with loss”*.

Other than a handful of rehearsals before the summer break, the play has been put together in just over three weeks. The cast and crew have fully embraced this accelerated schedule which will undoubtedly add to the intensity of the production and the play’s content, along with occasional audience interaction, will be particularly well suited to the intimacy of the Studio. This is my fourth involvement with a Studio production, so you can tell I’m a big fan of the space - four of the five cast are also Studio ‘alumni’. In addition, we’ve have had the opportunity to work alongside the (occasionally irascible) author making certain adjustments to the script, which has made this a genuinely collaborative and richly-rewarding process. We have seen laughter and tears, which you also may experience.

I am well aware that a number of other people have also contributed to the shaping and development of the play over the last twelve months, offering suggestions, comments and even structural changes to earlier drafts at informal read-throughs - you know who you are - and for your support and continual encouragement, the author is incredibly grateful.

This is the first performance of **Good Grief** - a world premiere if you like - so sit back and enjoy its first outing.

Thank you - Rob Graham

VANILLA

CAST

Katie

Merrin Sharples-Moore

Dan

James Scripps

Nick

Ethan Kelly

CREATIVE TEAM

Director Laura Mead

Prod. Manager Sharon Francis

Stage Manager Madeleine Evans

Props Barbara Foster

Lighting Rig Tristan Cameron

Lighting / Sound Devi Smart

“Will you be entering the back door tonight?”

Dan and Katie are your ordinary couple living in an ordinary one-bedroom flat. They're in their twenties. They're making advancements in their career. They used to drink at the local pub every Friday. Now they just do jigsaws. Dan and Katie can't remember when their sexual mojo disappeared. Or where to. All they know is, they have to get it back – and they have to get it back tonight. But how far do they go? And how vanilla is TOO vanilla?

A fresh, honest and awkwardly funny look into an isolated relationship and the repercussions of wanting too much – or not wanting enough.

Vanilla – Mead crafts a careful, nuanced tension in the build-up to the inevitable arrival, as the couple's conversations play out as intriguingly as the movements of a boxing match; a series of punches and feints, the uncomfortable exchanges of two people not certain of what they are about to experience and it's dangers.

Lost in Theatreland

Vanilla has been on quite the journey this year; from the VAULT Festival all the way to the Birmingham's Old Rep Theatre. I am so thrilled to refresh the play in a setting as beautifully intimate as the Barn's Studio Space. I really have Merrin, James and Ethan to thank for bringing such a new lease of life to the play. Each and every rehearsal has had me feeling inspired and excited to see what will come next. I am a huge fan of collaborative work and this play would not work without such generosity and willingness from the cast. *Vanilla* really locks into the idea of being open and honest with ourselves and each other. I think the mere fact that we have been able to do that in the rehearsal room alone has enabled us to bring the intimacy of this story and the characters to life. I also have so much to thank the crew at The Barn Theatre for; I am so lucky to have been able to make my directing debut amongst such a supportive team of people. Thank you, especially, to Sharon, Rob, Madeleine, Tristan, Barbara and Devi for holding my hand throughout.

So, without further ado: we are at the end of a pandemic. Restrictions are lifting. The day has arrived.

Welcome to Katie and Dan's living-room.

Laura Mead