

PUNK ROCK

BY SIMON STEPHENS



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PUNK ROCK
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The New York premiere of PUNK ROCK was produced by MCC Theater (Robert LuPone, Bernard Telsey, William Cantler, Artistic Directors; Blake West, Executive Director) on October 29, 2014. It was directed by Trip Cullman. The scenic design was by Mark Wendland; the costume design was by Clint Ramos; the lighting design was by Japhy Weideman; the sound design was by Darron L West; and the dialect coach was Stephen Gabis. The cast was as follows:

WILLIAM CARLISLE.....Douglas Smith
LILLY CAHILLColby Minifie
BENNETT FRANCIS Will Pullen
CISSY FRANKS Lilly Englert
NICHOLAS CHATMAN Pico Alexander
TANYA GLEASONAnnie Funke
CHADWICK MEADE Noah Robbins
DR. RICHARD HARVEYDavid Greenspan

CHARACTERS

WILLIAM CARLISLE

LILLY CAHILL

BENNETT FRANCIS

CISSY FRANKS

NICHOLAS CHATMAN

TANYA GLEASON

CHADWICK MEADE

DR. RICHARD HARVEY

PLACE

The first six scenes of the play are set in the library of the Sixth Form of a fee-paying grammar school in Stockport.

The seventh scene is set in Suttons Manor Hospital.

TIME

The play is set in the present day.

NOTE ON SONGS

All songs indicated in the opening scene stage directions are themes for each scene, not songs to be played aloud. If you would like to play the specific songs in your production, you must clear performance rights with the respective copyright holders. For more information, please see the Special Note on Songs and Recordings on the copyright page of this acting edition.

PUNK ROCK

ACT ONE

Scene 1

“Kerosene” by Big Black.

Lilly Cahill and William Carlisle are alone in the library.

It’s Monday, 6th October.

It’s 8:31 A.M.

WILLIAM. When did you arrive?

LILLY. Last week.

WILLIAM. Whereabouts are you living?

LILLY. In Heaton Moor.

WILLIAM. Whereabouts in Heaton Moor?

LILLY. At the top of Broad Stone Road. By the nursery there.

WILLIAM. That’s a nice street.

LILLY. I think so.

WILLIAM. Is it very different here?

LILLY. It is a bit.

WILLIAM. Have you settled in yet?

LILLY. I don’t know.

WILLIAM. It must be slightly disorientating having to adjust to a new town in such a short space of time, is it?

LILLY. It’s not too bad. I’m used to moving about.

WILLIAM. Why?

LILLY. My dad's worked in four different universities in the past twelve years. I've grown immune to it.

WILLIAM. Was Cambridge the best?

LILLY. Not really.

WILLIAM. Were the people there unthinkably intelligent?

LILLY. No. They were rude horrible pigs.

WILLIAM. Did they have enormous foreheads and big bulging brains.

LILLY. No. They were really rich and stupid.

WILLIAM. I want to go to Cambridge.

LILLY. Do you.

WILLIAM. That or Oxford. It's my life's ambition. How did you get here?

LILLY. What?

WILLIAM. What mode of transport did you use? To get to Stockport I mean. Not to school. Although you can tell me what mode of transport you used to get to school if you'd prefer.

LILLY. We drove.

WILLIAM. With everything packed in the car or did you hire a removal company?

LILLY. We hired a removal company. We had some things packed in the car.

WILLIAM. I like your haircut.

LILLY. Thanks.

WILLIAM. Is that coat real fur?

LILLY. No.

WILLIAM. It's faux?

LILLY. That's right.

WILLIAM. That's a relief.

LILLY. Yeah.

WILLIAM. It'd be terrible if you were some kind of animal killer. Imagine my embarrassment.

LILLY. I'm not.

WILLIAM. The fur trade's abominable. People who wear fur coats should be skinned alive in my opinion.

LILLY. Mine too.

WILLIAM. Good. I'm glad. I'm William.

LILLY. Hi William.

WILLIAM. I've been coming here for five years. I know the place completely inside-out. I know every nook and cranny and everything so if you want any help.

LILLY. Great.

WILLIAM. I know parts of this school that other people don't even know exist. There are secret corridors. Deserted book cupboards. Cellars. Attics. All kinds of things. You want to know about them? Just ask me. This is the Upper School library. Don't you love it?

LILLY. It's —

WILLIAM. It's completely hermetically sealed from the rest of the school. They tell us it's to keep the Lower School away. I think it's to keep us contained. Look outside.

LILLY. Where?

WILLIAM. That track leads up to Manchester in that direction and all the way down to London in that direction. The trains come past here all the time. They need to keep us locked in in case we escape.

Most of the Sixth Form can't be bothered to come up here anymore. They go to the common room. Or to the main library. They spend hour after hour after hour on the internet there. I prefer it here. It's intimate.

Do you know where to go to eat?

LILLY. I was going to go to the canteen.

WILLIAM. Don't. You mustn't. Nobody goes there. You'll die very quickly if you start eating your lunches there. (*She breaks into a smile.*) I'm being serious. (*Bennett Francis and Cissy Franks enter.*)

BENNETT. And this monkey is stood on the bus yelling at all the little Year Seven babies about how he'd stopped smoking and so anybody who smoked that day was getting glassed before they got off the bus. I looked at him. Pulled three cigarettes out. Lit them all at once. Smoked them.

CISSY. All in one go?

BENNETT. Oh yes.

CISSY. Didn't that hurt?

BENNETT. Viciously.

CISSY. It doesn't look as though he glassed you.

BENNETT. Of course he didn't glass me. He likes my arse too much. How was the rest of your evening?

CISSY. It passed.

BENNETT. How was your dad?

CISSY. You know. The same. I wish you'd stayed.

BENNETT. Yes. (*Notices Lilly.*) Who the fuck are you?

WILLIAM. Bennett this is Lilly Cahill.

BENNETT. Is it?
WILLIAM. She's new.
BENNETT. Are you?
WILLIAM. This morning.
CISSY. Is she? (*Pause. They look at her. William awaits their verdict.*)
BENNETT. Did we hear about you?
LILLY. I've no idea.
WILLIAM. There was an email.
BENNETT. I bet there was. There's always an email. I'm Bennett.
LILLY. Hello Bennett.
BENNETT. Cahill's a very good name.
LILLY. Is it?
BENNETT. It's Irish. From County Galway. It's ancient.
LILLY. Right.
CISSY. I'm Cissy.
LILLY. Hello.
WILLIAM. Cissy's Bennett's girlfriend.
LILLY. Great.
CISSY. You're not from round here are you?
WILLIAM. She's from Cambridge.
CISSY. I can tell. From your accent.
BENNETT. She's shatteringly astute like that.
WILLIAM. Yeah. You have to get up really fucking early in the morning to catch her out. (*Beat.*)
BENNETT. How long are you here for?
LILLY. I don't know. Until the exams I think.
BENNETT. Brilliant.
CISSY. What are you taking?
LILLY. Geography, History, French, and English.
BENNETT. Four A-Levels?
WILLIAM. She's incredibly clever.
CISSY. Clearly.
LILLY. And General Studies.
BENNETT. Yes. Everybody takes General Studies. Nobody goes. Ever.
WILLIAM. I do.
BENNETT. What's Cambridge like?
WILLIAM. You should too. It's Mr Lloyd. He's great.
LILLY. I hated it.
CISSY. That's good.

LILLY. Why?

CISSY. I only really trust people who hate their hometowns.

WILLIAM. Me too.

CISSY. How are you this morning William Carlisle?

WILLIAM. I'm fantastically fucking brilliant thank you very much for asking. How are you Cissy?

CISSY. Great. Happy to be here. Happy as a song lark.

WILLIAM. Good weekend?

CISSY. Thrilling. We had a dinner party on Saturday night. Bennett cooked a salmon. My mother swooned. How was yours?

WILLIAM. Terrible. Far, far better here. (*Nicholas Chatman enters. He is drinking a protein drink.*)

LILLY. Why was it terrible?

BENNETT. Shit. I've forgotten everything.

WILLIAM. What?

NICHOLAS. You'll never believe what I saw on Sunday.

LILLY. Why was your weekend terrible?

CISSY. What do you mean you've forgotten everything?

WILLIAM. You're better off not knowing. Seriously.

BENNETT. My English books, my French books, my History books. The works. What did you see?

NICHOLAS. *Deep Throat.*

BENNETT. Bless.

CISSY. What are you going to do without your books?

BENNETT. Lie. Busk it. Copy yours. Steal theirs. I've not seen that film in years and years and years.

CISSY. I've never seen it.

NICHOLAS. You should do. It's extraordinary.

LILLY. Why?

NICHOLAS. What?

LILLY. Why's it extraordinary?

WILLIAM. Lilly, this is Nicholas Chatman. He plays lacrosse. Nicholas this is Lilly. She's from Cambridge. She's new. (*Nicholas assesses her before he answers her question.*)

NICHOLAS. Right. (*Bennett interrupts him before he's able to.*)

BENNETT. I like your jacket, Mr Chatman.

NICHOLAS. Thank you very much Mr Francis.

CISSY. Can I try it on?

NICHOLAS. What?

CISSY. Your jacket. Can I? Please.

PUNK ROCK

by Simon Stephens

5M, 3W

In a private school outside of Manchester, England a group of highly-articulate seventeen-year-olds flirt and posture their way through the day while preparing for their A-Level mock exams. With hormones raging and minimal adult supervision, the students must prepare for their future — and survive the savagery of high school. Inspired by playwright Simon Stephens' own experiences as a teacher, PUNK ROCK is an honest and unnerving chronicle of contemporary adolescence.

"[A] tender, ferocious and frightening play ... Mr. Stephens, one of the most quietly original playwrights working today, has the gift (or curse) of perceiving human unhappiness with almost clinical verisimilitude ... [He] grounds his subjects in a calm, almost photorealist sense of the everyday, reminding us that extreme behavior is often only a degree removed from what we think of as normal."

—The New York Times

"[A] muscular little play that starts out funny and ferocious then reveals its compassion by degrees en route to a tragic and all-too-plausible denouement. What makes PUNK ROCK so riveting is Stephens' skill at peering beyond the rampaging hormones, the dangerous energy and youthful insouciance to illustrate the casual cruelty of adolescence as unease escalates into alienation and horrific violence."

—The Hollywood Reporter

Also by Simon Stephens

BLUEBIRD

THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE
DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME

HARPER REGAN

DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC.

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