

Happily Ever After

Fanny (16)

Amy (16)

Keira (16)

Fanny and Amy are mill girls in 1916. Keira is in present day. Although the two timescales never collide, the girls may move around the space, pass each other, sit beside each other. Both stories take place in Leeds but this could be anywhere in Britain. The stories are universal. An indication of costume is vital to delineate the time difference.

The play was written in response to the following facts:

- According to the 1921 census there were 1.75 million spinsters in Britain. Ten years later, half of the women who were 25 to 29 years old in 1921, were still unmarried.
- 750,000 women were made redundant in 1918 when the men returned from the war.
- Many young women in twenty first century Britain went into prostitution because an older boyfriend (actually a pimp) persuaded them to sleep with 'just one man' to help him out and repay a debt.
- Among pupils entitled to Free School Meals all ethnic minority groups achieve greater academic success than White British pupils. (2019 figures)

(A piece of First World War music plays. Amy is sitting, weeping silently, Fanny enters to find her. Keira enters last, with phone in hand and her headphones in her ears. She sits or stands in a different area.)

FANNY: Amy, what's the matter love?

AMY: Oh Fanny.

FANNY: What is it my love?

AMY: It's Albert Hodgson. I called to see his mam today and she's just had a telegram.

FANNY: Oh no.

AMY: The lad came with it yesterday but she wouldn't open the door.

FANNY: But she's opened it now?

AMY: Yes, she's opened it alright and it says missing **(her voice breaks)**. Missing, but we all know what that means. He's probably blown into a thousand little pieces. **(She howls)**

FANNY: Come here love, you just have a good cry.

Keira speed dials her boyfriend Tyrone

KEIRA: All right?

FANNY: Are you all right?

(Pause, Amy is still crying.)

FANNY: You're awful upset about this.

AMY: Oh Albert **(she wails)**

KEIRA: Yes well, I will, I told you I'd think. Look, don't push me. I do what I want you know. Nobody tells me what to do, do you hear me, Tyrone?

FANNY: Oh, I see, I'm getting the picture now. I didn't know there was owt going on between you and Albert. I wondered why you kept going to see his Ma.

AMY: Well, she's got no-one else, has she, only Albert. She needs the company.

FANNY: Yeah, but there's more to it than that isn't there? Amy... Come on you can tell me, especially now.

AMY: What do you mean especially now?

FANNY: Nothing. I didn't mean anything. But I'm right, aren't I? There is more to it than keeping his Mam company?

AMY: Yeah, there is. There is more to it than that. But it was only the night before he left really.