

# FRESHERS

A play

By Thomas Morley



*Freshers is a play for three actors, who all play multiple roles. The distribution of roles is as follows:*

ACTOR ONE: DAVY, DAVY'S MUM, JACKSON DIMMOCK, RECEPTION PERSON, SALESMAN

ACTOR TWO: MARK, MARK'S MUM, ALF, OLLIE CARTER, MIKE, JILL HARVEY

ACTOR THREE: LOTTIE, LOTTIE'S MUM, CARLY JENKINS, FIONA

*Freshers is a tale of three first year drama students at university. It explores themes of sex, gender equality and mental health.*

*Contains very strong language and adult themes. Suitable for ages 16+.*

**ACT ONE.**

*Three students, Davy, Mark and Lottie.*

LOTTIE: *Pulling out a bottle of wine.* Bottoms up!

MARK: Where did you get that from?

LOTTIE: Home.

DAVY: What are you doing? You're not supposed to-

LOTTIE: I need a bit of dutch courage. I'm gonna down it.

MARK: You are not!

LOTTIE: I am.

MARK: You're gonna be pissed!

DAVY: You're gonna need a piss. You do realise the first act lasts 45 minutes, don't you?

LOTTIE: I'm nervous, and when I'm nervous, I drink, ok? It's not my best character trait, but I can't help it. I'm alcohol dependent. It's a psychological condition. It's because I grew up in a very alcohol heavy household.

MARK: Erm, guys-

DAVY: We've been preparing for this all year. Our final marks depend on this, Lottie.

LOTTIE: Yeah but it's only first year.

DAVY: So?

MARK: Guys-

LOTTIE: So first year doesn't count. You need 40% right? Well, I'm gonna get 40% easy. Because, like, I've learnt all of my lines and I deliver every single one exceptionally well.

MARK: Guys!

LOTTIE+DAVY: What do you want, Mark?

MARK: We have an audience.

LOTTIE: Oh shit.

DAVY: Erm. Right. Hello. Sorry about that. We do know what we're doing. Promise. Welcome to our end of first year performance.

LOTTIE: Yeah, yeah, welcome one and all. We are three drama students who have spent the last few months putting this piece together for 50% of our first year mark.

MARK: Everything you're going to see tonight was put together by us.

LOTTIE: And because we're drama students, we're going to use lots of different techniques that you probably won't be familiar with.

MARK: Freeze frames.

DAVY: Slow motion.

MARK: Thought tunnels.

LOTTIE: Sometimes we'll even talk directly to the audience.

MARK: Most of all we'll be using multi-role. This is because, well, basically, our lecturer told us that we had to.

DAVY: No, that's not it at all. Don't listen to him. We need to use multi-role because there are 30,000 students at our university, and only 3 of us. So we've all got to play lots of different characters.

LOTTIE: Using lots of different voices.

MARK: And costumes.

LOTTIE: And personalities.

MARK: So it'll be dead easy to follow.

LOTTIE: Because we're dead brilliant at acting.

DAVY: We're going to tell you about our first year at The University of- Well, for legal reasons, we're not actually allowed to disclose the name of the university where we study. But it's, like, a good one. In England. In fact, we all needed 120 UCAS points to study here, and that's not an easy feat. It's not like they just let anyone in, you know. It can be proper difficult, and the course isn't just a walk in the park. We have to write essays, and do research, and make posters-

LOTTIE: Get on with it.

DAVY: Oh, right, yeah. We're going to tell you it all. All the gory details. And some of those details are pretty gory.

MARK: We're going to tell you about the highs and the lows.

LOTTIE: The nights out and the nights in.

MARK: The people who are having lots of sex. And the people who are having none.

LOTTIE: Are you ready?

MARK: They don't have a clue what they've let themselves in for.

DAVY: This is Freshers.

*Music. Davy, Lottie and Mark become their respective parents.*

DAVY'S MUM: Goodbye my darling.

LOTTIE'S MUM: Take care of yourself.

MARK'S MUM: Don't drink too much, Mark.

DAVY'S MUM: Text me before you go to bed.

LOTTIE'S MUM: I've put some brownies in your bag for you to hand out. Make some friends.

MARK'S MUM: Drink in moderation, Mark.

DAVY'S MUM: Send me that emoji with heart eyes. I like that one.

LOTTIE'S MUM: If you eat any chicken, make sure it's cooked.

MARK'S MUM: It might seem like a good idea at the time, but it's probably not.

DAVY'S MUM: I love you, my sweetheart.

LOTTIE'S MUM: I'll miss you, my darling.

MARK'S MUM: Don't get arrested.

*Music.*

DAVY: The student house that I was moving into wasn't very big, but when I arrived, it seemed huge, and I felt so small. Other teenagers were already there, unpacking their parents car, carrying in suitcases, boxes of DVDs and crates of beer. There was a note stuck to the fridge from our landlord, Alf. We never met Alf, but he sounded like a man with a very big moustache. I'd spoken to him on the phone the day before moving in.

ALF: *On the phone.* Aye, aye, how about you then? A drama student. Bleedin' 'ell. Bleedin' waste of bleedin' time, is bleedin' drama. Never did anyone any good. But, you know, good luck to you. I'm just ringin' to let you know, I won't be able to show you around tomorrow. My bleedin' wife is giving me hell. Wants me to tile the bleedin' bathroom. I told her, I can't, Pauline, love, I've got to show these new kids round the house, I've got six new tenants and they're not going to have a clue what's going on. She doesn't listen to me of course. Never bleedin' listens. I just want a quiet life, Davy, lad. I swear they get younger every year. Students. They're not students. They're kids living away from home. They don't know how to live. And I'm not talking about living life to the full, I'm just talking about living. You know what I mean? Surviving. Because these days it's all, I'll hit a button on my bleedin' phone, and that'll do what I need. In the real world, it's not like that, though, Davy, boy. I 'spose you're fresh out of the womb yourself, of course. Just a word of warning, it ain't gonna be easy, being a student. Don't bleedin' fuck it up. Tara.

LOTTIE: Alright?

DAVY: Hi. I'm Davy.

LOTTIE: Lottie. Erm... would you like a brownie?

DAVY: Oh. Yeah. Ok. Go on then.

LOTTIE: My mum made them. Come on, I'll show you around. Everyone else is already here.

MARK: There were six students in our house. Three of us were drama students, that's us three, me, Davy and Lottie. There was Jackson Dimmock, a first year bio student, who was sat in the kitchen when I arrived, talking about football even though no one else cared.

JACKSON: Did you see the match yesterday? I couldn't believe that last minute goal, it came from nowhere. Right outside the penalty box. There was a moment where we all thought it might have been offside, but the ref gave it, and watching the footage back, it was clear that was the right decision. I've never seen Man City play like it. I'm not really a Man City fan, but I do like watching every game they play. The 3-5-2 formation that they played yesterday probably wasn't the best choice, but it worked to their advantage. I imagine they'll stick to it in future, but you can never be complacent. Not in the game of football.

MARK: Jackson didn't even like football. He'd only started watching because he'd read on The Student Room that common interests such as sport were a great way to make friends at uni.

DAVY: There was Ollie Carter, who never came out of his bedroom.

OLLIE: *Muffled* Mmmmmf gmmmf smmmmf hmmmf.

LOTTIE: And Carly Jenkins, a natural scientist who had been driven up by her twenty seven year old boyfriend, Mike.

MIKE: Sup.

CARLY: This is Mike. He's my boyfriend. He's twenty seven, y'know. He drove me up here. Yeah, that's right. He can drive and he owns his own car.

MARK: All the girls fancied Mike, but no one fancied Mike more than Mike himself. He was good looking and he knew it.

CARLY: Mike hasn't been to university, so he'll be staying for Freshers week. I think it's one of those things that you just have to experience at least once in your life, don't you agree?

DAVY: Yeah.

MIKE: I love drinking.

DAVY: I see.

MIKE: All drinks. But especially alcoholic ones.

DAVY: Cool.

CARLY: And he'll be sleeping in my room. It'll be a little cosy, but that's just how we like it.

DAVY: Right.

MIKE: We're going to have sex.

DAVY: Ok.

*Music.*

MARK: The first night of Freshers is a biggie. It's the first time you've met a lot of people, and you need to make a good impression. It's also the first time most of us have lived away from home, so you can go out, get pissed, and not need to worry about your mum's reaction when you stumble in at four in the morning.

LOTTIE: Tango was the place where everything happened. It was a huge nightclub in town that played all the chart music, with the bass turned up to ninety and strobe lights that made you feel dizzy, although that might have just been the £1 shots.

DAVY: For the first week, special buses were running every night, just for students, to take us from the uni campus into the city centre.

MARK: You didn't even have to pay. It was brilliant. We stayed at home, drank cheap wine until we were tipsy, and then jumped on a free bus into the middle of a city that we didn't know, and a nightclub where we couldn't see a thing.

*Loud music and strobe lights. All three of them dance.*

LOTTIE: No one knew the songs and no one cared. Everyone jumped up and down and pumped their fists in the air and screamed along to lyrics that made no sense but were obviously about shagging.

MARK: I bought shots for everyone, even though I couldn't really afford it. Everyone loved the shots, and I think everyone was starting to love me.

DAVY: The floor was not solid. It was made of some sticky substance that was a mixture of booze and piss and vomit. Sometimes when you tried to jump, you couldn't. And if you happened to slip over, or was pushed, then there was no alternative but to burn your trousers when you got home.

LOTTIE: At 2am, the music stopped and the lights came up. In the stark brightness of the main lights, everyone looked ridiculous. Jackson had lost a shoe, Mike was showing his six pack to the DJ, and Carly was waving a bra in the air. The bra wasn't hers. We never found out who that bra belonged to.

*Music.*

DAVY: The first lecture was in one of the biggest lecture halls I had ever seen. Everyone turned up hung over, with a backpack that held a treasure trove of new stationery and fancy notebooks. The lecture was led by our course moderator, Mrs Jill Harvey.

JILL: Jill Harvey was a miserable middle-aged woman, who constantly grimaced as though she'd just tasted lemonade that was too bitter. She carried a large folder full of paper, and a big handbag that was probably hiding a bottle of gin. She had been divorced five times and hated all men. Good morning first year. Thank you for all arriving so promptly this morning. I'd like to begin by welcoming you to our university. We hope you'll feel at home here over the next few years.

LOTTIE: Can you see Mark?

DAVY: No. Oh, is that him sat over there by the guy that looks like Chewbacca?

LOTTIE: No, he's better looking.

JILL: I'll start off by taking you through the syllabus, and then we'll get on with some theory.

LOTTIE: Theory? We have to do theory?

JILL: So there'll be three seminars a week, and three workshops. The seminars are mostly taken in small groups, and that is where you'll learn about different theatre practitioners and different methods of acting.

LOTTIE: That sounds so dull.

JILL: These are not compulsory-

LOTTIE: Oh thank the shitting lord.

DAVY: We should probably still go.

JILL: But we strongly advise you to attend.

DAVY: See?

JILL: The workshops are taken in the drama studios over in the Weathergill Building. This is where you'll get hands on with theatre, characterisation and acting. These are led by either myself or Thomas Langley. The workshops are three hours long, so come prepared to work hard.

LOTTIE: Mark texted me.

DAVY: Is he alright?

LOTTIE: Reckons he's lost.

DAVY: Where is he?

LOTTIE: I'll ask him.

JILL: So we'll start off today by looking at our first genre of theatre, feminism.

DAVY: Is feminism a genre?

JILL: I would like to start off by saying that I am a woman. I am a strong independent woman, and I have my own mind. My ex-husband wouldn't agree, but that's why he's my ex, and also why I stole half of his money, so who's laughing now, Gerald?

LOTTIE: He's replied.

DAVY: What does he say?

LOTTIE: Erm... Did Mark come back with us from Tango last night?

DAVY: I don't remember. Why?

LOTTIE: He says he's still there.

JILL: And if I want to eat cheese in bed, I will. No man is going to tell me what to do. Not any more. And now, on with the lesson.

*Music.*

DAVY: We caught up with Mark at lunch time in the student's union. He looked like he'd had the worst night of his life.

LOTTIE: Or the best night of his life, depending on your perspective.

MARK: You know, Tango is actually an awful place, in daylight. The walls haven't been painted in years, and I'm sure there are things growing in the carpet. It's even worse in darkness.

DAVY: How did you end up getting locked in overnight?

MARK: I don't really remember. I think I was probably having sex with someone-

LOTTIE: Probably?

MARK: Yeah. I had sex with about five different girls last night. I lost track.

DAVY: How did you manage to have sex in the middle of a nightclub?

MARK: I'm very talented, Davy. But it got more difficult once the music stopped and the place started to empty. To avoid getting caught, we snuck into the cloakroom-

LOTTIE: We?



MARK: Me and this girl I'd met.

DAVY: And you went into the cloakroom and had sex?

MARK: Yeah. I'm pretty sure we did. She definitely gave me a blowjob. And then everyone left and they shut the front doors and we ended up locked in for the night.

DAVY: You said you were locked in on your own?

MARK: Well, yeah, but this girl was there as well. I just forgot to mention her.

LOTTIE: At that moment, an older student walked past us and shouted "Oi, aren't you that kid that shat himself in Tango and then went and hid in the cloakroom?"

*Music.*

ALF: *On the phone.* Kids these days don't know they're born. They'd crawl back up their mothers bleedin' birth canal if they could. That nightclub they've got in town – they call it Tango nowadays. Didn't used to be called that, of course. Used to just be called The Club. Back then, there was only one club and that was it. Everyone went to the club. And it was an even shitter place than it is today. But we didn't complain. We couldn't afford to. Was the only place we could go, was the club, and by god, we went. Then they did it up. Renamed it Tango, to attract the youth, of course, because the bleedin' youth want everything named fancy like, not just the club. I mean, with the club, you know where you are. What you're getting. Tango. No one knows what it could be. I never went of course. I said to my wife, I said, "Pauline, we ought to go and check out the new Tango." But she told me I was too old and then told me to go and warm her slippers in the microwave. Bleedin' microwaves. Never had them when I was younger either. Bleedin' 'ell.

*He leaves.*

DAVY: Mark wasn't feeling well, so he went back home to shower and have a nap. Lottie said she wanted to go and ring her mum, and that was fine, because even though it was barely 24 hours since we'd moved in, all of us were feeling a little homesick and missing our parents. I ventured off on my own to check out the fresher's fair.

*A lot of hustle and bustle. Mark and Lottie become lots of different characters trying to entice people to join their societies.*

DAVY: The Fresher's Fair was held in a big tent that looked a little bit like the one from Bake Off. It had been erected specially for this purpose, and it looked ok, but whoever's idea it had been to hold the Fresher's Fair in a tent clearly hadn't checked the weather forecast, because it was raining and windy and the east side of the tent had caved in. The tent was filled with rows and rows of students all advertising their different societies, trying to attract and entice the new students to join them.

LOTTIE: Do you like to blow your own trumpet? Then come and join the brass society, where we all blow together!

MARK: Do you have the balls to join the juggling society?

LOTTIE: Let's have a thirty minute discussion on why you should join the debating society!

MARK: Are you in need of some needles? Then come and join the heroin society-

LOTTIE + DAVY: Mark!

MARK: -I mean, the knitting society!

DAVY: There was just so much choice, and everywhere you turned, different people were trying to call you over and capture your interest. It was like being a tourist walking past restaurants in a foreign country. I quite liked the idea of the cake society, until I found out you had to actually bake cakes and couldn't just turn up and eat them. Every desk had some rehearsed spiel designed to entice you to their club – except for the improv society, of course. They just made it up as they went along. Dancers danced, jugglers juggled and gamers stood there awkwardly trying to work out how to have a conversation. Suddenly I heard-

*Lottie becomes a posh passer-by:*

LOTTIE: I can't wait to go skydiving again this year! What-ho!

DAVY: Skydiving? They have a skydiving society?

MARK: I've been diving before. Diving in vagina.

DAVY: What does that even mean? *To Lottie.* Excuse me, posh lady.

LOTTIE: Tally-ho, spiffing day laddie.

DAVY: Could I join the skydiving society?

LOTTIE: Of course my boy. Just pay us fifty quadrillion pounds.

DAVY: Fifty quadrillion? There was no way I could afford that. I was already paying nine thousand just to attend the university.

MARK: What do you suppose the nine thousand gets spent on?

LOTTIE: Lecturers, probably.

DAVY: Yeah. And equipment.

MARK: What equipment? We have to buy our own books and our own printing credits.

DAVY: It's also for maintenance. Like, the buildings.

LOTTIE: And for things like student services. The careers help and the mental health service.

MARK: The uni has it's own mental health service?

LOTTIE: Yeah, I think so. Sure I saw it mentioned in the prospectus. No idea where it is on campus though.

DAVY: Feeling poor and suitably out of place, I left the skydiving table and instead went and signed up for the film society. I don't know why. I just felt like I should sign up for something.

*Music.*

LOTTIE: Yes Mum, I am eating well. No, I've not forgotten to shower. Yes, that boy I live with *is* good looking, but no, I'm not dating him. Yes Mum. I miss you too.