

Andrew

Hello everyone. This is Andrew Pond, Artistic director of Eclectic Full Contact Theatre. Welcome to Season 3 of The Half Hour Audio Hour. Every month, we'll be featuring a different playwright, allowing you to not only hear their work, but to find out a little more about them and their process. This month's production is "FINGERS CROSSED", written by Colette Cullen, directed by Susan McDonald, and starring Morgan Wardlaw, Tara Haight, Chris Robertson, and Lesley Miller

Before we start, we'd like to briefly introduce you to Colette Cullen. After

the production, stay tuned for an interview with Colette for more insight into the play and this process.

Colette is an Irish writer and director. Her critically-acclaimed play WHEN RACHEL MET

FIONA has just finished a sell-out run at The New Theatre, Dublin. It had its world premiere

at The Space, London in 2021. Her zoom adaptation THEN AND NOW was Finalist for Best

Feature Film at Cardiff International Film Festival and received an Honorable Mention at the

13 th Underground Cinema Film Festival. She recently directed her audio play BLIND DATE for

NearFM's 'Audio Drama Hour 3'. BLIND DATE was also an RTE PJ O'Connor Radio Drama

Award shortlist. She will be directing an Irish production of FINGERS CROSSED for NearFM's

'Audio Drama Hour 4' later this year. She co-wrote Eclectic Full Contact Theatre's prize-

winning audio crime drama series DEEP SHADOWS. Her play NO PROMISES had a rehearsed

reading in The New Theatre in July 2022 and was shortlisted (Honorable Mention) for the

'Epiphinanies New Works Festival 2022', Wild Imaginings, Waco TX and for the 'Gary

Marshall Theatre New Works Festival 2022' Burbank, CA. Her play FAMILY TREE was

longlisted for the UK's prestigious Papatango Prize 2019. Her play TENDER MERCIES had its

UK premiere in The Clapham Fringe in 2022. It had its critically-acclaimed world premiere in

the Scene + Heard Festival, Smock Alley Dublin before touring to The Garter Lane Theatre.

Her play BLIND DATE was nominated Best Male Performer and YES for Best Female

Performer and Intercultural Dialogue Award at The International Dublin Gay Theatre

Festival. Many of her short plays continue to be internationally produced.

And now, Fingers Crossed

SCENE 1 RACHEL AND FIONA'S LIVING ROOM

F/X THE TV IS ON. Fiona enters and sits on sofa

FIONA: I followed your advice.

RACHEL: You did?

FIONA: Yes. I thought about it.

RACHEL: That's good.

FIONA: And now I've made my decision.

RACHEL: Okay.

FIONA: Feels good to have finally made a decision.

RACHEL: That's great.

FIONA: I'm going to give it a try.

RACHEL: You are?

FIONA: Yes, that's what I decided.

RACHEL: Good.

FIONA: Can you turn that off?

RACHEL: Oh yeah, sure, sorry.

F/X THE TV IS TURNED OFF.

FIONA: Thanks. You think so?

RACHEL: Yes, yes I do.

FIONA: So you agree?

RACHEL: I mean good that you've thought about it and have made a decision.

FIONA: I don't need to go any further than that for now.

RACHEL: Of course not.

FIONA: I can still keep all my options open.

RACHEL: Absolutely.

FIONA: Thanks.

RACHEL: For what?

FIONA: For being so supportive.

RACHEL: You're welcome

FIONA: You can put it back on.

F/X TV BEING TURNED ON FOR A BIT THEN TURNED OFF

FIONA: Huh?

RACHEL: Fiona.

FIONA: Yes.

RACHEL: Any chance you could give me a hint?

FIONA: A hint?

RACHEL: About what we were talking about?

FIONA: Rachel!

RACHEL: Sorry but I thought it'd come out in the wash.

FIONA: Huh?

RACHEL: You know become obvious as the conversation progressed.

FIONA: I don't believe it.

RACHEL: But it didn't.

FIONA: You haven't listened to a single word I've been saying.

RACHEL: Oh yes I have. Trust me, I've been hanging on to your every word in the hope that/

FIONA: Unbelievable, absolutely unbelievable.

FX: Music up, fades to lullaby as door opens and Adam enters

SCENE 2 ADAM AND SARA'S NURSERY

ADAM: Sara, Sara. What are you doing in here in the middle of the night in the dark?

F/X SARA BURSTS INTO TEARS.

ADAM: Oh no. Oh no. Oh no, no, no, no, no. Not again.

F/X SHE QUIETLY SOBS.

SARA: Oh Adam.

FX: Music up, which fades to interior of Rachel's car. Radio is on

SCENE 3 INSIDE RACHEL'S CAR

RACHEL: There's that new restaurant.

FIONA: What new restaurant?

RACHEL: The one that got a ten-star review in the weekend mag. I read it to you. Apparently, the tables are like gold dust.

FIONA: How can you think of food at a time like this?

RACHEL: Sorry, I couldn't help noticing it. It's right beside that coffee chain I like.

FIONA: Can you forget about food and drink for a minute and concentrate on what we're supposed to be looking out for.

RACHEL: I am concentrating.

FIONA: Yeah right. There it is.

RACHEL: Where?

FIONA: Over there. Signal. Hurry up!

F/X A TURN SIGNAL FLASHING.

RACHEL: Okay, okay I'm signaling.

FIONA: And get into the right lane.

RACHEL: I'm trying to. This is a car I'm driving not a helicopter.

FX: Sound of car revving

FIONA: I should have driven.

RACHEL: Panic over.

FIONA: And stay focused until we park.

F/X THE CAR COMES TO A HALT AND THE PARKING BRAKE IS PUT ON.

RACHEL: Here we are all safe and sound.

FIONA: No thanks to you.

RACHEL: Excuse me?

FIONA: You would have sailed right past if I hadn't been paying attention.

RACHEL: We're really early so we could have just driven around the block again.

FIONA: This is stressful enough without you making it worse.

RACHEL: Sorry I just got a bit distracted.

FIONA: You're supposed to be supporting me not making me more anxious.

RACHEL: I'm sorry, I'm really, really sorry.

FIONA: It's okay. We're here now.

RACHEL: Ready?

FIONA: No.

RACHEL: No?

FIONA: I don't want to go in.

RACHEL: Really?

FIONA: Yes really.

RACHEL: Will I call and cancel?

FIONA: No.

RACHEL: Maybe reschedule?

FIONA: No, we're here now let's do it.

RACHEL: Oh, okay.

FIONA: I just need a moment.

RACHEL: Take as long as you like. As I said we're really early.

FIONA: Look, over there.

RACHEL: Where?

FIONA: Is that woman crying?

RACHEL: What woman?

FIONA: That woman over there. See, she just ran out.

RACHEL: I dunno.

FIONA: Is that her partner running out after her?

RACHEL: The guy with the coat and purse?

FIONA: Must have left in a hurry.

RACHEL: Or maybe she just left them behind.

FIONA: She seems really upset. Look she's definitely crying.

RACHEL: Maybe she's happy.

FIONA: Happy?

RACHEL: Yeah, you know, tears of joy.

FIONA: Tears of joy? More like sobs. Ever hear of anyone sobbing with joy?

RACHEL: No, now that you mention it.

FIONA: Then why say it.

RACHEL: Wanted to make you feel better, I suppose.

FIONA: By lying to me?

RACHEL: Wasn't exactly lying to you maybe just...

FIONA: Presenting a different version of reality?

RACHEL: Something like that.

FIONA: That's called lying, Rachel.

RACHEL: Okay, okay.

FIONA: I need you to be honest with me. Brutally honest with me like you always are, okay?

RACHEL: Sure, brutally honest with you like I always am, apparently. Wouldn't quite have put it like that myself.

FIONA: Do you want to get a coffee?

RACHEL: Well to be brutally honest yes I wouldn't mind.

FIONA: Right let's go then. A coffee might settle my nerves.

RACHEL: Hmm want me to be brutally honest?

FIONA: No, there's a time and place for everything.

F/X: CAR DOORS OPENING/CLOSING. FOOTSTEPS, DOCTOR'S OFFICE DOOR OPENS and CLOSES. RACHEL AND FIONA SIT, SOUNDS OF SIPPING COFFEE

SCENE 4 THE WAITING ROOM OF A FERTILITY CLINIC

F/X MUZAK PLAYS IN THE BACKGROUND.

ADAM: See you had the same idea with the coffee. I'm Adam by the way and this is Sara.

RACHEL: The so-called free coffee in these places is usually poisonous. Rachel and this is Fiona.

SARA: Adam's so fussy about his coffee. We have to make a detour to his favorite coffee shop every time we come here.

FIONA: Rachel's the same, although it was on our way.

ADAM: We're really early so it was no big deal.

FIONA: Us too.

F/X THEY SIP THEIR COFFEE IN SILENCE FOR A BIT.

ADAM: What do you two do for a living?

SARA: Adam!

ADAM: Only making conversation.

FIONA: It's okay we don't mind. We're both designers.

RACHEL: We have our own business.

ADAM: I'm a lawyer and Sara's an academic. The history of art.

FIONA: That's interesting. We both did Fine Art at college.

ADAM: Is that how you met?

RACHEL: No.

FIONA: We were at different colleges.

RACHEL: And at different times.

ADAM: Sara's Head of the Department.

SARA: Is this your first cycle?

FIONA: Yes

RACHEL: And last. It's been a nightmare from start to finish.

FIONA: Well it isn't finished yet.

RACHEL: I mean after today.

FIONA: Hopefully. Fingers crossed.

RACHEL: Fingers crossed.

ADAM: Tell us about it.

FIONA: Is it your first too?

ADAM: I wish.

SARA: No it's our fifth.

RACHEL: Gosh.

ADAM: Imagine having to go through this five times.

FIONA: Wow it must be very difficult.

SARA: And before that four IUI's and before that another four years of trying.

FIONA: That must have been so hard on you both.

ADAM: To put it mildly.

SARA: That's eight babies that didn't make it. Eight. I've names for them all.

ADAM: Sara.

SARA: And I've a name for the one today.

RACHEL: (WHISPERS) Come on Fiona let's wait outside this is weirding me out.

FIONA: I'm sorry you lost so many pregnancies. That must have been devastating for you both. I know how it feels when your body doesn't do what everyone else's seems to do without any effort.

ADAM: You've no idea.

SARA: Imagine living in a house with eight ghosts.

ADAM: Sara I really don't think this is helpful. Remember this is her first.

SARA: And now a chance of bringing some new life in and wiping all those ghosts away.

RACHEL: Fiona, c'mon!

FIONA: Well let's hope this time you'll be lucky. A

DAM: Thanks and hopefully you'll be lucky too.

FIONA: Thanks.

F/X ADAM OPENS A TUPPERWARD CONTAINER AND SHAKES IT.

ADAM: Help yourself to a cookie. Sara baked them. All made from scratch. No short cuts with Sara. She's a great cook.

FIONA: Thanks.

F/X FIONA TAKES ONE AND HAS A BITE.

ADAM: They're good, aren't they?

FIONA: Yes, really good. You should try one Rachel.

RACHEL: Maybe later.

ADAM: You're both designers. Is that how you met?At work?

RACHEL: No.

ADAM: People meet in all sorts of different places. Mainly online nowadays. There's /apps

FIONA: We met in a book group.

ADAM: That's a new one on me.

SARA: A variant on meeting someone at an evening class I suppose.

ADAM: Sara's a great reader. Me, not so much. A few airport blockbusters at the poolside on vacation but otherwise...

SARA: Most books groups are mainly women.

ADAM: That talk show host has a book group, doesn't she? What's her name? You know the famous one. Worth millions. Always on a diet. Get a mention on that and you shoot straight up the book charts to number one. Better than any amount of money spent on marketing.

SARA: Oprah Winfrey.

ADAM: That's her. Oprah Winfrey.

ADAM: Here Rachel have one.

F/X ADAM SHAKES THE TUPPERWARE CONTAINER AGAIN.

RACHEL: Thanks.

F/X RACHEL TAKES A COOKIE AND HAS A BITE.

ADAM: They're good aren't they. Sara makes them all herself from scratch.

SARA: You've told them that already Adam.

ADAM: It's just that lots of people use a box mix then pass them off as being homemade. That's all I was saying. Giving you a compliment darling. You know how you're always saying that I don't compliment you enough. Well here I am giving you a compliment and you're still not happy. Are you two married?

SARA: Adam!

ADAM: Only making conversation.

RACHEL: Yes.

FIONA: Four years.

ADAM: We just celebrated our tenth.

RACHEL: Congratulations.

FIONA: How did you two meet?

SARA: It was all very boring really.

ADAM: I needed a valuation on a number of paintings and someone suggested Sara.

RACHEL: I thought you said you were a lawyer?

SARA: A corporate lawyer.

ADAM: Working for a large bank at the time. The paintings were being used as collateral on a large loan. We were both married to other people.

SARA: Technically.

ADAM: Sara was just waiting for her divorce to be finalized.

SARA: And you and Alison were still going through your troubles. Thankfully all ancient history now.

ADAM: Who does the proposing in a same sex relationship?

SARA: Adam!

ADAM: I'm just curious. Which one of you proposed for instance?

RACHEL: Neither of us.

FIONA: It just kind of happened.

RACHEL: We just knew we'd get married one day.

ADAM: Yes but who suggested it first? That's the person who did the proposing surely?

SARA: They're not in the witness box Adam.

FIONA: Hmm.

RACHEL: We both always wanted to go to Provincetown.

FIONA: So when we were planning that trip we decided to make it our honeymoon.

RACHEL: So if we were having a honeymoon...

FIONA: Then there'd have to be a wedding.

SARA: Not very romantic.

FIONA: It was actually.

RACHEL: How did you propose? I'm assuming it was you that did the proposing Adam.

ADAM: It certainly was. I had it all planned. It was supposed to be very romantic.

SARA: Oh don't tell that old story Adam.

ADAM: In Paris.

FIONA: That is romantic.

ADAM: Nighttime at the top of the Eiffel Tower with the lights of the city twinkling all around us, you know, just like the diamonds on the ring.

FIONA: Very romantic.

SARA: Your secretary probably put that idea into your head.

ADAM: But I couldn't get Sara past the first floor.

SARA: It was a very wet and windy night.

ADAM: In fairness you weren't exactly dressed for the occasion.

SARA: You told me we were going to dinner in a fancy restaurant.

ADAM: A very tight dress and skyscraper heels. You looked very sexy.

SARA: Pity your secretary didn't come up with a better ruse or check the weather forecast.

ADAM: Anyway I had to drop on one knee outside the café and gift shop.

SARA: With a gaggle of Japanese tourists clicking away on their

cameras all around us.

F?X: RACHEL AND FIONA LAUGH

ADAM: Then we went up to the top and celebrated with a glass of champagne.

SARA: With many glasses of champagne as I recall.

ADAM: It all ended up well in the end.

FIONA: Bet that was a relief.

ADAM: It sure was.

SARA: I'm going to get some water. Anyone else want some?

ADAM: (TOGETHER) No, thanks.

RACHEL: (TOGETHER) No, thanks.

FIONA: (TOGETHER) No, thanks.

F/X: SARA LEAVES.

ADAM: That was long before the endless disappointments of trying to start a family. Takes the romance and a lot more out of a relationship. But you know about all that of course.

FIONA: Well it hasn't been as protracted for us as it's been for you.

RACHEL: But still stressful enough.

FIONA: Yes, yes stressful enough.

ADAM: What kind of business are you in?

FIONA: Retail.

ADAM: You have a store?

RACHEL: Stores and a mail order division

ADAM: Mail order. That's where the money is in retail. Establishing a brand. That's the secret. Then you can franchise. But you probably know all that. You have professional advisers I take it? Would I know any of your stores? Maybe I've been in one of them. Wouldn't that be funny?

FIONA: Yes, very funny. They're adult stores.

RACHEL: Erotic boutiques.

ADAM: Sex shops!

F/X SARA RETURNS.

SARA: Sex shops! Why on earth are you talking about sex shops Adam? I leave the room for a minute and when I come back you're talking about sex shops. I'm sure Rachel and Fiona have no interest in sex shops. The last sex shop you were in was in Vegas on your bachelor weekend. I'm sure they're very different now. It's probably all online. You know the biggest use of the internet is pornography and recipes. Sex and food. The basics I suppose.

ADAM: They run a chain of sex shops.

FIONA: Three.

RACHEL: With a mail order division.

SARA: Your baby will be living in a sex shop. RACHEL: Of course not that's our business not/

FIONA: We live in a lovely house in a quiet neighborhood.

RACHEL: A very quiet neighborhood.

FIONA: Yes. Lots of green spaces and parks which is why we chose it.

SARA: But is that the right sort of environment for bringing up children?

FIONA: It's a very family orientated community.

SARA: Say he or she gets asked in school what their parents do for a living? What do they say?

RACHEL: That they run their own business. That's what we said at school. My father is a businessman. I never knew what business he was in when I was a kid. Wasn't really interested to be honest as long as he brought home the bacon. Still not exactly sure what he does and still have absolutely no interest.

ADAM: You have a point there. My dad was a bit of a wheeler dealer. Never knew exactly what business he was in at any one time. He used to tell us to say he was an inventor if anyone asked. Have no idea if he ever invented anything to be honest.

SARA: I doubt it.

F/X ADAM SHAKES THE TUPPERWARE CONTAINER.

ADAM: Tuck in. Looks like we're going to be here for a while.

SARA: Sex shops. Didn't think this could get any more bizarre.

ADAM: I'm tempted to ask how you got into that particular line of business.

SARA: Don't.

RACHEL: We saw a gap in the market.

ADAM: A gap?

RACHEL: Yes, sex shops that cater to women.

ADAM: Like...

RACHEL: Every kind of woman. Gay, straight and everything in-between.

SARA: Please don't ask them to explain everything in-between.

FIONA: You know ones that aren't sleazy.

SARA: Sex shops that aren't sleazy. Who knew?

ADAM: Sex shops for couples going through IVF now that's a gap in the market. Heterosexual couples I mean. You know having to perform like a circus monkey while your wife is in the next room with her legs up in stirrups. Takes the romance--

SARA: No need to go into graphic detail Adam.

ADAM: I was just--

RACHEL: We get the picture.

ADAM: Doesn't really apply to you I suppose.

SARA: Adam!

FIONA: Our sex shops are good for any sort of couples. As we said they're not sleazy or intimidating.

ADAM: And there's always online for the shyer customer I suppose.

RACHEL: Exactly.

SARA: Any chance we could move off the subject of sex shops.

RACHEL: Well he asked.

ADAM: She's right I did.

SARA: If you don't mind me asking why didn't Rachel have your baby when you found out you couldn't get pregnant nat... without IVF.

ADAM: Much less expensive for starters.

SARA: Everything's not always about money Adam.

ADAM: I know Sara I was just making a little joke. To lighten the mood you know.

SARA: Well as you can see no-one's laughing.

ADAM: Surely that's one of the biggest advantages of two women... together... if you want a family.

FIONA: Well I wouldn't say biggest advantage.

ADAM: How many times have I said it Sara how I wished it was me going through all that endless prodding, poking and injections. All I had to do was/

SARA: We've already heard enough about what you had to do.

RACHEL: If the situation was reversed there's no way men would go through what women have to go through. No way. Someone would have thought of a better solution. I'm sure of it.

ADAM: But you have to admit it is an advantage. Two women. Doubles the chances.

RACHEL: I have given birth actually.

SARA: You have?

RACHEL: To twins.

ADAM: You have twins?

RACHEL: A boy and a girl.

SARA: A boy and a girl?

RACHEL: Yes a boy and a girl.

FIONA: They'll be three next month.

ADAM: Did you come here too?

RACHEL: No we did it ourselves.

ADAM: You did it yourselves?

FIONA: Yes.

RACHEL: From a donor.

ADAM: Where did you get your donor from if you don't mind me asking?

FIONA: We advertised.

SARA: You advertised?

FIONA: We couldn't make up our mind what kind of donor to use. One of my brothers, a friend, a sperm bank/

RACHEL: So we wrote all of the possibilities on individual post-it notes

FIONA: Scrunched them up

RACHEL: Put them in a hat

FIONA: Well it was actually a bowl

RACHEL: Put them in a bowl.

FIONA: And I pulled out advertise. There're sites and online forums for men who are willing to donate.

SARA: But why not go to a sperm bank? Surely it's safer.

ADAM: But more expensive.

RACHEL: It wasn't for economic reasons it was because we wanted the sperm to be fresh...

SARA: Fresh?

FIONA: So there'd be a greater chance of it working...

RACHEL: Which it did for me...

FIONA: But not for me. I used six different donors including two from the sperm bank here but couldn't get pregnant.

RACHEL: Which is how we ended up going down the IVF route.

ADAM: Wow, you learn something new every day.

SARA: Advertising for fresh sperm I really have heard it all now.

ADAM: Do you have to pay these sperm donors?

SARA: Thinking of a career move Adam?

RACHEL: Expenses sometimes but mostly not.

ADAM: So why would--

RACHEL: I dunno we never asked.

FIONA: It's mainly to help couples like us out I think.

ADAM: For altruistic reasons?

FIONA: I guess you could call it that.

RACHEL: The donors we picked all had recent health checks so we didn't put ourselves at any risk.

ADAM: Fascinating.

SARA: What I don't understand is if you already have a family why are you so desperate for a third child?

ADAM: Yes, why put yourself through all of this? We'd be happy with one child. More than happy with one. Over the moon with one.

RACHEL: We're not desperate. We always planned on having one each. I went first 'cause I'm older than Fiona and lo and behold I had twins. We hadn't planned on twins. So that was a surprise.

FIONA: But a nice surprise once we got over the shock.

ADAM: Snap.

RACHEL: Snap?

SARA: Adam has twins from his first marriage.

ADAM: Two boys. Hugo and Harry.

SARA: They're hardly boys anymore. They're both young men now.

ADAM: Don't rub it in Sara.

SARA: Sorry I didn't mean it that way. Alison took the boys to Australia so Adam doesn't see them very often.

FIONA: That must be tough.

SARA: Very tough.

RACHEL: Is it just a temporary move? Will they be coming back?

SARA: Alison's Australian.

ADAM: We met in Boston. I was doing an MBA

SARA: At Harvard.

ADAM: A football scholarship. Don't play anymore. Bust my knee so had to give up. She was at MIT. Brains to burn. I got recruited by a bank, she was headhunted by a major pharmaceutical company but we always said we'd come back when--

SARA: No-one wants to hear your life story.

ADAM: The girl's asked me.

SARA: I'm sure they were just being polite.

FIONA: No I'd like to know.

RACHEL: Yeah me too.

ADAM: Then she got a big job offer from ANU.

SARA: The Australian National University.

ADAM: The most prestigious university in Australia. You know, literally an offer she couldn't refuse. To head up a new research program. Her dream job. She really couldn't say no.

SARA: You always make excuses for her.

ADAM: We'd divorced by then but it was amicable. I saw the boys whenever I wanted to which to be honest wasn't all that often. When she first took them to Australia I hardly noticed to be honest.

SARA: Adam that's a dreadful thing to say.

ADAM: Well it's true. No point beating around the bush. I'd just set up my own law firm and was working day and night to get it off the

ground. And you and I had--

SARA: Don't blame me.

ADAM: I'm not just explaining that I didn't have much time to be a single dad.

SARA: Alison remarried.

ADAM: An Aussie.

SARA: Bruce.

ADAM: A college football coach. Very butch. The boys are right little Aussies now.

RACHEL: How often do you see them?

ADAM: Hardly ever. I make it my business to visit at least once a year. Usually fit it in with a business trip or a vacation. Every year they get bigger and the gulf between us bigger still.

FIONA: What about school vacations? Can't they come here?

ADAM: Have no interest. I've tried everything to entice them. Thrown any amount of money at it but to no avail. It's ironic now I can take all the time off I want to spend with them and they've no interest. Getting their own back I suppose. Can't say I blame them. I was a shit Dad.

SARA: They've their own lives. Friends, summer camps...

ADAM: Have all but given up facetimeing them except for birthdays & Christmas. You can see that Alison has forced them to and it's so embarrassing 'cause we've absolutely nothing to say to each other.

SARA: Adam really tries but when you get nothing back it's very disheartening.

ADAM: And now they've a baby sister.

SARA: Alison had a baby girl with Bruce and is just about to push out another/

ADAM: Sara.

SARA: A super high achiever even in the fertility department.

ADAM: That's why starting our own family is so important for me. You know a second chance to do things right. When we ran into all our

difficulties I thought it was my fault for having been such a bad Dad first time 'round. Like I didn't deserve a second chance. Maybe we were both being punished for what we did.

FIONA: I don't understand.

ADAM: For leaving our marriages.

F/X AN INTERCOM SOUNDS.

INTERCOM: Fiona and Rachel we're ready for you now.

FIONA: Wow here goes.

SARA: Good luck.

FIONA: Yes you too.

ADAM: And nice meeting you.

FIONA: Yes nice meeting you too.

F/X FIONA AND RACHEL LEAVE.

ADAM: That was a pleasant interlude.

F?X: MUSIC UP, FADES INTO SOUND OF DOOR OPENING AND CLOSING> RACHEL AND FIONA EXIT CLINIC

SCENE 5 FERTILITY CLINIC EXTERIOR

RACHEL: How are you feeling?

FIONA: A bit sore.

RACHEL: All that prodding and poking.

FIONA: Don't remind me.

RACHEL: Hopefully it'll be worth it.

FIONA: Yeah, hopefully. They seemed pleased, didn't they?

RACHEL: Yes, yes they did.

FIONA: I wasn't just imagining it, was I?

RACHEL: No, being brutally honest, you weren't.(PAUDSE) They were weird, weren't they?

FIONA: Who?

RACHEL: The couple in the waiting room.

FIONA: Adam and Sara.

RACHEL: He was only short of asking what color underwear we were wearing.

F/X FIONA LAUGHS.

RACHEL: If he had I would have said none.

F/X THEY BOTH LAUGH.

RACHEL: Don't you know? That's how you spot a lesbian they don't wear any.

FIONA: He probably would have believed you.

RACHEL: Probably.

FIONA: He was just trying to hide his nerves.

RACHEL: I guess. And what about her, completely bonkers.

FIONA: Rachel!

RACHEL: C'mon. Names for all those--

FIONA: Don't say it!

RACHEL: Thought I'd wandered into an episode of 'Stranger Things'.

FIONA: Look she probably wasn't like that to start off with. Imagine going through this eight times.

RACHEL: Stop, I don't want to.

FIONA: And all those hormones she's had to inject.

RACHEL: Yuk I'd say her stomach must be like a giant pin cushion.

FIONA: Rachel!

RACHEL: Sorry, that image just popped into my head.

FIONA: Well pop it out and fast.

RACHEL: And the homemade cookies?

FIONA: In that little Tupperware container.

RACHEL: What was all that about?

FIONA: They were nice though.

RACHEL: Should have taken some for the twins.

F/X TEXT MESSAGE NOTIFICATION

FIONA: It's Mom. Says the kids are helping her bake cookies.

RACHEL: Christ, can you imagine what her kitchen must be like.

FIONA: A total bombsite! Oh and offering to have them stay over.

RACHEL: Text back

F?X: SOUND OF TEXTING

FIONA: Yes as quick as my little fingers can hit those keys.

RACHEL: Hmm, talking of cookies

FIONA: You want to see if we can get a table in that new restaurant?
I saw you looking at the menu earlier.

RACHEL: We might be lucky and get an early bird.

FIONA: Sure we'd be saving money.

RACHEL: To splurge on a...

FIONA: Very expensive bottle of wine.

RACHEL: This parking garage looks safe enough.

FIONA: Get a taxi home and pick up the car tomorrow?

RACHEL: Exactly what I was thinking. Might as well go out in style.

FIONA: Huh?

RACHEL: Who knows could be the last bottle of wine you'll be drinking
for a while.

FIONA: You reckon?

RACHEL: Fingers crossed.

FIONA: Fingers crossed.

F/X: MUSIC UP, SWITCHES TO ON THE RADIO. SOUND OF PAGES TURNING, THEN DOOR OPENS AND ADAM ENTERS. RADIO SWITCHES OFF

SCENE 6 ADAM AND SARA'S SITTING ROOM

SARA: Good day?

F/X HE WALKS ACROSS TO HER AND KISSES HER.

ADAM: So, so.

F/X HE PLONKS HIMSELF DOWN ON AN ARMCHAIR.

SARA: Whiskey?

ADAM: Sure.

F/X SHE WALKS OVER TO THE COCKTAIL CABINET AND POURS THEM TWO WHISKIES. SHE WALKS OVER TO HIM, HANDS HIM THE WHISKEY.

ADAM: What's this in aid of?

SARA: Can't I give my husband a well-earned drink after a long day at the office without arousing suspicion?

ADAM: No, but thanks anyway.

F/X: ADAM SIPS WHISKEY

SARA: Guess who I met this morning?

ADAM: I've no idea.

SARA: Julia Baher.

ADAM: Julia who?

SARA: You know my thesis supervisor.

ADAM: I've met her?

SARA: At that conference in New Mexico a few years back.

ADAM: She had a faculty job in some fancy college down south and had just adopted a baby. She had the baby with her at the conference, didn't she?

SARA: Yes, his name is Sam. She'd just got him a few weeks earlier. She's Head of Art History now at Rice.

ADAM: Rice, where's that?

SARA: Texas, Houston Texas.

ADAM: The lone star state. What's she doing here? Are we meeting up with her later?

SARA: No. We were just a pit stop on her way to Paris.

ADAM: Good I've something I need to look at after dinner.

SARA: Sam's eight now. She showed me photos. Looks like a sweet boy. Says he is. Never a moments trouble.

ADAM: And was she asking you...

SARA: Yes.

ADAM: Come here.

SARA: I'm okay.

ADAM: You sure?

SARA: I'm sure. It was nice catching up.

ADAM: Good.

SARA: We could do it too you know?

ADAM: What?

SARA: Adopt.

ADAM: We've been over this, how many times? You know the statistics for babies. That's why we decided not to, remember? The odds were even lower than for IVF.

SARA: I didn't mean here I meant in Texas.

ADAM: I'm not following this.

SARA: One thing led to another and she gave me the name of the adoption agency she used.

ADAM: But the vetting process still takes ages so we'd be way too old now anyway.

SARA: Aren't you listening to me? I'm not talking about adopting here. I'm talking about adopting in Texas.

ADAM: In Texas?

SARA: Yes, in Houston Texas to be precise.

ADAM: You've completely lost me now.

SARA: I called the agency. The approval time is only two months. Two months. We could have a baby this year. Imagine.

ADAM: Sorry to complicate things but aren't you overlooking one tiny little detail? We live here and not in Texas.

SARA: Imagine this year we could have our own baby. The family we've always dreamed of.

ADAM: In Houston Texas.

SARA: Yes in Houston.

ADAM: We just up and move to Houston?

SARA: Give me one good reason why we couldn't.

ADAM: Oh like our home and jobs are both here for starters.

SARA: We can have a home there too. I can apply for academic leave. They've been on my back for years to publish something so now's my chance. We move there at the end of the term. That gives us seven months to get a baby. Then I can apply for maternity leave which will more than cover the time it'll take to finalize everything.

ADAM: You've it all worked out.

SARA: It's not that difficult. We've been through worse, much, much worse.

ADAM: How long did you work out we'd need to be in Texas for?

SARA: Tops eighteen months, could even be less.

ADAM: And what am I supposed to do in Texas for tops eighteen months? Become a househusband?

SARA: If you want. What's the point being the boss if you can't do whatever you want?

ADAM: I'm the managing partner. Managing, did you get that bit? Which means I'm required to manage.

SARA: Surely you can do that remotely or have Gerald take over while we're away. Get back out in the field again. You're always saying that's what you enjoyed most, building up the business. Now's your chance to build it up in Texas.

ADAM: Just like that?

SARA: Why not? Have those overpaid researchers dig out marketing opportunities. Houston is the fourth most populous city and corporate headquarters to the second most Fortune 500 companies. They call it the Space City. It's where NASA is based. I've been reading up about it.

ADAM: Doing your research.

SARA: Yes.

F/X: ADAM SIPS WHISLEY

SARA: Well then?

ADAM: You're really serious about this, aren't you?

SARA: What's it you always say? If we really want this to happen then we've got to make it happen for ourselves.

ADAM: That didn't include relocating to Texas.

SARA: We're not relocating permanently just temporarily. Call it a sabbatical if you like.

ADAM: There's no such thing as a sabbatical in business.

SARA: And there's no such thing as a no in business either, isn't that what you always say too?

ADAM: And here's me thinking you never pay attention to anything I say.

SARA: I can do this with or without you Adam.

ADAM: With or without me?

SARA: I'd obviously prefer if it was with you.

ADAM: Oh thanks, thanks very much for that morsel.

SARA: But I'm prepared to do it on my own too.

ADAM: You are?

SARA: Yes, yes I am.

ADAM: You're prepared to sacrifice our marriage?

SARA: I'm trying to save our marriage.

ADAM: Save our marriage? Really?

SARA: Yes really. All these endless rounds of IVF are destroying us. Destroying us both. I want it to stop. To call a halt now before it destroys us completely.

ADAM: So this is not really a discussion anymore. More of an ultimatum?

SARA: Call it what you like.

ADAM: And the downside? You always have to look at the downside, remember me saying that too? Say we do all this and there's no baby at the end of it?

SARA: At least we'll have given it our best shot. Worst case scenario no baby, the faculty is happy because I've published something, you clock up a lot of airmiles and we maybe dip into our savings a bit.

ADAM: You could cope with that?

SARA: The no baby bit will be hard obviously but we've been there before, haven't we? Many, many times before. At least we'll have tried.

ADAM: Okay I'll think about it.

SARA: And discuss it with Gerald. See what he says. Who knows it might turn out to be the best business decision you ever make.

ADAM: Don't oversell it. Quit while you're ahead. I said I'll think about it, didn't I?

SARA: And discuss it with Gerald.

ADAM: And discuss it with Gerald.

SARA: Imagine we could be having our first family Christmas this year with our new son or daughter. Surely anything is worth making

that happen, isn't it?

F?X MUSIC UP, THEN FADES INTO NIGHTTIME SOUNDS. A CLOCK TICKS. SOUND OF COVERS RUSTLING

SCENE 7 RACHEL AND FIONA'S BEDROOM F/X RACHEL AND FIONA ARE IN BED.

FIONA: You awake?

RACHEL: (YAWNING) Sort of.

FIONA: What does that mean?

RACHEL: I'm awake now.

FIONA: How do you know you're in labor?

RACHEL: You know.

FIONA: Really?

RACHEL: Yes, really. You just know.

FIONA: Well you didn't.

RACHEL: Don't remind me.

FIONA: We've never been back to that restaurant.

RACHEL: I wonder why.

FIONA: I'd say that waitress is still in shock.

RACHEL: I'm still in shock.

F/X FIONA LAUGHS.

RACHEL: The twins are lucky they're not called Mac and Cheese.

FIONA: Mac and Cheese?

RACHEL: That's what I was just about to order

FIONA: Before Niagara Falls.

RACHEL: Don't!

F/X THEY BOTH LAUGH.

FIONA: We did offer to pay for the chair.

RACHEL: Was that before or after they called for the ambulance?

FIONA: They would have paid us to get out of there faster if that was humanly possible.

F/X THEY BOTH LAUGH.

RACHEL: Why were you asking about going into labor?

FIONA: Oh I've just been having a few twinges.

RACHEL: Twinges?

FIONA: Yes twinges.

RACHEL: Like how many twinges?

FIONA: A few.

RACHEL: Want me to help it along?

FIONA: Huh?

RACHEL: You know, loosen everything up.

F/X FIONA BURPS.

FIONA: Sorry.

RACHEL: False alarm?

FIONA: Must have been heartburn.

RACHEL: That's a relief.

FIONA: She'll be coming out soon though.

RACHEL: You're still convinced she's a she.

FIONA: Yes I am.

RACHEL: What if she's a he?

FIONA: That'll be fine too. Ohhhh!

RACHEL: What?

FIONA: Don't think that was heartburn.

RACHEL: No? Do the breathing!

F?X: RACHEL GETS OUT OF BED

FIONA: Get your phone.

RACHEL: You want me to call someone?

FIONA: Time them on the stopwatch.

RACHEL: Oh, okay.The breathing!

F?X: FIONA BREATHING

FIONA: We've everything ready, right?

RACHEL: Yes your bag is in my car.

FIONA: Okay.

F/X: FIONA STARTS TO DO THE BREATHING

RACHEL: Good job your mother has the twins.

FIONA: Must have had a premonition. Ohhhh!

RACHEL: Another one?

FIONA: We need to get dressed.

RACHEL: Okay.

F/X THEY BOTH GET OUT OF BED AND START TO GET DRESSED.

FIONA: And you need to get the car.

RACHEL: Now?

FIONA: Yes now!

RACHEL: Your Niagara Falls

FIONA: Yes.

F/X: RACHEL HEADS OUT OF THE ROOM.

FIONA: Rachel.

RACHEL: Everything okay?

F/X RACHEL STOPS.

FIONA: I'm a bit scared.

RACHEL: A bit scared? I was absolutely terrified.

FIONA: Thanks for that.

RACHEL: Everything's going to be fine. BREATHE

F/X FIONA AND RACHEL BOTH BREATHE

FIONA: You reckon?

RACHEL: Yeah, definitely.

FIONA: Fingers crossed.

F/X: FIONA DOES THE BREATHING

RACHEL: Fingers crossed.

END

Andrew

Thank you for listening to Fingers Crossed, here on The Half Hour Audio Hour. Next up is a brief interview we conducted with Colette Cullen after the recording of this show.

Andrew

All right? So colette I Just want to say once again. Thank you for allowing us to be part of your show fingers crossed. It was really wonderful to get to work on another piece of yours.

Colette Cullen

Well thank you I I Really every time I work with Eclectic I Really enjoy it and so this has been a wonderful experience too. So thank you for having me.

Andrew

So first first question is ah you know when did you start writing.

Colette Cullen

Well I started writing for the stage about 2013 I Wrote a um short play. I had written for um, the screen I'd written screenplays before then but that was my original degree and was in film and Tv And I made a lot of short films and you know wrote some feature length but it's quite difficult to get things made in you know the whole movie industry things take time and so um, my partner suggested maybe I

should start writing for theater and it was funny because I I Always really like theater. But I I don't know I maybe felt it was more inaccessible I don't know and so I did it and my masters in directing for theater and as part of it was like a three pronged program. It was like a playwriting kind of and group directing group and then a more kind of theoretical group. And so I used to sit in in the playwriting classes because you know I I'd written screenplays and um, yeah and I just wrote ah I had an idea ah that that I tried to get made into a short short movie but didn't and then um I reworked that as a short play which I got produced and I think that's the thing but writing that you learn so much particularly playwright you learn so much from having your work produced really. So so about 2013 really was when I started writing writing for the stage really.

Andrew

Excellent and what inspired fingers crossed.

Colette Cullen

Um, ah, kind of a couple of things I so I was kind of interested in the whole. Um you know assisted fertility. What's become an industry. My my partner is an acupuncturist and so um, Acupuncture is used a lot with ivf. And I used to hear all these stories really and um and so I kind of got interested and I kind of think sometimes people don't know what's behind it like on the one hand people think oh you know science can do everything you know and they don't look at the personal cost. And um I also liked the idea of them writing something that kind of happens like in real time and because like just the kind of a long scene and play or in yeah, the play happens in a waiting room and so I like that idea of almost something happening in real time. And then I like the idea of different couples meeting so that that was kind of yeah that that was kind of the background I wanted to bring 2 different couples together who had 2 different journeys really and you see their commonalities and you see their vulnerabilities really so that's yeah that that kind of interest to me that that type of idea really.

Andrew

Well I have to say I love that waiting room scene. It really is lovely.

Colette Cullen

Yeah, that like that that was the first thing I wrote and then I thought oh maybe I should like get expanded a bit more. Like I like the idea too that you see the couples on their own and then you see them when they're with other people I think we're like that you know we're we're very different. You know it's like the like there's a famous m Brian Friel play called Philadelphia Here I Come and there's a character in that in this the public Gar, the private Gar and so I was quite interested in that idea of you know when when we're but our

partners on our own and then when we're ah partners with other people.

Andrew

Yeah, absolutely now I know you've written for audio before because you've written for audio for us before as well. But what What advantages and or disadvantages are there to writing for audio as opposed to stage or as you started out for film both of which are very visual mediums.

Colette Cullen

When I was in college you know you know you learned the theory of like what works well in cinema what works well in stage and what works well well audio tends to be ignored. Actually it was ignored then and and sometimes I think there's a lot of difference and sometimes I think. Kind of no difference or very little difference I think it depends on the kind of work you do. I mean but I tend to do character based work I tend to do m work like I've written Monologue plays or I've written dialogue plays and so um, you know so they can work in you know in in different media. But um.

What I love about I mean I've always listened to like radio drama I love it. Um I feel. There's um, there' real intimacy about it. Like theoretically like people would say oh yeah, you can have a car crasht and you can you know be in outer space and all that kind of stuff you know in radio you can do all sorts of stuff. But that doesn't really kind of interest me actually, because they're not the kind of plays I write. But I think there's something really intimate about it. There's something I don't know like I think the voice is like everything is stripped back and you're just listening to somebody's voice and I think you know if you've got a good actor and you've got good direction it's all there. You know it's it's the actors are doing everything just with their voice and and the actors seems vulnerable. Really you know does nobody else. You know like when we listen to the play. We're not looking or listening to anybody else just whoever speaking, so the actors quite vulnerable. For me, that's why like I go to the theater or that that's what art does to me. It's like a catharsis.. It allows me like be a voyeur sometimes and it also allows me experience things through an actor

And you know, I learned more like I wish I wrote for it more actually because I think you learn like it seems it kind of seems easy but it it's actually it's actually not really um and I think the more I do it the more I learn you know how I can. To do a better really, you know it's like it's like I was saying you know when you have your work produced you learn a lot as a writer and so I think the more you know the more you work in the medium the more you realize how how special it is and you know all the different things you can do. So yeah I just kind of really enjoy but but ah this is not really to do the writing. But like I'm here in Dublin you're in Chicago some of our actors were in New Jersey some were in New York, but I feel we've all the

connection.

You know we've we've I've never met anybody that that's involved in the production and you know we've worked together a couple of times and we've we've never met but I feel a connection. You know what? and I love that I feel it breaks down Barriers. You know these barriers that are there. Um, and and I love that I Love the power of art to break down barriers. And that you feel connected to people. And audio allows you to do that because I think you know we were talking about it earlier in some of the other interviews because it's like it's kind of I suppose. It's It's more accessible. It's cheaper and also I think in terms of the audience that you know.

They don't have to go out anywhere. You don't have to live in a Metropolitan area. You don't have to have a lot of money, dress up. You don't have to you know you can listen to an audio drama more or less anywhere in your own time and I think that's Terrific. It's It's really,. It's really art as a. A democracy.

08:24.44

Andrew

Yeah, no I I agree with you. That's one of the wonderful things that I've that I've discovered in in doing this project ever since the lockdown is the ability to connect with people from all over the the world. Really and to be able to to expand the audience and also the the group of artists that we get a chance to work with.

Colette Cullen

Yeah, it's marvelous, isn't it?

Andrew

Absolutely I think it's wonderful and and and that's why that's why we keep on doing it.

Colette Cullen

Um, I'm and I'm glad you do Really glad you do.

09:04.41

Andrew

Yeah, so so so now ah let me ask you this question? Do you have any upcoming projects that you'd like to promote.

Colette Cullen

Because I live a small country I do a lot of work outside of Ireland I work a lot in the UK and and sometimes in state remotely and. Well actually in London I I spend a lot of time in London so I mean I have a couple of short plays coming up in London during the summer and I'm I'm involved in something called a sleepover. It's called. It's slackline sleepover. There's this production company and they specialize really in developing women characters and women writers who

are over 35 and so they have this thing called a sleepover. And what you do is you arrive at a theater at seven thirty P M of a Friday night you meet a director and some actors you have a chat, you as the writer go back and you produce A script by seven thirty the next morning and it's then rehearsed during the day and it goes on that night so um yeah I'm doing that in July and and that's really exciting because it's um, it can really push issues as a writer you think oh my god what I come up with what will this director be like what will these actors be like. And so yeah, so so I know it's kind of mad like I tell people and they think why you're crazy and I probably but I just love the I just think it's exciting. You know I just love the excitement of it. So so that's go to be happening in July but but um, just in terms of you know audio because obviously um, if you're not in London you won't see that m.

I have an audio play a a couple of months ago and called blind date which was an adaptation of a stage play I had done and it's available on, and but I'm sure you can put it up somewhere on your website, but it's it's done by a radio station here in in Dublin called near fm and we actually did that in studio so that was kind of fun. Um, because I mainly do audio work online and so that was the first time I do it in the studio and that was great fun, and I'm really really--and I directed that that as well and I really liked it. It was it was really good, fun.

And of course I'd like to plug Deep Shadows which is the audio crime drama series that I co-wrote with the wonderful Aaron Mays and which which which which we did, I don't know many years ago now last year the year before I can't even remember

Andrew

It was 2020 it was 3 it was almost three years ago now. Yeah.

Colette Cullen

I just really really loved that I just loved working on that and I loved working with Aaron he's such a nice guy. Such a brilliant writer and um. I Love the cast I Love those actors you know and so and yeah, so so if people want to check out some more of my work and ah in in the audio medium. Yeah they could they could check deep shadows and and also blind date and maybe we might put the link up on on the website and I'm probably going to be doing a rehearsed reading of 2 plays of mine this year in in Dublin and hopefully ah I'll have a production next year because I've just wrapped as you know on ah and a production of my play when Rachel met Fiona which features the same two character I love these characters I've written--I just love those characters you know and you know I like Fingers Crossed started off with Sarah and Adam and then I'm thinking oh you know I have to have a different couple then I thought oh Rachel and Fiona, it just has to be them and so yeah, yeah, so yeah, so yeah.

Andrew

There you go? No, it's wonderful, Wonderful. And let me tell you, your your sleepover? We used to do one of those twice a year over here.

Colette Cullen

Ah, give me some tips.

13:19.15

Andrew

Yeah, it was well again, it's like you don't really need to you don't really need a whole lot of lead time on that. Ah, just grab a bunch of people throw them in a theater and don't let them sleep. Um, but yeah, we're we're hoping to start doing that again. Ah.

Colette Cullen

Mean it's it's just the idea you know even like like I got into stage because it's quicker theoretically to get stuff. You know put on but it's like you know a important does theater company about something and they're saying oh yeah, I'll be 2024 I'm think you know 2024 you know whereas I love the idea it's you write it at its on the next day you know? So yeah, that's big attraction.

13:42.98

Andrew

Yeah, yeah, yeah I was um so so now of course we get to the to the meat of this interview which is of course what is the funniest thing you mispronounced as a child.

Colette Cullen

I see this is in this is so embarrassing because I'm the writer here and I don't have a story so I'm just you know all the actors were terribly entertaining Susan was that was a wonderful story and I have no stories The only word I can remember is I used to call you know a hairdressing salon. hairdressing saloon but listen, that's only word I can remember and I don't even don't even have a funny story and it's not even that funny and I do really apologize.

Andrew

No I think I all I all I picture now is walking through ah a pair of bat wing doors to ah to a slightly out of tune piano and asking for a blowout. I think it's I think you know I think I think a hairdressing saloon would be quite an interesting thing. You know it's all of a sudden.

14:51.27

Colette Cullen

Yeah I think there's what many cowboy movies. That's all I can say that.

Andrew

That that's the thing I'm like I just picture you know the the the

doors open. There's the squeak and then all of a sudden all the hair dryers stop as everyone turns to look. Yeah.

Colette Cullen

Um, ah yes, yeah, At this person who's having a really bad hair day. Yeah listen, let's make one let's make it.

Andrew

I You know what I think you've just found what I think you've just found a subject for your overnight play.

Colette Cullen

Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

Andrew

Ah, well as always Colette. It is absolutely wonderful. Getting a chance to work with you and I really do appreciate the fact that you have allowed us to be part of another ah another of your scripts they're they're wonderful I I Always enjoy it and ah. Thank you so much for letting us be part of this again.

Colette Cullen

Well look at thank you so much for for arranging all this for bringing us all together and for allowing me the opportunity of working with such a fantastic director Susan and with the brilliant cast you put together and with yourselves. So it's been just like a dream project for me as always.

Andrew

We hope you enjoyed Fingers Crossed. Next month, we will be presenting Melancholy Echo, written by Robert Alexander Wray. If you enjoyed what you heard, please remember to like, follow, and subscribe to our podcast. And feel free to leave a review! You can help us out in continuing this work by heading over to redcircle.com/shows/half-hour-audio-hour, where you can sponsor us through a onetime or recurring donation and become our partner in highlighting the voices and stories of women, BIPOC and LGBTQ+ artists. And head over to eclectic-theatre.com to find out about our serialized audio dramas, Deep Shadows, Bloody Bay, Clusterf**k, Monocyte, and Throwing Shade. On behalf of myself and everyone here at EFCT, thanks for listening