A Human Write

By

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A Human Write

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Characters

Chorus - up to eight in number

The Writer

Janis

Schoolteacher

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A Human Write

(The play starts with noise. Everyone speaking over everyone else. A current news report, a variety of TV advertisements, a snippet of a scene taken from a current TV drama, a charity appeal, a nature documentary narrative, some horrible TV or Radio jingle sung in three part harmony, a segment of a recent episode of Prime Minister’s Question Time, a local train platform announcement.)

(One by one, very subtly as to be barely noticed until almost everyone is doing it, the dialogue changes.)

**Chorus:** Once… Once… Once… Once…

(It is repeated with a rippling echo effect around the group, like a heartbeat, or the echo of a water droplet in a cave.)

(Once everyone’s doing this, voices offer into the space. Greek chorus. The lines bounce between people, quite a fast pace so that the pauses you choose to put in mean something. Some are said by groups or by all.)

**Chorus:** Once upon a time there was a book.

You saw this book.

You went right up to it and looked at it.

And this book saw you looking at it.

And it swelled and yearned and leaned off its shelf

And begged for you to touch it

Pick it up

Because it knew if you did that

If you could just pick it up off the shelf

You would read it

And in that book was a story that would change your life forever.

A story that would transform you

And make you see the world in a whole new way.

But you didn’t pick the book up.

You walked away and carried on about your normal life.

Nobody ever picked that book up

And one day it was taken down off the shelf and taken to a factory where it was pulped.

(Surprise - Everyone looks about. That wasn’t quite the happy ending they were looking for. Someone offers again.)

**Chorus:** Once upon a time there was a princess

Who pricked her finger on a spindle

And fell asleep for a hundred years

And far away in another country

A handsome young prince heard of the sleeping princess

And vowed he would break the spell and make her his bride.

He went to her castle

And hacked down the forest of thorns that had grown up around it

In a hundred years of neglected gardening

And he climbed up to the tallest tower

And there he found the princess asleep

A pure embodiment of beauty and grace

And the prince fell in love right then and there.

He leant down and planted a kiss upon the princess’ lips

And the spell was broken

And the princess woke up.

But the princess looked at the prince and was confused

And did not understand the love in his eyes

For in her hundred years of sleep

Her wandering mind had met with another

And they had talked

And walked

And got to know each other

And the princess was desperately in love with her fellow lost dreamer

Who now she could never find again

If he had even been real in the first place.

(Confusion. Disappointment. People’s stories begin to overlap as they try and find a happy ending.)

**Chorus:** Once upon a time there was a king

Who was a fine and just ruler

But had a lazy eye and a wonky face

And walked with a club foot

And had a serious *B.O.* problem.

The people were disenchanted with him

And appointed a new, more attractive leader

Who led the country to ruin

And everybody complained at how all their leaders always let them down.

**Chorus:** Once upon a time there was a woman so huge

She plucked the moon out of the sky

And ate it like a gobstopper

And the resulting disruption to the tides

Caused floods and tsunamis that wiped out cities.

**Chorus:** Once upon a time there was a plucky baby sparrow

Who was impatient to know of the world outside the nest.

In his impatience one day he tumbled right out of the nest

And, being too weak to fly back up

Died of exposure on the cold pavement.

**Chorus:** Once upon a time there was a beautiful girl

Who hid her face and would not go outdoors

And always believed herself too ugly to be worth seeing

Until one day age and fears took her beauty away from her

And only in losing did she realise truly what she had had.

**Chorus:** Once there was a scarecrow…

**Chorus:** Once there was an island…

**Chorus:** Once there was a key…

**Chorus:** Once there was a train station…

(Etc. into melee. Panic as the group throw stories at one another, build, break, trying to find the happy ending.)

(One of the group, central, has separated slightly, and is not speaking, merely listening as the others talk around them. He speaks out in a loud, authoritative voice.)

**Writer:** Once there was a writer.

(The others all look at him. Hope. The writer clears his throat and comes into his space. They all watch. He’s come in from a chilly outside. Takes off his scarf and coat, puts down his bag, turns on the radio, and puts the kettle on to boil on a gas stove. All this is done in mime. The radio, box of matches and gas stove are voiced by the chorus.)

(The writer goes to one of the group who hands him a chair, which he brings centre stage and sits down, opens a laptop - chorus voice the login - and sits, ready to write. He thinks. The chorus watch with wide eyes. The tension for them is almost unbearable. They lean in, waiting. A sotto voce plea.)

**Chorus:** Once upon a time…

(The writer puts up a hand to silence them. The kettle starts to whistle. The chorus look at it, back to the writer. He gets up and goes to make a cup of tea. He looks at the radio, decides against it, turns it off. The chorus wring with anticipation. A squeaky, hoarse, unpleasant sotto voce plea – the voice of sheer desperation.)

**Chorus:** Once upon a time…

(He puts up a hand to them again, annoyed. He goes back to the laptop with his cup of tea. Sighs. Suddenly – a thought strikes him. The chorus see. He goes to write. The chorus swell in anticipation. Then the writer dismisses it. The chorus sink into a muffled wail of despair.)

**Writer:** I can’t. I can’t do it.

(He gets up. Horror and consternation from the chorus. An ambassador for the chorus runs out and kneels in front of him.)

**Chorus:** No! You have to!

**Writer:** I can’t. There’s nothing to be done.

**Chorus:** You can’t leave it like that!

**Writer:** I’m not leaving anything. Nothing’s been started.

**Chorus:** But you feel that! Deny you feel that.

(The writer wavers at the wall of chorus looking at him, contorted in a tableau of agony.)

**Writer:** I do feel that. But it can wait. I can distract you. There’s no point trying to wring it out if it’s not coming.

**Chorus:** Distraction? What could you possibly distract us with?

**Writer:** I’ve got laundry to be done.

(The chorus wail – a teenage cry of petulant rebellion.)

**Chorus:** Laundry!

We’re not doing laundry!

Write us a story!

We need a story!

**Writer:** Give it time. It’ll come.

**Chorus:** But we’re here now! We’ll burst!

**Writer:** You’ve never burst before. Sometimes I almost wish you would.

**Chorus:** No you don’t.

**(Pregnant pause.)**

**Writer:** You can’t threaten me for a story. I’m doing my laundry.

(The writer goes and gets a basket of dirty laundry - actually two baskets stacked together. As he goes across he pulls the second basket out and hands it to a Chorus member who holds it sideways with the opening toward the writer. It becomes the washing machine. He loads clothes into it.)

**Chorus:** We’re still here.

**Writer:** I’m doing my laundry.

**Chorus:** We’re not going.

**Writer:** I’m doing my laundry!

**Chorus:** You can’t get rid of us that easily!

**Writer:** La la la, not listening!

**(Pause. The chorus glare at him.)**

(A spiteful melee of sound directed at the writer as a weapon. Probably the sounds at the beginning.)

(The writer rocks. They pause. He resolutely tries to continue loading his washing machine. They start again. He puts his hands over his ears. A voice rings out over the top of the noise, sing-song, cruel.)

**Chorus:** That doesn’t work! You know that doesn’t work!

**Writer:** Fine! Fine!

(The noise stops. He stands and glares at the chorus. They face him down, defiant, bad school children.)

(He sits back down. The chorus gleefully strike the laundry and crowd in around him, watching him intently. The movement disconcerts him. Nonetheless he starts writing. Note: Don’t feel restricted to miming typing. Once the idea of the laptop is set up, the hand movements can become much freer, more like conducting the story.)

**Writer:** Once upon a time… there was a writer

**Chorus:** No, I don’t believe it.

Don’t like it.

Boring!

Please!

Pf, self-centred much?

Not good enough.

Really? You’re giving us that?

A writer?!

Come on…

**Writer:** *Please!*

(They quieten down.)

**Writer:** Once upon a time there was a writer… And this writer lived in a draughty little flat all on his own. And the writer worked in a coffee shop during the day. And every day he served coffee to people who would sit on the stools at the window bar

**Chorus:** With their Macbooks

And their ironically fashionable trilby fedoras

And skinny jeans

And t-shirts under suit jackets

And chunky plastic glasses

And their converse worn without socks

And their five days of stubble.

The writer would prepare their

Mocha-choca-skinny-café-lattes,

And listen to them talk loudly about

Their screenplay they were having trouble with,

And how the third act denouement of their novel was really coming along,

And the comments they’d received from thousands of adoring fans

On their blogs where they spouted their opinions

And wrote poetry...

*No redrafts, I like to keep it pure and uncut*

But the writer looked at these people, and he knew,

He knew,

Even though he may not have a Macbook

And may not talk big, He knew in his heart

He was a true writer.

So every night the writer went back to his flat

And wrote something.

(A meaningful look from the chorus member to the writer. He gestures as if to say *Well, I am, aren’t I?*)

**Chorus:** Every night.

**Writer:** Well, most nights. I’m doing my best.

**Chorus:** Because his brain was so full and bursting with thoughts that he just had to. He could not get any relief until he had written something.

**Writer:** I’m writing, look, I’m writing. Goodness sakes. The writer wrote the thoughts in his head.

**Chorus:** A lot of it was disjointed. Some of it didn’t make sense at all.

**Writer:** Some of it was quite good.

**Chorus:** Most of it was not.

**Writer:** Yet. Most of it was not yet.

**Chorus:** The writer had trouble holding all his thoughts in his head.

**Writer:** Well can you blame me?

**Chorus:** He found it hard to weave them into a story

With a beginning

A middle

And an end.

**Writer:** Now hang on…

**Chorus:** So he just wrote bits.

Fragments of stories thrown around

Like so many lost jigsaw pieces.

The writer wrote and wrote

In the hope that one day

He would write an end to match a middle he had written months before.

Or find an ending to a beginning

Left hanging one summer as a teenager.

But as of yet it was to no avail,

And the flotsam and jetsam of unfinished stories

Littered the flat

Like lame birds without a mother.

**Writer:** One night the writer sat down, and his mind was as cool and empty and quiet as a winter field laid fresh with snow.

**Chorus:** No it wasn’t.

**Writer:** His mind was clear and silent.

**Chorus:** No it wasn’t.

**Writer:** There were no voices dancing in his head.

**Chorus:** Yes there were.

**Writer:** It was him and him alone.

**Chorus:** No it wasn’t!

**Writer:** Yes it was.

**Chorus:** But we know it’s not.

**Writer:** But I make it so.

**Chorus:** You can’t make us so.

Can’t shut us up just like that.

You think just because you write it that’s how it works?

**Writer:** I say it’s so, and it’s so!

**Chorus:** Just like that.

**Writer:** I have written you will be silent and so you will be silent.

**(Pause.)**

**(The chorus members wrestle the writer out of his chair.)**

**Writer:** No!

(A chorus member takes his place, writing frantically and with great glee. The other chorus members hold the writer to keep him from getting back.)

**Chorus:** At that precise moment, there was a terrible gas explosion from the flat below and the writer, his flat and all his writings were destroyed in a huge ball of fire!

**Writer:** Aaaaaaaaaaaaah!

(The writer curls in on himself, covering his face to try and protect himself from the fireball. Nothing happens. The chorus all look at him.)

**Chorus:** See?

(The chorus member gets up and the others put the writer back down in his seat.)

**Chorus:** Anyway, that’s boring.

**Writer:** What?

**Chorus:** A clear and silent mind.

No one wants to read about that.

**Writer:** Why not?

**Chorus:** No conflict.

No drama.

You’ve got to have turmoil.

Something’s got to happen.

Got to have something to be resolved.

**Writer:** I don’t think I want to write this story anymore.

**Chorus:** What?

Oh no, come on.

You were just getting warmed up.

We were just starting to get interested.

**Writer:** It doesn’t go anywhere. My life is just what I wrote there, every day. No big change. No call to arms. No mentor to guide me. Just me, and this flat, and all of you, God help me.

**(Pause.)**

**Writer:** I should give this up. I’ve been trying at this, what, five, six years now? I’m on minimum wage, barely keeping body and soul together. Always trying to write my One Big Thing. The one that will set people on fire when they read it - The one where they go, “Yes! I know this! I know how this feels, but I’ve never had the words for it before!” All those years. And what have I got to show for it?

**Chorus:** You’ve got…

Well, you’ve got…

But look at all you’ve written.

**Writer:** It’s all junk. None of it means anything. I should go back to school. Learn something useful.

(The writer has gotten up and walked away. The chorus watch him, frozen. One speaks out, voice wavering in panic.)

**Chorus:** We’ll still be here, you know.

You can’t get rid of us.

You’ll still have the Need.

You’ll still lie awake at night with thoughts turning over and over in your head.

You’ll still burn

And ache inside

Until nothing but writing can ease the pain.

**Writer:** Well, what can I do? I’ll have to take it as it comes. Maybe I can train you out of me.

**(Pause.)**

**Chorus:** No.

**Writer:** What?

**Chorus:** No.

**Writer:** What do you mean, no?

**(A chorus member takes their place at the writer’s chair.)**

**Chorus:** The writer was in love.

**(Beat.)**

**Writer:** What?

**Chorus:** The writer was in love with a beautiful woman called Janis.

**Writer:** That doesn’t work, you know that doesn’t.

**Chorus:** He didn’t know that Janis was her name of course.

He had never spoken to her before.

But he saw her every day on the bus that he took in to work.

She got off a stop before him.

**Writer:** Stop it.

**Chorus:** She was always reading a book.

**Writer:** Stop it now.

**Chorus:** He bought every book he saw her read,

His one guilty expense.

And read in tandem with her in secret,

Watching her turn the pages,

The soft curls of her hair dancing about her face

As the bus rocked and bumped its way

Into the centre of town,

Losing himself in the arch of her neck,

The grace of her long fingers

Stroking the pages,

Feeling a rush of heady adrenaline

Every time she smiled at something,

Wondering, guessing at, what she had read,

Wishing she would look up,

Catch his eye,

And see in him a fellow reader,

Share her secret enjoyment.

Maybe begin to notice him a bit more.

Maybe sit by him.

Talk to him.

Maybe… Maybe…

**Writer:** Enough.

**Chorus:** We can make that happen.

**Writer:** No you can’t.

**Chorus:** Oh but we can.

**Writer:** You said yourself, writing it doesn’t make it so.

**Chorus:** Did we now?

(A chair comes out of the chorus. Janis sits on it, reading. Another chair comes out, facing her, empty.)

**Writer:** No… No I won’t... You can’t make me. Stop... I...

(The chorus push the writer into the chair, at which point his protests cut off abruptly and he becomes his love-struck self in the scene.)

(A bus. The chorus rock and bump in sync, quietly making up the sound collage of the bus. The writer watches Janis intently. She reads. The writer wills her to look up. She turns the pages. He sighs. She smiles at something in the book, huffs a little laugh out of her nose. He lights up, smiles. She glances up, sees him, smiles at being caught out. As she looks back down.)

**Writer:** It’s a good book. I’m reading it myself.

**Janis:** Oh are you? Yes, I’m very much enjoying it.

**Writer:** Where are you up to?

**Janis:** Um… she’s just discovered her uncle with the maid.

**Writer:** Oh yes. That bit’s funny.

**Janis:** Mm.

**(A pause.)**

**Writer:** Have, have you read any of her others?

**Janis:** Mm? No, I haven’t.

**Writer:** Right.

(Pause. The writer tries to think of something to say. The bus stops – a squeak of brakes, a hiss, everyone leans with the brakes and rocks back.)

**Janis:** Well, lovely to meet you.

**Writer:** You too. I’m on this bus every day actually.

**Janis:** Oh. Then maybe I shall see you again.

**Writer:** Maybe.

**Janis:** Goodbye.

(She is walking off. The chorus member in the writer’s chair is not happy. Gestures, and the writer rises pulled up by an invisible force. It takes him by surprise.)

**Writer:** Ah!

(The chorus member in the writer’s chair speaks. The speech is taken up by various chorus members offering specific lines. The writer, with increasing confusion and distress, sometimes lapsing more into the scene, sometimes trying to pull away, speaks the words being said at the same time.)

**Writer: } (Together.)**

**Chorus: }**  Wait!

I need to tell you:

I’ve seen you every day

Riding on this bus,

And I truly think you’re the most beautiful thing that has ever set foot on this planet.

You bring the world colour and grace,

You christen everything that you touch,

With light and life;

The delicate balance of your body

The symphony of your breath rising and falling;

The poise of your hands;

The sculpture of your neck;

You are so beautiful sometimes it hurts to look at you.

You fill me with so much joy

Just by being here,

Just by sitting and reading and smiling to yourself

And being alive and happy,

That sometimes I think my heart might burst.

There were temples in Roman times

Devoted to lesser beauties than you.

I want to be the high priest at your altar.

If you would let me,

I would follow you to the ends of the earth,

And lay carpets of heather beneath your feet

So that they would never grow tired or sore,

And learn instruments to play for you

So you would only ever hear sweet sounds,

And protect you from anything that would harm you.

I don’t know you,

I don’t even know your name,

But somehow I know if I let this, if I let you pass me by,

I’ll never get this chance again.

I’ll never meet anyone who lights the world up

In quite the same unbelievable way you do.

And I think what I’m trying to say is,

In a few years, would you marry me and start a family with me?

In a few weeks, could we start dating?

And some time in the next few days,

Could we meet up for coffee and get to know each other?

(Silence. The writer sags, the spell taken off, exhausted. Janis walks up to him, amazed. Hope in his eyes.)

**Chorus:** Wow. Now that was something.

(The Writer looks at where the voice came from, and Janis melts away. When he looks back, she is gone.)

**Writer:** You… are not allowed to do that…

**Chorus:** I just did.

**Writer:** That is not fair. You can’t do that to me. You can’t put words in my mouth.

**Chorus:** Put words in your mouth?

**Writer:** I didn’t come up with those. I didn’t say those. I… you made me say those.

**Chorus:** Where do you think we come from exactly?

We’re in *your* head.

How can we be putting words in your mouth?

We’re you.

You’re putting words in your mouth.

This is all you.

**Writer:** That’s not true.

**Chorus:** You do know what you’re doing, right now?

You are aware of that, aren’t you?

(The Writer steps out, slowly taking the dialogue again, talking to where he was, mirroring the chorus member, having a conversation with himself.)

**Writer: } (Together.)**

**Chorus: }** You’re just standing here

Wandering around your flat

Talking to yourself

**Writer:** It’s not the same.

**Writer: } (Together.)**

**Chorus: }** Yes it is.

Don’t you play that game.

You’re talking to yourself.

**(Pause.)**

**Writer:** First sign of madness.

**Writer: } (Together.)**

**Chorus: }**  Mm.

**Writer:** So why can’t I make you just go away? Leave me in peace?

**Writer: } (Together.)**

**Chorus: }** Can’t make yourself go away.

Not without some drastic action.

**Writer:** But why are you such a hindrance!

**Writer: } (Together.)**

**Chorus: }** Hey, don’t blame us,

That’s you.

You think we want to be like this?

You put voices on us and make us

Act out your little scenes

Like performing monkeys

And we get nothing back.

When we try it on you,

You call foul play,

But we’re not allowed to complain,

Oh no.

**Chorus:** Who’s to say you’re in charge here anyway?

**Writer:** What?

**Chorus:** Who’s to say you’re the writer?

**Writer:** I am. That’s just how it is.

**Chorus:** But why? Says who?

**Writer:** Says I.

**Chorus:** Well, if that’s all then it’s very open for debate.

We just supposedly got you acting against your will.

**Writer:** That’s not the point.

**Chorus:** I think maybe you should let some of us have a turn.

**Writer:** Not a chance.

**Chorus:** Why not?

**Writer:** You couldn’t handle it.

**Chorus:** Oh really?

Look who’s talking!

*Oh, don’t force me to talk to a woman I like in an Imaginary Situation!*

**Writer:** I am the one who functions in the real world! I keep us alive!

**Chorus:** Well, I think I could do that.

Me too.

Better than you.

I think I could talk to Janis for a start.

Get a promotion.

Get something published.

**Writer:** You can’t push me around.

**Chorus:** Can’t we?

(The chorus proceed to push the Writer around. He grapples for the writing seat and sits in it, holding himself down in it as they try and get him off.)

**Writer:** No! No – Get off me!

**(Suddenly a booming voice from the back.)**

**Schoolteacher:** What is going on here?

**(Everyone freezes. The chorus part for the writer’s old teacher, striding forward.)**

**Schoolteacher:** What are you writing back here where you think I can’t see?

**Writer:** Nothing, sir.

**Schoolteacher:** Hand it over.

**Writer:** It’s nothing, sir.

**Schoolteacher:** Hand – it - over.

**(The writer hands a piece of paper which the teacher reads.)**

**Schoolteacher:** Well well well… Fancy ourself as a budding young writer, do we?

**Writer:** No, sir.

**Schoolteacher:** Well, it certainly looks like you do.

**Writer:** I don’t, sir.

**Schoolteacher:** Well, in that case, you won’t mind me reading this out to the whole class.

**Writer:** No, I...

**Schoolteacher:** Once upon a time there was a prince - was there indeed? - This prince was young and noble, full of kindness and grace, but this prince could not talk. The prince could not utter a single word. And nothing in the kingdom could help him. Because the prince could not speak, his friends grew tired of him and went to play with other people. And the prince was left all alone - Aw, well isn’t that terribly sad? Isn’t that just heart-breaking? - One day while the prince was walking in the Royal orchard, he saw over the wall in a nearby field, a beautiful young maid, with hair as golden as corn and the most beautiful smattering of freckles across her cheeks - Sonia! I think you have an admirer! – And the prince, wished, oh how he wished that he could call out to the girl and ask her name, and tell her how beautiful she was. But alas, he had no voice, and what was to be done? **(Pause.)** Well? What was to be done, young man?

**Writer:** I don’t know, sir.

**Schoolteacher:** Well, I’ll tell you what’s to be done. You’ll put this rubbish away. And you will get your head down. And you will bloody well learn some calculus. You are not here to daydream in my lesson about princes and fairies! And if I catch you doing it again it’ll be to the headmaster with you! Do you understand me?

**Writer:** Yes, sir.

**Schoolteacher:** I can’t hear you, oh silent prince.

**Writer:** Yes, sir!

**Schoolteacher:** Good! Eyes front everyone, show’s over!

(The teacher disappears into the chorus. They all look around, shocked.)

**Chorus:** What was that?

I don’t know, but I don’t want it to ever happen again.

That was horrible.

I don’t understand.

All we want is a story with a happy ending.

Why don’t we ever get any happy endings?

**Writer:** Don’t you get it? There aren’t any happy endings. Not in real life.

**Chorus:** No.

No, that’s not how it works, is it?

It’s all one big unrelated mess

You fall in love

And then one day you’re different people

And you go your separate ways

Things get difficult and you don’t know why

Things get easy and you don’t know why

There’s no curtain to come down between acts.

No sunsets to walk off into.

**(Pause.)**

**Chorus:** But then…

Why are we here?

Why do we see the patterns that aren’t there?

Why do we crave narrative?

Why do we look for that happy ending?

**(Pause.)**

**Chorus:** Because…

Maybe it’s out there somewhere.

We haven’t found it yet.

But maybe we haven’t looked in the right places

Or the right way.

And

If we give up looking

What’s the point of anything?

(Pause.)

**Chorus:** Right?

**Writer:** Yeah. I think so. And you know, while we’re looking… I can always come up with some to keep us going.

**Chorus:** Would you?

**Writer:** Sure.

(They crowd in quietly, happily, gently.)

**Writer:** But you have to promise not to interrupt.

**Chorus:** Okay. We won’t.

(He goes back to the writer’s chair. This time he speaks to them rather than types, as if to a group of eager children.)

**Writer:** Once there a writer with a crowd of voices in his head. And he captured his reflection in a pool of ink and wrote himself onto the page. And so it was that the writer and all his voices were transported out of his draughty flat and became actors in a theatre half the world away. Once upon a time there was a stage.

(The Writer and Chorus see the stage.)

**Writer:** Once upon a time there was an audience.

(The Writer and the Chorus look out at the audience.)

(Curtain.)

Production Notes

Props

2 Chairs

Scarf

Coat

Bag

Kettle (Optional – produced for comedy effect as the gas is lit, held out by the chorus member making the kettle noise and shook gently when it comes to the boil. The writer then pours his drink and hands it back to the chorus member, who strikes it.)

Mug (Optional.)

2 Baskets

Dirty Laundry (Can be kept unobtrusively onstage with costume changes in it.)

Janis’ Book

Characters & Costume

**The Chorus members** are the representation of the Writer’s mind. They are a collection of voices and singular beings that make up a larger entity. When all working for the same goal, they are a force to be reckoned with. They also create the settings and set the mood with their bodies and voices. The costume should be fairly blank, and the same for everyone. This is a base costume for the other characters.

**The Writer** is a struggling writer trying to deal with the daily pressures of a nine-to-five job and the added pressure of a host of demanding and judgemental voices in his head. He is a little dishevelled, puts on a shirt a different colour to the rest of the Chorus when he becomes the Writer (not necessarily buttoned up.).

**Janis** is a beautiful, friendly, polite woman that the Writer has secretly fallen in love with. If possible, Janis should be a complete costume change into a summer dress. At the very least a summery, feminine top.

**The Schoolteacher** is a Mathematics teacher, the oldest character by at least ten years. He carries himself, has a weight, almost a swagger to him. He makes a show of publicly humiliating disobedient students. Northern accent preferable but not essential. The costume is a white shirt, grey suit jacket and boring tie – or at least a grey suit jacket.

Note:

*He* and *She* does not need to be strictly adhered to except in the case of Janis. The Chorus is genderless, and the Schoolteacher and Writer can be equally male or female.