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The Flock

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Vic
Louise
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English translation commissioned by

**Theater
LOLO**

LIVING WILD IN THE CITY

Anything was allowed, it was for the nest.

They lived in the here and now without thinking of the consequences. Having to survive on their own, living on impulse, they preyed on others and were preyed upon by the Fox.

Birds. That's how I think of us. Now. Birds. We were like birds – birds of prey. We hunted in a flock. Zigzagging down the streets, in and out of the people, over their heads. Like pigeons. No, not like pigeons, pigeons are stupid. We weren't stupid. Even though we did some stupid things. We were smart. Clever. Stuck our beaks into people's pockets, the second they looked the other way. Smart, clever. That's what we were.

Talk together about when you think they were **'smart'** and **'clever'** and when you think they did **'stupid'** things.



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All about Vic

*My name is Vic.
A few years ago,
I lived on the
streets, with a
flock of girls. It
was summer.
I was fourteen
years old.
This is our story.
This is my story.*



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What do you think about her?

Vic is a girl who, for some reason we don't know, became homeless at fourteen. Did she have a safe home to return to? Did she have parents who were searching for her or not? She doesn't go to school. Why not? She is older now, looking back, 'these days are haunted by memories'. She remembers her friend Louise who died. Why does she need to tell their story? What is driving her to remember?

Vic 'talks' to her friend Louise

Sometimes Louise comes. Yeah. I'm sitting on the bus and suddenly I think I see her. Or I'm in the cinema. All of a sudden I can feel her. I turn round, and she's there, a few rows behind me, sitting in the dark, looking at me, and smiling. But when I try and find her in the crowd after the film, of course, she's not there.

Or at home. When I'm sitting on the sofa. Or lying on my bed. Or standing in front of the mirror looking at myself. At my face. Suddenly it's Louise's face that I see.

All about Louise

Louise died when she was fifteen. She returns from the dead into Vic's life *'to hear our story'. 'I want to listen, and you want to tell.'*

They met on the streets and Vic introduced her to the others. They shared everything and the *'Flock'* was born. They made a *'Nest'* together.

She had to take 'medicine' to control her fragile emotional state; she was vulnerable, sick and needed help. She turned to her friend, Vic, who agreed to look after her.

She allowed the Fox to abuse her to save their Nest but this encounter may have triggered her suicide. Louise dreamt of flight but her story ended in death.

Louise

The world gets too much. Everything that's going on, everything I see and hear. It gets too much. As if there is not room for it all in my head. As if it's about to explode ... Everyday I feel more and more lost ... I forgot who I was and where I was ... I got lost but you didn't see

Louise *Do you remember those birds we saw? I was thinking about them. If only it was possible to just take off and fly away.*

Vic *It is possible. We'll do it, Louise. I promise, we'll fly south.*

Louise *But I meant something else ... Something you didn't understand*

Friendship? When you're down and troubled.

For some reason the adult world has let Vic and Louise down, no longer protecting them. They make up their own rules to survive. Could their friendship be expected to protect Louise from death? Vic is also a young person taking on an adult role by trying to protect her friend. Could she be expected to know what to do to help and to save her? She still grieves for Louise and her telling of their story is unresolved. Then, at the end of the play, she finds a way of speaking the truth about her friend's death.

When we asked young people about friendship this is what they told us

(Researched in schools in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan)

Teenage Boys define friendship in terms of

- how much a friend will protect you
- 'watch your back for you'
- how much of a laugh you can have together
- the activities you can share
e.g. football, team games
- respect and loyalty
- 'they don't beat you up'

Exceptional boy comments:

- 'sacrificing for each other'
- 'kind and loving'

Teenage Girls define friendship in terms of

- sharing secrets, confidences
- trust and reliability
- 'count on you when you are down'
- someone you can let yourself go with
- commitment, trust and communication

Exceptional girl comments:

'friendships are your second family'

'never to be abandoned'

'a friend is someone you can sit silently with'

**IF YOUR FRIEND WAS MADE HOMELESS
COULD YOU REALLY TAKE THEM HOME
TO LIVE WITH YOU? WHAT WOULD THE
CONSEQUENCES BE?**

All about Maria

Maria 'speaks posh'. She was pretty, smartly dressed and innocent looking. She wanted to be with the Flock. She stole from the old lady at the station. When she couldn't steal she would 'borrow' money from her parents. Her father tried to get her to come home and to go on holiday with them. When she refuses the holiday, they leave her anyway. She chooses to wreck her parents' home and steal from them to try to save the Flock and the Nest.

Louise says Maria

*looked like a princess
with her long blonde
curly hair*

Vic agrees

just like in a movie.'

Why would a girl, who has everything she needs in her parents affluent home, destroy it?

Why is she more loyal to The Flock than her own family?

All about Claire

Claire the Goth wears black clothes and lipstick. She has a spider tattoo and never smiles. She swears and speaks in a slang way.

They found the Nest to live in and Claire earned money by taking dogs for walks, returning bottles and washing up.

Vic

Her skin was almost transparent. She never smiled. Not even when she was laughing.

Louise

she did smile once. That time when she found the nest for us.

Claire

I've found a place for us. A home. Our own home. It was an old abandoned building.

All About Tülin

Vic

She could run like the wind.

Tülin, the Turkish girl, the quiet one, runs quickly, she doesn't say much. She has a brother, Mahmood, who drives a big car. She steals a bike and Mahmood defends her from a gang of boys. She plaits tourists' hair for money. She finds the Nest and shares the Flock's life until they flee from the Fox and abandon the Nest.

What happens to her?

How do you think she survives into the future?

Can her brother, Mahmood, help her?

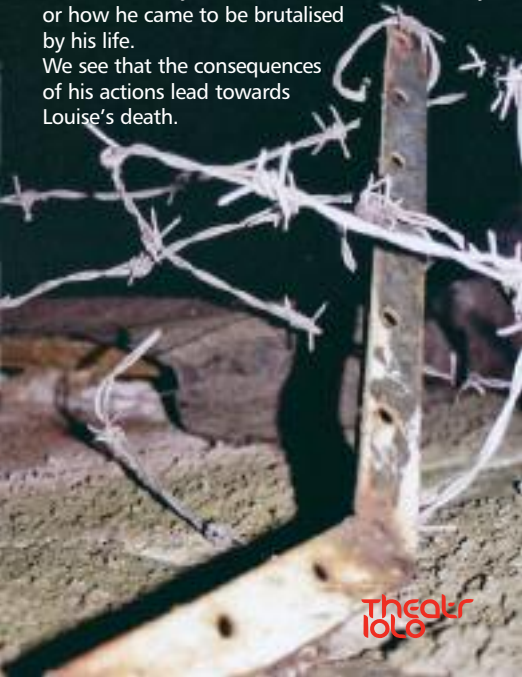
Would he want to?

All about the Fox

The Fox is a man who claims to be the owner of the property where the Flock have made their home. He had 'hardly any hair and great podgy fingers'.

He saw that he could exploit the girls financially and sexually. He knew that there were no adults to protect them and they needed somewhere to live. They were young people. He was an adult. He may have been a father himself with a family at home or maybe not. We don't know his story or how he came to be brutalised by his life.

We see that the consequences of his actions lead towards Louise's death.



They could not pay the rent

Fox *Okay, there are two possibilities. Either I call the police or you do some work for me.*

Louise *Work?*

Fox *As models. I'm a photographer.*

Louise *What? So, we're going to be models now, are we?*

Fox *It's quite simple. I take pictures of you, and you can carry on living here.*

Louise *We looked at one another. A couple of photos, that couldn't do any harm.*

Fox *Wonderful. Now get undressed and we can get on with it.*

Louise *Suddenly, we understood what he meant.
But what could we do?*

WHAT COULD THEY DO?

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Anything was allowed, it was for the Nest

Stealing Mugging Vandalising

**OTHER PEOPLE? HOW DID THEY
FEEL? ROLE PLAY THESE FOUR
PEOPLE AFFECTED BY THE
ACTIONS OF THE FLOCK**

The train guard.

The old woman.

The posh lady in a fur coat.

Maria's rich father.

**CALL A PUBLIC MEETING TO
DISCUSS CRIME IN THE CITY AND
HOMELESSNESS.**



THE TRAIN GUARD

ROLE CARD

Stop in the name of the law

Next time you won't get away with it

We chased after them but these young girls were chucking bags and suitcases into the aisle, for us to fall over. No respect for anyone or anything! They were too quick for me and they knew it. Not a ticket between them. Causing havoc and the language was...! They'd probably been drinking or worse. No discipline in the home, they just let them run wild. And why weren't they in school?'

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THE OLD WOMAN

ROLE CARD

At The Central Station there was an old woman whom Maria pilfered from, whilst pretending to do a school project.

I was waiting at the station on my way to see my daughter. There was a pretty young girl, about thirteen I'd say, with lovely blond curly hair. She chatted away to me, very politely, about a school project she was doing.

Do you know she even curtsied! I was completely taken in by her. She helped me to count my change and before I knew it she was off with my money. When I looked, I'd no notes left - I couldn't buy my ticket - I couldn't visit my daughter. I can't trust anyone now.

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THE WOMAN IN THE FUR COAT

ROLE CARD

The 47 year old woman, in a fur coat, victim of their assault at the station.

I travelled home after going to the bank in town, I always go there on a Thursday, they must have followed me. When I got off at my station, it was pretty empty and I'd just noticed them - when they struck. They knocked me to the ground and dragged me into the toilets. I remember seeing a spider tattoo on her hand. She held a knife to my throat. I couldn't move. She said 'If you scream, it'll be the last noise you ever make.' They knew what they were doing. They tied me up with black tape and pushed my head down into the toilet. I haven't been able to return to work yet.

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Maria's rich parents

We'd put up with her nonsense for a considerable amount of time. She was living in some squat, illegally, with a group of girls who were a terrible influence on her. She should have been doing her exams. My wife and I always hoped she would follow me into the family business. The stress was considerable and my wife needed a holiday. Maria could have come with us – but no she wouldn't. Not even to please her mother. I just can't understand it. Then we come home to this!