**INK Festival - Audition excerpt from ‘The Last Cheeseburger’**

***Characters***

*BELLA – a well-oiled presenter type who wants everything to go to plan*

RP. Neat, well put together – almost robotic like. When things don’t go as planned she fully loses control but can quickly slip back in line. Think Annette Bening in American Beauty.

*SARAH – unsuspecting competition winner who isn’t afraid to query the status quo*

***Play Synopsis***

*With the world on the brink, one museum aims to capture the last moments of everything. For this particular exhibition, Sarah has been selected at random to eat the last cheeseburger. What will humanity leave behind in the end, and is any of it truly worth saving?*

***Extract Context***

*Bella is hosting to a live and streamed audience the consumption of the last cheeseburger, which Sarah has been picked at random to consume. This is Bella’s big moment – everything must go perfectly – the world is watching. Sarah is starving and finds the whole ceremony quite ridiculous.*

**BELLA**: Do you know what Muckbanging is Sarah?

**SARAH**: What?

**BELLA**: Muckbang, enjoyment from watching another person … consume. There are entire YouTube channels dedicated to it. I want you to take your time, they're all here for you, eagerly awaiting every sound, every precious crumb that falls from your mouth.

**SARAH**: What the actual fuck.

**BELLA**: Please don’t swear, the exhibitions are child friendly.

**SARAH**: Sorry.

**BELLA**: You have no idea how lucky you are, no one has been able to buy a genuine beefburger for years.

They tried to replicate it with whatever animals we had left, horses, dogs, rats, but nothing pairs better with a slice of tomato, lettuce, mayo, fried onions, ketchup, melted cheese, crispy bacon, two soft buns and a gherkin. Beef has no equal.

**SARAH**: I thought you were vegan?

**BELLA**: I am.

**SARAH**: Alright. I’d always take the gherkin out.

**BELLA**: Not this time, you have to savour every mouthful.

Are you ready?

**SARAH**: Yeah.

*Bella places her hand over the lid.*

**BELLA**: Here we go, everybody, I present to you … the last cheeseburger.

*Bella lifts the lid revealing a burger.*

*It’s a sad-looking McDonald’s Cheeseburger.*

*Beat*.

**BELLA**: Just take in the sight of it, let any lingering aromas into your nose, breathe in nostalgia, breathe in your childhood, breathe in happiness.

*Sarah breathes in.*

**BELLA**: What do you smell?

**SARAH**: It smells …

**BELLA**: Into the microphone, please.

**SARAH**: Oh sorry, It smells … a bit off actually. Is it fresh?

**BELLA**: Of course it is.

**SARAH**: I was expecting a proper gourmet-style burger with all the trimmings, this is a bit …

**BELLA**: What?

**SARAH**: It’s a bit of a letdown.

**BELLA**: We did the best we could, the beef had to be smuggled across Europe. We bought most of the ingredients on the dark web. We had our best historians collaborate on replicating the authentic recipe.

**SARAH**: This looks suspiciously like a McDonald’s Cheeseburger.

**BELLA**: It isn’t.