

I'M A MINGER

By

ALEX JONES

A Premiered at The Arts Theatre, London's West End, two performances at The Latitude Festival, finishing at 503 Theatre, London, Summer 2008. **Runner up** for the **Brain Way Award, 2009**. Extensive national tour, 2010, a co-production with **Belgrade Theatre, Coventry** and **Nicholas Collet Productions**, including theatres in Northern Ireland, **Theatre Royal Bath** and **Theatre Royal York**. **I'm a Minger!** was featured on **BBC Radio 4 Woman's Hour** and the script is now used as a therapeutic springboard for work with young girls with eating disorders by the **Priory clinic**. The play was also produced in an Italian translation By **Antonia Brancatti** called '**Sono una Frana**' at **Teatro Stradanouva, Genova**, March 2019. The play script is published by **Oberon Books**.

"Kelly, right, Kelly the bitch decides to have a party on the very same night as my sleep over - the very same night! And I know she's done it on purpose, and she invites everybody, doesn't she? Sophie, Tori, Kathy, Sam, Anna-Lisa - absolutely everybody... except me of course... I want to die!"

A hilarious journey in a world where pain and joy mingle - and sometimes within the very same sentence! Funny yet poignant, touching on important current issues like bullying, friendship, anorexia and self-esteem - a totally unique production that is not only revelatory and moving, but ultimately seriously entertaining!

OTC copy - In an outstanding 75 minutes of performance Alex Jones plays the 14-year-old heroine, Katie, her parents, her friends and a host of other characters in this touching and topical tragic-comedy. **I'M A MINGER!** was inspired by the experiences of Alex's own teenage daughter when faced with the startling fact that she was becoming disturbingly unhappy with her life and couldn't see a way out of her messy room and messed-up head. Suddenly self-harm, eating disorders, bullying and suicide-chat rooms were being discussed with his daughter as well as in the national press, and he had to take notice. This play is a loving and truthful look at some of the most difficult and hilarious parts of both teenage-dom and parent-hood and speaks to audiences of all ages.

**SYNOPSIS & SAMPLE SCENES
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SCENE 1

A teenage girl's bedroom: posters of boy bands and various pin-ups of hunky men, together with pictures of cute animals - cats and horses, etc. It's pink and girly, but it's a real mess: make-up, hair slides, magazines, books, videos, CD's, clothes, empty cups, plates, cushions and cuddly toys are everywhere. This is a room that is so untidy it's reached a point of no return: this is KATIE's bedroom, her refuge and her prison. Music - 'Teenage Dirtbag' by Wheatus as KATIE, a 14-year-old girl flounces through the door, dressed in her school uniform. She angrily throws her schoolbag at the wall; it lands on the bed. Music ends.

KATIE I don't believe it! Cow! Bloody cow - I hate her, I really, really hate her! Cow! Bitch! Cow, cow, cow!! (Shouts) Aagghhrr!!

KATIE calms down, and then -

Bitch!! Kelly, right, Kelly the bitch decides to have a party on the very same night of my sleep over - the very same night! And I know she's done it on purpose, and she invites everybody, doesn't she? Sophie, Tori, Heather, Sam - even Treena... except me of course.

Deflated, KATIE goes over to the mirror and looks at her reflection.

Hello fatty!

She leans in closer and examines her face.

Oh my God - look at my skin. Even my spots have got spots. Was I born ugly, or did I just evolve into ugliness?

KATIE leaves the mirror and sits dejected on her bed.

I was looking forward to it: a sleep over at my house. I said to Tori "You're still coming, aren't you?" And she said -

She becomes TORI and whenever another character crops up she becomes that one too.

TORI Um... well, you see Katie, Kelly's like had a hard time lately; she's had a hard time. Her dog died, didn't he?

KATIE "Her dog? So what? It's a dog; it's an animal, what's the big deal?" And Sophie says -

SOPHIE She loved that dog, actually. She cried for two days solid, she did.

KATIE "When? When did she cry? I never saw her cry."

SOPHIE That's typical of you, Katie - always think of yourself. That's really selfish.

KATIE (To audience) "No I'm not selfish; I was just looking forward to having you around, that's all. Dad was gonna buy us all pizzas and we could rent a video and do our make-up and stuff, that's all. I mean, yeah if Kelly needs to see you...well maybe we could do it the following Friday?" And Sophie says -

SOPHIE Yeah - maybe.

KATIE And Tori says -

TORI I'm busy that week end, Pat an' Simone's coming over.

KATIE I don't know why I bother; I might as well face up to the fact that I'm unpopular and when I leave school I'll become a nun or a lesbian, or both probably knowing me. And then we had RE, didn't we with slimy Mr Wanker Williams, and I hadn't done my homework, had I?

WILLIAMS T, t, t! No homework again. Well what a surprise.

KATIE "But sir, I did it, but I did it in rough in my notebook and I was gonna hand it in tomorrow when I copied it up, honestly sir."

WILLIAMS And some fell upon stony ground.

KATIE *(Smart)* "No sir, it's not on the ground, it's at home."

WILLIAMS Don't be insolent with me, Katie Weller; I won't have it, I simply won't have it, do you hear?

KATIE "But sir..."

WILLIAMS *(Loud)* Do you hear me?!

KATIE *(Submissive)* "Yes sir."

WILLIAMS Detention after school on Thursday - don't forget to inform your parents that you'll be late home.

KATIE "But sir, I'll miss the school bus."

WILLIAMS Not my problem. Sort out an alternative mode of transport, or take the bipedal route.

KATIE "What?"

WILLIAMS Your legs. Walk girl - walk!

KATIE *Wanker!*

 KATIE goes to the door, opens it and calls down the stairs.

 Dad!

Pause.

 Deaf old bat. *(Screams)* DAD!!!

DAD No need to shout.

KATIE Really?

DAD What do you want, Katie?

KATIE What's for dinner?!

DAD Spag bol.

KATIE *(To herself) Oh God! (To her DAD) Can I have something else?*

DAD No, you're eating spaghetti bolognese... *and tidy your room!*

 KATIE *looks in the mirror and sticks out her chest.*

KATIE 'Least I've got tits. *(Smiles) Kelly's got a chest like a fat boy. Jealous cow!* Patrick Peasbody was looking at them today - I saw him. I said "What you looking at?" and he went all red -

PATRICK Nothing' Katie, honestly.

KATIE And Oliver Bunting said -

OLIVER He was lookin' at yer tits, Kate, weren' he? An' I don't blame him, either - they're fantastic!

KATIE And I blushed a bit and felt really proud... I hate Spag bol; it's like eating... it's like eating shit. It is shit, actually, that's what it is - minced up shit with garlic and basil. *Basil?* Who wants leaves in food?

DAD It's classic Mediterranean cookery, Katie.

KATIE Am I supposed to be impressed, Dad?

DAD What about that fish we ate last night?

KATIE It had a head!

DAD Grilled Red Snapper.

KATIE It had a head, Dad!

DAD It had been marinated.

KATIE Yeah, but why?

DAD Because... well...

KATIE See, what's the point?

DAD It took me ages to make that marinade: 2 teaspoons of arrowroot, lemon grass (outer leaves removed, finely sliced), fresh ginger...

KATIE I hate ginger - all ginger should be banned; especially hair; I'd cross the road rather than talk to a ginger-headed person.

DAD The juice and zest of one lime...

KATIE Apart from Roger Bostock, he's all right.

DAD Three tablespoons of Thai fish sauce...

KATIE He catches my bus sometimes; he spoke to me last week.

ROGER Hi Katie.

KATIE *(Flustered)* Oh yeah... hi, erm...

ROGER Roger?

KATIE Oh yeah, Roger, I knew that; I mean I really did, Roger, I really did, I mean I don't want you to think I don't know your name because I do... it's erm, it's Roger.

ROGER I know.

KATIE *(Laughs)* Yeah, of course you do; I mean of course you do, it'd be daft if you didn't, so of course you do.

ROGER So - how's things?

KATIE Well... you know -

ROGER No, that's why I'm asking.

KATIE Yeah, 'course, yeah. Well they're okay, actually, yeah things are... okay.

ROGER Still doin' the ballet?

KATIE *No!* Bloody hell, no! You must be joking! Who told you that?

ROGER Nobody. I just wondered that's all. I mean, I know you used to do it; I saw you in that show last year at the Hall; I thought you looked great.

KATIE Did you?

ROGER Yeah; I thought you looked great in your tutu (laughs).

KATIE *(Laughs)* Huh, yeah my tutu.

ROGER Swan Lake, wasn't it?

KATIE It was, yeah.

ROGER I love ballet.

KATIE You love ballet?!

ROGER I know it's strange for a boy to like ballet, but who gives a toss what anybody thinks, eh?

KATIE *(To audience)* Who gives a toss? Who gives a toss? I couldn't believe my ears - such bravery! Ohh, I love the way the light shines in his eyes - they're sort of green and his freckles, well they're kind of not so bad when you get used to them. *(Back to ROGER)* Yeah, I know what you mean, who gives a toss?

ROGER Still 'shame you don't do it anymore; I thought you were pretty good at it.

KATIE Oh I am... I mean, I'm not saying I'm good at it, because well that would be bragging, wouldn't it? But what I meant was I am still doing it - ballet, I mean.

ROGER But you just said you weren't.

KATIE Did I?

ROGER *(Smiles)* Yeah.

KATIE Oh... I wonder why I said that?

ROGER I don't know.

KATIE Well... I think I said it because... because...

ROGER It's not cool?

KATIE Er...

ROGER Don't let your peers put pressure on you and stop you being creative - I don't, no way. I still play in the local youth orchestra.

KATIE Do you? Oh Great. I saw you play once, actually.

ROGER Did you?

KATIE Yeah, saw you playing your trumpet.

ROGER Violin.

KATIE Trumpet, violin - similar really.

ROGER *(Laughs)* Yeah, 'cept one's Brass and the other's Strings.

KATIE *(Laughs)* Yeah, that's what I meant. *(To audience)* My God, do I sound as thick as I think I sound?

ROGER Well Katie, reckon you an' me've got to keep the flag of culture flying, don't you?

KATIE Definitely, definitely!

ROGER 'Cause if we listen to our peers...

KATIE *(To audience)* I love the way he says that - "*Our peers*", it sounds so... so... I dunno sort of intellectual an'... well sexy, actually. I could never sound intelligent - oh, I get sick of all those dumb blonde jokes, not that I don't like being blonde 'cause I do, instead of having to dye it every three weeks like Melanie Foster - you should see the way her roots show through - they look minging, really minging.

MEL Can you see my roots, can you see them, Katie?

KATIE No, not at all.

MEL 'Cause I want you to tell me if you can.

KATIE No, I can't Mel, honestly.

MEL 'Cause you know what - I think I look more blonde than you, yer know?

KATIE *(To audience)* In your dreams, you chavvy, pikey, wannabe blondie loser! Huh, more blonde than me - I am one hundred and sixty one percent nat-u-ral, baby, and you'd better believe it, you jealous mousy-haired cow!

ROGER 'Cause if we listen to our peers...

KATIE *(Sighs)* Peers!

ROGER We're just going to hold ourselves back; creatively I mean.

KATIE I agree totally, Roger, I really do, one hundred percent; I dunno why we bother listening to them.

ROGER So let me know when you're in your next show an' I'll come and see you.

KATIE Will you?

ROGER I'd love to see you in your tutu again.

KATIE Would you?

ROGER *(Smiles)* Yeah.

KATIE And I'd love to see you in your trumpet, I mean violin; I mean see you play it, not in it.

ROGER *(Laughs)* You're cool.

KATIE *(To audience)* He said that, he really did, and he's in year eleven, too..!

DAD 15 grammes of fresh coriander, roughly chopped...

KATIE Are you still here?

DAD And all served with an aubergine and pesto salad!

KATIE *It had a head!*

DAD All fish have heads.

KATIE Only in the sea - how am I supposed to eat something that's looking at me..? Still I can get rid of it later; just chuck it up an' flush it away. It was Tori who taught me to do that, actually, at Sam's birthday sleep-over at primary: we'd stuffed ourselves stupid; so we were in the bathroom and she just threw up in the toilet. "*Euurggr!*"

TORI What's the problem?

KATIE You just threw up!

TORI So?

KATIE But Tori, you just threw up!

TORI Yeah - can't you?

KATIE Well... yeah if I have to.

TORI Katie, you are such a retard!

KATIE No I'm not. *(To audience)* And Sam chimes in -

SAM Yes you are Katie. We can all chuck up at will; we've been doin' it for ages.

KATIE Have you?

TORI Do you wanna get fat?

KATIE No.

TORI *(Mimicking)* "No".

SAM Oh, show her Tori -

KATIE And she did.

DAD Aubergine and pesto salad - when do you get to eat that?

KATIE Never again, hopefully. Fish is not supposed to be served with salad, Dad - it's unnatural; it goes against all the laws of nature.

DAD I try to cook you nice food; a little appreciation would not go amiss.

KATIE But Dad, I don't like nice food; I like proper food.

DAD Oh just... just... *tidy your room!*

KATIE *(To audience)* Tidy my room? Why? It's my room, it's not his, it's not Mum's - it's mine!

KATIE picks up a fluffy toy, helplessly looking for somewhere to put it.

(Sighs) Where am I supposed to put everything? It's a bedroom, not a bloody Tardis! *Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck!!* That's better! Know what, Melanie Foster swears all the time - in front of her Mum, too. I was round her house 'cause well I was walking home with her, wasn't I? 'Cause we'd both been in detention together; I mean I wouldn't normally hang out with her because she's... well she's a chav an' she's scary, too.

MEL Wanna come in; watch some telly?

KATIE Erm...

MEL Watch MTV if yer like. We got SKY - you got SKY?

KATIE No.

MEL You ain't got SKY?!

KATIE No, we ain't... I mean we haven't.

MEL God, you're deprived, you are.

KATIE Tell me about it.

MEL Get all the footy an' all. You watch the footy?

KATIE No, not really.

MEL You don't watch the footy! You are deprived, girl; really deprived!

KATIE *(To audience)* Anyway, just as I'm giving up the will to live, we're by her house in Skylark Rise, which is like a really scary area where all the Chavs and Pikeys live and all the gardens are full of nicked cars and rusty motorbikes and old baby buggies an' stuff, and before I know it I'm in there.

MEL *(Shouts)* Mum!!

KATIE And her mum shouts back from up the stairs -

MUM *What?!*

MEL Any tea?

MUM I dunno, do I? See what's in the fridge!

MEL I've got me mate wiv me!

MUM So?!

MEL So you gonna fuckin' cook us summat?

MUM Leave off, Mel; I've got a minging hangover!

MEL Arse'ole!

MUM Whatever!

MEL Fuck her. Let's rustle summat up, eh? You like fuckin' burgers?

KATIE Yeah.

MEL Chips?

KATIE Yeah, yeah I do.

MEL Got some microwave ones - eat 'em straight from the fuckin' box; they're fuckin' great!

KATIE *(To audience)* So we sat on her greasy real leather sofa together in her sitting room with bright orange carpet and racing pictures on the wall, and we watched MTV on the biggest telly I have ever seen, and we ate burgers, beans, microwave chips, jaffa cakes and coke from a tray on our laps - *it was fucking great!*

 KATIE'S *phone bleeps.*

 Text message - wonder if it's Sophie?

 KATIE *retrieves the message.*

(Reading) A girl was granted two wishes by a genie. She asked for bigger tits and a tight cunt...*(laughs)* - that is disgusting..! Oh there's some more... *(Scrolling down)* So the genie gave her a pair of 38 double D's and your mobile number... Huh... funny... who sent that? *(Scrolls down)* Number withheld... I'm not tight; nobody could call me tight; I even gave Sophie my Monster Munch last Thursday, pickled onion flavour too; so nobody can call me tight, *nobody!*

Pause.

Maybe I should text Sophie? But if it was her an' she got a text from me, she'd know that I knew she'd sent it... Still I could text her anyway, just text her 'cause she's a mate... *(Begins to text)* Hey Sophe, wot u doing? Not homework I hope.... er... what else can I say..? *Shit for dinner 2 night, or should I say spag bol - eughhhrr!! Txt back - ur Monster Munch Mate... LOL.* Shall I send it..? Oh, I'll send it, just send it 'cause she's a mate - have a laugh. *(Presses send)* I wish I hadn't sent it! Oh God, it looks a bit desperate; like I'm desperately trying to be desperate and crave her friendship.

MUM *(Calls)* Hello!

KATIE *(To audience)* Oh God no, that'll be Mum.

MUM *(Calls)* Katie! Katie! I'm home!

KATIE *(To herself)* Yeah, yeah, I can hear you.

MUM Katie, are you going to come and give your Mum a hug?

KATIE *(To audience)* A hug? A bloody hug! She doesn't deserve one.

MUM I've been at work all day, teaching.

KATIE *(To herself)* Then don't bloody teach.

MUM And I come home to a stropky daughter who can't even be bothered to acknowledge a mother who works all hours to put a decent meal on the table.

KATIE *(To herself)* Grilled snapper - a decent meal?

MUM And buy you new outfits from H&M and Top Shop almost every weekend!

KATIE *(To audience)* That is blackmail, that is! That is emotional blackmail!

MUM Right, sod you! Just don't expect me to fork out for that skirt you saw last week or those shoes either for that matter.

KATIE *leaps up and mimes running down the stairs to hug her* MUM.

KATIE Mum! Mum, is that you? Sorry, I had my ipod on.

MUM *I bet!* Anyway, had a good day. What did you do at school?

KATIE Stuff.

MUM What stuff?

KATIE Just stuff, Mum.

MUM What sort of stuff?

KATIE I dunno - stuff; the same stuff we do everyday - I don't know what else to say - stuff!

MUM All right - I'm only trying to take an interest in what you do.

KATIE *Huh!*

MUM And what's that supposed to mean?

KATIE Oh come on Mum, to be fair, when do you ever show an interest in what I do?

MUM I'm always interested in what you do.

KATIE *Huh!*

MUM Stop saying *huh!* Have you got any homework?

Pause.

 Have you got any homework?

KATIE A bit, yeah. But it doesn't have to be in till Thursday.

MUM Go and do your homework; don't leave it all until the last moment again.

KATIE *(About to strop off)* Mum - you've got to buy me that new outfit this weekend.

MUM *Got to?*

KATIE I've got to have it for the school disco.

MUM You've got plenty of nice clothes already.

KATIE *You must be joking!* I haven't got anything, absolutely anything! You can't do this to me, Mum, you can't! You promised me you'd buy me that skirt from Top Shop, you said you would, you promised! And those shoes... and I need a new top, too.

MUM Look Katie, I'm sorry, but I've got lesson plans to do this weekend.

KATIE But the disco's next Friday. Sam and Sophie and Tori and absolutely everybody in the school, actually are all like having all new stuff. I thought it would be nice to go out together, have a little Mummy and daughter time.

MUM Oh... oh God, you know all the right buttons to press to make me feel guilty.

KATIE *(Pouting)* Please?

MUM *(Sighs)* I'll pick you up from school on Monday.

KATIE Oh thanks Mum - I love you! *(To audience)* Sucker!

MUM *(Smiles)* Go on and do your homework then; dinner won't be long.

KATIE *(Ironic)* *How lovely!* Still, I'll just chuck it up later an' stuff my face with chocolate to take the taste away. See what you're doing to me, father, you selfish, bloody cordon-blue freak - *You're making me fat!* God - I hate my fucking life!

KATIE'S *phone beeps; she looks alarmed as she picks it up.*

Text - shit, it's from Sophie - oh God... what is it?

She scrolls down.

"Hi Monster Munch Buddy. I am staring at a blank page that something should be written on is wot I am doing! Fuck homework. Wot U wearing 2 disco? LOL - Sophe." (*Beams*) Aw, she called me her Monster Munch Buddy! Aw, what a mate - I love Sophe I do! Right - I've got to get those fuckin' shoes! See ya -

Music - 'Dontcha!' by pussycat dolls as KATIE bounds out. Lights fade to black.

SCENE 2

Lights up. Music continues from last scene as KATIE enters with carrier bags, delighted with her purchases. Her room is still the same as before - a complete mess.

- KATIE *Shopping! Shopping, shopping, shopping!* I love it!
Wait till you see what I've got -
- She pulls out a very short denim skirt from an H&M bag.*
- Look at that - it's like just what I wanted, exactly and like it's really, really short and I don't think Mum realised just how short it was and I wouldn't let her see me in it because I know what she'd say...
- MUM You are not going out in a skirt like that; your Dad would have a fit.
- KATIE But Mum, it's not that short.
- MUM Katie, I can see your knickers!
- KATIE No you can't, anyway it's just how everybody wears them now.
- MUM It's obscene, I am not buying you that skirt.
- KATIE *(To audience)* But she did, because I came out of the changing room and said, "It fits, Mum, can I have it?"
- MUM Why didn't you let me see you in it?
- KATIE Come on, Mum; people are like queuing up for the changing rooms two deep.
- MUM It seems a bit short.
- KATIE Not when it's on.
- MUM Really?
- KATIE Really Mum, I wouldn't wear anything too short anyway; I don't want to look like a tart. Can I have it, or not?
- MUM Oh all right.
- KATIE *(Beams)* Thanks Mum! *(To audience)* And then we went into New Look and they had these well cool shoes...
- KATIE takes the shoes from the box, discarding packaging anywhere and puts them on.*
- MUM Are you sure you can walk in them okay?

KATIE Yeah, they're really comfortable, actually. *(To audience)* They're fucking instruments of torture, but who gives a shit - they look amazing! Oh, and wait till you see my top; correction - two tops! I got Mum to buy me two, 'cause they were only a fiver each, well one was a fiver; the other was a bit more expensive.

MUM Twenty quid for a top, that's a bit steep.

KATIE But Mum, the other one was only a fiver; you can't count that as a purchase really.

MUM What? How did you work that one out?

KATIE *(Holding it in front of her)* Oh but Mum, look at it; it's really sweet. I'll never see another one like this, ever, and it's not as if I get that much, really.

MUM I took you shopping a couple of months ago.

KATIE Exactly Mum, months, not weeks - months! Like styles change from day to day. *(To audience)* Anyway, I worked my dutiful daughter routine on her and she coughed up. *(Suddenly)* Guess what? I saw Roger Bostock again on the bus and he came right over and sat by me and like I go red instantly, but it's like wow, he likes me, he really does! And he says...

ROGER Wotcha Kate.

KATIE *(To audience)* And I try to stop blushing, but I can't and I hope he doesn't notice and I say back... "Wotcha Roger; how's the trumpet?"

ROGER Violin.

KATIE Oh yeah, violin, I keep getting them mixed up; I don't know why 'cause one is like wind and the other is like... er... er...

ROGER Strings?

KATIE Yeah - strings *(Laughs)*.

ROGER *(Smiles)* You're funny.

KATIE Oh... thank you, I mean if like that's a good thing I mean.

ROGER Yeah, it's good. Saw the ballet tickets were on sale. Looking forward to seeing you in your tutu.

KATIE *(Laughs)* Wow, you're really coming then?

ROGER Got the tickets.

KATIE Already?

ROGER Like I said, bit of culture; don't get much around here.

KATIE It's only my dance school, though; it's not like The Royal Ballet or anything.

ROGER Hey, it doesn't matter, just be good to see some dance
 - especially as you're in it.

KATIE *(To audience)* He fancies me; I mean he must, mustn't he... But like, why
 doesn't he just ask me out? Perhaps he just likes me as a friend? Oh
 God, I'm so confused and I've got to rehearse more now; I haven't been
 to class for over a week! Oh God! And Sophie saw us talking, didn't she
 and she had to come over then of course.

SOPHIE Hi, what you two talking about then?

KATIE *(To audience)* And I'm thinking - don't mention the show, please don't
 mention the show!

ROGER I'm going to see Katie's ballet show, actually.

SOPHIE My God Katie, I thought you'd given all that stuff up.

KATIE *(To audience)* And I could see that she was like eyeing up Roger.
 Anyway, Roger right, Roger was totally unfazed by all this and
 he just smiles at Sophie and says...

ROGER I take it dance is not your cup of tea then?

KATIE *(To audience)* And Sophie is really on the spot now and
 a bit stuck for words.

SOPHIE No... I... I didn't mean that I don't like dance, 'cause like I really love
 dancing, you know proper dancing, like at a club or something... *(Smiles)*
 Anyway if you like dance so much, you should come out with us
 sometime, go to Tramps; bit of lippy, bit of make-up I can charm the
 bouncers and get us in, you fancy a bit of a night out, Rog?

KATIE *(To audience)* I couldn't believe it! Sophie - Sophie, my best mate
 stealing the love of my life away from me! But I didn't have to worry,
 'cause Roger just looked at her as if she was some sort of uber chav,
 and said...

ROGER Dancing... at Tramps nightclub..? Lippy, make-up..? Charm the
 bouncers..? Don't think so, not my cup of tea.

KATIE *(To audience)* So right at lunchtime I was on my own 'cause Sam
 and the others were off on the geography trip and Sophie went off
 bumming that posh girl from year 11, and she was only doing it to
 get back at me 'cause of what happened with Roger Bostock...

SOPHIE He's such a dork!

KATIE Come on, Sophe - he's like a bloody film star,
 or something and he's in year eleven.

SOPHIE He's got ginger hair!

KATIE Yeah, nothin' I can do about that.

SOPHIE And what's with the ballet thing? Is he like gay, or something?
 Oh my God, I bet he's gay, I bet he is!

- KATIE There is no way he is gay, no way and you know it... *(To audience)*
My God, he can't be, can he? I mean he does sort of have a strange
obsession with tutus; yeah, but it's because he wants to see me in one,
that's all. I don't mind wearing a tutu for him... bit weird, though.
Anyway, Sophie was being all huffy with me and so I was on my
ownsome and feeling a bit vulnerable, and I saw Rachel Hampshire
with Verity Edwards and her posse, and so although they're not cool
or anything I went over, and they were all really nice actually and we
had quite a laugh, and we were talking about the end of term disco
and Verity said...
- VERITY You can come over to my house and get ready with us if you like, Katie.
- KATIE *(To audience)* Isn't that nice? But there is no way I could, or even
would 'cause they're like the loser group really. And after a while I
could see that Sophie was on her own. God, she is like so bloody
moody at the moment... "You due on or summat?"
- SOPHIE No I am not! And what's that supposed to mean?
- KATIE Nothing. Oh come on Sophie, chill out, let's go to tuck shop an' I'll
buy you some Monster Munch, eh? *(Suddenly to audience)* You
know what? They've stopped selling crisps in tuck! Why pick on crisps?
I fuckin' hate Jamie Oliver! I will dance on his grave when he dies,
Kelly Parker's too! And Heather Pleby who used to be a really good
mate, until she started hanging out with Treena Sharples, who is such
a wannabe everything: bitch, slut, goth, troubled teenager, etcetera,
etcetera. And so now Heather pretends that she doesn't know me
and if I say hello, she goes...
- HEATHER *What?*
- KATIE *(To audience)* And...
- HEATHER Hello... whoever you are.
- KATIE *(To audience)* And right she has put on so much weight that she looks
like Shrek, and her school skirt is so tight round her fat arse that it's split
up either side, and the buttons are bursting on her shirt, which I swear is
see-through, and rolls of fat bulging under her massive fucking grey bra
that she never changes.
- KATIE *surveys her room, despondent.*
- Dad's still going on about my room...
- DAD It's disgusting. You can hardly open the bloody door!
- KATIE But Dad, it's 'cause I've got so much homework; I can't do both. I've
got RE homework, right, which is like a totally random essay about
what would you do if you were God? *(To audience)* Actually I know
exactly what I'd do if I was God; I would turn Roger Bostock's hair
blonde, marry him and have lots of sex... I haven't actually had sex
yet, but I'm pretty sure I'd like it because I once snogged my cousin's
mate who is a year older than me and he put his hand inside my bra
and it was great! *(Suddenly)* You know what? Heather Pleby, right,
she's always going on about sex like she's done it, but she hasn't and

she can't anyway because she's too fat; she's even fatter than Kelly Parker if that's possible!

HEATHER You talkin' 'bout me?

KATIE No.

HEATHER Why you lookin' at me, then?

KATIE I wasn't.

HEATHER Well make sure you don't.

KATIE (To audience) And she's always backed up by her scabby side-kick, Treena bloody goth face slut...

TREENA Yeah you were, you was lookin' at her, like in like a funny way, me too, you were.

KATIE (To audience) Yeah, well maybe it's because it's not often you get to see the Elephant Woman and Mrs Dracula in one place.

TREENA I think you was looking at my scars, that's what I think.

HEATHER Was you looking at her scars?

KATIE What scars? (To audience) And then the dork of a fuckin' Emo rolls up her sleeve to show me where she cuts herself...

TREENA Those right, those scars!

KATIE *Eughhrr!*

HEATHER What do you mean – *eughhrr*? You saying her scars are ugly?

TREENA Yeah, you saying I make you feel sick, or summat?

KATIE No, not at all; I'm not saying that Treena, I wouldn't; it was just like an instant reaction.

HEATHER Why do you think she does it, eh?

KATIE Er...

HEATHER Why?

KATIE Is it like... a fashion statement?

HEATHER She does it because of people like you, you fucking cow!

KATIE (To audience) And then the pair of them march off like the bloody Gestapo to terrorise some other poor, unsuspecting kid. School is just full of weirdo's like that; there's hardly anybody normal... (Suddenly) So... where was I? Oh yeah, (To DAD) so right Dad – I've got RE and maths homework and...

DAD I don't care how much homework you have young lady! I still expect you to keep your room tidy.

KATIE (To audience) I hate it when he says that – *young lady* – *Old Man!*

You try tidying; it's just not that easy – it's like... where does it all come from? But no, I have to miraculously tidy it all away like I'm Mary fucking Poppins!

KATIE *picks up some clothes – they're totally scrunched.*

Uhh – should be ironed, really... uhhh –

KATIE *looks around for somewhere to put it, but is instantly distracted by her shopping and holds up her new top.*

Look at that – I am gonna look so cool at the disco. I've invited the girls around here again to get ready. They all came last year; it was great. And we're all swigging cider an' swappin' lippy an' doing each others hair an' listenin' to music, and then we all crowd into Dad's car and hit the disco... which wasn't that great to be honest – well who was there to get off with – Oliver Bunting?

OLIVER Your tits look nice, girls.

KATIE *(To audience) Eughhr! Or Patrick Peasbody...*

PATRICK *(Awkward laugh) 'Lo Katie, you look... (awkward laugh).*

KATIE What? What do I look, Patrick?

PATRICK Y' know... *(awkward laugh)* you look...

KATIE *What? (To audience)* And Oliver Bunting, who is his vocal partner, says...

OLIVER He thinks yer look sexy an' he wants to shag yer!

PATRICK No I don't!

OLIVER Liar!

PATRICK No...

OLIVER Well if you won't, I will.

PATRICK Well... I suppose...

KATIE *(To audience)* And like, do they seriously think I'd let either of them pop my cherry? The grubby, dirty little losers... and Trena Sharples was pissed in the toilet all night trying to slash her wrists with a piece of wire while Heather Pleby banged on the door and slagged off everyone that came near. She scared poor Verity Edwards shitless...

VERITY Is she all right, Heather?

HEATHER No she is not all fucking right, you nosy little cunt!

VERITY Oh... anything I can do?

HEATHER Yeah – die.

VERITY Well... I'd better get back to the disco I suppose.

HEATHER Yeah, turn your back on human suffering like everybody else in this fucking school... bitch! (*Shouts*) Hang on in there, Treen – I love yer, mate, you can count on me.

TREENA (*Crying*) Life is so fuckin' horrible, Heather!

HEATHER Yeah I know, Treen, I know.

KATIE (*To audience*) That's school discos for you! (*Suddenly glum*) Had another text today... sort of joke thing again: "How do blonde brain cells die..? Alone". (*Sadly*) and I weighed myself today and I've put on two more pounds, and like my hips are just bloody massive - I don't get it. And of course Lucy Cunningham just had to say something, didn't she?

LUCY Hhm, bit of a spare tyre coming there, Katie; I'd watch that if I were you.

KATIE Cheeky cow! Just because she's got weight issues. She is well anorexic; I mean the proper thing – she looks like a stick insect and she's always going on about being size zero, the bitch..! (*Sighs*) And then the next day she'll go...

LUCY Oh look at me – I'm so fat!

KATIE Just so everyone will go, "No you're not, Lucy, you're really thin, you're size zero, wish I could be size zero". And she struts around school like this –

KATIE *minces around pathetically on her toes.*

She looks like she's disabled; she walks on tiptoe and she like talks in this stupid whingy-whiney voice all the time...

LUCY Oh I wish I wasn't so fat, I really do.

KATIE *Aahhh* – I want to strangle her, I really do! Or just pick her up and snap her in half over my knee like the dry, brittle piece of balsa wood that she is!

KATIE'S phone *beeps a message.* *She grabs it.*

A message! (*Grins*) I am so popular! (*Suddenly wary*) What if it's another slaggy text though? Oh God, I can't bear it... why is someone doing it to me?

She scrolls down.

(*Reading text*) "How's your pirouettes coming on?" What's that supposed to fucking mean? "Can't wait to see you do the dying swan!" What..? LOL – Rog... (*Delighted*) My God, it's from him! It's from him! It's from Roger from year eleven with a brain like a computer and a beautiful smile and freckles and a fit body and he's a boy and he's texted me! Right – fuck homework and tidying my room – where's me tutu? I need to practice! *See ya!*

Music – 'My Humps' by Black Eyed Peas. Lights fade to black.

Reviews:

York Theatre Royal Studio, October 2010

FRESH from success in London and the Latitude Festival, Alex Jones' one-man show is the story of 14-year-old Katie's school life, young love, and battles with the bullies and friends.

It's surprisingly easy to buy middle-aged Jones as a 14-year-old girl, speaking fluent text speech and teenage angst, and effortlessly selling the character, based in part on the experiences of his own daughter.

There are a host of other characters for Jones to immerse himself in, from Katie's so-hip-it-hurts parents, to teachers, friends, bullies and a boyfriend, he hops nimbly between roles for the full show, adopting different accents, stances and postures.

Most importantly, you're never in doubt that these are all fully-formed characters, and the stage often seems fuller than it is as one-man conversations take place. The set also sells Jones as a young girl in a mess of unfamiliar emotions, with high walls canted to tower over the small stage, itself strewn with the clutter of a teenage bedroom.

When happy, Katie dances across the stage when upset, she retreats to the centre of her mess – something that the predominantly teenage audience could no doubt relate to.

The brief 70-minute runtime means Katie's problems are wrapped up quickly and neatly, though not entirely convincingly at the end, but this is a minor problem for a funny yet serious show which keeps the audience hooked throughout.

Touching bravely on anorexia, peer pressure and teen suicide, I'm A Minger deserves to be seen by anyone who was ever a teenager. *Dan Bean - Yorkshire Post.*

Belgrade 2, Coventry

Birmingham Post: Tour se force reflection on teenage angst - For a middle-aged man to write a one-person show about a 14-year-old girl requires a stretch of the imagination, but not many would be brave enough to play the part themselves.

Undaunted, that is what Malvern-based writer and actor Alex Jones does here, to remarkable effect.

In blonde wig, short skirt and a range of studied physical mannerisms, he conjures up his character Katie, a typical teenager from a supportive middle-class family with the usual adolescent preoccupations of self-image, status and peer-esteem.

Katie doesn't communicate well with her teacher mother and pretentious amateur chef father. It seems she genuinely cannot tidy her room because it would involve carrying out a series of actions in a sequence she cannot grasp.

Initially secure in her texting circle of school friends, she is clear about which of her contemporaries are to be looked down on, and why.

But when she finds herself the victim of her friends' fickleness and the bullying text messages start, her self-esteem collapses. When she casually logs on to a chat room discussing suicide the play takes us into a dark and lonely place.

The gradual ebbing of Katie's self-confidence is beautifully written. The author's tour-de-force performance, even including a brief ballet sequence complete with tutu, also spans a wide range of supporting characters effortlessly conjured up by changes of voice.

The play was partly inspired by a newspaper story about the suicide of a 14-year-old girl, and partly by Alex Jones's observations of his own daughter and the pressures to which teenage girls are vulnerable.

It is touring across Britain after its initial run at the Belgrade and is clearly aimed at teenage or school audiences. But be warned that Katie's reflections on life come fully armed with a highly graphic vocabulary.

Terry Grimley - Birmingham Post. September 13th 2010.