Extract from **Re-Write**
By Tosin Omosebi

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Characters
TOMMY
#476A

SCENE 5

#476A walks through to Tommy's room. Tommy has on headphones but they aren't plugged in to anything. He is dancing wildly around the room, the wire trailing behind him. #476A stands at the open door. He looks back and forth between Kingsley's room and Tommy. Tommy spots him and is startled. He removes the headphones.

TOMMY: Doctor! I didn't see you there.

#476A: Evidently.

TOMMY: What are you doing just standing by the door?

#476A: I can't decide who I'd rather spend less of my time with.

Tommy laughs.

TOMMY: You're really funny, you know that? You're a right laugh. Always got something snappy to say. You're like Kingsley; I like that.

#476A takes a seat.

#476A: I'm going to pretend you didn't say that.

Tommy laughs again.

TOMMY: I bet you two are getting along really well. You're both so much fun and –

A loud sneeze from the audience. Tommy walks over to the 'wall' hurriedly.

TOMMY: Who was that?

Tommy squints out into the audience.

TOMMY: This isn't right.

Tommy continues to peer out into the audience.

TOMMY: There's something wrong. If I squint, I can definitely see something. I keep hearing stuff too.

#476A: Tommy, there's nobody here but you and me.

Tommy stops very suddenly and looks clearly at the audience. He spends a few moments looking at them with fear.

What's going on?

#476A: What can you see, Tommy?

TOMMY: All those people, what are they doing here?

#476A: People?

TOMMY: Yeah, people. Loads of 'em. They're just… staring at me. At both of us.

Tommy walks over to #476A.

What's going on?

#476A: Tommy, you're having a very vivid hallucination.

Another loud sneeze. Tommy looks from #476A to the audience, and back again.

TOMMY: You have to have heard that. I know you can hear it. And you can see them, all of them. How could you not?

Tommy steps offstage downstage in front of the audience

#476A: Tommy, please calm down.

#476A: Tommy, I understand that what you're going through must be very confusing and scary. Please sit down and let me help you.

TOMMY: Sitting down isn't going to help. Nothing is going to help, don't you understand? I'm – I'm broken. It's like there's a screw lose in my head and it's fallen straight out and I'm confused and nothing makes sense anymore and–

#476A: For fuck's sake!

#476A leaves the room as Tommy is left in the audience, looking scared. #476A returns moments later with Nurse. They both stand by the door and watch Tommy.

NURSE: Oh dear.

TOMMY: *(still to the audience)* Why are you just gawping at me? Enjoying the show are you? Got some nice seats there? Twats.

#476A: Thomas!

Tommy stops. He is out of breath and tired.

NURSE: Tommy …

#476A Tommy.

TOMMY: They won't stop watching me

#476A: Tommy have you been taking your medication?

TOMMY: Why won't they stop watching me?

Tommy turns around sharply and goes back onstage. He points at the audience.

Look, look right over there and tell me that you can see people.

#476A: Look, Tommy. Your life is a bit like a script and the author has put certain restrictions on your character. Certain rules. You might not like the rules, but you have to play along.

TOMMY: Play along?

#476A: Yes. Taking your medication is just one of the rules. You've got no choice but to play your part correctly.

Tommy doesn't respond. He continues staring at the audience with confusion. Nurse walks up to him.

NURSE: You've got to play along with the script, Tommy.

TOMMY: Like a performance? A play?

#476A: Why not? Let's just run with the metaphor.

TOMMY: So my life is a play?

#476A: No, we're pretending your life is a play. Imagining it so that you can understand how we want to fix you. We need to rewrite you and that can't happen unless you play your part in this and take your medication.

TOMMY: So that's what all these people are doing here? It makes sense now.

#476A: What do you mean?

TOMMY: All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players. Don't you get it?

He begins to pace excitedly, gesturing wildly as he does so. Despite the dark turn his words take on, he doesn't stop smiling or sounding happy.

See, Shakespeare was right all along. Our lives are like one long performance in a theatre. And all these people… *(he faces the audience)* they're the audience. They're watching the show. My show. Yeah. See? That's all the important people at the front, and there at the

very back are the ones who couldn't get the good seats. *(To audience)* Enjoying the show are you, guys? Enjoying watching me suffer? I bet it's a right laugh from where you are. Just sit back and watch me unravel. Please, don't worry about helping me. It's pretty obvious you don't *actually* care.

#476A: Tommy, it's very important that you tell me whether or not you've been taking your medication.

TOMMY: Of course. I'm fine. I'm better than fine; I'm brilliant. I'm like Shakespeare; brilliant but misunderstood in my time.

#476A: Actually, Shakespeare was revered at the time he was writing. You, however, are in a mental institution.

TOMMY: Minor discrepancies. We're practically the same person.