

# The Trials and Passions of Unfamous Women

## Self-Care Guide

### What is *The Trials and Passions of Unfamous Women*?

*The Trials and Passions of Unfamous Women* is a production from Clean Break, LIFT and Brixton House. It is co-created by Janaina Leite, Lara Duarte & Athena Maria, Yvonne Wickham, Sarah-Jane Dent, Dominique Lavine Wood-Whyte, Kim Teresa (KT) Marsh and Rachel Valentine Smith.

The production unpacks the experiences of women who have been labelled transgressive across time and explores how our collective judgement of women. From the stories of historic and mythic figures to the personal testimonies of those on stage, we see women driven by their passions; women who have crossed the line between legal and illegal, moral and immoral, and as a result faced the laws of their time.

Age recommended 16+

### What does 'Self-Care' mean?

The concept of self-care comes from the Black Feminist movement. Self-care is important because it's about recognising that we experience discrimination and oppression because of how others react to who we are, or what we've experienced. Self-care is a choice to listen to our needs and look after ourselves, so we are able to keep going and live our best lives, despite the difficulties we experience in life and how they make us feel.

*"Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare."* - Audre Lorde, a Black Feminist and pioneer of self-care.

### Why Self-Care?

*The Trials and Passions of Unfamous Women* might be challenging to engage with, especially if you are personally affected by the content. This guide will help you look after yourself whilst you're at the theatre.

This guide includes:

1. Content Notice List
2. Thorough Content Notices
3. Self-Care Suggestions
4. Helplines and Support
5. Further reading and resources about self-care

## **Content Notice List**

This play contains the following content:

- Criminalisation and depictions of the criminal justice system
- Death
- Difficult family relationships including motherhood
- Discussion of racism
- Drug and alcohol use
- Flashing lights and loud noises throughout
- Gender based violence / sexual violence
- Haze
- Model of a severed head including fake blood
- The care system

## **Thorough Content Notices**

### **\*Contains Spoilers\***

If you would like to know when potentially activating subject matter comes up during the performance, we have outlined the content notices as they arise in each Act.

NB: this is not a full synopsis of the production, it is only an outline of potentially challenging subject matter:

### **Act 1: Burn the Witch Down**

The space is set up in the style of a mediaeval fayre, the audience is invited to move freely around the space and listen to the actors. Each actor delivers a monologue about their own experience mixed with stories of mythical and historical women.

Narrator / court jester: mentions of anxiety, morality, religion, lack of censorship, sex, crime, abandonment at birth, alluding to drug use, religion, family, mother relationships, mental health.

Sarah-Jane: holding a prop of a severed head. Mention of killing, witches, magic, gods, blood, decapitation, infidelity, cocaine.

Yvonne: Mention of sins, crime, alcohol, violence, death, survival, difficult father relationship, slavery, generational trauma, sexuality.

Athena: Mention of burns, scars, death, severed hands.

Dominique: Mention of death, violence, racism. Use of prop bones. Death row symbolism.

All actors walk to the centre of the stage towards a stack of chairs which symbolises a bonfire, referencing the burning of witches.

There is mention of burning, family death.

## **Act 2: From Revenge to Sacrifice**

The space is reconfigured to represent a courtroom. The next act is focused on the criminal justice system.

There are mentions of blood, matricide, abandonment of children, domestic violence, torture, robbery, drug dealing, mother / daughter relationships, a depiction of intoxication, custody dispute, the care system, drug use, imprisonment, lynching, racism, murder by stabbing.

## **Act 3 – (Our) Final Judgement**

The final scene is set to be a kind of ethereal space, there is religious imagery.

There are mentions of mother / daughter relationships, hospital, sexual exploitation and violence, teen pregnancy, the care system, alcohol, gender-based violence, ectopic pregnancy, motherhood, criminal justice system.

ENDS

## **Self-Care Suggestions**

### **Watch with someone**

Ask a friend or someone you trust to watch the play with you.

### **Talk to someone**

If you find the content distressing try talking to someone you trust or contacting one of the organisations we listed above.

### **Check the content warnings**

This will help you prepare for any difficult bits or decide if the play is right for you.

### **Breathe**

Breathing is a great way to help you feel calm. Try breathing in for four seconds, holding your breath for four seconds, exhaling for four seconds and holding again. Repeat this for as long as you need.

### **Try a Grounding Exercise**

Grounding exercises are things you can do to bring yourself into contact with the present moment to relieve distress. There are many ways you can do this:

1. Notice five things you can see, four things you can feel, three things you can hear, two things you can smell and one thing you can taste.
2. Sit with your feet on the floor and back against your chair and either gently tap each leg or cross your arms and tap your shoulders.
3. Wash your hands, have a shower or drink some water.

### **Find some nature**

Look out of the window or go for a walk if you can, experiencing nature can be beneficial to our wellbeing and help us feel grounded.

**Know if you need to step away**

There is nothing wrong with deciding this isn't for you or it's too much. Walk away or turn it off, do what feels right for you.

**Helplines and Support**

**Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Line** – a free, specialist helpline for anyone who has experience sexual violence, no matter when.

[Rapecrisis.org.uk](https://rapecrisis.org.uk) | 0808 500 2222

**Refuge** – offers support, guidance, and routes to refuge for women experiencing domestic violence.

[refuge.org.uk](https://refuge.org.uk) | 0808 2000 247

**Rights of Women** – free legal advice for women, including family law.

[rightsofwomen.org.uk](https://rightsofwomen.org.uk) | 020 7251 6577

**Samaritans** - provides emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide.

[samaritans.org](https://samaritans.org) | 08457 90 90 90

**Unlock** - provides a voice and support for people who are facing stigma and obstacles because of their criminal record.

[unlock.org.uk](https://unlock.org.uk)

**We are with you** – free, confidential support with alcohol, drugs or mental health.

[wearewithyou.org.uk](https://wearewithyou.org.uk)

**Women in Prison** - supports women affected by the criminal justice system and campaigns to end the harm caused to women, their families and our communities by imprisonment.

[womeninprison.org.uk](https://womeninprison.org.uk) | 020 7359 6674

**Further reading and resources about self-care**

This guide takes inspiration from [20 Stories High](#) and [The Survivor's Trust](#).

[London Survivors Gateway self care guide](#) - this guide has been written for people who have experienced sexual violence, but it includes lots of helpful self-care tips which could be useful for anyone.

[Anna Freud Self Help Hub](#) - this resource hub has been created for young people, but it contains lots of self-help tips and suggestions which anyone could find useful.