

RED HOOD PRODUCTIONS
PRESENTS
BIG TEETH

An immersive bedtime story with a bite



Written and designed by Elizabeth Dearnley
Originally commissioned by Upstart Theatre

Funded by Arts Council England
using money from the National Lottery



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Two people, perhaps complete strangers, go to bed together. But what happens next?

Gripped by the Great Freeze of 1947, with wolf-whistling spivs and other predatory characters skulking round every corner, London could be a dangerous place for an unwary girl. In this immersive theatre installation, audiences are invited to step back in time into the bedroom of young waitress Ruby Hunter, where they listen to an apparently familiar tale unfold. But there is always more than one side to every story. What really happened? How well do we ever know the people we get into bed with?

Weaving together elements of Red Riding Hood, 1940s detective serials and recorded sound, *Big Teeth* is an uneasily intimate storytelling experience. Expect red cloaks, wolves, and suspiciously tasty pies.

Christina Oakley Harrington, Director of Treadwell's Bookshop:

"We were thrilled to have Big Teeth in our mysterious basement: through the curtain and between the sheets, in the space between fairy tale and sexy horror. Elizabeth Dearnley brings a remarkable, indeed mythic, intelligence to the piece."

Big Teeth is designed to work in any room measuring a minimum of 4 x 5 metres. It can be staged in studio theatres, bookshops, libraries, galleries, or even pie shops!

Originally staged in eerie cellar space The Ditch underneath Shoreditch Town Hall in September 2017, its second outing was in the atmospheric basement of Treadwell's, a Bloomsbury bookshop specialising in magic, esotericism and the occult.

Big Teeth is funded by Arts Council England, using money from the National Lottery. It was originally developed with Upstart Theatre at DARE Festival, with further support from the Bloomsbury Festival.



How the show works

Big Teeth is an immersive audio show for 2 people at a time. Audience members are led in pairs into Ruby's bedroom, encouraged to make themselves at home, and get into the bed. At various points, participants can size each other up: how big are their eyes, how strong are their hands, how big are their teeth?



Big Teeth at Shoreditch Town Hall



Big Teeth at Treadwell's

Putting on headphones attached to bedside radios, each listens to a separate, but interlinked, version of the same story: one from Ruby's point of view, and one from that of Stephen, a customer from Ruby's café. While these initially seem to tell a familiar tale - of an unwary girl and a wolfish predator - the story takes unexpected turns. Ruby is revealed to be a werewolf with carnivorous culinary talents; butchering men who prey on her, she turns them into delicious pies which become popular in a London under meat rationing.

After the show, participants can explore Ruby's room, peek inside her suitcases, or sit at her dressing table and flick through her movie magazines, listening to a crackling soundscape playing from her radio. (Hear a preview here: redhoodproductions.co.uk/bigteeth.html)

You can experience the story with someone you already know, or with a complete stranger: before entering Ruby's bedroom, audience members play a 5-minute 'intimacy game' to get to know their prospective bedmate better. The entire experience lasts around 30 minutes.

Tom Mansfield, Artistic Director of Upstart Theatre:

"The detail of the immersive world Elizabeth Dearnley creates is breathtaking, and it's matched with a beautifully told pair of stories with a wicked twist in the tale. Big Teeth also uses the story it tells as the starting point for really important questions about gender dynamics, autonomy and consent."



Creative team

Elizabeth Dearnley - Writer and Performer

Red Hood Productions founder
Elizabeth Dearnley is an artist, folklorist and maker whose work centres around interactive, collaborative storytelling and engagement with public spaces.



Elizabeth's work includes collaborative storytelling projects *Bird Box Stories* (E17 Art Trail) and *The Secret Diary of Bloomsbury* (Bloomsbury Festival), and fairy tale maze *Out Of The Woods?* (Being Human). As producer of Sing London's *Talking Statues* she has brought sculptures to life in Leeds (Yorkshire Festival), Bedford, Chester and Dublin (with Fáilte Ireland). Elizabeth also teaches the history of fairy tales at University College London, and is writing a book about forests.

James Blakey - Audio Director and Creative Support

James Blakey is a theatre director and Artistic Associate of Upstart Theatre. He was a founding director of Upstart's sister company Oscar Mike, developing and presenting theatre that invites audiences to play. He has worked as a freelance director for RashDash, Slung Low, West Yorkshire Playhouse and the National Theatre Studio.

Tamsin Dearnley - Sound Designer

Tamsin Dearnley is a harpist, composer and sound designer. Her work focuses on innovative use of the lever harp, exploring its tonal possibilities in contemporary music, jazz and blues. Holding a Master's in composition from the University of Edinburgh, she is also trained in circus skills and performance art, and has provided musical accompaniments for theatre, video games and everything in between.

Tamsin and Elizabeth have been collaborating on soundscapes since the ages of 6 and 9, when their haunted house soundtrack *Nightmare Murder* mysteriously failed to entertain their parents on long car journeys.

Red Hood Productions

Red Hood Productions makes eerie immersive stories, fairy tales to disconcert and dazzle, and narrative-based installations with a fantastical, feminist slant. Working with festivals and unusual venues to create site-specific shows, we engage people with the stories which surround them and encourage them to tell their own.

Twitter/Instagram/Facebook: @redhoodstories
redhoodproductions.co.uk



Marketing

Target audiences

Big Teeth's core audience is women aged 16-40 engaged in wider discussions around gender equality and rape culture who enjoy subversive reworkings of popular culture, including fairy tales.

They may read Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, follow @EverydaySexism, watch *The Handmaid's Tale* and have attended the Women's March; they may also watch recent female-driven horror films like *Raw* and *Prevenge*.



In the context of recent revelations about sexual harassment and abuse by men in positions of power, stories about consent and autonomy remain highly relevant. *Big Teeth* will appeal to women of all ages and anyone eager to smash the patriarchy through the responsible consumption of fairy tales. However, its focus on Ruby resisting the wolf's approaches may be particularly suitable for younger women.

Key messages

- dangers of internalising ideas about 'fairy tale' relationships
- the importance of sexual consent and autonomy
- issues surrounding toxic masculinity and rape culture
- the importance of retelling archetypal cultural narratives from the perspective of non-dominant voices

Engagement activity

Elizabeth is available to run workshops exploring the themes of *Big Teeth* with both young people (15+) and adults. Please ask for costs/details.

Audience feedback

"Immersive, enrapturing, intimate. Unsettling in a very good way."
- Hel, 28

"Brilliant! I felt transported back in time - there was so much attention to detail that really made it feel like 1947. Loved how unexpected the story was - and well told."
- Lucy, 34

"Totally unexpected, intimate, fascinating, and awesomely awkward."
- Nastasia, 25

"Strange, sexy, a 'shocker'. "
- Crudgie, 62



Information for bookers

Availability: November 2017 onwards

Space: Private room or cordoned-off area, minimum size 4m x 5m

Get-in: 4 hours

Lighting: Practical lanterns provided by the production

Show length: 30 minutes per pair of audience members

Technical support: 240v power supply required

Front of House support: 1 usher or volunteer to be provided by venue
(negotiable)

Audience capacity: 2 people per 30 minute slot (bookable in advance)

Timings: Negotiable - at least 4 hours per day suggested. The show was run continually during DARE Festival, and during shop opening hours at Treadwell's (including late-night opening).

Marketing support: Print (posters and flyers) can be provided on request. Elizabeth Dearnley is available for workshops and other engagement activity - see above.

Previous tour: *Big Teeth* was originally staged at Shoreditch Town Hall (September 2017) as part of Upstart Theatre's DARE Festival of new and in development work. It was next staged at Treadwell's Bookshop during the Bloomsbury Festival (October 2017).

Fee: Negotiable depending on length of run

Contact: Elizabeth Dearnley, elizabeth.dearnley@gmail.com



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